

A Modern Gelert.

BY WALTER RAGGE.

IF I refrain from giving particulars of names and places, forgive me. I have a haunting fear, a fear that may not be well founded, that I might be sent to prison; so I want every zealous and efficient officer who reads this narrative to know that he has wasted his time: this is fiction, foolish, improbable fiction, nothing more.

Two years ago, in August, I was walking peacefully along the esplanade of a certain town on the southern coast of England. It was evening, and the band was playing on the esplanade, which was consequently crowded, while the little pier, at other times the chief attraction of the place, was almost deserted. Suddenly, high above the strains of "Tommy Atkins," there smote on our startled ears a woman's scream; then another, and another, and then the deep cry of a strong man in mortal agony—"Help, help, help!" This sound came from the seaward end of the pier, and the crowd, heaving, swaying, the men swearing, the women screaming out their sympathy, made with one accord for the turnstiles. Luckily for me, I had been standing at that end of the esplanade, and I reached and cleared the stiles before the crush began. I heard the mob struggling and smashing the ironwork as I ran up the pier. The gate-keeper had left his post, and was hurrying as fast as his bulk permitted in the direction of the cries.

"Who is it?" I shouted, as I overtook him.

"Man and woman, sir," he gasped; "only two on the pier to-night—got a covered perambulator with 'em—I 'ad to open the gate——"

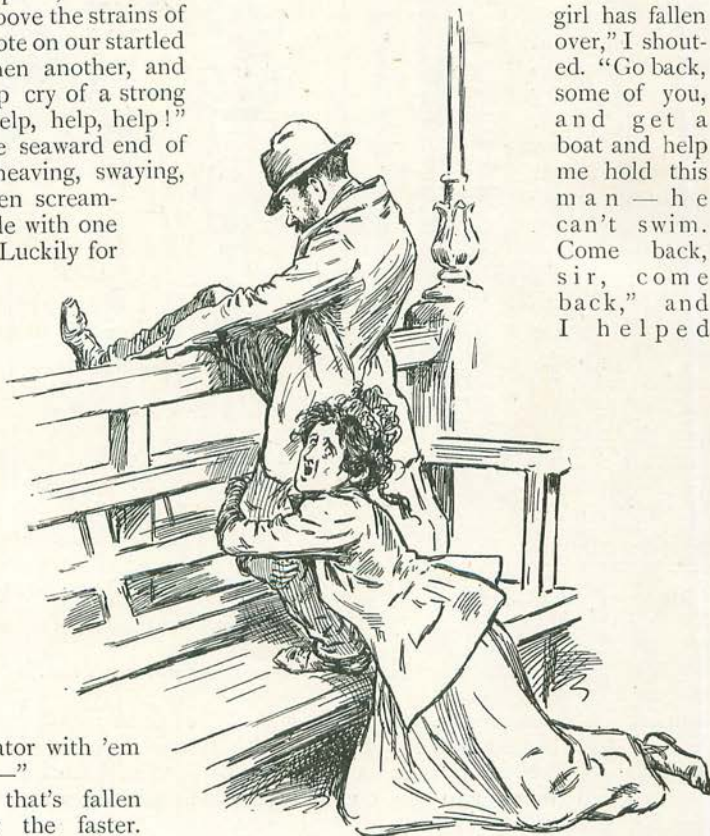
"Then it's the child that's fallen over," I cried, and flew the faster. Rushing round the little house at

the end of the pier I came upon the hapless pair. The man was standing on the seat and had thrown one leg over the rail; the woman was clinging wildly to his other limb and screaming in a manner horrible to hear. However, she was not hysterical, for as I came up she turned to me: "Hold him back, sir," she cried, "he can't swim. Oh, John, the dog'll save her if she can be saved."

"Is it the child?" I panted.

"Oh, yes, sir," wailed the mother, still clinging to her husband's leg; "our little girl has fallen over into the sea." The crowd was seething all round us now, and twenty voices yelled, "What is it?"

"A little girl has fallen over," I shouted. "Go back, some of you, and get a boat and help me hold this man—he can't swim. Come back, sir, come back," and I helped



"THE WOMAN WAS SCREAMING IN A MANNER HORRIBLE TO HEAR."

the woman to pull the poor, frantic wretch over the rail again.

"The dog's gone after her, John," the woman cried once more. "You know that Nero will save her if she can be saved. And you can't swim—you know you can't swim."

"No more can I," I hastened to observe,

for the woman looked at me; "but perhaps someone——" I had no need to say more. A young fellow behind me shouted, "Let me through!" and forced his way to the front bearing a life-belt in his hands. Without even fastening on the belt he jumped on to the seat and threw himself headlong over the rail. Now, if I had seen that belt I should have done as he did, though I cannot swim, and though I owe a duty to my partner to preserve my life, and after all we older fellows must be content to take the second place: youth will be served. There were many younger than I among that crowd, and they did not jump. Besides, I had the frantic father to protect from his own rashness. The electric lights at the end of the pier had been switched on; the cold, unsympathetic beams shone down upon the troubled water, and we could clearly see, for the pier was not a high one, the life-belt floating on the waves, and

close beside it the dark, wet head of the foolhardy young man. Then the boat that was always moored to the steps of the landing-stage swung round the corner of the pier, and remember that it was I and

I alone that had recalled the existence of that boat to the memory of the thoughtless crowd. A hundred eager voices hailed her crew, "Do you see anything?—where is

she?—help, help, help!" Then there was a splash and, clearly seen by our straining eyes, a dark head rose up some twenty yards from where the life-belt floated. A breathless pause and then, "It's a dog!" cried the pier-keeper, who was standing in the bows of the boat. "Give way, lads, there's something in his mouth."

The woman gave a rapturous cry: "Oh, John, what did I tell you? Nero has saved her—Nero has saved her!"

"Three cheers for Nero, then," I shouted, and they were given with a will. The boat, the man with the belt,

and the brave dog were together now. We saw the men stop rowing and haul man and beast into safety, and we cheered again and went on cheering. But suddenly there came a shock

of doubt. Why were they still rowing round and round? Good heavens, the man had jumped back into the water, and the dog had followed him. What did it mean? "Is she safe?" we shouted, and then the father's voice, "Let me go. Let me go, I must—I will!"



"HE THREW HIMSELF HEADLONG OVER THE RAIL."

But we held him back by force, and cried again, "Is she safe? For God's sake, tell us—have you found her?"

The pier-keeper called back; "It was her frock that the dog brought up; but never fear, he's dived again—he'll fetch her up." Another dreadful pause, and then again the dog came up, close to the boat this time, and again we saw that there was something in his mouth. But we did not cheer; we waited breathless, and all the time the woman's voice went on, "He'll save her, John; Nero will save her. Oh, kind gentleman, he'll save her, won't he?"

The young man had been hauled into the boat, exhausted, but the dog had dived once more; then the girl was still in the water. "He's found her cap," called the pier-keeper. Men had run off in all directions for ropes and drags, and still the boat rowed slowly round and round, and still the dog dived and rose and dived again, and still the people waited on the pier. But all hope had left us now. The poor child must be drowned; search as they might, they could only find a corpse. The woman was sobbing bitterly; the man, seated by her side, was plunged in the apathy of despair, and paid no heed to our attempts at consolation. A tall, stout man, with a beard, came hurrying up and forced his way through the crowd to where the wretched parents sat: he had a note-book in his hand. He stepped up to the father and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"This is a bad business, my poor fellow," he said, in a rough but not unkindly voice. "Tell us all about it." The woman had raised her head and was staring at him.

"Are you a policeman?" she asked, quickly.

"Policeman? No, no, my good soul, I'm a newspaper man. Come, my man; tell us how it happened." His bluff manner seemed to have a good effect: the poor man raised his head, and in broken accents told his pitiful story. He was a basket-seller, it appeared, travelling with a van from place to place. He had come to the outskirts of the town at dusk, and, leaving his van by the roadside, had come with his wife and child to the little pier. The little girl was delicate and could not walk far, though she was some five years old; hence the covered perambulator.

"I've seen better days, sir," the poor fellow said, with a piteous smile. "And that perambulator's about all I've got to remind me of them."

Indeed, it was obvious both from his

speech and manner that this was no common basket-seller. The little girl had been lifted from the perambulator and was sitting on the seat, and while he and his wife had turned their eyes away towards the esplanade, the accident had happened.

"But the dog will save her, sir," broke in the woman; "Nero will save her." The reporter looked at me inquiringly.

"The dog has jumped after the poor little girl," I explained; "he has found her frock and cap, but——"

"Yes, sir," cried the woman; "Nero will save her."

"What sort of dog?" asked the big man, writing busily in his note-book.

"Newfoundland dog, sir; he can swim like a fish and do 'most anything."

"Bravo, dog!" cried the reporter, and at that moment the boat's crew, the young man who had dived, and the animal in question came up the steps from the landing-stage. We rushed towards them, but the pier-keeper, who was the foremost of them, shook his head sadly.

"They've got the drag-ropes out," he said, and indeed the water was alive with boats. The reporter seized him by the arm. "Is that the dog?" he cried. The pier-keeper looked surprised. "Yes," he answered, slowly; "that's the dog, and a good dog too."

The woman came running forward. "Where is she, oh, where is she?" she wailed.

"Now, bear up, bear up," said the reporter, and then she saw the dog.

"Oh, Nero, where is she?" she cried, "Why haven't you brought her back, why haven't you brought her back?"

"He done his best," said the pier-keeper, gruffly. "See here," and he held up two dripping little garments.

The poor mother seized them with an eagerness that was terribly pathetic, and her husband came staggering forward to her side. "She's dead," he cried; "dead and drowned. Nero, how dare you come back and leave her there?"

I interfered at this. "You mustn't blame the dog," I said; "he has done nobly. Bear your affliction like a man; be brave; all that can be done has been done."

The dog, a huge, shaggy black-and-white Newfoundland, seemed to know that I was speaking for him, for he lifted a dripping paw and laid it on my spotless flannels. The owner turned to me.

"You're right, sir," he said, the tears standing in his eyes. "He has done his best, and I should not have blamed him."

"He's a noble dog," I said, and there was a murmur of approval from the crowd. "He's a noble dog, and for the sake of his courage, and to show my sympathy, I'll give you £15 for him."

The man seemed to waver for a moment, but his wife, laying her hand on the huge wet head of the faithful beast, cried out, "No, John, no; don't part with Nero, he's—he's all we've got left now."

There came another murmur from the crowd of sympathy with her, and, most unjustly, of anger with myself. "Don't go for to rob the poor man of his dog," said one indignant female, and other voices echoed her remark.

"My friends," said I, hastily, "I have no wish to do so."

"Well, don't you do it," repeated my assailant.

"I don't intend to do it. On the contrary, I will hand over the £15 to this poor fellow to help him to keep this noble dog."

"Bravo, sir," cried the reporter. "We'll make a jack-pot of it, and I'll put a quid in myself." And, taking off his hat, he threw a sovereign into it, and passed it round among the crowd.

The poor woman turned to me and caught my hand in hers. "Oh, bless you, sir," she sobbed. "Bless you, and you, kind gentlemen."

We stayed on that pier for hours, and when at last we left it, all hopes of recovering the body being abandoned, the woman was still tearfully expressing her gratitude, for which I must say I think she had some cause. The collection, inclusive of my donation, amounted to over £30.

The papers were full of the dog's courage and devotion for days to come (there was no mention, by the way, of the young man with the life-belt); and I think that the basket-maker and his wife

had reason to be thankful to the Press. I know of my own knowledge that three aunts of mine from London, Liverpool, and Exeter sent large donations to "the brave Nero and his master," and, as I afterwards ascertained, many other people did the same. The body of the child was not recovered, in spite of the diligent efforts of the authorities, and when I had my last interview with the parents before I left the place they were still broken-hearted at their loss.

None the less, they were very grateful to me for what I had done, and Nero, the popular idol, shared their gratitude, and greeted me with the most embarrassing warmth whenever I crossed his path. I twice offered to buy the beast, but nothing would induce the man to part with it. The wife, who had been the most vehement at first in rejecting my offer, had altered her opinion, and even added her entreaties to my own, but it was of no avail. I went away, regretfully thinking of the dog: he was not a particularly fine specimen, but there was an indescribable air of humorous intelligence that attracted me. Most Newfoundlands are stolid, almost sullen, in appearance; but not Nero. He would put his head on one side when we met and look at me with a "pawkiness" that was irresistible. Had he been human I feel sure he would have winked.



"'HOW SAD,' SAID I, FEELING SOMEWHAT BORED."

I would have given £20 for him ; but it was no use, and I bade him and his owners a sad farewell.

In April of this year I went down to stay with a cousin of mine who lives in Dorsetshire, about twenty miles from the sea-coast. He is a landowner and a magistrate, and a busy man generally, but he was not at home when I arrived. His wife apologized for his absence : " Charlie is so sorry that he couldn't meet you, but there's been such a sad accident in the village, and he's seeing about that. He'll be home to dinner."

" What kind of accident ?" I asked.

" Oh, it's a most pathetic story. Charlie will be very angry with me, I know, for he's sure to want to tell you himself, but I really cannot wait. A poor man with a travelling cart came here yesterday. He left the cart in his wife's charge, outside the village, and came in to sell baskets and things. While he was away the van caught fire—I believe a lamp exploded. The woman was gathering sticks."

" How sad," said I, feeling somewhat bored.

" Oh, but wait—that's not the dreadful part of it," cried the daughter, excitedly.

" I know, my dear, I know," said her mother. " Please let me tell the story my own way. The woman was outside—but the poor little child was in the van. The fire was so terrible that the poor mother couldn't face the flames, so she sent their dog to fetch out the child. The dog tried several times without success, and at last—isn't it awful?—brought out the skeleton of the poor little thing. I suppose the burning oil had run over her—there was nothing but the skeleton—at least, even that was broken up by the flames. It's too terrible to think of—but here's Charlie at last."

My cousin came bustling in. " Well, George," he cried, " sorry to miss you—had a busy day—we've been having a terrible business here ; a poor basket-maker—"

" I've told George all about it, dear," said his wife, benignly.

My cousin's healthy face grew redder, but he nobly crushed his disappointment down. " Well," he said, " I've been looking after the poor people. The man's almost off his head—he was abusing his wife in the most frightful language when I came up ; not for leaving the child, but—what do you think?—for sending the dog into the fire."

" Poor man," said my cousin's wife.

" What sort of a dog is it ?" I asked.

" A Newfoundland—big black-and-white dog. It's not very badly burnt."

A Newfoundland ! The tide of memory carried me away to that dreadful scene on the pier two years ago. Were all Newfoundland dogs heroic, I wondered, or could this be my long-lost, much-regretted Nero ? His master was a basket-maker, I remembered ; yes, it must be he.

" What is the man like ?" I cried, eagerly.

" Most respectable-looking man : I was most surprised to hear him use such language : he's a smallish fellow with a black beard : speaks almost like a gentleman."

" Do you remember my telling you of the dog that dived from the pier ?" I said. " I am almost certain this must be the same."

" What a darling dog," cried my cousin's daughter. " The dog that tried to save the poor, drowning girl ! Oh, yes, I'm sure it must be ; there can't be two such dogs."

" I must go and see the man to-morrow," said I. " Where is he to be found ?"

" I was sending John round to him to-night," said my cousin. " We've made a little collection for him, and the sooner he has the money the better."

" Tell John to say that I am here, then," I said. " He will remember me, if it really is the man. It's a most extraordinary coincidence—though, after all, Bowling, where the girl was drowned, is not far from here, is it ?"

" About twenty miles, I should say," replied my cousin. " It is rather funny, though. I'll tell John—and now we ought to go and dress."

As we were knocking the balls about after dinner my cousin returned to the subject.

" Most extraordinary how fierce the fire must have been," he said, chalking his cue. " There wasn't a bit of flesh on the bones—they were all charred, of course ; even the ligaments were gone."

" Then how did the skeleton hold together ?" said I.

" It didn't ; the dog must have brought it out almost bone by bone. I can't think why he isn't more severely burnt. And, by the way, don't mention it to my wife, but I asked the man if he'd mind my taking a photo. of the skeleton ; he didn't object, and I'll come with you to-morrow and bring my camera."

On the following morning we started off to the village, my cousin discreetly concealing his camera until we had turned the corner of the drive. We found the unhappy couple in the cottage of an old servant of my cousin's. They were sitting together in the kitchen, and the old woman who owned the

place was vigorously driving off the curious villagers who tried to peep in at her windows.

I was right. I recognised the man and the woman immediately, and my old friend Nero was lying by the fire with bandages round his neck. All three greeted me cordially, and I sat down to converse with them, while my cousin assisted his old servant in dispersing the idle crowd outside.

"This is a dreadful business," I began. "How terribly unfortunate you are! And poor Nero couldn't save this child?"

"No, sir," said the man, shooting an angry

The remains of the poor child were laid out in a little room upstairs. The skeleton was, as far as my unpractised eye could judge, almost perfect; yet every bone was separate from its neighbour, and there was, as my cousin had said, no trace of any ligament.

"Who arranged these bones?" I asked.

"Dr. Ripton," said my cousin; "there's going to be an inquest."

"It's marvellous that the dog should have found them," said I.

"Yes, isn't it? I believe he brought them



"HOW TERRIBLY UNFORTUNATE YOU ARE."

glance at his wife. "It's a wonder he wasn't killed."

"He doesn't fear death," said I, "that I am sure of. I didn't know you had another child, my poor fellow. I thought the one that was drowned——"

"Yes, sir," said the woman, wiping her eyes. "This was our last, sir."

"Poor things, poor things," said I, and silently slipped a coin into the woman's hand. My cousin entered briskly.

"Well, how's the dog?" said he.

"Going on well, sir," said the man. "He's come off well, considering all things," and again he looked angrily at the woman.

"Well, let's go upstairs," said my cousin. "No, don't you come, my man: it will only distress you."

all out. They're very little charred, when one considers the violence of the fire, and they can none of them have been left in the fire long, because it wasn't put out for more than an hour, and there wouldn't have been anything left of them. Just pull up that blind, will you? I want more light."

My cousin took several photographs, and we went home. The inquest was held, and the jury refrained from blaming the poor woman, I believe, though I didn't see the report. The public was very much interested in the sad case, and a good deal of practical sympathy resulted from the publication of the story in the Press.

About a week later my cousin said to me, after breakfast, "Those poor people are leaving to day. I must really print those

photographs. Very possibly the man would be glad to have them."

The dark room adjoined my cousin's study, and I sat and smoked my after-breakfast cigar while my cousin arranged the fixing, or whatever it is called, of the photographs. Finally he produced them for my inspection.

They had come out very well, especially one that had been taken of the skull. I was examining this when I noticed a mark on the top of the head that I did not remember seeing when we "viewed the body."

"What's this?" I said, and pointed out the mark to my cousin.

"Maybe a flaw in the plate," said he. "Here's a magnifying-glass; look at it through this."

I looked, and, to my utter astonishment, saw clearly marked upon the skull the figures "189." I handed the glass to my cousin in silence. He looked, started, and then turned to me, his face absolutely purple.

"It's a number," he said, hoarsely.

"It is," said I. "How on earth did it get there?"

"How?" he yelled. "Why, we've been done. This isn't the skull of a child at all; there never *was* a child in that infernal van. This is some confounded old skeleton that's been faked up by that smooth-poken villain."

"Steady, steady," said I; "you can't be sure."

"Sure! Of course I'm sure. How could the number get there on a living child? Answer me that. The rascal, the infernal rascal! I'll see that he gets his deserts; I'll——"

"Stop a bit," said I. "Don't be so hasty. You may be right——"

"I am right."

"Very good. But it will be an unpleasant business. You wrote to the paper, you know——"

My cousin's jaw dropped. "I know I did," said he, after a pause. "I know I've made an ass of myself. They'll guy the very soul out of me for this. But, hang it, man, you wouldn't have me hush it up?"

"No, no," said I, hastily. "It's not a question of hushing up—I only wish you not to act upon suspicion."

The door opened and John appeared. "A man to see you, sir," he said.



"'IT'S A NUMBER,' HE SAID, HOARSELY."

"Who is it?" said my cousin, angrily.

"It's the man whose child was killed, sir," said John.

"What's he want?"

"He wants to see Sir George, sir."

"Very good," said I; "show him in here"; and John departed.

"Now, look here," said I, hastily, "I must see this man alone. You must not mix yourself up in this business. Don't try to be wiser than a coroner's jury, my dear fellow. I'll settle with the man alone; if

you were here, he knows you're a magistrate—he'd say nothing—or if he did, you'd have to take it up, and I don't think that's desirable—I don't think that's desirable."

My cousin looked at me doubtfully; then silently nodded his head and went out. In another minute John reappeared.

"The man wants to bring his dog in, sir," he said. "Do you wish 'im to do so?"

"Certainly," said I, and John withdrew and presently ushered Nero and his master into the study.

"Good morning," said I, coldly. "You wish to see me, I understand?"

"Yes, sir," said the man. "I'm going

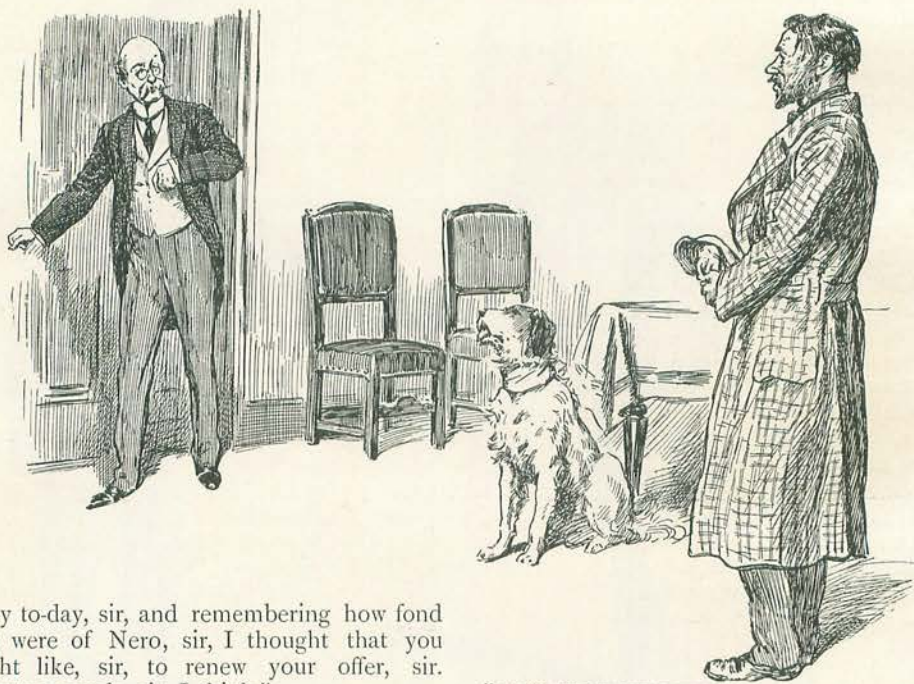
Could it be possible that he was trying to confess? I determined to help him.

"So you're giving up business, then?" I said.

He gave me one quick, suspicious glance, and then dropped his eyes. "Yes, sir," he said. "We're thinking of going to London."

I rose and, walking quickly to the door, locked it and put the key in my pocket. "Now," said I, "this house belongs to a magistrate. I have discovered your scheme, my man, and I tell you candidly, because I do not wish to be harsh with you, that your only chance is to confess at once."

"Confess!" he cried, with an admirable



"I ROSE AND, WALKING QUICKLY TO THE DOOR, LOCKED IT."

away to-day, sir, and remembering how fond you were of Nero, sir, I thought that you might like, sir, to renew your offer, sir. Twenty pounds, sir, I think."

"Certainly not," I said, gently but firmly, repulsing the dog, who laid a friendly paw upon my knee. "I am not prepared to pay that sum."

"Well, sir, say ten."

"Nor ten pounds, nor five, nor one."

"Well, sir," said the man, after a pause, "will you take him as a gift?"

I was simply astounded. "What do you mean?" I said.

"You were always fond of the dog, sir, and he was fond of you, and I think he'd be safer with you, sir—safer and happier."

I looked at him—obviously something was on his mind; he was shuffling his feet about, and never once did he look me in the face.

assumption of injured innocence. "Confess what? What do you mean, sir?"

"I have here," I went on, quietly, "a photograph of the skull that you pretended to be that of your dead child. That photograph clearly shows that it is not so. Now, I give you one minute to make up your mind. Either you will tell me without reserve all about it, when I will be as lenient as I can, or I ring the bell and give you into custody."

The man hesitated for a moment, then—

"Sit down, sir," he said, with a smile, "and make yourself comfortable. I guess the best way will be to make a clean breast of it. D'you want the whole story, sir?"

"I do," said I, and then, as a fresh wave of suspicion flooded my hitherto unsuspecting mind, "and don't forget the incident on the pier."

He had the grace to look somewhat abashed, but, as I sat down quietly, he recovered his assurance and began his story.

"That was the first time we tried the job, sir," said he. "I knew that Nero could swim like a fish, sir; seen him in the water often and often. Well, sir, I don't know if you read the papers much, but if so you must have noticed that the public never care much what a man does in the way of saving life, but when there's an animal in it, my word, what a fuss they make! And it's just the same in other things, too: if a man's starved, bless your heart, they don't care; but if he keeps a dog and feeds it, while he's starving—Lord, don't they just come down with the ready! I'd been reading something like that in one of the papers, and says I to my old woman, 'Why shouldn't we starve, and fatten Nero up, and let the papers hear of it?' says I.

"They wouldn't hear of it,' says she; 'and I don't want to starve.'

"Then it must be life-saving,' says I.

"Whose life?' says she.

"Well, that puzzled us for a bit: there's lots of lives saved by dogs, you know, and we wanted something special. I thought of getting our little girl down from London and letting Nero save her, but she's got a place in the theatre, and the wife wouldn't hear of her giving it up. You see, if I'd gone in to the water and been saved, I'd have had to go deep and be a long time in being saved, or the public wouldn't care about it a bit, and I thought I might make it a bit too long and not be saved after all, which would have been a pity, wouldn't it?"

I remained silent, and the hardened villain went on.

"At last I hit on the right plan. We'd got some of Jennie's clothes along with us, and that night, seeing the pier was empty, we went on with the perambulator closed. I'd bought the perambulator special. The fool at the gate spotted nothing. When we got to the end I gave Nero the cap and the frock, and he took them in his mouth."

I glanced at the dog, and he put his head on one side and looked back at me with his tongue out.

"Nero could dive as well as any duck, and I said to him, 'Deep, Nero, deep.'"

The dog heard the words and sprang up

wildly, but his master calmed him with a wave of the hand.

"Nero jumps off into the water and dives, and we start yelling out and you came up—and that's all clear and satisfactory, isn't it, sir?"

"Why did he go on diving?" I said.

"He always did, sir, until I whistled."

"But you didn't whistle?"

"Oh, yes, I did, sir. You didn't notice it perhaps, but *he* did. That's all satisfactory, isn't it?"

I did not commit myself. "Tell me about this business," I said, sternly.

The man frowned. "This was none of my doing, sir," he said. "I've only just forgiven the missus for sending the poor dog into the fire like that."

"But the skeleton?" I said, incredulously. "You must have been preparing for this fraud, for you had the skeleton ready all the time."

The man laughed: "Not for this, sir," he said. "I got the skeleton right enough, and I'll tell you what I meant to do with it. We were going back to the old place, sir: I judged the people would have just about forgotten us, and I was going to drop the bones out of a boat near the pier-head, give one to Nero, say he'd found it, and let him have a try for the rest. The people would have remembered all about the sad accident then, sir, and I think we might have had a second edition of their kindness, even though you wouldn't have been there. It was a good lay, that first one, sir; £200 we cleared, all in all."

"Go on," said I, sternly. "Why did you burn the van?"

"Ah, that was an accident—a real accident, sir. We never meant to burn the van. A lamp burst, or something, and when my wife saw that it was all ablaze, she sent the dog in to bring out the bag, and angry I was with her for doing it."

"The bag," said I. "What bag?"

"A linen bag, sir, with the bones in it. I'd taken all the wire out of the skeleton, you see, sir, and the bones were loose. Nero brought the bag out all right and burned himself a bit in doing it. Then my wife thought she might as well make the best of a bad job, so she burnt the bag and kicked up a row, and when I came back from the village I found a crowd there, and learnt that I'd lost another child." And he laughed outright at this.

"I see," said I; "that accounts for all the bones being found?"

"Yes, sir," said he. "My wife thought it best to burn them a bit, but I suppose she didn't do it enough, and that's how you spotted us. I must say it was smart."

"No," said I; "there was a number on the skull."

He looked genuinely shocked. "A number, sir? You don't say so! And to think of my overlooking a thing like that."

"Don't blame yourself. It wasn't visible to the eye. It came out in the photograph for some reason. I cannot tell you why; I'm no photographer."

"Ah," said he, visibly relieved. "I thought I shouldn't have missed it. Wonderful process, photography. But I ought to have thought of that, too, for I read somewhere that that's how they discovered the writing on the monuments in Egypt."

"You seem to have read a good deal," said I.

"I have, sir," he replied. "I am a well-educated man, though I say it as shouldn't, perhaps. And now, sir, you know my history: what are you going to do?"

"You are going to London?" I said, after a pause.

"Yes, sir. Must get back to business, sir."

"Business? What business?"

"Cabinet-maker, sir. Oh, I see, sir: yes, we took our summer holiday with the van, sir. Comes cheaper."

"Why did you want me to take the dog?"

He looked embarrassed for a moment; then—

"Well, sir," said he, "I think you'll agree that it wouldn't have been safe to play the game again; we should have been caught for a certainty—well, we have been caught, in fact. Now, I can't trust my wife not to try it on: that's the worst of women, they never know when to stop; and she's no proper care for the dog, sir, as you can see, so I thought I'd leave him with you, knowing you to be fond of him."

"And you never intend to defraud your fellow-creatures like this again?" said I, in my most impressive tones.

"Never, sir. You can see for yourself that it wouldn't do."

"Tell me one thing," I said, as the thought struck me. "You've a respectable business of your own in London, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir—I see what you mean, sir. We

travel incognito, sir, in the van; under another name, sir. Safer, sir, and more convenient."

"Quite so. What is your real name?"

No answer.

"Well, my man," I said, at last, "promise me you'll never do this any more, and I'll let you off easily."

"Yes, sir," said he, eagerly, "and you'll take the dog, sir?"

Nero looked at me with that irresistible grin—I can give it no other name. I was tempted—struggled for a moment—and fell.

"I'll take the dog," I said, weakly.

"Thank you, sir," said the scoundrel, cheerily. "And as my poor, burnt child is safely buried now, there's nothing to detain me here, is there?" He said it with meaning, and I understood.

"No," I said, "I shall not prosecute, but I should advise you to clear out quickly."

"Yes, sir," said he; "the wife has gone already. Now, Nero, here's your master; understand, here's your master. Call him, sir." I did so, and the man also called at the same moment; the dog walked up to me and held out a paw.

"That's all right, sir," said the man. "May I go, sir?"

I unlocked the door and saw him depart. He left the place that day, and I have never seen him again. I had some difficulty in explaining to my cousin how the dog came into my possession; however, he was glad to know that the man had gone, that no serious crime had been committed, and that his indiscretion in so zealously advocating the scoundrel's cause would never be discovered.

I'm not going to call the dog Nero any longer: *he* would never have fiddled at the burning of Rome, rather would he have dashed into the flames and hauled out the images of the gods.

I shall call him Gelert; for, in spite of his humorous expression, I do not think he realized the full extent of his late master's fraud. At least, I am sure that if a child had been drowning in that sea, or burning in that van, he would have rescued her. Is he less heroic because he recovered only rags in the one case and bones in the other? No, I shall certainly call him Gelert, after Llewellyn's Gelert. And have I, or have I not, compounded a felony by taking him?