

"FUZZLES": THE STORY OF A PUPPY.

BY G. B. BURGIN, AUTHOR OF "HIS LORDSHIP," ETC.



"WHAT you want," said the family friend, as he looked round our pretty little rooms with that supremely aggravating air of toleration which the family friend always considers he is privileged to assume — "what you want is a dog, just to take off

the loneliness, as it were, of being all by yourselves."

My wife interrupted the family friend.

"Why, we have been married only a month, uncle, and," indignantly, "we are *not* lonely."

"Ah yes, my dear," replied our avuncular relative, "that's all very well. I've been married myself—twice—and I know what it is like. There's nothing so useful to a young newly-married couple as a dog which tones with the furniture and helps to provide a common topic of conversation. It will also keep your husband from going to the club, and——"

"He's given up his club."

"Don't interrupt me, my dear. He'll go back to it. They always begin by giving up everything and gradually going back again: it is a way young, newly-married men have had from time immemorial.

I was young myself once, and did the same thing. You must get a dog for him. If he hears the watch-dog's honest bark baying a deep-mouthed welcome to the intrusive grocer's boy or milkman, and all that kind of thing, it will lend an added zest to domesticity, so to speak. You take my advice" (he frowned portentously, as much as to say: "If you fail to do so, then never more be legatees of mine"), "and buy a dog. If I don't see that dog here the next time I come to stay with you, I—I—candidly I shall" ("Cut you off with a shilling," we expected him to add, but he hesitated and didn't) "be extremely disappointed—extremely!"

Then he went away, and left us gazing somewhat blankly at one another.

"I suppose we must get a dog, dear," said my wife. "You know what your uncle is when roused. If he wanted us to keep a tame megatherium or an ornithorhynchus on the back lawn, we should have to do it."

"But, my dear girl, how am I to exercise

the little beast? I come home tired, I want to write stories; the time not occupied in writing stories I devote to you. And then there'll be this little brute yapping aloud for exercise. Just fancy how pleasant it will be, when I'm comfortably settled down in my armchair, if you remind me that I must rise and go for miles through suburban Hornsey, leading the dog with a string or allowing him to lead me. I shall be taken for a blind man, and have people offer me coppers. Uncle Peter's a pompous, purple old——"

A pretty hand was laid on my lips.

"Your Uncle Peter has been very kind to us, dear; and I should rather like having a little dog here when you are away all day."

Of course that ended the discussion. The matter presented itself to me in a new light. To please my wife, I would have bought a Newfoundland or a St. Bernard already fitted up with life-saving appliances, and ready for action. There must be some poor wretched dog at the Battersea Home who would be glad to make my acquaintance, or, at least, would tolerate me for a few hours every evening.

I decided to go to Battersea the next day and buy something canine. Ten shillings, I believe, is the usual price charged there, utterly irrespective of weight, moral character, or antecedents. I bought



C.T.D.

"I TOOK THE BALL, AND P—— HURRIEDLY EFFACED HIMSELF"

two dogs in rapid succession, but the cold weather was against them, and they developed every possible complaint except hydrophobia. They had to be sent back to Battersea, and the officials there seemed to think that those dogs would soon get over their troubles and end life's pilgrimage in a comfortably painless manner. Just as I was preparing to start for Battersea the third time (I lived there on and off for about a week, and began to be looked upon as a sporting character by all the guards on the Metropolitan Extension) in came my friend P——, the editor of a well-known illustrated paper. P—— carried an animated bundle of something under his arm. It looked like a small door-mat, but one end of it waggled, and from the other end shone out two intensely black eyes, filled with dancing light. P—— proudly

"Occasionally. Now, would you mind playing with him? It diverts his attention." P—— handed me an indiarubber ball. "Just throw it carelessly about, as if you were doing it merely to oblige him, until I can get out of the office without his knowing it. My wife is crying at home."

"Crying! What for?"

"Because she can't bear to part with him. He has been a great deal to us. But we have his mother, and cannot keep more than one dog. They gnaw the furniture, and then we have to get fresh things, which becomes expensive. If you throw the ball into that corner and smile, I will bolt while he waddles after it."

I took the ball, and P—— hurriedly effaced himself. "George Augustus" attracted a good deal of



"HE DEVELOPED A ROOTED ANTIPATHY TO CATS"

deposited his bundle on the carpet; it sat up on the waggling end, two silky ears erected themselves in a perkily inquisitive manner, and I saw that my visitor was a puppy of about four months old.

"Affection's offering," P—— said proudly. "We couldn't come to the wedding, as we were away at the time, so cast about for one of our most precious possessions to give you. I've brought it along."

He pointed to the puppy, which suddenly became very grave, as if it realised that the matter was now assuming a more personal complexion.

"What's that?" I asked. "Tisn't a dog? You—eh—really haven't the audacity to call *that* a dog! It's more like Berlin wool-work than anything else."

"Did you think it was a giraffe?" P—— answered, somewhat testily. "It is a very valuable pedigree, prick-eared, Skye terrier pup, with many good points."

I picked up the soft, silky bundle.

"Why, he hasn't a point about him. He's as soft and round as a ball of silk."

"We call him 'George Augustus Sala,'" said P—— "because he always wears a white waistcoat;" and he pointed to the puppy's white breast. "I never knew any other pup of the breed have a white waistcoat: it is unique—never been done before. This pup is something exceptional. We think he has a future before him."

"Will it want washing?—the waistcoat, I mean?"

attention that evening in the train. Before I reached Hornsey, he was on friendly terms with all the people in the carriage, particularly one old lady, whose bonnet-strings he affectionately chewed for the greater part of the journey. She kissed him at parting, and gave me her card.

"If the dear little fellow should ever want a home," she said, "write to me, and I will come for him, even if it should be in the middle of the night."

I promised I would do so, smuggled "George Augustus" under my coat, and, when I reached home, hurriedly placed him on my wife's lap, where he lay, looking up into her face with his wonderful eyes—eyes soft and sweet, yet full of quaint, owlish solemnity. "I'm here," they seemed to say. "Now, what have you to say about it?"

I must confess to feeling rather a jealous pang as my wife hugged that puppy, and he cordially responded by licking her nose. After her rapture had subsided a little, "What are we to call him?" she asked.

"His name is 'George Augustus Sala.'"

"Then it must be changed," returned my wife, with prompt decision. "A little wee baby thing like this shall not be called such a long name. Shall it, 'Fuzzy-wuzzy'?"

"You've hit upon it at once. Don't you remember Kipling's

"'Ere's to you, Fuzzy-wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air?'"



"HIS HEAD WAS HELD OVER A JUG OF BOILING WATER."

He does look more like a miniature hayrick than anything else."

"Fuzzy-wuzzy," however, soon degenerated into "Fuzzles." Unsympathising friends who noticed his appetite said that it ought to be "Guzzles"; but this we resented, and it soon came to be an understood thing that no remarks of a disparaging nature were to be made about our puppy. For three months he was a constant joy to us. It was absurd to call "Fuzzles" a mere animal, for he had all the intelligence of a self-willed child, varied with lovable fits, during the continuance of which we felt that so saintly a dog could not live long. At breakfast and dinner he sat on a chair by my wife's side, and was allowed to have bits of bread at the conclusion of the repast. For some time he would control his impatience and sit silent, but as we neared the end of the meal he began to give short sharp barks, and then look round with an unconscious air, as if they had proceeded from some other animal altogether. Soon he developed a rooted antipathy to cats, and was never happier than within a foot of an old Tom's tail as it disappeared through our garden palings. But at length there came a day when even cats could not rouse "Fuzzles." He lay about listlessly, with no appetite, and indisposed to move.

"Don't you think I ought to give him some beef-tea?" asked my wife.

And we gave him beef-tea accordingly, although it bored him very much.

This went on for a fortnight. "Fuzzles" crawled about as if he could scarcely drag one paw after the other. Suddenly he recovered his former spirits, and became more winning than ever. A fortnight later he began to shiver, decline to touch food, and get as thin as the

proverbial herring. At last my wife carried him off to a veterinary college, and asked what was the matter with "Fuzzles."

"We can't take him in here," said the doctor, "as you don't subscribe to the institution. However, if you will call on my friend Dr. H——, he will look after your puppy. It's a very bad case of pneumonia and distemper."

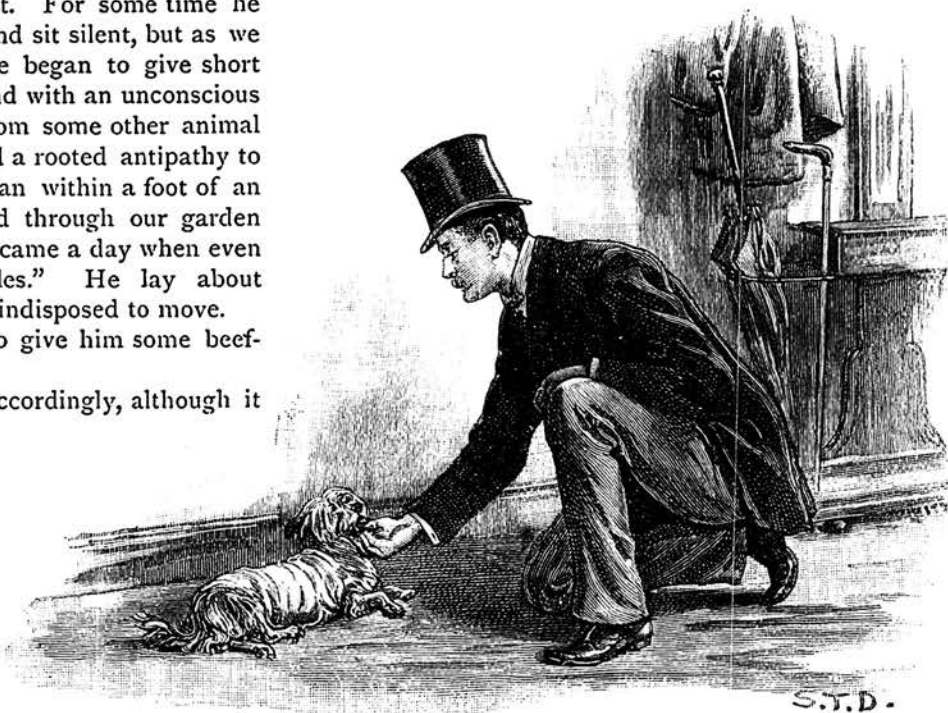
My wife took a cab and drove to Dr. H——'s. Dr. H—— was not at home, but she left "Fuzzles" in charge of a domestic, and sorrowfully came home.

The next morning we received a telegram: "Please fetch puppy, or will fret himself to death. Will attend him at your house."

We immediately posted off to fetch "Fuzzles," who greeted us with momentary rapture, then

nestled into my wife's arms, and shut his suffering eyes. We took him home, and made him a flannel jacket, through which his stumpy little legs were always working in unexpected places. He had beef-tea every two hours, a powerful tonic every four. His head was also held over a jug of boiling water four times a day. After the second experiment with the boiling water, "Fuzzles" gave up struggling against it.

"Very well," he seemed to say, as I lifted him up on the kitchen table, "if you like to parboil me alive, you can do so. It doesn't make much difference. Give me some more minced steak afterwards; that's the only thing I really like. But I wish you'd let me



"LAY DOWN HALF-WAY WITH A FEEBLE WAG OF HIS TAIL"

alone. I've such a lot of things to think over—this jacket, among others, and that fiend in spectacles who's always jabbing spoons down my throat."

This went on for ten days. At last it became evident to me that "Fuzzles" was beloved of the gods, who meant to call him hence. On the evening before his death, directly I knocked at the door, there was a shambling sound in the passage, and "Fuzzles," a wraith in white flannel, crawled slowly along the hall towards the front door, but lay down half-way with a feeble wag of his tail. I picked him up, and carried the poor little wasted thing back to the kitchen, where Eliza, the maid, wept over him without concealment.

"He's been in to say good-bye to missis, sir," she said. "Twice this afternoon he's crawled into the droring-room and laid his head up against her dress, just looking solemn-like, and not saying nothing. He's a-goin' fast, sir. You mark my words. He's a-goin' fast!"

The next morning "Fuzzles" had a fit, and the doctor sent for a chemist with instructions to bring and administer poison. "Fuzzles" took the poison languidly, rolled over on his side with slowly-glazing baby eyes, gave one sigh, and was no more. When I returned in the evening, I found Eliza sitting in the kitchen, her apron over her head, and "Fuzzles" customary corner vacant. My wife was on the verge

of tears. Someone knocked at the front door, and we both started nervously.

"It's the boy come to take 'Fuzzles' away," said my wife, clutching my arm.

We heard the boy's heavy lumbering steps go slowly down the passage. Presently he came blundering back. Then he knocked the box against the wall and half-dropped poor "Fuzzles," but recovered himself with an effort.

"It sounds like a coffin being taken away," said my wife.

The boy's footsteps receded across the hall, he noisily slammed to the door, we heard the front gate open, his footsteps grew fainter and fainter, and Eliza came in with her best black bonnet on.

"What's the matter, Eliza?" I asked.

Eliza checked a fresh outburst with difficulty.

"It ain't right not to see 'im buried, sir. Won't you and missis come too?"

We all crept after the boy at a respectful distance until he entered the field which he had selected for "Fuzzles" last resting-place. From behind an ancient oak we watched the interment with mingled emotions. At length the boy patted down the sod with his spade, and went away blithely whistling. Then Eliza, my wife, and I crept homeward through the shadows, feeling almost as if we had lost a little child.



A Thanksgiving Hymn.

"Have you cut the wheat in the blowing fields,
The barley, the oats and rye,
The golden corn and the pearly rice?
For the winter days are nigh."

"We have reaped them all from shore to shore,
And the grain is safe on the threshing floor."

"Have you gathered the berries from the vine
And the fruits from the orchard trees,
The dew and the scent from the roses and thyme
In the hive of the honey-bees?"

"The peach and the plum and the apple are ours,
And the honey-comb from the scented flowers.

"The wealth of the snowy cotton-field
And the gift of the sugar-cane,
The savory herb and nourishing root—
There has nothing been given in vain,
We have gathered the harvest from shore to shore,
And the measure is full and running o'er."

Then lift up the head with a song!
And lift up the hands with a gift!
To the ancient giver of all
The spirit of gratitude lift!
For the joy and promise of Spring,
For the hay and clover sweet,
The barley, the rye, and the oats,
The rice and the corn and the wheat,
The cotton and sugar and fruit,
The flowers and the fine honeycomb,
The country, so fair and so free,
The blessing and the glory of home,
"Thanksgiving! thanksgiving! thanksgiving!
Joyfully, gratefully call,
To God, the preserver of men,"
The bountiful Father of all.