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* WHOLESALE AND RETAIL *

No. 36 Main Street,

SALT LAKE CITY.

THANKSGIVING

AT THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

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"Next Thursday will be Thanksgiving," said Mrs. Sarah Whitcomb one November morning, as she came hurrying in from the kitchen, where she had hurried to personally supervise the making of the morning meal, and took her seat at the head of the breakfast table, around which her husband and ten children were already grouped. "Only a week to prepare for it and nothing done yet."

Her utterance of the word "Thanksgiving" brought a look of eager expectancy into the face of every Whitcomb present from the 30-year-old son Ruben to little Ruth, the 18-month-old baby of the household, who, as though she had the clearest possible notion of the significance of the occasion and the host of good things indissolubly associated with it, laughed and cried and clapped her tiny hands as she sat on the lap of her sister Hope.

That sister was a rare type of New England beauty. The eldest of the large Whitcomb family, she had been "putting in" at 16 but now, at 25, the dominant radiance of early youth was crowned by a pensive sadness that made it still more beautiful. Like many another New England girl, Hope Whitcomb's life had known the romance of a sailor lover—a fine, manly fellow, some seven years her senior, to whom she had been betrothed at 17, and whose ship had not been lost with all on board three months before the Thanksgiving day set for their wedding.

But notwithstanding that melancholy association, Thanksgiving was always a joyous occasion in the household of Joseph Whitcomb, an industrious and prosperous New England farmer, residing wherever the father chooses to locate him within the great region bounded by the shores of the Connecticut river, the Green Mountains, Mount Hope, and Mowheeh Lake.

"Well, now, mother," said Mr. Whitcomb, in response to his wife's observation, "I should think a week was time enough to get up a Thanksgiving dinner and a Thanksgiving supper good enough for King George himself."

"No, now, mother," said Mr. Whitcomb, "I've had anything to do with the house to get it with, but we haven't a bit of flour, not a morsel of mince pie."

"Never you mind, mother," responded Mr. Whitcomb, "we'll have a Thanksgiving for the Governor in spite of all that. Last Saturday I put into a bag a good deal of what was ever ground. Ruben can take a horse and carry it to the mill this morning, and you'll have prime flour in a brace of shakes. We've got plenty of butter and lard, and Ruben can order your raisins, spices and such at Griffin's store, and you'll have home-made mince."

"Have you asked Father Stratton?"

"Yes, and what's more interesting to you, his brother Dave."

"Dave doesn't interest me a bit," re-

sponded his sister, coloring violently as she turned to leave the room.

"Wait a minute, sis. I heard today that he's coming to town. You can judge for yourself."

"I won't believe it," exclaimed Father, "but I'll wait till he comes."

"Yes, but I'll wait till he comes."

"The day had been bitterly cold, and the mercury fell still lower as night drew on. But the Whitcomb boys and girls, the large fireplace in the long dining room, the 'fore room' and the 'end room,' well piled up with good sized logs, and the blazing fire sent warmth and light to every corner of those apartments. And now the young folks began to arrive."

First came the boys in their jackets and caps, and then the girls in their dresses and bonnets.

"Here's Dave Stratton's bell," said Father, as a merry rattle was heard coming nearer, and a few moments later Dave Stratton, his sister Esther, Susan Olney and two strange gentlemen were in the dining room.

One of the strangers was a young man of some 23 years. He was of medium height and light build and his countenance was singularly frank and winning.

The other was a tall, stout, old man, and though the snows of many winters had heavily bowed his form, his face was remarkably smooth and unlined, and his features singularly bold and well defined for one of his years.

His long white hair fell nearly to his shoulders, and beneath his bushy, gray brows peered out large, dark eyes of piercing brightness. His dress was very old and strange, being many, many years behind the fashion of the time. He merely made a comprehensive bow to the company in general as he entered and selecting the vacant corner near the fireplace, he placed thereon a great chair—almost a log—which he carried and tossed some secret spring contained within it metamorphosed it into a quiver of chairs, upon which he sat down. Taking from his pocket a small book he began to read it so intently as to seem oblivious of all around him.

"I don't know what to make of that old chap," said Dave Stratton, anxious to do justice to the presence and strange conduct of the old gentleman, before introducing the young one. "That's the way we found him sitting at the cross of Barth's tomb by taking about him, for he's just as dead as a post."

"He's not dead, he's just as you see him now, prettily as he is, and I don't mind saying, though I know he couldn't see it, he's a good deal better than he looks."

"He's a good deal better than he looks," said Dave, "but he's a good deal better than he looks."

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"He came to board at our house this afternoon," said Dave, "and to Father."

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made a point of seeing you that would have been made off in the direction of the schoolmaster."

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knowledge that he was married in the event of her having forgotten him and married another. He had therefore retained from writing, and had retained his old home and his sweetheart disinterested as an old man.

"No, here I am at last, dear Hope," concluded "Tale and hearty, and rich besides, but Hope, I would, rather have come back crippled for life and penniless too, I would rather have lost my arm—yes, I would rather have lost my hand, than to have come back to find you dead or anything but what I have found you. Thank God for all his goodness."

"And listening to all this, Hope knew that she was not that she might have been in happiness as she had so long lived in sorrow; that God is good, and that by one moment of such complete and perfect happiness. He reveals to his children the meaning of that joy which comes in the morning and goes out in the evening, which has endured throughout the long night."

"It was late, or rather early, when the company departed, after having been laden back to a wedding feast on that night week. Before leaving, Dave Stratton whispered to Father that he should have to take Susan Olney home, but it was the last time he would ever take her anywhere."

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