

to-morrow. Won't you make us a rice-pudding for our dinner?"

"You're a good boy, John—a very good boy," said the mother, much affected by the generous spirit her boy displayed.—

"Yes, you shall have a rice-pudding. But take off your wet shoes, my son—they are all wet, and dry your feet by the fire."

"No, not till you put Nelly's shoes on to see if they fit her," replied John.

"If they don't fit, I'm going back to the store for a pair that will. She shall have her new shoes for Christmas. And, mother, try on yours, may be they won't do."

To satisfy the earnest boy, Mrs. Elliott tried on Nelly's shoes, although the child was asleep.

"Just the thing," said she.

"Now try on yours," urged John.

"They couldn't fit me better," said the mother, as she slipped on one of the shoes. "Now take off your wet ones, and dry your feet before the fire, while I put the supper on the table."

John, satisfied now that all was right, did as his mother wished, while she got ready their frugal repast. Both were too much excited to have very keen appetites.

As they were about rising from the table, after finishing their meal, some one knocked at the door, John opened it, and a gentleman came in and said, familiarly—

"How do you do, Mrs. Elliott?"

"Oh, how do you do, Mr. Mayfield?—Take a seat," and she handed her visitor a chair.

"How has your wrist got, Mrs. Elliott? Are you most ready to take my washing again?"

"It's better, I thank you, but not well enough for that; and I can't tell you when it will be. A sprain is so long in getting well."

"How do you get along?" asked Mr. Mayfield. "Can you do any kind of work?"

"Nothing more than a little about the house."

"Then you don't earn anything at all?"

"No, sir, nothing."

"How do you manage to live, Mrs. Elliott?"

"We have to get along the best we can on John's two dollars a week."

"Two dollars a week! You can't live on two dollars a week, Mrs. Elliott; that is impossible."

"It's all we have," said the widow.

Mr. Mayfield asked a good many more questions and showed a very kind interest in the poor widow's affairs. When he arose to go away, he said—

"I will send you a few things to-night, Mrs. Elliott, as a Christmas present. This is the season when friends remember each other, and tokens of good will are passing in all directions. I think I cannot do better than to spend all I designed giving for this purpose, in making you a little more comfortable. So when the man comes with what I shall send, you will know that it is for you. Good-night. I will drop in to see you again before long."

And ere Mrs. Elliott could express her thanks, Mr. Mayfield had retired.

No very long time passed before the voice of a man speaking to a horse, was heard at the door. The vehicle had moved so noiselessly on the snow-covered streets, that its approach had not been observed. The loud stroke of a whip-handle on the door caused the expectant widow and her son to start. John immediately opened it.

"Is this Mrs. Elliott's?" asked a carman, who stood with his leather hat and rough coat all covered with snow.

"Yes, sir," replied John.

"Very well: I've got a Christmas present for her, I rather think; so hold open the door until I bring it in."

John had been trying on his new shoes,