

stormed and scolded, whilst the lads went from slide to slide, enjoying their fun all the more.

At this moment a policeman came in sight, and the old gentleman said, "You'll change your tone now, young sirs." He did not realize that the lads were as slippery to catch as the ice was on which they were sliding.

The policeman understood all about it, and made a grab at one of the boys, but missed him and came down on the ice. Before he regained his feet all four were off like the wind. No use trying to catch them; and the poor policeman, shaken by his fall, rubbed first his knee, then his elbow, looking rather rueful as he did so.

"I hope you are not much hurt," said the old gentleman. "Just think what it would be for a man of my age to fall in such a way. What a shame these slides are allowed! They ought to be put a stop to and the boys punished."

"Easier said than done, sir. The police are willing; but they are only round their beats once an hour, and it would want a man for each boy," was the answer.

"Then there is no remedy, and the police are of no use," said the old gentleman angrily, as he hobbled away.

The policeman felt aggrieved, and said he "couldn't do impossibilities, or be in twenty places at once."

He was angry about his fall, and he wanted to catch one of the culprits, so he lingered about the place, but in vain. Four pairs of sharp eyes were watching, and as soon as he was at a safe distance the owners of them resumed their sport on the slides.

Was there to be no remedy? Were the old and feeble or the young and careless to risk their limbs on those slides after nightfall?

There was a remedy, but the old gentleman had not thought of it, neither had the policeman.

A few minutes later a girl passed along the same street. She had a kind face, all aglow with health and seeming to reflect a happy temper.

She stopped and smiled at the lads, who smiled back again as they glided past her.

"Boys," she said, "I want to speak to you. Will you stop sliding for a minute?"

Almost as she finished speaking, they stood round her.

"I want to ask if any of you have had a broken limb or a joint put out of place?"

Two said "No." A third told her his little brother's

arm had been broken; and the fourth said, "I put my ankle out once by falling downstairs."

"Then one of you has known a good deal of pain. So have I, and I'll tell you how it happened. I was coming home on a night like this two years ago. Boys had been making slides like yours, never thinking of hurting any one any more than you did when you made this"; and she touched the nearest with her foot.

Perhaps the lads guessed what was coming; but the speaker looked so kind they would not interrupt her, and she went on,—

"A little snow had covered the slide, which I trod upon, not seeing it, and I fell. I was sadly hurt. My shoulder and wrist were put out of joint, and I was bruised and my face cut on a loose stone. There was nobody near, and I felt very faint; but I crawled to a doorstep and sat there till the gentleman of the house found me there, and I was taken home."

"Is that all real true?" asked one boy.

"Yes. I had great pain and was in bed for a long time through the shock. As I lay there I used to think how sorry the boys who made that slide would be if they knew."

The boys looked uneasy, but did not speak.

"You would not like to be the means of giving anybody such pain, would you?" she asked.

"No," shouted all four at once.

"It is such a little way to the brick Croft, and all the pools there are frozen hard. You could slide there merrily and neither vex nor risk hurting anybody."

"Let's go," said one and all.

"Wouldn't it be better to spoil these slides first?"

"I'll run for mother's chopper," said one.

"No need. Here are some coppers. Buy some salt at the corner shop, and it will melt the ice."

The lads ran, the salt was brought and duly sprinkled, and with a merry shout the lads prepared to go to the brick Croft.

"Good-bye, boys, and thank you. I hope you'll have good fun. I was sure you were not unkind boys," said the girl, waving her hand to them.

"We'd do anything to please you, because you speak so kindly," was the answer.

The girl turned homeward, her bright face brighter still, for her gentle words had gone home with power and done good.

Truly "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

PRAYER-BOOK KALENDAR.—February 2, Purification of *M. V. Mary*; 3, Septuagesima Sunday, *Blasius, Bishop and Martyr*; 5, *Raatha, Virgin and Martyr*; 10, Sexagesima Sunday; 14, *Valentine, Bishop*; 17, Quinquagesima Sunday; 20, *Ash Wednesday*; 24, 1st Sunday in Lent, *St. Matthias, Apostle and Martyr*; 27, *Ember Day*.

Jesus said: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

ST. LUKE vi. 37.