

N. AUGUSTUS HINCHINS, ESQ.

A THANKSGIVING STORY.

Whoever happened in at the domicile of Farmer Hinchins, on the eve preceding a day appointed by the Governor of the New England States, for 'Public Thanksgiving and Praise,' could not have avoided noticing that somebody more than the circle there assembled was expected. As a large family sat about the capacious fire-place, the hearty honest wood fire threw a cheerful light on their almost happy faces—almost happy because as we have intimated there was a chair yet to fill. The premonitors of thanksgiving waited upon the table, in the cold anticipatory chicken pie, manufactured more with an eye to quality than to quantity, the stout pitchers of cider, flanked with plates of shining pippins, walnuts cracked ready for the tooth, 'fire cake' yet smoking, and 'dough-nuts,' in Manhattan called 'crawlers,' a bountiful supply. Another 'platter' contained a formidable brisket piece of cold boiled beef, with a garnish of pork, and no lack of cabbage and cold 'garden sauce.' Such was the repast, and the party only waited the arrival of some expected guest to fall upon it.

Suspense, which always appears long to those who endure it, is not half so long as it seems.—At its usual hour of arrival the Hardscrabble mail coach drove into the village, and stopped before Farmer Hinchins' door, deposited the precious burden for which the family had been waiting for three hours before it was due. Sisters, brothers, father, and mother crowded round a mass of shawls, handkerchiefs, wrappings, fur tippet and upper Benjamin, and by industrious unrolling, a young gentleman was at length revealed,—father's hope and mother's joy, in lengthened sweetness long drawn out. All had naturally made up their minds to be delighted to see him; but the mother started back from his lips as if she had encountered a shoe brush. The sisters were frozen into formality by an apparition so much unlike their mental portrait of brother Nahum, and the little brother ran grinning into the corner of the room. The old gentleman laid off his spectacles, and commenced a survey of the nondescript, beginning at his monkey face, coursing over his foppish waist, running a line of survey down his candle-mould invested legs, and ending in a long stare at his stilt heeled boots. It was evident they had expected a natural blood relation, but had found an unnatural curiosity. The stranger repaid the stare of curiosity with another, and putting his quizzing glass to his eye; surveyed the room in which his childhood was spent, as if he had never seen it before, and was not sure it was habitable. His father frowned, his mother bit her lips, his sisters blushed before his gaze, and his brothers, to use their expression, 'snorted right out.'

Affection cannot, however, be lightly crushed, and the family could not forget that they were receiving a long absent member. The animal was led to the fire, and deposited himself in a chair with the air of a man who was paying his inferiors an enormous compliment, and the usual common-places were passed between the guest and his entertainers. November's cold without was not half so chilling as the re-union within the walls of Farmer Hinchins' dwelling. The city son diversified his conversation at table with remarks upon city dishes, by way of teaching his father and mother, by no very ambiguous intimations, that people lived in the country very much like savages.

Every attempt to excite his interest in old familiar scenes and objects was parried by his careless gab to show his traveled knowledge, and his acquaintance with scenes and people who were not for superiority to be mentioned in the same breath with any of the objects and persons which composed the happy little rural world of which N. Augustus Hinchins had once been a contented resident. Or if that worthy vouchsafed to hear his friends speak, it was with such an expressive smile of condescension that the rustic family began in spite of themselves, to feel inferiority before Mr. Hinchins, as they now felt compelled to call him whom they had counted on welcoming home with their whole hearts as brother Nahum. The cider and apples did, however, melt down a little of Nahum's gentility before he went to bed, and the sisters actually ventured to offer their hands as they parted for the night. 'Awrawwah,' drawled out Nahum Augustus Hinchins, as he scuffed out of the room in embroidered slippers, holding the lamp with a thumb and finger, 'Awrawwah mah mare eh mong pare.'

The matron looked up anxiously at her husband as she raked up the fire—the husband sat in mood contemplative. At last as he rose, he broke out—'The starch must be taken out of that youngster, ma'am.'

'He is our own son, Mr. Hinchins.'

'Never mind, the starch must be taken out, and if it is not before to-morrow night I'll be—'

Mrs. H.'s somewhat extensive hand clapped a stopper on the farmer's mouth, but not on his resolution.

'Why don't the boy come down?' said the father the next morning. The mother went up to see. The tender lad complained bitterly that there was no bell in the room—and that he had always been accustomed to have a fire in his 'apartment,' but as there was no servant, he would try once to rise without. So after a deal of fuss about water and towels, and a display of his dressing box to the astonishment of his country mamma, he managed in an hour's time to come down to breakfast in a dressing gown and slippers; the former article causing new amusement to the young natives, his brothers, who thought that he might as well be a woman at once, and done with it.

He exhausted the bastard French of the hotels in lamenting the 'absence of sundry made dishes, but concluded at last to let a furious appetite have its way. He ate bountifully of the wholesome food before him, cooked by his tidy mother and sisters, instead of by greasy men in dirty nightcaps, with napkins tucked through their buttonholes, which answered to dust a plate or wipe the mouths of the wearers.

Getting ready for church was another awful difficulty. He inquired for a 'bawber,' although he very well knew there was no such phenomenon in the village, and never had been. He asked his mother to send his boots to the boot-black's, another dignity that Hardscrabble never supported; and the mother, as many a foolish mother has, compromised the matter by taking his elegant and fashionable leathers to the kitchen fire and giving them a brilliant coat of first rate 'blackball,' a stereotyped unction for leather, warranted to preserve it and fill the pores.—She, good lady, had beautified them to the best of her knowledge and belief, but the shining coat of Day and Martin, the remains of which had adorned them before, was not improved by this operation.

'O dem it,' cried the exquisite, as they were placed before him, 'some miserable fuel has positively ruined my boots, and if I could find him I would kick him positively.' He looked up—his mother was hesitating between tears and astonishment, his father debating between a kick and a cuff, and his brothers and sisters standing in wonder and fear what should come next.—The explosion was, however, spared for the present.

Going to church was an awful bore to N. Augustus Hinchins, but he had seen some stormy indications in a certain quarter, which warned him that the next ounce of puppyism might break the camel's back. Besides he had a secret wish to show himself off to his old playfellows, the natives, and therefore ventured to let his eldest sister touch his arm, and with her walked behind his father and his mother. It was a curious procession. The mother would feel a little proud, and could not help feeling a little dubious of the impression her boy was to make on the congregation. The father looked as if though the animal was his son, he would gladly contradict it; the sister who had his arm, seemed foolish—how could she help it? N. Augustus minced along, quizzing the villagers with his glass, totally insensible while everybody was gaping and laughing—totally insensible to everything but his own pre-eminent importance. Little Ned, the wag of the family, strutted behind him, following in his footsteps, making stride for stride; straddle for straddle, and a swing of his coat for every swing of his brother's swallow-tail.

It was glorious broad comedy, and as the procession passed, people did everything but cheer the young actor.

Hinchins was not a bad fellow—were there none in the village to welcome him in real sincerity, and to remember on his return one who had really once been a favorite? Certainly there was one—the favorite schoolmate and playmate, the little girl, now a fine young woman, to whom three years previously, before his transportation to the city, he had plighted his word in all the sincerity of youth. Of course she was at once adopted at the farmer's house, as daughter and sister, and union was counted on, as if it had already taken place. Ellen was an invited guest at every Sunday dinner, and on holidays, and as her future husband was expected this day to grace the board, an extraordinary invitation had been sent her, in addition to the usual standing order. N. Augustus, when the service closed, posted himself in the porch outside the church, exchanging distant salutations with the young men who claimed his acquaintance. His sisters came out, and with them Ellen. With all the sympathy of a confiding girl she came up, ready to give her hand when he offered his. He scanned her through his glass—and reached her two fingers of his gloved left paw.

'O, aw, child, I believe we have been acquainted—yes, I do remember—your name is—aw, eh,' and here he raised his head and brushed up his whiskers. Surprised that his two fingers were not taken, he looked around. Ellen had flown, and he saw her walking indignantly away, with head erect and showing all the woman's token of an insult appreciated and resented.

His father, mother and sister had deserted him in disgust—his little brother Ned waited just long enough to cry out—shame! and ran, the group about him, set up an indignant hiss.

In a few moments he was left almost alone, some few boys only waited to take a last look at the monkey.

'Well, this is really cutting it foine, the—uncivilized clown,' soliloquized our hero—'I shall positively leave this hole at once—the ignorant savages.' He strolled across the road, and for lack of human objects to bring within the range of his glass, commenced surveying a bluff hill, down which he had many times rolled in play, as if he had never seen such a curiosity before. From his reverie a few snowballs soon disturbed him. Humbled essentially in his pride and his pretensions, he hurried to his father's house, with one eye bunged, and one-half of his dicky spoiled, by the unerring aim of some village embryo Tel; whose missiles were readily gathered from the winter covered ground, and dispatched with striking accuracy.

A large dinner party had been invited to Farmer Hinchins—and a large evening party.—Right glad would the worthy people have been to have escaped from the dilemma, but in the

country they had no 'white lies' to turn away visitors with. The only way of proceeding was to face the matter out; as, after the occurrences of the morning, malice in some, curiosity in others, would be sure to bring all who were asked, and more too.

The female members of the family were in agony, Ned was in his element of mischief, and Farmer Hinchins was—in the kitchen. He dared not face the group of visitors in the dining room, but chewed the cud of sweet and bitter fancy in the kitchen chimney corner. 'They come to see an ape—but they don't make a menagerie of my house—I'll be d—d if they do.—The starch must come out of him.' So saying, he rose as he heard the front door open, and proceeded to intercept his beautiful son as he was about to enter the parlor.

Leading him directly to the kitchen, Farmer Hinchins there borrowed his wife's shears, and thence took his son above stairs to his room, seated him in a chair, and before the fop could guess what was coming, marred his whiskers, destroyed his moustachios, and reduced his imperial to a plebian. Nahum expostulated, but it was of no use; he struggled, and the old gentleman's shoulder-of-mutton fist was shaken in his face. A razor completed the demolition of the Esau-crop, and N. Augustus Hinchins began to look like his father's son again. He turned disconsolate from the glass to go down stairs, when the old gentleman stepped between him and the door, and pointed to something which had before escaped his eye. His former country Sunday suit lay across the back of a chair. Even then, he could not conceive what his father meant. His mind could not embrace so awful a degradation as that he must put on that suit and cast away his city integuments.

His father readily explained the case to him, intimated that he should give a sledge-hammer voucher for his sincerity of purpose, poor Nahum was forced to submit. They walked down together, and entered the dining room. There was an awkward pause. A child broke it, as children often do. Little Ned ran up, and seizing both hands, cried—

'Welcome home to Thanksgiving, brother Na!—we're all glad to see you.' The whole party closed in, and in their honest greetings poor Nahum melted to tears, reciprocated.

There might have been a little rage in the first tear—but real contrition afterwards. All, however, was forgotten and forgiven by the time Nahum's next neighbor had demanded the first 'wish-bone,' and challenged him to break it with her.

'There, Nahum,' roared little Ned, 'you've got your wish, and I know what it is! Don't you wish Ellen Smith was here now?'

'Faith,' answered Nahum, taken off his guard, 'I do.'

There was a hearty laugh all round, and now began the festivities of Thanksgiving in earnest.

For the rest, how Nahum went over and coaxed Ellen to forget his insult; how she relented, as she had made up her mind not to do, when she saw him coming; how they went back together to the farm house, and how the party shouted as they entered arm in arm; how old Farmer Hinchins forgot his years and joined in the blind man's buff; how Ellen fought Nahum's battles when anybody alluded to his past misdeeds; and how little Ned frolicked himself to sleep before midnight—is too long a story for us to tell now, but Mrs. Ellen Hinchins might tell you about it, some evening as she rocks the cradle, if you should happen along her way.

Picture of Misery.

The following heartrending account of the suffering, starvation, misery, and sorrow that abounds with the poor in New York, is enough to make the heart ache:—

Five Points House of Industry, N. Y.,

January 16th, 1855.

My Dear Brother:—You ask why I do not write. How can I, with the cries of the starving constantly ringing in my ears? One hundred and ninety thousand are objects of charity. Twenty thousand sewing girls are out of work. We support in our ward not less than 10,000 beggars. We feed at the mission 1,000 per day, according to the report of the superintendent.

I saw, on Friday, in front of the Methodist Mission not less than 1,000 beggars. Yesterday, when I would step out, a crowd would in a minute surround me—sick, feeble, aged and young—mothers with starving children in their arms—and cry aloud:—'O sir pity, O, for God's sake, pity my starving child. Please sir, come and see and you will know we are starving.'

I go as much as possible. O, how my soul sickens. Last Saturday night I went with a mother and six starving little ones to a cellar and gave them bread. I went to another cellar in which thirteen were starving. Just around the corner from us in a room 10 by 12 ft., are three families, (10 persons) no food, no fire.

I went into an attic in cow bay, to see a poor afflicted widow, and found four very small children, with no fire and not a rag of bedding and those dear little ones had lived thirty hours on a part of one head of raw cabbage! I wept but could give no more than kind words. I went up Pearl street and found in a neat but poorly furnished room a mother with seven small children—all starving and not a coal to make a fire. There lay the mother with an infant but a few hours old—as I entered the room the mother wept for joy:—

'O, sir,' said she, 'we have done all we could, but I had to stop and lie down, and the children cried for bread—yesterday they came around

my bed and begged for food. What could I do? I could only cry and put my arms around them. I told them God would send them bread to-morrow, and they cried themselves to sleep. The morning came, but no bread.' I said 'my dear woman, God has sent you bread.' I handed her \$5, all I had, and that I had intended to have sent my own family, but I felt that they would not suffer. When I handed her the money, her little daughter, ten years old, threw her arms around me and kissed me, and cried for joy.

My dear brother, never have I been so overwhelmed with a sense of the sinfulness of hoarding up wealth for the sake of aggrandizement.

Our churches and citizens are at work and sending in every direction for help. I cannot write more for I must work. Will your citizens, churches, sabbath schools, and musical associations help us quickly? We must have it soon or many will perish.

Reproduction of Animal and Vegetable Forms.

Our thoughts were turned to this subject at this time by some singular paragraphs in the London 'Mechanics Magazine,' one of which is said to be an extract from a work of Octinger, entitled 'Thoughts on the two faculties of Feeling and Knowing,' and which is as follows:—

'I chopped up some balm, put it into a large glass retort, poured rain water upon it, connected the retort with a good sized receiver, and let it heat at a cappel, gently at first, then more strongly. Upon this there went into the water a yellowish greenish oil; it took up the whole space of the receiver, and swam on the surface of the water, the thickness of the back of a table knife. This oil had the form of innumerable balm leaves, which did not lap over or run into another, but lay side by side, each perfectly drawn, and with the distinctness of all the lines of a palm leaf. I let it stand a long time, that all about me might observe it. At last I shook the receiver, because I had to pour it out; the leaves ran together, but in less than a minute restored themselves to their former position most distinctly.'

The writer in the Magazine follows up this quotation by saying:—

'After reading the above I came quite unexpectedly upon a similar account in a place where one would certainly not imagine anything of the sort likely to be found, viz:—in Pitaval's 'Causes Celebres,' a collection of the most celebrated criminal trials in the French courts, (the sources whence Dumas has drawn the greater part of his popular work, 'Celebrated Crimes.') In the 12th volume there is one entitled 'Le Spector,' at the end of which Pitaval enters into some reasoning on the subject of spectral illusion, and brings forward the following experiments to show that the forms of things may exist without their subject matter.'

The subjoined quotations from Pitaval are given in the Magazine in French, which are here translated.

'Besides, it is possible that the appearance of spectres may have a natural cause for another reason. Chemists show that the 'palingenesie' (being born again) or the resurrection of plants is very possible. Able chemists in great numbers have made experiments by which, placing the ashes of a plant in a vial, these ashes exhale, and arrange themselves as nearly as they can in the very figure which the Author of Nature first impressed on them.'

The Abbe Vallemont, in his treatise on the curiosities in nature and art, teaches the secret of making this 'palingenesie.' He says that Father Scott, a Jesuit, assured him that when he was in Rome, he had the satisfaction to see the rose made to arise from its ashes whenever it was desired, by simply employing a little heat. The same author also taught the art of using some mineral water which caused the plant, dead down to the roots, to become green as in life. From this palingenesie of plants we come to the palingenesie of animals.

Gaffler, a very able chemist, states that M. Duchene, one of the best chemists of the age, reported that he had seen a very able Polish physician, in Cracow, who kept in vials ashes of almost all plants, so that when any curious person desired to see, for example, a rose in a phial, he took one containing the ashes of the rose well preserved, and warming it over a lighted candle, after becoming warm the ashes were seen to be in motion. A little cloud arose, and after some motion of the phial, soon assumed the form and color of the rose, so fresh, and so perfect and beautiful that one would believe he could smell its sweet odor.

That learned man said that he had often tried to do the same thing; but chance at last enabled him to come pretty near producing the same prodigy and he had amused himself at M. de Luynes de Formentieres, councillor in parliament, in seeing many curious experiments with the salts of nettles burnt. Putting the ley made from them out of doors in a clear cold night, and finding it in the morning frozen with this marvellous result, that the different kinds of the nettles, their shapes and figures, were so neatly and perfectly represented on the ice that the living plants were no better delineated.'

Nearly twenty thousand vessels are now annually admitted into the docks of Liverpool. Its receipts from customs are four and a half million pounds sterling. The Liverpool docks are the finest and most extensive in the world, and occupy an area of one hundred acres, a large proportion of which space is devoted to American vessels. This leading commercial city owes its enormous growth and business prosperity almost entirely to American trade.