

"Tom Baker's come home, that's all," said the girl slowly.

"Honest?" asked the other, flushing a little.

Chalcy sprang to her feet. "Clarissy," she cried, her tone full of hurt feeling, "did I ever story to you?"

Clarissy rose and put her arm affectionately about the thin shoulder, "Goosie," she said lightly, "who said you storied? You know we've heerd more's onct he was comin'."

"I s'pose you thought 'twas too good to be true," returned Chalcy saucily, quite appeased.

"Well, it's time we was gettin' home," said Clarissy, turning away.

Chalcy ran helter-skelter down the hill, indulging in various capers to express her buoyant feelings, just as a young lamb prances about because he is young, while Clarissy walked sedately along the narrow path that wound down the hillside. She stopped, presently, before a small "doby," a hut built of sun-dried brick, its lean sides shrunken and cracked as if from drouth. A hard-faced baby sat in the doorway and eyed her with such unwinking stolidity when she stooped and made a merry face at him that she felt rebuked, and was about to start on her way, when she was startled at the sight of a woman's face, wearing a look of dull misery which appealed silently to the girl's pity. It was that of Hanchen, her Swedish neighbor, usually one of the happiest and most smiling of creatures, who now sat listlessly in the disordered room, her face drawn and haggard with pain.

"Why, Hanchen!" cried Clarissy, going hastily in, "air you sick? Where's Peter?"

For answer the woman put her hands over her face and rocked to and fro.

"Oh, Hanchen," implored the girl, "do tell me what's the matter! Where is Peter?"

"He gone to Logan," sobbed Hanchen.

"To Logan?" echoed Clarissy. "What for?"

Hanchen struggled to regain her self-control. "He get letter two, t'ree mont' ago," she began, picking her way with difficulty through the unfamiliar English, "from home, de ole countree. It say some more of our people come to Zion, an' he must be for sure meet dem to de city, w'en he come back an' say Gerda Sorenson, her we know to home, she is come too. W'en he say dat I t'ink not'ing. I nefer like dat Gerda. Now, to-day, Peter he is gone to Logan to take her for wife, too." A fresh burst of tears closed the recital.

Clarissy stood in awkward silence. What could she say to comfort a grief like this? "You know the church says plural marriage is a revelation," she began, falteringly, wondering if that would be any consolation.

Hanchen's eyes flashed. "De church lie den. I no wants Peter to haf nodder wife. I no b'lieve Got say to him marry Gerda."

"Oh, you mustn't talk that a-way," cried Clarissy in alarm. "It's dreadful, an' if any one heard you I don't know what they'd do to you."

"Oh, w'y I no die," moaned the unhappy woman, "w'en mine heart ache so it will break?"

"But Hanchen, mebbly he loves you too."

"I not know dat lof; I haf no fadder, no mutter, no one but Peter, and he will mine be no more—all de time Gerda's now."

"Oh, I'm so sorry for you! If I could only do something for you!" sobbed Clarissy, quite overcome, and she knelt down and put her arms around the unromantic figure.

"You haf de goot heart," said Hanchen, gratefully.

"But there haint nothin' I can do," went on the girl, hopelessly, "jest nothin', only to feel sorry for yor an' feel bad with you. Oh!" some painful recollection pierced her troubled mind.

Half ashamed, not of her emotion of pity, but of her demonstration of it, she rose, and after a moment of awkward silence, said hurriedly—

"I must be a-goin'; come an' see us soon's you can," and then went out, her head drooping so that she did not see how the bands of orange in the sunset sky were fading, changing to palest yellow and pink, while in the edge of the rosy flush a few stars hung trembling and luminous. A man and woman coming slowly up the hill did not notice her as she stood aside to let them pass.

It was Peter and his new wife, hand in hand, seeing only each other's faces. She looked at them with bitter disgust and pain. Being a woman, and yet young, her heart ached, whether more for Hanchen or herself she did not know. Old doubts stirred in her mind, old memories of her mother, dead these many years, came up before her, and words her mother had spoken seemed to utter themselves afresh to her unhappy consciousness. Tossed on a sea of unrest, between her doubts and her ignorance, the girl was very miserable. If, for a moment she thought of Tom Baker, she tried to thrust his image from her with a feeling of contempt at her weakness.

"Haint I seen enough of it?" she whispered scornfully, and yet with a certain sadness for herself. "Don't I know jest how it goes? Mother knew; an' that's why she made me promise, I reckon. I wonder if she knows how hard 'tis for me to keep it?" and questioning thus she came slowly down the hill to her father's house.

Silas Dean's house had originally been a square adobe building, containing two rooms, the kitchen