

"Somebody"

BY MRS. LILA RIPLEY BARNWELL.

Written for The Observer.

I am only a dog, but I am a thoroughbred of unusual intelligence. My dear lady and the nice man have frequently made this statement, so I know it is true. My first recollection is of a soft bed in the hay, shared with five others very like myself. The bed was in a barn where every day the great door was left open so that we could enjoy the sunshine. As soon as we were old enough we played outside on the pretty, green grass, and Oh, what fun we had. My father was very handsome, but I think he was rather indifferent to us, for when we attempted to climb over him he would yawn in a bored manner or get up and walk away with great dignity. Not so with our lovely mother, who was well named Beauty. We tumbled over her broad back, bit her silky ears, or caught her feathery tail. No matter how hard we pulled or bit she never hurt us, but would lick us with her kind red tongue, and let us do just as we liked all day. When night came we curled close to her warm body, and were afraid of nothing because she was there to protect us.

One bright day in October we were having a jolly time with each other when our master and the nice man came and stood beside us. "Fine puppies, every one of them," said our master. "You can hardly make a choice, these three are males, take whichever you like." I did not understand, but I liked the nice man from the first. He turned me over so gently, and patted us approvingly. I responded by licking his hand, and chewing his fingers. "I'll take this one," he said, lifting me up and holding me to his breast. My mother jumped toward him, giving a little cry, and the nice man laid his hand on her saying, "All right, old girl, he is going where he will be well taken care of." I never saw any of my family again.

It was terrible at first, but now my dear lady and the nice man are all the world to me. I was put into a buggy on a lap robe at the nice man's feet, and then we drove away. I had no idea where we were going, so after I had stood it as long as I could I wanted my mother, and my playmates so much that I gave a tiny whimper. "There, there," said the nice man, touching my head. "Remember you are a thoroughbred and must not cry. You are going to be a lucky dog if you only know it." I swallowed a lump in my throat, and winked away my tears as we drove farther and farther from those I loved. Finally we came to a town. I had never seen so many houses and people before. It was all so strange and lonely. I did want my mother, and my own bed in the hay. The nice man put me on the floor in his room while he wrote a note.

When he had finished he came to me and said: "You are going to belong to the loveliest woman in the world. Now I want you to behave yourself, and be a faithful protector. If you don't I'll break your neck." He said it so kindly that I did not feel at all afraid. Then he called a man, and gave me to him with the note and some directions. The man grinned, and walked off with me saying, "You shore is a fine pup. I bet you make a dandy dog." In a few minutes we came to a pretty house in a garden where there was plenty of grass and flowers. The man rang the bell, and I wondered what would happen next. Presently I was handed to my dear lady. She took me in her arms, and called me all sorts of affectionate names, she pressed me against her sweet face, and said she had rather have me than anything she ever saw. I was very hungry by this time, but after what the nice man had said, I would not even whimper. My dear lady seemed to understand, for she carried me into the kitchen and gave me some warm bread and milk. After this I felt better, and enjoyed having her sit on the floor to play with me, while I bit at her pretty rings, and pulled the bows on her slippers. Some one asked her where I was to sleep, and she said, "To-night in my room, to-morrow I will arrange a suitable place for him." They said she was foolish to let me stay in her room, but my dear lady said, "He shall stay there if please." She always did as she pleased. When she carried me up stairs I had already been asleep, but I awoke to see what new experiences was coming. So much had happened on that one day.

She put me on a soft rug in a box by her bed, and after awhile she blew out the light. I felt very queer and lonesome, but my dear lady put her hand on my head and said, "I'm right by you, you dear pretty puppy, now go to sleep. In the night I waken, and tried to get out of the box, for I did not like being in the dark alone. My dear lady heard me, and in a minute she lighted the lamp, and was by my side, and tried to play with me, and at her pretty bare feet. She laughed and said, "Oh, you foolish puppy, be quiet while I get your milk warm." After she gave me this I wished to run around the room to see what was there, but my dear lady said, "It is too cold for me to be running after you in this airy costume with bare feet, you must go to sleep. She put me once more into the box. I tried to get out, but she would not let me. She put her hand on my head every now and then to keep me still.

The next day I trotted after her all the time. When she sat down I lay on her skirt, or she took me on her lap. In the afternoon the nice man came with a buggy. I was so afraid he would take me away again, but he never seemed to think of it. My dear lady held out both her hands to him as she said, "You have given me a perfect pleasure in this beautiful puppy. He will be a charming companion for me. Even so soon he knows me and prefers me to any of the family. I cannot tell you how I love him already." The nice man said something about a lucky dog, and that it was a pity that I could not present my privileges. My dear lady pretended not to hear him, then she answered, "I have named him Somebody, and he is going to be a very important Somebody in this house-

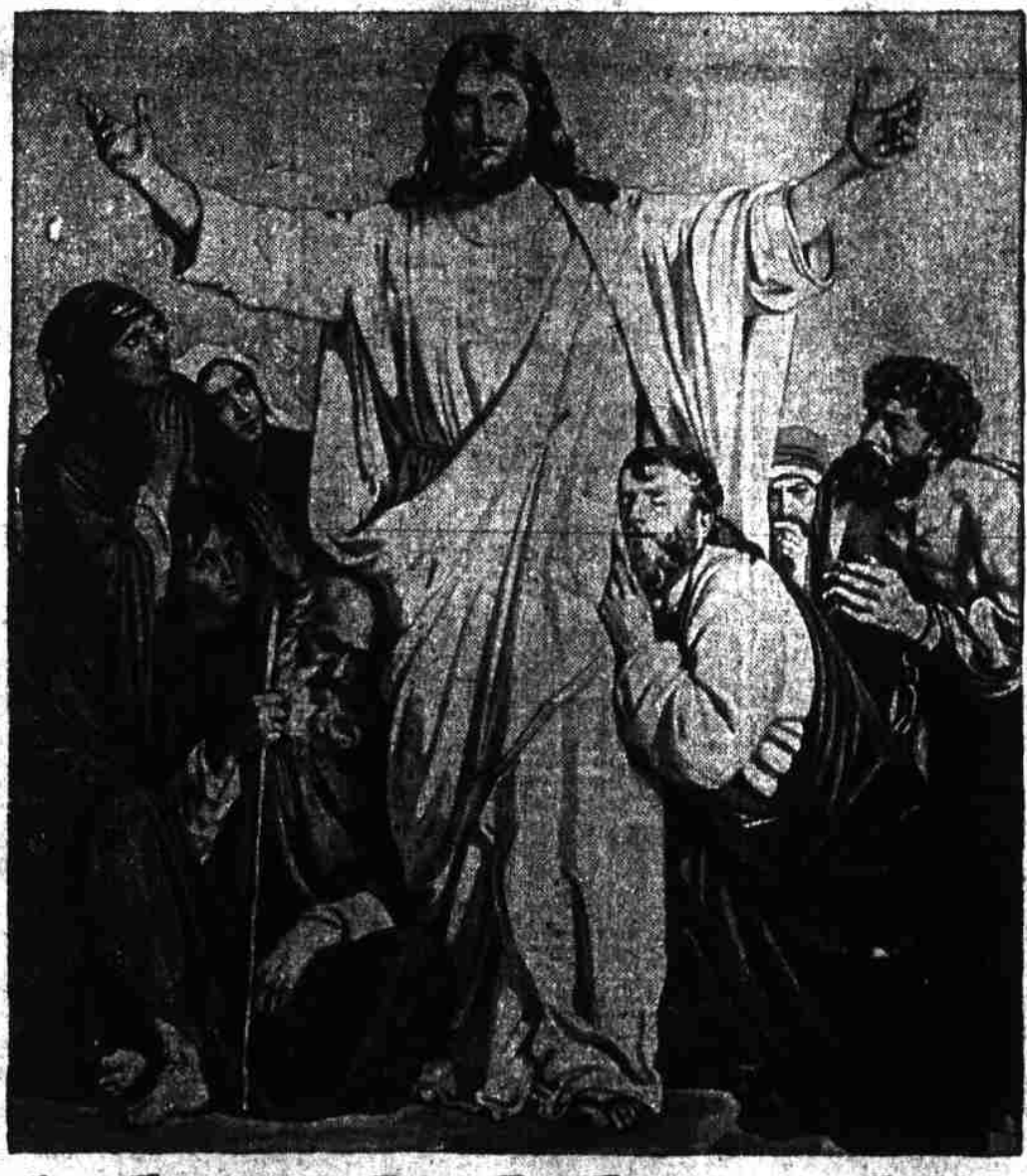
Easter Hymn

The Sun hath come again and fed
The lily's lamp with light,
And raised from dust a rose, rich red,
And a little star-flower, white;
He also guards the Pleiades
And holds the planets true:
And we—we know not which of these
The easier task to do!

But, since from heaven he stoops to breathe
A flower to balmy air,
Surely our lives are not beneath
The glory of his care!
And, as he leads the blade that gropes
Up from the barren sod,
So, from the ashes of our hopes,
Will beauty grow toward God.

Whate'er thy name, O Soul of Life,
(We know but that thou art)
Thou seest through all our waste of strife
One groping human heart,
Weary of words and broken sight,
But moved with one accord
To worship where thy lilies light
The altar of its Lord.

—JOHN CHARLES M'NEILL.



COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOR

hold." The nice man laughed saying, that was a queer name for a dog, but that he liked it, and would give me a collar with my name on it. My dear lady gave him a little pat on the arm as she said, "You are so kind to me always, too much better than I deserve. Why are you so good to me?" The nice man looked at her very earnestly as he replied, "I think you know." A pretty collar came into her cheeks as she pressed me to her, saying, "Goodbye, Somebody, I'll come back soon." Then she got into the buggy with the nice man and drove out of sight. I was glad she told me that she would return, for I was afraid that she would keep her, and then what might have become of me? My first night in a stable by myself was awful. I was frightened, but I was too much of a thoroughbred to cry aloud. Finally I just had to give a howl or two, and in a little while the door opened and there was my dear lady. She had on a soft white dressing gown and red slippers. As she picked up my collar, I looked her pretty white bosom, while her curling brown hair fell all over

me and I was once more satisfied and happy. "You dear Somebody," she said, "You must not be afraid, nothing shall hurt you, and I'll come soon in the morning to play, but she said it was after midnight, and that both of us ought to be asleep. I could not see what difference that made, but I had to do as she bade me, so I soon grew accustomed to being by myself at night. Once a dog came in, but when I barked at her she ran, and then I was never afraid afterwards. The nice man came to see me very often, or rather I think he came to see my dear lady, but she always asked for me. Sometimes he would give me a little talk while waiting for her. He never failed to impress upon me that I must take care of her. "You must be a faithful Somebody," he said. "If you should ever fall her you may prepare for sudden death." There was no use to tell me this, for every day I loved my dear lady more and more, and would have defended her even with my life. The nice man gave me a fine collar with my name, "Somebody," on a

silver plate. I was a happy dog, truly a lucky dog as the nice man said, for my dear lady took me everywhere with her except on Sunday, when she went to church. I did not like Sunday by that reason. What grand walks we had. We used to wander for miles through the woods, and I was always finding something wonderful. We went in all weather, for my dear lady was not any more afraid of a wetting than I am. We saw birds, squirrels, rabbits, fish, and all sorts of creatures. She would not let me run after the rabbits, which I think was queer, for any dog likes to chase them, but she was afraid I might hurt them, and so I had to resist this temptation for her sake. We had so much fun in the snow. My dear lady threw a big snow ball at the nice man, and he rolled her over in a snow bank. I barked excitedly and rolled over myself. Toward the spring we found flowers, but my dear lady said she did not want me to help her gather them, for I always bit their heads off. Some times the nice man brought beautiful roses, and she would

kiss them as though she loved them. She said she loved them more than me. I thought she might have kissed the nice man, for I am sure he would have liked it, but she never did.

Once she took from the roses he brought a lovely red bud, and she kissed it before she pinned it on his coat. Then he kissed the roses, and looked at her. I cannot see that there is any satisfaction in kissing a flower myself, but people are queer. Now if he had kissed my dear lady, but he never did. I think I could not understand, for she was so kind to everybody. She used to scold him sweetly when he brought roses in the winter, and say that it was dreadfully extravagant, but she took them all the same and wore them. She liked the candy he gave her better than the flowers, especially the chocolates and the bon-bons. He always gave her such nice candy. People often said that the nice man was in love with my dear lady, and I know that this was true, for he told me so himself, and added rather bitterly, "and she loves me just in the way she does you, Somebody." I felt rather pleased and proud of that. He asked my dear lady to marry him. They never minded my hearing anything they had to say, and it was honored by their confidence. She said no, that she thought too much of him as a friend to exchange him for a husband. He pleaded earnestly and wept, but she persistently said no. Well, one day he came to see her and to say that he was going away. My dear lady asked him why he was going, and he answered, "Because I am not brave enough to stay. I cannot see you except as your accepted lover. Time and space can never cause me to forget you, but they may help me to live without you." My dear lady went very white as she asked him when he was going. "This afternoon," he said. "At five o'clock," she said, and she almost whispered, "I shall miss you. Oh, wish you would not go." "Then let me stay," he said eagerly, taking her hands, but she drew them away and slowly shook her head. Without another word he suddenly folded her in his arms, and kissed her once, twice, thrice before either of us knew what had happened. When I recovered from my surprise he was going out of the gate. I ran frantically after him, and grabbed his hand. He gave me a farewell pat and said, "Take care of her, Somebody. I'll be back to the parlor, and there was my dear lady lying on the sofa with her face buried in a pillow.

Now this was very strange to me, if she wanted him to stay why did she let him go? I tugged at her skirt, and she finally threw her arms around my neck and said, "Oh, Somebody, Somebody," but I am not sure whether she meant me or the nice man. That afternoon we did not go out, but wandered all over the garden. My dear lady was too restless to sit still. She would drop on the grass for a moment, then walk a few times up and down the long walk, sit for awhile in one of the arbors, or stand under the big lilac looking as though she had lost her best friend. I feared that she really had. I stayed with her all the time, for I pitied her unhappiness, though I knew it was of her own making. As the evening lengthened she sat in the arbor, and I laid my head in her lap. I am too big to do more than that now. She clasped her arms about me and said, "Oh, why did I let him go? I want him, I want him." Such a pity that she had not decided that way a few hours earlier. We were slowly going toward the house when a lady passing called to us saying, "There has been a dreadful accident near Wilton. The five o'clock train was derailed, several people killed, and I remember badly hurt." My dear lady's very lips grew pale, and I thought she was going to faint. The lady continued, "Mercy child, don't look so scared, I hope you knew none of them." As she turned away I heard her tell a lady who was with her that the nice man was hurt. My dear lady went straight to her room, and I was right behind her, though I do not think she even saw me. She threw herself on the bed with a sort of groan. I could only lick her hand, and tell her in my dumb fashion that I understood her grief. We always understood each other. After a short time she hurriedly rose from the bed, and ran down stairs to the street. I of course following. I had promised the nice man to care for her, and she would have followed her anywhere. It was getting dark and I did not wish her to be out alone. At last we went into a big building, and through a long marble corridor to what I afterwards learned was an office. She tapped at a door, and without waiting for it to be opened she walked in, and went directly to an elderly gentleman saying, "Tell me, Mr. Baird, is he hurt?" Her hands were tightly clasped, and her pale face looked drawn with anguish and suspense. Mr. Baird literally forced her into a chair as he answered, "Not seriously, your poor child. I have just heard, it is not so bad as at first reported. The engineer and fireman are badly wounded, some passengers are slightly bruised, but he is not hurt beyond a mere scratch." My dear lady burst into tears, and the elderly gentleman said, "Cry it out, my dear, it will do you good. I know all about it. She told me afterwards that he was the nice man's business partner. The elderly gentleman continued, "A regular train has gone to the wreck, and the passengers will be brought back here. I think he will come in about an hour. My dear lady rose and said, "Will you send him at once to my room? He is so nervous, if it is not until midnight, I will be waiting." "I will my child, indeed I will, and now let me see you safely home." But she would not hear to that, saying that she had Somebody with her, who was all the protection she needed. I felt very proud to have her say so publicly, and renewed my vow to be faithful to my trust.

It was a dark night, but my dear lady and I sat on the piazza listening for every footstep, and trembling at every sound. About nine o'clock I heard the well-known tread crunching the gravel, a sharp click of the gate, and then the nice man was on the piazza. My dear lady rose and went to him without saying a word. He did not speak either, but folded her in his arms, though he would never let her go. It was so long before they said anything that I grew nervous, but presently my dear lady said, "Oh, never leave me again, I should have died if you had not come back." And he answered, "Sweetheart, I could not have stayed away." They did not talk much, but sat quite still on the piazza steps. My dear lady had her head on the nice man's shoulder, and he seemed so happy to have it there. I lay at their feet, and rejoiced to see my friends behaving sensibly at last. I never have been able to understand why they did not see from the first that they were necessary to each other. We had a beautiful wedding. I saw it myself, for my dear lady insisted that I should be a witness. The nice man said that I had been their only confidant, so he thought it was my right. I fully realize that I am a lucky dog. Such a good home, and such a kind master and mistress. My dear lady and the nice man are devoted to each other, and I too am a very happy Somebody.