

## RESULTS OF A SKATING ADVENTURE.

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## PART II.

"When Abbie and I left the shore on that fatal afternoon" (I am now giving Harvey's account in his own words, as far as I can remember them), "we kept company, you remember, with the other members of the party; but by-and-by we found that we had unconsciously left them very far behind. I must confess that Abbie and myself were among the first to encourage the idea of this adventure, as it afforded us the very opportunity we hoped to find for having a long and uninterrupted conversation; but of course we had no idea whatever that there was the least risk. We soon lost sight of the other skaters, who were less adventurous and kept closer to the shore, near a bend of the river which hid them from us. When we found that we were entirely alone, we kept slowly side by side, talking earnestly of the subject which was then most interesting to us both—I mean the prospect of my speedy departure from the colony. Abbie confessed that she had a dread of breaking the news of our engagement to her mother; but at last we both concluded that it would be best to let her know it the next day. Alas, the next day was to bring to her poor mother far sadder news.

"The hours passed so quickly that we were shocked to find that the sun was setting, and then we felt we ought to return. We saw our friends wave their handkerchiefs to us, for we were then too far off to hear their voices. We had noticed, as we moved swiftly along, that there were a great many fissures in the ice, and as we looked down them we could see the blue water of the river; but the ice was so thick that we made little of the cracks. Our progress, however, was very slow, for the

wind came sweeping down the river, directly in our faces, and we were obliged more than once to make a considerable detour in order to avoid the fissures, which in one or two places seemed to have widened alarmingly since we had passed over the same ice.

"Had we not better try and land at the shore and walk home," enquired Abbie who could move only with great difficulty, as the wind caught her heavy dress.

"The suggestion was carried out, but we soon ascertained that there was no possibility of landing there, as the ice was broken up. If we had seen anyone on the banks we might have waited until they could come and assist us; but there was no house in sight, and the woods alone fringed the borders of the river.

"I felt very much alarmed, for it was rapidly darkening and the wind was increasing, but I encouraged my companion to make an energetic effort to reach a point where they could see us at the Manor, for I knew that the rest of the party must now be aware of our predicament and be on the alert to assist us in reaching the shore. We had not, however, gone far when we felt the ice shiver beneath our feet, and the next instant we heard a sharp report, and saw a yawning abyss directly before us. We paused aghast, and then, as the instinct of self-preservation asserted itself, we skated to a distance from the watery abyss, and as we did so we heard several sharp reports follow each other in quick succession, and saw that the field of ice had separated into three fragments. So far as we could judge in the indistinct twilight we were on the largest and middle floe.

"Very few words were exchanged whilst this fearful scene was being enacted around us. Abbie showed a nerve and presence of