

MORE ABOUT MR. SMITH.

Every year he develops new traits, and gains a more masterly grasp of the situation; and takes everything and everybody under his protection in the most obliging way.

Both dogs have a curious partiality for cats, and, though not above the joys of "chivvying" them up trees or across the garden, they are always excellent friends with those of their own establishment, and Smith always exercises a curious fascination over them. When he lies before the



"Dropped into the water."

kitchen fire they will come sidling up and nestle beside him—cats and kittens alike—a familiarity that he in nowise resents, albeit never condescending to return their admiration by any too great show of affability. Our present cat regularly romps with the dogs in the most absurd way. She gets on to a low window-sill, or some easily accessible place, and "brings them on" by every means in her power, till she has worked them up to a state of sufficient excitement, when she will make a bolt for one of their kennels—open casks that afford little cover—they after her, of course, when a great show of scuffling and barking and scratching goes on, a sort of siege, valiantly conducted on both sides until the combatants are about tired. Then comes the triumphant finale, which seldom varies. Col takes the cat by the nape of the neck, Smith holds on by the tail, and in this way they parade round the yard with their captive until they are satisfied. They tire sooner than the cat does, who generally tries to continue the entertainment after it has begun to pull upon the dogs. Strangers sometimes cry out that she is being torn to pieces, but they are rather astonished when, on release, she sits still before Col, trying to get him to take her up again.

Smith merely patronizes and tolerates cats, but horses he dearly loves. He has a passion for running with them, and he takes them on his mind and watches them, and understands them in a fashion quite peculiar to himself.

He knows perfectly well that in harness a horse has no business to canter, and though when we are riding he takes no notice at all of a change of pace, if a horse in harness ventures to break, he rushes up like a whirlwind with a bark of angry remonstrance, and he is not pacified until he sees the trot steadily resumed. This bark is quite different from any other. It is the language he addresses to the horses

when he considers it his duty to rebuke them.

His bark of pleasure at going with the horses is altogether distinct. He is always as much excited and delighted at going out as if it were a pleasure of annual rather than of almost daily occurrence. Now he only barks for a short time at the start, but there was a time when he would keep up a ceaseless concert the whole day, till we almost felt inclined to doom him to his kennel when we went out. Luckily, however, in the days of his youth, he had a salutary lesson that produced a marked improvement in this respect, and was never, I think, quite forgotten. When he has a barking fit on he runs just in front of the horse, with his head over his shoulder, so, naturally, he cannot see very much where he is going. Once, when he was in one of his most objectionable moods, and nothing we could say or do could quench his joy or silence his clamor, we were traversing a somewhat unfamiliar road which turned a very sharp corner over a light, open, wooden bridge. Now Smith, running half backwards, not looking at anything but the horse, was quite unconscious of what was coming. He was not prepared for the turn or for the bridge, and, to our unspeakable delight, he deliberately ran on, with his head over his shoulder, until he just dropped flop into the water—a fall of about six or eight feet—as we passed over the bridge, and the current carried him some way down the stream before he could swim ashore and pursue his way.

I have never seen Mr. Smith so utterly quenched as he was that day after that impromptu cold bath. He was too subdued even to shake himself, and paddled home behind instead of in front of us, never so much as attempting to lift up his voice the whole way back. I do not think he ever forgot that ducking, and he was never so tiresome about barking afterwards.

His passion for the water has once or twice been gratified by a visit to the sea, which is a great delight to him. The first time, of course, he was immensely puzzled at finding all the water salt, and he made a round of every pool he could find, tasting each one to see if they were all alike, and drank so much salt water that he made himself quite ill. When he had got over that surprise, however, he gave himself up to unfeigned enjoyment, and lived in the water from morning till night.

We had joined a party of relatives at a sea-side rectory, and the only master Smith has ever condescended to recognise was one of this party. As a rule, Smith holds men very cheap, and will not condescend to take any but the scantiest notice of them; but he did attach himself, to a certain extent, to this master, and would go out with him gladly when bidden to do so, all the more gladly because he always carried a stick (over which Smith's soul yearned) and always took his exercise upon the shore.

To carry a stick, to fetch it out of the water, to race along the sand with it, and

lead his master fine dances after it, became the very joy of Smith's heart; and then a new game was instituted that gave to him the keenest enjoyment.

When the pair were out together before breakfast one morning, his master scraped a trench in the sand, in which he laid the stick and covered it well up, Smith sitting by and watching intently. When it was all neatly covered the master got up and called the dog to follow, which he did, though not without many backward glances at the hidden treasure. Presently the wished-for word of command was given, and back rushed Smith, dug up his precious stick, and scampered off with it. But so fascinated was he by the game, that he promptly set to work to dig a trench himself in the soft dry sand above high water-mark, laid the stick in it, and covered it up with his nose: showing a power of observation and imitation quite beyond the average of that of dogs. To bury that stick and dig it up again became henceforth one of his most absorbing pursuits.

Smith's pleasure in the sea is only to be equalled by his delight at getting home afterwards. The recognition between him



"They parade round the yard with their captive."

and the horses at the station is almost human, and Col and the cats cannot make enough of their companion and friend when once they get him back again. He is always very grand for a few days after his return, as if his new experiences had raised him to quite a different level; but as his four-footed companions look up to him at all times as to a superior kind of being, these lofty airs give offence to no one.

Smith really has a very beautiful disposition, and a sense of right and wrong that some human beings might do well to emulate.

Sometimes an elderly visitor, somewhat long over his breakfast, is finishing his meal whilst we are reading. On more than one occasion when this has been the case, the desire to tempt Smith to a breach of decorum has been too strong to be resisted. Pieces of buttered toast or fried

bacon have been held out to him, or any delicate morsels most likely to tempt his appetite. But I am proud to say that Smith has never yielded to the temptation. I feel him quivering with a sort of longing; but principle is too strong. There is no need for me to lay a detaining hand upon



"Dug up his precious stick."

him, he wards off temptation himself by shutting his eyes and turning his head away, so that neither by sight nor by smell shall he be tempted to a breach of rule. One can thus leave plates of bread and butter or cake within his reach with perfect confidence; he never dreams of touching them. He has been alone for an hour or more in a room with the remnants of afternoon tea on plates actually on the floor beside him, and not a crumb has been touched. He would no more dream of taking what was not meant for him than a thoroughly well-trained child.

I have a little silver-mounted Malacca cane that I sometimes carry when walking out with the dogs. This stick Smith is never allowed to carry, as his teeth would leave too many traces behind; and his most eloquent pleadings to have it "just once" are always met with a steady denial. One day I had accidentally left this cane lying upon the lawn, and I saw from an upper window a struggle of Smith's conscience over his wishes that really did him the greatest credit.

As he was playing about the lawn by himself, he suddenly came unawares upon this long-coveted treasure. He stopped and stared at it eagerly, and then looked carefully round him. I was hidden behind the window curtain, and there was nobody in sight. Then began the battle with himself. He looked at the stick; he smelt it carefully all the way along; he drew back a little to gaze at it, and licked his lips with the delight of anticipation. Then he approached and smelt it once more, and it seemed as if he must take it and pull it to pieces, as he loves to do. But all of a sudden his better nature came to his aid. He turned his back upon temptation, and sat down with his head the other way, guarding his treasure till his mistress should claim it, but not touching himself what he knew he was not allowed to have.

This may seem a small victory to those who do not know Smith's passion for a stick, but such of his friends as are aware of this trait will appreciate his self-restraint.

The only real trouble of Smith's life is when his mistresses go up to town and leave him behind. It is very tantalising for him, when the portmanteaus go upstairs to be packed, not to know if he is going to the sea-side, or if he is to be left alone with the servants for a while. But as a set-off against this sorrow is his joy at welcoming us home, when he will hardly let us out of his sight for days, and is quite frantic with delight when we ride out again and resume our usual habits. Dear Smith! I do not think that any words of mine can do justice to his precocious intelligence and unwavering fidelity. He is sitting warm and snug under my feet at this minute, and if I put down a hand he lays his nose in it with a gesture of contented happiness and affection. It is hard to tell whether he is most clever and amusing, or loving and devoted, but the best I can wish for any lover of animals is that he should possess as his own a companion so trusty and affectionate, so full of life and animation and the power of enjoyment, and so truly human in his comprehension of men and things as our own dear Mr. Smith.—*Evelyn Everett-Green, in Cassell's Magazine.*

REV. HORACE WALLER states that in some places in Africa the wages of native laborers, even of boys and girls, are actually paid in spirits!! If so, it is a burning disgrace and shame.



"Smith has never yielded to the temptation."