

## The Inglenook.

### A DOG'S TALE.

(By Mark Twain.)

*From Advance Sheets of Harper's Magazine for December.*

My father was a St. Bernard, my mother was a collie, but I am a Presbyterian. This is what my mother told me: I do not know these nice distinctions myself. To me they are only fine, large words meaning nothing. My mother had a fondness for such; she liked to say them, and see other dogs look surprised and envious, as wondering how she got so much education.

But, indeed, it was not real education; it was only show: she got the words by listening in the dining-room and drawing-room when there was company, and by going with the children to Sunday-school and listening there; and whenever she heard a large word she said it over to herself many times, and so was able to keep it until there was a dogmatic gathering in the neighborhood, then she would get it off, and surprise and distress them all, from pocket-pup to mastiff, which rewarded her for all her trouble. If there was a stranger, he was nearly sure to be suspicious, and when he got his breath again he would ask her what it meant. And she always told him. He was never expecting this, but thought he would catch her; so when she told him, he was the one who looked ashamed, whereas he had thought it was going to be she.

The others were always waiting for this, and glad of it and proud of her, for they knew what was going to happen, because they had had experience. When she told the meaning of a big word they were all so taken up with admiration that it never occurred to any dog to doubt if it was the right one; and that was natural, because, for one thing, she answered so promptly that it seemed like a dictionary speaking, and for another thing, where could they find out whether it was right or not, for she was the only cultivated dog there was.

By-and-by, when I was older, she brought home the word Unintellectual, one time, and worked it pretty hard all the week at different gatherings, making much unhappiness and despondency; and it was at this time that I noticed that during that week she was asked for the meaning at eight different assemblages, and flashed out a fresh definition every time, which showed me that she had more presence of mind than culture, though I said nothing, of course.

She had one word which she always kept on hand, and ready, like a life-preserver, a kind of emergency word to strap on when she was likely to get washed overboard in a sudden way—that was the word Synonymous. When she happened to fetch out a long word which had had its day weeks before and its prepared meanings gone to her dump-heap, if there was a stranger there of course it knocked him groggy for a couple of minutes, then he would come to, and by that time she would be away down the wind on another tack, and not expecting anything; so when he'd hail and ask her to cash in, I (the only dog on the inside of her game) could see her canvas flicker a moment—but only just a moment—then it would belly out taut and full, and she would say, as calm as a summer's day, "It's synonymous with

supererogation," or some godless long reptile of a word like that, and go placidly about and skim away on the next tack, perfectly comfortable, you know, and leave that stranger looking profane and embarrassed, and the initiated slatting the floor with their tails in unison and their faces transfigured with a holy joy.

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FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

#### Sometimes.

BY M. ISABEL GRAHAM.

Sometimes when the day is dreary  
And the tear-drops trickle down,  
When the weight of the cross o'er shadows  
The joy of the coming crown;  
There comes some sweet revealing  
Of the Father's constant care,  
Some proof that his eye is watching,  
That his love is everywhere.

Sometimes when the heart is restless.  
And rebellious at its lot,  
When it turns from life's delusion  
Ill pleased with things it brought,  
These accents low and tender  
Float down from the angel band,  
Trust on though the shadows lengthen,  
Sometime you will understand.

Sometimes when there comes a discord  
In the music of the soul,  
When the mind is vexed and weary  
And the doubts like dark clouds roll,  
We catch a far, faint echo  
Of the faith of long ago,  
Like a song of summer singing  
Adown in the drifts of snow.

#### The Restful Visit.

In an essay recently published in Harper's Bazar, Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson has wisely pleaded for more tact and thoughtfulness on the part of those who entertain friends. The subject is one worthy of consideration, and too much can hardly be written on it. After commenting on the necessity of allowing the utmost freedom to the guest, Col. Higginson adds:

"It must be remembered, too, that this is a land of overwork, and that a guest comes as often for rest as for stimulus. Whether country cousin be transplanted to the city or city cousins to the country, they must not be worked too hard. It is not essential that they should inspect every art museum and cooking school in the one case, or drive to every mountain view in the other, but it is essential that they should not go home more tired than they came. The mere general atmosphere of a new scene often gives enjoyment and variety enough, and makes a multiplicity of details superfluous; it is enough to watch the city from the window, or to look out upon the birds building their nests in the orchard. Real kindness demands the closest observation and the utmost tact; the true hostess will know just when to relax the strain, and even to send Elizabeth to her own room, if she is too shy or inexperienced to claim for herself that privilege. One reason why men like club life is that it is usually attended with a certain judicious freedom on the part of the host; he introduces you, or 'puts you down,' and

commonly leaves you to yourself, secure that the needful appliances will be found at hand. Even in a private house I have sometimes fancied that the daily newspaper afforded to a masculine guest a certain shield of protection which a woman has not; once furnish a man with the morning paper and he is regarded as being provided for, even if there is little in it to read, or if he has read it already. It might seem that sewing or crochet were a similar protection for women, but this can hardly be maintained, because these pursuits are by their very nature gregarious, whereas a newspaper is a monopoly, and tends to solitude and self defense."

#### The Long Evenings.

Nightfall comes early again now, and the chill November air makes a bit of fire at the hearth twice grateful. The lamps are lit for tea, and, as we gather at the board, a sense of domestic satisfaction settles down, to which in the summer time we are almost strangers. So the law of compensation ever works. We are robbed of the long days, and of much of the outdoor enjoyment; but we are awarded those blessings which are inseparable from the family life, and from the shadow of the old roof tree:

"Now stir the fire and close the shutters fast  
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round  
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn  
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups  
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,  
So let us welcome peaceful evening in."

Evenings at home! What we owe to them can never be computed. Their influence has been powerful, far-reaching and benign. They have often entered more into the making of a perfect manhood than all the days and years at school or college. They have furnished the rich treasure of blessed memories and high purposes. It was ever so. The ancient Romans knew how to awaken the valor and virtue of their sons, and made much of their nocturnal opportunities. Even still we may learn how they were wont to put the iron into the youthful blood:

"When . . . the largest lamp is lit,  
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,  
And the kid turns on the spit;  
When young and old in circle  
Around the firebrands close;  
When the girls are weaving baskets,  
And the lads are shaping bows:

With weeping and with laughter,  
Still is the story told,  
How well Horatius kept the bridge,  
In the brave days of old."

And now, as then, should the lads and maidens have their night employments. The fret-saw or the embroidery needle help to pass pleasant hours away. Games and music are at times indispensable. Nor shall we omit to enumerate good books. A home well stocked with them is infinitely better than a balance at the banker's. "Without books, God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in Cimmerian darkness." "Books," says the author of "Dreamthorp," "are the true Elysian fields where the spirits of the dead converse, and into these fields a mortal may venture unappalled. You may walk and talk with the kings and queens of thought on a perfect equality. They do not ask how much money you possess, what was the cost of your clothing, or what is the size of the house you dwell in. They only want you to bring an understanding heart, seeing eye, and listening ear, and they will make you perfectly at home."