Ancient Mayas Kept Thanksgiving Day

WHEN football fans turn out for the Thanksgiving games they will perhaps realize that they are conforming with an old American custom, but do they know how old that custom is? asks a writer in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Thanksgiving football games were instituted in America about 2000 B. C. The custom began among the ancient Mayas, who, although they did not eat mince pie or sit in concrete stadiums, did dine on turkey and did set aside a day on which they offered up the first fruits of the harvest season, feasted and played, or watched a ball game in a stone-walled enclosure.

The department of middle American research at Tulane university has discovered that the Mayan games were like ours in many respects. Just as fans today travel for miles to see the Thanksgiving games, so did our predecessors on this continent journey across the land, on foot or horseback, to Chichen-Itza, holy city of the Mayas, to view the holiday spectacle.

In his description of the Mayan game, Maurice Reis, on the staff of the department of middle American research at Tulane, says:

"As it began when Rome ruled the waves and Frenchmen wore bear skins as their Sunday best, football wasn't just football. That is, the ball wasn't kicked with the foot and the scores were produced by persuading the ball to pass through a perpendicular ring high on a stone wall."

When the thousands of pilgrims who came every year arrived at Chichen-Itza, they offered sacrifices to the earth gods in an impressive thanksgiving ceremony led by the ruler.

"The earth gods," says Alredo Barrera Vasquez, of the staffs of the Mexican National Museum and the National University of Mexico, who is of Maya descent, 'are called the Four Bacabs and are represented as supporting the four corners of the earth. Each god has an appropriate color: red for the east where the sun rises, black for the west where it sinks into darkness, yellow for the warm south and white for the cold north. Yum Klax, Lord of the Forest, resides at the center of the universe and is characterized by the colors blue and green."

The Ball Wasn't Kicked With the Foot in That Game.

The Thanksgiving ceremonies still take place in some parts of Mexico today, although most of the old customs are dominated by the Catholic influence.

The name of the principal god of the harvest is lost. However, we have many representations of him on ancient monuments. He is always depicted as being young and handsome symbolic of life and growth. From his head grows maize instead of hair.

THE JUDGE SAYS:

"THANKSGIVING is approaching—it's time we told ourselves over and over again the things about which we should be thankful. There are plenty of those things. But, most important of all, I think, is the chance given to make ourselves happy again."—Judge Harry B. Keidan.

Thanksgiving Day

NO DOUBT the same old question will be asked that we have so often heard — what have we to be thankful for? The question is foolish, almost as foolish as the attempts to answer it. Thanksgiving means gratitude, and there is probably no man alive who does not hold ingratitude to be one of the blackest sins. Of course, there can be no gratitude except as it is shown not only for something but to some one. Therefore, observes a writer in the Indianapolis News, it is that the thought of Thanksgiving necessarily implies the existence of a Divine Giver and Benefactor. So we are bidden to return thanks to Almighty God as "the Giver of every good and perfect gift." When there seems to be a scarcity of gifts one is tempted to ask the question, why be thankful? And that is a question which every one must answer for himself, and it will be answered as it always has been, in different ways. It is futile to catalogue what we know to be blessings and what we believe to be anything but blessings, and set off one list against the other, and be thankful in proportion as the good exceeds the evil.

Carlyle long ago showed us the folly of the bookkeeping method as applied to things spiritual. Probably most people get out of life about what they deserve and in proportion to what they put into it. It seems to be true that the most thankful people are those who have the least. On the other hand, those who are surfeited with good things take them as matters of course, as their due, and so calling for no gratitude. The question seems to be whether one has a thankful spirit, which surely is something to be greatly desired.

Without it, man is less than man. Even beasts are grateful. Practically, the question suggested by the day touches character. There is nothing mechanical or formal about it. One can not pump up thankfulness, and the setting apart of a day does not suggest that there should be such an attempt. The day is rather a recognition, less of a duty than of an opportunity which it would be or might be fatal to neglect. "Be ye thankful" is an apostolic command. It ought to be easy to obey. Those men are nearest the truth who feel that in this life nothing is due them, and that whatever

they get is in a very true sense a gift, and one which may be far beyond their deserts. So we are called to keep another Thanksgiving day, which should bring an outpouring of not only thankful but kindly hearts. Appropriate to the day is Pope's well-known verse:

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Uncle Phil Says:

Chaff or Flint

Vagrant winds blow the chaff, but the flint is undisturbed. Which are we?

More that boys are expected to be perfect, the more dissembling there will be.

If one must sneer, let him not indulge in cheap ones. They're so trying among people of intelligence.

Leave Their Welcome

Those who cultivate the art of knowing when to go home, frequently run away when their friends want them to stay longer.

If one could only learn not to be afraid he would escape 75 per cent of his worry.

A great deal of energy is required to say nothing.

Outstanding trait of the great common people is their humanity.

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