

## Dancing on Ice Skates the Latest.

### Fashionable Society Now Busy with "Ice Teas" and "Dansants a Glace" and Not Enough Skating Rinks or Instructors to Meet the Demand

ICE skating, or rather dancing on skates, is the newest fashionable amusement. There is every indication that the new craze, which already is country-wide in extent, will be taken up by people of all ages, and in all walks of life, with the same enthusiasm that has converted men, women and children into fox-trotters and tango-experts during the past three or four seasons.

Skating on ice is considerably more difficult for adults to learn than dancing. Dancing on the ice is a feat which only expert skaters dare to tackle. Nevertheless, the difficulties of the new fad seem to have had little effect on its popularity, and the rinks throughout the country are now crowded morning, noon and night with debutantes and society matrons who are determined to become expert skaters and ice-dancers in the shortest possible time.

The dances which expert skaters are able to execute on the ice include the old-fashioned waltz, the ten-step, another form of waltz, the fox-trot and various modifications of the other dances which have become popular in recent seasons. While these ice-dances look extremely difficult to perform, the accomplishment follows easily enough after the fundamental figures of figure-skating have been acquired. A good figure-skater can learn new figures with as much facility as a dancer learns new steps. The main thing that is necessary is to become adept at ordinary figure-skating. Dancing on ice will then follow easily enough, although, of course, it will require a good deal of practice.

The foundation of all figure-skating is the ability to use the four edges of the skates—the inside left, the outside left, the inside right and the outside right, and to be able to skate backward on either of these edges just as readily as forward. Daily practice on these fundamentals is essential to progress in ice-dancing.

The fact that the new amusement has already taken a firm hold is evidenced in many ways. Four of New York's most fashionable hotels have already planned ice-rinks for the use of their patrons. The Biltmore is the first to open its rink to the public. The Waldorf is said to be investing in the neighborhood of half a million dollars in a rink on the roof of its new annex. The Hotel Astor and the McAlpin are now arranging similar facilities. Some of the restaurants and cabarets which have hitherto made their dancing-floors their principal attraction are preparing to substitute ice for hard-wood so that those who have danced may hereafter skate instead.

Most significant of all, perhaps, is the thorough manner in which New York, Boston and Chicago society has taken the lead in adopting the new fad. In New York, a club was formed several weeks ago by enthusiasts and its membership includes most of the debutantes of the season, the girls who are to come out next year and some young married people. Among subscribers to the club are Mrs. John Jacob Astor, Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Gould, Mr. and Mrs. Irving Brokaw and a host of others whose names are very well known in the most exclusive social circles.

This club has engaged the St. Nicholas Skating Rink for Monday afternoons for the entire season, which lasts until the end of April. Professional skaters and instructors have been engaged to instruct the members in the intricacies of ice-dancing.

In Boston, expert skaters have been engaged by the Boston Skating Club, an exclusive organization, to teach society the new fad. Mr. and Mrs. A. Windsor Willis, Miss Eleanor Sears and Miss Edith Rotch are, perhaps, the most prominent of Back Bay fashionables who are leading the movement in New England.

In Chicago, the Sherman House some time ago anticipated the present craze and installed a skating-rink in the College Inn, in the basement, in place of the dancing floor. It was foreseen that dancing was losing its hold and that ice-skating was going to take its place. The change has met with great success.

That the general public is going to follow society's lead and make skating the principal diversion this winter is indicated plainly by the unusually large number of people who have already taken up the sport at the rinks.

At St. Nicholas Rink, for instance, record crowds have been in attendance at every session since the opening of the season on November 1. This rink accommodates 800 people on the ice at a time and there are three sessions a day. Men and women of all ages are clamoring for instruction or for a chance to practice and perfect themselves in the new skating-dances.

The same situation prevails at the other rinks throughout the country. There are two large rinks on the Coast, one at Seattle and the other at Portland. Both are doing a record business, and similar enthusiasm is evident in Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Chicago.

The new amusement will not score its greatest triumph, perhaps, until frostier weather arrives, when the limited capacity of the indoor rinks will be suggested by the unlimited facilities

of the park lakes, streams and out-door rinks. Then, of course, there will be sufficient outlet for all the pent-up enthusiasm which the craze is bound to arouse in the meantime.

Evidently that is what the manufacturers of sporting goods and apparel are relying upon mainly, for although the indoor skating season is now a month or two old, the large skate factories are still running on a twenty-four hour schedule in three shifts in an effort to cope with the tremendous demand for skates which they are confident will materialize within the next two or three months.

Up-to-date skating has brought with it its own special styles of wearing apparel. All the costume makers and manufacturers of wearing apparel have vied with each other in getting out attractive skating designs and the big retail stores have given considerable space in their advertising to the beautiful creations which have been made available for followers of the new craze. This factor, in itself, it is believed, will insure the popularity of ice-dancing. Indeed, it has been suggested that women may be tempted to take up skating in order to wear the new garments rather than to purchase the new garments for the sake of skating.

In line with this phase of the situation, a series of weekly fashion shows devoted to garments specially designed for skating has been arranged at the St. Nicholas Rink. Already several of the well known women's specialty houses have exhibited their models at these displays, and the remarkably effective costumes which skating has developed are certainly not calculated to deter women from falling into line.

The social opportunities which the new craze affords are considerable. Already two elaborate "Ice Teas" or "Dansants a Glace" have been given by Mr. and Mrs. Irving Brokaw, in which the skating stage of the Hippodrome was engaged.

On these occasions, the guests of the Brokaws to the number of about 100 participated in the general ice-dancing and were then entertained by Mr. Brokaw, probably the most accomplished amateur figure-skater in the world. Lawrence Waterbury, of polo fame, and Raymond Townsend, of New Haven, who gave a special exhibition of fancy-skating, their partners being the famous Hippodrome professionals Charlotte, Katy Schmidt and Ellen Dallerup. A large contingent of Boston society folk were present, bringing with them Mr. and Mrs. Muller, the German professional skaters, who have been engaged by the Boston Skating Club to teach Back Bay folk the new accomplishment. The New York guests included Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Harriman, Mr. and Mrs. Elbert H. Gary, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Scott Burden, Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Mrs. Barger-Wallach,



Mr. Irving Brokaw

Kathleen Pope and George Kerner

Mrs. Cass Ledyard and Mr. J. H. Alexander

Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth At Robert Golet's Skating Party



Miss Leila Burden

Mr. Foxhall P. Keene, and a host of others equally prominent in social circles.

Just how the new craze started no one is able definitely to explain. Perhaps the largest single factor in arousing interest in skating, however, has been the wonderful exhibition given by Charlotte and her associates at the Hippodrome. The Ballet on Ice was brought from the Admiralpalast, at Berlin, by Mr. Dillingham and has been universally admired. The Shuberts have helped to foster interest in the new diversion by converting the "Castles in the Air" cabaret, on top of the Forty-fourth Street Theatre, into an Ice Palace, where every evening a skating troupe displays its skill on real ice.

Particularly significant is the fact that some of the most accomplished of the

professional dancers who have hitherto been featured at the Broadway cabarets, sensing the drift of things, have taken up dancing on ice and are not only giving exhibitions but instruction.

Eileen Molyneux and Clifton Webb, of the Town Topics Company, for instance, who made such a hit as professional dancers, have shown equal skill at fox-trotting on skates in the rinks. Norval Baptie and Isabel Butler, at the Castles in the Air, have similarly forsaken the old-style hardwood dancing for the more graceful and more difficult feat of ice-dancing.

Preparations to accommodate the thousands of skate-mad enthusiasts who will be clamoring for a chance to display their skill, or lack of it, as soon as the first freezing weather sets in, have been

made at the various public tennis courts in different parts of New York City and the vicinity. A two-foot embankment has been erected all around these courts and as soon as the temperature drops sufficiently to justify a hope of freezing weather, these grounds will be flooded.

The problem of providing sufficient indoor rinks to accommodate the enthusiasts when the weather is not sufficiently cold to freeze the lakes and out-door rinks is not a very difficult one. The ease with which the Hotel Biltmore installed its rink, using the regular refrigerating plant for the purpose, will point the way for other institutions. It is not unlikely, too, that the imitation ice used by certain vaudeville performers for their skating stunts and which consists of a certain composition which is laid down in blocks, may be utilized by roller-skating rink proprietors to convert their houses into ice-rinks. This imitation ice is said to be almost as good as real ice for figure-skating and dancing purposes, although it retards speed to some extent.

"Don't worry about lack of facilities for ice-skating," declared Mr. Brokaw, when this phase of the present craze was suggested to him.

"The sport has aroused such a tremendous storm of enthusiasm that it is not unlikely that too many rinks will spring up overnight. Everybody seems suddenly to have gone ice-mad.

"For years I have tried to arouse enthusiasm in this most graceful of sports and now that the boom has come I'm almost afraid the thing may be overdone. There are so many people who are taking up skating now who will never really amount to anything. They are going at it in the wrong way.

"You see them at the rinks going around and around like so many mice on a tread-mill instead of endeavoring to

perfect themselves in the only feature of ice-skating that is really worth while—figure-skating.

"Of course, I realize that we must learn to crawl before we can walk, but when I see skaters who have been able to skate for years and are still content to roll around in the ceaseless grind of rink-skating instead of trying to accomplish something in the way of figure-skating, it makes me a little discouraged.

"Plain skating is a very important preliminary to figure-skating. Unless the fundamentals of good skating are acquired right from the start, graceful figure-skating is forever out of the question. It is almost impossible to correct the bad habits which faulty skating brings with it. So many skaters never get beyond the preliminaries. That is unfortunate. Perhaps the renewed interest in this most graceful and healthful of all sports may bring about a general improvement in this respect."

Mr. Brokaw has made skating his hobby for years. He is the author of the only authoritative work on the art of skating, and he has always been active in every movement to further the interest of the sport. He is an active member of the new society skating club at the St. Nicholas Rink, and he gives frequent amateur exhibitions.

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Miss Katherine Dahlgren and Mr. R. S. Emmet.

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