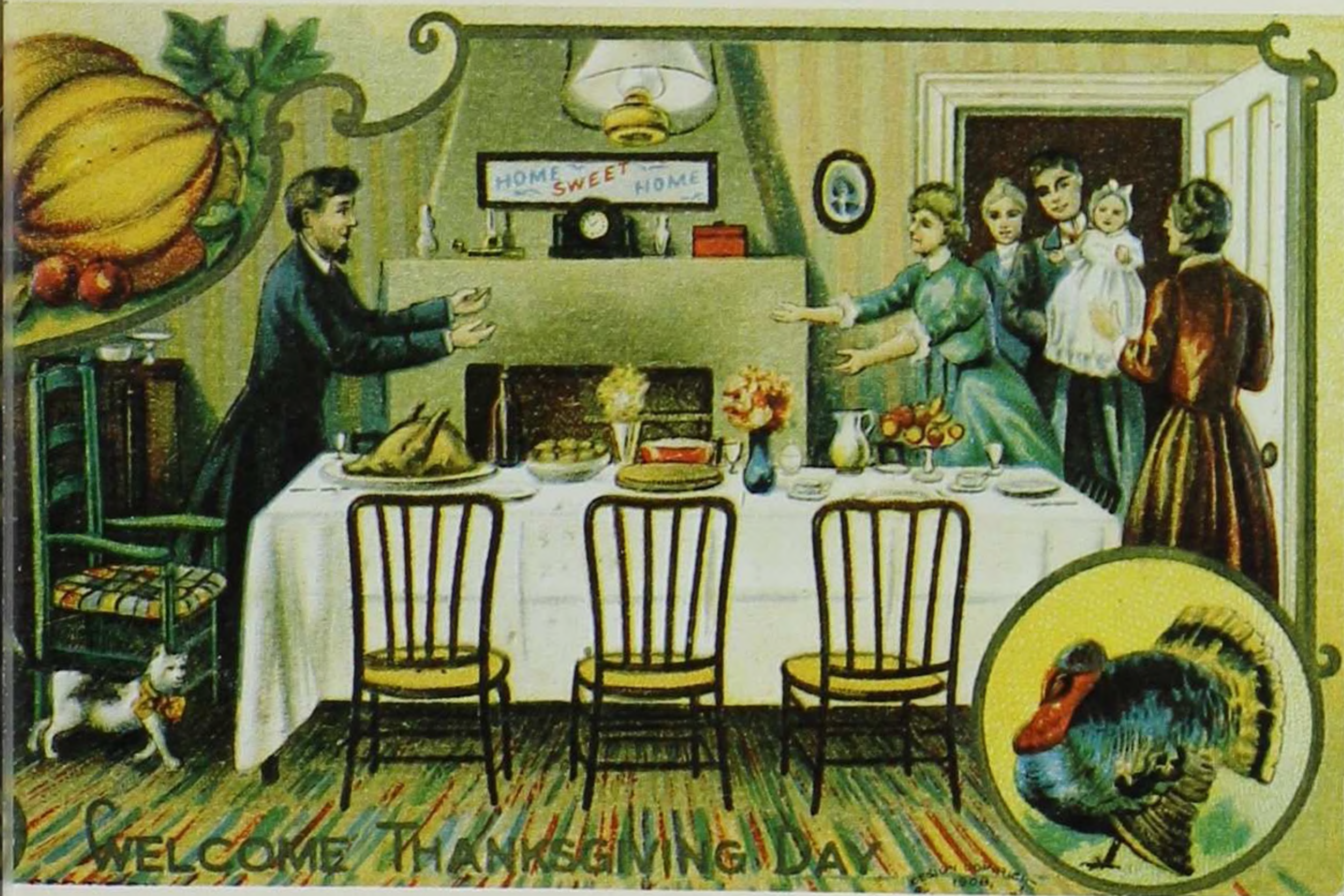


The
PALIMPSEST



Thanksgiving In Iowa

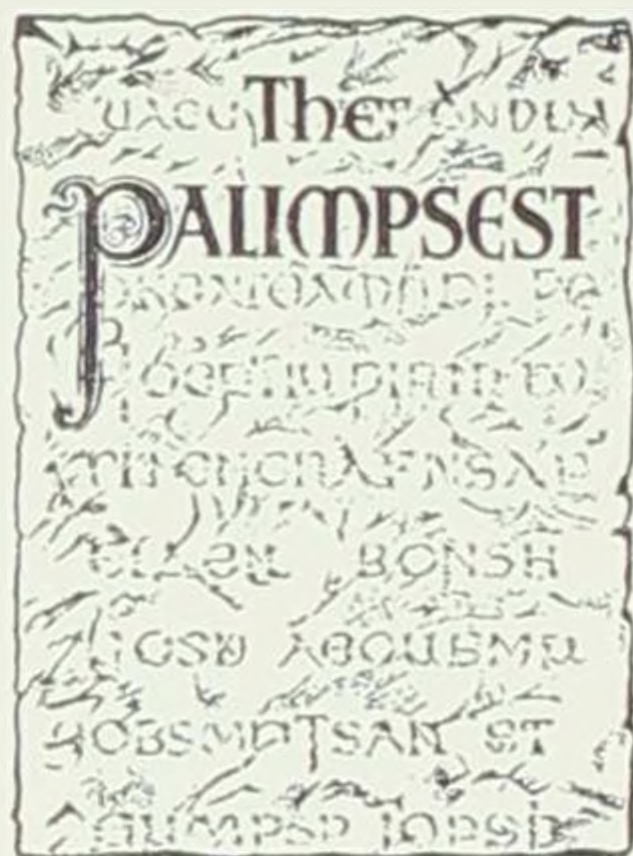
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SPECIAL THANKSGIVING EDITION — ONE DOLLAR



The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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Illustrations

All black and white illustrations are from the September, 1960 issue of *The Palimpsest*. The colored postcards are from a collection loaned by Norman Erickson of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Author

Dr. William J. Petersen is Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa. The 32 pages of Thanksgiving poems, prayers, and essays are from various *Special Days* pamphlets issued by the Department of Public Instruction in Des Moines as an aid to Iowa school teachers in properly observing holidays.

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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Thanksgiving in America

Since the dawn of history man has offered thanks to his gods for abundant crops and for protection from adversity. The Canaanites celebrated the harvest season by feasting and drinking, and the Hebrews observed the seven-day "Feast of Tabernacles" at the close of the harvest season. The harvest festival of ancient Greece was celebrated each November by the married women in Athens in honor of the goddess Demeter, whose fruitfulness was symbolized by poppies, ears of corn, baskets of fruit, and little pigs. The Roman festival of Cerelia was held on October 4th in honor of the harvest deity Ceres. In England the autumnal festival was called Harvest Home, a custom dating back to Saxon days.

Despite such precedents, Thanksgiving Day as it is observed in the United States is a purely American holiday. It stems from our Pilgrim forefathers of New England, those hardy, God-fearing souls who signed the immortal "Mayflower Compact" before stepping ashore at historic

Plymouth Rock. The names of William Bradford and John Winthrop, of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, of Samoset, Squanto and Massasoit, are all associated with the beginnings of the Plymouth settlement. Felicia Hemans captured something of the spirit of the colony in "The Landing of the Pilgrims" while Henry Wadsworth Longfellow portrayed the romance of the times in "The Courtship of Miles Standish."

The landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock occurred just a few days before Christmas in 1620. They remained aboard the *Mayflower* until the last of March while their homes were being built. The winter was extremely severe, and the courageous little colony saw its numbers dwindle from 101 to 55 settlers because of cold, hunger, and disease. In the spring the survivors sowed their crops and watched with anxiety the progress of their plants, upon whose successful harvesting their very lives depended. In the fall their hearts were gladdened as they saw the granaries fairly bursting with grain. Thankful for the prodigal returns of a bountiful nature, Governor William Bradford ordered a three-day feast and celebration to which Chief Massasoit and his Indians were invited.

Many Americans like to trace the beginnings of Thanksgiving to this three-day festival of the Pilgrims in 1621. Others contend that the first religious thanksgiving services date back to July 30,

1623, when the colonists held a public service of prayer and thanksgiving following Miles Stan-dish's return from a journey, bearing food for the hungry colonists and the good news that a ship had been sighted bearing in their direction. Be this as it may, in the years that followed Thanks-giving became more and more firmly entrenched in New England. According to one author:

Sometimes it was appointed once a year, sometimes twice, sometimes a year or two were skipped,—according as reasons for giving thanks presented themselves or not. Now the reason was a victory over the Indians, then the arrival of a ship with supplies or "persons of special use and quality," and yet again a bountiful harvest. The frequent appointments for the last cause finally made August the customary month. Beginning with 1684, the festival became a formal and annual one in Massachusetts. Her example was soon followed by all the New England colonies.

It was during the Revolutionary War that Thanksgiving first took on the earmarks of a national holiday. In 1777, the Second Continental Congress set aside Thursday, December 18th, as a day of "solemn thanksgiving and praise" for the "signal success" of the American troops in overcoming Burgoyne. The following year Congress directed its chaplains to prepare a report recommending that the several states set apart December 30th as a day of general thanksgiving throughout the United States for American victories and for the French alliance. In 1779, the second

Thursday in December was set apart as a day of "general thanksgiving" for good health, abundant crops, and continued victories over Great Britain. In 1780, December 7th was designated as the day of "public thanksgiving and prayer," while in 1781 public thanksgiving was offered on December 13th. After expressing thanks for the victory at Yorktown, the 1781 proclamation asked for "wisdom and integrity" in the "speedy establishment of a safe, honorable and lasting peace." The following year Congress passed an act requesting the "several states" to provide that Thursday, November 28, 1782, should be observed as a day of thanksgiving and prayer. December 11, 1783, and October 19, 1784, were set aside for public prayer and thanksgiving in gratitude for the return of peace.

No specific day had evolved as Thanksgiving Day, but December was the favorite month. Only once, in 1782, did Congress suggest the last Thursday in the month of November but this proposal was amended in its final form to read specifically Thursday, November 28th. During the next five years, independence having been won and peace established, Congress did not see fit to set aside a day for national thanksgiving.

George Washington issued the first presidential Thanksgiving proclamation on October 3, 1789, in response to a congressional request that he set aside a day of public prayer and thanks-

giving. The "Father of His Country" wrote the following classic proclamation:

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace and concord; to promote the knowl-

edge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

It would be difficult to determine how many people in the United States carried out the spirit of this Thanksgiving Day proclamation. In his diary Washington himself recorded: "*Thursday, 26th.* Being the day appointed for a thanksgiving, I went to St. Paul's Chapel, though it was most inclement and stormy — but few people at Church." Was the slim attendance responsible for Washington's failure to issue any other Thanksgiving Day proclamation during the remaining seven years he was in office? Or was it felt that the successful launching of the ship of state under the constitution alone merited such a proclamation?

John Adams issued only one such proclamation during his administration when he set aside May 9, 1798, as a time for "fervent thanksgiving" for prosperity, religious and civil freedom, and for the improvement of vexing foreign relations with France. James Madison, at the request of Congress, signed a proclamation on November 16, 1814, setting aside Thursday, January 12, 1815, as a day of prayer that the War of 1812 might soon be concluded and the blessings of peace be speedily and happily restored. The Treaty of Ghent actually was signed on December 24, 1814,

but news of its consummation was not received by the people of the United States in time for their Thanksgiving celebration.

No other national Thanksgiving Days seem to have been proclaimed until Civil War times. One reason, perhaps, was the influence of Thomas Jefferson who firmly believed that the national government had no right to tell the people when they should attend church. He had expounded his views on the subject to a minister in 1808 when he declared:

I consider the government of the United States as interdicted by the Constitution from intermeddling with religious institutions, their doctrines, discipline, or exercises. This results not only from the provision that no law shall be made respecting the establishment or free exercise of religion, but from that also which reserves to the States the powers not delegated to the United States. Certainly, no power to prescribe any religious discipline has been delegated to the general government. It must then rest with the States, as far as it can be in any human authority. But it is only proposed that I should recommend, not prescribe a day of fasting and prayer. That is, that I should indirectly assume to the United States an authority over religious exercises, which the Constitution has directly precluded them from. It must be meant, too, that this recommendation is to carry some authority, and to be sanctioned by some penalty on those who disregard it; not indeed of fines and imprisonment, but of some degree of proscription, perhaps in public opinion. And does the change in the nature of the penalty make the recommendation less a law of conduct for those to whom it is di-

rected? I do not believe it is for the interest of religion to invite the civil magistrate to direct its exercises, its disciplines or its doctrines; nor of the religious societies; that the general government should be invested with the power of effecting any uniformity of time or matter among them. Fasting and prayer are religious exercises; the enjoining them an act of discipline. Every religious society has a right to determine for itself the times for these exercises, and the objects proper for them, according to their own particular tenets; and the right can never be safer than in their own hands, where the Constitution has placed it.

Perhaps the lion's share of the credit for the final acceptance of Thanksgiving Day as a national religious festival should be attributed to a woman — Mrs. Sarah J. Hale. While editor of the *Ladies Magazine* between 1828 and 1836, Mrs. Hale began advocating the celebration of Thanksgiving on the last Thursday in November. When she became literary editor of *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1837 she increased the tempo of her campaign for a national Thanksgiving Day, writing presidents, governors, and others in high office. Her final plea entitled "Our National Thanksgiving" appeared in the September, 1863, issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*. After quoting Nehemiah VIII:10 and pointing out the "salutary effect of appointed times for national reunions" Mrs. Hale noted that in 1859 thirty states had observed Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November and concluded:

Would it not be a great advantage, socially, nationally,

religiously, to have the day of our American Thanksgiving positively settled? Putting aside the sectional feelings and local incidents that might be urged by any single State or isolated Territory that desired to choose its own time, would it not be more noble, more truly American, to become national in unity when we offer to God our tribute of joy and gratitude for the blessings of the year?

Taking this view of the case, would it not be better that the proclamation which appoints Thursday, the 26th of November, as the day of Thanksgiving for the people of the United States of America should, in the first instance, emanate from the President of the Republic — to be applied by the Governors of each and every State, in acquiescence with the chief executive adviser?

Perhaps it was in answer to this, and more personal appeals, that President Lincoln issued his first national Thanksgiving Proclamation on October 3, 1863, setting aside the last Thursday in November as the day. Lincoln's proclamation read:

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequal magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has

prevailed everywhere except in the theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the

Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and union.

More than a century has elapsed since Abraham Lincoln issued his first national Thanksgiving Proclamation. In the years that followed other presidents have called upon the American people to unite in prayer to Almighty God in times of war — McKinley, Wilson, F. D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower. Despite hardship and adversity, whether at war or at peace, citizens of the United States unite in expressing their gratitude to Deity at Thanksgiving time.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

Thanksgiving in Iowa

Iowa had much to be thankful for in 1844. The population of the Territory of Iowa soared from 22,859 in 1838 to 75,152 in 1844. A steady flow of immigrants from the more populous eastern states had streamed across the Mississippi — upwards of two hundred German families from Hamilton County, Ohio, settling at present-day Guttenberg for the purpose of cultivating grapes. Although the Rock River country in Illinois had been heralded as the “most salubrious district in the west” the *Dubuque Transcript* noted a large cavalcade of Rock River farmers crossing the Mississippi in order to enjoy the “still greater salubrity” of northern Iowa. Before the year 1844 closed, a state constitution had been adopted at Iowa City and the six-year old Territory was asking Congress for admission into the Union.

At the end of the harvest season in 1844, the pioneers of Iowa realized that they had much to be thankful for. Recognizing the general attitude, Governor John Chambers drafted a suitable manifesto at his “Executive Office” in Burlington. Duly countersigned by S. J. Burr, secretary of the Territory, the first official Thanksgiving holiday in Iowa was proclaimed on October 12, 1844.

At the request of many of my Fellow Citizens, I have deemed it proper to recommend that Thursday, the 12th day of December next, be observed throughout the Territory, as a day of general Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the many and great blessings we enjoy as a people and individually, and of prayer and supplication for the continuance of his mercy and goodness toward us; and for the prosperity, happiness and ultimate salvation of the American people.

We are told that, "righteousness exalteth a nation," and are taught by divine authority that the voice of thanksgiving and prayer is acceptable to our Father in Heaven. Let us then, on the day designated, unite our voices, in the humble hope that they will reach the Throne of Grace and obtain for us a continuation and increase of blessings.

The appearance of this Thanksgiving proclamation two years before Iowa achieved statehood is both noteworthy and significant. It is significant because it revealed the religious bent of the Iowa pioneers as well as the New England origin of a considerable portion of the population. It is noteworthy because Thanksgiving was not a national holiday in 1844, nor was there any uniformity in the date of its observance among the few states that celebrated it.

The Davenport *Gazette* of November 21, 1844, believed that "former residents of New England" would rejoice to learn that Governor Chambers had introduced the "time-honored custom" west of the Mississippi. "May it long prevail with due observance," the *Gazette* concluded. The Iowa

City Standard of November 28, 1844, declared: "We believe this is the first Thanksgiving Proclamation ever issued in Iowa; we are glad to welcome the good old Pilgrim custom to our midst, and trust when the day comes around with its plentiful cheer, none will omit to send up to the Almighty Giver a tribute of praise."

Burlington celebrated Thanksgiving in a manner befitting the most populous city in the Territory. Most of the stores and commercial houses were closed and a "partial suspension" of business was generally observed. "During the day," declared the *Territorial Gazette*, "there was an appropriate celebration by the Sunday School scholars, under the management of their teachers; and in the evening the whole town assembled at the Methodist Episcopal Church, to listen to a most delightful entertainment of vocal and instrumental music, and an admirable lecture on music as a science."

Not all Burlingtonians, apparently, spent their time in this manner, for the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* noted that some engaged in "shooting deer and prairie chickens on the Bottoms" after which they "wound up" Thanksgiving by attending the ball at the City Hotel in the evening. The Davenport *Gazette*, which had expected appropriate church services, was shocked at such lack of good taste in Burlington. "We certainly misunderstood the intention of this day," the *Gazette* editor chided

the fun-loving citizens of Burlington and Des Moines County.

If John Chambers deserves credit for issuing the first Thanksgiving Proclamation in Iowa, his successor, James Clarke, may be credited with setting the date on the customary last Thursday in November. At the request of many "highly respectable persons belonging to the several religious denominations of the Territory," Governor Clarke designated Thursday, November 26, 1846, as a day of Thanksgiving. The people of Iowa, according to Clarke, had many things for which to offer thanks, including victories in the Mexican War.

Ansel Briggs, the first Governor of the State of Iowa, issued his first Thanksgiving Proclamation on November 1, 1847, designating the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving. Good crops, health, increasing immigration, rapid strides in education, commerce, and agriculture, and the important victories over the "semi-barbarous" Mexicans were blessings Iowans could count in 1847. No other proclamations have been found during the remaining three years of Briggs's administration or the four-year term of Stephen Hempstead. In 1855, James W. Grimes set the fourth (not last) Thursday as Thanksgiving Day. Since 1857, Iowa governors have, with two exceptions, consistently appointed the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.

Presidential and gubernatorial Thanksgiving proclamations were subjected to editorial comment, both pro and con, facetious and serious. In 1859, the Democratic *Dubuque Herald* ripped Governor Ralph P. Lowe's proclamation to shreds on the basis of its literary style. In 1864, a Council Bluffs editor commented on the day of "fasting and prayer" set aside by "Father Abraham": "We notice the *fast* part was well observed, *fast* men, *fast* boys, and *fast* women, riding behind *fast* horses, going at very *fast* gaits, could be seen every moment dashing through our streets; and to conclude the *fast* day, Mynheer Koppes gave a *fast* ball in Street's hollow, to which nearly all the *fast* people, including Brick Pomeroy, No. 2, with that 'still small voice' of his, went as *fast* as they could go."

Bitter partisan politics was in large measure responsible for many of the barbs aimed at the holiday during Civil War and Reconstruction days. At Dubuque the leading Democratic editor looked with foreboding upon the attitude of most ministers of the Gospel. "Thanksgiving day," he declared, "afforded a splendid opportunity for the display of diabolical piety by the Bloodhounds of Zion. Among the lesser lights of the political pulpit this display was made with remarkable unanimity, but they confined themselves principally to the usual invocation of John Brown's peregrinating soul, and diatribes upon the blessings

wrought by the slaughter of thousands of white men and the elevation of negroes." The Thanksgiving sermon of the chaplain of Congress was so vindictive that the editor felt sure the "Blessings promised to peacemakers will not enter largely into the awards of this fellow in the future world."

The editor of the *Iowa City State Press* of December 6, 1865, could not help but castigate the "hypocrites" who had brought about the Civil War. Upon reading the appeal of the Freedmen's Bureau that thirty thousand negroes would perish of hunger in Georgia alone, and forty thousand more in Alabama, the editor declared:

While we would counsel the free opening of every charitable purse and heart, to the end that these poor victims of a mistaken and misguided philanthropy may be saved from starvation; yet we cannot repress our indignation at those canting hypocrites, who have emptied this vast load of misery and pauperage upon the country.

Before the Fall elections the radical papers were teeming with accounts of the prosperous condition of the Freedmen; then there were more white men than negroes in the South receiving Government aid; ERGO, the negroes were better able to provide for themselves than the whites.— Now when no political purpose is to be served by withholding the truth, they startle the country with the really heartrending statement that in two States alone, seventy thousand of these people MUST PERISH before spring. Five years ago these people, who are now dying by the wayside, formed the happiest, the freest, most moral and most intelligent portion of the African race upon the whole broad earth. But a beastly IDEA was born in the brain

of murderous fanatics, that the detention of these people in that condition of happiness and plenty, was the "sum of all villainies," a "relic of barbarism," and, to wrest them from it, the Nation must be plunged into a war, and a million of white men and six millions of treasure spent, that the well fed negro might taste the sweets of that freedom, which brings to him, starvation and death. And now, that happy community that had progressed under the tutelage of a system as old as organized society, until they were an example to their race, under the workings of an IDEA have become the most corrupt, degraded and helpless portion of that race. Because Lincoln issued a proclamation, bestowing upon these people the blessed (?) rights of prostitution, idleness, starvation and death, a monument is to be built over his tomb and chaplets woven to his memory. . . . Boston sleeps sweetly each night, and arises in the morning to fare sumptuously and prick its teeth and form plans of speculation for the coming day; it prays dolorously for the down-trodden and groans grievous amens to the political thunderings of its pantheistic clergy, while the victims of its foul philanthropy are left to starve; or to be supported by the already overtaxed producers of the West.

We would see no freedman starve, we would not counsel the withholding of any means that would ameliorate his condition, but at the same time we would hold up to the withering scorn they so justly merit those men who have placed it beyond the most strenuous efforts of charity to save thousands who **MUST PERISH**.

As the years passed editors refrained from such lapses into political partisanship.

Iowans took warmly to Thanksgiving, for nowhere else could the "Harvest Home" be more appropriately observed. Here was the richest

agricultural land in the entire United States. Here Indian maize quickly became the emblem of the State. Here wheat, oats, and rye grew in profuse abundance. Here luscious golden melons (especially Muscatine melons) won nation-wide attention. It was of Iowa, surely, that the poet sang:

*Cart-loads of pumpkins as yellow as gold,
Onions in silvery strings,
Shining red apples and clusters of grapes,
Nuts and a host of good things,
Chickens and turkeys and fat little pigs,—
These are what Thanksgiving brings.*

In 1870, a Des Moines editor printed the Thanksgiving menu of the Savery House. After observing that it was not customary to print such menus, he reminded readers that the "high reputation" of the Savery House was so "universally known" that nothing could be said to add to its reputation. It appeared in print as follows:

SOUP — Oyster

FISH — Mackinaw Trout, with fine herb sauce

BOILED — Tongue; Ham; Leg of Mutton; Corned Beef;
Turkey, with oyster sauce; Chicken, with Marrinaise
sauce

ROAST — Prairie chicken, with currant jelly; Turkey
with giblet sauce; Veal, with dressing; Ribs of Beef;
Sirloin of Beef; Mutton; Lamb; Saddle of Venison,
with cranberry jelly; Sirloin of Buffalo; Goose, with
apple sauce; Mallard Duck a la Creole

COLD — Corned Beef; Tongue; Mutton; Chicken Salad; Lobster Salad

ENTREE — Broiled Quail, with toast; Buffalo Steak, a la Maitre d'Hotel; Braized Teal Duck, with olives; Wild Goose, a la Regent; Pork and Beans, baked Boston style; Fillets of Chicken, a l'Anglaise; Belle Fritters, vanilla flavor; Haricot of Venison, with pastry

VEGETABLES OF THE SEASON

RELISHES—Pickled Beets; Worcestershire Sauce, Pepper Sauce, Chow Chow, French Mustard, Sliced Tomatoes, Tomato Catsup, Boston Pickles, Cheese, Walnut Catsup

PASTRY — Mince Pie; Old Style Yankee Pumpkin Pie; Steamed apple pudding; Lemon Sauce

DESSERT — Pound Cake; Sponge Cake; Swedish Pound Cake; French Cream Cake; Jelly Cake; Jumbles; Rum Jelly; Doughnuts; Blancmange; German Meringues; Kisses; English Walnuts; Filberts; Almonds; Raisins; Apples

TEA AND COFFEE

WINES — From the Savery House cellars

Sometimes Iowans partook too heartily of the bountiful Thanksgiving dinners placed before them. In 1874, a Keokuk paper reported that a physician was called to treat a young man who "worries hash at a fourth class boarding house" but who had accepted an invitation to dine out on Thanksgiving Day. The doctor requested his patient to tell what he had eaten. The young man, so the story ran, repeated the bill of fare as nearly as he could recollect, the following being an alleged inventory of the food encompassed:

“Three dishes of oyster soup, two plates of fish and two of turkey, two dozen fried oysters, and a dozen raw; some gherkins, four slices of roast pig, a quart of coleslaw, two cups of coffee, four stalks of celery, a liberal supply of boiled cabbage, six hard boiled eggs, some turnip, a glass of milk, apple dumpling, a bottle of native wine, two dishes of plum pudding, two mince pies, some fruit cake, and three dishes of ice cream.” The physician, it was said, listened patiently through the recital of all this, then pronounced the case a hopeless one, recommended that a minister be called in, and went off to consult with the undertaker.

To many Iowans, the large turkeys of pioneer days proved a real problem. “I protest against so much Thanksgiving,” said one housekeeper. “Here we had that turkey for dinner last Thursday. Every day since we have had his carcass for dinner, and warmed up turkey for breakfast and supper. Dressing has become a burden; gravy occasions weariness of the flesh; white meat and dark meat are alike unsavory.” Two generations were to pass before the Americans learned to raise turkeys of a size that could be handled by the average family, even when augmented by Thanksgiving homecomers.

Many Iowans, especially college students, have at times been unfortunate enough not to be able to go home for Thanksgiving. In 1867, the students

at the State University of Iowa spread a festive board in the old chapel to make up for their absence from the home circle. According to a local editor the first part of the evening was spent in conversation while promenading around the new chapel. Shortly after 9 o'clock the whole crowd proceeded to the old chapel where an abundant Thanksgiving repast was served by the committee.

The report of the affair included the following comment: "After the feast came toasts and responses, but these ran to so late an hour we did not stay to hear them. The remains of the feast were distributed to the poor and needy — the cake to the editors, the cold chicken to the bachelor members of the faculty. A fine sense of the fitness of things was shown in this distribution. Editors are always poor and in need of supplies, and bachelors require all the comfort that can be derived from cold chicken, munched in solitude."

Many persons attended church on Thanksgiving and editors often reported on the sermon to their readers. When Reverend Mr. Magoun preached on "The Blessings of Hard Times" in 1857, several of Davenport's "most intelligent citizens" expressed a desire that the sermon be published. At Sioux City in 1859, religious services were held in the Presbyterian Church in the morning and at the Methodist Church in the afternoon. The following year Sioux Citizens held a union service in the Methodist Church on Thanksgiving.

Keokuk churches held both separate and union meetings in 1868. The Civil War was over, the negroes freed, Reconstruction was in progress, Andrew Johnson had been acquitted, and U. S. Grant elected President. The Reverend J. R. Effinger of the Unitarian Church considered the granting of negro suffrage in Iowa the chief cause for Thanksgiving in 1868. Although grateful for abundant harvests, Mr. Effinger was especially thankful for the great strides made in education. He praised the State University of Iowa with its "earnest and determined young men and women" who would return into the interior of Iowa "to make homes more beautiful and life more noble." He was equally thankful for that newly-established "Frontier University" known as "Iowa Agricultural College" which already had attracted young men and women from twenty-three counties, and he praised the fine work of Cornell College and similar "centres of instruction."

At the union service in Des Moines in 1870, the Reverend J. V. Schofield pointed out that some people placed their trust in science, others in knowledge, still others in reason, in philosophy, in wealth, in morality, in standing armies, or in government, but the Christian placed his trust in God. "A Christian people can thank God — as we do to-day — for a free government, no more slavery agitating our peace, and threatening ruin. We can render thanks for a growing unity in all sec-

tions, commercial prosperity, for decreasing national debt, credit and peaceful relations abroad with most nations. As a State we can render thanks for Iowa, the Indian name for beautiful land." Thanks could also be rendered, he thought, for Iowa's thirty-five million acres of rich, productive land, and for the position of leadership the State had taken in education. After pointing proudly to Iowa's 6079 school buildings and 12,000 teachers, her 53 colleges and academies with over 4000 students, Mr. Schofield turned to the 19 daily papers and 246 weeklies and to the railroads which crossed the State at many points. Finally, thanks were given for Iowa's almost unrivalled reputation for patriotism, integrity, temperance, and morality.

In addition to recording sermons, editors frequently wrote thoughtful Thanksgiving editorials. In 1890, a Clinton editor wrote:

Very few people but feel like giving thanks for something. The living are thankful they are not dead, that is, if they don't wish they were dead. The sick are thankful they are not sicker. The rich are thankful for riches and the poor are thankful they are not poorer. The good are thankful they are not bad, and the bad are thankful they are no worse. Americans are thankful they were not born in Africa, and Africans are thankful they were born at all. The newly elected members of congress are thankful they were not defeated, and the defeated candidates are thankful they are permitted to live. We all should be thankful to the Lord for His many mercies and loving kindnesses.

Let no one forget today that God rules and holds the destinies of nations in the hollow of His hand.

It is the family dinner following church services that most nearly typifies Thanksgiving. In 1890, a Des Moines editor quoted the following from *Harper's Bazaar*:

Soup, fish, salad, and *entrees* may be appropriate and elegant on 364 days in the year, but on the 365th let them be banished, and let the traditional turkey and his vegetable satellites, the toothsome chicken pie, and all the triumphs of the Yankee housewife, reign supreme. Let that national holiday be kept with national dishes, and let there be a joyful and honourable pride in them, with never a tinge of shame that their palatableness is not hidden behind French names.

The following day, on November 27, 1890, this same Des Moines editor declared in the *Iowa State Register*:

This is Thanksgiving Day — one of the best days of all the year. It has a mission all its own and a blessing all its own to bestow upon all who open their souls to its beauty and good cheer. It should not be wholly given up to turkey and cranberry sauce. To eat, drink and be merry is a good way to give thanks — better than long prayers rendered with long faces, but it is not all that one ought to do to-day. A kind word kindly spoken to some one in distress; a worthy gift worthily bestowed upon some one more unfortunate — these are thanks acceptable on earth and in Heaven alike. . . . There is no man or woman so humble that their thanks to you for a gift bestowed to-day is not an incense that will rise to Heaven.

Such editorials did not fall on deaf ears. In

1896, for example, all business houses, banks, courts, as well as city, county, and state offices were closed. Thanksgiving was observed in the various churches and the Sunbeam Mission gave the poor a free dinner. "Dozens of turkeys, hundreds of loaves of bread, piles upon piles of all kinds of good things to eat were dished up with a lavish hand for those who would probably have gone hungry." In addition, Frankel's Clothing Company again showed their "big heart" for the poor. Between 9 and 10 a.m. on Thanksgiving day all the Frankel clerks were busily engaged providing poor children with three hundred suits of new clothing.

The spirit of the family circle has been immortalized by Lydia Maria Child in her poem — "Thanksgiving Day:"

*Over the river and through the wood
To grandfather's house we'll go;
The horse knows the way,
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.*

One Iowa editor felt the very mention of Thanksgiving brought back nostalgic memories of roast turkey, cranberry sauce, and hot pumpkin pie. "What a beautiful season it is with its home comings and its family gatherings!" he declared. "What tears of joy well up to the aged mother's eyes as she clasps to her heart one whom she has

not seen for so long, always her 'boy' though the snows of sixty years have whitened his head. What memories rise in the loving daughter's heart, as she lies down to rest again, after her long absence, in the room where she dreamed her girlish dreams!"

Nor should one forget the great work of our public schools in fostering the observance of Thanksgiving Day. Songs and essays, poems and plays, all formed a part of a moving pageantry whose stage setting was formed by the deep orange of the pumpkin, the red and yellow of luscious apples, by shocks of golden grain and stalks of corn. Sometimes the President's or Governor's Proclamation was read. Teachers were aided in the preparation of such programs by a manual for special days issued by the Department of Public Instruction. In 1901, the following "Program For Higher Grades" was suggested:

- Song "Thanksgiving Hymn"
- Roll call "Response with Quotations"
- Reading "Proclamation by the President or Governor"
- Reading
 "Address to the Pupils of the Public Schools of Iowa"
- Recitation . "Pen Picture of the First Thanksgiving Day"
- Essay "The History of Thanksgiving Day"
- Recitation "The Landing of the Pilgrims"
- Reading "The Founders of the Republic"
- Recitation "The First Thanksgiving"
- Recitation "The Turkey's Soliloquy"
- Reading "The Harvests of Iowa"

Recitation	"The Pumpkin"
Recitation	"The Difference"
Reading	"America's Public Schools"
Concert Recitation	"We Offer Thanks"
Song	"Nearer My God, to Thee"

Although participating in and gaining much inspiration from school programs, children particularly enjoyed the sports afforded by a snowy Thanksgiving. "Jack Frost has no terrors for young blood," a Des Moines editor declared. "Probably chillblains or possible sore throats annoy them not. All day they thronged the streets with sleds and skates. . . . The sight of the many coasters was enough to 'stir a fever in the blood of age,' although there will be many nights of watching by sick beds to follow their sport."

Many parents, however, were concerned over the disastrous practice of over-stuffing on Thanksgiving. In 1876, a mother urged the Des Moines Board of Education to return to the "former practice" of making Friday as well as Thanksgiving a holiday in order to allow school children as well as teachers ample opportunity to recover from "fearful" headaches and stomach aches. The logic of this argument apparently was recognized. In 1890, East Des Moines high school students gave school programs, offered presents which were distributed to the needy, and received Friday off.

Much of the general Thanksgiving activity de-

pended on the state of the weather. In 1857, the day was delightful in Davenport although walking was "juicy" for pedestrians; in 1864, the holiday was ushered in at Oskaloosa with temperatures that plummeted to 13° below zero. In 1874, a heavy Thanksgiving Day snowstorm in Jones County brought out cutters and sleds in Anamosa while "several hundred urchins yanked flyers around promiscuously among foot passengers." In 1890, the weather at Clinton was so mild that lawn tennis, football, and hoop-rolling were common sports. Contrast this with 1876 when the weather was so "bitterly cold" in Des Moines that sleighriders withdrew from the streets leaving the capital city thoroughfares almost deserted. "John and Jenny," a kindly editor observed, "can't sit close enough together outside to keep warm on such a night as that was, and so they snuggled down by the fireside or hurried to some entertainment indoors."

There were plenty of indoor Thanksgiving activities for all the Johns and Jennys living in Des Moines in 1876. The Hawkeye Hose Company gave a dance at Turner Hall while the Centenary Church chose Thanksgiving for a colorful fair and festival. The colored Masons were not left behind, celebrating Thanksgiving by making merry in their lodge rooms. The "finest masquerade ball ever given in Des Moines" took place at the home of Honorable John A. Elliott. The gay assemblage

was clad in the costumes of all ages and included such personages as Little Red Riding Hood, the Daughter of the Regiment, and Henry VIII, Uncle Sam, Boss Tweed, and Buffalo Bill. At 12 o'clock all unmasked and repaired to the dancing hall above where merriment, laughter, and pleasure ruled until early morning.

Some folks would have been better off not going out to celebrate Thanksgiving eve, as witness the story of Aminidab Dobbletrop recounted in the *Iowa State Register* of December 3, 1876:

The day before he had investigated his full share of a Thanksgiving fowl, eaten at the fashionable dining hour of six, and when the meal was concluded Aminidab wandered off to pass the evening with some other thankful companions. It's wonderful what an amount of praise and gratitude is developed by the tender breast bone of a turkey. Now Mr. Dobbletrop is one of those men that can't find time to be thankful more than once a year, and when the "sign is right" he is sufficiently grateful to answer for twelve months to come. He is grateful, and full in other ways. Thursday night he found his companions — Tom and Jerry, Moody and Sankey, old man Burbon, Udolpho Schnapps, and in fact all his cronies were there, and between them they rounded up the evening hours of Thanksgiving day until Friday morning was well along. Then Mr. Dobbletrop went home and retired to rest by the side of the feminine Dobbletrop, taking good care to keep his face turned away from her's. He had been out in the cold and was afraid she might take a chill from his breath.

Soon he slept, and sleeping he dreamed. In his vision he thought he had been changed into a turkey roost. Huge gobblers clutched their claws around the profile of his Ro-

man nose. Immense turkey-hens perched astride each ear and howled against his tympanum sentences concerning dressing and gravy. A film of salad covered each eye, great plump oysters dropped like tears from his cheeks, and celery sprouted like the horns of the behemoth from his forehead. He was smothered in gravy — a second Clarence. Dumpplings engulfed him; mince pies threatened to overwhelm him, and plum puddings came rolling down imaginary mountains to crush him in an avalanche of sweets and raisins. He was sailing along a sea of schnapps. Suddenly a fearful storm came and wrecked his barque. There for hours he battled with angry waves of Tom and Jerry. Old Burgundy foamed in his smarting eyes; sour mash spirits rushed in a stragglng tide down the Dobbletrop gullet. Gout and indigestion oppressed him. All of his remote ancestors came from under their headstones, armed with red hot pitchforks which they thrust into his diaphragm. He was stuffed and baked, his grandmothers for ten generations back basting his browning back with steaming gravy. All the turkeys that had been raised since the time when Adam plucked the first thanksgiving fowl from a sour apple tree in Mesopotamia and had a difficulty with Eve because he wouldn't pick up cobs with which to cook it, were piled on his breast. He clutched frantically at the heap, but was only able to pull out two handsfull of feathers before Mrs. Dobbletrop landed him on the floor, and he awoke to find that good lady's black hair in his hands and she caressing his head with his right boot. There was a bald place just back of her ears, and with careful thoughtfulness she had selected the right boot because the heel was gone from the left. Before Aminidab had completed his explanation his head looked like the Himalaya mountains after a severe fit of smallpox. He narrated his dreams in extenuation to Mrs. Dobbletrop, but she said he had gone to bed drunk, and that fancied turkeys wouldn't replace her dismembered scalp

lock. Next year Aminidab proposed to enjoy his Thanksgiving at home and sleep in the woodshed.

In addition to home, church, school, and the great outdoors with its varied sports, Thanksgiving afforded an opportunity for entertainment in the theater. On November 25, 1906, the editor of the Dubuque *Times-Journal* noted with pleasure that the Standard Opera Company would give a matinee and evening performance on Thanksgiving Day at the Grand Opera. Two of the "more tuneful" light operas — *Martha* and *The Bohemian Girl* — had been selected for production. Miss Pauline Perry was the prima donna whose "effective soprano" and "charming manner" had won the approval of the "best musical critics." Miss Clara Hunt, who appeared in the leading contralto roles, had received popular and critical praise in the Metropolitan Opera and in Europe.

The opera company was under the stage management of Cecil B. de Mille who, the *Times-Journal* declared, "comes of a famous theatrical family" and was an "efficient actor and singer." De Mille took "leading parts in the casts of the operas named." The management had provided its own orchestra and an outstanding group of singers and dancers. Truly, Dubuque was destined to have gala Thanksgiving entertainment in 1906. For more than a century Thanksgiving has been one of Iowa's best loved holidays.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN





Thanksgiving Greetings

Therefore I, *William Bradford*
 Governor of Plymouth, Say:
 Through virtue of vested power
 Ye shall gather with one accord,
 and hold in the month of November,
 Thanksgiving unto the **Lord**
William Bradford
 Governor
 of Plymouth
 1621







THAT WAS IN THE AUTUMN, CHILDREN,
 SIXTEEN-HUNDRED-TWENTY-ONE,
 SCARCE A YEAR FROM WHEN THEY LANDED
 AND THE COLONY BEGUN.
 AND NOW WHEN IN LATE NOVEMBER,
 OUR THANKSGIVING FEAST IS SPREAD,
 'TIS THE SAME TIME-HONORED CUSTOM
 OF THOSE PILGRIMS, LONG SINCE DEAD.



Thank God
 for rest,
 where none
 molest.

And none can make afraid,
 For Peace that sits as Plenty's guest,
 Beneath the homestead's shade
 Whittier.



AND THE PATIENT PILGRIM MOTHERS
 AS THE HARVEST TIME DREW NEAR,
 LOOKED WITH HAPPY THANKFUL FACES
 AT THE FULL CORN IN THE EAR.

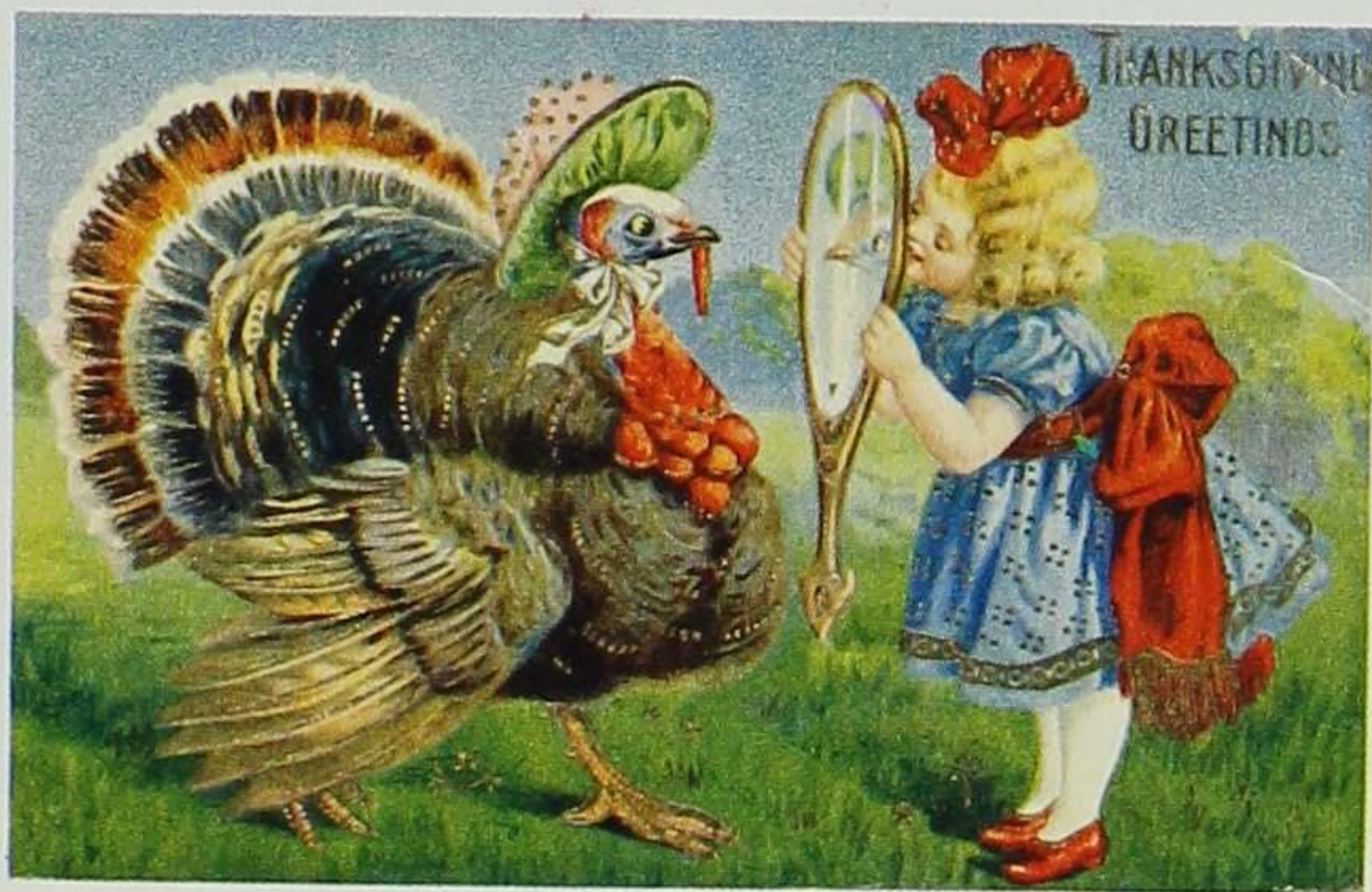
SO THE GOVERNOR, WILLIAM BRADFORD
 IN THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART,
 TO PRAISE GOD FOR ALL HIS MERCIES
 SET A SPECIAL DAY APART.

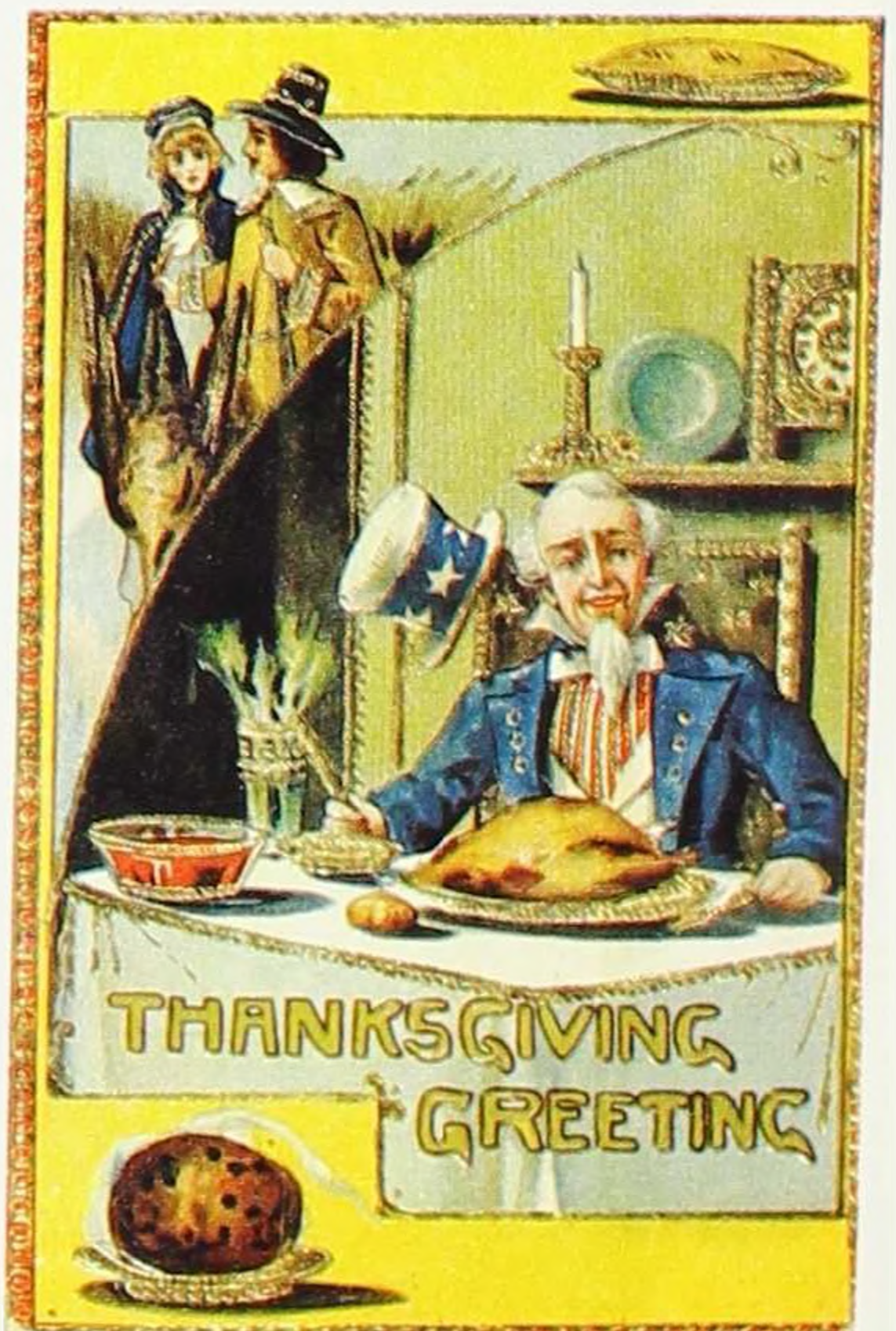
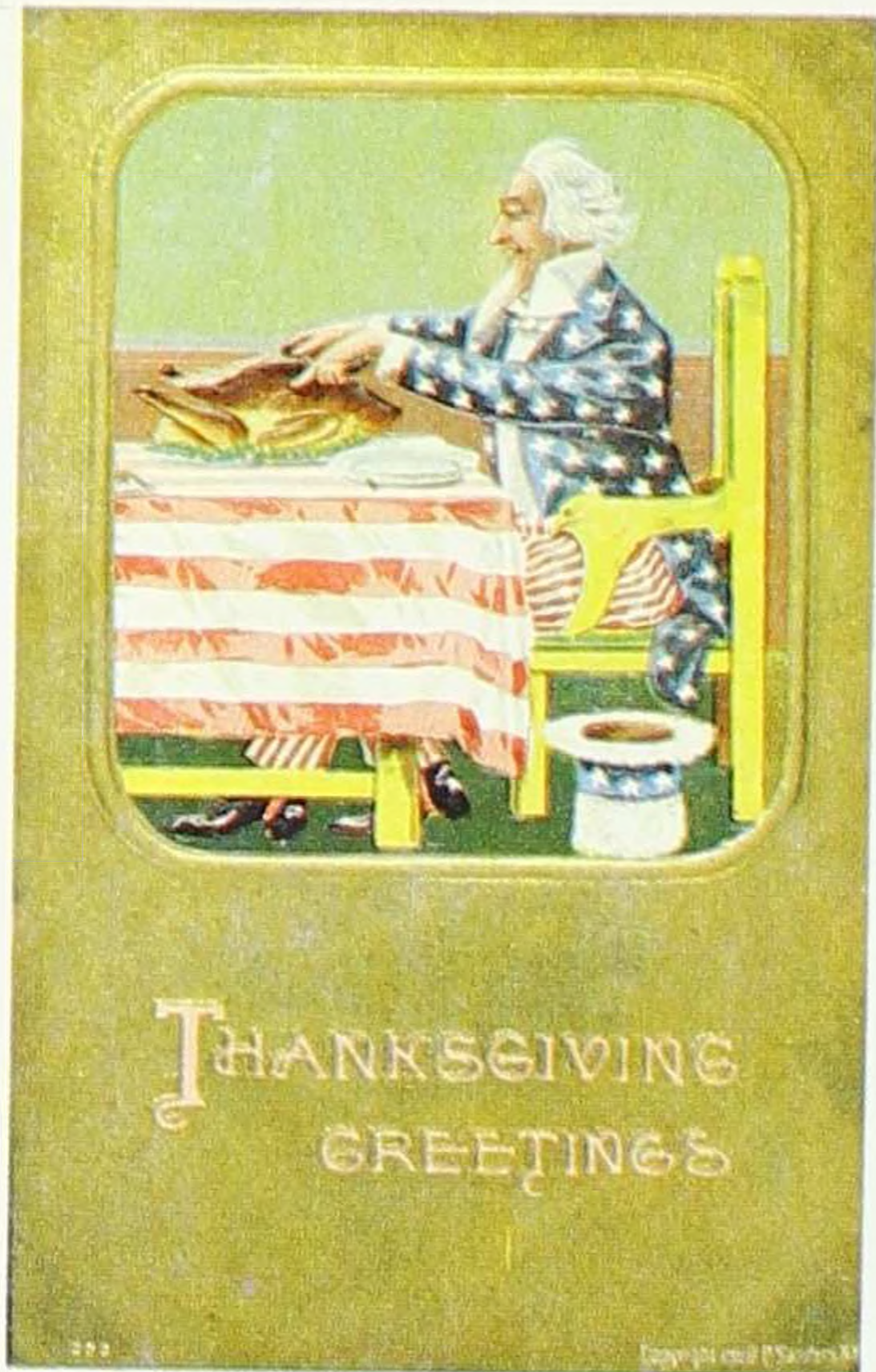






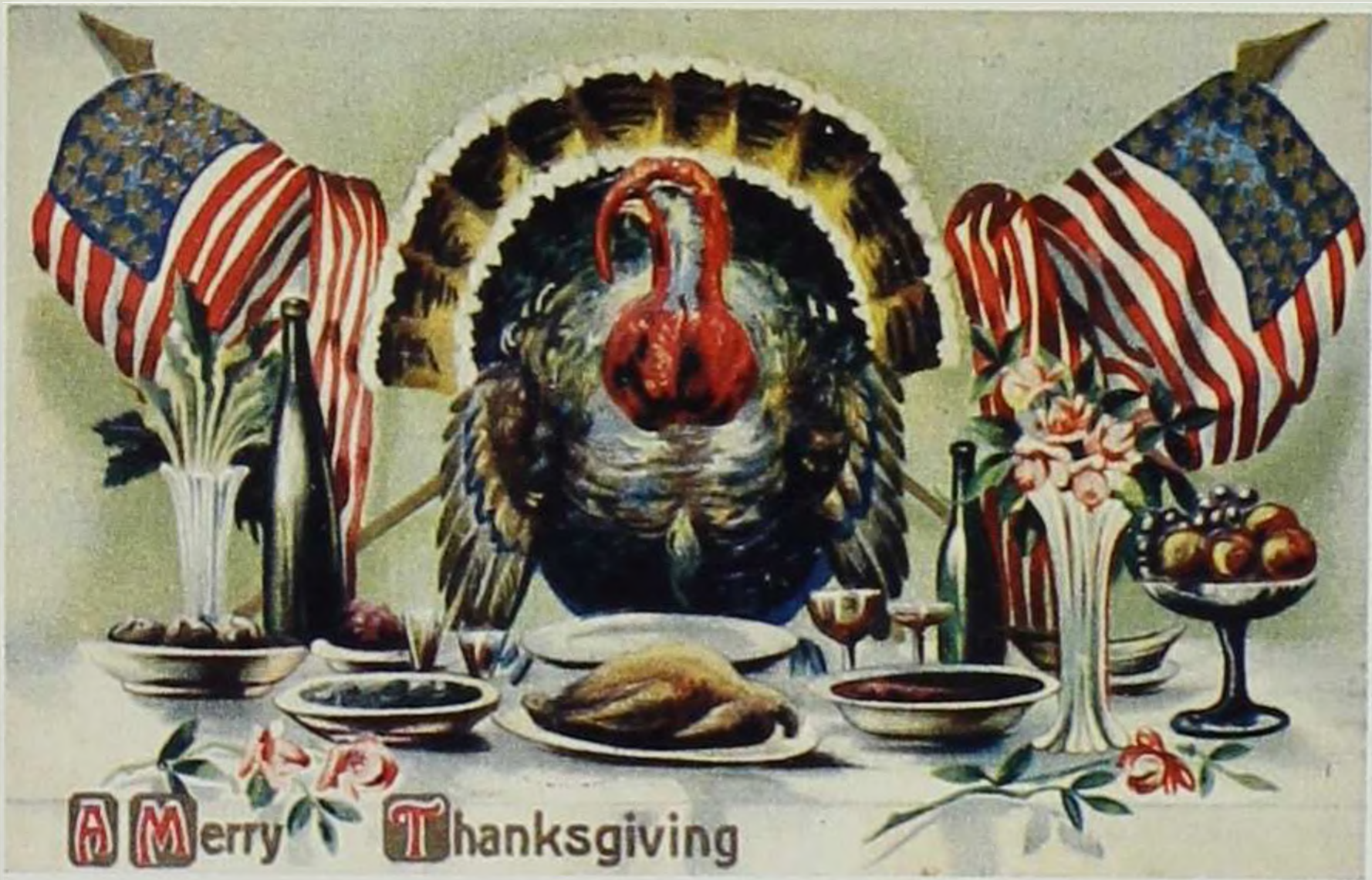








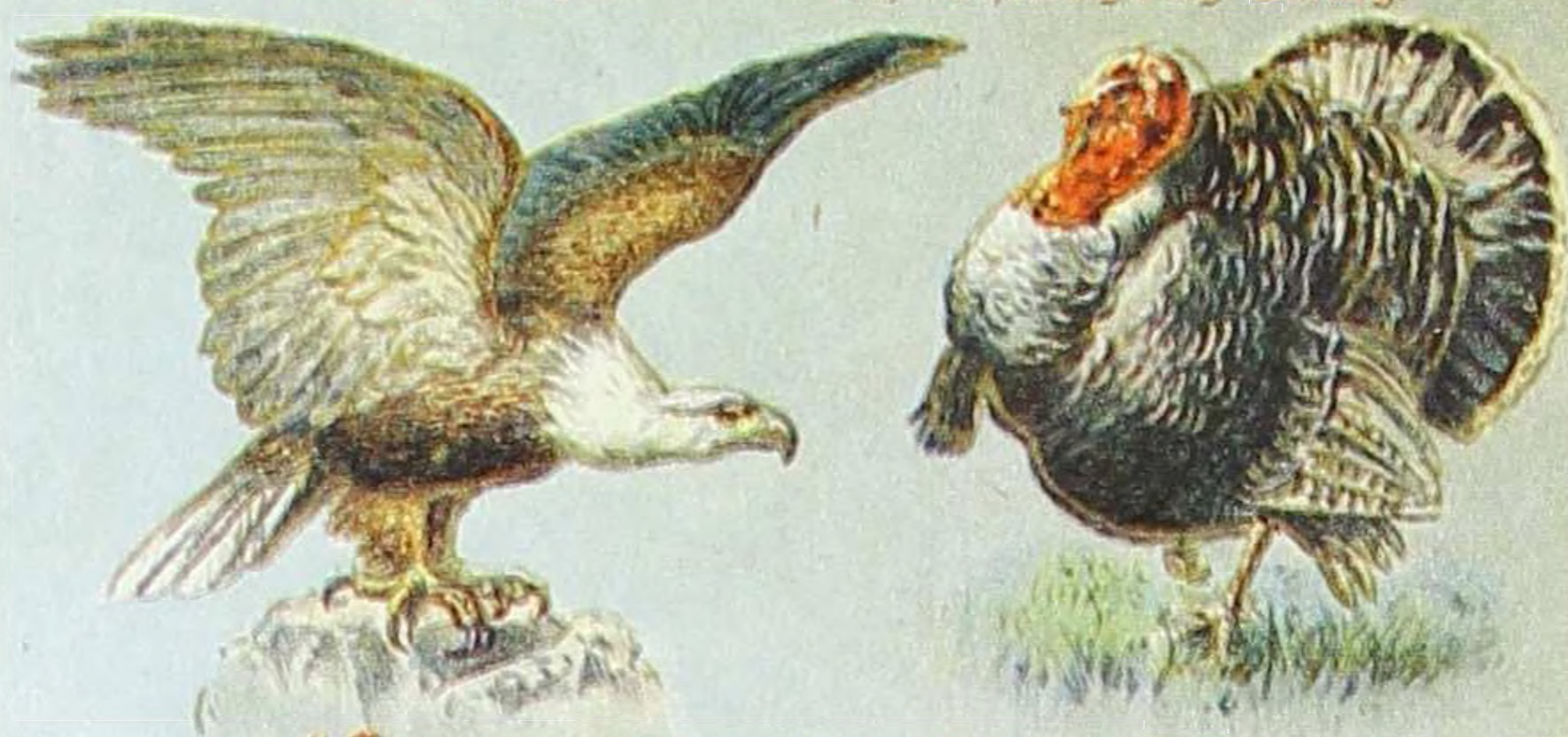




Our National Birds.

The American Eagle.

The Thanksgiving Turkey.



"May one give us peace in all our states,
The other a piece for all our plates."





A JOYFUL THANKSGIVING
There's so much to be thankful for
Complain and grumble as we may
We never stop to realize
The wealth that is ours today.



THANKSGIVING DAY AT VALLEY FORGE 1778!

REPRODUCED BY JERRY WILSON 1912

Thanksgiving in Iowa Schools

The observance of Thanksgiving in Iowa schools dates back to an early day in Iowa history. There can be little doubt that many teachers were aware of the presidential as well as the gubernatorial proclamations calling upon the people to observe Thanksgiving. Iowa teachers accordingly carried on simple ceremonies that reflected for the most part their own personal feelings regarding the significance of the occasion.

Gradually, as the seasons passed, it became more and more obvious that something should be done to reach a more uniform and meaningful observance of Thanksgiving in Iowa schools. By the turn of the century the Department of Public Instruction had established a well-rounded program for the observance of various holidays and, through an excellent *Special Days* publication, had provided teachers with an effective and useful tool to educate and inspire student awareness, not only of legal holidays, but of such days as Arbor Day and Bird Day, Peace Day, Flag Day, Louisiana Purchase Day, and Conservation Day.

The following material on Thanksgiving Day appeared in various *Special Days* brochures, issued annually, and distributed to the various schools in

Iowa. While Memorial Day (see the May 1968 issue of *The Palimpsest*) and Thanksgiving usually occupied the lion's share of the space, other holidays were by no means overlooked. Many Iowans who received their education in the early years of the 20th century will recall nostalgically the indelible impressions made by these poems. Indeed, many may recall, as does the writer, that several of these poems had to be committed to memory and can still be recited in whole, or in part, with a little coaxing. They represent only a part of the varied Thanksgiving Day material provided by Iowa teachers.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

THE LANDING OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS

The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods, against a stormy sky
Their giant branches toss'd;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moor'd their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes,
They, the true-hearted, came,
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear,—
They shook the depths of the desert's gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard and the sea!
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean-eagle soar'd
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roar'd—
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim-band—
Why had they come to wither there
Away from their childhood's land?

There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow, serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod.
They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God.

Mrs. Felicia Dorothea Hemans

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY

"And now," said the governor, gazing abroad on the piled-up store
Of the sheaves that dotted the clearings and covered the meadows o'er,

" 'Tis meet that we render praises because of this yield of grain;
'Tis meet that the Lord of Harvest be thankful for his sun and rain.

"And therefore I, William Bradford (by the grace of God today,
And the franchise of this good people), governor of Plymouth, say,—
Through virtue of vested power,—ye shall gather with one accord
And hold, in the month of November, Thanksgiving unto the Lord.

"He hath granted us peace and plenty, and the quiet we've sought so long;
He hath thwarted the wily savage, and kept him from wrack and wrong;
And unto our feast the sachem shall be bidden, that he may know
We worship his own Great Spirit, who maketh the harvest grow.

"So shoulder your matchlocks, masters, there is hunting of all degrees;
And fisherman, take your tackle and scour for spoils the seas;
And maidens and dames of Plymouth, your delicate crafts employ
To honor our first Thanksgiving, and make it a feast of joy!

"We fail of the fruits and dainties, we fail of the old home cheer;
Ah! these are the lightest losses, mayhap, that befall us here.
But see! in our open clearings how golden the melons lie!
Enrich them with sweets and spices, and give us the pumpkin pie!"

So bravely the preparations went on for the autumn feast;
The deer and the bear were slaughtered; wild game from the greatest to least
Was heaped in the colony cabins; brown home-brew served for wine;
And the plum and the grape of the forest for orange and peach and pine.

At length came the day appointed; the snow had begun to fall,
But the clang of the meeting-house belfry rang merrily over all,
And summoned the folk of Plymouth, who hastened with glad accord
To listen to Elder Brewster as he fervently thanked the Lord.

In his seat sat Governor Bradford, men, matrons, and maidens fair;
Miles Standish and all his soldiers, with corselet and sword were there;
And sobbing and tears and gladness had each in its turn the sway,
For the grave of sweet Rose Standish o'ershadowed Thanksgiving day.

And when Massasoit, the sachem, sat down with his hundred braves,
And ate the varied riches of gardens and woods and waves,
And looked on the granaried harvest, with a blow on his brawny chest,
He muttered: "The Good Spirit loves his white children best!"

—Margaret J. Preston

THANKSGIVING DAY

Over the river and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we'll go;
The horse knows the way,
To carry the sleigh
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river and through the wood,
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes
And bites the nose
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and through the wood,
To have a first-rate play,
Hear the bells ring,
"Ting-a-ling-ding!"
Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!

Over the river and through the wood,
Trot fast my dapple-gray!
Spring over the ground
Like a hunting hound!
For this is Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river and through the wood,
And straight through the barnyard gate;
We seem to go
Extremely slow;
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood,
Now grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!

—*Lydia Maria Child*

WHO GIVES US OUR THANKSGIVING DINNER

On Thanksgiving day little Dorothy said,
With many a nod of her wise, curly head,
"The cook is as busy as busy can be,
And very good, too,—for 'tis easy to see
She gives us our Thanksgiving Dinner."

"Oh! no, little Dorothy," answered the cook,
"Just think of the trouble your dear mother took
In planning the dinner and getting for me
The things that I cook; so 'tis mother, you see,
Who gives us our Thanksgiving Dinner."

"Of course it is mother; I ought to have known,"
Said Dorothy then, in a satisfied tone.
But mother said smiling: "You are not right yet;
'Tis father who gives me the money to get
The things for our Thanksgiving Dinner."

But father said: "I earn the money, 'tis true;
But money alone not a great deal can do,
The butcher, the grocer, whose things we must buy,
Should not be forgotten, for they more than I
Will give us our Thanksgiving Dinner."

"Oh, isn't it funny?" said Dorothy then;
"And now, I suppose, if I asked these two men,
The grocer, the butcher, about it, they'd say
It surely is somebody else and not they
Who gives us our Thanksgiving Dinner."

And soon little Dorothy heard with delight
That her guess about grocer and butcher was right.
The grocer said he only kept in his store
What miller and farmer had brought in before
To help for the Thanksgiving Dinner.

The jolly old butcher laughed long and laughed loud,
My Thanksgiving turkeys do make me feel proud,
And one's for your dinner; but then, you must know
The turkeys are raised by the farmer, and so
He gives you your Thanksgiving Dinner."

"Oh, yes! 'tis the farmer; at last I've found out,"
Said Dorothy then with a glad little shout.
"The miller must go to the farmer for wheat,
The butcher from him gets the turkeys we eat;
Yes!—he gives us our Thanksgiving Dinner."

"But yet all the others had something to do;
The miller and butcher and grocer helped, too.
And then there was father and mother and cook.
I never knew before how many it took
To give us our Thanksgiving Dinner."

So said little Dorothy, full of surprise,
And feeling that now she had grown very wise.
But what do you think? Had she found it all out?
Or was there still more she might learn, about
Who gives our Thanksgiving Dinner?

—Emilie Poulsson in *Kindergarten Review*

WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
 And you hear the kyouck and the gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock
 And the clackin' of the guineys and the cluckin' of the hens,
 And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
 O, it's them's the times a feller is a feelin' at his best,
 With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
 As he leaves the house bareheaded and goes out to feed the stock,
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' hearty like about the atmusfere
 When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
 Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
 And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
 But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
 Of a crisp and sunny morning of the early autumn days
 Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky rusty rustle of the tossels of the corn,
 And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
 The stubble in the furries kindo' lonesome-like, but still
 A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;
 The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
 The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
 O, it sets my heart a clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
 Is poured around the cellar floor in red and yeller heaps;
 And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
 With theyr mince and apple-butter and theyr souse and sausage, too
 I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be
 As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on me—
 I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole indurin' flock—
 When the frost is on the punkin and fodder's in the shock.

—James Whitcomb Riley, in *Neighborly Poems*

THE CORN SONG

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard!
Heap high the golden corn!
No richer gift has Autumn poured
From out her lavish horn.

Let other hands, exulting, glean
The apple from the pine,
The orange from its glossy green,
The cluster from the vine;

We better love the hardy gift
Our rugged vales bestow,
To cheer us when the storm shall drift
Our harvest fields with snow.

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
The wheat field to the fly:

But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod,
Still let us, for his golden corn,
Send up our thanks to God.

—*John Greenleaf Whittier*

HIS THANKSGIVING DREAM

Three plates full of turkey with cranberry sauce,
And four or five vegetables, too,
And candy and raisins and ice cream and pie—
Poor Tommy! How little he knew
What a quarrel they'd have in his little insides
In the course of that Thanksgiving night!
The people he dreamed of were all so mixed up,
He couldn't get one of them right.
Miss Muffet was sitting on something quite high,
It wasn't a tuffet at all;
It looked very much as if—yes, it must be!
It *was* Humpty Dumpty's red wall!
And Humpty see-sawed with Miss Margery Daw—
He tumbled, and came down too soon;
And Little Red Riding Hood, dear little girl,
Ran away with the Man in the Moon.
King Cole, he was busily shaving the pig;
The barber was singing "Ding Dong!"
The maid wasn't hanging out clothes as she should,
She was singing the sixpence song.
Jack Horner was asking the little black sheep
To give him a bag full of wool;
And "Diller a Dollar," that ten o'clock scholar,
For once was quite early at school.
Now "Rock-a-by, baby, upon the tree-top"
Was queer for Tom Tucker to sing.
The Queen ate her honey with Little Boy Blue;
The little dog laughed—at the King!
Now Little Bo Peep rode to Banbury Cross
So fast that Cock Horse couldn't stop!
When Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard,
She found it was full to the top!
Now Tommy slept badly because of all this;
He hated his pie and ice cream,
And he was right glad, when he woke up next day,
To find it was only a dream.

—*Agnes M. Smith*

THE BOY IS COMIN' HOME

I tell you it is busy times jest now for me and marm;
 The boy is comin' home to spend Thanksgivin' on the farm.
 'Tis ten long years since he went West to mingle in its strife;
 He's done first-rate, and furthermore, he's got a Western wife.
 We got the letter yesterday, and marm she laid awake
 Full half the night, to praise the Lord and think what she must bake.
 If I should feed the turkey now, as she declares I must,
 Why, long before Thanksgivin' day he would swell all up and bust.
 I've had to grind the choppin' knife and go to choppin' mince,
 And things are brewin' rich and fine and fit to feed a prince.
 The Boy, he writ for chicken pie, "With double crust," says he,
 "And mix with cream that lovely pie you used to make for me."
 He wants a big red apple from the hillside Northern Spy,
 And butternuts—I've got 'em round the stovepipe, brown and dry;
 He wants to lay the fire himself with maple hard and sound,
 And pop some corn upon the hearth when all are gathered 'round.
 He wants the things he used to have when he was but a lad.
 'Tis somewhat strange, it may be, but it makes us mighty glad.
 We're both a little whiter, but our love, depend upon 't,
 Is jest as green and stiddy as the hills of old Vermont,
 It flustered marm a bit at first about the Western wife,
 What she should do for one so fine and used to city life;
 But tucked between the Boy's big sheets she found a little slip;
 She read it with a happy tear, a gently quivering lip;
 "Dear mother," them's her words, "I write this on the sly,
 So don't tell John, but make for him a big, big pumpkin pie;
 I know it will delight him, for he still is but a boy—
 His mother's boy—and so he fills his wife's glad heart with joy."
 And so you see 'tis busy times jest now for me and marm—
 The boy is comin' home to spend Thanksgivin' on the farm.

—John Mervin Hull, in *Lippincott's*

ON RECEIPT OF A PUMPKIN PIE

Ah! on Thanksgiving day when from east and from west,
From north and from south come the pilgrim and guest;
When the grayhaired New Englander sees round his board,
The old broken links of affection restored.
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles, where the girl smiled before;
What moistens the lip and brightens the eye,
What calls back the past, like the rich pumpkin pie?

Oh, fruit loved of boyhood, the old days recalling,
When wood grapes were purpling, and brown nuts were falling;
When wild ugly faces were carved in its skin
Glaring out through the dark with a candle within;
When we laughed round the corn heap, with hearts all in tune,
Our chair a broad pumpkin, our lantern the moon,—
Telling tales of the fairy who traveled like steam,
In a pumpkin shell coach, with two rats for her team.

Then thanks for thy present; none sweeter or better,
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter.
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine,
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking, than thine.
And the prayer, which my mouth is too full to express,
Swells my heart, that thy shadow may never be less;
That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below,
And the fame of thy worth like a pumpkin vine grow;
And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky,
Golden tinted and fair as thy own pumpkin pie!

—*J. G. Whittier*

A TURKEY'S SOLILOQUY

Thanksgiving day is coming;
I scented pumpkin pie
Today while walking near the house;
Ah me, I soon must die!
The first snowflakes are falling.
The little birds have fled,
Thanksgiving day will soon be here,
And I shall lose my head.

Last night my sleep was broken.
I dreamed a dream of woe;
I saw the farmer's table spread
With dishes, row on row;
And in the very center,
Flanked round with plates of pie,
Was *something* on a platter huge,—
I looked. Alas! 'Twas I.

My head and feet were missing,
And I was nicely browned;
With glistening eyes and watery mouths
The children gathered round:
The farmer raised his carving knife
And made one dreadful stroke,—
I gobbled loud in terror
And luckily awoke.

Why do folks keep Thanksgiving,
I cannot see the use?
But I wouldn't mind it half so much
If they would eat roast goose.
But they're so fond of turkey
They'll never pass me by;
And so, I think I'll hurry round
And bid my friends good-bye.

—*From Western Teacher*

IT IS COMING

It is coming—it is coming—be the weather dark or fair;
 See the joy upon the faces, feel the blessings in the air!
 Get the dining chamber ready—let the kitchen stove be filled;
 Into gold-dust pumpkin—have the fatted turkey killed;
 Tie the chickens in a bundle by their yellow-downy legs;
 Hunt the barn, with hay upholstered, for the ivory-prisoned eggs.
 'Tis the next of a procession, through the centuries on its way;
 Get a thorough welcome ready for the grand old day.

—Will Carleton

GIVE THANKS FOR ALL

Give Thanks for all the love that brings
 To us a host of precious things;
 Let's stop and think that here we are—
 Close to our sides and near and far
 Spread God's good gifts of pleasant Foods,
 And Joys in waiting multitudes;
 And Toys and Games and lots of Fun;
 And Sky and Stars and smiling Sun;
 And Thoughts awake and Dreams asleep;
 And Things to give and Things to keep;
 And rosy Hope, that never ends;
 And cozy Secrets, Laughs and Friends;
 And Little Things like Flowers sweet,
 And useful Hands and dancing Feet—
 O, stop and think of all of these,
 And for a moment bend the knees
 Before a Loving God that brings
 This endless store of precious Things;
 Let's prove to God by grateful living
 How full we are of true THANKS-GIVING.

—By John Martin from *John Martin's Book*

THE DRESSED TURKEY

One of the parish sent one morn,
A farmer kind and able—
A nice fat turkey, raised on corn,
To grace the pastor's table.

The farmer's lad went with the fowl,
And thus addressed the pastor:
"Dear me, if I ain't tired! Here is
A gobbler from my master."

The pastor said: "Thou should'st not thus
Present the fowl to me;
Come, take my chair, and for me ask,
And I will act for thee."

The preacher's chair received the boy,
The fowl the pastor took—
Went out with it, and then came in
With pleasant smile and look;
And to his young *pro tem* he said:
"Dear sir, my honored master
Presents this turkey, and his best
Respects to you, his pastor."

"Good!" said the boy, "your master is
A gentleman and scholar!
Many thanks to him, and for yourself
Here is half a dollar!"

The pastor felt around his mouth
A most peculiar twitching;
And, to the gobbler holding fast,
He "bolted" for the kitchen.

He gave the turkey to the cook,
And came back in a minute,
Then took the youngster's hand and left
A half a dollar in it.

TOM'S THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving tomorrow, the teacher said,
"Now I wish you each to say
What you have most to be thankful for
Upon Thanksgiving day."

A flutter of paper, a pencil's scratch,
A puzzled and anxious look,
As each little head bent over his task
And scribbled his thought in his book.

Tom wrote "Thanksgiving is always a day
To give God thanks," then a whirl
Of his pencil, "I'm giving my thanks,
I'm thankful 'cause I'm not a girl."

—*Emma Playter Seabury*

LITTLE PAUL'S THANKSGIVING

They tossed him and they squeezed him,
And they kissed him one and all;
They said, "You blessed, blessed boy!"
And "Darling little Paul!"

But they didn't give him turkey,
Nor any pumpkin pie,
And when the nuts and grapes went 'round,
They slyly passed him by.

But he didn't seem to mind it,
For in the sweetest way
He sat and sucked his little thumb,
His first Thanksgiving Day.

—*From Western Teacher*

GENTLEMAN GAY'S THANKSGIVING

Said old Gentleman Gay, "On a Thanksgiving Day,
If you want a good time, then give something away;"
So he sent a fat turkey to Shoemaker Price,
And the shoemaker said, "What a big bird! How nice!
And since such a good dinner's before me, I ought
To give Widow Lee the small chicken I bought."
"This fine chicken, oh, see!" said the pleased Widow Lee,
"And the kindness that sent it, how precious to me!
I would like to make some one as happy as I—
I'll give Washwoman Bidy my big pumpkin pie."
"And oh, sure!" Bidy said, "'tis the queen of all pies!
Just to look at its yellow face gladdens my eyes.
Now it's my turn, I think; and a sweet gingercake
For the motherless Finigan children I'll bake."
Said the Finigan children—Rose, Denny, and Hugh—
"It smells sweet of spice, and we'll carry a slice
To poor little lame Jake, who has nothing that's nice."
"Oh, I thank you, and thank you!" said little lame Jake;
"Oh, what a bootiful, bootiful, bootiful cake!
And oh, such a big slice! I will save all the crumbs,
And will give them to each little sparrow that comes."
And the sparrows, they twittered, as if they would say,
Like old Gentlemen Gay, "On a Thanksgiving Day,
If you want a good time, then give something away."

—Marian Douglas, in *Little Men and Women*.

ADVICE TO A BOY

Remember, my boy, you *must work*, whether you handle a pick or a pen, a wheelbarrow or a set of books, digging ditches or editing a paper, ringing an auction bell or writing funny things, you must work.

If you look around, you will see the men who are most able to live the rest of their days without work, are the men who work the hardest. Don't be afraid of killing yourself with overwork. It is beyond your power to do that on the sunny side of thirty. Work gives you an appetite for your meals; it lends solidity to your slumbers; it gives you a perfect and grateful appreciation of a holiday.

There are young men who do not work but the world is not proud of them. It does not know their names even; it simply speaks of them as old So-and-so's boys. Nobody likes them; the great busy world doesn't know that they are there. So find out what you want to be and do, and take off your coat and *do something* in the world. The busier you are, the less harm you will be apt to get into, the sweeter will be your sleep, the brighter and happier your holidays, and the better satisfied will the world be with you.

—Robert J. Burdette

THANKSGIVING DAY

Ride a Turkey Gobbler
All around the town,
When the days are frosty
And the leaves are brown.

Apple Pie and Pumpkin,
Cranberry and, O!
Mince Pies in the pantry
In a smiling row.

Pantry's full of good things,
Safely stowed away
For a certain Thursday,
Called Thanksgiving Day.

Everybody's waiting
Man and Bird and Beast,
Everybody's waiting for
A great Thanksgiving Feast.

—E. W. Peckham in *John Martin's Book*

THANKSGIVING

Thanks be to Thee, O God!

For the throbbing music which the world's voice thrills;
But most for melody which sings, alone—

The bird in deepest wood—or song that stills
A child to sleep, far from the grand refrain
Of Fame's great chorus, chanting tones well known.

Thanks be to Thee, O God!

For Autumn harvest men have toiled to reap;
For love, for home, for laughter through our tears,

But most of all for seeds which, in the sleep
Of winter, wait for sun and Spring-time rain,
Holding potential growth for coming years.

—*Edith Livingston Smith*

THANKSGIVING

Harvest is come. The bins are full,
The barns are running o'er;
Both grains and fruits we've gathered in
Till we've no room for more.

We've worked and toiled through heat and cold,
To plant, to sow, to reap;
And now for all this bounteous store
Let us Thanksgiving keep.

The brown birds are flying
Like leaves through the sky;
The flow'rts are calling,
"Dear birdlings, good-bye."

The bird voices falling
So soft from the sky
Are answering the flow'rts,
"Dear Playmates, good-bye."

Heavenly Father, hear our thanks
For thy loving care;
Help us now to show our love
And each blessing share.

And for the home with friends to love,
For clothes, for health, for gain,
We thank our Father, He who sends
The sunshine and the rain.

In the sky above us,
Where the angels dwell,
God will ever love us,
If we serve him well.

Trees bare and brown,
Dry leaves everywhere,
Dancing up and down,
Whirling through the air.

The happy thank-you day has come,
And harvest time is past;
We've gathered fruits and nuts and grains,
We'll say good-bye at last.

Good-bye to Autumn, Autumn dear,
And with our parting words
We'll sing our thanks to God above
For fruits and trees and birds.

COMMON MERCIES

Dear Lord, are we ever so thankful
As thankful as we would be to Thee,
For Thine angels sent down to defend us
From dangers our eyes never see;
From perils that lurk unsuspected,
The powers of earth and of air,
The while we are Heaven-protected
And guarded from evil and snare?

Are we grateful, as grateful we should be,
For commonplace days of delight,
When safe we fare forth to our labor,
And safe we fare homeward at night;
For the weeks in which nothing has happened
Save commonplace toiling and play,
When we've worked at the tasks of the household,
And peace hushed the house day by day?

Dear Lord, that the terror at midnight,
The weird of the wind and the flame,
Hath passed by our dwelling, we praise Thee
And lift up our hearts in Thy name;
That the circle of darlings unbroken
Yet gathers in bliss round the board,
That commonplace love is our portion,
We give Thee our praises, dear Lord!

Forgive us who live by Thy bounty,
That often our lives are so bare
Of the garlands of praise that should render
All votive and fragrant each prayer.
Dear Lord, in the sharpness of trouble
We cry from the depths to the throne!
In the long days of gladness and beauty,
Take Thou the glad hearts as Thine own.

Oh, common are sunshine and flowers,
And common are raindrops and dew,
And the gay little footsteps of children,
And common the love that holds true.
So, Lord, for our commonplace mercies,
That straight from Thy hand are bestowed,
We are fain to uplift our thanksgivings—
Take, Lord, the long debt we have owed.

—Margaret Sangster

A THANKSGIVING WOOING

The frost was on the cottage pane,
The skies were gray and chill;
But with a trembling hand she smoothed
Her kerchief's dainty frill.
For then she saw the youthful squire
Dismounting in the snow,
In velvet coat and buckled shoes,
Thanksgiving long ago.

While with her wrinkled sire, he talked
Of weather and of wheat,
His ear was ever strained to catch
The music of her feet.
Her dimpled arms were deep in flour,
Her rounded cheek a-glow;—
Her father slept; he stole a kiss,
Thanksgiving long ago.

Her stately mother and her guests
Were waiting at the Hall
Before the feast in silver served;
But he forgot them all,
And at the farmer's humble board,
With curly head bent low,
He called a courtly blessing down,
Thanksgiving long ago.

Clear rose the moon above the woods
And twilight veiled the farm;
But still he lingered at the gate,
The bridle on his arm.

"Oh, bake and brew for me alone,
Be mine for weal or woe;—
I love you dear," he softly said,
Thanksgiving long ago.

In yonder carven frame she stands,
In pearls and blue brocade;
And still tradition fondly keeps
The pumpkin pies she made,
And tells again the story sweet,
When granaries overflowing,—
Of how the squire a-wooing went,
Thanksgiving long ago.

—*Minna Irving*

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

Children do you know the story
Of the first Thanksgiving Day,
Founded by our Pilgrim fathers
In that time so far away?

They had given for religion
Wealth and comfort—yes, and more—
Left their homes and friends and kindred,
For a bleak and barren shore.

On New England's rugged headlands,
Now where peaceful Plymouth lies;
There they built their rough log cabins,
'Neath the cold forbidding skies.

And too often e'en the bravest
Felt his blood run cold with dread,
Lest the wild and savage red man
Burn the roof over his head.

Want and sickness, death and sorrow,
Met their eyes on every hand;
And before the spring had reached them
They had buried half their band.

But their noble, brave endurance
Was not exercised in vain;
Summer brought them brighter prospects,
Ripening seed and waving grain.

And the patient Pilgrim mothers,
As the harvest time drew near,
Looked with happy thankful faces,
At the full corn in the ear.

So the governor, William Bradford,
In the gladness of his heart,
To praise God for all his mercies,
Set a special day apart.

That was in the autumn, children,
Sixteen hundred twenty-one;
Scarce a year from when they landed,
And the colony begun.

And now, when in late November,
Our Thanksgiving feast is spread,
'Tis the same time-honored custom
Of those Pilgrims long since dead.

We shall never know the terrors,
That they braved years, years ago;
But for all their struggles gave us,
We our gratitude can show.

And the children of New England,
If they feast or praise or pray,
Should bless God for those brave Pilgrims,
And their first Thanksgiving Day.

—*Youth's Companion*

THE THANKSGIVING OF THE PUMPKINS

Five jolly, fat pumpkins one moonlight night
Said, "Come, let us all take a ride.
The turkeys will take us, with ease and delight."
So away they all rode in great pride.

But soon Mistress Cook cried out in dismay,
"O, where are my turkeys, my pies?"
"They all went away to spend Thanksgiving Day,"
Said the moon, laughing down from the skies.

—Ella M. Powers

THE OLD NEW ENGLAND THANKSGIVING

The king of all the festivals was the autumn Thanksgiving. When the apples were all gathered and the cider was all made, and the yellow pumpkins were rolled in from many a hill in billows of gold, and the corn was husked, and the labors of the season were done, and the warm late days of Indian Summer came in, dreamy and calm and still, with just enough frost to crisp the ground of a morning, but with warm traces of sunny hours at noon, there came over the community a sort of genial repose of spirit,—a sense of something accomplished, and of a new golden mark made in advance,—and the deacon began to say to the minister, of a Sunday, "I suppose it's about time for the Thanksgiving proclamation."

—Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Oldtown Folks*

BOY'S THANKSGIVING

The meal was done. The father then
Addressed the youngest guest, aged ten;
"On this Thanksgiving, tell me, sir,
What do you feel most thankful for?"

The youth he sighed, for past delight
Had filled his ample jacket tight,
Then glanced the empty table o'er;
"I'm thankful, sir, there is no more!"

A SONG OF LIFE

In the rapture of life and of living,
I lift up my heart and rejoice,
And I thank the great Giver for giving
The soul of my gladness a voice.

I can laugh at the world and its sages—
I am greater than seers who are sad,
For he is most wise in all ages
Who knows how to laugh—and be glad.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

THE AMERICAN TURKEY

O, who has not heard
Of Columbia's bird,
The Eagle, that soars to the sky;—
Chants Liberty's song—
The whole twelve-months long,
But loudest on Fourth of July.

There is another,
Plain barn-yard brother,
Belongs to this Land of the Free;
Not much on the wing,
And no voice to sing,—
Just says, "Gobble, gobble," to me.

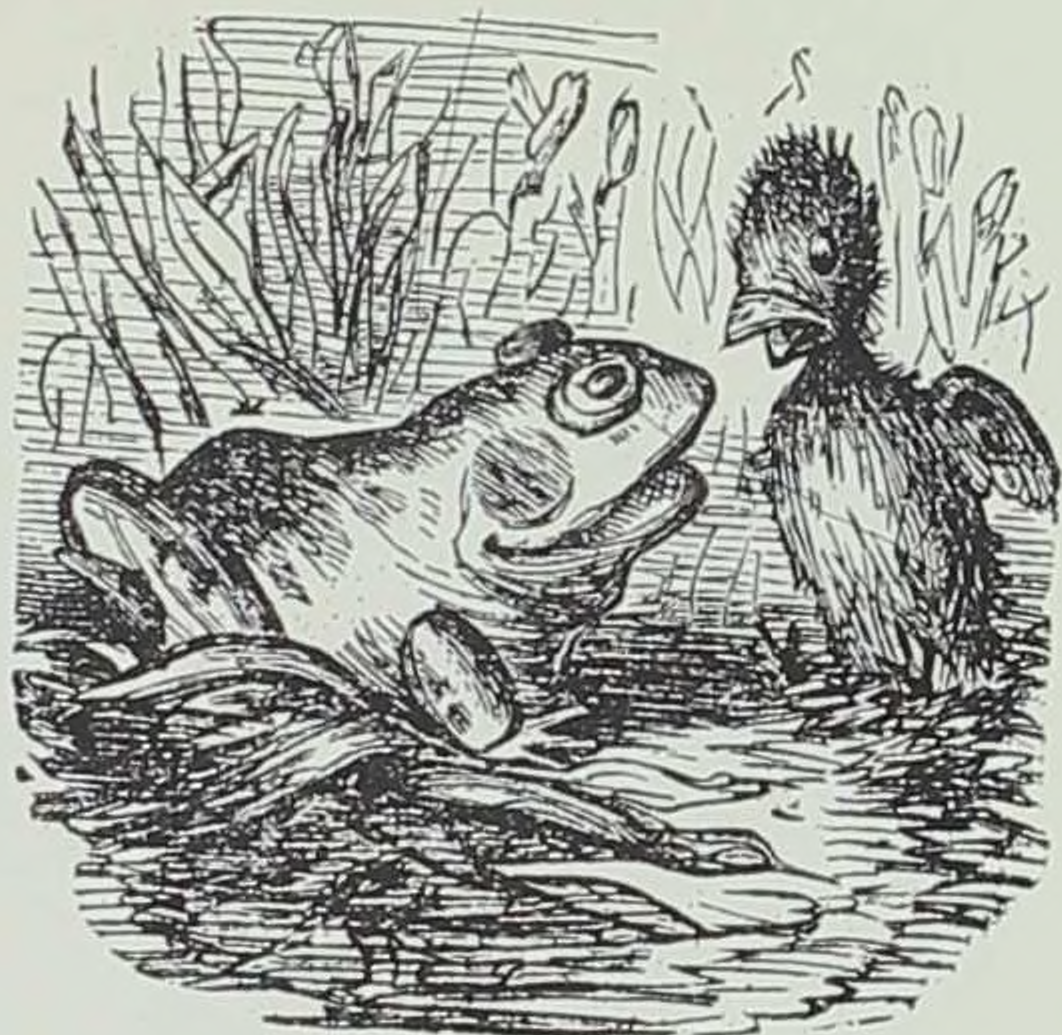
He has his day, too,
For what would we do,
Without Turkey dinner, Thanksgiving?
And all the good things,
That holiday brings,
To make a boy glad he's living.

—Addie B. Billington

THE CAREER OF A TURKEY.



He enters upon this world of trouble.
(1)



He sees astonishing sights,
(2)



He makes his first acquaintance with his enemy, man.
(3)



Time passes, and he is enabled to have revenge.
(4)



He gobbles well.
(5)



But he is gobbled.
(6)



A CORDIAL THANKSGIVING

SEP. T. F. G.

BRUCE SCHWARTZ
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