

Thanksgiving Day in Washington

By EDWARD B. CLARK

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FROM Washington every year goes forth a presidential proclamation calling on the people of the United States to give thanks on the last Thursday in November for the blessings of prosperity and progress, and if there have been no prosperity and progress, to give thanks that things have been no worse, and that matters probably will be better in the future.

While the capital is the headquarters, so to speak, of these Thanksgiving proclamations, Thanksgiving day itself is not one of the great holidays of the year on the banks of the Potomac, although it is recognized and celebrated where recognition and celebration are given it at all, in a manner that does not hold in other sections of the country.

The foreigners connected with the different legations look on Thanksgiving as being peculiarly an American holiday, and it is the truth that of some of the embassies there is a more marked recognition of the day than there is in the households of Washington, Americans whose Pilgrim forefathers set the example of giving thanks for the harvest.

President Taft is of New England ancestry, and the celebration of Thanksgiving in the old and approved style of New England is to him not only a matter of pleasure, but of duty. The president goes to church on Thanksgiving day morning just as all other presidents before him have gone to church on the holiday since custom established it that the chief executive should urge the people in public proclamation to get together for praise offerings. It would do for a president to decline to follow the advice that he has given the people.

For a great many years presidential families have eaten Rhode Island turkeys for their Thanksgiving dinner. The Taft family follows precedent in most things. It isn't, perhaps, that Rhode Island turkeys are better than Indiana turkeys, or Oklahoma turkeys, or the turkeys of any other state, but a gentleman named Vese, who lives down in Rhode Island, has made it a practice for years to fatten a special turkey for White House consumption. The bird that goes to the president's table never weighs less than 25 pounds.

About five years ago the Rhode Island turkey gift to the White House caused something of a sensation. It was not the bird's fault, however. Before the turkey is shipped from the Rhode Island breeding ground to the White House, it is killed and plucked. This fact did not prevent the publication of a story in a certain newspaper, a story which aroused the ire of President Roosevelt to such an extent that he issued a warm statement that could in no wise be called a second Thanksgiving proclamation.

An eastern newspaper declared in its columns that the Rhode Island turkey arrived at the White House, alive and kicking, and that Theodore Roosevelt turned it loose in the lot back of the executive mansion and allowed his children to run the bird to death, catching it and then, and plucking from it, wing and tail feathers, only to loose the bird once more, and to go on again with the chase.

This story of cruelty to animals charged against himself and Kermit, Archibald and Quentin made the president mad. There is no other word to be used. He forbade access to the White House offices and to the various departments of government to the correspondents of the offending paper. How the story originated, no one ever knew, for the turkey was dead and cold long before it left its native turkey yard. It is supposed that some one told it as a joke and that the newspaper correspondent took it seriously. At any rate, one Thanksgiving turkey some days after it had passed from life gave the country something to talk about for a week.

The White House Thanksgiving dinner is like the Thanksgiving dinner in the homes of most good Americans who are able to buy a dinner of holiday proportions. The president, his wife and children, eat roast turkey with stuffing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and other vegetables, and wind up with pumpkin pie.

It is entirely probable that the president's wife has to watch the cook when the pumpkin pie making is in progress, and be especially watchful if the cook was born and raised in Washington. There is a firm conviction in the minds of all District of Columbia people that a squash and a pumpkin are the same thing. Ask for pumpkin pie in a Washington restaurant and they give you squash pie, and if you are courageous enough to protest, you will be told that there is no difference between squash and pumpkin, and the information will be given you with an air of pity for benighted ignorance. The wise Washingtonian who has gone to the capital from other sections, invariably imports his own pumpkins, for if one is ordered from the market man a squash invariably turns up in the kitchen. The New Englander holds that no Thanksgiving dinner is complete without the pumpkin pie. President Taft knows a pumpkin when he sees it.

It has been said that the foreigners, the ambassadors, the envoys extraordinary, the ministers plenipotentiary and all the attaches of the different legations, give heed to Thanksgiving day. An American secretary of state who hailed from New England once said that the foreigners rejoiced in Thanksgiving because it gave them a chance to eat all the turkey that they wanted to without feeling that they were called on to give an excuse for over-feeding. The foreigners love turkey. It is the one simon-pure American institution to which they have sworn allegiance. The turkey is an American bird and while it is found in Europe, it is



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there only as a child of adoption. When turkeys were first introduced into Europe it was called in the language of each country "the great bird." The word "great" had reference only to the size of the species, but unquestionably another significance attached to it in more modern times.

There are thousands and thousands of government employees in Washington who came to the capital to work, from other sections of the country. Every New England employee who can, leaves the city for the old home a day or two before the Thanksgiving holiday. They will tell you in Boston, that during the fall holiday season, all roads lead to that city, the great distributing point for New England. All the government employees are given one month leave each year. Many of them try to so arrange things that the Thanksgiving holiday will be included in the vacation season. Those of them who cannot get away, and who in early life were taught to make much of Thanksgiving, get together in small companies on the holiday to dine, and they call the dinners "family affairs."

There are nearly 100,000 colored people living in Washington. With the negro race Christmas is the great holiday of the year, but Thanksgiving is coming more and more to be recognized by the race members. Their churches are open for service in the morning, and the Thanksgiving dinners follow, but even among the well-to-do colored people the chicken seems to be preferred to the turkey, and not infrequently the "possum" is preferred to both.

Thanksgiving time in Washington is still a beautiful season. The leaves on many of the trees still cling, and they retain their touch of autumn color. Roses are in bloom in many sheltered places, and flowers of other kinds are not infrequent in the "out-of-doors." In fact, there is only about one month of the Washington year in which one cannot pick some species of flower in the open. In ordinary seasons the last of the roses drop from the stem about Christmas day.

On Connecticut avenue on Thanksgiving day there is always a "parade" of the notables of the official circles. Connecticut avenue is one of the fashionable thoroughfares of the capital city, and on Sundays and holidays the sidewalks are crowded with people. On Thanksgiving day morning, if it is pleasant, one can get fairly adequate knowledge of the winter fashions from a stroll down the avenue, for on that day the women of society put on for the first time, their cold weather garb. The Connecticut avenue "parade" is a Washington institution.

Just about a week after Thanksgiving, congress opens. Most of the members stay at home for the holiday, and then comes the rush to the capital. The president hails Thanksgiving day as one of rest from his message writing labor. A president's message always is long and in some parts it is of necessity, dull, for it must deal with things which confessedly have no live interest excepting to the statistician. President Taft is not as fond of writing messages as was President Roosevelt, and it is entirely probable that there is a real thanksgiving in the present president's heart over the fact that on one day he has ample excuse to drop his pen.

There are a great many golf clubs in the District of Columbia. They play golf all winter long in this latitude, and President Taft never misses an opportunity to go out on the links. Thanksgiving afternoon every Washingtonian who can, and who knows how to play the game, starts for the club house. The president is a member of several golf clubs, but it may be of interest to the American people to know that he seldom plays on the grounds of the club which is considered the most fashionable and exclusive in the country's capital.



THERE IS ALWAYS A "PARADE" OF NOTABLES OF THE OFFICIAL CIRCLES

One thing is certain, however, President Taft gives thanks for golf.

Over at Fort Myer, across the Potomac, the soldiers celebrate Thanksgiving with football and a big dinner. The fall festival is celebrated at every army post in the United States, and is celebrated royally. The commissary puts forth of its best, and the dinner is even better than that given the soldiers on Christmas day. Perhaps the reason is that the proper observance of Thanksgiving day is regarded in the light of an order from the commander-in-chief. The Thanksgiving proclamation has the same binding effect on the army and navy as an order for the two arms of the service to go forth to fight.

It should not be forgotten, perhaps, that one great cause for Thanksgiving this year at the White House dinner table is that William Howard Taft has returned unscathed from the longest presidential journey ever undertaken.

A Lonely Thanksgiving

Some years ago a sailing ship bound from New York to Singapore with oil, took fire in the middle of the Indian ocean the day before Thanksgiving. Realizing that it was impossible to extinguish the burning oil, the captain ordered the men to the boats, with such provisions as they could carry at short notice. The long-boat, containing the captain, second mate and ten men, got away all right, but was never heard of again. The cutter, with the first mate and the rest of the crew, after drifting about in the darkness for several hours, went broadside against a coral reef and was smashed like an eggshell. The mate alone succeeded in reaching land, all the others being dashed to death on the jagged reef-points or drowned in the boiling surf.

Daylight showed the survivor that he was marooned on a little island that was not much more than a cluster of rocks rising above the waves. It was a half mile wide at the widest part and about a mile in circumference, and was surrounded by a bristling chevaux de frise of reefs, over which the billows spouted in foam and thunder. Beyond the glittering walls of spray was the desolate expanse of the Indian ocean, with not a sail or a smudge of smoke anywhere in sight. The shipwrecked

man remembered it was Thanksgiving day, and the thought of all the good things the folk at home were enjoying increased the pangs of hunger and thirst. In the forlorn hope of finding water in some rocky crevice he started to explore the island, and, much to his delight, found a pool of water. It was a pool of water collected in a hollow on the top of a rock which he mistook for the hope of desecrating a tomb. Further on, hidden in the coarse grass which the sea wind combed over it, he stumbled on a sea-fowl's nest full of eggs, and was also by good luck able to kill one of the birds with a well-aimed stone. Being a bit of a dandy, he carried a silver match box, which had kept the matches dry, so he was able to light a fire of dry grass and little sticks, with which he cooked the sea-fowl. He roasted the eggs in the hot embers, and though of an oily flavor, they were very palatable to a hungry man. Salt and pepper would have been a great improvement to this Thanksgiving dinner alone on a rocky islet in the lonely Indian ocean, but the chance of a healthy appetite made up for their absence. The next day, as the shipwrecked sailor was finishing the last of the roast eggs, a P. & O. steamer sighted his signal of distress and sent a boat to his rescue.

Thanksgiving of the World

Sixty years ago there was something called a world, in which some of us were alive. It was a world of four or five continents of jarring interests; a world parted by three or four oceans. If I wrote to my brother on the other side of the world I might expect an answer in six months. If in the region where he lived the water falled, or the winds did not blow, the poor people there lay down and died of famine. The barns of Ohio might be bursting, but the starving people had to die.

But 60 years have changed all that. All that has been changed because God has worked with his children, and his children have worked with him. Men have been working each for all, and all for each. When a botanist in Java made gutta percha flow from a tree, and when Alexander Agassiz and the rest compelled the Lake Superior mines to deliver their copper, some hundreds of thousands of God's children between them drew the copper into wire and sheathed it with gutta percha and laid their cable beneath the oceans. The children worked with their Father, and the Father worked with his children. It is not one man who has done this. It is not a hundred men. It is the union of the world. It is this union of the children with the Father, and the Father with the children. The great victories have been the victories which you and I have prayed for every morning when we have wished that the Father's will may be done on earth just as it is done in heaven.

All for each, and each for all!—Edward Everett Hale, in Woman's Home Companion.

The Habit of Thankfulness

We are creatures of habit and our habits express our characters. Too many people have formed the habit of chronic grumbling. Nothing suits them. No matter how beautiful the weather, they could improve it. They may be enjoying the very best of health, but they will not admit it. They are eternally predicting disaster. They are chronic grumblers.

They grumble at board, they grumble in bed, From the soles of their feet to the crown of their head.

Such a spirit is a crime in this world and age. This is a beautiful world. This is the best age of history. Every 24 hours the sun is shining upon a better, brighter, happier earth. "We are the heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of times."

We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful time In an age on ages telling, to be living is sublime.

It is just as easy and infinitely better to cultivate the cheerful, thankful spirit. Gratitude should be the habit of every life. To look on the bright side, to carry sunshine in the heart and reflect it in speech and conduct is to enjoy life and make it a blessing to the world.

THE OIL DOCKER
WILBUR D. NESBIT

Heaven



What do you think that Heaven may be?
The answerer smiled:
"A place where folk like you and me
May hear sweet music all the while,
Where roses bloom and birds will sing
And silver stars splash in the shade.
With no night but joy in every thing—
Of these, I know, is Heaven made."

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OLD MAN GIDDLES OBSERVES.

Another trouble is that there are just as many kinds of cures of prevention suggested as there will be pounds of cure later on. Sometimes the fellow who doesn't talk does a great deal—sometimes he is just too lazy to talk.

Henry Müsser claims it is just as easy to shoot rabbits as elephants, but wants to know why no one ever writes books about rabbit shooting.

It was a lawyer who said that a man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client.

The heroine in a novel written by a man never keeps the hero waiting while he does her hair all over. A woman novelist sometimes gets as jealous as her heroine that she will tell about her powdering her nose.

Economy is how we would save our money if we had it after we have spent it foolishly.



If you cannot afford to own an automobile, at least you may acquire distinction by being run over by one.

An able-bodied man, with a good digestion and a steady job is never known to do any talking about "affinities."

The Boater and the Batter.
Said a boater biting butter
To a batter, as a batter,
"I'm a better biter, batter;
No one else than me is greater."

Said the batter to the boater
Biting butter, very bitter:
"I'm a better biter, batter;
And I'll make you be a quitter."

Economical.
"I have a letter from your uncle," says the first young man. "There must be something wrong with him. He has all his dates mixed. Have you noticed peculiarities about him of late?"

"It's all right," explains the other. "You know uncle is of a saving disposition. He found a 1905 calendar early this year and said he would make it do, because it really hadn't been used at all."

An Argument.
"What are those two men quarreling about?" we ask, indicating what seems to be the beginning of a fight. "Oh, that's nothing much," explains our friend. "That's Braid the hat man, claiming he doesn't have to eat oysters to-day, and Shells, the oyster man, claiming he can wear his straw hat till the middle of the month."

Wilbur D. Nesbit