

PETS—A FAMILY AFFLICTION.

(From The Dallas Oak.)

I suppose every family in which there has been a small boy has, at some time or other, been afflicted by a series of pets—pets they are sometimes called by an irate parent. Even before the boy is able to sit alone he likes the stuffed wooly dogs from the toy shops. By the time he has shed dresses and is in his first cotton suits, he has discarded these lifeless toys and searches far something which can follow his toddling footsteps.

How well I remember the first dog which was admitted into our household! It was an overgrown, yelping dog of no particular breed, presented to my little five-year-old brother by an adjoining uncle, who probably remembered his boyhood days. What a trial this dog was to us all! Had he only been pretty, or even respectable-looking, I think we could have endured him, but from a promising looking pup he grew into an ungainly dog with a long tail, which had the unbearable habit of sinking between his legs. He always had the appearance of being in his own way, and he certainly was in every one else's. He was abjectly devoted to my brother, who was very proud of Prince—what an inappropriate name for a dog of such unimpressive bearing—as he tagged at his heels, unflinchingly. How long he was with us I do not remember, but one day he left and did not return. We never knew what became of him, nor were we guilty of much inquiring, but we little realized that our troubles had only begun, far from that time forth our home was never long free from pets of some kind.

Jack was at first overcome with grief, but in a few days he received a pair of tame rabbits from a maiden aunt, who sympathized with his ebullient grief. These he declared were "lots better than old Prince anyhow." For the rabbits it was necessary to erect a small pen in the back yard. They were always getting out and this meant destruction to father's cabbages. They were the joy of Jack's small soul while he had them and at the same time a relief to every one else except father, who had always taken a pride in his garden. One night, however, they hopped from their pen and ranging farther than the garden, did not return.

This time Jack was tired of anything as gentle as rabbits and, boy like, he wanted something which would romp and play with him, therefore, we were not very much surprised when he came home one day leading a dog—at least not surprised at his acquiring a new pet—but such a pet! Since then I have seen numerous dogs of various descriptions and of different breeds, but I have never seen one like that one. He was the slimmest dog imaginable—to be exact skinny is the only word that could properly describe him. I rather think that his extreme length accentuated his lack of bodily circumference. His tail like Prince's, had the sinking habit also his body was borne up by tooth-pick legs attached to which were elephantine feet. His long ears drooped about his mournful eyes. When he was first led into the dining room, mother gave a horrified shriek, but all remonstrance with Jack proved futile and she finally consented to grant him a place in the old barn, which stood back of the house. Immediately upon being banished there he settled down upon his thin legs and raising his huge head gave forth such a howl as I am sure human ears had never heard before. Later discussion in the family circle finally decided that the howl was a cross between a fog horn and a fire whistle. His howl made up half of him, while his appetite made up the other half. For first, second, third biscuits and cookies, the "left-overs" of several days, made their way to the barn. Within the next few days we discovered that Hugo, as he was called, made secret visits to the kitchen and pantry, and at such times they were left amazingly bare. When I think of the roast, cooked chickens, and cakes which Hugo stole I arrive at the conclusion that they would have had a whole tribe of starving people in the neighborhood if he had not been so judiciously disposed of. The whole family longed to see Hugo, but he made no effort to come a whole hog, though I offered him a whole hog when Hugo would not come, and I was sure he would not come, but he would come if I offered him a whole hog. He was a very long dog, the strain of length. He was a very long dog, the strain of length. He was a very long dog, the strain of length.

Before long the winter of 1918-19 came, bringing a cargo of white pine which he had obtained in exchange for his lunch, two steel marbles and a new rubber ball. We were all able to thank that it was nothing worse, at least they couldn't howl. These pets he soon tired of and exchanged them as readily as I can remember for a golden dog, which was worse in some respects than Hugo. And so it went on through several years. At one time it was a little lamb dog, which he had found in the streets, at another it was a whole bag full of sprawling puppies, which he had rescued on their way to the nearest river. Sometimes the old barn had as many as five occupants at one time, and only on a few rare, joyous occasions was it tenanted. To get rid of one pest only meant to live

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in dreadful expectancy until the next appearance.

At last there came a time when the old barn was empty for quite a while and remained so. Observing more closely, we noticed a change in Jack. He used a quantity of soap on his gubby hands and acquired a result quite pleasing to mother; he brushed his stiff locks until

they almost lay in place; and he spent many precious minutes before the mirror, arranging his tie under his conspicuous white collar. We realized, then, that our days of pet afflictions were over and with a quiet sigh of relief we settled down to enjoy the well-earned calm which followed.

NELL CRAIG, '19.

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