

more than he can help. I believe there wouldn't be so many men a meanderin' off nights into grog shops, and all sorts of wickedness, if they had a bright home and a cheerful companion to draw 'em back (not but what men have to be corrected occasionally, I have to correct Josiah every little while.) But good land! It is all I can do to get Josiah Allen and Thomas Jefferson out of the house long enough to mop.

I looked round the room, as I said, but not a thing did I see that I could alter for the better; it was slick as a pin. The painted floor was a shinin' like yaller glass (I had mopped jest before dinner.) The braided mats, mostly red and green, was a layin' smooth and clean in front of the looking-glass, and before the stove, and table. Two or three pictures, that Thomas Jefferson had framed, hung up aginst the wall, which was papered with a light coloured buff ground work with a red rose on it. The lounge and two or three rockin' chairs was cushioned with handsome copper plate. And Tirzah Ann had got a hangin' basket of ivy on the west winder that made that winder look like summer. I'll bet her canary hangin' there in the thickest of the green leaves, thought it was summer, he sang like it. The stove hearth shone like a silver dollar, and there was a bright fire, and in a minute the tea-kettle began to sing most as loud as Whitey, that is the canary's name. (I mistrust she named it in that kinder underhanded way, after Whitfield Minkley—though I never let her know I mistrusted it, but I never could think of any other earthy reason why she should call t Whitey, for it is as yaller as any goslin' I ever laid eyes on.)

I felt that I couldn't alter a thing round the house for the better. But as I happened to glance up into the lookin' glass, I see that although I looked well, my hair was slick and I had on a clean gingham dress, my brown and black plaid, still I felt that if I should pin on one of Tirzah Ann's bows that lay on the little shelf under the lookin'-glass I might look more cheerful and pleasant in the eyes of my companion Josiah. I hain't made a practice of wearin' bows sense I jined the meetin'-house. And then again I felt that I was too old to wear 'em. Not that I felt bad about growin' old. If it was best for us to have summer all the year round, I know we should have it. As I have said to Josiah Allen more'n once when he got kinder down hearted, says I, Josiah Allen look up where the stars are shinin' and tell me if you think that with all them countless worlds, with all that wealth in His hands, and his lovin' heart, the Lord begruches anything that is

for His children's good. No! I am willin' to take God's year as it comes, summer and winter.

And then do you s'pose I would if I could by turnin' my hand over, go back into my youth agin, and leave Josiah part way down hill alone? No! the sunshine and the mornin' are on the other side of the hill, and we are goin' down into the shadders, my pardner, Josiah and me. But we will go like Mr. and Mrs. Joseph John, that Tirzah Ann sings about—

“Hand in hand we'll go
And we'll sleep together at the foot.”

knowing that beyond them shadders is the sunshine of God's Great Mornin'.

As I said, I don't make a practice of wearin' bows, and this bein' fire red, I should have felt a awful backslidin' feelin' about wearin' it' if I hadn't felt that principle was upholdin' me.

Then I drew out the table, and put on a clean white table-cloth, and began to set it. I had some good bread and butter, I had baked that day, and my bread was white as snow, and light as day, some canned peaches, and some thin slices of ham as pink as a rose, and a strawberry pie—one of my cans had bust that day, and I made 'em up into pies. And then I brought up some of my very best cake such as I keep for company—fruit cake, and delicate cake. And then after I had put on a great piece of white honey in a glass dish, and some cheese that was like cream for richness, the table looked well.

I had got the table all set, and had jest opened the door to see if he was a comin', when lo! and behold! there he stood on the door-step—he had come and put his horses out before I see him. He looked awful depressed, and before he got the snow half offen his boots, says he:

“That new whip I bought the other day is gone, Samantha. Some feller stole it while I was gettin' my grist ground.”

Says I, “Josiah, I have been a mewsin' on the onstidiness, and wickedness of the world all day, and now that whip is gone. What is the world a comin' to, Josiah Allen?”

Josiah is a man that don't say much, but things wear on him. His face looked several inches longer that it usially did, and he answered in a awful depressed tone:

“I don't know, Samantha, but I do know, that I am as hungry as a bear.”

“Wall,” says I, soothingly, “I thought you would be, supper's all on the table.”

He stepped in, and the very minute that man ketched sight of that cheerful room, and that supper table, that man smiled. And it wasn't a sickly, deathly smile either, it was a smile of deep inward joy and contentment.