

But there are people on whom the cold seems to have quite a different kind of effect. Either because they are young, or, if not young, because their organization is one which supplies heat freely at small expense to the supply of nervous force, they find the cold simply a novelty, which gives a fillip to their energies and adds a zest to life. Mr. Alfred Garrod threw out not long ago in a scientific journal a suggestion that perhaps it is the difference in temperature between the external skin and the heat of the blood, which supplies the springs of those magnetic currents of which nervous action in a large degree possibly consists, and that the greater that difference of temperature, the more lively is the action of the batteries of which the nerves are the conducting wires. If that were so, that would certainly account for the sort of abounding self-gratulation which seems to possess some men in dwelling on the mere fact that "the thermometer showed 18° of frost last night;"—only it would make it still more difficult to account for the apparently frozen up energies which cold causes to the people of whom we have already spoken. But to the people who exult in cold, the human race appears all the nobler for sustaining so many degrees of frost; and as for them, they treat the low temperature as a gospel of great joy. Indeed, their bearing seems to indicate something more like the deep well-spring of satisfaction arising from a good conscience than anything else. You see the traces of this state of feeling in Dickens's Christmas stories, where frost and benevolence always flow together in great spring-tides. If feeling does not gush when water is frozen, it is always, with Dickens, the sign of deliberate malignity of heart. And unquestionably there are a good number of persons to whom severe weather brings a self-satisfaction and a desire to overflow benignity over other people which you never see at other times. They go about saying either literally or by smiles and lavish rubbing of the hands, "Here is the thermometer more than half-way between freezing-point and zero, yet I exult in it; I walk, I skate. I