

Children and Animals

alike "fall for it," as they say, and produce a biscuit or some such dainty which Bonfire takes with much gravity and gentleness. Should I chide him for being too eager and give him my hand saying, "Gentle now," he mumbles with his lips, and licks with his tongue like a dog to show how gentle he can be when he tries. Truly a great boy is that same. On this subject I am like a doting grandmother, but forgive it.

I have a very deep affection for Bonfire, for we have been through so much together, and some of it bad enough. All the hard spots to which one's memory turns the old fellow has shared, though he says so little about it.

This love of animals was no vagrant mood. Fifteen years before in South Africa he wrote in his diary under date of September 11th, 1900:

I wish I could introduce you to the dogs of the force. The genus dog here is essentially sociable, and it is a great pleasure to have them about. I think I have a personal acquaintance with them all. There are our pups—Dolly, whom I always know by her one black and one white eyebrow; Grit and Tory, two smaller gentlemen, about the size of a pound of butter—and fighters; one small white gentleman who rides on a horse, on the blanket; Kitty, the monkey, also rides the off lead of the forge wagon. There is a black almond-eyed person belonging to the Royal Scots, who begins to twist as far as I can see her, and comes up in long curves, extremely genially. A small shaggy chap who belongs to the Royal Irish stands upon his hind legs and spars with his front feet—and lots of others—every one of them "a soldier and a man." The Royal Scots have a monkey, Jenny, who goes around always trailing a sack in her hand, into which she creeps if necessary to obtain shelter.