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IT IS LIKE A CARNIVAL.

CELEBRATING THANKSGIVING IN THE
CITY OF CHURCHES.

They Have Processions and Muskers and
Much Blowing of Horns, Bonfires and
Asking of Gifts, but "They" Are Mostly
Children—The Custom's Origin.



VISITOR from the west or south, who should arrive in Brooklyn on the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day, would be startled, puzzled, and, perhaps, if of a very devout nature, somewhat horrified at the actions of the young people. He would meet processions of lads and children blowing on tin horns,

beating cheap drums and whooping as recklessly as so many young savages. Boys in masks and outrageous costumes would salute him with "Gimme a penny, mister." And he might even see a squad of apparently well-to-do men marching in irregular order and conducting themselves like tramps.

To sum it up in one sentence: Brooklyn alone of all places in the United States, celebrates Thanksgiving Day as a heathen festival. And the custom is peculiarly local to Brooklyn. It has not even crossed in full strength to New York city, though some of its influence is discernible there; and it is barely noticeable in the smaller cities and towns of Long Island. And what is stranger still, it is a very old local custom, and its origin is, as the historians of Ireland say, "lost in the mists of a hoary antiquity."

The phrase "heathen festival" in the preceding paragraph must not be construed as a term of reproach; it is simply meant to imply a celebration like that of Christmas in the west and south. And to explain these variations of local custom, a bit of history is in order. As all classical scholars know, it is only by accident that some sections of the Christian world observe Christmas as the anniversary of Christ's birth. The day was celebrated in Italy for a thousand years or more before the Christian era. It was the day of the sun's return from his most southern point in the heavens, the day when the people closed accounts for the old year and started on a new one; so all rigid rules were relaxed, the most austere smiled on the general levity and it was a day of rout and revel, of mask and mummery, of feasting and giving gifts and general social equality.

Through all the changes of 2,500 years the old custom has survived, and in more than half the Christian world today Christmas is practically a "heathen festival," celebrated just about as it was in Italy 500 B. C., except that gunpowder has been invented and the turkey discovered since then. From southern Europe the custom floated unchanged to the southern belt of the United States, and from England to Virginia and the border states north and south; so, while New Englanders assembled in their churches for forenoon services on that day, the people of Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and adjoining states were "dressing up," popping firecrackers, drinking eggnog, shooting at a mark, having running and wrestling matches, pitching quoits, and getting ready for a big dinner of fresh pork, chicken and sausage, with whisky before it and plenty of "Jeebies river" tobacco after it. Farther south the slaves were allowed unlimited license and revel, and no work was done till after New Year's.

Well, all that Christmas is to the boy of the southwest, all that July 4th is to all American boys, and a good deal that a school holiday is to most boys, that is Thanksgiving day to the boys of Brooklyn, in the afternoon. A gentleman spending his first winter in the city in 1887, said to me recently:

"When I descended from the Greeno avenue station on the elevated road at 2 p. m. I was amazed at being surrounded by a crowd of half-grown, boys in masks and fanciful costumes who boldly demanded the gift of a penny each and en-



RAISED AN ESPERANTO DIS-
my refusal raised an infernal din with tin horns, bones and other instruments. At length I recognized the voice of a son of one of my neighbors, a wealthy man, and he asked me for a penny. I bought off the whole squad at a penny apiece, but had not gone a square before I was surrounded by another squad, dressed in woman's clothes, their faces daubed with paint, and they insisted on escorting me home. And so it went on all the afternoon, first a squad of little hoodlums and then a procession of tall lads and young men; and some of them actually knocked me back down and demanded gifts of pie and cold turkey. All the boys of the ward seemed to have turned hoodlums for the afternoon. And the parents said it was a necessity to have a day occasionally to let off the savagery which is inherent in a boy and must work out some way. At night there were blazing barrels and other bonfires on the corners, and little savages daubed with paint howling and dancing around them. To a western man who had only known the day as a religious anniversary it was a queer experience."

The origin of this curious local custom cannot be traced. One old citizen thinks it was set up on Long Island by the French Huguenots, who had a day of gen-

eral merriment at the season afterwards taken for Thanksgiving, and that the two merged in one by mere accident. Another "ventures to guess" that it was a Dutch custom, well established before Brooklyn became an American city. Still another is positive that the custom had its rise among the first Yankees who settled in Brooklyn, as a sort of joelular reaction from the austerity of the old New England holy day. According to him, the interlock of church and state was so complete in New England in the last century that a man had to be awfully solemn and religiously quiet all of Thanksgiving Day; the lighter hearted and liberal fled to Long Island and finding there so much more liberty than they had been accustomed to, grew quite hilarious over their new found freedom and made the day a sort of white man's Emancipation Day. What was at first wild hilarity in them has become masking and merriment in their youthful descendants.

There is a good deal in history to support this view. It is well known that the first churches on Long Island were largely built up by religious refugees from New England, and as the Puritans had rejected Christmas and May Day because the Church of England sanctioned some license on those days, so it is quite likely these exiled Yankees rejected the severer features of Thanksgiving Day because the Puritans had enforced them. Be the cause what it may, the fact is patent that while the forenoon is devoted to religion, the afternoon is a season for masking, mirth and mummery. And in Brooklyn, alone among American cities, do parents allow and even encourage wild, boyish sports on Thanksgiving Day.

J. B. PARKE.

A MEAN BOARDING HOUSE KEEPER.

"I'm glad all the boarders are going to be here to Thanksgiving dinner," said one boarder to another.

"Why, what difference does it make?" asked his companion in misery.

"Oh, you see last Thanksgiving they nearly all went out to dinner and the landlady felt the balance of us on the same evening, one of the kind that hangs 'round there were so few of us it didn't pay to get up a large dinner. She will have no such excuse this year."

"Yes, but she will, though," was the other's quick answer; "she just told me that as all the boarders are going to remain home to dinner Thanksgiving she couldn't afford to make any spread."

Then the two looked arns and waded down to the nearest lunch counter.

ENOUGH OF IT.



A clergyman in a rural parish was remem-bered at Thanksgiving with a monster turkey, one of the kind that hangs the door of the markets Thanksgiving time. The family was small, and meal after meal that turkey "bobbed up serenely." At last one day that minister's young boy manifested a prodigious appetite. Again and again he passed his plate, until his father and mother became alarmed and asked him what he was eating so much for. With his mouth full of turkey he answered:

"Father, I mean you shan't have to any grace over that old turkey again."

A TRUE TURKEY STORY.

There was a time not long ago when turkey reared to high feet the man with a rooster on his head, but each village has changed all this. The public has lost a misty idea of cold storage, but the business is full of cold facts. In one of the twelve warehouses in New York city, according to a certain veracious reporter who was detailed to hunt up something curious for the Thanksgiving number, there is a turkey of the harvest of 1879 still in a remarkable state of preservation. This feathered bird has a post-mortem history. He was raised in Orange county and passed an uneventful life till his neck was wrung in the interest of the human race. He was hung up in Washington market as the prize turkey, weighing forty pounds. Nobody wanted a turkey of that weight on that Thanksgiving Day. While it had been a good year, nobody felt blessed to the extent of buying turkey by the fraction of a ton.

After Thanksgiving was over the turkey disappeared. Patrons of Washington market missed him, and imagined his fate. It was given out that an uptown hotel had bought him. In a week he was forgotten. A year later and forty pound turkey was again ascribed to the market on the same beam in the market place. He had the rosy glow of youth, and everybody suspected that it was the ghost of a year-dead bird. Styles run, small turkeys that year, and the market absorbed steaks off the big bird, but the public was not educated up to turkey steaks. That is why the turkey remained intact, and again flew out of the market.

Years followed and still a turkey weighing forty pounds was sold each year in part of November under the name of "Orange county's pride. Fished by Farmer Biggs, of Meadowlake farm. Boned and taken in summer."

Marketers began to recognize the big turkey as one of the best. Nobody but the butcher suspected that one turkey only was in the plot. Boned and from Biggs' store they saw the big turkey in the best henneries.

Cold storage did it. The turkey was this year on exhibition in Washington market, as usual. It weighed a somewhat ponderably increased from a member early in the season, but the turkey was his equal in weight of turkey. Later the order was sent to the cold storage warehouse to repack the turkey, and all was busy about the place in consequence.

But up to the hour of going to press there have been no advices from the metropolis to the effect that any one had the nerve to buy the frozen turkey. If you should ever visit the Big City, head Thanksgiving time, go to Washington market and ask for Biggs' big bird, and it will undoubtedly be pointed out to you.

All my life thanks who are stirred by thoughts of the betterment of the world and can rejoice at its continuance and increasing fulfillment. God reigns and God wills, and he neither reigns nor wills for naught.

THEORY AGAINST PRACTICE.

An Instance Where Book Learning Was Defective.

"I'm hungry, my considerable," said a red-headed young man as he stood at the foot of Courtland street, waiting for the ferry, and felt of the repairs which had been put around on his face in the way of courtplaster. "I'm fasted pretty manfully, but I guess I can hold out till I strike Jersey."

"Been in a fight?" asked a sympathetic bystander.

"Naw, I didn't get started 'nough so you could call it a fight. I've been licked though and I ain't tryin' to dodge the issue."

"What got you into the trouble?"

"Edgeration, sir—readin' when I orter been in better business, I guess. A lot of blame-fod truck, jes' 'cause it was a book."

"How was it?"

"Why this way: You see I had one of these 'ere gymnasium books and read it. Says the book like this, you see: 'A man with his waist bigger 'round than his chest ain't no first physically.' That's what the book claimed. He's libble to give out at the critical moment, says the book. And if he's fat, went on the book, he's dead sure to give out at the critical moment. He's short winded and his muscles is flabby, says the book. He ain't no good on earth, says the book awful certain, and no man needn't be 'frail to tackle him. He's a 'cumbrance on the work, says the book, and he ort to train and get down the size of his waist and loom the dimensions of his chest 'fore some small man swats him one and walks on him. This was the idea the book held and I took it all."

"Didn't they hold good in practice?"

"I ain't been able to see it in that light yet. I come over from Jersey this morning feelin' pretty O. K. My dimensions are all right. You can crack lick'ry nuts on my chest—I ain't short winded. Nothing flabby 'bout my muscles. I don't give out at the critical moment, says I. After a while I was up on Bleecker street lookin' in a window watchin' a Frenchman cook pan cakes on an iron foot stool, when long comes a policeman as big as a load of hay. He tried to run on me by tellin' me to move on. I sided him up. It was a foot further 'round his waist than 'round his chest if it was an inch. He was fat, too. Consequently, says I, to myself, you're flabby and short winded, and, 'bore all, you'll flunk at the critical moment. Then says I: 'Old boss, dry up or I'll mob you!' He steps up and I sails in, dependin' on the critical moment for him to cave."

"But he didn't do it?"

"Don't know, you see, I was dead at the critical moment so I couldn't tell. But I have a sneakin' 'lowdown notion that he didn't. I couldn't swear to nothin', but it's my opinion that at the critical moment he was walkin' around on me and reachin' down and poundin' me with a black club 'bout the size of a bananer. He may have slumped at the critical moment, but I'd sooner flunk that he was dancin' on a blasted fool about my size durin' several very critical moments. When I come to I put on my boots which he had pounded off me and went and bought court plaster by the roll like wall paper. I am now goin' home to bar up a green covered book on physical development, and when I get my arm out of the sling I shall go to work again and try to forget some things that I have read. Good by."—New York Tribune.

When Nellie's Husband Sat Down.



Mrs. Brown—Tell me Nellie, was your husband much embarrassed when he proposed to you?

Mrs. Youngblood—Not nearly so much as he was after the bills for our wedding reception came in.—Boston Transcript.

One Who Didn't.

"Well, me, I suppose you got in your vote all right the other day," he said to Uncle Bears, of the market brigade.

"No, sah, I didn't."

"Dar was sich a big crowd dat I reckoned I would wait till de nex' day, an' when I went ober agin de polls was dat gone an' s'it up an' 'tired away."—Yankee Blade.

The Difference.

Customer—Well, I guess I'll take these pants.

Rabapaginsme—Ya, mein front, tree toll lirs is wery cheap.

Customer aghtest—Terry dollars! Why, you had them marked a dollar and a half in the window.

Rabapaginsme—Oh, sah, dat means ein dollar and feifty cents for you, log.—New York Sun.

Useless.

"Can I see Mr. Hazzerty?" inquired the caller at the jail. "Before he was arrested he owed me a little bill that he promised he would pay at this date, and he has always been a man of his word." "You can see him if you will wait a few minutes," said the turnkey. "His attorney is with him now." The caller shook his head and sighed deeply. "There is no use in my waiting," he said.—Chicago Tribune.

Lead to Horrors.

Dentist—The tooth you want extracted is very firmly set. Will you take gas?

Patient—No, I never take gas.

"Ever had tooth extracted before?"

"No, but I was best man at a wedding once, and I took no gas then."—London Journal.

Diplomacy.

Mrs. O'Kay—I'm going to Outlet's, Har-rose. Shall I order the Sunday dinner?

Mr. O'Kay—By all means, not just ask for it. Last month's bill is still due.—Times.

Absence of Mind.

A prominent physician of this city, upon meeting his own daughter on the street, politely inquired after the health of both herself and her parents.—New York Tribune.

A Shackled Demand.

There will probably be disappointed by immediately, since there will be no longer a demand for them for making up campaign hats.—San Francisco Journal.

Antiquities restored.

An English gentleman, who had visited Cyprus, was asked if the "wre" many antiquities in the island. "Antiquities" he replied. "Why, the place is alive with them!"

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