

THE SKATER.

Oh what ecstasy in gliding
Over the water's glassy breast!
Arrow-like the air dividing,
Almost seeming as if riding
On the fleet winds of the West.

Have I quaffed some magic potion,
Changing me to demigod?
Is not this the very motion
With which Hermes trod old ocean,
When with winged sandals a-bod?

Ha! It is the joyous feeling
Of unfettered birds I share;
And like them my joy revealing,
Bursts of song I would be pealing
Through the wide-resounding air.

Circling, swaying, curving, skimming,
Like a swallow on the wing;
Now you margin deftly trimming,
Now the surface roughly limning,
Onward now with graceful swing.

Tell me not of Lydian breezes,
That to idle dreams invite;
Stude Lorasas better pleasees,
Whose caress the waters freezees,
And whose rugged kisses bite.

THE SHOT IN THE DARK.

It was a 25-caliber and carried a leaden pellet not larger than a pea. It did not look very formidable, and in fact was not, but when Eva put it into what she was pleased to call her pistol pocket, in the rear of her dress, she felt as safe as if she had the escort of a regiment.

"What are you doing with that pop-gun?" said Cousin Jack to her one morning, as he observed her putting her armory in her pocket preparatory to going out.

"That's my beau, if you please, sir. He sees me safely along these four dark blocks when I come home at night."

"Just let me look at that gun, will you?" said Jack. "Pshaw! you couldn't hurt a mouse with it. Come I'll let you shoot at me all day for a nickel a shot. Hurt me? Not a bit. But why in the name of the guardian angel of all young women do you want to carry a pistol?"

"Well, Cousin Jack, you know that it is late when I leave the store, and I cannot always have company. It's a dark walk from the cars over here, and I thought I saw a sneaking fellow follow me one night. I shall be ready for him next time. I don't intend to be bothered or robbed, if I can help it. Don't think I can't shoot. I have been practicing a little, and shall make it very uncomfortable for the coming sand-bagger as sure as my name is Eva."

"But you couldn't hurt anybody with that thing, you know."

"Couldn't I? Don't get in front of it, that's all. Good-by, I must hurry along."

It was only at the breakfast table that the family met, for Eva took her lunch at the store, and was always late at dinner.

The next morning Jack commenced on Eva: "Well, my Amazonian little saleslady did you slay any sand-baggers last night?"

"I'm not a saleslady I want you to know, cousin Jack."

"What'd been promoted again?"

"No, I am not promoted, and I am not a saleslady. I am a saleswoman. If there is one word I despise more than another, it is saleslady. Do you say saleslady? I suppose you are a teller-gentleman in the Southwestern?"

"No," said Jack, "I am a gentleman teller."

"You may joke, but I tell you I abominate saleslady. Why can't girls and women have as much sense as men? Are we to call them kitchen-lady and cooklady?"

"Every woman is a lady by her right of sex," said Jack.

"Doubtless, that is true, but why should we American girls be so distrustful as to be constantly announcing ourselves as ladies? We are ladies if we act suitably to whatever place we are in. Others may call themselves salesladies, if they choose, but for myself I am a saleswoman, and when it is necessary to refer to me in that capacity I prefer to be called so. Think of a man advertising for a place as sales-gentleman. He would get it, I guess!"

"Bravo! bravo! my belle cousin. Another new departure. Here is a saleswoman, armed cap-a-pie. Well, may the philosopher ask, whither are we tending? Are there any more young women in your store of your mind?"

"Yes, a few; but the great majority prefer to be salesladies."

"I hope, cuz, you don't consider yourself a woman with a mission?"

"No, sir; I am not a woman with a mission. The strongest points about my sex are their weaknesses, and one of their weaknesses is to be called salesladies. I don't believe I could ever reform that out of them if I tried. I like the name lady. It implies dignity, refinement and good breeding. Don't let us drag it in the mire. Every saleswoman can be a lady if she chooses, but she is not a lady simply because she stands behind a counter! 'Sales-fiddlesticks!' and Eva started up and off with an energy that almost made Jack's head swim.

Solloquized Jack: "The pistol idea is not a good one. She must give that up. She'll hurt herself sometime, and then I should reproach myself. I can't argue her out of it, that's certain; but I shall find a way."

Jack continued in a brown study nearly all day. In the evening he came home to dinner, and strolled out immediately after. He had an idea and he was going to work it out.

Eva left the store as night was falling. She had a long ride in the car, and by the time she reached her crossing it was pitch dark, and the scattered gas lamps only tended to make the darkness more visible. She was not a timid girl, but she never did like that long walk alone at night. Quietly adjusting her dress and putting her hand in her pistol pocket she started forward. As she did so she saw a figure stealing along the opposite side of the street and then coming toward the path she must take. She hurried along, and so did the figure, now in front of her. And when she slackened her pace, so did the figure. The street was deserted, but Eva gave her pistol a tighter grip and moved on courageously. Just as they got to the middle of the darkest block the figure turned and moved toward her. She spoke quickly, "Out of my way, sir!" No answer.

Crack, went the little pistol. The figure never heeded it.

Crack, again.

"Great Scott!" Eva, do you want to kill me?" howled Jack, as he felt a sharp pain rush through his upper arm.

"Great Scott!" put up that gun. Don't you know me? I'm Jack! How'll you've blown my arm off. Don't you know me?" And Jack capered around on the sidewalk, holding his arm while the warm blood commenced to trickle out of his cuff.

Eva stood almost dazed.

"Oh, John, why did you not speak? Why did you act so? Have I hurt you? Are you killed? Are you dying? What shall I do? Come, hurry here; don't die here in the street; let me carry you; let me support you. It's only a short way home. Here, lean on me."

And Eva clasped him around the body and rushed him forward. Jack felt as if he was being waded through the air by fairies. They hurried up the steps and into the house. Mrs. Bascom met them.

"Why children, what is the matter? John is as pale as a ghost. What is it, Eva? Look at John's hand, all covered with blood. Where have you been and what has happened?"

They jerked off Jack's coat, and rolled up his sleeves. Sure enough, there was a little bullet-hole in the fleshy part of the upper arm. It had gone through, but touched no bones.

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com soon dressed and bound it up. As Jack marched off to his room he looked at Eva humorously and said:

"You can now see that pistol is of no account."

"There were four more charges in it, Cousin Jack."

"I believe I don't want any more of them, to-night. I hope I can use my arm to-morrow."

Jack laid awake a long time thinking over the matter. He had been very stupid. He felt that. What would Eva think of him? And what a girl she was! What intrepidity and character! That girl is a treasure, thought Jack, as he floated off into the land of dreams.

As for Eva, she did not sleep a wink. She could hardly excuse herself of wrong, and yet she could not excuse herself. To think that she had wounded Jack was terrible. She might have killed him. How dreadful! And on her sleepless pillow she upbraided herself the whole night through. One thing she determined to do. As soon as it appeared that Jack's arm was all right she would return home.

Jack appeared at breakfast table, his arm somewhat stiff and sore, but not much more painful than if he had been newly vaccinated. He tried a feeble joke or two, but both Eva and Mrs. Bascom felt too serious for much conversation.

"Eva thinks she will go home," said Mrs. Bascom.

"What?" said Jack, a sharp pain running quickly through his breast, sharper than the pain in his arm.

"Eva says she will return to Black-water in a day or two."

"I don't think you ought to, Cousin Eva."

"Yes, John, I think I must."

A little while after Jack and Eva were standing side by side in the parlor.

"I suppose, Eva, it may be best for you to return home for the present; but do you know I am wounded incurably?"

"Don't say that. Oh, it can't be so!"

"Not in my arm, dearest, but in my heart."

"Oh, Jack!"

"And if you go home now, may I come for you soon and make this your home?"

Eva looked up into Jack's eyes, her own full of light and love, and gently whispered:

"Yes, Jack."

"Then," said Jack, as he clasped her in his arms, "it was the luckiest shot in the dark I ever heard of."

Look out for Your Health.

Dr. J. William White, one of the highest authorities on hygiene in Philadelphia, said to a reporter that recently, our winter has a very unfavorable influence on the general health of the community. The combination of moisture with either cold or heat always has a deleterious effect. In addition to the effect of the cold on the surface of the body there is also the prevention of the evaporation from the skin on account of the dampness of the atmosphere, and consequently many injurious products are retained that would otherwise be thrown off by the perspiration.

"The lungs are the organs which chiefly suffer, and cases of bronchitis, pulmonary congestion and pneumonia are therefore alarmingly frequent. Cold, damp weather is much more productive of colds, catarrhs, influenza, rheumatism, lung and bowel troubles than even a greater degree of cold with a dry atmosphere.

"The ice and snow in the streets are injurious because they increase the dampness.

"If persons who have any predisposition, hereditary or acquired, to lung trouble wish to avoid the evil effects of the weather they should pay special attention to preserving a uniform temperature of the surface of the skin, keeping their feet warm and dry, abstaining from over-fatigue and long hours of fasting. They should discard the habit of wearing slippers and thin stockings, so common with most women and some men, and which should probably be assigned the prominence in the production of coughs, colds and pulmonary troubles. Thin-soled shoes and cotton underclothing are also to be avoided during such weather as this.

"Woolen, flannel or merino under garments are preferable to those of any other material for this weather. Wool is a poor conductor of heat and an admirable absorber of water, taking the latter up rapidly, both into and between its fibres. As compared to either cotton or linen, its power of absorption is vastly greater.

"In all such climates as this flannel or merino undergarments, including stockings, should be worn by every one during the winter months and, indeed, it would be safer if they were used of a lighter texture through the summer. Certainly invalids or persons predisposed to pulmonary troubles should observe this rule absolutely. After wool silk is best adapted for use in underclothes. Then, though a long distance removed, muslin and then linen.

"Common sense, of course, would recommend wearing stout, thick-soled shoes and sufficient clothing and avoiding draughts, particularly when the skin is damp."

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Street Lamp-Lighting.

The lamplighter whom a New York reporter interviewed usually races along the streets as if his lamps were so many trains all just about to start and liable to go off unattended to, but the other afternoon when the reporter saluted him he was lagging. He had made his long round, and was resting by moderating his gait on the way home. He invited the reporter to go along with him, and took him to a comfortable flat beyond Avenue A, in Twelfth street, where were found the lamplighter's young-looking wife and strapping big boy and two baby girls.

The following was the story told by him, Alonzo Strickland, a veteran in the business. He is a short man, worn down to the close working trim of a professional pedestrian, but vigorous, bright-eyed, and quick as a cat on his feet. He has not been a lamplighter all his life, for he was a soldier, and spent another interval at another occupation; but there are few men who have had such a wide experience in the business.

"I began to light lamps for my father when oil was used in the streets. Then we had to carry a lamp like what are called stable lamps, together with a torch which was immersed in alcohol. We lighted the torch first, and then the street lamp, which was a little metal box with two wicks set in a socket inside a glass like those around the present lights. Once a week we took all the little lamps in our district to our homes and boiled them in a kettle to clean them. Sperm oil was what we used in the lamps. Oil began to go out of use in about the year 1857. It took many years for it to go wholly out of use. Years and years had passed in fact, it was not many years ago—when it was still burned along the Boulevard and far up town.

"I have 132 lamps in my district, and I get 30 cents a month for lighting each lamp, or \$39 a month in all. My lamps string along a distance of about six miles, and must all be lit in one hour. That necessitates pretty lively work. We lamplighters are obliged to do every thing in a hurry and everything by timetable. I have to start at a certain definite time in the evening, and to begin putting out my lamps at a fixed time in the morning. The hour changes with each week, the timetable being made out by the city. See, here is the last table. Beginning in May and running all through June and into July, I got up at 3:15 A. M. That was the earliest hour. In August and September it gradually grew to be an hour later. October began with 5 o'clock and November ended with 6. The schedule is about the same every year. Now I am getting up at half-past 6 o'clock and beginning my lighting before 5 o'clock. I manage to wake myself, but a good many lamplighters get policemen to wake them.

"No; the lamplighters work for the gas companies, not for the city. The gas companies pay us, and take full charge of the lamps. The city pays for the gas, and keeps a number of inspectors to see that the city is properly treated. The gas companies also have inspectors to look after their interests—two to each company. One looks after the west side and the other the east side. They see that we do our work thoroughly and on time, and they look after the condition of the lamps. We have to clean the glasses and see that the burners are in good order, and whatever we have to do we really are obliged to do. There is no humbug about it. We clean each lamp three times a week. We see that the street signs are in their proper places, replace broken glasses wherever we find them, and take the lanterns to the superintendent for repairs when we find them broken. Broken glasses give us a great deal of trouble, and a little later in the winter trouble is caused by the freezing of gas. Gas, you know is moist. Hold your hand over a burner before you light it and you will see the moisture on your palm. When a lamp freezes we uncrow the pipe, and pour alcohol down the pipe. That cuts the ice. Then we blow down the pipe, and that blows the film of ice into the main, and permits the gas to flow.

"Who breaks the glasses? Boys. They like to throw stones at them. They play regular games, each one seeing who can break the most at one shot. A brick has been found the most efficient missile; it breaks all the glasses at once. A district that I used to have from Avenue A to the river is the worst in this respect that I know of. I was forever putting in glasses, and on one occasion I went down to the neighborhood where the most glasses were broken so to speak I could see the operation in progress. Sure enough, there were the boys pegging away at the lanterns. They went on until they saw me, and then they all ran away, crying, there's the lamplighter! Ill! Ill! There's Old Stumpy, the lamplighter! I went to a policeman and asked him to arrest the boys, but I got no satisfaction out of my interview with him. Cleaning the glasses three times a week takes up the better part of a lamplighter's time after he has finished his morning round and had his breakfast. Lamps in the neighborhood of private dwellings are easier to clean than those near tenement houses. In tenement neighborhoods the moisture that settles on the glass is sticky.

Near private dwellings you can almost clean the glass with a dry handkerchief.

"People wonder what I use to make my glasses so clean. They stop me at my work and ask me to tell them. But I always say, 'What's the use? You won't use the things I do if I tell you.' One said she could not get her coach windows to look as my lanterns did, and wouldn't I tell her what to do?"

"You wouldn't do it if I did ma'm, said I. 'For instance,' said I, 'you wouldn't use kerosene, and that's one of the best of things.' 'Mercy, no!' said she; 'I wouldn't like the smell of that in my carriage.' I use kerosene and sperm oil or sperm oil and stove blacking; but the best recipe for removing stubborn, sticky dirt on glass is a little oxalic acid, a little alcohol, and equal parts of kerosene and sperm oil. And a curious thing about it is that the older and dirtier my rag gets the better it seems to clean the glass. We have to use what will do the work best, for we must work quick. I can clean two lamps in five minutes. I tell you it makes people stare to see how quick it can be done.

"I have curious experiences in the deserted streets in the early mornings. A lamplighter does not have to buy any hats in the summer time. He finds good ones in the streets. Young men lose them while they are out on a spree, and either don't look for them or are not able to find them. We find money sometimes. One day I found a ten-cent stamp at the head of a flight of basement steps. At the next steps I found 60 cents. I went down the steps and in the brick work, stuffed in between two loose bricks, I picked up a handful of money—\$40 in all. On another occasion I met a crazy man who told me and a policeman where he had just left \$20,000. I went to the place and found a good new pair of shoes, but no dollars at all. I have seen burglaries, too, and have reported what I have seen to the police, but I never felt that did much good."

The lamplighter showed the reporter the torch, whose exterior is familiar to all New Yorkers. Outside it looks like a long stick with a metal cylinder, perforated like a cullender on the top of it. If you take that cylinder off you disclose a little oil lamp, big enough to hold about a gill of sperm oil, and provide with a single wick. The perforated screen or cylinder has an inside sheathing reaching down to about the three last rows of holes. This sheathing prevents the wind from extinguishing the flame. The holes that are unprotected are below the flame, but permit the gas to flow in until it reaches the flame and takes fire. These torches are comparatively new. Before they came into use the pay of a lamplighter was 40 cents a lamp, but with their introduction it was reduced to 30 cents. The number of lamps in each district was increased, however, so that the lamplighters get as much money at the end of the month, but have to work a little harder to earn it.

A Profitable Timber Tree.

The wild black cherry is a healthy tree, a rapid grower and lumber made from it brings as high price in many markets as the black walnut. It is a much more profitable tree to plant than the black walnut, as it can be grown closer, that is to say, many more trees can be grown to the acre. It is not so detrimental to other vegetation as the black walnut, which will always be found to have ample room if of large size, having made everything else "stand from under," while the cherry may be found close to other trees without apparently harming them. Another great advantage the cherry has over the walnut is that it is ripe for the cabinet-maker in less than half the time required for the walnut, and to this may be added the advantage that it is easier grown, or, rather, more cheaply grown, for either of them are as easily grown as peas or beans. One bushel of cherry seeds will grow as many seedlings as twenty-five bushels of walnuts, and the cherry is more easily dug up and transplanted.

In all this we would not be understood as saying one word against the walnut as a timber tree. It is a very valuable tree, as is well known to everybody, but everybody does not use common sense enough to know that black walnut trees will not all make sawlogs when planted two or three feet apart. The common sense way would be to plant them at least twenty feet apart and fill in with cheap, rapid growing trees that could be cut out in time; leaving the whole space to the walnuts, for it should be born in mind that the black walnut sapling is of about as little use for any purpose as any common sapling. The cherry and walnut stand about equal as being healthy trees, and both are affected about alike by the tent caterpillar, which does not appear to injure either of them when the trees are grown in quantity.

The black cherry is found from the Canadian lower province to Florida, and from the seaboard to Kansas, and Nebraska. The black walnut has about the same range, both apparently "running out" in Northern Wisconsin and Minnesota. It grows well on a light, shady, gravelly lawn, and grows best on dry land. When the land is naturally moist the black walnut will flourish and should be preferred.

A Novel Exhibition.

An exhibition of a novel kind, illustrating the culinary art, was held recently in Vienna. The keepers of all the most renowned hotels and restaurants exercised their skill and powers of invention to please the eye as well as the palate, so that the jury, whose honorary president is Count Kinsky, the chief of the kitchen department at court, had some difficulty in making its awards.

A telegram from Vienna to the London Daily News said: The cookery exhibition has proved a wonderful success. The ring and all the streets surrounding the horticultural halls are blocked. Long rows of carriages and dense crowds make movement all but impossible. Owing to the large number of people admitted the crowding became dangerous. Thousands, however, waited outside and clamored to be let in. The Emperor and the Archdukes visited the exhibition, and expressed their satisfaction with what they saw. The Empress sent word that she would visit the exhibition. It was cleaned and lighted, and at half-past 7 his Majesty, with the Archduchess Valerie, was received at the gates, where electric lights were shown in the wintry morning. Among the most remarkable objects to which her attention was drawn were the gold dishes, in original and most splendid forms. One hotel disguises its game-pies, fish and cakes in various shapes—a Roman emperor, Gothic buildings, Chinese towers, fortresses, Greek temples and ships. A breakfast is decorated with built heads—small masterpieces of plastic art. Pies show their contents by having heads of pheasants and grouse upon them. Two sucking pigs dance on their hind legs on either side of a pie over which a fluttering hen seems to protect the eggs under her, which are already made into a savory dish. A very remarkable object is a large wild boar, whose skeleton is exhibited side by side with it. Peacocks, game of all kinds are shown in their natural form, yet ready to be served. Besides these luxurious dishes are exhibited economical dinners. All the paraphernalia of kitchens, dining-rooms, cellars, are also exhibited, and among the mass of delicate objects crowds numbering over 3,000 persons slowly move. When the doors were closed to prevent the public from storming the entrance a panic seized the people inside, who did not know how to get out. At last officials from the balcony explained that one small back door was open, but a disaster well-nigh happened. While this one narrow outlet was alone open a curtain caught fire from an electric wire. Happily few noticed it. When the people outside became very clamorous an official from a window begged them to disperse, as it would endanger their lives to let them in. The crowds dispersed for a quarter of an hour. Now, at 11 o'clock, they are as dense ever. The exhibition was prolonged by one day, but the general cry was why objects of such interests to all were not exhibited in the rotunda.

Frozen Water-Pipes.

"Who is this man?"

"The one who is rushing along, with his hat on the back of his head, and his eyes hanging out?"

"Yes."

"That's the man who warned the servant girl the other night to shut off the water so the pipes wouldn't freeze."

"And the good girl obeyed!"

"Not exactly. She meant to, but her head came up and she forgot all about it. Consequently there was a freeze-up. Poor girl! She is very sorry! If tears would thaw the pipes she would shed 'em by the hundred."

"And why does the man rush?"

"He is on his way to the plumber for consolation."

"And what will the plumber do?"

"He will show the man 14,678 calls which were booked before he came in, and which must be attended to in rotation."

"And will there be any swearing?"

"There will, my boy! There will be swearing and stamping and blasting, but it won't be on the part of the plumber. He will preserve his serene smile through it all. When the other man gets out of wind he will retire."

"To his office?"

"Oh, no! He will go off and buy himself an alcohol lamp, have a druggist fill it for him, and he will return home to thaw out the pipe for himself. He can thus make a saving of several thousand dollars, saying nothing of the personal satisfaction of getting ahead of a plumber."

"And will he succeed?"

"Not by a John Rogers! He will crawl under the house, scalp himself on the joists, fill his knees with rusty nails, choke himself with the smoke, and finally crawl out and give it up."

"And wait for it to thaw?"

"No, sir—e-l! He won't wait for anything. He'll skip down town for a furniture van and move into another house. That's where his head is level. It's cheaper to move than to thaw out frozen water-pipes."

"Have you a soul for poetry?"

said a wild-eyed man as he entered the editor's office and threw down a roll of manuscript. "Well, I don't know about that," replied the editor, glancing at the bottom of his liberally proportioned boot. "but I have a sole for poets." The poet didn't stay long after that.