

## JEM HASTINGS' LUCK.

The Widow Wilson's farm had seen better and more prosperous days and now was traveling backward. It began at the top of Brindlehill, where it was bounded by the country road, and straggled down to the lake shore, its hundred acres or so wandering over hills and dipping into hollows until they terminated at the bay, with its rim of white and glistening sand.

One of the most picturesque spots of earth, and right in the centre of it, crowning a rounded knoll, surrounded with stalwart oaks and butternuts, squatted the house of its owner.

It was always a difficult spot to reach in winter, when the drifting snows piled high their white billows against the low eaved structure and hid the windows from the outer world. But in summer it was a delight, this moss brown dwelling beneath the oaks, and at one time had been a home around whose hearthstone had gathered sons and daughters.

Now it was desolate. The passing stranger would have but added it to the category of deserted farms. No sign of life was visible this bright Thanksgiving morning. From its white, paneled chimney no curl of smoke invaded the crisp and frosty air. The light fall of snow that had covered the ground the night before showed no trace of footstep leading from the weather beaten door. And yet there was a stir of life in the farmyard, in the hollow among the trees, where the old barn tottered ready for its fall. There a flock of fowl and turkeys wandered disconsolately about. In the adjacent stall an old horse stamped impatiently for his breakfast and a forlorn cow chafed restlessly at her stallions. Except for these the old farm was as silent as when its first owner carved it from the virgin wilderness. A rustling of the shrubbery that fringed the tall, still rankle pines on the hill beyond the barn told that a visitor was coming to Lonely farm. A human head appeared in sight. It was crowned by a woolen cap, from beneath which peered a pair of black, bright eyes. Their owner took off the cap and mopped his brow. He was a rugged country lad of 18, well knit and sturdy, with a pair of ruddy cheeks, white teeth and lips rosy, but with a drop of sadness.

New England, always hard on her children, had taken from this boy the home and mother that make Thanksgiving, even as it had taken from the widow all but the wretched framework of what had once been a home.

"House looks like mother's used to after she got so she couldn't get about," soliloquized the boy, staring at the smokeless chimney. "I'll bet there ain't been nobody near the widdler in a week, and I'll bet, while I'm a bettin', that she needs somebody. Guess I'll find out what's the matter."

He strode down to the house and knocked. There was no response. Only the creak of the oak door was disturbed by the unwanted noise and flew away, with a caw of alarm. A second knock startled the fowl in the barnyard which greeted him with a suppressed chuckle, but there was no answer from within. "Guess I might as well go in," he pushed open the door and entered the room which served as a kitchen and sitting room all in one. A table stood in the center of it, covered with a snowy cloth and set as if for supper. A tall clock ticked in the corner under the stairs, but its rhythmic beats only seemed to make the silence audible. "It seems kinder creepy, that's a fact. How there ain't nothin' happened to her. Wonder where she is? P'raps she's asleep?"

He rapped loudly, and then put his ear down to the keyhole, listening intently. At first there was no response. Then he thought he heard a faint, quivering voice. "It's me—Jem Hastings. I've come to see if you need anybody."

"Come in." The feeble voice struggled with a cough. Then: "Yes, I'm so glad you've come. I was faint yesterday and had just strength enough to crawl to bed. Perhaps—"

"What, an you ain't had nothin' to eat?" "No," with a feeble smile.

"Well, if you'll let me try, I'll make a cup of tea."

Jem closed the door, set his gun in a corner and looked around for the place in which the widow kept her stores. The dressers ranged against the wall were bright with old fashioned pewter platters and china. Here he found a caddy of tea and then set about making a fire. A huge fireplace yawned at one side of the room, hung with a black iron crane from which was suspended a teakettle. The woodpile was outside, near the back door, and brushing off the snow Jem saw that some dry wood, with which he made a roaring blaze. It was not long before he had the satisfaction of seeing the kettle send forth a volume of steam, and a few minutes later he tapped again at the bedroom door with a tray, on it a tempting cup of tea and two well buttered slices of bread.

Wrapped in a shawl of Canton silk, the heirloom of a grandmother whose father once sailed from Salem to the Indies, the widow sank back into her comfortable armchair with a deep sigh of content. She closed her eyes from her weakness, while Jem tiptoed about the room, setting things to rights and preparing the table for a prospective meal. To be sure there was very little in sight, but he had faith that there might be something in the cellar and in the cupboards, for the widow was known in the township to have been a "good provider" in her days of affluence.

"You've made me very happy, Jem—ve y' thank!"

"Well, ma'am, I'm glad of it. Its Thanksgiving."

"What! Really Thanksgiving day? It's the first time I've forgotten it—ever. I must be growing older."

Jem grew bolder.

"There's a turkey out in the barn yard. He ain't very fat, but if you say so I'll help fix a Thanksgiving dinner."

The widow urged no objection, and both fascinated at the prospect of a Thanksgiving dinner, with themselves as host and hostess, the boy trudged out to the barn. Some sticks of hard wood were soon piled on the fire, and by the time Sir Turkey was ready for the oven the widow had peeled the vegetables and dropped them into the mysterious depths of the steaming kettles. Jem looking on with glowing but bashful appreciation.

A snowy cloth over a round table, with two seats opposite each other, is always an inspiring sight, and when topped by a steaming brown turkey, with all the fixings

of a turkey dinner, the feast is one to melt hearts harder than that of a lonely widow and a homesick New England lad.

"It is the happiest Thanksgiving dinner I have had in many a year, my boy," she said to him as he cleared away the dishes and brought out the dessert of fragrant quince preserves.

"May God bless you! And to think how the dreadful, gloomy morning has been turned to such bright sunshine by your comin'!"

Jem turned to the window to hide some tears that would persist in squeezing themselves out of his eyes. "I wish she wouldn't be so sentimental," said he to himself quite wrathfully. But to the widow he said: "Why, ma'am, I ain't done nothin' great—no more'n you'd have done for me, I'll bet. I ain't enjoyed a dinner so my myself since I can remember. I wish I could just stay here all the time."

A new light came into the woman's faded gray eyes born of a thought that had been struggling for expression for an hour or more. "And why can't you stay, Jem?"

"I could, ma'am, if I could come as—as partners."

It was out at last, the boy's yearning for something as his own and the chance he saw upon the widow's farm. "I could fix things up," he went on eagerly, "and make the chickens lay eggs and the cow give milk and—"

Jem stopped, but the widow's respectful attention led him on.

"I could earn my board in saving things that's going to waste. When I come through your wood lot this morning, I noticed cords of corded dead trees that ought to be cut an' made firewood. An' as for timber, there's mo' e'n \$100 worth there that'll be spoiled if it ain't cut an' sold pretty soon."

The boy hesitated, amazed at his audacity, but the widow nodded her head and smiled approval. "That's true, Jem. The farm is running down for the lack of some one to over-see out of doors. So, then, it is a bargain."

And so this strange partnership began. The first winter Jem began thinning out the superfluous wood in the neglected lots, stacking up behind the house enough fuel to satisfy even the cravings of that yawning fireplace for years to come and selling to the sawmill on the pond timber for shipment that came to quite \$500.

At the spring opened he was soon afield, continuing the good work of improvement, and "planting time" found the farm with more and earlier labour performed than it had ever before experienced. In front of the western door he threw out a platform, protected by a lattice work covering, and here the widow passed all the spare time she could snatch from her indoor duties. It had never occurred to any one before that farm work might be made attractive. The widow had only looked upon the beauties of her farm around her through the kitchen window or during a hasty trip to the well or farmyard. The latticed porch was a revelation to her, and a haven of rest where she sat and mused during the long twilight of summer.

"I never thought I should take such comfort here," she said. "Before you came I was more than willing to give up the farm and go away. But now, Jem, I want to live here the rest of my life. I would not leave it for the world."

"That's so, ma'am. It would have been a great mistake to leave the old place. Why, there ain't a prettier view in all the world than from your front door. If there is, then it is right there, down in the woods, where the great trees meet overhead, the brook sings a soft song of rest and the fern covered banks stretch down to the pond. I never traveled any yet, but I don't want to. This suits me." And he returned to his work with a cheery whistle that sent a thrill of satisfaction through the widow's heart.

A wonderful change had been effected by the time another year had rolled another Thanksgiving into the calendar. The roof of the old house no longer leaked. The barn had been raised from the attitude of deep dejection, and its mows were crowded to bursting with hay and grain. The old horse spent his days chiefly in the pasture, while a younger and more vigorous animal did the work, assisted by a yoke of big and handsome oxen. The solitary cow now had plenty of company, and frisky calves gambled about her in the summer time. There was no longer any doubt as to the availability of any of the 1st gobbles for a Thanksgiving dinner.

Thus the seasons succeeded one another with their measure of content. Each found the widow more and more dependent upon her stalwart helper. She clung to him as she might have clung to the son of whom she had been deprived in the springtime of her widowhood. As her toiling footsteps were supported down the aisle of the village church on Sunday few of the congregation knew that the handsome young man who watched over her so assiduously was not in fact her own son. Those who were cognizant of the relations between the two shook their heads knowingly, saying to themselves and to each other: "Lucky boy that! Stepped right into the farm just as the old lady was about to leave it. He knows the side of his bread that has the butter on it."

But it is doubtful if Jem had ever given that a thought; so happy and content was he that the merely material conditions of his life had never troubled his consciousness. Only one thing troubled his thoughts of late. He was deeply stirred by the soft, brown eyes of pretty Susie Jones, a chorister in the church—Susie, who lived, as he had done, with friends for board and keep—another of New England's orphans. He never mentioned this daring sentiment, not even to the widow. But her eyes, though growing dim, were acute enough to penetrate his honest soul. His whole life centered in the farm, which had

become as essential to it almost as the air he breathed. But now there must be young life there. A pair of brown eyes persisted in dancing before his face, in wood pile, in field, in garden.

And so it came to pass that there was a wedding next Thanksgiving in the little cottage, now pretty with vines and cheery within. Susie was glad of so pleasant a place for the troth which she was to plight with Jem, while he, lucky fellow though he was, could not take time to travel to Susie's home, far away over the rough, hilly roads. "A wife's a good thing," he remarked to the widow the evening before his marriage, "but there's cows to be looked after and hens to be fed—more'n you could tend to alone."

"That's so, Jem," said the widow, smiling brightly, "and thanks to you for it all." Under branches of autumn leaves from the last reddening trees Jem and Susie promised all the things of the simple marriage service. Then came the country wedding supper.

When the last guest had gone, driven away in the farm wagons that had clustered around the door all afternoon, the widow turned to Jem and Susie, sitting bashfully in the freight.

"You're my children, now, both of you," she said. "Call me mother just once, Jem and Susie."

"Mother!" cried Jem, taking the feeble hands together and kissing them tenderly. "My darling mother, dearest friend I ever had!"

She returned his loving glance lingeringly, gratefully, as they led her to the door of her room.

Next morning Jem knocked again at the Widow Wilson's door just as he had done on that lonely Thanksgiving day four years ago. This time not even a feeble voice answered his repeated calls.

Three days later, as the neighbors struggled back from the little cemetery on the hill, Squire Lathrop drew Jem apart.

"I s'p'ose you know the widdler's left the farm to you? No? Sho! It's mighty strange she didn't tell you. She made her will more'n a year ago, and you're her only heir. She seemed to set a lot by you, the widdler did, and—looking around approvingly over the snow covered fields—I don't blame her. The last four years he's been the peaceablest of her life, and she's left her peace with you, for sure!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

## BORN.

Moncton, Oct. 20, to the wife of B. C. Gesner, a son. Gates Mt., Oct. 2, to the wife of George Bent, a son. Liverpool, Oct. 15, to the wife of Isaac Tins, a son.

Freeport, Oct. 19, to the wife of D. Mitchell, a son. Pictou, Oct. 17, to the wife of John D. Cameron, a son.

Liverpool, Oct. 27, to the wife of E. T. Campbell, a son. Milton, Oct. 20, to the wife of Frank P. Dresser, a son.

Halifax, Oct. 17, to the wife of Arthur G. Troop, a son. Bathurst, Oct. 24, to the wife of Wm. J. La Plante, a son.

James Plains, Oct. 6, to the wife of E. H. Cooke, a son. Yarmouth, Oct. 24, to the wife of Robert Concete, a daughter.

Stanley, Oct. 5, to the wife of William Anthony, a daughter. Yarmouth, Oct. 19, to the wife of James Richards, a daughter.

Digby, Oct. 15, to the wife of George Holdsworth, a daughter. Berwick, Oct. 14, to the wife of F. H. Musher, a daughter.

Sydney, Oct. 19, to the wife of Ernest A. Richardson, a son. Dartmouth, Oct. 3, to the wife of Walter G. Lavers, a daughter.

Parrishboro, Oct. 15, to the wife of Percy McLennan, a daughter. Salmon River, Oct. 15, to the wife of W. F. Wessel, a daughter.

St. Stephen, Oct. 17, to the wife of George Hannah, a daughter. Freeport, Oct. 15, to the wife of Capt. Calvin Steeves, a daughter.

West Pubnico, Oct. 19, to the wife of Ludger Anco, a daughter. Annapolis, Oct. 13, to the wife of Charles McCormack, a son.

North Sydney, Oct. 1, to the wife of Rev. John Campbell, Oct. 19, to the wife of H. F. McLatchey, a son.

East Wentworth, Oct. 9, to the wife of James Cooper, a son. Quebec, Oct. 10, to the wife of Neil Hartling, twin boys and girls.

Passadena, Cal. Oct. 13 to the wife of Charles C. French, a daughter.

St. Stephen, Oct. 17, to the wife of Frederick P. McNichol, a son.

Shag Harbor, Oct. 15, to the wife of Herbert Kendrick, a daughter.

West Pubnico, Oct. 20, to the wife of Chas. D'Entremont, a daughter.

Parrishboro, Oct. 9, to the wife of Thomas Livingstone, a daughter.

Shubenacadie, Oct. 12, to the wife of Thomas Sharp, a daughter.

Melvern Square N. S., Oct. 6, to the wife of John Morse, a daughter.

Hamilton, Bermuda, Oct. 9, to the wife of Hedley Hallett, a daughter.

Fox Creek, Oct. 21, to the wife of Doocy T. Leblanc, a daughter.

Point Turner, C. B., Oct. 7, to the wife of M. A. McLeod, a daughter.

Trinidad, Sept. 29, to the wife of Rev. A. W. Thomson of N. S., a daughter.

Freeport, Oct. 15, William H. Lockett to Ellen M. Rudolf of N. S.

Windsor, Oct. 15, by Rev. A. A. Shaw, Frank Warr to Mrs. D. Doak.

Nelson, N. B., Oct. 20, by Rev. W. Aiken, Robert Loggie to May Flett.

Milford, Oct. 15, by Rev. R. Smith, Matthew Rupert to Mrs. Linnahan.

Rockingham, Oct. 15, by Rev. S. K. West, Carrol Gray to Isabel Forbes.

Nictaux, Oct. 12, by Rev. J. W. Brown, Charles Fisher to Sadie Young.

Hill Grove, Oct. 5, by Rev. W. L. Parker, O. S. Dunham to Ella McKee.

Bridgeport, Oct. 7, by Rev. S. March, Lawson Fraser to Lavinia Hillier.

Boston, Oct. 6, by Rev. A. T. Sowerly, John M. Aker to Ida M. Shilliner.

Bridgeport, Oct. 10, by Rev. S. March, Philip Meisner to Esther Nanger.

Halifax, Oct. 20, by Rev. E. F. Murphy, Patrick B. Terman to Josie M. Kenny.

Hartland, Oct. 14, by Rev. G. B. Trafton, Fred Boyd to Mildred Thornton.

Pugwash, Oct. 14, by Rev. R. Williams, James H. Langille to Annie Pedgley.

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Halifax, Oct. 20, by Rev. G. A. Lawson, Harris Huxley to Margaret Mosher.

Dartmouth, Oct. 20, by Rev. Thos. Stewart, A. M. Morrison to Sarah M. James.

Marquodobb, by Rev. J. Rosborough, Robert H. Cooke to Margaret Soddart.

Dalhousie, Oct. 15, by Rev. Geo. Fisher, Charles Campbell to Margaret Casey.

Sackville, Oct. 21, by Rev. T. D. Hart, William C. Scur to Maggie V. Grumble.

St. Stephen, Oct. 21, by Rev. Wm. Dillard, John C. Darns to Mary Ellen Beale.

Amherst, Oct. 20, by Rev. D. A. Steele, Douglas B. Willis to Bessie McGlashin.

Harbor Grace, Nfld., Oct. 1, by Rev. J. M. Noel, Joseph Martin to Ali's Moore.

Centerville, Oct. 21, by Rev. Dr. Morse, George Shaw to Eliza May McWhorter.

Ingonish, Oct. 13, by Rev. C. A. Munro, Rev. R. O. Armstrong to Annie Burke.

Andover, N. B., Oct. 14, by Rev. A. H. Hayward, F. S. Prescott to Mary B. Sicut.

Yarmouth, Oct. 21, by Rev. E. D. Millar, William G. Kirk to Elizabeth A. Adams.

Sussex, Oct. 19, by Rev. H. Nobles, Wellington McLaughlin to Janie E. Wilson.

Windsor, Oct. 14, by Rev. Henry Dickie, John A. Dorman to Josephine Mulholland.

Yarmouth, Oct. 15, by Rev. J. H. Fosha, Arthur W. Gayton to Clara R. Whitman.

Cape Negro, Oct. 12, by Rev. J. H. Davis, Winslow J. Swaine to Florence E. Swaine.

East Hantsville, Oct. 14, by Rev. K. Bearisto, Arthur S. Britto to Anne Anderson.

Milton, Me., Oct. 7, by Rev. F. W. Brooks, Johnson Colpitts to Fannie Lewis.

Fairbairn, Minn., Oct. 14, Charles E. Kinsman to Florence Band, all of Nova Scotia.

Edinburgh, Oct. 2, by Rev. D. Forbes, Rev. Clarence McKinnon to Mary McIntosh.

Barter Settlement, Oct. 13, by Rev. S. H. Rice, George T. York to Jessie Leaman.

Upper Richmond, Oct. 20, by Rev. H. B. Mack, Slayter Higgins to Bessie E. Roodie.

Kentville, Oct. 17, by Rev. H. Alfred Porter, Reginald Robinson to Annie Lovett.

Riverside, N. B., Oct. 16, by Rev. I. B. Colwell, Emma E. Stiles to Anne McRae.

Grand Pre, Oct. 27, by Rev. P. M. McDonald, A. Foals Newcombe to Alma F. Beattie.

Pembroke, N. S., Oct. 14, by Rev. F. W. W. Desbarres, Eunice Ryder to Eva Churchill.

West Hantsville, Oct. 14, by Rev. D. G. Brooks, George McFarland to Phoebe Birrows.

Upper Port La Tour, Oct. 8, by Rev. J. H. Davis, John E. Bethell to Emma H. Reynolds.

Hopewell Cape, Oct. 14, by Rev. I. B. Colwell, Albert A. Steeves to Annie E. Donville.

St. John, 24, Hugh DeVenise, 68.

Windsor, Oct. 17, Joseph Scott, 78.

Halifax, Oct. 21, George T. Nautilus.

John, Oct. 25, B. J. Driscoll, 56.

Middleton, Oct. 9, B. B. Morton, 76.

Halifax, Oct. 22, Alex. McCarthy, 49.

Tasquet, Oct. 20, Philip H. Hilton, 65.

Yarmouth, Oct. 18, Pearl Kinney, 48.

Granville, Oct. 7, Alfred T. Carter, 48.

Halifax, Oct. 15, James E. Wilson, 68.

St. Stephen, Oct. 12, Uriah W. Toal, 54.

Lunenburg, Oct. 29, William Beggs, 63.

West Pubnico, Oct. 10, James Deon, 62.

Halifax, Oct. 21, Mrs. Annie Rogers, 48.

Ohio, N. S., Oct. 1, Capt. D. F. Scovell 69.

Cape Island, Oct. 4, Ellen D. McGray, 29.

Heckman Island, Oct. 19, Adam Tanner.

Grand Bay, Oct. 22, William McCarthy, 55.

Sandfield, C. B., Oct. 15, Ewen Cameron, 50.

Robinson, Oct. 11, Everett E. Holmes, 28.

Pomquet River, Oct. 9, Peter McKinnon, 65.

Bocabec, Sept. 17, Mrs. Margaret Turner, 71.

Kempt Head, C. B., Oct. 7, Daniel Fraser, 28.

Halifax, Oct. 19, Janet, widow of W. H. Ryan.

Newburg, N. B., Sept. 20, David Kimball, 55.

West Pubnico, Oct. 12, Mrs. James Amiro, 55.

Chatham Head, Oct. 4, Samuel B. Harper, 56.

Lower Economy, Oct. 10, Josiah F. Marc.

Lower Economy, Oct. 18, Mrs. Eliza Fleet, 55.

Little Ridgeway, Oct. 11, Hector McKenzie, 44.

Roxbury, Oct. 13, Sarah, wife of George Richmond.

Moncton, Oct. 25, Ethel B. wife of C. H. Edgett, 35.

Upper Sackville, Oct. 25, Mrs. Daniel Wheaton, 62.

Beaver Brook, Oct. 9, John, and Susan Marshall, 10.

Richibucto, Oct. 23, Minnie, wife of W. W. Short, 20.

Springhaven, Oct. 15, Sarah, wife of Wm. Curry, 36.

Woodlawn, N. S., Oct. 14, Charles Scott Ogilvie, 36.

St. George, N. B., Sept. 6, Charles W. McCormack.

Boston, Oct. 23, Stephen B. Humbert of St. John.

Malindi, Oct. 11, Isabel S., wife of Ernest Gratto.

Stellarton, Oct. 3, Mary widow of James McDonnell, 76.

Winnipeg, Oct. 19, Murray Bliss formerly of Moncton, 41.

Mt. Pleasant, Carleton Co., Oct. 15, John Porter, 59.

Summerside, Sept. 29, Phoebe, widow of John Prichard, 91.

French Village, Oct. 21, Sarah widow of Peter Hildy, 91.

Fredericton, Oct. 27, Bhristina, wife of Capt. H. E. Sypher.

Arlington, Oct. 10, Charlotte, wife of Michael Pearl, 70.

East Florenceville, Sept. 21, Mrs. Maria Moreau, 59.

Glassville, Oct. 13, Isabel S., widow of Donald McIntosh, 86.

Parrishboro, Oct. 7, Mary wife of Thomas Kirkpatrick, 79.

Bridgeville, Oct. 9, Christy wife of Jam's M. McDonald, 51.