

Bellefonte, Pa., October 18, 1929.

"LITTLE BOY BLUE"

The little toy dog is covered with dust But sturdy and staunch he stands; And the little toy soldier is red with rust, And his musket molds in his hands. was when the little toy dog was ne Tim And the soldier was passing fair, Boy That was the time when our Little Blue

Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said "And don't you make any noise!" So, toddling off to the trundle-bed He dreamt of the pretty toys. And as he was dreaming, an angel song Awakened our Little Boy Blue,-Oh, the years are many, the years are

long. But the little toy friends are true.

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand, Each in the same old place, Awaiting the touch of a little hand,

The smile of a little face. And they wonder, as waiting the long

years through. In the dust of that little chair,

What has become of our Little Boy Blue Since he kissed them and left them there. -Eugene Field

SINNERS

"We have to keep it kind of warm in here because of their not getting any exercise—they get chilly," the matron explained.

"Don't they get out?"

"Not this weather. And they sort of lose interest-"

The matron glanced at the visitor and the latter, a big quiet-eyed wo-man in a handsome, dowdy coat, looked back at her dubiously.

"They haven't got much ambition left when they get here!" the matron said, with a laugh.

The other frowned faintly, as if in vague pain. She followed in silence through the big clean imper-sonal halls that smelled of coffee, disinfectants, air heaters and herded, over-clothed humanity.

"I didn't get your name?" "Huggett. Mrs. Joe Huggett."

'And you're some kin to Lucas

Rippey?" "Some—? Oh, no. Just a friend." Mrs. Huggett cleared her throat; her serious face had turned a little pale. Some of the poor forlorn old men were reading shabby magazines in the winter heat of the assembly room; a radio was playing. Many of the occupants of the big apartment were merely staring idly into space —broken in mind, the visitor saw, as well as body.

Lucas Rippey was a thin blue-eyed old man, with white, thin hair. He rose alertly, looked surprisedly at his visitor. When the matron had led them to a little side parlor and left them alone, he told Mrs. Huggett smilingly that he could not remember the time he had had a caller berather delightedly.

ed it. "I don't know, Lucas, that stricken. After a moment she add-ed, "One minute, the last thing I was thinkin' of, was you. The next, I was tellin' Ma and gran'ma this long rigmarole about how I seen you up

bered.

Woods." blue eyes were fixed upon her with a sort of innocent, dispassionate ex-

pectancy. It was almost as if she were entertaining him with a story.

"You told 'em that in court," she nodded. For the first time anguish came into her voice. "Oh, why, why, came into her voice. "Oh, why, why, why," she began, knotting her big work-worn hands together, "why didn't they believe you, instead of takin' the word of a crazy girl of thirteen! Mind you," she went on suddenly, "after that crazy Easter afternoon, when I'd told my mother this yarn. I lay awake all night and this New Year's day." this yarn, I lay awake all night, and I made up my mind that I'd come out with the truth the next day and

recess, I kinder began to let it out to the other girls that I knew something about Kane Madison's murder.

It was just too easy. "Walkin' home from school, I rehas got to stop!' I says, as loud as

that. 'But then when I got home Judge Robbins was there—the old judge himself, that us kids were all so scared of. And he held out his hand to me, gently and friendly, and he says, 'Come here, Emma. You're only a little girl,' he says, 'I want you should promise me that you'll not say any 'more about

poor Kane Madison and the Rippey boy. Will you do that?" he says. "Well, a great relief came over me, and I felt like I was saved. It never occurred to me that he was

holdin' me as an important witness. I thought my share of the whole thing was over, and when the newspaper sent a feller out to get my picture the next day I was just as happy as I thought I'd be, gettin' my name into the paper. Judge Robbins had told me not to say nothin' more about anything, and yet I was gettin' all the excitement of bein' pointed out and talked about.'

"You never seen me near the Madison house that day Kane Madi-son was killed," old Rippey said def-initely, after a pause, "becuz I wa'nt

"Well! You take me completely by surprise," said Lucas. "Well! day," she agreed dully, the hard shamed color in her face. "As a matter of fact. I was up in fore. His bright blue eyes twinkled matter of fact, I was up in our attic all afternoon, dressin' up and

his eyes fixed on space as he remem. I would find you in a State Home. have another moment of peace, it'll "I wa'n't much more than a or that somewhere, sooner or later, be due to you. It's been burnin' in kid, and some of them men wa'n't fit I'd be sayin' it.

companions for man or beasts. I was sickly, too; I'd be'n raised in the Bayliss County Orphans' Home, you know." "You spent sixteen years in pris-on for a crime you didn't commit, and it was my fault," she summariz-ed it. "I don't know, Lucas, that

rigmarole about how I seen you up by the Madison place runnin', and how you was buryin' something up near the birch grove in Holley's

"Well, I always say I've "I never was anywhere near the more time than most men for read-Madison house that day," the old in'," Lucas said cheerfully. "I'm a why, it'd be a charity to me to let man offered, as she paused. His great hand for a book. Adventures me do it!" -I seem to share 'em with the authors!"

'I'm well fixed," the woman said,

not listening. "And you live in California?" "I was tellin' you. I've got a ranch—chickens and fruit—outside

out with the truth the next day and tell them I'd been lyin'. "But I couldn't get my courage up for it at breakfast, and at school, in stairs. I have a radio down there "My husband was a good man, but and a phonograph and an airtight. he was hard. He died awhile back; He was comfortable there. I've got my

member, the wickedness of what I was doin' suddenly came over me, and I spoke right out loud, while I was goin' by Bassett's Pond. "This you'd like to do about the place. don't know that there's been an hour that goin' is says, as loud as There's a Portuguese girl helps when I haven't remembered that bot me with dishes and cleanin', but Easter Sunday, back home, when I'm one to run my own kitch- Kane Madison was murdered, and en and I'd like to have someone to when I, a smug little girl with long cook for agin."

"I don't know as I understand life" what you're drivin' at," Lucas said, "Y clearing his throat.

"It isn't in any way makin' up to you," she persisted stubbornly. "Why," he said kindly, pityingly, "what you done you done as a lit-tle girl. I wouldn't hold that against you! Nobody wouldn't. You seen a good chance to show offchildren'll do that-that ain't noth-

ing.' "I never thought, if I ever did find you, that you'd kill me, sayin' that," she observed, as he paused. 'I'll get you your ticket, I'll make all arrangements, and I'll meet you at San Jose station," she added. The tears had come into her eyes; with the difficult words; tears stood in his bright old blue eyes as he answered her.

"Why, I don't hardly suppose you're askin' me to leave the State Home, Emma?" he faltered. She made an awkward gesture, laughed thickly, frowned again.

that I want to do." "Gettin' out, huh?" he mused.

my soul for ten years that that was my way out." "Well, you certainly are a good

woman," he said slowly. T'm not a good woman at all

I'm the murderer, not you. I hard-ly knew you, and I did to you what a savage wouldn't done to his enemy. There's no happiness I could give you that'd clear me, I know that. But if putterin' about the farm and there; feelin' that you were a free man, ne," she with something put by in the bank, in case I was suddenly took-if had that'd mean anything to you, Lucas,

He blinked with wet, smiling

eyes. But he spoke sturdily. 'If it'd mean anything ! Why, Emma, I don't know as folks realize just what this kind of a place is like, eatin' amongst a lot of paupers and beggars and fellers that aren't mentally straight. If I ask for a shirt or a sweater or a pair of pants, she unlocks the wardrobe and hands me out the first one she sees-I don't blame her, she's not got any reason to respec' me—but I haven't stopped "My alfalfa was three inches this New Year's day." "For pity's sakes!" up to respec' me—but I haven't stopped respectin' myself, just the same. I don't know that there's been an hour "I had a big room fixed off the how hard it is. A man likes a little peace and privacy," he explained

simply. "I'm alone now," the woman said. my boy died in the 'flu year. The little feller died when he wasn't but an old car you could drive. "I'd do for you," she said hum-bly, thickly her voice trembling, and ary and lives in China. But I'm well

helps when I haven't remembered that hot curls, stood up and lied away your

> "You wasn't nothing but a kid, Emma."

"I knew better'n that, though." "I certainly would enjoy livin' on a farm again," he said. "I'm country-bred, and trees and fields seem to say something to me."

She was looking at him wistfully; She was looking at him wistruly; there was something of humble en-treaty, something of admiration, in her dull look. "There's just one thing more to say," she began ab-ruptly. "I want you to understand that the obligation in this matter isn't on your side. It seems to me you've already done more for me, Lucas, than I'm ever goin' to be able to do for you!"

Six weeks later she walked down to the barn, on a hot March morning, to tell him that luncheon was ready. Supper was never anything but warm-over biscuits and tea and fruit sauce and such nursery fare, but luncheon was a daily triumph for Emma, who was a master hand with chicken tapioca gravy and asparagus omelet

The air was blue and singing, this morning, and all about the white farm-house the lilacs were in flow-

"I don't need money !" he tested. "I've got some of that check you sent the superintendent. I haven't no more use for money here than Captain has !"

The dog leaped at the kindly old hand that dropped to his shaggy head

"I'd pay a foreman more'n that, Lucas. "Why, but sho !" he said. "I eat

my weight in butter and eggs every day." "You don't eat much," she said

"It'll just accumulate there at the

ank," he said stubbornly. "It's a good place for it." bank,'

er wanted to say it for some time, and I may's well say it now. I'd get?" live the life I've lived all over again, ' Emr to have it come out like it has now."

"There isn't any money in the bank that could buy your sayin'

that," she said simply. "We don't know what governs our destinies," he went on. "What "What I'd have be'n without them long years of incarceration, who can say? I was destined to endure 'em, and you destined to eat your heart out with regret. But we don't

have Lucas."

"It don't take a very sweet naturre to appeciate havin' health and some work to do," he suggested.

the woman observed, in her hope-less way. 'You might well forgive and forget because you're innocent. But I keep goin' over and over it. Ma and gran'ma were in the kitch-en when I got home that Easter afternoon, and I'll never forget Ma's en when I got home that Easter afternoon, and I'll never forget Ma's holdin' out the paper to me 'See about Susan Clute, and her folks sendin' her East for violin lessons?' she says. Sue'd always had everything I wanted.

"It kinder made me sick, the rest of that afternoon. I changed my dress and bathed my face and took a good long drink of water out at the pump, I remember, but I was just shakin', inside.

"About six o'clock Mrs. Tenney came runnin' over and she told Ma about Kane Madison bein' murdered. 'I'd like to know where Lucas Rippey was this afternoon, 'she says, in a scared sort of whisper, 'because everyone knows he and Kane were both after Thelma Cass.'

"Then I spoke up. Right out of a self on. "An clear sky I says, 'Why, I saw Lucas should know." Rippey up near the Madison place "Know wha this afternoon !" I says. The minute I said it I knew I was done for. They both turned to me.

"Then you know where poor Kane was found?' Mrs. Tenney says. "It must have been somewhere near the house,' I says, at random, about Kane Madison?" Lucas said. not knowin' whether she'd know T was lyin' then and there, and say that the body was down near the railroad tracks or something. But no, she just looked scareder than

Her sad face brightened only a Everything delighted him, every shade Oh, yes !" she said. "Yes- waking, every breakfast, every hour terday was the first. I put some of his busy puttering day was a fifty dollars—to your ac- separate delight. He discussed the separate delight. He discussed the chickens as if they had been human entities; the old plow horses came over to the corral fence, and rested their great shaggy heads there, when Lucas was busy in the farm-yard; the Airedale crushed his hairy length against Lucas' porch door at night and whind and work door at night, and whined and mut-tered from time to time in a very ecstasy of love.

She regarded the sunshiny old face wistfully, painfully. "Nothing hasn't ever embittered you, Lucas." "No," he agreed, considering. "Don't know's it has."

'But weren't you thunderstruck when I, the minister's niece, come out with all that rigmarole?"

'Emma, can't you forgive and for-

Emma laughed in desperation, seeing the sympathetic look upon his kindly rosy old face.

'I tell you there's many a mil-lionaire of sixty-five that'd change places with me !" he assured her over and over again.

One hot July noon he and she were alone on the shabby, shadowy side porch. The sky was whitishthe fig tree shadows seemed to blue. heart out with regret. But we don't pulsate with a green light. In the know but what all's for the best." orderly dooryard pepper plumes hung motionless, filling the air with pungent scent. Chickens were his own oratory. She sighed deeply, frowned. fluffling and complaining in the "You've got a sweeter nature than shadow of the stable lane; the wind-mill wheel was lifeless. Now mill wheel was lifeless. Now and then the dog sighed and moaned faintly in his sleep.

Emma, always restlessly active. "Remorse is the thing that ages was stringing beans with quick ex-you and eats into your night's rest," pert movements of knife and fingers. the woman observed, in her hope-less way. 'You might well forgive a flytrap, bending the wire gauze

She raised heavy eyes. "No, I don't know as my head aches," she said slowly.

He worked on again in silence. and again gave her an uneasy look. "Emma," he said suddenly, "there's something I want to say to you." She glanced up expectantly; his tone was odd. Her hands were still. "I've had this on my mind for some time," Lucas began. His old face had reddened painfully. He hesitated, looking at her doubtfully. "This may make kind of a difference-he said, and stopped.

"What ever on earth are you talkin' about, Lucas?"

"You've be'n very kind to me," the old man resumed, forcing him-self on. "And it's only right you "Know what?" she asked, nervous

and impatient.

"Emma," he said, "would it surprise you to know that I done it?"

The burning. difficult color middle age spread to her own face. Her eyes not leaving his, she automatically put aside her panful of beans and raised her fingers to press ever, and she says, "Yes. He was her throat. layin' right across the doorsill." "Yessir, I done it," Lucas then "After that I went on. As dif-ferent neighbors came in, I'd tell it voice.

be n nere two years and ain't settled down yet!" he confessed. "I worked, up to them. I got 'flu in the year 'twas so prevfoller. And sure 'nough, it did!"

"Take a good look at me, Lucas," Mrs. Huggett said heavily. She had seated herself, thrown back her wid-it myself!" ow's veil. "Don't you remember me?" He looked at her keenly, still smiling. ing. "No'm. I'm sorry. But your face don't say nothing to me."

"I was Emma Kent," she said slowly.

The old man sat down himself now, suddenly, with an air of shock. The light had died out of his eyes. "Is that who you are?" he said in

a whisper. There was a pause. Then the wo-

man began, "I've been huntin' you for years." "That so?" he asked, still in a

dulled voice. 'Ever since I was thirteen years

old," she continued, "ever since I there. But the state was payin' my was thirteen years old-and that's all rent just the same. And now-here

eyes opposite her. Lucas Rippey be-gan to shake his head regretfully, deprecatingly.

"I lied about you," the woman said if you want to get out." tly. "How do you mean?" he asked,

the visitor said, in a stony, quiet voice. "I don't know what does get into a girl, sometimes." stitution behind it. "Do you like it here?" she asked simply. His old face flushed painfully.

She paused and he looked at her with respectful sympathy. "I was runnin' with Sue Clute," she began again. "WHCHL there" he sold his food

"Well, there!" he said, his face suddenly brightening, as he seized upon the diversion. "I hadn't thought of them Clutes for forty years!" "Sue had her picture in the paper,

me," Emma Huggett pursued, reso-lutely, unhappily. "She was terrible pretty. I was just eat up with jeal-I guess.

He was considering it, his head on one side, lips pursued and eyes nar-rowed. "I never thought of that. I used to think you dremp' all you said. he murmured thoughtfully." "My husband got it from his said. he murmured thoughtfully."

"No, I didn't dream it," the woman answered promptly. "I made it all up. I was dyin' to be important, to "That get noticed by somebody, like Sue had. The day Kane Madison was murdered I begun romancin' to my mother and gran'-mother, and the more they made of it, the smarter I thought I was. I don't know what in creation started me. But once I'd to see California." started, seems I couldn't stop."

"It's hard for us to explain our own acts, sometimes," Lucas said politely. "Hard?" she echoed. "Well, I've

been tryin' to explain mine for forty years!" A shadow fell upon her plain good face. "You were in pris-on?" she asked reluctantly.

"Sixteen years." "Oh, my Lord," Emma said in a feless whisper. "State's prison?" lifeless she added.

"Huh!" he commented, thinking. The woman looked at him anxgot 'flu in the year 'twas so prev-alent; the' warned me pneumonia'd foller. And sure 'nough, it did!" in warden year 'i used to go down on my knees and pray that some-

> "I guess they'd have convicted me, anyway," he suggested briefly. 'I don't know how they could."

Mrs. Huggett sat looking at him heavily, dumbly. She sighed. "I started life a charge on the state," the man said. "I didn't git out of the orpanage until I was fourteen. At twentytwo, I was back on the state again, for sixteen

years. When I come out, I was quite delicate, and the' sent me to Colorado- well, I worked some,

of forty years ago—I've been sorry." I am, back on 'em for A softer look came into the blue time, unless all signs fail!" I am, back on 'em for life this

Her alert eyes had brightened with sudden resolute interest. "This time," she said, "I can get you out,

fatly. He cleared his throat, and spoke without resentment. "I've often wondered why you did that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly would that, "he ad-without mildly would that," he ad-without mildly

clean, ugly, disinfectant-scented in- do as children.'

His old face flushed painfully. "No, ma'am. Nobody could like it "My

blinking and swallowing.

main. I ain't sixty-four yet." Emma Huggett was silent for a

"I guess that's down Linden reek way?" he hazarded. "That's in California," Mrs. Hug-

gett said briefly.

sound. I've always thought I'd like

ineloquently. 'Ain't it some considerable dis-

respectfully. "It's well over twelve hundred miles by rail," she said. No livin' soul ever knew what you and I know. I was afraid." "You be'n visitin' back here?" he

pursued, puzzled. "No; I come to find you."

This left him speechless. He smiled his polite, appreciative smile.

And there were already wings in his voice. 'I'd be glad to get out," he whispered, suddenly shaken. he whispered, suddenly shaken. "This is a hard place to be — for a proud man." His voice thickened; he was still. "I wouldn't be no bur-den to you!" he assured her recovering.

"I wouldn't care if you were." "Well, I wouldn't be. I could do a

man you know. I've always be'n a worker, only it was winter comin' on, Lucas was sitti

Clara."

"Clarifornia!" he said rapt. "Well, I declare, I didn't know, when I got he worked, an Airedale attentive sensible thing to do.' up this mornin'-it shows how little trust we put in Providence. Seems we never know what's comin'!"

him anxiously. "I take this very kindly of you, Emma," he said considering. "It's like a dream to me that I've

found you, Lucas, and you aren't dead and I can maybe make up the

hundredth part of what I done to "We ain't responsible for what we

"No, but we can pay for it, Lucas. I've been payin' for forty years." "Sho!" he said, distressed. "If they'd sent you to the chair,

then I would have spoke!" she burst out miserably. "There wasn't any doubt in my mind about that! Orchard unopened upon a heap on school he'd be'n bullyin' me. 'I wasn't smilin'," Emma said, But there were extenuatin' circumstances, and you was only tried for had fed upon upon the diversion. "I hadn't thought of them Clutes for forty years!" "Sue had her picture in the paper, and that was gall and wornwood to me," Emma Huggett pursued, reso-utely uphangett for some and european means made up my mind to re-means made up my mind to re-means made up my mind to re-the state's generosity I deeply appreciate," old Lucas Rippey said, with his favorite forlorn attempt at literary flourish. But I've by no means made up my mind to re-the state's generosity I deeply and that was sale dwas only the was about me-reporters and court—everyone. I her the state's generosity I deeply analsaughter. And meanwhile, they were all makin' a fuss about me-reporters and court—everyone. I her the was all radius about me-these days; he had theories about "This afternoon he com acacia honey. He was already hart's stable while I ten "Utely unhappily". I've by no means made up my mind to re-means made up my mind to re-

"My folks moved away, but I made Emma Huggett was silent for a a birl back home promise she'd let who w thoughtful moment, considering. "I me know what happened to you. But place; have a real nice ranch, down in the she never wrote me. After that I

everything right and sweet about my marriage and my children. There wasn't one of 'em born but I didn't look down at his little face and say Well, for pity's sakes!" he ejaculated. "That's always be'n a great word with me," he confessed. "California." It has a real pretty

"You spent sixteen years in iai ind. I've always thought I'd like see California." "I hope you will,' the woman said reloquently. if or a crime you didn't commit. But I've been forty years in tor-ment, Lucas. I used to pray that the Lord would make it up to you tance away?" Lucas Rippey asked and punish me. But I never had the

against a celestial sky.

The barn stood in a slight depression too shallow to be called a cangood deal of cartin', in that car—I can drive any make there is," he said eagerly. "And there's nothing the windmill was flanked by tow-'I don't know how they could." "I was kind of a loafer," he re-marked. "I was the kind of fel-ler hard-workin' men like to git in-to jail." money in them. And I ain't a sick picking near the line of whitewash-

> Lucas was sitting on a backless and myself well along in years, and they bein' apprehensive that I'd take another chest cold." "You won't get any colds in Santa muddy corduroys and thick sweat- laugh, with a note of shame and er; he was whistling to himself as gratitude in it. "Yes, that's the

and adoring at his knee. "If you aren't whitewashin'some- what you do with your life long's e never know what's comin'!" She sat heavily silent watching "If you aren't whitewashin'some- what you do with your life long's commented, with an air of dryness. thoughtfully.

"That Portygee brcke his milkin'-stol strap," Lucas explained. "You're a great hand for jobs,"

made her see it with new eyes. Joe Huggett had been a sufficiently satisfied rancher, but there had

gain an entity, a personal fascina- mad-all of a sudden. tion, under his eager care. "But that wa'nt all Since Joe's death Emma had tos.

acacia honey. He was already hart's stable while I tendin' it for "Uncle Luke" to the Portuguese Len Lenhart, and he begun to set who worked intermittently on the place; Carolina, the kitchenmaid, adored him.

He was happy, and Emma Hug- awful swee gett, watching him witsfully as he I couldn't expanded in this new atmosphere in trouble. own sore heart a certain satisfaction that was somewhat like happi-ness, too. The old car was a Cin derella coach to him; he worked over it,

shining. His own books and lamp, his coffee cup with the pink roses on it, the instant allegiance of the him. dog, these were things in which he

took untiring delight. "Lunch time?" he said, when she had inspected the milking stool. down on the story of the

farmer, Lucas, you ought to call it dinner.

'Well, that's right, too." He walked along beside her through opened said cheerfully. eates and corrals. "This feels He admitted himself that he was

all afresh. And when Judge Robbins come, the next day, I was as an old shoe with the details about how you spoke of me, and how you were buryin' something and asked me not to say I'd seen you. I was crazy, that's the only explanation.

They had halted in the shadow of the barn at the dooryard fence. The lilac blossoms near them moved in a soft breath of wind and were still. "I thought we was goin' to forget all this, Emma."

She laughed a brief troubled "Yes, that's the

"I don't know as it matters much

"I know. But as if there wasn't trouble enough in the world, to send an innocent man to prison! Lucas, she said, smiling. she added abruptly, in a quickened His delight in the little farm had voice, 'who did kill Kane Madison?" "I don't know. We had a fight at the livery stable, all right, him and me," the old man said, "like it been no romance in his attitude. was proved in court. We fought over Lucas, a broken old jailbird from, Thelma-she'd got into trouble, and the poorhouse, saw enchantment he was sorter laughin' at me about everywhere. The place seemed to it. I don't know when I've got so enchantment he was sorter laughin' at me about

"Lucas, you never killed Kan Madison !" "But that wa'nt all the score betwixt Kane Madison and me. Ever sed her weekly copy of Farm and since I'd be'n a little feller in grade the desk in the dining room. Lucas used to twist my wrists. Sometimes had fed upon these hungrily, had my wrists would be sore for weeks, drawn her into discussions of prun- but I never dast to tell anybody. I afternoon. He run out the side doo and went streakin' up through the medder. I run after him for him, all right; I would have

> me if I would like a message from Thelma. I wasn't never a regular beau of Thelma's, but she seemed awful sweet and pretty to me, and I couldn't bear to think of her bein'

"He backed me up to the loft ladold Grandma Madison said. Anywa I knew I'd rurt him considerable der, and he begun forcin' me up, and I struck at him with the broom o. The old car was a Cin handle—like they brought out in coach to him; he worked court—and I yelled at him that I'd tinkered with it, kept it kill him, all right. The lady in the right. "I got up from my knees scare "I got up from my knees scare to death, and I says out loud, "Ty got to get out of here! I've got t cottage next door told all that true enough, and that I run out after

of come to me that no, better han around and ac' innocent. So I wer 'He run across the fields towards home. But I never followed him. I out and washed the gas pipe at the troft and threw it down in the su on the dry grass." went up into the woods and laid down on the grass all afternoon,

"But then, who did kill him, Lucas?"

"Mysteries of the missin' !" he

the best of it, Emma. I haven't ever be'n much of a success," the man said. "But I don't know's I've ever be'n afraid, either. You mustn't feel too bad." "Gates and corrals. "This feels said. And then suddenly, "Say, lis-ten—listen. I've got a bone to pick with you. What's all this about?" He admitted himself that he was "great' on mystery stories. But then, Emma would muse a little enviously, he was "great" on every-thing. She was well past her half-century mark but she had then I prayed some more. My motl er had be'n a great believer, and lieve !" he replied, with his sum old smile. "But I had a long wa to go before I found God."

"For forty years I've been sayin" "Was it awful, Lucas?" "Yes, at first it was," he admitted, "T don't know as I ever imagined

"Y-you," she stammered, and swallowed with a dry throat. "You -why Lucas Rippey," she sharply, 'you don't know you're sayin'!" she added what

"Yes, I do, Emma," he persisted simply.

For a long moment she watched him steadily almost fearfully. "You wasn't anywheres near the Madison place !" she whispered at last.

"Becuz Kane Madison wa'nt killed at his own place. He was killed at Lenhart's barn, and he run all the way home." Her eyes flashed as she consider-

"Twa'nt possible," she breathed still watching him as if fascinated. "That's the way it was, though

"Oh, my Lord!" she murmured

looking away. Her hand was clutching her heart now.

"I hit him with a pipe in Len. hart's." Lucas resumed. "He backed

me up the ladder and he was ta'nt. in' me about Thelma. I useter go kinder crazy whenever anyone tan't

ed me like that. I uster go crazy

even before I left the orphanage

The matron knew it. 'Don't ge Lucas in a tantrum," she usete:

"You hit him on the head?"

"Down at Lenhart's, that Sunday

piece, yellin' at him that he couldn'

talk to me that way, that I'd kil him. Then I come back, and was scared. I knelt down and pray

ed, right there in the middle of th

"But the mallet, Lucas? The mal

"Well, maybe it was ackshall used to hammar a steak with, lik

let they found in the Madison kitch

There was blood on the pipe, a

get away," I says. And then it so

"Your sleeves was wet when the

took you!" she whispered, struck.

"Yes, from washin' the pipe.

says, 'I'll believe, too, if You get n

out of this !" Well I've come to b

"Lucas," the woman said, an (Continued on page 3, Col. 3.)

washed my hands good, too,

stable, that he wouldn't die."

en, that had blood on it?"

ed this.

Emma."

say

"I sav I did."