

not always a choice, one, nor the hours seasonable, and if the older members of the family object to having their sons and daughters concerned in them, they are not altogether without good reason for so objecting.

One winter task is that of breaking out the roads after the heavy storms. In the lowlands this is only an occasional necessity. But among the hills nearly every storm blocks the roads. Thaws are there infrequent, and snow piles upon snow, and a drift forms in the lee of every stone wall and hummock. Many roads, or parts of them, are entirely abandoned, and a "winter road" is made through the woods or across the open fields. Even a light snow, if it is dry and accompanied by wind, will fill the exposed roads and heap up the drifts with astonishing rapidity.

The breaking-out process is accomplished by hitching a pair of horses or a yoke of oxen to the front bob of a sled, at one side of which is fastened a plow. Two men are needed to engineer the contrivance, one as driver, one as plow-holder. When a drift is met with through



Little Farm under Deer Hill, Cummington, Mass

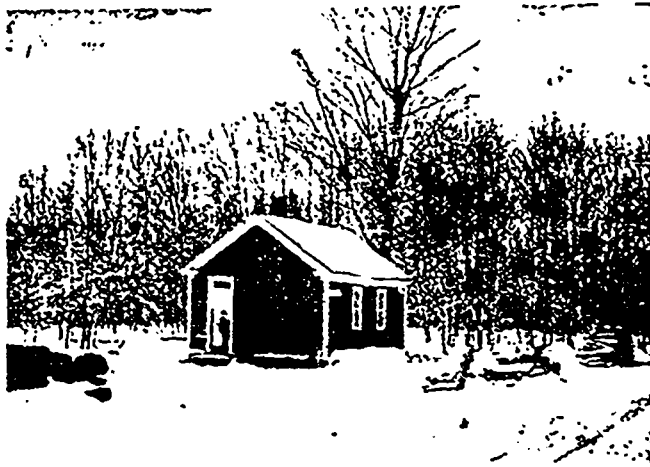
Aside from the hilly and mountainous regions, the district schools have their regular winter term beginning the first week in December. Soon after eight o'clock each school-day morning the children tie up their ears, put on cloaks and mittens and overshoes, and, with their sleds dragging behind, go stubbing along through the snow toward the school-house. Those who come more than half a mile have in hand their tin dinner-pails. Those who live nearer go home at noon, unless the day is stormy.

The more advanced children of the outlying districts have a long ride before them each winter morning to the academy at the Center, a distance of perhaps three or four miles. They go in all kinds of weather. Neither storm nor cold can keep them at home. It sends a sympathetic shiver through one to look out and see them drive past in the gray frostiness of the early morning. The case seems plainly one of getting education under difficulties. But they know how to bundle-up, almost out of sight, and if there is hardship they do not realize it, and I fancy they are in truth to be envied. The experience gives them hardiness, and the long drives back and forth, with whatever they contain of storms and cold and mishaps, will in after life be among its most pleasantly treasured memories.

Church-going is not very much affected by the winter weather. A storm will keep a certain number at home whatever the season. But if the roads are passable, the man who is in the habit of going to church continues to go the year round independent of heat or cold.

On the whole, the New England winter presents a cheerful aspect, and by its people is found enjoyable. If there is some suffering or discomfort, it is doubtless far less than in the cities, and it may as well be recognized that Utopia has been dreamed of,

never yet realized. Indeed, take it all in all, where is there a better country on the globe to live in than New England? As that Yankee genius, Artemus Ward, has said, "Nowheres, nor anywheres else."



A Little Red School-House at the Parting of the Roads.

which the team cannot struggle, shoveling is resorted to. It is a rough-hewed track that the plow leaves behind, and, until travel has smoothed it, not a very comfortable one to travel over.

Among the hills only the high schools hold winter sessions. The scholars of the primary schools live, as a rule, so far away that it would be a real hardship for them to attempt to get to the school regularly through the snows. The big boys who used to come in to the district schools only in the winter, now have a high school open to them. It is very apparent that these boys are the sons of their fathers, for they worry the high school teachers very much as their ancestors used to worry the teachers of the district schools. Display of smartness and insubordination is still altogether too common in New England schools.



Working up the Wood-pile with a Cross cut Saw

