

"I ain't allus this ere bad," he replied apologetically. "It's this ere wet weather makes my rheumatiz worse'n gener'l. I cain't sleep much o' nights an' it most draws me double of daytimes. Wall, if you've got all yer luggage we might as well be a pullin' out I reckon."

"Yes, I suppose so," she acquiesced and followed him toward the wagon. "But how am I ever to get into this thing? Aren't there any steps at all and must I climb over the wheel?" she asked as she came to it.

"I'm afeered ye will, Deborie. That's the way me and yer ma has done fur the last twenty year er more. You used to be spry enough to git into it Deborie."

"Well, for mercy's sake pa, don't call me 'Deborie,'" she mimicked. "I've changed my name Deborah, and the girls call me Deb or Debbie."

"Tain't sich an improvement as I kin see and Deborie wuz your grandma's name, as good a woman as ever drawed breath, but if ye don't like it I reckon me and yer ma kin git t'callin ye Deb r Debbie."

Old Mr. Dobson climbed into the seat beside his daughter and started the horses.

"Dear me, what a wretched hole this is. The houses look like chicken coops. It must be awful to spend a whole life time here. I suppose the fashions are years behind the times."

"Wall, thars some mighty good people here and in the surroun'din' country. The church is a prospin' every day and the Lord is a blessin' us mightily. And as fur fashions, we've got something' more important t'look after, with souls a perishin' around us fur the bread o' life."

"The'y perish anyway so you might just as well enjoy yourself," then she continued, "We might just as well have those blankets over our laps the way the cold scroops in behind. This seat's a regular old sky-scraper anyway. Can't you drive a little faster? We'll never get home at this rate and I'm freezing to death."

"Mebbe you'd best take the blankets and

git right down in the bottom uv the wagon. The roads is pretty heavy and its nigh onto three mile."

"Most anything would be better than this," she replied and did as he suggested.

It seemed hours that she sat there shivering, listening to the distal chup-chug of the wheels as they sank almost to the hubs in the gummy mud, before she heard the "Whoa, Dick! Whoa, Doll!" which told that they had at last reached home.

She stood up stiffly, shook out the skirt of her dress and peered into this darkness around her.

On her right she could see a dim light, shinning from a lower window and straight ahead, the slanting roofs of the old wood and smoke houses.

"I guess you kin git to the house," her father remarked as he helped her down and began unhitching. "If John's up, jest ask him t'come and help me with this trunk. Its liable to git wet by mornin'."

She stumbled over logs and chunks of wood, until she reached the path leading to the house, then walked firmly along until she came to the flat, irregular stone in front of the kitchen door. Here she paused.

There were the rain barrels and cellar door on one side and yes, there was that old well curb with its rope and pulley on the other side. "It did seem strange that pa didn't get a pump if nothing else," she mused and thinking of the work attached to pulling a bucket of water to the top of the weather beaten curb, she turned the door knob and walked in.

A stream of light fell in her face, blinding her for a moment, then things began to assume definite shape and she saw her mother approaching. But before she had reached her Deb had seen everything in the room, even to the young man sitting in the shadow of the stove with his feet faced against the wood-box.

What a homely, cheerless room it was. That hideous paper on the walls and how abominable for the floor to be painted pink!