

blessed households in which the baby's nap is not a thing of terror and a gloom forever to all mature existence. As a rule, the more noise you made the better the True babies slept.

The door was open, as I said, and John True stepped in on tip-toe. A rag mat, clean enough, but very old, lay in the little entry; he looked down at it as he entered, wiping his feet, which were dusty dry, with mechanical patience. The mat had a blue flannel rose on it, touched off in black alpaca on one of the petals where the flannel had given out. A child's tin horse, without a head, stood in the entry, and trundled about when his foot hit it.

The little tinkling noise betrayed his presence, and the lullaby in the inner room stopped abruptly. A woman's voice said:

"That you?"

"It's me," said John. He hung his hat up and stood hesitating. The little boy was singing with piercing shrillness:

"Wy shoulda ma-a-ma
If twyalappere?
My omeizzen Ye-ev—"

"Sh-sh, Tommy!" interrupted the woman's voice, dropping on meanwhile contentedly into her lullaby, "Go see who that is in the entry, Tommy. 'Sh-sh-sh-h, my dear! Lie still and slu-umber!"

Tommy checked himself in the midst of his religious aspirations and ran to the door, where he stood peering—a pleasant little rogue, well built and red; he had on a green gingham apron, and had been eating gingerbread. Tommy said:

"W'y, it's *Pupper*!" with the eternal surprise of childhood, to which all things are forever new. His father patted him on the head, and said:

"There, there!" while he re-hung his stained straw hat, which had tumbled down. The hat was brown, and had a row of air-holes perforated about the crown—a new fashion then. True began to

count them as he stood staring. The child crept back and tugged at his mother. True heard him tell her that "*Pupper*" didn't kiss him, but only patted him. The mother crooned on to the gurgling baby.

"I believe I'll change my clothes first," called John, without entering the room.

The lullaby stopped short.

"Why, John?"

John flushed, and went in at once. As he entered the room, details blurred and slipped away before his eyes; he perceived chiefly that the windows and blinds were open, and the late summer light came quivering into the western corner of the room where the woman sat with the baby; the child fell heavily back upon her long, maternal arms away from her half-draped breast. The light blinded her a little, and she moved out of it, holding up her face like a Madonna to the Lord. John kissed her with the silent reverence with which even a house-painter, my esthetic friends, may kiss his wife when she gets one of these aureolas about her.

"*Now*, Father," she said, with sweet mock reproach in the voice of a woman to whom clearly reproaching is not natural, "you may go change your clothes! The idea! I guess it would have been the first time for twelve years, wouldn't it, Tommy? Think of *Pupper* stopping to clean up before he kissed us, Tommy!"

"I'd got an extra daub on to-day," said John True, glancing down at his unbleached cotton blouse and overalls. "I've been to work to Seth Grimace's. There seemed to be such lots of—red."

He went away into the shed and hung up the splashed and spattered clothes. It took him longer than usual to "clean up," a process which he conducted by the aid of the yard-pump and kitchen roller. Some of the paints especially would not come off his fingers, even for the turpentine.

"I hate to paint a red house," he said.