

THE TWA MONGRELS:

A MODERN ECLOGUE.

BY

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THE ARGUMENT.

Two Does, who, with a number of other faithless curs, have fled from their kind and liberal master's service, taking with them as many of his sheep as they could catch, have met to consult together. Each praises himself for his great abilities; but both complain that their labours have not been appreciated by their new masters, although they have demeaned themselves in every way. They lay a plan to drive off a small out-lying flock under the immediate care of a young dog, but belonging to the herd in charge of a powerful mastiff, who has been faithful to his engagements. They are maturing their scheme, by which they hope to please their new owners—spite the mastiff, and secure the field for the exclusive guardianship of Rab, the half-bred terrier when they are disconcerted by the appearance of the mastiff, and, yelping, fly for the nearest shelter. The scene is close to the mountain in the neighbourhood of the commercial metropolis of the Dominion.

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FRAE Royal Mount, whaur leafless trees
Sough to the bitter Northern breeze,
An' snaw-drifts fill the banks and braes,
An' puir folk grane wi' mony waes,
While broad St. Lawrence, chained and fast,
Ne'er feels the cauld and angry blast—
See to the South Belœil's high peak,
Calm, white, and stately, seems to speak
O' Christian faith, uplifted fair,
Aboon the fash o' earthly care ;
An' to the North, the rugged hicht
O' stern Laurentians, bathed in licht.

Or in the bonnie simmer days,
When hills and rivers' seen thro' haze,
Put on a beauty far outvies
The scenes 'neath sweltering Southern skies.
When trees are decked wi' leafy dress,
An' fields green wi' rich loveliness ;
When Côte des Neiges—hoo cauld the name !—
Lies baskin' in the sun's het flame,
An' a' the mansions—hames o' pride—
Are clusterin' up the Mountain's side ;
The toon, wide-spread, lies at oor feet,
Lang syne o' Indians' power the seat.

'Twas near this place Twa Dogs, ae day,
 Wha frae their shed had run away,
 Had met tae hae a freen'ly crack,
 An' plan their maister's shæp to tak'.
 They baith had been well-kept an' fed,
 But they were only mongrel-bred,
 An', like sic ill-bred mongrel cretturs,
 They girmed an' yelped aye at their betters,
 An' thocht, while shepherds ta'en their sleep,
 They'd get a chance tae steal their sheep :
 'Their evil natures—worthless tykes—
 Showed by their skulkin' roun' the dykes.

Ane was a half-bred terrier pup,
 Thin in the back, wi' little grup ;
 Could yelp an' nyaff—his name was Rab,
 But for aye yatterin' ca'd St. Gab.
 He had a restless, bitter tongue,
 Sharp, vicious, like a wire ticht strung ;
 Wi' hair aboot his neb an' muzzle,
 Twisted an' curled like Chinese puzzle :
 A dancin' crettur, wi' an air
 As if the toon had fa'n to his share,
 Wi' cheek as hard's the ancient Sphinx,
 On which, in vain, the hammer clinks.

The ither had an ill-faurt look,
 Fat, but nae thanks for that to the cook.*
 (Crabbit, like ilka cook, an' she
 Hauds a ticht grup o' kitchen fee.)
 His yellow chafts an' brindled hair
 Gi'ed him a sanctimonious air.
 He could look either meek or grim,
 Agent his name, whyles Bully Jim.
 When he had ony end to reach,
 He'd whine, an' lick yer hand, an' fleech ;
 But gin he thocht he could ye grapple,
 He'd soon his teeth hae in yer thrapple.

* This cook, from her capacity for getting up messes, is usually known as doctor cook, sometimes principal or chief cook.

RAB.

Od, Jim, I've had a hard day's wark
 To ca' the beasts into oor ark.
 It's no an easy job I've ta'en
 To play the colley a' my lane.
 Were't no for me an' my great lear
 The maister's sheep had ne'er been here.
 'Twas me that got them frae the fauld,
 Cajoled the young, and fleeced the auld,
 Danced roon the yowes, played wi' the lambs,
 Yelped lood an' fierce to fear the rams :
 There ne'er was sic a usefu' beast
 Frae North to South, frae West to East.

JIM.

Man, Rab, ye are na' unco blate,
 Folks say ye're but a bletherin' skate,
 That's weel aneugh for orra wark,
 Or frichenin' laddies in the dark.
 It's true that ye for ever yelp,
 An' mony times ye catch a skelp ;
 Bit look at me—I'm twice yer size,
 An' did faur mair to catch the prize.
 I wiled the maister's sheep awa',
 Wha'd kept me weel in hoose an' ha' ;
 An' noo, at last, wha could expekit
 For a *Reid* dog I'd be negleckit.

RAB.

Ye're no mim-mouthed, an' hard's yer snash
 To bear ; but ye've had muckle fash.
 Ye were set up to guard the chosen,
 Like Israel in the land o' Goshen.
 Ye promised that ye'd faithfu' watch,
 An' ony thievin' scoun'rel catch ;
 An' for this wark they heaped yer cog
 Wi' meat wad pleasure ony dog :
 But you, Jeshurun-like, waxed fat,
 An', kickin', coupit ower the pat :
 For ye had hopes o' gettin' double,
 By double-dealin'—hence the trouble.

JIM.

Let that flee, Rab, stick to the wa' ;
 We'll say o' conscience 'twas the ca'.
 My maister's flock was somethin' scant,
 An I was fear't to come to want.
 It's like a sum in Rule o' Three—
 So much i get, so much they'll gie.
 If I can only ware the flocks
 Amang the herds wha vow by Knox,
 My cog for twa girrs will hae sax,
 Till the verra skin my flesh will rax.
 But, oh ! they kept (my howls hae cause)
 Their ain fish for their ain sea-maws.

RAB.

They sent a Welsh dog to my pasture,
 Wha was ower big for me to master.
 I whinged an' yowled in the new fauld,
 For which I had gi'en up the auld.
 I'd promised I wad be their colley,
 An' chatter like ony pretty Polly ;
 I'd be their scudgy, dae their biddin',
 E'en to gae snokin' in the midden :
 They d but to whistle, an' I'd rin,
 Nor stop until the job was dune.
 Yet for my pains they use me worse
 Than lang-lugg'd ass, or foondered horse.

JIM.

I hae a plan.* Ye ken yon hirsle
 Watched by a mastiff I could birsle.
 The flock is yet but young an' tender ;
 The young dog there's but slicht and slender—
 A faithfu' *Stewart*, I've nae doot,
 But you an' me could wile him oot.
 We'll turn amang his simple care
 Twa or three sheep that ye could spare,
 To raise sic a confoundit din,
 That he'd rin oot, an' we'd rin in,
 An' wi' oor brazen faces threep
 That they were oor new maister's sheep.

* See "Landmark," June, 1876.

RAB.

Gran' ! Jim, but that's a bonnie plan,
 An' truly shows a maister han'
 At trick, an' cunning, and deceit,
 That coofs like them can ne'er defeat.
 But when that's dune, a' to oor gain,
 I want to keep them for my ain.
 I hae a fauld that's nice an' cozy,
 Whaur I can lead them by the nose aye.
 I want nae Welsh nor Scottish colleys
 To come an' vex me by their follies.
 A' for mysel' I want the East,
 Disturbit by nae ither beast.

JIM.

The hurdles we will move awa'
 Up to the field at Hudon ha',
 An' ware the sheep, by noisy clatter,
 Frae the laigh howe near Craig's still water.
 The silly things will ken nae differ
 When we hae made this aff-hand niffer.
 Then when ye hae them in yer hand,
 'Twill no be ill to change the brand.
 For them ye dinna care a button
 Sae lang's ye get their fleece an' mutton,
 An' that St. Andrew's mastiff spite.
 Preserve us a' ! hoo he can bite !

But as they clattered at this gate,
 Like burnies rinnin' broon wi' spate,
 They saw approachin', like an arrow,
 A sicht that froze their verra marrow.
 A mastiff, big, an' stoot, an' *Lang*,
 Deep in the chest, wi' voice that rang
 Majestic, strong, wi' awfu' roar,
 Like waves on the Atlantic shore.
 They turned an' fled, wi' tails hung doon,
 An' yelpin, scurried for the toon.
 A bush big, blusterin' Agent screens,
 While Rab socht shelter wi' his freens.