

by a remark which I heard made yesterday for about the one thousandth time. The book was written—or rather dictated—by a little dog whose ignorance, self-conceit, unfaithfulness, and selfishness made me blush for my kind. Was this little creature, so full of himself, so low in the scale of dog-morality, to be allowed to represent our race? His was only the second book by a dog which I had ever seen. The other, written many years ago, was a beautiful story of a dog whose honesty and courage carried him through great difficulties; but it was about dogs only: there was hardly a human person in the whole book.

The remark was that foolish old saying about “a dog’s life.” A poor woman who often comes to Madame for help was telling how she had to work at anything she could find to do—berry-picking, weeding, even hoeing corn sometimes, and gathering the stones out of the farmers’ fields. “It’s a dog’s life, ma’am,” she said, “but what can I do? The children go hungry half the time as it is.”

Now, that was too much. In all *my* dog’s life I had never but once known what it was to be more than pleasantly hungry, and that once was quite my own fault, as you will hear when I come to it. And, as for work, my work had always been mere play. I tried to make that woman understand how foolishly she was talking: I stood on my hind legs and put my paw on her arm, giving a sort of gentle bark, but wagging my tail hard all the time, that she might know it was all friendly. And what do you think she did? She gave a great scream, and nearly fell down. But that was not the