dries, melt the size again, and put more whiting and whiten the frames seven or eight times, letting it dry between each time ; but before it be quite dry, between each washing with size, you must smooth and wet it over with a clean brush-pencil in fair water.

SKATING, an exercise on ice, both graceful and heal­thy. Although the ancients were remarkable for their dex­terity in most, of the athletic sports, yet skating seems to have been unknown to them. It may therefore be consid­ered as a modern invention ; and probably it derived its origin in Holland, where it was practised not only as a grace­ful and elegant amusement, but as an expeditious mode of travelling when the lakes and canals were frozen up during winter. In Holland long journeys are made upon skates, with ease and expedition ; but in general less attention is there paid to graceful and elegant movements, than to the expedition and celerity of what is called journey skat­ing. It is only in those countries where it is considered as an amusement, that its graceful attitudes and movements can be studied ; and there is no exercise whatever better calculated to set off the human figure to advantage. The acquirement of most exercises may be attained at an ad­vanced period of life ; but to become an expert skater, it is necessary to begin the practice of the art at a very early age. It is difficult to reduce the art of skating to a system. It is principally by the imitation of a good skater that a young practitioner can form his own practice. The Eng­lish, though often remarkable for feats of agility upon skates, are very deficient in gracefulness, which is partly owing to the construction of the skates. They are too much curved in the surface which embraces the ice ; consequently they involuntarily bring the users of them round on the outside upon a quick and small circle ; whereas the skater, by using skates of a different construction, viz. less curved, has the command of his stroke, and can enlarge or diminish the cir­cle according to his own wish and desire. The metropolis of Scotland has produced more instances of elegant skaters than perhaps any other country whatever ; and the institu­tion of a skating club has contributed not a little to the im­provement of this elegant amusement.

SKELETON, in *Anatomy,* the dried bones of any ani­mal joined together by wires, or by the natural ligament dried, in such a manner as to show their position when the creature was alive.

In the *Philosophical Transactions* we have an account of a human skeleton, all the bones of which were so united as to make but one articulation from the back to the os sac­rum, and downwards a little way. On sawing some of them where they were unnaturally joined, they were found not to cohere throughout their whole substance, but only about a sixth of an inch deep all round. The figure of the trunk was crooked, the spins making the convex, and the inside of the vertebræ the concave part of the segment. The whole had been found in a charnel-house, and was of the size of a full-grown person.

SKENE, Sir John, a Scotish lawyer, was the second son of James Skene of Ramore, and of Janet the second daughter of Alexander Burnet of Leys. He thus derived his lineage from the ancient family of Skene of Skene. We may place his birth about the year 1540. He is said to have been partly educated at King’s College, Aberdeen ; but he is known to have been incorporated at St. Andrews in the year 1556 ; and in this university he took the degree of A.M. In 1564 and 1565 he taught as one of the regents of St. Mary’s College. According to Dempster, he spent a great part of his youth in Norway, Denmark, and Poland, and had thus an opportunity of acquiring a familiar acquaint­ance with modern languages, as well as of extending his knowledge of men and manners.@@1 Skene has incidentally mentioned that he was in Switzerland in 1568, and that he was at Cracow in Poland during the following year.@@2 He has likewise stated that he returned home after a peregrin­ation of seven years, and that he returned from the famous university of Wittemberg, honoured with an annual pen­sion from the elector of Saxony, and imbued with some knowledge of the civil law. He appears to have begun his travels in 1567, and to have returned in 1574.@@3 On re­visiting his native country, he finally made choice of the legal profession, and was admitted as an advocate on the 19th of March 1575. He speedily acquired some degree of distinction as a lawyer.

The earl of Morton, then regent of the kingdom, had formed a plan for reducing the laws into a more easy form and method. The execution of the plan was committed to Skene and to Sir James Balfour, president of the court of session. Among other ostensible coadjutors, we find Lord Glammis, chancellor, Lord Ruthven, and William Baillie of Provand, who likewise attained to the dignity of president. The only result of this commission is supposed to have been the compilation of a book which passes under the title of Sir James Balfour’s Practicks. “ If I might be allowed to indulge in conjecture,” says Mr. Thomson, “ I should be in­clined to suppose, that the conception or project of this di­gest of the laws may have originated with Balfour; that his own exile afterwards precluded him from continuing to take any part in its execution ; that the active drudgery of the proposed investigation was devolved upon younger men ; and that the unfinished result of their labours is perhaps no other than the volume of Practicks to which the name of Sir James Balfour has been traditionally annexed.”@@4 It is at least evident that the work must have been interpolat­ed ; for, as Lord Hailes has remarked, it mentions certain acts of parliament, and the names of certain peers, that did not exist till after the death of Balfour. Of this compila­tion, which was not printed till 1754, the value has never been highly estimated. The labours of Skene, whatever may have been their nature or extent, were, on the 10th of June 1577, rewarded by the grant of an annual pension of “ ten chalders of meal,” payable out of the revenues of the abbey of Aberbrothock.

In the year 1589 he was employed in another capacity. Sir James Melville was selected by the king as his ambas­sador to the court of Denmark, for the purpose of negoci∙ ating a marriage with a Danish princess ; and he required the advice and assistance of a lawyer, with a special refer­ence to the Danish claims on Orkney. “ When I schew his maieste,” says Melville, “ that I wald tak with me, for man of law, Mester Jhon Skein, his maieste thocht then that ther wer many better lawers. I said that he was best acquanted with the conditions of the Germanes, and culd mak them lang harangues in Latin, and was a gud trew stout man, lyk a Dutche man. Then his maieste was con­tent that he suld ga ther with me.”@@5 Melville was however supplanted, and the Earl Marischal having been placed at the head of the embassy, Skene accompanied him to Den­mark. Dr. Craig, physician to the king, addressed a letter to Tycho Brahe, recommending to his friendly attentions Skene, Swinton, Nicolson, and Fowler, who were all at­tached to this mission,

In the course of the same year, Skene was conjoined

@@@’ In the dedication prefixed to Regiam Majestatem, Skene expresses himself thus: “ Annus jam agitur tricesimus quintus, cum Dei

@@@ Fourth Annual Report of the Deputy Clerk Register, p. 21.

@@@1 Melville’s Memoirs, p. 366. Edinb. 1827, 4to.

@@@ Dempstcri Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum, p. 600.

@@@’ Skene de Verborum Significatione, vv. *Menetum* and *Pede-pulvoosus.*

beneficio, post septem annorum peregrinationem, ex inclyta Academia Witebergensi (quae est in Germania, sedes et domicilium bonarum literarum) Augusti Ducis et Electoris Saxoniæ annua pensione honoratus, et qualicunque juris civilis cognitione imbutus, domum redii·” This dedication was printed in the year 1609.