

hero. But there are other heroes too, who live in white cottages scattered along the English shores. These are the bold coast-guarders. From one of their stations they had seen the signals of distress sent off from the 'Firefly' before she was abandoned, and had put to sea to help her crew. They arrived in time to pick up Lieutenant Wainwright, who had cast himself into the waves with a bare possibility that his strong arms and a cork belt might keep him afloat until assistance came.

He had been ready to give his life for his friends if duty demanded it; but God spared him to complete his noble career, and to become increasingly the pride of his mother and an honor to the flag he served, until the 'middy' was in due time an admiral of the red.—'Children's Treasury.'

The Adoption of Old Joe.

(Ernest Gilmore, in the 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

The woods were on one side and the mountains on the other of old Joe's cabin home. Ah, it was a weird and lonesome place to live, but the old man loved it. He had come here to live 'after de wah,' he and his wife, Phyllis. Here it was that he and Phyllis had lived joyously together and here she had died and 'gone to glory,' as she would have told you.

His only daughter, Chloe, had been born here and from here she had gone out (on her seventeenth birthday) with her young husband, Caesar Augustus Willing. Old Joe had never seen her since.

Before and behind the cabin there came sunlight every pleasant day. The mountains and the woods could not keep the sun from saying 'good morning' and 'good night' to the lonely occupant of the old moss-covered cabin.

The cabin door faced the east; from it old Joe could see the wondrous beauty of sunrise. Into the window in the rear flashed the glow of sunset.

Old Joe lived near to Nature's heart. He loved all the seasons, but Spring and Summer best. For years, after the labors of the day were over, he had sat in his old arm chair at the cabin door, watching in Springtime the beauty of the silent, sweet making of Nature's new garment, sprinkled with waking violets. He had watched, too, the gradual merging of Spring into the glorious beauty of midsummer with its wonderful skies and golden fields, its wealth of bloom, drinking in meanwhile the balmy, fragrant air with keen enjoyment.

Often as he rested by the cabin door he sang old plantation songs, accompanying these with melodious strains from an ancient fiddle that he had brought 'up Norf from way down Souf.'

But when I introduce old Joe to you his work days were over.

'De rheumatiz done got mah laigs,' he said to himself and to his dog Lige; 't'ank the Lawd it ain't got mah ole black han's.'

As for his 'ole black han's,' the 'rheumatiz' did have a grip on them, but it did not completely disable them, consequently the fiddle and the bow were still in evidence.

It was a sad day when the old man discovered that he could not take his regular semi-weekly walk to the village, a mile away, and a sadder one when he found out that he could not work in the field any more. A big lump that was even harder to endure than the 'rheumatiz' lay heavily on his chest and seemed to choke him.

'I dunno jes how I see gwine ter get along ef I cayant wuk any moah,' he wailed; 'but what cayant be cured must be endured.' Then the poor old faced brightening, 'but de Lawd is massiful en kin'. I kin trust him.'

And so, trusting the Lord and doing the best he could, the days of old Joe passed on. He groped around, attending to his own wants, each day it being more difficult to do so.

'I see gettin' awful lonesome fo' Phyllis,' he moaned, his lips quivering, 'awful lonesome; it's a mighty long time sence I saw Phyllis. An' I wondah whar Chloe stays all dese long yeahs—dese long yeahs. I spec' she mus' hev forgot her ole daddy by dis time. But I neber t'ought dat' Chloe'd forget her ole daddy. I wish she hadn't.'

He took his old fiddle and groped his way out of doors. He laid the fiddle down carefully on a bench and sat in his old arm chair. He was not watching the golden grain that

evening. He did not even hear the sweet good night song of a sleepy wild bird. He was living over bygone days 'way down in ole Kaintucky' and Phyllis was with him.

Oh, those mind pictures! There was 'massa's' old mansion, low, rambling, shining white among the green, its great columns covered with blooming creepers. The negro quarters. Ah, how dear this mind picture to old Joe! For Phyllis was always in it, dear, dear Phyllis. There came a faint whisper from his lips, 'Oh, Phyllis! oh, my honey!' He saw the dark faces aglow. He saw the mischievous pickaninnies. He walked with Phyllis through the lush blue grass and amidst the clover. He stood with her beside the fence of wild plum and persimmon. The pictures grew more distinct as he meditated. The smell of woods through the mist of years; the mistletoe; the tangled vines of many colors; the luxuriant bloom of a catalpa with the bees around it; the magnolia woods! Each and all of these were connected in his mind with Phyllis. Ah, the old 'Kaintucky' home! The old mansion 'whar massa lived and died'; the dear old log cabin in which he and Phyllis began married life together 'jess befo' de wah'; the wild turkey shooting; the deer hunt with young massa! Old Joe's heart would have been heavier than it was now had he known that the dear old Kentucky home was blotted from the face of the earth and that on that (to him) sacred ground were great barns devoted to cattle raising.

In 'ole massa's home' the latch string was always out. No caller, no visitor, whether friend or stranger, failed to receive a welcome.

'Deah ole miss!' he said to himself at thought of her ever present goodness.

He sat there in the gloaming in this reminiscent mood until day had deepened into night. Then he reached out for the old violin and lifted it up gently as if it had been a little child. His old, bent, lame hands fingered it fondly and then there came a melody, weird but beautiful, as if voicing his yearning thoughts of the dear ones gone. He was oblivious of his surroundings at this moment. He was living entirely in the past. He had no thought that anyone was listening to the old violin, but away down the old roadway two boys, spinning along on wheels, stopped to listen and admire.

'Who is it?' asked one in surprise to hear such music in such an out-of-the-way place.

'Oh, that's old Joe. He's an old colored man who has lived in a cabin somewhere around here for years.'

'I see, I see. Hush!'

The second speaker put up one hand, begging silence. He, too, was a violin player and extremely fond of music, but such playing as he now heard was beyond him.

The two boys got off their wheels and sat down by the wayside. Neither spoke. For a little while the music continued and then abruptly ceased. The boys looked at each other questioningly. The one who could play the violin was the first to speak. His voice seemed husky:

'That old man is a genius,' he said, 'and I'm sure he's in trouble. I can tell by the way he's been playing. Come on, Hal; let's go on and find out if he needs us.'

Hal Ford was the son of a farmer nearby, the other boy being his cousin, Ned Hill, from the city, two miles distant, who had come to the Ford farmhouse for a short visit. When Ned said, 'Let's go on and find out if he needs us,' he and Hal jumped on their wheels and raced on to old Joe's cabin. It was indeed as Ned had surmised. Old Joe needed them. They found him with the beloved violin grasped tightly in one hand, clinging to the door post with the other.

'Mah laigs seem to hev give out,' he replied to their questioning; 'I cayant seem to get in de do.'

The boys helped him in and to bed.

'De good Lawd must hev sent you,' he ejaculated as he fell back on his bed with a grateful sigh and a faint smile. 'De mis'ry in mah laigs made 'em stiff an' stumblin' like, but de good Lawd is massiful an' kin'; he sent you.'

He smiled upon the ministering boys in such a way that it brought tears to the eyes of the tender-hearted Ned, who felt as if he had received a benediction.

The old clock on a shelf in the corner struck nine.

'We'd better be going home,' said Hal; 'mother'll be worrying.'

'Then you'd better go,' was Ned's answer; 'I'm going to stay here to-night. Do you want me, old Joe?'

'Eh?' said the old man, his eyes brightening; 'want you? Course I does, but you musn't stay. You must go—go home.'

Ned, however, in the goodness of his heart, stayed. When old Joe fell asleep Ned laid down on an old lounge and slept, too. He was roused by the old man talking in his sleep. 'Phyllis' and 'Chloe' were the names oftenest on his lips. At dawn he wanted to get up and Ned helped him dress and go to his old arm chair.

'I wondah whar Chloe is,' said old Joe rather feebly.

'Tell me about her,' begged Ned. 'Do you want her?'

So old Joe told the story of how Chloe went away years ago with Caesar Augustus Willing 'an' neber come home.'

'Truth is stranger than fiction,' it is said, and a strange thing happened then. Ned jumped on his wheel and raced to the village, where he boarded the trolley and was whirled away to the city.

'Mother, he said, 'I've come for Chloe. You'll spare her, won't you?' and he told all he had seen and all Hal had told him of old Joe.

'But, Ned, dear, our Chloe isn't old Joe's daughter, you know,' she expostulated.

'Perhaps old Joe won't know, mother. He is failing, I can see that, and Chloe may comfort him.'

'All right,' said his mother; 'let Chloe go if she will, bless your kind heart!'

Before another night closed in Chloe, a kind-hearted, sunny-faced girl, was with old Joe, who was failing steadily, mind and body. At sight of her he fairly trembled with joy.

'Chloe,' he cried out, 'mah honey chile!'

His own Chloe had been in the other world for years, but he had not known—no need to tell him now. He was peacefully happy now that 'at las' Chloe had come to see her pore ole daddy who loved her so.' As for this Chloe whom Ned had brought, she ministered unto him as gently and lovingly as if he had been her own father.

Days passed on until there was nearly a week gone, days of great joy even amidst his pain and weakness, and then there came a night when, with one hand fast clasped in Chloe's, he passed on to the New Jerusalem. A light for a brief moment brightened his face as he opened his eyes and called out faintly but with joyful cadence, 'Phyllis! oh, mah honey!'

And then the light faded out of the old face and all was still. He was with Phyllis and Chloe and all was well.

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