

The Jamestown Alert.

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JAMESTOWN. D. T.

The Curse of Empty Hands.

At dawn the call was heard,
And busy reapers stirred
Along the highway leading to the wheat,
"Wilt reap with us?" they said,
I smiled and shook my head.
"Disturb me not," said I. My dreams are
sweet.
I sat with folded hands,
And saw across the lands
The waiting harvest shining on the hill;
I heard the reapers sing
Their voices of harvesting,
And thought to go, but dreamed and waited
still.
The day at last was done,
And homeward one, by one,
The reapers went, well laden as they passed;
Their's was no mispent day,
No long hours dreamed away
In sloth, that turns to sting the soul at last.
A reaper lingered near.
"What?" cried he. "Idle here?"
"Where are the sheaves your hands have
bound?"
"Alas!" I made reply.
"I let the day pass by
"Until too late to work. I dreamed the hours
away."
"Oh, foolish one!" he said,
And sadly shook his head.
"The dream is yours in the way of death.
The harvest soon is o'er,
Rouse up and dream no more!
Act, for the summer fadeth like a breath.
"What if the master came
To-night, and called your name,
Asking how many sheaves your hands had
made?"
If at the Lord's commands
You showed but empty hands,
Condemned, your dreaming soul would
stand dismayed."
Filled with strange terror then,
Let chance come not again,
I sought the wheat fields while the others
slept,
"Perhaps ere break of day,"
The Lord will come this way,"
A voice kept saying, till, with fear, I wept.
Through all the long, still night,
Among the wheat fields white,
I repeated and bound the sheaves of yellow
grain.
I dared not pause to rest,
Such fear possessed my breast,
So for my dreams I paid the price in pain.
But when the morning broke
And reapers reapers woke,
My heart leaped up as sunrise kissed the
lands,
For came he soon or late
The lord of the state
Would find me bearing not the curse of
empty hands.

A THANKFUL THANKSGIVING.

PART I.

ON THE HILLS.

"But, Harry, you surely do not think
—"
Harry took his mother's face between
his hands.
This is what I think, you most precious
of all mothers. There is no game in the
woods; there is nothing, or next to nothing,
to eat here in the house. Hector
knows the first as well as I; and you the
rest; so we make a very respectable ma-
jority, you see.
Hector, hearing his name called, lifted
his huge self from the floor and came
over to join in the conversation. If you
will add together all the best dogs you
ever saw or heard of, and then multiply
by two, you have Hector to the life.
It was going to be an early winter,
even for Upper Highlands. The leaves
said so, as they tumbled and rustled
through the long gullies of the wood; and
the wind said so, too, as they flocked
southward in long, wavering lines, look-
ing like black, crooked arrows, high up
in the sky. But, surest of all, the child-
ren in the valley said so, as they bun-
dled off to school, trying to think of les-
sons which, somehow or other, wouldn't
stay lessons, but would change into skates
and sleds before they knew it. Back on
the hills, where Harry and his mother
lived, winter was surely coming. The
bleak wind whistled about the little
house and roared down the large chim-
ney. The forest gave up plenty of
branches, which the fire, generously
shook down, so that the fireplace was al-
ways roaring with plenty of warmth and
to spare. But food was scarce. The lit-
tle farm had refused to do its share, and
the harvest had been small, indeed. In
the woods, too, where game had always
been so plenty, this year it had failed,
and the little household was sorely pressed.
"There is no help for it, my boy," said
his mother. "You must go to the village
for assistance."
"Not to beg?"
"No, no. Not to beg, answered his
mother, cheerfully. "But, see here."
Harry took in his hand the little white
box. In its soft nest of pink lay a pair
of tiny diamond ear-rings. The setting
of gold was old and dingy, but the stones
sparkled brilliantly as ever.
"I bought those, Harry, when quite a
young girl, and wonder I've never
thought of them before."
"And you shall not think of them
now, darling. Why will you not let me
go to the village and get work? Hector
shall stay with you, and every night I
will come back."
"No, Harry, no. You couldn't come
back over the hills at night, and I
couldn't have you away. There must
surely be game in the forest, my boy; and
in the mountains we will bridge over the
little unpracticable seasons with supplies
from the village below. Why, all the
associations of these earnings have been
tearful. I cried before I got them, and
I cried afterward to think how foolish I
had been.
They sat and talked far into the night.
With bedtime came the bringing in of
wood for the morning's fire, and the rather
unnecessary precaution of locking the
rough-hewn doors.
"What's the matter, Hector? Want to
have a little racing before turning in for
the night?"
The dog was standing with his fore
paws upon the latch, sniffing at the crack.

Harry opened the door. Whew! They
had been so busy talking that they hadn't
noticed the rising wind nor suspected the
snow, that now whirled into the room.
"Mother," said Harry, with his arm on
her shoulder—"Mother, the snow has
come."
"Yes."
That was all they said. It wasn't a
question of snow-balling and coasting
with them. It meant a bitter struggle
against poverty—this coming of the snow
before its time. But, whatever the other
thought of it, Hector was as jolly as a
schoolboy. A whistle brought him back
to the house. His shaggy coat was cov-
ered.
"Perhaps, Harry, its only another fur-
ry."
"Flurries don't take three days to gather,
dear; and when they do come the
snow isn't like this."
He rubbed his hand across Hector's
back, and the fine, dry snow floated out
as light as wool. Next morning the
storm was still raging. All day long it
snowed, beating up against the low doors
and windows. Now the fence is up to
its neck in the drifts, and now there is no
trace of the rails. Hour after hour the
biting wind whistled around the cottage.
Inch by inch the snow crept up its side—
high above the record of any former year
—and the long afternoon wore on.
"Mother, I'm going to the valley."
"Not to night, Harry; not to-night.
Wait! See, we have plenty."
It was a loving mother's "plenty."
Enough for one, and that one not herself.
For the first time since early morning
they opened the door. A solid bank of
snow fell half across the floor; and out-
side; as the storm lulled, could be seen
over the tree tops the broken, trackless
waste, stretching far down to the valley
below.
"See, my boy. It would be impossi-
ble."
"With starvation behind, men have
risked more."
"A man never risked more than you
would do, were you to risk your life on
the hill to-night."
He knew her meaning. He knew that
his life to her meant everything in this
world. He closed the door. There by
the fire lay Hector, sleeping with one eye
and with the other watching his master.
"Mother, I have it," suddenly cried
Harry, as his eye fell upon the dog.
"You have two lives at your disposal, you
see—mine and Hector's. Let your mas-
ter decide! Come here, sir, and stand
up for review!"
Harry was jubilant. While he would
have to follow the beaten path, the dog
could take advantage of every wind-
swept ledge and foothold. He could
carry a message to the village below;
and, with Harry's game-pouch about his
neck, could bring food enough to last
four days—plenty at least, for the pres-
ent need.
"Could you make him understand?"
"Make him understand!" repeated
Harry. "Do you hear her, old fellow?
She wants to know— But look here."
Drawing the table to the window, he
put a chair upon it, and at the command
the dog sprang up.
"Hector, the village is down there.
No, you can't see it now, because the
snow is blowing again; so you needn't
try. But the village is there. Isn't it, old
boy?"
Hector sneezed.
"All right! Now, you're to go—wait
a minute—to go down there, and come
back again. You understand? Come
back again."
Harry went to the cupboard, and, tak-
ing a bit of bread, he held it before the
dog's nose.
"This is what you're to bring home,
you see, in this."
He took the bread, put it in the pouch,
took it out again, placed it back in the
cupboard, and the lesson was learned.
Around the dog's neck they strapped the
pouch, and in it they sent the message for
assistance. An anonymous message it
was, for a little money would pay for it,
and a little money was just what they
had.
Truly, it was a sad parting. They
watched the dog flounder through the
drifts, across the clearing; saw him get
a foothold on the ledge by the great pine
tree and spring out of sight. As the
night fell they saw the clouds drift away
and the moon come up, and the hills
were bright with the light.
"Give us this day our daily bread."
Do you never doubt, little mother?"
"Never for an instant."
"No more do I. Good-night and pleas-
ant dreams!"

PART II.

IN THE VALLEY.

"Oh! papa, do you think it's going to
snow?" Bessie looked appealingly into
her father's face.
"Suppose, Pass, that I should say
"Yes?"
"Oh! then I'd give you most all my
candy," replied Bessie, holding up what
once might have been candy, but what
now looked like a very sticky little
hand.
"And if I should say 'No'?"
"Then," said Bessie. "It does seem
to me as if I never could speak to you
again."
Papa went to the window. Outside it
was nearly dark; but he could see, easily
enough, that it was going to snow, and
pretty soon, too.
"I'll take the candy," said papa, "for
I say 'Yes.'"
Bessie climbed upon her papa's knee,
and, putting her head down on his arm,
she said:
"Papa, I want to ask you a favor, but
it's such a big one I'm afraid you'll just
say 'no' the first thing."
"Does mamma know what it is all
about?"
"Oh! yes, sir. She knows, truly and
honestly. Don't you, mamma?"
"Mamma only smiled, and I think there
was some other reason than, just because

she was counting stitches, that she didn't
say anything.
"Well, papa, you know,—you know—
day after to-morrow will be Thanksgiv-
ing; and—Joe, he says he is going
to take his skates to bed, and I want to
know, now, please, papa, if I can take
"Clear the Track" to bed with me this
night?"
Papa looked perfectly astonished.
"Day after to-morrow will be Thank-
sgiving, and you want to take "Clear the
Track" to bed with you to-night, just
because it is to be."
"No," said Bessie, "it isn't that; but
don't you know Thanksgiving is one good
thing and "Clear the Track" is another,
and when two good things come together
it's ever so much more fun than just one
one, you see."
Now, what do you think? "Clear the
Track" wasn't a doll, or a pussy cat, or a
steam-engine; but, if you'll believe me,
it was nothing more or less than a new sled,
with a cushioned seat and two long swans'
necks curling up in front. Now, you
don't wonder, I suppose, that papa opened
his eyes so very wide when Bessie wanted
to take "Clear the Track" to bed with
her.
"Why don't you say something,
mamma?" said Bessie. "Why don't you
say you never in all your life saw such a
good little girl as I was when I pruned
my finger, you know—or something."
For once, however, Bessie's ally failed
her.
"But I tell you what, Puss," said papa,
"You shall tie "Clear the Track" to the
bedpost, and I'm sure he'll not get away
before morning."
Of course, with both papa and mamma
never felt less sleepy in their lives. Joe
had been caught with his skates buckled
on, walking over the dining-room floor
"Just to try his ankles," he said (although
I don't see why he should have been so
happy, when the snow that was coming
would surely spoil his fun); and Bessie
sat on "Clear the Track" all the evening,
telling her largest doll the greatest stories
of what was going to happen on the mor-
row. It was nine o'clock. Joe was
sound asleep, with his skates under the
pillow; and Bessie, with "Clear the
Track" tied tight to the trundle-bed, still
clapping in her plump little hand the
iron neck of one of the swans, was dream-
ing of a coast so long that it looked at
that time as if it would last until morn-
ing.
At ten o'clock there was wind and cold
enough, but still no snow; and the
village went to bed—the children to
dream of skates and sleds, and the older
ones to wonder where the money was
coming from to buy them.
But the next morning! There was no
doubt about it then, for the snow was
whirling past the windows at a tremen-
dous rate.
"What do you think about school to-
day, mother?" asked papa.
Breakfast had been eaten and the clock
hands were slowly moving around toward
starting time.
"No school to-day, I think," said mam-
ma, looking out at the drifting snow and
the leaden sky overhead.
"Oh! mamma," and Bessie sat down on
"Clear the Track" and came very near
crying.
"I was going to drag Bessie all the
way to school and all the way home
again," said Joe, with a very deep groan;
"and now you've spoiled it all."
And he put his head against the corner
of the mantelpiece and wouldn't be com-
forted.
"It doesn't seem to me," said papa, "as
if we could have a heavy storm at this
time—only the 27th of November. Don't
you think, too, mamma, that the clouds
look light over there?"
Bessie was on the window-seat in a
moment.
"Pooh!" she said with a very wise look.
"There's blue sky enough to make a
Dutchman's jacket."
"Where?" asked mamma.
Bessie looked again.
"Well, I don't see it now; but it's there,
really and truly."
"Will you promise to come home at
noon if the snow keeps on?"
"Oh! yes," they promised over and
over again, and Joe, Bessie, and "Clear
the Track" were soon ready to start.
"Keep in the road! Don't go across
the fields!" called mamma out of the
window.
Two kisses were thrown back, with the
answer, "All right. Good-bye."
The school-house was a long distance
away; for, as the village wasn't rich
enough to have a school all to itself, the
next village had joined with them in
supporting one, which was built, half
way, and the children had nearly a mile
to walk.
"Oh, why did I let those children go!"
said mamma to herself, the minute
they were out of the yard. The
little brightness all disappeared from the
sky and the wind whistled around the
house, rattling the blinds and whirling
the snow this way and that into every
crevice and corner it could find.
"Why did I do it?" she repeated a
hundred times that morning, as the hours
went on and the storm went sweeping by.
At eleven o'clock she could stand it no
longer. Calling Joe, she said, she
would her mother to send for Bessie and
Joe without delay.
It took poor Jane five minutes just to
go from the side door to the gate, and
half an hour to reach the store. The drifts
across the road ran from fence to fence,
and even the teams were struggling along
an inch at a time.
"Say 'I will go at once,'" said papa.
A neighbor was passing in a sleigh, and
they agreed to push on together.
How it did snow! As on the hills, so in

the valley. The roads were almost im-
passable. The horse plunged and reared
as the high snow-drifts arose before him
and the blinding storm dashed into his
face.
"They couldn't have gone further than
the half-way house, any way," said the
neighbor, trying to keep papa's courage
up. The half-way house was where a lit-
tle old woman lived all alone, and sold
apples and candy to the children as they
passed on their way to school.
The horse struggled on.
"Bless ye, sir, the children is gone back
two hours ago, and wid a stick o' candy,
so smilin' and happy," said the little old
woman. Sure, they didn't go on at all."
It was then past two o'clock, and two
hours more it took them to travel that
short distance back again. And when
they reach'd home the horse was helpless.
"Well, mamma," cried papa, cheerfully,
making believe he wasn't nearly wild
with anxiety, "are the children up-stairs
or playing in the barn?"
White and trembling, mamma answers:
"What! Haven't you brought them?"
And Mamma gives up then, while Jane
and papa lift her upon the lounge, trying
to bring back the light into her eyes once
more.
By five o'clock brave, strong men were
out with heavy ox-teams. But the women
shook their heads. Eight hours out in
the storm, and nothing but wee bits of
children, too. And they take their own
babies into their arms and think: "What
if they should be out in the snow!" And
not a few brave the storm to go and com-
fort the poor mamma whose children are
really lost to her.
"Blow! blow! blow! But overhead the
air is clearing. A shout goes up as a star
peeps out through the clouds and the
storm is over. The voices of the men, as
they break into parties and leave the
road to the right and to the left, are heard
in every direction. And the moon comes
out, just as we saw it on the hills.
Six, seven o'clock! What a hopeless
task it seems! Any drift might cover
them, and willing hands might pass them
by without a sign.
Still they work on, wandering far out
over the fields, stopping at a farm-house
door here and there, gaining helpers
everywhere. The snow still drifts with
the wind; but the search never flags.
"Hark! Was it a shout? No. Listen
again."
"Bow, wow, wow!"
Creeping slowly through the snow, lift-
ing one paw wearily after another, comes
a dog. No one seems to know him, and
around his neck is swung a hunter's
pouch.
Did I say no one knows him? That
was a mistake. We know him well;
don't we? His name is Hector and he left
the little house on the hill hours ago.
The dog is lifted upon one of the ox-
sleds. It seems to give him new life to
hear a human voice once more, and he
tries to spring up and lick the face of
the man who pats his shaggy
sides. Then he is down once more in
the snow, whining and barking furiously.
"Hullo!" cried the cheery voice of one of
the men. "What have we here? A shot
pouch, as I live!" he cried, working at
the string that bound it.
Sure enough, and stranger still, in the
pouch money and a request for food. The
little message from nowhere was eagerly
passed from hand to hand.
"I know the dog," said one, who just
came up. "I've met him hunting on the
hills yonder. He belongs to the young
fellow who lives with his mother in the
old Barnes House."
"Who are they?" asked a dozen at
once.
"Don't know. They came from the other
side of the mountain. Only been
there since summer."
Look at the dog! No longer drooping
and weary, he springs back and forth
from sled to sled, whining and crouching
at the feet of the men.
"What is it, my dog? We can't go up
the mountain to-night; but you shall have
your fill and a full pouch to carry home,
my brave old fellow!"
So the men say; but Hector does not
mind. Leaping through the snow, he
looks back, whines, and nearly speaks.
What a pity he cannot!
Suddenly a man shouts: "Can it be
the children?"
Can it be? Is there any doubt of it?
See how the dog answers! Tumbling,
bounding, barking joyously, and the
sleds move creaking on. Through the
drifts, out of the road, over fences, slow-
ly go the crowd of men, the oxen and
all. Now to the left. What great domes
are those far out in the field by the
woods? There are two of them, and on
the windward side the snow has been
swept away. There we see plain enough.
They are haystacks, and where the hay
has been pulled away in as large armfuls
as poor little Joe could take—there, in
the little hay-house which he had made,
where Hector pokes his great black nose,
and where papa stoops and enters—there
they are—wet, hungry and nearly frozen,
but safe! And a shout goes up, which is
carried back to the lingering searchers,
back to the farm houses, and over the
fields to the listening ones at home. Safe
from all the dangers of that terrible day!
Safe once more in loving arms—on papa's
breast!

jolly ride across the interval and up the
the long street! And many were the
kisses old Hector got right on his big
black nose, as he rushed into this yard
and that, barking for the people to look
out and see his dear master and mistress,
who were coming down to spend Thank-
sgiving with them.
And the dinner they had at Bessie's
home! Not in the dining-room; for, al-
though the warm sunshine of the Indian-
summer—which had been bluffed up in
the hay-stack to which they had wander-
ed in the blinding storm—had kept the
children safe, yet the doctor wouldn't let
them go down-stairs, even for a Thank-
sgiving dinner, and so there was a table
upstairs, where the children lay in their
low beds, just about big enough for
mamma and papa and Harry and his
mother. But they were so crowded that
they had to put the plum pudding on the
bureau.
But, after all, Hector was the hero,
and bore his honors modestly, as all
heroes should. He would sit at the foot
of Joe's bed and fold his paws, and wait
patiently with a delicious piece of turkey
on his nose, until Joe counted three; and
then he would go over to Bessie's bed,
and once I saw her give him a piece of
white meat with cranberry sauce all over
it.
It certainly was the thankfulest
Thanksgiving you ever knew in all your
life. It was a thankfulness that didn't
end when the turkey and plum-pudding
were eaten and when the sun went down
that day, for in the spring a road was
opened up the mountain-side and the lit-
tle house on the hill was no longer lonely.
Hector is lying in his own familiar
corner, and Harry with his arm resting
on his mother's shoulder, is looking down
into the valley, which once had seemed
so far away.
"Hector, old boy, wasn't that just a glo-
rious snow-storm, after all?"
Hector sneezed his acquiescence.—
G. M. S. Horton in N. Y. Independent.

Survivors of the Alamo.

New Orleans Picayune.
A venerable Mexican named Reigido
Guero, residing in San Antonio, applied
last week for a pension from the State of
Texas, on the ground that he is the only
male survivor of the Alamo massacre, of
those who were in the building when it
was captured by Santa Anna's troops and
the heroic defenders put to the sword. It
has always been believed in Texas—and
we heard the tragic story of the Alamo
by men who lost relatives there, and who
helped to defeat Santa Anna afterward
at San Jacinto—that there was no male
in the fortress escaped death except a
doctor, and he was wounded. Quite a
number of Mexicans, a few of them men
of prominence, residing in Texas when
her war of independence commenced,
joined the Texans and fought with them.
A few of these brave men still live in
Western Texas. The Navarro, Manchaca,
Mexia and other families of note were
among these patriots, and their descend-
ants are now in or near San Antonio and
held in great esteem. It is possible that
a few Mexican volunteers were in the
Alamo during its memorable siege. This
would account for Guero's presence
within the bloodstained walls. He states
in his pension application that "with
five other men he attempted to gain the
room occupied by the women, and in do-
ing so the other four were killed. When
he gained the apartment he induced the
women to secrete him beneath the bed-
ding and sit upon it when the captors
effected an entrance. After they had
made the capture of the place, he waited
an hour on the spot where he was con-
cealed, and then passed out unobserved
and hid himself in a house to which the
women had fled and taken refuge."

Women and Home.

There is a bundle of delight bound up
in the sweet word home. The word is
typical of comfort, love, sympathy, and all
other qualities that constitute the delights
of social life. Were the every-day enjoy-
ments of many of our intelligent and af-
fectionate families faithfully portrayed,
they would exceed, in moral heroism,
interest, and romance, most of the pro-
ductions of the pen of fiction. The so-
cial well-being of society rests on our
home, and what are the foundation stones
of our homes but woman's care and de-
votion.
A good mother is worth an army of
acquaintances, and a true hearted, noble-
minded sister is more precious than the
"dear five hundred friends."
Those who have played around the
same door-step, basked in the same
mother's smile, in whose veins the same
blood flows, are bound by a sacred tie
that can never be broken. Distances
may separate, quarrels may occur, but
those who have a capacity to love any
thing must have at times a bubbling up
of fond recollections and a yearning after
the joys of by-gone days. Every woman
has a mission on earth. There is "some-
thing to do" for every one—a household
to put in order, a child to attend to, some
class of unfortunate, degraded, or home-
less humanity to befriend. That soul is
poor indeed that leaves the world with-
out having exerted an influence that will
be felt for good after she has passed
away.
A little fellow, at whose home hens had
been kept but a few weeks, visited a
neighbor's to find a playmate, when he
was informed that his young friend was
suffering from the chicken-pox. The
lady of the house, in tones of curiosity
and solicitude, asked the little fellow if
they had the chicken-pox over at his
house. "No," replied the youngster
gravely, "we haven't had our hens long
enough yet."

PARLIAMENT.

London, Nov. 22.—Parliament will meet De-
cember 5th.