



### Saved By An Air Hole.

"I am going to the city to-morrow and I think your Uncle John ought to know it," said Mr. Davidson to his son Fred as the two were at the barn doing the chores.

The farmer raised his eyes to the sky, assuming a debating attitude. The sun was setting in a sort of red glory that was pleasing to the man, since there had been almost daily rains and sleet during the past week.

"Why do you wish Uncle John to know of your going to the city, father?"

"Because, you see, he has a lot of unsold furs on his hands, a full winter's catch, and the sooner he gets them to market the more money he will get out of them. Indications are that the fur market is in for a sharp decline. I wish John knew."

"I'll go tell him if you want me to, father," said the son, who evidently was not averse to a trip down the river to his uncle's home some half score of miles distant.

"You might go, Fred," mused the farmer, "but for the fact that old Doll has cast a shoe and has gone lame. There's not another horse I would trust you to ride so far at night. You know we have tested her more than once."

"Truly," exclaimed Fred, "old Doll's true blue every time; but there's another way to get to Uncle John's and back to-night. The sleighing must be about used up from the spring rains, but there's the river, you know."

"The river, son?"

The eyes of the speaker fell from contemplating the western sky to a contemplation of a long, smooth expanse of ice that sped away as far as the eye could reach toward the distant horizon.

"It's nearer to Uncle John's by the river, father, and my skates are freshly sharpened. I'd as soon go as not."

Mr. Davidson sat down on the milking stool and reflected.

"I ought to have thought of this sooner," he mused. "It is imperative for me to get to Great Rapids to-morrow before night. I have to meet Jake Campeau there with furs of my own. I guess we'll have to put it off one day longer."

"Do you think a single day will make much difference in the price of furs, father?" asked Fred.

"I am afraid so."

"Then Uncle John's furs shall be here to go with you to-morrow morning!" declared Fred, springing from his own stool, swinging his pall nearly full of frothing warm milk about his head. "I'll go and get ready at once."

Twenty minutes later boy and man came out of the house, the boy carrying a folded strap in his right hand, a pair of skates swinging from his left. They walked down to the river whose surface was still covered with its wintery coating of ice.

"I don't know if it is really safe, Fred," said the father hesitatingly. "If your mother was home she might—"

"Suggest that I stay strictly on land," laughed the boy. "Mother is so very easily worried. I'm glad she's away, for now I can go to Uncle John's without giving her a single pang of worry. I'll be back by midnight with Uncle John's pack of furs strapped to my back, never fear."

Mr. Davidson sat on a log near shore while his son strapped on his skates. Never was there a boy of Fred's years a better skater. The farmer had no fears for his son if the ice were only safe. It was now the latter part of February, and no thaw had come to soften the white field over the river's bosom save within the last few days. It did not seem possible there was real danger. The moon was already risen, giving promise of a cold, bright night.

Fred skated away, sending back a farewell shout as his parent straightened up to send a farewell wave of his hand to the boy gliding over the steely surface of the river.

"Good boy, good son," mused the farmer as he went back to the house. "He'll be home again by midnight. It's all right of course."

It would have been as the father believed had not circumstances over which neither father or son had any control intervened. The ice was an even glare, the worst hummocks having been planed out level by the recent rains. The surface of the river was like glass, the weather having

The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the mar, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces; let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonored, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep. A men. — Robert Louis Stevenson.

sufficiently cooled to freeze the surface water completely.

Half a mile down the stream and a dark object shot from the shore of the river and set out in pursuit of Fred Davidson. The farmer's son recognized his pursuer as one Abner Bolt, a shingle weaver's son, who, though several years Fred's junior, yet still believed himself superior on a pair of skates.

"Where you going, Fred?" called small Abner as he sped down the glittering surface of the river as if shot from a bow.

"To Uncle John's," yelled Fred.

"Good, I'll go along!"

Soon the smaller boy skated up alongside the other. Abner was curious and wanted to know why his friend was going so far so late in the day. After Fred had explained, small Abner suddenly swerved to the side of the former, grasping his arm, saying in a sharp voice:

"You can't make it, Fred. There's a big air-hole four miles down, at Fiddler's Elbow. You'll run into that and drown! Let's go back."

"Take your hand off me," called Fred. "Go home if you want to. Nobody asked you to go. I can manage that airhole. I know it was there, but I'll land and walk around it—that's easy."

Abner did not return. Instead he wheeled slightly aside and continued to skate parallel with Fred. Zim-zim-zim-zim! the keen steel runners of the boys' skates cut and sang across the hard ice. A mile, two miles, almost three, and then—

What was that echoing down between the banks of the narrowing stream. The howl of dogs? Ah, no! Too well the older boy knew that sound, the howl of gray timber wolves!

It had been a hard winter, and the wolves had been bothersome to the settlers. Many a night had Fred been kept awake along about midwinter by the mournful howl of these beasts as they gathered for their prey, usually a deer separated from its mates, fleeing for its very life.

"Crackee!" exclaimed Abner. "What is that noise, Fred?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Tain't wolves, Fred!"

There was a perceptible quaver in the small boy's voice.

"I expect it's that same," assured the older boy. "You can't go home now, Abner. You'll have to keep on with me. They're not chasing us. We can outrun 'em anyhow. Keep close to me, Abner."

The small lad needed no second bidding. The two boys, urged by the wolf howls into greater speed, were apparently outdistancing their enemies, when Fred's companion, in jumping over a small tree imbedded in the ice, fell prostrate with a cry of pain.

Fred circled about, coming back to his friend almost instantly.

He snatched Abner by the arm and drew him to his feet. A sharp cry from the lips of the small boy shocked the other.

"I—I can't go a step, Fred. I've sprained my ankle!" wailed Abner.

"Quick then!" uttered the larger boy, "climb on my back!"

Fred squatted down, and when the other clasped both hands about his neck he rose to his feet, feeling considerably burdened, as you may imagine. At the same time the howls of the wolves grew more distinct, and up the moonlit glare of the ice, dark forms were seen running like immense shadows in a mirror.

The smaller boy breathed hard as Fred struck out across the white expanse of ice with all the powers of his muscular young legs.

"Hang on tight!" breathed he, "but don't choke me that way."

Fred Davidson knew now that the wolves were actually pursuing him, since they came directly down the river in his direction, uttering horrid yelps at every jump. It soon resolved itself into a skate for life.

The farmer's son never felt the need of keeping his strength more fully than at this moment. What if a skate strap snapped! Or if he should sprain an ankle as Abner had done, the two of them would be lost!

On with increased speed swept the boy skater with that black bunch of humanity, Abner Bolt, clinging like grim death to his perch, his lame foot dangling, whipping against his friend's jacket with a frosty clicking, at the same time pining him exquisitely.

"If I only had a gun," breathed little Abner.

Fred said nothing. He felt that he needed all his strength to guide his skated feet on their flight for life. Presently a long dark streak met the boy's strained vision in the distance. As he drew nearer Fred realized the truth—it was the airhole!

hope of safety lay in a dash for the shore, where among the willows which bent low along the margin, he might be able to hide from the wolves.

Turning his head as far as possible Fred saw that the gray timber wolves were gaining upon him at every jump. He could not make the shore if he so desired. His only hope lay in keeping straight on, and that was not really a hope, as he was sure to plunge into the open river and go under the ice!

Abner hugged all the tighter, breathing hard, not seeming able to make any further suggestions.

Nor did Fred need any just then. His lips drew tightly across his strong white teeth. His every effort was at a terrible strain as he faced toward the narrowest point of open water, the hard breathing of his panting pursuers reaching his ears from the rear. The wolves were so close Fred feared they would be upon him before the airhole was reached. Better death in the river than at the jaws of timber wolves!

At the near edge of the narrowest point of open water Fred made a desperate leap high in the air. It took all his strength to make the spring, burdened as he was with little Abner. The great speed at which he was going carried him much farther than he had dared to expect. His skates touched the far edge of ice just beyond that awful opening, out and cracked the feathery fringe of ice where the water plunged beneath it, and glided on to a broad expanse of solid ice. Even as this took place Abner gave a tilt at Fred's throat, completely shutting off his breath.

Another instant and the two boys fell prostrate, sliding a few yards across the glittering surface of frozen water!

A groan from Fred. Abner rolled free some feet away. The larger boy crawled quickly to his knees, his ears saluted with a terrific howl, the splash of water, cracking of ice, then the silence of death.

It proved death indeed to the half dozen timber wolves that pursued our two boys. The momentum of their swift race sent them sliding into the opening which Fred Davidson had so miraculously spanned in his desperate leap for life. Every wolf drowned but one, that one crawling out upon the ice, only to speed from the spot, genuinely frightened out of his wits by the unexpected catastrophe.

Fred crouched on the ice, clasping his hands together till they ached. At length he laughed softly, then began to cry. The reaction from the tremendous strain he had undergone completely deprived him of strength for the time being.

"Where are they, Fred?" finally gurgled little Abner as he began to crawl toward his friend.

"Drowned, I guess," returned the larger boy.

Half an hour later the two boys arrived at the home of Uncle John, completely fagged with the night's adventure, quite willing to rest and partake of some refreshment set out by the good uncle's wife.

John Davidson listened to the story told by the boys, and gave them both high praise for the way they had out-generaled the ravenous timber wolves.

The Dominion forest reserves, which are the areas unsuitable for agriculture in the Prairie Provinces and Railway Belt of British Columbia set apart permanently for forest production, include an area of 35,185 square miles, or nearly twenty-three million acres.

To delight in one's daily occupation and to render it fine and poetic by the manner in which it is carried on is an admirable achievement. In this relation there may be mentioned the case of the colchocero, or mattress beater of Spain, who performs his task, not less than once a month for every self-respecting Spanish housewife, in the open air outside the house, with two sticks and a knife for implements.

In a moment he deftly cuts the stitches of the mattress and lays bare the wool, which he never touches with his hands. The longer stick in his right hand describes great circles in the air and descends with the whistling of a sword upon the wool, of which it picks up a small handful. Then the shorter stick comes into play, picks the wool from the longer, throws it into the air, beats it this way and that, tosses it and catches it until every fibre is clear, when the fluffy mass is deftly cast aside.

All the while, through the beating of the wool, the two sticks beaten against each other play a distinct air, and each mattress beater has his own, handed down from his forefathers, ending with a whole chromatic scale as the shorter stick swoops up the length of the longer one to sweep away the lingering wool. Thus the whole mattress is transferred from a sodden heap to a high and fluffy mountain of wool, all baked by the heat of the sun.

The man has a hundred attitudes, full of grace. He has complete control over his two thin sticks, can pick up with them a single strand of wool or half a mattress. He can throw aside a pin that lurks in a ball of wool or kill a fly that settles on his work without staining the snowy mass. And all the while, from the moment that the mattress is open till the heap is complete, the two sticks never cease playing their thin and woody air, so

### The Success Family.

The Father of Success is—Work.  
The Mother of Success is—Ambition.  
The eldest son is—Common Sense.  
Some of the other boys are—Perseverance, Honesty, Thoroughness, Foresight, Enthusiasm, Cooperation.  
The eldest daughter is—Character.  
Some of the sisters are—Cheerfulness, Loyalty, Courtesy, Care, Economy, Sincerity.  
The baby is—Opportunity.  
Get acquainted with the "old man," and you will be able to get along pretty well with the rest of the family.

### Fighting the Cactus.

The kind of cactus often called the "prickly pear" has become a first-class nuisance in Australia. It grows very fast, spreads with great rapidity and forms masses of vegetation so dense that the clearing of ground once occupied by the plant is accomplished with utmost difficulty. Incidentally, it renders the land unavailable for agricultural purposes.

In response to urgent request, the United States government is sending to Australia certain insects that prey upon the prickly pear. Hope is entertained that they may do enough damage to discourage the spread of the cactus plague in that part of the world.

Many species of insects, in the Southwestern States, feed upon the prickly pear, one of them being the tiny cochineal bug, which in former days was so highly valued for the dye it furnished. It would not be useful for the purpose here in question; but there is a large green caterpillar, nearly two inches long, which ought to prove exceedingly efficient as a cactus destroyer. It is the offspring of a moth and one of the most important enemies of the plant known in this country, its method of attack being to bore into the fleshy leaves of the prickly pear and eat out the insides.

This caterpillar is to be sent to Australia, its transportation being easily accomplished by forwarding a quantity of infested leaves of the cactus. Another insect that is to go is a beetle about the size of a cricket, which is a great destroyer of the prickly pear. The adult feeds on the outer parts of the joints, while the young grub penetrates and devours the interior of both joints and stems.

### Cheap Light.

Science and invention describes a recent achievement of a French scientist, who has successfully tried out in his own house a scheme for operating electric lights without cost.

Upon his water-supply pipe he has fitted a high-speed water turbine, which drives a dynamo charging a storage battery. Every time a faucet is turned on in the house the stream of water is put to work at loading the battery which furnishes current for the lights. "It is simply utilizing energy that is ordinarily wasted," says the inventor.

## Pleasure in Work Is Their Reward

That any one within hearing may know that the colchocero is at work.

A farmer in one of the Middle Western States bought material for a house and then discovered that for lack of means he could not go on with it. The stuff lay on the ground for months, when one day a generous thought came into the mind of a contracting builder. He called his men round him and asked for volunteers to build the farmer's cottage, telling them he would undertake to do it within one day if they would contribute their work. Twenty-six carpenters, masons and painters agreed, on the condition that the farmer would furnish a chicken dinner, and a time was fixed for all to report at the site of the proposed building.

Every man appeared on time and all went at once to work. Each worker was assigned to a particular part and the house began to go up with a rush. When noon came the framework was all up and the chimney was started.

Then came dinner. The wife of the farmer had fried two dozen chickens. There were ten loaves of bread, four dozen ears of corn and nearly a bushel of mashed potatoes. The dessert consisted of cherry cobbler and various kinds of pie. The contractor had to call off his men for fear they would eat so much they would not be able to finish the job.

The hurry began again. Before the roof was on the plasterers were at work, and at exactly 6 o'clock the cottage was finished, all but the second coat of paint and the skim plaster, neither of which could be put on before the first coat dried. Everything else, even to putting on the locks and hinges, was done before the men were called off, and done well.

The contractor complimented his men when the job was complete. He said that although he had done "hurry" work before he had never known a house to be begun and completed in a day.

## The Wise and the Foolish Virgins

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. . . . Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.—St. Matt., 25: 1-13.

Again we have our Lord illustrating His lesson of spiritual preparedness by reference to a marriage. Ten young women (and the number ten formed, according to Jewish custom, a company, "which fewer would have failed to do") took their lamps (for in the East marriages were celebrated at night) and went to meet the bridegroom. There is something fine in this suggestion of youth and enthusiasm in the service of Christ. A virgin is a young, unmarried woman, attractive, happy, good, ready to enter into all the innocent joys of others. So should all Christians be. It is a glorious life to which the Lord calls us, a life of service and love, and we need to consecrate to it all our youth and strength and courage.

But five of these virgins were foolish. They had their lamps, but no oil to keep their lamps burning, while the wise had oil in their vessels.

The foolish virgins represent people who have the outward signs of Christianity, but do not have the abiding power of faith and love. Alas, how many people who are outwardly members of the church seem to lack the inward grace! They are always receiving, but they do not give. They are not church workers. They do not have a share in the real service in the world which the church should render. Their faith is weak, and in the hour of trial their religion fails because it lacks sustaining power.

The wise virgins had oil for their lamps, so that when they trimmed them and made them ready the light burned clearly and was replenished with oil. They suggest Christians who are not only Christians by profession, but Christians by conviction and consecration. The world takes knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.

Waiting For His Coming. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept," both the wise and the foolish. Evidently this sleeping was not wrong. It implies that our Lord may delay His coming to claim His own.

When the cry came at midnight and the virgins arose and prepared to go to meet the bridegroom with lighted and clearly burning lamps, the foolish realized their need. Faith failed in the hour of trial. Love had grown cold and could not be rekindled. Dull to hear the cries of little children in their need, selfish in a luxury which dead-

ened a generous providing for the hungry, indifferent to the wicked wrongs eating into the lives of the weak and foolish—so do many disregard the meaning of their lives and throw away the golden blessings from their door. These foolish virgins were not especially wicked. Their lives were not vicious nor were they cruel save in their withholding from the needs of others. But the power to shine, the might of warmth to cheer even their own shivering beings about out from the heartstones of divine fellowship—these had gone and their place could in no wise be filled. Other hearts might once have rekindled the dying embers if the plea had been made in time, but now it was too late. The Master was coming, even now He was calling, and only those who had burning desires and true faith could follow as He entered His kingdom.

Fear God and Help Mankind. Now is the accepted time. The heart, the life, without delay, without reservation, must be opened that lasting power may enter in, the light that never fails! The door of mercy will never be closed to those whose hungry souls cry for pardon and peace. But there surely must be a "too late" for the careless and indifferent, the hard-hearted, the men and women who fear not God nor regard human need. The bridegroom, Christ Jesus, desires all His children to come to the final and blessed feast when His travail is ended; but they only can have time and strength to enter who continue clinging to the cross with one hand and reaching out to help their fellows with the other. Tennyson has well versed the story:

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!  
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now."

No light had we; for that we do repent:  
And learning this, the Bridegroom will relent.  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.  
No light! so late! and dark and chill the night!  
O let us in that we may find the light!  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.  
Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?  
O let us in, though late, to kiss His feet!  
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—Rev. F. W. Tomkins.

## When the Bishop Called.

While Mr. Herbert Hoover was living in China a visiting bishop of the English Church came to call upon Mrs. Hoover. His arrival was announced in comprehensible but rather startling fashion by the "China boy" who had admitted the right reverend gentleman. With a bland Chinese smile he stood on the threshold of the drawing-room and said simply:

"The number one topside devil joss man makee come."

It was no foreign boy, but a native New England helper of a kind and quality no longer to be found, that once gave her employer and a visiting clergyman of distinction a difficult moment. He, too, was a bishop; and the admirable Mrs. Ann, though somewhat deaf, had elicited the fact by questioning the impatient man while he stood dripping on the doorstep, for it was raining hard. But to Mrs. Ann "bishop"—she caught the word only—had anything but a churchly connotation; and she hastened to her mistress without so much as inviting him to enter. She did not, however, quite shut the door in his face, and as the down-pour was momentarily becoming more terrific he presently followed her, uninvited and unobserved, into the hall. The door into the living room was open, and he heard the lady's voice:

"Show the poor man in, anyway, Mary Ann; it's raining cats and dogs. We can't leave him out in the wet, and he probably doesn't belong to that family at all. There are plenty of other Bishops in the world. At least let him come in and explain himself."

"Not if I know it, and us women alone in the house," said the voice of Mary Ann firmly. "There may be other Bishops in the world, for all I know; but all the Bishops in this part of the country are Bishops from Dogtown, and they're no sort of folks for decent people to have dealing with. There's two sorts of 'em, and I don't know which is worst; there's tough Bishops that drink and beat their wives and rob henroosts; and there's slick and sly and slippery Bishops that whine and beg and sneak things when you ain't lookin' and have starvin' children they collect food and clothes for. Umph! They stuff the food themselves and pawn the clothes for whiskey. I know 'em! You let me send that Bishop about his business."

The lady hesitated. "I don't like to in this weather. Which sort does he seem to be, Mary Ann? Tough or sly?"

"Both," responded Mary Ann promptly. "And I won't answer for what he'll get out of you once he gets his ugly great foot inside the door."

"I'm afraid," interposed the bishop gently, "he's got it inside already and his ugly great self along with it. It was so very wet outside! But I am really not a Bishop from Dogtown, madam; I am the Bishop of Blank."

The lady was not hard to convince,

and a generous providing for the hungry, indifferent to the wicked wrongs eating into the lives of the weak and foolish—so do many disregard the meaning of their lives and throw away the golden blessings from their door. These foolish virgins were not especially wicked. Their lives were not vicious nor were they cruel save in their withholding from the needs of others. But the power to shine, the might of warmth to cheer even their own shivering beings about out from the heartstones of divine fellowship—these had gone and their place could in no wise be filled. Other hearts might once have rekindled the dying embers if the plea had been made in time, but now it was too late. The Master was coming, even now He was calling, and only those who had burning desires and true faith could follow as He entered His kingdom.

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## Sea Scouts Branch Attracts Boys.

A division of the Boy Scouts movement, which is very popular in England, is the Sea Scouts, a branch inaugurated in 1911 for scouts who had completed the training courses in scouting and camping and wanted new fields of study.

The Sea Scouts branch has grown rapidly and the boys now have a ship that is all their own, the S. S. Northampton, a former fisheries patrol vessel, which has been remodelled as a training ship and anchored in the Thames, off the Embankment. It is fitted up with a gymnasium, carpenter shop, machine shop and classrooms, and here the various Sea Scout units come for instruction in knots, hitches, lights, whistles and rules of the road.

During the war the Sea Scouts cooperated with the Coast Guard service in coast watching work, serving as signalers, dispatch carriers, inspectors of wreckage and submarine lookouts. Each scout patrolled a three-mile-long strip of beach, working in all weathers. Thousands of boys participated in this work. There are now over 5,000 Sea Scouts in the various branches.

## Job for Grandpa.

Little Phyllis Paymore heard the remark that her grandfather was a tailor.

"Are you a tailor, granddad?" she asked.

"Yes, my dear," admitted the old man.

"Then will you put a tail on my rocking horse?"

She led the way to the attic, where mice had robbed the steed of its rear appendage.

## By the Side of the Road.

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,  
Where the race of men go by,  
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,  
Wise, foolish; so am I.  
Then why should I sit in the scorners' seat  
Or hurl a cynic's bar?  
Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.