



Life, Literature and Education.

Canada's Thanksgiving Day.

The world, O God, is brighter than we ever dream or know,
Its burdens growin' lighter—and it's love that make 'em so;
An' I'm thankful that I'm livin' where love's blessedness I see,
'Neath a heaven that's forgivin', where the bells ring "Home" to me.
—Frank L. Stanton.

Heathendom has no Thanksgiving Day. It is a product of Christendom—the expression of gratitude springing from a confident belief in a Divine and beneficent government of the world. All this is implied and acknowledged in the official order-in-council setting apart the day for national thanksgiving. It was Shakespeare who would have every day one of thanks:

Let never day nor night unhallowed pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.

In America, its observance dates back at least to Nov. 26th, 1789, according to proclamation of George Washington, made at New York. The observance of occasional days of thanksgiving recommended by the civil authorities was not unusual in Europe, such a day being observed at Leyden, Holland, in October, 1775, for deliverance from siege. This 18th day of October, 1906, is Thanksgiving Day for the Dominion. We trust it is being observed in the best sense, and not made the occasion of mere feasting, frivolity or cruelty. Let us do some sober thinking, if we have not done so before, and ere the occasion fades from memory, may we discern somewhat of its real spirit and meaning. It is quite possible to develop an element of selfishness in our thankfulness because things appear to have gone well with some of us individually or as a nation. There has been abounding prosperity; people and wealth have been flowing in, and to carry out the crops for the feeding of humanity will work our transportation facilities overtime. We may be taking smug satisfaction out of "the blessings that march down the pathway of time." Our gratitude may rise to just about the plane that Burns so aptly describes:

"Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some would eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit."

Others there are to-day who will perchance find it hard to be thankful "for the things that are dear—The sob of the tempest, the flow of the tear." Let us with patience look a little closer into the heart of things, then will we know that it is out of storm and stress, pain and toil, anguish and tears that great sympathetic souls are born, and that adversity is a hammer to beat the dross away from the pure gold of character. In simple lines, Will Carleton gets a little nearer the

thought we have been seeking to convey:

"We thank Thee, O Father of All, for the power
Of aiding each other in life's darkest hour,
The generous heart and the bountiful hand,
And all the soul-help that sad souls understand."

Can we, as a people, be thankful for bloody and remorseless strikes, for the unscrupulous rapacity for money disclosed by the Insurance Commission, or the revelation of political rottenness preying upon the best instincts of humanity on the one hand and prostituting patriotism on the other? Humiliating these things are, but it is better that they be uncovered than continue festering in the body politic. If the heart of the great mass of our people be yet sound and true, as we believe it is, then these wretched disclosures may ultimately be matter for thanksgiving, since they will bring us back to safer moorings, resurrect dying ideals, dethrone false ones, and exalt character as the only thing that can save and perpetuate this Canada of ours.

Our Literary Society.

Summer is over. Vacation days are gone. For the student, recreation must now be more intermittent. For the man in the field and the woman in the garden, toil will be less strenuous. The days shorten. The nights lengthen. We light the lamps earlier, replenish the wood-box and the coal-bin, and gather about the library or sitting-room table. The bookcase must be brushed off, and its shelves renewed. Mental dust and cobwebs have been accumulating, perhaps. It is high time for the "F. A. & H. M. L. S." to re-assemble and lay its plans for the winter. A couple of months ago our Literary Society, like the rest of folks, took a vacation, and now members are writing to have its sessions resumed, according to promise. We hereby Call the Roll. This Society or Club became a reality less than a year ago, and proved a notable success from the initiation of the first member. Canada never had just such a Literary Society before, nor one with so widespread a membership. It was a real literary inspiration. Who are eligible for membership? Why, every reader of "The Farmer's Advocate." What are the fees? There are none. Are candidates blackballed? No. What are the conditions? Simply say you wish to be a member on a post card, or send in a contribution on some subject, share in the debates or discussions, simply study the topics assigned and articles published, or write a good natural, helpful criticism on what somebody else has

written. That's easy! Practically, you see, there are no conditions. All you have to do is say you wish to be a member, and then take part in any way you like. The advantages are alike open to everybody. No one has been expelled, so you are all members still. The next fortnight's mails should bring us in at least 1,000 new members for the season of 1906-7. Already, members have been proposing literary topics for study and discussion. We want to hear from others. What have you been reading this summer? What have you seen that has added somewhat to your knowledge and satisfaction of life? What direction do you now think our studies should take so that our knowledge of Life, Literature and Education will be improved? Let us be specific and earnest, so that as each week passes we shall have something to show for the work of our Society. It means hard work for the editors of this Department, but we do not mind that. And this reminds us to thank the men and women, farmers and their wives, sons and daughters, teachers both in town and country, and our minister friends, who so ably helped to make the Society a success last season.

A Sample Letter from an L. S. Member.

Editor "Home Magazine" Department:

It is impossible for you to realize the pleasure that your Department gives among the homes of the farmers. The young people, especially, turn up your page first, and many are looking forward with great pleasure to the literary discussions during the winter. I would like to suggest two subject for essays: Dickens' most attractive character; Dickens' most repulsive character. This great novelist's works are good wholesome reading, and on both these subjects many of Dickens' admirers have strong opinions. Also, a good subject for debate would be, Resolved that "Jeanie Deans of The Heart of Mid-Lothian" is a finer character than "Isabella of Measure for Measure."

JOHN. D. MCGREGOR.

Halton Co., Ont.

Most of the readers of "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" will remember, among other valuable pioneers of the Literary Society, Mr. J. D. McGregor. We have published his letter in full, not only because it is good to get a warm, personal handgrasp from an old friend now and again, but because we approve most heartily of the subjects he has suggested. As, however, these topics will necessitate, on the part of most of our readers, considerable thought, and, perhaps, considerable reading, we shall for the present hold them in abeyance, but will, if winds blow fair, use them a little later.

As an opening to the F. A. & H.

M. L. S., we will, rather, confine our attention to something easier, and will ask your careful reading and yet more careful study of the following beautiful little poem, written by Charles Kingsley, a synopsis of whose life appears elsewhere in these pages:

Three Fishers.

Three fishers went sailing out into the west,
Out into the west as the sun went down,
Each thought of the woman who loved him best,
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor-bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed their lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up rugged and brown;
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor-bar be moaning.

Three corpses lie out on the shining sands,
In the morning gleam as the tide goes down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands,
For those who will never come back to the town,
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep,
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.

To show the result of your study as members of the F. A. & H. M. L. S., we ask you to answer the following questions:

1. What especial object does the poet gain by specifying a number, as "three" fishers? What by saying that they went "out into the west as the sun went down"? Why would it not have been as well to say "out over the sea," or some such expression, and make the rest of the poem correspond?
2. Is it characteristic of a fishing village that the children shall stand "watching them out of the town"? Would not the departure of the fishing boats become such a common thing as to pass without especial interest? If not, why?
3. Explain fully the signification of "Though the harbor-bar be moaning," as used in connection with the two preceding lines in stanza 1.
4. Is the word "moaning," in your estimation, especially appropriate? If so, why?
5. Is anything gained by the abrupt transition from stanza 1 to stanza 2, and again from stanza 2 to stanza 3?
6. Express clearly the meaning of the words "harbor-bar," "night-rack," "squall," and the peculiar signification in this poem of "shining" and "gleam."
7. Write out and comment upon