

**Always keep
BOVRIL
in the House**

Bovril prevents that Sinking Feeling.

The Pioneers

BY KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD

Copyright by Hodder and Stoughton.

CHAPTER XLIV.—(Cont'd.)

she had scrubbed the wooden table until it was of a weathered whiteness, and reddened the brick round hearth. She looked about the house, her mind fainst to work at so that the old took possession of her. It was late in the afternoon when Conal was gone, his hand and foot got to work—that cubing brain of his, quickened by a sense of his injuries and his spluttering, passionate fear and hate of the man who had humiliaded and thwarted him. Deirdre wondered how it would fare with Conal them when McNab would return him. She and Deirdre had been working with McNab to scheme out holes and corners. If Conal would have to reckon with him in the end, she realized that it would have been better to let the reckoning be now, before any further mischief was done. Yet her mind shuddered at the thought. She knew that she had means to delay it.

"When Steve came shambling into the yard, blinking in the sunlight, she knew that Conal had returned, and that he was gone down the Black Ball, but would be back by the evening.

He exchanged all the morning about Conal's coming, and had a thousand questions to ask. "Where had Conal been? What had he been doing? Why was he gone? Had he been ill without saying a word to anybody?" All of which Deirdre had not thought of. They walked up and down the garden paths, Steve's mind full of fitting forms for the cow shed to last a good while, the trees, the breaking of broken and swaying branches, the faint calling of birds; all confused and mingled in a vague way of sound.

The last hoist of the jackasses in the misty depths of the hills drifted across the ends of the track where the trees met over it, and it dwindled into a wavering thread.

She lay down by the roadside, and the sound of hoof-beats, but only the forest murmur came to her, the murmur of the wind in the valleys, the break-

of broken and swaying branches,

the faint calling of birds; all confused and mingled in a vague way of sound.

The last hoist of the jackasses in the misty depths of the hills drifted across the ends of the track where the trees met over it, and it dwindled into a wavering thread.

Deirdre drove them into the yard and milked. When she had taken the pails indoors, she went again to the road, gazed down into the darkness and listened for the rapid beat of hoofs on the road.

A glimmer of light in the shadow windows told Deirdre that Steve had lit up. He came to the door.

"Come in, Deirdre," he called.

"Yes," she replied.

She stood there quite still, looking down the road.

"What do you think can have kept him?" she asked.

"We've had come out and was standing beside her."

Her face was very wan to his old eyes; her dark hair blew in tendrils about it.

"I don't know!"

She saw the anxiety start in his eyes.

"Oh, it's all right!" She took his hands and they went toward the house again.

"I'll tell you when we think—and when you'll want to talk to him."

"Well, yes!" He shuffled out of doors again.

"Where did he come from?" he shook her head.

"Hadn't you better finish last night the terms?" she said. "He may be back sooner than we think—and when you'll want to talk to him."

"Well, yes!" He shuffled out of doors again.

"Aren't you going to have anything?" he asked when he saw that she was not eating.

"I'll wait for Conal," she said.

Steve dozed in his chair afterwards. The night that closed in on the forest was of a soft, thick darkness. Deirdre stood in the doorway looking out into the white. Not a sound, not a stir, not even over the hills. The wind crept with slow, uncertain breaths about the shanty. She shut the door.

She carried her work-basket, with the socks that she had been mending the night before, to the table. But she could not work; her hands would not stir. She sat listening, listening, listening.

She had taken out his pipe and smoked it, nodding in his chair by the fire. His teeth relaxed their grip as he dozed; the pipe fell on the floor. Deirdre started to her feet as the sound broke the stillness. It awakened him too. He stared stupidly about him with sleep-dazed eyes.

"What's that?" he asked. "Has Conal come yet?"

"No," she said, picking up the pipe. "Perhaps you'd better not wait up for him."

"Yes! Yes!" he muttered testily. "Of course I'll wait."

He sank back into his chair and presently was sleeping again.

Deirdre went back to the table and sat there staring before her, listening.

"He'll be here," she said, "as soon as dinner is ready."

The bare kitchen and the musty warmth of new-made bread and bacon, the patter of feet, the bustle of Deirdre, had made bread and new butter for Conal. She had prepared a good meal for him when he came home in the evening. After

she had taken out his pipe and smoked it, nodding in his chair by the fire. His teeth relaxed their grip as he dozed; the pipe fell on the floor. Deirdre started to her feet as the sound broke the stillness. It awakened him too. He stared stupidly about him with sleep-dazed eyes.

"What's that?" he asked. "Has Conal come yet?"

"No," she said, picking up the pipe. "Perhaps you'd better not wait up for him."

"Yes! Yes!" he muttered testily. "Of course I'll wait."

He threw out his chair and staggered to the door.

"He would not have fallen if he had not been there to hold him."

She dragged him indoors, leaning against her.

"Steve! Steve!" she called.

The old man was beside her in an instant.

Conal had fallen, his legs crumpling under him. There was a stain of blood on his clothes.

Deirdre tore them from the place where the blood wallowed. She put the

brandy Steve brought to Conal's lips, and sent Steve for water and rags, telling him where to find the soft scraps she kept together for burns or cuts.

"It's like the wound Davey had," Steve cried, when he saw the way the brandy was plowed up on Conal's breast, "only nearer the heart."

Conal moaned as the cold water struck him. A damp sweat lay on his forehead.

"It's all up—I'm done for," he muttered. "Give me—your hand, Deirdre—but I could die there in the dark—down by the creek."

His voice failed.

"Don't try to talk, Conal dear," she begged. "You'll be all right if you keep quiet—lie still—Davey was."

But, there was a greyness, about Conal's face, that showed him to work at so that the other took possession of him.

Afterwards, when Conal was gone, his hand and foot got to work—that cubing

brain of his, quickened by a sense of his injuries and his splitting

fear and hate of the man who had humiliaded and thwarted him. Deirdre wondered how it would fare with Conal them when McNab would return him.

McNab would have to work with McNab to scheme out holes and corners. If Conal would have to reckon with him in the end, she realized that it would have been better to let the reckoning be now, before any further mischief was done. Yet her mind shuddered at the thought. She knew that she had means to delay it.

"When Steve came shambling into the yard, blinking in the sunlight, she knew that Conal had returned, and that he was gone down the Black Ball, but would be back by the evening.

He exchanged all the morning about Conal's coming, and had a thousand questions to ask. "Where had Conal been? What had he been doing? Why was he gone? Had he been ill without saying a word to anybody?" All of which Deirdre had not thought of. They walked up and down the garden paths, Steve's mind full of fitting forms for the cow shed to last a good while, the trees, the breaking of broken and swaying branches, the faint calling of birds; all confused and mingled in a vague way of sound.

The last hoist of the jackasses in the misty depths of the hills drifted across the ends of the track where the trees met over it, and it dwindled into a wavering thread.

She lay down by the roadside, and the sound of hoof-beats, but only the forest murmur came to her, the murmur of the wind in the valleys, the break-

of broken and swaying branches,

the faint calling of birds; all confused and mingled in a vague way of sound.

The last hoist of the jackasses in the misty depths of the hills drifted across the ends of the track where the trees met over it, and it dwindled into a wavering thread.

Deirdre drove them into the yard and milked. When she had taken the pails indoors, she went again to the road, gazed down into the darkness and listened for the rapid beat of hoofs on the road.

A glimmer of light in the shadow windows told Deirdre that Steve had lit up. He came to the door.

"Come in, Deirdre," he called.

"Yes," she replied.

She stood there quite still, looking down the road.

"What do you think can have kept him?" she asked.

"We've had come out and was standing beside her."

Her face was very wan to his old eyes; her dark hair blew in tendrils about it.

"I don't know!"

She saw the anxiety start in his eyes.

"Oh, it's all right!" She took his hands and they went toward the house again.

"I'll tell you when we think—and when you'll want to talk to him."

"Well, yes!" He shuffled out of doors again.

"Where did he come from?" he shook her head.

"Hadn't you better finish last night the terms?" she said. "He may be back sooner than we think—and when you'll want to talk to him."

"Well, yes!" He shuffled out of doors again.

"Aren't you going to have anything?" he asked when he saw that she was not eating.

"I'll wait for Conal," she said.

Steve dozed in his chair afterwards. The night that closed in on the forest was of a soft, thick darkness. Deirdre stood in the doorway looking out into the white. Not a sound, not a stir, not even over the hills. The wind crept with slow, uncertain breaths about the shanty. She shut the door.

She carried her work-basket, with the socks that she had been mending the night before, to the table. But she could not work; her hands would not stir. She sat listening, listening, listening.

She had taken out his pipe and smoked it, nodding in his chair by the fire. His teeth relaxed their grip as he dozed; the pipe fell on the floor. Deirdre started to her feet as the sound broke the stillness. It awakened him too. He stared stupidly about him with sleep-dazed eyes.

"What's that?" he asked. "Has Conal come yet?"

"No," she said, picking up the pipe. "Perhaps you'd better not wait up for him."

"Yes! Yes!" he muttered testily. "Of course I'll wait."

He threw out his chair and staggered to the door.

"He would not have fallen if he had not been there to hold him."

She dragged him indoors, leaning against her.

"Steve! Steve!" she called.

The old man was beside her in an instant.

Conal had fallen, his legs crumpling under him. There was a stain of blood on his clothes.

Deirdre tore them from the place where the blood wallowed. She put the

brandy Steve brought to Conal's lips, and sent Steve for water and rags, telling him where to find the soft scraps she kept together for burns or cuts.

"It's like the wound Davey had," Steve cried, when he saw the way the brandy was plowed up on Conal's breast, "only nearer the heart."

Conal moaned as the cold water struck him. A damp sweat lay on his forehead.

"It's all up—I'm done for," he muttered. "Give me—your hand, Deirdre—but I could die there in the dark—down by the creek."

His voice failed.

"Don't try to talk, Conal dear," she begged. "You'll be all right if you keep quiet—lie still—Davey was."

But, there was a greyness, about Conal's face, that showed him to work at so that the other took possession of him.

Afterwards, when Conal was gone, his hand and foot got to work—that cubing

brain of his, quickened by a sense of his injuries and his splitting

fear and hate of the man who had humiliaded and thwarted him. Deirdre wondered how it would fare with Conal them when McNab would return him.

McNab would have to work with McNab to scheme out holes and corners. If Conal would have to reckon with him in the end, she realized that it would have been better to let the reckoning be now, before any further mischief was done. Yet her mind shuddered at the thought. She knew that she had means to delay it.

"When Steve came shambling into the yard, blinking in the sunlight, she knew that Conal had returned, and that he was gone down the Black Ball, but would be back by the evening.

He exchanged all the morning about Conal's coming, and had a thousand questions to ask. "Where had Conal been? What had he been doing? Why was he gone? Had he been ill without saying a word to anybody?" All of which Deirdre had not thought of. They walked up and down the garden paths, Steve's mind full of fitting forms for the cow shed to last a good while, the trees, the breaking of broken and swaying branches, the faint calling of birds; all confused and mingled in a vague way of sound.

The last hoist of the jackasses in the misty depths of the hills drifted across the ends of the track where the trees met over it, and it dwindled into a wavering thread.

She lay down by the roadside, and the sound of hoof-beats, but only the forest murmur came to her, the murmur of the wind in the valleys, the break-

of broken and swaying branches,

the faint calling of birds; all confused and mingled in a vague way of sound.

The last hoist of the jackasses in the misty depths of the hills drifted across the ends of the track where the trees met over it, and it dwindled into a wavering thread.

Deirdre drove them into the yard and milked. When she had taken the pails indoors, she went again to the road, gazed down into the darkness and listened for the rapid beat of hoofs on the road.

A glimmer of light in the shadow windows told Deirdre that Steve had lit up. He came to the door.

"Come in, Deirdre," he called.

"Yes," she replied.

She stood there quite still, looking down the road.

"What do you think can have kept him?" she asked.

"We've had come out and was standing beside her."

Her face was very wan to his old eyes; her dark hair blew in tendrils about it.

"I don't know!"

She saw the anxiety start in his eyes.