Our Boys and Girls.

THE BOY WHO HELPS HIS MOTHER

As I went down the street to-day I saw
a little lad
Whose face was just the kind of face
to make a person glad.
I saw him busy at work, while blithe
as a blackbird's song
His merry, mellow whistle rang the
pleasant street along.

Just then a playmate came along, and
leaned across the gate,
A plan that promised lots of fun, a
frolic to relate;
"The boys are waiting for us now, so
hurry up," he cried.
My little whistler shook his head, and
"Can't come," replied.

"Can't come! Why not, I'd like to
know? What hinders?" asked
the other.
"Why, don't you see," came the reply,
"I'm busy helping mother?
She's lots to do, and so I like to help
her all I can;
So I've no time for fun just now," said
this dear little man.

—*The Child's Gem.*

JOHN CROSSELY'S PARTNERSHIP.

"You'll be sure to come!"

"I'll be there unless something happens more than I know of now, Uncle John."

And thus admonished Pete bounded to make his plans for the evening.

"I'd give a cent to know what he is going to do about it," Pete whispered to himself as he hurried along. "Queer why he should ask me to come if he didn't mean to. But Uncle Jack is queer anyway."

So a great many people beside Jack thought. So, too, Uncle John himself had declared that very day, when Pete came suddenly upon him as he was trundling a wheelbarrow load of coal away from the little mine he owned up on the side of the mountain, with the question:

"Uncle John, folks say you are going to be rich some day out of the mine. Take me in partner, will you?"

Uncle John let the handles of his wheelbarrow down, and straightened up, just the faintest shadow of a smile showing itself on his face. He liked Pete. Pete was all alone in the world; so was he himself. No one seemed to care what became of Pete any more than they did what had happened to him. Take Pete in as partner? He could not think of anyone he would trust more.

"Don't know about getting rich, Pete," he said slowly. More than one way to be rich in this world. Money don't always do it. I have known lots of awfully rich men who were really as poor as Job's turkey.

"Well, I'm sure you'll be rich, anyway, Uncle John. Everybody is who has a coal mine."

"If I be, 'twont be the coal mine that'll make me so, Pete."

And Uncle John shook his head positively.

"You and I could dig a pile of coal in a day, Uncle John," Pete went on persuasively. "I wouldn't wonder if I could beat you."

He looked at Uncle John't poor bent back. It did not seem as though he could do much down there in the dark with a pick. And in fact no one knew of Uncle John's ever selling a pound of coal. He seemed to be content to get enough to keep his own fire going. That did not mean a great deal, for the old man's house was small, and his needs few. Often he did not build a fire in the rickety stove from one day's end to the other.

"Don't doubt that, Pete," Uncle John admitted with another shake of the head. "Don't take much of a man to beat me. The rheumatizh as doubled my back up 'most like a hop-toad." Uncle John laughed, and so did Pete, at this comparison. "But then, I'm a queer old fellow, and everybody knows it. I s'pose you hear 'em say so."

There was a question in the tone, and Pete wondered what he ought to say. It was true that many did not understand about Uncle John's lonely life. Some of these did say harsh things about him.

"Why does he not live like other folks? What is the use of his watching that old mine of his night and day? If he doesn't want to mine the coal himself, why does he not let poor people go there and help themselves? If he were not so mean, he would."

"We don't care what folks say, do we, Uncle John? They don't know, that's all."

"They don't know," Uncle John thought. "That's a wise thought, Pete."

Then he studied over Pete's proposition to become his partner.

"You never have been in the mine, have you, Pete?" he asked after a while.

"No, but I'd like to."

"You couldn't come over to-night?"

"If I don't get into some other job I could."

"Then I hope for this time the other job won't come, Pete."

And so Pete promised, leaving Uncle John to go on with his wheelbarrow.

* * * * *

When Pete turned up at Uncle John Crossley's coal mine that night he drove a good strong horse and rode in a stout cart. If you or I had seen him coming along the road, we surely would have thought he was prepared for business; and that is what Uncle John concluded as he came to the opening of his little mine, and peered out at the lad and his strange equipage.

"What in the world are you going to do, Pete?" the old man inquired.

"I'd like to know, Uncle John, whether you're going to take me in partner?"

Before the old man had time to answer Pete went on:

"Cause if you ain't, I've got to take this horse right back. But I'll tell you how I came to have him, anyhow. Then you'll know." And Pete hurried along with his story. "You see, I live with Miss Kent. She's an awful nice woman. When I was sick she just sat up with me night and day. She paid the doctor, too, and she's done lots of other things for me. Now she's sick herself, and there ain't any coal in the house. You know since the trouble came on at the mines coal has cost more than poor folks can pay, and now she is all out of money, and can't get any. And it is so cold nights, and there ain't any clothes on the bed hardly."

Pete was quite out of breath now.

"Well, Pete?"

"I was thinking that if you would give me a chance in with you somehow, I would give my share of what we could dig to-night to Miss Kent."

"But you won't get very rich that way, Pete."

"All right. I'd rather not have the money than to see Miss Kent shiver so."

For a moment there was silence.

"I'm going to take you in partner, Pete. Back the horse up to the mine and we'll see what we can find in there for Miss Kent."

"I told 'em! I knew you wasn't such a man as they said! Three cheers for Uncle John Crossley!"

"Hold on, Pete," the old man said; "you don't know me yet. I can't do much, my old back is so lame. You won't get enough to do much with alone."

"I'll dig as long as you let me! When you see the pile you will think I am going to rob you."

"Let it go then! If I could have dug it myself, the mine would be empty now. Now I have got a partner, I expect we shall dig it all out to-night!"

And Uncle John laughed. He knew the mine was a rich one, with coal enough to keep every man and woman in the township warm as long as they lived.

How Pete dug for the next hour! The sweat ran down his face, and his back began to ache. Uncle John with his knees on the cold earth dug what he could, and then rested while Pete filled the box of the cart well to the top.

"Don't let me take any more than my share, Uncle John," he cautioned as the old man urged him to take one basketful more. "We've got to dig as much for you yet, and this must be unloaded."

It was an hour before Pete came back. By that time Uncle John, toiling there on his knees, had dug enough to fill the box of the cart again.

"Are you too tired to load up again to-night?" he asked. "I would like to get my share out, too, before we stop. But you sit down and rest, and let me carry it out."

"I don't feel a bit tired now, Uncle John. It made me so glad to hear what Miss Kent said when I told her about the coal that I got rested in a minute. "I'll carry this out. But where are we to take it?"

"Pete, I have been thinking about some of the other folks around town who haven't coal to-night. We can't supply them all, but if we should take them a little each to-night, and more to-morrow, how would that do?"

"It would make 'em so happy they would all give it up that there never was such a good man as Uncle John Crossley."

Pete was filling his basket now, and soon the box on the cart was heaped full again. Then Uncle John and the boy started out through the dark to deliver the coal at the homes of the poor folks around the town.

"I don't see how you are to get very rich out of this, Uncle John," Pete said when the last basketful had been emptied and they were on the way home.

"I am richer now than you know, Pete," the old man said cheerfully. "You know I said this afternoon that money doesn't always make a man rich, nor the lack of it make him poor."

This thought gained a deeper hold upon him in after days, as he dug by the side of poor old Uncle John Crossley with his bent back. Now that he had a partner who could carry out his plans, Uncle John seemed to be eager to keep every family in town which was pressed with poverty and unable to buy coal during the trouble at the outside mines, well supplied with fuel. He was as happy as a boy.

"If I had not taken you in to be my partner, Pete, I should have been a poor man all my days. Now I am richer than I ever dreamed of being."

Pete knew now what his friend meant—his pocket was yet empty, but his heart was full.

And the time came when an old, old promise was made true with Uncle John and his boy partner: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The mine prospered wonderfully. Hundreds of men were employed in it; but never did either of "the partners" forget to give a share to those who had no money to buy with.

And this is the story of Uncle John Crossley's partnership.—*Pittsburg Christian Advocate.*

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A little boy watched the building of a new house across the street until his father asked him whether he meant to be a bricklayer. "No, father, but I am thinking what a small thing a brick is, and yet what a big house they build out of them." The boy had got the true secret of constructing a beautiful or a powerful character. It is by conscientious attention to the minute thoughts, words and deeds of every-day life.—*Cuyler.*

There are no sealed lips in either human or divine fellowship.—*J. H. Allen.*