

A Happy Thanksgiving

A Story Showing That There is No Rule Without Exception

By EUNICE BLAKE

"Goodby, John," said Amy regretfully. "I'm sorry to part with you. Indeed, my heart is almost broken. I'm sorry you're so impractical. If you were content to come down to hard work we could remain together. We could be frugal and saving while young, which would insure us a competence when we get old. But this visionary disposition of yours renders that impossible. You say you are going to seek your fortune. Do you suppose you can find a fortune anywhere easier than right here? Indeed, you will have more difficulty in attaining it where you are not known and where you have no one to give you a lift when you most need it than here."

So spoke Amy Tarrant to John Esterbrook the day he left her to go out into the world, as he told her, to make his fortune. He was indeed of that order we call visionary. He believed he would succeed, but he had no definite idea of how he would succeed. He had no aptitude for drudgery.

"I'll admit, sweetheart," he said, "that it looks pretty dark ahead—that is, for me. You will doubtless make up your mind to the practical, the inevitable, and marry some man who will be a hard worker. He will provide the necessities of life for his family and make you comfortable. I am of a different kind. I can't force myself to do what I dislike to do, and what I like to do doesn't pay. But some day I may find some way of making what I like to do pay. The world requires other things besides food, clothing and a place to live in. There are persons whose business it is to instruct, others to amuse, others to excite the imagination."

"Oh, John, there you go again! Such persons have just as hard a time as usually a harder time than those who buy and sell molasses or boots and shoes."

"Nevertheless I am one of that class and must make my place with them. If I find something whereby I can make money that is a pleasure to me as well as you may hear from me. Till then farewell."

John Esterbrook was wrong in his reckoning. Yet it is questionable if he was wholly wrong. For ninety-nine persons in every hundred the only way to be comfortable and lay up a competence is hard work, whether they like it or not. However, John looked for employment which might lead to work that he would enjoy. He had a literary taste and considered newspaper work a part of literature. That led him to seek employment in an editorial room, and he found an inferior position in the service of the Spottswood Eagle.

Of the first five years of John's work in the newspaper business little can be said. He drifted from one department to another, not because he was too dull to do the work assigned him, but because his heart was not in it. He was also careless, and carelessness is a fatal trait in making up material for the press. He managed, however, to keep in harness because he was liked, his popularity coming from an infinite good nature and a dry humor with which he caused his and other persons' mishaps and shortcomings to appear amusing. If taken to task for a blunder he would soften it by a joke without hard work, whether he liked so apt that it assured his forgiveness. He then, too, John had in him a keen appreciation of the foibles of human nature. He realized that all persons like work, but confessed that he had not to have the shortcomings of other persons except themselves shown up in an amusing way.

One day one of John's fellow workers said to him, "Why don't you put some of these funny things you say in the paper?"

"I have never thought they were worth it," John replied, but it gave him an idea. For a month he kept a memorandum of what seemed to amuse others, and putting the best of them in proper form, offered them for the humorous column. They were used, and more appeared the next week. Then some one suggested to John that he put his name to them. The work did not appeal to his ambition, so, instead of using his own name, he chose a substitute—Uncle Bill. From that time forward something funny appeared in the Eagle every week signed "Uncle Bill," and after a while these bits of humor began to be copied in other newspapers. Their reception to him was slow at first, because there was an especial zest in them that required a little time to percolate through the skulls of those who read them. Their author had been quite awhile in educating his associates to catch on to them, and it would have required an equal time to educate the public had it not been that they appealed to certain persons who introduced them to others and they grew in favor.

One day John was asked how he would like to devote himself to the exclusive work of writing humor for the Eagle. He replied that he didn't think he could write funny stuff to order, but he would try it. He found that by injecting his humor into ordinary items which were going the rounds of the newspapers he could greatly increase his supply. He was given a column called "Uncle Bill's Sayings,"

and it was not long before it was noticed that the circulation of the paper was rapidly increasing. John Esterbrook had proved his claim, though he had stumbled into the proof. He spent a few hours each day hunting for items into which he could infuse his quaint humor and a couple of hours more in making them over. His work occupied him for four or five hours each day and was accomplished without the slightest effort. He was doing exactly what nature had intended he should do, what he had hinted to his sweetheart was a possibility, and, since the circulation of the Eagle widened, his salary increased.

Meanwhile, though John had left Amy Tarrant free to make a home with a more practical man than himself, he had not forgotten her. Amy hadn't married. She had given her heart to John, and it was not hers to give to any one else. There was another reason why she did not marry. Her mother was a widow, and there were several young children, all of whom required Amy's attention. Amy was an attractive girl and had several suitors, but she had sent them all away, conceiving it to be her duty, as it was her preference, to remain at home, where she was the mainstay of the family.

Indeed, this was necessary, for, though Amy worked eight hours a day at an office, she being the only productive one of the household, she could not earn enough to pay rent, buy food and the necessary clothing.

Such was the condition of affairs in the Tarrant family when Thanksgiving day approached. One of the younger boys heard his mother and his sister Amy discussing what they should do for a Thanksgiving dinner, Amy suggesting that hamburger steak was the best they could provide for meat. The boy whined that they should have turkey and, though informed that the bird would cost 30 cents a pound, was not a whit better satisfied to do without it.

The day before Thanksgiving Mrs. Tarrant and Amy before the latter went to her work had a final conference as to how they should get up a dinner for the morrow. There were absolutely no funds, and Amy could not draw even the few dollars that were coming to her until the end of the week. Nor was there anything in the larder except a few potatoes. The outlook was dismal. Amy went to her work, intending to ask for enough of her weekly salary to provide at least a meal sufficient to stay the children's appetites, but she was informed that such advances were contrary to the rules of the office. She returned after business hours to inform her mother of her failure and was approaching the house when she saw a man standing at the door. As she drew near she recognized John Esterbrook.

"Why, John," she exclaimed, "what brought you here?"

"Well," replied John, "your predictions as to my business having been fulfilled, I've invited myself to take a Thanksgiving dinner with you. I haven't had a real good one since we parted."

"Oh, dear! What shall we do? We haven't a cent with which to buy a dinner."

"That's a disappointment, isn't it?"

"Not only to you, but to us. Mother and I wouldn't complain if it were not for the children."

"Haven't you anything in the house?"

"Nothing." A tear stood in her eye.

"Well, I have a little change left, but I reckon I'll have to pay it out for something to fill the children's stomachs. Suppose we go now together. The markets will not be open on Thanksgiving morning."

She walked away with him and as she proceeded sympathized with him at his ill success, reminding him of persons' mishaps and shortcomings to their conversation when he went away appear amusing. If taken to task for a blunder he would soften it by a joke without hard work, whether he liked so apt that it assured his forgiveness. He then, too, John had in him a keen appreciation of the foibles of human nature. He realized that all persons like work, but confessed that he had not to have the shortcomings of other persons except themselves shown up in an amusing way.

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PERSIAN GULF PEARLS

The Shereh Aga Recently Arrived at the Red Sea. Bombay, India, for his pearl business. In not a hour producer, through the game he brought there for shipment in all parts of the world. The pearls were taken from the Bahrein Islands, a small archipelago on the western side of the Persian Gulf, which, although adjacent to territory under the control of Turkey, is governed by an independent sheik, under special British protection, the British government maintaining a political agent there.

Of this group of islands only those of Bahrein and Maharat are of any importance, however, in that they are the great center of the Persian gulf pearl fisheries, which are the world's chief source of supply for pearls. The sheik of Bahrein is held to have a customs revenue amounting to about \$400,000 per year, which makes him the richest ruler in the Persian Gulf. The pearl fisheries under his control may in a good year bring to his islands as much as \$2,500,000.

It is difficult for newcomers to obtain the services of good divers owing to the system in vogue, which practically makes this class of men slaves to the masters of the pearling boats. The men's earnings in the majority of cases are insufficient to keep them all the year round, and consequently they take advances from their masters year after year to such an extent that they can never repay their debt. When a diver decides to engage himself to another boat the owner of the latter has to pay up the debt due to the former master should he engage him.—Argument.

MILITARY COWARDICE

A Sample of Its Exhibition During the Thirty Years' War.

Punishment for cowardice in the German army at the time of the Thirty Years' war was so severe as to be forgotten. In the year 1643 the Swedish General Torstensson ordered a regiment of 400 men to attack a village before the gates of the city, but during the engagement the Maddebock regiment became suddenly panic-stricken and fled.

Punishment immediately followed. When the regiment had again assembled six other regiments surrounded it and tried it by court martial in the open field. The verdict was that the colonel and the captain should die by the sword and that every tenth man among the noncommissioned officers and men should be hanged.

The stern verdict was carried out to the letter, except that at the request of Leopold the men were shot instead of hanged. Colonel George Maddebock was beheaded after he had sought in vain for a pardon. The survivors were consigned to quarters with other commands, and the regiment never regained its name or former prestige. In those days there was no alternative but to be brave. Cowardice meant either death or humiliating disgrace.—Youth's Companion.

SCRAPS AND A DINNER

A French Chef's Feast With Food That Had Been Discarded.

A year or two ago I was chafed in a country gentleman's household in England. The morning after my arrival I looked around the kitchen garden, and in the dust bin that stood in the backyard I saw a mixture of food that could have been turned into a first class dinner.

In about four quarts of milk that had turned sour were swimming stale half loaves, drumsticks of fowls, old ham bones, cold boiled potatoes, trimmings of dough made for piecrusts, cracked eggs, some old codfish and some spoiled macaroni.

Next day I found a second consignment very similar, about to be carried away and thrown out. I stopped this lot, sorted it out and, with the help of a little stock, half a dozen eggs and a hare that had been shot on the estate, served a seven course dinner for a family of ten that night, and the master of the household called me up and complimented me before the whole family on the best dinner they had had for a year.

Afterward his wife sent for me and told me that, though pleased with the dinner, she feared I had been too extravagant and said that her rule was not to allow more than 7 shillings per head in housekeeping. It was a severe shock to her to hear I had fed the family on the scraps of the cook that had left the day before, the cost being not over ninepence per head.—From an interview with a French chef in National Food Magazine.

The Market in Gaul. We believe that there is still some market for cauls among sailors, who retain their belief in the efficacy of the membranes as a protection against shipwreck and drowning. Notices of "Cauls For Sale Within" were to be seen recently in windows in the vicinity of the docks of both London and Liverpool, but it is some time since we have noticed an advertisement of a caul for sale in the daily press. It may be remarked that the sale of cauls, so far from being a very ancient custom, is a comparatively modern innovation. The wretched sort of the middle ages declared against the caul retaining any virtue whatever if parted with by gift or sale to any but a member of the child's kindred.—London Lancet.

The Struggle. The road to eminence and power from an obscure condition ought not to be made too easy nor a thing so much of course. If rare merit be the parent of all things it ought to pass through some sort of probation. The temple of honor ought to be seated on an eminence. If it be open through virtue let it be remembered, too, that virtue is never tried but by some difficulty and some struggle.—Burke.

Tangled Up in Boston. Hank—Eve in Boston. Bill? Bill? Yep. Hank—Get tangled up any? Bill—A little I stole a pup from a front porch, run two miles with him and stopped to rest right on de same front porch I stole him from.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

A Spunking Team. "Now, Tommy, this little story says, 'The rich man had a spunking team.' Now, what's a 'spunking team?'" "I know, My pa and ma's one."—Baltimore American.

Astronomy Versus Art. Professor—Has anything ever been discovered on Venus? Student—No, sir, there has not—if the pictures are correct.—Judge.

BUILDING OF PETROGRAD

Rebuilding the Capital. Most astonishing thing about it all these years ago, was the fact that the city was built on a swampy plain, and that the ground was so soft that the buildings were sinking into it. In 1703, when the first foundations of the city were laid, the ground was so soft that the buildings were sinking into it. In 1703, when the first foundations of the city were laid, the ground was so soft that the buildings were sinking into it.

Peter went to work with his usual energy and with his usual reluctance to create a capital in what was once a desert. He almost imperceptibly directed the building of the city and gave the directions of the streets to half a dozen workmen. The work was pushed with almost incredible rapidity, so that by 1717 sufficient advances had been made to permit the transfer of the imperial family from Moscow.

One measure offered by Peter was that thousands of peasants must be taken in or near the new capital. A special tax was put on the surplus to meet the expense of building the city. Such a small difficulty as the scarcity of masons was nothing to a man like Peter the Great. He simply forbade the erection of stone buildings anywhere else in the empire until Petrograd was finished.—New York Times.

PEOPLE JUSTICE

A couple in a certain village, each the parent of six children, had meted out to them a kind of poetic justice in which they failed to see the poetry.

The woman, a widow, pleading that she had no home and was therefore unable to care for her children, induced the local authorities to admit them to an orphan asylum. The man, a widower, pleading he had no housekeeper and therefore no one to care for his children, induced the authorities to admit his six also. Thereupon, being freed from all incumbrances, these two married.

All went well for a few months, when the authorities, learning of the situation, promptly disintegrated the twelve children back to their parents, and the woman no longer able to support herself as homeless or the man as without a housekeeper, they were forced to receive them.

One of Hook's Puns. Theodore Hook, the inveterate punster, could pun with safety upon matters that touched his own pocket. He envied the usually prosaic and unwelcome duty of paying his taxes by a word of advice to his neighbors to do likewise—which it is to be hoped the worthy Mr. Winter, the collector, found of some assistance.

Here comes Mr. Winter, inspector of taxes. I advise you to pay him whatever he asks. I advise you to pay him without any summary. For though his name's Winter, his actions are summary!

The Farce. Farce is a modern term founded on the Latin verb *facere*, to stuff. This was originally an allusion to the practice of the ancient buffoons padding out their stage dress to abnormal dimensions. Later the padding was dispensed with, but the wide garments were retained.

Just Goes Out. "Mother, when the fire goes out, where does it go?" asked a child of her parent.

"I don't know, dear," replied the mother. "You might just as well ask me where your father goes when he goes out!"

Conditional. Examiner—Now, William, if a man can do one-fourth of a piece of work in two days how long will he take to finish it? William—Is it a contract job or is he workin' by the day?—Life.

Grasping Animal. Man is never satisfied. If he finds a nickel which he didn't know he had in some obscure pocket he immediately begins to look for another.—Toledo Blade.

REVIEW OF AN AMERICAN

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"Indeed!" replied his friend. "You can't feel it, hear it, smell it or see it. How under the sun do you know you've got a car, then?"

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