

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.

MARtha 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 babies never before exhibited in the east. So, Mr. and Mrs. 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 work. They might even stop for a sketch or two.

But the valley folk thought them pretty rash to put off their going so long. And, as Martha dilly-dallied 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 day.

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 Martha. "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 food 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, supported by a superior in some way to a tree brought in the city.

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

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 a Christmas spirit at all. And then, as Martha pleasantly drifted into a nap, the snow began to come. Very soft the individual flakes falling, causing between them, yet the general impression of the whole was of tremendous swiftness. Thomas set his 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 guilty frightened smile. Her eyes caught the yellow curve of Thomas' snowshoes where they showed above her massed greenery. She had been openly scornful when he had grimly 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.

So, 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 matching 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 crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

whimpered Martha, "but for me we'd have been there now."

"They'll all keep," he said comfortably, swinging off into the white chaos, "except Christmas, and there'll be another just as good next year."

"The car—"

"Nobody'll steal it. It'll be right there when the snow goes off in spring. These things happen now and then up here, Hiram was telling me yesterday."

"You know, 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 miss it in this mass. If it's empty we'll break in. Most of these bungalow things are empty, but that one was an old farmhouse as I recollect. It might keep open the year round."

But after they had been going in silence for what seemed a long time Martha said in a tired tone:

"But how can we be sure we're keeping the road at all? And then, perhaps because he wriggled, perhaps because he was weary, his shoes caught and they plunged forward."

Now it is not safe or wise to go head first into a deep drift when you have snowshoes on. But Martha was quite sensible. She dug down to his nose and got him out, and then loosened his shoes so he could right himself. Then she unscrewed the thermos bottle.

"Ten minutes," gasped Thomas, "for refreshments."

"Shoulder to shoulder in Statuesque immobility they waited until he was just six feet distant, then suddenly said in unison, "Good morning, Mr. Carter."

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 food 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, supported by a superior in some way to a tree brought in the city.

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

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 a Christmas spirit at all. And then, as Martha pleasantly drifted into a nap, the snow began to come. Very soft the individual flakes falling, causing between them, yet the general impression of the whole was of tremendous swiftness. Thomas set his 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 guilty frightened smile. Her eyes caught the yellow curve of Thomas' snowshoes where they showed above her massed greenery. She had been openly scornful when he had grimly 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.

So, 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 matching 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 crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.

Thomas looked at it. Martha looked at it. Thomas did a man's work, pouring between those crackles, was still busy with it. What it would become by night, which would begin to close down in two hours—would it predict? Even as it was it was enough, quite enough.



Shoulder to shoulder in Statuesque immobility they waited until he was just six feet distant, then suddenly said in unison, "Good morning, Mr. Carter."

"Yes, I guess you've done about all any one could have done for you," he conceded, "but if we can dig our way to the car tomorrow I can get some iodine and put a few more frills on the dressing."

He rose and looked with a quizzical utterance at the log deployed over the floor. "Mind if I try to improve on it?"

"Isn't it horrible!" she said. "Poor babies how they worked on it and how proud they were! But all my wood is that length. I've been saving it to stove length as I needed it. But I thought it would burn like this safely tonight and I would stay here and show 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 Bleeker house when she brought you up for Froze week. And we sat next each other at senior dramatics!"

"And you," cried the girl, after a startled silence, "you were the class genius, Martha Carter. I was so scared and so honored—"

In the woodshed Thomas confronted a small company of four-foot chinks. One of them lay across a saw horse, half cut in two, a rough 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 it halves into his arms, Martha came out, her eyes wide and black with excitement, and she heaved her 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 good causes, and she was just a little girl—silly—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 practical 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. I've looked into the shop. It's full of uncolored stuff."

"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 corn in it—the sort that's used for chickens—and I swear to you it's the nearest thing to flour bread that's been in the house for weeks."

"Why aren't the children sick, then?" said Thomas, after a moment's grave consideration. "They'd have all sorts of things the matter with them."

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

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

The oak chink, confidentially snuggling its old, dry cheek to the red one of the now-boreden log, presently caught its neighbor's enthusiasm, and together they sent up a joyous roaring. Martha set about tidying up, while Jean resumed work on the lengths of bright colored paper chains that seemed to be her chief effort at Christmas decoration.

"There are some old things left over from last 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 put one today, but what with my foot and the snow— However, I'll spread my chains as far as they will go and make the most of what greens we have."

"O, why have a tree, all right," said Thomas earnestly. "Jean looked up radiantly."

"O, if you could!"

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

"O, why, yes," she said, "relatives, of course. I used sterile water. But—it almost seems through, you see. That little bruise on the instep shows where the point struck inside. I was wearing tennis sneakers and the soles were worn thin."

Thomas did it up in a more workmanlike manner.

but I knew Marian would feel so bad to have them separated, and I knew she trusted me more than she did any one else. I told them all I 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 a bit of the responsibility. But maybe I was wrong. I was wondering if 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 our garden and chickens—everything will come all right if we can only hold on. But now—"

She rose and adjusted her knee again to the hair. "I'm going to turn in with the babies and 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 we've no blankets for that bed. But if Mr. Carter can be comfortable in these furs and Miss Carter can make out here by the fire, it may not be so bad."

Martha assured her that it would not be bad but very, very good—much better than the snowdrift that they were preparing to inhabit when they saw her light—and went with her to help put the injured foot to bed, while Thomas took a hand lamp and went on a search for 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 Mr. Carter's seemed not greatly unlike other rooms; observed carefully, however, it was but a clever sham of packing boxes and chinks. 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 bean leaves and corn husks instead of feathers, while the mattress was only a sack of husks, lumpy, rusty. Nevertheless he was comfortable and deep 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 gone and 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 attempted larder of his snow beleaguered house. Then like a blow came 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 and lb, but the chicken kind, no coffee, or tea, or sugar, or flour."

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 Peepsy who had something to do with eggs. The whole situation was a little funny, but mostly it was something else. Thomas rapped in his furs, the husks beneath him rustled 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, and then, in a frightened way, at Thomas. Suddenly she pushed back from the table and tried to rise.

"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 doctor, Thomas understood. Being a woman, Martha understood perfectly. But it 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 sobbing, were once more busy with their shoes, while she was being led 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 I used to know, you know how you can 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 babies."

"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 it seemed the most natural thing in the world that after professionally counting her pulse which had leaped to a hundred and forty, the 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 heavy work!

He thought of all the things it had been doing—the constant care for the children, of the pitiful paper chains, of the grisly horror of its conquest of doomed and struggling chickens—"in the cellar 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, cramped and 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 fault in it at all.

His meditation was interrupted by an odd lock from Martha. Whirruping his face took on a feet dazed, and, definitely 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 for a long time.

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

The wooden shutter of the window had been ajar and twisted askew by the storm, and now its black blank was crowded with the sharp, peering faces of chickens, their yellow beaks and scarlet combs brilliant in the sunlight. But even as Thomas looked the foremost bobbed her head in a sort of salute, unfurled her wings, squealed and leaped. She sailed yelling across the space, landed in the drift just outside the window, and, with outspread wings keeping her aloft upon that white sea, quietly set down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

said she a little sadly, "then we don't see them 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 on how hot it is. We aren't very fond of soggy, still—"

"How about Peepsy? Has she laid that Christmas egg?"

The pair threw off the gloom occasioned by the momentary contemplation of Soggy's possible end, and answered partly in unison, partly a swift reply:

"We're just going out to the barn to see. You've made her a nest. And when we've dug a path to the barn we'll bring her in. But first we'll take the basket in for you."

Martha opened the door upon this colloquy. She was wearing a bunselow 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 chinks for its expression, and now that the stove was black and the floor clean of ashes it seemed to 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 hollows 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 us do nothing more for it. Unless, she promised, it should get worse.

"Well," said Martha, "the potatoes are about one. I know, of course, you'd bring something back from the wreck."

A table was already set in the kitchen, and the blue-Tweedledum 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 makings for hot chocolate.

"I couldn't mash the potatoes without butter and milk," whispered Martha, "and the salt pork was too precious to use up before I'm 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 you can't find some milk for the babies. I don't believe they've had any for ages. Look it over now!"

Tweedledum and Tweedledum had ranged up side by side in front of the table with a glazed, hypnotic look, their eyes wholly engrossed by the food they did not recover themselves, 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 she hadn't had you?"

"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 sandwiches and marmalade and coon and her own potatoes—she acted hypnotized, too. She sat back in the rocking chair and stared and gazed 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 tried to rise.

"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 doctor, Thomas understood. Being a woman, Martha understood perfectly. But it 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 sobbing, were once more busy with their shoes, while she was being led 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 I used to know, you know how you can 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 babies."

"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 it seemed the most natural thing in the world that after professionally counting her pulse which had leaped to a hundred and forty, the 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 heavy work!

He thought of all the things it had been doing—the constant care for the children, of the pitiful paper chains, of the grisly horror of its conquest of doomed and struggling chickens—"in the cellar 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, cramped and 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 fault in it at all.

His meditation was interrupted by an odd lock from Martha. Whirruping his face took on a feet dazed, and, definitely 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 for a long time.

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

The wooden shutter of the window had been ajar and twisted askew by the storm, and now its black blank was crowded with the sharp, peering faces of chickens, their yellow beaks and scarlet combs brilliant in the sunlight. But even as Thomas looked the foremost bobbed her head in a sort of salute, unfurled her wings, squealed and leaped. She sailed yelling across the space, landed in the drift just outside the window, and, with outspread wings keeping her aloft upon that white sea, quietly set down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking:

"Peepsy, Peepsy, Peepsy!" they shrilled. "She flew! She's coming in for Christmas!"

So the window was opened and Thomas pulled her down, cooking an expert yellow eye up at him. But the children had recognized her voice and came shrieking: