

A JANUARY THAW

Out of Doors When the First Warm Days of Winter Come.

"Nature and Science" in January St.

There is not always a "thaw" in January, nor do all springlike days in winter come in January. As the old-fashioned almanacs would put it, scattering the words down the page for January: About this time—expect—several—warm—days. Even if the "about this time" were the last of February, the country people would regard it as a January thaw, only about a month late this year! The first of these warm days is often cloudy, and so misty and cloudy that the ground seems to steam. The snow has not yet fallen two or three weeks ago is nearly all melted. Then how slushy it is!—how "disagreeable getting about," the old folks would say. How the new folks, rubber boots, going to and from house to barn there is a fascination in wading thru the soft mixture.

Indeed, it is evident that all young folks know how to make the best of many things that older persons call disagreeable. Some one has said that "everything is fish that comes to the net of the naturalist," meaning that the naturalist takes an interest in all that he observes in nature. And everything seems to be fun to the young folks, because they see only the bright side of life.

Not only the boys, but the girls, enjoy such wading. At the edge of a pool they search for the grass that the protecting blanket of snow may have kept fresh and green—a bit of spring in midwinter.

On such a warm day as this the brook looks like a butterfly, for it has struggled the forces of heat and cold. Blocks of ice lie broken and crushed before the plunging, foaming water. In this ravine we find spring strangely intermingled with winter. Rushing down the brook are miniature icebergs, and bordering its banks are panoramas of arctic fields. Yet on the hillside the grass peeps green above the snow. In a small branch of the brook is the waterwheel which Thoreau observed on a midwinter day, as green as ever, waving in the stream as in summer.

If we follow this little branch to its source we shall find a spring by which is the stichwood, and the grass peeps wide open buds. Here is summer indeed, strangely mixed with winter.

A similar mingling of autumn bloom with midwinter surroundings is afforded by the witch-hazel, with its feathery yellow flowers, as beautiful as in late autumn, but they now seem weird and un-anny as they come before the eyes.

Autumn as well as spring seems to say, "You can't wholly overcome me, old winter."

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

Washington Star.

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