



Some Thoughts on Thanksgiving

There is no hard and fast rule about making the last Thursday in November Thanksgiving day. It is merely a custom. It is therefore a "moveable holiday."

Governor Bradford of New England issued the first Thanksgiving proclamation, the cause being the arrival from England of a vessel full of supplies for the starving New Englanders. Thanksgiving day as we observe it, however, did not become a recognized national institution till President Lincoln issued his proclamation setting aside the last Thursday in November as "Thanksgiving day." Since that time it has been faithfully observed by every president with one exception, and he issued a Thanksgiving proclamation. In 1865 President Johnson made the first and only departure from the "last Thursday in November" rule by fixing upon the first Thursday in December as Thanksgiving day. The governors of every state save Rhode Island followed the president's lead. Rhode Island insisted on the regular day.

Does anybody really know how it came about that the turkey is considered an absolute necessity on the Thanksgiving dinner table? The common or garden variety of turkey certainly has nothing to recommend it over the chicken—unless it be its size. It seems strange that in the old days when venison, bear meat, squirrel and other game was plentiful that the turkey should become the Thanksgiving leader. Will some one kindly explain this turkey business?

Twenty-five or thirty years ago everybody went to church on Thanksgiving. Now everybody goes to the football games. Then they go home and are thankful that they did not see any more killed and wounded.

A New York surgeon declares that the human stomach may be easily reduced one-third. This, however, has no particular interest for us at this time of the year. What we want is some knowledge of how to enlarge the Thanksgiving purse about three-thirds so as to supply a lot of stomachs that expect to be considerably distended about 2 p. m., Thursday, November 26.

The late Captain Crouch of Omaha was a gallant soldier in a Kentucky confederate regiment, and he was a mine of good stories to the newspaper boys of that city. Sitting in the World-Herald office one day he told of a Thanksgiving experience in 1864.

"We didn't have anything in particular to be thankful for that year," said Captain Crouch, "and on our side there wasn't any proclamation. We knew of Lincoln's proclamation, however, and we discussed it in camp. A few days before Thanksgiving according to the northern calendar I set out at the head of a scouting party down in the Tennessee mountains. There were five of us, and we scouted through the hills until we were plumb worn out without finding anything worth while. There didn't seem to be a Yank within a thousand miles, although we knew the hills were full of 'em. The night before Thanksgiving we pitched camp near a little spring, hiding ourselves in the thicket and

building a fire that fried our meagre supply of bacon and baked our pone, but didn't show far enough to be seen by the enemy.

"About 5 o'clock in the morning we were awakened by a Yank who yelled 'Hello' and showed a flag of truce. He said he belonged to a scouting party of five or six and wanted to know if we would 'cease hostilities' for a while and do a little swapping. That struck us, all right, and we agreed. A half hour later our two parties were snuggling up to a warm fire and swapping. We had plenty of tobacco, but it had been a long time since we'd drank anything in the way of coffee except that made from parched rye and wheat. The Yanks had real coffee in plenty but they were honing for tobacco. They also had plenty of hard tack and we had more tobacco.

"We swapped tobacco and coffee and jackknives, and played a mysterious game with cards in which various things changed hands, until about 11 o'clock. Then one of the Yanks suddenly exclaimed:

"By George, boys; this is Thanksgiving! Let's celebrate."

"Being chock full of real coffee and having accumulated a store of Yankee notions as a result of our mysterious card game we endorsed the idea. So we set about getting dinner. We combined our stock of bacon, the Yanks furnished coffee and hard tack and we baked some genuine ash cake. I've eaten many a Thanksgiving dinner since then, but that was the best one I ever set my teeth in. Say, boys, I can just taste that genuine coffee yet.

"Then we rolled over closer to the fire and smoked until the atmosphere was blue.

"About 5 o'clock the leader of the Yankee party yawned and remarked that it was time to go. So we bade each other good bye and the Yanks shouldered their muskets and started away. Looking back over his shoulder the leader shouted:

"This truce ends in just fifteen minutes. Then you Johnnies look out!"

"Fifteen minutes later we were again sneaking around under cover. Just about supper time I felt a burning sensation in the calf of my left leg and heard the crack of a musket. Don't know which one of the Yanks was responsible, but he took a piece of flesh out of my leg with that bullet, and left me limping for a month. But the gallon or two of real coffee I consumed that day amply paid me for the suffering."

First prepare your Thanksgiving dinner. Then hustle out and find somebody who hasn't any dinner and mighty little to be thankful for, and bid them to the feast.

In 1909

Scene, a weekly newspaper office in Gotham.

Characters, a printer and the office "devil."

Printer—"Now who the blankety blank and double dash used his feet to write such a horrible mess of alleged copy as all this?"

Devil—"Sh-h-h! Don't talk so loud!"

Printer—"Why not? It gives me pleasure to testify to my hatred and utter abhorrence of any man who would deliberately set down and

make such a horrible mess of pot-hooks and then expect a free American citizen and printer to wear his brain to a frazzle trying to decipher 'em. The fellow that wrote this a—"

Devil—"Gee, Bo, don't say no more. If youse knew who writ dat stuff youse would—"

Printer—"Don't give a rap who wrote it. Whoever he is he ought to have it crammed down his throat with a—"

Slam! Bang! C-r-r-rash-h-h! Biff!

When the noise subsided all that could be seen was a wrecked composing room. A moment later the door to the editorial room closed softly and a man resumed his swivel chair after depositing a badly scarred stick in the corner.

"Quite a reminder of old times," he muttered as he picked up his pen and resumed writing on a review of a pile of books in front of him.

Being naturally a little curious we took a peep at some of the tiles under review. We saw:

"Alone in Cuba," "Nature Fakirs I Have Finished," "Trusts I Have Busted," "Race Suicide and Other Fables," "What Labor Ought to Have," "Climbing San Juan Hill and Laying Down Before Jim Hill."

Brain Leaks

Fine feathers make expensive hats. A fight for right is never wholly lost.

A receipt for pew rent is not a passport to heaven.

The man who leads must expect some stabs in the back.

The man who has never experienced trouble can never appreciate joy.

There is one thing worse than a "quitter"—the man who is afraid to begin.

Faith may stumble in the dark, but doubt will tumble in broad daylight.

There are some people who think they are cutting 'cross lots to heaven.

Some men take an interest in politics without having any principle about it.

Riches may buy immunity from men—but that's the only kind of immunity it will buy.

We always feel sorry for the young medical graduate who can not raise a set of whiskers.

We are now engaged in trying to invent a pay envelope that just can't be opened until we get home.

It will not suffice for men to open their mills if they shut their eyes and hearts to truth and justice.

The man who thinks he is getting the worst of it has only to wait a while to be convinced of his error.

They may have beat us to a frazzle but they already had us messaged and advised and coached and nagged to a frazzle.

At forty-five we wish we could as quickly learn to let trouble alone as the baby learns to keep away from the stove.

A lot of money that is often spent on a wedding would have been better if used to purchase a safety net for the fall out of the honeymoon.

It's difficult to make the average woman understand the electoral college business. But we've never yet heard a man who could explain with any degree of success just why it exists.

Sarcastic

After gazing for a moment on the mass of feathers that she called a hat, he growled:

"Why didn't you get the bird?"

"Why, what part of the bird do you mean?"

"The bill."

Later, however, he was compelled to note the fact that not even that had been overlooked.

In 2010

Having at last gained an entrance into "society" by virtue of his inherited millions, Mr. DeNorgan Von Crombilteerocks sought an authority on heraldry and expressed a wish for a coat-of-arms.

"Explain to me your family and financial connections," suggested the authority on heraldry.

This was done with a wealth of detail and circumstance. A few days later the young man was given the design.

It was a steam shovel rampant with a Panama canal contract couchant, on a shield of shimmering silver that looked very much like an expanse of blue water.

In Doubt

"I see that old Grabberly is spending money with a lavish hand."

"Yes, and I don't know whether he is purchasing immunity or merely having a few twinges of a long dormant conscience."

The Week After

I can not sing the old songs;
I can not sing the new.
My voice is full of whiskers
And I am feeling blue.

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