

"S'pose you let me go straight on," suggested Peter; "after, *you* speak. Yes, she dead-alive now." He stuck to that. "But not then, not when mother live, not when we all laugh, and dance, and sing, and ride horse. It was all laugh then, Molly."

Molly could not help a "Poor Peter!" escaping her lips. There was evidently some great tragedy to come in this story of his life.

"Horses very plenty in Hawaii, you know," explained Peter. "Not good horse like Queensland horse, but horse that run all the same. Well, we run all day, up mountain, under tree, across river. Then eat, then sleep, always laugh. Molly, you know Molokai?" he asked abruptly.

Molly shook her head.

Peter continued: "Molokai, island, far from Hawaii, all rocky, bare!" He shuddered, then seemed to force himself on: "We got new King and Queen—very good, very wise—so wise they say as English Queen. They make new laws, they visit all their country. They say—"Some things good, some things bad. Keep good, change bad." One very bad thing—so much sickness in island, so much leper in the country. You have lepers in England, Molly?"

"Lepers!" Molly hardly knew they existed out of the Bible; she hastily assured Peter there were none in England.

"Many with us," repeated Peter, "man woman, little child, and more every year. So," he sighed heavily, "King make strong law. Take all lepers in big ship to Molokai. Shut them up in that island, that no more people catch leprosy. Oh, that was time of crying! Father taken from one house, snatch mother in another, little child—two—three little child in 'nother. One house lose all children, 'nother house lose all father, mother. The King he say to his man, "Be kind, speak softly, take gently." But all the same they take, and there is much weeping in Hawaii. The King he send his own brother-in-law, leper, to Molokai. Every one stay all his days in the leper island, never come away, never see his people any more. All leper, leper, leper, there."

Molly's eyes were round with amazement and distress, but she said nothing. What could she say to this strange new form of tribulation? Peter went on: "Last they come to us. We smile. No leper here. But they come on, and on, and pass me, and pass mother; and take *sister* with the long hair, and the red cheeks, and the laughing mouth. I would kill them, but a man hold me fast. 'King order it,'" he say.

"But, Peter, Peter," stammered Molly, in great excitement, "that was cruel, unjust, wicked, to carry off your sister who was not a leper. Surely you could stop it, or the King could when he knew."

There was a second of deep silence, so deep

that Molly could hear the river current lap-lapping against the side of the vessel.

After that second, Peter spoke slowly, as if every word was squeezed out of him against his will. "But she was a leper," he said. "We did not know, not guess, she look so bright; but it had begun—it was true."

Another long pause. Molly broke it this time. She must ask what became of the girl.

"She had to go," said Peter; "first she cry, then she turn brave, not to make mother cry, and she make smile for last thing on board ship. But her heart cry still."

"And have you never seen her since?" asked Molly.

Peter shook his head.

"Nor your mother?"

"Me not know that," declared Peter; "perhaps she been to Molokai, for she die two, three week after sister taken; her heart gone, so she die."

It was indeed a tragedy, such a one as even orphan Molly had never dreamed of. She was obliged to question Peter yet further about this dreadful rocky, sunny, leper-island lying in the bright blue Pacific, with its strange population gathered, in a stern exercise of mercy, from wrecked homes, wrested from broken-hearted relations.

Peter told her all he knew, but that was little.

Government fed the miserable creatures, gave them shelter and a spot to die in.

"And one good man, not leper, priest you call him, gone to them," said Peter. "He teach them good before they die."

Yes, it was indeed true that a young, brave, healthful servant of God had left home and friends, love, and almost life, to spend himself in the service of these poor, sad, homeless exiles. He might never return, he had accepted the doom of his flock.

Even Peter had grasped the greatness of the sacrifice, the love that prompted it. "He good man," he repeated.

'Lisbeth rose from her couch that evening, better, stronger, braver, for the story of Peter's grief. Poor lad, ignorant, sinful as he was, he could return love for love. 'Lisbeth felt as if she could not rest till she had told him of that Great Love which met a cruel death to save the world. She had had many a serious thought regarding the carrying of the news of salvation to the heathen, but this half-heathen creature in her very company day by day, how came she to overlook him?

(To be continued.)

THE church that seeks its selfish interests by confining its works and efforts to itself will inevitably become weak and ultimately will die of inanity.