

# FOR HIS COUNTRY



MARSHALL  
SAUNDERS  
AUTHOR OF  
"BEAUTIFUL JOE"

COSY CORNER SERIES

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FOR HIS COUNTRY  
AND  
GRANDMOTHER AND THE CROW

Works of  
Marshall Saunders

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Rose à Charlitte

Her Sailor

Deficient Saints

For His Country and Grandmother  
and the Crow

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L. C. PAGE AND COMPANY  
(Incorporated)  
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(Courtesy of The Youth's Companion)

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“ ‘MADEMOISELLE, YOU ARE AN AMERICAN?’ ”

FOR HIS COUNTRY  
AND  
GRANDMOTHER AND THE CROW

BY  
MARSHALL SAUNDERS  
AUTHOR OF  
"BEAUTIFUL JOE, ETC."

Illustrated by  
LOUIS MEYNELL  
*and others*

[Illustration]

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1900

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FOR HIS COUNTRY



## FOR HIS COUNTRY.

—  
“My country! ’tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing!”

Here the singer’s voice broke down, and I peered curiously around my corner of the wall. He was pacing to and fro on the river-bank—a weary-faced lad with pale cheeks and drooping shoulders. Beyond him a fat French footman lay asleep on the grass, one hand loosely clutching a novel. An elderly goat, grazing nearer and nearer the man, kept a wary eye on the book, and finally seizing it, devoured it leaf by leaf. At this the weary-faced boy did not smile, and then I knew there was something the matter with him.

Partly because I wished to console him, partly because I was lonely, I continued the song in notes rather more cheerful than his own:

“Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims’ pride,  
From every mountainside  
Let freedom ring!”

The boy stood stock-still, only moving his head slightly after the manner of a bird listening to a pleasant strain. When I finished he came toward me, cap in hand.

“Mademoiselle, you are an American?”

“No, my boy. I am a Canadian.”

“That’s next best,” he said, politely.

“It’s better,” I rejoined, smiling.

“Nothing is better than being an American.”

“You are patriotic,” I observed.

“If your ancestors fought with Indians, and English and rebels, and if you expect to die for your country, you ought to be patriotic.”

I surveyed him curiously. He was too grave and joyless for a boy in a normal condition. “In youth one does not usually speak of dying,” I said.

His face flushed. “Ah, mademoiselle, I am homesick! I have not seen America for a year.”

“Indeed? Such a patriotic boy should stay at home.”

“My mother wished me to finish my education abroad.”

“A woman should educate her children in the country in which they are to live,” I said, irritably.

“I guess you’re most old enough to be my mother, aren’t you?” he replied, gently, and with such tenderness of rebuke that I smiled irrepressibly. He had delicately intimated that if I were his mother I would not care to have him discuss me with a stranger.

“I’ve got to learn foreign languages,” he said, doggedly. “We’ve been here one year; we must stay one more and then go to Italy, then to Germany. I’m thankful the English haven’t a different language. If they had, I’d have to go learn it.”

“And after you leave Germany?”

“After Germany—home!”

He was not a particularly handsome lad, but he had beautiful eyes, and at the word home they took on such a strange brilliance that I gathered up my parasol and books in wondering silence.

“I suppose,” he said, soberly, “that you will not be at the Protestant church on Sunday?”

“Probably I shall.”

“I don’t see many people from America,” he went on, turning his head so far away that I could hardly hear what he said. “There isn’t anybody here who cares to talk about it. My mother, of course, is too busy,” he added, with dignity.

“*Au revoir*, then,” I said, with a smile.

He stood looking quietly after me, and when I got far up the river-bank I turned around. He was adjusting a slight difference between the footman and the goat; then, followed by the man, he disappeared up one of the quaint old streets leading into the heart of the city.

Close beside me a little old peasant woman, gathering sticks, uncurled her stooping figure. “*Bon jour, mademoiselle!* You have been talking to the American boy.”

“*Oui, madame.*”

“It is very sad,” she continued, in the excellent French spoken by the peasants of the Loiret department. “He comes by the river and declaims. He speaks of Linkum and Wash’ton. I watch from my cottage, for my daughter Mathilde is housemaid at Madame Greyshield’s, and I hear her talk. *Monsieur le colonel* Greyshield is a grand officer in America;

but his wife, she is proud. She brings her children to France to study. She leaves the poor man lonely. This boy is most heartbroke. Mathilde says he talks of his dear country in his sleep, then he rises early to study the foreign languages, so he can more quickly go to his home. But he is sick, his hand trembles. Mathilde thinks he is going to die. I say, 'Mathilde, talk to madame,' but she is afraid, for madame has a will as strong as this stout stick. It will never break. It must be burnt. Perhaps mademoiselle will talk."

"I will, if I get a chance."

The old woman turned her brown, leathery face toward the blue waters of the Loire. "Mademoiselle, do many French go to America for the accent?"

"No; they have too much sense!"

"It is droll," she went on, "how the families come here. The gentlemen wander to and fro, the ladies occupy themselves with their *toilettes*. Then they travel to other countries. They are like the leaves on that current. They wander they know not whither. I am only a peasant, yet I can think, and is not one language good enough to ask for bread and soup?" And muttering and shaking her head, she went on gathering her sticks.



On Sunday I looked for my American boy. There he was, sitting beside a handsomely dressed woman, who looked as if she might indeed have a will like a stout stick. After the service he endeavoured to draw her toward me, but she did not respond until she saw me speaking to a lady of Huguenot descent, to whom I had had a letter of introduction. Then she approached, and we all went down the street together.

When we reached the boulevard leading to my hotel, the boy asked his mother's permission to escort me home. She hesitated, and then said, "Yes; but do not bore her to death with your patriotic rigmaroles."

The boy, whose name was Gerald, gave her a peculiar glance, and did not open his lips until we had walked a block. Then he asked, deliberately, "Have you ever thought much of that idea of Abraham Lincoln's that no man is good enough to govern another man without the other man's consent?"

"Yes, a good deal; yet one must obey."

"Yes, one must obey," he said, quietly. "But sometimes it is puzzling, especially when a fellow is growing up."

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"Not older?"

"No; I am from California," and he drew himself up. "The boys and girls there are large, you know. I have lost twenty pounds since we came here. You have never been in California, I suppose?"



“ I AM FROM CALIFORNIA. ”

"Yes. I like California."

"You do?" He flashed one swift glance at me, then dropped his eyes.

I politely averted my own, but not before I saw two tear-drops splash on the hot, gray pavement.

"If I could see," he said, presently, "if I could see one of those brown hills, just one,—this flat country makes me tired."

"Can you imagine," I said, "that I have been as homesick in California as you are in France?"

"No! no!" he replied, breathlessly. "No, I could not imagine that."

"That I sailed into San Francisco Bay with a heartache because those brown hills you speak of so lovingly were not my native hills?"

"But you are grown up; you do not need to leave your country."

"Our duty sometimes takes us to foreign lands. You will be a better soldier some day for having had a time of trial and endurance."

"I know it," he said, under his breath. "But sometimes I think I must break loose, especially at night, when the bugles blow."

I knew what he meant. At eight o'clock every evening, from the various barracks in Orléans, the sweet, piercing notes of bugle answering bugle could be heard; and the strain was the one played by the American bugles in the school that I guessed he had attended.

"You think of the boys drawn up in line on the drill-ground, and the echo behind the hill?"

"Do you know Almada?" he exclaimed, with a face as white as a sheet.

"I do."

This was too much for him. We had paused at the hotel entrance, and he intended, I knew, to take a polite leave of me; but I had done a dangerous thing in conjuring up the old familiar scenes, and mumbling something in his throat, and giving one tug to his hat, he ran as nimbly down the street as if he were a lean coyote from the hills of his native State.

Four weeks later I asked myself why I was lingering in Orléans. I had seen all the souvenirs of Joan of Arc; I had talked with the peasants and shopkeepers till I was tired; I agreed thoroughly with my guide-book that Orléans is a city sadly lacking in animation; and yet I stayed on; I stayed on because I was engaged in a bit of character study, I told my note-book; stayed on because my presence afforded some consolation to a struggling, unhappy boy, I told my conscience.

The boy was dying of homesickness. He did not enter into the life of the sleepy French city. "This is a good enough country," he said, wearily, "but it isn't mine. I want America, and it seems to me all these priests and soldiers and citizens are acting. I can't think they were born speaking French."

However, it was only at rare intervals that he complained. Away in America he had a father who had set the high standard of duty before him,—a father who would not encourage him to flag.

On the Fourth of July, Mrs. Greyshield was giving a reception—not on account of the day, for she had not a spark of patriotism, but because she was shortly to leave Orléans for the seashore. Gerald was also giving a reception, his a smaller one, prepared for in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, for he received no encouragement from his mother in his patriotic schemes.

His only pleasure in life was in endeavouring to make his little brother and sister as patriotic as himself, and with ill-concealed dismay he confided to me the fear that they were forgetting their native land.

About the middle of the afternoon I joined him and the children in a small, gaily decorated arbour at the foot of the garden. Shortly after I arrived, Mrs. Greyshield, accompanied by a number of her guests, swept down upon us. The French officers and their wives and a number of English residents surrounded the arbour.

"Ah, the delicious cakes! But they are not *babas* and *savarins* and *tartelettes*! They must be American! What do you call this kind? Doughnuts! How peculiar! How effective the arrangement of the bunting, and how many flags—but all of his own country!"

Mrs. Greyshield listened carelessly to the comments. "Oh, yes, he is hopelessly provincial. I shall never teach him to be cosmopolitan. What do you think of such narrowness, princess?" and in veiled admiration she addressed her most distinguished guest, who was also her friend and countrywoman.

As Mrs. Greyshield spoke, the American princess, who was the possessor of an exceedingly bitter smile, touched one of the flags with caressing fingers. "It is a long time since I have seen one. Your boy has several. I should like to have one for a cushion, if he will permit."

The boy's nostrils dilated. "For a cushion!" he exclaimed.

His tone was almost disrespectful, and his mother gave him a warning glance, and said, hastily, "Certainly, princess. Gerald, choose your prettiest flag."

"Not for a cushion!" he said, firmly. "The flag should be up, never down!"

The gay group gazed with concealed interest at mother and son.



Mrs. Greysshield seized a flag and offered it to her guest.

“Thank you—not from you,” said the princess, putting up her lorgnette. “Only from the boy.”

He would not give her one. His mother was in a repressed rage, and the boy kept his eyes bent on the ground in suffering silence.

The titled lady put an end to the painful scene. “I have changed my mind,” she said, coolly. “I have too many cushions now.”

The boy turned swiftly to her, and, lifting the white hand hanging by her side, gently touched it with his lips.

“*Madame la Princesse*, you, too, love your country!”



“YOU, TOO, LOVE YOUR COUNTRY!”

His exclamation was so enthusiastic, so heartfelt, there was in it such a world of commiseration for the titled lady before him, that there immediately flashed before each one present the unhappy life of the poor princess in exile. The boy had started a wave of sympathy flowing from one to another of the group, and in some confusion they all moved away.

Gerald wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and went on with the programme of patriotic selections that the impatient children were obliged to go through before they could have the cakes and fireworks.

After the fizzing and bursting noises were over, I said, regretfully, "Gerald, I must go to Paris to-morrow."

"I have been expecting this," he said, with dogged resignation. "When you are gone, Miss Canada, I shall have no one to talk to me about America."

I had grown to love the boy for his high qualities of mind and soul, and my voice faltered as I murmured, "Do not give up,—fight the good fight."

"Of faith," he added, gravely, "looking forward to what is to come."

It seemed to me that an old man stood pressing my hand—an old man with life's experience behind him. My heart ached for the lad, and I hurried into the house.

"Good-bye," I said, coldly, to my hostess.

"Good-bye, a pleasant journey," she responded, with equal coldness.

"If you do not take that boy of yours home, you will lose him," I murmured.

I thought my voice was low, but it was not low enough to escape the ears of the princess, who was standing beside her.

Mrs. Greysshield turned away, and the princess's lips moved almost imperceptibly in the words, "What is the use?"

"The boy is dying by inches!" I said, indignantly.

"Better dead than like those—" she said, with her bitter smile, nodding toward the chattering cosmopolitan crowd beyond, us.

I echoed the boy's words: "You, too, are a patriot!"

"I was," she said, gravely, and sauntered away.

I went unhappily to Paris. Would that another stranger could chance along, to whom the boy might unburden his heart,—his noble heart, filled not only with dreams of military glory, but of plans for the protection of the weak and helpless among his countrymen!

A week later a telegram from the princess summoned me to Orléans. To my surprise, she met me on the staircase of Mrs. Greysshield's house.

"You are right!" she whispered. "Mrs. Greysshield is to lose her boy!"

My first feeling was one of anger. "Do not speak of such a thing!" I said, harshly.

"Come and see," and she led the way to a room where the weary-faced lad lay on a huge, canopied bed, a nursing sister on either side of him.

"The doctors are in consultation below," she murmured; "but there is no hope."



“Where is his mother?”

“In her room. She sees no one. It is a foreign fashion, you know. She is suffering deeply—at last.”

“Oh, this is horrible!” I said. “Can nothing be done?”

“Do you observe what a perfect accent he has?” she said, meditatively. “There must be excellent teachers at the *lycée!*”

From the bed came occasionally muttered scraps of French prose or poetry, and I shuddered as I listened.

“Sacrificed for an accent!” she went on to herself. “It is a favourite amusement of American mothers. This boy was torn from a father whom he worshipped. I wonder what he will say when his wife returns to America with two living children and one—” She turned to me. “I could have told her that growing children should not be hurried from one country to another. Yet it is better this way than the other.”

“The other?” I repeated, stupidly.

“Yes, the other,—after years of residence abroad, no home, no country, no attachments, a weary traveller till one dies. I thought you might like to see him, as you were so attracted by him. He fainted the day you left, and has been this way ever since. It cannot last much longer.”

We had been speaking in a low tone, yet our voices must have been heard by the sleeper, for suddenly he turned his head on the pillow and looked at us.

The princess approached him, and murmured his name in an exquisitely soft and gentle voice. The boy recognised her.

“Ah, the princess!” he said, collectedly. “May I trouble you with a message?”

“Certainly.”

“It is for papa,” he said, dreamily. “Will you tell him for me, please—” Here his voice died away, and his dark, beseeching eyes rolled from one to another of the people in the room.

“Shall I send them away?” asked the princess.

“No, thank you. It is only the pain. Will you—will you be good enough to tell papa not to think me a coward? I promised him to hold out, but—”

“I will tell him.”

“And tell him I’m sorry we couldn’t build that home and live together, but I think if he prepared it mamma and the children might go. Tell him I think they would be happier. America is so lovely! Mamma would get used to it.”

He stopped, panting for breath, and one of the nurses put something on his lips, while the other wiped away the drops of moisture that the effort of speaking had brought to his spectral face. Then he closed his eyes, and his pallid figure seemed to be sinking away from us; but presently he roused himself, and this time his glance fell on me.

“Miss Canada,” he said, drowsily, “the salute to the flag—Dottie and Howard.”

The princess motioned to one of the nurses, who slipped from the room and presently returned with the children. A wan, evanescent flush overspread his face at sight of the flag, and he tried to raise himself on his elbow. One of the nurses supported him, and he fixed his glazing but still beautiful eyes on the children. “Are you ready?”

The small boy and girl were far from realising their brother’s condition, but they knew what he wished, and in a warbling voice little Dottie began:

A little farther on her tiny brother took up the formula which it had been Gerald’s pleasure to teach them.



The consultation below had broken up, and several of the doctors had crept to the door of the room, but the boy did not seem to notice them. His attention was riveted on the children, to the exclusion of all others.

“Give brother the flag!” he murmured, when they finished.

They handed him the Stars and Stripes, but he could not retain it, and the princess, quietly moving to the bedside, steadied it between his trembling fingers.

“Now sing with brother.”

The two children lifted up their little quavering voices, and turning his own face to the ceiling, a face illumined by a joy not of this world, he tried to sing with them:

“My country! ’tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing!”

Here his voice faltered, his radiant face drooped, and his darkening eyes turned beseechingly in my direction.

In a choking voice I finished the verse, as I had once before finished it for him:

“Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims’ pride,  
From every mountainside  
Let freedom ring!”

His head was on the pillow when I finished, but his fingers still grasped the flag.

“Gerald,” said the princess, tenderly, “do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand,” fluttered from his pale lips.

“And are you contented?”

He pressed her hand slightly.

“Would you rather die, or live to grow up and forget your country, as you surely would do if you lived all your young life among strangers?”

“I would rather die!” and here his voice was so firm that all in the room heard it.

“Dottie and Howard!” he murmured, presently, and the princess drew back. After all, she was only a stranger.

He died, with their little faces pressed close to his own. “Give my love to mamma, dear mamma!” were his last words. Shortly after the nurses drew the children away. The boy had had his wish. He had died for his country as truly as if he had fallen in battle.

## GRANDMOTHER AND THE CROW





## GRANDMOTHER AND THE CROW.

When I was a little girl I lived with my grandmother, and a gay, lively little grandmother she was. Away back in the family was French blood, and I am sure that she resembled French old people, who are usually vivacious and cheerful. On my twelfth birthday I was driving with her through a thick wood, when we heard in front of us the loud shouting and laughing of boys.

"Drive on, George," said my grandmother; "let us see what this is all about."

As soon as he stopped, she sprang nimbly from the phaeton among half-a-dozen flushed and excited boys who had stones in their hands. Up in the tall trees above them were dozens of crows, which were cawing in a loud and distressed manner, and flying restlessly from branch to branch. A stone thrown by some boy with too true an aim had brought a fine young crow to the ground.

"Ha—I've got him. Thought I'd bring him down!" yelled a lad, triumphantly. "Now give it to him, boys."

The stones flew thick and fast at the poor crow. My grandmother screamed and waved her hands, but the boys would not listen to her until she rushed to the phaeton, seized the whip, and began smartly slashing those bad boys about the legs.

"Hi—stop that—you hurt! Here, some of you fellows take the whip from her!" cried the boys, dancing like wild Indians around my grandmother.

"Cowards!" she said; "if you must fight, why don't you attack something your own size?"

The boys slunk away, and she picked up the crow. One of its wings was broken, and its body was badly bruised. She wrapped the poor bleeding thing in our lap-robe, and told George to drive home.

"Another pet, grandmother?" I asked.

"Yes, Elizabeth," she returned, "if it lives." She had already eight canaries, some tame snakes, a pair of doves, an old dog, white mice and rats, and a tortoise.

When we got home, she examined the crow's injuries, then sponged his body with water, and decided that his wing was so badly broken that it would have to be amputated. I held his head and feet while she performed the surgical operation, and he squawked most dismally. When it was over, she offered him bread and milk, which he did not seem able to eat until she pushed the food down his throat with her slim little fingers. Then he opened and closed his beak repeatedly, like a person smacking his lips.

"He may recover," she said, with delight; "now, where is he to sleep? Come into the garden, Elizabeth."

Our garden was walled in. There was a large kennel on a grass-plot under my grandmother's bedroom window, and she stopped in front of it.

"This can be fitted up for the crow, Elizabeth."

"But what about Rover?" I said. "Where will he sleep?"

"Down in the cellar, by the furnace," she said. "He is getting to be rheumatic, and I owe him a better shelter than this in his old age. I shall have a window put in at the back, so that the sun can shine in."

For several days the crow sat in the kennel, his wings raised,—the stump of the broken one was left,—making him look like a person shrugging his shoulders, and the blood thickening and healing over his wounds. Three times a day my grandmother dragged him out and pushed some bread and milk down his throat; and three times a day he kicked and struggled and clawed at her hands. But it soon became plain that he was recovering.

One day my grandmother found him trying to feed himself, and she was as much pleased as a child would have been. The next day he stepped out on the grass-plot. There he found a fine porcelain bath, that my grandmother had bought for him. It was full of warm water, and he stepped into it, flapped his wing with pleasure, and threw the water over his body.

"He is coming on!" cried my grandmother; "he will be the joy of my life yet."

"What about Second Cousin George?" I asked.

Second Cousin George—we had to call him that to distinguish him from old George, the coachman—was a relative that lived with us. He was old, cranky, poor, and a little weak-minded, and if it had not been for my grandmother he would have been obliged to go to an almshouse. He hated everything in the world except himself,—pets especially,—and if he had not been closely watched, I think he would have put an end to some of the creatures that my grandmother loved.

One day after the crow was able to walk about the garden, I saw Second Cousin George following him. I could not help laughing, for they were so much alike. They both were fat and short, and dressed in black. Both put their feet down in an awkward manner, carried their heads on one side, and held themselves back as they walked. They had about an equal amount of sense.



**"I SAW SECOND COUSIN GEORGE FOLLOWING HIM."**

In some respects, though, the crow was a little ahead of Second Cousin George, and in some respects he was not, for on this occasion Second Cousin George was making a kind of death-noose for him, and the crow walked quietly behind the currant-bushes, never suspecting it. I ran for grandmother, and she slipped quickly out into the garden.

“Second Cousin George, what are you doing?” she said, quietly.

He always looked up at the sky when he didn't know what to say, and as she spoke, he eyed very earnestly some white clouds that were floating overhead, and said never a word.

“Were you playing with this cord?” said grandmother, taking it from him. “What a fine loop you have in it!” She threw it dexterously over his head. “Oh, I have caught you!” she said, with a little laugh, and began pulling on the string.

Second Cousin George still stood with his face turned up to the sky, his cheeks growing redder and redder.

“Why, I am choking you!” said grandmother, before she had really hurt him; “do let me unfasten it.” Then she took the string off his neck and put it in her pocket. “Crows can feel pain just as men do, Second Cousin George,” she said, and walked away.

Second Cousin George never molested the crow again.

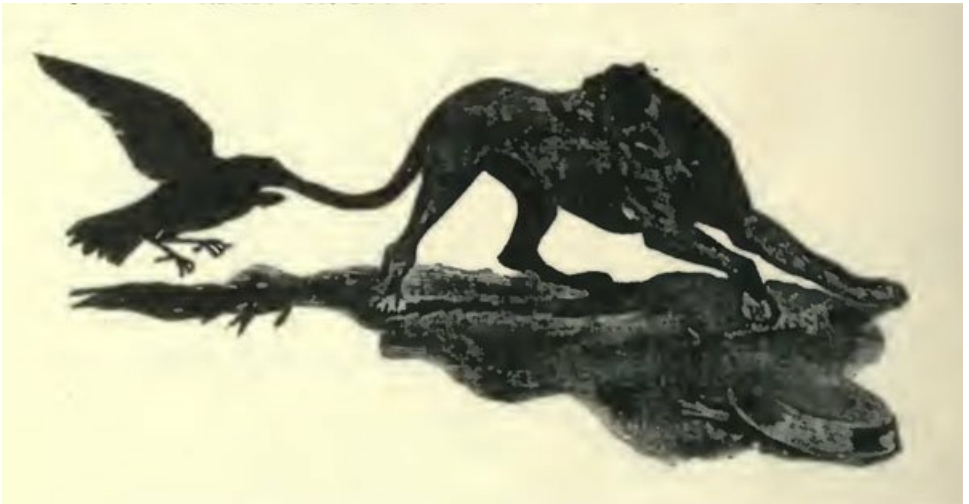
After a few weeks the crow became very tame, and took possession of the garden. He dug worms from our choicest flower-beds, nipped off the tops of growing plants, and did them far more damage than Rover the dog. But my grandmother would not have him checked in anything.

“Poor creature!” she said, sympathetically, “he can never fly again; let him get what pleasure he can out of life.”

I was often sorry for him when the pigeons passed overhead. He would flap his one long, beautiful wing, and his other poor stump of a thing, and try to raise himself from the ground, crying, longingly, “Caw! Caw!”

Not being able to fly, he would go quite over the garden in a series of long hops,—that is, after he learned to guide himself. At first when he spread his wings to help his jumps, the big wing would swing him around so that his tail would be where he had expected to find his head.

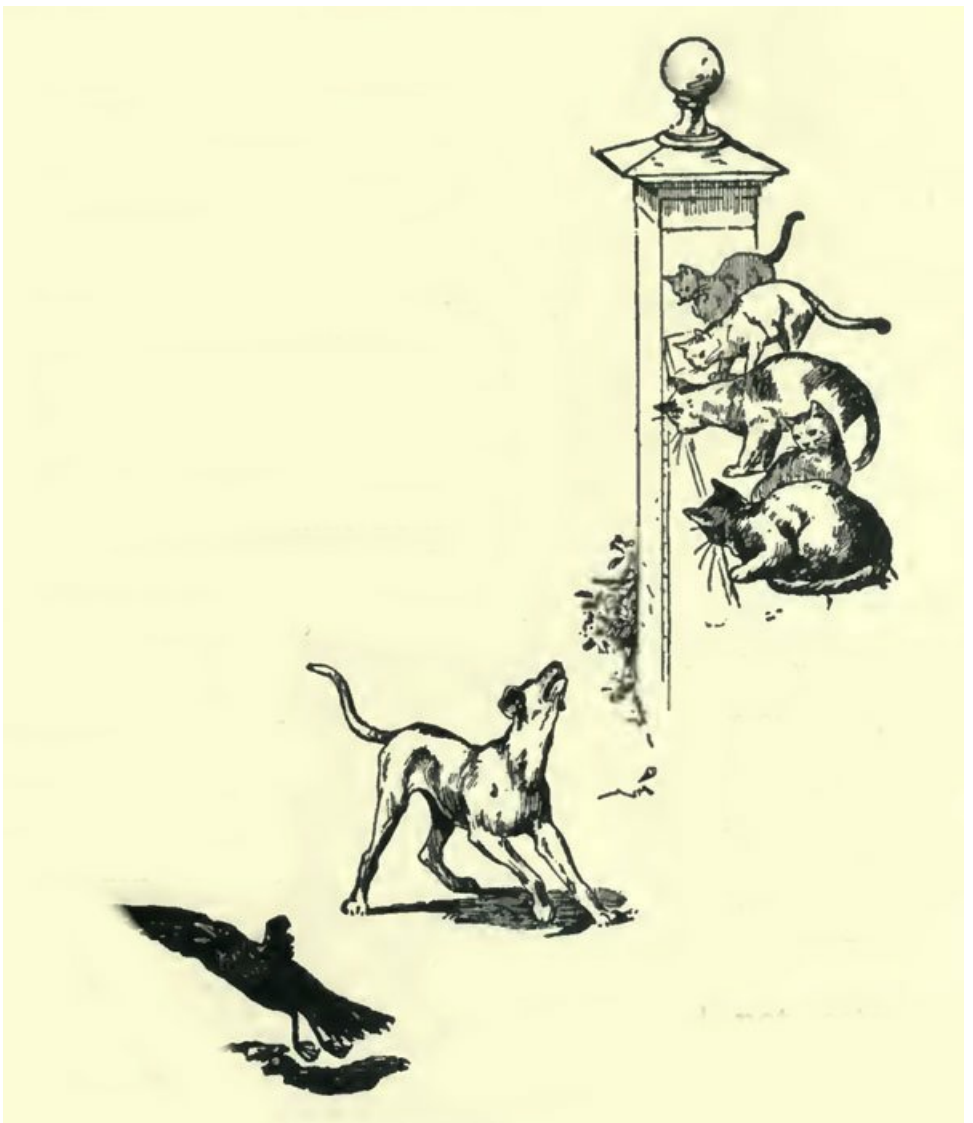
Many a time have I stood laughing at his awkward attempts to get across the garden to grandmother, when she went out with some bits of raw meat for him. She was his favourite, the only one that he would allow to come near him or to stroke his head.



He cawed with pleasure whenever he saw her at any of the windows, and she was the only one that he would answer at all times. I often vainly called to him, “Hallo, Jim Crow,—hallo!” but the instant grandmother said, “Good Jim Crow—good Jim!” he screamed in recognition.

He had many skirmishes with the dog over bones. Rover was old and partly blind, and whenever Jim saw him with a bone he went up softly behind him and nipped his tail. As Rover always turned and snapped at him, Jim would seize the bone and run away with it, and Rover would go nosing blindly about the garden trying to find him. They were very good friends, however, apart from the bones, and Rover often did good service in guarding the crow.

The cats in the neighbourhood of course learned that there was an injured bird in our garden, and I have seen as many as six at a time sitting on the top of the wall looking down at him. The instant Jim saw one he would give a peculiar cry of alarm that he kept for the cats alone. Rover knew this cry, and springing up would rush toward the wall, barking angrily, and frightening the cats away, though he never could have seen them well enough to catch them.



Jim detested not cats alone, but every strange face, every strange noise, and every strange creature,—boys most of all. If one of them came into the garden he would run to his kennel in a great fright. Now this dislike of Jim's for strange noises saved some of my grandmother's property, and also two people who might otherwise have gone completely to the bad.

About midnight, one dark November night, my grandmother and I were sleeping quietly,—she in her big bed, and I in my little one beside her. The room was a very large one, and our beds were opposite a French window, which stood partly open, for my grandmother liked to have plenty of fresh air at night. Under this window was Jim's kennel.

I was having a very pleasant dream, when in the midst of it I heard a loud, "Caw! Caw!" I woke, and found that my grandmother was turning over sleepily in bed.

"That's the crow's cat call," she murmured; "but cats could never get into that kennel."

"Let me get up and see," I said.

"No, child," she replied. Then she reached out her hand, scratched a match, and lighted the big lamp that stood on the table by her bed.

I winked my eyes,—the room was almost as bright as day, and there, half-way through the window, was George, our old coachman. His head was in the room; his feet must have been resting on the kennel, his expression was confused, and he did not seem to know whether to retreat or advance.

“Come in, George,” said my grandmother, gravely.

He finished crawling through the window, and stood looking dejectedly down at his stocking feet.

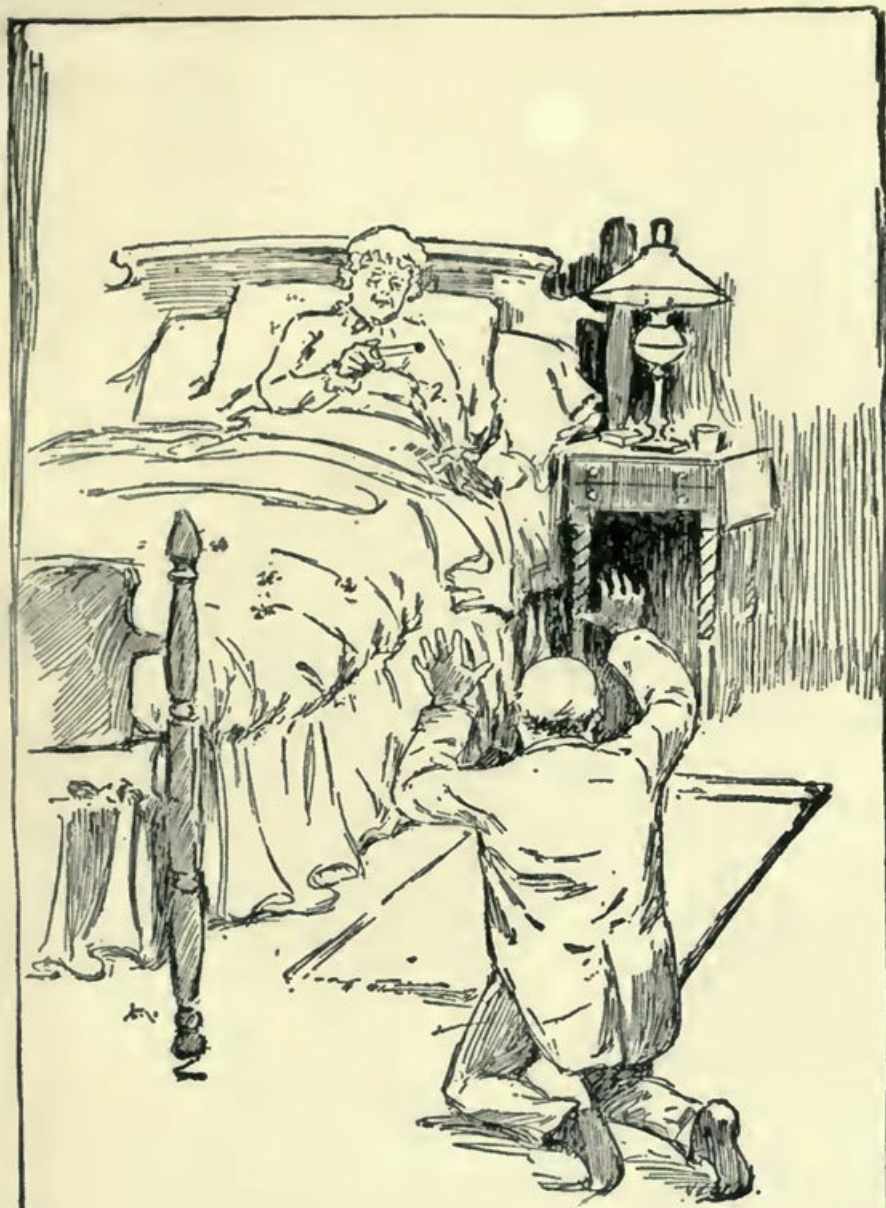
“What does this mean, George?” said my grandmother, ironically. “Are you having nightmare, and did you think we might wish to go for a drive?”

Old George never liked to be laughed at. He drew himself up. “I’m a burglar, missus,” he said, with dignity.

My grandmother’s bright, black eyes twinkled under the lace frills of her nightcap. “Oho, are you indeed? Then you belong to a dangerous class,—one to which actions speak louder than words,” she said, calmly; and putting one hand under her pillow, she drew out something that I had never known she kept there.

I thought at the time it was a tiny, shining revolver, but it really was a bit of polished water-pipe with a faucet attached; for my grandmother did not approve of the use of firearms.

“Oh, missus, don’t shoot—don’t shoot! I ain’t fit to die,” cried old George, dropping on his knees.



“‘I AIN’T FIT TO DIE,’ CRIED OLD GEORGE.”

"I quite agree with you," she said, coolly, laying down her pretended revolver, "and I am glad you have some rag of a conscience left. Now tell me who put you up to this. Some woman, I'll warrant you!"

"Yes, missus, it was," he said, shamefacedly, "'twas Polly Jones,—she that you discharged for impudence. She said that she'd get even with you, and if I'd take your watch and chain and diamond ring, and some of your silver, that we'd go to Boston, and she'd—she'd—"

"Well," said grandmother, tranquilly, "she would do what?"

"She said she'd marry me," sheepishly whispered the old man, hanging his head.

"Marry you indeed, old simpleton!" said my grandmother, dryly. "She'd get you to Boston, fleece you well, and that's the last you'd see of her. Where is Miss Polly?"

"In—in the stable," whimpered the old man.

"H'm," said grandmother, "waiting for the plunder, eh? Well, make haste. My purse is in the upper drawer, my watch you see before you; here is my diamond ring, and my spoons you have in your pocket."

Old George began to cry, and counted every spoon he had in his pocket out on the bureau before him, saying one, two, three, four, and so on, through his tears.

"Stop!" said my grandmother. "Put them back."

The old man looked at her in astonishment. She made him return every spoon to his pocket. Then she ordered him to hang the watch round his neck, put the ring on his finger, and the purse in his pocket.

"Take them out to the stable," she said, sternly; "sit and look at them for the rest of the night. If you want to keep them by eight o'clock in the morning, do so,—if not, bring them to me. And as for Miss Polly, send her home the instant you set foot outside there, and tell her from me that if she doesn't come to see me to-morrow afternoon she may expect to have the town's officers after her as an accomplice in a burglary. Now be off, or that crow will alarm the household. Not by the door, old George, that's the way honest people go out. Oh, George, George, that a carrion crow should be more faithful to me than you!"

My grandmother lay for some time wide-awake, and I could hear the bed shaking with her suppressed laughter. Then she would sigh, and murmur, "Poor, deluded creatures!"

Finally she dropped off to sleep, but I lay awake for the rest of the night, thinking over what had taken place, and wondering whether Polly Jones would obey my grandmother.

I was with her the next day when Polly was announced. Grandmother had been having callers, and was sitting in the drawing-room looking very quaint and pretty in her black velvet dress and tiny lace cap.

Polly, a bouncing country-girl, came in hanging her head. Grandmother sat up very straight on the sofa and asked, "Would you like to go to the penitentiary, Polly Jones?"

"Oh, no, ma'am!" gasped Polly.

"Would you like to come and live with me for awhile?" said my grandmother.

Now Polly did not want to do this, but she knew that she must fall in with my grandmother's plans; so she hung her head a little lower and whispered, "Yes, ma'am."

"Very well, then," my grandmother said, "go and get your things."

The next day my grandmother called to her the cook, the housemaid, and the small boy that ran errands.

"You have all worked faithfully," she said, "and I am going to give you a holiday. Here is some money for you, and do not let me see you again for a month. Polly Jones is going to stay with me."

Polly stayed with us, and worked hard for a month.

"You are a wicked girl," said my grandmother to her, "and you want discipline. You have been idle, and idleness is the cause of half the mischief in the world. But I will cure you."

Polly took her lesson very meekly, and when the other maids came home, grandmother took her on a trip to Boston. There she got a policeman to take them about and show them how some of the wicked people of the city lived. Among other places visited was a prison, and when Polly saw young women like herself behind the bars, she broke down and begged grandmother to take her home. And that reformed Polly effectually.

As for old George, after that one miserable night in the stable, and his utter contrition in the morning, he lived only for grandmother, and died looking lovingly in her face.

Jim the crow ruled the house as well as the garden after his exploit in waking grandmother that eventful night.

All this happened some years ago. My dear grandmother is dead now, and I live in her house. Jim missed her terribly when she died, but I tried so earnestly to cultivate his affections, and to make up his loss to him, that I think he is really getting to be fond of me.

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