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Poetry.

A THANKSGIVING LETTER

A letter once poor Katie wrote,
And on it's way it sped
One bright Thanksgiving morning,
'Twas thus the letter read:

"Oh, farmer man! Oh, farmer man!
Do please to come this way,
Because we want a turkey
On this Thanksgiving Day.

"Oh, do you think that none of us
Here in this narrow lane
Have nothing to be thankful for,
In spite of toil and pain?

"I have two hands with which to work,
Two feet with which to walk,
And I can hear, and I can speak,
And with my mamma talk.

"And when I'm cold and hungry,
I then can sing a song
And think I'm warm. When headaches come
They never do last long.

"With so much to be thankful for,
I'd keep Thanksgiving Day;
So bring a turkey, and some time
You'll surely get your pay.

"Leave it at Bragg's Lane, No. 5,
And please wait for my thanks."
The postman gave this letter
To crabbed Farmer Hanks,

Who hung his biggest turkey
That day on Katie's door.
With it this note: "You've made me, child,
More thankful than before."

Select Family Reading

THE DAY THEY DID NOT CELEBRATE

By Emily J. Langley

It did they celebrate it, after all? Well, you shall see.

"God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." The minister rolled out the usual grand old appendage to the Governor's Thanksgiving Proclamation.

"Amen!" responded Deacon David Sweet.

His wife, Elizabeth, turned to him for one brief moment a pair of flashing eyes; then pulled down her veil to hide the tears in which the indignation was drowned. How could his heart take in a whole Commonwealth in one huge gulp, when in her own, on that Sunday before Thanksgiving, there was room for only two members of that Commonwealth?—one of which (strange to tell) was Deacon David himself, the other, their only child David, junior, away in the city of Boston.

If she had known of the existence of a certain little lad, David Sweet, third, I think (to state it mildly) her heart could have expanded enough to take him in too.

But they had heard only incidentally from David, in the five years since he left home, until the day preceding this Sabbath, when a letter had arrived from him which the deacon and Elizabeth had sat up very late to discuss, though the discussion was a most one-sided affair, as you will allow.

"I'll larn David," began the deacon, hotly, "that he can't play at fas' 'n' loose with me. I told him when he said he would go to the city, 'Turn yer back on the old farm now, 'n' ye turn it for good 'n' all.' What hev'n' I done for that boy?" asked the deacon, partly to justify himself, partly to check his wife, who was on the point of speaking. "I never see no use in gettin' 'n' eddication. I've got 'along without no eddication, 'n' so I knuckled ter him an you, and let him get it.

"Proud on him, was I? Well, yes, I was rather, 'long thesr fur a spell. I lived through them ere days on the idee that David 'ud come home 'n' settle down with me 'n' call his farmin' out for the good of the farm; but when I found that all his larnin' had only lifted him, head, neck 'n' heels above farmin' the ole ranklip' came back, 'Lizabeth, 'n' it come fur ter stay."

The poor old deacon's voice grew husky; his only safety was to explode in a new direction.

"I bet that ere wife of his'n is at the bottom of this letter," slapping it down on the old desk at which he was seated. "His wife! It's simply 'n' purfiely scand'lous that our David should ha' gone out 'mong them heathen shopgals of Hostin 'n' took to hisself a wife. Why, the very best in the county he might ha' had for the arskin'."

His wife made no reply. She had also had dreams about the daughter that David might some day bring home, but in the depths of her heart she had blessed this unknown girl, if, through her influence, David had written at last. The mother knew that David did not despise his father's life; but the counterpart of that father he could not be.

"Well, deacon," she gently asked, "what duz the letter say?"

"It sez," replied the deacon in another burst, "it sez, in sum 'n' substance, 'Ken my wife 'n' me come home ter Than'sgivin'?' and I sez 'n' sum 'n' substance, 'n' I'm a-going ter write David so, 'No, ye can't.'"

Her face flushed; she opened her mouth to expostulate, then closed it again with unaccustomed patience. The deacon, without further words, began his struggle with the answer to David's letter. He found it an easy matter to tell "sum 'n' substance" to "Lizabeth," but a far harder thing to write it to David.

There must be a beginning—what would it be? My dear son? Well, yet it go at that. Then as to what should follow. He scratched and blotted, sighed and wiped his sweaty forehead, wrote again and tore into bits.

"David fied orter be here ter write my letters fur me," he muttered fretfully; then he began once more, finished it desperately, and signed it "Father," at his wit's end for a substitute. "For his Father I be," said he, "an' I can't git rid on't."

"Don' ye seal it up without me seein' it, deacon," said his wife, anxiously.

The deacon reluctantly passed it to her, expecting a torrent of tears and expostulations in consequence; but 'Lizabeth held herself strangely in check.

"My dear son, 'Father,'" she remarked at length. "Humph! It's like a pie with a good top 'n' bottom crust, but a mor' meayly fillin'." Then louder to her husband, "Whilst you've got pen in hev', deacon, jest ter 'bleege me, take 'nother sheet of paper 'n' write out what 'ud be my answer. Ye're not obliged ter sen' it, you know."

The deacon, amazed and relieved at this easy escape, dipped his pen, forefinger and thumb in the ink, and waited for her dictation.

"My dear son," she said. "I can't improve on that—write it out."

"Done," said the deacon. "Go ahead, 'Lizabeth."

"Nor I can't better the endin' nuther," she went on: "So skip a line and write down 'Father.'"

"There, deacon," she concluded, trembled with earnestness, "let them tow letters lay there, locked up in fellorship over the Sabbath. Then come here, Monday mornin', 'n' choose which ye shall sen' ex the Lord shall show ye. Now, I'm a-goin ter bed."

The deacon looked the desk, pocketed the key and followed his wife.

All Sunday Elizabeth Sweet held her peace, but her heart sank when she heard the deacon's vigorous "Amen!" "Fur deary, deary me," she sighed, "the wuss he goes on about David ter hum, the louder he hollers in meetin'."

On Monday morning the deacon's wife rose long before the sun, and began her week's washing. The little kitchen was a very place of prayer—not the loss so that the one who prayed stood over her wash-tub; the smoke of her incense, the steam from the boiling clothes. She heard the deacon fumbling with his keys at the old desk. She longed to go to him, yet feared to injure her cause. While she hesitated, he entered the kitchen.

"Well, 'Lizabeth, it's only fair ter let ye know what I've choosed. I'm a-goin' ter 'bide by what I writ ter David, myself, Saturday night. I've stuck the envelop an' backed it, 'n' now I'm bound to the store ter ketch the mail afore I start, ter settle it up. I'll throw the letter o' yourn in the fire."

He pushed the boiler aside, thrust the letter underneath and left the room. And the mother's hopes died out with the glow of its burning.

Pumpkin lost their gold, cranberries their crimson, spices added their pungency, in a vain attempt to give zest to the Thanksgiving preparations that went on in Elizabeth Sweet's kitchen. But for the pity in it, the gravity with which the deacon handed his wife the limp, fat, fore-ordained turkey, would have been irresistably comical.

A feast minus the o means only a fast. Thanksgiving, to Elizabeth, without David, meant the same.

On the afternoon before Thanksgiving, restless and condemned under his wife's accusing eye, the deacon shouldered his axe, and set off for his nearest patch of woodland. Elizabeth watched him with a sudden twinge of pity.

"Poor old father," she said. "I'd ruther stan' in my shoes ter-day than in his; fur I dew b'lieve, tew ter one, he's more miserable than me."

The old clock rang out another hour. Her work was done, and she sat resting in her cozy kitchen.

"Fur mercy sakes!" she exclaimed, starting up suddenly. "If ther ain't the very whistle ter the cars ex would ha' fetched 'em." She bowed her head on the table and cried as if her her heart would break.

The deacon, homeward bound, heard the whistle, too, and it brought to his mind thoughts identical with his wife's. His vigorous work in the woods had partially exercised his evil spirit.

"I'll go hum," said he, "'n' of so be 'Lizabeth's eye hex got red of that look of judgment, I'll up 'n' tell her I'm sorry."

He wanted to see the train come around the curve. The smoke belched from the engine, dark and surly. He never forgot how it trailed its heavy length along the ground, in the wanlong, cheerless light. The engine and one car passed over the bridge that spanned the old river road. He started. Did he imagine that the bridge was trembling, the coaches tottering, swaying; the whole going pell mell down to destruction? It was not till the engine shrieked for help that he woke from the spell which bound him. The next instant, so it seemed, he was down there, axe in hand, amid the moans of the wounded and a mass of wreckage.

But he was not long alone; in a few moments every man in the village was on the spot. Two of the three coaches had fallen, one upon the other, but in these, most fortunately, were but half-dozen passengers; for the village is not on the main line of travel, being simply the terminus of a short branch.

They pulled the first man out—dead; he was not even bruised; his lips were still parted in the smile they had worn as death took him. The friend to whom that smile was given sprang out unharmed.

Just then a cry rang out. The overturned stoves had set the ruined cars on fire. With terrific energy, the men tugged and lifted and pried. After that first cry of horror the work went on in silence. Two more were rescued, though sadly maimed.

"There's three left," said the conductor, in despair. "A young couple with a baby. God help them; they're as good as dead."

"Never," shouted the deacon, "never! Now, boys, as it again! That's right! Bless me, we'll save the baby, anyhow."

On his knees, he reached for the little one, whom the mother held up to him above her head. She shuddered at his blood-stained arms, yet gave the boy unfalteringly. Even in that extreme moment he wondered at the brave, young soul. The boy was passed along in safty.

"Quick, young woman," said the deacon; "it's your turn now."

But the baby had barely left her arms, before she was down again in the stifling heat and smoke, clinging to her husband, who, firmly held by a mass of wood and iron, could not move, though it afterward was found that he had received no serious injury.

The deacon tried in vain to disengage her hold.

"No, no," she moaned, "let me die with David. I shall never leave him."

"David!" The word gave fresh inspiration to the vigorous old man. He let himself down there beside them.

The flames drew nearer; nevertheless, as the young man looked into the deacon's face a smile of joy illuminated his own.

"Father," he cried, "I thought you would come, but you can't save me. Take Content, my wife, away. Make her go. Look after her and the boy. Good-by, dear father; I'm so glad you wrote me to come home."

The deacon stopped his work for an instant that he might comprehend this wonderful thing. God, then, had caused Elizabeth's letter to be sent.

But had David come, only to die in sight of home? A glow as bright as that the face of David wore, spread over the father's; but he was looking away from David. What, then, did he see?

The deacon is far from being an imaginative man, yet he declares that in that dreadful place he saw; distinct—fleeting, still glorious as the lightning's flash—the visible promise of God that they should escape unharmed. Strength, superhuman, came to the deacon's arms. Just at the last moment, David was freed. And they took him home to his mother.

All that night, bruised and sore, David lay in his mother's bed—that refuge to which, when a little boy, he had so often flown on pain or fright-quickened wings; and never had it seemed sweeter or dearer than now.

His mother sat near him, happy and watchful, noiselessly jogging her chintz-covered rocker. Content, weak from the nervous shock, lay passive in the arms of the great, comfortable sofa, just where, in the fire's fitful gleaming, he could see her white, peaceful face.

Little Davy slept in the old cherry crib, that had once held his grandfather, over in a shadowy corner.

The deacon had been relegated to the little bed-room, once David's, across the hall; but shut out alone, he could not sleep.

Twice, during the night, the father opened the door with cautious eagerness, only to be softly but emphatically dismissed by his wife. But, watching his chance, once, towards morning, he found the sentinel herself asleep, and softly, stocking-footed, crept to David's side. The deacon passed his hand caressingly over his son's face. David opened his eyes and gave back smile for smile. Then, satisfied, the deacon went out as quietly as he had entered, and both slept peacefully till morning dawned.

And then it was Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving Day, but no Thanksgiving feast. All the day Elizabeth brooded and fluttered over "the children," as she called David and Content, and brought them gruel in the old silver porringer that David had loved as a child, her face radiant as she chose, for Content's use, the very spoon that David had dented with his baby teeth.

The deacon had to forage for himself. Little Davy ate prosaic bread and milk, in blissful unconsciousness of what belonged to the day. As for the deacon's wife, I do believe she breakfasted, dined and supped on nothing but her happiness.

"It's so long sence I got a good square meal of that," she said, when they urged her to eat, "that I'd clean forgot 'twuz so fillin'."

She had emphatically denounced the necessity of acquainting David with the mistake that had been made in the letters.

"Deacon Sweet," she said, "you're an ungrateful creature. Arter the Lord hez interfered 'n' made the wrath of yer own heart to praise Him, the leastest you can dew is to hold yer tongue." And the deacon was most happy to hold it.

Yet he moved about restless and subdued. Thanksgiving Day, that had dawned in all its glory for the rest, for him was dim with shadows of regret, that even little David Sweet, the third failed to dispate.

"That's Content's work, father—naming the baby," David junior, told him. "And the letter, too. I never should have sent it but for her."

When the deacon heard that, he forgot his shyness, and went over to the sofa where Content lay, and put his hand on hers. What he said to her David did not catch—Content drew his white head down upon her breast; that was her only answer.

And yet Thanksgiving joys, in their full blossedness, were not the deacon's till on the next evening, when, with humbly lagging steps, he took his wonted place in the "Friday night prayer-meeting." There, among his friends and neighbors, he rose to relieve his burdened soul.

"Brethren," said he, "I've gut sum'at to say to ye. You all know how the Lord hez gin me cause for thanks in' fetchin' home, through wonderful ways, David, my son.

"How wonderful thesu ways thez been, I ain't at liberty ter tell ye. But ex of that wuzn't nough, he's gone 'n' did a 'maxin' thing beside. He's fetched me home, tew. I've been thinkin' all these years that I wuz safe inside my Father's house, 'n' it's tuk this Than'sgivin' ter larn me that I ain't scurce stepped over the door sill.

"I s'pose the Lord knowed how a Sweet couldn't be drove, fur He's coaxed my home through ways so lovin'-marciful I ain't got words ter tell ye; they'll hev ter lay onta' Prover, betwixt the Lord 'n' me.

"I dunno how you've done to stan' me, through all these years—uncharitable, onlovin', hard 'n' cold, with His words on my tongue, but little of His love in my heart.

"Brethren 'n' sisters, forgive what's past and gone. Don't lay nothin' up gin me, I beseech ye, fur, with God's help, in futur' days the come, I mean ter show ye that—that—"

His voice broke, then utterly failed him; he sat down, his face buried in his hands. Many eyes grew dim. Sophronia Fritz, tender-hearted soul, could not check her sobs. The silence grew oppressive; when suddenly, Brother Lane threw back his head and in a strong, melodious voice started the old camp-meeting strain:

"My brother, I wish you well."

Sophronia caught it next, all tangled with her sobs; the rest came in to swell the second line,

"My brother, I wish you well."

Ere the last notes had died away the deacon had turned his back on them, and left the little room, but not one misinterpreted his action.

He went home to Elizabeth with a shining face.

"'Lizabeth," he said, "we've had a heavenly settin' together in the meetin' to-night."

"Hev ye?" she questioned, in reply.

"Well, me 'n' David 'n' Content—we've had a heavenly settin' together, tew. Thank God, He don't tie them wort o' thin's up'n meetin'-houses. Fur' place I rocked that ere leetle Davy off ter sleep, in my arms, 'n' that cut a purty good slice of heaven ter start with. 'N' then Content got up in the rockin' cheer for a spell; 'n' David, we h'isted over on to the sofy; 'n' then we gut ter talkin'.

"Deacon, of you'll b'lieve me, that ere Content, she's never seen a genoine Than'sgivin' yit. She's allers been born 'n' brought up in Bostin, 'n' she lost her father 'n' her mother so airly, she don't even know their looks. She tolt me that she's moved about so much, from pillar ter post, that she never sensed what a home wuz, till she married her deary, good David.

"'N' then David, he broke in, and he tells me how Content hex gloried up their little home, till it's a teeny heaven on earth ter him 'n' the baby, 'n' she's allers so cheery, come bright days, come dark days, that he's gin her name a private heart-twist, 'n' allers ter himself, he calls her 'Sweet Content.' 'N' it's a name that she deserves, deacon, 'n' I ups 'n' sez so, 'n' you'd orter seen David, he looked so tickled.

"'N' now, deacon, I've c'nluded ex the bes' thin' you 'n' me ken dew is ter be content to let David make his home in the city; fur he's a good, stiddy, lovin' boy—'n' that wife o' his'n, she's ex dear-hearted a creatur' ex ever lived—'n' ex fur the baby, he's the blessedest baby ex ever drawed the breath of life.

"I tell Content it's the fust Than'sgivin that I ever spent in all my born days a-pasain' round nuthin' but spoon-vittles; but ef we live, 'n' the Lord spares us ter see the light of 'nother Than'sgivin, we'll jes' show her what's what."

"Amen," said Deacon David Sweet.

HE FEARED BLOOD POISON

But Zam-Buk Saved His Thumb

Once again a case is reported in which the popular balm Zam-Buk has saved a worker from the terrible effects of blood-poisoning. Mr. Alfred Hy. Orth, of Shipley, Ont., says:

"While at work I had the misfortune to run a rusty nail under my thumb nail, to the depth of about one-and-a-half inches. The pain was terrible and what I feared was that the nail, being so dirty and rusty, would set up festering and blood-poison. I knew from previous experience how good Zam-Buk was, so I cleaned the thumb, melted a little Zam-Buk, and ran it into the wound. The result was wonderful! It soothed the pain and the thumb actually did not swell. Zam-Buk kept away all inflammation. I was able to go on with my work all the time, and in a few days the thumb was as good as ever. A balm which can do this should be in every working man's home."

Zam-Buk is the finest form of "insurance" for all workers. Its antiseptic power is so great that no disease germ can live in it; and if immediately applied to a sore or injury, or diseased patch, all danger of blood-poisoning is averted.

Being composed of pure vegetable essences, Zam-Buk is an ideal balm for babies and young children, and mothers will find it far superior to the ordinary salves, some of which contain harmful mineral poisons, rancid animal fats, etc.

Zam-Buk is a sure cure for ulcers, abscesses, eczema, ringworm, blood-poison, scalp sores, chapped hands, cold sores, inflamed patches, bad leg, varicose veins and ulcers, piles, cuts, burns, bruises, and all skin diseases and injuries. Sold by all druggists and storekeepers at 50c a box, 3 for $1.25. Post free from Zam-Buk Co., Toronto, for price. Avoid harmful imitations and substitutes.

FIG-PILLS
Cure Backache, Bladder and Kidney Trouble
A few doses of FIG PILLS will convince you that a few more will cure you. Every box of FIG PILLS is guaranteed. If they do not cure all Bladder, Kidney, Rheumatism and Liver Trouble, your money will be refunded.
25c a box at all leading drug stores.

THANKSGIVING SONG

Summer is gone, autumn is here,
This is the harvest for all the year.
Corn in the crib, oats in the bin,
The wheat is all threshed, barley drawn in.

Carrots in cellars, beets by their side,
Full is the hayloft, what fun to ride:
Apples are barreled, nuts laid to dry.
Frost on the garden, winter is nigh.

Father in heaven, thank thee for all,
Winter and springtime, summer and fall.
All thine own gifts to thee we bring,
Help us to praise thee, our heavenly King.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Notes From Our Issue of 30th October, 1890

The swamps are nearly full of water. An early winter is likely.

The first snow of the season fell on Monday morning. Just twenty-one days later than last year.

Mr. Wm. Auld has sold his residence on the corner of Queen and Young Streets to Mr. Thos. Easton.

Mr. A. E. Matthews, of Syracuse, N. Y., has kindly sent the FREE PRESS a budget of papers describing the fatal hotel fire in that city.

The engine and some of the machinery for Grindell & Dickson's new machine shop have arrived and will soon be placed in position.

The tea-meeting at Limehouse on Tuesday evening was a success. Addresses by Revs. Dr. Hannon, Guelph, and Dr. Gifford, Acton. Rev. Thos. Gee presided.

Rev. D. Strachan, Jr., preached an excellent sermon in Knox Church, on Sunday. His father, Rev. D. Strachan, Rockwood, preached a Gaelic sermon to the Highland members of the congregation at the close of the English service. Rev. Mr. Rae preached at Rockwood and Eden Mills.

The Belle Stevenson Co., which gave such a good entertainment here last spring are coming for Friday and Saturday evenings under the auspices of Acton Cornet Band.

Mr. Eli Snyder received a deep wound in the back of the head from a stone-mason's hammer falling from a scaffold while he was in a stooping position while at work on the Bloor St. Presbyterian Church, Toronto. It is not serious, but an inch either way would have killed him.

Mr. W. Worden's bakery delivery team ran away on Friday, on Church Street and made a total wreck of the wagon. They continued to the fourth line where they stood still.

Mr. Anson Smith has sold his house and lot opposite the Canada Glove Works to Mr. James Firstbrook, of Firstbrook Bros., Toronto, for $1000. Mr. Firstbrook will reside here and go to Toronto daily to attend his business.

Mr. Thos. Ebbage while leaving his house yesterday morning by a set of steps leading from the rear of the house to the ground, a distance of about eight feet, slipped, and fell heavily to the ground. Dr. Lowry, being summoned, found that Mr. Ebbage had received painful, though not dangerous internal injuries which will confine him to the house for several days.

Messrs. A. E. Nicklin, W. Stark and H. Jeans, the hunters who went to Wiarton a couple of weeks ago, have returned with the trophies of the chase, bringing two deer and Mr. Edward Nicklin came a day later with another. Each man shot a deer while away. Mr. A. E. Nicklin's capture weighed 220 lbs. when dressed. The friends of the hunters were remembered when the carcasses were dissected. The editor's roast was furnished by Mr. Will Stark, and was a tender, juicy piece of venison.

The northern station at Georgetown will be done away with when the work of grading the new connecting line with the G. T. R. is completed, as all the trains will be run into a union station on the main line.

Miss Meda Nelson, of Guelph, visited friends here this week.

Mrs. W. M. Crowson and Norman leave this week for Huntsville, Muskoka.

Mr. A. L. Hemstreet left yesterday for his farm in Trafalgar, the old homestead. He has lived here for between two and three years and he and his estimable wife have made many friends.

BORN—In Esquesing, on Oct. 21th, to Mr. and Mrs. John Stalker, a son.

BORN—In Nassagaweya, on Oct. 24th, to Mr. and Mrs. John Bell, a daughter.

The beginning of all life is a search for individual happiness.—G. Matheson, D. D.

THE TURKEY CAME

Years ago an old darkey whose master had some fine, fat turkeys, made up his mind that he must have one of those turkeys, and, as he tells the story, he set to work to get it by prayer. "I prayed to de Lord," he said, "dat he would send me one of dem turkeys. I prayed dat way mornin' and ebenin' for a week, but still dat turkey didn't come, and I tells you my mouth was jes a-watering for it. So I says to myself I must change dat prayer, and so I prayed one ebenin' dat de Lord would send me after de turkey, and, brethrens, dat turkey was here before daylight."

THE THANKSGIVING TABLE

The table should be set with snowy nappery, the glass and silver polished to the last degree of cleanliness and brilliancy, and every detail perfect before any edibles are served. Chrysanthemums are usually beautiful and inexpensive at this time of year, and a low bowl of them in yellow in the centre of the table is very effective. And everything must be hot, piping hot, and served in a dignified manner—not banged on in a fashion which certain country maids think adds to the friendly feeling of a family dinner.—Selected.