

are the scene of the story and its chief character presented in the opening paragraphs, that they seem to afford a vivid glimpse of her own sympathetic and responsive nature, and are therefore reproduced here :—

“The pitiless sun was disappearing with a dull red glow, behind the low range of western hills, and casting its last rays over the sweep of parched brown prairie—the miles of hard-baked trails, and the thousands of cattle, panting and gasping for breath, because no rain had fallen on the arid land.

“On the doorstep of a squatty, low-roofed sod shack, a faded little woman was sitting, holding her chin in her tightly knotted hands. She might have been pretty once ; but now her cheeks were pinched and pale, her hair compressed and colorless, even her coarse, homespun wrapper, faded and threadbare, seemed a part of its owner. Her eyes no longer danced and sparkled, but were gloomy and troubled, as they gazed towards the west and the setting sun.

“A flock of turkeys came round the corner of the house, cheeping for their evening meal. Mechanically she rose and fed them, then took an old hat in her hand and slowly walked out to the little rough stable, to gather eggs.

“Passing through the door, she unconsciously murmured, ‘Good-bye, old sun, please come back to-morrow.’

“Her hand stiffened on the door-latch. Could she really have uttered those words, or was she only dreaming ? Yes ! she saw a little golden-haired girl, dancing up and down along the vine-clad veranda, and eagerly waving her little handkerchief as she repeated, ‘Good-bye, old sun, please come back to-morrow !’—over and over again, till a voice from within called—‘Beth, dearie, bedtime now !’ ”