

SIDE PLAY AT THE SKATING RINK

A Meteorological Note, the Impossibility of Cinderella and Some Bumps.

Perhaps you think that the weather conditions don't make any difference to the rink skater. If so you have made your first mistake.

To be convinced of this, when you reach the rink instead of joining the crowd going up the wide stairs, turn to the right and after passing through corridors and unheated rooms which may be offices or not, and going down a short flight of stairs, you will find an engineer with a newly washed face that shines with a lustre rivalled only by the engines. It is from him that you learn your error.

It is the first cold snap and the deceitful,

have the exclusive use of the rink that afternoon. So you can draw your own conclusions.

If in your mind you couple small feet and social graces, your second mistake becomes evident in another room, where there are all kinds of skates. At the moment when he is peered at through the half opened door, a mechanic in blue jeans is riveting a pair of Norwegian speed skates to a pair of shoes whose mere ownership would put their possessor forever and ever outside the Cinderella class. In fact it may be said that the feet of society, seen later at a respectful distance, fall to disclose



THE HUSBAND DIDN'T CUT ANY ICE.

double faced jade put down in the telephone book as four Zeros and having the surname of Winter, who had up to this time smiled sunnily with biting meaning underneath the smile, has displayed a frosty disposition for the first time.

"When it's cold," says the engineer, "we don't have to have but one engine." The warmer it gets outside, therefore, the more power here. He is asked by the presence of society with a large S has any effect on the temperature and he says, without apparently taking in your meaning.

"I guess we won't need but one engine to-day."

And it happened that society was to

anything that could justify a twentieth century version of that famous fairy tale.

Now for the third mistake. The following incidents seem to show that one can meet with bumps at the rink without going on the ice.

The guide motions in an awed manner toward the door of a room left open apparently by mistake. The furnishings consist of a burly covered divan, a double row of lockers against the wall, an ice cooler and two chairs. It is here that men skaters refresh themselves after too strenuous physical effort. On the door a memorandum book is pinned headed, "Holiday Gifts for Employees." The paper looks as if it had just had a facial massage, so devoid is it of

lines. The attendant mutters, "Generous lot, ain't they?"

A couple of smartly dressed women saunter in and proceed to incase their nether limbs in long boots. The stealthy footed attendant approaches THE SUN reporter and artist. "If you really want a good story for the papers," she whispers, "there's one!"

"Where?" And the eyes of THE SUN visitor, a little blinded by the nearness to two four hundredths of society, look about eagerly.

The attendant points to the big picture hat and drooping plume.

"It's the first time," she says, "that I ever saw real swells like those that come to this skating club put on their own shoes. Why there's a maid upstairs and everything convenient. I don't see why they do it."

She looks about as if to seek a masculine excuse and then shakes her head sadly at the suggestion that economy may be a sufficient reason.

"Economy!" and she shrugs herself off.

Then attention is attracted by an animated colloquy going on at the top of the stairway. The combined ages of the participants would not make twenty-five years, but they have the blasé manner that made Bourget complain that we have no children in America.

The keeper of the books in which each person who comes in, if not a regular member, has to be registered has demanded the reason for the appearance of the taller of the two, whose name is not Mamie, but who may be called so.

"I am a guest of Edith," and she points to her companion, who is strolling nonchalantly away, leaving her to face the doorkeeper.

"And she says for you, I suppose?"

"Oh, madame," she is remembering her French lesson, "I do not know. I suppose so."

Shoulders are shrugged, skates changed from one arm to another and Edith is called to explain the situation.

"She is my guest," she says volubly, "my guest, and as if that were sufficient she attempts to escape."

She is detained.

"You mean you want to pay for her?"

"Oh, pay?" Blank looks are exchanged.

"Pay? Why, do I have to pay?"

Edith and Mamie have apparently been warm friends, but an icy chill is creeping into their relations. The doorkeeper stands at attention.

"You know the rules. She can be put on your list and you can pay for her some other time."

More silence. Finally the guest rises to the situation.

"I will pay for myself," she says, glancing

severely at her hostess and the icy barrier drops. "Myself, I will pay!"

She waits for the protest that she has been taught to expect at such a moment. None comes.

The protest is not forthcoming, neither is the money. The thrill deepens.

"I don't think I care to skate to-day," says the visitor.

is no sail on the horizon. Again, tragically, she will pay."

The maid is watching with absorbed interest through the glass the evolutions of a small boy on the ice and is apparently desirous to see him at closer range. Her expression seems to say:

"Well, so long as you have decided to pay, why not pay at once?"



"THERE'S MANY A SLIP 'TWIXT THE MAID AND THE TIP."



THE AUXILIARY ICE PLANT

The hostess insists.

"Oh, you must stay," and for fear she may be misunderstood she explains hurriedly: "All you have to do is to pay."

"Very well," says the guest, "I will pay."

She beckons the French maid, "Clarice, we will pay."

She casts an agonized look about. There

It is easy to see that Clarice's position is like that of an aeronaut who is not quite sure of the security of air as a standing place. The eyes of Mamie meet and hold hers; there is a commiserating glance in one of the corners of her eye. The interest of the spectators increases.

Clarice, as one who has been driven into a corner, throws all indecision aside, feels in the folds of her gown and brings out her purse. The hostess and the guest watch it eagerly. It opens. There is a silver quarter there only.

The guest prepares to depart.

"I will not skate to-day," she explains, "I am a little tired."

"She will not skate to-day," says Clarice in French to the doorkeeper.

"She will not skate to-day," repeats the hostess. The spectators look relieved. At least it is settled. Mamie and Clarice steal down the stairs.

Outside of its sociological aspects as indicated above, the rink is an interesting place. A few people are skating, one well.

A young woman whose flight is graceful as that of a swallow holds the centre of the ice. As the hand plays she keeps time with it—slow, then fast, then faster, backward, sideways, as if the ice surface were her proper medium of voraging. She is grace personified and, as if dispensing the aid of dress as a means of drawing attention to herself, is attired in a plain gray skirt and short jacket unadorned.

"She holds her leg too stiff," says one envious spectator.

"Who wouldn't skate well if they simply lived out of doors all the year?" says another, grudgingly.

A lonely man writing his name with his skates on the ice is next the mark of criticism. He is a mere husband.

"He don't cut any ice, does he?" says a coarser hand maiden. "He seems to," answers her vis-a-vis.

THE MILLINER AN EASY MARK

WOMEN CUSTOMERS WHO ARE NOT ABOVE PETTY SWINDLING.

One Game, Says a Dealer in Hats, Is to Give a Sealed Up Check for a Receipted Bill—Customers Who Wear Bonnets and Then Return Them a Nuisance.

"When I first went into business for myself it astonished me to find how many women there were who considered it smart to beat a milliner, but nothing that women do in the way of business meanness or underhandness is capable of surprising me any more," said a woman milliner.

"Look at this, for example," and she exhibited a check for \$45, filled out in a feminine hand, folding the name under so that it could not be read. "This check represents as deliberately mean a transaction as could be imagined, and yet it is a dodge that has been varied upon me four or five times by different women since I started in business."

"The woman whose name is on this check is the wife of a prosperous man, and she lives in a beautiful home. It is well known to tradespeople that her husband lets her have all the money that any woman, even one with extravagant tastes, could possibly need."

"And yet she is not above turning so contemptible a trick as this. She came here for the first time yesterday. I recognized her at once, was pleased to think that I was going to have her for a customer, and would have given her any amount of credit she would ask for. But she didn't ask me for any credit. She picked out two hats that she liked, each of them costing \$45."

"Send them to my home this evening," she said to me, "and I will return you a check."

"Well, that looked even better," she was going to be a fine new cash customer, it seemed.

"I sent the two hats to her, together with a receipted bill for the full amount, \$90. She gave my delivery man this check for \$45. She handed the man the check in a sealed envelope, took the hats and the receipted bill for \$90, and there you are. I had had this thing as long worked upon me before, but I could not think it possible that this woman would do it. I thought she must have made some mistake. So I went up to see her this forenoon. I explained the situation to her, but she simply would not listen to me in fact, boldly

told me that I was trying to cheat her, and she shut the door. That ends the transaction. I am \$45 out."

"There is no way to guard against such meanness as that. When the dodge was first worked upon me, about two years ago, I was so angry that I instructed my delivery man not to accept any more money or checks placed in sealed envelopes, but to open the envelope and examine the contents before giving up the receipted bill. He did this in a couple of cases where regular women customers gave him checks in sealed envelopes, and found everything all right. The women became very angry over what they called his impertinence and withdrew their patronage from me, so I had to instruct him not to open the envelopes any more."

"This woman whose check I have in my hand gets two hats for the price of one, and of course she will not come back to my place any more. She will no doubt work the same game upon other milliners and different sorts of business houses that deal in women's wear, and I cannot believe, from the way she treated me this morning, that she will suffer the just punishment of conscience over her catty meanness."

"Her dodge, of course, is merely another version of the old money-in-the-envelope dodge that professional swindlers used to employ before it became too stale. I would not, of course, permit my delivery man to accept payment in that way from a strange woman, one who received the goods sent to her at a hotel, for instance. That old scheme was worked time and again years ago, as everybody knows. But this woman presumed upon her credit, and upon my knowing that she was what we call 'good,' to cheat me out of just half the amount of my bill."

"I couldn't begin to name half of the downright dishonest things that some women will do in their efforts to get the best of milliners. Not long ago a woman who had been a customer of mine for some time came to me in a state of great apparent distress. I had bill of \$120 against her."

"My husband is very angry over that bill," she told me. "He declares that I am borrowing money and having my tradespeople put the borrowed money on their bills for goods, and he is perfectly unreasonable. Now, here is what I wish you'd do for me. Cut your bill down to \$75 and I will pay you \$50 now and the rest later, and you give me the bill receipted in full so that I can show it to him and tell him how good you will be in not minding my hat. Then I can get some more hats."

"I told her that I couldn't cut the bill

down at all—that it was a just bill, and so on."

"Well," she said then, "I will pay you the \$50 now and then you let me have the bill receipted in full just to show him? And I'll send you the remainder of the amount in a couple of weeks."

"I didn't like the sound of this, either naturally enough, since I've been fooled so often by these things, and I said: 'No, I will do this: You pay me the \$50 now and I shall let you have the bill receipted in full if you will let me have your personal note for the remaining \$75.'"

"She agreed, and I took her \$50 and handed her the bill for \$120 receipted in full. Then I sat down to make out the personal note for the remaining \$75 for her to sign, when she calmly turned and walked out of the place. She was stepping into her automobile before I had a chance to realize what was happening. There would have been no use in my flying out after her, especially when the store was full of people, and so I simply let her go, with a receipted note for the remaining \$75, and a full \$120 when she had really only given me \$50 on account. That's another one that, I think, it would be pretty hard to match for meanness."

"Last fall a woman whom I knew to be perfectly good, as far as what we call the blue book showed, came to my place for the first time and selected three very expensive hats. One of them cost \$130, the second \$85 and the third \$60."

"She gave a check when I told the aggregate cost of the three hats she picked out. 'Oh, I know that my husband would never agree to that bill in the wide world,' she said."

"But do you need all three of the hats at the same time? I asked her. 'Perhaps if you took them separately, at short intervals, and he received the three separate bills, he would—'

"No," she interrupted, "we'll do it this way: Make out the total bill for the three hats at an even \$100, he isn't really stingy, but he thinks that even \$100 for a hat is a frightful price. And I'll pay you the difference now, and he'll never know about it—I must have those three hats."

"So we arranged it that way. She paid me the difference, \$145, and the hats were sent her. The bill followed a month or so later, and her husband's check for the \$150 promptly came back. About three days after receiving her husband's check I was one embarrased," she said, hastily, "I am out to do a little shopping, and I've got both my pocketbook and my check book at home, and I haven't the time to drive down to my husband's office. I'd be so obliged if you'd let me have—oh, a hundred dollars, say, till tomorrow, and I will pay you and let you have it back, or better, I'll send you a check this evening."

"Why, certainly I would. Let her have the \$100 without a thought of any wrong intent on her part. But she didn't 'drop by' the next day with the money, nor did she send me any check for the \$100, and it wasn't long before I became reduced

to the belief that she had deliberately chiselled me out of that hundred just because it seemed an easy and simple job for her to do it. She has bought her millinery elsewhere since then, and I've found out that she has told everybody that I overcharged her frightfully, but that she found out a way to get even with me." The last part of her assertion is perfectly true.

"I have no way to get the hundred from her. Of course, I have absolutely nothing to show for having loaned it to her. I could write a statement of the transaction to her husband if I were foolish enough to do that, but I'm not, and I simply send me back a flaming letter of denial, or worse, come storming down here himself and accuse me of no end of things, and I know better than to do anything of the sort. I simply pocketed my \$100 loss, and let it go at that."

Women who do not belong to the wealthy class, but who are regular customers, do not do that, but I'm not, and I simply send me back a flaming letter of denial, or worse, come storming down here himself and accuse me of no end of things, and I know better than to do anything of the sort. I simply pocketed my \$100 loss, and let it go at that."

"I'll take it if my husband likes it," she says. "Send it up, and I'll show it to him this evening, and if he approves of it I'll take it."

"Then she wears it to the theatre, or to a party, and returns it in the morning, with a note to the effect that her husband doesn't like the hat. How do we know that she has worn the hat? Why, by the hatpin marks in it, bless your simple heart! There are no hatpin marks in a hat when it is sent out of a milliner's establishment, for the pins are not used in trying on hats."

"We don't often say anything in a case of this sort, it isn't good policy. But if one woman reports to us that she has worn a hat, then, of course, we have to say something to her about it, and in almost every case she flings up her hands with all the solemnity in the world that she wouldn't think of doing such a thing, and then quits the establishment."

"One night at the opera I saw six of my hats on the heads of women—hats that had been sent to them on my husband's approval. That is to say, they were all expensive hats, too. Well, every blessed one of those hats came back on the following morning, accompanied by notes to the effect that their husbands didn't like them. To one of those women—she had done the trick several times before—I said the next time she visited the store, 'But I saw the hat on your head at the opera that night.' She almost went into hysterics, she was so angry with me and of course, I had to hold her. I didn't mind that. And, by the way, the milliners send any hats on approval to the very cream of their customers, several times before. I said the next time she visited the store, 'But I saw the hat on your head at the opera that night.' She almost went into hysterics, she was so angry with me and of course, I had to hold her. I didn't mind that. 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