



A Sled-load of Ice on a New England Lake

Winter Life in New England

By Clifton Johnson

Illustrated from Photographs by the Author



WHAT the New England summer is, many visitors from the outside world well know. Very few outsiders, however, know by experience what the New England winter is. Rarely, too, has it been pictured, except somewhat romantically from the artist's imagination or memory. Yet it is

to be doubted if at any season New England is more beautiful. The contour of every hill and mountain slope lies exposed, and at no other time can one so clearly comprehend the real nature of the country. Everywhere is the wide expanse of the snow, broken by the patches of woodland with their gray masses of tree-trunks and their delicate tracery of bare twigs against the sky. In the outlooks from the highlands, or across the wide valleys, the landscape melts in the distance into mellow blues, and the tints of the skies at that season are of unequalled brilliance.

Often the higher ridges of the hills are crowned with the solemn green masses of a pine or spruce wood, as dark and stiff as nearly all the rest of the world is light and delicate; and to me this carries always a reminder of the pictures we see of Norway, or the countries of the far

North. In places, the rocks lift dark shoulders to break the whiteness, and along the roads, where habitations are near, are black lines of stone wall. Then there are the weather-beaten, unpainted old houses and outbuildings, emphasizing by their gray gloom the light tones which are general.

It makes an odd impression to come upon a little village of white houses in this winter world. They differ so little

from the surrounding snow-fields as to be ghostly. To look down upon some wide expanse of country from a hill-top, and see it all given over to the drifted snows, gives the feeling that only a miracle can ever bring back the greens of spring and summer. Among the tumbled ridges of the hills the forsakenness is quite appalling.

I suppose the majority of New Englanders take winter as a matter of course, and yet I have been told by a Yankee, who gathered his wisdom by years of experience as a peddler, that its inhabitants wasted just half their lives in wishing it wasn't such abominably cold weather.

When, in autumn, the fields turn brown, and the leaves



A Chopper's Lunch—On the "Flats" near Mount Holyoke

fall, and the frosty nights begin to hint at the coming cold, few look forward to the approaching winter with feelings of pleasure. The thought of it brings a shiver, and the imagined delight of a trip south, or to California, pictures itself in many minds. But such a thing belongs to the realm of impossibilities, though I do know of a single case where a man of moderate means has one farm among the Massachusetts hills and another in Florida. To the latter