

A Country Thanksgiving.

Uncle Jerry Foster was too stingy to live, and everybody knew it. But everybody didn't know how poor Aunt Betsey, his wife, had to manage and contrive and skimp to get along.

She never had the handlin' of any money. Even the butter and egg money, that most every farmer's wife has for her own use, all went into Uncle Jerry's pockets; and if she wanted a new gown or a bonnet or a pair of shoes—I hadn't orter say if she wanted 'em, but if she must have 'em, and there wa'n't no possible airtly way for him to skin out o' gettin' 'em—then Uncle Jerry would go to the store with her and buy 'em and pay for 'em, jest as if she was a child or an idiot, and incapable o' davin' business on her own hook.

If Aunt Betsey hadn't a' had the best disposition in the world, she wouldn't a' stood it all them years. As it was, it wore on her, and told on her fearful. Though Uncle Jerry was one o' the richest men in town, she might a' been the wife of the poorest and miser'blest, so fur's any outward indication was concerned—or inward indications either—for she was alwars halt starved, and wa'n't nothin' but skin and bones, as you might say.

You see, everything they raised, on the farm that orter have gone to furnish their table bountiful, such as beef, creaturs, pigs, turkeys, hens, eggs and fruit, and vegetables, was either sold at the store or sent off on the cars to the city markets; and the money that come from 'em was put in the bank and kep' there. Pretty much all their livin' the year round was salt pork and pettaters, with now 'n' then a biled dis.

And the wust on't was that as Uncle Jerry got older his stinginess grew upon him, and every year he made it harder 'n' harder for Aunt Betsey, ter get along. She never had nothin' ter do with! That was her everlastin', continual complaint. Sometimes she had thought seriously of applyin' to the town, to see if that wouldn't shame her husband into bein' more liberal. She never thought of applyin' for a divorce for non-support! Bless you, no! I don't s'pose such an idee ever entered her head! She wa'n't one o' that kind; there wa'n't nothin' strong-minded nor woman's-rights about Aunt Betsey. She was one o' these ere mild, meachin' little women, that don't darster say their soul's their own, 'less everybody's willin', you know.

Well, as I said, Uncle Jerry grew wuss 'n' wuss, and come along towards Thanksgiving he got a bran'-new crocket fer savin' into his head.

It was just at family devotions one mornin', jest before the readin', that he divulged it to his wife.

He finds the place in Nehemiah—he alwars reads the long chapters in fall and winter, and kep' the short ones, —he finds the place and puts his thumb in to keep it, then, drawin' on a long face, he looks at Aunt Betsey over his spectacles, and says he:—

"Wife, I are of a notion that this 'ere Thanksgiving business is all fool- ishness! Seems if it must be a sin in one day in the year. I don't believe it's necessary to make pigs 'n' glut- tons of ourselves in order to have thankful hearts; and if we go to meatin', and so on, why ain't that enough?"

Aunt Betsey didn't say nothin'; jest set and looked at him kinder helpless, with her hands in her lap, and he went on:—

"I reckon we'll sell the turkey this year and have our usual dinner, 'long's there ain't no children comin' home, nor nothin'."

Then he began to read a hull chapter full of long, hard names, and his pronunciation was enough to make a cat laugh. But Aunt Betsey didn't laugh; there ain't no laugh in her no time, and that mornin' she felt uncommon num.

All through the readin' she set there with her hands in her lap, not exactly thinkin', but kinder wonderin' and grievein'. And when they kneeled down to pray she kept on wonderin' more 'n' ever. She wondered what she had to be thankful for, anyway. "Now, if Ellen could come home!" Ellen was his daughter, all the child they had in the world, and she lived so far away that she couldn't afford to come home and bring the children—bein' she was a widder and poor—but, oh, how her mother did waster see her! "What did she care about turkey and plum puddin' if Ellen and the children couldn't eat it with her? Yes, the money might as well be put in the bank, she didn't care." So she thought on and on, not hardly sensin' the prayer a mite.

The next mornin' she couldn't get up, but Uncle Jerry didn't think much about it, s'posed she'd be up bimeby; and so he shuffled round and warmed up some tea 'n' got a bite o' somethin' to eat and went out to work. But when he come in to dinner, there lay no thoughts o' gettin' up.

"Wall, wall!" says Uncle Jerry, "I wanner know if you're goin' ter be sick! I'm 'traid you haint been care- ful enough about your diet, what have you e't?"

Upon this poor Aunt Betsey turned her face to the wall and cried like a baby. She didn't say a word, jest laid and cried. It wa'n't often she cried and it scart her husband. Why! how she did cry! Seemed as if she wouldn't never stop.

He didn't know what under the sun to do, but he knew he must do somethin', so he het a brick and put to 'er feet, and was jest makin' a mustard plaster to put on her somewheres when Mis' Hopkins happened in.

She see how it was with Aunt Betsey in a minute. She's awful cute about some things, Mis' Hopkins is, and she ain't afraid o' no man livin'.

"Now," she says to herself, bracin' up, "now is the time to strike for Aunt Betsey's future good 'n' welfare," and she meant to make a thurrer job o't.

"Uncle Jerry," says she, matter o' fact as you please, "your wife's a very sick woman, and she's goin' to die right off, I'm afraid, 'less we hyper round, and do somethin', and do it quick. But fust I'd better step over 'n' fetch the doctor."

Uncle Jerry was wonderfully look down. All of a sudden he realized that his wife was invaluable to him; he felt that he could not get along with- out her, nohow. He was as anxious to have the doctor as Mis' Hopkins was, and told her to hurry and bring him.

So she went—he lived near by—and she says to him:—

"Doctor Cross now is your chance to do a deed o' humanity, and put a spoke in Uncle Jerry Foster's wheel for all time! If he's got any heart and feelin's you must find 'em and work on to 'em for his wife's sake. It would be cruel to bring her back to life, 'less you can do somethin' to make that life endurable. Don't, I beg on ye, raise her up to live on in the same old skimpy, miser'ble way! Better let her die and done with it."

They discussed and considered over the matter for a few minutes, then went together to the house.

They found Aunt Betsey layin' jist the same only she stopped cryin'. The doctor examined her and diagnosed her case as well 's he could, then he motioned Uncle Jerry out into the other room and shet the door behind him.

They talked there a good half hour, and when Uncle Jerry came out he looked as if he'd been drawn through a 'notbole. He looked like a man who had been made to "renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, and all his stinginess to once," Mis' Hopkins said, laughin' in her sleeve.

Afterward Dr. Cross gave her a full account of that 'ere interview; and it was interestin', and, as it turned out, satisfactory to all concerned.

It seems the doctor took him awful sollum and in dead earnest, and says he, to begin with:—

"Uncle Jerry, do you set high vally on your wife's life?"

"High vally on my wife's life?" says Uncle Jerry, red in the face. "Of course I dew. What you talkin' about?"

"She has been a devoted and lovin' pardner," goes on the doctor, calm's a clock; "she has been kind and equi- nomical, nussed you in sickness, 'n' shared your labors in health, haint she?"

"Yes, yes! of course! What in natur' be you drivin' at?" says Uncle Jerry, gettin' excited.

The doctor only waved his hand to enjine silence, and went on, kinder dreamy now, as if talkin' to him- self:—

"I was here when you fetched her home a bride. I remember how hand- some she was; pumpt as a partridge, fresh as a flower; and as laughin' and chipper a girl as I 'bout ever see. Changed, terribly changed, ain't she?"

turnin' to Uncle Jerry and feelin' in his pocket for his han'kerchief to wipe away the tears. "It does beat all how she's changed," says he.

"Changed!" says Uncle Jerry, all of a fluster, "of course she's changed! Why, we've been married goin' on twenty-five year! You can't expect a woman to stay eighteen all her life?"

as if he was stunned or somethin', and the doctor went out and left him alone.

When Doctor Cross went back to much medicine, but plenty of good beef tea and chicken broth, to begin with; and he left it to Mis' Hopkins to leans over Aunt Betsey and says, real cheerful:—

"Now, you must brace right up, Aunt Betsey and try to get well. Your hus- band can't get along without you, no- ways, and I guess he'll make things as easy and pleasant as he can for you if you'll only get well."

She hadn't no idea what he really meant; so she only smiled, kinder sad, but her great eyes spoke volumes. She didn't wanner live—not yet—and the doctor knew it.

When Uncle Jerry came back he went up to the bed and set down be- side his wife and looked at her. She was asleep, and Mis' Hopkins thought he must a' realized how pitiful she looked, for she seen him draw his hand across his eyes two or three times on the sly.

Bimeby he got up and went out to Mis' Hopkins and, says he:—

"What was the doctors orders? What can I do to help ye?"

"He ordered nourishin' food, and wine and so on," she says, "and I guess the fust thing you may kill a chicken, if you're minter, and git it ready for the broth; then go over to Jim Jackson's and buy a quart or so of the oldest grape wine o' his'n. She'll be awake by the time you get back with it, I guess."

Uncle Jerry didn't so much as wink at mention of the chicken, but when she spoke o' the wine so offhand and matter o' course he drew in his breath once or twice kinder spasmo- dickly, but he never opened his head.

He killed the chicken and got it ready for the pot, as spry and handy as a woman, then took a gallon jug and started off to Jim Jackson's after the wine.

When the broth was ready Uncle Jerry asked if he might take it in; so Mis' Hopkins filled one of the chiny bowls that was Aunt Betsey's mar's and set in a plate with a cracker or two, and he took 'em along.

The broth was good and strong, and when Aunt Betsey tasted out she looked at her husband real kinder scart, and, says she:—

"Where did this 'ere come from?"

And he laughed and says: "It's made out o' one of our best Plymouth Rocks; is it good?"

A wonderin', quiverin' smile hovered for a minute on her poor face; she didn't know what to make o' it. But when he lugged in the jug o' wine and poured out a full half a tumbler full and handed it to her, her eyes fairly stuck out of her head with astonish- ment.

"Drink it; it'll do you good," says he. "It's Jim Jackson's oldest grape wine you've heard tell on."

"Why—why, husband!" she whis- pered, "didn't it cost an awful sight o' money?"

"Only three dollars a gallon," he an- swered, tryin' to smile, but lookin' rather ghastly. She sipped it slow, eyin' him over the top o' the tumbler as she done so; but pretty soon she set it down and spoke again, awful meachin' and 'pealin', her lips trem- blin' as if she was goin' to cry.

"I'm sorry to put you to so much expense, husband. I'm afraid—I'm afraid it ain't wuth while!"

He got up and blowed his nose with all his might and main.

"I want you to get well, Betsey. I want you to get well!" he managed to say.

The strangest expression come into her face you ever see in any creature's, Seemed as if she thought at fust:—

"Yes, you want me to get well, so I can work and save 'n' slave for you again," and I s'pose she felt as if she didn't wanner do it. Then, as if struck by somethin' in his looks, she seemed to get a dim idee that he was different, and she tried to make out how it was, but couldn't, and, bein' too tired and weak to think much, she jest shet her eyes and give it all up.

That night Uncle Jerry harnesssed the old mare and wmt over and got Mary Buell to come 'n' stay with 'em a spell. Mary's an excellent good hand in case o' sickness, and bein' an old maid, she's alwars ready to go and dew for the neighbours. She's a prime nuss and housekeeper, and she's good com- pany, too—jest the kind of a person to cheer Aunt Betsey up, you know.

flowers stood on the mantlety shelf; a cracklin' fire was burnin' in the open fireplace, and the old tabby-cat lay be- fore it on the rug, purrin' for all she was wuth—a perfect pictur' of content.

The door was open into the kitchen and she could see Mary steppin' round about her work, gettin' ready for to- morrow. She could smell the stuffin' for the turkey, and the plum puddin' bakin' in the oven. She knew there was a hull shelf full o' pies in the pan- try—she see 'em yesterday—six mince, six punkin, three apple and three cran- berry tart. She thought it was too many to make at once; and it seemed so strange. Why, she never used to have pies—not even one, 'less some great company was comin'! But every- thing was strange now! days! She looked down at her pretty gown and to round the pleasant room, and listened to Mary hummin' a hymn-tune as she worked, and she couldn't hardly be- lieve she was herself at all, or that this was really her home! "How nice everthing is, and how happy I orter be, only—only!" She sighed and laid her head back, with the old look on her face. She was thinkin' of Ellen and the children.

"How could she bear to be happy— low could she feast on turkey and plum puddin' to-morrow, and know that Ellen and the children hadn't nothin' o' the kind?"

"Oh, she wished that she had asked her husband to sell the turkey, jest the same, and send the money to fetch 'em home. No dinner at all with Ellen would be fur better then turkey and everthing nice without her."

She sat there, blamin' herself and thinkin' what a poor weak kind of a mother she was, till the tears rolled down her cheeks. Then, all to once, she heard a noise outside.

The stage had stopped, and there was the sound o' voices talkin' and laughin', and of feet hurryin' up the steps. Then the door opened—no, it was burst open—and in trooped a parcel o' children, and behind 'em not fur behind, with her hands stretched out and the happy tears streamin' down her pretty face, come her daughter El- len!

How them two kissed and clung to one 'n' other, till the children got out o' patience and wouldn't wait no longer for their turn! And how they pounced upon their little gran-mar, that they loved more by hearsay than by actewal knowin', and hugged her like bears, so that she almost fainted away in their strong young arms!

Then Uncle Jerry came to the resky and says betwixt laughin' and cryin': "There, there, children! I guess that'll dew! It's my turn now," and he took her to the lounge where she could lay and rest and still be with 'em all.

When she was fixed comfortable he started to leave her, for he felt that he couldn't stan' much more; but she put her arm round his neck and pulled him down to her and kissed him and whispered:—

"Oh, husband, how good you bel! You've made me the happiest woman in the world!"

Uncle Jerry got away as quick as he could, and went out to the barn and set down on the hay-utter and laughed and wiped his eyes till he wuz some calmer. Then he fell on his knees and thanked God reverently for showin' him before he died what true happiness wuz, and how to get it for himself by bestowin' it on others.

WEALTHY JAP.

He Triumphantly Rehearsed His Own Funeral at Great Expense.

A curious incident is related by the Japanese papers about Mr. Kume-kawa, of Kobe, who, like every other intelli- gent Japanese, desired that his fune- ral should be attended by ceremon- ies appropriate to his rank and social position. In order that he might not be disappointed in this respect, hav- ing reached his seventy-seventh year, and feeling that his days were num- bered, he determined to have his fune- ral in advance and make the arrange- ments himself. On the day appointed his relatives and friends were invited to his house and gathered around an empty coffin with all the parapher- nalia of mourning and engaged in the most elaborate Buddhist ceremony that could be devised. Mr. Kume- kawa sat at the head of the casket and watched with interest all that was going on.

After the ceremonies at the house were concluded, a procession was formed, which marched through the principal streets to the cemetery. Mr. Kume-kawa walked in front of his own coffin. The floral offerings were numerous and beautiful.

The Kobe City Band led the procession and played modern airs, while at intervals groups of dancing girls and members of the theatrical profession, who performed pantomime allegories to illustrate the nobility of Mr. Kume- kawa's character and the loss that was suffered by the community at his death. Just before reaching the gates of the cemetery the procession was halted, and several photographs were taken. After the coffin had been lowered into the grave and covered with floral offerings, the funeral party proceeded to the Jinko Club, where an elaborate feast was served, and speeches eulogistic of Mr. Kume- kawa were delivered by several of his friends. Mr. Kume-kawa was thor- oughly satisfied with the success of his funeral, although it cost him a large sum of money.

THE FUTURE UNFOLDED.

She—Suppose I didn't dress as well as I do now, would you love me as much?

He. Certainly, dear. Why, that is as much as to say that I won't care for you after we are married.

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thinks he knows it all take water offener who has doubts. thing the rich man man has, the miser spendthrift saves.