## IHANKSGIVING

## By Thyra Samter Winslow

A HOUSING woke up, as she always woke up, with a little start as if an unheard alarm clock had rung. She knew it was because for so many years a real al m clock had rung and she had had to jump hurriedly out of bed. There had been babies to wash and breakfast to cook-and then years of getting children ready for school-and then more years of getting grown boys and a girl ready for, well, for the world.

Now Ma Housing lay quietly in bed and tried to feel luxurious. She knew that downstairs Irma May, with her two trained dark hands, was already preparing the simple breakfast and would, through the day do all the things that she herself holidays." had done for so many years.

The children had insisted on Irma May.

"Now, ma, if you're foolish enough to live in that silly town all alone in that big house," they had said, "at least voure going to have some one to look out for you-some one there in case something happens.

So Irma May was there. And sometimes, through the long days of nothing to do, Ma Housing rather wished that "something would happen." Anything, almost.

Not that the children weren't good to her. They were. She was awfully proud of them. Of all of them. Even of the wanderer, Ben, when the rest of the family were a bit doubtful. And she didn't blame them for not living in all. This coat she could wear Centerville, though she didn't think it was quite as dreadful a place as they made out.

Ma Housing could have gone to New York. They had written and asked her to come. But in New York she felt confused and strange and not at home, even with her own children. She always felt she was potting them out, interfering with their plans. It was better when they came to Centerville. Christmas, maybe-

But this was Thanksgiving.

Ma Housing bathed and dressed quickly, the ing wondered why it made her way she always did, as if there were important feel a little sad. things to be done right away. She put on a warm jersey dress, for the morning was cool. It was a gray dress with white wool embroidery and Lorraine had sent it to her.

After breakfast Ma Housing read the morning paper, still in the kitchen while Irma May cleaned the breakfast things and straightened up Ma Housing's room. Then Ma Housing put on a big gingham apron and the two of them went about preparing the Thanksgiving dinner.

This dinner would have astonished the onlooker, especially if the onlooker had known that Ma Housing and Irma May were the only ones who were going to eat dinner in the old house. For there were three turkeys! And three pies! And quantities of baked potatoes all hollowed out and seasoned and put back into the shells again, and a great pot of string beans, neatly slivered, and on the table stood three jars of Ma Housing's favorite preserves and packages of nuts and raisins. Ma Housing and Irma May worked busily, chatting as they worked. Ma Housing tasted and added butter and cream and spices. She was having an awfully good time.

Ma Housing and Irma May had good appetites, but they were not gluttons. They had no intention of eating three turkeys and the things that went with three turkeys. But it was Thanksgiving and if you can't do something for some one on Thanksgiving to make some one a little more thankful or a little happier, well, it didn't seem to Ma Housing there was much excuse for the holiday

One of the turkeys and the accompanying dinner was for old Mrs. Fredder, who lived in the little brown cottage on the other side of Jerome Mrs. Fredder's son, Henry, had hurt his foot almost a month ago. His foot was better now, but things being slack at the lumber mill they hadn't held his job for him and there were three little Fredders and Henry's wife.

The other dinner was for the Bartels. Mr. Bartel wasn't out of work: that is, he had as much work as he had had in a long time. But there wasn't much painting and decorating being done in Centerville and Mr. Bartel was getting old. The Bartels had no children. Their only son had been drowned skating on the river when he was 17. The two of them, living alone all these years!

Ma Housing and Irma May remarked how nice rently didn't remember that they had said the same thing about the turkey last year and the goose last Christmas and the year before--when the children couldn't come. They liked turkey creamed on toast, and turkey cold and turkey hash. A turkey lasts a long time when there are

pack, Ma Housing and Irma arranged the two big baskets. Cranberry sauce left in the molds, potatoes in covered dishes. Vegetables. Little red hothouse tomatoes brought into Centerville especially for the holiday. The pie safely on top. The door bell rang. Irma May hurried to the door, though Ma Housing didn't try to hide her cagerness. What if-

It wouldn't be Ben. He'd know the front door was locked and come around to the kitchen. But one of the others-

Irma May held three telegrams in her hand. Ma Housing's hands trembled a little as she opened the envelopes. Nice telegrams. A long night letter from Lorraine. Shorter messages from Donald and Lewis. What good children they were!

Ma Housing was on her way upstairs to straighten up and put on her hat when she heard a new noise. Some one coming around to the kitchen door! A voice! A man's voice!

She almost lost her footing as she turned around and hurried down into the kitchen again. It was Bill Morris, who worked for the express Ma Housing Had Despaired of Anything Ever Happening in Centerville -Until She Took a Lonely Ride Along a Country Road and Found Fate Again Staging an Old, Old Tragedy

"This came three days ago, Mrs. Housing," Bill said, "but a letter came before that saying She liked to watch its slender, graceful curve it was to be delivered on Thanksgiving day, so we figured out it wasn't anything that would spoil. Your family certainly don't forget you on

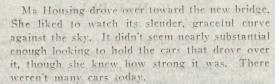
Ma Housing peered at the address on the box, saw the name of the sender. She was happy when she saw Lorraine's name. A box from Ben would have meant definitely that he wasn't coming home. This was nice! And there was still a chance that Ben might come!

The box was grand! A big new black and

white tweed coat with a gray squirrel collar and a fur lining! The boys had given Ma Housing a black caracul coat for Christmas two years ago, but she thought it was too good to wear except for "best," and they laughed over the fact that this meant she hardly ever wore it at There was a big lot of candy

too-Jordan almonds. Ma Housing's favorite. And a striped flannel bath robe and some candy for Irma May. And a note from Lorraine saying the coat was from all three of them and the candy was from the children. It was a nice surprise--the box. Ma Hous-

A HOUSING put on her neat little black hat and the new coat, though the weather was a little too warm for it. The coat fit absolutely perfectly-Lorraine was so clever seeing about things like that. She brought the shining new



Near the bridge Ma Housing stopped the car. The river and the sky were gray behind the black silhouette of the bridge, but the trees across the river were still orange and red. It was peaceful. A sort of an end to things. Maybe folks who didn't have anything left to do-

A figure of a woman stood on the bridge. Ma Housing didn't know how she got there; hadn't Taken care of. Some place to go."

"Sure," said the girl. "Young. That's it. All

"Yes," agreed Ma Housing, "sometimes it does seem a long time. But you're young and husky. And you've got something to live for. You're going to have a baby."

"Yes," said the girl. "Ain't that reason mough?"

'Most people don't feel that way about it," said Ma Housing.

"Maybe I wouldn't," said the girl, "If I was like folks around here." She waved her hand into a vague curve. "A home and a husband

> But you didn't just spring up," said Ma Housing. "You've been living some place," "I was living some place, all right," said the girl. "Lots of places Yesterday I lost my last place. I walked all nightand today. Nobody wants a girl aroundlike this. I guess I can't blame them. Now I haven't any place at all. Except here. And now you came along."

"Where's your husband?" asked Ma Housing. Her voice was gentle.

"As if you didn't know I didn't have a husband!" said the girl. The sullen look. was stronger. "Even if I do get the baby born, what then? It wouldn't have a

"Of course the baby has a father," said Ma Housing, suddenly calm, as if conversations like this were the most commonplace thing in the world. "Was he a healthy, strong young man?"

The girl began to cry. "Sure he was," she sobbed. "Big and strong. Good-good looking. You don't think I'd have cared enough otherwise." Not very articulate, hesitating over words, she told Ma Housing about things. The story was simple enough, certainly.

And not new, even to Ma Housing. The girl had been in an orphan asylum until she was eight. "The Children's and Old Folks' Home of Bergen county." Then the Jacksons had taken her to live with

seen her walking past, them on their farm. She'd worked hard on the farm, taking care of the children and helping in the kitchen. As she grew older she worked in the kitchen garden, too, and helped take care of passed. She looked at the chickens. And helped feed the men at planting and harvest.

"I was a good girl," she said.

Her room was under the eaves. Cold in winter. She wore Mrs. Jackson's old clothes. She didn't go to school very much. It was a four-Ouickly Ma Housing mile walk when she did go, and the Jacksons didn't believe much in schooling. She read the She didn't even stop to farm journals and the newspapers. And a magazine or a book when there was one around. She faster than she had run liked to read, but there wasn't much time for in years. She knew now reading.

> AST spring Carl had come to the farm. He I had just wandered in. He was better than a farm hand, he always said, but conditions these days-O, she should have known better! But he had promised so many things. All the things they were going to do. The places they were going to see. Traveling and good times

But it hadn't been just the things he had prom ised her. He had been gentle and merry. She had been so happy while she was with him. And when he wanted to make love to her to make him happy-

Then she had been worried had cried. And Carl had laughed at her. But then he grew worried, too. He had said he would take care of her always. And then one day he went away

She hadn't known what to do. She had felt desperate—as if she were in a dark place. She had written to every place she had ever heard him mention. The latters had come back. And she had cried all the time couldn't help crying. Mrs. Jackson had found out and said she wasn't any good. She knew she wasn't any good without Mrs. Jackson saying so. And Mrs. Jackson had told her to get out.

She had taken her things and had got out. She found out and let her go.

She didn't know what to do then. She had never done anything but live on a farm. She didn't know anything but what she had heard on the radio or at the picture shows-or from Carl She tried to get jobs. A week one place, A tew days some place else. And crying at night.

of three children and doing the housework. She thought the woman knew about her, would let I had telegrams from them and a beautiful new her stay, maybe, until time to go to the hospitalshe hadn't dared think ahead further than that, And last night suddenly the woman had told her to get out. So she had walked and thought-and ing of their

"Well," said Ma Housing, "there certainly is nothing new about that story! It's so old you don't even read stories like that any more. I thought girls these days knew more than to let men-what do you call it-take advantage of them I'm ashamed of you!" said Ma Housing. with me

You're old fashioned. I like modern girls!" "I know," said the girl, sniffling, "it's awful. I never thought I'd-I'd end like-like this."

Who said anything about ending "? asked Ma Housing. "I can't even remember how stories can tell you." like that end, they're so out of style. But the baby is coming. I guess babies don't ever quite go out of style. And with both the parents strong

and healthy I don't see why the baby shouldn't have a chance if you don't make a fool of yourself. Hurry and get into the car. It's getting

"You mean-you're going to take me?" asked

"I can't leave you on the bridge very well." said Ma Housing. "You've got common sense enough to know that's no place to spend Thanks-

"I think you -I don't know how to tell you -- " began the girl, crying again. Ma Housing bundled her into the car.

SHE drove slowly and carefully, keeping too far to the right, as she always drove.

Listen," she said, as they came into town. "You look like a girl who can hold her tongue. Nobody here knows anything about you. What

"Rose lordan," said the girl.

"Well, it s-it's Mrs. Roy Cromwell now," said Ma Housing, "That's a nice name. Your husband was killed in-in an automobile accident. You're my cousin Walter's daughter. I could have had a cousin Walter. And I wrote them to send you on to me. After the baby comes we'll see. You may like it here. Or it may be too quiet in Centerville for a young girl."

"You mean you're going to let me stay with you! And-and say I'm married! And let me keep the baby!" said the girl.

"Yes." said Ma Housing, "if you stop your sniveling. You'd better say your husband died four months ago. So you can be over most of

"Yes, ma'am," the girl said.

"And you'd better call me Ma Housing," Ma Housing went on. "My children call me ma, all but Lorraine."

"Yes, Ma Housing," the girl said and smiled. When they got home Irma May managed to conceal her surprise. Her cousin Walter's daughter, indeed! What would the old lady do next! Still, the girl was here-

Ma Housing put her into the big guest room. The children's rooms had to be ready for them when they came home,

"In the morning," she said, "we'll drive in to see Dr. Stimson. He'll look you over and tell you if there is anything special you ought to do or cat. Then we'll go to the Banner store and get you a few things to wear. And we'll make the clothes for the baby---

Sewing clothes for a baby-some one who needed her-something to do-

What would Lorraine and the boys say? The nice, warm feeling that was beginning almost made Ma Housing chuckle. They wouldn't like it-at first. What could they do? They led their own lives. This was hers.

Already color had come into the girl's face. How pretty she would be later on!

"This-this is wonderful," she said. "I-I don't know what-I'll-I'll do my best-" She didn't know how to go on.

"Sure you'll do your best," said Ma Housing. We've all got to do our best. It won't be too easy for you, some of the time. There'll be a lot for you to learn for you to go through. But maybe it will sort of pay. Things are like that. Wash up now. In there. When you come down we'll have something to eat."

CLOWLY Ma Housing went downstairs. She took tired little steps into the kitchen. She wasn't as young as she once was. But it seemed to her now that she was just as happy. It didn't even make her sad when Irma May put a yellow envelope into her hand-a radio from Ben. He was in London. He wouldn't be home after all. She read the message. "Happy day, see you soon, love. Ben.

Ben would be home soon! Though soon didn't mean the same to Ben as it did to other people. But he'd be home

'I'm going to take the cranberry sauce over to Mrs. Brannen," she said to Irma May. "Soon as I get back Mrs. Cronwell and I will have dinnerin the dining room."

"I'm sorry you won't eat with us," said Mrs. Brannen. "Eating your Thanksgiving dinner all

"O. didn't I tell you," said Ma Housing, almost carelessly, "I'm not alone. My cousin Walter's daughter-you've heard me talk about my cousin Walter and his daughter the one whose husband died four months ago-

Mrs. Brannen nodded. She didn't remember, had got a job on another farm. And they had but then she didn't always listen when Ma Housmg talked about her family -those wonderful

"Well," Ma Housing went on, "I wrote them to send her to stay with me-she's expecting a baby in a few months and they've had business You know how that is. She just got in. I met her at the station. A lovely girl! She'll Then she'd got a job in Gloverton taking care be a great comfort and pleasure to me. With the children getting along so well-did I tell you

coat and a wireless from Ben from London? They're always think-

mother And now to live here in the house lot of things to be thank.

## Kidneys Must Glean Out Acids



car out of the garage and Irma May put the baskets carefully into the back. Irma May would

it was that they both liked turkey. They appare the dinner. Well, they were good people. They urged her to stay to dinner.

was nice of them to want her. Mrs. Brannen, who lived next door, had asked her, too. She must remember to take over the cranberry sauce she had made for the Brannens the minute she got back!

cold would be better soon.

Ma Housing didn't usually feel useless or blue. She had been busy this morning. She was a little tired now. She felt there ought to be something for a woman of her age to do, something that was needed, besides being on the Orphans' home board and the Missionary society and the committee for the free hospital ward, things like that

She thought for a minute she'd go out to the cemetery and look at Pa Housing's grave—at Philip's grave. But there is nothing you can do in a cemetery in November, and the sun had gone behind a cloud now and it looked as if it were going to rain. Ma Housing knew the graves looked as nice as they could for this time of year. You can remember folks just as well when you're not in the cemetery, anyhow. And Pa Housing and Philip had been dead for a long time.

finish their dinner while Ma Housing was out. Both of the families were glad to see Ma Housing. She had rather thought they would be, with

Ma Housing said she couldn't stay, though it

In both homes she proudly exhibited the new WHEN the two turkeys were cool enough to thing would turn up—she'd speak to Mr. Johnson herself tomorrow. And she hoped Mrs. Bartel's

Ma Housing didn't turn the car toward home though there was nothing else for her to do. She felt restless and blue. There ought to be something you can do for folks on Thanksgiving that means more than taking them a turkey or cheer- a girl, a young girl. Not more than 18 or so. She ing them with words.

The woman reached the iron railing, started to climb over!

Ma Housing sharply.

But then she hadn't been

looking, especially. A

dozen people could have

the woman now. A cu-

rious figure, bundled in

black. A young girl. No,

a sort of a misshaped fig-

jumped out of the car.

slam the door. She ran

Ma Housing ran as fast as she could. What if she couldn't get there in time? If she calledthe woman would surely jump. There was no one else around.

Ma Housing muttered something under her breath. If it were a plea to God it was a most undignified plea, not the sort one usually made

to a divinity. "Come on, God! Be a good sport! Hold her off!" prayed Ma Housing, using the words her boys might have used. It never occurred to her that she was being profane.

The god to whom she prayed must have sensed the spirit back of the words, for Ma Housing, out of breath, her heart beating the way Dr. Stimson said she should never let it beat, laid a firm hand on the black shoulder just as the woman put her other foot over the rail.

"Don't do that!" said Ma Housing sharply, the way one talks to a naughty and difficult child "Do you know what you are going to do?"

THE figure twisted out of her grasp, turned around, climbed down again. For the first time Ma Housing saw the face of the person whose life she was trying to save. Why, she was had a tender, oval, white face, and her eyes were big and gray and frightened now.

"I-I was going to kill myself," said the girl slowly. "I would have been in the water-it would have been nearly over-if you hadn't come "And wouldn't that have been a sensible thing

to do!" said Ma Housing. "A young girl like you-and this Thanksgiving day!" "That's one reason why." said the girl. She was a little sullen now. "What have I got to be

thankful for? ' "I'm sure I don't know," said Ma Housing, 'I don't know you very well. I don't know anything about you except that you gave me a scare. But you're young, for one thing. Lots of folks would think that being young was something to