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SPILL THE MILK



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COMPLETE

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THE STONE

By ROBERT ANDERSSON

"There are lots of good fish in the sea . . ."
but Thorsten was casting his net in the wrong
waters

THE boats are coming in after a day's fishing. One by one, they appear from behind the peninsula that lends a shielding arm to the harbor of the little village.

On a quiet evening you can hear them far out, and the keen ears of the fishermen's wives ashore have already told them apart by the sound of the engines long before they come waddling like cattle from pasture into the tranquil pool of the harbor. The motor stops, hiccupping slightly before the final turn of the propeller.

This daily occurrence is as common to the three hundred people of Selvick as the sight of their unpaved streets and two small stores. Still there is a kind of excitement when the boats start coming in. The Icelandic waters are risky, and even in the fairest weather, there will always be someone ashore who doesn't feel quite at ease until the last boat

is safely lodged beside the piers. And then the catch is always somewhat a matter of chance. A captain may bring in ten thousand pounds today and find little or nothing tomorrow.

You follow the boats eagerly with your eyes as they approach, try to guess their load, compare it with yesterday's, sum up roughly the outcome for the season.

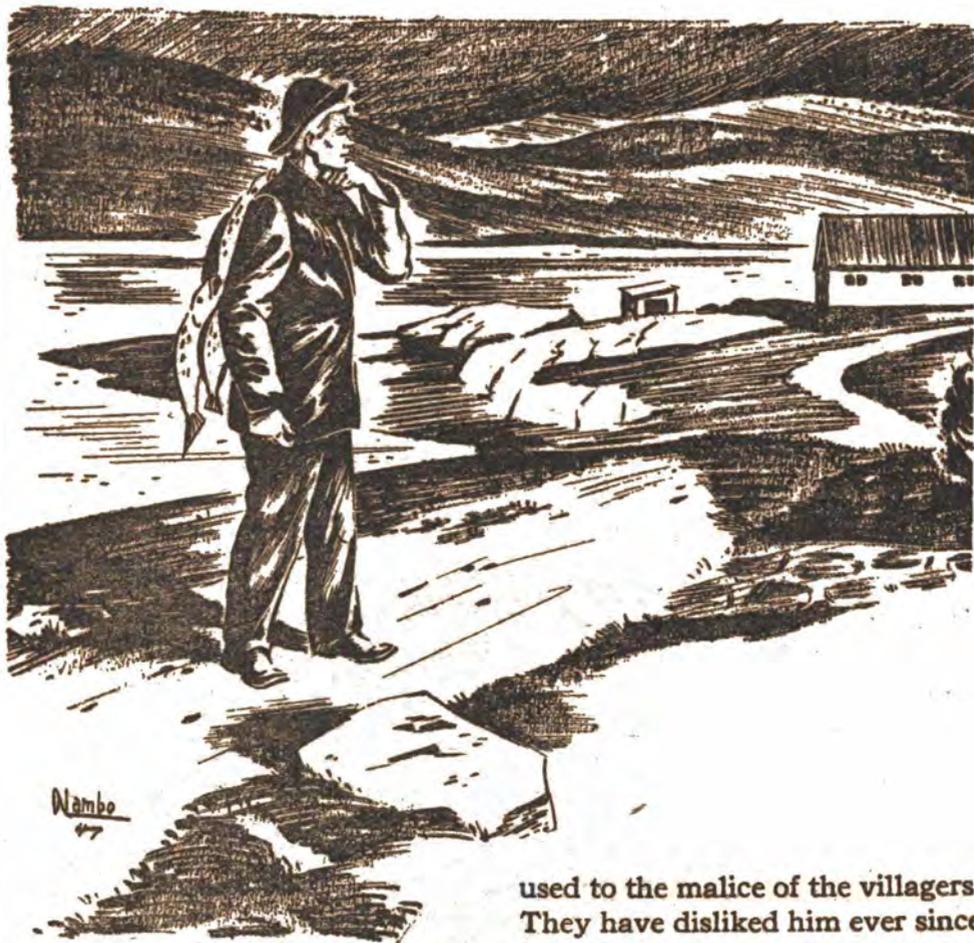
Young Thorsten Bjornson's boat, 'The Earl,' is turning the peninsula just now.

"There is that young Thorsten again as empty as a shell," says greybeard Nikulas, an old salt, who has come down on the piers to greet the arrivals.

"Two thousand pounds of catch," someone guesses. "Pretty lean for a day like this."

"Poor boy," says a timid little fisherman's wife who is bringing her husband refreshments. "Poor boy, he is so inexperienced."

Young Thorsten, tall, rangy



and weatherbeaten is standing on deck of his boat, leaning a brown, sinewy hand against the cabin door.

He knows by experience that the old wisecracks up there on the piers have guessed his load only too accurately. Two thousand pounds while others bring in four or five times that much a day. When he lands, there will be some slyly innocent questionings and casual remarks about the plentifulness of the season. But he is

used to the malice of the villagers. They have disliked him ever since he settled in town a year ago, and especially since merchant Thomsen preferred him to older men and gave his command of 'The Earl.'

Not that 'The Earl,' old, speedless and shaky is much of a ship to compete with other boats of the village, but the old timers simply didn't like the idea of a newcomer taking over the boat. Perhaps, he didn't listen to their counsels with sufficient humility. But somehow he felt that they wouldn't be too sorry if 'The Earl' came out with a little deficit after



the season, just to prove their point. His pride was challenged, he felt, and he wasn't going to stand for any patronizing attitudes from the others. Things worked out all right at first, but a month ago, everything started going backwards. 'The Earl' seemed to be giving up. There were repairs and delays every day. Then he lost part of his line out at sea. Simply bad luck, no one to blame, but old Thomsen doesn't believe that his captains should have bad luck.

And the catch is miserable every trip. The old timers seem to think it quite natural. He just isn't a good seaman. Too little experience, nothing but conceit, they argue. No wonder he did all right during the early part of the season when you could practically scoop up the cod with your bare hands. Time is the best test for young sprouts like him

"I saw you coming up the street," she adds, blushing slightly. "You look so very tired."

who think they know their trade first hand.

Ah, well, tonight he isn't going to worry. It's a Saturday, and he is going to snap out of the rut, have a good time for once, take Freyja, old Nikulas' daughter to the village dance. He hasn't seen her for days, but Freyja is young Thorsten's girl, no matter what old Nikulas may say.

Young Thorsten fastens the landing line with a quick, skilful jerk of the hand. "Tell the men when they come to unload that I won't be here to help," he says to the engineer. "Whatever there is to unload," he adds sarcastically as he turns up the pier.

His walk is slow and a little clumsy as if he were mechanically trying to steady himself. Of late he has scarcely stepped ashore,

sleeping in the boat at night.

Funny, but as he trudges up the path to the village, his long rubber boots slapping monotonously with each step, he feels gradually too tired and listless to be going out. Maybe, he'd simply better take a good shower and sleep in a clean bed for once. Still he'd like to see Freyja. Freyja is a very nice girl, but she has too many admirers for her own good, and she is headstrong enough to have someone else take her to the dance if Thorsten is too tired. Merchant Thomsen's son, for instance, who is always around. Old Nikulas wouldn't mind that.

"Hello," someone is saying. Young Thorsten looks up. It is Lina, the shy, freckled girl who lives in the cottage across the street. She is standing there awkwardly in a faded green dress and brown slippers that look too large for her feet. He remembers suddenly that he has often seen her down in the salting house among the women who clean the fish. He always thought her homely and a little stupid because she couldn't return the fishermen's jokes like the other girls.

Strange that he recalls her so well from the piers, and yet he has never before identified her with the girl he occasionally sees slipping furtively into the cottage. He must be getting absent-minded from all those blasted worries.

This time Lina doesn't hurry inside. She wants to offer him a

cup of coffee. "I saw you coming up the street," she adds, blushing slightly. "You look so very tired."

Young Thorsten doesn't want pity from anybody in this village, but tonight he is tired and there is something so attractive in the girl's mild and sympathetic demeanour that he accepts, and walks silently after her into the cottage. It is clean and tidy in here, the rough, unpainted floor of the kitchen is scoured almost white and a kitten sits purring on the windowsill. The quiet neatness of the little place is infectious. You want to be careful here not to brush against anything with your stained overalls and sticky boots—more so than in old merchant Thomsen's overfurnished sitting room. The rickety old cupboard, the small earthenware jugs over the stove, the towels, thin from long use seem to hold together more by force of sheer cleanliness than substance.

Young Thorsten is overcome by a pleasant, insinuating drowsiness as he sits down in a corner and leans his back against the wall. His limbs ache. Somehow he thinks of a tender hand that might pull off his boots and bring soft slippers for the fisherman's heavy and tired feet.

Lina pours him a cup of coffee. Her hands are tiny but roughened and blistered from work in the salting house. She is shy and talks little while he drinks. Then she asks about today's fishing.

"It's all because of that old boat," she insists. "I'm sorry you couldn't start off with a better one."

Young Thorsten is preparing to leave. "So you don't think I am a bad seaman like the others do?" he asks, half serious, half smiling.

"No, of course you are not." Her voice is anxious as if she had finally got a chance to say something that lies heavy on her mind. "You work hard. And you are strong." She is shy again and thinks she has said too much.

Young Thorsten is touched. Somehow no encouragement has ever sounded more welcome than the naive tribute from this poor lonely girl. With a sudden impulse, he bends down and kisses her on the mouth, clumsily, abruptly. "Thanks for the coffee," he says as an afterthought and walks out into the street.

Young Thorsten is putting on his best coat. There is a relief in putting on one's best coat even if the sleeves are too short and the elbows shiny, especially if you have forgotten how you look in anything but dirty overalls. The weariness is gone. Of course, you'll go to the dance, have the time of your life. Isn't Freyja the prettiest girl in the village? Young Thorsten adjusts his handkerchief; he is fairly pleased with his looks.

Before he goes out, the engineer from 'The Earl' drops by.

"Old Thomsen was down on the pier asking for you," he says, "I

thought you might like to know."

"Did he say what he wanted?" Young Thorsten is a little annoyed at being reminded of the boat owner just now.

"No, nothing in particular. He didn't even ask about the catch. Just said to tell you if you came around that he'd be in his office." The engineer's voice is tired and a little apathetic. Poor fellow, he has a wife and three children, and there won't be much for his share this season.

"I'll go." Young Thorsten claps the engineer on the shoulder with a sort of awkward friendliness. "Thanks for telling me. You go home and get a good night's rest."

Old Thomsen is sitting in his office, a musty unpleasant cubicle in back of his store. He offers Thorsten a chair, pulls out a cigar box, sharpens his pencil carefully before he starts.

He doesn't want Thorsten to misunderstand him, he says. He'd do as much as he could for him. But the fishing hasn't been quite as it should be. To be sure 'The Earl' is old. He knows that only too well. But then it used to be the best boat in town. It has brought in many a good load in its time. Oh, he knows too that Thorsten is conscientious and works hard. He has nothing to complain about in that respect. But 'The Earl' wasn't built for any of those new ideas about fishing. It wasn't built for speed or long trips either. 'The Earl' has

never lost an inch of line until this season.

He isn't blaming Thorsten, but, perhaps, an old hand, a man who has more experience with that kind of boat that 'The Earl' is might be able to do better. Old Nikulas, for instance, might be quite willing to take over for the rest of the season. No, he isn't throwing Thorsten out. He wants him to stay on the boat just the same or perhaps he can give him something to do ashore. Which-ever way he prefers.

Young Thorsten walks out of Thomsen's store, a fisherman without his boat. For a moment he is violently angry, angry at Thomsen and the whole village, angry at himself for not having quit weeks ago instead of giving the merchant a chance to throw him out. He has left Thomsen without saying a word—a few steps farther and he'll turn back and tell the old miser what he thinks. Is there any justice in firing him now when he has spent the better part of the season trying to make the boat go? Thomsen ought to be grateful that someone was stupid enough to spend time and effort on his rotten outfit.

Still if old Nikulas is willing to take over the boat—old Nikulas usually knows what he is doing.

Young Thorsten doesn't turn back. There is no sense in flaring up now, he is tired of justifying himself as a victim of circum-

stances. Maybe they were right down there on the piers when they said that he simply wasn't a good seaman. He can't figure it out; he has tried that only too often. When every hapless trip feels like a personal humiliation, there is little help in telling yourself that it is all because of bad luck and an old boat. Can a man keep cool and ignore it if the whole village turns against him and tells him that he is no good at his trade?

Right now he is too weary to think and soon his gait becomes heavy and awkward as before when he walked up the pier. People pass him by, young idlers sporting their Sunday clothes and killing time before the dance starts, fishermen going home to rest after a strenuous day. A sense of loneliness creeps over him, a desperate need to confide in someone. Then he thinks of Freyja and turns toward old Nikulas' house.

Greybeard Nikulas opens the door himself.

"Is Freyja in?" Young Thorsten doesn't want any unnecessary conversation with the old man.

"Oh, yes, Freyja," old Nikulas takes snuff and speaks with a nasal twang. "Freyja left for the capital yesterday with her aunt. Didn't you know?"

But young Thorsten didn't know. All he knows is that he has to check a sudden impulse to punch the greybeard squarely

in the face. Instead he turns away from the house.

"You are fishing in the wrong waters," old Nikulas is muttering, but Thorsten ignores it. From now on he isn't going to bother about this village, simply pack his things and go away. There are other places where a man may establish himself on his own, find the right girl and make a home, have his own boat and outfit even if it's only a rowboat and a hand-line. Still wouldn't it be cowardly to run away like that? Could he ever show his face in this town again? Young Thorsten is a slow thinker. On board his boat things are easier to decide but walking along the street, trying to solve mental problems throws him into confusion.

In the back of his mind there is something else, vague and indefinite as yet, which tells him that he isn't going to leave now. Something he has forgotten to do, perhaps and can't remember.

Suddenly his thoughts are interrupted—by a sound of laughter and gaiety. A group of young people have gathered around a large seabeaten stone on an empty lot. Long ago someone has brought this rock from the beach and placed it in the center of town for young men to test their strength on. Reminiscences of years ago flood upon young Thorsten. He recalls the testing stone in his native village out west and how he had stood a little boy

tense with emotion watching the young fishermen try their strength. How he had trained himself day after day, year after year lifting smaller rocks until he was able to wrestle with the big one. How he finally had been able to lift the stone, first to his ankles, then to the knees and at last to the chest. The youngsters are laughing gaily as one after another takes hold of the stone and struggles with it. One, a short stocky lad is able to lift it to his knees. Someone sees Thorsten standing there. "Come on and try," they yell.

Thorsten moves slowly forward. He is out of practice and feels a strange sense of fright at trying. The blood rushes to his head. He feels as if the group of youngsters around were a board of judges, and his fate depended on whether he could lift the stone. Somehow it is terribly important. He looks at the youngsters. They have sensed his tenseness and stand around in a circle alert with unconscious foreboding that something is going to happen. He bends down over the stone, and suddenly he has to exert all his willpower not to straighten up and leave it untouched. Desperately, confusedly he searches his mind for something to bring him back his reassurance. Then he remembers little Lina, the timid, freckled Lina who said with such anxiety, such force of childlike confidence, (*More on page 49*)



We might as well admit it—there is nothing like this June weather to fill us with the gay, tender thoughts of love. Everything as well as everybody seems to have it on his mind.

The fountains mingle with the river,

And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle;—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,

And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;

What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

"Love's Philosophy"
Percy Bysshe Shelley

But after all, one can't think those sad but true thoughts every moment of the day. There is work to be done—daily work—and that requires planning and at

least a quarter of our thoughts—agree?

It is so easy to take a philosophical view of other men's problems, and so hard with your own.

Buy not what you want, but what you need. What you don't need is dear at a penny. —CATO

Here is a thought I picked up especially for the vacationers. Summer is upon us and I think it would be well to ponder this carefully.

It is a good idea to begin at the bottom in everything except in learning to swim.

And when that summer mob besets you, and the heat is in your hair, take a piece of advice from the master of good behavior, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"We must be as courteous to a man as we are to a picture, which we are willing to give the advantage of good light."

There are very few people who, when their love is over, are not ashamed of having been in love.

SPILL THE MILK

By DORIS HARKEY

(From THE ARCHIVE)

The whole spirit of the carnival died for Collie when he saw the light on in Nona's bedroom and heard her rich laughter echo through the night

COLLIER BARNETT kicked the screen door open with a bang. It flopped back against the wall, shuddered noisily, and then swung shut, creaking on its hinges. He shuffled to the edge of the porch and leaned against the grey weathered post. It was warm under his shoulder. The afternoon sun was just going down. The last rays filtered through the trellis at the end of the porch and made crossed patterns with the cracks on the floor. The air was still. The trumpet vine withered in the heat. Up the alley a group of children laughed and splashed tin cans of water on each other, their black arms and legs glistening in the sun.

They got the right idea, he thought as he wiped the row of perspiration from his lip.

Theirs was the only activity. Elsewhere on the alley, the hot, heavy air of mid-July had ar-

rested all motion in the monotony of rocking chairs and in the rhythmic flapping back and forth of funeral parlor fans. It was as if everything in the alley waited with unstinted patience until the heavy burden of the summer air could be lifted by the relief forces of night.

Collier had watched Night come to the alley. It crept cautiously up the bank of the smelly creek that ran behind the row of shacks. It crouched for a moment at the corners of the houses, then moved hurriedly along, seeking cover behind clumps of privet and battered, overflowing garbage cans. At length, Night sprang forward, shattering the sultry defenses of Day. With the coming of Night, life and motion would return to the alley. The leaves of the stunted water oaks, their green lost in the dust of day, would begin to twitch with the

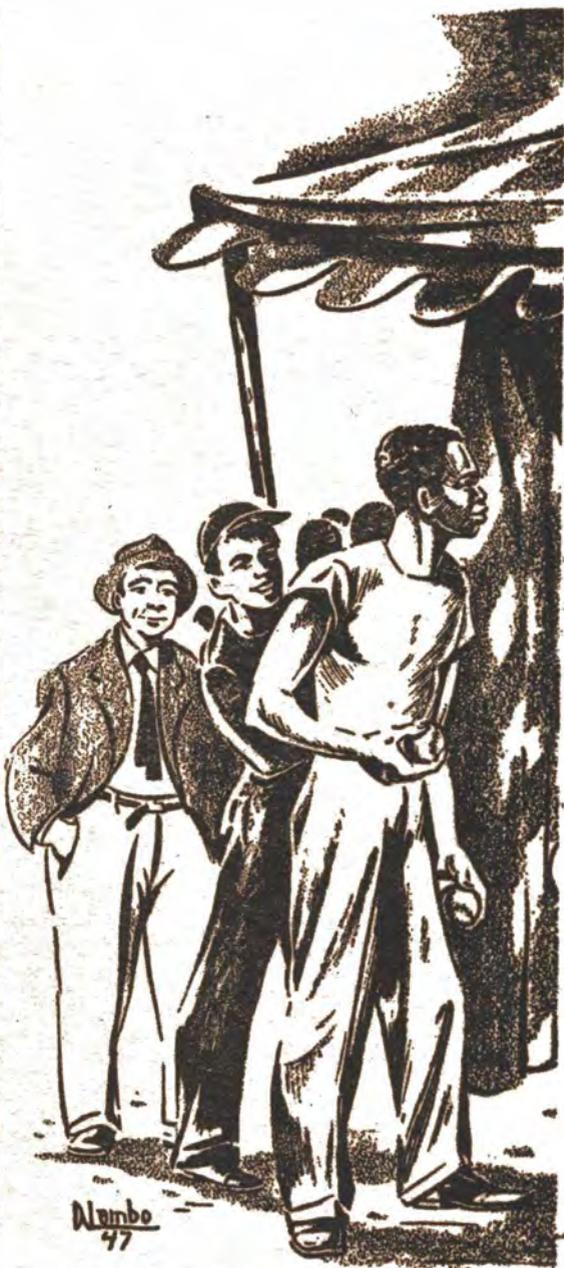
slightest breeze. On the porches, dark, lean shadows would rise in their places, unfold, and stretch to man-like size, entwined with a teasing treble, would ring out, begin to fade, and suddenly become lost in the grass near the creek bank. Night would know her welcome.

Up at the corner, Collier watched the white people swarm past from the grocer's, great brown bags piled high in their arms. They always seemed to be in a hurry—working themselves into a sweat even on the hottest days.

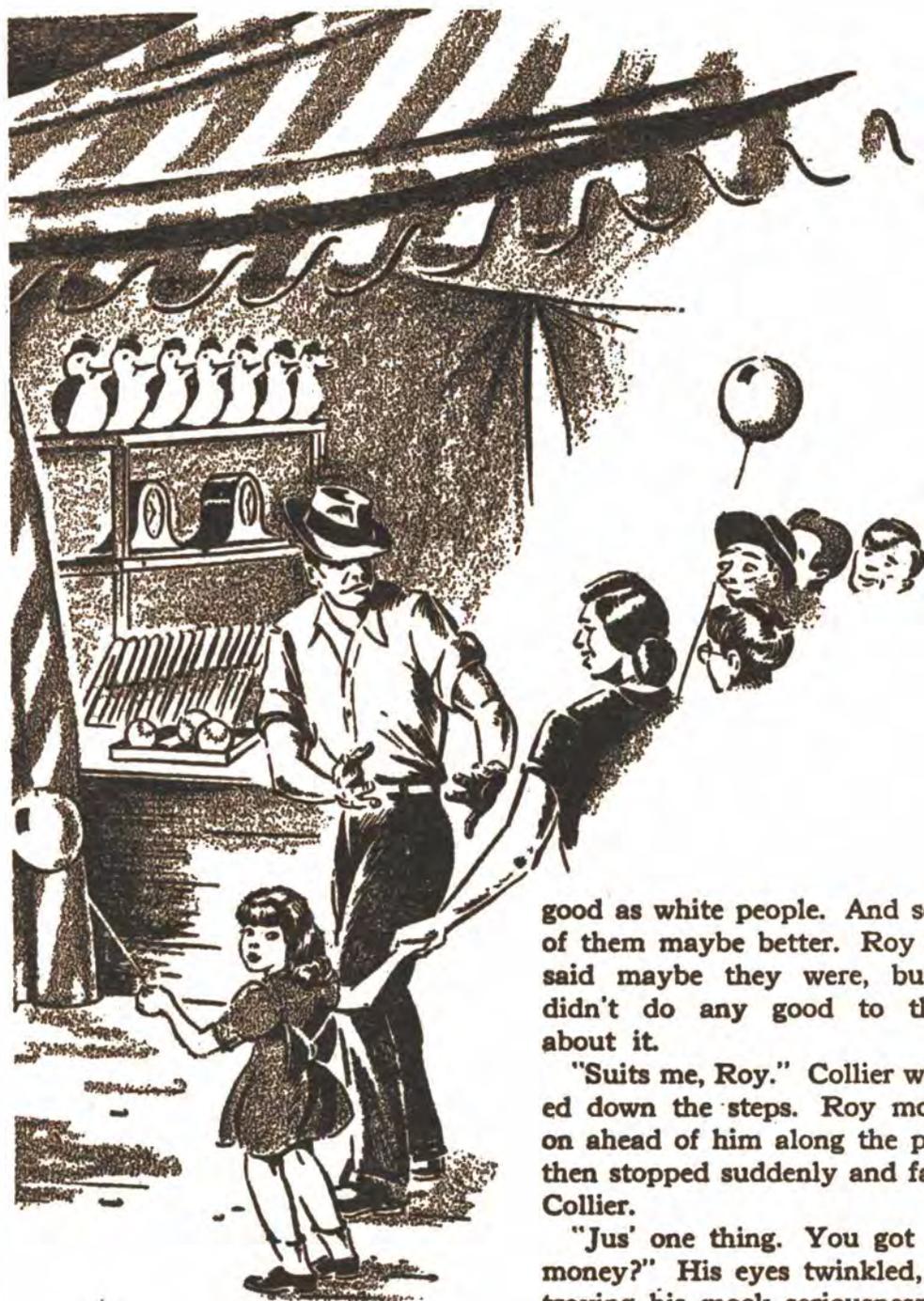
Summer wasn't meant for white people, Collier mused. They ought to know by now you have to give in a little to hot weather. All they do is work all the time—just working and piling up money. Then along comes a hot day—and plop! there's one of them gone. Just dropped in his tracks. Collier smiled with satisfaction as if he had personally sent another one sprawling to the earth. His mood of triumph was soon shattered by a voice beside him.

"Hey, Collier—what you doin'? daydreamin' ag'in?" He didn't wait for a reply. "Le's go out to the carnival."

Roy was Collier's best friend. Or at least he used to be. Collier was afraid he wasn't anymore. It was hard to tell him things sometimes. He didn't understand. Like the time he only laughed when Collier said he thought colored people were as



He gripped the ball in his right hand and the crowd stepped back to give him room



good as white people. And some of them maybe better. Roy had said maybe they were, but it didn't do any good to think about it.

"Suits me, Roy." Collier walked down the steps. Roy moved on ahead of him along the path, then stopped suddenly and faced Collier.

"Jus' one thing. You got any money?" His eyes twinkled, betraying his mock seriousness.

"It's Sat'day, ain't it?" Collier grinned. "Well, I got money."

Digging his hands deep in his pockets, Collier felt the smooth coins oily against his fingers. His billfold bulged in his hip pocket. With every step he took, he could feel the hard, fat wallet press his body. Of course, they were all ones. But it made you feel a lot richer to have all ones instead of a five and a ten. Mr. Grove always smiled a little when he asked to be paid in one dollar bills. Fifteen dollars wasn't much for a week's work, but it was good money for curbing. Besides, the hours were good. He could go out to the University mornings. And there was always a good bit of extra money in tips. The Drive-in was located in the wealthiest section of town.

Collier matched his steps to Roy's and they walked toward the corner. In front of the last house Roy stopped. It was the finest house on Grayson Row. It was an old house like the others on the alley, but the steps were sturdy and the shutters secure.

"Aren't you going to take Nona?" Roy asked.

Collier looked toward the house. The front door was open and her little brother was playing on the porch.

"Naw, I don't guess so. She probably isn't home from work yet anyway," he said.

"You crazy, man? You know she's home now. She don't never work in the afternoons."

Collier stared past him with

pretended interest in a mottled cat, paddling along the street.

"Say, Collier?" Roy began again. "What's between you and Nona these days? You been gettin' those funny ideas ag'in?"

"Naw, Roy. It's nothin'. Guess I just forgot. Wait for me out here."

Collier walked slowly up the steps. Nona was his girl, wasn't she? She'd been his girl ever since they moved on the Row. Why should he be afraid to ask her to go? Little Joe put down his toys and ran to call her.

Inside the house it was cool and dark except for the lamp burning on the table. It felt good to be out of the heat. Collier thought the room was like Nona—cool and dark. She was a yellow. But her moods were dark and impenetrable. And then they were light and he could see right in. They understood each other. They wanted the same things.

As soon as Nona came in, he knew why he had been afraid. She was wearing her uniform—the black one with the white starched cap and the frilly little apron. Even the simplicity of the style could not hide the round fullness of her body.

"Hello, Nona." He went on, not waiting for her to speak. He wanted to avoid any awkwardness. "Roy and I are goin' out to the carnival. Wanna come?"

Nona's eyes met his only for an instant. "I'm working again

tonight, Collie." She turned to the mantel and moved a vase a little nearer the edge. "Mrs. Cameron's having another party tonight. She needs me."

The Camerons were the richest people in town. Nona had been working there almost a year. She used to tell Collier about the grand parties they had. They were like the ones you saw in picture shows, where the women wore long dresses and the men white jackets and everybody drank liquor from little glasses with long stems. The only difference was that everybody got drunk—not funny drunk, but disgusting drunk. The things they did made Collie know that they weren't any better than colored people. He had begged Nona not to work there. He didn't think it was the kind of place for her. But she could never make so much money anywhere else.

Nona faced him again suddenly. She was smiling now and there was that light in her eyes that he could never quite understand.

"Oh, Collie, I wish I could go with you." Her hand rested on his arm. "Bring me something. Will you? One of those little painted dolls maybe."

She moved her hands lightly along his arms and raised her eyes to meet his. Her voice was low.

"You do understand, don't you, honey? And we can have all day tomorrow together."

"O. K., Nona, sure. Sure, Nona.

And I understand," he added.

Collier started down the steps. I understand all right, he thought. Sure, she can send me out to play like a good little boy. I understand.

Nona watched him from the door, then called him back. She pulled him inside and put her arms around his neck, drawing his body close to hers. "Why did you go away like that?" Her voice was teasing. "Who you love, big boy?" she whispered, pushing back to look at him. Her dark eyes were intimate. Their light was shaded and familiar.

Everything was all right now. Collier knew it was.

The fairgrounds were already thronged with people. The midway writhed with dancing lights and chaotic sounds. Collier had been to carnivals many times, but there was still something that made them new, exciting. It was like watching a parade and feeling the drums pound in your stomach when the band passes.

He closed his eyes and tried hard to remember everything to tell Nona. He could still see the bright lights of the Ferris wheel revolve slowly against the night sky. And the sound of the merry-go-round spinning out its sad song in a boyish voice made something stick in his throat. He was glad when they had come to the end of the midway where it was not quite so noisy and whirling.

A barker near them was gathering a crowd. Each word seemed to come easily, mechanically; but his voice was husky from too much use. "S-s-tep right up, folks! See the most amazing show on the midway. I-i-in this tent—we will show you—the *fish* boy. He has no feet. He has no hands. Only fins like a fish. Yes, folks, it's the fish boy."

Somewhere in the crowd a man jeered. "Fish boy, huh? Where you get a license to catch that kind?" And the crowd laughed with relief. He was a sport in a cheap tweed jacket and his hair slicked close against his head.

Roy nudged Collier. "Hey, Collie, le's go in. I'd like to see this." Inside, the crowd lined the canvas square in muted silence. A small tow-haired boy sat at a table, coloring pictures in a book. He held a crayon in two tapering pieces of boneless flesh. His legs ended in the same meaty prong. The man who had mocked the barker outside quickly jammed his hands in his pockets and walked out.

Collier turned away from the scene. "Ready to go, Roy?" He felt ashamed for having come, and for all the people who stared with dumb, expressionless faces. Outside the barker was gathering another crowd. The man with the slick hair stood on the edge of the crowd, not looking at anything. The two walked on in silence. A sailor and his girl

passed and she laughed foolishly as he brushed a wisp of cotton candy from her nose.

"You know, Roy," Collier said at last, "carnivals are a lot of fun. You can do anything you want to. It doesn't make any difference at a carnival."

"What you talkin' about anyway?" Roy asked.

"I mean like there's no back doors in these tents and no back seats on the Ferris wheel."

"Now listen to me, Collie. Don't you get started on that tonight. We're out to have a good time. Le's ride the Ferris wheel. Back seats or front seats. It don't make no difference to me."

It was getting late when Collier remembered the doll for Nona. They began to look in all the booths for the prettiest one. Roy stopped short in front of a booth with a gay red and white striped awning. A man was throwing balls at a stack of wooden bottles.

"Collie, why don't you win her somethin'? She'd like that better 'n anything you could buy."

"Yeah, that's a good idea." Collier looked at the prizes. There were rows of pastel blankets hanging across the side of the tent. And three shelves of big, expensive prizes. There were two clocks left, brown mantel clocks with cheap faces. "Maybe I could win her a clock. That would be much better than a doll—and better than anything Mr. Cam—." Collier stopped and looked at Roy.

But he was watching the big white man knock all the bottles down and had not heard. "That would be better than a doll," he finished.

The barker held three balls extended in his hand. "Who'll be next, folks? Ev-r-ree body gets a prize. The gentleman going there has just won a clock. Who'll be next? A clock if you get 'em all down with one! A lovely blanket if you get 'em all down with two. Everybody wins a prize. Only twenty-five cents for three balls. There's only one clock left. Who'll be next, folks?"

The crowd stood watching his antics. No one moved. Finally Collier stepped forward. "I'll take three, mister." He gripped a ball in his right hand and the crowd stepped back to give him room. The first ball squashed in a dead thud against the canvas. Well, he'd lost the clock. And he didn't want the blanket. Might as well take a practice shot, though. Two toppled off with the second ball. Ray watched intently. "Now you've got it, Collie. Ask him for three more." He didn't win on the next three. But the practice was good. His aim was much better. There were three more and then three more. "Just three more, mister. I'm gonna win this time. I want that clock."

The crowd had gotten bigger now. They were silent, tense, wanting the colored boy to win his clock. Collier stepped back and took careful aim. The

muscles were taut under his shirt sleeve as he followed through the windup. It was a sure winner. The bottles crashed to the ground. But two remained teetering in position. A sigh of disappointment went up from the crowd.

The barker stepped close to Collier. "Hey, boy—I'll tell you a secret." His breath was hot and stale in Collier's face and his red rimmed eyes jumped nervously. "You gotta aim to hit on the right side just between the last two bottles and up a little. See—like this." All the bottles fell. "That's the way you spill the milk."

"I'll take three more." Collier reached for his money, but he had spent his last quarter. Roy handed him one.

The crowd took heart once more and pressed closer. Collier surveyed the stack of bottles. Spill the milk, huh? He'd show him. And he'd knock 'em all down without hitting between the last two on the right. He could feel the crowd behind him, straining as if to help. Sure, he'd win. This time he couldn't lose.

The ball sped from his hand and hit the bottles dead in the center. Collier's arm dropped to his side and his chest heaved with satisfaction. The barker was quick. He thrust a painted walking stick with a silk tassel at Collier. His voice boomed. "A-a-and the boy wins a prize. Everybody wins a prize. Who'll be next, folks? It's ver-ry easy. Just spill

the milk. Only a quarter—twenty-five cents for three balls."

He glanced at Collier still standing before him. "Go on, boy," he scowled under his breath. "You got your prize. Clear out."

"I want the clock," he said. "I won it." He turned to look at the crowd watching silently. Most of them had already begun to move away. They had wanted him to win, but they didn't care about the prize. A change had come over the ones who were left. They were smiling, but it was not regret or sympathy. On the face of the entire crowd there was a fixed, triumphant smile, a snarl.

A man in front spoke up. "You heard him, bud. Be on your way. You can take your pretty little walking cane. A few years from now you'll be glad you got it"—he turned to the crowd—"if you live that long," he sneered. They laughed coarsely and he exulted in their approval of his joke.

Roy watched Collier's jaw tighten and saw the vein begin to swell at his temple. "Come on, Collie. Let's get the walking stick and go home." He picked it up from the ground where the man had thrown it. He pushed Collier ahead of him and the crowd separated for them to pass.

The boys walked home without speaking. Collier left Roy at his house and walked on toward the Row alone. It was late and no one was on the street. From the corner he could see a dim

light burning in the back room of Nona's house. That was Nona's room. He was glad she was still up. He would tell her about the carnival and she would understand about the doll.

He walked toward the house. Then he saw Mr. Cameron's car parked in the back. He was not surprised. He had seen it there twice before. One night he had waited in the bushes to watch Mr. Cameron leave. He had got a good look at him then. A rather short middle-aged man, clumsily hurrying to get in the car before anyone could see him. It had made Collier remember the time he and Roy had been caught swimming naked in Mr. Johnston's pond.

He watched the lighted window blindly, clinching his jaw at the thought of her cool body under a white man's hand. He didn't know Nona after all, he guessed. How could she want anyone else? The high school girls came out to the Drive-in on Sundays. He used to look at their long, soft hair and wonder how it would feel to run his hands through it. And he always noticed the fine shape of their legs under their silk dresses. But he had never wanted one of them. Not the way he wanted Nona.

Nona's rich laughter floated from the window and mocked him standing there. His hands gripped the walking stick he was still holding. (*More on page 49*)

MARTHA GOES A-BORNING

By GERTRUDE BARLOW MEYERS

No doctor needed to check the babies Martha "borned," yet here was a pioneer mother who couldn't rest until the man from town arrived

MARTHA BENSTON pulled up at the top of the hill, letting her stock frame go slack in the saddle, while she looked over the valley and rested.

"At fifty, I'm getting too old for this business of borning babies!" The words came out rushed on the crest of a tired sigh, as she pushed her graying hair back from her face, and smoothed the black riding skirt down with strong fingers.

She had been up two nights in a ranch house twenty miles from home while a new human being had struggled its way into the world. But the faint sense of relief she always felt when she came in sight of her own house on the far side of the valley came over her now and she smiled.

She had announced to the people in the valley last year, she was thinking with wry humor, that she had delivered her last

baby. But it hadn't made the slightest difference. Prospective fathers with ragged nerves came riding in tremendous haste and Martha, whether she'd ever seen him before or not, climbed into her worn sidesaddle and rode off with him.

Doc Maysmith, who had died last year over in Cedar Gap, the nearest town, had rarely even called to check over the cases she'd delivered, she thought with pardonable pride.

She wondered what the new doc was like. A young fellow. She'd been too busy to get into town now for six months, and she usually tried to get down once or twice for church service anyhow. There was a new minister, too, who'd been there several months and she hadn't even heard him.

"I wonder," she muttered aloud, "if he can shake folks loose from sin any better'n the other one



could!" She sighed again tiredly.

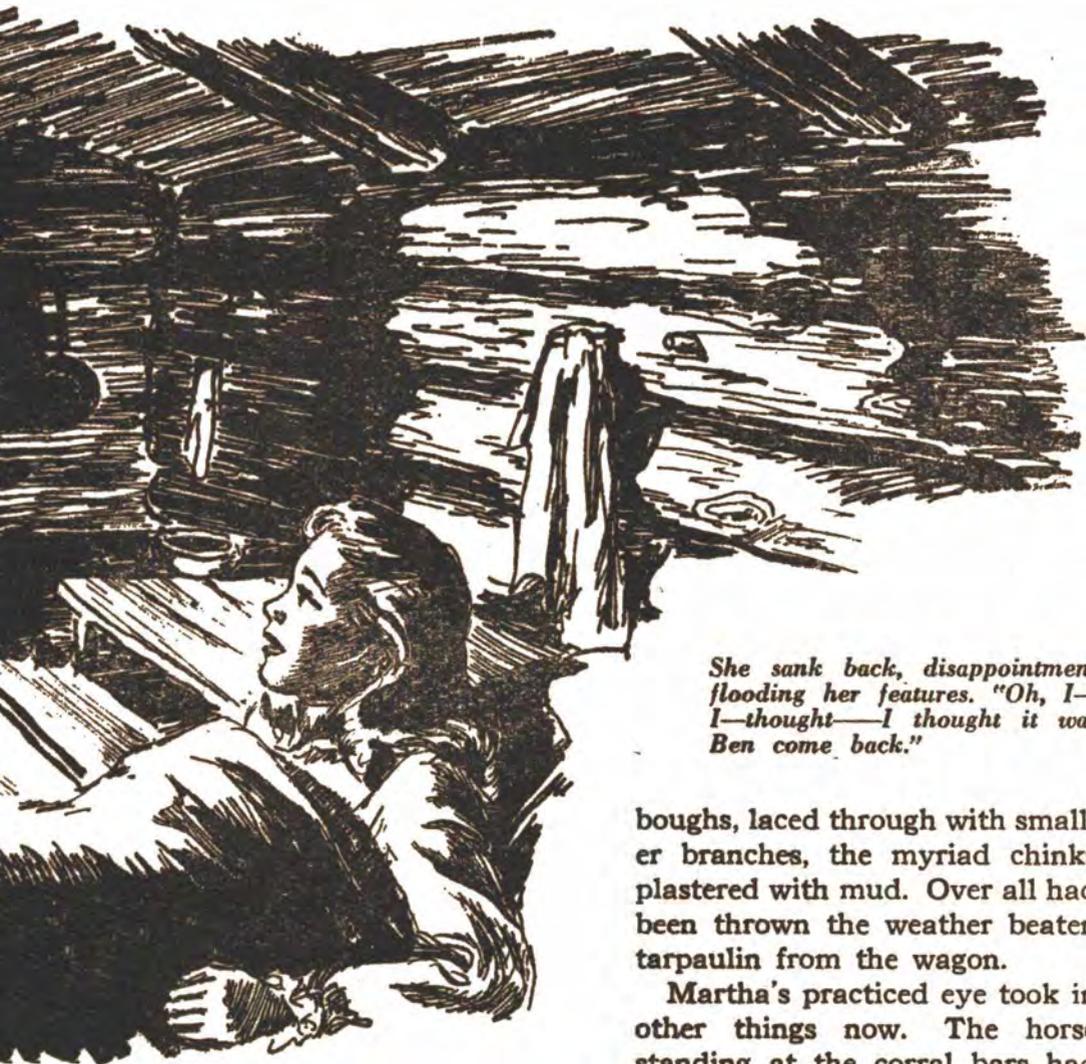
It was as she lifted the reins to go on down the little used trail that she glanced to the left and saw horse tracks at the base of the hill. She was on land now that belonged to her and Tim, and she knew no ranch hands had been sent to this part of the range since branding time last fall.

"Now who could be goin' in an' out from there? Nesters maybe. Tim won't like that!"

At the moment she was too tired to feel a tremendous interest, but Tim would want to know. Wagon trains were still going through to California and it was not uncommon to find occasional parties camping on the range. But

the repetition of tracks, some fresh, indicated something more than temporary, for they followed a small stream around a bend that ended in a deep arroyo, almost a small canyon, at the head of which a small spring opened. The fact that it was a dead end canyon would prevent its being a through trail to anywhere.

She started her horse zigzagging down the side of a hill until



She sank back, disappointment flooding her features. "Oh, I—I—thought—I thought it was Ben come back."

she came out at the bottom, forded the stream and rode on around the bend. A shrill nicker cut the stillness, and ahead of her she saw a rudely built corral, penning in a single horse and a gaunt cow. It was not until she had ridden close that she saw the tiny clumsy cabin built like a lean-to against the side of the arroyo.

"Well, I never!" she marveled.

The cabin was built of large

boughs, laced through with smaller branches, the myriad chinks plastered with mud. Over all had been thrown the weather beaten tarpaulin from the wagon.

Martha's practiced eye took in other things now. The horse standing at the corral bars had heavy fading harness marks on his shoulders and around his belly. The wheels of the wagon had already sunk down in the dirt several inches. It had not been moved for some time. The tarpaulin on the cabin was dirty and torn here and there.

"A makeshift outfit if I ever saw one! Lucky we had a dry spring, or that'd a been washed plumb out of sight!" Martha

pulled up in what passed for a yard.

It was not until the mare's hoofbeats had stopped that she heard a low moan from the cabin followed by a cry that was almost a wail. She stiffened in the saddle, and her lips compressed with irritation. She could not mistake that sound!

With a sigh she lowered herself to the ground and dropped the mare's reins.

"Another nester family having a baby along the way, Midge, or I miss my guess!"

Her step flatfooted with weariness, she went up and pulled aside the ragged tarp at the door and looked in.

Only one thing surprised her, and that was the extreme youth of the girl on the rough bunk. She lay moaning softly, occasionally tossing awkwardly from side to side in pain. Her eyes were closed and her face twisted in a grimace so that she did not even see the woman in the door.

Martha stepped inside and the girl's eyes opened dully, then widened in surprise. She started up, her face almost pitiful in its welcome. Then she sank back, disappointment flooding her features.

"Oh, I—I—thought—I thought—it was Ben—come back!"

Martha went forward and put her hand against the girl's forehead. It was damp with perspiration, but she was running no

temperature. Her head was cool.

"I'm Martha Benston. Where's your husband?"

"He—He's gone! Gone to—Cedar Gap—to get—"

She stopped, gasping and Martha took hold of the girl's hands and pulled.

When the paroxysm had passed, Martha spoke. "To get a doctor? That's quite a hitch, child, if a man needs to hurry. How long ago'd he leave?"

"I don't know—really. Seems like I been here for hours, but I—guess I ain't. He must've been gone about three hours. He'd ought be back any minute!"

Martha turned away to the fire and flung a handful of dry twigs on the coals until they blazed up, and she could add a sizeable chunk of wood.

"I couldn't keep the fire goin'—no longer. I had to lie down!" The girl spoke apologetically.

"That's all right."

It's a four hour trip to Cedar Gap, fast as a horse can travel in these hills, Martha thought. If he left three hours ago, he's not there yet! And if the doc's not in, he mightn't get back with him until tomorrow. She clucked softly and turned back to the bed as a low cry of pain came from the girl.

When she lay quiet once more, Martha asked, "How long you been here?"

Her breath still coming shakily, the girl gave her a quick look.

"This—this—must be 'bout April, ain't it? We left the wagon train end of January. There was—there was—some trouble—that is, I was sick an' couldn't travel no more!"

"So you holed up here for the rest of the winter!"

Martha's tone was more tart than she had meant it to be. These Easterners trying to get through to California! Kids like this with makeshift equipment! The girl glanced up at her.

"We be on your land?" she divined.

Martha nodded. "Not that it matters—in your case," she said kindly.

"We won't be here long—just till after the baby's born an' I kin travel again!"

"I should have thought you'd been better off to have stayed with the wagons. There'd be women there to care for you and help you through."

The girl moved restlessly and did not reply for a moment. "No, I—we—couldn't. There was some trouble in the train, an' Ben—he's kind of hot-headed—" she smiled fleetingly with open pride—an 'he wasn't goin' to stand for no remarks bein' made!"

"Remarks?"

But the girl was suddenly past answering again, and Martha winced at the crushing grip on her fingers. When the child lay spent and quiet, Martha looked her over. She was close to her time, probably within the hour.

"What's your name?"

"Mary—Mary Kingly. My—my husband's Ben Kingly."

Even under the uneven breathing Martha felt the girl's pride in being the wife of Ben Kingly. Nothing could be better than that.

She patted the tense shoulder. "In another half hour this will be over!" she told her cheerfully. "And your Ben Kingly will have an heir!"

The effect of this was startling. Mary almost sat up.

"Oh, no! Not—not till Ben comes back. Not till he brings ———"

"Now listen here!" Martha told her soothingly. "You needn't worry about the doctor's not getting here. I've been borning babies for twenty years around these parts, and nobody's objected yet. You're doing fine and everything's all right whether your Ben and the doctor get here or not!"

"I got to wait! I ain't goin' to have it till Ben comes! He'll bring—!"

Martha was provoked. "I'm afraid what you decide about this ain't goin' to cut any ice one way or the other. Your baby's got the bit in his teeth. And anyway"—she said aggrievedly—"you're the first person around these parts that hasn't preferred me over that two-bit doctor over at Cedar Gap anyway!"

But Mary was past comfort. She wept stormily, her sobs fre-

quently cut off by pain. But it was as Martha had told her. Her time was here. In her mind as she worked, Martha handed the girl the best praise she knew. She had grit and courage—even if she did stubbornly insist again and again that she was waiting until Ben came.

When the struggle was done and Martha had spanked the first wail from Ben and Mary Kingly's first-born, she found the small chest of clothes Mary had kept under a tarpaulin in the corner, wrapped the baby warmly and brought him to the bedside.

Mary held out her arms weakly and Martha laid the infant in them.

'Ain't he beautiful?' Mary asked wonderingly. 'Ain't he just beautiful though?' Then her voice shook with tears. 'But I wanted to wait till Ben came with—'

Martha thrust back her mounting irritation. If that wasn't just like these women from the East! Moaning around because they didn't have a doctor around to look 'em over after all the fuss and bother was over with.

'Now, now!' she soothed, brushing the heavy chestnut hair back from Mary's face. 'It's all over! You've got a fine baby boy that Ben Kingly will crow about. You came through fine, and there is nothing to worry about!'

She pulled out the rude cradle Ben Kingly had made for his son,

expertly folded a blanket in the bottom. She felt the blanket with the back of her hand, then held it up against her cheek.

'Feels damp and chilly like!'

She went to the fireplace and put her hand on the side of one of the logs lying close to the fire. It was deeply warm, almost hot. She laid it in the cradle and dropped another blanket over it for a few minutes, then removed the log and put the baby in.

'There, that'll keep him warm a while! Now, Miz Kingly, you go to sleep!'

'Oh, no, I couldn't! Not till Ben comes—'

'You still waitin' for that doctor?' Martha sighed in exasperation. 'You go to sleep then, and when they come I'll wake you!'

'You're sure? You won't not wake me?'

'I'm sure!'

'You're awful good! I don't know what I'd done without you! I'll—'

The girl's voice trailed off as her eyelids closed, and Martha smiled briefly and turned back to the fire. Food would be the next thing wanted.

Examination of the rough cabin brought a reluctant admiration for Ben Kingly. For a greenhorn, it wasn't too bad. The hearth was an awkward combination of fireplace and smokehole, but it worked, and that was something. And for a man to have put up a cabin—even one as rough

as this since late in January showed more than the usual amount of energy even if he *had* built it where spring floods could have washed him away!

The furniture obviously he had built himself, even the rude bunks whose feet and rails were cut from cottonwood saplings, then laced across with willow withes, and filled with cedar boughs.

It was queer about the furniture—almost all the settlers coming through—if there were women in the train—had some treasured piece of furniture with which they had refused to part. She smiled remembering her own journey out from the States twenty years before. There had been the nested set of copper kettles great aunt Edith had given her and Tim for a wedding present. At one of the Platte crossings the wagon had stuck and Tim in exasperation had told her they'd have to throw out some of their stuff. They couldn't go through the Pass carrying such a heavy load. She had wept and pleaded; they had quarrelled over the rosewood table Tim had started to drag out of the wagon. Finally in a fury she had picked up the heavy copper kettles and flung them into the licking current; then she had sat down and wrapped her arms around the legs of the rosewood table and dumbly and stubbornly held on to it. Tim had finally given in and put the table back. Nearly all the women held some-

how to some one thing of beauty and grace from the life they had left.

But in this cabin there was nothing. The pots and kettles were meager and cheap. The few articles of clothing about were adequate but no more, and the food supply was about the same.

Martha looked down now at Mary. She was deeply asleep, the mane of chestnut hair lying back on the blankets. Martha noted with a smile the faint wave it had, and that the hairline had an odd way of curling forward about her face. It gave her even more the look of a child, yet there was a woman's look about the mouth and in the faint shadows under the eyes.

"Be something wrong with her if she wasn't a woman if she made that trip out here!" Martha clucked to herself in sympathy, remembering again her own trip out.

Seven times across the Platte, a dry swelled tongue in the Humboldt Sink and feet that cracked open. Indians all around! Yet somehow they had gotten through and reached here, and somehow this girl and her Ben Kingly had done the same thing. Still, Martha felt something amiss. She frowned.

"No telling. Probably her Ben is a firebrand, and ran 'foul o' the wagon train law somewhere. If he did, he's lucky he didn't get shot!"

She went outside then and looked things over. There were two

sets of hobbles in the wagon bed and she managed to get them on her own mare and the horse in the corral, and turned them and the thin cow loose to graze.

When she went back, Mary was awake, half up on one elbow.

"Ben!" she stammered. "Where's Ben?"

"Not here yet, Mary! It takes a long time to ride here from Cedar Gap."

"But he left this morning! Why—Ben—he—he left before daylight!"

"Even so!" Martha told her briefly, and pushed her back on the blankets. "Lie down now and stay put."

But Mary was obviously frightened. She lay quiet awhile, but her hands moved restlessly, and her eyes were wide and brilliant.

"You—you—don't think he—
they—got hurt somewhere?"

"Heavens no! Besides if the doctor's with him, he'll see your Ben through. Doctors get all over the country out here, you know!"

But Mary still lay waiting, and finally to take her mind away, Martha asked her questions about the trip out.

"Was it bad?"

"No-o-o-! Not too bad, I guess."

"Where'd you start from?"

"From Illinois. We was both farm people there, lived as neighbors. But our folks they never liked each other much, so Ben an' me, we run away from them!"

They smiled at each other, understandingly woman to woman.

"I was for settlin' in Missouri, but Ben, he wanted to come West. My Pa he follered us far as St. Jo; I had an awful time to keep Ben from waitin' to meet him! But we found we could git a train out to Independence, so we left. The railroad's that far now!"

"I heard t'was," Martha replied. "It'll be gettin' out here some o' these days!"

Mary nodded.

"There was a wagon train leavin' the next morning for California, and there was room for another wagon if you had an outfit ready. Ben, he had some money and I had a little, an' we got us a wagon and some stuff just in time. We didn't have much but it was enough to get us in."

"When'd you leave Independence?"

"Early—in July—it was."

Martha asked then the question she could no longer withhold.

"By the way, how happens it your Ben left you alone like this and you so close to your time?"

For a long moment Mary lay brooding into the fire, then her eyes turned slowly on Martha.

"We never thought the baby was comin' for a few weeks yet. It wasn't time. Ben, he didn't want to go, but I needed some things from town, an' told him I'd be all right for a day. An' Ben was goin' to bring back—"

Her voice trailed off sleepily,

then roused again to whisper.

"Then after he was gone, I got scared. Seemed likè I never been anywhere so by myself. Next thing I knew the baby was start-in'."

Abruptly again Mary was asleep, and Martha lay down on the other bunk and tried to rest. She began counting the hours since the young husband had gone. Ben Kingly had left before daybreak, and the long lines of late afternoon sun were slanting down into the arroyo. Soon now, dusk would begin to creep in, and the air would turn spring evening cool. Four hours either way. He should be back by now. Unless he had trouble or couldn't find the doctor.

Mary slept on and when it was close to dark Martha slipped out, drove the stock in, and tethered her own horse close to the cabin. She started preparing a simple meal then, and during this, Mary wakened again. Martha felt the wide frightened eyes on her before she turned to look. Mary's lips quivered with her unspoken question.

"Not yet, Mary, but it can't be long now. I'll have something to eat in a minute."

Mary's eyes were on her and they filled slowly with tears.

She sees what I think! Martha thought. She's quick, that girl! She knows something's wrong.

She brought over to the bed the plate of mush sweetened with

molasses she had made and sat down with a spoon. But Mary shook her head and turned her face toward the wall.

"Now listen!" Martha scolded. "You got to keep strong for young Ben here. This sort of thing won't do. Eat now!"

Reluctantly Mary ate with Martha's help, swallowing her tears with the food. She lay after that staring a long while at the fire and finally when she had dropped off to sleep again, Martha sighed with relief and lay down herself. She found herself listening tensely, and it made her think that there hadn't been many nights of her life in this rough country that she had spent like this. Mostly she had been where there were people to help, never alone. She was not frightened but she lay awake and listening. But the night wore on with only the occasional tramping of Midge outside, and the distant yelping of coyotes—and the slight bubbling sound of the small stream.

She had almost drifted off to sleep when something awakened her. She lay tense a moment listening, hearing nothing more, yet sure something was near. Quietly then she moved across the room and lifted Ben Kingly's gun down from the rack and slipped out the door. You never knew in this country. She slipped along the side of the cabin and waited in the darkness. The rapid clop-clop of hoofs was coming.

The hoofbeats slowed, started up again, slowed again.

Tired horses, Martha thought. *Horses who had traveled a long way*. They were in the yard then, stopping a few feet away from her.

"Here we are!" a low masculine voice said. "Come on in!"

A man's form passed her in the darkness, swung the rough tarpaulin away from the door and went in. She saw him briefly in the firelight, a dark young face with a stubble of beard, a tired, tense face.

Then she heard a sobbing cry.

"Oh, Ben, you came! I thought—I'd thought you'd never get back. The baby's here, Ben!" Mary was crying now, and Martha went in, the second masculine form following here. Ben was kneeling beside Mary, his arms holding her close, his rough face against hers. In the girl's face, rainwet with tears over his shoulder, was a kind of glory.

"Here! My God, Mary! You—you was here by yourself! Mary—are you . . . ?"

Mary's voice was choked and husky.

"I'm fine, Ben. Look, ain't he beautiful?"

Ben turned to look, and his tired shocked young face broke into a grin.

"By golly, look at 'im! He sure is." He turned abruptly back to Mary. "I knew it at the time! I shouldn't a left! Mary, are you sure—?"

"Ben, did you bring—?"

Ben nodded.

"Had an awful time findin' him too! He was out of town. On the way back his horse went lame, and we had to stop at a ranch an' get another. Thought I'd never get here. God, Mary!"

Martha's eyes were blinded with tears at the raptness in the two young faces. She hadn't cried for a long time but she knew she was going to now, and she slipped back out the door, standing in the darkness to wipe her eyes.

She fished for a handkerchief.

"Silly old fool!" she remarked disgustedly.

As though her words had summoned him, the tarpaulin was pushed back, and the man who had come with Ben said,

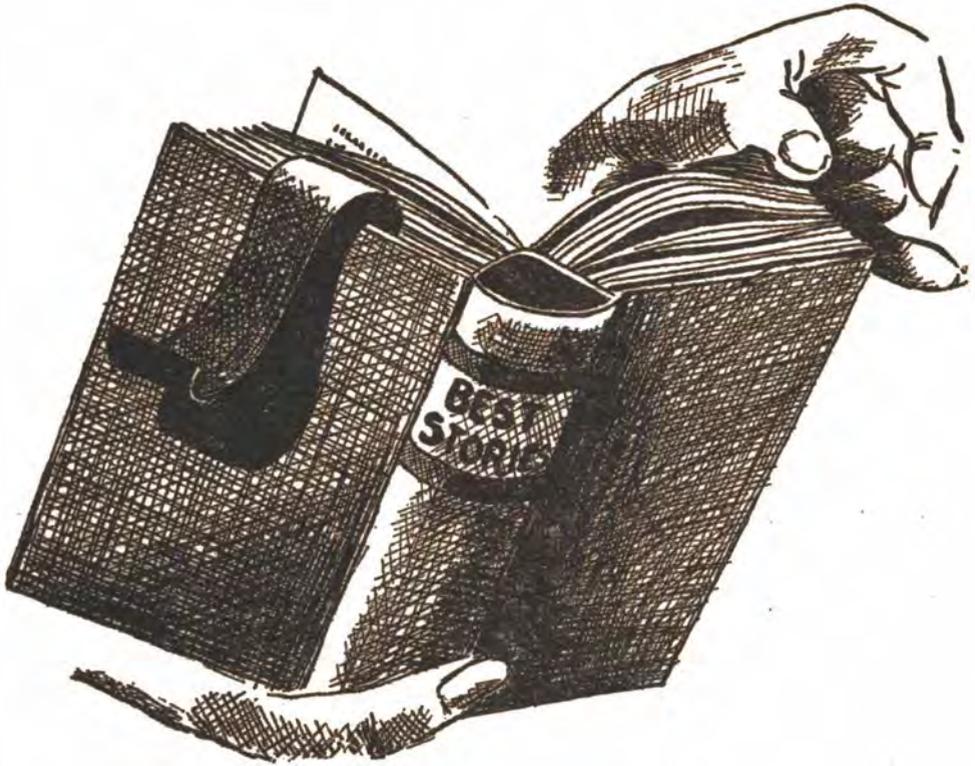
"I'll be needing you, Ma'am."

The corner of Martha's mouth twitched with contempt. All that trip to Cedar Gap to bring back a doc who still needed help after everything was all over. Oh, well!

The man dropped the tarpaulin behind her and moved to the bed. He said something to Ben she didn't catch, but saw the young man look up at him quickly, then stand. The tall quiet man drew a small book from his pocket, and Ben Kingly took Mary's hand in his, his eyes holding hers.

While Martha stood wide-eyed and startled, the sonorous words filled the tiny cabin,

"Dearly Beloved, we are gathered here——"



THE BOTTLE IMP

By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(Edited and abridged)

All the riches of the world were his for the asking.
There was only the devil to pay.

THERE was a man of the island of Hawaii, whom I shall call Keawe; for the truth is, he still lives, and his name must be kept secret; but the place of his birth was not far from Honaunau,

where the bones of Keawe the Great lie hidden in a cave. This man was poor, brave, and active; he could read and write like a schoolmaster; he was a first-rate mariner besides, sailed for some

time in the island steamers, and steered a whaleboat on the Kama-kua coast. At length it came in Keawe's mind to have a sight of the great world and foreign cities, and he shipped on a vessel bound to San Francisco.

This is a fine town, with a fine harbour, and rich people uncountable; and, in particular, there is one hill which is covered with palaces. Upon this hill Keawe was one day taking a walk, with his pocket full of money, viewing the great houses upon either hand with pleasure. "What fine houses there are!" he was thinking, "and how happy must these people be who dwell in them, and take no care for the morrow!" The thought was in his mind when he came abreast of a house that was smaller than some others, but all finished and beautified like a toy; the steps of that house shone like silver, and the borders of the garden bloomed like garlands, and the windows were bright like diamonds; and Keawe stopped and wondered at the excellence of all he saw. So stopping, he was aware of a man that looked forth upon him through a window, so clear that Keawe could see him as you see a fish in a pool upon the reef. The man was elderly, with a bald head and a black beard; and his face was heavy with sorrow, and he bitterly sighed. And the truth of it is, that as Keawe looked in upon the man, and the man looked out upon

Keawe, each envied the other.

All of a sudden the man smiled and nodded, and beckoned Keawe to enter, and met him at the door of the house.

"This is a fine house of mine," said the man, and bitterly sighed.

"Would you not care to view the chambers?"

So he led Keawe all over it, from the cellar to the roof, and there was nothing there that was not perfect of its kind, and Keawe was astonished.

"Truly," said Keawe, "this is a beautiful house; if I lived in the like of it, I should be laughing all day long. How comes it, then, that you should be sighing?"

"There is no reason," said the man, "why you should not have a house in all points similar to this, and finer, if you wish. You have some money, I suppose?"

"I have fifty dollars," said Keawe; "but a house like this will cost more than fifty dollars."

"The house?" asked Keawe.

"No, not the house," replied the man; "but the bottle. For I must tell you, although I appear to you so rich and fortunate, all my fortune, and this house itself and its garden, came out of a bottle not much bigger than a pint. This is it."

And he opened a lockfast place, and took out a round-bellied bottle with a long neck; the glass of it was white like milk, with changing rainbow colours in the grain. Withinsides something ob-

scurely moved, like a shadow and a fire.

"This is the bottle," said the man; and, when Keawe laughed, "You do not believe me?" he added. "Try, then, for yourself. See if you can break it."

So Keawe took the bottle up and dashed it on the floor till he was weary; but it jumped on the floor like a child's ball, and was not injured.

"This is a strange thing," said Keawe. "For by the touch of it, as well as by the look, the bottle should be of glass."

"Of glass it is," replied the man, sighing more heavily than ever; "but the glass of it was tempered in the flames of hell. An imp lives in it, and that is the shadow we behold there moving; or, so I suppose. If any man buy this bottle the imp is at his command; all that he desires—love, fame, money, houses like this house, ay, or a city like this city—all are his at the word uttered. Napoleon had this bottle and by it he grew to be the king of the world; but he sold it at the last and fell. Captain Cook had this bottle, and by it he found his way to so many islands; but he too sold it, and was slain upon Hawaii. For, once it is sold, the power goes and the protection; and unless a man remain content with what he has, ill will befall him."

"And yet you talk of selling it yourself?" Keawe said.

"I have all I wish, and I am

growing elderly," replied the man. "There is one thing the imp cannot do—he cannot prolong life; and it would not be fair to conceal from you there is a drawback to the bottle; for if a man die before he sells it, he must burn in hell for ever."

"To be sure, that is a drawback and no mistake," cried Keawe. "I would not meddle with the thing. I can do without a house, thank God; but there is one thing I could not be doing with one particle, and that is to be damned."

"Dear me, you must not run away with things," returned the man. "All you have to do is to use the power of the imp in moderation, and then sell it to someone else, as I do to you, and finish your life in comfort."

"Well, I observe two things," said Keawe. "All the time you keep sighing like a maid in love—that is one; and for the other, you sell this bottle very cheap."

"I have told you already why I sigh," said the man. "It is because I fear my health is breaking up; and, as you said yourself, to die and go to the devil is a pity for any one. As for why I sell so cheap, I must explain to you there is a peculiarity about the bottle. Long ago, when the devil brought it first upon earth, it was extremely expensive, and was sold first of all to Prester John for many millions of dollars; but it cannot be sold at all, un-

less sold at a loss. If you sell it for as much as you paid for it, back it comes to you again like a homing pigeon. It follows that the price has kept falling in these centuries, and the bottle is now remarkably cheap. I bought it myself from one of my great neighbours on this hill, and the price I paid was only ninety dollars. I could sell it for as high as eighty-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, but not a penny dearer, or back the thing must come to me. Now, about this there are two bothers. First, when you offer a bottle so singular for eighty-odd dollars, people suppose you to be jesting. And second—but there is no hurry about that—and I need not go into it. Only remember it must be coined money that you sell it for."

"How am I to know that this is all true?" asked Keawe.

"Some of it you can try at once," replied the man. "Give me your fifty dollars, take the bottle, and wish your fifty dollars back into your pocket. If that does not happen, I pledge you my honour I will cry off the bargain and restore your money."

"You are not deceiving me?" said Keawe.

The man bound himself with a great oath.

"Well, I will risk that much," said Keawe, "for that can do no harm," and he paid over his money to the man and the man handed him the bottle.

"Imp of the bottle," said Keawe, "I want my fifty dollars back." And sure enough, he had scarce said the word before his pocket was as heavy as ever.

"To be sure this is a wonderful bottle," said Keawe.

"And now good-morning to you, my fine fellow, and the devil go with you for me," said the man.

"Hold on," said Keawe, "I don't want any more of this fun. Here, take your bottle back."

"You have bought it for less than I paid for it," replied the man, rubbing his hands. "It is yours now; and, for my part, I am only concerned to see the back of you."

Now when Keawe was in the street, with the bottle under his arm, he began to think. "If all is true about this bottle, I may have made a losing bargain," thinks he. "But perhaps the man was only fooling me." The first thing he did was to count his money; the sum was exact—forty-nine dollars American money, and one Chili piece. "That looks like the truth," said Keawe.

The next thing he did was to buy a corkscrew in a shop, and go apart in a secret place in the fields. And there he tried to draw the cork, but as often as he put the screw in, out it came again, and the cork was as whole as ever.

"This is some new sort of cork," said Keawe, and all at once he

began to shake and sweat, for he was afraid of that bottle.

On his way back to the port-side he saw a shop where a man sold shells and clubs from the wild islands, old heathen deities, old coined money, pictures from China and Japan, and all manner of things that sailors bring in their sea-chests. And here he had an idea. So he went in and offered the bottle for a hundred dollars. The man of the shop laughed at him at first, and offered him five; but, indeed, it was a curious bottle, such glass was never blown in any human glass-works, so prettily the colours shone under the milky way, and so strangely the shadow hovered in the midst; so, after he had disputed a while after the manner of his kind, the shopman gave Keawe sixty silver dollars for the thing and set it on a shelf in the midst of his window.

"Now," said Keawe, "I have sold that for sixty which I bought for fifty—or, to say truth, a little less, because one of my dollars was from Chili. Now I shall know the truth upon another point."

So he went back on board his ship, and when he opened his chest, there was the bottle, which had come more quickly than himself. Now Keawe had a mate on board whose name was Lopaka.

"What ails you," said Lopaka, "that you stare in your chest?"

They were alone in the ship's fore-castle, and Keawe bound him to secrecy, and told all.

"This is a very strange affair," said Lopaka; "and I fear you will be in trouble about this bottle. But there is one point very clear—that you are sure of the trouble, and you had better have the profit in the bargain. Make up your mind what you want with it; give the order, and it is done as you desire, I will buy the bottle myself; for I have an idea of my own to get a schooner, and go trading through the islands."

"That is not my idea," said Keawe; "but to have a beautiful house and garden on the Kona Coast, where I was born, the sun shining in at the door, flowers in the garden, glass in the windows, pictures on the walls, and toys and fine carpets on the tables, for all the world like the house I was in this day—only a story higher, and with balconies all about like the King's palace; and to live there without care and make merry with my friends."

"Well," said Lopaka, "let us carry it back with us to Hawaii; and if all comes true as you suppose, I will buy the bottle, as I said, and ask a schooner."

Upon that they were agreed, and it was not long before the ship returned to Honolulu, carrying Keawe and Lopaka, and the bottle. They were scarce come ashore when they met a friend upon the beach, who began at once to condole with Keawe.

"I do not know what I am to be con-doled about," said Keawe.

"Is it possible you have not heard," said the friend, "your uncle—that good old man—is dead, and your cousin—that beautiful boy—was drowned at sea?"

Keawe was filled with sorrow, and, beginning to weep and to lament, he forgot about the bottle. But Lopaka was thinking to himself, and presently, when Keawe's grief was a little abated, "I have been thinking," said Lopaka, "had not your uncle lands in Hawaii, in the district of Kau?"

"No," said Keawe, "not in Kau: they are on the mountain side—a little be-south Kookena."

"These lands will now be yours?" asked Lopaka.

"And so they will," says Keawe, and began again to lament for his relatives.

"No," said Lopaka, "do not lament at present. I have a thought in my mind. How if this should be the doing of the bottle? For here is the place ready for your house."

"If this be so," cried Keawe, "it is a very ill way to serve me by killing my relatives. But it may be, indeed; for it was in just such a station that I saw the house with my mind's eye."

"The house, however, is not yet built," said Lopaka.

"No, nor like to be!" said Keawe; "for though my uncle has some coffee and ava and bananas, it will not be more than will keep me in comfort; and the rest of

that land is the black lava."

"Let us go to the lawyer," said Lopaka; "I have still this idea in my mind."

Now, when they came to the lawyer's, it appeared Keawe's uncle had grown monstrous rich in the last days, and there was a fund of money.

"And here is the money for the house!" cried Lopaka.

"If you are thinking of a new house," said the lawyer, "here is the card of a new architect of whom they tell me great things."

"Better and better!" cried Lopaka. "Here is all made plain for us. Let us continue to obey orders."

So they went to the architect, and he had drawings of houses on his table.

"You want something out of the way," said the architect. "How do you like this?" and he handed a drawing to Keawe.

Now, when Keawe set eyes on the drawing, he cried out aloud, for it was the picture of his thought exactly drawn.

"I am in for this house," thought he. "Little as I like the way it comes to me, I am in for it now, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he told the architect all that he wished, and how he would have that house furnished, and about the pictures on the wall and the knick-knacks on the tables; and he asked the man plainly for how much he would undertake the

whole affair and he would pay.

The architect put many questions, and took his pen and made a computation; and when he had done he named the very sum that Keawe had inherited.

Lopaka and Keawe looked at one another and nodded. "It is quite clear," thought Keawe, "that I am to have this house, whether or not. It comes from the devil, and I fear I will get little good by that; and of one thing I am sure, I will make no more wishes as long as I have this bottle. But with the house I am saddled, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he made his terms with the architect, and they signed a paper; and Keawe and Lopaka took ship again and sailed to Australia; for it was concluded between them they should not interfere at all, but leave the architect and the bottle imp to build and to adorn the house at their own pleasure.

The voyage was a good voyage, only all the time Keawe was holding in his breath, for he had sworn he would utter no more wishes. The time was up when they got back.

Now, the house stood on the mountain side, visible to ships, Above, the forest ran up into the clouds of rain; below, the black lava fell in cliffs, where the kings of old lay buried. A garden bloomed about the house with every hue of flowers; and there

was an orchard of papaia on the one hand and an orchard of bread-fruit on the other, and right in front, towards the sea, a ship's mast had been rigged up and bore a flag. As for the house it was three stories high, with great chambers and broad balconies on each. The windows were of glass, so excellent that it was as clear as water and as bright as day. All manner of furniture adorned the chambers. Pictures hung upon the wall in golden frames—pictures of ships, and men fighting, and of the most beautiful women, and of singular places; nowhere in the world are there pictures of so bright a colour as those Keawe found hanging in his house. As for the knick-knacks, they were extraordinarily fine: chiming clocks and musical boxes, little men with nodding heads, books filled with pictures, weapons of price from all quarters of the world, and the most elegant puzzles to entertain the leisure of a solitary man. And as no one would care to live in such chambers, only to walk through and view them, the balconies were made so broad that a whole town might have lived upon them in delight; and Keawe knew not which to prefer, whether the back porch, where you get the land breeze and looked upon the orchards and the flowers, or the front balcony, where you could drink the wind of the sea, and look down the steep wall of the

mountain and see the *Hall* going by once a week or so between Hookena and the hills of Pele, or the schooners plying up the coast for wood and ava and bananas.

When they had viewed all, Keawe and Lopaka sat on the porch.

"Well," asked Lopaka, "is it all as you designed?"

"Words cannot utter it," said Keawe. "It is better than I dreamed, and I am sick with satisfaction."

"There is but one thing to consider," said Lopaka, "all this may be quite natural, and the bottle imp have nothing whatever to say to it. If I were to buy the bottle, and got no schooner after all, I should have put my hand in the fire for nothing. I gave you my word, I know; but yet I think you would not grudge me one more proof."

"I have sworn I would take no more favours," said Keawe. "I have gone already deep enough."

"This is no favour I am thinking of," replied Lopaka. "It is only to see the imp himself. There is nothing to be gained by that, and so nothing to be ashamed of, and yet, if I once saw him. I should be sure of the whole matter. So indulge me so far, and let me see the imp; and, after that, here is the money in my hand, and I will buy it."

"Very well," replied Keawe, "I have a curiosity myself. So come,

let us have one look at you, Mr. Imp."

Now as soon as that was said, the imp looked out of the bottle, and in again, swift as a lizard; and there sat Keawe and Lopaka turned to stone. The night had quite come, before either found a thought to say or voice to say it with; and then Lopaka pushed the money over and took the bottle.

"I am a man of my word," said he, "and had need to be so, or I would not touch this bottle with my foot. Well, I shall get my schooner and a dollar or two for my pocket; and then I will be rid of this devil as fast as I can. For, to tell you the plain truth, the look of him has cast me down."

So Lopaka went down the mountain and Keawe stood in his front balcony, and listened to the clink of the horses' shoes, and watched the lantern go shining down the path, and along the cliff of caves where the old dead are buried; and all the time he trembled and clasped his hands, and prayed for his friend, and gave glory to God that he himself was escaped out of that trouble.

But the next day came very brightly, and that new house of his was so delightful to behold that he forgot his terrors. One day followed another, and Keawe dwelt there in perpetual joy. He had his place on the back porch; it was there he ate and lived, and read the stories in the Honolulu

newspapers; but when any one came by they would go in and view the chambers and the pictures. And the fame of the house went far and wide; it was called *Ka-Hale Nui*—the Great House—in all Kona; and sometimes the Bright House, for Keawe kept a Chinaman, who was all day dusting and furbishing; and the glass, and the gilt, and the fine stuffs, and the pictures shone as bright as the morning. As for Keawe himself, he could not walk in the chambers without singing, his heart was so enlarged; and when ships sailed by upon the sea, he would fly his colours on the mast.

Time passed and Keawe enjoyed his house thoroughly. He visited friends and was feted as befits such a man.

One day Keawe was returning from a visit and beheld a beautiful maiden, heretofore unknown to him. She had just emerged from the sea and freshly attired, she climbed up to the road. He drew rein and hastened to ask her who she was. She was Kokua, the lovely daughter of Kiano and recently returned from Oahu. They were pleased with each other at sight and upon learning that Kokua was not married, Keawe escorted her home.

The meeting was charged on both sides and each felt that he had waited all the years to meet such a one. Keawe returned to his house to bathe and dream—for tomorrow he would start his

formal wooing. He rode furiously up the hill to his house, woke his Chinese servant and asked for a hot bath and a bed made up in his bridal chamber above stairs.

So the Chinaman had word, and he must rise from sleep and light the furnaces; and as he walked below, beside the boilers, he heard his master singing and rejoicing above him in the lighted chambers. When the water began to be hot the Chinaman cried to his master: and Keawe went into the bathroom; and the Chinaman heard him sing as he filled the marble basin; and heard him sing, and the singing broken, as he undressed; until of a sudden, the song ceased. The Chinaman listened and listened; he called up the house to Keawe to ask if all were well, and Keawe answered him "Yes," and bade him to go to bed; but there was no more singing in the Bright House; and all night long the Chinaman heard his master's feet go round and round the balconies without repose.

Now the truth of it was this: as Keawe undressed for his bath, he spied upon his flesh a patch like a patch of lichen on a rock, and it was then that he stopped singing. For he knew the likeness of that patch, and he knew that he was fallen in the Chinese Evil, leprosy.

Now, it is a sad thing for any man to fall into this sickness. And it would be a sad thing for

any one to leave a house so beautiful and so commodious, and depart from all his friends to the north coast of Molokai, between the mighty cliff and the sea-breakers. But what was that to the case of the man Keawe, he who had met his love but yesterday and won her but that morning, and now saw all his hopes break, in a moment, like a piece of glass?

A while he sat upon the edge of the bath, then sprang, with a cry, and ran outside and to and fro, to and fro, along the balcony, like one despairing.

"Very willingly could I leave Hawaii, the home of my father," Keawe was thinking. "Very lightly could I leave my house, the high-placed, the many-windowed, here upon the mountains. Very bravely could I go to Molokai, to Kalaupapa by the cliffs, to live with the smitten and to sleep there, far from my fathers. But what wrong have I done, what sin lies upon my soul, that I should have encountered Kokua coming cool from the sea-water in the evening? Kokua, the soul ensnarer! Kokua, the light of my life! Her may I never wed, her may I look upon no longer, her may I no more handle with my loving hand; and it is for this, it is for you, O Kokua; that I pour my lamentations!"

Now you are to observe what sort of a man Keawe was, for he might have dwelt there in the

Bright House for years, and no one been the wiser of his sickness; but he reckoned nothing of that, if he must lose Kokua. And again he might have wed Kokua even as he was; and so many would have done, because they have the souls of pigs; but Keawe loved the maid manfully, and he would do her no hurt and bring her in no danger.

A little beyond the midst of the night, there came in his mind the recollection of that bottle. He went round to the back porch, and called to memory the day when the devil had looked forth; and at the thought ice ran in his veins.

"A dreadful thing is in the bottle," thought Keawe, "and dreadful is the imp, and it is a dreadful thing to risk the flames of hell. But what other hope have I to cure my sickness or to wed Kokua? What!" he thought, "would I beard the devil once, only to get me a house, and not face him again to win Kokua?"

Thereupon he called to mind it was the next day the *Hall* went by on her return to Honolulu. "There must I go first," he thought, "and see Lopaka. For the best hope that I have now is to find that same bottle I was so pleased to be rid of."

He neither slept nor ate the entire journey to Honolulu. Upon his arrival, inquiry proved that Lopaka in the finest schooner seen in these parts had set sail for a South Seas journey. Lopaka had

his gift and all his wishes.

Keawe then went to a lawyer friend of Lopaka in Honolulu and by the magnificence of his house, concluded that the bottle had been here, too. The lawyer provided the necessary clue and Keawe followed street after street of happy, well-dressed men upon whom sudden prosperity had descended. He knew he was on the right track.

So it befell at last he was recommended to a Haole in Beritania Street. When he came to the door, about the hour of the evening meal, there were the usual marks of the new house, and the young garden, and the electric light shining in the windows; but when the owner came, a shock of hope and fear ran through Keawe; for here was a young man, white as a corpse, and black about the eyes, the hair shedding from his head, and such a look in his countenance as a man may have when he is waiting for the gallows.

"Here it is to be sure," thought Keawe, and so with this man he noways veiled his errand. "I am come to buy the bottle," said he.

At the word, the young Haole of Beritania Street reeled against the wall.

"The bottle!" he gasped. "To buy the bottle!" Then he seemed to choke, and seizing Keawe by the arm, carried him into a room and poured out wine in two glasses. He offered a toast.

"Here is my respects," said Keawe, who had been much about with Haoles in his time. "Yes," he added, "I am come to buy the bottle. What is the price by now?"

At that word the young man let his glass slip through his fingers, and looked upon Keawe like a ghost.

"The price," says he, "the price! You do not know the price?"

"It is for that that I am asking you," returned Keawe. "But why are you so much concerned? Is there anything wrong about the price?"

"It has dropped a great deal in value since your time, Mr. Keawe," said the young man, stammering.

"Well, well, I shall have the less to pay for it" said Keawe. "How much did it cost you?"

The young man was as white as a sheet.

"Two cents," said he.

"What!" cried Keawe, "two cents? Why, then, you can only sell it for one. And he who buys it—" The words died upon Keawe's tongue; he who bought it could never sell it again, the bottle and the bottle imp must abide with him until he died, and when he died must carry him to the red end of hell.

The young man of Beritania Street fell upon his knees. "For God's sake, buy it!" he cried. "You can have all my fortune in the bargain. I was mad when I

bought it at that price. I had embezzled money at my store; I was lost else; I must have gone to jail!"

"Poor creature," said Keawe, "you would risk your soul upon so desperate an adventure, and to avoid the proper punishment of your own disgrace; and you think I could hesitate with love in front of me. Give me the bottle, and the change which I make sure you have all ready. Here is a five-cent piece."

It was as Keawe supposed; the young man had the change ready in a drawer; the bottle changed hands, and Keawe's fingers were no sooner clasped upon the stalk than he had breathed his wish to be a clean man. And sure enough, when he got home to his room, and stripped himself before a glass, his flesh was whole like an infant's. And here was the strange thing: he had no sooner seen this miracle than his mind was changed within him, and he cared nought for the Chinese Evil, and little enough for Kokua; and had but one thought, that here he was bound to the bottle imp for time and eternity, and had no better hope but to be a cinder for ever in the flames of hell. Away ahead of him he saw them blaze with his mind's eye, and his soul shrank, and darkness fell upon the light.

When Keawe came to himself a little, he was aware it was the night when the band played at

the hotel. Thither he went, because he feared to be alone; and there, among happy faces, walked to and fro, and heard the tunes go up and down, and saw Berger beat the measure and all the while he heard the flames crackle and saw the red fire burning in the bottomless pit. Of a sudden the band played Hiki-ao-ao; that was a song that he had sung with Kokua, and at the strain courage returned to him.

"It is done now," he thought, "and once more let me take the good along with the evil."

So it befell that he returned to Hawaii by the first steamer, and as soon as it could be managed he was wedded to Kokua, and carried her up the mountain side to the Bright House.

Now it was so with these two, that when they were together Keawe's heart was stilled; but as soon as he was alone he fell into a brooding horror, and heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burn in the bottomless pit. The girl, indeed, had come to him wholly; her heart leaped in her side at sight of him, her hand clung to his; and she was so fashioned, from the hair upon her head to the nails upon her toes, that none could see her without joy. She was pleasant in her nature. She had the good word always. Full of song she was, and went to and fro in the Bright House, the brightest thing in its three stories, carolling like the

birds. And Keawe beheld and heard her with delight, and then must shrink upon one side, and weep and groan to think upon the price that he had paid for her; and then he must dry his eyes, and wash his face, and go and sit with her on the broad balconies, joining in her songs, and with a sick spirit, answering her smiles.

There came a day when her feet began to be heavy and her songs more rare; and now it was not Keawe only that would weep apart, but each would sunder from the other and sit in opposite balconies with the whole width of the Bright House betwixt. Keawe was so sunk in his despair, he scarce observed the change, and was only glad he had more hours to sit alone and brood upon his destiny, and was not so frequently condemned to pull a smiling face on a sick heart. But one day, coming softly through the house, he heard the sound of a child sobbing, and there was Kokua rolling her face upon the balcony floor, and weeping like the lost.

"You do well to weep in this house, Kokua," he said. "And yet I would give the head off my body that you (at least) might have been happy."

"Happy!" she cried. "Keawe, when you lived alone in your Bright House you were the word of the island for a happy man; laughter and song were in your

mouth, and your face was as bright as the sunrise. Then you wedded poor Kokua; and the good God knows what is amiss in her—but from that day you have not smiled. Oh!" she cried, "what ails me? I thought I was pretty, and I knew I loved him. What ails me, that I throw this cloud upon my husband?"

"Poor Kokua," said Keawe. He sat down by her side, and sought to take her hand; but that she plucked away. "Poor Kokua," he said again. "My poor child—my pretty. And I had thought all this while to spare you! Well, you shall know all. Then, at least, you will pity poor Keawe; then you will understand how much he loved you in the past—that he dared hell for your possession—and how much he loves you still (the poor condemned one), that he can yet call up a smile when he beholds you."

With that he told her all, even from the beginning.

"You have done this for me?" she cried. "Ah, well, then what do I care!" and she clasped and wept upon him.

"Ah, child!" said Keawe, "and yet, when I consider of the fire of hell, I care a good deal!"

"Never tell me," said she, "no man can be lost because he loved Kokua, and no other fault. I tell you, Keawe, I shall save you with these hands, or perish in your company. What! you loved me and gave your soul and you think

I will not die to save you in return?"

"Ah, my dear, you might die a hundred times: and what difference would that make?" he cried, "except to leave me lonely till the time comes for my damnation?"

"You know nothing," said she. "I was educated in a school in Honolulu; I am no common girl. And I tell you I shall save my lover. What is this you say about a cent? But all the world is not American. In England they have a piece called a farthing, which is about half a cent. Ah! sorrow!" she cried, "that makes it scarcely better, for the buyer must be lost, and we shall find none so brave as my Keawe! But then, there is France; they have a small coin there which they call a centime, and these go five to the cent, or thereabout. We could not do better. Come Keawe, let us go to the French islands; let us go to Tahiti as fast as ships can bear us. There we have four centimes, three centimes, two centimes, one centime; four possible sales to come and go on; and two of us to put the bargain. Come, my Keawe! kiss me, and banish care."

"Gift of God!" he cried. "I cannot think that God will punish me for desiring aught so good. Be it as you will then, take me where you please: I put my life and my salvation in your hands." Early the next day Kokua went

about her preparations. She took Keawe's chest that he went with sailing; and first she put the bottle in a corner, and then packed it with the richest of their clothes and the bravest of the knick-knacks in the house. "For," said she, "we must seem to be rich folks, or who would believe in the bottle?"

It was given out in the country they were gone pleasuring in the States, which was thought a strange thing, and yet not so strange as the truth, if any could have guessed it. So they went to Honolulu in the *Hall*, and thence in the *Umatilla* to San Francisco with a crowd of Haoles, and at San Francisco took their passage by the mail brigantine for Papeete, the chief place of the French in the south islands. Thither they came, after a pleasant voyage, on a fair day of the Trade Wind, and saw the reef with the surf breaking and Motuiti with its palms, and the schooner riding withinside and the white houses of the town low down along the shore among green trees, and overhead the mountains and the clouds of Tahiti, the wise islands.

It was judged the most wise to hire a house, which they did accordingly, opposite the British Consul's to make a great parade of money, and to make themselves conspicuous with carriages and horses. This it was very easy to do, so long as they had the

bottle in their possession; for Kokua was more bold than Keawe, and whenever she had a mind, called on the imp for twenty or a hundred dollars. At this rate they soon grew to be remarked in the town; and the strangers from Hawaii, their riding and their driving, the fine holokus, and the rich lace of Kokua, became the matter of much talk.

They got on well after the first with the Tahiti language, which is indeed like to the Hawaiian, with a change of certain letters; and as soon as they had any freedom of speech, began to push the bottle. You are to consider it was not an easy subject to introduce; it was not easy to persuade people you are in earnest, when you offer to sell them for four centimes the spring of health and riches inexhaustible. It was necessary besides to explain the dangers of the bottle; and either people disbelieved the whole thing and laughed, or they thought the more of the darker part, became overcast with gravity, and drew away from Keawe and Kokua, as from persons who had dealings with the devil. So far from gaining ground, these two began to find they were avoided in the town; the children ran away from them screaming, a thing intolerable to Kokua; Catholics crossed themselves as they went by; and all persons began with one accord to disengage themselves from their

advances. They lived alone.

Depression fell upon their spirits. Sometimes they would pray together; sometimes they would have the bottle out upon the floor, and sit all evening watching how the shadow hovered in the midst. At such times they would be afraid to go to rest. It was long ere slumber came to them, and, if either dozed off, it would be to wake and find the other silently weeping in the dark, or perhaps, to wake alone, the other having fled from the house and the neighbourhood of that bottle, to pace under the bananas in the little garden or to wander on the beach by moonlight.

One night it was so when Kokua awoke. Keawe was gone. She felt in the bed and his place was cold. Then fear fell upon her, and she sat up in bed. A little moonshine filtered through the shutters. The room was bright, and she could spy the bottle on the floor. Outside it blew high, the great trees of the avenue cried aloud, and the fallen leaves rattled in the veranda. In the midst of this Kokua was aware of another sound; whether of a beast or of a man she could scarce tell, but it was as sad as death, and cut her to the soul. Softly she arose, set the door ajar, and looked forth into the moonlit yard. There, under the bananas, lay Keawe, his mouth in the dust, and as he lay, he moaned.

"Heaven," she thought, "how

careless have I been—how weak! It is he, not I, that stands in this eternal peril; it was he, not I, that took the curse upon his soul. It is for my sake, and for the love of a creature of so little worth and such poor help, that he now beholds so close to him the flames of hell—ay, and smells the smoke of it, lying without there in the wind and moonlight. Am I so dull of spirit that never till now have I surmised my duty, or have I seen it before and turned aside? But now, at least, I take up my soul in both the hands of my affection; now I say farewell to the white steps of heaven and the waiting faces of my friends. A love for a love, and let mine be equalled with Keawe's! A soul for a soul, and be it mine to perish!"

She was a deft woman with her hands, and was soon apparelled. She took in her hands the charge—the precious centimes they kept ever at their side; for this coin is little used, and they had made provision at a government office. When she was forth in the avenue clouds came on the wind, and the moon was blackened. The town slept, and she knew not whither to turn till she heard one coughing in the shadow of the trees.

"Old man," said Kukua, "what do you here abroad in the cold night?"

The old man could scarce express himself for coughing, but she made out that he was old and

poor, and a stranger in the island.

"Will you do me a service?" said Kukua. "As one stranger to another, and as an old man to a young woman, will you help a daughter of Hawaii?"

"Ah," said the old man "So you are the witch from the Eight Islands, and even my old soul you seek to entangle. But I have heard of you, and defy your wickedness."

"Sit down here," said Kokua, "and let me tell you a tale." And she told him the story of Keawe from the beginning to the end.

"And now," said she, "I am his wife, whom he bought with his soul's welfare. And what should I do? If I went to him myself and offered to buy it, he will refuse. But if you go, he will sell it eagerly; I will await you here; you will buy it for four centimes, and I will buy it again for three. And the Lord strengthen a poor girl!"

"If you meant falsely," said the old man, "I think God would strike you dead."

"He would!" cried Kokua. "Be sure He would. I could not be so treacherous; God would not suffer it."

"Give me the four centimes and await me here," said the old man.

Now, when Kokua stood alone in the street, her spirit died. The wind roared in the trees, and it seemed to her the rushing of the flames of hell; the shadows towered in the light of the street lamp,

and they seemd to her the snatch-
ing hands of evil ones. If she had
had the strength, she must have
run away, and if she had had the
breath, she must have screamed
aloud; but, in truth, she could do
neither, and stood and trembled
in the avenue like an affrighted
child.

Then she saw the old man re-
turning, and he had the bottle
in his hand.

"I have done your bidding,"
said he. "I left your husband
weeping like a child; tonight he
will sleep easy," and he held the
bottle forth.

"Before you give it me," Kokua
panted, "take the good with the
evil—ask to be delivered from
your cough."

"I am an old man," replied the
other, "and too near the gate of
the grave to take a favour from
the devil. But what is this? Why
do you not take the bottle? Do
you hesitate?"

The old man looked upon Ko-
kua kindly. "Poor child!" said
he, "you fear: your soul misgives
you. Well, let me keep it. I am
old, and can never more be happy
in this world, and as for the
next—"

"Give it me!" gasped Kokua.
"There is your money. Do you
think I am so base as that? Give
me the bottle."

"God bless you, child," said
the old man.

Kokua concealed the bottle
under her holoku, said farewell

to the old man, and walked off
along the avenue, she cared not
whither. For all roads were now
the same to her, and led equally
to hell.

Next day she came to her mind
again, and returned to the house.
It was even as the old man said—
Keawe slumbered like a child,
Kokua stood and gazed upon his
face.

"Now, my husband," said she,
"it is your turn to sleep. When
you wake it will be your turn to
sing and laugh. But for poor Ko-
kua, alas! that meant no evil—
for poor Kokua no more sleep, no
more singing, no more delight,
whether in earth or heaven."

With that she lay down in the
bed by his side, and her misery
was so extreme that she fell in a
deep slumber instantly.

Late in the morning her hus-
band woke her and gave her the
good news. It seemed he was silly
with delight, for he paid no heed
to her distress, ill though she dis-
sembled it. The words stuck in
her mouth, it mattered not; Ke-
awe did the speaking. She ate not
a bite, but who was to observe it?

All the while Keawe was eating
and talking, and planning the
time of their return, and thanking
her for saving him and fondling
her, and calling her the true help-
er after all. He laughed at the old
man that was fool enough to buy
that bottle.

"A worthy man he seemed,"
Keawe said. "But no one can

judge by appearances. For why did the old reprobate require the bottle?"

"My husband," said Kokua humbly, "his purpose may have been good."

Keawe laughed like an angry man. "Fiddle-de-dee!" cried Keawe. "An old rogue, I tell you; and an old ass to boot. For the bottle was hard enough to sell at four centimes; and at three it will be quite impossible. The margin is not broad enough, the thing begins to smell of scorching—brrr!" said he, and shuddered. "It is true I bought it myself at a cent, when I knew not there were smaller coins. I was a fool for my pains; there will never be found another, and whoever has that bottle now will carry it to the pit."

"Oh, my husband!" said Kokua. "Is it not a terrible thing to save oneself by the eternal ruin of another? It seems to be I could not laugh. I would be humbled. I would be filled with melancholy. I would pray for the poor holder."

Then Keawe, because he felt the truth of what she said, grew the more angry. "Heighty teighty!" cried he. "You may be filled with melancholy if you please. It is not the mind of a good wife. If you thought at all of me, you would sit ashamed."

Thereupon he went out, and Kokua was alone. He met friends, and drank with them; they hired a carriage and drove into the country, and there drank again.

All the time Keawe was ill at ease, because he was taking this pastime while his wife was sad, and because he knew in his heart that she was more right than he; and the knowledge made him drink the deeper.

Now there was an old brutal Haole drinking with him, one that had been a boatswain of a whaler—a runaway, a digger in gold mines, a convict in prisons. He had a low mind and a foul mouth; he loved to drink and to see others drunken; and he pressed the glass upon Keawe. Soon there was no more money in the company.

"Here, you!" says the boatswain, "you are rich, you have always been saying. You have a bottle or some foolishness."

"Yes," says Keawe, "I am rich; I will go back and get some money from my wife, who keeps it."

"That's a bad idea, mate," said the boatswain. "Never trust a petticoat with dollars. They're all as false as water; you keep an eye on her."

"I should not wonder but she was false, indeed," thought he. "Why should she be so cast down at my release? But I will show her I am not the man to be fooled. I will catch her in the act."

Accordingly, when they were back in town, Keawe bade the boatswain wait for him at the corner by the old calaboose, and went forward up the avenue alone

to the door of his house. The night had come again; there was a light within, but never a sound; and Keawe crept about the corner, opened the back door softly, and looked in.

There was Kokua on the floor, the lamp at her side; before her was a milk-white bottle, with a round belly and a long neck; and as she viewed it, Kokua wrung her hands.

A long time Keawe stood and looked in the doorway. At first he was struck stupid and then fear fell upon him that the bargain had been made amiss, and the bottle had come back to him as it came at San Francisco; and at that his knees were loosened, and the fumes of the wine departed from his head like mists off a river in the morning. And then he had another thought; and it was a strange one, that made his cheeks to burn.

"I must make sure of this," thought he.

So he closed the door, and went softly round the corner again, and then came noisily in, as though he were but now returned. And, lo! by the time he opened the front door no bottle was to be seen; and Kokua sat in a chair and started up like one awakened out of sleep.

"I have been drinking all day and making merry," said Keawe. "I have been with good companions, and now I only came back for money, and return to

drink and carouse with them again."

Both his face and voice were as stern as judgment, but Kokua was too troubled to observe.

"You do well to use your own, my husband," said she, and her words trembled.

"Oh, I do well in all things," said Keawe, and he went straight to the chest and took out money. But he looked besides in the corner where they kept the bottle, and there was no bottle there.

At that the chest heaved upon the floor like a sea-billow, and the house spun about him like a wreath of smoke, for he saw she was lost now, and there was no escape. "It is what I feared," he thought. "It is she who has bought it."

"Kokua," said he, "I said to you today what ill became me. Now I return to house with my jolly companions," and at that he laughed a little quietly. "I will take more pleasure in the cup if you forgive me."

She clasped his knees in a moment, she kissed his knees with flowing tears.

"Oh," she cried, "I ask but a kind word!"

"Let us never once think hardly of the other," said Keawe, and was gone out of the house.

Now, the money that Keawe had taken was only some of that store of centime pieces they had laid in at their arrival. It was very sure he had no mind to be

drinking. His wife had given her soul for him, now he must give his for hers; no other thought was in the world with him.

At the corner, by the old calaboose, there was the boatswain waiting.

"My wife has the bottle," said Keawe, "and, unless you help me to recover it, there can be no more money and no more liquor tonight."

"You do not mean to say you are serious about that bottle?" cried the boatswain.

"There is the lamp," said Keawe. "Do I look as if I was jesting?"

"That is so," said the boatswain. "You look as serious as a ghost."

"Well, then," said Keawe, "here are two centimes; you just go to my wife in the house, and offer her these for the bottle, which (if I am not mistaken) she will give you instantly. Bring it to me here, and I will buy it back from you for one; for that is the law with this bottle, that it still must be sold for a less sum. But whatever you do, never breathe a word to her that you have come from me."

"Mate, I wonder are you making a fool of me?" asked the boatswain.

"It will do you no harm if I am," returned Keawe.

"That is so, mate," said the boatswain.

"And if you doubt me," added

Keawe, "you can try. As soon as you are clear of the house, wish to have your pocket full of money, or a bottle of the best rum, or what you please, and you will see the virtue of the thing."

"Very well, Keawe," says the boatswain. "I will try; but if you are having your fun out of me, I will take my fun out of you with a belaying-pin."

So the whaler-man went off up the avenue; and Keawe stood and waited. It was near the same spot where Kokua had waited the night before; but Keawe was more resolved and never faltered in his purpose; only his soul was bitter with despair.

It seemed a long time he had to wait before he heard a voice singing in the darkness of the avenue. He knew the voice to be the boatswain's; but it was strange how drunken it appeared upon a sudden.

Next the man himself came stumbling into the light of the lamp. He had the devil's bottle buttoned in his coat; another bottle was in his hand; and even as he came in view he raised it to his mouth and drank.

"You have it," said Keawe. "I see that."

"Hands off!" cried the boatswain, jumping back. "Take a step near me, and I'll smash your mouth. You thought you could make a catspaw of me, did you?"

"What do you mean?" cried Keawe.

"Mean?" cried the boatswain. "This is a pretty good bottle, this is; that's what I mean. How I got it for two centimes. I can't make out; but I am sure you shan't have it for one."

"You mean you won't sell?" gasped Keawe.

"No, sir," cried the boatswain. "But I'll give you a drink of the rum, if you like."

"I tell you," said Keawe, "the man who has that bottle goes to hell."

"I reckon I'm going anyway,"

returned the sailor; "and this bottle's the best thing to go with I've struck yet. No, sir!" he cried again, "this is my bottle now, and you can go and fish for another. Here's your health and goodnight to you!"

So off he went down the avenue towards town, and there goes the bottle out of the story.

But Keawe ran to Kokua light as the wind; and great was their joy that night; and great, since then, has been the peace of all their days in the Bright House.

THE STONE

(From page 9) "You work hard and you are strong."

Young Thorsten edges his hands under the shapeless, slippery stone and lifts it with a quick, even pull to his chest. Then he lays it down again, slowly almost gently on the ground. For

a moment he smiles and looks around, but he doesn't hear the shouts of admiration from the group. He is walking briskly towards Lina's cottage.

Young Thorsten isn't leaving town. Tonight he is going to take the little Lina to the dance.

SPILL THE MILK

(From page 18) The tassel brushed his waist in a soft, silken caress. His head was spinning and he wanted to be sick.

He turned from the house. If that was Nona's decision, he had one, too. She hadn't fooled him this afternoon with her loving

ways. Crouching behind the car, he waited. His hands clinched the walking stick until his knuckles ached. But it felt strong, very strong. The man at the carnival had been wrong. He was already glad he had won the walking stick.

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Out of some cold figures, came a story to warm **A**merica's heart

NOT LONG AGO, the Secretary of the United States Treasury studied a figure-covered sheet of paper.

The figures revealed a steady, powerful upswing in the sale of U. S. Savings Bonds, and an equally steady decrease in Bond redemptions.

But to the Secretary, they revealed a good deal more than that, and Mr. Snyder spoke his mind:

"After the Victory Loan, sales of U. S. Savings Bonds went down—redemptions went up. And that was only natural and human.

"It was natural and human—but it was also dangerous. For suppose this trend had continued. Suppose that, in this period of reconversion, some 80 million Americans had decided not only to stop saving, but to spend the \$40 billion which they had *already* put aside in Series E, F & G Savings Bonds. The picture which *that* conjures up is not a pretty one!

"But the trend did **NOT** continue.

"Early last fall, the magazines of this country—nearly a thousand of them, acting together—started an advertising campaign on Bonds. This, added to the continuing support of other media and

advertisers, gave the American people the facts . . . told them why it was important to buy and hold U. S. Savings Bonds.

"The figures on this sheet tell how the American people responded—and mighty good reading it makes.

"Once more, it has been clearly proved that when you give Americans the facts, you can then ask them for action—and *you'll get it!*"

What do the figures show?

On Mr. Snyder's sheet were some very interesting figures.

They showed that sales of Savings Bonds went from \$494 million in last September to \$519 million in October and kept climbing steadily until, in January of this year, they reached a new post-war high:

In January, 1947, Americans put nearly a billion dollars in Savings Bonds. And that trend is continuing.

The figures show that millions of Americans have realized this fact: there is no safer, surer way on earth to get the things you want than buying U. S. Savings Bonds regularly.

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