



# Mr Gladstone and his faithful Petz

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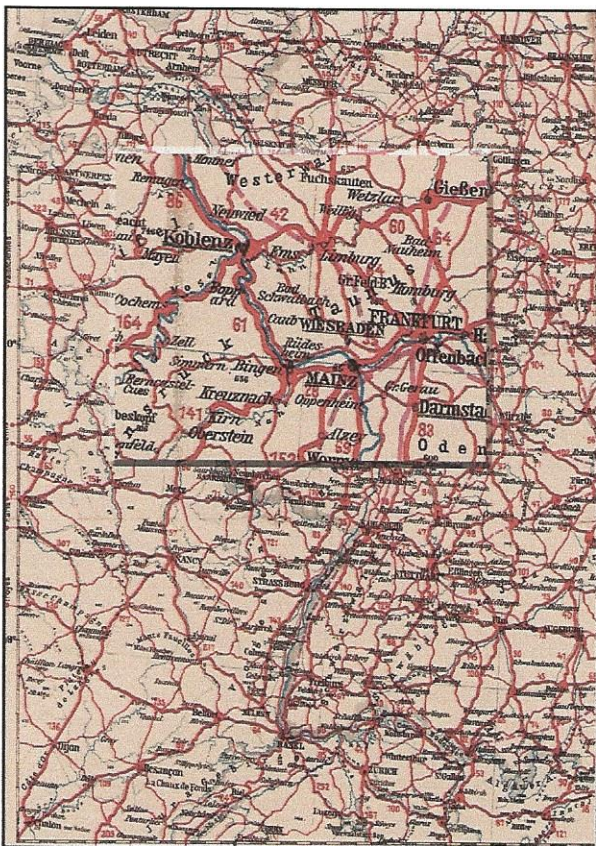
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## Petz - Mr Gladstone's devoted little black Pomeranian

### Faithful unto death 1886 - 1898

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In his day Petz was as famous as Queen Victoria's Marco and yet has long since been forgotten by breed fanciers. Here is his extraordinary little story.

Petz was born in Bad Schwalbach, Germany in 1886. This is a small spa town on the east bank of the river Rhine near Koblenz (Victorian name Coblenz) and about 12 miles north of Mainz in a region famous for its small Mannheimer Zwergspitze, called Pomeranians by the British. He was sold to Herr Bersior of the Pension Stadt, Coblenz and it was in his hotel that two of Mr Gladstone's relatives first met Petz in the early summer of 1888. The Leeds Mercury reported in February 1892 that Petz 'entirely devoted himself to the two visitors' in return for their attentions; and when it was time for them to leave 'by a friendly arrangement' with Herr Bersior the little dog came home with them and settled down to life at Hawarden in Flintshire Wales.

The Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone lived at (New) Hawarden with his wife Catherine and their family. He entered politics in 1831, age 22, and was Prime Minister on four occasions the last time being 1892 - 1894. His wife, the daughter of Sir Stephen Glynne, was born at Hawarden. Their daughter Mary Drew and grand-daughter Dorothy lived in the nearby parsonage. Hawarden is a beautiful stately home in scenic wooded countryside near the ruins of the ancient Hawarden Castle.

Petz was an instant favourite of the Gladstones but he took a special liking for old Mr Gladstone and immediately assumed the role of his constant devoted companion and 'bodyguard'. Mary Drew once wrote that Petz was his favourite Pomeranian dog - 'immortalised by a poem in Punch magazine, who lay every morning on the mat at his dressing-room door waiting for him to start.' He soon earned the nick-name Petz the Great.

Later in the day if his master was reading in the library with little Petz by his feet the dog slept 'with the sort of slumber in which both ears and one eye are kept open for the detection of disturbing influence which may be threatening'. The Strand Magazine reported Petz often reposed by the fireplace in the drawing room when Mr Gladstone was reading in his library and no one dared to disturb him except Petz - 'when he considered the horses must be kept waiting no longer, pushed his little cold nose against the master's hand, and suggested an immediate adjournment of the sitting'.

Petz also liked having the top of his head rubbed often pushing his head into Mr Gladstone's hand when he was sitting at a table or reading in his chair. Mr Gladstone's theory was that Petz's brain was 'on the alert all day and that he loves to be soothed in this way as a kind of antidote.'

Although Mr Gladstone was in his eighties he was relatively fit enjoying

long walks, chopping wood on his property and attending church every morning when in residence at Hawarden. His faithful follower Petz enjoyed his afternoon walks around the grounds of Hawarden. A Pall Mall Gazette article explained Petz liked these walks 'because the chances are that he will get more stick throwing' - Petz had a passion for retrieving sticks thrown by his master. Here's a favourite story of Mr Gladstone's, reported in 1892. One day he was felling a tree with Petz as his only companion, the little dog kept picking up chips and bringing them to Mr Gladstone to throw so he could fetch them, however, his master did not respond and kept on working. At last in sheer frustration Petz picked up a large chip and dropped it on Mr Gladstone's boot while looking up at his face, at last Mr Gladstone gave in, stopped work and played fetch with his very triumphant dog.

Until 1892 Petz would accompany Mr Gladstone to nearby Buckley church every morning for the early service. Regardless of the weather they would walk nearly a mile uphill to church, then walk back home for breakfast. Mr Gladstone's daughter Mary was married to Rev. Harry Drew the minister of the church. She first became aware her father's strength was failing about this time when he said to her "I am afraid I must ask you to keep Petz from coming to church with me ... you see, I have to throw sticks for him to pick up, and stooping every other minute to get one and then throw it is too hard work on the hill." Thereafter Mr Gladstone changed to attending the Evensong service leaving Petz at home.

