

# QUIP OR THANKSGIVING.

## WE BOW BEFORE THE TURK

The Day on Which Grace and Gobblers Mingle with the Cranberry.

## VARYING VIEWS OF THE OBSERVANCE

Gracing the Bird of Thanksgiving from the Pen to the Table—Hints on Decoration and Methods of Serving.

Thanksgiving and turkey are inseparably welded in the calculations of every well-regulated family. Much as they who venerate the intent of the originators of the day may frown upon the combination of grace and gobblers, of faith and fodder, its existence is embedded in the inextinguishable laws of custom, to which the majority cheerfully bow. Resistance is useless. They who rebel insist that "lean and hungry look" spoken of by the bard. But the modern application of the Puritan festival does not wholly divest the day of its thankful intent. Presidents and governors offer their prayerful suggestions in cold print, while every church door swings inward for all desiring to offer "grace before meat."

Though not celebrated universally, Thanksgiving can never be to children of other states and climes just what it is to the children of New England, with their memories and traditions of brick ovens and steaming puddings and pies, and the old meeting house sermon for old and young. Late into this century the old colonial meeting house had no stoves, and on this historic holiday all men, women and children were in the

dinner not only does the table, but the diner, literally groan with the weight of the good things upon it.

## SIMPLICITY AND STYLE.

The guests come early, driving into the barnyard, where the host meets and greets them, giving the pretty girls an extra swing as they leap from the dizzy heights of the wagon wheel. The older and more sedate of the party dismount by slower but not easier stages from box brakes and brake chairs. The motherly hostess, in white apron and with cheeks red from many lookings in at the browning turkey, fills the doorway and bestows upon each female guest a resounding kiss. The children's faces shine with soap and expectation.

After the table is set for afternoon, and leaves no room for ornamentation beside the little glass of scarlet geraniums and bitter sweet berries. The hired girl—usually a close friend of the family—assists in the general entertainment, and incidentally passes the plates. There is roast turkey with dressing, chicken pie, sweet potatoes and gravy, smoothed mashed potatoes with a little puddle of melted butter in the middle, turnips, browned parsnips and dried sweet corn, cold sliced and four kinds of pickles, apple sauce with a veil of grated nutmeg, and hot rolls and divers preserves. Then comes the mince and pumpkin pie in generous triangles, and the cake, which proves almost the last straw.

After the elder is drunk the men withdraw to look at the stock and discuss the crops. The women linger about the table and make more sure the coming of the country doctor on the morrow. The children build bonfires of the dead, dry leaves, and in the more visionary of a future, when milk comes as magic in the rocks and wood boxes are miraculously filled.

After the red sun sinks between his cloudy covers of gray, flocks of wild geese, those puma of the air, will utter wild necks, by southward and "hook" to unfortunate stationary mortals their warning of freezing weather. The wagons rattle homeward. The sleepy dogs creep out of sheltered corners, stretching their stiffened legs, and wag a welcome. The chickens troop up for their evening meal. The swagging cock—after

forms a huge court, mingled with flocks, while a fine enterprise.

## READY FOR THE AXE.

The Emblem of Thanksgiving and "the Fattest Thereof." One of the peculiarities about persons who buy turkeys is that every purchaser thinks he is a good judge of a turkey. As a matter of fact, very few persons can tell the difference between any turkey and a poor one. Buyers invariably judge the bird by its size, and the bigger it is the better they think it is. There are many rules for identifying the best turkeys, but one of the simplest is to judge it by its feathers. A bird whose feathers are smooth is a young turkey and is also in the best of health. It is one of the peculiarities of every member of the feathered tribe that when illness prevails the feathers are always ruffled.

Another rule is to notice the color of the gobbler's head. If it is a bright red the bird will do credit to any table. There has been much dispute as to the land which deserves the credit for producing the turkey. The eminent naturalist, however, after making extensive searches, emphatically declares that the bird is a native of America, and that it was first brought to Europe by Columbus. As early as 1570, at the celebration of the nuptials of Charles IX of France, the wing of a turkey was eaten by the royal bridegroom. Buffon, after investigating the celebrated French gourmand, having partaken of his first truffied turkey, being asked how he liked it, said: "It was a big turkey. There were only two of us, me and the turkey, and we ate it all."

The Germans called the turkey the Kalchische Hahn, indicating the belief that the bird first came from the shores of Calcutta. The Spaniards named it Pava de las Indias—the peacock of the West Indies. But Buffon, after investigating the celebrated French gourmand, having partaken of his first truffied turkey, being asked how he liked it, said: "It was a big turkey. There were only two of us, me and the turkey, and we ate it all."

The turkey is the king of fowls. He has his peculiarities, and perhaps is the most eccentric of all the feathered tribe. He is sometimes called stupid because he is not easily trapped. Down in the forests of southern Indiana at this time of the year, he is found hundreds of traps made of rails. From a certain direction grains of corn form a trail leading into an opening in the bottom of the pen.

Wild turkeys alighting in the woods come across these trails and follow them until they are in the pens. They are so greedy they give no attention to their peril until they are inside the pen, where there is no more corn.

When at last they realize they are trapped they look up, but never downward, and as the rails at which they are perched are at the bottom of the pen, they never find their way out, because, like some men, they are always looking too high. A dozen other turkeys may enter at the same place as the first captive got into the pen, and the way out will still remain a mystery to the first bird. The Indians, who, with all their ignorance, were close students of nature, learned this peculiarity in the habits of the bird. Early settlers got their idea of trapping turkeys from the Indians, and a more successful means has been invented.

Persons west of the Rocky mountains are compelled to pay exorbitant prices for turkeys. It is impossible to raise them on the Pacific coast. Ship a turkey to that region and he straightway becomes a skeleton instead of the plump, luscious fowl he is here. For that reason all the turkeys of the Rocky mountain states get are shipped from Iowa and Minnesota and are killed before they are put on the cars. It is said to say that a turkey that has been on ice for a week is no longer a turkey, and persons who take Horace Greely's advice must be careful to buy their turkeys before they are frozen. It is estimated that in the United States

there are about 6,000,000 turkeys being prepared for execution. About the only consolation the bird has at the present time is that he has no feathers that are suitable to adorn feminine headgear, else the entire species would be exterminated. The turkey that survives Thanksgiving is almost certain to lose his head on Christmas day, and if he lives till New Year's it is more than he has any right to expect.

## KENTUCKY'S SUPPLY.

A Mammoth Pen Wherein 20,000 Turkeys Are Handled in a Year. Few of us who sit around the Thanksgiving

table always gives the Rhode Island turkey to the white house servants and sends his chef out to buy one. Last year Rhode Islanders sent a fifty-eight pound turkey to President Cleveland, but he did not taste a mouthful of the bird.

## EXECUTIVE CHAMBER.

Lincoln, Nebraska.

## Thanksgiving Proclamation. 1895

In harmony with a custom as old as our government and conforming to the proclamation of the president of the United States, I, SILAS A. HOLCOMB, governor of the state of Nebraska, by virtue of the authority in me vested by law, do hereby designate and set apart

Thursday, the 28th Day of November, A. D., 1895,

as a day of solemn and public thanksgiving to Almighty God for His blessings to us as a people, a state and a nation, and I earnestly request that on that day all manner of secular work may be laid aside and our people assemble together in the usual places of public worship and in their homes, and in such manner as may be approved by their conscience render thanks to our Heavenly Father for the manifold blessings enjoyed under the beneficent influences of the enlightened Christian civilization of the present day.

The people of Nebraska have indeed great reason to feel a deep sense of gratitude to the Giver of all Good. In the midst of universal depression in the business world the people of Nebraska have enjoyed a fair degree of prosperity during the year now drawing to a close. Providence has again smiled upon our fair land, blessing the toil of the husbandman with crops sufficient to meet all ordinary wants, and peace and contentment prevail throughout the land.

Let us also on this day remember the poor and unfortunate among us, not by prayers alone, but by acts of charity and benevolence manifested in such substantial manner as will make the recipients thereof most timely and content.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused to be affixed the great seal of the state of Nebraska.

Done at Lincoln, the capital of the state, this 9th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, of the state the twenty-ninth, and of the independence of the United States the one hundred and twentieth.

SILAS A. HOLCOMB, By the Governor: J. A. PIER, Secretary of State.

Seal

the white house every year. Every president except Cleveland has eaten the bird from the little state. The present executive, however, is so afraid he will be poisoned

traditions of the red man, who hunted the wild bird long before the pale face had domesticated it, or made the famous prozodion, after a day's hunt, in which a buzzard and a wild turkey constituted the amount of game killed.

"Now you take the buzzard and I'll take the turkey, or I'll take the turkey and you take the buzzard."

And thereupon the maxim arose: "He never said turkey to me once."

The favorite bird, which is an American production, when properly combined with the necessary auxiliaries of oysters, roasted chestnuts, cranberry sauce, and the succulent celery, makes a savory dish, in the full praise of which all words are ignominiously fall.

The following figures from an inland Kentucky town, one of many which help to supply the city markets with Thanksgiving turkeys, will give some little idea of the extent of this branch of industry, and of the methods employed to prepare the turkey for the market and the cook.

The young brood of turkeys is to the farmer's wife her chief source of revenue for the autumn and winter, therefore she guards them through the dangers attendant on turkeyhood with zealous care, and usually drives a shrewd bargain later with the buyer, who begins his riding through the country as Thanksgiving approaches.

Turkeys are generally bought on foot, and the prices range from 4 to 5 cents a pound. The flocks are driven to the turkey pens from the different farms. If the distance is a long one and night comes on, the pens are reached, the turkey goes to roost at sundown, wherever it may happen to be, and despite all efforts of the driver to urge it on.

Turkeys are kept in enclosed pens until they are ready to be killed, but geese are pastured out on meadows, and are watched by small boys who, with long sticks, keep them from straying out of bounds.

Ducks, geese and chickens are generally shipped alive to the cities, but turkeys are usually killed and dressed for the market. They are not fed for some twelve hours before killing, and after being plucked and cleaned are put on cooling boards for another twelve hours before they are packed in cases for shipment. Two thousand turkeys or more constitute a carload.

In the turkey house are a row of boxes with the lower ends open toward the lower end. These are fastened along the side of the wall, and into them the turkeys are thrust, head downward, until their heads and necks protrude through the lower opening. Then the "sticker" with a sharp knife goes along the line and cuts the throat of each bird, leaving a small hole in the skin, through which it carries off the blood.

The turkey's wings are confined by the sides of the box so that it cannot flutter or struggle, and death does not seem to be painful to it.

When the turkey is dead the wings and tail feathers are cut and the body is sent to the picking room, where a number of men, women and children are employed. The turkey is suspended from a wire cord, and the picker merely uses his hands, literally making "the feathers fly."

From 2,000 to 4,000 turkeys are picked a day, and a skillful hand can average fifty or sixty each. Three cents apiece is paid for picking a turkey.

Not much of the fowl is thrown away. The wings are saved, and are sold for fat. The other things, the tail feathers are sent to factories, where feather dusters are made, the quills are ground into pulp and then pressed into artificial whitens, and the loose feathers are used for various purposes.

When the dressed turkey reaches the market the prices fluctuate anywhere from 25 to 15 cents a pound, so that the business is not always a paying one.

From 20,000 to 25,000 turkeys are killed each year in this state, and the figures show how great a number is required to supply the country with its great national dish.

A CHEAP DINNER. Thanksgiving Banquet that Any Housewife Can Serve with Credit. "The Thanksgiving dinner should be home made," remarked the obliging chef, setting his snowy cap equisitely over one ear, and beaming with the traditional amiability of a well fed cook, on his interview.

"Even among the fashionable folk, who usually order their great banquets from a professional caterer," he continued, "there prevails a universal sentiment in favor of serving the Thanksgiving dinner from the home kitchen, and compiling the menu of strictly American dishes. Yes, I have already outlined a bill of fare for my own employer, a series of dishes tempting enough, but you see so simple and inexpensive the housekeeper of most modest means could easily find them applicable to her own needs as follows:

"After a rich brown turtle soup, thick like a puree, dashed with sherry and lemon and served with broken hard boiled egg shells, I propose a new course of oysters. First with a dark scrape out the soft insides of small, hard crusted, pointed Vienna rolls. Within I lightly butter these shells and fill them with oysters, drained almost dry and packed in with capers, salt, pepper, browned cracker dust and shreds of lemon. The holes in the rolls bottoms I wash with a little water, and then I fill them with a warm cream of the sort, distant from the fire, till the crusts absorb the rich oyster juices. They are then served hot to the table, a roll for each individual.

"The turkey I will stuff with chestnuts and decorate his many breast with the nuts, in a fanciful imitation of military buttons, and the vegetables I have selected are succotash, Boston beans, baked in small individual brogue and earthenware dishes, cauliflower, cooked exactly as you do macaroni with cheese and white potatoes. These last I intend to boil, mash and in ice cream moulds turn out a dozen, and garnish with fresh garden settlers, turkey gobblers and Indian heads. Dipped in beaten egg, they will be browned over before going to the table.

"American chestnuts must accompany the salad of Boston lettuce, and after the plum pudding, boiled in a bag, there is a second dessert of apple pie, liberally core very large ones, fill the holes with currant jelly, sprinkle over them a little sugar, pour a trifle of water in the pan and set them in the oven to bake, until the chestnuts are tender and fairly candied the fruit. These go to the table with whipped cream and orange cake. This is easy to make, too. Just follow any cup cake recipe, squeezing the juice of two or three big California oranges into the dough, bakes in layer pans and then make the usual icing, using orange juice only with the sugar and egg. Put a thick spreading of icing between every layer of cake and you will have a delicious loaf.

"American cherry cordial and cherry bonnet I intend to replace European wines at every course, maple cream candy and nutmeg punch, and I shall use the tin bon bou plates and plan to taper off on oranges and coffee, pecan nuts and California raisins."

Now there continued the artist with pride, "the dinner that can be prepared in any one's kitchen most inexpensively, and if the housekeeper cannot quite manage the turkey, let her substitute chicken, prepared after the southern fashion. Dismember the fowl, broil them a trifle and then pop them into a pan, their own gravy, increased by a little water, thickened with butter and pepper and salt. In a shallow pan the chicken should cook over an even fire, and by turning and basting in the thick abundant sauce it will delicately fricassee. Of course it must go to the table hot. Spread with its sauce the potatoes, and garnish with rice, peas, corn, and the reader may judge from the figures how great a number is required to



DRIVING TURKEYS—THE PICKING ROOM.

Christian habit of occupying seats during the Thanksgiving sermon and piously freezing! One old member said "good preaching kept him hot enough without stoves." It was alleged that "they would be the means of starting destructive conflagrations; that they caused severe headaches in the church attendants," and, worst of all, that "the warped the ladies' tortoise shell back-combs!"

The Thanksgiving festival was intended originally as a strictly religious festival, but the wonderful New England Thanksgiving dinner and the rollicking amusements that follow took away much of its solemnity. Even the Thanksgiving sermon is expected to be in a somewhat more secular run of thought than is deemed exactly appropriate to the Sabbath, the minister being allowed to express his views freely concerning the politics of the country and the state of society generally.

IN THE COUNTRY. Thanksgiving to quiet country folk is an event. It means a welcome break in the monotony of their winter time. The thought of its coming causes ripples of excitement on the placid waters of their lives. The barns are heaped to bursting. The fragrant hay reaches the rafters and bulges through the windows and doors. The trees are laden with shifting sand in bins and boxes. The yellow corn is housed. The harvest is passed. Rest time has come. Nature has blazed into a last fierce flame of glory and is dying. The leaves that a month ago were red and gold, and green are mild brown nices that run and skip before the wind, which drives with stinging breath. The trees test hard black branches against a cold gray sky. The little brown gards are the bravest things on the landscape, for they cling with their graceful necks to their leafless vines, and struggle with approaching doom.

On the clear, crisp air the homely sounds of the farm are borne and answered; neighboring cocks crow to each other their morning reveille. The strutting turkeys roll a long



THE STICKING ROOM.

Thanksgiving call and vainly plume themselves in the face of the survival of the fittest. The gay young horses fling up their heads and start for an all-day run in the pasture, but suddenly changing their minds, stop short to gossip and back-bite with their neighbors over the maddening rattle that divide. The silent chimney, always watching, breathe whispers of white smoke that softly rise and drift high up in air. The sound of dropping guts is heard.

Invitations to Thanksgiving dinners have been spread broadcast by word of mouth all the country round. Everybody has invited or is invited. The hospitable housewives have been full of preparation for a week or more. The merriment is made, the pumpkin stewed, the preserves and pickles inspected, the turkey selected and slain, for north, south, east and west the same proud bird lays down his head and dies that we may eat and be merry. Could he know the tribulation that divides, swift and sure upon his eating there might be at least the sweetness of revenge mixed with the sharpness of his death, for at the genuine, old-fashioned country Thanksgiving ornaments serves at each plate as a favor,

the manner of his kind—loudly entrants his fond, misguided wives to gather round and behold with what grace he partakes of the choicest morsels of the feast. The chickens are done. The moon comes out and waxes large, and as the country mother tucks her drowsy family into chilly beds the city hostess, brilliant, graceful, stands in her sweeping alken draperies and welcomes her coming guests. The mellow light of shaded lamps floods the stately home and tenderly caresses soft shoulders and round arms. Light up eyes which rival in brightness the sparkling jewels beneath them. It rests on eastern rugs and oriental hangings; it filters through Moorish carving and falls on masterpieces of art, which once adorned palace walls; on rare books and bric-a-brac; on luxurious couches and high with down cushions. Every nook is eloquent of wealth and culture. The dining room is ablaze with light. The silver gleams and the cut glass sparkles from the polished table. All is bright and glittering. The Thanksgiving dinner itself, served in courses by the stately butler and his assistants, is the masterpiece of a chef. The markets of the world are called upon to tickle the palates of epicurean aristocrats. River banks of flowers, the cost of which would free many a poor man imprisoned by the bar of debt, the guests talk of art, religion, poetry, politics. To them Thanksgiving is a brilliant, graceful, stands in her sweeping alken draperies and welcomes her coming guests. The mellow light of shaded lamps floods the stately home and tenderly caresses soft shoulders and round arms. Light up eyes which rival in brightness the sparkling jewels beneath them. It rests on eastern rugs and oriental hangings; it filters through Moorish carving and falls on masterpieces of art, which once adorned palace walls; on rare books and bric-a-brac; on luxurious couches and high with down cushions. Every nook is eloquent of wealth and culture. The dining room is ablaze with light. 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