BRAVE DOGS

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BRAVE DOGS

JOCK ON GUARD

[*See p. 18*]

Brave Dogs

By

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"TRUE STORIES ABOUT DOGS" "THE HUNDRED BEST ANIMALS"
"TRUE STORIES ABOUT HORSES" "BABES OF THE WILD"
"ALL ABOUT PETS" ETC.

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TO

KATHLEEN REDMAYNE

WITH THE AUTHOR'S LOVE

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THESE stories of brave dogs are 'founded on fact,' each having been written round some striking instance of that faithful courage we find so natural in the animal who from prehistoric times has been man's close and loving friend.

I have to thank the Editor of *Little Folks* for permission to use "Léon" and "Barry," first published in its pages.

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BRAVE DOGS

JOCK

"A Guid Beastie"

It had rained all day—a steady downpour—and the wayfarers hurried home to peel off their wet clothes and warm themselves by the fire.

All but one, dumb and homeless. His rough coat must stay where it was—on his back!

Down the grey streets he padded, covering the ground at a good pace, and when the last house had been left behind he stopped to draw breath and think what he would do next. A short piece of rope still dangled from his scraggy neck; the brick at the other end of the rope had been left on the bank of a pond.

A constable had pressed to see his licence, and to drown him had seemed the best way out to the scamp he had known as master. Dan Ford was 'wanted' on several counts, and had a horror of the law. And since his dog had refused to be lost, the only thing to do was this.

But the dog did not enjoy being drowned, and made a good bid for life. The pond had nearly won, for the rope was thick, and when he had bitten and torn it through he had barely strength left to scramble out. All night he lay where he had crawled, but when morning dawned, and the sun shone down and warmed him, he sat up, drew a deep breath or two, and was off to look for his master.

He felt sure, with the beautiful faith of a dog, that he could not have meant to harm him.

Dan was not to be found—for the very good reason that 'the law' had got him after all. The dog hung round his old haunts for several days, then gave it up, and turned his face toward the country, for he had been born on a farm.

Since then he had travelled many a mile; he was worn to a shadow, and his feet were sore, but the soft brown eyes in his ugly head looked out on the world with undaunted courage, despite the fact that he was hungry.

Hungry and tired. The side of a hedge had often been his night's lodging, but now the banks were a mass of mud, and the ditches inches deep in water.

He must go on. There was a light ahead, and this meant that some one lived on that hill—lights always meant men, he knew.

The squat building was an old Army hut that Sandy McKay, the new manager of the mine at Polruth, preferred to quarters in the village.

"A 'dour' man, McKay," they would have told you at the mine. He was blunt of speech, his energy was amazing, and his keen blue eyes saw too far. To-night the fair, straight brows above them met in a frown—he was rating himself for his 'saftness' in finding the hut so dreary when quiet was what he most desired. But he was sick of the falling rain, and the moan of the sea on the rocks. He could not settle down to read; and things had gone wrong all day.

A sound outside made him look up. What was it? The wind? No—too near for that. Some one was fumbling outside the door. Some one was trying to get in!

The sound came again. He opened the door cautiously—to find himself in an impromptu shower-bath, as a dog on the threshold shook himself vigorously. Surprise kept the young man still for a moment; the next he was gently pushed on one side while the dog took possession of the hearth. With his head thrown back he gazed steadily at Sandy, who stared at him in return. Brown eyes met blue; and questions were asked and answered without any need of words.

He was to stay, and he knew it. Down he plopped by the farther side of the fire, and gave a deep sigh of relief.

"Make yourself at home, laddie," said Sandy with a grin. "Not brought your card with you? I thought as much. Weel, I shall ca' you Jock."

"That'll do fine," said a wagging tail, and humming a few bars of *Bonnie Dundee*, which happened to be the only tune he knew, Sandy brought out the one dry towel he possessed and gave his visitor a good rub down.

They supped together on bread and cheese, and 'Jock,' taking quite kindly to his new name, feasted on the end of a leg of mutton which should have been Sandy's dinner next day. And though the rain pattered still on the roof, the hut had become a home.

Sandy always said Jock brought him luck, and certainly things improved. The output of the mine increased, the men decided he "might be worse"; and even if things did go wrong a bit, there was always Jock to listen to what he had to say when he got home.

They were never apart, these two, when they could be together. Every morning Jock accompanied his master to the mine, the handle of a can of

cold well-sweetened tea carefully held in his mouth.

Having barked "Good-bye," he trotted to the village for yesterday's paper, which his master found awaiting him when he came up for lunch. The men, whom he treated with a royal condescension, were much interested in his doings, but agreed among themselves that he was 'queer.'

There was one dweller in those Cornish wilds that Jock equally feared and hated. This was a huge, bad-tempered bull, who had bitterly resented his attempts to take a short cut to a rabbit warren through his own particular field. Jock had defied him, but not with impunity. The point of one horn had made a nasty sore behind the thick hair on his side, and months after it had healed he felt twinges now and then in the scar this had left behind it.

One Sunday afternoon Sandy dressed himself in a well-cut blue serge that usually spent its time in his portmanteau. Jock knew what that meant, and groaned in spirit. They would walk toward the village, instead of to the sea, and—alas—he would first be brushed, which was always an ordeal!

He was still feeling rather hurt when presently they set out, Sandy smiling to himself as if his thoughts were pleasant.

Before long a white dress gleamed in the distance, to be lost to sight in a narrow high-banked lane that skirted the pasture lands. Jock knew what this meant too; a girl called Jean was coming to walk with them. Jock rather liked her, so he did not mind.

Sandy quickened his pace, while Jock raced on ahead, then suddenly stood still and listened. A moment, and with a bark of warning he flew toward the lane so swiftly that his feet barely touched the ground.

Jean thought he had gone mad, when, seizing her frock, he literally drove her up a flowery bank; but she understood when a few seconds later she heard a wild stampede of heavy hoofs.

The bull had broken out of his field, and but for Jock's intervention she must have been trampled underfoot, even had he not stopped to toss her. Sandy barely escaped him by vaulting a gate, and the first thing he did when he reached that flowery bank on which Jean had tremblingly collapsed was to tell the proud Jock that no dog in the world was such "a guid beastie" as he.

Not long after this Sandy bought a little house, and the hut became littered with catalogues of furniture and bright bits of stuff for curtains.

"See here!" laughed Sandy one day, and he tapped his pocket as he spoke to make sure that his wallet was safe. "A hundred poun's, a' fresh frae the bank, tae fit up the wee new house!"

It was not only Jock who heard Sandy's gay words. A friendless 'out-of-work' had spied the hut, and shambled up the slope on which it stood to ask for help on his way. Drawing back quietly, the hungry man watched through the crack of the half-open door while Sandy thrust the notes behind the silver frame that decked a corner of the mantelpiece. It held Jean's photograph, and as Sandy touched it Jock growled and made for the door.

"Mustn't be jealous, laddie," laughed his master as he slammed it. And Jock was at peace now the door was shut, the intruder he had seen being left outside.

When tea was over Sandy thought he would see Jean again and let her know he had taken their tickets to London. He and she were to stay with his mother for three days, and spend that hundred pounds on furniture. He whistled *Bonnie Dundee* in great style as he swung off down the road.

Jock started with him, but altered his mind, and left him when he reached the village. He had not liked the look of that man.

So home he trotted—in time to see some one slip through the window of the hut and make off down the valley. The man had a good start, and fear lent him speed when he heard Jock barking behind him.

But he had all his wits about him and did not mean to be caught. He twisted and turned, jumped streams and waded down them to put Jock off the scent; and once, by catching at an overhanging bough while he stood knee deep in the water, he pulled himself up into the heart of a tree, where even to Jock's sharp eyes he was invisible. Here, feeling safe, he dozed away the hours till dawn.

When the sky was all primrose and delicate green, and a blackbird called to the wood: "It's morning!" he let himself down—to find Jock lying in wait for him, convinced that he was somewhere near.

And now the chase was the merest farce—Jock had thrown him to the ground in no time. He fell heavily, breaking his ankle beneath him, and Jock, having quenched his thirst at the stream, settled down by his side on guard.

Sandy had not reached home until late the night before, and, rather disturbed to find Jock missing, sat up some time to let him in. He gave it up at last and went to bed.

He woke at dawn with a sense of something wrong. His eyes sought Jean's picture, and as it smiled on him he remembered, in a flash, those notes.

They were gone, like Jock! He guessed then what had happened, and soon, with a handful of men from the farm, was scouring the countryside. It was almost dusk when they heard a faint, hoarse bark from a tangle of briars by the stream.

"That's Jock!" cried Sandy joyfully. And there he was, still on guard over his unconscious foe, in whose coat was the missing wallet.

They carried the man to the house of a kind old Cornish dame, who nursed him till he was well. Sandy would not prosecute; the theft, he said, had been partly his fault, since he had put temptation in a poor man's way. He intended to take him on at the mine and give him another chance.

Jock often went to see him in a friendly way while the broken ankle was healing. Dogs are clever creatures, and I think he guessed just how the patient felt. At any rate, he made it his business to cheer him up by bringing him things to play with—stones from the road, an old pipe of his master's, and once a young rabbit that he carried in his mouth without hurting a hair of its head. And when that broken ankle was healed, and a new man worked in the mines, Jock met him every evening as he had once met Sandy, before the coming of Jean.

THOR

THE DOG WHO DISOBEYED

THROUGH the blackness of the night the stars shone down on the vast plains of whiteness. The waves that through the brief Arctic summer had ebbed and flowed round the rock-bound coast were silent now, fast locked in ice, and not a breath stirred amid the pines that sheltered the long, low, two-roomed house in which a tired man was sleeping. John Farrant had built that house himself, with some small help from the friendly Cree Indians; and that he had taken a Double First at Cambridge seemed a small thing to him in comparison.

"Jolly good house!" he murmured drowsily, as he woke for a moment at a wailing chorus from the huskies that formed his team. "*Ooo-ooo-ooo-ooO!*" they howled, and every dog within hearing distance answered the melancholy sound. "*Ooo-ooo-ooo-ooO!*" it rose and fell; but Dr John had ceased to hear it. A long day's drive in the bitter cold to visit a patient across the bay had made sleep come to him readily.

Up on the roof, snuggled under the snow, lay some of the serenaders. It was warmer there than anywhere else outside with the thermometer at twenty below zero; and warmth was what Black Nell wanted. Very near, and pressing hard against her, were three new-born pups, as black as she, with blunt noses and shining eyes. As she licked their rough heads, sighing faintly with rapture, her first-born touched the tip of her muzzle with his own moist, red tongue.

The stars were hidden now, and more snow was falling, flake after flake, till the tall green pines bent under the load they bore. Black Nell was heavy, and her pups were big. As they pushed one another out of the way, she moved suddenly to rebuke them; and *plop!* on John Farrant, as he lay dreaming, fell a tangled mass of hairy puppies with several hundredweight of snow.

This was John's introduction to Thor, who had landed right on his head. Instead of yelping like his brother and sister, now actively engaged in trying to tear a rug, Thor vented his feelings in a strong, deep growl, surprisingly loud for his size.

The doctor freed himself with difficulty, too astonished to be indignant. Though new to the North, he had heard that roofs fell in, but *his* roof! It was

incredible.

Thor continued to growl, and while Black Nell, glad to be under shelter, took possession for her pups of the deep wicker chair John's mother had sent from home, he scrambled unsteadily back to the bed and defied Dr John to do his worst.

John was too busy feeding the stove to take much notice of him then, but it flashed through his mind as he piled on more wood that 'Thor' must be the youngster's name.

"It was thunder, not lightning, that bothered my roof," he said, in writing to his old mother. "Thor's going to be a fine fellow," he added, "or I am much mistaken."

His faith was justified. The Newfoundland blood Thor had from his father marked him out among the huskies, his mother's kindred. From his early puppyhood he was almost human, or so it seemed to his master.

"Don't know what I should do without you!" Dr John would sometimes say, and it was no more than the truth. The loneliness of this bleak white land was in striking contrast to the city practice he had left in answer to its call, and Thor's welcome alone made the bare house 'home' after his long day of work. Thor never barked, but his growl of pleasure was sharply defined from the thunderous sounds that rumbled in his throat when the doctor was in bed and some one came to the door.

"Gently, gently," John would say, and Thor would subside into a suspicious stillness.

Nothing pleased him more than to steal into the surgery when his master's back was turned, there to watch the measuring of pills and potions, which he wistfully regarded as strange rewards in which he had no share. There were times, of course, when his strong will came into collision with the doctor's, as when he neglected his share of white-fish to feast on moccasins hung out to dry, or on the corner of a moose-skin rug. So adept was he at stealing snared rabbits that for a long time he was not found out. Caught at last in the act by an Eskimo boy, he was reported to Dr John, who gave him his first thrashing.

Thor took this in silence, making no sound, and vanished for three whole days. On the fourth he returned, another rabbit in his mouth, and his head held high in defiance.

This time the doctor tried another plan. Fastening him up outside the dispensary, he tied the rabbit round his neck so that he could not get at it, and there it remained till night. The injured natives, duly coached, made

frequent visits to jeer at him, and by evening Thor had had enough of rabbits to sicken him of them for ever.

Another black day in his young life was the first of his training for team work. Harnessed with a couple of old dogs in front of him, and another behind who snapped at his ankles if given the slightest excuse, he was dragged forward whether he would or no at his trainer's sharp command to "*Marche!*" A shout of "*Chaw!*" meant turn to the right; "*Yee!*" to the left; while "*Isse*" added on either meant that he was to turn back on the trail to the side that had last been mentioned. When released, after some rough handling from the others, he was off to the woods like a shot. He did not return until nightfall.

Dr John heard him breathing outside the door, and hastened to let him in.

"Bravo!" he said cheerfully, stroking the great head. "You'll do finely to-morrow, old man. It's a splendid game when you try it!"

Thor growled, but quite gently. If he did not understand the new point of view the doctor put before him, he knew he was being praised; and praise from his master was as sweet to him as ridicule was bitter. There was no more trouble with him in the team, and his achievements later on as leader are still remembered on the island.

When the ice over which he had to travel, in some places several inches thick, was being 'candled'—separated into long, crisp splinters by the bright sunshine of early spring—he wound his team in and out among it, skirting dangerous places with judgment and skill, and always reaching his goal. Sometimes when the snow lay thick across the trail an Indian guide ran on ahead, but this was rarely necessary with Thor. "He *knows*," would say the guide; and in some queer way he did.

Early one morning a wandering Cree brought a message that some one was very sick on a lonely farm beyond the lake. Packing his sledge with medicine and stores, and taking an old guide with him, the doctor set out at once. The sky was clear; if all went well they would be home before dusk.

Thor was in great form, and the dogs behind him kept well up to the pace he set. The journey to the farm was uneventful, though sharp little gusts of wind came and went, and the guide began to look anxious.

"Him blizzard, he come soon," he nodded. And Thor, as though he knew what had been said, went at a speed that left his followers breathless.

The patient, a gentle grey-eyed woman, was so ill that the only chance for her life was to take her at once to hospital. Leaving a note for her husband, a trapper, who might not be home for some days, Dr John rolled

her in a pile of blankets and carried her out to the sledge. Two wondering small boys, whom she could not leave behind, were tucked in beside her in a nest of furs, and thought it a very good joke.

And now it was decided to skirt the lake, as the trail on the left bank was not so rough—a great advantage to the invalid. Once more the dogs set off at full speed, for Thor, like the Indian, knew the meaning of those sharp gusts that now seemed to come from every quarter. The whirling snow made it more and more difficult to see where they were going, but he had often found his way in the teeth of a raging storm.

"Go ahead, old boy," said Dr John cheerfully. "We're leaving it to you, you know."

And Thor did his best, avoiding dangerous places, winding his team in and out on rocky ground and making straight for home. The blizzard shrieked and howled; the little boys, in their furry nest, hid their faces against each other, while their mother, too spent to ask what was happening, was satisfied to feel them near.

"We can't be far from the settlement now," the doctor shouted to his companion. He had scarcely spoken when Thor, to his dismay, flung himself down on the snow.

Nothing would move him. Sharp blows from the guide, his master's reproaches, the sting of the whip, brought from him never a sound. Like a dead weight he lay across the track, his harness twisted and tangled.

The guide, in despair, ran on a few paces to see if he could make out some landmark that would give him an idea of where they were. In a minute or two he groped his way back, shaken and horror-struck.

"Thor—Thor—he save us all!" he panted. They had come to a point where a river joined the lake, and here the current was so strong that the ice above—barely two inches thick—would not have been strong enough to bear them.

Thor got up stiffly when, instead of being commanded to go forward, he was told to turn on the trail. Left to himself, he went back for some half-mile, and crossing the lake at another point, brought them all to the settlement in safety.

When Dr John returned from the hospital, having done what he could for the comfort of his patient and seen the children warmed and fed, the dogs were ravenously devouring seal flesh, thawed out of the ice for them.

All but one. Thor was missing. The storm was over now, and the moon, riding over the clouds like a queen, threw gleaming silver on the snow. Some three or four hundred yards from the house a solitary form loomed dark on the ice-field, motionless, sullen, grim.

"Thor!" called his master. "Thor! come here!"

But once again Thor disobeyed. . . .

Dr John was cold and hungry. The basin of steaming soup on his table, his slippers set out before a roaring fire, and the knowledge that in less than ten minutes he might be called out again, tempted him to leave Thor to come to his senses—to stay there all night if he would. But Thor had saved their lives. . . . A short, sharp run, and the two of them were side by side, Thor looking steadfastly the other way as though he were still alone.

The doctor had an inspiration.

"Well done!" he cried heartily. "Well done! Well done! I'm proud of you, old man!"

Thor turned round slowly, felt his master's touch, and forgiving and forgetting those unjust blows, went back with him to share his supper.

“THOR—THOR—HE SAVE US ALL!”

ROB ROY

A Gallant Friend

For several months now the gaunt retriever had haunted the docks at Table Bay. No one remembered when he had seen him first. "Rob Roy," as a sailor jokingly named him, had come from nowhere one far-back day and established himself where he could watch the great ships sail into harbour.

He was there with the dawn, and there still when dusk blotted out the tall pines at the base of Table Mountain. When offered food he would take a few mouthfuls and turn away, seeming too sad to eat. A bone might sometimes tempt him, and a poor old Irishwoman always brought him one when she could. He thanked her with a look from his mournful brown eyes, but dropped the bone before it was half eaten to stare out again beyond the bay.

The solitary dog, so calm and unmoved amid all the bustle that went on around him, became one of the sights of the place. There were many kind folk who would gladly have befriended him, but Rob Roy would have none of them. Any attempt to pat his head was met with a protesting growl; he wanted no one to fondle him but his master—the gay young man who had sailed away with no intention of returning. He had been sorry in his careless way to leave his dog in the lurch, but "Need's must!" he said cheerfully, and had not even troubled to find him a new home.

But his dog never doubted him. He was sure he would return; and day by day, as he kept his watch, he strained his ears to catch the familiar whistle he had heard for the last time.

One late afternoon, in a squall of wind, the *Kestrel* steamed into harbour. It had been a rough passage, and Roger Smith, blue-eyed, white-faced, and desperately lonely, staggered under the weight of the battered tin box he had brought with him in the steerage. He was the last passenger to disembark, having no little difficulty to find his legs again after three weeks in his berth. For a moment it seemed to Rob Roy in the gloaming that the shabby tweed overcoat held some one else—that some one now hundreds of miles away who never gave him a thought. With a hoarse bark of rapture he flew to meet him, stopping short in an anguish of disappointment as he realized his mistake.

Not his master, but a stranger. Sick at heart, and faint with hunger, it was more than he could bear. . . . The little old Irishwoman, with a bone for his

supper, arrived on the scene in time to see him fall at the feet of a thin young man. Roger looked at him pityingly, and would have passed on, but Mary Moyra Murphy barred his way.

"Sure now," she cried, her dark eyes flashing, "ye wouldn't be afther laving the poor craythur, an' him near dyin' fur lov' uv ye?"

"But I've never——" began Roger. Before he could end his sentence he was interrupted by a burly docker.

"Been watching for you for months, he has," he cut in gruffly. "Nice sort of chap, you, to go off like that!" And his mate joined the group to give his frank opinion on what ought to be done to a man who left his dog—"an' such a dog as that!"—to starve, while Mary Moyra Murphy called on her saints to witness that the heart of him was "stone hard."

In vain the bewildered young man explained he had never seen the dog before—his voice was drowned in a chorus of reproach; and to make matters worse Rob Roy revived sufficiently to lift his head and crawl a few inches nearer.

A tear stood in the docker's eye.

"The dumb beast shames you!" he cried.

Roger wasted no more words. It was useless to talk when they would not listen to him. Pushing his way through the crowd that had gathered, he hailed a car, flung in his box, and, getting in himself, shut the door. It was wrenched open, and Rob Roy, tenderly lifted by gentle hands that were itching to deal, and anything but gently, with the man who had tried to disown him, was laid on the floor at his feet. Then the door was slammed to, amid threats from the crowd as to what they would do if he tried again to leave the faithful beast behind.

Roger laughed ruefully as they drove off. To be saddled with a dog when he had not enough to keep himself seemed a strange turn of fate. His doctor had told him that South Africa would work wonders with his shaky lungs, but he did not see how starvation would help them; and this was what he would have to face if he did not get work, and quickly.

"Not that it matters, after all," he thought bitterly. "There's no one to fret for me."

The wind that blew in through the window was chill, and Rob Roy, shivering with cold and hunger, pressed against his legs for warmth, Roger's heart stirred faintly. Queer that the dog should take such a fancy to him! A moment later, and Rob Roy's head was resting against his knee.

“We’re both of us alone,” the dog seemed to say. “Don’t send me away from you!”

“Can’t keep you, old fellow,” said Roger in reply, tugging at one soft ear. “It’s out of the question. First thing to-morrow I must hand you over as a stray.”

Rob Roy sighed deeply, but he did not stir. And when the car stopped outside an inn, where lights twinkled in every window, he followed closely at his new friend’s heels, and dropped down before the comforting wood fire as though he had a right to be there. A good supper, and a good night’s rest, put fresh courage into them both. They breakfasted together in a flood of golden sunshine, and Roger said: “Some climate, this!” He would surely find work—a light job, he hoped, at first; and perhaps he would keep this queer dog after all. Two are always better than one. . . .

“I shan’t hand you over this morning, anyhow,” he told Rob Roy, who did not need this assurance to know that he had been adopted.

When lack of funds made it necessary to leave the inn, Rob Roy went too, as a matter of course, and waited at street corners while his master applied for jobs that he never got. Funds were at a low ebb when one day as he lounged in the market-place, hoping to earn enough for a meal by shifting crates or fruit baskets, a weather-beaten farmer stopped to look at Rob Roy, and from him to the white-faced man beside him.

“At his wits’ end—wouldn’t sell his dog for diamonds—hard put to it to get a feed,” he thought, shrewdly summing up the situation. “Can you drive a cart?” he asked Roger brusquely. “ ‘No, but you could learn’? Well, so you could. Maybe I can give you a job.”

They adjourned to a coffee-house, and over a good lunch, his share of which Rob Roy accepted with all the dignity of a Highland chief who finds himself in a strange country, Roger was taken on for a month to help through the rush of the fruit harvest.

“You’ll have to sleep in the barn, like the rest,” the old farmer told him.

“That’s all right,” said Roger. Rob Roy wagged his tail. He was tired of living in a town.

Seven years later. Rob Roy was an old dog now, and Roger, grown stout and as brown as a berry, was head man on the prosperous fruit farm. He was to be a partner soon, and as he went his morning rounds, between row upon

row of well-laden fruit-trees, he felt at peace with all the world. It was a good place to live in.

Rob Roy trod at his heels. He was not so well pleased, for, mingled with the fragrance of the ripe fruit, he caught a whiff of an ugly scent he had smelt once or twice before. As they reached the upper orchard, Roger hastened his steps with a cry of anger and dismay. Not ripening fruit, but torn and ravaged boughs met his eyes as he looked round.

A troop of baboons had come down from the forest and destroyed what they could not eat. . . .

This, then, was why Rob Roy woke him soon after midnight by growling and tugging at his chain. Why in the world, thought Roger in deep disgust, had he not gone out to see what was wrong, instead of thinking it the usual thing—a strange cat crossing the yard? The other dogs had been awakened, too, and a fine noise they made between them. Roger was wild with himself all day for having let those apes escape.

That night he slept with his gun by his side, and had Rob Roy so much as grunted he would have been out like a flash.

Three weeks went by, the harvest was nearly over, when once more the dogs gave the alarm.

It was just before sunrise. The sky was still grey as, letting them loose and bidding them be silent, Roger hurried to the orchard with his gun. In a spreading tree, half hidden by the leaves, he saw a dark form that moved.

Lifting his gun, he fired, but missed his aim. To his vexation the dark form—the leader of the troop, he guessed—dropped nimbly from the tree, making off in the direction of the forest.

The dogs went after it, gained upon it, turned it. The young man fired again.

"Got it this time!" he cried in triumph. And hurrying up to dispatch the baboon discovered he had shot a leopard!

Before he could reload the brute was on him, striking him to the ground. Its claws were fastened in his shoulder, its hot breath beating on his face, when, with a bound that made his stiff joints crack, Rob Roy reached the leopard's side.

Biting and snapping, growling like a fury, he tried to drag it off his master; the leopard kept its hold, but withdrew one paw to punish the dog for his boldness. That moment's delay saved Roger's life; it gave a farm-hand who had hurried up the chance to hit the beast on the head with a

heavy piece of wood, and, seeing their enemy at a disadvantage, the other dogs, who till now had stood aside, took courage and tore it to pieces.

Roger was none the worse for his adventure, save for an ugly gash across his forehead.

“Thanks, old fellow,” was all he said, as he patted the dog who had saved him. But Rob Roy was well content.

JAN

"No Friend like an Old Friend"

A HEFTY bull-terrier, male parentage unknown, lay sprawling at the feet of a small thin man who eyed him thoughtfully, one corner of his thin-lipped mouth turned up in an approving smile.

"We'd a find in that dog," he remarked briefly.

"Sure," agreed his subordinate respectfully. And Jan, lolling out a moist, pink tongue, was led off to enjoy a meal.

He was one of the dogs attached to a police-station in the heart of busy New York, the small thin man being the 'Chief.' It was he who had intervened when Jan, mud-stained and bleeding, had been run in from a dismal slum by the river. In days gone by Jan had been the boon companion of a fine young fellow known as 'Long Jim'; those were his puppy days, and they were ended when Long Jim went off to the war.

Jan had been left in the care of a neighbour, who, on moving into the country, found that Jan had quietly made off.

No trees and fields and hens for him! He preferred streets and houses—and Long Jim. Back in the city, Jan continued to search for him in the intervals of other business, the youngster to whom he had attached himself keeping most of his time employed.

Sad to say, this new master was a clever scamp who taught Jan the tricks of his trade. He had never before had so apt a pupil, and the air of bland innocence Jan could assume would have convinced the keenest jury. Even the squint in one soft brown eye was turned to good account—it gave him a look of bewildered surprise when accused of theft or wrong-doing. But for this, he would surely have met his deserts when his master was flung out of the States; as it was, Jan disappeared in the nick of time, taking up his abode in a crowded cellar on the other side of the river. Here he shared the bed of a paralysed cripple, whom he kept warm on bitter nights, fending for him as well as for himself with the skill he had lately acquired.

In the very early morning he would slink out behind the first to leave that crowded cellar, and having made a good meal himself, return with what in his doggy mind he considered good for his friend. At dusk he went out to forage again, and so clever was he in timing his raids, and so dangerous

when interfered with, that he managed to elude the officers of the law till the winter was well-nigh over.

One night he was tracked to his humble home by an outraged butcher he had just robbed of several pounds of fillet steak, and, after a fight against heavy odds, was muzzled while half stunned by a blow and tumbled into a sack. By the time he reached the police-station he was himself again, and boiling over with rage. Fire flashed from his glance; he held his tail erect, and his white teeth gleamed through his muzzle. The Chief, just then on his way out, stopped to inquire what he had done.

Dogs were a weakness of the small thin man, whose almost superhuman knowledge of their ways made him a terror to criminals. He admired courage wherever he found it, and Jan's extreme ugliness appealed to him.

"That's not the way to handle a dog!" he said sharply, as Jan, on making a move toward him, was half-strangled by a rough jerk backward. "Take off his muzzle. . . . That's better—poor old chap." And Jan, in an ecstasy of relief and gratitude, slobbered his well-polished boots.

The small thin man looked down at him thoughtfully as he listened to the tale of his misdeeds.

"Stole for the two of them, did he?" he mused, and methodically drew out his notebook. He did not enter the charge against Jan, but a memo, to send a certain Sister North to see what could be done for the cripple.

Half an hour later and Jan rode beside him in the car that was taking him out of New York to spend an hour with the married daughter who had asked him to find her a watch-dog. She was a pretty little woman, blue-eyed and golden-haired, with a brand-new, yellow-headed baby.

"I—I didn't mean a dog like *that*," she said nervously, when Jan was introduced.

"He's as mild as a lamb," her father reassured, thrusting his hand down Jan's throat.

Jan sat quite still and blinked at him affectionately. It had been the way of his best-beloved master to show him off like this.

He went very quietly to the shed in the garden, where he was to spend the night, and was fast asleep with his head between his forepaws when something seemed to disturb him. He twitched his nose, breathed deeply, and awoke. A faint, acrid odour, so slight as yet that only a very keen sense of smell could have made him aware of it, found its way in through a hole in the wall and hovered above his head.

Jan sat up and barked. He made a terrific noise, but all that happened inside the house was a drowsy murmur from the baby's mother that she "couldn't—no, not even to please Dad—have such a noisy dog around. . . ."

The barking continued. Jan was desperate now, for he knew that something was wrong. Flinging himself against the door of the shed, he smashed one of the panels, wriggled through it, and rushed across the lawn, barking wildly.

The baby woke up and howled. "I'll *shoot* that dog," growled a sleepy man, as he dragged himself out of bed. But now he, too, caught the smell of burning. . . . The staircase was filled with smoke.

Jan's portrait was in the Sunday papers as the dog who saved the lives of five people by giving an alarm of fire. People came out from the city to see him, and for a time he was the hero of the neighbourhood. But his weak point was cats. There was something in their slinky softness that turned him into a savage, and when he had slain some half-dozen or so the popular feeling turned dead against him and demanded his instant death. So he was sent back to headquarters, with thanks, and passed on to a training school for dogs, where it was hoped he might be taught to help his old enemies—the police.

There Jan made good. It took time and patience to give him a working set of morals, but his unknown sire had handed on to him a good memory and a keen intelligence. He learned to obey—no easy lesson that!—to know by instinct what was required of him, and how to hold his tongue. Before his year of training was over he could track down a criminal, trip him up, and keep him lying flat on his face until the police arrived; and this he did more by moral suasion than by a display of teeth. To-day he had covered himself with glory by running to earth a notorious train-wrecker over miles of difficult ground. It was a proud moment when the Chief stooped to pat him, and said: "Well done, old guy!"

That evening, rested and refreshed, well pleased with life and with himself, Jan positively swaggered as he sauntered through a park near the Life-saving Station by East River. An attempt to break into the station had been reported, and two policemen, friends of Jan, had been told off to watch for the thieves, who were likely to try again.

Jan went with his friends. It was a lonely post, and they were glad of his company.

The grass was pleasant enough to walk on, but Jan soon began to feel bored. What was he there for, anyhow? The hum of the traffic was far away, and but for the drowsy twitter from a bird not a sound broke the peaceful silence.

Jan yawned. He did not like soft jobs. What he most enjoyed was a man-hunt.

Dusk deepened into night, and a thousand stars shone out in the quiet sky. Jan nosed amidst the grass for the scent of a rabbit, but drew blank. He yawned again.

Then, on ahead, he caught a glimpse of something white that gleamed through the blackness of the trees. It was a *cat*—a cat whose amber eyes gazed down at him some seconds later from a bough high above his head.

"No hurry," he thought as he sat himself down. Fate was kind to him after all.

The cat gave no sign of the passion of terror she hid within her silken breast. Crouching a little closer to the bough, she watched him through her half-closed eyes. . . . Jan fancied presently that she had gone to sleep, so still was that patch of white. . . . Well, he'd have a nap, too, keeping one eye open. He had had a tiring day.

But it takes two eyes to watch a cat, and no sooner had he settled himself more comfortably than she made a flying leap to the ground, landing some yards behind him . . .

It was a splendid race—from his point of view—and he did not grudge her that start. Her flying feet barely touched the ground, but in spite of his weight he was gaining upon her when he heard a sharp cry from the river. A quiver passed through him. It was a cry for help . . . .

The cry came again. It was fainter now, and something stronger than his zest for hunting impelled him to swing right round. Amazed at her deliverance, panting, crazed with fright, the white cat crawled into safety, while, plunging down the cliff, Jan dashed across the rocks and into the swirling current. . . .

Not long after this the watchers by the station heard a shrill crescendo of barking. "Jan's got our man!" cried the younger with conviction, as they raced along the cliff. The moon sailed out through a haze of silver, and, looking down, they saw Jan sprawling on a float that belonged to the Life-saving Station.

He could not bark now, for his mouth was full of coat; he was doing his utmost to drag up beside him a struggling man who floundered about and

seemed as though he could not get his bearings.

When rescuer and rescued had been safely landed, and an ambulance arrived to take the half-drowned man to hospital, Jan refused to be parted from him. For the man whose life he had saved that night was his old master, Long Jim. . . .

Blinded by shrapnel, for years dazed and bewildered, when his memory returned he had come ‘home’ at last, to find his few relatives scattered or dead, and all his old companions gone. Nobody wanted him; nobody knew him. He was wreckage thrown up by the tide.

But he had found two friends that night when he stumbled into the river —Jan, the ‘Star’ dog of the New York police, and their Chief, who took him under his protection. A cottage in the country, with a kindly woman to keep him company who had lost her own son in the war, were waiting for Jim when he came out of hospital, where they nursed him through a bout of fever. Jan was there too, very brisk and important. He had already taught every cat in the neighbourhood to keep at a respectful distance, but he now relinquished the pleasures of the chase for the joy of staying beside Long Jim.

The broken man was very grateful for all that was done for him, but Jan was his best consoler.

“There’s ‘no friend like an old friend,’ ” he would whisper, Jan’s head resting upon his knee.

JAN WAS DOING HIS UTMOST

LOONEY

"Not so Queer as He Looked"

He was born in an outhouse, one bitter winter night—a shivering little creature who couldn't keep warm in spite of all his mother's efforts. His brothers were fine fellows, sturdy and well built, and soon learnt to fight their own battles; but long after homes had been found for them (their father had been a famous ratter) he was still in the barn, rather tottery on his legs and given to sudden panics. He had too long a head and the wrong kind of nose, and his ears were decidedly queer. But his mother minded none of these things. She only loved him all the more.

He saw nothing at all of her during the day, once his first weeks of puppyhood were over. She was off before dawn, standing guard by the green-stuff her master bought in the market, and later minding the cart for him while he sold his stock in 'pennoths' and 'ha'poths' down back streets and sunless alleys. No boy, however daring, touched so much as a potato while Nell had her eye on him.

While she was away it was very lonely for that ugly, odd-looking puppy. Sometimes he ventured into the yard, but he never stayed there long—not even when the sunshine streamed on his head till his eyes gleamed like bits of amber. He was always afraid, poor little chap: afraid of the kick that would certainly be his portion if the stable boy came his way; afraid of the cat, who disliked dogs on principle, and delighted to scratch his face. He was even afraid of his own lanky shadow, and crept back to hide till his mother came home and snuggled him down beside her.

Nell licked his head drowsily; she was too tired to play. But as he felt the warmth of her near him, and heard her deep breathing as she fell asleep, he forgot that he was hungry and crept closer still. He wanted no one but her.

When at last he took a start and began to grow, his legs were more out of proportion than ever, and his ears lopped about like a rabbit's.

"Why don't you drown the ugly little beast?" his owner had been asked more than once.

But Nick had a grateful corner in his heart for such a good friend as Nell.

"Let un be," he said roughly. "Pup's th' apple of her eye. Reckon his keep won't break me."

One day Nick was ill and could not go to market. Nell hung about mournfully, restless and uneasy, knowing that something was wrong. . . . Her master had gone where she could not follow, and a few days later she was dragged away at the end of a ragged piece of string. A friend of Nick's had bought her as a watch-dog, but nobody wanted her puppy.

No one cared whether he lived or died. From pillar to post he was driven and hunted, chased by policemen and chivvied by boys who pitted their speed against his. They were beaten. He could run "like a streak of lightning," as one of them said in disgust.

But running would not feed him, and he was far too timid to follow the example of another stray who helped himself from a stall of meat while the butcher was scolding his boy. He haunted dust-heaps when twilight fell, and became very smart at digging. He could scent a bone beneath potato parings with any dog in the town, and one summer evening he found a big one, the handsomest he'd ever seen.

"*Wooff! Wooff!*" he barked, for once breaking his rule of silence. It was his undoing, for the huge bull-terrier who had buried that bone the night before jumped a garden wall and hurled himself against him in a paroxysm of rage.

The puppy doubled, jumped a wall himself, pelted through one door and out of another, upset a perambulator, a bicycle and an old woman, then stopped for sheer lack of breath.

The old woman sat up and stared at him. She had a tiny face all criss-crossed with lines, and a dimple like a little girl's. He could run no more, so he stared back, more piteously than he knew.

"Why, you poor thing!" she chirped in a voice that was also like a little girl's. "You're eyes an' bones—that's what you are. Now you just come along o' me."

She scrambled on to her feet as she spoke, picked up a string bag that had been flung on to the road, and trotted briskly round the corner. The puppy followed her. In all his life no one had spoken so kindly.

As for the bull-terrier, he was at that moment being marched off home by a man in a blue uniform whom he had tried to bite on being restrained from a further chase of his enemy.

Old Mary—if she ever had another name none of her neighbours knew it—produced rich treasures from that string bag, and made a feast for the hungry puppy beyond his wildest dreams. There were bones—far more tasty than the one he'd found (old Mary had meant to make soup with them)—

and crusts of bread that some one had given her, which he crunched up with great enjoyment.

"Down an' out, aren't you?" she said as she watched him. "I've been that too, an' I know. You're a looney, old fellow, the queerest I've ever seen, but you an' me'll stick together."

And 'Looney' he was for the years he lived there with her—happy years, though both were often on short commons, since it was not much that she could earn. Some friends subscribed to buy a licence for him—one even presented him with a brass collar, on which she scratched LOONEY with a pin.

On chilly nights they sat by her bit of fire, one on each side, like Darby and Joan, and she told him all her longings for "Bill," the son who had gone to "Australy."

"He's coming to fetch me, one day!" she would say, "an' then you'll have bones an' to spare, Looney. An' I'll have Chiny tea, an' oranges an' mebbe a black silk gown."

And though the neighbours smiled when she spoke of her Bill, whom they only half believed in, Looney's amber eyes reflected her excitement as she talked of those joys to come. He noticed that always when her talk was done she would bring out some special little dainty for him unless her cupboard were bare.

It was winter again when the letter came that turned Looney's life upside down—a letter with thick blue marks across it, and crisp bank-notes folded inside. Her son couldn't fetch his mother as he had promised, but he sent her money to come to him, and would meet her at Adelaide and take her to his home in the shadow of the Blue Mountains.

Old Mary nearly went crazy with joy till some one told her of the quarantine laws, and that Looney must be left behind. . . .

He wondered when she took him in her arms and cried and cried on his head. He wished she wouldn't—it was most uncomfortable. He never liked getting wet.

"Now, Looney, listen to me," she said, when at last she had dried her eyes. "I'm sending you away; it's a choice between you an' Bill, an' he's my very own son."

Then she took his head between her hands and kissed him, and cried again. And next day he was fastened up in a hamper, and jolted about in a train.

When they let him out, after hours and hours, he was in the green country, where there wasn't a house for miles. Old Mary had sent him, with one of those crisp bank-notes, to a married niece who had promised to keep him and give him "a real good home."

But Looney had something to say to this. No sooner had they settled him comfortably for the night beside the kitchen fire, than he squeezed himself through the scullery window, sprinted across the field till he came to a road, sniffed a bit, then looked round and continued to run.

I cannot tell you *how* he found the way, but some days later, worn to a shadow, he reached the street in which Old Mary lived, about three o'clock in the morning.

There was no moon, but against the sky red flames were dancing and leaping. Fire-engines clanged as they rushed up, men shouted to one another, and clouds of thick black smoke poured from the tall house where Mary's room was, high up and facing the back.

Some one threw a stone at Looney as he got in the way; Looney merely ducked his head and ran between the legs of a fireman, who drenched him with the hose. Looney wanted Old Mary, and he meant to find her. He didn't care what they did to him.

Through those stifling clouds of smoke, up the stairs, he dashed, into the familiar room. Mary lay on the floor, where she had fallen, all but choked by that dreadful smoke. Seizing her skirt, he dragged her to the landing, where a fireman, scrambling in through a window, found them in the nick of time.

Looney had saved Old Mary—no one had thought of her, and but for him she would have died. In spite of his wet coat, he was badly burned, and her son had quite a long time to wait before they were both well enough to travel.

Yes—Looney went to Australia too. Mary refused to leave him. So somehow or other Bill fixed it up, and after spending some months with strangers, to make sure that he hadn't hydrophobia, or something else horrid like that, a very ugly dog with amber eyes joined that little home in the mountains.

But they don't consider him ugly there—to them he seems quite handsome. And I fancy they've given him another name. I should not be surprised if it were "Hero"!

HE DRAGGED HER TO THE LANDING

DANDY

KNIGHT-ERRANT

DANDY was a collie. He belonged to a little lady with brown eyes and hair, and a little brown frock that would have looked very shabby if it had not been so well brushed. She had brought him to the cottage at the end of Pym's Lane more than six months ago, but the people in the village knew no more about her now than they had done the day she arrived. She never spoke to any one if she could help it, and if a visitor came up the garden path she sat very still before her desk, her fingers in her ears, that she might not hear a knock.

Dandy was different. Before they had been in Pym's Lane a week he was the play-fellow of all the babies, and had won the heart of the butcher's wife simply by wagging his tail.

It was, I need not tell you, a beautiful tail, for Dandy had carried off first prize in a dog show, and his sire had been Monarch-of-the-Hills. But good looks had nothing to do with his conquest—it was his manners that charmed Mrs Baxter, who knew a gentleman when she saw one.

She had offered him a bone when he was not hungry, but instead of turning proudly away, he picked it up from where she had tossed it and laid it gently at her feet. Looking at her gratefully, as one who would say, "Thank you kindly, Madam, though I don't require it!" for quite a minute he wagged his tail, and left her feeling that, for once, her goodwill had been appreciated. Many a tit-bit had she offered him since then, but, although occasionally he would accept one, so that he might not hurt her feelings, he did not care to eat away from home.

Whoever might go on short commons at the cottage, Dandy's plate was always full. Barbie would have bought him bones every day if Bobby's school bills had not been so big and editors had been less tiresome.

Bobby was all she had left, now that the kind big brother who had taken care of them both was dead. Dandy had been his dog, and this was why Barbie would never part with him—no, not even for the roll of notes she had been offered for him in London.

Dandy loved Barbie next best to his old master, but he was very fond of Bobby too. When he came home for the holidays they were seldom apart.

If it had not been for his friends in the village, Dandy wouldn't have had much fun when Bobby's holidays were over. Sometimes Barbie did not go out all day; this usually happened when the postman had brought her one of those horrid long-shaped envelopes, which always made her look as though she'd like to cry. Dandy *hated* that postman. He would lie in wait for him behind the big bush of sweet briar by the gate and jump round him, and pretend to bite his heels till the poor man was at his wits' end. So Dandy was chained up morning and evening, and scolded severely if he snarled and growled when his enemy came up the lane.

Jenny Lee did not like the postman either—he had called her precious baby "Puddin'-face"—but Dandy she adored. The baby had once fallen out of his pram, and, rolling down the bank of the village pond, fallen *plop* into the water. Dandy, who was out for a stroll with a friend, heard the shrieks of the little sister, who ought to have been minding him, but wasn't, and bounding over a gate or two, was on the spot in a moment. Another bound took him into the pond, another and he was out again, the fat baby, held by his wisp of a skirt, gurgling with delighted laughter.

When Jenny, the tears streaming down her face, hurried round to Sweet Briar Cottage to Dandy's mistress, Barbie only said in an off-hand way: "He often does things like that."

And though she accepted the marrowfat peas and the beans and clove carnations that the baby's father brought her when he came home from work, she was very shy, and not half so gracious as Dandy had been when he had refused that bone.

"Thinks she's too good for the likes of us," growled Tom Lee to his wife on his return.

"You're a wicked man to say such a thing, when her dog it was as saved our child," snapped Jenny. But in her heart she thought the same, not knowing what Dandy knew (dogs know so much!), that 'the little brown lady' was so unhappy that she did not find it easy to be kind.

She was not always kind even to Dandy, but went for long, lonely walks without him, leaving him on his chain. This was when she was more worried than usual. Even in the country one cannot live on air, and what was she to do if she couldn't earn some money before Bobby's school bills were due?

She must write another story—a long one this time. Barbie's small face looked quite fierce as she decided she would make it so exciting that the editor himself would have to take a peep at the end.

Early and late she toiled at that story, refusing to let Dandy stay in the room lest he should distract her attention. Some days she scarcely stopped to eat, and, the story finished, she was such a shadowy Barbie that Dandy was half afraid of her.

When she had typed it all out again, and tied it up, and posted it, she did not try to write any more, but took Dandy with her to the hills, where she dreamed for hours among the heather. This suited Dandy excellently, for it gave him time to go a-hunting. He never caught anything, but he was always hopeful.

After some days of fine weather it rained for nearly a week on end, and Barbie began to feel uneasy about her story—it might come back after all. . . . If it did——! At this point Dandy always got up and growled. He knew by the look of her that she felt desperate, and he wanted to kill that postman.

At last the weather cleared, and one morning, when the sky was very blue, and the corn in the valleys almost golden, Barbie went blackberrying. Bobby loved jam, and in a dark corner of her almost bare cupboard there was still a big packet of sugar.

Dandy was left at home in disgrace. He had nearly throttled himself by trying to slip his collar when the postman came; and the postman had vowed he "wouldn't come no more, no, not for King Garge hisself." I think, though, that anyhow Barbie would have gone alone that morning; she was so wretched that she could not have borne to have even Dandy with her.

Her story would not be accepted—that was clear. And Bobby would have no warm coat for the winter, and those dreadful bills could not be paid.

It seemed a very long day to Dandy, tugging at his hateful chain. The hours dragged on to afternoon, and still Barbie did not come. The blue of the sky changed to rose and amber, then to purple and green and grey. Barbie had never stayed away so long before; Dandy knew that something must be wrong.

The moon came out presently, and as he howled, she seemed to look down and grin at him. He had never liked her—the cold, white thing, and now he was furiously angry. In a frenzy he tore at his chain, barking wildly. If he throttled himself, no matter.

The chain did not break—it was too strong for that; but the kennel was an old one, and the wood gave way. Dandy nearly tumbled head over heels

and felt dizzy and queer for a moment. Then he steadied himself, and was off.

The road lay still and white in the moonlight, winding round the foot of the hills. With his nose to the ground Dandy found the scent he sought, and crossed the bridge that spanned the mill stream. Here he lost the trail for a minute or two; it had been fouled by a drove of cattle, and people coming home from market. Soon he found it again; this time he went straight on, up a narrow sheep track between clumps of heather, then over another valley.

Barbie's restless feet had carried her far, but Dandy was certain he should find her.

The trail led him at last to a gravel pit which had not been worked for years. Blackberry bushes clustered round it, hiding the yawning gulf beyond. Dandy scrambled through them; once more the trail was lost, but Barbie must be somewhere near.

"Speak! Speak!!" he barked, and the night wind brought him the faint echo of a piteous sob. . . .

Down the crumbling sides of the pit he slid. That horrible chain wound itself round his legs, but he rolled over and over. And when he found himself by Barbie, who lay, shivering and exhausted, on a pile of drifted leaves, he barked himself hoarse with rapture.

Poor Barbie! She had slipped when her basket was nearly full, scattering the blackberries far and wide, to find herself at last on a heap of wind-blown leaves that fortunately broke her fall.

Happily she was unhurt, though very frightened; and with Dandy close beside her to keep her warm, she soon fell asleep—to dream he had wings to match his beautiful tail.

A perfect orgy of barking woke her. Dandy could have climbed the pit side easily, but somehow he knew she couldn't; and as he did not intend to leave her, he tried, like the sensible dog he was, to let folks know what had happened.

An old shepherd, dozing in his wooden hut, heard him and came to the rescue. Barbie was thrown a long stout rope, and with Dandy helping her all he could, was dragged up to the head of the pit.

The two of them shared the old shepherd's breakfast; and as his rusty kettle sang over the wood fire, and the dew on the grass caught the first gleam of sunshine and forthwith turned into diamonds, Barbie thought it was quite the loveliest morning that she had ever seen.

When she and Dandy were back at Sweet Briar Cottage, the first thing they saw—for the postman had relented—was a slim white envelope under the door. Dandy sniffed at it suspiciously, but Barbie pounced on it with a little cry of joy. At first she could not open it, but, encouraged by Dandy, who was dancing round her, she ripped the envelope open. It was from the editor to whom she had sent her story saying that he was going to use it!

Dandy rather likes the postman now, for Barbie never cries when she gets letters. They are nearly always small ones, and some she likes so much that she kisses the top of Dandy's head and fetches him a lump of sugar.

BARRY

A Faithful Heart

Barry was a most methodical dog, and his business for the day was carried out punctually, no matter what cats might tempt him to chase them. At seven every morning, after barking at the milkman, and threatening to bite the paper-boy's toes, he was on guard beside his master's tea; and though Jim sometimes left the tray outside for a good ten minutes after Jane had called him, Barry never dreamed of touching the thin bread and butter which presently he would share.

From the moment the bedroom door was opened Barry never left Jim's side if he could help it. Wet or fine, he escorted him to the office, running gaily beside his cycle, and quite untroubled by the fierce reproaches of the drivers whose buses got in his way. Every evening, sharp to the minute at six o'clock, he was waiting outside the office to bring Jim home; later, he superintended his work in the garden, even doing a little digging on his own account. The last thing at night he went round with Nina to see that the house was safely secured against the burglars who never came; and when, on one never-forgotten occasion, she forgot to shut the scullery window, Barry barked so insistently and so loudly that she had to come downstairs again.

If ever a dog was thoroughly happy, that dog was he. His wagging tail declared his enjoyment of every moment of the day. The master he loved had none but kind words for him, and he hadn't a trouble in the world.

But at last, quite suddenly everything seemed changed. First, two Sundays came together—so it appeared to him, since Bank Holidays did not enter into his calculations. This was puzzling, but what made it more so was that Jim behaved so uncommonly queerly, giving all his attention to rustling sheets of paper, and crying "Down, sir!" when Barry jumped up against him. And instead of cycling off into the country with Barry behind him and Nina by his side, as was his wont on holidays, he hurried back right into the town, where men stood talking in little groups, and newsboys shouted themselves quite hoarse.

Barry's instinct told him that something was wrong, and next morning he was sure of it. Jim took in his tea the moment Jane knocked, and dressed in half his usual time—not whistling or humming, but very grave, with Nina

hovering round him. Downstairs, his paper absorbed him again; he forgot that Barry loved toasted kidneys.

"I don't know what's coming to him!" sighed that injured dog, missing that kind attention. As for Nina, her eyes were full of tears, and her fingers so shook when she poured out his milk that nearly half of it was spilt.

"Silly creature!" Barry thought impatiently. He was never impatient with Jim.

He left him at the office that morning as usual, but felt very troubled as he trotted home. Every one he met seemed in a hurry; the shops he rushed by were almost empty, and the cars he hated whirled faster than ever. There was trouble in the air, and as the day wore on Barry's uneasiness increased.

Nina wasn't in to lunch, and Jane forgot his bones. Barry was obliged to help himself, and by way of distraction from the pangs of a guilty conscience he took a longer afternoon ramble than he was in the habit of doing. The clock in his head (he hadn't the least idea how it worked, but he knew the time by it to a nicety) told him it couldn't be nearly six when he got back. But there was his master, home already, and busily packing a small portmanteau.

Barry stood and stared at him, as well he might. Instead of the dark suit he had worn that morning, he was dressed in clothes that were very much the colour of Barry's own coat—a sort of dull yellowish brown. Barry had seen them on him several times before, but then Jim had laughed and joked with Nina, while now he was strangely quiet.

"Poor old fellow!" he said as he caught sight of the wistful eyes that watched him from the doorway. "Nina, he'll keep you company while I'm away. I shall know you're both waiting to welcome me home, and it mayn't be so long after all!"

Barry found himself shut in the woodshed presently. It was Jim who had locked him in.

"Better let him stay there till morning, dear," Barry heard him say. "He'll be comfortable enough, for there are sacks for him to sleep on, and I'd better have a good start. He's equal to chasing me across the Channel. Never knew such a determined little beggar."

Then came the sound of Nina sobbing, and a few more words from Jim. Then silence, for the doors were shut; a silence broken only by Barry's howls, which continued all through the night.

A very red-eyed Nina let him out next morning, and without wasting even a bark on her, Barry hastened to explore the house. As he expected, his

master wasn't there. He must have gone to the office by himself. With a very sore heart Barry set off to see. It wasn't like Jim to treat him so.

Jim wasn't in the office either, and for a few minutes Barry felt nonplussed. Then he pulled himself together, barked defiantly at a big retriever, who could have bowled him over with a single paw, and went off to visit all Jim's old haunts, including the shop where he got his hair cut, and that from which his own much detested collar had been bought.

Evening came, but Barry had no thought of giving up his task. His master was *somewhere*, and he meant to find him—but where was there left to look? As he stood, uncertain, in the twilight, one of the many men he had seen that day wearing yellow-brown clothes like Jim's stooped to pat him, and ask: "What's up with you, sonny? Lost your master? Poor little beast! I expect he's gone, and there's more than you will be missing him."

Barry wagged his tail joyfully, for a new thought had struck him. He had from the first put down Jim's disappearance as in some way due to his change of raiment, and perhaps this man who spoke so kindly, and was dressed exactly as he had been, was going where he had gone.

"You lead and I follow," he barked, and the soldier strode swiftly on.

He had forgotten all about the rough-coated Irish terrier, who had gazed at him so inquiringly, before he reached the little house where his old mother lived. He had come to say "Good-bye" to her, just as Jim had said it to Nina. Barry darted in between his feet the moment the door was opened, and scampered from one room to another, his nose to the ground and his bit of a tail held stiffly above him like a flag. Finding no trace of Jim, he was off again—to hunt the streets until six o'clock, when once more he tried his luck at the office, watching the door till the last clerk had left. It was a very sober Barry, with pathetic eyes and a drooping tail, who went back alone to Nina. He hadn't a doubt now that Jim had *gone*—and gone, perhaps, for ever.

It comforted him a little to be allowed to sleep on his beloved master's velvet coat, with one of his old slippers between his paws; but no sooner did he wake in the morning than he scratched at the door to be let out, so that he might start his search again. The same thing went on day after day; he visited Jim's old haunts with unfailing regularity, and was pointed out to compassionate bystanders as a touching example of a dumb friend's faithfulness. Barry cared nothing for their sympathy, and unless they wore khaki refused to notice them. If they did, he usually saw them home, for every soldier was a possible clue to the vanished Jim's whereabouts.

At the depots and training-schools he was soon a familiar figure, and more than once it was all he could do to escape the men's friendly

attentions. He had no objection to the dainties they gave him in the canteens; but he wanted nothing and no one but Jim. And Jim had gone.

One night he did not go home to sleep, as he had always done up to then. Nina watched for him until midnight, listening in vain for the short, sharp bark that announced he was waiting to be let in. She felt lonelier than ever when at last she locked the door.

"Barry has been missing for nearly a week," she wrote to Jim some days later. "He grew so thin after you left, Jim. It was piteous to see him sniffing at your shoes, and hunting for you in the garden. Poor little chap—I hope he isn't dead. I'm afraid that something must have happened to him."

But Barry wasn't dead—not a bit of it. At the last depot he visited there was a sergeant who reminded him of Jim—a little man, with sandy hair and kind brown eyes. Worn out and hungry, Barry shared his supper, and then fell asleep beside him. The sergeant covered him tenderly with his greatcoat, and Barry greeted him next morning as a friend.

The regiment went to the front that day, and Barry, who was off to the office as usual when an open door gave him his opportunity, came across it again on its way to Victoria. As interested as ever in making sure that Jim wasn't one of the khaki-clad men who stepped out so bravely to the music of the band, he followed them to the station, where he tripped up a zealous ticket-collector who strove to keep him off the platform. Barry mingled with the crowd, still looking for Jim; the guard waved his flag, the sergeant whistled, and obeying a sudden impulse the little rough-haired Irish terrier, who had been getting in everybody's way, made a flying leap and landed in the last carriage.

Before the train arrived at Dover he had been adopted as the regimental pet, and, by means of string attached to an improvised collar, was forcibly induced to board the boat.

And so it happened that he trod French soil, with the sea between him and the doubly deserted Nina. Never for a moment did he give up the idea of finding his master—he searched the trenches as methodically as he had done the streets at home, scudding recklessly from point to point, and ignoring such trifling details as shot and shell.

"He's a game little beast," said the sergeant admiringly; "an' wot's more, he's got a faithful heart. If him an' me come out of this picnic, I'll take him home with me, that I will."

One afternoon when Barry, drenched and shivering, wondered why the man next him lay so still, with his face on the sodden earth, there came a

break in the clouds at last after forty-eight hours of incessant rain. The sun shone down through a watery haze on an oncoming column of reinforcements, and a thrill of concern ran through the trenches. For it was marching straight into a German ambush concealed by a bend in the road.

A soldier in front of Barry sprang up to signal "Danger!" He had barely raised his flag when he was shot down; the next and the next who rose as quickly fell. Then the order rang out: "Keep under cover!" To attempt to signal was to court disaster, and more useless waste of life.

Then a little man with sandy hair and brown eyes, that just now were full of determination, rode out from the midst of a clump of trees in which a cycle corps had been in shelter. Right through a hail of bullets he dashed, his head bent low over the handle bars of his machine, and after him, barking joyfully, ran a rough-coated Irish terrier.

Perhaps it was due, as Jim declares, to the enemy's surprise at the dog's appearance that their firing ceased just sufficiently long for him to get clear of their guns. A flash of steel, a wild cheer from the trenches, and he was in sight of the unconscious men for whom he had risked almost certain death. They were saved, and as Jim sprang from his cycle, Barry reeled and fell at his feet. Deaf to the shouts that proclaimed him a hero, Jim gathered the dog up in his arms.

"Poor old fellow!" he cried. "*Dear* old fellow!" And Barry, his faithful eyes dimmed with pain, barked feebly, well content. He had found the master he loved so well, and the wound in his side a stray bullet had made just mattered nothing at all.

Master and dog are back in England now—Barry as spry as ever, Jim with an empty coat sleeve and the V.C. pinned against his breast. Nina is scarcely more proud of him than he of Barry, who takes him to the office every morning and fetches him home at night.

"POOR OLD FELLOW!"

LÉON

A Hero of the Marne

"*Tiens!* YOU weary me—be off!" cried Pierre, snapping his thin brown fingers. Léon, the regimental pet, looked at him wistfully and wagged his tail. He had a weakness for this quiet soldier, whose voice was gentle even when his words were rough, and in spite of his dismissal he stood there still, a model of faithful patience.

"Be off with you!" said Pierre again, and Léon, hearing his name called in the rear, gave a parting caress to the repelling hand ere he trotted obediently away.

Pierre had something else to do just then than to make much of the shaggy-haired dog whose clever pranks kept the mess in roars of laughter during times of peace. Crouched on the ground, with a precious sheet of paper stretched out before him on an exploded shell, he was trying to write to his boy at home, bidding him grow up quickly, that he too might fight for *la belle France*. He had barely reached the end of the second page when Léon was back beside him, his liquid eyes fixed questioningly on the stumpy pencil that seemed to absorb all his friend's attention.

A whir of bullets overhead, the roar of cannon echoing like thunder, and Pierre's letter literally went to the winds. The momentary lull of battle was at an end; shells screamed, and the great gun "Soixante-quinze" boomed a fierce reply.

It wasn't at all the place for a little dog, but Léon did not think so. He had adopted Pierre as his master from a certain memorable night when the soldier had rescued him from the death-like grip of a surly bulldog with whom he had disputed the right of way, and now where Pierre went he would go too. Nevertheless, he trembled, for the noise of musketry filled his soul with fear. And why Pierre should stay where it was loudest, instead of fleeing to the green woods close by, was more than he could understand.

Those woods were a great temptation to Léon. When the horrible black smoke he hated cleared away, he could see the treetops waving, and maybe his fancy painted half a dozen brown bunnies scuttling beneath them with himself in full chase. Léon adored rabbit-hunting, and did not disdain the thought of a tender woodmouse skilfully surprised in some deep hole. If Pierre would only take him for a walk! But Pierre, it seemed, preferred to

spend his days in fiddling with fire-sticks or digging up the ground, and Léon feared to lose him if he strayed too far away.

A little later Pierre and his comrades were retreating to the south, fighting every inch of the way, until they could take up stronger positions and establish a new front on the banks of the Marne. A terrific struggle was impending, and it seemed as if even Léon knew it, for his bark was grimly defiant as he dodged the flying bullets.

"*Ce chien*, he goes for to be slain!" said one of his admirers, with a regretful shrug. But this had often been said before, and Léon was still very much alive, though how he had managed to escape was a marvel to those who knew him.

In vain was he told, in language very plain, to go to the rear. Like his gallant companions on the field, he drew back only to advance again, haunting Pierre with a wistful persistence that touched the soldier in spite of himself.

"Thou art a good little beast," he murmured, when Léon snuggled close to his breast one cold wet night as he lay in the trenches. The warmth of the dog's soft body brought a curious comfort with it, and in the snatches of sleep that came to him he dreamed of home.

Fighting had never been more fierce than on the day that followed. Léon was heartily sick of it, and hungry as well as frightened. But somewhere at the back of his keen dog mind was a firm conviction that his presence in the firing-line was indispensable to the safety of his beloved Pierre, and so he stayed there. It was not his policy, however, to take needless risks, and, adapting himself to circumstances, he became an adept at finding cover.

The sharp sting of pain that followed the loss of his tail—as cleanly shot off as though sliced with a knife—set his wits to work to protect himself. He wasn't going to leave his friends—not he; but he didn't mean to be hurt again if he could help it. So he cleverly scraped a hole in the ground, his strong claws scattering the earth all round him, and promptly buried himself. Only his pointed nose and bright brown eyes were visible, but, down below, his wounded tail wagged on as merrily as ever.

"You show sense, *mon ami*!" cried Pierre, with a laugh, for it was close to him that Léon had taken up his quarters. Next moment the ranks moved forward, in spite of a hurricane of bullets, and Pierre gave no more thought to him. A little dog did not count for much in war-time, and Léon's disgust at having to leave his refuge would only have provoked a smile. He soon scraped himself another, but he could not find his beloved Pierre; and from time to time he risked being shot by darting out to look for him.

Pierre fought well, but no better than his comrades, for they were heroes all. Paris, the city of their love, was threatened; to save her they would spill their last drop of blood, and the English made common cause with them. Léon wondered sadly what strange game was this that his friends were playing, and why some dropped down and lay so still; but when once more he discovered Pierre, his dance of joy was a triumph.

"What! Not shot yet!" was all Pierre said. But he patted the shaggy coat with tenderness, and felt an odd lump in his throat. The love that shone at him from Léon's eyes seemed a queer sort of thing on a battlefield, and he too wondered in his turn at the strange game of war.

That was a memorable week for the Allies, for it saw the turn of the tide. Slowly at first, then with the rush of an oncoming flood, the enemy was driven back, and the silver waters of the river ran a dull and hideous red. The hard-pressed foe made repeated efforts to bridge the tide and reach the farther banks, that they might retreat in something like order. But the Allies' artillery swept their pontoons away like matchwood; guns were captured and villages retaken by the triumphant French and British. Avenged now were those past dread days when their commanding officers' repeated orders to "Fall back" had been to them a long-drawn agony.

"I thank *le bon Dieu* that I have lived for this!" cried Pierre, and the glow that illumined his haggard face was reflected in the fast-dimming eyes of a stripling who lay a-dying near.

It was toward the close of that memorable battle that Pierre's chance came. He had been wounded in the side, but not so seriously but that he could fight on still, and in the confusion of the enemy's last stand he saw ahead of him a young lieutenant, in a much soiled blue-green uniform, defending his country's flag.

A sobbing breath shook Pierre from head to foot; a mist of blood swam before his eyes, and rallying his strength he sprang upon the enemy as a tiger upon its prey. A short, sharp tussle, a thrust of cold steel, a wild, choked cry, and the flag changed hands. The gallant young lieutenant would fight no more.

Pierre fell with him, and lay for hours unconscious, till the cold night dew fell on his face and roused his slumbering senses. Still grasping the flag, he managed to drag himself some few yards away. He wanted to die alone—not with that flaxen-haired lad beneath him, or by other still forms that pressed him close. But even now he had company, though he wished for none. A low moan and a faint cry of "*Wasser, Wasser!*" told him of the

nearness of a prostrate foe. All the fury of his passion was spent, and he felt a curious detached pity for those who suffered as he did.

"Poor chap!" he murmured, as he shuffled nearer. And very simply, as a matter of course—for had he not heard in those "other days" which seemed to him now so far away, of One Who said "Love your enemies"?—he fumbled feebly for his water-flask, and, finding it, pushed it into his hand.

"*Danker*," muttered the hoarse voice. "*Ich*——" Then it failed; the flask fell from the lifeless fingers, and the precious water trickled to the ground.

Pierre had drifted back into a land of shadows when at daybreak a cringing figure stole from the woods that bordered the battlefield. A human wolf, gaunt with fear and hunger, came out from his hiding-place, craving for vengeance as for food. Stumbling over Pierre, he drew his sword; here was one of the rabble that had put his country's proud army to flight. Did he live still? Then he should die!

But before his sword could touch Pierre's breast, the man caught sight of his own dead comrade. The empty French water-flask by his side told its own tale.

"*Ach—so!*" breathed the German, putting back his sword. And Pierre, all unknowing, escaped death yet once more.

The autumn sun was high in the sky when the repeated touch of a warm moist tongue on his forehead brought Pierre back to life again, and he opened his eyes to meet the rapturous gaze of a pair of liquid brown ones. They belonged to a very disreputable little dog minus an ear and half his tail, and plus a dirty bandage round one leg.

"Léon!" breathed Pierre; and Léon cocked the ear that remained to him, as if to demand "Who else?" For Pierre he had left the comforts of the field hospital where he had wisely installed himself at the invitation of a friendly nurse. He could not rest when Pierre was missing; he had howled for him all night.

"Good little dog!" the soldier murmured. And Léon fell to caressing his hand, whining with grief that it lay inert and made no attempt to pat him. The sight of him cleared the mists from Pierre's brain, and hope came back to his heart.

"Léon!" he cried, "fetch my comrades to me. Make haste, little dog—make haste, or I die!"

Léon hesitated. It was against his principles to leave a friend, and Pierre was more to him than all the world. But the soldier's insistence moved him to obey, and with a melting look from his true, brown eyes he scampered off. While Pierre was yet wondering if he understood, he was back again, followed by two of the Red Cross bearers. Léon had fetched them thrice already to wounded men, so they followed him with little ado.

"Good little dog!" repeated Pierre, as he was lifted on to a stretcher. And Léon, running along beside it, wagged his stump of a tail in an ecstasy of joy.

DUCHESS

The Dog who Remembered

It was stiflingly hot in Calcutta that June day, even toward the late afternoon. The rains were already overdue, but the sun blazed down from a cloudless sky, a brilliant disc of molten gold.

"*Poof!*" groaned an Englishman, as he crossed the square. "This place is like a furnace!"

His groan was echoed from a shadowy doorway, where a half-starved dog had crept to die. The young man stopped, mopped his forehead, and stared. The dog crept feebly from the patch of shadow, and, with a pathetic air of dignity, feebly held out her paw.

"Hallo, Duchess!" laughed the man, stooping down to take it. Then, as he saw the rust-red marks that stained her once white coat, his blue eyes flashed indignation.

"I say, who's been hurting you?" he asked.

She could not tell him, and a spasm of pain made her quiver as he touched her shoulder.

"Well, I can't leave you here," he said, after a moment's pause, and dismissing from his mind a half-formed plan to put a speedy end to her troubles by a dose from the nearest chemist, he picked her up gingerly, talking to her as though she were a frightened child.

"There—don't be afraid. We haven't far to go, and soon you shall have a good drink. All right—that's better. Put your head where you like, but I'd rather you didn't lick my ear."

So the Duchess licked his chin instead, and, sick as she was, determined then and there to serve him with her last breath.

She was an ugly creature, with a broad flat head, a chest like a bulldog's, and a heavy jaw. But her narrow eyes, more green than brown, were very gentle, and shone now with a passion of gratitude. It was months since any one had spoken kindly to her, and how she had craved for love!

William Martin—"Willie" to all his friends—fed her with spoonfuls of brandy and milk, and sat up half the night with her. Next morning, after a long and refreshing sleep, she revived sufficiently to glare at Nip, a well-

bred young puppy who looked at her with scorn when his master bade him "make friends."

"He's more mine than yours already," said her jealous glance. "He doesn't feed *you* from a spoon!"

From that moment her recovery was rapid, and when, some days later, the spruce young puppy was chased round and round the garden in the rain until he was all but done for, he transferred himself to the colonel's wife, who had no wish to harbour strays and frankly called his rival "hideous."

The coast being clear, the Duchess proceeded to 'mother' Willie Martin in the quaintest way, fetching his slippers, his book, or paper, according to his demands, hovering round him with anxious affection, and thrusting her muzzle between his clenched hands when he sat still staring at nothing. Then his thoughts would return from cool grey skies and dim vistas of moorland spaces, and with the light touch on her head that she loved, he would take up his book again.

The Duchess soon showed she had a mind of her own. Nowhere else would she sleep but at the foot of his bed, and if he came in late, which she doubtless knew was bad for him, she showed her displeasure by sepulchral sounds that seemed to come from the floor. It was the joke of the mess to hear him say, with that pleasant boyish grin of his: "I must be off now, or I shall catch it from my old lady!"

"That dog shows her sense," his colonel said. "We shall lose him if he doesn't take care."

There came a day when, after a bad bout of fever, during which the Duchess haunted his room, Willie Martin was ordered home. Before he went he called her to him, and taking her ugly head between his hands, looked deeply into her eyes.

"I hate to leave you behind," he told her. "Be sure of that, old dear. But there'd be no room for you where I'm going, so I'm giving you to my friend George Vance. Mind, you're to do exactly as he says. He will be your master now."

Instinct told the Duchess, at least in part, what he was trying to say. With a howl of anguish she dashed beneath his couch, and only her training of strict obedience brought her out when Captain Vance appeared.

"Shake hands with him, Duchess," Willie said quietly.

And the Duchess, her head turned over her shoulder, obeyed with tears streaming down her face; real tears, like those shed by humans.

Captain Vance did not press his attentions on her, but left her much to herself. Now and then he would say: “Poor old lady! It’s hard luck, but you and I won’t forget.” He hoped that time would soften her grief, and that then she would turn to him.

Months passed, and the Duchess still held aloof, fretting so much that once more she seemed to be only skin and bone. But for his promise to give her a home Captain Vance would have sent her away. She was no use for shooting, and as a companion she certainly did not shine.

One day when he was trying a new horse, in view of the Duchess, who looked on listlessly, the animal bucked and sent him flying. With languid interest the Duchess watched to see him get up again, but he lay where he fell, very white and still, his limbs outstretched in the long grass.

The friend who had been with him hurried off for help, and the Duchess walked soberly over the field as though impelled by some mysterious force that was stronger than her own will. . . . On his return to consciousness, she was gently licking his hands, and at the doctor’s bungalow, where his collarbone was set and his broken ribs bandaged, she stayed by him as she had stayed by Willie, alert to hear his faintest whisper.

“Dogs are a bit like women,” said the doctor. “They can’t hold out against the appeal of weakness. You’ve won the heart of yours at last.”

And so it seemed. She did nothing by halves, and though the new love did not displace the old, the Duchess was happy again.

She had plenty of excitement in her life now, for though she had no gifts as a retriever, she always went where her master did, much as she detested guns. Once he was nearly killed by a bear, but shot it in the nick of time; once he tried to swim the rapids, and was all but caught between the grip of two rocks. The Duchess nearly lost her life then by dashing in to try to save him. She was scolded soundly for her pains when dragged out of the swirling current.

“You leave things to me, my lady,” he told her, with would-be sternness. “When I want your help, I’ll ask for it.”

But the Duchess only wagged her tail and growled at the native who wanted to rub her dry with a mangy fragment of blanket.

She disliked the natives as much as she did shooting, and never let one come near her if she could help it. In vain was she reasoned with, persuaded, chidden. Duchess as she was, she could show her disdain by the way in which she lifted an eyelid.

One hot afternoon, while hunting ibex, Captain Vance fell asleep in the shade of a tree, with the Duchess on guard beside him. She was dozing too, but a snake-like movement in the long grass told her a native was approaching. His eyes glittered strangely, and he held his head as though on the eve of battle.

The Duchess growled, and George Vance woke. The native had retired as quietly as he had come, leaving a dirty blue envelope behind. The Duchess was still growling as she carried it to her master, for it smelt of native, and had she had her way she would have torn it to shreds.

Like a thunderbolt falling out of the blue, it brought the dread tidings of the mutiny of the native army, and summoned all officers to rejoin their regiment without a moment's delay.

Then began a forced march across mountain and valley, when sometimes they slept in a cave above the snow-line, or pitched their tent on a grassy plain as near as they could to water. Vance hunted as he went, to feed his party. The game was cooked on the camp-fire at night, and as the flames lit up the faces round it, the Duchess kept close to her master's side, always watching lest some one should harm him.

At the end of the march on the Murree road, the baggage carriers deserted. They had heard news of the fighting at Delhi, and Vance knew that this meant trouble. Calling the headman of the village to him, he showed his pass from a Maharajah, and ordered him to procure more coolies in place of those who had left him. The headman called, but no answer came. The coolies would serve the English lords no longer; the white man, they said, was being driven out of India.

George Vance loaded his gun and prepared to defend himself, knowing he might be attacked at any moment. The Duchess took up her stand beside him as he sat by the open flap of his tent, and soon the expected happened. A crowd of natives came running from the village, armed with pieces of iron and anything they could snatch up. They were out to kill—what could one man do, even if he had a rifle?

Vance raised it to his shoulder, but before he could fire, the Duchess flew at their leader's face, gnashing her teeth in it as she dragged him down, and making most horrible noises. The suddenness of her attack, and the rebel's shrieks of pain, scared his followers out of their wits. They turned and ran, with the Duchess after them, biting their legs and tearing away their blankets in a frenzy of rage and hatred.

Whatever the sepoys were doing at Delhi, on the Murree road an Englishman's dog had cut short the first attempt at rebellion!

Captain Vance rejoined his regiment in safety, fought through the Mutiny, and not long after married a charming English girl who had come out from ‘home.’

“The only thing that troubles me,” he told her ruefully, “is that the Duchess will be so jealous, Mary. And she’s saved my life more than once.”

But he need not have feared. When the Duchess saw his wife—yellow-haired, blue-eyed, with ‘a face made out of a rose’—she flew to her with a bark of welcome, and fondled her pretty hands.

“Why, she loves you straight away!” cried George. “I might have known she would.”

And neither then nor later did he remember that Willie Martin had just such hair and eyes as blue as Mary’s own.

DUCHESS FLEW AT THEIR LEADER'S FACE

DEB

Plain and Homely

Aunt Deb was great-aunt to Mamie, Meg, Geoff, and John.

Three years ago she had left her home in Westmorland to pay her nephew, Dr Kemp, a visit. She did not stay long. She was very old, and London, she said, was noisy. Patients seemed to be knocking at the door all day; and the crowded streets, full of hurrying men and women, were a nightmare to one who had lived all her life among heather and bees, with the chant of the wind for company.

So back she went to her native hills, but always after this, as Christmas came round, she sent five pounds to her nephew's children to be spent exactly as they liked. It was almost the only money they ever had, for 'Daddy' was too busy and too overworked to find time to send in his accounts.

One Christmas, instead of a five-pound note, there came a middling-sized hamper. It was marked, "Urgent—Deliver Immediately," and "This Side Up—With Care."

"Apples and pears, or a turkey," guessed Geoff, sniffing anxiously round the edge.

"Fireworks!" John suggested hopefully.

"Well, let's open it, anyhow," said Meg, with a sigh. Her share of the usual five-pound note was to have bought a warm coat for Mamie, the blue-eyed, golden-haired, fragile little sister their mother had left in her care. Mamie's wee face was like a scrap of apple blossom—it was so pink and white.

Geoff fetched a knife, the string that fastened the hamper was cut, and the lid flung open with a flourish.

Straw was all they saw at first. Then a head poked out, then shoulders, and then two black-and-white paws.

"Why, its Aunt Deb!" cried Geoff, as the dog shook off a shower of tumbled straw and made a leap for the hearth-rug. "Don't you *see*, Meg? Black rings round its eyes for specs., and the patch on its head—snowy-

white—is her cap, and it wags its nose just as she does! And it's got a black patch on its back, like a shawl, and fat black feet, like Aunt Deb's boots."

"So it has!" agreed John, with a shout of laughter; and though "Fancy" was plainly written on the dog's collar, "Deb" was henceforth her name.

She was their last present from Great-aunt Deb, who had sent her to them because as she said, she was too feeble now to look after her herself. Her annuity died with her. So much they gathered from the pencilled note they found pinned to Deb's rug in the hamper, but the cottage and all that it contained had been left to her nephew and his children.

A few days later Aunt Deb died suddenly, and her namesake, whose howling had kept them all awake, seemed to know that never more would the kind old voice bid her "Be a good dog, and lie still." Tears trickled down her face. Mamie wiped them away, and cried a little for company. The doctor found them both fast asleep, curled up together on the hearth-rug, when he came in from his rounds.

After this, Deb was looked upon as Mamie's dog, and always slept outside her door.

Having settled down as a member of the family, she took upon herself various duties. She fetched the doctor's slippers as she had fetched Aunt Deb's, ushered patients in and out on his busy evenings (she whined if they stayed too long!), and woke up stay-a-bed Geoff every morning by nipping the tip of his nose. In her off-times she mothered anything that came her way, from a pigeon she found in the yard with a broken wing to the half-drowned kitten she discovered on a dust-heap, and licked it till it was warm again.

But Deb could be stern as well as pitiful. If the wrong kind of patient—a docker, for instance, in his working-clothes and with an unwashed face—dared to march up the garden to the front door instead of going to the surgery, her bark was so furious that he stopped, abashed, and finally went round the other way. The man who came to wind the clocks, and was trustfully left alone by Meg in the little drawing-room they so seldom used, yelled when he felt Deb's grip on his leg, and promptly flung away a silver vase from the pocket of his faded coat.

But Deb's greatest merit in the doctor's eyes was the way in which she dealt with the newspaper-boys who thought that to peal the night-bell as they passed by was the richest joke in the world. When he had been up the best part of the night with patients he would let her out on his return, knowing his slumbers would be undisturbed by spurious calls if she had anything to do with it.

"Quietly, mind, old lady!" he would say. And Deb's ungainly body—she was a heavy dog—would quiver with pride as he patted her head or chucked her under the chin.

Not a sound would she make as she sprang from the shadows with much threatening of gleaming teeth; and ring-and-run away was no longer popular as a pastime on winter mornings.

Deb didn't like boys. She tolerated John, and was passably civil to Geoff. The doctor himself, with his gentle hands and voice, came next in her heart to Mamie, while to Meg she always showed the respect that was due from one colleague to the other.

"We run the house, you and I," she barked softly, as Meg dusted the doctor's books, or sat up late over household accounts that never could be made to balance. Deb did not count the maid, whose 'evening out' came round most nights in the week.

The months flew by. It was Christmas again, and Meg and Mamie had a secret. By means of screwing here and pinching there, of going without a new winter hat, and having her old shoes re-patched, Meg had accumulated a little hoard to furnish a Christmas-tree. A tall one, already laden with presents, was hidden away in an unused room, and she and Mamie were to go on Christmas Eve to buy some last treasures for its adornment.

Mamie's eyes were like sapphires, and her dancing feet had been hard to keep still all day.

"It's the beautifullest Christmas I've ever, ever had!" she confided to Deb, who was not enthusiastic. Perhaps she sensed the humiliating fact that it was not intended she should take part in the forthcoming expedition.

Not for nothing, she knew, had Mamie's best boots been brought out, and her muff, and the scarf that went with it. . . .

Deb was missing when they started. She had disappeared while they were putting on their things.

"An' I wanted to say 'good-bye' to her," lamented Mamie, "an' to tell her we wouldn't be long!"

"I hope she isn't waiting outside," said Meg, who knew Deb's tricks of old. Only locked doors, she had learned by experience, could keep her away from Mamie.

They had left Dockland now, and were in the wider streets, where Christmas shopping was in full swing. Shop windows were gay with red-berried holly; bunches of mistletoe were heaped inside, and silver tinsel and many-coloured balls turned the grey East End into fairyland.

"Oh, it's *lovely*," breathed Mamie, and the stars smiled down on her from the clearness of a frosty sky.

Meg was laden with parcels when she and Mamie crossed the road during a block in the traffic.

"Keep close to me, Mamie," she said; "we must hurry!" But Mamie, hugging a fairy doll, stopped for a second to make sure its wings were not being crushed against her coat. That pause was fatal; the traffic moved again, and Mamie, stumbling in sudden fright, rolled in front of a heavy van.

"The child!" a woman shrieked from the pavement, but even as Meg echoed her cry a black-and-white terrier, heavily built, hurled herself on Mamie, pushing her into safety. A moment later she was in Meg's arms, while Deb, with one foot badly crushed, was gasping beneath the van. . . .

Mamie sobbed herself to sleep that night, but cheered up next day when she found that Deb seemed to be quite comfortable. With her foreleg and head amply swathed in bandages, she was the star patient of the canine hospital to which she had been carried, and wagged her stumpy tail in a frenzy of joy when she found who had come to see her.

The Christmas-tree had to wait till she was well. When she came home, she still limped badly. She always would; but, even so, three feet are better than none.

Next winter found Deb as brisk as ever. Every morning when Meg took Mamie to school she insisted on going with them, and barked with pained reproach if they attempted to cross the road while a van was anywhere near. It took twice the time to get there, Meg complained, but Deb always had her way.

It was a trying winter. Fog after fog succeeded a long hard frost, and for days at a time a heavy black pall hung between London and the sunlight. Sometimes, for a change, it turned into pea-soup, and smarting eyes and choking throats smarted and choked the more. Pneumonia and influenza came in the wake of coughs and colds; the doctor was on his feet from morn till eve, and Deb became so well accustomed to the night-bell that she did not deign to bark.

When the fog lifted, some fortnight before Christmas, the sun that streamed in through the breakfast-room window showed a Mamie who was startlingly white and frail. Deb knew something was wrong and she generously brought her a bone to tempt her appetite, but Mamie was too languid even to smile.

The doctor, who looked rather like a wraith himself, knitted his forehead and frowned. She must be sent away to the country; but money had never been scarcer than now, and he didn't see how it could be managed. Meg read his thoughts.

"Daddy," she cried, "couldn't we go to Aunt Deb's cottage—all of us, just for the holidays? You haven't had a change yourself since Mother died, and that is seven years next June. What is the good of slaving at the practice if it's going to kill you in the end?"

But her father was no longer listening. His forehead had come unknitted, and his eyes were as bright as Deb's.

"The cottage?" he cried. "I had forgotten all about it since the agent said it would neither sell nor let. If I could get in some of those old accounts, I'd try for a locum for Christmas week, and take you there myself. The boys must come back with me, I'm afraid, but you and Mamie might stay on a bit if some one could keep you company."

It is surprising once a plan is set going how everything seems to fit in. Three patients paid their bills within the next few days, and Dr Baynes, who had walked the hospitals with 'Daddy,' was looking out for a new post, and could 'locum' for a week or longer. So the very day after school broke up, the Kemp family set out for Great-aunt Deb's cottage, arriving soon after dusk. A woman from the village had lit fires in all the rooms, and the sheets smelt of lavender and rose leaves.

The children woke to a new world. Frost had silvered the tips of the tall green firs standing out against a blue, blue sky; in the valley below were clusters of wee houses, like mushrooms in a stretch of green. Robins and thrushes twittered in the garden and bracken flamed against the hills. And the air was so fresh and sweet and pure that fogs faded into a dream.

Within a week Mamie's colour had come back; the country cream and butter and farmhouse bread, with honey and porridge and home-made jam, were enough to tempt any one to eat, and as for the boys, they were in such high spirits that even Deb was surprised. She objected to being chased as if she were a rabbit—it offended her dignity.

She often looked wistful as she hovered by the door of the room that had been Great-aunt Deb's, but did not seem to expect to find her. When Geoff let her in—he and John slept there now—she made straight for an old oak chest. By this she would stand with bristling hair, growling and going through strange gymnastics to push it out of the way.

“It’s rats she’s after,” John said wisely. It took their united strength to move the chest, even though it was half empty; but he was right—there was a big rat-hole, which Deb rushed at with a bark of joy.

“We must fill it up at once,” declared Meg, the good housewife, when she learnt what they had discovered. “Geoff—there’s a lump of putty in the greenhouse. I think it will be just enough.”

“She’s so growly there must be a rat there still,” said John, referring to Deb. And down he thrust a slim brown hand, bringing it out with a thick wad of papers, rather nibbled about the edge.

“The beggars took these for their nest,” remarked Geoff, who had just come back with the putty. John was in the act of throwing them beneath the grate, when on a time-stained slip he saw the magic words: ONE POUND.

“Hallo!” he cried. He might well exclaim, for when the notes were counted up they came to over two hundred pounds. . . .

The hole in the wainscoting had been Aunt Deb’s bank, though a rat had undoubtedly lived there. When the corners were exposed, gold coins were found, and heavy five-shilling pieces. Her namesake looked on with evident disgust. She had been so sure of that rat.

Dr Baynes stayed at the London house as ‘locum’ until the holidays were over, and then as his old friend’s partner. A brave little two-seater, bought with Aunt Deb’s money, took Deb’s master on his rounds, and carried Mamie, warm and dry, to school if it were raining. It was Aunt Deb’s money, too, that did up the cottage, their lovely holiday home; but best of all her gifts to them was the funny old dog who for love of Mamie had so nearly lost her life.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

[The end of *Brave Dogs* by Lilian Gask]