

How Rags Paid for His Supper

Yes, Rags, that was his name, the most wretched, half-starved cur that you could possibly imagine. He had no home, except the cold, pitiless streets; his food old, dirty crusts and bones found in the gutter. Cruel people flung stones at him, and life was one long, hideous misery. Such a pity, too, for Rags, being a retriever, would have repaid anybody for their trouble and his keep.

Well, it was Christmas Eve, and the poor dog felt nearly frozen to death as well as, oh, so hungry. Crusts and bones had seemed fewer that day than usual, and now it was night, and the bitter east wind made him shiver and tremble in every limb. Rags crept down a road with tall houses on each side, and at last stopped to listen outside one brilliant with lights. A children's party was going on inside, and Rags slunk in through the gate into the front garden, intending to go round to the back premises, and see if he could find old bones lying about. Mary Moore, the little girl of the house, looking out of the window, saw the poor animal.

'Oh, dear mother,' she cried, 'do look at this poor doggie! May I give him a plateful of those coconut biscuits?'

Everybody in the party laughed at Mary's idea of food for a great hungry retriever, but Mary was only three years old, and did not know any better.

'No,' said her mother kindly; 'but you shall give him a plateful of scraps that cook will give you.'

Mary soon was feeding poor Rags in the warm kitchen.

'You shall stay here to-night, poor fellow,' said Mary's father.

'Fire, fire, fire.'

That was the awful cry that rang through the house at dead of night.

The house was full of smoke and crackling flames. Mr. Moore carried his little girl safely through the fire to a friend's house, then fetched his wife. The servants were saved by the brave firemen who had arrived; but, somehow, they all forgot the baby—the darling baby-boy, lying fast asleep in his cot.

'Oh, my baby, my boy!' Mrs. Moore screamed, wringing her hands together in agony. 'Will no one save my child?'

'It would be certain death to anyone who attempted to enter the house again,' said the Captain of the Brigade.

But as he spoke a great shout arose from the people, for there, leaping out of a window, came Rags, dragging something white in his mouth. Yes, it was the baby in his night-shirt. Rags had brought him, but very little burned, safe through the fire. Don't you think that Rags paid for his supper?—'Band of Mercy.'

How Janet Was Cured.

It was the uneasy time of day. It was likewise the time when the hands of the clock went around altogether too fast to suit Janet.

'You seem to love to say it's my bedtime,' she said, looking crossly at the big clock. 'I wish I could sit up once in a while and see what a good time the grown folks have after we have gone to bed.'

'We' meant Janet and her dolls.

'You can sit up to-night if you wish, just as long as you like,' said Janet's mother.

'Truly?' asked Janet.

'Truly,' said her mother.

'Oh, thank you, mamma. Won't we have a good time, though?'

Then she went to tell the dolls.

'Dear ones,' she said when she had collected them together, 'I know and I long have known just how you feel about going to bed so early. So to-night you shall sit up just as long as you like, and we will see for ourselves just what good times the grown-up people have.'

Then they all went down-stairs to the library, where the family were. It was very quiet there, Janet thought. The older children were studying their lessons for the next day, grouped around the long table in the middle of the room, and her father and mother were reading.

'Do tell me a long story, please, mamma,' said Janet, bringing her little chair up beside her mother's; but her mother shook her head.

'It would disturb the children studying,' she said.

'Can I have an opera with my dolls?'

'No, dear.'

'Isn't there anything to amuse me?' and there were tears in Janet's voice.

'No, little daughter, this is the

quiet hour for the grown people and you will have to keep still.'

So Janet sat down and looked soberly at the fire.

By and by her head rested against her mother's knee.

'I don't think grown folks—' she began, and that was all, until her father was carrying her upstairs—'have a very good time at all,' she murmured sleepily.

Since then she goes to bed cheerfully.

'For it's really better for all of us, my dears,' she told the dolls.—L. E. Chittenden, in 'Youth's Companion.'

Polly's Year.

January 1st.

Come sit in my lap and let me hear, Polly, my dear, Polly, my dear, What do you mean to do this year?

I mean to be good the whole year long,

And never do anything careless or wrong.

I mean to be good the whole year right,

And do all my sums, if I sit up all night.

I mean to keep all my frocks so clean,

Nurse will never say I'm 'not fit to be seen.'

I don't mean to break even one of my toys,

And I never, oh! never, will make any noise.

In short, Uncle Ned, as you'll very soon see,

The best little girl in the world I shall be!

December 31st.

Come sit in my lap and let me hear, Polly, my dear, Polly, my dear, What you have done in the course of the year.

Oh dear! Uncle Ned, oh dear and oh dear!

I fear it has not been a very good year.

For somehow my sums would come out wrong,

And somehow my frocks wouldn't stay clean long.

And somehow I've often been dreadfully cross,

And somehow I broke my new rocking-horse.

And somehow nurse says I have made such a noise

I might just as well have been one of the boys.

In short, Uncle Ned, I very much fear

You must wait for my goodness another year!

—'Youth's Companion.'