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# LITTLE JOE CARTER.

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## CHAPTER I.

LITTLE Joe Carter sat by the fire turning over the leaves of an old torn primer, and slowly spelling out the words.

Joe wanted to learn to read, but his mother was almost always too busy or too tired to teach him, and he had never been to school.

There was no one with him now but the dog and cat, for his mother had gone out washing, and his father was at the gin shop, where he spent nearly all his days, and sometimes the night too.

Joe used to watch for his mother to come home, and often limped out to the gate, or a little way down the road, to meet her: for he was a poor little cripple, and had to walk with a crutch. But he never went to meet his father, and when he heard him coming, generally crept away into some corner and tried to hide until he found out whether he was drunk or sober; because if he was drunk Joe was not likely to escape a kick or a blow unless he kept out of his way.

Poor Joe could not run about and play like other children, and he had many a sad and lonely hour when his mother was away; and that was almost every day in the week; for she had to work very hard to get food and clothes for herself and her little son.

And it was not often they had anything better to eat than brown bread and milk, or potatoes and salt, hardly ever either butter or meat.

To-day Joe had been all alone since seven o'clock in the morning, and now it was nearly sundown. He was very tired of being by himself, and hungry too, for he had had nothing for his dinner but a bowl of bread and milk, which he had shared with his dog and cat.

He had turned over the leaves of his primer and looked at all the pictures two or three times, and now he laid it down on a chair, threw a chip or two on the fire, and picking up his crutch, which lay on the floor beside him, he limped along to the window to see if his mother was coming. She was not

in sight, and he put on his hat, opened the door, and went down to the gate. He leaned against it a moment, then moved on down the road, for, though he could not see his mother, he thought she would be coming soon, and he would go to meet her.

He had not gone far before he heard a voice behind him calling out, "Hal-loo! Joe Carter, go it, you little cripple!"

Joe did not speak nor look round, but only tried to move on faster; for he knew the voice belonged to Dan Jones, a big rough boy who liked no better fun than to tease and torment him, or any other small boy he came across.

"Stop!" roared Dan, "stop, I say, you young cripple, or I'll make you."

He took up a handful of dirty snow, from a bank by the roadside, as he spoke, rolled it into a ball, and threw it at Joe. It struck his hat and knocked it off; and as he stooped to pick it up, another big, hard one came thump against his crutch, and in an instant poor Joe was rolling over in the mud, while Dan stood by laughing and jeering at him.

"Ah, ha, you little cripple! now you're a pretty-looking fellow, aren't you? mother's sweet clean boy. You'll run away from Dan Jones again, won't you?"

Joe had hard work to get on his feet again, but at last he did, and leaning against a fence he shook his crutch at Dan.

"You—you rascal!" he said, "just



wait till I'm a man, and I'll thrash you."

Dan threw up his cap and laughed aloud.

"You grow to be a man!" he said. "You'll never be anything but a little cripple, not able to hurt a fly. I'm not a bit afraid of you, nor of your father neither, for he's only an old drunkard."

Joe burst into tears. He was very angry, and longed to be strong enough to knock Dan down.

"I'll set the dog on you the very next time you come by our house," he said.

"Will you?" said Dan. "We'll see about that."

He walked off into the road, and picked up a stick; but seeing Joe's

mother coming, he dropped it and ran off as fast as he could, for he was a great coward, as cruel people almost always are.

"Why, what's the matter, Joe?" his mother asked, as she came up to him and saw how dirty he was, and how hard he was crying.

"It's that Dan Jones," sobbed Joe. "He threw me down in the mud, and then laughed at me, and called me names. I wish I was big enough to beat him."

"It's a great shame," said his mother. "I'll have to take every stitch of clothes off you and wash them. But never mind, I hope you're not hurt."

Joe shook his head.

His mother picked up his hat and put it on him.

"Come on home now," she said.  
"What did that bad boy say to you?"  
"He called me a cripple, and said father was an old drunkard."

"So was his own father, when he had one," said Mrs. Carter, "and he had to beg his bread till old Mr. Hunt took him out of charity. Just you tell him that next time he talks so to you, and that he may be a cripple too before he dies, for all he knows."

She opened the gate as she spoke, and helped Joe into the house. Then she took off his muddy clothes, and put others on him. They were old and ragged, but dry and clean.

"Mother, what made me a cripple?" asked Joe.

"You fell out of bed, child, when you were a baby."

"I wish I hadn't," said Joe. "I want to grow big and strong, so I can whip Dan Jones; but he says I'll always be a cripple. Will I, mother?"

His mother looked sad.

"Yes, Joe," she said, "I'm afraid so; but never mind; just you take Towser along next time, and if Dan Jones comes near, set him on him. He'll whip him for you."

Jesus says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." But Mrs. Carter did not love Jesus, nor care to obey him. She never read the Bible, nor prayed, nor taught little Joe about God and heaven. So poor little Joe was a heathen in a Christian land.

## CHAPTER II.

THE snow was all gone, and bright, warm days had come, and now Joe could sit without any fire, and with the doors all open. He could play and dig in the garden too, and he was trying to make a flower-bed for his mother.

"I wish I had some violets to plant here," he said to himself. "I'll just take my little basket, and the trowel, and go off into the woods a little way, and I guess I'll find some."

He was in a hurry, and did not wait to call his dog, but just took his bas-

ket and went. He found some violets and dug them up, and then set off home again.

But he was tired with his walk and his digging, and soon had to sit down on a log to rest. He put his basket down beside him, and leaned his crutch against the log. Then he took off his hat and began to fan himself, for he was very warm.

"Ah, ha, my fine fellow, I've caught you now!" said a voice behind him, and Dan Jones jerked his hat out of his hand, and picked up his crutch, and ran away with them.

Poor Joe burst into tears and begged him to bring them back.

"I won't," said Dan. "I'll hang them up on these tall bushes, where you couldn't reach them even if you

could walk here, and you know you can't stir a step without your crutch. Oh, I've got you fast, my fine fellow! and I'm never going to let you go home again. You'll have to stay here in the woods till you starve to death."

"No I won't," said Joe, wiping his eyes, "mother'll come for me."

"Not she," said Dan, "she don't know where you are."

Joe began crying again, for he thought the bad boy was right, and that his mother would not be able to find him.

"Give me my hat and crutch, Dan Jones," he said, "I want to go home."

"Do you?" said Dan. "Don't you want to set the dog on me? I believe I'll cut a stick and give you a good beating. You deserve it all the same

as if you had set your dog on me, 'cause you would if you could."

He took out his knife and began to cut a stick, and poor Joe cried harder than ever, for he knew he was too little and weak to fight Dan; and too lame to run away.

"You're a bad boy, Dan Jones," he said; "and mother says may be you'll be a cripple too before you die. And you needn't call my father a drunkard, for your father was one when he was alive, and you were a beggar yourself till old Mr. Hunt took you in."

"None of your impudence, youngster; you'd better keep quiet or you'll get a taste of this," said Dan, shaking his stick at Joe.

Joe cried still harder, and called his



mother as loud as he could, although he knew she was too far off to hear him.

Dan laughed, and went on calling him names, "baby and cripple and drunkard's son," and telling him that he was going to beat him, and then carry away his crutch and leave him there to starve-and die.

Neither of the boys noticed that a lady was coming towards them from the road near by, until she was close to the log where Joe was sitting.

"What is the matter, Dan?" she asked. "Why are you teasing this poor little fellow? For shame! nobody but a coward would abuse one so much smaller and weaker than himself."

"He has got my hat and crutch,

and won't let me go home," sobbed Joe.

The lady went to the bushes where Dan had hung the hat and crutch, and took them down and brought them to Joe. Dan hung down his head, and sneaked away quite ashamed of himself; and the lady sat down on the log beside Joe, who was still crying.

"My poor little fellow, what is the matter?" she asked, stroking his hair.

"I hate him! I hate Dan Jones; he's a bad boy, and always doing something bad to me," sobbed the little boy. "I wish he was dead. I wish I could kill him, so I do."

"O my little boy, that is very wrong," said the lady, softly. "Don't you know that we must forgive and love those who are unkind to us?"

"I can't, and I don't want to," said Joe. "Dan Jones is very bad to me, and I never hurt him. He calls me a cripple and other bad names."

"That is very unkind," said the lady, "but still you must forgive him, if you want Jesus, the dear Saviour, to forgive and love you."

"Who is he?" asked Joe, looking up in her face. "I never saw him nor did anything to him."

"Did you never hear of Jesus, poor child?" the lady asked in surprise.

Joe shook his head.

"Do you know who made you?" she asked.

"Yes, mother says God did; but I never saw him, and don't know anything about him."

"Poor little fellow!" said the lady,

sighing. Then she put her arm round him and drew him close to her side.

"Shall I tell you about Jesus?" she asked.

"If you please, ma'am, and if it's a story," said Joe. "I like stories."

"Yes," she said, "it is a story; the sweetest story that ever was told. But now before I begin, will you tell me your name?"

"Joe Carter," he said; "and I live over yonder in that little white house. Please, ma'am, what is your name?"

"I am Miss West, the new teacher," she said, smiling. "Are you coming to school?"

"If mother will let me. I wish she would, but she says the big boys would abuse me."

"I think I could take care of that,"

said Miss West; "and I will see your mother about it. But now for the story.

"It was a great many many years ago that Jesus, the dear Saviour, lived in this world of ours. He was very kind and full of love to every one. He never did nor said anything wrong, never had any sinful thoughts or feelings. He always went about doing good, curing the sick, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, and raising dead people to life again.

"A great many came to him; sometimes so many that he could not even get time to eat; but he never turned one away. He cured them all."

"I wish I had been there," said Joe, "to get him to cure my leg. He was very good, wasn't he?"

“Indeed he was,” said the lady. “He was perfectly good and holy, and that no one else ever was. You would think everybody would love one who was so good and so kind, but it was not the case. There were wicked men, who hated Jesus, and wanted to kill him; and they were watching for a time when they could catch him alone; for they were afraid to try to take him when the crowds of people were around him, who loved him, because he preached to them, and taught them, and healed those that were sick among them.

“Now Jesus had chosen twelve men, whom he called his disciples, and who went everywhere with him. Eleven of them loved Jesus very much; but the other one, whose name

was Judas, did not care for his Master, but loved money so much that he went to those wicked men who wanted to kill Jesus, and told them that if they would pay him for it, he would help them to take him.

“And they were very glad, and said they would pay him thirty pieces of silver. So one night when Jesus and his disciples had walked out to a garden where they often went, Judas came leading on a great number of those bad men, carrying lanterns, and torches, and weapons. Judas had told them how they should know which was Jesus. He said, ‘The one that I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast.’ And when they got to the garden he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Hail, Master!’ and kissed him.

Jesus said, 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?' for he knew all about Judas' wickedness. But he did not hate him as you said just now you hated Dan. He always returned good for all the evil that was done to him; and when Peter, one of his disciples, drew a sword and cut off the ear of one of those cruel men who had come to take him, Jesus touched his ear, and made it well again in a moment."

"How could he do that?" asked Joe, opening his eyes very wide. "I never heard of anybody that could do such things."

"No one else could have done it," said Miss West; "but Jesus could, because he was God as well as man. But that was not more strange than



what I told you before, about Jesus curing the blind and deaf and raising the dead."

"Well, please go on," said Joe. "I hope those bad men didn't hurt Jesus."

"Yes, Joe, they did. They led him away first to the high-priest's house, and then to Pilate and Herod, two of their rulers, and there they mocked him, and treated him as badly as they could. They blindfolded him, and then struck him with their hands, and bade him tell who it was that struck him; and they pulled the hair of his beard, and spit in his face; then they took off his coat and put on him an old purple robe, such as kings wore, and instead of a golden crown like the king's, they made a crown of

thorns and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' and they took the reed and struck him on the head, and oh, how that must have driven the cruel thorns into his flesh! But he bore it all meekly, and never spoke one angry word."

"And did he get away from them?" asked Joe.

"No," said the lady. "You know I told you they wanted to kill him; but the law would not let them do it themselves; so they told Pilate lies about Jesus, to get him to kill him.

"But Pilate said he did not find any fault in him, and wanted to let him go. But all that great crowd of

angry men cried out, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' They were like so many hungry wolves thirsting for Jesus' blood.

"Then Pilate said, 'Why, what evil hath he done? I will beat him and let him go.'

"But they cried out again, louder than ever, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' And Pilate let them have their own way, because he was afraid they would tell tales against him to the king who was over him. And they beat Jesus very hard, and made him carry a heavy cross of wood to a place outside of their city; and there they laid him down on the cross, and fastened him to it by driving nails through his hands and feet; and while they were doing that Jesus prayed for them,

saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

"Then they stood the cross up with one end in the ground, and let Jesus hang there until he was dead.

"And while he was hanging there in all that dreadful pain, they stood by and mocked him, wagging their heads at him, and saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he be Christ, the chosen of God.'

"But Jesus said not one cross nor angry word to them. He was God, and could have struck them all dead in an instant if he had chosen. But he did not do it. He let them kill him. Do you know why? oh, little Joe, do you know why Jesus suffered and died thus?" asked the lady in a voice choked with sobs; and as

Joe looked up quickly into her face, he saw that the tears were running fast down her cheeks.

The tears came into his eyes too, and he shook his head and said, "No, ma'am, I don't know. Why didn't he kill them all? I would."

"O Joe," she said, "it was to save sinners; to save you and me, Joe, for we are sinners; and if the dear Saviour had not laid down his life for us, we must have perished for ever."

"Save us from what, ma'am?" asked Joe.

The lady repeated a little verse.

"There is a dreadful hell,  
And everlasting pains,  
There sinners must for ever dwell,  
In darkness, fire, and chains."

"It was to save us from that, Joe,"

she said. "Do you not know that you have a soul, Joe? a soul that can never die?"

"No, ma'am," he said; "what is it?"

"It is that part of you that thinks and feels, and loves and hates. You know that people die sometimes? you have seen dead people, I suppose?"

"Yes," he said, "my little sister died, and they buried her in the ground."

"Well, Joe, what we call dying, is the soul going away out of the body. Then the body can no longer see, nor hear, nor feel, and it soon turns back to dust, of which it was made at first. But do you know what becomes of the soul?"

He shook his head.

“ If it is a soul that loves Jesus, it goes to be with him in that bright, happy land where all is peace, and joy, and love, and where sickness and sorrow can never come; for Jesus is there now: he rose from the grave where they buried him, and went up to heaven again. But if it is a soul that does not love Jesus, it goes down to that dreadful place the little verse tells about; where the devil and his angels are; and it can never get out. And, Joe, we would all have had to go there if Jesus had not died on the cross for us. For you see we are sinners; and God had said that sinners must be punished; but Jesus said, ‘ I will bear it instead of them;’ and he did. He left that beautiful heaven where everybody loved him, and came

down here, and suffered and died for us; and so now God can forgive us for Jesus' sake; and he says if we will only love Jesus, and trust in him, he will take us to heaven when we die."

"I do love him," said Joe, brushing away his tears. "I couldn't help loving him now I know he's been so good to me."

"Then, Joe, you must forgive Dan Jones, and not want to do him anything but kindness; because the Bible, God's holy book, says that if we love Jesus we will try to be like him; and I have told you how he treated those who were so cruel to him."

"I can't," said Joe, hanging down his head.

"No, Joe, I know you can't of yourself; but you must ask God to help



you for Jesus' sake, and he will. You can't forgive Dan because you have a wicked heart; but God will give you a new and good heart if you ask him for it."

"I don't know where he is," said Joe. "Isn't he up in the sky? and I can't go there to ask him."

"Yes, God is in heaven, Joe," the lady said, "but he is everywhere else too. He is here, Joe, and he will let us speak to him if we wish; and will give us what we ask for in Jesus' name, if we really want it. Shall we pray to him now?"

"I don't know how to pray," said Joe, "nobody ever told me how."

"Shall I teach you how?" she asked.

And then she knelt down on the

grass beside the log, and made Joe kneel beside her, and took one of his hands in hers while she said this little prayer: "O Father in heaven, give me a new heart and teach me to love Jesus; forgive all my sins, and help me to forgive Dan Jones, and every one who treats me unkindly. I ask it all for Jesus' sake, Amen."

Then she made Joe say the words after her several times, till he could remember them all quite well. She made him promise to repeat this little prayer every morning and evening; and then she said it was time to go; and Joe put on his hat and took up his crutch and his basket, and the lady walked along with him as far as his father's gate.

There she kissed Joe good-bye, and

told him not to forget what she had said to him, and that she would come again in the morning and talk to his mother about sending him to school.

## CHAPTER III.

JOE looked after Miss West, as she walked away down the road, and he thought, "What a nice kind lady she is. I hope mother will let me go to school to her."

But soon Miss West was out of sight, and then he went to his flower-bed and planted his violets. When that was done, he sat down on the door-step to watch for his mother.

He wanted to tell her all the lady had said to him, and to beg her to let him go to school and learn to read.

He wondered if his mother had

ever heard of Jesus, and if she had, why she had never told him that sweet story; and why she had never taught him to pray. Then he went over the whole story again, in his mind, and the tears ran down his cheeks as he thought of all the cruel things those wicked men had done to Jesus, and remembered that the lady had said Jesus bore it all for him, to save him from going down to that dreadful hell. He felt full of love to Jesus for all he had done for him, and he got up and went into the house and knelt down by a chair, and said his little prayer again. And while he was doing that his mother came in.

He had been so busy thinking, that he had not seen her coming up the

road. She stopped and stood still in the door when she saw little Joe on his knees, for she had never seen him so before. And she heard him sob, and heard some of the words he said too; for he added a little more of his own, thanking the dear Saviour for loving him so much, and asking him to love him always.

Then Mrs. Carter remembered how, when she was a little girl, her mother used to teach her to kneel down and pray to God; and she thought how wicked she had been to give up praying herself, and never to teach her little boy anything good, and she sat down on a chair and began to cry.

When Joe got up from his knees and saw his mother sitting there crying, he went to her and asked, "What

is the matter, mother? don't you like me to pray to God?"

"Yes, Joe," she said; "but who told you how? and where did you hear about Jesus?"

Then Joe told her how he had gone to the woods for flowers, and how Dan came and took away his hat and crutch, and then about Miss West, and all she had said to him, and the little prayer she had taught him. And he asked, "Mother, did you ever hear of Jesus before?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Carter, "my mother often talked to me about him when I was a little girl."

"Then why didn't you tell me about him, mother?" asked Joe.

"Because I was wicked, Joe," she said. "I've been so busy trying to

get you enough to eat and wear that I've 'most forgotten all the good things my mother used to teach me. But I'll try to do better."

"Will you tell me more about Jesus, mother?" asked Joe, eagerly.

"Yes," his mother said, "and here's a book that's all full of him, and I'll read you some of it to-night when I've got my work done up."

She went to the other side of the room while she was speaking, and reaching up to a high shelf, she took down a big Bible all covered with dust and cobwebs.

She took a cloth and wiped it off clean, and laid it down on a chair and told Joe he might look at the pictures while she was getting supper.

Joe was very glad, and hardly



wanted to leave the book long enough to eat his supper when it was ready.

"I wish I could read it myself," he said. "Mother, mayn't I go to Miss West's school? she says she won't let the big boys hurt me."

"Dan Jones will be there," said his mother, "and may be a good many more as bad as he."

"But Miss West will take care of me, and I want to go and learn to read," said Joe.

"Well, child, we'll see about it when she comes. I'd like to have you learn to read," said his mother.

Joe was in such a hurry for his mother to read to him, that he could hardly wait till the dishes were washed and the room put in order. He thought it had never taken her so long before.

But at last she took the book and sat down, and Joe brought his little stool and sat at her feet while she read. She chose the parts that told about Jesus; for she knew that was what Joe wanted.

First she read about the time when he was a little baby lying in a manger, and about the angels, and the shepherds, and the wise men; and Joe was filled with wonder, and every now and then stopped her to ask some question. Then she read about Jesus raising the dead son of the widow of Nain; and about the woman who washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them; and how Jesus said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." And Joe thought he should

have liked to do just what the woman did; and oh, how he wished he could hear Jesus say those words to him!

But now it was time for him to go to bed; so he kissed his mother good-night, and thanked her for reading to him. And then he got ready for bed; but before he got in, he knelt down and said his little prayer again. His mother saw him do it, and after Joe was asleep, she knelt down and prayed—the first time for a long while. She told God she was a great sinner, and asked him to forgive her and make her good, and to help her to teach her little boy to love and serve him.

When Miss West came the next day, she found Joe sitting at the door watching for her. He looked very glad, and set her a chair, and then

went to call his mother, who was busy in the garden planting seeds.

She came in and shook hands with Miss West, and thanked her for her kindness to her little boy. Then Miss West asked her if she would let Joe come to school.

Mrs. Carter said, "Yes, ma'am, I will, if you won't think it too much trouble to watch and see that the big boys don't abuse him; for he's but a poor little fellow, a cripple, and not at all strong, and can't take care of himself. But I would be glad to have him go to school, for it would be a fine thing for him to learn to read. He needs something to amuse him, because, you see, he can't run about and play like other boys."

"I will try to take care of him,"

said Miss West, "and I think I can. And if you will let him go to Sabbath-school too, I will call for him to-morrow and take him with me."

Mrs. Carter said, "Thank you, ma'am, yes, he shall go if he is well," and Joe looked very glad.

Then Miss West went away, and Joe followed his mother out into the garden to talk about the Sabbath-school.

"What do you think they will do there, mother?" he asked.

"Sing hymns, and pray, and read, I suppose," she said, "and I think Miss West will tell you some more about Jesus."

"Then I'll be sure to like it," said Joe, "and I wish Sunday had come. I'm glad it's coming to-morrow."

Little Joe was up with the sun the next morning; and when he had eaten his breakfast, his mother washed him and combed his hair, and dressed him in his best clothes.

They were not very fine, but they were clean and whole, and Miss West seemed to think them quite nice enough for a little boy to wear to church and Sabbath-school.

She came early to give Joe plenty of time, so that he need not walk fast and tire himself out; but she found him ready for her, sitting on his stool beside the door, with his hat in his hand and his crutch beside him. So they set off at once.

It was a long walk for Joe, and he felt quite tired by the time they reached the church door, and was

very glad to sit down on the little bench Miss West pointed out.

Miss West had the infant class, and they were in a small room by themselves. She taught them a prayer, and some little hymns, and showed them some pictures, and told them Bible stories. Joe liked it all very much, and had a great deal to tell his mother about the Sabbath-school when he went home. He begged her to let him go every week.

"I mean you shall, if you don't get tired of it," she said; "and I hope you will like day-school too."

"I think I will," said Joe. "I couldn't help liking to be where Miss West is."

Just then he saw his father coming, and he knew by the way he walked

that he was drunk, and would be likely to be very cross. So Joe slipped out into the garden, and went and hid behind an old ash-barrel.

He had to stay there a good while, and he heard his father scolding, and swearing, and knocking things about, and he was so afraid that he would hurt his poor mother, or may be kill her, that he cried very hard.

Then all at once he thought of something that Miss West had said to them in Sabbath-school that morning. It was that they must go to God when they were in any trouble, and tell him all about it, and ask him to help them, and he surely would, if they asked for Jesus' sake.

So little Joe knelt down and said, "O God, I'm afraid father is going to



kill mother. Please don't let him do it; please don't let him hurt her at all. And oh, please, for Jesus' sake, make him quit drinking rum, and be a good man."

Then he got up and wiped his eyes, and did not cry any more, for he felt sure his mother would not be hurt. So he sat still thinking of all the nice stories Miss West had told them about the good people in the Bible, and trying to remember the words of the pretty hymns the children had sung.

After a while his mother came and told him he could come in now, for his father had gone to sleep, and she did not think he would wake up before morning; and Joe went in softly and sat down on the door-step beside

his mother, while she read to him in a little book Miss West had let him bring home; and after that in the Bible.

Then she gave him his supper; and when they were done eating, and she had put all the things away, she sat down and took him on her lap.

Joe put his arm round her neck and kissed her.

"Mother," he asked, "did father hurt you?"

"No, Joe, not much," she said; "he pulled my hair down and struck me, but not very hard."

"I thought God wouldn't let him hurt you, because I asked him not to," said Joe. "And I asked him to make father a good man; and I think he will some day."

His mother hugged him close to her when he said that, and whispered, "Pray for me too, Joe. I want you to ask God to make me good."

"I will, mother," said Joe; "but I think you are good now."

His mother shook her head.

"No, Joe, I'm not. I'm very bad. I never knew how bad till to-day. But I've been reading in the Bible where it says that Jesus will forgive our sins, and wash them all away in his blood, if we only ask him; and I have asked him to do it for me, and I think he will."

"Yes, mother," said Joe, "Miss West says that God will forgive us for Jesus' sake, if we're very sorry, and don't ever mean to do so any more; and he will help us to leave off

being bad, and will make us good like himself, so that we won't want to be wicked any more; and then he'll take us to heaven when we die; and all because Jesus died instead of us. O mother, how good Jesus was! I do love him very much: and I mean to try to please him always. I'll forgive Dan Jones, and everybody that is bad to me. And then Jesus will forgive me and love me. Miss West says so."

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Joe opened his eyes on Monday morning, he was very glad to see that his father was gone. His mother was setting the table.

"Come, Joe," she said, "jump up; breakfast is almost ready, and I must soon be off to my work."

Joe got out of bed at once, and put on his clothes as fast as he could. Then he knelt down and said his little prayer, and after that he washed his face and hands, and ate his breakfast. He wanted to talk while he was eating, but his mother told him not

to, because she wanted him to make haste and get done, that she might have time to dress him for school before she went to her work.

"Now this will be your first day at school," she said, as she put on his clean apron and smoothed his hair, "and you must be a very good boy and try to learn."

"Yes, indeed I will, mother," said Joe. "Will it be like Sabbath-school, do you think?"

"Not much, I guess," said his mother; "but you'll see when you get there. I shouldn't wonder if Miss West read a little from the Bible, and may be let you sing a hymn. Should you like that?"

"I guess I would," said Joe.

"Now, Joe," said his mother, "I

can't wait till Miss West comes, but you are all ready; here's a little bag I've made for you, with your dinner in it, and your old primer; you can carry it on your arm. And when you are going, you must turn the cat and dog out, and lock the door, and put the key in the crack behind the step, so that I'll know where to find it if I get home before you. I don't expect to though, for you must not stop a minute when school is out, but come right home; unless Miss West tells you to wait."

"Yes, mother, I will," said Joe.

Then his mother went away and left him. It seemed a long time that he had to wait, though it was really not much more than an hour. He locked up the house after a little, and

hid the key as his mother had told him, and then stood at the gate watching for Miss West to come. He soon grew tired, and had to go back again and sit down on the step, for he was not able to stand very long. But at last he saw her coming down the road. He got up and met her at the gate.

"Good morning, Joe," she said.  
"So you are all ready, I see."

Joe smiled, and looked very happy, and Miss West took hold of his hand and helped him along.

"I hope you will like school and learn very fast, Joe," she said.

"I mean to try as hard as ever I can," said Joe.

"Then I am sure you will learn, and soon be able to read," said his teacher, smiling kindly at him.



The school-house was in a very pretty place, with grass and fine large trees all around it, and a little stream of water running along close by. The door was open when they got there, and a good many boys and girls were standing about under the trees.

"There's the teacher," "The teacher's coming," Joe heard them say to each other.

"And who is that little cripple with her?" asked a big, fat, coarse-looking girl.

"Hush, Betsy Black, he'll hear you," said another, who looked very sweet and kind; "don't you know it's little Joe Carter? They say his father kicked him out of bed when he was a baby, and lamed him for life. Poor little fellow!"

Betsy did not know how loud she spoke. Joe had heard her, and his face grew very red, and the tears came into his eyes, and for a minute he wished he was at home. But Sally Ware, the kind-looking girl, came to him and gave him an apple, and took hold of his hand, and made him sit down on a log to rest.

Miss West was speaking to some of the others, but when she saw what Sally was doing, she smiled and said,

"That is right. I hope you will all be very kind to little Joe."

Then she went into the school-house, and Joe thought he must go too; but Sally told him he need not till the bell rang. So he sat still, and ate his apple.

"Are you coming to school all the time?" asked Sally.

"Yes," said Joe. "Miss West says she will take care of me, and not let the big boys hurt me."

"I shouldn't think they'd want to," said Sally. "They must be great cowards if they try to hurt anything as little and weak as you. But I'll look out for you when Miss West is not by. What's the matter?" she asked, for just then Joe started and moved closer to her.

"There's Dan Jones," he said, in a low tone.

"Well, are you afraid of him? you needn't be, for if he touches you, I'll see that uncle Peter hears of it."

"Who is uncle Peter?" asked Joe.

"Mr. Hunt, the man that Dan Jones

lives with. He is my uncle, and knows how to make Dan behave himself."

"I don't want him to be cross to Dan," said Joe.

"No, he isn't," said Sally; "he's very kind to him, but he makes him behave for all that."

Miss West now rang the bell, and all the boys and girls went into the school-house. She then told each one where to sit; for this was the first day of school.

Joe's place was on a low bench close beside his teacher's desk. He liked that very much, because he liked Miss West, and wanted to be near her. But some of the scholars who were not good, and did not mean to study, wanted to get just as far away from her as ever they could.

Dan Jones was one of them. He sat down close to the door when he came in, but Miss West made him move to a desk near the front, where she could see him all the time; for she saw, by his look, that he was a bad, idle boy.

When they were all quiet in their seats, Miss West talked to them a little. She told them she loved them, and wanted to be very kind to them, and to do them good; but that she could not unless they would listen to what she said, and try to obey her, and to learn their lessons well.

She said they must not forget that God was there looking at each one of them, and that he would not be pleased if they were idle and bad; and they could not be happy if God was angry with them.

Then she read a few verses from the Bible; and after that they sang a hymn, and Miss West prayed, and now they were ready for lessons. Miss West looked at their books, and told each one what to study.

Joe's book, besides being old and torn, was not of the right kind; but his teacher gave him a new one, and wrote his name in it; and never did a little boy feel richer than he when told that it was his to keep, his very own. And Miss West felt well paid by the glad look in his eyes as he lifted up his face to give her a kiss of thanks.

She showed him where his lesson was, and told him to sit down on his bench and try to read it over until she called his class.

Joe did just as he was bid. He did not gaze all round the room to see what all the others were doing, but kept his eyes on his book, and spelled the words over and over very carefully until his class was called; and in that way he learned his lesson so well that he was able to read it very nicely, and his teacher looked pleased, and patted his head; and that made the little boy feel very happy.

After a while Miss West said the boys might go out to play a little. Joe looked over at Sally Ware, and wished she was going too; but he found that the girls were to wait till the boys came in; so he sat down again, for he was afraid of Dan Jones.

Miss West saw how it was, and she spoke to a kind-looking boy, and

pointing to Joe, said, "Seth, I want you to take care of this little fellow, and see that no one hurts him."

"Yes, ma'am, I will," said Seth, pleasantly.

And he took hold of Joe's hand, and led him out.

There was a big swing there under the trees, and Seth put Joe in it and swung him back and forth a good many times. Joe liked it very much, but he thought Seth must be tired, and want to go and play with the other big boys; so he said he would like to watch them playing ball, and Seth found him a nice place where he could sit and see them very well, and then he ran off to get his share of the sport.

Joe liked to watch the boys, and see



how well they could catch the ball, and how they kept it flying from one side to the other. But soon the bell rang, and Seth came and helped him into the house again.

Always after that Seth Adams took care of Joe at recess; and though Dan Jones sometimes made faces at him, and called him names when Seth's back was turned, he never did anything worse.

When school was out at noon, Sally Ware came up to Joe and said, "Come, Joe, you and I will eat our dinner together."

She led him out to a cool, shady place, where there was a big flat stone that did very well for a table. They sat down beside it, and she opened her dinner-basket and took out a

clean white towel, which she spread on the stone; and on that she set out her dinner: bread and butter, and several pieces of cold chicken, some cheese, and cake, and a little cup of apple-butter.

Joe had nothing in his bag but a bit of dry bread, for that was all his mother had to give him. But Sally took it out of his hand, and spread it all over with apple-butter; then she gave him a leg of chicken, and a big slice of cake, and a piece of cheese.

Joe looked as if he was afraid he cught not to take them; but Sally said, "Come, Joe, I've taken you for my boy while you come to school, and we'll play that I'm your mother, and you must just eat whatever I give you. That's the way good boys do to their

mothers, you know. And you needn't bring any more dinner after this, because I always have plenty for two, and it makes your bag too heavy for you to carry." And she patted Joe's cheek, and looked so kind that he could hardly keep from jumping up to hug and kiss her.

Then Betsy Black, and some of the other girls came and sat down beside the big stone,—for nearly all the girls lived too far away to go home to dinner,—and Betsy gave Joe a large piece of pie. So little Joe had quite a feast.

"Mayn't I take this piece of cake home to mother?" he whispered to Sally.

"No," she said, "you eat that up like a good boy, and here's another

slice you shall have to take to your mother when school is out."

"Oh thank you!" said Joe, "you are very kind."

"No, I'm not," said Sally; "I don't want it, and mother says it is no great kindness to give away what we don't want ourselves."

"Joe, do you like to swing?" asked Betsy Black.

Joe nodded, for his mouth was too full to speak.

"Well," said Betsy, "when you've eaten your cake I'll swing you."

Betsy swung Joe a good many times without seeming to be at all tired, but at last Joe said he must get out and let some of the others have their turn. Joe was not a selfish little boy, but wanted every one about

him to have a share in his pleasures. After a while Miss West came out and played some games with them, and then it was school time again.

Joe was almost sorry when school was out, although he did feel rather tired of sitting still so long on his bench. But then came the walk home with Miss West and Sally both for company, and he enjoyed that very much.

Miss West lived in the same house with Sally, and as it was quite in their way to call at Mr. Carter's, they promised Joe that one or both of them would come for him every morning, and bring him home again in the evening, so that he need not be afraid of Dan Jones, nor anybody else.

Joe found he had got home before

his mother, as she had expected he would, and he could hardly wait for her to come, he had so much to tell her.

Sally gave him the slice of cake at the gate, and he carried it in and laid it on a plate in the cupboard, smiling to himself all the time to think how good it would taste to his poor tired mother. He picked some chips, too, for her to make the fire with when she came, and then he sat down on the door-step and took out his new primer, and tried to learn his lesson for the next day. He held it up for his mother to see as soon as she came in the gate, and told her that Miss West had given it to him.

"Isn't she kind, mother?" he asked.

"Yes, my son, she is indeed," said Mrs. Carter, "and I hope God will reward her."

"Somebody else is kind to me too," said Joe; "indeed 'most everybody is, but I think Sally Ware is the kindest of all."

His mother seemed to think so too, when he had told her the whole story of Sally's kindness to him; how she had taken him for her boy and given him such a nice dinner, and a piece of cake for her too. She wanted him to eat it for his supper, but he begged her to take it, and at last she did, because she saw that he wished her to do so very much indeed, and would rather see her enjoying it than to eat it himself.

Joe did not grow tired of his school,

but liked it so well that he was never willing to stay away. It was much pleasanter, he thought, to be there along with other children than to stay at home all alone; and besides, he liked to read, and sing, and say tables. And then the boys and girls were so kind to him; they pitied him for his lameness, and were very careful not to hurt him, and often chose quiet plays that he might be able to join them; and there was hardly ever a day when two or three of them did not bring him cakes or apples, or something nice to eat, and Sally gave him a good dinner every day.

Almost all the other little boys and girls had slates to make figures and draw pictures on, but Joe had none. He asked his mother to buy him one,



but she said she could not spare the money; so poor Joe had to do without, except when some kind little boy or girl lent him one. But he tried not to fret about it, for he knew his mother was very poor, and could hardly get him food and clothes.

One day, pretty soon after Joe's mother had said she could not buy the slate, Sally came, as usual, to take him to school. When they got there, Joe sat down on the door-step to rest, and Sally went into the house. In a minute she came back, holding her hands behind her, and asking, "What would you like to have, Joe?"

"A slate," said Joe.

"There it is then," said Sally, as she laid one on his lap.

It was a little one, quite new, and

had a bit of sponge and a pencil fastened to it by two strings.

"Oh!" cried Joe, clapping his hands, "is this for me? How did you know that I wanted a slate?"

"Oh I found it out. Yes, it's for you. I bought it on purpose for my little boy." And she bent down and gave him a kiss.

"Oh how good you are!" said Joe; "but how did you know?"

"Why, I saw that you had none, and that you liked to make figures and pictures when the other children would lend you theirs."

## CHAPTER V.

ONE morning when Joe got up, he found it was raining very hard. He wondered how he should get to school, but he did not say anything about it for fear his mother would say he could not go. He hoped it would stop raining before school-time. But it did not stop; it kept on harder and harder.

At last Joe asked, "How will I get to school to-day, mother?"

"I think you'll have to stay at home to-day, Joe," she said. "You can't go in all this rain, and the roads are very wet too."

The tears began to run down Joe's face, for he did not at all like to be kept at home.

"You ought not to cry, Joe," said his mother. "Don't you know who sends the rain? and the gardens and fields need it badly, too."

"Yes, mother," said Joe, "I know God sends it; and I'm glad he does to make things grow; but I wish he would send a wagon too, or a cart, to take me to school."

"Who knows but he might, if you should ask him," said his mother. "I'm sure he will, if it is best for you to go."

Joe's face grew brighter. "So I will ask him, mother," he said.

And he went away by himself, and prayed that, if it was best, a wagon

or cart might come to take him to school.

Then he went back to his mother, and asked her to brush his hair and get him ready, "because I do believe it will come, mother," he said.

His mother said, "I shouldn't wonder, Joe; for the Bible says God hears prayer."

And she brushed his hair, and put a clean apron on him, and then he went and stood at the little window to watch.

"There it is, mother," he cried out when he had been there a few minutes. "There's Mr. Ware's wagon at the gate."

And he made haste to open the door, and then they heard Sally's voice calling to Joe to come.



LITTLE JOE'S FIRST RIDE.

He put on his hat and took his bag on his arm, and his mother held an umbrella over him down to the gate.

Jonas, the man who was driving, jumped out and lifted Joe into the wagon, and his mother handed up his crutch and his bag.

"You are very kind to my little Joe, Miss Sally," she said. "I don't know how to thank you for all you've done for him."

"I don't want any thanks, Mrs. Carter," said Sally; "it pleases me as much as it does Joe."

Miss West was in the wagon too, but she was so far back that Mrs. Carter did not see her, and Jonas drove on before she had time to speak.

As for Joe, he was quite wild with delight. He had hardly ever had a

ride in his life, and besides, he was so glad he did not have to stay away from school. He threw his arms round Sally and hugged her. "I think you were so good to come for me," he said. "I was afraid I would have to stay at home to-day."

"Were you?" said Sally. "I know some boys who would be only too glad of a chance to stay away from school."

"Not Miss West's boys, I guess," said Joe.

Miss West smiled and patted his cheek.

"I'm afraid they don't all like school as well as you do, little Joe," she said.

It seemed hardly five minutes to Joe, before the wagon stopped, and he saw that they were at the school-house door. He felt quite sorry, and wished



they had had twice as far to go, that he might have had a longer ride.

Sally saw how sober he looked as Jonas helped them out, and she said, "Never mind, Joe, you shall ride home to-night. Jonas is coming for us. And as I see you like riding so well, I'll ask father to let him take you and me out for a nice long ride some day when the sun shines, and the roads are good."

"Oh! will you, really?" said Joe; and he looked as if he thought it was too good to be true.

"Yes, I will," said Sally; "and may be we can coax Miss West to go with us."

"That would be nice," said Joe. "I hope she will go along."

He hung up his hat and went to his

seat, and presently Sally came and sat down beside him, for it was not quite time yet for the bell to ring.

"How sober you look, little Joe," she said. "What are you thinking about?"

"I'll tell you, Sally," he said, moving close to her, and speaking in a very low tone. "I wanted to come to school ever so badly this morning, but it was raining so hard, you know, and the ground was all wet, and so mother said I'd have to stay at home. Then I cried and said I wished God would send a wagon to take me to school; and mother said maybe he would if I asked him. And I did ask him, and then I got all ready, and pretty soon you came for me. Don't you think God sent you because I prayed?"

"Yes, I do," said Sally, "and I think it is right to pray for whatever we want; only we must remember that God knows what is really good for us, and we do not, and so we must only ask him to give it to us if he sees best, and be willing to do without it if he sees that it would not be good for us to have it. But I've got many a thing I wanted by praying for it."

"What?" asked Joe. "Won't you tell me some of them?"

"Yes," said Sally. "Once my mother was very ill, and the doctor and every one else thought she must die; but I prayed to God to make her well, and he did."

"Another time my little brother and I were walking along the road, and a

mad dog ran after us. Oh, we were so scared! We ran as fast as ever we could, and I was praying in my heart all the time that God would help us to get away from the dog; but he was gaining on us, and at last he was so close to us that he caught the skirt of my dress in his mouth. But just at that very instant we heard a gun, and the dog fell dead. Jonas had shot him. He and another man were chasing the dog, but Alfred and I did not know it."

"How glad you must have been," said Joe.

"I fell down on the ground and didn't know anything for a little while," said Sally; "and when I had come out of my faint, I thought the dog had bitten me; but they told me

I was not hurt, nor Alfred either, and then I was so glad I could do nothing but cry."

"Cry because you were glad?" said Joe. "I always think people are sorry when they cry."

"Not always, Joe; when they are very glad, as I was then, they very often cry."

"Won't you tell me some more?" said Joe.

"Well," said Sally, "sometimes my lessons seem very hard, so hard that I think I can't get them at all, but I pray to God to help me, and then try my very best, and they soon grow easy. And it is just so with everything I have to do. Praying helps me to be patient with the little ones at home, and to obey my father and mother, as

well as to mind the rules in school; and to do my work when I would rather be idle."

"I guess you love Jesus, don't you?" asked Joe.

"Yes," said Sally, "and I like to think that he is looking at me all the time, and is pleased with me when he sees me trying to do right, because it is what he bids me, and because I love him."

The rain kept a good many of Miss West's scholars at home that day, and those who were there had more play-time than usual, because it did not take so long to hear the classes. They could not go out of doors, but they played quiet plays in the house, and their teacher told them some stories, and taught them some little songs.

When the afternoon school was out, Jonas was there with his wagon, ready to take them home. He helped Miss West and Joe to get in, and then Sally asked if he could take two more little folks who had no way to get home but to walk.

"Oh yes," said Jonas. "I've no objection if it won't crowd Miss West too much."

"Oh no, not at all," said Miss West, "there is plenty of room."

"It's Susy and Kate Green," said Sally. "Come, little girls, and let Jonas help you in."

Susy sat on Miss West's lap, and Kate on Sally's, and then they drove off, the little folks all laughing and full of glee. Joe sat on the front seat beside Jonas. He liked that best, he

said, because he could see out so nicely. He told his mother when he got home that he did not care how often it rained on school days, because Sally had said she would always come for him in the wagon, and he had had such a nice time.



## CHAPTER VI.

THERE was never any school on Saturdays, and then Joe used to go out and dig in the garden, and pull up the weeds. He was working away very busily there one morning, when he heard some one calling him.

He thought it sounded like Sally's voice, and he got up from the ground as quickly as he could, and turned to see if it was. Yes, there was Jonas at the gate with Mr. Ware's wagon and horses, and there was Sally's smiling face looking out at him.

"Make haste, little Joe," she said.

"I've come to take you riding; and then you are to go home with me and stay all day, if your mother will let you; and Jonas will bring you home after supper."

Joe was so glad that he would have jumped and skipped if he had not been lame.

"Will you wait for me till I get washed and dressed, Sally?" he asked.

Sally nodded, and he went into the house as fast as he could. His mother was up-stairs, but she came down when he called to her, and said he might go; and she made haste to wash and dress him in his Sunday clothes, and helped him into the wagon, thanking Miss Sally, with tears in her eyes, for all her kindness to her little son.

The sun was shining brightly, and the roads were nice and dry without being dusty, and Sally had all the curtains rolled up, so that they could look out at the green fields and trees, and the blue hills far away.

"Where is Miss West?" asked Joe.

"She was too busy for a ride to-day," said Sally, smiling in a funny way, Joe thought, "but we are going to stop for Susy and Kate Green."

Joe thought that was the very nicest ride that anybody ever had, and Kate and Susy said they thought so too. They went three or four miles past farm-houses, and meadows, and orchards, and flower-gardens; and on into the woods where pretty wild-flowers grew by the roadside; and Jonas got

out two or three times to gather some for them. And they saw a stream of water with ducks and geese swimming in it, and a meadow where some sheep were grazing, and little lambs playing around their mothers.

But at last Jonas said, "I think we must go back now, Miss Sally. I'm afraid I'll be needed to help with the hay."

"Very well," said Sally; "we have had a very nice ride, and I guess it will do for to-day."

Jonas drove on a little farther till he came to a good turning place, and then turned the horses' heads towards home. They seemed to go faster now than before, and very soon the wagon had stopped before Mr. Green's house, and Susy and Kate had to jump out.

Then Jonas turned into another road, and in a few minutes they were at Mr. Ware's gate.

"Here we are," said Sally. "Lift Joe out first, Jonas."

Jonas lifted the little boy and set him on the ground, and then helped Sally out.

Joe had never been at Mr. Ware's before, and he was quite delighted with the looks of the place. The house was large, built of gray stone, and had green blinds, and a porch all around it, with beautiful vines loaded with flowers, twining around the pillars. The ground sloped a little from the house to the gate, and a broad gravel walk led to the front door. On each side of the walk there was nothing to be seen for quite a distance

but green grass cut short and smooth, so that it looked like velvet, and large forest trees that spread out their great arms, and made the lawn cool and shady. Joe found out afterwards that there was a nice garden behind the house, where peas, and beans, and beets, and other vegetables grew in plenty; and a flower-garden on one side, and an orchard beyond that, and then fields of wheat, and rye, and corn, and oats; for Mr. Ware was a rich man, and owned a fine large farm.

Sally took hold of Joe's hand, and led him first into the nice cool sitting-room. There she made him sit down in a little rocking-chair to rest. There was no one else in the room.

"I'll be back in a minute, Joe," she said, as she ran out of the room.

Joe amused himself with looking about him while she was gone: at the pretty carpet on the floor, the pictures on the walls, and the nice chairs and tables, so different from what he saw at home.

But Sally was not gone long. She soon came back carrying a waiter with two large saucers of strawberries and cream, and a plate of cake on it. She set the waiter on a little table, and put a chair beside it for Joe, and one for herself.

"Come, Joe," she said, "I think you must be hungry after your ride, for I am; and here's a little lunch for us."

Joe thought he had never tasted anything so good.

When they were done, Sally asked,

"Now do you feel strong enough to walk up-stairs to see Miss West? because she wants you to pay her a visit in her own room."

"Yes," said Joe, "I'd like to."

"Come then," Sally said; and she led the way out into the hall, and up to Miss West's door.

They knocked, and Miss West said, "Come in," and Sally opened the door. Miss West was sitting by the window, sewing busily.

"I'm almost done, Sally, just putting the last stitch into the jacket," she said. "Good morning, little Joe. Come, give me a kiss; and there's a stool for you to sit on."

Joe saw that it was a suit of clothes for a little boy she was making, for one of Sally's little brothers, he sup-



posed, and he wondered that she should be sewing for them when she had not time to take a ride, and they had a mother to take care of them.

But in another minute Miss West broke off her thread, saying, "There! they're done, and we must try them on;" and Sally caught hold of Joe and began to unfasten his jacket.

He was so surprised that he did not say a word until they had him dressed in the pretty new suit, and bade him look at himself in the glass.

He looked, and his cheeks grew very red. He could hardly believe that the nice-looking little boy he saw there was not some stranger.

"They're yours, Joe," said Sally, clapping her hands. "Don't you like them? I think they fit nicely."

"They're too nice for me," said Joe, the tears coming into his eyes. "I don't think I ought to have them."

"You dear little fellow," said Sally, hugging and kissing him.

"Yes, you ought, for Miss West and I have made them on purpose for you, and will be very much hurt if you don't take them."

"Joe won't refuse, I'm sure," said Miss West, stroking his hair. "The clothes won't fit anybody else, Joe; and Sally and I would be very sorry to have all our labour lost."

Miss West and Sally had noticed that the clothes Joe wore to school were very much patched and worn, and that some of the boys were so unkind as to make sport of him on that account, and that it hurt poor little

Joe's feelings; so they had contrived this way of giving him a new suit for Sunday, that he might take his Sunday suit for every day.

Joe's eyes were full of tears as he said, "I don't know how to thank you; but I will ask God to bless you both."

"That is the very best thing you could do for us, Joe," said Miss West, giving him another kiss.

"Now come with me, Joe," said Sally. "I'm going to take you to see my little sisters, Ettie and Grace."

The little girls were in their play-room, and they seemed very much pleased to see Joe, and to show him their baby-houses, dolls, and picture-books. After he had seen everything there, Sally took him down into the

parlour, and Grace and Ettie went along. There were a good many pretty things in the parlour, and Joe liked to look at them, but he was very careful not to touch any of them without leave, lest he might do some mischief. He saw something on one side of the room, which he thought was a large and very high table, and he wondered what it was used for, for he never had seen one like it. He was going to ask Sally about it, when she went to it and lifted up the top, and called to him to come.

"What is it?" Joe asked, full of wonder.

"It is a piano," said Sally, running her fingers over the keys.

"Did you never see one before?"

"No, never," said Joe.

"Then I'll play you a tune," she said; and so she did, and Joe was delighted. He thought it the prettiest music he had ever heard. Alfred and Robert, Sally's brothers, came in while she was playing. They were very nice boys, younger than Sally, but older than the little girls, and they treated Joe very kindly.

But soon the dinner-bell rang, and they all went out to the dining-room.

"This is little Joe Carter, father," said Sally to a gentleman who sat at the head of the table.

"Ah!" he said, "I am glad to see him," and he patted Joe's head.

Then he asked a blessing, and Joe wished his father would do that too.

Mrs. Ware, also, spoke kindly to

Joe, and said she hoped he would often come to see them.

That was the very best dinner that Joe had ever seen in his life, and everybody kept putting good things on his plate till he had a great deal more than he could eat, and wished very much that he could carry some of it home to his mother.

After dinner Alfred said he must show Joe his pony. He put some bits of bread in a small basket, and then he and Robert, and Joe, set off for the pasture where the pony was.

The pony came galloping up as soon as he saw them, and ate the bits of bread out of Alfred's hand.

"Oh how handsome he is!" said Joe.

"Yes," said Alfred, "and so gentle

too; he will let me do anything with him, and follows me round like a dog."

Ettie and Grace had followed the boys, and when the pony had eaten up all his bits of bread, Ettie said, "Now Joe must see the little calves; they are almost as pretty as the pony."

"Yes, and the little pigs too," said Grace; "I think they are the funniest fellows: so little and so white, and they run about so fast."

So Joe was shown them all; and though he thought the calves very pretty indeed, he agreed with Grace that the little pigs were the funniest.

"I don't like big pigs," he said; "they're so dirty; but these little fellows are so clean and nice. I wish I could catch one."

"Try it, Joe," said Alfred, laugh-

ing, "and I'll engage if you catch it father will give it to you."

Joe tried, but they ran too fast for him.

"If they'd only stand still a minute," he said, quite out of breath with his efforts. "I wouldn't hurt them, but I would just like to stroke them a little."

Just then Mr. Ware came up. "You seem to admire those little pigs, Joe," he said; "would you like to have one of them for a pet?"

"Yes, indeed, sir," said Joe, "but I guess they wouldn't want to go with me."

Mr. Ware smiled; and Grace, taking hold of Joe's hand, said, "Come, now we must show you the old hens with their little chicks."



There were several hens walking about the poultry yard, each followed by her brood of little ones; there were young turkeys too, and ducks and geese.

"The fowls belong to Sally, because she takes care of them," said Ettie; "and there she comes now with a pan. I guess she's going to feed them."

Sally threw some corn and crumbs of bread on the ground, and called, "Chick, chick, chick," and all the fowls came running together to pick them up.

Joe stood watching them, thinking it a very pretty sight.

"Don't you like to feed them, Sally?" he asked.

"Yes, very much; they are such

pretty creatures, and I like to make them love me, and I think they do too. I'm sure they know my voice. Wouldn't you like to have a hen and little chickens to take care of, Joe?"

"Yes, dearly," he said, his eyes sparkling. "I wish I lived near enough to help you to feed them every day."

"Well, as you don't," said Sally, "I think you must take one of these old hens home with you. They belong to me, and I'll give you that speckled one with her nine little chicks."

"For my own? do you really mean it?" asked Joe, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Yes, I really mean it," said Sally.

"Perhaps Joe would prefer one of the little pigs," said Mr. Ware.

"You may have your choice, Joe; which will you take?"

Joe looked as if he did not know how to choose.

"Well," said Mr. Ware, "I'll tell you how we will fix it. You shall take the hen and chickens now, and the little pig after a while, when it is old enough to leave its mother."

Joe went home very rich that evening. He wore his new suit, and had the old ones rolled up in a bundle, and laid by his side. In the back part of the wagon was a covered basket, in which the hen and chickens were riding, and alongside of it stood a bucket of strawberries, and a loaf of cake folded in a snow-white towel, both of which Mrs. Ware was sending to his mother.

## CHAPTER VII.

JOE was very fond of his hen and chickens, and took great pleasure in feeding them. And before long he had another pretty pet, which he loved even better. Seth Adams made him a present of a beautiful white rabbit. He brought it to Joe one Saturday morning, and stayed long enough to build it a little house to live in, where it would be quite safe from dogs and rats.

Joe kept his rabbit a number of weeks, and loved it almost as well as he did his mother, it was so pretty

and tame, and grew so fond of him. It would run up on to his knee, and cat out of his hand, and let him stroke and pat it as much as he pleased. Joe was very careful of it; but one day it got out and ran across the road, and before he could catch it again, he heard a gun fired, and his poor little pet fell down dead in the middle of the road.

Poor Joe went and picked it up, and hugged it in his arms, and cried as if his heart would break. Just then he saw Dan Jones coming out of the woods with a gun in his hand, and he knew who had done the cruel deed.

"O Dan, how could you shoot my rabbit?" he sobbed.

"Why did you let it out then?" said Dan. "I thought it was a wild

one running across the road. It's all your own fault."

And he walked away without so much as saying he was sorry.

Joe stood a minute with his rabbit in his arms; then he sat down on the grass, and laying it out on his knee, stroked and patted it very lovingly; then he took it up in his arms again, and hugged and kissed it, calling it pet names, and crying bitterly all the time.

It was Saturday, and his mother was at home, as usual on that day, doing her own week's work. She had heard the gun, but did not know who had fired it, nor what mischief had been done. She supposed some one was hunting in the woods near by, and thought no more about the matter.

But after a while she missed her little boy, and went to look for him.

She found him sitting on the bank by the roadside, still crying over his dead rabbit.

"Why, Joe, my son, what is the matter?" she asked.

"O mother, it's dead!" he sobbed. "My poor little Pearl! Dan Jones shot it, and it will never run about any more!"

"What a shame!" said Mrs. Carter; "but did he do it on purpose?"

"I think he did, mother," said Joe. "I'm 'most sure he knew it was mine; but he says he thought it was a wild one."

"Well, maybe he tells the truth; at least we will try to think so," Mrs. Carter said, sitting down on the grass

beside her little boy. "But don't cry so, Josey, dear; the little thing will never feel pain any more, and may be some day you'll get another one."

And she put her arm round him, and hugged him up to her bosom, and wiped away his tears, and kissed him.

Joe stopped crying, but he looked very sad indeed, and his eyes filled again directly whenever they fell upon his poor little rabbit lying there so stiff and cold.

"O mother," he said, "it is very hard to forgive Dan. I don't think I can do it."

"You must try, Joe," she answered gently. "Think of the dear Saviour, and how he forgave his murderers even while they were nailing him to



the cross. Was that not much worse than Dan has done to you?"

"Oh yes, mother, a great, great deal," said Joe, sighing; "but I'm not good like Jesus. I wish I was; and I'll ask him to make me like him, and to help me to forgive Dan."

"That's right, my boy," said his mother, kissing him again. "You know that he says, 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will my Father forgive you.' And again, 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven;' and I am sure he will help you to obey him, if he sees that you really want to do it."

"I'll go back to the house now, mother, where I can kneel down and ask him," said Joe, getting up.

"Shall I carry Pearl for you, Joe?"

"No, thank you, ma'am, I'd rather carry her myself," he said. "I can't keep her long, mother, can I?"

"No, dear, not long; but we will bury her out of the way of the dogs and rats. We'll dig a nice little grave for her under the big willow tree in the back yard, and you can plant flowers round it if you choose. Come, shall we do it now?"

"Not yet, mother," Joe answered, hugging his rabbit closer to him. "I want to keep her till to-morrow. Please let me. I can't bear to give her up yet."

His mother stroked his hair, saying, "Well, dear, you shall do as you please about it; I'm only sorry you have to give it up at all."

Then she went back to her work,

while Joe carried his rabbit into a corner, and kneeling down with it in his arms, asked God to help him to forgive Dan.

He had no heart to play any more, but sat on the door-step all the rest of the morning, nursing his poor little pet.

Just as Mrs. Carter was putting the dinner on the table, her husband came in at the gate. Joe was sitting with his head against the door-post, and had fallen fast asleep with the dead rabbit still lying on his lap.

"Hallo!" cried his father, snatching it up, "what is this? your rabbit dead? shot, eh? Well, it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good; he's a fine fat fellow, and will make a famous supper for me."

Poor Joe, now wide awake, burst into an agony of tears, begging him to give it back. "I couldn't bear to see it cooked, father," he said. "I couldn't bear to have you, or anybody, eat my poor little pet."

"Nonsense, child, don't be a fool," said his father; "it's dead now, and it can't hurt it to be cooked and eaten; and if you think I'm going to throw away so much good meat in these hard times, you're much mistaken. Come, dry up your tears, and you shall have a bit of it yourself, and I'll warrant you'll find it good eating."

"I couldn't touch it," sobbed Joe: "I'd rather starve. O father, let me have it; it's mine, and I want to bury it under the willow tree."

"Bury it indeed," said his father,

"you'll do no such thing. I tell you I'm going to eat it. But I'll take the skin off nicely, and then your mother can stuff it, and in that way you'll get your pet back again, and can keep it all your life, if you choose; and that will be better and more sensible than burying it."

He took out his knife as he spoke, and Joe hurried away and hid himself in the garden. He could not bear to see his rabbit cut; it seemed as if it must hurt it, although he knew it was quite dead.

His mother followed him in a few minutes, and coaxed him to come in. "I'm right sorry for you, Joe," she said, "for I know it is hard to see your pretty pet eaten; and yet I think your father's plan is best after all;

for, as you can't have your rabbit alive, it will be very nice for you to have it stuffed. But come in, dear, for your father is getting vexed, and says if you don't stop crying and eat your dianer, he'll sell the skin."

"Oh no, he mustn't!" cried Joe, hastily wiping away his tears, and starting for the house. "I'll eat my dinner, and try not to cry any more if he'll only let me keep it."

He found his father just sitting down to the table.

"Well, Joe, are you done crying?" he asked. "I've taken the skin off nicely; but if you don't behave yourself, I'll take it right away this afternoon, and sell it for what it will fetch."

"Please don't, father, and I'll try

not to cry any more about it," said Joe, wiping his eyes.

He sat down at the table and tried to eat, to please his father, but it was hard work, for he was too full of grief for the loss of his pet to feel at all hungry.

The rabbit was cooked for supper, and looked very tempting; but neither Joe nor his mother would touch a morsel of it, and Mr. Carter ate it all, saying they were very silly to refuse anything so good; but he was just as well pleased, because there was the more for him.

Joe had only a bit of bread and a cup of milk for his supper, but he would have done without anything rather than eat his pretty pet. He could not help thinking that Dan knew it was his

when he shot it, and it was several days before he could quite forgive him; but he tried very hard to do so, and prayed earnestly to God for help; and God heard his prayer, and enabled him, when the time came, to return good for evil.

I will tell you how that was. One day when there was no school, Joe went into the woods a little way to look for flowers. He was stooping down to pick some, when he heard a noise like somebody groaning. He listened and heard it again. It seemed to come from under a tree not far off.

"Who's there? and what is the matter?" he called.

"Oh come and help me," said Dan Jones's voice. "I fell out of this tree, and my leg is broken."





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Joe went to him. "O Dan, I'm very sorry for you," he said, "and I'll go as quickly as I can and get somebody to come."

Then he went home as fast as he could and told his mother.

"Oh, what a pity!" she said. "I'm very sorry for the poor fellow. I wish you could run over to Mr. Ware's, Joe, and tell the men; but you couldn't go fast enough; so I must leave my work and go myself."

She picked up her bonnet, and ran out to the gate.

"Oh there are the men now with the cart," she said; "how glad I am, for they'll take him right home."

Then she called to them, and told them about Dan.

"Yes, that comes of robbing birds'

“nests,” said one of the men. “I told Dan he’d fall and break his leg or his neck some day if he didn’t quit it. He ought to be left to lie there; it would only serve him right.”

“But you’ll take him home, and get the doctor to him, won’t you?” asked Mrs. Carter.

“Oh yes, to be sure,” said the man. “I reckon it would go hard with me too, if I got nothing but my deserts.”

Joe led the way into the woods, and showed the men where Dan was lying. They raised him up, and carried him to the cart as gently and as carefully as they could; but he groaned so dreadfully while they were doing it that Joe’s kind heart was filled with pity, and he could not help crying very much.

"Do you think Dan will die, mother?" he asked, as they stood in the road together watching the cart as it moved slowly away.

"No, I hope not, Joe," she answered cheerfully. "If his leg is broken, it will hurt him a good deal to have it set, and he will have to lie in his bed a long time, and keep very still; but I guess that will be about the worst, unless he is injured in some other way."

The men were out of sight now, and Mrs. Carter and Joe turned to go into the house.

"Mother," said Joe, "I'm very glad now that I forgave Dan for killing my rabbit. I'm so sorry for him, poor fellow! Mother, I wish I could do something to make him feel better."

"Well, Joe, I know of only one thing that you can do at present, and that is to pray for him. You can do that now, and always, and if you really want to do something more, perhaps God will open the way for you after a while."

"Yes, I'll pray for him," replied Joe, heartily. "I'll ask God to make him well, and give him a new heart. I'll ask him not to let him be a cripple like me," he added, in a lower tone, while the tears rushed into his eyes again.

His mother saw them, and sighed.

They had come into the house while they were talking, and sitting down on a chair, she put her arm round her little boy and hugged him up close to her.

“You must not mind your lameness, Joe,” she said tenderly, “because you know it was God’s will it should be so, or he would never have let it happen. And you don’t know what a blessing it may have been to you; for, if you had been able to run about like other boys, perhaps you might have got into bad company, and learned to curse and swear, to lie, and steal, and drink; and your heart might have grown so hard that you would never have cared to hear about the dear Saviour, but would have gone on in wickedness until you were ruined for ever. That is the way I try to think about it, Joe, when I look at you, and feel as I sometimes do—that it is hard to see you a cripple.”

The tears were rolling fast down

her cheeks before she was done speaking; but Joe wiped them away, and kissing her, said, "Don't cry, mother; I hardly mind it at all, and I'm very happy, indeed I am; everybody is so kind to me; and besides, I know that Jesus loves me, and that I shall not be lame any more when I get to heaven."

Joe did not forget his promise to pray for Dan; and if he had been able to walk that far, he would have gone to see him.

It was on Saturday morning that Dan was hurt, and Joe did not hear anything more about him until Sally came to take him to school on Monday.

She told him that she had seen Dan that morning, and that he was looking

pale and sad, lying all alone upon his bed; for the others were all too busy to sit with him.

"Can't he get up at all?" asked Joe.

"No," said Sally, "the doctor says his leg is broken very badly, and that he will have to lie in bed and keep it perfectly still for a good many weeks."

"Poor fellow!" said Joe, "I wish I could do something for him; but he's so far off, and I'm so lame I can't get to him."

"But you can pray for him, Joe," said Sally, "and I think he needs that more than anything else; for uncle Peter and the rest are sure to take good care of him."

Several days had passed away, and Joe had almost given up hoping to be



able to do anything for Dan; but as he and Sally were walking home from school on Friday afternoon, she asked, "Joe, do you still feel like doing something for Dan?"

"Oh yes, indeed, if I could," Joe answered eagerly; "but then what can I do? for you know I can't walk there."

"I think we can manage it," said Sally. "Dan is very lonesome indeed, and seems glad to have almost anybody come in and speak to him; and if you think you would like to go there, and sit and talk a while with him to-morrow morning, I'll get Jonas to take us in the wagon."

Although Joe had not told any tales on Dan, Sally had found out all about the rabbit, and she was anxious

to give the little boy an opportunity to return good for evil, for she felt sure he would be glad to do it.

"Yes, Sally," said Joe, "you are very kind indeed, and I should like to go very much, if you think Dan would like to see me."

"Perhaps he may not just at first," replied Sally; "but I am quite sure he will, when he finds out how kindly you feel towards him."

"Then I'll ask my mother if I may go, and I'm sure she'll let me," said Joe, bidding Sally good-bye, for they had just reached his father's gate.

Mrs. Carter was at home, sitting near the door mending an old coat of her husband's, and Joe sat down on the step beside her, and told her what Sally had been saying.

"May I go, mother?" he asked.

"Yes, Joe, if you want to. I've no objection at all."

"Thank you, mother," he said; "but I wish I had something to take to Dan. Can you think of anything I could give him?"

"Yes, Joe, if you choose to deny yourself to do it," his mother replied.

"You know I have been working for Mrs. Ware all this week, and she is always so kind and generous to me. When I came home from there, about an hour ago, she gave me some tea and sugar, and a quart of sweet rich milk; so I took some of those nice fresh eggs your hen has been laying, and made some cup custards, because I know that you and your father are both so fond of them. There is just

one for each of us, and you may do what you please with yours."

Joe did not speak for a minute or two, but kept his eyes on the ground, looking very sober. He liked custard better than almost anything else, and, as he did not get it very often, it cost him an effort to give it up.

"Mother," he said, in a low tone, "don't you think Mrs. Hunt gives Dan plenty of good things to eat?"

"Yes, Joe, no doubt she does; but when we are ill any little thing brought from a neighbour's is apt to taste better to us than what we can get at home. But, my dear boy, I don't want you to give Dan the custard unless you *prefer* to do it."

"Yes, mother, I do prefer it; I will give it to him," said Joe, "because

the Bible says, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him,'—Miss West read that to us this morning—and I want Dan to know that I have quite forgiven him, and that I love Jesus, and try to do whatever he bids me."

His mother smiled and said, "I am glad to see you are not a selfish boy, Joe, and that you try to please the Lord. You shall have a bowl of bread and milk for your supper, and if you are hungry, I know it will taste very good."

She put away her work and set the table, and, after waiting a while for her husband, finding he did not come, she and Joe sat down alone.

The little boy ate his bread and milk very contentedly, not even so much as casting a longing look at the

custards. But presently his mother said, "Joe, I don't believe your father is coming home to supper, and, as he doesn't know anything about the custards, I think you may as well eat yours, and take his to Dan."

"Thank you, mother," said Joe, "but I'd rather leave it for father, because I know he likes it so much."

"Then take half of mine," she said, beginning to dip it out into a saucer.

"Please, mother, don't," said Joe. "I'd rather not eat it, because I want Dan's custard to be all a present from me; and you know it won't be if I eat some of yours."

Mr. Ware's wagon, with Jonas and Sally in it, might have been seen driving down the road towards Mrs. Carter's at an early hour the next

morning; but, early as it was, Joe was at the gate watching for them. He was neatly dressed in the pretty suit Sally had given him, and stood there leaning on his crutch with one arm, while in the other hand he had a small basket, which he seemed to hold very carefully.

Sally could not see anything in it but a great bunch of flowers, and as Jonas lifted the little fellow to a seat by her side, she said with a smile, "You seem to have quite a basketful of flowers, Joe."

"Flowers on the top, Sally," he said, smiling, "but there's something better under them: a nice custard that mother made. I'm taking it to Dan; do you think he'll like it?"

"I've no doubt of it. You are a

dear little fellow," replied Sally, patting his cheek.

She knew that Joe must have denied himself to be able to take such a present to Dan.

When they reached Mr. Hunt's, Sally took Joe in, and introduced him to her aunt, saying, "This is little Joe Carter, aunt Ellen. He has come to see Dan."

Mrs. Hunt was so very busy that she had only time to shake hands with Joe, and then pointing to an open door, she said, "Dan is in there, my dear, and if you would like to have a little chat with him, just go in. He'll be glad to see you."

It was a very neat, pleasant little room, with a window looking out upon a pretty garden, and Dan lay upon a



bed that was as clean as clean could be. He was lying with his eyes closed, and though he opened them at the sound of Joe's crutch, he shut them again the minute he saw who it was, and turning away his head, pretended to be asleep.

Joe put his basket on a little stand by the bedside, and sat down, waiting for Dan to open his eyes. He knew he was not asleep, but did not like to speak for fear of vexing him.

Dan soon grew tired of keeping his eyes shut, and looking round at Joe, asked gruffly, "What did you come here for?"

"To see you, Dan," said Joe, mildly, "because I heard you were lonesome, and I feel so sorry for you."

"You oughtn't to care for me," said

Dan, in a softened tone, "for I've always been real mean to you. Have you forgotten that I killed your rabbit? and I did it on purpose, too, for I knew well enough it was yours."

"No, Dan, I haven't forgotten it," replied Joe, the tears filling his eyes; "but even that was not half so bad as what those wicked men did to Jesus; and yet he forgave them; and so I've forgiven you, Dan, and I want to be as kind to you as ever I can, if you'll only let me."

"It was very good of you to bring the men to help me when I was under the tree there," said Dan, turning an earnest look on Joe. "I've been thinking about it all these long days that I've had to lie here, and I couldn't help wondering what made

you do it. If I'd been in your place, and you in mine, I guess I'd have let you lie there till somebody else came to help you."

"And so would I, Dan, I'm afraid, before I heard about Jesus," said Joe; "but now, since I know how good and kind he was, I want to be like him, and to do just what he bids me; and you know he says we must love our enemies, and do good to those that hate us."

"I don't think I could do it," said Dan; "I'd feel too spiteful."

"You could, if Jesus helped you," replied little Joe, earnestly, "because I can when he helps me. You must ask him to give you a new heart, Dan, and then you'll feel like loving everybody."

Joe now uncovered his custard, and set it out on the stand, saying, "I brought you this, Dan, because mother thought it would taste good to you. And these flowers are out of my garden. Will you have them?"

"Thank you," said Dan, looking both surprised and ashamed, "you and your mother are both very kind, Joe; and I wish I hadn't killed your rabbit, nor called you names; but I'll never treat you so again. I didn't know how bad it was to be a cripple, Joe, till now. I'm afraid that I may be one myself."

"I hope not," said Joe; "doesn't the doctor think he can cure you?"

"He says so; but folks make mistakes sometimes, you know," replied Dan, sighing deeply.

"But I think the doctor knows," said Joe, cheerfully, "and I hope God will help him to make you well. But good-bye now, Dan, for I hear Sally calling me, and I must go."

"Good-bye, Joe," said Dan. "I hope you will come again soon."

"Yes, if I can," replied Joe, as he took up his basket and went out.

When Joe was gone, Dan was quite alone again, and he could not help thinking, as he lay there, of all Joe's kindness to him, and how little he deserved it; and he thought, too, of all that Joe had said to him about praying for a new heart, and trying to be like Jesus. Dan had plenty of time to think now, and he found out that he had been a very wicked boy. He began by feeling sorry for his un-

kindness to Joe, but at length he was still more grieved on account of his sins against God. But he prayed to be forgiven for Jesus' sake, and God heard his prayer; and when at last he was able to walk about again, everybody noticed what a changed boy he was. He was kind and gentle to every one now, and especially to little Joe.

He wanted to get another white rabbit for him, as like the one he had killed as possible; but he had no money to buy it with, and they were too scarce in that part of the country for him to hope to be able to catch one; yet he was not discouraged. He learned that there was a man living in a town four or five miles off, who kept rabbits for sale, and some-

times had white ones. Dan was hardly able to walk that far, as his leg was still weak; but the first time he had a half-holiday given him, he started off, hoping to find some cart or wagon going in that direction, in which he might get leave to ride at least part of the way. He had on his arm a large basket of chestnuts, which he meant to try to sell, intending to use the money he got for them in buying the rabbit; though he was very much afraid it would not be enough.

The first half mile seemed very long, and his basket grew heavier every moment. At last he set it down, and seated himself on a stump by the road-side to rest.

All the wagons he had seen thus

far had been going in the wrong direction, and he began to fear he would have to give up his trip; for he felt that it would be useless for him to attempt to walk half the distance.

But just then, to his great joy, a wagon came in sight, and as it drew nearer he saw that it was Mr. Ware's, and Jonas was the driver.

"Hollo, Dan!" he called, "is that you? Where are you bound with that basket of nuts?"

"To Oldtown," said Dan. "Can you give me a lift?"

"Why, yes," said Jonas, "I'm going there, too, and without a load. So jump in. What are you going to do with these nuts?" he asked, as Dan set in the basket.



"Sell them, if I can," said Dan.

"Well then," said Jonas, "I know a lady that wants some, and I'll take you right to her door."

"Thank you," said Dan. "Are you going back this afternoon?"

"Yes," replied Jonas. "I shall be going back in about an hour, and if you are ready to go home by that time, I'll take you along. I guess you're hardly fit for long walks yet?"

"No, and I'm very much obliged to you," said Dan.

The lady Jonas had spoken of bought Dan's nuts very readily, giving him twenty-five cents for them.

"I wonder if this will buy the rabbit," he said to himself, as he walked away with the empty basket on his

arm. "I'd like to carry it to Joe to-night."

He walked on for another square or two, and then stopped before a little shop where he saw a number of birds in cages hanging about the door and window.

"I think this must be the place," he muttered, and opening the door he went in. "Do you keep rabbits for sale?" he asked.

"Yes," said the man, "I have a good many white and black, and grey ones, and one white one."

He led Dan into the yard, and showed them to him.

The white one, Dan thought was just what he wanted, but when he asked the price he found it was a dollar.

He had no way of earning money but by gathering and selling nuts, but he worked so hard at all his spare time, that before the two weeks were up he had a dollar. Then he bought the rabbit, and when he carried it to Joe it would have been difficult to tell which boy was the happier.

Dear little reader, if any one treats you unkindly, I hope you will try, like little Joe, to return good for evil; it is the best and only way to change enemies into friends; and besides, we must not forget words of Jesus, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

THE END.

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