

## NEW YEAR'S EVE IN CAMP.

MERCURY 10° BELOW ZERO, NORTHWEST GALE.

THE winds are out in force to-night, the clouds, in light  
brigades,

Are charging from the mountain tops across the everglades.  
There is a fierceness in the air—a dull, unearthly light—  
The Frost-king in his whitest crown rides on the storm to-night.  
Far down the gorge of Otter Run I hear the sullen roar  
Of rifted snows and pattering sleet, among the branches hoar.  
The giant hemlocks wag their heads against the midnight sky,  
The melancholy pine trees moan, the cedars make reply.

The oaks and sugar maples toss their frozen arms in air,  
The elms and beeches bow their heads, and shriek as in despair.  
Scant shield to-night for flesh and blood is feather, hair, or fur :  
From north to south, for many a mile, there is no life astir.

The gaudy jay with painted crest has stowed his plumes away,  
The sneaking wolf forbears to howl, the mountain cat to prey.  
The deer has sought the laurel brake, her form the timid hare,  
The shaggy bear is in his den, the panther in his lair.

From east to west, from north to south, for twenty miles around,  
To-night no track shall dint the shroud that wraps the frozen  
ground.

I sit and listen to the storm that roars and swells aloof,  
Watching the fitful shadows play against the rustic roof,  
And as I blow an idle cloud to while the hours away,  
I croon an old-time ditty, in the minor key of A.

And from the embers beams a face most exquisitely fair—  
The maiden face of one I knew—no matter when or where,  
A face inscrutable and calm, with dark, reproachful eyes,  
That gaze on me from limpid depths, or gusty autumn skies.

And there may be a reason why I shun the blatant street,  
To seek a distant mountain glen where three bright waters meet.  
But why I shun the doors of men, their rooms a-light and warm,  
To camp in forest depths alone, or face a winter storm,  
Or why the heart that gnaws itself will find relief in rhyme,  
I cannot tell: I but abide the footing up of Time.