

TIPSY

..A Sketch..

Written for the
CANADIAN HOME
JOURNAL.

By ALICE C. THOMPSON



TIPSY was a small black and tan Dachshund, so fat that she merited the title of "roly-poly," yet pretty and graceful enough to attract attention anywhere.

At the age of eight she had suffered the loss of an eye in a cat-fight, but the experience had not taught her to avoid the feline race.

More brave than wise, she was off the instant she heard one, to give chase in a frenzy of excitement. That cat's cry was to her a clarion battle call. The enemy there! Let it be war to the death, and no quarter!

The mere mention of the word "cat" would make her prick up her pretty ears. It was all she knew of "the chase," and the blood of ancestors, who had, literally, known royal sport, flowed in her veins!

She had several accomplishments, such as jumping over one's interlaced hands, giving a paw to be shaken, and singing to the accompaniment of a human voice raised to a certain high and shrieky key. Between notes she would raise her little head to the ceiling as if seeking inspiration there. But she was most charming when she pretended to be "dead doggie," lying flat on her side, quite lifeless except for the single eye that watched with anxiety for the first sign of permission to come to life again. Then she would jump up in such haste that you felt sure that she said to herself, "There, that's over, and I'm glad of it!" As for begging, it came natural to her. She was in a supplicating attitude the larger part of the day, standing erect on her hind legs with her two short fore paws drooping in front—a quaint and irresistible figure. She begged for everything she wanted, and with almost uniform success. If she did not get it by begging she uttered a little grunt, or a succession of grunts, and that for water was not by any means to be mistaken with that for more covering or with the grunt that begged a walk. Judging the attempt by the result, it must be said that Topsy came very near to human speech.

She slept at night in a hatbox in a cupboard. Sometimes at the unseasonable hour of midnight, or in the dark and early morning, she arose, and, following the ineradicable instincts of her race, began to dig for herself a hole in her cushion. Of course this little habit was rather upsetting to the bedclothes! Finding that she was now uncovered, and being a little dog used to much attention, she announced as plainly as words could do that she had nothing on by giving one low and gentle grunt. It took her some time to learn that she could not be waited on at any hour she fancied to indulge in her little pastime. We had long and lively conversations about it.

"Go to sleep, Topsy."

"Uraph"—meaning "But I tell you my covers are off."

"Stop that noise at once, Topsy."

"Umph"—"I don't think you can possibly understand that I have nothing on me at all."

"Topsy, if you don't stop that noise at once I shall whip you."

After a moment's pause, as if she had been considering the threat and had decided to brave it out, another grunt. "I'm not used to such treatment," it said, whimperingly.

"Very well, Topsy, I'm coming to whip you."

Very faint, almost like a whisper, and pitched in a pathetic minor key, yet one more.

"At least I'll have the last word," said Mrs. Topsy.

It was not denied her, and quiet reigned. I believe it was really a great satisfaction to her to think she had out-talked me. But sometimes when she took this treatment more to heart, she would continue for some time to give utterance to her wounded feelings in a series of gentle whines or short hiccoughs, that had the very human effect of uncontrollable sobbing.

She was ready to eat at any time, and though she seldom refused anything, she had her own favorite dishes. She would take hot bread made into dainty pills, but if it were offered in large pills would merely sniff at it and walk away. One day the temptation of a dish of turkey on the table and an empty room proved too much for her. She fell! But she completely gave herself away afterwards by the conscience-stricken air with which she came upstairs, not to mention the foolish heartiness with which she smacked her lips. On the few occasions, as on this, when it was thought necessary to punish her,



"Topsy."

she had her own original little way of disarming one. She would come obediently sidling-up till she reached the arbiter of her fate and would then roll over flat on her back, stretching four pathetic paws up to plead for mercy, and blinking solemnly as if to say, "Now whip me if you have the heart." And we seldom had.

In the morning when she first awoke, stretched herself, and came forth slowly from her cupboard, she would sometimes find the window open and a current of fresh air creeping down her too-susceptible little spine. For a moment she would stand, ears and eyes expectant, one little paw held up on tiptoe for a flight, yet giving you the opportunity to be reasonable and close the window. Otherwise she would patter quickly to the far corner beneath the bed, where she would stay in dignified silence till called from the room.

Topsy had been the mother of many children, none of whom equalled her in intelligence

or charm. Her case was truly that of the "survival of the fittest," for while several generations of puppies came and went without making much of a stir in the world, she remained always the dearest, cleverest, best.

Her obedience to a call was such that she would leave the cosiest corner to meet a whipping half way, or to make certain limited approaches to a bath. After being called we could guess by the sound of her reluctant feet in the hall at just what moment the victim first divined that a bath was in preparation. But during its progress she was meekness and obedience personified.

"Now you can go, Precious," was the final mandate of the "Order of the Bath," and "Precious," needing no second intimation, was off as fast as her short legs would carry her, to her dear, warm basket by the fire.

Somebody once compared a Dachshund to a cucumber set on four match ends! That is not complimentary, but it is rather apt. It was always a wonder to me how Topsy's very short legs could carry her over the ground so fast.

Marvellous also was her way of entering rooms, using her nose to open the door. One or two attempts to teach her to shut the door after her were unsuccessful. "Umph, umph," she said, indignantly. "The idea of expecting a person of my age to learn to close doors."

But to see Topsy mole-hunting was to see her character in epitomé. Pitching headlong at the irregular mound tossed up by the little animal, and beginning anywhere at all, she would work her way along, every muscle strained to its utmost. How tirelessly she scooped and scratched and grubbed! Every now and then her dirt-covered, hot little face would come up, while she took a hurried gasp of air, and then back she would go, snorting and puffing like an engine. When she came to a tuft of grass or roots she bit through them.

"I will get him sometime" she said. But in spite of energy and patience and determination she never caught up to him! Hot, dirty and tired she gave up the pursuit only when called, and it was renewed again and again with the same dauntless optimism. In two, or perhaps three days' time, she had dug, unaided, a trail that measured no less than forty-seven feet. Of course we are glad that the little mole was "not at home" when Mrs. Topsy called, but we could not see her "a striving and a striving and an ending in nothing," without feeling a lurking pity that so much hard work should have no result.

But why pity? If patience is indeed "trying for nineteen times and succeeding the twentieth," then someday Topsy and patience will have that little mole!

The Jeweller.

Oh, a right brave jeweller is he,
Frosty January!
He hangs with diamonds the great elm tree,
Rich old January!
He strings his pearls along the eaves,
And when the sun the cold earth leaves
He works all night while the children sleep,
And the elves of frost come creep, creep, creep,
And many a shining v'raith he weaves
Gay old January!

MARY F. BUTTS.

NINE times out of ten when a man asks your opinion he is only looking for a chance to express his own.