

happy; and how could it be otherwise? His family are re-united, his dearest household treasures are on all sides of him, and if he be a man of some imaginative power he may, while the young people merrily chat, and the elder ones gossip about anything and everything pleasant, call up before his mental eye a vision of the same scene being enacted in every dwelling in the land, from the highest to the lowest, and while thus engaged philosophise on the effect of the festival of Christmas on society at large. He discerns in Christmas not an ordinary feast, but one in which unstudied and involuntary homage is offered to the Divine Being, not only by our worship of Him and our gratitude for His bounties, but by the unbidden spontaneous feeling that to give to the poor is to give to Him, who gave Himself up for us, for rich and poor alike."

New Year's Day is also an interesting Anniversary—being generally observed as a day of social intercourse, and mutual congratulations. May 1864 be to our patrons, friends, and the public, a year of moral, intellectual and general progress—a year of prosperity—a year of happiness.

GRATITUDE:

When the nature of gratitude is considered in its proper light, as a debt which we have contracted, and which consequently must be discharged, we see at once that the merit or demerit of the individual to whom we owe this debt has nothing whatever to do with the payment of it. A generous mind would perhaps feel more bound to discharge it to an unworthy object, simply because where respect or love was wanting, grateful feeling would be all that could with propriety be offered. But, as in all such cases, the debt, though just, must still be painful and humiliating, it is of the utmost importance, both to young and old, that they should be careful never to be the willing recipients of obligations from persons whom they neither love nor esteem. They need great watchfulness in this respect, and sometimes from their over-willingness to incur obligations, involve themselves in connections and associations highly disadvantageous. It is an excellent plan for young women always to put this question to themselves before they accept an offered kindness—"Is the person who offers it one whom I should like to feel indebted to?" Or, "Am I prepared to make all the return of gratitude to that person which would, under similar circumstances, be due to the most praiseworthy and distinguished individual of my acquaintance?"—*Mrs. Ellis.*

SNOW AT CHRISTMAS.

What better sport is there than sliding down hill? Take your sled on a clear, winter day—start from the top of a long slippery hill—and—away you go—sliding, rushing along—faster and faster—your very blood dancing in your veins—now jumping over this knoll and then over that—bouncing away to the bottom of the hill. What if your feet are cold, and your fingers too? Off of your sled quick, and trudge back again—the exercise will warm you ready for another start.

Well do I remember a good time I had years ago. It was two days before Christmas—there was a heavy fall of snow, and all of us boys, and some of the girls too, were rejoicing over the capital fun we should have as soon as it stopped snowing.

In the afternoon as we left school, one of our number, who was always prophesying about the weather, said, "See! how red it is in the west! and look, the wind is in the north—it will stop snowing before morning, and will be cold enough." "What sport we will have then!" said another who stood by; "I will have my 'Gen. Jackson,' ready to run a race with any of you!"

And sure enough, the next morning it was clear and cold, and half an hour before school we boys were at work, clearing away the snow, and making a good path on the hill just back of the school-house; before we had finished, however, the bell rang, and with red cheeks and cold fingers we rushed into the school-house out of breath, and flocked about the stove, where there was a rousing wood fire; some of us who were too eager to get warm paid for it dearly—soon our fingers and toes began to smart. Upon the advice of some one, we ran our fingers into our hair; but what were we to do with our toes? We were not long to consider—the teacher calling the school to order directed us to find our seats, and we soon forgot our pains in getting ready for recitation.

As it was the day before Christmas, we were dismissed early in the afternoon. Once out of school, there was a rush for sleds; and boys and girls, all of us were ready for a start. We found our hill one glare of ice, with deep snow banks on both sides; we soon found out how this came. One of the boys asked permission to "go out" during the morning exer-

cises, and had taken the opportunity to draw several buckets of water, and pour it upon the track we had opened.

Soon we were at it, "Gen. Jackson" taking the lead, followed by several larger combatants. I was ready with my long sled, seated in front steering, with two of the girls behind; all were cheering, laughing, and shouting, "out of the way, or I'll run over you!" Gen. Jackson did not keep ahead; but some said, he did not start fair. We were soon back again for another start—one of our number, more adventurous than the rest, took his sled in his hands, ran a short distance, and then threw himself at full length on the seat, using his feet behind for steering; when half way down the hill, and at full speed, suddenly his sled turned, and away he went head first into the snow bank, nothing left but his feet, kicking furiously in the air; he soon found his way out, with a red face and clothes covered with snow. We all laughed heartily, which so vexed him, that he left the hill and was not seen again that day; but I was as unfortunate, for soon after, when near the bottom of the hill, with my sleigh load of girls, over we went, & into a bed of snow, they here, there, and everywhere; and what a time, sleds whizzing past—boys hallooing, girls crying—all in confusion. We soon found that we were all safe, no one hurt, and all was forgotten in the excitement. The next day was Christmas, warm, and the snow melting; and from the way the snow-balls flew one would think we were bound to make the best use of it. But talking about snow-balls puts me in mind of a story I read not long since in a book called, "The Private Life of an Eastern King," in which an Englishman, who lived for some time in Oude, in Hindostan, describes, at length, the strange doings of the king of the country. He was a whimsical, passionate, and often very cruel fellow, with the power of doing pretty much as he liked. One day they told him about snow and snow-balling, and he tried to imitate the fun with flowers for snow-balls. Here is the story:—

"Christmas sports led to a description of what winter was; winter led to snow; snow to snow-balling. We described to his majesty the art and pastime of snow-balling as well as we could. To a man who had never seen snow, it was not very easy to describe it vividly.