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"To Belle" by R.B. LeCocq, July 1926

Ralph B. LeCocq

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To Belle
R. B. Le Cocq

BELLE is gone. While her master lingered idly by his fireside, without a thought of danger, or a sense of harm, his faithful dog had wandered out on a forbidden highway where some speeding driver ran her down. There only human traffic has a legal license, and dogs are only dogs without their canine rights. We found her on the pavement, her face headed homeward; she had strayed off for but a moment and was forced to pay with life. I buried her one morning as the eastern sun first peeked over the snow-capped hills. With tender hands and eyes a little moist, I must confess, I laid her gently in her grave dug in the meadow along the brook where she was wont to roam, or where she entertained her ancestral instincts by looking for the minnows in the stream.

Belle, I miss you. In all the years gone by I never yet came back from work or play but you would come to meet and greet me. On sunny Sunday days we walked together along the old stream and into woodland; and as we walked and talked the primitive instincts in both were somewhat satisfied. In hunting season we would roam o’er hill and dale, field and meadow, in pursuit of fleeing game. We were good companions, Belle. We understood without a language; gesture, look and instinct were enough.

Belle, in losing you my heart is sad. No other can just take your place; no other dog would know me as you did. When misfortunes come and sorrows fall; when friends forsake or sickness lays us low; when life’s brief span seems entangled with the pains and troubles humans know, a faithful dog is faithful still. I know not whether there is a spirit land for dogs, or if man alone can boast of such a home; but when I think of you, Belle, the imagination goes perhaps astray, and I like to believe that when life’s brief day is done and the soul shall wander in the valley of the shadows searching for the lonely way, that thru the hazy, misty distance of that other shore, I may recognize my friend and pal of earthly days—my dog, Belle.