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# AUNT LOUISA'S LONDON TOY BOOKS



# HECTOR THE DOG

LONDON.

FREDERICK WARNE & CO.

# HECTOR THE DOG.

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Man loves the dog, the dog loves man :  
The dog is trusty, strong, and brave,  
And God has on the dog bestowed  
The power and will man's life to save.

And often has the tale been told,  
How, borne along in eager strife,  
While struggling hard to rescue man,  
The noble dog has lost his life.

---

THE little inn of Martigny  
Had but few guests on Christmas  
Eve,  
For men at home made festive cheer,  
And cared not household joys to leave.

But near the door a trav'ler stood,  
Who with his host had earnest talk,  
With knapsack girt and staff in hand,  
All ready for a mountain walk.

“Nay, stay to-night; the way is long;  
Dark clouds are flitting o'er the sky;  
A storm is brewing, trust my word,—  
I hear the raven's warning cry.

“Come, friend, give up thy toilsome walk,  
And spend thy Christmas with us  
here.”

The landlord spoke with kindly voice,  
Himself a well-train'd mountaineer.

“Nay, press me not,” the man replied;  
“I must get home by Christmas Day.  
“The mountain-pass I know right well,  
Its hoary peaks and boulders gray.

“Ten years ago I left my home  
My fortune in the world to seek :  
It seems to me a long, long time  
Since last I saw these mountains bleak.







“I promised them that, come what might,  
I would be home on Christmas Day;  
So farewell; may GOD’S blessing be  
With me along my toilsome way.”

In the fast-fading evening light  
He then pursued his lonely road,  
Onward and upward through the snow,  
Leaving behind him man’s abode.

Above him rose the snowy peaks,  
Still glowing white against the sky,  
And many a crevasse, deep and wide,  
Around his path he could descry.

Upward and onward still he toil’d,  
His heart was beating loud and fast:  
He’d reach’d his own dear fatherland,  
Danger and toil were well-nigh past.

He long’d to hear his father’s voice,  
His mother’s kiss once more to feel,  
And in the quiet restful home  
With them once more in prayer to kneel.

He long’d to spread before their gaze  
The honest gains of many a year,  
Earn’d with hard toil for those he lov’d,  
And guarded with a jealous care.

His father with his silver hair,  
His mother with her kind blue eyes,  
His sisters, little playmates once,—  
Would he their faces recognize?

Colder and colder blew the wind,  
It whistled up the mountain-pass;  
The blinding snow-storm flew before;  
The ice was slippery as glass.

Onward he went, but cautiously:  
“Surely I have not miss’d my way?  
The night grows dark, ’t is piercing cold:  
Can I hold on till dawn of day?”

And still he battled with the storm,  
That every moment fiercer grew,  
And stronger came the dreadful thought  
That he the way no longer knew.

And now his strength is ebbing fast;  
His head is sinking on his breast.  
Oh! could he in that fearful storm  
But find some shelter, gain some rest!

Happy for him that at that time,  
Alone upon the mountain-side,  
He knew that to his Father’s love  
His life or death he might confide.







The eddying snow-wreath whirl'd around,  
Snow hid the path, snow fill'd the air.  
He fell unconscious to the ground,  
The object of a Father's care.

Above the smooth white-sheeted snow  
The convent-walls rose dark and high,  
And bright the clear, cold stars look'd  
down

From out the wind-swept winter sky.

The stately shadows, broad and dark,  
Lay stretch'd along the mountain-side,  
And through the narrow windows gleam'd  
The blazing logs of Christmas-tide.

It was the holy Christmas Eve,  
When joy in Christian homes should be,  
And in this lonely monast'ry  
Was friendly talk and quiet glee.

And truly none deserved it more  
Than these lone men of lowly mind,  
Who, in their Master's steps to tread,  
Had left the pleasant world behind.

That was a scene for painter's art,  
Those men so calm, so free from strife,  
Who bore upon each rugged face  
The impress of a noble life.

Nor men alone composed the group :  
Four dogs, of pure St. Bernard blood,  
Or slept unconscious on the hearth,  
Or by their masters proudly stood ;

Calm, lofty, steadfast, great, and strong,  
A picture of the mountains round ;  
Both dogs and masters in one tie  
Of kindly brotherhood fast bound.

What was their life ? had selfish aim  
Enticed them to this lonely spot,  
Life's toil and burden to escape,  
Its battle-field to enter not ?

No, surely ; not in sinful ease  
The daily life of each was spent,  
But to fight hand in hand with Death  
Each nerve was strain'd, each pow'r  
was bent.

For here, amongst the snow and ice,  
The everlasting winter cold,  
Full many a weary traveller  
Had died unknown since days of old.

And so to seek and save the lost  
These men and dogs were living here ;  
Bravely they daily risk'd their lives,  
Nor e'er gave way to thought of fear.









Vespers are over. In the hall  
The monks are gather'd round the board  
To celebrate the joyful feast  
With the best cheer their stores afford.

The noble dogs are feasting now,  
Fed with kind hands and loving care,  
For if they share their masters' toils  
Their joys and feasts they also share.

"Brethren and friends," the Prior said,  
"The night grows wild, the storm gets  
high,  
The dogs are restless; some must go,  
If help is needed. to be nigh.

"This night we'll sing our hymn to GOD  
With shepherds and the angelic host;  
But you will praise whilst yet you serve,  
And by the serving praise Him most."

So, taking hatchets, torches, ropes,  
The monks and dogs together went;  
They make towards the mountain-pass,  
And soon the dogs are on a scent.

Smelling and sniffing through the storm,  
Their noble heads bent to the snow,  
Close follow'd by the stalwart monks,  
They bravely up the mountain go.

"Full sure, I guess," said Brother Ralph,  
"Some traveller is out to-night,  
And sure I am that for his life  
With storm and snow he'll have to fight.

"And if but once he miss the path  
Hard by the precipice which winds,  
A fearful sight 't will be for him  
The mangled traveller that finds.

"But, see, the dogs are on the track;  
See how with one consent they go;  
They've turn'd the point, they're out of  
sight:  
And, hark! that baying down below!"

The monks rush on with breathless speed,  
All on the strain, no word they say;  
But as they breast the storm-blasts' rage,  
With silent earnestness they pray.

They turn the point, and down below  
The eager, striving dogs they see,  
All on a narrow ledge that hangs  
Projecting o'er the icy sea.

There's one way down, but e'en in light,  
When all is calm, on summer's day,  
While in pursuit of mountain goat,  
The hunter dreads that dizzy way.







The brothers pause, and peering down,  
Each grasps the other as he stands;  
The noble hounds will do till death  
What their life-saving law commands.

First one and then the other down  
That fearful steep, with shuddering  
cry,  
They creep, they cringe, they bound, they  
roll,  
And now on snow-slip swiftly fly.

The snow-slip takes a happy turn,  
And lands them on the icy sea,  
And sharp glad barkings upward send  
The tidings of their victory.

And thanks to GOD! the storm is past,  
The gentle moon gives out her light  
To guide their footsteps down each steep,  
And aid their swing from height to  
height.

They reach at length the sea of ice,  
Three dogs come bounding to their  
side:  
The fourth, brave Hector, where was he  
Hurl'd by the avalanche's slide?

Anxious and eager rush the dogs  
To where a face of hopeful glow  
And firm resolve, in death-like swoon,  
Peers upward from the open'd snow.

What dogs could do these dogs have done;  
Man's skill and care must do the rest;  
And sooner far than could be thought  
Their efforts with success were blest.

But other cares await them now:  
No sooner had they shown the man,  
Then, darting off with eager haste,  
The hounds to farther distance ran.

Hector they seek with whine and cries;  
They scratch the appalling mound of  
snow,

Which, loosen'd from the mountain-side,  
Had swept them with it down below.

Vain work for dogs! vain work for men!  
Thousands of tons of ice and snow,  
Heap'd up in one vast funeral pile,  
Poor Hector holds entombed below.

Alas! poor Hector! Gone for him  
Those scampers on the mountain's side,  
Where to lead men from height to height  
Still upward, was his joy and pride.







The bright blue sky,  
The torrent's roar, the  
The foes with which

For winter oft would see  
To prowl among the ice  
And oft the bear would see  
That shudder'd on their path

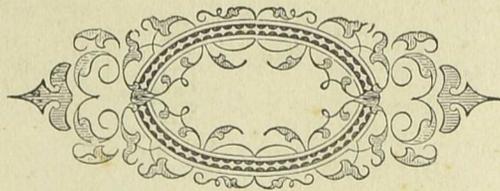
Then mighty courage filled the heart  
Of Hector, bravest of the brave,  
And forth he rushed with eager haste  
The trembling flocks and herds to save.

But now no more: his work is done;  
The dog has met a hero's end!  
With deep-drawn sigh the brethren mourn  
Their mute companion and their friend.

And the hound  
came to the same.

There watchful care attends the couch  
Where rests the traveller return'd,  
And swift feet carry to his home  
Good news from one they might have  
mourn'd.

But as each Christmas-tide return'd,  
And still he toil'd in life's rough way,  
With thankful praise he join'd in thought  
Hector, the dog, and Christmas Day.



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