

A Romance of a Pair of Skates.

A Seasonable Story.

BY COLLIE WILKINS.

On a superbly upholstered lounge, rivalling in its magnificence the erstwhile celebrated "Canoe Couch damask" of the Ontario Agricultural Department, with her fair head supported by silken pillows reclined Miss Iolanthe De Bellevue. Iolanthe, though possessed of a graceful form and lovely face, was a confirmed invalid. Although apparently in good health the young lady was afflicted with a constitutional weakness which necessitated a continued recumbent position, and with the exception of an occasional drive around the Queen's Park in her father's carriage, she passed most of the time on the sofa reading the latest novels, and the standard British poets, not excepting the works of the much abused "Wizard of the North," of course taboring the objectionable Marmion.

Some of the more curious of her young lady "dearest friends" maliciously assumed and secretly expressed that her constitutional weakness partook very much of the nature of laziness, and that she naturally on that account preferred to recline gracefully on a sofa, reading novels, to assisting her maternal relative and younger sisters in the ordinary duties of the household. These base insinuations were treated with the scorn they deserved, not only by herself, but by all her true friends, among whom figured conspicuously a certain young gentleman who scouted with indignation anything that would tend to injure or reflect upon the adorable Miss De Bellevue.

This young gentleman rejoiced in the name of Roderick Malcolm McGregor, and was a B.A., a gold medalist and a student of Divinity. It is not of any moment, nor does it come within the province of this tale to say what college had the honor of being his Alma Mater. He might be an iron clad Presbyterian or Knox's, a Scotch student of prelatist proclivities like the late Rt. Reverend Dr. Strachan, and have taken his degree in Trinity, or a Broad churchman of the Wycliff school, it mattereth not. It is sufficient for the purposes of this story to know that he was a most exemplary young man, and withal a most devoted admirer of the fair Iolanthe.

On the evening our story opens our heroine was in a most pronounced state of ennui, or in other words, she was suffering from an acute fit of the "blues." The novels no longer interested her and poetry had lost its charms. She was trying in vain to wrestle with Scott, and on arriving at the passage, "Oh, Caledonia! stern and wild Meet nurse for a poetic child."

he threw the volume from her petulant, and, with a voice quivering with emotion murmured, "I wish to goodness gracious that some fellow would come and nurse me, even if he were stern and wild. Anything would be preferable to this horrid monotony." Scarcely had she uttered the sentence when Mr. McGregor was announced, and in a few moments thereafter, was seated by her side.

"Hoo's a' in' ye the day Iolanthe? It's a vera great pity ye can no take a wee bit o' air," said the young gentleman sympathizingly.

"Oh, Roderick!" replied the poor languishing lady. "Could I but do so, how gladly would I avail myself of every possible opportunity to drive out in the air. And now that we have snow, I pine for a nice cutter ride."

"Hoot, toot!" interrupted Roderick, who, although quite an admirer of the fair sex in general, and desperately enamoured with Iolanthe in particular, had a very dogmatic, not to say John Brownish manner in addressing them. "Hoot toot, I see! I wud na gie a bawbee for a' the guid sleigh drive will do ye. Ye might as wul be lym' here as lolling in a cutter wi' a heap of buffalo claes on ye, and ablin's ye may get yer two lugs frozen. Noo gin ye tak my advice ye'll try and make an effort and indulge in a wee walk. It will stretch yer legs for ye."

"Spare me, I beg, Mr. McGregor," said the now indignant young lady—"Spare me your advice and somewhat rude expressions. How can I ever attempt to walk when my poor legs—limbs almost refuse to support me? Why if I could walk I could skate, and skating used to be my favorite pastime years ago—before I was—was—smitten."

"Weel I'm richt glad o' that, for in my opinion ye'd better take a sma' walk wi' me every day and I wader ye'll soon be able to skate," said the confidant Mac. "I recollect," continued he, "taking many a long walk through the hills of Argyshire and found them vera beneficial for my health. And while in Holland I could na help admiring the bonny figures of the braw Dutch lassies, which I'm tauld is the result of skating wi' bundles on their heads. Yes," said the philo sophic Mac, "I certainly recommend skating for ye."

Urged by the solicitations of her impetunate lover, Iolanthe "made an effort" and aided by his strong arm gradually shook off her torpor and became quite a *pedesienne*, and each evening she astounded her affectionate family by her wondrous skill in overcoming any number of buck wheat pancakes and other luxuries at the tea table, for she was determined to skate. After some time she felt convinced that she was now able to perform the evolutions she had practised in her younger days on the ice. Accordingly she, as the lawyers say, "made search as to" and from amidst the *debris* of the garret she dragged out her old pair of skates and proceeded to the Rink, accompanied by a young brother, Master Hildebrand Perceval Percy Bellevue, who assisted her in putting on the long neglected "irons."

Many were the remarks, and odious the comparisons that were made by the on-looking damsels on the skates.

"Did you ever see such an old-fashioned pair?" said one.

"Never," said another.

"Hardly ever," said a third.

"I wonder where she got 'em?"

"She ought to get them cast over again at a foundry."

"They must have belonged to her grand-mamma," &c., &c.

All this did poor Iolanthe hear, and was so mortified that she took off her skates and went home, laid down on her favorite lounge, and wept bitterly.

Next morning she looked over the matter

with more clearness, and said to herself, "It was not I after all that caused such invidious remarks, it was these horrid old fashioned skates. I'll go down town this very day and buy a new pair," so she did. She bought a pair and again sought the Rink. Hildebrand buckled them on securely, and she glided gracefully to the centre of the rink. She then, so to speak, "put on more steam," when horror! one of the skates and its correspondi'ng foot flew upward till it pointed to the zenith, while the other described a semi-circle on the ice, and Iolanthe fell with tremendous force on the glassy surface of the rink. Fortunately she had on one of those extremely tasteful and much admired head dresses known to the theatre going public as the Gainsborough Hat, for providentially the rim of it, coming first in contact with the ice, gradually bent and allowed her head to come gently though firmly to its surface.

Again she removed her skates, went home, betook herself again to the grateful repose of the sofa, and wept more bitterly than ever.

She had not long resumed her old position when her lover and whilome monitor McGregor stalked into the room. She neither raised her eyes or bade him welcome.

"What's wrang wi' ye, Iolanthe?" said he. "Ye look as cross as a bear wi' a sore head!"

"It's nothin' to you anyway," replied the young lady with asperity, and forgetting her company manners.

"Oh, yes, it's a vera great deal to me," said the Caledonian soothingly. "Ablin's ye have na walked out the day."

"Yes, thanks to you, I have walked and skated too, and almost broke my neck," she replied satirically.

"Skating!" said the astonished lover.

"Yes," I first tried my old skates and the girls gayed and "Pinafores" me because they were so old fashioned," said the lady sobbing. "Then I bought a new pair at Moses Mordecai's on Queen street, and I came near breaking my neck. Oh, oh! (sobs and tears) I never want to speak to you again!"

"Oh, I see it a' the noo," said the undaunted Mac. "Why but ye get a guid pair and a' will be richt. I'll get them for ye, for never let it be said that a McGregor ever went back on his girl, even if she has abused him. Noo just listen ta me. I went down yesterday to Rawbone's, Yonge street, wi' a lot o' the lads that were gangin' out ta the woods ta shoot, one wanted a breech loading shot gun, another a knife, and another a revolver, and they wanted traps of a' sorts ta equip themselves for the camp, and while they were occupied in getting what they required, (which was a long time, for Rawbone has an immense stock of a' sorts on hand, and they dootless found it difficult to choose), I amused myself in looking at the articles in the store. There were as many rifles as would fit out a respectable battalion of infantry, and cartridges, belts, pouches, and hunting guns of a' descriptions. But what took my ee' especially, was their new style of skates, caid' the CLIMAX SKATE, which by a vera neat contrivance, a turn or two of a screw adjusts itself firmly to the boot, no matter of what size. I was just thinking of you at the time, and if I had known that you were gain' ta skate, I'd hae' bought ye a pair. So Iolanthe dry yer weeping ees, and to-morrow deo ro'ante ye'll have the finest pair o' skates in Toronto."

Next afternoon, having visited Rawbone's, Roderick duly appeared with the CLIMAX SKATES. Iolanthe was charmed, and when she tried them at the rink she was fairly in ecstasies! She glided round like a swan, the envy and admiration of the beholders, some of whom had laughed at her previous discomfitures.

"Oh, Roderick! how can I repay you for all your kindness and for your consideration at my petulant behavior yesterday?"

"By accepting me, and becoming Mrs. Roderick McGregor," said the imperturbable Mac.

"Oh, Roderick!" said the agitated maiden, who trembled so that the new skates she carried jingled an *obligato* in B flat, "but we must wait until after Lent."

"The deil much I care," said Roderick, "before or after as long as no time is lost." Which remark we must confess was somewhat inconsistent with the supposed characteristics of a Divinity student.

However, here we see an interesting young invalid lady brought to robust health, and two hearts made to beat as one, and all through a pair of skates.—Toronto Truth.

The First Shot.

Just as the paling of the stars showed dawn to be near, but while it was still as dark as ever, a few scattered shots were fired in our front, probably from some sentries or small pickets outside the enemy's lines. No notice was taken of this, though one of the shots killed a Highlander; the movement was unchanged—and then a single bugle sounded within the enemy's lines. These were most welcome sounds, assuring us that we should close with the foe before daylight, which just before he had seemed very doubtful. Yet a minute or two of dead silence elapsed after the bugle was blown, and then the whole extent of entrenchment in our front, hitherto unseen and unknown of, poured forth a stream of rifle fire. Then, for the first time that night, I could really be said to see my men, lighted by the flashes—the dim phantom lines which I had been looking on all night suddenly woke to life, as our bugles sounded the charge, and responding with lusty continued cheers, and without a moment's pause or hesitation, the ranks sprang forward in steady array. The distance from the blazing line of entrenchment was judged to be about 150 yards—in that interval nearly 200 men went down, the Seventy-fourth on the left losing 5 officers and 60 men before it got to the ditch. The obstacle was, (as the engineers afterwards recorded) 6 feet wide and 4 feet deep, and beyond was a parapet 4 feet high. Over it, or into and out of it, went the whole of the first line, mounting the parapet and attacking the Egyptians who lined it, and most of the second line followed, but I stopped the parts of it that were nearest to me as they came up, wishing to keep a support in hand which should be more readily available than such as the brigade in rear could supply.—Lieut. Gen. Hamley in the Nineteenth Century.

LATE CANADIAN NEWS.

MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.

Hay is coming in large quantities into Brandon and seems to be a drug in the market.

The cut of timber for the season at the Hudson Bay Company's mill, Edmonton, was 523,866 feet, board measure.

The mumps are going around among the Indians at Edmonton just now, and some of the whites are catching.

The snow fall has been exceptionally heavy at Prince Albert. More snow has already fallen than during the whole of last winter.

It is reported at Calgary that the C. P. Railway engineers engaged in the mountains have discovered rich gold bearing quartz.

Last winter river water cost 33 1-3 cts, a barrel at Edmonton. It now costs from 50 cts. to \$1, according to the situation of the place of delivery, and no jawbone allowed.

The first birth in Wapella, N. W. T., took place on Christmas day, the happy mother being Mrs. M. Currie. Under the rule generally observed in such cases, the youngster is entitled to a corner lot at the hands of the C. P. Railway.

A letter from Peace River written by W. Lloyd, who went in last spring, says the crops there were ahead of anything he had ever seen anywhere. It was reported that two miners near Fort St. John had been making from ten to thirty dollars a day.

A convention of veterinary surgeons was recently held in Winnipeg to devise means for putting a stop to the rapid spreading of glanders among the horses in the vicinity of Winnipeg and other parts of Manitoba. Twelve glandered horses had been shot on one day lately near Morris.

Messrs. Harvey and Grant of Kawloops, B. C., arrived at Edmonton on Nov. 10th with W. F. Buxton's train of pack horses. They say that the trail this side of the Jasper House is very bad, being much obstructed by fallen timber and muskeg. In many places it can scarcely be seen.

It is generally supposed that Saskatchewan coal will crumble and lose its burning properties after having been out of the pit some time. Ross' coal which was taken out the winter before last is still being used, and is nearly if not quite as good as when first taken out.

The Brandon Sun says claim jumping is assuming a very serious character in that community. Cases have come under its observation where parties have made affidavits in support of cancellations. Afterwards, conscience stricken, or through fear of the consequences, they have made affidavits setting forth that their first statement was false.

A petition is now in circulation among the vessel owners and others interested in the navigation of Lake Winnipeg and of the Red River, asking the Dominion Government to take such steps as will not only improve navigation, but will also lessen the dangers to navigators of the lake and stream referred to.

The Brandon Sun says: The western mail for Brandon goes through to Winnipeg, where it is re-assorted and then returned to us. As the Times would say, if it were not for the post-office department we would have no mail at all, so we had better show our gratitude by being satisfied with what we have got.

Somewhere near Medicine Hat a large manufacturing city—the Pittsburg of the North-West will be located. Specimens of canal coal have been brought from that vicinity which are fully equal to the best Pennsylvania coal. It is of a bright black color, so hard and solid that it can be cut and polished, and burns readily with a clear yellow flame. This district has long been noted for its iron ore, and with fuel near by to reduce the ore to merchantable shape, a promising industry is sure to spring up in the near future. The only drawback is the lack of limestone. Search has been made for the wherewithal to make lime, which is required to be used in reducing the ore, but in vain. About forty squatters are located in the vicinity of Medicine Hat.

The lowest temperature at Edmonton last April was nine degrees above zero on the 3rd, the highest was 63° on the 18th. Wheat was sown on the 13th. There was a slight fall of snow on the 16th, but there was no rain whatever and no high winds. In May the highest temperature was seventy-two above zero, and the lowest on the 8th, twenty-six above. The average for the month was fifty-one above. The highest wind was on the 10th, being forty-two miles per hour, and the average for the month was six miles per hour. Rain fall for the month, 1.16 inches. In June the highest temperature was eighty-six above zero, and the lowest, on the 21st thirty-nine above, while the average was fifty-eight. The highest wind was on the 12th, 12 miles per hour. Rain fall for the month, 3.75 inches. The weather throughout the month was simply superb, and the growth astounding. In July the highest temperature was 85 above zero, and the lowest 45 above, average for the month 62 above. Highest wind on the 10th, 23 miles per hour; average for the month, 3 2-3 miles. Rainfall 1.04 inches. In August the highest temperature was 87 above zero, and the lowest 45 above, average 59 above. Highest wind on the 15th, 27 miles per hour; average for the month 4 1/2 miles. Rain fall 2.18 inches. The first barley was cut on the 1st and the first wheat on the 8th, both perfectly ripe, and before the end of the month almost all the grain was ripe and the bulk of it was cut. In September the highest temperature was 79 above, and the lowest 26 above, average 50 above. Highest wind on the 30th, 18 miles per hour, and the average for the month 3 1/2 miles. Rainfall 0.66 inches, and the snow fell in the last days of the month, 1 1/2. The earlier part of the month was fully as good for growth and ripening as the four former months, but about the 13th the weather became damp and cool, and on the night of the 16th the first frost of the season occurred.

The Rev. Pere Lesage has determined on a crusade against the sale of intoxicating drinks in Chambly.

The road of the Canada Atlantic Railway is now graded between the Richelieu and the Seignory line, with the exception of about three miles.

A fearful cold-blooded murder has just been reported from Arthabaskaville. On Wednesday night last, a respectable farmer, from St. Norbert, named Mr. Goyette, came into the village to the mill and to the station on business. Near the station, on his return, he met four men, Messrs. Chabot, his father and son, Brown and Blanchet. All were slightly under the influence of liquor, and words passed between them which quickly led to blows. All at once the younger Chabot stepped up to Goyette, and, with his knife, struck into the abdomen of his victim and cut open the body upward to the top of the stomach, inflicting a wound from which the bowels protruded, and which was necessarily attended by almost immediate fatal results. After striking the fatal blow, the murderer simply said: "Come along, father, I've given him enough." All the parties have been arrested and are now carefully watched in the Arthabaska gaol, where they are confined. The prisoners will be tried at the next term of the Criminal Court, in February.

MARITIME PROVINCES.

Owen Connolly, of Charlottetown, P. E. I., has donated one hundred pairs of blankets and sixty tons of coal to the poor of that city.

The product of the new woollen cloth mills at Hopewell, N. S., is highly spoken of, its admirers predicting extensive sale for it throughout the Dominion.

The local option law has been worked in Pictou County to the extent of making it difficult but not impossible to procure the ardent.

PEARLS OF TRUTH.

The only happiness in this world's gift that is really worth the having is the happiness which springs up, free and unsought, by the wayside of duty.

Things that are to last require time for building. And, when a man is living for honor and glory and immortality, it takes time for him to bring out the full fruit of that which he is seeking.

Flatterers are the worst kind of traitors, for they will strengthen your imperfections, encourage you in all evils, correct you in nothing, but so shadow and paint your follies and vices as you shall never, by their will, discover good from evil or vice from virtue.

There are certain times when a hearty greeting, a word of cheer, a token of sympathy, or a little friendly assistance are most valuable and life-giving; but let the moment slip by and they are needed no longer and lose all their virtue. How often has the help that might have saved the sick and suffering arrived too late to be of any avail!

In all the pursuits of life we find that those who achieve honor and distinction are strong and self-reliant in their own powers, exercise faith in their own ability, and carry out plans conceived in their own brain. Morse had faith in telegraph wires, and Field in submarine cables, and to-day, in consequence thereof, the lightning is harnessed to convey the news of the world to every part of the inhabited globe within the compass of a few hours.

Girls, if they intend to become useful members of society and make good wives for "honest men and true," ought to be perfectly acquainted with all kinds of domestic work. They should know how things are done. "Knowledge is power," and such power renders a woman very independent in this age of inferior servants. She may perhaps never be required to use her knowledge in a practical way by performing household work, but it is well to possess the knowledge.

MARRIAGE.—What should be sought, and what is sought, as a rule, in a husband or a wife, whose arbitrary conventional customs and considerations of rank, wealth, and position are not allowed to interfere, is not a counterpart, but a complement—something to supply a lack—the other self, which shall round out one's being, and form a perfect symmetrical whole. As in music it is not contagious notes which combine to form chords, but those separated from each other, as a first and a third, or a third and a fifth; so we produce domestic harmony by associating graduated differences.

BANTER.—Jesting should have its limits, even at home. Among brothers and sisters a little harmless banter is perfectly admissible, and even perhaps desirable; but a family whose members are always snapping at each other in the style at present approved as clever, both in fiction and reality, can scarcely be upheld as a model of courtesy at home. Both among brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives, a great deal of talk which begins in chaff ends in rudeness. In society, conventional politeness sets certain limits to repartee, but at home there are no such barriers. In private life, when the more refined weapons of conversational dispute fail, the combatants are apt to resort to personal abuse. Wit is a dangerous weapon, and must be used with caution.

Saskatchewan Railway.

Col. Sproat, Hon. L. Clark and R. Fuller, of Hamilton, Ont., started from Winnipeg on Wednesday to Prince Albert, on the business of the South Saskatchewan Railway. They have been fortunate enough at Ottawa to receive the usual land grant of 6,240 acres per mile to aid in the construction of the line, and the intention is to commence operations at the western end next spring. Twenty miles of line from Prince Albert will reach the river, whence steamboats can proceed from points lower down. This is intended to supply a rail and water route for the people of that town before the closing of navigation in 1883. The gentlemen mentioned started out with the intention of purchasing a right of way, so that no obstacle will be in the way of the rapid construction of this railway. It is asserted that inside of three years the journey will be made by rail from Winnipeg to Prince Albert in 24 hours. Winnipeg Commercial.

The musicians of Boston have resolved upon a fixed standard of pitch. This does not refer to the stories they tell about each other.

Making a Night of It.

I had been at dinner. There were several good fellows there. They were dining, and other good fellow who was going away, and I had dined him. The night was a humid night.

And then, as the night was humid, and the star-dials hinted of morning, I thought me of home. Ah, home! It is great thing to have a home. They say in the French language there is no word for home. Home, sweet home. They say hear the watch dog's honest bark. And that sort of thing.

But then sometimes you don't want to go home.

I didn't want to go home. But I was afraid to stay away. So I took a cab to my homeward route together.

When I reached my stately mansion I missed the cab and reflected. Was it a condition to appear at the domestic tribunal that awful tribunal? I determined to do it over; en reflectant, I took a walk to the block.

I thought I might pass off my illness for fever disease, or something like that. Something sudden—something dangerous. Apoplexy might do.

But no. I smiled sadly and reflected. Zulana knew me pretty well. She was familiar with the symptoms of my projected heart disease.

I cautiously unlatched the door, without a little trouble. When within, I peeped again. I think I see the cynical smile upon the face of some baseless teacher. Ah, little reek ye, ye matless teachers, no matter.

When I entered the hallway I recalled a man stood before me. He was a tall, ugly looking customer in the dim light. But I soon saw that I had been mistaken. It was only a most hideous suit of armor, which is the very apple of Zulana's eye. A bright idea struck me. I wouldn't it do for me to do the war with the defunct *daimio*? Thus I determined I would enter the chamber of Zulana. I would surprise her. I would tell her plain. In the midst of the laughter, a slight yet pleasant glow created by my joke, my late arrival and my hiccoughs perhaps pass unnoticed.

Happy thought.

I began the task of donning the armor, was longer and more difficult than I anticipated. How in the name of all that is ineffable those Japs ever get their armor on without bursting a blood-vessel is more than I can guess.

However, at last I got into the thing and started up-stairs. I trod as gently as could, but when I entered the chamber where Zulana lay enshrined, my helmet vented me from seeing distinctly. I tumbled over an ottoman, and came to the floor in an awful crash.

I rose with much difficulty. But I scarcely got upon my feet when I was startled by the most awful, the most piercing, the most blood-curdling shriek ever heard in my life.

It was Zulana.

Apparently the wife of my bosom failed to see the joke.

I advanced toward her and endeavored to explain, but she fled from before me in her garments of night that she, like a ghost through the hallway.

I followed, entreating her to be seated. But she only shrieked the louder.

When I reached the foot of the stairs I had evidently fallen back for reasons. She appeared presently, flanked by the cook and the housemaid. But my rival threw them into disorder, and they fled back.

I made a short and impressive speech from my post at the foot of the stairway, did it with as much dignity as was compatible with my raiment. I implored them to be calm. Already a policeman was knocking at our portal. Finally I succeeded in quieting these insane creatures.

But I had a very long and elaborate set of explanations to make. First to the policeman. He was firmly convinced that the murder had been committed, and that the body was secreted on the premises. It took much time to remove this impression from his mind, and to convince him that my wife was a sleep-walker, and that I had been masqueraded ball. Next the servants, and ordinary dignified intercourse with Zulana was much impaired by reason of my anxiety.

Last came Zulana. I will not dwell on this painful scene. Suffice it to say that what I endured that night would have made the early Christian martyrs think their tortures were as naught in comparison. I thought of those whom Nero had dipped in oil, kindled and used as a torchlight procession, I laughed bitterly.

I am still of the opinion that my scheme was an excellent one, and that in it all the elements of a side-splitting joke. With almost any other woman it would have succeeded perfectly.

Elopement.

The wife of Sir Francis MacNaughten, Coleraine, has eloped with a young agent for the Macartney estates. Sir Francis MacNaughten has several children. She is the daughter of Dr. William Howard Ross, the well-known newspaper correspondent.

The two hickmen who robbed Texas are evidently trying to raise money enough to go to Niagara Falls, where they can charge \$1 per minute and live fast.

"So you have got twins at your house," said Mrs. Bezumbe to little Tommy Seaman's son.

"Yes, ma'am, two of 'em."

"What are you going to call them?"

"Thunder and Lightning."

"Why, those are strange names to call children."

"Well, that is what pa called them, soon as he heard they were in the house."

A Bugabo once Crawled Down a Chimney to Ban away with a Child who had been Afternoon previous been Detected in one of the Prevarications peculiar to Youngsters. "Pray do not harm me," cried the fled youngster. "But if you insist upon Wreaking your Revenge upon a Larva, please step into the next Room and Tackle my Parents, who have been Giving me the Traditional Staff about Santa Claus."—Denver Tribune.