

"HE SUDDENLY SPRANG AT HIM"

HECTOR, MY DOG

HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By

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*Author of "By Canoe and Dog-Train,"
"My Dogs in the Northland," etc.*

Illustrated by

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HECTOR, MY DOG
HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

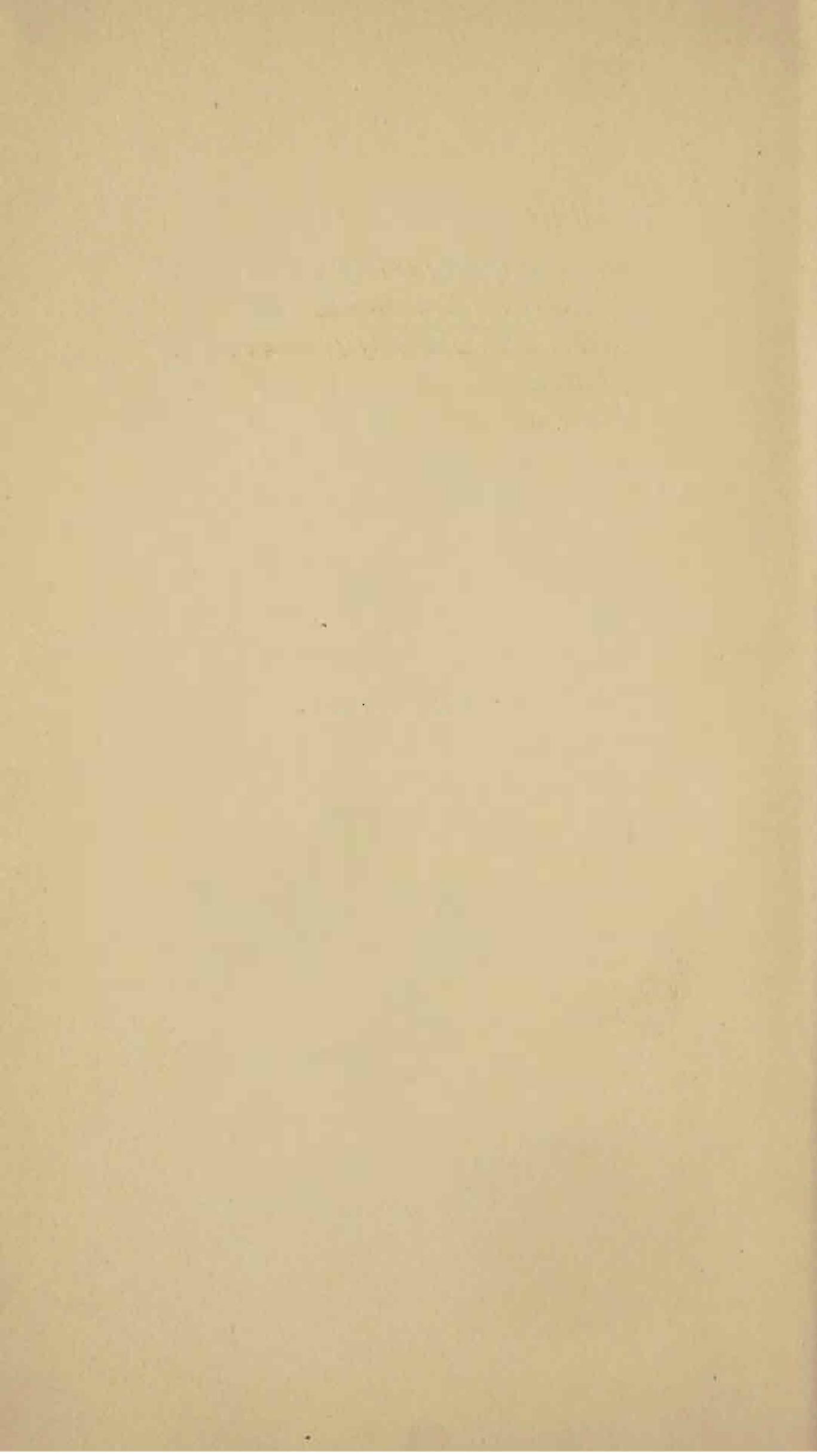
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To all lovers of the dog :

All Hector humbly asks is that he who reads this story will be loving and patient with his dog: the only creature that has absolutely surrendered himself to his master and this with a love so complete and abiding that if need be he would for him rather die than live.







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HECTOR, MY DOG

His Autobiography



Hector, My Dog

His Autobiography

I

IN THE NEST OF A WILD GOOSE

“**G**RAND old Hector!”

Thus said my master, as coming along he greets me in his cheery way.

“Glad to see you out enjoying the sunshine of this pleasant day. Hope you are better of your rheumatism? Aye, old fellow!”

As well as I can, with my old cracked voice, I bark out my thankfulness for his kindly notice of me.

“That’s right, old Hector! Have a good time while you can, for it was not always like this for us both; was it, my faithful old doggie?”

And then my master, as though the utterance of these last words brings up some of the thrilling memories of the past, turns back and comes and sits down on a bench near me. As I go and put my old head upon his knee, his hand,

as it has often been before, is placed lovingly upon it. Then looking into my eyes he says :

“ Yes, old doggie, we have had many strange adventures together, of which the world knows but little. You could tell of many a cold wintry storm we have faced together ; or how often we have been caught out in the howling blizzards, where the raging tempests roared around us like wild beasts determined to overwhelm us. But in God’s mercy, you and your comrades brought me in safety to some haven of refuge. It was indeed a desperate struggle more than once ere that race for life was won.

“ Wise old doggie ! How can I help loving you, when that great fierce wolf was resolved to make a meal of my boy, you took the wisest course possible, and, with your comrades, traveled at such a rate that you prevented him from making his deadly spring, and so brought the lad safely home.

“ Yes, indeed ! Your gallant deeds are very many, and it is a shame that they should be forgotten. But you and I remember them, and thousands of others ought to know about them too.”

But just here there joined us the kind mistress, and the children of the house, with the word that the Indian canoe-men were waiting to take them all out on the beautiful sunlit waters of the lake.

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Ere they left me, each one of them stroked my head and said some kindly words. Then they left me to rest in the warm sunshine and to be thankful that now my hard-working days were over, I was still lovingly cared for.

As I lay there thinking of the kindnesses of my master to me, and of the chat we had just had, which had so brought up the memories of the past, I tried to see how far I could succeed in getting my memory to bring up the incidents of my life.

Once when listening to some people talking, I heard one say: "Yes, even dogs have good memories." Another man then said: "I know that is true, for once when I was angry I kicked a young dog without any reason, and now that he has grown big and strong he growls and shows his teeth whenever I go near him, and seems to say: 'I have not forgotten your cruelty, and will get even with you yet.'"

Well I am glad that revengeful dogs are not many. I am sure that I can truthfully say that we dogs are quick to forget our wrongs, and that we lick the hand that is reached out in regret and kindness, even if not long before it held the stick that cruelly beat us.

Our devotion to our masters, be they kind or cruel, is so well known that it has won for us many friends.

But I am wandering from my subject—What I wanted to say, was, that many dogs have good memories, and so while mine is still good, I have been thinking that I ought to jot down some of the stirring events of my life, with the adventures that have occurred with the many splendid dogs with which I have toiled.

This thought, which has now been in my mind for quite a while, has been very much increased by what I have lately heard said by my master and mistress, as one pleasant summer day I lay at their feet as they read and talked with each other.

That day the little daughter, whom everybody loves, and whom they call Minnehaha, was out with them. Looking up from the book which she had been reading, she said :

“Father dear, I see on the back of that book which you are reading, the big word ‘Autobiography.’ What does it mean?”

“Why, my darling,” was the answer, “when a man writes the story of his own life, it is called his autobiography. Suppose,” he added laughingly (as he patted my head), “Hector here should write all about his queer adventures and his wonderful experiences as a sleigh-dog, we would call it the Autobiography of Hector.”

Then the little girl laughed with great delight at the idea, and said : “Would it not be funny if

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Hector would really write his Autobiography? I am sure everybody would like to read it.”

Of course everybody laughed at the idea of a dog writing his Autobiography. I too, had to bark out my delight, as I heard my name so frequently mentioned, and I knew by the kindly way in which it was repeated, that they were saying something nice and pleasant about me. For dogs do dearly love to be kindly spoken about, as well as spoken kindly to.

Then Minnehaha, who had become greatly interested in the matter, and did not want to let the subject drop, said :

“ Well, could we not help Hector in the matter, and the book still be his autobiography? ”

But the father said : “ Some dogs (and Hector is one of them) know more and can do more than most people give them credit for. Let us allow him to proceed in his own way.”

So hearing these, and many other things, I have pondered over them, and have come to the conclusion to try it, and will do the very best I can.

Of course, before finally deciding, I asked the opinions of some of the other dogs. Some of them were a bit doubtful about it, and said their impression was, that men and women and boys and girls, were so busy with their own affairs, that they would not take time to read what a

dog's thoughts were, and of the adventures of dog-life. Others said there will be much criticism, for people are not in the habit of having things written from the standpoint of a dog. Most of the dogs however were very enthusiastic about it and said it was a capital idea, and that amidst the multitudes of books, which men and women have written, one from a dog that had passed through so many adventures, and with his comrades had had so many thrilling experiences as I have had, would form most interesting reading to the tens of thousands of people that we dogs have heard of, who are fond of dogs, and love to read interesting things about them.

Koona, the white Esquimaux dog, was the most persistent opposer. He feared that I would show him up in his true colors, which as an "honest and impartial writer" (I think those are the correct words), my readers will see I have done.

At length after many discussions, and I am afraid, much "dogmatizing" it was finally decided by a very large majority that I should make the venture.

The matter of writing the Autobiography being thus finally settled, the question that next concerned me was, where and how to begin. I thought out many plans and drafted out many elaborate chapters with their thrilling climaxes.

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Of these I soon became ashamed, for I honestly wanted this book to be just the story of dog-life, and told as a dog would tell it.

So I am going to begin at the beginning of my earliest recollections, and bring my readers with me, on and on, through many of the adventures and incidents of my dog-life, in which, of course, to make the story more complete, must be woven much referring to my dog-companions.

So as a dog would talk, in my own way, I begin my story.

My first recollection is in finding myself stowed away, with five other little puppies, in the nest of a wild goose, with the cold waters rushing along on each side of our nest.

How I and my little brother puppies got there, I can only tell as the story was given to us by our mother.

It is quite a long one, but I can remember it as though only told us yesterday.

Our mother said that she was one of four dogs owned by an Indian, who in the summer time was a tripper for the Hudson Bay Company, engaged in carrying with hundreds of others, goods into the interior of the country. During the winter months he was employed by the same fur company, with his train of dogs, in traveling from one trading post to another, carrying packets and letters as required.

The work was very hard, as the snow was often very deep, and the cold at times was terrible.

The only satisfaction that we dogs in the train had, was that although we were worked very hard, we were well fed, as the great company allowed two good white fish a day, to each dog, during the whole of the winter months, whether we were on the trail, or resting at the different trading posts.

When the spring arrived, and the snow and ice melted away, the work of the dogs was over. There was nothing for them to do. Their life was one holiday, until the next winter's work began.

But there were some sad drawbacks to the pleasures of the summer holidays. The principal one was the fact that the Indians, unlike the white people, did not take much care of their dogs when they were not working them. The result was, they were little better than scavengers and thieves, and some who hung around the villages in summer were starved to death. Others, however, were more independent, and so, organizing themselves into parties, they wandered into the interior of the country, and especially up the rivers where there were shallow marshy places, into which the jack and pike and maske-longe and other kinds of fish were frequently

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found. There by industriously hunting and fishing, they managed to make a decent living. Then when the ice began to freeze on the lakes and rivers again, they returned to their masters at the Indian villages.

It was on one of these summer outings, made by my mother in company with other Indian dogs, scores of miles away from the Indian village, where dwelt her master, that I was born.

My mother had prepared a cozy nest among some fallen trees with plenty of dry leaves and dry hay from a beaver meadow.

But we were not allowed to remain there very long, as unfortunately, a very severe rain storm began, which continued for several days. The spot selected for us by our mother was in quite a sheltered hollow, and so when the water began to spread over the land, we were speedily flooded out. At first all our mother could do for us, was to lift us, one by one, by the nape of our neck, up on to the highest of the logs near at hand. There we had all we could do to cling to the wet slippery bark, and yelp.

Our poor mother was almost distracted at our pitiable condition and cries. Then she remembered having seen the nest of a pair of wild geese, that had already hatched their brood and gone away. Giving us some supper as well as she could on the trunk of the tree, and then tell-

ing us to hold on as well as we could, away she ran and swam to see if that nest was still where she had observed it. To her joy and delight, she found it high and almost dry, so wisely had it been built by the clever old geese.

Hurrying back to the log, she seized us one by one, by the nape of our necks, and swam with us to the cozy retreat which was some feet above the highest point reached by the flood.

When we had been safely carried over by our clever loving mother, after she had well shaken off the water from her warm coat, she lay down in the nest with us. There, cuddled up to her, we soon got so warm and comfortable, that we forgot all of our dangers and hardships.

The floods soon disappeared, but there were so many fish left in the shallow pools, that our mother and the other dogs had all they could eat. Thus we puppies grew fat and big, and it was while there that there came to me these first vivid recollections of my life.

We often heard strange sounds in the forests around us, as we lay there cuddled up in our comfortable nest. Sometimes our mother would crouch down low and hush us into complete silence, as we would hear far off in the woods, some strange howling which our wise mother said was made by wolves. If they happened to come near, our mother would even tremble, and we

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noticed that all the rest of the dogs kept very quiet and still. When the howlings had died away in the distance, then our mother would tell us that those wolves were very savage and would soon make a meal of us if they found us.

One day, while our mother was away trying to catch rabbits or fish, a queer looking brown animal with short legs and big feet, came and looked at us. His wild eyes and queer growls made us puppies very much afraid, and we yelped out our fears, as loudly as we could. Our mother and some other dogs heard us, and as rapidly as possible, they came to see what had alarmed us.

They almost ran against this strange wild animal which had so frightened us, and which we were afterwards told was a wolverine.

The dogs sprang upon him and there was a great battle before they killed him. Wolverines are very fierce, and when attacked, fight with great fury. One dog alone has but little chance against such a cunning fighter.

Our mother, who had received an ugly wound, was weak for some days. She told us that we had had a very narrow escape, as wolverines always kill all living things they can master, even if they do not need them for food.

II

RETURNING TO THE MASTER

THE narrow escape we had from the wolverine very much frightened us puppies, and so on the fine days when we went out of our nest to play, we did not go far away.

And yet in spite of all our care, it was not many days before we had another great fright. It was while we were out of our nest, playing and romping around. Everything had seemed so quiet and safe, when all at once from a big tree above us, we heard something like this:

“Hoot-a-hoot-a-hoo!”

We rushed yelping for all we were worth back to our nests in a great hurry. When our watchful mother heard us (for since our narrow escape from the wolverine she did not go very far away), she came rushing to us, and anxiously looking around, she enquired as to the cause of our fears.

We tried to tell her as well as we could what it was that had so frightened us, and just then while we were talking in our young puppy-dog way, there sounded out again:

“Hoot-a-hoot-a-hoo!”

We were indeed terribly frightened, and cuddled down very closely to her.

But our wise mother only laughed as much as a dog can laugh, and told us that all the sounds around us did not come from savage animals like wolves and bears and wolverines.

Then she quieted our fears by telling us that these hoot-a-hoot-a-hoos, were only from a bird called an owl, that lived on mice and young rabbits, and would not attack fine little doggies that had grown as big as we were.

We were very glad to hear this from our mother, who was very patient with us, and gave us so many lessons that we soon learned the difference between the sounds which meant danger, and those which would do us no harm.

One day, a queer-looking animal came along when our mother was cuddled down in the nest with us. When she saw it she hushed us into perfect silence, and we all lay very quiet. Sometimes that strange creature came quite close to us, but it did not seem to notice us at all. It was about as large as a small-sized dog. Its color was black, but it had two queer stripes of white on its body, and it had a very bushy tail which it carried high over its back.

I am sure it saw us, but it just went on hunting for grasshoppers and beetles and bugs, which it caught and swallowed very cleverly.

When it seemed to have caught all of these things which it could find around our nest, it slowly moved away from us, but always on the lookout for its queer food.

As it moved along, it happened to go to a place where some of our dogs generally slept when they were not hunting or fishing. Some of the dogs were there at the time, and saw it coming towards them. Instead of quietly going away and letting this animal pick up what grasshoppers and beetles it could find, and then go on to some other place, they very foolishly resolved to remain in their sleeping-places, and, if needs be, fight for them.

What happened I was of course too small to see, but I did hear first a growl or two as the dogs made their attack. These were soon followed by some cries and yells of distress, and then we saw some frightened dogs dash by our nest and rush out into the river, and there bury themselves in the water, with only a small part of their heads to be seen. And at almost the same time, we were all nearly choked by some most dreadful-smelling stuff. It made us cough and sneeze, and our eyes to smart very much.

We puppies were frightened, but when we saw our mother, who had sat up and thus had been able to see what had happened, fairly grin with delight, we felt certain that the danger was over.

But what it was, we had to wait until it was all explained to us.

Our good mother did not keep us long waiting. She told us that that queer looking animal, with the black coat and white stripes and bushy tail, was a skunk. She said that it was afraid of no living creature, and never began a fight. She told us that it lived on bugs and beetles and grasshoppers, as we had seen.

One strange habit it had, and that was, it never got out of the way of any animal, but expected all in the woods or fields to move aside when it came along looking for its food.

The trouble has been with those dogs, said our mother, that they would not move aside as that skunk went near them. If they had done so there would have been no trouble, and doubtless it would have been for their comfort, for if that skunk had had charge of their sleeping place for a few minutes, it would have cleared it of a number of very troublesome insects of various kinds. But no! the dogs must get up a fight with that skunk, and of course were quickly conquered.

The skunk does not fight with its teeth. It has a sack filled with that vile-smelling stuff, with which the air seems now so full, and which will remain around us for many days. When the dogs sprang at it, the skunk just threw some of the stuff in their faces. It nearly blinded and

smothered them. No dog will face it the second time. It takes all the fight out of even the fiercest of them, and so they have rushed, as you saw, into the water for relief, but it will cling to them and make them miserable for many days.

So there we young dogs learned our first lesson regarding skunks, and it was, that it was the best plan to give them a wide berth; and that even if they could be conquered, they were not of much value, and their flesh would be but a poor return for the horrid-smelling substance with which they would so thoroughly bespatter us.

Thus as the pleasant months went by, we were learning lessons that were of service to us as the years rolled on. We soon became accustomed to the different sounds of the forest, and were able to distinguish between those which meant danger, and those which were harmless. We also learned that those sounds which were the loudest were not the ones always to be most feared.

Thus as I recall these memories of my early days, I think that on the whole I had a happy time. Our mother was very kind to us, and there was plenty of food. Our only fears were of the passing bear or fierce wildcat or wolverines, and very rarely the distant howling of the great gray wolves.

So we were very sorry indeed when one morn-

ing our mother told us that some pretty little white things like feathers which fell around us, were the signs that very soon we would all have to leave that cozy home, and go far away to a place where the master lived.

We little puppies, born out there in the woods, and never having seen anything but what was in the wild life around us, of course did not understand what she meant when our mother talked of the master. But we have found it all out since.

When we woke up the next morning, the few little white feathery things that had so amused us puppies as we chased them the day before, had become so numerous that the very ground was white with them.

The old dogs, with their wise heads and long experience, knew what they meant. So they all gathered around our nest, and held a council, and our mother soon after informed us that we were to move out and start on a long journey the very next day.

I can never forget that long journey, not only on account of its length and weariness to my young brothers and myself, but also for the fact that it was then that we first met with those queer creatures who walk on two legs, and whom we soon found were our masters, and many of them I found were our best friends.

It seemed so strange to us little puppies, who were only about four months old, to be obliged to trudge along with a lot of dogs hour after hour for several days together. The old dogs showed us no sympathy as they eagerly pressed on. Even our mother, who had always been so kind to us, would now by little nips and bites, punish us if we dared to loiter on the way.

Fortunately for us, the days had again become pleasant, and so without much discomfort we were able to move on from place to place, where the nights were spent. The dogs did not make us travel very many miles every day, as they had to stop at various places and hunt for fish and game. Some nights our mother would bring us a supper of fish which she had caught, and once she caught a nice young rabbit which she divided among us.

Thus on and on we traveled, and then there came to us one of the greatest frights of our young lives. We had been trudging along near our mother in company with the other dogs, when suddenly we came out of the woods, and there right before us, were a number of what we afterwards found out were called wigwams and houses. And what was more amazing to us, and filled us with terror, was that there were a number of queer-looking creatures who walked on only two legs. Some of them were tall, and

others only of medium height, while others were quite small.

My brother puppies and I, who had never seen such queer looking creatures, wanted to turn round and rush back into the forest, but this our stern mother would not permit.

The strangest mystery of all now came to us. The big dogs of our pack, and our mother among them, boldly advanced to these wigwams and among these queer looking two-legged creatures. And instead of being alarmed and frightened at the sight of them, they began wagging their tails and barking out their greetings. They were actually saying to them in their dog-language, that they were really glad to see them.

We poor ignorant puppies, born in the woods, could not understand it or make it out.

We were indeed amazed when our own mother, who could be so savage when she liked, actually listened to some sounds that seemed so strange to us, which came from one of these large two-legged creatures, and at once with wagging tail and bow-wows of delight, she rushed off to the spot where he stood, and really and truly let him pat her on the head and back.

We puppies could stand it no longer, and as our mother was not now near us to restrain us, we turned tail and with howls and yelps of fear, we dashed back into the forest. Nor did we stop

running until we were far away in the woods, well out of sight of those tall creatures that had so frightened us.

When our first fright was over, and we found ourselves alone out in the dark woods, well we just sat up and cried for our mother. And she let us cry there all night, and did not come for us until the next day.

When we heard our mother calling, we were very glad, for the night had been very cold, and in the darkness out there alone, we had been very much afraid. So at once we rushed towards her, but when we got near her, there to our horror, we saw the great two-legged creature that had been patting her the day before. Our first thought was to at once turn and hide away again in the dark woods. But our mother called us so kindly to come to her, and then we were so cold and hungry, that we hardly knew what to do.

Vainly we whined and begged our mother to come with us, but she would not, and so trembling and shivering with fear, and cold, we went slowly to the place where he stood.

We discovered then why it was she had not come to us. One end of a strap was tied around her neck, and the other end was in the hand of the tall two-legged creature, whom we afterwards found was called her master.

We were very indignant when we first found

out that our mother was thus tied with a strap, but more surprised when we observed that she did not seem to mind it, and was only anxious that we should come to her.

We found this very hard to do, as we were so fearful of that tall creature that held her. However, our mother's soothing calls prevailed, and at length we reached her.

The warm breakfast which she gave us was very welcome. We kept our eyes as well as we could on the big creature that held our mother. He kept talking to her, and it was certain that she was pleased with what he said. Our surprise was great when we found out that he was saying nice things to her about us.

It might have gone on all right, if he had not done what he did. And it was what I could not then stand. He actually stooped down, and putting his hand under me, he tried to lift me off the ground.

Terrified and frantic at this, I suddenly turned round, and sunk my sharp little teeth into one of his fingers.

Maddened and angry at this, he suddenly threw me down on the ground with such force, that he nearly knocked the breath out of me.

My mother was so indignant at his conduct, that she sprang up from the ground and, pulling

the strap out of his hand, she called us around her, and marched off with us into the woods.

But it was of no use. The bitter cold weather had come, and the ice and snow were everywhere. So our mother went back to those wigwams, and made her peace with her master, and then little two-legged creatures called boys came and threw their lassos over our heads, and in spite of our howlings and yelpings, dragged us away to their homes.

They fed us well, and gave us a warm place in which to sleep, and were much kinder to us than we had any reason to expect.

At first we were inclined to bite them when they attempted to handle us, but they put thick leather gloves on their hands and so our bites did them no harm, yet every time we tried to bite them we were cruelly whipped.

So we gave up our wild ways, as we found it was best, and in a short time we took our places, and were treated as were the other young dogs that were born in the village.

Oh, dear, how cold it was! and how we suffered, especially when we were thrown out of the wigwam into the snow by some angry Indian, because we put our noses in the fish-pot, or began chewing some meat off from a haunch of venison that was left behind us in the wigwam.

It often seemed as though we should freeze to

death, as there we were driven out in the bitter cold, and tumbled in the snow that was deep enough to smother us. It was so cold that the breath from our noses turned white and then froze in icy particles on our little whiskers. Our poor naked feet were so cold that we could do nothing but cry and yelp in our misery.

It was fortunate for us that the anger of the Indians soon passed away. So as quickly as possible we endeavored to struggle out of the snow-drift into which they had pitched us, and managed to crawl back into the wigwam under the deerskin door.

The Indian women would pity us, and so they would let us come near the fire, and even curl down on the corners of their warm blankets. They would even feed us out of that same fish-pot into which not long before we had tried to put our little noses, and for doing which, we had not long before been cruelly punished and thrown out into the snow.

This sudden change from cruelty to kindness on their part was to me a mystery, and I began to find out that it takes a lot of dog-sense to understand some people.

III

GOING TO SCHOOL

FROM this time on I saw but little of my mother. For days and days she, with some other dogs, would be absent.

Then when she did return, she was so tired that she could not romp or play with us as she had so often done when we were free and happy in the woods.

What was the matter at first I could not tell. But as the months passed on, and I began to get big and strong, I found out to my sorrow.

In the wigwam with me were several boys who were fond of me and my brothers. They petted us a great deal, and we had many jolly romps together, not only in the wigwam, but also outside where the snow was well packed down, and the bright sun was shining. It was very cold in spite of the sunshine, and so the harder we played and ran around, the better we felt.

We puppies, or young dogs as we were now called, were very sorry when these boys had to stop playing with us, and start off to what they called going to school.

We wanted to follow them, but they ordered us back.

One day some of the other dogs and myself said we would go, and so we followed on the trail.

Our young masters shouted to us to go back, but we would not obey. However, being afraid of punishment, we dropped some way behind. After going some distance, we were surprised to see them going into a large wigwam, which we afterwards learned was called a schoolhouse.

We ought to have turned around and run home like good dogs, but we were young and foolish, and so we thought we would go on far enough to see our young masters in that schoolhouse, and if possible, find out what they were there doing.

So on and on we went, until we got quite near that house, when suddenly there jumped up the biggest dog I ever saw. With a roar that half frightened the lives out of us, he came dashing towards us.

My! but we did turn quickly, and with our little tails tucked between our hind legs, we made the quickest run of our lives. Nor did we stop, or even dare to look around, until we were safe in our own wigwam.

We learned afterwards that the name of that great dog was Jack, and that he was only doing what he had been told to do, and which was to keep all the Indian dogs away from the schoolhouse while the teacher and children were there

at their studies. That he did his work well and thoroughly, there was no denying. He gave me and the other young dogs such a fright that we never had any desire to go near that schoolhouse again. Indeed, I am sure I never did. And so having had no schooling, that may account for the many foolish things I have said, and may yet say, and also be the reason why so many blunders have been made in my life.

I may here mention, that when some time after this I became better acquainted with Jack, I found him to be, not the fearful monster I had imagined, but as wise and gentle, as he was large and strong.

But I never forgot the fright of my young life, which he gave me that day on the trail that led from the schoolhouse.

Jack was, however, an aristocratic dog, and, with Cuffy his mate, kept somewhat aloof from all the other dogs, but as I was part mastiff as well as Esquimaux, he was always on speaking terms with me after I had been purchased by his master.

There was this also to be said in his favor, that while he could easily have thrashed any half dozen of us, he was never tyrannical, and in after years we more than once tested his intelligence and wonderful staying power, when in traveling we were caught in the terrible blizzards. Then

when the hearts and courage of the rest of us failed, Jack took the lead of our sleds, which were all fastened together for safety, and be the distance fifty, sixty, or as it was on one occasion, even seventy miles, Jack, without faltering or hesitancy, guided us to our desired destination.

Thus, while he kept us at a distance, and allowed no intimacies, we all admired him, and, without question, admitted his supremacy.

When the boys came home from school in the evening of that day on which Jack had given us such a fright, they dragged us out from among the robes and blankets in the wigwam, where we had remained hid on account of our great fright.

It seems that from the windows of the school-house, they had seen the whole affair, and knowing that Jack would not kill, or even hurt us, they had thought it was great fun. We, however, did not think so, and thus we were very loth to go out with them for the romp which they wanted to have with us, for fear Jack might be around. However, as everybody who heard their story of our great fright laughed about it, we gradually got over our fears, but we could not for some time help keeping our eyes from wandering along the trail that led to the school-house.

While playing with the boys we heard the merry jingling sounds of sleigh-bells, which came

from a distant forest trail. The boys instantly dashed off in that direction, and as it was from a trail in the opposite direction from that one which led to the schoolhouse, we dogs quickly followed them.

We had not to run very far ere we met some men with dog-sleds coming rapidly towards us. Each sled was dragged by four dogs harnessed up one ahead of the other. Among them, pulling and panting, we discovered that one was our mother!

She quickly recognized us as the sleds rapidly flew by, but all she could do was to give us a cheery bark and a wag of her tail.

Our young masters, the boys, with shouts of welcome had greeted their friends, the Indian drivers, and then, as the sleds, without stopping, sped on, they quickly followed, and we dogs were not far behind.

For the first time we here saw the loaded dog-trains, and there came to me some vague idea of what was meant by dog-traveling. Yet there had not dawned upon me any thought of the hardships and sufferings that must of necessity be associated with such work. In happy ignorance of coming ills, we more enjoy the present bliss.

Our mother, and the other dogs, were soon unharnessed and fed. We were sorry to see that on

some of these sleigh-dogs there were ugly wounds, while others were lame and bruised.

That night our mother let us cuddle down beside her, although she had long since ceased to nurse us. We tried to get her to tell us something about what she had been doing, as, harnessed up with other dogs, she had been away from us for days. But she only nestled us up closer to her warm body, and throwing her great furry tail over us, she said :

“ Wait, my little ones. Have a good time while you can. There is no use wearing your collar before it is put on.”

Thus we romped and played and had a good time all through our puppy days, except for the bitter cold.

Our master saw we were likely to make fine large dogs and thus be valuable to him, and so although we often got cuffed and thrashed for doing stupid things, such as eating our master's food instead of our own, yet he fed us well on plenty of good fish, and sometimes he gave us a good dinner of venison, when he had been fortunate in killing a reindeer.

Not having had any schooling, as we have already mentioned, we were ignorant of many things, and so our education went on very slowly. For example, we young dogs could not see what harm there was in our having a nice supper of

fish, and eating up some moccasins which were made of dry smoked leather. They were not half as good as the fish. But my! we did get a hiding for doing it.

Then one evening when our master came into the wigwam, he pulled off and hung up to dry, his moose-skin shirt. He had been away hunting, and had just returned with his dog-sled loaded with moose-meat. Our mother, who had been one of the dogs that had dragged home that heavy load of meat, told us, as she snuggled us down beside her, that evening after she had been fed, that she had overheard the master say that on the next day he was going to give us young dogs a lot of that fine venison to eat.

We were so delighted we could neither sleep nor keep still, and so our tired mother was not sorry when we left her to rest in peace. In our prowling around we came across our master's moose-skin coat, and whether or not, it was the joyful prospect of the famous dinner of moose-meat we were to receive the next day, we can hardly tell, but anyway we quietly pulled down and ate up about a half of that nasty old smoked skin shirt. Then we were discovered, and there *was* a row. Our master was so angry and furious when he found out what we had done, that he so thrashed us, that we thought all the bones in our bodies were broken. Then we were

thrown out into the snow, and there we cried and yelped during the remainder of the cold night.

Thus we found that there was no use in trying to please some people, even by taking the second best cut.

By slow degrees we were thus getting our education, even if Jack did chase us away from the schoolhouse. But we were getting on.

We learned that it was bad form to plunge our noses into the kettle as soon as it was taken off the fire. Firstly, because we were generally so scalded that we had to rush out howling, and bury our scalded noses in the snow. Secondly, we were taught a lesson which I am sorry to say we were slow to learn, and that was, that we were only dogs, and consequently must wait until our masters were first served.

Happy were we when we found our right place, and were there content to stay.

Even trying to be a blessing to our race was not always very successful. For example, when we had seen how cruel some of the dog-drivers were to the dogs, by whipping them so severely, we young dogs that were still allowed at times to sleep in the wigwams, would watch for our chance, and when we found out where these cruel drivers had carelessly thrown their whips, we noiselessly set to work, and with our sharp teeth cut these

great whips to pieces, and ate up as much of them as we could.

But even this kindly act, which had caused us a lot of trouble and considerable inward pain (for the stuff was most indigestible) only resulted in more thrashings for us, and new and heavier whips for the sleigh-dogs.

Thus in our school of experience, dull as we were, we found it best not to destroy the smaller whips, for, as sure as we did, the masters would secure bigger ones.

Thus, while everybody thought we were having a good time—and I suppose we were—we were rapidly being kicked and cuffed and thrashed into shape, and our master was delighted when he saw how we were growing into such fine, large, handsome dogs. For what purpose, we were soon to know.

Dogs are generally broken into work when about nine months old, that is, if it is in the winter time, with sufficient snow upon the ground for the sleds.

This we learned in our wigwam, as there we listened to the talk of our master with other Indians. We had become so accustomed to their voices, that although but slowly learning, we were able to understand a great deal that they said: much more I think than they gave us credit for, or I am sure they would not have said

before us many things which they did. Indeed I think we really might have picked up more information than we did, if we had always been attentive. But with sleepy indifference, we had generally listened as they talked away on various subjects, sometimes getting an idea of what the talk was all about, but generally it was beyond the powers of our young puppy minds to understand.

We had however understood with great pleasure, and our wise old mother had helped us, that they had said that it was a good winter, with plenty of fish and game, so that nobody need be hungry. Indeed, our dear old mother in talking to us about it, had explained that when there was plenty of food for the masters, it meant good times for the dogs. So we slept and ate and romped and played.

Then there came a time however when we could not help being interested.

“They are surely nine months old!”

Thus said one wise old Indian, as taking his calumet out of his mouth, he sat down near us on a deerskin where we were squatted lazily looking into the fire.

These words were addressed to our master, who was even then busily engaged in counting back the months, or moons, as he called them, on his fingers.

“No,” he said, “that would take them back to Wa-wa tipisgow pesim, the egg-moon, and that is too far. They could not have been born that early. We will call them ayan-anao tipisgow pesim, that is, eight moons old. That will suit me very well, and it will give them one moon more in which to grow stronger and leave me sufficient time in which to get everything ready for their being thoroughly broken in.”

Then they petted us, and felt our necks and the muscles of our legs, and looked into our mouths, and seemed much pleased, and said to each other in the Indian language: “Metoone menousin Atimosisuk,” which means “very fine young dogs.”

To those wise people who can understand these things, it may not have appeared singular or unexpected, but to me, only a young dog, even before they were through with their talking about us, some strange forebodings that I could not get rid of, came to me that in spite of their pettings and fine words, I felt that their talking together about us meant more than mere compliments.

So I have found that when friends come around and are profuse in their flatteries, it is well if we cannot at first read between the lines, at least to see what are their next movements.

IV

UNCONQUERED BY CRUELTY

THE very next day there came into the wigwam a fine old Indian, with a soft, low, gentle voice. The people called him Memotas.

We young doggies knew nothing about him then, but we found out afterwards that he was the most famous maker of dog-harness in the village.

In his quiet gentle way he talked to the people in our wigwam, and then he made friends with us dogs, and we could not help but like him. Indeed, we found out that everybody liked him, and even the surliest dogs would not growl when Memotas passed by.

Yet he came to help on our enslavement, but we knew it not. So we let him measure us around our necks for our collars, and around our bodies for the harness bands. These harness he would make out of moose-skin, and he would make them so strong that struggle as we would, we could not break them or twist out of them.

So we learned that the soft low voice does not destroy the skilled workman's hand.

Patting us on our heads, and flattering us by

saying what splendid dogs we had grown to be, Memotas left our wigwam, and we did not see him again for some days.

When he did come again, we saw that he had in his hands something that looked very much like the harness that we had seen worn by our mother and the other dogs. But as they had no bells upon them, and Memotas had quickly thrown them down behind him in the wigwam, we soon forgot all about them, and were speedily interested in his gentle voice and charmed by his caresses and flatteries.

After a while he carelessly picked up one of the harness, for there really was a complete set of them, and, playing with me with it for a time, before I really knew what he was doing, he skilfully slipped the collar over my head, and placing the harness on my back, he securely fastened the band under me.

Seeing that it was all right, he as quickly took it off, and so flattered me, that my brothers seemed envious of the fuss made over me, and so crowded themselves forward, that Memotas had no trouble in fitting the harness of each one of them.

Thus blinded by flattery they, like myself, were soon enslaved.

Some days after, our master brought home some little bells, which he fastened on to the

underside of the collars of the new harness, and we dogs heard him say to some of the others in the wigwam :

“In a few days we will begin the work of breaking them in.”

“Breaking them in !” Years have passed since I first, there in the wigwam, heard those horrid words, and yet I cannot even now think of them without a shiver of pain. Why do men not handle us dogs kindly ? They who are our masters little know the great love that there is in our hearts towards them and how anxious we are to please them. Our highest bliss is to have their smile and kindly words, and to obey them and carry out their wishes, our delight.

For our masters, we dogs are ever eager to find out their desires, and in our anxieties to carry them out, we render a willing service that can be said of no other living creatures in anything like the same degree.

All that we ask is that kindness and patience should go with our lessons ; for after all we are only dogs, and are at the least, dull scholars, and slow to comprehend, especially when the language is not that of love.

“Breaking them in !”

This which I have now to describe is the hardest part of my autobiography. I only here record it, that some who may read it, may not

adopt this plan when dealing with a young dog, that he would have as his companion and friend.

Why my Indian master, who himself was not cruel, should have hired those brutal half-breed dog-drivers to break us in in the manner they did, I have never been able to understand.

They were two rough-looking large men. They began their cruel work by roughly seizing us young dogs, without one kindly word, and forcing the collars of our new harness over our heads. Then they fastened, as tightly as possible, the strong moose-skin bands around our bodies. They then jerked us around in a line, and fastened us together in tandem-style. The traces of the last dog in the line they then took and attached to a heavy wood sled. Old Black, a steady old leader-dog, was then harnessed and fastened in the front of our train. The drivers then shouted: "Marche! Marche!" to us, and were really foolish enough to think that after such treatment we would move off like old dogs. But we did nothing of the kind. Poor old Black tried to do his duty, but what could one dog do against four stubborn dogs, that felt as insulted and indignant as we did.

"Marche! Marche!" they shouted, and while Black tried vainly to advance, we four stubborn dogs just planted out our fore legs as stiff as pokers, and there we stayed.

The cruel whips of our drivers, who were now furious at us, hissed out, and as they were made of buckskin loaded with shot, they cut into our tender ears, and raised great welts along our sides.

With every report of those heavy whips, which in hands altogether too accustomed to their use, rang out, like pistol shots, there was still shouted :

“ Marche! Marche! Majestimuk!” (their word for bad dogs).

In our veins was the blood of the English mastiff as well as that of the Esquimaux, and so under their cruel blows we just laid down in the snow and said by our actions :

“ As you have started out in this rough way to conquer us, we will put up a stubborn fight ere we yield.”

The two drivers, who had completely lost their tempers, and were furious that their whippings had so failed to get us to move, then began to cruelly kick us.

Our master, who was really not cruel, as I have said, but only ignorant of dog-nature, now interfered, and none too soon ; for one of the brutal drivers in kicking the dog next to Black, so enraged him that he suddenly sprang at him and gave him such a bite in the leg, that he did but little dog-driving for many days after.

Thus utterly failed, for that day at least, the efforts of those men to break us in.

As we were being unharnessed, our master came to us and chided with us for being such stubborn, obstinate dogs. He seemed very sorry when he saw how the cruel whips had cut our ears, which were now so limp and bloody.

He tried to chide us, and said :

“I am sorry for you, but you have to be broken in, and the sooner you surrender the better it will be for you.”

As he seemed to thus talk to us, both by his looks and actions, I think I understood about all he said, and oh! how I did wish that I could tell him that if he would only have us treated kindly and with patience, we would soon understand and surrender, and then would ever do our very best for him.

But alas! I was only a dog with but a few “bow-wows” to utter, and so I could not tell him what was in my heart, and thus he let the cruel driver, who had not been bitten, try all of his cruel ways, without one single kindly word, to break us in.

Finding that he could not succeed in breaking us in, when thus harnessed all together, the driver, who had secured another half-breed to help him, now tried to see what they could do with us separately. So harnessing us up, one by one,

they placed three powerful dogs ahead of us in the train, and one behind to keep us in line.

By this plan, the three strong dogs ahead of us could take us simply off our feet, and pull us along on the trail, or through the snow.

So when we found ourselves thus powerless to resist, we just sullenly lay down and let those dogs drag us along. At times they pulled us over rough places, where we were badly hurt, but we took our bruises with the same stubborn obstinacy that we had received the stinging blows.

But I will not prolong the agony by the full recital of those sad days. Suffice to say, that one after another of my brothers gave in. I never did.

As a last resort, one day they fastened me to a small sled, and then with a team of four strong dogs in front of me, they dragged me and the sled a couple of miles or so, along a forest trail, and there they left me still harnessed and fastened by my traces, to that little sled.

As they left me, one of them said :

“ Well, he will have to draw home that little sled, or stay here and starve.”

Did I! Not a bit of it!

I just waited until dogs and men were out of sight, and then I turned round, and with my sharp teeth, I cut off the moose-skin leather

traces, and eating them up (for they had been cruelly starving me for some days), I deliberately walked home.

My master, who had been informed by the cruel men of what they had done, saw me coming home, and when he noticed what I had done, he just laughed and laughed.

Why he did so, of course I do not know, but perhaps it was because those boastful men had been outwitted, and he thought I was a clever dog.

Then he laughed and laughed again.

As I listened to his cheery laugh, O how I did wish that I could just say to him :

“Master, if with that cheery laugh in your actions, you will just harness me up yourself, I will do anything for you that a dog can do.”

But, alas, he understood not dog-nature, and there I could not make him see that even a laugh and a kindly word would go so much further than cruelty.

But a change in my life was at hand.

A change so sudden, so sharp, so abrupt, that to this day it seems beyond my thought or powers of explanation.

While my master was watching me eat the second of the two fish which he himself brought out to me, I was half amused, sore and hungry as I was, to notice that he still at times burst out into laughter.

While standing there, he was joined by one of the pale faced race, a gentleman who had on a large fur coat, for the day was very cold.

This white man was accompanied by two large dogs, one of them, to my surprise and even alarm, I recognized as Jack, the great dog that had so fiercely chased me and the other young dogs from the front of the schoolhouse.

I soon found out however that my fears of him were groundless, for he did not take the slightest notice of me, but with Cuffy his companion, he remained close to the side of his master, whom I heard my master call Ayumeaookemou.

The two men cordially shook hands with each other, and then after a few words had passed between them, my master as far as I could make out, told Ayumeaookemou all about me.

At first the strange gentleman looked sad, as my master told him how stubborn I had been, and how severely the drivers had whipped me in their fruitless efforts to break me in.

But when he was told of how I had cut my traces and came home without the sled, they both laughed very heartily at it, and thought it was very clever.

Then the stranger came close to me, and when he saw how swollen and wounded were my ears, and noticed the great welts on my sides, he was very indignant, and said :

“What a shame to have such a fine young dog so cruelly treated. When will people learn that dogs can be managed far better by gentleness and kindness, than by such brutality?”

Then, turning to my master, he said:

“What do you want for that dog?”

“Thirty skins,” replied my master.

“It is a bargain!” said the gentleman. “Bring him over to the mission at once, and you shall have your pay.”

Thus did I pass into the possession of my present master.

Patting me gently on my head, which he saw was sore from the cruel blows, he said:

“Well, Hector, if we can understand each other, as I think we can, those cruel days are all over, and better times are before you.”

Why he then and there called me Hector I never found out.

Then, as he continued to pet me and say kindly words, and call me his dog, somehow or other, both Jack and Cuffy seemed to understand that as their beloved master was thus taking so much notice of me, they must do likewise; and so in their dignified way, they came and introduced themselves and looked me over. But it was very evident that they were very much shocked at the state of my ears.

For a time I was dazed, and troubled with

strange fears. Then as it dawned upon my dog-sense that I had been sold and bought, I could only see my new master. And as I looked into his face and listened to his cheery words, and felt the touch of his gentle hand upon my sore head, I felt by some innate instinct or impression within me, which I, as a young, inexperienced dog, could not explain, that I had met my truest friend. And during the long years in which he has honored me with his friendship, and it has been my joy to serve him, I have never changed my mind.

That same evening, my new master, after seeing that my ears and the other wounds were washed and oiled, introduced me to his other dogs in his kennels. Then, in their company began, apart from my young puppy days, the happiest period of my life; and it has continued to this day.

As I was first introduced among the dogs in the kennels, my wounds and welts so touched them, that if any of them had had any disposition for a bit of roughness with a newcomer, it was never displayed.

Even Koonah, the most incorrigible mischief and inveterate tease, came, and after investigating me most thoroughly, he, in dog fashion, sat down beside me, and began a howling so doleful and contagious, that all the other dogs that had any

Esquimaux blood in their veins, joined in it with such dead earnestness, that our good master had to come out and positively forbid any encore.

I found out afterwards that these doleful refrains, so enjoyed by Esquimaux dogs, had been positively prohibited at the mission, but Koonah, the rascal whose joy was in breaking rules, when possible, saw in my battered condition a subject so suggestive, that he could not resist the temptation to break the rules, and resurrect the mournful refrains.

Rover, the intelligent dog-doctor, had also been an early sympathizer. He had, however, critically observed how, by the master's orders, my wounds had been so carefully washed and then oiled, that at present at least, his services were not required.

But as far as it was possible for him to put it, his kindly eyes and actions said to me :

“Do not hesitate to avail yourself of my services. Any assistance that I can render you will be cheerfully given. For my testimonials, ask any dog in the yard.”

And grandly did old Rover's tongue aid my rapid recovery.

V

NEW AND HAPPY LIFE

A NEW life now opened before me. Here were comfortable kennels, where in plenty of dry hay, brought from distant beaver meadows, we dogs could sleep in peace, shielded from the blizzard storms.

Very different and happier were these surroundings from those in which my poor mother and her companion dogs were left to shift for themselves, when their heavy day's work was done.

Instead of warm kennels like these, in which to sleep, they, when they had eaten their supper of fish, were carelessly left to find what shelter they could, from the cold blasts or blinding storms.

Often they were glad to get and be thankful for the slight protection afforded by the lea side of a fallen log, or a stump of a tree. Their lot indeed was a hard one.

Young as I was, when removed from those hardships, yet I and my young brothers had enough of them to still almost make me shiver, as I think of them.

We often were thrown out of the wigwam,

and there, with no hut or shed into which we could crawl, had to cuddle down in the snow, exposed to many a gale.

Many times we cried ourselves to sleep, and even then could not keep from shivering. The snow sometimes fell upon us, nearly burying us. All we could do was just to endure and suffer.

But why should it be so?

Our Indian masters, with their axes, could easily have cut down a few trees, and in a short time have made a little house for us in which, huddled together, safe from the winds and blizzards, we would have been happy and comfortable.

Here, however, in the kennels, I found everything so different, and, as was quite natural even for a dog, I wanted to know what was the reason why all dogs were not so carefully looked after as we were. As I talked over the matter with the other dogs, I was pleased to learn that there were some Indians who, seeing what our master was doing for his dogs, were following his example.

I had a great deal to learn in my new surroundings, and many of these things surprised me.

One of the first and most suggestive things which I learned, was that all of the dogs that were well and strong, had their allotted share of

work to do. There was not an idle dog in the whole pack, except the young growing ones, and a couple of old fellows, whom our kind master called his pensioners.

I was not long in finding out what the work was which the different dogs had to do.

Some were employed in hauling large quantities of wood from the distant forests for the fires in the house, the church, and the school.

As I was allowed any amount of freedom, I would frequently, with other young dogs, accompany the sleds as they went for their heavy loads. This trail was only about a couple of miles long. It was made as straight as possible, direct from the mission to the spot where the Indian woodmen were cutting the small trees up in the proper lengths to be tied on the sleds. These small logs and poles were from twelve to twenty feet long.

The small trees had been cut down the previous year, and so the wood when hauled home by the dogs, was quite light and dry.

These dogs were so clever, and enjoyed their work so well, that after the woodmen had gone with them a few times, they did not require the drivers to accompany them, but when the sleds were loaded, they would drag them home, and then as soon as somebody, who would be on hand, would unload their sled and turn them

around in the trail, they would hurry back alone, for another load.

I was always delighted when allowed to accompany the dogs when they were taken up the river, to some far away place, for a load of hay for the cows.

In order that they might be able to bring home a large load of hay, three sleds would be fastened side by side. As the sleds were nearly twelve feet long, the three of them made quite a large space.

On these three sleds thus arranged, the hay, which had been cut and dried the previous summer, and here piled up in stacks, was now carefully packed.

The three trains of dogs that were here arranged side by side thought it great fun to thus travel. The only dog that disliked this arrangement was surly old Voyageur. He had so long been accustomed to be at the front, that he could not understand this idea of having two other leader dogs side by side with him. So he was inclined to be quarrelsome, and get into a row, especially with the dog that traveled on his blind side, as he had only one eye.

When I learned from the other dogs, that all this hay was for some large animals called cows, my curiosity was aroused, and of course I was anxious to see them.

Kennedy had charge of them, and as a general thing, he would not allow any of the dogs to prowl around the stables where he kept them.

As he was a kind-hearted man, I one day got him persuaded to leave the stable door open for a while, and let me have a look at them. They seemed such great big creatures, that at first I was half inclined to be afraid of them. I had never seen such great big animals, except perhaps two or three times in the wood, before my mother, with the other dogs, brought my brother puppies and me home to her master's wigwam.

I forgot all about it when I was telling about my earliest days, but now that the sight of the cows has brought it up, I will here describe what we saw, and what happened.

It was one day when my little brothers and myself were playing around our goose-nest home. Then there came quite near us some great big creatures with great flat horns.

When we saw them we were very much alarmed, and hurried back into our nest. We were so frightened by such enormous creatures, that we yelped and howled as loud as we could.

As soon as our mother came near, she saw what it was that was frightening us.

Instead of being frightened also, our brave mother at once began calling the other dogs, and

then away they rushed after these great animals that were called moose.

So now, as I looked at these great cows, I thought of the moose. But the cows looked very much nicer. Their eyes were gentle looking and not like those of an old moose bull that came roaring through the woods, and dashed by quite close to our nest, and then on and away to a place where he heard another one equally angry, calling him to battle.

We saw the wicked eyes as he passed by so close to us. Then soon after we heard their bel-lowings as they fought with each other.

When our mother and the other dogs that had been away down the river looking in the shallows for jack fish, returned, we told them all about these moose, and away they ran to the place where we told them we had seen them fighting.

There they found one dead moose, but the other one had gone away.

So we all had moose-meat for several days.

But I have wandered from the stable and the cows. You must remember that I am only a dog, however.

After Kennedy had given the cows some hay and water, before he shut the stable door he said, very seriously to me,

“Now, Hector, you must never bark at, or in

any way annoy the cows, or even go very near them. You might get into trouble. They are very valuable creatures, and much prized by our master and mistress. They give them the milk that is used by themselves and the little children. At times quantities of it are sent out to the wigwams of the Indians, where there are sick people, especially to the little children."

Then Kennedy again warned me not to go near the cows, if the stable door should happen to be open, and he not around. Of course I very earnestly promised to obey his orders.

But one day, when I was loitering around with nothing to do, I thought I would go and have a look at the cows.

The door of the stable was open, which I thought was very fortunate for me. So I had no difficulty in seeing them very well.

No harm would have been done, if I had just looked at them from the door. But I forgot all of my promise to Kennedy, and so I thought I would go a little nearer. This I did, and then I went nearer still, until I was close enough to touch with my nose, one of the hind legs of one of the cows.

What happened then, I hardly knew. But some of the other dogs who had been near enough to see what did occur, so laughed and grinned in dog-fashion, that they could hardly describe what

they had seen. But anyway they said that when that cow kicked me, I flew out of that door much faster than I went in.

I have never gone near a cow's hind feet since that day.

But I have wandered far away from the questions I had asked about the different kinds of work in which my master's dogs were employed.

I have already referred to those that drew home the wood and the hay.

One night, as we lay snuggled up in the hay, after we had had our nice supper of white fish, a very friendly dog that was near me, told me about the way in which these fine fish on which our master fed us, were obtained and brought home.

He said that thousands of them were caught in nets in the early winter, and as they quickly froze, they were hung up on high stages above the reach of the prowling gray wolves, and other savage animals.

These fisheries, as they are called, are about twenty miles away, and so it was the work of several trains of the dogs, under the guidance of their drivers, to drag home great loads of these fish, as they were needed. This, he told me, was not unpleasant work, as the route was on the frozen lake and river, and so each sled often brought home a load of a thousand weight of fish.

The most important work which our master's dogs had to do was yet to be told me. Indeed, it was some time before, in my stupidity, I was able to get any correct idea of it. And, indeed, it was not until long after this, when I was permitted to be one of the actors in this most important work in which we dogs were ever employed, that I realized what it meant.

Some days after I had been so very happily introduced among these splendid dogs, I noticed that there was a good deal of earnest though quiet excitement among them, about some long journey that was to be made.

As abundance of wood and fish and hay had been dragged home nearly all the heavy work had ceased. Some short trips were as usual occasionally made, as when the master in his cariole, sometimes alone, and often with the family, went over to the trading post, to visit the gentlemen and their families, there residing.

Then frequently our loved mistress would have her own cariole, with her splendid train of dogs, prepared for her, and then away she would be driven by Kennedy to various Indian wigwams, some, many miles away, to visit the sick people and to carry food or medicine or warm clothing to the needy ones. Thus, with the exception of these and other short trips, the work for the dogs almost entirely ceased.

What seemed about the strangest thing about it, was the fact that now that the work was so light, the supply of food for the dogs was not cut down, as it had always been among the Indians, but it was, if possible, increased.

Even two meals a day were sometimes now served out, and we were encouraged to eat all we could.

Sometimes the master would come with Martin or Tom Grieve or others of his favorite dog-drivers, and they would call all the dogs around them, young and old, and would have many a jolly romp and play.

I was very much pleased when they would look at me kindly, and say :

“ See how the noble fellow is improving ! ”

“ His ears are nearly healed, and the welts on his sides are gone. He will yet make a splendid sleigh-dog, but we will let him have plenty of time to grow stronger, and to forget how shamefully he was treated.”

Little by little, I learned that the master, with four Indians, one of whom was called the guide, with sixteen of the best dogs, four to each sled, was soon to start on a long journey through the woods and over great frozen lakes, to visit some bands of Indians, who were not only cruel to their dogs, but also to their old people, and even to their wives and girls.

When in my ignorance, I asked : "Has any good ever come to such cruel, wicked people, as the result of such long and dangerous journeys in the bitter cold?" the listening old dogs grinned even unto laughter, and all of them seemed to desire to be the first to answer me.

"Yes, indeed, and because many have listened to what good white men, who have undertaken these long journeys, have said to them, not only has it been better for the women and aged people, but hundreds of dogs are now being as well treated as we are here."

So I earnestly hoped when I heard this, that all Indians, and even half-breeds, who had been cruel to me and my brothers and other dogs, would hear what there was to be said, and become kind and gentle to all, even like these about whom I now heard.

As I was full of curiosity, for a dog, I asked many questions of different dogs.

Voyageur did not want to be bothered with me, and Koonah, the mischievous one, told me all sorts of absurd things, which at first I was silly enough to believe, and so I was made the laughing stock of the other dogs who said : "Wait a while, and you will find out what a tease and practical joker Koonah is."

I observed, with great interest, the preparations which were going on, and I found out from

overhearing bits of dog-talk, that most of the dogs were eager to go, and yet they were anxious to find out in which train they were to be placed, and who was to be their driver.

I soon found out that what were considered the two places of honor among the dogs of the kennels, were the two vacant places in the master's train. The other two dogs were always the master's household companions, the great powerful Jack, and beautiful Cuffy. Jack was the master's dog and was always with him when possible, while Cuffy was our loved mistress's special friend and attendant. These two splendid dogs were constant companions and very fond of each other, and unhappy when separated. Yet Cuffy at times most provokingly tyrannized over Jack. He took all of her teasings with the greatest good nature. He saw it pleased her so to act, and as it did not hurt him very much, why he just put up with it because she was a lady dog, and would have had her way anyway, while he was a most gentlemanly dog and very patient.

So as the time drew near for starting, the interest in the question—which two dogs shall have the honor of completing the master's train—very much increased.

VI

ACCEPTED AS PLAYMATE

WE soon found out that our master had selected Voyageur as the leader of his train. This seemed very strange to me, as he was such a queer, unsociable dog. Then he had only one eye. He was the first dog in the kennels that savagely bit me, and that was because I came up to him quickly one day on his blind side, and in my puppy foolishness began fooling with him. I found out that day that that blind side of his was his sensitive place, and so did many other dogs.

Voyageur was, when out of harness, about the ugliest looking dog in the whole pack. He had long thin legs and a long round body. His color was a dirty white, with a few reddish spots in the wrong places. He was the only dog in my master's kennels to whom I had taken a thorough dislike. Even Koonah, the young mischief, was a perfect beauty, and we could not help but admire him. But Voyageur was unattractive and so cold and distant. He seemed to try to keep aloof from the rest of the dogs, and it often ap-

peared as though he was with his one good eye—and it was a brilliant one—ever guarding his blind side against impertinent intruders.

It was not long before I found out what a stupid young dog I was, and how utterly incompetent to judge my betters. This Voyageur, whom I had almost despised, I soon found out was the most valuable dog in the kennels, and stood next to Jack and Cuffy, who lived with the master in the house, the most honored dog in his regard.

He was the matchless, untiring leader in whose sagacity and almost unerring instinct, even old veteran guides trusted so implicitly, that when it came to deciding in the crisis of a fearful blizzard, or a whirling blinding snow-storm, which was the safest course to pursue, they always left the choice of route to wise old Voyageur, and the result always showed that they had done the wisest thing.

But here I was, a silly young dog, daring to question even my master's wisdom in selecting as the leader of his splendid train, such a dog as ugly one-eyed old Voyageur, when if the truth were told, I was not deserving of the honor of carrying to him his supper of white fish.

It is the van in the storm, not the nest in the kennels, that shows the finest dog.

Cæsar was the other dog selected to complete

the master's train. The reason of his selection, I found out little by little, was, that his reputation was under a cloud, and that the kind master was giving him this place that he might have a chance to regain his character as an honorable dog, which he had nearly forfeited.

The rumor was, and unfortunately it was found to be true, that on one of the last long journeys of several days, where the loads were heavy, and the trail very hard, Cæsar had been detected in shirking his share of the work, and what was more, of pretending, when in the harness with the other three dogs, of doing a great deal of the pulling, when in reality he was hardly doing anything, and so the other dogs were about doing it all.

Some of the other big dogs that had never been guilty of such meanness, and who wanted the place, were quite annoyed and inclined to be sulky when they found out that Cæsar, the shirk, had been selected. However, they soon got over their pet. They knew that the master's eye would be upon Cæsar, and woe to him if he tried any such tricks again. Then as they thought it over more and more, they felt more kindly about it, and said: "Well, Cæsar was always a good dog, and this was his first offense of the kind, and the indulgent master is giving him a chance to redeem him-

self. So it is all right and we are glad he has got the place."

Cæsar hardly knew whether to be ashamed or proud of the honor of thus being selected, especially as it was the good master who had detected him in his selfishly shirking his share of the work, and now had thus honored him. However, after thinking it over, he had dog-sense to see that the position was given to him as a chance to redeem his badly shattered reputation, and he resolved to do his level best to get into his master's confidence. And he won it all right.

The next two or three days were full of novelty and excitement to me. As I look back upon them now, I fear that in my desire to see and know everything possible, I was often in the way, and severely tried the patience of both men and dogs.

The morning of the day for the commencement of the long journey at length arrived.

It was a bitterly cold day, and I felt sorry for the dogs that had to go. Still they did not seem to mind it, but were eager to be off.

The stars were still shining, for it was some hours before sunrise. The sleds had been packed the day before, and all other preparations possible, fully made.

While the master and his guide and the Indian drivers were having their warm breakfast in the

mission house, other Indians were harnessing up the dogs, and fastening them to the different sleds, which were all heavily loaded. Although I was but a young dog, I was proud to belong to such a crowd of splendid animals.

Although they had had no breakfast, yet they were now full of excitement, and showed by barkings and jumping in their traces, that they were eager to begin the long journey.

I am only a dog, but I could not but notice that in spite of the bitter cold of that early morning, our kind mistress, well wrapped up in furs, came out to say "good-bye" to all, and to see the party off. She not only went to each train, and shook hands with the drivers, and said that she would look well after their families in their absence, and see that they had everything which was needed, but she also stooped and patted each dog in the different trains, calling them each by name.

Then the guide came out, and lifting off his cap as he shook hands with the dear mistress he said:

"I will do my very best to bring the master safely home again."

"Thank you, Tom," she replied. "I know you will do your very best. May God bless you and be the Guide of you all."

In the meantime the master had come out, and

was standing near to his dog-sled, which was called a cariole. It was so arranged that when the roads would permit, he could ride in it. Here he remained for a little time while many Indians came and said "Good-bye" to him.

He had for all of them some kindly words of cheer, but it was easy to see that many of them were sorry to have him go off on that long cold journey.

Then the brave mistress, who with her little ones, was to be left alone for six weeks, went up to our master to say her words of farewell.

When he put his arm around her neck, and drew her face to his, . . . well, the water in my eyes just then froze, and before I could rub it out, and again see clearly, the good mistress had turned towards the house. Then the master's voice rang out: "All right, Tom."

For these words Tom had now been eagerly waiting, and so the instant he heard them, he was off.

"Marche! Marche!" shouted every driver, and as the eager dogs sprang to their work, the heavy sleds creaked in the cold snow, and then one after another of them glided off on the icy trail.

And now for the first time I saw the real Voyageur.

As I looked at him, I could hardly believe my own eyes, and I could not help asking myself

the question: "Is that the same ugly, slouching, sulky old fellow that kept himself so coldly aloof from us all in the kennels?"

Yes! it is really Voyageur, but marvelously transformed. He is all alertness now. His head is up: his one brilliant eye is fairly blazing with excitement. His hard muscles, as he so strains upon his collar, stand out clear and distinct. His round body, with its perfect chest, reveals his staying powers. His not very handsome tail is now gracefully carried, and at times like the rest of his body, fairly quivers with excitement.

This is the real Voyageur; and as we thus see him, so full of life and energy, with his traces never slack, we see one of the finest and most honored dogs that ever wore a collar or faced a blizzard storm.

I felt very lonely after these sixteen dogs had left us. It is true that there were several dogs left, and among them Rover and Koonah. But I am afraid that I was a conceited young dog, and so I had tried to associate with the best, and now I missed them.

Later on in the day I presumed to follow Kennedy up to the door of the mission house, and there I hung about while he was busily engaged in carrying in wood and water.

While I was near the door, I overheard the kind mistress say:

“Well, Kennedy, it was a cold day for the master with his men to begin such a long journey.”

“Yes, ma’m,” replied the old Indian. “It was one of the coldest mornings we have had this winter.”

“What makes me think that it must have been at least fifty below zero,” said the mistress, “was that early in the morning I heard Sam Stocking’s laugh from the fort, and that you know is over two miles away.”

I, only a young dog in the kennels, was very lonely for the dogs that were away. How much worse it must have been for the mistress and the little ones in the mission house, for I heard her once say, that they had now been gone for six weeks, and she had not as yet heard one word of how they were getting along.

I was allowed any amount of liberty during these weeks, and as I moved around I was able to pick up a good deal of information.

At the mission house I had early discovered that there were two bonny little white children, and I learned from Kennedy that now they very much missed Jack and Cuffy the great house-dogs with whom they used to play so much.

One day Kennedy was, for him, a quiet old Indian, quite excited, and he said to me:

“Do you know, young doggie, that the little

boy you have often seen at the mission house, has been pleading with his mother, our kind mistress, to let him have you to play with in the house, and if he likes you, and you behave yourself, you perhaps will yet be called one of his own dogs, for his father, our master, has promised him a train of dogs, as soon as he is big enough to drive them."

This was wonderful news to me, and although I could not get it all into my young foolish head, yet I did understand that it meant good news for me.

So I frisked and romped around and barked for very joy, even if I did not much understand the reason why.

Old Rover came out of his kennel, and wanted to know what all the fuss was about. When told as much as I was able to tell him, he congratulated me, and said he hoped that I had dog-sense enough to behave myself, and know my place. Then Koonah, who had been sulking in the kennel, and full of indignation that he had not been allowed to go off with the master's train, came trotting up with ears erect and his handsome tail over his back, and in his saucy way, asked why it was that I was giving such a display of canine foolishness.

Strange to say, when he heard that there was a possibility of my being promoted from the

kennels to the kitchen, and thus become one of the pet dogs of the little master, Koonna lost all interest in the matter, and with a contemptuous toss of his head, retired at once to the kennels, and there in the darkest corner half-buried himself in the hay and pretended to go to sleep.

I was very much surprised at this strange conduct on the part of Koonna. I had had to put up with so much of his banter and mischief already, that now I had expected that I would be the subject of a lot of his raillery and sarcasm. Some time later, Rover, who had seen the whole affair, and had been amused by it, told me the reason why Koonna had thus acted.

It seems that Koonna had once had a capital place in the kitchen, and was petted and admired by every one on account of his beauty and his clever ways.

But the trouble with Koonna was, he was an incorrigible thief, and no matter how well-fed and kindly treated, he would steal whenever he could get a chance. Very queer were some of his stealings, for they were of things that he could not possibly eat. At first he was only laughed at, but at length the matter became so serious, that it had to be reported to the master.

The master was very indulgent, and by kindness hoped to break him of his weakness, but it was impossible. Severe measures were then

tried, and as they also failed, Koona was banished from his warm place in the kitchen, and sent in disgrace to the kennels.

So now, while he tries to appear as though he does not care, and often in his pert cocky way says: "I don't care;" we all know better, for he has shown that he feels his disgrace most decidedly just now.

When I heard this in my youthful stupidity, I went back into the kennel where Koona lay, and tried to sympathize with him, but I only got a first-class thrashing for my pains.

Dear me! dog-nature is so hard to understand, even by dogs. So it is no wonder our masters do not always understand us.

I have also learned that it is sometimes well to keep even our condolences, as well as our advice, to ourselves, until they are wanted.

Dear old Rover, when I told him that Koona had given me such a mauling, he gave me a thorough looking over, and said I was none the worse for the shaking. He then gave me a few rules for my guidance, if I should have the great honor of being allowed to take the place in the mission house from which Koona had been expelled.

Dear old Rover, very seldom had he been in the mission house, unless when as the dog-doctor he had been sent for to heal an ugly wound or two on Jack or Cuffy's shoulders, which they

could not reach with their tongues. Clever as those two great dogs were, they never seemed to get the knack of in this way helping each other.

Still what Rover said to me was wise and proper. He warned me never to go in the house with dirty feet. If I did, I would very quickly be bundled out.

Then he warned me never to touch any article of food that was not specially given to me. He was also very earnest in his warnings when he told me that I was never under any circumstances or provocation to growl at the little children with whom I would be taken to romp and play. But I must be very gentle with them, and quickly as possible learn to understand what they said or wanted me to do, and then be prompt to obey.

Kennedy then took me soon after I had had this advice from dear old Rover, away to his house, and there before the fire in a big tub, he gave me such a scrubbing with hot water and soft soap. Then he soused me in water, making it colder and colder. After this he rubbed me as dry as he could, keeping me close to the fire. He then spread out a large buffalo robe near the fire, and told me I was to stay there in his warm house until the next morning.

When he brought me my supper of white fish, I wanted to go outside to eat it, but this he would

not permit, as he said I might catch cold after such a hot bath.

The next morning he almost tired me out, as he spent so much time in combing and brushing me from my nose to the tip of my tail of heavy wavy hair.

Indeed, he had hardly finished before we heard the sharp voice of old Mary the nurse saying :

“Astum pashu atim !” (Come with that dog.)

Old Mary the nurse, was a queer-looking little, old woman with a crooked back and a very sharp tongue when she was annoyed. Her wonderful love for the little children of the mission home caused her master and mistress to forget her defects. And so now in her solicitude for these little ones, over whom she watched with such untiring devotion, she was here to see, and carefully examine the dog that it was proposed to admit to the society of her loved little charges.

Speaking rather sharply to Kennedy, who had me in charge, her first question was :

“Is he a clean dog ?”

This was an important question from Mary's standpoint, as it was her work and delight to keep the children clothed in garments of soft deer-skin, beautifully white and tastefully ornamented with silk and bead-work.

For answer Kennedy, who had so thoroughly cared for me, asked her to part my furry coat and

see how clean and pink was the skin underneath.

The investigation that followed proved entirely satisfactory, even to the critical Mary. Then she began putting her second question:

“Is he ——” But Mary got no further with her question, for here the door flew open, and in there bounded the two sweetest, happiest children I ever saw.

Fearlessly they threw their arms about me, and pressing their little heads against my furry coat, they said:

“Oh, he is a beautiful doggie, and we are sure he will love us, and we will love him, and we will have great fun with him, as we often have with Jack and Cuffy.”

Who can explain the mystery of love? Even that of a dog.

In that moment my love went out to those little children—that little boy and girl—and for them I felt that if it were necessary, I would gladly die.

VII

CONQUERED BY LOVE

THUS began the happiest experiences of my dog-life. During several hours of the day, the children and I were inseparable companions.

Jack and Cuffy, their usual playfellows, were, as I have already mentioned, away with the master on one of his many long winter journeys. So I had the joy of having the children all to myself.

The kind mistress very naturally questioned Kennedy a good deal about me, and also gave me a thorough examination herself. She did not consider it beneath her notice to study the peculiarities of the various dogs which in those days were used at that northern mission field.

She was also, as I soon discovered, a skilful dog-driver, and we dogs found out that when her cheery voice was in command, as we sped over the icy lake, or well-polished trail, we were expected to do our very best, for she dearly loved the excitement of rapid traveling in that clear, frosty air. But she was never known to use the whip, and somehow or other, although we dogs

soon found this out, there was not one of us that would think of doing anything else than his very best when he knew that the only thing that was urging him on was the wish of this loved mistress.

The blizzard storms were raging outside for the first few days after I was admitted into the society of these little children. The result was, we had to have our romps and plays in the large kitchen, where, in the great iron stove, in the centre of the room, there was kept a roaring fire which made the place warm and comfortable.

Mary, the queer old nurse with her sharp eyes and warning words to me, if she thought at times I was a little too rough in my gambols, was always with us.

Although she ever seemed busy with her fingers, working at some beautiful bead-work or silk or porcupine quill embroidery, she was alert to notice everything that went on. She had not the slightest trouble in getting into a passion with faithful Kennedy when he filled up the capacious boxes with wood, or the barrel with water. A sarcastic word, or a sneering look from an Indian maid, would raise such a storm in her little crooked body, that the mistress had sometimes to come out and quiet it. What surprised me about her was her intense devotion and love for these two little white children. Every look in

her brilliant black eyes, and every word towards them she uttered, showed nothing but the deepest affection and intensest devotion. In her eyes, they were absolutely perfect, and never did wrong. The only time she would dare create a scene with her mistress, was when the children had to receive a slight punishment for some decided breach of discipline. Then woe even to the dog that got in Mary's way.

So, as I romped and played with Sagastao and Minnehaha, I had to keep one eye on old Mary, for she certainly had two on me.

The children had played so much with Jack and Cuffy, that they were well posted in various ways of amusing themselves with dogs indoors. And so now with me they experimented, and I am afraid that at first at least, they thought me a very stupid dog.

One of the simplest things they did, was to have old Mary hunt up for them a number of sash belts and a dog's saddle cloth. Then in these they would gaily deck me out, and thus we marched around the room.

When they found that I was happy and contented in these gay trappings, they had the man Kennedy hunt up for them a spare dog harness with its silvery jingling bells.

And now just think of it—and who can explain it—I, the dog that had so fought against the har-

ness, and had even conquered some of the best half-breed dog drivers of the Indian village, found myself in the hands of these little children and powerless to resist.

The hated collar, the sight of which used to fill me with fury when being forced over my head by cruel men, was now welcomed with pleasure when now handled by the little soft, white hands of these happy children, who vied with each other, as laughingly they tugged and pushed the collar into its place over my head.

Even the memory of my wrongs was then forgotten, and so in spite of the dreadful past, I here found myself holding down my head to the children, and doing all I could to assist them as much as possible in getting this rather tight collar in its place.

As I am only a dog, of course I cannot tell why all the fight and revengeful feelings had gone out of me, but here I was, the dog that had resisted so many times so obstinately, and had continued unconquered by stalwart men, now completely subdued and conquered by these little children.

Oh, men and women, if you only knew the power there is in love and kindness and sympathy in your dealings with us poor dumb creatures, who so often mourn that we cannot talk your language and thus explain these things to



"I FOUND MYSELF . . . PROMPTLY OBEYING MY LITTLE MASTER"

you, you would deal with us more patiently, and in return, our loyalty and devotion as well as service to you would be so increased, that even to die for you, or in your cause, would be to us a delight.

With shouts of triumph at their success, when the children had succeeded in completely harnessing me up, they at once proceeded to put me to work.

As the kitchen floor was found to be unsuitable even for a narrow sled, after various expedients, such as trying boxes and over-turned chairs, and finding them failures, the happy suggestion of Minnehaha was carried out, and amidst the laughter of herself and Sagastao, the traces of my harness were fastened to the front of her home-made carriage. This proved a great success. And so with Minnehaha in it, and Sagastao as driver, I found myself with willing alacrity and even eagerness, to understand, promptly obeying my little master as he called out :

“Marche!” (Go.)

And then “Chaw” (right) or “Yee” (left), as he wanted me to go in different directions in the capacious kitchen.

Thus, without hardly knowing how it came about, I found myself conquered, and that without a cross word, or the sight of a whip.

Of course the story of my surrender to the

children was soon known in the village, and I heard that there was much talk about it.

Some were incredulous, and said: "Oh, that is only a little play with the children in the house. Wait until he is tried on the ice, or on the trail, and you will see that he is as obstinate as ever."

As the wild stormy weather continued for some time, there was nothing for it but to be content to stay indoors. The children, especially Sagastao, chafed under this, for he was a hardy lad, and loved to be out in the bracing air.

So we had great times in that big kitchen, although some of the things those children asked me to do, and in which they succeeded, seemed very odd to me. One was, that I should stand up, and then even walk on two legs, when I had four good ones. Another thing was, that when they asked me to stand up, and they then put a piece of pemmican, which I dearly loved, on my nose, they kept me standing there very still with that sweet morsel, until they said: "One! two! three!" Then I was allowed to toss it up and eat it.

Old Mary, and even the kind mistress, came at the children's urgings, and joined in some of the sports, and strange to say there was one sport in which I easily excelled them all. And that one was: "Hunt the slipper."

It made no matter to me whose slipper it was. All I wanted, was just to have one smell of it before the game began. Then, no matter whether it was hid under the corner of a carpet or rug or down under the wood in the box, or up behind a picture, it made no difference to me, I could find it first almost every time. This was of course a mystery to the children, and also to me.

The good mother explained it to the children, by telling them that dogs had in a more or less degree, the power of scent or smell so largely developed, that they could very easily by it find anything they desired, as they had seen me do.

She also explained, that by it a dog could find his master or his home, and a hunting-dog the game, and the bloodhound the criminal he was tracing up. It was indeed a great surprise when they heard that to many dogs his powers of scent were more to him than his eyes or ears.

Since that day when there dawned upon me, a young foolish dog, the knowledge that I had a sense or gift, call it what you may, that no man or woman had, I have often wondered why it should be, that we creatures thus gifted, even if we are defective in other ways, should be called mere brutes, and doomed to utter and complete extinction, while our masters, defective where we are gifted, but having as we also have, the power of intense and undying love, should alone

have immortality in wider and grander surroundings. Surely it cannot be. That which is within us dumb creatures, call it spirit, if you will not let us call it soul, which can be loyal and true, and can trust and love even unto death, is surely not to be annihilated or even dissipated in immensity.

But from these cogitations we must get back to realities.

The blizzards and storms having spent their fury, and passed away, there followed some very delightful bright wintry weather.

It was as it nearly always is in such high latitudes, very cold, but the sun was bright and the air was dry and invigorating.

The children, especially Sagastao, had become weary of the confinement to the house, and so persuaded the mother to let old Mary wrap them up well in their fur and leather garments, and go out for a run and play on the frozen lake just in front of the home.

I was delighted when I found out that I was expected to accompany them.

For a time, old Rover and Koona joined us, but they soon returned to their kennel. Then soon, the little sweet Minnehaha felt the cold to be too severe, and she went back to the house, leaving my little master and myself alone to our sports.

Suddenly stopping on the ice, Sagastao turned to me and said :

“ See here, Hector, I don't see why you cannot as well draw me, out here on a sled, as you can draw Minnehaha in her little carriage in the house.”

With the suggestion of the thought in his mind, came the resolve to carry it into action. And so with me at his heels, he hurried over to the little house of Kennedy, and solicited the help of that good-natured kindly man to aid him in carrying out his resolve.

Kennedy at first was inclined to demur, declaring that there was no use in trying to harness to a sled such a dog as I was, that had conquered the most experienced dog-trainers.

As the man went on painting my character in the darkest colors to my little master, of course I felt very much humiliated, but great indeed was my joy when I found that I had a friend in Sagastao, who stoutly answered Kennedy by saying that the cruel men who had so beaten me, had, as he had heard his father say, not understood me, and that he was sure that all I asked for was kindness.

Anyway, he was going to try and see if that was not the right way.

“ And now, Kennedy,” he added, “ I am going to take Hector in the house, and harness him,

and while I am gone be quick and get out for me one of the lightest of the birchwood sleds."

And Kennedy, bewildered and perplexed though he was, obeyed. For whoever saw any of those Indians refuse any request made by one of those little white children.

Then turning to me, my little master shouted: "Astum (come), Hector," and away we hurried to the house. The harness was speedily found, and no dog ever tried harder than I did to speedily get my head in the collar. The saddle-cloth was quickly adjusted, and the bellyband buckled, and then while Mary held open the kitchen door, I trotted out to the music of the little silvery bells, while my master proudly hung on to the traces.

Kennedy was perfectly amazed, as he stood a little distance away watching us. But a shout from Sagastao for the sled aroused him, and with a sudden push, he sent it sliding over the icy ground to the spot where my young master and I were standing.

At first, the sight of that sled thus skimming over the ice and snow towards me made me shiver and tremble. I could not at once forget the terrible battles I had had with cruel men, and how I had hated the sight of these things.

But my little master, who had seen me trembling, spoke kindly to me, and when I saw that he understood, I shook off my terror, and even

if it was at first a good deal of an effort, I barked in his face as joyously as I could, to show that I trusted him, and was eager to do everything for him that I could.

Then I was more than ever resolved to do my very best, for when I turned my head towards one of the windows of the house, there I saw the bright, expectant, happy faces of the mistress and Minnehaha, and even that of old Mary. Kennedy, silent and half-alarmed, still stood at some distance, glumly looking on.

Sagastao led me to the front of the sled, and I stood perfectly still while he fastened in the loops of the sled the ends of the traces of my harness.

All the time my little master was getting things in order he kept saying kind words to me, and hoped that I would show them all that when kindly treated, I could really be a good dog.

Of course, I could not understand all he said, but the friendly and nice way in which he talked, was so different from the harsh words of the cruel men, that I was really eager to show him that I would do my very best to please him.

But alas! I was too eager to show off. For when my little master stood up on the sled, and said :

“Now, Hector, Marche!” I, in pure delight, dashed off with such eagerness, that I jerked the sled from under him, and down he fell on his

back. His feet flew up in the air, while his head hit the hard icy ground with such force that he afterwards said that he saw stars.

But that seemed a queer remark to me, as it was bright sunshine, and I always thought that the stars were only seen at night.

Dear little Minnehaha at the window, when she saw her brother fall so hard on the ground, cried out in alarm, while fiery Mary with bitter words and armed with a club, came rushing out to inflict dire punishment on me.

But ere she could reach me, for, ashamed of what I had done, I had quickly turned round, and returned to my young master, the sturdy little fellow threw himself in front of the angry little woman, and calling her by her pet name, Sakehow, he asked her to leave him alone with his dog.

As suddenly as her passion had arisen, so suddenly did it cool down at that magic word to her, and turning around she, without another word, reentered the house.

Adjusting his fur cap, which had fortunately in a measure broken the force of his fall on the ice, my little master said, as he patted me:

“It is all right, Hector. It was my fault. I should have sat down on the sled, for I did not know that you were so eager to be off.”

Then, turning the sled around, he firmly seated

himself on it, and gripping hold of the deerskin loops at the side, he cheerfully shouted out to me:

“Now, Hector, Marche, and do your very best to throw me off.”

Humiliated at having so suddenly upset him before, I now started off rather slowly this time. But there was no occasion for my caution now. So pluckily did he hold on, that all my fears for him were soon gone, and in response to his cheery calls I galloped as hard as I could wherever he desired on the icy trail and the frozen lake.

When he had had enough of this exciting sport, he called me into the home trail, and as fast as I could run, I brought him to the door of the house.

There, to our surprise, we found a number of the Indians of the village, who had been summoned by Kennedy, to see how the once stubborn dog, that they had about decided was only fit to be cooked and eaten, had been conquered by a little boy.

But while I thought I knew a little about what they were thinking, I only saw the faces of my kind mistress and Minnehaha, who, wrapping some fur garments about themselves, had come out in the cold, to greet us with loving, cheery words.

They even wanted to help my little master,

who was so proud and happy, to unharness me, but although the tip of his nose was frozen white and hard, he would not think of having it attended to until I was escorted to my buffalo-skin rug in the kitchen, and well cared for.

Thus began my career as a sleigh-dog.

Every day, when the weather was favorable, Sagastao had me out for a run. Sometimes Minnehaha, well wrapped up in fur robes, was seated carefully on the sled, and with her proud, happy brother hanging on behind her, we had many runs over the icy trails.

I did my best to save them from mishaps, but in spite of all I could do there were times when a flaw in the trail or an unnoticed piece of crystal ice would upset the narrow, cranky sled, and spill its occupants out on the ice or in the snow. But they were the hardy children of the Northland, and so these upsets only gave a zest to the outing, and added to the merriment of the hour.

VIII

A REGULAR SLEIGH-DOG

I SHALL not soon forget the day that my young master had the delight of showing me to his father as a well-trained sleigh-dog.

One forenoon, there appeared suddenly in the kitchen, Tom Grieve, the famous guide. His coming in was quiet and yet not unexpected, for, for days now the family had been on the lookout for the return of the master and his party.

Yet not one word had been heard from them for all these long six weeks, as there are no opportunities of sending letters or any word in those lonely regions.

So Tom's sudden coming was hailed by my mistress and the children with great delight. He quickly relieved their minds of any anxiety, by telling them that all were well, and that he had left them at the morning camp-fire, eating their breakfast, and that judging by the speed with which he had run, they ought to be along in a couple of hours.

While he was eating a hearty meal, which the mistress had had prepared for him, he was plied

with any number of questions by the children about their father and Jack and Cuffy.

Sagastao then called me to follow him, and, slipping out of the house, he hurried over to the house of Kennedy, and rapidly telling him the news, then said to him :

“I want you to be quick and help me to rig up Hector to a light sled, for I am resolved to go and meet my father, and show him what a splendid sleigh-dog Hector has become.”

At first, Kennedy, who was a cautious man, felt inclined to refuse, but the eagerness and enthusiasm of my young master as usual prevailed, and soon Kennedy seemed to catch the spirit, and it was not long before I was well harnessed up, and had received any amount of instructions.

We still had a little time to wait, as Kennedy said it would never do to start until, in the far distance, the trains were visible.

At length, however, the keen eyes of the Indian saw the sleds emerge from the distant forest out on to the white frozen lake, still some miles away.

Seeing that the little master was well-seated on his little sled and securely packed in his fur robes, Kennedy then turned me around, and told me to be a good doggie and obey. He was much pleased to see how steadily I started off to meet the home-coming trains and the master.

It was not long before I heard the jingling of the sleigh-bells, and then soon after we saw the trains.

These home-coming trains were traveling very fast. The sight of home was now in the eyes of the dogs, and they well knew that at yonder white mission there was food and rest for days to come.

So, in the excitement of the hour, they forgot their bruises and their bleeding feet.

My little master, seeing the speed at which they were coming, called to me to turn round, and there close at the side of the trail, along which they would come, we waited for them. But we did not have long to wait, for Voyageur was leading the master's train, and behind him were Jack and Cuffy and Cæsar.

As they were coming up, Sagastao started me, so that when they dashed up, I was able to get their pace, and thus keep my little master's sled side by side with the cariole of his father.

"Welcome home, father!" shouted my plucky little driver. "And now for a race."

Up to that moment, the father had not recognized who it was that so bundled up in furs, was here racing him in the trail. But the well-known voice revealed his identity, greatly to the father's delight.

A few loving words of greeting were ex-

changed, while the father was inclined to stop his train and take into his large cariole his darling boy, whom he was so glad to see.

But not so thought Sagastao just then. The excitement of a race with the dog he himself had broken in, against the crack trains of the mission, absorbed him, and then the home was near at hand. And so with cheery voice he urged me to do my very best while again he shouted:

“A race, father, a race!”

One thing I have learned in reference to speed in dog-traveling, is this: It makes no matter how many dogs there may be in the train, the progress made is no greater than the speed of the slowest dog.

By doing my very best, I found that I could keep alongside of Cæsar, and this happened to be the best thing possible as it enabled the father to put out his fur-clad hand and steady the sled of the lad which on the icy trail was flying along beside his heavier and steadier cariole.

Thus on and on we ran in glad excitement over the now wide, icy trail. Close behind us were the other trains, the dogs of which had caught the glamour of the home coming and were wild to be there.

Yet amidst all the noise of the jingling bells and shouts of drivers, my little master was able to tell his father with joyous shouts, how well he

had succeeded with me, and what a good, faithful dog I now was.

My quick ear caught these pleasant words of commendation, and my happiness was complete, when on our reaching the mission house together, the master, as he stepped out of his cariole, after kissing Sagastao, came and petted me and said: "I knew it was in you, Hector, and felt sure that you would make a splendid dog if kindly and decently handled. I am glad I was not mistaken."

So elated was I that I had succeeded in keeping alongside of Cæsar and thus arriving at the same time as the master's train, that I am afraid that I strutted around a good deal like the young foolish dog that I was.

This silly conduct on my part, in the presence of these splendid dogs that had just finished a journey of hundreds of miles, was simply ridiculous, yet none of the fine dogs seemed to notice it.

But it was more than Koonna could stand. He was still in a bad humor for not having been allowed to go on this journey just ended, and also vexed that I had supplanted him in the affections of the young master, and so when he saw me so strutting around, he savagely pitched into me and tried to give me a good thrashing. Fortunately for me, my little master was not far

off with Jack and Cuffy. Seeing Koona thus viciously assailing me, he shouted out :

“ Jack ! Jack ! make Koona behave himself.”

With a rush Jack caught Koona by the back of his neck, and jerking him away from me, he threw him into a snowdrift with such suddenness, that Koona was so frightened that as speedily as possible, he struggled out of the snow, and skulking off to the kennels, was not seen again until feeding time.

Old Rover, the dog-doctor, was now busy going from one dog to another, cleaning with his tongue their sore shoulders and bleeding feet. When he saw Koona attack me, he came quite near to us, and there sitting down on his hind legs, coolly watched the row, without the slightest idea of interfering.

A queer dog was old Rover. He was never known to fight himself, or even to interfere in the quarrels of other dogs. His sole work was to dress the wounds of the combatants after the fight was over.

So here he quietly looked on while Koona tried to master me, and then he manifested the same indifference when Jack interfered.

But the instant Jack had dragged Koona away, Rover was about and active. With a bound he was close beside me, and with so much eagerness did he begin nosing around my neck

and throat, that at first I thought I was in for another battle.

Grand old dog! He was just carefully examining me to see if the sharp teeth of Koonah had cut into me, and left any wounds that he might cure with that tongue of his, which was his whole stock in trade.

A careful investigation showed him that my thick coating of hair had saved me from serious injury, and so Rover in his good-natured way congratulated me on escaping so easily and then went back to the sore and wounded dogs of the trains that had just returned, several of which much needed his kindly skilful attention.

Yet I could not but notice that while there were several dogs that really needed the assistance which Rover could give, as their wounds were where they could not reach them themselves, especially those caused by the collars, yet there were other dogs who could easily have attended to their own wounds, but did not, if they could only induce old Rover to do the work for them.

It looked very odd to me, a dog, to see some great old dogs following him around and whining to win his attention, and then holding out their sore feet for Rover to lick them well again, when they should have done the work themselves.

With the return of Jack and Cuffy, the two

dogs that lived in the mission house with the family, and thus in a measure kept apart from the rest of the dogs I did not see so much now of my little master. But nearly every day he came out to see me, and as he was generally accompanied by Jack and Cuffy, he let them know that we were to be very good friends. I could not help but notice, however, that when Jack was around, he was not so free and demonstrative in his friendship, as when we were alone. For a time I could not make this out. However, Koonah one day enlightened me, by abruptly asking me what I thought a very queer question. It was: "Has Jack yet given you a thrashing?"

I quickly said: "No," and wanted to know why he asked such a question. With a grin he replied:

"Jack allows no rivals in his young master's friendship. When I was in favor, and the children made a great fuss over me, I of course felt my importance, and acted accordingly. But Jack met me alone one day, and gave me such a thrashing that I have taken care to give him no good reason to have to repeat it."

Why Koonah should have thus put me on my guard, I could not explain, but I think that it was because he felt ashamed of himself for that last needless attack upon me.

Thus have I found that even the worst dogs have some good qualities about them.

This warning of Koona's came none too soon, as I soon found out, and indeed a number of the dogs had already been wondering why Jack had not already given me a thrashing, seeing that such a fuss was made over me.

From this I learned another lesson about dogs, and that was, that even the best of them had their faults. For here was the great Jack with all his splendid qualities, yet at times subject to fits of jealousy.

So it is no wonder that we observant dogs sometimes see what looks very much like this spirit of jealousy among human beings, when it can so enter into the hearts even of dogs.

Thus was I learning things as the days went by.

As the time passed on, and I was so well treated I overheard my master say that I had really developed into a first class dog. So I was put in a train with other dogs and given some light work to do, and then sent off on some short trips.

As I was most kindly treated, I much enjoyed the work and was happier those days I was busy, than when I was idle.

I soon became so accustomed to the work that I was, with my comrades, sent off to the fisheries

for loads of the frozen white fish. Some days I helped in hauling wood from the distant forest, and a couple of times I went with many others, for loads of hay for the cows.

My greatest delight, however, was when the master would have me harnessed up in his own train, with Voyageur, Jack and Cuffy. Then with the master, mistress and children well wrapped up in the fur robes of the cariole, we would rapidly travel for miles and miles over the icy trails.

No whips were ever carried on those happy excursions, for they were never needed. Indeed, it was not long before, even with my poor dog-sense, that I discovered that what my master and mistress said or thought was :

“We will go out on no pleasure excursion except with dogs that enjoy the run as much as we do ourselves.”

But as I was still a young dog, I was not required to take part in continuous heavy work. The master, who was wise as well as kind, was more than once heard to say that many a valuable dog had been ruined by being worked too hard before his strength was fully developed. So some other young dogs and myself had about as many days of rest as of work.

The little master Sagastao, who every day was becoming more clever in driving dogs, was now

ambitious to have a train that he could call his own.

At first the older people were inclined to object, and old Mary was madly against it, and declared that the little master would be killed. The importunities of Sagastao, however, at length prevailed, and so, with necessary arrangement for his safety, it was decided to make up a train that should be called his own, and be available for his use when the dogs were not needed on important work.

A clever young Indian lad called Alec, was secured to assist Sagastao in the management of the train. Alec was also to be the driver when both of the children went out, well wrapped up in fur robes, in the new beautiful cariole which had been purchased for them. He was also to be responsible for the care of the dogs, and to see that they were well fed, and in every way well looked after.

My delight was very great when I learned from my young master that he had chosen me as one of his train.

The other three dogs were selected by the master with the assistance of Grieve and Kennedy, after a good deal of testing and trials of speed. In a perfect train, the dogs should be well matched in size, endurance, and speed.

The three dogs were called Billy, Boxer,

and Buster. We were all about the same age.

Grieve the guide harnessed the four of us up together, and had several races with us. His decision regarding us was that while we would never be a train of racers, having no strain of greyhound blood in us, yet we would be a good strong train of useful dogs. Then turning to the master, he said with a bit of a laugh :

“They have been so well fed and are such a conceited lot, that I fancy each one thinks he is a little better than the others and there may be some rows among them ere each one knows his place.”

As I stood there, still in the traces, listening to these remarks of Grieve, I thought, What silly nonsense, he must surely know that I am the best dog in the train, and will be the boss.

Strange to say, I afterwards found out that the other three dogs that had also heard these same words, had thought about them just as I did. So it was evident there was trouble ahead.

Sagastao, our young master, who now called us all his own, was very proud of us.

He easily coaxed his father to have old Memotatas, the famous harness-maker, come and make a splendid new set of moose-skin harness for us.

Old Mary, who had been reconciled by seeing how the lad had set his heart on the dogs, was

now busily engaged in making most beautiful saddle-cloths for each of us four dogs. They were wonderfully ornamented with beads and silk work as only Mary's skilful hands could do it.

When Memotas brought home the harness, and they were pronounced a splendid fit by even Grieve the guide, Mary produced her beautiful saddle-cloths and fastened them on each dog with her own hands.

The little master's joy was about complete when his father produced from somewhere, sixteen sweet open silver bells, four of which Memotas speedily attached to each of our dog collars.

IX

AMBITION AND JEALOUSY

OUR little master and Alec were both very kind to us. They secured a large warm kennel for us four dogs apart from the rest. They saw that we were well fed, and watched that none of the older and more powerful dogs should steal our fish.

I am sorry to have, as a faithful dog-writer, to be obliged to say, that we four dogs had not been long together, before we began to be very jealous of each other.

How it began we hardly know. We were of different litters of puppies, and each one therefore was certain that he was better than were the others.

Of course I, Hector, had foolishly imagined that I was superior to the others. I even thought that my very name, Hector, would ensure me that respect which dogs by the common name of Billy, Boxer, or Buster, would not expect to have.

But they all grinned, and said :

“Who are you, anyway? Born in the woods, brought up in a goose-nest, and pitched out of a

wigwam, while our mothers were among our master's favorite dogs."

Thus was the conceit taken out of me, and I was thus roughly taught that there was not much in a name, especially for a dog.

We then began to make sarcastic remarks about each other, which eventually became so severe, that we had some tiffs and even fights, when neither Sagastao nor Alec were around.

Thus it went on from bad to worse, until one day Alec caught us in a most thoroughly mixed up battle among ourselves.

He, as in duty bound, at once reported it to the master. His description of it was, that it was a general scrimmage or fight of one dog after another against the other three.

This, as far as my dog-memory will allow me to recall, was quite correct. The fact was, each one of us dogs wanted to be, as Grieve the guide had predicted, the boss over the others.

So it happened in our battles, if one of us in a set-to managed to down another, the conqueror was speedily set on by the other two and tumbled over in a hurry. The result of this kind of fighting was, that after every row we had among ourselves, not one of us was allowed to consider himself better than his comrades.

The master was inclined at first to treat the matter as but the rough play of some young,

high-spirited dogs, but when some days after, Alec and Sagastao reported that there were wounds, that were more than mere scratches, on some of our heads, the master decided on immediate action that would put a stop to our ever again fighting or even quarreling among ourselves.

The plan adopted was stern and severe, but in the end it was successful.

The night had been bitterly cold, and when the morning dawned, a half-blizzard storm was raging.

We dogs, that lay so comfortably huddled in the kennel, were congratulating ourselves that Sagastao would not take us out of our warm nests that day. But something worse was to happen. While we were having an early morning nap, our kennel was thrown open, and almost before we knew what was the matter, we were all unceremoniously hauled out, and quickly harnessed up in a set of strong old working harness without a single bell upon it. Then we were speedily fastened to a heavy oak fish sled.

Two of the powerful old dog-trains were already harnessed and, like their drivers, were impatient to be off, as the cold was so intense.

Tom Grieve, the famous guide, had us in charge, and from the beginning it was evident that something more than usual was cut out for us.

Tom had a stern way with him, and a terrible voice. As our train, with the other two in the lead, dashed away, we soon found out that heavy work was to be ours for that day at least.

Tom had a great whip with a lash about fifteen feet long. As in his experienced hand it curled out, the explosion of it cracked like the report of a gun, and sounded at times as within an inch of our ears, while his great voice would make us jump and kept us alert and well up to our work.

In two hours we crossed the twenty miles of icy trail that stretched between our kennels and the place where, on high stagings above the reach of wolves and other wild animals, was *cached* away, the mission's supply of frozen white fish.

We were only allowed to rest while the drivers were busily employed in taking down and securely fastening the loads of fish which were strung in sticks of ten, on our sleds.

The Indians then, after lighting their pipes, shouted: "Marche!" to each of the trains, and the journey home was begun.

The loads were very heavy, but no mercy was shown us.

At the least sign of flagging, the stern: "Marche! Marche!" rang out from Tom, while that long whip curled dangerously near, ever ending with its ominous crack.

In three hours we were obliged to make the

twenty miles with our heavily loaded sleds. When hot and panting, we drew up in the mission yard, the master met us, and after looking us over, said enquiringly to Tom :

“ Well, do you think they will feel like fighting now ? ”

But I was only a dog, and did not understand his questions then, and my comrades were just as big fools as I was.

Tom's answer was equally puzzling to us four dogs then, but we found out its meaning later on.

His reply to the master was something like this :

“ They are high-spirited dogs, but foolish, and so they will require some hard work and perhaps a good deal of it, before they learn what all working dogs get into their heads sooner or later, that dogs that have to work together, must not waste their strength in fighting with each other. ”

This last sentence of Tom's is one of the wisest of dog-proverbs. Although up to that time I had never heard it, yet it struck me so much, that I could easily repeat it, but it was some time before either Billy, Boxer, or Buster, or myself grasped its meaning.

“ How long do you think, ” asked the master, “ will it take them to learn their lesson ? ”

“A week or ten days,” replied Tom, “of real hard work ought to be enough, if they have ordinary dog-sense, to show them the folly of wasting their strength by fighting with each other.”

But we were then still sadly destitute of that dog-sense of which Tom spoke, and showed our lack of it that very day.

“Shall we go back with them for another load of fish to-day?” asked Tom.

“No! No!” said the master. “Forty miles travel is enough for the first day, especially as twenty of it were with such heavy loads. Turn them loose in their kennels, they are surely too tired to fight much to-day.”

We were four very well-pleased dogs when we heard these words of our kind master, and so after a good roll in the dry, crisp snow, we soon cuddled down in the hay in our kennels and went to sleep.

Some time later in the day, we were suddenly aroused by what we four dogs thought was the call for supper, and so we dashed out in a hurry, for the long, heavy trip of the forenoon had given us keen appetites.

Our disgust at finding that it was a false alarm quite annoyed us, and put us in bad humor, and so when we all at once attempted to reenter the warm kennel, a row immediately began, as each

one of us wanted to get in first, and so be the farthest away from the cold, open door.

The long journey, and our disappointment about our supper had made us cross and irritable, and so before we hardly knew how it happened, we found ourselves pitching into each other with teeth and claws at a great rate.

The fight was so fast and furious, that Tom and Kennedy, followed by the master, and even little Sagastao, were soon at the kennel. With kicks and cuffs we were soon separated and sent off in different directions in disgrace.

What hurt me most was that my little master should have seen me in such a fight, and that as I passed him he had not one cheery word for me, and his troubled face told me that he was hurt and grieved at my conduct.

The master and the men gave us a thorough overhauling, and were pleased to see that none of us were seriously injured.

Then they talked over their plans, and how they should be carried out, to cure us of our jealousy and quarrelings.

“My advice,” said Tom, “is that they be made to sleep out in the snow to-night without any supper, and then started off very early in the morning, and compelled to make two journeys to the fisheries.”

Fortunately for us, no one agreed to these

stern measures: not even Kennedy. The little master was indignant at the idea, and appealing to his father, who was pondering over the matter, said that it would be a shame to treat his train so cruelly. Then he added something about what he and Minnehaha had been reading in one of their little books about "dogs delight to bark and bite, for it was their nature too."

This appeal conquered, and so, although we were ashamed and humiliated, we four dogs were allowed to return to our kennel, and in due time, much to our delight, our supper of well-warmed white fish was brought to us.

The next morning, while the stars were still shining, we were aroused by men's voices, and much to our discomfort and disgust, we were speedily brought out of our kennel by Tom, and harnessed up in that same old sled, and, with other trains, were again started off on that trail that led to the distant fisheries.

We had started so early that the sun only rose when we were at the end of our journey.

The sleds were speedily loaded, and with our faces towards home, we were driven by the loud-voiced Tom, who showed us little mercy.

There is this to be said in justice to Tom, that with all his noisy ways and almost constant flourish of his great whip, but few dogs ever felt

its sting, and those who did, never, until they richly deserved it.

We were allowed about an hour's rest at the mission while the drivers had their dinners, and then with fresh dogs in the other trains, we were started off again over the icy route that led to the fisheries.

No lagging along the route was allowed. Our loads were speedily fastened on our sleds, and then again we were quickly started off on those now weary twenty miles.

The dogs in the other trains being fresh, did not so mind it, but Billy, Boxer, Buster and myself, were about tired out, when we dragged our loads into the yard.

As Tom pulled the collars over our heads, and gave each of us a pelt with our harness to hurry our laggard movements to our kennel, he said:

“Now, go and see if you will fight with each other to-day.”

Not much. So tired and weary were we, that any place in that kennel was welcome. We just dropped down, and were soon so sound asleep, that when the call for supper came, we did not hear or heed it, and so had to be driven out of our warm nests to go and eat it.

Our little master came out and petted us, and said that he was so sorry that we were so quarrelsome, and that in such a severe way we had to be

taught that if we four dogs were ever to make a good first-class train, we must not waste our strength by quarreling with each other.

Still we were such stupid dogs that we did not yet understand.

“Do you think they have yet learned their lesson?” asked the master.

“No, indeed,” said the experienced Tom. “Such spirited dogs as they will take a lot more of hard work together before they will learn their lesson.”

“My advice is, to give them two more trips to-morrow and the next day also.” To this programme, which seemed to be so cruel, the master decidedly objected.

“All right!” said Tom, who was always loyal to the master’s wish. “But I am afraid that if you give them a good rest, it will be seen that what has been done has accomplished nothing.”

We dogs richly enjoyed the rest, and during the night and the next forenoon, were the best of friends. How the row or fight began, I am not very sure. I think it was Koonas coming in and strutting around as though he owned us all.

Now Koonas was, as I learned soon after, a great coward, and would run from any dog that bravely faced him. But he was a great braggart, and a thorough mischief maker. Nothing pleased him better than to get other dogs fighting, but he

took good care to save his own skin by keeping out of the row he himself had started.

Somehow, he had heard from the other dogs, for dogs have a language among themselves as well as other animals, about the rows and battles in our kennel between Buster, Billy, and Boxer, and myself. So he came around that afternoon to see us, and as we were still young dogs, he was very saucy and cheeky, as he generally was with youngsters.

I had never been friendly with him since the day he had pitched into me because I had supplanted him in the place in the kitchen, from which he had been kicked out for his general wickedness and thieving. Yet I felt kindly towards him for his warning words that put me on my guard against incurring the anger and jealousy of Jack.

Anyway here he was, and as we four dogs had had a good sleep and rest since our hard work, we had about recovered from our tired feeling, and were just the young fools to be each flattered by Koonna into the idea that we could thrash any other dog in the kennel.

So at it we went in grand style, and soon there was the queerest mix-up imaginable, as it was each dog for himself, against all comers.

Koonna stood in the door and howled in rare delight, and thus encouraged us on. His crisp

little "Yep! Yeps," were the calls to each one of us to go in for victory, and with all the vim imaginable, we were each doing our very best.

Abrupt, inglorious, and unconclusive did the end of the battle come.

It seems that Tom, the guide who had been given charge of this work of putting a stop to our quarreling, had seen Koona skulking around, and well knowing some of his habits, had been on the alert.

However, as things were quiet around the kennel, he had gone over to have a chat with Kennedy, when the noise of battle brought him and Kennedy out in a hurry.

Koona, who was generally so cunning that he was not easily caught in his mischief, was here so absorbed in urging us dogs on in the fight, that he did not hear the moccasin-footed Indians behind him, and so he was cleverly caught by Tom in the door of the kennel. He then and there received such a thrashing that his saucy "yeps" were changed into the most doleful howlings.

Kennedy in the meantime had thrashed us fighting dogs apart, and then he went and told the master. This tattling on us was about the meanest thing I ever knew Kennedy do.

The master came out and looked us over, and then said to Tom, whom he generally called by his second name:

“Grieve, I know you will not injure them, but do what you think best to put a stop to this wretched quarreling.”

That evening we had but one fish apiece for our suppers, and on the next day, and the next, and even the next, we had to make two journeys for fish to the distant fisheries.

I have dogmatized enough about this experience in my life, and so need say but little more, except that those dreadful three days of work made us so tired, that when at the close of the last day, Billy, Boxer, Buster and I lay there in the kennel, with our four noses close together, in our dog-language we talked it over, and as the result of our united dog-sense, we came to understand that if we had to work together, it would be best for us to save all our strength and energy, and not waste it in fierce battles with each other.

From that day we lived in peace with each other, and were ever ready to help each other.

Thus, by bitter experience, we learned our lesson and never afterwards forgot it, “That dogs that work together should never quarrel with each other.”

X

CHRISTMAS WEEK

OUR master was quick to notice that we had learned our lesson. It pleased him, for he was full of kindness, and it hurt him when, even for our good, any of his dogs had to be dealt sternly with. So now, while recognized as the special train of Sagastao, we were often employed in various kinds of light work, for our master believed that every able-bodied, healthy dog should at least earn his own white fish.

Sagastao, our little master, was delighted when Tom grimly told him that while we four dogs would likely ever be ready for a battle with outsiders, it was not likely that we would quarrel again with each other. With Alec, as our driver, Sagastao, and his little sister, and even sometimes the mother, in the beautiful new cariole, we were often driven over the different icy trails that led from the Indian village to the various different hunting grounds which lay in different directions.

When the hunters came in frequently with their furs, or for supplies, the trails were well beaten, and it was a pleasure to run along them, even if the cold was intense.

But the happy inmates of the cariole, well wrapped up in their beautiful fur robes, cared but little for the cold, and only laughed the more merrily, when on some winding place in the woods, we had a complete upset, or even struck heavily against a tree.

At times, when our route was over some great lake, they had to guard their eyes from being attacked by snow-blindness, which is caused by the brilliant reflection of the sun's rays from the spotless snowy expanse that stretched away to the distant horizon.

When the good mistress was taken on these excursions, I noticed that often heavy bundles were put in the cariole with her, and then we were generally driven by Alec to some far away Indian wigwams, into which our mistress entered, while Alec quickly followed with one or more of the bundles. And sometimes while we dogs waited, there came out the sounds of singing, and we had no trouble in recognizing that the principal voice was that of our mistress.

At first, we dogs, in our youthful ignorance, knew not what it meant, but in after years it came to us that in those days, our mistress was singing those sweet songs to comfort some poor dying old Indian, and for whose comfort the bundles of food and warm clothing had been brought.

The face of our good mistress was generally

bright, and her voice cheery, as she greeted us so kindly with a loving word for each one of us. But there were times when, as she came out of those cold birch bark wigwams, our noisy gladness for her return was hushed, for the sweet face was clouded and the eyes were full of tears. And when at times there was weeping from one whose face was generally so bright and sunny, great indeed was our perplexity and amazement.

At first, as we saw the dear mistress thus weeping as she came out of some lonely wigwam, we dogs were full of indignation, and our blood was up, and we were eager to fight for her against any one that had thus hurt or grieved one we knew to be one of our truest friends.

Then, after a time, the truth came, and it was to us poor dogs a great mystery, over which, in our dog way, we pondered, that the tears of our mistress were those of sorrow for poor sick Indians, who were in pain and suffering.

From this, we also discovered that all the trouble and pain and suffering in this world were not the sole heritage of dogs.

This revelation of troubles and sorrows came as a great surprise, and also the fact that our mistress, when she herself was well, did so sympathize with, and even weep for the poor sick Indians in their cold wigwams.

Later on, we may have more to tell about this

great mystery of suffering and death which is the common lot of men as well as dogs.

Perhaps the pleasantest of all the weeks, as well as the busiest, was the one which Sagastao and Minnehaha called "The Christmas week."

A few days before, some heavily loaded sleds had arrived from a far-away place, called Fort Garry. During the few visits which I was again allowed to make into the kitchen, I found everybody busy, and even old Mary in good humor.

"Christmas! Christmas! Christmas!" seemed to be the word I most frequently heard.

The contents of the big bundles which had arrived by the dog-trains from the south, were now being made up into smaller parcels, amidst the merriment and delight of the little children.

I think I must have heard mentioned by them the names of every sick old man or woman, and also of all the children in the Indian village, and also of those who lived up the rivers for twenty miles away. Then when the Christmas week really came, it seemed that we dogs had our harness on almost every hour from daylight to dark.

But busy as we were, Billy, Boxer, Buster and I voted that as we were remembered with so many additional dainties to our usual supper of white fish, we would be glad if Christmas week came more frequently.

It was a very cold week, yet no one seemed to think of that. The two children had things about their own way that week, and the number of times that Alec took them in their cariole, rapidly drawn by us four dogs, and packed around with bundles, from wigwam to wigwam, and home to home, we happy dogs could not begin to tell.

With the gifts of these bundles, the people were made happy, and when the day, which they call "Christmas," really arrived, everybody seemed to be saying: "Wish you a merry Christmas."

We dogs of the master were not forgotten, for that day he bought from a successful Indian hunter, a whole reindeer, and divided the whole of the venison among us. And this was given in addition to our usual supper of white fish.

And now I want to record the story of the narrow escape of Sagastao, my little master, from a terrible great northern wolf, that made most desperate attempts to kill him.

The happy Christmas times were over, and all the people had settled down to their usual work. The scores of hunters who had come in from their distant hunting-grounds for the Christmas gatherings, had nearly all returned. The master was thinking of soon taking another of his long journeys to some Indian village hundreds of miles away.

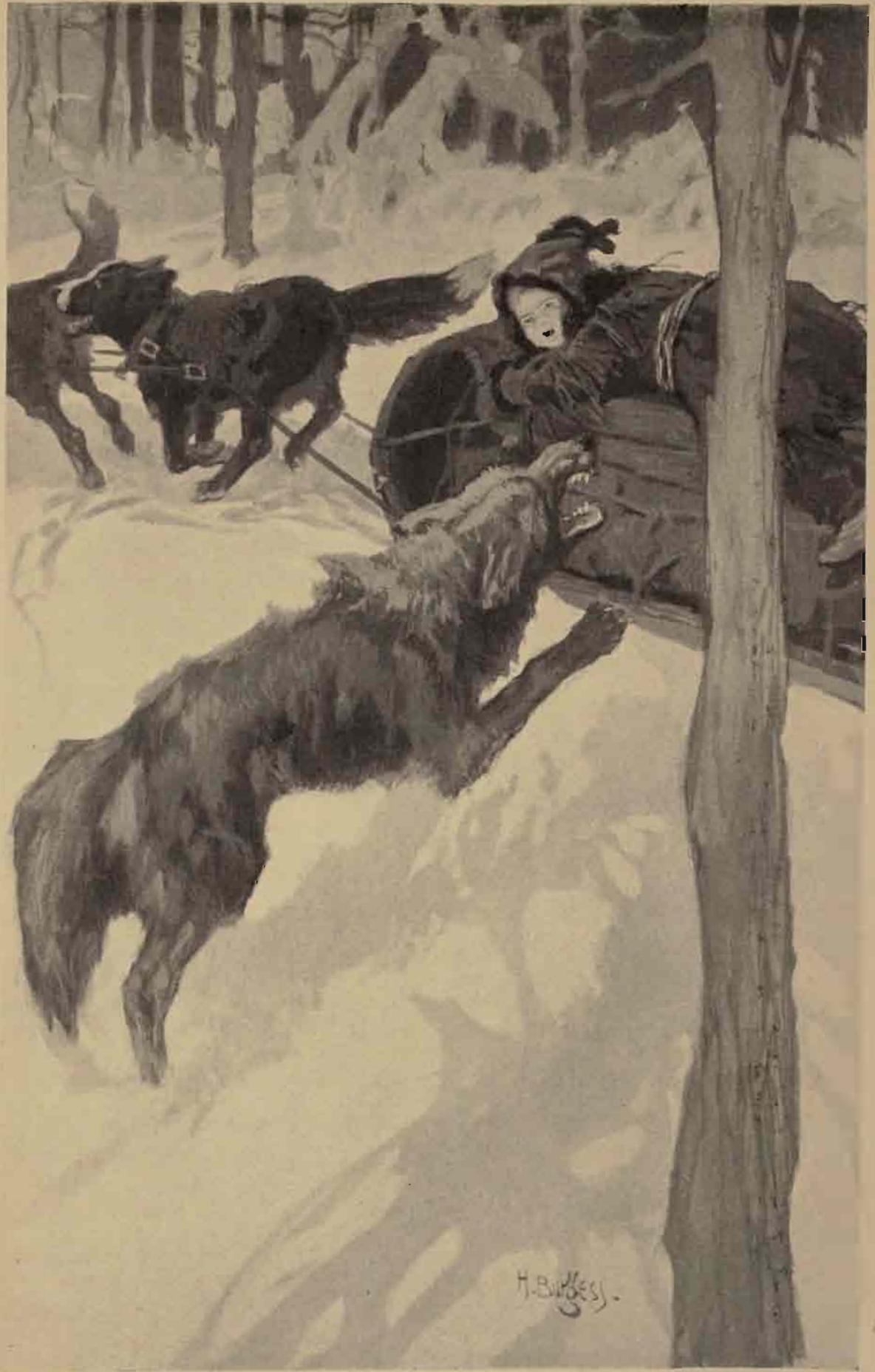
So nearly all of the dog-trains were kept hard at work hauling home wood and fish.

The wood, as I have already referred to, was cut into the proper lengths by the Indian choppers, and then dragged home on the heavy dog-sleds along a specially prepared trail made through the deep snow, and leading directly into the mission yard.

After a few trips under the guidance of the drivers were made, we dogs soon became so expert at the work of hauling home the loaded sleds, and then returning with the empty ones, that we were often left to do the work without being accompanied by our drivers.

Thus we worked for days and days, until great piles of wood were gathered. Sometimes the little master, Sagastao, took charge of his own train, of which I was now the leader dog, with Billy, Boxer and Buster in line behind me. Alec was often with us, but sometimes he was needed with his axe to help the men in the woods.

Of course the plucky little fellow always rode on his sled whether it was empty or loaded, and nearly always in company with another train that was attended by one of the drivers. Only a small load was tied on the sled of Sagastao, and it was made so flat, and tied on so securely with deerskin thongs, that he could easily keep himself from falling off.



"THE LARGEST WOLF I EVER SAW . . . CAME JUMPING STRAIGHT FOR
OUR LITTLE MASTER"

For several days, when the weather was not too bitterly cold, he thus went backwards and forwards, but always, when Alec was not along, in company with some other of the men.

After a while he became so expert at the work, that when his sled had been turned around in the woods and loaded sufficiently, he would jump on, and not waiting until the next sled was ready, would shout out his cheery "Marche!" to us, and away we dogs would start for the mission, two or three miles away.

One forenoon we had thus started off alone ahead of the other trains. We had hardly got out of the sight of the Indian wood-choppers, when the largest wolf I ever saw dashed out of the forest, not very far from the trail, and with what sounded like a snarl of triumph, came jumping straight for our little master.

It was a good thing for him that the snow was there very deep, and so the wolf could not spring in it with the same speed that he could have made on hard ground.

It was well that all four of us dogs had noticed him the moment he emerged from the forest, and without an instant's delay, with yelps, or rather cries of terror, had suddenly started off on what was the maddest and perhaps the swiftest run of our lives.

To confess the truth, and it was well for us and our brave little master here, we dogs are terribly afraid of those great northern gray wolves.

While we are ever ready and eager to attack the black bears, we are in fearful terror of the sharp teeth of those fierce savage wolves.

It was well for our little master that he was gripping, tightly and firmly, the strong deerskin thongs that tied on his load of wood. If he had fallen off, he would very quickly have been killed and mangled, if not devoured, by that fierce savage creature that in all probability was wild with hunger.

The suddenness with which we dogs sprang forward, caused the wolf, floundering in the deep snow, to miss his last spring, which was to have enabled him to have pounced upon the boy. With a snarl of rage he came galloping on in the narrow icy trail close behind the sled, still determined to get the lad. Fortunately for us, the load of wood on the sled was light, and consisted of pieces of small round poplars about sixteen feet long. These long sticks practically filling the trail, kept the wolf that far behind, and as Sagastao was seated near the front of the load, it was impossible for the wolf to spring upon him while we dogs were dashing along at such a rate.

When the wolf found that he was not likely to succeed in his way, he sprang into the deep snow

at the side of the trail, and made the most desperate efforts to get alongside of the boy to there seize him.

But even a great gaunt wolf found it hard to travel faster in three or four feet of light dry snow, than we four frightened dogs were running terrified as we were by his presence and snarls. Yet, although we had the advantage of the beaten narrow trail, it did seem to us that several times, to judge by the snappings of his teeth and the snarls, that he was running alongside of our brave driver, but such was the abundance and nature of the snow, that he did not once get a footing from which he could successfully make his deadly spring.

And all this time, how fared it with our little master, and what did he think of his perilous position?

At the beginning of the race, as we dogs first caught sight of the great wolf, and sprang forward in the trail, we were delighted to soon hear the cheery voice of the lad shout out to us:

“Marche! Marche! my good doggies, and let us run a race with this big gray dog.”

As our running became so rapid, and the race we knew was one for life, Sagastao, unconscious of any danger, but the risk of falling off, threw himself forward on the sled, and there stretched out, hung on to the straps of deerskin that were

holding on his load. We several times heard him speak to the wolf in bantering tones, that was making such desperate efforts to reach him. Then we would hear him calling to us again: "Marche! Marche! good doggies, we will surely win this race."

While the brave, cheery words of our master were so welcome to us, we were terrified by the snarls of the wolf who, thus far baffled in his efforts to get his prey, was becoming more and more furious. Several times we could tell by the weight that he had sprung on the sled, but the round like poles and the swinging motion, gave him no footing, and he soon tumbled off.

Then again he would renew his tactics of trying to reach the boy by plunging through the snow on one side of the trail or the other. When he did succeed in getting near him, he seemed deterred from seizing him, by the shouts and calls, which were about equally distributed between the wolf and us.

This wild fierce race was fortunately not a very long one. We were pleased indeed when we emerged from the forest, and saw the houses in the distance, as we supposed that the wolf would there leave us. To our horror, the wolf, instead of giving up and skulking off, continued to make the most desperate efforts to get the boy.

What made it worse for us, was the fact that

soon the trail would widen out, and thus give the wolf a better chance to succeed than he had had in the deep snow.

But the sight of the home and the prospect of winning the race, very much excited our little master, who had been so plucky from the beginning, and fortunately had no idea of the terrible danger he was in.

So only imagining that it was an exciting race, and the end so near, he redoubled his taunts to the wolf, and his cheers to us the dogs.

And thus, with this fierce wolf not ten feet behind us, we dashed up to the door of the mission house.

To our great delight, the master, who had heard us coming, immediately appeared. But ere gun or rifle could be secured, or even any person had any idea of his presence, the great wolf had turned and fled into the forest.

Full of excitement, the delighted boy began telling the story of the great race to his father.

To him, as yet, that fierce wolf was only a great savage, ugly dog. With flashing eyes and eager voice, he told how the animal had run aside his sled, making great jumps in the deep snow, and that when two or three times he had succeeded in getting up quite near him, he had gnashed his big teeth at him. And then he had jumped a few times on the sled, but soon tumbled off.

“My!” said he, “but that big gray dog was mad when I made fun of him, and laughed in his face. But we beat him, and I tell you Billy and Boxer and Buster and Hector are boss dogs, and no mistake.”

And of course we dogs that had done our best, were pleased to hear our little master speak so well of us.

Here, however, there was a sudden change. For while the boy was earnestly continuing to talk about the great race, not only to his father, but also to his mother and little sister, who had now come out of the house, we saw the Indian drivers, without the dogs, but armed with axes, coming towards us as hard as they could run in the trail. It seemed that a few minutes after our train had left, one of them following us, soon detected the tracks of the wolf. Being unarmed, he rushed back as rapidly as possible and gave the alarm. At once, with their axes as weapons, they all came on as hard as they could run, filled with fear, lest they should come upon the little lad being devoured by the great wolf.

As they hurried along, noticing with their keen eyes, as experienced hunters, the desperate attempts the wolf had made, great indeed was their anxiety. And now, equally great was their joy as they saw the lad alive and unharmed.

The excitement was of course very great when the story was told, and it was realized how great had been the danger, and how narrow the escape, of Sagastao from the fierce gray wolf.

The fact that the wolf had come into the yard and close to the door of the house, the Indians said, was because he was wild with hunger, and doubly dangerous.

When Sagastao now heard that what he thought was only a big ugly gray dog was a wild fierce wolf, he became very much excited, and not having seen what had become of the brute, he thought he might still be around and would yet hurt somebody. And so, as his little sister Minnehaha was still standing near, before any one could interfere with him, he quickly grabbed her up and threw the little four year old child into the dirty fish house, and slammed to the big door in her face, much to her disgust and indignation.

That night, we dogs were all securely fastened up in our kennels, for the wise Indians said that that wolf that had come so near getting the little boy, would come back that very night and skulk around in hopes of finding him. And if he could not succeed, he would likely make his supper out of one of the many dogs that were around.

Later in the day, the mission house was visited by some palefaces from afar, who were friends of our master and his family.

When they heard the story of the narrow escape of our little master from the great wolf, they were very much interested. They also said that what the old Indian hunters had said about that wolf likely coming in the night for the lad, was correct. But when he comes he must do no harm, and also he must never return to his haunts again. So baits with deadly poison in were placed in various trails while all dogs were carefully shut in or tied up.

In the morning, an Indian who had arisen early, came to the house with the word that the great wolf lay dead in the trail.

Soon after, Billy, Boxer, Buster and myself were harnessed up, and with some Indians we went out and dragged in the cold dead body of that great wolf that had made such desperate efforts to make a meal out of my little master.

For long years the skin of that wolf made a very fine rug on the floor of the master's study.

XI

WOLF STORIES

THE story of the narrow escape of the little master from the great wolf caused great excitement among both dogs and Indians. Sagastao was of course the greatest hero, for the way in which he had so pluckily held onto the sled, and cheered on his dogs to victory.

Next to him, they gave to me, Hector, the leader of the train, great praise for the way in which I had so quickly detected the presence of the wolf, and had so suddenly dashed away with my companion dogs, ere the wolf, floundering in the deep snow, could reach our plucky little driver.

Great praise, well deserved, was also given to Billy, Boxer and Buster. For if they had not been clever dogs, and seen as I had, the great danger, we never could have succeeded.

All the members of the family, including even old Mary, made a great fuss over us, and gave us many a dainty morsel to eat, as well as saying kindly words.

Many were the dog talks in our own language which we had about it, for all were deeply interested. Even dignified Jack and beautiful Cuffy,

when they heard about the affair, came to our kennel, and to them, I had to tell the whole story.

Koona, of course, was jealous, and tried to belittle the whole thing. Even when I was telling the story to Jack and Cuffy and some other dogs, he had to interrupt with some of his sarcastic remarks. For a time no dog seemed to notice him; as I went on with my narrative, Koona threw out some slighting remark about what I had done, and pertly declared that if he had been in my place, he would have attacked that wolf, instead of running away from him.

This impertinence on the part of Koona, who was known to be a coward, could be stood no longer, and so Jack, who had lost all patience with him, said to me:

“Hector! throw that dog out of your kennel, or I will have to do it myself.”

Up to this time, as I have said elsewhere, Koona had by his cheeky ways, tyrannized over us younger dogs. But when I heard Jack thus show his annoyance at this reflection on my courage or judgment, I suddenly sprang upon the saucy interrupter, and found no trouble in giving him a good thrashing, and then in driving him out of our kennel.

From that time on, Koona treated me with civility and respect.

When all the other dogs, that had not been

present heard of the visit of the aristocratic Jack and Cuffy to the kennel of Billy, Boxer, Buster and myself, they were now most anxious to pay their respects to this train of dogs, now so much honored.

The result was, our kennel, which was not one of the largest, was often uncomfortably crowded.

Dear old Rover, who was most anxious to hear, and yet not neglect his duties as dog doctor, made us all grin as near into laughter as it is possible for dogs to laugh, by his crowding in, dragging a big pup some months old, that had an ugly cut on his neck.

Rover had just discovered the wound, and knowing that it was his duty to dress it, and yet anxious to hear about the race with the wolf, resolved that while not neglecting his work, he would also hear what was to be said. So in he came dragging his patient with him. And there, just before me, he sat industriously dressing the wound with his tongue, while listening to my yarn.

Koona, whom no rebuff could suppress, was of course on hand, while even old Voyageur, the glum and solitary dog, hovered round the door, much interested in my story, especially when he heard that I had been the leader of the train.

Being a hero, even among dogs, becomes a nuisance after a time, and I got tired of having

to tell the story over so frequently. For, every time any of the trains that had been away, returned to the mission, they of course wanted full particulars, and with them would crowd into the kennel, dogs that had heard the narrative over and over again.

Generally they had all listened in silence as I repeated the story, but after a time, some of those dogs that had been present on several occasions, now began to have some remarks to make.

One day, Nelson, a quiet dog generally, spoke up and said :

“When you described some of the desperate springs which the wolf made in the snow, in his efforts to reach Sagastao, I could not help thinking of the time when a great wolf, that pretended to be dead, sprang at me, and robbed me of part of my tail.”

“Ho! Ho!” yelled out Koonah. “That was the way you lost it, was it? You might have given us the particulars much sooner.”

Fierce growls of annoyance from several dogs at Koonah's saucy interference and his impertinence to Nelson, who was a great favorite, so frightened the rascal, that he sprang for the door, and escaped just in time to escape a shaking.

Nelson's reference to some as yet unrelated

conflict with a wolf, quite interested a number of the dogs. And the very fact of his having said what little he did, unloosed the tongues of some of the other dogs about whom rumors were afloat that if they were not so modest and shy, they could tell some thrilling stories.

Grand old Black was one of these. He had a great scar on the side of his head about which he had been often questioned. But like Nelson, with the short tail, he had been silent. However, as Nelson had spoken, and they were of the same train, it was now evident that it would not take much persuasion to get from him the story of his adventure with the wolves.

And now there was a lot of noise and confusion in our crowded kennel.

Some of the dogs that had just returned home, wanted to hear my story, while others that had heard it over and over again, began calling for Nelson, while others were equally noisy in their dog-calls for Black.

In the midst of the confusion, for of course I could not go on with my story, the master with Jack and Cuffy happened to be passing the kennel. Hearing the din and noise inside, and perhaps thinking that he might be of use in restoring quiet, if it were necessary, Jack looked in, about filling up the door with his great size. The darkened door, and Jack's great eyes glower-

ing at the noisy dogs, instantly restored order, without even a growl being heard.

Turning to Rover, whom he greatly respected, and who had long finished his work with the wounded pup, Jack asked the cause of all the confusion.

When it was explained to him, he was asked for his decision, which all knew would be final.

“Let Hector continue his story to the end for the information of those dogs that have not heard him. The fact that they were away on the master’s work is no reason why they should be deprived of the privilege of a story of which we are all so proud.

“Let a council be called in a place large enough for all to assemble, and there in a decent way, without any of this confusion, let each dog that has something to say of personal experience of battles or conflicts with wolves, have an opportunity to tell his story.”

This dignified address of Jack’s, given in his measured, stately style, met with the heartiest approval. And then each dog vied with his fellows by his barks, or yelps, or even howls, to show his delight.

Here, our master now appeared, and after looking us over and getting some vague idea of how things were, laughingly said:

“You dogs to-day seem about as noisy and un-

mannerly as a town council or a parson's conference."

Cuffy also now looked in, and seeing lordly Jack in the midst of this apparently discordant crowd, she curled up her aristocratic lips.

"Disgusting!" she said.

Then, marching up to Jack, she seized one of his great pendant ears in her teeth, and led him out of the place.

A day or two later, the council was advertised, although the time of its meeting was quite uncertain. A deputation of dogs waited upon Jack, and asked him to accept the position of chairman, to which he graciously agreed. Dear old Muff was appointed secretary. She well deserved this honor, as once, during a whole night, she had kept off a number of wolves from a *cache* which had been left in her charge by her master, when they were on a long journey.

Intimations were at once sent out, and notices posted up at different kennels by Muff, the secretary, that each and every dog that in his, or her life, had met with any exciting or thrilling adventure with a wolf or wolves, was or were earnestly requested to begin rehearsing to himself or herself the narrative or story, so as to be ready when called upon to relate it at the coming council, the meeting of which would be fully announced in due time, in such an interesting

manner, that it would meet with the approval of the noble chairman, and the approbation of the audience.

These notices caused great excitement. The fact that Jack was to preside, meant that the council would be sedate and orderly.

Curiosity was at once aroused to know what dogs there were, in addition to Nelson and Black, that had had adventures with wolves, of sufficiently thrilling interest to narrate before such a council.

All sorts of rumors were soon afloat among the kennels, and it did seem at first as though the majority of the dogs had had some bloodcurdling adventures and experiences.

However, as these were trotted out and investigated, it was found that very few of them amounted to much.

Some dogs that at first honestly thought that they did have sufficient to make up a good story, when it was sifted down, they saw that to get it before such a council, would only expose themselves to ridicule and laughter.

Koona, the irrepressible, thought that here was a chance for him to win distinction by a little brazen effrontery and any amount of lying. So he rehearsed to a choice few of the dogs whom he thought he could trust, a marvelous story of how in the gloom of a wintry night, when he was

out walking on the trail, that led several miles from the mission into the lonely forest, he suddenly heard a great wolf crunching the bones of an Indian or a dog, which he had seized, and was devouring.

Full of courage and sympathy for the man, or dog, that was being eaten, Koona said that he at once rushed forward and attacked that wolf, alone though he was.

The great wolf, thus suddenly assailed, was so terrified that, while Koona was about to strangle him, he managed to so vigorously howl out his wolf call, that a whole pack of his comrades at once responded, and, "as they were near at hand," said Koona, "I was obliged to leave off strangling that wolf, and slowly return to the kennels."

Old Rover, who had heard this most marvelous yarn of Koona's, fairly grinned out loud.

Indeed, it was such a comical, laughable grin for dear old Rover to emit, that at once the curiosity of the dogs was excited to such a degree that they all turned to him, and with their "bow-wows" and those of a number of other dogs that had joined them, they clamored for an explanation.

Koona, however, did not join them. He knew that Rover was the one dog that could give the correct account of this so-called terrific encounter with the wolf.

Rover was not only good-natured, but easily persuaded, and so now as the dogs in large numbers gathered around him and he was about to begin his version of the story, Koonna, who had presumed that the good-natured fellow would have held his tongue, now saw that if he persisted in telling it, it would cover him with ridicule, lost his temper, and sprang at Rover, and tried to frighten him into silence.

This of course was the most foolish thing that Koonna could have done.

Not one of us dogs there gathered, and who had listened to Koonna, had believed a word of his yarn. But we had all been amused with his cheek and assurance.

Then what angered us was, that he dared before us all, to so savagely assail the dog that knew the facts. And that dog dear old Rover, our doctor, whom we all respected and who had rendered valuable service to many in that crowd.

Well, the rascal was stopped speedily, and promptly taken care of.

Old Blucher, who had been for years one of the same train as Rover, and was the fighter of that train of four dogs, was assigned to the work of giving Koonna the dressing down he merited. Well and thoroughly was the work done, and yet without injuring him, for that would have incurred the anger and intervention of the master.

So disorganized and humiliated was Koonna when Blucher was through with him, that he tried to sneak away out of the crowd. But the dogs, still indignant at his treatment of Rover, would not allow this.

As we dogs had heard our masters, the menfolks, talk about sitting down on one of their number whom they wished to punish for some conceit or folly, so here it was decided that Koonna was to be *sat upon*, while Rover told us his version of this wolf story, in which Koonna, in his own estimation, had won such great distinction.

So, in rough sport, two or three of the big dogs speedily tumbled Koonna over, and literally sat down upon him. The seat of honor, it was evident, was the head.

Rover at first seemed troubled, and loth to begin. But the cheery barking applause of his comrades, who all respected him for his worth and transparent honesty, as even seen in this story, encouraged him, and he began:

“I must commence,” he said, “by confessing my faults, especially the one that led me out that night on the trail into the woods.

“My master, who has always been indulgent to us all, and to me in particular, had let me follow him for some days before this, when he went on that trail into the forest, which was one which he himself had made on his snow-shoes.

“At first I could not understand why my master stopped frequently, and cutting down small branches, fastened bits of strings with loops in them to the ends of them.

“It was, however, all clear to me the next night, when he let me again take a walk with him on that same trail. Then we found a number of rabbits caught in those loops.

“Of course I should not have touched any rabbits caught in this way by the master’s snares. But, I am sorry to say, that a few nights after, I went out alone, and took two or three rabbits out of those snares of the master’s, and there did eat them.”

“Shame, shame, old Rover. To think that *you* of all dogs, should have been a thief.”

Thus chorused out several of his listeners, and even Koonā tried to laugh a dog-laugh, and for which one of his ears was nipped by the big dog sitting on his head.

“Leave Rover alone!” barked out the great majority of the dogs. “He was punished for his fault, and he has never repeated it, which is more than can be said of some of you rascals that are howling out ‘shame.’”

This completely silenced the disturbers, and so Rover was allowed to proceed :

“It was before the master caught me stealing the rabbits out of the snares, that one night I

skulked away from the kennels rather early, for Koona had got into the habit of going earlier and getting the rabbits before I could."

"The rascal! Koona a rabbit thief!" they all yelped out.

"Shake him again! Sit down harder on him!"

This sitting down on him more thoroughly, was about an impossibility, as already three dogs were comfortably using his prostrate body as a cushion. However, another one pulled out from under him his beautiful bushy tail, and amidst the delight of the others, tried to sit upon it.

This was the greatest humiliation to Koona, as he had undoubtedly the finest tail of any of the dogs, and he had never been backward in bringing forward this fact. So now his humiliation was complete when several dogs were thus trying to straighten it out, and make as much of a cushion of it as possible.

Quiet being again restored, Rover resumed his story.

"I had to go some distance along the trail," said Rover, "before I discovered, a little away at one side, a fine rabbit hanging in a snare. I had to spring up quite high to catch hold of it. When I had pulled it down, I carried it into the darkest place I could find under a spruce-tree, and began eating it as fast as possible, for I knew I was a thief, and so was afraid.

“While I was crunching the bones between my teeth, I happened to look out, and there I saw Koonna coming along. From where I was in the dark, Koonna could not see me, and so as I could see him, and did not want to be troubled with him, I just crunched away harder at the ribs of that rabbit, and gave two or three growls, or wolf-like snarls.

“It would have made you all roll over on the ground with delight, if you could have seen the way Koonna turned, and rushed off for home.

“That is all, I believe, there is in Koonna’s wolf story, and I quietly told him to hush it up, but his egotism is such that he cares not what risks he runs, if his self-conceit is only flattered, and so now he has only himself to blame for his humiliation.”

XII

THE DOG COUNCIL

SOME days elapsed ere any news reached our kennels as to the date of the coming council.

The winter was advancing, and there was still much work to be done. A new stable was to be built, and while the Indian men cut the logs in the forests, ten or twelve miles away, we dogs had to drag them home on the strongest sleds. This was very toilsome work, and was in addition to fish hauling and bringing in of fire-wood.

Then the master decided to go to a faraway place called Fort Garry, for supplies. This meant that sixteen dogs, four trains, and among them Jack and Muff, would be away for five or six weeks.

Thus it looked as though our council would not be held for a long time. However, something happened which after all brought it on speedily.

Just as our master was about ready to begin his long journey to Fort Garry, there came to the mission another Ayumeaookemou, of whom our master and his family were very fond.

He came with a couple of trains of fine dogs

from some far away place where he there was teaching the Indians to be good, and among other things, to be kind to their dogs, even as was our master.

We dogs soon learned to love him, for he was not only very kind to the little children in the mission, who dearly loved him, but he often came out with our master, and petted us all, but especially the older dogs, who seemed to know him well.

That he was a good man and the friend of the dogs, we knew from the way his own dogs felt towards him. As we loved our master, so they loved him. He looked well after them, and saw that they were well fed and had a good sheltered place in which to rest and sleep.

One of them had a sore on his shoulder where he could not reach it with his tongue, and so he was given in charge of old Rover, our dog doctor, and so well did the old fellow do his work, that during the few days that this good man remained in the home of our master, the wounded dog was completely cured.

We dogs became great friends with his dogs. Our masters were most loving friends, so why should not we, their dogs, whom they so well treated, be the best of friends. And so we were.

At first this great friendship which so speedily

sprang up between these visiting sleigh-dogs and ourselves, was to me a mystery. For the fact may as well come out, we dogs of the mission were generally very jealous of strange dogs, and when any dared to come near the place, we drove them off as quickly as Jack had driven me in my puppy days away from the schoolhouse. But now it was so different, and as I am only a stupid dog, it took me some time to understand.

It seemed so queer to me to see one of our fiercest dogs lying down with two of the largest dogs of the visiting train and there with their heads together, in dog language, they were talking so earnestly, though quietly. Then in their dog fashion they would kiss each other, and in the most affectionate manner, show great love for each other.

So one day I asked old Rover, who was always good-natured and not angry, even when foolish questions were put to him, what it all meant.

The dear old dog bow-wowed out a good-natured laugh at my dulness and said :

“Why! can you not see that they are brothers? They are glad to meet each other again, and of course have much to talk about.”

So at length I got to understand that some of these fine dogs now visiting us, had grown up as puppies in our kennels, and that our masters were ever helping each other with dogs and other

things which each needed to thoroughly carry on their work.

Word had come out to the kennels that the journey to Fort Garry had been postponed for a week, in order that the dogs of our visitor should be thoroughly rested and fed up for the long journey, which he had decided to take with us. And what had caused the greatest delight was that this good man, when he saw the great piles of wood which we had dragged from the forest, and the large quantities of frozen fish stored away in the fish-house, which we had brought from the distant fishing point, had pleaded with our master to give us dogs a holiday, like his were having.

To this request our master agreed, and soon to my great delight, I found Jack, with Muff, the secretary, going around among the dogs, and imparting some information that soon was known to us all.

It was that the council, about which we had been speaking, was to assemble the next day, and that to it our visiting dog friends had been cordially invited, and had at once replied that it would be a very great pleasure on their part to attend.

As the number of dogs would thus be large, at the request of Jack and Cuffy, the front space

in the stable was granted by our indulgent master to form the council room.

The morning of the council at length arrived, and at the time appointed, it seemed as though every dog was present. At first a separate place had been assigned for our visiting dogs, but they did not like this, and preferred to sit among their own relatives that were in our pack.

Jack, as it had been arranged, at once took the chair, and called the meeting to order. Born aristocrat that he was, and conscious of his powers, there was that in his very presence that told all humbler dogs, of less certain lineage, that he was without question the one who should ever be their leader. Modest Muff had to be called forward to take her place as secretary.

A hearty chorus of cheery bow-wows greeted her, which she much appreciated.

Then I noticed that none of us had given the chairman any cheers when he had taken his place.

In my foolishness, I was about to set up a noisy barking cheer for him, when I was speedily silenced by the dogs around me.

“None of that!” they snapped out. “Jack wants no such nonsense. All he wants is that you behave yourself in the council, and if you don’t, he will speedily make you.”

Silence having now settled down upon us, and

the late comers being all seated, Jack arose, and began his address.

“Madam Cuffy, and ladies and gentlemen dogs,” he began, and at once we surmised, and afterwards found out, that he was a henpecked husband, and that his mate, the beautiful Cuffy, when in her tantrums, led him, big as he was, a very poor dog’s life.

“I have called you together to-day that we may have the pleasure of listening to Nelson and Black, and it may be, some other dogs.”

“Koonal!” some dog yelped out.

The chairman at once rose up on his hind legs, and looked severely in the direction from which the interruption had come. He was unable, however, to positively name the culprit. He also had some difficulty in suppressing the ripple of merriment and the broad grins of delight of all the dogs, who had first heard Koonal’s version of his wolf adventure, and then Rover’s true account of the affair.

“As I was about to remark,” resumed the chairman, “we are to hear the story of the conflicts in battles between some of our companions, with our deadliest enemies, the great northern wolves, that roam in the vast forests around us. Not only will we be pleased to listen to any thrilling stories that our own dogs may be able to tell us, but it will be a great pleasure to us all,

if any of our visiting dog friends that have had any similar experiences will let us hear from them.

“And now, ladies and gentlemen dogs, I will not much further detain you, but will call on my much respected secretary, Madam Muff, to call the roll.”

As Jack resumed his seat, there was some applause, but it quickly died away, when it was seen that he paid not the slightest attention to it.

The roll having been called by Muff, who had the names arranged in alphabetical order, and thus gave no offense, as had occurred in previous councils, where some old dogs had felt slighted by hearing the names of younger dogs called before theirs.

“And now,” said Jack, “I am sure you will all give the best attention while we listen to the dogs that are to address us as they give the stories of their conflicts with wolves which are, as you are aware, our deadliest enemies that roam.”

“O bother!” snapped out Cuffy. “You said all that before. Your tongue is as long as old Mary’s. We have not come here to listen to your clack. Do call up your speakers, and let us have a chance to hear what they have to say.”

My! but there was consternation among us dogs.

The bare idea of any dog living, thus speaking to such a powerful dog as Jack. And so a shiver went through us, and we waited in suspense for the storm.

But there was no storm. Jack had, it was now evident, learned his lesson, long ere this. Without a word, or even a look of remonstrance, to Mistress Cuffy, he quietly said :

“ We will now hear Nelson tell his story.”

With a lot of nervousness, Nelson, who like the rest of us, had been upset by Cuffy's action, came forward to the place assigned him.

We all welcomed the popular handsome dog with a full chorus of dog applause, which much encouraged him.

“ Mr. Chairman and fellow companions,” he said.

“ You older dogs well know that I am not of your kennels bred, and have only had the privilege of sharing your pleasures and toils for a few brief years.

“ As well as I can remember, I lived my young days in an Indian wigwam far back in the North Land on the shores of a great lake, which I have heard the palefaces call Lake Wollaston.

“ As the Indians there were but few, and the fish very abundant, my master, who was one of that people, gave to my mother and the rest of us dogs, plenty of food during the summer months

when the fish could be easily caught. In the cold winter months when the ice was so thick on the great lake that fishing was impossible, all of us, Indians and dogs, were practically dependent on the herds of reindeer that frequently came down to us from the barren grounds farther north.

“When my master was successful in shooting the leader deer of the herd, he generally succeeded in shooting a number ere the herd fled away.

“So with fish and reindeer meat and parts of the other animals they managed to kill, we dogs did not fare very badly.

“Thus I grew up to be the fairly large dog that I am. My master without much cruelty broke me into the harness, and I loved to serve him, for he was not unkind to me. I worked for him for two winters, and met with some strange adventures.

“The first one was when my master took his family and two of his dogs, and went out far away in the forest to make his winter hunt. His hunting grounds were very distant from any other Indian hunter.

“He made his hunting lodge of strong poles, which he set close together in the ground in a round trench which he dug before it was hard frozen. The tops of the longer poles were drawn

together, so that the lodge was like a wigwam, only much stronger.

“Then with birch bark and stones and sods and moss, the lodge was banked up and made warm and comfortable.

“It was well for us that our master, who was clever and industrious beyond most of the Indians in these matters, made a strong door for his hunting lodge by splitting with long thin wedges some birch logs into broad pieces like planks. These he dressed well with his axe, and then firmly joined them together. He made wooden hinges, and set up the door in its place in a strong birch frame with a great cross bar to hold it in its place when shut.

“This strong door was very different from the ordinary door of a tent or wigwam, which is generally, as you all know, only a few deer or buffalo skins sewed together. But it was well for us that we had such a strong hunting lodge with this good door.

“The snow was very deep that winter, and it was not long before the great gray wolves began troubling us. I understood from my Indian master’s talk that there were plenty of silver foxes and minks and martens and wild cats and other rich fur-bearing animals, but he said the wolves and wolverines had got on his trail of traps and deadfalls and often before he could

visit them, these animals had been there and they had eaten the animals which had been caught, even if their flesh was very poor food.

“One day my Indian master returned with only the beautiful tail of a black fox and the paw of a mink. Their bodies had been devoured by wolves. My master was not only angry and disappointed at thus losing two such valuable animals, but as he and his wife talked the matter over, we could see that they were alarmed, and began to fear that they, when out on the trail, or even in their hunting lodge, might any day be attacked. For they said, if the wolves are so hungry that they will even eat foxes, which nearly every animal refuses to touch, it means that they must be very nearly starved, and therefore will be very venturesome and savage.

“So it was resolved that every one should be very cautious. Even the Indian woman, who used us two dogs and the sled, to draw to the lodge the wood required, or to go for the deer which the man often shot, decided to always have her loaded gun with her.

“The man, before starting out next morning, well-sharpened his tomahawk and hunting-knife, and put in his pouch more bullets than usual.

“The Indian woman had cut, and we had hauled home, a couple of loads of wood, when about noon, we heard the distant howlings of wolves.

Then we heard the report of a gun, and in a few minutes we heard the gun again and soon again. This very much alarmed the Indian woman, as she knew her husband's gun had only one barrel, and there were no hunters near.

“So when she heard the gun again and again, she could stand it no longer. So, after securely fastening the door of the lodge, with a sharp axe in her belt and the loaded gun in her hands and a powder-horn and bullet-pouch across her shoulders, she strapped on her snow-shoes, and calling us two dogs to follow behind, she hurried off on the trail made by the snow-shoes of the Indian man that morning, and which led straight towards the place where we had heard the wolves and the firing.

“My Indian mistress was not only brave, but she was cautious, and so when she knew she must be near the place, which was in the forest, she hushed us into complete silence, and moved very noiselessly but rapidly from tree to tree.

“It was not long before we could see our Indian master up in a tree, while around it were a number of wolves. He was above their reach, and at first we were surprised that he was not firing more frequently at them, but we heard later that his bullets were nearly all fired away.

“As my mistress wanted to let him know that she was there without attracting the attention of

the wolves, she kept well out of sight of those fierce animals that would speedily have attacked her if they had had any idea of her presence, and croaked out the hoarse notes of the whiskey-jack.

“The man at once heard it and understood. So, while pretending to continue shouting at the wolves, he began now giving directions to his wife what to do.

“She carried out his instructions, which were to remain out of sight, and fire when she could at least hit a couple of the wolves. She was then to shout out as loudly as she could, while he again would fire among them.

“As was anticipated by these hunters, who so well understand these animals, they were so terrified by this second attack, that those that were unwounded quickly fled away.

“Now here came my humiliation.

“As the master sprang down from the tree, my mistress, who had reloaded her gun, and we two dogs, hurried forward to join him.

“In my foolishness I went among what I supposed were dead wolves, nipping at them in my delight over their death. While thus fooling with one of them, I saw his eye open, and so terrible was its gleam, that I was dreadfully frightened. I dropped my once long beautiful tail and turned to run. But while I saved my life, I did not

wholly escape. For when he sprang at me, while he did not reach my body, he did succeed in reaching my tail, and those sharp teeth of his like a knife bit the most of it off, leaving me only what you see is left of it.

“The wolf, however, did no further harm.

“The gun in the hands of my alert mistress suddenly spoke out, and then he was dead sure enough.”

Then, with a bow to the chairman and a comical flourish of his short, bushy stub of a tail, which set nearly every dog in the council grinning with delight, Nelson thus finished his first story.

“I move that we adjourn,” said Cuffy. And the chairman said :

“The council is adjourned for two hours.”

XIII

NELSON AND BLACK

THE council assembled early in the afternoon, and as Cuffy did not appear, Jack was in the best of humor, and in again introducing Nelson to continue his address, complimented him on the admirable tale he had given us, even if it had so concerned the other tail, part of which the treacherous wolf had so suddenly robbed him.

Nelson, in resuming his narrative, at once got into his subject without any waste of words, and said :

“As my master and mistress feared, the wolves were very troublesome, although after this killing of several of them, they did not disturb us for some time.

“I and my companion dog were harnessed to the sled, and our master used us to drag to the lodge the dead wolves which he skinned, as their robes are valuable. Their dead bodies, which froze solid, he piled up, a couple of hundred feet from the lodge. Why he put them there we found out afterwards.

“Using all necessary caution, my brave Indian

master continued his hunting. Some nights, as we were all there in the lodge, I heard him and his wife say that they wished he had brought two or three of his brother Indians with him, as there was a great deal of danger for one lonely hunter, with the wolves so much more numerous than they had imagined. However, he kept at his work, and was succeeding fairly well.

“Towards spring, while the snow was still very deep, there came some bright, warm days, which much softened the snow. Then there came a cold snap, and the frost made a hard crust on the top of the snow.

“This was the opportunity for the wolves, as they got on the tracks of the reindeer, or moose. For, while the wolves could run on the hard crust on the snow, the heavier animals broke through, and thus could not get away from their merciless enemies.

“Numbers of deer were thus killed, and some quite near our lodge.

“One day, as our master was out in the forest, not far from his wigwam, he saw a great moose coming towards him, being chased by a single big wolf. The moose was plunging through the crusted snow as well as he could, but do his best, he could not get on as fast as the wolf, that easily bounded along on the icy crust.

“My master noticed that the moose would

whirl around, when the wolf was near, and offer battle, but the cowardly wolf would then only sit down on the crust at a safe distance off, and set up the most dismal howlings.

“These howlings would suddenly start the moose off again, for he knew that they meant that that wolf was calling to his companion wolves to come to his help.

“Those wolf-calls also alarmed my master, for he did not want to have the pack of wolves come so near his lodge. So he decided quickly what he would do.

“He let the wolf chase the moose until they were both not far away from the lodge. He had kept very quietly gliding on his show-shoes, for he knew the two animals were so excited in watching each other, that he had little fear of being noticed. When he had decided that they were near enough, he first shot the wolf, and then again loading his gun, he drove the moose much nearer the lodge, and there killed him.

“His alert wife had heard first the howlings of the wolf, and then the two reports of the gun, and so was ready to act in any way required.

“As the master rushed up on his snow-shoes, he told her what had happened. Their two guns were loaded, and as we dogs were there already harnessed to the wood sled, we were speedily driven to the spot where lay the dead moose.

He was a large one, and it was all the man and woman could do to get him on the sled. Then we dragged him on the icy crust to the lodge.

“They worked in a hurry that day, for they did not know the minute they would hear the howlings of the pack of wolves that had been called by the one now dead.

“My master did not want to lose the fine skin of the wolf he had shot, and so leaving his wife skinning the moose, he put both of the guns on the sled, and turning us around, he drove us as fast as we could go, to the dead wolf.

“We dragged him home in safety without hearing any distant howlings.

“The active mistress had the moose partly skinned, and as the two of them now worked together, they soon had both the moose and wolfskins off, and in the lodge. They then cut up the body of the moose, and while they carried part of the meat into they lodge, they *cached* the rest, by bending down some saplings, and then let them swing up again, loaded with the meat, beyond the reach of the most active wolves. The body of the wolf was dragged on our sled by us two dogs, and thrown away on the frozen bodies of the ones killed some time before.

“My! but we two dogs were excited. Our master and mistress were, and as is often the case, the dogs get into the same spirit.

“The moose meat taken into the wigwam was tied up in the centre, high up over the fire. The smoke would do it no harm. Plenty of wood was brought in, and the kettles filled with water.

“The master had some large steel traps, which he set in different places around the lodge, securely fastening their chains to young trees.

“Thus the daylight passed away, and it was dark before we heard the distant howlings of the wolves. It made us two dogs tremble at first, but when we looked into the brave faces of our master and mistress, who quietly petted us, we seemed to catch their spirit, and resolved to stand by them all we could. But we were very glad that we were in the hunting-lodge with its thick, frozen walls and strong door and bright fire. All we could do, was just there to wait for what would happen.

“The howling of the wolves suddenly ceased in the distance. This was when they had reached the places where their comrade and the moose had been killed. They had also got the scent of the hunter, and were suspicious. It was not long, however, before they came along on the trail made by our sled, that dragged the large moose, from which some blood had dripped.

“The sight of the hunting-lodge, with the sparks of fire and smoke going out of the top, made them again suspicious for a time, but they

soon got the scent of the fresh meat hanging up just above their reach, and so they soon forgot their fears, and made the most desperate efforts to reach it, but were not able.

“It was not long before they got on the scent of their dead comrades that night. But they did not then care for dead wolf: they were after higher game.

“It was not long before my comrade dog and myself detected that some of them had come up close to the lodge. Even our clever master and mistress did not know this until, by our quiet growls, we told them. Then our master went and listened at a little crack that there was between two of the thick boards of the strong door.

“He had not been there long before he very quickly jerked back his head, for just outside a wolf had put his nose to that same crack!

“The master was not so startled, but he quickly knew what to do. So, without making any noise, he drew out his keen hunting-knife, and when he felt certain that the nose of that wolf was there again close up to the crack, he so cleverly drove his knife through the crack and into the nose of that wolf, that there was a howl of pain and rage outside. His howlings started the rest of the pack, and soon there was a terrible time.

“Then the attack began in earnest. The

wolves tried to break in the door, and failing there, they tried to crawl up the steep side of the lodge. But so much water had been thrown on it, as I have said, when it was made, that they had very poor foothold, and so not one of them succeeded in getting in. But something now occurred outside that saved us from further attack. In their prowling around, the wolves, that are generally very difficult to catch in traps, seemed to lose their caution, and so two of them, almost at the same time, were caught in different great steel traps. We could hear their cries and howls of pain, while they made the most desperate efforts to escape, but the traps were strong, and the chains they could not break. Strange to say, as we found out afterwards, they were both caught by their two fore legs, and so must have just jumped into the traps. And there they were securely held.

“It is well-known by the hunters, that a wolf, when caught by only one foot in a steel trap, will cut it off with his teeth, but the Indians have no remembrance of any case where a wolf has cut off two of his feet. They seem to know that they can get along on three legs, but not on only two.

“The howlings and cries of these two wolves, thus securely caught, filled the others with terror and alarm, and perhaps fearful of a similar fate,

they at once fled away into the forest, nor did we see or hear anything of them during the rest of the time we there remained.”

Nelson's stories were well received by his auditors, and, as usual, a very hearty vote of thanks was rendered him, which Muff duly entered into the Journals.

An intermission of twenty minutes here took place: the chairman, however, urged the auditors to be in their places promptly, as he intended calling Black, on the minute, to begin his narrative.

Promptly on time, every dog was in his place, except the chairman.

As the minutes passed on, and no Jack appeared, there was something like a sensation. Such a thing as Jack, the great stickler for promptness and order, thus delaying the council, and this in the presence of distinguished visitors. The surprised look on every dog's face was a study, and there were many conjectures.

“I'll bet it's Cuffy!” yelled out the irrepressible Koonna. And sure enough, the rascal was right.

Into the trouble and its cause, I did not dare to inquire. And as some of us dogs had heard menfolks say that it was a risky business for an outsider to interfere in a quarrel between a man and his wife. And so I am sure it would have

gone hard with any dog that would have dared to protest or try to argue with Cuffy, even when she was most tyrannical and unreasonable in her treatment of Jack.

So all we could do, was to remain quiet, and wait, even after we heard them talking in dog language outside.

What we seemed to make out, was that Cuffy was trying to get Jack away for a run on the trail, while he was pleading his duties as our chairman.

Fortunately for Jack and us, our young master came along just then, and seeming to understand the matter, and well knowing Cuffy's ways, he just seized her by one ear, and quietly led her away, and shut her up in the house.

We did not very well hear all that she said, as she was being led away, but it was something like this :

“I'll get even with you yet, my big fellow, for this.”

Flushed and heated was Jack when he took his place in the council. We dogs had heard enough of the row with Cuffy to tell us the reason of his absence, and so when he arose and began to try and frame an apology, we dogs at once set up such a din of cheering “bow-wows,” that for perhaps the first time in his life, he was very grateful for them. Anyway, they soothed

his ruffled spirit, and soon he was his own grand dignified self again.

Calling on Muff to read the minutes of the previous session of the council, the unpleasant event was considered closed.

“We will now,” said the chairman, “have the pleasure of listening to a story from our fellow comrade Black.”

Black, as his name suggested, had the blackest coat of any dog in the pack. There was apparently not a white hair on his body. He was a fine, modest, retiring dog, as I have said elsewhere, with a great scar on the side of his head.

At the call of the chairman, he at once walked to the place assigned him, and began his story:

“I was young and foolish when I received the wound, the scar of which you see. I am older now, but I am afraid not much wiser, or I would not have been so foolish and presumptuous as to have consented to occupy the place I now do.”

These modest words, so characteristic of Black, much pleased his comrades, and they broke out into a cheery chorus of “bow-wows,” which Jack did not try to suppress, as he knew they were well deserved.

Continuing, Black said: “You older dogs know I was born in the kennels here, and so have known only the kindness and fair treat-

ment which our kind master insists shall be given to all of his dogs. We have all of us heard his stern words of reproof to any of his drivers, if they happened to lose their tempers, and treat us cruelly. When I was big and old enough to be broken in to be a sleigh-dog, the good master attended to the work himself. The work was done so easily and successfully, that I really hardly remember how it was done. About all I do remember is that I was harnessed up in a train, and my loved master was on a sled drawn by another train, in front of me, and that when I heard his cheery call of 'Black! Black!' all I could do was just to try and run as hard as I could to get to him. Then, when we caught up and ran alongside of his sled, he gave me dainty little bits of pemmican, and said kind words to me.

"Thus was I broken in, without a cross word, or even the blow of a whip, so far as I can remember.

"As many dogs, one winter, died of the distemper, a number of us young dogs were put to hard work earlier than our good master wished, but it could not be helped, as the work had to be done.

"But he saw that we were well fed and cared for, and our kennels made comfortable with plenty of dry beaver meadow hay. So he was

quite proud of us when we had drawn home the fish and hay and plenty of wood for all the fires.

“One day, in the winter, towards spring, there came a young trader, with a sad story about a sick sister some hundreds of miles away. He was very anxious, he said, to go out and see her, but his dogs had died of the distemper, and so he begged very hard for our master to lend him a train of dogs for the trip.

“We all know how kind-hearted our good master is to everybody, and so he decided to let him have the train of four dogs, of which I was one.

“He was charged to be very ‘careful of us and to treat us kindly.’

“This he tried to do, but the load was much heavier than we had expected, and it was a very bad, rough trail. There was with us another train of dogs with an Indian driver.

“The two men of our party were very much troubled with snow-blindness, so we traveled a good deal during the night and rested and slept in the dense woods during the hours of sunshine.

“One night, as we were pushing on, with no light but the stars and the reflection of light from the snow, we heard the distant howlings of a number of wolves. They were far away behind us, but were coming on our trail.

“It was well for us that we had a beaten trail in the snow made by the tripping of some Hudson Bay officers and their Indian dog drivers. Fortunately no blizzard or wind-storm had arisen since they passed along, and so the trail in the packed down snow was as smooth and hard as ice.

“We pulled on as fast as dogs and men could run, as the Indians of our party wisely said: ‘We will surely soon reach their camp, where they spent the night.’

“And so it was. For not more than a mile beyond the place where we first heard the wolves, there was a fine camp dug out of the snow which had been piled up around on three sides; as the Indians made it very comfortable for their masters, the company’s officers.

“We dashed into it, and took possession. The fire of course was all out, as some days had passed since the one night when they had occupied it. There was, however, plenty of cut wood, and so it was not long before a large fire was burning.

“Our two men loaded their guns with bullets, and dragged both of the sleds into the camp, and also called all of us dogs inside. There was plenty of room, as the camp had been formed for several men.

“We could now tell by the howlings of the wolves that they were near at hand.

“The bright fire seemed to frighten them, and for a time their howlings ceased. Our two men were very alert, however, and soon they saw the wolves skulking around our camp to see if there was a place where they could attack us.

“There were plenty of small dead trees all around, but the men had not had time to cut any of them, and so all the wood we had was what had been left by the party who had made the camp.

“So there was not enough to make a circle of fire, and this the wolves seemed to know, as they circled round and round us.

“‘There are only six,’ I heard the Indian whisper to the other man, ‘and with our guns and axes we can master them.’

“The wolves having at length decided that there was only the one fire, made a rush for the back of the camp, but ere they could reach it, two of them were shot dead.

“The noise of the guns, and the seizing of their axes by the men, as well as the near presence of the wolves, so much excited my companion dogs and myself, that we four climbed over the bank of snow which was the back wall of our camp, and rushed at the four wolves.

“It was a terrible blunder we made. The cunning wolves seeing us coming, and not wishing to give battle within range of those mys-

terious guns, quietly retreated before us, until they had lured us some way into the woods.

“In vain did both the men, while rapidly reloading their guns, call us to return. We were mad with excitement, and seeing the wolves retreating, we thought we were able for them, and so at them we rushed.

“It was a terrible battle, but one-sided.

“We could not stand against them. Their sharp teeth cut into us every time their strong jaws closed on us.

“This great scar on my head is the result of the bite of the wolf with which I was fighting. He tried for my throat, but I prevented that. Then, in our struggle, he got his grip on my head.

“I tried to shake him off, and to get at his throat. In this I failed, but when he put up one of his paws to get a firmer grip on me, I managed to seize hold of his leg just above the foot. In it I set my teeth with all the strength I had, for I saw we were in a battle that was life or death. Strange to say, he let go of his grip on my head, and without trying very hard to grip me again, only made the most desperate efforts to get his leg out of my mouth, as we struggled there in the snow. Young and foolish as I was, I had dog sense enough to know by the way he howled, that I had a good grip on him, and I resolved to just hang on.”

Here the excited dog listeners could not restrain their enthusiasm, and so gave Black rounds of applause.

Jack, the chairman, was very indulgent, but at length he called them to order, and Black proceeded with his story.

“There remains,” he said, “but little more to be said. How long the struggle would have continued, I do not know; I fear not very long, for one of the four dogs had already been killed by the wolves, and the other two were badly wounded.

“But sudden was our deliverance. While so desperately struggling with the wolf, I had not noticed the approach of the two men from the camp.

“The first I knew of their presence, was when one of the guns went off so close to my ear that it very much startled me. But it had done its work, and now my teeth were set into the leg of a dead wolf. So desperately had I fastened them into that wolf, that it was hard for me to get them loose. My jaws seemed so set.

“Another gun had also been successful, and two discomfited wolves flitted away in the darkness.

“Poor Swag was quite dead. The surviving three of us went back to the camp with the Indians. With their axes, they cut down some

more trees, and thus secured abundance of wood, and made a bright fire, and by it they sat until daylight, and sewed up the wounds of three foolish dogs, that never since have had any ambition to attack the great northern gray wolves."

With votes of thanks, and some kindly "bow-wows" from the visiting dogs, the council closed just as there were heard the welcome calls for supper.

XIV

THE JOURNEY TO WINNIPEG

THE next day my master and his friend came out to the kennels, and looked at us carefully, and then talked earnestly with each other.

“Come here, Hector!” said my master. “We are going to take you and your mates as an extra train to Fort Garry, to bring out supplies for this good man.

“It is the longest and heaviest trip you have ever made, but I fancy you will do well. Now go to your own kennel with your mates, and tell them to rest and sleep and eat all you can, for your ribs will be showing more plainly than they do now ere you get back.”

This was good news for me, and also to my comrades.

We dogs that had been kept at the mere routine work about the mission, such as drawing wood and fish and hay, were quite jealous of the crack trains that had had the honor of going off on the long journeys that sometimes kept them away for six weeks.

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We imagine that they must have seen a great many wonderful things in that time.

So we home dogs were quite envious of them, and listened with great interest to their stories. We did not seem to notice how thin some of them were when they returned, or how sore and bleeding were many of their feet.

Then of all trips, the one to Fort Garry was the one most talked about.

They saw, they said, at that place, so many people who made a great fuss over them, and on some occasions they had even had beef for food.

Why, the very thought of it made our mouths water. Just think of it; the possibility of us dogs that had nothing but fish, having some meals of beef.

So it was no wonder that we dogs were wild with delight, when we heard that we had been selected to go with the other trains to Fort Garry. Indeed, we were so excited about it, that we could hardly rest and sleep as we had been ordered by our master.

“Come here, Hector, I want to measure your feet.”

Well, of all the queer orders I ever received, this was to me the oddest. And what made it more surprising the questioner was none other than little old Mary, the children's nurse. It seems that my little master had already heard

that I had been selected as one of the dogs to go on this long trip, and as we loved each other very much, more so if possible since his escape from the wolf, when I led the train, he was resolved that everything possible should be done for my comfort.

So the first thing he had thought of was my feet. He had often been full of sorrow at the sight of the sore, bleeding feet of the dogs on their return from some of these long journeys; even Jack and Cuffy had suffered very much. And so the kind-hearted young master had gone to his nurse, and had insisted that she, the best needlewoman among all the Indians, should make my shoes.

Mary had as usual protested against the extra work, but the one word, "Sakehow" (beloved), from the young master whom she simply idolized, broke down all of her objections, and so now here she was measuring my feet most thoroughly.

Some time later, I was brought by Sagastao, the young master, to the kitchen, when, under his eye, the shoes were tried on, and found to fit admirably. They were made of a warm woolen cloth called Duffle. There were over a dozen of them, and I used them all up ere I returned.

The good mistress was quite amused when she heard about Mary's making my shoes. Up to that time she had turned up her nose at the idea

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of her doing any such coarse sewing, but she knew the great love of Mary for Sagastao, and so was not surprised when she heard that he had given her the work to do. The mistress was also wise about these things, and knew that there must be no jealousies among the dogs, even about these shoes. So she appointed Mary to take charge of the Indian women who were called in to make the many scores of shoes that would be required by the many dogs on this long journey. Mary loved to boss folks, as well as to say sharp things to dogs. So she was pleased with her position, and quickly gathered into the large kitchen the required number of Indian women, who, seated on their blankets on the floor, under her energetic directions, speedily did their work. But not a dog-shoe there before those women did Mary make. When her sharp eyes were not on them, she was ostentatiously engaged on some exquisite piece of silk or bead-work.

Dear old Memotas, of the gentle voice, was called to carefully fit our collars, so that without any irritation or suffering, we could best do our work.

I, of course, being only a dog, could not notice everything that was being done to make the long trip a very successful one. Suffice to say, we had all the good white fish we could eat. While our liberty was not restrained yet we were not much

encouraged to romp or play. Rest and sleep seemed to be the wish of our masters and the guide and drivers.

Wise indeed were they as we found later on in the long, long, toilsome journey.

I watched with interest the packing of the heavy sleds which we were to draw. I overheard the masters say, that as they were to sleep many nights in the snow, there must be plenty of blankets and fur robes, also abundance of food, especially fat meat.

As they were to bring heavy loads of supplies back from Fort Garry, they heavily loaded some of the sleds with frozen white fish. The fish were not only to be the food of us dogs going to our destination, but quantities of them were to be *cached* away in the deep snow in convenient places, that we could have them for our suppers when we were returning home.

This plan would enable our masters to put much heavier loads on our sleds at Fort Garry.

I was rather humiliated, when I found that the sled of which I was to be the leader of the train was loaded with nothing but frozen fish. But I soon found out, as we traveled on day by day, that it was a good thing for us, as at each evening camp, so many were taken off for food and to be *cached* away for us on our return trip,

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that our sled was so much the lighter, and so much the easier to draw.

Tom Grieve was our guide, and Martin was the driver of my train. Sagastao, my little master, had arranged that Martin should drive us. He knew that although Martin was a thorough driver, he would not punish us unless it was well-deserved.

Voyageur, the great leader, was of course to be at the head. The other dogs of the master's train were Jack, Cuffy and Muff.

The last evening, while we were having our suppers, the masters and drivers came and looked us over. They seemed pleased that we all looked so well.

“Rest and sleep well to-night, doggies,” they said, “for early to-morrow we start.”

The stars were still shining when the drivers, with their harness with their little silvery bells jingling, came for us.

My! but it was bitterly cold outside of our warm kennels. But what cared we for that. The collars were speedily on our necks, the heavily-loaded sleds were dragged out of the fish-house, and each train of four dogs harnessed in tandem style, was speedily attached. The guide and drivers had come from their homes in the village where they had had their breakfasts, but our thoughtful, loving mistress had had an extra

meal prepared for them in the big mission kitchen, and so when the sleds were all prepared and the trains attached, they gratefully partook of the warm meal and many cups of tea.

Then all went into a front room, and we dogs heard our good mistress' voice leading in song, and although we poor dogs are not supposed to know much about these things, yet it did sound to us like: "God be with you till we meet again." Then when the singing ceased, we were awed, as we heard our master talk to some one with great reverence, whom he thanked for His past protecting care and asked to still watch over them all, those in the house, and those out in the wintry cold.

A strange hush fell upon us dogs, for we can tell much by the tones of voices, as we heard Sagastao and Minnehaha weeping, and as our master heard them, even his strong, firm voice was full of emotion at the grief of his little ones, at the long parting, and the lonely home which would be theirs and their dear mother's, in that lonely northern house. But it was only for a little while that they showed their grief, and then they were all brave again. And as the door opened, and Tom the guide and Kennedy came out with their master's robes and blankets, we caught glimpses through that open door of the master and the brave mistress and the two chil-

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dren, kissing each other and saying "good-bye."

This was something that we dogs could not fully understand, nor the meaning of all their parting words, but there was something like: "Hoping soon to meet again."

They then all came out into the bitter cold, even to old Mary. But it was evident that her sole thought was about the children. She busied herself about their wrappings, and apparently saw no one else.

Sagastao first went and said "good-bye" to big Jack and Cuffy, and then he came to me, and putting his arms around my neck, he said:

"Good-bye, Hector, my own doggie dear. You saved me from the big wolf that wanted to eat me, and I am sorry you and Billy, Boxer and Buster are going away for six weeks. I shall miss you and dear father very much."

Then his voice broke, and as I looked up, I saw that he was weeping, and some of his tears fell upon my head. So I loved him more than ever.

And now the master had taken his place, and the guide and drivers all go and shake hands with the mistress, whom they all so love, and who has a cheery, kind word for each of them.

Numbers of the Indians have come to see us off, and to cry, "What cheer! What cheer!" As there were so many dog-sleds and trains, the

last thing the guide does, is to arrange our places in the procession.

Voyageur, of course, leads in the master's train. The visitor, his loved friend, comes next. To my great joy, the master said: "Let Hector's train come next."

This plan made Koonna very angry, for he was very ambitious, and here he found himself placed far back.

Soon, however, we all were placed, and were expected to travel in that order unless some accident occurred. My! but what a noise we did set up. Such barkings and shaking of our musical bells, and such jumping and springing in our traces.

Our masters smiled, and were pleased, and said:

"Our dogs are in splendid spirits. We hope they will feel as well in six weeks' time."

Now when everything seemed ready for us to start, and we were waiting for the master to give the word to the guide, there was a scene that could touch even the heart of a dog, even if, as a dog, he could not fully understand.

The master had taken his place in his cariole, and as Kennedy was packing in the robes around him, there burst out a cry so pitiful, that even we dogs were startled.

It came from wee sweet little Minnehaha, who

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had been picked up by Mary to be carried back into the house.

“Let me kiss my dear father again,” she said.

When Mary carried her to her father’s cariole, she fairly threw herself into his arms, as there he was already seated. Throwing her arms around his neck, as well as she could, for he was bundled up in his furs, she pressed her little rosy face into his, and wailed: “Oh, father! father! don’t go away so long and leave us here all alone. Mother and Sagastao and I are so lonesome without you. And Mary tells us about the wolves and the blizzards and the storms, and your sleeping every night in the cold woods in a hole in the snow, and we never hear from you all the time you are away. Don’t go, father! Don’t go!”

Then the mother came, and without a word—for what word could there be said—she gently lifted up the sobbing child, and carried her into the house.

“All right, Tom!” said the master to the guide, but his voice was low and still.

The drivers shouted out “Marche!” to their different trains, and the long journey was begun.

XV

ON THE TRAIL

“**W**ELL, Hector!” said Jack to me, as we sat close together the first night near the camp-fire, while our drivers were thawing out our fish for our supper. “What do you think of this kind of work? Would you not rather have remained at home and hauled wood or fish all day, and then had your fish well prepared in the kitchen, and then your warm kennel in which to sleep, instead of sitting out here in the snow in the woods, and blinking into the fire?”

This question of Jack's was so unexpected that for a moment it quite upset me. For the fact was, I had begun the day's work with so much energy as well as delight, that now as I sat there in the snow, watching with one eye the fiery sparks with their long tails flying up above us, and the other eye on the fish thawing for our supper, my body was weary, and my feet were cold. So for an instant, as I thought of the warm kennels with their abundance of dry beaver meadow hay, instead of the snow in which I was sitting, a bit of a shiver ran through me, which Jack did not

fail to notice, and which I am afraid was even seen by my master, who sat quite near to us.

But it was only for a moment, and then, as I saw the splendid dogs that I was permitted to call my comrades, and these picked Indian drivers, every one of whom was kind-hearted, and especially when I thought of my kind master who had taken me from a life of cruelty, and who was here sitting at this same camp-fire with no roof above him, and exposed to the same bitter cold and storms, there entered into me a spirit of pride and delight, and I was able in my best dog language to tell Jack truthfully, that I was proud to be in the company of, and permitted to now call myself, one of the dogs that our master honored with his greatest confidence, in giving to them the most responsible work to do, which could possibly be ours to perform.

As I finished my answer to Jack, which much pleased him, I happened to look at my master, and I saw that his look was kindly and encouraging. Then it came to me that he had first seen my depression, and then the spirit of pride of service that had come to me as I had answered, even if he had not understood my language.

But just then the calls of our drivers were heard that our suppers were ready, and as, when at hard work, we get only one meal a day, we were eager for it, and so lost no time in gathering

together as trains, where each driver fed his own four dogs, and took great care to see that there was no stealing by the stronger dogs, of the fish of the younger or weaker.

But it seems to me that I have begun my story of the day's doings at the wrong end. So before I am tired and sleepy, and cuddle down on the outside of one of my master's robes near to the place where are Jack and Cuffy, I will try and tell of some of the events of the day.

We had for the first day or two, the trail over which many hunters had passed. This enabled us to make good progress, and so it was not long after sunrise the first morning when we reached what our drivers called the old fort.

We dogs here had a short rest while the men cut down some small, dry trees, cleaned away the snow, built up a roaring fire, and there cooked a good, warm, second breakfast for themselves.

Soon after we were traveling on great Lake Winnipeg, which was solidly frozen over. Tom Grieve, the guide, up to this time had been running on ahead of the trains. Now, after what they call the first spell, that is, a run of a couple of hours or so, he had a talk with the master. I did not of course understand all that was said, but I was startled when I heard the master say :

“Let Voyageur show us what he can do! and,” added the master, “it will be more pleasant for

you to come on behind, in company with the drivers."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom. "It does get a little lonesome at times, and I am proud to be your guide. However, there is no need of me now at the front, on this great lake, with such a leader as Voyageur."

So to the matchless Voyageur, the leader dog, that had no equal, was given the work of guiding us on from point to point on that great Lake Winnipeg, and so well did he do his work that all the guide had to do, when the point or headland on the lake was reached, was for him to take his place again at the head, and lead us up from the lake into the forest, until a suitable camping-place was found.

Voyageur showed himself worthy of the confidence reposed in him. All the master had to do was to show him the distant headland or point, reaching far out into the lake twenty or thirty miles away, and say:

"Voyageur, old dog, do you see that point so far away? There is our next stopping-place. Now for it, old fellow!"

With a spring he was off. His work was to go in a straight line to the point indicated, and also to set the pace at which we were all to travel.

I found among the dogs, that as we talked

over the matter among ourselves, the common opinion was, that when Voyageur led, more miles were traveled each day than when either Tom or Papanekis was at the front.

To keep Voyageur and his train in sight, there must be no loitering on the way by any of the dogs following. Indeed, some of the slower dogs were inclined to grumble at the great pace that Voyageur set up.

"He don't stop as often to light his pipe as do the guides," said Koono.

At this quaint remark we dogs all grinned with amusement.

The idea of a dog smoking, and especially glum old Voyageur, seemed so ridiculous, that it was some time before we could settle quietly down again.

Then when we began thinking it over, we saw that there was a good deal of force in Koono's odd words.

We remembered that the frequent rests or "smokes" as they were called by some, were quite frequent in the long stretches, when a guide who was fond of his pipe was leading. Then we dogs rested while the men smoked.

Now that Voyageur led, there were no calls for stopping for "smokes" until our master called to Voyageur to stop. And as master did not smoke, he did not call for a halt until it was needed.

At Montreal Point, and several other places, we dogs again rested, while our masters and the Indians had a fire made and food prepared.

Towards evening, Tom, the guide, after a brief consultation with the master, took his place in front, and the journey was resumed. He speedily led us into the forest from the lake, and we tired dogs found the traveling in the deep, dry snow among the trees very much harder work than it was out on the frozen lake.

Fortunately for us, he did not lead us very far into the dense forest before he suddenly stopped, and then as Voyageur led up his train to the spot where he stood, he said something like this :

“Here is a capital place for a good camp! Plenty of dry wood for the fire, and green spruce and balsam-trees to shelter us from any storm that may come up.”

“All right, Tom; as usual, you have struck the right spot,” cheerily replied my master.

Then for a time there was great excitement among us, as train after train reached the place.

We dogs were speedily unharnessed, and it was a great relief to get the collars off our necks. Many of us rolled in the dry snow, and rubbed noses, and uttered the usual friendly compliments which pass between dogs well acquainted when they meet.

I noticed, as I wandered about, that while

young dogs, like myself, kept moving around, the older dogs looked out for sheltered places, and at once dug down through the snow, and then turned round and round until they had made quite cozy resting-places for themselves in the dry, fleecy snow. Then they lay down, and throwing their fine tails, which most of them had, over their faces, went to sleep, and there remained until called to their suppers by their drivers.

While we dogs were thus free to act as we desired at the evening camp, our masters and the Indians were very busy, and as each night's camp is very much alike, I will just here try to tell, as far as a dog could observe, what they did as each day's trip ended.

As Tom said to the master the first night: "Plenty of dry wood for the fire, and green spruce-trees to protect them from the trees." So this was what was sought for at the close of each day's journey. And as it was not always easy to find such a place, we had to pull the sleds many a weary mile ere Tom was satisfied.

But when the spot was found that pleased him, everybody at once went to work. The master was as busy as were the others. Dry trees were cut down for the great fire. Snow-shoes were used as shovels, and the camp was prepared by the snow being piled up in great banks as walls,

on three sides, while on the fourth side, a little in front, was the great fire of burning logs. On this hot fire the suppers of our masters and their men were prepared, and at one side of it the frozen fish were thawed out for the one meal of the day for us dogs.

We dogs were always fed first. This at first very much surprised me, but it showed the love of our master for us. So it was a rule never broken, that no matter how hungry the men might be, and there were often long runs that had lasted many hours, where on the great frozen lakes where of course there was no dry wood where the kettle could be boiled, yet at the night camp they had to wait until we dogs were first fed.

We were each given two white fish for our supper, which, as I have said, was the only meal of the day. At first, I, like the foolish dog that I was, thought as we were now doing such heavy work, we ought to have had something to eat in the morning ere we started on our long day's work. Indeed, I was silly enough to brood over this until I began to feel that we were badly treated.

One night, when some of us dogs were resting near together after our day's work was done, I mentioned the matter to them.

“You silly dog!” chorused a number of the

older dogs. "If you should eat in the morning, you would be fit for nothing all day."

I did not believe them then, but I did soon after. Foolish dog that I was, I made up my mind to try and get a morning breakfast.

Here my troubles began, for, of course, I had to steal it. But being part Eskimo in my blood, I had not much trouble in doing that. For as I prowled around, I noticed that Martin, my driver, having, I suppose, such confidence in the honesty of us, had, the previous evening, in taking out the necessary number of fish for our supper, only thrown back the deerskin coverings over the rest, without securely tying them down. So it was not difficult for me to cautiously skulk around the next morning, and without attracting any attention from the sleeping men or tired dogs, work back the deerskin, and help myself to a fine fish.

My! but it was hard. Now I could see how kind and thoughtful it was of our master to have our fish well thawed out before they were fed to us.

This one I had stolen was so hard that it was almost impossible for me to cut into it with my sharp teeth.

Then it did not seem to taste better than so much ice. But I had begun that fish, and I knew that I must finish it or I would get into trouble. It took me a long time and ere I was through with

it, my mouth was bleeding, and I felt as cold as ice. Matters were not improved when, as I looked around, there I saw Martin my driver, looking at me. I saw he was disappointed in me, and also indignant.

“Your Eskimo blood will come out in spite of all the kindness shown you,” was about all he said. But, nevertheless, he caught me, and gave me a good whipping, which warmed me up considerably.

That day I was in disgrace, and my train was set back far in the line, even behind the train of Koonna, and the mischievous rascal gave full vent to his “bow-wows” of delight. At first I was very sorry to be so far back from my beloved master, and even behind Koonna; but before the day was over I was glad my master could not see me, for I was no good at all that day. I could hardly drag myself along. I was so short-winded and stupid. Well was it for me that Billy, Boxer and Buster, the other three dogs behind me, were strong and willing, for I hardly did anything more than keep my traces tight.

That night I purposely went and lay down near some of the dogs with whom I had had the talk about morning meals, and told them of my experience that day.

Some of them grinned, and said:

“We tried the same plan, and learned the same

lesson that you have learned, that working dogs, when very busy, do their best work on the one evening meal of the day."

When Martin fed us that night, he gave me only one fish. The other, which should have been mine, he divided into three parts, and gave it to the three dogs that were behind me in the train, and that had done my work as well as their own that day.

The next day, even Martin said something about hoping that I had learned my lesson, and to my great joy he put our train up again in its place near the front.

The nights were very cold ; but when no storms were howling around us, there seemed to be any amount of pleasant chat and laughter among the two masters and their men, as they gathered around the great roaring camp-fire when they, as well as we dogs, had had their evening meal.

So, while Voyageur and the other unsociable dogs were settled down in their well-prepared nests in the snow, there were others of us who loved to sit around near the fire and listen to the merry talk, even if we did not understand much of it.

But the work was heavy, and it was not long ere our heads began to nod, and we, too, were glad to cuddle down in the best spot we could find, and go to sleep.

When the nights were more bitterly cold than usual, my good master would let me sleep on the warm fur robes that covered him, near to Jack and Cuffy, who being house dogs, always slept thus with him in the camp. I noticed that Jack always slept at our master's back, while Cuffy preferred to sleep on the robes at his feet.

I was much interested in watching the Indians each night *caching* or hiding away as many fish as they thawed out for us dogs at each camp-fire. "These fish thus hid away," said some of the older dogs to me, "are to be our food each night on our return journey, and the reason why our drivers are so particular in selecting their hiding-places, is to put them where the wolves will not find them."

As the days passed on, some of the dogs began to feel the ill effects of the very hard work and the bitter cold. It was hard work, indeed; the hardest continuous work I had ever known. But our masters and drivers endured it, and so of course we dogs had to do our share. The worst part of it seemed to be the early starting in the morning.

Long hours before daylight the men were up. They had slept in the camp near the master, each one wrapped up in a single rabbit-skin robe. When no fierce wolves howled around us, the fires had burned low, or even gone entirely out.

But it did not take these active men, even with no light but the stars, to speedily gather the wood and have a great camp-fire burning. The morning meal, for the masters and themselves, was speedily cooked by some of them, while others rearranged their sleds and harnessed up the dogs.

It was now, in these cold, early hours, that I began to see the first signs of any of the dogs showing any sulkiness or disposition to shirk from their work.

Some of them seemed to be strangely deaf, or even to forget their own names. Call as loudly as they would, the drivers would meet with no response from some of their dogs. The result was, they had to go after them, and even then it was no easy matter to find them, especially when the forest was dense, and there was no light but that from the snow and stars. Koona was one of the hardest to find, for he paid not the slightest attention to his driver, and being perfectly white, and always making his bed in the spotless snow, he had to be almost stepped upon before he was found. As this was his usual habit, his driver, ere he lay down to sleep, observed where Koona had prepared his nest, and then in the morning was able to easily find him.

It was not very long, however, before Koona found this out; and so when all was still, and the

men asleep, he quietly changed his resting-place, and so it was as difficult as ever to find him.

This so annoyed his driver that one night after all had had their suppers and the men were sitting around the camp-fire, he went out and brought in Koonna, and chilling a lot of the burning coals in the snow, and then grinding them into coal dust, he blackened Koonna from his nose to the end of his beautiful tail. So the driver the next morning, and the next, had no trouble in finding his dog; and strange to say, Koonna never tried that trick again, but resorted to other expedients, and he had many of them, to outwit his driver.

XVI

ATTACKED BY WOLVES

THIS provoking habit of some of the tired dogs in refusing to respond when their names were called, at length became not only annoying, but at times quite a serious matter, as it prevented the beginning of the journey as promptly as was desired. The fact that some of the dogs were now skulking every morning was very annoying to their drivers, and so they requested our master to have Jack help them to put a stop to what was now becoming a very serious matter.

The master heartily agreed to their request, for he, too, was troubled by the delays. So to Jack was assigned the work of bringing these skulking dogs to time, and thoroughly and well did he do his work.

As I was now permitted, whenever I desired it, to sleep in or near the camp, I was able to see the way in which Jack did his work.

All that was necessary for the driver of the missing dogs to do was to bring to the master the collars of the truants.

“Here, Jack!” the master would say. “Go and bring in the dog that wears this collar.”

All that Jack had to do was to take one quick sniff at the collar, and then instantly he was off, plunging through the snow around the camp, until he got onto the scent of that skulking dog.

It would not be long before we heard his fierce, roaring bark that told us that he had found the culprit, and was now driving him into the camp.

The collar of another absentee would then be shown him, and speedily would that dog be found and hurried in to his driver.

Jack soon became so clever at this work, that soon there was not much delay in securing the dogs.

One morning, as the master saw me so much interested in watching Jack thus bringing in the skulkers, he said to me:

“Well, Hector! Do you think you could do that kind of work?”

Delighted to be thus even asked such a question, and conceited and ignorant as I was, I barked out my delight; and so when my master put to my nose the collar of a missing dog, I instantly caught the scent, and away I went as fast as I could run to find him.

I plunged on and on through the deep snow until a whiff of wind brought to me the scent of

that dog for which I was looking. Turning up against it, I soon ran against my dog.

With all the assurance imaginable, I there tried to imitate Jack's fierce bark, and sprang at him in an effort to drive him before me.

But very suddenly my courage oozed out, as I found myself face to face with the biggest and fiercest dog in the train of my master's friend.

Without waiting for any further acquaintance, I turned instantly, and rushed back to the camp with that fierce dog at my heels.

Fortunately for me, there stood my master and his friend, both of them laughing at my discomfiture.

One sharp, stern word from my master's friend to his dog, suddenly stopped him, and thus I escaped a much-deserved thrashing for my presumption.

I had, however, the satisfaction of hearing my master say as they continued to talk and laugh on the matter :

“Well, Hector brought him into the camp anyway, and so he did his work.”

But I would rather have been behind him than in front, when we made our entry. After that experience I left this kind of work to Jack.

Thus on and on we journeyed day after day. The ice at times was very rough, and our poor feet became very sore, and often bled so freely

that in places the trail was marked with blood.

It was now that we felt the value of the warm woolen shoes which our thoughtful mistress had had old Mary and the Indian women make for us.

They were so warm and comfortable, that after we became accustomed to them, we were ever eager to have our drivers put them on to our sore, cold feet. Indeed, so eager had we become for them, that I fear that there were times that we begged and called for them, when we could have done without them.

One night we were thrown into a state of great excitement by the distant howlings of some wolves. The dogs that were sleeping some distance from the camp, came rushing in in a great hurry. They were very much excited, and nearly all of them showed by their trembling that they were in great fear of those savage creatures.

Our party was such a large one, and so well prepared for such an attack as this, that there was no fear on the part of any one. The master did not even order the fire to be circled round the camp, as would have been done if our party had been a small one.

The guide and drivers were, however, all set to work to prepare a place near the fire, sufficiently large in which all of the dogs could be gathered.

This place was additionally strengthened by the sleds all being placed around it.

With abundance of wood to keep the one large fire burning brightly, and with rifles and loaded guns, our masters and their men patiently awaited the oncoming of the wolves.

There were not many of them, and so they were at first more cautious than a larger pack would have been.

We dogs at first could not make out for some time what they were doing, as their howlings had ceased when they came near our camp. But as the wind was blowing, we soon detected by their scent which came to us, that they were circling around us; I suppose, to see if there was any weak place where they could rush up to us with any chance of success.

Whenever a strong whiff of their scent came on the wind to us, I noticed that Nelson and Black and some of the other dogs that had had encounters with them, trembled very much.

But our master's eye was upon us all: and he was quick to detect these signs of fear, and so with kindly, reassuring words and some loving caresses of his hand, as he came and moved among us, he quieted us all down, so that we did not even reply to the saucy challenges of the wolves.

Jack and Cuffy, that were as usual in the

master's camp near to him, were very alert and watchful.

We dogs had sometimes wondered what sort of a battle it would be if ever Jack and a great northern gray wolf should have an encounter. There were times when there could have been such a battle, but the master thought too much of the splendid dog, and so the bullet, and not Jack, quickly ended the wolf's career.

While the wolves were now more cautiously approaching, I thought I understood in the quiet conversation that went on between our masters and the Indians, the question of urging the whole of our dogs to rush out and attack the wolves after the first volley had been fired among them.

When my master, who had been quiet until others had spoken, did speak, his words were strong and emphatic against the idea. He said:

"We are not here as wolf hunters. Our dogs are tired with the days of heavy traveling. Many of them have sore feet. Others of them bear marks of previous battles with wolves. Even if they should conquer, a number of them may be badly wounded, and thus unfitted for our work. There must be no battle between the dogs and the wolves to-night. One volley from your guns will doubtless drive those that survive the bullets howling back to the forest."

Our master's word was law, and so we dogs

were, much to my delight, kept very quiet in the camp.

I was fearfully frightened, for I remembered not only the stories of Nelson and Black, but also what my mother told me when I was a little puppy, cuddled with my brothers in the deserted goose-nest in the forest.

“Lie down!” sternly said our master.

This word of command was now sorely needed, for in spite of his soothing words and even caresses of a short time before, there were some of the more nervous dogs that found it almost impossible to keep still. They really acted as though they would like to dash out of the camp in the opposite direction from that in which the wolves were evidently approaching.

When the wolves reached a place just out of the range of our masters' guns, there they halted and seemed disposed to remain.

To Tom, our guide, who was a famous hunter, and well knew the habits of wolves, was given the place of danger, and that was to go out some distance from the camp towards the wolves, and there, standing up on a snow-covered log, where the light of the camp-fire clearly shone upon him, let himself be plainly seen by the wolves.

There he was to attract their attention by his shouts, and then, as though filled with fear, turn and rush back to the camp.

The ruse succeeded admirably. The sight of but one unarmed man in rapid retreat, and his cry of fear, seemed to cause the generally cunning brutes to lose their caution, and so with howls of anticipated triumph, they rapidly followed Tom quite close up to the camp.

The guide had no sooner jumped into the camp and taken his place and seized his gun, than, at the arranged signal given by the master, the guns, not altogether, but in quick succession, were fired, as no man wished to waste a bullet on a wolf already hit.

We dogs, that had been so sternly ordered to keep quiet, were very much excited, as the wolves made their wild rush towards the camp after our guide, whose shouts we had not been able at first to understand. The rapid firing of the guns nearly deafened us, and we could only crouch down in terror.

But very suddenly our fears were gone. For we dogs perhaps better understand the language of wolves than do our masters, and so when quickly after the noise of the firing of the guns we heard the howls of pain and rage and disappointment of the wolves, we knew that the danger was over.

As rapidly as possible the men kept loading their guns, and firing at any wolf within range.

With the disappearance of the few that had not

been hit or badly wounded, my comrades and myself were very much delighted, and felt ourselves to be ready for anything.

It was well for us that our masters and drivers were wiser than we dogs were. We were wild and eager to rush out and see the wolves that had been shot. This our masters would not permit until the men had reloaded their guns, and with blazing torches had gone out first.

It was well that they did this, as they found some of the wolves, although badly wounded, yet able to fight most desperately.

After we had heard the firing of a few guns, we were allowed to go out and see the once fierce brutes, now powerless to injure us.

Nelson, however, would not go near them. He remembered how one that had been pretending to be dead had suddenly sprung up and snapped off the greater part of his tail.

The men allowed us dogs to look at the wolves for a time to quiet us. Then they sternly ordered us all off to our beds again. From where I slept, or pretended to, I saw that the men slept but little that night. They were very busily engaged in skinning those wolves. The skins they rolled up into as small bundles as possible.

In the morning, when they had frozen solid, they were packed upon our sleds, and dragged by us dogs to Fort Garry.

We understood our master to say that there was one apiece for each dog-driver and the guide. We also heard later on that they sold them to John Company at Fort Garry, and were quite proud of the nice things they got for them to carry home to their families.

We were late in starting the next morning, owing to the attack upon our camp by the wolves. We all felt the loss of our sleep, and so there was not much said by masters or drivers.

The only bit of excitement that came to us that day, was when we were speeding on over the frozen lake some miles out from shore. There were numbers of heavily wooded islands on either side of us, and when near them we saw that they were fairly well stocked with rabbits.

When passing between two of these islands we saw a beautiful black fox come out from among the evergreen trees, on one of these islands, and after looking at us for a minute or so, he started off on a leisurely gallop ahead of us.

The sight of him much excited us dogs; but harnessed up as we were to our loaded sleds, we could not catch him. This he seemed to know, and so he saucily galloped on ahead of us for miles, and then after vexing us with some of his foxy yelps, he turned off and disappeared in one of the densely covered islands.

Thus on and on we traveled day after day.

Every night the men hid away a quantity of the frozen fish for us to have as our suppers on the return journey.

The attack of the wolves upon us showed that they were alert and active, and so we dogs heard the men saying that they feared that in spite of all their care in hiding away the fish, there was a good deal of danger that the wolves would discover and so devour them.

“Jack! Jack! What is the matter?”

In dog language I found myself one night thus calling out to my big trusty friend that was sleeping not far from me in the camp.

A heavy fall of snow had come down upon us one night after we had gone to sleep.

With a start I had suddenly awoke to find myself nearly buried in the snow.

Jack's quick ears had heard my frightened question, and so knowing by experience what was best to do, he said in quiet tones :

“Keep perfectly still, Hector, where you are. You are better off than you will be if you move around, and thus let the snow which is on top of you get under you.”

This was good advice on the part of Jack, for under me was part of a warm buffalo robe on which I was resting very comfortably, and so even what little dog sense I had was sufficient to show me that if I got up and shook myself, there

was sufficient snow on me to completely ruin my bed.

Reassured thus by Jack that there was no immediate danger, I cuddled down as well as I could in my resting-place, and soon went to sleep, even if there was, as I afterwards learned, over two feet of snow on us all.

Men and dogs and sleds and everything else were all covered with snow, that when my first fears about it were allayed by Jack's reassuring words, I found really added to my comfort.

It was so light and feathery that we could easily breathe through it, and the air around us was so cold that this snow did not melt upon us. Neither did it melt upon the robes or blankets of our masters or dog-drivers, but we heard them say it very much added to their comfort and warmth.

We all found, both men and dogs, that the worst time was the getting up. The snow was very deep, and it was so difficult to move about.

But a few cheery words from our masters sent us dogs so gamboling and playing about, that we soon packed down a good deal of it near the camp.

Our active men brought up amidst such things speedily set to work; and using their big snowshoes as shovels, they soon cleared away most of

the snow out of the camp, and from the spot where the fires had been smothered out.

A great fire was speedily rekindled, and soon the place looked as bright and cheery as ever. So even a camp in the woods is not such a bad place after all, when the men are kind-hearted and the dogs do their work.

XVII

FORT GARRY AND WINNIPEG

WHEN we emerged the next morning from the dense forest in which we had slept that night out on to the great lake, and resumed our journey, we were in the great storm which was now a first-class blizzard.

It was indeed a dreadful storm, and one full of danger.

It rolled along the surface of the lake like a great dense cloud, and it seemed to howl like a great savage beast that was anxious to devour us. It came directly from the north as a fierce, strong wind, and just lifted up and drove on with it the great fall of snow of the previous night. If it had been merely the high wind roaring by over the hard icy surface of Lake Winnipeg, we would not so have dreaded it. But as it roared along and lifted up the enormous snowfall, making it impossible for men or dogs to see many yards ahead, we saw in this its danger. The only reason why our master and the guide decided that we might venture to resume our journey was the fact that the wind was behind us and would really help us on.

Fortunately for us dogs and men, we had in our party those who had often been in these terrible blizzards, and so aware of their dangerous, treacherous character, knew well how to act.

Our seven trains, of four dogs each, were six of them doubled up, the odd train was the master's, in front, with *Voyageur* in the lead. The other six trains, side by side in twos, followed up after.

The train in which I was leading was one of the first pair, and so I was close up at one side of the cariole in which was my loved master, and many a cheery word he said to me.

All of the trains were tied together, and even some of the drivers slipped through their belt the tail rope of a sled, as it would have been death to any one who, wandering a few yards away from the company, could not find his way back.

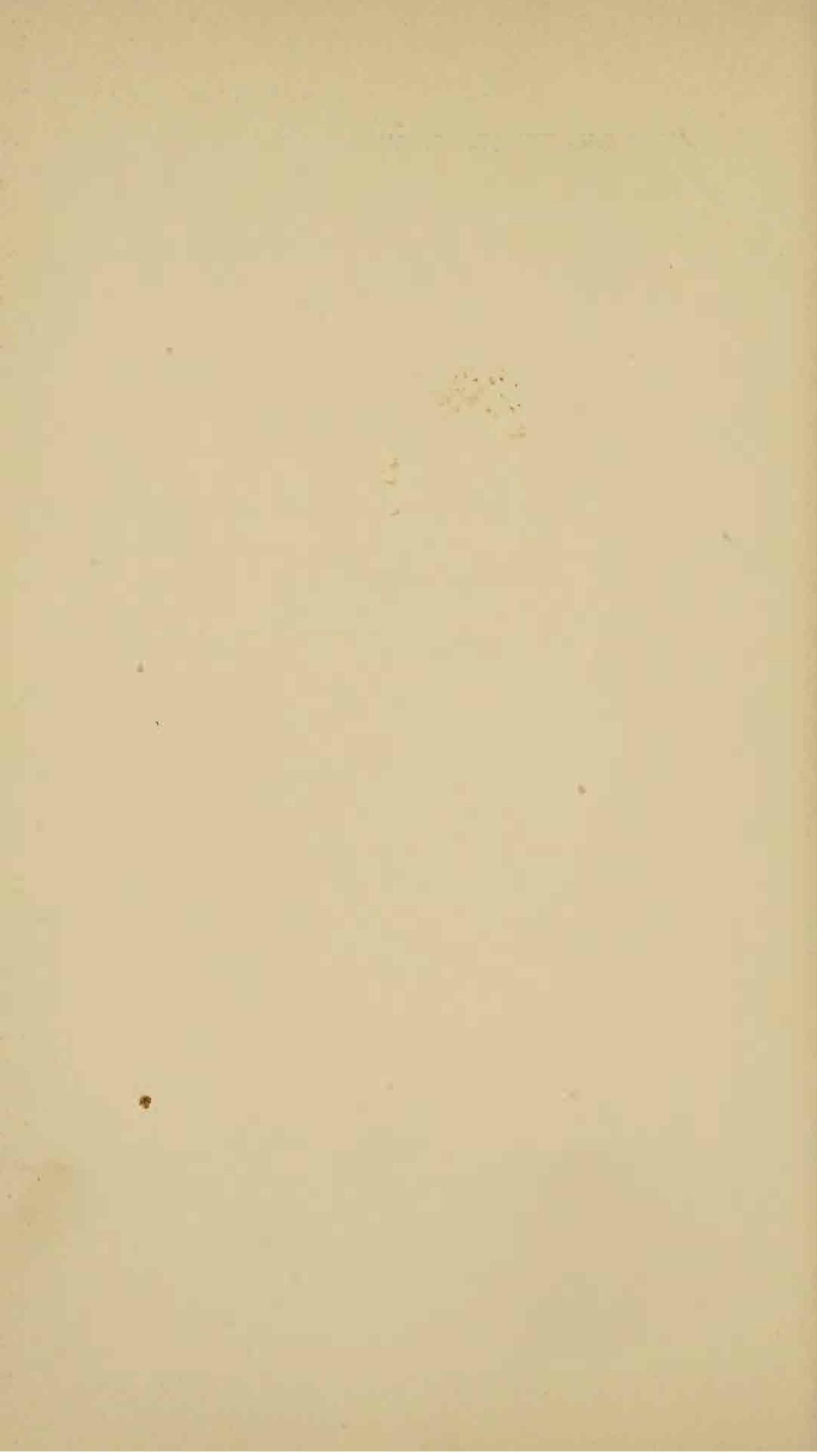
Tom, the guide, ran along beside *Voyageur*, and Martin took charge of the master's cariole. The other drivers had but little to do, as the trains were so massed together.

With roarings and shriekings that were far louder than any howlings of the fiercest pack of wolves, the terrible blizzard storm passed over us.

Sometimes the quantity of snow that was hurled at us seemed as though it would really bury us. Then sharp and stern were the com-



"WITH ROARINGS AND SHRIEKINGS . . . THE TERRIBLE BLIZZARD
STORM PASSED OVER US"



mands of the drivers, who well knew our danger if there should be a panic, or we should get discouraged in our struggles in the deep as well as driving snow.

My master's cheery voice, and the pat of his fur-covered hand on my head, as I struggled alongside of his cariole, was all that I needed to save me from any fear.

I have often thought over and pondered about how or why it is that we dogs give ourselves so completely up to our masters. At a kind look or a loving word we are their slaves to live and die for them. And as here in this awful blizzard, in danger of death, if we hear their voices of cheer and encouragement, we lose all fear, and in their courage we are brave, and in their confidence we lose all anxiety. Who can explain all this? I am only a dog, and so while I know all this is true, I cannot understand it.

I have often talked this matter over with other dogs, and to those of them who are wise enough to ponder over such questions, it has been to them a subject beyond their grasp. But we have all come to this conclusion, that if men only knew how willing and anxious we were to please them and to be ever loyal and true to them whom we love to call our masters, they would be more patient with us, remembering we are only dogs, after all, and are sometimes slow to understand

their meaning. Then, because we do not always know what they want us to do, they call us sulky and headstrong, and punish us when we really do not deserve it.

The blizzard raged with such fury that day that it blew itself out before night. That is, all the light dry snow was lifted off the ice before the daylight ended, and then although the high wind still blew fiercely, as the snow was all gone, the great lake was smooth and hard again, and with the wind behind us, we made great progress until we reached the place where Tom found a good camp. But the masters and the Indians had nothing to eat from morning until night, as the blizzard would not let us stop for a meal.

At one of our camps the rabbits were very numerous, and so, although we were very tired, some of us younger dogs started off on a rabbit hunt. We succeeded in getting very near to a number of them, but they were too clever for us, and we still had to be content with fish for supper.

At a place called Willow Islands, Tom, the guide, took his place again at the front as we here left the great lake and struck into the forest. He led us on and on for many miles, and then we young dogs, who had never been on such a trip before, were startled when we arrived at a place

where there were large houses and white people as well as Indians.

What most amazed us was to meet on the hard, well-beaten trail which we had now struck, strange wood sleds that were drawn by great large creatures that they called horses. At first we dogs were very much frightened at the sight of them, for if they had been fierce like wolves we would soon have been destroyed, for they were so large.

We did not stop on the way until we reached the biggest place I ever saw. We heard our master call it the Lower Fort.

We saw our masters kindly welcomed by a white master whom they called Mr. Flett. After he had talked to our masters, and had some men take them and their things into the great big house, Mr. Flett turned to some Indians there and told them to take us to his kennels, and see that we were well treated. The guide and drivers were all well cared for.

It was very pleasant for us to be once more well sheltered in warm kennels.

Our drivers prepared melted tallow, and carefully rubbed it over our sore, bleeding feet. Then they pulled on warm new flannel dog-shoes, and told us that we were to have two or three days' rest ere our master made the run of twenty miles to Fort Garry.

When we had our supper that night, it was of beef, which Mr. Flett had given to our master in exchange for a lot of our good white fish. My! but it tasted good.

We had queer times at Fort Garry, or rather at the little village of Winnipeg, as the people had then begun to call it. Jack and Cuffy were sent off on a visit somewhere, and the rest of us dogs were left by our masters in charge of a man who had a stable in which he tried to keep us.

The first day or two we were quiet enough, because we were not only still tired, but footsore, as the result of our heavy trip of about four hundred miles.

We were also upset and dazed by the number of people we saw at the many houses and sleds, and the noise and stir, so different from the quiet, lonely life of the far-away land where we lived. So while all these things, so very different from what we had been accustomed to, excited us, they also at first quieted us, and we remained in the stable together and behaved ourselves.

Our good master had given strict orders that we should be well fed, as they wanted us to be in the finest condition for the return journey.

The first day or two this was done, and always when our masters were present. But we dogs were not such fools but that we noticed that when neither of our masters were present that we

did not get more than half of our usual allowance of food, and then it was some boiled up stuff instead of the good meat which our masters had promised to pay for.

So it was not long until we began, in dog fashion, to talk it over and even to grumble. Then soon after the trouble commenced. The first thing we did that caused a row was to cut through a door with our teeth into a room, off the one in which we were kept, and there speedily pull down and devour some large pieces of beef and mutton that we believed had been kept from us.

The owner of it was the man who was supposed to be well feeding us. He was furious at the loss of his meat, but our masters declared that we must have done it because he had been neglecting us, and we were hungry.

Fortunately the Indian boy whom this stingy man had had to help him, and who knew how poorly we had been treated, spoke up and said it was true; that when they, the masters, were not present we were fed but little, and that not so good as the man was being paid for.

This made our masters indignant, so they took us to another place where we were better treated.

But a spirit of mischief had got into us, and I am afraid we gave a lot of anxiety to our kind masters as well as to others. Also it was said we

afforded much amusement to many others, and even set the whole village of Winnipeg laughing about us.

One of the first things we did was, one forenoon, to break out of our quarters, which was an old disused log house. We all marched down into the village, full of excitement. One of the first things that attracted our attention, and won our admiration and delight, was the sight of a large butcher's shop with a number of great pieces of beef and mutton and other meat hanging up in the front. The sight of so much meat, the greatest quantity we had ever seen in our lives, filled us with great delight. My! but it was wonderful. And so we just gathered round, the whole twenty-six of us, and there we sat upon our haunches, and just howled out our delight. We gave the Eskimo dog chorus, and every other dog chorus of which we knew anything.

At first we saw nothing else but that wonderful display of meat, the abundance of which even in our finest dreams, when we had dreamed of plenty, we had never even then realized. Then we found, as we looked about us, that the street was filling up with men who were running towards us in every direction. But we took no notice of them, and howled away in our great delight.

At first some of the men seemed by their words

to be angry and excited, but soon they burst out laughing, and they laughed about as much as we howled.

They seemed at first surprised that such a company of great dogs were merely content to howl (of course we were). But we were not hungry, and we had our enjoyment in the very sight of so much meat.

How long this would have continued or what we would have done next I do not know. But what happened was this; the owner of all this meat, whom I think I heard them call a butcher, was a great friend of our masters', and so, as he knew where they were, he went immediately for them, and told them what a great crowd of people were fairly blocking up the street laughing at their dogs, that were giving a dog concert in front of his shop.

Even our masters had a great laugh at us. Then they ordered us to follow them back to our quarters.

But the spirit of adventure was in us, and in spite of all the man in charge of us could do, we got out about every second day, and we did indeed make things lively.

When people saw us coming (for we dogs all kept well together) they would shout :

“ Here they come ! ”

And they would gather and watch us at our

various tricks as we practically took possession of the village.

One day, when by gnawing in relays, we had eaten through the door of the house and got out, we found the village quite empty of people. Even the butcher's shop, which of course we visited every time we were able to escape from our keeper, was closed, and we hardly knew what to do with ourselves.

As we were wandering thus along one of the streets, we came on the scent of our masters, and so as we had not seen them for some days, with a rush we dashed off along the trail until we came to a fine house, into which, we knew by the scent, they had entered. The door was shut, and so for a time we had to stay outside. Then there came along a couple of good, kind boys who, perhaps knowing that we wanted to see our masters who were inside, very quietly opened the door and then ran away. In we filed, climbing over each other in that narrow door in our eagerness to get in and see our masters.

But my! What a time there was inside! At the other end of that house, which we found afterwards, they called a church, we saw our masters. In our joy we only saw them at first, although there were hundreds of other people who were sitting in rows all about us. So at the sight of our masters sitting up on a kind of a platform at the

other end, we set up our barkings of delight, and crowded up the trail towards them.

My! but there was a sensation!

Some women screamed, and some men cried: "Put out those dogs!" But most of the people laughed, and we liked these the best.

One foolish man tried to put out the dog that was nearest the door, but he soon stopped that work, and went off for a doctor.

There were only two men in that house who could put us out, and they were our masters, and while we were "bow-wow-ing" out our delight at seeing them, they were quickly putting on their heavy coats and fur caps, and then they came and met us in about the middle of that room, and while they tried to speak sternly to us and pretended to be cross, we knew them well enough to know that they were both shaking with laughter.

So they quickly called us out, and took us back to our lodgings.

When they had us back in the log-building, they just laughed until we were afraid they would hurt themselves.

And when they left us we heard them saying: "There is no use in going back to church to-day."

What they meant of course we dogs knew not.

Thus the days passed by, and we had good times.

We were fed on beef and mutton by the man who had us dogs in charge, and as he was a great friend of our masters', he did not stint us in our food, but gave us all we could eat.

All that troubled him was that he was not able to keep us in that old house set apart for our home while in his charge. Do what he would, we were able in some way or other to get out of it.

XVIII

THE KEEPERS OUTWITTED

ONE morning, quite early, we managed to get out of our house by moving some short logs that had been set up between two windows. We started off on the run, and had a good time frolicking about and tumbling each other over in the snow.

This morning we wandered off in another direction from any that we had previously taken. This route soon led us quite outside of the village.

To our surprise, we came near to quite a number of white woolly animals, the like of which we younger dogs had never seen before. But some of the older dogs that had traveled more than others of us, had told us that these queer-looking creatures that looked like bundles of white wool, were sheep that made the nice mutton of which we were all so fond. They also told us that they were very gentle, timid creatures. That they never fought like the fierce wolves or bears, and were raised for their wool and mutton, and that perhaps these before us were being driven out to some place to be turned into meat.

This all very much interested us younger dogs, so away we hurried towards them, that we might have a good look at them.

They were not at all friendly to us, and it quite surprised us that they did not know what good dogs we were, and that we were just anxious to make their acquaintance. The fact was, while we tried to say in our friendliest way: "Bow-wow," "How do you do!" they actually began to run away from us. This made us feel very badly, and so we began to run after them then, to tell them what dear, nice dogs we were. But run they would, and did.

At first they were all together in one company, but when they commenced running they began to break up in little parties, and some turned down one trail and some another.

We now saw what we had not noticed before, and that was that there had been a couple of men and two or three dogs behind them. To our delight, we saw that one of the men was the butcher at whose shop-door we had so often gone and howled out our delight at seeing so much meat. As he had become very friendly with us and had often talked to us as we sat and looked at his meat, we surely thought he would be glad to see us here, and so we rushed through the sheep that were still before him.

My! but he was angry, and said lots of strong

words. But we never thought then that it was at us he was so cross. And so while we were wondering what was the matter, we saw that his dogs were running after the sheep and trying to turn them this way and that way, and even nipping at their hind legs, so we thought the butcher was angry at his dogs that were thus cruelly chasing the dear sheep, that gave us the nice mutton. That was enough for us, and so away we rushed after those dogs, and as we caught them one after another, we gave them such a shaking that they did not want to chase sheep that day any more.

Then we ran back to the butcher to let him know how we had served the dogs that had chased the sheep.

How queer it is, that often do the best you can, you only get abuse for it.

That butcher man was so angry that he even shook his fist at us, and his words seemed stronger than ever.

Some men now came running towards the butcher in answer to his calls. With one of them he had some talk, and in it was heard the mention of our masters' names. Then that man hurried away, while we poor innocent dogs there gathered in the road wondering what was the matter with the butcher, who had generally been so kind to us, but who now seemed so angry at

us as in cross tones he talked to some other men who had joined him. He even dared, while he thus talked, to shake his big stick at us, but he knew better than to strike one of us. We would have made it lively for him if he had.

To our great delight we saw our masters rapidly coming towards us. We of course dashed off in a hurry for the usual cheery greetings, but were met with nothing but cold, stern words of reproof.

Well I never! We dogs could not understand it.

Here we had tried to be as friendly as possible with both men and sheep. So much so, that we nearly killed the dogs that were chasing them, and all we got was reproofs and sharp words, and then were taken back to our house in disgrace.

When our masters had us once more fastened up in that log-house, they gave us a lecture that showed us what fools even dogs could be, when they interfered where they had no business, and with things of which they were ignorant. They made us feel ashamed of ourselves when we learned that even those very dogs, so much smaller than we, were only trying to do their duty in striving to gather the poor frightened sheep together that had been scattered by our conduct. But it seems hard for us dogs anyway

to get to know that we don't know everything.

One day we got into such thorough and complete disgrace that we had to be banished from Winnipeg, and sent down to the Indian settlement below the stone fort, and put in charge of our Indian drivers, who were there visiting their Indian friends.

I am sorry to say they were none too well pleased to see us. They knew we would make things lively even there, if we got the chance.

But our adventure that banished us dogs from Winnipeg was this.

It occurred in this way: and I am sure we dogs did not mean any harm.

We had been too much for our keeper, and had got out again. How, we promised not to tell. As we were tearing down one of the streets, we met a man carrying in his hand a leg of mutton. Of course we dogs all wanted to have a smell of it, and so at him we rushed. The silly fellow instead of holding it up and letting us pass in a row before him and each get a good smell, got so frightened as he saw us coming, that he let out a great yell that sounded like: "Police, police." Then, throwing the leg of mutton among us, he turned and ran, yelling as though we were a pack of wolves instead of a lot of nice dogs.

Well, of course when that mutton fell among us, each one of us wanted to have the honor and pleasure of picking it up and carrying it back to its owner and telling him that he had dropped something. The trouble was that we were all so very anxious to do the decent thing, that as many of us as possible fixed our teeth into it, and as none would yield to the other, the meat itself quickly fell into pieces and mysteriously disappeared.

Buster, who had been taught to fetch and carry things, seeing the owner now returning with a big officious man, whom we afterwards heard was called a policeman, picked up the bone, which was all that was left of the leg of mutton, and followed by the rest of us, advanced with it to its owner.

What followed I can hardly well describe. But it seemed to me that that policeman with a short club hit Buster, who was so kindly bringing back the bone to its owner.

His one cry of pain was enough for us, and we were all there at once. Down went that policeman in the snow, and as we piled on him and rolled him over, his cries of :

“Help! help!” soon brought a crowd of people; among them our masters.

Their stern, strong words showed us that we were in complete disgrace.

That night, as I have said, we were banished from the village of Winnipeg, and only saw it again for a couple of days when our drivers brought us up for our heavy loads.

We made it hot for our drivers during the few days we were in the Indian settlement. This was what they said to our masters when they met in Winnipeg.

Yet we dogs hardly knew what they meant when they said we made it hot for them, for it was very cold weather.

We dogs were of course annoyed when we were sent out of Winnipeg in disgrace. We did have such a good time there; and we had just begun to see that the people were becoming very fond of us.

We were also well-treated in the Indian settlement. Arrangements had been made that we should have all the beef we needed, but we got no more mutton.

Our drivers hired an old disused Indian house, and in it they threw a load of dry hay which they purchased from a farmer. So our beds were comfortable, and no dog could complain of bad treatment.

We had, however, so got into the habit of breaking out of our house in Winnipeg and roaming about as we liked, and had had such jolly times, that now we could not bear the idea of

here being kept housed up in the Indian settlement. We knew that our drivers would be harder on us than were our masters, and so we had to be a bit careful. They must have heard in some way of how we had acted in Winnipeg, and so were on the lookout for us, even from the first.

That this was really the case we found out the first night after our arrival.

Koona and some others of us, in moving around in our quarters, just merely pulled down some boards that had been loosely nailed up to a place where there had been a window. Then we decided that we would go out for a quiet walk, and while we were going, who should suddenly spring up just there outside, but a couple of our drivers.

My! what a fright they did give us.

And then they had with them their great big whips, and the way they used them on us innocent dogs, who were just stepping out for a walk, was dreadful.

We felt very much offended as well as hurt, and so yelped out our indignation and grief as we speedily crawled back into that old house. Then as though to show that they had no confidence in us, which very much hurt our feelings, they came in with long nails and a large axe, and there that very night, while one held a lantern and the other man, there right before

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our eyes, nailed on those boards to the big logs.

It was very humiliating. We dogs felt very much hurt and offended.

As though we would try the second time the same night to get out!

“There!” said one to the other. And as they talked in Indian, of course we understood them.

“There! that was the only weak place about the house, of which I was suspicious. And now we have made it tight and firm we can go to bed in peace. We have them shut in securely now, and no mistake.”

Had they? Well, we will see.

When we understood that they said they were soon going to bed, we just heard it and resolved to see that they really did before we made much of a move. So we kept quiet for some time, and then soon after we were greatly amused by our drivers noiselessly coming back and listening at the door to try and find out if we were again up to any mischief.

That was really the silliest thing that we dogs ever knew clever Indians to do.

As though we dogs did not know by the scent of them that they were there!

Of course we did, and so we just sank down in

the hay where we were, and pretended to be fast asleep.

Such an amount of dog snoring you never heard. I was really afraid that we were overdoing it, and would thus be found out.

They listened to us for quite a time, and then one whispered to the other the one Indian word "Auxannie," which means "all right."

Then they noiselessly flitted away back to the little houses near to each other where they were visiting, one in each house.

The little lights in the two houses were soon put out, and then all was dark and quiet, and we dogs knew that those Indians had been completely outwitted, and that we would not be bothered with them for some hours at least.

As we moved around in the place we found out that the boards which made the floor under us were quite loose. The load of hay which had been thrown in for our beds had, we now saw, not only been brought for our comfort, but also to hold down in their place these loose boards.

So from one side of the room we very quickly pushed aside enough of the hay in order that we might get hold of the first of the boards and then turn it over. They were so easily managed, that in a short time we had a number of them turned back on the hay, and a place thus opened quite wide enough for us all to get through. But now

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we were uncertain what to do, as it was so very dark in that hole, and we did not know how deep it was.

While we were cautiously moving around and in our dog-language talking and wondering what we could do next, Koonna, much to his terror, but to our delight, tumbled into somewhere below.

We all expected the coward to yell out, but strange to say he did not even yelp.

For a time we could neither see nor hear anything of him. Then one of his train leaned over and whispered his name.

“Be quiet!” answered Koonna. “I am in the cellar, and am looking for a place where we can get out.”

I confess I was a bit uneasy, but we all kept quiet and as many of us as could peered down into the darkness. By and by our eyes got accustomed, as dogs' eyes do, to the darkness, and we saw Koonna, with all of his Eskimo cleverness, studying every part of the cellar. He had at length found out where an old door stood up at one side, and on peeking through the cracks of it, he discovered that the earth had there been dragged away, and so if he could get through the door, we would be free.

He first tried it with his teeth, but as he was not able to move it alone, he asked the other three

dogs of his train to come down and help him. They quickly jumped down, and great was the delight of the rest of us, as we saw that door, which they found was only held in its place by the frost at the bottom, yield to their strong teeth, as they all pulled at it together.

We all very silently and yet quickly jumped down, and struggling through a snowdrift that the wind had piled up against the house, we were once more free, and ready for any fun or mischief that would turn up.

One thing we did speedily decide upon, and that was to get as far away as possible in the settlement from those two watchful drivers. We had had our eyes open as we rapidly galloped through the settlement on our trip in from the north, and so as quickly as possible we hurried out to that well-beaten trail that ran through the centre, with the houses on each side. We did not dare to yelp or bark until we were a good way off from those two little houses in which our drivers were sleeping.

It was still far from daylight, and so we had but little sport except what we got up among ourselves, and we could generally get a lot of that when we tried.

Among other things, we got up a great race to a bit of woods which we saw some distance down the trail. When we reached it, we there

found a small camp-fire and a couple of men and two trains of dogs.

We afterwards heard that they had just come in from a place called Fort Alexander with letters and despatches for Fort Garry.

They were resting here for a few hours, and would then go on as soon as it was light, as those that carry the mail are always expected to travel as fast as possible.

When we saw that they were travelers, even as we had been, we did not wish to disturb them, but only to get a good look at them. So we just rushed up to their camp-fire and barked our welcomes and greetings. The men, who had been sleeping soundly, were suddenly aroused by our clamors, and I am afraid were terribly frightened.

Their eight dogs, that had been resting near their masters, were at first inclined to growl at us and show fight; but when they saw what a lot of us there were, they, too, became very much frightened, and tucking their tails between their hind legs, they scooted off into the darkest part of the forest.

When we dogs saw this, we were sorry that we had so disturbed and frightened these tired men and weary dogs, and so we as quickly turned round and dashed away from that camp as rapidly as we had rushed into it.

Some days after, we heard some one reading out of a paper an account of the narrow escape of the two men who had come in from Fort Alexander by dog-trains with the mail packet. The story was, that their camp in the outskirts of the Indian settlement had been attacked by an enormous pack of wolves. But by their desperate bravery they had succeeded in driving them off. Indeed, so desperate had been the defense made, that a panic had apparently seized the wolves and they had disappeared as quickly as they had made their attack. This story went far and wide, and we found that our masters and the guide got to hear about it, and some time later on when they were all together at a camp-fire, they talked it over and looked at us very knowingly, as much as to say, "You know more about it than did those who put that story in the paper." Then they laughed again as they thought it over. But of course we dogs said nothing, but just looked into the blazing camp-fire.

Some time that morning, after we had made that call at the camp where it was evident that we were not welcome, we turned back among the houses in the settlement.

This place was not like the village of Winnipeg, and we were wondering what we should do to get up some fun or excitement. There was not even a butcher's shop to visit, and so we were

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there just aimlessly fooling with each other and uncertain what to do next.

However, we had not long to wait in this state of dull inactivity.

Our adventure came, and it came suddenly, and there was about as much fun and excitement in it, for a short time, as the liveliest and most mischievous dog could desire.

XIX

“DOGS WILL BE DOGS”

AS I said in the last chapter, we dogs were just fooling along in the trail there in the settlement, when several savage dogs ran out from one of the largest houses, and had the impudence to bark angrily at us and challenge us to a fight.

We were not slow in responding.

The way those dogs turned and ran was a laughable sight even for dogs to see.

As the doors of the big house were shut, those frightened dogs could not find refuge there, and so as we were close behind them, they turned on one side and ran back between two smaller houses, then through a large yard, and jumped over a high log fence. Over this log fence we clambered and sprang, and there we found ourselves among a lot of great big, black, frightened animals, which we dogs thought were bears.

It seems that we had chased those yelping, frightened dogs into the farmer's big pig-pen, and there we were piling in after them.

But at that time we dogs did not know that there were such animals as pigs.

The chased dogs did not seem to care for bears. They were then more frightened by the dogs that were after them, and so they dashed quickly across the pen with some of my companions after them, and disappeared under a barn.

Others of the dogs, however, with memories of exciting conflicts before them, and preferring a battle with bears to any other excitement, at once left off the pursuit of the retreating dogs, and went at once for these supposed bears.

Some of my readers may perhaps think that we dogs were very stupid not to know the difference between bears and great big, black pigs. But they must remember that up to this time we had never seen such things. And indeed I overheard my master say in our defense, that once when he was coming up Red River, through this very settlement, with some Indians from Nelson River, in a boat in the summer time, they saw in the fields some of this same herd of black hogs, and he had to get between the guns and the pigs to keep his men from shooting them. They declared that they were bears and nothing else.

But here in the pen these dogs that were bear fighters, and were, as they now imagined, among a number of bears, cleverly separated in pairs, which is their usual plan, and began what are their tactics in these conflicts, which was only to nip the bears in their hind legs, and to carefully

keep out of the reach of their terrible fore paws, with which they can give such dreadful hugs.

To the surprise of us dogs, for I was one of those that had jumped into the pen, these bears had but little fight in them, but gave out the most blood-curdling screams we had ever heard.

At first we did not like to hear these sounds, so different from the "Whoof! whoof!" of other bears.

Soon, however, we became accustomed to these squealings, and we got to like them so much that we went around nipping every bear to see if they could all make this same grand sound.

We found they all could. Some even better than others.

We thought it great fun. And I do not know how long we would have kept it up if left alone. For the fact is, we had been joined by the rest of our dogs that had returned from chasing the cowardly dogs that had hid under the barn.

Of course our comrades became at once interested in these bears, and were very much surprised that they had so little fight in them, as we had seen.

But they soon became interested in their squealings, and thought that it was just splendid. So, for their delight as well as our own, we had a grand time keeping up the music.

And it was also just amusing to us younger

dogs to watch the old bear-fighter dogs of ours, to see them there sit up and study these queer bears that had no fight in them.

But as suddenly as our fun had begun, more abruptly did it stop.

Thus have I often found it. Just as you are having a glorious time, full of fun and excitement, somebody comes along and spoils it all.

So it was here. In the midst of our jollification of barking dogs and squealing bears, over that log fence jumped two others of our dog-drivers armed with their heavy dog whips.

“Majestimuk! Majestimuk!” (bad dogs), they shouted.

And the way they used those whips on us poor dogs that were out just for some fun was simply dreadful. They whipped and whipped us all around that yard, and they drove us over that log fence and out on the road, and then just taking time to run into the house and get their heavy leather coats, for it was very cold that morning, they came out, and we had to move lively to keep ahead of them, as they drove us back to the old house out of which we had walked through that old cellar way.

They tried to drive us into the cellar, but we would not go, and one of them had to go and wake up the other two drivers, who were still asleep, and bring them out to open the door and

let us in. Those men were surprised and looked very foolish.

We soon cuddled down in the hay as innocent as possible. The men quickly examined the place, and of course soon found where we had with our teeth pulled back the flooring and got out. Then they brought some more nails, and if they did not keep us awake for hours while they kept pounding away nailing down those boards, and we were so sleepy.

“Now then, we will see what they can do now,” we heard them say in Indian.

Then as they were going, one of them said :

“How our masters will laugh when we tell them of the tricks of these cunning rascals.”

Then the Indians, who do not laugh much, laughed now as one of them told the two they had awakened of how we were acting with what we thought were bears, but which he called pigs—big black hogs.

The two drivers who had brought us back, remained for some time with these two who were living near us, for the purpose of watching us, as though such good dogs as we were required any watching. They soon after came in again to see if we were all right. They then went back to the house where they were stopping, which was with the farmer who owned the great big, black pigs that had given us such fun.

That evening, when our two drivers were giving us our suppers, they were talking with each other very earnestly about something which seemed to very much interest them.

We could not make out at first what it was about, and we did not care, for reasons of our own, to let them see that we were even listening to their talk, or were in any way interested.

When they had gone back to their houses, and we dogs were resting in the hay, we put together what we had each understood of their talk, and we discovered that they had been invited out to a party somewhere, and would be away all the evening and most of the next day, but they would surely be back in time to feed us.

Some of our dogs had understood them to say that they would come the last thing before they went away and see if we were all right and quiet.

This was good news for us, for already we had a scheme of our own on hand, which in order to be successful, required that we should be left alone for some time the next morning.

So “mum” was the word, and we dogs cuddled down in the hay for a good rest. All we did was to have two or three of the dogs with the keenest scent rest where they could detect the coming of our drivers, and then quickly pass round the word.

It was some hours after dark before they came in with a lantern and looked us over, and they were actually that suspicious of us, that they went all round the room and looked to see if we had made any attempt to get out.

We felt so hurt as we looked out at them with one eye, to think that they had so little confidence in such nice dogs as we were.

“They are too tired to go hog-hunting, thinking they are bears, to-night,” said one to the other, as they went out. They were all dressed up in their best cloth capotes with brass buttons, and had on their finest leggings and silk-work moccasins.

We were now certain that they were going away to a party.

Where it was, of course we knew not, neither did we care. All we wanted was to get them away, and as far as possible.

While one of them was locking the door with a great padlock, the other one said:

“I am afraid we are making a mistake in both of us going away for so long a time. These dogs are such cunning rascals, that I am fearful that they will again be too sharp for us. Then, if any real damage is done by them, our kind masters will have to pay for it.”

“Nonsense!” said the other driver. “The building is now perfectly dog-proof. It is im-

possible for them to get out.” Then laughingly he said, “You know this is your last chance to see Bright Eyes, your best girl, the one you would like to ask to be your wife. You surely don’t want to miss seeing her again.”

This seemed to settle it. And so away they went. We could hear the crunching of the dry snow under their moccasined feet for some time that cold and frosty night.

So far the coast was clear, but we lay down and slept for some hours before we began to carry out our plans, which but few dogs would have attempted.

The only window left in the little house in which we were kept faced directly towards the little houses where our two drivers stopped. It consisted of four panes of glass. We had not dared to interfere with it while the men were about that evening, but we had seen from our first coming to the house that we could easily smash through it. Of course the first dog that jumped through might get cut with the glass. We, however, little cared for that. We all had hard heads well covered with thick hair, and the chances were that nobody would be much hurt. Anyway, we had resolved to take the risk and go through it.

It was still dark when we began to move about, and for a time no one seemed anxious to be the

first to jump through that window, and thus smash it out for the rest of us to easily get through.

Strange to say it was Koona who first volunteered, and thus we found that although he was cowardly in some ways, he was brave in others, especially when there was any chance for mischief.

It was decided that as soon as Koona had jumped through, and had given the word that the way was clear, we were all to follow him as fast as possible, for fear some of the Indians in the houses might, on hearing the smashing of the glass, come quickly out and try to stop us.

With a run to give him more force, Koona dashed through that window in grand style. His cheery yelp, which meant "All right!" was soon heard, and then one after another of us jumped out into the snow, which was there in great abundance.

When about half of the dogs were out, we saw, through a window, a light burning in one of the little houses near us, and then two or three faces were pressed against the glass, as some people were looking out at us. But they did not come out. They were very kind, and were willing to let us have a good time. Then perhaps they knew we might make it lively for them, if they interfered.

When all were out of the house, we decided to carry out the idea that had come to us as we lay resting in the hay, and that was, as the settlement was so slow, and there were so few chances to have any fun, to go up to the stone fort, where there were lots of people and dogs, and have a good time with them.

Koona had cut his head a little, and the blood showed on his white hair, but some of the dogs of his train soon licked it off. Two or three others had cut themselves also on some of the bits of glass that remained fast in the wood of the window frame. These cuts were soon attended to, and then we dashed off on the trail for the Lower Stone Fort.

It was a run of some miles to get there, and so it was after daylight when, to our great delight, we saw the big stone walls of the fort before us. We seemed to get into trouble from the beginning. As we saw nobody around in the front and the big gates, through which we had dashed when we first came in our trains with our masters, were closed, we hurried around to another gate which we found open. We hurried along through this, and there before us, to our great delight, were some of the people we had met before. They had great pails in their hands, and as we rushed up to them to greet them, they, instead of being glad to see us, got so excited,

and tried to lift up high the pails as though they did not want to let us dogs see what they were carrying.

This strange conduct of those men we thought were our friends, quite excited our curiosity, and so without meaning any harm, we were soon resolved to see for ourselves.

So we just bounded up and got our fore paws on those pails.

Of course they had to come down, which they did amidst the strong words and "majestimuk" (bad dogs) of those who were carrying them.

We dogs were a little upset ourselves, as well as were all the pails, when we found out that they had been full of milk, which these men had obtained from the cows in the stables belonging to the fort.

There was a big row of course, for very soon out came Mr. Flett, the master, and a number of other gentlemen, called clerks.

We were glad to see them, but I am sorry to say they did not seem glad to see us, especially two or three who were called Scotchmen, and, if we understood aright, said something about "Deil tak them! So there is to be no fresh milk the morn for our parritch."

Mr. Flett himself, who at first seemed angry with us, at length began to laugh, and said something about "dogs will be dogs," and then turn-

ing to the angry men who were still mourning over the loss of the new milk, he said to them :

“There is plenty of frozen milk. Some of it can be melted for your porridge.”

This was all we were able to do at Lower Stone Fort. We were in the hands of those who knew how to manage us, and so we were just huddled in a stone bastion where there was plenty of hay, and there we had to stay until our frightened drivers came for us.

The next morning we were harnessed up to our sleds and driven up to Winnipeg village for our loads, and then in a few days afterwards the long journey to our home was begun.

XX

A SLEIGH LOAD OF BREAD

OUR friends in Winnepeg were of course glad to see us again in their village. We galloped in their midst in fine style. Our silvery bells were all ringing, and our Indian drivers were decked out in their finest apparel, with their beaded caps, their embroidered leggings, and silk-worked moose-skin moccasins.

“Here they come!” was the cry that was shouted out on all sides, as with our light sleds, we sped along the well-beaten snowy streets.

It had first been arranged, that in view of some unpleasantness in connection with our last visit a few days before this, that our sleds should immediately be loaded up and we would that afternoon begin our return journey.

This plan was, however, changed at the request of the great Hudson Bay Company, that desired our trains to be delayed until some important packets, expected from the South, should arrive by the St. Paul's Stage, that our masters might carry for them to some of the great posts in the far North.

When we dogs understood that we were not to

leave the village for two or three days we were very much delighted.

To our surprise, however, the people began to make some sarcastic remarks, some of which we did not think very complimentary.

While awaiting for the arrival of our masters, they even began their talks.

One gentleman, whom I believe was called McTavish, said to another called Sinclair: "I say, Sinclair, go and lock up in your safe that roast of beef you had sent home this morning, or some of these dogs will surely get it."

"No fear, but I will be on the lookout. But what are you going to do with that leg of mutton you have just ordered?"

"O!" said the other, "I have, now that these dogs are here, decided to put it in a covered tin pail and hang it in my well, at the end of a sixty foot rope."

"A poor plan," was the laughing reply.

"Do you see that dog Cæsar there? Why, he once pulled in a net with a lot of fish in and helped himself. Better hide well the end of that rope."

And thus as the people gathered around us at the place where our drivers had stopped, we simple, innocent dogs had to listen to a lot of such stuff as this said about us. So we were not sorry when somebody shouted:

“Here come their owners!”

Our masters were glad to see us, and we were glad to see them; for except when we were very bad, they always had a kindly word and a pat on the head for each one of us.

They looked us over carefully, and were pleased to see that we were in capital condition for the long journey, with the heavy loads that we would have to draw to the end of the route.

They well knew what was before us, and so they were resolved that vigilant eyes should be upon us until we started.

We dogs were simply wild with delight when we discovered that we would not have to start on our long northern trip that evening, or even the next day.

We were resolved to have another night's outing and frolic if possible, no matter how it turned out.

We had to confess that it looked rather discouraging for us, as here we heard the most positive orders being given to our drivers, that they were to see to it that we were never out of their sight.

We were taken to the home of the man in the village who had treated us decently, and orders were given that we should have beef and mutton for our suppers.

So strict were they with us, that they would not

allow a few of us to take a half hour's stroll down the streets.

The drivers, remembering their trouble in the Indian settlement, resolved to bring their warm rabbit-skin blankets into the house where we dogs were confined, and there sleep in the same room with us. This would be just as warm as the camps in the forest, and so it would be impossible for us to get away.

When we found that by their early bringing in of their robes to the house what their plans were, we dogs felt as though they were taking a mean advantage of us and not giving us a chance, and lost about all hope of having the night out.

Our food was brought to us quite early, and as usual, our drivers remained with us until we had finished it. Then they shut the door and went away for their own suppers.

This was the only opportunity we had for arranging any plans, if anything was to be done. Most of the dogs urged that we should give up the thought of trying to get out. It would be better for us, in view of the long and toilsome journey before us, to remain quiet and rest all we could.

Others, however, were of a different mind. Koonas's suggestion was that a few of us, perhaps half, might manage to steal away in the darkness while our drivers slept, and have a good time.

His plan was that those dogs that did not care to risk the matter, should lie down near the drivers and by sprawling themselves out, and snoring at times, make it appear that all were in their places.

The guides had in the coziest part of the room, which was the farthest from the door, spread out some hay, and there thrown down their rabbit-skin robes. It was evident from this, that there was to be their resting-place.

So the dogs that had no desire to try and get out, dropped down near these robes, and the others took places nearer the door.

Just before it was quite dark, our drivers came in and looked us over, and even were mean enough to count us. But we saw what filled us with delight, and that was that three of them, were all dressed up in their dandiest clothes and that told us that these men had some plan for the night on hand, and it was not all sleeping with dogs.

However, we just lay low and listened.

What we made out was that a number of Indians, some of them were their relatives, were camped not far down the Red River, and that these three so dressed up, were going down to visit them for a few hours. And what tickled us most, was that they said to the one man who was to be left with us:

“Leave the door unlocked, so that they can get

in easily without making any noise when we return."

So there we just remained, the best and most innocent dogs imaginable, and one after another went to sleep, and some dogs were so kind to that one driver who, fortunately for us, was the biggest sleeper of our party, that they crowded up close to him, and made him so warm and comfortable that he was soon fast asleep and snoring beautifully.

Now was the chance for those who were eager for the outing. Koonah, who had well practiced on the doors of the mission house at our far away home, just as quickly as possible crawled to that door, and as it was just the ordinary thumb latch, he opened it very easily and so quietly that in a very brief time about a dozen of us dogs were outside. Then, as arranged, a dog inside gently pushed the door shut.

The question now with us was what to do. It was still early in the evening, and although after dark, many people were still moving about.

Cæsar said: "I wish I knew where that Mr. McTavish lives, and I would have a try for his mutton."

But as none of us knew, his mutton was safe.

Then we went to have a look at the butcher's shop. But the shop was closed, and there was nothing for us there.

Thus we wandered about; and as there was nothing to interest us, we began to wish we were back resting with the other dogs in the hay.

Then our fun came. As we were at the western end of the village, coming up the street was a sleigh, drawn by a horse with jingling bells. As the sleigh passed us, we saw that it was loaded with loaves of bread. Bread, we learned afterwards, that was being carried out to some soldiers camped at the Assiniboin.

All at once we became hungry for bread. We had had some loaves broken up among us, and we liked it as a change of food.

So, thoughtless dogs that we were, away we dashed after this loaded sleigh. It did not take us long to reach it, and as it was low, being only on runners, some of us easily sprang upon it, and the way we tackled the loaves was great. That silly driver was so frightened. The foolish fellow. We saw no reason why he should have yelled so, and made such a fuss.

We only wanted a loaf apiece, and he had so many, a dozen or so would not have been missed.

If his shouting had been all that he did we would not have much minded it, as long as we got some bread. But he began striking us with his whip, and he struck us as hard as he could.

The best trained dogs in the world would not

have stood that, and so we got angry ; and some of us began climbing over his load of bread to interview him about it.

He, however, did not wait for us to get on the seat beside him, but actually jumped off from his sleigh, in the snow, although it was going very rapidly.

We did not know how to drive the horse, and so away he went as hard as he could run, and then as he turned a corner in the road, he did it so quickly, that the three dogs of us that were all that were left on the sleigh, were pitched out and fell in the snow with more bread around us than we had ever seen before in our lives.

The other dogs that had not managed to get on the sleigh soon joined us, and we were not slow in seeing that we had had fun enough for one night, and that it would be best for us to get back to our nest as quickly and quietly as possible.

Having been in the village before, we now knew a well-beaten road that led us almost directly to our abode, and although we were out of the village where no lights were shining, we were not long in returning to the place.

Koona and others cautiously approached the door and listened. The heavy snoring of the one solitary driver could be heard, and so the door was quickly opened, and then shut again behind

the lot of us, and very soon we were all in our places, and of course, fast asleep.

In a couple of hours or so the three drivers returned, and as speedily as possible they changed their fine suits for their other clothing, and then after stepping over and amongst us, they said: "Yes, they are all here as yet, but as it is about the time they may try and get out, a couple of us had better sleep here against the door."

So there they spread out some hay, and rolling themselves up in their warm rabbit-skin robes, they lay down to sleep. How long after it was, I cannot say, but it could not have been very long before we saw lights flashing through the high window of our abode, and we heard a number of voices, and among them were those of our masters.

My blood seemed to chill in my veins, and I felt such a shivering come over me. But I just kept quiet and waited for what would happen.

Some of the dogs that had not been out, awakened by the noise outside, for it was now evident that there were a number of people, began fiercely growling. This seemed to frighten some of the people, especially the policeman, whom we had tumbled in the snow some days before, and whose voice we now recognized.

"You must go first and quiet them," this policeman said to our masters; "for I would as

soon go into a den of lions as among those dogs."

This unkind remark made our own master's friend quite indignant, and he said to that policeman :

"Of course. If you only knew how to treat them, you would find them as innocent as lambs."

And of course we were.

Then our masters tried to open the door, but met with some difficulty on account of the two sleeping Indians who were lying close against it, and who, considering that they had been there so short a time, seemed to be very difficult to awake.

They were, however, aroused at last ; and getting up as though half dazed from being awaked from a long and profound slumber, they let in the masters and then several other men that accompanied them, including the policeman and, to our horror, the young man that had driven the bread sleigh. The other two drivers were with difficulty aroused, and then the policeman with a great deal of authority said to the boy :

"Now of course you recognize these dogs as the ones that chased you off your bread sleigh and caused your horse to run away."

The boy looked us over, and then replied :

"It was pretty dark, and we had passed the

last lamp-post, and I could not see very well. One that I saw I think looked like that very white one there.”

Then he pointed to Koonna, who was very lovingly and sleepily cuddled down close to his driver, who was, as we have said, the heavy sleeper who had not been out of the building.

This partial accusation against Koonna, whom his driver loved in spite of all his cunning, saucy ways, was too much for him ; and as it was also a reflection on his own watchfulness, he at once resented it with such warmth that the poor driver, now half-distracted, said apologetically :

“ Well, I did say that I believed it was a pack of wolves that attacked me, and one of them was very white ; but we all know there are white wolves, and there was one fierce one in that pack that looked like that white dog.”

Our master said but little as they turned the light of the lantern upon us, but I did think that they thought some of our extra sleepy ways were a little forced.

The drivers were really innocent, for Koonna's had not been awake, and the other three had arrived after we dogs were all cozily back in our places.

The policeman, smarting still under the humiliation of his upset in the snow, for which he could get no redress, for the owner of the leg of

mutton had been well paid for it by our masters, was still resolved to convict us.

But the more he questioned the boy the more the lad became convinced in his own mind that the raid upon his bread sleigh was not made by these good-natured, sleeping dogs, but by a pack of fierce prairie wolves, that now that the buffalo were about gone, driven by hunger, had actually come to the outskirts of the village and had rushed upon him.

Thus baffled, the policeman, with the rest, retired, but he angrily declared that just as soon as it was daylight, he would get on the tracks and follow them up, and he knew where they would lead him.

That night, several inches of snow fell, and so no track could be followed. In some way or other we dogs heard later on that our masters sent a certain baker ten dollars, and also five dollars to a much frightened boy.

We also overheard our masters say that that was the last time they would bring their dogs to Winnipeg, and they kept their word.

XXI

“GOING HOME”

OUR sleds were loaded up the next day with supplies for the distant mission. Each sled started with from eight hundred to a thousand pounds weight.

These were heavy loads, but most of the route was on the ice, and over it we dogs can draw very much heavier loads than we can in the forest, where the only trail before us is that made by the snow-shoes of our guide.

We had understood that we were to remain over in the village of Winnipeg another night, but our masters decided that they would sleep better if the dogs were securely shut up in one of the corner bastions of the Lower Stone Fort instead of in that old house in Winnipeg.

We dogs were quite hurt when we were told by our drivers that at three o'clock sharp the journey would begin.

The fact was, we had begun to like Winnipeg, and to feel very much at home on its streets, especially in the night-time. And now here our last night was taken from us. We might have had such fun.

We made the journey of twenty miles in three hours, which was not poor traveling considering our heavy loads.

Mr. Flett and the other gentlemen greeted our masters very cordially, and while we dogs, after being unharnessed, were strolling around waiting for our suppers, we overheard the gentlemen laughing together and saying such words as “spilt milk,” “black hogs,” “squealing bears.”

Then our masters said something about “a mad policeman,” and “bread in the snow,” and “dogs instead of wolves,” and other things. Then they all laughed again and again.

They remained with us while our drivers brought out the meat that had been purchased for our suppers.

We were then taken into the stone bastion of the fort, and there in the soft hay we lay down to sleep, except Jack and Cuffy the aristocrats. They, as usual, went into the house with our master.

We were aroused by our drivers long before daylight the next morning.

Our masters had already had their breakfasts, and had gone on for over an hour on the long trail of hundreds of miles that were before us.

This they often did, and sometimes they walked or ran those cold, keen mornings many miles before we, with our heavy loads, overtook them.

Voyageur was in his place at the head, and so the scent of the master before him was all that was needed to lead him on without any trouble.

That first morning we found our masters at the last house in the Indian settlement awaiting us.

A kettle of tea was there made, and after a lunch the real journey began. Behind us were the houses and people, among whom we had seen many new and wonderful things. Before us was the great Lake Winnipeg and hundreds of miles away north was our home towards which we were now going. We had had a good time, but somehow or other we soon caught the spirit of our drivers and our masters, and, like them, we dogs were all glad that we were going home.

“Going home!” they would shout to each other.

“Hurrah! we are going home.”

And of this they never seemed to tire, and it was ever the thought in their minds.

At the camp-fire, when the day's long toilsome journey was ended, of getting home they talked. Then their voices softened as they spoke of the kind mistress and the little ones who doubtless already were beginning to look out through the frosted windows, and saying, when shall we see father again?

To them, every unusual sound, by day or night,

was conjured into the distant jingling of the merry bells of the dog-trains.

Our Indian drivers, too, staunch, reserved men though they were, as they sat and smoked their last pipe at the camp-fire, long after they had tucked in their masters' robes, lingered there ere they lay down to take the much needed sleep, and looked longingly into the bright fires, and talked in quiet, kindly tones of their little ones whose bright eyes would kindle with delight as they spread before them the presents they had brought for them with their wages, in addition to what they had each obtained for the sales of the prime wolf robes which they had secured in the battle to which I have already referred. And I could not help but notice as there I lay so quiet and still, that the voices that could be so stern and strong as they urged us dogs along with our heavy loads, were so soft and gentle as they showed these presents for their wives and little ones to each other, and spoke with joy of the happy times they would have when they met with their loved ones in the little homes.

The fire burned low before they had thus finished, and so, ere they wrapped their warm rabbit-skin robes around them, they quietly put some more logs on the fire, and then lay down to their much needed sleep.

Dog as I am, yet that night as there I lay on

the outer robe of my master's bed there in the forest, with the great snow-drifts piled up around us, and the bright stars above us, and looked into the fire, I got some new thoughts that came to me, even a dog.

One was that even the hardest and roughest of our drivers had kindness and tenderness in them, and I had that night looked into their hearts and found it.

Another was, this love of home was not only in the hearts of the white man—men who have so much—but that even these Indians, some of whose homes were as yet only wigwams, had it just the same. And then I wondered, if it could be, whether we dogs who loved so to get home, had anything in us similar to what is in the white man and Indian that made this same home longing; but I could think no longer, and so went to sleep.

We found as we traveled on that our guide tried to arrange each day's journey so that we would reach each night the camps we had used as we had come down from the north. This meant, if no great snow-storm had occurred, very much less work in preparing the camp.

The principal reason, however, why we wished to reach our previous camping-places was on account of our *caches* of fish which we had hid, to have for our food. A dog's ability to count may

not be very good, but I think it was eight times we made camp on our outgoing journey.

Our masters and drivers found that twice on the return trip, the cunning wolves had found those hidden places where the fish had been *cached* away, and of course they had made short work of them.

Those nights our masters fed us on meat off the sleds out of the supplies which he was carrying home, which was there almost unknown, as they lived on fish. Some of the drivers even said:

“It won’t hurt the dogs to fast a day or so. It is too bad to give them the beef or mutton brought so far, and which will be so prized in the mission home.”

But our master said “no” to all of this talk, and if there were no fish in the *cache*, he gave us meat.

Thus we pushed on day after day. The cold was very great, but we dogs were kept warm by our heavy loads, and at night my good master let me sleep near the fire, and sometimes as many as a dozen dogs would crowd round in the warm, sheltered places, and our master would not allow the Indians to drive us away.

Towards the last of the trip, we heard the men complaining of what they called snow-blindness. They seemed to suffer very much and to be in great pain. Our master put medicine in their

eyes, but as he and also his friend began to suffer from this disease of snow-blindness, which is caused by the brightness of the sun shining on the pure white snow, they resolved to sleep in the camps during the day and then travel at night.

This we did for two or three days, and then all soon got well.

But it seemed so odd to us dogs to be ordered to lie down near the camp and go to sleep during the hours of sunshine as we had done in the nights. And when we dared to get up and walk around, it seemed so queer to see our masters and drivers asleep and the sun shining on the camp through the trees.

I am afraid we dogs chatted in dog-fashion with each other more than we slept the first day of this new experience, but after the next night when our journey was of over sixty miles, we were quite ready for our rest and sleep, be it in darkness or sunshine.

But this traveling by night to escape from the snow-blindness had its dangers. It is true we heard the men talk about the stars that shone so brightly, and also there were times when all their talking ceased, and they were hushed into awe by the strange, beautiful lights which flashed out and danced before us in the northern skies.

Even we dogs were startled by them, as at times they were so bright beyond or above us,

that our shadows were thrown on one side and then on the other and then again right under us.

From our masters and drivers we found out that the two dangers which they most dreaded in this night traveling were the fierce, sudden storms of blinding snow, and the open cracks in the ice. When the experienced men suspected a coming storm, they turned us dogs at once for the nearest point, and as often we were twenty miles out from the land we were sometimes caught in the blinding gale ere we reached the forest where the camp could speedily be made.

But the greatest danger to the night travelers are the open cracks in the ice. I well remember when, as a young and inexperienced dog, I lay in the camp on the shores of the great Lake Winnipeg. Frequently during the night I would be suddenly aroused by hearing great booming sounds away out on the frozen lake. At first they frightened me very much. Indeed I could not sleep at first, as they made me think of the distant wolf howls that I remembered having heard when I was a little puppy and my mother had hushed my little brothers and myself into perfect stillness in our cozy nest.

What surprised me was that the older dogs hardly noticed these distant booming sounds. So I inquired why it was that they cared not for

them. They only grinned out their amusement at my stupidity, and said :

“Those sounds come not from wild animals, but are just caused by the cracking of the ice.”

So while I was relieved of my fears that they were not wild animals, I found out from what was said about them that they were very dangerous.

“Keep a good lookout for the cracks in the ice!”

This was a command often given to those sent on with the guide to the front.

But the real danger was not so much with open water, that could easily be seen, but the greatest danger was when a thin crust of ice had just formed where but a short time before the ice had burst asunder, and on the water which had rushed to the top, a thin crust had formed, but not strong enough yet for men or dogs to cross upon.

Voyageur was very clever in detecting these weak places. He never failed when there was running water under the ice, but on the great lake where the ice that had burst was several feet over still water, it was very difficult, and so even Voyageur sometimes failed.

Several men and dogs got in, in spite of the greatest care. Then there was a mad rush to the nearest shore for a fire at which to dry them.

One day as we were all pushing on as well as we could, over a place where the ice was rough and the footing poor, we heard a loud cry of pain that startled us all. Our trains were all at once stopped, and we found to our sorrow that the cry had come from Muff, the sleigh-dog of the master's train. She had broken her collar bone in an ambitious spring she had made to carry the heavy load over a bad place. The sled I was leader of was not far behind her train, and so I saw and heard all that occurred. As poor Muff so cried out, our master, who was driving, instantly called to Voyageur to stop, which he quickly did.

The guide and other drivers were soon around him, and very tenderly Muff was unharnessed, and soon it was known that so serious was the injury, that her working days were over. The bone, against which her collar rested, was snapped in two, and so it was no wonder that she had so cried out in her agony.

The master had quickly ordered that a fur robe should be taken off his sled, and there on it the now suffering, yet patient dog was placed.

As she lay there on the robe with the men all gathered around, there was a hasty consultation amongst them as to what should be done. Some of the drivers who had lost dogs in this way before said :

“There is only one thing to be done, and that is to kill her at once, and thus put an end to her sufferings. We have had to do it before now when one of our dogs had broken a leg or had injured themselves in such a way as had Muff. She was a good dog, but she is useless now, and must die.”

Then another said: “Yes, she was a fine, strong dog, but others have had to be killed, and so if you white men do not wish to see it done, you can go on and we will attend to the matter, and then come on without her. We see no other way.”

When my master’s friend, who was very kind-hearted, heard this, he cried:

“Wait then until I am far away, for I do not want to hear her dying cry.”

Then our master, who had been sitting down on the fur robe with Muff’s head in his lap, and had said nothing while the guide and men thus talked, now began to speak. His voice was low, and we had all to listen carefully to catch his words.

“Kill Muff like that, and leave her here to be devoured by wolves? No! never! A kind lady by the name of Mrs. Allan of Montreal gave her to me, and she has served me too well on many a cold winter’s journey to be thus killed. Muff shall live. I am going to carry her home in my

own cariole. She shall ride in my place, and for what she has already done for me I will walk the rest of the way home. She shall live and not die.”

Even the men who had thought that there was nothing else to do but to kill Muff, were a little ashamed that they had so quickly advised that she should be killed. But it was bitterly cold, and as we were far from home and must rapidly get on, they had known no other way. So here they thought that Muff must die.

But our master gave them but little time to talk. When he spoke like that, his word was law, and they knew it. He quickly ordered some bandages to be made, and then setting the bone with the help of his friend, he ordered the guide and another to go on rapidly with most of the trains to the next camp and get everything ready, and he would follow on more slowly with Muff, the injured dog, whom he had had carefully placed on soft robes in his cariole.

It was a couple of hours before our masters with their two trains arrived. We dogs of the other trains had already had our suppers, but we could none of us lie down to rest until our master with Muff had reached the camp. The master had his robes and blankets put in the camp, and then close to the place where he would sleep he had them put Muff. Then he had her supper

prepared of the best of the meat of the sleds, and then having it cut in small pieces, he carefully fed her himself, so that in eating she should not injure herself.

Thus day by day the master walked or ran behind his cariole, while Muff rode in his place. We could see that he was often very tired and footsore, and more than once we saw blood on the ice where his feet had trod, but he did as he had said he would, and so Muff was brought home, and, to our great delight, for she was a kind, affectionate dog whom we all loved, she completely recovered.

But no heavy work was ever required of her by her kind master who had refused to let her be killed when the guide and drivers saw no other way.

XXII

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

OF the welcome home—the glad reunion—the happy children—the radiant face of the brave mistress who had cared for all, in the lonely weeks while we were away, I, of course, as a dog, cannot say. But as altogether, we, as a medley of jingling bells, cracking whips, shouting drivers, excited dogs, and thankful masters, dashed up to the door of the mission house, and were met by the loved ones there, with many of the Indian people who had gathered to welcome us, I, like many of the other dogs, could in a measure enter into the gladness of the hour and bark out my delight.

Sagastao was of course wild with excitement and delight. After greeting his father, and then the other men of the party, he came at once to me, and after some cheery words of greeting for us all, he claimed the right to unharness me while Alec did the same for Billy, Boxer and Buster.

Dear old Rover was so delighted at our return, and at the prospect of having plenty of work to

do in curing all that were suffering from wounds or frost-bites, that he fairly howled with gladness, and wagged his tail so vigorously that he seemed also to wag about half of his body.

The supper that was provided for us that night and for many succeeding ones was abundant, and our beds were warm and comfortable.

After a few days' rest, we settled down again into our usual routine of work.

The wood-piles had greatly diminished in our absence, and Kennedy said that the cows would soon need more hay.

The fish that still remained at the distant fisheries were all to be brought home ere the ice melted, or the trail became unsafe.

Our master made some short trips, of a few days each, to some not very remote Indian villages. But he did not take me or any of the dogs of my train. We belonged to Sagastao, and so in spite of the fright the wolf had given us, we had many a jolly race on the beaten trails, and drew home many a load of wood. But now vigilant hunters were ever on the lookout, while the sleds kept together, and the drivers had their guns in their hands.

The biggest excitement we had with wild animals was as the spring was near at hand, a couple of porcupines came along one of the forest trails.

Some of us dogs, being too inquisitive in our investigations of those queer-looking creatures, got our noses well-filled with their quills. They made us very miserable, and so the Indians had to hold us down and pull them all out.

Thus by experience we have learned that there are some creatures, such as skunks and porcupines, that had better be left severely alone.

With the coming of the spring, the snow and ice all disappeared.

Our dog-sleds and carioles were piled up high in the fish-house, while the harnesses, well-oiled, were hung up above the reach of any stray, hungry dog.

It seemed so odd to us dogs that had been so busy all winter, now to have nothing to do.

We were given plenty of exercise, but everything was now so quiet that I am afraid that there were times when we longed for the village of Winnipeg, or some other place where we could again have some rollicking fun.

Koona, alert and mischievous as ever, did once and awhile succeed in getting up for us a little diversion when he knew that we were all out of the kennels.

He would steal away, and boldly invade the Indian village, and by the most tantalizing and provoking barks get a great pack of the Indian dogs after him. Keeping just ahead of them, but

taking good care that they should not catch him, he would lead them right into our midst. Of course we went for them, and then there would be lively times. The fight would continue until whites and Indians would rush in, and with their heavy whips separate the combatants.

But Koonah was never in the actual fight. All his work was to get the two companies of dogs into the conflict. Then from a safe place he watched the battle with great delight.

The coming of the warm weather speedily spoiled all the frozen fish still left from the last fall catch, and so the question was, how are so many dogs with such good appetites to be supplied with their necessary food, and kept in good condition for the next winter's work.

At first, until all the ice had left the lakes and rivers, several nets were set in the open places by Indian fishermen, and in them sufficient fish were caught for our needs. But the village was large, and as there were so many people depending on their nets for food, our master, who could not think of letting the people suffer for want of food, early arranged for us dogs to be all taken out to an island on the great lake some miles away where no people dwelt, but where there were abundance of fish.

At that island we were given in charge of an active old Indian and his wife. They were sup-

plied by our master with plenty of gill nets with which they caught for us large quantities of the best of fish.

So there for months we dogs had our summer holidays. The contrast between these quiet, lazy days and the busy past we could hardly understand.

The drudgery of the heavy winter's work was ended. The last, long journeys in the bitter cold were over. Our last excursion with our sleds, which was to take our master to the goose hunt, had finished up in slush and mud.

And so now here we were in for good times, out on this pleasant island, where we had nothing to do but to bark and gambol in the sunshine and bathe in the lake, and enjoy ourselves to our hearts' desire.

We had a bit of a fright one day when Koonah told us that he feared our summer holidays would be broken up for some of us, anyway. He said that once when with Jack and Cuffy, who as you know live in the house with the white people there, and so know of what is going on, he overheard the master say that he had brought out in a boat from Fort Garry, a thing which he called a plough, and also that he was making a queer sort of a thing which he called a harrow, and that as he had no horses or oxen to draw them, he was going to harness up eight of the strong-

est of the dogs, and see if they could not draw those heavy things through the ground.

And all this was to be done as soon as all of the frost was gone out of the ground, and the weather had become warm and pleasant.

These rumors very much excited us, and we were inclined to feel hurt and annoyed that our holidays, at least for some of us, were thus to be broken in upon.

What did happen was just this ; and for those of us selected it just turned out to be a lot of fun, and not very hard work. Sure enough, one day the master came over with Kennedy and Alec and two or three other Indians in a big boat, and after having a romp with us all they had their dinners, and then they carried back with them in the boat about a dozen of us. The next day eight of us were harnessed up, and then in two trains, side by side, we were fastened to that odd looking thing they called a plough. It was all right and easy enough work for us as we dragged it into one of the fields, but when one end of it was stuck in the ground and kept there, while they shouted : " Marche ! Marche ! " why, it was rather heavy work, even for the eight dogs of us. But we soon understood what was wanted of us, and then when we learned to pull all together, why, it was just fun.

When our master had hold of the handles and

knew how to keep the point of the plough in the ground all the time, we could only move on slowly. But we did have sport, when an Indian, who had never seen such work before and so knew nothing about it, tried to manage that plough. Sometimes he would get the point of that plough down too much in the ground, and that would stop us all. Then when he was told to press down on the handles, he would often do it too much, and this would bring the point out at the top. This of course took all the pressure or weight off, and so we lively dogs, when we felt this, suddenly started off with the plough on the top of the ground, dragging it and the frightened Indian. We did not stop until we had reached the other end of the field. Of course our master and all the Indians who had come to see this queer thing work, laughed at our runaway and the failure of the Indian, who thought he could plough with dogs.

Nothing could induce him to try it again. Kennedy and the master soon got accustomed to the work, and so for days we kept at this new employment for dogs. We ploughed up a number of little fields and gardens for the Indians as well as those belonging to the mission, and also harrowed in what wheat and other grain there was for sowing.

They called us good dogs, and said we had

done very well indeed instead of horses or oxen, and then they had us sent back on the big boat to the island.

So we dogs that had been thus honored, felt very proud and happy that we had been able to render some service, even during our holiday time, to those who had ever treated us so well.

Of course we had to explain it all to the dogs that had remained on the island, and I really think that some of them were sorry that they had not been with us, especially when we were running across that field dragging the frightened Indian at the handles of the plough.

As the weeks went on we dogs had to devise as many ways as possible to pleasantly pass the time.

The telling of the fine time we had when ploughing, and the remembrance of the big council when Jack was chairman, set us thinking about what we could do to amuse and interest each other. Indeed, it did not take us very long to think over various things, and our only surprise was that we had been so slow in getting to work.

Dogs have their weaknesses as well as have their masters, and one of the signs of it is in their loving to talk about themselves and what they have done.

So when it was suggested that we have a coun-

cil and keep it up for some days, and there in a regular, formal way meet and listen to the stories of the different dogs, the idea was at once approved of.

It was true that we did not have Jack or Cuffy with us, as they always lived with the family in the mission house, but we were conceited enough to think that we could get along without them.

As we did not wish to be disturbed, we selected a spot on the island which was very secluded, on the opposite side from where stood the wigwam of the old Indians.

We had some difficulty at our first meeting in selecting a chairman. No one dog, now that Jack was not with us, stood out prominently at the head, and so we lost a lot of time, as there were several who wanted the position and none could get a majority. So in our perplexity, we brought out what we had heard people call "a dark horse" and we all voted for dear old Rover, and so made him our chairman.

Then some one in a spirit of mischief nominated Koonah for secretary, and, strange to say, he was elected.

Old Rover was almost dazed with the honor conferred upon him, but he resolved to do his best. So, amidst a hearty chorus of barks and yelps and some doggerel, with all the dignity which he could assume, which was not much, he

curled his bushy tail under him and sat up on the position assigned him, which was on the top of a low, flat rock.

Koona, as pert and saucy as ever, took his place with his usual cheeky manners. As he called the roll, he managed to so comically mispronounce some of the names, and also to so absurdly join others together, that while at first there was a lot of indignation on the part of those whose names were so trifled with, soon the whole council was in a roar of laughter.

As it was seen at once that Rover would be utterly unable to keep order, old Voyageur and Blucher were appointed vice-presidents to help him.

The first discussion was as to the character of the stories or incidents that were to be narrated by the different dogs that would be called to address the council. Some wanted only those that were blood-curdling and thrilling like the wolf stories that were told by Nelson and Black.

Billy yelped out, "Can we not hear Koona's wolf story over again?"

This produced any amount of amusement among the dogs. Koona wisely went on with his duties as secretary, and so nothing more was said.

Koona had been punished, and so why should he be tantalized further.

Now it happened that I, Hector, the writer of

these reminiscences, had when resting in the kennels with various dogs, sometimes in our dog language, told to those then around me, some of the events of my early life. These dogs now here in the council referred to these interviews, and moved that the subjects for the addresses before the council be "Earliest Days, or incidents connected with them."

This was carried unanimously.

Then the next discussion was as to which dog should first be called upon to speak on such an interesting subject. By vote, it was decided that the oldest dogs should have this honor. This decision brought old Pompey to his feet. He was one of the oldest pensioners, a grand old dog on the superannuated list; kept in plenty and honored and petted by his master, even if his working days were over.

Pompey was specially honored, for the fact that once, years before this, when he was in his prime, with other dogs, sleeping in the woods near the camp-fire which had burned low, he detected the stealthy approach of some cunning wolves, and had so promptly given the alarm, that the master and men had had time to spring up and with their guns drive back the wolves into the forest.

So Pompey with his splendid record was well received; for he was a grand old dog, and like

Rover, so good-natured that he had no enemies.

Thanking the company for their kindly greetings, which were very cheering to an old dog like himself, he began.

“My mother,” he said, “was one of two favorite dogs that were clever bear hunters. Their master lived far away on the shores of a great lake far north of this.

“She lived in the wigwam with the family, and was much better treated than are most of the Indian dogs. Still when bears were known to be near, no mercy was shown to the dogs, and indeed they generally asked for none, for they were just as eager for the battle as were their masters.

“My mother, in anticipation of my arrival, had hid herself away in a cozy nook in the woods, not far from her master’s wigwam.

“That very day, word suddenly came to the Indians there living, that a great big, black bear had been seen hurrying through the forest, and in order to delay him until the hunters would be able to catch up to him and shoot him, it was necessary that two of the best trained bear dogs should at once be sent off on his trail. My mother, for the first time in her life, had to be sternly ordered off to join the other bear dogs, ere she would go.

“However, after a little hesitancy, she was true

to her master and her training, and away she hurried off on the trail of the bear. When they overtook the bear, they attacked him in the usual way, that was, for one of them to get in front of the bear, while the other assailed him from behind, by nipping at his hind legs. The bear is very sensitive in his legs, and so when he felt the bite, he instantly turned round to drive away the assailer. This gave an opportunity for the other dog to thus attack him in the same place. Thus two well trained dogs that were clever enough to keep out of the reach of his great armlike paws, can delay him until the hunters arrive.

“This they did on this occasion, and as the bear was killed very near his den which he had made very nice and soft with leaves and hay, my mother took possession of it and there I was born.”

This brief but interesting address of old Pompey's was received with applause, and grinning his thanks as well as he could, the old fellow returned to his place in the council.

XXIII

OLD NESTOR

OLD NESTOR, another old pensioner, was the next dog that was called upon to take the rostrum, such as it was.

After attempting to clear his throat of a fish bone that had there stuck, for having lost most of his teeth, he was in this and other ways frequently getting into trouble, he began what proved to be a story that thrilled us all.

“Very little ought I to have to say,” said Nestor, “as I have really tried hard to forget the memories of my first days. But there are, as dogs and men well know, some things that will not be wiped out.

“I have overheard some wise men in their talking saying something about a river, into which if you plunge, you forget everything of the past. I have been in many rivers, but I have never been in any one that has been able to do that for me. So perhaps I did not understand those men aright or have not been able to find it, but it would indeed be a joy to me, even yet, old as I am, to plunge into it.”

These depressing words of old Nestor very

deeply interested the rest of the dogs, and as Nestor had been very loth up to this hour to speak about his early history, we all pricked up our ears, that is, those that had any, to hear his story which we were sure would be full of interest.

“Some years ago, not many in the life of a dog, for it is true that we live but short ones, there came into our land a couple of great white men, and they were anxious to make a long journey with dog-trains through our country. As the distemper had killed off a great many of the dogs of the Hudson Bay traders, they searched through the Indian villages and bought up a number of dogs to add to those obtained from the white men. My mother was a fine, large dog, and she was one that was purchased by them. When she found out that she had to leave the warm nest she had prepared in an old disused fish-house, she was very angry, and fought against being dragged away; but the men were determined, and in spite of her cries and appeals, she was harnessed, and had to go.

“These white men had cruel drivers, and they showed no pity to the dogs. As they were to be paid according to the speed with which they traveled, they used their cruel whips without mercy. When night overtook them, they camped in the forest where the snow was very deep.

The only resting-places, as we dogs know to our sorrow, allowed us, were the holes we could dig down in the deep snow. My poor mother did the best she could to get a sheltered place for herself in her misery, for the cruel, heartless drivers made her work as hard in the traces as any other dogs.

“The third night out in the woods, I and some little brother puppies were born. My poor mother did all she could to shelter with her warm body her little ones from the bitter cold; but in spite of all she could do, one after another froze to death, except two of us. In the morning when the dogs were being harnessed to begin the day’s journey, my poor mother refused to listen to the calls of the cruel driver and leave us there to perish.

“This made him so angry that he came striding over the snow on his snow-shoes, and with his cruel whip began giving my mother a great beating. My mother was generally the gentlest of dogs, but now, stung to madness, and with her motherly instincts all aroused for her little ones, she turned on this brutal driver, and seizing him by the leg, she drove her teeth in him so thoroughly, that he howled with pain, and tumbled over in the snow.”

Murmurs of applause greeted these words, and Koonah, who was ever ready for mischief, and who

was especially delighted when any disaster came to one of the drivers, all of whom he hated, was loudest in his yelpings of delight. Strange to say, Voyageur, the one eyed, who was never known to show much affection for men, be they white men or Indians, was the one who sprang up and earnestly protested against this outburst of applause, as being contrary to the dignity of a great council.

Voyageur's reproofs of these outbursts of applause because the cruel driver had been so treated, much surprised most of the dogs, for it was well known that it was a cruel blow or stroke of a whip, in the hand of a driver, who had lost his temper that had caused the matchless leader to lose one of his bright eyes. So it was evident that Voyageur had no revengeful feelings, and so his comrades could not help but think the more of him.

When old Rover, the chairman, had at length restored order, Nestor was requested to proceed with his story.

“When the cruel driver found himself down in the snow, and being bitten by an angry dog, he was frightened as well as furious. He was partly entangled in his big snow-shoes and so was not able, with the dog assailing him, to get up on his feet. So he yelled out as hard as he could for help.

“Fortunately for my mother, and for me also, the white man who had purchased her was a kind man, and had already become very much annoyed at the cruelty of this driver.

“Hearing the man’s affrighted calls for help, he had been one of the first in the camp who had rushed to his assistance.

“In some way or other we dogs quickly recognize who are really our friends among menfolk, and so it was here; for the instant the white man reached the spot, my mother ceased worrying the cruel driver, and turning quickly to the cold nest in the snow, she picked me up in her mouth and brought me to his feet. The driver, now released from the attacks of my mother, quickly sprang to his feet, and furious with rage, raised his cruel whip to strike the now trembling dog, that with a little helpless puppy in her mouth, was mutely appealing for sympathy. And she got it, and protection too. For before the cruel lash could fall upon my mother, the master, who was a big, stalwart man, as well as kind-hearted, sprang in front of the angry driver, and wrenching the whip from him, he gave him a blow so vigorous that it sent him again sprawling in the snow.”

This climax of course brought more applause from the audience, but it soon died away.

Strange to say, Koonah was so overcome by

Nestor's story that he was observed trying to wipe the tears out of his eyes with his bushy tail.

"Let there be no more interruptions," said the chairman. "Nestor will please proceed."

"When the driver had thus been disposed of," said Nestor, "the master turned to my mother, and speaking kindly to her, he stooped down and gently took me from her mouth, and with her closely following, went with her to the cold nest in the snow. There, to his and my mother's sorrow, he found that all the puppies except one and myself had frozen to death.

"My mother, knowing that he was her friend, allowed him to take us two little shivering things back to the camp, where the fire was still burning. Here on a warm fur robe he placed my mother and her two little puppies, and there in the warmth she nursed us while the master ordered some soup to be made out of some pemmican for our mother.

"What to do with us was now the question that troubled him. To have us killed, he would not hear of; and so after first ordering a warm blanket garment to be made for our poor mother, which would so protect her that she could nurse us at the different resting-places, he took the skins of a couple of white rabbits recently killed, and wrapping us up warmly in them, he put us

in the big hood of his large fur coat. There in warmth and comfort we rested and were carried for many days, being nursed by our mother, who was indeed grateful to our master for his kindness. For not only did he thus care for us, but he would not allow the cruel driver to again harness up my mother on that trip. He made him get a push stick, and there by his labors so push on the sled that the three dogs could do the work that the four were expected to do."

When Nestor had finished his pathetic story, there were great diversities of feelings among the dog listeners. Some had been much touched by the sufferings that his mother and he had endured. Others, however, grinned with delight at the discomfiture of the cruel driver.

A brief recess was here taken, and then the council resumed its sitting at the call of the chairman.

The next old dog that was barked up amidst much applause was old Scar.

He was, however, so affected by Nestor's pathetic story, that had brought up so many memories to him, that he was loth to begin.

The friendly encouragement of the "bow-wows" of his most intimate chums, however, helped him, and so he was at length able to start. He said :

"My mother was part Eskimo, but unlike most

dogs of that race, she was shy and timid. She was often beaten by her master, who did not understand her, and mistook her nervous, shrinking ways for obstinacy and sulkiness.

“How much better it would be for our masters themselves as well as for us dogs, if they would study us more.

“My mother had a habit, not uncommon among Eskimo dogs, when her little ones were to be born, of going out into the woods and then hiding herself for some days.

“It was in the pleasant spring-time with the winter work all over. The spot selected by my mother was in a large, decayed, fallen hollow tree, where at the larger end, was a cozy nest capacious and comfortable and well sheltered from the wind. Here a number of us little puppies found ourselves cuddled together. When we were able to understand anything we discovered that our mother was in perpetual terror about something which we could not then comprehend. What it was, we found out to our sorrow long before we were able to afford our mother any help.

“It seems that this tree, which was a very long one, was also quite hollow at the other end, and there our mother had discovered that a pair of fierce wildcats had taken up their abode. To attack them singly, my mother knew would be

madness, and so now her sole efforts were to keep us quiet until we were large enough to be safely taken away from a place so dangerous, for it is known to us all that wildcats are rather partial to a meal of young puppies if they can get them. Fortunately for us, while the large tree was hollow at both ends, it was quite solid in the middle, and so the wildcats, whose trail led from their retreat in an opposite direction, had not as yet detected our presence.

“ This ignorance of us on the part of the wildcats, our mother well knew, could not last very long, as we were all well aware how alert and watchful are these animals, and how keen is their scent. So she was very much worried about it, and only remained away from us long enough to get something to eat, which fortunately then was not very difficult, as the suckers, mullets and jack fish were very abundant in the spring freshets.

“ As the days went by and we grew larger, we naturally longed to get out of our cramped quarters and, puppy-like, try our limbs in romping about in the bushes. Our mother’s anxieties naturally thus became very great, but she did all she could to keep us quietly resting in our nest in the hollow log; but it is difficult to put old heads on young shoulders, even if they are puppies. And so one day when our mother was away hunting for some food, we all received a

most dreadful fright, and two of our family were killed and devoured.

“We had, in spite of our mother’s warnings, got out of our gloomy nest in the log, into the pleasant sunshine, for a puppy romp. Suddenly we were aware that there was danger, and tried to scramble back into our nest. For there, quite near to us, were two fierce wildcats with their queer whiskered faces, and big blazing eyes. With snarls of triumph, they leaped upon us, and each seizing one of my brothers, they sprang up on the big log and began devouring the poor little things, whose yelps were soon silenced.

“But brief as were those dying yelps, they had been heard by our watchful mother, who was not far away. Yet frantic as she was with fear for us, she was wise enough to know that she alone was not a match for two great wildcats, and so knowing where other dogs were like herself looking for the spring fish in the shallows along the shore, she howled and yelped out to them in dog language that she was in trouble, and met with a quick response. A number of the dogs at once dashed up to join her in some adventure of which as yet they knew not its character.

“In the meantime,” said Scar, “we three or four other puppies that had succeeded in getting back to the hollow log, were so terror-stricken, that we could only crouch down in the farthest

corner and there yelp out our fears, which were not lessened as we heard the snarls of the two great wildcats on the log just above us as they were greedily devouring our brothers. So terrified were we as there we crouched, that it did not seem very long before those two savage animals had finished their work, and then they, as we had feared, came to seize and devour the rest of us. Very terrifying were these fierce faces, especially their great green eyes that seemed to shine so dreadfully as they came and peered into the hollow log where we were huddled not far away.

“That they did not crowd in and seize us at once much surprised us. They would crawl in a little way, and then suddenly back out and listen to some sounds that we could not hear. Then again one or other of them would come in, and just when we thought that he would surely seize one of us, he too would quickly back out of that hollow log and then we could hear them talking together in their own language of snarls and growls.

“At length one of them seemed to make up his mind to get us, and so he crawled in that near to us that when he struck out at me with one of his dreadful paws, one of his sharp claws tore down the side of my face and made the wound of which this is the scar.

“You have often asked me how I got this scar, and now you know, and the fact that I am called Scar is to me ever a reminder of that day when I so nearly lost my life.

“While I crouched back as far as I could, and every moment expected the next blow which would surely kill me, it never came. For before he could strike again, there was a great commotion outside, and so now the wildcat was most anxious to get out of his close quarters in that hollow log. But as he about succeeded, he was seized by my mother and some other dogs, and after a sharp battle he was killed.

“The other wildcat was, after a brief fight, able to get up a tree beyond the reach of the dogs. The noise, however, which both the dogs and wildcats had made, was so great that it attracted the attention of some hunters who were not far away. They speedily hurried to the spot and soon shot the wildcat, which from its imaginary place of security in the tree had been spitting its defiance to all.

“One of these hunters was my mother’s master, and so she quickly brought us out of that hollow log and showed us to him. He was in great good humor when he saw us, for the price of dogs had much risen. So we were speedily carried to his wigwam and fairly treated, and there our ordinary life as an Indian dog began.”

A chorus of friendly "bow-wows" greeted Scar as he finished his capital story.

Koona, the tease, who had often chaffed him about that strange healed up wound went over and kissed it and handsomely apologized for all past offenses.

A sharp discussion now arose in the council as to which dog should follow on with the next recital of the story of earliest days.

The general impression of this canine council was that Fanny, a matronly old dog, should be next, if age were still to be the criterion.

Dear old Fanny, however, with ruffled spirits and noisy words, most decidedly protested against being considered more than half as old as some declared she was.

The older dogs, as they listened to Fanny's words, and witnessed her coquettish ways, were trying to keep back their grins of humor. Koona, who with all his mischief, was a shrewd observer of men and women as well as of dogs, as here he listened with the rest to Fanny's pert protestations of her youthfulness, simply convulsed the council with laughter as he exclaimed:

"A woman, for all the world."

XXIV

BEARS

DEAR old Fanny was indignant at these words of Koonas, and at the applause and laughter which followed.

She was very much ruffled in spirit, and felt that her character and influence had been much lowered in the council. She was known to be a very good talker, quite characteristic of her sex, and it was reported that if she would, she could give a capital story of her early days.

The council was now in a quandary, for Fanny was still much ruffled. But suddenly was she saved from any further annoyance, for very abruptly was the council broken up by the attention of the dogs being drawn to something else.

The cause of the excitement was the low, but emphatic calls of the old Indians for the dogs, and their earnest and exciting movements.

When the attention of the dogs had been secured, all the Indian man had to do to create the greatest furor and excitement, was to mention the two words:

“Mooskwa. Mooskwa.” (Bears. Bears.)

It seems that while the two old Indians were resting and having their quiet smoke out in the sunshine after their morning's visit to the nets, they saw a couple of bears swimming among some islands. On one of these islands, not far distant, the Indians had hung up to dry a quantity of white fish.

As the Indians intently watched the bears, and talked over the prospect of capturing one or both of them, they observed by their movements that they must have caught the scent of the drying fish.

This they had been able to do, as a strong wind was blowing directly towards the bears from the place where the fish were hung up on stagings.

Keeping well out of sight, the old Indians watched the movements of the bears until they saw them clamber up out of the water and then start off in their awkward, lumbering gallop directly towards the fish.

It was easy enough now to decide how to act. And as the dogs would have to play an important part in the coming battle with these bears, we now see why the council had been so suddenly broken up.

The channel between the island on which the Indians and dogs were living, and the one on which were the drying fish which the bears were

now probably eating, was only a few hundred yards wide.

The Indians as speedily as possible launched their large birch canoe, and placing in it their gun and axe and a long pole, to one end of which a keen, sharp hunting-knife was bound; they brought it close up to the rocky shore, and getting in themselves first, they then had a number of the best dogs get in and lie down on the bottom. Dogs are wonderfully clever in a canoe. They seem to quickly learn what a frail, cranky boat it is, and so they keep very quiet when in one.

Calling to the other dogs to swim across, the old Indians, who were still vigorous, soon paddled the canoe to the other side.

The bears were now invisible, as the land rises up considerably from the shore. But the water on the rocks and the imprints of their wet feet were still visible where they had landed.

The instant the dogs landed they took up the scent, and with loud yelps, were at once off on the trail.

The plan arranged was that the old man with the gun should at once follow the dogs that could be depended on to keep the bears busy until he came up. His only fears were that at least one of them might spring into the lake and thus escape. To prevent this, was to be

the work of the old Indian woman in the canoe.

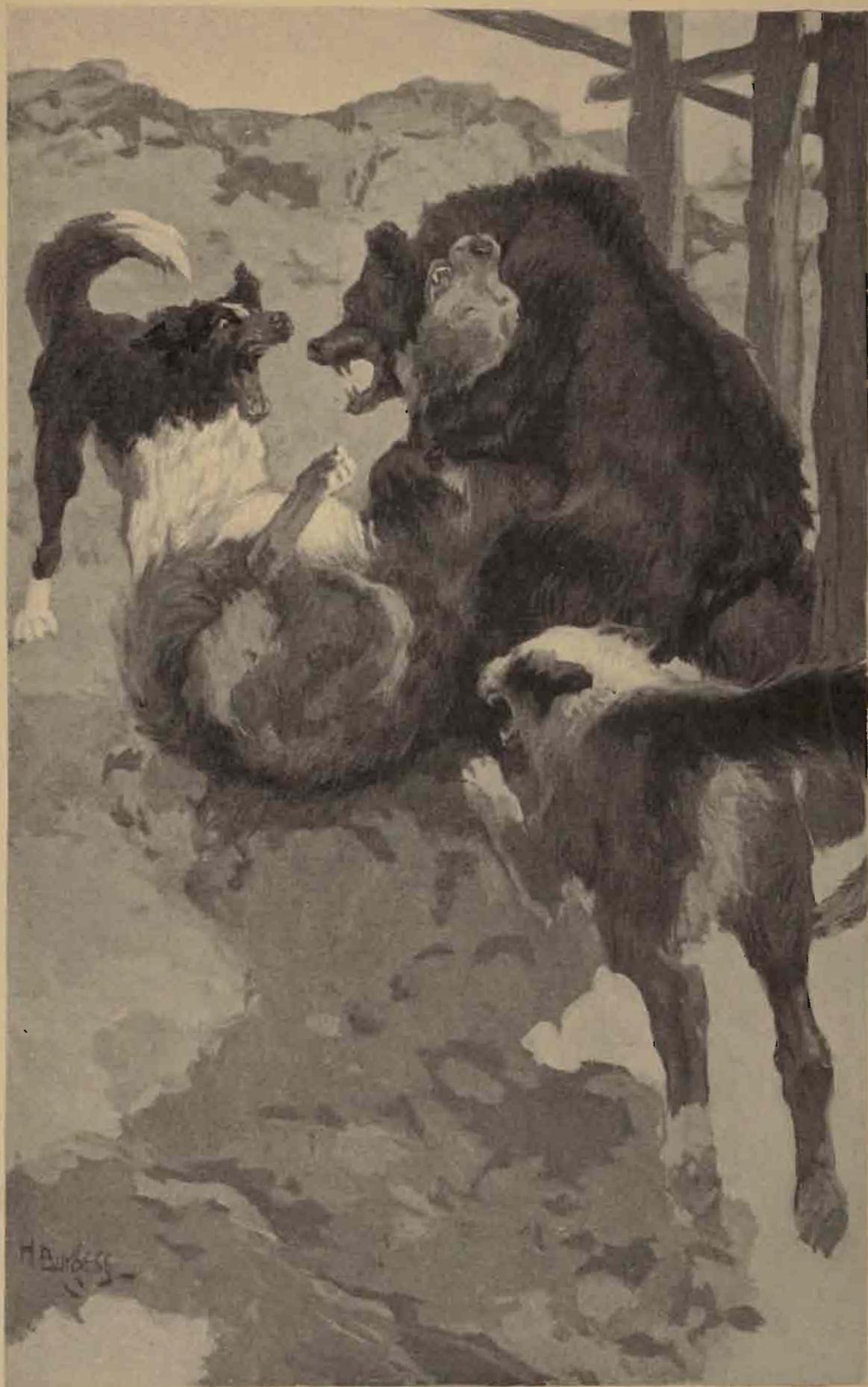
With their knowledge of the habits of the bears, they knew that if either of them attempted to reach the water it would likely be as near as possible to the spot where they had landed, as there the channel was the narrowest.

So taking her place in the centre of the canoe with her improvised lance and axe very handy, the old huntress sat there alert and ready for any emergency.

As I, Hector, was one of the dogs allowed in the canoe, I dashed on the trail of the bears with the rest, but being inexperienced at this kind of work, I prudently, and for other reasons, kept well in the rear of the other dogs.

As had been surmised by the Indians, the bears had reached the stagings on which the fish were drying, and had easily climbed up and thrown a large quantity on the ground, which they were now eagerly devouring. We noticed that as they had such a large quantity before them, they were only taking a mouthful or two out of each fish, and that was from the parts where the fish were the fattest. Thus they had already destroyed quite a number.

The sight of them very much excited the dogs, and yet I noticed that even my bravest comrades did not close in upon them and try to seize hold



"WHILE HIS GREAT PAWS WERE TRYING TO GIVE ME A DEATH HUG,
THEY SPRANG UPON HIM"

of them. They only formed a circle around them, and by their incessant barking, tried to get them to move from where they had taken shelter among the strong posts of the fish stagings.

In my excitement, for I had now got over the timidity and nervousness that had first kept me back, I thought in my ignorance that I would show the other dogs what I could do, and so seeing what I imagined was a good chance to seize one of the bears, I made a mad rush for him, and, well—I hardly know what happened, except that that bear was quicker than I was, and he seized me, big as I am, in his great forearms and gave me such a hug that it seemed as if he were squeezing the very life out of me.

Fortunately for me, the dogs that were not engaged with the other bear, now saw their opportunity, and so, while his great paws were trying to give me a death hug, they sprang in upon him, and seizing him by his nose and small ears, they tried to master him. As my head, when he gave me that terrible hug, was in the way, my comrades had not been able to seize him by the throat, and thus by making the fight of his life, he was able to get rid of them.

Throwing me from him, he speedily turned his attention to the other dogs. Roaring with rage and pain, especially at Buster, the dog who had

deeply sunk his teeth into his nose, for that is the bear's most sensitive place, he struck out with the force and cleverness of a scientific boxer. One dog after another was soon knocked either to the right or left, none of them being much hurt, except Buster, who, however, carried away with him the piece of the nose in which he had set his sharp teeth.

In a few minutes I had recovered my breath, which had been nearly squeezed out of me, and finding that I was not much the worse, except that my ribs were very sore, I joined limping Buster, and as both of us dogs had had enough for that day, we did nothing but watch the battle.

As soon as the bear that had so nearly squeezed the life out of me and shaken or knocked off my comrades whose attack had saved my life, he quickly backed up among the posts of the staging, and there he and the other bear seemed to put their backs together and thus with their four great forearms were able to guard themselves completely from the now exasperated dogs that had formed a circle around them.

The bear that had had his nose so torn, was whimpering out the story of his wound to his companion, and when not engaged in repelling the attack of some venturesome dog, he was busy with his long tongue trying to stop the incessant bleeding.

The dogs, rendered cautious by seeing two of us so badly used up, were not willing to again come to close quarters. So they were trying every plan possible to get the bears out in the open from among the numerous tree-like pillars of the staging. Fortunately for the dogs, there were no large trees on that small island. If there had been, the bears, on the first sign of danger, would have made for them.

And now there was suddenly a change in the mode of battle.

By some way or other the two bears became aware that another enemy was coming, and all their present methods of defense would be only to their injury. They had become aware that the old Indian was rapidly nearing them, and something must be done, and that quickly.

So even before the circle of dogs seemed to be aware of the coming of the old Indian, the bears suddenly dashed in different places in the circle of dogs, and dealing out some cruel left and right hand blows, that for a moment seemed to demoralize them all, they hurried off as hard as they could gallop for the shores of the lake; one going towards the northeast, and the other towards the southeast, their object being evidently to get round the hunter, who was coming from due east. Their intention being as near as possible, to get to the spot where they had first come

ashore as there the channel between this and the large wooded island from which they had come was the narrowest.

It is well known by those who study the habits of bears, that when on a small island, and frightened, they will try to swim where the water is narrowest.

So here it was evident that these two bears, while trying to get clear of this man with the gun, were striving hard to reach the narrow channel.

The dogs, however, soon recovered from the sudden attack made upon them, and were speedily rushing after them, and as dogs can run faster than bears, they were not long in catching up to them.

And now began a scene, or rather two of them, that would have made even old Voyageur laugh.

The dogs seemed to know that now the game was theirs. The bears were speedily overtaken, and then as there were still six dogs able to fight, three of them went after each bear, although two would have been enough. One of the dogs rushed up alongside or rather a little ahead of the bear, and thus attracted his attention, but taking good care to keep out of his reach. The bear thus engaged was rendered powerless to ward off the attack of the dog that noiselessly but suddenly rushed up and severely nipped him in the muscle

of one of his hind legs, which, next to his nose, is his most sensitive part.

Sometimes when thus assailed in his rear, a bear in his rage and pain will turn a complete somersault to the more speedily get his hind leg out of the reach of his tormentors. Generally, however, he quickly turns round to catch and punish the cunning dog who, having got in his work, is wise enough to keep out of reach.

This is now the opportunity for the dog that had been running at the front. With his speedy whirling round, he is instantly at his rear, and with his sharp teeth, he gives the bear another bite in the same tender place. This brings him round again with greater howls of pain and more furious rage. But ere he can get his paws upon him, his merciless pursuers in the rear are now again the assailants.

From this on, the fight was in circles; and so the progress of the bears towards the water was slow, indeed.

Buster and I were not so badly hurt but we were able to follow along and watch the fun, for such it now seemed to the dogs to be, as they had speedily become accustomed to the work.

We were somewhat surprised at the long delay in the Indian's coming, but overheard him saying later on that he had forgotten his powder horn,

having left it in the canoe. However, during the time he was going after it, the dogs were having rare fun with the bears.

The only drawback to the sport of that day was the sad, fatal accident that happened to one of the dogs. He was one of those that was not brought over in the canoe, as eight of us made up quite a heavy enough load with the old man and woman who paddled us over. It seems that several of the dogs swam over after us. As they could not keep up to the canoe, they were not in at the first of the fight, but eagerly entered into it on their arrival.

Lacking the experience and caution of the old bear dogs, they got many a cuff and nip. Still they recklessly rushed in and really more impeded the work of the experienced dogs than aided them.

One of the bears soon seemed to understand this, and so recklessly disregarding the latest bite on his hind legs, he suddenly threw himself with fury on one of these inexperienced dogs, and seizing him in his powerful arm-like paws, he gave him such a hug, that we could hear his ribs break like sticks.

Poor young Argo! He was indeed done for.

In vain the rest of the dogs threw themselves on the bear, and so held him down that he could

do no further damage, but the poor dog was crushed beyond recovery.

Fortunately, the old Indian now came up, and placing his gun near the bear's head, the savage brute was instantly killed.

XXV

SAGASTAO'S QUESTION

BUT how fared it with the other bear? Buster and I had been so excited in watching the one just killed, that we had hardly noticed that the other one, although very much worried by the dogs that had attacked him, had managed to get quite near the water.

So, while the old Indian was reloading his gun, we dogs at once rushed off to see how this second battle was progressing.

Strange to say, the addition of more dogs rather impeded the fight than helped it on, as the dogs were continually getting in each other's way, thus enabling the bear, while desperately fighting in circles, to get, foot by foot, nearer to the water.

The old Indian, who had succeeded in reloading his old flint-lock gun, at length reached the scene of conflict; but he was so out of breath and excited, that when he fired, his bullet only grazed the bear's head, tearing a bit off the scalp. And as it glanced off the skull, it broke the leg of one of our best dogs. The howling of poor Billy with his broken leg so diverted the attention of

the rest of the dogs that the bear, now terrified more than ever by the sight of the man and the report of the gun as well as the wound he had received, recklessly charged the old Indian, and knocking him over with one blow, dashed through the dogs and sprang into the water. And before we hardly knew what had happened, for everything was done so quickly, there the big bear was over that cliff, and swimming for dear life towards the other shore.

A few of the dogs jumped in after him, but they had but little chance of overtaking him, as bears, with their powerful forearms and hand-like paws, are great swimmers.

There was, however, another foe, that the bear little imagined, on the lookout for him.

The old Indian woman's quick eye had seen him jump into the water, and so paddling her canoe, she came alongside just near enough to be out of danger. Then with her lance-like spear, she gave him but one thrust which was quite enough, as it pierced him behind his shoulder and entered his heart.

It was nearly dark when the two Indians, with us tired, excited dogs and the dead bears, reached our island home. Argo, the dog that had been crushed to death by the bear, was buried with all respect. Billy with his broken leg was well cared for in the wigwam of the Indians until

some one could be brought from the mission to set the bone.

The council that had been so abruptly broken up by the sudden appearance of the bears, was never again called together.

It seems that Fanny, who had been joined by Muff and some other female dogs, had had a scene with Rover, the chairman, and so emphatically did Fanny give him a piece of her mind about his ungallant conduct in even asking a lady dog to give herself away as regards her age, or even for a moment permitting the thing to be discussed and even laughed about in open council.

Good-natured old Rover was completely cowed by the way in which these lady dogs dressed him down. He meekly begged their pardon, and then and there faithfully promised that the matter should never be referred to again in any council of which he might have charge.

And, dog-like, Rover was faithful to his word.

The next day after the battle with the bears, the old Indian man, leaving us dogs in the care of his wife, took the canoe and paddled away to the mission to carry the news to our master.

That afternoon as he was very much interested in the Indians' story, he had the big mission boat made ready, and with supplies for a few days' outing, he and Sagastao and several Indian men came over to our island.

We dogs were all delighted to see our masters. They at once, after giving us their usual cheery greetings, went to see poor Billy in the wigwam.

Billy was very glad to see them, for somehow or other that I cannot explain, he seemed to know that their coming meant relief, for the old Indians had done nothing for him, and so the wounded leg was swollen and painful. He was very patient and good while the master and Kennedy set the broken bone and dressed the leg.

Sagastao, his little master, was very sorry to see one of his train thus injured, and so he sat down, and with his little white hands on the head of his dog, soothed him so that as he lay there on the buffalo robe, while he moaned a little he never once growled nor struggled all the time the work of setting the bone was going on. Yet we heard the master say that having been neglected so long, it must have been very painful.

So around that buffalo-skin out in the sunshine where our wounded comrade lay, after the bone was set, some of us dogs gathered, and when a moan would escape from poor Billy, we could not but sit up and howl out our sympathy. Then when we saw the tears in the eyes of Sagastao, as in words so tender, he soothed the suffering dog, we were startled, and in our increased love for him who so loved us dogs, we wondered what that was which was within him that caused this

love and sympathy for the suffering Billy. And when, afterwards, I heard that it was his soul or spirit in him that lives forever, I could not but help, in my dog way, wondering whether we dogs, that can feel sorry too, have not something like that spirit in us, and that perhaps it also will live forever.

The master and Sagastao, much to our delight, we soon discovered had come to spend some days on the island. A tent had been brought in case it should rain, but when the weather was fine, which it most generally was, he and Sagastao preferred to spend all of the time outside, as it was so warm and dry. We dogs were allowed to accompany them as they rambled over the rocks and along the smooth, sandy shores.

The master, who carried a hammer with him, spent much time in breaking off bits of different kinds of stone and rocks, while Sagastao gathered beautiful mosses or ferns to carry home to his dear mother and Minnehaha.

But while these rambles in the glorious summer sunshine were very pleasant, I most enjoyed the evening hours at the great fires which the men built up in some pleasant place. There the bears' paws were roasted while their spare ribs and other dainty portions were cooked with abundance of the splendid white fish just taken out of the nets, in addition to the supplies

brought from the mission. There was abundance for all, and many a dainty bit did Sagastao give to me.

Then when the evening meal was over, and all gathered round that camp-fire, masters and Indians, and many of the dogs, I heard many things that even if I did not understand all, yet I listened to many that interested me, and have tried to ponder them over; but alas, I have to mourn that I am only a dog, and am so ignorant.

There was one night that I shall not soon forget.

The men had spread out a quantity of the beautiful soft, dry moss, which is there so abundant, and on it had made the bed for the master and Sagastao.

For hours in the beautiful twilight and early night they sat there on the robes of that bed and talked, while the Indians listened, and once in a while asked a question.

The sun had gone down in splendor, and the stars one by one had come out in beauty. The crescent shaped moon hung low in the sky, and then the Northern lights came out in multitudes, clothed in beautiful colors, and danced and flitted across the heavens above and north of us.

The day had been one of brightest sunshine, and now was followed by this night of wondrous beauty.

The pleasant talk that had gone on for some time had gradually ceased, as though silence was most in harmony with the weird, beautiful surroundings.

The only sounds that fell upon our ears were the ripples of the waves upon the shore, or the cry of some night bird that had strayed away from its mate or nest.

After a time, Sagastao, who had, like the others, been silent, called me to him, and after giving me a corner of the buffalo robe on which he was seated, and telling me to cuddle down where he could keep his hand upon my head, began talking to me.

“Well, Hector, we are both sorry for poor Billy: are we not?”

“Poor Billy with his broken leg; I saw that you were sorry for him. For when he moaned while they were fixing his leg, which must have hurt him very much, you set up and yelped and howled. And I felt very sorry too, and I could not keep the tears out of my eyes.”

So I was pleased as I thus heard my young master talk about Billy; and I was sure by his voice that he was sorry for him. Then turning to his father, who had been for some time in silence watching the flashing, blazing, beautiful auroras, he said:

“Father!”

"Well, my boy, what is it?"

"What is it, father dear, in me that made me feel so sorry when I heard that Argo had been killed by the bear, and then made me almost cry when Billy moaned while you were setting the bone in his injured leg?"

"Why, your soul within you was stirred to pity, when you heard of the death of Argo, and then again when you saw how Billy suffered."

"But, father dear, what is my soul?"

"The spiritual part of you, which dwells within you, my son! It is vastly superior to your body, which is really only the cage for the soul. The body will die, but the soul or spirit by which we love and mourn and have a thousand emotions, will live on forever."

"But, father dear, I saw Hector and some of the other dogs sit up and cry and howl in sorrow as they heard the moans of the suffering Billy. What was it in them that made them feel such pity and sorrow for their comrade?"

"You have asked me a question, my boy, that for ages has been pondered over, and is still surrounded by clouds and mystery."

"But, father dear, what is it in Hector that makes him pity, and also makes him love us so much?"

"Something in him that corresponds to the soul or spirit in us," was the reply.

“Is it a soul?” said the boy.

“I do not say so,” was the reply.

“Will it live forever?”

“I dare not say so.”

“Why not, my father?”

“Because neither nature nor revelation has given us any positive answer.”

For a time my little master was silent, and then he began again:

“Father, dear?”

“Well, my boy, what is it now?”

“I heard you talking with mother dear about what is called ‘The astronomic system of the universe.’ What do all those big words mean?”

The father feeling that perhaps he was on sure ground here, readily replied,

“It is the theory of many wise men, that every ray of light flashed out, and every sound once uttered, be it a shout of gladness or a cry of pain, still continues somewhere in this great universe, even if we see not the light nor hear the sound.”

“Father,” said the boy, “have these rays of light or sounds any souls like ours?”

“Certainly not!”

“Have they in them that which Hector has which makes him love us so loyally, and that causes him to feel sorry for Billy?”

“Certainly not!”

“And yet,” continued the lad, “the rays of

light and sounds that have no souls or spirits, live on forever, but not the spirits of such splendid dogs as Jack and Cuffy and Hector."

"I did not say so," said the father.

For a time Sagastao lay there on his back on the fur robe, and in silence gazed at the glorious heavens above him. There, without any fog or mist or clouds, the stars in that wondrous sky shone out with undimmed splendor.

An occasional meteor flashed across the heavens, while sinking in the west the half filled moon in increasing brightness shone as the long gloaming was gradually giving way before the increasing darkness of the night.

Mysterious auroras, like armies in the sky, seemed to come out, regiment after regiment, and fight their ghostly battles, and then retire before other wondrous displays.

"Father, dear!"

"Well, my son," was the response.

"That was a lovely verse you read to-night. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.'"

"Yes! And I am pleased that you have remembered it so well."

"Father, dear! How large is God's universe?"

The father's voice was low and solemn, as he replied:

“God alone can answer that question.”

Sagastao was hushed into silence for some time, and then he began again.

“I have been lying here looking up at the stars, and far away beyond the larger ones, I see others: great numbers of them. Can any of the big telescopes see to the last of them?”

“No, my boy. The most powerful telescopes can bring within the range of vision millions that the keenest eye unaided cannot see; and yet they tell us that the stars in countless myriads stretch on and on beyond them.”

“What a vast and wonderful place then God’s universe is,” said Sagastao. “And I cannot help but think that if there is room in it for every flashing ray of light and every passing sound, there surely must be room for the souls or spirits of these bonny dogs of ours, that love us so well and truly.”

“Yes, indeed, they do love us. Is that not so, Hector?”

Then my little master began talking to his father of things that I had never before heard.

“You remember, father dear, when I was so sick, and you and mother thought I was going to die, how Jack would not leave the room, and for days refused to eat.

“Then you remember how you brought me books when I was better, telling some wonderful

true stories of dogs that had died from grief for their masters, as you were sure that Jack would have died for me.

“Surely in this great universe which reaches out above and all around us, there is room for the spirits of dogs that can show so much love and pity, as even to die for those they love so well.”

To those last words of Sagastao, the master replied not. There were stirred within him the memories of those dark, sad days when his only boy lay at the point of death, and for him nothing more could be done. So in intense solicitude, they had awaited the issue, which fortunately was life instead of death ; and vividly there came up before him the pathetic sight of the great dog, that had kept his constant vigil at the bedside of his little playfellow, and refused to be comforted, and would not eat for days, until the child was able to speak to him.

“But, father, who knows ?” Then the little head dropped restfully on my body, and in a moment or two my little master was sound asleep.

¶ Of course I, Hector, only a dog, was not able to comprehend these deep things about which my masters talked, as there we rested on the fur robes that beautiful night under the stars ; but there have come to me some dim thoughts or dreams, or impressions, that if our masters, who

have loved us so well here, and have had any happiness because of our loyalty and devoted love to them, are to live forever and forever in perfect happiness, who knows but that some of us dogs that made them happy here, may be permitted, by our companionship and love, to have some little share in adding to or completing their felicity where existence in that great universe is eternal.

Who knows? Who knows?

JD
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