

had been to England and had seen these yachts sail, and knew that they were speedy; but their utterances were received with incredulity. "They sail well enough when compared with each other," it was said, "but put them alongside of our centreboard yachts and they will be beaten easily." The average Bay Shore boatman hitched up his trousers and said oracularly: "It stands to reason them things

away down on their sides can't sail; a boat has got to have bottom fur to sail on,"

Had the *Madge* been the *Vanduaara*, the *America's Cup* would have gone back to Great Britain, beyond a peradventure. That was one chance of which John Bull failed to avail himself; he has another this season—will he avail himself of it? *Quien sabe?*

ON BLADES OF STEELE.

BY D. BOULTON HERRALD.

To the enthusiastic skater even the pleasures afforded by the enclosed rink are manifold, but who will compare them to those offered by the far-stretching reach of the frozen river or lake?

However tastefully decorated the rink may be, it cannot bear comparison with the arena supplied by Nature. Instead of flags and streamers we have the green pines on the distant hill-tops, while closer at hand the trees, clothed with leaves of autumn tints, are painted by Nature's brush. The carpet of brown, withered ferns and grass is dotted here and there with drifted heaps of early snow. In place of long lines of promenading, gossiping humanity, our boundaries are the barren shores, their sameness relieved here by an upturned boat and there a stranded log. Replacing the glare of the electric light, we have the sun's genial rays, or the softer and more beautiful moon. Gone is the damp vapor that will ever arise from even the best-appointed rink, and we can revel in the crisp and bracing air of autumn. Surely, then, is outdoor skating entitled to the palm. In the rink the never-ceasing round from left to right, and, at the sound of the bell, from right to left, grows wearily monotonous, even though the most charming of partners may glide by one's side. Round and round the skaters promenade in endless procession. You dare not go too fast nor yet too slow, for the one will surely bring you into collision with some one who blocks the way; the other will still more certainly run some one into *you*.

But in the glorious open all is changed. Your skates locked on, away you glide, fast or slow, turning and twisting without let or hindrance, as fancy prompts your path. Do not go near that hole! Beware

of yonder stick! Though half hidden in the ice, it yet projects enough to catch the point of your skate and give you an ugly "cropper." Crack! You are on thin ice. Keep nearer to the shore. Who is this coming up behind so fast? He evidently wishes to have a "brush," and you are not unwilling.

So on you fly, past the creek, with timorous children and girls covering its surface. They prefer to skate over the shallows to trusting themselves upon the deeper river. Here's the deserted pottery, bleak and dismal, with sashes that hold naught but the ragged edges of the panes that once kept out the weather—victims of the small boy and his "sling." And here the Fair Grounds, the long rows of white-washed stabling, grand-stand and buildings glaring in the bright sunshine. The oblong race track recalls memories of the close finish between "Little Vic" and "Chestnut Jim." How your heart stopped still until "Vic" showed her nose under the wire, a short head to the good, for she carried your "pile" on her handsome shoulders! On and on, until the bridge stops your progress. The ice beneath it is not of sufficient strength to bear your weight.

Then, after walking across the road and climbing the fences, you come to the narrows, where the ice is ever frail. Keep well in, under the trees, skate swiftly, and do not tumble, or you will surely get a ducking. Halloa! the man ahead seems to be in difficulties. He has fallen into a water-hole! Now, put on a burst and try to avoid meeting with a like mishap. You near the victim as he stands over the waist in water. His coat collar seems to offer a good hold—and the idea is no sooner thought of than acted on. As you pass,



“ PUT YOUR SKATES ON, MISS ? ”

you grasp him, and with the impetus of your speed drag him from his involuntary bath to a spot where the ice is firm.

He betrays ingratitude, however, of the basest description, for he consigns you to a hotter place than—skating, because, forsooth, you gathered some of his back hair in your fist. Well, such is life! “Men were *ungrateful* ever.”

Now you near the worst place yet encountered, open water, with ice here and there between the boulders on the shore. In and out you thread your way, dulling the skate blades sadly on the stones; but soon the obstruction is passed, and the “going” is again good. There, to the right, is the tamarac swamp, where you have bowled over many a “bunny” and many a grouse. There the wooded point where you had such a pleasant picnic and met jolly Miss Jones. But duck your head, for here is the railroad bridge, and in case of contact with those jutting iron bolts your cranium would be apt to come out second best.

Why, here we are at the locks already! A short four miles it has seemed, covered in little more than twenty minutes. Now off with the “acmes,” for why should one blunt them, or stumble over the portage like a drunken man, when he can so easily unlock the skates and saunter over comfortably?

Another mile and a half is passed, and

a second set of lock-gates is reached, which must be crossed ere we can come to the lake-like expanse on their farther side, made by the widening of the river. Hallo! there is a sail, and a large one at that. What can it be? Oh, the ice-boat, of course. How stupid of me not to think of it before.

When we cross over the rise the boat comes into full view, dashing along at high speed as it tacks from shore to shore. It is the only craft of the kind in Central Canada, and is consequently regarded as a wonderful machine. To me, however, it looks a crude affair indeed, after the far-famed fleets that grace the frozen waters of the Hudson.

Mile after mile we skim along, now jumping a crack, now avoiding a miniature drift of snow. The sun is in my eyes, and I cannot keep a good lookout. Suddenly I am startled by a warning shout, which brings me to a standstill to discover that there is open water but a few feet ahead.

The shadows of evening are falling, so we turn homeward. The scenes of the outward journey meet the eye again, mellowed in the deepening twilight. At length we reach the landing, with a keen appetite for dinner, and in a condition to thoroughly enjoy the after-dinner pipe before an open fire, and the perusal of the latest novel.