

announced. "I thought fourteen pieces would ha' done it; but it's been a mistake, it seems. 'Ave to get it made, I suppose, to finish the corner."

"Oh, how dreadfully, dreadfully tiresome! We will have to wait weeks and weeks before we can get it, and it will keep everything back."

Peggy wrung her tired hands and looked the image of despair.

"You said that you were sure fourteen pieces would be enough; and we told you at the time to be careful, as it had to be made!"

"Ay, it do seem a pity, don't it? They rarely ever gets it the same shade a second time," the man replied blandly.

Then he jerked his thumb towards the flower-beds, and put a deprecatory question: "Didn't you like them, then? Wasn't they your fancy?"

"I don't know what you are talking about? Was what my fancy?"

"Those 'ere things as they put in yesterday. I thought, maybe, they was something special from the care they took about 'em." He gave an explanatory kick with his foot to the weeds piled up on the gravel path, and there was a pause of two whole minutes before a weak little voice inquired faintly—

"Who took such care? Who put them in? I don't understand."

"The young master up at The Larches and one of his gardeners. They was here for a good two hours. We wondered to see you scratching them up. Joe says to me, he says, 'Go down and tell her,' he says. 'Oh,' I says, 'she knows what she's about!' I says. 'She's not the sort to do a trick like that,' I says."

Peggy's lips positively ached with the effort of twisting them into a smile.

"That was very kind of you," she said. "It would be a silly trick, would it not? Do you think you could boil the kettle for me now? I feel badly in need of some tea."

(To be continued.)

SKATING.

By CHRISTINE HANDLEY, M.A.



OUTSIDE EDGE BACKWARDS.

SKATING is an accomplishment which British maidens have unfortunately all too little opportunity of acquiring. So provokingly fleeting are the visits of the Ice Fairy that skating enthusiasts are fain to fly from perfidious Albion across the sea to Switzerland or Holland (the home of skating) for practice in their beloved art. And in very sooth, which of us, having once tasted the delight of skimming on steel-shod foot over ice-bound lake or river, does not long for more? In the gay time of the Stuarts, even the practical Pepys, watching the graceful gyrations of the ladies and cavaliers of St. James's, felt constrained to admit, when he "did see the people sliding with their skates," that it was a "very pretty art."

To become adepts in this desirable accomplishment it is best to begin on an up-to-date basis, having due regard for the mighty

principle of evolution—that is to say, by making one's earliest essays in childhood's happy days, when monkeyish propensities and consequently the blindly-imitative faculties are at their strongest. But to a self-conscious maiden, what can be more galling than to feel herself absolutely ungraceful and awkward and helpless, and to find her efforts at a graceful easy glide end in ignominious downfall on the hard ice? Her body gets painfully bumped, certainly, but worse than the ache of the bruise is the smart of wounded dignity. Therefore the girl desirous of adding skating to the list of her accomplishments would spare herself much needless pain by leaving her dignity at home for the day. Then moral agony, at any rate, will be spared her, for fall she certainly will, and that right early and often, be it said.

While divesting herself of her dignity, let the would-be skater not forget to put on warm stockings and sensible lace-up boots. The salient features of the "sensible" boots should be: (1) low flat heels; (2) strong soles; (3) roomy square or rounded toes. In very pointed boots the toes are crushed together; consequently the blood is

unable to circulate, and exquisite pain is the result.

The question of boots is indeed a most important one for the novice in the art of skating. No one can learn to skate whose feet are cold and aching. Under such conditions the muscles lose their elasticity and the ankles their strength. Therefore, O maiden desirous of learning, do your best, as far as in you lies, to aid the circulation by having suitable foot-gear. Your boots should not err on the side of largeness any more than on that of undue tightness. The uppers should be laced up sufficiently tightly to give a sense of support to the ankle.

Having disposed of the question of boots, we now come to that of skates.

They may be roughly divided into two classes—the old-fashioned variety, partly made of wood, and attached to the boot by means of a screw and straps, and the newer American skate, fashioned entirely of metal. The latter certainly bears off the palm for convenience, but for the beginner the balance of comfort lies with the old-fashioned wooden skate, which screws into the heel, and is strapped round the toes and ankle. The Barney & Berry metal skate is much more speedily put on. It is attached to the boot by means of clasps, two of which bite the sole of the boot and three the heel. It is adjusted by means of a screw behind the heel, which is turned by a key. But to the unaccustomed ankles of a beginner the weight of a metal skate is very tiring, and therefore the wooden variety is to be recommended till some degree of proficiency is attained. For figure-skating



EIGHT.



IN THE TWILIGHT.

it is best to have a pair of blades fastened by a Mount Charles fastening to a pair of boots specially reserved for skating. It is important that these blades should be neither too much curved nor too flat, where they come into contact with the ice. The perfect skate should form a segment of a circle having a radius of seven feet. Many figure-skaters like the Dowler—a blade-skate with concave sides. But to return to the preliminaries of skating. A beginner feels much more comfortable on a pair of skates whose blades have had the keen edge taken off them by use than on a brand-new pair. Therefore let the aspirant after prowess in skating, having obtained an already-used pair, wend her way on her sensibly-shod feet to the ice and there have her skates securely screwed and strapped on. Then, by the aid of a helping hand, let her rise. She will feel a desperate inclination to cling to that hand, but she must screw up her courage, relinquish it, and learn to stand alone till she feels fairly steady. She should then try to walk on her skates. Her feet will make wild dashes for liberty and try to glide from under her, but she must do her best to keep her ankles rigid and a good heart. The beginner should bear in mind the fact that it is in the study of the law of balance that the whole art of skating lies. To acquire an insight into that law, the tyro will find it a great help to stand feet together leaning rather forward than backward, get someone to push gently behind, and so, without any attempt at striking out, be propelled at a gentle rate over the ice. Care must be taken to keep the feet parallel; otherwise inelegance and disaster will ensue.

After a few doses of intelligent help, one feels a courageous desire to master the mysteries of at any rate the ordinary inside edge, and starts off proudly alone. The proverbial fate will surely ensue; but by bearing in mind one or two simple laws, serious disaster may be avoided. Always remember to keep the weight of the body forward. So you will avoid testing the strength of the ice with the back of your skull. Secondly, think of what you were told so often when a little girl, and turn your toes out. This will render it impossible for the feet to go very far astray. In the third place, don't be afraid, when striking out on one foot, to lift the other off the ice, holding it just behind the

performing foot. If you feel yourself falling, you can always put your reserve skate down, and so regain your tottering balance. Fourthly, keep the ankle as rigid as possible.

After a little practice on these lines, the beginner will be able to skim over the ice at quite a respectable rate. But now attention must be given to style. Just as very few people can use either hand indifferently, so almost everyone feels more at home on one foot than on the other. After a little practice you invariably find that you are much better on one foot—either right or left, as the case may be. Then it behoves you to devote all your attention to the erring member. Endeavour to make your strokes perfectly equal; above all, keep on one foot as long as possible. Lay your weight well on the foot you are striking out with, so as to make it describe a proper curve. Don't brandish the unoccupied foot ungracefully in front or at the side, but hold it behind the other with the toe turning well outwards, so as to be ready to begin a

new stroke at right angles to the end of the previous one. Each stroke on the inside edge should describe a quarter of a circle. Should you commit the blunder of sliding along the ice on the flat of your skate-blade, a proper curve cannot be described. Avoid the error therefore by turning the toes well out and pushing off alternately to the extreme right and left. Above all, take warning by Mr. Kipling's "'Eathen," who "keeps his side-arms awful and leaves 'em all about." A windmill may be a pleasing addition to a landscape; but don't play at being one. Remember you were not built for the purpose. Sometimes one sees a really good lady figure-skater looking absolutely displeasing to the eye, simply because of her windmill propensities.

The ordinary forward roll will be found a restful mode of progression for the tyro in skating. The course described by the roll is a double serpentine. To accomplish it get up a little speed by striking out for a few strokes in the ordinary way; then place the feet together parallel to one another; lean the weight alternately on the inside edge of each skate in turn. The necessary impetus is thus given, and the wavering course may be continued *ad lib.*

The roll done backwards looks very pretty, and is simple. Proceed exactly as in the forward roll, remembering to put plenty of weight on the toes of each foot in turn.

Being proficient in these preliminaries to skating, and having paid due attention to doing those things which we ought to do, and to leaving undone those things we ought not to do, the skater now, we will suppose, cherishes yearnings after cutting figures. The initial step to the performance of all fancy skating is skating on the "outside edge"—which, being interpreted, means skating on the outer of the two edges of the skate you are striking out on, *i.e.*, the right-hand edge of the right skate and the left-hand edge of the left skate. It seems as if it should be very easy to get on the outside edge of the skate-blade by simply bending the ankle outwards. In reality a little perseverance is necessary. A good way to learn the outside edge is to skate quickly in a circle, always crossing the outside foot in front of the other. The inside foot will then be on the outside edge. Study to lean on the inside foot and remain on it as long as possible, and soon the glides on the outside edge will grow longer and longer, and



GRINDELWALD AT CHRISTMASTIDE.

you will complete a whole stroke. Having mastered the outside edge on one foot, skate round in a circle in a contrary direction, and so educate the other.

Some people prefer to learn the outside edge by doing the ordinary forward roll, in which the two feet are kept continuously on the ice. This serpentine skating may serve as a preliminary to the outside edge, if, instead of leaning, as is natural, on the foot which is doing the inside edge, they rest the weight on the other skate, which, being parallel to its fellow, is on the outside edge.

When the rudiments of this indispensable outside edge have been mastered, it should be practised straight forward, striking out on it on alternate feet. It will be remembered that when pushing off on the inside edge the toes are turned out. When skating on the outside

other side—that is to say, when on the right outside edge incline the head towards the left, thus throwing the left shoulder back; and when on the left outside edge incline the head towards the right, thus throwing the right shoulder back.

When you feel quite at home on the outside edge forwards, the "hour for which the years did sigh" has come, and you may be properly introduced to the fascinating intricacies of figure-skating. A simple 3 is the generally-accepted skater's *pons asinorum*. Get over that *creditably*, and your skating future is assured. Observe the italics of the word "creditably." Lots of people do a 3 badly. Don't be one of the vulgar herd; try to be one of the select superior few, and do it properly as follows. Start off on the outside edge of whichever foot you choose, remembering the

foot) once more, straighten the knee, and lean well back on the heel of the skate. Turn the toe of the "off" foot well out, so as to ensure the "off" shoulder being kept well back.

At first it certainly needs an effort of will to take the backward turn; but when one reflects that the "off" foot is always there ready to be put down to steady one, confidence is soon gained; and as we become bolder, so does the erstwhile feeble, waggly tail of the 3 increase in boldness and magnitude. Care must be taken to make the angle of the 3 as clear as possible.

There are many amplifications and glorifications of the 3. A triple 3 is accomplished by a second sharp turn on to the forward outside edge. A very pretty and difficult figure called the rose is achieved by multiplying the turns and making all the curves of exactly the same length till the skater arrives at the point he started from.

But let us return to simple figures. To describe an inside forward 3, commence with a curve of forward inside and finish on a curve of back outside.

To do an 8, strike off boldly on the outside edge on the right foot, leaning the body well over to the right, and throwing back the left shoulder, till a circle is nearly completed. The left foot should be held behind the right with the toe well turned out, so that the heels of both feet are nearly touching. Before your impetus has quite died away, bring the left foot forward, cross it over the toe of the right, and put it down so as to point well away to the right. Lean the weight of the body on to the foot just put down, and describe a complete circle on the outside edge on the left foot. At first the ends of the curves refuse to fit in with one another, and it seems impossible to complete a circle on one foot unaided. But the skater's motto should be "Head and heart high!" It is best not to attempt to make the circles of the 8 too small.

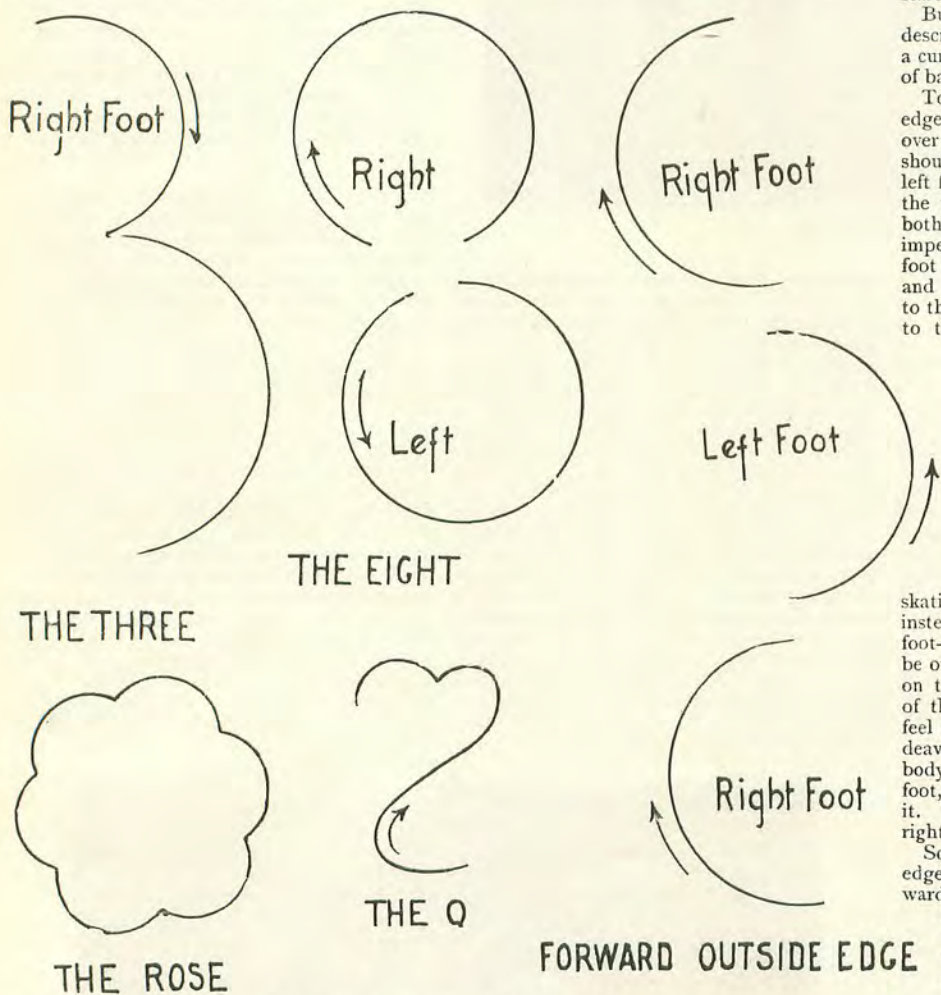
To proceed to more difficult figures, it is essential to be able to do the outside edge backwards. Like the forward outside it is best learnt by skating in a large circle, but backwards instead of forwards, of course. The inside foot—the foot next the centre—will then be on the outside edge, and the outside foot on the inside edge. Try to lean the weight of the body on the inside foot, and, when you feel secure, take up the outside foot. Endeavour to hold yourself upright. Turn the body sideways. When you are on the right foot, hold the left shoulder back and look over it. When you are on the left foot, hold the right shoulder back.

Some may find it easier to begin the outside edge backwards by doing the inside roll backwards, trying to transfer the weight on to the foot which is on the outside edge. More courage is needed in acquiring the backward outside edge than in the performance of 3's and 8's.

Its difficulties overcome, a Q may be attempted. For the forward Q, start off on the right outside edge forwards. Before the circle is completed, change to inside edge on the same foot. A turn to outside back completes the figure.

The so-called spread-eagle is very effective. To perform it, skate straight forward till some speed is attained. Then turn out the toes until the feet are in a straight line, with the heels almost touching. In order to proceed in a straight line, the body should be kept upright; if the body is inclined slightly forwards, the skater describes a circle.

These few simple figures and variations thereon introduce the seeker after proficiency to a bewildering maze of intricate gyrations. There we will leave her, happy in the consciousness of "something attempted, something done," but dreaming of a new and wider world of figures still to conquer.



edge the opposite obtains, and the toes should be turned in at the beginning of each stroke. To ensure this, the essential for a graceful swing, at the end of each stroke, the foot which is about to describe a curve must be placed parallel with the foot which has just finished one. As in skating on the inside edge, remember to carry the "off," or unemployed, foot behind, close to the heel of the other foot, with the toe well turned out. Look to the heaven above you, not at the ice beneath your feet.

It is not essential to success in the performance of the outside edge to keep the knee of the leg on which your weight is resting absolutely rigid after the push-off. When swerving off to the right or to the left, the head should not be turned in the direction of the curve. In fact, it should look rather towards the

rule of the rigid knee, which rule is unbending as the law of the Medes and Persians. When the stroke is half completed turn quickly and do another half-stroke on the inside edge of the same foot. This quick turn and change of balance calls for practical rather than verbal exposition. To understand and surmount its difficulties, it must first be attempted. In the early attacks on the 3 it will be found easier at first to take rather a long stroke on the forward outside edge, and not to take the redoubtable turn on to the inside backwards till the forward impetus is pretty well lost. Just before taking the turn throw the weight of the body on to the toe of the skate. Bring the shoulder corresponding to the unemployed foot forwards and the skate turns easily. As soon as you are on the back inside edge push back the shoulder (corresponding to the "off"