goin' down to that Swede's shack to get some women's clothes."

get some women's clothes."

Red drew forth a roll of bills and, shoving them into Peloo's hand, said, "There's 'bout a hundred there. Buy the best he's got for Billy. It's all my fault. Oh, if I'd knowed Billy was a woman!"

"Billy never was a woman, Red!"
Peloo's voice was like a snarl. "Look here, fellers, an' you, doctor! Billy hit the trail to-night for Cobalt, an' Hanson's wife she come up the river

Hanson's wife she come up the river in a canoe a follerin' him. That's what Silver City's got to know in the mornin'. Ain't that right, fellers?"

"Give the Swede twenty-five dollars to keep his mouth shut about the clothes," Red added.

A N hour later Meekins sat in Peloo's room. "I can ketch onto the whole thing now," he said, "Billy bein' a woman. That skunk, even if he was Billy's husband, was onto it that I was trailin' him all the time, an' he's doublin' on me. You see he got an idee I knew Billy was a woman, an' as we're great friends and I got an idee I knew Billy was a woman, an' as we're great friends, and I liked Billy, that loon is jealous. I guess he framed it up with the Dagos to do me by tellin' 'em I'm goin' to blow on their blind pig. To-night we got into a argyment, an' he says I'm too thick with Billy. You see, Peloo, I don't know Billy's a 'woman, an' says that me an' Billy is perty hot Pals. He sneers 'bout somethin', an' I asks where he comes in' as it's gener'ly s'posed he's spongin' on Billy. This makes him heat up an' say somethin' not perlite, an' I swat him on his laughin' box. I see him draw a gun an' grabs him. Jus' as you fellers bust the door a gun cracks, an' I don't know whether Petri tried to plug me an' got Hanson, or Dick winged himself tryin' to bore a hole in me."

"You wasn't to blame, Red," Peloo said soothingly, "an' that's all got to be fixed up in the court trial. But here's Billy—"

"Say, Peloo, we got to drop that

"I mean the widder," Peloo corrected. "Here's the widder got all the worst of it. She's broke—that snipe sponged all her wages—an' she won't want to live unprotected in the hotel, me bein' a bachelor. There's fellers jus' mean enough to talk; you know that, Red."

"We got to stake her somehow," Meekins declared after a little pause. Billy—I mean the widder—is jus' the squarest, cleanest feller—I mean widder—that I ever come acrost."

Squarest, cleanest feller—I mean widder—that I ever come acrost."

"We jus' got to do it, Red," Peloo agreed. "Danged if I know how I'm goin' to run the Trout House without Billy."

"Say, Peloo—" Red hesitated and looked at Trout.

"What is it?" the latter asked carelessly.

"What is it?" the latter asked carelessly.

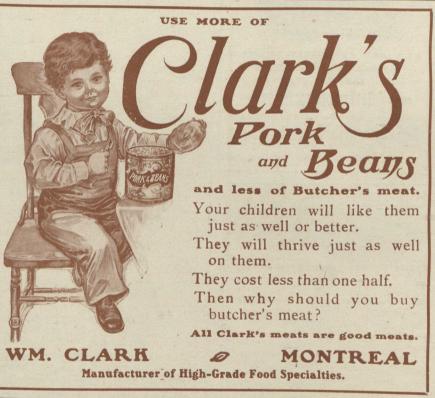
"P'raps it don't sound in keepin' with the surroundin's; but there's only me an' you here, Peloo, an' somethin's got to be did—" Red hesitated again, and Peloo once more affirmed; "Yes, we go to jus' put things night for the widder."

"It's kinder soon to talk about it; but couldn't it sorter be arranged—Why don't you marry the widder, Peloo?" Red fairly bruited this out, as though half afraid of his own utterance. Then he added flounderingly, "It would make the hotel respectable to the sound with the sound with

terance. Then he added flounderingly, "It would make the hotel respectable to have a missus hangin' about." I ain't never thought of gettin' married," Peloo answered, "besides, as you say, it's kinder soon. I'll own up to it that I think about as much of the widder as you do, Red, an' somethin's got to be did; but it's kinder soon—too soon. We best have the fun'ral fu'st."

"Yes, I guess we best give the little money, an' bury that skate that's







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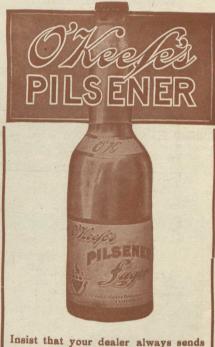
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POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, Mail Service Branch, Ottawa, 9th March, 1910. G. C. ANDERSON, uperintendent