

Hearth and Home.

A TALK WITH THE YOUNG FOLKS ABOUT THE MONTH.

This is the coldest month of all the year. It is the very pith and marrow of winter. We used to have a January thaw that softened the rigour of this month a little. But that is very irregular and uncertain now, like the Indian summer, which could once be counted on with a degree of certainty, but only visits us now and then in these days. "All things are full of change" in this world, and the seasons change among the changeful things of earth. But even in this changing world there is a degree of regularity about the course of the year, which marks the reign of a supreme and Almighty Mind. You never behold such a scene in the month of June as is shown in the accompanying picture. But you may always see it in January. Slowly, but surely, June changes into January, and January into June. The earth is ruled by that glorious and faithful Being who has given His creatures a pledge that "while the world stands winter and summer, seed-time and harvest shall not cease."

Many people are wont to decry the winter's cold and to complain of our climate as unpleasantly severe. But facts prove that ours is the very best climate on earth. It is more healthful than one of constant mild weather, and it is better fitted to raise up a hardy, energetic, prosperous people. A winter like ours purifies the air, locks up foul snells, arrests the process of decay, and in many ways promotes health. Warm countries always have a sleepy, lazy race of inhabitants. The fact is people don't feel like exerting themselves when oppressed by heat. Most of the world's energy is to be found in the north temperate zone. And if we ask ourselves what kind of folks they are who complain of the Canadian winter, we shall find that they are the ease-loving, timid, weak-willed class, who are always trying after comfort, indulgence and self gratification. The pushing, energetic person boldly encounters the frosty air



and the snowy path. Stirring about briskly, the blood soon gets into active circulation, so that there is a glow of warmth and a flow of spirits only to be produced by winter. Cold weather hardens the muscular fibre, just as it hardens vegetable fibre. It toughens animal nature, tones up the system to strength and vigor, and if only protected by suitable clothing, any one in ordinary health may not only defy but enjoy it. January musn't be trifled with however. It is a great folly for people, whether old or young, to go out with thin clothes or shoes on, valiantly exclaiming "I don't care for the cold, the cold can't hurt me!" But, oh! fool-hardy boaster, you ought to care for the cold. The Bible teaches you better than to be contemptuous of it. "Who," it asks, "can stand before His cold?" The cold *can* hurt you, and it will if you don't guard properly against it. Many a child has courted and obtained a fit of sickness, or undermined a good constitution for life, by this kind of folly. Another very unwise thing sometimes done in mid-winter is to get into a