

that of an undeveloped man. She felt as an adult may to a weak child whom she befriends.

It scarcely hurt her that he came so seldom to her sick room. She even laughed a little to herself at the nature of his visits. At a certain time every afternoon, on his return from his constitutional, he would knock at her door. The servant had put a chair in readiness just in front of the screen which sheltered her bed from draughts. On this he would seat himself, answering to her cheerful "Well, Cuthbert," with a melancholy "Well, sister." She asked him a question or two which he answered shortly, looking at her the while with a doleful expression, and remarking from time to time, "I am sorry you are sick," and then with a muttered comment on the heat of the room, or fear of tiring her, he would give her a limp hand to touch and edge himself out of the apartment.

Nevertheless, though he could not exert himself for her, there was not a thought of his heart but what was loyal to his sister. He regretted her illness. He was lost without her.

No allusion was ever made to the love affair which had not ended in marriage. Hannah, who could not conceive any woman refusing an offer, thought that Mr. Gray had behaved badly to her mistress, and expressed to her intimates a desire to give him a piece of her mind. The brother thought they had been mistaken. He would not wound his sister by touching on the subject. It was in accordance with his usual views that people were false, and therefore did not surprise him. Mary let him think what he liked. It did not matter now. Those who have learnt to follow duty care little what is said by those whom they pass on the narrow road.

And so the years rolled by. They made many changes. But the Rev. Cuthbert Jones and his sister remained much

the same. They were considered a quiet, harmless, eccentric couple. To the village people they seemed an institution. The children who had looked up to Mary with a sort of awe were married and had children of their own, and there was a touch of unconscious patronage in their relations with her, due to their wider experience. But she was beloved, this plain, good, homely woman, who was getting constantly more crippled with rheumatism, but who was always gentle, and considerate, and sympathetic.

Then one day while he was preaching to his sparse congregation, the Rev. Cuthbert Jones had an attack of apoplexy, and died.

Death, debts, dilapidations—three very dreary "d's" to poor Mary Jane Jones. She had to see to everything and there was no time to grieve. When at last she found herself in her little cottage, with her occupation gone, she was scarcely in the mood for sorrow. Whatever the faults of his life, her brother had tried to do right. She trusted God would deal gently with him. For herself she had only to be patient a little longer. And patience was no new thing.

The rectory was brightened by the presence of a young energetic man, a fashionable wife, and two or three little children. Mary Jane Jones had no place there, but she expected to remain in the village. But it was to be otherwise. And that too she thought was for the best.

And as we talked together about her admission into the Home for Incurables, I, who had lived for myself in the enjoyment of wealth, and health, and love, and happiness, could not yet find it in my heart to pity her. May my old age be as happy.

Only, it is vain to pretend that the sugar-plums of life always fall to the people who sweeten the lives of others.

IDA LEMON.



SWISS CHILDREN'S WINTER SPORTS.

BY WARD MUIR.

COUNTRY-READED children have a good time all the world over, but surely none more so than in Switzerland. To judge by their appearance at any rate, the observer cannot but believe them to be the happiest little folk on earth. Brown skins, laughing black eyes, sturdy limbs—all indicate an existence than which none can be healthier or pleasanter. In summer there are glorious hills to wander upon, streams to fish in, hay-meadows for play: in winter all the varied delights of snow and ice. Add to this the important fact

that in the "playground of Europe" poverty is extremely rare, and it will be seen that the lot of the younger generation there is a decidedly enviable one.

Winter, as I have said, brings in its train a number of delights unobtainable at any other season of the year. It is of these that I intend to treat.

As I walk along the road in Davos Dorf, my present home, I often hear shouts of "*Achtung!*" (look out), and in a moment half-a-dozen tiny mites on toboggans sweep down

towards me from a side lane of the village. Their speed is headlong but apparently can be checked instantly if necessary. The little folks are as at home on their sleds as their British brothers and sisters on bikes. In and out they shoot, guiding their steeds down the slopes with an art that almost amounts to instinct. It is bred in the bone. Their ancestors for generations past have been accustomed to save their energies by descending slopes, whenever possible, on "luges." The necessary body and leg action for the directing of the machine comes almost as naturally to a Swiss child as walking; indeed many of them are tobogganers at an age when the other form of progression is still a very recently acquired accomplishment.

Lugeing, as practised by the natives, is done in two manners—feet forward and feet behind. The latter is faster and more graceful, but undoubtedly requires greater skill. The boys indulge in this form of the sport as a rule more than the girls, though these



TOBOGGANING.



A RING GAME.

in many cases are also daring riders of that type. The toboggan is controlled by the single foot that trails behind on the snow, its owner reclining on the machine in much the same attitude as an ancient Roman on his couch. In the sitting position, on the other hand, both legs are allowed to hang down in front, the right heel being lowered into the snow when a turn to the right is desired, and *vice versa*. Both feet are put down simultaneously to act as brakes. Their power to stop the toboggan upon the very steepest decline is something surprising. At the same time it must be admitted that this system of control would be utterly useless on anything but roads. The artificially constructed ice-runs so dear to the heart of the danger-loving Britisher in the Alps are another matter altogether. Flying down their glassy surfaces at a speed literally as fast as an express train is a form of the sport in which even the instincts for guidance inborn in the youthful Swiss would prove unavailable to avert disaster.

Outside the door of the village school during lesson hours there is always a little group of luges, just as

at home the children's iron steeds await their owners' pleasure in the cycle-shed. A brother and sister who live at yon hay ch  let on the hillside toboggan down every morning and afternoon to their work, sitting astride their tiny wooden sled as happily as a king and a queen in their carriage. The boy carries a goat-skin satchel for books strapped tightly on his back; the girl has a piece of red wool knitting in her hand. Neither of them wear any extra outdoor clothes excepting woollen mufflers and (sometimes) caps. And this notwithstanding the fact that the temperature after sundown often drops far below zero. Yet they are healthy. Perhaps their hardiness is hereditary. It is curious to note, by the by, that though they can endure the most terrible cold without apparently any evil result, they come from homes whose rooms are kept heated like ovens and where an open window is unknown. Consumption never appears amongst the natives of Davos, though it has been stated that the tendency to contract it is very common in those who emigrate to lower levels. It would appear that the mere altitude of the place is sufficient to kill the tuberculosis microbe, without the addition of thorough



THE HORIZONTAL BAR.

ventilation. One hardly dares, however, to advance such a theory in these days of fresh-air mania. To add that the little folk here rarely catch cold, though constantly getting their feet wet in the snow, may also seem a heresy too terrible for words; but it is none the less a fact.

The children who do not live up a slope skate along the level road to school. "Level" in this connection is merely a comparative term, for as a matter of fact the hard icy surface over which they must travel is, if anything, rather lumpier than the cobbles of one of our older-fashioned streets in England. But this would seem to make no difference whatever to these little athletes. They calmly screw on their skates and go scudding off over the frozen snow in proof that smoothness, though preferable, is far from being a *sine quâ non* for this mode of progression. They do not go at racing speed, it is true, but still the pace they can get up is by no means one to be sneered at. It is quite as great as that of a moderately fast sleigh, and on a decline several times greater. Moreover they rarely, if ever, fall—which is more than most skaters can say.

The road-skating is, of course, a purely straightforward form of the art. But when the children manage to spare time for a turn on real ice, they soon show that they know something of figure-work also. Most of them can manage the "outside edge," that *pons asinorum* of all beginners. Many can cut threes and serpentines in excellent style. The few who really take the trouble to practise soon acquire a very fine control of their feet, though there is a tendency to showiness in action that militates against them in the opinion of the undemonstrative Briton. This, however, is noticeable in all continental figure-skating, and is not therefore a peculiarly Helvetian trait. If these boys and girls would only take a greater interest in the thing, we should hear oftener of the World's Championship for "Kunstlaufen" being carried off by a Swiss instead of a Swede or Austrian, as is generally the case. Unfortunately the fascination of tobogganing engrosses too much of

their spare time; and later on they are naturally occupied with the more serious affairs of life.

Sliding and snow-balling, the two commonest forms of winter fun at home, are comparatively neglected here. It is not difficult to find an explanation of this fact. Where a sheet of ice occurs at all, it is utilised for skating, however small its limits, the less fine art of sliding being therefore tabooed. And as the constant low temperature of the air causes the snow to become too powdery in texture to "bind" properly into balls, the ferocious warfare so dear to the heart of all British children is not very often possible of accomplishment. Mutual pelting with masses of the soft stuff picked hap-hazard from the tops of fences and gate-posts is occasionally indulged in perhaps, but the more effective if less damp system of ammunition can only be brought into play during the course of a thaw. Broken windows are therefore rarer in Davos than might be expected.

The village school playground contains an excellent horizontal bar. It is by no means neglected in winter, though the counter-attractions are numerous. Owing to the depth of the snow around its uprights, it is rather lower than is convenient, but its devotees are undaunted by such a minor drawback as this. They swing and circle upon it, three and even four at a time, with an ease and freedom from falls which many a more accomplished gymnast might envy. How they contrive to keep clear of each other in such a confined space is a mystery.

Summer brings with it the work of cattle-herding and hay-making. Agreeable though these forms of labour must be to the juvenile mind, we can well imagine that the happy—if somewhat cold—days of winter are often looked back upon with regret, and forward to with pleasant anticipation. The season of fogs, rain, and wind, so sad to the younger denizens of our humid isles, is the joy of the Swiss children. They are not—like the mites at home—lovers of winter merely because it happens to bring Christmas in its train.

VARIETIES.

EVERYONE HAS A WATCH.

Our hearts are watches, and every beat
Is a tick that registers Time's retreat;
In the Father's mansion, with marvels rife,
Is the key that has wound them up for life.

William H. Hayne.

DROPPING HIS H'S.—A London 'bus conductor in the City Road, shouting out, "This way for 'Olloway! This way for 'Olloway!" was reproved by a passer-by with the remark, "Hi there, conductor, you've dropped one of your h's!" The conductor was prompt to retort, "Never mind, sir; I'll pick it up again when we get to the Hangel!"

THE GIRL IN THE WRONG.—The angriest girl in a controversy is the one most liable to be in the wrong.

A BIG PENNYWORTH OF PURE WATER.—If any city in the United Kingdom has reason to be satisfied with its water supply it is Glasgow, the mercantile metropolis of Scotland. In Glasgow a £15 householder obtains for seventy-one pence per annum, a continuous never-failing unrestricted stream of the purest water in the world delivered right into his kitchen, wash-house and bath-room. It is calculated that 380 gallons of pure water are delivered to the citizens of Glasgow for every penny paid.

WORK ON.

Little is much when God is in it,
Man's busiest day's not worth God's minute!
Much is little everywhere,
If God the labour do not share,
So work with God and nothing's lost;
Who works with Him does best and most;
Work on, work on.

WHERE IS GREAT JEOPARDY?

A wealthy but uneducated man, living in a seaport town on the east coast, owns many sailing vessels and follows their course over the seas by the aid of the *Times* atlas.

"I've just had a letter," he said the other day to a neighbour, "from one of my captains, and he tells me that he has been in a fearful storm and didn't know but the vessel would go to pieces. But I'll read you from his letter what puzzles me. He says 'the waves rose like mountains and we were driven before the wind, and put into great jeopardy.'"

"Now, what I want to know," added the shipowner, "is where is Great Jeopardy? It must be somewhere on the Mediterranean, but I can't find it on the map."

WHERE OUR FRUIT SUPPLIES COME FROM.—The sources from which foreign supplies of fruit are brought into this country are very various. Currants come almost exclusively from Greece; raisins from Spain and Asiatic Turkey; apples from Canada and the United States; grapes from Spain and Portugal; lemons from Italy; oranges from Spain; plums from France and Germany; pears from France; almonds from Spain, Portugal, Italy and Morocco; and figs from Spain, Portugal and Turkey.

DON'T GET ANGRY.—Two things a girl should never be angry at:—what she can help and what she cannot help.

A MUSICAL CRITIC.

The following epigram was written by Charles Kenney on Mr. J. W. Davison, the *Times* critic and a proficient musical personage in his day:—

"There was a J. W. D., Who wished a composer to be;
But his muse wouldn't budge, So he set up as judge Of
better composers than he."