

## TRIBUTE TO A DOG

*The Phrase "Man's Best Friend" originated in a court of law. Back in October 28, 1869, A man's dog, named Old Drum, was shot to death by a neighbor. Animals had no rights back in those days, but the man wanted justice and so he hired 3 lawyers to sue the man who shot his dog. One of these lawyers, named George Graham Vest, is given credit for originally coining the phrase "Man's Best Friend" during his final summation to the jury. By the time he was finished with his speech, the jury only took 2 minutes to reach a verdict of guilty. This is a record of the final summation given by the lawyer...*

"Gentleman of the jury, the best friend a man has in the world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has he may lose. It flies away from him, perhaps when he needs it most. A man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees when success is with us, may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads.

The one absolutely unselfish friend that a man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog.

A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer. He will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey thru the heavens.

If fortune drives his master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard him against danger, to fight against his enemies. And when the last scene of all comes, and death takes his master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death"

...Senator George Vest, 1870