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Joe's Sacrifice.

It was a July day; a day when the sun-baked plains of Nebraska lay barren and waste. The alfalfa, which in early spring grew so luxuriantly, gave small promise of a second cutting. The hot winds, against which irrigation and good husbandry were alike unavailing, had swept over the plains, and the fields of grain lay barren and waste. On the banks of a river some trees threw a grateful shade, but, with this exception, on those great stretches of sandy soil the cactus, the soap weed and the wild sunflower were all that remained.

In the midst of this wild waste, where the shadow of a small sod house cooled the sun's fierce heat, were a boy and his dog. To Joe, when but a child of three years, an uncle for whom he was named had given this splendid St. Bernard, and the dog, with the instinct of his species, had, from the first, considered the child his especial care.

When, the following spring, the Sanders family, in a great covered wagon, moved to Nebraska, the dog went with them; and here, where Mr. Sanders built his two-roomed sod house, he did not forget that near it must be placed a comfortable kennel for Hero. Busy with the cares of frontier life, both father and mother felt that with the dog as protector their boy was safe.

They would wander away together where Joe could pluck the pure, white stems from the soap-weed, gather the bright cactus flowers, or chase the rolling tumble-weed and the childish feet would always be guided safely home again. As Joe grew older, his love for Hero became stronger, and the dog returned it with a devotion almost human. Now that Joe was seven, with Hero harnessed to his dog-cart, they would go on and on until they came to the woods, or where they could see the stage that made weekly trips from the railroad, miles away. On these journeys Joe sometimes wondered if he loved Hero better than he did his father and mother, but when this thought crept into his heart, he put it away instantly, for it seemed very wicked. On this morning, however, his father was sick; his mother was sad with weeping; Joe had been telling Hero of the gloom and sorrow that had seemed to settle on their home, then, with his head pillowed on the dog's shaggy neck, he lay in the shadow, fast asleep.

"Hello, Joe!"

Suddenly awakened, Joe started up in happy surprise at seeing a boy standing near.

"Why, Jack Granger, how you skeered me!" said Joe.

"Didn't I, though," replied Jack, "but why don't you ask me what I cum fur?"

"What did you?" asked Joe, "taint mail day?"

"Nop," replied Jack. "You guess."

"Maybe—there's company come," ventured Joe.

"Nop; I'll tell you," said Jack, "ther's city folks come down there by the river to camp."

"Is ther?" asked Joe.

"Yep," returned Jack, "and they want some things from our house, and I cum fur your dog-cart to carry um over. Ken ye go?"

"I reckon," said Joe. "I'll ask ma."

Joe went into the house, but soon returned and said, "Yep, I ken go."

Hero was soon harnessed to the dog-cart, and the boys took turns in riding or walking until they reached Jack's home. Here Mrs. Granger, coming to the door, said: "I thought you'd help Jack carry the things over. How's your pa and ma?"

"Pa's sick," said Joe.

"Not very sick, is he?" inquired Mrs. Granger.

"I reckon he is," said Joe, "cause he stays in bed all the time, and my ma, she cries."

"Well, now, that's too bad," sympathetically said Mrs. Granger. "I hope taint the fever!"

"I don't know," said Joe, "but he's awful sick, and don't say nothing to nobody."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Mrs. Granger. "Well, while you boys take these things over to the folks on the river I'll go down and see how your pa is; maybe I ken help you ma some."

The things were soon packed in the dog-cart, and the boys started for the camp. Arriving there the "city folks" came out to see them. There were a man, his wife, a boy of six years, and a girl about ten. The children never having seen a dog harnessed and drawing a cart, were much interested. When the cart had been relieved of its load, each in turn had a ride, and when Master-six-year-old discovered that he could hold the lines and do the driving himself, his delight knew no bound.

"Oh, papa! isn't that the nicest, biggest dog you ever did see? I wish we had one," said he.

"And papa," cried the little girl, "we could ride every place in this little wagon!"

"Is he cross?" asked the father, "and does he ever bite?"

"Oh, no, sir," said Joe, "Hero's the very best dog there is."

"Well, what will you take for him, my little man, will you let me have your dog if I give you twenty-five dol-

lars?" he said as he held up the money in bright five-dollar gold pieces.

Joe only shook his head.

"Not sell him for twenty-five dollars!" exclaimed Jack. "That's a heap o' money Joe, more'n all your pa'll git off'n his hul ranch this year."

"I won't sell my Hero; I love him best of all!" said Joe, and getting into the cart he turned his face homeward.

The afternoon was well spent when Joe opened the kitchen door and stepped in. The house was very still, and in the room beyond his father's pale face among the pillows could be clearly seen. Mrs. Saunders, hearing him, came out. "You're back," she said in a whisper; then, after a minute she continued: "You're pa's worse. I'm afraid he's going to die, and yesterday he said I mustn't send for the doctor when he ain't got no money to pay him."

Joe fastened his frightened gaze on his mother's anguished face, then glanced at his father, still and unconscious, in the room beyond. A pain keener than he had ever known, rent his childish heart, and oh! to know that the city man had offered him lots of money for Nero. Could he—could he let that man have his dog? No, he could not.

He went out, and in sobs told Hero the whole pitiful story. The struggle was long and hard, but when Joe's little eyes closed in sleep that night he had decided whether he loved his father or Hero best. Waking early the next morning, without waiting for breakfast, Joe slipped from the house, harnessed Hero to the little cart and was soon on his way to camp. When he reached it he said, "Please sir I'm going to sell Hero."

"What, my little fellow, are you going to sell your pet?" asked the man.

"Pa's awful sick," said Joe.

"And you're going to sell your dog to help?" he inquired.

"Joe nodded his head. With all his determination to be brave, he could not trust himself to speak.

"Well, you're a noble little fellow," he said, giving him the money, and adding to the amount another twenty-five dollars.

Joe took the money and thanked the man, who helped him put it securely in his pocket, and then, going to Hero, he told him he must stay with the little girl and boy, and not come home any more; then with one arm around the dog's neck, he sobbed, "Good-bye, Hero," and giving the lines into the man's hands he turned his face away and walked slowly homeward.

"Ma, I sold him," said Joe.

"Sold who?" asked Mrs. Sanders.

"Sold Hero. The city man gave me this for him," said Joe, handing her the money, "and it's to make pa well."

Mrs. Sanders looked at the fifty dollars, knew what it might mean for the sick man; knew too what it must have meant to the dear child to have parted with what he so dearly loved. She took him in her arms and kissed him again and again, calling him her own, dear, brave little boy.

The long days dragged slowly by. Under the doctor's care the father improved, but oh, so slowly. More than a month had passed before he could again step outside the door. Then he saw the kennel, but no Hero was there. As he passed it, he said to Joe, "Where is Hero?"

"I sold him, pa," the child replied.

"You sold him?" asked the bewildered father.

"Yes, when you was sick; I sold him to make you well," said Joe.

Then the truth of how the money to pay the cost of his long illness, and many comforts he had known dawned upon him. Folding his child in his arms, he said, huskily: "God bless you, my boy. Sometime I may prove to you that you made a wise choice."

And Joe was content, for he knew he loved his father best.—The Pacific.

New Happiness by an Old Receipt.

My dear Mrs. Brown, how well you are looking—and how happy!"

The word slipped out before I knew it, and I could have bitten off the tongue that said it for vexation at my own discourtesy, for Mrs. Brown had for years carried an unhappy, anxious look which made me wonder.

Now she laughed a whole-souled, happy laugh that was good to hear.

"I'm glad you said it, dear! for it's true. I've never been so happy since I was a child."

"Won't you tell me the secret, please—if there is a secret," I exclaimed, for I was not as happy myself as I could have wished under the stress of some unusual worries.

"Oh, there's no real mystery about it. It's only that I've found myself out, and discovered that I'm not of near the importance to the universe, or even to my own family, that I imagined."

"But that makes some people very unhappy."

"I know! Isn't it silly! I felt that way once. I think

I had the feeling that if I were to die the wheels of the world would stop. I suppose it's natural for a mother to worry about her children when they first go out into the world, but I not only did so, but made their father worry about them, too. Then I got to worrying about my clubs. The Mothers' Club piled all the mistakes of motherhood on my back, and the Social Reform Club all the political corruption of the city. I began to elect the next president; and when the Japanese war broke out, every Japanese repulse made me feel as though I had lost a friend. At last I had to have in the doctor, and he looked at me over his spectacles, and said, 'Mrs. Brown, you are trying to do too much.'

"Doing too much, I suppose you mean," I said, for I was cross and unhappy because I couldn't go to the Social Club that night, and help scold over the way the streets are not cleaned.

"The doctor laughed: 'You mustn't ask me to tell you how much you accomplish,' he said, 'all I know is that you would do more if you didn't take the work so hard. Now I am only going to prescribe two things. One is idleness of body, and the other idleness of mind. The world won't stop, Mrs. Brown, if you let it run its own affairs for a month, and if you don't, you'll have trouble.'

"But I can't stop!" I cried.

"That's the disease under which you suffer," he replied with one of his most positive tones and the politest of his bows. The brakes are worn out; you must get new ones, or you will run to destruction."

"Did you ever try to lie still and not think?" I thought I couldn't but between my husband and my doctor, I got through two days of fighting worry, and the next morning woke up with a new idea in my head—the new idea that I, Elizabeth Brown, was probably not of nearly the importance to the world I had imagined. I found that the house went on well enough without me. I remembered that the responsibility for the dirty streets was with the city officials. I considered that the world would not come to an end if Japan was beaten. Mrs. Brown, responsible for the affairs of the universe without anyway of enforcing her responsibility, was the unhappy person whom you knew; Mrs. Brown, an unimportant individual, with work enough and a Father to whom all her worries can be brought and left, is happy in possession of a quite mind."

"I see," I answered. "But don't you find the worries creeping back?"

"Oh, yes; but then I remember the partnership. I don't have to run the world, because my Father is in charge. I do the best I can for my children, but my Father shares the responsibility. I try to help my neighbors—those I can reach—but I let my Father think about the others."

She laughed again that happy, restful laugh which it was good to hear. And I went on my way wondering whether I too might not be more efficient and infinitely happier if I really let God manage his own world in his own way.

"But Then."

It was a queer name for a little girl, and it was not her real name—that was Lizzie; but everybody called her "But Then."

"My real name is prettier; but, then, I like the other pretty well," she said, nodding her brown curls merrily. And that sentence shows how she came by her name.

If Willie complained that it was a miserable, rainy day, and they couldn't play out-of-doors, Lizzie assented brightly: "Yes, but, then, it's a nice day to make our scrap-books."

When Rob fretted because they had so far to walk to school, his little sister reminded him: "But, then, it's all the way through the woods, you know, and that's ever so much nicer than walking on the hard pavements of a town."

When even patient Aunt Barbara pined a little because the rooms in the new house were so few and small compared with their old home, a rosy face was quietly lifted to hers with the suggestion: "But, then, little rooms are best to cuddle up all together in—don't you think so, Auntie?"

"Better call her 'Little But Then,' and have done with it," declared Bob, half vexed, half laughing. "No matter how bad anything is, she is always ready with her 'but then,' and some kind of consolation on the end of it."

"Just look at all the snow going to waste without our having a chance to enjoy it!" said Will one day; "and the ice, too—all because we couldn't bring our sleds with us when we moved."

"But then, you might make one yourself, you know. It wouldn't be quite so pretty, but then it would be just as good," said little "But Then."

"Exactly what I mean to do, when I get money enough to buy two or three boards; but I haven't even that yet, and the winter is nearly half gone."

"If we only had a sled to-day, sister could ride, and we could go on the river," said Bob. "It's just as near that way, and we could go faster."