

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

GREYFRIARS BOBBY.*

"TERRIERS ARE SONSIE LEAL DOGS."

Who that has visited the famous Greyfriars churchyard in Edinburgh has not been moved by the memorial fountain, opposite the main gateway to the churchyard, surmounted by the life-sized representation of a little Highland Terrier, and wished to know more of the loyal little animal there represented. Mrs. Atkinson has therefore laid all dog lovers under an obligation by giving us the story of "Greyfriars Bobby," who, for love of the master who died, remained masterless all his life, and persistently refused till the day of his own death, some fourteen years later, to sleep anywhere but on that master's grave.

With extraordinary sympathy Mrs. Atkinson has made Bobby live again for us in her pages, and given us the greatest insight into the mind of a little dog which has ever been penned.

The portrait of "Auld Jock," the shepherd who commanded this whole-hearted devotion, his Scotch peasant reticence quite broken down by it "so that he told the little dog many things that he cannily concealed from human kind"; the tragedy of his admission to the cheery landlord, John Traill: "Bobby isna ma ain dog," and the death of the independent old shepherd in a tenement-room in a Cowgate wynd; all these are related with a pathos that moves us profoundly.

Auld Jock was buried in the Greyfriars Kirkyard and when the caretaker made his last rounds that evening he found the little terrier flattened out on the new-made mound. Turned out, not unkindly, he later slipped in again and disappeared, and "when James Brown had locked the kirkyard gate for the night and gone into his little stone lodge to supper, Bobby came out of hiding and stretched himself prone across Auld Jock's grave."

Had it not been for John Traill, the landlord of Ye Olde Greyfriars Dining Rooms, Bobby would have starved, as it was, though he refused the landlord for a master, he accepted his friendship, and that of the children in the surrounding buildings.

Turned out of the churchyard again by the worthy caretaker, the little dog "leal as ony Covenantanter" nevertheless ultimately established his right to be there, though not without passing through perilous times first. Permission to stay in the churchyard, where dogs were prohibited, was gained first from the minister.

"It's a remarkable story; and he's a beautiful little dog, and a leal one. . . . The matter need not be brought up in any formal way. I will speak to the elders and deacons about it privately."

Next came the peril of the police action in taking up masterless dogs and putting them out of the way. The desperately hurried collection made

in halfpence by the tenement children, in terror for the safety of their pet, of the money to pay for his licence, and the powerful friendship of the Lord Provost who gave the leal Highlander the Freedom of the City, and a collar inscribed, "Grey Friars Bobby, from the Lord Provost, 1867. Licensed."—all this reads more like a fairy tale than the true story of a little Highland terrier.

The toast at the officers' mess in Edinburgh Castle to "the 'bittie' dog who seemed to have won a kind of Victoria Cross," and the assurance of the dog-loving guest that he should be taken home, is graphically told. "But," he added, "bide a wee, Bobby. Before he goes I want you all to see his beautiful eyes. In most breeds of dogs with the veil you will find the hairs of the face discoloured by tears, but the Skye terrier's are not, and his eyes are living jewels, as sunny a brown as cairngorms in pebble brooches, but soft and deep and with an almost human intelligence."

For the third time that day Bobby's veil was pushed back. One shocked look by this lover of dogs and it was dropped.

"Get him back to that grave, man, or he's like to die. His eyes are just two cairngorms of grief."

"In the hush that fell upon the company the senior officer spoke sharply: 'Take him away at once, Sergeant. The whole affair is most unfortunate, and you will please tender my apologies at the churchyard and the restaurant, as well as your own, and I will see the Lord Provost.'"

"The military salute was given to Bobby when he leaped from the table at the sergeant's call: 'Come awa', Bobby. I'll tak ye to Auld Jock i' the kirkyard noo.'"

How Bobby came down the Castle Rock in the fog, to be true to his trust, we read with breathless interest. After that, "At nightfall, before the drum and bugle sounded the tattoo to call the scattered garrison in the Castle, there took place a loving ceremony that was never afterwards omitted as long as Bobby lived. Before going to bed each bairn opened a casement . . . and whether the children saw him or not they knew he was always there after sunset, keeping watch and ward, and 'lanely' because his master had gone away to heaven; and so they called out to him sweetly and clearly:

"'A gude nicht to ye, Bobby.'"

Every child should read "Greyfriars Bobby." Every dog-lover should possess it. Truly "Terriers are sonsie leal dogs."

P. G. Y.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"In reverence is the chief joy and power of life. Reverence for what is pure and bright in your own youth, for what is true and tried in the age of others; for all that is gracious among the living, great among the dead, and marvellous in the powers that cannot die."—*Rushin*.

* Harper Bros., New York and London.

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