

UNCLE NED'S TOY BOOKS.

HECTOR THE DOG



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RECTOR, THE DOG.

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 the 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-trained 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.

Hector, the Dog.

“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?

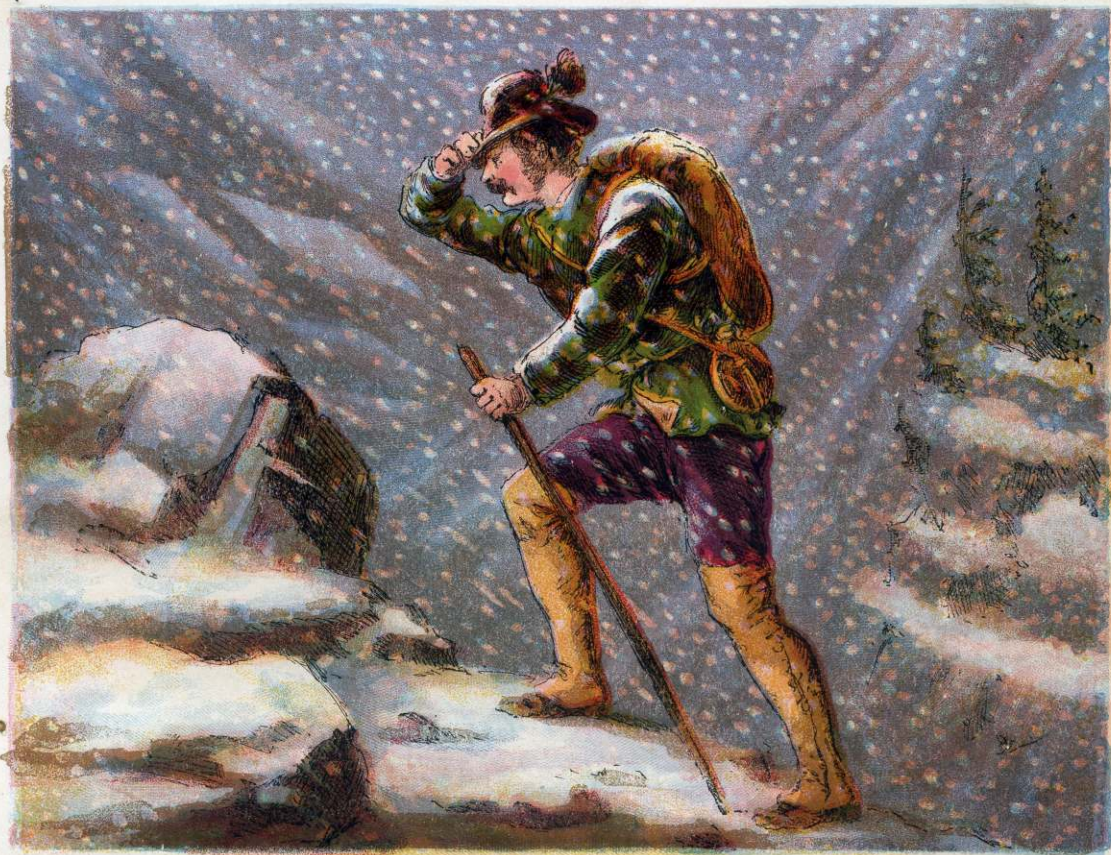
Colder and colder blew the wind,
It whistled up the mountain-pass;
The blinding snow-storm flew before;
The ice was slippery as glass.

Onward he went, but cautiously:
“Surely I have not miss'd my way?
The night grows dark, 'tis 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!





Hector, the Dog.

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.

Hector, the Dog.

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.

Gone the sweet smell of pine-clad hill,
The bright blue sky, the sunny slope,
The torrent's roar, the eagle's cry,
The foes with which he used to cope.

For winter oft would send the wolf
To prowl among the flocks below,
And oft the bear would seek the herds
That shudder'd on their path of snow.

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 an' their friend.

Then on, with heavy hearts, and slow,
They bear with toil the rescued man,
Mounting still upward to the height
From whence their steep descent began.

And slow, and hanging low their heads,
As if oppress'd by sense of shame
Mingled with grief, the noble hounds
In silence to the convent came.

There watchful care attends the couch
Where rests the traveler 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.





THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN KIDS.

ONE day an old goat
Who, from men quite remote,
With her seven kids lived in a wood,
Told her kids o'er and o'er
Not to open the door,
And went forth to find them some food.

She'd not been gone long,
When a wolf fierce and strong
Came knocking "tap, tap!" at the
gate.

Said he, "Children dear,
Your mother is here;
So don't keep me waiting—it's late."

At first, each small kid
Did as he was bid,
And they kept the house-door shut quite
fast;

But the wolf smiled and coaxed,
And the poor kids he hoaxed,
Till they opened the house-door at last.

When the wolf once got in.
He did quickly begin
To devour all the kids, one by one;

And he swallowed, I've heard,
Just six—on my word!—
Before he his supper had done.

When the old goat returned
With the food she had earned
By her diligent search in the glade,
Of the kids she had left
When she found herself 'reft,
A loud lamentation she made.

And now the old story
Goes on to inform ye,
That the big wolf lay down for a nap;
Within him, 'tis said,
The kids were not dead,
For he swallowed them whole, by good
hap.

So, while he was sleeping,
The old goat came creeping,
And at once with her shears cut him
through;

And the kids they jumped out,
And went leaping about—
(But I don't know if *this* part is true.)

The Three Little Dogs.

But it still doth appear
That two morals are clear,
And I will rehearse them directly;
First: "When you are told
By those who are old
What to do go and do it exactly."

The second, again,
Is equally plain—
It is this: "Don't be eager and greedy;
Like a wolf do not eat,
Nor devour all your meat,
But leave some for the poor and the
[needy.]"

THE THREE LITTLE DOGS.

THREE little dogs were talking,
As they trotted along the road;
And the subject of speech,
With all and with each,
Was what bad folks there were abroad.

Said the first: "You would hardly believe it,
But I can assure you it's true—
A man with a pail,
Threw suds on my tail!
Now I think that's cruel. Don't you?"

Said the second: "That's very atrocious;
But a worse thing happened to me:
A boy with a stone
Almost broke my back-bone!
Now what think you of *that*?" said he.

Said the third: "My fate was the hardest,
And I can prove it just now:
A man knocked me flat,
When I looked at a cat;
Wasn't *that* too bad? Bow-wow!"

But the three little dogs did not mention:
The first that he'd stolen some sprats;
The second that he ran
At a poor blind man,
And the third that he'd hunted the cats.

Thus these three little dogs were talking;
And many small boys do the same:
They tell of a story
What redounds to their glory,
But forget where they well deserve
blame.

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