

SWORTH,
ECT,—
reet East,
NTARIO.
SPECIALTY.
& COMPANY
, N. Y., BELLS
to the public since
pel, School, Fire Alarm
lso, Chimes and Pells

A CHRISTMAS MYSTERY; OR
JO AND HIS PET CROW.

BY MRS. FRANK MCCARTHY.

The sharp crack of a rifle startled the echoes around Judge Malcom's country home, and a big black crow dropped from the wood-pile. Out ran a little darky boy from the kitchen, followed by Aunt Dinah, his fat old grandmother.

"Now, you Jo, what you gwine to do wid dat dar crow? You better drap him like a hot potato. He's a-gwine to de Ole Scratch, whar he belongs."

But Joe had run over to the wood-pile, picked up the poor old crow, and held it to his bosom. His woollen shirt was open, and down his black skin ran the red blood of the wounded bird, down his black cheeks ran the tears, and he rocked himself to and fro in an agony of grief.

"He's done gone dead for suah," sobbed Jo. "Oh, Mas'r Harry! what made yer kill poor old 'Thus'lem?"

"I'm sorry, Jo," said a handsome lad of twelve, putting down his gun. "I didn't know it was your crow, and he made such a capital target up there on that jagged stick, I couldn't help it. Don't cry, Jo; I'll get you another much nicer pet than that. He's the most broken-down, dilapidated-looking customer I ever saw. He's blind in one eye, and no wonder Aunt Dinah named him Methuselah; he must be a thousand years old. Let the miserable thing die, Jo, and I'll give you one of my bull-pups."

"An' I'll dib oo a pet tennary, Do," lisped little Laura.

"An' I'll give you a good lickin' ef you don't shet dat dar bawlin'," said Aunt Dinah. "Why yer couldn't make more ob a rumpus over a pore Christian."

But entreaties or threats were of no avail, Jo thanked Master Harry for his offer of the bull-pup, and Miss Laura for hers of a canary, but he said he didn't want any more pets if 'Thus'lem died. Then he climbed the back steps to the room over the kitchen where he and Aunt Dinah slept.

Taking out of an old box a checked shirt, he proceeded to tear of the tail some narrow strips. These he bound tightly together about the bleeding body of the crow, and finding one leg limp and useless, he cut a splinter from the box, and set the shattered limb. Then he bathed 'Thus'lem's head with water, all the while calling upon his favourite to open his eyes and look at him once more before he died.

'Thus'lem seemed to have made up his mind to look at Jo a good many times before he died, for his best eye opened and began to blink in such a lively manner that Jo jumped up and clapped his hands with delight.

"Why, 'Thus'lem," he stammered — "why, why, yer ain't done gone, is yer? Yer's a-gwine to lib, mebbe?"

"Jes so, jes so," feebly croaked the crow.

Not that I mean to say 'Thus'lem could talk. No member of the crow family has ever been known to carry on a conversation; but as for those two words, everybody said they were plain enough when you knew what they were.

"Clar to goodness," said Aunt Dinah, "ef dere's any kill in dat dar row! He's been froze to deff, an'

calded to deff, an' crushed to deff, an' shot to deff, an' here he is agin, peart as a maggot. Reckon he's lived 's long 's de creation itseff, an' looked on with dat dar crooked eye o' his'n when Noah built de ark. He's enuff to scar' de life out ob any one. Jes look at him, Mas'r Harry."

He certainly was a very queer specimen of the bird creation. His body seemed to be held together with strips of Jo's old shirt, he had only one leg to stand on, and every feather seemed to straggle in a different direction.

"He hasn't got off by de skin ob his teef for nuffin, said Aunt Dinah; "he's chock-full ob inikity, dat dar crow."

"Jes so, jes so," croaked the crow. But Jo patted tenderly the wounded body of his favorite, and told him not to mind granny, to be a good crow, and get well and comfort the oppressed heart of his master."

"For, 'Thus'lem," said Jo, as he sat down to his potato-paring, with the bird on his shoulder, "I know you's ill used an' pusecuted an' slanderized, an' folks don't gib yer no peace, sleepin' nor wakin'; but dat's acause you's black, 'Thus'lem, an' I's black, an' we's bofe black. Ef yer woz a lubly yaller canary ob Missy Laura's, you'd hab a mos' spreniferous time, 'Thus'lem. You'd hab a shinin' gilt cage to lib in, an' a boss swing to swing on, an' all de lump-sugar yer could swaller down, an' Missy Laura'd call yer 'honey' an' 'sugar-plum,' an' let yer roost on her lily-white finger, an' peek out ob her lubly red lips. Oh, goodness gracious' sakes alive, 'Thus'lem!" said Jo, his eyes rolling in his head at the thoughts of such ecstasy, "ef yer woz only a yaller canary!"

But 'Thus'lem shook his head, as much as to say that he wouldn't give a rotten cherry for such felicity.

"It's a most drefful pity," sighed poor Jo, "dat yer looks is so mightly agin yer, 'Thus'lem; dat dar nose o' yourn bein' so drefful hooked, and dat dar eye o' yourn so powerful skewed. But don't worry about it, 'Thus'lem; it can't be helped, yer know."

"Jes so, jes so," meekly croaked the crow.

"We'll hab to be sassyfried 'Thus'lem, and do de bes' we can. Don' yer smell de good tings a-cookin', 'Thus'lem, an' de ginger an' spice an' all de lubly cookin', 'Thus'lem? Dat's acause it's Christmas-time, when eberybody's kinder happy, 'Thus'lem, even a pore old crow."

"Jes so, jes so," croaked the crow, and apparently a little tired of Jo's sermonizing, he limped out of his sight.

Shortly after, Master Harry entered the kitchen, and told Jo he had some very particular work for him to do.

"You see, Jo," said Harry, "Santa Claus is very busy this year, and he can't get time to provide Christmas trees for folks that have them handy. We'll have to help him a little." And winking mysteriously to Jo, he beckoned him outside, and told him the joyful news that he too was to help get the Christmas tree and greens.

It may not seem such a very pleasant thing to some people to go out in the freezing air and hack down a lot of tough cedars, but to Jo it was simply delightful.

"Jes tink of dat dar, 'Thus'lem," he said to his crow, "ter be sot ter work for Santy Claws himself! 'Pears like as ef de good times is omin' for dis yere, Jo, 'Thus'lem."

OUR BIG SUIT SALE
STILL GOING ON!
BIG SALE
—OF—
OVERCOATS

The Best
Fitting Clothing
in Canada!

Don't buy until you see our Immense Stock, and you will Save Money.

Men's Heavy Winter Overcoats
\$4, \$5, \$6, \$7.50, \$9 and \$10
Men's Fine Worsted
and Melton Overcoats
\$7.50, \$10, and \$12.

EVERY GARMENT WARRANTED!

Petley & Petley
128 to 132 KING ST. E.,
Opposite the Market,
TORONTO.

OUR BIG SALE OF SILKS STILL GOING ON.

MANTLES.

We are offering big drives in
Ladies', Misses
and Children's
MANTLES

In all the Leading Styles for the Present Season.

Ladies, don't buy without first seeing our Large Stock, as no House in this City can give you as good styles or value for your money.

Petley & Petley
King St. East,
TORONTO.

OUR BIG SALE OF DRESS GOODS STILL GOING ON.

Rowsell & Hutchison,
76 KING ST. EAST, TORONTO,
Have received from the
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
A very Large Stock of
Bibles, Prayer-Books,
Church Services,
Hymn Books,
Prayer Book & Hymn
Book combined,
Prayer Book and
Hymns in Cases,
And in Great Variety of
Choicest Bindings
THE
Poets in Cloth & Morocco Bindings.
Annuals,
Illustrated Gift Books.
Boys' and Girls' Books.
Children's Toy Books.
Sets of Stan'd Authors.
CHOICE ASSORTMENT
—OF—
XMAS & NEW YEAR CARDS
—ALSO—
AN UNUSUALLY LARGE STOCK OF
BOOKS
—FOR—
Sunday School
—AND—
Day School Prizes,
—AND—
SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES,
Embracing all the New Publications of
the Society for Promoting Christian
Knowledge, and other English
and American Publishing
Houses.
Several Thousand Vols. to choose from
ROWSSELL & HUTCHISON,