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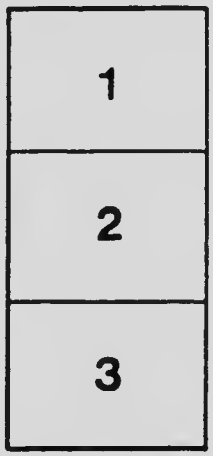


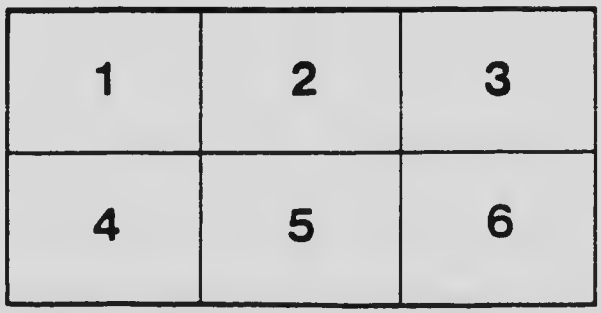

Mildred Mitchell

No. 1

# MORANG'S TEN CENT SERIES

## Rab and His Friends

and

## Our Dogs

*by*

*Dr. John Brown*

TORONTO
MORANG EDUCATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED
1909

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# RAB AND HIS FRIENDS

AND

# OUR DOGS

BY

DR. JOHN BROWN

TORONTO
MORANG EDUCATIONAL COMPANY LIMITED
1909

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# RAB AND HIS FRIENDS

FOUR-AND-THIRTY years ago, Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary Street from the High School, our heads together, and our arms intertwisted, as only lovers and boys know how, or why.

When we got to the top of the street, and turned north, we espied a crowd at the Tron Church. "A dog-fight!" shouted Bob, and was off; and so was I, both of us all but praying that it might not be over before we got up! And is not this boy-nature? and human nature too? and don't we all wish a house on fire not to be out before we see it? Dogs like fighting; old Isaac[1] says they "delight" in it, and for the best of all reasons; and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight. They see three of the great cardinal virtues of dog or man— courage, endurance, and skill—in intense action. This is very different from a love of making dogs fight, and enjoying, and aggravating, and making gain by their pluck. A boy—be he ever so fond himself of fighting—if he be a good boy hates and despises all this, but he would have run off with Bob and me fast enough: it is a natural and a not wicked interest, that all boys and men have in witnessing intense energy in action.

Does any curious and finely-ignorant woman wish to know how Bob's eye at a glance announced

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[1] *Old Isaac*—Isaac Watts, the writer of hymns.

"Let dogs delight
To bark and bite
For 'tis their nature to."

a dog-fight to his brain? He did not, he could not see the dogs fighting; it was a flash of an inference, a rapid induction. The crowd round a couple of dogs fighting, is a crowd masculine mainly, with an occasional active, compassionate woman, fluttering wildly round the outside, and using her tongue and her hands freely upon the men, as so many "brutes"; it is a crowd annular, compact, and mobile; a crowd centripetal,[1] having its eyes and its heads all bent downwards and inwards, to one common focus.

Well, Bob and I are up, and find it is not over: a small thoroughbred, white bull-terrier, is busy throttling a large shepherd's dog, unaccustomed to war, but not to be trifled with. They are hard at it: the scientific little fellow doing his work in great style, his pastoral enemy fighting wildly, but with the sharpest of teeth and a great courage. Science and breeding, however, soon had their own; the Game Chicken, as the premature Bob called him, working his way up, took his final grip of poor Yarrow's throat,—and he lay gasping and done for. His master, a brown, handsome, big young shepherd from Tweedsmuir, would have liked to have knocked down any man, would "drink up Esil, or eat a crocodile," for that part, if he had a chance: it was no use kicking the little dog; that would only make him hold the closer. Many were the means shouted out in mouthfuls, of the best possible ways of ending it. "Water!" but there was none near, and many cried for it who might have got it from the well

[1] *Centripetal*—Crowding inwards, towards the centre.

at Blackfriars Wynd.[1] "Bite the tail!" and a large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged man, more desirous than wise, with some struggle got the bushy end of *Yarrow's* tail into his ample mouth, and bit it with all his might. This was more than enough for the much-enduring, much-perspiring shepherd, who, with a gleam of joy over his broad visage, delivered a terrific facer upon our large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged friend,—who went down like a shot.

Still the Chicken holds; death not far off. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" observed a calm, highly-dressed young buck,[2] with an eye-glass in his eye. "Snuff, indeed!" growled the angry crowd, affronted and glaring. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" again observes the buck, but with more urgency; whereon were produced several open boxes, and from a mull[3] which may have been at Culloden,[4] he took a pinch, knelt down, and presented it to the nose of the Chicken. The laws of physiology and of snuff take their course; the Chicken sneezes, and Yarrow is free!

The young pastoral giant stalks off with Yarrow in his arms,—comforting him.

But the bull-terrier's blood is up and his soul unsatisfied; he grips the first dog he meets, and discovering she is not a dog, in Homeric phrase,[5]

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[1] *Wynd*—A narrow court.
[2] *Buck*—A gentleman of fashion.
[3] *Mull*—The sharp end of a horn snuff-box.
[4] *Culloden*—The battle fought in 1746 between the Highlanders under Prince Charles Edward and the forces of King George.
[5] *Homeric phrase*—As Homer, the Greek epic poet, would have expressed it.

he makes a brief sort of *amende*,[1] and is off. The boys, with Bob and me at their head, are after him: down Niddry Street he goes, bent on mischief; up the Cowgate like an arrow—Bob and I, and our small men, panting behind.

There, under the single arch of the South Bridge, is a huge mastiff, sauntering down the middle of the causeway, as if with his hands in his pockets: he is old, grey, brindled, as big as a little Highland bull, and has the Shaksperian dewlaps[2] shaking as he goes.

The Chicken makes straight at him, and fastens on his throat. To our astonishment, the great creature does nothing but stand still, hold himself up and roar—yes roar; a long, serious, remonstrative roar. How is this? Bob and I are up to them. *He is muzzled!* The bailies had proclaimed a general muzzling, and his master, studying strength and economy mainly, had encompassed his huge jaws in a home-made apparatus, constructed out of the leather of some ancient *breechin*.[3] His mouth was open as far as it could; his lips curled up in rage—a sort of terrible grin; his teeth gleaming, ready, from out the darkness; the strap across his mouth tense as a bowstring; his whole frame stiff with indignation and surprise; his roar asking us all round, "Did you ever see the like of this?" He looked a statue of

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[1] *Amende*—Apology.

[2] *Dewlaps*—The folds of skin hanging from the throat.

"Who would believe that there were mountaineers
Dew-lapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em
Wallets of flesh?"

—SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*, Act III. Sc. 3, ll. 45-47.

[3] *Breechin*—Harness.

anger and astonishment, done in Aberdeen granite.

We soon had a crowd: the Chicken held on. "A knife!" cried Bob; and a cobbler gave him his knife: you know the kind of knife, worn away obliquely to a point, and always keen. I put its edge to the tense leather; it ran before it; and then!—one sudden jerk of that enormous head, a sort of dirty mist about his mouth, no noise,—and the bright and fierce little fellow is dropped, limp, and dead. A solemn pause: this was more than any of us had bargained for. I turned the little fellow over, and saw he was quite dead: the mastiff had taken him by the small of the back like a rat, and broken it.

He looked down at his victim appeased, ashamed, and amazed; snuffed him all over, stared at him, and taking a sudden thought, turned round and trotted off. Bob took the dead dog up, and said, "John, we'll bury him after tea." "Yes," said I, and was off after the mastiff. He made up the Cowgate at a rapid swing; he had forgotten some engagement. He turned up the Candlemaker Row, and stopped at the Harrow Inn.

There was a carrier's cart ready to start, and a keen, thin, impatient, black-a-vised[1] little man, his hand at his grey horse's head, looking about angrily for something. "Rab, ye thief!" said he, aiming a kick at my great friend, who drew cringing up, and avoiding the heavy shoe with more agility than dignity, and watching his master's

[1] *Black-a-vised*—Dark faced.

eye, slunk dismayed under the cart,—his ears down, and as much as he had of tail down too.

What a man this must be—thought I—to whom my tremendous hero turns tail! The carrier saw the muzzle hanging, cut and useless, from his neck, and I eagerly told him the story, which Bob and I always thought, and still think, Homer, or King David, or Sir Walter,[1] alone were worthy to rehearse. The severe little man was mitigated, and condescended to say, "Rab, ma man, puir Rabbie,"—whereupon the stump of a tail rose up, the ears were cocked, the eyes filled, and were comforted; the two friends were reconciled. "Hupp!" and a stroke of the whip was given to Jess; and off went the three.

Bob and I buried the Game Chicken that night (we had not much of a tea) in the back-green of his house, in Melville Street, No. 17, with considerable gravity and silence; and being at the time in the *Iliad*,[2] and, like all boys, Trojans, we called him Hector of course.

Six years have passed,—a long time, for a boy and a dog: Bob Ainslie is off to the wars; I am a medical student, and clerk at Minto House Hospital.

Rab I saw almost every week, on the Wednesday; and we had much pleasant intimacy. I

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[1] *Sir Walter*—Sir Walter Scott.

[2] *Iliad*—The great epic poem written by Homer which describes the ten years' siege of Troy by the Greeks. Hector, the son of Priam, king of Troy, was the bravest hero on the side of the Trojans.

found the way to his heart by frequent scratching of his huge head, and an occasional bone. When I did not notice him he would plant himself straight before me, and stand wagging that bud of a tail, and looking up, with his head a little to the one side. His master I occasionally saw; he used to call me "Maister John," but was laconic[1] as any Spartan.

One fine October afternoon, I was leaving the hospital, when I saw the large gate open, and in walked Rab, with that great and easy saunter of his. He looked as if taking general possession of the place; like the Duke of Wellington entering a subdued city, satiated with victory and peace. After him came Jess, now white from age, with her cart; and in it a woman, carefully wrapped up, —the carrier leading the horse anxiously, and looking back. When he saw me, James (for his name was James Noble) made a curt and grotesque "boo," and said, "Maister John, this is the mistress; she 's got a trouble in her breest—some kind o' an income[2] we're thinkin'."

By this time I saw the woman's face; she was sitting on a sack filled with straw, her husband's plaid round her, and his big coat, with its large white metal buttons, over her feet.

I never saw a more unforgettable face—pale, serious, *lonely*, delicate, sweet, without being at all what we call fine. She looked sixty, and had on a mutch,[3] white as snow, with its black ribbon; her

[1] *Laconic*—The Spartans or Laconians, one of the ancient Greek peoples, were men of deeds rather than words.
[2] *Income*—Inward growth.
[3] *Mutch*—A cap.

silvery, smooth hair setting off her dark-grey eyes —eyes such as one sees only twice or thrice in a lifetime, full of suffering, full also of the overcoming of it: her eyebrows black and delicate, and her mouth firm, patient, and contented, which few mouths ever are.

As I have said, I never saw a more beautiful countenance, or one more subdued to settled quiet. "Ailie," said James, "this is Maister John, the young doctor; Rab's freend, ye ken. We often speak aboot you, doctor." She smiled, and made a movement, but said nothing; and prepared to come down, putting her plaid aside and rising. Had Solomon, in all his glory, been handing down the Queen of Sheba at his palace gate, he could not have done it more daintily, more tenderly, more like a gentleman, than did James the Howgate carrier, when he lifted down Ailie his wife. The contrast of his small, swarthy, weather-beaten, keen, worldly face to hers—pale, subdued, and beautiful—was something wonderful. Rab looked on concerned and puzzled, but ready for anything that might turn up,—were it to strangle the nurse, the porter, or even me. Ailie and he seemed great friends.

"As I was sayin', she 's got a kind o' trouble in her breest, doctor; wull ye tak' a look at it?" We walked into the consulting-room, all four; Rab grim and comic, willing to be happy and confidential if cause could be shown, willing also to be the reverse, on the same terms. Ailie sat down, undid her open gown and her lawn handkerchief round her neck, and, without a word, showed me her right breast. I looked at and examined it

carefully,—she and James watching me, and Rab eyeing all three. What could I say? there it was, that had once been so soft, so shapely, so white, so gracious and bountiful, so "full of all blessed conditions,"—hard as a stone, a centre of horrid pain, making that pale face, with its grey, lucid, reasonable eyes, and its sweet resolved mouth, express the full measure of suffering overcome. Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and lovable, condemned by God to bear such a burden?

I got her away to bed. "May Rab and me bide?" said James. "*You* may; and Rab, if he will behave himself." "I'se warrant he's do that, doctor;" and in slunk the faithful beast. I wish you could have seen him. There are no such dogs now. He belonged to a lost tribe. As I have said, he was brindled, and grey like Rubislaw[1] granite: his hair short, hard, and close, like a lion's; his body thick-set, like a little bull—a sort of compressed Hercules[2] of a dog. He must have been ninety pounds' weight, at the least; he had a large blunt head; his muzzle black as night, his mouth blacker than any night, a tooth or two—being all he had—gleaming out of his jaws of darkness. His head was scarred with the records of old wounds, a sort of series of fields of battle all over it; one eye out, one ear cropped as close as was Archbishop Leighton's father's[3]; the remaining

[1] *Rubislaw*—A granite quarry in Aberdeenshire.

[2] *Hercules*—The famous Greek hero, who was of gigantic size and strength.

[3] *Archbishop Leighton's father*—The father of Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Dunblane, was a celebrated Puritan preacher. He was punished on one occasion by having an ear cut off.

eye had the power of two; and above it, and in constant communication with it, was a tattered rag of an ear, which was for ever unfurling itself, like an old flag; and then that bud of a tail, about one inch long, if it could in any sense be said to be long, being as broad as long—the mobility, the instantaneousness of that bud were very funny and surprising, and its expressive twinklings and winkings, the intercommunications between the eye, the ear, and it, were of the oddest and swiftest.

Rab had the dignity and simplicity of great size; and having fought his way all along the road to absolute supremacy, he was as mighty in his own line as Julius Cæsar or the Duke of Wellington, and had the gravity of all great fighters.

You must have often observed the likeness of certain men to certain animals, and of certain dogs to men. Now, I never looked at Rab without thinking of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller.[1] The same large, heavy, menacing, combative, sombre, honest countenance, the same deep, inevitable eye, the same look,—as of thunder asleep, but ready,—neither a dog nor a man to be trifled with.

Next day my master, the surgeon, examined Ailie. There was no doubt it must kill her, and soon. It could be removed—it might never return—it would give her speedy relief—she should have it done. She curtsied, looked at James, and said, "When?" "To-morrow," said the kind surgeon—a man of few words. She and James and Rab and I retired. I noticed that he and she

[1] *Andrew Fuller*—Fuller was in youth a famous boxer.

spoke little, but seemed to anticipate everything in each other. The following day, at noon, the students came in, hurrying up the great stair. At the first landing-place, on a small, well-known blackboard, was a bit of paper fastened by wafers, and many remains of old wafers beside it. On the paper were the words: "An operation to-day. J. B., *Clerk*."

Up ran the youths, eager to secure good places: in they crowded, full of interest and talk. "What's the case?" "Which side is it?"

Don't think them heartless; they are neither better nor worse than you or I: they get over their professional horrors, and into their proper work; and in them pity—as an *emotion*, ending in itself or at best in tears and a long-drawn breath, lessens, while pity as a *motive* is quickened, and gains power and purpose. It is well for poor human nature that it is so.

The operating theatre is crowded; much talk and fun, and all the cordiality and stir of youth. The surgeon with his staff of assistants is there. In comes Ailie: one look at her quiets and abates the eager students. That beautiful old woman is too much for them: they sit down, and are dumb, and gaze at her. These rough boys feel the power of her presence. She walks in quickly, but without haste; dressed in her mutch, her neckerchief, her white dimity shortgown, her black bombazeen[1] petticoat, showing her white worsted stockings and her carpet-shoes. Behind her was James with Rab. James sat down in the distance, and took

[1] *Bombazeen*—A fabric made of silk or cotton and worsted.

that huge and noble head between his knees. Rab looked perplexed and dangerous; for ever cocking his ear and dropping it as fast.

Ailie stepped up on a seat, and laid herself on the table, as her friend the surgeon told her; arranged herself, gave a rapid look at James, shut her eyes, rested herself on me, and took my hand. The operation was at once begun; it was necessarily slow, and chloroform—one of God's best gifts to His suffering children—was then unknown. The surgeon did his work. The pale face showed its pain, but was still and silent. Rab's soul was working within him; he saw that something strange was going on,—blood flowing from his mistress, and she suffering; his ragged ear was up, and importunate; he growled and gave now and then a sharp, impatient yelp; he would have liked to have done something to that man. But James had him firm, and gave him a *glower*[1] from time to time, and an intimation of a possible kick;—all the better for James, it kept his eye and his mind off Ailie.

It is over: she is dressed. steps gently and decently down from the table, looks for James; then, turning to the surgeon and the students, she curtsies, and in a low, clear voice begs their pardon if she has behaved ill. The students—all of us—wep like children; the surgeon happed her up carefully, and, resting on James and me, Ailie went to her room, Rab following. We put her to bed. James took off his heavy shoes, crammed with tackets,[2] heel-capt and toe-capt, and put them

[1] *Glower*—Scowl.
[2] *Tackets*—Hob-nails.

carefully under the table, saying, "Maister John, I'm for nane o' yer strynge nurse bodies for Ailie. I'll be her nurse, and I'll gang aboot on my stockin' soles as canny as pussy." And so he did; and handy and clever, and swift and tender as any woman, was that horny-handed, snell, peremptory little man. Everything she got he gave her; he seldom slept, and often I saw his small shrewd eyes out of the darkness fixed on her. As before, they spoke little.

Rab behaved well, never moving, showing us how meek and gentle he could be, and occasionally, in his sleep, letting us know that he was demolishing some adversary. He took a walk with me every day, generally to the Candlemaker Row, but he was sombre and mild; declined doing battle, though some fit cases offered, and indeed submitted to sundry indignities; and was always very ready to turn, and came faster back, and trotted up the stair with much lightness, and went straight to that door.

Jess, the mare, had been sent, with her weather-worn cart, to Howgate, and had doubtless her own dim and placid meditations and confusions, on the absence of her master and Rab, and her unnatural freedom from the road and her cart.

For some days Ailie did well. The wound healed "by the first intention"; for as James said, "Our Ailie's skin 's ower clean to beil." The students came in quiet and anxious, and surrounded her bed. She said she liked to see their young, honest faces. The surgeon dressed her, and spoke to her in his own short kind way, pitying her through his eyes, Rab and James outside the circle,

—Rab being now reconciled, and even cordial, and having made up his mind that as yet nobody required worrying, but, as you may suppose, *semper paratus*.[1]

So far well: but, four days after the operation, my patient had a sudden and long shivering, a "groosin'," as she called it. I saw her soon after; her eyes were too bright, her cheek coloured: she was restless, and ashamed of being so: the balance was lost; mischief had begun. On looking at the wound, a blush of red told the secret: her pulse was rapid, her breathing anxious and quick, she wasn't herself, as she said, and was vexed at her restlessness. We tried what we could. James did everything, was everything; never in the way, never out of it; Rab subsided under the table into a dark place, and was motionless, all but his eye, which followed every one. Ailie got worse; began to wander in her mind, gently; was more demonstrative in her ways to James, rapid in her questions, and sharp at times. He was vexed, and said, "She was never that way afore: no, never." For a time she knew her head was wrong, and was always asking our pardon—the dear gentle old woman: then delirium set in strong without pause. Her brain gave way, and then came that terrible spectacle,

> "The intellectual power, through words and things,
> Went sounding on its dim and perilous way."

She sang bits of old songs and Psalms, stopping suddenly, mingling the Psalms of David, and the diviner words of his Son and Lord, with homely odds and ends and scraps of ballads.

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[1] *Semper paratus*—Always ready.

Nothing more touching, or in a sense more strangely beautiful, did I ever witness. Her tremulous, rapid, affectionate, eager, Scotch voice, —the swift, aimless, bewildered mind, the baffled utterance, the bright and perilous eye; some wild words, some household cares, something for James, the names of the dead, Rab called rapidly and in a "fremyt"[1] voice, and he starting up, surprised, and slinking off as if he were to blame somehow, or had been dreaming he heard. Many eager questions and beseechings which James and I could make nothing of, and on which she seemed to set her all, and then sink back ununderstood. It was very sad, but better than many things that are not called sad. James hovered about, put out and miserable, but active and exact as ever; read to her when there was a lull, short bits from the Psalms, prose and metre, chanting the latter in his own rude and serious way, showing great knowledge of the fit words, bearing up like a man, and doting over her as his "ain Ailie." "Ailie, ma woman!" "Ma ain bonnie wee dawtie!"

The end was drawing on: the golden bowl was breaking; the silver cord was fast being loosed—that *animula blandula, vagula, hospes, comesque*,[2] was about to flee. The body and the soul—

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[1] *Fremyt*—Scolding.

[2] *Animula*, etc.—Lord Byron's translation of the passage in which this line occurs is as follows:

THE DYING EMPEROR TO HIS SOUL

"Ah, feeble, fleeting, wavering sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humours gay
But pallid, cheerless and forlorn."

companions for sixty years—were being sundered, and taking leave. She was walking alone, through the valley of that shadow,[1] into which one day we must all enter,—and yet she was not alone, for we know whose rod and staff were comforting her.

One night she had fallen quiet, and as we hoped, asleep; her eyes were shut. We put down the gas, and sat watching her. Suddenly she sat up in bed, and taking a bedgown which was lying on it rolled up, she held it eagerly to her breast,—to the right side. We could see her eyes bright with a surprising tenderness and joy, bending over this bundle of clothes. It was pitiful and strange to see her wasted, dying look, keen and yet vague—her immense love.

"Preserve me!" groaned James, giving way. And then she rocked back and forward, as if to make it sleep, hushing it, and wasting on it her infinite fondness. "Wae 's me, doctor; I declare she 's thinkin' it 's that bairn." "What bairn?" "The only bairn we ever had; our wee Mysie, and she 's in the Kingdom, forty years and mair." It was plainly true: the pain in the breast, telling its urgent story to a bewildered, ruined brain, was misread and mistaken; it suggested to her the uneasiness of a breast full of milk, and then the child; and so again once more they were together, and she had her ain wee Mysie in her bosom.

This was the close. She sank rapidly: the delirium left her; but, as she whispered, she was "clean silly"; and it was the lightening before the

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[1] *That shadow*—Psalms xxiii., 4.

final darkness. After having for some time lain still—her eyes shut, she said "James!" He came close to her, and lifting up her calm, clear, beautiful eyes, she gave him a long look, turned to me kindly but shortly, looked for Rab but could not see him, then turned to her husband again, as if she would never leave off looking, shut her eyes, and composed herself. She lay for some time breathing quick, and passed away so gently that when we thought she was gone, James, in his old-fashioned way, held the mirror to her face. After a long pause, one small spot of dimness was breathed out; it vanished away, and never returned, leaving the blank clear darkness of the mirror without a stain. "What is our life? it is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." [1]

Rab all this time had been full awake and motionless: he came forward beside us: Ailie's hand, which James had held, was hanging down; it was soaked with his tears; Rab licked it all over carefully, looked at her, and returned to his place under the table.

James and I sat, I don't know how long, but for some time,—saying nothing: he started up abruptly, and with some noise went to the table, and putting his right fore and middle fingers each into a shoe, pulled them out, and put them on, breaking one of the leather latchets, and muttering in anger, "I never did the like o' that afore!"

I believe he never did; nor after either. "Rab!" he said roughly, and pointing with his thumb to

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[1] *Vanisheth away*—James iv., 14.

the bottom of the bed. Rab leapt up and settled himself; his head and eye to the dead face. "Maister John, ye'll wait for me," said the carrier; and disappeared in the darkness, thundering down-stairs in his heavy shoes. I ran to a front window: there he was, already round the house, and out at the gate, fleeing like a shadow.

I was afraid about him, and yet not afraid; so I sat down beside Rab, and being wearied, fell asleep. I awoke from a sudden noise outside. It was November, and there had been a heavy fall of snow. Rab was *in statu quo;*[1] he heard the noise too, and plainly knew it, but never moved. I looked out; and there, at the gate, in the dim morning—for the sun was not up, was Jess and the cart,—a cloud of steam rising from the old mare. I did not see James; he was already at the door, and came up the stairs, and met me. It was less than three hours since he left, and he must have posted out—who knows how?—to Howgate, full nine miles off; yoked Jess, and driven her astonished into town. He had an armful of blankets, and was streaming with perspiration. He nodded to me, spread out on the floor two pairs of clean old blankets having at their corners, "A.G. 1796," in large letters in red worsted. These were the initials of Alison Græme, and James may have looked in at her from without—himself unseen but not unthought of—when he was "wat, wat, and weary," and after having walked many a mile over the hills, may have seen her sitting, while "a' the lave were sleepin'"; and by the firelight

[1] *In statu quo*—In the same state.

working her name on the blankets, for her ain James's bed.

He motioned Rab down, and taking his wife in his arms, laid her in the blankets, and happed her carefully and firmly up, leaving the face uncovered; and then lifting her, he nodded again sharply to me, and with a resolved but utterly miserable face, strode along the passage, and downstairs, followed by Rab. I followed with a light; but he didn't need it. I went out, holding stupidly the candle in my hand in the calm frosty air; we were soon at the gate. I could have helped him, but I saw he was not to be meddled with, and he was strong, and did not need it. He laid her down as tenderly, as safely, as he had lifted her out ten days before —as tenderly as when he had her first in his arms, when she was only "A. G.,"—sorted her, leaving that beautiful sealed face open to the heavens; and then taking Jess by the head, he moved away. He did not notice me, neither did Rab, who presided behind the cart.

I stood till they passed through the long shadow of the College, and turned up Nicolson Street. I heard the solitary cart sound through the streets and die away and come again; and I returned, thinking of that company going up Liberton Brae, then along Roslin Muir, the morning light touching the Pentlands and making them like on-looking ghosts; then down the hill through Auchindinny woods, past "haunted Woodhouselee"; and as day-break came sweeping up the bleak Lammermuirs, and fell on his own door, the company would stop, and James would take the key, and lift Ailie up again, laying her on her own bed, and having put

Jess up, would return with Rab and shut the door.

James buried his wife, with his neighbours mourning, Rab inspecting the solemnity from a distance. It was snow, and that black ragged hole would look strange in the midst of the swelling spotless cushion of white. James looked after everything; then rather suddenly fell ill and took to bed; was insensible when the doctor came, and soon died. A sort of low fever was prevailing in the village, and his want of sleep, his exhaustion, and his misery, made him apt to take it. The grave was not difficult to re-open. A fresh fall of snow had again made all things white and smooth; Rab once more looked on, and slunk home to the stable.

And what of Rab? I asked for him next week at the new carrier who got the goodwill of James's business, and was now master of Jess and her cart. "How 's Rab?" He put me off, and said rather rudely, "What 's *your* business wi' the dowg?" I was not to be so put off. "Where 's Rab?" He, getting confused and red, and intermeddling with his hair, said, "'Deed, sir, Rab 's deid." "Dead! what did he die of?" "Weel, sir," said he, getting redder, "he didna exactly dee; he was killed. I had to brain him wi' a rack-pin; there was nae doin' wi' him. He lay in the treviss,[1] wi' the mear, and wadna come oot. I tempit him wi' kail and meat, but he wad tak naething, and keepit me frae feedin' the beast,

[1] *Treviss*—Stable.

and he was aye gur gurrin', and grup gruppin' me by the legs. I was laith to make awa wi' the auld dowg, his like wasna atween this and Thornhill,—but, 'deed, sir, I could dae naething else." I believed him. Fit end for Rab, quick and complete. His teeth and his friends gone, why should he keep the peace and be civil?

He was buried in the braeface, near the burn, the children of the village, his companions, who used to make very free with him and sit on his ample stomach, as he lay half asleep at the door in the sun—watching the solemnity.

## OUR DOGS

I WAS bitten severely by a little dog when with my mother at Moffat Wells, being then three years of age, and I have remained "bitten" ever since in the matter of dogs. I remember that little dog, and can at this moment not only recall my pain and terror—I have no doubt I was to blame—but also her face; and were I allowed to search among the shades in the cynic Elysian Fields,[1] I could pick her out still. All my life I have been familiar with these faithful creatures, making friends of them, and speaking to them; and the only time I ever addressed the public, about a year after being bitten, was at the farm of Kirklaw Hill, near Biggar, when the text, given out from an empty cart in which the ploughmen had placed me, was "Jacob's dog," and my entire sermon was as follows: "Some say that Jacob had a black dog (the *o* very long), and some say that Jacob had a white dog, but *I* (imagine the presumption of four years!) say Jacob had a brown dog, and a brown dog it shall be."

I had many intimacies from this time onwards—Bawtie, of the inn; Keeper, the carrier's bull-terrier; Tiger, a huge tawny mastiff from Edinburgh, which I think must have been an uncle of Rab's: all the sheep-dogs at Callands—Spring, Mavis, Yarrow, Swallow, Cheviot, etc.; but it was not till I was at college, and my brother at the High School, that we possessed a dog.

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[1] *Cynic Elysian Fields*—The heaven of the dogs. The Elysian Fields were the heaven of the Greeks.

## TOBY

was the most utterly shabby, vulgar, mean-looking cur I ever beheld: in one word, *a tyke*.[1] He had not one good feature except his teeth and eyes, and his bark, if that can be called a feature. He was not ugly enough to be interesting; his colour black and white, his shape leggy and clumsy; altogether what Sydney Smith[2] would have called an extraordinarily ordinary dog: and, as I have said, not even greatly ugly, or, as the Aberdonians have it, *bonnie wi' ill-fauredness*. My brother William found him the centre of attraction to a multitude of small blackguards who were drowning him slowly in Lochend Loch, doing their best to lengthen out the process, and secure the greatest amount of fun with the nearest approach to death. Even then Toby showed his great intellect by pretending to be dead, and thus gaining time and an inspiration. William bought him for twopence, and as he had it not, the boys accompanied him to Pilrig Street, when I happened to meet him, and, giving the twopence to the biggest boy, had the satisfaction of seeing a general engagement of much severity, during which the twopence disappeared; one penny going off with a very small and swift boy, and the other vanishing hopelessly into the grating of a drain.

Toby was for weeks in the house unbeknown to any one but ourselves two and the cook, and from my grandmother's love of tidiness and hatred of dogs and of dirt, I believe she would have expelled

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[1] *A tyke*—A mongrel.
[2] *Sydney Smith*—The famous English wit, who died in 1845.

"him whom we saved from drowning," had not he, in his straightforward way, walked into my father's bedroom one night when he was bathing his feet, and introduced himself with a wag of his tail, intimating a general willingness to be happy. My father laughed most heartily, and at last Toby having got his way to his bare feet, and having begun to lick his soles and between his toes with his small rough tongue, my father gave such an unwonted shout of laughter, that we—grandmother, sisters, and all of us—went in. Grandmother might argue with all her energy and skill, but as surely as the pressure of Tom Jones's[1] infantile fist upon Mr. Allworthy's forefinger undid all the arguments of his sister, so did Toby's tongue and fun prove too many for grandmother's eloquence. I somehow think Toby must have been up to all this, for I think he had a peculiar love for my father ever after, and regarded grandmother from that hour with a careful and cool eye.

Toby, when full grown, was a strong coarse dog; coarse in shape, in countenance, in hair, and in manner. I used to think that, according to the Pythagorean doctrine,[2] he must have been, or been going to be, a Gilmerton carter. He was of the bull-terrier variety, coarsened through much mongrelism and a dubious and varied ancestry. His teeth were good, and he had a large skull, and a rich bark as of a dog three times his size, and a tail

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[1] *Tom Jones*—The hero of Henry Fielding's novel of that name. Squire Allworthy was the foster-father of Tom Jones.

[2] *Pythagorean doctrine*—Pythagoras was a Greek philosopher who taught that the souls of men after death passed into beasts.

which I never saw equalled—indeed it was a tail *per se*;[1] it was of immense girth and not short, equal throughout like a policeman's baton; the machinery for working it was of great power, and acted in a way, as far as I have been able to discover, quite original. We called it his ruler.

When he wished to get into the house, he first whined gently, then growled, then gave a sharp bark, and then came a resounding, mighty stroke, which shook the house; this, after much study and watching, we found was done by his bringing the entire length of his solid tail flat upon the door, with a sudden and vigorous stroke; it was quite a *tour de force*[2] or a *coup de queue*,[3] and he was perfect in it at once, his first *bang* authoritative, having been as masterly and telling as his last.

With all this inbred vulgar air, he was a dog of great moral excellence—affectionate, faithful, honest up to his light, with an odd humour as peculiar and as strong as his tail. My father, in his reserved way, was very fond of him, and there must have been very funny scenes with them, for we heard bursts of laughter issuing from his study when they two were by themselves: there was something in him that took that grave, beautiful, melancholy face. One can fancy him in the midst of his books, and sacred work and thoughts, pausing and looking at the secular Toby, who was looking out for a smile to begin his rough fun, and about to end by coursing and *gurrin'*[4]

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[1] *Per se*—In itself.
[2] *Tour de force*—An act of skill.
[3] *Coup de queue*—A blow of the tail.
[4] *Gurrin'*—Rushing.

round the room, upsetting my father's books, laid out on the floor for consultation, and himself nearly at times, he stood watching him—and off his guard and shaking with laughter. Toby had always a great desire to accompany my father up to town; this my father's good taste and sense of dignity, besides his fear of losing his friend (a vain fear!), forbade, and as the decision of character of each was great and nearly equal, it was often a drawn game. Toby, ultimately, by making it his entire object, triumphed. He usually was nowhere to be seen on my father leaving; he however saw him, and lay in wait at the head of the street, and up Leith Walk he kept him in view from the opposite side like a detective, and then, when he knew it was hopeless to hound him home, he crossed unblushingly over, and joined company, excessively rejoiced of course.

One Sunday he had gone with him to church, and left him at the vestry door. The second psalm was given out, and my father was sitting back in the pulpit, when the door at its back, up which he came from the vestry, was seen to move, and gently open, then, after a long pause, a black shining snout pushed its way steadily into the congregation, and was followed by Toby's entire body. He looked somewhat abashed, but snuffing his friend, he advanced as if on thin ice, and not seeing him, put his fore-legs on the pulpit, and behold there he was, his own familiar chum. I watched all this, and anything more beautiful than his look of happiness, of comfort, of entire ease when he beheld his friend—the smoothing

down of the anxious ears, the swing of gladness of that mighty tail,—I don't expect soon to see. My father quietly opened the door, and Toby was at his feet and invisible to all but himself; had he sent old George Peaston, the "minister's man," to put him out, Toby would probably have shown his teeth and astonished George. He slunk home as soon as he could, and never repeated that exploit.

I never saw in any other dog the sudden transition from discretion, not to say abject cowardice, to blazing and permanent valour. From his earliest years he showed a general meanness of blood, inherited from many generations of starved, bekicked, and downtrodden forefathers and mothers, resulting in a condition of intense abjectness in all matters of personal fear; anybody, even a beggar, by a *gowl* and a threat of eye, could send him off howling by anticipation, with that mighty tail between his legs. But it was not always so to be, and I had the privilege of seeing courage, reasonable, absolute, and for life, spring up in Toby at once, as did Athené[1] from the skull of Jove. It happened thus:—

Toby was in the way of hiding his culinary bones in the small gardens before his own and the neighbouring doors. Mr. Scrymgeour, two doors off, a bulky, choleric, red-haired, red-faced man—*torvo vultu*[2]—was, by law of contrast, a great cultivator of flowers, and he had often scowled

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[1] *Athené*—The Greek goddess Athené or Minerva is fabled to have sprung fully armed from the head of Zeus or Jupiter, the king of the gods.

[2] *Torvo vultu*—With a fierce countenance.

Toby into all but non-existence by a stamp of his foot and a glare of his eye. One day his gate being open, in walks Toby with a huge bone, and making a hole where Scrymgeour had two minutes before been planting some precious slip, the name of which on paper and on a stick Toby made very light of, substituted his bone, and was engaged covering it, or thinking he was covering it up with his shovelling nose (a very odd relic of paradise in the dog), when S. spied him through the inner glass-door, and was out upon him like the Assyrian[1] with a terrific *gowl*. I watched them. Instantly Toby made straight at him with a roar too, and an eye more *torve* than Scrymgeour's, who, retreating without reserve, fell prostrate, there is reason to believe, in his own lobby. Toby contented himself by proclaiming his victory at the door, and returning finished his bone-planting at his leisure; the enemy, who had scuttled behind the glass-door, glaring at him.

From this moment Toby was an altered dog. Pluck at first sight was lord of all; from that time dated his first tremendous deliverance of tail against the door, which we called "come listen to my tail." That very evening he paid a visit to Leo, next door's dog, a big tyrannical bully and coward, which its master thought a Newfoundland, but whose pedigree we knew better; this brute continued the same system of chronic extermination which was interrupted at Lochend—having Toby down among his feet, and threatening him with instant death two or three times a day. To

[1] *The Assyrian*—"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold."—Byron's *Destruction of Sennacherib*.

him Toby paid a visit that very evening, down into his den, and walked about, as much as to say, "Come on, Macduff!" [1] but Macduff did not come on, and henceforward there was an armed neutrality, and they merely stiffened up and made their backs rigid, pretended each not to see the other, walking solemnly round, as is the manner of dogs. Toby worked his new-found faculty thoroughly, but with discretion. He killed cats, astonished beggars, kept his own in his own garden against all comers, and came off victorious in several well-fought battles; but he was not quarrelsome or foolhardy. It was very odd how his carriage changed, holding his head up, and how much pleasanter he was at home. To my father, next to William, who was his Humane Society man, he remained staunch. He had a great dislike to all things abnormal, as the phrase now is. A young lady of his acquaintance was calling one day, and, relating some distressing events, she became hysterical. Of this Toby did not approve, and sallying from under my father's chair, attacked his friend, barking fiercely, and cut short the hysterics better than any *sal volatile* [2] or valerian. He then made abject apologies to the patient, and slunk back to his chair.

And what of his end? for the misery of dogs is that they die so soon, or, as Sir Walter says, it is well they do; for if they lived as long as a Christian,

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[1] "*Come on, Macduff*"—The famous exclamation of Macbeth in Shakespeare's play, when about to meet in deadly combat the man whom he had wronged. Macbeth was killed in the fight by Macduff.

[2] *Sal volatile*—Smelling salts,

and we liked them in proportion, and they then died, he said that was a thing he could not stand.

His exit was lamentable, and had a strange poetic or tragic relation to his entrance. My father was out of town; I was away in England. Whether it was that the absence of my father had relaxed his power of moral restraint, or whether through neglect of the servant he had been desperately hungry, or most likely both being true, Toby was discovered with the remains of a cold leg of mutton, on which he had made an ample meal; this he was in vain endeavouring to plant as of old, in the hope of its remaining undiscovered till to-morrow's hunger returned, the whole shank-bone sticking up unmistakably. This was seen by our excellent and Rhadamanthine[1] grandmother, who pronounced sentence on the instant; and next day, as William was leaving for the High School, did he in the sour morning, through an easterly *haur*, behold "him whom he had saved from drowning," and whom, with better results than in the case of Launce and Crab,[2] he had taught, as if one should say "thus would I teach a dog,"—dangling by his own chain from his own lamp-post, one of his hind feet just touching the pavement, and his body preternaturally elongated.

William found him dead and warm, and falling in with the milk-boy at the head of the street, questioned him, and discovered that he was the executioner, and had got twopence, he—Toby's

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[1] *Rhadamanthine*—Rhadamanthus, the son of Zeus, was one of the judges in Hades, the world after death.

[2] *Launce and Crab*—Launce is a clown in Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Crab is his favourite dog.

every morning's crony, who met him and accompanied him up the street, and licked the outside of his can—had, with an eye to speed and convenience, and a want of taste, not to say principle and affection, horrible still to think of, suspended Toby's animation beyond all hope. William instantly fell upon him, upsetting his milk and cream, and gave him a thorough licking, to his own intense relief: and, being late, he got from Pyper, who was a martinet, the customary palmies,[1] which he bore with something approaching to pleasure. So died Toby; my father said little, but he missed and mourned his friend.

There is reason to believe that, by one of those curious intertwistings of existence, the milk-boy was that one of the drowning-party who got the penny of the twopence.

## WYLIE,

our next friend, was an exquisite shepherd's dog; fleet, thin-flanked, dainty, and handsome as a small greyhound, with all the grace of silky waving black and tan hair. We got her thus. Being then young and keen botanists, and full of the knowledge and love of Tweedside, having been on every hill-top from Muckle Mendic to Hundleshope and the Lee Pen, and having fished every water from Tarth to the Leithen we discovered early in spring that young Stewart, author of an excellent book on natural history, a young man of

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[1] *Palmies*—Thrashing.

great promise and early death, had found the *Buxbaumia aphylla*, a beautiful and odd-looking moss, west of Newbie heights, in the very month we were that moment in. We resolved to start next day. We walked to Peebles, and then up Haystoun Glen to the cottage of Adam Cairns, the aged shepherd of the Newbie hirsel,[1] of whom we knew, and who knew of us from his daughter, Nancy Cairns, a servant with Uncle Aitken of Callands. We found our way up to the burn with difficulty, as the evening was getting dark, and on getting near the cottage heard them at worship. We got in, and made ourselves known, and got a famous tea, and such cream and oat-cake!—old Adam looking on us as "clean dement-it" to come out for "a bit moss," which, however, he knew, and with some pride said he would take us in the morning to the place. As we were going into a box bed for the night, two young men came in, and said they were "gaun to burn the water." Off we set. It was a clear, dark, starlight, frosty night. They had their leisters[2] and tar torches, and it was something worth seeing—the wild flame, the young fellows striking the fish coming to the light—how splendid they looked with the light on their scales, coming out of the darkness—the stumblings and quenchings suddenly of the lights, as the torchbearer fell into a deep pool. We got home past midnight, and slept as we seldom sleep now. In the morning Adam, who had been long risen, and up the *Hope* with his dog,

[1] *Hirsel*—Flock.
[2] *Leisters*—Salmon spears.

when he had found we had wakened, told us there were four inches of snow, and we soon saw it was too true. So we had to go home without our cryptogamic[1] prize.

It turned out that Adam, who was an old man and frail, and had made some money, was going at Whitsunday to leave, and live with his son in Glasgow. We had been admiring the beauty and gentleness and perfect shape of Wylie, the finest collie I ever saw, and said, "What are you going to do with Wylie?" "'Deed," says he, "I hardly ken. I canna think of selling her, though she 's worth four pound, and she'll no' like the toun." I said, "Would you let me have her?" and Adam looking at her fondly—she came up instantly to him, and made of him—said, "Ay, I wull, if ye'll be gude to her"; and it was settled that when Adam left for Glasgow she should be sent into Albany Street by the carrier.

She came, and was at once taken to all our hearts—even grandmother liked her; and though she was often pensive, as if thinking of her master and her work on the hills, she made herself at home, and behaved in all respects like a lady. When out with me, if she saw sheep in the streets or road, she got quite excited, and helped the work, and was curiously useful, the being so making her wonderfully happy. And so her little life went on, never doing wrong, always blithe and kind and beautiful. But some months after she came there was a mystery about her: every Tuesday evening she disappeared; we tried to watch her, but in

[1] *Cryptogamic*—Flowerless plants such as ferns.

vain, she was always off by nine p.m., and was away all night, coming back next day wearied and all over mud, as if she had travelled far. She slept all next day. This went on for some months, and we could make nothing of it. Poor dear creature, she looked at us wistfully when she came in, as if she would have told us if she could, and was especially fond, though tired.

Well, one day I was walking across the Grass-market, with Wylie at my heels, when two shepherds started, and looking at her, one said, "That 's her; that 's the wonderfu' wee dog that naebody kens." I asked him what he meant, and he told me that for months past she had made her appearance by the first daylight at the "buchts" or sheep-pens in the cattle-market, and worked incessantly, and to excellent purpose, in helping the shepherds to get their sheep and lambs in. The man said with a sort of transport, "She 's a perfect meeracle; flees about like a speerit, and never gangs wrang; wears but never grups, and beats a' oor dowgs. She 's a perfect meeracle, and as soople as a maukin."[1] Then he related how they all knew her, and said, "There 's that wee fell yin; we'll get them in noo." They tried to coax her to stop and be caught, but no, she was gentle, but off; and for many a day "that wee fell yin" was spoken of by these rough fellows. She continued this amateur work till she died, which she did in peace.

It is very touching the regard the south-country shepherds have to their dogs. Professor Syme

[1] *Maukin*—Hare.

one day, many years ago, when living in Forres Street, was looking out of his window, and he saw a young shepherd striding down North Charlotte Street, as if making for his house: it was midsummer. The man had his dog with him, and Mr. Syme noticed that he followed the dog, and not it him, though he contrived to steer for the house. He came, and was ushered into his room; he wished advice about some ailment, and Mr. Syme saw that he had a bit of twine round the dog's neck, which he let drop out of his hand when he entered the room. He asked him the meaning of this, and he explained that the magistrates had issued a mad-dog proclamation, commanding all dogs to be muzzled or led on pain of death. "And why do you go about as I saw you did before you came to me?" "Oh," said he, looking awkward, "I didna want Birkie to ken he was tied." Where will you find truer courtesy and finer feeling? He didn't want to hurt Birkie's feelings.

Mr. Carruthers of Inverness told me a new story of these wise sheep-dogs. A butcher from Inverness had purchased some sheep at Dingwall, and giving them in charge to his dog, left the road. The dog drove them on, till coming to a toll, the toll-wife stood before the drove, demanding her dues. The dog looked at her, and, jumping on her back, crossed his forelegs over her arms. The sheep passed through, and the dog took his place behind them, and went on his way.

## RAB

Of Rab I have little to say, indeed I have little right to speak of him as one of "our dogs"; but nobody will be sorry to hear anything of that noble fellow. Ailie, the day or two after the operation, when she was well and cheery, spoke about him, and said she would tell me fine stories when I came out, as I promised to do, to see her at Howgate. I asked her how James came to get him. She told me that one day she saw James coming down from Leadburn with the cart; he had been away west, getting eggs and butter, cheese and hens, for Edinburgh. She saw he was in some trouble, and on looking, there was what she thought a young calf being dragged, or, as she called it, "haurled," at the back of the cart. James was in front, and when he came up, very warm and very angry, she saw that there was a huge young dog tied to the cart, struggling and pulling back with all his might, and as she said, "lookin' fearsome." James, who was out of breath and temper, being past his time, explained to Ailie, that this "muckle brute o' a whalp" had been worrying sheep, and terrifying everybody up at Sir George Montgomery's at Macbie Hill, and that Sir George had ordered him to be hanged, which, however, was sooner said than done, as "the thief" showed his intentions of dying hard. James came up just as Sir George had sent for his gun; and as the dog had more than once shown a liking for him, he said he "wad gie him a chance"; and so he tied him to his cart. Young Rab, fearing some mischief, had been entering a series

of protests all the way, and nearly strangling himself to spite James and Jess, besides giving Jess more than usual to do. "I wish I had let Sir George pit that charge into him, the thrawn brute," said James. But Ailie had seen that in his foreleg there was a splinter of wood, which he had likely got when objecting to be hanged, and that he was miserably lame. So she got James to leave him with her, and go straight into Edinburgh. She gave him water, and by her woman's wit got his lame paw under a door, so that he couldn't suddenly get at her, then with a quick firm hand she plucked out the splinter, and put in an ample meal. She went in some time after, taking no notice of him, and he came limping up, and laid his great jaws in her lap: from that moment they were "chief,"[1] as she said, James finding him mansuete[2] and civil when he returned.

She said it was Rab's habit to make his appearance exactly half an hour before his master, trotting in full of importance, as if to say, "He 's all right, he'll be here." One morning James came without him. He had left Edinburgh very early, and in coming near Auchindinny, at a lonely part of the road, a man sprang out on him and demanded his money. James, who was a cool hand, said, "Weel-a-weel, let me get it," and stepping back, he said to Rab, "Speak till him, my man." In an instant Rab was standing over him, threatening strangulation if he stirred. James pushed on, leaving Rab in charge; he

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[1] *Chief*—Friends.
[2] *Mansuete*—Gentle.

looked back, and saw that every attempt to rise was summarily put down. As he was telling Ailie the story, up came Rab with that great swing of his. It turned out that the robber was a Howgate lad, the worthless son of a neighbour, and Rab, knowing him, had let him cheaply off.

## WASP

was a dark brindled bull-terrier, as pure in blood as Cruiser or Wild Dayrell. She was brought by my brother from Otley, in the West Riding. She was very handsome, fierce, and gentle, with a small, compact, finely-shaped head, and a pair of wonderful eyes—as full of fire and of softness as Grisi's[1]; indeed she had to my eye a curious look of that wonderful genius—at once wild and fond. It was a fine sight to see her on the prowl across Bowden Moor, now cantering with her nose down, now gathered up on the top of a dyke, and with erect ears, looking across the wild like a mosstrooper out on business, keen and fell. She could do everything it became a dog to do, from killing an otter or a polecat to watching and playing with a baby, and was as docile to her master as she was surly to all else. She was not quarrelsome, but "being in," she would have pleased Polonius[2] as much as in being "ware of entrance." She was

[1] *Grisi*—The famous singer who died in 1869.

[2] *Polonius*—One of the characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In the course of his advice to his son Laertes, he says:

"Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee."

never beaten, and she killed on the spot several of the country bullies who came out upon her when following her master in his rounds. She generally sent them off howling with one snap, but if this was not enough, she made an end of it.

But it was as a mother that she shone; and to see the gipsy, Hagar-like[1] creature nursing her occasional Ishmael—playing with him, and fondling him all over, teaching his teeth to war, and with her eye and the curl of her lip daring any one but her master to touch him, was like seeing Grisi watching her darling "*Gennaro*," who so little knew why and how much she loved him.

Once when she had three pups, one of them died. For two days and nights she gave herself up to trying to bring it to life—licking it, and turning it over and over, growling over it, and all but worrying it to awake it. She paid no attention to the living two, gave them no milk, flung them away with her teeth, and would have killed them had they been allowed to remain with her. She was as one possessed, and neither ate, nor drank, nor slept, was heavy and miserable with her milk, and in such a state of excitement that no one could remove the dead pup.

Early on the third day she was seen to take the pup in her mouth, and start across the fields towards the Tweed, striding like a racehorse—she plunged in, holding up her burden, and at the middle of the stream dropped it, and swam swiftly ashore: then she stood and watched the little dark lump floating away, bobbing up and down with the

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[1] *Hagar-like*—See *Genesis*, Chap. ix.

current, and losing it at last far down, she made her way home, sought out the living two, devoured them with her love, carried them one by one to her lair, and gave herself up wholly to nurse them: you can fancy her mental and bodily happiness and relief when they were pulling away—and theirs.

On one occasion my brother had lent her to a woman who lived in a lonely house, and whose husband was away for a time. She was a capital watch. One day an Italian with his organ came—first begging, then demanding money—showing that he knew she was alone, and that he meant to help himself, if she didn't. She threatened to "lowse the dowg"; but as this was Greek to him, he pushed on. She had just time to set Wasp at him. It was very short work. She had him by the throat, pulled him and his organ down with a heavy crash, the organ giving a ludicrous sort of cry of musical pain. Wasp, thinking this was from some creature within, possibly a *whittret*,[1] left the ruffian, and set to work tooth and nail on the box. Its master slunk off, and with mingled fury and thankfulness watched her disembowelling his only means of an honest living. The woman good-naturedly took her off, and signed to the miscreant to make himself and his remains scarce. This he did with a scowl, and was found in the evening in the village, telling a series of lies to the watchmaker, and bribing him with a shilling to mend his pipes—"his kist o' whussels."

[1] *Whittret*—Weasel.

## JOCK

was insane from his birth: at first an *amabilis insania*,[1] but ending in mischief and sudden death. He was an English terrier, fawn-coloured: his mother's name VAMP (Vampire) and his father's DEMON. He was more properly *daft*[2] than mad; his courage, muscularity, and prodigious animal spirits making him insufferable, and never allowing one sane feature of himself any chance. No sooner was the street door open than he was throttling the first dog passing, bringing upon himself and me endless grief. Cats he tossed up into the air, and crushed their spines as they fell. Old ladies he upset by jumping over their heads; old gentlemen by running between their legs. At home he would think nothing of leaping through the tea-things, upsetting the urn, cream, etc., and at dinner the same sort of thing. I believe if I could have found time to thrash him sufficiently, and let him be a year older, we might have kept him; but having upset an Earl when the streets were muddy, I had to part with him. He was sent to a clergyman in the island of Westray, one of the Orkneys; and though he had a wretched voyage, and was as sick as any dog, he signalized the first moment of his arrival at the manse by strangling an ancient monkey, or "puggy," the pet of the minister—who was a bachelor—and the wonder of the island. Jock henceforward took to evil courses, extracting the kidneys of the best young rams, driving whole

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[1] *Amabilis insania*—Harmless madness.
[2] *Daft*—Silly.

hirsels down steep places into the sea, till at last all the guns of Westray were pointed at him, as he stood at bay under a huge rock on the shore, and blew him into space. I always regret his end, and blame myself for sparing the rod.

## THE DUCHESS

The Duchess, *alias* the Sputchard, the Dutchard, the Ricapicticapic, Oz and Oz, was a rough, gnarled, incomparable little bit of a terrier, three parts pure and one part—chiefly in tail and hair—cocker: her father being Lord Rutherford's famous "Dandie," and her mother the daughter of a Skye and a light-hearted cocker.[1] The Duchess is about the size and weight of a rabbit, but has a soul as big, as fierce, and as faithful as had Meg Merrilies,[2] with a nose as black as Topsy's[3]; and is herself every bit as game and queer as that delicious imp of darkness and of Mrs. Stowe. Her legs set her long slim body about two inches and a half from the ground, making her like a huge caterpillar or hairy *oobit*—her two eyes, dark and full, and her shining nose, being all of her that seems anything but hair. Her tail was a sort of stump, in size and in look very much like a spare foreleg, stuck in anywhere to be near. Her colour was black above and a rich brown below, with two dots of tan above the eyes, which dots are among the deepest of the mysteries of Black and Tan.

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[1] *Cocker*—A cocker spaniel.

[2] *Meg Merrilies*—The gypsy woman in Sir Walter Scott's *Guy Mannering*.

[3] *Topsy*—The negro girl in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

This strange little being I had known for some years, but had only possessed about a month. She and her pup (a young lady called *Smoot*, which means smolt, a young salmon) were given me by the widow of an honest and drunken—as much of the one as of the other—Edinburgh street-porter, a native of Badenoch, as a legacy from him and a fee from her for my attendance on the poor man's deathbed. But my first sight of the Duchess was years before in Broughton Street, when I saw her sitting bolt upright, begging, imploring, with those little rough fore leggies, and those yearning, beautiful eyes, all the world, or any one, to help her master, who was lying "mortal" in the kennel. I raised him, and with the help of a ragged Samaritan, who was only less drunk than he, I got Macpherson—he held from Glen Truim—home; the excited doggie trotting off, and looking back eagerly to show us the way. I never again passed the Porters' Stand without speaking to her. After Malcolm's burial I took possession of her; she escaped to the wretched house, but as her mistress was off to Kingussie, and the door shut, she gave a pitiful howl or two, and was forthwith back at my door with an impatient, querulous bark.

A fierier little soul never dwelt in a queerer or stauncher body: see her huddled up, and you would think her a bundle of hair, or a bit of old mossy wood, or a slice of heathery turf, with some red soil underneath; but speak to her, or give her a cat to deal with, be it bigger than herself, and what an incarnation of affection, energy, and fury—what a fell, unquenchable, little ruffian! And her oddities were endless. We had and still have

a dear friend—"Cousin Susan" she is called by many who are not her cousins—a perfect lady, and, though hopelessly deaf, as gentle and contented as ever Griselda[1] with the full use of her ears; quite as great a pet, in a word, of us all as Duchie was of ours. One day we found her mourning the death of a cat, a great playfellow of the Sputchard's, and her small grace was with us when we were condoling with her, and we saw that she looked very wistfully at Duchie. I wrote on the slate, "Would you like her?" and she through her tears said, "You know that would never do." But it did do. We left Duchie that very night, and though she paid us frequent visits, she was Cousin Susan's for life. I fear indulgence dulled her moral sense. She was an immense happiness to her mistress, whose silent and lonely days she made glad with her oddity and mirth. And yet the small creature—old, toothless, and blind—domineered over her gentle friend, threatening her sometimes if she presumed to remove the small Fury from the inside of her own bed, into which it pleased her to creep. Indeed, I believe it is too true, though it was inferred only, that her mistress and friend spent a great part of a winter night in trying to coax her dear little ruffian out of the centre of the bed. One day the cook asked what she would have for dinner: "I would like a mutton-chop, but then, you know, Duchie likes minced veal better!" The faithful and happy little creature died at a great age, of natural decay.

[1] *Griselda*—The patient Griselda is the heroine of *The Clerk's Tale* as told by Chaucer.

But time would fail me, and I fear patience would fail you, my reader, were I to tell you of CRAB, of JOHN PYM, of PUCK, and of the rest. CRAB, the Mugger's dog, grave, with deep-set, melancholy eyes, as of a nobleman (say the Master of Ravenswood[1]) in disguise, large-visaged, shaggy, indomitable, come of the pure Piper Allan's breed. This Piper Allan, you must know, lived some two hundred years ago in Cocquet Water, piping[2] like Homer from place to place, and famous not less for his dog than for his music, his news and his songs. The Earl of Northumberland, of his day, offered the piper a small farm for his dog, but after deliberating for a day, Allan said, "Na, na, ma Lord, keep yir ferum; what wud a piper do wi' a ferum?" From this dog descended Davidson (the original Dandie Dinmont) of Hyndlee's breed, and Crab could count his kin up to him. He had a great look of the Right Honourable Edward Ellice, and had much of his energy and *wecht*; had there been a dog House of Commons, Crab would have spoken as seldom, and been as great a power in the House, as the formidable and faithful time-out-of-mind member for Coventry.

JOHN PYM was a smaller dog than Crab, of more fashionable blood, being a son of Mr. Somner's famous SHEM, whose father and brother are said to have been found dead in a drain into which the hounds had run a fox. It had three entrances; the father was put in at one hole, the son at another, and speedily the fox bolted out at the

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[1] *Master of Ravenswood*—One of the characters in Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

[2] *Piping*—It is said that Homer was a wandering minstrel.

third, but no appearance of the little terriers, and on digging, they were found dead, locked in each other's jaws; they had met, and it being dark, and there being no time for explanations, they had throttled each other. John was made of the same sort of stuff, and was as combative and victorious as his great namesake, and not unlike him in some of his not so creditable qualities. He must, I think, have been related to a certain dog to whom "life was full o' sairiousness," but in John's case the same cause produced an opposite effect. John was gay and light-hearted, even when there was not "enuff o' fechtin," which, however, seldom happened, there being a market every week in Melrose, and John appearing most punctually at the cross to challenge all comers, and being short-legged, he inveigled every dog into an engagement by first attacking him, and then falling down on his back, in which posture he latterly fought and won all his battles.

What can I say of PUCK—the thoroughbred—the simple-hearted—the purloiner of eggs warm from the hen—the flutterer of all manner of Volscians[1]—the bandy-legged, dear, old, dilapidated bu[illegible] I got him from my brother, and only pa[illegible] with him because William's stock was gone. He [illegible] to the end of life a simplicity which was quite touching. One summer day—a dog day—when all dogs found straying were hauled away to the police-office, and killed off in twenties with strychnine, I met Puck trotting along Princess

[1] *Volscians*—Intruders. The Volscians gave the Romans much trouble in the early days of the city, and were conquered only after a bitter struggle.

Street with a policeman, a rope round his neck, he looking up in the fatal, official, but kindly countenance in the most artless and cheerful manner, wagging his tail and trotting along. In ten minutes he would have been in the next world; for I am one of those who believe dogs *have* a next world, and why not? Puck ended his days as the best dog in Roxburghshire. *Placide quiescas!*[1]

## DICK

still lives, and long may he live! As he was never born, possibly he may never die; be it so, he will miss us when we are gone. I could say much of him, but agree with the lively and admirable Dr. Jortin, when, in his dedication of his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* to the then (1752) Archbishop of Canterbury, he excuses himself for not following the modern custom of praising his Patron, by reminding his Grace "that it was a custom amongst the ancients, *not to sacrifice to heroes till after sunset.*" I defer my sacrifice till Dick's sun is set.

I think every family should have a dog; it is like possessing a perpetual baby; it is the plaything and crony of the whole house. It keeps them all young. All unite upon Dick. And then he tells no tales, betrays no secrets, never sulks, asks no troublesome questions, never gets into debt, never coming down late for breakfast, or coming in by his

[1] *Placide quiescas*—May you rest in peace

Chubb[1] *too early* to bed—is always ready for a bit of fun, lies in wait for it, and you may, if choleric, to your relief, kick him instead of some one else, who would not take it so meekly, and, moreover, would certainly not, as he does, ask your pardon for being kicked.

Never put a collar on your dog—it gets him stolen; give him only one meal a day, and let that, as Dame Dorothy, Sir Thomas Browne's[2] wife, would say, be "rayther under." Wash him once a week, and always wash the soap out; and let him be carefully combed and brushed twice a week.

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[1] *Chubb*—Pass key. The Chubbs were well-known locksmiths.

[2] *Sir Thomas Browne*—The author of the *Religio Medici* (Religion of a Medical Man).

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