

## Editors' Table.

### SHALL THE LAST THURSDAY IN NOVEMBER BECOME OUR NATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY?

Our country has now two national holidays. On the Fourth of July we celebrate the birthday of our national life. The twenty-second of February is sacred to the memory of the man who, after leading the armies of America in the great struggle for freedom, gave back to the government of his country the power he had received from it, and went back to the private life of a citizen. By his example, he has established Freedom and Brotherhood in our land. Greater than a hero, he was hailed the Father of his Country, and so, with filial reverence, we celebrate the birthday of our Washington.

But do we not need a third holiday, adequately to express the worth of the two we now enjoy? The sword is not a Christianizer; the hero is not a husbandman. That our hero was a good man, who feared God, loved man, and made his home the haven of his earthly happiness, are things which made him an example to us forever. War, too, undertaken in a righteous cause, should be commemorated. But the blessings of Heaven that are treasured in the homes of the whole people—men, women, and children—should not these have their day of joyous festival?

The English settlers of America could not, as colonists, appoint a national holiday, but the first emigrants to New England soon established a yearly Thanksgiving Day. Massachusetts set the example, and the colonies around her soon followed their sister. But over the rest of the country the festival did not take place; and after our independence had been won, and the Constitution adopted, still, except in one notable instance, the New England Thanksgiving had no recognition. This exceptional occasion was the passage of a resolution by our First Congress, at the close of the session in 1789, requesting the President to appoint "for the people of these United States of America a day of public thanksgiving to Almighty God." The proclamation was issued, and the day designated was the last Thursday of November, 1789.

It is well known to the readers of the *LADY'S BOOK* that for twenty-seven years our Magazine has been steadily urging the adoption of this great festival over the length and breadth of our land. Its benefits have been so fully set forth in our pages that we need hardly allude to them here. That the ties of home should be strengthened; that families should gather, after the harvest season, around a single board, and renew those sweet remembrances that bind to each other children of one household in bonds of love; that the poor, and the sick, and the prisoners, should have one day of peace and plenty in the year—these are surely reasons enough for the establishment of one holiday as a season of rejoicing over the blessings poured upon us, and of thankfulness that we are permitted to enjoy them. We have not space to trace the slow but certain progress of this great idea in the minds and hearts of Americans; but our readers know that almost every State united in 1859 to keep the last Thursday in November as a national thanksgiving, and that for several years

the President has issued an annual Proclamation, appointing that day for our great holiday. But one thing more is requisite. Our festival is not secure so long as it depends upon the yearly inclination of the Executive and the varying customs of the several States. We ask Congress, in this its coming session, to enact that, from henceforth evermore, the last Thursday in November shall be an American Thanksgiving Day. It will not be the least service which the Forty-Fourth Congress will have rendered to its country, if its session shall be signalized by the sure establishment of a day which, more than any in the annals of national festivity, heralds peace on earth and good-will to men.

### AMERICA'S THANKSGIVING HYMN.

WRITTEN FOR THE LAST THURSDAY IN NOVEMBER, 1872.

ALMIGHTY LORD of glory!

Our praise to Him we bring;  
And chant our country's story,  
Where GOD alone is KING;  
His outstretched arm sustaining,  
Behold the Mayflower come!  
His mercy foreordaining  
Our land for Freedom's home.

Though wintry darkness gathers,  
And dearth and death prevail,  
The faithful Pilgrim Fathers  
Could look within the veil;  
O joy amid the sadness!  
They're free to do and pray,  
And keep in sober gladness  
Their first Thanksgiving Day.

These seeds of Faith and Freedom  
God's Word hath wafted free;  
O'er rocks outsoaring Edom  
They reach the Sunset Sea;  
And East and West uniting,  
One family become;

With North and South relighting  
Love's lamp,—WE'RE ALL AT HOME!

With half of heaven above us,  
An ocean on each hand,  
We've room for all who love us,  
And join our brother band;  
Praising the Great All-Giver,  
Our Home Feast we display,  
And through the years forever  
Keep free Thanksgiving Day.

In palace and in prison  
Our Festival is one,  
The witness CHRIST is risen—  
Good-will for men begun;  
Our hearts one hope rejoices,  
Our souls in concert pray,  
'Mid songs of choral voices—  
GOD BLESS THANKSGIVING DAY!

To be sung to the measure of Bishop Heber's hymn, "From Greenland's icy mountains."