

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1891.

HOW TO TRAIN CANINES.

IT'S THE FAD TO HAVE A TRICK DOG TO AMUSE YOUR VISITORS.

Points About the Training of Dogs—The System of Instruction and the Results that May Be Expected.

Educated dogs are becoming quite the fashion. An intelligent dog can be trained in five or six months to a degree of development so high that a dude is hardly a fit companion for him, intellectually.

A pug doesn't do anything, and is proud of his ignorance. He doesn't want to learn, and if you hammer a trick into his thick head he will always do it just as badly as he can. I obtained this information from Prof. Harry Parker, the famous exhibitor of trained dogs.

He also gave me a number of points about the proper method of conducting the education of a dog, which may be useful to those who haven't an instructor at hand. It isn't so hard a task, nor so long, as one might suppose; and it's quite worth undertaking, for there's lots of fun to be had with a well trained dog. After the first drudgery is over, the work progresses rapidly and the extent and variety of the resulting amusement depends principally upon the ingenuity of the trainer. But the process must be gone through systematically. It is nearly useless to attempt to teach a dog spherical geometry in the first lesson.

After talking with Prof. Parker, I began to understand one of my own early failures, when I tried to instruct one of the most intelligent Newfoundlanders that ever—well, I won't begin to lie about that dog. Suffice it to say that I made no progress whatever, because I never taught him the primary lesson of obedience. That dog had no idea of high authority. He would receive my instructions with a contemptuous disregard, which was as much as to say, "go learn a few tricks yourself so that I can have a proper respect for you." I should have made him understand that I was the master, and then I might have been.

The most difficult trick of all is to teach a dog to mind, and it is ordinarily made nearly impossible by complicating the idea with several others. Let the obedience be very simple at first, says the professor. Do not try to train a dog in a room full of people. Take him, if possible, to an entirely bare room, and let nobody else in. Begin by teaching him to sit in a certain place, and not to leave it until he is called. Make him come instantly when he is spoken to, and return when he is commanded.

Don't let his mind get away from these fundamental necessities in the course of a lesson, and do not experiment with him aimlessly or allow anybody else to do so.

In connection with the work in the room, you may carry on an outdoor training which is equally simple. Teach the dog to walk with you. For this purpose it is much better to lead him by a chain than to let him run loose. Make him walk by your side for a while; then a little behind



you; then a little ahead of you. Do not let him pull hard at the chain, but teach him to walk with a steady gait.

Of course he will try to do everything you don't want him to do, at first. Simply show him that he can't, but don't whip him. Encourage him when he does well, but not too lavishly. As to whipping the bad effects of it can never be overcome. Not even those who can make training dogs a profession can "break" a dog with the whip, and prevent him from showing the method of his education. He will hang his head and carry his tail between his legs whenever he is told to do a trick, and the more you try to break him off the habit, the more persistently it will show itself.

Teaching the dog to walk with the chain is called "chain breaking," and the best men in the business regard it as an indispensable rudimentary exercise. When the dog has learned this, and has also learned to keep his seat until he is told to leave it, and to go back to it promptly and cheerfully when sent, the worst of the work is over. It should not require more than two months with a good dog, and the amount of instruction per day that his master would ordinarily be willing to give.

Then begin with a simple trick. A dog trained to obedience will learn to "shake hands" in a single lesson. Always use the same form of words with each trick, and pronounce them distinctly. It is wonderful how perfect will be his recognition

of the words after a little while, and how wide a vocabulary he can be given. When he knows how to shake hands politely, let him shut the door. This may be easily taught by simply leading him up to it, and such other guidance as will constantly suggest itself. Then you may teach him to go lame. Make him walk slowly by you; and, as he goes, touch the leg in such a way as to give him the gait you desire. Be careful not to hurt him. Three or four lessons will give him a good counterfeit limp in a fore leg.

Then he may "die for his country." Pronounce the words clearly and then roll him over into the proper position. If he is a bright dog he will "catch on" quickly, and may very likely surprise you by clever little poses which show how truly he has grasped the idea. Probably he doesn't know that he is counterfeiting death, but he perceives that an apparent entire suspension of animation and a general air of dejection are required of him.

For saying his prayers pose him in a chair with his head upon his fore paw. He can soon be taught to take that position. Then stand behind him with your hand a couple of inches above his head. Every time he lifts his head press it back again. Call out various orders which are likely to make him raise his head, and catch him every time he does it. Then say "Amen," and take your hand away. It isn't hard to make him understand that that is his signal. If you've tried this trick and failed—as a good many owners of dogs have—the

reason is that you have not trained Bingo to the point of implicit obedience.



The most useful trick of all is jumping, because it can be turned to so many varieties of action by the use of different ob-

stacles. To teach a dog to jump, place him on your left and hold the chain attached to his collar in your right hand. Hold your whip in your left hand. Of course you have a whip although, as I have said, you must never use it so as to break a dog's spirit. He may be corrected a little without becoming a "whipped cur."

Hold the whip, then, a little way from the floor, and lead the dog over it. He will walk over at first. Let him understand that the necessary thing is to pass over. Then lift him a little with the chain so as to urge him to jump. It won't take him long to see what's wanted. Jumping isn't altogether out of his daily line of experience. It is important to teach him some word or words which he shall always associate with jumping. A dog that is taught to jump at the command "go over" will not know what you mean if you say "jump." If you intend to make a high leaper of him, and use a platform such as is a part of the ordinary stage apparatus, it will be necessary to lead him onto it and then call him over a small obstacle, working him up gradually to the idea of a run.

Dogs are good jumpers, especially greyhounds which are used for that purpose most often on the stage. It is their ability in this direction that leads them into a professional career. Otherwise their timidity might exclude them from the "boards."

After a dog has learned to jump he may be taught to walk on his hind legs or his forelegs alone. It is not every dog that can learn this trick well; and contrary to one's ordinary idea, it is easier as a rule to teach a dog to walk on his fore than on his hind legs. The latter method of locomotion requires more strength in the back than some dogs possess. It is easy to recognize this deficiency when teaching the animal to "stand up," which must, of course, precede the walking, just as sitting precedes standing.

It is well to teach a dog to stand on his hind feet by holding up before him something tempting in the edible line; and nothing suits the canine palate or encourages effort like trier liver. There may be some variety in tastes here as elsewhere, but on the whole trier liver is the most stimulating delicacy that can be used in the school-room.

When you are teaching a dog to walk on his fore legs it is necessary to hold him up at first. Don't grasp him such a way as to prevent his taking the position that it is easiest for him. He probably knows more about that than you do; and if you hold him rigidly in a position which defies the law of gravitation, he will never learn the trick.

In England one of the favorite methods of unnatural locomotion for dogs is "side feet," varied by the "crosswise" action. That means making the dog walk with no other support than two feet on a side, or one hind and one fore foot. The method

necessary will be clear enough to anybody. Teach the dog first to hold up one foot till you tell him to put it down, and after he has learned to do it standing he can be led to do it walking. One of the trick dogs at



WELL TRAINED DOGS.

the late show learned to do the side foot act without being taught. Prof. Parker was teaching him to walk with one fore foot in the air, when the dog stepped on a tack with a hind foot, on which the weight of that side of the body was depending at the time. He was too well trained to put the fore foot down even in so sharp an emergency, so he hopped along on two feet; and it required very



HOUND IN HIGH JUMP.

little encouragement to implant the trick upon his memory. I think that the back somersault, as performed by little Jerry, the Yorkshire

terrier, was the most surprising feat I ever saw a dog perform, yet it may be taught to any dog if he is well built and intelligent. It is done with a harness similar to that which is commonly put upon pug dogs when they are to take their afternoon stroll on the avenue. It must be so arranged that the support will be even, for at first the dog must be lifted by his harness.

Let him stand in front of you, facing towards you. Call him to spring towards you just as a dog ordinarily leaps upon his master. When his forepaws touch your breast give him a flip, as if he were a flap-jack and over he goes, landing on his feet. It will surprise him for awhile but if you are careful not to let him get hurt, he will learn what is required of him, and will do it neatly. Little Jerry can whirl off a dozen handsprings backwards as easily as any tumbler in the sawdust ring.

I have talked with many trainers of dogs and they all say that that sort of education undeniably raises a dog in general intelligence. He learns readily what could not be taught to an untrained dog. He gets interested in trick work, and picks up amusing variations which he remembers in a wonderful way. He becomes susceptible to the delights of being applauded, and, alas, he experiences the pangs of professional jealousy.

There are stupid dogs and bright ones. It is not worth while to waste time on Bingo if he is dull. Dog trainers discover an animal's intellectual possibilities just from the expression of his face. A clear, bright eye; a quick, comprehensive glance; a look of eagerness and vivacity, are the signs. Supplement this observation by letting the dog loose and watching his behavior. If he is frolicsome, active and apparently interested in his play he will do good work under proper direction.

The best dog for stage tricks is the French poodle. He is not quite so intelligent as the St. Bernard and perhaps a little behind the Newfoundland, but he is more conveniently carried about than either. Setters and pointers are bright dogs, but they haven't the erect pose of some others. It is their instinct to hold their heads and tails down, and people who don't understand dogs would say that they have been whipped too much when they are being taught. Collies are open to the same objection, though this doesn't apply to home entertainment with any of them. Poodles, spaniels and Yorkshire terriers are easily taught, and make successful stage dogs. Poodles must be full blooded to attain a high standard of intelligence. Much has been said in favor of the cur, but I am told by Prof. Parker and others who know the business that the thoroughbred is the best dog, especially when it comes to poodles.

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