

Angelica she had been magnificently christened, but "Jicky" was all that six years' wear and tear had left of the name.

"Well, who cares?" responded Joe, indifferently. "I wish every tater was a lump of gold, and I'd dig 'em up fast, I tell you! I'd fill my basket, an' all my pockets, an' my hat, and then I'd go—wouldn't ketch mespendin' it for old fields an' farms! I'd buy six black horses, an' a silver carriage to ride in, and have nice clothes an' gold-headed spectacles like the minister's, and a band to play for me, an' a circus all of my own, where I could go in every day without payin' nothin'; and I'd live in a great big house with a steeple to it, and eat mince pie and oranges all the time—"

"Joe! Joe! what keeps you so long? Hurry, now!" called a voice from the back door of the yellow farm-house.

"Well, I'm just a gettin' ready to hurry," said Joe, explanatorily to himself, reluctantly relinquishing his dreams for his hoe, and slowly rising upon the feet he had been planting. "A feller can't do nothin' afore he gets a good ready. There's four more taters, an' there's five. I say, Jicky, I'll dig 'em, an' you put 'em in the basket."

The immense bonnet bobbed assent, but there were such long rests between the short works, and so many experiments to try in the way of marksmanship, with the basket for a target, and the potatoes for ammunition, that, notwithstanding their united efforts, the summons again sounded from the house before they were ready to go.

A woman, flushed and tired with a morning's hard work, and annoyed with this long waiting, caught the basket before the tardy little feet that bore it had crossed the threshold, and said in tones, sharp with impatience:—

"Well, you did get here at last! What possessed you to stay so? It does seem to me that I can't set you children at anything but what you'll continue to hinder more than you help. Here, Joe, take this pail and bring me in some water—quick, now!"

Her hurried manner imparted no corresponding haste to Joe's movements. "Mother's always in a hurry," he soliloquized, discontentedly, as he took the empty pail and sauntered towards the well. "Don't see what she's always wantin' us to work for, if 'tain't no help, I don't!"

Up and down, in and out, from cellar to kitchen, and from kitchen to pantry, Mrs. Moore passed. There were so many things to do that it was no wonder she grew wearied, but she would let no sign of it creep into her unflagging step, and so it could but find expression in her face and voice. She was a woman of whom the neighbors always spoke as "smart and capable." She took pride in the name, too—in the

number of pounds of butter she sent to market every week, and in being "able to turn off a good day's work." Still, the reputation cost her something—a cost she never yet had stopped to count.

Joe came and sat down in the door-way. He was restless and uneasy that day, his thoughts continually travelling back to a disappointment of the morning.

"I don't see why we can't go to the picnic too! All the other boys and girls'll be down at the school-house this afternoon, helpin' make wreaths and banners, and learnin' speeches an' things to say."

His mother looked into the oven, and carefully turned the loaves of bread that were baking, but made no answer.

"I don't see why we can't go, too; say mother, why can't we?"

"You know very well; I told you this morning. Nothing will do but the little girls must all wear white, so I'd have to buy and make a new dress for Jicky; and then there must be cake and other things baked for you to carry, and I haven't got time to spend on such nonsense nor money either—that's all there is of it. You're better off at home anyway."

"That's what you always say, and I don't want to stay at home all the time, I want to go somewhere, and have some fun," persisted Joe, complainingly. "Can't I go up to the school-house and see what they're doing?"

"Dear me! yes, if that'll keep you quiet. I don't believe this oven is hot," and she crowded more wood into the stove.

"And can I put on my t'other jacket an' trousers?"

"No, you can't," was answered shortly—the mother was tired of being teased. "If you get 'em on you'll get 'em all stained and soiled, and then they won't be fit to be seen on Sunday unless they're washed. I can't be bothered that way."

"Then I won't go," said Joe, leaning his head back against the door-frame again. "I ain't goin' up there lookin' this way, when the other tellers 'll be fixed up—that's what I ain't!"

"Very well, you can stay at home, then; you'd ought to if you don't know that it's politeness and good manners that make any one respectable, and not what they wear. If you'd only behave as well as you're dressed, you'd do well enough."

"Behave like I'm dressed!" muttered Joe, surveying a pair of pants that certainly bore strong proof of maternal industry in the mending line. "Guess I'll have patched up politeness an' darned manners then."

"Joe!" exclaimed Mrs. Moore, severely, but Joe was walking off toward the barn and did not hear, and her culinary arrangements called for careful oversight, so she contented herself with seasoning