

What It Nearly Cost Jack.

(By Arthur Ward, in 'Good Cheer'.)

'I wish Jack wouldn't be so rough with animals and little chaps,' said Charlie Connor to his mother, as he let the kitten in at the door.

It was crying pitifully and limped painfully along.

'I saw him do it,' continued Charlie. 'Perhaps he didn't know it was my kitten, but it's all the same, anyway. I like Jack, and I almost have to play with him, he lives so near to us, and then we are in the same class at school; but I don't like what

It was a snapping cold day, and out-of-doors the snow was beginning to fall. As Charlie looked at the feathery flakes whirling down, he saw Jack coming into the yard and along the walk to the back door. He knocked and Charlie went to let him in.

Jack called out, 'Halloa!' and gave a little start as he saw Charlie holding the kitten in his arms. 'Say, is that your cat?'

'Yes,' replied Charlie.

'Well, I didn't know that before. I guess I hurt it. But if it's yours I'll look out next time.'

'Couldn't you look out for other folks'

The dog knew the voice, for many a kind word, many a pat, and not a few bones had he received from Charlie. He stopped, pricked up his ears, looked around, apparently to see if he was especially needed, and then, with a bound, was down the banking and through the storm was sliding and galloping toward Charlie, who ran out from the door to meet him, and with a caress presented him with the bone.

Carl, with a 'thank you' in his eyes and a whine of recognition, turned and trotted slowly back to his post again.

Jack had called to arrange for a skating trip the next morning.

Charlie promised to go with him, if it left off snowing, so that the ice should be clear. It was pleasant the next morning, and the boys joined the rest of the village young people at the river, now a gleaming strip of silver in the bright sun. For two hours Charlie and Jack skated, built bonfires on the ice and taught beginners to hold their wabbling ankles stiff. Then, longing for a race, the two spun on beyond the crowd and away up the river by the car-shops to the dam.

Jack was ahead as they reached the line of coal cars, where Carl was usually found, and at sight of the dog he picked up several lumps of coal and threw them at him. As one of the lumps struck him Carl shrank.

When Charlie came up Jack was saying, 'It's no use, that dog never likes me, and he's always cross when I come around.'

Charlie thought he knew why the animal was cross, but he kept quiet. What fun it was skating up here alone! The boys' cheeks glowed as around and across and backward they glided. What a glorious motion! They tried a new figure; it was an intricate one. They almost had it, when Jack slipped and went down in a heap on the ice.

There was an ominous crash, a snapping of the crystal surface, water flashing cold and clear, a ragged hole, a breaking around the edges of the hole, and they were both struggling in the pond. There was a thin place at that point in the ice, made by the current setting towards the gateway in the dam. They had not realized that the surface was so thin.

Jack came up first. His clothes seemed so heavy that he could not swim, though he was a good swimmer. How icy cold everything was! He felt confused. He wondered where Charlie was. He grasped the edge of the ice, but it broke. He tried it again. He thought it must hold. How he clutched at it! It was cutting his hands. They were bleeding. Just then he saw Carl, in the distance, on the shore. He called. How shrill the cry sounded!

'Carl! Carl! Good Carl! Come!'

The dog was looking towards him. The ice was still breaking, but Carl made no move. Jack knew that dogs sometimes save drowning folks. Then he felt a grip on his collar. It was Charlie who was paddling wearily, painfully, out of breath.

Then Charlie called out feebly:

'Carl!' There was a pause and slowly again, 'Carl!' and finally he screamed, 'Help! Oh, help! Carl! Carl!'

Charlie never knew how he held out, but what a furious barking there was! How the old dog roared!

Charlie heard the puffing of the steam at the engine room in the shops, and then the slow rolling of a train beyond the switch, passing towards the city. He idly wondered if he should ever hear it pass again. Carl barked nearer and nearer. He seem-



IT WAS PLEASANT ON THE ICE,

he does. He is so cruel. He needn't have touched the kitten at all. And he picked it up and threw it in the air and it came down on the fence. As he came along the kitten was on the front steps and he couldn't let it alone.'

'Perhaps Jack is more thoughtless than cruel,' said Charlie's mother.

'I'm afraid not,' replied Charlie, 'for I've seen him do such things very often. He's always throwing stones at birds and punching small fellows on the street, and trying to scare the girls.'

After a nice saucer of milk had been served kittle, she seemed to feel a little better and came and curled up peacefully on her master's lap.

kittens, too, Jack? I think it's nice to make animals like you.'

As Charlie looked out of the door and towards the railway tracks, beyond the pond and the mill-dam, he called to his mother, 'Didn't you have a bone there for Carl?'

'Yes, here it is,' replied Mrs. Connor.

Charlie took it, and looking down across the pond, cried loudly, 'Carl! Carl! Carl!'

The large Newfoundland dog, that belonged to the watchman at the machine-shops, was walking gravely back and forth along the car track that was laid across the top of the dam, at the end of the pond. Over the ice and snow rang Charlie's call: 'Carl! Carl! Carl!'