

READING TIME FOR YOUNG FOLKS**A THANKSGIVING STORY***The Scene at the Home of Governor Winthrop*

IN our imagination let us go back more than three hundred years to a scene very different from anything with which we are familiar. To arrive at the scene we cross the vast Pacific Ocean, in our imagination, and the great American continent, and travel on until we come to the Massachusetts Bay Colony on the cold, bleak New England coast of North America.

The people who founded this colony had emigrated from Old England in order that they might have more freedom. During the early history of the colony many of the colonists were sick and some had died. Food was very scarce during the cold winter, not only with the English colonists but with the American Indians who lived in the vicinity. The colonists had sent to England for food supplies, but the returning ship, long overdue, had not yet arrived. The governor of this struggling colony was John Winthrop.

And now we find ourselves, in im-

agination, in a room in Governor Winthrop's home in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The room is very plainly furnished according to the New England period, and is evidently used for transacting the governor's business.

On this chilly morning a knock was heard at the door of Governor Winthrop's home. A servant admitted a woman, Mrs. Freeman—one of the colonists—and her little eight-year-old daughter named Patience.

"Is the governor at home?" Mrs. Freeman asked.

"Yes, mistress; he has just come in," replied the servant.

"Will you let him know that I am here?"

"At once, mistress. Please be seated," answered the servant, who then went to the governor to announce Mrs. Freeman.

Mrs. Freeman and little Patience sat down on a settee. Patience breathed on her hands in order to warm them.

"Mother, do you really think the governor will give us corn?" said Patience fretfully. "I'm tired of having nothing good to eat."

"Why, Patience, of course he will if he can spare us any," said Mrs. Freeman. "But you must remember how many sick people there are in the colony who need it more than we do."

"Yes, mother," continued Patience, "but there are not many people in our colony. Why can there not be enough food for everybody?"

"I hope that there may be before very long, my dear," answered Mrs. Freeman. "We must try to think that our ship with provisions is coming soon. Sh-h! I hear the governor coming. Remember your manners. Rise and curtsy, as I have taught you."

Governor Winthrop entered the room and bowed to Mrs. Freeman. She and Patience both rose and curtsied.

"Good day, Mistress Freeman," said the governor. "I trust that you and your family are well."

"All well, Your Excellency," Mrs. Freeman responded, "and thankful to be so in this season of want and cold. Our larder is getting low, so I came to see if I could buy a few pounds of corn."

Evidently the governor was worried, but he tried to conceal the fact. "Why, Mistress Freeman," he said, "it is about that matter that I am awaiting tidings. This morning I sent word to the chief of the neighboring Indian tribe that we should like to trade with him for corn. I expect that Dudley and Wilson, the two colonists who took my message, will soon be back. Can you not wait until their return? If our trade is good, we shall have plenty of food for all."

Mrs. Freeman and little Patience sat

down again on the settee, and the governor sat down on a chair.

Presently Mrs. Freeman said, "I suppose Your Excellency has had, as yet, no word of the good ship *Lyon* which is bringing us food supplies."

"Not yet," answered the governor. "No doubt the date of her sailing was deferred."

"It would seem so," commented Mrs. Freeman, "for Captain Pierce sailed seven months ago to fetch us provisions."

"If we were all well," said the governor, "the delay would not matter. But when half our people are sick, we long to give them some of the comforts they left in England."

Just then the servant admitted another colonist, Mrs. Garrett, who curtsied to the company and took a seat.

"Ah! Mistress Garret," said the governor, "I was just lamenting to Mistress Freeman that we have so few comforts for our sick, but I did not forget that we have brought you, the best nurse in England."

"Your Excellency is very kind," said Mrs. Garrett. "I only wish that I could do more in the homes where sickness has entered. I thought you would like to hear that John Humphrey and his wife are better of their fever."

"I rejoice to hear such good news," the governor answered. "I trust that you can give as good an account of your other patients."

"I wish I could, Your Excellency," said Mrs. Garrett, "but with this biting cold and our lack of food, it goes hard with those who are sick. Is there no hope of the good ship *Lyon* bringing us food?"

"No immediate hope, madam, but I trust that we may be able to buy corn

from the neighboring Indians."

Just then a knock was heard on the front door. The servant admitted Dudley, Wilson, the Indian Chief, and a young Indian, all of whom advanced to the governor.

"We have brought the Indian chief back with us, Your Excellency," said Dudley, "just as you directed, but he does not seem disposed to trade with us. However, we can try."

Dudley then took the Indian chief over to the flour barrel which was in one corner of the room, and showed him that it was empty. He and Wilson took from a chest several long, showy strings of beads, which they offered to the chief, suggesting by their motions that the Indians might have the beads if they would fill the barrel. The chief shook his head.

Both men urged him for some time. Governor Winthrop then took a red blanket from the chest, approached the chief, and offered it in similar fashion.

Finally, after all three men had persisted for some time, the Indian chief and the young Indian shook their heads, and, by pointing to their own mouths and showing their empty hands, indicated that they themselves had not enough to eat. Then the Indians went out of the front door which was opened for them by the servant.

A silence fell on the company, which was broken by little Patience, who began to cry.

"Mother," said Patience.

"What is it, little daughter?" said her mother.

"If we had only staid in England," said the little girl, "we should have plenty to eat."

Mrs. Freeman did not answer her, but put her arm around her child. Turning to Governor Winthrop she said: "It is hard sometimes, Your Excellency, when we realize how much we have sacrificed for our freedom here."

"You speak truly, Mistress Freeman," said the governor. "But we have crossed the sea in safety; we have been kept from harm among the savage Indians; we have founded a colony. Whatever happens, we must not give up hope. I will proclaim a day of prayer and fasting for

tomorrow. We must not lose faith, for all may yet be well."

As the company nodded in approval, a knock was heard. The servant opened the door and admitted Roger Clapp, another of the colonists. Clapp, wild-eyed and shivering, looked at the governor.

"Your Excellency," said Clapp "my wife is dying. My children have been without food for two days. Can you give me something for them?"

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The Good Ship "Lyon"

THANKSGIVING STORY

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The governor went to the barrel, and scooped up a small portion of meal. "This is the last of our corn," he said sadly, as he looked at Mrs. Freeman.

Mrs. Freeman said promptly, "Let Roger Clapp have the last of the meal, by all means. What say you, neighbors?"

"Yes, let him have it," was the general response.

The governor put the meal in a dish and was about to hand it to Clapp, when there was a knock at the door. Before the servant could open it, Samuel Garrett, the ten-year-old son of Mrs. Garrett, rushed in.

"Your Excellency," said Samuel breathlessly, "the ship *Lyon* has come."

The company, startled, could scarcely believe him.

"Is this true?" said the governor. "How do you know?"

"Your Excellency, I am speaking the truth," the boy replied. "I was down on the shore just now, and when I looked across the bay, I saw a great ship entering the harbor. As I ran to bring you word, I heard a man say that Captain Pierce was being

rowed ashore."

Before anyone could speak, a loud knock was heard at the door. When the servant opened it, Captain Pierce stood there. Governor Winthrop rushed to him and seized him by both hands.

"Never was man or ship more welcome! William Pierce! May God be thanked!" said the governor.

All crowded around Pierce, the captain of the ship *Lyon*, and greeted him with joyous and grateful exclamations.

"Your Excellency," said Captain Pierce, "I have the honor to report the safe arrival of the ship *Lyon*."

"An hour ago we had well nigh given you up," said the governor.

"We met with many unforeseen delays on our voyage," said the captain. "We encountered many storms. One was so severe that one of our sailors was washed overboard. We could well imagine what you must be suffering in our absence. I, too, thank Heaven we have arrived."

"Have you food and provisions on board?" one of the colonists asked.

"Yes, truly, we have

plenty," said the captain. "We have flour and beans and oatmeal; we have dried beef and smoked pork and cheese and dried fruits, plenty for all."

At these words, all in the company showed great relief.

"If Your Excellency will ask a few men to volunteer to go and unload the *Lyon* we shall have everybody fed within an hour," suggested the captain.

Ten-year-old Samuel said eagerly, "I will volunteer."

Everyone laughed. Captain Pierce patted the boy on the shoulder and said, "You shall come down to the ship with me. There is plenty for a bright boy to do as well as for the men."

Governor Winthrop raised his hand and said slowly, "Friends, I will now proclaim not a day of fasting and prayer, but a day of praise and thanksgiving for our deliverance. Thank God, we are saved. However great the destiny that may await our colony struggling here in the wilderness, this day must never be forgotten. Tomorrow will be our Thanksgiving Day."—*Adapted from The Grade Teacher.*