

BANDIT JIM CROW

Chapter I - Jim Crow Becomes a Pet

ONE day, when Twinkle's father was in the corn-field, he shot his gun at a flock of crows that were busy digging up, with their long bills, the kernels of corn he had planted. But Twinkle's father didn't aim very straight, for the birds screamed at the bang of the gun and quickly flew away--all except one young crow that fluttered its wings, but couldn't rise into the air, and so began to run along the ground in an effort to escape.

The man chased the young crow, and caught it; and then he found that one of the little lead bullets had broken the right wing, although the bird seemed not to be hurt in any other way.

It struggled hard, and tried to peck the hands that held it; but it was too young to hurt any one, so Twinkle's father decided he would carry it home to his little girl.

"Here's a pet for you, Twinkle," he said, as he came into the house. "It can't fly, because its wing is broken; but don't let it get too near your eyes, or it may peck at them. It's very wild and fierce, you know."

Twinkle was delighted with her pet, and at once got her mother to bandage the broken wing, so that it would heal quickly.

The crow had jet black feathers, but there was a pretty purplish and violet gloss, or sheen, on its back and wings, and its eyes were bright and had a knowing look in them. They were hazel-brown in color, and the bird had a queer way of turning his head on one side to look at Twinkle with his right eye, and then twisting it the other side that he might see her with his left eye. She often wondered if she looked the same to both eyes, or if each one made her seem different.

She named her pet "Jim Crow" because papa said that all crows were called Jim, although he never could find out the reason. But the name seemed to fit her pet as well as any, so Twinkle never bothered about the reason.

Having no cage to keep him in, and fearing he would run away, the girl tied a strong cord around one of Jim Crow's legs, and the other end of the cord she

fastened to the round of a chair--or to the table-leg--when they were in the house. The crow would run all around, as far as the string would let him go; but he couldn't get away. And when they went out of doors Twinkle held the end of the cord in her hand, as one leads a dog, and Jim Crow would run along in front of her, and then stop and wait. And when she came near he'd run on again, screaming "Caw! Caw!" at the top of his shrill little voice.

He soon came to know he belonged to Twinkle, and would often lie in her lap or perch upon her shoulder. And whenever she entered the room where he was he would say, "Caw--caw!" to her, in pleading tones, until she picked him up or took some notice of him.

It was wonderful how quickly a bird that had always lived wild and free seemed to become tame and gentle. Twinkle's father said that was because he was so young, and because his broken wing kept him from flying in the air and rejoining his fellows. But Jim Crow wasn't as tame as he seemed, and he had a very wicked and ungrateful disposition, as you will presently learn.

For a few weeks, however, he was as nice a pet as any little girl could wish for. He got into mischief occasionally, and caused mamma some annoyance when he waded into a pan of milk or jumped upon the dinner table and ate up papa's pumpkin pie before Twinkle could stop him. But all pets are more or less trouble, at times, so Jim Crow escaped with a few severe scoldings from mamma, which never seemed to worry him in the least or make him a bit unhappy.