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THE BIG BROTHER.

BY MRS. M. E. SANGSTER.

It was a treat to the little Ransoms to be allowed to enter the big brother's room. Indeed, it was a wonderful place, and I always used to feel highly honored when I had a peep into it myself.

To begin with, Joe Ransom was a tall sophomore at college, when Will and Bert were boys of nine and twelve. What Joe thought and did and said was therefore of vast importance in the eyes of the juniors. That he was stroke in the college boat crew, and had carried off all the honors of his class in study, helped to magnify him in their opinion; and really the other fellows sometimes felt as though the Ransoms were much too boastful of their big brother. Had nobody in town such a possession except those two? After the day, however, when little Eugene Peters fell into the mill-stream, and Joe Ransom, loitering by in tennis-shirt and knickerbockers, dashed into the current, and saved the boy just as he was sinking the fateful third time, he became the village hero; and every boy who belonged to Townsend Corners felt a thrill when the gallant rescue found its way, nobody could imagine how, into a great city newspaper. Just one line, in small type, in an obscure corner, but that was enough to star Joe Ransom's name with glory, which was not soon to fade.

Returning to the room, however, I want to tell you of a talk that went on there one evening at dusk, when Bert, Will, Sammy Gleason, Art Fish, and three or four more boys, had been looking at Joe's collection of moths and butterflies, inspect-

ing his birds' eggs and stamps, and hearing him tell the story of his latest mountain climb.

The clock struck eight, and Mr. Ransom, from the foot of the stairs, called, "Time for

prayers, Joe!" "Come, boys," said Joe, putting down the fishing-tackle he had been adjusting, and promptly leading the way. Arthung back, but Bert drew him on, and presently they were all joining, al-

most before they knew it, in the evening hymn:

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near,"

Mrs. Ransom sat at the piano and played, her husband sang bass, Gertrude and Lucy supplied the soprano and alto, Joe's voice was a fine baritone, and the boys each added something in sweetness and freshness to the melody.

"That was charming!" said Mrs. Ransom, as the last note died away. "Papa, shall we sing another hymn?"

"Two or three, if you like," he replied, and one favorite after another was asked for and sung.

Then Gertrude read a chapter and Mrs. Ransom said very simply:

"Joe, I am tired this evening. I wish you would pray."

Without the least hesitation, and as if he were speaking to some one who stood at his side, the big fellow made a brief prayer, after which they all went upstairs again to his den.

Art Fish had been staying away from Sunday-school lately. He thought himself too large to go, now that he was fifteen; and though nobody at home knew it, he had grown very careless about reading the Bible and praying. He felt ashamed and uneasy now, as the words of Joe's prayer lingered in his mind.

"Forgive us for everything wrong we have done this day. Make us kinder, truer, more gentle with each other. Keep us safely when we sleep, and may we waken to-morrow to be thy brave soldiers and servants."

Finally, Art spoke:

"Joe," said he, "do you think a fellow can be a Christian without joining the church?"



"JESUS, OH MY MASTER! SAVE!" See next page.