

Wright declared it was nice to boil mint in; Alexander didn't care if he hadn't to lug any more from the brook. All were satisfied, and Margaret became a wonder.

A sumptuous home-made dinner, with a suet Indian-pudding and molasses for dessert, was served on bright pewter plates with stag-horn knives and forks. After this, Rufus brought Margaret a marble flower-pot he had made, also a kitten very well executed, which he had cut from the same material. Rhody gave her a root of the Guelder rose. Mr. Palmer paid the Widow handsomely for her visit to his daughter, whose case she elaborately investigated. He offered money to Nimrod, who refused it. Mistress Palmer made Margaret a present of linen cloth of her own weaving, enough for two or three entire under dresses.

"Thank Miss Palmer," said Nimrod to his sister.

"Oh no!" exclaimed the lady. "Take it and welcome, and anything we have got. But do, my young friend," she added as he was mounting his horse, "do think on your ways, strive, strive, who knows but you may find the good thing at last. And the little gal — she is a good child as ever was. It was very kind of her to come all the way up here, and do us a service. She is worth her weight in gold. I hope she will have a new heart soon. Here," she continued, "let me help you on." Margaret scarcely touching the woman's hand sprang to the pillion. "Why, how she jumps! She is as spry as a cricket. How pretty she does look up there behind you; I must have a kiss out of her, — there, — remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth — and don't you forget, my young friend — good day."

"I want Rhody to kiss me," said Margaret.

"Run Rhody," said her mother. So Rhody went forward and kissed Margaret.

"Did Rhody kiss you?" asked Nimrod, when they had rode on awhile without saying anything.

"Yes," was the reply.

CHAPTER X.

THANKSGIVING, OR NEW ENGLAND'S HOLIDAY.—MARGARET HAS HER DIVERSION.

It is a noticeable fact, that we of the present age have fewer holidays than our puritanical ancestors. "The King's Birth Day," was formerly celebrated with great pomp; in addition there were enjoyed "Coronation Days," the "Birth of a Prince," Accessions and Burials of Governors, Victories in War, Masonic Festivals, to say nothing of Military Reviews, Election Days, Ordination of Ministers, Executions for Murder; and at a still later period Washington's Birth Day, now almost forgotten, The Fourth of July, at present diverted to a Sunday-school or Temperance Festival. But of Thanksgiving; a day devoted to mirth, gratefulness, hospitality, family love, eating, drinking; a day sometimes externally snowy, rainy, benumbing, drenching; internally so elastic, smiling, lark-like, verdant, blithe; it is not sanctified or squandered like Merry Christmas in the Old World; it has no gooding, candles, clog, carol, box, or hobby-horse; it has no poetry or song; it does not come in the calendar, only by the Governor's proclamation; New Englanders can sing with Old Englanders, *mutatis mutandis*:

"Now thrice welcome Christmas,
Which brings us good cheer,
Minced pies, plum porridge,
Good ale and strong beer,
With pig, goose and capon,
The best that may be," —

they cannot add,

"With holly and ivy
So green and so gay,
We deck up our houses
As fresh as the day,
With bays and rosemary
And laurel compleat."

Our houses and churches are brown and sear as the gardens and orchards about them. The cedar may be green in the

woods, the box-tree, the fir and the pine together, we never use them. In both cases, there is, or was, an abundance of wassailing, dancing, gaming, shooting, and if one pleases to say, "Heathenrie, Divilrie, Dronkenness, Pride." We have no budding oak or holy-thorn, which sprang from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, and bears milk-white blossoms every Christmas day, in the forests of Glastonbury; although we have no doubt such trees might be found in our woods. Unlike Christmas, bread baked Thanksgiving Eve moulds never the slower. Yet, bating ecclesiastical days and a few calendar superstitions, which the dissenting Colonists left behind, how much did they not bring with them from their native soil! "We owe," says the Democratic Review, "our political institutions, and nearly all the arrangements of our public, social and domestic life, to our English ancestors." In addition to religion, language, habits, costume, fashions, science, art, architecture, agriculture, the military and naval art, horses, carriages, cows, sheep, grasses, bells, knives and forks, crockery and glass ware, apples, pears, peaches, etc. etc., there floated across the sea, and has descended the stream of time, idiosyncrasies of temper, idioms of speech, rhetorical figures, colloquial metaphors, an entire dialect of vulgarisms, ballads, madrigals, maxims, apologues, saws, witticisms, jokes, snibs, witchcraft, bigotry, omens, signs, a thousand and one fanciful calculations on the moon, the weather, beasts, birds, persons, — a whole argosy. Some of these may be traced to the Saxons and Britons, in unbroken succession. They still exist in England, Germany, Sweden, nay, everywhere. We must look perhaps for some great Oriental centre, some fountain head beyond the Indus. The fathers of the Sanscrit, the authors of the Vedas, the original Brahmins, whoever they may have been, possibly the step-sons of Noah, seem to have given population, language, law, philosophy, superstition, and, saving Christ, religion to the world.

John Bull and Brother Jonathan, a North Briton and a Yankee, have the same flesh and blood, the same corpuscular ingredients, the same inspiration of the Almighty. The latter differs from the former chiefly in this, breadth; his legs are longer and his feet larger, because he has higher fences and steeper hills to climb, and longer roads to travel; he is more lank because he has not time to laugh so much, since it takes him so long to go to mill, to pasture, to his neighbors; he is less succulent and oozy because he gets dry and hardened in the extensive tracts of open air he has to traverse; he is

more suspicious because in his circuits he meets with more strangers; he is more curious for the same reason; he is more inventive and calculating for this same breadth, that he has not aids at hand, and must depend on himself; his eye is keener because he sees his objects at a greater distance; he is more religious because he has farther to go for his religion, that is to say, to meeting; men valuing what costs them much; — the whole difference is breadth, interminable forests, rivers, mountains, platitudinous farms, families reaching from the Madawaska to the Yazoo. The same cause operates to distinguish the Kentucky hunter from the Yankee, cypress swamps, alligators, catamounts, the Indians, the Mississippi. Sam Slick is an elongated and skinny John Browdie, and David Crockett is the same "critter," knobbed and gnarled.

Thanksgiving was an anti-Christmas festival, established as a kind of off-set to that. Yet both are a fealty paid to the universal gala-sentiment. We cannot always work, we cannot always pray. So say young and old, grave and gay. Hence, Hindoo, Doorga, Celtic Juul, Jewish Succoth, Japanese Majira, the Panathenæa, Fête des Fous, Volks-fest, Carnival, Halloween, Christmas, Thanksgiving.

Thanksgivings have been observed — what do we say? The first Thanksgiving must have been of God's own ordaining about the beginning of the new year 1621, that is to say, the 25th of March, at New Plymouth, after a dismal winter of destitution, disease and alarm, when the snows were melting, and "brooks of sweet fresh water" broke loose, the children found a new May-flower peeping from the dead leaves, the buds of the dog-wood began to swell, and the birds to sing, the "sick and lame recovered apace," and the Colonists saw something that looked like living and home. The first Thanksgiving "by authority," was, if we are agreed, June 13, 1632. We can hardly call this a New England Thanksgiving, inasmuch as it embraced but a handful of the people. The Indians must have kept it as a Fast.

Thanksgivings were appointed for "the removal of sickness," "the precious life of our Sovereign;" "success of the king of Prussia," "the conquest of Martinico," that "God had been pleased to support our most gracious Queen in the perils of childbirth," "for success against the Indians, so that scarce a name or family remain in their former habitation," "the suppression of rebellion in Great Britain," "the near view of peace." Fasts, the antipodal holiday, were proclaimed by reason of "the small-pox," "earthquakes, inunda-

tions, and other calamities in Europe," "distressing Indian wars," "that we may be preserved against the rage of the heathen," "the great number of insects," "drought," "unseasonable rains," "divisions in our churches," "the Ranters and Quakers," "the low estate of the people of God," "some heathen yet in hostility," "the great distresses of Ministers, their salaries being paid in depreciated paper."

Thanksgiving was at hand for Livingston, the Pond, Nimrod, Margaret. Its succedanea, as respects the latter, were a turkey shoot the next day, and a ball the following night, at No. 4. If Margaret had lived in the village, or almost any where else than at the Pond, she might have enjoyed the meeting of families, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, uncles and aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins; she might have partaken in the consumption of pigs, turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, plum-pudding and plum-cake, pumpkin, mince and apple pies, beer, cider, flip; she might have gone to church and heard a discourse from Parson Welles on the distressing state of the times, and the imminent danger from French influence, and learned what a Philistine Napoleon Bonaparte was; she might have gone to a party of boys and girls at Esq. Weeks's, and played "blind-man's-buff," "run round the chimney," and "button, button, who's got the button;" but she did not. Yet she was quite busy at home. Two or three of the preceding days she spent riding about with Nimrod to invite company and arouse interest for the ball. They went to Mr. Pottle's at Snake Hill, and Mr. Dunlap's at Five-mile-lot, where they also encountered the camp Preacher sedulously disputing the field with them. They went also to the Ledge, where the Preacher followed. But Mistress Palmer decided the question by saying that Roderick, her oldest son, had professed a hope and would not think of going, but that Rhody had not come forward at all, and she thought it would do her good to have the exercise, and that Rufus, if he had been serious, had lost his impressions, and it would not do him any harm to go. They went into the various districts, and left some invitations in the edge of Dunwich and Brandon. The party was designed to be select, and all people of a certain caste and character were carefully omitted. Thanksgiving Eve was kept at the Pond in this wise; their candles were pine torches, which they flourished about the premises, under trees, in the shed, in pursuit of hens and turkeys; their clogs were large clumps of wood, stumps, twigs, &c. crowded into the immense fire-place; their carol consisted of oaths, smirks, songs; for ale they had an abundance of pupelo. No St.

Nicholas watched about the chimney during the night, or filled Margaret's stocking in the morning. Who is the patron saint of Thanksgiving?

Only Chilion made her a present of a beautiful blue-painted sled to coast with when the snows came. It was framed of the best materials, put together in the form most fitted for speed, shod with highly polished steel, and named Humming Bird. They had stewed chicken and crust coffee for breakfast, and for dinner chickens roasted by strings suspended before the fire, potatoes, brown bread and cider. Pies and cakes were wanting. The remainder of the time was occupied in preparing for the events of the next day, scouring guns, brushing shoes and coats, polishing buckles, &c. Nimrod took occasion to renew his instructions to Margaret in the dancing art, and Chilion intimated some of his best tunes. No. 4, to which the attention of the family was now directed, lay in a valley below the Pond, formed by the passage of Mill Brook, and was enriched by nature with fine intervals and excellent drainages. The approach to the place was by a narrow, woody, rocky road or lane. Opposite you, on the south, rose a gradually ascending eminence and range of hills that jointed the horizon. Through No. 4 ran the highway from the village of Livingston to Brandon, a town on the south-west. Here was a large tavern, known as Smith's, and a distillery owned by the same gentleman. In the language of a writer of the times, this hamlet presented a spectacle of "houses without windows, barns without roofs, gardens without enclosures, fields without fences, hogs without yokes, sheep without wool, meagre cattle, feeble horses, and half clad, dirty children, without manners, principles or morals." The people were loungers about the tavern, which seemed to have exhausted the life of the place, and to have diffused over it instead, dearth, indolence, dreariness and sterility. This was a large two-story house, having a long stoop in front. Between it and the Brook was the Still, a long black building, surrounded by barrels and hogsheads of cider. Near the tavern was held the turkey shoot, the day after Thanksgiving, to which Nimrod took Margaret, and Hash carried one or two turkeys. It was chilly and drizzling, and Margaret was deposited in the kitchen of the tavern, where she had a chance to become acquainted with Mr. Smith's daughters, the Gubtail's, Hatch's, Tapley's from the neighborhood, Paulina Whiston, Grace Joy and Beulah Ann Orff from Breakneck. The bar-room was filled with men and boys, fumes of rum and tobacco, and a jargon of voices;

the air about was charged with the smoke of powder; the turkeys were perched on a stump and tied by the leg; there were the report of rifles, the running to and fro of men and boys; disputes about the shots; wrangling, wrestling; in all which Margaret had no share. Thus passed the fore part of the day.

In the evening, Nimrod, as one of the masters of arrangements, with Margaret, came early to the tavern. Soon the ladies and gentlemen began to assemble. Of the number were Pluck and his wife, the Widow Wright and Obed, and Sibyl Radney; among the spectators were several elderly men and women from the neighborhood; among the loafers were Abel Wilcox, the clerk, Hancock Welles, grandson of the Parson, from the village. The hall was a long unfinished upper room; the naked timbers, joists and sleepers, were garnished with branches of pine and hemlock, laced with wreaths of ground laurel. Tallow candles were supported in wooden blocks on the walls, and rude benches were fixed to the sides of the room. The ladies' dresses presented considerable variety; some had made requisition on the wardrobes of their grandmothers, some had borrowed from their neighbors, servants from their mistresses; in some appeared the latest style of the cities; several wore gowns of their own manufacture, striped or checked linen, with flowers elaborately wrought with the needle. There were sacques, trails and one or two hoops. There were corsages long and pointed, round and medium, high and narrow. Sleeves were tight, short and bordered with ruffles. All had necklaces of gold, glass, or waxen beads. The coiffures were equally diversified, ringlets, crockets, twists, tye-tops, crape cushions, toupees, sustained and enriched with brass and gilt clasps, pins, silk and velvet fillets, feathers and flowers. The shoes were striped with a white welt. There was an agreeable intermixture of old and faded brocades and damasks, rustling padusoyes, shining lutestrings, changeables, embossed linens, and plain white muslins. Many wore ear-hoops of pinch-beck, as large as a dollar. On the side of the gentlemen was a similar blending of old and new patterns. If Joseph's coat of many colors had been miraculously enlarged, and cut up into separate garments, it would form the appropriate suit of this assemblage, in which red, blue, yellow, chocolate, butternut, green and all hues but black, were represented. Some wore a costume resembling that of the Master's, we have before described. The hair of most of the gentlemen was powdered, and some had it done in

tyes, queues, frizzes. Of buckles there were silver, plated, brass, iron, steel, pewter and paste. Most of them sported ruffle cuffs. Margaret wore the new dress Nimrod bought her, and her moccasins. Pluck retained his leather apron, his wife had donned a clean long-short. Chilion, the chief musician, wore a pearl-colored coat, buff swansdown vest, white worsted breeches and ribbed stockings. Tony Washington, the negro barber from the village, and assistant violinist, had his head powdered, wore a crimson silk faded coat with long skirts, ruffle cuffs and white smalls. It was a singularly freaked and speckled group. There were burly, weather-beaten faces under powder and curls; broad, hard hands in kid gloves; thew, red elbows that had plied brooms, shuttles, cards, frisking lace ruffles; there were bright eyes, smiling faces and many pleasant words. Chilion, whose general manner was reserved and obscure, grew animated when the dance began. Margaret, omitted at first, was presently called up by Rufus Palmer. None were so young and small as she; but she enacted her part with vigor and precision. Her father asked her for a partner, and it gave her new life when she saw she pleased him. She was, for the most part, among strangers, in a strange place and strangely occupied. The lights, the open fantastically shadowed garret above, the evergreens, the windows shining with the dew of so many breaths, the mystic motion, steps which one takes and comprehends not, balancing, galloping, confusion harmonized, oiled intricacies, ploughboys graceful and boors mannerly, earnestness of participation, so earnest that even in the height of the game no one smiles; and then above all and in all, the clear, exhilarating, penetrating notes of the violin, and Chilion's violin, that she always loved to hear, played in its best way; the life of all this life, the motion of this motion, the inspirer and regulator of this maze,—she felt grateful to her brother, and for the rest, she seemed to enjoy it with a deep unconsciousness of joy. One might have noticed her brother Chilion peculiarly employed. He not only controlled the action, but seemed to gratify himself in varying and modifying it. He evidently fantasied with the company. He made them move faster or slower as he pleased. He might have been seen watching the effect of his viol, or his own effect through it. Whatever power he possessed he exerted to the utmost. He seemed to be playing more upon the dancers than upon his instrument. In the midst of a figure he would accelerate the parties, drive them from point to point with the wildest rapidity. In a contra-

dance, to the "Campbells are Coming," never did plaided Highlander leap down his native rocks with a more headlong step than those same pied bumpkins sprang over that hall floor. He slackened the motion at the close, and dismissed them quietly to their seats. In one of the intermissions, might have been seen entering the place the indefatigable Preacher. He stole through the crowd, erected his tall dark form on a bench, and taking advantage of the pause, broke upon them like a thunder gust. His loud, guttural, solemn voice, rang through the room.

"Thus saith the Lord God, thy pomp shall be brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols!"

"A sermon! A sermon!" cried Abel Wilcox.

Preacher. "You look fair and seemly, but you are stench in the nostrils of the Almighty."

Crowd. "Another set, who'll lead off?"

Preacher. "The Lord will take away the bravery of your tinkling ornaments, your cauls and round tires like the moon, your chains and bracelets and mufflers."

Pluck. "Let us praise God in the dance, praise him with the stringed instruments. Let us, as David did, dance before the Lord."

Preacher. "This place shall be as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; owls shall dwell here, and satyrs shall dance here."

Crowd. "Peggy and Molly!" "The Haymakers," "Here's Zenas Joy and Delinda Hoag want 'Come haste to the Wedding!'"

Preacher. "You stand on slippery places, your feet shall stumble on the dark mountains."

Crowd. "Chorus Jig! Hoa! Chilion, where are you?"

Chilion. "Take your partners."

Preacher. "Rhody Palmer! Sylvina Pottle! Myra Dunlap! are you in this scene of noise and confusion? Didn't you come forward to be prayed for? Myra, didn't you profess to have submitted? Oh! oh! God has been at Snake Hill, Five-mile-lot and the Ledge, and he would have gone clear through Breakneck and No. 4, but for this dance! And here I espy the arch-adversary of souls, the contriver of your eternal ruin, the very devil himself in your midst."

Nimrod. "The devil you do."

Preacher. "Young man, you will have your portion in hell-fire."

Nimrod. "I go to hell if I do."

Preacher. "The deep damnation of God is prepared for you."

Nimrod. "I be damned if it is."

Preacher. "What profanity! what blasphemy to add to the catalogue of your sins."

Chilion. "All ready."

The words of the Preacher, as not unusually happens, were disregarded. He pitched his voice still higher. They danced the faster, Chilion played with the greater energy. The Preacher himself exhausted, or discouraged, became at length a listener, and finally his eye was rivetted to the scene before him. Chilion played on almost wildly. Tony seconded the purposes of his master to the best of his endeavors, his teeth and eyes shone with a terrified whiteness, and the powder from his hair sprinkled his face. Chilion was unmoved in the storm he raised. Curls uncurled, ruffles were ruffled, trains trailed; but the dance went on. Margaret revelled in the movement; she danced as to the winds; she knew her brother, she loved his power, she leaped out his spirit and tones. She sprang through the figure like a shuttle, she spun round and round like a top. Chilion, in his own time, softened the measure, and suffered the piece to glide away in the gentlest pulsations. The night waxed and waned. The Preacher, the elderly people and children, and other spectators had gone; most of the dancers left.

Here we must recede a moment to relate that in the forenoon, Hash the brother of Margaret, and Zenas Joy, a resident of the place called Breakneck, had a serious misunderstanding about a shot the latter made at a turkey set up by the former. Numbers came forward to the arbitration, and in the result it happened that the interests and jealousies of all parties became joined in issue, and the strength and prowess of the several neighborhoods were arranged under the respective standards of the Pond and Breakneck. It was proposed to adjust the difficulty by a champion from each side in a wrestling match. A rain, however, separated the combatants, and broke up the ring. At the supper-table in the evening, the subject was renewed. Again at this late hour of the night, there were not wanting causes to stimulate the feud in such as remained. Mr. Smith, the tavern-keeper, brought forward a fresh supply of liquors, of which both gentlemen and ladies freely drank; and the two young men from the village had no other business than to foment and egg on the rivalships of the several districts. A final dance was called

for; but there appeared little self-possession, either in respect of temper or limb. Chilion played a while, and then relinquished his instrument. Zenas Joy seized Hash by the collar; Joseph Whiston tripped Obed, who, poor youth, was already nearly down with liquor; Abel Wilcox spurred Rufus Palmer to tread on Beulah Ann Orff's trail; Grace Joy taunted Nimrod with a false step Margaret had taken; Sibyl Radney rushed into the fray, pounced upon Zenas Joy, and sent him whirling about the room, as she would a spinning wheel. So one and another were engaged. Margaret, who had left the floor, was standing by the side of Chilion. She looked at the quarrellers, and then at her brother. He snapped his viol strings, and was silent.

"Sing, Margery," at length he said. He began a familiar tune, "Mary's Dream," — he played and she sang. This twofold melody, sweet and plaintive, seemed to touch the hearts of those excited people. They stopped to hear, they heard to be won. They moved towards the music; they were hushed if not subdued, they parted in peace if not in harmony. Thus ended their Thanksgiving, and we must end ours, and turn to other times and scenes.

CHAPTER XI.

A REVISED ACCOUNT OF NIMROD AND HIS DOINGS.

WE shall omit the wild-turkey hunt of a bright autumnal moon-light night in the woods, exciting and engaging though it was, and the race with Streaker, in which Margaret bore no part, while we proceed to enumerate some particulars of her eldest brother, that have a relation to herself. Nimrod evinced a volatile, roving, adventure-seeking habit from his boyhood. The severe waspish temper of his mother he could not abide, the coarse, dogged despotism of Hash he resented; Chilion was only a boy, and one not sufficiently social and free; with his father he had more in common. At the age of fourteen he became an indented apprentice to Mr. Hatch the blacksmith at No. 4. But of the different kind of blows of which he was capable, he relished those best that had the least to do with the anvil. He liked horses well enough, but preferred

their hides to their hoofs; and became more skilful with the fleam than the buttress. He left his master in a rage, himself in good humor. He next let himself at the Crown and Bowl in the village, where one might fancy he would find his element. He was hostler, bar-tender, wood-bringer, errand-boy, chore-doer, farrier, mistress'-man, waiting-maid's man and everybody's man by turn. He entertained travellers at the door, girls in the kitchen and boys in the stoop. He was quick but he always loitered, he was ingenious yet nothing was well done. It would not seem strange that he should prove a better auxiliary to every one's taste and fancy, than to Mr. Stillwater his employer's interest. He hung a flint stone on the barn-door to keep the devil from riding the horses in the night; but this did not prevent indications of their having been used at unlawful times and in unlawful ways, which their owner was disposed to charge upon Nimrod. He was dismissed. While he served others at the bar he must needs help himself, and he became at an early age an adept in what an old writer denominates the eighth liberal art. At the close of the revolutionary war, it became more difficult to fill vacancies in the army, than it had been originally to form companies. There were "Classes" in Livingston, as everywhere else, whose duty it was to furnish a certain number of soldiers, as exigency required. By one of these, Nimrod, not yet fifteen years of age, but of due physical proportion and compliance, was hired. He joined a detachment ordered on the defence of our northern frontier.

But even military discipline was insufficient to correct his propensities, or reform his habits. He deserted, and crossed the Canada lines. He connected himself with a band of smugglers that swarmed in those quarters, and during the spring of the year 1784, we find him in New York in a sloop from up river. The vessel was anchored in the stream not far from the Albany Basin. She had a deck-load of lumber, and wheat in her hold, the ordinary supply of the country at the time; her contraband goods were stowed in proper places. Government, both state and national, was pressed for means; the war, taxes, suspension of productive labor, had heightened necessity, and diminished resource. Duties were great, but legislation was irregular. The city held in its bosom many who had suffered during the late contest. The general amnesty while it retained the disaffected, failed in some cases to reconcile them. Hence smuggling, while it grew to be a most vexatious practice, was one of tolerably easy accomplish-