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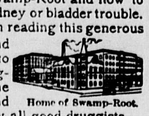

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## FALL AND WINTER

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**H. KAPLAN,**

MERCHANT TAILOR.


## Mrs. Stetson's Revolt

By JOHN BARTON OXFORD.

[Copyright, 1905, by John Barton Oxford.]

IT was commonly said in Centervale that old John Stetson held the strings of his own purse and "kep' a pretty tight holt on 'em too." This kernel of truth from the chaff of the town gossip Mrs. Stetson was turning over in her mind as she darned socks under the yellow light of an ancient kerosene lamp one evening early in Thanksgiving week. On the other side of the table her lord and master, old Jim—he of the closely held purse strings—perused the pages of the Weekly Mirror through two pairs of spectacles.

Stetson was a middle aged man of medium height, inclined to portliness of figure and baldness of the head. His face was clean shaven save for the stubble of iron gray beard on the chin, and this rather emphasized the hard, straight lines about his mouth which gave his face that expression locally characterized as "sot."

Mrs Stetson was little, gray haired and bent of figure. Her hands were knotted by an unfortunate combination of housework and rheumatism. Her voice was at once appealing and apologetic. The neighbors said thirty years with old Jim had "crushed her sperrit."

"TURKEY? I GUESS CHICKENS 'LL DO WELL ENOUGH."

She glanced covertly across the table many times and furtively cleared her throat before she found sufficient courage to address her liege.

"Father," she began at length, a trifle more apologetical than usual, "so long's Marthy's goin' to bring her husband home here for Thanksgivin', don't you think we'd better have a turkey?"

Her husband turned to her. The two pairs of spectacles gave his face an expression of ridiculous ferocity.

"Turkey?" he inquired explosively. "I guess chickens 'll do well enough."

"Last year when we was up to Marthy's place we had turkey," Mrs. Stetson pursued. "Seems to me we ought to do as much for them."

"I calc'late a pair of them chickens will be full as good," said Stetson.

"They're nice chickens, I know," said Mrs. Stetson. "Them Plymouth Rocks is as plump as can be. But it seems though turkey fitted Thanksgivin' better, specially when you're goin' to have company. Why couldn't you kill one of them two turkeys I hatched out under the old black hen last spring and like to run my legs off bringin' up? They're likely lookin' fowl, and one would be plenty big enough for us."

"I sold 'em this mornin'," said Stetson.

"Sold em!" she gasped.

"Yes. Tom Babb wanted a pair of turkeys to raffle off up to his store the night before Thanksgivin', so I let him have 'em."

Mrs. Stetson straightened herself in her chair. She felt the "stiffening" go out of her knees, but her eyes flashed. Under the gross injustice of this thing her "crushed sperrit" had revolted.

"Them turkeys was mine," she said in a voice whose tone was new to him.

"I s'pose you paid for all the corn and grain they et," he sneered.

"They was mine," she reiterated, and there was neither appeal nor apology in her words.

"I guess it's pretty well settled who they belonged to," he said grimly.

She rose from her chair and stood before him. She trembled violently, but her eyes never faltered as they looked into his.

"Jim Stetson," she said chokingly, "I'm goin' to have Thanksgivin' as I want it. I'm goin' to have a turkey—if I have to steal it."

To his amazement she swept from the room before he could reply and banged the door after her.

* * * * * * *

In the big bare room back of Tom Babb's store the Thanksgiving raffle was in full swing. The room was hazy with rank tobacco smoke, and the pungent smell of recently consumed spirits pervaded the place. The sporting element of Centervale, with much laughter and many broad jokes, shook the dice on an old counter from a dilapidated dice box. In one corner the two turkeys were hung conspicuously for critical inspection.

At 9 o'clock the door leading from the front store opened. The crowd as one man craned heads to greet the newcomer, but instead of boisterous gibes they stared in amazement and suddenly fell silent, for into the room, thin, frail, but determined, strode Mrs. Stetson.

"I want to raffle," she said simply. "How much does it cost?"

"Twenty cents for three throws," said Babb.

Mrs. Stetson passed over the change.

Much might be written of her experience in that dingy room—of how she threw to the limit of her cash capital (60 cents); of how one of the Dayton boys showed her how to count the dice and as he bent above them slyly turned them over to count higher. But that has all passed into the official (unwritten) history of the town. Suffice it to say that at 9:30 Mrs. Stetson strode homeward with a plump turkey under her arm and the odor of vile tobacco about her clothes.

Her husband sat by the kitchen table as she entered. She threw her bundle on the floor beside him.

"I got my turkey," she said in challenge.

"Eh! Where'd you git it?" he said, stupefied.

"At the raffle," she said defiantly.

She was prepared for a storm of his wrath. She knew in that event just what she would say. To her surprise he calmly undid the bundle and critically inspected the bird.

"Good looking critter," he said. "You done fust rate."

She felt the hot tears in her eyes. Her throat seemed parched and choking. She sank into a chair.

"I never done fust rate, neither," she said brokenly. "It was all tobacco smoke, and they'd been drinkin', but you drove me to it."

He smiled grimly. The hard lines about his mouth softened. He came over to her chair and gently placed a hand on her shoulder. Her sobs were unrestrained.

"Sho!" he said uneasily. "Don't take on so, mother. I promise you you won't never have to raffle for another turkey—never."

## HOW CHINA CELEBRATES.

**Thanksgiving Day In the Celestial Kingdom.**

In China at the beginning of winter a thanksgiving festival is held at which the deities are especially thanked for the preservation of life and health during the preceding twelve months. Offerings are presented on the family altar, and the ceremony is brought to a close by a grand dinner at which all members of the family can partake. The feasting and rejoicings are kept up for some days and extend to the last night of the year. On that evening it is a common practice in some parts of the country for boys to cry aloud in the street, "Maisou"—"I sell my folly"—in order that they may be wiser the next year.

Every year on the fifteenth day of the first moon the emperor of China goes in great state to a certain field, accompanied by the chief officers of his household, and prostrates himself, touching the ground nine times with his head in honor of the god Tien, and pronounces a prayer invoking the blessing of the Great Being. Then as high priest of the empire he sacrifices a bullock to heaven as the fountain of all good. While the victim is being offered, a plow drawn by a pair of highly ornamented oxen is brought to the emperor, who throws aside his imperial robe, lays hold of the plow handles and opens several furrows. The principal mandarins follow his example, and the festival, which is really a species of thanks in advance for good harvests, ends with a distribution of clothes and money to the poor.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## THANKSGIVING DAY.

**First Proclaimed by Washington at Request of Congress.**

The first national Thanksgiving was proclaimed by George Washington on the 3d day of October, 1789, assigning Thursday, the 26th day of November, as the date, says a writer in the Saturday Evening Post. He did this by the request of a joint committee of both houses of congress "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

Washington bore out admirably the pious tone of its sentiments. In his first sentence he said, "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits and humbly to implore his protection and favor." In his second proclamation for the next Thanksgiving, which occurred on the 19th of February, 1795, he used this phrase: "Sincere and hearty thanks to the Great Ruler of nations for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot."

**The Thankful Mouse.**

[A fable.]

It was a hungry pussy cat,
Upon Thanksgiving morn,
As she watched a thankful little mouse
That ate an ear of corn.

"If I eat that thankful little mouse,
How thankful he should be
When he has made a meal himself
To make a meal for me!

"Then with his thanks for having fed
And his thanks for feeding me—
With all his thankfulness inside—
How thankful I shall be!"

Thus "mewsed" the hungry pussy cat
Upon Thanksgiving day,
But the litle mouse had overheard
And declined (with thanks) to stay.

—Oliver Hereford in Outlook.


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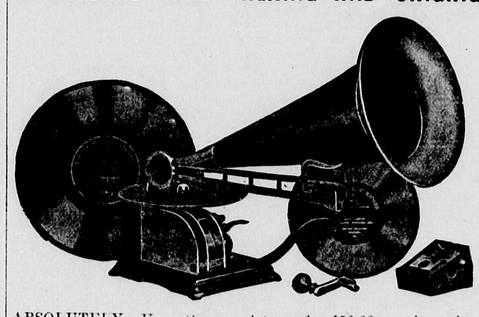

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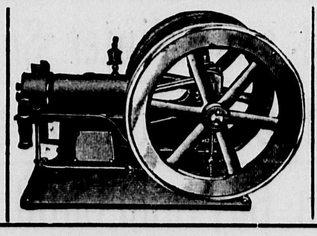

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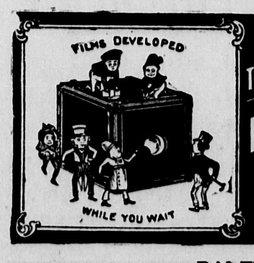


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