

More interesting than all these, though, is the way in which the Swiss native youth have taken to the pastime. Skates they regard, apparently, only as a useful means of progression in the icy village streets—the *lugette* or small sled as a convenient receptacle for parcels or burdens, and a means of accelerated progression when a downward slope serves. But for some inexplicable reason, ski-ing stands in their estimation as a thing apart from these. Whole battalions of them, men and boys together, may be seen on Sundays and fête-days thus on pleasure bent. And many of them have acquired already a skill which will make them in days to come the instructors and ski-club managers of enterprising amateurs in the art, and will no doubt put them on terms of equality with the Norwegians themselves. For at present the Norwegians stand easily first. They come to Switzerland in twos and threes, to give exhibitions of ski-running, to perform those feats of jump and double-jump which sound so incredible when measured in yards, which look so tremendous when reproduced in photographs and on picture postcards. But leaping on ski is and must remain but a trick of the exhibition grounds, a spectacle and an acrobatic feat. In cross-country work it is seldom used. Easily to ascend a slope, to glide with facility and true poise down again, to swing round and stop with celerity—these are the essential accomplishments of the skier, and a proper mastery of them gives ample scope for patience and perseverance.

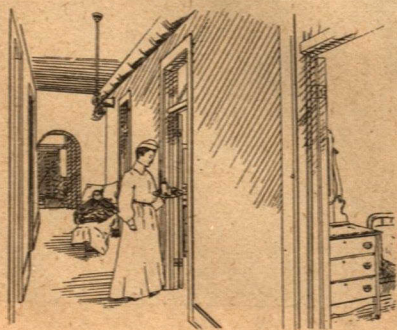
Bandy too, like ski-ing, gains yearly in popularity. Bandy is, with a few minor differences, ice-hockey; and only polo may be compared to it for speed and splendor. Indeed, the cynosure of all eyes in the figure-skaters' rink is seldom the leader at bandy. And, bar falling weather, it may be played on every day of the winter, for the ice in the

bandy-rinks is fresh from morning to morning, being flooded over night and carefully swept.

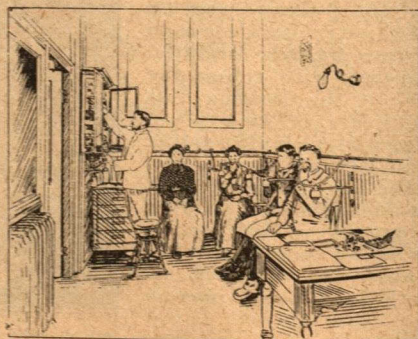
Crowded as are the rinks, however, and much as they have done for the development of winter pastime, it is the mountain lake which affords the true devotee of the polished blade his sport in ideal surroundings; and perhaps the rarity of the necessary conditions makes this kind of skating the more valued. Certainly a day of it lingers long in the memory. One such I recall at Sils lake near St. Moritz last winter—three square miles of black and flawless ice, a blue dome overhead, the air as still as that of a cathedral, and snow-capped bergs "propping the speckless sky."

But the sport universal of the Swiss winter is that afforded by the *luge*, as it is called in the French cantons, the *Schlitten* of the Germans. This is a frame sled, iron-shod, the seat constructed of parallel slats and not in one piece. It amuses visitors to see how old and young, native and foreign, go always with one of these sleds at heel. No one thinks of walking even the least slope. Down they sit on their ever-present *luge*, and save thereby the time and effort of the descent. Nor do they lose in the ascent, for the long cord swung on the arm creates only the very faintest suggestion of an effort. It is the *luge*, too, that gives rise to that debatable question as to which is better fun—a day on the iced runs, or one in the less frequented roads and the fields. It is the *lugers*—by far the greater number—who elect for the latter; and it is there that one sees the brightly-colored caps and streamers flash in the frosty air, the gay procession up the hill; it is there that one hears the laughter that greets a turn-over in the snow, the joyous and incessant "*Gare! Gare!*" and the hum of merriment of a horde of happy children—children (for that day at least) of fifty and under.

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