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SIGNS OF THANKSGIVING.

You can hear Thanksgiving comin' with the faintest kind o' sound; You can hear the turkey holler for a mile or two around. For he knows that he is in it, as he has been in the past. 'An' he thinks that every minute is jes' sure to be his last.



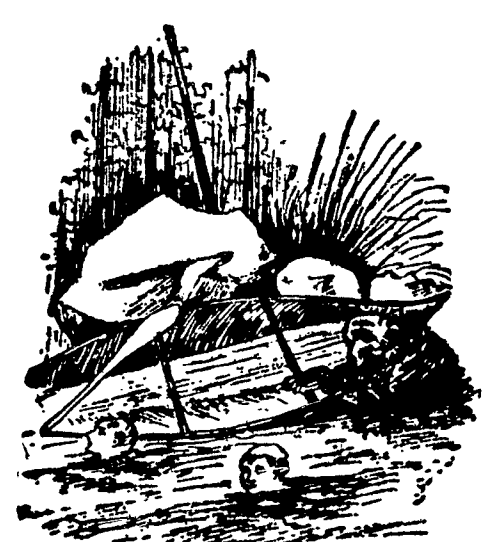
You can hear Thanksgiving comin' with a rush an' with a roar. An' the knives an' forks a hummin' as we pass 'em. It's jes' every minute, in the North an' in the South. For the turkey gobblers in it, an' we're waterin' at the mouth! —Atlanta Constitution.

A THANKSGIVING BEAR.



NOTHING at present existing in the great central States of the West recalls the conditions of a few years ago. Then the howling of the wolves was heard at night, the deer still roamed the forests, the bear, panther and catamount were frequently encountered, and away from the growing towns the people still led the primitive life of the settler.

The Bairds were a happy and prosperous family, that lived near the Little Red, a swift stream that flowed through a region but little opened as yet to civilization. The father was a type of the hardy men who opened up the Great West—a skillful hunter, a woodsman and a farmer by turn, cultivating the soil in the spring and summer and hunting and trapping during the fall and winter. His two boys, Robert and Phillip, had been brought up to be expert shots, so that the family table was always luxuriously supplied with meat, generally game from the forest. Wild turkey, prairie chicken, pheasant, and venison were quite as common to this remote Western family as beef or pork are to the table of an Eastern farmer.



Old Ephraim was unceremoniously tumbled out of the wagon. With all his might upon the huge head, Old Ephraim merely blinked, and lunged forward with an effort that threatened to upset the canoe.

It was a calm, moonlight night when the boys started to paddle up the Little Red. The torch had been placed in the stern of the canoe. Only two or three rapids were to be passed, and these the young hunters surmounted by hard poling, and then they dragged the canoe around the big fall. Now they had reached a point some four or five miles from home, where the stream flowed smoothly for several hundred yards, and was shadowed on each side by trees. Slowly they proceeded, Rob sitting in the bow of the boat with the rifle while Phil handled the paddle.

All at once the paddles in Phil's hands rested, as Rob beat forward with an eager movement. On the right, where the tall trees shut out the stars, gleamed a pair of fiery eyes, close together and near the ground.

"It is not a deer," whispered Rob. "I hope it is Old Ephraim." "Don't miss him!" responded Phil, in hushed tones.

Slowly and deliberately Rob raised the rifle and glanced along the barrel. The crack of the weapon awoke the echoes along both shores.

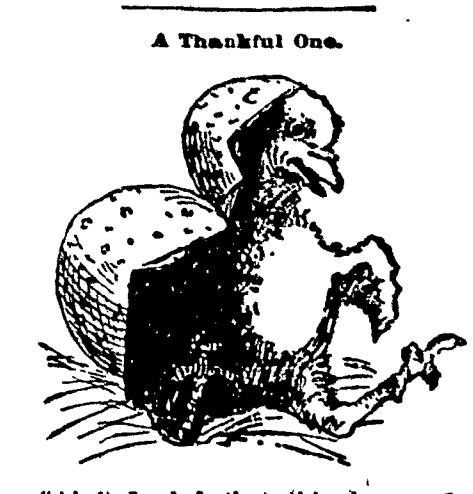
"You have missed him," shouted Phil, in an agony of disappointment, as silence succeeded the shot.

But in an instant there was a splashing in the water, and Phil excitedly urged the canoe toward the spot. As they neared it, they were momentarily unable to detect anything in the deep shadows.

While they were discussing the matter, a huge form appeared in the circle of light that surrounded the boat, and both could see the head and shoulders of a large bear making directly for the boat.

"Back off!" shouted Rob. For a moment Phil's arms were paralyzed. Before he could recover, the great paws, looking doubly formidable in the unsteady light of the torch, were upon the gunwale of the canoe and a moment after the boys were both struggling in the water.

He was too old and wise a woodsman to condemn the courage and skill that had enabled them to provide alone the Thanksgiving dinner his accident had prevented his seeking in their company.



"Ain't I glad that this is my first Thanksgiving?" JAI THANKSGIVING TURKEY.

Turkey gobbler, proud an' fat, Scratchin' grabble like a cat— Now he don't know wh' he's at— Oh, dat wishbone!



Now's de snowflakes in de sky, Co'n pones costin' mighty high, I mus' make dese feathers fly— Oh, dat wishbone!

Lightwood fire de cabin cheer— Turkey, now we glad you're here— Thanksgiving come but once a year— Sweet wishbone!

KING MIDAS OF KLONDIKE.

"My goodness gracious, Susan! What be you tryin' to sew in this d r k hole for? I sown, if she ain't been a cryin' again! Now, get up and lit th lamps!"

"No, ma'am, I should tink you'd give up expectin' any. Come, hurry up, I've walked fast and I'm starvin'." and Rachel Squires, spinster, jerked her angular figure out of the room with a slam of the door.

A short, slight figure arose from the dusty window-seat and came wearily to the table to light the lamp. Its cheerful flame cast a sort of glory on the soft, brown curls and pale cheeks, and hid from view the dark rings below the blue, near-sighted eyes.

Four years ago, her lover, a handsome young fellow, had parted from her because his financial difficulties had prevented him from marrying. And, being somewhat of a lazy disposition, he did not seek to better his pecuniary position. Some sharp words had passed between them on this account, and in a spiteful mood, she threw him over, declaring her inability to live on love, and asserting that, if he cared, he should find sufficient means to support a wife before she became Mrs. Martin.

The next day came a note: "I have gone to make myself what you wish—a rich man,—how or where, I don't know. I shall not write until I can come back and claim you. Until then, my love, I am your own true Jack."

rather knew nothing of his doings—and cared less, I reckon. As the weeks, months, and finally years had passed, Susy began to despair of his return, and heartache and loneliness began to tell on her health. She had her work, teaching the village school,—without it she would have died for the daily care and thought, won her mind from the worry.

And so the days wore on—"Smooth endless days, notched here and there with knives." November had come with its chill breezes whispering again of the cold, angry words they had spoken in parting. Every ear leaf that sifted to the ground brought back some manly, loving thought of his,—every listlessly waving bough spoke of the easy grace of that bright, young lazy fellow.

About the first of the month, just as the sharp winds began to herald the approach of the bleak, New England winter, the usually quiet village became aroused. A stranger, John Midas, by name, had arrived in town, and was staying at the one hotel for no more ostensible reason than to create inquiry and excitement. For this rough, burly, shaggy individual was a Klondiker fresh from the gold fields, and reported to be enormously rich. He certainly spent his money freely and carelessly and the few stores were evidently profiting by the gold-digger's strange visit.

McAuley, the proprietor of the Latch-string, had some fresh story every day of the man's eccentricities, and his wife circulated the same gossip among her sex. The children took it up and chattered about the jolly old fellow who threw them pennies in a street.

Some thought he was in search of a good location for a permanent residence, and he was overrun with landowners and real estate dealers, who all had desirable property to sell. Others thought he was in search of a wife and great was the speculation on that score. The widows and spinsters set up competition for the generous heart of the shaggy Croesus. Even the pretty young ladies joined the contest, donning their prettiest furs and hats in hopes of making an impression.

It was wonderful to what a degree of estimation the little town had grown to its inhabitants. They began to realize its value more and more each day and one and all joined in praise of its rich soil, good drainage, good neighborhoods, good everything, until the innocent cause of it all must have had an idea of St. Evans as a veritable paradise. Property and produce value increased, traffic grew and at last the country became aware that the town of St. Evans was booming.

And all because a rich man had arrived for an uncertain stay and on uncertain reason. The morning, a pupil of Susy's came in the schoolroom breathless with excitement.

"Teacher! He sent you this!" and the excited child laid a gold dollar in her hand.

"Who, Paul?" she asked. "Why, the Midas man, who picks up gold wherever he lays his hand!" "How did it happen, my boy?" "Oh, he asked me if I was a school teacher and who my teacher was, and then he gave me that for you. He looked at me awful queer, he did!"

"Well, now!" he ejaculated, gripping her hand hard. "You're the school-teacher, ain't you?" She nodded, wishing he would release her hand and remove those searching eyes from her face.

"If I was you," he said, slowly, "I'd get out of that stuffy schoolhouse and take more of the fresh air. You don't look well."

"She ain't been strong for nigh onto four year," put in aunt Ray, who had been standing by, interestedly. "She's all I got to care for, and I can't seem to do even that, for them roses persist in stayin' out of her cheeks."

"The roses were certainly there now for it was becoming embarrassing for her." "I am very well," she said, curtsy, withdrawing her hand and placing a chair for him.

It was an enjoyable call. John Midas had many interesting stories to tell of his adventures at the gold fields, and how he amassed such wealth. But never a word did he say concerning his reasons for coming to St. Evans. And so the evening passed merrily and the guest took his departure.

"Now, little girl," he said in a fatherly way, "just take good care of yourself and don't get reckless of your health. Let Rachel dose you up and mother you a little, like you was a kid once more."

"I don't need any medicine," she said hotly. "You need something else, my dear," and with a last good-by, he was gone. Susy turned sadly and mounted the stairs to her room. The tears were standing in aunt Ray's eyes, but Susy never saw.

Once in her room she flung herself in her couch and sobbed out: "I need something else! I need Jack! Jack! Jack, why did I send you away? Will you never come back, Oh, my love!"

And a lonely figure still standing on the steps, heard the sobbing and turned back as if to re-enter the house, but thought better of it and went out the front gate, murmuring her name with the utmost tenderness.

Evidently it was some time before she had a girl down here in St. Evans somewhere, but she was the news of the town.

"What was his name?" asked "Jack Martin." A pause and then she appeared looking up. A groan rose from her lips as she glanced at the little figure of Susy who had quietly faded.

An hour later she lay on the attic room sofa, propped up with pillows, and being patted and dosed by aunt Rachel, with true motherly fervor.

But Susy's face was hard and cold. She shed no tears, but gazed with eyes wildly and steadily into space. "I killed him!" she kept muttering. "My poor lamb! Don't you worry now, for maybe it wasn't your fault. Don't look like that, lamb! It isn't so bad as you think."

She stole softly out of the room, but came back soon. "Dearie," she said, soothingly, "John Midas is waiting now and wants to see you. He'll tell you something about Jack."

She left the still figure pale and a manly boyish in appearance, stood in. She did not look at him but stared at her as if to hide from the face of the man who had brought her such anguish.

He knelt by the sofa. And then she did not see him. A man she had knelt there, waiting, till she could bear the stillness no longer, and his arms around her.

Her eyes flew open then, and she saw him. Her lips were parted, and she saw the lips of her lost lover, was her heart torn. Not the shaggy bear, nor the rough, brazen man, but the old, gray, graceful beauty of her youth, old Jack, her true love.

Half an hour later, aunt Ray had entered the dusky room. "Now, John Midas," she muttered, but, abruptly, to hide the tears, I mean you'd better bring that little girl if yours out to supper. And, Susan Squires, don't you spoil your Thanksgiving mornin' by your own fault!" —Mary E. O'Neil.



"He turned back as if to re-enter the house."



"The next day came a note."