39M

LEARNING TO SWIM.

Shud-dered, trembled.
Per-ceived, noticed.
Sep-a-rat-ed (the second "a" as in *ale*), placed apart.
Prac-tice, use; actual performance.
Rec-ol-lec-tion, memory; remembrance.
Suc-cess-ful, having the desired effect.

[The following is a description of the way in which Digby Heathcote, a boy of nine or ten years of age, is taught to swim by an old servant of the family, whom he calls Toby.

One fine day, they are out in a boat together, when Digby gets his first lesson.]

1. "Pull off your clothes, Master," said Toby, as they were still some little way from the shore.

Digby did as he was bid. "Now, jump overboard," added Toby. Digby stood up; but, as he looked into the water and could see no bottom, he shuddered at the thought of plunging in. Toby passed a band round his waist with a rope to it; but Digby had hardly perceived this. He felt himself pushed, and over he went into the water.

2. "O, I'm drowning, I'm drowning!" he cried out, when he came to the surface.

"O no, you're not, Master, you're all right," said the old man. "Strike out for the shore, and try if you can't swim there."

3. Digby did strike out, but wildly, and not in a way that would have kept him afloat.



THE BREAST STROKE.

"Catch hold of this oar. Now, strike away with your feet, right astern; not out of the water though, keep them lower down.

4. "That's the way to go ahead. Steady, though; strike both of them together. Slow, though, slower. There's plenty of time; you can learn the use of your hands another day. Draw your legs well under you. Now, as I give the word, strike out, draw up. That will do famously. If you keep steadily at it, you'll learn to swim in a very few days."

5. Digby felt rather tired when he and the boat at length reached the shore. He had, however, learned an important part in the art of swimming. When he came out of the water, and had dressed, Toby showed him how to use his hands in making the breast stroke.

6. "Now, Master Heathcote, look here. Do as I do." Toby put his hands together, with the fingers straight out and close to one another, and the palms slightly hollowed. Then, he brought them up to his breast, and, darting them forward, separated his hands, and pressed them backwards till he brought his elbows down to his hips, close to his body, and again turned his wrists till his hands once more got back to the position with which he had started.

7. He made Digby do this again and again, till he was quite eager to jump into the water and put his knowledge into practice.

"No, no, Master," said Toby, "you've had bathing enough to-day."

8. The next day was very fine, and several of the boys of the village came down to bathe.

"Now, Digby," cried Marshall, one of the eldest of the lads, when they got near the shore, after they had been for a row, "overboard we go."



FLOATING.

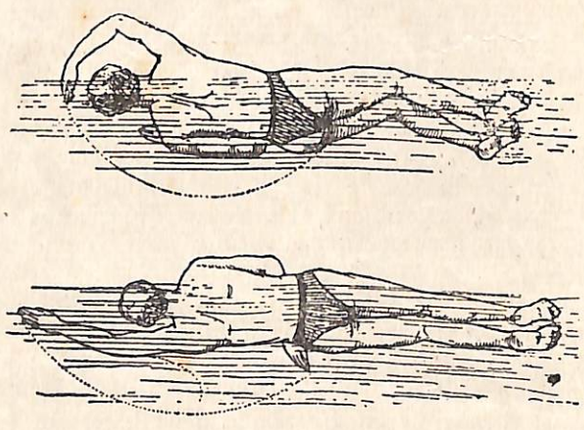
"All right," cried Digby, putting his hands into the correct position, as well as he could remember it; and, with great courage, he jumped into the water.

9. Somehow or other, he could not tell why, down he went some way under the surface, and, when he came up, he had forgotten all about the way to strike out which Toby had taught him. Instead of that, he flung about his arms, and kicked his legs out in the wildest manner, and would have gone down again had not Marshall swum up alongside him, and, putting his hand under his chin, told him to keep perfectly quiet till he had collected his senses.

10. He had courage enough to do this, and was surprised to find himself floating on the surface of the water with so little support.

"Bravo, Master Marshall," cried Toby. "Now strike out, Master Heathcote, as I showed you."

11. The recollection of the way to strike out came back to Digby, and, to his great delight, he found himself making some progress towards the shore, his friend still holding him up by the chin.



THE SIDE STROKE.

"Let me go, I am sure I can swim alone," he cried.

12. Marshall did so, but, after a few strokes, down he went, and again he forgot what he had done so well on dry land. His feet, however, touched the bottom; and, hopping on one leg, he went on, striking out with his hands, and fancying that he was swimming, till he reached the shore.

she laid the bit of cake she had taken up back on the plate when she saw that her brother was not eating.

25. "What is the matter? Why don't you take hold, my little fellow? What is your name?" asked Barba.

"Willie," was the answer.

"Good. Well, Willie, what deep thoughts have taken away your appetite?"

"If I only had a bag!" was all the answer.

"A bag? And what for?"

"Then, I would put everything in it, and take it to mother. She has had nothing to eat to-day."

26. Some of the party at once cried out for somebody to bring a bag; others asked him where his mother lived. When Willie said she lived up in B———, on the mountain, they were surprised, and Barba said, "If you have come from there, you must be very hungry. Now, confess it, Willie."

27. "Yes," said the boy. "We have not had much bread to-day; but, to-morrow, mother can finish the stockings, and, perhaps, we shall have more."

28. The child's tale awakened great pity. Everybody wanted to do something—one to get a bag, another to get a man to carry it. Barba silenced them all by saying—"First, I want to see these children eat all they can, and, then, we will talk about something else. Now, listen, Willie; you must eat all that is on this plate, and the rest your mother shall have."

29. "All that?" asked Willie.

"All. Now, go to work."

Willie grasped his fork, and began to eat with such haste that the company looked on in wonder.

"Did your mother send you here to sing?" asked Barba.

30. "No; she went to sleep because she had eaten nothing and was tired; and she wants to go and see the doctor," explained Willie; "and so I came here to get something for her when she wakes up. We got some bread the first time we sang here."

31. Now the students understood how it was that the New Year's carol had been sung to them; and Barba said, "I propose that we all go with our little singers to the village. It will make a pleasant moonlight walk."

This was agreed upon.

32. They were soon on the way. Barba marched at the head, and Willie beside him.

Max put Frances into an open carriage, and seated himself beside her, and they drove on in the beautiful glow which still lingered in the sky from the setting sun.

33. In the meantime, their mother, at home, awoke from her sleep, but she had not strength enough to get up from the chair. Finally, she roused herself a little. It was twilight, and she could not see her children.

She was so tired that she could not stir.

"Willie," she called after some time, "Frances, where are you?"

34. She received no answer. Her fear suddenly gave her strength. She rose quickly, and ran out of the little cottage; but nobody was there. She ran round the house, calling the children's names. All was still. Only the sound of the rushing stream reached her ears. A dreadful thought came into her mind. She ran to the footpath, and would have rushed wildly down the mountain, but she saw a party of people coming up. They were talking loudly, and she thought she saw them pointing up to her little cottage.

35. "Alas!" she cried in the greatest terror, "can it be a message for me?"

She stood helpless.

"Mother! Mother!" she heard all at once, "we are coming, and you must see what we are bringing. And the gentlemen are coming with us, and Frances in a carriage with two horses." And Willie, rushing on ahead of them all, tried to tell the whole story before he reached the top.

36. Afra's wonder grew every moment, as the young men drew near. Two of them were carrying a big basket on two sticks put over their shoulders; and, last of all, came Frances with her companion.

37. Afra did not know what to think. She gathered, from Willie's account, the fact that the young men had shown the children great kindness; indeed, the well-filled basket proved that. She turned to Barba. As he was the biggest man, she considered him the leader, and she thanked him heartily.

38. The students soon took their leave, and began their march down the mountain; and Willie ran to the highest point of the cliff, and called out as long as he could see them, "Good luck to you, Barba! Good luck to you, Max!" for he had soon learned their names.

39. When quiet reigned in the little household once more, the children tried to tell their mother everything that had happened since they had left home. But, when the great basket was unpacked, and all sorts of good things were taken out, and three whole loaves of white bread remained at the bottom, Willie jumped all over the room in his joy, crying, "Good luck to you, Max! Good luck to you, Barba!"

40. In the meantime, the students were going back to Altorf in a state of high glee. Max had been silent for some time, when he suddenly burst forth in these words, "It is not right yet. No, it is not right. We have provided means against hunger only for a few days, and nothing more. What will they do up there in the winter without warm clothes, without food, or anything? We have not done enough. We must send them help when we get back home."

41. This plan met with high approval. They re-entered Altorf, seated themselves again at the table in the garden, and there, in the clear moonlight, made out a plan for the future.