



The Ella Wheeler Wilcox Society Newsletter

Richard A. Edwards, Editor

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Ella's Birthday Issue

With so many important dates in November, I couldn't resist producing another issue of the Newsletter. This newsletter is still experimental and no set schedule has been established yet.



First of course we must wish Ella a happy birthday. She was born 150 years ago on November 5, 1850 at Braley House in the village of Johnstown, Rock County, Wisconsin, USA. She was the fourth and last child of Marcus Hartwell Wheeler (1808-1899) and Sarah J. Pratt (1814-1906). More information about her family can be found on our web site under

her [Family Tree](#).

Here are some stories of her youth from her own pen:

"The youngest of my mother's children, I seemed to have had my career arranged for me by conditions before my birth.

"It has always been my belief that children inherit the suppressed tendencies of their parents. A clergyman's son frequently shows abnormal tastes for the pleasures that his father denied himself; and talent is quite often the full-blown flower of a little shoot which circumstance has crushed under its heel in a former generation.

"So at the age of eight I began to compose prose and rhyme, because the literary tendencies of my mother had never been gratified. The poetical gift was no doubt greatly the result of her having accidental access to a library of the poets, for the first time in her life, the year previous to my advent, and the happiest and most hopeful year of her life."



From "[My Autobiography](#)" by Ella Wheeler Wilcox as published in [The Cosmopolitan](#). XXXI :4 (August 1901) p. 415-421 .

"The mother who wishes her unborn child to possess certain tastes, talents or qualities, cannot bring about the desired results merely thinking of it. Thought is only constructive when it is charged with intense feeling and emotion. Powder scattered lightly over a large surface does not project a bullet to the mark, but compressed into a small space and given the right impetus, the lead is sent to the bull's-eye. So, desultory thought is wasted, while focused thought creates that which it desires. The expectant mother whose thought is focused intensely in any special direction attracts to herself out of space the Ego awaiting reincarnation best calculated by its former lives to use her thought; and she impresses upon its embryo mind, in the important months which ensue, the nature of her wishes.

"My mother, always a devotee at the shrine of literature (and having in her own mind the seed of poetic fancy) found herself for the first time in her life with a large library at her command during the months preceding my advent. She committed to memory whole cantos of Byron, Moore, and Scott, and mentally devoured the plays of Shakespeare, as well as various works of fiction. Curiously enough, she believed that the child she was carrying under her

heart was to be a novelist. Always she spoke of me before my birth (so aunts and a grandmother as well as she have told me) as a daughter who was coming into her ripened life (I was the youngest of four children) to carry out her own unrealized ambitions. 'My child will be a girl,' she said, 'and she will be a writer; she will follow literature as a profession; she will begin young, and she will travel extensively and do all the things I have wanted to do and missed doing.'

"When, at the age of seven and some months, she found me printing on scraps of paper a story about the love of Mr. Larkspur for Miss Hollyhock, and the jealousy occasioned by a roving bee, she did not join in the surprise of other members of the family, but said, 'I expected her to do these things.' So my crude, early efforts met with encouragement from the start, and my ambitions were fired by my mother's often expressed belief in my abilities."

From *The Worlds and I*. New York: George H. Doran Company, [c1918] p. 17-18.

In addition to her birth date, this issue's stories and poems will focus on Thanksgiving, a holiday that was dear to Ella and that she celebrated often in verse. Here's a story from Ella about one early Thanksgiving poem in her life:

"At a Thanksgiving Eve ball I recollect waltzing with a very good-looking young man whom I met there for the first time. The band played one of Strauss' waltzes. As we floated about the hall I thought to myself, 'If I were desperately in love with this man and he cared for some one else, this waltz would sound like a dirge to me.' So the next day I wrote a little poem called '[The Dirge](#)' (which paid for my slippers) which was widely copied.

From "[My Autobiography](#)" by Ella Wheeler Wilcox as published in [The Cosmopolitan](#). XXXI :4 (August 1901) p. 415-421 .

A Happy Thanksgiving to all the members of The Ella Wheeler Wilcox Society.

Rich

This month in Ella's life:

November 5, 1850

Ella Wheeler born to Marcus & Sarah Wheeler at the Braley House in the village of Johnstown, Rock County, Wisconsin.

[See "[Sketches of Wisconsin pioneer women](#)" for a short biography of Ella by her brother, Marcus P. Wheeler.]

[For a longer biography, see "[The Story of a Literary Career](#)" by Ella herself.

November 15, 1814

Sarah J. Pratt, Ella's mother, was born in Bradford, Vermont.



Poems:

BOYS' AND GIRLS' THANKSGIVING OF 1892

Never since the race was started,
 Had a boy in any clime,
 Cause to be so thankful-hearted,
 As the boys of present time.

Not a girl in old times living--
 Let the world talk as it may--
 Found such reasons for Thanksgiving,
 As the girls who live to-day!

Grandmas, in their corners sitting,
 Toiling till the day grew late,
 What knew they with endless knitting,
 Of the jolly roller-skate?

Grandpas sitting by the fender,
 Reading by the faggots' blaze,
 What knew they of modern splendor
 Found in incandescent rays?

Where they toiled in bitter weather,
 Braving rain and snow and sleet,
 Gathering sticks of wood together,
 We have radiators' heat.

But these fruits of modern science
 They first planted seed by seed,
 In their strength and self-reliance
 We may find a noble creed.

With the dawn of great inventions,
 Came the anti-warring days.
 Men are sick of armed contentions,
 God be thanked with heart-felt praise.

Once a boy was trained for fighting,
 Now the world is better taught,
 'Tis an age when wrongs are righting
 By the force of common thought.

Once a girl was trained for sewing,
 Spinning, knitting, nothing more.
 She must never think of knowing
 Aught of things outside her door.

THANKSGIVING

We walk on starry fields of white
 And do not see the daisies;
 For blessings common in our sight
 We rarely offer praises.
 We sigh for some supreme delight
 To crown our lives with splendor,
 And quite ignore our daily store
 Of pleasures sweet and tender.

Our cares are bold and push their way
 Upon our thought and feeling.
 They hang about us all the day,
 Our time from pleasure stealing.
 So unobtrusive many a joy
 We pass by and forget it,
 But worry strives to own our lives,
 And conquers if we let it.

There's not a day in all the year
 But holds some hidden pleasure,
 And looking back, joys oft appear
 To brim the past's wide measure.
 But blessings are like friends, I hold,
 Who love and labor near us.
 We ought to raise our notes of praise
 While living hearts can hear us.

Full many a blessing wears the guise
 Of worry or of trouble;
 Far-seeing is the soul, and wise,
 Who knows the mask is double.
 But he who has the faith and strength
 To thank his God for sorrow
 Has found a joy without alloy
 To gladden every morrow.

We ought to make the moments notes
 Of happy, glad Thanksgiving;
 The hours and days a silent phrase
 Of music we are living.
 And so the theme should swell and grow
 As weeks and months pass o'er us,
 And rise sublime at this good time,
 A grand Thanksgiving chorus.

If she soared above her spinning,
If she sought a life more broad,
She was looked upon as sinning
'Gainst the laws of man and God.

Now a girl is taught she's human,
Brain and body, soul and heart--
All are needed by the woman
Who to-day would play her part.

Swift and sure the world advances,
Let the critic carp who may.
God be praised for all the chances
Boys and girls enjoy to-day.

The Beautiful Land of Nod by Ella Wheeler Wilcox
Chicago: Morrill, Higgins & Co. [1892]

Poems of Power by Ella Wheeler Wilcox
Chicago : W. B. Conkey, 1902.

Story:

John Smith;
or,
Two Thanksgivings.
by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

It was the night before Thanksgiving. Aunt Tabitha sat knitting a blue woollen sock. Uncle Joel was poring over the column of patent-medicine advertisements, which he found a never-failing source of entertainment and delight. Janet, their spinster daughter, was washing the supper-dishes, and the rattling of teacups and saucers, spoons and forks mingled with the sort of domestic melody, which was presently interrupted by a long-drawn sigh and an ejaculation from the lips of Miss Janet of ---

"Oh, yes!"

Now, as no one had spoken for full five minutes, such an exclamation seemed somewhat irrelevant and one necessitating an explanation. But neither Uncle Joel nor Aunt Tabitha expressed any surprise, or indeed seemed to notice Janet's ejaculation. The truth was, this was but one of the many idiosyncrasies of this most peculiar family.

Aunt Tabitha Smith was designed by heaven for the sphere of an old maid. Her prim ideas of propriety, her severe criticisms, her aggressive cleanliness and order, and her limited idea of human nature and needs, all fitted her for the calling of a spinster of the most approved pattern.

In some moment of weakness, never accounted for, and through some impulse inexplicable to himself and to all who knew them, Uncle Joel Smith had persuaded her to forsake her predestined vocation and assume the duties of a wife and mother.

But, as is frequently the case with a career cut short or turned aside from its natural course, or with talents hindered and restrained in one generation, they

culminate and flower in the next.

Aunt Tabitha had not been allowed to fulfil her destiny; but her daughter Janet was completing it for her in the most approved manner. A more perfect specimen of the spinster it would be difficult to conceive.

To be sure, she was only twenty-five--an age which in these days is considered the very morning of youth; an age far more attractive to the average man of the period than sixteen or eighteen--just as the ripe peach is more appetizing than its fair blossom.

But Janet had been a spinster at fifteen; at twenty she was a confirmed old maid. She cared nothing for the pleasures of youth, preferring her round of domestic duties to any festivity; and by her primness, her reserve, and her odd little whims, keeping all possible suitors at a safe distance; and when I say safe, I mean it in the full sense of the term. For it would have been a rash and reckless youth who had ventured into the presence of "Aunt Tabitha," as Mrs. Smith was generally known, to woo her daughter.

Despite the evident fact that she herself had been wooed and won, Aunt Tabitha denounced all lovers as "miserable fools," and she received the reports of neighborhood marriages with the same denunciatory phrases which she bestowed upon other crimes. For Aunt Tabitha seemed to have little pity in her composition for the world of misdoers. She was of the severest type of grim old Puritan stock. She planned and executed her life on the most austere principles, and felt no sympathy for those who deviated in the least from her ideas of propriety.

Endearing words and caresses between friends or members of a family she considered weak, if not vulgar; and Janet would as soon have thought of striking her mother as kissing her. Uncle Joel, who had once been a man of warm affections, had learned years ago to repress any impulse of demonstration toward wife or children.

After a child could walk and talk, Aunt Tabitha considered it too old to kiss or fondle; and rather than listen to her caustic criticisms and sarcastic rebukes, he concealed his natural feelings of affections, even toward his own children, and turned his thoughts--like many a woman--for lack of something else to occupy his mind, to his physical ailments.

He was a man of delicate physique, and his aches and pains became his pets, which he could coddle to his heart's content in spite of Aunt Tabitha.

Janet, who had cut her life by the pattern of her mother's ideas, was, according to Aunt Tabitha's thinking, a model personage, sensible, and free from all nonsense.

If Janet ever had longings or aspirations beyond her narrow and colorless life, no one knew it.

And her frequent and audible ejaculation of "Oh, yes," seemed an utterance of approval and satisfaction at her own discreet and orderly existence.

As she wiped the last dish out of scalding water, Uncle Joel read:

"Over ten thousand testimonials have been received from sufferers who have been

cured by the Gallopin' Pain Pacifier.' Over ten thousand! That is a great many people to be cured by one remedy. There must be something in it if it cures ten thousand suffering people."

"They ought to be ashamed of themselves," proclaimed Aunt Tabitha, who had no patience with Uncle Joel's patent-medicine mania.

There was a quick step on the walk, a mellow whistle in the hallway, and the door

burst open as if a strong wind had blown it. A handsome, stalwart young man of twenty, with curling, chestnut hair, and warm, brown eyes, strode across the room, after banging the door behind him, and throwing his cap into the corner, and clasping Janet about the neck, placed a sounding kiss upon either cheek.

Janet gave a little feminine shriek, and struggled to free herself.

"For shame, John!" cried Aunt Tabitha, "what coarse manners you have fallen into lately! You should treat your sister with more respect."

John's boyish face clouded, and a suspicious mist came into his brown eyes. He threw himself face downward on a lounge which stood at one end of the room.

"A nice greeting for a fellow who has been gone two weeks from home," he said. "A sweet scolding to give him because he kisses his own sister."

"You are too old to conduct yourself like children," Aunt Tabitha answered sternly. "I think kissing and hugging altogether out of place among grown people, and very coarse and underbred. You could shake hand with Janet, and show your pleasure at seeing her quite as well."

John lay in a moody silence, his handsome mouth quivering.

"Who is coming here to-morrow?" he asked; presently.

"Oh, Aunt Mary, Uncle John, Cousin Sarah and her children--that's all, I believe."

"Why don't you invite Gerty Denvers?" John ventured, in a low voice. "She has no home, and no relatives, and it will be a dull day for her."

"Well, then it better be," spoke Aunt Tabitha, making a great clatter with her knitting-needles. "What is she to *us*, I'd like to know? I think you have made the family conspicuous enough by racing around with that dressmaker's apprentice during the last two months, without our inviting her here to Thanksgiving."

John rose to a sitting posture, the mist in his eyes dried by their flashing fire.

"She is a sweet, beautiful girl, and she *is* a dressmaker's apprentice," he said, "and I love her with all my heart."

"Should try Gallopin' Pain Pacifier," read Uncle Joel aloud to himself. He was so accustomed to these tilts and controversies between John and his mother, that he paid little attention to them.

For John was wholly unlike Janet, and the trial of Tabitha's life. He was full of warm, young blood, and craving for affection, demonstrative and irrepressible. The strict home rules oppressed him and depressed him. He wanted more sunlight, more mirth, more gayety, and more love in the household. But his mother rebuked him, and Janet shrieked if he offered her a brotherly caress. Never since he was four years old, and donned his first pair of trousers, had his mother ever kissed him, voluntarily.

She cooked, baked, washed, and ironed for him, she took care of his body and his brain, but she let his heart starve within him, and was angry that it cried aloud for food, and because it was not given at home he sought for it abroad.

At first he fed the fire of his boyish heart with lovers of his own sex. Tom and Bill and Charley all reigned their season as his dearest friends and comrades, who shared his full heart's lavish wealth of affection. Why he should so idealize and idolize these common boys, and seek their society and sing their praises, Aunt Tabitha could not understand. She did not realize that his heart craved more than was given by that cold, Puritan household, and that he must seek it elsewhere.

But by and by, when he transferred his worship to idols of the opposite sex, and sang their praises, and became their adject slave, Aunt Tabitha's indignation knew no bounds.

"That a son of mine should be such a spooney," she would cry. "Runnin' after girls at his age, sittin' with 'em evenin's when he ought to be abed and asleep--it's a shame an' a disgrace."

But the more Aunt Tabitha scolded and railed at John and his inamoratas, the less he remained at home. He worked diligently in the field by day, ate his meals in silence, and was off to the village in the evening. And all Tabitha's sarcasms were of no avail. As for Uncle Joel, his sympathies were with John; he had once been young himself, and he had been fond of youthful sports, and a great gallant among the girls. Yet he had too great a fear of Tabitha's tongue to venture a voice in the matter. He did not like to take any responsibility upon his shoulders which he could avoid. And so he kept discreetly silent, and let the war wage as it would, while he found refuge behind the column of newspaper advertisements.

Aunt Tabitha's face flushed angrily as John made the bold assertion of his love for Gerty Denvers.

"You'd better make yourself still more ridiculous," she said, "and announce your passion to the girl. She may be fool enough to marry you, and then you will reach the end of your folly, and come to your senses, perhaps. I'm sick of having you running after her."

"If I got any love at home, may be I would not have to seek abroad for it," John said, as he seized his hat and left the house.

They did not see him again until the next morning--Thanksgiving morning. Then he stood before them, tall, handsome, pale, determined.

"I am going to take your advice, mother," he said, "and marry Gerty Denvers. The minister is waiting to perform the ceremony now. She has no home and no friends, and we love each other. Do you want me to bring my wife home to Thanksgiving dinner? She doesn't expect to live here; she is going to stay in the shop and keep at work."

Aunt Tabitha grew pale with anger.

"I want you to take your simpleton of a wife and go where I will never see you again," she said. "If you choose to disgrace us, I don't want to have the evidence before my eyes daily."

"Very well, I will go," he said. He turned and left the house. Twenty-four hours later he and his young bride had left the place.

Janet broke into tears when the report was brought to them.

"John did nothing so very wrong, mother," she sobbed, "that he should have been turned out of doors."

"Wrong?" Aunt Tabitha responded sternly. "He has disgraced himself and us by marrying at his age. Why could he not behave himself as well as you have done? Why did he need love that he could not get here, any more than *you* need it? Were you not children of the same parents? He was always defying me, always neglecting his home for other people, always going against my rules. He was never a proper child like you. Let him make a home for himself, and don't let me see you shedding tears over him again."

So Janet said no more about him, only sighed, "Oh, yes," more frequently over her dishes and mending; for now she knew that, despite her disapproval of his demonstrative manner, John had been necessary to her happiness, and she was lonely without him.

Uncle Joel grew more and more in the habit of petting his ailments, and talking of

his complaints, and studying the advertisements for remedies. And he aged rapidly after John went away.

The old farm ran down, and the place grew sadly out of repair.

Uncle Joel had never been a very energetic man, and he seemed to have lost all ambition when John left him alone. Aunt Tabitha urged him to repair the fence, and repaint the house, and stay the little leaks which were reducing them from independence to poverty- But Uncle Joel said, "Wait till next year, Tabby." And to Janet and some of his confidential neighbors he added, "John will be coming home pretty soon, and he'll fix things up."

But John did not come.

So the years went by until nearly fifteen had gone since that Thanksgiving morning so long ago. And they never heard from John in all those years.

It was October. There was a shadow of gloom over the Smith household. Uncle Joel had become thoroughly shiftless and inefficient, thinking only of his aches and pains.

Aunt Tabitha's heretofore vigorous constitution seemed breaking down, and all the work and care of farm and household rested upon Janet's shoulders.

She stood washing up the supper dishes again, while her mother lay half asleep in her easy-chair, and Uncle Joel was whispering behind his newspaper.

Janet had changed the least of the three during this decade and a half of years. She was the same prim, precise little old maid that she had been during her whole life. Perhaps there was a line or two more about the mouth and eyes, but never having had any youth or freshness, she had none to lose.

"We need somebody to husk the corn and dig the potatoes, father," she said presently. "It is getting late in the year. I wish we could have help for a few weeks. I can't do everything."

"Tabby, didn't I hear your complainin' of feeling a pain in your back and limbs this morning?" asked Uncle Joel from behind his newspaper.

"Yes. I don't understand it," Aunt Tabitha responded from the depths of her great chair. "I feel so dull and lifeless, too."

"Well, I've just found a new and infallible remedy for those symptoms--'The Electric Eradicator. Only one dollar per bottle; for sale by all druggists.' You might send down and see if Johnson keeps it at the village. I know he used to keep a supply of the Gallopain' Pain Pacifier; but The Electric Eradicator is said to be much better. It has cured thousands who suffer as you do."

"They were great fools to be cured by the stuff," was Aunt Tabitha's reply. "All I need is a little mint-tea."

A timid knock sounded at the door. Janet wiped her hands on her apron, and opened the door cautiously a little way.

Janet always responded to a knock, night or day, in this extremely cautious fashion, as if she feared being seized bodily and carried away, after the manner of the Sabine women, by the person without.

But it was a very small and weary-looking Roman whom she espied through the crack of the door to-night. A moment's conversation ensued; then Janet closed the door and spoke to her mother.

"A little boy wants lodging and supper," she said. "He has walked a long distance to-day, and is looking for work."

"Some young tramp, I suppose, who will murder us all in our beds," responded Aunt

Tabitha. "He ought to be in better business than wandering about the country."

"He is trying to *get* into better business," said Janet, whose heart was more easily touched than her mother's. "He looks as if he needed rest and food."

"'Can be restored by the Electric Eradicator,'" continued Uncle Joel, unmindful of the parley at the door, so occupied was he with the testimonials of sufferers.

"Guess he'd better come in," said Janet; "he may be willing to husk our corn;" and she opened the door just wide enough to admit an undersized boy of twelve or fourteen years, and then quickly closed it lest a regiment of ferocious Romans should follow.

"Take a chair, little boy, and I will give you a bite of something."

"There's the mouldy cheese I said was spoiling to-day--put that on," said Aunt Tabitha, whose economy had grown into parsimony with adversity. And then, as if ashamed of herself, and moved by some sudden impulse of pity toward the tired stranger, she arose, and with her own hands prepared him a generous repast.

"What might your name be, and where have you travelled from?" asked Uncle Joel, laying aside his interesting testimonials to question the boy.

"My name's John Smith, sir, and I came from town this morning."

"John Smith, hey? Well, that's a good enough name," laughed Uncle Joel. "Though I should hate to advertise ye, hoping to find ye by that name alone, ef I lost ye. A good many men hev had that name. An orphan?"

"My mother is alive; she's sewing in town. I couldn't get work there, and mother thought the winter was coming on, and I'd better try and get a place on a farm to work for my board, maybe, till spring. It's awful expensive living in town."

"Father dead, I suppose."

"We fear so, sir. It's nine years since mother saw him. He went to California to seek his fortune. He sent mother money, off and on, till two years ago. Since then she's never heard from him. We think he must be dead. Mother gets along with her sewing, but she is not very well now, and she's always worryin' about me. She's afraid she'll die and leave me alone in the city; so she told me to go out in the country and learn to farm."

"Better keep him to do chores this winter, father," whispered Janet. "We need help, and we can't afford to hire."

"Well, just as you and mother say," responded Uncle Joel, returning to his newspaper, glad to avoid this responsibility, as he had all others possible through life.

"Poor shiftless creeters! his parents, not to have anything saved up," muttered Tabitha. "But you'd better keep him. He'll be handy, and it'll save paying anything out; and a growin' boy 'll eat 'most anything."

So John stayed, and wonderfully handy he did prove, outdoor and in, until each of the trio wondered how they had lived without him.

And John grew fat and rosy in spite of Aunt Tabitha's economy.

Janet rejected a sun-browned potato one day which she had taken on her plate.

"If you can't eat it, save it for John," said Tabitha. Yet when John came in, tired and hungry, she again prepared him a generous supper.

"Somehow, John's face reminds me of some one," mused Uncle Joel, one evening. "Doesn't it you, Tabby?"

But Tabitha only answered abruptly:

"Don't be a fool, Joel!" and knit with more than usual vigor; while Janet heaved a sigh over her basket of mending, and said:

"Oh, yes!"

But Tabitha was more than usually kind, almost tender, in her manner to John that night.

The day before Thanksgiving found Aunt Tabitha in a high fever. She grew delirious, and wanted John constantly in her sight, and she talked wildly.

"I am glad you came back," she said, over and over. It has been a long, long time since you went away, and I have missed you so, all these years. You must promise me never to go again, John--never!"

And little John would promise, wondering.

The village physician shook his head and looked puzzled when questioned by Uncle Joel.

"She seems to be breaking down," he said, "as if under a long mental strain."

"Nerves, I suppose," Uncle Joel said; "women are made of nerves. And this new discovery, this Electric Eradicator, is just the thing for nervous complaints. Thousands give their testimonials. But Tabitha is dreadfully set against patent medicines."

"She's sensible there," responded the physician. "Poisonous drugs kill more people every year than--than--"

"Than the doctors?" queried Uncle Joel, with a chuckle.

"Very good, very good, Uncle Joel," laughed the doctor. "You are not so slow after all. But about your good wife, her case puzzles me. I really am alarmed about her. Medicine doesn't seem to reach her disease. That boy seems to remind her of something or of somebody. Let him stay by her. Sometimes the mind is so centred upon some object of the affections that nothing else can fill the place--"

"Oh, yes," sighed Janet, coming up from the cellar with a pan of potatoes, and thinking what a dreary, dreary Thanksgiving day it was to be.

Somebody rapped. The doctor, standing near the door, opened it. A big man rushed in, and clasped Janet in his arms, kissing her most vigorously.

Janet screamed and struggled feebly. The thought dashed through her mind that her hour had come. In allowing the doctor to go to the door caution had been forfeited, and the Sabine maiden, so long protected by Providence and her own prudence, was captured at last. But she remembered how useless it was to resist, so she only screamed, and after one faint struggle resigned herself to her fate. All this flashed through Miss Janet's mind in a second's time, of course, as dying people recall the events of a lifetime.

In another second Janet found herself free, and gazing into the face of--John Smith, her brother!

It was not a Roman soldier, after all.

"Here's something better than The Electric Eradicator, Tabitha," said Uncle Joel, as he led John to her bedside.

"There, I never believed father would own *anything* was better than his last new patent medicine," half sobbed Janet. "You are wonderfully complimented, John."

And Aunt Tabitha actually clung about John's neck and kissed him--an act which caused Uncle Joel to stare in amazement.

"If you'd only done that years ago he'd never have gone away," he muttered *sotto voce* as he turned away. "Affection and kisses are as necessary to some natures--as--as--"

"As sunlight to plants," suggested the doctor, helping him out with a simile, and

looking at Janet.

"Oh, yes," sighed Janet.

And just then little John Smith, who had been sent out on an errand, returned, and big John Smith caught him in his arms, crying out, "My boy, my darling boy!"

And then everybody began to ask questions, and pretty soon they all were made to understand that little John Smith was big John Smith's son! and that little John Smith had been sent out into the country by his mother, hoping he would find a place in the hearts of his grandparents before she died and left him an orphan; and that big John Smith had miraculously returned with pockets full of gold after his long exile from his home, to find his wife grieving for him as for one dead, and she had sent him to bring back her boy; but instead *she* was brought back to the old homestead; and such a happy, happy Thanksgiving day as it proved to them all!

And Aunt Tabitha recovered, and kissed big John and little John every day of her life afterward. For she and Uncle Joel went to live with them--John and his wife would have it so.

And Janet? Why the good old doctor who was a lonely widower, admiring Janet's thrift and energy, proposed to her that very Thanksgiving day to come and cheer his declining years; and Janet, in spite of her hereditary aptitude for the sphere of a spinster, sighed, "Oh, yes," and the doctor accepted it as an answer to his proposal, whether Janet had meant it so or not.

When she was married, and about to leave her old home and go with her husband, Uncle Joel took her aside.

"Here is a bottle of the Electric Eradicator," he said, in a confidential tone. "Your man, bein' a doctor, is dreadfully sot againt such things, and likely as not you might be pizened with a lot of his long-named drugs, when a leetle dose of this would be all you needed. So I thought I 'd give you a bottle to keep. Needn't say anything to the doctor about it, you know."

Perdita and Other Stories. By Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

New York : J.S. Ogilvie and Co., 1886.

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