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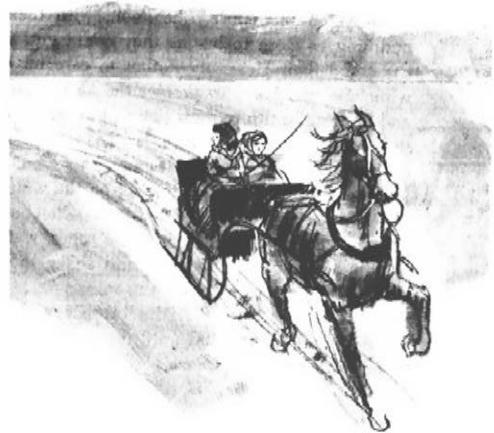
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## Thanksgiving Goose

By Mrs. Paul E. King

From the November 30, 1980 Sunday School Beacon

It was exactly twenty-four hours and twenty minutes before Thanksgiving day (I know, because the great Grandfather clock in the long winding stair hallway had just chimed out the time of day) and as I pressed my fat little nose tight against the frosted window in the kitchen, I figured the minutes out, too. You see, this was going to be a special Thanksgiving. Very, very special.



"Polly," Mama called softly, "peel those few apples in the sink. We can make tasty applesauce out of them."

"But Mama," I protested, "there's not too much good left in them and, besides, we don't have meat to make our Thanksgiving dinner complete."

"For shame on you, Polly," Mama reprimanded softly. "One does not need meat to be truly grateful and thankful. Our house is nice and warm and we have plenty of beans and salt pork."

"But I'm tired of beans," I said, whimpering.

"Better be thankful for what you have, Polly, or the dear Lord may take even that away from you," and Mama sighed deeply.

I felt ashamed of myself. True enough, our house was cozy with warmth and love; and Harris, Joey, Hannah and I had all received a pair of warm mittens and new

galoshes. Then, too, Mama had made each of us another coat. I can't say 'new' because she had made them out of some of Aunt Kate's heavy, used winter coats.

I cast a long lingering glance toward the pond where Harris and Joey were cutting figures on the ice then reluctantly tore myself away from the frolic and the play and made my way over to the sink and the shoveled up apples.

Mama had bread rising in the pans and the good yeast smell made me hungry. "Give us this day our daily bread" . . . the Lord seemed to suddenly be talking to me from Luke's Gospel and I hung my head in shame while the hot tears fell down my cheeks and mingled with the shriveled up apples. I sniffed just then.

"You taking cold, Polly?" and Mama's face searched mine anxiously.

"No. I . . . I . . . I'm just crying. Forgive me, Mama; I am thankful for the shriveled up apples and the beans and salt pork. But where's the goose?" "Goose?" Mama looked puzzled.

"I heard Papa praying in the cowshed last night, and he asked the Lord to please send us a goose for Thanksgiving. He even thanked Him for it!"

"He did?" There was a twinkle in Mama's eyes now. "It'll be along then, dear Polly."

Such was the faith Mama and all of us had in Papa's prayers. He made it a very rigid point to get in touch with Heaven each day. Oh, how his dear face would shine when he came out of his secret closet! It made me want to get up real near to him and rub my small face over his angelic-looking one to see if some of the glow wouldn't perhaps rub off on me.

I finished peeling the apples and Mama put them on the stove to simmer. She made a quick survey of the cupboard where she kept all the spies and sugars. "Thank you Lord!" she praised loudly. "I'll have enough of everything to make a big plum pudding, too."

Things were really shaping up now!

I slipped over to the frosted window again and watched the boys make more figures on the ice at the pond. How great was my desire to be there, too! But I must stay near to help Mama in any way needed until Hannah finished her nap.

I noticed, for the first time since standing in front of the north kitchen window, that the sky was heavily overcast with a great leaden-gray -- a sure enough sign that more snow was on the way. Always, we children felt for Thanksgiving and Christmas to really be Thanksgiving and Christmas, there would have to be a heavy snow covering the

ground. We failed to realize that our little counterparts in the Southern States had never needed a thick coverlet of the powdery white stuff to make their Thanksgiving and Christmas a truly great and enjoyable day.

"I hope it won't be too bad," Mama said anxiously, "or old Brother and Sister Potterby won't be here tomorrow, Lord willing."

"Oh, were they coming to Thanksgiving?" I questioned childishly.

"Papa invited them -- said they wouldn't have any Thanksgiving dinner unless we provided one for them, Polly."

"But, Mama, all we have is salt pork and beans."

"And apple sauce and homemade bread and plum pudding, Polly," Mama added, smiting sweetly and lifting the cover on the pot of slowly simmering apples. "Um, they do smell right appetizing, Polly. Now, when our Heavenly Father sends that goose, we'll have real goose gravy and potatoes to go with it. Why, little Polly, I forgot -- we have potatoes a-plenty in the bin in the cellar. Oh, we are a blest people!"

"But, Mama, hadn't we ought to war until we're sure the Lord's going to send a goose before we begin to break the stale bread in pieces?" I asked, when I saw Mama busy at the job.

"'Ask, and ye shall receive,' Jesus said. Papa's asked, and that goose is as much ours as if he were already dead and lying in the kitchen sink waiting to be stuffed."

I walked back to the window again and stood in silence for a long time, thinking about what Mama had just said. That was why we had awakened one morning long ago (when the cupboards had been bare the night before) to the smell of delicious bacon and eggs frying, and biscuit baking . . . Mama and Papa had asked our Heavenly Father at family worship that night for food. And He had sent it! Now, again, Papa felt the Lord would be pleased for us to have a goose, and so he asked Him about it.

"Give yourself up, Mr. Goose," I said half-aloud.

"You say something, Polly?" Mama asked, still breaking the stale bread into a big earthenware bowl. She knew how we all loved stuffing.

"I was talking to the goose," I said seriously, expecting at any minute to see one land on our doorstep and knock on the door as if to say, "Here I am. What are you waiting for?"

Mama and I heard a sudden loud commotion coming from down near the pond. Harris was screaming while Joey was struggling fiercely to make it up the hill with his skates still attached to his shoes.

"Mama! Come quick! Come quick! Where's Papa?" By now Harris was breathless. Simply breathless from screaming and from running and stumbling up the slippery hill. Joey was right on his brother's heels, his nose as red as a cherry.

"What happened? What happened?" Mama asked, hurrying through the kitchen door, a big chunk of stale bread still in one hand. "Who's hurt? Did the ice break through?"

"A goose, Mama! A big, big goose!" the boys gasped together. "I never saw anything like it. Come and see."

Quickly we all stumbled and slid down the hill toward the pond. Mama was shouting and crying for joy all the way down.

"Me an' Joey were skating when all of a sudden we heard a loud, loud noise," Harris began, his voice full of animation and excitement. "And just like a shot, a big goose dropped at our feet. See! He's still there. Right where he dropped out of heaven at our feet!"

Mama walked over to where the stately winged creature had settled on the ice and, reaching out, she gathered the fowl into her arms.

"He'll hurt you, Mama!" Joey cried.

"God's got him calm, boys. He's been waiting for me. Praise the Lord! I praise Thee, Lord, for sending us our Thanksgiving dinner!" and Mama shouted all the way up the hill.

"It's the goose Papa asked the Lord for last night in the cowshed," I explained as I hurled up the hill with my brothers. "It's our Thanksgiving goose -- from God."

The snowflakes filtered earthward in rapid succession now and the pond was quite forgotten as we stood and watched Mama dress the biggest goose we had ever seen.

"There'll be plenty of tender meat and delicious golden gravy," Mama said between her praises to God.

I saw the big earthenware bowl and the stale bread nearby and decided I'd better get busy. Papa would soon be home from visiting and praying with the poor widow and

her sickly child in Maple Valley, and Susan would be with him, too. Everything must be ready for the truly, truly great Thanksgiving feast.

As I worked, I hummed ever so softly, "Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus our blessed Redeemer." Next, Harris was singing; then Joey and Mama.

"Oh, Mama," I exclaimed prayerfully, "I shall never forget this Thanksgiving. God does take care of His children."

The applesauce was steaming fragrantly away on the table where Mama had set it to cool. The spicy cinnamon topping enhanced the glorious fragrance and mingled wonderfully with the now baking bread and steaming plum pudding.

I glanced through the kitchen window and washed the pure-looking snow cover our each with a shining white blanket, and suddenly I felt good all over. "Thank You, My Father!" I exclaimed, looking at Mama's radiant face.

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THE END