

SEEK YE THE LORD,

BY MRS. N. C. ALGER

The school was closed, the tiresome examinations were over, and friends had gathered to listen to essays, declamations, and songs. Four young men had sung so well that they were recalled by a storm of applause. One of the quartet was not a Christian, and it was natural that he should whisper, "Let's sing that last song we learned—just a high old one—some fun in that."

Did the Lord bring to the mind of the leader a bit of Miss Havergal's beautiful hymn,

"Keep my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King?"

Again they were before the audience, and it seemed to me music never sounded sweeter than when those fresh young voices uttered the sentence:

"Seek ye the Lord
While he may be found,
Call ye upon him
While he is near."

I had heard some of the best singers in the world, but the unaffected bravery of this act, when the temptation was to sing to please the fancy, placed it among my pleasantest memories. A great hush fell upon the people. The hymn was an invitation, and I expect to find in eternity that it was among the many influences which caused some of those present to come to Christ.

J. Cole, the Boy Hero

BY

EMMA GELLIBRAND.

CHAPTER II.

The waiting at table I could not exactly pronounce a success, for although Joe's quick eyes detected in an instant if I wanted anything, his anxiety to be "first in the field," and give Mary no chance of instructing him in his duties, made him collide against her more than once in his hasty rushes to the sideboard and back to my elbow with the dishes, which he generally handed to me long before he reached me, his long arms enabling him to reach me with his hands while he was yet some distance from me, and often on the wrong side. I also noticed when I wanted water he lifted the water bottle on high, and poured as though it was something requiring a "head." Mary nearly caused a catastrophe at that moment by frowning at him, and saying, sotto voce, "Whatever are you doing? Is that the way to pour out water? It ain't hale, stoopid!"

Joe's face became scarlet, and to hide his confusion he seized a dish-cover, and hastily went out of the room with it, returning in a moment pale and serious as became one who at heart was every inch a family butler with immense responsibilities.

Joe was quiet and sharp, quick and intelligent, but I could see he was quite new to waiting at table. To remove a dish was, I could see, his greatest dread, and it amused me to see the cleverness with which he managed that Mary should do that part of the duty.

When only one plate and dish remained to be cleared away, he would slowly get nearer as I got towards the last morsel, and before Mary had time, would take my plate and go quite slowly to the sideboard with it, leisurely remove the knife and fork, watching meanwhile in the mirror if Mary was about to take the dish away.

I was, however, pleased to find him no more awkward, as I feared he would have been, and when, having swept the grate and placed my dessert-plate on the table, he retired, softly closing the door after him, I felt I should make something of J. Cole, and hoped his character would be good.

The next morning, a tastefully arranged vase of flowers in the centre of the breakfast table, and one magnificent rose and bud by my plate, were silent but eloquent appeals to my interest on behalf of my would-be page, and when Joe himself appeared, fresh from an hour's self-imposed work in my garden, I saw he had become quite one of the family, for Bogle, my little terrier, usually very snappish to strangers, and who considered all boys as his natural enemies, was leaping about his feet, evidently asking for more games, and our old magpie was perched familiarly on his shoulder.

"Good morning, Joe," I said. "You are an early riser, I can see, by the work you have already done in the garden."

"Why, yes," replied Joe, blushing, and touching an imaginary cap; "I'm used to bein' up. There was ever so much to do of a mornin' at 'ome; and I 'ad to 'elp father afore I could go to be with Dick, and I was with Dick a'most every mornin' by seven, and a good mile and a half to walk to 'is place. Shall I bring in the breakfast, mum? Mary's told me what to do."

Having given permission, Joe set to work to get through his duties, this time without any help, and I actually trembled when I saw him enter with a tray containing all things necessary for my morning meal; he looked so overweighted; but he was quite equal to it as far as landing the tray safely on the sideboard. But, alas! then came the ordeal, not one thing did poor Joe know where to place, and stood with the coffee-pot in his hand, undecided whether it went before me, or at the end of the table, or whether he was to pour out my coffee for me.

I saw he was getting very nervous, so took it from him, and in order to put him at his ease, I remarked,

"I think, perhaps, I had better show you, Joe, just for once, how I like my breakfast served, for every one has little ways of their own, you know, and you will try to do it my way when you know how I like it, won't you?"

Thereupon I arranged the dishes, etc., for him, and his big eyes followed my every movement. The blinds wanted pulling down presently, and then I began to realize one of the drawbacks in having such a very small boy as page. Joe saw the sun's rays were nearly blinding me, and wanted to shut them out, but on attempting to reach the tassel attached to the cord, it was hopelessly beyond his reach. In vain were the long arms stretched to their utmost, till the sleeves of the ex-page's jacket retreated almost to Jo's elbows, but no use.

I watched, curious to see what he would do.

"Please, 'm, might I fetch an 'all chair?" said Joe, "I'm afraid I'm not big enuf to reach the tassel, but I won't pull 'em up so 'igh to-morrow."

I gave permission, and carefully the chair was steered among my tables and china pots. Then Joe mounted, and by means of rising on the tips of his toes he was able to accomplish the task of lowering the blinds.

I noticed at that time that Joe wore bright red socks, and I little thought what a shock those bright coloured hose were to give me later on under different circumstances.

That evening I had satisfactory letters regarding Joe's character, and by degrees he became used to his new home, and we to him. His quaint sayings and wonderful love of the truth, added to extreme cleanliness, made him welcome in the somewhat exclusive circle in which my housekeeper, Mrs. Wilson, reigned supreme.

Many a hearty burst of laughter came to me from the open kitchen window across the garden in the leisure hour, when, the servants' tea being over, they sat at work, while Joe amused them with his stories and reminiscences of the sayings and doings of his wonderful brother Dick.

This same Dick was evidently the one being Joe worshipped on earth, and to keep his promises to Dick a sacred duty.

"You don't know our Dick, Mrs. Wilson," said Joe, to the old housekeeper; "if you did, you'd understand why I no more dare go agen wot Dick told me, than I dare put my 'and in that 'ere fire. When I were quite a little chap, I took some big yaller plums once, out of one of the punnits father was a-packin' for market, and I eat 'em. I don't know to this 'our wot made me take them plums, but I remember they were such prime big 'uns, big as eggs they was, and like lumps of gold, with a sort of blue shade over 'em. Father was very partikler about not 'avin' the fruit 'andled and takin' the bloom off, and told me to cover 'em well with leaves. It was a broillin' 'ot day, and I was tired, 'avin' been stoopin' over the baskets since four in the morning, and as I put the leaves over the plums I touched 'em; they felt so lovely and cool, and looked so juicy-like, I felt I must eat one, and I did; there were just six on 'em, and when I'd bin and eat one, there seemed such a empty place left in the punnit, that I knew father'd be sure to see 't, so I eat 'em all, and then threw the punnit to one side. Just then, father comes up and says, 'Count them punnits, Dick! there ought to be forty on 'em. Twenty picked large for Mr. Moses, and twenty usuals for Marta!'—t'at 'ere of our best customers they was. Well, Dick, he counts 'em, and soon misses one. 'Thirty-eight, thirty-nine,' he sez, and no more; 'but 'ere's a empty punnit,' he sez. I was standing near, feelin' awful, and wished I'd said I'd eat the plums afore Dick be-

gun to count 'em, but I didn't, and after that I couldn't. 'Joe' sez Dick, 'I wants yer! 'Ow comes this empty punnit 'ere, along of the others? there's plums bin in it, I can see, 'cos it's not new. Speak up, youngster!' I looked at Dick's face, Mrs. Wilson, and his eyes seemed to go right into my throat and draw the truth out of me. 'Speak up,' he sez, a-gottin' cross; 'if you've prigged 'em, say so, and you'll get a good hidin' from me, for a-doin' of it, but if you tells me a lie, you'll get such a hidin' for that as 'll make you remember it all your life; so speak up, say you did it, and take your hidin' like a brick, and if you didn't prig 'em, say who did, 'cos you must 'av' seen 'em go."

"I couldn't do nothin'," Mrs. Wilson, but keep my 'ed down, and blubber out, 'Please, Dick, I eat 'em."

"Oh, you did, yer young greedy, did yer," he sez; 'I'm glad yer didn't tell me a lie. I've got to giv' yer a hidin' Joe; but giv' us yer 'and, old chap, first, and mind wot I sez to yer: Own up to it, wotever you do, and take your punishment; its 'ard to bear, but when the smart on it's over yer forgets it; but if yer tells a lie to save yerself, yer feels ashamed of yerself whenever yer thinks of it.' And then Dick gave me a thrashin', he did, but I never 'ollered or made a row, tho' he hit pretty 'ard. And, Mrs. Wilson, I never could look in Dick's face if I told a lie, and I never shall tell one, I 'ope, as long as ever I live. You should just see Dick, Mrs. Wilson, he is a one-cr-, he is."

"Bless the boy," said Mary, the housemaid; "why if he isn't a-cryin' now. Whatever's the matter? One minnit you're makin' us lark fit to kill ourselves, and then you're nearly makin' us cry with your Dick, and your great eyes runnin' over like that. Now get away, and take the dogs their supper, and see if you can't get a bit of colour in your cheeks before you come back."

So off Joe went, and soon the frantic barking in the stable-yard showed he had begun feeding his four-footed pets.

Time went on: it was a very quiet household just then—my husband away in America, and my friends most of them enjoying their summer abroad or at some sea-side place—all scattered here and there until autumn was over, and then we were to move to town, and spend the winter season at our house there. I hoped my dear sister and her girls would then join us, and, best of all, my dear husband be home to make our circle complete.

Day by day Joe progressed in favour with everybody; his size was always a trouble, but his extreme good nature made everybody willing to help him over his difficulties. He invented all sorts of curious tools for reaching up to high places; and the marvels he would perform with a long stick and a sort of claw at the end of it were quite astonishing.

I noticed whenever I spoke of going to town Joe did not seem to look forward to the change with any pleasure, although he had never been to London, he told me, but Dick had been once with his father, and had seen lots of strange things; among others a sad one, that made a great impression on Dick, and he had told the tale to Joe, so as to have almost as great an effect on him.

It appeared that one night Dick and his father were crossing Waterloo Bridge, and had seen a young girl running quickly along, crying bitterly. Dick tried to keep up with her, and asked her what was the matter. She told him to let her alone, that she meant to drown herself, that she had nothing to live for, and was sick of her life. Dick persuaded her to tell him her grief, and heard from her that her father and mother had both been drowned in a steamer, and she was left with a little brother to take care of; he had been a great trouble to her, and had been led away by bad companions until he became thoroughly wicked. She had been a milliner, and had a room of her own, and paid extra for a little place where her brother could sleep. She fed and clothed him out of her earnings, although he was idle, and cruel enough to scold and abuse her when she tried to reason with him, and refused to let him bring his bad companions to her home. At last, he stole nearly all she had, and pawned it; and among other things, some bonnets and caps, belonging to the people who employed her, given as patterns for her to copy. These she had to pay for, and lost her situation besides. By degrees all her clothes, her home, and all she had, went for food, and then this wicked boy left her, and the next thing she knew was that he had been taken up with a gang of burglars concerned in a jewel robbery. That day she had seen him in prison, and he was to be transported for seven years; so the poor creature, mad with grief, was about

to end her life. Dick and his father would not leave her until she was quiet, and promised them she would go and get a bed and supper with the money they gave her, and they promised to see her again the next day at a place she named.

The next morning they went to the address, and found a crowd round the house. Somebody said a young woman had thrown herself out of a window, and had been taken up dead. It was too true; and the girl was the wretched, heart-broken sister they had helped over-night. Her grief had been too much for her, and, poor thing, she awoke to the light of another day, and could not face it alone and destitute; so, despairing, she had ended her life. They went to the hospital, and were allowed to see all that remained of the poor creature; and Dick's description of it all, and his opinion that the brother "might have been just such another little chap at first as Joe," and "What would that brother feel," said Dick, "when he knew what he had done, for he had done it," said Dick; "he done that girl to death, the same as if he'd show'd her out of that winder hisself."

"And," said Joe, "I wonder if them chaps is goin' about London now wot led her brother wrong? I don't like London; and I wish we could stop 'ere."

I assured Joe that in London there was no danger of meeting such people if he kept to himself, and made no friends of strangers.

Joe was also much afraid of having to wait at table when there were guests. In spite of all I could do, he was hopelessly nervous and confused when he had to wait on more than two or three people, and as I expected to entertain a good deal when we were in town, I could not help fearing Joe would be unequal to the duties.

I could not bear the idea of parting with the little fellow, for, added to his good disposition, Joe, in his dark brown livery, with gilt buttons, his neat little feet, and clean hands, his carefully brushed curls, by this time trained into better order, and shining like burnished gold in the sun; his tiny feet, with the favourite red socks, which he could and did darn very neatly himself when they began to wear out (and when he bought new ones they were always bright red);—Joe, let me tell you, was quite an ornament in our establishment, and the envy of several boys living in families round about, who tried in vain to get acquainted with him, but he would not be friends, although he always refused their advances with civil words.

Sometimes a boy would linger when bringing a note or message for me, and try to draw Joe into conversation. In a few minutes I would hear Joe's deep voice say, "I think you had better go on now. I've got my work to do, and I reckon you've got yours a-waitin' for yer at your place." Then the side door would shut, and Joe was bustling about his work.

(To be continued.)

A SCHOOLBOYS' JOURNEY.

Master Constantine, a young lad who arrived a day or two ago to enter as a student at Upper Canada College, has had a travelling experience probably unique in Canadian schoolboy life. His father is in command of the Northwest Mounted Police at Fort Cudshy, the Canadian post on the River Yukon. Constantine left home on June 8, and arrived at the college on September 21. The first part of his journey was down the Yukon River, which in its great northern bend crosses the arctic circle. After descending the river by steambot through Alaska, a distance of 1,800 miles, the mouth of the river was found to be blocked with bergs and pack ice. The captain, after waiting a fortnight for this to clear away, decided to return up the river for further cargo, a distance of 1,000 miles. On returning from this long trip the ice caused a further delay, but finally the boat reached Port St. Michael's, at the mouth of the Yukon, not far south of the Behring Straits. From this point the passengers were carried to Ounalaska, where they were compelled to wait another fortnight for the arrival of the ocean steamboat which carries the Alaska mails. After a stormy passage down the Pacific coast, Constantine was landed at Seattle, whence he came by way of Winnipeg to Toronto, and he is now hard at work in college at his Latin declensions. He reports a winter temperature of 68 degrees below zero in his northern home. Constantine's classmates are curious to learn whether he returns home for the Christmas vacation. Some years ago two lads came to the college from Moonsoonee, after a canoe voyage of several weeks, but this long distance school record seems now to be broken.—Globe.