

## \* \* The Story Page. \* \*

### "Me'n' Bose."

A sharp bark testified to the presence of a dog in the court room.

"Whose dog is that?" asked Justice Murray.

"Mine," said the prisoner, with aplomb, and his small brown fist gripped the hair on the dog's neck.

"A curly, brown-haired, brown-eyed boy; a curly, brown-haired, brown-eyed dog."

"What have you been doing?" demanded the Justice.

"Noffin," replied the boy, with conviction.

"Vagrancy," said the big blue-coated man.

"Now, Jedge," remonstrated the prisoner, "t'ain't vagrancy, is it, jest to sleep in a box w'en you have to, 'long of Miss Rose bein' gone to the country, an' her room locked up?"

"Where is this Miss Rose?"

"Gone to the country for her health."

"Where?"

"County Farm."

"You'll be much better off in the House of Refuge, or the Reform School, or the Industrial Farm—"

"No, I wouldn't," said the prisoner, emphatically. "Them's the places for bad ones. I ain't a bad one. Me'n' Bose is all right, ain't we, Bose?"

Bose assented waving his bushy brown tail—we had almost said vociferously, so intense was the affirmation conveyed by the action.

After this defence the officer thought best to proffer a more definite charge.

"Have you paid your dog tax? You have broken the law against letting dogs run at large."

"I don't have to pay dog tax, 'cause I never bought him. You see, Jedge, it was jest this way. I was walkin' 'long Water Street when up comes this dog an' puts his cold nose right into my hand, an' my hand kinder went to patten' his head; and we've been together jes' like brothers ever since; 'cause I ain't got no folks, an' he ain't. I didn't know his name, so I called him Bose, an' he liked it; didn't you, Bose?"

The dog settled upon his haunches and gave an affirmative double rap on the floor with his tail.

"The dog may go to the pound. Put the boy in a cell until the Children's Aid Society can look after him."

"No, no, Jedge!" shrieked the boy, great tears welling into his brown eyes, a note of agony in his voice. "No, I can't be put from Bose! Don't take him from me, Jedge! We're alone in the world; ain't we, Bose?"

Bose licked the face bent towards him and gave a consenting howl.

"I cannot send a dog to jail, and they won't take him at a Reform School," said the Judge.

"Then let me go to the pound with him," cried the boy, eagerly. "Say, may I, Jedge?"

"Why, boy, if you go to the pound you'll be put in the cage with dogs, and tomorrow you'd be drowned," said the Justice, smiling.

"Never mind; I don't care, so me'n' Bose keeps together. Yer see, Jedge, I tried twict to buy a shoe-black's kit, and make my livin'; but when I had most got enough some one stole it. Nobody dast steal from me when Bose is 'round. I've tried to set up for a newsboy, too. If you'll let me'n' Bose off, mebbe we'll have better times, 'n' make it yet. I can't if Bose ain't along."

Bose's brown tail wagged frantically.

"How old are you?"

"I duanno; mebbe 'bout 'leven."

"Where did you come from?"

"My folks all got drowned when the flood was up the river. Some other folks brung me to the city, an' I've been 'round since."

"Maybe I'd better put them both in the cell until the pound-wagon comes round," said the policeman, with a sly wink at the Justice.

The big officer put his double charge into a cell. It was warm and clean. The boy promptly lay down on the floor, clasped his arms under his head, and took up the thread of those slumbers broken earlier in the morning by his arrest. The dog crouched by his side, laid his head on his master's chest, put one ear up in a manner of expectancy, trailed the other low, as a banner in the dust, and so remained on guard, growling sotto-voce if any one neared the half open door.

The reporter who had been making a telling item of "Me'n' Bose," lounged into the street, then looked alert, and lifted his hat to Mrs. Randolph Nugent.

"I have an item here that will suit you exactly." He held forth his tablet with "Me'n' Bose" fairly written out for the printer.

"He is asleep in there now, with his 'brother Bose' lying on his breast."

Mrs. Nugent entered the police station. The Lieutenant of Police privately dropped his cigar into a box behind his desk; the Sergeant took his feet from the top of the stove, and two "blue-coats," seemingly asleep on leather sofas, awoke and sat up. Mrs. Randolph Nugent treed them to a smile apiece, after which she remarked: "I came to see that boy and dog."

"Here they are," said the Sergeant, pushing the cell door wide open. At sight of the blue-coat, Bose gave a long, low, warning note, intended to strike

error to the heart of an invader. When the Sergeant gave place to Mrs. Nugent, Bose fell into silence. His eyes were steadfast, his muzzle quivered, his tail moved slowly through an arc of a half circle, he breathed deeply.

Mrs. Nugent understood him; she was on terms of intimacy with dogs, cats, and small boys. Bose saw kindness in her eyes. He returned to Richard, licked his ear, and the dog sat up, alert.

"I came," said Mrs. Nugent, "to ask you and Bose to make me a visit."

"All right! Come on Bose!" said Richard, for here was a Christian who said "You and Bose." They departed under a fire of respectful smiles of relief from the representatives of the police force.

Justice Murray came in with a big silver dollar. "I thought I'd set him up in the shoe-blackening business," he explained.

"They're gone—with Mrs. Nugent."

"Mrs. Randolph Nugent? Oh, then they are all right."

"Mournin', ma'am; brought me another stray?"

Mrs. Nugent handed over the boy and dog to a very big and dignified negro barber, splendid in white shirt, white apron, white jacket, and with an orange silk necktie pulled through an enormous ring.

"Now, my little man, you see, here's soap and towels and tub; you pull this out to let off the water, and you turn this on for hot, and this for cold. So go for yourself now."

What a most delightful china tub; what delicious smelling soap; what warm floods that cradled and soothed and made supple the wanderer's little body! Bose, with his nose over the edge of the tub endured as long as possible that enticing spectacle, then he flounced in with a mighty splash.

"Now we'll go for you," said Richard; so the brown coat was soaped and rubbed until Bose had enough of it, and leaped to the floor, shaking himself.

That did not matter; the room was lined with china tiles. Bose repaired to the register and alternately warmed and shook himself as if he had taken baths all his life. Richard ran the water off from the tub; ran in more. Oh, blessed water! Every fibre of his frame was relaxed and comforted. Could he ever be cold and aching again! Rub, snap, dive, splash, splutter! The door opened, a black hand introduced to the room a complete suit of clothes with the remark, "Dress yo'self youngster." There lay an undersuit of red flannel, long black hose, gray jacket and trousers, and a red tie.

How could one boy wear so many clothes? Richard thrust his head into the hall, calling, "Ho, mister! I dunno how to get into two suits at once."

The big black man had dressed him, stockings braced up, and his hair was shampooed, combed, trimmed, while a man buttoned his feet into such a pair of shoes as forced him to say, "Reg'lar swell; ain't they, Bose?"

Then a sudden light flashed on his mind. Mrs. Nugent came and held out her hand. "Come to dinner, Richard. Send Bose with Mary; she will give him plenty of bread and meat."

That table! Dare he sit down? White napery, china, silver, a tall central bouquet. Mrs. Nugent cast down her eyes and said a few soft words, not as though complaining of the dinner; oh, no! she seemed to be thanking some One who was not there.

The sight and smell of food brought a strange goneness and dimness. On his plate stood a cup of brown, warm, enticing drink.

Mrs. Nugent said: "Drink your beet tea, Richard." When he drank it he was so strengthened that he could eat his dinner. Yes, two dinners; for one dinner being ended, straightway the maid cleared the table, gathered the crumbs up in a silver tray, and set forth—was there ever the like!—another dinner, "all the same as a bake-shop window." "She asked you an' me, Bose, to stop for a week; an' I tol' her I'd learned to read off'n signs an' posters, an' sech." Thus Richard said during the first opportunity for private conference with his dog.

Over six years later a young collegian ran briskly up Mrs. Nugent's front steps one April day; a dignified dog with advanced doghood stood waiting for him.

It was the old story told to Justice Murray: "He held up his cold nose and put it right into my hand, and my hand dropped down and began to pat his head."—The Advance.

### But for the Grahams.

"This is a dear home, Evelyn! I am going to be a better traveler along duty's dusty highway for having known its sanctities."

"Yes," answered Evelyn, without enthusiasm; "yes, it is a dear home."

But she spoke languidly, as if not greatly valuing its peculiar dearness.

Miss Joliffe threw a keen glance across the grass to where her friend sat under the elm tree, paring peaches for marmalade. Her look had such a questioning power that Evelyn looked up uneasily and colored, as if she were being put on the witness stand.

"Of course, Patty," she said, "I know it is everything one could ask for in comfort and happiness—that is, the happiness that comfort does bring."

The silver knife slipped from her slender hand and rings of fuzzy parings clung forgotten to the peach, while Evelyn threw herself back in the rocker and clasped her fingers behind her head.

"But it is a narrow life you know," she went on, after a moment. "We see the same country people week in and week out, there are no new books, no lectures, we hear no good music, see nothing." Oh, Patty!—and now there was a passionate sound creeping into the girl's voice—"you don't know how hard it is to feel life slipping away without ever having a chance at anything! I don't mind so much not having things or not seeing them, but it almost kills me to do anything! How would you feel if you never had a chance to make any impressions on your circle for good—if you felt that you had to die like a worthless weed by the roadside and leave the world no better or happier because you had been in it?"

Evelyn's gloomy words came to a sudden halt, for the pastor of Tinkling Creek church came out to the shady lawn and joined his daughter and their guest. The pastor was not a man whose presence encouraged fume or fret. Strong, grave, earnest, there was yet about him a sunny tenderness which compelled cheer; one would no more violate it by fretfulness than bring a noisy disturbance into some cathedral sanctity.

"You've had an interrupted morning, father," said Evelyn, with a sudden change of tone. "I'm afraid our Sunday morning sermon has suffered."

"I wouldn't be surprised," answered Dr. Graham, helping himself from her peach basket; but I often find interruptions the most important work of the day."

"This morning's, for instance?" asked Miss Joliffe.

"This morning's, decidedly, Miss Patty. Young Conrad came to ask my help in getting work. He is about half-way through his college course and must now earn a little more money to carry him through to his degree."

"Could you help him about the work, father?" asked Evelyn, and Miss Joliffe looked at her in surprise. Gone was the air of indifference and lassitude with which she had taken part in the morning's talk. Evelyn was keenly on the alert now.

"I gave him several strings to his bow," answered Dr. Graham, turning back to his study; "and there are some letters I want you to write for him. This is Evelyn's job, Miss Patty—one of her Sunday school boys, of whom she expects to make a great man one of these days—a saint and a sage."

"If he is a saint," murmured the Sunday school teacher, somebody else's boy must be the sage."

And then some other topic of conversation came up, and Miss Joliffe, in her brief stay at the Tinkling Creek parsonage, did not hear Robert Conrad's name again, nor did she again draw out of Evelyn the passionate discontent which seemed to lie under the quiet of her monotonous days.

But long afterward—ten years, indeed—when Miss Patty Joliffe was no longer Miss Patty, but the wife of Mr. Clinton Park, a well known city lawyer, she suddenly met the quondam Sunday school boy of Tinkling Creek and remembered him perfectly. It was one of those meetings which story-writers hesitate to invent, being careful of their art, but which life, that greatest of story-tellers, uses lavishly and boldly to the best advantage.

Mrs. Park was one of the receiving party at a great social function on this occasion, and if anything was entirely below the line of memory and consciousness it was the Tinkling Creek parsonage, its past or its present. Suddenly she found herself confronted with a strange young man who was claiming her acquaintance.

"I am taking an unfair advantage of you, Mrs. Park," he said, "because I have just found out who you are, while you,—"

"Even as ignorant a person as Patty knows something about the new superintendent of the steel works," said Mrs. Park's brother, and the lady's eyes brightened with a quick interest for now she knew him as a wonderfully successful manager of machines and of men—"a rising man," of whom people were saying that Mr. Conrad's rising meant always the upward life of many other people and the betterment of the whole community. But she was now to feel a new interest in him.

"My claim," said Superintendent Conrad, "is on Mrs. Park's part." Then he spoke of the Grahams, and straightway out of some unsound depth in memory rose the fair picture of the parsonage lawn, the girl paring peaches, the noble pastor of this country flock, and the whole morning's conversation, which had been so long forgotten.

"So you are Evelyn's saint and sage!" she cried. "By no means!" laughed the stranger. Then, with a look of great earnestness, he said: "I hope I am an honest workman, Mrs. Park, whose success as it is, is due under God's grace, to your friends, the Grahams. I would go far to touch the hand of any friend of theirs and to find a listener who will echo my 'God bless them!'"