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The Mind of a Dog.

BY BISHOP GOODSKILL.

He came to us in a crate, a gift from Omaha, valued as to contents at fifty dollars. He was principally legs when we first saw him. Earlier it may be that these were not so out of proportion with his body; and that he could play without getting them tangled; but this was impossible now. The last six weeks had gone to legs. His long nose was chafed through his ardor in seeking acquaintances in the express car and on express truck. This ardor diminished as he grew older, reaching such pass finally that he recognized no one outside the family without permission. This was not due to any ingrained aristocratic feeling, but to a sense of his duty to the members of the family, and to the fact that what strength he had must be reserved for their use.

He was a thoroughbred greyhound, slate colored, with all the regulation white points, a star on his breast, and the tip of his tail white also. There was no doubt great promise in his ancestry, and promise in his simple and awkward outline. From the overgrowth of his legs he was awkward as a cow. Yet from the first day he had that noble, statuesque way of sitting peculiar to his kind, the forepaws extending before him, his hind legs close to his side, and his whip of a tail carefully aligned.

The naming of any member of a family requires thought and consultation. It was only after much of both that we reached unanimity as to the name Gad. The final reason is a family secret. The name was not, however, a family name; nor was it in any way derogatory to the son of Jacob and Zilpah.

Everybody's dog is the best and smartest in the world. As a unit in this everybody I proceed to prove that mine was. It makes no difference whether he be thoroughbred, cur, or "benchleg," the universal fact is, "Love me, love my dog."

Here in Tennessee no law against dogs can be passed. It is fatal to the future of the legislator who proposes it. The cities and towns would like it; but the man of the mountain and the cabin will have none of it. Hence waste tracts and few sheep. Can the influence of the dog be better shown?

Does not the reason lurk in this, that the dog's devotion to his master begets a sense of oneness which exists in no other sub-human relation?

Hence it is the other dog which is always to blame for a fight; and if he snaps, it is because he is teased. I think it is something of the same feeling. Increased also by fear of commercial loss if good reputation be gone, that makes every owner of a skittish horse speak of him "as gentle as a kitten." More than once have I been upset and damaged by these kittenish horses. It is, of course, possible that in horse talk the owner may use this phrase much as "David Harum" did when he recommended the horse which would stand without hitching. Kittens can bite, scratch, spit furiously, and have running fits, which last I know to be true of a horse.

Named and fed, Gad was shut up for the night in the barn. But as he had been for five days and nights on the train, and constantly in human society, I was no sooner ready for sleep than his loneliness overcame him and he lifted up his voice in lamentation. The volume of this wail suggested that his throat had grown to the length of his legs. Phebe has a faculty for sleep to the measure of genius. She has denied thunder-storms in the night, because she did not hear them. But Gad waked her. Her imperative tone was excusable. After lights appeared in neighboring houses, and I thought I saw the railroad president loading his gun, I brought him into the house.

Human society was all he craved. On a rug in the corner, after turning round three times, as is the habit of prairie wolves in treading down grass for a bed, he stretched himself on his side and was quiet until morning, with one slight exception: Doubt as to whether we were still in the house led him about midnight to put his cold nose on Phebe's hand. The observations which followed, though entirely lady like, had the element of surprise in them, and awakened doubt in my mind whether Gad had not better have been left in the barn. Yet he won his way to her heart so fully the day after that always, until we lost him, he slept in the house, free to wander, which he seldom did, and then only when some noise required investigation.

I write of him as "Gentleman Gad" because from his puppyhood he had the manners of a gentleman. Little training was necessary to his behaviour in the house. His blood told. Greyhounds are commonly thought unintelligent as compared, for instance, with collies. I cannot conceive of greater intelligence, loyalty and obedience in a dog than Gad showed. He certainly understood much that we said, and knew when we were talking of him, though his name was not mentioned.

That season at Granite Bay brought him to eight months of age, nor yet mature, but well grown and as beautiful and graceful as a dog can be. His nose elongated, his chest deepened, the muscles of his mighty

thighs stood out, his tail grew in length, curvature as to the whole, and with a particularly pretty curve at the tip. He accumulated an impressive mouthful of teeth. Not once did he snap them or growl at any member of the family. All the neighbors and the little children came to love him. With strangers he permitted only brief familiarity, keeping himself chiefly for us.

Never but once did he harm any live thing except intruding cats or impertinent dogs. He killed a nestling which had fallen from a tree to the grass. He was then very young and was whipped. The next week he found another, which he fenced in with his paws until it was restored to its clamorous mother.

It was highly necessary to train him to distinguish between the cats of our immediate neighbors and disreputable vagrants of that order; soon accomplished as to the distinction, but developing a compensating intensity of pursuit as to all of unknown ownership. As I was not fond of seeing these manifestations of his severe nature, I commonly screened them from vision by going into the house when I saw that he was bent on the banishment, if not worse, of unknown cats. Hence I am not in a position to state what happened.

His bearing toward lesser dogs at this time was rich in patience and dignity. He paid little attention to them unless I invited him to do so. They found it well to go home then, but went unhurt. Dogs of his size hesitated to come into the yard on seeing him. He took his naps where he could see all who came to the gate. He looked steadily at such, partly raised himself, growled with a depth and vigor proportioned to their nearness. Not one resisted the final vigor of his protest against the invaders.

It was difficult to cure him of digging holes in the garden. Bones were very precious, and he could not think of wasting them or of sharing them with curs of low degree. It was not polite to take them into the house. He must therefore bury them. His mighty paws hurled the earth ten feet behind him, and a minute was sufficient for a great hole. Not naturally aware of the value of flowers and shrubs, it had to be taught him by pointing out the hole, the ruined plants, and by earnest exhortation, by the exhibition of a whip, and once by the sting of it. He learned to avoid the flower beds, but as to other places the temptation overcame him to the last. But his bearing always betrayed him if he had been digging, even when we had not seen it. He went about meekly, with a deprecatory air—had a marked tendency to retirement. When we said, "Gad, you've been digging a hole!" his spirits utterly sank, and he would crawl at our feet until forgiven.

Not allowed to be in the dining-room while we were at meals, he lay just outside with a sharp eye on our procedure, and knew, as well as we, when we were nearly through. When sitting on the floor his head reached far enough above the table to eat handily from a plate. No one could be less greedy. He would wait until a napkin was tied round his neck, and eat piece by piece and drop nothing.

We could not take him South with us. During the four months of our absence he passed from large puppyhood to full doghood. We were not a little anxious to see if he would know us on return. He heard my footsteps while still shut in the house, nearly burst the door in his effort to reach me, put his paws on my shoulders, raced around the yard, jumped all the fences, and "bayed a deep-mouthed welcome." When Phebe came he climbed into the carriage in his joyful frenzy.

After this he became more stately in bearing, and was of wonderful agility. At my command he would leap the fences, but not often otherwise. He now developed more fully that sense of ownership, while on our place, which some dogs never seem to acquire. He almost never left the place unless to accompany some member of the family. He would go with a guest when permitted. He perfectly understood "You may go," "You cannot go." If permitted to go, his joy and eagerness were touching. The putting on of a hat made him tremble with expectation until asked to go. Then with a mighty leap he cleared the veranda, was over the fence, and waited at the foot of the hill. This compelled us to believe that he went as far as he could in order to be sure that he would not be sent back. He knew the difference between preparations for a walk to the village and for a journey. Trunks and travelling bags made him as unhappy as hats and canes made him glad.

It was about this time that he learned to call the children, who slept up stairs, and afterward his mistress, who slept down stairs. Where he lay down at night we commonly found him in the morning. He waited for me to bid him rise; followed me about in my morning's preparations. When I said, "Go and call the girls," he raced up stairs, wedged the door open with his sharp nose, and never came down until he was patted and caressed. What an air of duty well done he bore then! He understood perfectly the difference between "Go and call the girls" and "Go and call Phebe." He made no mistake whichever was said first.

This summer he was promoted to sleeping on a lounge, his long legs having been often stepped on while he slept on the floor. But he never sought the lounge until told to go there, and would not leap upon it unless the cushion was turned over, exposing its leather side. He learned not to do this in a day. When lying on the floor I would say as to a person, "Gad, it is time for you to go to bed." He would go instantly to the lounge. If the leather side was up he promptly took his place; if not, he waited until the cushion was turned.

When full grown he was fearless as to other dogs of any size, as he was far from being when a puppy. In his youth he depended on his speed. I shall never forget the behaviour of a cross and heavy dog who hid behind a box which Gad must pass on his way to the village. I noticed that Gad was watchful, but could see no reason. He walked stiffly by my side. There was a rush from the box, which nearly tripped me. The big dog leaped for Gad. But Gad was not there. He was running homeward as only a greyhound can. The big dog was the picture of astonishment and disappointment.

No dog attacked him after he was full grown, but all kept at a respectful distance. I had supposed him too good to fight; too amiable! I wondered that some dogs acted so queerly in his presence. One collie in particular would wade into the sea up to his neck and hiss at him, and walked stiffly off in contempt of such a coward.

Greyhounds are seldom good water dogs. But Gad was actually fond of bathing and swimming, and would on hot days stand for a long time immersed save his head. He delighted to be in the water with the young people. Once, when we had left him with the fishermen on the island, he swam across the Cut and was found on our veranda. He was as happy as possible in a boat, sat steadily in his place, and more than once swam after the boat when left behind.

I have said that I did not understand why the other dogs seemed to fear him. I supposed he did not fight because he was too amiable, and because he never showed fangs from fighting. So for years I thought him above it by reason of the dignity of his nature. But I was set right by the Long Captain, who told me Gad was the worst fighter in town! When another dog snarled at him he never bit at leg or throat, but leaped into the air, came down to fix his terrible fangs on the other dog's loins, and this was the end of the battle. I confess to both pain and pride in hearing this—pain that I did not know as much as I thought I did, and pride that, seeing he did fight, he was able to secure quiet for himself when with me by these private contests, forced, of course, upon him.

My neighbor, the railroad president, had a small obese, venerable, but most faithful and affectionate black and tan; dear to everybody for devoted attachment to the ladies of the family. I have known him when crippled with rheumatism, and asleep when they left him, to follow over the six miles between their city home and the bay. As they rode all the way he came not by scent, but by conviction that, if not at home, they must be at the bay.

This dog could not bear that his young mistress should show Gad much attention. He snarled every moment he had to endure it. Having as keen a knowledge of the boundaries of his master's property as Gad had, the presence of any other dog in his preserve grieved him greatly.

Now, the peculiar thing is that Gad took no notice of Frisk's resentment when Gad was on Frisk's premises; apparently he thought it well within Frisk's rights to behave as he did. His mistresses warned Frisk to behave or he would be paid off some day.

The young ladies were coming for a call, Frisk with them. Gad went out to welcome them. Frisk snarled on Gad's premises. Gad shook him, sent him down unhurt, and walked stiffly off with an air of magnanimous virtue.

I wish we had not left him the last time. The fisherman and his good wife were as kind as possible. If Gad could not be with us, I knew he would have wished to be with them. He mourned for us when we were gone. He was much cheered by a visit from our grandson, but he pined and fretted and developed pneumonia. The fisherman's wife said, weeping, "He was not like a beast, but a human being." A physician attended him. Consumption followed. When I came in the spring he was a skeleton, unable to rise. The doctor lifted him to his feet. Gad staggered across the room, put his head between my knees, after his old loving fashion, fell down from weakness, but kept his eyes on me with just the tip of his tail wagging. A few days after he died when I could not be with him.

Neither my tears then nor heartache now make me ashamed. So passed out of our sight the staunchest friend, bravest protector, most loyal guard, most loving companion, and intelligent servitor, not human, we ever had. His human goodnesses were so many that we still speak of him as "Gentleman Gad," and only now have found one exactly like him to take his place.—New York Advocate.