

204 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn N.Y.
Nov. 19th 1888.

My dear Daughter: I have been think-
ing of you all day as I was push-
ing around here and there in the
crowded, rushing city. Mamma
has been talking of you every evening
for the past few days and we
have been very sorry indeed
that you would not yet
~~your presents today.~~ ~~It is quite~~
unavailable, however, and we
have so much confidence in our
brave darling that we know that
she will not think her papa and
mama forgot her or neglected
her. We send you a knife and
a pair of skates by express and
I will try and have the other
things follow as I can get time
to humb them up. You must re-

Remember that we are just too busy for anything in the world now and we feel as if we could hardly take time to breathe, so busy are we in putting things aright and taking care of our opportunity.

The knife is a perfect shop-saw, needle, awl, cork-screw, Rooks and I know not what else.

It costs \$2.75- and you must send me one cent to pay for it. You know it is but a week to make any one a present of any thing that has an edge. It is sure to cut friendship & it is said.

The cleats are the best I could get, ^{cost \$7.00} unless I got oil-
re-plated ones - there are

nickel-plated and are wonders of ingenuity. The work with a lever which you will see under the sole of the shoe. This pulls out to the right; then you set your heel and the sole of the shoe in the flanges to hold them and push the lever back and — there you are.

By the way, these flanges are regulated — that is made to open more or less widely — by a thumb-screw under the skate. So you can make it fit your heel and sole in a minute.

They are not much like my first pair of skates. I remember them perfectly. The skates cost \$25 and I had to get someone to put straps on them and that cost a quarter more. I got money to pay for them by chopping wood —

at least part of it. No, I guess I am wrong. In fact, I know I am. That wood-cutting was for another matter. The skates were bought with a part of my Fall mittling — chestnuts and perhaps hickory nuts. I was very proud of the skates — though they were clumsy enough affairs — with great awkward heels and ~~lots~~ straps and rigging enough on them to fit out a seventy-four gun ship. The very night after they were "put in slaps" so to speak, I took them over to a neighbor's and showed them to my crow Jew. Jew was a fat, lummish fellow but as good-natured as a seal. He was powerful lazy too and always seemed born

to a lot of buck licks. His parents were not exactly poor — indeed, his grandfather was a rich man — but there were a great many children in the house and the father was "no account" nor the mother either for that matter. Besides that Jim never seemed to be in the right place at the right time. He was always at the tail end of a race, the first one to be found when we played ^{"Jepsey"} ~~Jepsey~~; and the first to be caught when we played "goul" or "Pomp-pomp-pull-away." So he was the last one to be chosen when we played ball and because he was a divider he'll too, the last one to be chosen when we

"above sides" in a spelling = bee.
Jim was not eacious, It was too
much trouble to be anything es posi=
tive but I remember how longingly
he looked at those skates by the
firelight. He was a little older than
I and a great deal bigger but
somehow I always used to
"boss" him around and putrouize
him as if I had been a half a
decade older. Jim's sisters —
there were a lot of them — went
into raptures over the skates
and I was very much of a he=
ro as I explained the working
of my strap and buckle, told
the cost and boasted of the
quality as befitted the confi=
dence and enthusiasm of a boy
of twelve. Jim looked really
ashamed of himself. My su=
perior enterprise seemed

really to afflict him. His sisters
were not slow to draw invid=
ious comparisons and afflict
his sluggish soul with taunts.
They were rather coarse, ill-na=
tured girls all except one, who
was as ill-placed among her kin
as a jewel in a swine's snout.
She was fair and soft and gentle,
never in my life did I hear her
make fun even of her lubberly
brother, but she made no se=
cret of her preference for me
and we were constant play=
mates. She suggested mildly that
I could not use the skates all
the time and that I would, of
course, let Jim use them the
rest of the time. I remember
it did not strike me very
favorably. I would have been
willing to let Jim have them
half the time — say from April
to October — but the idea of

having his turn come in the winter
did not seem to have any
special attractions for me. Jim
had no skates you see. I ought to
have told you that before as I should
have known that you did not re-
member. I suppose Mary Ann
saw that I was not inclined to be
over-generous just then so she sug-
gested that we all go out to the
pond and try the new slippers.
We did so. It was a cold clear night.
The girls were all ruffled up but
they managed to am amble slick and
have a heap of fun nevertheless.
I was a little afraid of the new
skates. I had now and then
had a bit of experience with boot-
soled ones and when the pre-
vious winter gave way to spring
had gotten a good deal of con-
fidence in my power to manage
a pair of steel runners. But that
was even so long ago — it seemed

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just an age to me. That was the
first freeze of winter. I hadn't got
my ice lags on and here I was
to perform on a pair of utterly
unexperienced ice-cutters, before a
half dozen girls one of whom
was ready any day or night to
wager her immortal soul that
I could beat the champion of
Holland. I got awful cold be-
~~fore we reached the pond and~~
kept growing colder all the
time till we got there. There never
was such a cruel, cold-blooded
oscillating moon as the one
that teetered and tumbled and
jeered at me out of the deep
black blue of a night with
snow in the northwest, that
night & I almost wished I

was a girl, because girls did not skate in those days. However we got the skates on after a while. There were straps enough on them to make a harness and I spent all the time over them I could. Jim - confirmed the parent was mightily helpful. He adjusted and buckled and tried every strap until there was not any reason why I should not rise and conquer. I got up on one knee. Jim gave me his hand. Mary Ann stood by to give me a triumphant send off. The other five girls and a stray boy stood on the shore as the audience to witness my debut.

It was not promising and the audience seemed to be cordily critical. My feet took an unaccountable aversion for each other and nearly pulled my legs off trying to get away from each other. When I managed to conquer this inclination and get them fairly together, I turned and faced the audience determined to remove the unfavorable impression of my first movement. I suppose the instinct of politeness impelled me to bow in acknowledgment of their presence and attention. The movement was executed with what might be termed impetuous haste. I stretched out my hands - stretched them up - and then suddenly struck them straight downwards. The tail of my "warmer" struck straight out towards the Area Major. The boy on shore suggested that I was "taking sight" between my legs! Jim smelly

intimated that I was feeling for stones
in the sub ice. I mentally determin-
ed to whip both of them the next
day, but in the meantime devoted
my energies to regaining the perpen-
dicularity which I rigidly — very rigid-
ly maintained for a considerable time.
The audience got tired and went off
to slide — all but Henry, Anne who
stood faithfully by to cheer, soothe
or assist as the case might be.
I hated those two boys and despised
those girls. However, I went on prac-
tising. They laughed at my movements
and I twitted them with not having
any skates. Gradually I got more
confident and at the same time
more angry. Finally I struck out
boldly across the pond. Almost im-
mediately there was a rebellion among my
members. Three or four pairs of legs
were mixed up in the controversy. All
of them were apparently opposed to
rapid transit. The world turned
around diurnally, semperternally and