

# Snow and Winter Sport

Pictures from Photos by  
The Bee Staff Artist

**S**NOW brings certain problems to the city that are not in anywise experienced in the country; rather, maybe, the problem that must be faced in the country is amplified in the city to a degree unknown in the country. A snow blockade is serious enough, wherever encountered, but what would be only an inconvenience in a rural district, in the urban amounts to a costly proposition, owing to the immense traffic that must be kept moving without cessation, no matter what the weather is. People in the big cities have come to depend on receiving their daily supplies each day, carrying nothing along unless it be fuel, and even this must be moved rapidly during the stormiest weather, for it is impossible that all should have ample stock on hand all the time. This is but one of several phases of the snow problem in a city. In other winters The Bee has shown by pictures how the downtown thoroughfares are kept open when the snow drifts high and fills all open places with its fleecy piles. These pictures will be well remembered as showing the street railway sweepers, the snowplows sent out by the city authorities, the gangs of men shoveling away the accumulations, the wagons loaded with the soiled and trampled mass and similar incidents in the fight to keep traffic moving. But the snowstorm in the city has another side.

When the bare and frozen hillsides are covered to a sufficient depth, thousands of merry, healthy sons and daughters of the metropolis appear with their sleds, and the air is filled with the shoutings of the gleeful coasters. It is one sport in which all can participate, for it requires no especial skill and affords an amount of enjoyment and genuine pleasure for the effort put forth that exceeds probably any other outdoor sport. Given a good sled with steel-shod runners and the boy or girl who cannot have fun is hopeless. Omaha is particularly adapted to the enjoyment of coasting, being built among the hills, with declivities of all degrees of descent running in every direction. Many of the best hills for coasting are paved with asphalt or brick, thus affording a basis for a track of a quality unknown in the country. Some hills are grass-covered slopes in the summer, but these make splendid ways in the winter down which to tear with speed like that of the wind, and all are well patronized whenever there is enough snow to make coasting possible.

In sleds, as in all things, great advance has been made in the last few years. Some of us whose minds go back a generation can easily recall how proud we were to have a "jumper" made of hickory saplings, bent and pinned together with tenons and dowel-pins of the same material. Unwieldy they were, but strong and staunch, and if they did not possess beauty, they had at least the merit of speed and durability. These gave way in time as our prosperity grew, until we had sleds that in a measure approached the light and elegant models of the present time. Once an effort was made to plant the toboggan in this latitude, but it didn't take well. One season was enough, and the return to the good old Yankee model was spon-



MAKING "BUTTERFLIES" IN THE NEW FALLEN SNOW.

chanics has come to the aid of the pleasure seeker, and the "traveler" of today is as far ahead of the "bobs" of yesterday as the steel-shod runner is ahead of the hickory "jumper." The traveler is frequently a most gorgeous and luxurious affair, upholstered and decorated until it is a thing of beauty as well as utility. It is built as solidly as a locomotive, is equipped with brakes, steering gear, and all appliances for safety that experience can suggest. But one may doubt if its patrons ever experience anything like the thrill of pleasure that was born of the old-time "bobs," which added to the other exhilarating features of the sport the delightfully uncertain spice of danger. But coasting accidents are rare nowadays.

No one who has ever experienced the keen delight of the rush downhill through the crisp winter air, with the snow-spume flying sharp against the face, will ever forget it. It exhilarates as nothing else can, and sends the blood dancing and tingling all through the body, bringing a sensation of enjoyment and buoyancy that is a certain precursor of good health. The merry youngster or the child of a larger growth and more sedate ways, can tug his sled to the top of the long incline, one of a throng bent on making the trip. Then with a whoop he pushes off, and away he goes. Eyes glued to the track, one foot stuck out behind to serve as a rudder, body bent forward and closely crouched on the narrow sled top, he makes a ride apparently through the air. Faster and faster moves the sled, until it fairly attains a speed that takes the breath. The track is but a blur ahead, and the eyes grow dizzy



SLED RIDE FOR BABY SISTER.



READY TO START AT THE DROP OF THE CAP.

taneous. That the Yankee idea is the correct one has been demonstrated by the fact that it has been adopted by the expert coasters of the land of the north from whence the toboggan came, and while it has not entirely supplanted the broad, flat-bottomed Canadian contraption, it is used whenever anyone wants to make a speed record or to do a big jump on the track. On one of the courses near Montreal, where coasting has been reduced to a science, a jump of sixty feet is recorded. A fine hand sled may now be bought for 95 cents, whereas not so many years ago the irons for the runners could not have been purchased for that amount. This is another evidence of our progress as a people.

But the children do not monopolize the fun of coasting in the city. Grownups have still a considerable capacity for its enjoyment, and they go at it with as much zeal and enthusiasm as the youngsters. In this, too, the advance in me-

with the rush. Maybe there is a jump in the hill; here the coaster braces himself on his hands, and lets the rest of his body lie limp. Over the jump dashes the sled, and with a swoop like a gigantic bird it covers the space below, settling on the track. This is the supreme test of skill as a coaster. If the rider be able, and understand his business, he has risen above the sled when at the top of his flight and is holding only by his hands; when the sled alights, his arms act as springs, and he gently lowers himself without a jar onto the top once more, and is away for the finish without unpleasantness. If he does not know how to do this, he not only makes a poor jump, but comes down with an awful bump, and maybe a spill when the sled strikes ground again. The "traveler" isn't built for taking the jumps, and only the foolhardy undertake to negotiate the hurdles with one.



THE RACE FOR THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL.