

and the "other room," a proud title in days when most dwelling houses had only one room. The "other room" it was still, as Silas had increased his responsibilities the house had grown by a simple process of accretion. The east lean-to was built on when he took his second wife; the west wing when he trebled his joys; but amid all changes the "other room" remained the family sitting room. Here, on this sunny afternoon, Silas Dean, Clarissy's father, and an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, sat with his wife Martha and his wife Serena. The Book of Mormon lay on the table, together with a bible and the book of doctrines and covenants, the latter especially furnishing an abundance of strong meat and drink to the spiritual life of the elder and his family. In the place of honor over the mantel piece hung the pictured face of the founder of Zion, a strong, coarse face, selfish, cruel and shrewd. The elder was bothered. He had sought aid and comfort from the doctrines and covenants, but even that well of inspiration had failed him. He tilted his chair back, pursed his lips, thrust his hands deep into his pockets and fixed his eyes upon the ceiling. His stiff, iron-gray hair stood up like a mane on his head, which was long in shape from crown to jaw. He half closed his small, black eyes, as if, by excluding external objects, he hoped to concentrate his mental vision on a baffling question.

After a serious silence, lasting some minutes, he brought his chair down with a thump, leaned forward and looked reproachfully from his wife Martha to his wife Serena. Martha, a large, sandy colored woman, went placidly on with her knitting, while Serena's sharp, black eyes were bent on the baby that lay sleeping in her arms.

"Ef ennybuddy ud tell me," began Silas slowly, "er even give me a kind uv an idee, es ter w'at ails the girrul—"

"Meanin' Clarissy?" interposed Martha.

"Meanin' Clarissy, in course," he replied emphatically, a little nettled at her tone. Martha sniffed.

"She haint mean er ornery," continued Silas warmly. "She's sot in 'er way some, but she's a major to work, an' most ways seems to hev purty tol'ble good sense, fer a woman," glancing sneeringly at Martha, "but law! they's no use talkin', she's jest diffrent, thet's the hull thing in a nutshell—she's diffrent. Now here's ben Joe Barmen an' that there Oly Anderson an' Bill Rushton's boy Dick all a-wantin' to marry her, an' she won't so much as say dog to none uv 'em; 'pears like she haint on the marry nohow."

"Er else she's minty hard to suit," ventured Serena.

Silas shook his head gloomily. He had never thought women hard to suit in the matter of marrying.

"Mebby she's possessed uv a devil," suggested Martha, in the same tone in which she might have remarked on Clarissy's having the measles.

"What!" roared Silas, quite maddened by this unexpected complication.

"A devil, possessed uv a devil, I said," repeated Martha stoutly.

Her husband drew a long breath: "Wal," he said bitterly, "ef she is, ef she is, le's be thankful to God it's a dumb one." He got up in his anger and walked up and down the room a moment, then sat down again sighing heavily.

Serena rocked to and fro, hushing the baby and singing a dreary hymn, beginning—

Go tell my companions and children so dear
To weep not for Joseph our Saint,
For the same hand that led him
Through scenes dark and drear,
Has safely conducted him home.

The lame metre and halting rythm of these lines were carried along pretty smoothly to a sing-song tune, which, commencing on a high note at the beginning of each line, gradually descended from a painful shrillness to a long-drawn nasal whine. Soothed by such melodious strains, Silas was fast forgetting his troubles under the sweet, sleepy influences, when the door flew open and Chalcy bounced in.

Chalcedony had been the scriptural name bestowed upon her when a helpless baby, as indicating that she should be a precious jewel in the kingdom of Zion. Martha had been a widow when Silas had the pleasure of making her acquaintance, and he had thought more than once, in the years of their wedded life, that it would have been better for him if he had never changed her condition. Chalcy had not been so objectionable as the widow's pert little girl, but as a step-daughter she was simply obnoxious. She favored her departed parent, Martha said, and said frequently, until, in a moment of extreme nervous irritation, Silas so far forgot himself as to remark that in his private opinion she "took after home-made sin, only she was uglier."

Martha never forgave him that speech. "Beauty," she said, "was only skin deep; and Chalcy was like a singed cat, a heap smarter'n she looked."

At present the child was in the gawky age, being chiefly angles, freckles and preternaturally long limbs. She was a born gossip. To hear news and to repeat it gave her a joy so keen as to be almost unholy, and by reason of this thirst for information and desire to impart what she acquired, Chalcy sometimes told more than she heard; at least that was what people said who did not appreciate her talents as a reporter.