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Содержание

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SIR WALTER SCOTT AND HIS DOGS

One of my pleasant recollections is that of seeing Sir Walter Scott out on a stroll with his dogs; the scene being in the neighbourhood of Abbotsford, in the summer of 1824, while as yet the gloom of misfortune had not clouded the mind of the great man. There he was limping gaily along with his pet companions amidst the rural scenes which he had toiled to secure and loved so dearly.

Scott's fondness for animals has perhaps never been sufficiently acknowledged. It was with him a kind of second nature, and appears to have been implanted when as a child he was sent on a visit to the house of his grandfather, Robert Scott, at Sandyknowe, in the neighbourhood of Dryburgh. Here, amidst flocks of sheep and lambs, talked to and fondled by shepherds and ewe-milkers, and revelling with collies, he was impressed with a degree of affectionate feeling for animals which lasted through life. At a subsequent visit to Sandyknowe, when his grandfather had passed away, and the farm operations were administered by 'Uncle Thomas,' he was provided with a Shetland pony to ride upon. The pony was little larger than many a Newfoundland dog. It walked freely into the house, and was regularly fed from the boy's hand. He soon learned to ride the little pony well, and often alarmed 'Aunt Jenny' by cantering over the rough places in the neighbourhood. Such were the beginnings of Scott's intercourse with animals. Growing up, there was something extraordinary in his attachment to his dogs, his horses, his ponies, and his cats; all of which were treated by him, each in its own sphere, as agreeable companions, and which were attached to him in return. There may have been something feudal and poetic in this kindly association with humble adherents, but there was also much of simple good-heartedness. Scott added not a little to the happiness of his existence by this genial intercourse with his domestic pets. From Lockhart's Memoirs of Sir Walter, and other works, we have occasionally bright glimpses of the great man's familiarity with his four-footed favourites. We can see that Scott did not, as is too often the case, treat them capriciously, as creatures to be made of at one time, and spoken to harshly when not in the vein for amusement. On the contrary, they were elevated to the position of friends. They possessed rights to be respected, feelings which it would be scandalous to outrage. At all times he had a soothing word, and a kind pat, for every one of them. And that, surely, is the proper way to behave towards the beings who are dependent on us.

Among Sir Walter's favourite dogs we first hear of Camp, a large bull-terrier, that was taken with him when visiting the Ellises for a week at Sunninghill in 1803. Mr and Mrs Ellis having cordially sympathised in his fondness for this animal, Scott, at parting, promised to send one of Camp's progeny in the course of the season to Sunninghill. As an officer in a troop of yeomanry cavalry, Scott proved a good horseman, and we are led to know that he was much attached to the animal which he rode. In a letter to a friend written at this period (1803), he says: 'I have, too, a hereditary attachment to the animal – not, I flatter myself, of the common jockey cast, but because I regard him as the kindest and most generous of the subordinate animals. I hardly even except the dogs; at least, they are usually so much better treated, that compassion for the steed should be thrown into the scale when we weigh their comparative merits.'

For several years Camp was the constant parlour dog. He was handsome, intelligent, and fierce, but gentle as a lamb among the children. At the same time, there were two greyhounds, Douglas and Percy, which were kept in the country for coursing. Scott kept one window of his study open, whatever might be the state of the weather, that Douglas and Percy might leap out and in as the

fancy moved them. He always talked to Camp as if he understood what was said – and the animal certainly did understand not a little of it; in particular, it seemed as if he perfectly comprehended on all occasions that his master considered him a sensible and steady friend; the greyhounds, as volatile young creatures whose freaks must be borne with.

William Laidlaw, the friend and amanuensis of Scott, mentions in the *Abbotsford Notanda* a remarkable instance of Camp's fidelity and attention. It was on the occasion of a party visiting a wild cataract in Dumfriesshire, known as the Gray Mare's Tail. There was a rocky chasm to be ascended, up which Scott made his way with difficulty, on account of his lameness. 'Camp attended anxiously on his master; and when the latter came to a difficult part of the rock, Camp would jump down, look up to his master's face, then spring up, lick his master's hand and cheek, jump down again, and look upwards, as if to shew him the way and encourage him. We were greatly interested with the scene.'

The most charming part of Scott's life was, as we think, that which he spent with his family at Ashestiel, from about 1804 to 1808, part of which time he was engaged in writing *Marmion*. Ashestiel was a country mansion situated on the south bank of the Tweed, half way between Innerleithen and Galashiels, and in what would be called a solitary mountain district. There was the river for fishing, and the hills for coursing, and no other amusement. To enliven the scene, literary friends came on short visits. There was an odd character in the immediate neighbourhood, called from his parsimony Old Nippie, whose habits afforded some fun. When still at Ashestiel in 1808, there is presented a pleasant picture by Lockhart of the way in which Scott passed the Sunday. The account of it is a perfect Idyll. 'On Sunday he never rode – at least not until his growing infirmity made his pony almost necessary for him – for it was his principle that all domestic animals have a full right to their Sabbath of rest; but after he had read the Church service, he usually walked with his whole family, dogs included, to some favourite spot at a considerable distance from the house – most frequently the ruined tower of Elibank – and there dined with them in the open air on a basket of cold provisions, mixing his wine with the water of the brook beside which they were all grouped around him on the turf; and here, or at home, if the weather kept them from their ramble, his Sunday talk was just such a series of biblical lessons as that preserved for the permanent use of the rising generation in his *Tales of a Grandfather*. He had his Bible, the Old Testament especially, by heart; and on these days inwove the simple pathos or sublime enthusiasm of Scripture, in whatever story he was telling, with the same picturesque richness as he did, in his week-day tales, the quaint Scotch of Pitscottie, or some rude romantic old rhyme from Barbour's *Bruce* or Blind Harry's *Wallace*.'

Failing from old age, Camp was taken by the family to Edinburgh, and there he died about January 1809. He was buried in a fine moonlight night in the little garden behind the house, No. 39 Castle Street, immediately opposite the window where Scott usually sat writing. His daughter, Mrs Lockhart, remembered 'the whole family standing round the grave as her father himself smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression of face she had ever seen in him. He had been engaged to dine abroad that day, but apologised on account of "the death of a dear old friend."' A few months later, Scott says in one of his letters: 'I have supplied the vacancy occasioned by the death of dear old Camp with a terrier puppy of the old shaggy Celtic breed,' and which he named Wallace. This new companion was taken on an excursion to the Hebrides in 1810, and in time partly compensated for the loss of Camp. There came, however, a fresh bereavement in 1812, in the death of the greyhound Percy. Scott alludes to the fact in one of his letters. 'We are going on in the old way, only poor Percy is dead. I intend to have an old stone set up by his grave, with *Cy gist li preux Percie* [Here lies the brave Percy]; and I hope future antiquaries will debate which hero of the House of Northumberland has left his bones in Teviotdale.' The two favourite greyhounds are alluded to in the Introduction to the second canto of *Marmion*—

> Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
> O'er holt or hill there never flew,

From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot or sure of fang.

In a letter dated Abbotsford, 1816, written to Terry, with whom he communicated on literary and dramatic subjects, he says: 'I have got from my friend Glengarry the noblest dog ever seen on the Border since Johnnie Armstrong's time. He is between the wolf and deer hound, about six feet long from the tip of the nose to the tail, and high and strong in proportion: he is quite gentle and a great favourite. Tell Will. Erskine he will eat off his plate without being at the trouble to put a paw on the table or chair. I shewed him to Matthews, who dined one day in Castle Street before I came here.'

The staghound so introduced was the famous Maida, which came upon the scene when the Waverley novels were beginning to set the world on fire. Maida was the crack dog of Scott's life, and figures at his feet in the well-known sculpture by Steell. He did not quite supersede Wallace and the other dogs, but assumed among them the most distinguished place, and might be called the canine major-domo of the establishment. On visiting Abbotsford in 1817, Washington Irving enjoyed the pleasure of a ramble with Scott and his dogs. His description of the scene is so amusing that we can scarcely abate a jot:

'As we sallied forth, every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old staghound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal; and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived at the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft silken hair, long pendent ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound, who came from the kitchen wagging his tail; and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade. In our walks, he would frequently pause in conversation, to notice his dogs, and speak to them as if rational companions; and, indeed, there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance ahead of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a gambol. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust, then giving a glance at us, as much as to say: "You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense," would resume his gravity, and jog on as before. Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. "I make no doubt," said he, "when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say: Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters: what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery?"

'Scott amused himself with the peculiarities of another of his dogs, a little shamefaced terrier, with large glassy eyes, one of the most sensitive little bodies to insult and indignity in the world. "If ever he whipped him," he said, "the little fellow would sneak off and hide himself from the light of day in a lumber garret, from whence there was no drawing him forth but by the sound of the chopping-knife, as if chopping up his victuals, when he would steal forth with humiliated and downcast look, but would skulk away again if any one regarded him."

'While we were discussing the humours and peculiarities of our canine companions, some object provoked their spleen, and produced a sharp and petulant barking from the smaller fry; but it was some time before Maida was sufficiently roused to ramp forward two or three bounds, and join the chorus with a deep-mouthed *bow wow*. It was but a transient outbreak, and he returned instantly, wagging his tail, and looking up dubiously in his master's face, uncertain whether he would receive censure or applause. "Ay, ay, old boy!" cried Scott, "you have done wonders; you have shaken the Eildon hills with your roaring; you may now lay by your artillery for the rest of the day. Maida,"

continued he, "is like the great gun at Constantinople; it takes so long to get it ready, that the smaller guns can fire off a dozen times first."'

Maida accompanied his master to town, where he occupied the place of the lamented Camp. In the sanctum at Castle Street, Maida lay on the hearth-rug, ready when called on to lay his head across his master's knees, and to be caressed and fondled. On the top step of a ladder for reaching down the books from the higher shelves sat a sleek and venerable Tom-cat, which Scott facetiously called by the German name Hinse of Hinsfeldt. Lockhart mentions that Hinse, 'no longer very locomotive, usually lay watching the proceedings of his master and Maida with an air of dignified equanimity. When Maida chose to leave the party, he signified his inclinations by beating the door with his huge paw; Scott rose and opened it for him with courteous alacrity – and then Hinse came down purring from his perch, and mounted guard by the foot-stool, *vice* Maida absent on furlough. Whatever discourse might be passing was broken, every now and then, by some affectionate apostrophe to these four-footed friends. Dogs and cats, like children, have some infallible tact for discovering who is, and who is not, really fond of their company; and I venture to say, Scott was never five minutes in any room before the little pets of the family, whether dumb or lisping, had found out his kindness for all their generation.'

In letters to his eldest son, Scott seldom fails to tell him how things are going on with the domesticated animals. For example: 'Hamlet had an inflammatory attack, and I began to think he was going mad, after the example of his great namesake; but Willie Laidlaw bled him, and he recovered. Pussy is very well.' Next letter: 'Dogs all well – cat sick – supposed with eating birds in their feathers.' Shortly afterwards: 'All here send love. Dogs and cat are well. I daresay you have heard from some other correspondent that poor Lady Wallace [a favourite pony] died of an inflammation after two days' illness. Trout [a favourite pointer] has returned here several times, poor fellow, and seems to look for you; but Henry Scott is very kind to him.' In a succeeding letter we have the account of an accident to Maida: 'On Sunday, Maida walked with us, and in jumping the paling at the Greentongue park, contrived to hang himself up by the hind-leg. He howled at first, but seeing us making towards him, he stopped crying, and waved his tail, by way of signal, it was supposed, for assistance. He sustained no material injury, though his leg was strangely twisted into the bars, and he was nearly hanging by it. He shewed great gratitude, in his way, to his deliverers.'

At Abbotsford, in the autumn of 1820, when a large party, including Sir Humphry Davy, Dr Wollaston, and Henry Mackenzie were sallying out – Scott on his pony Sybyl Grey, with Maida gambolling about him – there was some commotion and laughter when it was discovered that a little black pig was frisking about and apparently resolved to be one of the party for the day. Scott tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy was sent home. 'This pig,' says Lockhart, 'had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging his pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers; but indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers – but such were the facts.'

Mr Adolphus, a visitor to Abbotsford in 1830, when the health of the great writer was breaking down under his honourable and terribly imposed task-work, gives us not the least striking instance of Scott's wonderful considerateness towards animals. 'In the morning's drive we crossed several fords, and after the rain they were wide and deep. A little, long, wise-looking, rough terrier, named Spice, which ran after us, had a cough, and as often as we came to a water, Spice, by the special order of his master, was let into the carriage till we had crossed. His tenderness to his brute dependants was a striking point in the benignity of his character. He seemed to consult not only their bodily welfare, but their feelings, in the human sense. He was a gentleman even to his dogs.' When too roughly frolicsome, he rebuked them gently, so as not to mortify them, or spoil the natural buoyancy of their character.

We could extend these memorabilia, but have perhaps said enough. Maida died in October 1824, and is commemorated in a sculptured figure at the doorway of Abbotsford. His attached master wrote an epitaph on him in Latin, which he thus Englished:

Beneath the sculptured form which late you wore,
Sleep soundly, Maida, at your master's door.

It was a sad pang for Scott, when quitting home to seek for health abroad, and which he did not find, to leave the pet dogs which survived Maida. His last orders were that they should be taken care of. We may be permitted to join in the noble eulogium pronounced on Scott by Willie Laidlaw, who lived to mourn his loss, that Kindness of heart was positively the reigning quality of Sir Walter's character!

W. C.

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS

CHAPTER XXI. – OUR EXPERIMENT

I watched Lilian very anxiously for a few days after our visit to Fairview. But although it had given her a shock to find Arthur Trafford already upon such familiar terms there, whilst there had been no call at the cottage, nor even a message sent to inquire after our well-being, she was not permanently depressed in consequence. I must do Arthur Trafford the justice to say that I think he was ashamed of sending conventional messages under the circumstances, and felt that bad as silence was, it was in better taste than meaningless words. Nevertheless, his sister might have contrived a call, had she possessed the something besides blue blood, which, in dear Mrs Tipper's estimation, constitutes a gentlewoman, sufficiently to recollect past kindness, and act up to her former rôle of being Lilian's friend. Fortunately, Lilian did not depend upon her friendship.

'Do not fear for me, Mary,' she whispered, rightly interpreting my anxious looks.

I did not fear for her – in the long-run. I knew that in time she would come to be even ashamed of having given the name of love to her infatuation for Arthur Trafford. But to attain that end, she must not be allowed to dream over the past; and I was casting about in my mind in the hope of finding some plan for employing our time which would be sufficiently interesting to absorb the attention of her mind as well as her hands. Pupils Mrs Tipper would not hear of; nor would she allow us to render any assistance in the housekeeping, insisting that Becky and she had no more to do than they could very easily get through. Indeed Becky worked with a will; Mrs Tipper and she were the best of friends; and nothing would have pleased them better than keeping Lilian and me in the parlour in state, and waiting upon us.

Fortunately we neither of us inclined for that kind of state. Lilian knew as well as I did that hers was not a nature to be nursed and petted out of a trouble. As people thoroughly in earnest generally do, we soon found a way of filling up our time – a way which had a spice of novelty and adventure in it, specially adapted to our present frame of mind.

About a mile distant, on the high-road leading from the left of the village towards the town of Grayleigh, were a few cottages, which had been erected for the accommodation of the labourers upon some fruit and hop growing grounds in the vicinity. Lilian and I had come upon them in one of our walks; and their forlorn uncared-for aspect appealed to our sympathies, and set us thinking about the possibility of a remedy. At length an idea suggested itself to us. During the daytime, at this season of the year, they were all unoccupied but one, where dwelt an old woman past work, and who was, as she proudly informed us, kept out of the workhouse by her children. Through the medium of this old woman, we applied for permission to do what we could for the absent wives and mothers, in the way of making the desolate-looking hovels more like homes. There seemed some difficulty in obtaining leave. We afterwards found that there had been grave deliberations as to the expediency of allowing us the freedom of the place, there being all sorts of doubts and speculations as to our motives. But after two or three visits to old Sally Dent, during which she sharply questioned and cross-questioned us, she gave us to understand that it was agreed that we might try what we could do; though I believe permission was given more out of curiosity to see what our intention was, than from anything else; and she was cautious enough to inform us that they reserved to themselves the right of putting a summary stop to our visits whenever it should please them so to do. For the present, Sally Dent gave us the key of the end cottage, which was to be duly returned when what she ungraciously termed our 'rummaging' was over.

'Not as you will find much to rummage at Meg Lane's,' chuckled the old woman. 'She ain't taken any pride in her home since she had to sell her bits of things when they were down with the fever.'

It did appear rather unwarrantable to unlock the door and enter the place in the absence of the inmates, before we had even made their acquaintance; but we satisfied ourselves with the hope that the end would be found to justify the means; and the very first day we contrived to leave a pleasant indication of our intentions.

The cottage contained two rooms up-stairs, and one on the ground floor opening to the road, with a little back scullery. We did not intrude into the upper regions, contenting ourselves with putting things into some sort of order in the little sitting-room. Perhaps I had better not describe how very real our work was, and how hopeless at first seemed the task we had undertaken. But we worked with a will, enjoying many a little jest at the idea of what Mrs Tipper's astonishment would be if she could see us with our sleeves tucked up sweeping out dirty corners, when we were supposed to be taking our daily constitutional as decorous gentlewomen should. Lilian devoted herself to one dirty cupboard with a pertinacity which, I gravely informed her, did equal honour to her head and heart, considering the time it would take to make any visible improvement. Four shelves filled with a heterogeneous collection of unwashed cups and saucers, bread new and stale, scraps of meat (some not too fresh), a jug coated with a thick fur of sour milk, dirty plates, mugs smelling of stale beer, bits of old pipes, and so forth – 'all canopied o'er' with spiders' webs, certainly were an undertaking.

But it must not be supposed that we intended solely to employ ourselves in sweeping and cleaning: no indeed; the little we did in that way was only intended to serve as a suggestion for others to carry out. Our ambition was to induce the people to begin to feel that they had homes, and so in time to take some little pride in keeping them neat themselves.

The small amount of money which we allowed ourselves to spend was spent in a way which might not a little surprise some people. We tried to make the little room attractive, with an ornament or two, which though inexpensive, were in good taste and pretty in shape and colouring – a primitive hanging shelf with two or three neatly bound books, a clean blind, a nicely framed print for the wall, and so forth, all new and fresh and bright; a contrast with the blackened ceiling, which we hoped would in time suggest whitewash. Then we boldly challenged our hosts, as we laughingly termed them, with a clean hearth; and after persisting two or three days, we were delighted to find that the hint was taken – that our clean hearth-stone had brought about a decently brushed grate.

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