

A DOG
NAMED CHIPS



ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

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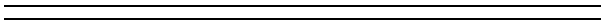
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A DOG NAMED CHIPS

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A
MONGREL SCAMP

By
Albert Payson Terhune

Author of LOCHINVAR LUCK, FURTHER
ADVENTURES OF LAD



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A DOG
NAMED CHIPS

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MY BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
LORING A. SCHULER

*Who gave me the suggestion
for a fiction dog with the
queer own-your-own-soul
nature of my hero, CHIPS:
and in whose magazine,
The Ladies' Home Journal
these stories first saw the
light of day.*



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A Dog
Named Chips

CHAPTER I

The Coming of Chips

SHE had begun life, as far as any record can be found, tucked under the right arm of a mangy-looking man. The man stood on a New York street corner with her, when no policeman was in sight, and strolled along the busy shopping-block with an air of aloof preoccupation whenever a patrolman chanced to glance toward him.

Under the mangy man's left arm was tucked another fuzzy puppy. Both pups were scrubbed and combed to a fictitious state of clean fluffiness. Each of them was adorned with a huge scarlet neck-ribbon.

It was the little doglet under the vender's right arm that drew the bulk of such attention as passers-by bestowed. For she had the wistfulest eyes and the pudgiest body and the most appealingly lovable air imaginable.

Mrs. Johannes Crake was piloting her two children through the milling sidewalk throng, on the way to the Pennsylvania Station and thence to her suburban home, at the end of a nerve-frazzling day of shopping.

Suddenly Mrs. Crake found herself brought to anchor, through no volition of her own. This because both children had come to an abrupt halt. As Mrs. Crake was holding tightly to a hand of each of them, their halt entailed hers.

Oblivious of her absent-minded commands to get into motion again, Carlie and Stella Crake were staring upward in rapt interest at the two pups under the mangy man's arms.

Without seeming to note their fascinated gaze, the man stopped directly in front of them and fell to rearranging the scarlet bow on the neck of the puppy under his right arm. It was on this wistfully lovable puppy that the children's round eyes were fixed.

With reluctance Mrs. Crake came out of a bothersomely engrossing set of calculations as to whether she had left the umbrella at the candy-shop lunchroom or at the department store before the department store whereat she had missed it.

It was her sister-in-law's umbrella, at that. She had borrowed it, early in the morning, when she started for New York, and without the formality of asking leave. She knew, wherever she had lost it, there was less than no use in going back to make inquiries.

Then it was that a dual clamor of admiration from the children brought her to reality. This and the fact that her hold on their hands prevented her from moving onward. Motherwise, a single glance at the pudgily fluffy pup told her the reason for the halt and for the clamor.

"No!" her incisive voice cut through her offsprings' pleadings. "No, dears. You **CANNOT** have him. Now, don't tease any more! Mamma has such a frightful headache and we must hurry for our train and——"

Carlie burst into a torrent of high-pitched pleading. The gist of his harangue was that if he could have that grand puppy for Stella and himself he wouldn't ask for a single other Christmas present; and that if he could not have it, then

mamma might as well throw away any Yule gifts she might be planning for him, for he wouldn't touch one of them.

Stella hit on an even more efficient method for winning her mother's consent to the buying of the fuzzy pup. Throwing herself face downward, in her best winter coat, on the sidewalk among the numberless tramping feet of the shoppers, she lifted her voice to high heaven in a series of hysterical screeches, keeping time to her vocal rhythm by banging her stubby patent-leather toes furiously upon the pavement.

"Your pretty little folks seems to have took a reel fancy to this dawg, mum," volunteered the mangy man as Mrs. Crake endeavored to haul Stella to her feet and to silence the double din, and as passers-by stopped to watch grinningly the embarrassing scene. "Seems 'most a shame not to buy it for 'em. Pure Saint Bernard, this pup, mum. I paid me a cool century for it, last month. But I'm kind of pressed for cash just now. It's yours for ten small round dollars, mum, and a sacrifice at that."

"Gee!" proclaimed a fat man in the fast-gathering crowd—a man who seemed to have lunched well and none too dryly—"Gee! If I had kids like that, and a ten-spot present would make them happy—why, me, I couldn't get the cash out of my pocket quick enough. Folks that can't bother to make children happy haven't any right to children, say I."

He addressed nobody in particular; but in this pre-holiday concourse his words evoked a wordless murmur of assent. A prim woman in black touched the horribly exasperated Mrs. Johannes Crake on the arm.

"It's none of my business, madam," she sighed, "but the day may come when you'll look back more happily on

having gotten your children a gift they cried for than on saving money by not doing it. I know what I'm talking about," she finished, pointing with much pathos to the mourning she wore.

Again that wordless murmur from the ever-thickening knot of onlookers. Carlie and Stella ceased to wake the echoes and peered longingly once more at the wistful pup. Something told them their case was in far abler hands than theirs.

"Seeing that Christmas is coming on, mum," wheedled the vender, "and seeing your two darling angels has took such a fondness to this grand little dog, I'll let you have it for *eight* dollars, cash, mum. If you was my own daughter, I couldn't do more for you than offer the puppy to you for that; grand-looking and pretty as you are. I——"

"Hey!" spake the bibulous fat man. "How about us taking up a little collection and getting the pup for the kids, if their mommer can't afford to? I'll lead off with a two-spot. I sure do hate to see a kid cry. Especially 'round Christmas-time. How about it?"

Throughout the crowd there was a semi-general movement toward cash pockets. The two children sought to smile in cherubic gratitude on the fat man. They succeeded in achieving a resemblance to two smugly hypocritical little gargoyles.

Mrs. Johannes Crake's plump visage deepened from pink to red, from red to blackened purple. Devoutly she prayed there might be no people from her own suburb in the tight-packed crowd about them.

It was bad enough to be made hideously conspicuous like this by her two spoiled children, right here in a public street,

without having a collection taken up for their benefit. She went dizzy with the infuriating shame of it.

To cut short the nightmare experience in the quickest and easiest and cheapest way, she opened her wristbag, yanked therefrom a ten-dollar bill, thrust it loathingly at the vender, and permitted him to lower the fuzzy little wisp of doghood into the avidly upstretched arms of Carlie and Stella—who well-nigh dismembered the luckless puppy by struggling with each other for the bliss of carrying him.

On the way to the station there was a scarce less vehement struggle, verbal, this time, between the youngsters, as to what the puppy should be named. Carlie wanted to call it Lindbergh. But Stella held out for Evangeline, which, to her, was the most sonorously fascinating of names.

They called on mamma to arbitrate. But mamma was past speech. She was conserving such few energies as she still had, for the ensuing clash with Johannes Crake over her mushiness in letting herself be whipsawed into buying a pedigreeless she-dog.

For this and for the task of explaining to her sister-in-law how she had chanced to borrow an eleven-dollar umbrella without asking leave, and then how she had been so abominably careless as to lose it somewhere.

This was no time for merry badinage with her loving children as to the naming of a hated beast.

Left to themselves, Carlie and Stella blundered upon a compromise which satisfied them both. On a magazine cover, as they were hurried through the Pennsylvania Station on the way to their train, they beheld a photograph. Under it, in letters large and plain enough for both of them to read as they ran, was the name, "BABE RUTH."

Stella thought it a lovely name for the dog. It suggested fluffiness and dainty beauty. Carlie, more sophisticated, knew it stood for a hero whom he admired as much as he admired Lindbergh himself. So, without a dissenting vote, the new-bought puppy became Babe Ruth. “Ruth” for short.

This is not a super-realistic war chronicle, nor the day-by-day tale of rancorous internecine strife. Hence the homecoming of Mrs. Johannes Crake and of her son and daughter and of Babe Ruth can be slurred over mercifully and with no damage to the general plot.

The wrath of Mrs. Crake’s sister-in-law over the misappropriated umbrella; the mockery-streaked diatribe of Johannes Crake as to the wasting of ten good dollars in these hard times on the purchase of a fifteen-cent mongrel pup, and his freely expressed opinion of his whimpering wife’s attributes as a child-trainer and a salary-saver—are they not written, or smeared, into the slimy chronicles of a myriad households like the Crakes’?

Suppose we let it go at that, except to say that the blameless storm-center of the wholesale family squabble was a bewildered and hungry and thirsty and frightened and homesick baby female puppy, a puppy alternately mauled and neglected by its two juvenile owners, and scorned by everyone else under the Crake roof.

A pure-bred dog of the same age would have died from the neglect or would have developed running fits from the mauling. But most mongrels are uncannily hardy, even as the best of them are uncannily clever.

This is one reason why Babe Ruth not only lived, but changed swiftly from pudgy appealingness to scrawnily wiry adolescence. The other reason for her survival is that the

cook of the house next door to the Crakes' had a heart the size and softness of three overripe watermelons.

This cook saw the grievous plight of the unwanted and ill-treated Babe Ruth. Surreptitiously she sneaked huge nourishing platefuls of table scraps, daily, to the puppy's packing-box kennel behind the Crake home.

Yes, and when the Crakes were absent the cook would tiptoe over to the kennel and gather the unhappy pup into her ample arms and croon to her and pet her and feed her red bits of steak-end and the like.

(For which—somewhere a trillion miles beyond the frontier of the stars—Some One snatched up a rainbow-tipped celestial pen and drew swift obliterating lines across the Judgment Book's black page which contained that same cook's life record; canceling a long list of such sins as petty pilfering and gin-guzzling and lying and lesser and greater evils, and writing in a bold hand at the bottom of the once-damnatory sheet: "*She helped the helpless. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.*"')

So matters went on for the greater part of a year. The once-fluffy and appealing bunch of puppyhood was a leggy cur. It would have taken a clairvoyant, rather than a dog expert, to tell what breeds had gone into the make-up of Babe Ruth's cosmos. Without doubt, the blood of fifty champions ran in her non-azure veins. But if there were fifty such champions, they belonged to at least fifty breeds.

Yet she was gentle and friendly and wise and, in her own way, beautiful. Her wistful dark eyes mirrored a soul.

A professional dog-fancier would have sneered at her, as did Johannes Crake. A man or woman in whose brain was the

understanding of dog-nature would have welcomed her eagerly as a pal and would have developed the latent wisdom and loveliness of her nature and would have made her supremely happy.

But there was no such understander of dog-souls in or near the Crake domicile, except the cook next door. And the cook could only feed the lanky body and soothe the ever-tormented feelings of Babe Ruth.

Then, one evening, when Johannes Crake came home from a month's trip on the road for the firm which hired him, he took a long and comprehensive look at Babe Ruth, and came to a Napoleonic decision. To his wife he said, disgustedly:

“Here's where I do what you've been at me to do. I'd have done it long ago if it wasn't that the brats both bawled so every time I hinted at it. I knew if I got rid of her, they wouldn't give us any peace till we got them another. And the other, most likely, would have been no better than this one when it grew up. But I've been watching both of them for quite a while. And I had a talk with them tonight before they went to bed. They're sick and tired of the mutt. They want a couple of rabbits instead. They told me so. They promised to give up Babe Ruth if I'd promise to bring them home the rabbits from New York tomorrow night. They——”

“Yes, they told me the same thing, last week. I——”

“It was bad enough to have this cur on our hands, and having folks laugh at us for owning such a dog. But in another few days there'll be a full half-dozen more mutts, just like her or maybe worse, if we don't get rid of her. I'm taking her for a ride. Don't sit up for me.”

A few minutes later Johannes Crake crossed from the garage to Babe Ruth's kennel-box in the back yard. With no

gentleness at all, but with no undue roughness, he picked up the sleeping mongrel by the scruff of the neck and carried her bodily to where his battered motor-coupé stood with engine running.

He lifted her aboard and climbed into the machine, closing its door behind him and stepping on the gas.

Babe Ruth came out of dreamland to find her owner carrying her toward the car. From the fact that he swung her by the scruff she augured a beating, perhaps a series of kicks.

But, to her relieved surprise, he merely laid her on the seat of the coupé and got into it beside her and started off toward the dark country beyond.

This was Babe Ruth's first experience at motoring. Like nine dogs in ten, she thrilled to it. In gratitude for the outing and for the un hoped-for immunity from a beating, she sat up and strove to lick the man's face.

He thrust her aside, but with less than his wonted aversion, and with almost no roughness at all.

She cuddled back onto the springy car-seat; and gave herself over to the joy of the brand-new experience of spinning through miles of darkness through no effort at all. Drowsily, happily, she cuddled against Crake's side, reveling in the ride and in his absence of hostility.

Perhaps he and she were going to be dear friends, after all. Again she sought to lick his face. Again he pushed her away; but not roughly.

For perhaps twenty miles the ancient coupé chugged on through the night; at first over smooth roads, but, later, on narrower and bumpier byways. Then Johannes Crake brought the car to a standstill midway across a bridge which spanned

a narrow river. Stooping down to the floor, he lifted a clock weight, to which was tied a stout cord.

This cord he wound about Babe Ruth's neck; tying it firmly. Apparently it was some new game he was teaching her. The dog tried to play her part in it by patting friskily at his hands and by wagging her tail with much vehemence. He slapped her into cringing movelessness.

Then, Crake lifted her once more by the scruff of the neck, the clock weight bumping against her hindlegs and its taut cord almost choking her. But she forbore to make any protest. Perhaps this still was part of some game.

Stepping out onto the bridge, Crake raised her on high; and tossed her over the rail, into the fast-running river below.

With a mighty splash Babe Ruth and the clock weight smote the water. The dog never had swum a stroke. But nature teaches dogs how to swim, without lessons. She struck out, dazed and scared and chilled, for the unseen shore.

But the clock weight dragged her far below the surface, struggle as she would.

Johannes Crake climbed into his car and drove placidly homeward. His work was done, and done far from home. Tomorrow a pair of pink-eyed white rabbits with wiggly noses would take the place of Babe Ruth as official torture victims in the gentle Crake household. Not being wiry mongrels, their ordeal would be over the sooner.

To the river bottom, fighting gamely for release at every inch, swirled poor Babe Ruth. Struggle as she would, the lump of iron forced her inexorably down.

A freak of nature once had flung Babe Ruth into the world, and now another freak of nature gave her a one-in-fifty

chance to battle her way back into it.

The heavy rains of early spring had swollen the narrow river to a torrent, days before. Though the flood had subsided, it had left a high and fairly solid sand-riffle where until now the channel had flowed deep.

On the upsloping side of this sand-bar the clock weight came to a sullen rest. Into the sand Babe Ruth drove her frantic claws.

Her head was more than fifteen inches under water. But she did not thrash about deliriously until she was exhausted. The instinct and calculating wit of the best type of mongrel came to her aid.

Clawing desperately, she strove to mount the sandspit's slope. She may have taken that direction by mere chance, instead of following the steeper downward pitch to death.

The clock weight dragged heavily upon her clawing advance. But the gallant little dog threw every atom of her wiry strength into her climb. She was strangling. She was in increasing anguish. But she clawed onward.

Presently her courage-scourged forces were all but spent. A last brave forward lunge was followed by a back-jerk of her straining neck as the iron weight tugged against her.

The jerk threw her head high—and her mouth and nostrils were above the surface.

For the first time in all her pathetic life—except in her friendship with the fat cook next door—fate was giving Babe Ruth a break. Deep she drew the chilly night air into her tormented lungs.

The long breaths were agony. But they were life. Her foreface still above water, she lunged onward. Another three

plunges brought her head and shoulders clear of the river.

Then it was that her mongrel wit came again to her help. Wheeling, she felt for the taut cord which held her to that impeding clock weight. She caught it in her mouth and scissored it between her sharp front teeth until it fell back limply into the water.

Babe Ruth was free, free to huddle there on the summit of the submerged sand-riffle. She was stomach-deep in water and she was shivering and she was in pain. But her heart was flame-brave and her keen brain was working.

Never before had she swum. But between her and the river-bank was forty feet of fast-running water. She could not stay where she was.

Fearlessly she launched herself from the abrupt end of the riffle and toward the shore. High and awkwardly she splashed, after the manner of dogs on their first essay at swimming. And she was heavy and unwieldy and suffering.

But she made progress. True, the current carried her downstream and once or twice its eddies all but sucked her under. But she swam on, ever aiming for the elusive bank.

And now her groping forefeet touched the pebbly bottom. A final spurt landed her, spent and panting and dizzy, on dry land. Yes, fate had given Babe Ruth a break, at long last, such as it was.

Worn out, she lay grunting and gasping on the shore. But, as her strength crept reluctantly back to her, an all-encompassing need spurred her to new activity. Age-old instinct shouted to her that she must find a lair for herself, and that right speedily.

She staggered drunkenly to the by-road and jogged along it, wavering; whimpering to herself as she went.

From side to side she peered. After a few hundred feet of painful journeying she saw outlined against the sky a low building of some kind. Up the bank from the road she toiled pantingly toward it.

It was a shed, whose door sagged a quarter-way open. Behind and beyond it, a small clump of other buildings showed dimly against the glum clouds. But there was no time to investigate these.

Into the shed Babe Ruth nosed timidly. It was warm in there, for a cow with a new-born calf occupied a shut-off stall at one side of it. In an opposite corner was a thick scatter of bedding. To this snugly soft refuge the suffering dog gratefully made her way.

Her Hour was upon her.

A little after sunrise, next morning, the creaking shed door was shoved wide. A child, perhaps seven years old, trotted in, followed by a man in sheepskin coat and overalls.

Dorothy Murrel had come with her father to see the new-born calf. But she paused midway to the stall, attracted by a softly squeaking sound from the opposite corner. The child gaped star-eyed at what she saw there.

Stretched out on the soft hay reclined Babe Ruth. Around her were strewn four dead puppies, smaller than rats. A fifth puppy was nuzzling at her soft underbody ravenously, squeaking and chuckling to itself as it fed.

Why their dam's fearsome experience, just before their premature birth, had not killed all five of the puppies, instead

of only four of them, is one of the minor mysteries of mongrel biology. But one of the quintet had lived and was as aggressively vigorous as any eugenic product of a ten-thousand-dollar kennel. The survivor was runty and shapeless and of an indeterminate fuzzy yellow.

“Daddy!” shrilled Dorothy Murrel, half breathless with wonder, as she ran eagerly toward Babe Ruth and the tiny puppy. “Look over here! *Look!*”

Babe Ruth had stared up in languid apprehension at sound of the stubby childish feet on the ground outside and at the dainty little figure that shoved open the door of her refuge.

The outcast crossbreed had scant reason to like or to trust children. Moreover, she had now her own baby to fend for and to guard from mauling.

She was too weak to flee, even had she been willing to leave her infant to the fate that seemed in store for it, which she was not. She essayed to shove the pup out of sight beneath her own underbody and to defend it as best she might.

But there was no need. A second appealing glance at Dorothy told her in some mystic way that all children are not torturers and that this laughing little girl was of far different type from the Crake brats.

Babe Ruth did not have the remotest idea how she knew this, but know it she did, even before Dorothy had knelt beside her and had begun to stroke her tousled head and rumple her furry ears.

The child’s touch had infinite gentle friendliness in it. Babe Ruth expanded to the unwonted caress. Then she glanced apprehensively past Dorothy to the bulky man who had crossed the shed behind her. But after that first worriedly

appraising look, Babe Ruth had the same odd feeling of security that had been hers when Dorothy knelt to pet her.

This man was bigger and was rougher of aspect than had been Johannes Crake. But somehow Babe Ruth felt at once that he was a man from whom helpless creatures need feel no harm.

She wagged her tail weakly, and sank back on the hay with a contented sigh. For the first time since she could remember, fear departed from her.

“Oh, Daddy,” the child was exclaiming in rapture, “isn’t it wonderful! And, see, God has sent her a perfectly splendid little son! He sent her—let’s see—He sent her five of them. God is awfully good to dogs and cats, that way, isn’t He? But only one of them is awake. And—and I *can* keep them, can’t I, Daddy? Just for ours. Can’t I?”

“Well, we’re sure not going to kick out a poor dog that’s wished herself on us like that,” her father reassured the girl as a note of worry crept into her voice at his slowness in answering her plea. “They say it’s lucky to keep such dogs. Seems a cunning little thing, at that, don’t she? Couldn’t have happened in on us at a better time, either, with good old Tige dying last week. Sure she can stay, Dot. Her and her baby.”

“Oh, thank you! She——”

“Only—well, the others aren’t asleep, Dot. They’re dead. You keep between me and her, so she can’t see me while I take ’em out and bury ’em. Then I’ll rustle her some breakfast. I—Don’t go looking all sad, now, ’count of the four others dying! They never lived long enough to know what ’twas about. They didn’t suffer any. And you’ll have heaps of fun with the one that’s left, soon as it gets frisky and big. The mother’s got a real wise face onto her. I’ll bet she’s

good comp'ny, too; and I'll bet we can make a crackerjack farm dog of her. But she looks like she's been bad treated. Did you see how she flinched when we came in here? We'll cure her of that, easy enough, hey?"

"And—and we'll call her 'John,' I think, Daddy. I never heard of a dog named John, and it's a lovely name for her. And Mama will be crazy glad to have her. It wasn't more ago than just yesterday that she said it seemed so kind of lonesome without a dog underfoot. Since Tige went to heaven, it *has* seemed lonesome. But it won't, any more."

So did Babe Ruth come into her own. So, for the first time in her abused life, did she learn that there are friendliness and pity and square treatment in the grim world which had buffeted her so roughly.

Her personal story might almost end here and now, with the statement that for twelve long and happy years—until her death of old age—she abode at the farm in whose outermost shed she had taken refuge in her hour of agony; and that she was the loved and useful housemate of the Murrels, learning with ease her simple duties as watch-dog and cattle-driver and reveling in the light toil and full happiness of her peaceful routine.

It might end thus, but for one incident.

Early April had sweetened into late spring, and late spring had melted into the heat of July.

On a Sunday afternoon Murrel and Dot fared forth for a swim in the river, less than a furlong from the farm. Frisking ahead of them ran Babe Ruth.

Clumsily at the mother dog's side galloped her three-months-old puppy—the puppy that was destined to win fame on a much later day under the non-poetic name of "Chips."

Long ago Babe Ruth had recovered from her first horror of the stream wherein once she had battled for her life against such impossible odds. She had learned to love the river, with its cool shadows and its revivingly sparkling waters. Often she swam there, after a hot gallop in search of some strayed cow. She had even coaxed her puppy to make a few scrambling attempts to navigate in its shallower backwaters.

Today the puppy cantered along the bank, barking in gay excitement, while its mother swam beside Murrel across the stream and back, and then while Murrel made the same dual trip with seven-year Dorothy sitting proudly astride his thick shoulders.

After which, man and child sprawled in the shade, by the water's edge, in their frayed bathing-suits, lazily chatting and staring up at the deep-blue sky through the deeper green of the waterside trees.

Babe Ruth would have been well content to loll thus with them. But the puppy was at an age which knows but two extremes—bouncing activity and dead slumber.

The pup found no sport at all in sitting sedately beside its dam and the two humans on the mossy verge of the creek. An exploring spirit took possession of the fat youngster.

It frisked off from the somnolent trio and made its way awkwardly up the steep bridgeside bank, to the by-road above. There, for a few seconds, it paused, looking in every direction for new worlds to conquer.

Reluctantly, yet urged by conscientious mother-care, Babe Ruth quitted the shady river-edge and the man and the child who lounged so comfortably there, and she toiled up the bridge embankment in quest of her errant puppy.

She arrived at the by-road ditch just as a motor chugged into sight around the bend.

The vehicle was driven by a sour-faced man. A stout woman sat beside him. In the rumble, at the back, squirmed a boy and a girl, not more than a few years older than Dorothy Murrel.

At sight and scent of the invaders a queer horror swept through Babe Ruth. Back she sidled into the wayside's long grass, flattening herself in swift fright.

Then, by far greater effort of will than she had used to drag herself out of the river three months earlier, she darted forward. For her bumblepuppy youngster was frisking, unafraid and uncomprehending, athwart the byway, directly in the path of the oncoming car.

With a scurry and a swoop Babe Ruth flung herself at the menaced pup. Almost under the front wheels of the coupé she came up with the wanderer. By the neck she caught the whiningly struggling puppy, and by sheer force yanked it out of peril.

The car came to a standstill as its driver observed this mildly dramatic act of life-saving. The children in the rumble leaned out from either side, to find what it was all about.

“Why,” ejaculated Johannes Crake, “if it isn't that very dog I drowned that night!”

His exclamation was lost in the dual screech of recognition from the rumble. Carlie and dear little Stella recognized their lost victim as quickly as did their sire.

More—they saw, at the roadside, beside Babe Ruth, a frowsily fluffy pup—a pup with many possibilities as a

mauling-bag, even as its mother once had been until they had tired of her.

The pair of white rabbits which Johannes Crake had given them in place of the no-longer-desired Babe Ruth, had suffered only a few days of such rough handling before digging a tunnel under their hutch and escaping through it to the freedom of the woods.

With morbid longing the children's thoughts had turned again to a puppy. Not to a scraggly grown dog, but to such a helpless and maulable pup as Babe Ruth had been when first they had owned her.

And now, at the side of this road which they were traversing on their Sunday afternoon drive, frisked just such a puppy.

Their voices arose in a snarling demand to their parents for this miraculously sent gift.

“Better find who owns it,” suggested Mrs. Crake to her husband as the din of her children's plangent demands smote upon her ears, “and buy it for them if it doesn't cost too much. They'll give us no peace if you don't. Oh dear! They do make my head ache so with their awful racket! Buy the puppy, if you can, and——”

“Buy nothing!” declared Johannes Crake. “That's Babe Ruth's pup, isn't it? There's Babe Ruth, to prove it. Babe Ruth belongs to us, don't she? You paid good money for her. Nine-dollars-and-ninety-cents too much good money. By law, her pup belongs to us. Wait!”

He barged out of the car and down onto the hotly dusty byway. In a stride he had reached the spot where the ungainly pup was gamboling around its tremblingly crouching dam.

His children applauded loudly as Crake stooped to lift the nondescript youngster.

Then, mad with terror, yet scourged on by a mightier impulse, Babe Ruth went into action.

These humans who had made her own life hell were seeking to carry away her beloved baby to a like fate. For the first and the last time in her gentle life Babe Ruth waxed savage.

Lunging forward, she drove her teeth deep into the fleshy part of Johannes Crake's hand as the man bent down to reach for the puppy.

With a yell, Crake hopped backward, shaking his bloody hand and swearing loudly. Then, recovering his balance and quite daft with fury, he rushed at the brave little dog as she was pressing protectively in front of her imperiled puppy.

One of Johannes Crake's heavy-shod feet poised itself for a rib-crushing kick at the unflinching mother-dog.

But the kick was not delivered.

This because a great hand clapped itself on the raging man's shoulder and spun him about, jamming him against the bridge rail. Towering above him was a giant in a frayed bathing-suit.

"Dot," said Murrel to a bathing-suited child who had run up the embankment behind him, "pick up the puppy and hurry on home. Do as Daddy says, dear. *And don't look back!* Hurry, now!"

He spoke gently, but his big voice was shaking with ill-held emotion. Marveling, yet as ever obedient, Dorothy gathered the wriggling puppy into her chubby arms and

trotted off homeward, heroically resisting the temptation of even a single backward look.

“You ruffian!” Mrs. Crake was screaming to Murrel. “Let go of my husband or I’ll send for the police! And call that child of yours back here with our puppy. It belongs to us. I paid ten good dollars for its mother there.”

“If this dog of mine belonged to you, ma’am,” asked Murrel, without relaxing his grip on Crake’s shoulder, “how did she happen to come into my shed to have her puppies? I know all the folks that live anywhere near here. And I don’t know either of you. No, nor yet those two hollering kids in the back of your car. If——”

“That dog is ours!” vociferated Mrs. Crake. “We can prove it. And we can prove how she happened to be in this neighborhood. My husband drove out here with her, all the way from Garth Center, last April, just before her puppies were going to be born, and he tied a clock weight around her neck and he threw her into this very river, from this very bridge. And he——”

“Shut up, Margie!” snapped Johannes Crake as he felt the mighty grip tighten spasmodically on his shoulder. “Shut up, you! I——”

“Yes,” drawled Murrel, his deep voice all at once slow and somber—“yes, she can shut up now, if she wants to. She’s told me enough. I guessed what might have happened, when I found that chewed cord around the poor critter’s neck and a lot of river mud and sand in her coat. But I didn’t like to think any man would be skunk enough to do such a filthy thing, ’specially to a dog in that condition. She can’t pay her own bill for what you done to her. But maybe I can try to pay a half-portion of it for her, Mister Dog-drowner. So——”

His drawling speech broke off. Johannes Crake had struggled vainly to free himself from the iron grasp that held him pinned by the shoulder to the bridge rail. Now he bethought him of something he carried always in his hip pocket during long back-country rides, as a protection against possible holdup men.

Writhing impotently to get free from this humiliating position which he was forced to occupy in the presence of his wife and children—all three of whom, he knew well, would remind him tauntingly of it for many a long day thereafter—he sought to release himself in the only possible way.

His bitten right hand flashed back toward his hip, reappearing instantly with its bleeding fingers gripping a heavy-caliber pistol.

Then several things happened in immediate succession.

First, a hammer-blow from Murrel's open palm sent the weapon scudding from Crake's grasp and far out into the rushing river beneath. Next—it seemed to occur in practically the same gesture—Johannes Crake was jerked from his feet into the air.

Down he fell, athwart Murrel's knee, face to the earth. Followed a prolonged sound as of violent applause, punctured by Crake's blasphemous yells and by Mrs. Crake's shrieks. Again and again Murrel's free hand smote Johannes Crake agonizingly on the nearest and most salient part of the latter's squirming anatomy. Every slap carried with it the scientific strength of the strongest arm in Preakness County.

Crake's blasphemy, under that frightful punishment, changed to tearful howls for mercy as he wrenched himself vainly from side to side in a futile effort to escape.

“There!” remarked Murrel, at last, setting the bellowing Crake on his feet once more, but renewing his grip on the man’s shoulder. “From the way that poor little dog used to look up at me and crouch and shiver away from me when she first came here, I’m figuring I’ve treated you to only a misses’-and-children’s-size sample of the lickings you gave her. But it’s enough to pay off a few per cent of the score. If you want to sue me for assault and battery, my name’s Hiram A. Murrel, and I live in that house up yonder. At the same time we’ll tell the court what you did to that poor, suffering mother-dog. I’ll leave you to guess how the trial will come out, and what the S. P. C. A. will do to you afterward. So much for the beatings you handed out to a dog that couldn’t defend herself. Now for the time you threw her off this bridge. I’m sorry I haven’t any clock weights handy to pin onto you. Over you go!”

As he spoke, he shifted his position, too suddenly for his victim to guess what was toward. In the same instant Johannes Crake arose once more in the air. This time he spread-eagled through space for several feet, then dropped like a plummet into the turbulent depths of the narrow river.

Far beneath the surface he dived, to an accompaniment of a renewed series of screams from his wife and yells of delighted excitement from his children.

Presently his head appeared, sleek and dripping, above the surface, denuded of the six-dollar straw hat he had worn for the first time this day. His new Sunday clothes were soaked and stained by river mud. A pint or more of water had gushed down his windpipe.

Blindly, panic-stricken, Crake struck out for shore, the current toying tumultuously with him as once it had toyed

with Babe Ruth.

Pausing only long enough to see Crake's shoulders begin to emerge from the river shallows' mire as the man toiled, weeping and puffing and gurgling, up the steep bank, Murrel turned to Babe Ruth. Petting tenderly the head of the trembling dog, he called down to the dripping man on the shore below.

“Drop around any time you want to pay off another installment, friend. So long!”

With Babe Ruth padding lovingly along at his heels, he turned homeward.

This disturbing scene alone marred the glad peace of Babe Ruth's life, from the time Dorothy and Murrel discovered her and her one surviving puppy cuddling in the shed corner's hay to the long-distant day of her death.

It would be pleasant to record that her puppy followed her example and shared her joyous years. But the puppy, for some unexplained reason, found scant plaisance either in farm duties or in peace.

From the outset the pup was a problem. Imbibing all the nourishment which nature had supplied for a litter of five, it waxed strong and lively. But there was something queer about its brain's make-up. Perhaps it was mentally a throw-back to its unknown sire. Assuredly it had inherited none of the traits of its dam.

Instead of emulating Babe Ruth's ecstatically grateful devotion to the Murrels, and her quick adaptation to their mode of life, the youngster seemed to look upon the family, and its own mother, as some humorously snobbish sprig of nobility might regard a group of slum-dwellers. Incidentally, it had an uncanny genius for mischief.

It was clever—elfinly clever in many ways—but it would not learn to do farm work. It was glad enough to dash in among a bunch of slowly plodding cattle as they moved down the lane toward the barn, and scatter their formation by a series of nips and a harrowing fanfare of falsetto barks. But it would not consent to drive them to and from pasture.

It would run the indignant farrow sows for half a mile, in circles, dodging easily their efforts to turn and rend their pursuer. But it would not stir a step to drive the pigs out of the truck garden when a rift in the cornfield fence gave them greedily eager ingress to that forbidden ground.

It would bark ragingly at members of the family as they approached the house, but it would gambol in gay friendliness about the feet of any well-dressed stranger.

Most exasperating of all was its air of amused contempt toward the Murrels. For none of the family did it evince an atom of affection. None of them would it obey unless it chose to.

When prosperous motorists chanced to stop at the gate to inquire the way, the pup hailed them with its only semblance of cordial equality. There are many dogs obsessed by inbred snobbery. Babe Ruth's pup carried it to wild extremes.

“The purp ought to have been born in one of those palaces you was reading about in your fairy-book, Dot,” commented Murrel to his daughter, after one such motor visitation. “The only folks it treats like they amounted to anything are the ones that stop here in five-thousand-dollar cars. It treats the rest of us like we was dirt. Its mother is pure gold, all through. But that snooty purp ain't worth the powder and shot it'd take to blow it up.”

“But, Daddy——”

“There’s dogs like that,” expounded Murrel. “I’ve run across one or two of ’em. Dogs that was meant to live in towns and with rich folks, and that turns up their noses at anything quieter than a three-ring circus, and despises folks that work for a living. This one is what you might call an ‘own-your-own-soul’ purp, too. Don’t give a hoot for anyone but itself. If one of these rich motor folks would buy it offn us, the purp would think it was in heaven, to go to a big house in a big city and forget all about us backwoodsers that brought it up.”

When the pup was about ten months old a big sports-model car ran out of gas, one morning, while negotiating the by-road in front of the farm.

The driver got down, swearing, and clumped into the house to telephone to the nearest garage. The puppy escorted him, right hospitably, all the way from the car to the house door, lavishing on the fur-coated stranger a wealth of friendliness it never had been known to waste upon its owners.

The fur-coated man vanished into the kitchen, shutting the door in the pup’s face. Left alone, the nondescript yellow youngster frisked back to the road to inspect the car.

The front seat’s door had been left open. The pup leaped nimbly up into the driver’s place on a tour of investigation. From there it hopped over into the rear seat.

On the tonneau floor lay a fur rug, a rarely enticing rug. The pup jumped down upon it, thrilled by the scent and the texture of the fur. Joyously, it stretched itself out among the soft folds of the rug.

There, with a wholly new sense of satisfied luxury-love, the stowaway snoozed. So comfortable was the fur couch that

the sleeper did not bother to stir or even to awaken as the garage's rattletrap roadster clattered up with a supply of gas for the big car.

The fur-coated man got aboard, presently, and drove away, the pup still nestling luxuriously deep in the rug.

For perhaps thirty miles the driver kept on, at a pace that lulled and rejoiced the drowsy puppy. This was adventure—which it loved; plus a new costly comfort—which it adored.

How much farther the stowaway might have traveled, nobody knows. But a flea began to nibble at its neck, just below the right ear.

Ensued a noisy scratching, accompanied by small yelps of reproof at the presumptuous insect. The sound soared above the smooth purr of the car's engine. The driver looked back and saw the gleesome and fleasome pup scratching loose hair from its ear all over his eight-hundred-dollar rug.

In a moment he had brought the car to a halt. In another moment he had reached back and lifted the pup bodily from its luxurious nest. Leaning out, he dropped the squirming canine to the roadside. Then the car sped on.

The pup stood blinking and bewildered at its sudden marooning. But nothing had the power to bewilder it long. It stared curiously about, taking stock of its surroundings.

The sweet countryside where it had been born and brought up was nowhere to be seen. All around was wholly new territory, the chief residence street of a big suburb. Across the street from the gutter where the driver had dropped his unwanted passenger was a hedge which divided two acres of carefully laid-out grounds from the highway.

Here stood a house of much size and beauty. In a garden at the house's rear a woman was bending over some rose bushes, a gardener standing just behind her, listening in a pose of respectful attention to something she was saying.

Perhaps it was the strange luxury of the place that lured the wanderer; perhaps it was the gardener's air of respect toward the woman; perhaps it was but a freak of canine mentality. But all at once the pup's mind was made up.

Across the street it darted—almost ditching a fast-traveling delivery wagon whose driver had much ado to keep from crushing the foolhardy country dog to death under his wheels—and through the hedge and straight up to the woman who bent over the rose bushes.

With no cringing at all it approached her, but with the manner of one who after long absence accosts a loved equal. For an instant the woman did not see it, but moved on to a border of *Lilium auratum*, just beyond the roses. The pup shifted its position, with hers, and danced up to her afresh, once more greeting her in gayly eager equality.

With a start, the woman caught sight of the newcomer, and stared.

The pup was not at its best in point of attractiveness, unprepossessing as was its best from any standard of canine beauty. For, that morning it had tumbled into the river while chasing a baby mink along the shelving bank. Swimming to shore, it had sought to dry itself by rolling in the dust of the by-road edge. It still had been engaged in that cleansing operation when the big car had stopped at the farm gate and the fur-coated man had claimed the luxury-loving youngster's attention.

Thus, Mrs. Tredway—unquestioned leader and social arbiter of the only worthwhile set in the pretty suburb of Lothian—shrank, just at first, at sight of the grimly muddy pup that gamboled so merrily up to her. The gardener, too, stepped officiously forward to serve as barrier between his employer and the dirty mutt which had thrust itself upon her august presence.

But the pup, with a gesture of cold aloofness, moved past the protecting gardener and once more pranced up to Mrs. Tredway in jocund goodfellowship.

Something stirred far down in Claire Tredway's cosmos—something she could not analyze—as she looked at the audaciously jocund cur which hailed her as its peer. Had the pup slunk up to her cadgingly, had it sheered off in terror at the gardener's menace, she would not have given it a second glance.

But, at its absurdly self-assured greeting, her memory flashed back, for no reason she could understand, to the days when she and her husband had been desperately poor and when by sheer audacity and fearless impudence she had forced for them a foothold among people who were only too ready to snub them forth into outer social darkness.

That had been long ago. Since then, wealth had completed for Claire Tredway what brains and impudence had begun. Yet——

Urged by that same inexplicable impulse, she stooped and patted the canine waif on the head. Gravely the pup sat down in the *Lilium auratum* border and tendered her its grimy paw.

The gesture had as much calm assurance as had had Claire Tredway's own when first she had offered her hand in welcome to the great old Miss Ginevra Garrod—a terrible

grande dame, last survivor of *THE* Philadelphia Garrods, and undisputed ruler of any surroundings she might care to grace with her presence.

Urged on by that mysterious sensation of “deep calling unto deep,” Mrs. Tredway accepted the pup’s impudently proffered paw. To her gardener she said, with a stiffness that sought to mask her own amaze at the impulse which possessed her:

“Take him to the stables and have Symonds wash him and comb him. Then bring him to me at the house. I’m—I’m going to keep him. I’ve been wanting a dog for some time, and I think he is just what I have been wanting.”

Strutting proudly, the pup kept pace with the wondering gardener on the short journey to the stables. Deep in the wanderer’s heart was a sense of smug satisfaction, a feeling of being wholly at home for the first time in all its brief life. The strut merged into a swagger.

Thus came into its self-appointed heritage the own-your-own-soul mongrel—the dog that was destined to be known as Chips and to carry that staccato name through a myriad staccato adventures.

“No, Dot,” Murrel was saying. “No news of the purp anywheres at all. I’ve asked, for a couple of miles in both directions. And I kept an eye on the ditches, too, on the chance it had been hit by some car and throwed there. Not a sign of it, though.... Now, don’t go worrying yourself. That purp would land four square on its feet if it fell out of an airship. It’s that kind of a dog. And it’s got brains enough to find its way back here, right now, if it wanted to. It——”

“But, Daddy, don’t you s’pose it *wants* to come home? I should think——”

“It’ll find the home it wants, Dot. It’s that kind of dog, like I just said. It never felt at home here where it was born. You’ve said so, over and over again, and so have your Mamma and me.... There’s a whole lot of wanderings, in this funny life of ours, kid, but I’ve taken notice that soon or late everything and everybody finds its way home—to whatever place seems to be home for them. The purp’s done that. Or it will. I’d make a big bet on it.... It’ll find its home. Just as its good little mother, here, has found hers.”

Babe Ruth wagged her scrubby tail with glad good-fellowship as Murrel’s hand dropped affectionately on her rough head. Then she fell to drowsing again in front of the loved kitchen fire. It was monstrous good to be at home—forever at *home!*

CHAPTER II

The Scourge

WHEN the black catastrophe burst upon the Grays—when everything all at once was impossibly horrible and the many-breeded Chips was wholly and solely to blame for the whole ghastly business—Ethel Gray said to Paul, her husband, with a hideous calmness:

“That is the dog you’ve been promising me solemnly you’d get rid of, for the past two years.”

There was no answer. There was nothing to be said, no merry or cutting retort.

Repartee is a splendid anchor in a matrimonial gale. But when the ship has gone down an anchor is of no special use.

The Grays’ ship had been blown up and then had been sunk beyond soundings. All by Chips. All by the mongrel dog that Paul Gray had not gotten rid of.

Though he said nothing in his own defenseless defense, yet Paul could remember a day when Ethel herself had been wont to hail Chips as “You precious puppy!”

A lapse of time had followed. Then she had taken to addressing the erstwhile precious puppy as “You Scourge!” And now——

The Grays lived in a pretty street in the prettier suburb of Lothian. Paul drew a good salary. He and his wife moved in a good set.

Sometimes the financial going was a bit hard; by reason of the need for keeping up with friends slightly better off than themselves and from the yearly-growing expense of the Grays' yearly-growing children.

There were three of these children. Junior, the eldest, was ten. Ginevra, the baby, was four.

The occasional pinch of expenses did not sadden Paul to any vast extent. Not only had he eternal optimism, but he had solid cause for that optimism.

The cause was Miss Ginevra Garrod—of *THE* Philadelphia Garrods—one of the richest single women in Pennsylvania. The ninth richest woman in America. Paul Gray was her nephew, her only near relative on earth.

From boyhood Paul had been liked and spoiled by her, in her stern fashion. She was aged and fragile, for all her stout spirit. She could not live many years, at best—or worst.

Her half-yearly visits to the Grays were a nerve-shaking ordeal for everybody, but they were big with golden promise.

Two years earlier an incredibly dirty stray mongrel puppy had wandered into the Tredway garden, next door. Claire Tredway, as I have said, was the social arbiter of Lothian. On her capricious frown or smile hung many a young matron's local career.

It has been told that she was supervising the planting of some *Lilium auratum* borders when the pup cantered sidewise into the garden and frisked up to her.

Touched by the little mongrel's gaiety and evil plight, and by a queer fellow-feeling for his audacity, Mrs. Tredway had ordered him washed and fed. Even when a disgruntled

houseman had scoured him for twenty minutes, the puppy did not look like much.

She was at a loss what to do with him. Such a dog as he gave promise of developing into is not a prepossessing sight on the lawn of a house like the Tredways’.

Junior Gray solved the problem by stopping on his way home from school and staring admiringly over the boundary hedge at the capering mutt. In a flash of true inspiration Mrs. Tredway presented the wet and new-fed pup to Junior.

The boy was enraptured. Triumphantly he bore the gift indoors for his mother’s approval. Ethel Gray knew little about dogs and she cared less. But she knew much of social climbing.

When this wriggling morsel of caninity should grow to stately mature perfection, it would be pleasant to call attention to him when friends dropped in and to say, carelessly:

“Yes, he *is* a beauty, isn’t he? Claire Tredway gave him to us. I always think she has such rare taste in gifts, don’t you? Oh yes, she’s our next door neighbor. Didn’t you know that? She’s forever giving wonderful presents to the few people she really loves. I often say to her, ‘Claire, you’re so generous you almost make me ashamed of being your most intimate friend!’ ”

That kind of thing.

Yes, Junior could keep the dog. Indeed he could. Ethel was going upstairs at once to write a note of thanks to the big-hearted donor. And wouldn’t “Marmion” be a sweet name for him?

But Marmion was not the name saddled on the young mongrel. He earned his own name, the very day after his arrival at the Grays' and while he was still investigating his new abode and experimenting with its possibilities.

Mrs. Gray was giving a luncheon—a meal whereat she contrived with no effort at all to bring in the tale of dear Claire Tredway's present of a super-costly registered dog.

The puppy, meanwhile, for no sane reason fathomable to mere humans, had discovered the living-room wood-box, and had carried from its kindling compartment no fewer than a half-bushel of chips—laboriously and one by one—and had deposited them with loving care on and under and around the lunchers' wraps on the guest-room bed.

Then, amid the hard-carried trophies, he cuddled down to sleep on a broadtail coat, first yanking it from the bed to the floor by its sable collar.

There the guests and the aghast hostess found the “super-costly registered dog” when the hour came for departure. By that time he was awake. He was sitting on the rumpled broadtail coat, scratching fleas. Even as once he had scratched fleas on the fur rug of the car which bore him to Lothian as a stowaway, from the Murrel farm of his birth.

Paul Gray laughed coarsely at his wife's tale of the humiliating exploit and he nicknamed its perpetrator “Chips.”

The name stuck.

That was the beginning. Chips grew apace. With his physical growth grew also that queer twist of mentality which had caused him to desecrate the Grays' guest-room in such idiotic style on the day after his arrival.

Junior reveled in his comradeship. So did the two other children. Paul used to grin with secret appreciation at his crazy actions and mental processes. Ethel, presently, loathed the sight or mention of the dog.

Had Chips been acquired in any other and less sacred way than through Mrs. Tredway, Ethel would have insisted that he be given away or drowned before Junior had owned him for a month.

But there were obstacles. Chips was still a social asset; a seeming proof of the close intimacy between herself and the Tredways. Moreover, Mrs. Tredway used to stop one or another of the Grays in the street, now and then, to inquire amusedly after the poor hungry pup she had succored and for which she had found such a nice home.

It would never do to let the giver know that her carelessly-bestowed offering had been discarded. Nobody could tell just how Mrs. Tredway would take such news. Less flagrant slights against her benevolences had lost for other Lothian women the light of her countenance. And Ethel was still climbing.

When dear Aunt Ginevra Garrod should die things would be different. But until then——

Meantime, Chips was having a glorious time. The pleasure was all his.

He would have been an inspired war-dog. He had acquired a fixed habit of finding things anywhere and everywhere, and of bringing them home; also of transferring home things meticulously from one place to another.

He could have been trained with absurd ease to such front-line duties as liaison work and message-bearing. But in the

more or less piping times of peace his talents were worse than wasted. For instance:

It was the night of the Grays' much-planned dinner dance. Claire Tredway and her husband were overwhelmingly present.

Something always is forgotten at any function involving so many trillion all-important details. This time it was the switching on of the moonlight-globe porch lamp.

The last but one of the dinner guests had arrived. The late-comer was portly old Judge Zabriskie, a magnate all-needful to Paul in business and to both the Grays in social life. Wherefore, dinner was held, obsequiously, until his arrival.

His car halted at last under the porte-cochère. His ponderous tread was heard on the veranda steps and then on the porch itself.

Before the temporary butler could swing wide the door to admit him, there was a scrambling sound followed by an oath-fringed crash; then the crescendo *bumpety-bumpety-BUMP* of a heavy body coasting blasphemously down the porch steps.

Followed a bare half-second of silence, then a fresh gush of fervid language. Apparently, Judge Zabriskie was addressing his Creator.

Formality was forgotten. Host and hostess and guests surged to the front doors. Paul Gray, slightly in advance, noted the veranda light was not switched on. He punched its button; illuminating all the nearer scene with a soft radiance.

At the foot of the steps Judge Zabriskie was hoisting himself to his feet.

He was a horrible sight. Partly by reason of having clutched at a huge earth-filled jardinière and having carried it along in his fall, partly from an assortment of non-earthly foreign matter which smeared his garments.

Chips, shut out from the party, had used his leisurely exile in rooting the top off the full garbage can at the curb, and in bearing its sloppy contents, article by article, to the veranda and to its steps.

Judge Zabriskie's groping foot had chanced to plant itself on the rind of a Christmas melon.

The other guests, in the gloom, had been lucky enough to steer clear of the can's strewn contents; or else Chips had put most of the stuff there in the interval just before the judge's late advent.

In any event, the tastefully furnished veranda was gruesome to behold. So was Judge Zabriskie. During his bumpy descent of the steps the judge had amassed almost as much garbage as had Chips. The stately jurist's language was worse than his aspect.

If Mrs. Tredway had not been in the throng of doorway-peering guests, Ethel would have pronounced Chips's death warrant, then and there. As it was, she forced herself to gobble something about gay puppyish spirits and to hope dear Judge Zabriskie was not badly hurt.

But, after a slumberless night, she gave Paul her ultimatum. Chips must go.

She had figured out how it might be done without rousing Mrs. Tredway's wrath or even her suspicions. Paul was to drive over to Garth, nineteen miles distant, taking Chips along with him proudly on the front seat of the car.

At or beyond Garth the dog was to be dumped out into the road and Paul was to drive home at top speed. The tale was to go forth that Chips had leaped from the seat of the car, during a halt, and had vanished.

A fake search was to be instituted. Advertisements were to be inserted in the local weekly, offering a fabulous sum for his return. Mrs. Tredway could suspect nothing, after all that effort to recover her prized gift.

Paul did not like the task. He had acquired an unwilling fondness for the cur. The farther he drove, the less he liked the idea of throwing his gaily trustful little seatmate into the wintry road and leaving him to starve or to a dog-catcher's net or to the merciless mercy of some vivisectionist.

Yet he drove on to Garth, and a mile or so farther. But (perhaps through absentmindedness) he failed to lift Chips down from the seat until they were on a familiar street in Lothian, within a quarter-mile of home.

Then Paul drove on to the station, to catch his morning train to the city. That night he expressed most convincing amazement at learning that Chips had returned to the Gray domicile long before mid-morning.

"It shows what a miraculous homing sense the dog has!" he commented. "Ran all those nineteen miles and never once missed his road! No use trying to get rid of him again. He'd always find his way back. But I'll think out some trick of doing it. I promise you that, dear; so don't worry."

Paul was as good as his word. Two or three other non-traceable schemes for losing the hated Chips were evolved in gradual succession by Ethel, and were zealously carried out by her husband.

But they failed, all, for similar reasons as had the first plan. As failure followed failure, Paul began to wonder morbidly if Ethel were not somehow beginning to lose her wifely faith in him. But he liked Chips.

Christmas came. With it drew near the semi-annual fortnight of Miss Ginevra Garrod's visit.

Thrice had Miss Garrod visited the Grays since Chips joined their once-happy family group. The old lady had a horror of all dogs, a horror amounting almost to obsession.

As a child she had sought to dislodge with a rake a sick and savage farm-hound from under some steps. He had bitten her, cruelly, when the rake-teeth scored his mangy back. She had spent weeks in hourly terror of hydrophobia.

Since then the very sight of a dog was enough to wrench her iron old nerves into a strong semblance of hysterics.

Accordingly, just before her visits, Paul Gray always had taken Chips to a boarding-kennel, two miles down the Lothian Turnpike, and had left him there until after Miss Garrod's departure. It was a simple solution.

Thither Gray had made arrangements to take the dog again, just before this forthcoming visit.

For Christmas, Miss Garrod sent her nephew and Ethel a joint check of very moderate size—she was averse to foolish expenditure—and sent non-thrilling gifts of a modest value and more modest desirability to the two older children.

But to her namesake godchild, little Ginevra, Miss Garrod sent a truly beautiful Christmas present. Ginevra was the old lady's one weakness. Always she let economy go by the board when it was a question of buying anything for the youngest Gray child.

For this Christmas she sent Ginevra an exquisite snowy ermine coat with big and fluffy white fox collar and cuffs. The coat had cost nearer a thousand dollars than five hundred; and it looked it.

Ginevra, with her rosy face and pale-gold hair, was breath-catchingly beautiful in it.

Ethel sat down, the morning after Christmas, and wrote Miss Garrod a tearfully grateful letter of thanks. Then she had the unwilling Ginevra place a line of kisses at the bottom of the last page.

After which, Ethel laid out the peerless coat on the guest-room bed, to have it all ready for Ginevra to wear to a children's party that afternoon.

Ginevra did not wear the coat to the party.

Chips, roaming upstairs from a nap in the cellar coal-bin, glanced in at the open door of the room and saw the white drift of ermine on the bed.

From the first—even in the car that had borne him to Lothian—Chips had displayed the odd mania for furs of all kinds which is shared by so many house dogs. As witness his treatment of the broadtail-and-sable coat he had found on this very bed, two years ago.

Never in all his misspent life had Chips felt his heart and his possessive yearnings go out to anything as now they did to this soft and snowy ermine garment.

At first sniff he decided once and for all that it belonged to him and that henceforth it was to be his dearest plaything and his bed. Daintily he tugged it to the floor. Then he trailed it behind him downstairs and out into the back yard.

There, after frantic search, it was found, by the merest chance. Chip was fast asleep, his coal-dusty body cuddled deep into its crumpled depths.

That night Paul bent before the awful wrath of his wife, as might a sapling before a cyclone.

Chips must go. He must be destroyed or otherwise disposed of; even if Mrs. Tredway should cut the whole Gray family, in consequence, for the rest of their lives.

Paul reminded her that in less than a week the dog was to be sent to the boarding-kennels for the fortnight of Miss Garrod's stay. He explained that they could work out, in the interim, some permanent way to divest themselves of Chips's presence.

The man was playing for time. Luckily he had a few weeks of time to play for.

The precious ermine coat was sent to the best cleaner available, along with all manner of instructions. In a few days it came home again, looking almost as new as before.

Scowling at Chips as he danced appreciatively around her and leered lovingly up at the coveted garment, Ethel hung the coat in a closet, and shut the door on it with a slam. In fact, she shut it with so vicious a slam that the hasp did not catch.

The ill-treated door rebounded open a few inches. But Ethel did not see this. Not daring to trust her temper if she should stay longer in the same room with The Scourge, she stamped out.

Ten minutes later, as she started for a luncheon, she all but collided with Chips. The dog was returning from a neighborhood canter, during which he had been exhibiting to all and sundry his dearest possession. Behind him, through

slush and mud, trailed the ermine coat. Its collar was slightly torn, from the tug he had given in jerking it down from its closet hanger.

That same day Ethel went into the city, herself, to take the coat to the cleaner. Miss Garrod's visit was but a week off. The coat must be at home and in as much as possible of its first loveliness, before the old lady should arrive.

Should Miss Garrod learn of the treatment her several-hundred-dollar present had received—and received from a vile dog—!

But Miss Garrod did not learn of it. The ermine coat came back from the cleaner's, in tolerable shape, the day before the guest's advent.

On the day before the coat's return Chips had been taken to the boarding-kennels, two miles away. All was serene. All was safe. All was set for the momentous visit—the visit which had entailed more and costlier planning for the Grays than had Christmas itself.

Everyone was happy. Everyone except Chips. Chips loathed the boarding-kennels. Always he was desperately homesick during his two-week imprisonments there.

Perhaps Haroun-al-Raschid, deigning to visit some satrap or pasha who depended on him for office and for life itself, may have been received with almost as much reverent ardor as was Miss Ginevra Garrod on her arrival at the Grays'.

There was an air of adulation, tinged with rapture, in the greetings bestowed on the guest by Ethel and Paul and the two older children.

Little Ginevra alone was non-gushy. Though she was only four years old, Ginevra had learned to detest the mingled

cosseting and disciplining which her doting great-aunt bestowed on her, and to shrink from the array of large and prominent teeth which were so like tombstones and which were so strongly in evidence when Miss Garrod kissed her.

Miss Garrod accepted the family's worshipful welcome with stiff graciousness, recognizing it as her due.

She was loftily benign, in response to the mental genuflections of her hosts. She criticized Ethel's housekeeping, and she asked Paul awkward questions as to his business and what percentage of his income he managed to invest.

She set the perfunctorily enthusiastic elder children calmly in their places, and she talked creaky and frightening baby talk to the shrinking Ginevra.

A somewhat large and more than somewhat ostentatious dinner party was given in Miss Garrod's honor, on the night after her arrival. The guests had been chosen wisely. They included the Tredways. Some few of the lesser invitees—not the Tredways—had even been coached.

Miss Garrod sailed into the drawing-room with a formal grace she had been taught at a French finishing-school, sixty-two years earlier.

She was resplendent in black velvet, almost covered with antique spidery rose-point lace which had been handed down to her from her great-grandmother. The Garrod jewels were worn sparingly but right effectively.

Her high-bred parchment face was crowned by the pile of snow-white hair which was her chief vanity and on whose luxuriance and beauty she loved to be complimented.

Like an Old World marquise she moved among the twentieth-century guests who seemed almost uncouth by contrast to her.

Even the Tredways were visibly impressed. Miss Garrod was a sensation. She realized it, and her heart swelled. She unbent charmingly to the incense of deferential admiration that arose so sweetly to her thin nostrils.

Dinner was a success—an unqualified success from every possible standpoint. When it was over and the men had joined the women in the drawing-room, Miss Garrod reclined in a Madame Récamier pose on a *chaise longue*, her court around her, and prepared to enjoy the rest of the evening as thoroughly as she had enjoyed the meal itself.

The soft lights flashed from her jewels and brought out the ice-white luster of her high-piled hair as she leaned back in her comfortable seat and drank deep of the adulation that surrounded her.

It is ill to turn for even the merest moment or two from so refined and beautiful a scene to the squalor of a boarding-kennel. But such things must be.

Two miles from home, Chips lay sulkily in the corner of his kennel-coop and dreamed of his wonted evening romp with Junior. For two dreary days he had been in this loathly place. Experience told him he must expect nearly two weeks more of it.

Two weeks away from the folk and the fare he liked! Two weeks away from that fascinating little white fur coat he had marked so lovingly for his own and which those exasperating humans were forever snatching from him.

Chips sighed, and prepared to doze. Just then the inclosure's door opened. The attendant was bringing him his

evening rations. Spurred by a new access of homesickness, Chips went into vehement action.

In one diving leap he had sprung between the attendant's slightly bowed legs and was streaking for the inclosure door, which had been left ajar. Out he fled into the night before the bewildered kennel-man knew what it was all about.

Chips's short legs spurned the frozen earth in his frenzied two-mile gallop for home. In record speed he made the trip.

Presently he had reached the Grays' house; and was circling it at a hard gallop, seeking ingress. There were many lights and many voices. Something interesting was going on inside.

He butted open a swinging cellar window and plunged down upon a heap of coal just beneath. He coasted and rolled to the bottom of the coal-hill, found his legs again, and scampered up the cellar stairs.

At the top, he headed toward the distant drawing-room whence issued all those happy voices.

Chips dearly loved a crowd.

Unseen he reached the doorway between the drawing-room and the library. In the former room were many people. Chips's nose told him that, though the lights dazzled him after that gallop through the darkness.

Vaguely he made out the shapes of men and women sitting or standing. Yes, and his half-unfocused eyes made out something else as he stood there—something which gave him a thrill of genuine elation.

Projecting over the top of a *chaise longue*, whose back was toward him, he caught sight of a mass of snow-white fur.

Past all doubt it was the collar of his dear white coat!

Now for one mighty rush, to grab it and to get safely away to his own kennel with it, before any human could forbid or could snatch it beyond his reach!

Once more Chips went into vehement action.

“Yes, perhaps I *am* just a little tired,” Miss Ginevra Garrod was saying, in answer to a solicitous question from Judge Zabriskie. “I suppose you mean I look sallow?”

“You know I don’t!” declared the old judge, in ponderous gallantry. “Not being blind, I couldn’t think that. I should say, rather—if I may—that I thought you might be weary, because you seem tonight like a star seen through the mist. I——”

A thin screech interrupted his compliment.

Across the room, from behind the *chaise longue*, a grimy yellow creature of some kind had whizzed toward them. As it came into the radius of lamplight it resolved itself briefly into a fast-galloping little mongrel dog.

Scarce a twentieth of a second did Chips pause behind the *chaise longue*. Barely long enough to seize between his teeth a bounteous mouthful of stately Miss Ginevra Garrod’s high-piled white hair.

Giving the hair a tremendous tug, Chips bolted into the front hall, bearing proudly what he deemed to be part of his beloved white ermine coat.

It was not the coat. It was a three-hundred-dollar white wig; marvelously artistic and convincing in structure.

The thin screech had emanated from Miss Garrod. Clapping both thin hands to her all-but-bald head, the old lady rushed from the room.

Her feet could be heard pounding their way nervously up the hardwood stairs in shamed and furious flight toward her

own suite.

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It was at the end of the same terrible evening, and in the sanctity of their own bedroom, that Ethel Gray said to her thunderstruck husband, with a hideous calmness:

“That is the dog you’ve been promising me solemnly you’d get rid of for the past two years.”

As I have hinted at the outset of this story there was no reply. Ethel herself was not able to say more. Both husband and wife knew what must be the result of the evening’s happening.

In their home, in the presence of their invited guests, Miss Ginevra Garrod’s life-secret had been thrust into the public gaze.

Her monumental vanity had been shattered, once and forever. She had been made unforgettably ridiculous—probably for the first time in her seventy-odd years of seigniorial life.

What would be her reaction toward the nephew and his wife, who relied upon her favor and upon her bequests for their whole future?

They were lost forever, and then some, as far as any prospects from her were concerned. Ethel had known it from the moment the bald benefactress had bolted upstairs.

Tenfold had Ethel known it when, tremblingly, she had borne to the old lady’s suite the disheveled wig Paul had retrieved from Chips’s kennel-house.

Long had she stood knocking at Miss Garrod’s locked door. No sign of response had she been able to elicit from

within. The silence had been anything but golden. It had been fraught with sky-blue ruin for the Grays.

Yes, everything was not only as bad as it possibly could be, but fiftyfold worse.

The great Miss Ginevra Garrod had (literally) been “snatched baldheaded,” in the sight of the multitude. And by a dog. By the one creature above all others she hated and feared.

Truly, Chips had justified to infinity his nickname of “The Scourge!”

Slumping down like a sick raccoon on the corner of his bed, Paul Gray recalled pleasantly to himself that Essex owed his downfall and his ultimate execution to the fact that he blundered one day into Queen Elizabeth’s boudoir before the sovereign had had a chance to clap any of her thirty wigs on her bald pate.

What doom, then, lay in store for Paul, whose execrable cur had shamed publicly the Queen Elizabeth of the Gray family’s future?

Penury loomed ahead of him. Financial beheading. That at the very least. A haloed saint would not have let such an outrage go unpunished. And Aunt Ginevra was anything but a haloed saint.

Paul groaned aloud. Then, still wordless, he slunk down to the library, to finish the wakeful night alone.

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Cheerily dawned the January morning. With no cheer at all the Gray family gathered mutely at the breakfast table.

Like False Sextus, “with haggard face and laggard pace,” Paul had crawled forth from his library refuge, to confront a

glassy-eyed and set-lipped spouse.

After his first cup of coffee he summoned courage to speak. Well did he know that Ethel was waiting avidly for him to break the blackly despairful silence.

“Well?” he asked, feebly. “Any news of—of——?”

He gulped and fell silent again.

“Yes,” rasped Ethel. “There is ‘news,’ as you call it. Hedda worked for an hour over the—the”——she glanced at the children, then finished in French—“*la toupée*.”

“Yes?” prompted Paul, miserably. “A *toupée* means a wig, doesn’t it?”

“I sent Hedda up with it. Aunt Ginevra’s maid opened the door three inches and snatched the—*la toupée*—from her, and told her Aunt Ginevra would have her chocolate and toast in her own rooms. And then she slammed the door in Hedda’s face. That was nearly an hour ago. She——”

Across the dining-room and out onto the back porch and thence down the long and steep back-porch steps frisked Chips, on his way to his kennel for a snooze.

The sight loosed the remaining vials of wrath in Ethel’s brain. Curtly she ordered the children from the room. Then she whirled toward her husband.

“Paul Gray!” she declaimed. “There is one thing you *can* do—one thing that must be done, *now*. Go upstairs and get your shotgun and bring it down into the yard and shoot that horrible Scourge. Do it this instant!”

“But the——!”

“Never mind the Tredways! It’s too late to trouble about them. If anything can soften Aunt Ginevra’s heart it will be to know we’ve made what amends we can, by killing the

miserable brute that humiliated her so. There's only one chance in a thousand. But it *is* the only chance. Do as I say!"

With feet dragging and with a queerly sick feeling in the pit of his stomach, Paul slouched upstairs toward the attic wherein was the trunk that held his shooting outfit.

Grievously he hated the task his wife had set him. The distaste put leaden weights of slowness into his progress.

Yet he knew she was right. This catastrophe to all of them had befallen through his shilly-shallying about keeping his earlier promises to get rid of Chips.

The time had come. Up to the attic he made his inch-at-a-time way.

Ethel Gray turned toward the window. Something white in the back-garden yard had caught her strained gaze. There, up and down the frosty paths, crowned as of yore of her wig, Miss Ginevra Garrod was stumping along with her cane, taking the after-breakfast constitutional which she never omitted under any pretext.

She had contrived to get down the back stairs, unnoted, and to the presumably invisible precincts of the garden. How she had negotiated the many steep steps from the rear porch to the yard, with her stiff knees and uncertain legs, was a mystery.

The sight galvanized Ethel into life. She rang for a maid and told her to run upstairs for little Ginevra's ermine coat.

Then she called Ginevra from her playing in the front hall, bundling the coat about the child in the most becoming fashion and fluffing up her pale-gold hair.

An inspiration had come upon Ethel. Miss Garrod loved Ginevra better than all else. Should the chubby child be sent

out to her, clad in the gift coat, it might help to soothe the humiliation-steeped visitor for a later interview with Ethel herself.

“Listen, darling,” Mrs. Gray bade the flustered child. “Run out to the garden just as quickly as you can. Aunt Ginevra is out there. Run out and go straight over to her and hold up your face to be kissed—like this—and say: ‘Good morning, Godmother dearest!’—just like that. And say, ‘See my wonderful new coat you gave me!’ And say——”

“But I don’t want to kiss her!” pleaded Ginevra. “Her teeth are so big and they’re so boney and——”

“Do as mother says!” commanded Ethel, in sudden fierce authority. “Go this minute! *Quick*, now!”

Seldom did Ethel Gray speak thus to one of her children. But when she did they knew better than to cavil.

Sniffing under her breath at the sharpness in her mother’s tone, and with her big violet eyes blurred with tears, Ginevra trotted, hesitant but obediently, onto the high back porch.

As she advanced toward its edge, she sniveled out what she could recall of the words her mother had told her to say:

“G’morning, Godmother dearest,” she mumbled, tearfully. “G’morning. See my—see the coat—you——”

It was then that something gripped Ethel Gray’s heart and twisted it inside out.

From behind the window curtain she had been watching the child’s unwilling forward trot. Now she saw Ginevra was toddling blindly toward the abrupt edge of the porch; not toward the narrow steps at one side.

She saw, too, that the low collapsible guard rail, usually fastened across the edge, was gone.

The rail had needed painting, and she had sent it to be freshened for Miss Garrod's visit. The painters had forgotten to return it in time. No obstruction stood between the dully advancing child and a sheer seven-foot drop onto the frozen earth and the stacked flower-pots below.

Ethel rushed for the back door. Subconsciously she could hear Paul clumping slowly down the upper stairs with his gun. She screamed, and ran on.

Miss Garrod, in the garden beneath, had heard Ginevra's muttered greeting and had looked up. She saw her worshiped namesake trot straight toward the unguarded edge of the piazza.

Shouting hoarsely to the baby to go back, Miss Garrod stumbled toward her as fast as her shaky old legs would bear her, in wild hope of reaching the bottom of the porch in time to catch the down-flying little body before its skull should crack or its neck break against the flinty ground.

Ethel Gray was struggling with the back door's suddenly jammed catch, insane with eagerness to get to the porch and to check the tragedy.

Both she and Miss Garrod were too far away and too variously impeded, to have reached their goal in time. But Chips was not.

Out from the kennel in the corner of the yard flashed a nondescript shape, traveling at wind-speed, hurling itself at the steps and flowing up them rather than climbing them.

Awakened from his just-begun doze by Ginevra's voice, Chips had blinked drowsily upward as the child came onto the porch and advanced to its edge.

Now, Chips had not the remotest idea of Ginevra's mortal peril. Nor, if he had had any idea of it, would he have been likely to dash to the rescue. He was not that kind of dog.

He did not care for Ginevra. She had a bothersome way of squeezing him and of pulling his sensitive ears and of sticking pebbles into his mouth—all of which, perforce, he had borne because she was young and helpless. He kept out of her way whenever he could.

But his idle glance narrowed and his idle body went into motion the instant he saw she was actually daring to wear his idolized and often-lost ermine coat.

There could be no mistake in this clear daylight, as there had been in the dazzle of the lamps last evening. This was the coat. Not a shadow of doubt as to that. Chips's coat! And that unlovable little human was wearing it.

Be she young and helpless or not, here was no time for chivalry. Unless he could get it from her in a rush, some grown-up would happen along and hide it away from him again.

There was not an instant to waste. Even now her mother was at the porch door. The old crone, too, with the untruthful hair, was hurrying to her. Both of them, of course, wanted the coat.

Well, neither of them was going to get it. This time Chips would hide it where they could not find it as readily as before.

Up the steps he swept, and at Ginevra. One of the baby's pudgy-toed shoes had just stepped blindly out into space when a furious tug at the rear of her stout ermine coat jerked her backward.

But already she was off-balance, toppling forward to her fall.

Chips was energetic and Chips was strong. But Chips was small and weighed little. Tug as he would, he could not counteract that outward urge, far enough to drag the coat—and the child, too, if must be—back onto the porch.

His nails slipped and his pads slid on the smooth boards as he fought madly for a footing. Backward and forward he and Ginevra lurched, as balance outweighed the dog's tugging or as the struggling strength of Chips briefly discounted the greater weight.

For what seemed like a century to gasping old Miss Garrod, just below, they reeled thus. Then Ethel Gray conquered the stubborn door latch and charged out onto the porch.

Chips's claws had slipped to the very edge. Ginevra was swinging far over the brink. Ethel lurched forward and seized the child by her white fox coat collar, drawing her back to safety in one muscle-wrenching heave.

Then, panting and dizzy, she sank down beside the much-flustered little girl, catching Ginevra close to her and sobbing hysterically, while Chips made furtive and futile rushes at corners of the coat.

Up the steep flight staggered Miss Garrod, galvanized into sudden new life. As she climbed she was gurgling in a wavery high-pitched monotone, ludicrously different from her majestic voice of ordinary times. The falsetto gurgle shaped itself into disjointed speech:

“She's alive! Oh, she's *alive*! He saved her. If it hadn't been for the splendid, glorious, magnificent hero dog——!”

She shuddered, then the wavery old voice scaled half an octave as she panted dazedly:

“And I hated dogs—wicked and blind that I was! All the stories I ever read about their heroism were true. I see that now. I used to sneer at those stories. Oh, he is *wonderful*! I can’t forgive myself for——”

Out onto the porch barged Paul Gray, shotgun in hand. He had delayed as long as he dared in the finding and assembling and loading of the gun. But now, keying himself to what he must do, he put on a belated burst of speed.

He came upon the scene, to find Ethel on the floor, hugging Ginevra and weeping. His aunt was mounting the last of the steps and was orating disjointedly in a voice not her own. Chips was hauling and jerking viciously at the hem of the sacred white coat.

Apparently Miss Garrod was on the rampage. Paul guessed at the cause, from the word, “dog,” which he could catch in the course of her otherwise indistinguishable tirade.

Not content with disgracing her, last night, Chips was now tearing the expensive coat she had given Ginevra. No wonder the old lady seemed in such a hysterical rage! One thing alone could stem that wrath of hers—the instant destruction of its cause.

Paul Gray set his teeth, drew a deep breath, and leveled the gun at the head of the coat-yanking Chips.

To his stark astonishment, Miss Garrod’s crutch-stick knocked high the gun-barrel before Paul could pull trigger.

Then, dropping the stick, Miss Garrod flung herself on her rheumatic knees beside Chips, gathering the astounded dog into her bony arms and straining him to her breast.

“If you shoot him, you’ll shoot me first!” she shrilled, quite beside herself. “He is a shining hero. He risked his life for her! It was the—the grandest thing I ever saw. He——”

“Huh?” grunted Paul, his jaw adroop and his eyes popping.

“This is *my* dog!” declared Miss Garrod, challenging the whole world to dispute her claim. “He is *mine*! He is going home with me and he is going to live on the fat of the land. I’ll be honored by his presence—by his beautiful friendship. I’ll never be lonely or frightened again—not with my hero at my side to shield me.”

“But, Aunt, I never——!”

“Paul, you must give him to me—you and Ethel,” demanded Miss Garrod, a fiercely pleading note in her shrill old voice. “You *must*. No matter how dear he is to you. You’ll—you’ll find, some day, that I won’t be unappreciative of your sacrifice in letting me have him for my own. I promise. If he outlives me, he shall come to you again—along with much else of mine. *Much* else, Paul! That is a promise, too. Say I can have him, both of you. *Say* it!”

Chips twisted and squirmed in the tremblingly tight grasp of the old arms. Yet he endured the embrace. He endured it in the hope that one of his eel-like wriggles might bring him within jaw-reach of that fascinating white wig.

Next to the ermine coat, Miss Garrod’s luxuriant mass of shakable and teasable hair was quite the most desirable object in all the world, just now, to Chips.

He promised himself many glad romps with it—a promise he was destined to keep.

CHAPTER III

The Psychology-Pup

WHEN old Miss Ginevra Garrod's very formal dinner to the Queen of Roumania was at its very formal height, a diversion was created by the spectacle of a hard-chased rat scuttling into the dining-room and blindly running up the back of a guest and thence jumping down to the table.

Hot on the fleeing rat's heels dashed a smallish and nondescript yellow mongrel, which gained the table-top at one frantic bound.

The dog pursued his prey from one end of the board to the other, in a whirlwind rush, creating a deep furrow amid the glowing bank of roses and the glass and silver.

At the table's head, directly under the nose of Her Majesty, he made his kill.

Jerram, the butler, stepped gravely forward and lifted the mongrel in both hands—the rat still close-gripped between the grinning jaws—and bore him from the room. Miss Ginevra Garrod beamed apologetically about her.

“It is Chips,” she explained to the badly-startled guests, seeming to feel that this bald announcement made all clear. “He has such wonderful spirits! And he is utterly fearless. You saw that, just now, for yourself.”

Under her breath, the old lady added, to the man beside her:

“ ‘A cat may look at a king.’ But Chips wasn’t going to permit a rat such familiarities with a queen. There never was a dog like him.”

The next week a Highly Important Personage, who just then was running for a highly important office, called ceremoniously to pay his respects on Miss Garrod, who had been his long-dead father’s friend in the days of Grant’s second administration.

As usual, at tea-time, Chips trotted into the room.

The Highly Important Personage was balancing a full cup in one hand and a bit of cake in the other. He was gesticulating with the hand which held the cake.

Chips regarded the waving of the morsel as an invitation. He trotted up to the visitor and planted both paws on the gray-trousered knees. Chips had just come in from a scamper in the muddy garden.

The guest was not a dog man. Impatiently he kicked at the pawing mongrel. The half-deflected kick stung Chips, who retaliated by inflicting a really creditable bite on the offending leg’s shin.

The tea was spilled. So was the Highly Important Personage’s temper as the hot liquid scalded his lap and the pain of the raking bite excoriated his shin. Leaping up, he delivered a harder and more vigorously directed kick at the dog—a kick which Chips eluded with no difficulty at all.

Before either man or mongrel could renew the encounter, Jerram had appeared from nowhere in particular, scooping up the angry Chips and bearing him growling from the room.

At the same time Miss Garrod was on her feet, white and terrible, as she confronted her fuming guest.

“Since it seems impossible for you to show your inferiority to a dog in any better way than by kicking him,” she said, with awful iciness, “may I suggest that you will find the afternoon air more congenial from the other side of my front door? I have never exercised my recent prerogative of the ballot, nor had I thought to. But next week I shall do so, if only to help bar from office a candidate who has just shown himself so vilely unfit for it. Please do not let me detain you longer. I am certain you can find more dogs to kick, in the street than in my house. Good day. And good-by.”

Neither of these incidents need have been related here—though they passed into folklore in Miss Ginevra Garrod’s regally exclusive set—except to show the all-encompassing hold which Chips, the nondescript little mongrel, had gained over his mistress’s heart, and to explain more clearly what is to follow.

To the age of seventy-seven, Miss Garrod never had owned a dog, nor had she had the remotest personal experience with one. Then, during that wig-snatching visit to her nephew, Paul Gray, at Lothian, she had encountered the eccentric nondescript Chips; under dramatic conditions already set forth in this chronicle.

She insisted that he be given to her. It was a royal command. She bore the queer little dog back with her to the gigantic Philadelphia mansion where she reigned as last and richest representative of *THE* Philadelphia Garrods.

Miss Ginevra’s had been a drearily lonely life. Into that loneliness frisked the gayly devil-may-care Chips. On him, presently, she was lavishing all the blind affection which should have gone to the children she never had had.

Also, in her dense ignorance of dog nature, she looked on his elfin cleverness as nothing short of miraculous. Mentally she endowed him with more astoundingly human and superhuman traits than have been the portion of all of history's dogs since Cerberus.

If Chips had been less an own-your-own-soul canine, the petting and adulation might well have spoiled him. They might have done so in any case, but for Jerram, the household's ancient butler.

Jerram was an Englishman. He had been in Miss Garrod's service for more than thirty years. But his father had been kennel-manager of a sporting nobleman's estate in the dukeries. Jerram himself had begun life as kennel boy, before he was transferred to the job of page as a first step in his long climb toward the post of butler.

Jerram knew dogs. He took Chips under his wing and he sought to make a respectable house dog of him. While he did not succeed—thanks to Miss Garrod's spoiling—yet he grew attached to the odd little mongrel. And Chips came nearer to loving and revering Jerram than any other human.

Besides Miss Garrod and Chips and the servants, the huge and ugly old house's occupants were Dorothy Fane and Cornelius Van Loo.

Dorothy was Miss Garrod's companion and social secretary. The girl was young and decidedly pretty. Her sweetness and tact and forbearance had won Miss Garrod's heart as well as her confidence, during their two years together.

Van Loo was general secretary and major-domo and financial handy-man to Miss Garrod. He had held the office, at a surprisingly good salary, for more than forty-five years.

He had been an excellent employee, in his day. But now he was nearly eighty. Not only was he increasingly fragile of health, but he was still more increasingly forgetful. When, one day, he drew a monthly pay check to the order of Miss Ginevra's farm foreman, and made it out for \$8,000 instead of the requisite \$80, he himself admitted it was time for him to retire.

Miss Garrod pensioned him at full pay and sent him off to Scranton to end his days with his grandson—who did not want him. And so Cornelius Van Loo dodders out of our story—a story which never would have existed except for his retirement.

As Miss Ginevra Garrod was one of the richest nine women in the United States and as her business interests were many and varied, it became necessary to fill Van Loo's place, not only satisfactorily, but promptly.

Her personal counsel, Claiborne Ritter—of Ritter, Pennifold & Ritter—asked for the vacant and profitable berth for his son, Parsons Ritter, a young lawyer of high repute and of ultra-conservative ways.

The same evening, Dorothy Fane approached the old lady. The girl spoke with nervous rapidity, far different from her wonted gentle calm. Her face, too, was flushed, and her manner was hesitant.

“Miss Garrod,” she faltered, “I'd like to say something to you. But perhaps it is presumptuous. I——”

“Probably it is,” assented Miss Ginevra. “Most things said to rich old women are apt to be. If you are asking for a raise of salary——”

“You know I'm not!” declared the girl. “I——”

“Or if you’re getting married and leaving me in the lurch, just when poor old Van Loo’s absence is making me need to throw so much extra work on you——”

“Won’t you please stop guessing, dear Miss Garrod?” pleaded Dorothy. “It gets me so—so confused and——”

“Of course it does!” exclaimed Miss Ginevra in triumph. “That’s precisely what I meant it to do. You came to me with a nice diplomatic speech all carefully rehearsed. I saw that, the minute you barged into the room.”

“Oh, Miss Garrod, no! I——”

“If I had let you go on, you would have led up to the point so gracefully that it would have taken me ten minutes to find out what you were driving at. So I crumpled your battle-line. Now, please forget all about the rehearsal and tell me what you want.”

“Mr. Van Loo has been pensioned,” began Dorothy, valiantly, yet visibly shaken from her original plan of attack, “and you need some one to take his place—to take it as soon as possible because——”

“You astonish me. I am too old to be subjected to such sudden revelations. But go on. I am recovering enough from your startling news that Van Loo is gone and that I need some one in his place, to hear the rest. Well?”

Steeling herself against the ponderous sarcasm, Dorothy continued as best she could.

“If it isn’t impertinent, I’d like—ever so much—to suggest some one to take Mr. Van Loo’s place. Some one I’ve known always. I know he could do the work. I know he could do it splendidly. Would you mind very much seeing him and

talking to him about it, dear Miss Garrod? He's—he's a friend of my family's. He's a friend of mine. He——”

“Yes,” dryly agreed Miss Ginevra, as the girl faltered again. “I gathered he was a friend of yours, Dorothy. People don't shake all over and hem and haw and get pink and starry-eyed, talking about strangers. Who is he?”

“Graeme Bliss.”

“Why didn't you say so right away? I was afraid it was some exemplary bore you went to business college with. I've known Graeme Bliss since the time I threatened to have him sent to the reformatory for robbing my cherry tree out there. I haven't happened to see him in nine or ten years—not since he went to college, I think—but I doubt if he's much changed. He didn't even have the tact to lie out of it or to beg for mercy when I caught him in my cherry tree. He wouldn't even give the names of the other boys who were with him—the ones that ran away before I could get there. The young tough! That was why I didn't have him arrested. So he's the lad you want me to hire for Van Loo's position, is he?”

“Yes, Miss Garrod. Oh *yes!* If you please. He——”

“H'm! I knew his grandfather, too—old Cartaret Graeme. Cartaret lost his mind when he was ninety. He got the perfectly absurd and illogical idea that he was a postage stamp. He used to go around with an envelope, asking strangers to lick him and put him on it. Came of the right stock, though. And up to ninety he was wise enough. He—he proposed to me, once. No, twice. Very prettily, too. Of course, that was long before he took to asking people to stick him onto an envelope. *Long* before. I needn't tell you that. I—— Let me see—you were saying you wanted Graeme Bliss to take Van Loo's place. Why?”

“Because I like him. And because I know he will do the work well. And because he is splendidly square. And because he has ever so much cleverness. And——”

“Those are reasons enough. Never mind groping for more. You told it all in your first reason. Let me think, a minute.”

Into the room loped Chips. In his jaws the dog carried the large T-bone of a steak. Mounting upon the furred yellow satin cushions of *chaise longue*, he snuggled down to his feast.

Miss Garrod eyed him fatuously. Then her eyes glinted.

“Good!” she declared. “Chips has given me an idea. Just as he always does. (There never was such a dog!) Claiborne Ritter is at me to give his son Parsons the position. Now *you* are at me to give it to Cartaret Graeme’s cherry-stealing grandson. Claiborne Ritter paints his son in even more glowing colors than you paint Graeme Bliss. In fact, to hear his father talk, young Ritter has not a single redeeming vice. Now, here is what I am going to do.”

She paused dramatically: her withered old fingers rubbing the unresponsive Chips’s tatterdemalion ears. Then she went on:

“I shall send for both boys to come here to see me. Both the same day. Perhaps an hour apart. Not longer than an hour apart, for I want to keep the comparison fresh in my mind. Chips shall be in the room while each of them is there. Do you catch my trend?”

“I’m afraid not, Miss Garrod,” answered the girl, puzzled.

“And yet, just in the past month or so, you’ve read aloud to me no fewer than three stories or essays about dogs, that said a dog’s psychic sense is more to be relied upon than the

wisest human logic, when it comes to testing character! That you may safely trust a human whom dogs take to, and that there is something fundamentally wrong with the man or woman whom dogs dislike! Don't tell me you've forgotten."

"No, of course I haven't forgotten. And I've heard the same thing all my life. But I don't see how it affects——"

"No? Well, in addition to my own judgment of both the applicants, I am going to watch Chips's reactions to them. A dog knows. And if any dog knows anything, Chips is that dog. Aren't you, Chipsey?"

Again the long old fingers caressed the head of the industriously-gnawing dog. Chips continued to rend the few remaining shreds of steak from the T-bone, oblivious of his mistress's ministrations. She looked up, to see Jerram standing in the doorway.

"Beg pardon, Miss Garrod," said the butler, "but it's time for me to take him for his evening run. And, if I may make so bold, he don't belong on a sofa. I've taught him to——"

At sight of Jerram, the dog had sidled swiftly to the floor, where he strove to look innocent of the crime of jumping on the *chaise longue*. Then, with little dancing grace-note steps he followed the butler from the room, still gripping his beloved T-bone.

Dorothy Fane watched man and dog disappear. Vaguely she wondered why Jerram had waited so long before coming in and summoning Chips to his walk.

For, twice, as she had been talking with Miss Garrod, she had glanced across the threshold and had seen the ancient butler standing in the hallway outside the room, presumably out of earshot, certainly outside the range of Miss Garrod's vision.

Half an hour later Dorothy chanced to be crossing the lower hall as Jerram and Chips returned from their ramble. On impulse, she halted the man.

“Jerram,” she said, nervously, “you know all about dogs. Is it true that——”

“No, miss,” he corrected her, “I don’t. And neither does any other mortal human. Off and on, since I was a nipper, I’ve been handling dogs, miss. And maybe it’s been given me to know pretty near as much about them as most folks can hope to. But that isn’t one-tenth of the whole of it.”

“Do you believe the old saying is true?” she asked. “The saying that a man can be trusted if dogs like him, and that a man isn’t worthy of trust if dogs don’t take to him?”

“Miss,” replied Jerram, oratorically, “there’s all sorts of lies—all manner of lies, miss—floating around this world. And the silliest of those lies is about dogs. But of all the crazy lies ever told about dogs, the craziest is the lie about their knowing good folks from bad folks, and that you can trust a man a dog takes to. That’s the silliest of the lot.”

“Oh!”

“Yes’m. Up in the your state of Maine, a Governor sent a collie to be a pal for the prisoners in a penitentiary, a year or so back. The newspapers said the dog chummed with mostly all of the prisoners, and seemed to love them. Well, out of that lot of jailbirds there must have been at least one or two that wasn’t saints. Likewise, one or two of the very worst blaygards I ever met had dogs that worshiped them.”

“But——”

“Likewise, miss, one or two of the finest and holiest men I have known couldn’t make a dog stay in the same room with

them. How could a dog know a good man from a bad man, at sight, any better than a human can know? Which same is, not at all. How can he tell who is honest and who isn't? He can't. Some folks he likes. Some folks he don't like. It hasn't anything to do with their goodness or their badness."

"But I've read——"

"It doesn't prove anything, miss," insisted Jerram, "except that he happens to like them or not to like them. I wanted to tell Miss Garrod so, once, long ago. But she'd only have said I was an old fool. Like she always says when I tell her things she don't want to believe. It's better to be an old fool than an old liar like the man who made up that silly story, miss. But," he added cryptically, under his breath, "sometimes it's maybe worth while to be an old liar, for all that. Just once in a way."

Crestfallen, the girl continued her way to her own room. Stolidly Jerram stared after her. He had taken a strong liking, long since, to the pretty young companion who was so invariably pleasant to him.

With smug good wishes he had peered out of a window, more than once, on Dorothy's afternoons off, to see her joined at the street corner by a well-set-up youth who always held out both hands eagerly in greeting as he met her.

"Chips," remarked the butler, as the dog trotted down the hallway after him toward the baize door which separated the front half of the rambling house from the servants' quarters—"Chips, me buck, a poet-chap said once, '*There's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream,*' Chips. I and you are too old to dream that way. But the both of us can do our bit to help along them who isn't old for it, Chips."

On an afternoon, dreadful with suspense to Dorothy Fane, the test was made.

At four o'clock the door bell buzzed. Before Parsons Ritter's well-gloved finger could complete its pressure on the button the front door swung wide. Jerram stood on the threshold, to usher the visitor into the house and thence into the awful presence of Miss Ginevra Garrod.

Ritter was punctual, to the split second; an admirable trait, as he knew, in an applicant. His somewhat wooden face was courteously expressionless. His well-cut clothes were faultless, from tie to toe.

Clothes and face underwent a sharp change for the worse as he stepped into the gloomy front hall and handed his hat and gloves and stick to the butler.

For a house man chanced to be crossing the hall at the moment, bearing a dustpan heaped high with ashes. As he detoured around the immaculate Ritter, the house man slipped awkwardly on the gleaming marble of the hallway floor.

Ritter had been noting wordlessly that a house man thus laden had no place in the front hall of a well-conducted house at such an hour, when his meditations were wrecked by a cascade of dusty white ashes that fell athwart the entire lower expanse of his own faultlessly tailored trousers.

An explosive and perhaps excusable oath ripped its way between his tight lips as he stared in wrathful consternation down at his ash-strewn trousers and shoes.

But, on the instant, even as the clumsy house man scuttled away, Jerram was down on both knees, with a mysteriously produced cloth and brush, and was working with skilled haste

to repair the damage. As he toiled, the butler babbled apologies for his subordinate's awkwardness.

"The lout ought to be discharged!" raged Ritter. "Such a thing ought not to be possible in a house like this. It won't be, if I become a member of the household. I——"

"Yes, sir," stolidly assented Jerram, rising flushed from his labors. "No, sir. You are quite all right again, sir. Thank you. Miss Garrod will receive you at once, sir. This way, if you please."

With an effort Parsons Ritter reestablished his wonted efficient calm as he was ushered into the little firelit room beside whose tea-table Miss Ginevra sat enthroned.

With precisely the correct deference Ritter bowed as he entered, then advanced easily toward his hostess.

Something else advanced at the same time. Chips had been curled up lazily at his mistress's feet, in front of the fire. As ever, inquisitive about all visitors, he got up and started across the room to sniff at the newcomer.

Miss Ginevra leaned back, her half-shut eyes taking stock of the applicant, but more closely observing her adored dog.

Up to Ritter lolled Chips, questioningly welcoming, as was his habit with strangers who visited the house. Ritter, in his studied progress toward his prospective employer, did not so much as glance down at the ragged-coated mongrel.

Then, as the two met, midway in the room, Chips shrank back with a snarl of angry distaste.

In a gust of anger, such as never before had Miss Ginevra seen him display, he burst into a fanfare of fierce barking. He made angry dashes at the intruder's legs, backing away each time with that same ferocious snarl of distaste.

Between Ritter and Miss Ginevra he ranged himself, growling, his hackles a bristle.

Ritter all but tripped over him. Chips flashed forward and nipped at the guest's toe. Instinctively, Ritter thrust him impatiently aside, before remembering himself and continuing his advance. The mongrel pranced around him, snarling and yapping in fury, making abortive little runs at his legs.

"Mr. Ritter," said Miss Garrod, with the same iciness wherewith she had frozen the Highly Important Personage, "I shall not trouble you further. I should have written or telephoned to tell you the position is filled."

"But, Miss Garrod!" cried Ritter, aghast, "I——"

"I need a secretary who possesses calmness and humane tendencies," resumed Miss Ginevra. "Not one who crosses a room excitedly, in a succession of stumbling hops. Most assuredly not one who tries to hurt a harmless and friendly dog."

"I——"

"I may be old-fashioned," coldly resumed Miss Ginevra, "in fact my check-book seems to be the only ultra-modern attribute I possess, of late years. But I still claim the right to insist upon the standards of good breeding which were in vogue in my brighter days. I repeat, I shall not trouble you further. Good afternoon."

Ritter departed, cowed, if inwardly blaspheming, before the awesome old lady's displeasure.

"The fact that Chips took such an instant abhorrence to him was enough," Miss Garrod confided to Jerram, who came into the room for the tea things, with the second man,

when the protesting Ritter had been dismissed. “Dogs know. But the ruffian’s shoving the poor defenseless little fellow clinched it. Imagine employing a man who would torture or even mildly maltreat darling Chips whenever my back was turned! I would as soon invite a mosquito into my bedroom. The brutal scoundrel! Chips knew! Chips knew, instantly!”

“Yes, madam,” answered the imperturbable Jerram. “Chips knew. If more humans was wise enough to take a tip from their dogs, there’d be fewer mistakes made, madam. If I may make so free as to tell you a story, madam, back in my own county, when I was quite a small child, there was a gentleman who hired a secretary that all his dogs snapped at and hated. And, not wishing to harrow you up none, madam, that same secretary cut his master’s throat before the year was out.”

“*Oh!*”

“He did indeed, madam. The dogs knew. Like you just said. And my father knew of a lad who was hired by a gentleman who didn’t really like the lad’s looks, madam, but he hired him because the dogs took to him so. And my father told me that that lad lived to be a Prime Minister of England, madam. Asking pardon for talking so much.”

He backed out, convoying the tea-tray-laden second man and leaving Miss Ginevra to digest his two moral tales at her leisure.

Graeme Bliss was not due at the grim old mausoleum of a house until five o’clock. Warned by Dorothy of Miss Garrod’s craze for promptitude, he mounted its steps twenty minutes too early. Which was just as well.

For, as he was handing his hat to Jerram in the front hall, Dorothy leaned far over the stairs of the floor above. The house man, too, happened to cross the hallway with another

panful of ashes and to stumble at the precise spot where he had stumbled a little more than half an hour earlier.

“Gawky oaf!” reprimanded Jerram, dropping on his knees, with brush and cloth, in front of Graeme’s defiled trousers legs.

“It wasn’t his fault,” expostulated Bliss. “The floor is slippery. Let him off easy, won’t you?”

This as the house man vanished cringingly at Jerram’s rebuke and as the butler wrought over the ash-flecked garments.

Then Dorothy hove in sight, from above, and the newly-cleansed Bliss was drawn by her into a reception-room and told that he still had more than fifteen minutes before he was due to face Miss Garrod.

Jerram blinked at the door that closed behind them.

This closing of the door, perhaps, also was well. For no sooner was it shut than the secretarial applicant caught Dorothy to him, holding her tightly and kissing the flushed face upraised to his.

“It’s our big chance, sweetheart mine!” said the girl when presently she was free to speak again. “Oh, I’ve prayed so hard that she’ll like you! Just think what it will mean to be in the very same house with each other, nearly all day! To be able, in just a few months, to marry! Not to wait maybe years and years till you build up a law-practice! There’s one good sign, anyhow—— She has decided very strongly indeed that she doesn’t want Mr. Ritter. I understand Chips didn’t like him, for one thing. And I know you’ll like Miss Ginevra if you get to knowing her. She’s really a dear, when you get past her Garrod ways. She——”

“Miss Garrod will see Mr. Bliss,” said Jerram, discreetly opening the closed reception-room door on a crack. “I told her he was here. She heard the bell.”

Graeme Bliss followed the butler’s angular bulk across the slippery marble hall and to the room where the audience was to be held. As he was ushered into the firelit apartment, Miss Garrod looked appraisingly at him.

“You are nearly a quarter-hour early,” she commented, stiffly. “Too much promptitude is as bad as too little of it. I _____”

She paused. Chips had arisen from his rug beside the fire and was moving lazily across the room toward the advancing candidate. Miss Garrod watched, as before, through half-shut eyes.

Then her eyes opened wide.

As Chips neared the visitor the mongrel’s careless demeanor gave place to a gush of keen interest. He sniffed avidly; then began to gambol around the man, patting at his legs and even licking his boots.

Never before had Miss Ginevra known her canine chum to show such affection for any caller.

Graeme Bliss bent down and caught the dog’s tousled head between his palms, shaking it in rough friendliness, then rumpling the ragged ears. Chips responded to this greeting with a wriggling warmth of friendliness.

Beholding, Miss Ginevra recalled to mind Jerram’s gruesome tale of the dog-hated secretary in England who cut his master’s throat, and the narrative of the secretary, loved by dogs, who later became Prime Minister. Her heart warmed toward Bliss.

“Sit down,” she commanded, with a new graciousness. “Here, close to the fire. I want to talk to you about your grandfather. He was an old beau of mine. Of course that was before the time he had his eccentric delusion about being a two-cent stamp. Does Chips bother you?”

For answer, Graeme Bliss picked up the lovingly attentive mongrel and held him in his lap. There Chips nestled right contentedly as Miss Ginevra and the applicant chatted.

Three days afterward, Graeme was installed as Miss Ginevra Garrod’s secretary and major-domo and personal man of business, in place of the superannuated Cornelius Van Loo and at Van Loo’s desirable salary.

Six months later, Dorothy Fane and Bliss announced timidly to Miss Garrod that they were going to be married. Then, breathless, they waited for the possible storm. It did not come.

“I suppose you expect me to be astonished,” said the old lady. “Well, I am not. I knew it when Dorothy spoke to me about you, the first time. I’ve known it, more and more, ever since, and I have been wondering what detained you so long. That is why I was quite ready for the bombless bombshell you have just thrown at me. That is why all my arrangements are made.”

“But, Miss Garrod——!” began Dorothy.

“My dear,” continued Miss Ginevra, unheeding, “you are the first and only companion, of a long line, who has not either flattered me or robbed me or imposed on me. Do you think I am going to let you go? I am not. There is room in this

enormous house to tuck half a dozen families away, without any of them rubbing elbows with any of the others.”

“Oh, Miss——”

“You are going to stay on here,” continued the old lady, unheeding. “I’ll fit up any suite of rooms you like, except my own, for you and Graeme. There, *that’s* settled! And you can be married from here. Nothing is going to be changed just because two moon-eyed children have decided they want to live together instead of separately. Now run along, both of you. Graeme, when the afternoon mail comes, I’ll have more than usual dictation for you to take. Bring it to me as soon as it is in.”

But when Graeme Bliss came back into Miss Ginevra’s sitting-room, an hour later, with a sheaf of letters and with his pad and pencils, he wore an aspect far different from the air of glad triumph which had been his when last he had quitted his employer’s presence.

The old lady, lounging back on the *chaise longue* with Chips dozing at her feet, noticed instantly his change of demeanor. But she would not help him out by being the first to speak. Graeme halted, barely inside the door.

“Miss Garrod,” he said, forcing the words through reluctant lips, “I have just found out something. It is something I have to tell you. I don’t want to, but it has to be told.”

“Most delicate subjects are the better for a good airing,” suggested Miss Ginevra as he paused, irresolute and miserable. “Suppose you get it out and over with and then let me judge how terrible it is. Come, boy! Speak up!”

“I had a talk with Dorothy, half an hour ago,” said Bliss, miserably. “She told me how Chips, here, snapped and

snarled at Mr. Ritter when he came to see you about this job you gave me. I remembered how eagerly Chips welcomed me. And I remembered seeing Ritter out walking, again and again, in the parks, with his dogs. They were devoted to him. It set me to thinking.”

“Well?”

There was no help, no encouragement, in the monosyllable. Graeme continued, wretchedly:

“It didn’t make sense. But when she told me Ritter had been deluged with ashes, just as I was, when he came here, and that Jerram had cleaned him off as he cleaned me, I got to remembering that Jerram used to work in some kennels in England. Those Englishmen can beat us hollow when it comes to dog-lore. So I hunted up Jerram and I kept at him till I made him talk.”

“Well?”

Again the dry monosyllable, and again Graeme Bliss nerved himself to his confession.

“I know you won’t hold it against the good old fellow. He only wanted to help us—Dorothy and me. Those two inundations of ashes were by his order. While he was working over Ritter’s boots and trousers legs he scattered snuff in the cuffs of his trousers. Chips sniffed at them, and got his sensitive nostrils full of the stingingly painful snuff. That is why he went for Ritter. Probably thought Ritter had done it on purpose.”

“And when the Ritter person struck at him, that wasn’t done on purpose, either?”

“I didn’t know about that. When I came here and Jerram was cleaning off my boots, he put different stuff in my

trousers cuffs. He had boiled some liver with anise seed and had scattered a few drops of tincture of valerian into it. Then he had dried it to a powder and he strewed it into the cuffs of my trousers.”

“The old rascal!”

“That odor is something no dog can resist, Jerram says. And that is why Chips was so fond of me, at sight.... Dorothy says you gave me the job because Chips liked me, and that you rejected Ritter because Chips took a dislike to him. This is a glorious job. I love it. But I don’t want to hold it under false colors. And I can’t go on holding it, and marrying on it, without letting you know the trick that gave it to me. Now fire me, if you like.”

For a long half-minute Miss Ginevra Garrod made no reply, gave no sign of having heard. Then she asked:

“Have you got any powdered liver and anise seed and valerian in your trousers cuffs now?”

“Why, of course not! These aren’t even the same trousers. And——”

“Call Chips over to you!” ordered the stern voice.

Wondering, Graeme Bliss snapped his fingers at the dog that had been his chum for half a year. At the summons, Chips jumped to his feet and trotted across to him; wagging a stubby tail and patting invitingly at the wretched Graeme’s legs, coaxing him to a romp.

“H’m!” commented Miss Ginevra Garrod, her stern old mouth-corners twitching ever so little. “I thought so.... Now give me my mail. Get ready to take dictation, please.”

CHAPTER IV

Chips for Ransom

To avoid artistic suspense and to put the pith of the news into the first paragraph, Chips was lost—Chips was stolen—Chips was held for ransom.

The ransom demanded would have been about equal to his weight in twenty-dollar gold pieces. Chips's actual cash value, from a dog-fancier viewpoint, was somewhere between eighteen cents and half a dollar. He was that kind of dog.

Yet to old Miss Ginevra Garrod the shabby little mongrel's price was above rubies. Chips' swaggering own-your-own-soulism and his elfin originality had won, long ago, every atom of the lonely old lady's half-atrophied heart.

Chips, alone of all the world, she did not suspect of having a weather eye on her money or of fawning upon her for what he might hope to get. Long and sour experience had taught Miss Ginevra that a rich and old and peppery spinster is courted for revenue only.

As a proven fact, Chips never fawned on her at all. He rewarded her slavish adoration with an amused tolerance. He strutted about in her huge and hideous ancestral Philadelphia house with the air of an owner rather than of a dependent.

To everyone in the Garrod household Chips accorded a careless good-fellowship. Even to Raikes, the second man.

Raikes is the villain of this story.

Jerram, the ancient butler, caught the second man unostentatiously going through the change-pockets of several overcoats whose owners were guests at one of Miss Ginevra's awesome teas. Raikes denied the accusation with a gust of such virtuous horror as no innocent man could possibly have summoned to his aid.

"I could have stood his eking out his wages by Robin Hooding the safe's contents," observed Miss Ginevra when Jerram came to her with the report. "But when a man will sell his soul for two or three nickels and a possible twenty-five cent piece, he lacks a business sense as well as imagination. His horrified denial wasn't badly done. But it was a bit of acting thrown away, when he knew you had seen him rifling those pockets. It was an insult to my intelligence, as well as to yours, Jerram, if you have any. He is a fool. Most men are. But I can't stand a dishonest fool. I don't want to see a Mental Defective following you around the dinner-table with dishes. My appetite is none too good, at best. Send him packing."

So it was that Raikes left the Garrod house with contumely and with the rest of his month's pay and without a reference.

So it was that Raikes went back to his shoddy bungalow near the trackside in the unlovely suburb of Blumenberg, and to his wife, who was a former lady's maid.

But he did not go empty-handed. Nor did he arrive at the Raikes domicile in the low spirits which are supposed to go with sudden loss of job.

This through the agency of Chips.

As Raikes was leaving Miss Ginevra's house, by the basement door, Chips pattered out after him. Always when

one of the servants went out, the little mongrel followed thus, and coaxed to be taken for a walk.

As he was about to send the gayly dancing dog back indoors, Raikes was smitten by a brilliantly sudden inspiration—an inspiration which was born full-grown and whose potency made the man gasp for breath.

Instead of ordering Chips into the house again, Raikes peered furtively around him. There in the angle of the basement doorway he was invisible to anyone from within.

Deftly he opened one of his two suitcases. Deftly he thrust most of the case's stuffing of soiled linen and the like into the bottom of the near-by ash-barrel.

Then he patted Chips benevolently, and with a swift motion he thrust the mongrel into the suitcase and closed it.

In another five seconds Raikes was striding along the street toward the trolley line which was to carry him homeward. While he waited for the car he cut a nick or two into the cheap leather of the suitcase to admit air. It was no part of his plan that the indignantly snarling and struggling dog should smother.

Only once more on the way home did Raikes stop. That was at a corner drug store in Blumenberg. There he bought a cheap Kodak camera and a roll of six films.

There were tumultuous times that night in the enormous old Garrod house. Chips was missed. Chips was sought. Chips could not be found. Morbidly, Jerram declared he believed Raikes had stolen the cur. A man who would frisk change-pockets would not balk at dog-stealing.

But this theory was exploded at a single word from Miss Ginevra. She had chanced to drive up to the door just as

Raikes started along the sidewalk, bound for the trolley line. Distinctly she recalled that he was swinging a suitcase in either hand and that there was no bulge under his sleazy overcoat.

Moreover, Chips never would have consented to lie quiescent in a shut satchel (he had not!) nor stuffed under anyone's overcoat.

A parlor maid who had been returning from her afternoon off had seen Raikes board the trolley car. She was certain he had carried nothing but the two suitcases. There was no possibility that he could have hidden a lively and vociferous dog anywhere about his lanky body.

No, Raikes was not the culprit. That was proven, to everyone's dissatisfaction.

Yet Chips was gone. For the first time in his three years of association with Miss Ginevra the eccentric little dog had run away! It did not seem possible. Yet there was no other solution.

Next morning, every paper in Philadelphia and in its larger suburbs published a display-type advertisement describing Chips with a wealth of detail and offering a "suitable" reward for the wanderer's return.

As this appeal drew no reply, the following morning's papers carried a still larger and more flamboyant advertisement, offering "\$250 and no questions asked" for the restoring of the sorely missed Chips.

This brought results in abundance—such as they were. All day a string of men and boys rang the Garrod service bell, bearing under their arms squirming or dejected little stray dogs of every degree of fleasome manginess and disreputable aspect.

The only flaw in the program was that none of these canine waifs happened to be Chips nor to bear even a casual resemblance to him.

A combing of the dog pounds for a radius of miles netted no better clue.

Graeme Bliss, Miss Ginevra's secretary, tramped the streets until his athletic young body ached with fatigue and until no fewer than fifteen policemen had scowled suspiciously at his excursions up blind alleys and at his increasingly hoarse shoutings of Chips's name.

On the morning of the third day, Bliss handed Miss Ginevra a typed sheet of paper that had arrived by the first mail and which he brought to her in a rush, before bothering her with the rest of her thick sheaf of letters.

Pinned to the top of the typed page was a blurred snapshot of a dog. Blurred as the likeness was, there could not be an instant's doubt as to the animal's identity.

Chips resembled no other canine on earth, and this snapshot depicted him in a pose and aspect of angry glumness. Yes, it was Chips, past all chance of mistake, and a very unhappy and disgruntled Chips, at that.

Miss Ginevra stared wide-eyed at the picture. Then she held the typed sheet at arm's length and read:

“Miss G. Garrod:

“I found your dog. I knew he was your dog because I saw you out driving with him twice when you passed by my store.

“He is at my furnished room, now. I brought him here. I just took a photograph of him. I inclose it to prove to you I am not faking.

“I read your advertisement. I will be glad to give you back your dog in good condition.

“But I am a poor man. You are a rich lady. I shall have to ask you five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for this service to you. That sum is no more to you than five dollars (\$5) would be to me.

“I cannot afford to go on feeding a dog that eats so much as your dog eats.

“So unless I receive the five thousand dollars (\$5,000) inside of the next week I shall have to put the poor little dog to death.

“I do not want to do this as I have a soft heart. But I will have to do it unless I receive the money.

“I hope you will see the justice of this. If you do, please insert an ad in the same papers that you inserted the other ads in. Insert it in the Personal Column.

“Just say: ‘I agree.’

“Then I will send you word, right off, where to send the money to me and how to send it. And you will get him back the same hour I get the five thousand dollars (\$5,000).”

There was no signature. The note was neatly typed and on clean paper and the spelling was not bad. It had none of the earmarks of the ordinary crank's anonymous letter. Moreover, the snapshot of Chips attested to its genuineness.

Miss Ginevra sat rigid and expressionless, reading and rereading it. Her one outward sign of emotion was the

convulsive quivering of her firm chin;—humanity’s first symbol of old age, in emotional crises.

Graeme Bliss did not break in on her sharp struggle for self-command. Presently she spoke.

“Send out the advertisement, Graeme,” she commanded. “One of life’s biggest secrets is the knowledge when to pay and when not to pay. This is the time to pay. I would give three times as much to see this sweet dog-stealing soul with his throat cut from ear to ear or with seaweed in his hair and sand under his finger nails. But I would pay fifty times as much to save Chips’s life. To think of the dear little fellow cooped up in this fiend’s ‘furnished room,’ pining and lonely and miserable and perhaps kicked and beaten—and then some day to be shot or poisoned! He——”

“If I know anything about Chips,” interposed Bliss, gently, as the dry old voice threatened to break, “he will land on his feet, wherever he is. He isn’t going to pine. And a dog with his perpetual good luck isn’t going to be killed, either. This is just a clumsy blackmail scheme. It——”

“I didn’t suppose it was a love-letter,” interrupted Miss Ginevra, tartly, “and I am not a baby or a dotard, to have to be soothed in this maddening way. I know what I am about. And I want you to telephone at once to have that advertisement inserted. At *once*, I said. We——”

“Dear Miss Garrod,” pleaded Graeme Bliss, “nobody thinks you’re a ‘baby’ or a ‘dotard.’ That is why I am begging you to use the wise brain God gave you. Listen: If you do this thing, what proof have you that the crook won’t take your money and keep Chips? What proof have you that he or any other crook will play fair? What proof have you that he won’t grab the money and hang onto the dog and then

bleed you for still more ransom? Even if he returns Chips to you when he gets the five thousand, don't you realize he'll try to steal him again, the very next time he is in need of funds, and that he'll hold you up all over again, in just the same way?"

"I said, I——"

"Besides," hurried on Graeme, "he's due to brag to his fellow-crooks of the easy money he has won—it's human nature to brag about easy money—and that means that every petty criminal in Philadelphia will be on the lookout to make a small fortune by stealing Chips. It will be one theft after another, one payment after another, as long as the dog lives."

During Bliss's appeal, Miss Garrod's initial impatience had ebbed. As the secretary finished, she sat wordless for a few seconds. Then she said:

"Graeme, there are non-typical glints of sanity cropping out here and there, all through that harangue of yours. It is seldom I have to concede such traits to any of my employees. Now that you've given sane negative counsel, pray go ahead and spoil it all by giving some idiotic constructive hints. What do you suggest we do? If you say, 'Send for the police,' I shall know your other advice was given in a mere lucid interval. Now, what are we to do? Speak up, lad!"

"Why not put the case in the hands of the Quhaig Detective Agency? Judge Claiborne says it's the best agency of the kind in America. Quhaig found Mrs. Claiborne's tiara when the police had had to give up. He is a really great detective. Everyone says so. His prices are high, of course. But——"

"Send for him," ordained Miss Ginevra, adding: "Not that I look on your suggestion as a brilliant one in any way. But it

happens to be the same that came into my own mind. I don't bank on it, though. Tanya Claiborne's tiara wasn't worth one-tenth what the papers said it was. Perhaps that is why Quhaig was able to get hold of it—after the thieves had had it appraised. Besides, I've read somewhere that when a policeman blows out his brains, and survives, he becomes a detective.... Well, send for him! What are you waiting for?"

The awe-inspiring Artemus Quhaig himself deigned to answer the summons, instead of intrusting the apparently trivial case to one of his aides.

No case could be wholly trivial, with the great Miss Ginevra Garrod at the receiving end of it. The prestige to be gained by adding her mighty name to his private list of clients was incalculable.

Wherefore the chief responded in person to Graeme Bliss's summons.

To his annoyance he was kept fidgeting in a reception-room for ten minutes before Jerram ushered him into the study where Miss Garrod and her secretary were at work.

Artemus Quhaig was not accustomed to waiting for anyone. He sought to show his displeasure at the slight by an increased stiffness of demeanor.

Instantly it was made plain to him by his hostess that he had as much chance of impressing Miss Garrod by any such tactics as to cause a solar eclipse by scowling at the midday sun.

She ignored his rebuking manner. She ignored everything about the portentously important Artemus Quhaig except the fact that she had sent for him, as she might for a bug-exterminator, to do a needful and unsavory job for her.

Acknowledging the chief's salutation by the barest nod of her white-crowned head, she glanced commandingly at Bliss. She did not so much as indicate a chair to the deeply offended guest, but let his pompous aloofness melt into gawky discomfort as he stood uncomfortably on the rug in front of her.

At his employer's glance, Graeme Bliss told in terse fashion so much of the tale of Chips' abduction as he had not already related to Quhaig over the telephone.

Quhaig listened in a lofty attention which somehow he could not make as Napoleonic as usual, with Miss Garrod's half-shut old eyes fixed unfathomingly upon his grim face.

Rallying his Napoleonism, he asked a trenchant question or two. Bliss replied to the queries. The great man fell silent, his brows knitted. Then he opened his mouth for one of those utterances on which most of his clients hung in breathless eagerness.

"Graeme," said Miss Ginevra, dryly, to her secretary, as Quhaig's lips parted, "he is about to tell us that this looks like an inside job."

"How did you guess that, pray?" demanded Quhaig, adding, "That is, unless you have been keeping something back from me."

"I guessed it, my good man," replied Miss Ginevra, "because I have insomnia; and thus because I have read detective stories, for years, to put me to sleep. Also, I have read detective interviews in the daily press. Everything that a detective cannot understand at first glance 'looks like an inside job.' Your next remark will either be that we may look for startling developments within twenty-four hours or else

that we did well to come directly to you instead of calling in the police. After that——”

“I am not accustomed to this kind of treatment, Miss Garrod!” flared Quhaig, stung to very genuine indignation and yet feeling curiously as though he were a punctured balloon. “I——”

“And you are not accustomed to the kind of fee you will get if you can find my dog,” rejoined Miss Garrod, “nor to the cash value of being able to brag that I am your client. That is why you came here instead of sending your best subordinate. That is why you tried in such an idiotic way to be dignified and impressive. That is why I have wasted so much of my precious time in deflating you. Now if you have stopped being an Olympian, suppose we get down to business.”

As from far away the thunderously formidable Artemus Quhaig heard his own voice make impossibly humble reply:

“Yes, Miss Garrod.”

“Good. Now you can sit down, if you want to. Go ahead with your questions and your deductions. Only, this time, glean them out of your own alleged brain and not out of every detective story ever written. Can you find Chips for me? If you can, you may write your bill on a government bond.”

Meanwhile, in his house of bondage, Chips was playing true to form.

Always avid for novelty of any kind, he had surveyed with interest his new surroundings when Raikes unstrapped the perforated suitcase and let him out in the garret of the

trackside bungalow at Blumenberg. For a little while this change of environment and of society promised fun.

But he had an unalterable dislike to being locked up anywhere at all. And nowadays he was kept eternally in that attic room, except when—tightly leashed—Raikes led him forth after nightfall for an infuriatingly brief and slow walk along the squalid street.

Besides, his unfailing sense of snobbery told him this was the abode of the poor. Wherefore, he despised it; even as once he had despised the Murrels' home.

Chips grew to hating it all. In a day or two he fell to sulking, and he refused to eat.

Here was cause for genuine alarm to the kidnapper. While Miss Garrod might be prevailed on to pay the egregious ransom for the sake of getting her adored pet back again, yet if the dog were returned to her, thin and sick and mopey, her ire against his supposed ill-user might readily lead her to offer an even larger reward for the latter's arrest and punishment.

Whereas, if Chips were to die, she was quite capable of scourging the whole police and detective force to frantic action.

Something must be done to cheer the captive. Moreover, Chips's indignant all-night yowling already had evoked a complaint from the people next door. If the Board of Health should be asked to step in and interfere——

At Miss Garrod's, the little mongrel had had free range of the house. Perhaps the same privilege here might assuage his sense of imprisonment. At the very least, for a night or two it might check his angry yelping. With the whole small bungalow to roam about in, at will, Chips might find enough

of interest to keep him quiet and even to revive his spirits and his appetite. It was well worth the try.

Thus, from the wholly bare attic room of his captivity, Chips was allowed to emerge into the rest of the bungalow. If this had been his portion from the first, he might or might not have appreciated his greater freedom. But the change came too late.

The dog had learned to hate, with a deathless hatred, every inch of this place of incarceration; wellnigh as fiercely as he had grown to hate the smug man and the prim woman who ruled it.

As ever with Chips, hatred took the form of impish mischief. There had been nothing in that blank attic cubbyhole room on which to vent his mischief, except to gnaw and scratch at its unyielding door and to tear to rags the thin old blanket which served him for a bed.

But now there was everywhere a wealth of destroyable things—things on which to wreak his mischief-rage; things whose destruction might perhaps hurt the hatable man and woman who owned them, almost as much as Miss Ginevra had been hurt when once Chips had torn up the final draft of the paper she was writing for the Colonial Dames' Convention.

He began on the contents of the bungalow's "best room." This, because the room chanced to be the first into which he wandered.

The "best room" was the pride of Mrs. Raikes's housewifely heart. To her it represented the acme of elegance and taste, even as did the living room downstairs. Indeed, the whole overfurnished little bungalow was her shrine. Her

chief joy in life was to keep it immaculate, and to add, whenever possible, to its garish adornments.

With demoniac thoroughness Chips set to work. Here was no blind Berserk madness; but a calculating spirit of annihilation. Chips wrought with savage swiftness, but with as savage thoroughness.

Raikes and his wife were finishing luncheon when a crash and an ensuing tinkle in the room above brought them to their feet.

By dint of hurling himself bruisingly against a near-alabaster pedestal, Chips had brought it crashing to the floor, and with it the stained-glass lamp which was Mrs. Raikes's chief pride.

Up the stairs ran husband and wife. At the open door of the best room they came to a halt of stark horror.

In the middle of the floor lay the near-alabaster pedestal in three pieces, and the lamp and its glass shade in three hundred. But this was only the central detail of the scene of demolition.

The overstuffed couch and the three overstuffed chairs which matched it had been slashed and clawed and tugged at until they were nude. Upholstery and padding strewed the whole floor, with the exception of the big rug.

The rug lay snarled and bunched in one corner of the room; seven or eight irregular gashes turning it into 100 per cent, eligibility for the ragbag.

Having finished with the more tearable or smashable furnishings within easy reach, Chips was leaping upward at one of the window curtains. As Raikes and his wife appeared

in the doorway, down came the curtain, its pole's knobbed end smashing a wall mirror.

Chips began gayly to reduce the brocaded curtain-cloth to ribbons.

With a screech which would have done credit to an Assyrian high priest at sight of the overthrow of Baal's altar, Mrs. Raikes bore weepingly down upon the destroyer. In the course of her advance she snatched up the fallen curtain pole and swung it punitively aloft.

But Raikes sprang between the screaming housewife and her prey.

He caught the descending pole in mid-flight. With his free hand he gripped the would-be avenger, holding her still, by main force, while he exhorted her to remember all that depended on the dog's safety and well-being.

But Mrs. Raikes was in no mood to listen to crafty counsel. To high heaven soared her lamentations over the ruin of her precious best room. Long and eloquently did Raikes address his struggling spouse, before at last her frenzy slumped into weak hysterics.

He reminded her that five thousand dollars would refurnish magnificently a dozen rooms like this.

He reminded her that if Chips should be sent home with a leg or a rib cracked by a blow of the curtain pole, Miss Ginevra's vengeance would not cease until the dog's persecutor should be dragged forth to punishment.

He reminded her that this was the sixth of the seven days decreed by him as the limit for the ransom to be forthcoming.

Should she desist from her cravings to hammer Chips into small independent republics, Raikes would go that very

afternoon to his cousin who owned a typewriter. There he would type and mail a final demand for the money—a demand crammed with horrid threats.

He knew Miss Garrod and her fatuous adoration for the cur. The ransom would be paid, eventually. No doubt as to that.

He ended by reminding his sobbing wife of her own earlier enthusiasm over his scheme and of her genius which had suggested the death clause in the first typed letter to Miss Ginevra.

At last Mrs. Raikes was made to see reason and to abate her canicidal yearnings in favor of a vaster yearning for the ransom. She went across the hall to her bedroom to wash her swollen eyes and to dab powder on her reddened nose.

Then it was that recent history repeated itself. For, once more, she came to a halt of incredulous horror. This time on the threshold of the bedroom.

Unnoted by the hotly wrangling man and woman, Chips had slipped casually out of the place he had wrecked, and into the nearest room whose door stood ajar. This chanced to be the bedroom—an apartment which promised much to a sincere seeker after demolition.

Directly in front of him was the open door of the clothes closet. From a frame on the back of this door hung neatly Mrs. Raikes's new and treasured fur coat.

This was a garment of great price and greater splendor. It had been bought on nine installments—of which only the second had been paid.

To the floor it fell squushily, at a single yanking wrench from Chips's strong jaws.

Alas! (similarly, alack!) for the seven large installments still due on that beauteous coat! To the Raikes family the phrase, “paying for a dead horse,” was to take on a mordantly new meaning.

No bear raid in all financial history has reduced values with such devastating suddenness as Chips’s rending teeth deprived Mrs. Raikes’s costly fur coat of any value at all.

In its tumble from the frame, the coat had pushed slightly to one side the cover of a long pasteboard box on the closet floor—a box containing the fox furs which had been Mrs. Raikes’s chief sartorial pride until the advent of the coat.

Gleefully Chips hauled them forth from their hiding-place. Gleefully he fell to ripping them into fuzzy irregular bunches.

The healthful exercise and innocent amusement of the past few minutes had lightened Chips’s rancor; only to add to his mischief-rapture in the destruction of everything in sight.

Even when the furs and the coat offered no further novelty, he did not give up hope that the fascinating closet might hold more pretty playthings for him.

Something was hanging at the back of the closet—something shrouded in a white muslin bag.

Down it came, under the persuasion of Chips’s ardent tug. The muslin bag interested the dog not at all. His keen scent told him that inside the sack was something closely connected with the man he loathed.

He ripped the muslin asunder and came at once to what he sought.

The bag contained an almost-new dress-suit—with several installments still to pay on it—which Raikes had bought for

use in a head-waiter job a friend of his had promised to secure for him.

With as much wrath now as joy, Chips slashed it and bit and tore great holes in the suit.

One of these tugging bites caused something to fall from the destroyed garment's inner pocket, where it had been cunningly hidden for safety. This object smelled even more strongly of Raikes than had the suit itself. Therefore, Chips pounced upon it and bore it out into the room to chew and rip at his greater leisure.

The thing was a well-worn wallet. It contained, among other valuables, Raikes's hoarded bunch of references and several other papers he treasured, as well as one hundred and seventy-five dollars in cash.

While the wallet was tough to chew, its contents were not. Chips wrought vigorously and efficiently upon them.

He had reduced the papers and the paper money to a ruffle of scraps, and was beginning anew on the wallet itself, when Mrs. Raikes came to the door.

Her husband was close behind her, still arguing and pleading. Over her heaving shoulder he beheld the hideous sight. For the moment the man went quite rabid.

He shoved his wife aside and barged into the room, snatching up the blissfully chewing dog by the nape of the neck with his left hand, while with his right he smote the wriggling Chips stunningly over the side of the head.

Then, with a hoot of anguish, Raikes dropped the destroyer to the floor and fell to sucking his own thumb, which Chips had bitten to the bone.

As if disdainful to carry the absurd feud further, Chips gathered himself up and trotted haughtily out of the room and thence downstairs.

The ululations of the despoiled man and woman were broken in upon by the noise of loud ripping. Chips had begun work on the living-room's center rug.

Down the stairs galloped Raikes, pulling off his coat as he ran. Chips wheeled about, snarlingly, to meet him as he came into the living-room.

Raikes flung his coat dexterously over the angry dog, gathering Chips up in its folds. Then he bore him to the coal cellar and thrust him into it; slamming the dusty door shut upon him.

"Let him try chewing the coal, if he wants to!" raged the man, beginning again to suck his sorely-mangled thumb. "Lord! but that five thousand dollars won't be any too easy earned! I'd like to rip him into as many pieces as he ripped my clothes! It'd be worth anything to me to do that! Anything short of five thousand.... Cut out the blubbering, can't you, Myra? If *I* can stand it, you can. I'm going to wash up. And I'm going to get this bite tended, at the druggist's, and then I'm going to type that letter. Maybe I won't make it a scorcher, this time! Don't wait supper for me. I'll be running into town to the agency, if my hand don't pain me too bad."

As he talked, he was binding his thumb in a handkerchief, and then struggling into his sleazy overcoat.

"That reward isn't ever going to be paid!" wailed Mrs. Raikes. "And if that brute stays here another day, the house won't be worth living in. You'll never be able to keep him in the cellar. He'll get out, some way or other, and he'll spoil all

the rest of my lovely things. I know it! I just *know* it! He's no dog. He's a devil. That's what he is. He——”

Raikes cut short the diatribe by stamping out of the house.

“Graeme,” remarked Miss Ginevra, icily, “you showed positive genius when you cajoled me into turning Quhaig and his gimlet-eyed sleuths loose on this case. I would never have believed that any mere humans could have shown such miraculous detective powers. Just think! Here they've been looking for Chips only a little more than three days—five super-detectives at fifteen dollars a day apiece, plus expenses (mainly expenses)—and already they've found that the anonymous note was mailed to me from the Broad Street Post Office and that it was typed on a Corona machine. Now I *know* the Sherlock Holmes stories are true. Such uncanny intellect fairly takes my breath away.”

“Give them time, Miss Garrod,” soothed Bliss.

“I'd like to. And if imbecility was penalized in the same ratio as mere crime, they'd get it—seven years of it apiece.... Time is something we haven't got. Tomorrow is the last day of grace the abominable black-hander gave us.”

“But what are we to do?”

“‘*We*’ are to continue to do nothing, as usual. *I* am going to find Chips. At least, I am going to try to. It came to me, bit by bit, before I got up this morning. If I'm wrong, I'll know it by night. And then I'll put that ‘Agreed’ advertisement in tomorrow morning's papers. Ring for Seton to get my things. Then have Robard here with the shabbiest of the cars—and without washing it or even running a brush over it.... No, thanks. I'm going alone.”

A few minutes later, she was on her way, the grim old face set like granite except when it peered farsightedly at a memorandum slip she carried.

From a Classified Directory she had culled the names of the few local wholesale houses which made a specialty of developing kodak prints for amateurs. At the first of these she exhibited the blurred snapshot of Chips. The rubber stamp mark of "190 BX" on the back of the print was identified as the mark of a second establishment of the kind.

There she was lucky enough to find an operator who recognized distinctly the snapshot which Raikes had sent to her. He recognized it, he said, partly because it was the only print that had been made on a roll of six films. The five others had not so much as been exposed to the light.

He had wondered mildly that anyone should waste five films, in his haste to get such a worthless print of the sixth. He remembered, too, grinning at the comedian face of the pictured dog, and at the almost human scowl on the funny little visage.

The film had been sent in from a drug store in Blumenberg; with a request for a rush job. It was from a store which sent all its customers' films to this concern.

Robard was commanded to drive fast—this by an employer who feared and disliked fast driving. In another fifteen minutes the machine stopped at a corner drug store in the unlovely suburb of Blumenberg.

Miss Garrod descended from the dusty and mud-splashed car; bidding Robard keep his seat, as might a taxi-man. She entered the ugly shop and said sweetly to the proprietor:

"This pretty snapshot was sent to me as a present. I like it so much I want an enlargement made. I am willing to pay

double rates if you can have it for me in three days. Can you?"

"Sure," agreed the druggist.

"But," she pursued, "I don't think I ought to do it without the consent of the dog's owner. Some owners are so touchy about their pets! If you can tell me where to find him, I can go and ask his permission. Then I can bring this snapshot back to you, and leave it with a deposit of—of say, ten dollars, along with directions where to send it."

The druggist did scant business. This shabby old woman very evidently was an imbecile, with her talk of a ten-dollar deposit on a job that could be put through for less than a fifth of the sum. She was worth humoring.

"Sure," he agreed, once more. "And if you'd come in here half an hour earlier you could have seen him, right at this counter. I dressed a bite on his thumb that this very purp gave him. Wait. I'll write out his name and *address* for you."

Three minutes of driving through mean trackside streets brought Miss Garrod to a mean trackside bungalow. She mounted its rickety steps and rang imperiously at its bell.

Twice and thrice she rang. Then she noticed that the door was not even tight shut. It was nearly an inch ajar, as though it had been slammed hurriedly and the unoled hasp had not caught. Without further ceremony, Miss Ginevra Garrod strode indoors.

From room to room she roamed, seeking some occupant.

The bungalow was deserted. But two of its upper rooms told a ghastly tale of murdered furniture and clothing and the like.

Miss Garrod stooped, and picked up one of many varicolored fragments of paper. It was the corner of a twenty-dollar bill.

After thorough search of every room from coal cellar to attic—in the attic she paused to glance at an untouched food dish and at a shredded blanket—she went back to her car.

At the front door, when she reached her own house, she was met by Jerram, her butler. Jerram's wooden face was shattered into an ecstatic grin.

"Miss Garrod!" he exclaimed. "He's back, madam. He's *home*! A woman found him straying in the street, not two squares from here, and she brought him straight to you in her market basket. She had read the ads. I told her to wait. I said you'd be home presently, and I knew you'd want to thank her and pay her the reward. She's in the hall, madam. She——"

Chips came bounding forth, between the butler's slightly bowed legs, to hail his mistress. There was no bumptious rapture in his salutation, but a certain degree of mild pleasure in greeting thus again a woman of whom he was measurably fond.

Miss Garrod scarcely waited to pick him up and hug him, before stalking into the chilly hallway. There a plainly clad woman arose nervously, fingering a market basket and smiling in deprecatory fashion as Miss Ginevra confronted her.

"Come in here," said Miss Garrod, leading the way into the firelit study. "Sit down. Now, then, you found my dog and you brought him home; so my butler tells me. He says you found him not far from here. How did you know he was mine?"

“I knew it, ma’am, from those descriptions in the papers,” was the pat reply. “Nobody could mistake the little precious, after once reading those.”

“No? About two hundred people did, during the past week. You were cleverer than they were. Chips, come here.”

At the call, Chips came lazily into the room. At sight of the visitor he paused in his advance and snarled loathingly at her.

“Several times he has nipped men he didn’t like,” mused Miss Ginevra. “He’s so gloriously high-spirited, you know. But he never bites women. He just shows his teeth at those of them he doesn’t like.... By the way, Mrs. Raikes,” she continued, with knife-keen abruptness, “how fortunate it is that when dear little Chips was dismantling your home he didn’t destroy the really attractive framed photograph on the living-room table—the wedding photograph of Raikes and yourself! It is a perfect likeness of you both. You’ve scarcely changed at all since it was taken. I would have known you anywhere.”

The woman let the market basket clump unheeded to the floor. Her prim face went the color of raw veal.

Slowly and wholly without her volition her nose began to work up and down like a rabbit’s. Her dull eyes, too, had a fixedly despairful stare in them, like those of a rabbit that a snake is seeking to charm.

For an instant Miss Ginevra smiled amusedly at the fright-smitten visitor. Then her smile vanished.

“I suppose I am a fool!” she rasped. “But terror is one thing I can’t bear to watch. Stop looking like a half-swallowed guinea-pig and tell me the truth. Speak up. You can begin at the point when Raikes left home to get his thumb bandaged. What happened next?”

Under those awful old eyes, the guest found herself beginning to speak. She listened to her own sputtered words as to those of a stranger.

“The horrid beast spoiled my pretty things,” she said, her voice as flat as a sleep-talker’s. “All the lovely sweet things I was so proud of. The things that cost me so much and took such a long time to get together. All of them, in two rooms, he spoiled. *All* of them, ma’am. And my——”

“And your furs and your coat and Raikes’s clothes and some of his money,” supplemented Miss Ginevra as the flat voice faltered. “And then you shut Chips in the coal cellar. He’s thick with coal dust, even yet. And then Raikes went out. What next?”

“I wouldn’t have the beast there another day!” declaimed the flat voice, wildly. “No, not another hour. He’d have found a way to spoil everything else we’d took such pains to get together. He’d have spoiled all our home. And I knew you’d never pay that five thousand dollars.”

“How did you know?”

“If you’d meant to pay it, you’d have done it right off, seeing how fond you are of the dog. When you didn’t pay it, that meant you had the police looking for him.”

“I see. Go on.”

“I figured you’d give me the two hundred and fifty dollars reward you promised in the newspapers, if I was to fetch him here to you and say I found him. Then he wouldn’t get loose, to spoil the rest of the beautiful things we’ve scrimped and saved to buy. And the money would have helped pay some of the installments on the clothes he tore up. So as soon as Raikes was gone, I put him in the basket and I took the trolley to——”

“What’s your first name?” challenged Miss Ginevra, crossing to a corner desk.

“Myra, ma’am,” said the woman, miserably. “But if you’re going to have me put in jail, anyhow——”

“Be quiet,” ordered Miss Ginevra. “I can’t listen and write at the same time. Here!”

She handed the trembling woman a strip of greenish paper.

“You’ve earned the reward,” said Miss Garrod, crossly, as if each word was an annoyance. “I promised two hundred and fifty dollars to anyone who would bring Chips home to me. Take this and go. It’s made out to *you*, so Raikes needn’t know anything about it. By the way, next time you leave your house in a hurry, don’t slam the door after you so hard that the spring doesn’t catch. Good-by. Perhaps, if you hurry, you’ll reach home in time to smash the cellar window before your husband gets back, so he won’t know Chips didn’t escape that way.”

Dazedly the woman blinked at the check.

“But, ma’am,” she gasped. “You made a mistake. This is made out for a thousand dollars. I—I——”

“I am a careless and slovenly old woman!” sighed Miss Ginevra. “I’m always making blunders. But it’s too much trouble to write it all over again. Go now, please. I’m busy.”

“And you—you’re giving me all this money?” blithered the bewildered woman. “And you’re letting us go free? Not even having us arrested? Oh, ma’am! I—I—I——”

“Since dear little Chips did so much to accelerate the Raikes’s Progress toward the poorhouse,” snapped Miss Ginevra, “who am *I* to sidetrack that progress to a mere jail? For the severalth time, I must ask you to go now. Chips

hasn't stopped snarling since he caught sight of you. I'm sure it can't be good for the darling little fellow's nerves!

“By the way,” she added, contemplatively, half under her breath, “if the Lord hadn't blessed me with brains, I really believe I should have made a passably good detective.”

CHAPTER V

Chips, the Hero

“CHIPS,” said Miss Ginevra Garrod, “this is Blayne. Blayne is my new maid. She is taking Merriam’s place.”

The fragile old lady made the announcement as though she were introducing one human to another. Chips—disreputable and ragbag-reminiscent little mongrel—blinked appraisingly at the angular newcomer.

Blayne’s unwinsomely heavy face was a mask as she answered with due primness:

“Yes, ma’am.”

Ragingly, in her heart, she was muttering:

“The frowsy old mummy introduced *me* to the measly tyke, not him to me. Like he was my betters. What sort of goings-on is it, anyhow, speaking to a cur like he was folks?”

“Chips is my dog,” Miss Ginevra added, somewhat unnecessarily, and stooping to lay a benedictory hand on the mongrel’s tousled head. “A very remarkable dog, Blayne. By far the most remarkable dog I have met. He is as wise as any judge. Wiser than most judges I have known. Also, he is an honored member of this household. It is well to explain all this to you at the beginning.”

“Yes, ma’am,” repeated Blayne, with precisely the right note of respect in her contralto voice.

“He has the run of the whole house,” continued Miss Ginevra, “and he sleeps on a pink blanket beside my bed. He _____”

Here Chips created a mild diversion.

Ever since Miss Ginevra had called him into the room he had been sniffing at the tall and bony English maid with the neat black dress and the neat black hair and the mask-like homely face and stonily irreproachable manner.

Something about Blayne had seemed to puzzle him.

Now he gave vent to a single short, high-pitched squeak—a squeak uncannily like an attempt at a human hoot of laughter. His ample mouth stretched into a grin which could not well have been wider unless his moth-eaten ears had been set back an inch or two.

Nobody could have doubted that he was reveling in elfin enjoyment of some rare joke.

He rolled one eye leeringly back at his mistress, as though to see if she were sharing the rich jest with him. Apparently finding she was not, his gleeful smirk took on a tinge of contempt at her stupidity.

Then he stared afresh at the lanky black-clad maid, as some child might peer expectantly at a conjurer. There was a world of expression in his furry yellow face, and every glint of that expression spoke of sardonic merriment.

“I am glad to see he appears to like you, Blayne,” said Miss Ginevra, misreading as ever her adored pet’s aspect. “See, he is actually smiling up at you, the little darling! I am glad, because I have a strong belief in the theory that people to whom dogs take a fancy are to be trusted. I have never

known it to fail. I hope you and he will be very good friends.”

Seldom was Miss Ginevra Garrod so loquacious with any servant of hers. But on the theme of Chips she was loquacious with everybody. The dog's keen and delighted interest in this new maid pleased Miss Ginevra, whose life rule it was to distrust everybody, on general principles.

Chips alone she loved. Chips alone she trusted. Chips was her One Weakness, her Blind Side, the sole outlet for her atrophied affections.

No dog, no million dogs, could have combined a tithe of the wisdom and loyalty and all-around genius she attributed to this one shaggy and shabby little crossbreed. The axiom, “Love me, love my dog,” might well have been coined for Miss Ginevra Garrod.

Wherefore, Chips's grinning interest in Blayne raised the faultlessly stony lady's maid to sudden heights of favor in Miss Ginevra's esteem.

The mischievously leering grin of the mongrel and the fixedness of his sniffing stare began to do things to the overtense nerves beneath Blayne's stolid exterior.

There was something about Chips's leer which puzzled and worried the new servant. For Blayne was in a chronic state of mind to be worried by trifles.

To put a merciful end to the element of suspense, this is as good a time as any to clear up the mystery of Chips's wide-mouthed grin and of his regarding Blayne as a highly entertaining joke.

He had every reason for appreciating the rare jest.

For he knew that this tall and bony and big-featured woman was no woman at all, but a man in woman's attire.

Any dog can tell instantly a man from a woman. Costume has less than nothing to do with this recognition. To canines, a man in woman's garb is a man, even as a woman dressed in masculine raiment is still a woman. It is wholly a matter of scent. A dog receives his impressions through the nostrils rather than through the eyes.

(Moreover, three dogs out of four have a wholly different attitude toward women from their attitude toward men. Dogs, for example, which are savagely willing to bite men, will not, as a rule, bite women. This has been proven, innumerable times.)

Yes, Chips knew Blayne was a man; would have known it in the dark. For one of several reasons, the acrid reek of strong English shag tobacco on Blayne's hands and hair—too faint by far for human nostrils to detect—was distinct to Chips's canine sense of smell. Women do not smoke numberless pipefuls of rank shag tobacco and become permeated with its aroma.

Herb Blayne had begun his professional career as a feminine impersonator in small provincial music-halls in England. There was nothing feminine or effeminate about him; but he was a fairly good actor of such parts. His success was slight, and he drifted into association with a gang of rural English crooks.

Here he fared somewhat better, financially. So much talent did he display, indeed, that in time he was admitted to membership in a London "mob" of jewel thieves. But presently the law was hot on the mob's heels. In woman's clothes, Blayne escaped to the States.

Through the help of a clever forger friend he was able to bring along a thick sheaf of references—references which would have given employment to Benedict Arnold.

More than once, in England, he had masqueraded profitably as a lady's maid, a rôle he had learned to perfection through his boyhood employment in several British families of note and from the teachings of his wife, who followed that calling.

With his splendid references as a backing, he resolved to try his luck at the same trade in some jewel-incrusted house in jewel-incrusted America.

Fortune and deft wire-pulling and a careful study of society pages led him at last by devious routes to seek and win employment as Miss Ginevra Garrod's maid; to supersede one Merriam, who had left service to be married.

Here at last Blayne seemed to have come into his own. The Garrod jewels were worn sparingly by their owner, and the bulk of them reposed in a bank vault. But some were kept always in the wall safe in the library, an old-fashioned hiding-place whose lock's combination Blayne found, without difficulty, among the papers in Miss Ginevra's private desk.

All that remained to do was to wait until some semi-regal dinner or reception should cause Miss Garrod to send to the bank for a quantity of her jewels, then to clean up the lot and escape with a fortune.

Foremost among the collection, of course, was the historic Faith Diamond (fourth largest in the United States); and next in value was the triple rope of graduated pearls, insured at \$400,000. These two treasures, apart from any lesser loot, would make Blayne glitteringly rich for life.

The danger of capture, too, would be laughably slight. A woman would sneak out of the house with the plunder. That woman would vanish forever. In her place a very genuine man would walk the world, safe from suspicion. There could be no link of identity between the two persons.

Yet, safe as the venture seemed, Herb Blayne was on edge, perpetually, as to nerves. Thus, the odd behavior of his employer's dog toward him did not add to his peace of mind.

Blayne disliked and feared dogs. He knew little about them, and cared to know less. They filled him with an illogical terror, the smallest and meekest of them.

Chips, from the first, sensed this fear. To him it opened lovely vistas for teasing. His victim's fright added sweet zest to such pranks. For example—

As Blayne entered Miss Ginevra's room, in the mornings, to awaken his employer and to raise the curtains and shut the windows and give her her tea and dry toast, Chips would start up dramatically from his fluffy pink blanket-rug beside the bed; and would charge growling at the supposed maid, snarling in pretended fury and making as though to nip Blayne's stodgy black-clad ankles.

The first morning that he did this Blayne hopped backward with such nervous vehemence that the tea-tray was upset.

"Sorry, ma'am. I beg your pardon, I'm sure," mumbled Blayne, flopping to his knees and seeking to sop up the spilled mess with the napkin.

Apprehensively he glanced sidewise at the shrunken figure in the bed, as he sopped.

Awkwardness in a lady's maid, he knew well, is not tolerated in houses like Miss Ginevra's. The offender might

readily lose her position for such a clumsy performance, and this before the gem harvest could be reaped.

But Miss Ginevra was leaning back among her pillows, laughing in childlike amusement.

“It’s quite all right, Blayne,” she said. “It’s just Chips’s idea of fun. You see, he knows you’re afraid of him. I knew it, myself, from the way you looked at him when you and he met. Yes, Chips knows it. He knows everything. (There never was such another dog!) So he tried to scare you, just for a joke. But he wouldn’t harm a hair of your head, or of any other woman’s. He has bitten offensive men, once or twice, I’m proud to say. But he has never even snapped in earnest at a woman. So stop being afraid of him.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Now if he were Otho,” continued Miss Ginevra, her amused smile merging into a majestic frown, “I couldn’t guarantee that so certainly. Otho is a menace. Why, once he so far forgot himself as to growl at *me*. Just because I chanced to strike him with my parasol to make him stop romping with Chips on the lawn. But darling little Chips is _____”

“Otho, ma’am?” faltered Blayne, staring apprehensively about, as though in fear lest the house might contain still another dread-inspiring dog.

“Yes. Young Carryl Deane’s great brute of a police dog, next door. Otho insists on coaxing Chips into silly romps with him, whenever the two happen to meet, outdoors. I will do him the justice to say that thus far he has always played very gently with my dear little dog. But there is no knowing when he may get rough and hurt Chips cruelly.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“I told Cyril Deane very plainly that if ever Otho does that, I shall lodge a complaint against him with the authorities. It is the only flaw in Chips’s character—this low fondness he has for romping with Otho....

“Come here, Chipsey, and lie down,” she continued, her severe voice becoming tender. “Lie down! Stop prowling around Blayne’s ankles. Shame on you for being such a bully! I was going to give you some nice delicious toast. But now I’m—I’m going to give it to you, anyhow, I suppose.”

After three mornings of similar abortive attacks from Chips, after three days of growling rushes from dark corners and on the stairs, Blayne’s resolve was taken. Chips must go, unless Blayne’s indispensably valuable nerve was to go. And the lady’s maid went into subtle action.

One evening Blayne made excuse to be alone in the pantry when Chips trotted in to get the dinner which Jerram, the antique English butler, always prepared for him at this hour. Blayne had arrived in the pantry a bare half-minute ahead of the mongrel. But there had been time enough to do what was to be done.

Two ounces of prussic acid were poured over the contents of the food-dish; enough to kill several dogs of Chips’s size.

Blayne had watched Chips at meals, and had noted how eagerly he wolfed down every mouthful, clearing his dish in a mere handful of seconds.

Undoubtedly he would do the same thing now. Blayne could wash the dish carefully, afterward, to remove any possible trace of the poison. Chips would be found dead. There would be much mourning, but no suspicion.

There were plenty of natural causes, acute indigestion among them, which could account for his sudden demise.

In trotted Chips, making avidly for his evening meal on the floor in the pantry corner.

He was even hungrier than usual. For he had sneaked out onto the lawn, a few minutes earlier, for a rollicking and appetite-evoking romp with his gigantic chum, Otho—a romp which Miss Ginevra had interrupted, most inconsiderately, at its very height, by catching sight of the galloping pair and sending Jerram out to capture and bring indoors the loved offender.

Dinner would be a delight just now. Chips was in fine mood to perform prodigies of wolfing. Over to the dish he ran. There he came to a sliding halt.

A nastily pungent smell, which had offended his nostrils from the instant he had crossed the pantry threshold, grew stronger and more nauseating at each step. Now he realized that it emanated from this food dish of his.

The plate was heaped with cut-up raw chuck steak; fare that Chips reveled in. But there was no raw-meat savor to lure him. There was nothing but that gagging and nostril-torturing pungency.

Had Blayne possessed the wit or the time to poison the meat in such way as to leave it odorless, Chips would have tackled it ravenously. But no dog would have eaten stuff that smelled as did this dinner.

The mongrel backed away in angry disgust. He glowered at Blayne, this time in no jest at all. Somehow he connected the pseudo-maid with the trick played on him.

Snarling, he stalked past the poisoner and into the farther reaches of the servants' quarters in search of Jerram.

With deft speed Blayne emptied the dish out of the pantry window, left the window open to air the room, and washed the plate shiningly clean. The first attempt at getting rid of Chips had failed. But there might be other chances.

Next morning two cats lay dead on the lawn. Chips nosed them, inquisitively. They had eaten what he had had the wit to refuse.

It was less than a week later that Miss Ginevra Garrod gave one of her semi-occasional state dinners—this time to the British ambassador, with whose father she had danced in London, a full half-century earlier.

These state dinners of Miss Garrod's were Occasions. Members of younger and smarter sets sneered at them as funereal—and would have parted with three eye teeth and a finger, to have been invited to one of them.

From the bank, on the day of the dinner, an armed messenger brought a few of the most super-costly of the Garrod jewels, including the great Faith Diamond aswing on its severe pendant-chain of platinum, and the triple rope of pearls. These and one or two rings comprised all the jewelry Miss Ginevra planned to wear.

On their arrival, Miss Garrod herself received them from the messenger and shut them into the library wall safe. Thence she planned, as usual, to bring them forth and don them when she should be dressed for the evening.

Miss Ginevra felt toward none of her dependents that simple faith which the poet assures us is better than Norman blood. Not even toward Jerram, the wise asthmatic butler who had grown stiff and ancient in her service.

Hence, her habit of receiving the jewels in person from the bank messenger and putting them into the safe with her own

hands and taking them out again in the same manner.

Blayne watched unconcernedly, his dull face bearing no faintest trace of the most casual interest, while his employer, thrust the velvet cases into a compartment and shut the safe door on them and twirled its handle. But in his heart was a dizzying joy.

His longed-for opportunity was at hand. Every step of his procedure was planned and tested in advance.

Daily, after tea, Miss Ginevra lay down for an hour's twilight nap. Daily, at the same hour, her athletic young secretary, Graeme Bliss, went for his brisk five-mile walk. Today, at dusk, the whole household staff, from rickety old Jerram down, would be busy in the kitchen wing of the house, on preparations for the ponderous dinner party.

Blayne said over to himself the safe's combination, the combination he had acquired by picking with a button-hook the antiquated lock of the secret drawer of Miss Ginevra's desk:

Ten. Right twice, stop at twenty. Right three times, stop at thirty. Left four times, stop at five.

What a silly combination for a safe that contained, just now, considerably more than a half-million dollars' worth of precious stones! And yet the old mummy trusted nobody! These suspicious people were really the easiest to rook!

Blayne had worked out each and every step of his program. He had seen to it that each was flawlessly fool-proof. He was ready. He had been ready for a long time, ready and waiting.

Time can be the best friend or the worst enemy of a crook. Blayne had had illimitable time wherein to play his game.

Thus, Time was his best friend.

Not fifteen minutes after the aged safe's doors had slammed shut on the jewelry he made his first move.

Miss Ginevra Garrod was in her study, dictating letters to Graeme Bliss. Chips snoozed at his mistress's feet, in a shaft of sunshine. Blayne made excuse to enter the room.

Miss Ginevra's temper never was sunny. Today, by reason of the great events in preparation for the evening, her temper was at its least desirable. As Blayne came in she looked up crossly from the faint-scrawled notes she was consulting in the dictation of a business letter.

"What do you want, Blayne?" she demanded, with no urbanity at all. "Can't you see I'm busy? It's bad enough to _____"

"If you please, ma'am," said Blayne, deferentially apologetic, "your dress for this evening has just come, and I've laid it out on your bed. And——"

He got no further. Chips, aroused from his nap by Blayne's entrance, had waked in merry mood. He got to his feet and shook himself and leered obliquely at the intruder. With exaggerated show of terror, Blayne took a step backward.

This was enough for Chips. In gay simulation of wrath he bounded growling toward the masquerader.

But Blayne did not retreat or protest, as usual. Instead, he stood his ground. As Chips bore down upon him, the charging mongrel was met by a hard kick.

The boot toe missed the onrushing dog's face, but smote him glancingly on the shoulder with enough force to send him rolling over and over. Blayne accompanied the kick with a falsetto yell of:

“Get out, you filthy cur! You drive me fair crazy, so you do! I’ll kick the wretched head off of you if you don’t leave me be!”

Miss Ginevra had been merely cross. Now she flamed, of a sudden, to righteous and blazing rage, at this unforgivably outrageous assault upon her beloved pet, and at the hideously bad training shown by her hitherto irreproachable maid.

In a mere mouthful of searing words she rebuked the offender, the while cuddling the indignant Chips and exploring his tough body for possible broken bones.

She ended the briefly lurid diatribe by discharging Blayne and by bidding Graeme Bliss write out a check for the culprit’s wages, including an extra month’s pay in lieu of notice.

“You will be out of my house before nightfall,” she commanded. “As soon as you can pack your things. And you go without a reference. Now leave the room!”

Muttering under his breath in most convincing ill-temper, but with all the birds on earth singing in his glad heart, Herb Blayne departed for his own quarters. His ruse had succeeded, right gloriously.

Very slowly and with every show of thoroughness he began to pack. Old Jerram came to the door to ask if he could be of any help to this disgraced compatriot of his. Blayne merely sobbed in convincing fashion and went on packing.

For so expert a lady’s maid this process of packing was very slow and very strange. But at last it was finished, at about sunset.

Asking Jerram to send for a messenger boy, Blayne consigned his two large portmanteaux to the youth and told

him whither to carry them. The address was a suburban hotel some miles away.

Then, as dusk drew on, Blayne began to work much more rapidly. He discarded his feminine attire and rolled it into a compact bundle, to be dropped into the nearest street-sewer outlet. In the middle of the bundle was his well-built black wig.

Next, he arrayed himself as a man, in a loose tweed suit, into whose pocket he stuffed a folded soft hat. Over his clothes he donned a woman's ulster, old-fashioned but inconspicuous, whose hem came well below his shoe-tops. He put on his head a neat black cloche.

Headgear and ulster were to join the bundle of clothes in the sewer opening when he should be a square or two away from the house. Then, putting on the folding soft hat, he could swing along without fear of recognition; a 100 per cent man from top to toe.

It was all absurdly simple and safe. And now for the really important part of the whole affair!

Down the servants' staircase marched Blayne with no effort at concealment. Only when he reached the main floor of the house did he turn furtive. For a moment he stood and listened. But all was as he had known it would be.

Miss Ginevra, virulently annoyed at the prospect of having to press one of the housemaids into service as lady's maid, that evening, was lying down in her own room, for her usual after-tea rest.

Bliss Graeme was out on his twilight walk. Blayne had seen Bliss go swinging down the street some time earlier.

Jerram and all the other servants were vigorously busy in preparations for the evening's festivities. The front part of the main floor was deserted, except for the ulstered and cloche-hatted Blayne.

On silent feet Blayne sped into the library and shoved aside the landscape picture which masked the door of the wall safe. Then his nimble fingers were on the safe's knob.

Ten. Right twice, stop at twenty. Right three times, stop at thirty. Left, four times, stop at five.

There was a click. The door opened at Blayne's impatient wrench. With another glance of caution over his shoulder, the man fell to work.

In much less than a minute the Faith Diamond and its pendant, the triple rope of pearls, and several less precious but decidedly worth-while ornaments were wrapped separately in white tissue and were stuffed, together, into a stout chamois bag.

The bag was thrust into a pocket of Blayne's undercoat. The safe's door was shut and its knob was twirled. Blayne was on his way, no longer furtively, toward the servants' entrance, to the right side of the house's basement.

He was rich, independent, settled luxuriously for life. Or he would be as soon as he should have disposed of his treasure through a "fence" he knew and could trust. Now to get out into the open and on his way! True, it would have been vastly pleasant to slit that horrible dog's throat before departing. But one cannot have everything. Besides, Chips was nowhere in sight.

Chips had been brushed and combed carefully that afternoon, by no less expert hands than old Jerram's, and under Miss Ginevra's supervision. Then Miss Ginevra had tied upon his thick throat an enormous cerise satin bow, and had gazed with pride on the disgusted dog. She was looking forward happily to the impression her beautiful canine chum was certain to make on the evening's guests. After which she lay down for her daily twilight nap, insisting that the unwearied Chips lie down also on his fluffy pink rug beside the bed.

Chips had had experience in this kind of thing, before, and he had studied the position more than once with a view to its possibilities of escape.

When at last Miss Ginevra dozed—it took much longer, this afternoon, than usual, for her to fall asleep—Chips moved pussyfootedly to the bedroom door, which was slightly ajar.

He nosed his way through and pattered noiselessly downstairs. In due time he had descended unseen to the cellar. There, atop a heap of coal, was a window whose glass was broken. Through it wriggled Chips and out onto the side lawn. He was free.

On the veranda of the house next door sprawled lazily a big police dog, the Otho with which Miss Ginevra so often had forbidden Chips to play.

At sight of the mongrel, Otho came trotting gayly across to meet him. The two touched noses in greeting. Then Chips snatched up a twig and set off at a circular gallop with it. Otho gave chase. The romp was on.

The wide circle in which he cantered brought Chips presently within a few yards of the servants' entrance. He

heard a door shut softly.

At the same time he was aware of a hostile scent, the scent of the disguised man who had kicked him so painfully and brutally not three hours ago.

The little dog halted precipitately in mid-canter. He snarled, his upper lip curling back from his funny little teeth. Otho stopped, also, at sight of this show of anger on the part of his chum.

Too shrewd and too nearly human not to be secretly glad of Otho's formidable aid in case of another kick, Chips dashed ragingly at the departing Blayne. The insult of the early afternoon was due to be wiped out, then and there.

Before Blayne could reach the street, Chips had overhauled him, Otho jogging inquisitively along behind. Blayne wheeled about at sound of his chronic enemy's scurrying approach.

Catching sight of Chips through the gloom, the man braced himself and aimed a kick far heavier and more murderous than he had dare to in their earlier encounter that day.

In the former event Blayne had merely wished to make Miss Ginevra discharge him. Now he was avid to square accounts with the cur he detested. Wherefore, the kick was delivered with all Blayne's wiry strength.

Had it landed full on its objective, there would have been broken bones, if not a crushed spine.

But twilight is an ill time for gauging distances. As before, Blayne's boot merely grazed Chips's shoulder, yet this time most painfully, and knocking the charging mongrel through the air for several feet. Chips gave vent to a loud yelp of hurt and astonishment.

The yelp had several immediate effects.

For one thing, it penetrated to a room in the house next door, where Otho's owner, young Carryl Deane, sat reading. Deane sprang up and ran to the side door. He recognized the howl as Chips's; and he dreaded lest Otho in their play had inadvertently injured the smaller dog.

Remembering Miss Ginevra's dire threats and, like everyone else, standing in trembling awe of the dreadful old lady, Deane sought to establish an alibi by getting Otho indoors as quickly as might be.

So he whistled in shrill command to the police dog.

Chips's yelp had been wafted through the open windows of Miss Ginevra's bedroom, just as she was rising from her unsatisfactory nap. She, too, recognized Chips's voice. Hobbly, yet with what speed she could summon, she hurried downstairs and out onto the lawn.

Jerram and the second man, in the butler's pantry, also had heard the cry. Both of them came hastening out to learn what had befallen so important and popular a member of the household. Jerram snatched up a flashlight as he ran.

But the most immediate and drastic effect of Chips's yelp was upon Otho, the huge police dog. Seeing his jolly little pal kicked and hearing the squeal of pain, Otho hurled himself vengefully at the assailant.

Blayne saw the peril in time to turn and flee across the lawn in something less than record time; making for the nearest tree. Fast as he ran his mind moved faster.

It was plain he could not outstrip this demon of a police dog. Otho would get him down. People would arrive to

investigate the rumpus. It would be discovered that he was dressed as a man and had discarded his wig.

This by itself would be enough to rouse suspicion. He might be searched. Then——

Snatching the chamois bag from his pocket, Blayne flung it into the very heart of a juniper clump. There would be ample chance to creep back later and recover it. Meanwhile, it must not be found on him by any possible searchers.

Scarcely had the thrown bag left his hand when Otho had overtaken him. The police dog leaped upon Blayne's shoulders from behind, pulling him down and ripping away the upper half of the ulster. As Blayne rolled over in a futile effort to get up, Otho dived for his throat. Instinctively, Blayne put out his right arm to guard his menaced jugular. The police dog's teeth met in the "heel" of his hand.

Blayne was halfway to his feet as Otho crashed against him this second time. Back he was knocked, with tremendous impetus. His skull banged resoundingly against a sharp edge of the lawn's rock-garden.

Blayne's taut sinews relaxed. He slumped in a huddled heap, senseless.

Before Otho could follow up his advantage, Carryl Deane's imperative whistle came to his ears. Trained from puppyhood to implicit obedience, the police dog turned reluctantly from his helpless prey and ran to the master who had summoned him.

Pausing only long enough to thrust Otho into the house and to slam shut the side door behind him, Deane hurried apprehensively over to mid-lawn to find how badly Chips had been hurt.

At almost that moment Miss Ginevra, with Jerram and the footman, issued from the Garrod house on the same hasty mission.

When Otho had given chase to the fleeing Blayne, Chips had followed as fast as his short legs would permit. As he ran he had seen Blayne toss something into the juniper clump. Ever morbidly inquisitive, Chips yearned to investigate. But more thrilling work was afoot and the investigation could wait.

Panting and pattering, he came up to where Blayne lay stunned, just as Otho had galloped off in obedience to Deane's whistle.

Thus Chips was left alone on the field of battle—alone except for this huddled and inert thing that lay so still on the lawn in front of him. The little dog sniffed at Blayne's bitten and bleeding hand. Then he placed both forepaws on the senseless thief's chest and sniffed inquiringly at the upturned face.

It was then that Deane and Jerram and the second man and Miss Ginevra debouched upon the scene of carnage.

Jerram's flashlight revealed a man lying bleeding and unconscious on the sward, a woman's ulster half torn from his body, a cloche hat lying close beside him.

Standing fierce guard over the victim posed Chips—Chips with ferocious mien and blood-smirched jaws; Chips the heroic conqueror; a nobly inspiring sight!

While all stood mute, the flashlight rays played vividly upon the prostrate man's face. Miss Ginevra croaked in unbelieving amaze:

“Blayne! It’s—it can’t—— It *is* Blayne! And—and she’s a MAN! Not a woman at all! Look at those clothes and that shortcropped hair. Why, the very features have changed! He _____”

Her babbled words were drowned in a triple exclamation of wonder.

“Lord, madam!” blithered Jerram, stooping down to peer more closely. “Lord, madam, but you’re right! It’s——”

“He is a thief! A robber!” declaimed Miss Ginevra, getting back a fraction of her wonted keen mentality. “I understand it all, now! Every bit of it. He came, as a lady’s maid, just to rob me. There was a case like that, in New York, when I was a girl! He’s——”

Her cracked voice scaled a whole octave as she cried in fresh excitement:

“And Chips caught him while he was escaping! Chips caught him and dragged him down and gave him that bite on the hand; and then held him prisoner till we could come to his help. I heard Chips’s terrible howl of anger as he attacked the wretch. That’s what brought me downstairs and out here. He mangled Blayne and dragged him down and——”

She broke into a passion of tears and clasped the wriggling and uncomfortably fidgeting dog to her breast.

Jerram turned his flashlight for the merest instant on the bitten hand. He noted the great rending teeth-marks in the flesh. Mentally he visualized Chips’s comical little inefficient jaw with its diminutive teeth.

But he said not a word. He merely shifted the flashlight’s ray from the bitten hand and scratched his own head in dire perplexity.

Graeme Bliss turned in from the street. Seeing the gabbling group on the lawn, he ran across to where they clustered around Blayne.

At sight of her secretary, Miss Ginevra let Chips slip gently to the ground, while she poured forth to Graeme the thrilling tale of her dog's magnificent exploit.

Chips was glad to be set free. Not only did he hate to be hugged, but he remembered something which had roused his itching curiosity to a flood pitch—the throwing of that yellowish missile into the juniper clump.

Now there was spare time to nose at it and to find what it might be.

In the back of his queer brain, throughout, that maggot of inquisitiveness had been gnawing. At last he could satisfy it.

To the clump he went. There, it was entirely easy for him to locate and seize the chamois bag, for the hated scent of Blayne's clutch was still strong upon it.

While Miss Ginevra was still midway in her glowing recital, Chips came trotting back into the arc of flashlight gleam, and straight up to her. Between his jaws he carried a lumpy yellow chamois sack. He laid it at his mistress's feet.

He brought it to her through no loyalty; but because it seemed to promise little further interest for him as a plaything, and because Miss Ginevra always praised him inordinately whenever he brought her any kind of offering.

Praise was mildly pleasant to Chips.

Jerram lifted the bag and opened it. He drew forth the topmost of the tissue-paper packages and shook it.

The flashlight's glare gave back a myriad multicolored flames and starpoints from the priceless Faith Diamond!

“*Now* the whole mystery is cleared up, as plain as day!” shrieked Miss Ginevra, breaking the silence of stark astonishment which fell for a moment upon them all. “Can’t you see? Chips caught him creeping out of the house with my jewelry. He tore the bag away from Blayne and then he fought him and he overpowered him and he guarded him till we could——”

A hollow groan from the slowly recovering thief interrupted her.

Jerram stood with mouth ajar and bulging eyes. Here was an element in the drama even more amazing than the fact that Chips seemed to have borrowed a set of teeth five times as large as his own, to bite Blayne’s hand with. The retrieving of the jewels left Jerram’s brain blank and useless.

Spellbound, the ancient butler watched Graeme Bliss and Deane and the second man bend down to seize the groggy Blayne. In a trance of dumb listlessness, he heard Miss Ginevra croon exultingly as she caught Chips to her heart again:

“After this I’ll feel safer, with my magnificent hero to guard me, than if I had a whole battalion of Marines camped on the lawn. What are Marine ‘devil-dogs,’ compared with *my* angel devil-dog? Chips, you’re going to get a diamond-studded hero-medal and a——”

“By your leave, madam,” stuttered Jerram, his old voice shaky and seeming to come from far away, “by your leave, I think he’d a good bit rather have a big T-bone steak, madam. He had his fair chance at eating some real nice diamonds, just now, and he didn’t take so much as a nibble at ’em. The steak will please him best.”

“Jerram!” snapped Miss Ginevra. “You’re a fool.... But, like most fools, sometimes you have a way of being right. Take him into the house and give him a steak, if there’s one to be found. Only, be sure to cut it up very fine. His poor jaws must be tired out, after the frightful exercise they’ve just been having.”

CHAPTER VI

“Formerly Chips”

“CHIPS!” old Miss Ginevra Garrod addressed the tatterdemalion little yellow mongrel that leered amusedly up at her. “The only reason why an all-wise Providence failed to endow you with the doubtful blessing of speech was to keep you from being too far superior to us humans.”

This absurd outburst of praise was caused by Chips jumping to his feet and gyrating eagerly from his mistress to the front door and back, at sound of a motor-car that was drawing up to the veranda steps.

Fifty cars a day might pause near the grim old Garrod mansion or stop at its door. But Chips paid no heed to any of them, unless his sharp hearing caught the hum of one of the Garrod engines.

Invariably, he could tell the hum and chug of Miss Ginevra’s cars from all others. At sound of them he would have a brain-storm of joyous expectancy. For the car’s arrival was likely to mean a drive. The queer little cur was insanely fond of motoring.

There are many thousand dogs that have taught themselves the difference in sound between their masters’ cars and all other automobiles; even as of old a myriad country dogs could recognize the gait of their owners’ horses, from all others, as far as the hoof-beats could be heard.

Thus, there was nothing remarkable in Chips's having learned the special timbre of the Garrod motors and to know that their arrival at the door might connote a drive. It is a fairly common canine perception.

But to Miss Ginevra it was nothing short of incredible. It bore out what she always had declared—that Chips was a super-dog, the most wonderful of his race, the most amazingly brilliant animal of any kind on the face of the earth.

Never until she was far past seventy had Miss Garrod owned a dog, nor so much as lived in the same house with one—never until she had acquired Chips. Thus, to her, Chips's most ordinary feats of intelligence were breath-taking.

There was something perhaps more pathetic than laughable in the hold the uncaring mongrel had taken upon the heart and the life of the crotchety old woman.

Her vast wealth and her social Tsardom had choked her path with flatterers and with self-seeking hangers-on. In her younger years there had been hideous disillusionments. But, of recent decades——

“My dear,” she had said to her companion, Dorothy Fane, just before Dorothy's marriage to Bliss, “this is the time when the elderly relative or elderly friend is supposed to make a few well-chosen remarks to the bride. These well-chosen remarks I shall omit, by request. My own request.

“You are young. You are almost pretty. You are going to be married to a man you love—a man also young and good to look upon and no more stupid than the general average of youth. That is enough for both of you; enough for the gods themselves.

“To pile wise advice upon happiness like that, would be to offer a stale ham sandwich to a surfeited banqueter.

“But if your love-stuffed brain can hold any thoughts for the future—the far and inevitable future—here is something for you to remember and one day to profit by:

“Nobody loves the very old. The very old who are poor are neglected, unless their children have been thrashed often enough in youth to have acquired the ancestor fetish—a fetish common enough in my own early days, but luckily dwindling fast toward the ideal point in vogue among the wise Eskimos, who have the sense to push their old people into a hole in the ice and leave them there.

“The very old who are rich—myself, for the nearest example—are fawned on and cheated and despised. Their loving relatives have one sweet thought of them, every day of their lives. The thought is, ‘How soon will she leave us—and how much?’

“If the very old have any sense—as *I* have—they will realize this and get what pleasure they still can out of such outward adulation as they can evoke, and from any other substance that may be left on life’s withered husk. They will trust nobody. Daily I say to myself, ‘A fool and her money are soon courted!’ And I dodge such sycophantic courtship or else I rap it over the nose.

“Chips is too divinely wise to understand that money has any value. Thus, he has not one eye upon my fortune. He loves me for myself alone. That is why I can return his love, with no fear of being robbed, and that is why I can trust him.... The rest of you? I can’t even despise you, nor blame you.

“God help the very old and send them the speedy blessing of Sleep! Until Chips came into my life I did not care how soon that Sleep might be sent. But Chips has given me something to live for.... Laugh if you wish to. It is true.”

Miss Ginevra spoke lightly, as if giving her horrifiedly protesting young listener a choice of believing her words or of taking them as a ponderous attempt at wit. But, at the bottom of her atrophied old heart, she was fearsomely in earnest in her opinion of the world’s regard for the very old.

To nothing and nobody had she given unstintedly her love and her trust—until the advent of Chips. On him she lavished the devotion which should have gone to the children she never had had. The dog was her one blind adoration. In return Chips regarded her with a mischievous tolerance.

Today, the arrival of the motor to take Miss Ginevra for her afternoon drive had evoked from Chips the usual demonstration of joy, and from his mistress the equally usual pæans of praise.

A maid was helping Miss Ginevra into her many layers of wraps. Jerram, her very ancient English butler, was waiting at the top of the outer steps to escort her to the car at the curb. The chauffeur had already taken his stand, rug over arm, beside the open door of the limousine.

All, in short, was in its wonted order for the ceremonial drive.

At the Garrod house everything was always in precise order for something or other. For each move of Miss Ginevra’s had long ago become more or less of a ceremonial, and to be attended on as such.

Chips alone, in that household’s otherwise hard-and-fast equation, was the eternally unknown factor, ever destroying

the solemn symmetry of routine.

This afternoon, for example, as Miss Garrod swept down the house front steps in slow majesty, leaning on stiff-legged old Jerram's arm, Chips bounded between the two ancients with a crazy fervor that all but upset them both.

Jerram clawed at the balustrade to save himself from a fall. Miss Ginevra clawed at Jerram's arm, for the same reason.

"Chips!" she shrilled in tender rebuke. "I am ashamed of you! Come back at once, and——"

Then she noted the cause of the dog's scrambling dash down the steps. Her reproof ended midway in a fatuous "boys will be boys" smile as she watched his rocketing flight.

From the doorway, Chips had beheld a gaunt and peculiarly chasable cat, mincing across the lawn between house and sidewalk. With characteristic fervor he had sped in pursuit of the feline trespasser.

Across the lawn he spun, while the cat let out an unbelievable burst of speed as she spied the oncoming enemy. Her tail the thickness of a baseball bat, and all her mangy hairs erect with indignant terror, she threw her whole heart into the attempt to keep well in the lead until some friendly tree should afford easier mode of escape.

Chips was having a glorious time. For speed and for spirit this cat was a rarely worth-while quarry.

Giving vent to his glad excitement with a series of breathless yelps, he performed such prodigies of sprinting as nobody would have believed his stubby little legs could achieve.

He did more. Craftily he guided the chase in such direction that the cat had no time nor scope to turn aside toward any

tree. Chips saw to that.

Miss Ginevra watched the mad hunt with the thrill which might possess a fond mother who sees her only son score the winning touchdown for his varsity team. Even stodgy old Jerram so far forgot his aged dignity as to exhort under his breath:

“At ’er, Chips, me buck! Ah, *well* run!”

Thanks to Chips’s deftness in chivvying his feline prey clear of trees, the chase was prolonged far beyond the average distance for such pastimes. Cat and dog disappeared presently around the nearest street corner, the cat maintaining its lead with increasing difficulty.

Thus, the two passed out of the watchers’ sight; skidding perilously as they rounded the corner, and becoming lost to view.

Then only did Miss Garrod bethink herself to order her pet’s recall. At the top of her thin old voice she shouted his name, again and again.

But Chips had traveled far out of earshot. He would not have obeyed the quaveringly imperative summons even if he had heard it. Obedience went ever to the wall, with Chips, when it chanced to clash with inclination.

Failing to win her point by vocal effort, Miss Ginevra called up her auxiliaries. Sharply she bade Jerram and the chauffeur to follow the disobedient pursuer and to bring him back to her at once; ere he lose himself among strange surroundings or even be stolen.

Briskly the chauffeur set forth on his quest, followed at a perforce soberer pace by Jerram.

But in this instance the race was neither to the swift nor to the rheumatic. Both men returned, after fifteen minutes of fruitless scouring of the whole neighborhood, with word that Chips was nowhere to be found. Apparently the solid ground had opened and swallowed him.

He was gone.

There was no stately afternoon drive for Miss Ginevra Garrod that day. In an agony of worry for her worshiped pet's safety, she impressed into swift service every male employee she had, from Graeme Bliss, her secretary, to the house man.

Singly they were sent forth into each neighboring street and alley, with stern instructions not to come back without Chips—to hunt for him all night, if need be—to widen the first zone of their search until the spreading human net should encompass and recapture the Lost One.

The chauffeur was luckier than the rest. He was bidden to follow, in the limousine, all possible routes which Chips and the cat might be supposed to have taken after their disappearance around the corner, and to keep an eagle-sharp lookout for the wanderer.

The others were forced to do their tedious searching on foot, through the slush.

Back and forth, throughout the gloomily huge first floor of her gloomily huge mansion, Miss Ginevra paced, in an anguish of apprehension. At one moment she was certain some motor-vehicle had cut down mercilessly the darling little dog as he chased the cat from one curb to another. She pictured Chips writhing and screaming his life out, and she wished she had given the men special instructions to examine every gutter.

The next moment she visualized some fiend in human form grabbing up the fast-galloping Chips and hiding him under a coat and hustling him off to some foul lair, to hold him for reward.

Then the potential thief shifted to some less demoniac person who, tempted beyond his or her strength by Chips's unearthly beauty and loveliness, had stolen him for a pet.

By the time the first searcher slunk back, sullenly unsuccessful, the old lady's usually firm nerves were ripped and shaken almost to the point of hysteria. She was dizzy and panting. Her temper shared the fate of her nerves.

No Oriental potentate ever poured forth upon messengers of evil tidings such vials of vitriolic wrath as did Miss Ginevra upon her returning servitors as they straggled in at nightfall, tired and wet and chilled to the bone, after their hours of futile quest.

"Dear Miss Garrod," pleaded Graeme Bliss, "you'll make yourself ill if you go on this way. There is every chance that Chips will be found again. The first thing in the morning I will go to the dog pound—it's shut by this time, for the night—and to the animal shelters. I've told the police to be on the lookout for him, too. I've taken the liberty of promising them a fat cash reward if——"

"Yes, Graeme," dryly commented Miss Ginevra, "you have always been magnificently generous with my money. I accord you that much appreciation. But this time you were right. Money doesn't mean anything if only I can get Chips back."

"I was certain you would approve of——"

"But," her voice and temper gathering force, "before scolding me for 'going on this way,' please remember you

are quite young enough to be the grandson God never cursed me with. It is not your place to criticize my ‘going on.’ ”

“I didn’t mean——”

“I could listen with admirable self-control—and even with exemplary cheerfulness—to the news that you or any other human of my acquaintance had been run over by a truck or had been irretrievably lost,” volleyed Miss Garrod. “Even if I can’t bear this suspense about Chips with the same fine equanimity. Kindly remember Chips is my well-loved comrade. Not merely my secretary. Secretaries can be replaced, by the gross. But there is only one Chips.”

Whereat Graeme Bliss gave over his well-meant efforts to soothe his nerve-scourged employer, and left her alone to her unhappiness.

Next morning, before breakfast, Bliss made his way to the dog pound.

Alas! that such a saga of suspense should end with such a slumping anti-climax! In the pen reserved for worthless mongrels—those for whose reclaiming there was scant hope—the secretary beheld the missing Chips.

Chips was enjoying every minute of his stay in these drear quarters. He had begun the day by thrashing in fair fight another mongrel, slightly larger than himself. Now he was munching relishfully the breakfast from which he had driven away three smaller dogs.

He greeted Graeme Bliss, of whom he was mildly fond, in debonair friendliness, when the secretary paid his fine and bore him to the waiting car.

Bliss also bore away the information that, on the preceding afternoon, Chips’s blind pursuit of the cat had sent him

scurrying against the very legs of an official dog-catcher.

As the dog wore neither the legally required muzzle nor the still more legally required license tag, and as he was unaccompanied except by his pace-maker, the fast-fleeing cat, the official had gathered him into his net and had slung him into a wagon containing several other canine unfortunates.

Thence he was driven to the pound.

It was not a tale of high enterprise, nor even of thrilling adventure. Bliss told it to Miss Ginevra while, ecstatically, the old lady hugged to her thin breast the totally unimpressed Chips. Her joy in her pet's return made her all but apologize for her vitriolic diatribe of the night before.

If Miss Ginevra Garrod had been content to let well enough alone, that would have been the tame end of the whole affair. But she was not. As soon as her first reaction of delight began to simmer down, her indignation blazed forth afresh.

Who were these miserable city officials, anyhow, to impound and risk the life of a harmless pet dog? The name of Garrod had been a mighty spell in Philadelphia for two hundred years. Was the last and richest and most dreaded scion of the line to be flouted in this way by a wretched dog-catcher?

Had she and her dog no rights that could be safeguarded? She had been put to a night of frantic grief and worry over the loss of her chum; just because some high-handed dog-catcher had the insolence to steal and incarcerate Chips.

Was there no punishment for such an atrocity, no way to frighten the same class of men into keeping their sacrilegious

hands off her canine friend in future? If there was a law in the land——!

Miss Ginevra Garrod summoned her personal attorney and gave fiery commands.

She bade him secure a warrant for the arrest of the scoundrel who, unlawfully, had impounded her precious dog, and to bring suit against the city itself for its employee's lawless action.

When the lawyer pointed out to her that she had no case whatever, she went over his head by appearing in person in the district's police court and demanding a warrant for the dog-catcher's arrest.

This wrath-scourged action was one of the very few strategic errors in the old lady's long and otherwise ultra-sane life. For the reporters gathered in swarms to the feast.

That the great Miss Ginevra Garrod, ninth richest woman in America and a social super-lion, should appear personally in a police court was a front-page story by itself.

That a burningly righteous ire should shatter her lifelong rule of refusing interviews and should make her talk not only freely but searingly of the outrage to her wonder-dog, was an added attraction to the story's news value.

The climax was reached when the court not only refused her the demanded warrant, but imposed a fine upon her for permitting her dog to go unmuzzled in defiance of the city's ordinances and for neglecting to license him.

This bench dictum brought from the furious Miss Ginevra a tirade which all but caused her arrest for contempt of court.

The matter would have gone much further and more disastrously; had not high powers in city and state and

national government intervened secretly in her behalf and had not Graeme Bliss surreptitiously paid the muzzle-fine and the license fee out of his own pocket.

But no power could be wielded to keep the story out of the Philadelphia papers and out of the Associated Press dispatches. The nation's news-dispensers have scant respect for the sanctity of rank; especially when the rank-bearers are not also heavy advertisers.

The occurrence was played up, to hideous length and with a mirthful slant, in every newspaper the angry old lady chanced to see. For the moment, the lofty Miss Ginevra Garrod and Chips were notorious from one end of America to the other.

Had a group of courtiers combined to yank the throne out from under the late Emperor of Austria as he was seating himself majestically thereon for the convening of parliament, and had a mischievous chamberlain substituted a dunce-cap for the imperial crown, that etiquette-ridden monarch could have felt no wilder nor more incredulous amazement than was Miss Garrod's at the flood of jocose publicity which overwhelmed her.

For two centuries the Garrods—*THE* Garrods—had reigned as undisputed sovereigns in their own Philadelphia social sphere. No taint of scandal and assuredly no smirch of humorous or sensational publicity had touched the sacred family name.

And now their latest and greatest representative found herself the butt of a nation's ridicule. It was impossible, unthinkable. Yet it had happened.

By shutting her doors firmly and furiously against all reporters Miss Ginevra escaped further humiliating

interviews. But those already smeared over a score of front pages could not be recalled.

Craftily, her lawyer and Graeme Bliss worked on her horror of publicity, to coax her into providing Chips with a muzzle and letting his silver link-collar be defiled by a garish brass license tag. To refuse, they explained, would be to court future legal proceedings and thus to entail future abhorrent notoriety.

On these grounds and on these alone, she yielded to their urgings.

Within a few days, floods of more interesting local and national occurrences wiped Miss Ginevra's name from the news pages. The funny incident was forgotten by the public at large. But it was burned indelibly deep into Miss Garrod's soul.

Raging shame still tore at her, day and night. Nor are such emotions good for the nerves and health of the very old.

The muzzle was bought. An expensive and supposedly comfortable muzzle. Jerram chose it. Jerram adjusted it to Chips's funny little nose.

Ensued a scene of maniac strife.

It was in Miss Ginevra's sacred first-floor study that the muzzle was donned, and under Miss Ginevra's own loving supervision. Chips viewed the new toy with much interest—until the thing was strapped upon his face.

This was an indignity, a gross indignity, an unpardonable familiarity, even from so valued a friend as Jerram. Besides, the muzzle chafed and teased his unaccustomed jaws. He proceeded forthwith to make every possible effort to rid himself of it.

This he essayed, first by trying to scrape it off against Jerram's legs and the nearest chairs.

Failing, he went berserk, charging about the solemnly tasteful room like a miniature battering ram; whacking the muzzle against everything within reach, then spinning in circles, with some vague notion of shedding it in that way.

He gave a vivid imitation of a cyclone afflicted with running fits.

Miss Ginevra screamed. Jerram toiled vainly and rheumatically in the wake of the flying victim, seeking to catch and hold him. The room's lighter items of furniture crashed noisily to the ground, some of them breaking to atoms.

Servants came running to the study, drawn by the screams and by the crashing and by the incessant volley of yells from Chips. Graeme Bliss tackled the whizzing dog in football fashion, holding him by main force and ripping off the muzzle.

Instantly Chips calmed down. He had won his point. There was no further need for hysterics.

Jerram studied the situation. Then he went to an expert, who took careful measurements of Chips's foreface and made for him a super-expensive and guaranteed painless muzzle. On the day of its arrival it was to be donned when Miss Garrod and Chips should go for their regular morning walk through the grounds.

With much loving persuasion Miss Ginevra approached Chips with the nice new custom-made gift. To incite the dog further to wear it, Jerram held open the side veranda door in token that a walk was in prospect.

This time Chips did not hold back, nor bolt.

Instead, he dashed up to Miss Ginevra and snatched the proffered muzzle from her grasp. He turned and ran with it, between Jerram's rheumatic legs and out into the garden.

On he galloped, to the extreme end of the grounds, to a spot where a flower-border had just been spaded up.

With piston-like forelegs he dug a deep hole in this border, the upthrown dirt enveloping him like a murky cloud as he wrought. At the bottom of this hole he deposited the muzzle. Still working with galvanic energy, he nosed the soft earth in above it until the new-made pit was filled.

Then, unconcernedly, he trotted back to the house.

"That settles it!" cried Miss Ginevra, who had been watching his performance with awed admiration. "No dog but Chips would have had the genius to get rid of something he hated, in such a sublimely clever way. He has earned his right to go unmuzzled for the rest of his life. There never was such another dog!" she finished, as Chips patted at her white cashmere house-dress's skirt approvingly with his earth-crusted forepaws, and danced around her in jocose friendliness.

"But, madam," protested Jerram, "the law says——"

"The law hereabouts has always said pretty much what the Garrods have wished it to say—so far as our family has been concerned," augustly retorted Miss Ginevra. "And it will be the same, even in these degenerate days. But we must give it time to work. I shall dictate three letters, today. They will set the needful machinery in motion."

"Yes, Madam."

“But it may take some little time. And, meanwhile, there are two things I intend to avoid. One of them is the slightest discomfort for Chips. The other is odious mention in the newspapers. The only way that I can see, for doing it, is to pack up and go to Garrodshurst a month earlier than usual.... Have everything set in motion at once, Bliss,” she added, turning imperiously to her secretary.

Thus it was that Miss Ginevra and her retinue moved to the family’s nine-hundred-acre Pocono estate of Garrodshurst, for the season, in early May instead of mid-June. All because of a ragged yellow mongrel’s detestation for wearing a muzzle.

At Garrodshurst, Chips could frisk around for miles, in any direction, without coming in contact with the law and without danger of death under a car’s wheels.

But, for the first time in his several successive summers at Garrodshurst, Chips did not frisk.

Gradually he was acquiring a staidness of gait and a disinclination for the violent exercise which hitherto had been his joy. Miss Ginevra observed, and Miss Ginevra worried.

For many months now Miss Ginevra had had one thing after another to worry over; she who had sailed serenely through life, imperious and untroubled, for nearly eight decades. Also, the placid routine of those decades had been broken into, rudely, of late, by one hard nerve-shock after another.

Worry and shocks alike had been supplied exclusively by the volcanic Chips.

First, the dog had been stolen by Raikes, and had been held for ransom under threat of death. Miss Garrod’s own shrewd

wit had brought that nefarious scheme to naught. But the strain had been bad for her.

Next, according to the accepted version of the tale, Chips had overtaken and overpowered and captured a gem-thief who was escaping from the Garrod home with a chamois bag full of jewelry, and the dog had restored the jewels to their distraught owner. Shock number two.

Followed his disappearance and impounding and the nauseously mortifying experiences of his mistress in police court and in press.

These things had combined to affect Miss Ginevra's health rather seriously. When one nears the age of eighty, a calmly ordered life is all necessary. And now came the new worry about Chips's lack of spirit for romps and for his regular daily exercise.

The one faint glint of hope Miss Ginevra could glean from the situation was that Chips did not seem to be dropping off in weight. His once-keen appetite, it is true, was waxing capricious. But he was taking on flesh; he who hitherto had been vibrant with whalebone wiriness.

There was no denying it—Chips was growing fat.

“I don't know what to make of it all!” sighed the unhappy Miss Ginevra, to Jerram, one day, as Chips turned heavily away from a dishful of chopped chicken, at which he had merely nibbled, instead of wolfing it down with his former zest. “And it troubles me more than I like anything to trouble me. Yesterday, a rabbit popped out of a grass-clump not three feet ahead of him, while he and I were out walking together. Last year, I wouldn't have seen Chips again all day. He would have chased that rabbit into the next county. But he just pricked up his ears and lumbered after it for a yard or

two and then came waddling back to me. Something is very terribly wrong with him.”

“I wouldn’t worry, madam, if I was you,” soothed Jerram, fidgeting uncomfortably. “I’m sure the good little dog will come out all right. I’ve seen lots of such cases. I’ve had a longish bit of experience with dogs in my day, and——”

“Jerram,” Miss Garrod cut him short, “how many of your sixty-odd years have you spent in my service?”

“Thirty-two, madam, the twelfth of last month,” answered the butler, perplexed at the abrupt question.

“In those thirty-two profitless years, Jerram,” she continued, acidly, “I have had occasion, perhaps seven hundred times, to inform you that you are an old fool. But never have I had more occasion to say it than now. When you see Chips, lazy and slow and heavy and with his appetite and his beautiful high spirits all gone, you have the idiocy to tell me you’re sure he’ll ‘come out all right.’ I am not a child, nor a mental defective, to be consoled by such asinine mush as that.”

“No, madam,” replied Jerram, stolidly.

“I am afraid Chips is growing old,” continued Miss Garrod, as the object of her concern stretched out lazily in the sun and proceeded to go snoringly to sleep. “I have no means of knowing how old he is. I read the other day that old dogs often begin to show their age suddenly, instead of little by little. That they grow fat and stiff and asthmatic within a very few months before—before the—the end. And I have read that a sick dog is usually a dead dog. Most of us humans live too long. Myself, for instance, if you like. But all dogs die too soon.”

She turned away with some suddenness, walking to the terrace edge and blinking unseeingly out at the view.

Jerram looked after her in pitying embarrassment. Of late, the irascible old lady's nerves had made life anything but pleasant for her housemates. At her best she had never been over-patient with any of them. Yet, for some odd reason, every one of them was devoted to her, Jerram most of all.

The butler yearned to comfort her now. But he lacked the power to speak the right words. Stiffly he ventured to follow her to the terrace edge, gripping his courage tightly. But that courage oozed as she turned to face him.

“If there was another dog in the world precisely like Chips,” said she, “a very *young* dog, just precisely as Chips once was, I would pay any sum to buy him. But I would not pay one penny to buy every other dog now on earth. Chips has spoiled me for anything less wonderful than he is. I wish there could be another just like him. But there can't.”

“Well, madam,” ventured Jerram, cryptically, and fidgeting afresh, “queerer wishes than that one have come true. I've—I've a feeling your wish *will* come true, madam. Maybe over and over. See if it don't!”

For a second, Miss Garrod's old eyes blazed. Her thin lips contracted at this clumsy attempt to cheer her. Then the hard eyes softened and the tight lips relaxed.

“Jerram!” she said, touching him impulsively on the shoulder with her withered long fingers. “I'm a wicked old woman. A *peevish* old woman, Jerram. And lately I have been making all of you miserable by my babyish temper. I know that. And—and I am sorry. You are good to me. Better than I deserve. This wretched worry about Chips has made me impossible to get on with. Be patient with me. All of you.

You, most of all, Jerram.... Now, stop chattering and go back to your work! I don't feel like talking." A lump in his throat, the ancient butler withdrew wonderingly into the house. As he went, he saw Miss Ginevra bending in unhappy solicitude over the sleeping dog.

"You never used to snore, Chipsy," she was crooning to him. "And now you keep me awake half the night by it. One might almost as soon have a husband. Or a coffee-mill. I wouldn't mind lying awake, Chips dear, if only I didn't know your snoring must be a sign of whatever terrible thing is the matter with you. Won't you *please* get well again?"

Chips slept, as always, on his fluffy pink mat, close beside Miss Ginevra's huge antique four-poster bed; where his mistress could reach down her hand sometimes in the night to pat his frowsy head and reassure herself as to his watch-dog presence.

One night, a week or so after the uttering of Jerram's cryptic prophecy, Chips forbore the snoring which was his recent deplorable habit.

This because he did no sleeping at all that night.

He had refused to touch a morsel of his toothsome supper, earlier in the evening; and he had seemed more willing than usual to retire to his rug when Miss Ginevra went to bed at half-past ten.

But he did not sleep. A demon of restlessness possessed him. In the darkness, Miss Garrod could hear him scratching vehemently at his rug, as though to make it more comfortable. He tossed and turned and got up and lay down again with a grunt and a thump.

This over and over again for hours. In vain Miss Ginevra sought to quiet him. In vain she sought to get her own quota of sleep.

Once Miss Garrod got up and switched on the light; thinking to still the dog's restlessness by patting him and by the offer of a bowl of milk that had been brought upstairs for his possible delectation during the night.

She found the pink rug tangled into a shapeless snarl, from Chips's continued scratching and nosing of it. She smoothed it straight again; and bade the dog lie down on it.

Then she offered him the bowl of milk. He turned his restless head away from it in disgust. When she sought to force it upon him, he so far forgot himself as to growl crankily at her, for the first time in their long acquaintanceship, and even to snap at the kindly old fingers.

This exhibition of crossness toward his adoring benefactress so hurt Miss Ginevra's feelings and so alarmed her for the dog's welfare that she lay sorrowfully awake for hours thereafter.

At daylight she fell into a troubled doze.

By and by, through her dreams, she thought she could hear Chips crying. His voice appeared to have grown less resonant than of yore and to have taken on a weakly high-pitched squealing tone.

Miss Garrod awoke, in sudden apprehension. But, awake as she was, the squealing did not cease. Indeed it seemed to be a veritable falsetto chorus, rather than a solo.

Dumfounded by the unaccountable multiple sound and obsessed by a nameless terror born of frayed nerves, Miss Garrod reached out through the dense gloom and rang her

bedside bell. Not once, but a dozen times, she pressed the button, in scared haste.

The excited successive summons brought not only her maid running to the bedroom, but half a dozen wondering servants besides.

These, headed by old Jerram, crowded around the doorway, while the maid entered the room.

As usual, the maid went at once to the thick old-fashioned portières which shrouded all the windows. She swept them wide, letting a gush of morning sunlight into the dimness.

Miss Ginevra had risen on one elbow and was staring apprehensively down at Chips. The vivid sunshine illumined the dog and the pink mat, as well as every other object in the gloomy apartment.

Miss Garrod stared downward, wide-eyed and aghast.

No longer restless, but good-naturedly languid, Chips reclined with regal dignity upon the fluffy mat, looking up at the haggard old face that bent over the side of the four-post bed.

Clawing avidly at Chips's furry underbody, and announcing their healthy hunger by a chorus of soft little high-pitched squeaks, sprawled seven nondescript midgets scarcely larger than so many mice.

Miss Ginevra rubbed her eyes, to banish the impossible illusion. Then she stared afresh.

Chips returned her gaze, wagging a feeble but friendly tail. The puppies continued to nurse ravenously.

“Jerram!” gasped Miss Garrod, catching sight of the butler standing in the doorway with a broad grin on his wooden face. “*Jerram!* It—it isn’t TRUE, is it? Tell me, honestly, do

you—do you think you see anything—anything queer about Chips? Or has my poor brain gone, at last? Does he—is he ——?”

“Yes, madam,” proudly announced Jerram. “He—*he is a mother, madam!*”

“HE?” echoed Miss Garrod, her thin old voice scaling an octave.

“Well, madam,” said Jerram with a certain modest hesitation, “you always kept a-calling Chips a ‘he.’ And it seemed to me to be more respectful-like to you, to do the same, seeing as you always called the good little dog ‘he’ instead of ‘she.’ It was so with all of us. We called Chips ‘he’ because we figured you expected us to.”

“*HE!!!*” blithered Miss Ginevra Garrod anew, her eyes fixed upon the miracle at her bedside.

“Yes, madam. I—I—— That was what I was trying to hint at, that time last week, when I said there wasn’t anything to worry yourself about; and—and when I told you you might maybe get your wish for another dog just like Chips. Only, lots of them and lots younger, madam. But you was pleased to call me an old fool, madam. So I didn’t like to make it any plainer. I gathered you didn’t like it to be talked about to you.”

“I——” began Miss Ginevra, still staring fixedly at the canine family on the rug. “I——”

She fell silent. Jerram continued:

“I was sure you knew, madam. That’s why I didn’t say; nor any of the rest of us. But Chips isn’t a ‘he,’ madam. He—I mean *she*—never *has* been a ‘he.’ Not ever since we’ve had him—her. She——”

His voice trailed away. Miss Ginevra had ceased to listen. As one feasting the eyes on a mad impossibility, she sat upright in bed, peering dazedly at the mother and her pups.

Yes, there was something actually regal in Chips's reclining pose and proudly happy aspect.

It was comically reminiscent of the pose and expression of the character depicted in a print which had hung above the bed in Miss Ginevra's nursery, more than seventy years ago; the print of an immortal Egyptian queen.

The longer Miss Ginevra gazed, the more fantastically strong the resemblance became.

"Jerram," ordained the old lady, at last, finding her voice and her suspended mental processes at the same time, "send at once for some warm milk and some good nourishing broth for—for—CLEOPATRA! Formerly Chips."

THE END

[The end of *A Dog Named Chips* by Albert Payson Terhune]