

THANKSGIVING DAY.

ITS ORIGIN AMONG THE PILGRIMS AT PLYMOUTH.

Great American Feast Day Is the Sunday of Our National Year—Significance of the Fall Festival—Sentiment Is a Far Descended One.

Joy Instead of Penance.

HIS year hath been a sorry time," said a hoary-headed pilgrim. "The hand of Providence hath been heavy upon us and methinks it were indeed well to institute a day of fasting in expiation of the evil that hath caused this visitation of the Lord."

It was Plymouth on one dark and rainy night in the month of October, 1621, when this remark was made to representatives of the surviving pilgrims gathered at the house of one of their number for the express purpose of considering the appointment of a day of penance for the remission of the sins which had been productive of their hard fate.

"Aye, a sorry time in truth," echoed another, his white bearded head rising above the little audience as the others disappeared in it, "for of the more than five score of us who disembarked from the Mayflower last December do not half now sleep yonder on Cole's Hill, and once more on the verge of what we know by dire experience to be the bitter new world winter, our crops are scant, our—"

"Nay! Nay! good sir," quickly interjected a white-haired, black-robed woman, the lines of whose pure old face only seemed to give it an additional beauty like chasing on silver—"but mayhap it is not seemly that I speak out," she quickly added with lowered tone, "for hath St. Paul not said—"

"Say on, mistress, say on," encouraged a male voice, "this is not the house of God, neither a Sunday meeting, only a gathering of neighbors where all who mind may speak."

"Then I would add," she continued, thus emboldened, "what I believe to be the gospel truth—that the Lord, instead of chastening, hath greatly prospered us." Her voice trembled a little at these words, a vision of the three new graves stretching wet and cold under the lowering skies of that autumn night rising involuntarily into her mind. Her hearers, too, looked at her in pitying wonder, but after a little pause she repeated, "hath greatly prospered us. For we are not now permitted to worship Him in spirit and in truth, such as hath not been our privilege for many a day before? Have we not homes? And though the harvest be scant, yet have ye got faith that the Lord will maintain His promise and provide for His own, even as He hath already done in guiding us hither? So, in view of these many graces, a day of thanksgiving seems to me more meet than a day of penance."

She sat down. For several minutes utter silence reigned in that quaint Puritan living room. Then Gov. Bradford rose, his silver knee buckles glistening in the candle light, and tip-toed across the space separating him from the brethren who first spoke, when a whispered consultation went on for several minutes more. Presently their conference ended, he walked to the fireplace in the far end of the room, and, turning, faced his people. "This faithful sister hath shamed us," he said, "and taught us a lesson of bravery. With her good man gone, a stalwart son laid low and as likely a lass as ever opened a pair of blue eyes under Englund's blue skies lying, too, out there on Cole's Hill—a sob came from a flaxen-haired youth in the back of the room—she yet sees reasons for thankfulness rather than cause for repining. We must not be outdone by her, and instead of sitting in sackcloth and ashes we will praise God for His manifold mercies to us and feast rather than fast. The forests abound in game, though our crops be poor, and thither shall our young men go and find materials for the feast. Courage a better than fear," he concluded, a sentiment which was greeted with a hearty chorus of "Aye, ayes."

Thus was Thanksgiving day inaugurated, a triumph of womanhood and a triumph of optimism, not only indeed a triumph of optimism, but a proof that optimism is itself a triumph, for if the day of mourning had been established how long would it have been observed, since every added year seeing the steady increase of good in this land there would be less and less reason for waiting and more and more arguments in favor of a day of thanks.

Two hundred and thirty-eight years after the landing of the pilgrims the largest granite statue of the world was erected to their memory. It stands on a high hill overlooking Plymouth. In the center is a colossal figure of Faith with a Bible in her upstretched hand, while around her are clustered a group representing Morality, Law, Education and Freedom, in looking at which one instinctively endows the beautiful Faith with the spirit of that serene old woman who even in adversity looked with prophetic eyes to the time when in very truth freedom, morality, education and law should result from her sublime belief.

With the Fourth of July, Memorial day and Washington's birthday Thanksgiving day is one of the four distinctively American festivals, but though distinctively American the sentiments that inspire them—Thanksgiving day, faith; Washington's natal day, hero worship; Memorial day, love, and the Fourth of July, patriotism—are common to all people of the earth, and only for excellent reasons of our own have we selected the times when we ourselves shall celebrate these universal feelings.

The Thanksgiving day sentiment is indeed a far descended one, it being an inheritance from the first races of mankind of the elation they felt over nature's yearly largess—the American Indians and other barbaric tribes having to this day ceremonies of their own in celebration of autumn's bounty. As a spirit of religion developed this feeling grew into a worship of deities that were supposed to preside over the crops, like the beautiful goddess Demeter of the Greeks, and Ceres of the Romans; and still later when mythology had been cast off, remnants of the same idea remained in the "harvest homes," and similar though differently named festivals of all nations when, the grain garnered and the fruit heaped up, merry makings and dances went on beneath the rays of the harvest moon. But

"SAY, JIMMY, WOULDN'T YER LIKE TO PULL DER WISH-BONES?"



It remained for that little band of Plymouth pilgrims to give a spiritual significance to these gala times—to provide a fitting soul for so fair a body, an act eminently in conformity with this religious people; while the American nation at large, many decades later, widened this feeling into one of national import, so that this year, instead of fifty-five people observing it, as was the case in Plymouth 276 years ago, 70,000,000 are participants in its good cheer.

Thought He Was Satan.

Upon one of his professional visits to Washington the late lamented Hermann, the magician and prestidigitateur, almost caused a stampede among the ignorant colored people. To this day some of them think that Satan himself was present in person upon that occasion.

One afternoon Hermann visited the Centre Market. On the pavement outside of the market it is customary for several hundred aged colored people from the surrounding country in Virginia and Maryland to gather on market day and display their little stocks of dried herbs for medicinal purposes, wild fruits, a few eggs or an ancient chicken.

These are the genuine Virginia negroes, every one of them an ex-slave. They are quaint and picturesque, and as they sit behind their baskets and trays the old women smoke their pipes of home-grown tobacco and on cold days light them with a "chunk of fish" from the pans of glowing coals by which they warm themselves.

These ignorant and simple-minded folks had never heard of Hermann or any other sleight-of-hand performer. When he appeared among them in his long cloak, his pointed beard and general Mephistophelean appearance he attracted their whole attention. When he took a silver dollar out of the lighted pipe of one of the old mammys he created a sensation, and when he began to lift live rabbits, pigeons, suit of linen underwear and other articles from their pockets he created consternation. Many of the old men and women gathered up their "trucks" and fled with loud cries, and for once there were no market-day profits for the old folk.

Thought He Had 'Em.



Jones—Horror! What's that? By gracious, I'll never drink another drop!



Boy—What's that you said, mister? Jones—Why—er—I—er—said that you must be careful, and not let that turkey drop.

Flying Squirrels.

The flying squirrel is six inches in length, his "wings" are merely thin membranes connecting the fore and hind legs.

Tommy—I wish I was president. Willie—What would you do first? Tommy—I'd issue a Thanksgiving proclamation every month.—Philadelphia Record.

MISS DOROTHY'S THANKSGIVING

QUIRE EPHRAIM Drew and his good wife Prue They invited some guests to dine, And drink to the health of the Commonwealth In a glass of Thanksgiving wine.

Said Ephraim Drew to his good wife Prue, "When a king Judge Jonathan Drake We'll ask the young man, his son Jonathan, For my daughter Dorothy's sake."

The guests came at last to the Squire's request, Receiving a welcome bland, And Dorothy blushed as Jonathan brushed With his lips her lily-white hand.

With wondering eyes at the turkey's size The guests did exclaim and admire; There were dainties beside, basted, baked, And a big plum pudding on fire.

To Jonathan's plate, by a lucky fate, It chanced that the wishbone fell; Then softly said he to fair Dorothy, "My lot shall this wishbone tell."

"I'll wish you and I, when a year slips by, May dine on Thanksgiving Day, With none to o'erhear, or to interfere, And with all but ourselves away."

Then they broke the bone; with a stifled groan, He lost and sighed heavily To note the glad smile that she wore the while, So he asked what her wish might be.

She blushed rosy red. "Well, thought," she said, "Lest you lose, 'twere surer this way— For me to wish, too, that your wish come true, Your wish for next Thanksgiving Day." —Harper's Bazar.

A PATRIOTIC THANKSGIVING.

It Brings to View a Picture of the Dark Days of the War.

"Ask Aunt Barbara; she will tell you all about it," said the veteran, looking pathetically at the empty sleeve folded across his breast.

"It," said dear Aunt Barbara, smiling, "refers to the only time I took my knitting work to church. It was during the war and we were knitting socks for the soldiers. We were not veterans then, if we are now," and she sighed gently.

"I was not in it," complained the veteran. "Not with us at that immediate time. But we were a houseful of girls, and when Thanksgiving came that last year of the war we were busy as bees sending supplies to our soldiers, who were out at elbows and toes. And we had decided not to go to church, as the regular New England custom is on Thanksgiving Day, but to stay at home and knit. However, the minister called the day before Thanksgiving, and when he rose to leave, said:—"

"I hope to see you girls at church tomorrow. It will be a special service and your pew must not be empty."

"Then sister Kate spoke up saucily and asked: 'Isn't there as much goodness in staying at home and knitting socks for our boys in blue?'"

"He looked at her in a sort of dazed way. Poor man, he had only two boys and they both went to the war and never came back. Kate caught a sob in her throat and begged his forgiveness, and the smile he gave her was like a sunbeam lighting up a wintry landscape."

"Bring your knitting along," he said, and we knew he meant it, and took our work under our capes, intending to knit on the sly during the sermon, which is always long in New England.

"But, dear me, the house was filled with knitters. Somehow it had leaked out that its being Thanksgiving Day and not Sunday, a special permit had been given to those who were knitting for the soldiers, to continue working during the exercises rather than stay at home, and the sight was one to be remembered. The old ladies could knit without taking their eyes off the minister, but when they came to toe off or bind the heel, they forgot where they were, and it was dull enough to hear their audible responses 'slip one,' 'bind two,' mingled with the click-click of flying needles. I am afraid the sermon was not appreciated that day, but the unique situation certainly was."

"Another incident made us remember that Thanksgiving Day. We had put our turkey in the oven to roast, and when we went home it had disappeared. Tramps were hardly known in that locality, but we were fain to believe that some hungry wayfarer had robbed us of our feast."

"While we sat at a dinner composed mostly of vegetables and pies, a prankish youth of the neighborhood brought us a fine hot turkey with his mother's compliments, and it was not until a week later that we learned that it was our own which he had stolen and returned. His excuse for such a prank was indicative of the times. 'There don't nobody do nothin' to make fun.' So we forgave him his simple practical joke, for we, too, appreciated the need of 'fun' on a day given over to festivity."

"Tell the rest of it, Barbara," said the veteran.

"It was a year later at Thanksgiving time the rest happened. A soldier in a faded and tattered uniform, and lacking an arm, came to our door and asked if Barbara White lived there. As that was my name, I expected to see some one I knew, but the man was a stranger. He gave me a soiled and worn note, which was his letter of introduction."

Aunt Barbara stopped her recital in some embarrassment, but she looked at her veteran and received a nod of encouragement.

"Strange, isn't it, that a whole life may be deflected from its natural course by a trivial incident? Who knows, however, that the incident may not have been created purposely for that result? I had written a note on a leaf torn from a hymn-book on that Thanksgiving day in church, and tucked it into the toe of the sock I was knitting. It was a simple message of good cheer to the soldier to whom the socks should be apportioned, and I signed it 'A Well Wisher.' However, in my haste and flurry I did not look on the reverse side of the leaf, where my name and address were written in full. My soldier ate his Thanksgiving dinner at our house, and a year from that day we were married."

"Now we are both veterans in gray," said Aunt Barbara's soldier, as he fondly regarded her, "and in these piping times of peace we ought to distinguish Thanksgiving Day by such a celebration as has never been given before—make it an epoch of prosperity, hey, old comrade!" and he tapped Aunt Barbara's shoulder lovingly.

The invitations are out for a gathering of veterans, and this Thanksgiving Day will be a fitting supplement for that historic one when the patriotic girls of '65 took their knitting work to church.

Thanksgivinglets.

Fine feathers don't make fat birds. Let us give thanks that we are able to give thanks.

It's a wise turkey that is a living skeleton these days.

Uneasy lies the head that eats not wisely but too much.

Eat, drink and be merry, for Friday you'll have a headache.

A bird in the refrigerator is worth two dozen at the butcher shop.

What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the turkey—if it is cranberry.

The briefest and most heartily enjoyed proclamation is "Dinner's ready."

Go to the restaurant, thou bachelor, consider its ways and get married.

Another Cause for Thanks.

"Are you going to have Aunt Peevish for Thanksgiving, mamma?" asked little Ruth, who was laboriously jotting down the things for which she thought she should be thankful.

"Not this year, dear," and the young hopeful joyfully made another entry.

Beating the Record.

"Mr. Crumpton made her husband a pumpkin pie four inches thick."

"What was that for?"

"She wanted to get ahead of the pumpkin pies his Aunt Maria up in Maine used to make."

Johannie's Happiness.

"Going to observe Thanksgiving at your house, Johannie?"

"You bet! Mamma gave the cook \$3 extra to stay at home that day."

A FROLIC AT THE FORD.

Geography was horrible; the sweat—we called it that— Bespoke a common misery when Billy signalled Pat. Two stubby, grimy fingers uplifting on the sly; Thereat a wink significant distorted Patrick's eye.

Then Billy turned to Cummins, and Harvey, and Depew, To each in turn displaying the mystic fingers two, And lastly condescended, while the others winked in glee, To show the mystic symbol to the least of all—to me.

O ecstasy transcending what'er the future stored, When Billy bade me join him for a frolic at the ford!

The hours till noon slunk by as if they knew we wished them past; It seemed as though they'd never go—they did, of course, at last—

And O, how cool the water was, and O, how sweet the joy That filled and thrilled the bosom of each sweaty little boy.

When he had hung his trousers on the nearest handy bough And shut his lips and held his nose and dove to "show y' how."

We ducked and splashed and wrestled, we flopped, raised and tread, And Billy flopped his feet aloft while standing on his head; Depew had brought up bottom from the center of the pool,

When Harvey said he reckoned it was time to go to school.

"Gee whiz!" says Billy, first to quit, "that's something I forgot; An' as I live! my breeches are twisted in a knot!"

Each rushed ashore and scurried to where his garments hung, Then sudden imprecations arose from every tongue.

While we had wooed the cooling stream, some evildoers sneak had gone And tied our shirts and trousers so we couldn't get 'em on.

"We're late," says Billy. "Then," says Pat, "just take your time to dress; We'll fix it so's to wander in at afternoon recess."

An' each o' y' must gather a bunch o' purty flowers An' give 'em t' the teacher er she'll keep y' after hours."

The teacher worked for slender pay, so far as money went; She prayed and played and pardoned and seemed to be content, But when a boy that loved her contrived to let her know, She looked as if her gratitude was going to overflow.

I guess that she—no matter what. * * * When we six boys marched in, Each one of us a-grinning from eyebrows down to chin, And stopped in turn before her desk and laid our flowers down, We saw two tears start sudden in the middle of her frown.

As I, the last and least of all, went by, with hair askew, She stooped and said: "I love you, boys, no matter what you do."

"These flowers," whispered Harvey, "are not so bad a plan."

"She's solid gold," said Billy; "she ought t' been a man!"

HERE is no place on earth where utter helplessness comes out so strongly, where the ceremonies in human use fall so powerless before the majesty of the occasion, as at a funeral.

It need not be that one's heart shall be interested. The obsequies of a stranger, conducted with all the pomp and

vanity of church and state, with the melancholy rolling drum of the military funeral, or the gorgeousness of the Masonic regalia—all are alike inadequate and unavailing.

But once in my life have I witnessed a ceremony that was as grand and impressive as the silent, awful occasion that was ever given to the dead.

I will tell you of a funeral which lingers in my memory as the grandest, most solemn, and befitting ceremony that was ever given to the dead.

It was rumored many years ago that a poor widowed woman, leading a hard life of unending labor, was called to part with the one thing dear to her—her only child. Mother and daughter had toiled together for fifteen years, and the only bit of sunshine falling into their dark lives was that shed by their living companionship. But the girl had always been sickly. Under the heart-broken mother's eyes she had faded and wasted away with consumption, and at last the day came when the wan face failed to answer with its ghastly smile the anxious, tear-blinded eyes of the mother.

The poor young creature was dead. For many months the pair had been supported by the elder woman's sewing, and it was in the character of employer I had become acquainted with Mrs. Cramp and her story. By an occasional visit to the awful heights of an East Side tenement where they lived, by a few books and with some comforting words, I had won the love of the dying girl. Her grateful thoughts turned in her last hours to the small number of friends she possessed, and she besought her mother to notify me of the day of her funeral and ask me to attend.

The summons reached me upon one of the wildest days preceding Christmas. A sleet that was not rain and a rain that was not snow came pelting from all points of the compass. A wind that whirled in the chimney and howled

in the street told how truly dreadful for outdoor purposes was the weather of the day. I piled the glowing grate; I drew closer the curtains and shut out the gloom of the December afternoon; I turned on the gas and sat down devoutly thankful that I had cut all connection with the wretched weather—when an installment of it burst in on me in the shape of Parepa Rosa. She was Euphrosyne Parepa at that time, and the operatic idol of the city. Muffled with tippets, flecked with snow, glowing with the short encounter she had had with the elements rushing up the steps from her carriage, she threw herself into an easy chair and proclaimed the horrors of the outer world to be beyond description.

And even as we congratulated ourselves on the prospect of a delightful day together there came the summons for me to go to the humble funeral of the poor sewing woman's daughter. I turned the little tear-blotted note over and groaned.

"This is terrible," said I; "it's just the one errand that could take me out to-day; but I must go." And then I told Parepa the circumstances and speculated on the length of time I should be gone, and suggested means of amusement in my absence.

"But I shall go with you," said the great, good-hearted creature.

"Your throat, and old Bateman, and your concert to-night!" I pleaded.

"If I get another 'froggy' note in my voice it won't matter much; I'm hoarse as a raven now," she returned.

So she reworded her threat with the long, white comforter, pulled on her worsted gloves, and off in the storm we went together. We climbed flight after flight of narrow, dark stairs to the top floor, where the widow dwelt in a miserable little room not more than a dozen feet square. The canvas-back hearse, peculiar to the \$25 funeral, stood in the street below, and the awful cherry-stained box with its ruffle of glazed white muslin stood on uncovered trestles in the center of the room above.

There was the mother, speechless in her grief, before that box—a group of hard-working, kindly hearted neighbors sitting about. It was useless to say the poor woman was prepared for the inevitable end—it was cold comfort to speak to her of the daughter's release from pain and suffering. The bereft creature, in her utter loneliness, was thinking of herself and the awful fate—of the approaching moment when that box and its precious burden would be taken away and leave her wholly alone. So, therefore, with a sympathizing grasp of the poor, worn, bony hand, we sat silently down to "attend the funeral."

The undertaker's man, with a screw-driver in his hand, jumped about in the passage to keep warm. The creaky boots of the minister belonging to the \$25 funeral were heard on the stairs. There was a catarrhal conversation held outside between them as to the enormity of the weather, and, probably, the bad taste of the deceased in selecting such a bad time to die was discussed. Then the minister came in with a pious sniff and stood revealed, a regular Stiggins as to get-up—a dry, self-sufficient man, icier than the day and colder than the storm.

He deposited his hat and black gloves and wet umbrella on the poor little bed in the corner; he slapped his hand vigorously together; he took himself in well-merited fashion by the ears and pulled them into glowing sensation, and after thawing out for a moment plunged into business.

He rattled merrily through some selected sentences from the Bible. He gave us a prayer that sounded like peas in a dried bladder, and he came to amen with a jerk that brought me up like a patent snaffle. He pulled on his old gloves and grabbed his rusty hat, and with his umbrella dripping inky tears over the well-scrubbed floor he offered a set form of condolence to the broken-hearted mother. He told her of her sin in rebelling against the decree of Providence. He assured her that nothing could bring the dead back. He inveighed against the folly of the world in general, and this poor woman in particular; and then he made a horrible blunder, and showed he didn't know even the sex of the dead, by saying: "He cannot come to you, but you must go to him."

This was a settler for Parepa and myself. We looked at the departing minister in blank astonishment.

The door swung wide, we saw the screw-driver waving in the air as the undertaker's man held converse with the clergyman. A hush fell on everybody gathered in the little room. Not one word had been uttered of consolation, of solemn import, or befitting the occasion. It was the emptiest, hollowest, most unsatisfactory moment I ever remember.

Then Parepa arose, her cloak falling about her noble figure like mourning finery. She stood beside that miserable cherry wood box. She looked a moment on the pinched, wasted, ashy face upturned toward her from within it. She laid her soft, white hand on the discolored forehead of the dead girl, and she lifted up that matchless voice in the beautiful melody:

"Angels ever bright and fair, Take me, oh, take me, to your care."

The screw-driver paused in describing an airy circle; the wet umbrella stood pointing down the stairs; the two men with astonished faces were foremost in a crowd that instantly filled the passage. The noble voice swelled toward heaven, and if ever the choir of paradise paused to listen to earth's music it was when Parepa sang so bravely beside that poor dead girl.

No person ever went to her grave accompanied by a grander ceremony. To this day Parepa's glorious tribute of song rings with solemn melody in my memory as the only real, impressive funeral service I ever heard.