

Republican Journal Supplement.

BELFAST, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1881.

Our National Thanksgiving.

Today, in response to the President's proclamation and the proclamations of the Governors of the respective States, the people through all the length and breadth of the land will cease from their usual avocations, devote themselves to social enjoyments and to the recognition of the Supreme wisdom which rules in all the affairs of men, giving the rain and the sunshine in due season, and crowning the year with plenty. By many the belief is entertained that this semi-religious festival originated with the Pilgrim Fathers, who, tradition tells us, before the landing at Plymouth, celebrated in the cabin of the Mayflower their escape from the perils of the deep by solemn acts of worship, in which the sense of gratitude to God found the most expressive utterance. But this is a mistake. Our American Thanksgiving no doubt had its origin in a much remoter period—even in that far away time when the Jewish people inaugurated among their national holidays "The Feast of Tabernacles," wherein they recognized the goodness of God at the ingathering of the harvest, and at the same time commemorated His protecting care over their fathers in the passage through the wilderness. This custom seems to have come down to our times through various European nations which made the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, the rule of their faith and conduct, and among which the observance of the day of thanksgiving was formally recommended at times by the civil authorities. In October, 1575, there was a public thanksgiving at Leyden in Holland to celebrate the first anniversary of the deliverance of that city from its besiegers. The fact was no doubt familiar to the minds of the Pilgrim church, who, exiled from England, resided in Leyden from 1608 to 1620, or until their departure for Plymouth; and so it was perfectly natural, and in the ordinary course of events, that after their first harvest in 1621, Governor Bradford should send four men out to shoot fowls that they might, after a more special manner, rejoice together. Thus, from the very beginning of the observance of this festival in America, we know that it was a day dedicated not only to grateful worship but to good cheer; and, as the settlements increased and colonies were established by men of other nationalities, the wise and venerable custom was extended. In New York the early Dutch governors introduced occasional "Thanksgivings" for a period of 20 years, dating from 1641, and more than a century later the English Governors followed the excellent example. During the Revolution, Thanksgiving day was recognized as a national institution by repeated acts of Congress as long as the war continued; and, in 1784, there was a general Thanksgiving observance in all the States for the success that had crowned the efforts of the colonies to secure their independence. In 1795, President Washington issued a second proclamation for Thanksgiving, on account of the suppression of rebellion, and, after the war of 1812, President Madison, by request of Congress, recommended a national Thanksgiving for the return of peace to a distressed and impoverished people. But the official recommendation of Thanksgiving observances was after that time mainly confined to New England until a later period. In New York its annual observances commenced in 1847. In 1858 the Governors of eight Southern States issued Thanksgiving proclamations, and, during the war of the rebellion, President Lincoln gave to this time-honored religious festival a national establishment. In 1862 and 1863 he recommended special thanksgiving for victory, and in 1864 and 1865 he issued proclamations for the general observance of the ancient holiday. Since that time all his successors have followed his example; and today, as the earliest rays of the morning

An Aesthetic Lay.

Mary had a little mule,
Its eyes were heavy blue,
She called it an aesthetic,
'Twas so terribly too true.
One day it found she'd left its side,
Which was utterly unkind;
So it dropped a mule-tear and died,
It felt so awfully awful.
They buried it on a sunny slope,
Where the south wind gently blew,
And the band that played its funeral dirge
Went too te too-too too.

Out of the Depths.

A THANKSGIVING STORY.

"The Dead musician" was the inscription I read in antique characters upon the tarnished door-plate as I rang the bell.

Simultaneously with the faint tinkle in the basement there arose a weird noise, half shriek, half laugh, that never could have proceeded from any human lips—almost fiendish in its first wild fierceness, and then gradually dying away in accents of despairing piteousness.

I started back involuntarily, and was still standing confused and bewildered when a young girl opened the door, and as I asked to see Mr. Ballendrant I could not keep my eyes from scanning her countenance, which struck me as being the fairest and most expressive I had ever seen.

Not of the floral type of beauty. No golden hair and melting azure eyes. Hair of a rich dark brown, around a broad white brow; true womanly eyes, eloquent to those who could read them aright, with a story of mingled strength of mind and faithful love.

Her form small and delicate, yet with a suppleness that told of health; while all her features were regular and her teeth pearly white. Yet there was something in her face, with all its delicate beauty, that told roses had not always bloomed through the summer of her youth.

I could not help noticing the troubled expression, almost a look of pain, that swept over the features as I spoke, and I hastened to explain that I had a letter of introduction from a professor of the college where I had studied, stating I wished to take some lessons in music, and thinking he might be disposed to instruct me.

Again the troubled look intensified if anything. She did not reply, however, but lead the way into a desolate little parlor, and asking me to be seated went out, closing the door after her.

I looked around the dreary, cheerless room, and out of the window on the not unimpressive prospect of back yard closed around by the rear of dingy brick buildings; and thought what a joyless place for one so young and fair to have to live in. Then my mind reverted to the weird noise I had heard, and wondered what it could be.

As I was thinking the door opened, and a tall man with long, gray hair and flowing beard entered, accompanied by his daughter. His figure was much stooped at the shoulders, and his once strikingly handsome face was crossed by many a wrinkle, and moreover, bore a most peculiar expression, as though he constantly strove to catch some far-off sound.

Miss Ballendrant's words explained it.

"Papa has lately had the bitter misfortune to lose his powers of hearing," she said. "Indeed, he has become totally deaf, and you will have to communicate your thoughts to him in writing."

He seemed to know what she was saying.

"Yes," he said, "my hearing is becoming weakened, and I shall trouble you to write anything you wish to say, or let my little girl do it for you."

Miss Ballendrant turned her eyes up on him with a fond expression, and, through the medium of a small slate which hung at her waist, let her father know that as I had studied before it was practice upon the piano under a competent instructor I wished, and he fixed the time for the first lesson on the following day.

I was on my way to the door when Miss Ballendrant very nervously spoke: "I should have indeed meant to have told you that papa is often unwell—and, perhaps, if you do not object—I shall have sometimes to take his place."

I have no doubt my face showed the surprise I felt, for she walked quickly to the piano—the only article of any value in the room—opened it and sat down.

"Do you doubt my ability?" she said, with a touch of pride.

She did not give me time to reply, but, running her fingers over the keys for a moment, awoke them into life, making the air vibrate with a volume of music like something of Bach's almost startling one to hear the crash and rumble like an Alpine storm—every avalanche of tempestuous harmony.

After the dull gloom that pervaded the room but a moment before, one could easily imagine it to be an impassioned account of the creation, and that the quivering chords beneath the touch of those delicate fingers gave forth the music of the spheres and the rush of the waters as they surged over the shoreless world.

Then came a grand, triumphant hymn, a rapturous song of praise that might have swelled from the throats of the angels, proclaiming the approval of the Holy Spirit that it was good.

Then a dreamy, moonlight sort of song without words, typical of nature asleep and the solitude of the vast continents; and last, the daintiest, airiest, most spirit-like air—dainty, airy and spirit-like as anything Chopin ever wrote, almost too ethereal to be human,

like the first glad pulsations of the wonderful mystery of life.

"Beautiful!" was all I could say as she rose, her lovely face aglow with the delicious pride which springs from the consciousness of power.

"Miss Ballendrant," I said, earnestly, after a pause, "I never for an instant doubted your ability to instruct me, but had I done so your performance would convince the most skeptical."

This was the introduction to each other. What her feelings may have been I cannot tell; neither can I analyze my own—charmed, bewildered, with all the romance of my nature awakened, and my curiosity aroused as to the source of that unearthly cwy.

The next day at the appointed time I was there, and for a week I went regularly, until I came to regard it as the only period of real pleasure in the day.

My beautiful instructress and I had become excellent friends, and I liked to tell myself that when I was with her that anxious look became less marked and her whole being brightened up.

Her father ever sat in the rocking chair during the lessons, but seldom speaking, except to his daughter, whom he usually called "this little girl," but sometimes Camille.

One day I saw he was annoyed at something, and Camille's face did not brighten up as was its wont.

We went through our lesson mechanically; she was evidently troubled about something, and I felt conscious I was intruding upon some household distress.

When the lesson was over, and I rose to take my leave, the old man addressed me.

"Miss Ballendrant," he said, "it was the first time I had ever heard him either address or speak to her—'has been trying to persuade me that I am growing childish, and that my hand has forgotten the instrument I have played since my childhood. I shall leave it to you whether she speaks the truth or not.'"

As he spoke he took a violin from a case beside him, and arranging the strings, glanced triumphantly towards his daughter, but she had buried her face in her hands, and was sobbing silently.

The moment he drew the bow across the strings I thought there was something amiss, and then, oh, powers of discord, the noise I had heard when I first stood upon the step, such hideous wailings and shrieks as filled the room. No one with the veriest knowledge of music could have touched these strings. Had an infant the necessary strength of arm and waist he would have produced as much harmony.

Surprised and bewildered, I knew not how to act.

Unwilling for Camille's sake to sit and hear, and not wishing for the same reason to offend the old man by taking my leave, I knew not how to act.

Suddenly Camille started to her feet, her face flushed crimson and her eyes swollen with tears.

"Are you a gentleman?" she cried, hysterically, "to sit there and see an old, childish man make a fool of himself? Perhaps, though, it amuses you. If so, pray enjoy it."

"Camille," I pleaded, "you are unjust."

"Go!" she shrieked, wildly, and pointing to the door, "go!"

"You are unjust," I said again; "but believe me, I pity you from the bottom of my heart. By and by, when you can think, remember I am your friend till death."

I walked miles that afternoon through a drizzling rain and raw November air, but the house had a fascination for me, and almost unconsciously I retraced my steps.

As I drew near I saw a crowd gathered around the door, and, hurrying on, I asked one of the bystanders what was the matter.

"Matter enough. The old fellow's dead, and the girl's half crazy, and keeps on crying out that she killed him."

I found it was too true, the violin lay dashed to fragments on the floor, the old man was dead, and his daughter lay in a swoon with a doctor trying to restore her.

She gradually recovered consciousness, but only to break into fresh denunciations of herself as having killed him. At length, however, she wore herself completely out, and under the doctor's management, sank into a deep slumber.

The coroner gave the verdict that the old man had died of heart disease accelerated by unusual excitement. Then, giving the doctor a *carte blanche*, I saw that everything that money could do was done before I left.

I called the next morning early, and found Camille sitting up in an easy-chair, but very weak and exhausted.

"I wish to see you," she said, "to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kindness you have shown, but I am very poor, and can never repay you."

I tried to stop her, but she would not hear me, and she told me the story, the bitter story of her life. How her father had been gradually losing his hearing until about three years before, when he had been attacked by some peculiar affection of the brain which completely puzzled the doctors, and when he had recovered his strength his musical powers were completely gone; how she had kept the knowledge from him, blaming herself, oh! so bitterly, for her loving deceit; how hard they had found it to live upon the pittance she could earn; of all her futile trials in endeavoring to get pupils. Then, how yesterday, when concealment was no longer possible, she had let him know the truth; and dashing the violin to pieces, he had fallen in what she thought a fit, but was in reality death.

It was a relief to her, yet God only knows the pain it cost her to tell me this; and, as she recalled the final catastrophe, she clasped her hands, and through a rain of tears prayed silently for strength to endure.

I followed the body of the old man to its last resting place, and when the service was over and the minister had departed I left Camille by her father's grave and waited for her at the gate. In about an hour she rejoined me, a very picture of sorrow, pale but very calm. It was the day before Thanksgiving, and as a contrast of the rich home comforts of that festive occasion with me and the cheerless, solitary life of that young girl in her desolation forced itself upon my mind, the thought took possession of me that my interest in her was a better one than of pity for her loneliness and I saw my way clear for her future.

We stood in silence for a moment or two, and then I ventured to ask her plans for the future.

"I have taken a little room," she said, "and, though I have little money, I trust I can manage until I get a situation of some sort."

"Miss Ballendrant," I said, "I have a situation for you if you will accept it."

She turned her eyes to me inquiringly. "A lady going abroad desires a companion. My recommendations will be sufficient. Do you think it would suit you?"

"Oh, I should be so thankful," she said, "if I thought I were competent to fill it. And the lady's name?"

"My mother."

A rosy flush suffused her face, and she asked, timidly:

"Are you going also?"

"I intend doing so; but do not let that be an objection."

One sudden look of joy flashed into her eyes, and for a moment chased the sorrow from her face. Only for an instant; but it was enough for me to know, and I could wait patiently, trusting in the future.

On the next day she was a guest at my mother's Thanksgiving dinner; her modesty and grace endeared her to my parent, and she was gladly received into the situation for which I had presumed to engage her, and it was not long until she had a more permanent engagement.

We have enjoyed many Thanksgiving's since, but none that has not gained pleasure from the recollections of that early one, which brought cheer and a new life to the dreary outlook of her who is my best reason for heartfelt Thanksgiving.

Women—What Great Writers Say About Them.

How divine a thing
A woman may be made.
[Wadsworth.]
Earth's noblest thing—a woman perfected
[Howell.]
A woman's whim—they are full of whims.
[Aldrich.]
These women are shrewd tempters with their
tongues. [Shakespeare.]
One must tell a woman only what one wants
to be known. [Gautier.]
Women always give more than they receive;
men less. [Arsene Houssaye.]
Women, more than all, are the element and
kingdom of illusion. [Flaubert.]
Formed for softness she,
And sweet attentive grace. [Milton.]
Woman is a changing creature, who changes
her heart as easily as her gloves. [Balzac.]
Beauty is the first present nature gives to a
woman and the first it takes away. [Mere.]
All men are more eloquent than women make;
but women are more powerful to persuade.
[Randolph.]
But for them, sir, our entire world is but a frost
bitten sweet potato, worthless to the core. [Bacon.]
Beauty deceives women in making them
establish on an ephemeral power the pretensions
of a whole life. [Bismarck.]
Some reckon women by their sins of years.
I rather think the moon should date the years.
[Byron.]
A woman who writes commits two sins—she
increases the number of books and decreases
the number of women. [Alphonse Karr.]
No one can be a master in conversation who has
not learned much from women; their presence
and inspiration are essential to his success.
[Emerson.]
A woman's heart, though delicate, is strong—
like virgin gold it takes the furnace heat,
giving to history and immortal song
A glow to heroism pure and sweet.
[Bemans.]
Providence made a great mistake when it put
hearts into girls—hearts all ready to love and ad-
mire, and be grateful and happy with a word, with
a nothing. [Miss Thackeray.]
Lover, daughter, sister, wife, mother, grand-
mother, in those six words he what the human
heart contains of sweetness, the most ecstatic,
the most sacred, the purest and the most ineffable
[Massias.]
It is hardly an argument against a man's
strength of character that he should be apt to be
mastered by love. A man may be very firm in
other matters, and yet be under a sort of witchery
from a woman. [George Eliot.]
Now the winter cometh quickly
And it's time to huck once more
In conspicuous position
The inscription, "Shut the door!"
But, alas, our education
As a people is denied.
For each looks straight at the warning,
And the door leaves open wide.

Thanksgiving Thoughts.

I am glad we belong to a country in which Thanksgiving comes as a forerunner of the greater feast of the Redemption. The beautiful impulse of gratitude makes a fitting preparation for the holy devotion of love which should hail in a Christian country the coming to the Saviour. The lifting up of hearts for the bounteous fruits of plenty and welfare leads one unconsciously toward exaltation for the most wonderful gift of all; with the receiving of which mortals shall put on immortality. It is like the first step on the ladder of prayer and praise, down which angels come, and up which the soul mounts from earth to heaven. Like even the earthly preparation for the good old Puritan festival, which makes the dull November days redolent with the memory of summer's prime and autumn's bounty, with the beauty of growing fields and the perfume of ripening harvests. We are so apt to take the natural blessings and miracles of life as accepted facts, without note or comment, that it satisfies a certain poetic justice in having their claims on gratefulness admitted, even once a year. For are they not as much part and parcel of the divine mysteries, as the choirs of angels and flight of Cherubim? And is not the love which typifies the doctrine of resurrection in the germ of wheat and the grain of mustard seed, worthy of uplifted hands and prayerful souls?

What is the miracle of the loaves and fishes to the one which goes on before our blind eyes year after year, flooding the nations of the earth with abundance, constantly renewed as it is needed, filling the waste places with plenty and making glad the desolation of the earth. When recurring season repeats the mysterious reproduction of the harvest, is it not as truly a work of God as the increase of wine at the marriage of Cana, or distribution of bread among the gathered five thousand? Yet we cover the greater wonder from sight under the shadows of "natural laws," while we look upon the lesser as a special work of grace. [M. E. B., in Boston Journal.]

A Bourbon Anecdote.

John J. Crittenden used to tell this anecdote to illustrate the fidelity of his people to the "wine of the country."

A leading politician of the State (Kentucky), stopping for the night at the house of a countryman in one of the southeastern counties, found the entertainment he got the more satisfactory because of a barrel of very respectable whiskey having been just brought in. Returning a month afterward from an electioneering tour, and disappointed in not being able to get even a drink, he reminded the host, with some impatience, that only a month ago he had a full barrel in his pantry. The look that preceded the answer to this reminder was composed of surprise and resentment.

"Lookee here, my friend, do you spect one bar'l' of whiskey to last *always*, and specially when a man's got a wife and six children, and the cow's gone dry, and they've got no milk?"

"Never!" answered the candidate, "certainly not. I didn't understand the situation, or I'd never have asked so foolish a question. This molasses-and-water is well, it's simply splendid!" [Editor's Drawer, in Harper's Magazine for November.]

The Advantage of Being a Boy.

At the closing of the Railway (N. J.) grammar school, Adolph Jacobs, aged 13 years, composed and read the following composition on "The Advantage of Being a Boy."

A boy is generally born when he is very young, and gets to be a man before his mother. A boy is not so skittish as a girl. He takes a mouse, which would scare his sister half to death, and ties a string to its tail and swings it over his head. Then he is in his glory, and laughs at his sister, who is looking for a knot-hole to hide in. He wears no lace-trim or corsets, petticoats or skirts. A boy possesses ten times more cheek than a girl, but, if he ever does any mischief, he owns up to it with a bright, smiling face. Girls are a great deal of trouble to their parents, who have to keep them in until somebody falls in love with them and marries them. Not so with the boy—he takes care of horses, works in the mine and raises a cabin. All that girls do for exercise is to make dolls, chemises and crochet work, while the boy, the spark of mankind, is putting up some job to play on his teacher, or playing the glorious game of base ball. Hurrah! then, for the boys. They are standard-bearers of the world!

The English Nautical Magazine thinks that steel ships pay. A steel ship was built in 1877 for the Bilbao ore trade at a cost of \$91,750, or \$6,750 more than she might have been obtained for if built of iron. The gross earnings of this vessel, due to increased carrying capacity, have amounted to \$1,200 per annum; and after deducting from this the cost of discharging the extra cargo, and the extra insurance, etc., there still remains a yearly gain of \$250 which is a very fair percentage upon \$6,750.

Here we have an Oyster. It is going to a Church Fair. When it gets to the Fair it will swim around in a big Kettle of Warm Water. A Lady will Stir it with a Spoon and Sell the Warm Water for two Bits a pint. Then the Oyster will move on to the next Fair. In this Way the Oyster will visit all the Church Fairs in town and Bring a great many Dollars into the Treasury. The Oyster goes a great Way in a Good Cause. [Denver Tribune Primer.]

"The shores of the bay
Where the Mayflower lay,"

the voices of thanksgiving and praise will arise from the descendants of those Mayflower Pilgrims; and, gathering volume as the day advances across the continent and declines in the twilight of the Pacific skies, will bear to heaven the record of more than 50,000,000 of the most grateful and happy people upon whom the sun has never shone,

"Since the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy."

