

## WHATEVER IS, IS BEST

by Lilly Elvina Granlie

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*One summer evening, Joan lay in her pretty white bed by the window, where morning glories climbed up to greet her every morning, and she was thinking busily. She was a little girl, only six years of age, and she had been a cripple all her life. Though she had never known what it was like to be able to walk, she would have been happy and contented had it not been that she was continually hearing people speak of her as that "poor little girl."*

*She had grown to pity herself very much, and felt that it was not fair that she should be robbed of a blessing that all other children had. Her mother, father, and her brothers tried their best to make her happy. She did not mind their efforts at all, but continued to pout and rumble all day long.*

*Tonight, the moon was shining brightly through the morning glory vines, and she watched the funny shadows they made on her bed. She fancied she could see pictures. She imagined she saw a fierce creature of the jungle, but on looking at it closely, it appeared to be a queer little man with an enormous hat on his head. He sat and winked at her for a while, then he disappeared. After that, Joan grew tired of watching the shadows and fell asleep.*

*In her sleep, Joan fancied that she saw the queer little man again. He was sitting on the window sill and shaking his little fist at her. This time, he seemed very angry about something.*

*"You are a naughty girl to be unhappy," he said at last in a funny wee voice. "What in the world are you so sad about?"*

*Joan was almost too frightened to speak, but after a second thought, she decided to tell him of her great trouble.*

*"It's 'cause I can't walk," she said in a timid little voice.*

*"Because you can't walk!, the man said again. "Do you think you would be happier if you could walk?"*

*"Y .. yes," Joan answered, still in a scared voice.*

*"Maybe you wouldn't like to walk so very much if you could walk," said the little man, tilting his head to the side and trying to look as wise as he could.*

*Joan did not know what to say, so she kept still.*

*"Let me tell you something little girl," he continued -- his wee voice was kind. "If you could walk, you would not even be thankful for it. You would complain of having to use your feet like your brothers do when they are asked to run errands or when compelled to use their feet."*

*At this speech, the queer little man moved farther up on the window sill as if in fear of falling off. Then he quietly crossed his little legs and continued.*

*"Now you may think that being a cripple is about the worst thing that could happen to a little girl like you, but it isn't -- far from it. If you would only think of all that a cripple has to be thankful for, you would not be so discontented as you are."*

*He paused as if out of breath. Then he turned about and peered down at the morning glory vines. Then, to Joan, it seemed that a chorus of little voices like tinkling bells came up to him as he turned about into her room again, holding up his wee little hand as a signal for Joan to lie still and wait for something.*

*To her surprise, a whole troop of beautiful morning glories danced into the room. They came through the window like a refreshing breath of fragrant spring time, and Joan drew a deep breath of it -- her face shining with a new joy. Her whole being seemed to radiate with a happiness she had not known for a long time. It made her feel a new interest in life, and as she watched the flowers which appeared to have changed into little fairies, she breathed an unspoken prayer of thankfulness for the very joy of living.*

*It was a strange sight that met her eyes. The scene resembled a glittering rainbow as the flowers danced into one long line. In the bright moonlight, she saw that every petal bore letters that made a sentence. The first sentence shown in big letters: "WHAT EVERY CRIPPLE SHOULD BE THANKFUL FOR:" Then down the line was the following:*

- 1. A cripple is treated with kindness by everyone.*
- 2. They always have a peace and quiet, and seclusion from the turmoil of the world.*
- 3. They are free from the daily cares, and are not haunted by the dangers that beset those who are capable of walking.*
- 4. They easily keep out of mischief, and have an earnest and sincere nature.*

5. *They have life, love, and happiness, and a bright prospect in the life that lies beyond.*

*WHAT MORE CAN THEY ASK?*

*Then as suddenly as they had come, they disappeared through the window. Joan opened her eyes wide. The mellow moon still hung outside the window, and made a fantastic silhouette of the morning glory vines as they rustled and sighed faintly in the breeze. The queer little man was gone. Had it, after all, been only a dream? Never mind, she had learned a splendid lesson that she would never forget. She could hardly wait to tell her parents and her brothers what she had seen. Until then, she would live in a world of her own, a world of happiness that floated in an essence of gladness, and she would continue to live in it for years to come.*

*Joan's little face beamed with a joy that seemed to say, "It is great after all, to be a cripple."*

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*(Written at age 14 for a little crippled girl in Montana, through "Helping Hand Club," St. Paul, Minnesota.)*

**THE END**