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Philanthropist *A Boy and His Dog Cure Rose*

And Mr. Allstyne's Conscience is Soothed

By JAMES McNITT



R. ALLSTYNE stretched and called over to me. "Go out and find a fit recipient for my philanthropy."

* * *

The window flew up at one end of the tenement house. A cautious call sounded. Toward the other end another window opened.

"How is she today, Mrs. O'Hara?"

"About the same, the doctor says."

After a few perfunctory remarks about the weather, the two women disappeared and the windows were closed.

This tableau was an almost daily occurrence at the Stevenson tenements. Mrs. O'Hara would learn from the doctor or from a personal visit, the condition of the girl on the fourth floor. Then she would transmit the information to the other tenants.

The girl on the fourth floor was Rose Fletcher. Rose had never been well from birth, and when she had married and come to the tenement to live, it had shut off the sunshine and fresh air she needed to keep her from being seriously

sick. Within two months she was confined to bed, and started to waste away. The doctor was called occasionally but he never prescribed anything but sunshine and fresh air, which were absurd demands, to say the least. They were having the greatest difficulty making both ends meet by living in the cheapest possible way. How could they move where the beneficial rays of the sun could be reached, without borrowing large sums of money to do so, thus forever enslaving them?

Near the crisis of her illness an incident happened which started her health on an upward trend. One day Paul Fletcher, her husband, came home tired but happy. He was followed by a little urchin of perhaps seven years.

"Look what I picked up out of the gutter, Rose," he cried exultantly.

She looked up, startled. "Who is that?"

"I don't know. I found him out in front crying pitifully. All he'll tell me is that he's lost."

"But we can't keep him, Paul."

"We can until someone advertises for

him. Maybe there's a reward. What's your name, child?"

The boy answered mournfully, "Kenneth. I'm lost."

"Well, Kenneth, are you hungry?"

At the prospect of food the child's eyes brightened. He grunted an affirmative answer. Paul shared his portion of the evening meal with him.

The next evening Paul came from work with a newspaper under his arm. "Hello, dear. Gee, you're looking swell. Your eyes are brighter than they have been in a long while."

She smiled. "Oh, Paul, the boy is wonderful. He just plays around on the floor and whenever I ask him for anything he gets it right away. I wish we could keep him."

"We shall keep him, too. Look."

He pointed out an article in the newspaper. It told briefly of the death of a woman living in a tenement house not far from the Stevenson. She had had a son, corresponding in description to Kenneth, who had disappeared shortly after her death. As she had no relatives the child would go to the Home if found.

"But can we afford to keep him?" she inquired, doubtfully.

"Sure. Look at that pay-check." He tossed it to her casually. "Five dollars increase."

"Oh, Paul" she exclaimed, her eyes shining. "And he's such a help."

During the next few weeks, Rose's health improved considerably, due to the interest and affection she showed for Kenneth. But as she waxed healthier, the child's health waned. Being cooped up in the tenement was telling on Kenneth. Rose spoke about it to Paul. "Frankly, I'm worried. He's losing weight every day and he hardly eats."

"Don't worry about that, honey. I'll fix that tonight."

When he came home that night he was dragging a small cur canine behind him.

"Got him from a friend. Oh, Kenneth!"

"What do you want, Uncle Paul?"

"Come here a minute."

The boy came. He saw the dog and fell on his knees, his arms enfolding the mongrel's neck. His eyes bespoke mute gratification.

"Is it mine?"

"It is yours."

The dog had the same effect on Kenneth that Kenneth had had on Rose. The boy grew more healthy as his affection for the dog grew, for he exercised outdoors more, ate more heartily, slept more soundly. As for Rose, she succeeded in getting up from bed for the first time since she had been confined. Paul received another raise, and they seemed on the road to comfort.

* * *

Then came the terrible day when Paul was carried in silently and laid on the sofa.

"He's not—not dead?" asked Rose, terrified.

"No, but he's darn close to it. Some fool kid ran out in front of an automobile and Frank here pushed him away from it. The car ran right over him and kept on going. We've called the ambulance."

The siren was even now audible in the street; then the ambulance men came and bore the still white form away.

Convulsed with tears, Rose threw herself on the sofa. She was in such a state of hysteria that Mrs. O'Hara had to be called in. Her condition grew steadily worse.

Finally, in two or three months Paul returned, but he walked with a limp from which he never recovered. As the job he had formerly had required a man active on his feet, he did not regain his position. He had had clerical work, but posts as clerks were scarce. To crown the period of their misfortunes, the dog was picked up in the streets by the pound man; and the boy began pining because of the loss of his dog.

* * *

I reported these facts to Mr. Allstyne. I hold a position as chief secretary to the latter. He is an eccentric fellow. Whenever his conscience trou-

bles him particularly, he sends me out to find a suitable object for his philanthropy. At this time he had just been engaged in a business maneuver in which the tactics had been rather unscrupulous.

He listened attentively to what I said. "Where did you find all this out?"

"Mrs. O'Hara."

Mr. Allstyne ordered his coat and hat; on receiving them, he accompanied me to the waiting car. "To the dog pound, Mason." The chauffeur took the order with an immobile countenance. He took us directly to the old red building which served the purpose of a pound. Turning to me, Mr. Allstyne asked, "Think you can recognize the dog from the description Mrs. O'Hara gave you?"

"Positive, sir. She was very explicit."

We entered the pound and obtained permission to examine the dogs. Looking them over, I picked out one whose markings tallied with those on the dog described by Mrs. O'Hara.

Mr. Allstyne paid the necessary fees and took the dog to the car, where he ordered the chauffeur to drive to the offices of Allstyne, Phillippo and Allstyne. Here he entered and stayed for a short time. When he came out he told me that he had found a position for Fletcher in the offices of the company.

"To the Van Dorn Hospital," he ordered Mason. From that institution he went with a receipt for Fletcher's bill.

Then my employer returned to his office, where he used the phone again. "Hello, Manning. How much for a nice-sized bungalow today? How much? All right, I'll take one. I'll send you a certified check in the morning. A couple named Fletcher is moving in Monday. Have a Certificate of Ownership ready in about half an hour; my secretary will be down for it."

He turned to me. "Take this pooch, this cancelled receipt, this guarantee for the job, and that Certificate of Ownership from Brown and Owens. Now get out of here. This philanthropy is getting on my nerves."

"Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law, but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, 'It is the glory of a man to pass by an offense.'"

—Bacon,
"Of Revenge."



VANQUISHED

I went to give you bitten ire.
Like angry dogs up-leaping
Carnivorous and tongued with fire,
My sullen thoughts were steeping.

I walked the score of rods that lay
Our ruddy hearths between.
I conjured up barbed words to say,
And brewed my venomous spleen.

The look you gave was meek as milk—
The dogs dropped, slain and sleeping.
I said, "The weather's fine as silk,
And how have you been keeping?"

V. Valerie Gates.