A XMAS TO REMEMBER

By

SYLVIA CURTIS OWEN

Decorations by the Author
T was nearing Christmas time. Tom Craig wanted a good dog, as much for his wife's sake, Linda, as for a guardian around the place. Some day with any luck, he hoped earnestly to become a successful farmer, and a well trained dog should prove to be an asset.

Neither he nor Linda could decide however which of the many breeds would be most likely to suit them best, for each had its respective merits. Tom rather fancied having a Border Collie, while Linda dreamed longingly of the well-groomed Kerry Blue Terrier, like that show winner Kate had up in Maine.

Time passed! The Craigs delved into various dog magazines without being able to make up their minds, until one bright day they noticed an advertisement in the AMERICAN KENNEL GAZETTE offering Puli puppies for sale. Naturally the unusual name aroused their curiosity. What new breed was this? Some foreign discovery obviously.

In reply to his enquiry Tom received an illustrated circular describing the Puli's Hungarian background, its remarkable adaptability, cleverness, fidelity, and increasing popularity as a perfect home pet. It also quoted at length the favorable results obtained during sheep-herding trials, when the first imported Pulik were tried out by the United States Department of Agriculture at its experimental station in Maryland before the war. It said that Pulik (the Hungarian plural of
the odd name) had been taught as many as seventy-six commands compared to an average of sixteen in most breeds. They were described as of medium size, very alert, long-coated dogs, with a head so profusely covered as to render the eyes indistinguishable.

The advertised puppies were supposed to be of a particularly fine working strain. The Craigs wondered hesitantly whether this was fact or fiction. They could not afford to invest in a whimsical possibility.

It occurred to Tom that the fellow down the road who did odd jobs for him on the farm might further enlighten them on the subject, since his parents had come from Hungary, and it was they who first encouraged Tom to go in for sheep raising.

Gladly the old Magyar related all he knew about the famous Pulik of his homeland. What hardy dogs they were, of uncanny intelligence with inherent herding instinct. He wistfully recalled how a stranger had come to the Carpathian hills and had admired a shepherd's dog. "That's not a dog, it's a Puli!" answered the shepherd.

The fact that Pulik have never been known to stray from the boundaries of their land, or wantonly destroy livestock, impressed both Tom and Linda, so as a Christmas present to each other, they bought a Puli.

Neither ever regretted the choice. His coat was jet black, all curly like Astrakan fur, and he paddled about inquisitively, bear cub fashion. They named the newcomer "Nick" because, as Linda remarked, "he arrived in the very nick of time, on Christmas Eve!"

Nick seemed quite at home immediately. From the start there was no doubt of his unusual intelligence which in time developed into something pretty nearly human. They had not believed how wise a Puli could be. House training proved no trouble at all. Tom thoughtfully gave him an odd glove to chew which he soon guarded with jealous care. The old stone wall became his special delight, contentedly he would sit there by the hour expectantly watching, but chipmunks and squirrels sought a loftier retreat.

Linda was fond of reading aloud when her husband came in weary on wintry nights. The farmhouse bookshelves contained many canine stories dear to their hearts. Nick would doze off between them on the hearth, relaxed as only a played-out puppy can relax.

Reading was always a joy, Rudyard Kipling’s "Jungle Tales," and "The Just So Stories" were their favorites. It was all very well for Mr. Kipling to write "Never Give Your Heart to a Dog to Tear!" That was just what they were both doing, Linda thought as she fondly gazed at their beloved Puli pup!

It was fun, too, owning an unusual dog few people had ever seen, or even heard of. Tom admitted that such pride verged on conceit! Nick was always the favorite wherever they went. He had a winsome trick of grinning engagingly to attract attention, even fastidious "Tibbie" the cat, regarded him with a friendly eye.

Spring brought the pleasant prospect of a change for Linda. Her sister Nancy asked her for a visit in town and to bring Nick of course! Nancy could scarcely wait to see the famous Puli she had heard so much about. So early one morning, Linda with Nick beside her, set off for the city.

The unfamiliar choke collar, the speeding car were strange to Nick. Even the air lost its fragrant sweetness. But nothing really mattered so long as Linda was near, presently he settled down and slept all the way.

Her family greeted them joyously on the porch, and all the excitement centered around the new puppy. Nick rose to the occasion with Puli dignity, and proceeded to explore the surroundings with much interest. He really was a perfect guest and Nancy was quickly won over. Pleading! Useful! Loving! Intelligent! Kind! spells P-U-L-I-K! was Linda’s merry retort to her sister’s praise.

Until then, Nancy, much to the family’s concern had persistently refused to replace old “Boxer-Joe”. She had missed his companionship so very much, and was beginning to realize that, in town or country, life without a

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A Classified Advertisement in
the American Kennel Gazette
solves the problem of how to
tell prospective buyers about
those outstanding puppies.

A XMAS TO REMEMBER
(Continued from page 32)
dog was cheerless. Even her long daily
walks had somehow lost their charm and
object. So, thanks to Nick's visit and
unmistakable personality, it was not long
before another fortunate Puli found a
perfect home, and fully lived up to
Nancy's expectations. His many show
wins added further distinction to his
other qualities.

When Nick was seven months old, Tom
entered him in a class for obedience
training. He was doing so well that
Nancy too, had entered her Puli in an
obedience class. Such training brings out
the best in every dog. It was Tom's greatest
satisfaction when Nick won his
"C.D." or companion dog degree.

"Dogs do understand far more than
most people give them credit for" said
the Judge, as he handed Tom the award.

Five years went by before the Craigs
started raising sheep in a big way. At
last, Nick could show his kind master
what latent talent and shepherding in-
stinct lay dormant in every Puli. A
splendid task indeed, and one which our
age cannot mechanize! Picturesque oxen
teams are largely a sight of the romantic
past, even in Europe; and the proud dray-
horse's glory has long been replaced by
labor saving tractors, but even the most
moderately equipped farmer still relies on
his herd dog, just as the Hungarian
peasants have had their Pulik for eleven
hundred years.

Careful daily schooling put Nick
keenly on his mettle. Man and dog
worked as one. To grasp the best method
of approach Tom studied the principles
set forth by Dr. R. B. Kelley in his
covering book "Sheep Dogs, Their Breed-
ing, Maintenance and Training," which
proved of tremendous help.

Tom's intense affection and pride in
his Puli were justified. Nick strictly
obeyed every command, and seemed to
read his master's mind, so perfect and
complete was the understanding between
them.

As the flock grew, so did the need of
more Pulik. Tom acquired two fine brood
bitches that soon qualified in every way.
So sprang the foundation stock of a
great line of American-born working
dogs. Year in, year out, Tom was seen
constantly engrossed with his Pulik, now
greatly in demand. The neighboring
farmers marveled at their ability, even
the most incredulous had to admit that
here was truly a sheep dog worthy of
his name.

Time passed all too quickly, the Craigs
looked back on bygone years, to that especially happy Christmas, when they put their faith and hope in a little black mite of a Puli—he had been their own wonderful discovery—Nick! whom they had loved so dearly. Their grand pal in whose fond memory each felt a sense of deep gratitude. A gratitude which only kindred spirits can feel towards man's most faithful and ever willing friend—the working sheep dog, particularly the PULI!

THE DOG’S DEVOTION

(Continued from page 29)

There has been talk on the part of the California Legislature that they might make it legal for guide dogs to enter school rooms, and when Patsy Ruth heard about that, she began to hope it would make such a ruling. However no ruling has been made so far, so she has decided to choose between her friends at school and Lucky.

Now we come to the other part of our story telling of another dog's devotion. Every morning, when it's time for Edward G. Shelton to start to work, his Seeing Eye dog, Betty, brings him her harness, just as she had been doing for the past seven years.

Now Betty bumps into chairs and stumbles over things. So after petting her, Shelton puts aside her harness and gropes his way to work the best he can without her. Betty can't understand why she's being left behind—she can't understand that her usefulness as a Seeing Eye dog has ended. The fact is that she also has lost her eyesight!

For years, Shelton and Betty have been a regular sight on Salt Lake City's streets and in its courtrooms. Shelton, who is now 39 years old, was blinded by two accidents when he was 17. One eye was blinded by a premature dynamite explosion, the other by a splinter while he was chopping kindling.

With the hope and zeal that marks the blind, Shelton felt he would make the law his career. Parents and friends read his lessons to him, and in time he received his law degree from the University of Utah.

Seven years ago the Utah State Junior Bar sent him to the Seeing Eye Institute at Morristown, N. J., where he was trained with Betty. She has since served him devotedly.

Once she frightened, with bared teeth and a growl, an angry office visitor. She has pulled Shelton from the path of many

a car. The only trouble he's had with her was teaching her that she, unlike human beings, did not have to stand when the Judge entered the courtroom.

Now Shelton is in trouble. His wife and daughters want to send Betty to their suburban home to retire. His fellow lawyers want him to get another Seeing Eye dog. If he does, Betty is bound to be jealous and unhappy. So will the new dog. If he doesn't, Shelton will feel more "lost" than ever.

They have rules against dogs in some hospitals, too, but the East Orange General Hospital broke them not long ago to let a Seeing Eye dog visit its master. Frank W. Ellor of near-by Bloomfield, N. J., had gone to the hospital with a stomach ailment. Ellor, a noted athlete in the 1900s, missed Queen, his Seeing Eye dog, but he knew he would be home