

THE STORY OF LARS.

Lars was a mastiff, one of the great Russian dogs, that have such a grand way of walking and such fierce dark faces. Oh! I'd as soon meet a lion any day as one of them unchained.

When Lars was only a very young and clumsy puppy he lived in Russia, where he had a very good time indeed with his brothers and sisters, and if his mother did box his ears once in a while, why it was only her way of teaching him good manners, so he winked and learned to do better next time.

But Lars' troubles began when a strange gentleman came into the kennel one day with his master, and began looking very carefully at his brothers and sisters as well as at himself. His mother showed her teeth a little while the stranger was handling the puppies, but a "Quiet, Olga," from her master, prevented her from stirring.

"This is a capital fellow," said the strange gentleman, picking up Lars last of all, "and with many thanks, if you are willing, I'll take him."

"Yes, take him; he's as good as any of them, and very sweet tempered."

Poor Lars! Well, he probably was sweet-tempered until they treated him so badly, but when he was shaken and jolted all the way from Russia to Liverpool in a baggage-car, and then chained up in a dreary hole for eight days, while the vessel swayed and rocked to America, no wonder the poor dog snapped and snarled and was very unpleasant to everybody when his new master tried to lead him on the dock when the steamer reached New York.

"Very handsome! splendid breed! but a very dangerous dog, evidently," everybody said. "You must keep him chained up all the time," and poor Lars heard this said in the new strange language he was trying to learn, and looked from one person to another very wistfully, trying to say with his eyes and his tail that really he wasn't such a bad dog if they would only try him!

Then there came another of those terrible railway journeys. All day long Lars howled in his box in the baggage-car, until at evening the train stopped at a quiet little station where the world looked more like itself again to his tired eyes, as there was green grass and plenty of trees waving overhead.

Still there was that terrible chain. If he could have only been rid of it once, and taken a good roll on the soft grass, Lars was sure he would have felt very amiable indeed. But the groom, who was told to lead him home, was a cross fellow, besides being dreadfully afraid of this great awkward puppy, so he only pulled and twitched at the chain, and hurried Lars along as fast as he would consent to go.

What a lovely place Ridgeway was. Even poor, tired, cross Lars thought so, as he saw the lovely green slope of the lawn and the great trees, besides, the house was covered with ivy and climbing roses.

If only they would take that dreadful chain off, and let him roll, and race and tear about on the green grass, and drink all he could of the cold water that came tumbling over the stones from the hill behind the house, he'd be a good dog, he felt sure. But instead of that he was chained up to a box with a door in it for him to go in and out of; a comfortable bed of straw was arranged for him to lie on, and a plate full of bones sent out from the kitchen for his eating.

"We don't live in this way in Russia," said Lars to himself as he turned over the bones in a dainty manner.

So he grew crosser and crosser as time went on, and everybody in the house grew very much afraid of him.

When carriages drove up to the house he barked and danced as far as his chain would let him, to tell them that if they would only unfasten him and let him go with them a little way, he'd be a very good dog indeed.

It was just the same with the people in the house who went out to ride on horseback. Lars begged and longed to go with them, and barked and jumped to attract their attention, but they would pay no attention at all to the fact that he wanted a little run and a little roll on the fresh grass.

Finally Lars began to think. He had

plenty of time to do so, you know; hours of hot summer sunshine that he had to spend in his box, and he made up his mind to this:

"I've been very badly treated. Everybody's afraid of me. Even the cook puts the dish as far away as she can, when she comes out to feed me. I'll be bad. I'll be just as bad as they think I am. And the very first day my chain breaks—it will break some time, if I only pull hard enough!—I'll go in the house and eat someone up! I've had trouble enough!"

A baby had come to the Ridgeway house while Lars was thinking about these dreadful things, and there wasn't a person in the house who thought they could do enough for the little rose leaf, rolled up in the finest and softest of cambric and lace, that did nothing but smile and open its blue eyes once in a while when its mother hugged it closer to her heart.

The baby owned silver mines and gold mines; it owned acres and acres of land; it had money, gold dollars by the—well, a great many—in bank, but all it really cared for was to lie in its mother's arms, and to be rocked and patted and kept warm and quiet.

Lars, lying out in his kennel or walking

young had an excellent temper, and even the few minutes that he had been free from his chain—it had broken at last—had made him feel something like his old self again. Slowly he walked across the room pit-pat to the side of the chair where the little mother and the baby were sitting. Then quietly he put his two fore paws on the chair, and looked down in the baby's face.

What do you suppose the dog thought about? The years it had been chained and all the wrongs he had suffered, the water he had gone without when he was thirsty, because some one was careless, and all the dinners the cook had forgotten?

I don't believe Lars thought of one of these things when he saw the little rose-leaf face lying on the pillow.

While he was looking at it, the baby opened its blue eyes, and instead of being frightened at the dog face looking down into it so earnestly, smiled, and tossed up two hands against the great dog's black mouth.

And do you think Lars bit one of those hands?

Of course you don't. He licked them over carefully, as if he was afraid they hadn't been washed quite clean that morning—but of course they had been—and



HE PUT HIS TWO FORE PAWS ON THE CHAIR AND LOOKED DOWN IN THE BABY'S FACE.

up and down as far as his chain would let him, heard all about the baby. Dogs learn the English language very easily, you know, and then and there said to himself "As soon as I can break this chain I'll go and see this baby, I'll bite it, and then they'll be sorry they chained me up."

Poor dog! He had been chained up two years now, and he was really very cross indeed.

So it came about one morning that the baby's mother, who was sitting in one of the pretty rooms down stairs, looking out at the rippling water and the rustling leaves, humming a song all the while, that made the baby's eyelids grow heavier and heavier until he promised to be asleep very soon, heard a soft "pit-patting" up the piazza steps and across the floor. When turning around to see who was coming, and holding up a warning finger for no one to disturb baby, she saw standing in the doorway the great dog Lars.

What was she to do?

"Never go near him," every one said. "He'll tear you into pieces." And here he was! standing in the door, and her precious baby was in her lap!

Lars, you know I told you, when he was

then when the little mother's color was beginning to come back in her cheeks, she had been so terribly frightened, you know, he hid himself down at the baby's feet, saying as plainly as a dog could, "This is my place, and here I am going to stay."

And there he did stay, with the baby I mean. No one ever tried to chain him up again.

There is nothing like love in this world. It can make a fierce dog gentle, and a great rough man quiet, and the lion and the lamb will be friends again.—*Churchman.*

"IF I WERE A BOY."

If I were a boy again I would look on the cheerful side of everything, for almost everything has a cheerful side. Life is very much like a mirror; if you smile upon it, it smiles back again on you, but if you frown and look doubtful upon it, you will be sure to get a similar look in return. I once heard it said of a grumbling, unthankful person, "He would have made an uncommonly fine sour apple, if he had happened to be born in that station of life!" Inner sunshine warms not only the heart of the owner, but all who come in contact with it. Indifference begets indifference.

"Who shuts love out, in turn shall be shut out from love."

If I were a boy again I would school myself to say "No" oftener. I might write pages on the importance of learning very early in life to gain that point where a young man can stand erect and decline doing an unworthy thing because it is unworthy, but the whole subject is so admirably treated by dear old President James Walker, who was once the head of Harvard College, that I beg you to get his volume of discourses and read what he has to tell you about saying "No" on every proper occasion. Dr. Walker had that supreme art of "putting things" which is now so rare among instructors of youth or age, and what he has left for mankind to read is written in permanent ink.

If I were a boy again I would demand of myself more courtesy toward my companions and friends. Indeed, I would rigorously exact it of myself toward strangers as well. The smallest courtesies, interspersed along the rough roads of life, are like the little English sparrows now chattering to us all winter long, and making that season of ice and snow more endurable to everybody.

But I have talked long enough, and this shall be my parting paragraph. Instead of trying so hard as some of us do to be happy, as if that were the sole purpose of life, I would, if I were a boy again, try still harder to deserve happiness.—*James T. Fields in Journal of Education.*

BE AWAKE.

I have heard of a little maiden who said "It was so very hard, she always had to go to bed just when she wished to stay up, and to get up just when she wished to go to bed;" and I know many children feel as she did; but if they had old heads on their young shoulders, they would know that those who are growing require more sleep than those who are at their full strength; and also, that if they do not go to bed early they will not be ready to get up for the bright morning hours, which are the very best of the whole day.

It is a happy thing to be awake early, and to get into the habit of rising early. Lord Chatham said: "I should have inscribed on the curtains of your bed and on the walls of your chamber, 'If you do not rise early, you can make progress in nothing.'" Therefore, that you may be early awake, and may keep awake at your lessons, or at your work, be early in bed. I sometimes wish, when I hear children grumbling about having to go too soon to their pleasant bed, so soft and sweet, that they knew what it was to be really weary. In the factories, before the law was passed which limited the hours of labor, children often fell asleep over their work, though they knew they would be speedily aroused, and punished for doing so. During the battle of the Nile, many ship-boys were so weary that they were seen lying asleep on the decks, awakened neither by the noise around them, nor by the fear of their officers' anger, nor by their own danger. They were so weary that they must sleep, whatever came of it. I think if some little people who make ugly faces about going to bed, had more to tire them, they would not only be glad to go to bed, but would thank God that they had a bed to go to, while the children of poverty have to sleep as they can—oftentimes cold and comfortless.—*Chatterbox.*

MACAULAY AND BOOKS.

In one of Lord Macaulay's letters to a pet little niece he tells her that she will find that books are "better than all the tarts and cakes and toys and plays and sights in the world. If anybody would make me the greatest king that ever lived, with palaces and gardens and fine dinners, and wine and coaches and beautiful clothes and hundreds of servants, on condition that I would not read books, I would not be a king. I would rather be a poor man in a garret with plenty of books than a king who did not love reading."

Make the best of everything;
Think the best of everybody;
Hope the best for yourself;
Do as I have done,—persevere.

—George Stephenson.