

1621

Thanksgiving Day.

1896

THANKSGIVING AT HOME.

O, it's early in the mornin' that a feller must be risin'.
Thanksgivin' Day, like Christmas time, it comes but wunst a year.
The birds are stuffed an' roastin' with an odor appetizin'.
The pumpkin pies are bakin' an' the elder bowl's freez'.
There's piles an' piles o' cookies, an' there's doughnuts till you're dizzy.
There's mounds an' mounds o' jelly, an' there's biscuits browned an' light.
All the mornin' in the kitchen mother's been most awful busy.
O, you bet I'm mighty thankful that I own an appetite.

Two lonely, solemn turkeys, sole survivors of the flock,
Are a-struttin' round the yard with a kind o' anxious air.
The sort o' sudden absence of their friends is quite a shock.
An' they're searchin' for their late lamented cronies everywhere.
With spreadin' tails and feathers fluffed their quest they keep pursuin'.
They don't suspect their fate will be the others' gloomy lot.
They notice how we're fussin' an' they wonder what we're doin'.
O, you bet I'm mighty thankful that a turkey I am not.

The folks they keep arrivin' brimmin' o'er with fun an' laughter.
Bluff uncles shake my hand until the bones begin to crack.
Girl cousins shyly kiss me—jes' exactly what I'm after—
An' with promptitude quite lightning-like I gaily kiss 'em back.
But one of them, the fairest maid of all my fair relations,
To steal my heart by witchin' arts somehow she does contrive.
While in her eyes I read a tale beyond my expectations.
O, you bet I'm mighty thankful—mighty thankful—I'm alive.

A COWARD'S THANKSGIVING.

He was not a bad man at heart. But the very qualities which moved some people to call him a "jolly good fellow" were identical with those which made other people consider him a bad citizen, and, with the usual emphasis of people who take the downward view, a very bad citizen.

When his wife died he seemed to awake with a sudden shock to the issues of life and the fact of death. He had loved her with all that marvelous depth of tenderness, that inconsistent fervor which sometimes underlies the weakest natures.

In the newness of his grief he foreswore his old ways and habits. He knew himself to be weak. He fancied the way to strength of resistance lay along the road of self-exile to strange scenes and unfamiliar faces—that road well worn by the restless feet of those who fly from the battle within to wage an unequal struggle with the allies without.

He left his little son, made doubly dear to him by the sense of loss, with his wife's cousin, gave to her what money he could spare for the child's support, promised to send more at regular intervals, and departed westward.

More than a year later he roused himself as if the finger of fate had touched him. He remembered, with an anguished regret, that he had failed again; that for months he had drifted from place to place, he himself scarcely knew where or how. He remembered that his promised remittances for the boy had ceased. He saw himself broken in strength, in health, in spirit. He felt suddenly overpowered with the consciousness of his own weakness, and, as a drowning man's arms reach wildly out toward any illusion of help, his thought went out toward his child.

It seemed to him that the love of his boy could save him. The miracle of salvation became to him possible, wherein a little child, strong in love and innocence and faith, should lift the fainting, failing manhood of the man.

A passionate yearning seized him to fold again to his heart the little form, to feel about his neck the clinging arms, to hear again the hissing words which came to his weakened memory like distant echoes in a dream. And then he remembered the day when first the child was laid in his arms; he remembered the thrill, the wonder, the first pride of fatherhood. Then, in broken glimpses, as a fair landscape is seen between blurs of mist, there came to him memories in swift succession, of the growth, the incidents of the child's few years.

"I must go to him," whispered the man with a gasp, as he lifted his head from his hands. His face was flushed, tears stood in his eyes. His resolution was carried out with feverish haste, and he turned his face to the East.

His wife's relative had little excuse for him. She had long considered him a hopeless vagabond. So when he appeared suddenly, as from the possible, and, in her opinion, better, dead, she was not prepared to receive him with especial cordiality. The story was soon told. The boy had died months before. He slept by his mother. No one had known where to address the father, who was supposed to have forgotten he had a son. She was really not much surprised at the apathy with which the father listened. It was consistent with her estimate of his character. She had no means of knowing that his faculties were stunned. But she was astonished beyond measure when, in a mechanical way, he insisted upon giving her money for the expense of caring for and burying the boy.

"Is that quite all?" he kept asking, and then, abruptly but quickly, he said: "Good-by, I'm going back."

He knew that his hope was dead; he felt the certainty of fall now that nothing remained to him to lean upon. But he thought of other things.

A sleety mist filled the air, sparkling in the street lights like a mazy shower of



THANKSGIVING SONNET.

To God give thanks! From every hill and plain
The fruits of autumn crown the dying year—
The ghost of drowsy summer hovers near
As if regretful for her shortened reign.
The harvest of the year revolves again—
The wine of life is in the atmosphere.
For those to whom health holds her chalice clear,
And healing comes from breath of ripened grain.
Now o'er the gayly decorated land
The granaries are filled from base to brim;
The frost-sword strews the leaves on every hand
In combat with the sunbeams' raptures dim;
And heard throughout earth's echoes of beauty grand
The grateful tollers chant their harvest hymn.

He knew was there. He remembered approximately the amount. Brushing past the pleading child at his feet, he went abruptly into the restaurant. After a brief interview with the manager he returned to the door.

"Who wants a Thanksgiving dinner?" he asked. Two or three voices said "Me!" explosively; but for the rest an incredulous stare alone responded, until one boy said, slowly and reproachfully: "Ah-b, g'way! You're givin' us guff!"

WHICH?



lessness of his life. With a mocking persistence the many resolves he had made to himself, the efforts to change, the ever-succeeding failure surged up before him, and his lip curled in contemptuous scorn of himself. Never did a man hold himself up to more merciless scrutiny, more intolerant judgment.

In his abstraction he nearly fell upon a group of wretched children of the street who stood clustered about a restaurant window.

And such a window! The light of mellow globes flooded it. It was decked with holiday greens. In the center, on a platter sprigged with parsley, reposed brown and crisp, a roasted pig, with the reddest of apples in its mouth. On each side a fair, fat turkey, dressed for the oven, lay in state. Lobsters, in their scarlet coats, leavened quail with heads tucked under their wings to swell out the pitiful little breasts, and divers other resources and accessories of the culinary art lent color and suggestiveness to the tableau.

The man stopped. A tiny fellow, about as large as his own boy would have been, but ragged and dirty and shivering, as by God's mercy his own never would be, lifted a newspaper up to him and piped in a shrill little voice:

"Boy a paper, mister, to help me git a 'Tanks-givin' dinner!"

"Is this Thanksgiving?" asked the man with a dull surprise.

"Sure!" said the boy. "Don't y' see dat lay-out in de window?"

The man looked at the window. He stared at the children. He put his hand in his trousers pocket and felt the small roll of

For answer the man opened the door, and the children, without more ado, clumsily shuffled past him. All save one, a girl with an accordion slung from her shoulder and the black locks of Italy straying from under the red kerchief on her head. She paused with a look of inquiry.

"Does de girl come?" asked a boy. "She's a purty good feller—for a girl."

"Yes, come along," said the man, with an affectation of cheerfulness. "In a time like this female suffrage goes."

They were led by a grinning waiter to a private dining-room where a long table stood shrouded as with new-fallen snow; and while the children were taken to wash their hands and faces, the man, whose head turbaned afresh as he came in from the outer air, took in a glass of brandy two of the powders from the package in his pocket.

"Bring us a real old Thanksgiving dinner," he said to the waiter, "and plenty of it, without too many frills. Some soup and—some turkey—"

He paused and looked archly at the children, who caught the spirit of his glance and shouted: "Yes, yes!"

"Yes, some turkey with cranberry sauce—"

The tiny newsboy hugged himself and murmured: "Gramblyr sauce!"

"And some scalloped oysters," continued the man, stopping after the mention of each delicacy to watch the children, who shivered with eagerness and punctuated each pause with approving nods and murmuring echoes, "and some sweet po-

intoes, and plenty of bread and butter, and—ah, pickles!"

"Ah-h, pickles!" repeated the children. "And pie—shall it be mince pie or apple pie?" he asked.

This question required pondering, and a youthful Alexander cut the Gordian knot by saying: "Let's have both."

"Here, here," said the man to a boy who scrambled for the seat at his right hand. "When there's only one lady in the company the seat of honor should belong to her."

The man touched her hand reassuringly and turned to his left, where sat the little newsboy. Long and steadily he looked into the child's face.

"He, too, had blue eyes," he murmured, with a catch of the breath as for a brief instant his own eyelids closed and he bit his lip.

At last, when each child had eaten two pieces of pie, even to the last crumb, the man rose to his feet, clutching at his chair for support. He brushed his hand across his eyes. Strange lights danced before him, crimson and gold; the air was populous with unknown shapes, weaving in slow mazes; soft melodies sang in his ears as from infinite distances, thrilling, uncer-

ODE TO A GOBLER.

All hail! all hail! Oh, rare and antique bird
That lately on the venerable tree,
Rolled in a ball of sleep, the chill winds
Have waked.
Moaning in mournful gusts thine elegy!
Or ripple on thy wing;
For time hath caught thee, even as the cat
Catches the gray and agile whiskered rat;
And now thy praise we sing,
Gathered upon the board, serene and gay,
Upon Thanksgiving Day.

With joy we see thee lying on thy back,
Thy chest, lush drumsticks sticking in
The air;
Thy wings in sweet peace folded, and, slack,
The incense of thy stuffing, pungent, rare,
Filling our souls with heavenly melody.
The while with fork and knife
Thy dark meat and thy white meat fondly we
Suffuse with gravy in our revelry.
And then, with pleasure rife,
Each dainty morsel nimbly tuck away
Upon Thanksgiving Day.

Thou'rt nobler than the canvasback or goose.
The lordly shanghai or the ortolan,
Or any other vanguard that is loose
From Tusculossa to Cape Mary Ann.
Compared with thee the woodcock is a mere
"Delusion—all in all!"
The upland plover ne'er can be thy peer,
Beside thee to the epicure and seer
The prairie hen is small!
Thou art the bird of freedom, anyway,
Upon Thanksgiving Day.

THANKSGIVING DAY IN EUROPE.

Baked Beans, Glace, and "Bounkin Pie a l'Americaine."

A few years ago one of the diplomatic corps in Paris complimented some American visitors by giving a Thanksgiving dinner. He made some elaborate researches regarding our national customs as applied to the day and with help of his chef offered among other things baked beans, well thinned with custard and frozen. The crowning glory of the feast was a pumpkin pie. Its crust was shiningly puff paste fully an inch thick. The pumpkin was merely a filmy glaze upon the paste, with a taffy-like consistency that made it cling to the eater's teeth.

The chef must have imparted the secret to the national pie, at least in part, to others of his craft, for a little later a well-known restaurateur announced on a little placard at his establishment: "Bounkin Pie a l'Americaine."

In Berlin the traveler will find, if he is there in November, an addition to the menu of some places of refreshment. The addition is a flourishing announcement to Americans that Indian puddings, bean puddings, pumpkin tarts, and other delicacies, which the waiter will affably say are for the American "Danksgiving," but which only resemble the originals they imitate as the mist resembles the rain.

Foreign restaurants pride themselves upon catering to American "customers' tastes, but their translations are striking and worked out laboriously from the dictionary. One Berlin hotel proudly put upon the menu, "False hair stewed American fashion." It requires some penetration to discover that a dish of smothered beef known to us as mock rabbit is meant.

A Russian of wealth and position having gathered accurate knowledge of Indian corn and the ways it should be served some years ago, invited some English and American friends to dinner and, after a little preliminary boast of the success his gardener had made in cultivating the vegetable, presented his guests with tiny immature cobs an inch and a half long, boiled till tender and served like asparagus tips with a rich cream dressing. An American present found it difficult to maintain a circumspect gravity when the hostess asked him if it was true that in America this corn was always eaten with the fingers, for in view of the dripping ears she was daintily lifting, one at a time, upon her fork, he had to assure her that she was eating it in the only proper manner.

The Crowning of the Year.

This is the festival which the Pilgrim fathers inaugurated, which New England has annually celebrated for two centuries, and which the nation has adopted and sanctioned as a day of public thanksgiving to God. It exalts the home and strengthens its sacred and tender ties. It brightens the shadows which have gathered over it. It dignifies prosperity. It prompts men to reach out helpful hands to their less fortunate neighbors. It reminds us afresh from whence every good gift comes. If it seemed good to our fathers in the midst of the hardships of this new world to give public thanks to God for blessings, how much more reason have we to follow their example! Abundance of food and clothing, happy homes, a free country at peace with all nations and extending its influence throughout the world, with marvelously multiplied appliances for use and pleasure which surpass the wildest dreams of those who first were moved to set apart a day of public thanksgiving and praise, are ours. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Tickletooth Pudding.
"Tickletooth pudding" was the name of the Thanksgiving pudding of old colonial days. It was only a memory of the great progenitor of that name which the pilgrims had left at home in old England. There were no ten pounds of solid fruit, no twenty luscious eggs, rich beef suet, nor was it dampened with choice brandy and home-brewed ale. But it was probably more easily digested.

Every Day.

Every day is a day of thanksgiving for Christians. They do not wait until the crops have been gathered before returning thanks, for they are thankful for every day's blessing. Still it is a commendable custom for a nation to officially recognize man's dependence, and to ask its people to unite in a common thanksgiving.

