

## LITTLE JOE.

Little Joe first appeared on the streets of New York two years ago. He was small and slight, with great brown eyes and pinched lips that always wore a smile. Where he came from nobody knew and few cared. His parents, he said, were dead, and he had no friends. It was a hard life. Up at 4 o'clock in the morning, after sleeping in a dry-goods box or in an alley, he worked steadily till late at night. He was misused at first. Big boys stole his papers or crowded him out of a warm place at night, but he never complained. The tears would well up in his eyes, but were quickly brushed away and a new start bravely made. Such conduct won him friends, and after a little, no other boy dared to play tricks upon Little Joe. His friends he remembered, and his enemies he forgave. Some days he had especially good luck. Kind-hearted people pitied the little fellow and bought papers whether they wanted them or not. But he was too generous to save money enough even for a night's lodging. Every boy who got "stuck" knew he was sure to get enough to buy a supper as long as Joe had a penny.

But the hard work and exposure began to tell on his weak constitution. He kept growing thinner and thinner, till there was scarcely an ounce of flesh on his little body. The skin on his face was drawn closer and closer, but the pleasant look never faded away. He was uncomplaining to the last. Two weeks ago he awoke one morning after working hard selling "extras" to find himself too weak to move. He tried his best to get upon his feet, but it was a vain attempt. The vital force was gone.

"Where is little Joe?" was the universal inquiry. Finally he was found in a secluded corner, and a good-natured hackman was persuaded to take him to the hospital at Flatbush, where he said he lived. Every day one of the boys went to see him. On Saturday a newsboy who had abused him at first, and learned to love him afterwards, found him sitting up in his cot, his little blue-veined hand

stretched out upon the coverlet.

"I was afraid you wasn't coming, Jerry," he said with some difficulty, "and I wanted to see you once more so much. I guess it will be the last time, Jerry, for I feel awful weak to-day. Now, Jerry, when I die I want you to be good for my sake. Tell the boys—"

But his message never was completed. Little Joe was dead. His sleep was calm and beautiful. The care and anxiety on his wan face had disappeared. But the expression was still there. Even in death he smiled.

It was sad news that Jerry bore back to his friends on that day. They feared the end was near, and were waiting for him with anxious hearts. When they saw his tear-stained face they knew that Little Joe was dead. Not a word was said. They felt as if they were in the presence of death itself. Their hearts were too full to speak.

That night one hundred boys met in front of the City Hall. They felt that they must express this sense of loss in some way, but how they did not know. Finally, in accordance with the suggestion of one of the larger boys, they passed a resolution which read as follows:

*Resolved*, That we all liked Little Joe who was the best newsboy in New York. Everybody is sorry he has died."

A collection was taken up to send delegates to the funeral, and the same hackman who bore Little Joe to the hospital again kindly offered the use of his carriage. The burial took place yesterday. On the coffin was a plate, purchased by the boys, whose language was expressive from its very simplicity. This was the inscription:

LITTLE JOE,

Agcd 14,

The Best Newsboy in New York,

We all liked him.

There were no services, but each boy sent a flower to be placed on the coffin of his friend. After all, what did it matter that Little Joe was dead.

He was only a newsboy.

This is not a fancy sketch. Every word of the above story is true.—*Ogontz Mosaic.*