

which we are separated only by our own dullness of sense and heaviness of vision—the story of the Transfiguration ceases to be a strange episode, a breaking in upon nature and the supernatural.

Christ was accustomed to retire from the haunts of men, even from the companionship of his own disciples, and spend all night in prayer among the hills of Galilee. Of these secret and sacred communings this story of the Transfiguration gives us our only glimpse. On this occasion he took his three most intimate friends with him, and they saw, and have recorded for us, the story of his night-watchings. We are not to think of his praying as a Jacob-like wrestling with God. The spirit of his only prayer forbids such a conception of his night communings. The Lord's prayer is the language of petition, but also of quiet and calm assurance. His intercessory prayer, in the seventeenth chapter of John, is a thanksgiving, but the thanksgiving of one to whom intimacy with the Father is no rare experience, but a perpetual joy. Even the agony in Gethsemane, so far as the very brief account gives us any true knowledge of it, was a wrestling with his own bodily nature, not a wrestling with God, and his prayer was ever the same in its triumphant refrain, "Thy will, not mine, be done." These nights of prayer were nights of communion; nights in which the obscurity of sense was cleared away, and the half-enfranchised soul saw and communed with the souls that were wholly freed from the dimness and darkness of the flesh, and, most of all, with the Father whom no eye of flesh ever has seen or ever can see.

If, however, this incident thus interpreted affords us a new sense of the reality and the presence of the spirit world, it also guards us against going out of the activities of an earthly existence to indulge in reveries and dreams concerning the invisible. Their presence may well serve as an inspiration; their ministry may be real and helpful; but we may not turn aside from present duty for converse with them. If ever any of us are inclined to listen to the voices of the voiceless dead, the one voice which speaks to us out of the cloud—and the *only* voice—is, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." If we are ever inclined to turn our longing eyes toward this impalpable world, and seek for some materialized form of the invisible dead, we may well remember that the glimpse of the lawgiver and the prophet was but a glimpse, and that when the disciples' eyes were open they saw no one save Jesus only. If we are inclined to abide on the Mount of Vision, and substitute spiritual ecstasy for practical duty, we shall do well to recall the throng that waited at the foot of the Mount for Jesus's return, bringing power of healing for the demoniac boy, and to remember that the poor we have always with us, and that the hours of inspiration are meant to equip us with a larger sympathy, a broader human love, and a profounder curative and healing faith as a preparation for the work of casting the devil out of those who abide in the valley.



## A Prayer

By Norman Gale

Let me live in quiet joy,  
Simple-hearted as a boy,  
Asking alms of vale and fountain,  
Begging beauty from the mountain;  
Quick to answer smiles of God,  
Gold and gracious on the sod.

Let me learn your larger speech,  
Oak of heaven, breathing beech!  
Ye whose lips of foliage shout  
Mighty ballads roundabout,  
While the doves, deserting song,  
In your bosoms listen long.

Wash me, rain, and lave me, dew!  
Ah, to grow as pure as you!  
Bending bravely to my labor,  
God for guide and love for neighbor—  
Just a child of star and stream,  
Filled with sunshine, touched by dream.

—*St. James's Gazette.*

## A Pioneer's Thanksgiving

By Major James B. Pond

It was early in April, 1843, that my father and mother, with five children, bade good-by to friends and neighbors in New York State, and, with all our household effects loaded on wagons, drove to Ithaca and embarked on board a canal-boat for Illinois, then the frontier of civilization. The Illinois fever was epidemic. Passing through the great locks at Lockport, overwhelmed with its wonders, we were obliged to wait a whole day for our turn to pass through. The locks were busy day and night passing through boatloads of Illinois home-seekers. At Buffalo we took passage on board the propeller Republic for Southport (now Kenosha), Wis. It was a stormy voyage, everybody seasick, the boat loaded to its full capacity with intelligent, enterprising pioneers.

An uncle who had preceded us the autumn before met us at Southport with his horses and wagon to take us to his home twenty-five miles southwest, in the town of Libertyville, Ill. We found our uncle and his wife, with a family of four young sons, living on the prairie in a log shanty 12 x 14. My aunt was in the midst of a real ague chill and shake when we arrived.

It was close quarters for the two families in this little log cabin—nine children and four adults. Mother set about the housework while my aunt was too ill to get about. During supper a chill came on mother, and she shook nearly half the night. The day following it rained and we all had chills, except father and uncle. They went to the village three miles away to try and find a doctor and some medicine. They returned with a large package of thoroughwort, better known as "boneset," a weed that grows abundantly on the edges of marshes throughout the West—the best ague medicine known at that time. Boneset tea was the order of the day. No family was without it in all the settlement round. A pot of it was on every stove and fireplace.

It was too late for father to secure a farm the first summer of our residence in Illinois. He obtained work in a blacksmith-shop in Libertyville, and the only home obtainable consisted of two rooms in the frame court-house, which was a half-finished building on a high spot of ground. It was neither sided nor plastered, with only rough boards nailed on the frame, and when it rained and the winds blew we would have been just as comfortable out-of-doors. Here our first summer and winter in Illinois were spent. Father was unable to work half the time on account of chills and fever. He had a chill every other day. My sister and I invariably shook every alternate day. Mother's and father's shakes came simultaneously. I have known the whole family to be shaking at the same time. None of the neighbors escaped. It was epidemic. When my morning shake arrived I used to lie down on the floor behind the cook-stove and almost hug the old salamander, even on the warmest summer day, with my sister on the opposite side, my young brothers hugging close to me, mother sitting as close as possible to the fire, and our teeth all chattering at the same time. This was the first long, dreary, rainy, aguey summer and wet, nasty, bitter winter my parents had ever known. The spring came early that year, and father rented a farm. Here we lived for two years, on a public thoroughfare, where thousands of emigrants passed on their way to take new homes in Wisconsin, then the extreme outskirts of civilization in the Northwest. Living so near the road, it was the custom for everybody to stop either for a drink of fresh water or to purchase milk, butter, garden-stuff, or anything we could spare.

Father saw the enterprising home-seekers and heard their glowing descriptions of the country, the healthy climate and its freedom from ague, and the Wisconsin fever took him. Mother looked disparagingly on the reports brought back, and with pity on those moving north. Her three years' experience had been considerably different from the ideal prospects to be enjoyed by this vast host. Father had provided a fair living for his family—a sumptuous living compared to our first year in the West. We now had

neighbors, and friends, and schools. The owner wanted father to rent the farm two years more, but he argued that now was the opportunity for his boys. He could make nothing on rented land.

It was February, 1847, when father started for Wisconsin to look for a home of our own. He had now become a land-looker. Mother had entered into the spirit of the new prospects, and during the evenings of father's absence she would tell us of our owning a farm, and that when we boys grew to be men we could be farmers and own homes, too; that the country was free from ague; that there would be villages and churches and school-houses built, and that we would be the pioneers, which meant the first settlers on the land. Her father had been a pioneer in New York. Father had been gone three weeks when a letter came telling us that he had located a farm in the town of Alto, Wisconsin, and that he should return at once, with his oxen and wagon, for the family. It was late in March when we left for our new home in Wisconsin. Father had hired a neighbor who owned a horse-team to take mother and the younger children, with household goods, to the new claim one hundred and fifty miles in the wilderness. It was an eventful day in all that neighborhood. Work was suspended on adjoining farms, and everybody gathered about the loaded wagon to say good-by, and shake hands with mother. Father and brother Homer and I were to follow with the oxen and a wagon-load consisting of the remainder of the household effects. We drove two milch cows and five pigs, and in a coop on the end of the wagon were eight chickens. We experienced a good deal of difficulty in getting started. Whoever has attempted to drive a hog knows the discouragement we met with. Whoever has never attempted it can never know. It seemed that if we had wanted them to go the other way they would have been all right. They scattered in different directions several times, and some of them succeeded in getting back home. We stopped over night near a farmhouse, and, after getting the cattle in the farm-yard, built a fire by the roadside and father got supper from provisions mother had prepared for the journey. With plenty of coverlets we made up a bed under the wagon, where we three slept soundly. This was my first camping-out. The next day the hogs became used to being driven, and during the whole journey (three weeks) they gave no trouble, except the necessity of watching them, when the wagon started, to see that none were under the wheels.

We were very tired when we finally arrived at our home in Alto. The log house was a new one, with one room downstairs and an attic which contained a bunk for us boys. This bunk was made of four oak slabs, and was wide enough so that four of us could lie crosswise and sleep very comfortably. The roof was made of oak "shakes," and in the winter the snow would often sift in and nearly bury us.

It was Thanksgiving morning in 1850. We had lived in Alto three years. Father was away from home, and we were expecting his return every day. He had been absent in northern Illinois trying to get work at day's wages to keep his family alive. There was little to be obtained even for money, which we did not possess. We had eaten the last of our frozen turnips; the cows had dried up for lack of proper feed and neglect of milking. I had not the strength to milk, and mother could not go to the barn for want of shoes. She could only console her hungry children by assuring them that the Lord would surely hear her prayers, and that father would certainly come that day, or some relief from far-off neighbors, who must know our needy condition. My heart was broken. I was starving, but I cared little for myself if the sufferings of poor mother and the children could only be relieved. There had been a school at what was known as Carpenter's School-house, a log structure two miles west of us. The teacher was an eccentric young Scotchman, who wore a blue frock-coat with two rows of brass buttons. He seemed to know nothing about managing children. He had bad luck, and the few pupils he had made it so uncomfortable for him by throwing pepper on the stove and such-like school-boy annoyances that he disappeared all of a sudden, and none of the settlers knew what had become of him. None of

our family had attended school, owing to our scanty clothing and want of shoes. This morning, as I strayed away from the house into the thicket near by, because I could not possibly bear to listen to poor mother's prayer for relief that it seemed impossible to expect, I suddenly stood face to face with the schoolmaster. I was so frightened that I dared not run. I had heard that he had been driven away from the school. He bowed to me and spoke very gently. "Do not fear, my lad," he said, "I could not harm any one. Is your father at home?" "No, sir, he is down south working." "Is your mother at home?" he kindly inquired. "Yes, sir; will you come in the house?" I asked. He stepped nearer to me, as I shrank from him. "Do not fear, my lad. I am not going to harm you. I am told that your mother and all of your family are needy. I have a little money, and can accommodate you."

"Please come and see mother," I said. Mr. Sailes walked with me to the house and stepped inside. At the door he removed his hat and stood perfectly silent. "Mother," said I, "this is Mr. Sailes, the schoolmaster." The young man's face was crimson. He fairly trembled as he said: "Mum, I hear you are needy. I have some spare cash and no one to bestow it upon. I would gladly make a loan to your husband until I want it. I know that he is an honest man."

"You are very kind, sir," replied my mother. "Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you, ma'am; if you will let the lad go with me to Fairwater [a new town that had just started two and a miles from us, where a store had been opened], we can bring some relief at once."

I started with him. It was a chilly November morning. I was thinly clad, and shivered from cold. Before we had gone very far he took off his coat, saying he was clad too warmly for walking, and asked me if I had any objections to carrying the coat for him. I might throw it over my shoulders, and it would make me warm.

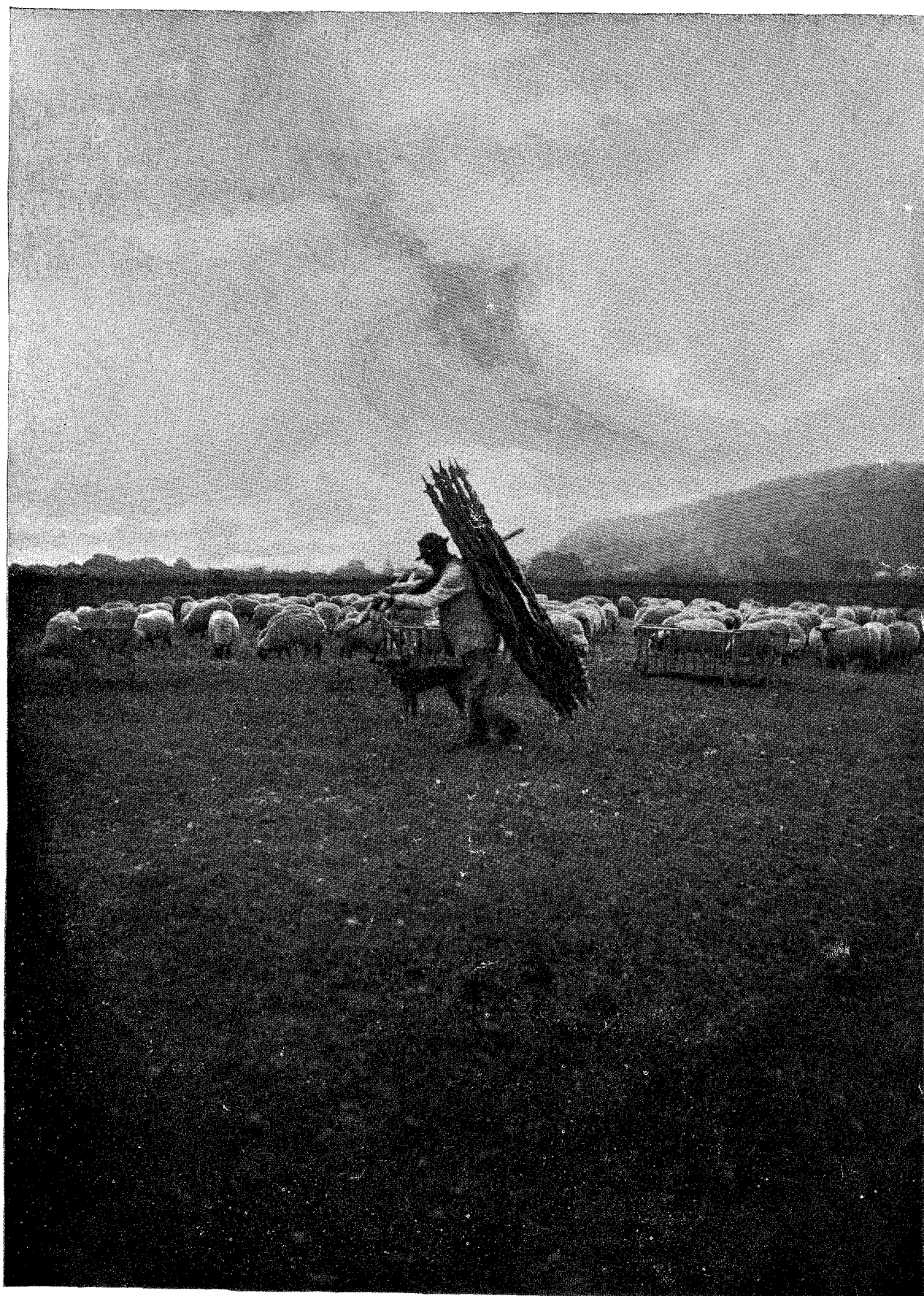
I was absolutely too ignorant to understand that he was making an excuse for giving me his coat. He wore a red flannel shirt under his coat, and no waistcoat. I noticed also that he wore shoes with no stockings.

Just before we reached the new store he put on his coat, and we walked into the place. It was a small board shanty, with a counter and shelves, and a stock of general merchandise was being opened. Mr. Sailes asked the proprietor, George Soule, if he would serve him at once. Soule replied that most of the goods were yet unpacked. "Can't I assist in unpacking?" he asked, and off came his coat. He opened a barrel of flour and secured a bag and filled it; then a box of dried codfish was opened and a number of fish tied in a bundle, with a pound of tea, some coffee, salt, four pounds of crackers (I remember the four pounds because the package was so large and bulky), and a large piece of salt pork. These were hurriedly got together. The fish, tea, and crackers were loaded into my arms. Mr. Sailes shouldered the flour and the salt pork, and we started. It was all I could do to carry my load and keep in sight of him. He set his load near our door and said to me, "Now, my lad, I pray God this may keep you and your mother and family until your father's return." He left without entering the house.

It was a feast long to be remembered which we had that day. It had been such a time since we had experienced the aroma of seasoned food cooking that it was almost intoxicating, and it seemed as though the table would never be set, or that the time would never come for sitting around it. No one who has never had such an experience can appreciate how delicious was this Thanksgiving dinner.

That night father arrived. Mother's prayer was answered. He carried a package containing various articles for our comfort, having walked day after day with it on his shoulders. I do not remember all that it contained. There were shoes for mother and a new pair of boots for myself, some cloth to make us comfortable, and I remember some little articles with bright buttons that had been given to him for the children by somebody he had known. A city boy does not know what it is to be proud of a luxury like that, nor of a pioneer's Thanksgiving.





An English Pastoral



## Thanksgiving Reminiscences

By the Rev. Edward Everett Hale

**M**Y first Thanksgiving I do not pretend to remember. And I am willing to admit that my early associations with Thanksgiving Day are more of eating and drinking than they are of gratitude. This little paper, alas! will have no tales of infant precocity in the way of giving thanks for mercies past or mercies to come.

And, for eating and drinking, we children had a good dinner every day of our lives. A Thanksgiving dinner differed from the rest because it was a dinner-party. The cousins came. The large table appeared, from some crypt where it was hidden other days in the year. There were peculiarities in the legs of the large table, which I did not understand then and do not understand now. More than this, there would be things at dinner which we did not usually have. This above all—it was a party, and it would last from the time we came home from meeting until we went to bed, much later than usual.

"From meeting." I wish it may be observed that in 1826, and much later, the average Bostonian, and all New Englanders outside of Boston, spoke of going to meeting. I have a map of the neighborhood of Boston for a circle of twenty miles around, where every "meeting-house" is marked "M. H."—the "Rev. Dr. Codman's M. H.," the "Rev. Mr. Osgood's M. H." People would not have called these houses churches more than they would have called them mosques or synagogues. This appears on an edition of this map as late as 1833.

In Boston, for some reason not known to the antiquarians, the custom was different. People spoke of Church Green before there was any meeting-house built there. When it was built it was called the New South Church. And so Brattle Street Church would have been so called, as an edifice. But when one spoke of attendance there, he spoke of "going to meeting," as he would have spoken outside of Boston.

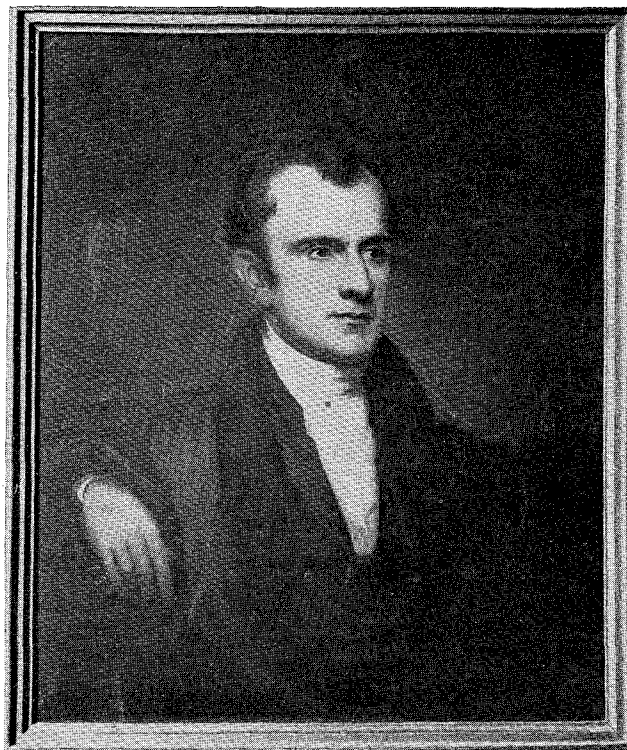
No, I do not remember the time when Thanksgiving Day was a novelty. But, as I do remember the Farmers' Almanac of 1827, when that was a novelty—as I remember the admiration with which I regarded the device on the cover, in which the gravestone, with 1826, already tips a little, while 1827 stands erect and solid—I am quite sure that I heard the proclamation of Levi Lincoln, for Thanksgiving Day in 1826, read from the pulpit of Brattle Street Meeting-House.

It was in Brattle Street Meeting-House that my earlier worship, so far as the Lord's Day was concerned, was conducted. The church, elegant and massive, was built in 1772, when Boston was defying George the Third. The corner-stone was laid in June of that year, and bore, among other names visible to the eye, the name of John Hancock.

Nearly opposite was a British patrol when the siege came, and, long before my day, the name of Hancock had been made illegible by the bayonets of sentry who had no better occupation. But in the tower there was the ball from an American cannon, fired in the siege, the same to which dear Dr. Holmes alludes:

The humbler pile, which, mindful of the hour  
When Howe's artillery shook her new-built tower,  
Wears on her bosom, as a bride might do,  
The iron breastpin which the rebels threw.

The tradition was that the high mahogany pulpit was from a design by Christopher Wren. He was dead long



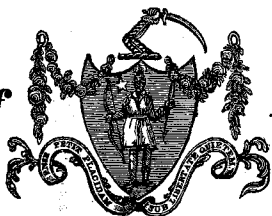
The Rev. John G. Palfrey,  
Pastor of Brattle Street Church in 1826.

before it was built. But the interior of the church was so much like that of the interior of many of the London churches built by him that I dare say the tradition had some foundation.

That I was in this church, by my mother, in a pew in which was also one of the high pillars which supported the roof, that I was here to hear the proclamation of Thanksgiving read by Mr. Palfrey in 1826, I am as sure as I am that I am writing these words. For, from the time when I first attended the public services of religion, until the time when I entered college, I was absent from Brattle Street Meeting-House but three times, morning or afternoon. I know what those three occasions were, and this was not one of them.

Indeed, the reading of the Proclamation was one of the rare occasions of excitement for children. Children hate monotony. Yet most people who have to do with them

**Commonwealth of**



**Massachusetts.**

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

**LEVI LINCOLN,**

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

**A PROCLAMATION,**

FOR A DAY OF PUBLIC THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE.