



Whether Common or Not

By Will M. Maupin

The Lookout Man

[Eight years ago "The Lookout Man" made his first appearance in *The Commoner*. Each succeeding year he has returned at the special invitation of friends. I am glad you like him. He and I are good friends—and he has helped me in more ways than one. Here he is again, and I hope that he will not have to use his "Bad Book" even once this Christmas.—W. M. M.]

Now, listen, little children, and I'll tell a story true—
And better you remember, for it means a lot to you—
For if you heed the lesson, then when Christmas time is here
You'll get a lot of presents and a lot of Christmas cheer.
The Lookout Man is walking when the stars begin to peep
To see if little children are in bed and fast asleep;
And all who act up naughty and don't mind their ma's and pa's,
The Lookout Man is watching, and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

I knew a little fellow once who got real bad, and said
He didn't care for Santa Claus, and wouldn't go to bed;
And said he didn't have to mind—O, he was awful bad,
And didn't seem to care a mite in making folks feel sad.
But when it came to Christmas Day he didn't get a thing,
For Santa Claus had heard of him and not a thing he'd bring.
He knew that bad boy's record—better mind your ma's and pa's,
The Lookout Man is watching and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

I also knew a little girl who was just awful bad.
She wouldn't get her lessons and she always got so mad
If anybody told her to be still and hush her noise—
Well, she was always wishing for a lot of Christmas toys;
But when 'twas Christmas morning, to her wonder and surprise,
An empty stocking hanging in the corner met her eyes.
You see, she acted naughty—better mind your ma's and pa's;
The Lookout Man is watching and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

The Lookout Man is peeping through the windows every night
And counting up the children who are always acting right.
And going off to bed at once when told it's time to go,
And never pouting, not a bit, or taking clothes off slow.
He puts them in the good book, but the bad ones in the bad,
And when he writes a bad one, O, he looks just awful sad;
For he knows they will get nothing—better mind your ma's and pa's—
The Lookout Man is watching and he'll tell old Santa Claus.

Unheeded Advice

Yes, the advice is to do your Christmas shopping early. A thousand paragraphs are urging it. Yards of editorials are being printed advocating it.

But what's the use?

You'll pay no attention to it. You'll fuss around looking at the Christmas wares until a couple of days before Christmas, then you'll join the rush. You'll be squeezed and battered and jammed; you'll lose your temper and get miles and miles away from the Christmas spirit; you'll talk cross to the exhausted girls behind the counters and convince them at a season of good will Christmas is all to the bad and really a season of aching limbs and throbbing heads and surly shoppers.

Of course you will. No use denying it. You always have, and despite every appeal to your better sense and your good nature you'll keep right on doing it. I know you will, for every Christmas for the last thirty years I've written that same appeal, then postponed my own Christmas buying till the last minute. Result: Loss of temper, a collection of stuff that don't suit me, money

worse than wasted and a loss of self-respect. Oh, I know all about it—and about you.

"Do your Christmas shopping early!"

There; I've gotten that off my chest. I'll feel better, even if I do know you'll pay no attention to my advice.

A Thanksgiving Memory

Do you remember your last Thanksgiving day at the old home, with all members of the family circle present? I do—and the memory carries me back more than thirty years. There were only five of us—father, mother, sister, brother and myself. It was in a little cottage in a little Missouri town. I was beginning to think about spreading my wings and flying the home nest, for I was about to complete my apprenticeship in the old Sentinel office. Sister, the next oldest, was still in short skirts and wore her hair in long curls, and brother was a chubby little tot in knickerbockers, just big enough to be ever tumbling out of the trees and from the back porch, to the detriment of his clothes and of injury to his body. Father was a big,

hale, hearty man, just the age I am now—always jolly, never so happy as when making others happy, and full of quiet fun that bubbled and sparkled in his black eyes. And mother! She could walk under father's outstretched arm without mussing her hair.

I remember that dinner, for ere another one rolled around I was out in the wide world, hustling for myself. You better believe it was a good dinner, for mother concocted it, and she was an artist in the culinary line. But somehow or other we never seemed able to meet all at once around the home Thanksgiving table after that. Either father or sister would be absent. But as long as mother lived I never missed, save once, eating my Thanksgiving dinner with her, though more than once I traveled hundred of miles to give myself that great joy.

You who are permitted to meet all the loved ones of your family circle around the Thanksgiving board—you don't know what a blessed privilege is yours. It will never come to me again. Father and mother have answered the final summons. Sister is away out in California; brother is away down in Missouri. My own first born is nearly a thousand miles away.

But every Thanksgiving day there is an extra plate placed on our family table, an extra chair always ready for the loved one who will not come. And I love to think, as I revel in the feast the Little Woman and the Biggest Girl prepare, that my absent loved ones take turns in filling that empty chair. And I am thankful that I had them once upon a time; that I have their memory to cheer me; that I have still left loved ones who sit with me and join me in returning thanks for all the blessings that God has bestowed upon me.

Hirsutely Historical

It was Bill Nye who referred to the "Syracuse hair" adorning the head of a young lady friend, and when asked to explain he said that he called it "Syracuse hair" because it was six stations beyond Auburn.

This as an introduction to the statement that Governor-elect Sulzer of New York wears a thatch that would come within Bill's description. But Governor-elect Sulzer is rather proud of it—and why not? Can he not point to the fact that George Washington's white periwig covered a head adorned with red hair? When Alexander the Great sat down and bemoaned the fact that there were no more worlds to conquer he thrust his fingers into a fine growth of red hair and tore it in his frenzy. Rufus of England was some man, and he was called Rufus the Red because he had hair so red that were he alive today he wouldn't dare walk bare-headed on a railroad track for fear of flagging all the trains to a stop. Elizabeth of England was redheaded, and if history is to be relied upon she was a very extraordinary sort of woman. Napoleon's hair was nearer red than any other color, and I rather guess he left his mark. And don't overlook the fact that it was not alone as a soldier that Napoleon won fame. His famous "Code Napoleon" occupies a mighty prominent place in the legal world.

It isn't the color of his hair that is worrying Governor-elect Sulzer—not by a long shot. If there is anything about his hair that is causing him worry it is the possibility of losing it in time.

Our Versatile Congressmen

Speaking of versatility, we commend to your attention Dan V. Stephens, representing the Third Nebraska district in congress. In addition to being a democratic democrat, Mr. Stephens is a school teacher, the author of several text books and

more than one popular book of fiction, an authority on good road building, and a farmer who took 450 acres of worthless land that everybody else said would never be fit for anything but wild hay, and made it yield more bushels of wheat per acre than any equal number of acres in any one county in Nebraska—and believe me Nebraska is some pumpkins when it comes to producing wheat. Between times he manages a big publishing house, talks to conventions and puts in a few more miles of drain tile on his big Platte river bottom estate.

Working a Scheme

"If my wife comes in here and asks about cigars, you tell her that I smoke Mudaduros—the kind you sell at \$2.50 a hundred."

"Very well, but how am I to know your wife when she comes in?"

"She is a tall, dark complexioned woman, with a very Roman nose and a look that will indicate that she is in the habit of having her own way."

"And suppose she orders a hundred Mudaduros?"

"That's what I am getting at. Here's a ten-dollar note. You take her money, then you pack a hundred of those Flor de Havanellas—the two-for-a-quarter kind, in a Mudabox and have 'em all ready for her."

The tobacconist winked at the customer, the customer winked at the tobacconist. A few weeks later a determined-looking woman will be telling her friends how she gets such rare bargains in cigars for her hubby.

Justifiable

"And now," said the police judge, "you may explain if you can why you violently assaulted this man."

"Your honor, I had just paid for a couple of tons of coal when I met this fellow, and he begun telling me about the time when he lived in central Illinois and could go out in his own back lot and get all the coal he needed just for the digging. Then I hit him."

Whereupon the judge dismissed the defendant and fined the plaintiff \$5 and costs for using language calculated to provoke an assault.

Doing It Early

The other day I ran across my friend Wimberly in a tobacco shop, and he was busily engaged in looking over a big assortment of meerschaums, calabashes and French briars.

"What's on now?" I asked.

"I'm taking time by the forelock and buying my wife a Christmas present," he replied.

"And what is Mrs. Wimberly doing?" I asked.

"I left her down at the Woman's Exchange to select a Christmas present for me," he replied.

Kiddies Six

I beg to announce a new edition of my book of poems, "Kiddies Six." You know what it is. Cloth bound, 200 pages, with a picture of the Architect, the Little Woman and the Six Kiddies. They are coming from the binder now, and I can fill before Christmas all orders received before December 20. Price, \$1, postpaid, anywhere in the United States or Canada. I beg the patience a bit longer of those who have so long waited for the books they ordered. I am sending them out every day, and you'll all get yours before this coming Christmas. It is slow work, owing to circumstances over which I had no control.

Order now, and get the book before Christmas—and I'll have some Christmas money to spend on the Little Woman and the Six Kiddies. Address, Will M. Maupin, 436 Bankers Life, Lincoln, Neb.