

A DOG STORY.

MR. SEVERN'S marvellous story in the July number—all the more marvellous as he vouches for the truth of the story—reminds me of a very touching instance of the love of animals in the lower grade of creation for man—a love strong as death, testified by as tragical an ending as that of the poor boa-constrictor, Cleopatra. Mine, too, is a true story; and as I am long and well known to the Editor of CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, my name—which I give him—will be a voucher for my veracity.

When I was a boy—more than half a century ago—living with my parents in a remote part of the country, we had a very remarkable carriage-dog, the first of his kind imported into that part of the world, though the breed is now common enough—one of those dogs speckled all over with black spots on a white ground, and then called Dalmatian boar-hounds.

Nelson was large, strong, muscular, and deep-chested; surly and unsocial in his habits, verging on the misanthropical (an unusual quality in dogs), save to the favoured few whom he honoured with his friendship. To these he was as true as steel; faithful and fond, though not demonstratively so, like those fawning dogs that are perpetually jumping upon you, soiling your clothes and slaving on your hands. He was decidedly a canine "character"—an oddity of a dog—grave and taciturn, rarely giving vocal expression to his feelings, save when irritated—and then his growl, his bark, and, above all, his bite, were to be dreaded, as many a frightened boy and tattered garment testified; for he hated beggars like a parish beadle, and treated ragged peasants with aristocratic hauteur.

Many a time have I seen the workmen, as they passed him at a respectful distance, take off their hats to him; for the coachman, who was a wag in his way, told the simple peasants that by so doing they would be sure to avert his animosity.

He disliked his own race as cordially as he did that of men, and rarely approached other dogs except in a combative spirit; and few of his species came off victorious in an encounter.

To complete his physique, I have only to add that he had one "wall eye," white and glaring, which

gave a special ferocity to his countenance; so that one might say of him, as Launce said of his dog Crab, "I think he be the sourest-natured dog that lives."

He was a dog, too, of marvellous adroitness. I taught him to walk up a ladder placed at a rather steep inclination, into a hay-loft over the coach-house, and down again, which was a more difficult feat. It was an amusing sight to see the gaping rustics watching this performance, especially as he descended with an increasing velocity till he reached the third lowest rung, from which he sprang to the ground.

And he had other accomplishments. He would

ride one of the carriage-horses when taken out to exercise, sitting on his back like a monkey on a bear, the coachman riding the other. How well I remember it, as if it were but yesterday—those two noble bay horses, Peer and Andrew, walking slowly along the road with their dissimilar riders! The horses took kindly to their dog-groom, for they loved him and he loved them, so that this equino-canine affection was ludicrously touching. They spent their lives together—they and the coachman. They were rarely separated, for he went with the coachman when he walked or rode, and ran after



the carriage when he drove. And now comes the tragic part of my story.

It happened one summer that my father and mother went to the metropolis—a rare event with them—and took the carriage and horses. The dog my father would not take; so he was locked into the stable when they left, and I and a brother alone of the family remained behind.

When Nelson was liberated, some hour or so after the party had gone, he was in a state of great distress and perplexity. He rushed about in every direction, seeking his companions in vain. He did not howl or whine, but bore his grief in silence.

At last he went into the coachman's bed-room, and, poking out a pair of his old shoes from under his bed, lay down beside them, expecting, no doubt, that the man would return and look for his shoes. From this spot he rarely moved. With each day his misery increased. After a time he refused all food, and

moped about sad and stupid, so that it was most affecting to look at him. No one ventured to soothe or caress him, for we began to fear that he might be falling into a state of melancholy madness, and that it would not be safe to meddle with him. All we could do was to leave food and water near him. And so he went on day by day, moping and pining, growing weaker and weaker, till he scarcely stirred from the room.

It was nearly a week later, as well as I remember, when my father and mother returned, late in the evening. The sound of the carriage-wheels and the tramp of the horses, as they entered the stable-yard, was audible enough, and reached the ears of poor Nelson. He rose, staggered into the yard, and over to the coachman, who had come down from the coach-box. Then, licking his hand as the man stooped down to caress him, he uttered a faint cry and fell down at his feet. *He was dead!*

Need I say how we all mourned over poor Nelson—how we forgot his strange and surly ways in this touching exhibition of love and fidelity? We buried him as reverently as Byron buried his dog, though we

wrote no misanthropic epitaph over his grave. But I have moralised over his life and death.

Assuredly the dog is one of the greatest blessings in animal life that God has given to man. It is, I believe, the only creature that prefers man to its own species, loving him with a love that is utterly unselfish—a love that neglect will not weaken, that chastisement will not destroy. Yet, strange to say, many nations have held the dog in contempt, if not in detestation. With the Jews and other Asiatic nations the name of dog was a term of reproach (“Is thy servant a dog?” said Hazael to Elisha), and the most offensive expression that could be used was to compare a man to a dead dog. This no doubt arose partly from the fact that dogs were considered unclean, and partly from their habits when left wild and undomesticated.

But we have learned better things, and have found that the domesticated dog is the noblest of creatures, the most loyal of servants, the most inalienable of friends. Were I to choose a crest to my arms I would take the dog, as Sterne did the starling; and say with him, “Let the herald’s officers twist his neck if they dare!”

W.



JOHN FORD:

HIS FAULTS AND FOLLIES, AND WHAT CAME OF THEM.

By FRANK BARRETT, Author of “Honest Davie,” “Hidden Gold,” &c. &c.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.



ELL, if you're for going quiet, so am I,” said Bax with alacrity, remembering my fighting powers as a lad, possibly, too well to wish to try conclusions with me now that I was in the strength of manhood. “Bring the bag and the gun, Nat. You ain't a-going to deny as

they're yours, Master Ford, I suppose?”

“Did you ever know me to take the trouble to deny a lie of your telling, Bax?” I asked.

“Oh, of course, if you can prove as they don't belong to you——” he said, in a conciliatory tone of suggestion. I made no reply, and we walked down the path, Bax with his hand laid lightly on my arm, and his mate following behind with the things abandoned by the poacher.

The firing had brought some of the people out of the house. Sir Andrew and four or five gentlemen stood on the lawn. A light in the vestibule showed a

group of ladies and gentlemen in the open doorway. Bax went out of his course to approach Sir Andrew; he was anxious to be seen the captor of a man standing a head and shoulders higher than he.

“Got one on 'em, sir; and a fine run we had for him, too,” said he.

Sir Andrew recognised me. He looked grave and troubled, I could see, for the light of the moon fell upon his face. He said nothing until we had passed, then he called the keeper named Nat, and spoke to him.

“He's not to go in with the others, guv'nor says,” said Nat, overtaking us. “We're to put him in the old still-room.”

We altered our course, which was towards the stables, and took the path leading round to the back of the house: this obliged us to pass by the group of persons standing in the doorway. A lady stood upon the terrace, a little apart from the rest. I knew the beautiful figure at once. It was Miss Westlake. We passed so close, that I saw the expression of sad reproach in her eyes, and their eloquence touched me, and made me conscious of my own baseness and want of generosity.

The old still-room was in disuse. It was unfurnished. The windows were barred upon the outside.