

WORK AND PLAY SECTION

SWIMMING AND DIVING

IT IS SAID that all living creatures except men and monkeys can swim by instinct. But any person can learn to swim in a short time, if he learns it in a proper manner.

The first thing to remember is that the human body, when there is air in the lungs, is slightly lighter than fresh water, and very much lighter than salt water.

Nearly everyone can float motionless in a horizontal position with face above the surface if the body is properly balanced.

The first thing to do in order to overcome the fear of sinking is to go into quiet water up to the shoulders. Slowly raise the feet off the bottom, making at the same time short downward motions with the hands. The hands should be held back close to the body with palms extended on the down stroke, but drooping on the up stroke.

Next, practice a treading motion with the feet, thrusting down each foot in turn with the sole of the foot flat. Draw it back with the toes upward.

When you can float, begin to learn the simpler swimming strokes. The Breast Stroke is the simplest of all strokes. The hands are brought together, palms down, in front of the chest, and pushed out straight ahead to the full length of the arms. Then the palms are turned outward and the arms swept back horizontally. The stroke is finished by bringing the hands together under the chest again. For the leg-stroke the knees are first drawn up under the body. Then the legs kick out backward and wide apart, are brought together again like scissor blades, and drawn up once more for the

next stroke. The backward kick of the legs should be timed to come as the arms are being thrust forward.

The Side Stroke is a good stroke to learn. The body is turned on one side, and the arms, instead of working together, alternate in their movements. As the lower arm sweeps downward and backward, the other arm reaches forward, skimming the surface of the water, and then moves downward and backward in its turn. The legs are drawn up and thrust out to much the same position as if you were taking a long step; then they are brought together again with a scissors motion.

Diving is an art in itself, which can be acquired only by constant practice. For plain diving the body should follow the line of a curve such as would be made by a stone tossed out a similar distance into the water.

The hands should be held above the head with thumbs together and palms down, never with palms together. As the body enters the water it should be straight, toes pointed and backward. When the body is about half-way in, the hands should bend upward at the wrist; this will tend to bring the head quickly to the surface, and thus give a chance to breathe.

All swimmers should learn how to save persons from drowning. The rescuer should approach from the rear, thrust the crook of one elbow around under the chin of the drowning person and tow him backward to safety, making the swimming strokes with the legs and the free arm.

On the next page are given some illustrations in swimming and diving.