

knowed some dogs that I jest despised. Th' more ye'd kick 'em, the more they'd lick yer hands an' fawn at yer feet. Thar be plenty o' men jest like 'em. I sets heap o' store by stock. Gi' me dog or man wi' 'nuff self-respect to never dishonor ther own inside, fer we all be jes' wat's inside 'n us. Now Zeke hed a high sperrit, along wi' a mighty fine dignity. He wuz kin' an' docile, but impulsive, like all strong, deep natura. He hed one fault—jes' one; thet o' snappin' at his bes' friends ef they meddled wi' 'im w'en he wuz a gnawin' a bone. He'd leave a good dinner any day fer a nice, tender, meaty bone—one, ye know, wi' feathery bits o' meat along it. Thar be a ole sayin', 'Th' nearder th' bone, th' sweeter th' meat.' Mebbe that's why it wuz sech a sweet morsel to 'im; I dunno. Some facts be queer 'nuff, queer 'nuff—let 'em pass.

"Twuz th' middle o' Injun summer. Thar wuz a warm, purpleish haze in th' sky; a hot, languorous softness in th' air' thet tuck th' grit outen us. Th' boss an' me wuz settin' on th' piazzy, thet run all round th' house, es they build 'em in th' south. We wuz settin' on th' west side, figurin' on some improvements we wuz a goin' to make. Zeke wuz busy wi' a plate o' bones, thet ole Chloe, th' cook, hed gi'n 'im. Suddenly Vi'let, in a white gown, an' her wavy, golden hair a flyin', stepped outer a low winder close to 'im an' stooped down by 'im, her shinin' head close to hisen. Thar wuz a gleam o' angry eyes, a horrible snappin' sound an' a low outcry. We sprung for'ard. Th' dog gin one shocked, agonized, despairin' look at th' ugly wound; then, wi'out glancin' agin at th' bones, uttered a long, wailin' cry, an' leaped away to th' woods."

They heard again that stifled howl, and Zeke arose with a look of sorrowful contrition in his eyes, and with his tail between his legs, slunk away to the darkest corner of the room. No amount of coaxing could induce him again to return. The artist was deeply touched, and eagerly motioned the mountaineer to continue his narrative.

"I allus hate to repeat th' story, kase it makes 'im suffer so. He kin't fergit th' part he tuck in it, an' his remorse be sech a real, live thing to 'im, thet ye kin't git round a feelin' o' respect an' sympathy; an' th' pathos under it all jes' teches th' marrer o' yer bones."

He drew his shaggy coat sleeve slowly across his eyes and coughed a suspicious quaver out of his voice, then hurried on as if to get through with an unpleasant task.

"Her father caught her up wi' a muttered curse. Thar wuz a ghastly wound on her head, slantin' down a bit on th' forrud, an' splashes o' blood lay on th' bright hair. Th' shock o' th' fright an' the wound

together brung on brain fever, an' fer a fortnight her life flickered like a candle w'en th' raw wind strikes it. At th' end o' three weeks th' crisis hed passed, an' she was slowly, but surely, on th' road to health agin. All this time we hed seed nur heard nothin' o' Zeke, but th' boss hed swore by th' Almighty, ef he showed 'imself agin he'd shoot 'im dead in his tracks. One mornin' I wuz standin' on th' porch ready to start fer a distant part o' th' ranch. Th' boss come out wi' a gun in his hand an' said he was goin' to shoot some quails fer Vi'let. I noticed a angry flash leap to his eyes, an' follerin' ther direction I seed a sight thet made th' tears drop from my eyes like rain. Thar wuz Zeke, not thirty feet away, a crawlin' to'rd us on his belly. He wuz th' mere ghost o' 'imself—starved to a skeleton, an' within his haggard, holler eyes, wuz th' dumb agony o' remorse, repentance, an' a pitiful prayer fer pardon. Skursly th' fraction o' a second passed; ther wuz a ominous click, a flash, an' Zeke sprung upward in th' air an' fell quiverin' to th' airth. I turned wi' drippin' eyes an' burnin' words on my lips. Th' boss dropped his gun, an' wi' a dazed, scared look, strode in th' house es ef th' sperrit o' th' dog wuz arter 'im.

"Stranger, thar be summat awful in a dog's repentance. Et premises a intelligence skursly below man's soul. W'at comes o' it arter death? I ha' a notion thet heaven 'ud be a mighty lonesome place to me wi'out Zeke to share it. But let thet pass, too.

"I keerfully lifted th' wounded dog an' tuck 'im away wi' me. Th' bullet hed crashed through his left jaw, an' th' scar o' it he'll carry to his dyin' day. I nursed 'im back to life an' health, an' we ha' been sworn pardners ever sence. I vowed, arter sech treatment, I'd never let th' boss know thet Zeke wuz livin'. I kep' thet vow; yit mebbe ef I hed tole 'im, things might ha' went different wi' 'im; I dunno, p'raps not. Some weeks later, w'en I come back, I knowed to oncet thet summat wuz wrong wi' 'im. Es I rode up he wuz runnin' roun' an' roun' th' house at a tight jump, lookin' back'ards wi' a wicked laff, an' his coat tails flappin' in th' wind like sails. Sudden he stopped an' peered, cautious like, roun' th' corner o' th' piazzy, a thumbin' his nose, jes' so. W'en he seed me he come tip-toein' close up to me, wi' a look o' cunnin' in his eyes, an' sez he, in a shrill whisper, 'E's hoff th, scent; H'I tricked 'im.'

"Well, he hed them bad spells off an' on, allus declarin' thet Zeke's sperrit wuz pursuin' 'im night an' day, a belchin' fire outen his mouth. W'en Vi'let wuz able to travel, they all went back to England; but he growed wuz fast, an' come to be so vi'lent they wuzn't able to manage 'im. His frien's wuz goin' to take 'im to a private mad-house; but th' mornin' they wuz to start, he wuz missin'. Th' next mornin' his