

chimneys, and also to be damp. Also, if not most substantially built, they are liable to "settle" after frost and rain—"to settle" in this connection meaning to get cracks in the walls, so that doors will not open and locks will not fasten. The bottom of a hill is always to be avoided. It is easily reached, but it is very likely to be damp, because all the water runs into it, and in hot weather it is uncomfortable because no air seems to get to it. Yet an old writer tells us that "when choosing a house, we should chiefly choose a wholesome air, for air is a dish one feeds on every minute, therefore it need be good." The top of a hill is bracing but very trying, exposed to wind and weather. People who are asthmatic or whose hearts are affected ought not to have to mount a hill. The best situation is the gentle slope of a hill, and the nearer the top the better so long as shelter may be obtained. A great authority in building has said that "the perfection of situation is the slope of a not too steep hill, facing between south-south-east and south-west; high enough to get a good fall for drainage, and to be quite free from the miasma of the lower land; low enough to secure thorough protection from the cold winds of the east and the north." "The direction of the prevailing winds near a house," another authority says, "can frequently be detected by observing the way in which

the trees and the shrubs in the neighbourhood are grown. They will generally be found to indicate by their shape the direction of the prevailing wind. The continued pressure of winds in one direction will bend the trees in one way, and the young twigs and leaves on the side on which the wind most frequently impinges get damaged and destroyed more frequently than those on the other side, where the trees are able consequently to grow more freely."

For the rest we might remember old Thomas Fuller's saying, "A pleasant prospect is always to be respected. A medley view, such as of water and land at Greenwich, best entertains the eyes, refreshing the wearied beholder with exchange of objects. Yet I know a more profitable prospect, where the owner can only see his own land round about."

Drainage is the next consideration, but I must leave that for another letter. It is so important and so little understood that it ought to be respectfully studied; and we should indeed make a mistake if we put it in the fag end of a letter. I will continue my discourse in a few weeks, and I sincerely hope you will be as interested in reading as I have been in writing.

Believe me, dear, affectionately yours,

PHYLLIS BROWNE.

MY MONGREL : THE STORY OF A LOST DOG.



MY MONGREL AT THE BUTCHER'S.

dogs are sent to the "Home" at Battersea, where, if not claimed by their owners, they are either sold or put to a painless death; while such lost dogs as do not appear at Battersea are regarded as stolen, either to be returned, if a reward is offered, or exported to another district.

FEW people, probably, except those who have themselves made search for a lost dog, are aware of the large number of canine waifs and strays which may be heard of and traced by a diligent inquirer in almost any quarter of London. It is generally supposed that the majority of lost

Some recent experience, however, has opened my eyes to the fact that, quite apart from these two recognised classes, there is a large floating population of lost dogs—or perhaps it should be said *found* dogs, since most of them are undergoing a course of adoption into new habitations. Except during the continuance of some special crusade against stray dogs, the police are not particularly active in effecting the arrest of "vagrants"; and numbers of dogs find temporary and then permanent



"POOR PUSSY."



IN THE COUNTRY.

people, who, from laziness or mistaken kindness, do not hand them over to the police, thus rendering it far more difficult for owners to find their dogs than it would be if *all* the waifs and strays could be collected at Battersea. This revelation of the status of lost dogs I owe to my mongrel.

My friends had all warned me that a tragedy was inevitable if I persisted in taking my mongrel with me from the country to the town. For several years he had been a well-known local character in a remote Surrey village, where his affable disposition and tricky habits had endeared him to a wide circle of rustic acquaintances. Often would he go the round of the neighbouring cottages, invariably securing a mutton-bone, or some other titbit, in the course of such domiciliary visits. Or he would exercise his fleet limbs and not inconsiderable vocal powers by yelping in pursuit after the carts and carriages that travelled along the straight sandy road; or waylay and "sore let and hinder" such other curs as were unlucky enough to pass by his haunts; or play the truant for a day or two with the cow-boys on the common, keeping meanwhile a very observant eye on the motions of the rabbits. It was urged by my friends that this ignorance of urban conventionalities on the part of my mongrel would unfit him for residence in a great city; but unfortunately I could not be content to "let sleeping dogs lie," and in a luckless moment brought my mongrel with me to this great metropolis.

For a few days all went well; for, confused by the strangeness of his new position, he conducted himself with unwonted sobriety and decorum. But soon, when the novelty had worn off, and he awoke to the El Dorado of scents and savours which lay around him, he began to "get his tail up," and, like many another provincial in similar circumstances, to develop a strong partiality for the excitements of London life. In the place of rabbit-burrows, he had now areas well stocked with cats; there were hundreds of dogs to waylay and thousands of vehicles to pursue; while the butchers' shops offered an *embarras de richesses* in comparison with the modest mutton-bone of a cottage scullery. To walk with my mongrel, even in the quietest streets, soon became an unpleasantly exciting pastime; and it was on one such occasion, when he had just chased an omnibus and then rifled a butcher's shop, that the necessity of withdrawing him from urban society was forced upon my mind. That very evening, as if divining my intentions, he himself took the initiative by escaping from the hall door and vanishing round the nearest corner. Like every other member of his species, this dog had his proverbial day, and his day, as far as I was concerned, was now over. The intricacies of the streets



"MARVELLOUS INDEED WAS THE MOTLEY ARRAY" (p. 108).

were more than he had reckoned for—my mongrel was a lost dog.

Everything was done that could be done to effect the recovery of this strayed reveller. A reward, much in excess of his market value, was proclaimed by means of placards, posters, and advertisements; while police, postmen, milkmen, bakers, butchers, cats'-meat-men, and crossing sweepers were duly notified of his disappearance and exhorted to keep a careful look-out, but it was of no avail; neither the police nor "the fancy" had news or tidings of him; if he had "gone to the dogs," it was not to those assembled at the Battersea "Home." All that I gained by my search was an instructive insight into the number and condition of other lost dogs, and the amazing inability of people in general to note the salient points of the most clearly worded description. Marvellous indeed was the motley array of curs, of every shape, colour, and size, to which my attention

was invited, in the confident anticipation that each would prove to be my errant mongrel.

Black-and-tan collies seemed to be the speciality in this unowned menagerie, but one and the same advertisement served to bring to my door black retrievers, white lurchers, long-haired spaniels, and short-haired terriers—anything and everything was held to correspond to the description of my lost mongrel. The one idea that never seemed to strike any of my informants was that it was their duty to hand over to the police the stray dogs in their possession; again and again I was told the same thing: that they had taken a fancy to the dog, and if he was not claimed they would themselves "give him a home." I am now driven to the conclusion that my mongrel has found a refuge in some such home as these, where I earnestly trust he is behaving himself in such a manner as to do credit to his former possessor.

S.



A SHARP EXPERIENCE.

By KATE EYRE, Author of "A Step in the Dark," "For the Good of the Family," "To be Given Up," &c.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH. CONSCIENCE HOUSE.



HAVE no choice but to keep pace with Gracie, as she follows Mr. Fane up the narrow hedge-lined pathway leading to the greenhouse.

"Whatever makes uncle persist in speaking to Kershaw to-night, I wonder?" she says in a tone of vexation.

"Why do you object to his doing so?" I venture to ask.

"Because there is no sense in it," she answers pettishly.

The pathway is a winding one, and at every turn I expect to see Mr. Fane come upon Gracie's late companion. However, the greenhouse is reached without any encounter having taken place; and there, sure enough, is Kershaw. Can I have been mistaken? As far as I can see, the pathway leads to the greenhouse only, and the hedge either side is too high to vault. Yet, as I glance at the gardener, I find it impossible to identify his appearance with that of the man who was standing so close to Gracie. The more I think of that individual, the more convinced do I feel that his waistcoat was low-cut, exposing a wide expanse of linen, against the dazzling whiteness of which the sparkle of a diamond stud was visible.

Gracie is very quiet as her uncle gives his order about the peaches, and I fancy I hear her breathe a