

THANKSGIVING

A Thanksgiving Worth While

By JENNIE FOWLER-WILLING

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THE merry sleigh bells in the agony of the woman crouching over the dying one.

The sturdy November wind snarled down the chimney, blowing gas and ashes into her face. She uttered brokenly to herself, "Baby's gone—she's safe! I must save my boy!"

When they were coming home from the "burying ground" and Melville turned down Third street she knew that would be the last of him till he'd slept of his sleep.

Something pulled so hard at her heartstrings they seemed ready to snap. He was such a splendid fellow when they were married! She shook as if in an ague fit, muttering to keep up her courage, "I must save my boy!"

She raised her haggard face and bit back a stifling sob. "O God, I've done my very best for Melville, but I've failed—failed—failed! I can only turn him over to thee!"

She peered around the room in the dim light. Her wedding presents made a cozy nest of it at first, but they had all gone to the pawnshop.

"Mae Maude always had the knack o' fixin' things up," her old farmer father had said. "Took after her mother. Make a nicer bouquet out of a bunch o' mayweed an' a mullein stalk than anybody else could with plumes an' lilies."

She smiled bitterly over the dear little flattery while she packed her old suit case, even thanking God that her father and mother were safe in his heaven. "They'll keep poor baby from being afraid of the newness—and I must save my boy!"

She took from its hiding place the \$200 that had been paid for the old farm things. That would take her and little Melvie to Aggie Duncan, down in Texas, and she'd trust God for the

comes had blown over, "I guess you'll have to take hold of Jack's job. These poor cowboys almost worship a woman's shadow. And then the settlers' homes they have to be awfully neglected. I can't go with Jackie very often on account of the babies. He'll get you a good pony and turn you loose on them, and, my, oh, the good you'll do them! A special providence, I call it!"

Mae Maude smiled as the immediate past rushed before her "mind's eye." A most kind of providence, she thought. For she fell into line and was soon galloping over plain and prairie, a full size of redemption in the settlers' homes and the backbone of the nearest school house—Sunday school, to which the cowboys traveled for miles around for "a good look at the new super, just on from the east."

One Sabbath Mrs. Agnes crimsoned to the roots of her hair with the terrible "publicity" of telling the Sunday school folks about the "bee" they were going to have, to put up a lean-to, with a porch for vines, to give the new superintendent a living room, and would they all come? And those who hadn't any women folks of their own to bring to help get the big dinner and supper might bring somebody else's, and Mr. Duncan was over on Forty Mile run or he'd give it out, but they'd all come just the same and have a mighty good time putting up the new Sunday school lady's lean-to.

When Mae Maude climbed up on the rear car of the express, after throwing her old shawl and her boy's hat into the river that bleak November night of the baby's funeral, she was sure she could never laugh again. But when Mrs. Agnes told Jack the next day about her announcement of the "bee" Mae Maude had to put the frills on the story. Jack Duncan caught his wee, plump wife in his arms, with a baby or two thrown in for good measure, their squeals of merriment accompanying his full-throated American laugh, their heels kicking his broad chest gleefully, while the second edition of Melville Tremaine squeezed his mother's neck, shouting mildly: "We don't have to preach, mommy and me. We'm goin' to farm it!"

Then all joined, big and little, in the chorus of laughter, and there came near being a riot of hugs and kisses.

Mae Maude, with the help of the second generation of Duncans and her correspondence with the "back to the soil" wise men of Washington, made the manse ten acre lot bud and blossom as the rose. Many a good hint did she give the settlers and their wives that made her word on "farming it" take the place of their "rule of thumb" methods.

Dan Wetherell, a thoroughgoing young ranchman, with his eye on the legislature, noticed her neat, trim appearance while she took notes in the "lecture car" and increased the frequency of his visits at the manse.

One day he quizzed Mrs. Agnes about her friend's widowhood, quite shocking her by asking her if it were "sod or grass."

Mae Maude heard only the word "widow," but it sent the "creeps" up and down her spine. After that Dan Wetherell might as well have tried to win one of Grenfell's Labrador peaks.

She kept tab on the home folks through the Duncans, even to the mysterious disappearance of Melville Tremaine soon after her own. Everybody had given him up for dead; but, woman fashion, she held stubbornly the hope that she would see him again—her very own—the noble fellow that he was when she first knew him. Having been through the ordeal herself and knowing how they always thought along the same lines when he was himself, she looked for him to come to her—permanently redeemed.

One evening a day or two before Thanksgiving John Duncan came home from a two weeks' trip. He was silent and absentminded, though the small house was fairly tipsy with merriment. Agnes' usual expedient of putting the baby in his arms was a flat failure. It came near breaking the child's neck, for he set it down on the floor, its long clothes wadded about its useless feet, and when it was tumbling over on its small nose he took it, this way and that, as he would have done a bag of grain to make it stand on end.

Mrs. Agnes sprang to the rescue. "For mercy's sake, Jack!"

He came to the surface long enough to beg the baby's pardon and stop with a big, bushy kiss its issue of protesting notes. "Come, Aggy, let's go and take a walk."

He drew her hand into the bend of his elbow, leaving the baby and the Thanksgiving box that had just arrived from the home church, the contents of which the Junior Duncans were almost perishing to explore.

Just fairly beyond earshot he broke out with, "Lost my trail yesterday, Aggie, and you can't guess whom I ran across."

"No, Jack. Who?" certain that the mystery of his abstraction was about to unravel itself.

"Melville Tremaine."

"No, Jack. He's dead."

"Not by a long shot! The liveliest fellow I've met for many a day! Stay-



"HERE'S MY THANKSGIVING DINNER."

Photo by American Press Association.



DRAGGING THE RIVER FOR THE MISSING BODIES.

rest. Judge Tremaine's folks would take care of Melville as long as he lasted. Another great sol!

In those awful hours alone with her dying baby she had wrought out her plan. A swing of Melvie's old hat before the locomotive when the express slowed for the bridge, tossing it into the water with her old shawl, a clamber up the steps of the last car and a settling into a seat by the door.

It never entered the heads of the train crew that the dozing woman with the sleeping little boy in her lap had stopped the train.

After dragging the river for the missing bodies the "friends" gave them up. Poor Mae Maude! The loss of her baby had driven her crazy, and she had drowned herself and her boy.

She brought up at the home of Agnes Duncan, the dear, dumpy little helpmeet of a large sized home missionary whose heart, everybody said, was "as big as all outdoors."

Their handbox of a manse was packed to the eaves with babies and happiness. The small lady had a few snug little investments, the interest on which she knew would come in handy when she "threw herself away" on big John Duncan.

"See here, Mae Maude," chattered Mrs. Agnes after the tornado of we-

ed all night with him! Told me the whole story."

"Jack Duncan, what are you saying? Didn't he drink himself to death?"

"Tried to after Mae Maude left, but the Salvation Army folks down there in the city got hold of him."

"Oh, Jackie! And doesn't he drink now?"

"Total to the backbone! When the poor cowboys get near the last ditch they'll fight for a chance to get to him. When the Lord makes a man over the job can't be improved, specially such a one as Mel Tremaine."

"Did you inform him about Mae Maude?"

"It was mighty close work to get around that, for she's uppermost in his thoughts, but I said to myself, 'Aggie and I'll treat all hands to one big surprise.' He'd never given her up. He said: 'I know her conscience. She'd never go to God without a good, straight summons—drowning the boy too!' From something she said once, she's somewhere in the southwest. I'll find her yet. My business is to make myself worthy of her love. My heart ached to tell him the whole story, but I thought he could wait a day or two longer and we'd have one good, old surprise down here where things don't often happen. He promised to come to our Thanksgiving dinner. He's well fixed on his ranch."

Little Mrs. Aggie was laughing and crying and hiding her face in his shirt front. Then her housekeeperliness came to her help. "There'll be a lot o' things in the Thanksgiving box, and Mae Maude has been fattening one of the turkeys." Then came a relapse and another outburst: "Oh, Jackie, Jackie! But won't we have a Thanksgiving worth while?"

Be Thankful Anyway.

The real, original and genuine Thanksgiving dinner must boast a turkey and cranberry sauce if it is to be strictly orthodox in regard to the menu. Next to that in importance is the mince or pumpkin pie.

Yet if none of these things is forthcoming it is well to be thankful anyway. In the words of that rare old Pennsylvania philosopher, Benjamin Franklin:

"We will thank God that we have bread and butter to eat, and if we have no butter we will thank God for the bread."

ONCE A FAST, NOT A FEAST.

Thanksgiving Was Not Fatal to Turkeys in Early Days.

Turkey did not figure in the original Thanksgiving feast, but it became a feature of that historic meal so long ago that the reason is lost in oblivion.

On the original Thanksgiving day the pilgrim fathers fasted and gave verbal thanks that they had been saved from the perils of the sea and permitted to find a home in the new land. Giving up every sort of occupation and spending the time in Bible reading and in prayer, the colonists regarded it as an annual occasion of much solemnity.

It was not until thirteen years after

the settling of Massachusetts that Thanksgiving day received official cognizance, although it was generally observed by churchgoing and—after a few years of stern fasting—a better dinner than was served on week days. Thus by degrees the feature of the great day became the dinner that accompanied it.

A Candy Cornucopia.

A cornucopia formed of nougat or white candy makes an effective table decoration at Thanksgiving and has the added advantage that the children can break it up and eat it afterward. It may be filled with candied oranges and grapes, marrons glaces and other nuts.

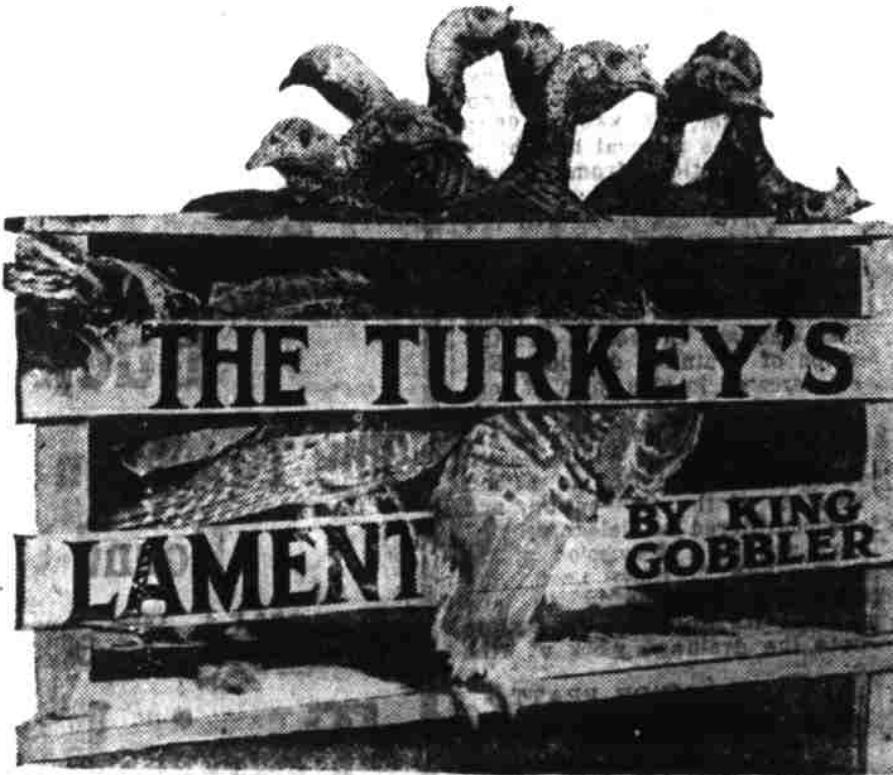


Photo by American Press Association.

I WONDER what I can have done To merit all this trouble— Shuf up where I can have no fun And bent until I'm double!

This morning all the folks rushed out And chased me over fences And here and there and round about Until I lost my senses.

I ran toward the farmer's wife And thought she would befriend me, But even she—upon my life— Did nothing to defend me!

INSTEAD, she grabbed me by a foot With no consideration, And in this prison I was put Without an explanation.

The farmer's sharpening an ax; The children talk of "dressing." Oh, my, I wish I knew the facts! These rumors are depressing!

But all the future I can see Looks very, very murky. Just now I think I'd rather be A chicken than a turkey.

ADE'S THANKSGIVING FAITH.

Here is a story apropos of Thanksgiving for which George Ade, the humorist, is directly responsible.

"The only time I ever believed in the transmigration of souls was one frosty November afternoon on my Indiana farm," he said to some friends not long ago. "It was a day or two before Thanksgiving. The trees were bare. The fields were a russet brown color. Toward me over those russet fields strutted a very plump, very large, very young turkey."

"Then it was that an ardent belief in the doctrine of metempsychosis seized me."

"You," I said to the superb bird—"you are now a turkey. And you will die tomorrow. But cheer up. Your next transmigration will be into the body of a humorist not unknown to fame."

THE HORN OF PLENTY AS A SYMBOL OF THANKSGIVING.

The cornucopia, or horn of fruitfulness and abundance, always used by the Greeks and Romans as the symbol of plenty, is an apt expression of the sentiment that prevails on Thanksgiving day. Filled with fruits and flowers, it makes one of the most charming of centerpieces for the Thanksgiving dinner table. The contents should be arranged so that the cornucopia is overflowing, the fruits and flowers running out of the horn and over the table.

A cornucopia may be made of wire covered with silk, or again with linen, or it might be made of cardboard on which vines or autumn leaves are sewed. The leaves of the garland, which do not fade, could be used, although one should prefer the beautiful blackberry vine, which at this season is always at its best in color. The leaves of the vine should be made to run up toward the mouth of the horn and trail about its edges, suggesting a horn being wound about with them. Flowers, too, should fall about the brim so that fidelity to the original idea might be preserved.

A Thanksgiving Prayer.

A GOOD thing to read on Thanksgiving day, if one feels that the trials and tribulations of the year outweigh the compensations, is the prayer of Robert Louis Stevenson, the poet, written during his last illness in Samoa. It breathes the very essence of the Thanksgiving spirit. Here it is:

"We thank thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the tomorrow; for the health, the work, the food and the bright skies that make our lives delightful; for our friends in all parts of the earth."

Goose and Turkey Rivals.

The goose may soon replace the classic bird which now forms the apex of most Thanksgiving feasts if the advice of some food experts is followed. According to them, the turkey is immature before Christmas, being put through a system of forcing to get to the proper weight and fatness. While its flesh is all right as far as health goes, its flavor is not at its best until Christmas, when it really becomes the king of fowls. On the other hand, the flesh of the goose has reached its perfection at Thanksgiving time.

Pride Goes Before a Fall.

"Stop!"

The word was hissed by a goose just as a gobbler with all sails set strutted by. But the proud bird, intent on admiring his own plumage, ignored the command.

"Humph," sniffed the envious asserine. "He's all puffed up because he heard the farmer say Thanksgiving would be his day to enter society."

WHAT THANKSGIVING MEANS

- To the small boy—Turkey and cranberry sauce.
- To the debutante—The first dance of the season.
- To the farmer and forest—Big business.
- To the wanderer—Home.
- To the mother—The family will all be there.
- To the father—More carving to do.
- To the collegian—Football.
- To the tired shopper—A holiday.
- To the chef—Extra work.