

The Children's Friend.

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MARY AIKEN.

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO LITTLE SISTER LOUISE.

BY MRS. CICERO W. HARRIS,
OF WILMINGTON, N. C.

CHAPTER III.

Twilight had just commenced to deepen on the landscape when our party reached Ridley Farm. Although the afternoon had been warm and pleasant, the kitchen was already lighted up with the glow of a blazing country-fire. An early supper was always served in that household, and the children were put to bed long before the whip-poor-wills and katy-dids ceased to sing. When Miss Aiken, with Eddie, Louise and Joe rode down the lane, they saw Mr. Ridley and Willie standing at the large front gate awaiting them. Miss Aiken had quickened her horse's gait as they approached the farm, for she wished to be the first one to tell Mr. Ridley about Joe. As he came forward to help her dismount, she said to him:

"Mr. Ridley, I have brought a new claimant to your generosity. We found on the wayside a poor and destitute orphan. We questioned him, and his story is a very sad one. I propose to induce you to allow him to pay for his board by doing what work he can out of school hours, and with your permission I will teach him. I will not slight your children. I trust I am too honorable for that. And, if Joe is as intelligent as his face indicates, I think he will be a decided accession to our little school. If there was an Asylum in this State, I would not make this request of you. But you know, sir, I am an orphan, and perhaps I know better how to feel for them. I hope I am not asking too much?"

"I will see the boy, Miss Mary. He may be trying to impose on you. If I can manage it I will try to oblige you. If you can afford to teach him, it does seem that I might board him."

"I do not propose to have you board him gratis. I think he can do enough about the farm to pay for his board."

"Perhaps he might. But I would not allow one of my race to work as a menial with my colored laborers. It may be a foolish notion, Miss, but I would not allow it. I will see my wife about it, and I suspect she can give Joe something to do. Besides, if I find him a worthy boy, he can assist Edward and Willie."

"Yes," chimed in Willie, with his cap on this time, but with his chubby hands still thrust into his pockets, "he can help us ride horses to water, feed chickens and cut wood for mother. I think, father, you had better take him. Becky says Miss Mary knows every thing, and she says take him. You better do it," he continued with an ominous shake of the head.

"You think so, do you?" said the good farmer smiling. "Will, run into the house and ask my sister to step out here. Tell her about it, and if she says so, maybe we will take your advice."

The little fellow started off at a

double quick, and when he brought his mother out of the house, the other two horses with their riders had reached the gate. Miss Aiken had dismounted and stood, flushed with excitement, beside Mr. Ridley. Little Louise had a pleading look in the great, blue eyes, and Eddie wore such a determined expression that his father saw Joe had already three advocates. His tender-hearted, honest wife was listening very attentively to Willie's animated recital as he led her along the broad path towards the gate. If an examination of Joe should be satisfactory, the thing was settled. And there he stood, holding the reins of the pretty pony Eddie had permitted him to ride. Mr. Ridley's first questions and Joe's answers were similar to those asked and replied to, at the creek. At last Mr. Ridley said,

"If I will take you into my house as one of my own children, and if this lady will educate you, will you try hard to improve every opportunity?"

"I'll work for you harder than I ever worked before. And I'll do anything in the world for her!"

—he answered, pointing his dirty, hard hand towards Mary Aiken, and turning around towards Eddie and Louise who stood near him, he said, "I will love you as long as I live, whether he takes me or not. She and you are the only ones who have talked soft and kind to me since my mother died."

"Take him, Edward," said Mrs. Ridley, touching her husband's arm. "He shall not cost you much. I'm willing to do all I can for him."

"Yes, wife, I'll do it. Who knows but what our children may be orphans some day?" said the farmer, looking kindly at the orphan boy and the delighted group.

"Hurrah for father!" shouted Willie, forgetting about keeping his cap on, and twirling it around his curly head.

"And now, Joe, let Eddie and Will take the horse, and you come into the house. We will see what we can do to make you a decent looking member of the family," said the kind man, opening the gate to admit Miss Aiken, Louise and the happy boy.

"Thank'ee sir, thank'ee. You never will be sorry for it," exclaimed Joe, looking up in his benefactor's face with gratitude expressed on every feature.

When Joe appeared at the supper table the children scarcely recognized him. He was cleanly washed and was neatly dressed in a suit of Edward's clothes. His bright gray eyes with their new and joyous look, his broad, high brow with his black hair nicely brushed from it, and his still pinched and hungry, but almost smiling mouth, combined to make him a very different looking boy from the dirty, sullen, sleepy creature Louise had seen under the tree in the forest. Joe enjoyed his supper and then went into the front room a few minutes with the other children.

"Now, Miss Mary," said Mr. Ridley, as soon as they reached the piano and lifted it, "let us have some music."

"Yes," exclaimed Willie in an

excited tone. "Can't you play Old Joe Ridley? Black Dick plays it on the banjo. Play it for young Joe Ridley, Miss Mary."

The children laughed at Willie for thinking of so delicate a way to compliment their new companion. Mr. Ridley said, "by the way, Joe, what is your name? I forgot to ask you."

"My father's name was Joseph Welton, sir. I will run and get the pocket book out of my old clothes and show you, sir."

The boy ran hastily from the room and soon returned with an old worn brown leather pocket book, which he handed to the farmer with the words: "Here it is, sir, I want you to keep it for me. Before mother died she gave it to me, and told me never to lose it, or part with it. She said it might do me some good some day."

"Miss Mary, will you examine it for me?" said the farmer, handing the book to her. "Your eyes are better than mine."

Mary Aiken took up a yellow-faded sheet of paper which the old book contained and read:

"Joseph Welton, only son of Margaret and Jos. Welton, born May 12th, 1858, in Austin, Texas." "So, Joe, you are twelve years old. Can you tell us anything about your father and mother?" asked Miss Aiken.

"I remember my father was a soldier, ma'am. He was killed in the battle around Richmond, I believe it was. My mother had to leave her home when he was shot, she told me, and she came here to look for some of her kins-people. She died before she found them. Some people she had stopped with took everything she had when they buried her, and told me I would have to work for my bread. I worked for them a short while, but I was too little to be of much service to them and they sent me off."

"What was the name of the family, Joe?" asked Mr. Ridley.

"They called him Mr. Judd, sir," answered Joe.

"Oh, yes! I know him. A miserly and stingy old customer as ever breathed. I'm glad he turned you off, even if you suffered for it for a short time. He would make any boy a brute. But what next, Joe?"

"After I left him I worked for different people when hands were scarce. Sometimes white people and sometimes colored people gave me shelter and work. If I had been older, I could have done much better. Sometimes I had no where to sleep and nothing to do. This was the matter when they found me to-day."

"Can you read? Did you ever learn your letters?" inquired Miss Aiken.

"Yes, ma'am, I used to read some. My reading and spelling book and mother's Bible are at Mr. Judd's. Some other things of my mother's are there also. He kept them to pay expenses."

"Well, Joe, let him keep them. We could not get them from him unless we gave him ten times their value. If you will try to do your duty and as you are the son of one of our soldiers, you shall fare as if you were one of my own children until you are better able to take care of yourself."

When Miss Mary plays us a tune we will have prayers, and you children must go to bed so as to be able to get up early in the morning," said Mr. Ridley, taking a seat near the piano, and lifting Louise on one knee and Ammie on the other. Sweet music filled the room and a silent happy group listened.

Is it unreasonable to imagine that guardian spirits and Recording Angels waved their bright wings above the humble dwelling, nestled in the quiet woods and rocky hills, where none of the heartless mockery of the great selfish world had ever intruded? When that one great sentiment, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," as first expressed by the Jewish Rabbi Hillel, and afterwards endorsed and repeated by the Savior, was the intuitive rule of action; where Pity, Mercy and Charity instead of Indifference, Cruelty and Hate kept "watch and ward" over human hearts; where a thought for others supplanted the ever-present and almighty—I; and in brief, where religion summed up in the one word, Love, was life's constant mentor and guide? There indeed did the spirits of Peace and Happiness dwell; then the mourner found sympathy; there the widow and orphan found aid; and there, lowly as the spot might be, the God of a Universe was glorified, worshiped and acceptably served.

RALEIGH, N. C., Jan. 19, 1875.

Mr. Editor:—The first copy of "THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND" is hereby acknowledged. I rejoice at every addition to the helps and agencies of the Asylum. A paper, if sustained, will be of great advantage to this most commendable charity. I know you and Bro. M. are experienced journalists, and may regard suggestions rather impertinent, when they come from one not so familiar with the sanctum; but I will venture to propose that in one of the first issues you repeat those sensible thoughts you once published about the wicked ways some adopt to show their benevolence. I refer to the gambling styes that some well-meaning persons unfortunately adopt to raise funds for the orphans. To get up raffles and gift concerts to support such an institution as the Asylum is really revolting to every sense of propriety and morality. The object is too pure and sacred to be profaned and degraded by the use of such means for its accomplishment. If we believe St. Paul, we must confess that God does not approve the conduct of those who do evil that good may come. And surely these fashionable styes of gambling are evil—whether practised by Masons, Odd-Fellows, Temperance Societies, Churches or any other societies, or by individuals in any capacity. The chance feature, however disguised or embellished, is the dangerous spirit of the gambling table. The person who buys a ticket at a raffle or gift show, or any place of the kind, virtually bets his ticket against the larger amounts presented in the programme as prizes. As he expects to get something of greater value, he cannot claim the virtue of true benevolence; for either, in part, or entirely, he is apt to be moved by sordid selfishness. If he draws nothing, he has fooled away what was his. If he secures a prize, he is to be pitied; for he has swallowed a sugar-coated pill of moral quackery that will produce a hungering for more doses of the same; is in possession of something that he never worked for, asked for, paid for, or had any moral right to have; must, if intelligent, know that he has thrown his influence to a peculiarly dangerous degree in favor of a demoralizing vice; while in all his exultation he can only boast of the joy that warms the bosom of the successful gambler.

This lottery practice is calculated to excite serious prejudice against the Orphan Asylum. If men wish to give, why are they not content to give in a proper, decent way? If they

love the Asylum and wish to induce others to contribute to it, why will they do the strange thing of cultivating selfishness and depravity, rather than direct benevolence and godly sympathy? Men are not made philanthropists by appeals to their covetousness. Lastly, sir, it seems that we are in a state of public opinion that is rather in keeping with the spirit of the gaming saloon. One no longer needs to go behind the green shade in order to be educated in the cursed school of gambling. One is no longer required to defy public opinion and sneak out to a disreputable race-course to become a demoralized turfman. Agricultural fairs belie their names and professions by giving prominence to absolute horse racing; and so-called benevolent enterprises betray their moral deformity by preaching and practicing immorality under the sacred garb of charity.

In behalf of good morals, the Orphan Asylum, and in short, all true interests of all our people, I solemnly protest against all fashion of gambling by whomsoever practised and for whatsoever end. A. W. MANGUM.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

In obedience to the order of the Grand Lodge of Masons of North Carolina, a school for poor and promising orphans has been opened, and is now in operation, at Mars Hill, in Madison county. Every child has a right to live, a right to grow, and a right to learn. When parents die and leave helpless orphans, the wicked should not be allowed to seize them for slaves; but good people should defend their rights and give them the opportunity to grow up into intelligent, virtuous and useful citizens. The Orphan Asylum, at Mars Hill, receives poor and promising orphans, between the ages of six and twelve, and gives them food, clothing and instruction until they can acquire a good English education, and be prepared for the usual business transactions of life. All friends of the young are requested to inform the orphans of the advantages so freely offered and to aid them in securing admission. All good people and all churches and benevolent organizations are invited to send contributions of money, food and clothing for its support. Though the institution is controlled by the Grand Lodge, its benefits are not limited to the children of deceased Masons. All religious denominations and all political parties are treated alike. We accept the aid of all. We espouse the quarrels of none. So far as we have opportunity, we help the young and the old to be good and to do good. J. H. MILLS, Sup't.

Form of Application for Admission to the Orphan Asylum.

..... N. C., 1875.
This is to certify that.....
..... is an orphan, without
estate, and years of age. His
father died in 18.....; his mother
..... I, being h.....
..... hereby make applica-
tion for h..... admission into the Asylum,
at; and I also relin-
quish and convey, to the officers of the
Asylum, the management and control of
the said orphan for years, in order
that..... may be trained and educated
according to the regulations prescribed
by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

Approved by.....
"Why, Jimmy," said one professional beggar to another, "are you going to knock off already? It's only two o'clock." "No, you muton-head," replied the other, who was engaged in unbuttoning his crutch; "I'm only going to put it on the other knee. You don't suppose my fellow can beg all day on the same knee, do you?"