

fire is crackling comfortably and cozily in the stove, and they can see the snowflakes falling outside and covering the Christmas corn-sheaf. A delicious smell of roasting comes from the kitchen, and in the dining-room the long table is laid for a good, old-fashioned dinner with good old wine. How nice and comfortable everything is! One might fall ill with longing to be home. But wait, wait; when summer comes. . . .

“Oh, the road to the stars is both long and difficult!

“Tuesday, December 31st. And this year too is vanishing. It has been strange, but, after all, it has perhaps not been so bad.

“They are ringing out the old year now at home. *Our* church-bell is the icy wind howling over glacier and snow-field, howling fiercely as it whirls the drifting snow on high in cloud after cloud, and sweeps it down upon us from the crest of the mountain up yonder. Far in up the fjord you can see the clouds of snow chasing one another over the ice in front of the gusts of wind, and the snow-dust glittering in the moonlight. And the full moon sails silent and still out of one year into another. She shines alike upon the good and the evil, nor does she notice the wants and yearnings of the new year. Solitary, forsaken, hundreds of miles from all that one holds dear; but the thoughts flit restlessly to and fro on their silent paths. Once more a leaf is turned in the book of eternity, a new blank page is opened, and no one knows what will be written on it.”