

"Ye'm," said Stevens, who had also come to the gate to look.
 "Shall I go out to him?" I said, looking round for support.
 "Don't!" Celia replied instantly. "He'll kill you."
 "As soon as look at you," said Stevens.
 "I believe he would," I said, with conviction, and then we all stood and looked at one another in silence, while the low sucking snarl went on.
 "What is to be done?" I asked, as presently a flapping of wings and screaming too plainly showed that he had begun on another hen. "He may finish the lot off—"

kin, who is a lover of animals and a member of the S.P.C.A., said, "Good boy, good dog!" Just that—in a wheedling voice. There is really nothing to object to in Hankin's voice; it has not even the clerical quality in it. On the contrary, it is a pleasant, brisk baritone voice. But the dog did not like it. With a roar that would have drowned a brass band, he made for Hankin.
 My wife declared that she shut her eyes, expecting to see him crushed up like the Buff Orpingtons. I kept mine open because it seemed more manly. I saw Hankin take one glance at the gate, and one at a small arbor, or shed, with a door to it that lay to the right. The

shouting animatedly through the narrow slit that served as a window must have put a considerable strain on the vocal chords, especially as our guests wouldn't go away without the fullest explanations, and seemed doubtful then whether the whole thing wasn't a joke. We could hear them laughing and chatting and Hankin earnestly exhorting them, and the dog, which had stretched himself sphinx-like just outside the arbor door, occasionally letting off a cyclonic growl. It was the sound of the latter which chiefly persuaded people to go away. Dr. Jenkinson, a sceptical man, but keen on tennis, heard it only after he had actually unlatched the gate, after frankly expressing his opinion that the whole thing was nonsense. The click of the gate, however, caught the ears of our perfect guard, and as his thunder died away, the pluck, of Jenkinson's retiring motor-bicycle sounded quick and sharp.

"Why don't you shoot the brute!" was his parting remark, passed on to us by the now woolly-voiced Hankin, who added: "I'm almost afraid you'll have to, old man. I've got a service at 7, you know."
 "Celia and I will talk it over during tea," I called back. "I wish we could send you out a cup—"
 "Not at all," said Hankin, politely. "Never mind about me."

We did not mind about Hankin nearly so much as we minded about the dog, who was upsetting everything in the most unprecedented manner. Stevens had not stirred from the greenhouse. Susan was absolutely shaky on the legs when she brought in tea.
 "I'm afraid you will have to shoot him," said Celia, regretfully, as she poured out my second cup.

"You talk, Celia," I said irritably, "as though that were a simple matter. Apart from the fact that it is throwing away three pounds. I have nothing but my revolver in the house at present, and I am not much of a shot with a revolver. I shouldn't care to try at less than fifteen paces. I should only miss—"
 "Well, why not try at fifteen paces?"
 "Because if I missed, the dog mightn't—"

"Oh, you mustn't, then," said Celia.
 "Of course, later on we might stalk the creature," I said, "or set a bait for him—tie up a Buff Orpington under the

window, don't you know, or get Stevens to go out and wave a red handkerchief, but I don't see that at present—". Can you find Hankin! What's the matter with him now?"
 The comparative peace of the arbor had just been broken by a series of distracted shouts from Hankin. We ran to the window.
 "The dog can't have got in!" I said nervously.

"No, no, listen!" said Celia. "He's calling to somebody."
 "Go away! Go away! You mustn't come in!" These directions, evidently given by Hankin to someone in the road, suddenly changed to a convulsive yell of "Hi, Barker!"
 "Yes," we both shouted back.

"There's a child coming along—coming in, I think. She doesn't seem to hear."
 "Has she got golden curls?" Celia asked, irreverently as I thought.
 "Yes," said Hankin.
 "What if she has?" I asked.
 "It's Kizzie Green," said Celia. "She's—she's dead!"

I don't wish to boast, or suggest that I was doing a courageous thing. I merely mention that on hearing these words spoken in Celia's most tragic voice, I turned, ran to the hall table, took out and loaded my revolver. Weights seemed attached to my legs during this process.
 "What are you going to do, John?" Celia asked, terrified, as I returned.

"I am going to shoot that dog," I said. "It is my life or Kizzie Green's—probably both, if I miss."
 "Yours is most valuable," said Celia unheroically.

"I know it is," I said. "But you won't get everyone to think so if that child is killed. Leave me, Celia!"
 She was clinging to me, saying that she would go, too; but I presently found myself stepping into the garden alone.

The scene that followed will ever dwell in my memory—and also, I believe, in Celia's and Hankin's—as the most dramatic we have ever witnessed. It is the sort of thing that recurs in dreams. Once again I feel myself step out into the garden, I hear the gate click, I see the child enter and the colossal dog prick up its ears and rise. At the time, I am thankful to say, it had its back to me, thus enabling me to advance without being seen. As I did so, I realised that the door of the arbour was being



The dog had begun to crawl toward the child, stalking her.

"Melie he's got of it when he's had enough," said Stevens; and this, in fact, proved to be the case. Four Dan Orpingtons and the dish of bones seemed to satisfy his cravings; and after that he wandered out of the yard leisurely, as though to seek some comfortable resting place. We lost sight of him a minute later, and my wife expressed the hope that he had run away and would not come back.

"We shan't have any such luck," I said gloomily. "That dog will know when he has found a good home."
 "If he only could get him on a chain—"

"If," I repeated. "He's probably in the garden now. By the way, Stevens, you were going to prick out the cabbages, weren't you?"

"I'd sooner get on with the 'mums, sir," said Stevens. "You see, sir, I can get into the conservatory by way of the 'ouse."

"As you please," I said; and my wife and I retired to the drawing-room, which looks out on the greater part of the garden, including the front gate and the tennis lawn. It was the sight of the latter which moved my wife to say suddenly:

"Good gracious, I'd forgotten! It's this afternoon that people are coming for tennis. And I particularly said, 'Come early.' What are we to do, John?"

"I don't know," I said.
 "It isn't fair to let them come with that dreadful creature wandering about loose."

"He may not attack them," I said.
 "After all, it's only a dog, you know."
 "Don't be so inhuman!"

"Shall I stand at the gate and warn them to abandon hope as they enter?" I asked, endeavouring to affect a hilarity I did not feel.

"You ought to. If anyone were killed—"

It was exactly in the middle of that sentence that we heard the front gate click; and it was less than a moment after (so that I really had not time to think of a plan of action) that we saw Archibald Hankin, the curate, appear lurching it, wheeling his bicycle. In what again seemed less than a second the dog, which had been reposing unseen in the middle of one of the flower-beds, rose and growled.

He did not move toward Hankin, and Hankin did not move toward him. They simply stood facing each other for an appreciable length of time. Then Han-

shed was slightly nearer than the gate. He must have seen that in an instant, for almost as the dog began his spring, he dropped his bicycle and dived for it. He got in just so much ahead that the dog's teeth gnashed the closing door. He must have had rather a shock, for quite an interval elapsed before he called out "Barker!" and his voice was distinctly shaky.

"Yes!" I shouted back.
 "There's a brute of a dog here," he said, "that came for me. He's outside this shed now, I fancy."

"Yes, I can see him," I said. "He's a powerful-looking dog."
 "You might call him off then—"

"No good, my dear fellow," I responded.
 "Eh?"

"He wouldn't come."

I explained the nature of the dog, so far as I knew it, in a few well-chosen shouts, dwelling particularly on the fact that we had only just found him out; and then Hankin inquired from his shelter what I expected him to do.

"Stay there," I said.
 "For how long?"

"Well, I can hardly say," I replied. "You see how things are—"

"Yes, I see that," said Hankin. "But hang it all, man, I've a service at 7; and you've got other people coming to tennis, haven't you? You're not going to let them come in and be eaten!"

"That's it," I said. "I thought if you wouldn't mind stopping there, you're so much nearer the gate than I can get that you could see the people as they come along and warn them what's up. Of course, they mustn't think of coming in and playing."

This appeal to the altruistic side of Hankin, who is a very good-natured fellow, stopped for the time being the querulous note that had crept into his voice.

"All right, I will," he said. "Only remember, I've got a service at 7, won't you?"

I promised to keep this in mind, if it would give Hankin any satisfaction, and Celia thanked him in a fluty voice that carried well. Then for an hour or more we sat in the drawing-room window, and listened while Hankin explained to people as they came along the road that they had better go back again owing to a wild dog being at large.

Poor Hankin! I did not envy him. The arbor is a musty, dusty place, and on that hot afternoon could not but have been very trying. The need, too, of



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