

# Martha Butterworth's Thanks

## She Found Cause For Them on That Thanksgiving Day

By CLARISSA MACKIE  
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"Give thanks for what?" demanded Martha Butterworth fervently. "Being alive, of course, for one thing," retorted her roommate, old Mrs. Loyd.

"Alive?" sniffed Martha. "Everybody else in the world is alive as well as I. I don't consider that any special act of Providence."

"You're sacrilegious, Martha," said Mrs. Loyd solemnly.

"I s'pose I be, I s'pose, I be," said Martha drearily, and she stared from the window down at the frost-tipped lawn of the old ladies' home.

Martha Butterworth hated the old ladies' home with a fervor that few of its inmates understood. Most of them were simple minded old women who had invested a little nest egg of savings in the institution to receive dividends of a lifelong home and decent burial.

They had been a congenial company, until Martha Butterworth came into their midst. Many of them had known Mrs. Butterworth in her younger days. Then she had been quite a personage in the county, for her husband, Darius Butterworth, had been known as the richest farmer within a radius of twenty-five miles. But Darius had fallen a victim to the gold mine fever and awoke one morning to find himself the possessor of a big tin box full of worthless mining stock while even his farm had been mortgaged to its full value.

The horde of censorious relatives which immediately gathered at the Butterworth farm and clamored their disapproval of Darius' "crazy investments" proved to be too much for the patient, unobtrusive Darius, who, dazed by the great misfortune that he had brought upon his wife as well as himself, promptly disappeared, linking the box of beautifully engraved stock certificates with him.

The closest search failed to reveal the whereabouts of the fugitive father, and the aforesaid relatives, still censorious, but in a mute, heartbroken way, helped Darius' bewildered little wife to close up all the affairs that hungry creditors had not already pounced upon, and they agreed that Martha should live in turn with one and another of them until Darius should come back or something turned up.

The bread of dependence is bitter, and for five long years Martha Butterworth tasted gall and wormwood. Then she packed up her few belongings and took a position as housekeeper in the family of a man who had an invalid wife.

For five more years Martha looked for her husband's return, and then hope died in her breast with the ending of the tenth year of his absence. Shortly after this a severe attack of rheumatism crippled Martha's busy feet and she gave up her situation and, taking her small savings, did what her soul longed to do—she became an inmate of the old ladies' home in the adjacent bustling little city.

She hated the home. She detested the simple minded, contented old women, who were well pleased with their lot. Not one of them had known as great prosperity as Martha Butterworth, and not one had suffered the pang of fallen pride or endured the grief of uncertainty regarding a loved one's safety that she had, and, although one of them knew Martha Butterworth's story—and in consequence all the others were soon possessed of it also—they could not understand her deep rooted bitterness of spirit, and they withdrew from her company and left her alone.

Old Mrs. Loyd, the woman who had known of Martha's affairs, also knew that Martha Butterworth had been a very brilliant pianist in her day. Before Martha had married Darius she had taught music, and after she was married she played for her husband's pleasure. For ten years her work hardened fingers had not touched piano keys—her own piano had gone in the auction sale that followed the general crash—and in spite of Mrs. Loyd's pleading that Martha entertain their long autumn evenings with "trues" on the big square piano in the parlor of the home Martha had as steadfastly refused to touch it.

"Thankful indeed!" muttered Martha again after Mrs. Loyd had left the room. "I declare! Sometimes I think if I was a man I'd swear!"

She blushed after that remark and hid her thin face in her hands. "Everything's gone wrong!" she wailed softly. "To think after I had saved \$500 that rheumatism should catch me in the feet, only to leave the minute I got into this home! If I hadn't been so hasty I might have gone on working. I would soon have had money enough to eat out and look for Darius, not that I expect he's alive now," she hastily added. She arose and paced her half of the square room. "I hate this old place—I hate this home!" she said between her clenched teeth.

Mrs. Loyd, who was now standing in the doorway, heard her and drew her mouth in sudden frown. "I'd be

afraid to say that, Mrs. Butterworth. It's flying in the face of Providence to say such things. I've got a sister who is crazy to come here and stay, only she hasn't got \$500 to buy her way. If she was here with me we'd be perfectly happy and you're knowing, because you have to stay here."

Martha stared at her. "Your sister wants to come here?" she asked incredulously.

"Yes, it's a nice easy life and we've always had to work dreadful hard. I'm afraid she will never have \$500 to come, though."

"You don't know. Maybe Providence will open a way for her," said Martha Butterworth, suddenly losing her bitterness. "I know of somebody who is tired of it and wants to leave."

"You mean you?" cried Mrs. Loyd.

Martha nodded. "If I do you sister can have my membership."

"Oh, oh!" cried Mrs. Loyd delightedly. "That is good of you, Martha Butterworth. If you don't change your mind Hannah will spend the best Thanksgiving she ever had."

"I shouldn't change my mind," said Martha decidedly. "You can write and tell her she can have my half of the room on Thanksgiving day. Don't cry about it, Mrs. Loyd, and no I don't want you to thank me. It's not because I'm kind hearted, for I'm not. I'm dreadful bitter. I do it gladly because I want to go away from here."

Those are the words that Martha Butterworth spoke, but even as she uttered them she felt a tremor of fear for the future. In leaving the deserted home she was throwing away the last defense between her frail body and the poorhouse, for it might be that in the end no.

On Thanksgiving day there was to be a feast in the long dining room downstairs, and the housekeeper, Mrs. Green, had prepared all the good old fashioned viands that go to make up the traditional Thanksgiving dinner in the morning there was a delicious odor of broiling turkey, and all the inmates of the home gathered in the sitting room and discussed other Thanksgiving dinners that they had partaken of under happier and more favorable auspices.

Even Martha Butterworth seemed to have forgotten her sorrow, for she had put on her best black silk dress with a purple bow at the throat and her brown hair was fluffed prettily over her ears. Her cheeks were flushed, and she actually laughed several times during the meal, and she felt better for it.

After the long dinner was over the old ladies gathered in the stiff splendor of the parlor, where a great fire had been kindled on the hearth, and they told stories and jokes, and there were much laughter and fun taking. Then Mrs. Green asked Martha Butterworth to play something for them.

To everybody's surprise Martha went to the piano without a word and sitting down before it played one thing after another until each old lady had her favorite piece played or her favorite song sung. At last Martha's fingers strayed into a melody that she had not dared remember for ten years. It was her husband, Darius', favorite song and one she had played for him times without number. Now her voice was somewhat broken, but it was still penetratingly sweet, and it pierced through the walls of the home, and a man passing dejectedly along the sidewalk heard it, stopped short and listened, and when the sound of the piano died away he mounted the steps of the home and rang the bell.

Mrs. Green, the matron, came into the parlor again and looked strangely, doubtfully, at Martha Butterworth who was still at the piano.

"Somebody wants to see you, Mrs. Butterworth," she said meaningly.

"Some one to see me?" Martha was surprised for most of the censorious relatives were dead or had long since removed to other states, and she had few friends. She walked down the long room, her small figure erect and her head held with the proud poise that marked her in spite of all the grief that should have laid it low.

A man was waiting in the dining room—a tall, white haired, pale faced man, well dressed and prosperous looking. He looked once at Martha and held out his arms. Martha stared at him with unbelieving eyes, for it was her husband, Darius Butterworth. In another instant she was in his arms and Darius was telling his story.

One of the women relatives had scolded Darius, well that day when ruin fell upon him, and she had told him that the best thing he could do was to take himself away where he couldn't do any more harm to his wife's interests or happiness. Of course the relative was sorry, afterward, but then it was too late, for poor Darius had taken his worthless mining stock and departed for the west, where for years he struggled for a living, while he patiently investigated every mine until at last he found one that really held out a prospect of paying dividends to its trusting stockholders. That was the beginning of the fortune that Darius had piled up from several of his so called "worthless certificates." When he had regained the fortune he had lost he went back to his old home only to find that his wife had disappeared after five years, and while it was known that she had entered a home somewhere she had taken no one into her confidence. Darius had been wandering disconsolately through the street that Thanksgiving night when he had recognized his wife's voice singing.

"And I believe that I didn't have a thing to be thankful for," said Martha remorsefully.

"This'll be the happiest Thanksgiving my sister Hannah ever had," decided old Mrs. Loyd to the women about the hearth fire. "Martha Butterworth's going to leave, and Hannah's going to take her place."

# THE SHADOW

## A Story of Hypnotism

By ETHEL B. HAYNES  
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Estella Brooks looked wistfully at the prospective buyer. "I'm very anxious to sell the place," she said slowly. "Your offer is satisfactory to me but I hardly think you will want it after I have told you about the shadow." As she uttered the last word all the color forsok her cheeks, and she looked years older.

"You needn't say a word about it unless you want to relieve your mind. I'll take it even if the shadow is a ghost," assured Mr. Baker warmly.

"It isn't an ordinary ghost," protested Estella. "In fact, it isn't a ghost at all. I tell myself I can't believe in them and be a member of the church at the same time, but it's very queer that the shadow should be there just the same."

"Show it to me, please," requested Mr. Brooks, and in silence Estella led the way down the front steps to the gate that opened into the highroad. Here she paused and turned facing the long farmhouse with its low pitched roof and many gabled windows.

"Look there," she said simply pointing up at the roof of the house. "The shadow is behind the clouds, yet what a dark there to cast a shadow like that on the roof?"

Mr. Thomas Baker scanned the stained shingles with a critical eye. He glanced up at the sky a mass of grey leaden clouds; he looked at Estella standing beside him with every muscle tensed, her white brow and staring at the roof.

"I can't see anything, Miss Brooks," he said gently.

Estella turned a disappointed face to him. "I was afraid you couldn't see anything. But it's there right between the two chimneys, a great black shadow as plain as can be on the roof. I suppose it's only for the family to see and remember."

"Tell me about it if you care to," said Miss Brooks. "But I assure you that it won't make any difference in my decision. I'll take Wistaria farm if you will accept my offer."

"I'll tell you about the shadow first," said Estella, leading the way back to the deep shaded veranda. "After you've read my little book you'll see that, if you want to conclude the bargain, I am quite ready."

She was a very stern man, cold by nature, but possessing a powerful magnetism that bound his family to him by cords of fear as well as love. My mother died while I was a little girl, and my father's strict rule, as Barbara, my sister, grew older she seemed to develop the same qualities, and so it was that her will and my father's, the often clashed over little matters and at last over larger affairs.

"About ten years ago Barbara was twenty and I was twenty-five. My sister met and fell in love with a young man who wrote poems for a living. He was spending the summer in Riverside, and he wrote verses about Barbara's beautiful eyes and her lovely hair, and of course he was in love with her. My father discovered the verses and forbade him the house, arranging him in the most stinging terms, accusing him of seeking to marry Barbara for the little patrimony that would one day be hers, saying other terrible things, although he really was a most manly fellow, and I liked him exceedingly. As for my sister, poor Barbara was deeply in love with him from the beginning, and when my father sent her lover away, tossing the despised verses after him, Barbara defied father to his face and declared she would marry Allen in spite of everything.

"That night she bade me farewell and went away with Allen Searle and was married by her own minister here in Riverside. In the morning when my father discovered her flight and read the letter she had left for his personal he led me out to the gate, ponder and pointing to the roof of the house, he said solemnly:

"Estella, there is a shadow on our house. Do you see that grim, black shadow of disgrace staining its pure roof? Look long at it. Your sister's defiance of me and her elopement with a penniless stranger has broken my heart. Mark well the shadow on our roof, for it will never pass away—not in your lifetime or mine."

"I looked, and, Mr. Baker, I saw the shadow, grim and black and shapeless, lying there where no shadow had ever rested before. The day was cloudy and forbidding, even as it is now, and yet the shadow lay there, and it has always lain there since that day when my sister went away. Nearly every day my father would take me out to the gate and show me the shadow and repeat his denunciation of Barbara. He died five years ago, and I have been left alone with the shadow on the roof, for beyond a letter now and then I have rarely heard from Barbara."

"I see," said that gentleman, with an air of sudden enlightenment. "Now, before I go back to town this afternoon and before I pay the money to bind the bargain I would like to ask you a question, Miss Brooks. Now

that you have honored me with your confidence, will you tell me whether you would change your mind about selling the farm if the shadow were removed?" He bent forward and scanned her face with eager eyes.

"If there was no shadow there and if Barbara could come back some times if we could be reconciled I would be the happiest woman in the world, Mr. Baker," she cried, with tears in her eyes. "Wistaria farm has always been my home—always would be if it were not for the shadow. Besides, you see my father disinherited Barbara, and I want to give her her rightful share of his estate. If it is turned into money I can accomplish it better."

"I see I see," muttered Mr. Baker thoughtfully. "I believe I'll take that 3,300 back to town but I'll put something down to bind the bargain, and if you change your mind about selling it I'll let you off. I shall return tomorrow, and with your permission I will bring a friend with me."

The next day he came down from the city in a large touring car that contained several seated and goggled passengers in the tandem. Mr. Baker came down the path accompanied by a short stout man with protruding blue eyes behind thick lensed spectacles. Estella met them at the front

Went the lady come in so inquired as she led the way into the darkened parlor and threw open the blinds.

"Not now thank you, Miss Brooks. Allow me to present my friend Dr. Gaunag. Would you object to telling the doctor the story of the shadow on your roof? He is an expert at expelling shadows of that sort."

There was no resisting Thomas Baker's winning smile, and so heartily Estella related the story of her sister's flight and how her father had shown her the shadow on the roof.

Dr. Gaunag listened intently, never once removing his bright eyes from Estella's mild brown eyes. When she had concluded he spoke brusquely.

"If you will accompany me to the gate, Miss Brooks, I will dispel the shadow forever. Have no doubt, have no fear, madam," he assured her as Estella's brows were arched incredulously. "Come with me to the gate and I will dispel the shadow," he repeated in a monotonous tone.

A dreamy look came into Estella's eyes and in utter silence she arose and preceded the two men out of the house and down the path to the gate.

The three turned and faced the house. The summer sunshine lay warm on the red roof, and there was no shadow save the forested shadows of the two great chimneys.

Dr. Gaunag lifted his hands impressively before Estella's face. "Do you see the shadow, Miss Brooks?" he inquired sharply.

"Yes, she said evenly. "It lies between the two great chimneys, a large, irregular blot on our roof, yet there is nothing between that and the sun that a shadow not even a passing cloud."

"Now you do not see the shadow because it has never been there. You will never see it again. There never was a shadow on the house and you will forget all about it and never think of it when you awake." The doctor repeated his hypnotic suggestions with monotonous regularity until Estella's eyes closed. They carried her to a summer house near by and placed her in a chair, and she continued in the hypnotic sleep until the motor returned and the veiled lady alighted and came down to the summer house accompanied by a tall, slight intellectual looking man. The woman fell on her knees beside Estella and wept bitterly.

When Estella awoke she was alone with her sister Barbara and Allen Searle. "I've had such a terrible dream, Barbara," she said after the delight of greeting was over. "I can't recollect it sufficiently to tell you, but it hung over me like a black cloud, but the cloud has departed."

"Forever, dear Estella," whispered Barbara as she placed her arms around her dazed sister.

"I came very near selling the place, Barbara, dear. I don't know what to do about it," said Estella, puzzled.

"Keep it or sell it to Tom Baker, as you please, dear. Tom is Allen's half brother, and they are in business together in town. It will make a lovely summer home for all of us no matter which member of the family owns it. In the winter you shall come to us."

"Mr. Baker writes poems, too, I suppose," ventured Estella, glancing with interest the tallest of the three men standing in a little group outside the arbor.

Barbara uttered her old light hearted laugh. "Dear me, no. Allen is a poet by nature and has scribbled lots of pretty verses, but as for making a living by it, he simply can't do it. I hope you won't be shocked, but he and Tom are in the most romantic sort of business imaginable."

"What is that?" inquired Estella eagerly, for she discovered a growing interest in big Tom Baker.

"Wholesale paint and varnish—there. Not much poetry in that, is there?"

At that moment Dr. Gaunag was shaking his head vigorously at his two companions. "Not a doubt of it, my dear sirs. Miss Brooks' father was a hypnotist. She has seen the shadow merely through his powerful suggestion that it was there. It is a dangerous gift, especially if it is badly used."

Allen Searle nodded gravely and then smiled as Tom Baker said, with a proprietary gesture toward the unconscious Estella, "I'll watch her carefully, you can depend upon me, doctor. And then he had the grace to blush, for he caught the glance of understanding in their eyes.

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