The Children's Book of Thanksgiving Stories

[Illustrated]

By

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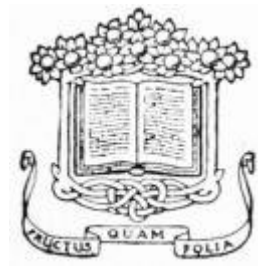
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THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF THANKSGIVING STORIES

EDITED BY
ASA DON DICKINSON
(*Editor of "The Children's Book of Christmas Stories," etc.*)



PREFACE

The success of "The Children's Book of Christmas Stories" has encouraged the Editor to hope that a similar collection of stories about Thanksgiving would prove useful to parents, librarians, and teachers, and enjoyable to children.

Like the former book, this one is exactly what the title would indicate—a select collection of children's stories closely connected with our American festival.

The short descriptive note placed before each story will be of use in choosing a tale suited to one's audience in reading aloud.

May the present volume make as many friends as did its older brother! [A. D. D.]

THE KINGDOM OF THE GREEDY

By P. J. Stahl.

Translated by Laura W. Johnson.



The extraordinary squash jumped with scarcely a moment's hesitation over the high wall

This fairy tale of a gormandizing people contains no mention of Thanksgiving Day. Yet its connection with our American festival is obvious. Every one who likes fairy tales will enjoy reading it.

THE country of the Greedy, well known in history, was ruled by a king who had much trouble. His subjects were well behaved, but they had one sad fault: they were too fond of pies and tarts. It was as disagreeable to them to swallow a spoonful of soup as if it were so much sea water, and it would take a policeman to make them open their mouths for a bit of meat, either boiled or roasted. This deplorable taste made the fortunes of the pastry cooks, but also of the apothecaries. Families ruined themselves in pills and powders; camomile, rhubarb, and peppermint trebled in price, as well as other disagreeable remedies, such as castor——which I will not name.

The King of the Greedy sought long for the means of correcting this fatal passion for sweets, but even the faculty were puzzled.

"Your Majesty," said the great court doctor, Olibriers, at his last audience, "your people look like putty! They are incurable; their senseless love for good eating will bring them all to the grave."

This view of things did not suit the King. He was wise, and saw very plainly that a monarch without subjects would be but a sorry king.

Happily, after this utter failure of the doctors, there came into the mind of His Majesty a first-class idea: he telegraphed for Mother Mitchel, the most celebrated of all pastry cooks. Mother Mitchel soon arrived, with her black cat, Fanfreluche, who accompanied her everywhere. He was an incomparable cat. He had not his equal as an adviser and a taster of tarts.

Mother Mitchel having respectfully inquired what she and her cat could do for His Majesty, the King demanded of the astonished pastry cook a tart as big as the capitol—bigger even, if possible, but no smaller! When the King uttered this astounding order, deep emotion was shown by the chamberlains, the pages, and lackeys. Nothing but the respect due to his presence prevented them from crying "Long live Your Majesty!" in his very ears. But the King had seen enough of the enthusiasm of the populace, and did not allow such sounds in the recesses of his palace.

The King gave Mother Mitchel one month to carry out his gigantic project. "It is enough," she proudly replied, brandishing her crutch. Then, taking leave of the King, she and her cat set out for their home.

On the way Mother Mitchel arranged in her head the plan of the monument which was to immortalize her, and considered the means of executing it. As to its form and size, it was to be as exact a copy of the capitol as possible, since the King had willed it; but its outside crust should have a beauty all its own. The dome must be adorned with sugarplums of all colours, and surmounted by a splendid crown of macaroons, spun sugar, chocolate, and candied fruits. It was no small affair.

Mother Mitchel did not like to lose her time. Her plan of battle once formed, she recruited on her way all the little pastry cooks of the country, as well as all the tiny six-year-olds who had a sincere love for the noble callings of scullion and apprentice. There were plenty of these, as you may suppose, in the country of the Greedy; Mother Mitchel had her pick of them.

Mother Mitchel, with the help of her crutch and of Fanfreluche, who miaowed loud enough to be heard twenty miles off, called upon all the millers of the land, and commanded them to bring together at a certain time as many sacks of fine flour as they could grind in a week. There were only windmills in that country; you may easily believe how they all began to go. B-r-r-r-r-r! What a noise they made! The clatter was so great that all the birds flew away to other climes, and even the clouds fled from the sky.

At the call of Mother Mitchel all the farmers' wives were set to work; they rushed to the hencoops to collect the seven thousand fresh eggs that Mother Mitchel wanted for her great edifice. Deep was the emotion of the fowls. The hens were inconsolable, and the unhappy creatures mourned upon the palings for the loss of all their hopes.

The milkmaids were busy from morning till night in milking the cows. Mother Mitchel must have twenty thousand pails of milk. All the little calves were put on half rations. This great work was nothing to them, and they complained pitifully to their mothers. Many of the cows protested with energy against this unreasonable tax, which made their young families so uncomfortable. There were pails upset, and even some milkmaids went head over heels. But these little accidents did not chill the enthusiasm of the labourers.

And now Mother Mitchel called for a thousand pounds of the best butter. All the churns for twenty miles around began to work in the most lively manner. Their dashers dashed without ceasing, keeping perfect time. The butter was tasted, rolled into pats, wrapped up, and put into baskets. Such energy had never been known before.

Mother Mitchel passed for a sorceress. It was all because of her cat, Fanfreluche, with whom she had mysterious doings and pantomimes, and with whom she talked in her inspired moments, as if he were a real person. Certainly, since the famous "Puss in Boots," there had never been an animal so extraordinary; and credulous folks suspected him of being a magician. Some curious people had the courage to ask Fanfreluche if this were true; but he had replied by bristling, and showing his teeth and claws so fiercely, that the conversation had ended there. Sorceress or not, Mother Mitchel was always obeyed. No one else was ever served so punctually.

On the appointed day all the millers arrived with their asses trotting in single file, each laden with a great sack of flour. Mother Mitchel, after having examined the quality of the flour, had every sack accurately weighed. This was head work and hard work, and took time; but Mother Mitchel was untiring, and her cat, also, for while the operation lasted he sat on the roof watching. It is only just to say that the millers of the Greedy Kingdom brought flour not only faultless but of full weight. They knew that Mother Mitchel was not joking when she said that others must be as exact with her as she was with them. Perhaps also they were a little afraid of the cat, whose great green eyes were always shining upon them like two round lamps, and never lost sight of them for one moment.

All the farmers' wives arrived in turn, with baskets of eggs upon their heads. They did not load their donkeys with them, for fear that in jogging along they would become omelettes on the way. Mother Mitchel received them with her usual gravi-

ty. She had the patience to look through every egg to see if it were fresh.

She did not wish to run the risk of having young chickens in a tart that was destined for those who could not bear the taste of any meat however tender and delicate. The number of eggs was complete, and again Mother Mitchel and her cat had nothing to complain of. This Greedy nation, though carried away by love of good eating, was strictly honest. It must be said that where nations are patriotic, desire for the common good makes them unselfish. Mother Mitchel's tart was to be the glory of the country, and each one was proud to contribute to such a great work.

And now the milkmaids with their pots and pails of milk, and the buttermakers with their baskets filled with the rich yellow pats of butter, filed in long procession to the right and left of the cabin of Mother Mitchel. There was no need for her to examine so carefully the butter and the milk. She had such a delicate nose that if there had been a single pat of ancient butter or a pail of sour milk she would have pounced upon it instantly. But all was perfectly fresh. In that golden age they did not understand the art, now so well known, of making milk out of flour and water. Real milk was necessary to make cheesecakes and ice cream and other delicious confections much adored in the Greedy Kingdom. If any one had made such a despicable discovery, he would have been chased from the country as a public nuisance.

Then came the grocers, with their aprons of coffee bags, and with the jolly, mischievous faces the rogues always have. Each one clasped to his heart a sugar loaf nearly as large as himself, whose summit, without its paper cap, looked like

new-fallen snow upon a pyramid. Mother Mitchel, with her crutch for a baton, saw them all placed in her storerooms upon shelves put up for the purpose. She had to be very strict, for some of the little fellows could hardly part from their merchandise, and many were indiscreet, with their tongues behind their great mountains of sugar. If they had been let alone, they would never have stopped till the sugar was all gone. But they had not thought of the implacable eye of old Fanfreluche, who, posted upon a water spout, took note of all their misdeeds. From another quarter came a whole army of country people, rolling wheelbarrows and carrying huge baskets, all filled with cherries, plums, peaches, apples, and pears. All these fruits were so fresh, in such perfect condition, with their fair shining skins, that they looked like wax or painted marble, but their delicious perfume proved that they were real. Some little people, hidden in the corners, took pains to find this out. Between ourselves, Mother Mitchel made believe not to see them, and took the precaution of holding Fanfreluche in her arms so that he could not spring upon them. The fruits were all put into bins, each kind by itself. And now the preparations were finished. There was no time to lose before setting to work.

The spot which Mother Mitchel had chosen for her great edifice was a pretty hill on which a plateau formed a splendid site. This hill commanded the capital city, built upon the slope of another hill close by. After having beaten down the earth till it was as smooth as a floor, they spread over it loads of bread crumbs, brought from the baker's, and levelled it with rake and spade, as we do gravel in our garden walks. Little birds, as greedy as themselves, came in flocks to the

feast, but they might eat as they liked, it would never be missed, so thick was the carpet. It was a great chance for the bold little things.

All the ingredients for the tart were now ready. Upon order of Mother Mitchel they began to peel the apples and pears and to take out the pips. The weather was so pleasant that the girls sat out of doors, upon the ground, in long rows. The sun looked down upon them with a merry face. Each of the little workers had a big earthen pan, and peeled incessantly the apples which the boys brought them. When the pans were full, they were carried away and others were brought. They had also to carry away the peels, or the girls would have been buried in them. Never was there such a peeling before.

Not far away, the children were stoning the plums, cherries, and peaches. This work, being the easiest, was given to the youngest and most inexperienced hands, which were all first carefully washed, for Mother Mitchel, though not very particular about her own toilet, was very neat in her cooking. The schoolhouse, long unused (for in the country of the Greedy they had forgotten everything), was arranged for this second class of workers, and the cat was their inspector. He walked round and round, growling if he saw the fruit popping into any of the little mouths. If they had dared, how they would have pelted him with plum stones! But no one risked it. Fanfreluche was not to be trifled with.

In those days powdered sugar had not been invented, and to grate it all was no small affair. It was the work that the grocers used to dislike the most; both lungs and arms were soon tired. But Mother Mitchel was there to sustain them

with her unequalled energy. She chose the labourers from the most robust of the boys. With mallet and knife she broke the cones into round pieces, and they grated them till they were too small to hold. The bits were put into baskets to be pounded. One would never have expected to find all the thousand pounds of sugar again. But a new miracle was wrought by Mother Mitchel. It was all there!

It was then the turn of the ambitious scullions to enter the lists and break the seven thousand eggs for Mother Mitchel. It was not hard to break them—any fool could do that; but to separate adroitly the yolks and the whites demands some talent, and, above all, great care. We dare not say that there were no accidents here, no eggs too well scrambled, no baskets upset. But the experience of Mother Mitchel had counted upon such things, and it may truly be said that there were never so many eggs broken at once, or ever could be again. To make an omelette of them would have taken a saucepan as large as a skating pond, and the fattest cook that ever lived could not hold the handle of such a saucepan.

But this was not all. Now that the yolks and whites were once divided, they must each be beaten separately in wooden bowls, to give them the necessary lightness. The egg beaters were marshalled into two brigades, the yellow and the white. Every one preferred the white, for it was much more amusing to make those snowy masses that rose up so high than to beat the yolks, which knew no better than to mix together like so much sauce. Mother Mitchel, with her usual wisdom, had avoided this difficulty by casting lots. Thus, those who were not on the white side had no reason to complain of op-

pression. And truly, when all was done, the whites and the yellows were equally tired. All had cramps in their hands.

Now began the real labour of Mother Mitchel. Till now she had been the commander-in-chief—the head only; now she put her own finger in the pie. First, she had to make sweetmeats and jam out of all the immense quantity of fruit she had stored. For this, as she could only do one kind at a time, she had ten kettles, each as big as a dinner table. During forty-eight hours the cooking went on; a dozen scullions blew the fire and put on the fuel. Mother Mitchel, with a spoon that four modern cooks could hardly lift, never ceased stirring and trying the boiling fruit. Three expert tasters, chosen from the most dainty, had orders to report progress every half hour.

It is unnecessary to state that all the sweetmeats were perfectly successful, or that they were of exquisite consistency, colour, and perfume. With Mother Mitchel there was no such word as *fail*. When each kind of sweetmeat was finished, she skimmed it, and put it away to cool in enormous bowls before potting. She did not use for this the usual little glass or earthen jars, but great stone ones, like those in the "Forty Thieves." Not only did these take less time to fill, but they were safe from the children. The scum and the scrapings were something, to be sure. But there was little Toto, who thought this was not enough. He would have jumped into one of the bowls if they had not held him.

Mother Mitchel, who thought of everything, had ordered two hundred great kneading troughs, wishing that all the utensils of this great work should be perfectly new. These two hundred troughs, like her other materials, were all delivered

punctually and in good order. The pastry cooks rolled up their sleeves and began to knead the dough with cries of "Hi! Hi!" that could be heard for miles. It was odd to see this army of bakers in serried ranks, all making the same gestures at once, like well-disciplined soldiers, stooping and rising together in time, so that a foreign ambassador wrote to his court that he wished his people could load and fire as well as these could knead. Such praise a people never forgets.

When each troughful of paste was approved it was moulded with care into the form of bricks, and with the aid of the engineer-in-chief, a young genius who had gained the first prize in the school of architecture, the majestic edifice was begun. Mother Mitchel herself drew the plan; in following her directions, the young engineer showed himself modest beyond all praise. He had the good sense to understand that the architecture of tarts and pies had rules of its own, and that therefore the experience of Mother Mitchel was worth all the scientific theories in the world.

The inside of the monument was divided into as many compartments as there were kinds of fruits. The walls were no less than four feet thick. When they were finished, twenty-four ladders were set up, and twenty-four experienced cooks ascended them. These first-class artists were each of them armed with an enormous cooking spoon. Behind them, on the lower rounds of the ladders, followed the kitchen boys, carrying on their heads pots and pans filled to the brim with jam and sweetmeats, each sort ready to be poured into its destined compartment. This colossal labour was accomplished in one day, and with wonderful exactness.

When the sweetmeats were used to the last drop, when the great spoons had done all their work, the twenty-four cooks descended to earth again. The intrepid Mother Mitchel, who had never quitted the spot, now ascended, followed by the noble Fanfreluche, and dipped her finger into each of the compartments, to assure herself that everything was right. This part of her duty was not disagreeable, and many of the scullions would have liked to perform it. But they might have lingered too long over the enchanting task. As for Mother Mitchel, she had been too well used to sweets to be excited now. She only wished to do her duty and to insure success.

All went on well. Mother Mitchel had given her approbation. Nothing was needed now but to crown the sublime and delicious edifice by placing upon it the crust—that is, the roof, or dome. This delicate operation was confided to the engineer-in-chief who now showed his superior genius. The dome, made beforehand of a single piece, was raised in the air by means of twelve balloons, whose force of ascension had been carefully calculated. First it was directed, by ropes, exactly over the top of the tart; then at the word of command it gently descended upon the right spot. It was not a quarter of an inch out of place. This was a great triumph for Mother Mitchel and her able assistant.

But all was not over. How should this colossal tart be cooked? That was the question that agitated all the people of the Greedy country, who came in crowds—lords and commons—to gaze at the wonderful spectacle.

Some of the envious or ill-tempered declared it would be impossible to cook the edifice which Mother Mitchel had built; and the doctors were, no one knows why, the saddest of

all. Mother Mitchel, smiling at the general bewilderment, mounted the summit of the tart; she waved her crutch in the air, and while her cat miaowed in his sweetest voice, suddenly there issued from the woods a vast number of masons, drawing wagons of well-baked bricks, which they had prepared in secret. This sight silenced the ill-wishers and filled the hearts of the Greedy with hope.

In two days an enormous furnace was built around and above the colossal tart, which found itself shut up in an immense earthen pot. Thirty huge mouths, which were connected with thousands of winding pipes for conducting heat all over the building, were soon choked with fuel, by the help of two hundred charcoal burners, who, obeying a private signal, came forth in long array from the forest, each carrying his sack of coal. Behind them stood Mother Mitchel with a box of matches, ready to fire each oven as it was filled. Of course the kindlings had not been forgotten, and was all soon in a blaze.

When the fire was lighted in the thirty ovens, when they saw the clouds of smoke rolling above the dome, that announced that the cooking had begun, the joy of the people was boundless. Poets improvised odes, and musicians sung verses without end, in honour of the superb prince who had been inspired to feed his people in so dainty a manner, when other rulers could not give them enough even of dry bread. The names of Mother Mitchel and of the illustrious engineer were not forgotten in this great glorification. Next to His Majesty, they were certainly the first of mankind, and their names were worthy of going down with his to the remotest posterity.

All the envious ones were thunderstruck. They tried to console themselves by saying that the work was not yet finished, and that an accident might happen at the last moment. But they did not really believe a word of this. Notwithstanding all their efforts to look cheerful, it had to be acknowledged that the cooking was possible. Their last resource was to declare the tart a bad one, but that would be biting off their own noses. As for declining to eat it, envy could never go so far as that in the country of the Greedy.

After two days, the unerring nose of Mother Mitchel discovered that the tart was cooked to perfection. The whole country was perfumed with its delicious aroma. Nothing more remained but to take down the furnaces. Mother Mitchel made her official announcement to His Majesty, who was delighted, and complimented her upon her punctuality. One day was still wanting to complete the month. During this time the people gave their eager help to the engineer in the demolition, wishing to have a hand in the great national work and to hasten the blessed moment. In the twinkling of an eye the thing was done. The bricks were taken down one by one, counted carefully, and carried into the forest again, to serve for another occasion.

The TART, unveiled, appeared at last in all its majesty and splendour. The dome was gilded, and reflected the rays of the sun in the most dazzling manner. The wildest excitement and rapture ran through the land of the Greedy. Each one sniffed with open nostrils the appetizing perfume. Their mouths watered, their eyes filled with tears, they embraced, pressed each other's hands, and indulged in touching pantomimes. Then the people of town and country, united by one

rapturous feeling, joined hands, and danced in a ring around the grand confection.

No one dared to touch the tart before the arrival of His Majesty. Meanwhile, something must be done to allay the universal impatience, and they resolved to show Mother Mitchel the gratitude with which all hearts were filled. She was crowned with the laurel of *conquerors*, which is also the laurel of *sauce*, thus serving a double purpose. Then they placed her, with her crutch and her cat, upon a sort of throne, and carried her all round her vast work. Before her marched all the musicians of the town, dancing, drumming, fifing, and tooting upon all instruments, while behind her pressed an enthusiastic crowd, who rent the air with their plaudits and filled it with a shower of caps. Her fame was complete, and a noble pride shone on her countenance.

The royal procession arrived. A grand stairway had been built, so that the King and his ministers could mount to the summit of this monumental tart. Thence the King, amid a deep silence, thus addressed his people:

"My children," said he, "you adore tarts. You despise all other food. If you could, you would even eat tarts in your sleep. Very well. Eat as much as you like. Here is one big enough to satisfy you. But know this, that while there remains a single crumb of this august tart, from the height of which I am proud to look down on you, all other food is forbidden you on pain of death. While you are here, I have ordered all the pantries to be emptied and, all the butchers, bakers, pork milk dealers, and fishmongers to shut up their shops. Why leave them open? Why indeed? Have you not here at discretion what you love best, and enough to last you ever,

ever so long? Devote yourselves to it with all your hearts. I do not wish you to be bored with the sight of any other food.

"Greedy ones! behold your TART!"

What enthusiastic applause. What frantic hurrahs rent the air, in answer to this eloquent speech from the throne!

"Long live the King, Mother Mitchel, and her cat! Long live the tart! Down with soup! Down with bread! To the bottom of the sea with all beefsteaks, mutton chops, and roasts!"

Such cries came from every lip. Old men gently stroked their chops, children patted their little stomachs, and the crowd licked its thousand lips with eager joy. Even the babies danced in their nurses' arms, so precocious was the passion for tarts in this singular country. Grave professors, skipping like kids, declaimed Latin verses in honour of His Majesty and Mother Mitchel, and the shyest young girls opened their mouths like the beaks of little birds. As for the doctors, they felt a joy beyond expression. They had reflected. They understood. But—my friends!——

At last the signal was given. A detachment of the engineer corps arrived, armed with pick and cutlass, and marched in good order to the assault. A breach was soon opened, and the distribution began. The King smiled at the opening in the tart; though vast, it hardly showed more than a mouse hole in the monstrous wall.

The King stroked his beard grandly. "All goes well," said he, "for him who knows how to wait."

Who can tell how long the feast would have lasted if the King had not given his command that it should cease? Once

more they expressed their gratitude with cries so stifled that they resembled grunts, and then rushed to the river. Never had a nation been so besmeared. Some were daubed to the eyes, others had their ears and hair all sticky. As for the little ones, they were marmalade from head to foot. When they had finished their toilets, the river ran all red and yellow and was sweetened for several hours, to the great surprise of all the fishes.

Before returning home, the people presented themselves before the King to receive his commands.

"Children!" said he, "the feast will begin again exactly at six o'clock. Give time to wash the dishes and change the tablecloths, and you may once more give yourselves over to pleasure. You shall feast twice a day as long as the tart lasts. Do not forget. Yes! if there is not enough in this one, I will even order ANOTHER from Mother Mitchel; for you know that great woman is indefatigable. Your happiness is my only aim." (Marks of universal joy and emotion.) "You understand? Noon, and six o'clock! There is no need for me to say be punctual! Go, then, my children—be happy!"

The second feast was as gay as the first, and as long. A pleasant walk in the suburbs—first exercise—then a nap, had refreshed their appetites and unlimbered their jaws. But the King fancied that the breach made in the tart was a little smaller than that of the morning.

"'Tis well!" said he, "'tis well! Wait till to-morrow, my friends; yes, till day after to-morrow, and *next week!*"

The next day the feast still went on gayly; yet at the evening meal the King noticed some empty seats.

"Why is this?" said he, with pretended indifference, to the court physician.

"Your Majesty," said the great Olibriers, "a few weak stomachs; that is all."

On the next day there were larger empty spaces. The enthusiasm visibly abated. The eighth day the crowd had diminished one half; the ninth, three quarters; the tenth day, of the thousand who came at first, only two hundred remained; on the eleventh day only one hundred; and on the twelfth—alas! who would have thought it?—a single one answered to the call. Truly he was big enough. His body resembled a hogshead, his mouth an oven, and his lips—we dare not say what. He was known in the town by the name of Patapouf. They dug out a fresh lump for him from the middle of the tart. It quickly vanished in his vast interior, and he retired with great dignity, proud to maintain the honour of his name and the glory of the Greedy Kingdom.

But the next day, even he, the very last, appeared no more. The unfortunate Patapouf had succumbed, and, like all the other inhabitants of the country, was in a very bad way. In short, it was soon known that the whole town had suffered agonies that night from too much tart. Let us draw a veil over those hours of torture. Mother Mitchel was in despair. Those ministers who had not guessed the secret dared not open their lips. All the city was one vast hospital. No one was seen in the streets but doctors and apothecaries' boys, running from house to house in frantic haste. It was dreadful! Doctor Olibriers was nearly knocked out. As for the King, he held his tongue and shut himself up in his palace, but a se-

cret joy shone in his eyes, to the wonder of every one. He waited three days without a word.

The third day, the King said to his ministers:

"Let us go now and see how my poor people are doing, and feel their pulse a little."

The good King went to every house, without forgetting a single one. He visited small and great, rich and poor.

"Oh, oh! Your Majesty," said all, "the tart was good, but may we never see it again! Plague on that tart! Better were dry bread. Your Majesty, for mercy's sake, a little dry bread! Oh, a morsel of dry bread, how good it would be!"

"No, indeed," replied the King. "*There is more of that tart!*"

"What! Your Majesty, *must* we eat it all?"

"You *must!*" sternly replied the King; "you *MUST!* By the immortal beefsteaks! not one of you shall have a slice of bread, and not a loaf shall be baked in the kingdom while there remains a crumb of that excellent tart!"

"What misery!" thought these poor people. "That tart forever!"

The sufferers were in despair. There was only one cry through all the town: "Ow! ow! ow!" For even the strongest and most courageous were in horrible agonies. They twisted, they writhed, they lay down, they got up. Always the inexorable colic. The dogs were not happier than their masters; even they had too much tart.

The spiteful tart looked in at all the windows. Built upon a height, it commanded the town. The mere sight of it made

everybody ill, and its former admirers had nothing but curses for it now. Unhappily, nothing they could say or do made it any smaller; still formidable, it was a frightful joke for those miserable mortals. Most of them buried their heads in their pillows, drew their nightcaps over their eyes, and lay in bed all day to shut out the sight of it. But this would not do; they knew, they felt it was there. It was a nightmare, a horrible burden, a torturing anxiety.

In the midst of this terrible consternation the King remained inexorable during eight days. His heart bled for his people, but the lesson must sink deep if it were to bear fruit in future. When their pains were cured, little by little, through fasting alone, and his subjects pronounced these trembling words, "We are hungry!" the King sent them trays laden with—the inevitable tart.

"Ah!" cried they, with anguish, "the tart again! Always the tart, and nothing but the tart! Better were death!"

A few, who were almost famished, shut their eyes, and tried to eat a bit of the detested food; but it was all in vain—they could not swallow a mouthful.

At length came the happy day when the King, thinking their punishment had been severe enough and could never be forgotten, believed them at length cured of their greediness. That day he ordered Mother Mitchel to make in one of her colossal pots a super-excellent soup of which a bowl was sent to every family. They received it with as much rapture as the Hebrews did the manna in the desert. They would gladly have had twice as much, but after their long fast it would not

have been prudent. It was a proof that they had learned something already, that they understood this.

The next day, more soup. This time the King allowed slices of bread in it. How this good soup comforted all the town! The next day there was a little more bread in it and a little soup meat. Then for a few days the kind Prince gave them roast beef and vegetables. The cure was complete.

The joy over this new diet was as great as ever had been felt for the tart. It promised to last longer. They were sure to sleep soundly, and to wake refreshed. It was pleasant to see in every house tables surrounded with happy, rosy faces, and laden with good nourishing food.

The Greedy people never fell back into their old ways. Their once puffed-out, sallow faces shone with health; they became, not fat, but muscular, ruddy, and solid. The butchers and bakers reopened their shops; the pastry cooks and confectioners shut theirs. The country of the Greedy was turned upside down, and if it kept its name, it was only from habit. As for the tart, it was forgotten. To-day, in that marvellous country, there cannot be found a paper of sugarplums or a basket of cakes. It is charming to see the red lips and the beautiful teeth of the people. If they have still a king, he may well be proud to be their ruler.

Does this story teach that tarts and pies should never be eaten? No; but there is reason in all things.

The doctors alone did not profit by this great revolution. They could not afford to drink wine any longer in a land where indigestion had become unknown. The apothecaries

were no less unhappy, spiders spun webs over their windows, and their horrible remedies were no longer of use.

Ask no more about Mother Mitchel. She was ridiculed without measure by those who had adored her. To complete her misfortune, she lost her cat. Alas for Mother Mitchel!

The King received the reward of his wisdom. His grateful people called him neither Charles the Bold, nor Peter the Terrible, nor Louis the Great, but always by the noble name of Prosper I, the Reasonable.

THANKFUL[1]

By Mary E. Wilkins Freeman.



This tale is evidence that Mrs. Freeman understands the children of New England as well as she knows their parents. There is a doll in the story, but boys will not mind this as there are also two turkey-gobblers and a pewter dish full of Revolutionary bullets.

SUBMIT THOMPSON sat on the stone wall; Sarah Adams, an erect, prim little figure, ankle-deep in dry grass, stood beside it, holding Thankful. Thankful was about ten inches long, made of the finest linen, with little rosy cheeks, and a fine little wig of flax. She wore a blue wool frock and a red cloak. Sarah held her close. She even drew a fold of her own blue homespun blanket around her to shield her from the November wind. The sky was low and gray; the wind blew from the northeast, and had the breath of snow in it. Submit on the wall drew her quilted petticoats close down over her feet, and huddled herself into a small space, but her

face gleamed keen and resolute out of the depths of a great red hood that belonged to her mother. Her eyes were fixed upon a turkey-gobbler ruffling and bobbing around the back door of the Adams house. The two gambrel-roofed Thompson and Adams houses were built as close together as if the little village of Bridgewater were a city. Acres of land stretched behind them and at the other sides, but they stood close to the road, and close to each other. The narrow space between them was divided by a stone wall which was Submit's and Sarah's trysting-place. They met there every day and exchanged confidences. They loved each other like sisters—neither of them had an own sister—but to-day a spirit of rivalry had arisen.

The tough dry blackberry vines on the wall twisted around Submit; she looked, with her circle of red petticoat, like some strange late flower blooming out on the wall. "I know he don't, Sarah Adams," said she.

"Father said he'd weigh twenty pounds," returned Sarah, in a small, weak voice, which still had persistency in it.

"I don't believe he will. Our Thanksgiving turkey is twice as big. You know he is, Sarah Adams."

"No, I don't, Submit Thompson."

"Yes, you do."

Sarah lowered her chin, and shook her head with a decision that was beyond words. She was a thin, delicate-looking little girl, her small blue-clad figure bent before the wind, but there was resolution in her high forehead and her sharp chin.

Submit nodded violently.

Sarah shook her head again. She hugged Thankful, and shook her head, with her eyes still staring defiantly into Submit's hood.

Submit's black eyes in the depths of it were like two sparks. She nodded vehemently; the gesture was not enough for her; she nodded and spoke together. "Sarah Adams," said she, "what will you give me if our turkey is bigger than your turkey?"

"It ain't."

"What will you give me if it is?"

Sarah stared at Submit. "I don't know what you mean, Submit Thompson," said she, with a stately and puzzled air.

"Well, I'll tell you. If your turkey weighs more than ours I'll give you—I'll give you my little work-box with the picture on the top, and if our turkey weighs more than yours you give me—— What will you give me, Sarah Adams?"

Sarah hung her flaxen head with a troubled air. "I don't know," said she. "I don't believe I've got anything mother would be willing to have me give away."

"There's Thankful. Your mother wouldn't care if you gave her away."

Sarah started, and hugged Thankful closer. "Yes, my mother would care, too," said she. "Don't you know my Aunt Rose from Boston made her and gave her to me?"

Sarah's beautiful young Aunt Rose from Boston was the special admiration of both the little girls. Submit was ordinarily impressed by her name, but now she took it coolly.

"What if she did?" she returned. "She can make another. It's just made out of a piece of old linen, anyhow. My work-box is real handsome; but you can do just as you are a mind to."

"Do you mean I can have the work-box to keep?" inquired Sarah.

"Course I do, if your turkey's bigger."

Sarah hesitated. "Our turkey is bigger anyhow," she murmured. "Don't you think I ought to ask mother, Submit?" she inquired suddenly.

"No! What for? I don't see anything to ask your mother for. She won't care anything about that rag doll."

"Ain't you going to ask your mother about the work-box?"

"No," replied Submit stoutly. "It's mine; my grandmother gave it to me."

Sarah reflected. "I *know* our turkey is the biggest," she said, looking lovingly at Thankful, as if to justify herself to her. "Well, I don't care," she added, finally.

"Will you?"

"Yes."

"When's yours going to be killed?"

"This afternoon."

"So's ours. Then we'll find out."

Sarah tucked Thankful closer under her shawl. "I know our turkey is biggest," said she. She looked very sober, although her voice was defiant. Just then the great turkey came

swinging through the yard. He held up his head proudly and gobbled. His every feather stood out in the wind. He seemed enormous—a perfect giant among turkeys. "*Look* at him!" said Sarah, edging a little closer to the wall; she was rather afraid of him.

"He ain't half so big as ours," returned Submit, stoutly; but her heart sank. The Thompson turkey did look very large.

"Submit! Submit!" called a voice from the Thompson house.

Submit slowly got down from the wall. "His feathers are a good deal thicker than ours," she said, defiantly, to Sarah.

"Submit," called the voice, "come right home! I want you to pare apples for the pies. Be quick!"

"Yes, marm," Submit answered back, in a shrill voice; "I'm coming!" Then she went across the yard and into the kitchen door of the Thompson house, like a red robin into a nest. Submit had been taught to obey her mother promptly. Mrs. Thompson was a decided woman.

Sarah looked after Submit, then she gathered Thankful closer, and also went into the house. Her mother, as well as Mrs. Thompson, was preparing for Thanksgiving. The great kitchen was all of a pleasant litter with pie plates and cake pans and mixing bowls, and full of warm, spicy odours. The oven in the chimney was all heated and ready for a batch of apple and pumpkin pies. Mrs. Adams was busy sliding them in, but she stopped to look at Sarah and Thankful. Sarah was her only child.

"Why, what makes you look so sober?" said she.

"Nothing," replied Sarah. She had taken off her blanket, and sat in one of the straight-backed kitchen chairs, holding Thankful.

"You look dreadful sober," said her mother. "Are you tired?"

"No, marm."

"I'm afraid you've got cold standing out there in the wind. Do you feel chilly?"

"No, marm. Mother, how much do you suppose our turkey weighs?"

"I believe father said he'd weigh about twenty pounds. You are sure you don't feel chilly?"

"No, marm. Mother, do you suppose our turkey weighs more than Submit's?"

"How do you suppose I can tell? I ain't set eyes on their turkey lately. If you feel well, you'd better sit up to the table and stone that bowl of raisins. Put your dolly away, and get your apron."

But Sarah stoned raisins with Thankful in her lap, hidden under her apron. She was so full of anxiety that she could not bear to put her away. Suppose the Thompson turkey should be larger, and she should lose Thankful—Thankful that her beautiful Aunt Rose had made for her?

Submit, over in the Thompson house, had sat down at once to her apple paring. She had not gone into the best room to look at the work-box whose possession she had hazarded. It stood in there on the table, made of yellow satiny wood, with a sliding lid ornamented with a beautiful little picture. Sub-

mit had a certain pride in it, but her fear of losing it was not equal to her hope of possessing Thankful. Submit had never had a doll, except a few plebeian ones, manufactured secretly out of corncobs, whom it took more imagination than she possessed to admire.

Gradually all emulation over the turkeys was lost in the naughty covetousness of her little friend and neighbour's doll. Submit felt shocked and guilty, but she sat there paring the Baldwin apples, and thinking to herself: "If our turkey is only bigger, if it only is, then—I shall have Thankful." Her mouth was pursed up and her eyes snapped. She did not talk at all, but pared very fast.

Her mother looked at her. "If you don't take care, you'll cut your fingers," said she. "You are in too much of a hurry. I suppose you want to get out and gossip with Sarah again at the wall, but I can't let you waste any more time to-day. There, I told you you would!"

Submit had cut her thumb quite severely. She choked a little when her mother tied it up, and put on some balm of Gilead, which made it smart worse.

"Don't cry!" said her mother. "You'll have to bear more than a cut thumb if you live."