

Welcome to the Nineteenth & Twentieth Issues of

Flock Quarterly



Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners

STAFF --- Graphics Editor Laura Rosato --- Content Editor Richard Reid

In our Combined 19th & 20th Issues: Our columnist Denise Junker writes about the cross. Jeff Taylor tells us of his further travels to the Middle East. In part two of his article, Richard Reid remembers his last two dogs when he was young. There's always something new and different in *Flock Quarterly*.

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Announcement: With this issue, *Flock Quarterly* has reached five full years of publication. We thank all our contributors over the years who have made this possible. Your editors wonder: is *FQ* still of interest to the parish or should this be our final issue? Please let us know. Thanks.

Guidelines for Contributors

Types of Material . . . Essays on diverse topics; Humor; Bible Reflections; Interviews with Parishioners; Short Fiction; Original Photos and Artwork; Original Poetry & Prayers

General themes for any issue to inspire your submissions

Family; hobbies; your vocation; religion; the weather; people/things/places you remember; a great day; something/someone you're thankful for; your hobbies and avocations; about your pets

Suggested special topics & themes appropriate for upcoming issues to spark your creativity

Spring Issue Themes, including Ash Wednesday; Lent; Easter; Black History & Women's History Months; Valentine's Day (published in February)

Summer Issue Themes (published in May) including Pentecost; Mother's Day; Father's Day; 4th of July; end-of-school; graduations; summer; vacations

Fall Issue Themes (published in August) including end of summer; Labor Day; autumn; back-to-school; Halloween

Winter Issue Themes (published in November) including Advent; giving/stewardship; Thanksgiving; Christmas; the new year; the ending old year; winter; Epiphany

Please make text submissions in Word format (never as PDFs) or handwritten and try not to exceed much beyond 2,000 words – but don't be intimidated by that number: shorter pieces are always welcome, too. Unsure of your article or art idea? The Content Editor is happy to discuss and plan it with you.

--- Always submit original photos in .jpeg format

--- If your original artwork on paper is 8 ½" by 11" or smaller, it may be submitted for scanning

Issue Final Submission Dates:

Spring (by January 28th)

Summer (by April 28th)

Fall (by July 28th)

Winter (by October 28th)

Email material to Richard Reid (writer2363@gmail.com or telephone (585-766-7254)

You are part of the Good Shepherd flock . . . please contribute to Flock Quarterly!

ESSAY

Recent Trips to Afghanistan, Libya and Iran; The wonders of Traveling to Places We as Americans are Not Supposed to Go

by Jeff Taylor

Author's Note: Jeff Taylor is a lifelong parishioner at the Church of the Good Shepherd, where he also enjoys volunteering for A Meal and More.

In recent months I have traveled to Afghanistan, Libya and Iran. In October 2024, I left Rochester on a 26-day trip that included 10 days in Afghanistan, and also first-time visits to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Taiwan. In February 2025 I went on a 12-day trip that included 6 days in Libya, and visits to Tunisia and Morocco. In April and May of this year, I went on a 17-day trip to Iran, which also included visits to Kuwait and Dubai in the UAE. In Afghanistan, Libya, and Iran I was part of group trips organized by international tour organizers or by myself with another American. Each of those trips had a local guide that joined us, because each of these three countries do not recently allow Americans to solo on trips there.

The countries of Afghanistan, Libya and Iran are designated by the US State Department as the highest risk level for safety for Americans, Level 4, "do not travel" countries. They are variously described for their supposed risk of kidnapping, arbitrary arrest and detention of Americans and the government's inability to provide emergency services, and for death, and to have a will in place.

Yet despite those warnings I had completely safe, long stays in all three countries. However, Afghanistan has the enormous disadvantage of the horrible manner in the way the Taliban treats native women in their country. In contrast, Libya and especially Iran are incredibly warm and friendly to us as American visitors, and of wanting to be in photographs with us and inviting us into their homes.

I visited Iran in April and May with Austin Davis, an American travel friend, and our local guide Ehsan Dehghan, a native of Shiraz. One of the first places we visited in Shiraz was the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, which is also known as the Pink Mosque. Completed in 1889, it is known for extensive use of stained glass in its facade, with pink, blue, yellow, azure and white tiles. The interior has a series of arches and vaults with rows of columns that divide the interior into smaller sections. The passage of light through the stained glass is a major tourist attraction. Nearby is the Vakil Bazaar which dates to the 11th century. The bazaar has a wide array of goods including Persian rugs, spices, handicrafts, antiques, traditional clothing and local sweets. The Bazaar has beautiful architecture and courtyards. In Shiraz we also visited the Tomb of Hafez, the celebrated 14th century Persian poet, whose poems Iranians learn by heart.

The surrounding gardens were crowded by thousands of well-dressed Iranian families, gathered for an evening of local culture. Near to Shiraz we visited Persepolis, which was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. The large site has tall columns and carved relief of citizens of other countries bearing gifts to the ancient King. Persepolis is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Susa we visited the Mausoleum of Daniel, which has a unique conical dome. Daniel the Prophet, of the Biblical story of the lions, is a figure revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims. In Isfahan we visited the vast Naqsh-e Jahan Square which has two Mosques on the sides and a six-story palace, which has a huge interior with paintings that celebrate Iran's long history. The Square and surrounding buildings is an architectural marvel and a must see for every tourist. At night the square is lit up and enjoyed by people who wander through the vast bazaars and around beautiful ponds. The capital of Iran, Tehran, was the last large city we visited. Tehran is a densely crowded city. On the western side is the .

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Azadi Tower, a landmark of Tehran which also includes an underground museum. The tower was commissioned by the last Shah of Iran which marks the 2,500-year celebration of the Persian empire. In Tehran we also visited the large bazaar, and the former US embassy, taken over by protestors from 1979 to 1981 for 444 days, where American embassy employees were held as hostages. And in Tehran we also visited the Golestan Palace, which has an interior decorated beautifully with endless mirrors and rich ornaments.

My visit to Libya was in February of this year. Libya was unique in my visits to six Level 4 "do not travel" countries as the government requires "minders" to accompany any groups that has American, British or Canadian visitors. However, the two "minders" that accompanied our group did not interfere with anything that we saw and did and often seemed to be enjoying the sites as much as we did. Our tour included Leptis Magna, the prominent city of the Carthaginian and Roman Empire which has a beautiful view of the Mediterranean Sea. The city was significantly expanded by Roman Emperor Septimas Severus in the second century. Today Leptis Magna is renowned for the Amphitheater, marketplace, basilica and palace ruins which have survived for nearly 2,000 years. Another highlight of Libya was touring the city and surrounding desert area around Ghadames, an oasis town in northwestern Libya. Ghadames is known for its vertical division of functions in the town structure, the ground floor is used to store supplies, the floor above is for the family, and above is an open-air terrace reserved for the women. One of the highlights of our group visit to Ghadames was an evening riding in jeeps into the surrounding desert, through sand dunes and ancient ruins. In the desert we had bread cooked in fires in the desert sand by the Tuareg people living in the Sahara. The group tour of Libya also had the novelty of three Russians in our 14-member group. The rest of us in the tour group figured out the Russians appeared to be both enjoying the tour but scouting western Libya, in which Russia may have the goal of expanding their influence, after the overthrow of the Assad regime in Syria, and Russians being kicked out of Syria, which was a client state of Russia,

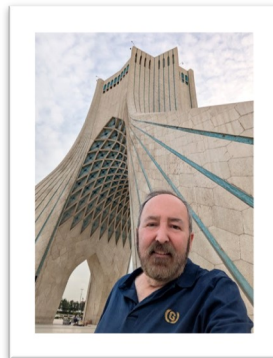
In Afghanistan, I was part of a group of five foreign visitors, with a local guide. An initial highlight was visiting the crowded market of Kabul, which also has a large fascinating bird market. The markets were a loud mixture of sounds, with people, nearly all men, bustling about the twisting paths, also busy with push carts and motorized vehicles. After wandering Kabul, our group traveled southwest to Band-i-Mir, the first national park in Afghanistan. It's a beautiful series of intensely blue deep lakes, surrounded by majestic mountains. In nearby Bamiyan, we saw where the Taliban had destroyed in 2001 the millennial old giant Buddha statues, done by the Taliban "so that no one can worship or respect them in the future." Now a serene but still beautiful location in Bamiyan, the huge holes where the enormous statues were located, is ironically guarded by the very group that destroyed them, the Taliban. In Bamiyan itself, we went through a busy market, sadly a location where an extremist group (who think that the Taliban is too liberal!) had murdered some Spanish tourists a few months before. Our group traveled to Mazar-i-sharif and Kandahar, where we visited famous shrines and the very busy city market. However, Afghanistan is the only Islamic country which allows only Muslims to enter the Mosques. Christians are not allowed to enter Mosques (unlike the other 12 Muslim countries I have visited in the past two years). But we are allowed to enter Shrines, which are religious sites in honor of famous deceased Muslims. Another unfortunate observation about Afghanistan is the appalling way women are treated by the Taliban. All women in Afghanistan over the age of 13 are required to wear the confining burka, women are not allowed in public parks, women cannot raise their voices in public, very few women are allowed to have employment, and education for females stops entirely beyond the sixth grade. It's an appalling treatment of women to see firsthand in Afghanistan.

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I have no fear of traveling to US State Department Level 4 “do not travel” countries, as I have been able to see amazing markets, wander famous religious, historical and archaeological sites, and sample great foods in countries that Americans rarely if ever visit in their lifetimes. And, countries like Iran and Libya have shown me how the western media bias against their people is a false narrative. Having most recently been to these countries, it is remarkable talking to the residents, and how the Iranians are genuinely excited to meet us Americans, how they wish to photograph us with them. As we were told by so many people in these countries, while our governments may not get along, the people consider themselves to be friends with us as Americans.



Afghanistan - with group of fellow travelers and guide



Jeff at Azadi Tower.



Afghanistan - Kabul, Blue Mosque



Iran - Isfahan - Jeff with fellow American traveler Austin and Ehsan, Iran guide.



Iran children



Libya - group of fellow travelers



Libya - Roman amphitheater in Leptis Magna



Afghanistan - women wearing compulsory burka



Libya desert adventure

COLUMN

A Saint's Corner: *The Cross as a Symbol and as a Symbol of our Faith*

by Denise Junker

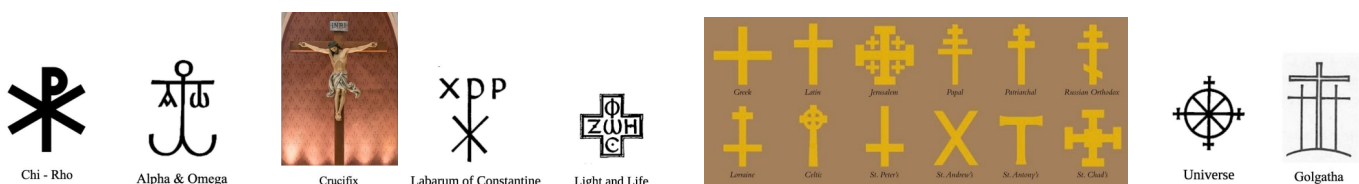
The Cross, our symbol for the place of Jesus' crucifixion has many forms besides the standard lower-case "t" format, called the Latin Cross, which may appear 'clothed' (with the Christ figure on it) (also known as a crucifix), 'unclothed,' or adorned with flowers signifying Easter.

The Cross has been the central symbol of Christianity since the 5th Century. After Jesus' death, the cross was about shame, humiliation and brutality, no one wanted to wear such a symbol. Also, since Christians were being prosecuted, it was not a time to identify oneself with a symbol that was permanent. But with the conversion of Constantine, his use of the Chi-Rho in his emblem, and his banning crucifixion as a punishment, the cross symbol was utilized widely, in churches and homes. The Chi-Rho is technically not a cross but a Christogram. Since I have mentioned it, I will include a visual of it.

You may recognize some of these crosses but know them as different names. There are multiple names for some crosses. Examples: The Jerusalem cross is also known as the Crusaders cross. The Light and Life cross is also known as Phos Zoe cross or Fos Zoe cross.

Since there is not enough space to go into all the various forms and their histories, I give you a visual summary of crosses and their names. From there, I invite you to do a web-search into the history of some of your favorites.

These illustrations mainly come from *The Book of Saints: A Day-By-Day Illustrated Encyclopedia* by Weldon Owen and *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* by Jaroslav Pelikan. Enjoy!



Have you ever wondered, is it “Cross OR Crucifix”? because the term “vs.” can easily be seen as starting a debate or be about a grand theological conundrum that people believe needs to be solved. I do not think either is the case regarding whatever version of the cross you wear or the form you may utilize in devotion. In researching this article about the various crosses we see in the world, I tripped upon the question of if the crucifix or the cross is “correct.” Now, a look at the cross as the symbol of our faith and what it means.

The answer can be given up front and is very simple. It has two parts: what does the cross mean and what should it depict. Jimmy Akin, a Christian apologist on the Roman Catholic podcast, Daily Defense Podcast, states in his March 3, 2023 episode’s transcript, “All Christian crosses—whether bare or not—recall the Crucifixion. It’s just a question of how vividly you want to do this.”

I’ll now expand on the cross as a symbol and then a reality check about what Jesus’ physical crucifixion was really like. I’ll end with a bonus note about the cross used in our Good Shepherd sanctuary.

To summarize from earlier, the Cross has been the central symbol of Christianity since the 5th Century. With the conversion of Constantine, the cross symbol was utilized widely, in churches and homes. The issue of the cross or the crucifix started with the Reformation. Protestants

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emphasized that since Jesus was risen the cross, only, suffices. He is risen thus he is no longer on the cross. The cross continues to remind us of his suffering and sacrifice, and for many, it is the symbol of what can be overcome. Even as through the years all Christians continued using both, the concern of the theology of the cross or the crucifix has continued to be a question for some.

The reality of Jesus' crucifixion having even been as we see in the cross, crucifix, and many artistic depictions is something that is also still under contention. Summarizing one way, as far as we know, the Romans crucified people was to have a pole in the ground called a stipe or, in Greek, stauros. Then the beam or cross bar, called a patibulum, was brought to the site by the person to be crucified, as Jesus did in his walk as commemorated in the Stations of the Cross, even though we depict him carrying the whole cross. The person was attached to the patibulum and lifted up and then could be further secured by nails through the feet, as we see with Jesus. The discussion is due to the Greek word "stauros" and other words in translation referring to a stake or some idea of a pole but not being specific enough for today's scrutiny. The Jehovah's Witnesses still contend highly against the cross as seen through the recording artist, Prince, changing the name of his spiritual song, "The Cross," to "The Christ," after his conversion. Prince did a prologue on this choice before performing the new version at the 1998 Essence Awards.

Even as the Episcopal Church does not focus on these questions, these detailed looks can help in gaining a new perspective on an important part of our Christian tradition. Overall, I feel the specifics may not be as much of a concern as the Crucifixion having happened and happened for every single one of us.



You may have noticed our cross in the Church of the Good Shepherd sanctuary. The cross is an outline. I was able to call Lance and see what the history of that choice was. With time, not all of the specifics are clearly remembered. He stated that Nancy Carnevale, since deceased, had it made. It was done in memory of her husband. The design was with the intent that the shadow the outline creates would remind people of the cross in the previous Good Shepherd sanctuary. Lance stated, if the light hits it just right, you can see the desired shadow.

ESSAY

Remembering Four Dogs from My Younger Years

Part Two: Tippy and Lucky

By Richard Reid

Note: In the previous issue #18, I shared memories of my first two dogs: Charcoal and Spot who both did not remain with me for very long. Not so with my next two pets: Tippy and Lucky, as you'll soon discover.

Not long after Spot's departure, likely in 1957, my father kept his promise, arriving home one day with a wiggling bundle of joy in his arms for me: a puppy! A friend of Dad's had let him select which of the five newly weaned puppies he wanted. Perhaps remembering Charcoal, my first dog, he selected the one with nearly all black fur except for small patches of light brown on its ankles and paws. That was how I came to call her Tippy (as you can see in the attached photo). She was a mixed breed -- a mutt with some cocker spaniel and collie in her, Dad told me. The first few nights we had her, we kept her in the kitchen with newspaper strewn about, probably because Dad didn't think she would be safe in the cellar. A high piece of wood that Dad had positioned between the rest of the house and the kitchen kept her in there. She made a lot of crying noises for a couple of nights. Dad said she missed her mother and siblings. Dad seemed to solve the problem by wrapping an alarm clock in a towel and letting her snuggle up to it, telling me the ticking sound would remind her of her mother's beating heart. Maybe his father had done it for my dad's dog, Brownie, when he was a pup. Of course, the dog could have just gotten used to its new circumstances. Although I bought that clock explanation at the time, I have my doubts now.

Once Tippy was housebroken, she spent her nights in the cellar. She spent some of her days in the yard during good weather. Dad made her a wooden bed for sleeping, adding insulation material in the hollow space in its floor to keep her warm, yet she never seemed to use it that much. She liked to sleep near the warm furnace. He also constructed an impressive doghouse for use in the yard. Eventually we got rid of it as Tippy never favored it, winter or summer. Her way of keeping cool during a hot day was to find a shady spot, usually under the back porch steps, dig a hole, and lie in it. I frequently fed her dinner, a mix of certain table scraps and dog food. Whenever I didn't, Dad was sure to see she had her daily meal.



You can see the light fur on Tippy's legs – how I came to name her. My father holds her. Dad said she reminded him so much of his own childhood dog, Brownie.



Tippy and me in the only photo I still have of the two of us. My Dad built the clubhouse behind me. He was a very skilled carpenter.

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Because there were so many kids in and out of the yard thanks to all our gates, and mindful of Charcoal's fate, we kept Tippy on a long leash, perhaps 15 feet or so, usually during the day when I wasn't in school. That leash was once nearly fatal for her. The back porch had a two-tiered metal railing but was open enough on the bottom for a dog to easily get through. This aspect was great for us kids as we could slide down the metal support poles, or even climb up them to reach the porch without using the stairs. One day, when I wasn't around, Tippy fell off the porch while on the leash. Because the leash was attached to a support pole at the bottom of the porch steps, about 12 feet of rope extended up the steps, leaving only about three feet of cord until the collar on her neck. This left her lethally short of the ground. Fortunately, Dad was working in the yard, saw the fall and immediately reached her before she might have choked to death. If I had been the only one there, I'm not sure I could have saved her because I might have been unable to unhook the leash from her collar while supporting her. Ironically, the back porch once had a wooden barrier below the bottom railing. Perhaps Mom, concerned I'd fall off the porch, had Dad put it up. Once I got old enough, it was removed. I guess Dad felt that Tippy, having learned her lesson, would never again fall off; he was right.

Never spayed, Tippy gave birth to five batches of puppies. I recall witnessing a birth from her first litter. I had been told she was expecting. When I went down the cellar stairs one day to feed her, I saw a puppy drop from her. I ran back upstairs yelling to my parents, "The puppies are here!" As a mother, Tippy became very protective of her brood and for a week or so. I was not permitted to go too near her out of concern that she'd bite me. Tippy accepted Dad's presence a lot sooner. Once, a newborn puppy accidentally died. Dad explained that the baby had fallen between the cellar wall and the dog bed box and was unable to get out. Tippy couldn't remove her pup and because the birth was too recent, Tippy wouldn't even let Dad near to rescue the poor animal which soon died from exposure and lack of food. Dad buried it by Uncle Bill's tree near where Charcoal rested. All the puppies were either given away to people my parents knew or were sold to local pet shops. I was told in later years that my parents never bred Tippy for her pups, yet they came along quite regularly. All it took was for Tippy to occasionally get out of the yard for a few hours or sometimes male dogs somehow got inside the yard when Tippy was out there.

Knowing that I was so overjoyed with having puppies to play with regularly, I suppose my parents decided never to have her spayed. The several weeks that we had the puppies were always wonderful times as my friends and I played with them often after Tippy let us near them. In warm weather, we would set up a huge "playpen" for them in the backyard using planks of wood high enough so they couldn't get out and devise games for them. (These were the same planks my father set up in the cellar as a pen so the puppies would stay in one area by the furnace.) Having them chasing a ball was fun but even better was attaching something to a toy fishing rod and having them trying to swat it with a paw. Best of all was just lying on your back inside the playpen and having them scamper all over you. I soon learned that when the puppies ran to her to be fed and Tippy began rejecting them, it meant that we could not keep them, that it was time for them to go. I hated it when that happened. I gave all the puppies their names, often using the same ones again and again, as needed: Frisky, Flippy, Ruffy, Tuffy, Buster and Buddy. Twice there was a Brownie – Dad liked that. Only once, with her fifth and last batch, did one puppy emerge looking exactly like Tippy. He became "Tippy Junior". His presence set my parents thinking: let's keep Tippy Jr. and let the ASPCA take Tippy since she was getting old and might not be around too much longer, they told me. I loved Tippy and couldn't believe they'd want to do this. Horrified at their proposal, I opposed them and won (to my surprise and relief). Within about two years, however, their plan seemed prescient when Tippy was diagnosed with advanced cancer. Eventually, we had to spare her needless suffering, and she was put down in June 1966. She had been part of the family for ten years.

I had not yet wanted another dog when Dad unexpectedly brought Lucky, a six-month old male, home for me, he said, in early September 1966. I missed Tippy terribly and didn't feel ready yet for another pet. I think my father was ready, however, and I had the good sense to recognize that, so I accepted Lucky without complaint. Seeing Dad with Lucky over the next few days told me I had made the right decision. In case you're wondering, Lucky arrived with his name and neither Dad nor I was inclined to change it. Like Tippy,

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Lucky was such a sweet-natured animal that he soon won me over and I was very happy to have him join our family.



Lucky, in 1970, about four years old

Lucky had a distinct personality which I think I can sketch in a few anecdotes. You may find some of this hard to believe, but it's all true. He liked to play ball but only when he was in the mood to do so. If you didn't play with him, he hounded you (pun intended) by dropping a ball at your feet until you acquiesced. When he lost interest in ball playing, you, too, were supposed to stop. If Dad and I continued to play catch after Lucky had refused to get the ball any longer, Lucky would often run for the ball that one of us had dropped. Instead of bringing it back to us as he had done when we were playing, he'd run away with the ball and wouldn't let us have it back. I'm done with this game, he seemed to be telling us, why aren't you?

After a neighbor's daughter married, she had a daughter, Dawn. Her family lived on Long Island but visited often. Once Dawn became a toddler, she developed a best friend on our street: Lucky. He would be at our front gate and she would reach through the green iron bars of the fence to pet and talk to him. One day, she must have had a piece of Italian bread that she was eating and offered it to Lucky who took it. Thereafter, she would regularly give him a piece of bread or a dog biscuit when visiting. At some point, Lucky must have realized he was getting more than he wanted, so he took to burying his extra food in the yard. Sometimes I would observe him doing so. If I went to where he had just buried something, Lucky would often come to me with a ball wanting to play. To me, that said that Lucky was truly both an intelligent dog and a gentle animal. He could have growled at me to get away, but that was not his style. He preferred to use his wits: distract me by playing a game so maybe I'd forget about where his stash of food was buried! At least it seemed that way to me.

I wouldn't say that Lucky was spoiled, at least not too badly, but he was adept at begging for food. One technique that usually worked well with Mom was to go up to her when she was seated on the couch watching TV and silently rest his head on her knee while staring at her until she gave him something. With Dad, his technique tended to be sitting in front of him and making occasional noises to attract his attention. Once they were watching TV and eating as an evening snack small chunks of cheese. After getting as much as he could from them, Lucky came into my room where I was studying and began barking at me and turning away as if to say, follow me. He led me to them and sat by the plate of cheese on the table next to Mom. He would turn and look at me and bark. It was now my turn to give him some cheese. After I had given him a few pieces, he seemed content. As I went back to studying in my room, I recall wondering, do you think Lucky considers us *his* pets?

Lucky lived up to his name. He stayed with us for the longest, about 17 years, becoming my mother's dog after my father's passing which was after I had moved out. He was good company for her, and for all of us over the years, as were all my four dogs, even Spot whose only real problem was his misfortune of being a large dog paired at the time with too small a boy. I shall always remember the four dogs of my younger years.