Mickey turned back. "Paper, may-Mickey turned back. "Paper, maybe," he suggested, pointing to her
closed hand. The surgeon opened it
and found a nickel. He handed it to
Mickey. "If you have a clean one
left, let this nurse take it to Miss
Alden's case, and say she has been
assigned other duty. See to sending
a substitute at once."

Every paper proved to be marked.
"I can bring you a fresh one in a

"I can bring you a fresh one in a second, lady," offered Mickey. "I got

'All right," she said. "Wait with it in the office and then I'll pay you." "I'm sent for a paper. I'm to be let in as soon as I get it," announced Mickey to the porter. "I ain't taking chances of being turned down," he said to himself, as he stopped a second to clean the step.

He returned and was waiting when the nurse came. She was young and fair faced; her hair was golden, and as she paid Mickey for his papers he wondered how soon he could have Lily looking like her. He took one long survey as he pocketed the money, thinking he would rush homes. thinking he would rush home at once at he wanted to fix in his mind how Lily must appear, to be right, for he thought a nurse in the hospital would

The nurse knew she was beautiful. and to her Mickey's long look was tribute, male tribute; a small male indeed, but such a winning one; so she took the occasion to be her love-liest, and smile her most attractive smile. Mickey surrendered. He thought she was like an angel, that made him think of heaven, heaven made him think of God, God made morning, the call made him think of the answer, the beautiful woman be fore him made him think that possi-bly she might be the answer instead of the other one. He rather doubted it, but it might be a chance. Mickey was alert for chances for Peaches, so he smiled again, then he asked: "Are you in such an awful hurry?"

"I think we owe you more than merely paying for your papers," she said. "What is it?" Again Mickey showed how long and

how wide Lily was. "And with hair like yours, and eyes and cheeks that

would be, if she had her chance, and nobody to give her that chance but just me," he said. "Me and Lily are all each other's got," he explained hastily. "We're home folks. We're a family. We don't want no bunching in corps and squads. We're nix on the Orphings' Home business; but you must know, ma'am—would you, oh must know, ma'am—would you, on would you tell me just how I should be taking care of her? I'm doing everything like my mother did to me; but I was well and strong. Maybe Lilly, being a girl, should have things different. A-body so beautiful as you, would tell me, wouldn't you?" Then a miracle happened. The nurse, so clean she smelled like a drug store, so lovely she shone as a sunrise, laid an arm across Mickey's shoulders. "You come with me," she said. She went to a little room, and all alone she asked Mickey questions with his eyes straight on hers, he could take care of Lily. She explained how. She rang for a basket and packed it full of things he must have, showing him how to use them. She told him to come each Saturday at 4 o'clock, as she was going off duty, and tell her how he was getting along. She gave him a thermometer, and told him how to learn if the child had fever. She told him about food, and she put in an ointment, instructing him to rub the little back with it, so the bed would not be so tiresome. She showed him how to arrange the pillows: when he left, the tears were rolling down Mickey's neeks. Both of them were so touched she laid her arm across his shoulder again and went as far as the elevator, while a passport to her at any time was in his pocket.

'spect other folks tell you you are beautiful like flowers, or music, or colours," said Mickey in farewell, "but you look like a window in heaven to me, and I can see right through you to God schol all the beautiful anges: but what gets me is why the other one had to bust her crust, to make you come true!"

The nurse was laughing and wiping her eyes at the same time. Mickey gripped the basket until his hands were stiff as he sped homeward at least two hours early and happy about it. At the last grocery he remembered every word and bought bread, milk and fruit with care "for a sick lady" he explained, so the grocer, who knew him, used care. Triumphing Mickey climbed the stairs. He paused a second in deep thought at the foot of the last flight, then ascended whistling to let Peaches know that he was coming, then on his threshold recited:

'Onc't a little kid named Lily, Was so sweet she'd knock you silly Yellow hair in millying curls, Beat a mile all other girls."

pillow; she had been lonely; both arms were stretched toward him.

were stretched toward him.

"Mickey, hurry!" she cried. "Mickey, lemme hold you 'til I'm sure!

Mickey, all day I didn't hardly durst breathe, fear the door'd open an' they'd 'get' me. Oh, Mickey, you won't let them, will you?"

Mickey dropped his bundles and ran to the bed. This time he did not be a way way ring clean. It

shrink from her wavering clasp. It was delight to come home to some-thing alive, something that belonged to him, something to share with, something to work and think for, something that depended upon him. "Now nix on the scare talk,"

comforted. "Forget it! I've lived here three years alone, and not'a single time has anybody come to 'get' me, so they won't you. There's only one thing can happen us. If I get Ack or spend too much on eating, and don't pay the rent, the man that owns this building will fire us out. If we, if we," Mickey repeated impressively, "pay our rent regular, in advance, nobody will ever come, not ever, so

don't worry."

"Then what's all them bundles?"
fretted Peaches. "You ortn't a got so much. You'll never get the next rent id! They'll 'get' me sure."
"Now throttle your engine," ad-

vised Mickey. "Stop your car! Smash down on the brakes! They are things he city you reside in furnishes its taxpayers, or something like that. I pay my rent, so this is my share, and it's things for you: to make you com fortable. Which are you worst—tired

fortable. Which are you worse est, or hungriest, or hottest?" "I don't know," she said. "Then I'll make a clean get-a-way,



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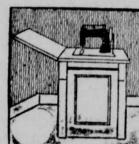
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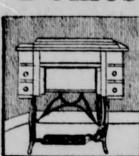


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