

the knitting. He thought Tom never would come down, and when he heard, faint and far, the first bell ring he whined and thumped the step with his bushy tail.

Father closed the Bible, took up his hat and called: "We'll be late. Tom, first bells ringing"

"Yes, pa, coming," answered a strong voice from above, and the young fellow hurried down.

Curley was on his feet in a minute, gave a short bark of delight and started along. Dandy and Bashaw, with heads over the pasture bars, watched them pass and wondered at their own unwonted holiday, for when the women-folk went to church there was a family load instead of the two men tramping along the quiet country ways. Curley gave them a frisky farewell bark and trotted ahead.

They had gone down the steep hill, across the brook, and were climbing Prindle hill when Curley fell into a temptation.

Now, Curley knew what Sabbath manners were. He had strengthened his heart against all the wiles of red squirrels or chipmunks. They might pop out of unexpected holes, whisk along the wall, or rail at him from the top of the bar post—he would have nothing to say to them. He hoped no woodchuck would try his patience, but he believed that even if one were eating clover in the "medder lot" he should be able to reserve his vengeance until another day.

O, self-confident dog! You little dream of the temptations before you.

Just as they reached the half-moon lot, Curley saw a sight that made every hair on his body tingle as if with an electric shock. There, in the centre of the field, was a stout old woodchuck sitting on end, giving battle to a red fox. Chuckie sat up manfully, ready to defend himself with his savage teeth, while Foxie slyly swept around him, just bending the clover tops with his red brush, watching for a chance to take his enemy at a disadvantage. But Chuckie was old and experienced and turned a bold face to his foe at every point. Now, oh, Curley, where are your Sabbath rows? Gone in the twinkling of an eye. With one short bark, almost strangled with his excitement, he shot over the wall.

Even father exclaimed, "That beats all!" And I am afraid Tom shouted "Ste-a-boy."

Chuckie gallantly turned to receive the charge of his new enemy, while Foxie, too courteous to attack him two to one, withdrew to a little distance and sat erect on end with smiling countenance to watch the fun. Poor Chuckie felt that the odds were against him. He did not feel sure of Foxie's neutrality and he could not keep his face to both at once. So, after turning Curley's second attack, he gave up his position and tried to beat a hasty retreat to his hole in the wall.

Alas, poor Chuckie! Did you not know that your enemy was better in the legs than you and that you had no rear guard? A short run, a scuffle, one or two angry shakes and Chuckie lay dead on the trodden clover.

Now, not only was Curley's Sunday broken, but the lust of slaughter was so roused within him that he thought himself equal to any hound, although he was only an honest farm dog. Never stopping to look at his masters (ought they not to have called him off?) he dashed at Foxie.

Poor Curley! Foxie fairly laughed in his face, and rising gracefully, moved off easily, with no exertion, keeping just out of Curley's reach, and yet so aggravatingly near that the tip of his red tail almost tickled the frantic dog's nose. Curley followed wrathfully for one or two rounds, then paused for breath, while Foxie wheeled around him as he had around the departed woodchuck, grinning all the while most insolently.

Curley now tried new tactics. Remembering that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, he began charging on Foxie in a direct and headlong fashion. Foxie knew a trick worth two of that, and enlarged his circle each time, so that he was always just beyond Curley's reach.

At last, after he had proved to every one but Curley that he was as safe in the same lot with the honest dog as if Curley had been a sheep, Foxie jumped the wall and trotted leisurely away.

Curley showed the blindness of his conceit by a little bark that said as plainly as words: "There, you see, he is beaten; don't wait for me. I'll bring him back when I've finished him," and started in pursuit.

Father and Tom, now that the fun was over, hastened on, ashamed of being late for so frivolous a cause. They reached the top of Prindle hill, and began the descent toward the village, and still Curley did not come.

"Well," Tom said, "he can't follow by scent, but he'll run as long as the fox stays in sight."

"I guess, then, he'll run all day," father laughed. "I never saw such a cool customer as that fox in my life!"

Just then Curley came through the huckleberry pasture and jumped the wall. Demure was no name for his appearance. He could hardly breathe, he was so fagged, but his whole attitude was meant to impress an observer with the fact that he was a sedate and orderly dog, who had just been taking a stroll for Sunday meditation. He refused to look at his masters and started ahead as if anxious to be at meeting on time.

But hardly had Curley jumped down one side of the wall, when, like a little imp, up popped Foxie on the other.