

She was very fond of going out in a snow storm and many a tramp had she and Bertie taken when the snow fell so fast and thick about them that they could scarcely see their way.

"And we will go snow-shoeing too," he replied eagerly. "Mrs. Howard has got such a nice new pair; have you seen them, auntie?"

"No, I have not seen them."

"They are regular beauties; Mr. Howard got them in Montreal the last time he was there; Mrs. Howard showed them to me yesterday when I was there; she said they were going to try and get a pair for little Tommie."

"I suppose Tommie is in great glee at the idea," said she smilingly. "But come, we must get our tea ready; I wonder if the kitchen fire is burning well."

"Oh! I guess it must be, because I put fresh coal on it just before you came in, and filled the kettle with water so as it would be boiling by tea time; but I'll run out and see anyway." He was off immediately and a moment after his cheery voice called from the little kitchen. "All right aunt Mollie; it's burning beautifully and the kettle is boiling like fun."

Truly the bright little kettle did look as though it meant fun, for it hissed and bubbled and steamed and did its very best to get the cover off, and when it could not manage that, it spattered drops of water on to the hot stove. Bertie stood looking at it, in the ruddy glare of the fire; his hands behind him and his eyes and lips both smiling their brightest.

"Isn't it a splendid fire aunt Mollie?" he asks.

"A beautiful fire" she replies as she fills the teapot with water and places it on the stove to draw.

"I wish the poor people all had fires like this in their homes-to-night aunt Mollie; if they had, I think ours would be more beautiful than ever."

When tea was over and Bertie with the skill and neatness of a girl had helped his aunt to wash and put away the dishes, they sat down once more in the parlor; he poring over his lesson books and working out long sums for school on Monday. She, bending over her sewing and thinking of Neal as she always did at this hour. Faithful, loving heart! No shadow of mistrust has ever hovered o'er thy thoughts of him! Bertie finished his lessons early that night and after they had sung as usual he bade his aunt good night and went to bed.

Long and earnestly Mollie sat thinking of him, when he had left her. Thinking of his present boyhood and of his future manhood. When she remembered how grave and thoughtful beyond his years he was, she bitterly reproached herself for letting the gloom of her own life over-shadow his; she told herself she had been selfish in her sorrow. Yet what could she do? Could she laugh and be gay when there was no mirth, no joy in her heart, only a dull void and a ceaseless longing that never would be satisfied? Never on earth; for had they not parted long ago?

"Oh had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly!
Never met or never parted
We had ne'er been broken-hearted!"

"If I could only pretend to be happy and light-hearted so that Bertie would not know that I was sorrowful and troubled," murmured poor Mollie to herself as she paced slowly up and down the room, her small hand pressed together and the tears welling up in her eyes.

"Oh Neal, dearest Neal! Are you merry and careless as ever? Do you laugh and fret and smile as you used to do? My love! my love!" Sobbing, she threw herself down on the floor beside the sofa and buried her face in the cushions. "Oh! where is he? Where is he? If only I knew that he lived. If only I could lay my head on his breast and feel his dear arms around me once again, only once again oh my God!" She clasped her trembling hand and raised her face as though petitioning the Almighty for this boon which her heart craved.

(To be Continued.)

SELECTED.

A NEW ENGLAND STORY.

A father in a New England town had a son; a little,

large-headed boy of nervous intensity, with eyes of startling wonder, and long, curling eyelashes which started like his fawn-like eyes with quick apprehension and timidity; a boy who played with all intensity, kept doing something all day long, without the power to rest, walked off alone, and even when alone spoke with himself, chased the geese with little legs as lean and swift, and at the table, eating his meals, could not sit very still, nor bear to sit all the morning in church, hearing the sermon, because his heart was too rapid in his narrow little chest, where every rib could be counted against tender flesh and skin. In the morning he was awake at earliest light; at evening his tired nature yielded to the deep sleep of exhaustion. His mother feared she could never raise him to be a man. His father thought he was too long becoming a man in gravity, sobriety and formal obedience.

"What ails my son?" the father sternly asked. "He is rattle-headed, and without stability. I fear for him. Do you chastise him enough? Spare not the rod, lest he grow beyond you and your rule!"

"Alas!" exclaimed the mother, "he has his little world we cannot see, perhaps. He is growing and sensitive. The doctor says we must not push him at his studies, but let him play all he can, till his frame is equal to his brain."

The father shook his head and spoke sternly to the boy, and feared he was going to give them all trouble growing up so seldom moulded and restrained.

All day the little boy was doing something: carrying the cat by the tail, carrying the dog under his arm, making pictures, on paper, of engines and steamboats and Indians and bellows.

"He will be an artist," said his mother, hopefully.

"He will spoil the library," exclaimed the father, suspiciously.

Antagonism grew up between the father and boy, born, on the boy's part, of fear; on the father's of criticism and severity. The boy ran to his mother, and asked her protection from his father's suspecting eye. The father feared his wife was spoiling the son with mistaken generosity and allowance. At times the father's habitual suspicion broke away like the clouds above hard, humid Britain, and he laid his rigorous books of theology down to take his boy walking, and they grew a little nearer. Then again the father observed some voluptuous tendency in the son, which started his fears anew; some taste for wordly, passing modes and joys.

"Wife," said he, "do you ever give our boy money?"

"A little," she said; "a few pennies, to buy drawing-materials and colors; he will be an artist, I think."

"Money," exclaimed the sire, "is the root of every evil. You had better give him fire or poison. He will become a wild, ruined spendthrift."

The idea that his wife gave the child money operated in the father's head like jealousy or revenge; it tinted every thing about his son's conduct, and he believed his wife had deliberately set to work to indulge her child at the expense of his soul.

One morning, thinking of such things, the father lay awake in bed, and a gentle noise disturbed him. The sun was nearly up, though it was scarcely five o'clock, and the light and air striking through the chamber curtains showed a little boy in his night-gown, stealing along the floor toward the foot of his father's bed. Laying perfectly still, with eyes almost closed, the father saw that small, large-headed child, unable, perhaps, to sleep, yet careful not to awake his parents, turn an eye of timid covetousness upon his father's trousers and vest hanging upon a nail. He glanced sharply toward his father, to see if he was quite asleep and then swiftly, like a little bird, hopped upon a chair and ran his lean, white fingers into his father's vest-pocket.

"Ha!" thought the father. "My son in my pockets by stealth, before I am awake, and imitating the bad example of my wife, who often perhaps, searches unauthorizably there!"

As he said this a dreadful idea crossed his mind. That son, spoiled by the mother's indulgence, already corrupted by spending money, was a thief—a thief while yet a child! He rose in bed and awoke in a voice of thunder:

"Robert, you are stealing my money!"

Horror froze the boy: he dropped from the chair like a cat, and was into his own bed in the next room and covered his face with the sheets. Anguish and stern resolve possessed