

Thomas Mann

DEATH
IN
VENICE

AND
Seven Other Stories

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

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covers. She nods, with one last little sob. For a quarter of an hour he sits beside her and watches while she falls asleep in her turn, beside the little brother who found the right way so much earlier than she. Her silky brown hair takes the enchanting fall it always does when she sleeps; deep, deep lie the lashes over the eyes that late so abundantly poured forth their sorrow; the angelic mouth with its bowed upper lip is peacefully relaxed and a little open. Only now and then comes a belated catch in her slow breathing.

And her small hands, like pink and white flowers, lie so quietly, one on the coverlet, the other on the pillow by her face—Dr. Cornelius, gazing, feels his heart melt with tenderness as with strong wine.

"How good," he thinks, "that she breathes in oblivion with every breath she draws! That in childhood each night is a deep wide gulf between one day and the next. Tomorrow, beyond all doubt, young Hergesell will be a pale shadow, powerless to darken her little heart. Tomorrow, forgetful of all but present joy, she will walk with Abel and Snapper, all five gentlemen, round and round the table, will play the ever-thrilling cushion game."

Heaven be praised for that!



A MAN AND HIS DOG

He Comes Round the Corner

WHEN spring, the fairest season of the year, does honour to its name, and when the trilling of the birds rouses me early because I have ended the day before at a seemly hour, I love to rise betimes and go for a half-hour's walk before breakfast. Strolling hatless in the broad avenue in front of my house, or through the parks beyond, I like to enjoy a few draughts of the young morning air and taste its blithe purity before I am claimed by the labours of the day. Standing on the front steps of my house, I give a whistle in two notes, tonic and lower fourth, like the beginning of the second phrase of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony; it might be considered the musical setting of a two-syllabled name. Next moment, and while I walk towards the garden gate, the faintest tinkle sounds from afar, at first scarcely audible, but growing rapidly louder and more distinct; such a sound as might be made by a metal licence-tag clicking against the trimmings of a leather collar. I face about, to see Bashan rounding the corner of the house at top speed and charging towards me as though he meant to knock me down. In the effort he is making he has dropped his lower lip, baring two white teeth that glitter in the morning sun.

He comes straight from his kennel, which stands at the back of the house, between the props of the veranda floor. Probably, until my two-toned call set him in this violent motion, he had been lying there snatching a nap after the adventures of the night. The kennel has curtains of sack-
ing and is lined with straw; indeed, a straw or so may be

clinging to Bashan's sleep-rumpled coat or even sticking between his toes—a comic sight, which reminds me of a painstakingly imagined production of Schiller's *Die Räuber* that I once saw, in which old Count Moor came out of the Hunger Tower tricot-clad, with a straw sticking pathetically between his toes. Involuntarily I assume a defensive position to meet the charge, receiving it on my flank, for Bashan shows every sign of meaning to run between my legs and trip me up. However at the last minute, when a collision is imminent, he always puts on the brakes, executing a half-wheel which speaks for both his mental and his physical self-control. And then, without a sound—for he makes sparing use of his sonorous and expressive voice—he dances wildly round me by way of greeting, with immoderate plungings and waggings which are not confined to the appendage provided by nature for the purpose but bring his whole hind quarters as far as his ribs into play. He contracts his whole body into a curve, he hurtles into the air in a flying leap, he turns round and round on his own axis—and curiously enough, whichever way I turn, he always contrives to execute these manoeuvres behind my back. But the moment I stoop down and put out my hand he jumps to my side and stands like a statue, with his shoulder against my shin, in a slantwise posture, his strong paws braced against the ground, his face turned upwards so that he looks at me upside-down. And his utter immobility, as I pat his shoulder and murmur encouragement, is as concentrated and fiercely passionate as the frenzy before it had been.

Bashan is a short-haired German pointer—speaking by and large, that is, and not too literally. For he is probably not quite orthodox, as a pure matter of points. In the first place, he is a little too small. He is, I repeat, definitely undersized for a proper pointer. And then his forelegs are not absolutely straight, they have just the suggestion of an outward curve—which also detracts from his qualifications as a blood-dog. And he has a tendency to a dewlap, those folds of hanging skin under the muzzle, which in Bashan's case are admirably becoming but again would be frowned on by your fanatic for pure breeding, as I understand

that a pointer should have taut skin round the neck. Bashan's colouring is very fine: His coat is a rusty brown with black stripes and a good deal of white on chest, paws, and under side. The whole of his snub nose seems to have been dipped in black paint. Over the broad top of his head and on his cool hanging ears the black and brown combine in a lovely velvety pattern. Quite the prettiest thing about him, however, is the whorl or stud or little tuft at the centre of the convolution of white hairs on his chest, which stands out like the boss on an ancient breastplate. Very likely even his splendid coloration is a little too marked and would be objected to by those who put the laws of breeding above the value of personality, for it would appear that the classic pointer type should have a coat of one colour or at most with spots of a different one, but never stripes. Worst of all, from the point of view of classification, is a hairy growth hanging from his muzzle and the corners of his mouth; it might with some justice be called a moustache and goatee, and when you concentrate on it, close at hand or even at a distance, you cannot help thinking of an airedale or a schnauzer.

But classifications aside, what a good and good-looking animal Bashan is, as he stands there straining against my knee, gazing up at me with all his devotion in his eyes! They are particularly fine eyes, too, both gentle and wise, if just a little too prominent and glassy. The iris is the same colour as his coat, a rusty brown; it is only a narrow rim, for the pupils are dilated into pools of blackness and the outer edge merges into the white of the eye wherein it swims. His whole head is expressive of honesty and intelligence, of manly qualities corresponding to his physical structure: his arched and swelling chest where the ribs stand out under the smooth and supple skin; the narrow haunches, the veined, sinewy legs, the strong, well-shaped paws. All these bespeak virility and a stout heart; they suggest hunting blood and peasant stock—yes, certainly the hunter and game dog do after all predominate in Bashan, he is genuine pointer, no matter if he does not owe his existence to a snobbish system of inbreeding. All this, probably, is what I am really telling him as I pat his

shoulder-blade and address him with a few disjointed words of encouragement.

So he stands and looks and listens, gathering from what I say and the tone of it that I distinctly approve of his existence—the very thing which I am at pains to imply. And suddenly he thrusts out his head, opening and shutting his lips very fast, and makes a snap at my face as though he meant to bite off my nose. It is a gesture of response to my remarks, and it always makes me recoil with a laugh, as Bashan knows beforehand that it will. It is a kiss in the air, half caress, half teasing, a trick he has had since puppyhood, which I have never seen in any of his predecessors. And he immediately begs pardon for the liberty, crouching, wagging his tail, and behaving funnily embarrassed. So we go out through the garden gate and into the open.

We are encompassed with a roaring like that of the sea; for we live almost directly on the swift-flowing river that foams over shallow ledges at no great distance from the popular avenue. In between lie a fenced-in grass plot planted with maples, and a raised pathway skirted with huge aspen trees, bizarre and willowlike of aspect. At the beginning of June their seed-pods strew the ground far and wide with woolly snow. Upstream, in the direction of the city, construction troops are building a pontoon bridge. Shouts of command and the thump of heavy boots on the planks sound across the river; also, from the further bank, the noise of industrial activity, for there is a locomotive foundry a little way downstream. Its premises have been lately enlarged to meet increased demands, and light streams all night long from its lofty windows. Beautiful glittering new engines roll to and fro on trial runs; a steam whistle emits wailing head-tones from time to time; muffled thunderings of unspecified origin shatter the air, smoke pours out of the many chimneys to be caught up by the wind and borne away over the wooded country beyond the river, for it seldom or never blows over to our side. Thus in our half-suburban, half-rural seclusion the voice of nature mingles with that of man, and over all lies the bright-eyed freshness of the new day.

It might be about half past seven by official time when I set out; by sun-time, half past six. With my hands behind my back I stroll in the tender sunshine down the avenue, cross-hatched by the long shadows of the poplar trees. From where I am I cannot see the river, but I hear its broad and even flow. The trees whisper gently, song-birds fill the air with their penetrating chirps and warbles, twitters and trills; from the direction of the sunrise a plane is flying under the humid-blue sky, a rigid, mechanical bird with a droning hum that rises and falls as it steers a free course above river and fields. And Bashan is delighting my eyes with the beautiful long leaps he is making across the low rail of the grass-plot on my left. Backwards and forwards he leaps—as a matter of fact he is doing it because he knows I like it; for I have often urged him on by shouting and striking the railing, praising him when he fell in with my whim. So now he comes up to me after nearly every jump to hear how intrepidly and elegantly he jumps. He even springs up into my face and slavers all over the arm I put out to protect it. But the jumping is also to be conceived as a sort of morning exercise, and morning toilet as well, for it smooths his ruffled coat and rids it of old Moor's straws.

It is good to walk like this in the early morning, with senses rejuvenated and spirit cleansed by the night's long healing draught of Lethe. You look confidently forward to the day, yet pleasantly hesitate to begin it, being master as you are of this little untroubled span of time between, which is your good reward for good behaviour. You indulge in the illusion that your life is habitually steady, simple, concentrated, and contemplative, that you belong entirely to yourself—and this illusion makes you quite happy. For a human being tends to believe that the mood of the moment, be it troubled or blithe, peaceful or stormy, is the true, native, and permanent tenor of his existence; and in particular he likes to exalt every happy chance into an inviolable rule and to regard it as the benign order of his life—whereas the truth is that he is condemned to improvisation and morally lives from hand to mouth all the time. So now, breathing the morning air, you stoutly be-

lieve that you are virtuous and free; while you ought to know—and at bottom do know—that the world is spreading its snares round your feet, and that most likely tomorrow you will be lying in your bed until nine, because you sought it at two in the morning hot and befogged with impassioned discussion. Never mind. Today you, a sober character, an early riser, you are the right master for that stout hunter who has just cleared the railings again out of sheer joy in the fact that today you apparently belong to him alone and not to the world.

We follow the avenue for about five minutes, to the point where it ceases to be an avenue and becomes a gravelly waste along the river-bank. From this we turn away to our right and strike into another covered with finer gravel, which has been laid out like the avenue and like it provided with a cycle-path, but is not yet built up. It runs between low-lying, wooded lots of land, towards the slope which is the eastern limit of our river neighbourhood and Bashan's theatre of action. On our way we cross another road, equally embryonic, running along between fields and meadows. Further up, however, where the tram stops, it is quite built up with flats. We descend by a gravel path into a well-laid-out, parklike valley, quite deserted, as indeed the whole region is at this hour. Paths are laid out in curves and rondels, there are benches to rest on, tidy playgrounds, with wide plots of lawn with fine old trees whose boughs nearly sweep the grass, covering all but a glimpse of trunk. They are elms, beeches, limes, and silvery willows, in well-disposed groups. I enjoy to the full the well-landscaped quality of the scene, where I may walk no more disturbed than if it belonged to me alone. Nothing has been forgotten—there are even cement gutters in the gravel paths that lead down the grassy slopes. And the abundant greenery discloses here and there a charming distant vista of one of the villas that bound the spot on two sides.

Here for a while I stroll along the paths, and Bashan revels in the freedom of unlimited level space, galloping across and across the lawns like mad with his body inclined in a centrifugal plane; sometimes, barking with mingled pleasure and exasperation, he pursues a bird which

flutters as though spellbound, but perhaps on purpose to tease him, along the ground just in front of his nose. But if I sit down on a bench he is at my side at once and takes up a position on one of my feet. For it is a law of his being that he only runs about when I am in motion too; that when I settle down he follows suit. There seems no obvious reason for this practice; but Bashan never fails to conform to it.

I get an odd, intimate, and amusing sensation from having him sit on my foot and warm it with the blood-heat of his body. A pervasive feeling of sympathy and good cheer fills me, as almost invariably when in his company and looking at things from his angle. He has a rather rustic slouch when he sits down; his shoulder-blades stick out and his paws turn negligently in. He looks smaller and squatter than he really is, and the little white boss on his chest is advanced with comic effect. But all these faults are atoned for by the lofty and dignified carriage of the head, so full of concentration. All is quiet, and we two sit there absolutely still in our turn. The rushing of the water comes to us faint and subdued. And the senses become alert for all the tiny, mysterious little sounds that nature makes: the lizard's quick dart, the note of a bird, the burrowing of a mole in the earth. Bashan pricks up his ears—in so far as the muscles of naturally drooping ears will allow them to be pricked. He cocks his head to hear the better; and the nostrils of his moist black nose keep twitching sensitively as he sniffs.

Then he lies down, but always in contact with my foot. I see him in profile, in that age-old, conventionalized pose of the beast-god, the sphinx: head and chest held high, forelegs close to the body, paws extended in parallel lines. He has got overheated, so he opens his mouth, and at once all the intelligence of his face gives way to the merely animal, his eyes narrow and blink and his rosy tongue lolls out between his strong white pointed teeth.

How We Got Bashan

In the neighbourhood on Tölz there is a mountain inn, kept by a pleasingly buxom, black-eyed damsel, with the

assistance of a growing daughter, equally buxom and black-eyed. This damsel it was who acted as go-between in our introduction to Bashan and our subsequent acquisition of him. Two years ago now that was; he was six months old at the time. Anastasia—for so the damsel was called—knew that we had had to have our last dog shot; Percy by name, a Scotch collie by breeding and a harmless, feeble-minded aristocrat who in his old age fell victim to a painful and disfiguring skin disease which obliged us to put him away. Since that time we had been without a guardian. She telephoned from her mountain height to say that she had taken to board a dog that was exactly what we wanted and that it might be inspected at any time. The children clamoured to see it, and our own curiosity was scarcely behind theirs; so the very next afternoon we climbed up to Anastasia's inn, and found her in her roomy kitchen full of warm and succulent steam, preparing her lodgers' supper. Her face was brick-red, her brow was wet, the sleeves were rolled back on her plump arms, and her frock was open at the throat. Her young daughter went to and fro, an industrious kitchen-maid. They were glad to see us and thoroughly approved of our having lost no time in coming. We looked about; whereupon Resi, the daughter, led us up to the kitchen table and, squatting with her hands on her knees, addressed a few encouraging words beneath it. Until then, in the flickering half-light, we had seen nothing; but now we perceived something standing there, tied by a bit of rope to the table-leg: an object that must have made any soul alive burst into half-pitying laughter.

Gaunt and knock-kneed he stood there with his tail between his hind legs, his four paws planted together, his back arched, shaking. He may have been frightened, but one had the feeling that he had not enough on his bones to keep him warm; for indeed the poor little animal was a skeleton, a mere rack of bones with a spinal column, covered with a rough fell and stuck up on four sticks. He had laid back his ears—which muscular contraction never fails to extinguish every sign of intelligence and cheer in the face of any dog. In him, who was still entirely puppy,

the effect was so consummate that he stood there expressive of nothing but wretchedness, stupidity, and a mute appeal for our forbearance. And his hirsute appendages, which he has to this day, were then out of all proportion to his size and added a final touch of sour hypochondria to his appearance.

We all stooped down and began to coax and encourage this picture of misery. The children were delighted and sympathetic at once, and their shouts mingled with the voice of Anastasia as, standing by her cooking-stove, she began to furnish us with the particulars of her charge's origins and history. He was named, provisionally, Lux, she said, in her pleasant, level voice; and was the offspring of irreproachable parents. She had herself known the mother and of the father had heard nothing but good. Lux had seen the light on a farm in Hugelfing; and it was only due to a combination of circumstances that his owners were willing to part with him cheaply. They had brought him to her inn because there he might be seen by a good many people. They had come in a cart, Lux bravely running the whole twenty kilometres behind the wheels. She, Anastasia, had thought of us at once, knowing that we were on the look-out for a good dog and feeling certain that we should want him. If we so decided, it would be a good thing all round. She was sure we should have great joy of him, he in his turn would have found a good home and be no longer lonely in the world, and she, Anastasia, would know that he was well taken care of. We must not be prejudiced by the figure he cut at the moment; he was upset by his strange surroundings and uncertain of himself, but his good breeding would come out strong before long. His father and mother were of the best.

Ye-es—but perhaps not quite well matched?

On the contrary; that is, they were both of them good stock. He had excellent points—she, Anastasia, would vouch for that. He was not spoilt, either, his needs were modest—and that meant a great deal, nowadays. In fact, up to now he had had nothing to eat but potato-parings. She suggested that we take him home on trial; if we found that we did not take to him she would receive him back

and refund the modest sum that was asked for him. She made free to say this, not minding at all if we took her up. Because, knowing the dog and knowing us, both parties, as it were, she was convinced that we should grow to love him, and never dream of giving him up.

All this she said and a great deal more in the same strain in her easy, comfortable, voluble way, working the while over her stove, where the flames shot up suddenly now and then as though we were in a witches' kitchen. She even came and opened Lux's jaws with both hands to show us his beautiful teeth and—for some reason or other—the pink grooves in the roof of his mouth. We asked knowingly if he had had distemper; she replied with a little impatience that she really could not say. Our next question—how large would he get—she answered more glibly: he would be about the size of our departed Percy, she said. There were more questions and answers; a good deal of warm-hearted urging from Anastasia, prayers and pleas from the children, and on our side a feeble lack of resolution. At last we begged for a little time to think things over; she agreed, and we went thoughtfully valleywards, exchanging impressions as we went.

But of course the children had lost their hearts to the wretched little quadruped under the table; in vain we affected to jeer at their lack of judgment and taste, feeling the pull at our own heart-strings. We saw that we should not be able to get him out of our heads; we asked ourselves what would become of him if we scorned him. Into what hands would he fall? The question called up a horrid memory, we saw again the knacker from whom we had rescued Percy with a few timely and merciful bullets and an honourable grave by the garden fence. If we wanted to abandon Lux to an uncertain and perhaps gruesome fate, then we should never have seen him at all, never cast eyes upon his infant whiskered face. We knew him now, we felt a responsibility which we could disclaim only by an arbitrary exercise of authority.

So it was that the third day found us climbing up those same gentle foothills of the Alps. Not that we had decided

to buy—no, we only saw that, as things stood, the matter could hardly have any other outcome.

This time we found Frau Anastasia and her daughter drinking coffee, one at each end of the long kitchen table, while between them he sat who bore provisionally the name of Lux, in his very attitude as he sits today, slouching over with his shoulder-blades stuck out and his paws turned in. A bunch of wild flowers in his worn leather collar gave him a festive look, like a rustic bridegroom or a village lad in his Sunday best. The daughter, looking very trim herself in the tight bodice of her peasant costume, said that she had adorned him thus to celebrate his entry into his new home. Mother and daughter both told us they had never been more certain of anything in their lives than that we would come back to fetch him—they knew that we would come this very day.

So there was nothing more to say. Anastasia thanked us in her pleasant way for the purchase price—ten marks—which we handed over. It was clear that she had asked it in our interest rather than in hers or that of the dog's owners; it was by way of giving Lux a positive value, in terms of money, in our eyes. We quite understood, and paid it gladly. Lux was untied from his table-leg and the end of the rope laid in my hand; we crossed Anastasia's door-step followed by the warmest, most cordial assurances and good wishes.

But the homeward way, which it took us an hour to cover, was scarcely a triumphal procession. The bridegroom soon lost his bouquet, while everybody we met either laughed or else jeered at his appearance—and we met a good many people, for our route lay through the length of the market town at the foot of the hill. The last straw was that Lux proved to be suffering from an apparently chronic diarrhoea, which obliged us to make frequent pauses under the villagers' eyes. At such times we formed a circle round him to shield his weakness from unfriendly eyes—asking ourselves whether this was not distemper already making its appearance. Our anxiety was uncalled-for: the future was to prove that we were dealing with a sound

and cleanly constitution, which has been proof against distemper and all such ailments up to this day.

Directly we got home we summoned the maids to make acquaintance with the new member of the family and express their modest judgment of his worth. They had evidently been prepared to praise; but, reading our own insecurity in our eyes, they laughed loudly, turning their backs upon the appealing object and waving him off with their hands. We doubted whether they could understand the nature of our financial transaction with the benevolent Anastasia and in our weakness declared that we had had him as a present. Then we led Lux into the veranda and regaled him with a hearty meal of scraps.

He was too frightened to eat. He sniffed at the food we urged upon him, but was evidently, in his modesty, unable to believe that these cheese-parings and chicken-bones were meant for him. But he did not reject the sack stuffed with seaweed which we had prepared for him on the floor. He lay there with his paws drawn up under him, while within we took counsel and eventually came to a conclusion about the name he was to bear in the future.

On the following day he still refused to eat; then came a period when he gulped down everything that came within reach of his muzzle; but gradually he settled down to a regular and more fastidious regimen, this result roughly corresponding with his adjustment to his new life in general, so that I will not dwell further upon it. The process of adaptation suffered an interruption one day—Bashan disappeared. The children had taken him into the garden and let him off the lead for better freedom of action. In a momentary lapse of vigilance he had escaped through the hole under the garden gate and gained the outer world. We were grieved and upset at his loss—at least the masters of the house were, for the maids seemed inclined to take light-heartedly the loss of a dog which we had received as a gift; perhaps they did not even consider it a loss. We telephoned wildly to Anastasia's inn, hoping he might find his way thither. In vain, nobody had seen him; two days passed before we heard that Anastasia had word from Hugelting that Lux had put in an appearance at his first

home some hour and a half before. Yes, he was there, his native idealism had drawn him back to the world of his early potato-parings; through wind and weather he had trotted alone the twelve or fourteen miles which he had first covered between the hind wheels of the farmer's cart. His former owners had to use it again to deliver him into Anastasia's hands once more. On the second day after that we went up to reclaim the wanderer, whom we found as before, tied to the table-leg, jaded and dishevelled, bemired from the mud of the roads. He did show signs of being glad to see us again—but then, why had he gone away?

The time came when it was plain that he had forgotten the farm—yet without having quite struck root with us; so that he was a masterless soul and like a leaf carried by the wind. When we took him walking we had to keep close watch, for he tended to snap the frail bond of sympathy which was all that as yet united us and to lose himself unobtrusively in the woods, where, being quite on his own, he would certainly have reverted to the condition of his wild forbears. Our care preserved him from this dark fate, we held him fast upon his civilized height and to his position as the comrade of man, which his race in the course of millennia has achieved. And then a decisive event, our removal to the city—or a suburb of it—made him wholly dependent upon us and definitely a member of the family.

Notes on Bashan's Character and Manner of Life

A man in the Isar valley had told me that this kind of dog can become a nuisance, by always wanting to be with his master. Thus I was forewarned against taking too personally Bashan's persistent faithfulness to myself, and it was easier for me to discourage it a little and protect myself at need. It is a deep-lying patriarchal instinct in the dog which leads him—at least in the more manly, outdoor breeds—to recognize and honour in the man of the house and head of the family his absolute master and overlord, protector of the hearth; and to find in the relation of vassalage to him the basis and value of his own existence,

whereas his attitude towards the rest of the family is much more independent. Almost from the very first day Bashan behaved in this spirit towards me, following me with his trustful eyes that seemed to be begging me to order him about—which I was chary of doing, for time soon showed that obedience was not one of his strong points—and dogging my footsteps in the obvious conviction that sticking to me was the natural order of things. In the family circle he always sat at my feet, never by any chance at anyone else's. And when we were walking, if I struck off on a path by myself, he invariably followed me and not the others. He insisted on being with me when I worked; if the garden door was closed he would disconcert me by jumping suddenly in at the window, bringing much gravel in his train and flinging himself down panting beneath my desk.

But the presence of any living thing—even a dog—is something of which we are very conscious; we attend to it in a way that is disturbing when we want to be alone. Thus Bashan could become a quite tangible nuisance. He would come up to me wagging his tail, look at me with devouring gaze, and prance provocatively. On the smallest encouragement he would put his forepaws on the arm of my chair, lean against me, and make me laugh with his kisses in the air. Then he would examine the things on my desk, obviously under the impression that they must be good to eat since he so often found me stooped above them; and so doing would smudge my freshly written page with his broad, hairy hunter's paws. I would sharply call him to order and he would lie down on the floor and go to sleep. But when he slept he dreamed, making running motions with all four paws and barking in a subterranean but perfectly audible sort of way. I quite comprehensibly found this distracting; in the first place the sound was uncannily ventriloquistic, in the second it gave me a guilty feeling. For this dream life was obviously an artificial substitute for real running, hunting, and open-air activity; it was supplied to him by his own nature because his life with me did not give him as much of it as his blood and his senses required. I felt touched; but since there was

nothing for it, I was constrained in the name of my higher interests to throw off the incubus, telling myself that Bashan brought altogether too much mud into the room and also that he damaged the carpet with his claws.

So then the fiat went forth that he might not be with me or in the house when I was there—though of course there might be exceptions to the rule. He was quick to understand and submit to the unnatural prohibition, as being the inscrutable will of his lord and master. The separation from me—which in winter often lasted the greater part of the day—was in his mind only a separation, not a divorce or severance of connections. He may not be with me, because I have so ordained. But the not being with me is a kind of negative being-with-me, just in that it is carrying out my command. Hence we can hardly speak of an independent existence carried on by Bashan during the hours when he is not by my side. Through the glass door of my study I can see him on the grass plot in front of the house, playing with children and putting on an absurd avuncular air. He repeatedly comes to the door and sniffs at the crack—he cannot see me through the muslin curtains—to assure himself of my presence within; then he sits down and mounts guard with his back to the door. Sometimes I see him from my window proying along on the elevated path between the aspen trees; but this is only to pass the time, the excursion is void of all pride or joy in life; in fact, it is unthinkable that Bashan should devote himself to the pleasures of the chase on his own account, though there is nothing to prevent him from doing so and my presence, as will be seen, is not always an unmixed advantage.

Life for him begins when I issue from the house—though, alas, it does not always begin even then! For the question is, when I do go out, which way am I going to turn: to the right, down the avenue, the road towards the open and our hunting-ground, or towards the left and the place where the trams stop, to ride into town? Only in the first case is there any sense in accompanying me. At first he used to follow me even when I turned left; when the tram thundered up he would look at it with amazement and then, suppressing his fears, land with one blind and

devoted leap among the crowd on the platform. Thence being dislodged by the popular indignation, he would gallop along on the ground behind the roaring vehicle which so little resembled the cart he once knew. He would keep up with it as long as he could, his breath getting shorter and shorter. But the city traffic bewildered his rustic brains; he got between people's legs, strange dogs fell on his flank, he was confused by a volume and variety of smells, the like of which he had never imagined, irresistibly distracted by house-corners impregnated with lingering ancient scents of old adventures. He would fall behind; sometimes he would overtake the tram again, sometimes not; sometimes he overtook the wrong one, which looked just the same, ran blindly in the wrong direction, further and further into a mad, strange world. Once he only came home after two days' absence, limping and starved to death, and, seeking the peace of the last house on the river-bank, found that his lord and master had been sensible enough to get there before him.

This happened two or three times. Then he gave it up and definitely declined to go with me when I turned to the left. He always knows instantly whether I have chosen the wild or the world, directly I get outside the door. He springs up from the mat in the entrance where he has been waiting for me and in that moment divines my intentions; my clothes betray me, the cane I carry, probably even my bearing: my cold and negligent glance or on the other hand the challenging eye I turn upon him. He understands. In the one case he tumbles over himself down the steps, he whirls round and round like a stone in a sling as in dumb rejoicing he runs before me to the gate. In the other he crouches, lays back his ears, the light goes out of his eyes, the fire I have kindled by my appearance dies down to ashes, and he puts on the guilty look which men and animals alike wear when they are unhappy.

Sometimes he cannot believe his eyes, even though they plainly tell him that there is no hope for the chase today. His yearning has been too strong. He refuses to see the signs, the urban walking-stick, the careful city clothes. He presses beside me through the gate, turns round like light-

ning, and tries to make me turn right, by running off at a gallop in that direction, twisting his head round, and ignoring the fatal negative which I oppose to his efforts. When I actually turn to the left he comes back and walks with me along the hedge, with little snorts and head-tones which seem to emerge from the high tension of his interior. He takes to jumping to and fro over the park railings; although they are rather high for comfort and he gives little moans as he leaps, being evidently afraid of hurting himself. He jumps with a sort of desperate gaiety which is bent on ignoring reality; also in the hope of beguiling me by his performance. For there is still a little—a very little—hope that I may still leave the highroad at the end of the park and turn left after all by the roundabout way past the pillarbox, as I do when I have letters to post. But I do that very seldom; so when that last hope has fled, then Bashan sits down and lets me go my way.

There he sits, in that clumsy rustic posture of his, in the middle of the road and looks after me as far as he can see me. If I turn my head he pricks up his ears, but he does not follow; even if I whistled he would not, for he knows it would be useless. When I turn out of the avenue I can still see him sitting there, a small, dark, clumsy figure in the road, and it goes to my heart, I have pangs of conscience as I mount the tram. He has waited so long—and we all know what torture waiting can be! His whole life is a waiting—waiting for the next walk in the open, a waiting that begins as soon as he is rested from the last one. Even his night consists of waiting; for his sleep is distributed throughout the whole twenty-four hours of the day, with many a little nap on the grass in the garden, the sun shining down warm on his coat, or behind the curtains of his kennel, to break up and shorten the empty spaces of the day. Thus his night sleep is broken too, not continuous, and manifold instincts urge him abroad in the darkness; he dashes to and fro all over the garden—and he waits. He waits for the night watchman to come on his rounds with his lantern and when he hears the recurrent heavy tread heralds it, against his own better knowledge, with a terrific outburst of barking. He waits for the sky to grow

pale, for the cocks to crow at the nursery-gardener's close by; for the morning breeze to rise among the tree-tops—and for the kitchen door to be opened, so that he may slip in and warm himself at the stove.

Still, the night-time martyrdom must be mild compared with what Bashan has to endure in the day. And particularly when the weather is fine, either winter or summer, when the sunshine lures one abroad and all the muscles twitch with the craving for violent motion—and the master, without whom it is impossible to conceive doing anything—simply will not leave his post behind the glass door. All that agile little body, feverishly alive with pulsating life, is rested through and through, is worn out with resting; sleep is not to be thought of. He comes up on the terrace outside my door, lets himself down with a sigh that seems to come from his very heart, and rests his head on his paws, rolling his eyes up patiently to heaven. That lasts but a few seconds, he cannot stand the position any more, he sickens of it. One other thing there is to do. He can go down again and lift his leg against one of the little formal arbor-vitæ trees that flank the rose-bed—it is the one to the right that suffers from his attentions, wasting away so that it has to be replanted every year. He does go down, then, and performs this action, not because he needs to, but just to pass the time. He stands there a long time, with very little to show for it, however—so long that the hind leg in the air begins to tremble and he has to give a little hop to regain his balance. On four legs once more he is no better off than he was. He stares stupidly up into the boughs of the ash trees, where two birds are fitting and chirping; watches them dart off like arrows and turns away as though in contempt of such light-headedness. He stretches, fit to tear himself apart. The stretching is very thorough; it is done in two sections, thus: first the forelegs, lifting the hind ones into the air; second the rear quarters, by sprawling them out on the ground; both actions being accompanied by tremendous yawning. Then that is over too, cannot be spun out any longer, and if you have just finished an exhaustive stretching you cannot do it over again just at once. He stands still and looks gloomily at the

ground. Then he begins to turn round on himself, slowly and consideringly, as though he wanted to lie down, yet was not quite certain of the best way to do it. Finally he decides not to; he moves off sluggishly to the middle of the grass-plot, and once there flings himself violently on his back and scrubs to and fro as though to cool off on the shaven turf. Quite a blissful sensation, this, it seems, for his paws jerk and he snaps in all directions in a delirium of release and satisfaction. He drains this joy down to its vapid dregs, aware that it is fleeting, that you cannot roll and tumble more than ten seconds at most, and that no sound and soul-contenting weariness will result from it, but only a flatness and returning boredom, such as always follows when one tries to drug oneself. He lies there on his side with his eyes rolled up, as though he were dead. Then he gets up and shakes himself, shakes as only his like can shake without fearing concussion of the brain; shakes until everything rattles, until his ears flop together under his chin and foam flies from his dazzling white teeth. And then? He stands perfectly still in his tracks, rigid, dead to the world, without the least idea what to do next. And then, driven to extremes, he climbs the steps once more, comes up to the glass door, lifts his paw and scratches—hesitantly, with his ears laid back, the complete beggar. He scratches only once, quite faintly; but this timidly lifted paw, this single, faint-hearted scratch, to which he has come because he simply cannot think of anything else, are too moving. I get up and open the door, though I know it can lead to no good. And he begins to dance and jump, challenging me to be a man and come abroad with him. He rumples the rugs, upsets the whole room and makes an end of all my peace and quiet. But now judge for yourself if, after I have seen Bashan wait like this, I can find it easy to go off in the tram and leave him, a pathetic little dot at the end of the poplar avenue!

In the long twilights of summer, things are not quite so bad: there is a good chance that I will take an evening walk in the open and thus even after long waiting he will come into his own and with good luck be able to start a hare. But in winter if I go off in the afternoon it is all over

for the day, all hope must be buried for another four-and-twenty hours. For night will have fallen; if I go out again our hunting-grounds will lie in inaccessible darkness and I must bend my steps towards the traffic, the lighted streets, and city parks up the river—and this does not suit Bashan's simple soul. He came with me at first, but soon gave it up and stopped at home. Not only that space and freedom were lacking; he was afraid of the bright lights in the darkness, he shied at every bush, at every human form. A policeman's flapping cloak could make him swerve aside with a yelp or even lead him to attack the officer with a courage born of desperation; when the latter, frightened in his turn, would let loose a stream of abuse to our address. Unfortunate episodes mounted up when Bashan and I went out together in the dark and the damp. And speaking of policemen reminds me that there are three classes of human beings whom Bashan does especially abhor: policemen, monks, and chimney-sweeps. He cannot stand them, he assails them with a fury of barking wherever he sees them or when they chance to pass the house.

And winter is of course the time of year when freedom and sobriety are with most difficulty preserved against snares; when it is hardest to lead a regular, retired, and concentrated existence; when I may even seek the city a second time in the day. For the evening has its social claims, pursuing which I may come back at midnight, with the last tram, or losing that am driven to return on foot, my head in a whirl with ideas and wine and smoke, full of roseate views of the world and of course long past the point of normal fatigue. And then the embodiment of that other, truer, soberer life of mine, my own hearthstone, in person, as it were, may come to meet me; not wounded, not reproachful, but on the contrary giving me joyous welcome and bringing me back to my own. I mean, of course, Bashan. In pitchy darkness, the river roaring in my ears, I turn into the poplar avenue, and after the first few steps I am enveloped in a soundless storm of prancings and swishings; on the first occasion I did not know what was happening. "Bashan?" I inquire into the blackness.

The prancings and swishings redouble—is this a dancing dervish or a Berserk warrior here on my path? But not a sound; and directly I stand still, I feel those honest, wet and muddy paws on the lapels of my raincoat, and a snapping and flapping in my face, which I draw back even as I stoop down to pat the lean shoulder, equally wet with snow or rain. Yes, the good soul has come to meet the tram. Well informed as always upon my comings and goings, he has got up at what he judged to be the right time, to fetch me from the station. He may have been waiting a long while, in snow or rain, yet his joy at my final appearance knows no resentment at my faithlessness, though I have neglected him all day and brought his hopes to naught. I pat and praise him, and as we go home together I tell him what a fine fellow he is and promise him (that is to say, not so much him as myself) that tomorrow, no matter what the weather, we two will follow the chase together. And resolving thus, I feel my worldly preoccupations melt away; sobriety returns; for the image I have conjured up of our hunting-ground and the charms of its solitude is linked in my mind with the call to higher, stranger, more obscure concerns of mine.

There are still other traits of Bashan's character which I should like to set down here, so that the gentle reader may get as lively and speaking an image of him as is any-way possible. Perhaps the best way would be for me to compare him with our deceased Percy; for a better-defined contrast than that between these two never existed within the same species. First and foremost we must remember that Bashan was entirely sound in mind, whereas Percy, as I have said, and as often happens among aristocratic canines, had always been mad, through and through, a perfectly typical specimen of frantic over-breeding. I have referred to this subject before, in a somewhat wider connection; here I only want, for purposes of comparison, to speak of Bashan's infinitely simpler, more ordinary mentality, expressed for instance in the way he would greet you, or in his behaviour on our walks. His manifestations were always within the bounds of a hearty and healthy com-

mon sense; they never even bordered on the hysterical, whereas Percy's on all such occasions overstepped them in a way that was at times quite shocking.

And even that does not quite cover the contrast between these two creatures; the truth is more complex and involved still. Bashan is coarser-fibred, true, like the lower classes; but like them also he is not above complaining. His noble predecessor, on the other hand, united more delicacy and a greater capacity for suffering, with an infinitely firmer and prouder spirit; despite all his foolishness he far excelled in self-discipline the powers of Bashan's peasant soul. In saying this I am not defending any aristocratic system of values. It is simply to do honour to truth and actuality that I want to bring out the mixture of softness and hardness, delicacy and firmness in the two natures. Bashan, for instance, is quite able to spend the coldest winter night out of doors, behind the sacking curtains of his kennel. He has a weakness of the bladder which makes it impossible for him to remain seven hours shut up in a room; we have to fasten him out, even in the most inhospitable weather, and trust to his robust constitution. Sometimes after a particularly bitter and foggy winter night he comes into the house with his moustache and whiskers like delicately frosted wires; with a little cold, even, and coughing in the odd, one-syllabled way that dogs have. But in a few hours he has got all over it and takes no harm at all. Whereas we should never have dared to expose our silken-haired Percy to such rigours. Yet Bashan is afraid of the slightest pain, behaving so abjectly that one would feel disgusted if the plebeian simplicity of his behaviour did not make one laugh instead. When he goes stalking in the underbrush, I constantly hear him yelping because he has been scratched by a thorn or a branch has struck him in the face. If he hurts his foot or skins his belly a little, jumping over a fence, he sets up a cry like an antique hero in his death-agony; comes to me hobbling on three legs, howling and lamenting in an abandonment of self-pity—the more piercingly, the more sympathy he gets—and this although in fifteen minutes he will be running and jumping again as though nothing had happened.

With Percival it was otherwise; he clenched his jaws and was still. He was afraid of the dog-whip, as Bashan is too; and tasted it, alas, more often than the latter, for in his day I was younger and quicker-tempered and his witlessness often assumed a vicious aspect which cried out for chastisement and drove me on to administer it. When I was quite beside myself and took down the lash from the nail where it hung, Percy might crawl under a table or a bench. But not a sound would escape him under punishment; even at a second flogging he would give vent only to a fervent moan if it stung worse than usual—whereas the base-born Bashan will howl abjectly if I so much as raise my arm. In short, no sense of honour, no strictness with himself. And anyhow, it seldom comes to corporal punishment, for I long ago ceased to make demands upon him contrary to his nature, of a kind which would lead to conflict between us.

For example, I never ask him to learn tricks; it would be of no use. He is not talented, no circus dog, no trained clown. He is a sound, vigorous young hunter, not a professor. I believe I remarked that he is a capital jumper. No obstacle too great, if the incentive be present: if he cannot jump it he will scrabble up somehow and let himself fall on the other side—at least, he conquers it one way or another. But it must be a genuine obstacle, not to be jumped through or crawled under; otherwise he would think it folly to jump. A wall, a ditch, a fence, a thickset hedge, are genuine obstacles; a crosswise bar, a stick held out, are not, and you cannot jump over them without going contrary to reason and looking silly. Which Bashan refuses to do. He refuses. Try to make him jump over some such unreal obstacle; in the end you will be reduced to taking him by the scruff of the neck, in your anger, and flinging him over, while he whimpers and yaps. Once on the other side he acts as though he had done just what you wanted and celebrates the event in a frenzy of barking and capering. You may coax or you may punish; you cannot break down his reasonable resistance to performing a mere trick. He is not unaccommodating, he sets store by his master's approval, he will jump over a hedge at my will or my

command, and not only when he feels like it himself, and enjoys very much the praise I bestow. But over a bar or a stick he will not jump, he will crawl underneath—if he were to die for it. A hundred times he will beg for forgiveness, forbearance, consideration; he fears pain, fears it to the point of being abject. But no fear and no pain can make him capable of a performance which in itself would be child's-play for him, but for which he obviously lacks all mental equipment. When you confront him with it, the question is not whether he will jump or not; that is already settled, and the command means nothing to him but a beating. To demand of him what reason forbids him to understand and hence to do is simply in his eyes to seek a pretext for blows, strife, and disturbance of friendly relations—it is merely the first step towards all these things. Thus Bashan looks at it, so far as I can see, and I doubt whether one may properly charge him with obstinacy. Obstinacy may be broken down, in the last analysis it cries out to be broken down; but Bashan's resistance to performing a trick he would seal with his death.

Extraordinary creature! So close a friend and yet so remote; so different from us, in certain ways, that our language has not power to do justice to his canine logic. For instance, what is the meaning of that frightful circumstantiality—unnerving alike to the spectator and to the parties themselves—attendant on the meeting of dog and dog; or on their first acquaintance or even on their first sight of each other? My excursions with Bashan have made me witness to hundreds of such encounters, or, I might better say, forced me to be an embarrassed spectator at them. And every time, for the duration of the episode, my old familiar Bashan was a stranger to me, I found it impossible to enter into his feelings or behaviour or understand the tribal laws which governed them. Certainly the meeting in the open of two dogs, strangers to each other, is one of the most painful, thrilling, and pregnant of all conceivable encounters; it is surrounded by an atmosphere of the last uncanniness, presided over by a constraint for which I have no preciser name; they simply cannot pass

each other, their mutual embarrassment is frightful to behold.

I am not speaking of the case where one of the parties is shut up behind a hedge or a fence. Even then it is not easy to interpret their feelings—but at least the situation is less acute. They sniff each other from far off, and Bashan suddenly seeks shelter in my neighbourhood, whining a little to give vent to a distress and oppression which simply no words can describe. At the same time the imprisoned stranger sets up a violent barking, ostensibly in his character as a good watch-dog, but passing over unconsciously into a whimpering much like Bashan's own, an unsatisfied, envious, distressful whine. We draw near. The strange dog is waiting for us, close to the hedge, grousing and bemoaning his impotence; jumping at the barrier and giving every sign—how seriously one cannot tell—of intending to tear Bashan to pieces if only he could get at him. Bashan might easily stick close to me and pass him by; but he goes up to the hedge. He has to, he would even if I forbade him; to remain away would be to transgress a code older and more inviolable than any prohibition of mine. He advances, then, and with a modest and inscrutable bearing performs that rite which he knows will soothe and appease the other—even if temporarily—so long as the stranger performs it too, though whining and complaining in the act. Then they both chase wildly along the hedge, each on his own side, as close as possible, neither making a sound. At the end of the hedge they both face about and dash back again. But in full career both suddenly halt and stand as though rooted to the spot; they stand still, facing the hedge, and put their noses together through it. For some space of time they stand thus, then resume their curious, futile race shoulder to shoulder on either side of the barrier. But in the end my dog avails himself of his freedom and moves off—a frightful moment for the prisoner! He cannot stand it, he finds it namelessly humiliating that the other should dream of simply going off like that. He raves and slavers and contorts himself in his rage; runs like one mad up and down his enclosure; threatens to jump the

hedge and have the faithless Bashan by the throat; he yells insults behind the retreating back. Bashan hears it all, it distresses him, as his manner shows. But he does not turn round, he jogs along beside me, while the cursings in our rear die down into whinings and are still.

Such the procedure when one of the parties is shut up. Embarrassments multiply when both of them are free. I do not relish describing the scene: it is one of the most painful and equivocal imaginable. Bashan has been bounding light-heartedly beside me; he comes up close, he fairly forces himself upon me, with a sniffing and whimpering that seem to come from his very depths. I still do not know what moves his utterance, but I recognize it at once and gather that there is a strange dog in the offing. I look about—yes, there he comes, and even at this distance his strained and hesitating mien betrays that he has already seen Bashan. I am scarcely less upset than they; I find the meeting most undesirable. "Go away," I say to Bashan. "Why do you glue yourself to my leg? Can't you go off and do your business by yourselves?" I try to frighten him off with my cane. For if they start biting—which may easily happen, with reason or without—I shall find it most unpleasant to have them between my feet. "Go away!" I repeat, in a lower voice. But Bashan does not go away, he sticks in his distress the closer to me, making as brief a pause as he can at a tree-trunk to perform the accustomed rite; I can see the other dog doing the same. We are now within twenty paces, the suspense is frightful. The strange dog is crawling on his belly, like a cat, his head thrust out. In this posture he awaits Bashan's approach, poised to spring at the right moment for his throat. But he does not do it, nor does Bashan seem to expect that he will. Or at least he goes up to the crouching stranger, though plainly trembling and heavy-hearted; he would do this, he is obliged to do it, even though I were to act myself and leave him to face the situation alone by striking into a side path. However painful the encounter, he has no choice, avoidance is not to be thought of. He is under a spell, he is bound to the other dog, they are bound to each other with some

obscure and equivocal bond which may not be denied. We are now within two paces.

Then the other gets up, without a sound, as though he had never been behaving like a tiger, and stands there just as Bashan is standing, profoundly embarrassed, wretched, at a loss. They cannot pass each other. They probably want to, they turn away their heads, rolling their eyes sideways; evidently the same sense of guilt weighs on them both. They edge cautiously up to each other with a hang-dog air; they stop flank to flank and sniff under each other's tails. At this point the rowing begins, and I speak to Bashan low-voiced and warn him, for now is the decisive moment, now we shall know whether it will come to biting or whether I shall be spared that rude shock. It does come to biting, I do not know how, still less why: quite suddenly they are nothing but a raging tumult and whirling coil out of which issue the frightful guttural noises that animals make when they engage. I may have to engage too, with my cane, to forestall a worse calamity; I may try to get Bashan by the neck or the collar and hold him up at arm's length in the air, the stranger dog hanging on by his teeth. Other horrors there are, too, which I may have to face—and feel them afterwards in all my limbs during the rest of our walk. But it may be too, that after all the preliminaries the affair will pass tamely off and no harm done. At best it is hard to part the two; even if they are not clenched by the teeth, they are held by that inward bond. They may seem to have passed each other, they are no longer flank to flank, but in a straight line with their heads in opposite directions; they may not even turn their heads, but only be rolling their eyes backwards. There may even be a space between them—and yet the painful bond still holds. Neither knows if the right moment for release has come, they would both like to go, yet each seems to have conscientious scruples. Slowly, slowly, the bond loosens, snaps; Bashan bounds lightly away, with, as it were, a new lease on life.

I speak of these things only to show how under stress of circumstance the character of a near friend may reveal

itself as strange and foreign. It is dark to me, it is mysterious; I observe it with head-shakings and can only dimly guess what it may mean. And in all other respects I understand Bashan so well, I feel such lively sympathy for all his manifestations! For example, how well I know that whining yawn of his when our walk has been disappointing, too short, or devoid of sporting interest; when I have begun the day late and only gone out for a quarter of an hour before dinner. At such times he walks beside me and yawns—an open, impudent yawn to the whole extent of his jaws, an animal, audible yawn insultingly expressive of his utter boredom. "A fine master I have!" it seems to say. "Far in the night last night I met him at the bridge and now he sits behind his glass door and I wait for him dying of boredom. And when he does go out he only does it to come back again before there is time to start any game. A fine master! Not a proper master at all—really a rotten master, if you ask me!"

Such was the meaning of his yawn, vulgarly plain beyond all misunderstanding. And I admit that he is right, that he has a just grievance, and I put out a hand to pat his shoulder consolingly or to stroke his head. But he is not, under such circumstances, grateful for caresses; he yawns again, if possible more rudely than before, and moves away from my hand, although by nature, in contrast to Percy and in harmony with his own plebeian sentimentality, he sets great store by caresses. He particularly likes having his throat scratched and has a funny way of guiding one's hand to the right place by energetic little jerks of his head. That he has no room just now for endearments is partly due to his disappointment, but also to the fact that when he is in motion—and that means that I also am—he does not care for them. His mood is too manly; but it changes directly I sit down. Then he is all for friendliness again and responds to it with clumsy enthusiasm.

When I sit reading in a corner of the garden wall, or on the lawn with my back to a favourite tree, I enjoy interrupting my intellectual preoccupations to talk and play with Bashan. And what do I say to him? Mostly his own name, the two syllables which are of the utmost personal

interest because they refer to himself and have an electric effect upon his whole being. I rouse and stimulate his sense of his own ego by impressing upon him—varying my tone and emphasis—that he *is* Bashan and that Bashan is his name. By continuing this for a while I can actually produce in him a state of ecstasy, a sort of intoxication with his own identity, so that he begins to whirl round on himself and send up loud exultant barks to heaven out of the weight of dignity that lies on his chest. Or we amuse ourselves, I by tapping him on the nose, he by snapping at my hand as though it were a fly. It makes us both laugh, yes, Bashan has to laugh too; and as I laugh I marvel at the sight, to me the oddest and most touching thing in the world. It is moving to see how under my teasing his thin animal cheeks and the corners of his mouth will twitch, and over his dark animal mask will pass an expression like a human smile, or at least some ungainly, pathetic semblance of one. It gives way to a look of startled embarrassment, then transforms the face by appearing again. . . .

But I will go no further nor involve myself in more detail of the kind. Even so I am dismayed at the space I have been led on to give to this little description; for what I had in mind to do was merely to display, as briefly as I might, my hero in his element, on the scene where he is most at home, most himself, and where his gifts show to best advantage; I mean, of course, the chase. But first I must give account to my reader of the theatre of these delights, my landscape by the river and Bashan's hunting-ground. It is a strip of land intimately bound up with his personality, familiar, loved, and significant to me like himself; which fact, accordingly, without further literary justification or embellishment, must serve as the occasion for my description.

The Hunting-Ground

The spacious gardens of the suburb where we live contain many large old trees that rise above the villa roofs and form a striking contrast to the saplings set out at a later period. Unquestionably they are the earliest inhabitants, the pride and adornment of a settlement which is still not

very old. They have been carefully protected and preserved, so far as was possible; when any one of them came into conflict with the boundaries of the parcels of land, some venerable silvery moss-grown trunk standing exactly on a border-line, the hedge makes a little curve round it, or an accommodating gap is left in a wall, and the ancient towers up half on public, half on private ground, with bare snow-covered boughs or adorned with its tiny, late-coming leaves.

They are a variety of ash, a tree that loves moisture more than most—and their presence here shows what kind of soil we have. It is not so long since human brains reclaimed it for human habitation; not more than a decade or so. Before that it was a marshy wilderness, a breeding-place for mosquitoes, where willows, dwarf poplars, and other stunted growths mirrored themselves in stagnant pools. The region is subject to floods. There is a stratum of impermeable soil a few yards under the surface; it has always been boggy, with standing water in the hollows. They drained it by lowering the level of the river—engineering is not my strong point, but anyhow it was some such device, by means of which the water which cannot sink into the earth now flows off laterally into the river by several subterranean channels, and the ground is left comparatively dry—but only comparatively, for Bashan and I, knowing it as we do, are acquainted with certain low, retired, and rushy spots, relics of the primeval condition of the region, whose damp coolness defies the summer heat and makes them a grateful place wherein to draw a few long breaths.

The whole district has its peculiarities, indeed, which distinguish it at a glance from the pine forests and moss-grown meadows which are the usual setting of a mountain stream. It has preserved its original characteristics even since it was acquired by the real-estate company; even outside the gardens the original vegetation preponderates over the newly planted. In the avenues and parks, of course, horse-chestnuts and quick-growing maple trees, beeches, and all sorts of ornamental shrubs have been set out; also rows of French poplars standing erect in their sterile masculinity. But the ash trees, as I said, are the

aborigines; they are everywhere, and of all ages, century-old giants and tender young seedlings pushing their way by hundreds, like weeds, through the gravel. It is the ash, together with the silver poplar, the aspen, the birch, and the willow, that gives the scene its distinctive look. All these trees have small leaves, and all this small-leaved foliage is very striking by contrast with the huge trunks. But there are elms too, spreading their large, varnished, saw-edged leaves to the sun. And everywhere too are masses of creeper, winding round the young trees in the underbrush and inextricably mingling its leaves with theirs. Little thickets of slim alder trees stand in the hollows. There are few lime trees, no oaks or firs at all, in our domain, though there are some on the slope which bounds it to the east, where the soil changes and with it the character of the vegetation. There they stand out black against the sky, like sentinels guarding our little valley.

It is not more than five hundred yards from slope to river—I have paced it out. Perhaps the strip of river-bank widens a little, further down, but not to any extent; so it is remarkable what landscape variety there is in this small area, even when one makes such moderate use of the playground it affords along the river as do Bashan and I, who rarely spend more than two hours there, counting our going and coming. There is such diversity that we need hardly take the same path twice or ever tire of the view or be conscious of any limitations of space; and this is due to the circumstance that our domain divides itself into three quite different regions or zones. We may confine ourselves to one of these or we may combine all three: they are the neighbourhood of the river and its banks, the neighbourhood of the opposite slope, and the wooded section in the middle.

The wooded zone, the parks, the osier brakes, and the riverside shrubbery take up most of the breadth. I search in vain for a word better than "wood" to describe this strange tract of land. For it is no wood in the usual sense of the word: not a pillared hall of even-sized trunks, carpeted with moss and fallen leaves. The trees in our hunting-ground are of uneven growth and size, hoary

giants of willows and poplars, especially along the river, though also deeper in; others ten or fifteen years old, which are probably as large as they will grow; and lastly a legion of slender trees, young ashes, birches, and alders in a nursery garden planted by nature herself. These look larger than they are; and all, as I said, are wound round with creepers which give a look of tropical luxuriance to the scene. But I suspect them of choking the growth of their hosts, for I cannot see that the trunks have grown any thicker in all the years I have known them.

The trees are of few and closely related species. The alder belongs to the birch family, the poplar is after all not very different from a willow. And one might say that they all approach the willow type; foresters tell us that trees tend to adapt themselves to their local conditions, showing a certain conformity, as it were, to the prevailing mode. It is the distorted, fantastic, witchlike silhouette of the willow tree, dweller by still and by flowing waters, that sets the fashion here, with her branches like broom-splints and her crooked-fingered tips; and all the others visibly try to be like her. The silver poplar apes her best; but often it is hard to tell poplar from birch, so much is the latter beguiled by the spirit of the place to take on misshapen forms. Not that there are not also plenty of very shapely and well-grown single specimens of this lovable tree, and enchanting they look in the favouring glow of the late afternoon. In this region the birch appears as a slender silvery bole with a crown of little, separate leaves atop; as a lovely, lithe, and well-grown maiden; it has the prettiest of chalk-white trunks, and its foliage droops like delicate languishing locks of hair. But there are also birches colossal in size, that no man could span with his arms, the bark of which is only white high up, but near the ground has turned black and coarse and is seamed with fissures.

The soil is not like what one expects in a wood. It is loamy, gravelly, even sandy. It seems anything but fertile, and yet, within its nature, is almost luxuriantly so; for it is overgrown with tall, rank grass, often the dry, sharp-cornered kind that grows on dunes. In winter it covers the ground like trampled hay; not seldom it cannot be dis-

tinguished from reeds, but in other places it is soft and fat and juicy, and among it grow hemlock, coltsfoot, nettles, all sorts of low-growing things, mixed with tall thistles and tender young tree shoots. Pheasants and other wildfowl hide in this vegetation, which rolls up to and over the gnarled roots of the trees. And everywhere the wild grape and the hop-vine clamber out of the thicket to twine round the trunks in garlands of flapping leaves, or in winter with bare stems like the toughest sort of wire.

Now, all this is not a wood, it is not a park, it is simply an enchanted garden, no more and no less. I will stand for the word—though of course nature here is stingy and sparse and tends to the deformed; a few botanical names exhausting the catalogue of her performance. The ground is rolling, it constantly rises and falls away, so that the view is enclosed on every hand, with a lovely effect of remoteness and privacy. Indeed, if the wood stretched for miles to right and left, as far as it reaches lengthwise, instead of only a hundred and some paces on each side from the middle, one could not feel more secluded. Only by the sense of sound is one made aware of the friendly nearness of the river; you cannot see it, but it whispers gently from the west. There are gorges choked with shrubbery—elder, privet, jasmine, and wild cherry—on close June days the scent is almost overpowering. And again there are low-lying spots, regular gravel-pits, where nothing but a few willow-shoots and a little sage can grow, at the bottom or on the sides.

And all this scene never ceases to exert a strange influence upon me, though it has been my almost daily walk for some years. The fine massed foliage of the ash puts me in mind of a giant fern; these creepers and climbers, this barrenness and this damp, this combination of lush and dry, has a fantastic effect; to convey my whole meaning, it is a little as though I were transported to another geological period, or even to the bottom of the sea—and the fantasy has this much of fact about it, that water did stand here once, for instance in the square low-lying meadow basins thick with shoots of self-sown ash, which now serve as pasture for sheep. One such lies directly behind my house.

The wilderness is crossed in all directions by paths, some of them only lines of trodden grass or gravelly trails, obviously born of use and not laid out—though it would be hard to say who trod them, for only by way of unpleasant exception do Bashan and I meet anyone here. When that happens he stands stock still and gives a little growl which very well expresses my own feelings too. Even on the fine summer Sunday afternoons which bring crowds of people to walk in these parts—for it is always a few degrees cooler here—we remain undisturbed in our fastness. They know it not; the water is the great attraction, as a rule, the river in its course; the human stream gets as close as it can, down to the very edge if there is no flood, rolls along beside it, and then back home again. At most we may come on a pair of lovers in the shrubbery; they look at us wide-eyed and startled out of their nest, or else defiantly as though to ask what objection we have to their presence or their behaviour. All which we disclaim by beating swift retreat, Bashan with the indifference he feels for everything that does not smell like game; I with a face utterly devoid of all expression, either approving or the reverse.

But these woodland paths are not the only way we have of reaching my park. There are streets as well—or rather there are traces, which once were streets, or which once were to have been streets, or which, by God's will, may yet become streets. In other words: there are signs that the pickaxe has been at work, signs of a hopeful real-estate enterprise for some distance beyond the built-up section and the villas. There has been some far-sighted planning on the part of the company which some years ago acquired the land; but their plans went beyond their capacity for carrying them out, for the villas were only a part of what they had in mind. Building-lots were laid out; an area extending for nearly a mile down the river was prepared, and doubtless still remains prepared, to receive possible purchasers and home-loving settlers. The building society conceived things on a rather large scale. They enclosed the river between dykes, they built quays and planted gardens, and, not content with that, they had embarked on clearing the woods, dumped piles of gravel, cut roads through the

wilderness, one or two lengthwise and several across the width; fine, well-planned roads, or at least the first steps towards them, made of coarse gravel, with a wide foot-path and indications of a curb-stone. But no one walks there save Bashan and myself, he on the good stout leather of his four paws, I in hobnailed boots on account of the gravel. For the stately villas projected by the company are still non-existent, despite the good example I set when I built my own house. They have been, I say, non-existent for ten, no, fifteen years; it is no wonder that a kind of blight has settled upon the enterprise and discouragement reigns in the bosom of the building society, a disinclination to go on with their project.

However, things had got so far forward that these streets, though not built up, have all been given names, just as though they were in the centre of the town or in a suburb. I should very much like to know what sort of speculator he was who named them; he seems to have been a literary chap with a fondness for the past: there is an Opitzstrasse, a Flemmingstrasse, a Bürgerstrasse, even an Adalbert-Stifterstrasse—I walk on the last-named with especial reverence in my hobnailed boots. At all the corners stakes have been driven in the ground with street signs affixed to them, as is usual in suburbs where there are no house-corners to receive them; they are the usual little blue enamel plates with white lettering. But alas, they are rather the worse for wear. They have stood here far too long, pointing out the names of vacant sites where nobody wants to live; they are monuments to the failure, the discouragement, and the arrested development of the whole enterprise. They have not been kept up or renewed, the climate has done its worst by them. The enamel has scaled off, the lettering is rusty, there are ugly broken-edged gaps which make the names sometimes almost illegible. One of them, indeed, puzzled me a good deal when I first came here and was spying about the neighbourhood. It was a long name, and the word "street" was perfectly clear, but most of the rest was eaten by rust; there remained only an S at the beginning, an E somewhere about the middle, and another E at the end. I could not reckon with so many un-

known quantities. I studied the sign a long time with my hands behind my back, then continued along the foot-path with Bashan. I thought I was thinking about something else, but all the time my brains were privately cudgelling themselves, and suddenly it came over me. I stopped with a start, stood still, and then hastened back, took up my former position, and tested my guess. Yes, it fitted. The name of the street where I was walking was Shakespeare Street.

The streets suit the signboards and the signboards suit the streets—it is a strange and dreamlike harmony in decay. The streets run through the wood they have broken into; but the wood does not remain passive. It does not let the streets stop as they were made, through decade after decade, until at last people come and settle on them. It takes every step to close them again; for what grows here does not mind gravel, it flourishes in it. Purple thistles, blue sage, silvery shoots of willow, and green ash seedlings spring up all over the road and even on the pavement; the streets with the poetic names are going back to the wilderness, whether one likes it or not; in another ten years Opitzstrasse, Flemmingstrasse, and the rest will be closed, they will probably as good as disappear. There is at present no ground for complaint; for from the romantic and picturesque point of view there are no more beautiful streets in the world than they are now. Nothing could be more delightful than strolling through them in their unfinished, abandoned state, if one has on stout boots and does not mind the gravel. Nothing more agreeable to the eye than looking from the wild garden beneath one's feet to the humid massing of fine-leaved foliage that shuts in the view—foliage such as Claude Lorraine used to paint, three centuries ago. Such as he used to paint, did I say? But surely he painted *this*. He was here, he knew this scene, he studied it. If my building-society man had not confined himself to the literary field, one of these rusty street signs might have borne the name of Claude.

Well, that is our middle or wooded region. But the eastern slope has its own charms not to be despised, either by me or by Bashan, who has his own reasons, which will

appear hereafter. I might call this region the zone of the brook; for it takes its idyllic character as landscape from the stream that flows through it, and the peaceful loveliness of its beds of forget-me-not makes it a fit companion-piece to the zone on the other side with its rushing river, whose flowing, when the west wind blows, can be faintly heard even all the way across our hunting-ground. The first of the made cross-roads through the wood runs like a causeway from the poplar avenue to the foot of the hillside, between low-lying pasture-ground on one side and wooded lots of land on the other. And from there a path descends to the left, used by the children to coast on in winter. The brook rises in the level ground at the bottom of this descent. We love to stroll beside it, Bashan and I, on the right or the left bank at will, through the varied territory of our eastern zone. On our left is an extent of wooded meadow, and a nursery-gardening establishment; we can see the backs of the buildings, and sheep cropping the clover, presided over by a rather stupid little girl in a red frock. She keeps propping her hands on her knees and screaming at her charges at the top of her lungs in a harsh, angry, and imperious voice. But she seems to be afraid of the majestic old ram, who looks enormously fat in his thick fleece and who does as he likes regardless of her bullying ways. The child's screams rise to their height when the sheep are thrown into a panic by the appearance of Bashan; and this almost always happens, quite against his will or intent, for he is profoundly indifferent to their existence, behaves as though they were not there, or even deliberately and contemptuously ignores them in an effort to forestall an attack of panic folly on their part. Their scent is strong enough to me, though not unpleasant; but it is not a scent of game, so Bashan takes no interest in harrying them. But let him make a single move, or merely appear on the scene, and the whole flock, but now grazing peacefully over the meadow and bleating in their curiously human voices, some bass, some treble, suddenly collect in a huddled mass of backs and go dashing off, while the imbecile child stoops over and screams at them until her

voice cracks and her eyes pop out of her head. Bashan looks up at me as though to say: Am I to blame, did I do anything at all?

But once something quite the opposite happened, that was even more extraordinary and distressing than any panic. A sheep, a quite ordinary specimen, of medium size and the usual sheepish face, save for a narrow-lipped little mouth turned up at the corners into a smile which gave the creature an uncommonly sly and fatuous look—this sheep appeared to be smitten with Bashan's charms. It followed him; it left the flock and the pasture-ground and followed at his heels, wherever he went, smiling with extravagant stupidity. He left the path, and it followed. He ran, it galloped after. He stopped, it did the same, close behind him and smiling its inscrutable smile. Embarrassment and dismay were painted on Bashan's face, and certainly his position was highly distasteful. For good or for ill it lacked any kind of sense or reason. Nothing so consummately silly had ever happened to either of us. The sheep got further and further away from its base, but it seemed not to care for that; it followed the exasperated Bashan apparently resolved to part from him nevermore, but to be at his side whithersoever he went. He stuck close at my side; not so much alarmed—for the which there was no cause—as ashamed of the disgraceful situation. At last, as though he had had enough of it, he stood still, turned round, and gave a menacing growl. The sheep bleated—it was like a man's laugh, a spiteful laugh—and put poor Bashan so beside himself that he ran away with his tail between his legs, the sheep bounding absurdly behind him.

Meanwhile he had got a good way from the flock; the addle-pated little girl was screaming fit to burst, and not only bending her knees but jerking them up and down as she screamed till they touched her face, and she looked from a distance like a demented dwarf. A dairymaid in an apron came running, her attention being drawn by the shrieks or in some other way. She had a pitchfork in one hand; with the other she held her breasts, that shook up and down as she ran. She tried to drive back the sheep with the

pitchfork—it had started after Bashan again—but unsuccessfully. The sheep did indeed spring away from the fork in the right direction, but then swung round again to follow Bashan's trail. It seemed no power on earth would divert it. But at last I saw what had to be done and turned round. We all marched back, Bashan beside me, behind him the sheep, behind the sheep the maid with the pitchfork, the child in the red frock bouncing and stamping at us all the while. It was not enough to go back to the flock, we had to do the job thoroughly. We went into the farm-yard and to the sheep-pen, where the farm girl rolled back the big door with her strong right arm. We all went inside, all of us; and then the rest of us had to slip out again and shut the door in the face of the poor deluded sheep, so that it was taken prisoner. And then, after receiving the farm girl's thanks, Bashan and I might resume our interrupted walk, to the end of which Bashan preserved a sulky and humiliated air.

So much for the sheep. Beyond the farm buildings is an extensive colony of allotments, that looks rather like a cemetery, with its arbours and little summer-houses like chapels and each tiny garden neatly enclosed. The whole colony has a fence round it, with a latticed gate, through which only the owners of the plots have admission. Sometimes I have seen a man with his sleeves rolled up digging his few yards of vegetable-plot—he looked as though he were digging his own grave. Beyond this come open meadows full of mole-hills, reaching to the edge of the middle wooded region; besides the moles, the place abounds in field mice—I mention them on account of Bashan and his multifarious joy of the chase.

But on the other, the right side, the brook and the hill-side continue, the latter, as I said, with great variety in its contours. The first part is shadowed and gloomy and set with pines. Then comes a sand-pit which reflects the warm rays of the sun; then a gravel-pit, then a cataract of bricks, as though a house had been demolished up above and the rubble simply flung down the hill, damming the brook at the bottom. But the brook rises until its waters flow over the obstacle and go on, reddened with brick-dust and

dyeing the grass along its edge, to flow all the more blithely and pellucidly further on, with the sun making diamonds sparkle on its surface.

I am very fond of brooks, as indeed of all water, from the ocean to the smallest reedy pool. If in the mountains in the summertime my ear but catch the sound of splashing and prattling from afar, I always go to seek out the source of the liquid sounds, a long way if I must; to make the acquaintance and to look in the face of that conversable child of the hills, where he hides. Beautiful are the torrents that come tumbling with mild thunders down between evergreens and over stony terraces; that form rocky bathing-pools and then dissolve in white foam to fall perpendicularly to the next level. But I have pleasure in the brooks of the flatland too, whether they be so shallow as hardly to cover the slippery, silver-gleaming pebbles in their bed, or as deep as small rivers between overhanging, guardian willow trees, their current flowing swift and strong in the centre, still and gently at the edge. Who would not choose to follow the sound of running waters? Its attraction for the normal man is of a natural, sympathetic sort. For man is water's child, nine-tenths of our body consists of it, and at a certain stage the foetus possesses gills. For my part I freely admit that the sight of water in whatever form or shape is my most lively and immediate kind of natural enjoyment; yes, I would even say that only in contemplation of it do I achieve true self-forgetfulness and feel my own limited individuality merge into the universal. The sea, still-brooding or coming on in crashing billows, can put me in a state of such profound organic dreaminess, such remoteness from myself, that I am lost to time. Boredom is unknown, hours pass like minutes, in the unity of that companionship. But then, I can lean on the rail of a little bridge over a brook and contemplate its currents, its whirlpools, and its steady flow for as long as you like; with no sense or fear of that other flowing within and about me, that swift gliding away of time. Such love of water and understanding of it make me value the circumstance that the narrow strip of ground where I dwell is enclosed on both sides by water.

But my little brook here is the simplest of its kind, it has no particular or unusual characteristics, it is quite the average brook. Clear as glass, without any guile, it does not dream of seeming deep by being turbid. It is shallow and candid and makes no bones of betraying that there are old tins and the mouldering remains of a laced shoe in its bed. But it is deep enough to serve as a home for pretty, lively, silver-grey little fish, which dart away in zigzags at our approach. In some places it broadens into a pool, and it has willows on its margin, one of which I love to look at as I pass. It stands on the hillside, a little removed from the water; but one of the boughs has bent down and reached across and actually succeeded in plunging its silvery tip into the flowing water. Thus it stands revelling in the pleasure of this contact.

It is pleasant to walk here in the warm breeze of summer. If the weather is very warm Bashan goes into the stream to cool his belly; not more than that, for he never of his own free will wets the upper parts. He stands there with his ears laid back and a look of virtue on his face and lets the water stream round and over him. Then he comes back to me to shake himself, being convinced that this can only be accomplished in my vicinity—although he does it so thoroughly that I receive a perfect shower-bath in the process. It is no good waving him off with my stick or with shoutings. Whatever seems to him natural and right and necessary, that he will do.

The brook flows on westward to a little hamlet that faces north between the wood and the hillside. At the beginning of this hamlet is an inn, and at this point the brook widens into another pool where women kneel to wash their clothes. Crossing the little foot-bridge, you strike into a road going back towards the city between wood and meadow. But on the right of the road is another through the wood, by which in a few minutes you can get back to the river.

And so here we are at the river zone, and the river itself is in front of us, green and roaring and white with foam. It is really nothing more than a mountain torrent; but its ceaseless roaring pervades the whole region round, in the

distance subdued, but here a veritable tumult which—if one cannot have the ocean itself—is quite a fair substitute for its awe-inspiring swell. Numberless gulls fill the air with their cries; autumn, winter, and spring they circle screaming round the mouths of the drain-pipes which issue here, seeking their food. In summer they depart once more for the lakes higher up. Wild and half-wild duck also take refuge here in the neighbourhood of the town for the winter months. They rock on the waves, are whirled round and carried off by the current, rise into the air to escape being engulfed, and then settle again on quieter water.

And this river tract also is divided into areas of varying character. At the edge of the wood is the gravelly expanse into which the poplar avenue issues; it extends for nearly a mile downstream, as far as the ferry-house, of which I will speak presently. At this point the underbrush comes nearly down to the river-bed. And all the gravel, as I am aware, constitutes the beginnings of the first and most important of the lengthwise streets, magnificently conceived by the real-estate company as an esplanade, a carriage-road bordered by trees and flowers—where elegantly turned-out riders were to hold sweet converse with ladies leaning back in shiny landaus. Beside the ferry-house, indeed, is a sign, already rickety and rotting, from which one can gather that the site was intended for the erection of a café. Yes, there is the sign—and there it remains, but there is no trace of the little tables, the hurrying waiters and coffee-sipping guests; nobody has bought the site, and the esplanade is nothing but a desert of gravel, where sage and willow-shoots are almost as thick as in Opitz and Flemmingstrasse.

Down close to the river is another, narrower gravel waste, as full of weeds as the bigger one. Along it are grassy mounds supporting telegraph poles. I like to use this as a path, by way of variety—also because it is cleaner, though more difficult, to walk on it than on the actual foot-path, which in bad weather is often very muddy, though it is actually the proper path, extending for miles along the river, finally going off into trails along the bank. It is planted on the river side with young maple and birch trees; on the other side the original inhabitants stand in a row—willows,

aspens, and silver poplars of enormous size. The river-bank is steep and high and is ingeniously shored up with withes and concrete to prevent the flooding which threatens two or three times in the year, after heavy rains or when the snows melt in the hills. At several points there are ladderlike wooden steps leading down to the river-bed—an extent of mostly dry gravel, six or eight yards wide. For this mountain torrent behaves precisely as its like do, whether large or small: it may be, according to the conditions up above, either the merest green trickle, hardly covering the stones, where long-legged birds seem to be standing on the water; or it may be a torrent alarming in its power and extent, filling the wide bed with raging fury, whirling round tree-branches and old baskets and dead cats and threatening to commit much damage. Here, too, there is protection against floods in the shape of woven hurdles put in slanting to the stream. When dry, the bed is grown up with wiry grass and wild oats, as well as that omnipresent shrub the blue sage; there is fairly good walking, on the strip of flat stones at the extreme outer edge, and it affords me a pleasant variety, for though the stone is not of the most agreeable to walk on, the close proximity of the river atones for much, and there is even sometimes sand between the gravel and the grass; true, it is mixed with clay, it has not the exquisite cleanness of sea-sand, but after all it is sand. I am taking a walk on the beach that stretches into the distance at the edge of the wave, and there is the sound of the surge and the cry of the gulls, there is that monotony that swallows time and space and shuts one up as in a dream. The river roars eddying over the stones, and half-way to the ferry-house the sound is augmented by a waterfall that comes down by a diagonal canal and tumbles into the larger stream, arching as it falls, shining glassily like a leaping fish, and seething perpetually at its base.

Lovely to walk here when the sky is blue and the ferry-boat flies a flag, perhaps in honour of the fine weather or because it is a feast-day of some sort. There are other boats here too, but the ferry-boat is fast to a wire cable attached to another, thicker cable that is spanned across

the stream and runs along it on a little pulley. The current supplies the motive power, the steering is done by hand. The ferryman lives with his wife and child in the ferry-house, which is a little higher up than the upper foot-path; the house has a kitchen-garden and a chicken-house and the man undoubtedly gets it rent-free in his office as ferryman. It is a sort of dwarf villa, rather flimsy, with funny little outcroppings of balconies and bay-windows, and seems to have two rooms below and two above. I like to sit on the little bench on the upper foot-path close to the tiny garden—with Bashan squatting on my foot and the ferryman's chickens stalking round about me, jerking their heads forward with each step. The cock usually comes and perches on the back of the bench with his green bersaglieri tail-feathers hanging down behind; he sits thus beside me and measures me with a fierce side-glance of his red eye. I watch the traffic; it is not crowded, hardly even lively; indeed, the ferry-boat runs only at considerable intervals. The more do I enjoy it when on one side or the other a man appears, or a woman with a basket, and wants to be put across; the "Boat ahoy!" is an age-old, picturesque cry, with a poetry not impaired by the fact that the business is done somewhat differently nowadays. Double flights of steps for those coming and going lead down to the river-bed and to the landings, and there is an electric push-button at the side of each. So when a man appears on the opposite bank and stands looking across the water, he does not put his hands round his mouth and call. He goes up to the push-button, puts out his hand, and pushes. The bell rings shrilly in the ferryman's villa; that is the "Boat ahoy!" even so, and it is poetic still. Then the man waits and looks about. And almost at the moment when the bell rings, the ferryman comes out of his little official dwelling, as though he had been standing behind the door or sitting on a chair waiting for the signal. He comes out, and the way he walks suggests that he has been mechanically put in motion by the ringing of the bell. It is like a shooting-booth when you shoot at the door of a little house and if you hit it a figure comes out, a sentry or a cow-girl. The ferryman crosses his garden at a measured pace, his arms

swinging regularly at his sides; over the path and down the steps to the river, where he pushes off the ferry-boat and holds the steering-gear while the little pulley runs along the wire above the stream and the boat is driven across. The man springs in, and once safely on this side hands over his penny and runs briskly up the steps, going off right or left. Sometimes, when the ferryman is not well or is very busy in the house, his wife or even his little child comes out to ferry the stranger across. They can do it as well as he, and so could I, for it is an easy office, requiring no special gift or training. He can reckon himself lucky to have the job and live in the dwarf villa. Anyone, however stupid, could do what he does, and he knows this, of course, and behaves with becoming modesty. On the way back to his house he very politely says: "*Grüss Gott!*" to me as I sit there on the bench between Bashan and the cock; you can see that he likes to be on good terms with everybody.

There is a tarry smell, a breeze off the water, a slapping sound against the ferry-boat. What more can one want? Sometimes these things call up a familiar memory: the water is deep, it has a smell of decay—that is the Lagoon, that is Venice. But sometimes there is a heavy storm, a deluge of rain; in my macintosh, my face streaming with wet, I take the upper path, leaning against the strong west wind, which in the poplar avenue has torn the saplings away from their supports. Now one can see why all the trees are bent in one direction and have somewhat lopsided tops. Bashan has to stop often to shake himself, the water flies off him in every direction. The river is quite changed: swollen and dark yellow it rolls threateningly along, rushing and dashing in a furious hurry this way and that; its muddy tide takes up the whole extra bed up to the edge of the undergrowth, pounding against the cement and the willow hurdles—until one is glad of the forethought that put them there. The strange thing about it is that the water is *quiet*; it makes almost no noise at all. And there are no rapids in its course now, the stream is too high for that. You can only see where they were by the fact that its waves are higher and deeper there than

elsewhere, and that their crests break backwards instead of forwards like the surf on a beach. The waterfall is insignificant now, its volume is shrunken, no longer vaulted, and the boiling water at its base is almost obliterated by the height of the flood. Bashan's reaction to all this is simple unmitigated astonishment that things can be so changed. He cannot get over it, cannot understand how it is that the dry territory where he is wont to run about has disappeared, is covered by water. He flees up into the undergrowth to get away from the lashing of the flood; looks at me and wags his tail, then back at the water, and has a funny, puzzled way of opening his jaws crookedly, shutting them again and running his tongue round the corner of his mouth. It is not a very refined gesture, in fact rather common, but very speaking, and as human as it is animal—in fact it is just what an ordinary simple-minded man might do in face of a surprising situation, very likely scratching his neck at the same time.

Having gone into some detail in describing the river zone, I believe I have covered the whole region and done all I can to bring it before my reader's eye. I like my description pretty well, but I like the reality of nature even better. It is more vivid and various; just as Bashan himself is warmer, more living and hearty than his imaginary presentment. I am attached to this landscape, I owe it something, and am grateful, therefore, I have described it. It is my park and my solitude; my thoughts and dreams are mingled and interwoven with images from it, as the tendrils of climbing plants are with the boughs of its trees. I have seen it at all times of day and all seasons of the year: in autumn, when the chemical odour of decaying vegetation fills the air, when all the thistles have shed their down, when the great beeches in my park have spread a rust-coloured carpet of leaves on the meadow and the liquid golden afternoons merge into romantic, theatrical early evenings, with the moon's sickle swimming in the sky, when a milk-brewed mist floats above the lowlands and a crimson sunset burns through the black silhouettes of the tree-branches. In autumn, but in winter too, when the gravel is covered with snow and softly levelled off so that

one can walk on it in overshoes; when the river looks black as it flows between fallow frost-bound banks, and the cries of hundreds of gulls fill the air from morning to night. But my freest and most familiar intercourse with it is in the milder months, when no extra clothing is required, to dash out quickly, between two showers, for a quarter of an hour; to bend aside in passing a bough of black alder and get a glimpse of the river as it flows. We may have had guests, and I am left somewhat worn down by conversation, between my four walls, where it seems the breath of the strangers still hovers on the air. Then it is good not to linger but to go out at once and stroll in Gellertstrasse or Stifterstrasse, to draw a long breath and get the air into one's lungs. I look up into the sky, I gaze into the tender depths of the masses of green foliage, and peace returns once more and dwells within my spirit.

And Bashan is always with me. He had not been able to prevent the influx of strange persons into our dwelling though he had lifted up his voice and objected. But it did no good, so he had withdrawn. Now he rejoices to be with me again in our hunting-ground. He runs before me on the gravel path, one ear negligently cocked, with that sidewise gait dogs have, the hind legs not just exactly behind the forelegs. And suddenly I see him gripped, as it were, body and soul, his stump of tail switching furiously, erect in the air. His head goes forward and down, his body lengthens out, he makes short dashes in several directions, and then shoots off in one of them with his nose to the ground. He has struck a scent. He is off after a hare.

The Chase

The region round is full of game, and we hunt it; that is, Bashan does and I look on. Thus we go hunting: hares, partridges, field-mice, moles, ducks, and gulls. Neither do we shrink from larger game, we stalk pheasant, even deer, if one of them, in winter, happens to stray into our preserve. It is quite a thrilling sight to see the slender long-legged creature, yellow against the snow, running away, with its white buttocks bobbing up and down, in flight from my little Bashan. He strains every nerve, I look on with the

greatest sympathy and suspense. Not that anything would ever come of it, nothing ever has or will. But the lack of concrete results does not affect Bashan's passionate eagerness or mar my own interest at all. We pursue the chase for its own sake, not for the prey nor for any other material advantage. Bashan is, as I have said, the active partner. He does not expect from me anything more than my moral support, having no experience, immediate and personal, that is, of more direct co-operation. I say immediate and personal for it is more than likely that his forbears, at least on the pointer side, know what the chase should really be like. I have sometimes asked myself whether some memory might still linger in him, ready to be awakened by a chance sight or sound. At his level the life of the individual is certainly less sharply distinguished from the race than is the case with human beings, birth and death must be a less far-reaching shock; perhaps the traditions of the stock are preserved unimpaired, so that it would only be an apparent contradiction to speak of inborn experiences, unconscious memories, which, when summoned up, would have the power to confuse the creature as to what were its own individual experiences or give rise to dissatisfaction with them. I indulged in this thought, but finally put it from me, as Bashan obviously put from him the rather brutal episode which gave rise to my speculations.

When we go out to follow the chase it is usually midday, half past eleven or twelve; sometimes, on particularly warm summer days, we go late in the afternoon, six o'clock or so—or perhaps we go then for the second time. But on the afternoon walk things are very different with me—not at all as they were on my careless morning stroll. My freshness and serenity have departed long since, I have been struggling and taking thought, I have overcome difficulties, have had to grit my teeth and tussle with a single detail while at the same time holding a more extended and complex context firmly in mind, concentrating my mental powers upon it down to its furthest ramifications. And my head is tired. It is the chase with Bashan that relieves and distracts me, gives me new life, and puts me back into

condition for the rest of the day, in which there is still something to be done.

Of course we do not select each day a certain kind of game to hunt—only hares, for instance, or only ducks. Actually we hunt everything that comes—I was going to say, within reach of our guns. So that we do not need to go far before starting something, actually the hunt can begin just outside the garden gate; for there are quantities of moles and field-mice in the meadow bottom behind the house. Of course these fur-bearing little creatures are not properly game at all. But their mysterious, burrowing little ways, and especially the slyness and dexterity of the field-mice, which are not blind by day like their brethren the moles, but scamper discreetly about on the ground, whisking into their holes at the approach of danger, so that one cannot even see their legs moving—all this works powerfully upon Bashan's instincts. Besides, they are the only wild creatures he ever catches. A field-mouse, a mole, makes a morsel not to be despised, in these lean days, when he often finds nothing more appetizing than porridge in the dish beside his kennel.

So then I and my walking-stick will scarcely have taken two or three steps up the poplar avenue, and Bashan will have scarcely opened the ball with his usual riotous plunges, when I see him capering off to my right—already he is in the grip of his passion, sees and hears nothing but the maddening invisible activities of the creatures all round him. He slinks through the grass, his whole body tense, wagging his tail and lifting his legs with great caution; stops, with one foreleg and one hind leg in the air, eyes the ground with his head on one side, muzzle pointed, ear muscles stiffly erected—so that his ear-laps fall down in front, each side of his eyes. Then with both fore-paws raised he makes a sudden forwards plunge, and another; looking with a puzzled air at the place where something just now was but is not any more. Then he begins to dig. I feel a strong desire to follow him and see what he gets. But if I did we should never get further, his whole zeal for the chase would be expended here on the spot. So I

go on. I need not worry about his losing me. Even if he stops behind a long time and has not seen which way I turned, my trail will be as clear to him as though I were the game he seeks, and he will follow it, head between his paws, even if I am out of sight; already I can hear his licence-tag clinking and his stout paws thudding in my rear. He shoots past me, turns round, and wags his tail to announce that he is on the spot.

But in the woods, or out on the meadows by the brook, I do stop often and watch him digging for a mouse, even though the time allotted for my walk is nearly over. It is so fascinating to see his passionate concentration, I feel the contagion myself and cannot help a fervent wish that he may catch something and I be there to see. The spot where he has chosen to dig looks like any other—perhaps a messy little mound among the roots at the foot of a birch tree. But he has heard and scented something at that spot, perhaps even viewed it as it whisked away; he is convinced that it is there in its burrow underground, he has only to get at it—and he digs away for dear life, oblivious of all else, not angry, but with the professional passion of the sportsman—it is a magnificent sight. His little striped body, the ribs showing and muscles playing under the smooth skin, is drawn in at the middle, his hind quarters stand up in the air, the stump of a tail vibrating in quick time; his head with his fore-paws is down in the slanting hole he has dug and he turns his face aside as he plies his iron-shod paws. Faster and faster, till earth and little stones and tufts of grass and fragments of tree-roots fly up almost into my face. Sometimes he snorts in the silence, when he has burrowed his nose well into the earth, trying to smell out the motionless, clever, frightened little beast that is besieged down there. It is a muffled snorting; he draws in the air hastily and empties his lungs again the better to scent the fine, keen, far-away, and buried effluvium. How does the creature feel when he hears the snorting? Ah, that is its own affair, or God's, who has made Bashan the enemy of field-mice. Even the emotion of fear is an enhancement of life; and who knows, if there were no Bashan the mouse

might find time hang heavy on its hands. Besides, what would be the use of all its beady-eyed cleverness and mining skill, which more than balance what Bashan can do, so that the attacker's success is always more than problematical? In short, I do not feel much pity for the mouse, privately I am on Bashan's side and cannot always stick to my rôle of onlooker. I take my walking-stick and dig out some pebble or gnarled piece of root that is too firmly lodged for him to move. And he sends up a swift, warm glance of understanding to me as he works. With his mouth full of dirt, he chews away at the stubborn earth and the roots running through it, tears out whole chunks and throws them aside, snorts again into his hole and is encouraged by the freshened scent to renewed attack on it with his claws.

In nearly every case all this labour is vain. Bashan will give one last cursory look at the scene and then with soil sticking to his nose, and his legs black to the shoulder, he will give it up and trot off indifferently beside me. "No go, Bashan," I say when he looks up at me. "Nothing there," I repeat, shaking my head and shrugging my shoulders to make my meaning clear. But he needs no consolation, he is not in the least depressed by his failure. The chase is the thing, the quarry a minor matter. It was a good effort, he thinks, in so far as he casts his mind back at all to his recent strenuous performance—for already he is bent on a new one, and all three of our zones will furnish him plenty of opportunity.

But sometimes he actually catches the mouse. I have my emotions when that happens, for he gobbles it alive, without compunction, with the fur and the bones. Perhaps the poor little thing was not well enough advised by its instincts, and chose for its hole a place where the earth was too soft and loose and easy to dig. Perhaps its gallery was not long enough and it was too terrified to go on digging, but simply crouched there with its beady eyes popping out of its head for fright, while the horrible snorting came nearer and nearer. And so at last the iron-shod paw laid it bare and scooped it up—out into the light of day, a lost

little mouse! It was justified of its fears; luckily these most likely reduced it to a semiconscious state, so that it will hardly have noticed being converted into porridge.

Bashan holds it by the tail and dashes it against the ground, once, twice, thrice; there is the faintest squeak, the very last sound which the god-forsaken little mouse is destined to make on this earth, and now Bashan snaps it up in his jaws, between his strong white teeth. He stands with his forelegs braced apart, his neck bent, and his head stuck out while he chews, shifting the morsel in his mouth and then beginning to munch once more. He crunches the tiny bones, a shred of fur hangs from the corner of his mouth, it disappears and all is over. Bashan begins to execute a dance of joy and triumph round me as I stand leaning on my stick as I have been standing to watch the whole procedure. "You are a fine one!" I say, nodding in grim tribute to his prowess. "You are a murderer, you know, a cannibal!" He only redoubles his activity—he does everything but laugh aloud. So I walk on, feeling rather chilled by what I have seen, yet inwardly amused by the crude humours of life. The event was in the natural order of things, and a mouse lacking in the instinct of self-preservation is on the way to be turned into pulp. But I feel better if I happen not to have assisted the natural order with my stick but to have preserved throughout my attitude of onlooker.

It is startling to have a pheasant burst out of the undergrowth where it was perched asleep or else hoping to be undiscovered, until Bashan's unerring nose ferreted it out. The big, rust-coloured, long-tailed bird rises with a great clapping and flapping and a frightened, angry, cackling cry. It drops its excrement into the brush and takes flight with the absurd headlessness of a chicken to the nearest tree, where it goes on shrieking murder, while Bashan claws at the trunk and barks furiously up at it. "Get up, get up!" he is saying. "Fly away, you silly object of my sporting instincts, that I may chase you!" And the bird cannot resist his loud voice, it rises rustling from the bough and flies on heavy wing through the tree-tops,

squawking and complaining, Bashan following below, with ardour, but preserving a stately silence.

This is his joy. He wants and knows no other. For what would happen if he actually caught the pheasant? Nothing at all: I have seen him with one in his claws—he may have stolen upon it while it slept so that the awkward bird could not rise—and he stood over it embarrassed by his triumph, without an idea what to do. The pheasant lay in the grass with its neck and one wing sprawled out and shrieked without stopping—it sounded as though an old woman were being murdered in the bushes, and I hastened up to prevent, if I could, something frightful happening. But I quickly convinced myself that there was no danger. Bashan's obvious helplessness, the half curious, half disgusted look he bent on his capture, with his head on one side, quite reassured me. The old-womanish screaming at his feet got on his nerves, the whole affair made him feel more bothered than triumphant. Perhaps, for his honour as a sportsman, he plucked at the bird—I think I saw him pulling out a couple of feathers with his lips, not using his teeth, and tossing them to one side with an angry shake of the head. But then he moved away and let it go. Not out of magnanimity, but because the affair seemed not to have anything to do with the joyous hunt and so was merely stupid. Never have I seen a more nonplussed bird. It had given itself up for lost, and appeared not to be able to convince itself to the contrary: awhile it lay in the grass as though it were dead. Then it staggered along the ground a little way, fluttered up on a tree, looked like falling off it, but pulled itself together and flew away heavily, with dishevelled plumes. It did not squawk, it kept its bill shut. Without a sound it flew across the park, the river, the woods on the other side, as far away as possible, and certainly it never came back.

But there are plenty of its kind in our hunting-ground and Bashan hunts them in all honour and according to the rules of the game. Eating mice is the only blood-guilt he has on his head and even that is incidental and superfluous. The tracking out, the driving up, the chasing—these

are ends in themselves to the sporting spirit, and are plainly so to him, as anybody would see who watched him at his brilliant performance. How beautiful he becomes, how consummate, how ideal! Like a clumsy peasant lad, who will look perfect and statuesque as a huntsman among his native rocks. All that is best in Bashan, all that is genuine and fine, comes out and reaches its flower at these times. Hence his yearning for them, his repining when they fruitlessly slip away. He is no terrier, he is true hunter and pointer, and joy in himself as such speaks in every virile, valiant, native pose he assumes. Not many other things rejoice my eye as does the sight of him going through the brush at a swinging trot, then standing stock-still, with one paw daintily raised and turned in, sagacious, serious, alert, with all his faculties beautifully concentrated. Then suddenly he whimpers. He has trod on a thorn and cries out. Ah, yes, that too is natural, it is amusing to see that he has the courage of his simplicity. It could only passingly mar his dignity, next moment his posture is as fine as ever.

I look at him and recall a time when he lost all his nobility and distinction and reverted to the low physical and moral state in which we found him in the kitchen of that mountain inn and from which he climbed painfully enough to some sort of belief in himself and the world. I do not know what ailed him; he had bleeding from the mouth or nose or throat, I do not know which to this day. Wherever he went he left traces of blood behind: on the grass in our hunting-ground, the straw in his kennel, on the floor in the house—though we could not discover any wound. Sometimes his nose looked as though it had been dipped in red paint. When he sneezed he showered blood all over, and then trod in it and left the marks of his paws about. He was carefully examined without result, and we felt more and more disturbed. Was he tubercular? Or had he some other complaint to which his species was prone? When the mysterious affliction did not pass off after some days, we decided to take him to a veterinary clinic.

Next day at about noon I kindly but firmly adjusted his muzzle, the leather mask which Bashan detests as he does

few other things, always trying to get rid of it by shaking his head or rubbing it with his paws. I put him on the plaited leather lead and led him thus harnessed up the poplar avenue, through the English Gardens, and along a city street to the Academy, where we went under the arch and crossed the courtyard. We were received into a waiting-room where several people sat, each holding like me a dog on a lead. They were dogs of all sizes and kinds, gazing dejectedly at each other over their muzzles. There was a matron with her apoplectic pug, a liveried manservant with a tall, snow-white Russian greyhound, which from time to time gave a hoarse, aristocratic cough; a countryman with a dachshund which seemed to need orthopædic assistance, its legs being entirely crooked and put on all wrong. And many more. The attendant let them in one by one into the consulting-room, and after a while it became the turn of Bashan and me.

The Professor was a man in advanced years, wearing a white surgeon's coat and a gold eye-glass. His hair was curly, and he seemed so mild, expert, and kindly that I would have unhesitatingly entrusted myself and all my family to him in any emergency. During my recital he smiled benevolently at his patient, who sat there looking up at him with equal trustfulness. "He has fine eyes," said he, passing over Bashan's moustaches in silence. He said he would make an examination at once, and poor Bashan, too astounded to offer any resistance, was with the attendant's help stretched out on the table forthwith. And then it was touching to see the physician apply his black stethoscope and auscultate my little man just as I have more than once had it done to me. He listened to his quick-breathing doggy heart, listened to all his organs, in various places. Then with his stethoscope under his arm he examined Bashan's eyes and nose and the cavity of his mouth, and gave a temporary opinion. The dog was a little nervous and anæmic, he said, but otherwise in good condition. The origin of the bleeding was unclear. It might be an epistaxis or a hæmatemesis. But equally well it might be tracheal or pharyngeal hæmorrhage. Perhaps for the present one might characterize it as a case of hæmoptysis. It would

be best to keep the animal under careful observation. I might leave it with them and look in at the end of a week.

Thus instructed, I expressed my thanks and took my leave, patting Bashan on the shoulder by way of good-bye. I saw the attendant take the new patient across the courtyard to some back buildings opposite the entrance, Bashan looking back at me with a frightened and bewildered face. And yet he might have felt flattered, as I could not help feeling myself, at having the Professor call him nervous and anæmic. No one could have foretold of him in his cradle that he would one day be called those things or discussed with such gravity and expert knowledge.

But after that my walks abroad were as unseasoned food to the palate; I had little relish of them. No dumb pæan of joy accompanied my going out, no glorious excitement of the chase surrounded my footsteps. The park was a desert, time hung on my hands. During the period of waiting I telephoned several times for news. Answer came through a subordinate that the patient was doing as well as possible under the circumstances—but the circumstances—for better or worse—were never described in more detail. So when the week came round again, I betook myself to the clinic.

Guided by numerous signs and arrows I arrived without difficulty before the entrance of the department where Bashan was lodged, and, warned by another sign on the door, forbore to knock and went straight in. The medium-sized room I found myself in reminded me of a carnivora-house—a similar atmosphere prevailed. Only here the menagerie odour seemed to be kept down by various sweetish-smelling medicinal fumes—a disturbing and oppressive combination. Wire cages ran round the room, most of them occupied. Loud baying greeted me from one of these, at the open door of which a man, who seemed to be the keeper, was busy with rake and shovel. He contented himself with returning my greeting whilst going on with his work, and left me to my own devices.

I had seen Bashan directly I entered the door, and went up to him. He was lying behind his bars on a pile of tan-bark or some such stuff, which contributed its own special odour to the animal and chemical smells in the room. He

lay there like a leopard—but a very weary, sluggish, and disgusted leopard. I was startled by the sullen indifference with which he met me. His tail thumped the floor once or twice, weakly; only when I spoke to him did he lift his head from his paws, and even then he let it fall again at once and blinked gloomily to one side. There was an earthenware dish of water at the back of his pen. A framed chart, partly printed and partly written, was fastened to the bars, giving his name, species, sex, and age and showing his temperature curve. "Bastard pointer," it said, "named Bashan. Male. Two years old. Admitted on such and such a day of the month and the year, for observation of occult blood." Underneath followed the fever curve, drawn with a pen and showing small variations; also daily entries of his pulse. Yes, his temperature was taken, and his pulse felt, by a doctor; in this direction everything was being done. But I was distressed about his state of mind.

"Is that one yours?" asked the keeper, who had now come up, his tools in his hands. He had on a sort of gardening apron and was a squat red-faced man with a round beard and rather bloodshot brown eyes that were quite strikingly like a dog's in their humid gaze and faithful expression.

I answered in the affirmative, referred to my telephone conversations and the instructions I had had to come back today, and said I should like to hear how things stood. The man looked at the chart. Yes, the dog was suffering from occult blood, that was always a long business, especially when one did not know where it came from. But was not that always the case? No, they did not really know yet. But the dog was there to be observed, and he would be. And did he still bleed? Yes, now and then he did. And had he fever? I asked, trying to read the chart. No, no fever. His temperature and pulse were quite normal, about ninety beats a minute, he ought to have that much, and if he had not, then they would have to observe him even more carefully. Except for the bleeding, the dog was really doing all right. He had howled at first, of course; he had howled for twenty-four hours, but after that he was used to it. He didn't eat much, for a fact, but then he hadn't much exercise, and perhaps he wasn't a big eater. What did they

give him? Soup, said the man. But as he had said, the dog didn't eat much at all. "He seems depressed," I remarked with an assumption of objectivity. Yes, that was true, but it didn't mean much. After all it wasn't very much fun for a dog to lie cooped up like that under observation. They were all depressed, more or less. That is, the good-natured ones, some dogs got mean and treacherous. He could not say that of Bashan. He was a good dog, he would not get mean if he stayed there all his days. I agreed with the man, but I did so with pain and rebellion in my heart. How long then, I asked, did they reckon to keep him here? The man looked at the chart again. Another week, he said, would be needed for the observation, the Herr Professor had said. I'd better come and ask again in another week; that would be two weeks in all, then they would be able to say more about the possibility of getting rid of the hæmorrhages.

I went away, after trying once more to rouse up Bashan by renewed calls and encouragement. In vain. He cared as little for my going as for my coming. He seemed weighed down by bitter loathing and despair. He had the air of saying: "Since you were capable of having me put in this cage, I expect nothing more from you." And, actually, had he not enough ground to despair of reason and justice? What had he done that this should happen to him and that I not only let it happen but took steps to bring it about? And yet my intentions had been of the best. He had bled, and though it seemed to make no difference to him, I thought it sensible that we should call in medical advice, he being a dog in good circumstances. And then we had learned that he was anæmic and nervous—as though he were the daughter of some upper-class family. And then it had to come out like this! How could I explain to him we were treating him with great distinction, in shutting him up like a jaguar, without sun, air, or exercise, and plaguing him every day with a thermometer?

On the way home I asked myself these things; and if before then I had missed Bashan, now worry about him was added to my distress: worry over his state and reproaches to my own address. Perhaps after all I had taken him to the clinic only out of vanity and arrogance. And

added to that may I not have secretly wished to get rid of him for a while? Perhaps I had a craving to see what it would be like to be free of his incessant watching of me; to be able to turn calmly to right or left as I pleased, without having to realize that I had been to another living creature the source of joy or of bitter disappointment. Certainly while Bashan was interned I felt a certain inner independence which had long been strange to me. No one exasperated me by looking through the glass door with the air of a martyr. No one put up a hesitating paw to move me to laughter and relenting and persuade me to go out sooner than I wished. Whether I sought the park or kept my room concerned no one at all. It was quiet, pleasant, and had the charm of novelty. But lacking the accustomed spur I hardly went out at all. My health suffered, gradually I approached the condition of Bashan in his cage; and the moral reflection occurred to me that the bonds of sympathy were probably more conducive to my own well-being than the selfish independence for which I had longed.

The second week went by, and on the appointed day I stood with the round-bearded keeper before Bashan's cage. Its inmate lay on his side on the tan-bark, there were bits of it on his coat. He had his head flung back as he lay and was staring with dull, glazed eyes at the bare whitewashed wall. He did not stir. I could scarcely see him breathe; but now and then his chest rose in a long sigh that made the ribs stand out, and fell again with a faint, heart-rending resonance from the vocal cords. His legs seemed to have grown too long, and his paws large out of all proportion, as a result of his extraordinary emaciation. His coat was rough and dishevelled and had, as I said, tan-bark sticking in it. He did not look at me, he seemed not to want to look at anything ever any more.

The bleeding, so the keeper said, had not altogether and entirely disappeared, it came back now and again. Where it came from was still not quite clear; in any case it was harmless. If I liked I could leave the dog here for further observation, to be quite certain, or I could take him home, because the bleeding might disappear just as well there as here. I drew the plaited lead out of my pocket—I had

brought it with me—and said that I would take him with me. The keeper thought that was a sensible thing to do. He opened the grating and we summoned Bashan by name, both together and in turn, but he did not come, he kept on staring at the whitewashed wall. But he did not struggle when I put my arm into the cage and pulled him out by the collar. He gave a spring and landed with his four feet on the floor, where he stood with his tail between his legs and his ears laid back, the picture of wretchedness. I picked him up, tipped the keeper, and went to the front office to pay my debt; at the rate of seventy-five pfennigs a day plus the medical examination it came to twelve marks fifty. I led Bashan home, breathing the animal-chemical odours which clung to his coat.

He was broken, in body and in spirit. Animals are more primitive and less inhibited in giving expression to their mental state—there is a sense in which one might say they are more human: descriptive phrases which to us have become mere metaphor still fit them literally, we get a fresh and diverting sense of their meaning when we see it embodied before our eyes. Bashan, as we say, “hung his head”; that is, he did it literally and visibly, till he looked like a worn-out cab-horse, with sores on its legs, standing at the cab-rank, its skin twitching and its poor fly-infested nose weighed down towards the pavement. It was as I have said: those two weeks at the clinic had reduced him to the state he had been in at the beginning. He was the shadow of his former self—if that does not insult the proud and joyous shadow our Bashan once cast. The hospital smell he had brought with him wore off after repeated soapy baths till you got only an occasional whiff; but it was not with him as with human beings: he got no symbolic refreshment from the physical cleansing. The very first day, I took him out to our hunting-grounds, but he followed at my heel with his tongue lolling out; even the pheasants perceived that it was the close season. For days he lay as he had lain in his cage at the clinic, staring with glazed eyes, flabby without and within. He showed no healthy impatience for the chase, did not urge me to go out—indeed it was rather I who had to go and fetch him from his kennel. Even the

reckless and indiscriminate way he wolfed his food recalled those early unworthy days. But what a joy to see him slowly finding himself again! Little by little he began to greet me in the morning in his old naïve, impetuous way, storming upon me at my first whistle instead of limping morosely up; putting his fore-paws on my chest and snapping playfully at my face. Gradually there returned to him his old out-of-doors pride and joy in his own physical prowess; once more he delighted my eyes with the bold and beautiful poses he took, the sudden bounds with his feet drawn up, after some creature stirring in the long grass. . . . He forgot. The ugly and to Bashan senseless episode sank into the past, unresolved indeed, unclarified by comprehension, that being of course impossible; it was covered by the lapse of time, as must happen sometimes to human beings. We went on living and what had not been expressed became by degrees forgotten. . . . For several weeks, at lengthening intervals, Bashan's nose showed red. Then the phenomenon disappeared, it was no more, it only had been, and so it was no matter whether it had been an epistaxis or a hæmatemesis.

Well, there! Contrary to my own intentions, I have told the story of the clinic. Perhaps my reader will forgive the lengthy digression and come back to the park and the pleasures of the chase, where we were before the interruption. Do you know that long-drawn wailing howl to which a dog gives vent when he summons up his utmost powers to give chase to a flying hare? In its rage and rapture mingle, desire and the ecstasy of despair. How often have I heard it from Bashan! It is passion itself, deliberate, fostered passion, drunkenly revelled in, shrilling through our woodland scene, and every time I hear it near or far a fearful thrill of pleasure shoots through my limbs. Rejoiced that Bashan will come into his own today, I hasten to his side, to see the chase if I can; when it roars past me I stand spellbound—though the futility of it is clear from the first—and look on with an agitated smile on my face.

And the hare, the common, frightened little hare? The air whistles through its ears, it lays back its head and runs for its life, it scabbles and bounds with Bashan behind it

yelling all he can; its yellow-white scut flies up in the air. And yet at the bottom of its soul, timid as that is and acquainted with fear, it must know that its peril cannot be grave, that it will get away, as its brothers and sisters have done before it, and itself too under like circumstances. Never in his life has Bashan caught one of them, nor will he ever; the thing is as good as impossible. Many dogs, they say, are the death of a hare, a single dog cannot achieve it, even one much speedier and more enduring than Bashan. The hare can "double" and Bashan cannot—and that is all there is to it. For the double is the unfailing natural weapon of those born to seek safety in flight; they always have it by them, to use at the decisive moment; when Bashan's hopes are highest—then they are dashed to the ground, and he is betrayed.

There they come, dashing diagonally through the brush, across the path in front of me, and on towards the river; the hare silently hugging his little trick in his heart, Bashan giving tongue in high head-tones. "Be quiet!" I think. "You are wasting your wind and your lung-power and you ought to save them if you want to catch him up." Thus I think because in my heart I am on Bashan's side, some of his fire has kindled me, I fervently hope he may catch the hare—even at the risk of seeing it torn to shreds before my eyes. How he runs! It is beautiful to see a creature expending the utmost of its powers. He runs better than the hare does, he has stronger muscles, the distance between them visibly diminishes before I lose sight of them. And I make haste too, leaving the path and cutting across the park towards the river-bank, reaching the gravelled street in time to see the chase come raging on—the hopeful, thrilling chase, with Bashan on the hare's very heels; he is still, he runs with his jaw set, the scent just in front of his nose urges him to a final effort.—"One more push, Bashan!" I think, and feel like shouting: "Well run, old chap, remember the double!" But there it is; Bashan does make one more push, and the misfortune is upon us: at that moment the hare gives a quick, easy, almost malicious twitch at right angles to the course, and Bashan shoots past from his rear, howling helplessly and braking his very best so that

dirt and pebbles fly into the air. Before he can stop, turn round, and get going in the other direction, yelling all the time as in great mental torment, the hare has gained so much ground that it is out of sight; for while he was braking so desperately Bashan could not watch where it went.

It is no use, I think; it is beautiful but futile; this while the chase fades away through the park. It takes a lot of dogs, five or six, a whole pack. Some of them to take it on the flank, some to cut off its way in front, some to corner it, some to catch it by the neck. And in my excited fancy I see a whole pack of bloodhounds with their tongues out rushing on the hare in their midst.

It is my passion for the chase makes me have these fancies, for what has the hare done to me that I should wish him such a horrible death? Bashan is nearer to me, of course, it is natural that I should feel with him and wish for his success. But the hare is after all a living creature too, and he did not play his trick on my huntsman out of malice, but only from the compelling desire to live yet awhile, nibble young tree-shoots, and beget his kind. It would be different, I go on in my mind, if this cane of mine—I lift it and look at it—were not a harmless stick, but a more serious weapon, effective like lightning and at a distance, with which I could come to Bashan's assistance and hold up the hare in mid career, so that it would turn a somersault and lie dead on the ground. Then we should not need another dog, and it would be Bashan's only task to rouse the game. Whereas as things stand it is Bashan who sometimes rolls over and over in his effort to brake. The hare sometimes does too, but it is nothing to it, it is used to such things, they do not make it feel miserable, whereas it is a shattering experience for Bashan, and might even quite possibly break his neck.

Often such a chase is all over in a few minutes; that is, when the hare succeeds after a short length in ducking into the bushes and hiding, or else by doubling and feinting in throwing off its pursuer, who stands still, hesitating, or makes short springs in this and that direction, while I in my bloodthirstiness shout encouragement and try to show him with my stick the direction the hare took. But often

the hunt sways far and wide across the landscape and Bashan's furious baying sounds like a distant bugle-horn, now near, now remote; I go my own way, knowing that he will return. But in what a state he does return, at last! Foam drips from his lips, his ribs flutter, and his loins are lank and expanded, his tongue lolls out of his jaws, which yawn so wide as to distort his features and give his drunken, swimming eyes a weird Mongolian slant. His breath goes like a trip-hammer. "Lie down and rest, Bashan," say I, "or your lungs will burst!" and I wait to give him time to recover. I am alarmed for him when it is cold, when he pumps the air by gasps into his overheated insides and it gushes out again in a white steam; when he swallows whole mouthfuls of snow to quench his furious thirst. He lies there looking helplessly up at me, now and then licking up the slaver from his lips, and I cannot help teasing him a bit about the invariable futility of all his exertions. "Where is the hare, Bashan?" I ask. "Why don't you bring it to me?" He thumps with his tail on the ground when I speak; his sides pump in and out less feverishly, and he gives a rather embarrassed snap—for how can he know that I am mocking him because I feel guilty myself and want to conceal it? For I did not play my part in his enterprise, I was not man enough to hold the hare, as a proper master should have done. He does not know this, and so I can make fun of him and behave as though it were all his fault.

Strange things sometimes happen on these occasions. Never shall I forget the day when the hare ran into my arms. It was on the narrow clayey path above the river. Bashan was in full cry; I came from the wood into the river zone, struck across through the thistles of the gravelly waste, and jumped down the grassy slope to the path just in time to see the hare, with Bashan fifteen paces behind it, come bounding from the direction of the ferry-house towards which I was facing. It leaped right into the path and came towards me. My first impulse was that of the hunter towards his prey: to take advantage of the situation and cut off its escape, driving it back if possible into the jaws of the pursuer joyously yelping behind. I stood fixed

to the spot, quite abandoned to the fury of the chase, weighing my cane in my hand as the hare came towards me. A hare's sight is poor, that I knew; hearing and smell are the senses that guide and preserve it. It might have taken me for a tree as I stood there; I hoped and foresaw it would do so and thus fall victim to a frightful error, the possible consequences of which were not very clear to me, though I meant to turn them to our advantage. Whether it did at any time make this mistake is unclear. I think it did not see me at all until the last minute, and what it did was so unexpected as to upset all my plans in a trice and cause a complete and sudden revulsion in my feelings. Was it beside itself with fright? Anyhow, it jumped straight at me, like a dog, ran up my overcoat with its fore-paws and snuggled its head into me, me whom it should most fear, the master of the chase! I stood bent back with my arms raised, I looked down at the hare and it looked up at me. It was only a second, perhaps only part of a second, that this lasted. I saw the hare with such extraordinary distinctness, its long ears, one of which stood up, the other hung down; its large, bright, short-sighted, prominent eyes, its cleft lip and the long hairs of its moustache, the white on its breast and little paws; I felt or thought I felt the throbbing of its hunted heart. And it was strange to see it so clearly and have it so close to me, the little genius of the place, the inmost beating heart of our whole region, this everfleeing little being which I had never seen but for brief moments in our meadows and bottoms, frantically and drolly getting out of the way—and now, in its hour of need, not knowing where to turn, it came to me, it clasped as it were my knees, a human being's knees: not the knees, so it seemed to me, of Bashan's master, but the knees of a man who felt himself master of hares and this hare's master as well as Bashan's. It was, I say, only for the smallest second. Then the hare had dropped off, taken again to its uneven legs, and bounded up the slope on my left; while in its place there was Bashan, Bashan giving tongue in all the horrid head-tones of his hue-and-cry. When he got within reach he was abruptly checked by a deliberate and well-aimed blow from the stick of the hare's master, which sent him yelping

down the slope with a temporarily disabled hind quarter. He had to limp painfully back again before he could take up the trail of his by this time vanished prey.

Finally, there are the waterfowl, to our pursuit of which I must devote a few lines. We can only go after them in winter and early spring, before they leave their town quarters—where they stay for their food's sake, and return to their lakes in the mountains. They furnish, of course, much less exciting sport than can be got out of the hares; still, it has its attractions for hunter and hound—or, rather, for the hunter and his master. For me the charm lies in the scenery, the intimate bond with living water; also it is amusing and diverting to watch the creatures swimming and flying and try provisionally to exchange one's personality for theirs and enter into their mode of life.

The ducks lead a quieter, more comfortable, more bourgeois life than do the gulls. They seem to have enough to eat, on the whole, and not to be tormented by the pangs of hunger—their kind of food is regularly to be had, the table, so to speak, always laid. For everything is fish that comes to their net: worms, snails, insects—even the coze of the river-bed. So they have plenty of time to sit on the stones in the sun, doze with their bills tucked under one wing, and preen their well-oiled plumes, off which the water rolls in drops. Sometimes they take a pleasure-ride on the waves, with their pointed rumps in the air; paddling this way and that and giving little self-satisfied shrugs.

But the nature of gulls is wilder and more strident; there is a dreary monotony about what they do, they are the eternally hungry bird of prey, swooping all day long in hordes across the waterfall, croaking about the drain-pipes that disgorge their brown streams into the river. Single gulls hover and pounce down upon a fish now and then, but this does not go far to satisfy their inordinate mass hunger; they have to fill in with most unappetizing-looking morsels from the drains, snatching them from the water in flight and carrying them off in their crooked beaks. They do not like the river-bank. But when the river is low, they huddle together on the rocks that stick out of the water—the scene is white with them, as the cliffs and islets of

northern oceans are white with hosts of nesting eider-duck. I like to watch them rise all together with a great cawing and take to the air, when Bashan barks at them from the bank, across the intervening stream. They need not be frightened, certainly they are in no danger. He has a native aversion to water; but aside from that he would never trust himself to the current, and he is quite right, it is much stronger than he and would soon sweep him away and carry him God knows where. Perhaps into the Danube—but he would only arrive there after having suffered a river-change of a very drastic kind, as we know from seeing the bloated corpses of cats on their way to some distant bourne. Bashan never goes further into the water than the point where it begins to break over the stones. Even when he seems most tense with the pleasure of the chase and looks exactly as though he meant to jump in the very next minute, one knows that under all the excitement his sense of caution is alert and that the dashings and rushings are pure theatre—empty threats, not so much dictated by passion as cold-bloodedly undertaken in order to terrify the web-footed tribe.

But the gulls are too witless and poor-spirited to make light of his performance. He cannot get to them himself, but he sends his voice thundering across the water; it reaches them, and it, too, has actuality; it is an attack which they cannot long resist. They try to at first, they sit still, but a wave of uneasiness goes through the host, they turn their heads, a few lift their wings, and suddenly they all rush up into the air, like a white cloud, whence issue the bitterest, most fatalistic screams, Bashan springing hither and thither on the rocks, to scatter their flight and keep them in motion, for it is motion that he wants, they are not to sit quiet, they must fly, fly up and down the river so that he may chase them.

He scampers along the shore far and wide, for everywhere there are ducks, sitting with their bills tucked in homely comfort under their wings; and wherever he comes they fly up before him. He is like a jolly little hurricane making a clean sweep of the beach. Then they plump down on the water again, where they rock and ride in

comfort and safety, or else they fly away over his head with their necks stretched out, while below on the shore he measures the strength of his leg-muscles quite creditably against those of their wings.

He is enchanted, and really grateful to them if they will only fly and give him occasion for this glorious race up and down the beach. It may be that they know what he wants and turn the fact to their own advantage. I saw a mother duck with her brood—this was in spring, all the birds had forsaken the river and only this one was left with her fledglings, not yet able to fly. She had them in a stagnant puddle left by the last flood in the low-lying bed of the shrunken river, and there Bashan found them, while I watched the event from the upper path. He jumped into the puddle and lashed about, furiously barking, driving the family of ducklings into wild disorder. He did them no harm, of course, but he frightened them beyond measure; the ducklings flapped their stumps of wings and scattered in all directions, and the duck was overtaken by an attack of the maternal heroism which will hurl itself blind with valour upon the fiercest foe to protect her brood; more, will even by a frenzied and unnatural display of intrepidity bully the attacker into surrender. She opened her beak to a horrific extent, she ruffled up her feathers, she flew repeatedly into Bashan's face, she made onslaught after onslaught, hissing all the while. The grim seriousness of her behaviour was so convincing that Bashan actually gave ground in confusion, though without definitely retiring from the field, for each time after retreating he would bark and advance anew. Then the mother duck changed her tactics: heroics having failed, she took refuge in strategy. Probably she knew Bashan already and was aware of his foibles and the childish nature of his desires. She left her children in the lurch—or she pretended to; she took to flight, she flew up above the river, "pursued" by Bashan. At least, he thought he was pursuing her, in reality it was she who was leading him on, playing on his childish passion, leading him by the nose. She flew downstream, then upstream, she flew further and further away, Bashan racing equal with her along the

bank; they left the pool with the ducklings far behind, and at length both dog and duck disappeared from my sight. Bashan came back to me after a while; the simpleton was quite winded and panting for dear life. But when we passed the pool again on our homeward way, it was empty of its brood.

So much for the mother duck. As for Bashan, he was quite grateful for the sport she had given him. For he hates the ducks who selfishly prefer their bourgeois comfort and refuse to play his game with him, simply gliding off into the water when he comes rushing along, and rocking there in base security before his face and eyes, heedless of his mighty barkings, heedless too—unlike the nervous gulls—of all his feints and plungings. We stand there, Bashan and I, on the stones at the water's edge, and two paces away a duck floats on the wave, floats impudently up and down, her beak pressed coyly against her breast; safe and untouched and sweetly reasonable she bobs up and down out there, let Bashan rave as he will. Paddling against the current, she keeps abreast of us fairly well; yet she is being slowly carried down, closer and closer to one of those beautiful foaming eddies in the stream. In her folly she rides with her tail turned towards it—and now it is only a yard away. Bashan loudly gives tongue, standing with his forelegs braced against the stones; and in my heart I am barking with him, I am on his side and against that impudent, self-satisfied floating thing out there. I wish her ill. Pay attention to our barking, I address her mentally; do not hear the whirlpool roar—and then presently you will find yourself in an unpleasant and undignified situation and I shall be glad! But my malicious hopes are not fulfilled. For at the rapid's very edge she flutters up into the air, flies a few yards upstream, and then, oh, shameless hussy, settles down again.

I recall the feelings of baffled anger with which we looked at that duck—and I am reminded of another occasion, another and final episode in this tale of our hunting-ground. It was attended by a certain satisfaction for my companion and me, but had its painful and disturbing side as well; yes,

it even gave rise to some coolness between us, and if I could have foreseen it I would have avoided the spot where it took place.

It was a long way out, beyond the ferry-house, downstream, where the wilds that border the river approach the upper road along the shore. We were going along this, I at an easy pace, Bashan in front with his easy, lop-sided lope. He had roused a hare—or, if you like, it had roused him—had stirred up four pheasants, and now was minded to give his master a little attention. A small bevy of ducks were flying above the river, in v-formation, their necks stretched out. They flew rather high and closer to the other shore, so that they were out of our reach as game, but moving in the same direction as ourselves. They paid no attention to us and we only cast casual glances at them now and then.

Then it happened that opposite to us on the other bank, which like ours was steep here, a man struck out of the bushes, and directly he appeared upon the scene he took up a position which fixed our attention, Bashan's no less than mine, upon him at once. We stopped in our tracks and faced him. He was a fine figure of a man, though rather rough-looking; with drooping moustaches, wearing puttees, a frieze hat cocked down over his forehead, wide velveteen trousers and jerkin to match, over which hung numerous leather straps, for he had a rucksack slung on his back and a gun over his shoulder. Or rather he had had it over his shoulder; for he no sooner appeared than he took it in his hand, laid his cheek along the butt, and aimed it diagonally upwards at the sky. He took a step forwards with one putteed leg, the gun-barrel rested in the hollow of his left hand, with the arm stretched out and the elbow against his side. The other elbow, with the hand on the trigger, stuck out at his side, and we could see his bold, foreshortened face quite clearly as he sighted upwards. It looked somehow very theatrical, this figure standing out above the boulders on the bank, against a background of shrubbery, river, and open sky. But we could have gazed for only a moment when the dull sound of the

explosion made me start, I had waited for it with such inward tension. There was a tiny flash at the same time; it looked pale in the broad daylight; a puff of smoke followed. The man took one slumping pace forwards, like an operatic star, with his face and chest lifted towards the sky, his gun hanging from the strap in his right fist. Something was going on up there where he was looking and where we now looked too. There was a great confusion and scattering, the ducks flew in all directions wildly flapping their wings with a noise like wind in the sails, they tried to volplane down—then suddenly a body fell like a stone onto the water near the other shore.

This was only the first half of the action. But I must interrupt my narrative here to turn the vivid light of my memory upon the figure of Bashan. I can think of large words with which to describe it, phrases we use for great occasions: I could say that he was thunderstruck. But I do not like them, I do not want to use them. The large words are worn out, when the great occasion comes they do not describe it. Better use the small ones and put into them every ounce of their weight. I will simply say that when Bashan heard the explosion, saw its meaning and consequence, he started; and it was the same start which I have seen him give a thousand times when something surprises him, only raised to the *n*th degree. It was a start which flung his whole body backwards with a right-and-left motion, so sudden that it jerked his head against his chest and almost bounced it off his shoulders with the shock; a start which made his whole body seem to be crying out: *What! What! What was that? Wait a minute, in the devil's name! What was that?* He looked and listened with that sort of rage in which extreme astonishment expresses itself; listened within himself and heard things that had always been there, however novel and unheard-of the present form they took. Yes, from this start, which flung him to right and left and half-way round on his axis, I got the impression that he was trying to look at himself, trying to ask: *What am I? Who am I? Is this me?* At the moment when the duck's body plopped on the water he bounded forwards to the edge of

the bank, as though he were going to jump down to the river-bed and plunge in. But he bethought himself of the current and checked his impulse; then, rather shamefaced, devoted himself to staring, as before.

I looked at him, somewhat disturbed. After the duck had fallen I felt that we had had enough and suggested that we go on our way. But he had sat down on his haunches, facing the other shore, his ears erected as high as they would go. When I said: "Well, Bashan, shall we go on?" he turned his head only the briefest second as though saying, with some annoyance: Please don't disturb me! And kept on looking. So I resigned myself, crossed my legs, leaned on my cane, and watched to see what would happen.

The duck—no doubt one of those that had rocked in such pert security on the water in front of our noses—went driving like a wreck on the water, you could not tell which was head and which tail. The river is quieter at this point, its rapids are not so swift as they are further up. But even so, the body was seized by the current, whirled round, and swept away. If the man was not concerned only with sport but had a practical goal in view, then he would better act quickly. And so he did, not losing a moment—it all went very fast. Even as the duck fell he had rushed forward stumbling and almost falling down the slope, with his gun held out at arm's length. Again I was struck with the picturesqueness of the sight, as he came down the slope like a robber or smuggler in a melodrama, in the highly effective scenery of boulder and bush. He held somewhat leftwards, allowing for the current, for the duck was drifting away and he had to head it off. This he did successfully, stretching out the butt end of the gun and bending forward with his feet in the water. Carefully and painstakingly he piloted the duck towards the stones and drew it to shore.

The job was done, the man drew a long breath. He put down his weapon against the bank, took his knapsack from his shoulders, and stuffed the duck inside; buckled it on again, and thus satisfactorily laden and using his gun as a stick, he clambered over the boulders and up the slope.

"Well, he got his Sunday joint," thought I, half enviously,

half approvingly. "Come, Bashan, let's go now, it's all over." Bashan got up and turned round on himself, but then he sat down again and looked after the man, even after he had left the scene and disappeared among the bushes. It did not occur to me to ask him twice. He knew where we lived, and he might sit here goggling, after it was all over, as long as he thought well. It was quite a long walk home and I meant to be stirring. So then he came.

He kept beside me on our whole painful homeward way, and did not hunt. Nor did he run diagonally a little ahead, as he does as a rule when not in a hunting mood; he kept behind me, at a jog-trot, and put on a sour face, as I could see when I happened to turn round. I could have borne with that and should not have dreamed of being drawn; I was rather inclined to laugh and shrug my shoulders. But every thirty or forty paces he *yawned*—and that I could not stand. It was that impudent gape of his, expressing the extreme of boredom, accompanied by a throaty little whine which seems to say: Fine master I've got! No master at all! Rotten master, if you ask me!—I am always sensitive to the insulting sound, and this time it was almost enough to shake our friendship to its foundations.

"Go away!" said I. "Get out with you! Go to your new friend with the blunderbuss and attach yourself to him! He does not seem to have a dog, perhaps he could use you in his business. He is only a man in velveteens, to be sure, not a gentleman, but in your eyes he may be one; perhaps he is the right master for you, and I honestly recommend you to suck up to him—now that he has put a flea in your ear to go with your others." (Yes, I actually said that!) "We'll not ask if he has a hunting-licence, or if you won't both get into fine trouble some day at your dirty game—that is your affair, and, as I tell you, my advice is perfectly sincere. You think so much of yourself as a hunter! Did you ever bring me a hare of all those I let you chase? Is it my fault that you do not know how to double, but must come down with your nose in the gravel at the moment when agility is required? Or a pheasant, which in these lean times would be equally welcome? And now you yawn!

Get along, I tell you. Go to your master with the puttees and see if he knows how to scratch your neck and make you laugh. I'll wager he does not know how to laugh a decent laugh himself. Do you think he is likely to have you put under scientific observation when you decide to suffer from occult blood, or that when you are his dog you will be pronounced nervous and anæmic? If you do, then you'd better get along. But you may be overestimating the respect which that kind of master would have for you. There are certain distinctions—that kind of man with a gun is very keen on them: native advantages or disadvantages, to make my meaning clearer, troublesome questions of pedigree and breeding, if I must be plain. Not everybody passes these over on grounds of humanity and fine feeling; and if your wonderful master reproaches you with your moustaches the first time you and he have a difference of opinion, then you may remember me and what I am telling you now."

With such biting words did I address Bashan as he slunk behind me on our way home. And though I did not utter but only thought them, for I did not care to look as though I were mad, yet I am convinced that he got my meaning perfectly, at least in its main lines. In short, it was a serious quarrel, and when we got home I deliberately let the gate latch behind me so that he could not slip through and had to climb over the fence. I went into the house without even looking round, and shrugged my shoulders when I heard him yelp because he scratched his belly on the rail.

But all that is long ago, more than six months. Now, like our little clinical episode, it has dropped into the past. Time and forgetfulness have buried it, and on their alluvial deposit where all life lives, we too live on. For a few days Bashan appeared to mope. But long ago he recovered all his joy in the chase, in mice and moles and pheasant, hares and waterfowl. When we return home, at once begins his period of waiting for the next time. I stand at the house door and turn towards him; upon that signal he bounds in two great leaps up the steps and braces his fore-paws against the door, reaching as far up as he can that I may

pat him on the shoulder. "Tomorrow, Bashan," say I; "that is, if I am not obliged to pay a visit to the outer world." Then I hasten inside, to take off my hobnailed boots, for the soup stands waiting on the table.

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