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WINNIPEG, MAN.**

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1907.

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WINNIPEG, MAN.**

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up in the day-coach because that girl was afraid to try a sleeper, not being used to them."

"Land alive! Why didn't you let her stay there then and you take the comfort of a berth?"

"Because, Marianna, I didn't traipse all over Winnipeg to lose her to some good-for-nothing man who might persuade her to get off and marry him at a tank station on the road."

The porch shook with Mrs McCoy's merriment. "You certainly do have bad luck with your help. Who'd ever a thought anybody would a wanted to marry that Price woman?"

"Or, who'd expect any woman to marry Ping Pong Bill, and him a cattle rustler that drinks like a blue blotter?"

"They say she makes him walk a chalk line."

"Then there was that Swede girl. She was the worst—stayed only two weeks before she ran away with Billy Rhodes."

"There's surely no accountin' for tastes, but I expect—" with an amused look into the kitchen where the new cook was washing dishes—"this here one will stay with you fer a while. What's her name?"

"Paradise Meeker. She's a widow."

"Well, I reckon she'll stay a widow

doing business for," promptly replied his hostess. Come right in, Mr. Sanderson."

But Pete Sanderson was gravely observing Young Canada and the sand-pile.

"Hello, sprat!"

The manikin looked up with a frown. "Me ain't 'prat."

"You ain't? Well, I guess you're a little bit the smallest grown-up man I ever see."

Mr. Sanderson essayed familiarity with effect disastrous. He swung the youngster in the air and grinned up at him. The turmoil produced was worthy of a massacre. It brought Paradise Meeker from the dishes with a rush to see what dire calamity had befallen His Majesty. But a moment was necessary to snatch him from Peter the amazed, to tuck him under her arm and to disappear into the kitchen.

"He did pick me up," wailed John Quincy Meeker in process of meteoric transit.

Traces of embarrassment were still engraved on the cowpuncher's flushed, homely face, when he had recovered sufficiently to present himself on the porch.

"She pounced on me like a wildcat. I ain't sure yet that I'm all here. She certainly must have thought I'd drap



But Pete Sanderson was gravely observing young Canada and the sand-pile.

quite a spell. She don't 'pear to me the marryin' kind. She's so sort o' worked out that I allow the boys won't find your kitchen so homelike now, Sarah."

Mrs. Kelly smiled complacently. "Them boys need a rest, and they're going to get it. She aint the flyaway gallivantin' sort. Notice how kind of tired and wistful her eyes are. She wouldn't have any truck with men-folks, even if they wanted to. Per husband used to drink and beat her awfully. She's tired of men, I reckon. Sets the world and all by that little fellow playing out there. He's a nice boy, too, plays all day by himself as contented."

For some time a dust cloud might have been observed descending the Goose Creek trail toward Mesa. It now swept up the street and came to a halt in front of the hotel. Out of it emerged a cowman on a horse, from which he lightly dismounted, tossing the rein to the ground.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Kelly. Thought I'd ride in and see the boys. Can you fix me up to-night with a bunk?"

"That's what the Kelly House is

and break him," he explained to Mrs. Kelly, laughing to cover his rout.

Her sympathetic smile was so immediate that he missed the under-note of triumph which Mrs. McCoy discerned.

"Paradise don't somehow take to men-folks, Mr. Sanderson."

"I don't remember asking Mrs. Paradise to take to me," the puncher drawled, scratching ruefully the spot where he used to part his hair before he parted with it some years before.

When Mrs. Kelly dropped casually into the kitchen to see that the widow was falling easily into the routine of the work, she suffered one of the shocks of her life. Paradise and the work was getting along all right. So was Pete Sanderson the shy. He was wiping dishes cheerfully under the direction of the new cook, while the manikin, seated on a sideboard, bulged with nuts and candy and wrestled with an all-day sucker provided as a peace-offering by the repentant cowman.

Harmony and good-will reigned on earth, even though an embarrassed silence filled the room.

Mrs. Kelly gasped and fled. The symptoms were too plain to be mis-

read. Her courtships gal at that very they had nev

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