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LOVE AND SKATES

IN TWO PARTS.

PART II.

CHAPTER VII.

WADE DOWN!

The hugging of Wade by the happy pair had to be done metaphorically, since it was done in sight of all Dunderbunk. He had divided a happy result, when he missed Bill Tarbox from the arena, and saw him a farthing away, hand in hand with his reconciled sweetheart. "I envy you, Bill," said he, "almost too much to put proper fervor into my congratulations. 'Your time will come,' the foreman rejoined. "And says Belle, 'I'm sure there is a lady skating somewhere, only waiting for you to follow her.' " "I don't see her," Wade replied, looking with a mock-grave face up and down and around the river. "When you've all gone to dinner, I'll prospect ten miles up and down and try to find a good matrimonial claim that's not taken." "You will not come up to dinner?" Belle asked. "I can hardly afford to make two bites of a holiday," said Wade. "I've seen Perry for a luncheon. Here he comes with it. Sit! I cede my quarter of your pie, Miss Belle, to a better fellow." "Oh!" cries Perry, coming up and bowing elaborately. "Mr. and Mrs. Tarbox, I believe. Ah, yes! Well, I will mention it up at Albany. I am going to take my Guards up to call on the Governor." Perry dashed off, followed by a score of Dunderbunk boys, organized by him as the Purlett Guards, and taught to salute him as Generalissimo with military honors. So many hundreds of turkeys, done to a turn, now began to have an effect upon the atmosphere. The odors are more subtle and pervading than this, and few more appetizing. Indeed, there is said to be an odd fellow, a strictly American gourmand, in New York, who sits, from noon to dusk on Christmas-day, up in a tall turkey, merely to catch the aroma of roast-turkey floating over the city, and much good, it is said, it does him. Hard skating is heavily as effective to whet hunger as this gentleman's expedient. When the spicy breezes began to blow soft as those of Ceylon's isle over the river and every whiff talked Turkey, the population of Dunderbunk listened to the wooing and began to follow its several noses—snubs, beaks, blunts, sharps, points, dominants, lines, bulgias, and bills—on the way to the several household which the noses adorned or defaced. Prosperous Dunderbunk had a dinner, yes, a dinner, that day, and Richard Wade was gratefully remembered by many over-fed foundry-men and their over-fed families. Wade had not had half skated enough. "I'll time myself down to Skerrett's Point," he thought, "and take my moon-oon there among the hemlocks." The Point was on the property of Peter Skerrett, Wade's friend and college comrade ten years gone. Peter had been an absentee in Europe, and had confirmed to Wade's eyes the rumor of his return. Skerrett's Point was a mile below the Foundry. Our hero did his waltz under three minutes. How many seconds under, I will not say. I do not wish to make other fellows unhappy. The Point was a favorite spot of Wade's. Many a twilight of last winter, tired with his flogging at the works to make good the evil of Whiffler's rule, he had lain there on the rocks under the hemlocks, breathing the spicy methyl they sprang into the air. After his day's hard light, in the dust and heat of the Foundry, with anarchy and unwhit, he used to take the quiet restoratives of Nature, until the murmur and fragrance of the woods, the cool wind, and the soothing lull of the shifting stream, had purged him from the fever of his task. To his little haunt, he skated, and kindling a little fire, as an old campaigner loves to do, he sat down, and lunched heartily on Mrs. Purlett's cold leg, cannibal thought—on the cold leg of Mrs. Purlett's yesterday's turkey. Then lighting his wood, dear ally of the lonely, the Superintendent began to think of his foreman's bliss, and to long for something similar on his own plane. "I hope the wish is father to its fulfillment," he said. "But I must not stop here and be spoony. Such a halcyon day I may not have again in all my life, and I ought to make the best of it, with my New Skates!" So he darted off, and filled the little curves above the Point with a labyrinth of curves and flourishes. When that bit of crystal tablet was

well covered, the podographer sighed for a new sheet to inscribe his intricate rudiments upon. Why not write more below the Point? Why not? Braced by his lunch on the brown fibre of good Mrs. Purlett's cold drumstick and thigh, Wade was now in fine trim. The air was more glittering and electric than ever. It was triumph and victory and peace in action to go flashing along over this footing, smoother than polished marble and sheenier than first water gems. Wade felt the high exhilaration of pure blood galloping through a body alive from top to toe. The rhythm of his movement was like music to him. The Point ended in a sharp promontory. Just before he came abreast of it, Wade under mighty headway flung into his favorite corkswear spiral on one foot, and went whirling dizzily along, round and round, in a straight line. At the dizzyest moment, he was suddenly aware of a figure, also turning the Point at full speed, and rushing to a collision. He jerked aside to avoid it. He could not look to his footing. His skat struck a broken ear, imbedded in the ice. He fell violently, and lay like a dead man. His New Skates, Testimonial of Merit, seem to have served him a shabby trick. He opened his eyes. It was not his mother; for she was long since deceased. Nor was this his non-mother kissing the place. In fact, abashed at the blind eyes suddenly unclosing so near her, she was on the point of letting her burden drop. When dead men come to life in such a position, and begin to talk about "kissing the place," young ladies, however independent of conventions, may well grow uneasy. But the stranger, though alive, was evidently in a molluscous, invertebrate condition. He could not sustain himself. She still held him up, a little more at arm's length, and all at once the reaction from extreme anxiety brought a gush of tears to her eyes. "Don't cry," said Wade, vaguely, and still only half-conscious. "I promise never to do so again." At this, said with a childlike earnestness, the lady smiled. "Don't scarp me," Wade continued in the same tone. "Scars never scarp." He raised his hand to his bleeding forehead. She laughed outright at his queer plaintive tone and the new class he had placed her in. Her laugh and his own movement brought Wade fully to himself. She perceived that his look was transferring her from the order of scarping squares to her proper place as a beautiful young woman of the highest civilization, not smeared with vermilion, but blushing celestial rose. He laughed and his own movement brought Wade fully to himself. She perceived that his look was transferring her from the order of scarping squares to her proper place as a beautiful young woman of the highest civilization, not smeared with vermilion, but blushing celestial rose. He laughed and his own movement brought Wade fully to himself. She perceived that his look was transferring her from the order of scarping squares to her proper place as a beautiful young woman of the highest civilization, not smeared with vermilion, but blushing celestial rose.

"You're the vine and I'm the lamp-post," Skerrett said. "Mary, do you know what a pocket-pistol is?" "I have seen such weapons, concealed about the persons of modern warriors." "There's one in my overcoat-pocket, with a cup at the but and a cork at the muzzle. Skate off now, like an angel, and get it. Bring Fanny, too. She is restorative." "Are you alive enough to admire that, Dick?" he continued, as she skinned away. "It would put a soul under the ribs of Death." "I venerate that young woman," says Peter. "You see what a beauty she is, and just as unspoiled as this; Joe. Ugh! 'She has a singularly true thing,' Wade replied, 'and that is the main thing—the most excellent thing in man or woman.' " "Yes, truth makes that nuisance, beauty, formidable." "You did not do me the honor to present me." "I saw you had gone a great way beyond that, my lad. Have you not her initials in carbide on your brow? Not M. T., which wouldn't apply, but M. D." "Mary?" "Damer." "I like the name," says Wade, repeating it. "It sounds simple and thoroughbred." "Just what she is. One of the nine simple-hearted and thoroughbred girls on this continent." "Is that too many? Three, then. That's one too many!" The exact proportion of Poets, Painters, Orators, Statesmen, and all other Great Artists, Well—three or nine—Mary Damer is one of them. She never saw fear or jealousy, or knowingly allowed an ignoble thought or an ungentle word or an ungraceful act in herself. Her atmosphere does not tolerate flirtation. You must find out for yourself how much genius she has and has not. But I will say this—that I think of puns to a minute faster when I'm with her. Therefore she must be magnetic, and that is the first charm in a woman. Wade laughed. "You have not lost your powers of analysis, Peter. But talking of this heroine, you have not told me anything about yourself, except *appropos* of punning." "Come up and dig out my own personal histories, bro." "I've been looking in her eye to set a *vis* to her. But stop! perhaps you're as turkey at home, with a brace of boys waiting for drumsticks." "No,—my boys, like cherubs, await their own drumsticks. They're not born, and I'm not married!" "I thought you looked incomplete and abnormal. Well, I will show you a model wife,—and here she comes!" Here they came, the two ladies, gliding round the Point, with draperies floating as artlessly artful as the robes of Raphael's Hours, or a Pompeian Bacchante. For want of classic vase or *patena*, Miss Damer brandished Peter Skerrett's pocket-pistol. Fanny Skerrett gave her hand cordially to Wade, and looked a little anxiously at his pale face. "Now, M. D., says Peter, 'you have been surgeon, you shall be doctor and dose our patient. Now, then,—'" "Hello, poor fellow! Quick! his eyes with mountain dew. No more! he may view." "Thanks, Isabel!" Wade said, continuing the quotation,—

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