

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—Which of you boys and girls have a pair of old skates lying around home besides the new ones given you last Christmas? Lots of you, of course; but does it seem hardly fair while you see lots of your poor school-mates stamping, shivering around trying to keep their toes from freezing, watching you skimming and cutting over the ice on your new skates, feeling as happy and warm as birds on the wing. It doesn't seem just right to have them lying idle at home, does it? Skating is the most exhilarating and graceful amusement when one "knows the how," and most of our boys and girls now think their education incomplete without this knowledge. Almost every town or village has its pond, river or creek, and boasts of its superior skater, but often this distinction has been dearly bought. It requires long continued practice and great perseverance to become thus skilled. But few ladies have the endurance to acquire this reputation. A young lady in a neighboring city, who belonged to a family in high social standing, became so fascinated with the amusement and so proficient in the art, that she would remain for hours on the ice. Her skates were strapped on very tightly and the result of one afternoon's exercise was a paralysis, which laid her upon her bed for months, and will doubtless make her a cripple for life. Her distinction was bought at too dear a price. You cannot be too cautious about taking cold when out skating. To sit down when you are very warm is almost sure to give you a severe cold. Always have a thick extra garment to throw about you the moment you stop skating; do not sit down at all, but walk about to restore circulation and prevent being chilled. It is safer to walk home than to ride. In the city covered rinks it is very different. There you can always go into the cloak room to rest, where there is a good hot stove. Perhaps some of you have never seen a carnival on ice, so I will try and describe one that I witnessed a few evenings ago. It was in a large covered rink, well lighted up with gas, and the band playing at intervals throughout the whole evening. There were about two hundred persons, composed of men, boys, ladies and children in costume, each one representing some character in history, novels, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, in fact anything such as kings, queens, clowns, negroes, gipsies, winter and night; the latter would be a dress of entire black, covered with gold stars and a half moon. Some of the costumes were rich and lovely, and others very trashy, just as the character represented required; they nearly all wore masks, which made them look the more absurd, but it is most amusing for the skaters trying to decipher who each one is and then coming up and calling them by name, ask them to go for a skate; they in turn try to find out who their escort is. Of course great

jokes and tricks are played, and you must be very careful not to let them detect your voice.

I am quite delighted with the large number who have again placed their names among my list of nephews and nieces. I hope, though, to receive more and better original puzzles for next month. It is not too late yet to try for the prizes, so I hope to hear from a great many others. UNCLE TOM.

How Billy Goes Coasting.

Billy is a gray horse kept by a family in Dorchester. When the boys and girls go out coasting,

that, as the snow is soft and nobody is hurt.

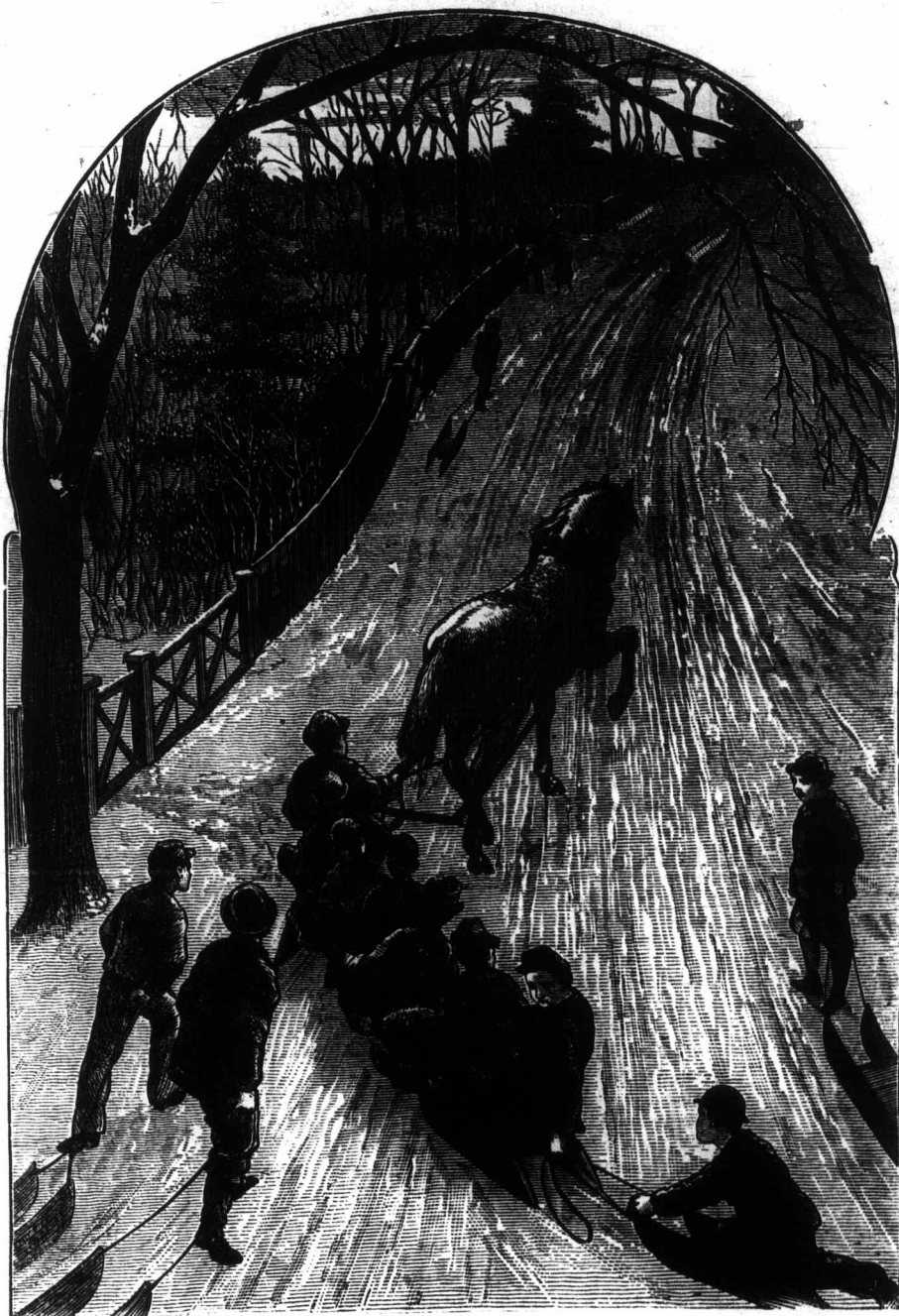
The picture is drawn from life, and presents a scene that is well known to some of our readers. The boys always keep a guard at the foot of the hill while they are coasting, so that no harm can be done to the people who are passing by. The hill is steep and the sleds come down with great speed; but the track is always cleared when the word is given. Nobody is so surly as to stop the boys' fun. The above is a true story. UNCLE TOM.

HUMOROUS.

A raw-boned Irishwoman entered one of the National Banks in Providence the other day and presented a cheque at the cashier's desk. The cashier looked at her and said politely: "Madam, you must get identified." "Faith, an' what's that?" "Why, you see, you are a stranger to me. I don't know you." "Will thin, I'm not too proud to introduce myself to yez. My name's Sary MacFlinn, an I'm not ashamed of it." "Well, but you see I can not tell whether you are the person whose name is on the cheque," said the cashier, too polite to tell her that perhaps she was lying about it. "An' what did ye say I must do?" "Identify yourself. Bring some one here that knows you." "Indade! An' who knows me better than I know myself?" The cashier paid the cheque without another word.

A citizen called recently at the Water Registrar's office and introduced himself and his business by saying: "I'm Mither Jerry Muldoon. My cellar is full of water, and my hins will be drowned if it isn't fixed; so I want you to fix it." Mr. Muldoon was informed that nothing could be done for him there. Two or three days later he reappeared. "I come again to see about that cellar," said he; "it's worse than ever." "But we told you the other day, Mr. Muldoon, that we can do nothing about it here." "Yes, but my cellar must be fixed or my hins will be drowned." "Well, Mr. Muldoon, did you see the Mayor about the matter?" "Indade and I did," replied Mr. Muldoon. "And what did the Mayor say?" "What did he say, is it? 'Misther Muldoon,' says he, 'why don't you kape ducks?'"

"I doan' know vhat I shall do mit dat telephone of mine," observed a citizen as he entered the headquarters of the company yesterday and sat down in a discouraged way. "Out of order, is it?" "Sometimes it vhas, and sometimes it vhas all right. If I go to speak mit der coal man, or der City Hall, or der butcher, it vhas all right, und I can hear every word. If somepody vphants to order my peer, I get de name shust as plain as daylight." "And when does it fail?" "Vhell, shust like two hours ago. A saloon man he owes me \$18, und I rings him oop und calls out, 'Hello! hello! I likes dot monish to-day!' Den he vphants to know who I am, und he says he can't catch der name. I tell him oafar again, und by und by he calls oot dot he doan' deal in watermelons, und dot if I call him a dandy again he'll proke my head. If sometings doan' all my telephone, it may be ash my voice is giving out. I wish you would examine me und see if I had better let my shondoder talking und I keep der pooks."



HOW OLD BILLY GOES COASTING.

he goes out with them to take part in the sport; that is to say, the children have the sport, and the horse does the work, as you will see in the picture.

The boys have a long "double runner," that carries a good many of them at once. It is fine fun to coast down the long hill upon it, but hard work to drag it up again; so they harness Billy to the sled, and he drags it up for them.

Sometimes they all get on and ride up, and even take some of the single-sleds in tow; but usually the boys walk up, as they need the exercise to keep them warm. When they get to the top, they throw the reins on Billy's back, and he jogs down to the foot of the hill and waits for them to come down again.

Billy seems to enjoy the sport as much as any of them. Sometimes a party of merry boys and girls get on the "double-runner," and drive all about town. If the snow is deep, they are pretty sure to be upset once or twice; but they don't mind

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—farm VOVATE Ont.