

THE LITTLE FOLK.

What Nathan Missed.

"Say, are you going up to the pond this afternoon?" whispered Harry Williams behind his desk cover to his next neighbor.

Nathan shook his head.

"Why?" said Harry.

"Co's," said Nathan. Presently he lifted his desk cover, and turning his face towards Harry, added: "Mother says the ice won't hold yet. Father left word that I wasn't to go even if all the other boys went."

Just then the conversation was interrupted by the teacher; Miss Harrison generally knew what to expect when she saw two desk covers raised and held upright, while the boys' faces were out of sight. Harry and Nathan were both kept in at recess, and and they had more leisure than they wanted then to talk about the ice.

"Come on up and just take a look at it, anyhow," urged Harry when it was time to start. "We are going up there to try it, and if it's good we'll have a fine time."

"But what's the use? I haven't got my skates, and even if it is good, I can't go on; and you don't suppose I want to stand there and watch the rest of you, do you?"

"I'll take turns with you, and lend you mine." Thus urged, Nathan made up his mind that he would run up to the pond for a few minutes, anyway. If the ice was not perfectly safe, of course he would not venture upon it; so after all he would really be doing what his father wished, although not just what he had told him.

It was so poor an excuse that he found it an easier way to put his directions out of his head altogether, instead of reconciling



them to his conduct as he went up with the other three boys to the pretty little pond that, in summer, was just the place to go swimming and hunting for pond lilies, and in winter it was fine skating; so it was always a favorite resort; but it was getting a little late for skating now.

They were very careful about going out on the glittering surface of the pond. Harry tried it very cautiously with his foot before he even stepped upon it, but by degrees he became bolder as it seemed well frozen, and before long all the boys who had brought their skates were gliding about on it, shouting with delight.

There was one spot near the middle that seemed a little weak, and that part they carefully avoided, for they did not want to break through and have their sport marred by an accident.

After a little time Harry lent Nathan his skates, and he, too, took a turn upon the ice, trying to make himself believe that if his father could see how careful they were to avoid any danger he would not in the least mind that he had come.

In about an hour Nathan left his friends and started for home. He knew that his mother would be uneasy about him, and would ask what had detained him.

"O, Nathan! where have you been?" she exclaimed, as he entered the cozy sitting-room. "You poor boy, you will be so disappointed."

"Why what is the matter?" asked Nathan, in surprise.

"Your uncle came to take you children for a ride with his new horses, and we could not think where you were. He looked for you at the school and along the way home, but no one knew where you were, and so he had to set off without you."

"Oh! how I did miss it," cried Nathan in dismay; and, boy though he was, he was almost ready to cry. It was a treat that had been promised for some time, this ride with those dashing black horses, and he would not have missed it for all the skating of the season.

"I was sure you would be home," went on his mother, "and as it was a surprise, your father did not tell you why he was so anxious that you should not go to the pond. What kept you?"

Nathan did not try to conceal anything. He told how he had chosen to do what his own desires had prompted him to do, instead of obeying his father, and had gone to the pond.

I am sure you will think as he did, that no punishment that could have been given him would have been harder than the one he had unwittingly brought upon himself. That evening as he heard the happy children tell how they had enjoyed their supper at the hotel at the end of the drive, he could not but think ruefully of his failure to obey, and what he had missed by his disobedience.

MRS. GEORGE A. PAULL.

Boys, a Word with You.

Are there not obligations laid upon you? You are stronger than your sister. Ought you not to spring to her aid if she is doing something difficult or fatiguing. For instance, housecleaning times are approaching, and there will be pictures to hang, carpets to shake, shades to put up, furniture to move from place to place, and all sorts of back-aching, back-breaking, occupations for a week or two. Of course it isn't so pleasant for a fellow to be around in those days, and so a fellow—pardon the expression, but we've heard young gentlemen use it so often—unless he is very manly and unselfish, will be apt to think of engagements out of the house. Let us whisper a secret in your ear. He is a jewel among men who is never in the way when he is not wanted, and never out of the way when he is. There are a great many little things which a good son and brother can do in domestic emergencies if he only cares to make himself useful. If you live in the country, there is many a lift you can give to the women-folks in the way of carrying in wood, bringing pails of water, and generally lending a hand.

Then, young man, if you are an elder brother, bethink yourself sometimes that your sister may like to have you take her out, as well as some of the other young ladies of your acquaintance do. Jennie is quite as pretty, quite as well bred, and has quite as many capacities for enjoyment as any other girl of her age. She would be so pleased, if now and then you would invite her to go to a lecture or a concert, and you would, if you only tried it, find out that an evening with your sister would pass as agreeably, and perhaps more restfully, than an evening with anyone else, not excepting even the dearest and best girl in the world, whose image is with you like a guardian angel, and whose name you always speak with reverence and regard.

Home.

Recently at a dinner, where notable bright spirits were assembled, among other toasts "Home" was offered, and received seven impromptu responses. These are here presented as unequalled examples of rapt, brilliant thought:

1. Home: A world of strife shut out, a world of love shut in.
2. Home: The place where the great are small and the small are great.
3. Home: The father's kingdom, the child's paradise and the mother's world.
4. Home: The place where we grumble most and are treated the best.
5. Home: The centre of our affection, around which our heart's best wishes twine.
6. Home: A place where our stomachs get three square meals daily and our hearts a thousand.
7. Home: The only place on earth where the faults and failings of humanity are hidden under the sweet mantle of charity.

A handful of good life is worth a bushel of learning.
On the soft bed of luxury most kingdoms have expired.
Life is a crucible. We are thrown into it and tried.
Life is given to no one for a lasting possession; to all for use.
There is no human life so poor and small as not to hold many a divine possibility.

God is the poet; men are but the actors. The great dramas of earth were written in heaven.