

Dogs.

William Russel resides in one of our Massachusetts villages. He has recently been to New York; and on the evening after his return, while his brothers and sister were arranging their new toys, he began to describe, as well as he was able, the wonders he had seen in the great city. The toys were soon forsaken to listen to him—John's stag-hunt was but half set up—Anne's city looked as if an earthquake had tumbled down churches and houses in hopeless ruin—Mary's doll was permitted to remain half-dressed—and even little Bess, the baby, caught the spirit of listening, ceased to jingle her silver bells, and, in sympathy with the rest, fixed her eager eye on William.

"Of all that I saw in the city of New York," proceeded William, "that which pleased me most, was the learned dog, Apollo."

"That is exactly like you, William," exclaimed little Mary—"You always seem to care more about dogs, than any thing else."

"Not one half so much as I care about you, Mary," said the affectionate boy, kissing his sister's round, red cheek.

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Mary's eyes sparkled—she threw her arm over her brother's shoulder, "Well, tell us all about Apollo, Will," she said.

William then went on to recount the wonderful performances of this most wonderful of all speechless animals—"Apollo," he said, "is a Greek by birth,—like many other heroes, a native of the celebrated city of Athens; but he is owned, and has been educated, by an Englishman."

"Educated, William!" exclaimed John—"a dog educated!—that is a good one!"

"Yes educated, or taught, if you like that better, John,—and if you will please to listen, instead of laughing, you will find that your education had been going on a long time, before you knew as much as Apollo does. When he was exhibited, a circular piece of baize was spread on the floor, and twenty six cards placed around its edge, with the alphabet printed on one side of them, and numbers, up to twenty-six, on the other. The spectators encircled the baize. They were requested, by Apollo's master, to ask him to spell any name, that occurred to them. Several names were put to him, which he invariably spelt right."

"Could he speak?" asked Mary.

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"Oh! no—no Mary—I never heard of but one dog, that could speak—a dog belonging to a peasant of Misnias; and he could pronounce but twenty-five words."

"A dog speak!" said Mary, shaking her head incredulously—"that I never will believe."

"Neither should I believe it, Mary, but papa read me the account, which is by Leibnitz, a great philosopher, who saw the dog,—and I had rather believe a dog could speak, than that a great man would give a false report. But though my dog Apollo cannot speak, he makes himself perfectly understood. For instance, if I say 'Apollo, spell Mary!' He walks slowly round the cards—stops before M a r y , and puts his nose down to each; or, if you choose, he will bring them, and lay them at your feet."

"Ah, but Mary is a very, very short name; do you believe he could spell Alexander?" asked the little girl.

"Yes—I put that to him myself, and several other names; but he astonished me still more when he came to his arithmetic."

"Arithmetic!" exclaimed John—"well, if a dog can learn arithmetic, I hope I shall have a little more patience with it."

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"Yes, arithmetic. He will multiply, or subtract, any number within twenty-five. For instance, you ask him, 'Apollo, how much is five times four?' and he will bring you the card, on which twenty is printed. Or, if you say 'Apollo, add together three times five, and subtract six,' he will bring you the card, on which nine is printed."

"Oh!" said John, "he could not know all that. It is a mere trick. I dare say his master makes him some private sign."

“Ah John, as a gentleman said at the show, to get rid of one difficulty, you make a greater. Many of the spectators were watching the master, and they could not perceive the least communication between him and the dog; so the dog, to see these signs, which you suppose, must have had keener wits than any of us. He did many other things; but they did not appear so wonderful to me, because they were uniform answers to certain questions, which might have been often repeated to him. For instance, he would tell the capitals of all our States, and of the countries of Europe:--where he was born—his age—the places he had visited, &c. He had even made acquaintance with the stars; could tell you the

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names of the planets, their distance from one another; and from the earth—the time they take to make their revolutions round the sun; and, in short,” continued William, smiling, “he is quite a Newton among dogs.”

After the children had exhausted their inquiries and expressions of admiration, William asked his mother if she did not think that, at some future time, there would be schools for dogs, as there were now for children. His mother thought no. “Men,” she said, “teach one another. One race of boys educated, teaches the next; but God, in denying speech to dogs, has denied them the power of transmitting their knowledge. Apollo, learned as he is, cannot impart his knowledge to another dog;--and it is not probable that man will ever make it his business to teach inferior animals, since such knowledge could be of no use after it ceased to be a curiosity. But, my children, we ought to be very glad to see the art of man employed on any other powers in dogs than the power of destruction. How much pains have been taken to train this interesting and useful animal to pursue and destroy other animals. In England, our mother country, dogs have been trained to fight, and tear bulls, for

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the amusement of the people. This disgusting sport was called bull-baiting. Even queens forgot the gentleness of their sex so far, as to be present at these sports. Queen Mary entertained a French ambassador, for two days successively, with an exhibition of this kind, only fit for Hottentots—and was herself present.”

“Perhaps, mamma,” said William, “these horrid spectacles made her cruel; for that Mary was the queen who put to death so many of her own subjects that she was called ‘bloody Mary!’”

“Yes, William, such sports would certainly have a tendency to confirm a cruel disposition. You will find that most kind-hearted people are kind to animals. He who treats his horses and cows with care and tenderness, will not neglect his wife and children.”

“You agree with the poet Cowper, mamma. Do you remember those lines you once pointed out to me:

‘The heart is hard in nature, and unfit  
For human fellowship, as being void  
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike  
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased  
With sight of animals enjoying life.’”

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“Yes, my dear—and I thank you for remembering them. Cowper is a case in point himself. He was one of the most tender-hearted men that ever lived; and the history of his three little pet hares, Tiny, Puss, and Bet, which he has told so beautifully himself, and which you have all read, is a proof of his love of animals. But we were speaking of the cruelties taught to dogs. Do you know, William, that formerly blood-hounds were trained to pursue malefactors? This might be excused, on the ground that murderers and robbers deserved no mercy; but no apology can be made for the French of St. Domingo, one of the West India islands. Their slaves rebelled, and, determined to be free, carried on a war against their masters, by which they finally obtained their liberty. During this contest, the French trained blood-hounds to pursue and devour the negroes. I will read you the description of this mode of training the dogs, as it is given in the Encyclopedia.” William’s mother took down the book, and read the following extract:--

“In training the hounds to this inhuman pursuit, they are confined in a kennel, sparred like a cage, and sparingly supplied with the

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blood of other animals. The figure of a negro, in wicker-work, stuffed with blood and entrails, was occasionally exhibited in the upper part of the cage: the dogs struggled against their confinement, and as their impatience increased, the effigy was brought nearer and nearer, while their usual subsistence was gradually diminished. At length the figure was resigned to them; and while voraciously tearing it up, and devouring its contents, they were encouraged by the caresses of their keepers. Thus their hatred to black, and their love to white men, were, at the same time, excited. When their training was complete, they were sent out to the chase. The miserable negro had no means of escape; he was hunted down, and torn to pieces; his wife and children, perhaps, sharing his misfortune. This, however, was not the full extent of the calamity. The dogs frequently broke loose, and infants were devoured in an instant from the public way—sometimes they proceeded to the neighbouring woods, and surprising a harmless family of labourers, at their simple meal, tore the babe from the breast of its mother, or devoured the whole party, and returned with their jaws drenched in gore.”

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The children were loud in their expressions of indignation at these base cruelties; and, turning from them to the more agreeable subject of Apollo, they again discussed his accomplishments.

“After all, mother,” said Mary, “though I should like of all things to see Apollo, and I know I should admire him, yet I never could love him so much as I do poor Clara’s little dog, Foot.”

“No, my dear—because though talents, in man, woman, child, or dog, may excite our admiration, it is goodness that touches our hearts. Your eyes are wide open with wonder when you hear of Apollo; but the other day, when you witnessed the fidelity of Foot, they were moistened with tears of sympathy and tenderness.”

“Tears! Did we shed tears, mother?” asked Mary. “I am sure my feelings were pleasant.”

“They were indeed, Mary; but some of our pleasantest feelings bring tears to our eyes.”

That our young readers may understand what were the pleasant feelings, that brought tears to the eyes of these good children, we must tell the story of Clara, and her dog Foot.

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Clara, or rather Clary, (for I would give the accustomed sound to her name) is a poor girl in our village, who has suffered from epileptic fits; which, for the time, suspend her faculties, and have gradually impaired them, till she has become, in country phrase, quite “underwitted.” She leads, for the most part, an idle, vagrant life, straying about the field, gathering fruits, and collecting roots, and wildflowers. She may be seen every day, sauntering through our village-street, in rain, snow, and driving wind, heedless of the weather, excepting in the bitterest cold of winter, when she steals to some kindly hearth, and putting to the fire her feet, which appear half frozen through her torn shoes, she looks up with a vacant smile, and says, like Shakespeare’s fool, “poor Clary’s a-cold.”

Her little terrier dog, Foot, is always by her side—the only living thing that seems to love her—the only one she loves. When she ploughs through the deep snows, he follows, jumping and frisking, and half buried at every plunge;—and through the dismal rains, the poor fellow appears, still performing his forlorn duty, his head drooping, and his tail curled close to his legs. But in the fine, bright summer days, Foot has his pleasures too.

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When Clary is marching under the shade of the beautiful maples, that line our street—her torn frock trailing on the ground—her calico bonnet hanging back from her weather-beaten face—her alms-basket dangling on her arm,—and her knitting, (her constant occupation) in her hands, little Foot appears full of life and spirits. Every child in the street knows Foot—all respect his devoted friendship for Clary, (for true friendship, even in dogs, is beautiful,) and every little girl and boy gives him a kind word, or caress, or perchance a bit of gingerbread from the school-basket. Even the dogs—and there is an uncommon population of that race in our village—even the dogs bound towards little Foot with kind salutations, while he returns their greeting with a frolicsome play, and a short, joyous bark. But that which is most worthy of record about Foot, and that which excited the admiration of our young friends, yet remains to be told.

Poor Clary is sometimes seized with her fits by the road-side. During the paroxysms, and the long sleep, which sometimes succeeds them, Foot never quits her side. I saw him on one of these occasions, his paws placed on her arm, looking intently in his poor mistress’

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face, and yelping most piteously. "What," thought I, "must be the tenderness of that Great Being, who has put such compassionate feelings into the breast of this little dog!"

Foot sometimes renders Clary essential service. Once, when she was returning from the fields, with a basket of fine strawberries, she sat down to rest herself, and was seized with a fit. A boy was passing, with an empty basket. He espied Clary's beautiful strawberries, he saw she was unconscious, and he was tempted to steal them. He knew it was wicked to steal, and that this was cruel stealing,--but the pleasure of gratifying his appetite with the delicious fruit, was uppermost in his mind. He stole softly towards the strawberries, and was just emptying them into his own basket, when Foot sprang on him, grasped his coat between his teeth, and held him fast. The boy in vain tried to beat him off—he snarled, and threatened to bite him, but did not quit his hold. The boy then thought of screaming for help, but then whoever came to his relief, would be a witness of his disgrace. He stood, for a few moments, pondering in silence—then stooped down, poured the pilfered strawberries again into Clary's basket, and placed it

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close to her side. When he had thus repaired his fault, Foot quietly released his prisoner, and returned to his mistress' side. To the honor of the boy, it should be told, that he afterwards related the story himself; and said, that no spoken reproof—no whipping, ever made him suffer so much as the shame he felt, when he compared his dishonesty with the fidelity of this little brute.

I have often thought, when I looked on Clary and Foot, that there was no creature which walked on the earth, for whom God had not provided some pleasure. The possession of this little dumb friend, seems, in some measure, to be a compensation to Clary for her misfortunes. I thought so last week, when I went to her mother's house, on a sorrowful occasion. She has been the most afflicted woman in our village; and last week, her husband, an industrious, hard-working man, died, after a few hours' sickness. When I entered their miserable dwelling, I found that some kind neighbours had already been there, and the poor man was decently laid out, in an inner room. His son, a boy ten years old, who, a short time before, had his arms crushed in a mill, and afterwards amputated, sat by him, weeping bitterly; the mother, a poor paralytic,--one half of her body dead,

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was attempting to hush a famishing, crying baby; a little girl, the image of gentleness and patience, but pale, and emaciated with disease, and deformed with dropsy, lay on a ragged coverlet, in the middle of the floor. Clary sat on the door-stone, caressing Foot, in happy unconsciousness of the misery around her. Her eye rested on me for a moment, while I sat feeding the baby, and she seemed to notice the tears I dropped on the helpless little thing, as if she half understood my emotion; but presently turning again to Foot, and renewing her play with him, she said, with one of her strange, vacant laughs, "But you and I have pleasant times, for all—don't we, Foot?"

I will not write out the moral of my story; for I well remember when I was a child, how I hated those formal morals to Aesop's fables; how I thought them a dead weight, which almost crushed the life out of the pleasant story that went before them; and beside, I do not doubt my readers have sagacity enough to perceive, that little Mary preferred Foot, on account of his affection and fidelity, and we hope, that like her, they will always set the qualities of the heart above the faculties of the mind—goodness above genius.

Stockbridge. S.