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Hawaiian Gazette

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1886.

Thanksgiving in Hawaii

A SERMON

Preached by REV. S. E. BISHOP.

NOVEMBER 25, 1886.

IN FORT-ST. CHURCH, HONOLULU.

PSALM 118:27.—"I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving."

To observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving has become an established custom of the American nation.

It was a happy and pious thought—to thank God for His mercies with rejoicing and feasting. It shows us how those Pilgrim Fathers and Mothers, with all their profound earnestness, their solemn piety—their stern steadfastness in trial and bitter persecution, were also a genial and joyful people.

It was a happy quality that they could so promptly and heartily look upon the bright side of their new colonial life, fresh from the bitter famine and pestilence of the previous months.

We come together to-day especially as Americans, by the President's invitation, at the summons of the United States Charge d'Affaires at this Court, to thank our God for his rich bounties and manifold mercies to us during the past year.

We have reason to thank God to-day. For the high degree of mental and social culture that we possess. I think we may claim not only to be an opulent community, but also one of high culture.

Our own Honolulu press is a productive one. There are three daily, one weekly and three monthly journals in the English language.

Our system of schools is of long and prosperous standing, through which the intellectual life of the native people has greatly advanced during the past 20 years.

Our large export crop of sugar has attained the amount of more than 100,000 tons, the largest in quantity and value yet shipped.

proved machinery have wrought together as never before. Although low prices have brought loss to many, the business as a whole has been prosperous, and all other business has flourished with it.

There are few places in which life is on the whole so easy, or the laborers' toil so well rewarded as in Hawaii. To Portuguese, to Chinese and to Japanese, wanted to heavy and ill-requited labor, it seems a paradise.

How great a change from the extreme destitution of the past! I will remember the satisfaction felt when in 1837 by the opening of the Koloa plantation it became possible for field laborers to earn one real a day, or three dollars a month, and this in store pay, with coarse cotton cloth at 25 cents a yard; and those people raised their own food.

Two days labor then purchased one yard of cloth, and now buys twenty. Fortunately the common people then used little clothing. Indeed they were all actual serfs, owning neither house nor other property independent of their chief's will.

Food was usually cheap, but for lack of trade and transportation, severe local famines were of frequent occurrence. Now great irrigating ditches and reservoirs abound. Artesian wells add copious floods of water.

A fleet of steamers promptly distribute supplies of necessaries and luxuries at every landing. The land has risen out of deep and squalid poverty into an affluence of luxury. We will thank our God for this His goodness to the Hawaiian land.

And as Americans, we should thank him especially for that high training, that skill and capacity, and that native force of character which enable us to earn and honorably possess so very large a share in these good gifts. It is a pleasure to know that so many do not forget the instruction, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Surely an honest loving thankfulness for our Fathers' earthly gifts will make us glad to bestow kindness and help on others who are in want or misfortune, be they among us, or come their voices of distress from far away.

We have reason to thank God to-day. For the high degree of mental and social culture that we possess. I think we may claim not only to be an opulent community, but also one of high culture.