

## TAKING A DARE.

First, there was a night on Chesapeake Bay, leaving Baltimore at eight o'clock one of the fine big bay steamers. The little men, Oscar and Phil Rae, enjoyed the new experience greatly, and voted it "a jolly sight better" than getting on the cars and going out to Pikesville every summer.

They were allowed to sit an unheard-of length of time to watch the moonlight putting silver night-caps on the waves and the long streak of light following the ship; then they tumbled into one berth, and slept so soundly that when papa called them at daylight in the morning they could hardly believe they had been to sleep at all. But all night long the engine had been thumping like a great iron heart in the centre of the ship; all night the wheels had been turning in obedience to its throbs, and now here they were at Old Point Comfort, and everybody seemed in as great a rush to get off as if the ship were on fire.

"Now boys," said their father, after they had breakfasted on fish and soft crabs and were prancing up and down the sand "at twelve o'clock I will take you into the surf to bathe; don't go an inch into the water until then."

"No, sir, we will not father," answered the two boys.

Mr. Rae felt satisfied that they would obey, and went into the hotel. But who can warn a boy off from all the dangers he can get himself into? Away out from the glass room stretched an unfinished pier, where the little fishing-smacks were tied and where in the afternoon crab catching was in fashion.

Of course Oscar and Phil were at the end of the pier in two minutes; there they found a small sunburnt boy lying on his stomach watching a little boat, riding on the water.

Our boys climb like sailors or like cats—they had learned that at Pikesville—and in another minute they had clambered down the end of the pier, and were frolicking in the boat to the wide-eyed surprise of the boy above.

"I say Ossie," cried Phil as the other flopped down at the end of the boat, "I dare you to stay there and let me rock you."

"I never take a dare," said Oscar resolutely.

So Phil stretched his short legs as far apart as they would stretch across the boat, and began to sway backward and forward, singing, "Rock-a-by baby your cradle is green."

Oscar would not show any scare, but suddenly the boat lurched like an angry creature, and in an instant it was almost full of water. Fortunately, it sank slowly enough for the boys to reach the end held by the rope; but they could not have clung there long. The small sunburnt boy quickly gave the alarm, and Oscar and Phil were dipped up, all wet and scared.

"But, mamma, I can't take a dare," whispered Oscar.

"Then you are a very cowardly little boy," said mamma gravely. "A brave man is not afraid of anything but doing wrong."

"But a brave man runs into danger," said Phil triumphantly.

"Only to do his duty, my little boy;" and then mamma told Oscar and Phil about the Lord on the pinnacle of the temple, and how he would not tempt God by a foolish risk of life.

I think Oscar and Phil take a different view of "dares" now.—*E. P. A., in Occident.*

## THE ALPHABET IN ONE VERSE.

The twenty-first verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra contains every letter of the alphabet, and is the only one thus distinguished:—

"And I, even I, Artaxerxes, the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatever Ezra the priest, the Scribe of the law of the God of heaven shall require of you, is to be done speedily."