



Winter 1903

Poem on the death of a favorite reindeer

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(15)

A favorite leader of Keeks runs swiftly by until a halt is called, whereupon he immediately lies down on the snow until the signal is given to start again, when he is up and away like the wind. They have been known to travel 125 miles a day, ordinarily travel 50 or 60 miles in a day, but cannot keep it up, as they get their own food and must have sometime to rest.

The reindeer has the largest heart according to its size, of any animal in existence.

The following is written on the death of a pet Reindeer.

Oh, my Reindeer, strong and fleet,
So lithe thy limbs and swift thy feet;
That then a fate like this should meet
In truth it almost breaks my heart,
So faithful and so good thou art.

Had I known 'twould ever be
That hungry dogs should mangle thee;
I had left thee always free,
To roam untamed these mountains wild,
For I loved thee as a child.

There lives not in Alaska here
Hardly such another deer;
None nor wild nor far nor near,
Oh! direful day, to be too late
To save thee from this cruel fate.

Thy antlers are a handsome pair
Branching high into the air;
Majestic, like an oak tree fair;
And those large, brown, tender eyes
Are so innocent, yet wise.

But, my beauty, thou must die,
Agony is in thy eye;
I'll tarry not, good-bye! good-bye!
My hand must hold this cruel gun
And lay thee low my gentle one.

Farewell then, reproach me not,
For I would 'twere not my lot;
To fire this last and fatal shot;
Look not at me with thine eyes
So full of pained and sad surprise.

I know not if a future state
Both for faithful deer await;
But if 'tis so, - methinks a gate
Will open wide and show thee where
Some happy herd is wand'ring there.

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