

'Oh! yes it is, mother!' said Willy, eagerly. 'The boys were skating on it yesterday.'

'But you know, my son, the weather has been very warm for several days, and the ice cannot be very thick, so I think you had better wait a little longer before you take your new skates to the pond.—There will be plenty of cold weather before long, and there will be no danger on the ice. You must not go on the pond to-day.'

'But, mother,' pleaded Willy, with disappointed looks, 'can't I go down and see the boys skate? I'll promise not to go on the ice, if you will only let me go with them.'

'Well, Willy,' replied his mother, 'you can go if you will promise me that you will keep off the pond, and be back home before dark.'

'Yes, mother, I will,' answered Willy, as he ran joyfully to meet his companions, leaving his new skates behind him. They soon reached the pond, where they found a great many men and boys gliding to and fro on its smooth surface, some darting swiftly forward, others skating backwards, and some engaged in gracefully cutting figures on the ice, to the delight of the lookers-on who stood on the banks. The ice, however, was quite soft, and so weak that many were afraid to venture upon it; in many places there were wide cracks across its surface, and some portions of it were overflowed by water.

It was a gay and exciting scene to Willy, and as he stood on the bank, surveying it with satisfaction and pleasure, he forgot for a time his own disappointment in not being permitted to join the skaters: but when he saw the boys who had accompanied him buckling on their skates in great glee and gliding off in every direction, he began to think that his mother had been mistaken about the strength of the ice, and that if she had really known how strong it was, she would have given him permission to skate upon it. He was continually urged by the other boys to come on the pond.—They offered to lend him their skates, and assured him that the ice was strong enough, and that there was no danger, but Willy shook his head and remained on the bank.

How many boys would have yielded to the temptation!

Many would have reasoned thus:—
"Mother thought perhaps there was danger, but she did not know how strong the ice is, and if she was here and could see how mistaken she is, she would certainly not object to my enjoying myself with the rest."

Suddenly, in the midst of the general enjoyment, the cry was heard that some one had broken in! Many, in their alarm, hastened to the shore, while others ran to the rescue. The ice in one spot had proved too weak. One of the skaters had broken through into water ten feet deep, and was now struggling in the midst of broken fragments of ice, and loudly calling for help.

It was one of Willy's companions, who had gone upon the ice against the express commands of his father. Some were pressing forward, and vainly endeavoring to rescue the drowning boy; but the ice gave way beneath their weight. Several were themselves precipitated into the water, and the danger of remaining on the pond was apparent.

The ice was breaking up. The panic became universal. The struggling boy was left, as each one sought to provide for his own safety.

Poor fellow! he sank at length for the last time, and his body was not recovered until the next day.

With a sad heart, Willy, who had witnessed this calamity from the shore, returned to his home, thankful that he had been kept out of danger, and had been able to resist temptation. Had he disobeyed his mother, the fate of his companion might have been his own.

'Honor thy father and thy mother,' by the strictest obedience to their will, and you will enjoy the reward not only in this world, but through eternity.

LENT, NOT GIVEN.

Children, relatives, friends, honours, houses, lands, and endowments, the goods of nature, and fortune, nay, even of grace itself, are only lent. It is our misfortune to fancy they are given. We start, therefore, and are angry when the loan is called in. We think ourselves masters when we are only stewards; and forget that to each of us will it one day be said, "Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward."—[Bishop Horne.