

Tailless Pete

By Robert Watson



ROBERT WATSON

Hi, there! mind your dirty feet! that dog
Belongs to me!
He's not much to see—
There we can agree;
But, although he wags a stump where his tail
ought to be,
Right upon that stump there hangs a tale.

'Course he's not a thoroughbred; he's just an
ordinar' dog;
Sleeps like any hog
'Fore a blazing log.
All the same, he saved the lives of me and
Mickey Fog.
That is good enough for Mick and me.

January, Ninety-eight, we went to have a go;
Sixty-five below;
Wind and ice and snow;
Tailless Pete was our lead dog—and here I'd
have you know,
Never dog had tail to wag like Pete's.

After we'd been sev'ral weeks upon the Nor-
thern trail,
Over hill and dale,
Never thinking "fail,"
We got off our bearings in a blinding Arctic
gale;
Lost as any wandered kids could be.

With a sleigh chuck-full of grub and all our
sleeping gear,
Little did we fear;
Though a feeling queer—
Kind of premonition in my inwards, right
down here—
Seemed to say, "There's worse in store for
you."

Ten more days the blizzard held. We wan-
dered round about;
Bearings still in doubt;
Dogs clean tuckered out.
Mick began to laugh and cry, and groan and
sing and shout.
Pretty sort of jackpot I was in.

Adding to our peck of woes, we struck a
frozen lake;
Dogs, with whine and quake,
Seemed to dread a break.
We'd no time to pick and choose which way
we'd like to take,
So we started out across the ice.

But, as we neared the farthest side, the ice
began to crack.
Forward sprang the pack;
Tried to change their tack.
Down we slithered with a yell—the ice gave,
front and back.
"Kingdom come" looked close to Mick and
me.

Dogs and sleigh plunged down below—forever
lost to view—
All but Peter, who
Bit his traces through;
To the surface rose and joined our wild hul-
labaloo,
As we splashed and spluttered in our fear.