

**LAND OF THE LINGERING  
SNOW. CHRONICLES OF A  
STROLLER IN NEW ENGLAND  
FROM JANUARY TO JUNE**

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Land of the lingering snow. Chronicles of a stroller in New England from January to June by  
Frank Bolles

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*CHRONICLES OF A STROLLER IN  
NEW ENGLAND  
FROM JANUARY TO JUNE*

BY

FRANK BOLLES



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## LAND OF THE LINGERING SNOW.



### FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW.

SUNDAY, the eleventh day of the new year, was what most people would call a good day to stay in the house. The face of New England winter was set. No smiling sky relieved its grimness, no soft breeze promised a season of relenting. The notes of the college bell were muffled and the great quadrangle was deep with snow, as I left Old Cambridge behind me and sought the hills of Arlington three miles or more to the north. Slowly climbing the heights, after my car ride, I looked back at the world I had left. The sky was a mass of dull gray clouds, with a copper-colored spot where the sun was hiding. Boston and Cambridge lay under a pall of smoke and dun-colored vapor. The broken ridges from Belmont to the Middlesex Fells were buried deep in snow, the soft whiteness of which was interrupted by patches of dark pines, dotted with stiff cedars, or shaded

by the delicate etching of birches and elms. The air was in that condition which favors the carriage of distant sounds. I heard the rumble of trains on the Fitchburg, Massachusetts Central and Albany railways on the one hand and of those on the Northern roads on the other. Now and then the tooting whistle of a train sounded like the hooting of a mammoth owl.

Entering the woods, I found written upon the snow the records of those who had travelled there before me. A boy with his sled had been across to a pond in the hollow. A dog had followed him, running first to one side, then to the other. Further on I struck another track. The prints were smaller than the dog's, round, and in a single line, spaced quite evenly, like those of a fox. Somebody's cat had been hunting on her own account. In an open space, bunches of goldenrod and asters had been pulled to pieces, and all around their stalks the footprints of small birds, perhaps goldfinches or redpolls, were thick. Not far away the snow on an open hillside was pencilled by the rising stems of barberry bushes. From the pine woods to these bushes numerous tiny paths led. The most dainty feet had printed their story there. The journeys seemed to have been made in darkness, for the paths made queer curves, loops, false starts into the open pasture and quick re-

turns to the woods. The barberry bushes had been found, however, and were thoroughly ensnared in the tracks. The mice which formed them had made holes in the snow near the stems of the bushes, and these holes led through long tunnels down to the ground and possibly into it. Among the pitch pines, old orchards, and chestnut trees squirrel tracks were countless. Most of them were those of the red squirrel, but in deeper woods I found records of gray squirrels as well. Along frozen brooks, where alders, willows, privet, and rosebushes were thick, the small brown rabbits had been feeding and paying moonlight visits to each other. In an orchard I found a place where a crow had alighted and marched about with long strides. Most interesting of all were the hurried tracks of a flock of birds which had been feeding on barberries, juniper and privet berries. They had been disturbed by a dog and had skurried through the thicket, their sharp toes printing innumerable "crow's feet" in the snow. What were they? I pushed on to see, and soon started a flock of fifteen quail from a dark grove of pines. Later I found one cuddled up in a hollow in the snow under a juniper, eating the berries over her head. I nearly stepped upon the bush before she flew.

Descending into a ravine filled with ruddy