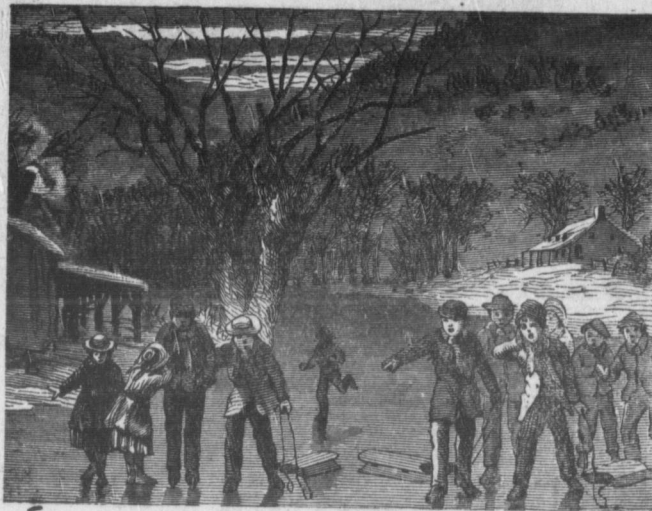




"AN AIR HOLE AHEAD."

WINTER—JACK FROST'S ARRIVAL.

'Tis winter's deepest heart. The invading frost
Has breathed his chilliest breath o'er rippling lakes,
And changed their laughing looks to glassy stare,
Their dimpling faces into mirrors bright
And keen, o'er which do glide, like phantom forms,
The graceful skaters on their polished steel.

FROST WORK—FAIRIES WORK?

No fairies left? You need not tell me so,
For in the night upon my window pane
Grew wondrous things that make me surely know
The fairies are at their old tricks again.

Stand where the light strikes thro' the frosted
glass,
And see Aladdin's palace rear its towers;
Look at the seed-tufts on that bunch of grass,
The humming-bird above those lily flowers!

What but a fairy pencil could design
These feathered fronds of dainty maiden-hair?
With every leaf so delicately fine
You almost see it tremble on the air!

Some nimble-fingered spirit of the ice
Has wrought his frolic will here, that is plain;
And while I study out each quaint device,
A wistful fancy gathers in my brain.

O, wonder-working spirit! if I could
But learn of you the secret of the snow—
How frost is given by the breath of God,
And where the hidden watercourses flow,—

And where begotten is the dew that strings
Her lovely pearls upon the meanest weed,—
And what sweet animating influence brings
The blossom splendid from the trivial seed.

Could I but ride the south wind and the north;
And fathom all the mysteries they hold,
See how the lightning, leaping wildly forth,
And how the turbulent thunder is controlled—

I would no more be fretted by the greed
And selfishness of men, their puny spite,
Nor any worldly loss or cross indeed,
My lifted soul could evermore affright.

And wherefore now? The laughing fairy seems
To mock at me the spangled window through;
And I laugh also, waking from my dreams
To take up daily loss and cross anew.

But with a sense of things divinely planned,
That makes me sure I need not fear disdain,
From One who holds the thunder in his hand,
Yet stops to trace the frost-work on the pane.