

LET US GIVE THANKS

For the Many Blessings Granted by Providence During the Past Year.

ORIGIN OF THANKSGIVING.

A Puritan Farmer Who Believed in Cheerful Gratitude to God.

OBSERVING THE DAY IN NEW ENGLAND.

Thanksgiving Day instituted by the Pilgrim Fathers—a Good Man Whose Name is Forgotten—Why Governor Winsor, of Virginia, Refused to Issue a Thanksgiving Proclamation—A Puritan Celebration—Long Church Services and a Hie Dinner—A Conflict Between Science and Religion—How Prominent Got Into Trouble—A Preacher's Reproof to His Cold and Hungry Congregation.

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.)

All our national holidays, none is now more universally and more joyously celebrated than that of Thanksgiving Day, which has been appointed this year for next Thursday. Though of New England origin, and for many years confined almost exclusively to that section, it has slowly, but surely, extended itself all over our country.

We are indebted for it to the Pilgrim Fathers, who may be said to have celebrated it for the first time upon the completion of their first harvest at Plymouth in 1621.

Pleading for a Day of Thanksgiving. their first harvest at Plymouth in 1621. Governor Bradford sent out four fowling in search of game, that they "might, after a more special manner rejoice together." But fowling was much more common among those hardy Puritans then, and though they occasionally observed a general thanksgiving day for some speciality of occurrence, such as some action favorable to them on the part of the mother country on the arrival of a shipload of provisions, they devoted much more time to deploring their miseries than they did to rejoicing over their blessings. It is said that their adoption of the custom of annually appointing a Thanksgiving Day was due to a sensible old farmer—whose name tradition has unfortunately failed to preserve—who rose up when it was proposed in the Assembly to proclaim another fast and plainly told them that he believed God was weary of their complaints in view of the fact that He was causing the custom of annually appointing a day when He filled the seas and rivers with fish, had made the air sweet and the climate healthful, and was permitting them the full enjoyment of their new agricultural industry. The speaker thereupon proposed that instead of a day of fasting...

A DAY OF THANKSGIVING and feasting should thereafter be annually proclaimed, which sensible suggestion was unanimously adopted. Whether or not this is a true account of the origin of the practice, it is a thoroughly established fact that

peace with England in 1815. After Madison, Abraham Lincoln was the first President to proclaim a Thanksgiving Day, and he did it in 1863 and 1864 for war victories. In 1864 he proclaimed a Thanksgiving Day in November for general blessings, and his example of that year has since been annually followed by every one of his successors and by nearly every State Governor down to the present time.

A PURITAN FEAST.

But popular as Thanksgiving Day now is throughout the length and breadth of this land, it is in New England that it still continues to be what it has been for more than two centuries—the greatest and most eagerly anticipated day of the entire year. The old Puritans and their descendants, who so long frowned severely upon Christmas— which, indeed, many of the latter still continue to do, refusing to allow recognition of a day of general blessings, regard with their cheerful hilarity, peace and goodwill in Thanksgiving Day. For at least a week before the important occasion all was activity and preparation. In the morning, the New England household. A bushel or more of the best wheat was sent to the mill to be converted into flour. Great rounds of beef were chopped up into mince-meat. Cardoons of yellow pumpkins, with an abundance of spices, sugar, molasses and sugar, were made up into pumpkin pies. An abundance of turkeys, chickens and geese were killed and made ready for roasting. A pair of immense plum puddings were baked in the largest sized earthen pots, with Indian puddings and custard puddings to match; while there was baking of pound cake, plum cake and spruce from morning till night.

From its very beginning divine worship was an important feature of the day's observance, and that term "divine worship" means something very different in rural New England in old colonial days, and even for some 40 or 50 years afterward, from what it means.

RIDING TO CHURCH.

A great majority of the members of the religious congregations of the time, lived at a considerable distance from the meeting house, and had to be up bright and early on Thanksgiving morning to prepare for their long drive to church. The roads in New England were often bitterly cold by the middle of November and it was no uncommon thing to ride to "Thanksgiving meeting" in a sleigh. On Thanksgiving day, and on all other fast and fast days, as well as on the Sabbath, there were held two services—morning and afternoon—each of some hours' duration, and for places of rest and refreshment during the noon intermission between them, there were erected in the immediate vicinity of the meeting house, for the accommodation of many families and consisted of two rooms some 10 or 12 feet square, with a chimney between them, having a fireplace in each apartment. On Thanksgiving morning a plentiful supply of coffee was brewed away in the houses or aleigh that was carried to a household to "meeting." Arriving in the vicinity of the meeting house, the "Sabbath-day houses" were filled, and the young men deposited there. A fire was then lighted and soon all were thoroughly thawed out and well warmed after their long, cold ride. At 10 o'clock, the hour for worship, they were ready to sail forth and shiver in the cold during the three-hour morning service, for the "meeting houses" or churches of those days were wholly unwarned by artificial heat of any kind. As a consequence the minister preached in his overcoat and mittens, and when the services drew near an end on a cold day everybody was anxious to escape from the chilling atmosphere of the church and seek warmth in their adjacent homes, or "Sabbath-day houses" as soon as possible.

A FANSTON'S REPROOF.

Proponents of this good anecdote is told of the Rev. Mr. Milton, a very eccentric man, who was one of the early pastors of that Congregational Church at Newburyport, Mass., within which walls lie the remains of the famous English evangelist, George Whitefield. One bitter, cold Thanksgiving Day Milton had scarcely pronounced the "Amen" of the benediction before the door of every pew was swung open and its occupants made a hasty rush for the aisles. But their unseemly haste was checked when their eccentric pastor leaned over the pulpit and cried out in his peculiar nasal voice, "Ye needn't hurry; your turkeys and mince pies won't get cold."

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY THANKSGIVING DINNER.

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At noon the family returned to the Sabbath-day house, where a warm room received them and here their Thanksgiving dinner was cooked and eaten, a blessing being invoked and thanks returned by the head of the household. The morning sermon formed the chief topic of discussion, all being allowed the utmost freedom in their remarks. A long prayer was offered by some one present, and then all returned to the meeting house for another three-hour service.

THE FOLLOWING QUAIN ACCOUNT OF AN OLD COLONIAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE AND ANOTHER IN 1765 FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE WHISKY INSURRECTION IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA, WHICH MADISON PROCLAIMED ONE FOR

There was a disturbance in ye galleries, when it was filled with divers negroes, mulattoes and Indians, and a negro called Pompe Shorter, belonging to Mr. Gardner,

Billington—Aha! Elvira, a camera. Let's stand just as we are. These fends are always ready to capture good-looking people, and perhaps this one'll take a snap at us.

MADE HIS WORD GOOD.

Cummings gave no more attention to knive swallowing for six years. In March, 1895, while in Boston, he related his exploits to party of carousing sailors who were engaged in a friendly contest of telling marvelous stories of their experiences. One believed him, and, being again drunk and reckless, he swallowed six knives in the course of the evening. The story of his performance was quickly spread abroad, and the next day, in the presence of crowds of wondering visitors, he swallowed eight more knives, making 14 in all.

THE EXPLOIT NEARLY KILLED HIM.

The exploit nearly killed him. He was taken to a hospital and for a month suffered great tortures. He was finally relieved, and started on another voyage to France. The course of his wanderings at length took him to England, where, being again under the influence of liquor, he boasted of his former feat. He was again challenged to repeat them, and again complied, "dismissing to be worse than his word." This was in December, 1895, and in the course of two days he swallowed six claspknives of various sizes. A few other feats of the kind

INDUSTRIOUS MULLINS—Two crowscut an 'a' backwards on the mantel. Trade's getting good. Wonder what struck them two high-toners to make 'n' cut like that?—Puck.

Nothing Taken but Flight.

A Puritan Congregation.

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ROLLING HOME IN THE MORNING.

kingly ostrich plumes had waved in distant Africa, and whose ludicrousness had converted the driver's lash in the cotton fields, walked step by step, and stride by stride with those of the so-called superior race. But black or white, all these men were grand with the grandeur of Longfellow's blacksmith hero—grand with the hale of labor accomplished, and the earnest heart and strong hand that will work still more diligent work, and do things still more difficult.

STUART ROBSON IS MAD.

He laments That Jesus Preaches All the Great Things. The morbid curiosity concerning the spiritual and private life of the illustrious actor is only worthy of that vulgar and ignorant mass of semi-illuminated delusions in the delusion that they alone are the elect

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