

cleared entirely; except for the half of the boat away in the offing, there was neither stick nor string on the sea to show that the Hespera had been cut down."

'And what do you think of that now?' said the man from Saigon.

#### PRIVATE LEAROYD'S STORY

And he told a tale.

--Chronicles of Gautama Buddha.

FAR from the haunts of Company Officers who insist upon kit-inspections, far from keen-nosed Sergeants who sniff the pipe stuffed into the bedding-roll, two miles from the tumult of the barracks, lies the Trap. It is an old dry well, shadowed by a twisted pipal tree and fenced with high grass. Here, in the years gone by, did Private Ortheris establish his depot and menagerie for such possessions, dead and living, as could not safely be introduced to the barrack-room. Here were gathered Houdin pullets, and fox-terriers of undoubted pedigree and more than doubtful ownership, for Ortheris was an inveterate poacher and pre-eminent among a regiment of neat-handed dog-stealers.

Never again will the long lazy evenings return wherein Ortheris, whistling softly, moved surgeon-wise among the captives of his craft

at the bottom of the well; when Learoyd sat in the niche, giving sage counsel on the management of 'tykes,' and Mulvaney, from the crook of the overhanging pipal, waved his enormous boots in benediction above our heads, delighting us with tales of Love and War, and strange experiences of cities and men.

Ortheris--landed at last in the 'little stuff bird-shop' for which your soul longed; Learoyd--back again in the smoky, stone-ribbed North, amid the clang of the Bradford looms; Mulvaney--grizzled, tender, and very wise Ulysses, sweltering on the earthwork of a Central India line--judge if I have forgotten old days in the Trap!

Orth'ris, as allus thinks he knaws more than other foaks, said she wasn't a real laady, but nobbut a Hewrasian. I don't gainsay as her culler was a bit doosky like. But she was a laady. Why, she rode iv a carriage, an' good 'osses, too, an' her 'air was that oiled as you could see your faice in it, an' she wore dimond rings an' a goold chain, an' silk an' satin dresses as mun 'a' cost a deal, for it isn't a cheap shop as keeps enough o' one pattern to fit a figure like hers. Her name was Mrs. DeSussa, an't' waay I coom to be acquainted wi' her was along of our Colonel's Laady's dog Rip.

I've seen a vast o' dogs, but Rip was t' prettiest picter of a cliver fox-tarrier 'at iver I set eyes on. He could do owt you like but speak, an' t' Colonel's Laady set more store by him than if he hed been a Christian. She hed bairns of her awn, but they was i' England, and Rip seemed to get all t' coodlin' and pettin' as belonged to a bairn by

good right.

But Rip were a bit on a rover, an' hed a habit o' breakin' out o' barricks like, and trottin' round t' plaice as if he were t' Cantonment Magistrate coom round inspectin'. The Colonel leathers him once or twice, but Rip didn't care an' kept on gooin' his rounds, wi' his taail a-waggin' as if he were flag-signallin' to t' world at large 'at he was 'gettin' on nicely, thank yo', and how's yo'sen?' An' then t' Colonel, as was noa sort of a hand wi' a dog, tees him oop. A real clipper of a dog, an' it's noa wonder yon laady. Mrs. DeSussa, should tek a fancy tiv him. Theer's one o' t' Ten Commandments says yo' maun't cuwet your neebor's ox nor his jackass, but it doesn't say nowt about his tarrier dogs, an' happen thot's t' reason why Mrs. DeSussa cuvveted Rip, tho' she went to church reg'lar along wi' her husband who was so mich darker 'at if he hedn't such a good coaat tiv his back yo' might ha' called him a black man and nut tell a lee nawther. They said he addled his brass i' jute, an' he'd a rare lot on it.

Well, you seen, when they teed Rip up, t' poor awd lad didn't enjoy very good 'elth. So t' Colonel's Laady sends for me as 'ad a naame for bein' knowledgeable about a dog, an' axes what's ailin' wi' him.

'Why,' says I, 'he's getten t' mopes, an' what he wants is his libbaty an' coompany like t' rest on us, wal happen a rat or two 'ud liven him oop. It's low, mum,' says I, 'is rats, but it's t' nature of a dog; an' soa's cuttin' round an' meetin' another dog or two an' passin' t' time o' day. an' hevvin' a bit of a turn-up wi' him like a Christian.'

So she says her dog maunt niver fight an' noa Christians iver fought.

'Then what's a soldier for?' says I; an' I explains to her t' contrary qualities of a dog, 'at, when yo' coom to think on't, is one o't' curusest things as is. For they larn to behave theirsens like gentlemen born, fit for t' fost o' coompany--they tell me t' Widdy herself is fond of a good dog and knaws one when she sees it as well as onny body: then on t' other hand a-tewin' round after cats an' gettin' mixed oop i' all manners o' blackguardly street-rows, an' killin' rats, an' fightin' like divils.

T' Colonel's Laady says:--'Well, Learoyd, I doan't agree wi' you, but you're right in a way o' speakin', an' I should like yo' to tek Rip out a-walkin' wi' you sometimes; but yo' maun't let him fight, nor chase cats, nor do nowt 'orrid': an them was her very wods.

Soa Rip an' me goes out a-walkin' o' evenin's, he bein' a dog as did credit tiv a man, an' I catches a lot o' rats an we hed a bit of a match on in an awd dry swimmin'-bath at back o't' cantonments, an' it was none so long afore he was as bright as a button again. He hed a way o' flyin' at them big yaller pariah dogs as if he was a harrow offan a bow, an' though his weight were nowt, he tuk 'em so suddint-like they rolled over like skittles in a halley, an' when they coot he stretched after 'em as if he were rabbit-runnin'. Saame with cats when he cud get t' cat agaate o' runnin'.

One evenin', him an' me was trespassin' ovver a compound wall after one of them mongooses 'at he'd started, an' we was busy grubbin' round a prickle-bush, an' when we looks up there was Mrs. DeSussa wi' a parasel ovver her shoulder, a-watchin' us. 'Oh my!' she sings out; 'there's that lovelee dog! Would he let me stroke him, Mister Soldier?'

'Ay, he would, mum,' sez I, 'for he's fond o' laady's coompany. Coom here, Rip, an' speeak to this kind laady.' An'Rip, seein' 'at t'mongoose hed getten clean awaay, cooms up like t' gentleman he was, nivver a hauptorth shy or okkord.

'Oh, you beautiful--you prettee dog!' she says, clippin' an' chantin' her speech in a way them sooart has o' their awn; 'I would like a dog like you. You are so verree lovelee--so awfullee prettee,' an' all thot sort o' talk, 'at a dog o' sense mebbe thinks nowt on, tho' he bides it by reason o' his breedin'.

An' then I meks him joomp ovver my swagger-cane, an' shek hands, an' beg, an' lie dead, an' a lot o' them tricks as laadies teeaches dogs, though I doan't haud with it mysen, for it's makin' a fool o' a good dog to do such like.

An' at lung length it cooms out 'at she'd been thrawin' sheep's eyes, as t' sayin' is, at Rip for many a day. Yo' see, her childer was grown up, an' she'd nowt mich to do, an' were allus fond of a dog. Soa she axes me if I'd tek somethin' to dhrink. An' we goes into t' drawn-room wheer her husband was a-settin'. They meks a gurt fuss ower t' dog an'

I has a bottle o' aale, an' he gave me a handful o' cigars.

Soa I coomed away, but t' awd lass sings out--'Oh, Mister Soldier, please coom again and bring that prettee dog.'

I didn't let on to t' Colonel's Laady about Mrs. DeSussa, and Rip, he says nowt nawther; an' I gooes again, an' ivry time there was a good dhrink an' a handful o' good smooaks. An' I telled t' awd lass a heeap more about Rip than I'd ever heeared; how he tuk t' fost prize at Lunnon dog-show and cost thotty-three pounds fower shillin' from t' man as bred him; 'at his own brother was t' propputty o' t' Prince o' Wailes, an' 'at he had a pedigree as long as a Dook's. An' she lapped it all oop an' were niver tired o' admirin' him. But when t' awed lass took to givin' me money an' I seed 'at she were gettin' fair fond about t' dog, I began to suspicion summat. Onny body may give a soldier t' price of a pint in a friendly way an' theer's no 'arm done, but when it cooms to five rupees slipt into your hand, sly like, why, it's what t' 'lectioneerin' fellows calls bribery an' corruption. Specially when Mrs. DeSussa threwed hints how t' cold weather would soon be ower an' she was goin' to Munsooree Pahar an' we was goin' to Rawalpindi, an' she would niver see Rip any more onless somebody she knowed on would be kind tiv her.

Soa I tells Mulvaney an' Ortheris all t' taale thro', beginnin' to end.

"Tis larceny that wicked ould laady manes,' says t' Irishman, ' 'tis felony she is sejuicin' ye into, my frind Learoyd, but I'll purtect

your innocence. I'll save ye from the wicked wiles av that wealthy  
ould woman, an' I'll go wid ye this evenin' and spake to her the wurrds  
av truth an' honesty. But Jock,' says he, waggin' his heead, "'twas  
not like ye to kape all that good dhrink an' thim fine cigars to  
yerself, while Orth'ris here an' me have been prowlin' round wid throats  
as dry as lime-kilns, and nothin' to smoke but Canteen plug. 'Twas a  
dhirty thrick to play on a comrade, for why should you, Learoyd, be  
balancin' yourself on the butt av a satin chair, as if Terence Mulvaney  
was not the aquil av anybody who thrades in jute!

'Let alone me/ sticks in Orth'ris, 'but that's like life. Them wot's  
really fitted to decorate society get no show while a blunderin'  
Yorkshireman like you--'

'Nay,' says I, 'it's none o' t' blunderin' Yorkshireman she wants;  
it's Rip. He's the gentleman this journey.'

Soa t' next day, Mulvaney an' Rip an' me goes to Mrs. DeSussa's, an'  
t' Irishman bein' a stranger she wor a bit shy at fost. But you've  
heard Mulvaney talk, an' yo' may believe as he fairly bewitched t'  
awd lass wal she let out 'at she wanted to tek Rip away wi' her to  
Munsooree Pahar. Then Mulvaney changes his tune an' axes her solemn-like  
if she'd thought o' t' consequences o' gettin' two poor but honest  
soldiers sent t' Andamning Islands. Mrs. DeSussa began to cry, so  
Mulvaney turns round oppen t' other tack and smooths her down, allowin'  
'at Rip ud be a vast better off in t' Hills than down i' Bengal, and  
'twas a pity he shouldn't go wheer he was so well beliked. And soa he

went on, backin' an' fillin' an' workin' up t' awd lass wal she felt as if her life warn't worth nowt if she didn't hev t' dog.

Then all of a suddint he says:--'But ye shall have him, marm, for I've a feelin' heart, not like this could-blooded Yorkshireman; but 'twill cost ye not a penny less than three hundher rupees.'

'Don't yo' believe him, mum,' says I; 't' Colonel's Laady wouldn't tek five hundred for him.'

'Who said she would?' says Mulvaney; 'it's not buyin' him I mane, but for the sake o' this kind, good laady, I'll do what I never dreamt to do in my life. I'll stale him!'

'Don't say steal,' says Mrs. DeSussa; 'he shall have the happiest home. Dogs often get lost, you know, and then they stray, an' he likes me and I like him as I niver liked a dog yet, an' I must hev him. If I got him at t' last minute I could carry him off to Munsooree Pahar and nobody would niver knaw.'

Now an' again Mulvaney looked acrost at me, an' though I could mak nowt o' what he was after, I concluded to take his leead.

'Well, mum,' I says, 'I never thowt to coom down to dog-stealin', but if my comrade sees how it could be done to oblige a laady like yo'sen, I'm nut t' man to hod back, tho' it's a bad business I'm thinkin', an' three hundred rupees is a poor set-off again t' chance of them Damning



Islands as Mulvaney talks on.'

'I'll mek it three fifty,' says Mrs. DeSussa; 'only let me hev t'dog!'

So we let her persuade us, an' she teks Rip's measure theer an' then, an' sent to Hamilton's to order a silver collar again t' time when he was to be her awn, which was to be t' day she set off for Munsooree Pahar.

'Sitha, Mulvaney,' says I, when we was outside, 'you're niver goin' to let her hev Rip!'

'An' would ye disappoint a poor old woman?' says he; 'she shall have a Rip.'

'An' wheer's he to come through?' says I.

'Learoyd, my man,' he sings out, 'you're a pretty man av your inches an' a good comrade, but your head is made av duff. Isn't our friend Orth'ris a Taxidermist, an' a rale artist wid his nimble white fingers? An' what's a Taxidermist but a man who can thrate shkins? Do ye mind the white dog that belongs to the Canteen Sargint, bad cess to him--he that's lost half his time an' snarlin' the rest? He shall be lost for good now; an' do ye mind that he's the very spit in shape an' size av the Colonel's, barrin' that his tail is an inch too long, an' he has none av the colour that divarsifies the rale Rip, an' his timper is that av his masther an' worse. But fwhat is an inch on a dog's tail?

An' fwhat to a professional like Orth'ris is a few ringstraked shpots av black, brown, an' white? Nothin' at all, at all.'

Then we meets Orth'ris, an' that little man, bein' sharp as a needle, seed his way through t' business in a minute. An' he went to work a-practisin' 'air-dyes the very next day, beginnin' on some white rabbits he had, an' then he drored all Rip's markin's on t' back of a white Commissariat bullock, so as to get his 'and in an' be sure of his colours; shadin' off brown into black as nateral as life. If Rip hed a fault it was too mich markin', but it was straingely reg'lar an' Orth'ris settled himself to make a fost-rate job on it when he got haud o' t' Canteen Sargint's dog. Theer niver was sich a dog as thot for bad timper, an' it did nut get no better when his tail hed to be fettled an inch an' a half shorter. But they may talk o' theer Royal Academies as they like. I niver seed a bit o' animal paintin' to beat t' copy as Orth'ris made of Rip's marks, wal t' picter itself was snarlin' all t' time an' tryin' to get at Rip standin' theer to be copied as good as goold.

Orth'ris allus hed as mich conceit on himsen as would lift a balloon, an' he wor so pleeased wi' his sham Rip he wor for tekking him to Mrs. DeSussa before she went away. But Mulvaney an' me stopped thot, knowin' Orth'ris's work, though niver so cliver, was nobut skin-deep.

An' at last Mrs. DeSussa fixed t' day for startin' to Munsooree Pahar. We was to tek Rip to t' stayshun i' a basket an' hand him over just when they was ready to start, an' then she'd give us t' brass--as was

agreed upon.

An' my wod! It were high time she were off, for them 'air-dyes upon t' cur's back took a vast of paintin' to keep t' reet culler, tho' Orth'ris spent a matter o' seven rupees six annas i' t' best droogist shops i' Calcutta.

An' t' Canteen Sargint was lookin' for 'is dog everywheer; an', wi' bein' tied up, t' beast's timper got waur nor ever.

It wor i' t' evenin' when t' train started thro' Howrah, an' we 'elped Mrs. DeSussa wi' about sixty boxes, an' then we gave her t' basket. Orth'ris, for pride av his work, axed us to let him coom along wi' us, an' he couldn't help liftin' t' lid an' showin' t' cur as he lay coiled oop.

'Oh!' says t' awd lass; 'the beautee! How sweet he looks!' An' just then t' beauty snarled an' showed his teeth, so Mulvaney shuts down t' lid and says: 'Ye'll be careful, marm, whin ye tek him out. He's disaccustomed to travelling by t' railway, an' he'll be sure to want his rale mistress an' his friend Learoyd, so ye'll make allowance for his feelings at fost.'

She would do all that an' more for the dear, good Rip, an' she would nut oppen t' basket till they were miles away, for fear anybody should recognise him, an' we were real good and kind soldier-men, we were, an' she bonds me a bundle o' notes, an' then cooms up a few of her

relations an' friends to say good-by--not more than seventy-five there wasn't--an' we cuts away.

What coom to t' three hundred and fifty rupees? Thot's what I can scarcelins tell yo', but we melted it--we melted it. It was share an' share alike, for Mulvaney said: 'If Learoyd got hold of Mrs. DeSussa first, sure 'twas I that renumbered the Sargint's dog just in the nick av time, an' Orth'ris was the artist av janius that made a work av art out av that ugly piece av ill-nature. Yet, by way av a thank-offerin' that I was not led into felony by that wicked ould woman, I'll send a thrifle to Father Victor for the poor people he's always beggin' for.'

But me an' Orth'ris, he bein' Cockney an' I bein' pretty far north, did nut see it i' t' saame way. We'd getten t' brass, an' we meaned to keep it. An' soa we did--for a short time.

Noa, noa, we niver heered a wod more o' t' awd lass. Our rig'mint went to Pindi, an' t' Canteen Sargint he got himself another tyke instead o' t' one 'at got lost so reg'lar, an' was lost for good at last.

#### THE BIG DRUNK DRAF'

We're goin' 'ome, we're goin' 'ome--