

Beauty of the
cold by itself the
struggle for existence

Herbert Spencer
Comment on Science

In Pastures Green

" The goblins of the Northland
That teach the gulls to scream,
That dance the autumn into dust,
The ages into dream."

It is worth while to take a trip along the side roads where they still have rail fences to see the snowdrifts. The briars and withered golden-rod stalks form shelters where the drifts can form and be carved into wonderful shapes by the driving wind. Along the main roads where wire fences are in use the drifts do not have a chance, but on the side-lines they can gather and lie undisturbed, save for the tracking of the wild creatures that now more than at any other season "do seek their meat from God." Sprawling rabbit-tracks abound everywhere, and here and there the loosely-woven lacework of quail-tracks may be seen. Where the briars and weeds are thick they bend down under the weight of the drifts, but hold them up sufficiently to provide hiding-places for the rabbits and quail, and shelter them from the cold. Occasionally one sees the jumping track of a weasel or mink that finds in the drifts an ideal hunting-ground. Everywhere flocks of snowbirds swoop down among the weeds to feed, and add their tiny tracks to the strangely-written history of the winter struggle for existence.

A few mornings ago the predatory members of the family, who, if there be truth in Spencer's lucid observation that the ontogenesis may be traced in the philogenesis, must now be in the stone age, came in with the news that there were rabbit-tracks in the garden. Of course, that meant a rabbit hunt to be organised at once. With outward signs of reluctance, but secret joy, I took a squirrel rifle and joined in the chase. While we were trying to unravel the tangle of tracks and find the freshest, a neighbour told us where a rabbit had been seen not five minutes ago. Following the direction we found the tracks, and started wolfishly on the trail, giving the best imitation we could of

" The long, hard gallop which can tire
The hound's deep hate, the hunter's fire."