

Thanksgiving at Lonesome Hollow

By FRANCIS A. MILLER

SEBBS awfully forlorn to eat a Thanksgiving dinner all alone, said Milly soborly, looking over at the young fellow who sat reading a harness strap beside the blazing hearth. "I haven't the heart to get up a big dinner for just us two."

"I don't see what else we can do. No neighbors to invite except old Pete Sprat, and he wouldn't come. We might feed him something by way of being neighborly."

"And be turned away for our pains," the woman laughed.

"You can't even go out on the high ways and hedges and gather in stragglers like the ancient host of Blithe fame. Maybe it is just as well not to have all the work of getting up a Thanksgiving dinner, for it seems to me that you look tired, Milly. What's the matter?"

"Nothing, Jim, I guess I need a little seeing. I'll take a run across the hollow and be back before supper."

Milly put on her cloak and went out into the crisp autumn afternoon. The woods were bare except for a few scarlike flames of red which marked the presence of an occasional gum tree. The sky was clear, cold and bright, edged with a greenish glow where the dark forests rimmed the far horizon. Not a sign of human habitation was visible, and not a sound broke the vast silence save the steady tap-tap of a woodpecker. The loneliness oppressed Milly strangely. For two years she had endured it in cheerful silence, working patiently at whatever her hand found to do in the rough little shack, which had gradually assumed



IT'S LIKE TO HAVE YOU ALL TAKE DINNER WITH US TOMORROW

an cozy, homelike appearance. They had left the busy, grinding east in quest of health for her young husband, who was slowly regaining his lost strength and vigor in the bearing climate of Colorado, which alone kept Milly's heart light and hopeful, but in spite of that joyful fact she could not shake a shiver of loneliness when she thought of the long dreary winter here.

"I'm getting world simply for the want of a little company," she said as she walked down the untraveled road in the face of the crisp north wind. "That will never do for you, Milly. I'll get for Jim's sake, you mustn't give way to such foolishness."

Suddenly Milly's ear caught the sound of chopping, which seemed to come from the hollow beyond the divide. She turned and made her way easily through the leafless thicket, walking briskly over the hill and down the opposite descent until she distinct heard voices. Farther on, at the edge of a natural clearing, she came upon a party of travelers camped by a newly kindled fire, where a lantern gleamed and a man was busied himself with preparations for the evening meal. They were eight in all—a rough, unkempt lot in leathern jackets and rusty boots. Beside the cook lay a bag of flour, a side of bacon and two jugs stoppered with corn-cobs.

Milly stopped abruptly when she found herself observed by the curious eyes of the eight strangers, then changed her mind and crossed the icy little brook and made her way toward the fire.

A big, black whiskered man dropped his armful of horse feed and looked at her pleadingly. "Lost?" he asked brusquely.

"No, I live two miles up the divide. I happened to hear you chopping and stopped out of curiosity."

The man's insistent gaze annoyed her, but the forlorn, gaunt appearance of the little group melted a little throb of pity and made her think gratefully of her own cozy, cheerful little shack, with Jim waiting for her beside the glowing hearth.

"I suppose you are simply camping here for the night," she ventured, looking about at the meager comforts of the camp.

"Well, no," answered the black-skinned man, who impressed her at once as being spokesman of the party.

"We came down to prospect a bit. There's talk of gold in this claim, and if it's worth our while we may set up for a week or two."

"Oh, then, you'll be here over Thanksgiving, won't you? I'd like to have you all take dinner with us tomorrow."

The man looked at his fellows with a curious smile, half questioning, half incredulous. "It's rather unexpected," he remarked humorously.

"Oh, we're all neighbors out here, you know," Milly explained cordially. "My husband would be very glad to have you with us. We are from the east, and we're used to having company for Thanksgiving."

"Your husband is a prospector, too, I take it?"

"Oh, no. He came out here for his health two years ago, when he was all run down with overwork. We expect to stay here until he's quite well."

"We didn't notice any houses as we passed along. Where do you live?"

"Two miles below here on the Sun rise road, not on the trail. Will you come over tomorrow?"

"Well, being as you're so kind as to take the trouble to invite us, we'll be glad to accept your hospitality and thank you."

"Very well, I shall expect you promptly at 12. There are eight of you aren't there? I want you all, remember. Now I'll go for the walk is rather long. You cross the hill and go straight south till you reach the Sunrise wagon road, which will take you directly to our shack, going west. Good night."

Milly returned in great good spirits. She looked dubious at first, but was loath to dampen the ardor of his good little helpmeet by voicing his doubts as to the wisdom of inviting eight strangers to their home.

"I hope we have enough stuff on hand," said cautious Jim. "It will take heaps to satisfy eight hungry men, you know."

"Of course we have plenty. We'll kill both turkeys, and I'll make four pies instead of one and two boiled puddings besides. We'll have potatoes and turnips and the canned corn I put up myself and as much elder as they can drink. For dessert we'll have real good coffee andiced cake. Oh, we'll have enough, you may be sure. Jim, you must rig up a table big enough to seat them all."

They worked till bedtime that night, peeling apples, scalding raisins and picking the turkeys. The next morning Milly rose long before dawn and set about her baking and broiling, while Jim put up a big deal table that stretched almost the length of the room; and by noon it was set with all the luscious viands of an eastern Thanksgiving dinner, set with homely platters and dishes, to be sure, but not rougher in appearance than the men who finally seated themselves about the steaming board. Jim heaped hospitality from his place at the head of the table and tried dutifully to "act as if the company belonged there," as Milly had said. The big, black whiskered fellow whom the others addressed as Blaisedale watched Milly with a curious intentness which made her uncomfortable.

"You're mighty comfortably fixed for these diggings," said he presently, looking about the walls with their homely prints and ornaments.

"Yes, we are rather comfortable, thanks to Milly's ingenuity," Jim answered, with a glow of affectionate pride.

"You're lucky to be able to afford such luxuries, for all those fancy fixings are luxuries in Colorado." Blaisdale remarked significantly.

"Yes, I count myself one of the luckiest men in the world. I owe everything to Milly, even my life. I was a poor law student when we were married, and when my health broke down she simply took all responsibility into her own hands. It was her money that enabled me to come here. It's her bit of money that we're living on now. All that she has in the world is in the little bank at Sunrise, where she goes once a month to draw the necessary sum for our provisions. But now that I've got to work we're making our way along without much help from the bank. I tell you I hated to use that money but enough, but if it hadn't been for that the Lord only knows what would have become of me."

Milly blushed deeply and becomingly. "Why, it doesn't amount to that," said she, with a snap of her brown fingers.

"All the money in the world would be worthless to me if I didn't have Jim."

"I've heard a saying about a good wife being a treasure," Blaisedale remarked. "Your wife proves the truth of it."

The dinner was a great success. Blaisedale, who seemed to exert a mysterious influence over his fellows, grew very talkative and entertaining. He told stories of queer places and queer people, which savored of familiarity, with lawlessness and lawbreakers, but which kept Jim breathlessly interested until the eight strange guests made their adieus. Blaisedale, who was last to go, turned to the threshold and held out his hand to Milly.

"You remind me of some one I once knew," he said simply, "and for her sake I'd like to shake hands with you. Thank you for your hospitality. You won't regret your kindness."

That night when Jim and Milly sat talking beside their cheerful hearth a scrap of white paper crept mysteriously under the door coping. Jim rose hurriedly and threw back the door, but no one was in sight and not a sound broke the deep stillness of the icy night. Milly read the note over his shoulder, and this is what it said:

Some curious whim prompts me to tell you that it was our intention to break into and rife the little cash-box kept at Sunrise before quitting these diggings, but for the sake of Milly's "bit of money" it shall go unharmed. Thanking you for a pleasant hour,
—Blaisedale.

THANKSGIVING THE YEAR ROUND

A WOMAN who has an almost old-fashioned faith in Providence keeps what she calls her "thank offering box." Into this goes through the year, from one Thanksgiving to the middle of the following November, a sum of money for every accident escaped, calamity averted or special joy.

These offerings are not confined to her own escapes, but each time some member of her family bolts up from some threatened woe into the box goes the money offering of thanks.

Not the same amount is given each time, and rarely large sums, for the woman is not rich, but a nice little sum is realized.

This is devoted to giving someone a happy Thanksgiving day. It does not always go into the regular channels. As the woman says, the poor and the plights are usually well cared for in holiday seasons.

Sometimes a homesick girl in a strange city is given car fare home for the Thanksgiving gathering she would otherwise miss. Once a music lover was given a season ticket to the symphony concert. Again a doctor's bill that had worried a young stenographer who had her mother to support was quietly paid.

In speaking of her pretty custom the owner of the thank offering box said, "Never have I known what thankfulness really meant until I started my box and saw the joy my thankfulness brings to others."

Such a box, besides cultivating one's bump of gratitude and making others equally grateful, cannot but afford great pleasure and interest in the spending. It is a gracious thought one more woman could profitably put into practice.

Thanksgiving In the Country

BRING on the turkey, mother, an' the pie 'em high upon the table for the big an' for the small.

It is time to set the dinner, it is time to set us down.

An' my appetite, I reckon, is the biggest thing in town.

Bring on the sass an' dressin'. Don't leave anything behind.

Cut today we want to sample, mother, each an' every kind.

So don't forget the puddin', an' please don't forget the pie.

Today's Thanksgiving, mother, an' we're goin' to travel high.

Ain't that turkey just a daisy? Ain't he juicy, plump an' brown?

Don't he make you hungry, mother? Ain't he fit for any crown?

See! The glory skin is burnin', an' the stuffin' is runnin' out.

Oh, I tell you, mother, children, this is heaven, jest about!

Draw your chairs around the table, loosen buttons where you kin.

You don't want your highest collars interferin' with your chin.

Now I'm goin' to carve the turkey. Pass your plates, you youngsters five.

Today's Thanksgiving, mother. Ain't it good to be alive?

—Baltimore Herald.

Some Eventful Thanksgivings.

Among the days set apart for thanksgiving which in reality have been days of national sorrow may be numbered that of 1875, when the entire country was mourning over the death of Vice President Henry Wilson, whose remains on the Thanksgiving day of that year were lying in state at Washington; that of 1878, when the German steamer Pomerania, from New York, crowded with passengers, sank off Folkestone, England, carrying to a watery grave fifty souls; that of 1881, the morning of which found the country grieving over the death of President Garfield; that of 1882, when an other terrible loss at sea set the country mourning, the steamer Ocean Grove striking on the rocks of Cape Canso and proving a coffin ship to many on board; that of 1885, when the country mourned over the death of Vice President Thomas Hendricks, sleeping his last sleep at his Indianapolis home.

A Thanksgiving Monologue.

A I want that drumstick there. An' some raisin stuff, too.

Uncle Jim, I like a pear sliced with pickles. Say, don't you?

—Marie, I wish you'd pass me the jam—that ain't enough!

What's that in that 'big glass'?

Aw, I mean that frothy stuff! Kin I have some white meat, pa?

Yeah, I'm a-goin' to be Keerful. Sit, I want some saw-gee, you're always stuttin' me! Whoop—whoop—ouch! I never meant.

To upset that gravy boat. Guess that stuffin' must 'a went. Down my Sunday meatin' throat! Pa, ain't there one more drumstick? Fust! Eat three if I'd jest try! Um-yum! Now, I won't be sick! Gimme nother piece o' pie!

—Charles C. Jones in Puck.

In a Gastronomic Way.

"Do you think Thanksgiving turkeys will go down?"

"I am sure of it."

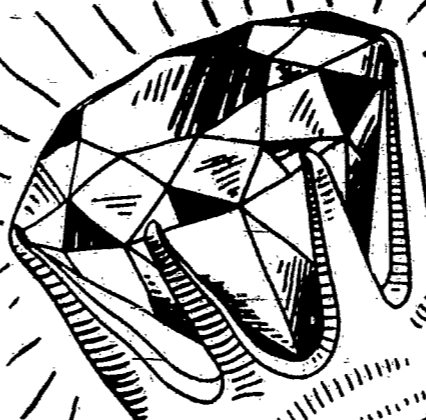
"That's good. Do you think they will fall-much?"

"I didn't say anything about their falling; I said they would go down."

—Baltimore American.

A Dinner Jingle.

If no turkey dish you view
Possum's good enough for you!
If no possum's on the plate
Rabbits overrun the state.
Anyway, in light we're livin',
An' we're willin' for thanksgivin'!
—Atlanta Constitution.



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THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

NOW Thanksgiving day we see, and we should be thankful for it, if you do not know just what are the blessings you have got. Let us mention just a few which may be pertinent to you:

That your girls are not boys and are not therefore filled with a consuming ambition to play football.

That your boys are not girls and will not therefore tax your digestion later with the nice little things they have learned to make at cooking school.

That up to date none of the aviators have fallen down through your chimney fire, filling your drawing room with yell and soot.

That, thanks to the butcher having refused you a further extension of credit, that particular bill won't grow any bigger.

That, having during the last year lost the last remnant of your hair, your capillary attractions have at last ceased to fall out.

That, your joy riding chauffeur having reduced your \$2,000 car to scrap iron, you are relieved of a \$3,000 annual expense in maintaining him and it.

That, whatever else happens in the way of draining your pocketbook, you won't have to draw a check for the payment of your own funeral expenses.

That your well beloved wife considers her new winter hat a dream—only trend softly lest you both wake up when the first of the month brings the whistling postman to your door with sundry requests from the little milliner.

That, having remained a poor, obscure nonentity all your days, there is no temptation for any mean, envious person to try to pull you down, or your pedestal and prove to posterity that you didn't know a bean when you met one.

That, not being a woman, you don't have to wear a hobble skirt to trip you up when you go walking in public or carry your car fare in a small portemonnaie inside a pocketbook, inside a wallet, wrapped up in a handkerchief, inside a chain bag, inside your muff.

That, not being a man, you don't have to smoke cheap cigars, pretending that you like them better than those made of real tobacco, or think up foolishly transparent explanations for having stayed at the club until 4 o'clock in the morning. —Harper's Weekly.

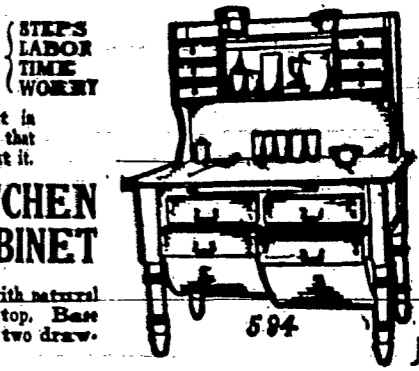
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