

girls—the others of the family were all girls—were standing at the foot of the bed; and a little red-faced mite of something human lay muffled in white beside his mother; and the doctor had looked first at the mother's weary face, then at the wan little girls, then at himself, at that time, a sturdy farm boy of ten.

"How is it your eldest boy is such a husky little piker when the others aren't?" asked the doctor, genially.

"Oh, I guess I had hopes and dreams and happy thoughts before Tom came," his mother had answered. He hadn't known, then, what she meant. There came a queer look to the doctor's face. He blew his nose like a piece of pulpit artillery.

"Well, Tom's a throw-back to the good old stock that pioneered these New England hills," the doctor had said.

"Yes, Tom resembles his grandfather," his mother had answered. Then, his father had come in, red-faced, wagging his beard. As a child he had not understood, then; but he realized now. It was his mother's inheritance that his father's blundering had dispersed; and even then all the children knew that the father resented people talking to his mother—hated her superiority. Perhaps, it was the grueling and grilling of that daily sad spectacle in his childhood home that had rooted out of his own nature any jealousy to superiority. Anyway, he was "a throw-back to the good old stock," whatever that was, and had ten times more energy in his little