

HONOUR WITHOUT RENOWN

BY MRS. INNES BROWN

Whistler our old friends were thus engaged in this pleasant and cheerful reunion, another scene, quite as entertaining, was being enacted in a much humbler walk of life. Ryder and his faithful friend Leo arrived in due time at their destination.

The old servant had travelled much in his day, and was not in the least disconcerted at finding himself in a foreign city, with a strange jargon of tongues chattering loudly around him. With a small but stout leather bag held firmly in one hand and the other grasping the strong leash attached to the dog's collar, he pushed steadily on, deeply intent upon his own purpose. Both man and beast looked solemn and earnest, as though filled with the importance of the mission upon which they were bound. His dear little lady—his—Leo's—mistress was ill, and she should not die without knowing that her old servant had been faithful to her last charge. "Take care of Leo, dear old John!" says she, "I love him very much." Thus muttering to himself, and talking in a quiet undertone to the dog, the old man stopped at last before a butcher's shop, where, by means of pantomimic signs, he procured a piece of meat which he paid for and tucked carefully under his arm.

Presently he turned into a small inn, and calling the landlady, made him comprehend that he wished for a quiet place in which to feed and rest his dog. He was shown into a comfortable stable, and there Ryder first fed his favorite; and then, taking from his bag a strong brush and comb, groomed him down thoroughly. "She always loved to see your coat shine, didn't she, Leo?"—and you and me'll look our best. Yes, that we will. Now, come, we must hurry up, old boy. You and me's not so young as we were; and it is getting late, it is! Bide here awhile, till I have a turn and freshen myself up a bit. Lie down and wait for me, d'ye hear? We're going to see Lady Beatrice by-and-by. Leo pricked his ears and seemed fully aware of all his master's wishes and plans. He shook himself pompously, then lay down to await further orders. He really seemed to understand, by some strange instinct between them, that something very unusual was about to take place, in which he and his old master were to take a prominent part.

Ryder hurried to the parlor, and having refreshed his inner man with some savoury French stew—the contents of which he felt extremely nervous about, and therefore, grumbled freely at—he brushed himself up and returned to the stable. "This late, I know," he murmured; "but she must not die till she's seen him, and me too, if it can be managed. Lord, don't I love her, almost more than if she were me own! And she has a tender spot in her heart for her father's old servant, I know she has!" Here he drew his sleeve across his eyes, and continued: "Come along, Leo; we're going to see Lady Beatrice—thine old mistress, dog. Goodness knows, she owns little enough of this world's goods now, but you bestill hers. I've taken care of ye for her; and you and me's not going to be daunted. It's a case of life and death, and no convent walls—no, nor iron bars, 'll stop us two, will they? Eh?"

The dog looked up with an expression of ready responsiveness in his fine old face. He was so accustomed to sharing the old man's ideas, and following out his notions, that the essential bond of union had grown up between them. Besides, during the journey, the old man had talked in a low, confidential tone to Leo about his mistress, and had frequently taken from his inner pocket a soiled but dainty lace handkerchief and a pair of small silk gloves, at the sight and perfume of which the animal had become quite excited. So he trotted freely by his master's side, neither of them heeding the desolation around, but both pondering the assurance that something important was about to occur.

Rat-a-tat-tat-tat. It was a loud and an imperious knock that Ryder levied at the convent door, and hearing it the timid little portress hurried, thinking it to be the doctor, or at least a visitor of importance—so flurried was she that she forgot to peep through the sliding panel—and opened the door at once.

With a set look of determination on his kind old face, Ryder stepped in; and the dog sprang forward. To the startled and terrified eyes of the Sister, Leo, in the gathering darkness, appeared like a huge lion; Ryder might be his keeper. Uttering a stifled cry of alarm, she endeavoured to fling the door to and fled for assistance. But they were safely inside, and it took Leo but an instant to decide in which room lay the object of their search. He sniffed below the parlor door; then whining excitedly, looked up-travellingly at his master. Trusting the animal's instinct, and hearing no voices within, Ryder opened the

door and followed the impatient beast into the room.

All was still. The evening air being chilly, a small stove had been lit, and by the light of a shaded lamp he discerned a small low bed with its head against the further end of the room, and thus left free and open at both sides. "Come back, Leo," he commanded in a stern whisper, for the dog was straining hard at his collar—"Steady, old boy, wait a minute!" Sister Marguerite was lying wide awake, and hearing the unusual sounds, raised her head to divine their cause. Was it a delusion, a vision, that she saw in the dim light before her? The forms of those dear old friends—were they real? were they living?

Not for long did she wonder thus. Then the full knowledge of the faithful devotion of these two old creatures—who, hearing of her illness, had come swiftly to seek and find her—flooded her heart with joy and delight. "My Leo!" she cried, "am I dreaming, or is that you?"

Forward bounded the dog, for he knew her voice, and holding tightly to the leash—fearful of the consequences to her—dragged Ryder. The dog reached her, and rising, half encircled her with his fore-paws; then, rubbing his delighted head against her face, whined for food. She put her wounded arms around his neck, and kissed his rough shaggy coat saying: "Poor old Leo! I never thought to see you more. How did you find me? There now Ryder, take him down, for the old darling is heavy, and come nearer yourself, and tell me all about it. My precious beauty!" she continued, as the dog yielded very reluctantly to her old man's efforts to draw him down. It is your sure enough; but tell me, John, how on earth did you get here?"

"How did we get here?" he repeated; and his jovial face was lit up with exquisite joy, as he strove to force the dog down and keep him quiet. "Oh, never you mind how we did it; but we only heard last night how ill you were; and did you think we could let die without seeing us once again—no, no! Be quiet, Leo; down with you, boy! Here's some body coming. I'm ashamed of y—making such a row."

True enough there was somebody coming, and more than one, too. In her alarm, the portress had flown to Ma Soeur, and in her excitement had pitched such a tale that it had startled the good lady into immediate action. Surely there had been enough rude work of late to have satisfied the most unruly? How was it, then, that ruffians should be allowed to intrude within the precincts of her convent at this hour of the evening? She rose from her seat and, drawing her figure up, walked silently but rapidly forward. Close behind her followed Sister Agnes, de Sales; and behind her again, in more or less alarm and dismay, came three more of the nuns. Oh, kind Heaven, what strange sounds were those which now issued from the interior of the parlor! The ruffians might have spared her patient—and for almost the first time in her life the good Superior's nerve failed her. Her face was as white as her *cornette* when she pushed open the door and forced herself forward. There, facing her, stood the old coachman, a look of mingled defiance and exultation upon his fresh, ruddy face. His white hair—from which he had removed the silk hat with its bright cockade—shone in the dim light, and the bright gilt buttons on his handsome coat stood out and defined his many proportions. Leo, looking very large and formidable, took no notice of the intruding party, but sat upright close to the bedside, watching every look and movement of his dear old mistress. Was it some strolling showman with a dancing bear that had forced an entrance?

"Who are you? How dare you intrude here?" inquired Ma Soeur, as severely as her dry lips would permit. But Sister Francis de Sales, peering forward, took in the situation more correctly; she seemed to remember both man and beast, and whispered: "Don't fear, Ma Soeur! It is all right. No harm is done."

To the astonishment of her scared companions her voice almost shook with laughter as she went up to the "ruffian" and shook him by both hands. Then stooping, she feebly—nay, quite affectionately—patted the huge animal's neck; who in his turn appeared to recognize her, for he even turned his gaze away from his mistress's face and lifted one great paw into her hand.

"Pardon me, Ma Soeur, but this man is an old English servant of Earl de Woodville's and he does not understand French."

Sister Francis remembered well the character of the old coachman, and retired into obscurity, vainly endeavouring to stifle her amusement. By this time several more of the community had ventured into the room, and were looking on in wonder and astonishment.

"But wherefore do you intrude into a house like this without permission, and at this late hour?" inquired Ma Soeur, eyeing with cold displeasure the jovial culprit before her. She spoke English well, pronouncing each word and syllable very distinctly.

"Why, ma'am, if you'll only listen to me, I'll explain it all to you as simply and straightforwardly as possible," answered John quite calmly.

"Proceed! I am here to listen to your explanation."

"Why, ma'am," begun the old man, "it's just this how. As he proceeded he warmed to his subject and emphasized his meaning by striking one hand vigorously against the other. "Ye see, I heard tell yesterday that our young lady—Sister Marguerite, as you call her—was took very ill; and me heart failed me, it did indeed; when I thought that maybe she might die and never see me, nor her dog, no more. For though I know well enough you've took everything from her as once she had, still he's hers yet"—pointing to Leo—"and I can prove it, ma'am. For her father gave him to her as her very own, ye understand, and she lent him to me—and him, mind ye—I took care of for her. Well, when we thought of her ill and suffering, when we got it into our heads that she might die; I, for one, never slept a wink no more. Bless your heart, ma'am, why, her old father hisself, afore he died, told me to look after her. So says I to meself, 'She'd love to see that dog of hers, and he'd love to see her—to say nothing of me; and neither distance nor ocean shall stop us. Come on, Leo, me old friend, I says, 'let's make an effort to see her before she leaves us forever. So off we sets; for the dog he knew as well as I did what we was up to; and, naturally enough, ma'am, we arrives at your door, because we knowed she was here."

"Well, I rapped, important like, and one of you ladies, answered; but she was somehow scared of us," chuckled the old man, "and away she flew! But ye must understand that these here breed o' dogs has wonderful instinct, and never forgets nobody; and no sooner did this one get a sniff into this 'ere domicile than he knowed well which room his mistress was in, wily-nilly fair dragged me to her room. I was forced to open this door to save a row," he said silyly, "with a wicked wink to himself, 'and here we are. And now nothing any of you ladies can say will make old John Ryder regretful of what he has done this day. For both me and Leo feels years younger now that we have seen our dear old mistress, and know that she's a bit better."

Ma Soeur was not only a kind, but a sensible woman; and long before John had finished his speech her face had relaxed, and all sign of displeasure had departed from it.

"Well, old man!" she said, looking quite kindly towards him, "it was a well-meant, but a bold action on your part; and though you may think that dear Sister Marguerite looks fairly well, I can assure you that she is very weak, and that excitement is not good for her; so you and your dog—

"Her dog, ma'am!"

"Well,"—smiling—"her dog, then, must wish her good-night, and leave at once. But I shall not forbid you calling to see how she is tomorrow, if the doctors approve and all be well; and I promise you that none of us will be afraid of you any more."

"Good-night, my dear old mistress, then," he said, turning fondly and anxiously towards her. "Ye'll not be no worse for seeing old John, will ye?"

"Not at all!" she said heartily—"much better; for if I cannot sleep tonight I shall enjoy thinking of all your faithful love and kindness, and it will do me good, dear old John."

"See, I'll leave him here to take care of ye," whispered the old man as he bent over her. "Ye'll like to have him, and I'll feel a deal easier in my mind when I know that he's here beside ye. Good-night, and may God have ye in His safe keeping." He turned to leave the room.

"Poor old man!" said Ma Soeur in her kindest voice. "But see, call the big dog; you are forgetting him."

old man pretended to shrink from him in terror.

"Now, look here, ma'am," he said seriously; "if you'll only let him alone, he'll let you alone and disturb nobody. He'll lie anywhere in this room as quiet as a lamb, so long as he thinks he's guarding her. And what's more," he chuckled, "I'll warrant ye no more burglars will dare to intrude, so long as he's here to protect ye. Think o' that!"

"But a dog, and such a huge monster, too, in a sick-room—it is outrageous. I cannot allow it. He will disturb my patient."

"Ah, I shall love to have him," came in a half-pouting, half-disappointed little voice from the bed. "There, now—there, now, didn't I tell ye so?" cried the old man, nodding his head exultingly. "Isn't it only accordin' to nater they'd like to be together again! O' course they would! And, begging your pardon, ma'am"—in a tone of injured pride—"he's not a monster. He's a gentleman, he is; and knows how to behave hisself as much. And"—waving his hand, and looking round with a lofty air of despotic superiority—"he's been used to a deal finer quarters than these!"

Here there was a sound of ill-disguised laughter from Sister Francis, and a very merry titter from amid the bed-clothes. But Ma Soeur was determined not to be beaten without one last effort.

"The woman's face, already pallid, turned whiter as she took the message. "It's Jane," she gasped.

"That's right—Jane, no other name given but yourn. You'll bring the child? There ain't no time to lose."

"Yes, I'll come," she said mechanically, and the boy whisked out into the rain leaving a small pool where he had stood.

Mrs. Dingle divested herself of her apron, took coat and hat from a peg in the kitchen and quickly dressed the child to go out. Then, under a doubtful umbrella, hurried down the long, wet street to take the car that passed the corner. It was a tedious journey to the General Hospital in quite a different quarter of the town, but it had stopped raining when they arrived within sight of their destination. The child had slept the latter part of the time and was fretful at being awakened.

"Come on, Berrie," said the woman, "we're going to Mama," and hurried the little thing along through the great square and up endless flights of steps. The nurse in charge met them at the door of the ward.

"Is that for No. 16? That's right—I'm glad you're in time. She won't cry, will she?"

But Berrie was too awed and interested to cry, as long as she had hold of Mrs. Dingle's hand. Her big brown eyes looked solemnly under her sunbonnet, one or two stray locks of pale, silky hair falling over the small delicate features and the thumb of her free hand again stuck in her mouth.

They went down the long ward to a bed in a corner, about which a screen had been drawn. Another nurse was seated by the bed, in which lay a thin young woman, her head enveloped in bandages and one of her eyes swollen and inflamed by the child's unskillfulness.

"Why, Jane, how did you get hurt like that?" asked Mrs. Dingle. "Here's Berrie come to see you," and she lifted the child on to the bedside.

"The sick woman put her uninjured arm round the child and held her. "She was knocked down in the street," exclaimed the nurse, "by a motor, I think—it doesn't matter what—and some time before she recovered enough to tell us where to send you."

"I'll soon be better," Jane said in a weak voice. "You'll have to stay here a bit, I reckon," went on Mrs. Dingle. "I'll do what I can for Berrie—if it wasn't for that policy what it must be paid up."

A faint red tinged the other woman's thin cheek. She looked at the nurse piteously.

"There was a purse in the pocket of my coat," she whispered. "Come with me, Mrs. Dingle, a moment."

They disappeared and Jane turned her face to kiss Berrie. "Take off your bonnet," she murmured. The child obeyed and with infinite difficulty the woman put over her head and tucked into her clothes two little flannel or serve lappets, apparently small bags attached by double strings over the child's shoulders.

LITTLE BERRIE'S INHERITANCE

By Mother St. Jerome in Rosary Magazine

In the open doorway of a house, one in a long row of small dwellings in a dingy street, stood a small child, busily sucking a very dirty thumb and grasping the remnants of what had once been a doll. It was raining heavily, and her eyes were fixed in a fascinated gaze on the little spouts of rain that jumped up from the pavement in front of her as the heavy drops beat down.

The spot she was staring at was suddenly invaded by a pair of stout and muddy boots, and her wondering eyes travelled up from them by way of the overcoat to the wet face of a messenger-boy, under a dripping sou'wester. He glanced up at the number over the lintel, and then, stepping inside, knocked sharply on the door. The child retreated further into a dim passage, and finally behind the skirts of a worn-looking woman, who came forward in answer to the summons.

"Mrs. Dingle, 6 Pork Street—that's right?" he snapped the boy.

The woman nodded, wiping the soap-suds from her arms on her apron. He thrust a paper at her.

"Haccident, number 16, haccident ward, General Orspital. Wants 'er kiddie."

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"You will always keep that Berrie," she said, "no one must ever take it away from you. . . and be a good girl to please Mammy."

handed over to the care of the public by a poor working woman (Dingle by name), who had cared for the infant since the death of the mother, resulting from a street accident.

"And why can't she remain in the Dingle?" asked a fat Guardian jocosely.

"The clerk, a thin, prim person, disapproving of levity, replied severely:

"Mrs. Dingle is obliged to go out to work, instead of taking washing at home, and she can't keep the child any longer."

"Has no doubt done what she could," remarked the parson. "Quite so," put in the chairman.

"Notify the matron that the child will be taken into the House. What name?"

The clerk hesitated. "There was no name given. The mother is only spoken of as Jane, and the little girl as Berrie."

The chairman filled in the order to that effect. "Berrie—well, it must be left blank," he observed.

"Miss Berrie Blank," said the wag—"that's distinctive."

The next time he came to the Union he asked to see the girl with the distinctive name, and Berrie was stood up on a seat to be looked at, small, pale and puzzled.

"Do you know me, my dear?" he asked. Berrie gazed with great dark eyes, and shook her head.

"You're not Joe Dingle—have you come to take me back to Mammy?"

The negative reply took all the joy out of the penny he gave her. Neither of Miss Regina Tempest's names suited her, in person or character. She was the mildest and most even-tempered little lady, with nothing but the least queenly in her appearance. Her years were slipping towards the sixties and all her life had been spent in the service of others. She had been visitor at the work-house many years, and the permanent inmates were all her intimates, from the funny old ladies in frilled night-caps, sitting in armchairs, and the wizened old men, mostly to be found on a bench in a sunny corner, to the waif-and-stray babies whose careers she aided and watched with interest.

It did not take long to make friends with Berrie, in whom she recognized a different type from the usual dependent on their country's bounty. The child's reserve and aloofness appealed to her, and the want of any reliable information as to her antecedents struck a strain of romance hidden in her seemingly prosaic nature.

The thought had formed in her mind to look for a little girl to educate and care for, and as happens sometimes, the vague project took shape quite suddenly. A conversation with the Work-house matron as to the possible future for Berrie put a match to the ready-laid train, and one board-day she went into the committee room and laid her proposal before the Guardians.

Needless to say there was no demur, with Mrs. Dingle's address as reference, and entered on a new phase of her existence.

Miss Tempest followed the Dingle family with some trouble, as the frail had moved, but eventually obtained such information as was available. Berrie's mother had applied for a room that was to be let in the house inhabited by Mrs. Dingle, who, finding the young woman apt at ironing and crimping, had taken her on to help in the laundry. She had never been known by any other name than Jane, had never spoken to any one belonging to her, but wore a wedding ring.

Jane's few possessions had fallen to Mrs. Dingle in return for her care of the child, and the only things remaining were the quaint little flannel bags to which Berrie had always tenaciously clung. These Miss Tempest found still on the child, and the idea of taking them from her, even to have them washed, roused such storms of tears and despair and wailing for "Mammy," that she contented herself with seeing them in clean covers every now and then.

They were happy years that followed, speeding only too quickly, and Miss Regina realized with a shock one day that Berrie was no longer a child but a pretty girl of some eighteen summers, with a very distinct personality of her own.

One night the girl had gone away to bed and Miss Regina prepared to follow. Her innate neatness made her unconsciously put in order the needle-work and books lying about in the sitting-room, and close to Berrie's desk that stood open. The little tray that fitted into the body of the desk was obstructed by something underneath that proved to be the small serge squares which Berrie had begun to put into new casings. Miss Tempest took them up tenderly, thinking of the dead mother, and the remarkable beauty of the little pale baby left adrift on the world. One edge of the serge was frayed and worn and a white lining or paper showed through.

Quite suddenly it came to Regina Berrie's parentage. But dared she open it without the girl's knowledge? She sat thinking for some time. Why had she never thought of it before? And if there was a clue, it might be of a distressing, or a disappointing form, better withheld

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