

# Thanksgiving Day In Town and Country



THE first Thanksgiving proclamation by a president of the United States was made forty-five years ago. Lincoln was the president who did it.

When a president issues his proclamation, naming the last Thursday in November as the day (this year it falls on the 25th), the governors of the several states follow with their proclamations, each calling upon the people of his state to give thanks to Almighty God for what they have received during the preceding year. That makes Thanksgiving day.

The observance of a day for giving thanks and offering prayer dates back to 1621, when Governor Bradford suggested it to the New England colonists after their first harvest. In 1623 there was a famine in New England, and the people met for fasting and prayer. While so engaged a copious shower fell, and the day was turned into Thanksgiving. The custom of meeting to give thanks once a year followed in New England, and it has become universal in the United States. During the Revolution congress recommended a day of thanksgiving annually.

While Thanksgiving day is observed all over the land in the same spirit generally, different sections have certain customs that make the day distinctive. Every city, town, hamlet and out of town locality has its religious observance of the day in one way or another. For it follows that a man may give thanks without kneeling in a pew, but aside from such obligations, the day is given over to visitation and rejoicing, and in some cities festivities give the occasion an aspect of hilarity.

**Unhappy Masqueraders in Gotham.**  
In New York city the children for many years have indulged in a custom that has no connection whatever with the spirit of the day. The custom parades of the nature of Mardi Gras in New Orleans in some respects. The pageantry and tinsel of the southern city's festival are out of the custom in the metropolis, but what it lacks in glitter is more than made up in grotesqueness. The custom is unique in that it has no counterpart in any other city of the land. It originated among the foreign born children in whose country there is no such day. Thirty-first street is a holiday suggesting the carnival, and where there is a carnival there is a masquerade. It is rather singular that, while the custom originated on the east side of the city, which has a population peculiar to itself, the odd and picturesque features have become well nigh universal, and the merry masqueraders are now seen on the avenues of the upper west side and on Broadway quite as much as in

the section where the custom had its birth.

So far as appearances indicate, every child who is permitted to run the streets of New York city is, for one day at least, a gambler. Early in the day they block the sidewalks, revel in the thoroughfares, chase vehicles and openly and persistently beg pennies or any sum from all classes. Bishop, priest, old men and women returning from church or on their way to make a visit, and belles out for a promenade—every adult is intercepted and asked for some contribution. If the intercepted dodges one set of masqueraders he comes in contact with another just ahead or around the corner, and this continues, unless a storm breaks in, until after dark.

The masqueraders impersonate well known characters, Uncle Sam and Washington being the favorites. Many of the makeups are striking, and some are even costly, especially among the better class of children. The American Indian is a favorite to imitate, inasmuch as the garb of his race admits of a variety of color schemes. Gypsies lurk in the path of the citizen, and clowns prance in front of pedestrians in the pranks of the harlequin. Others appear in the uniform of the police and solicit in a threatening manner. In some of the open squares of the city there are cakewalks, a baker in the vicinity offering the prize. Many urchins attire themselves in the

garb of the family domestic. Sometimes a demure widow will be impersonated. Again the young woman of flirtatious manner will be represented. In some instances the makeup is artistic. All these gamins are of the male persuasion. They blow horns in the ears of passersby, straddle broomsticks after the supposed manner of old time witches and scamper and scold whenever the victim appears. The Eskimo has not yet been impersonated, but it will be singular if the Peary-Cook discussion does not bring out the type of the arctic.

In all this revelry of pugil, tatters, tinsel and fancy the police never interfere with the buffoonery that holds possession of the streets. So long as the participants do not commit a misdemeanor the puppet show goes on unimpeded. The stranger who spends his or her first Thanksgiving day in New York sees sights that are seen in no other city. The day is a combination of New Year's, Christmas eve, Halloween and Mardi Gras in other cities of the country.

#### The Better Observance.

But all is not mimicry. The day has its better side in family reunions and dinners. In this respect the dinners are not confined to the rich and well to do, for the poor are always remembered, and even the prisoners are not forgotten. While all who have been favored of the gods are beneficiaries

and have much for which to be thankful, the hand of charity is open and extended in such manner as causes the oppressed to be thankful for one day at least.

In the latter respect "Thanksgiving day" is the same all over the land. It is the day when tapers are lighted and conviviality of the higher sort has away. More jokes come of Thanksgiving than any day in the year unless Christmas be excepted—jokes of the best type, humor of the better spirit. The turkey for the day is the king bird of the land. The eagle retires while the feast of the fattened bird gladdens the home, the places of the mighty and the hovels of the poor. Thanksgiving without turkey would be like Christmas minus Santa Claus. Not only is the turkey the favorite bird of the gastronomist, but at this particular season it is the inspiration of the muse. All sorts of meters are indited to it from gay to grave. The lines here are of the former brand:

What makes the turkey gobble so  
And spread their feathers out?  
What makes them try to look so lean  
When they are over stout?  
Why do they fly so high at night  
And crouch so low by day?  
They know the axman's on their trail  
And hastening on their way.  
What makes the little boys so good  
And ready for the bed?  
They know that on Thanksgiving day  
With turkey they'll be fed.

What makes your friends so happy when  
They see you in the street?  
Because they think you'll ask them in  
To get some turkey meat.  
Why does the preacher "cut it down"  
From "tenibly" to "in a nut shell"?  
He fears you'll leave him off the list.  
And that would cause him grief.

No wonder Dr. Cook is back  
And Peary's here to stay.  
They left the pole upon the ice  
To be here turkey day.  
And that is why Taft hurried home;  
He's hungry, too, I ween.  
He wants a bird like Teddy had.  
With good things stuffed between.

No wonder, then, the turkey's call  
In plaintive tone is heard.  
They hear the shout: "Off with their heads!  
Bring on the bird! More bird!"

The accompaniment of the turkey is the pumpkin made into pie. Oliver Wendell Holmes called the pumpkin the colossal orange of the cornfield. And Dr. Holmes was not only the author of the breakfast table, but he was a connoisseur at the dinner table as well. If the turkey should become extinct and pumpkins cease to grow, Thanksgiving would probably be observed, but it would not be just the same. There is no legal national holiday, but Thanksgiving day will undoubtedly take second place after the lawmakers make the Fourth of July first. An American wit—maybe it was Choate—was once asked when the sun

crossed the equator going south. He replied, "After Thanksgiving day."  
HIRAM GRUBB.

**Travel Impeded by Buffalo.**  
When the plains were whitened by long lines of covered wagons known in that day as prairie schooners, travelers journeyed all day without losing sight of the roaming buffalo. It was not unusual for these trains to be stopped by the herds that crossed the highway to the far west, and the first railroad trains in that country frequently came to a standstill to let the countless migrators go by, and steamboats on the upper Missouri halted in their passage in order that the great sluggish procession might have the right of way in swimming the river.

The herds marched in files, leaving farrows, afterward pointed out for years as buffalo trails on the prairies and on the hillsides. The circular buffalo wallows where the animals took their dust baths also remained as landmarks of the nomads many years after the last march and chase.

**Butchery of the Bison.**  
The end of the west is the slaughter of the bison. The Indian led the massacre. In one sense the red man was not to blame. The bison furnished him food and raiment. It remained for the white man to join the butchery for

sport. From 1878 there was a price on every bison's head. A band of half breeds in two hunts slew 4,779. In twenty years the half breeds of Red over killed more than a half million. When the whites joined the carnage it was for sport only, and then the killing was kept up for commercial purposes until the sight of a buffalo was a novelty. In one year while this demand was on one firm handled 246,175 skins, costing \$24,790. In 1878 the same firm received 41,258 robes; in 1883, 5,000 robes; in 1884, none. The end had come. The bison was a memory. In eight years the concerns that had gone into the business of buying robes had paid out \$1,252,670 to the exterminators. As if this were not enough, the year following the same Indians were sent out on another hunt, but they returned with the story that there were not enough found to pay for the "sport."

**French Diamonds to Order.**  
In microscopic form Moissan, the French chemist, produced absolute diamonds, which are but crystallized carbon. The largest artificial diamond yet produced measures less than one millimeter (0.03937 of an inch) in diameter. In Moissan's laboratory they believe that if they could deal with forty or fifty pounds of iron as easily as with four or five ounces their diamonds would be larger. They also believe that the process of their laboratory is the process of Mother Earth, though down in her secret laboratories the earth has temperatures and pressures they cannot command and sons of time to perfect her work.

**Varied Literature in the Bible.**  
Almost every form of literature is represented in the Bible, from the war song, the lament and the lyric to the rhapsody and the philosophical drama. Parables, enigmas, prayers, stories, biographies, epistles, orations and prayers are all found in this library of the literary activity of the Israelite race.

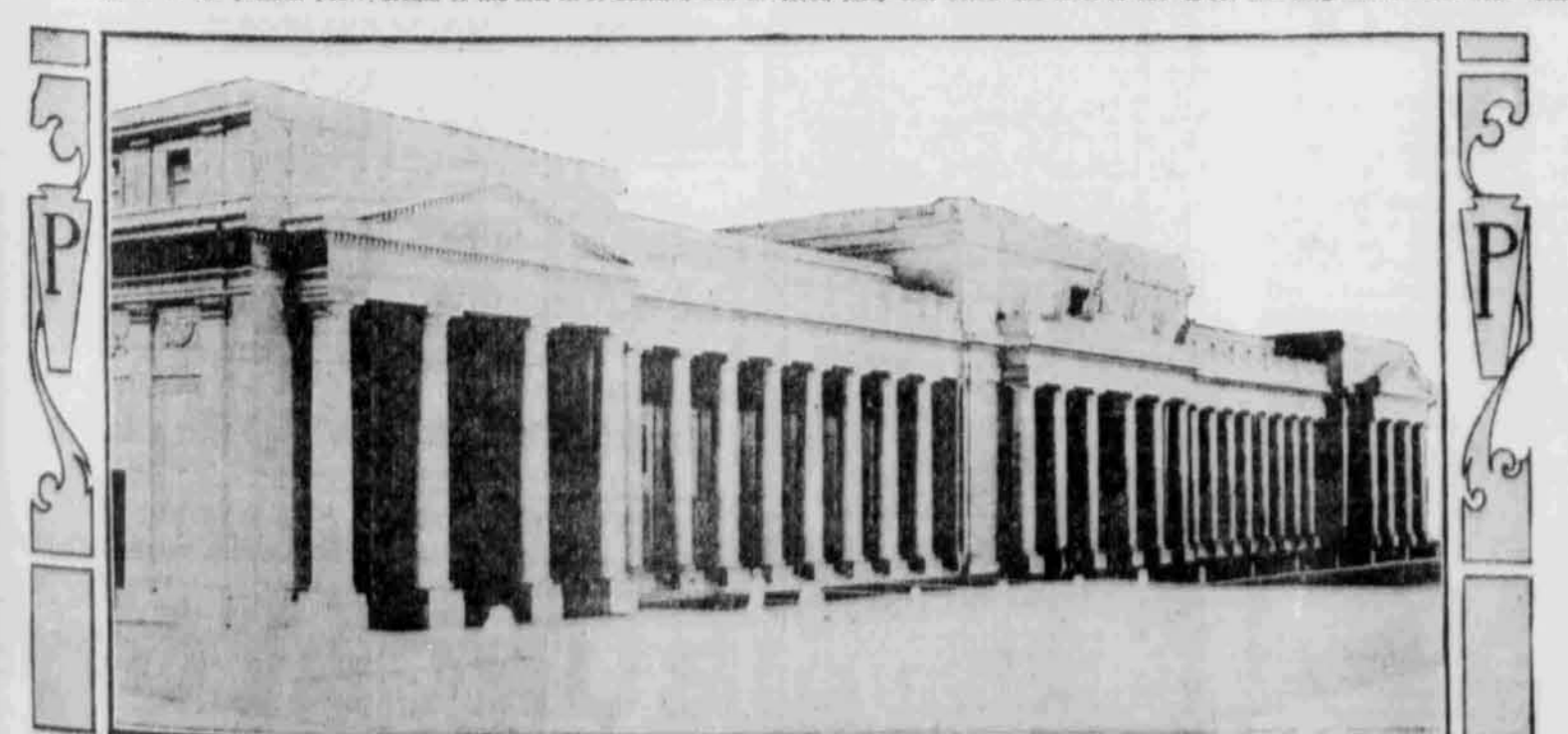
**When the Llama Quits.**  
When the llama is too heavily loaded, about 125 pounds, the wise beast lies down right then and there and goes on strike and refuses to budge.

## THE GREATEST RAILWAY TERMINAL IN THE WORLD

Completion of the Pennsylvania Company's Station That Is to Open in December

NO aggregation of superlatives can give an adequate conception of the extent and beauty of the Pennsylvania Railroad company's terminal in New York city, which will be practically ready Dec. 1, 1910. It will require time and personal inspection to bring out the magnitude of the marvelous work and the perfect system connected therewith.

The first stone in the masonry was laid June 13, 1908, and the last was put down July 31 of the present year.



PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD STATION, NEW YORK CITY.

The walls of the station are nearly a half mile in extent and inclose eight acres of ground. The entire territory is bounded on the north by Seventh street, on the east by Seventh street, on the south by Third street and on the west by Ninth avenue.

The exterior of the walls of the terminal represents 490,000 cubic feet of granite. Sixty thousand cubic feet of granite are represented inside the concourse. The structure has 27,000 tons

of steel. The walls contain 15,000,000 bricks, weighing 45,000 tons. It is estimated that if these bricks were placed end to end they would reach from the site of the terminal to Galveston, Tex., with enough left over for another line from New York city to Philadelphia and nearly a score of miles to spare.

Expansive stairways descend from the concourse to each of the platforms, which, with the tracks, form the third level, forty feet below the level of the street. Over the concourse is the great roof of the train shed.

In clearing the way for this structure and its adjoining buildings the Pennsylvania company purchased four blocks of compactly built houses, involving the tearing down of 400 tenements. The entire area of the terminal includes twenty-eight acres. The total

entire system when completed will represent an outlay of \$160,000,000. Just what the terminal building alone will cost, is not stated.

The vast work of tunneling the two rivers and of preparing the yards for storage purposes in New Jersey and on Long Island is another story.

## THANKSGIVING POSSUM

By JAMES A. EDGERTON.

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THE THANKSGIVING BILLY POSSUM

BACK as far as I remember  
The last Thursday in November  
Has been given up to turkey in the good old fashioned way  
Till I think there is occasion  
For a little variation  
In our culinary gratitude on each Thanksgiving day.

WE'VE had turkey boiled and roasted,  
Turkey browned and turkey toasted,  
Turkey truffled, turkey giblets, turkey hash and turkey stew,  
Turkey stuffed and turkey basted,  
Turkey cold and stale and wasted,  
Till the turkey is as ancient as a new joke by Depew.

WE'VE had turkey to reliefs.  
We are playing for variety.  
Is there not some other bird or beast on which to chew our praise?  
I submit as a solution  
That we make a substitution  
For our antiquated, antedated friend of other days.

LET our tables burst in blossom  
With a fragrant Billy possum—  
North and south we will unite in a Thanksgiving worth the while.  
By this token of affection  
We will end the blight of section;  
We'll be optimistic "possumists" and smile, smile, smile.