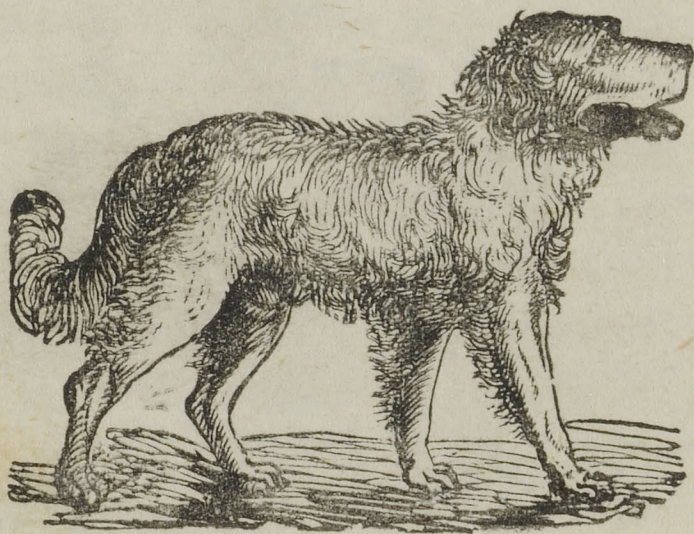


DEAN'S
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THE SAGACIOUS DOG.



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THE SAGACIOUS DOG.



A FRIEND of mine, owned many years ago a Newfoundland dog of remarkable size and beauty. Carlo, for that was his name, possessing an uncommon share of

the docility, sagacity, and attachment for persons characteristic of his race, was, of course, a prime favourite with his master and the family. His usual places of resort were the yard, and immediately round the family residence. Beyond these he seldom strayed, either in pursuit of game or to follow a person he liked.

His master went one day into the woods, near the house, to shoot squirrels. Carlo, impelled by an uncommon freak of playfulness or affection, followed him, but kept some distance in the rear, as if conscious that, being uninvited, he came unwelcome to the sport. A few caressing words and pats upon the head sufficed to restore his confidence, and he trotted along close upon the heels of his master, stopping when he did, but never venturing to circle through the woods in quest of game.

A large fox-squirrel ran up a tree close by the sportsman, who levelled his gun and shot it dead. The noise which it made in falling upon the dry leaves attracted the notice of Carlo, who rushed

forward, seized the carcass, and began to shake and rend it with great violence. The voice of his master commanding him to put it down was unheeded. The de-



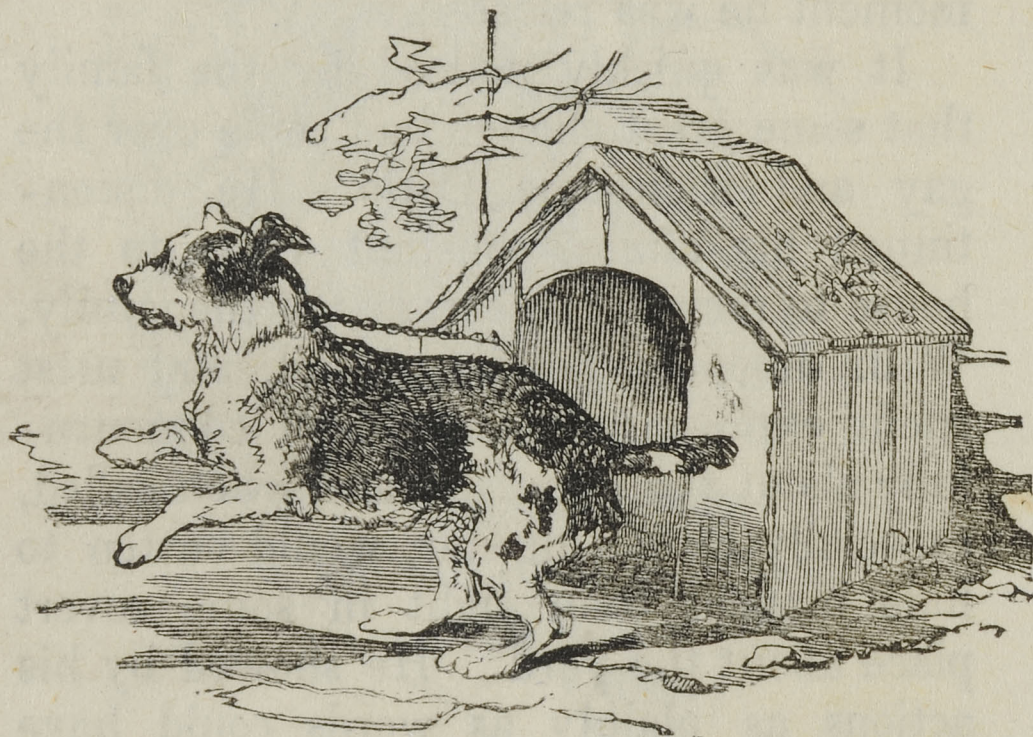
structive instincts of the dog triumphed over his habit of prompt obedience, and he tore the squirrel into fragments, and scattered them upon the ground at the base of the tree.

Irritated at the behaviour of his favourite, the sportsman whipped him severely with a branch which he tore from a bush, holding him by the leather collar which was fastened around his neck. The dog howled most piteously during the infliction of the punishment, and ran back home the moment he was released.

It was quickly noticed by the family that some great change had come over the gay and frolicsome Carlo. He discontinued his almost constant visits to the house to receive the caresses of the family. With drooping head and tail, and most rueful expression of face, he glided mournfully about the premises, and when called, especially by his master, would hasten to hide himself from sight in some covert place about the yard. He showed by his actions as plainly as words could have spoken it, that he felt himself in deep disgrace. As he persistently rejected all overtures of reconciliation made by his master, the affair seemed to be as incapable of adjustment as it was of explanation,

between the offending and the offended party.

After several days spent in this way, Carlo disappeared, and was not to be found anywhere upon the premises. Could it be possible that he had gone into voluntary exile to atone for his fault? Or



had he, imitating the folly of lordly man, made away with his own life, to cancel his disgrace and escape the taunts of his fellow-dogs? There was no end to the conjectures of the family as to the cause

of his disappearance, and no end to the search for his retreat. But he came not to the accustomed call, and there was neither footprint nor sign to tell whither he had gone.

In the evening of the second day of his absence, his master was seated in the front piazza of the family mansion, engaged in reading, when Carlo suddenly walked in with a large fox-squirrel in his mouth. Going straight up to his master, he deposited the carcass at his feet, looked up into his face, and gave a few short, cheerful yelps, wagging his tail all the time, and looking the very picture of canine content and delight. The squirrel had evidently just been killed, as the body was still warm, and showed unmistakable signs that life had been extinguished by the pressure of teeth and claws.

Carlo at once recovered his cheerfulness, and resumed his former habits. He had erred, repented, and atoned for his offence, and remained ever after to the end of his days a privileged favourite in the family of his owner.

Strange as this instance of canine sagacity may seem to those who deny to dogs even the faintest glimmer of the rational faculty, it is nevertheless not more strange than true, since the facts herein detailed are related by one of the most respectable families of the South. How Carlo came in possession of the squirrel, has never been satisfactorily ascertained. All the probabilities are in favour of the supposition that he caught it in the woods by stratagem or by fleetness of foot.

But how did the sagacious animal reach the conclusion that his offence was to be atoned for by the return of a whole squirrel for the one he had torn? How came he to know or believe that the offence either required or admitted of atonement by the restoration of like for like? There's the rub. For ourselves, we neither concede nor deny a qualified rationality to the lower orders of creation, but define our position in relation to the question by saying in the language of good old Sir Roger de Coverly, that "much may be said on both sides of it."