

❖ ❖ A QUEER LITTLE GRAVEYARD. ❖ ❖



"TOPPER."

ONE of the least-known corners of London is the cemetery for dogs. You may catch a glimpse of it as you ride outside the 'bus along Bayswater Road, but if you want to tread this sacred earth you must enter Hyde Park by the Victoria Gate, and knock lightly at the gate-keeper's door.

It is a pretty sight that meets your gaze. Here and there is a grave with nothing but a little grassy hillock to indicate that there some faithful Fido has been laid to rest, and at the head of one of these humble mounds a simple piece of wood bears the name of the corpse buried beneath. But nearly all the dogs have some memorial in stone—marble monuments, most of them, inscribed with a simplicity that is often pathetic. "Poor little Prince," says one stone, with not a word to tell of Prince's death, or when, or where, or how it came about. Prince was a royal dog, the pet of a military duke, and he was run over close to his own grave. "To dear little Smut," is another inscription still easily read, and the next is slightly more elaborate: "Dear Impy—Loving and loved, April 7, 1886." "Dear Titsey," "Poor Duchie," say other simple stones, and another is more orthodox — "Here lies Tip, Sept. 8, 1888." "In Tender Memory of Sweet little Tiny," another inscription runs, the adjectives beginning with capital letters as though to emphasize their tenderness; while another stone stands out conspicuously:

"Alas! Poor Zoe.
Born 1st October,
1879.
Died 3rd August,
1892.

As deeply mourned
as ever dog was
mourned,
For friendship rare
by her adorned."

"To dear 'Centi,' the loved companion of 12 years; Sept. 1889," one reads again, and as one reads one wonders if dear "Centi" is still remembered after these many years. For twelve years "Centi" wagged his little tail and ran behind his mistress in the park, and now that he wags his tail no longer his virtues are commemorated for posterity in the dogs' cemetery. "Sweet little 'Skye'" is a beautiful tribute, written, one fancies, by a little girl's hand; and "Love's tribute to love" lends a touch of poetry to this quiet, sad scene.

Simplicity, however, is the dominant feature of the dogs' Valhalla, and most of the friends of the

departed dogs are content to express their grief in a simple phrase such as "Darling 'Faust,' April 20, 1891"; "Dear little 'Peggie'" ; "A. J. H.—Our dog 'Prince'" ; while one stone bears the words "Flo,' June, 1891," and another the simple name "Sprite." It was evidently intended that the cemetery should be simple, for the first dog buried there lies under a stone having only the words "Poor 'Cherry,' died 28 April, 1881." "Cherry" was a clever dog, who made this corner of the park his playground before the cemetery was dreamed of, and when, seventeen years ago, he gave way to the infirmities of old age, it was thought very fitting that he should be laid beneath the earth he had loved so well. So a corner was found and a grave was dug, and the dogs' cemetery became an actual fact.

The Funeral Reform Association finds nothing to reform in a dog's funeral. Rarely do the friends follow their pet to the grave. The little corpses, sewn in canvas bags—sometimes enclosed in neatly-polished deal coffins—arrive at the house of the keeper of the Victoria Gate, who quietly digs a grave and lays the dead pet to rest in mournful silence. Lord Petre, who sent his dog to be buried one summer's day in 1892, intimated his intention to be present at the burial the next



SOME OTHER GRAVES.

morning; but the next morning Lord Petre lay as cold in death as his "Poor, dear 'Tappy.'" The keeper tells you many such stories, but we need not linger over them here. It may be said that a dog cemetery is a foolish fad, an absurd extravagance; but why should not our faithful pets have their marble monuments? The newspapers told us the other day of a dog which gave an alarm of fire and saved four lives by losing its own. The canine world has its heroes, not less worthy than the brave men who fight our battles, and perhaps there would be nothing amiss if we commemorated the lives of our dumb heroes a little more.