

Chapter II - Jim Crow Runs Away

AT last Jim got so tame that Twinkle took the cord off his leg and let him go free, wherever he pleased. So he wandered all over the house and out into the yard, where he chased the ducks and bothered the pigs and made himself generally disliked. He had a way of perching upon the back of old Tom, papa's favorite horse, and chattering away in Tom's ear until the horse plunged and pranced in his stall to get rid of his unwelcome visitor.

Twinkle always kept the bandage on the wounded wing, for she didn't know whether it was well yet, or not, and she thought it was better to be on the safe side. But the truth was, that Jim Crow's wing had healed long ago, and was now as strong as ever; and, as the weeks passed by, and he grew big and fat, a great longing came into his wild heart to fly again-- far, far up into the air and away to the lands where there were forests of trees and brooks of running water.

He didn't ever expect to rejoin his family again. They were far enough away by this time. And he didn't care much to associate with other crows. All he wanted was to be free, and do exactly as he pleased, and not have some one cuffing him a dozen times a day because he was doing wrong.

So one morning, before Twinkle was up, or even awake, Jim Crow pecked at the bandage on his wing until he got the end unfastened, and then it wasn't long before the entire strip of cloth was loosened and fell to the ground.

Now Jim fluttered his feathers, and pruned them with his long bill where they had been pressed together, and presently he knew that the wing which had been injured was exactly as strong and well as the other one. He could fly away whenever he pleased.

The crow had been well fed by Twinkle and her mamma, and was in splendid health. But he was not at all grateful. With the knowledge of his freedom a fierce, cruel joy crept into his heart, and he resumed the wild nature that crows are born with and never lay aside as long as they live.

Having forgotten in an instant that he had ever been tame, and the pet of a gentle little girl, Jim Crow had no thought of saying good-bye to Twinkle. Instead, he decided he would do something that would make these foolish humans remember him for a long time. So he dashed into a group of young chickens that had only been hatched a day or two before, and killed seven of

them with his strong, curved claws and his wicked black beak. When the mother hen flew at him he pecked at her eyes; and then, screaming a defiance to all the world, Jim Crow flew into the air and sailed away to a new life in another part of the world.