

Mickey made a grab at me and round my collar hung

Like a rag half-wrung.

Water filled my lung.

I clutched hold of old Pete's tail and to it blindly clung.

Thus brave Pete towed Mick and me ashore.

Mickey had some matches in a box, real water-tight.

Soon we struck a light,

And built a fire bright;

Dried ourselves, front, flank and rear, throughout that awful night.

Tried once more for home at break of day.

Then the rats of hunger started gnawing us inside;

Eyes, with envy wide,

Gazed on Pete's tough hide;

If he had not saved our lives, I'm sure he would have died

To provide a meal for Mick and me.

Four-and-twenty long hours more we went without a lick.

"Darn it all!" cried Mick,

Picking up a stick,

"Turn your head the other way; I'll knock Pete's block in slick.

"It's a case of eat or die with me!"

Murder in the tenth degree was lurking in Mick's eye.

"Hold your hand!" yelled I.

"Might not make good pie.

We had better sample Pete. To-day his tail we'll try.

If it's good, to-morrow we can feast."

Mickey Fog was nothing if he wasn't dead game sport.

He made no retort;

Just sliced Pete's tail short.

And the dog was so surprised he didn't even snort;

Simply stood and looked at Mick and me.

Mick, who used to cook in camps, knew just the thing to do.

Hair and skin soon flew.

My hat held the brew.

Then, in less than half an hour, Mick served up dog-tail stew—

Finest stew that ever man partook.

All the while old Peter sat before us, on his rump.

Now and then he'd jump,

Snap his aching stump,

Then he'd give a little, wistful, hungry kind of grump

That went to the hearts of Mick and me.

Mickey turned and looked at me. I looked at Mickey Fog.

Seemed like "dog eat dog,"

Still, we slipped a cog.

"T'aint the first time," Mickey said, "I've broke the Decalogue."

And he tossed the bones to wistful Pete.

Pete sprang upon those bones of him with barks of dog's delight.

Gobbled them from sight;

Frisked like any sprite!

And we three, in highest glee, reached settlement that night;

Saved from death, and worse, by old Pete's tail.

Consequently, tailless Pete's a real, live friend of ours,

Though he whines and cowers,

Though it shines or showers.

We don't mind the brick-bats, if you throw old Pete the flowers—

He who kicks that dog, kicks Mick and me.

