

TO THE NEW YEAR.

BY GOWAN LEA.

Hark! 't is thy step, New Year!
With sure but stealthy pace thou aye dost come,
And in thy train are gladdening gifts for some
O haste thee, glad New Year!

Too swift thy step, New Year!
The past had gathered friends from many lands,
And thou dost come to part their clasped hands.
Alas, so soon, New Year!

'O haste!' 'Delay!' New Year,—
Two prayers together rising up to Heaven:
The answer trust, for is it not God-given?
Meet bravely the New Year!

Bid welcome the New Year!
O clear-voiced Truth, lead in the coming morn.
And gentle Charity, our lives adorn;
Hope lives in the New Year!



REGINA, N. T. W.

DEAR YOUNG CANADIAN,—I like what you tell us about the snow. I never knew it before. Please tell me about the large flakes, when mother goose is plucking her goslings.

T. B.

As the snow passes through the air, it comes upon currents of atmosphere that are milder than others. The flakes get a little soft, and stick to each other. The wind, too, beats them all about, as wind is apt to do, into a general snow-flake wreck. This is why we have sometimes very fine snow, as well as these large flakes. The wind breaks up the flakes, and where the current of air is very cold the little atoms freeze up, and start off as snow on their own account.

Perhaps I might also tell you about the castles on the windows, the caves and fairies that grow on our panes, when we are asleep at night; gardens, glens, brooks, mountains, palaces, and everything that is beautiful and curious. Since you are fond of snow, perhaps you have noticed that when it is very, very cold, the fairy lace-work is made up of extremely fine points, while on milder days the scenes are large and bold. This is because on the very cold day the freezing went on at many points,—all over,—at one moment, and the palaces and caves have to elbow in as much as possible, and sometimes you can hardly see them. The mild day, on the contrary, gave plenty of time, and therefore plenty of room, for all to spread out as much as they liked. And still how noiselessly, how peacefully, does nature work. No fuss, no hubbub, and yet a thousand men could not do in a life-time what she does in one short minute.

Take a candle to the window as the snow is gently falling, and see if you could count how many flakes are in a square foot.—ED. P. B.

FREDERICTON, N. B.

DEAR POST BAG,—Mr. Old Grub seems so fond of our beautiful snow that I thought he would like to hear of a pretty sunset me and grandma saw last night. The sun had just gone to bed, and as he gathered his blankets up around his face, to hide himself so that we might get sleeping, all the sky shot up red as crimson, with down near the sun, quite close, wonderful clusters of gold and scarlet. Away out over the snow, too, right up to Uncle James' farm, six miles off, the same glorious red was streaming in waves, and showers, and streaks. Oh! it was lovely, and grandma thought so too; more than me. Me and grandma were coming home in the sleigh, and a little later on the Aurora Borealis, I hope I have spelt it right, came out in the sky, with mountains, and meadows, and forests, and Princes' palaces, all dancing up and down, and a whole army of soldiers keeping time with them. It was beautiful.

Your friend,

TATTIE.

Thank you, dear, for your kind remembrance of Mr. Old Grub. You should have seen how his face beamed with joy as I gave him your letter to read. Your description of the sunset and of the Northern Lights is delightful, and you spelled that hard word, *Aurora Borealis*, quite correctly. I hope you enjoyed your drive with grandma. I am sure you did, and I think she must have done so too if you chatted to her as nicely as you have written to me.—ED. P. B.

GUYSBORO, N. S.

DEAR YOUNG CANADIAN,—You say in your Reading Club that you are always wanting to know what we are reading about, and I think I will tell you about an

OTTER'S TOBOGGAN SLIDE

that Aunt Kate read to us last night. Aunt Kate reads so sweetly, her voice is like music. Well, we were around the parlour table after supper, when our lessons were all put away, and Aunt Kate said—"Look here, boys." We knew what that meant, and we sat right flop down beside her, as close as we could pack. Of course I forget some of the story, but it was about a lot of otters that were having a nice time one day in January. The snow was deep, and the otters lived up a steep bank. The bank sloped down to the river, and in the river there was a small pool of water that was not frozen. Well, here they were, the otters coming down to drink, a whole crowd of them, and going up again. Suddenly one of them lost its footing, and slipped from head to foot of the bank. The rest looked on, and I suppose must have laughed; for in a few minutes they all, one after another, did the same. They lay down flat on their stomach at the top, gave themselves a little push, and tobogganned down to the foot. Here they plunged in for a bath, and their wet feet going up and down soon made the slide first-class. For hours they kept up the sport, which made us boys laugh like fun to think of.

FRANK H.

I am delighted to hear from you, dear Frank, and do write again soon and tell us more of what you are reading. You will not only confer a pleasure upon me, but you will improve your own mind. Nothing is so good as to try to tell what you have read.

And the otters, hadn't they a good time? How I envied their lovely slide, and wish I had seen them! It was something new to me, too, to know that otters have their own toboggan clubs. Old Grub has handed me a foot-note for my answer, which you may read the next time you get sitting with Aunt Kate; something more about otters. Here it is:—"My grand-children gave me as a Christmas present a set of furs for my overcoat, and I feel no end of a grandee as I walk out with deep collar and cuffs of otter. The hair is smooth, shiny, brown-black, with a close warm grey down nestling next the skin. The skin is cut at the head and drawn off, as our young Canadians do their over-stockings. A board is then thrust in to make the skin flat, and is drawn out when the skin is dry. If you want to test an otter skin, put your arm up the inside of the skin, or pelt. If your sleeve comes out quite clean, buy the skin. If your sleeve comes out hairy, don't."

Isn't he a curious Old Grub?—ED. P. B.