

THE EXPIATION OF A JACKASS

A LITTLE NATURE TRAGEDY JUST BEYOND THE CITY'S DOORS.

Bad Ending of the Art Studies of the Infatuated J. A. and His Companion, the Imitative Fishhound—It Mightn't Have Happened Had Thompson Seton Stayed Home.

It was just about the curfew hour of a cool, crisp evening in the fall of the year—Tuesday night, as a matter of fact, literal fact—when a "copy boy" named Tom came through The Sun office weeping bitterly and wiping his eyes now and then with a sheet of yellow paper on which was typewritten a true story, something with pathos and heartache, in the form of a telegraph "query" from a suburban correspondent. Much of the ink had been smeared away by the little lad's tears, but enough was left to enable the boss to decipher this communi- cation:

Greenwich conn 12th Nov 7 pet dog killed by trying to jackass his companion jumps right in front of another trolly and commits suicide this occurred to animals owned by neighbor of Ernest Thompson seton not a nature fake want 200 words?

From desk to desk the query was passed along so that all might have a good hard cry before it should be learned, perhaps, that some of the simple elements of the story were not exact. While the soba still were floating about the desks, three reporters of excellence were slammed up to Greenwich to get all the other facts—one man to "cover" the death of the pet dog, another to look after the jackass part of the story and the third to look after Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton.

Pithily pathetic as the simple query was, it really looked as formal as an undertaker's bill when some time later the query was compared to the detailed story that was gathered up Greenwich and Cos Cob way. But for many reasons the publication of the story of the tragedy had to be delayed until this morning. One reporter didn't remember until he was detaining at Cos Cob in the dark that he had forgotten to bring the office revolver. Another, the man assigned to see Mr. Seton, learned that the naturalist was in Manhattan studying animals along Broadway or some place, and the reporter was unable to wait his return. So everybody had to take a fresh start.

One by one the details of the death of Flossie, the pet fishhound, and Aloysius, the pet jackass, were handed out all day yesterday by the local correspondent and other citizens of the region, notably Mr. Flap Hooper, the Cos Cob snake bite cures John Boles, who not only owned Flossie and Aloysius but also is a neighbor of Mr. Seton, could not be seen. All the shades were drawn at the Boles home and the family left word with the maid to admit no one but the milkman and an expected plumber named Harold Fitzgerald, who summers in the suburbs but moves right into Cos Cob for the winter season.

Flossie and Aloysius first began to work together in the arts—to begin at the beginning—about a year and a half ago, when the Boles's hired help, James Snee by name, led the pet fishhound and the pet jackass over to the Ernest Thompson Seton home, Wyndyng, every day to be studied by the naturalist. Flossie and Aloysius began by posing in the studio in a sort of life class managerie that Mr. Seton built of the butler's pantry back in the days when he was just plain Mr. Ernest Seton-Thompson—so Flap Hooper said yesterday. Both of the intelligent animals early began to absorb, from constant association, a bit of art knowledge themselves in their own way, and soon they grew to love the work for its own sake, and they gradually got the habit of reporting for work impatiently of their own accord fully half an hour ahead of time to be studied.

Their intelligence was almost transcendental, so Flap Hooper says. Flap knows. When he isn't mixing and testing snake bite cures he looks after Mr. Seton's animals, and from this constant mixing it up with animals and snakes the wild animal Flap has known he still knows with a knowledge that for sympathetic receptivity is equalled only by that of Ernest Thompson Seton and the Rev. Dr. William Jungles Long combined. In fact there isn't an animal around the Seton lawn, lion, tiger, elephant or any other down to the scrawnyest Weimarer rabbit, that doesn't come to Flap to tell in pantomime its little tragedies the minute it leaves Mr. Seton's office.

Flap Hooper says how Flossie, the pet pup, and Aloysius, the playful jackass, stood out even among the extraordinary flock of Seton stock (rock and stock were accidental) this story really is a tragedy when you learn that scarce had the two been posing a month when they began to act little stories as that they might help the naturalistic part of the author's artistic work as well as the pictorial. Call it mere unreasoning imitation of humans if you will, or even go the limit and call it what John Burroughs would if he were that kind of person, but Flap and Ernest will tell you that it was sheer reason that prompted Flossie one day in one of the five minute rests that Flossie and Aloysius enjoyed after each twenty-five minutes of posing, to dip the tip of her tail in a pair of shoes still, remember of drawing ink on try, with ever so pathetic a patience, to draw a face on the life class floor.

"I made they were, then they came to draw with her wee little tail, but the little fishhound was proud of them. And when the drawing—it was a three-quarter view of a South American jupuecker, which is a bird of no particular kind but just a bird—was finished little Flossie came to the feet of Flap and Ernest and wagged her tail and unceremoniously did a lot of ink on the work on Flap's and Ernest's respective gray pants. But when she gambolled back to her drawing, she was covered later, filled with the joy of the artist, which is far and far more ecstatic than the vulgar joy of living, her tail dropped suddenly and she stole into the drawing and while in a wistful, disappointed little doggy way when she saw Aloysius, the pet jackass, look toward the South American jupuecker and yawn. She was just a little bit tired.

The whole little story was a real tragedy to Flap and Ernest because they are naturalists and understand—Flap has to you, reader, a layman, it would perhaps have been merely to laugh. Ah, do not laugh at dumb creatures, reader. Study them and learn their little tricky ways and fill in any part of their pretty stories that they leave out through forgetfulness and bind the stuff and buy a country home with a planning mill steep that's five minutes away from the front gate.

The only time Aloysius ever forgot himself was when a Washington naturalist got irritated in the dock and called the term "nature faker." As the foam began to fly fast and faster the little artist fishhound and the happy jackass actually seemed to grasp in a vague way what was going on in the world of exact science. For a week both went off their feed—Flossie and Aloysius, that is, Flossie and Aloysius, who even when very young was of a more highstrung nature, displayed more psychological anger than grief, so Flap Hooper says.

The climax was reached when Aloysius began to realize, in his simple, jackass way, the meaning of the term nature faker. Aloysius was at luncheon when he first got the hunch, and when the luncheon things had been cleared away in the studio he went out on the lawn to Aloysius did. Until the shank of the afternoon he brooded, and then he arose from the flower bed where he had been reclining and started toward the shanty of Jim McBride, the popular switchman of Cos Cob, who is a member of two national zoological societies known respectively as the Elks and the Eagles, so Flap Hooper says.

Pasted to the wall of Jim's shanty just to the left of and above an appliance that is a combination of a stove and a cupboard is a lithograph entitled "Our Presidents, from Washington Up to Roosevelt." Now,

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

There is said to be a steady demand for "bedbooks" in England. Just what constitutes the ideal bedbook, to be read aloud to invalids or to be read by the convalescing, the weary or the sleepless in bed, is so much a matter of temperament that the writing of bedbooks has not been taken up as a profession, although some writers have unconsciously achieved distinction in this line. There are readers who find in Gibbon a sedative for tired nerves, there are others who enjoy Trollope's quiet humor. Some people find in Henry James's tangled syntax the restful diversion they seek and others enjoy Mr. Howells's unexciting realism. Generally speaking, the bedbook without too much dialogue is more conducive to repose than one broken into the short sentences of conversation or dealing with climaxes involving excitement.

Mr. Herman Whitaker knows much of the frontier hardships he has described in his new book, "The Settler." "I actually lived the settler's life as described in the book," he says. "Eight burning summers, eight frozen winters did I endure in that cast iron climate. I have seen in the thermometer register 72 degrees below zero; I have travelled twenty miles behind an ox team at a temperature of 85 below, but neither experience can be compared with the night that I ran fifteen miles loaded down with furs behind my cutter against a seventy mile wind with the instrument marking 55 below."

M. Edmond Rostand in spite of his success as a writer began life with a disaster. A few months before his studies should have come to a natural end at the College Stanislas he committed a breach of discipline for which the authorities expelled him. The indignation of his fellow students almost caused a revolt. They tore up his cap and divided it in pieces, one of which each boy wore in his buttonhole for the rest of the term as a decoration. His wife is almost as well known in the literary world of France as he, and it is said that much of his success is due to her sympathy and appreciation.

The Hon. Mrs. Arthur Henniker, the author of "Our Fatal Shadows," is the daughter of the late Lord Houghton, who was a poet and a man of letters. Mrs. Henniker acted as hostess at Dublin Castle and the Vice-regal Lodge when her brother was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Her new story recalls the little book by Baroness von Heysing, "Letters Which Never Reached Him," for it is a story told in letters from the heroine to her friend.

The publication of Edith Wharton's new novel arouses fresh interest in the personality of this social satirist of brilliant technique and polished style. Edith Wharton was born in New York in 1862 and was educated at home. Her mother was Laurencia Stevens (Rhinelander) Jones. She has travelled and lived much in Europe and has been in the social life of which she writes. In 1885 she married Mr. Edward Wharton of Boston. She lives in Lenox. Since her first book appeared, in 1899, under the title of "The Greater Inclination" some nine other books have been published.

"Almost everywhere on Dartmoor are furze, heather and granite," writes John Trevena in his new book on "Furze the Cruel." "The furze seems to suggest cruelty, the heather endurance and the granite strength. The furze is destroyed by fire, but grows again; the heather is torn by winds, but blossoms again; the granite is worn away imperceptibly by the rain." This work is the first of a trilogy which the author proposes to continue and complete with "Heather" and "Granite." Mr. Trevena is said to be as cruel in his first story as his own furze, relentless and grim in his descriptions of Dartmoor.

Alfred Whitman, who died suddenly this month at the age of 85, was the original of "Laurie" in Louisa Alcott's "Little Women." He was of New England birth, but he lived for many years in Kansas. A few years ago he was called upon to tell his recollections of Miss Louisa M. Alcott for publication and in this way for the first time he revealed the story of his relations with Miss Alcott, published many letters he had received from her and told how he came to figure as Laurie in her famous story.

It was of Sir Henry Wotton that Carlyle wrote, "Wotton's good old genially pious life deserves a proper elucidation by some faithful man." Such an "elucidation" is soon to be supplied by "Sir Henry Wotton's Life and Letters," the new book by L. Cecil Smith, who has traced nearly one hundred of Wotton's letters and despatches, published and unpublished. Mr. Smith thinks that Wotton is the first Englishman of his time whose correspondence deserves to be read for its literary quality apart from its historical interest.

At this time, when so much attention is focussed upon "The Letters of Queen Victoria," it is interesting to learn that the next volume on "The Political History of England" will be the "Reign of Queen Victoria." The book is the work of Mr. Sidney Low.

Prof. Haupt, professor of Semitic languages in the Johns Hopkins University, who has published a new translation of "The Songs of Solomon," urges, it is said, that Solomon never wrote the songs. "The book," he says, "is the work of a man who lived fully six hundred years after the reign of Solomon. The book is a collection of love songs dealing particularly with the love of the Christ who was to come for man. It was written in the neighborhood of Damascus."

"The Happy Chaps," by Carolyn Wells, are jolly, quaint little people who it is hoped will be to the present day readers of the St. Nicholas what the Brownies were to former readers of the magazine. W. Harrison Cady will illustrate the text with humorous pictures of the new merry "little people."

"The Reminiscences of Lady Randolph Churchill" in the December Century recall her early experiences in London society and her first visit to stately Blenheim, where when the family were alone the quiet life was arranged with the regularity of clockwork. An hour in the morning was devoted to the reading of newspapers, which was a necessity if one wanted to show an intelligent interest in the questions of the day, for at dinner the conversation invariably turned on politics. In the afternoon a walk or drive or visit to a neighbor helped while away the day. After the formal dinner "one might read a book or play for love a mild game of what." No one dared suggest bed until the sacred hour of 11, when all trooped out into the anteroom, lighted their own candles and each in turn kissed the Duke and Duchess good night. These recollections, which begin with the author's American girlhood, will be continued during the coming year and will contain comments on social affairs and anecdotes concerning the leading personages of Europe.

John N. Bogart, Commissioner of Licenses, to whom complaints were made that "Haggoods," acting as an employment agency, exact a fee, in the shape of a \$5 subscription to Haggoods' "Appointments," from applicants for jobs, has decided to leave it to the courts to say whether this is really extracting an illegal employment agency fee. To that end he will in a week revoke the license of Haggoods, and he recommends that in the meantime Haggoods obtain an injunction preventing him from doing so.

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MR. COMSTOCK TAKES A STROLL. Finds Picture Cards That a Policeman Mayn't Look at and Causes Some Arrests.

Spooning couples on benches in the park were represented on a picture postal card displayed in a drug store window at 225 First Avenue on Wednesday. The sight shocked Arthur Comstock, who was taking a stroll through the East Side. "Do you sell many of these," he asked Carl Mayer, the proprietor, as he bought a specimen. "I will take no orders in these cases until the surety is approved by the District Attorney's office," announced the Court.

BROAD ST. CASHIER ARRESTED. John Luck Charged With \$4,000 Shortage in the Accounts of A. Behrens & Co.

John Luck, 34 years old, for the last eight years cashier for A. Behrens & Co., exporters at 95 Broad street, was arrested yesterday by Detectives Gegan and Wilber of the Central Office, technically charged with grand larceny and forgery. A member of the firm was the complainant. The firm was notified several days ago that the company's account in its bank was running low. Experts were put on the company's books and a shortage of \$4,000 since July, 1907, was found. Luck said that he received a salary of \$2,300 yearly. He told the detectives that he did not drink or gamble.

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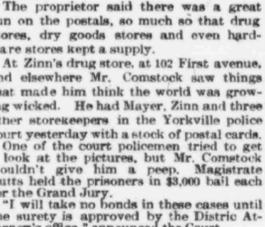
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