

STORIES FOR THE YOUNG.

MY PETS.

V.—TOM, THE NEWFOUNDLAND DOG.

I now come to the very prince of pets, the one of all I ever had the most noble and most dear,—Tom, a Newfoundland setter, the favourite dog of my brother Albert. He has been a member of our family for five or six years past. We brought him from the city to our pleasant village home, where we now live.

Tom is a dog of extraordinary beauty, sagacity, and good feeling. He is very large, and, with the exception of his feet and breast, jet black, with a thick coat of fine hair, which lies in short curls, glossy and silken. He has a well-formed head, and a handsome, dark eye, full of kindness and intelligence. His limbs are small, and his feet particularly delicate. He is, I am sorry to say, rather indolent in his habits, always prefers to take a carriage to the hunting-ground when he goes sporting with his master, and he sleeps rather too soundly at night to be a good watch-dog. We make him useful in various ways, however, such as carrying baskets and bundles, and sometimes we send him to the post-office with and for letters and papers. These he always takes the most faithful care of, never allowing any one to look at them on the way. He is a remarkably gentlemanly dog in his manner, never making free with people, or seeming too fond at first sight; but if you speak to him pleasantly, he will offer you a friendly paw in a quiet way, and seem happy to make your acquaintance. He never fawns, nor whines, nor skulks about, but is dignified, easy, and perfectly at home in polite society. He is a sad aristocrat, treats all well-dressed comers most courteously, but with shabby people he will have nothing to do. Tom knows how to take and carry on a joke. I recollect one evening, when we had visitors, and he was in the parlour, I put on him a gay-coloured sack of my own, and a large gipsy hat, which I tied under his throat. Instead of looking ashamed and trying to get these off, as most dogs would have done, he crossed the room and sprang on to the sofa, where he sat upright, looking

very wise and grave, like some old face in a quaint painting. The illustrious General Tom Thumb once travelled with my brother and this dog, and, falling very much in love with his namesake, offered any price for him. Of course my brother would not think for a moment of selling his faithful friend; and even had he felt differently, I doubt very much whether Tom, who had been used to looking up to full-grown men, would have shown much obedience or respect for such a funny little fellow as the General. It was amusing to observe the dog's manner towards his small, new acquaintance. He was kind and condescending, though he sometimes seemed to think that the General was a little too much inclined to take liberties with his superiors in age and size,—rather more forward and familiar than was quite becoming in a child.

Two or three years ago, Tom was the beloved playfellow of my brother Frederick's youngest daughter,—our little Jane. She always seemed to me like a fairy-child, she was so small and delicate, with such bright golden curls falling about her face,—the sweetest face in the world. It was beautiful to see her at play with that great black dog, who was very tender with her, for he seemed to know that she was not strong. One evening she left her play earlier than usual, and went and laid her head in her mother's lap and said, "Little Jane is tired." That night she sickened, and in a few, a very few days, she died. When she was hid away in the grave, we grieved deeply that we should see her face no more; but we had joy to know that it would never be pale with sickness in that heavenly home to which she had gone; and though we miss her still, we have great happiness in the thought that she will never be "tired" any more.

One day last spring, I remember, her mother gave me a bunch of violets, saying, "They are from the grave of little Jane." I suppose they were like all other blue violets, but I thought then I had never seen any so beautiful. It seemed to me that the sweet looks of the child were blooming out of the flowers which had sprung up over the place where we had laid her.

Tom seems much attached to all our family, but most devotedly so to my brother Albert. They two have hunted very much together, and seem equally fond of the sport. If Tom sees his master with his hunting-dress on, and his fowling-piece in hand, he is half beside himself with joy. But when he returns from the hunt, spent and weary, he always comes to me to be fed and petted.

You will remember that years have passed by since this brother and I were schoolmates and playmates together. He is now a fine young man, while I am a full-grown woman, who have seen the world I used to think so grand and glorious, and found it no better than it should be. But of my brother. He is our youngest, you know, and so has never outgrown that peculiar fondness, that dear love, we always give to "the baby." While I have been writing these histories, and recalling in almost every scene the playmate of my childhood, I can only see him as a boy,—a little black-eyed, rosy-cheeked boy; it is very difficult to think of him as a *man*, making his own way bravely in the world. Last spring we observed that dear Albert's bright face had become very thoughtful and serious; we knew that something was weighing on his mind, and finally it came out. He was about to leave us all for a long time, it might be for ever; *he was going to California!* We were very unhappy to hear this, but, as it was on some accounts the best thing that my brother could do, we finally consented, and all went to work as cheerfully as we could to help him off.

It was a bright May morning when he left, but it seemed to us that there never was a darker or sadder day. The dear fellow kept up good courage till it came to the parting; then his heart seemed to melt and flow out in his tears, fast dropping on the brows and necks of his mother and sisters, as he held them for the last time to his heaving breast. But I will not dwell on this parting, for my own eyes grow so dim I cannot well see to write.

I remember that poor Tom seemed greatly troubled that morning; he knew that something sad was happening, and looked anxiously in our faces, as though

he would ask what it was; and when my brother patted him on the head, bade him good bye, and passed out of the gate, forbidding him to follow, the faithful creature whined sadly, and looked after him wistfully till he was out of sight.

After Albert had been gone about an hour, I remember that I went up into his room, and sat down in his favourite seat by the window. Oh, how still and lonely and mournful it seemed there! Near me hung my brother's fencing-sword and mask, which he had used only the day before; on the floor lay the game-bag, which he had always worn in hunting, and which he had flung out of his trunk, not having room for it. This brought my merry brother before me more clearly than anything else. I took it up and held it a long time, mourning at heart, but I could not weep. Suddenly I heard a low whine in the hall, and Tom stole softly into the room. He came to me and laid his head in my lap; but when he saw the game-bag there, he set up a most mournful cry. Then I flung my arms about him, bowed my head down against his neck, and burst into tears. I forgot that he was a poor dumb brute, and only remembered that he loved my brother, and my brother loved him, and that he mourned with me in my sorrow. After this it was very affecting to see Tom go every day, for a long while, to the gate out of which he had seen his master pass for the last time, and then stand and look up the street, crying like a grieved child.

As you will readily believe, Tom is now dearer than ever to us all; we cannot see him without a sweet sad thought of that beloved one so far away. I am not now at home; but I never hear from there without hearing of the welfare of the noble dog which my brother, in going, bestowed upon me.

CURIOUS FACTS.—If a tallow candle be placed in a gun and be shot at a door, it will go through without sustaining any injury; and if a musket-ball be fired into water, it will rebound and be flattened as if fired against any hard substance. A musket-ball may be fired through a pane of glass, and if the glass be suspended by a thread it will make no difference, and the thread not even vibrate.