

When the World Honors the Harvest



What Turkey Wouldn't Willingly Be "Hand-Fed" if the Hand Were That of Pretty Miss Helen Lynch of Hollywood, California.

Dwellers in the City and Country Gather for the Feast of Thanksgiving.

GATHERED round the garnerings of field and forest, barnyard and garden, in whitely-lighted restaurants and the dining-rooms of the city, do the celebrants of the Harvest Festival give a thought to the reason lying far back of their merry-making?

Do even the holiday-makers, come together in the broad farmhouse dining-rooms East and West, North and South throughout this American continent remember why they have cause for joy and so cast retrospective eyes to the hour of the first seed-planting of the year?

For Harvest Festival belongs to no nation and no country and no time. It is the world's and eternal as the instinct of mankind to give thanks for the good things which Mother Earth nurtures and brings to rich fruition for her children.

Ever and ever so long ago the day flamed with the picturesqueness of pagan rites. There were two of the festivals then, since Ceres, the goddess of corn and the harvest, was considered a mighty force and worthy of endless propitiation. From the twelfth to the nineteenth of April the ancients feasted and made merry with games and contests. This was their "Ceresalia," and figured as a species of encouragement to the goddess to send plenty. But in August, when their patroness had proved her good will by turning her horn of plenty upside down over their heads, they held the second festival, merrier and more gorgeous than the first.

Where folk live close to Nature the feast is reverential—almost solemn. The peasants of Europe glean the growth of their farms and conduct a rite of gratitude that there is growth to glean.

Even the country districts of the United States and Canada see the day with sobered vision. The harvest is the work of their heart and hand—the strength or weakness of their livelihood and as such is regarded with something of awe.

But the cities devote themselves to search for the thrills in the day. The rise and fall of the price per pound of turkey—the pieces de resistance of any Harvest Festival celebration—furnishes speculation. The choice between mince pie or pumpkin—open-faced with a lattice crust—adds to the excitement.

At least twelve hundred wild Irish turkeys are brought to this continent yearly, representing a surplus over what Britain retains for her own Harvest Festival. And the number of domestic turkeys which help North America to give thanks may be estimated when it is known that seven hundred carloads of them are brought into New York City alone for the big meal of Thanksgiving Day.

