

were better for even miners to be freed from such an intellectual pest-house; and rather than risk their eternal interests, they might better spend their winter months revelling in solitary contemplative thought—the play of the soul—which, a recent writer tells us, is the highest occupation of man,

The miners in the smaller camps spend the long winter months each after his own fashion. The frivolous, of course, always find a way to kill time; there are the dance-halls and bar-rooms, unhappily too numerous in that part of the world. The wiseacres busy themselves with the thermometer during the cold spells, and compare notes as to the temperatures of former years; or even, aspiring to the dignity of weather prophets, predict the probable date when the streams will be free of ice. Others—the homesick element—worry the postmaster about the departure and the arrival of the last mails of the season. Meanwhile the months slip quietly away; the sun shines stronger; spring arrives.

My second winter in Council passed slowly and monotonously enough; but when the spring came, I was rewarded for my close isolation, by a sight that I shall long remember, an Alaskan "break-