

the trees, the garden of the little stone house was piled high with snow. The roads were blocked, so that Thomas Leonard could scarcely get to his work in the neighboring town. Mary was shut up in a dreariness, which she enlivened by decorating, as best she might, the space around the picture. She had begun to burn before it a small oil lamp, which was another school-day relic. Her father had at first said something about the danger of setting fire to the house, but he made no very great objection, and seemed at last to look for the light, on his return at evening. The little sitting-room had an end window, through which the red gleam of the lamp shone out upon the road.

One particularly wild and stormy night came about the end of December. Drifts of snow were whirling, blizzard fashion, up and down the road. The wind howled about the house and rattled the frost-bound trees. Just as the father and daughter sat down to supper, they were startled by a stamping of feet outside and a loud knocking at the door. Thomas Leonard threw it open, and discovered a young man, evidently belonging to the higher classes. The stranger briefly explained that, being on his way to the residence of a gentleman—whose name Thomas Leonard at once recognized—some distance further on, he had got off the direct road and lost himself.

"You had better stop here to-night," said Leonard, with rough civility: "there's no chance of making your way before day-break, and not then, unless this blizzard holds up."

"But I have a horse and sleigh," objected the traveller.

"There's an out-house for them. I'll see that they're all right."

The stranger yielded, and having partaken of the humble but plentiful supper, sat in the little sitting-room, watching Mary knit and her father smoke. All at