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to work over the open fire with bacon and eggs, but if you wanted that you had to pay for it.

Well, when Andy got through the nurse said, Yes, Johnnie was O.K., nothing to worry about. And Andy thought anyway he's insured; thank God for that. He went back into the parlour where the men were drinking with two men from the dredge. They were drinking beer straight but Sailor's wife was mopping up gin and looking a bit glazed already, although it meant nothing except that she was getting away from the cooking and the sandwiches and the house under the hill with the bush leaning on it. She always got that glazed look but she was good for a few hours yet. They were telling yarns, and Ben was just going to tell the one about the maid with housemaid's knee when Charlie from Mura Creek came in with his wife and two kids so he told them the one about the Irishman and the Maori instead. It looked like being quite a social evening and no one worried much about Johnnie now that he was going to be O.K. They started pouring the stuff down steadily, feeling the warm glow rising inside and out, and not taking any notice of the rain when they went outside.

BUT up at the mill little Johnnie heard his Dad come in late and knew by the way he laughed when he tripped over his boots on the back porch that he was drunk and would have something for him, but when he came in he asked, "How's Johnnie, Pop?" And his Dad sat back on the bed and laughed, "Johnnie's all right, young feller; he's in the money." And he explained to young Johnnie with a lot of flourishes the current meat prices, so much for one finger, so much for two fingers, so much for a hand or an arm; so much for a toe, and so on until he had young Johnnie laughing. And then suddenly he got up and went outside again and was sick on Mum's flash nasturtium.

BIG Johnnie lying in hospital felt the leg ease. The sheets were starched cool and smooth, and there was no sag in the bed like the one in his shack. The walls were white, and he realised suddenly that the walls of his shack were dirty and the air was never sweet, but always foul from old clothes and tobacco and spilt beer. Christ, there were worlds within worlds and all of them different, but linked somehow. You opened or shut doors. Chance did it mostly, a job took you there. And so you went down a mine or on a dredge or into the bush, and after a few days you had been doing it all your life and you let it happen to you. . . . Until one day the weight came down too hard and you fought back or cracked up. Every-one cracked up sometime, some on

booze or women, some on horses or against the law. You couldn't go on day after day, with the wet and the weight of the trees bearing down on you. Now he was out of it, and he wasn't sorry. Through the ward window before the blinds were drawn he could see trees. Trees separately were good things. He could see them standing detached, poplars and pinus insignis, planted trees with spaced lawns between them. Further back, even here, the hills were thick with native growth; but it was beaten back, knocked back with axe and saw and fire, the stumps standing black, the cattle grazing in the rubble. When the nurse came in with a cup of tea he smiled, and she noticed that even one of his teeth was missing.

\* \* \*

NEXT morning was Saturday so young

Johnnie went out with his Dad and Sailor. He had his crib with him for morning tea and rode out on the engine. When the whistle blew he turned and waved to his mother until the houses and the clothes lines were swallowed up by the trees, and you couldn't tell

what was smoke or mist or steam rising as the sun tried to break through. Young Johnnie liked riding on the engine and no one had to tell him to look out. After an accident everyone was careful. When Ben and Sailor got to work he hung around for a while. But at morning tea he asked where Big Johnnie was hurt, and later when they went to

work again he went over that way. He was thinking about big Johnnie and what they had said, and suddenly he realised that all night he had been wanting to look. He had a funny kind of feeling inside him, a sort of knot that made him breathe queerly. He ran forward, noting the ringed trees, big Johnnie's work. And then he came to the place. In an open patch before a native birch he saw the thing that had made Johnnie faint. Not the toes, lying like dead caterpillars, for the rats would leave nothing so choice lying about for a whole day and night. What young Johnnie saw was what big Johnnie had forgotten and then suddenly remembered. What young Johnnie saw was what no one should have seen, and ten to one no one would ever have seen among all that slush and rubble and the creeper fighting for life among the tall trees, if big Johnnie hadn't been little Johnnie's hero and if little Johnnie hadn't been lying awake half the night wanting to look. He saw a big red boot standing there obscenely with half an inch of water in it and the instep gnawed by a bush rat, but no mark on the smooth round toe.

With a little cry Johnnie ran forward and picked it up. With a queer twisted look on his face he threw it far, far into the scrub. Then he walked back to where Sailor and Ben were working.

## VOCAL SCHOLARSHIP

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# ABORTION *must be Stamped out!*

*This is what the McMillan Report on Abortion said in 1937:*

"It has been estimated that at least one pregnancy in every five ends in abortion; in other words that some 6000 abortions occur in New Zealand every year. Of these it is believed that 4000, at a conservative estimate, are criminally induced..."

That was 10 years ago. Today abortion is still inexcusably high.

A recent group survey showed that for every 100 births there were seven accidental abortions (miscarriages) and THIRTEEN induced abortions.

Illegally induced abortion is a crime against womanhood and against humanity. Those who condone it are as guilty as those who practise it.

Accidental abortion is best prevented by antenatal care.

Public conscience and public opinion can fight for safe and sane motherhood.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Keep this announcement for future reference.