

WHAT REALLY MATTERS ABOUT DOGS, FROM THOSE WHO SAID IT BEST

He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion. – Cicero

In this complex age with its conflicting burdens, it is, I think, with a sense of satisfaction that we may regard the position of the dog. In the last decade there has been a distinct advance in his position. His steady rise in public esteem and the increased acknowledgement of his definite part in our complex human relations is encouraging. The dog does not contend, he merely adds his measure to qualities of which this world has never had enough. Loyalty is a favorite word in all our vocabularies. It is a luminous word, direct and simple. May we pledge it anew to the cause of those quiet friends who have helped us to interpret and define its meaning. – Mrs. Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge, upon her acceptance of the Chappel Award at the Westminster Dog Show in 1939

ADDRESS TO THE COURT, IN DEFENSE OF DOG OWNERSHIP:

“Gentlemen of the Jury:

“The best friend a man has in the world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has, he may lose. It flies away from him, perhaps when he needs it most. A man’s reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees to do us honor when success is with us, may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads.

“The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog.

“A man’s dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master’s side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer. He will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wing, and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens. If fortune drives the master forth, an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard him against danger, to fight against his enemies.

“And when the last scene of all comes, and death takes his master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by the graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad, but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death.”

George Graham Vest – c. 1855

EPITAPH OF "BOATSWAIN", LORD BYRON'S NEWFOUNDLAND DOG, INTERRED AT
NEWSTEAD ABBEY, ENGLAND, 1808:

When some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rest below;
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should have been.

But the poor dog in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
Who labors, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
Unhonored falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth;
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven...
Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,
Degraded mass of animated dust!

Ye, who perchance behold this simple urn,
Pass on – it honors none you wish to mourn;
To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one – and here he lies.

"BOATSWAIN"

Who possessed Beauty without Vanity
Strength without Insolence
Courage without Ferocity
And all the virtues of Man without his Vices.