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but it never gains a fractional  
part of a second on an



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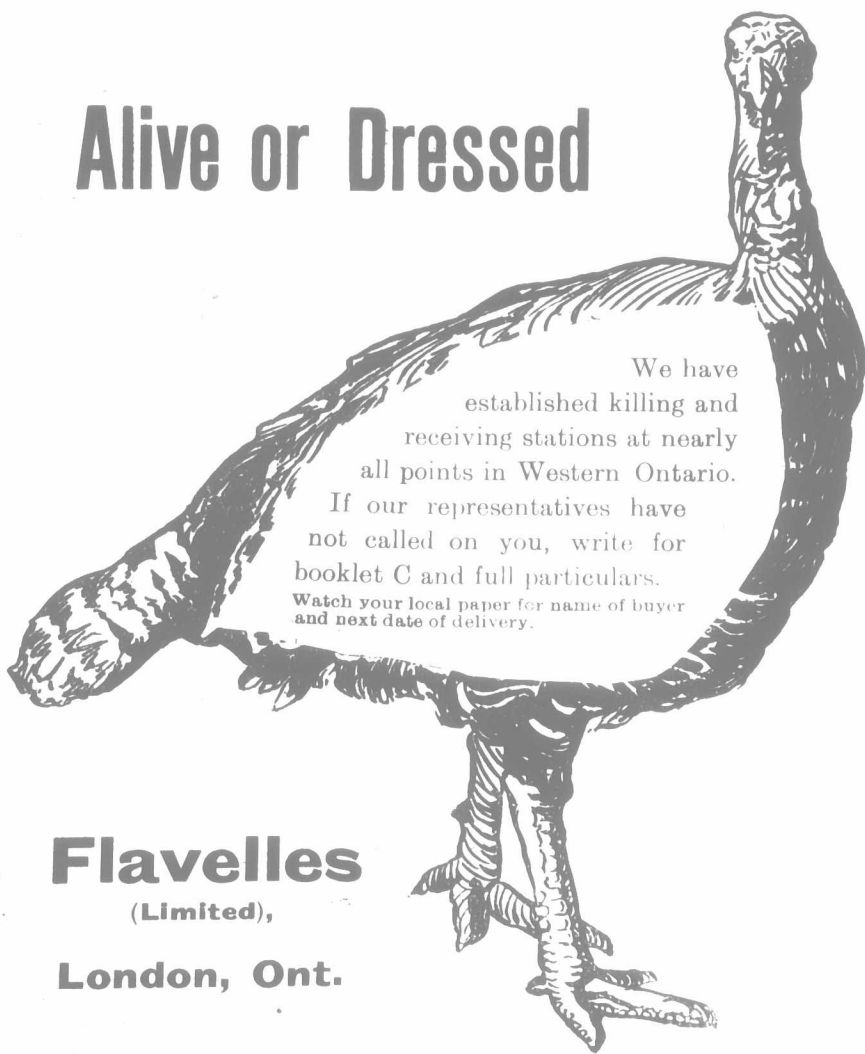
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## BOB, SON OF BATTLE.

By ALFRED OLLIVANT.

[Serial rights secured by "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine."]

"Bob, Son of Battle," is a tale of the sheep country "north of the Derwent," near the borderland between England and Scotland, and is written chiefly in the north-country dialect, into which the broad Scotch of Sandy M'Adam, who has drifted like a brown leaf down from the Scottish moors, breaks with a variety that helps, if help were needed, to accentuate the personality of this most original character. This is not a book of but one hero, or even of the conventional one hero, one villain and a host of satellites. Bob, Son of Battle, is a dog—a big, honest gray dog—"wi' the brains of a man and the ways of a woman," and he meets his opposite in Red Wull of the hungry fangs and the strength of a bull. Yet, it is with the owners of the dogs, the Moores of Kenmuir, and hard, crabbed little M'Adam, that the chief interest centers; while the fortunes of David M'Adam's son and Maggie Moore afford the necessary element of romance. Perhaps the climax of the story is reached with the sheep-dog races, the Woodbine of the sheep country—and more than the Woodbine, since with the powers and skill of the sheep-dog is locked up the very livelihood of the people—but we must not anticipate. Just a word more,—had Ollivant represented M'Adam and Red Wull as being wholly bad, the book would have been a failure. As it is, he has preserved in each the one spot of tenderness necessary, and has produced, in its way, a masterpiece.

### PART I.—THE COMING OF THE TAILLESS TYKE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### The Gray Dog.

The sun stared brazenly down on a gray farmhouse, lying long and low in the shadow of the Muir Pike; on the ruins of peel-tower and barmkyn, relics of the time of raids, it looked; on ranges of whitewashed out-buildings; on a goodly array of dark-thatched ricks.

In the stack-yard, behind the lengthy range of stables, two men were thatching. One lay sprawling on the crest of the rick, the other stood perched on a ladder at a lower level.

The latter, small, old, with shrewd nut-brown countenance, was Tammas Thornton, who had served the Moores of Kenmuir for more than half a century. The other, on top of the stack, wrapped apparently in gloomy meditation, was Sam'l Todd. A solid Dalesman, he, with huge hands and hairy arms; about his face an uncomely aureole of stiff, red hair; and on his features, deep-seated, an expression of resolute melancholy.

"Ay, the Gray Dogs, bless 'em!" the old man was saying. "Yo' canna beat 'em not nohow. Known 'em any time this sixty year, I have, and niver knew a bad un yet. Not as I say, mind ye, as any on 'em cooms up to Rex son o' Rally. Ah, he was a one, was Rex! We's niver won Cup since his day."

"Nor niver shall agin, yo' may depend," said the other gloomily. Tammas clucked irritably.

"G'long, Sam'l Todd!" he cried. "Yo' niver happy onless yo' makin' yo'self mis'er'ble. I niver see sich a chap. Niver win agin? Why, oor young Bob he'll make a right un, I tell yo', and I should know. Not as what he'll touch Rex son o' Rally, mark ye! I'm niver sayin' so, Sam'l Todd. Ah, he was a one, was Rex! I could tell yo' a tale or two o' Rex. I mind me hoo—"

The big man interposed hurriedly. "I've heard it afore, Tammas, I welly 'ave," he said.

Tammas paused and looked angrily up.

"Yo've heard it afore, have yo', Sam'l Todd?" he asked sharply. "And what have yo' heard afore?"

"Yo' stories, owd lad—yo' stories o' Rex son o' Rally."

"Which on 'em?"

"All on 'em, Tammas, all on 'em—mony a time. I'm fair sick on 'em, Tammas, I welly am," he pleaded.

The old man gasped. He brought down his mallet with a vicious smack.

"I'll niver tell yo' a tale agin, Sam'l Todd, not if yo' was to go on yo' bended knees for't. Nay; it bain't no manner o' use talkin'."

Niver agin, says I.

"I never askt yo'," declared honest Sam'l.

"Nor it wouldna ha' bin no manner o' use if yo' had," said the other viciously. "I'll niver tell yo' a tale agin if I was to live to be a hunderd."

"Yo'll not live to be a hunderd, Tammas Thornton, nor near it," said Sam'l, brutally.

"I'll live as long as some, I warrant," the old man replied with spirit. "I'll live to see Cup back i' Kenmuir, as I said afore."

"If yo' do," the other declared, with emphasis, "Sam'l Todd niver spake a true word. Nay, nay, lad; yo're owd, yo're wambly, yo're time's near run or I'm the more mistook."

"For mussy's sake hold yo' tongue, Sam'l Todd! It's clack-clack all day—!" The old man broke off suddenly, and buckled to his work with suspicious vigor. "Mak' a show yo' bin workin', lad," he whispered. "Here's Master and oor Bob."

As he spoke, a tall gaitered man, with weatherbeaten face, strong, lean, austere, and the blue-gray eyes of the hill-country, came striding into the yard. And trotting soberly at his heels, with the gravest, saddest eyes ever you saw, a sheep-dog puppy.

A rare dark gray he was, his long coat, dashed here and there with lighter touches, like a stormy sea moonlit. Upon his chest an escutcheon of purest white, and the dome of his head showered, as it were, with a sprinkling of snow. Perfectly compact, utterly lithe, inimitably graceful with his airy-fairy action; a gentleman every inch, you could not help but stare at him—Owd Bob o' Kenmuir.

At the foot of the ladder the two stopped. And the young dog, placing his forepaws on the lower rung, looked up, slowly waving his silvery brush.

"A proper Gray Dog!" mused Tammas, gazing down into the dark face beneath him. "Small, yet big; light to get about on backs o' his sheep, yet not too light. Wi' a coat hard a-top to keep oot Dale-land weather, soft as sealskin beneath. And wi' them sorrerful eyes on him as niver goes but wi' a good un. Amaist he minds me o' Rex son o' Rally."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" groaned Sam'l. But the old man heard him not.

"Did 'Enry Farewether tell yo' hoo he acted this mornin', Master?" he enquired, addressing the man at the foot of the ladder.

"Nay," said the other, his stern eyes lighting.

"Why, 'twas this way, it seems," Tammas continued. "Young bull gets 'isself loose somegate and marches oot into yard, o'erturns milkpail, and prods owd pigs i' ribs. And as he stands lookin' about un, thinkin' what he shall be up to next, oor Bob sees un. 'An' what yo' doin' here, Mr. Bull?' he seems