

## Around the Table.

### IF THE ICE BREAKS.

THERE is always a deal of thin ice about in the beginning of winter, and "no end" of boys and girls who want to have "just one skate." One can hardly read a paper without seeing an account of some ducking or drowning accident. I wonder if the little skaters who will read this have ever thought what they would do if the ice should break under them, or they should, by any mishap, fall into the water?

The best way is to *keep* out, and then you won't have any trouble about *getting* out. Never venture on ice over swift or deep water, that hasn't been well tested by some older person. Never go near air-holes or shaky places, just to show how smart you are. The safest place on the ice is good enough for a boy who has sense enough to make it worth while for him to grow up. Remember the old story of the coachman who got a fat job, not by showing how near he could drive to the edge of a precipice, but how far he could keep from it. It is not cowardly to avoid danger, when it can be honourably shunned. Foolhardiness is not bravery.

But if you do go through the ice, the first thing is to keep as cool in your head as you will be in body. Wits, pluck, and breath, are the three life-preservers. If you find you are "going under" once, shut your mouth, and hold your nose if you think of it. Come up as quick as you can, and throw your arms well out over the solid edge of the ice, if within reach, or across any floating cake, and *hang on!*—hang on for dear life! "Holler," if you can; but don't cry—till you are out of the water. Crying is bad for all three of your life-preservers. It scatters the wits, scares away the pluck, and uses up the breath. Don't cry. Shout, if help is near, and hang on. If the ice is firm enough, perhaps you can lift yourself out by your arms, by getting a little help from your knee. If you are so fortunate, don't try to get on to your feet at once, but roll over until you are well beyond the cracks, and free from all danger of slipping in. Your weight is thus distributed over more surface, and with your wet clothing it is easier to roll than to walk.

If you are out of the water, and some poor fellow is in, use your wits sharply to save him. If a rail, or a board, can be had at once, shove it out to him, and tell him to grab it. Speak bravely and hopefully to him, and direct him what to do. When he gets a good hold, pull steadily, so as not to jerk it away, but swiftly, so as to make sure of him. If the ice will warrant it,—as it will around a hole that has been cut out of solid ice,—and there are boys enough, form a line, take hold of hands, and let the strongest take the lead and pull him out, while the line draws them both safely back. When there is nothing better, tie two or three comforters together to make a rope,

or pass one end of a long coat to the poor fellow: I have seen a lad saved in this way, when there would have been no time to go for other help. Do something,—do anything that isn't hopelessly reckless,—rather than see a mate drown before your eyes while you stand gaping and helpless by.

And when he is out, let him run to the nearest house for care, if strong enough. The exercise will do him good. If too weak for this, bundle him in your own warm coat and carry him there on the double-quick.

The sagest advice of all I have saved to the last: Go to a rink, or slide instead of skate, and you will never "get in."—*Uncle Zack, in the Golden Rule.*

### A LITTLE BOY'S TROUBLES.

I thought when I'd learned my letters,  
That all of my troubles were done;  
But I find myself much mistaken—  
They only have just begun.  
Learning to read was awful,  
But nothing like learning to write;  
I'd be sorry to have you tell it,  
But my copy-book is a sight!

The ink gets over my fingers;  
The pen cuts all sorts of shins,  
And won't do at all as I bid it;  
The letters won't stay on the lines  
But go up and down and all over  
As though they were dancing a jig—  
They are there in all shapes and sizes,  
Medium, little and big.

The tails of the g's are so contrary,  
The handles get on the wrong side  
Of the d's and the k's and the h's,  
Though I've certainly tried and tried  
To make them just right; it is dreadful,  
I really don't know what to do,  
I'm getting almost distracted—  
My teacher says she is too.

There'd be some comfort in learning  
If one could get through; instead  
Of that, there are books awaiting,  
Quite enough to craze my head.  
There's the multiplication table,  
And grammar, and—oh, dear me,  
There's no good place for stopping,  
When one has begun, I see.

My teacher says, little by little  
To the mountain tops we climb,  
It isn't all done in a minute,  
But only a step at a time;  
She says that all the scholars,  
All the wise and learned men,  
Had each to begin as I do;  
If that's so—where's my pen?  
—*Carlotta Perry, in November Wide Awake.*

### BOYS, DON'T BE CRUEL.

THE following story comes all the way from Copenhagen, Denmark. The writer says that, noticing it in the Copenhagen papers, he made inquiries and found it to be true:—

"A boy, some weeks since, while walking beside a pond near Copenhagen saw a frog before him, and sharpening a stick he chanced to have in his hand, he cruelly inserted it through the flesh of the animal into the mud, thus pinning him to the earth, and went his way, supposing the frog would soon die.

"Happening to pass the same way twelve days afterwards, he was surprised and shocked to find the frog still alive; and its emaciated form and glaring eyes told plainly the story of its suffering.

"This so impressed the boy with his own cruelty that he could not study, nor play, nor

sleep. The eyes of the frog seemed to follow him wherever he went; and notwithstanding all efforts to divert his mind, so worked upon him that he was finally thrown into a fever, from which in less than two weeks he died."

### THE BED OF PINKS.

"OH! mother, dear, give us each a little flower-bed for ourselves—one for me, and one for Gustav, and one for Alwina,—and each will take care of his own."

So spake the little Fritz to his mother, and his mother granted him his request, and gave each child a flower-bed full of beautiful pinks; and the children were overjoyed and said, "How glorious it will be when the pinks are in flower!"—for it was not yet the time for pinks, but they had just put forth their first buds.

But little Fritz was of an impatient spirit, and he could not wait for the flowers, and besides, he wished his flowers to be in bloom before all the others.

So he went and took the buds in his hands and looked into their close coverings, and was much delighted to see the little red and yellow leaves peeping forth from their green shell.

But even this was too slow; so Fritz broke open the buds and loosened the little leaves entirely from one another. Then he cried out with a loud voice, "See, my pinks are in flower!" But when the sun appeared the flowers bowed their heads and wept, and were withered before it was noon. Then the child wept over them.

But his mother said: "Impatient child! may the greatest joys of thy life be those which thou by thine own folly destroyest for thyself; then mayest thou not too dearly learn the great and difficult lesson—to wait!"

THERE is no such thing as luck. It's a fancy name for being always at our duty, and so sure to be ready when the good times come.

As a cross word begets a word that is cross, so will a kind one beget its own likeness. If people only knew the power they possess in being kind, how much good would they achieve for themselves, how much misery prevent for others.

HAPPINESS is like manna. It is to be gathered in grains and enjoyed every day; it will not keep; it cannot be accumulated; nor need we go out of ourselves, nor into remote places to gather it, since it is rained down from heaven, at our very doors, or rather within them.

CARE FOR OTHERS.—Don't complain of the selfishness of the world. Deserve friends, and you will get them. It is a mistake to expect to receive welcome, hospitality, words of cheer, and help over rugged and difficult passes in life, in return for cold selfishness which cares for nothing in the world but self. Cultivate consideration for the feelings of other people if you would never have your own injured.