When spring, the fairest season of the year, does honour to its name, and when the trilling of the birds rouses me early because I have ended the day before at a seemly hour, I love to rise betimes and go for a half-hour's walk before breakfast. Strolling hatless in the broad avenue in front of my house, or through the parks beyond, I like to enjoy a few draughts of the young morning air and taste its blithe purity before I am claimed by the labours of the day. Standing on the front steps of my house, I give a whistle in two notes, tonic and lower fourth, like the beginning of the second phrase of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony; it might be considered the musical setting of a two-syllabled name. Next moment, and while I walk towards the garden gate, the faintest tinkle sounds from afar, at first scarcely audible, but growing rapidly louder and more distinct; such a sound as might be made by a metal licence-tag clicking against the trimmings of a leather collar. I face about, to see Bashan rounding the corner of the house at top speed and charging towards me as though he meant to knock me down. In the effort he is making he has dropped his lower lip, baring two white teeth that glitter in the morning sun.

He comes straight from his kennel, which stands at the back of the house, between the props of the veranda floor. Probably, until my two-toned call set him in this violent motion, he had been lying there snatching a nap after the adventures of the night. The kennel has curtains of sacking and is lined with straw; indeed, a straw or so may be clinging to Bashan's sleep-rumpled coat or even sticking between his toes—a comic sight, which reminds me of a painstakingly imagined production of Schiller's Die Die Räuber that I once saw, in which old Count Moor came out of the Hunger Tower tricot-clad, with a straw sticking pathetically between his toes. Involuntarily I assume a defensive position to meet the charge, receiving it on my flank, for Bashan shows every sign of meaning to run between my legs and trip me up. However at the last minute, when a collision is imminent, he always puts on the brakes, executing a half-wheel which speaks for both his mental and his physical self-control. And then, without a sound-for he makes sparing use of his sonorous and expressive voice—he dances wildly round me by way of greeting, with immoderate plungings and waggings which are not confined to the appendage provided by nature for the purpose but bring his whole hind quarters as far as his ribs into play. He contracts his whole body into a curve, he hurtles into the air in a flying leap, he turns round and round on his own axis—and curiously enough, whichever way I turn, he always contrives to execute these manœuvres behind my back. But the moment I stoop down and put out my hand he jumps to my side and stands like a statue, with his shoulder against my shin, in a slantwise posture, his strong paws braced against the ground, his face turned upwards so that he looks at me upside-down. And his utter immobility, as I pat his shoulder and murmur encouragement, is as concentrated and fiercely passionate as the frenzy before it had been.

Bashan is a short-haired German pointer-speaking by and large, that is, and not too literally. For he is probably not quite orthodox, as a pure matter of points. In the first place, he is a little too small. He is, I repeat, definitely undersized for a proper pointer. And then his forelegs are not absolutely straight, they have just the suggestion of an
outward curve—which also detracts from his qualifications as a blood-dog. And he has a
tendency to a dewlap, those folds of hanging skin under the muzzle, which in Bashan's
case are admirably becoming but again would be frowned on by your fanatic for pure
breeding, as I understand that a pointer should have taut skin round the neck. Bashan's
colouring is very fine: His coat is a rusty brown with black stripes and a good deal of
white on chest, paws, and under side. The whole of his snub nose seems to have been
dipped in black paint. Over the broad top of his head and on his cool hanging ears the
black and brown combine in a lovely velvety pattern. Quite the prettiest thing about him,
however, is the whorl or stud or little tuft at the centre of the convolution of white hairs
on his chest, which stands out like the boss on an ancient breastplate. Very likely even his
splendid coloration is a little too marked and would be objected to by those who put the
laws of breeding above the value of personality, for it would appear that the classic
pointer type should have a coat of one colour or at most with spots of a different one, but
never stripes. Worst of all, from the point of view of classification, is a hairy growth
hanging from his muzzle and the corners of his mouth; it might with some justice be
called a moustache and goatee, and when you concentrate on it, close at hand or even at a
distance, you cannot help thinking of an airedale or a schnauzer.

But classifications aside, what a good and good-looking anima! Bashan is, as he
stands there straining against my knee, gazing up at me with all his devotion in his eyes!
They are particularly fine eyes, too, both gentle and wise, if just a little too prominent and
glassy. The iris is the same colour as his coat, a rusty brown; it is only a narrow rim, for
the pupils are dilated into pools of blackness and the outer edge merges into the white of
the eye wherein it swims. His whole head is expressive of honesty and intelligence, of
manly qualities corresponding to his physical structure: his arched and swelling chest
where the ribs stand out under the smooth and supple skin; the narrow haunches, the
veined, sinewy legs, the strong, well-shaped paws. All these bespeak virility and a stout
heart; they suggest hunting blood and peasant stock—yes, certainly the hunter and game
dog do after all predominate in Bashan, he is genuine pointer, no matter if he does not
owe his existence to a snobbish system of inbreeding. All this, probably, is what I am
really telling him as I pat his shoulder-blade and address him with a few disjointed words
of encouragement.

So he stands and looks and listens, gathering from what I Say and the tone of it
that I distinctly approve of his existence—the very thing which I am at pains to imply. And
suddenly he thrusts out his head, opening and shutting his lips very fast, and makes a
snap at my face as though he meant to bite off my nose. It is a gesture of response to my
remarks, and it always makes me recoil with a laugh, as Bashan knows beforehand that it
will. It is a kiss in the air, half caress, half teasing, a trick he has had since puppyhood,
which I have never seen in any of his predecessors. And he immediately begs pardon for
the liberty, crouching, wagging his tail, and behaving funnily embarrassed. So we go out
through the garden gate and into the open.

We are encompassed with a roaring like that of the sea; for we live almost directly
on the swift-flowing river that foams over shallow ledges at no great distance from the
popular avenue. In between lie a fenced-in grass plot planted with maples, and a raised
pathway skirted with huge aspen trees, bizarre and willowlke of aspect. At the beginning
of June their seed-pods strew the ground far and wide with woolly snow. Upstream, in
the direction of the city, construction troops are building a pontoon bridge. Shouts of
command and the thump of heavy boots on the planks sound across the river; also, from the further bank, the noise of industrial activity, for there is a locomotive foundry a little way downstream. Its premises have been lately enlarged to meet increased demands, and light streams all night long from its lofty windows. Beautiful glittering new engines roll to and fro on trial runs; a steam whistle emits wailing head-tones from time to time; muffled thunderings of unspecified origin shatter the air, smoke pours out of the many chimneys to be caught up by the wind and borne away over the wooded country beyond the river; for it seldom or never blows over to our side. Thus to our half-suburban, half-rural seclusion the voice of nature Mingles with that of man, and over all lies the bright-eyed freshness of the new day.

It might be about half past seven by official time when I set out; by sun-time, half past six. With my hands behind my back I stroll in the tender sunshine down the avenue, cross-hatched by the long shadows of the poplar trees. From where I am I cannot see the river, but I hear its broad and even flow. The trees whisper gently, song-birds fill the air with their penetrating chirps and warbles, twitters and trills; from the direction of the sunrise a plane is flying under the humid blue sky, a rigid, mechanical bird with a droning hum that rises and falls as it steers a free course above river and fields. And Bashan is delighting my eyes with the beautiful long leaps he is making across the low rail of the grass-plot on my left. Backwards and forwards he leaps as a matter of fact he is doing it because he knows I like it; for I have often urged him on by shouting and striking the railing, praising him when he fell in with my whim. So now he comes up to me after nearly every jump to hear how intrepidly and elegantly he jumps. He even springs up into my face and slavers all over the arm I put out to protect it. But the jumping is also to be conceived as a sort of morning exercise, and morning toilet as well, for it smooths his ruffled coat and rids it of old Moor's straws.

It is good to walk like this in the early morning, with senses rejuvenated and spirit cleansed by the night's long healing draught of Lethe. You look confidently forward to the day, yet pleasantly hesitate to begin it, being master as you are of this little untroubled span of time between, which is your good reward for good behaviour. You indulge in the illusion that your life is habitually steady, simple, concentrated, and contemplative, that you belong entirely to yourself-and this illusion makes you quite happy. For a human being tends to believe that the mood of the moment, be it troubled or blithe, peaceful or stormy, is the true, native, and permanent tenor of his existence; and in particular he likes to exalt every happy chance into an inviolable rule and to regard it as the benign order of his life-whereas the truth is that he is condemned to improvisation and morally lives from hand to mouth all the time. So now, breathing the morning air, you stoutly believe that you are virtuous and free; while you, L_ ought to know-and at bottom do know-that the world spreading its snares round your feet, and that most likely tomorrow you will be lying in your bed until nine, because you, sought it at two in the morning hot and befogged with impas sioned discussion. Never mind. Today you, a sober character an early riser, you are the right master for that stout hunter wh has just cleared the railings again out of sheer joy in the fact that today you apparently belong to him alone and not to the world. We follow the avenue for about five minutes, to the point where it ceases to be an avenue and becomes a gravelly waste along the river-bank. From this we turn away to our right and strike into another covered with finer gravel, which has been laid out like the avenue and like it provided with a cycle-path, but is not yet built up. It runs between low-lying,
wooded lots of land, towards the slope which is the eastern limit of our river neigh. bourhood and Bashan's theatre of action. On our way we cross another road, equally embryonic, running along between fields and meadows. Further up, however, where the tram stops, it is quite built up with flats. We descend by a gravel path into a well-laid-out, parklike valley, quite deserted, as indeed the whole region is at this hour. Paths are laid out in curves and rondels, there are benches to rest on, tidy playgrounds, with wide plots of lawn with fine old trees whose boughs nearly sweep the grass, covering all but a glimpse of trunk. They are elms, beeches, limes, and silvery willows, in well-disposed groups. I enjoy to the full the well-landscaped quality of the scene, where I may walk no more disturbed than if it belonged to me alone. Nothing has been forgotten—there are even cement gutters in the gravel paths that lead down the grassy slopes. And the abundant greenery discloses here and there a charming distant vista of one of the villas that bound the spot on two sides.

Here for a while I stroll along the paths, and Bashan revels in the freedom of unlimited level space, galloping across and across the lawns like mad with his body inclined in a centrifugal plane; sometimes, barking with mingled pleasure and exasperation, he pursues a bird which flutters as though spellbound, but perhaps oil purpose to tease him, along the ground just in front of his nose. But if I sit down on a bench he is at my side at once and takes up a position on one of my feet. For it is a law of his being that he only runs about when I am in motion too; that when I settle down he follows suit. There seems no obvious reason for this practice; but Bashan never fails to conform to it.

I get an odd, intimate, and amusing sensation from having him sit on my foot and warm it with the blood-heat of his body. A pervasive feeling of sympathy and good cheer fills me, as almost invariably when in his company and looking at things from his angle. He has a rather rustic slouch when he sits down; his shoulder-blades stick out and his paws turn negligently in. He looks smaller and squatter than he really is, and the little white boss on his chest is advanced with comic effect. But all these faults are atoned for by the lofty and dignified carriage of the head, so full of concentration. All is quiet, and we two sit there absolutely still in our turn. The rushing of the water comes to us faint and subdued. And the senses become alert for all the tiny, mysterious little sounds that nature makes: the lizard's quick dart, the note of a bird, the burrowing of a mole in the earth. Bashan pricks up his ears—in so far as the muscles of naturally drooping ears will allow them to be pricked. He cocks his head to hear the better; and the nostrils of his moist black nose keep twitching sensitively as he sniffs.

Then he lies down, but always in contact with my foot. I see him in profile, in that age-old, conventionalized pose of the beastgod, the sphinx: head and chest held high, forelegs close to the body, paws extended in parallel lines. He has got overheated, so he opens his mouth, and at once all the intelligence of his face gives way to the merely animal, his eyes narrow and blink and his rosy tongue lolls out between his strong white pointed teeth.