

Animal Actualities.

NOTE.—Under this title we intend printing a series of perfectly authentic anecdotes of animal life, illustrated by Mr. J. A. Shepherd, an artist long a favourite with readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE. We shall be glad to receive similar anecdotes, fully authenticated by names of witnesses, for use in future numbers. While the stories themselves will be matters of fact, it must be understood that the artist will treat the subject with freedom and fancy, more with a view to an amusing commentary than to a mere representation of the occurrence.

VIII.



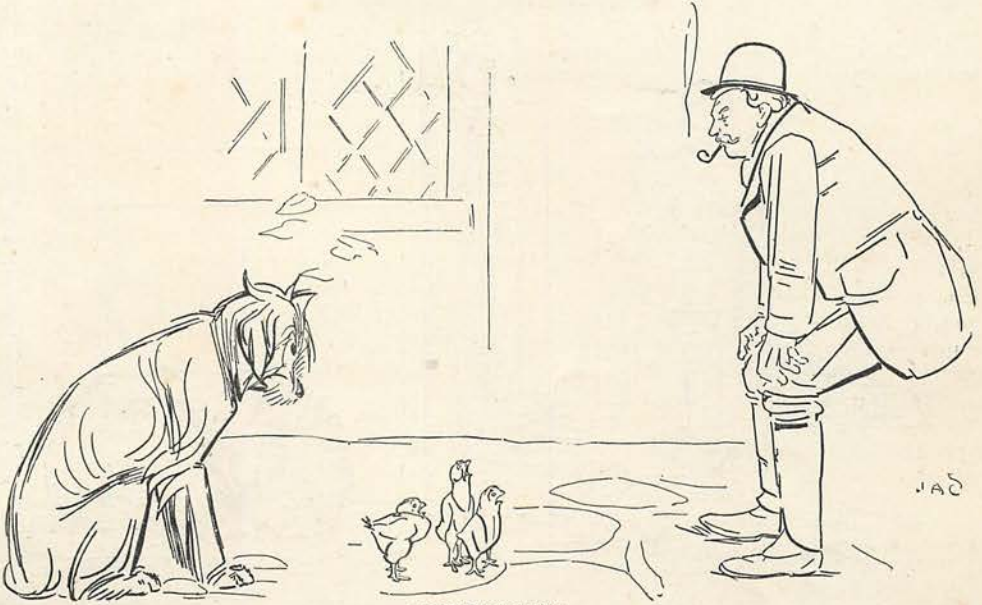
HIS incident took place in the spring of 1897, at French's Farm, Netherfield, near Battle, Sussex. This farm lies in the midst of the chicken-raising district, and it was at the time in the occupation of Mr. W. A. Williams. Mr. Williams, among his other farm operations, reared thousands of chickens, which the travelling higglers would collect

and fatten for the market. Most of these chickens were hatched in an incubator and reared by aid of a foster-mother—which latter, by the way, is not a motherly old hen, as some might suppose, but a sort of box lined with flannel. Sometimes it is merely an old coop.

The farm was surrounded by woods, and at first many chicks were lost by raids of



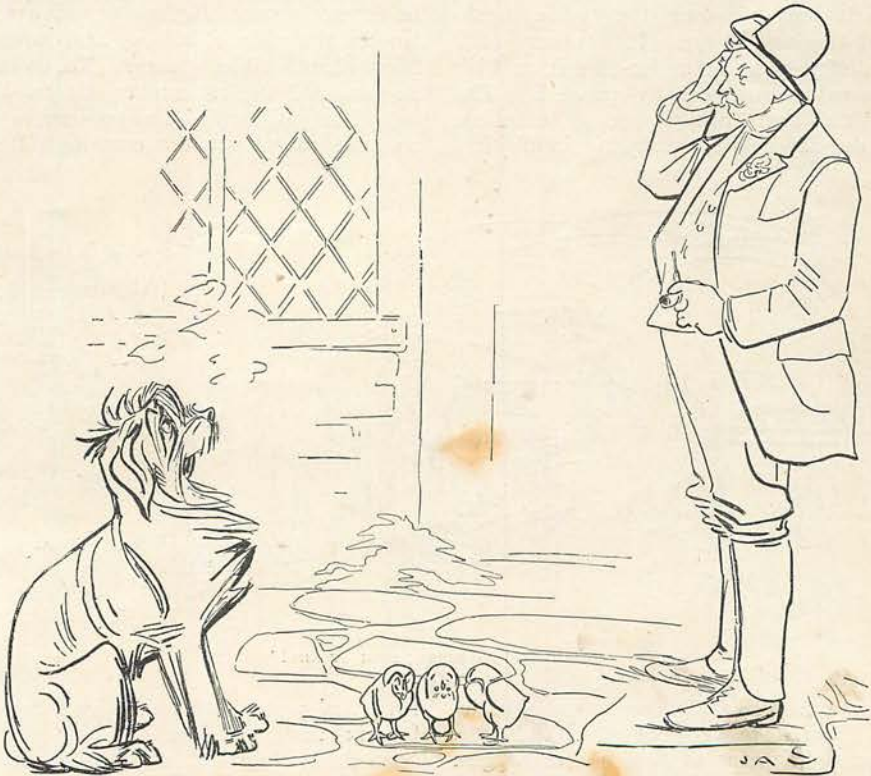
MOTHERLESS AND INQUISITIVE.



ONLY THREE LEFT.

foxes. To check the foxes, Mr. Williams washed the coops well with carbolic acid, and let his dogs loose at night. This was effectual. Mr. Williams's tailless sheepdog "Satan"

and a spaniel bitch had many a moonlight fox hunt together. Satan, by the way, was a peculiar dog, very quiet, but a game fighter when roused.



BEYOND THE WIT OF MAN OR DOG.



"WHAT! NO RATS?"

For a time the chickens prospered, and then, one morning, Mr. Williams found but three left out of some twenty-five fresh-hatched the day before. It was very odd. Mr. Williams couldn't understand it, and his dog Satan seemed equally puzzled. The chicks had been turned out in excellent health the day before, twenty-five inquisitive,

The thing occurred again and again, and the mystery was dense as ever. It couldn't be foxes, because they almost always kill a few for the sake of killing, and leave them lying about. Was it rats? No, there were no rats, said the rat-catcher who was called in. But still the disappearances went on, and morning after morning fifteen or



"THE DOG? NONSENSE; LOOK AT HIM!"

little, fuzzy activities, all agog to examine the world. Now there were but three, and not a scrap or a fragment of fluff left to suggest what had happened.

twenty of yesterday's chicks were not to be found; and the door of their coop was opened, or knocked down. If it were a human thief, why did he leave any at



LISTENING.

all? And besides, a man entering the yard at night would have been pounced on by the dogs at once. At last, in desperation, a friend suggested that perhaps the sheepdog knew something of it. But that was altogether unlikely—one had only to glance at him to see it. He was always a kindly guardian—almost a parent to the motherless chicks. He was chained up just outside the farm-house door all day, with a brood of happy chicks ever in his kennel and his food-pan, and, indeed, hopping all over him fearlessly, and nothing they could do ruffled his placid temper or changed his benevolent aspect. So the mystery continued, and was deep as ever.

Till one morning it happened to be necessary for Mr. Williams to rise just after dawn, and as he did so he looked out of his bedroom window. There stood Satan, the sheep-

dog, listening intently at the house door. As he listened and his master watched, there presently came along a batch of young chicks. Plainly the door of their coop had been opened again, and they had been let out. And then Mr. Williams gasped. For straightway the dog turned and calmly began snapping up the chicks, bolting them whole, as Mr. Williams expresses it, "like oysters." He had thus disposed of eight or nine in rapid succession, when Mr. Williams made a noise at the window, and the dog instantly fled.

That day Mr. Williams took particular care to move the chickens near him as he lay by his kennel, and to watch. But, no—the cunning rascal would take no notice of them at all. They ran and tumbled all about him, but he let them run. He was a hypocrite, consummate and proved, and he left the farm that evening.



GULP! THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

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IX.



HIS is a tale of true love that no social distinctions could hinder; of a love that persisted in spite of misfortune, disfigurement, and poverty; of a love that ruled not merely the camp, the court, and the grove, but the back garden also: of a love that (as Mr. Seaman sings) “was strong love, strong as a

big barn-door”; of a love that, no doubt, would have laughed at locksmiths had the cachinnation been necessary; that, in short, was the only genuine article, with the proper trade-mark on the label.

“Pussy” was the name of a magnificent Persian cat—a princess among cats, greatly sought by the feline nobility of the neigh-



MANY SUITORS.

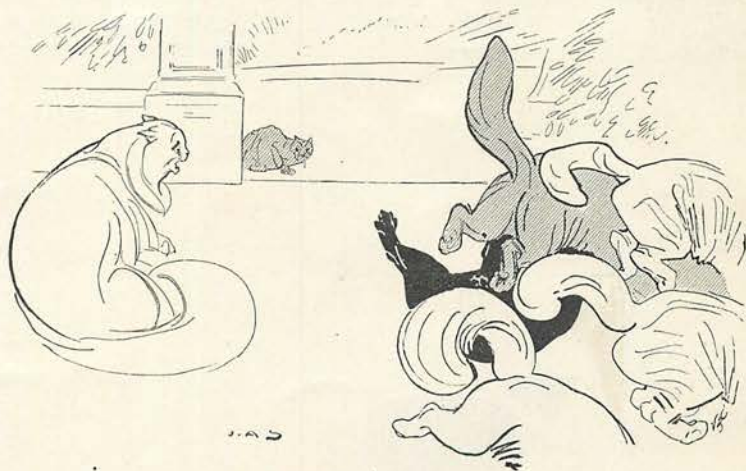


BOWING THEIR RESPECTS.

bourhood. She was the sort of cat that no merely individual name would be good enough for; her magnificence soared above all such smallnesses, and, as she was *the* ideal cat, combining all the glories and all the beauties of cat-hood in herself, she was called, simply and comprehensively, "Pussy." She condescended to reside at the house, and at the expense, of Mr. Thomas C. Johnson, of The Firs, Alford, Lincolnshire, and all the most aristocratic Toms of the vicinity were suitors for the paw of this princess. Blue Persians, buff Persians, Manx cats, Angora cats—all were her devoted slaves, and it was generally expected that she would make a brilliant match. She had a house (or palace) of her own at the back of Mr. Johnson's. Here were her bed, her larder—an elegant shelf supporting her wire meat safe, and her special knife and fork—for her meat must be cut up for her—and her plate and saucer. And here, by the door, many suitors waited to bow their respects as she came forth to take the air. But Pussy, who trod the earth as though the planet were far too common for her use,

turned up her nose at the noble throng, and dismissed them with effective and sudden language, conjectured to be a very vigorous dialect of Persian.

Then came, meekly crawling and limping to her door, one Lamech, a cat of low degree and no particular breed. His only claim to distinction of any sort was that he



VERY VIGOROUS PERSIAN.

had lost a leg—perhaps in a weasel-trap. He was ill-fed, bony, and altogether disreputable; his ears were sore, and his coat unkempt. He came not as a suitor, but as a beggar, craving any odd scraps that the princess might have no use for. So low was he esteemed, indeed, that nobody called him Lamech, his proper name, and he was

familiarly and contemptuously known as "Three-legged Tommy." When the princess's human friends saw Three-legged Tommy hanging about, they regarded him as a

his regalement. There was intense commotion among the scorned feline nobility. Three-legged Tommy was actually admitted into that sacred palace, from the portals of

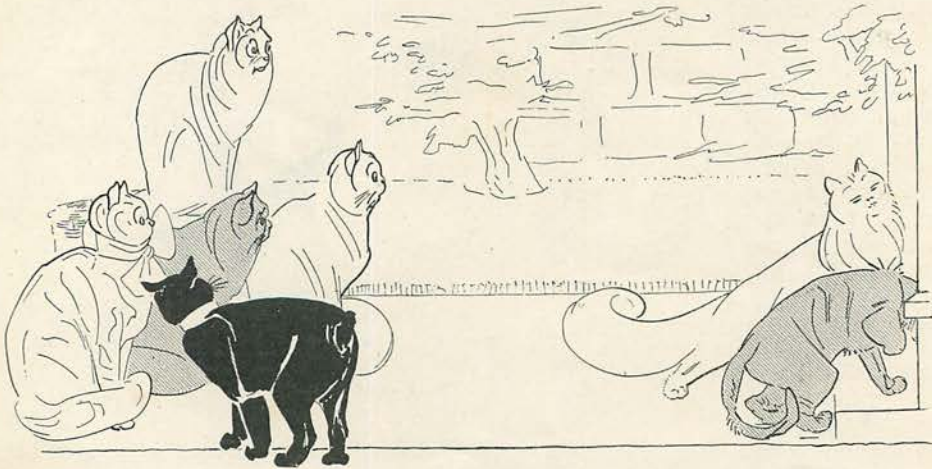


COMMOTION AMONG THE NOBILITY.

nuisance and a probable offence in the sight of the princess. Wherefore they chased him mercilessly, tempering their severities, however, by flinging him scraps of food, as far out into the road as possible.

which the most distinguished cats in Alford had been driven away!

As for Three-legged Tommy himself, he grew not only more confident, but more knowing. He came regularly at meal times.



PASSING THE SACRED PORTAL.

But presently a surprising thing was observed. Pussy actually encouraged Three-legged Tommy! More, she fed him, and her last drop of new milk and her last and tenderest morsel of meat were reserved for

More, he grew fatter, and less ragged. The princess enjoyed her self-sacrifice for a time, but presently she set herself to get a double ration. Sharing her provisions was all very loving and all very well, but she began to

feel that there were advantages in a full meal ; and Three-legged Tommy, now grown much more respectable, though a hopeless plebeian still, distinctly gave her to understand that he could do with a bit more.

powerless to resist her, he would rise and follow.

Meat it was, of course. And when it was cut she would attack it with every appearance of ravenous hunger—till the master's



"THE FEAST IS SPREAD FOR THEE!"

Three-legged Tommy was the princess's first and only love, but next in her affections ranked Mr. Johnson. It was her habit to follow him about the house and garden, and to confide her troubles to him, sitting on his knee. But now she tried stratagem. Five or six times a day she would assail him with piteous mews, entreating caresses, beseeching eyes, and the most irresistibly captivating manners she could assume. "What can she want?" he would say. "She has not long been fed. Is it meat, old girl?" And,

back was turned. Then—"Come, my love, the feast is spread for thee!"

Out would limp Lamech from behind some near shrub, and Pussy would sit with supreme satisfaction and watch her spouse's enjoyment of the meal she had cajoled for him. And so Three-legged Tommy waxed fat and prospered, and the Beautiful Princess was faithful to him always. Miss Mary Johnson, who was so kind as to send us the story, calls Pussy "a devoted helpmeet." We trust she meant no pun.



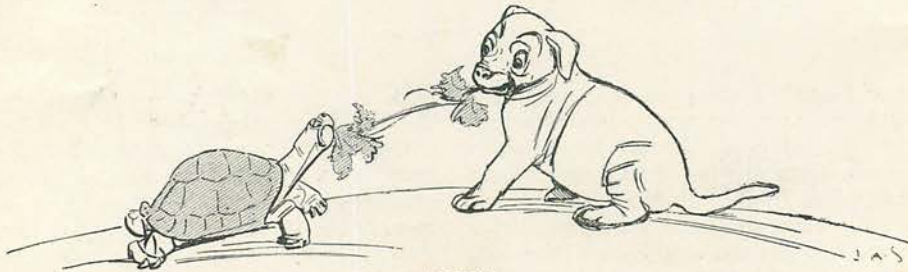
X.

The Puppy's Amusement.



TORTOISE has many virtues, as for instance, quietness, dignity, and lack of ambition. But, as a rule, activity and courage are not credited to the tortoise. This is a little anecdote of a tortoise who displayed both, in so far as to encounter, single-handed, a terrible puppy more than a fortnight old, and several inches high at the shoulder.

for slugs or other garden pests. The man who sells them most solemnly avers they have, but that is only his fancy; the tortoise—at any rate, the tortoise he sells—is a vegetarian, as well as a teetotaler and a non-smoker. But as to the strawberry leaves, these are longed for by the tortoise even more than lettuce leaves. Enthusiasm is not a distinguishing characteristic of the tortoise,



A MATCH.

Though the tortoise's lack of ambition may be accepted as a general principle, nevertheless it is relaxed in the ducal matter of strawberry leaves. Every tortoise of the sort we keep about our houses and gardens has an ambition for strawberry leaves—to eat. It may also be said as a warning (having nothing to do with this anecdote) that the tortoise has no ambition, or taste,

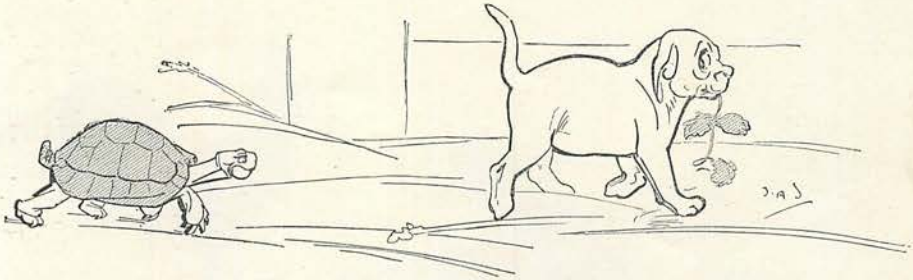
but when he *is* enthusiastic it is over strawberry leaves. The tortoise of our anecdote (he had no domestic name, such was his humility) had the even tenor of his life disturbed by a sudden inroad of puppies, who made things very busy about him. The puppies did not altogether understand the tortoise, and the tortoise never wanted to understand the puppies. But the puppies



A DRAG.

were playful and inquisitive. One morning, just as the tortoise had laid hold of a very acceptable "runner" of strawberry leaves, a puppy, looking for fun, seized the other end in his teeth and pulled. Something had to go, and it was the strawberry

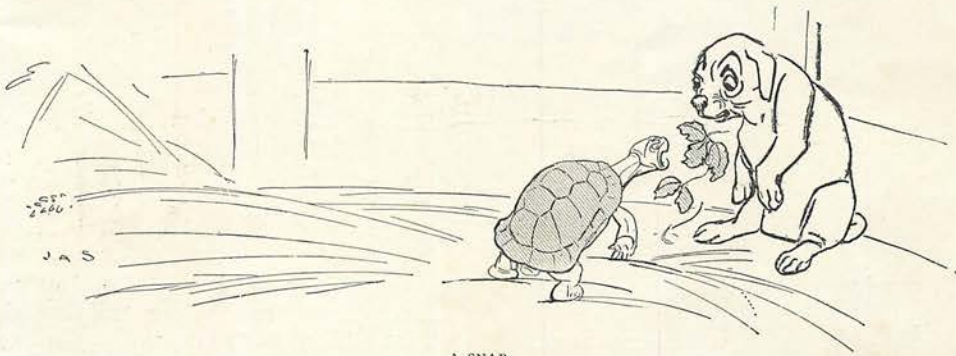
Was it really angry? What would it do to him? His experience of tortoises was small, and this one looked very threatening. Perhaps the safest game was to drop the strawberry leaves, at any rate. So dropped they were, and the puppy sat back in the



A BOLT.

leaf the tortoise happened to be biting, close by his mouth. Off went the puppy, trailing the "runner" after him, the tortoise toiling laboriously in the rear. Presently the puppy, finding that speed was no accomplishment of the tortoise, stopped at a corner and waited.

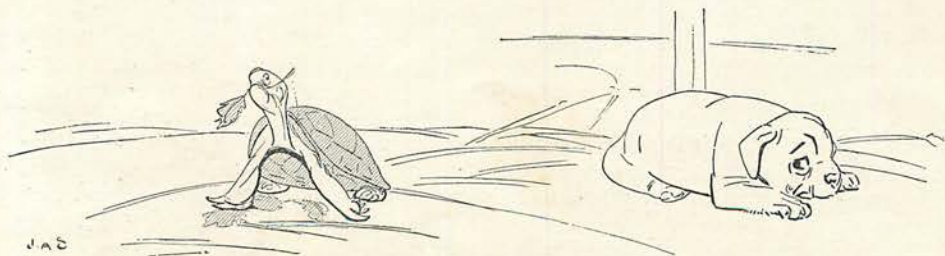
corner, a trifle apprehensive of what might happen next. But the strawberry leaves were all the tortoise wanted, and those he snatched, and straightway squatted down upon them. Then he ate them, little by little and bite by bite, at his leisure, regarding the



A SNAP.

Up came the tortoise, drums beating and colours flying, metaphorically speaking, and actually looking as threatening as a harmless tortoise can manage to look. "Snap!" went the tortoise. The puppy was nonplussed. What was this thing?

puppy defiantly the while. And the puppy carried to all his brothers and sisters a terrible tale of the prowess of that crawling monstrosity that ate leaves, and got formidably angry if you snatched them away for fun.

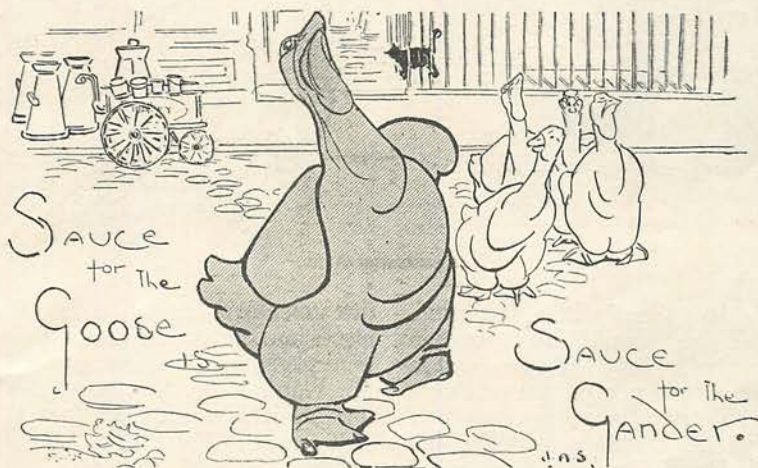


A VICTORY.

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XI.



THIS is a tale of shameful persecution of the Metropolitan police by a lawless gander and his abetting wives.

In New Road, Mile End, there was a dairy where poultry was kept. Most eminent among this poultry, and chiefly notorious in the neighbourhood, were a gander and four geese. The gander was a large and athletic bird, great in enterprise and immensely venerated by his consorts. It was the way of the troop to form a solemn procession which perambulated the New Road in ponderous state, seeking what or whom it might devour, and during these expeditions the outdoor life of Mile End never lacked for humorous incident. For some time the family enterprise was chiefly directed toward the maltster's opposite the

dairy, and the constant procession of the dignified gander, followed in single file by his harem, strictly in order of precedence, toward the grain-sacks, and the equally constant retreat of the lot, as fast as they could go, with quacks of injured dignity and no order at all, when repelled by the maltster's men, brightened the faces of the passers-by and filled the humorous souls of Mile End boys with gladness. For the gander was apt to be aggressive, his wives followed his example, and the maltster's men disapproved.

Persistently repelled from the grain-sacks, the gander and his ladies began a stately parade of the streets. There are area-gratings flush with the pavement in the New Road, and one day it occurred to somebody in an area to thrust a crust between the bars. The

gander absorbed the crust, but the significance of the hint was absorbed in equal quantities by the entire *cortège*, and the next morning the same area was decorated with the same fringe of geese, who declined to

biscuit as he went. There were a few loose crumbs and pieces in his hand, and in an evil moment he caught sight of the birds. Little suspecting what would be the terrible consequences to the Force,



THE BEGINNING OF IT.

leave till yesterday's dose had been repeated. Then they tried every grating in the street in succession, and before long had succeeded in levying a sort of area-tax on the suffering ratepayers of Mile End, returning home after every collection heavily laden, waddling, but preposterously dignified as ever, a source of joy to any onlooker capable of laughter.

But one day a policeman passed on his beat—a policeman whose notions of official dignity did not prevent him munching a

that unlucky policeman bestowed the broken pieces on the gander and his consorts, and went placidly on his beat, unconscious of ill. Mr. Ward, of 67, New Road, had observed this from his window, and saw also the horrible sequel. For on the following day that policeman passed again (but this time with no biscuits), and the geese knew him, and rushed at him with outstretched necks, flapping wings, and wild screeches. And not at this policeman alone, but at every



THE FATAL STEP.



THE SERGEANT.

other policeman who ventured to perform his duty in New Road, Mile End. Words cannot express the terrific scene when a more than usually ponderously-important sergeant was mobbed by this subversive gang. They came at him with yells and flaps, and waited expectantly about him. The sergeant took no notice, but walked on, even more vastly magnificent than before. And behind him, in single file, came the geese, solemn and dignified, too, in their own way. This wouldn't do. An important

the creatures away; whereat they gave a simultaneous quack and grew more eager. That wouldn't do, either. The sergeant turned to walk on, and instantly the geese lined up behind him again, and the pageant recommenced. It was very awkward. The sergeant stopped, and the geese made an expectant, long-necked circle about him, quacking indignantly at this delay in producing the desired biscuits. The sergeant looked abstractedly at the house-chimneys, folded his hands as though about to begin a



THE PROCESSION.

sergeant of police, stalking first in a procession the other members of which were a large gander and his four wives in order of seniority, was an object inconsistent with the dignity of the Force. So he turned to drive

long period of meditation, did everything he could think of to suggest to the minds of his persecutors that they had drawn him blank, and had best go away. Not they, however. The longer they waited, the more im-



BESET.

portunate they grew, and, when the unhappy sergeant made to move on, the procession formed again! A small crowd had collected, and it soon occurred to some small boy to yell "Who stole the goose?" And so the poor victim was harried the length of two long and derisive streets, till someone came from the dairy and drove the birds back.

It was a terrible affliction, and not this sergeant alone, but every policeman who

ventured into New Road in uniform was an equal sufferer. People in the interiors of their houses heard a burst of quacks and flaps, and said one to another, "Here comes a policeman." Nothing could rid the Force of the terror, and the cause of law and order seemed in a fair way to be wholly upset. Till at last urgent representations from the police-station led to the confinement of the birds within the dairy-yard.



RESCUED AT LAST!

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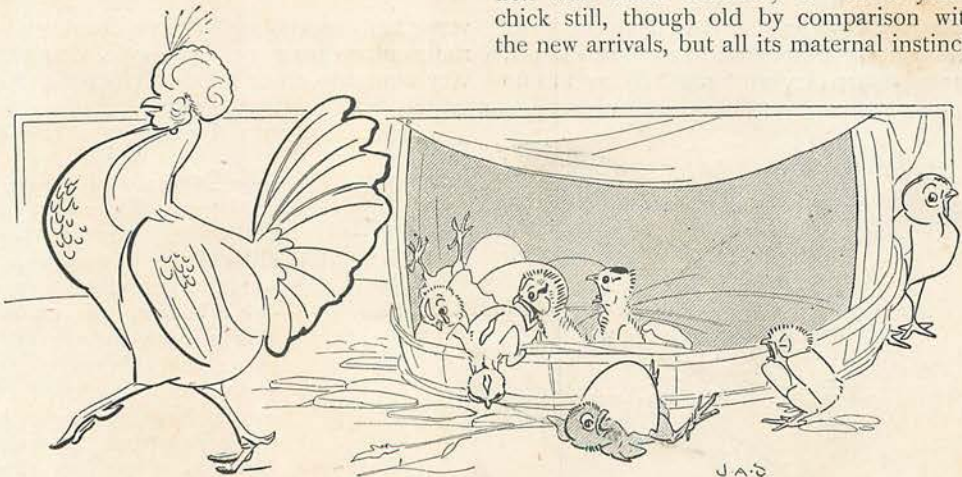
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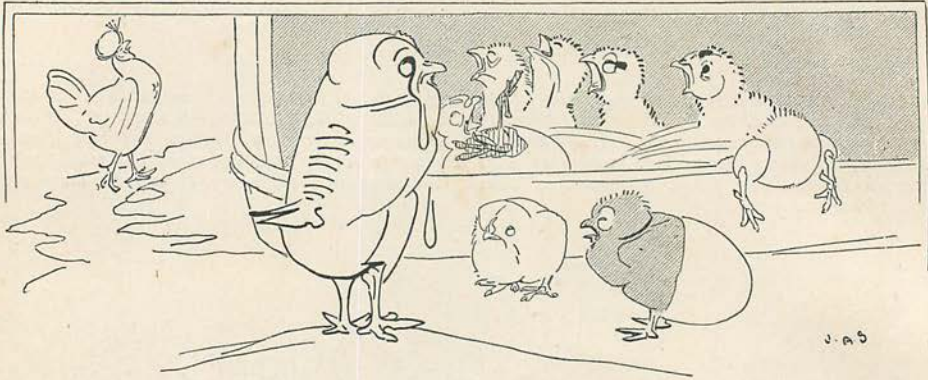
IN the fowl-run of the Rev. Robert Evans, at Walton, near Stafford, two years ago, occurred a sad example of misplaced instinct.

It was a populous fowl-run, this of Mr. Evans's, and the large families of the many hens were constantly welcoming fresh broods. It is with one particular chicken in one of these broods that this story is concerned. If you search the biographies of great men you will find in many, perhaps in most cases, they gave no signs of any special distinction in their early years. This chick was like those great men. It

was so much like the other chicks of the same brood of both sexes, that only its mother could have told it from any one of the others. At the age of three weeks, however, began a great development of character and instinct. Just at this period another hen had produced a hatch of nine. This hen was of a flighty, fashionable disposition—a *fin-de-siècle* society mother—and as soon as the chicks were well through their shells she set off calling on other hens in her set, and left the unhappy chicks to sprawl about and look after themselves. The three-weeks' old chick viewed this maternal desertion with much concern; it was a young chick still, though old by comparison with the new arrivals, but all its maternal instincts



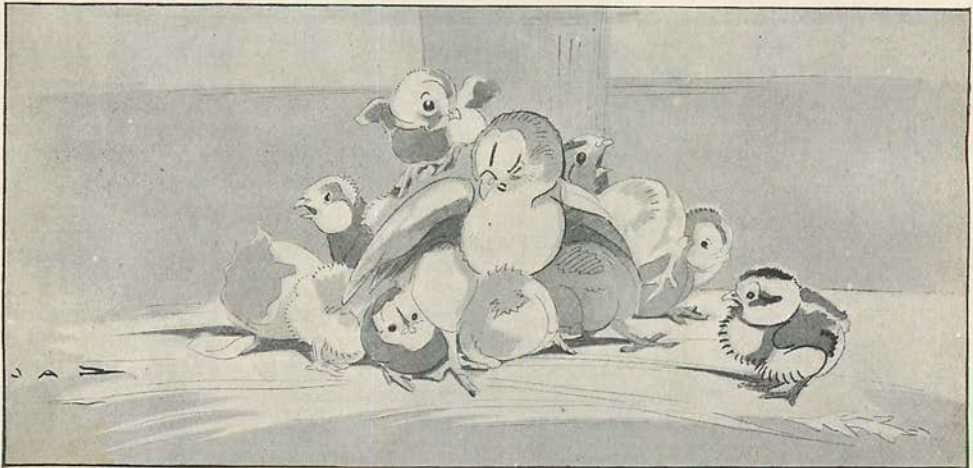
A SOCIETY MOTHER.



MUCH CONCERN.

were aroused by the sight. You have no doubt seen a very tiny boy or girl staggering about a street under the weight of a baby

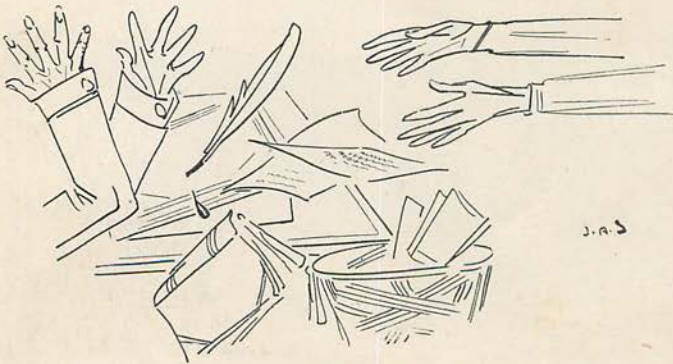
distinct indication of its legal engagement as nurse by the society hen, but it took upon itself all the duties, and every evening this



MOTHERLY INSTINCT.

about half a size smaller than its nurse. The maternal chick presented a similar sight, translated into chicken terms. There was no

very small chicken might be observed, with a rudimentary wing on each side, doing its very utmost to cover another chicken only a little smaller. And not the two chicks alone; for the remaining seven, seeing them so comfortably lodged and protected, rushed to get their share of those ridiculously inadequate wings. Thenceforward that chick became the mother of the nine, who nested under the shadow of her wings—and no doubt got as much shelter from the shadow as from the wings. Mr. Evans and his sister were most tenderly affected



SHOCKING NEWS.



GALLANT AND POPULAR.

by the scene. "Dear, dear," they said, "what wonderful and beautiful instinct! What a mother that chicken will become!" And they pictured a glorious future for that bird (and, incidentally, for themselves), with a long succession of broods of thirteen each, always well and healthily brought up. The bird, indeed, seemed likely to be so valuable that Mr. Evans felt some scruple about keeping it selfishly for himself, and gave it to his small nephew.

But they were deceived. The bird was maternally virtuous enough, but it had no right to such virtues—no right whatever. One morning Mr. Evans's sister burst into her brother's study, with dismay upon her face. "What *do* you think?" she exclaimed. "The white hen is a cock!"

And true it was. The motherly chicken, growing older and larger, and more shelter-some of wing, had now developed a comb and wattle and a tail altogether inconsistent

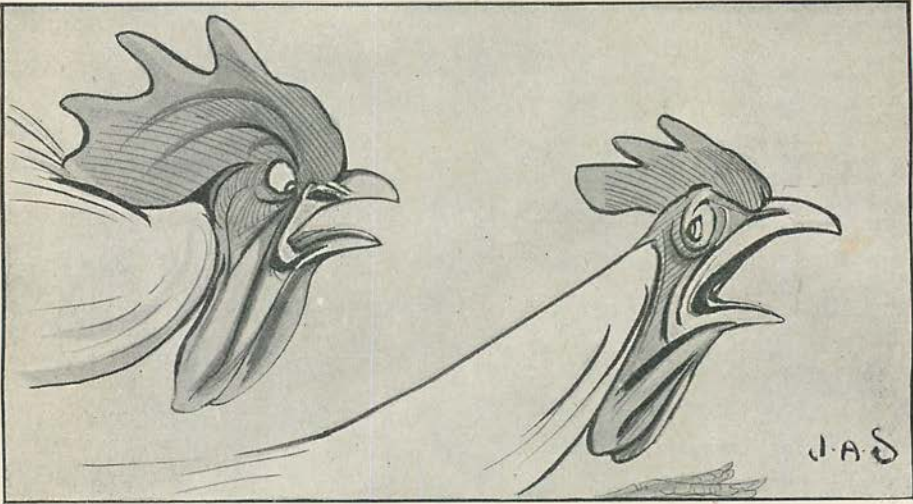
with henhood or motherliness of any sort. It *was* a cock! And as motherly and old-womanish as ever!

Now, Mr. Evans already had a fine young cockerel—a very dashing and gallant bird of military bearing, most exceedingly popular with the hens. Another wasn't wanted at all—for the sake of peace in the yard. What to do? One obvious course was to kill and eat the white hen which was a cock. But then it was no longer Mr. Evans's bird; he had given it to his nephew, who was now away at school; so that it was scarcely possible either to eat it or to give it away. And besides, to eat such a kindly, unnaturally virtuous bird would be at least as bad as eating or giving away Dr. Barnardo.

So the white cock with the hen's disposition was spared, and neither eaten nor given away. He grew up a weak-spirited, effeminate, henny sort of bird, with misplaced motherly instincts which could never attain



DESPISED!



CHASED !

realization. Imagine a big boy nursing a doll while his schoolmates were at cricket or football; what sort of life would he lead in the school? Just such a life as this cock lived in the fowl-run. He was a disgrace to cockhood, despised by the hens and chased by the gallant cock. This military despot gave him no peace, and on the slightest sign of attention to the ladies he chastised him mercilessly. "A hen you've made yourself," said the tyrant—said it in his every movement—"and a hen you shall remain!"

He still lives, and must still live. One of the two had to go, and it was the tyrant. He,

ill-fated gallant, proved as fine on the dish as in the yard. But as for his unworthy successor—never was such a failure as lord of the poultry yard. He neither reigns nor struts nor rules the roost as do other cocks. He cannot be called cock of the walk, nor even cock of the run—unless it is because he runs away from the hens. They let him live, and that is about all. They despise him, peck him, bully him, and he can't muster a return peck. Any hen—any chick, even—would despise such a peckless, timid creature. He is afraid of everything. Perhaps he is most afraid of his wives—but, then, that is a



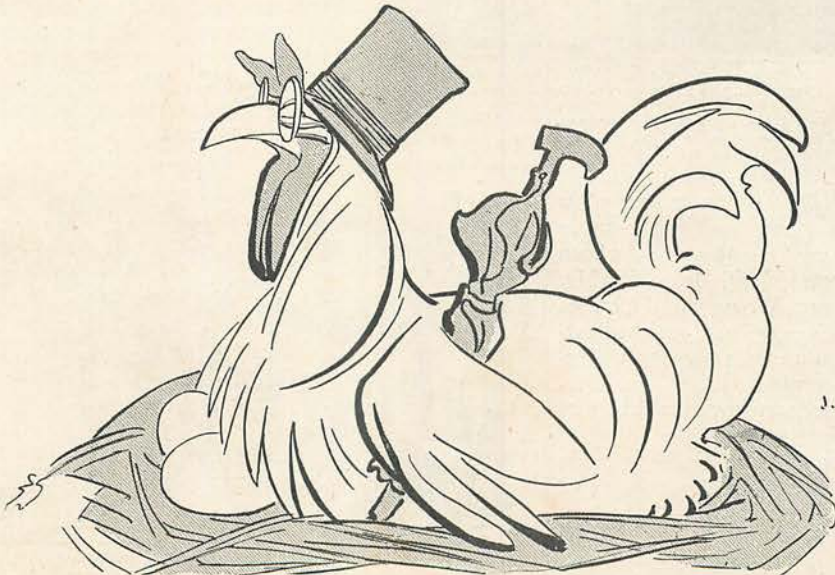
HENPECKED !



"OH! I'M AFRAID!"

thing not altogether unheard-of in species of higher development. But he is also afraid of his own shadow, of a chance-blown piece of paper, of a pert sparrow—almost (though certainly not quite) of the early worm that rewards his early rising. And although he has not yet been observed to be greatly scared by any handful of grain thrown in his way, it is a fact that he is too timid to go through a small opening in a wall which leads

into a field, and which is the usual means of exit for all the rest of the poultry. Perhaps he is afraid that his martial tramp may disturb the wall's foundations and bring it down on his back. And still, through it all, that preposterous motherly instinct exists! He sits about, intent on persuading Mr. Evans to mistake him for a broody hen, and to provide him with a sitting of eggs. And he will never be really happy till he gets it.



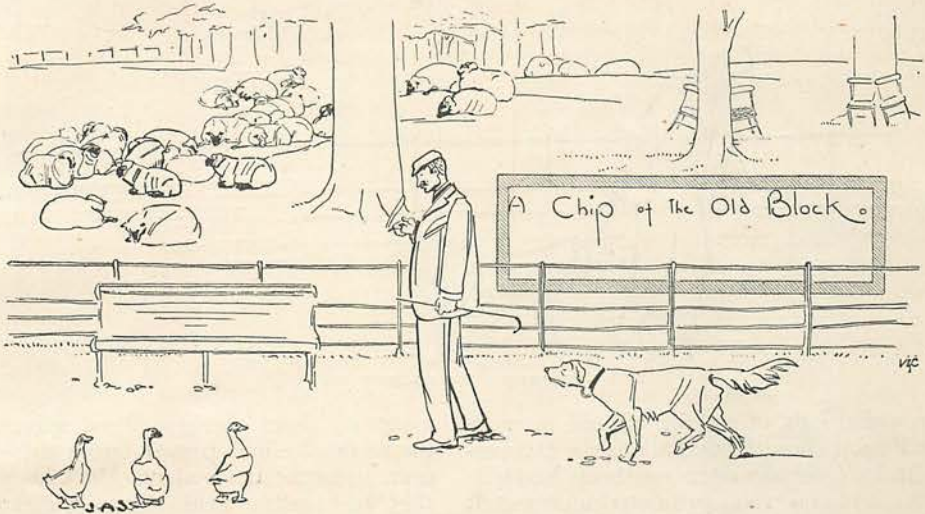
J.A.S

REALLY HAPPY.

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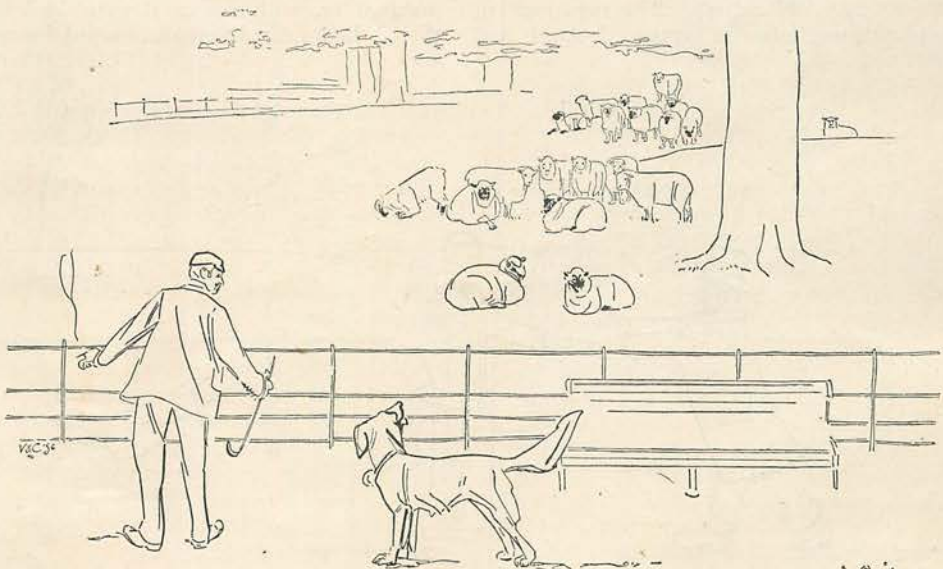


R. PIGGOTT had a dog, an Irish setter, which, notwithstanding its Hibernian name and pedigree, was born and brought up in London.

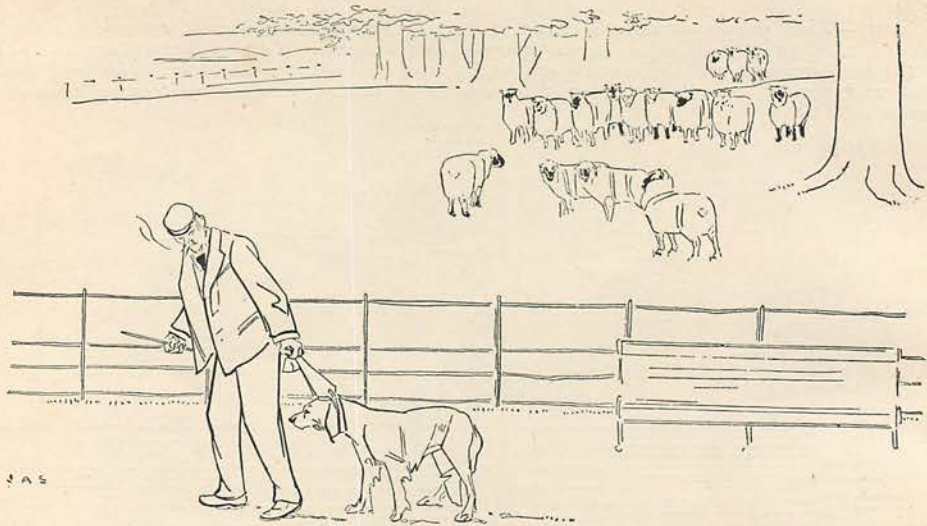
Jack was its name. Jack's ancestors in Ireland had been sheep-dogs for countless generations, but Jack himself knew nothing of sheep at all, beyond whatever acquaintanceship he might have had with an

occasional mutton-bone. Indeed, he had never as much as seen a live sheep in his life till the particular incident wherewith we are concerned took place. But heredity is a great thing, and in this case it manifested itself in a very noteworthy manner.

Jack's master gave him frequent exercise in walks. But Jack was young, and it so chanced that none of his walks had brought



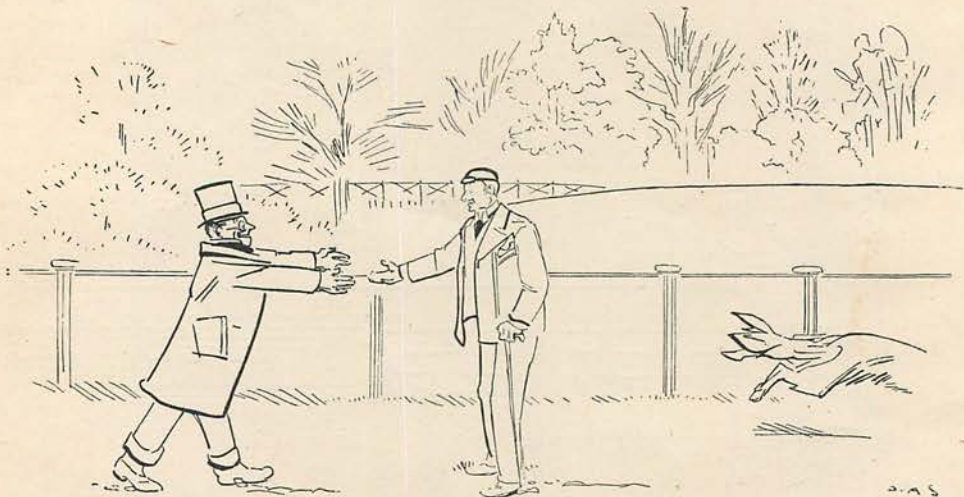
HE KNEW THEM !



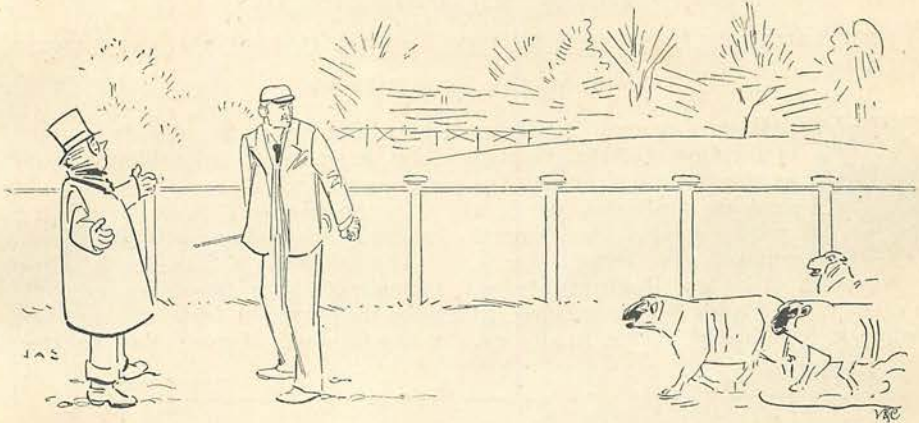
SUBMISSIVE, BUT DISAPPOINTED.

him within sight of a sheep, till one morning Mr. Piggott chose Hyde Park as the exercise-ground. One may often see sheep in Hyde Park, and on this particular morning it happened that a considerable flock disported itself at large about the grass adjoining the path Mr. Piggott chose. The flock was wholly unguarded, neither a man nor a dog having charge, and the sheep were making the most of their liberty. Jack stopped. What were these creatures? He had never seen such beings before—never, at least, in his present life. But he knew them well—more, he knew that something was wrong. Hundreds of generations of shepherd-ancestors in grassy Ireland had

learnt all about these woolly creatures, and the knowledge had passed on to this innocent, untaught descendant. Jack knew that they were foolish, weak things, these sheep now first set before his bodily eyes—things that must be lost without guidance; things, nevertheless, that it was important not to allow to be lost, and things which it was the duty of the superior creature, the dog, to take care of, to keep together, to drive in the path they should go, to terrify for their own good—even on extreme occasion to nip—lest they be scattered and lost entirely. And here they were, alone and uncared-for, with not a dog to look after them. Jack's ears lifted and his tail flourished



TROUT-FLIES AND HACKLE



DISTURBED.

intelligently. But Mr. Piggott interfered. He read the gaze, understood the cock of the ear, and interpreted the swing of the tail. He seized Jack quickly by the collar and took him along. The dog went submissively enough, but seriously disappointed. His master was resolved to have no trouble with those sheep, so kept a firm hold on Jack's collar for full half a mile, till the sheep were far behind, wholly out of sight, and, Mr. Piggott felt no doubt, altogether out of Jack's mind. Here a friend met Jack's master—an angling friend, and an enthusiast. When angling friends meet there is apt to be talk of an absorbing, technical, and mutually delightful character. Jack was released, and at the moment forgotten, and for a space all was trout-flies and hackle.

But while trout-flies and hackle hurtled through the quiet air, Jack had gone about his duty. The duty of every respectable dog, as ancestral remembrance whispered in his mind's ear, was to collect together all

scattered sheep and drive them home to his master. Jack left the neighbourhood of trout-flies and hackle at a swift bolt. He was gone but a few minutes, and his master knew nothing of his absence till a broken chorus of plaintive baa-aas disturbed the conversation. And there, kicking up the dust of the gravelly path, came an obedient and compact flock of sheep, driven, guarded, and kept from straggling with the true science of the perfect sheep-dog. And from behind the hurrying, bleating crowd beamed the joyous grin of Jack, happy in the honourable trade of his fathers! Not a sheep was missing, not one straggled. On they came, and only when the flock stood, a compact property, about the legs of the embarrassed debaters on trout-flies, did Jack stay the procession and gaze up in delighted expectancy for the approval of his master. For inherited instinct had triumphed, and Jack was a poet among sheep-dogs, born and not made.



A LITTLE SURPRISE.