## SNOW IN THE PASS By Georgia Wood Pangborn

The Story of the Bizarre Christmas That Was Borne In on the Wings of Storm and Peril.

M ARTHA CARTER and her brother Thomas had stayed late at the camp, Martha to get some studies of late autumn foliage, Thomas for the hunting, but they had meant to be back in town for Christmas with the family, because Helen, the married one, was to be there, showing off her husband and two perfectly good babin never before exhibited in the east. So Mar. and Thomas would not

have missed Christmas at home for anything. The idea was that they would leave on the fifteenth and motor down. You got such ripping scenery by the way and there wasn't enough snow to matter; the roads were still good. Anyway, Martha wanted to see the snow on the mountains as a climax to her autumn's work. They might even stop for a sketch or

But the valley folk thought them pretty rash to put off their going so long. And, as Martha dilly-da'led through the sixteenth and seventeenth Thomas himself began to fret. She wanted to finish something. Martha's way! It was the twentieth before she woke up, and they did not actually start until the twenty-third. Martha was three years older than Thomas and had ruled him from infancy, even after he shot up to six feet, leaving her somewhere in the foothills of stature-five feet two or three. But almost-almost-he threw off her yoke that

She said unconcernedly, looking up at the ominous blank whiteness of the sky, that it would be all the nicer to get home just on Christmas eve.

Thomas said nothing. He merely threw in his clutch and leaped forth upon the highway with temper and haste.

"Hiram Harwood said it would be all right as soon as we got through the pass," said Mar-"That's the only place where the drifts are likely to be bad."

Thomas said nothing.

The pair of them were as fuzzy as bears in their furs, as cozy as if they were about to hibernate, and the car was as large as a small house, glassed in and padded everywhere. What space was not taken by the hamper for Martha's extensive picnicking and by her cord or so of canvases and their two valises was stuffed with the real Christmas green they were taking back to the niece and nephew. They even had a beautiful little spruce tree on top, supposed to be superior in some way to a tree bought in

"I'm glad we waited," said Martha equably. "It's going to be perfectly ripping. I hope it

Thomas said nothing. 'We'll get to the pass after luncheon time, won't we?" she asked as she curled down, yawning. She had worked late with her delayed packing and was sleepy. Mhm," said Thomas. He was not in

Christmas spirit at all. And then, as Martha pleasantly drifted int a nap, the snow began to come. Very softh the individual flakes falling with feathery slow ness, yet the general impression of the whole was of tremendous swiftness. Thomas set hi

jaw and went full speed ahead. It was two hours before Martha woke. A first she smiled, the thick whiteness was so lovely. Then she sat up straight with a half guilty frightened smile. Her eye was caught by the yellow curve of Thomas' snowshoes where they showed above her massed greenery She had been openly scornful when he had arimly placed them there instead of leaving them at camp as usual. Now-well-she looked from them to the storm, bit her lip, and blushed. Still, they were entering now between the high gray walls of the pass. The road must still be good. And if Thomas scooted

Thomas was scooting, all right. Two inches of snow in the open may become something very different when caught between two cliffs marching shoulder to shoulder for a mile or so with barely room for a road to squeeze between. And two inches on top of two inches makes four inches. Thomas stopped.

A beautiful, motionless, curving wave of white rose before them. It was already ten feet high and the wind, pouring between those gray walls, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours-who could predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough. Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it.

Thomas did a mean and cruel thing. He took his hands from the wheel, lit a cigar, and, having pulled a newspaper from his pocket, leaned back in a carefree attitude and began to read. "Darn you, Tom!" cried Martha, twisting her small hands in his coat collar. Thomas

read on undisturbed, folding the paper to a different angle as he continued perusal of the article he had begun. "Tom, please! Don't stop to punish me now.

Get back while there's time, please!" 'Huh? O, all right. Anyway you sayand the car roared like a giant wasp in a spider But while they had been scooting and during the valuable minute and a half which Thomas had utilized in teaching his sister fesson events had been shaping behind them. The great car backed ten-twenty feet, and the wasp found that the spider had been silently

spinning. There was a great deal of web now. It took an hour to work up to within a hundred feet of the jaws of the pass-an hour of wrath and patience, of Martha's contrite tears, f roaring and wheedling. Two hours more of effort that led nowhere at all. Then night came -the deep night of six o'clock-and two flakes were falling where but one fell before. Four inches? Twenty at least, and twenty inches may mean twenty feet when drifted. Easily.

Even as Thomas seized a moment for exausted meditation, the signs of their frantic retreat out of the pass were quietly covered over as if they had never been. And the car was not only hub deep, there were no tires visible at all-only a black box, motionless like a waterlogged boat, wearing a ridiculous mob cap of white where their Christmas tree and an extra trunk had proudly ridden a-top.

'You take your snowshoes," said Martha, her face as white as the drifts, "and go back to the first farmhouse. It's that gift shop place. You know. We got some postcards there last Pretty girl and two awfully nice babies. I can stay here all night, and you can come back with men in the morning and dig

me out. I shall be perfectly c-comfortable." Thomas strapped on his snowshoes without comment, then, opening the door, held out his big arms with a grin.

"Get aboard." he said simply. Martha settled firmly in her seat, assuming her customary elderly dignity. "Don't be silly," she murmured.

"Hurry," said Thomas, "before I drag you out by the scruff of your neck. Shucks, Kitten! Don't cry. Why, this isn't anything but one Hold on-just get out the thermos tle, will you? Leave the tree and the paints and the trunks. They'll be all right till spring. There you are. But can the tears. They'll freeze in my neck. Gee! what a sell to have it

happen this way with nothing but a sister!"

swinging off into the white chaos, "except Christmas, and there'll be another just as good next year." "Nobody'll steal it. It'll be right there when the snow goes off in spring. These things hap-pen now and then up here, Hiram was telling "You knew, and yet you let me---"O, well! I thought maybe we'd get through all right. Now don't talk-just keep a lookout for that gift shop of yours. We don't want to pass it in this muss. If it's empty we'll break Most of these bungalow things are empty. But that one was an old farmhouse as I recolect. It might keep open the year round."

But after they had been going in silence for hat seemed a long time Martha said in a "But how can we be sure we're keeping the ad road at all?" And then, perhaps because wriggled, perhaps because he was weary, is shoes caught and they plunged forward. Now it is not safe or wise to go head first nto a deep drift when y have snowshoes on. But Martha was quick . . sensible. She dug down to his nose and got him air, and then loosened his shoes so he could right himself. Then she unscrewed the thermos bottle. "Ten minutes," gasped Thomas, "for refresh waited until he was just six feet distant, then suddenly said in unison, " Good more could have done for you," he conceded, "but if we can dig our way to the car tomorrow I can get some fodine and put a few more frills on

impered Martha, "but for me we'd have been

"They'll all keep," he said comfortably,

Their wallowing had made a deep cut or nest, in which for the moment they were relieved from the wind. The character of the snow was changing. It was becoming fine and hard, like sand, and the blowing of it was like a desert dust storm. It was also growing colder. Thomas remarked equably as he drank hot coffee that there seemed to be something like winter on the way, and he added, quoting from he deathless scarecrow

"Cool weather we're having for July." "Now," said Martha with her old bossiness. "what we're going to do is this. We're just going to burrow right down here like the babes in the woods and hibernate in our furs till morning. Then you can dig out, put on your snowshoes and go find that gift shop."

"Right as always," said Thomas, "but we won't. Because there's a light." Not a light exactly, but a difference in color one direction-the purplish gray of the storm taking on a subtly warmer tone toward their right. Thomas whistled through his teeth as

he hurried on his snowshoes. "I wish you'd let me walk," fretted Martha as he swung her over his shoulder, but he did not see mto hear.

No shape of house appeared, but the glow increased, haloed and amorphous as in a fog, then narrowing down to the definite outline of window, wreathed round and about with white. If there were steps leading up to it they were now covered in level with the road; if there was a porch that, too, was one with all the rest. Thomas walked straight up to the four shining panes. The glass was patterned visible. Thomas set Martha down in front of

"Now you do the knocking," said he. "This part of it is up to you. I saw a woman in

So Martha knocked. But, though there was sound within, it was not that of steps approaching to undo the door. It sounded more as if somebody had suddenly started to move furniture about. Thomas glanced in again at the window. A face looked out for an instant, indistinct behind the frost, then in a curiously clumsy way a bolt was drawn and a key turned The door opened inward and the snow that had drifted against it rushed in ahead of them, stretching half way across the room in a carpe threw more over their shoulders. They could hear it hiss as it struck the stove at the farther side of the room.

"Ah!" apologized Thomas. "Now that's too bad," and he stooped to struggle with the drift and close the door in the storm's face, while Martha conferred with the girl who stood smiling rather stiffly, seeming none too cordial, in spite of their plight. But as to that, she had a plight of her own to worry over. For as she stood she kept one knee upon the chair, which she had pushed in front of her in order to reach the door, this being the explanation of the delay and the noise of moving furniture.

Her foot was awkwardly bandaged, and as she smiled perfunctorily she caught her lower lip between her teeth as if in pain. Ashes were scattered about the stove, and the stove itself was a haggard sight, sprinkled with bits of bark, and dusty. Its front door stood open to admit one end of a four-foot log, the other end resting in a discouraged way upon the floor, and beside the stove a number of rugs were drawn into a pile, with some pillows at one end. The bables and Christmas and Helen," as if she had been lying there to be near the

log and push it in as it hurned without having to get up for the purpose any more than was necessary. In one corner of the room were a few branches of greenery, a Christmas wreath was hung over one corner of a chair back, and some tiny sweaters and red miftens and leggings were drying on another.

"You must make yourself as comfortable as you can," said she, when Martha had explained matters sketchily. "I do wish I could help, but

I hurt my foot yesterday---There came a small, sleepy sound from the next room. She touched her lips with her

"They're hardly asleep yet," she whispered warningly. Thomas and Martha froze in atti-

udes of silence. "Anjy!" said a little voice. "Well, dear?"

"Do you think Peepsy will lay her egg for 'hristmas?" "Perhaps, if you go right to sleep and don't "But, Anjy!"

"Well?" "Did somebody come?" "Yes, dear."

"Was it-was it-was it-" A word was whispered, but the girl heard She answered gently. "No, dear, not daddy."

"I thought . . . Christmas . . .

"Not this Christmas, sweetheart." She turned to look at a framed photograph of a young man in an aviator's helmet, hanging neside a photograph of a happy young woman in bridal wreath and veil. Over the aviator's picture was a flag with a gold star. Not this Christmas-no, nor any Christman

Observing this picture and its symbol Thomas felt humble and young. His growth had been an affair of such recent date that while this fellow had been getting his gold star he had been a Boy Scout merely.

A long silence followed, during which the tirl held her head bent attentively in the direcion of the door. Presently she nodded with little confidential smile.

"He goes off like a log when he does go and then an earthquake wouldn't wake him oor mite! He's been such a man since I hurt my foot. He and sister even got in this lor between them."

"I'm not a doctor yet," said Thomas, "bu I'm going to be. Better let me in on this i' you haven't had a real one." "O, thank you," said she, "but it's nothing

ally. I did a perfectly silly thing. Our 'hickens are in a crazy old barn, and the door won't stay shut without being braced by a great beam. It slipped and fell as I was putting it up last night, and as I drew back to keep from being hit I stepped square on to a great wire nail in a piece of crating the children had been

Martha shuddered. Thomas set his lips and bent over the foot with a professional air. The bandages were clumsy, but the skill of the future surgeon was foreshadowed in his big hands. He looked at the small wound with ar

"O. it's a clean wound," said the girl calmly I used sterile water. But-it almost went hrough, you see. That little bruise on the instep shows where the point stopped inside. I was wearing tennis sneakers and the soles were

Thomas did it up in a more workmanlike

"Yes, I guess you've done about all any one

He rose and looked with a quizzically tirted eyebrow at the log deploying over the floor.

"Mind if I try to improve on it?" "Isn't it horrible!" said she. "Poor bables low they worked on it and how proud they were! But all my wood is that length. I've heen sawing it to stove length as I needed it. But I thought it would burn like this safely enough tonight and I would stay here and shove it in as it burned until it was the right length. If you don't mind getting yourself a hand lamp from the kitchen and finding the woodshed. It would be glorious to have a log the right size."

As the door closed behind Thomas, Martha, who had been looking intently from the girl's face to that of the bride in the photograph. made an exclamation.

"But," she said, with catching breath, "but -you-you're Marian Applegate's little sister! You're little Jean Applegate. I had a dance with you at the Bleecker house when she brought you up for Prom week. And we sat next each other at senior dramatics!"

"And you," cried the girl, after a startled ellence, "you were the class genius, Martha onored-In the woodshed Thomas confronted a smal company of four-foot chunks. One of them lay across a saw horse, half cut in two, a tough bit of oak, that pulled smartly at his muscles before he had finished the job. When it had fallen sullenly apart and he was gathering its

halves into his arms, Martha came out, her

eyes wide and black with excitement, and shut he door into the kitchen carefully behind her. "Tom." said she, "It's Jean Applegate, the sister of that Marian Applegate, who married Ranney Bakerton that was killed in France. Ranney never saw the boy, and Marian died when he was a few weeks old, and on top of that they lost all their money, and there was just this girl to look after Marian's babies. Think of it! She's nothing but a kid herself. Why, she isn't even as old as you are. Marian was one of the richest girls in college; kept a saddle horse, had lovely gowns, gave to all the different funds, helped our poor girls on the sly-that sort. And then-Jean found that this old house up here was every blessed thing they had left. Jean had never had any useful sort of training. She says she was stupid, but, of course, that's a lie. Then she got the idea of having a gift shop here. It seemed practicable enough, right in the route of summer autoists. But-she had to look after the children, too, you see, and she wasn't used to that or to business. It hasn't panned out very well

"Tom! There's hardly a week's ration. They're positively on the edge of starving The flour barrel is so clean it isn't even white inside She pretends she was expecting supplies tomorrow, but-there's a little hand mill with cracked forn in it-the sort that's used for chickensand I swear to you it's the nearest thing to flour or bread that's been in the house for weeks."

I've looked into the shop. It's full of unsole

"Why aren't the children sick, then?" said Thomas, after a moment's grave consideration With things as bad as that I should think hey'd have all sorts of things the matter with

"Chickens!" said Martha, in an awed tone She kills them herself and makes broth for he children."

They looked at each other soberly. "I guess," said Thomas, as they turned to ether toward the kitchen, "it's just as well e're where we are."

The oak chunk, confidentially snuggling its old, dry cheek to the red one of the now hortened log, presently caught its neighbor's nthusiasm, and together they sent up a joyous roaring. Martha set about tidying up, while lean resumed work on the lengths of bright olored paper chains that seemed to be her hief effort at Christmas decoration

"There are some old things left over from ast summer's stock that I'm planning to bring out," she remarked. "They will help out, but I'm afraid we'll have no tree. I'd meant to ret one today, but what with my foot and the However, I'll spread my chains as 'ar as they will go and make the most of what treens we have.

"We'll have a tree, all right," said Thomas ernly. Jean looked up radiantly. "O, if you could!"

broke in Martha, having put the "Jean." room and dustpan away and returned to the re, "haven't you any relatives at all? Wasn't here anybody?"

"O, why, yes," she said, "relatives, of course, They made all sorts of offers. They meant to be kind, but somehow none of them could take both children. Some wanted little Ranney and some Marian. And my older sister would have been slad to sive me a home. She really needed me. I suppose, to help her out with her bables;

but I knew Marian would feel so bad to have said she a little sadly, "then we don't see them them separated, and I knew she trusted me more than she did any one else. I told them all thought I could make out this way, and they let me try. They'd lost a good deal, too. They were really glad to be - h of the responsibility. But maybe I was wrong. I was wondering it I ought to write and—say they could do things for us their own way. Yet it seems a pity, because as the children grow older, and we have ur garden and chickens everything will come ut all right if we can only hold on But now-"

She rose and adjusted her knee again to the nair, "I'm going to turn in with the babies nd let you two have all the rest of the house. which isn't so hospitable as it seems, because here's only one upstairs room furnished and ('ve no blankets for that bed. But if Mr. Car or can be comfortable in these furs and Miss Carter can make out here by the fire, it may

Martha assured her that it would not be bad but very, very good-much better than the mowdrift that they were preparing to inhabit when they saw her light-and went with her to help put the injured foot to bed, while Phomas took a hand lamp and went on a search

or the one furnished room overhead. He found it to be directly over the room he had just quitted. It was warmed a little by the stovepipe passing through it, and at first it seemed not greatly unlike other rooms; observed carefully, however, it was but a clever sham of packing boxes and chints. Even the bed was nothing but a set of springs set upon boxes instead of a bedstead, and the pillows which stood up solidly with a courageous port. when punched proved to be full of beach leaves ind corn husks instead of feathers, while the nattress was only a sack of husks, lumpy, custly. Nevertheless he was comfortable and leepy and glad to be alive.

As he dropped off he was drowsily aware that the snow was lessening and that the pallor of moonlight was in the room. When next he opened his eyes the moonlight was coming from another direction, and the moon itself, a quarter section, was sparkling in the frost of the window. Looking at his watch, he found it was already 6 o'clock, and he was desperately hungry. It was a moment before he remembered Martha's report of the attenuated larder of his snow beleaguered house. Then like a blow ame memory of an inventory she had hastily and secretly given.

"One pound of salt pork, one bushel of apples, half a bushel of potatoes, cracked corn ad lib, but the chicken kind, no coffee, or tea,

To this he added the chickens and-O, yes, eggs, of course. At least the little voice in the darkened room had made mention of a certain Peepsey who had something to do with eggs. The whole situation was a little funny, but mostly it was something else. Thomas sat up in his furs, the husks beneath him rustling crisply. The unsympathetic moon looked in upon him-the moon that sees so much trouble and never does anything about it.

The undulating whiteness lay as clear as daylight, sweeping down and then up to the foot of the mountain, where in the jaws of the pass their car was quietly hibernating. Remembering the bitter miles of darkness which he had traversed the night before with Martha, the gray walls of the mountain seemed startlingly near, and as he looked upon them the contents of Martha's hamper grew vivid and desirable. Mountains of sandwiches out there under the snow-chicken, ham, roast beefakes and pies-

And Jean Applegate's cheeks were so low, that girl younger than he? Only 19. Why, at 19 a girl should be dancing and

'ooling around—going to parties.

He dressed by the simple process of picking up his shoes, and stole with burglarious softness lownstairs. Martha did not wake, and there vas no sound from the other room. In the found his snowshoes, strapped hem on, and, finding a shovel that he had noted he evening before, put it over his shoulder and

'arted out. efore him. He could even make out a solitary ine leading out from a foothold so slight that ut little snow found lodgment about its trunk. Ie thought he remembered such a tree leering t him out of the storm just at the moment he

ad wrathfully abandoned the car. But the surface lay blank beneath the tree then he had reached it. How deep, then, did his buried treasure lie, and where then would ne start digging for it?

Then he spied now a mound by a depression -a wave mark, like the dimple a brook makes ver a bowlder or like the dent of a giant humb. He tightened his mouth and burrowed

nto the calm depths. The snow turned pink and gold about him tree which would never now wear glass balls and tinsel for the plece and nephew in New York. From this he worked down along the mooth black enamel and glass of the door. by the time he had conquered the flying white owder sufficiently to get it open the whole vorld about him had blazed into blinding gold

The hamper was heavier than Martha he went five, perhaps fifty, pounds, so, since it had no feelings to be considered, he hitched a strap to one end of it and dragged it behind him. But the sunlit snow was now so bright that he had to keep his eyes shut to a slit and pull the visor of his cap low. Half blind and without raising his head, he retraced his own tracks, and so, before he was aware how far he had come, he felt the blue shadow of the house cover him, and looked up to see the box and girl awaiting him upon the white mound which marked the porch steps.

Tweedledee was half a head taller than Iweedledum, and her hair curled beyond her knit blue cap beautifully. Tweedledum had darker eyes and was squarer of jaw and snubbier of nose. Otherwise, in swathed corpulence. expression and attitude they were the same, and each held a small fire shovel Shoulder to shoulder in statuesque immobility they waited until he was just six feet distant, then suddenly said unison, "Good morning, Mr. Carter," after which they hopped a little, to indicate relief from tension and duty well done. Thomas was not thinking of his own manners just then, and his answer came awkwardly, but they covered his confusion tactfully by laying hold of the hamper. They would carry it, they said, quite all by themselves. So he took it by the middle and they added their weight to either end and were borne along.

"Is it Christmas things?" asked Tweedledee her soft voice broken with happy awe. "Well," said Thomas thoughtfully, "tha would be telling. And, anyway, it isn't mine."

"Is it Martha's?" Acquaintance would seen have progressed since he left. "It's to eat!" said Tweedledum in a shout of

"To eat, to eat!" rejoiced Tweedledee. "Then we don't have to eat Soggy Sally!" "Who is Soggy Sally? "She's the oldest. She's a Brahma. We

were going to have her for Christmas dinner, but maybe we wouldn't have anyway, because Anjy hurt her foot. So maybe she wouldn't be Tweedledum broke off with a solemn look and kicked the snow frowningly. Plainly one

did not care to speak of certain things. Tweedledee, however, went on to make to "She does it down cellar after wore asleep," until they're all clean and pinky yellow and ready for the oven. We don't mind. At least, not very much. Of course, it depends some on ho it is. We aren't very fond of Soggy, still—"

"How about Peepsy? Has she laid that The pair threw off the gloom occasioned by he momentary contemplation of Sogry's posble end, and answered partly in unison, partly

"We're fust soing out to the barn to see. Ve've made her a nest. And when we've dug path to the barn we'll bring her in. But first

o'll take the basket in for you." Martha opened the door upon this colloquy. she was wearing a bungalow apron, and behind her the room had already thrown off its look of trouble, so that one saw what its character had been before the girl's mishap. Like the room overhead, it depended largely upon chintz for its expression, and now that the stove was black and the floor clean of ashes it seemed

smile bravely, as the girl herself was smiling. She sat in a wooden rocker, working on some affair of bright scraps which she hid under a towel as the children came in. The ollows in her cheeks were even plainer by daylight, but, as to the foot, she insisted that it was almost well, and in spite of Thomas' most professional manner would let him do nothing nore for it. Unless, she promised, it should

el worse. "Well," said Martha, "the potatoes are about one. I knew, of course, you'd bring something

ack from the wreck." A table was already set in the kitchen, and thither-Tweedledee and Tweedledum closely following with their shovels-the hamper was taken, opened, and made to disgorge heaps of sandwiches, a jar of marmalade, and the makngs for hot chocolate.

"I couldn't mash the potatoes without buter and milk," whispered Martha, "and the salt pork was too precious to use up before I made sure you would bring something. Do you know, she's shy about the neighbors! Too proud to let them know she's up against it, I suppose. But later on I wish you'd see if you can't get to that house where there's smoke and see if vou can't find some milk for the babies. I ton't believe they've had any for ages. Look

t them now!" Tweedledum and Tweedledee had ranged up side by side in front of the table with a glazed, hypnotic look, their eyes wholly engaged by the food. They did not recover consciousne even when their wraps were peeled off, their hands washed, and handkerchiefs applied.

'You know," confided Martha, "they're not so fast as you'd think. But they haven't exactly suffered. It's plain they've been getting whatever there was . . . still . . . I wonder what she'd have done if we hadn't—"

"Don't!" said Tom, turning away to look out of the frosted window. Then they brought Jean in, in her chair,

And when she saw the food—just sand-wiches and marmalade and cocoa and her own potatoes-she acted hypnotized, too. She sat back in the rocking chair and stared and grew white; took a spoonful of the cocoa which Martha had poured for her, smiled about at them weakly, looked at the children, already silently engaged upon the sandwiches; at Martha, and then, in a frightened way, at Thomas. Suddenly she pushed back from the table and

"Don't let them see me cry." she muttered, staggering to her feet, but she wasn't quick enough. Her weeping had its way-like ice going out in spring.

Being a cub doctor, Thomas understood. Being a woman, Martha understood perfectly. But was terrible, especially when the children, after a moment of open mouthed horror, joined in at the top of their voices.

"You see," she said, when the storm had subsided and the children, smiling but still wet eyed and sob shaken, were once more t with their sandwiches, while she was being fed at judicious intervals with tea and toast which Thomas had suddenly decided was a safer diet than chocolate for a person who had apparently been rationing herself just as near to nothing as was compatible with life-'you see, it came over me suddenly. You people, out of the world come from-them." She struggled again for self-control and won. "I've been a little lonely here," she said, "and not sure I was doing what they would have wanted me to do for the

bables. "Well, you were," said Martha sharply. "Now take this tea, and forget everything but that it's Christmas tomorrow."

The girl was leaning back now on Martha's shoulder, but Thomas was still at her side, and seemed the most natural thing in the world that after professionally counting her pulse which had leaped to a hundred and forty, then fallen back to a hesitant eighty as the storm subsided, he should keep the hand that lay so unresistingly in his. So thin-so marked with

He thought of all the things it had been doing; of the constant care of the children, of the pitiful paper chains, of the grisly horror of its conquest of doomed and struggling chickens -"in the callar when we're asleep." Once it must have been like the hands of other girls that he and Martha knew. Now it was like those of any working woman, chapped, calloused, the nails broken, marked with old and recent burns, chafes, cuts. But he thought as he looked steadily upon it that there was no ault in it at all.

His meditation was interrupted by an odd tock from Martha. Whereupon his face took on a deep damask, and, defiantly releasing the hand, which had not seemed aware in the least of his worship, he strode to the window, where he stood, whistling and drumming on the pane 'or a long time.

It was a window looking out from the side if the house directly upon the barn, which, as is the fashion of the region, faced the road, choulder to shoulder with the house. The snow started on a level with the window sill, then ewept up in a graceful curve, as the wind had nolded it, to the upper window where the hay as forked through into the loft,

The wooden shutter of the window had been ung afar and twisted askew by the storm, and low its black oblong was crowded with the sharp, peering faces of chickens, their vellow weathers and scarlet combs brilliant in the sunlight. But even as Thomas looked the foremost bobbed her head in a sort of salute, unfuried her wings, squalled and leaped. She sailed yelling across the space, landed in the drift just outside the window, and, with outspread wings keeping her affoat upon that white sea, quietly settled down, cocking an expectant yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shricking:

"Peepsey. Peepsey!" they shrilled.

"She flew! She's coming in for Christmas" So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her out of the drift, and she was brought to the table and finished breakfast with the family, being held first under Tweedledum's arm and then under Tweedledee's. Not that she was especially hungry, for her crop, being felt, proved fuller than it should be for so early in the morning. It was mostly corn, for you could feel the kernels plainly, and as to her gizzard it was grinding away like a coffee mill. They carried her around and held her up to all the adult ears that they might be placed in turn against her silky back and hear her wheels go 'round.

"I suppose now they'll all come," sighed

(Continued On Page Nine B.)