

A CHRISTMAS STORY. 71

shut out from her the pitying faces around her.

It was not an uncommon story, but coming from those lips an infinitely pathetic one. To all the listeners it was evident that the brilliant young son was ashamed of his lowly mother ; and that in her tender love she had never fancied it.

No one had courage to undeceive her now, as she sat with parted lips and bright eyes, picturing to herself the happy meeting at the journey's end.

Finally there was a stir among the passengers, a collecting of belongings and straightening of clothes, a sure sign that the city would soon be reached. Gradually the snow-bound fields and bare trees and shrubbery disappeared, while the tall chimneys and grim walls took their place.

When finally the train steamed into the station, the old woman drew back into her corner, once more overcome by the noise and stir around her.

A young man entered, looking eagerly around, till with a smile of recognition he hastened to our young friend, the girl, who threw her arms around his neck crying : "Oh, Henry, it is so nice to be home again !" Then she drew him aside for a