



"THE RUGGLESSES NEVER FORGOT IT."

goin' ter have my childern wear odd stockin's to a dinner-comp'ny, brought up as I was! Eily, can't you run out and ask Mis' Cullen ter lend me a pair o' stockin's for Peory, an' tell her if she will, Peory'll give Jim half her candy when she gets home. Won't yor, Peory?"

Peoria was young and greedy, and thought the remedy so much worse than the disease that she set up a deafening howl at the projected bargain—a howl so rebellious and so out of all season that her mother started in her direction with flashing eye and uplifted hand; but she let it fall suddenly, saying, "No, I won't lick yo

not know whether they would be called so in the best society. The law of compensation had been well applied; he that had necktie had no cuffs; she that had sash had no handkerchief, and vice versa; but they all had boots and a certain amount of clothing, such as it was, the outside layer being in every case quite above criticism.

"Now, Sarah Maud," said Mrs. Ruggles, her face shining with excitement, "everything is red up an' we can begin. I've got a boiler 'n a kettle 'n a pot o' hot water. Peter, you go into the back bedroom, an' I'll take Susan, Kitty, Peory an' Cornelius; an' Sarah Maud, you take Clem, n' Eily, n' Larry, one to a time, an' git as fur as you can with 'em, an' then I'll finish 'em off while you do yerself."

Sarah Maud couldn't have scrubbed with any more decision and force if she had been doing floors, and the little Ruggleses bore it bravely, not from natural heroism, but for the joy that was set before them. Not being satisfied, however, with the "tone" of their complexions, she wound up operations by applying a little Bristol brick from the knife-board, which served as the proverbial "last straw," from under which the little Ruggleses issued rather red and raw and out of temper. When the clock struck three they were all clothed, and most of them in their right minds, ready for those last touches that always take the most time. Kitty's red hair was curled in thirty-four ringlets, Sarah Maud's was braided in one pig-tail, and Susan's and Eily's in two braids apiece, while Peoria's resisted all advances in the shape of hair oils and stuck out straight on all sides, like that of the Circassian girl of

the circus—so Clem said; and he was sent into the bed-room for it too, from whence he was dragged out forgivingly by Peoria herself, five minutes later. Then—exciting moment—came linen collars for some and neckties and bows for others, and Eureka! the Ruggleses were dressed. A row of seats was formed directly through the middle of the kitchen. There were not quite chairs enough for ten, since the family had rarely all wanted to sit down at once, somebody always being out, or in bed, but the wood box and the coal-hod finished out the line nicely. The children took their places according to age, Sarah Maud at the head and Larry on the coal-hod, and Mrs. Ruggles seated herself in front, surveying them proudly as she wiped the sweat of honest toil from her brow.

(To be Continued.)

CHRISTMAS WAITS.

The children sing a carol clear,
On early Christmas morn,
Because it is the day on which
Our Saviour, Christ was born.

The wondrous story o'er they tell,
Of the dear Saviour's birth,
Of how the angels came to say
That peace should reign on earth.

Of how the wise men travelled far
The infant Christ to see,
In the poor manger where he lay
Upon his mother's knee.

And so, at break of Christmas day,
They sing their carol sweet,
And ask a Christmas blessing
From everyone they meet.

THE BIRD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

V.—SOME OTHER BIRDS ARE TAUGHT TO FLY.

Before the earliest Ruggles could wake and toot his five-cent tin horn, Mrs. Ruggles was up and stirring about the house, for it was a gala day in the family. Gala day! I should think so! Were not her nine "childern" invited to a dinner-party at the great house, and weren't they going to sit down free and equal with the mightiest in the land? She had been preparing for this grand occasion ever since the receipt of the invitation, which, by the way, had been speedily enshrined in an old photograph frame and hung under the looking-glass in the most prominent place in the kitchen, where it stared the occasional visitor directly in the eye, and made him pale with envy:

"BIRD'S NEST, Dec. 17th, 188—

DEAR MRS. RUGGLES.—I am going to have a dinner-party on Christmas day, and would like to have all your children come. I want them every one, please, from Sarah Maud to Baby Larry. Mamma says dinner will be at half-past five, and the Christmas tree at seven; so you may expect them home at nine o'clock. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am, yours truly,

CAROL BIRD."

Breakfast was on the table promptly at seven o'clock, and there was very little of it, too; for it was an excellent day for short rations, though Mrs. Ruggles heaved a sigh as she reflected that even the boys, with their India-rubber stomachs, would be just as hungry the day after the dinner-party as if they had never had any at all.

As soon as the scanty meal was over, she announced the plan of the campaign: "Now Susan, you an' Kitty wash up the dishes; an' Peter, can't you spread up the beds, so't I can git ter cuttin' out Larry's new suit? I ain't satisfied with his close, an' I thought in the night of a way to make him a dress out of my old plaid shawl—kind o' Scotch style, yer know. You other boys clear out from under foot! Clem, you and Con hop into bed with Larry while I wash yer underflannins; 'twont take long to dry 'em. Sarah Maud, I think 'twould be perfectly han'som if you ripped them brass buttons off yer uncle's policeman's coat an' sewed 'em in a row up the front o' yer green skirt. Susan, you must iron out yours an' Kitty's apruns; and there, I came mighty near forgettin' Peory's stockin's! I counted the whole lot last night when I was washin' of 'em, an' there ain't but nineteen anyhow yer fix 'em, an' no nine pairs mates nohow; an' I ain't

Christmas day, if yer drive me crazy; but speak up smart, now, 'n say whether yer'd ruther give Tim Cullen half yer candy or go bare-legged ter the party?" The matter being put so plainly, Peoria collected her faculties, dried her tears and chose the lesser evil, Clem having hastened the decision by an affectionate wink, that meant' he'd go halves with her on his candy.

"That's a lady," cried her mother. "Now, you young ones that ain't doin' nothin', play all yer want ter before noon-time, for after ye git through eatin' at twelve o'clock me 'n Sarah Maud's goin' ter give yer such a washin' an' combin' an' dressin' as yer never had before an' never will agin, an' then I'm goin' to set yer down an' give yer two solid hours trainin' in manners; an' 'twont be no foolin' neither."

"All we've got ter do's to eat!" grumbled Peter.

"Well, that's enough," responded his mother; "there's more 'n one way of eatin', let me tell yer, an' you've got a heap ter learn about it, Peter Ruggles. Land sakes, I wish you childern could see the way I was fetched up to eat—never took a meal o' vittles in the kitchen before I married Ruggles; but yer can't keep up that style with nine young ones 'n yer Pa always off ter sea."

The big Ruggleses worked so well, and the little Ruggleses kept from "under foot" so successfully, that by one o'clock nine complete toilets were laid out in solemn grandeur on the beds. I say, "complete;" but I do



CHRISTMAS WAITS.