

knack of pushing my fortunes, or gaining a reputation, and grew to be of a retiring nature.

"When there was any particular hurry skurry, yarding up awkward sheep, or work requiring extra skill and keenness, and other dogs were anxious to distinguish themselves, I retired and allowed them to do so. It was pure good nature on my part, but could you believe it? it was positively ascribed to laziness. One's motives are often so terribly misinterpreted. I knew all the while that I could do the work as well, or even better than they could, but I considerately gave them the chance. It was a mistake, I can see it all plainly now, but I could not then.

"They also made another great error, they never would allow me to be the leading dog when we were driving; I am convinced that I should have shone at that. It would have suited my disposition admirably. Running along in front of the sheep to prevent them from going too fast, breaking away, or boxing with other flocks, I should have been farther away from Master Tom. He might have flung stones at me to his heart's content, I should not have cared an atom, for I should have taken all sorts of care to be safely out of range. He would have been reduced to flinging curses instead, and they, you know, don't break bones. He was quite as good at this sort of flinging as at the other. His command of language was astonishing, but he never exhibited it till he got out of the home paddocks—oh, no! He'd been well educated, and of course he knew that it was wicked to swear even at sheep-dogs near the house. But once outside the sacred precincts, as the men called the paddocks, and safely out on the run, he made up for it if anything went wrong—my word he did! He'd throw off his hat, and dance on it, and rave, and storm till you could hear him ten miles the other side of the house, but he wasn't supposed to know that, was he?

"It cost him dearly once, though. His parents particularly wished to see him marry and settle down; he had not the slightest objection. They asked a girl, whom they considered an excellent match for him, to stay at the house. She came from Christchurch, prepared to thoroughly enjoy her visit to the country; she was really a very nice girl without taking her dollars into consideration. I loved her, for she was very kind to me. Tom used to say he was quite jealous of me, when he saw her hugging me in her lovely white arms, for he loved her too. We dogs really have some advantages over you men, she even kissed me sometimes, but I never saw her kiss him. That made me value her caresses far more than I should otherwise have done.

"Now Tom had received strict instructions from his parents on no account to drive sheep while the young lady was about. It was not considered safe. He fully intended to obey this admonition, for he was quite conscious of the danger; but one fine morning he and I breakfasted at daylight, and started off up the run to get a favourite horse of his which had been turned out for a spell; the young lady had expressed a wish to ride it. On our way out Tom espied some sheep which he knew were urgently required in the yards for some purpose, so he sent me after them. Judging that his lady love would in all probability, be fast asleep at this early hour, or at all events, out of ear shot, he talked to me even more emphatically and unreservedly than usual.

"He erred in his surmise, she sat at her open window thinking how kind he was to get up so early to give her pleasure, when his rude admonishment of me was wafted gently to her delicate, pink ears by the balmy morning breeze, which happened unfortunately to be exactly in the right direction.

"It hurt her. She was not used to it, like I was. We did not get in from the run till lunch time, for the