FOR YOUTHFUL READERS.

INSTRUCTIVE AND USEFUL READING FOR THE YOUNG.

Something About Skates and Skating--A Touching Scene From a Russian Polo Game --The Size of Alligators.

Something About Skates and Skating.

There is no more graceful and healthful exercise than skating. A skillful skater makes one almost look for the wings that the ancients fixed to the ankles of Mercury, Perseus and Minerva. In one thing can the birds be rivaled by humans,

"A they sweep,
On sounding skates a thousand different ways,
In circling poises, swift as the wind along, sings Thompson.

The boy who has never learned to skate has lost a pleasure that is dear to boy's heart, but there are few who have not tried skating, however limited the streams, pond or icy place for practice may have been.

Skates are very old; hundreds, nay, perhaps thousands of years before this crisp winter, skating was a merry sport. Perhaps too many in this age of invention think that more ideas are new than really are so. If we remember that everything we see around us grew up, then we can begin the inquiry about skates that came before the keen edged "club," with all the ardor of historians. It is certain that skates would be of no use in the tropics; we must look for their home in the land of long winters, of crusty snow and slow, ice-bound rivers.

We would not envy the boy of long ago, as he bound the shin-bones of some animal to his feet and went through a kind of sprawling gymnastics that was the skating of the period. In Iceland skates are called isleggir, "ice bones," the shin-bones of a sheep.

If sheep shin-bones were the first skates, then the boy who lived before iron or bronze were known, back in the stone and bone age, could enjoy himself with this cheery sport. The boys of London in the 12th century, Fitz Stephen tells us, in winter bind under their feet a pair of shin-bones, take in their hands poles shod with iron, which at times they strike against the ice, and are thus carried along with the rapidity of a bird on the wing or a bolt discharged from a crossbow. The generous Holland boy, Hans Brinker, was forced to go back to the primitive way, when he had given his skates to a poor friend and had forgotten his chances in the race for the "silver skates."

It is thought that skates came into use in Northern Europe, perhaps in Holland, where it is cold and there is plenty of smooth water, because where the rivers are swift there is no skating. The wooden skates with iron runners curling up into a wonderful spiral terminated with a brass acorn at the point, were introduced into England from the Low Countries. Gossipy Pepys, in his diary of Dec. 1, 1661, records, "To my Lord Sandwich's, to Mr. Moore and then over to the Parke, where I first in my life, it being a great frost, did see people sliding with their skates, which is a very pretty art."

The Scotch have the reputation of being good skaters both in the "fen," or straight swift skating, and the "fancy" skating. Our country has the champion, I think, at present.

A Touching Scene From a Russian Polo Game.

A pathetic story of brute pity is told in the following extract from the letter of a visitor in Russia, to a friend, describing a game of polo:

Horse and rider still lay motionless. Was it possible that the shock could have killed them both? The man lay just as he had been sitting, turned to one side in readiness to strike the ball; so that, while his feet were still in the stirrups' his head and shoulders had fallen backward on the ground.

At this death-like stillness a shudder passed through all the vast assembly; and in the carriage next to us a lady fell suddenly back against the cushions, fainting. Then two or three officers sprang forward to see what had happened, while the players leaped from their horses to assist their fallen comrade. Never have I seen a sight of higher intelligence in a brute than was then exhibited by that little Cossack pony.

As two or three of the officers, stooping, took him by the head to raise him, he looked up at them with pleading, pathetic eyes, as though entreating them to be very careful. Then slowly, cautiously, he allowed himself to be drawn away from that prostrate figure, raising himself as much as possible, that he might not crush or injure his beloved master.

No sooner was this weight removed than the officer's body turned with a quick, convulsive movement, and the next moment stiffened as though suddenly changed to stone. It made every one shiver to see that ominous, ghastly motion. The horse was no sooner on his feet, than, shaking his head free from the hand that held his bridle, and stepping, oh, so carefully, he passed around to where his master's head lay. The great fur cap had fallen backward, leaving the bronzed forehead bared. Then, the bystanders all the while looking on in pitying silence, the poor beast came close up, and putting out his tongue, touched the officer's face lovingly, licking the temples and brow and running his nose caressingly under his chin, as though he would force his master to raise his head and speak to him. Finding this to be of no avail, he lifted his own head sorrowfully, and, looking around at the mute observers of this touching scene, gave a low whinny, which said as plainly as any words could have done:

"Can no one here help him?"

A choking sensation came into my throat and in the carriages close around there were scarcely any eyes without tears. But there was no help. He had injured his spinal column and snapped some ligament connecting with the brain, so that—although he was taken to the hospital and did not cease to breathe for several days—he was virtually a dead man.

A Wise Toad.

A lady used to sit after tea almost every evening on a stone step at the head of a flight of terraces which led from a bay window down into the garden. As this window was not overlooked by any neighbor's window, it was the family custom to leave the curtains up in the evening, and let the cheery light of the student lamp which stood on the large reading table shine out.

One evening, as the lady sat on the step, she saw a large toad hopping on the grass toward her. When he had come within about eight inches of the window, he suddenly settled himself into the long grass, having selected as his resting place a little hollow, so that only the very top of his head and his gleaming eyes showed above the grass.

There he sat, without moving, until the dampness sent his observer into the house. The next evening she found that the toad had already taken his place when she seated herself on the step; and on several successive evenings he was sitting in exactly the same spot by the time the sun had fairly set.

The lady's curiosity was by this time aroused to such a degree that she determined to defy the dampness, and stay in her positon on the step until she saw what the toad accomplished in his hiding place. The next evening, therefore, she provided herself with a thick shawl, and took her accustomed seat, a little later than usual.

As the light faded the toad rose from his position and hopped towards her a little way; then, after solemnly and anxiously regarding her for some moments, he returned to his hollow, evidently deciding that she was a harmless person, not bent on making trouble for him, as he had at first feared.

When the lamp in the window was lighted, it seemed to her that the toad raised his head a little and took on an attitude of great vigilance. The cause was soon apparent.

After a few moments a large moth, attracted by the light, dashed against the window in a vain endeavor to gain entrance. After fluttering wildly against the glass, it suddenly dropped, blinded to the ground, and the toad sprang forward and secured it.

This was only his first victim, and at the end of half an hour the watcher went into the house with her curiosity fully satisfied. Some one to whom she told the story suggested that the toad might have happened on the favorable position the first night; but his friend persisted that he had discovered it by his own unaided intelligence.

The Size of Alligators.

I have seen numerous specimens of our saurian no longer than an ordinary lead-pencil; this was in the season of their hatching. I have also seen a few living specimens about sixteen feet in length. In the autumn of 1875 I obtained for the late Effingham Lawrence, Member of Congress, and Commissioner from Louisiana to the Centennial Exhibition, the dried skin of an alligator which, after at least fifteen inches had been cut from the snout and skull, and ten inches from the end of the tail, still measured seventeen feet ten inches in length. Allowing more than six inches for shrinkage in drying, this monster of his kind, alive, must have measured more than twenty feet. He was killed in the lower part of Bayou Lafourche.

Probably the largest alligator ever seen in Louisiana was killed in a small lake on the plantation of H. J. Feltus in Concordia Parish. According to the statement of Mr. Feltus, now of Baton Rouge, this specimen measured twenty-two feet in length. The great reptile had long been famous for miles around having destroyed numbers of hogs and hounds owned in the neighborhood of his retreat. He had become so wary, from the number of ineffectual shots fired at him, as to be almost unapproachable. Finally he fell a victim to a long shot fired from a Mississippi rifle in the hands of Mr. Feltus, who had persevered in hunting him, having been the greatest loser by his depredations. The huge carcass of this reptile was towed to the bank by a boat. It required the strength of a pair of mules and a stout rope to haul it ashore, where the measurement was made with the result noted above.

A Story of a Flood.

A pathetic story is associated with the little village of Suss, in the Lower Engadine, a wild bleak valley of Switzerland. One day a flood caused by the melting of many glaciers, came roaring down the valley. The pastor's duties had taken him into the village, and his wife, fearing that he might be over taken by the terrible flood, hurried down to the bridge that separated them from the village, just as her husband reached the opposite side.

Without a thought of her own danger, she called out: "Stay, Ulrich; I will come and help you to cross over!" Just as she reached the middle pier the flood came rushing down the gorge in great force, and in a moment swept away the two side piers, leaving her standing alone on the tottering bridge.

The brave woman clasped her hands for a moment in prayer, and then those on the mountain side perceived an expression pass over her face as though she had suddenly remembered something. They saw her hurriedly tear away the keys from her girdle and fling them ashore to her children, who followed her down to the bridge; and they heard her voice sound above the had roar of the rushing water, "There's the keys children!"

A second later, and the devoted mother had disappeared down the ravine. Even in her own terrible danger she had recollected that the keys of the cupboard were in her girdle, and she knew that the children would want their evening meal.—Little Folks.

A Dangercus Guest.

During a dreadful snow storm and inundation in Bengal, the estate of a Mr. Campbell, situated on the island of Sangar, suffered so greatly, that out of three thousand people living on his grounds, only six or seven hundred escaped, and these principally by clinging to the roof of the house. While Mr. Campbell's house was crammed so close as scarcely to admit another individual, what should come squeezing and pushing its way into the interior but an immense tiger. Having reached the room in which Mr. Campbell was sitting, he nestled himself down in one of the corners, like a Newfoundland dog. Mr. Campbell then loaded his gun in a very quiet manner, and shot the dangerous guest dead upon the spot.

SOME FIGURES.

Investigate and Be Convinced and Then Cast Your Vote.

We are in receipt of a pamphlet, entitled, "The Eleventh Census," by Hon. Robert P. Porter, superintendent of census for the United States, says the Okolona Messenger of Mississippi, from which we gather that the number of mortgages recorded during the ten years preceding the 1st of January, 1890, in five states, were as follows: Alabama, 93,828, Iowa, 520,458; Kansas, 654,243; Tennessee, 93,282; Illinois, 612,249. These mortgages covered an aggregate indebtedness of about $2,000,000,000, and there were due and unpaid January 1, 1890, more than $900,000,000; 137,000,000 acres of land and more than 1,500,000 town lots in these five states were encumbered. The amount due on mortgage indebtedness for every man, woman and child in these states Jauary 1, 1890, is as follows: Alabama, $26; Iowa, $104; Kansas, $170; Tennessee, $23, and Illinois, $100. It will be observed that the two Southern states are in better condition than the Northwestern states, and yet the burden of the former is more than they can bear. What, then, must be the fate of the agriculturists of this country if no relief is accorded them in the direction indicated by the Ocala demands in the near future? The superintendent of the census, commenting on the table from which the above figures are taken, says:

"The result of the direct inquiry as to the debt on farms and homes is not yet complete. The average farm and home debt, shown by tabulation of partial returns from counties distributed throughout the Union, is $1,288 for farms and $924 for homes. If these averages hold good for the United States there is an existing debt in force of $2,500,000,000 on the farms and homes of the United States occupied by owners and incumbered. Only some rough results of this inquiry are now known. It is probable that the number of families occupying and owning mortgaged farms and homes does not exceed 2,250,000, leaning perhaps 10,250,000 families that hire their farms and homes or occupy and own them free of incumbrance. The total number of families occupying farms is supposed to be about 4,750,000, so that about 7,750,000 families occupy homes."

The reader should remember that these figures are made for free America, and not for down-trodden Ireland. And yet we are told by the plutocratic press and speakers, "The Farmers' Alliance is a very good—in fact, a most excellent institution, if its members would only keep out of politics." And the Messenger can tell them further, that if they take the advice so freely tendered by the bosses and neglect their duties as citizens, it won't be long until they will be serfs and slaves of the money power. The remedy, therefore, is for the industrial classes to stand shoulder to shoulder in defense of their rights and interests, attend the political primaries and conventions, and instead of voting at the dictation of the machine, vote for Mary and the babies.

Paying Off the Debt.

Contraction of the currency has been going on from year to year for twenty years. It has made money more and more valuable year by year. The money sharks have not only reaped usury but they harvest larger dollars than the ones they planted—measured in labor's products. Those who have money to loan and those upon fixed salaries are interested in contraction. A congressman's salary of $5,000 a year is equal to a salary of $20,000 twenty years ago—that is, as much can be bought with the $5,000 to-day as with the $20,000 twenty years ago. The man in debt (and the majority are in debt) is interested in an expansion of currency volume, and it would but be justice were the per capita volume to remain the same. The man who is in debt and is compelled to pay from 150 to 200 bushels of wheat more for every hundred bushels of wheat that he borrowed, besides interest, is surely robbed—and that's the way our finances have been run. The nation's debt to-day, notwithstanding the billions paid upon it, is as great to-day as at the close of the war—measured in labor's products. That's the way the g. o. p. has been paying off the debt!—The Sentinel.

Only a Blind.

Ever since the Alliance started its business efforts some people have attempted to array Alliance papers against Allliance business enterprises by the foolish argument that it would injure their advertising patronage. It is only a blind; that class of men would not patronize reform papers anyway. They failed to do anything at Indianapolis. The Economist will fight for every Alliance enterprise, and if its advertisers do not like it they can let it alone. And when advertising money becomes a bribe to make re orm papers quiet on reform measures they had better stop taking advertisements, even if they be compelled to suspend.—Economist.

Money in Circulation.

The secretary of the treasury reports the volume of the money in circulation at $1,577,262,070, or $24.38 per capita. This money reported to be in circulation, includes money lost and destroyed, all bank reserves held for the security of depositors and circulation, the gold reserve held for the redemption of greenbacks, money locked up for speculative purposes and every dollar hoarded by misers. Such statements of the money in circulation among the people are calculated to deceive and ought never to emanate from official sources without a full explanation. A part of a truth may be the equivalent to a full grown falsehood.—Topeka Advocate.

The Weekly Advance: A number of pigmy politicians express the fear that in the event that free coinage is adopted, this country will be flooded with that metal from foreign nations. To show how utterly groundless this is as an argument against the free coinage of silver, be it known once for all that the total product of silver the world over is only $150,000,000. Of this amount $90,000,000 is coined out side of the United States, $54,000,000 is coined here, while the remaining $6,000,000 is required by the arts. Secretary Windom settled the question of surplus silver in his report for 1889. He said: "There is no known accumulated stock of silver in the world." This is no idle boast. It is the simple statement of a solemn truth, a truth that will reveal the folly of the present house if they think that the East, the money centers, are deserving of more consideration than the agricultural West and South.

KING SHYLOCK.

He Is the Cunning Wire-Puller of Our American Politics.

"This is not fair. It is not honest. And as a matter of policy it belongs to the statecraft of olden times, when kings exercised the royal prerogative of debasing the coin of the realm at pleasure and then deliberately robbing some rich subject if the first squeezing process had not yielded enough to satisfy their despotic desires. The policy should have no place in this enlightened age, when governments are supposed to be instituted and maintained for the good of the people."

What the gold ijjut refers to above is the shoving of the "debased" silver dollar or its paper equivalent upon the people. Yes, kings used to "water" the currency with alloy and it was a dead steal on all the people.

We have a different sort of king in our republics, says the Chicago Express. His name is Shylock and he pulls his wires so cunningly that it takes a Philadelphia lawyer to see the trick.

This king is not a Robin Hood, robbing "some rich subject." He's too smart for that—the rich subject can fight back and is one of his own class.

He robs the poor.

The demonetization of silver was such a cunning, far-seeing dodge that we are only just thoroughly finding it out.

Even the wise old Greenbackers are only just beginning to fully "tumble to the racket."

The farmers are only beginning to know that it has enabled England, since 1878, to buy our silver—and the world's silver—at about 97 cents an ounce, and work it off for India wheat, cotton, etc., at about $1.35 an ounce.

Only lately was there wafted across the water this from England:

Sir R. N. Fowler, ex-lord mayor of London, said at a meeting of the British and Colonial board of trade in London in 1887 in opposition to a resolution recommending the restoration of the bi-metallic system in England: "If we continue the present policy a few years longer we shall ruin the wheat and cotton industries of the United States and build up India, as the chief exporters of these staples."

And this:—Mr. I. C. Fielden, a prominent corn-dealer, testifying before the royal commission on silver and gold said: "Wheat, all wheat, would be worth $2 to $2.50 per quarter more than it is were silver at par."

Only lately has that monstrous fraud the gold basis of the Bank of England been analyzed down to the bone.

In coin-paying eras, corrupt governments and Shylocks have debased coins to make them go further. In these credit-mongering times they try to bring their coin bases down to one metal—gold—and clamor for extreme fineness of that, in order to make their inverted pyramid of credit go further and sell dearer. The policy of Great Britain, for instance, has been to make gold—its standard—so dear and inaccessible to the foreigner that he would find the other commodities in the market cheaper than the gold in the market, so that remittances in other commodities would be preferable. The retention of gold in the bank by raising discounts in panicky times, though murderous to individual active business men, is a necessary factor in this piratical scheme, and the fulcrum upon which England derricks into her treasure vaults the plunder of the whole world. Business is made a lottery—turning out dazzling prizes that keep merchants from rebellion. Long-headed American Shylocks hope to see the United States as much more successful in plundering the globe, in this way, as our country is larger than England.

Oregon Loans to Her People.

In Oregon the thing is now in vogue and if we are to believe reliable, unbiased authorities, the people of Oregon are abundantly satisfied that the principle of making government loans of money, direct to the people, is not only a safe, but a very desirable one to put in operation. Of course every proposition to loan the people their own credit, at a low rate of interest, has always met with the violent opposition of bankers, who are loaning notes (their debts) at a high rate of interest. Bankers have always contended that bank notes (bank debts), were much safer and better, at a high rate of interest, than the treasury notes at a low rate of interest. Self interest has made them ardent advocates of the rather equivocal proposition that government credit, loaned at bank counters, at a high rate of interest, for the benefit of the banks, is much safer and better for the people, than the same government credit, loaned over treasury counters directly to the people at a low rate of interest.

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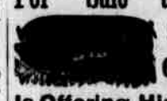

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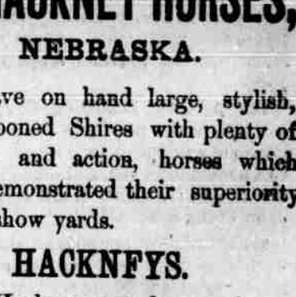

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My Hackneys are large, showy, handsome animals, good individuals, heavy bone and fine action, in fact the coming horse of their class. In order to make room for

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