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# LUCKY DAW

## THE STORY OF A PET CROW



by ADELAIDE PALMER





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Book 3

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“My, here is something nice for my collection”

[Page 82]

# BLACKY DAW

The Story of a Pet Crow

By  
ADELAIDE PALMER  
"

WITH TWENTY FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY DOROTHY SAUNDERS

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CHICAGO

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152.H.1-8-31

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# BLACKY DAW

## CHAPTER I

### THE STICK NEST

**M**Y earliest recollection is of a large, loosely woven nest of sticks in the top of an old elm tree. It wasn't much of a place to call home, but home it was to me. It was a very happy, crowded little home, for I was one of four baby crows that occupied this nest.

My old black mother was kept very busy providing us children with food. She and my father were on the go from early morning till late evening, foraging for things for us to eat. No matter how much they brought us, they were always greeted on their return by four open, red mouths. "My, my, will I ever get them filled up!" Mother used to say.

The more she carried the faster we grew. The faster we grew the more crowded became the nest. Mother was worried, for it would soon be time for her babies to leave the nest. She

was afraid something would happen to us before we learned to take care of ourselves. She was also worried for fear some one would rob the nest and carry away her babies.

When she started out she would say to us, "Now children, do be quiet; don't get to fussing around, for fear some of you fall out of the nest. If you see boys coming this way, be as still as a mouse. If boys find this nest, they will never stop until they have carried all of you away."

"All right, Mother, we'll be good," we always replied. We tried to mind Mother Crow, too, for we knew she was as smart as she was black. Of Father Crow I don't remember much, except that he was very handsome, with his black coat glistening in the sunlight. Mother provided most of the food we had to eat, though occasionally Father Crow would come with a fat field mouse or a small fish. I remember Mother's saying that Father was an expert fisherman, but a trifle "no-'count." But we were a very happy family, if Mother did provide most of the living.

One day, while Mother was away, we children heard a dreadful, loud noise in a cornfield near by. We wondered what it could be. After a





“Mother was kept busy providing us with food”

while Mother Crow came home. This time she had nothing in her beak.

“Hush, hush, children!” she said and crawled into the nest, hovering us with her wings. We could feel her heart beating. Surely something had happened. What could it be that had frightened her so?

After a long time Mother told us that the farmer who owned the cornfield also owned a dreadful thing called a shotgun. Mother had heard him talking one day when she had been in the cornfield looking for cutworms.

“If the crows don’t stay out of my cornfield, I will shoot one and hang him on the wire fence as a warning to all others,” he said.

“I don’t want to be that crow,” Mother had said to herself. She never went back to that cornfield.

When she told Father about it he just laughed.

“Saying is one thing; doing is another,” he had said, and went daily to the cornfield.

The noise we had heard was the gun. Father’s beautiful black coat was decorating the wire fence. A warning, Mother said, to all crows, big and little, as to what a man with a gun will do.



“Always remember,” Mother said, “to stay a long way from a gun and from a man.”

“We will always remember,” we told her.

We really did intend to obey our mother. The next day she was about early, hunting food for us four. Sometimes she would only have to go a short distance, but other times she would go a long way and be gone a long time. It was during one of these long absences that we little crows thought we would like to crawl out on the limb on which our nest rested. Oh, how fine it would seem to stand there and look around!

But what were those objects coming down the pathway by the brook?

## CHAPTER II

### STOLEN

**T**HERE were three of them. We knew at a glance they were the very things of which our Crow Mother had warned us. Their clothes were the regulation uniform of the small boy—gingham shirt and blue overalls. They ambled along, in the aimless fashion of one who is going nowhere in particular and has all day in which to get there.

My heart almost stopped beating, I was so frightened. Mother Crow had hidden the old stick nest away from prying eyes, but we had disobeyed her and left the nest. Now we sat in a row in plain sight of the woodland path. Our only hope lay in keeping so still that the boys would not see us. Our wild instinct told us that much, at least. But I reasoned without my small brother. When he saw those dreadful boys he became very much frightened. He crowded so closely against me that I almost fell off the limb where we were sitting. To keep from falling, I had to flap my wings, and I unconsciously



uttered a loud "Ah, ah!" which in crow meant, "Look out what you are doing."

Of course those boys heard me. I might as well have cried, "Come on, boys, and get me."

They looked up at my cry, and with one accord shouted, "Crows' nest, crows' nest!"

They immediately began climbing the tree.

We had all crept back into the nest by this time, heartily wishing we had minded our mother. What would those dreadful boys do to us? We were all wondering. On, on, they came, closer and closer, to the old stick nest.

At last a grimy hand was thrust in, and fingers closed about me. I did the best I could; I bit that hand with all my might. The boy it belonged to let out a howl of rage and called me a bad name; but he held on. Biting, flapping my wings, scratching with my claws, and "Ah, ah-ing!" loudly, I was taken from the nest.

I could not break that boy's hold, fight as I would; his skin must have been tough as raw-hide. I cawed loudly for Mother Crow to come and help us, but she was far away hunting food for us, all unconscious of the terrible fate that had overtaken her family.

What would they do with us? This was the question one of the boys asked. "Now that you've got it, what are you going to do with it?" was what he said.

By this time each boy had taken a young crow and they were all descending. When they reached the ground, Jim, the boy who held me, replied, "You asked me what I was going to do with it? Well, I'll tell you. I'm goin' to make a talking bird out of mine. Maybe sell him for some money when I get him trained."

"Crows can't talk," said one of the other boys.

"Crows can be taught to talk," answered Jim. "When Dad was a boy he knew some one that had a crow that could talk. All you have to do is to split their tongues and they can talk just like parrots."

"How dreadful," I thought, "to split a bird's tongue! How cruel!" I shuddered at the very idea.

"I don't believe any such story," answered the boy who held my little brother.

"Believe it or not, it makes no difference to me," said Jim. "Let's be going home. It must

be about supper time. I am as empty as air. Swimming makes a fellow hungry."

They walked along, each with a crow in his arms. The bit of woodland soon ended and they crossed a strip of pasture land. Coming to a wire fence, they crawled through and came out on the highway.

They ambled along in silence, stopping now and then to pick up small stones to throw at red-headed woodpeckers on the telephone poles. At last one of the boys spoke.

"Oh, I don't want this old bird!" he said, and threw my poor little sister over the fence into the near-by cow pasture.

Poor little sister! She had never yet used her wings for flying, but she instinctively spread them and saved herself a hard fall. She was so frightened that she "Ah, ah-ed!" piteously as she fell to the ground. A flock of crows in a field near by took up the refrain and cawed excitedly.

"I don't want mine, either," said the other boy, and he threw my little brother over the pasture fence.

I felt very unhappy, and wondered what was in store for me. Of one thing I felt certain. I



had seen the last of the old stick nest, my brothers and sisters and good old Mother Crow. Poor little me! Had I been human, I would have wept. It would be by the merest chance that I would ever see them again. In my heart I bade them all a sad farewell.

The boys followed the path, saying little. The wire fence was passed, and tall osage trees now lined the road on either side. Soon we came to a gate in the hedge. Two boys were at the gate, trying to make two cows pass through it, and still to keep other cattle in the pasture. With much loud "hey-ing" from the boys the two cows elected to pass. They went through the gate, and it was closed.

Then, and not until then, did the boys exchange greetings. The boys I was with hailed the others as "Toughie" and "Pete."

From their greetings I somehow gained the impression that Toughie was held in high regard by his friends, though I failed to see why. He was small and rather thickset. He had a funny little pug nose, merry brown eyes, and tufts of yellow hair showed through the holes in his battered straw hat. His clothes were in tatters, his



little fists were hard and his neck was short. One thing I noticed was that no one disputed with him.

His companion was as nearly his opposite as you can imagine. He was tall and slender, well dressed and clean, quiet in speech and manner.

What the other boys thought of him I could not tell, but in Toughie's presence, at least, they gave him the same deference they gave to Toughie.

"What have you there?" Toughie asked, as they finished closing the gate.

"Baby crow," Jim replied. "What'll you give for him?"

"Nothing at all," the other replied. "What do I want with a crow?"

"Make a talking bird out of him," said Jim. "Teach him to talk like a parrot."

"You can't fool me," argued Toughie. "Crows can't talk."

"Well, that's what most folks say," Jim continued, "but I happen to know different. You can just ask my dad, if you don't believe me."

"Well, I don't believe you," said Toughie, "and another thing, you can't sell him to me, because I don't want a crow."

This would have ended the matter if the boy called Pete hadn't at this moment spoken.

"Just how much do you want for your crow?" he asked.

"A dollar," said Jim, with a hopeful look at Pete. "I think that would be only a fair price."

"A dollar, indeed!" Toughie spoke in a scornful way. "Now, just understand this right now: no one cheats Pete while I am around."

"Now, you keep out, Toughie, when Pete and Jim are trying to make a deal," said the boy that was with Jim.

Toughie doubled up his fists and gave the speaker a look which silenced him immediately.

"Deal with Pete if you want to, but see that you deal fairly," said Toughie.

The bargaining began and lasted for some time, while the two cows, Boss and Daisy, munched tender grass at the roadside. At last a bargain was struck. Pete was to pay Jim ten cents in cash and give him an old bicycle tire for me, providing Pete's mother could be persuaded to give Pete the necessary ten cents.

As soon as an agreement was reached, old Boss and Daisy were hurried along to their respective





“Make a talking bird out of him”

cowsheds. When they had been properly disposed of, the boys went in a body to the home of Pete to see if the terms of the contract could be carried out.

“Mom, come here!” Pete called through the kitchen door. “Just see what I can buy for ten cents. Here it is! A real live crow for a pet.”

“O son, do you think you want that great, ugly bird for a pet?” a voice from inside asked.

“Sure I want him and what’s more I want you to give me the ten cents,” laughed Pete.

“Oh, I see,” said his mother, coming to the door. “I am to produce the cash for the transaction.”

After much persuading and coaxing, Pete’s mother said, “Well, I have heard that crows are very intelligent. I suppose you will have to have your own way, Pete. One thing, though, you must take all the care of him.”

And so I became the property of Pete and a member of Pete’s family.



## CHAPTER III

### MY NEW HOME

AS soon as the deal was closed, and I was properly turned over to Pete, Jim and his friends took their departure.

I began to look about to see what kind of a place I was in. I rather liked the looks of Pete and his mother. The other members of the family were a father, two sisters and a brother. The sisters and brother were small and seemed afraid of me, particularly when I opened my mouth for food, and flapped my wings at them. The "governor," as Pete called his father, behind his back, just grunted a little when he saw me. He didn't seem to care much about me. He stuck his finger out at me when Pete carried me into the house for him to see. I reached out and bit him to show him there was no love lost.

"Oh, what a bite!" cried the "governor."

Pete laughed and that made his father somewhat cross.

"Get him out of here, or I'll wring his neck," he said.

They didn't put me in a cage, as I was afraid they would. I was given the freedom of the place. At first I spent most of my time sitting on a fence post, just looking about, getting acquainted with everybody and everything. From this post I could see everything that went on in the back yard, and I could also see up and down the street. I was much interested in everything that went on in the whole neighborhood.

Very soon my wings began to grow strong, and I could go wherever I pleased.

The first thing I did was to explore the whole place. Remember, I was a crow, and crows have a large bump of curiosity. My curiosity sometimes got me into trouble.

The first thing I examined was an old dish pan that was set under the pump. I had seen Pete looking intently into it, and I wondered what could be so interesting. All I could see when I looked in was some small dark objects moving about in the water. What they were I found out later and relieved my master of the care of them; but that is a part of my story that will come by and by. I hopped into the pan and had a fine

bath. There was so much water in my feathers when I got through I could scarcely get out of the pan. Pete, seeing my predicament, set me on my fence post to dry. I shook and shook myself and was soon all right again.

While I was sitting there I saw a man and a woman coming down the street. I heard Pete telling Toughie that they were newly married and had rented a house in the neighborhood.

I waited until they were nearly opposite me; they hadn't noticed me sitting on the post, and I sounded the alarm.

"Ah! ah!" I cried.

They both jumped, and the woman blushed as red as a beet.

The man looked around, scowling, until he saw me on the post. He nudged the woman and said to her, "That was only a crow. See it, there, on the post."

Then they both laughed and told Pete they had thought some one was making fun of them.

I liked to sit there on the post and tell the family when anyone went by. I always sounded the alarm when a strange man, or a new dog or cat came into the neighborhood.

Another place aroused my curiosity. In the back yard was an old chicken house, which had been turned over to Pete to use as a pigeon cote.

As I grew older and stronger I had a great desire to visit this place.

I could see pigeons going in and out, and there was a constant cooing.

I heard Pete and Toughie talking about one old Dick Pigeon, as they worked on a new compartment for the pigeon cote. From what I overheard I gathered that old Dick had been having trouble with his wife, Plum Pigeon. It seemed she had deserted her husband and babies and had set up housekeeping with one Bill Pigeon. Faithful old Dick was taking care of the two babies, but his mournful cooing was getting on Pete's nerves.

"I have a notion to catch her and chop her head off," Pete told Toughie.

"Why don't you have your mother make her into a pigeon pie?" asked Toughie.

Toughie was always thinking of something to eat. He had no mother, and his father, like old Dick, was keeping house and taking care of his children.



I walked round and round the box the boys were working on. The boys drove me away when they saw me putting their nails into a crack in the well platform.

“Hey, you, stop that!” Pete said.

I decided I wasn't wanted there and flew to the door of the pigeon cote and hopped inside.

Oh, what a nice, interesting place it was! The walls were lined with boxes with doors in the front. I could see inside of them. In some there were old pigeons sitting on the nests; in others there were nests with two white eggs in them and still others held baby pigeons, some feathered and some not. As soon as I had stepped inside, the old pigeons had set up an excited cooing, but I paid no attention to them.

I went on peering into different compartments. At last I came to an interesting little house that held two babies about half grown. I was debating whether or not to try pigeon brains as food when, bam! bam! something struck me, first on one side of the head and then on the other. I was completely knocked off the little porch on which I had been standing, and fell to the floor of the pigeon house.



"Say, can't old Dick fight!" said Toughie

Before I had time to recover my senses it was after me again, beating me with gray wings and pecking me with a sharp beak. I finally got to my feet and made for the door as fast as I could, with that monster beating me all the way. I thought that if I could only reach Pete I would be safe; but I couldn't make it. The thing got on my back and was beating me over the head with its wings. I didn't know which way to go. I rolled over on my back and clawed the air with my feet.

The commotion had attracted the attention of Pete and Toughie and they came running to see the fight. They screamed with laughter when they saw me claw the air, and counted me out while I lay there, as a prize fighter is counted out.

"Say, can't old Dick fight!" cried Toughie.

"He surely can!" replied Pete, "but it's hardly fair to take his spite out on one so young."

Old Dick went back to the pigeon house, chortling to himself and muttering what he would do to me if he ever caught me around his house again. I understood what he said, though I don't speak pigeon. But I never gave him the chance he was looking for.



CHAPTER IV  
A NEW NAME

UP to this time I had been given no name. I was called "the crow," or "Pete's crow." This seemed to worry my master, though it gave me no concern. I could worry along, if need be, with no other name; but Pete wasn't satisfied.

One evening I overheard the family talking about it as they sat at the supper table. I was walking around in the grass just outside.

I heard Pete say, "I want to give him a name that will be appropriate."

"Well," said his father, "if it is an appropriate name you want, you will have to name him for some thief. I never saw such a sly, thieving imp as he is. The other day, while I was at work in the garage, he flew to the work bench where I was working and tried to steal the very nails I was using. If he were a human, he would be a bandit or a highwayman."

"Oh, that's nothing," answered Pete. "The other day when Toughie and I were greasing the wagon wheels, we laid the cotter pins, that



hold the wheels in place, on the well platform. Well, when we got ready to put the wheels on again, that crow had carried the cotter pins away; we haven't found them all yet. He had hidden some of them in a crack in the well platform. He sure loves to hide things."

"You might call him Pat Crow," said Father. "There was once a notorious criminal by that name."

"Oh, I hardly like that name," his son replied, "though I have to admit it would seem quite appropriate."

"Why not call him Blacky Daw, after George Randolph Chester's famous character, Blacky Daw?" Mother offered.

"I think I like that name much better," said Pete, and the conversation drifted to other things.

When Pete came out of the house he began calling me Blacky Daw, and from that time on I was Blacky Daw, or just plain Blacky. As far as color was concerned the name fitted me. I was black, there was no mistake about that. From the tip of my beak to the end of my tail I was one solid color; even my toenails were

black. You have heard the saying, "black as a crow." Well, I know of nothing any nearer one color than a crow. Only when I opened my beak could you see that I wasn't black all the way through.

A few days after I had been named, Pete's dad came home about the middle of the afternoon.

"What's the big idea?" shouted Pete, as he ran out to the car.

"I think I'll lay off from work this afternoon and go fishing," said his father.

"Are you going over to Davis City?" asked Pete.

"Yes, I think we will," answered his father. "Willis is going with me."

"Dad," said Pete, in a very earnest and pleading tone, "if there is room in the car, can Toughie and I go, too?"

"Just whatever your mother says about that. I don't care," said Father.

"Hooray!" called Pete to Toughie, who for once happened to be at his own home across the street. "Dad says we can go fishing with him."

"Hold on, young man, you haven't asked your mother yet," said his father.

“Oh, I will,” Pete replied, “but I know she will let me go.” And running into the house he shouted, “Mom! Mom! Dad said he would let me go fishing with him if you will just say I can; I can, can’t I, Mom?”

“Why, Pete, tomorrow is Sunday. What shall I say to your Sunday-school teacher, if she asks me why you are not there?” said Mother.

Pete’s face took on such a doleful expression that his mother had to laugh.

“Now, Mother,” pleaded Pete, “every time I want to do something, it’s Sunday, and I have to go to Sunday school instead.”

“No, Pete,” said his mother, “that isn’t true. I don’t want you to feel that way about Sunday school; some mothers would not think of letting their boys go fishing on Sunday. But you are my boy and I do with you as I please. Now, if you promise not to ask me again this year, I will let you go this time.”

“Come, Pete!” called his father, “if you are going, help me get ready.”

I was much interested in the preparations. A lot of stuff I had never seen before was brought out of the house and laid on the grass. I exam-





“What a fine place to put things!”

ined each article as it was put there. There was a nice, shiny lantern, and a net with large corks on one side and small leads on the other. I heard Pete's dad say they would use minnows for bait, whatever that meant.

I tried to pull the leads off the net, but they were fastened on too tightly for me.

Then they brought out several rolls of strong cord, with hooks fastened to the ends of the cord. I tried to pull some of the hooks off, but couldn't.

A large stone jug was the next thing they carried out. I tried the cork and found it was loose; I pulled the cork out and looked down into the jug. "My," I thought, "what a fine place to put things!"

I looked about for something to put into the jug. A cinder path led to where the car stood.

"The very thing," I said to myself, and began to drop cinders into the jug. I was having a good time when Pete's dad saw me.

"Here, you Blacky Daw!" he cried and threw a stick at me. "Stop that, or I will wring your neck."

I dodged the stick and flew to the limb in the old pine tree where I sat until they drove away.

## CHAPTER V

### A TASTE OF FISH

**I**T was rather lonesome after Pete and Toughie left. The little brother was there and rode his tricycle up and down the sidewalk, but he was no company for me, not like Pete and Toughie. Oh, my, no! Whenever they were in the yard I was right with them, interested in everything they did.

The next day was Sunday. Mother took the children and went to Sunday school. I was dreadfully lonesome while they were gone. It seemed that every one else was gone from the neighborhood, too. The fat neighbor came out of her house, dressed in a bright blue dress with ruffles, got into her car and went to church.

Little Brother cried because he had to walk. He was used to being taken to church in the car, and it made him angry to think he couldn't ride.

I put in the time looking about. I visited the fat neighbor's front porch; there were flower pots set in a row along the edge. I examined these carefully and decided to use one of them



for my collection. I found the head of an old, dead sparrow and put it in there. I knew where there was a bit of blue glass and a brass button; I hunted these up and deposited them with the sparrow's head.

There was a cushion on the seat of a rocking chair on the porch. I looked this all over to see if I could tear it apart, but it was made of good, strong cloth, so I gave up trying to see what was inside of it.

After a while Mother and the children came home, and things brightened up a bit.

About the middle of the afternoon the fishermen returned.

Pete's mother and the fat woman were sitting in the yard in the shade of the trees, for the day was hot.

Pete jumped out of the car and ran to where his mother and the fat neighbor were sitting.

"Mom, come and see what we have here," he called to her.

Pete's dad was untying a sack from the running board of the car. The fat neighbor, Mother, myself and the children followed Father around the house. Father emptied the sack on the

ground. Several long, slimy things fell out.

“Didn’t we have good luck!” said Pete’s dad. “Just look at this one. I’ll bet he weighs three pounds, and these two close to two and a half each; all channel cats, too. Say, but the fish were biting fine! I almost hated to come away when we did.”

“Yes, you certainly had good luck this time,” replied his wife. “This will make up for some of the times you have gone and caught nothing at all. But who is to clean the slimy things? That is usually my job, but I draw the line at doing it Sunday afternoon.”

“Nobody’s asking you to clean the fish on Sunday afternoon. I’ll do it myself,” said Father. “Get me the whetstone, Pete,” and, going into the garage, Father came back with a clean board in his hand.

Father spent some little time getting his knife ready. He sharpened and sharpened, until his knife would cut like a razor, almost. Then, with Pete’s help, he proceeded to skin the fish.

I wanted to help, too, but was brushed aside.

It was when the head was cut off that I got my first taste of fish.

How delicious it was! I thought I had never tasted anything so good in all my life. Only one other thing had I tasted that was half so good, that was cheese. How I do like cheese!

When Pete looked around and saw me, he tried to take the fish head away from me; he was afraid I would get a fish bone in my throat and choke to death. But I held on and cawed loudly at him.

Pete and his dad thought this very funny, and both laughed at me.

“Let him alone,” said Pete’s dad. “Can’t you see he is very fond of raw fish? Lend a hand here and let’s get this job done. I am hungry and tired.”

After they were through with the fish Pete’s dad buried all the fish heads, but I had had all I wanted to eat.

After the fish were dressed, Pete washed his hands and went out to where his mother was sitting with the fat neighbor.

“Well, Pete, what kind of a time did you have?” asked the fat neighbor.

“Oh, pretty good,” answered Pete, “only I got rather tired. Toughie and I lay down on the



car seats and we slept most of the night.”

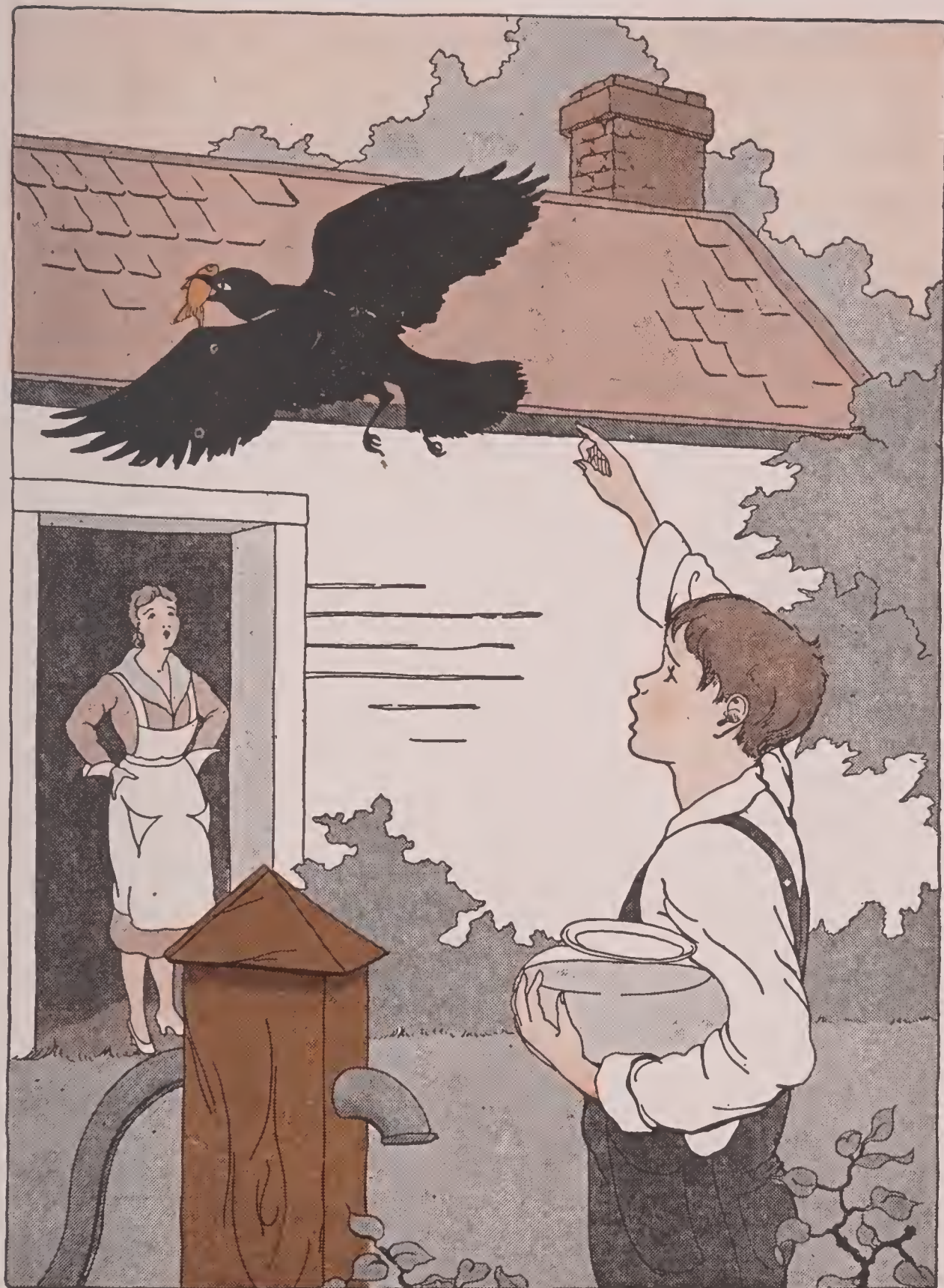
“Pete,” said his mother, rising, “I think you had best come into the house and I will get out something for you to eat. And then you can lie down and take a nap, if you are tired. You could not rest very well on the car seats, of course.”

The next day I made a discovery. The small objects in the pan under the pump were fish. While I was sitting on the edge of the pan helping myself to Pete’s minnows, Pete himself came out of the house carrying a big glass bowl. He emptied the bowl into the old dish pan, and my attention was attracted to a bright object that came out of the bowl and swam around in the pan.

My curiosity was aroused at once; I reached down and caught it in my beak. Pete made a grab for me, but I was too quick for him; I flew to the top of the house with Pete’s goldfish in my beak. Pete let out a scream of rage and ran into the house for his mother.

His mother came out with a piece of cheese in her hand and called to me—

“Here, Blacky, here, Blacky!” she said, and one calling was enough.



"I flew to the top of the house with Pete's goldfish"

As soon as I saw the cheese I let go the fish and flew down to get the cheese. The poor little fish fell from the top of the house to the ground. Pete ran to where it lay and picked it up and put it in the old dish pan, but it turned over on one side. I guessed it was quite dead.



CHAPTER VI  
FATHER'S KEYS

WHEN Pete found out that all his minnows were gone from out the old dish pan he was so angry that he seemed almost ready to kill me. He doubled up his fists and swung his arms in a threatening manner and jumped up and down in a way that frightened me.

“You black rascal,” he said, “you ate them all; you did it just for meanness. You have plenty to eat without eating my fish.”

“Ah! ah!” I said, by which I meant “I’m sorry;” and I *was* sorry, too. But if Pete could have known just how good those fish tasted to me, I don’t think he would have been so hard on me. Pete was always pretty good to me.

The incident of the fish was soon forgotten. I was accused of something much worse than eating Pete’s minnows.

Pete’s father had lost his keys, and he accused me of finding them and hiding them. It seemed that the blame for everything fell on me. The last time the governor could remember having

them was the day he cleaned the fish, on the platform of the well. He could remember taking them out of his pocket when he took out his knife; he couldn't remember putting them back. He thought they were left on the well platform. He just knew "that rascally crow" had picked them up and hidden them, goodness knows where.

"Pete, I have a good notion to wring his neck," I heard him say.

That was what he was always going to do when he was angry with me. His threats didn't seem to scare Pete at all, but they scared me. I flew to the limb of the old pine tree and there I sat while the family hunted. The whole place was searched, all the unlikely places and most of the likely ones were carefully looked into.

Pete, at his father's request, got out the lawn mower and mowed most of the yard. He got down on his hands and knees and looked in the grass around the well, but no keys were to be found. Pete's dad stormed, his mother looked worried, and Pete looked very unhappy. Altogether it was a dreadful day.

The fat neighbor came out of her house and wanted to know what the trouble was. I heard





“Here are your father’s keys,” she said



Pete say, "We are afraid Blacky has hidden Dad's keys."

"Well, that's too bad," she said, "but Blacky is a rascal and he certainly loves to hide things."

There it went again, "Blacky is a rascal." My, how sick I was getting of that word rascal! Named for a rascal, and everything I did was rascally.

After a while, to the relief of everybody, Pete's dad got into his car and went to town.

I overheard him telling Pete's mother, before he left, that he could get into his office, but that he couldn't get into the vault and get his books.

Pete and his mother continued the search for a while after he left. Some boys came to play with Pete, and his mother went about her work and the search was abandoned.

Pete and his friends went swimming and didn't come home till late afternoon. After he had been home a while, I heard the fat neighbor calling him. I went to see what she wanted with Pete.

Pete came running.

In her hand she held that precious, shiny, jingling object I had found and so carefully hid-

den with the rest of my collection. That woman had found my treasures and was now holding out to Pete the prize of my collection.

“Here are your father’s keys,” she said. “I found them in my geranium pot on the front porch. If you lose anything else, it might be well to look there for it. Blacky has put a lot of stuff there,” and she laughed heartily as she said it.

So that was what all the trouble was about—that shiny, jingling object was the bunch of keys Pete’s dad had made so much fuss about, and I was the guilty one after all. Well, well, there was nothing I could do about it now.

Pete’s mother heard the fat neighbor and Pete talking and she came out of the house and told Pete to take the keys and go to town and give them to his father.

“He can’t get into the vault and he might need to,” she said. “You may stay and ride home with him, if you want to.”

I set about looking for a new hiding-place for my collection. Before Pete and his dad came to supper I had moved it to the hole in the dead limb of the old apple tree, where the chickadee had left her nest.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE KINGBIRD AND THE ORIOLES

I DON'T know why it was so, but all the birds seemed to look upon me as their deadly enemy. Without exception they would make a terrible fuss whenever they saw me.

The pigeons hated me like poison. I never went about the pigeon house after the time old Dick gave me such an awful whipping. I didn't relish the idea of a second encounter with him.

One day, when I was peaceably walking about, minding my own business, I was attacked by three orioles. Two of them were orchard orioles and one was a Baltimore oriole. They made such a fuss that the family heard them and came to see what the trouble was about. Then they all just stood there and laughed at me, because I was so helpless.

I simply could not defend myself against those little pests. They were so much smaller than I, and so much quicker on the wing, that I just had to stand there on the ground and take their punishment, much as I hated it. The three took turns





One day I was attacked by three orioles

darting down at me, pecking me and flying back to the old plum tree. I couldn't recover from the attack of one before another was at me, beating me with its wings, pecking me, and all the time keeping up the angry, piercing cries that had attracted the family's attention.

It was funny to the folks, but most embarrassing to me. I wished I was almost anywhere else than where I was. I watched my chance and ran under the well platform. This made the folks laugh harder than ever, but I didn't care. All I wanted was to get away from those frightful little pests. I stayed under the platform until I was pretty sure they were gone away.

The Baltimore oriole had a nest in an old elm tree, down the street a little way. That nest was built out on the very end of a limb where I couldn't get at it, or I would have tried to even scores with him. I would have found out how young oriole tasted. The oriole knows what he is doing when he builds his nest as he does.

I had another encounter with a small bird about that time, that made the fat neighbor laugh at me again.



## THE KINGBIRD AND THE ORIOLES 49

One day, when I was flying around, not doing any harm, a kingbird got after me. Now, if you know anything about a kingbird, or bee martin, as this bird is sometimes called, you know that he is a great fighter and crows seem to be his especial abomination. This kingbird seemed to be angry with me for some reason. I headed for the house as fast as my wings could carry me, hunting for a place to hide.

Now, you no doubt know that a kingbird can fly much faster than a crow, and this one flew around and around me, all the time uttering a sharp, angry cry.

I circled around the house twice, "Ah! ah-ing!" for Pete to come and help me. The second time I came around the house, I saw the fat neighbor sitting in a rocking-chair on her front porch, fanning herself with a large palm-leaf fan. I knew she was my friend and would help me. I alighted on the porch and scurried under her chair.

I know that kingbird is still wondering what became of me. He could never dream of a crow taking refuge with a human being. How the fat lady laughs every time she thinks of it!



CHAPTER VIII  
GREEN CORN

**T**HAT fat neighbor and I became fast friends. I used to visit her every time I saw her in her garden, or sitting on her porch in her rocking-chair. She would talk to me as though I were a human being. I liked her very much.

When she worked in her garden, I followed her around, and begged for the nice, fat angle-worms she would uncover with her hoe. I also had a fondness for cutworms. She was never too busy to stop and point them out to me. I always thanked her by saying, "Ah! ah!" in a way which was crow for "Thank you."

She had a wonderful garden. Everything grew in nice, straight rows. There were vegetables of all kinds, and she had flowers planted among the vegetables, which made it very attractive to me.

As summer wore on, the garden blossomed with the colors of the rainbow. You know crows are very fond of color. I spent much time in the garden, just walking about looking at everything, and seeing what I could see.



I was very fond of corn



When she gathered her peas I was right on hand to help, and I would help her shell them. I always enjoyed this very much. I liked to watch her open the pods and take out the little, round, green balls. Sometimes she would open a pod and hold it out for me to see. I would look at it, with my head first on one side and then on the other, say "Ah!" and carefully select a little, round ball. I would hold the peas in my mouth until I had a mouthful, then I would fly away, and hide them somewhere and come back for more. Often I would have to change my hiding place several times before I would be satisfied that I had found a safe place.

"Mrs. White, I can always tell when you are going to have roasting ears for dinner," Pete's mother laughingly told her fat neighbor one day.

"How can you tell?" asked Mrs. White.

"By the noise I hear Blacky Daw making in your garden," answered Pete's mother.

"Well, that's pretty good," replied Mrs. White. "You know Blacky Daw and I are great friends and he wouldn't miss helping me gather my corn for anything."



“I would call it more of a hindrance than a help,” said Mother.

But what Mother had said was true. I did follow Mrs. White about as she gathered her green corn, “Ah! ah-ing!” every step we took.

I was very fond of green corn, and in the top of almost every ear there was a nice, fat, green worm.

After the fat neighbor had gathered her apron full of ears of corn she would go to the bench by the smokehouse and sit down. I always hopped to the bench beside her. As she opened the ears I “Ah! ah-ed!” loudly for the green worm I was sure to get.

The children thought this a very funny performance, and we usually had an audience.

Pete’s mother said, “Mrs. White is certainly very patient with Blacky Daw. I look upon him as something of a nuisance.”

CHAPTER IX  
WASH DAY

AS summer wore on, and I became better acquainted with the family, every day brought new pleasures to me. The different members of the family did so many interesting things, and my curiosity was aroused in so many different ways so many times, that life at Pete's house was very pleasant indeed. I wouldn't have traded places with any crow in the world.

As I have already said, I sometimes got into trouble by being too inquisitive, and perhaps I was a nuisance, as Pete's mother called me.

There was one day in the week that was always my delight. That day always started early, with a lot of pumping of water. There was a lot of going in and out of the back door; and then the washer would start with a brisk, busy sound that I loved. Pete always stayed around to be near if he was needed; this always pleased me, because on other days he sometimes went to other boys' houses to play.

One Monday morning in particular the wash-

er was started early and everything seemed to be going well, when all of a sudden that washer stopped, for no cause that I could see. I could hear Pete's mother scolding, and if I had been as wise as some folks think I am, I would have gone to the top of the pine tree and stayed there the rest of the day.

Instead I stayed around waiting to see what would happen; pretty soon I heard Pete's mother calling Pete's dad on the 'phone; she said a belt, or something, had broken on the washer, and would he please come home and fix it. I knew she was out of sorts, by the tone of her voice. I could always tell by Mother's voice just what to expect. If she spoke in a low, quiet voice, she would be very kind to you; but if her voice was high and loud it was better to stay away until she calmed down. Most of the time she was in a good humor, but once in a while, when anything went wrong, she made things hum for a while.

After a while Pete's dad came home, and I could hear him tinkering around in the kitchen. By and by the washer started again and Pete's dad came out of the house and went to town.



There was a lot of high-pitched talk in the kitchen, and I noticed that Pete and Toughie stayed in the back yard by the pigeon house.

Mother came out of the house with a big basket of clothes, set them down and began to wipe off the clothesline. I walked over to where the basket sat, jumped in and began walking about on the nice, clean clothes. I saw some shiny pearl buttons sticking out and tried to pull them off.

It made no difference to me that my feet left tracks on the snow-white clothes. At first Mother didn't see me, but just went on wiping off the line. When she finished with the line, she turned to the basket and saw me in it.

"Here, you!" she said. "Get right out of there!" Reaching in she caught me by the neck and threw me as far as she could. I wasn't hurt, but I was rather taken back, because Pete and Toughie saw the encounter and both of them laughed at me.

"Now all those clothes will have to be rinsed over again," said Pete's mother, "and all because of that crow. It's enough to make anybody cross, I do declare. It seems as though everything has



Whenever I found a loose pin, I pulled it off

gone wrong today," and picking up the basket she went into the house.

"Got yourself into trouble, didn't you?" said Pete to me as I came up to where he and Toughie were sitting on the well platform. "Maybe you will learn after while to stay where you belong."

Mother came out of the house again carrying the clothes basket and proceeded to hang the clothes on the line.

I waited until she had finished and had gone back into the house before I went near the clothesline. When the screen door had slammed behind her, I flew to the line and walked along, trying all the clothespins. Whenever I found a loose pin, I pulled it off and dropped it on the ground; sometimes I let the clothes down on one side and sometimes they fell to the ground. I was having lots of fun balancing myself on the line, when Pete's mother came out of the house and saw me. When she saw those clothes lying there on the grass, she almost screamed, she was so angry.

"Now, Pete," she said, "this thing has gone far enough; my patience is just about gone. You will have to shut that bird up in the old



squirrel cage until these clothes are hung out, dried and brought in."

"Why, Mom," argued her son, "I can't catch him."

"Go in to the house and get a piece of cheese," ordered his mother. "You know you can get him into the squirrel cage with that."

Without further argument Pete did as his mother told him to do.

When I saw what he held in his hand I came running to get that tempting, yellow morsel, "Ah! ah-ing," loudly.

The rest of that long summer day I spent behind bars.

CHAPTER X  
THE PARTY

THE summer days came and went in swift succession. The longest days of the year had come and gone and now the hot weather of July was upon us.

I heard Pete and Toughie planning for a celebration of some kind, that was to be held on a day called the Fourth. Pete seemed to be counting the days. I heard them each day checking off a day. My curiosity was aroused; I wondered what it was all about.

On the day before the fourth, Pete came out of the house carrying a large bucket with a handle on one side. He set it down in the shade under the plum tree. Pretty soon the ice wagon stopped, and the iceman came around the house carrying a large piece of ice in his tongs.

“Where does your mother want the ice?” he asked Pete.

“Over here by the freezer,” answered Pete. “We are going to use it right away.”

When the iceman had gone Pete began to

break the ice up into small pieces and to put the pieces into the bucket that had the handle on the side. While he was at work Toughie came in sight around the house.

“What you doing, Pete?” he asked.

“We are going to freeze some ice cream,” Pete answered. “Today is my sister’s birthday, and she is going to have a party. Do you hear Mom beating eggs?”

The boys listened and the sound of the egg-beater could be heard in the kitchen.

“Well, she is making cake, angel-food cake, with pink frosting, and the ice cream is to be crushed strawberry.”

A hungry, wistful look came into the eyes of Toughie.

“Say, Pete, it must be nice to have a mom and birthday parties,” he said.

“Well, yes, it is rather nice,” Pete replied. “I’m fond of angel-food cake myself. I’ll tell you what we will do; you help me with the freezing of this ice cream and I’ll see if I can’t get Mother to let you come to the party.”

“It’s a go,” said Toughie, “for that I’ll help,” and he began to roll up his sleeves.



Of course I helped with the ice cream freezing all I could, too. The boys had a lot of fun with me when I tasted the salt, and they laughed because I didn't seem to know what the ice was. You must remember I was a young crow and had never seen a winter yet.

There were other preparations besides the fixing of the ice cream. Rugs were brought out of the house and laid on the grass under the old apple tree. Chairs and cushions were also brought out and placed in the shade.

On one of her trips out of the house I heard Pete's mother giving Pete and Toughie instructions how they were to act at the party.

"Now, boys," she said, "do behave yourselves, and don't let's have any trouble this afternoon. There is only one little girl coming that I have any doubts about. Whatever you do, don't get into trouble with Elizabeth Smith."

"Is that little imp invited to the party?" asked Pete. "She is always trying to make trouble. I don't see why you had to go and ask her; she will just spoil everything."

"Well," answered his mother, "I couldn't very well leave her out. All the little girls in Louise's

room are invited, and another thing, you know, Mrs. Smith and I are very good friends. Nevertheless, I am aware of the fact that Elizabeth is an extremely difficult child to get along with. Now, try to have no trouble with her.”

“All right, Mom, we will do the best we can,” said Pete. “But all the same, she would better let me and Toughie alone.”

Toughie was the first guest to arrive at the party. He came shortly after dinner. He was so dressed up that I didn't know him. As he came around the corner of the house I thought he was a stranger and began to caw at him. Pete heard me and came out of the house to see what I was cawing about.

“I guess Blacky didn't know me,” said Toughie.

“Well, no wonder,” said Pete, “you must be setting out to make a hit with one of the little girls.”

“Not exactly,” said his friend, “but I don't often dress up, for the reason that I feel much better the other way.”

This statement I believed, for Toughie looked awkward and uncomfortable in his good clothes.

The guests began to arrive about the middle of the afternoon. Some came in cars and some walked, pushing perambulators in which were big dolls. All were dressed in pretty, light clothes.

I greeted each guest, and looked the dolls and perambulators over carefully. It began to appear as though we were going to have a dandy good time. I was very happy indeed. Little sister noticed this and said, "Blacky thinks this is his party instead of mine."

I noticed one little girl in particular. She had black eyes and shiny, black hair. She had also a bold, hard look about her that I didn't like at all. The children all called her Elizabeth, and I knew she must be the one about whom Mother had talked to the boys. She tossed her head when she saw Pete and Toughie. She tried to tease me by poking me with a stick, until Pete told her to let me alone. I took a dislike to her at once.

There was a good deal of laughter and noise and the children ran around the yard playing games. Some of the little ones sat around in chairs and played with their dolls.



After a while they played a game called "Drop the handkerchief." I got in the middle of the circle and had a great time walking around trying to get the handkerchief myself. At last I saw my chance. The handkerchief was dropped near me, and the little girl, behind whom it was dropped, hadn't seen it yet. I flew around her, grabbed the handkerchief and flew to a high limb in the old apple tree.

"Here, you, Blacky, come back with that handkerchief!" Pete called to me, but I paid no attention to him.

Pete ran into the house and came out in a minute carrying a piece of cheese in his hand. I dropped that handkerchief at once and flew down for the cheese. The handkerchief stayed in the tree top, and Pete had to go to the garage and get his father's bamboo fish pole to get the handkerchief down before the game could go on again.

They played a while longer and then Mother came out of the house and told them all to be seated on the grass, for she was going to serve the refreshments.

Mother and Mrs. White came out of the

house carrying plates with slices of cake on them. They were just starting to serve the ice cream when the awful thing happened. I had been walking around behind the children, and I came up behind that girl Elizabeth, who had teased me with a stick. She happened to be sitting next to Toughie at the time. Well, you know I didn't like her, so I reached over and gave her as hard a pinch as I could.

She never looked around to see who had done the pinching, she just took it for granted that Toughie was the guilty one. Jumping up, she began raining blows on Toughie's head. At first Toughie was too astonished to move, then he jumped up and gave her a mighty push that sent her tumbling heels over head among the children that were seated on the grass.

There was screaming and the cracking of dishes, and I "Ah! ah-ed!" loudly, for I was much pleased with the situation.

Somebody said, "Hey, there, Jitney Bus, look what you are doing."

Elizabeth had been angry before but now she was furious; she hated to be called "Jitney Bus." It was a name they had given her at school.

Her name had been changed from Elizabeth to Elizabus, then to Jitney Bus. I didn't blame her for being angry. Well, angry she was and no mistake. Little Brother had a small, red chair of which he thought a great deal. He called it his standing chair, because he used it to stand on when he wasn't tall enough to reach what he wanted. This little chair had been brought out of the house for the party. Elizabeth scrambled to her feet and looked about for something to hit Toughie with. Her eye fell on the little red chair. Quick as a flash she grabbed it and swung it over her head and brought it down on Toughie's head with a sounding whack. One of the rounds was broken in the contact.

Now Pete's little brother could yell louder than any other child in the whole neighborhood, and when he saw what had happened to his chair he threw back his head, opened his mouth and let out a loud roar.

"My standing chair! My standing chair!" he cried.

Just at that moment Pete's mother came out of the house with a tray full of sherbet glasses



of ice cream. She was so surprised that she almost let the tray fall.

“Why, children, what on earth does this mean?” she asked. “Elizabeth, put down that chair this minute.”

“Mrs. Walker, you just wait till you know what he did,” cried Elizabeth excitedly. “He pinched me right there,” indicating the place with her hand.

“Mrs. Walker,” begged Toughie, “honest and truly, I hope to drop dead if I am not telling the truth, what she says is a lie made up out of whole cloth. I never pinched her. I never thought of pinching anybody.”

“You did, too!” stoutly affirmed the little girl.

“I didn’t,” said Toughie. “You just ask some of the other kids. They will tell you I didn’t.”

The other children, when referred to, did not seem to know much about it, until one little girl spoke up and said, “It was Blacky Daw that bit her. I was looking right at him and saw him slip up behind Elizabeth and bite her. She thought Toughie did it, that’s all.”

“Well, children,” said Pete’s mother, “all get



I stuck my beak in his ice cream



seated now. Here is your ice cream. Pete, you and Toughie may have yours on the front porch, if you like."

"Yes, Mom, we would rather eat there," Pete said. "We have had enough of kids' parties for one day."

I walked among the children as Mother served them. When I got near Little Brother I reached over and stuck my beak in his ice cream; I wanted to see what it tasted like. I couldn't see what there was about ice cream for people to make so much fuss over. It was kind of sickeningly sweet and I didn't like it one bit. Neither did Little Brother like to have me eating out of his dish. He threw back his head and opened his mouth to yell, but Sister, knowing what was coming, ran into the house and returned with another dish for him. Then he quieted down.

After they had finished eating they played a little longer; then they all went home, after wishing Little Sister many happy returns of the day.



## CHAPTER XI

### FOURTH OF JULY

**T**HE next day was the Fourth of July. It was the first one of the kind I had ever seen, and if I live to be a very old crow I hope I may never see another just like that one.

The day began very early, with a lot of noise in the direction of town. This noise made me very sad, for it reminded me of the time when Mother Crow had told us that Father Crow would never come back to us.

When Pete had had his breakfast, he and Toughie sat out by the well platform and shot off a lot of things they called firecrackers. The shooting scared me and I went to the top of the old pine tree, and stayed until they left for town.

I could hear the band playing, and boys shouting; but all pleasure was taken out of the day for me by the dreadful boom, booming that went on all the time. I felt sure that it was the guns that Mother Crow had warned us about.

After breakfast Father took Little Brother

up town with him, in the car. When they came home Little Brother had a beautiful red balloon fastened to a string. I could tell by the way he walked that he was proud of it.

I really meant no harm when I took that string out of his hand, but you could tell by the way he yelled that he thought I was trying to murder him. He made so much noise that his father and mother both came out of the house to see what the trouble was, and I flew to my limb in the pine tree to get away from the noise. When Father and Mother saw me with that string in my mouth they both thought it was funny and laughed.

“I’ll get him to come down,” said Mother, and she went into the house for cheese.

When I saw the cheese I opened my beak to say “Ah,” and when I opened my beak, away went the balloon. Little Brother shrieked at the top of his voice when he saw his balloon sailing away in the sky. Father and Mother were powerless to stop Little Brother’s crying. They tried everything, money, candy, fire-crackers, ice cream; but Little Brother wouldn’t be comforted.



I really meant no harm when I took that string



At last Father got into his car and took Little Brother to town and bought him a new balloon. This one only lasted a short time. Brother himself accidentally broke it. It went off with a terrible bang, and nearly scared me out of a year's growth. The funny thing this time was that Brother couldn't tell what had become of his balloon, and kept crying, "Where is my balloon? Where is my balloon?"

Father thought this was funny at first and laughed, but after a while he got tired of it and threatened to spank Brother if he didn't keep quiet.

Along about noon Toughie and Pete came home; they brought a lot of firecrackers with them, and kept up a constant noise. I had grown used to the noise by this time and was not so much afraid as I was earlier in the day. I didn't stay in the top of the tree as I had intended, but came down and examined the ends of firecrackers that were in the grass.

Pete and Toughie put firecrackers in cans and shot them off. This made a great deal of noise and the boys seemed to think they were having a fine time.

“Now, I am going to shoot off this great, big cannon firecracker.”

It was Toughie who spoke.

“Now all of you get out of the way.”

The smaller children ran for the house. Pete and Toughie bent over the firecracker and lit it, then they jumped back. The thing sputtered and then seemed to go out.

“Wait a minute, Pete,” said Toughie, as Pete started forward.

Pete hesitated, and as he stood there waiting, I flew down and picked up the big red thing in my beak.

“Here, you, Blacky Daw, do you want to get your head blown off?”

It was Pete that spoke.

With a quick blow he knocked the cracker out of my beak.

Just as it touched the ground it exploded with the most dreadful sound I had ever heard in all my life. I thought I was a dead bird that time for sure.

I was so stunned I didn't know anything for a few moments. When I came to myself I flew to the top of the pine tree, and you can be sure

I stayed in the tree that time for the rest of the day. Pete and Toughie thought this was very funny and tried to coax me to come down, but that was once that even cheese wouldn't bring me to the ground.

The family all went to town that afternoon and there was no one about the place but the pigeons and me.

When the family came home to supper it was much the same as it had been at noon.

Pete and Toughie went back to town after supper, but the rest of the family stayed at home, because the smaller children went to bed early. Everything got quiet in the neighborhood, but I could still hear that boom, booming up town. After I went to bed in the old pine tree, and was just settling myself for the night, I was awakened by a dreadful roar. It seemed to me that a monster made of fire rose from the earth and soared right up into the sky, then broke with a loud noise and a shower of little hissing demons fell to the earth. There were other things went up into the sky that night, bright lights and balls of fire that frightened me very badly. I didn't sleep much; it was almost morn-





The firecracker exploded with the most dreadful sound

ing before it was all over, and the town got quiet so I could sleep.

I had an exciting time that Fourth of July. Pete may like celebrations, but I don't. The next time I think I will go to the woods and stay until it is all over.

## CHAPTER XII

### DAD CLEANS HIS CAR

AS the long summer days wore on, I began to hear talk of a trip the family intended to take. First it was Pete telling Toughie of the wonders of auto camping at the Minnesota lakes. The next I heard of it, Pete's dad was talking to a neighbor about overhauling his car before he went north on his vacation.

The neighbor that Pete's dad was talking to was a mechanic who worked in a garage up town. He offered to clean Pete's dad's car the next Saturday afternoon. Now Pete's dad was something of a mechanic himself and he thought, by working with his neighbor, the two of them could do the work in a short time and save a large bill at a garage. So a deal was struck, and Saturday afternoon was the time set to do the work.

So, when Saturday afternoon came, Pete's dad changed the usual order of things. He wanted to take advantage of this chance to get the car overhauled, with the help of his neighbor. In-



stead of going to the golf grounds as had been his custom for the weekly half holiday, he drove the car up the alley and into the back yard. He backed the car under the old box elder tree and left it there. The day was hot, for it was mid-summer, and he wanted to work in the shade.

He went into the house and pretty soon he came out dressed in the worst old overalls I had ever seen; they were ragged and torn and splashed all over with white paint; he had on an old, faded shirt, and an eyeshade over his head in strips. I purposely mention that eyeshade, for the next day his head was sunburned in strips and so sore he couldn't wear a hat. I think I failed to mention that Father's head is almost bald.

He was soon joined by the neighbor, who was also dressed in work clothes.

They began by draining the radiator and laying the hood and other parts on the grass.

Of course I was much interested by all this preparation. I walked about looking at everything and trying to lift things, but they were all too heavy for me to move. Father laughed when he saw me trying to pick up something.

“A little heavy for you, isn’t it?” he said.

He immediately became interested in what he was doing and paid no more attention to me.

Father went into the house and came out with one of Mother’s pans in his hand.

“We will put all the bolts and nuts in the pan,” he said to the neighbor, whom he called Bill.

Just then a little child came around the car with a cracker in his hand. When I saw the cracker, I flapped my wings and “Ah! ah-ed!” for a bite.

The child acted as though he was afraid of me and drew away. I reached up and took his cracker away from him and began to eat it myself.

The child started to cry loudly for his cracker. Father looked around and saw what I had done.

“Well, what do you know about that?” he said. “That crow has taken that baby’s piece from him. Blacky, you are a thief and no mistake.” Then he drove me away.

The man called Bill looked around and spoke to his child. “Now, quit your crying and go home to Mamma and get another cracker. But

don't you come back, or Blacky will get you."

Father and Bill both laughed and the little boy went home howling.

"I can't have him bothering around," said Bill. "I won't get anything done, if I have to look after him."

"My, here is something nice for my collection," I said to myself, as I turned my head first on one side and then the other, to look at what the pan contained. I picked out the brightest article in the pan and flew with it to the old chickadee's nest in the apple tree, where I kept the rest of my treasures.

After I had carried several things to the chickadee's nest, I grew tired of going so far, and busied myself hiding them in the cracks in the well platform; also I hid some in the grass and some under dandelion plants. (See frontispiece illustration.)

Father just happened to look around and saw me, as I was covering one over in the grass. He never said a word but came over to where I was, reached down, caught me and carried me over to the old squirrel cage, put me in and shut the door.



“Now, maybe that will hold you for a while, you black rascal.” He had called me that before, and I didn’t like it, although I didn’t know just what it meant.

“Oh! how that crow can bite!” I heard him telling the man called Bill, as he went back to his work.

Mother and the children walked home from church. When the children came into the yard, they cried, “Look! Blacky is shut up in the squirrel cage. What’s the matter, Father?”

“Matter enough,” replied Father. “If any-one of you lets Blacky Daw out before I finish this car, you will get licked. Licked good and proper, too.”

About the middle of the afternoon Father and Bill started to put the engine together again. They didn’t get very far when they missed a bolt; they hunted and hunted. They even crawled around on their hands and knees and looked in the grass; they found several that I had hidden, but not the one they were looking for. The longer Father looked the angrier he was. He called Pete and made him help, just because I was Pete’s crow. After they had

hunted for some time they quit, went over to Bill's house, got out his car and went to town. They were gone some time, and when they came back they had a lot of bolts and nuts. At last they found one to fit and went on with their work. They didn't get very far when they ran into the same trouble again. This time Pete found the missing bolt in the grass. "Well, that's good luck!" said Father. "I think if you hadn't found that bolt, I would have killed that crow."

"I don't think you ought to be so hard on Blacky," Pete said, "he doesn't know any better."

"Well, I will know better than to start any kind of work like this until after he has been shut up next time," said Father.

It was night before that car was put together; in fact, it was several days before it was finally put into running order again.

All that long afternoon I had to sit on the perch in the old squirrel cage.

## CHAPTER XIII

### AT GRANDMOTHER'S

**T**HE family was preparing for the journey into the north woods.

Pete's mother had hay fever and they always went north in the late summer for her benefit. Every one looked forward to this trip with great pleasure, for it was a camping trip to the Minnesota lakes.

Then the question arose: "What will we do with Blacky Daw? He can't be left without some one to look after him."

Pete settled that, however, by asking his grandmother to care for me while he was away.

The night before the family left, Pete took me in his arms and carried me over to Grandmother's.

Now Pete's grandmother was a very nice old lady, but she had some funny notions. One was that if she turned me loose, I would wander away and get lost. She thought the world of Pete and she intended to keep me safe until he returned. She had a screened-in porch at



the back of her house, which was used at night as a bedroom by Pete's Uncle Bob. Grandmother sometimes sat there in the daytime. She covered Bob's bed with newspapers and shut me up in the porch.

I amused myself by walking up and down on the bed until I had made a little hole in the newspaper with my claws. "Oh, what a dandy place to hide things!" I said to myself. "I must look around for something to hide."

My eyes fell on a pair of shoes with buttons on them that Grandmother had left in the sleeping porch. I tried to pull the buttons off, but they were fastened on tightly. I looked down into the shoe. "Ah, another nice place to put things," I thought.

I spied a basket of clothespins sitting in a corner. "The very things!" I said to myself, and taking one in my beak I dropped it into the shoe; then I went for more.

After I had filled each shoe about half-full of clothespins I grew weary of the sport, and was looking about for something else, when the door opened and Grandmother came in with a pan of water in her hands, and set it on the



“Ah, another nice place to put things”

floor in the sunshine. "Ah! ah!" I cried, meaning "Thank you," and I jumped in and had a fine bath.

It was a good thing Bob's bed was covered with newspapers, or it would have been good and wet, for I threw water all over that little screened-in porch.

While I was drying my feathers in the sun, Bob himself came home. He didn't like the idea of my being in his bedroom, in fact, he was kind of cross about it. I heard him tell Grandmother he would lock me up in the barn until he could fix up a cage for me.

The very idea of his putting me in a cage both scared me and made me angry. I made up my mind I would fight being put in a cage the best way I could.

Pretty soon he came into the porch and tried to catch me. I kept out of his reach. At last he got me into a corner and grabbed me around the body. I fastened my beak on his thumb and pinched it with all my might. Just then he stepped into the pan of water, slipped and fell. Just as he hit the floor I heard him mutter something that sounded like the words I had



heard Pete's dad say when a mousetrap went off and caught his fingers.

Just then Grandmother appeared at the door and asked, "Why, what's the matter, son?"

"Matter!" snapped Bob. "Why, nothing at all, Mother, nothing at all." He scrambled to his feet, still holding me tightly in his hands.

He carried me out to the barn, put me in and slammed the door shut and I heard a key scrape in a lock.

Oh, how abused I felt! I longed for the family to come back, and take me home again to the back yard. I longed to see the old apple tree under which the squirrel cage stood, the plum tree at the well, the pine tree where I used to sit and look up and down the street. I would have been glad to see old Dick Pigeon, even. But most of all I wanted to see my master, Pete. I wondered how long a month would be.

After I had sat on the work bench in the barn, where Bob had put me, I don't know how long, my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness. I began to look around to see what kind of a place I was in.

The barn was large and rather dark, but I

could see a row of cans sitting on a shelf. I went over to where they were and looked into them. Some of them had lids on and some hadn't. They were cans of paint. I looked around to find something to put into them. On the floor of the barn stood a coal hod about two-thirds full of those things that grow in the garden, called onions. I had heard Grandmother say that she had pulled her onion sets the day before. I got down and looked those onion sets over. "These are the very things!" I said to myself. "Won't she have a time finding these?" I spent most of the afternoon carrying onion sets and putting them into the paint cans.

The barn was also used for a garage, and Bob's car was standing there in the driveway. After I had grown tired of carrying onion sets to the paint cans, I carried some and hid them in the cracks around the seats of the car. I found a little place where the upholstery was torn, and I amused myself for a while by pulling out the stuffing. I laughed to myself when I thought of what Bob would say when he saw what I had done.

I had such a good time with that stuffing

that I completely forgot that I was a prisoner.

When Bob came home that evening he had a large dry-goods box with wire over one side of it. I was put into this and there I had to stay until the family came home from their trip.

Perhaps you think I wasn't glad to see the family when they got back. I was glad to see my beloved master and I was also glad to have my freedom given to me again.

One funny little thing happened while I was with Grandmother. I heard Bob say to his mother, "Every time I get into my car I imagine I can smell onions; I am almost ashamed to ask anyone to ride with me. I can't think where the smell can come from."

"Well, son," said his mother, "Blacky Daw carried away about two-thirds of my onion sets. Perhaps he has hidden some in your car."

Another thing—what Bob said when he saw that stuffing strewn about can't be put into this story.



## CHAPTER XIV

### SCHOOL

**F**OR more reasons than one I was glad to see the family when they got back home again! I grew so tired of that old dry-goods box the month they were gone, I didn't know what to do. There lay most of the trouble; there was nothing to do but walk around and around in that box. My! how sorry I feel for wild birds that are shut up in cages all the time.

Grandmother was as kind to me as she knew how to be, and gave me plenty to eat, and I had a bath each day. Aunt Lou was kind also. She hunted fat, green tomato worms for me each day. She wasn't at home all the time, so I took to watching for her. I always greeted her with "Ah! ah!" to let her know I expected something from her.

But I was a prisoner and all the green worms in the world could not make up to me for that. Grandmother loved Pete very dearly, and for that reason did not intend to let anything happen

to his pet while he was away. I understood it all perfectly. Grandmother's intentions were good, but it was pretty hard on me to be shut up in a box.

The family stayed as long as they could in the north on Mother's account. They arrived home late in the evening of Labor Day, looking more like Indians from a reservation than white people.

Pete lost no time in coming after me. He sat on the porch for a while telling Grandmother about their trip; then he took me in his arms and carried me home.

It was dark when we got there. Pete set me on the perch in the old squirrel cage. There was light enough for me to see that he left the door open. When he got into the house I flew out of the squirrel cage to my own especial limb in the old pine tree. Oh, joy! I was home at last and I was free. I hoped it would be a long time before the family took another trip, or if they did that they would take me.

The next morning the family were all up early. There was a lot of commotion about getting the day started. The folks had driven in

the night before and left the car just as it was, and that had to be unpacked before Father could go to town in it. Most of the camping outfit was thrown on the grass to be put away later. I walked all over this and examined everything. There was a lot of talk in the house, about clothes being soiled; and Pete had worn out his shoes on the trip, so he had to take a ride to town to get new shoes before he could go to school.

Little Sister was to go to school for the first time. Some of the neighbor children came in to accompany her and Pete to the schoolhouse. Altogether there was an air of excitement about the place that pleased me much. It seemed so good to be at home once more, and to have interesting things going on about the place.

After a while the children came trooping out of the house. A thought came to me: If it had been lonesome while they were away on their camping trip, why wouldn't it be lonesome with them in school? Why not go to school with them? The more I thought of this, as I watched them going up the street, the stronger grew my desire to be with them. At last, just as



they turned the corner, I gave in to that desire and did what I had never done before; I took to wing and followed them.

I flew from tree to tree until I caught up with them; then I flew down to walk beside them.

Pete was somewhat surprised to see me. At first he laughed, as though it was funny for a crow to go to school. He changed his mind when some of the others asked him what he would do with me when the bell rang and he had to go into the schoolhouse. Then he scolded me and tried to make me go back home.

When he tried to catch me, I flew to a near-by tree and waited until they started on. Then I came on a little behind them. The school was not far away. When the children reached the school grounds, I flew to the ground, and walked around among them. You should have heard the children shout when they saw me.

“Oh, look! Blacky Daw has come to school!” they cried.

“Ah! ah!” I answered, which meant, “Yes, yes! here I am.” The boys wanted to know of Pete in what grade I would be.

“I don’t just exactly know,” Pete said; “but he is smarter than some of you think. Blacky, say your letters for the boys. Now begin. Say A, Blacky.” “Ah!” I said.

“Now say B,” said my master.

Again I answered “Ah.”

And so it went on until Pete had gone through the alphabet, I saying “Ah!” after each letter.

Soon after we had finished the alphabet a bell rang and the children all ran to the door, formed a line and marched into the schoolhouse, leaving me alone on the school grounds.

“Now, you go home, Blacky,” were Pete’s parting words to me.

Go home, indeed!

Well, that wasn’t what I had come for. Neither had I come to be by myself on the school grounds. I was going to go inside and find Pete, no matter how much trouble I got into.

For a while I walked around on the playground. I could hear some talking, and after a bit some children began to sing. I looked up and saw that the sound came through an open window. At Pete’s home all the windows had screens, but, oh, joy! this one was without any.

I flew to the window sill and sat there for a moment, just looking about. The teacher didn't see me at first, but just went on with the singing. The children that sat near the window left off looking at their books and looked at me. They stopped singing and some of the little girls commenced to giggle.

"Ah! ah!" I called loudly in greeting to everybody in general.

My, how that teacher did jump!

"Oh, my!" she said. "What a dreadful, big, black bird! What is he doing here?"

"It's a pet crow and it belongs to Pete," a little boy spoke up and said.

"Well, it has no business in the schoolroom," she said.

Just then I spied a box of nice, white chalk on her desk. I flew over to where it was and began to take the pieces out, one by one. I knew I wouldn't like that teacher one bit, the minute she called me a dreadful bird.

"Here, you!" she screamed in a high-pitched voice, and she started to brush me off the desk with her hand.

She didn't frighten me at all. I just reached



out and caught her by the flesh on the back of her hand and pinched with all my might. Her hand wasn't tough like Pete's dad's or Uncle Bob's. It was soft and white and easy to pinch.

She didn't scold like Uncle Bob did the time I pinched him, but how that woman did screech!

A man that the boys called the janitor came running in to see what the trouble was. He took hold of me and I let go the teacher's hand to bite him instead. He carried me to a window and put me out and closed the window. That didn't bother me at all. I simply flew to another window and started to come in. That man, the janitor, met me there. He gave me a quick shove with his hand, and before I could do anything he closed that window.

I sat there a few moments, then I "Ah! ah-ed!" my good-by to everybody, took to wing and flew around the schoolhouse.

I flew to the sill of the first open window I came to. I looked around. Oh joy! there sat my master at a desk close by.

I "Ah! ah-ed!" loudly at him and flapped my wings. He was in the act of dipping a pen into an ink bottle.



"It's a pet crow and it belongs to Pete"



At my cry he turned his head, and when he saw me his face turned as red as fire. Every other head turned, too, at my greeting, and some of the boys began to laugh.

“Well, what have we here?” asked the teacher, a tall, thin woman with thick-rimmed glasses.

Before anyone had a chance to answer I flew to Pete’s desk to examine that ink bottle. Pete reached out his hand to catch me, but I gave him a peck. Taking the ink bottle in my beak, I started to fly to the open window. But I wasn’t quite quick enough. Pete grabbed me and I dropped the bottle.

There was a pretty little girl sitting in front of Pete; her yellow bobbed hair was about the color of molasses candy, well pulled. The ruffled white dress that she wore must have been her Sunday best, probably the occasion for her wearing it being her first day in the eighth grade.

I happened to be just above her head when I let go of that ink bottle. Since this was the ink bottle’s first day in school, too, it was full. Most of the ink spilled on the top of the little girl’s head, and what didn’t stay there ran off and was



absorbed by her white dress. I couldn't have hit her more squarely if I had tried.

The little girl screamed, and I bit and scratched and flapped my wings, trying to get away from Pete, but Pete hung onto me.

The teacher came back to where we were and asked Pete if I belonged to him. Pete, in a shamefaced way, replied that I did.

"You may be excused if you will take your pet home. The schoolhouse is certainly no place for a crow," said the teacher.

"You may be excused, too, Annie, if you want to go home and change your dress. I hope your mother knows how to remove ink stains from clothing," she said to the little girl.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE PATCH ON THE CAR

**P**ETE brought me home from school and I spent several days in the old squirrel cage for punishment. My, how I hated to be shut up! But I had had a lot of fun going to school, and I had that to remember.

While the family had been camping, the car had been driven under a tree and a hole had been torn in the top. Pete's dad decided to fix the hole himself and save the price of a new top.

One day at noon he came home with a bolt of tape and something in a little can. He got out the stepladder and set it up beside the car. Next he cut a patch from the bolt of tape. Climbing to the top of the stepladder he stuck the patch on and started to brush it over with the stuff from the can.

I was interested in everything that went on around me, and this performance interested me very much. I flew to the car top, got up close to see what he was doing. He slapped at me



He picked up an apple and threw it at me



with the brush he was using and I flew to the top of a near-by tree.

When he had finished he got down off the stepladder and carried it to the garage. He then went into the house to dinner.

I gave him time to get well started in his meal, before I went to look at what he had been doing.

I flew to the car top and walked around the patch several times, trying to get a corner loose. I had just succeeded in raising one corner when I heard the children calling their father.

“Daddy, come quick! Blacky is pulling your patch off.”

Pete’s father came out of the house like a cyclone. He left the door open behind him. He stopped just long enough to pick up an apple and throw it at me.

I saw the apple coming, jumped up in the air and let that apple pass neatly under my feet. If Dad hadn’t been so angry, he surely would have hit me, but anger spoiled his aim.

As my feet touched the car top again, I took a firm hold on the patch, gave a yank and flew to the top of the elm tree, while Dad was look-

ing around for another apple to throw at me. Father called me some names and shook his fist at me, as I sat there in the top of the tree.

Mother came to the door and asked him to come in and finish his dinner.

“I’ll not eat another bite until I have fixed that patch, and then if that crow pulls it off, something will surely happen,” declared Father.

He went around the house and came back carrying the stepladder. This he sat up again beside the car, cut another patch and proceeded to stick it on. Then he spoke to the children.

“Now, you children watch and tell me if that crow lights on the car, and call me quick.”

But I was too shrewd to go back while anyone was watching. I watched my chance and took it off when no one was about. I knew that I had had a close call when Dad had thrown that apple at me.

We had a great time, Dad and I, with those patches; about as fast as he put patches on, I pulled them off. He fumed and fussed and threatened to do dreadful things to me. Finally he went and bought a new car top, and ended matters that way.

## CHAPTER XVI

### KIDNAPED

PETE had many visitors. In the evenings after school, and on Saturdays, the yard was full of boys and dogs. There had always been plenty of excitement during vacation, but now that school had started there was more than ever. Boys came that I had never seen before.

I heard Pete's mother telling Pete's father about some one calling our yard a "residue." She laughed when she told it, and said the person meant *rendezvous*, but Father laughed and said that residue was the correct name for our back yard. He also said he thought Pete was a trifle democratic in his tastes. His friends were boys and dogs of all colors and kinds.

I knew all of Pete's friends, and was fond of most of them. Occasionally a boy would try to tease me, but as a rule they accepted me as one of them and I was allowed to go about among them unmolested. Even the dogs that got used to me let me alone.

One evening I had a shock that left me wor-





Something had been thrown over me

ried. Who should come into the yard, carrying papers, but that boy Jim who had stolen me from the stick nest in the old elm tree? I knew him the minute I laid eyes on him. I would never forget that ratlike face, nor his talk about splitting my tongue. It gave me cold shivers just to think of it. I somehow felt that he would be just the person to do such a cruel thing.

He stopped a while in the back yard to talk with Pete. He seemed much interested in me and wanted to know all about me, and he offered to buy me back.

“Sell Blacky! Well, I guess not,” I heard Pete say. “Why, I wouldn’t take a thousand dollars for him. He is the smartest and cutest crow that ever lived. There could never be another like him.”

“Well,” said Jim, “you had better take up my offer and sell him while selling is good. Something might happen to him.” Somehow the way he said it sounded like a threat to me. “Remember, I offered you perfectly good money for him.”

“I’ll not sell him,” said my master indignantly. I could feel those evil, covetous, ratlike eyes

watching me; and I also felt a foreboding of trouble. Every evening when he would bring the paper, Jim would stop a while to talk with Pete. I somehow knew he was watching me for a purpose.

The nights were getting cool. Summer had passed and the night air had a hint of frost in it. I had left off sleeping in the top of the pine tree; I found the fat neighbor's coal shed much more to my liking.

One evening Jim was particularly late about bringing the papers. I was just going to my roost when I heard him coming. I had a feeling that he had found at last where I roosted. In the night I was awakened. Something had been thrown over me, and I was being lifted from my perch. I tried to bite, scratch, flap my wings, caw, but was powerless to do anything. It seemed to me that I was wrapped in a boy's coat; my beak was held firmly, so I could make no outcry.

I was carried for some time, and then I was unwrapped and set upon my feet in a dark place.

“Now, you be good and stay where you are.” It was the voice of Jim that spoke.



## CHAPTER XVII

### ADRIFT IN THE WORLD

I SAT where I was until daylight came. When it grew light enough for me to see, I began to look around to find what kind of a place I was in. I made up my mind to one thing; I wouldn't live with that boy Jim, if I could help myself. I would get away at the very first opportunity. I was very much afraid of Jim. There was no telling what he might do to me. I was afraid he might try to split my tongue, as he once talked of doing.

I found that I was in an old coal shed. I walked around to try to find a place where I might get out, but there was no opening large enough for me to squeeze through.

I flew to the rafter where I had spent the night, and sat there waiting. I knew that sooner or later some one would open that door.

By and by I heard footsteps on the walk outside. I got ready to escape. I could hear someone fumbling with the latch, and then the door was opened by Jim.

Just as he stepped inside I went out, over his head. He grabbed at me and said some cross words. Fear lent speed to my wings. He called to me, but I only went the faster. One thing only did I want, and that was to get as far away from Jim as possible.

I flew over houses and barns and trees. I flew for what seemed to me a long time, just in an aimless way. After a while another thought came to me. Perhaps I could find Pete's house if I flew long enough.

On and on I went, hoping to see some familiar object, but none of the houses had I ever seen before. I was lost. Oh, how I longed for a sight of the old back yard!

I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the pine tree where I was wont to roost. If I had only continued to roost in the pine tree, instead of going to Mrs. White's coal shed, all would have been well. Wild birds always sleep in trees; why couldn't I have been satisfied? If I could only get one glimpse of the old back yard and my beloved master, Pete, how happy I would be!

A flock of pigeons flew past me. A thought

came to me. Maybe some of them were Pete's pigeons. I turned and followed them. I would be glad to be polite to old Dick Pigeon, even, if he'd be so kind as to show me the way home.

The pigeons alighted in the street, and I flew down among them. They were all strangers and took to wing as soon as they saw me.

I was so tired and thirsty that I just sat where I was. A small boy came down the street with a dog. The dog barked when he saw me, and the boy stooped and picked up a stone.

"Oh dear, what is going to become of me?" I thought, as I again flew away. Poor little me, without home or friends; hungry, thirsty, tired and lost!

Again I flew around and around. At last I came to a big house that had a cedar hedge back of it. The cedars looked friendly and inviting. "I will rest here a few minutes," I said to myself, "and then I will go on."

I was so tired that I took no notice of how long I sat there in the cedar tree. It must have been hours. The cedars were warm and cozy and I thought to myself, what a fine place this would be to sleep, if only the people who lived





The dog barked when he saw me

in the big, white house would receive me kindly. I had already begun to find out that there are several different kinds of people in this world. Some I would like to live with and some I wouldn't.

The place seemed to be a small farm. I could see chickens in a pen and I could hear pigs grunting, and an old cow lowed once in a while.

After I had sat in the cedar a long time and was somewhat rested, I decided to venture forth and get a drink of water. I was hungry, too, but I needed the water most. Taking to wing, I flew to the chicken pen and drank out of the chickens' trough.

The chickens made a terrible fuss when they saw me. You would have thought a hawk had landed in their pen, instead of a poor, lost crow. The chickens made so much noise that an old man and an old lady came out of the house to see what the trouble was.

I had quenched my thirst and now I wanted food. When the old lady leaned over the fence I "Ah! ah-ed!" to tell her I was hungry.

"Well, isn't that strange!" she said to the old man. "Surely that is no wild bird; it must be



some one's pet. I do believe the poor thing is hungry."

I flew to the fence and continued to plead for something to eat.

"What do crows eat, Father?" she asked the old man.

"Well I think they live mostly on field mice and green corn, but I believe they eat 'most everything," the old man answered. "You might try him on a piece of meat."

I was offered a piece and I ate it greedily. To tell the truth I was almost starved. The old people laughed at me heartily because I made a gulping noise as I swallowed the last morsel.

"I wonder whom he can belong to," said the old man. "I didn't know anyone in town had a pet crow."

About that time a little boy and girl came around the house. The old gentleman called to them: "Here, children, see what has come to Grandpa's. Some one's pet bird."

I flew down off the fence and walked around, chattering, to show them I was a nice, friendly crow. I made up my mind to stay with Grandpa until I could find the way to Pete's house.



The children seemed delighted with me, and tried to pet me, but I pecked at them when they tried to put their hands on me.

“Don’t touch him, children,” Grandpa told them. “You can see he isn’t used to being handled.”

The children played in the yard the rest of the afternoon and I played with them. Grandfather sat on a rustic seat near by and watched us. When the little girl lost her red mitten in the grass, I picked it up and they had a lot of fun trying to get it away from me. Grandpa laughed and said he hadn’t seen so much fun in a long time.

At last a car drove up and the children got in and went away. It seemed that they didn’t live there at all, but were only spending the day at Grandpa’s. I was sorry to see them go. I was afraid I couldn’t stand it, if there were no children about the place.

I didn’t know where to go that would better matters any, and was afraid to start again after the experiences I had had. So I went to roost that night in the cedars and let the future take care of itself.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### GRANDPA'S

**T**HE next morning I had my breakfast with the chickens, much to the disgust of Old Red, the rooster, who wanted to stage a fight as soon as he saw me. Old Red didn't like me one bit and never lost an opportunity to show his dislike. However, I didn't spend much time with the chickens.

Grandpa was giving the chickens their breakfast, and he laughed loudly at the fuss Old Red made because I was in the chicken pen.

"Here, you Red, let this poor fellow have a few grains of corn," he said.

After he finished feeding the chickens he gave me something that was more to my liking than chicken feed.

I began to think that Grandpa was a pretty good old man. Next to Pete, I believe I liked him better than anyone I had ever met. I went about the place with him, as he did his chores that morning. I was curious and wanted to know what kind of a place I was in.

We, that is, Grandpa and I, went into the barn to milk the old cow.

Grandpa had a large tin pail in his hand, and he took a three-legged stool over by the side of the old cow and sat down upon it.

Now, I never meant to do anything wrong; I only wanted to get up higher so I could see better. I flew to the old cow's back. She jumped and swung her head to one side and gave that bucket that Grandpa had one resounding whack with her hoof. Grandpa was so surprised that he lost his balance and fell off the stool. Most of the milk that was in the bucket went onto his clothes. Fortunately, there wasn't much milk in the bucket, for he had just begun to milk.

Grandpa acted as though he were angry about it, for he jumped up and scolded the old cow, and then he threw a stick at me; but he didn't hit me. I don't know if he even tried to, but I took warning and left the barn.

I went around to the front of the house to see what I could see.

I saw some children coming down the road, and I wondered if there could be a chance that I might know them. I flew to the street and





Grandpa lost his balance and fell off the stool

alighted in front of them. Alas, they were all strangers! I had never seen one of them before. They were surprised, but seemed pleased to see me. One of them, a little boy, held up a new dime for me to look at. I reached my long neck up and took the dime out of his fingers. The older children all tried to catch me, and the little boy whose dime I had taken ran screaming up the street.

I flew to a near-by tree and the children threw clods at me to try and make me drop the dime. I just flew to a higher limb to get away from them.

The children waited a few minutes for the small boy to come back. Finally one of them said, "Well, we can't wait for him all day. Come on, let's go." And away they went on their way to school.

I busied myself for some time, putting the dime first in one place and then another. At last I dropped it into a crack in a fence post where I couldn't get it out.

About that time I saw the little boy coming down the street with a man. They turned in at Grandpa's gate, and I heard the little boy say,



"There he is, papa," and he pointed his finger at me.

They went up to Grandpa's door and rapped. Grandpa answered the knock and opened the door.

This is what I heard them say:

"Good morning, Mr. Allyn."

"Good morning, Mr. Kaster."

"Is that your crow sitting there on the fence?"

"That is a crow that has taken up his residence at my place. Whose crow he is I do not know."

"Well, this morning he robbed my small son of a dime that I had given him to buy some school supplies. Now, if he does such a thing again, I will surely kill him. I won't have my children robbed in the public highway."

"Well, I am certainly sorry to hear this, Mr. Kaster," said Grandpa. "I thought he was a very well behaved crow, a trifle mischievous, perhaps, but pretty decent for a crow. Probably he is some one's pet. I thought I might hear of his owner and return him to whomever he belonged to, though I know of no one in town who owns a pet crow. Do you?"



“No,” answered the man gruffly, “and what is more to the point I don’t want to know anyone owning such a bird. Robbing a child in broad daylight, right out in the street! Why, I won’t have it.”

“Well, I am sorry,” again said Grandpa. “And rather than have you feel as you do, I will make good the loss.” Putting his hand in his pocket Grandpa drew forth some change. He picked out a dime and gave it to the man, who in turn handed it to the little boy.

“I would hate to have the crow killed,” said Grandpa. “Some one must feel very badly over the loss of a very intelligent pet. I feel sure we will hear from his owner one of these days.”

“As long as he lets my children alone, I’ll let him alone, since you have made good the loss. Well, I’ll be going. Come on, son,” said the visitor, and, taking the little boy by the hand, he left.

“Now, Crow,” it was Grandpa that spoke, “if you know what is good for you, don’t commit highway robbery in broad daylight; I might not get you off so easily next time. You might get the death sentence.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### BACK TO THE WILD

FOR several days nothing of importance happened at Grandpa's. One day was very much like another. I began to think it was going to be a very dull place to live. The thoughts of the old back yard, the boys and dogs, made me very homesick indeed. I wouldn't have stayed over night at Grandpa's if I had known where to go to find home. I was afraid to venture forth in search of it. Experience had taught me that this is a cruel world, if you have no friends and are lost.

After I had been at Grandpa's about a week, I heard a flock of crows in a field near by. It was early in the morning that I first noticed them. They seemed to be feeding in the cow pasture. As I listened to them a longing came over me. A longing to be one of them — to quit the habitation of man, and be wild and free, as nature had intended me to be.

As the day advanced, this feeling grew on me. I was lonely. Perhaps I would never see

my beloved Pete again. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life with an old man like Grandpa. I wanted to be where things were happening. I chuckled to myself as I thought of the mischief a wild crow can get into, and never get caught.

Once, while I was living at Pete's a wild crow had visited me. He sat in the pine tree a couple of days, trying to persuade me to join his band. I was happy then and turned a deaf ear to his pleadings. Nothing could have induced me to leave my beloved master.

I still hoped to find Pete, but as the days wore on, that hope became fainter and fainter. The longing to go back to the wild seemed somehow to take its place.

The days were growing colder and I knew that winter would soon be upon us. How could wild crows live through the time when everything would be covered with snow?

At last I gave in to the urge that I felt so strong within me. Taking to wing, I flew to the field back of Grandpa's place. The band of crows was on the ground by a straw stack. I circled around them several times, and finally took cour-



age and alighted on the outskirts of the flock.

At first no one noticed me. After a bit one of the crows saw that there was a strange crow among them, and set up a loud cawing. The rest of the band joined in the chorus and for a time you couldn't hear yourself think for the noise. Some of them acted in a way that was ungentlemanly, to say the least. It looked for a while as though I would be forced to leave and go back to the cedar hedge. But I was persistent, for I had made up my mind to stay. After a while the cawing and the hostilities ceased, and I was accepted as one of the band.

I was happy once more and soon got into the ways of the band.

The leader of the band was a large crow called Old King Cole. Every night he led the band to a row of pine trees that bordered a cemetery some miles distant. There the band slept, cozy and warm, in the shelter of the thick boughs. Every morning Old King Cole headed for the feeding grounds, followed by the entire band.

Life again was sweet to me. I was happy indeed.

One bright morning, late in the autumn, I saw my master. The band had been feeding for some time when I saw him coming down the road with several other boys. They all carried sacks in their hands, and I suppose were on their way to the woods for nuts. The heavy frosts had opened the shells of the hickory nuts.

I waited until the boys were near and then I "Ah! ah-ed!" at Pete in the old way. Pete came running toward me, crying "Blacky, Blacky Daw!"

Perhaps, if he had had some cheese in his hand, I would have allowed myself to be taken. As it was I eluded his grasp. He called and called to me, but I kept out of his reach.

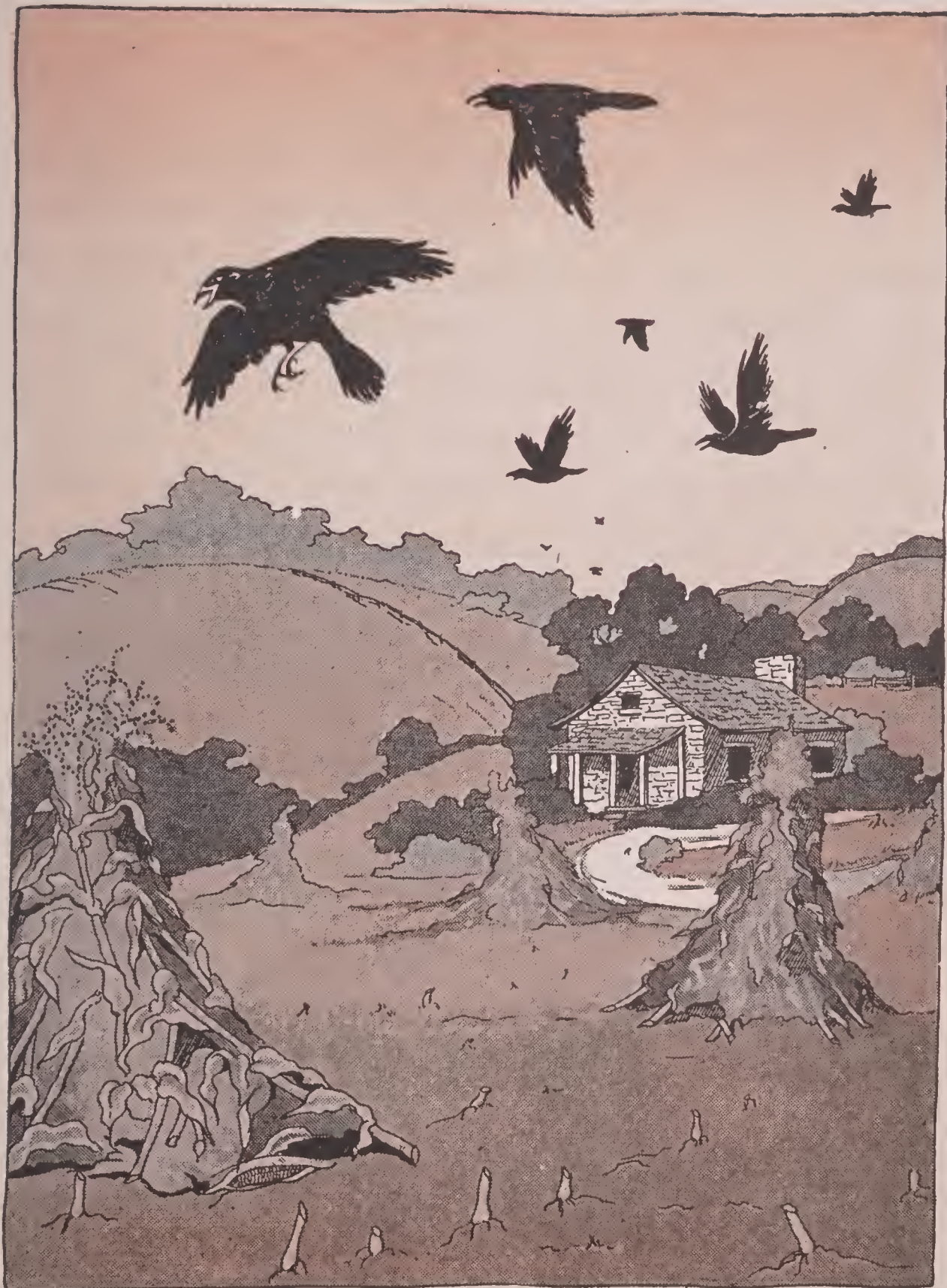
His friends became impatient and said, "Oh, come on, Pete, that isn't your crow; that is just a wild one."

"I know better," answered Pete, "didn't you hear him say 'Ah! ah!' to me? No wild crow would ever do that."

"Well, you can't catch him, and you might as well give up and come on. You are wasting a lot of time."

Pete gave up and went on with the rest of the





Blacky Daw, the leader of the band, wild and free



boys. I watched him as long as I could. Finally he disappeared in a turn in the road, and that was the last I ever saw of my beloved master.

As I grew older I became a very wise crow indeed. I knew so much about the habits of man that the other crows held me in high regard.

One night a great, horned owl found Old King Cole's roosting place. Poor Old King Cole never had a ghost of a show with that monster.

The next day the band was without a leader.

After a crow caucus, which lasted some time and was very noisy, I became the leader of the band. Now I lead the band from the pine trees to the feeding grounds and at night I lead them back to the sheltering pines.

Almost any morning or evening you can see me, Blacky Daw, the leader of the band, wild and free.



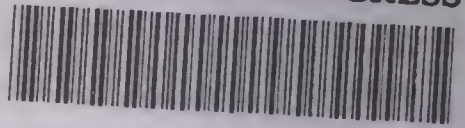








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