

stolen into his pocket, and he drew out a twenty-dollar gold piece and tossed it across the table.

"The rent is \$17.50," observed Rose, eyeing the coin doubtfully.

"Keep the change," chuckled John, "and pass the potatoes."

But the woman's gloom appeared to deepen.

"You pay your board promptly," she protested. "This is the third month in succession that you have also paid the rent. Besides, you are always doing for the children."

"Who wouldn't, I'd like to know?" challenged John, surveying them both proudly; whereat Dick, his mouth being otherwise engaged, darted a look of gratitude from his great, wise eyes, while Tayna reached over and patted her uncle's hand affectionately. "Tayna" was an Indian name the girl's father had picked up somewhere.

"Besides," went on John, "Charles is having an uphill fight of it right now. It's a pleasure to stand by a gallant fellow like him. He goes charging after his ideal like old Sir Galahad."

But the face of his sister refused to kindle.

"Like Don Quixote, you mean," she answered cynically. "I haven't heard from him in three weeks. He has not sent me any money in six. He sends it less and less frequently. He becomes more and more irresponsible. You are spoiling him to support his family for him, and," she added, with a choke in her voice, while a tear appeared in her eye, "he is spoiling us — killing our love for him."

The boy slipped down from his chair and stood beside his mother, stroking her arm sympathetically.

"Poppie's all right," he whispered in his peculiar drawl. "He'll come home soon and bring a lot of money with him. See if he don't!"