

# THE WIDDER'S WILD TURKEY.

## A Thanksgiving Episode in the Ozarks.

By ROBERTUS LOVE.

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**B**EINGS to hear to me remark of Ezry Edwards of Hoopole. "That some of us ain't goin' to have no turk meat for Thanksgiving dinner this year. Turkeys ain't so powerful high, I low."

"If it wuzn't for the mean, trillin' nature of some folks in this here neck of the woods," put in Squire Summers, whose name should have been Widders on account of his chill attitude toward things in general, "they'd be spongy of turk meat all right. If some of these fellers that's always yarin' on their hind heels an' kick in 'bout high prices 'ud just turn to an raise some turkeys, they'd be a plenty for all of us an' some left over for the widder."

"It was the widder that I was jist a-thinkin' of when I spoke up," said Ezry. "Here she's had no man to do for her these two years, an' her place is all run down, an' she surely needs a man to keep it up for her."

"Yes, she needs a man," said Squire Summers. "The widder's been on the last word, but she don't need no such ornery little hop-head as this here neighborhood has hopped around the roads. What she needs is a man old enough an' well off enough—here the squire puffed out his own chest—"to keep her sensible an' prosperlike."

Squire Summers mounted his ancient horse and rode off toward his 400-acre farm. Ezry Edwards looked after him with daggers in his eyes. "The blessed old runt!" he said to the county storekeeper, Hiram Summers. "I do b'lieve he's runnin' after the widder himself."

"Hiram laughed, a loud ha-ha! He looked quizzically at Ezry. "Where's your eye been all this time, Ezry?" asked Hiram. "In the back of your head, I reckon. Why, don't you know, compare your picture, that Squire Summers is tryin' to annex the widder's place, her cow loped into his back yard an' he brought her—the widder—up before him an' fined her \$5 for costs for trespassin'?"

"I don't quite see," said Ezry. "Jist how a Judge that could do a thing like that to a poor widow woman would ever have the nerve to ask her to marry him."

"The squire's nerve," Hiram returned, "is equal to any emergency, specially since them widdy's are of the widdy's kind. Ezry likes to marry them for a fact, an' so he's got to marry the widder. Ezry's land's powerful rich if anybody would like to hear work. The squire knows 'em."

night. Thanksgiving was just one week off. Ezry made overtures to Squire Summers for the purchase of a gobbler, but his rival apparently suspected his intentions regarding the disposition of the bird. He refused to sell at any price. Ezry tried all the other neighbors, but was amazed to find that Squire Summers had bought up the entire turkey output the week before and was finishing their fattening so that he could sell them in the town market at an increased figure. Turkeys promised to bring 20 cents a pound, a wholesale, the highest ever known in the Hoopole country.

Returning home Ezry took down a rusty old shotgun from its pegs above his door and inspected the works. He extracted the old wood with a cork screw fitted upon the end of the barrel and put in a fresh one. He aimed at a crow in a tree across the road. The gun was in commission. The crow was at Ezry's satisfaction.

They used to be a lot of wild turkeys in these here woods, said Ezry, but these city hunters has scared most of 'em off. But I seen a flock a few years back an' if I can find one on Wednesday I'll shoot it for the widder.

Ezry had it from work on Wednesday and went to the woods early. His shotgun carefully cleaned and oiled and a large supply of ammunition for the old muzzle loader in his possession. The old time powderhorn swung from his side. The shot was in a bag tied to the barrel, and a box of percussion caps was in his pocket.

Nearly all day until the sun began to decline behind the hills Ezry hunted, but saw no wild turkeys. He began to low he'd have to wait till Christmas to get the widders turk when suddenly he heard in the bushes at his right the familiar call of the big wild bird which used to be king of the Ozarks.

The hunter pulled out a whistle like a fife on which he could imitate the call. He made several turkey calls and was rewarded by seeing a big gobbler, with the red dish brown fenthera peculiar to the wild turkey, fly up into a neighbor tree.

Ezry, his hand still trembling with the excitement of the "buck nger" and "well enough" love, sighted his gun at the gobbler, which sighted him at the same instant and began to fly swiftly away. "Stiddy now, Ezry!" he said softly, and on the instant his hand ceased its trembling. Ezry took deliberate aim slightly ahead of the bird and shot him on the fly. The gobbler dropped in a duff heap. The shot had decapitated him.

The triumphant hunter's way home lay past the widder's house. He picked up his bird by the feet and tucked happily right up to Mrs. Brandon's door.

"How's the children, Mrs. Brandon?" he asked. "I've got a little Thanksgiving present for 'em."

The widder was grateful, but she "flabbergasted" Ezry, as he told his wife later, when she informed him that Squire Summers already had sent her a fine turkey gobbler and was coming over with his two daughters to help her eat it.

Ezry braced up then. He looked the widder squarely in the eye. "Mrs. Brandon," he said, "I worked all day to git this here critter for you, an' you're goin' to eat my turk—it's your turk, too—an' I'm goin' to eat with you, an' the square an' his daughters can eat their own turk. We'll cook both of 'em up. An'—Mary—uh—you know, the square's authorized to issue marriage licenses an' likewise to perform marriages. Them two girls can be our witnesses, as the law says we got to have. Are you willin'?"

"Hang Mr. Edwards' turk up in the shed, Johnny," the widder said to her son, "an' you go along with Johnny, Mirandy."

# A Thought For Thanksgiving



**W**HY shouldn't we be thankful when the fields of every county In every state—the forty-eight—where farmers till the soil Have yielded such a liberal toll of Nature's welcome bounty. The wealth of all the commonwealths, the rich reward of toil?

## THANKSGIVING TRAGEDY.

Rostand's "Chantecler" Put Into Shade by These Four Spasms.

**SPASM I**—A farmyard. The gobbler has feathered his family about him and has announced that the morrow is Thanksgiving and that one of them is in deadly peril.

**THE GOBBLER**  
"Dusk is drawing on apace and unless our wits avert the blow tomorrow one must die. The cock's shrill note proclaims each coming morn. Unto our master's house. To this cock's sympathies we must appeal."

**SPASM II**—The same. The turkey family visit the cock, led by the gobbler, who struts into the presence of his host with great dignity.

**THE GOBBLER**  
"Honored cock, tomorrow is Thanksgiving, and I fear that one of us is doomed to die. To satiate the gluttonous proclivities of our common master and his brood display we have observed that at the morn you daily sound a clarion note. That note tomorrow will pronounce our doom. If you will but neglect To crow our danger will be past. And, grateful for your service, we will fast. The Hvelong day, and you shall feast Upon our portion."

**THE COCK**  
"Shortsighted bird! Our master has a clock that sounds the hours. Of day and night upon a deep toned gong. My voice no longer rouses him, and I am powerless in the premises. Your offer of reward is worse than naught. For if the master rises not at morn Pray whence will come the feast you promise me?"

**THE GOBBLER**  
"This well. We'll stop the clock."  
**SPASM III**—The farmer's dining room at 9 o'clock p. m. The turkey family gather round the ancient clock. The cock is an interested spectator.

**THE GOBBLER**  
"I will turn back The hands, and you, my love, hold fast the pendulum."  
**THE HEN**  
"My lord, the pendulum is still."  
**ONESIE**  
"And we are safe."

**SPASM IV**—The farmer's dining room at midday on Thanksgiving. The family and a number of friends are seated around a table groaning beneath its weight of toothsome viands. The sunshine streams through the simple window with greater warmth than at morning when it awakes the farmer.

# THE DEACON'S THANKSGIVING

Willis Hawkins

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**O**LD Deacon Bedell was the cheeriest man you'd meet with in many a day. He lowed that the Lord had a pretty good plan for running the world, and he'd say:

"I'm thankful that things are about as they are. They could be a mighty sight wuss. An' the things we've complained of the loudest so far Have proved to be blessin's to us."

When others lamented the drought he'd reply: "It's better than havin' a flood. An' we ought to thank God when the weather is dry. That we don't have to waller in mud." Yet when it was stormy he'd never complain. But say with immutable trust:

"The Lord in his goodness has sent us the rain To lay the discomfordin' dust."

When adversity smote him it fell like the dew On a mountain's impervious crest. For his simple philosophy held to the view That everything worked for the best. And for others' misfortunes he always could find such sweet consolation to give.

It seemed that he envied the halt and the blind The lives they were destined to live. One day he was caught in a thrashing machine. It cost him a leg, but he said:

"That's gettin' of cheaper than some I have seen. I'm thankful it wasn't my head." And always thereafter he stumped on a peg Or patiently went with a crutch, Declaring, "I'm savin' a lot on that leg—My socks only cost half as much."

When his end was approaching he said, with a smile, As they folded his hands on his breast, "I've worked pretty hard a consid'able while. An' I'm thankful to git a good rest." So he went through the world strewing smiles on his way. And the neighbors surviving him tell That, no matter what happened, it seemed every day Was Thanksgiving for Mrs. Bedell.



# THANKSGIVING IN THE AIR

By Goodloe Thomas

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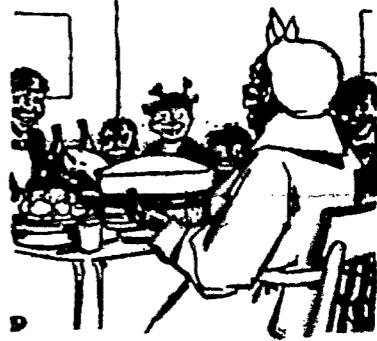
**A**T maww, when de tro' an' g'leamin' d' about de fell's. Belo' de sun come up an' o'clock han' show de heck. It's jist as plain as anythin', without a-gittin' down De almyrack an' calender, Thanksgiving's rollin' round.

De calah press an' squeak, De navin' wuz comin' a-sneakin'. An' down betw' de haws mub sun, erbout his heedin' wuk. An' callin' out, s'gossim-like, 'Heah, turkey, turkey, tu!'"



"TURKEY, TURKEY, TURKEY!"

**A** moon de man an' smilin', an' he g'leas erlong de road. O' green an' yaller patches dey a-havin' down de road. De cawn rows keep a-ruffin', an' de cawmbe ap-ple fall. Fo' anybody's busy, an' we couldn't pick 'em all. De chillun keeps a-linckin' I'm plus an' eat puddin'. Like what dey's settin' gittin' long about Thanksgiving day— Ah, well you sags an' p'ntin' to a comin' late de way!



"A MONSTROUS LOT OF VITICLES!"

**A**H b'liebe Ah'll git de space fo' de meak de family cake. Ah' stah to w'ekin' entry, fo' ANY hab to cook an' bake. A maww's on lot o' vittin' fo' we all in thank-ful mood. Eckase each you dere's no' to feed in de you called brood. We've got to keep Thanksgiving, Fo' an' we got a livin'. An' an' dere almos plenty to de cawm de de don't shu't? De' why Ah like to heah mah maw call "Turkey, turkey, tu!"

**How Many Turkeys Destroyed?**  
What would you say if you should see a file of turkeys stretching from San Francisco to New York and from New York back to Chicago? "Some turkeys," probably. Well, one of these professional estimators has figured it out that the Thanksgiving turkeys to be consumed this year would make a line about that long if placed single file in marching order. But it is easier to estimate than to acquire. Six million turkeys is the estimate made by the statisticians who has imagined this 4,000 mile streak of strutting gobblers and dumber fenthera is line.

Accepting this reasoning as a minimum and supposing that the average bird weighs nine pounds, it appears that the people of the United States will consume 54,000,000 pounds of turkey this Thanksgiving. Packed in refrigerator cars, as they are ordinarily transported, 3,000 birds to the car, this number of turkeys would make about 6,000 carloads and would require for their transportation a train forty miles in length. These many tons of noble fowls would more than test the carrying capacity of all of Uncle Sam's war ships.

**A Personal Problem.**  
The turkey whistled softly and said by "I Would Not Live Alive" as he gaze solemnly at the calendar and realized that Thanksgiving day was almost here. "Why so thoughtful, Brother Gobbler?" inquired the patriarch of the flock. "I was just pondering a question which will be of vital importance in the hereafter," explained Brother Gobbler.

"It is always profitable to dwell upon that time which is inevitable to all of us, but I trust you distinguish between simply idle speculation and the elevated contemplation of the essentials," fear brother," admonished the patriarch. "Well, I suppose you would hardly call it that," replied Brother Gobbler, reflectively scratching at a rearing worm. "The fact is, I was just wondering which is the most delicious, white or dark meat?"