

A Faithful Foxhound

A foxhound named Drum “was known far and near as one of the fastest and least uncertain of hunting dogs.” He was shot, and his owner sued for damages, \$150 being the maximum allowed.

The case started before a Justice of the Peace, was appealed to another court, and transferred to another. In the final trial, in the State Circuit Court at Warrensburg, Mo., attorney George Graham Vest made the following comments:

“Gentlemen of the jury, 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 can be near his master’s side. He will kiss the hand that had no food to offer; he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter 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 wings 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 against danger, to fight against his enemies.

“And when the last scene of all comes, and death takes the 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 his graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even to death.”

If you had been a member of the jury, how do you think you would have responded?

This *Eulogy on the Dog* speech came during a lawsuit in 1870. It is reported in the *Congressional Record*, Oct. 16, 1914, Vol. 51, Appendix, pages 1235-36.



This statue of Drum, the dog, graces the lawn of the courthouse in Warrensburg, Mo.

According to the recollection of Thomas T. Crittenden, counsel for the defendant and later governor of Missouri, Vest made no reference to the evidence but confined himself to a tribute to canine affection and fidelity. “It was as perfect a

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piece of oratory as ever was heard from pulpit or bar. Court, jury, lawyers and audience were entranced. I looked at the jury and saw all were in tears.”

John F. Phillips, former law partner of Vest and a member of the House of Representatives, whose comments appear in the *Congressional Record* with the eulogy on the dog, said the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff represented by Vest for \$500, far more than the sum sued for. The excess was remitted. Vest was elected to the U.S. Senate eight years later and served 1879-1904.

A statue of Drum, the dog, stands in front of the Warrensburg, Mo., courthouse.

The story also raises the personal question: How would you compare your faithfulness to Christ to the faithfulness of this dog to his master?

– Beecher Hunter