

DOGS.

THEIR "DIES IRÆ."

Their Haunts and Habits in the Summer Season.

The Men who Catch Them, and the Way They Catch Them.

Visit to the Dog-Pound—Scenes and Incidents Thereabout.

The Slaughter of Unmuzzled Canines.

The Sorrowful End of a Vagrant Dog's Career.

Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc.

"How wonderful is Death—Death and his brother Sleep! One, pale as yonder waning moon, With lips of lurid blue."

We cannot doubt that a fine and exquisite pen prompted the author of "Queen Mab" to pen these lines. And yet we have never been able to realize the wonderful aspect of a dead dog. There is something ghastly and repulsive about it. We know of nothing more ghastly or repulsive, unless it be the carcass of a dead cat. Some men spurn it with their feet, while others will scarcely even deign to spit upon it. Such men, of course, are not entirely human; but their actions go far towards showing the bad repute in which the body of a lifeless dog is held by the community at large.

Why dogs are killed. No person, we presume, objects to a dog living out his allotted days upon the earth, provided always that he is not a vicious dog. And even in such case there is no absolute feeling of insecurity, if the animal's head be furnished with a cage of wire during the continuance of the summer heats. Yet the fear of hydrophobia is one which annually haunts the minds of nervous people, from the first day of May to the last day of August. The fact that dogs do sometimes go stark mad, and fly at man and beast in reckless, passionate fury, is sufficient justification of this fear in the eyes of the law. And, therefore, the fat has gone forth, among all civilized peoples, that dogs who wander through the streets during this period without wearing a bit of wire over their noses and under their chins, are the legitimate subjects of the King of Terrors. It is bad for the dogs—that there can be no doubt at all; but it is a blessing to the community at large, of which dogs are not considered as forming a part.

The men who catch them. To quiet the nerves of these nervous people, and to render everybody secure against the dread contingency of madness, there is in the community a class of men who are known by the title of "dog-catchers." Almost every one has seen them. They are usually—in this city, we believe, invariably—of African descent. They are also addicted to the wearing of striped shirts, and have other peculiarities of dress and person by which they can be identified. The name of Captain Francis is the most illustrious that occurs to us in this connection. While he lived, the dogs of the Quaker City had a sorry time of it in the summer season. His glance alone was certain death to an unmuzzled cur. If he chanced to look upon such a dog, that dog was as good as a dead dog, and not a whit better. But for two years after the Captain's death, which took place some four years since, the dog-tribe had a respite. The wretch who has barely escaped the gallows is alone qualified to tell how great was their enjoyment of the general looseness of the warfare which, during these two years, was waged against them. There was no system about it, and a lack of system is as fatal to the dog-catching business as to any other.

Two years ago, however, the mantle of the lamented captain fell upon the shoulders of Mr. Alfred Brogan, a gentlemanly young man of color, who is considered a master of his art. For the furtherance of his task the city furnishes him with a horse and wagon, and an annual appropriation of one thousand dollars. For every dog he captures, by fair means or foul, he receives the sum of fifty cents. The process goes on until the appropriation is exhausted, and then it stops. In New York there is a crop headed gentleman by the name of Montgomery, who buys up dogs at a discount, to any number that may be offered, and then patiently trusts the city for his pay. That system of fulfilling municipal contracts has never worked well with us, and the dog-catchers, with a tincture of wisdom for which we cannot give them too much credit, have probably never thought of giving it a trial.

Whatever assistance Mr. Brogan deems necessary he must procure at his own individual expense. He has three men in his employ at present. Two of these are ordinary mortals, who have somehow or other imbibed a hatred of the canine race. The other is quite the reverse. He is known as "Professor" Price, and has followed his sanguinary, dogmatic calling for full sixteen years. It would be impossible to conceive of a more accomplished artist in any trade or calling. He has a trick of catching dogs that rejoices the heart of every nervous person. He has a knack of knocking them over the head, when caught, that would put a nervous person all in a tremor, could he but muster up courage sufficient to witness the operation. If the "Professor" had been endowed with a title of the "system" for which Captain Francis was noted, he would have been the head and front of the dog catching fraternity at this day.

The annual crusade against the unmuzzled curs commenced this year on Monday, the 14th day of May. At half-past 4 o'clock on the morning of that day, Chief Brogan mounted his dog-van, and started for the war. His cap-

rades, arrayed in striped shirts, and with long ropes coiled upon their shoulders, followed on the sidewalk. They were not alone, for they never venture out upon such an expedition without the company of a high constable of the city and county of Philadelphia, and four policemen selected from the district in which they are to operate. This strong array of blue-coats is always found necessary as a protection from the wrath of those who are despoiled of their eurs. The tenacity with which a dog will adhere to the fortunes of his master, is equalled only by the energy with which a man will do battle for his dog. For this reason the presence of the police is frequently far from ornamental.

Rules for discovering the haunts of dogs. As "Professor" Price is such an old hand at the business, and the others have had several years' experience, no time was wasted in arriving at a locality where specimens of the canine race abounded. In the heart of the city the dog-catcher finds but little encouragement to his vocation. It is in the by-ways and alleys, among the poverty-stricken and hunger-bitten that dogs of all sizes, shapes, and colors most do congregate. If a hapless, childless couple are domiciled in a single room on the second floor of a creaking tenement, they are usually the owners of one dog. If there are two children in the family, in addition, there will usually be found an extra dog. If the domicile be on the third floor instead of the second, it is safe to calculate on the presence of one dog to each member of the family. Whenever the number of children is greater than two, and the capacity for an honest livelihood thereby decreased, the number of canines will be found to increase in a direct ratio. These rules are infallible—so the dog-catchers say; and we have good reason, from a limited observation, for confirming their accuracy.

The object in taking such an early start in the morning is obvious. More unmuzzled dogs are to be encountered between the hours of 5 and 7 A. M. than during the entire remainder of the day. It is at this early hour, especially, that the nondescript yet well-known beast, called "nobody's dog," is sure to be abroad. He has picked up a night's lodging on some friendly door-step, or in some forsaken ash-barrel; and now with the first streak of dawn he sallies forth in quest of wherewithal to break his fast. Woe be unto him if the dog-van happens that way at that particular hour. This dog-van resembles a corn-crib, cut in two and placed lengthwise and sideways upon a truck. The only thing that can be said in its favor is that it allows of a free circulation of air for the benefit of its inmates. In all other respects it has much the aspect of a prison-house.

The capture. If the dog be "nobody's dog," the process of his capture is a very easy one. To use a vulgar term, he is simply "yanked" with a rope, and thrust headlong into the cage. Unless he is a very intelligent dog, before he fully realizes his situation he is crouched in a corner of the van and engaged in contemplating his captors from behind the bars. Then, if he be a sensible dog, he quietly awaits developments; otherwise he yelps, and snarls, and excites the contempt of his captors by futile efforts at escape.

If the dog has a master, as most dogs have, he is taken captive without any more ado, unless the master happens to be within hailing distance. In such cases the dog sets up a piteous howling, and straightway the master and his neighbors rush upon the scene. Then, if the affection between man and brute be anything more than a passing one, a rescue is resolved upon, after due consultation and a comparison of forces. It is here that the High Constable and his posse of police come in play; and if the dogless master exhibits any great amount of pugnacity, he is forthwith taken into custody, conducted before an alderman, and by him held over, in \$300 bail, to answer the charge of interfering with the dog-catchers.

This is a specimen of the daily routine, which is repeated every day in the week excepting Saturday and Sunday. On these days alone is a dog without a muzzle safe in the streets. No regular route is prescribed. The van purges its way wherever its director imagines there are dogs to be found. A journey of fifteen miles is considered a good day's work. On Tuesday morning, when the last expedition for the present was inaugurated, the van was dragged all the way from Smoky Hollow to the Richmond coal wharves, making numerous deviations to the right and left.

Dog statistics. In this connection, it may be interesting to glance at the statistics of the present season. They are from official sources. It should be noticed that during the week on which the national holiday occurred, the dogs were permitted to roam at will, without muzzles and without disturbance. This respite was probably to enable the dog-catchers properly to celebrate the Fourth of July.

For every dog he captures, by fair means or foul, he receives the sum of fifty cents. The process goes on until the appropriation is exhausted, and then it stops. In New York there is a crop headed gentleman by the name of Montgomery, who buys up dogs at a discount, to any number that may be offered, and then patiently trusts the city for his pay. That system of fulfilling municipal contracts has never worked well with us, and the dog-catchers, with a tincture of wisdom for which we cannot give them too much credit, have probably never thought of giving it a trial.

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closure is very large, but the quarters allotted to the captured dogs are proportionately restricted. On the Buttonwood side of the quadrilateral there is a frame structure, one story in height and of indefinite length. It would surely puzzle Ruskin himself to determine the style of architecture which prevails to the greatest extent. When we say that it much resembles a cross between a Western cabin and an Eastern pig-pen, we are not coming far short of the truth. We do not intend to insinuate that the establishment is a disgrace to the good City of Brotherly Love. It is probably large enough and neat enough for a slaughter-house for dogs, and that is all that is required of it.

How dogs are snatched from the jaws of death. The law requires that a dog who is taken into custody by the "ketchers,"—another professional term—shall be detained in the pound at least twenty-four hours from the time of his incarceration. This is for the purpose of allowing his owner, if any he have, to discover his disappearance, and put in a claim for redemption at headquarters. The owner of a dog can have him discharged from the pound on proving his ownership to the satisfaction of the High Constable in charge, and paying down the fee of two dollars. As will be seen from the above table, one dog out of every four is considered by his owner as worth that sum, and the time and trouble necessary to secure his release.

When the claimant of a missing dog arrives at the pound and makes known his errand, he is ushered into the presence of the assembled brute. If he be blessed with what is popularly termed a strong stomach, he will probably enjoy the scene—otherwise not. A room that measures about fifteen feet each way is considered large enough to hold all the dogs that are likely to be on hand at any one time. This chamber-house is low and dark; it has one window and one door; the proportions of the window are strictly in keeping with the surroundings. It is barred and cross-barred, to prevent all possibility of escape. The door is of such the same character; we might even say that it is a little more so. The dog that can succeed in making his way through either must certainly be a very expert dog, or else a very lucky one.

When the disconsolate dog-fancier has entered the pound proper, he finds himself within an enclosure about two feet and a half square. At his back is the grated door-way; at his left a blank wall; to the right, and in front, a series of bars and cross-bars, through which he obtains faint and unsatisfactory glimpses of the dogs. Still, if the animal of which he is in quest be of large proportions, he can distinguish him without much difficulty. If, on the contrary, he be of the poodle or terrier order, before the owner can get his eye upon him it will probably be necessary for "Professor" Price to stir up the animals with a short pole. In the New York pound, each dog is honored with a rope and two square feet wherein to move about. But in our pound, ropes are entirely ignored at this stage of the proceedings. The captives are huddled together in a most delightful confusion, which the presence of "Professor" Price and his short pole tends to render only worse confounded. For this reason we imagine that it will profit a man to consider the matter carefully, before he determines upon rescuing his dog from limbo.

Many curious scenes are witnessed by one who passes a day at the dog-pound, and watches the motions and exclamations of those who come to redeem their household pets. The law is very strict in its terms, requiring that no dog shall be delivered up, even on payment of the regular fee, except on positive proof of ownership. Many persons who think a dog would be a nice thing to have about the house, frequent the dog-pound, for the purpose of procuring a good specimen at the comparatively low price of two dollars. If they are not very circumspet in the answers they give, their object is easily detected, and they are forced to withdraw discomfited and chop fallen.

Now and then there is no trouble about proving ownership, but a difficulty arises concerning the payment of the fee. Not every one that owns a dog can afford to pay two dollars to save the animal from an ignominious death. For the most part, these cases are frowned upon by the authorities, but at times they are forced to listen to such pathetic tales that their innate weakness is touched, and the rule relaxed.

An affecting dog story. The other day, for example, an elderly lady made her appearance at the pound. She was in deep distress, and as the High Constable listened to her story, he became affected in a like manner. She was a widow, whose only son had gone to the war. In the heat of battle the latter had captured from the enemy a black-and-tan terrier, which had followed him thereafter as closely as his shadow. The adventures of that dog were wonderful to relate; his hair-breadth escapes from death at Rebel hands would fill a volume; his devotion to his loyal master was unequalled by anything in the previous history of dogs. On the suppression of the Rebellion, the soldier son had returned to his widowed mother. The captured terrier had borne him company. The son had subsequently died from the effects of disease contracted while in the service, and the bereaved widow had nothing left but the dog. And on that very morning the ruthless "ketchers" had deprived her of even that consolation. The dog was there before her eyes. He gave her a wag of his tail, by way of recognition, and then sat down and lifted up his voice in melancholy strains. It was, indeed, a sad case, for the widow had not the wherewithal to redeem the valued canine. As her story bore the marks of truthfulness upon its face, she was sent away rejoicing, the terrier following meekly in her train.

Another dog story. She had sorely left the precincts of the pound, ere a little girl of Miernian parentage appeared upon the scene—in tears of course. Her face was pinched by hunger and beset with dirt; her garments were "more holly than righteous," as the saying is. But despite her penury, she had hitherto rejoiced in the ownership of a clever-sighted and well-conditioned bull-dog, which had been the only consolation of her sorrowful little life. At the mention of any symptoms of hydrophobia, if they had done so, they would have despatched him upon the spot; for mad dogs are never knowingly admitted within the dog-van.

When the day's work at "ketching," to use the professional term, is ended, the horse's head is turned towards the dog-pound. This institution is located on the lower side of Buttonwood street, between Thirteenth and Broad. The en-

worthless lives. Everybody is aware of this fact, but few people have the courage to witness the operation. In olden times, dogs were doomed to death by the authorities were usually moltinged by an overdose of the fumes of sulphur. That was a heathenish practice; it partook strongly of the idea of a personal Devil, horned and hooped, and bearing in his bosom a blazing furnace, the fumes of which consumed those who fell into his power. The enlightened Nineteenth Century has frowned it down.

It was also a custom with our forefathers to tie a stone to the neck of a vicious dog, and then to cast him, alive and kicking, into a running stream. This barbarous custom has long since prevailed, to a certain extent, in the rural districts of New Jersey. But when it comes to slaughtering a thousand dogs in this fashion, and that within two months time, the items of wasted stone and rope run up a high price. This mode of execution also savors strongly of the punishment inflicted upon witches in the early colonial days of Massachusetts. It was barbarous from beginning to end; the Nineteenth Century has pronounced it so, and wisely frowned it down.

How dogs are tortured to death in New York. How, then, is a dog to meet his doom? The Metropolitan executioners of our neighboring city imagine that they were to appear most appropriate and least cruel process. The dogs are lifted severally by the nape of the neck, and hurled, foot foremost, into a large, dry tank. Dog upon dog is piled up, until the receptacle is nearly filled. That dogs should submit to such a mode of death is an unusual thing, and is inconceivable. Their cries and groans are piteous to listen to, and would move a heart of stone to compassion. A heart of stone, however, is something that is seldom heard of in the commercial metropolis of the nation. So the process goes on, until the tank becomes one vast, dense mass of writhing, shrieking flesh. When the tank is full, a tightly stinking lid is closed over all. Then the water is turned on, its surging rush is joined to the yelping of the dogs. If some wretched cur, overcome by such a late, clamorous above his fellows and huge the bars of his cage in the agony of death, he is pushed down with a long pole, and emits his piteous voice to the dying wall below. This was a short, story, and yet so frequent and so more inhuman; the tank becomes one ceaseless turmoil of strife and woe. But such things cannot last forever, and by-and-by the cries grow fainter, until at last they are hushed in the silence of universal death. This is all very retired, and of a secret reality, until upon the man in whose fertile brain it was conceived.

But the dog executioners of our own city have not yet carried cruelty to such a high pitch of refinement. The process which is still in vogue with them is somewhat old-fashioned, yet not absolutely barbarous. Twice a week—on Wednesdays and Saturdays—the innocent curs are slaughtered. As they were to be no further executioners or some time to come, we were present yesterday to witness the operation. It was very simple, but expeditious, and, as six hundred of the unfortunate creatures were hurried out of existence in less than a quarter of an hour, save ten minutes, and a precisely—the public appears to have a morbid curiosity for extreme minuteness of detail in everything partaking of the character of an execution—a ten minutes of "Professor" Price entered the dog-pen, followed by his grim assistants. Each was armed with a short, stout rod, and a coil of rope. We have already given the dimensions of the cage—it is a very little larger than the tank which has won such favor in New York. The entry of the executioners was the signal for a grand commotion. The five captive dogs commenced to realize instantly that something terrible was about to befall them. Yet they behaved themselves very prudently and very quietly under the circumstances. With low and plaintive whines they huddled together in the most compact manner, and with mutual protection, presenting to the eye of the spectator a simply an indistinct mass of quivering hair. They were certainly packed very closely together, but with this advantage for comfort—there was only one thickness in depth.

The first victim. A huge black animal of the bull-dog species was selected for the first victim. He was seized by the throat, and held up by one of the assistants, who held him erect, while the "Professor" adjusted a noose about his ugly throat. The end of the rope was quickly thrown over a rafter and drawn tight, until the animal swung clear before the cage, and heaved. Then the assistant grasped him by one of his hindmost extremities for the purpose of steadying the body, and the "Professor" seized his club. After a preliminary flourish, he laid the weapon evenly upon the back of the animal's head, three inches only, and in a trice the life of the life was completely knocked out of his carcass. There was not a groan, not a kick, not a drop of blood. This last torture was a peculiar one, and every now and then some one of the dogs would utter a cry of "No blood! No blood!" The thing was nearly done, and—shall we say so?—happily.

Only the big dogs were treated in this scientific manner, the invidious distinction between big and little dogs, so often exemplified upon the street, leading to the end of their wretched career. But although the majority of the lusty fellows died easy, now and then a tough customer would be swung into mid-air, making a show of fight and an effort at a howl.

Innocent victims of the small game. Meanwhile the little curs were dying in an ignominious fashion by the score. While two of the executioners devoted themselves to bull-dogs, mastiffs, and other large game, the other two were laying about them with their clubs, striking right and left, and extinguishing a life with every well-directed blow. Sore-eyed pointers and shaggy setters were one moment tripping about the most fantastic way, and the next they quietly fell over dead, without knowing what was the matter with them.

A curious specimen of a "dog." One of the last, a cock-eyed, crop-eared, hamstrung beast, created considerable merriment by his efforts to avoid the club, which was sent whirling after his cranium half a dozen times in succession. He was a horrid looking wretch. One of the bystanders pathetically remarked that "he had never seen such a head on a dog in all his life." The remainder of the "dog" was on a par with his head. He was, in truth,—"A curious specimen."

Of nature's handiwork. A dog that neither walked nor ran, but went with a jerk. But he was a doomed dog for all that, and at last he gave into the "jerk" and tumbled over, stiff and stark. He was probably "nobody's dog."

Sixty-minute work. The operation of killing the sixty-five dogs lasted just fifteen minutes. At the end of that time there was not left a solitary cur who had not been damaged to a greater or less extent. Most of them were stone dead. All of them were heaped into the corner. Now and then there was a faint gasp; but at every indication of vitality the club of an executioner sought out the hapless victim, and with one more blow his misery was ended. The scene presented by the dog-pen at this time, might, perhaps, be termed an interesting one. Yet we did not so consider it. The ghastly sight of protruding eye-balls, quivering legs, and squirming tails was almost too much for our eyes and brain. We gathered up our notes and left the spot—dismayed.

What is done with the dead dogs. In the economy of nature, it is said that nothing has been created in vain. On inquiry into the fate of these lifeless canines, we were convinced of the truth of this maxim. After the bloody work is ended, the carcasses are thrown into a wagon, and transported to that locality of the city denominated "the Neck." Here every morsel is made to answer some useful purpose. The hides are tanned, and are towards termed "goat-skin." The hair is curled up by machinery, and disposed of in a profitable way. From the fat a superior quality of lubricating oil is distilled. The large bones are given over to the button-makers, the smaller ones to manufacturers of fancy fertilizers. Not a toe-nail nor a tooth is suffered to run to waste.

The life of a dog is frequently a melancholy one, but of a very all such as fall into the hands of the "ketchers" meet a doom that deserves and receives our hearty commiseration. May their souls—if souls they have—rest in peace!

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