

Clarence Bicknell's dogs

Memo to self by Marcus, 28 March 2020

Mahdi

Clarence's dog, died 1906

"Luigi Pollini rubs a rock engraving while Clarence and Mahdi relax. Possibly the photograph was taken by Alice Campbell." 1897. Marvels p.120

"In a letter to Alberto Pelloux in 1906, Clarence relates: 'The other day Mahdi [his dog] and I have sat in the garden translating into Esperanto.'" 1906 Marvels p.142

"Clarence, Mahdi and Alice Campbell up on the Chiappes de Fontanalba. IISL." Photo Marvels p.142

"Mahdi had died in 1907, and was celebrated in the Book of Guests in Esperanto, so the dog was Capi, Nora's dog, whom Clarence seems to have taken over." Marvels p.146

'Mahdi, my faithful dog, was the first friend that slept in my cottage in Val Casterino'. The first line of Clarence's epitaph for Mahdi in his illustrated *Book of Guests in Esperanto*. Bicknell Collection. Marvels p.146

"Clarence then created another visitors' book: *The Book of Guests in Esperanto*. Smaller than *The Casa Fontanalba Visitors' Book*, it was the vehicle for Clarence to combine his artistic talents with a bit of humour while promoting Esperanto. He wrote descriptions of selected friends, family and visitors in Esperanto on the left page and painted watercolours of flowers on the right. Individuals range from eminent botanists and archaeologists to three dogs: Leo, Capi, and Clarence's much loved Mahdi." Marvels p.161

See Leo below, photo on p.84 of Marvels. This photo could also be Mahdi.

Leo

Margaret Berry's dog

Leo is only mentioned once in MARVELS.

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In "*The Book of Guests in Esperanto*" the page for Leo is dated 1907 and says "Leo, the yellow-brown dog of my niece Mrs Berry and friend of C. Aprosio". Caterina Aprosio is Margaret Berry's servant

("servistina" in Esperanto) in *"The Book of Guests in Esperanto"* but she is not in the *Casa Fontanalba Visitors' Book*. It is tempting to assume Robber died and Margaret got Leo sometime between 1904 and 1907.

Which dog is sitting between Clarence and Margaret Berry them in the photo on p.84 of Marvels? "The faces in this photo show warmth and friendship: Carlotta Gibelli, wife of the printer and manager of the Magazzino per Tutti in Bordighera, sits next to Clarence, then the ever-present dog and Margaret Berry. The girls are Carlotta's daughters Emma and Ida." Probably 1888. By saying "the ever-present dog", Valerie might be saying that she was not certain which dog it was.

Capi

Nora's poodle

"Mahdi had died in 1907, and was celebrated in the *Book of Guests in Esperanto*, so the dog was Capi, Nora's dog, whom Clarence seems to have taken over. " Marvels p.125, Photo: CB, Margaret and Edward Berry. Nora Bicknell (1871 in Brighton - 1960 in Farnham) was Clarence's niece, daughter of his brother Percy (who is also Marcus's great grandfather).

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"I am always sorry to leave home, and my books and begin the life of a savage in the wilds, but the wild life is very pleasant, and one quickly reverts to an ancestral simian type (at least I do)', wrote Clarence to Helene on 4 June 1912. He was heading up to the gentians and anemones of Val Casterino with niece Nora; Capi, the dog; Luigi and Mercede." Marvels p.195

"'Capi' says 'I remember your kindness'. (This was written in Esperanto.)" added by Luigi Pollini to his eulogy for Clarence. Marvels p. 207

"Clarence on the balcony of the Casa Fontanalba with a rubbing of a rock engraving in his hand, wildflowers at his elbow and Capi at his feet." Photo indistinguishable. Marvels p.208

The entry for Nora Bicknell in the *Book of Guests in Esperanto* says "Nora was the mistress of the poodle Capi"

The entry for Capi in the *Book of Guests in Esperanto* reads "Capi the black poodle of my niece Nora who spends the summer in the mountains *otherwise* in England. He sings wonderfully well but never works" (approx. translation from the Esperanto).

Robber

Margaret Berry's dog

'Laying of the Foundation Stone of Monte Verde 1904', ink inscription next to the photo. Edward Berry holding the plans of the house, next to Margaret and her dog Robber. Clarence is half way up the right side in a bowler hat and with a full beard." Marvels p.140. Robber is therefore a white mongrel terrier with a patchy face.

Robber is not mentioned in *The Book of Guests in Esperanto*.