

A WHITED CANINE SEPULCHRE.

To expose an impostor or a criminal is frequently a duty, but is rarely other than an unpleasant duty when undertaken by a humane man. There is no sadder sight than the wreck of a once unblemished reputation. Fanaticism, malignity, or revenge, may take pleasure in striking at character, but no matter how well the blow may be deserved, men of kindly and generous impulses shrink from inflicting it.

It has finally become a manifest duty to expose the true character of that hitherto generally respected beast, the Spitz dog. It is not in any spirit of anger that this unwelcome task is now undertaken. The Spitz is not precisely a popular dog, but he is nevertheless admitted to the best circles of society, and has, in too many instances, ensnared the affections of the young and thoughtless. To point out his true character is to inflict pain upon those who call themselves his friends, but the interests of the community sternly demand that this unwelcome duty should be performed.

The Spitz is generally understood to be a variety of the Pomeranian dog. That he has some connection with the latter may very possibly be true, but it is more probable that his alleged Pomeranian relationship has been assumed in order to support his claim to respectability. The best informed dog-persons assert that the Spitz is not only a native of the Arctic regions, but that his origin is by no means honorable. To speak plainly, it has been openly charged that he is the result of illicit relations on the part of the Esquimaux dog and the Arctic fox. His personal appearance is in harmony with both of these charges. He ostentatiously wears throughout our hottest months the heavy fur of an Arctic animal, and his face bears an unmistakable resemblance to the cunning and treacherous face of the fox. So far as morality is concerned, the Spitz is thoroughly and irredeemably corrupt. He is a tireless and shameless thief, and exhibits a perverted skill in obtaining access to forbidden cellars, and in stealing the reserved bones of honest and frugal dogs, which is truly vulpine. Except in rare instances, he is completely devoid of affection. If he does not bite the hand that feeds him, it is from motives of sheer selfishness. His treachery is undeniable, although his friends smooth it over by applying to it the milder term of irritability. Though he may be bound to his master by a thousand favors received, yet he will snap at him if there is the slightest failure to meet his views in respect to cold meat, or if the least liberty is taken with his tail. Indeed, no cat, however pampered, ever manifests so absurd a degree of vanity in regard to her tail as the Spitz habitually displays in regard to his own. To these objectionable qualities must be added that of cowardice. The Spitz barks from ambuscades and bites when his victim's back is turned. At the least show of hostility he takes refuge in flight, and a child armed with a hoop-stick can safely and effectually defy his malice.

All these, however, are minor facts in comparison with the Spitz's conspicuous addiction to *rabies*. It is a startling fact that three-fourths of all the cases of hydrophobia which have occurred in this City or its vicinity during the last few years have been directly or indirectly traceable to rabid Spitz dogs. The proportion may be even greater, for the statistics have not been accurately kept, and, strangely enough, no medical or dog-person has thought of inquiring whether *rabies* is more prevalent among one species of dog than among others. The increase of hydrophobia in the United States—an increase which has latterly become lamentably evident—has kept pace with the increase in the number of Spitz dogs. Twenty years ago the Spitz was rarely seen among us, and the very existence of hydrophobia was doubted. Since that time the Spitz has become so common as to be nearly valueless in the dog market, and hydrophobia has become almost as frequent as *tetanus*. This fact alone ought to have cast suspicion upon the Spitz, even if it had not been notorious that so large a proportion of the victims of hydrophobia, including the well-known FRANCIS BUTLER and the child who died in Newark the other day, were inoculated with the disease by Spitz dogs.

It is not charged that the Spitz wantonly or malignantly becomes mad, and it is quite possible that his proneness to *rabies* is the result of his attempt to live in a climate unsuited to him. That he is more delicate and liable to disease than other dogs is admitted by all who know him, and his peculiar liability to *rabies* has apparently escaped notice only by accident. That he should be for a moment tolerated by any one who is convinced that he is the chief source of hydrophobia in this latitude is, of course, out of the question. However white and spotless he may be externally, he is internally full of *rabies* and all varieties of distemper, and the moment the public is convinced of this fact the Spitz will be exterminated, and our annual panic concerning hydrophobia will have no longer any pretext or excuse.