

Rody went up to the prostrated form, one look at the white face and he cried out, "mother!" threw his arms around her and lifted her tenderly to her feet; the weak eyes opened and looked up at the anxious face, she recognized him, "Rody, my soldier boy, are you not coming home any more?"

THE UNINVITED GUEST

"YES, my dear," remarked Mr. Gobble-Gon to his wife, as they were

sitting around the table one morning in November, "I think that we really should have a family reunion. In these uncertain times you never can tell what day one of our number will disappear, never to be seen again. Now there is old Grandma Peckum, she surely won't last for another year. Why not all meet on Thanksgiving and have a jolly time?"

"I should think that it would be a very good idea! If you will see that Stuffy doesn't choke over his beetle, I'll run and pack your satchel now, so that you can go tomorrow, and see what the family thinks about it," replied his wife.

So the next morning, bright and early, Gobble-Gon started, with his clothes nicely brushed, and his satchel over his wing, to visit his relations. The sun had just risen, so the dew was still on the grass and every thing was fresh and sparkling. Soon he came to a cool, dark woods. Tall trees met over his head, and thick underbrush bordered his path on either side. The air was so exhilarating, that almost before he knew it, he had reached his destination, where he visited the homes of his relatives, and told them about his plan. The family was delighted over the idea, so they agreed to meet in the woods near by, at four o'clock on the following Thursday afternoon.

Having accomplished his errand, the happy bird started home at a great pace, and got there just as night was beginning to fall.

A week being only too short a time to prepare for so great an occasion, Mrs. Gobble-Gon started the next day to boil and bake, while her husband went to the store to make all manner of purchases for her. Stuffy and Lanky, dear little twins, tried their best to help her, but managed only to get in the way, and to make big nuisances of themselves.

They were so busy that it was hard even to find time to sleep. The children never had known such a long week, while to the mother the time wasn't half long enough. Mr. Gobble-Gon noticed how tired she looked and ventured to expostulate with her about it, "why do you work so hard, my dear, you will be worn out by Thanksgiving. Leave some of the things for the others to bring." "Do you want me to let sister Flip-Flap get ahead of me? No sir, not while I live," his angry wife replied. This was rather sudden, so poor Mr. Gobble-Gon decided to let her work on, undisturbed.

Finally the long-looked-for day arrived. The children had wakened about four that morning in their fear of being late, and now were waiting impatiently for their mother to finish packing the provisions. After what seemed hours to them she came, with bags and bundles galore. At the sight of her welcome face they raced on to see who would get to the meeting place first.

After going a short way they came to the flat rock that they had chosen for their table. It was a perfect day, cool and snappy. It seemed as if it had been ordered for the occasion. The sky was blue as blue could be, only a few small, fleecy clouds, here and there, marred its clear color. The sun had never seemed so beautiful as when it shone through the tall scarlet maples that surrounded the table. They, too, must have had their gowns made for the occasion, so gorgeous was their hue. There was one especially brilliant one, dressed in a gown of the finest cob webs, spangled with pure

gold leaves, so thickly that the cloth was completely hidden. She bent back and forth, waving her arms in welcome to all. A living silver brook bubbled and gurgled at their feet, as it rippled on its way to the sea.

The relations had all gotten there ahead of them, as they were rather late. "Oh! there is old aunt Crowfoot with all her dear little children," cried Stuffy as they came near to the gathering. "See Grubber and Bob-tail in their new suits, Fred. Mamma I wish I could have a hat of orange peel, I know it would be vastly becoming."

"Now Puff-Ball," exclaimed her mother, "you are getting to think altogether too much about your clothes, you had a nice serviceable hat of hickory bark last year, and here you are asking for another. You certainly are the most unreasonable child I ever knew."

"Why, how are you Sand-witch," the mother continued, turning to the old-maid of the family, "I have'n't seen you for a long time."

"No I have'n't seen any one, I am so busy taking care of Cracker-Jack's children, that I don't do anything else. Cracker-Jack herself runs around making calls and attending fashionable teas, while I do her work. I don't think it's fair at all. There she is now in her new corn silk cape."

Sand-witch being rather a gloomy conversationalist, Mrs. Gobble-Gon hurried away as soon as she could to see some one a little more cheerful.

After every one had spoken to every body else, the women started spreading the feast, while the men got water, and cut wood, and did the many useful jobs, that only men can do. The children, mean while, were having an exciting game of hide-and-seek in among the trees.

When the feast was ready, they sat down gladly, for all were very hungry. First they had lovely cockle-shells of barley corn soup, with cute little poly-wigs swimming around in it. In no time at all this had disappeared, then the next course was brought on. It consisted of two large cabbage leaves, which were put one at each end of the table. The children were anxious as to the contents of these dishes, and what was their joy, to find two large bull-frogs, lying on the green beds, garnished on all sides by fat, fuzzy caterpillars. Such a shout as arose, the woods fairly rang with it all. Indeed one little fellow called Egg-o-see, was so excited, that he swallowed his beautiful carved acorn spoon, at which his long suffering Mamma picked him up by the heels, and shook him vigorously until it dropped out again. Spoons like those were not to be lost at the cost of a little temporary discomfort.

When the excitement was over, they fell to work in dead earnest, the vegetables, consisting of crushed acorns and dried peas, having been served. Before very long nothing was left but the bones, which they promptly threw over their heads into the woods.

Then, as a grand climax, Mrs. Turkey brought in a steaming, cranberry suffle, served with this were sand cookies, and choke-cherry cordial for the children and elderberry wine for the "grown ups," such gaiety and laughter as there was now, every one teased everybody else, and all joined in the fun in the same good hearted way.

The toasts were just at their height, when suddenly a hush fell on a part of the party. Those who didn't understand it turned and saw a little boy

peering at them through the bushes, and looking longingly at the scraps that still remained. The quiet was soon changed to an uproar.

"The idea of anyone daring to come to our feast without being asked," "its proposterous, terrible," "we won't stand it," "chase him out, kill him," were some of the phrases that fell from the mouths of the furious turkeys. The women shrieked, the children squealed, and the men gobbled, while one and all, jumped up and down, flapping their wings.

The little boy had become very much frightened by this time, and started to run away as fast as he could, the turkeys followed, full tilt, some running, some flying, but all covering the ground in a remarkable fashion. They flapped their wings in the poor boy's face, they pecked at his hands, and indeed all the parts that were uncovered. The boy tried to fight them away but it only made them the more angry. After a while they become tired and stopped, much to the poor boy's relief. They had gone a long way in the wild chase, and when they did find their way back it was dark, and they had to gather their belongings together and go in various directions to their homes.

Although the men were lame, and the children were fretty, they all said that it was a great success, and that they would do the same next year.

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