Our family. A way to influence children.

Stories for children.

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Our Janie. A way to influence children.

When Janie was eight years old we lived in Washington, near the Howard University. Our house occupied an acre lot at the corner of Seventeenth Street and the broad avenue that led from it to the university. There was a strong, quiet fence along the road of the avenue. In the south-west corner near the ground were two or three fruit trees. On one of them at the time I have in mind were some ripening cherries, and near our front door a few vines covered with roses. They clinging to a high framework which leaned against the wall of the house. Opposite to us and stretching along the Thirty-Seventh road were many houses of poor people, whose children, often full of play and mischievous in groups would dash across the road, most of them favoring the fence and make a raid upon the cherries.

Our children were much inclined to call their
day to their aid and to drive the young
vegetables out. As soon as they saw
any of their owners or heard their bark
of the dog, the most mischievous
members would swing themselves over the fence
and scramble off, giving back a defiant
cry as they ran. I told Janie how I had
once succeeded in stopping some jovial
volunteers from stealing my melons.

"What, Papa, did you give the thieves
some melons? I'd a let 'em eat-'em
and shoot.
I'd a shot one, I would!"

"Yes, Janie, I found out who they were
and captured their hearts by asking them
to come and see me, and when they had come
to me a melon feast and some melons
to carry away with them.

"Papa, may I try to capture the children
here?"

"Yes, my son, call them in and give them some
doses of some cherries." So when again

Janie saw the little scamps coming
toward the fence some of them peeping
through the palings, he approached them
and said: "Do you want some flowers, children?"
"yes, yes, bully for you!" A doger respondeed
and a doger slap them over the fence or through
the gate in an instant. Jamis
led them up to the house where his mother &
sister helped him arrange a bouquet of
roses for each. Some cherries previously
gathered were thrown as, and the happy
children trotted off one after the other. New
fruit in one hand & the other flowers in
the other. Jamis had conquered them. They
never came again to steal.

Occasionally a little voice would beg of
me: "Can you please sir through the gate?" Please
sir, will you give me a penny? Or "please sir, may I have
our flowers?" It was wonderful, that
sudden transformation which Jamis
experienced by his kindness & generosity.

This conduct appears to me to be in
accordance with the instruction of the
Apostle Paul to his friends at Rome, when he
wrote: "Recompense to no man
evil for evil... if it be possible as much
as little as you live peaceably with all men. Lastly beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink: for so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.