Toilers of the Columbia

By PAUL DE LANEY

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

The northsiders guarded their traps. It was believed that with the approach of night the southsiders would steal upon the traps in squads and attempt their destruction. The trouble had been too long brewing to give up after one slight engagement. The fishermen on both sides felt that a principle was involved and they were there to settle it by might. The gillnetters declared that the traps were gradually destroying the run of fish while the trappers claimed that the gillnets were doing greater harm to the industry than the traps. The men had spent their lives fishing, the support of their families depended upon it, and it was truly a vital issue with them.

The run of fish was getting lighter every year and whatever the fault might be it was evident that the industry would soon become a thing of the past. It was natural that both sides should strike hard now as each respectively considered that the other was the cause of the dying industry.

The shore people had communicated with the men on the water several times during the day. The women had prepared meals and sent them out by the boys of the village to a number of the men. But the fishermen were badly scattered and many of them went without meals.

Sankala had made many inquiries for Dan Lapham but he had not been seen since the departure of the boats from the north shore.

He had led the way and given directions for the men to follow. But no one who had come ashore could give any tidings of the young fisherman. Sankala had prepared two meals and sent them out by the boys but they were unable to find him.

When night came still there was no tidings from the young fisherman. The girl could endure it no longer. She prepared enough lunch for a siege and slipped away to the beach unobserved. She knew that if Dan had not been killed or captured, he would be found near his trap at the lower end of the bay.

The night was very dark, and a storm was brewing, but she believed that she could make it to his trap before it grew too dangerous.

She tried the fishing boat but her strength was not sufficient to launch it. Then she drew a small skiff to the water's edge. It would not live in a heavy storm, but Sankala knew that if she could reach Dan his strong arms would bring her safely ashore again.

The roar of the surf on the bar was already distinct. An occasional whitecap leaped above the murky horizon to the southwest. Dark, misty clouds obscured the last star. The wind was already moaning in the boughs of the tall firs on the hills.

Sankala shoved the light craft into the water, and, guided by the interval flashes from Cape Disappointment light house, she pulled toward the foot of the rocks where lay the fish trap tended by Dan Lapham.

CHAPTER XV.

Rescued by the Enemy.

An accident had befallen Dan Lapham in the early morning engagement. In the rush for boats before it was still daylight he had taken the first one he came to. He led the way to the place where he expected to find the southsiders, and was followed by the long array of northside fishermen in their boats.

He was far in advance of the other fishermen, expecting to locate the enemy and then await the arrival of his colleagues and assist them in the attack.

Before a single shot was fired and before daylight began to dawn Dan came to grief in a most unexpected manner. The river brought with it all kinds of driftwood from above. The fishermen were constantly on the lookout for this, for large logs, famous the world over for their length and size, often come down with a speed and force sufficient to crush a river steamer, and the small craft of the fishermen would stand no more show before these than would an egg shell.

But it was not one of these that caused Dan trouble. It is the concealed from which most harm comes in all of the experiences of life. It is the hidden that takes man unawares and dashes his hope to pieces or frustrates his plans at the most unexpected moment. We may battle with the open enemy with hope of success, but the one in ambush takes us at a disadantage and destroys or is victorious over us before we are even prepared for defense.

Dan was keeping a sharp lookout for the enemy. He knew the plans of the southsiders and expected to intercept them before they should divide up into squads. While there was still none in sight he was sending his frail old craft like a cutter through the water. An old snag was slowly beating its way with the current and tide to the ocean. It was one of those heavy, pitchy fir trunks whose weight kept it deep in the water. Only a few inches of a knot, dark as the water itself, projected above the surface, and the thing stood like a rock directly in front of the fisherman's boat.

Unconscious of its presence he sent the old craft against it with a terrific sweep of the oars and the results were as sudden as a flash. The boat was already running deep in the water from the weight of the sea which it had taken from below, and when its rotten hull struck the snag it was practically torn asunder.

It went down like a rock, and the young fisherman had either of two alternatives. One was to take refuge by clinging to the cause of his disaster and the other was to swim for the island.

But there was no time to waste under such conditions. As soon as he had recovered from the shock which had sent him deep below the surface he arose and swam for the snag which danced about for a moment, after its contact with the boat, like a top.

He clung to this for several moments when he discovered that it was taking a course ranging farther from the island and heading directly for Disappointment rocks. The experienced fisherman knew what this meant. Raising his head as high as he could above the surface of the water he sighted the dark outline of the nearest point on Sand island as marked by the accumulated driftwood, taking Tillamook lighthouse for his guide, and swam in a southwesterly direction.

Dan Lapham was a good swimmer and was strong and experienced, but the water was cold and the current pulled at him like a thing of life. Battling to keep from being drawn to Disappointment rocks and at the same time to gain the nearest point of the island he soon found it telling upon his strength.

Benumbed and exhausted he felt that ease coming over him which is never experienced except under certain conditions. He had heard men rescued from drowning, tell of this sensation. He knew at once what it meant. His strokes grew weaker, and in spite of the fact that a consciousness came over him that he was gradually giving away he felt a certain amount of relief that is said to always come to the perishing man in his last moments—a dizzy, lulling feeling that makes death rather welcome than appalling.

A dull buzzing sound entered his ears. His limbs moved as if in a dream. The water seemed freed all at once from its chill. The darkness gathered more deelpy but it was as gentle as the shadows of sleep. The waves rocked him as smoothly as a babe in a cradle.

"Sankala!" he spoke. "Sankala! It cannot be! I cannot leave you. I must not surrender. Arms and legs, you have never failed me. Heart, send forth that blood you owe to Sankala and revive this body to battle the waves and live for the poor, unfortunate orphan girl!"

With a spasmodic effort he arose from his sinking attitude. He shot forth his limbs with forced and awkward motion. It was then that Dan Lapham discovered the weakness of will power compared with the grip of fate. He saw that youth, strength, determination, must all yield to the inevitable.

But the same fate that had carried him to the border of the dark shadow now threw a straw within his reach. A dark solid object grated against his side. He was caught by it and carried along at a slow but steady rate of speed. He reached out his hand and clasped the limb of a tree. One of the fallen monarchs of the upper country had been caught in the flood and was being carried to the ocean.

Lapham dragged himself upon its branches and closed his benumbed hands upon two of them that he might not be swept away. Thus, exhuasted and in a semi-conscious condition, he lay upon the drift, which was pursuing its course toward the ocean.

"Steer clear of that drift, mate," exclaimed a man's voice, low and husky.

Five men were seated in a boat. Four of them were lying upon their oars. The fifth was steering the craft. The men were merely using their oars to keep the boat from drifting seaward and the steersman was holding her along side the current. While the men held the oars in their hands long, black guns lay across their laps.

It was the advance guard of the southsiders. They were in waiting for the approach of the northside fishermen. A slight redness above the horizan to the east indicated that morning was approaching. The men had been watching for the approach of the northsiders for several moments. They were the lower guards, who expected to apprehend the fishermen of the traps in the lower bay. A large log with branches extending in many directions had almost run into them. So dark was the night that it had approached them very closley before they saw it. It was this that had called for the command to the steersman.

"There is a man aboard that drift!" exclaimed one of the men. "Tie on to the drift," said the leader.

One of the men grabbed a branch of the drift and the boat and log floated along together.

"The man's dead," remarked one of the fishermen as he came near the object. "Bring him aboard, anyway," said the leader, "and we will bury him on the sand spit."

Then the fishermen raised Dan Lapham from his place on the drift, fairly prying his clinched hands from the branches of the tree, and laid him in the boat at their feet.

CHAPTER XVI.

Daring the Elements.

"Give him a drop of whisky. He is not dead by any means."

"Raise him up—light in, boys, and rub him! He is one of old Seadog's slaves, but he is human and we will treat him as such."

Thus spoke the men who had rescued Dan Lapham from the floating timber. They worked with him sometime before he was restored to a thorough consciousness. The men knew him well and treated him kindly, though they now regarded him as a legitimate "prisoner of war."

Lapham was favorably known by all of the fishermen and boatmen of the river. His extraordinary strength gave him prominence among the toilers of the river, while his courage and kindness gained for him their respect.

The half-drowned fisherman received the same care and attention as would one of their own number. One shared a dry vest with him; another had an extra rain coat and with this garment and that he was soon warmly clad, and with youth and reviving strength he was soon himself again.

But the scenes were rapidly shifting. Dawn was breaking and the approach of the northsiders had been discovered. The boats began to line up for the capture of the fishermen from the north side who were supposed to be ignorant of the presence of the southsiders.

Dan Lapham was placed in a peculiar position, but one common in war. He was to sit side by side with the enemy and receive the fire of his friends. He knew what his companions in the boat did not know. He knew that the northside fishermen were armed, and that they would come prepared to do war unto death. He knew that he would soon be subjected to their fire and that they would shoot to kill.

Closer and still closer the northsiders approached. They lined up through the gloom of dawn like so many specks on the river and bay. The southsiders lay upon their oars with guns in hand. To row down upon them and capture them at a given signal was the previously arranged plan.

The keen whistle of a small launch rang out over the water from the head of the southside flotilla and the little fleet moved to the north under the steady strokes of the oarsmen.

"Bing!" rang out a rifle shot from the north side.

"Bing! Bing! Bing!" followed a succession of shots from the same direction.

The southsiders were taken completely by surprise. They had come to capture, not to fight, but now that the trouble was on, it was left to them to fight or to flee. The bitter feeling so long existing between the two stubborn factions would not permit the latter alternative, and as if from common command, the southsiders raised their rifles and poured forth a volley in the direction of their competitors. This was returned by a heavy volley from the north side, and then a desultory firing began all along the line.

The fishermen were not accustomed to the use of fire arms nor this manner of warfare and it was better for them that they were not. After the second volley the members of each contending element began to fall back and the boats scattered in every direction.

But neither side would abandon the struggle. It was the purpose of the southsiders to destroy the traps, while it was the determination of the northsiders to defend them to the last.

At the very first volley from the north a rifle bullet struck the fisherman directly in front of Dan Lapham, the very man who had aided in resuscitating their captive. He was wounded in the side and fell into Dan's arms. Dan begged them to pull for the island that the wounded man might receive better care. His request was granted, for the fishermen now were anxious for an excuse to get out of a fight that was so much more real than they had expected.

(To be continued)

Don't Grit Your Teeth.

"No teeth to fill," the dentist said to the man in the chair, "but you are grinding off your teeth more than you ought to. Do you grit your teeth in your sleep?"

And the man said he didn't stay awake long enough to know about that, but were they much ground off?

"More than they ought to be at your age," said the dentist. "You have worn the enamel off from some of them and got down to the dentine."

"What's going to happen?" asked the victim.

"Why, if you keep on grinding them off," said the dentist, "the teeth will hollow out and we'll have to put plugs in them with gold tops to give them new grinding surfaces."

This wasn't a very pleasant prospect, so later the man sought to ascertain for himself whether he did grit his teeth unduly. And while he was still unable to stay awake long enough to find out, he did discover that he had a habit at times of gritting his teeth in his waking moments, when he sat back from his work to think of something, for instance. And he made up his mind that he would stop that, anyway, and he hoped that he might thus stop grinding his teeth in his sleep, if he did so grind them. For, fine as they might be, he didn't want any of those nice little gold-capped plugs put in his teeth if he could help it.—New York Sun.

The best mathematics—that which doubles the most joys and divides the most sorrows.

The skeleton alone of an average whale weighs twenty-five tons.

In idleness there is perpetual despair. —Carlyle.

THE EMPTY CHAIRS.

I tell her it is foolish—but each Thanksgiving day
She's bound to have the table set in the old-time way,
The little cup and saucer that Henry always had—
That handle has been broken since he was just a tad—
The plate we got for Mollie—the brim is A. B. C's—
I tell me it is foolish, but her eyes, they look "Please!"
And then somehow or other I've got no more to say
When she sets out the dishes for our Thanksgiving day.

She gets the little high chair—I've vowed 'most every year
I'd sell it to somebody, but still it's always here—
The baby used to use it; the baby—that was Rose—
It's always for her children our fattest turkey goes.
We send one to the others; it isn't much to give,
But it's a home touch for them away off where they live.
But I tell ma it's foolish, with us both old and gray,
To set the children's places on each Thanksgiving day.

I ask a blessing always; there's lots I'd like to ask,
But with those empty places, the blessing is a task.
I tell ma not to do it—I'm thinking all the while
How Henry used to argue that handle was in style;
And ma says she remembers the way that it was broke,
Both of us laugh about it, but I most always choke.
I tell her that it's foolish to set the things that way—
And think we've got the children back home Thanksgiving day.

We never eat that dinner. We don't get half way through
Till ma is in some story of how they used to do;
Of how they used to chatter, and beg for this and that—
And all the time a-looking at each place where they sat.
And then—and then—she's trying to hide a sudden tear
And saying she is thankful that one time they was here.
But still I say it's foolish to have things fixed this way—
To set the children's places on each Thanksgiving day.
—W. D. Nesbit in Chicago Tribune.

Farmer Caldwell's Thanksgiving.

BY O. B. ACUFF.

It was down in "Ol' Virginny" one November morning that Toby Strange of the genus "hobo" crawled out from the burrow he had made for himself in a straw stack and looked around him. The sun was riding high in a blue haze, and the chill air made poor Toby shiver.

"A cup of hot coffee would do me good," he muttered, as he glanced dubiously at a large log house plainly discernible through the bare branches of some fruit trees in the distance.

He moved forward awkwardly on the toes of one worn shoe and the heel of the other, endeavoring to keep his feet from contact with the hoar frost which had stiffened every weed and blade of grass in the field.

At the rear gate he paused as if awestruck by the sights and sounds that greeted him. In the adjoining barn lot was a great cackle among the hens, which was almost drowned by the shrill noise of a dozen guinea fowls ranged on the rail fence. The turkey gobblers strutted defiantly past the proud peacocks, but their challenges were drowned in the general clatter. The noisy scene told its own story of comfortable farm life to the lonely wayfarer, and he sighed deeply as he shuffled into the yard and drew towards him a tall, blooming chrysanthemum, and breathed its unguent fragrance.

"Oh, tinder's end," he exclaimed under his breath. "Another five minutes' contemplation of such a home-like scene would spoil my appetite," and the softened expression of his face was replaced by a look of harsh indifference. "Pshaw!" he continued as he hobbled to the back door, "I'm too old and tough for any sentimental vagaries," and he tapped on the door.

It was opened instantly by a very neat, pretty girl of nineteen or twenty. As she held the door ajar, there poured out a pleasant steam, which bore on its breath a delicious odor of sausage, hot biscuit and strong coffee.

"Lady, I'm very hungry. Will you please give me something to eat?"

"Come in," she said kindly, "and eat your breakfast."

Giving him a seat near the stove, she brought from the corner cupboard a dish of fragrant sausage in brown gravy, biscuits, and a cup of rich, creamy coffee, and arranged all on the kitchen table. As Toby ate, he looked and really was for the time at peace with himself and all the world. He tried in a dreamy, half conscious way to analyze a delightful odor which seemed familiar, but it eluded him till the young lady, opening the stove, took therefrom a tempting creation in brown and gold.

"Pumpkin pies," he breathed. "I knew that odor belonged to the old days," but the regretful pang he felt was very much softened by the substantial pleasure of the present.

Meantime the young lady, with an air triumph, bore the pies into the next room.

"See, papa!" Toby heard her exclaim, "my three years at school did not cost my special talent."

"So I see," replied her father. "But why pumpkin pies, my dear?"

"Why, papa, don't you know next Thursday is Thanksgiving day?"

"Yes, Amy. But I have been thinking that—in short, that we might dispense with the dinner this year. While you were away at school your mother and I economized at Thanksgiving, and thereby saved several pounds of sugar and flour, besides clearing a dollar on the turkey. I see no sense in giving dinners and rejoicing when we have nothing to be thankful for."

"Oh, papa," Amy exclaimed in horrified tones, "nothing to be thankful for. How can you say so when we have so much more than we deserve?"

"Yes, Amy, in a general way that is true. But you can't understand the hard work and close management I'm bound to practice to make ends meet. This year has been a hard one altogether. One of my best horses died last spring. The frost killed the fruit crop. The pesky dogs killed several sheep; and between the drought and the insects my corn and potato crops are cut off at least half. And now, to cap the climax that cattle man offers me about half as much for the calves as I had counted on getting. No, I'm not feeling particularly thankful."

"Not have a Thanksgiving dinner, John, now Amy is at home and our only boy is coming, too!" exclaimed Mrs. Caldwell, coming into the room as her husband concluded his remarks.

"Not thankful," exclaimed Amy, a sob in her voice, "when we have good health, a home and plenty in storehouse and barn," and Amy passed hastily through the kitchen and out of sight in the yard.

Toby, just taking the last choice bits of his breakfast, cast a furtive glance at the girl and noted the trembling lips and tearful eyes.

"Now, John," said Mrs. Caldwell in a pleading tone, "you have hurt the dear child. And she has been so happy these weeks past planning for the dinner and the guests. And besides celebrating Tom's return, it would be a most appropriate way for Amy to renew old friendships, for after an absence of three years the poor child is almost a stranger in the neighborhood."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you and Amy," returned the husband. "But I cannot afford to entertain the public this year. If you and Amy are so awfully thankful, you can have a small family dinner; one of the little turkeys, and none but home folks present."

"The idea of scrimping and pinching on a Thanksgiving dinner!" retorted Mrs. Caldwell, now evincing unmistakable signs of anger; and leaving the room, she slammed the door after her.

With a sigh of mingled contentment and regret Toby slowly rose and prepared to leave the snug room which seemed a paradise to him. As he passed the dairy he saw Amy, with a jar of cream in her hand, and thanked her for his repast. Then, with a forlorn homesickness that wouldn't be shook off, he aimlessly climbed the long, red hill, and presently finding himself in a sunny, sheltered spot, he threw himself on the dry leaves for, what he seldom indulged in, a little sober reflection.:

"If I were in that farmer's place," he soliloquized, "I honestly believe I could be as thankful as he ought to be. I wish I could help that kind-hearted girl, but what can a poor tramp do?"

He was thinking of pursuing his journey when voices reached his ear, and looking up he said, sotto voce, "John Caldwell, as sure as I'm what I never meant to be. Who would have thought of seeing him after all these years? Well, it's likely he wouldn't know me if he should see me, but I'll not give him the chance." And Toby crouched low in the fence corner, while the farmer and cattle trader haggled about the bunch of plump calves in the pasture field before them.

At last the bargain being concluded, the trader paid the farmer fifty dollars and departed, while Mr. Caldwell entered the woods at Toby's back. Toby's eyes followed him thoughtfully.

"If I had that fifty dollars," said Toby, "I'd be more than thankful. And yet that ungrateful reprobate is too mean to let his daughter have a Thanksgiving dinner. I wish it was my business to kick him into a better way of thinking."

Toby, in his half recumbent posture on the leaves, felt loth to leave a retreat so restful until his breakfast was digested; but ere the farmer had quite disappeared from sight, Toby suddenly reaching a decision, arose and stealthily followed him.

Mr. Caldwell's gloomy meditations took a sudden turn, as Toby from behind a tree sprang upon him, and before the farmer could think of resistance or defense, he lay prone on his back with a hundred and eighty pounds of tramp seated on his stomach.

"Take it easy, man," said Toby. "You needn't cut up rough, it'll do no good. I mean to hold you quiet while we have a little talk. I think I can convince you that you have several things to be thankful for. Oh, you needn't wiggle. I heard your talk to your wife and daughter, although you didn't see me, nor I you. I heard it all, while I was breakfasting on your bounty. Now, listen to me. As young men just starting in life our prospects were about the same."

"Who are you?" interrupted Mr. Caldwell, looking keenly at his captor.

"It doesn't matter, I'm not worth a name. But when we left school you went back to the farm; while I, holding your choice in contempt, went to the city where in my ignorance I thought a man had a chance to rise in the world. For twenty years I knocked about, sometimes working, sometimes starving, always hard pressed.

"I lost my last job ten years ago, by striking for less work and higher wages. I couldn't get another job even at the same wages, so I turned tramp. I have not had the energy to try any other vocation since. In fact, I have come to the conclusion that I've done enough and suffered enough to have gained the independence I started out for. And now the world has got to give me the living it owes me.

"But mark you, not one ambition of my early life has been realized. And now I must travel on in search of the next meal, not knowing whether the people I next encounter will give me a crumb or not.

"Compare my lot with yours; a loving wife, a pretty daughter, a good home and plenty to eat, all your own. And in addition to all these blessings you've got fifty dollars in your pocket at this blessed moment."

"Yes," growled Mr. Caldwell, "and that loving wife and pretty daughter you mention so feelingly know how to spend every cent of it."

"What other use have you for it, man?" asked Toby, losing all patience and thumping Caldwell's head rather hard against the solid ground. "Such an old miser deserves absolutely nothing!" he exclaimed in disgust, as he dexterously changed the wallet from the farmer's pocket to his own.

"Don't, man!" cried Mr. Caldwell, helplessly.

But paying no heed to his futile struggles and remonstrances, Toby calmly knotted a handkerchief round his hands, then sprang up and away.

Mr. Caldwell instantly gave chase, but unfortunately he fell sprawling over the first log in his way. Toby had vanished from sight when he regained his feet, so with an imprecation on his own ill-luck he seated himself and with teeth and nails endeavored to free his hands. This task accomplished, he made his way home, in anything but a mild temper. His wife met him at the door, saying:

"John, a rather disreputable looking man came here a while ago and left this," holding up the wallet. "He said he found it in the woods."

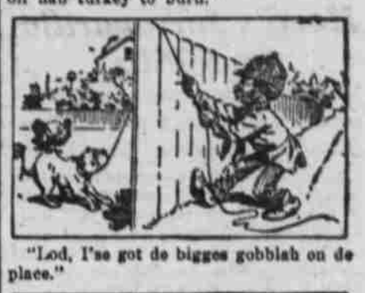
"Thank goodness!" cried her husband, eagerly seizing his treasure. "I thought it was gone for good and always."

Mr. Caldwell is still wondering who among his many school fellows "that preaching tramp may be." And although he would have suffered death rather than admit so much to any one, yet he was convinced that the tramp had adopted the only effective method for showing him his selfish and miserly nature. And being convinced of his former errors, he at once set about a reformation. As a first step in this new direction, he threw the purse in his wife's lap, then told Amy to invite the whole country to dinner if she chose to do so.

And what a dinner it was! Turkey, pigs, cakes and pies in bountiful perfection, rendered doubly enjoyable by the participation of dear friends, each intent on doing justice to the occasion by a hearty appreciation, and under the witticisms and laughter ran a current of fervent thanksgiving, which made Amy and her mother the sincere and happy hostesses they seemed.—Waverley Magazine.

A LESSON IN TURKEY GATHERING.

"Jus' wait till one o' de pawson's turkeys git a taste o' dat bait, an' dis nigga oll hab turkey to burn."

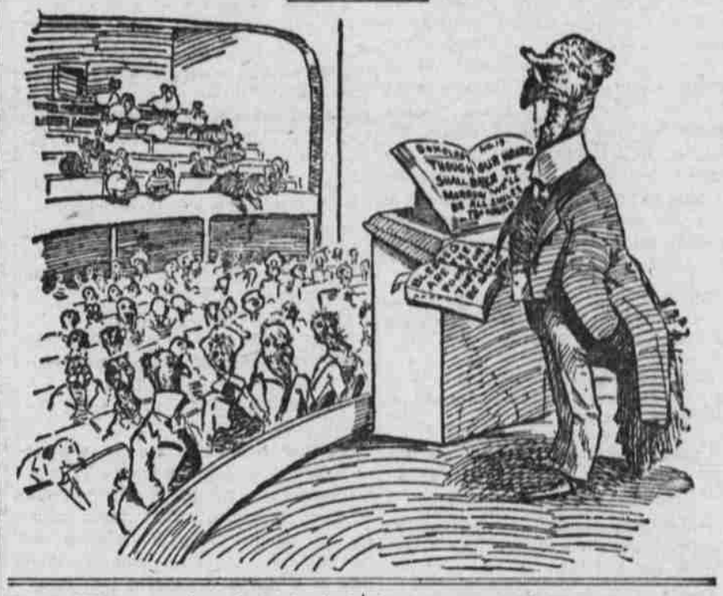


"Lod, I'se got de bigges gobblah on de place."

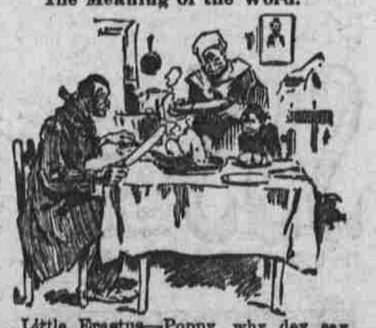
"Now, one mo' pull an' I'll git it."

He got it.

THANKSGIVING EVE IN TURKEYDOM.



The Meaning of the Word.



Little Erastus—Poppy, why dey say Funksgibbin' turkey, huh?

Poppy—Dat's ez cause yo' fank de ownah ob de coop fo' leabin' de do' open.