

like in clearness: "Who you totin' in, Sister? Hit can't be brother Chris at this time o' day."

"No, hit ain't Chris. Hit's a furriner,"—a shy side-look flung around, as she spoke, toward the stranger. "He 'lows ez he lost his trail back to the city, an' I'm aimin' to cook him some vittles. You lay down that sewin' o' yourn, an' come set his place at the table."

Leezer flung the work down. At one spring she was out into the open, her blue, curious eyes on their guest.

James Gaither had turned the same pleasant, casual smile he was still conserving for Ossie,—when he and the younger girl came face to face.

The man's smile died. A quick look of wonder distended his pupils; he caught in one long breath, and held it.

"That thar's Leezer," remarked Ossie in a matter-of-fact tone, as she reached for a skillet. "She's the one ornament that we has here. Me an' Chris we does all the work."

"Of course you do," thought James Gaither, in the heat of instinctive mental protest. "A Hebe like that to be made to feed pigs or fry bacon! She's the prettiest thing in the world."

James stayed, not only to breakfast, but so far into the mild afternoon, that Ossie and Chris had to tell him "hit war time to hitch up and make tracks" if he wanted to reach his own home before midnight.