

which shall be inexpensive, and yet pretty and quite original. I saw such an elegant pinafore-apron the other day, made by a young girl to hide her old winter dress. The material was a cheap sateen, of a dark pink shade, decorated with little flowers, and trimmed all round the edge with a cheap embroidery. The bill was triumphantly produced for my inspection, and amounted to two shillings and tenpence half-penny! The cheap cottons, with blue or pink stripes, are very pretty for the making of these winter pinafores; or, if these should be thought too cold, or their washing too expensive, there are so many pretty flowered Pompadour-like materials, that no difficulty will be found in selecting something pretty and inexpensive.

And now I am going to conclude my chat on Winter Clothes with a few explanations, and a little advice about purchases, and the cutting-out of

MATERIALS.

It may be thought that I have suggested a very short list of materials from which to select a winter dress. To tell the truth, the essential part of economical dressing, both for young and old, is to choose good all-wool, and quite unremarkable materials, avoiding mixed fabrics of wool and silk, or wool and cotton. So with this view I have left out all such combinations from the list for your choice. Everything *prononcé* in style, or at all peculiar in shape, must be avoided, and for two reasons—that it shows the date of its purchase, and the true lady should be neither dowdy, nor antiquated. All peculiarities of dress are sure to be commented upon, and however good-natured our friends may be, we should endeavour in this way to avoid giving them subjects for either discussion or caricature.

CUTTING-OUT.

In cutting-out a costume, first cut out the skirt, then the bodice and over-skirt. With the aid of a little ingenuity, the under portions of the sleeves will probably come out of the pieces. Leave the trimmings to the last, at any rate, and use-up the scraps for it. It will frequently be found that, by facing the fronts, instead of turning down the hems, of jackets and bodices, and by adding small pieces where they will not be seen under the arms, both the fronts may be cut from the same width of material. The safest way of proceeding is to lay all the pieces of a pattern on the material at once, as it will then be possible to judge of the most advantageous method of cutting it out. When it is a striped material, try to place a perfect stripe in the middle of the front, and in the centre of the back, if there be no seam. But, in any case, be sure that the stripes, or checks, match, and that those of the two sides correspond.

The straight part of the sleeves should come above the elbow, and the bias part below. Whenever anything has to be cut on the "bias," be sure to do so *exactly*, or it will not hang nor sit nicely. In cutting out a skirt, the front sides of the gores must always be straight, and the sloped or bias sides towards the back, carefully avoiding a seam either down the back or the front breadths.

In cutting materials that are figured, or that have a nap, be very careful to have all the parts of the pattern cut the same way of the material, that is, with the figures placed all the same way, the nap of the cloth running downwards, and the pile of velvet running either all up, or all down, as may be preferred.

And in conclusion remember three things:—that, to be really well dressed we must select such clothes as will be suitable wear when we pursue our daily avocations; that we must be comfortable, both in and out of doors, and that we must always strive to look exactly what we are; as true and upright girls, without silly vanity, or foolish finery.

HEALTHY RECREATIONS.

NO. I.—SKATING.

By the Author of "Skating and Scuttling."



HAVE taught many girls of various ages how to skate, and it would be unjust to them not to say that they were far better pupils than boys of the same ages. They seem to have a better idea of balance, and they mostly do as they are told, which is more than can be said for boys in general. And, in consequence, when they are taught to be skaters they rarely degenerate into scuttlers, though they too frequently abandon the ice altogether.

Some years ago lady-skaters were at a disadvantage. Numbers of girls learned to skate very creditably, and if they had pursued their ice-studies steadily, they would have developed into good figure skaters. Now, even with male performers, figure skating is the very poetry of motion, and no more graceful sight could be imagined than the figures when performed by a "set" of eight accomplished lady skaters.

Yet, scarcely any of these girls ever learned even to execute the alpha of figure-skating, *i.e.*, the figure 3, and I never yet saw a female skater who could take her part in a "set."

The reason for this decadence is to be found in Fashion. Young girls dressed in a way which allowed fair freedom to their limbs, and so they got on very well with their skates. But when they grew up, the tyrant Fashion seized upon them and put them into crinoline, within which metal or whalebone prison no human being could skate.

Now, however, female dress has assumed a much more sensible form, and costumes have been made expressly for skating as they have been made for bathing; and, as no true skater kicks the legs about, but always keeps the feet close to each other, the close-fitting and short skirt of the skating dress does not in the least interfere with the necessary freedom of the limbs.

And, if the sensible fashion of feminine skating dress will only continue for a few seasons, we may hope to see the poetry of motion in its most perfect and attractive form, and that the coveted "Silver Skate" may be worn at a lady's necklace as well as at a gentleman's button-hole.

As I hope that every girl who reads this magazine will either wish to learn the art of skating, or to improve her style even if she be a tolerable skater, I will give a few hints such as I always gave to my pupils, and begin with stating what to avoid.

Of course, a beginner will have her skates chosen for her by some one who knows how to skate, and she should never hire skates from the men who infest the ice.

Their skates are always of the worst possible

kind, and made in the cheapest possible way. The edges are never sharp, so that there can be no hold of the ice, and the steel generally terminates before the screw instead of passing well behind it.

Then, their skates almost invariably have upturned points, which are not only useless but dangerous, and they have the heel cut off square instead of being rounded. In a good skate the steel barely projects beyond the wood in front, and is equally rounded at either end. The skate dealers will tell you that these sharp heels are useful in stopping suddenly.

Do not believe them.

Certainly, by raising the toes and digging the sharp heels into the ice the skater *can* stop herself within a yard or two, and at the same time cut a couple of long, deep grooves in the ice; but she can stop herself in half the distance by simply spinning round, as every skater knows how, and without damaging the surface of the ice.

I must not be understood to recommend expensive skates for a young girl, especially if she be a beginner. Girls grow, and so do their feet, and it is very seldom that a pair of skates will last a growing girl more than a couple of seasons. Besides, a beginner would spoil a good pair of skates in a few days.

As to length, the skate should be just the length of the boot. It may be a trifle longer, but in that case, it must be set rather backward on the boot, so that it projects *behind* the heel, and not in front of the toe. Boots, of course, should be worn by the skater, and they should be laced and not buttoned or fitted with side springs. They should fit exactly but easily to the feet, so that their tightness can be regulated by the laces. Skating in loose boots is almost impossible, and a tight boot will cause indescribable agonies.

Avoid the straps which cross the instep. One broad strap, with double ends at the toe, and one heel strap, are all that are needed. Indeed, if the boots are perfectly fitting, the heel strap is scarcely needed. I use it myself, but merely employ it as a safeguard in case the screw should break, and I always have it drawn so loosely that a finger can be passed between the strap and the boot.

It will be an advantage to buy the skates for some months before the frost comes on, so as to soften the straps thoroughly before they are wanted. New straps are great nuisances, as they are stiff and apt to stretch, while a strap which has been repeatedly soaked in warm grease or oil, and then stretched, and pulled, and rubbed, will remain as soft and pliable as silk, will accommodate itself closely to the foot, and moreover, will be impervious to wet and consequent rotting.

Grease should also be rubbed daily into the junction of the steel with the wood, as in that case there will be no danger of weakening the steel by rust.

Do not employ any vegetable oil for the straps. Colza oil will do well enough for the skates, but neat's-foot oil is best for the straps. In default of neat's-foot oil, clarified lard, perfectly freed from salt, will answer very well if the lard be heated. Straps thus treated are almost indestructible. I have before me a set of straps more than twenty years old, which have been used in sixteen skating seasons. They are now as serviceable as ever, and will probably be used again this season.

If possible, a special pair of boots should be kept for skating, at all events during the season. Then the skates can be attached to them, the straps placed lightly over them, and thus they can be carried in the hand-bag, which every skater ought to possess. They can be slipped on in a moment, the straps and boot-laces tightened, and thus the tedious and troublesome operation of putting on the skates can be avoided.

Boots last much longer in this way, because they are not pulled to pieces by the repeated insertion and removal of the screws. In a soft substance like leather, the hole soon becomes "screw-sick," and the screw has no hold. Then, either the hole must be plugged, or a new hole made, which will alter the bearings of the skate.

Moreover, when the skater comes off the ice, she has only to loosen the laces and straps and slip her feet out of the skate-boots. The comfort of changing the boots after skating is quite indescribable.

Should no such spare boots be available, the skates should always be fitted to them before they are on the feet. The screw-hole can then be placed exactly in the central line of the foot, which is a matter of no small importance. This hole should be filled in with tallow before starting, and when the skater arrives at the ice all that will be needed will be to clear out the grease.

In the bag should be carried a knife, a small gimlet, a brad-awl for making fresh holes in straps, a little bottle of oil, a large piece of old rag, and a pair of old leather gloves. These are to be worn while putting on the skates, and while drying, wiping, and oiling them after leaving the ice. Also, I very strongly recommend a piece of waterproofing, which can be spread as a seat. It often happens that the skater has to sit down, either to rest or to alter the skates, and if there should have been a slight thaw, or if the sunbeams should have melted the snow or hoar frost, sitting down is scarcely practicable.

Carry *nothing* in the pockets except a handkerchief.

We will now suppose that a young girl has been supplied with skates, &c., and has arrived at the ice. Although it is obviously impossible to teach the art of skating by means of the pen, it is possible to give a few useful hints which will save much time and trouble.

In the first place, use every means to be accompanied from the first by a really good skater, so that you may not acquire bad habits, which can scarcely ever be shaken off. Do not lean on the back of a chair, as is so often advised. You will get into a nasty, stooping, round-shouldered style, and will hardly ever be able to acquire the straight, but flexible form which distinguishes a good skater.

Still less depend on a stick. I regret to say that the skate dealers often sell sticks with spiked ends for the use of beginners. Learning to skate by means of a stick is as wrong as learning to swim with the aid of corks.

No good skater ever carries a stick on any pretence whatever. However skilled she may be a strap may break, or she may come against an unseen pebble or pinch of sand frozen into the ice, and in either case down she goes. Should she have a stick in her hand, she will instinctively grasp it as she falls, and will probably inflict a severe blow upon any one who happens to be near.

Do not allow yourself to be towed along by two skaters for the purpose of getting used to the ice. In the first place, you *must* stoop, and will stoop more and more as the pace increases. Moreover you will be sliding and not skating, and will be confirmed in the idea that ice is slippery. So it is to a slider, but

not to a skater, who has a firm hold of the ice by the sharp edge of her skate.

Just at first, you may cling to the arm of your instructor, but, after a minute or two, depend entirely on yourself. You will feel the most helpless of beings; you will stoop forward; your feet will diverge, in spite of all endeavours to keep them together, and down you will come. You will not hurt yourself, as there is nothing hard in the pockets.

Being down, you will think that you will have to stay there, as getting up again seems impossible. There is, however, no difficulty about it. Kneel upright. Now put the right foot on the ice, lean forwards, and you will be on your feet. Most probably you will tumble down again almost before you are up. Never mind it, but get up again, and after two or

The next step is to make these strokes alternately, and as regularly as possible, and if you persevere, in half-an-hour or so, you ought to get along with some little speed, and to direct your course as you like.

I strongly advise the beginner to continue the first day's practice as long as possible, for next day she will find herself so absurdly stiff that she will hardly be able to put one foot before another. Still, she ought to make her way to the ice, notwithstanding the stiffness, and will find that the best cure is the homeopathic principle.

It is remarkable, by the way, that when any one has become a really good skater he or she will never find themselves stiff, even though they may not have seen the ice for years. Neither do they forget the art.

I remember, many years ago, when the floods round Oxford were frozen, that an old gentleman who had in his time been the crack skater of Oxford, but who had abandoned the ice for some thirty years, could not resist the temptation of many miles of clear, black ice, hard as marble and as smooth as a mirror. So he put on his skates, and after half an hour or so was delighting the spectators with an exhibition of the old school of skating, in which the arms were raised and lowered alternately with the skates, something like the left arm of a fencer when standing on guard or thrusting.

Of course, he could not continue the exercise very long, but he was not in the least stiff, and came on the ice every day as long as the frost lasted.

It is the same with riding and swimming, neither accomplishment ever being forgotten after it has once been attained.

The foregoing instructions are quite sufficient to enable a girl to travel over ice and guide herself in her course. But, as I hope that none of my readers will be content with the mere alphabet of skating, but will desire to make progress in the art, I will give them a few hints.

The first point is to use the outer instead of the inner edge, and until this is done no one can even begin to learn the rudiments of true skating, which depends wholly on the outer edge.

Here I may observe there are just two kinds of legitimate skating, *i.e.*, "travelling on skates," and "figure-skating," both of which depend wholly on the outside edge.

Skate-travelling is seldom used in this country, owing to the brevity of the frosts, and the lack of long, narrow pieces of ice on which to travel. In Holland, however, where canals form almost the chief feature of the country, and the frosts last for a long time, skating forms the chief mode of locomotion in the winter, and the people learn to skate, not as a pastime, but as a mode of travelling.

Children skate to their schools, market-women skate to the markets, bearing their laden baskets on their heads, and a young couple will skate twenty or thirty miles to be married, and then skate back again.

Naturally, a peculiar kind of stroke has come into use, and is popularly called the "Dutch roll." It is executed wholly on the outer edge, the strokes being long and sweeping, and each describing a slight curve some twenty yards in length. It is very deceptive



TWO OF MY PUPILS.

three such harmless falls, you will find that your skates have edges, and that by means of these edges you can at all events prevent yourself from slipping sideways.

This is a most important point gained, and you will now be able to try locomotion.

Place the feet as in the "third position" in dancing, nearly at right angles to each other, — thus, the perpendicular line representing the left foot, and the horizontal line the right.

Now, lean a little to the right, fix the inside edge of the left skate well into the ice, and so push yourself towards the right, bringing up the left foot as soon as you find yourself moving. When you can go towards the right with some certainty, reverse the position of the feet, and push yourself towards the left by pressing against the inner edge of the right skate.

in appearance. It appears to be slow, whereas it is only deliberate, and the swiftest English skater, if put on a Dutch canal, and matched against a Dutch market-woman, with a heavy basket on her head, will be hopelessly beaten in a long race.

At first he runs away from her, and leaves her far behind. But she keeps steadily on her course, with her long, steady, unchanging roll. After the first few miles, the distance between them gradually diminishes, and, strive how he may, the man will find his antagonist gradually creeping up to him, and at last forging ahead.

He may put on as many spurts as he likes, but they will be of no use. She will not alter her pace in the least, but swings herself along with the same unvarying roll, reaching the goal far ahead, and as fresh as when she began.

The skates are made for this mode of travelling, and are quite unfit for figure-skating. They are long in the steel, which projects far in front, and, in women's skates, curls over the toe. Mostly, they are fluted, and the edges are nearly straight instead of curved as in our English skates. Then, in the Dutch travelling roll, the knee is allowed to be bent, which is a heresy in a figure-skater. No matter how accurately a skater may be able to perform the most intricate figures, he will never obtain admission to the Skating Club if he allows the knee of the acting leg to be in the slightest degree bent.

Now for a little advice as to the outer edge.

Some teachers advise that at each stroke the feet should be crossed, so that the outside edge *must* be brought into use. Certainly, it has this effect, but it has two serious defects. In the first place, it is impossible to keep a straight knee if you have to cross the right foot over the left or *vice versa*, and in the

next place, you get into the habit of steering your course by the swing of the off leg, and not by the balance of the body as ought to be done.

The following plan will be found to answer admirably, and will give a good carriage to the body. Put on the ice some conspicuous object, and skate round and round it, keeping the right side towards it, the face always turned towards it, and the arms slightly hanging towards the right side.

In order to do this, the inside edge of the left skate and the outside edge of the right skate will be pressed against the ice.

When you feel yourself at home in this circle, take the left foot off the ice, and you will be on the outside edge. At first you will have to put down the left foot almost immediately, but in a little time you will be able to proceed for a yard or two on the right foot alone. Now go round in the opposite direction, keeping your left side inwards, and going on the outside edge of the left foot.

Now leave the circle and try to skate forwards, but instead of going on the inside edge of the skates as you did before, go on the outside edges. Do not be afraid of leaning well towards the outside edge. You will not fall, although at first you will feel as if you must topple over on your side.

Persevere in these movements, making your strokes longer and longer, and always keeping the knee of the active leg quite straight. When you can make these strokes long, even, and deliberate, which you ought to do after two or three days' practice, you will be fairly set upon your outside edge, and will be ready to begin a course of instruction in Figure Skating.

A SISTER'S LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "WHITE CROSS AND DOVE OF PEARLS," "SELINA'S STORY," ETC.

CHAPTER II.

HOW TO MAKE FIFTY POUNDS.

KATIE resolved to have a talk with her father at the first convenient season, and the opportunity was not long in coming. A few days after Frank left she found Mr. Oxley alone, and in a mood for talk, and thus she broached the delicate subject:

"Papa, are you really in earnest when you tell Frank that this is to be his last year at school?"

"Yes, my dear, I am," and he spoke with the air of one who has made up his mind.

"But, papa, for the boy to leave school before he is fifteen; it is simply ridiculous!"

"Katie!"

"It is, papa. Whatever is he to do with himself?"

"What have many others done with themselves who haven't had a tithe of the advantages he has had?"

"But that is not the point. If he was not to have more he ought to have had less. His education is incomplete. As well ask what you would do with a house completed with the trifling exception of the roof?"



DUTCH GIRLS SKATING TO SCHOOL.