

**FOURTH VOLUME;
LITTLE CLASSICS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649637188

Fourth Volume; Little Classics by Rossiter Johnson

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ROSSITER JOHNSON

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Not in PD
12/18-14
32

Fourth Volume.

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EDITED BY

ROSSITER JOHNSON.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC

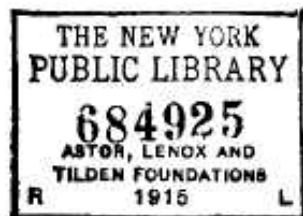
RAM AND HIS FRIENDS. — A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE. — THE LARK OF ROARING
CAMP. — JERRY JARVIS'S WIFE. — JULIUS AND THE DECADE. — DAVID
SWAN. — DREAMTHORP. — A MAGICAL HISTORY. — THE
GRAMMAR OF LIFE. — MY CHATEAUX. — DREAM-CHILD.
DREN. — THE MAN IN THE RESERVOIR. — WEST-
MINSTER ABBEY. — THE PURITANS. —
GETTYSBURG.

BOSTON :

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,

Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood, & Co.

1875.



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874,
BY JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

UNIVERSITY PRESS: WELCH, BIGELOW, & Co.,
CAMBRIDGE.



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NYOY WEM
CLUB
YRARRU



RAB AND HIS FRIENDS.

BY JOHN BROWN, M. D.

FOUR-AND-THIRTY years ago, Bob Ainslie and I were coming up Infirmary Street, from the High School, our heads together, and our arms intertwined as only lovers and boys know how or why.

When we got to the top of the street, and turned north, we espied a crowd at the Tron Church. "A dog-fight!" shouted Bob, and was off; and so was I, both of us all but praying that it might not be over before we got up! And is not this boy-nature? and human nature too? and don't we all wish a house on fire not to be out before we see it? Dogs like fighting; old Isaac says they "delight" in it, and for the best of all reasons; and boys are not cruel because they like to see the fight. They see three of the great cardinal virtues of dog or man — courage, endurance, and skill — in intense action. This is very different from a love of making dogs fight, and enjoying, and aggravating, and making gain by their pluck. A boy, be he never so fond himself of fighting, if he be a good boy, hates and despises all this, but he would have run off with Bob and me fast enough: it

is a natural and a not wicked interest that all boys and men have in witnessing intense energy in action.

Does any curious and finely ignorant woman wish to know how Bob's eye at a glance announced a dog-fight to his brain? He did not, he could not, see the dogs fighting; it was a flash of an inference, a rapid induction. The crowd round a couple of dogs fighting is a crowd masculine mainly, with an occasional active, compassionate woman fluttering wildly round the outside, and using her tongue and her hands freely upon the men, as so many "brutes"; it is a crowd annular, compact, and mobile; a crowd centripetal, having its eyes and its heads all bent downward and inward, to one common focus.

Well, Bob and I are up, and find it is not over: a small thoroughbred white bull-terrier is busy throttling a large shepherd's dog, unaccustomed to war, but not to be trifled with. They are hard at it; the scientific little fellow doing his work in great style, his pastoral enemy fighting wildly, but with the sharpest of teeth and a great courage. Science and breeding, however, soon had their own; the Game Chicken, as the premature Bob called him, working his way up, took his final grip of poor Yarrow's throat, — and he lay gasping and done for. His master, a brown, handsome, big young shepherd from Tweedsmuir, would have liked to knock down any man, would "drink up Esil, or eat a crocodile," for that part, if he had a chance. It was no use kicking the little dog; that would only make him hold the closer. Many were the means shouted out in mouthfuls of the best possible ways of ending it. "Water!"

but there was none near, and many cried for it who might have got it from the well at Blackfriars Wynd. "Bite the tail!" and a large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged man, more desirous than wise, with some struggle got the bushy end of Yarrow's tail into his ample mouth, and bit it with all his might. This was more than enough for the much-enduring, much-perspiring shepherd, who, with a gleam of joy over his broad visage, delivered a terrific facer upon our large, vague, benevolent, middle-aged friend, — who went down like a shot.

Still the Chicken holds; death not far off. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" observed a calm, highly dressed young buck, with an eye-glass in his eye. "Snuff, indeed!" growled the angry crowd, affronted and glaring. "Snuff! a pinch of snuff!" again observes the buck, but with more urgency; whereupon were produced several open boxes, and from a mull which may have been at Culloiden, he took a pinch, knelt down, and presented it to the nose of the Chicken. The laws of physiology and of snuff take their course; the Chicken sneezes, and Yarrow is free.

The young pastoral giant stalks off with Yarrow in his arms, — comforting him.

But the Bull Terrier's blood is up, and his soul unsatisfied; he grips the first dog he meets, and discovering she is not a dog, in Homeric phrase, he makes a brief sort of *amende*, and is off. The boys, with Bob and me at their head, are after him: down Niddry Street he goes, bent on mischief; up the Cowgate, like an arrow, — Bob and I, and our small men, panting behind.

There, under the single arch of the South Bridge, is a