

## The Story of Mike

By Harriet Crocker Le Roy.

**M**IKE certainly could not be called a beauty—no, not even his most admiring friends could find anything about him to praise—except his eyes. Mike's eyes were deeply brown and very appealing. They always seemed to be saying: "Please don't kick me. Please be good to me. I know I haven't any business here, but I hope you'll let me stay." For Mike was a tramp, and it was those brown, appealing eyes of his which won for him a home. He had appeared at the back door one day as the Lady of the House was dispensing juicy bones to the dog and cat, and the brown eyes, softly appealing, had touched the Lady's tender heart and secured for him a bone—a good, meaty bone, such as Mike's jaws had not closed upon for many a long day. Then she had ordered him away, and he had gone obediently, carrying his bone with him. But in an hour he was back again, looking with his pathetic gaze at the screen-porch door from which he hoped to see the Lady come forth.

For Mike, with a wisdom all his own, had developed one gift—the gift of knowing by the look of a lady's eyes whether she liked dogs or not. And the Lady's eyes, in this case, had been favorable—even to a tramp dog like Mike.

The Man of the House protested vigorously. "Two good-for-nothing dogs around the place? I won't have it! I'll get rid of them both and buy a good dog. I knew a fellow who can get me a Great Dane pup, and I'll have him see about it right away."

The Lady of the House sighed. A Great Dane pup! Her flower beds, her trailing vines and choice bulbs—and the Darling Child! Ten to one the Darling Child would be screaming half the time because the Great Dane pup had rubbed against him and upset him. And the things he'd drag off and bury!

In a few days a friend from the mountain drove into town. When he went back the little brown dog, Brownie, went with him. His host had urged him to take Mike also, but he had declined. The pathetic brown eyes evidently had failed to touch a responsive chord.

Mike was now supreme. His were all the juicy bones and his the undisputed ownership of the dog house. His heart was happy, and still he missed little Brownie.

One day soon after the departure of Brownie, the Lady of the House rushed to the telephone. She called up her husband and cried breathlessly: "Oh, Dick! Dick! The dog-catcher's got Mike! He just took him away! I ran out with my rolling pin in my hand, but the horrid wretch was driving away! And there was—poor—poor Mike looking at me through the wire netting of the cage! Oh, tell me quick, what shall I do?"

"Do?" came the unruffled voice through the receiver. "Why, my dear, if you've got time to spare from your pie-crust just offer up a silent prayer of thanks that the good-for-nothing creature is gone. It's the best piece of news I've heard for a month. I'll see that fellow today about that Great—"

The Lady of the House hung up the receiver with a snap. There was a generous dab of flour on her cheek into which a salty tear ran and promptly formed a bit of paste. The stove refused to draw properly, the Darling Child was wailing at the top of his little voice, and Mike—Mike, with the soft, appealing eyes, was gone! The dog catcher had him! And he would be killed! and—and—

Another tear rolled down into the dab of paste on her cheek, and life looked, just at that moment, scarcely worth the living.

At lunch-time the Lady made her plea for the redemption of Mike.

"Two dollars to get him out, \$2 more for a license, to say nothing of a new collar? Well, I guess not! I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go round to the pound this afternoon and pick out a good dog—a big one that'll be some good as watch dog. That Mike was no use on earth—he'd make friends with a burglar as quick as he would with any one. I'll get a good bulldog, if there's one there, or a Collie, or a St. Bernard if they've got one."

The Lady of the House poured herself another cup of tea. Her eyes were suspiciously red. But she said not a word, and the Man of the House began to feel

uncomfortable. If she'd only talk back! But she wouldn't.

At 6 o'clock the Lady of the House, sitting on the piazza in her cool white gown with the Darling Child in her lap, saw a familiar figure coming down the street, and at his heels—what—could it be? Yes—Mike!

The Man of the House looked a trifle sheepish as he came up the walk, and Mike, in a transport of dog-joy, leaped upon the Lady and the Darling Child together. He knew some explanation was necessary. If she would only ask a question or two, it would help a fellow out!

And she did. "Why, Dick, how did you happen to get poor Mike back? Couldn't you find a bulldog? Wasn't there any other dog in the pound?"

"Plenty of 'em, plenty of 'em," responded the Man. "Good dogs, too—a mighty fine little bulldog, and an English setter, and there was a Collie, too—a beauty."

"Then why—"

"Well, hang it all!" said the Man of the House. "There was that good-for-nothing Mike. And he looked at me so with those big brown eyes of his that I swear I couldn't help myself. Now, that's all there is to it. The incident is closed."

He stalked into the house, and the Lady stooped to examine the handsome new collar with its shining tag. And she smiled to herself in a wise little way. Evidently there was something potently appealing in Mike's soft brown eyes, after all!

At midnight a delighted barking and yelping arose in the back yard. The Man of the House hurriedly dressed himself and went out to investigate.

When he came back he was smiling broadly. "Is there anything in the pantry I can get for Brownie? He's come back and acts half starved. Great Scott! That little rascal has traveled more than thirty miles to get back home. I'll have to get another collar tomorrow and dig up \$2 more for another license. Great Scott!"

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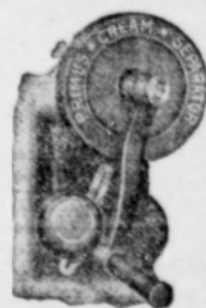
SALEM, Or., March 26.—(Special.)—Superintendent Hale, of the State Industrial School, is receiving letters written by persons seeking a cure for the smoking habit. Since Mr. Hale announced that the nitrite of silver treatment had cured numerous inmates of the institution he has been inundated almost with correspondence from victims of the weed.

A letter received today was from a broker of Louisville, Ky. The man, although a member of a local stock exchange and having connections with a New York exchange, admits that he is a victim of the cigarette habit, and that he has tried numerous so-called cures without success. Another letter was from a resident of British Columbia, and another from a farmer of Georgia. Mr. Hale answers all letters and gives the prescription which has been found efficacious at the school.

"Our physician has discovered," said the superintendent, "that in most cases one-fourth of 1 per cent solution used as a mouth wash before meals is sufficient. At first a much stronger solution was used at the school."—Oregonian, March 26.

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