

I remember being in Rome many years ago. The hotel we wished to stay in was full; so my companion and I were lodged in a small house at the opposite side of the square and came over to the hotel to dine. The walk home was always somewhat of a trial to me, for we were generally pursued by a number of lean, ugly, and hungry dogs, restless and savage from want of food.

'Why not have fed them, and then there would have been no cause for fear?' I think I hear some true dog lover say. My dear friend, you might as well attempt to feed the whole city of Rome. There was nothing to be done but to run for it, and run I did one dark night with such vehemence that I gained our abode headlong, and in my dismay slammed the outer door so quickly that I left my companion on the wrong side of it. Nothing but sheer terror could have caused such a mean and traitorous action; but before condemning me let my readers find themselves in a similar position.

In Florence the number of neglected dogs is also great. Last winter a friend of mine was made acquainted with a curious instance of dog-knowledge of human nature. A dog proceeded one evening up the stairs of a house where many families were staying. He was hungry and forlorn, and he was looking out for a friend. He went slowly and thoughtfully up the stairs as if considering his future course and making up his mind as to where he should seek for comfort. Into the long gallery at the top of the stairs he came, and there he saw a long row of doors. None of them were open. What should he do? He waited and watched; and then, finding that waiting and watching did no good, he made a selection out of the number of doors and scratched at the one he had chosen. It was opened by a kind servant, who was gifted with an intelligence almost canine. The piteous eyes, the uplifted paw, the open mouth soon showed her what was wanted, and a plate of bread and meat and a basin of water were placed before the hungry traveller. The food was ravenously devoured,

and the guest departed, leaving, let us hope, a blessing behind him. It was between eight and nine in the evening.

Every evening afterwards at the same hour the same guest returned, took his meal, and departed. It was never known whence he came nor where he went, for the shades of evening hid the mysterious stranger from view. He is supposed to belong to a peasant who lives in the country, and to have wandered into the town in search of food. Now the sagacity of the dog was shown in the choice he made of the door. Why did he choose that particular door? How could he tell that a merciful human being dwelt behind that door instead of a ruffian? a lover of dogs instead of a hater? An instinctive feeling made him choose the right door, and a kindred spirit touched another kindred spirit. There may, of course, be another explanation. Some will say, 'Of course he smelt supper and resolved to have a share of it.' But there were probably many other suppers going on in that row of habitations. Why did he pick out that particular supper? It is a mystery. As for his returning every evening and adopting that particular threshold as his restaurant or dining-place, no one will wonder at it, for dogs and men often show their gratitude by a lively anticipation of favours to come.

A little time ago an account of a much more remarkable instance of dog sagacity appeared in the *Spectator*. I am very sorry I did not cut it out, for it was well worth preserving. The gentleman who told the story landed at Melbourne (I think this was the name of the port, but I may be mistaken, as I quote from memory), and stayed with a friend who showed him great kindness and hospitality. During his visit he made great friends with a huge dog belonging to his host, and who seemed to have taken a particular fancy to him. Sometime afterwards he removed to a hotel in another part of the town.

One evening as it was growing dark, he was returning to his hotel, when he felt his arm gently bitten, but not so as to hurt, and looking down he beheld the magnificent dog,