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**Whether Common or Not**

By WILL M. MAUPIN.

**The One Who Was Not There.**

Around the full Thanksgiving feast  
We gathered yesterday;  
From north and south, from west and east

Once more we found our way,  
Though hearts were full of joy and cheer

We saw one vacant chair,  
And we recalled through smile and tear

The one who was not there.

We bowed our heads in heartfelt thanks

For life, and home, and love,  
Though God had broken family ranks

And called one home above.

We sat around the family board

And breathed a silent prayer

That in God's time would be restored

The one who was not there.

We decked with flowers the old-time place—

With roses red and white—  
They called to mind her dear old face

And eyes with love alight.

Their incense filled the little hall

With perfume rich and rare,

And every rose served to recall

The one who was not there.

We stood at mention of her name

And ev'ry head was bowed.

Into our eyes the teardrops came

And fast did mem'ries crowd.

A shrine of love we built that day

About that vacant chair,

And each did loving homage pay

The one who was not there.

**One Thanksgiving.**

There is one merit, at least, about this little Thanksgiving story—it is absolutely true. It happened several years ago, no matter where and no particular matter to whom. It was in one of the largest cities of the west, and a daily newspaper worker was the party most concerned. The newspaper worker's name was not Jones, but for convenience he will be called by that name.

Jones was past thirty years of age, and although he had been engaged in newspaper work for more than fifteen years, and in all parts of the country, he had never missed eating his Thanksgiving dinner with the old folks at home. Once he traveled from Pennsylvania to Missouri for the annual family feast, but he felt well repaid for the trip by the few hours' visit with his parents. On the day before this particular Thanksgiving—the one this story deals with—he was congratulating himself that he had only sixty miles to go the next day in order to keep up the record.

But when Thanksgiving came the chief told him he had to work, as nearly all the other boys had asked for a lay-off. Jones raised a roar, but it did not count. The chief was obdurate. For an hour or two Jones thought seriously of throwing up the job, but finally he decided to stick to it, the chief promising to let him off early in the afternoon so he could catch an evening train and get to the old folks in time for a late Thanksgiving supper.

So Jones slaved at the city editor's desk until noon, and then started for a restaurant. He was grouchy and felt like a man without a country. There were no thanks in his heart that time.

As Jones slowed up before his favorite restaurant he saw two ragged little children, a boy and a girl, staring through the window at a great display of edibles the restaurant keep-

er had put in for show. The little ones were blue with the cold, and their little feet were almost bare. Jones paused for a moment and then a thought came to him.

"Hello, kids!" he exclaimed. "Hungry?"

The children looked bashfully at their questioner and then nodded shy assent.

"Would you like to eat dinner with me?" asked Jones.

The children made no direct reply, but they exchanged glances that were eloquent with meaning. Then they backed away from the window and seemed about ready to run down the street. Jones reached out his hands and grasped them before they could get away.

"Come in and take dinner with me, will you?" he asked. "I'm all alone and it will be lonesome without you."

The children pulled back a little, but Jones led them into the restaurant and found seats for them at a table. Then he called a waiter and said:

"Charley, these two are young friends of mine whom I've invited to dinner. Now bring on the best you have."

Charley grinned as he looked at the ragged little waifs and then hurried away. When he returned he bore a tray filled with the best in the restaurant. He served the children with as much care and attention as he would have shown to a prince and a princess, and as fast as one dish was emptied he refilled it.

As Jones watched the turkey and cranberry sauce, the bread and butter, the potatoes and cold slaw, the foamy milk and the sugar corn disappear down the childish throats he forgot his grouchiness. He even forgot that it was the first Thanksgiving dinner he had ever eaten away from home. And then his hard thoughts gave way to a feeling of wonder—wonder where those little folks managed to tuck all that food away. Were their little legs hollow?

The feast was topped off with pumpkin pie and ice cream, and then an orange and a banana given to each of the waifs. Jones lifted them down from the table and escorted them to the door, then turned to pay the check. Outside the little ones paused and seemed engaged in earnest conversation. As Jones reached for his change the little girl opened the door, thrust in her tousled head and said:

"We're much obliged, mister."

And when Jones returned to the office he was whistling, and his heart was filled with the true Thanksgiving spirit, even though the old folks were far away.

**Of Course.**

We were loath to go home, for well we knew that the good wife expected us to put up the stove that evening. If you ever have gone through that sad experience you will understand why we preferred the office just then.

But at last we got ready to start. Just as we reached for coat and hat a visitor came in. He had a bulging grip in his hand and a broad smile on his face.

"Have you a moment to spare, sir?" he asked.

His coming was a relief, for it gave excuse to linger longer.

"Come in," we replied. "What can we do for you?"

"I have here," said the visitor, "one of the greatest inventions of the age. Mankind has been looking and long-

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"What is it?" we asked, our curiosity aroused.

Reaching down into his grip the visitor brought out several cylindrical pieces of sheet iron and laid them upon the floor. Closing his grip, he said:

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Just then the door was thrown open and two men rushed in. They threw themselves upon the visitor and despite his struggles soon had him securely bound.

"Hope he didn't give you any trouble, mister," said one of them.

"What does this mean?" we asked, angrily.

Then one of the men spoke up and said:

"He's daffy on the inventin' business. He got away from the forget house this mornin' an' we've been lookin' fr him ever since."

When the twain disappeared we hated more than ever the very thought of going home to tackle that job.

**Same Thing.**

"What's this I hear, Carter, about your having bought a gold brick?"

"It's a base slander. I never bought a gold brick in my whole life."

"I wonder, then, how the story got started?"

"I don't know, unless some one got next to the fact that I bought a lot of steel common at 70 cents."

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