

In Pastures Green

moonlight, with the snow crunching faintly underfoot. On the road we met others who had been lured away to neighbourly visits by the beauty of the night, and it was good to feel that, instead of killing sociability, the winter weather had really aroused it to more activity. Winter weather and winter pleasures at their best are very good.

Dec. 17.—A few nights ago the boys were testing their skates, and the familiar ringing sound seemed good in the frosty moonlight. And yet it was sporting under difficulties. All the ice they had to practise on was a frozen puddle about three rods long and a rod wide. As a matter of fact, skating, like everything else, has moved to town. I can remember when we had whole fields for skating ponds, but that was before the days of government drains and underdrainage. Now there are very few ponds or swamps left, and skating is no longer a country sport, except in specially-favoured localities. But every town and practically every village has its skating rink, where they hold carnivals on the solid ice in the winter time, and political meetings in the summer, when statesmen skate on thin ice. Of course, I am not regretting the fact that the country is too well drained for skating. I am merely noting the fact that this change has taken place, and I am afraid that skating is not the only sport that is lost to us. Baseball also seems to have retreated to the cities and towns, and hockey has taken the place of shinny, and is played almost entirely on the town rinks. But there may be another reason for this. Where could a boy find a shinny stick nowadays? The average woodlot in which cattle have been pasturing hasn't a stick left in it that is under thirty or forty years old. It is getting rather hard for country boys and girls to have fun of any kind without going to town for it and paying an admission fee. This may not seem of much importance to serious-minded people, but I am inclined to think it is very important. Most of us like to remember the homes of our childhood by the games we played in them, and to have no games is to have fewer ties binding the children to the land. I am afraid the