

THE HOUNDS OF THE COUNT DE BARRAL.

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AMONG DOGS OF HIGH DEGREE.

BY NOAH BROOKS.

ALTHOUGH some of the readers of ST. NICHOLAS may not know it, there is an aristocracy of dogs and various degrees of "high society" in the dog world, just as there is among mankind. An old English writer, making a genealogy of British dogs, classified them thus: "Dogs of chase," "fowlers and lap-dogs," "farm-dogs," "mongrels." At the top of this list are the hounds, or dogs that depend more upon the nose than the eyes for their following of the game of which they are in pursuit. These, in all their varieties, are "dogs of chase." There are so many families of hounds that an old wisacre among dog-fanciers has said:

"Many men, many minds; many hounds, many kinds."

But the fowlers are also dogs of high degree, for they too follow the scent rather than the sight of the game; and setters, pointers, and field and water spaniels are classed among these. At the very bottom of this list is to be found the "spaniel gentle, or comforter." Chief among these for its aristocratic breeding is the variety of spaniel represented in the King Charles and the Blenheim. The first named was a prime favorite with the unfortunate Charles I. The King, being once asked to determine which was the finer dog of the two, the spaniel or the hound, said that the hound deserved pre-eminence, "because," said he, "it hath all the good-nature of the other without his fawning." This was a gentle hint to the King's courtiers who had asked the question.

The Blenheim spaniels were first bred by the

great Duke of Marlborough, at his castle, Blenheim. Spaniels were also the favorite dogs of the proud and cruel Duke of Norfolk, who lived in the time of Robert Southey. The Duke had the sole possession of the breed, whose colors are black and tan, and whose fur is like silk in fineness. More strictly these are of the King Charles breed. By the Duke the spaniels were called King James spaniels; and, while he lived, he kept them on his estate, parting with none to any person. To show his wanton disregard for others, the Duke was accustomed to feed many of the puppies to his pet eagles, and a stranger to his pride of exclusive possession of the race of King James spaniels, seeing him thus employed, modestly asked the Duke for one of the litter that was being sacrificed. Whereupon his Grace haughtily replied, "Pray, sir, which of my estates should you like to have?" The King Charles, or King James, spaniel, if he be of pure blood, has not so much as one white hair upon him. The Blenheim spaniel is white and pale yellow.

A famous writer on dogs, George Jesse, has made this catalogue of "the virtues, feelings, and powers of mind that are well authenticated of the dog." Love, faithfulness, gratitude, generosity, sagacity, courage, nobility, trustfulness, truth, devotion, sincerity, unselfishness, honesty, endurance, perseverance, temperance, obedience, vigilance, compassion, mercy, attention, memory, forgiveness, tenderness, gentleness, forbearance, humanity, amiability, magnanimity, reflection, sensitiveness, grief, joy, jealousy, docility, revenge, willingness, complaisance, humility, submission. If the reader,

who is a lover of dogs, will read over this list very carefully and recall to mind the anecdotes of dogs that he has read, he will doubtless be able to find an example that will "authenticate," as George Jesse says, the virtues and the powers of mind so well set forth in this long list. Some of these graces of mind and temper are common to curs of low degree; but it is among the dogs of the highest

ears exceeding large, thin, and down-hanging much lower than his chaps, and the flews of his upper-lips almost two inches lower than his nether chaps, which shews a merry mouth and a loud ringer," and so on. This sort of hound, the Captain says, is "large, heavy, slow, and true." He added, "If you will chuse a light, swift hound, then must his head be more slender and his nose

more long, his ears and flews more shallow, his back broad, his tail small, his joynts long, his foot round, and his general composure much more slender and grayhound-like."

Now let the reader look at the beautiful hounds that are pictured in the frontispiece of this number of the ST. NICHOLAS, and, so far as the portraits of these dogs are given, he will see that they must be the high-bred animals of which the ancient Captain Markham discourses so learnedly. These dogs, Margano, Sereno, Lentenor, and Nicanor, were the property of the Count de Barral, a French nobleman whose kennels were famous all over Europe. They are hounds of the beagle family, but are taller than the old English beagle, as indeed, all French hounds are usually taller than their English cousins. Margano has the slightly roughish coat which some writers think indicates a warmer friendship for man in the dog who wears it; and certainly nobody can look in his honest and shrewdly intelligent countenance without a feeling of affection for the animal who looks so attentively at you from the canvas.

Sereno, to whom he is coupled,

has what the French call a *distingué* air, and may be the most aristocratic dog of the group, though all are clearly dogs of high degree. Lentenor, I should say, has a great head, an intellectual head, indeed; and that refined nose and the pendulous ears bespeak the very finest strain of blood. Nicanor, who is coupled with Lentenor, must be of a roguish turn of mind, and, being more in profile than either of the others, his fine nose is the very perfection of high breeding. He fills admirably the requirements of Captain Gervase Markham, of famous memory.

These portraits, as well as those of Calypso, and Barbaro on pages 884, 885, are all of the same pack of dogs, and were painted for the Count de Barral, by Louis Godefroy Jadin, a French artist of renown, who was born in Paris, in 1805,



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quality that we must look for the nobler traits of character.

Of the hound family it is said that those that are shaggily coated, as the setter, are more attached to mankind than those of the smoother skin. This is only a fancy, probably, for some of the finest traits of devotion have been observed in the smooth-skinned variety. Captain Gervase Markham, a noted British sportsman, is thought to have set forth the best rules for the choosing of a hound. In his book, "Countrey Contentments, or the Husbandman's Recreations," printed in 1651, the gallant captain says that in the choice of a high-bred hound one must be sure to see that the beast "hath a round, big, thick head, with a short nose uprising and large open nostrils, which shows that he is of a quick and good scent, his

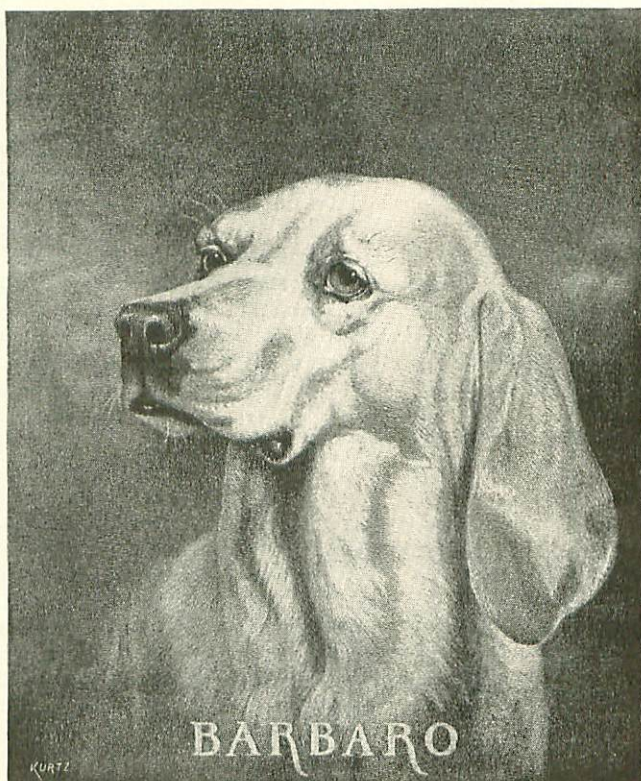
and who died in that city in 1882. M. Jadin was noted as a painter of hunting scenes, dogs, horses, and still-life. His art is capitally exemplified in these portraits, which are so evidently good likenesses of the dogs that we must needs admire the cunning with which the painter has portrayed the dispositions of his subjects. Note, for example, the coquettish pose of the beautiful Calypso. She has not only a high-bred appearance, but you might almost say that she has some of the fine-lady airs of a French woman of quality, who knows she is an elegant creature, and who makes no secret of her knowledge. Barbaro, on the other hand, is less conscious of being stared at, and his large, luminous eyes, liquid in the light, his exquisite nose and dilating nostrils, are all so many marks of good breeding and fine manners—dog-manners, of course, I mean.

Strange to say, the hound is the dog whose portrait is most frequently found in the most ancient sculptures and paintings in the world—those of old Egypt. We may believe, too, that the faithful Argus, the dog of Ulysses, was a hound, so far as Homer's description makes him out for us. When the far-wandering Ulysses, after twenty years of absence from his home, returned to his family, Argus lay a-dying of old age and neglect on a heap of offal. Nobody knew the wanderer when he came to his own again, but the faithful hound recognized his master through all disguise of tatters and neglected visage. Says Homer:

"The dog, whom fate had granted to behold
His lord, when twenty tedious years
had roll'd,
Takes a last look,—and having seen
him,—dies;
So closed forever faithful Argus' eyes."

It was a hound, too, some such dog as Nicanor, I make no doubt, that rose to everlasting fame in song and story as the preserver of the life of his master's child, laying down his own life without a murmur thereafter. Gêlert was a Welsh hound; his master, Llewelyn the Great, lived near the base of Snowden, one of the famed peaks of Wales. Going to the hunt one day, Llewelyn left Gêlert in charge of an infant sleeping in the cradle. The dog, faithful to his trust, attacked a savage wolf that stole into the house with the intent of carrying off the child. In the encounter

the cradle was overturned, and the infant was thus concealed, still sleeping. But the wolf was slain, and the faithful Gêlert, his chops dabbled with blood, met the returning Llewelyn, conscious of having done his whole duty. Not seeing his babe, Llewelyn rashly supposed that the hound had killed the infant, and drew his sword and plunged it in the side of the savior of his son. Of the remorse and grief of the chieftain when he found what a foolish and wicked thing he had done, we need not speak. But Gêlert was buried with due honor in a spot hard by, which, unto this day, is called "Beth-Gêlert," or "the grave of Gêlert." Read William Robert Spencer's touching ballad in which all this lamentable history is set forth, thus ending:



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"And, till great Snowden's rocks grow old,
And cease the storm to brave,
The consecrated spot shall hold
The name of Gêlert's grave!"

There are those that say that the tale of Gêlert is wholly an imaginary one. But let us cling to the belief that the "brindled hound," which one careful writer says Gêlert was, really did all that

was said of him in the story. We might well be willing to forget the folly of the master, of whom the Welsh have this proverb: "I repent as much as the man who slew his greyhound."

But, after all, we cannot claim for the hound all the virtues that pertain to dog-life. Mrs. Byron, the mother of the famous poet, had a fox-terrier to which Boatswain, Lord Byron's favorite Newfoundland dog, took a violent disliking. Gilpin, the fox-terrier, being in danger of losing his life by the worriments that Boatswain inflicted upon him, Mrs. Byron sent the little fellow away to Newstead, many miles from the house where she then lived. Shortly after, Byron, the dog's master, went away from home for a long time; and, Boatswain, after showing much concern of mind, disappeared for a whole day, to the dismay of the servants. At nightfall, he came home, bringing Gilpin with him. He led the terrier to the kitchen fire and lavished upon him every expression of tenderness and affection. It turned out that Boatswain had gone all the way to Newstead, whence he had lured Gilpin, guiding him home in safety. It is related that the two dogs lived ever after in loving concord, Boatswain defending Gilpin against the attacks of all comers.

When Boatswain died, his mourning master reared over his grave a monument on which was engraved the most touching epitaph and the most celebrated that ever graced a dog's burial-place. You will find it in Byron's poems. Here are the last two lines:

"To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one,—and here he lies."

Regarding dogs of great intelligence, like those of the Count de Barral, for example, we sometimes say, "He can do everything but talk." And yet there is a very well authenticated case of a dog being taught to talk. In Daniel's "Rural Sports," a work of high credit, published in London in 1801, the story is told of a dog born near Zeitz, in Saxony, that was taught

to ask in an intelligible manner for tea, coffee, chocolate, etc., and an account of which was communicated to the Royal Academy of France by no less a person than Leibnitz, one of the most eminent philosophers that ever lived. The account says that the dog was the property of a peasant, whose little son, fancying that he heard the dog attempt to make articulate sounds, undertook to teach him to speak, with the result afore mentioned. The sagacious creature, says Leibnitz, finally mastered no less than thirty words. Notwithstanding this dog's great talent, he was an incorrigible truant, and often ran away to escape the lessons that his young master taught him.

Dogs have been taught, as we have hinted, almost everything but to talk, and the story of the Saxon dog must be accepted as affording at least one instance of its powers of speech. Dogs have been known to hold such intercourse with each other as to give the impression that they do talk among themselves. A gentleman living near Boston has a large and dignified hound that usually accompanies his master in his walks. Nero never forgets his dignified composure, even under great provocation. For a time, however, he was greatly exasperated by the snapping and snarling at him of an ill-conditioned cur that master and dog encountered at a certain place. Finally, after many days of trial, Nero suddenly stopped, seized the poor cur in his powerful jaws, crushed its spine just back of the neck, and dropped it on the ground, limp and lifeless. Then he walked on composedly by the side of his master, showing no signs of agitation. It was noticed that after that, the intelligence of Nero's summary execution of the cur having apparently spread abroad, every dog in the neighborhood took to his heels in flight whenever Nero appeared. How did dogs that saw not the execution of the little cur learn what had happened?

When we can answer this question, we can also learn, perhaps, why dogs of high degree, like men of gentle blood and good breeding, perpetuate their fine qualities from generation to generation.