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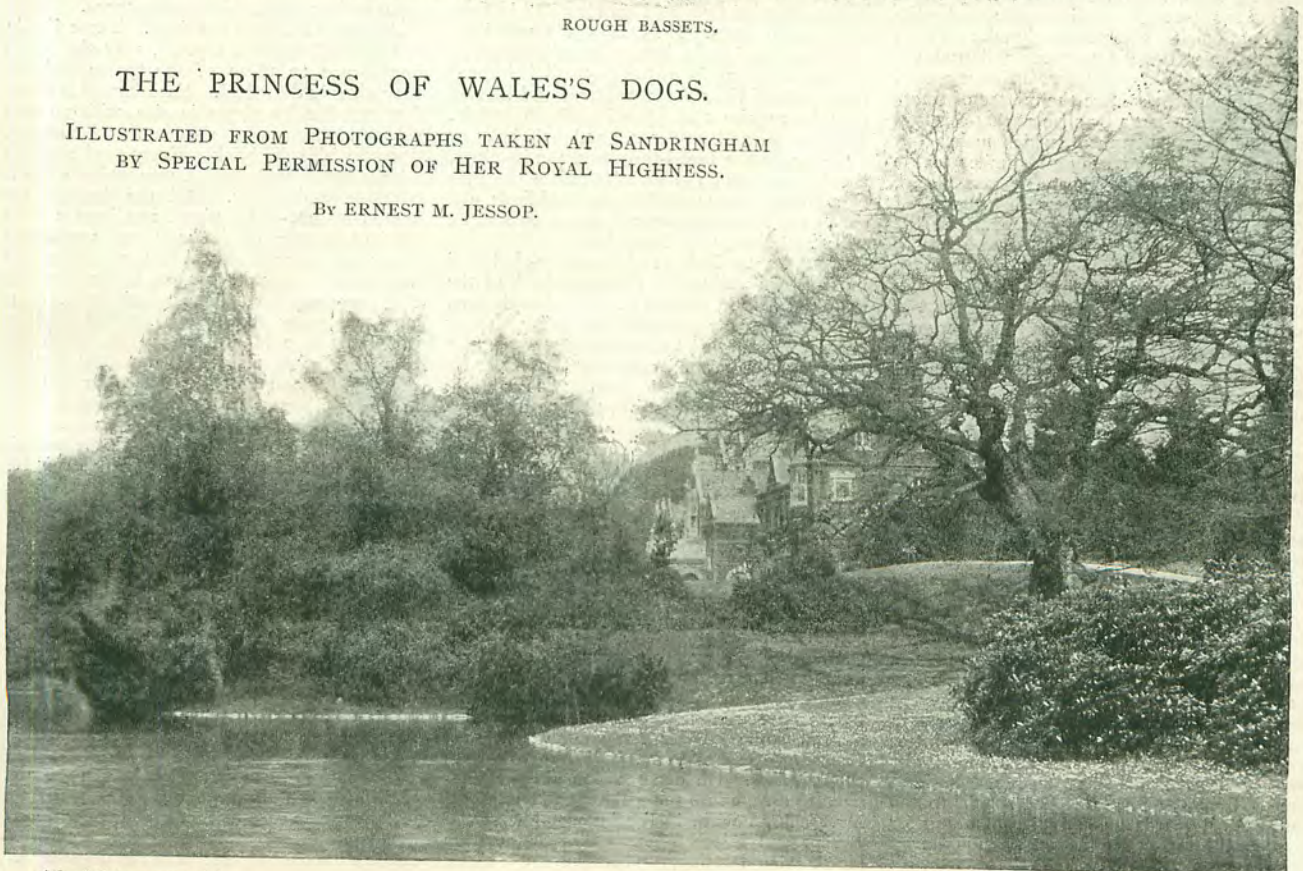


ROUGH BASSETS.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S DOGS.

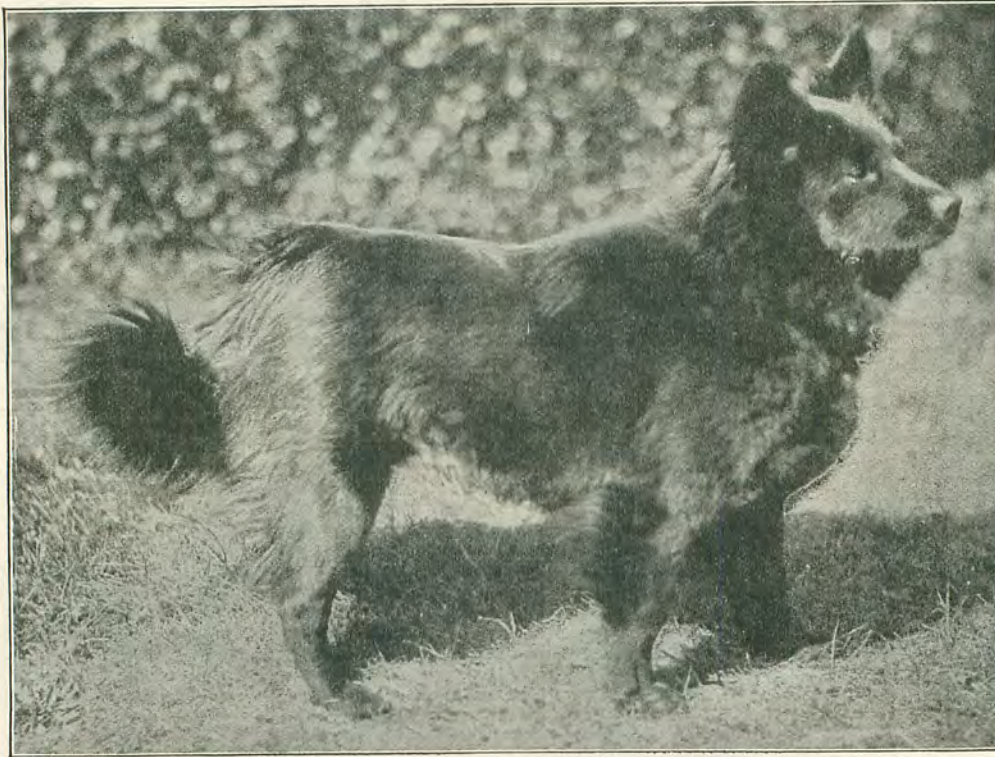
ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT SANDRINGHAM
BY SPECIAL PERMISSION OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS.

By ERNEST M. JESSOP.



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SANDRINGHAM FROM THE LOWER LAKE.



TUFI.

THREE-AND-A-HALF hours of bone-shaking and nerve-shattering in a carriage that might "stagger humanity" did but the Great Eastern Railway show it in a railway exhibition; fleet as an arrow to studious Cambridge, and thence creeping slow, and ever slower, from rustic station to yet another rustic station, under the charge of officials who seemingly take no heed of time, over the flat pastures and past the old-world windmills, at last we arrive at pretty, rural Dersingham. Here the matter of transport is taken in hand by a smart dog-cart and a high-stepping bay mare, which makes but short work of the remaining two miles to the House—Sandringham House, if you please, for there is no other House with a capital H in this district. Next to kindly Mr. Beck (the Prince's agent) in his lovely ivy-clad house to get your credentials signed, and, if you have the luck to arrive at breakfast time, to taste, among other dainties, cream that makes you mentally resolve on your return to deliver your family milkman into the unsympathetic hands of the public analyst, and bacon which causes you to wonder that pig so good was ever allowed to attain maturity.

Now, armed with your pass which allows yourself and photographer to wander anywhere over the estate at any time, you start in search of the kennels. These are easy to find if you first pull up at the pretty little house of genial Mr. Jackson, the Prince's head keeper, who, as well as Mrs. Jackson, is always ready with both help and information. Passing through Mrs. Jackson's garden, which is a perfect blaze of colour from its old-fashioned flowers, kept in the trimmest of order by its kindly mistress, we first come to a railed-in space of evergreen turf, much used for doggy exercise. This is the paddock, where may be seen on Sunday mornings our own Princess, in garden hat and great white apron, almost overwhelmed by the caresses of some sixty or seventy dogs of all sorts, shapes, sizes and breeds, from the miniature Jap spaniel to the lordly St. Bernard, one and all contending for a special little notice from the much-loved mistress. A yard or so behind stands, with

baskets well filled with bread and biscuits, the watchful attendant Brunson, the chief kennelman, a fine stalwart figure with long fair moustache and kindly eyes, clad in his Sunday uniform of Lincoln-green coat with gilt crested bottons, drab breeches, black tops, and bowler hat surrounded by a gold cord knotted in front with acorn ends. He carries a smart little silver-mounted whip, but, as he tells me, only as part of his uniform, the dogs all being too fond both of their Royal mistress and himself ever to require the use of such an article. Well, well, and so for a good half hour or more go on the bread-throwing, the laughter, the barking, and the caresses before the eyes of admiring guests until all are satisfied; and so, as such matters are not for us to see, we will stroll along with Brunson.

Now let us look at the creeper-clad and moss-grown wall which forms the back of the kennels: here in front of it, bedded in flowers, shall one notice the simple little grave of poor Beatie, who, as his tombstone says, was "for ten years the faithful companion of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales." Beatie was a white Siberian. He was most devotedly attached to his master, and invariably accompanied him in his walks and drives. The day after his death the Prince made a special visit to the kennels to thank the attendants for their care of his pet in his last illness.

Nearly opposite to Beatie's tomb is the site of an old bear-pit, formerly occupied by Charlie and Polly, two American black bears, which have now been deported to the Zoo, greatly to the pleasure of their former attendants, to whom they were somewhat of a trial. Polly was fairly affable, and could usually be coaxed into her den while the daily cleansing of the pit took place, but Charlie would pace around the pit for hours, wearing a grim smile on his sable countenance at Brunson's efforts to persuade him to vacate the premises. On one occasion also he managed to escape into the paddock and indulged Mr. Jackson with, in the immortal words of Besant and Rice's Phineas P. Beck, a little bit of "bar hunting," "bar behind." After

Mr. Jackson's narrow escape it was considered time for Charlie and his mate's departure, and with a warm leave-taking, from which their proffered hugging was luckily omitted, they left for the Zoo, where, midst a wealth of indigestible buns, they meditate on their lost royal home with its many advantages.

And now let us to the dogs. These live in a range of fourteen kennels, very similar in appearance to those of the Queen which I have already described. Each kennel is about fourteen feet by eleven in size, with an outside yard measuring sixteen feet by eleven, floored with solid brick. Every yard contains a large metal water-vessel, into which a tap is continually dripping. All the kennels are heated by hot-water pipes, and have a most efficient system of drainage and ventilating apparatus, as well as windows which can be kept open or closed according as the season of the year requires. The dogs' beds, some eighteen inches above the floor, are made of iron laths in a hinged framework, which can be raised for sleeping or let down flat against the wall. Dried bracken is used for bedding instead of straw, as it is considered more healthy and it does not harbour vermin.

The routine of life followed in the kennels is as follows. Early in the morning Brunson takes some thirty of the biggest dogs for a five or six miles' scamper while his assistant does some of the washing up. On the dogs' return they go into their clean kennels while their fellows are taken out in the same way. Then a light meal is given, and afterwards, weather permitting, the occupants of each kennel in turn have a run in the paddocks, and for the rest of the day the dogs remain in their own yards. Their heavy meal is given before kennelling up for the night. The foods used are biscuits, oatmeal, and bullocks' and sheep's heads all properly cooked and prepared together.

The range of buildings includes store-rooms, with a beautifully-kept apparatus ready for instant use in case of fire, a distemper house, a hospital, and a large, clean, well-fitted kitchen for the preparation of the dogs' food.



FOXEY.

While learning all these details on my first visit to the kennels, our constant companion was a small, smart-looking pug, who rather assumed the post of interpreter, seeming, as he stopped with a somewhat supercilious air, to remark to the other dogs, "You will pardon this man; merely the Press, you know, come to describe things. A great bore, of course, but it is one of the penalties one has to pay for being a Royal dog. Don't bark! The man with the three-legged machine, which he calls a camera, is quite harmless—only makes pictures." His little superciliousness turns out on inquiry to be Bully, who was given to the Princess by the Prince on his departure for India, and who held the position of first favourite for many years. He went the way of all good dogs some short time since, having attained the patriarchal age of nineteen, but to the last claimed all his

privileges, insisting, when Brunston was a bachelor, on sharing his bed, and in later days making a pillow of his baby.

Then there was Blackie, a most lovable little toy Spitz, whom the Prince brought from Homburg as a present for Princess Victoria. He only weighs about four pounds, but was the bugbear of my photographer. Keep still he would not. Play, play, play, was the cry of the mercurial little imp; a ball was fetched, keys were rattled, a tin whistle was tried, even a dinner bell was of no use; until that patriarch of all birds, Cockie, the Princess's cockatoo, who had been an interested spectator of the proceedings, after assuming an attitude of profound thought, suddenly grasped the situation and gave vent to a prolonged series of such awful yells that even Blackie was quiet for the moment wanted by the rapid shutter to do its work.

A great contrast to Blackie as models were the pretty group of rough grey and tan bassets. Babil and Bijou and their family. At the word of command they assembled in their little yard and grouped themselves in the most picturesque attitudes, seeming to be only too proud of the notice taken of them; small tails wagged, ears were pricked and tiny paws placed in the most dainty way, anything in fact to please such a kind keeper as Brunston. And when attention was drawn to the camera lens every eye was at once fixed on it as though it were some wonderful fetich. The parents of this beautiful little family of dogs were brought from France in 1887, by H.R.H. the Comtesse de Paris, and presented by her to the Princess.

Another prized companion of our walks round the kennels was Perla, a Lapland sledge dog, with the loveliest, snow-white



MARVEL. (SMOOTH BASSET.)



SANDRINGHAM COUNT.

coat and the blackest of eyes and noses. Of the most amiable and cheerful disposition, Perla is naturally a favourite of everyone on the estate, but I am afraid she is a little inclined to flirting, as she persistently declined to face the camera, moving first a yard one way, and anon to the other side with a whisk of her tail, and a look of human intelligence in her fine dark eyes, evidently trying to tell us that something was wanting. At last Brunndon remembered. "Oh," said he, "she won't be quiet without Bizoff." So at a call up trots Bizoff, a large, handsome blue and grey Norwegian dog; pretty "Miss Perla" wags her tail, gives a bark of satisfaction and at once stands at attention beside him while the photograph is taken. Perla, I learn, has been many times exhibited, and owns a very large number of first and special prizes. She was presented by Baron Oscar Dickson in 1887.

Now the whole group of us gets scattered by the friendly rush of a pet, who by means of a tremendous bass voice has been making himself conspicuous for some time past, and has at last been let loose to go to his (evidently) beloved Brunndon. This is the great St. Bernard, Sandringham Count, who in the extremity of his delight nearly knocks down the stalwart Brunndon by putting his paws on his shoulders, at the same time as he whisks the camera off its legs with a wave of his tail. These pets of thirteen stone weight are sometimes embarrassing in their attentions. But in spite of his size and high spirits, "the Count" is particularly obedient and sits most quietly for his portrait, although I must say his best picture is obtained when he is allowed to nestle his great fine head against his beloved keeper's hand. However, the portrait taken, and "the Count" told to go home, off he trots most contentedly to his kennel, merely knocking down a few small dogs by the way, and narrowly missing the present writer.

In the days that have gone, one of the nicest of the Princess's dogs, and certainly the greatest favourite, was Plumpie, a red

Chinese Chow-Chow. For many years she was her Royal mistress's constant and faithful companion, and was photographed times out of number with the Princess whom she so dearly loved. She is now, alas, dead. I think the last portrait taken of her was a drawing in silverpoint made by myself, which Her Royal Highness did me the honour of purchasing from me.

But Plumpie has left some reminiscences of herself in her offspring Buz, Fuz and Foxey, whose father was the Prince's Beatie.

Buz and his brothers have the reputation of being rather short-tempered with strangers, but I must do them the justice to say I found no indications of it. On the contrary whether it was from Bully's introduction, or that they looked upon me as the man with the bits of meat, I do not know, but most certainly we were on the best of terms during my visit. They are handsome creatures with splendid thick red coats. All the Chinese dogs on their first arrival at Sandringham were very savage and self-willed, but, in consequence of their kindly treatment, soon became the most docile of creatures.

Brunndon scorns the idea of a whip being required in the kennels save as a portion of his dress livery, and shows me, as a proof

of the merits of his system of training by kindness, a splendid jet-black Chow named Tufi, who, when she arrived at the kennels, could not be touched without danger, but now follows him about like an affectionate puppy. Here is Luska, too, who came straight from Siberia to Sandringham when he was eighteen months old. On his arrival, after his long journey, he was a dilapidated-looking object, with a coat mainly consisting of tar and paint, and an overwhelming desire to bite anyone with whom he came in contact. Now he is a strikingly handsome dog with a marvellous coat of the snowiest white, with the exception of his head and ears, which are all black, save for a white streak on the face. In his Siberian days Luska had lived entirely on fish, but soon took to Sandringham diet. He is now as quiet and well disposed a dog as one could wish for, but he is very reserved and shows more marked affection for the Princess than for anyone else.

Of the lovely Borzoi, Alix, the Princess's prime favourite, so much has been written, and so many photographs taken, that any more notice here would be superfluous. I think a few words ought to be given to Zero and Marvel who, especially the former, are perfect patterns of what their breed should be. They are known as smooth bassets. Zero is a most uncommon-looking dog—one of the finest of his breed in existence. His colours are black, white and tan. He has wonderful length of

body and great power of limb; but his chief beauties are his lovely head, with its great silky drooping ears, and his big, soft melancholy brown eyes, of which the iris is curiously tinged with deep pink. In spite of his heavy build he is a very fast galloper, and was formerly the constant companion of the Princess in her rides, being well able to keep up with the fastest of hacks, and, like all the other dogs, never likely to stray far from his mistress. Marvel, a female dog, is smaller and of slighter build, but is yet a model of her kind, and is



BULLY.



BLACKIE. (BLACK TOY POMERANIAN.)

noted for her affectionate disposition as well as her long pedigree. Her colours are black and white.

A beautiful meek-faced collie who constantly follows us about, neglecting no opportunity of calling attention to herself by giving an affectionate lick to one's hand, is Newmarket Nicety. She and her brother, Newmarket Tip, are special favourites of the Princess, and are frequently kept "in the house."

To my mind the nicest, and certainly by all who knew him the best-loved, dog in the Sandringham kennels was dear old Snowdrop (now dead). He was a pure white collie of the most aristocratic appearance with the loveliest coat imaginable. His manners were so kindly and yet so effusive, and his appearance so intelligent, that sometimes it was difficult to realise he was merely a dumb creature. And the patience of him! He seemed quite to understand that he was wanted to sit for his portrait. Being delicate, a mat was placed to cover the cold stones when he at once tried various attitudes to please us. Position after position was assumed with a questioning look upwards, or over his shoulder, as though he would say "How would that do?" and when at last he was settled, there he remained, like a beautiful statue, until told the picture was finished. But this was not all. He remembered things. Whenever I called at Mr. Jackson's house, where he lived his last years,

he would first give me a most kindly welcome, then retreat to his mat and pose himself in exactly the same position he had been required to assume when his likeness was taken, greeting with a sedate wag of the tail the appearance of my sketch-book from my pocket. At my last visit to the kennels, I am pleased to say that I was enabled to give reproductions of his portrait to his best friends, by whom the picture of their lost pet was almost greeted with tears.

With Snowdrop under the care of kindly Mrs. Jackson lived, as doggy companion, dear little Tiny, one of the smallest and smartest of black Spitzes, or as it is the fashion to call them, toy Poms. Tiny and Snowdrop were practically inseparable, and it would be difficult to find a prettier picture than the pair made, when the silky little black head of Tiny was pillowed on the lovely white coat of her big friend and champion. Poor little Tiny is also now, alas, dead, only having survived her companion a few short months.

Space is now running short, so I must stop descriptions of individual dogs, or I should like to have mentioned many others, notably the Clumber spaniels and Sam, the Princess Victoria's curly brown poodle, who possesses many accomplishments, such as the turning of somersaults and other acrobatic feats, and who is privileged to carry her letters every morning to his mistress.

Then, too, there are the Princess's tiny

Japanese spaniels, whose chief attraction is their smallness and their beauty, coupled with the fact that they never leave their Royal mistress. Their names are Punch, Little Billee, and Facey. I must conclude by saying that there are usually between sixty and seventy pet dogs in the kennels, exclusive of those used for sport, which are kept elsewhere. The Princess names all her own dogs herself, and knows each one by name. Never a day passes, when they are in residence at Sandringham, without both the Prince and Princess visiting the kennels, and personally attending to the comfort of their occupants.

The Duchess of Fife's favourite dogs are Blenheim spaniels and dachshunds. Princess Charles of Denmark prefers fox-terriers, and of the Princess Victoria's Blackie and Sam I have already spoken. The Queen has been many times to the kennels, the arrangement of which she greatly admired. The Duke of York also takes great interest in them, but naturally his tastes incline more to sporting dogs. And so one must conclude a pleasant visit by a call at the Princess's little sitting-room, where are to be seen brilliantly-polished collars, leads, etc., intermingled with photographs of old favourites, certificates of prizes won, the perfectly-kept stud-book, and, prized above all by the custodians, the autographed portraits of the well-beloved Royal masters and mistresses.

