

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE, 1887.

EMPEROR and Queen—whose rule extends
From those far climes, where breaks the day,
Beyond the western main, nor ends
Where dies the fire-tipped ray.
Though half a hundred changeeful years
Her sceptre holds a sway serene,
Through storm and sunshine, hopes, and fears,
Our Island Queen.

Queen of the waves—from shore to shore
Deep calls to deep and sea to sea,
To lift a loud, exultant roar,
A shout of Jubilee.
Their Island Queen they will defend.
See! how they toss on high their spray—
And we with theirs our voices blend,
For her to pray.

Queen of our hearts—most loved for this.
The holy brightness round her throne;
To those who mourn, the tenderness;
The stern, reproving tone
To vice, which unproved might dare
To stalk abroad with shameless mien.
O Father, hear a nation's prayer,
And bless our Queen!

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TWO FRIENDS.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

The weather was bright though so very cold, and for all who could take the quick exercise it was pleasant enough in the day-time. Sliding and skating went on as long as there was sufficient light for people to see where they were going. And even longer, with the disastrous result of occasional collisions. There were parties for skating by torch-light too, in which Reggie would have liked much to join. But his parents thought the days were quite long enough for him to disport himself in, especially as it was holiday-time. And in spite of his vigorous protests that he was not tired, he was unusually ready, when bed-time came, and slept uncommonly soundly.

He was certainly a happy boy now: the trust reposed in him had been the source of a trust in both his father and mother that had saved him from many scrapes, and prevented others from becoming really bad. He could scarcely believe that the time had been when he had dreaded their home-coming, and that it was not yet two years ago.

"Reggie," said his mother to him one day at luncheon, "we are going to have a visitor in a few days."

"Any one that I know, mother?"

"Yes, Miss Everson."

Reggie looked rather blank. He had not seen Miss Everson since the time when she had been in authority over him; it almost seemed as if her coming must bring back those days, and that was a consummation by no means to be desired.

Mrs. Lacy could not help smiling.

"I want you to be very nice to her, my boy, for she really took great care of you when you were little. And I want you to behave nicely, that she may not think I have spoiled you."

"All right, mother" replied Reggie, his face clearing. It did not matter after all, he thought, it would only be for a little time. And even if Miss Everson were shocked, she could do nothing, and would not be likely to say much. Of course he would be on his best behaviour for mother's sake, but he did not think it possible to behave sufficiently well to please Miss Everson.

"She is sure to think baby a little dear, mother, and I daresay she won't take much notice of me, especially as I shall be out all day."

"Father will not be able to go with you to the pond this afternoon, Reggie, as we have to drive into town. We may be a little late of getting home, but you will leave off at the usual time."

"Yes, Mumsey, you'll find me in the nursery with Babs when you come back."

Mrs. Lacy went to the window to watch him go, skates in hand. He turned to nod to her as he went, stopped for a minute to perform some antics, evidently for the amusement of baby at an upstairs window, and then ran off at full speed as if to make up for loss time.

Reggie was by this time a very active skater. He only tried to cut some very simple figures, but his great delight was in skating along as fast as possible. It was just like flying he declared, and other people have been known to say the same thing. How they know what flying is like, is quite a different question.

A portion of the pond had at one time been considered unsafe, and a rope had been stretched across it, but latterly it had been taken away. It had been replaced that morning, however, as some ice had been taken out of that part, which had only slightly frozen over since. And then by some mistake it had been removed again. It was a case of a person who wanted a thing done, and sent instead of doing it himself as the proverb teaches,—with the usual result. When the matter was investigated afterwards, it did not seem to be actually any one's fault, only a series of mistakes, which fitted into each other but too well.

A few of the village boys were sliding when Reggie got near the pond. Some people were walking along the road at a little distance off, but there were no more skaters.

There was a free course for him, and plenty of opportunity for flying about to his heart's delight, without danger of getting into any one's way. He sat down and put on his skates, and then set off at full speed along the whole length of the pond. He went so fast that he was carried safely over one dangerous place, although to his astonishment the ice seemed to give way behind him. It was of no use to turn around, he must get to the other end and see what was the matter. A few strokes more in safety, and then came a shriek from one of the boys at the other end. Reggie was under the ice!

They ran up, all of them, as near as they could get, but that was not near enough to be of any possible use. There was a rope kept in readiness on the bank, and some of them started to get it, but as they had to run round, there was little chance of their reaching it in time, and when they did reach it they had not the slightest idea what to do with it.

But another had gone there first, a boy coming along the road who had run on when he saw the accident happen. Perhaps as much from curiosity as any other motive, for he had little idea of being able to be of use. When he did arrive, however, he saw that there was no other help at hand, and he must do his best. He threw off his heavy greatcoat and fastened the rope round himself. In a few quick words told the boys who had just come up how to hold the other end, and then lying flat down he ventured himself on the ice.

It was perilous work, and he knew it, though he did not think about it. He only directed himself as quickly and cautiously as he could to the part, where among broken ice he had once seen a head appear. How long it took him to get there, surely he must be too late! Seconds seemed minutes to him, and to the boys who stood open-mouthed and breathless upon the bank. Then came a sudden shout.

"He has got him, hurrah!"

The triumph was a little to soon. The drowning boy was indeed supported by the other's arms, but how he was to get him back to land was another thing. It seemed only too likely

that the brave enterprise would but result in the death of two instead of one.

But no, there was other help near. The alarm had been given, and some men came running down with poles and a long ladder, and by their means the two boys were both soon on shore. The one was dripping wet, but seemed otherwise none the worse. But Reggie was quite unconscious.

The doctor had by this time joined the group on the bank, and directed that he should at once be carried into a cottage close by.

"As for you, my fine fellow," he said turning to the other boy, "you've done a good day's work, just go in here and have your clothes dried at once."

Before turning to obey, the boy stooped to look at the face of him who he had saved; he gave a strange start and exclaimed,

"Why, it's Master Reggie!"

"Of course it is," said one of the bystanders, "didn't you know that?"

Reggie's clothes were taken off, and all means speedily taken for his restoration. He had not been long under water, and it was a hopeful case. In a short time there were signs of returning animation, and even before he quite came to himself the doctor said,

"He'll do. What a good thing that Mr. and Mrs. Lacey are out. They have been spared a great fright."

In the meantime the other boy had dried himself as quickly as possible. He had been sent on a message, and was anxious to get back in time. But yet he could not go without being assured of Reggie's safety. He lingered about the door of the room until the doctor came out.

"Please, sir, is the young gentleman all right?" he asked.

"Yes, thanks to you," was the answer. "You may look at him, but you must not stay a moment, for it would be bad for him to speak."

The boy thrust his head in at the doorway, and withdrew it directly. But not before Reggie, who had turned round on hearing voices, had exclaimed in a tone of utter amazement,

"Nat!"

"Let me see that boy," said Reggie to the doctor, when he returned into the room beside him.

"You shall see him another time, but you are not to see or speak to any one now. Drink this and go to sleep."

Reggie obeyed in silence; he was in a very dreamy state to begin with, and the seeing Nat was only a pleasure deferred.

He was safe in his own bed at home, quite comfortably asleep when his father and mother came back.

"He may have taken cold," said the doctor, "you must take care of him for a few days. But I think he is all right."

It is impossible to describe their thankfulness on hearing this, when they thought of what they might have heard. The next question was as to who had saved him.

"I do not know the boy," was the answer, "but some one will be able to tell where he came from. He must have a head on his shoulders, as well as a brave heart of his own. I will find out about him, and let you know at once."

It was an easy thing to say, but the doctor came back before long to tell that no one who had seen the boy knew where he came from. He was respectable looking, and said he was in a great hurry to get back with a message to his master, but had not mentioned either where he had been, or where he lived.

"But he is sure to turn up here again; there can be no doubt about that. He is not likely to live beyond my district, and I will make enquiries everywhere I go, if he does not appear."

(To be continued.)