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He was not Black Clear Through

THE STORY OF A BRAVE MAN.

(Anne H. Woodruff, in the 'Ram's Horn'.)

He was only a colored janitor, well past middle age, but more active and industrious than many a younger man—a widower, and all alone in the world since the death of his only son, who had enlisted when the call for volunteers came, and after the 'glorious victory' which made the Cubans a free people, died of fever before his regiment started for home.

Jim was an 'old-time darkey,' respectable and respected; or at least respected by all those whose prejudices did not blind them to the beauty of disposition and of character which lifted him far above many whose 'whiteness' was only on the outside. Sold for a slave when he was eight years old, he had lived to see his old mother die in the freedom and comfort of his own free home.

Jim had only memories of kindness and affection from those who had been his owners in the old days in Kentucky, and often his eyes would light up with reminiscent fervor when he was persuaded to relate some story of his youthful exploits in company with young 'Marse Ralph,' who was about his own age. He was now a free man, but his childhood had been a happy one, and those kind friends had protected and cared for him as long as it was in their power. Now the old 'Massa and Missis' were under the sod, and the family scattered. Jim had nothing left of the past but memories, but he had a hope for the future—a hope which nothing this unkind world could do to dim, for it was founded upon a rock—the loving kindness, the faithfulness, the word of the Rock of Ages.

Jim was not an ignorant darkey. He had studied with 'Marse Ralph' when they were boys, and he took an intelligent interest in the affairs of the world. He was fond of reading, and contact with the world since his migration to the big city had sharpened his wits and broadened his mind. But he was black, and that was reason enough for enmity with a certain class of narrow-minded and prejudiced persons.

'I cannot see why Mr. Larson was a nigger janitor for these flats, when there are plenty of white men who would be only too glad to get the work,' said Mrs. Lansing to her neighbor who lived across the hall. 'Such an old hypocrite too—always so ready with his canting jargon. I hate niggers, anyhow, and cannot endure to see them around.'

'Jim is religious,' returned Mrs. Aiken, quietly, 'but I'm sure he is not a hypocrite. His greatest pleasure—and almost his only pleasure—he finds in his church. Why, I do believe, he gives the greater part of what he earns to that same little, colored

church, of which he is a very zealous and useful member. I like Jim.'

'Well, I don't,' snapped Mrs. Lansing. 'It makes my blood fairly boil when I hear him dictating to the children of the tenants. How niggers do love to show their authority when they get a chance! Only yesterday he sent Dicky and Doris out of the basement where they were trying to amuse themselves, as it was raining and they could not go outside to play. I intend to speak my mind pretty plainly to the landlord when he comes for the rent.'

'Why, Mrs. Lansing, Dicky would not keep away from the machinery, but was determined to meddle with the stops or valves—or whatever it is of the boiler; and Doris got hold of the matches, and was striking them where there was danger of their setting fire to the pile of kindlings,' exclaimed Mrs. Aiken breathlessly. 'My Bessie was there, and was likely as mischievous as the others. She told me all about it, and said he sent her away too, and I was glad of it. She said he was not at all cross to them, but told them quite

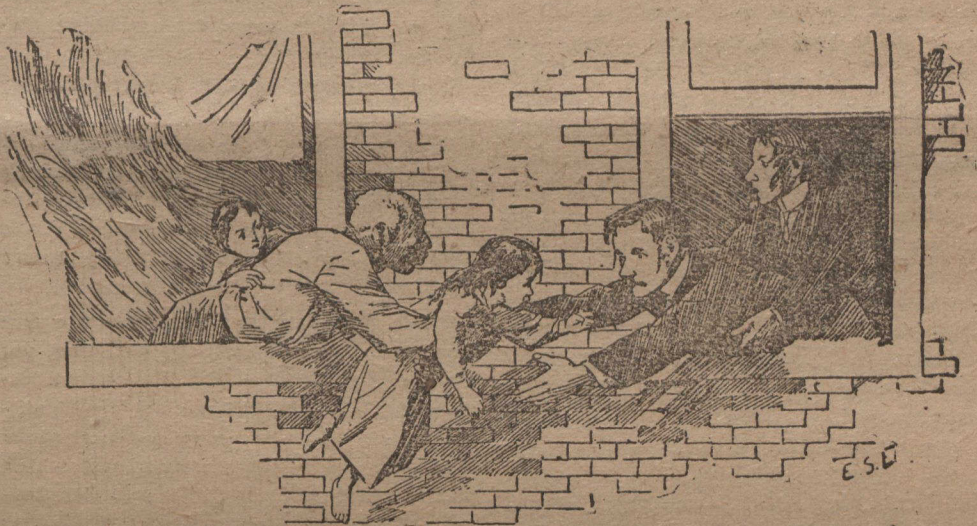
eyed twin sister. However, the next time he found it his duty to reprove them for meddling, Dicky also felt it his duty to assert himself. With a ridiculous swagger of his round, roly-poly of a body, and a saucy toss of his curly pate, he said:

'Doris an' me don't have to do what you tells us. Mamma said we don't have to mind a ole nigger. Didn't she, Doris?'

Doris nodded her head vigorously, and confirmed this statement with one monosyllable—'Yes.'

'Never mind, honey,' answered old Jim, good-naturedly, while he patiently and dexterously engineered the children away from the engine-room and toward the door. 'You don' hab to mine, mebbe, but dis ole niggah do hab to mine his boss, and he's got to shet up dis place right away. I don' s'pose you chillun wan' to be locked up heah all 'lone, does yeh?' and he skilfully manoeuvred them outside before they fully understood what he was about.

'I don' see what makes white folks so monstrous onreasonable,' Jim soliloquized, as he plodded slowly to his quarters



pleasantly that he was afraid they would get themselves and him into trouble.'

'Nonsense!' exclaimed Mrs. Lansing, with heightened color, annoyed at hearing what was to the discredit of her darlings. 'All he wanted was an excuse to show his power. Niggers can't stand having the least power. They should be kept in their place, and that is not ordering my children around,' and she retired to her own apartments in rather an unpleasant frame of mind.

The children belonging to the building really liked the good-natured, colored man whose laugh was so hearty and contagious. Mrs. Aiken was always willing to please them when it was in his power to do so without danger to the property and interests of his employer. Dicky and Doris, especially, found an attraction in his company; and their fondness for visiting the lower regions of the house, found its reason in this fact. Jim was fond of children, and his kind old heart readily responded to the advances of the sturdy little lad with the yellow curls, and his blue-

in the basement of the large apartment house opposite, which was also under his care, and where he lived. 'Poor Mistis Lansing don' know dat all black folks ain' black clar frough, no moah dan all white folks ain' white clar frough,' and he went to work to prepare his solitary supper, pondering deeply over this puzzling problem.

Jim had not noticed little Doris snatch a handful of matches from the box in which he kept them in the boiler-room. She was not allowed to handle matches when at home—they were always kept out of reach of the children—so this was an opportunity not to be neglected. The cunning little rogue kept them hidden under her white apron, but now that Jim was gone, she proudly displayed them before the astonished and admiring eyes of Dicky.

'Mamma 'll take 'em away from you,' he said, discouragingly.

'She won't see 'em,' retorted Doris. 'Don't you tell, Dicky, 'n' we'll light 'em when she don't see us.'