

A COUNTRY THANKSGIVING SERMON.

Ay, goodman, close the great barn door;
The mellow harvest time is o'er;

The earth has given her treasures meet
Of golden corn and bearded wheat.

You and your neighbors well have wrought,
And of the summer's bounty caught;

Won from her smiles and from her tears
Much goods, perhaps, for many years.

You come a tribute now to pay—
The bells proclaim Thanksgiving Day.

Well have you sown, well have you reaped;
And of the riches you have heaped,

You think, perhaps, that you will give
A part, that others, too, may live.

But if such argument you use,
Your niggard bounty I refuse.

No gifts you on the altar lay
In any sense are given away.

Lo! rings from Heaven a voice abroad;
"Who helps God's poor doth lend the Lord."

What is your wealth? He'd have you know
To hold it, you must let it go.

Think you the hand by heaven struck cold
Will yet have power to clutch its gold?

Shrouds have no pockets, do they say?
Behold, I show you then the way:

Wait not till death shall shut the door,
But send your cargoes on before.

Lo! he that giveth of his hoard
To help God's poor doth lend the Lord.

To-day, my brethren—do not wait;
Just yonder stands dame Kelly's gate;

And would you build a mansion fair
In heaven, send your lumber there;

Each stick that on her wood pile lies
May raise a dome beyond the skies;

You stop the rents within her walls,
And yonder rise your marble halls;

For every pane that stops the wind
There shineth one with Jasper lined.

Your wealth is gone, your form lies cold,
But in the city paved with gold.

Your hoard is held in hands Divine;
It bears a name that marks it thine.

Behold the bargain ye have made,
With usury the debt is paid.

No moth doth eat, no thieves do steal,
No suffering heart doth envy feel;

Ring out the words, who of his hoard
Doth help God's poor doth lend the Lord!

Go get your cargoes under way;
The bells ring out Thanksgiving Day!

SWEET MARJORAM.

A Thanksgiving Story.

By LIZZIE W. CHAFFET.

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse;—thy plants are an orchard of pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices: which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."—*Solomon's Song*, ix. 12, 13, 14; vs. 13.

Margery's spice-garden was not exactly like the one planted for Egypt's daughter by the great Jewish sultan, though the plants were, indeed, an orchard of pleasant fruits, consisting of a hedge-like row of currant bushes and a half dozen gnarled, stunted trees, that Bina Hutchins said bore the best "squinchas" in all the township. The ground not occupied by the fruits was laid out in orderly little beds filled with "yarba." Thoroughwort and motherwort, for the infusion of bitter teas, to be drunk religiously in the spring of the year, a penitential ceremonial seemingly handed down from the commemoration of the Passover, by the eating of bitter herbs. Other medicinal plants, more grateful to the palate—spearmint and pepper-

mint, pennyroyal, catnip, and hoarhound—grew near by, with arnica for wounds and bruises, lavender for the linen chest, coriander and caraway for the good house-wife's cookies, anise and saffron for spasmy babies, rosemary for perfume, thyme and sage for home-made "sassingers," tansy for batter puddings, with such mild aromatics as fennel and dill for the gentle stimulus to mental exertion needed by the ruminating old deacons, as they listened to the words of the good minister, which drifted down upon his hearers as soothingly as poppy-leaves.

As Margery sorted her herbs, that bright October day, passing some of them through coarse wire sieves, rubbing them fine, and packeting them away in neatly labeled paper bags, while others, not so dry, were tied in bunches and hung from the brown rafters of the attic, a stranger would have noticed a certain appropriateness between the girl and her surroundings.

Her presence seemed to diffuse just such a faint, pleasant perfume. Both the dried bunches of herbs and her pale cheek reminded you that, though faded now, there had been bloom there once. You felt that not very long ago she had seen June, with sunlight and song, warmth and perfume and life; and, though it had all gone from her as completely as from the withered leaves in the little paper bags, her mission, like theirs, was to do good, to give ease to the suffering, and even a mild spice, a cheerful flavor and perfume to all that was monotonous and distasteful about her.

Margery was not called an old maid by the school children. There was not a gray thread in all her wealth of auburn hair. She did not dress in antiquated style, or keep a cat, or drink tea, or belong to the sewing society, or show any of the usual characteristics of old maids. The cosy little parlor looked out upon the spice-garden from a bay window, which Margery had built for her geraniums; and the flowers and the open piano—for Margery was a music teacher—gave the room a very pleasant air. Her music kept up with the times, like her dresses. Both were always modern and pretty. She went to all the parties and musicales (and did not go alone, either). She helped get up all the fairs and festivals and tableaux. Society at Baxter's, the little town where she lived, would have been at a standstill without her. In short, she was not an old maid at all, but only an old young lady. Margery was never slighted, and yet it was probably ten years since she had an offer. She had had her love story, of course; but that was fifteen years ago—and everybody at Baxter's, including Margery herself, would have been very much surprised to have heard that she was going to be married. And yet everybody and Margery were destined to exactly that surprise.

If you had asked the people at Baxter's for Margery's love story, you would probably have received two different versions. Some would have said that it was Jack Bogardus, and some that it was Fred Frothingham; but all would have agreed that she had been "disappointed."

Margery's story, so far as she knew it—for Margery herself did not know all of her story—was this: Jack Bogardus was an orphan and her cousin. He had been adopted by her father, and they had grown up together. But Jack was a willful boy. Margery's father did not understand him, and at last he ran away to California. Margery knew that he was going, and she did not discourage him. It seemed to her that this was really best for all. Jack had promised to come back some day, when he had "made his pile," and claim her for his wife, if she would only wait. Margery had waited, her father had died, and she was left alone. That same year Jack wrote that he had prospered and that he was coming home. The same mail brought her a little box, containing a ring of California gold. It came on Thanksgiving Day, and the day had ever since been a sad one for Margery; for, though Jack came back to the village, and others saw him, he did not even call upon her, and he returned to the West the next day, without leaving any message for her.

There had been no explanation since. It was still the same cruel mystery that it had been fifteen years ago. She did not even know at the time that he was in town, for she was in great perplexity and trouble.

Fred Frothingham, the son of the wealthiest man at Baxter's, had been one of the first to enlist when the war of the great rebellion broke out, and it was now the second year of the struggle. On the eve of a battle, not knowing whether he would survive the terrible work of the next day, Fred wrote Margery a letter, telling her that he loved her, and asking her, if he lived to come home, to be his wife.

Margery replied, telling him as kindly as she could how impossible it was. This letter Fred never received, for he was wounded in the battle, his father came for him, and he was brought back to Baxter's the day before the arrival of Margery's cousin. The journey threw him into a fever, and when he was laid upon his own bed, with his mother bending over him, he did not know her, but raved deliriously about Margery, calling her by all the sweet names that his disordered mind could supply.

Mrs. Frothingham imagined from this that Margery and her son were engaged. The possibility that Fred could love and not be loved in return never entered the head of the doting little woman; and so she wrote to Margery, calling her "my dear daughter," and begging her to come to Fred, for her presence alone could cure him. Margery had no mother or friend to consult, and to her the only thing to be done seemed to be to confide in Mrs. Frothingham; and, taking a little basket of poppy-leaves, to make a pillow for the sufferer, she hurried to the Frothingham mansion. The girl who admitted her told her that Mrs. Frothingham was tired out from watching all night with her son, and had lain down to try to take a little rest; but had left word before doing so that, if Margery came, she was to be shown directly to Mr. Fred's room. Margery drew back at this announcement; but just at that moment the village doctor called to her from the head of the stairs, requesting her to help him administer some medicine to his patient, as he was quite wild. Margery did as the doctor directed, and Fred received his medicine tractably from her hand. A few moments later Mrs. Frothingham came in; the doctor went away, and she stumbled through her explanation, she hardly knew how, and left the fond mother tearful and indignant at her obduracy. It was not until weeks after that she learned that Jack had been in town on the very day when she had been so faithful to him, and had not even called upon her.

This was all that Margery knew. She had waited faithfully for some explanation; had written to him several times; but her letters came back to her through the Dead Letter office, showing that Jack had never received them and that his present residence was not known at his former address. She never doubted Jack through it all. She was true, and she felt sure that he was too. There was some strange mystery between them. It might never be cleared up in this world; but it would be sure to be in heaven, and they would have all eternity to understand one another in.

Margery could not grow old and sour, for there is always youth and sweetness where there is hope.

Margery was sorting her herbs in the sunny drying-room, which the school children called Miss Margery's herbarium, when she was called to the door by Bina Hutchins. Bina drove a provision cart, supplied in part at the shire town, five miles away, and supplying in its circuit as many villages.

"Mornin', Miss Margery," said the old man, cheerily. "I'm round taking my orders for turkeys for Thanksgiving. Nigh about disposed of the whole flock now. Miss Frothingham bought Suleiman Pasha; they took Achrost Pasha at the hotel; I sold Ismail Pasha and Mukhtar Pasha at the Corners; and the restaurant keeper at the junction spoke for Mahomet Ali last summer, when we saw him struttin' around in our pasture. I feel as if I owed a