MISS JOCELYN'S THANKSGIVING

Miss Jocelyn sighed wearily, and ceased the steady click, click of her knitting needles for a few minutes. It had been Thanksgiving day, but Thanksgiving days were never happy ones to her. She had, to be sure, cooked cranberry sauce. She had even had a piece of pumpkin pie. But all this argued nothing except that Miss Jocelyn had a conventional streak in her nature and wanted to be "like folks." She was not thankful, though she was a religious woman and honestly tried to be. All was quiet within her little shop, while outside there was bustle and confusion. She rose from her rocking chair and went into the back room to put the kettle on the fire. As she paused beside the stove, she glanced up for a minute at the gaudy calendar hanging over the little table and realized with a start that Thanksgiving day this year was her birthday. She walked slowly back into her little shop room and sat down and gazed around her.

She was 38 years old, and as she looked back over her past each year seemed like the last—lonely, miserable and weary—and looking into the future, all was as desolate. Her life had always been the same. Nothing sweet and tender, which would make her heart now grow warm to think of, seemed ever to have entered it.

As her dark eyes, in which lay a world of sorrow and bitterness, roamed over each of her small possessions, her mind was busy living over again her sad and unsatisfied existence. She had been born with a beautiful straight body. She thought of this now with a pang of deep self-pity, for when a child of 5 years she had been dropped by her mother, in some way injuring her spine. Thus she had been deformed and crippled for life. Only five short years of life like other children! Only five short years with no pain in her side, and no hump on her back! She looked down at her poor little body with passionate contempt.

How like a bad dream had been her girlhood! Crushed and beaten, she grew up bitter, silent and morose, with nothing ever to give her any joy, no bright spot in all her weary days. Then her mother, to whom she had always been a grief and a mortification, had died, and Miss Jocelyn could still feel the thrill of relief which shot through her when she realized it. After that she had been enabled to set up this little shop. Then she had been only 20, but old and careworn. Still, her heart had craved love and beauty and pleasure, with an intensity which frightened her. She remembered how wistfully she used to sit on the steps of her little shop at night and watch the girls with their lovers. What fun and laughter she heard! But she never had any lover; she never had even a girl friend. Oh, for something to love, to clasp to her poor, starved heart, to caress and cherish! Even the cats and dogs seemed to shrink from her.

She bent her poor head, streaked with gray, down upon her counter, and let the tears of anguish that were wrung from her lonely heart slowly course down her sallow cheeks. What, indeed, had she to be thankful for? Then the little bell jingled. A fat, rosy-cheeked boy entered and demanded a stick of lemon candy. Miss Jocelyn took down the glass jar and satisfied his desire.

After he left she drew her wooden rocking-chair, with its worn straw seat and lace tidy, nearer the stove and continued her knitting.

With her passionate love for beauty she had tried in a blind way to adorn her little home. The lace tidy was one of her efforts. It was almost pathetic to see, scattered here and there in the plain rooms, evidences of a groping toward luxury, brightness and color, such as was displayed in artificial flowers hung on the gas fixture and colored prints on the wall. * * *

On the corner by the old cigar store the newsboys were gathered. It was their regular place of meeting, where they settled their disputes and discussed business and the events of the day. Now they were talking very earnestly and lous about what appeared to be a most important question. This question, in the person of a pinched little hunchback, was sitting wearily on the platform which supported a fierce Indian brandishing aloft a romahawk. He was huddled up together, clutching his newspapers and looking from boy to boy with a hunted expression, as if he had small hope and did not much care.

The matter stood thus: The newsboys had formed a union, and no one outside was allowed to sell papers in that part of the city, so they were trying to keep the poor little hunchback from disposing of his stock.

"No, it ain't no use talkin'. Gin us yer papers," said Mike Flynn, advancing threateningly.

"Yous leave me alone!"—fiercely—"I ain't doin' no harm—" Then the hunchback's spirit died out, and his lip quipered pitifully.

"He can't sell them papers, any ways, Mike. Them's mornin' papers," said another boy, jeeringly.

"Well, let's leave him alone then. But lemme jest tell yer, young man, yer needn't be buyin' any more papers in this part of the town," and, after a few more words which fell heedlessly on the boy's ears, the crowd left.

He stood up a moment after they had gone and called bravely, "Herald, Journal! All about the murder!" in a voice which quavered pitifully. No one heeded the small, misshapen figure, shivering in its thin jacket. The lights were beginning to burn one by one, and everybody was hurrying home.

Billy gave a sharp sob of despair, and seated himself on the platform again, hugging his useless papers. He leaned his tired head against the wooden Indian, and clasped one thin little arm around that worthy's legs. He felt a great affection for this fierce savage. "Red Hand" he called him, after a hero in "Dare Devil Dick." As he hugged himself closer to Red Hand's unresponsive anatomy he felt that this was his only friend—this and something else which lay warm and purring in his pocket. It was a wee kitten which he had picked up in the alley. He snuggled it up to his face now, and rubbed his cheek against its soft fur, and then put it tenderly back in his pocket.

Suddenly the proprietor of the store appeared in the doorway, and, fearing to be sent off, Billy raised himself and moved on. He paused in front of Miss Jocelyn's window and pressed his face against the pane. He was enchanted by the glittering display there. What lovely tops and balls and books and candy! Oh, if he only had some money! He forgot the cold, and began to choose the things he would buy.

Miss Jocelyn moved to the window to look out, and saw the pale face, with the bright eyes, peering in. She opened the door, drawing her little black worsted shawl closer about her thin shoulders.

"Do you want to buy anything?" she said. He slowly shook his head.

"Are you cold?"

He nodded.

"Come in, then, and get warm by the stove."

She was surprised at herself, but his wistful face touched her, and his deformity, so like her own, appealed to her strangely. He followed her in and stood warming his blue little hands, while she went on knitting. He looked around with delight at the jars of candy on the shelves, the slate pencils, paper, toys and other fascinating things, and then he was struck with an idea.

"Ef I sing fer yer, will yer gimme a stick of that ere red candy?" he asked shyly, shuffling his feet on the floor and looking up at her.

"Yes; let's hear you."

Miss Jocelyn laid down her knitting. He clasped his hands behind him, tossed back his mass of bright, golden hair, which clung in close curls to his face, and began to sing.

He was not a pretty child. His face was rather old and elfish; but he had beautiful hair and gleaming blue eyes. As he sang, he seemed almost angelic. The hard, worldly look left his face. The sullen expression around his mouth vanished. He flung back his bright hair, and, fixing his eyes upon the stick of red candy 'way up the shelf, he sang like a little cherub, though his song was not exactly one that a cherub would have chosen.

The melody, sweet and clear and loud, came evenly through his parted lips and drew Miss Jocelyn's heart to him. It was an old street song that he sang, but he made it beautiful. When the last note died away he looked at her, half eagerly, half questioningly. She rose and, climbing the ladder, lifted the jar down with trembling fingers and poured the contents into his hands. He looked up, with sparkling eyes, and began to suck a stick with an ecstatic expression.

"What's your name?" said Miss Jocelyn.

"Billy Blair," replied he with his mouth full.

"Where's your mother?"

"Ain't got none," he answered carelessly, lifting up a stick and looking at it fondly, with one eye shut.

"Where's your father?" continued Miss Jocelyn nervously.

"Ain't got none," said he, jauntily biting off a big piece of the sweet stick in his hand.

"Ain't you had any Thanksgiving dinner to-day?j'

"Nope—only but this." He pointed to the candy.

A red spot came on each of Miss Jocelyn's cheeks. She rubbed her hands together and began to talk. In his astonishment he forgot to eat the candy—forgot everything but what she was saying.

To live in that bewitching shop, with the little bell over the door, which tinkled when any one came in; with the window full of such interesting things, and the crowded shelves! Never to have to go tired, hungry and cold through the streets singing, or selling newspapers for a living! He could not believe it.

"Oh, yer foolin' me!" he said incredulously, but when she assured him again, with tears in her eyes, that she meant every word, his face worked pitifully, and with shining eyes he said fervently, "You bet, I'll stay."

After a minute he put his hand in his pocket, half drew the cat out and hesitated—then he pulled it quite out, and, putting it in her lap, said diffidently:

"Here's a cat fer yer." It was all he had to offer in return.

That night Miss Jocelyn stole into the next room, and, carefully shading the candle, looked down upon the little figure lying on the mattress. His eyes were closed. His mass of tangled golden hair lay on the pillow, and one dirty little hand was still clutching a pepperment stick.

She lifted a curl with awe, and then half-shamefacedly kissed it. Here was something at last to love and to keep and to caress and to be thankful for. Her heart almost burst with happiness, and kept for once a glorious Thanksgiving day. She turned and went back to bed, and though she did not know it her heart was filled with a prayer that the angels heard and kept.

WAS HE KILLED?

Mr. and Mrs. Slocum Were in Great Doubt.

A few evenings since Mr. Slocum was reading an account of a dreadful accident which happened at the factory in the town of L——, and which the editor had described in a great many words.

"I declare, wife, that was an awful accident over at the mill," said Mr. Slocum.

"What's it about, Mr. Slocum?"

"I'll read the 'count, wife, and then you'll know all about it."

Mr. S. began to read:—

"Horrible and Fatal Accident.—It becomes our melancholy and painful duty to record the particulars of an accident that occurred at the lower mill, in this village, yesterday afternoon, by which a human being, in the prime of life, was hurried to that bourne from which, as the immortal Shakespeare says, 'no traveler returns.' "

"Do tell!" exclaimed Mrs. S.

"Mr. David Jones, a workman who has but few superiors this side of the city, was superintending one of the large drums——"

"I wonder if 'twas a bass drum, such as has 'Epluribus Unum' printed on't?"

"When he became entangled. His arm was drawn around the drum, and finally his whole body was drawn over the shaft at a fearful rate. When his situation was discovered he had revolved with immense velocity about fifteen minutes, his head and limbs striking a large beam a distinct blow at each revolution."

"Poor creature! How it must have hurt him!"

"When the machinery had been stopped it was found that Mr. Jones' arms and legs were macerated into jelly."

"Well, didn't it kill him?" asked Mrs. Slocum, with increasing interest.

"Portions of the dura mater, cerebrum, and cerebellum, in confused masses, were scattered about the floor. In short, the gates of eternity had opened upon him."

Here Mr. Slocum paused to wipe his spectacles, and his wife seized the opportunity to press the question:—

"Was the man killed?"

"I don't know; haven't come to that place yet; you'll know when I have finished the piece."

And Mr. Slocum continued reading:—

"It was evident, when the shapeless form was taken down and it was no longer tenanted by the immortal spirit, that the vital spark was extinct."

"Was the man killed?—that's what I want to come at," said Mrs. Slocum.

"Do have a little patience," said Mr. S., eyeing his better-half over his spectacles. "I presume we shall come upon it right away." And he went on reading:—

"This fatal casualty has cast a gloom over our village, and we trust that it will prove a warning to all persons who are called upon to regulate the powerful machinery of our mills."

"Now," said Mrs. Slocum, perceiving that the narrative was ended, "now I should like to know whether the man was killed or not?"

Mr. Slocum looked puzzled. He scratched his head, scrutinized the article he had been perusing, and took a careful survey of the paper.

"I declare, wife," said he, "it's curious; but really the paper don't say!"

FINNEGAN'S "BAWL."

Finnegan had struck it rich in Klondike and he was now intent on having a good time.

"Ye kin bring me two dozen of the very best eyesters," he said airly to a waiter in one of the smartest restaurants in his native city. And these were quickly set before him. He wanted something to put on them, and, hardly knowing what he ought to use, he seized a bottle of a peculiarly fiery condiment and smothered the bivalves.

He thrust one into his capacious mouth, and immediately sprang up and danced furiously, bellowing the while like an uncomfortable bull.

"Stop it," cried the scandalised proprietor, "or I shall put you out!"

"P-p-put me out, is it?" cried Finnegan. "Oi wish yez would. Me insoides is blazing like they was a match factory!"

A virtue is not a deceased vice.

Fine harness does not make the fast horse.

When David takes Goliath's weapon he loses his heavenly ally.

HEAT OF INDIA'S SUMMER

CALCUTTA TAKES LONG SLEEP DURING HOT SPELL.

Life in the Capital of Hindostan —Mercury Stands at Above 100.

It is the second week in June, writes a Calcutta correspondent. The heavens are as brass. On the southwestern horizon, whence cometh our help, is as yet no sign of the black, beneficient clouds. The mid-season showers, tempering the sun and ripening the mangoes; the little rains—"chota barsat"—preluding "the shattering might of the monsoon," have somehow missed their way. Day after day in the shade the mercury stands at anything a little above a hundred; evening after evening the sun goes down behind the masts and funnels of the Hooghly, behind the standing smoke of the jute mills across the water, a disc of yellowish white in a colorless sky—promising nothing for the morrow.

A SUMMER SLEEP.

The city takes her summer sleep. Long ago, as it seems, his Excellency the "Burra Lat Sahib" departed with the Government for Simla. Ages, as it seems, have passed since the flag flew over the low dome crowning the snow-white replica of Kedleston Hall since the blue-striped pagris of the viceregal bodyguard made way in the streets, since the distinguished patron of Indian arts and his graceful consort spent pleasant cool afternoons in the showrooms of the fashionable Hebrew cabinet maker—precise East-of-Suez counterpart of Tottenham Court Road! In these days it was easy to think of the second city of the Empire as "the settlement of an Imperial race, and the fitting habitation of a world-wide rule"—the viceregal rhetoric has an attractive cadence. In these she has another appearance, another character, with which, mayhap, the Burra Lat Sahib has not even a bowing acquaintance. Indeed, he confessed so much in an oration that has become famous.

FLIGHT OF THE MEMSAHIBS.

The balustraded Red Roah is eloquent of the change. Its broad, straight carriageway, crossing the Maiden at such an angle that the priceless evening breeze from the south comes along it unimpeded, is almost deserted during the brief hour dividing the daylight from the dark. True, the smart tum-tums and buggies are still to be seen, for your Calcutta man of business is not driven away by the heat. It is the absence of the palefaced memsahib that is noticeable. A few, a very few, remain; the rest are living laborious days within sight of the snows. In the pre-monsoon interval the inviolable Red Road becomes the resort of another grade, another shade. A glance at the carriages that pass and repass in the line of the breeze, or along the road by the river, reveals for the most part the "Spanish complexion," the hat in fashion of the day before yesterday, the mournful expression of those who belong to the race which Kipling named the real "people of India." They come out on the cool June evening from the hinterland that divides Chowringhee from the welter of slums behind; they annex the carriage roads; they pace up and down the Eden Gardens listening to the town band, at other seasons than this the daily delight of the mercantile youth. You remark in their faces the impassiveness of the East allied with—shall one say?—the discontent of the West.

THE REAL CALCUTTA.

It were a strange error, however, to conceive of Calcutta in the heat as a city of no pleasures. There is no music, no drama, no society. You may, if you are so minded, pay calls at mid-day on Sunday in frock coat and unclassifiable silk hat, but it will not be counted unto you for righteousness. Nevertheless, there are other things to do. After four months of cool drought and four more of heat the Maiden is still gloriously green. Here and there the glowing blossom of a gold-monur tree maintains its outdated splendor. It is good in the morning to ride, in the evening to drive, to walk—before and after the hours during which the unremorseful glare imprisons you indoors. There are some, moreover, younger and madder, who condemn such uninspiriting recreation. Reckless of the towering temperature, they play hockey, football even—with all the ritual of tournament and cuptie. It sounds incredible, but that eager, variegated crowd—Eurasians, Chinese, hundreds of shirt-clad babus with the inner select company of Europeans—testifies to the actuality of the game that is going forward. This is the part of Calcutta known to the ordinary European, whose sphere of interest is bounded by a half-mile radius on this side the Maiden. Beyond is the real Calcutta: the swarming bazaars, with their indescribable reek, the putrid bustees, from which the plague has been, for awhile, expelled by the mercifully merciless sun, the congestion, uncleanliness, and penury that are the despair of Viceroy and Government and corporation. This city, "the fitting habitation of a world-wide rule," we, who ought to know better, do our best to forget, intent as we are on the prospects of the monsoon and our own individual ways of making life, not endurable merely, but positively pleasurable, at a hundred and seven in the shade.

A FAMILY GATHERING

"Gran'ma says will you come over to her house to Thanksgivin' dinner?" A little maiden of nine years in a red hood and a red jacket stood by my desk saying these words one day after I had closed that days session of the country school I was teaching. "Grandma" was Mrs. Josiah Swift. She and her husband lived in a square red brick house on the bank of the river about half a mile from the school house. I said at once that I would accept the invitation, for I had spent a night with Mr. and Mrs. Swift and found them to be a delightful old couple, still young and cheerful in spirit and keenly alive to all that was going on in the world. To them belonged the unusual distinction of being the parents of 10 married sons and daughters, and it seemed to me that the home-coming of all these children to keep Thanksgiving with the old folks was a Thanksgiving incident worth treasuring in the storehouse of one's mind all of one's life. It was such a beautiful scene of household affections and a simple gratitude to the Giver of all good.

"Yes," said Gran'ma soon after my arrival at her house, "we have a lot to be thankful for, my husband and I. It aint given to many couples to live and see their 10 children good men an' wimmen an' married an' livin' in homes o' their own an' love an' harmony prevailin' among 'em all. There ain't nothin' sadder to see than estranged households. It'd break my heart if any o' my boys an' girls didn't speak to each other, or if there was any reason why we shouldn't all set down in peace an' love to eat our thanksgiving dinner together. An' I'm thankful that they aint scattered so far but they can come home to be with pa an' me at least once a year. My oldest son, James, is president of a big bank, but he don't feel a mite above the poorest of his brothers an' sisters on that account. He's awful good to 'em when they're in trouble, an' he'll be sure to be bringin' pa an' me some fine presents. He will be here on the noon train with his wife an' their two splendid boys. Just think we have thirty-eight gran'children, an' they'll all be here to dinner with us. But la, there is room in our hearts for that many more, an' we'd make room in the house somehow. The gran'children all eat at a table by themselves, an' what a good time they do have!

"There's my son Henry just drivin in at the gate with his folks!" She ran to the front door and called out cheerily, "Here you are! Put your horses in the barn, Henry, an' Mary you an' the children come right in out o' the cold. How glad I am to see you! My! how the children do grow! I'd hardly know little Lucy. Come an' kiss your old gran'ma, all of you. An' there comes Aron an' his folks. Ain't seen 'em for a month, an' I'm dyin' to git hold o' that new baby o' theirs. Willie an' his folks an' Emma an' her children an' Sarah an' her family will all be here on the noon train. We have had a telegraft sayin' so. Your pa will go to meet them with the big wagon, an' I reckin Silas will have to go along with his team, there is so many of 'em. If here ain't Nellie an' her big boys! How you boys do shoot up. But you ain't none too big an' you never will be too big to kiss your old gran'ma, so you come right along an' give her a hug an' a kiss. There's Reuben an' his folks just drivin over the hill. The baby ain't been well an' they was so scared that they wouldn't get here, but the baby must be better, so that is another thing to be thankful for. Lydia is here already. She is out helping to get the turkeys ready for the oven I'm expectin' Andrew an' his folks any minnit."

And so they came gathering home, the children an' the children's children, greeting each other with kindly affection, and the father and mother with the tenderest love. To me it was a never to be forgotten Thanksgiving day, and I often think of it in contrast to the lack and love and harmony that there is in some homes even on Thanksgiving day.

SLEEPING IN A CRADLE.

There is a man of seventy in Paris named Wallace Superneau, who still sleeps in the cradle he was rocked in when a baby, and he has never slept one night of his long life in any other bed. The youngest of a family of boys, Wallace retained his place in the cradle as he grew older. He soon became too tall to lie in it at full length, but he overcame this difficulty by drawing his knees upward. Each night to this day he rests his feet squarely on the bottom of the cradle, sways his knees to and fro, and rocks himself to sleep as he did when a small boy. The habit was formed in babyhood and never broken.

"RAIN" OF BUTTERFLIES.

Milan has just been the scene of a remarkable "rain," or downfall, of butterflies or moths. They settled in tens of thousands on almost every available inch of space on the ground and on the buildings of the central quarters of the city. The insects are described as perfectly black and marvellously active. Their presence is ascribed to an air current swept along in front of a hurricane.