

The Winning of the Liberty Bond

By Walter Moore*

PART II.

I HAD weighed the possibility for several months of that old friend of mine, as the one last chance to make Wish feel at home, wherever we might take him, without ever letting my plans become known, but from that night when we had had our heart-to-heart confab, I firmly decided to try once more to win the Liberty Bond stake, depending on my old pal, as I so often called him, as the means of my gaining my heart's most coveted desire. I had watched and marveled for years at his unrivaled facility in making friends. No matter how reserved people might be, it was always the same story. Though taciturn, even unapproachable, to other men, when that little old canine smile-bearer stopped them, wherever and whenever he met them a kind word and welcome pat came instant from the most distant of them all. Familiar as it was, always it seemed a marvel.

Mrs. Blazer and I sat by the mellow light from the grate fire in early October, the comfort and warmth bringing out all the sentiment in our souls. We discussed some chocolate bon-bons, sharing them with Buck as always. When they were finished, Mrs. Blazer resumed her knitting while Buck, luxury-lover that he was, snuggled snugly at my feet, his head resting pillow-fashion upon one of them. And silently I was thinking of all the friends that fading little gay, gray head had made of the pleasure and comfort he had carried to many hearts and houses in our little old home town.

There was poor George Ware, for years an invalid, always glad to see him; no visitor was so welcome as the little half-grey face of Buck as he made his morning call, each day for weeks, before the good man passed on to his maker.

There was "Bawley" Wilson—how often he bragged to me that every chicken he owned owed its life to Buck; hadn't he caught fifteen rats at one session when the young chickens were disappearing nightly? From that day Buck became a regular visitor to the Wilson domicile, sure of a hearty welcome and of a bite to eat, as some favorite child. When sickness came and poor old "Bawley" became too ill to leave his bed, each morning a little visitor would peer into the window and be admitted to the sick room. A wasted hand would slowly appear from under the cover to feebly pat the little head resting on the snowy counterpane, the sick man's lips parting in a satisfied happy smile. No other caller was more welcome. He bore no thought of criticism, neither did he offer unfelt words of solace; just winked those kindly, trusting eyes, and with a wag of his stubby tail, expressed affection without ostentation.

There was that grim old soldier, John Hatcher, a veteran of the Civil War, who barely nodded, even to comrades of his soldier days, yet when Buck met him with his all-subduing smile, the old man always reached down and patted the little grey head, so confidently lifted. Often they would toddle off down the street together, comrades for a half hour's visit, then Buck would ramble on home, to inspect his own rug in a cozy corner on the front porch.

Was it, any wonder, as all these things passed before my vision, that I thought he might supply the something lacking to make that great and greatly-disappointing trotter feel at home wherever he might be?

Other men I heard brag of their dogs being on-man dogs, not even noticing the tid-bits or friendly pats of strangers. But Buck!—why, I loved him all the more because everybody loved him; because every man, woman or child, was made welcome by him with his joyous smile. If he could make friends with the most reserved and moody people in town, why shouldn't I try him with a horse, even though other dogs had failed?

*By Permission of The Horse Review, Chicago.

My first move came the next morning, when I took Buck in the car, and with a sack of chocolates, drove to the fair grounds to make the introduction that was to either dissolve my interest for ever in race horses or make me the happiest owner in the world.

With doubts and hopes alternating, I opened the door to Wish's stall, chocolates in one hand and Buck in my arms. The food conservator surveyed us for a minute, then flattened his ears on his neck at the sight of Buck. I half audibly said, "Don't you make one move at this friend-maker of mine, or I will go out of the speed business with one stroke and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will have a case of murder on their hands, for if you harm this dog, I'll kill you in your tracks!"

I stood like a statue for at least two minutes, my mind a whirl seeking some thought to put into action. Finally I gave Buck a chocolate and offered one to Wish, which he hesitatingly ate.



Wish Reached Over and Licked Buck on the Top of His Pate

Another and another bon-bon was handed first to one, then to the other, without the first sign of acquaintance on the part of the horse, while that old dog nearly set me going when he wagged his bob-tail as the horse drew nearer for another bite. I didn't continue the introduction painfully long to either animal, resolving on short but frequent attempts. Every day for three weeks, or until the fall had almost gone, Buck and I journeyed to the fair grounds on our mission of making friends with that handsome chestnut gelding. I could not see that I was making any headway, for Wish drew back each time I tried to get their noses close together, and I was beginning to think my last card was to fail of taking a trick. Then, just a day or so before Christmas, when the morning lesson was being gone over, I received one of the best surprises of the year, or, in fact, of my entire life, when Wish reached over and licked Buck on the top of his pate! My feelings surged up and down like a stage heroine's when that old dog returned the compliment twofold by licking that chestnut nose several times, to the evident pleasure of the horse. I was so delighted that I called both Rufus and Patsy to watch

the spectacle, and still more so when the same occurrence took place the next morning. From the day of their first caress a friendship seemed to have been born, and I felt that progress was being made when the horse began nicker for the dog the minute my car stopped in front of the barn, on my daily visits to the track. In two months' time, that there was an understanding between the two was certain. As the winter days rolled by I often gave them chocolates to dig out of the sack together, which they did without a murmur of dissent. Many times I watched their comradeship, my mind busy with thoughts of what it might mean to me.

Spring came and I had a small aperture made in the door of Wish's stall, that Buck might have free access to and from it. Then I had a wide board slanted up to the feed box which served as a means by which Buck could get up to the horse's nose while he ate his rations. This arrangement proved a happy thought as Buck often lay on

the stake, my money was to be refunded, not as a refund, but as a reward for my staying qualities. As I expected, when the entries to the stake, which had now become the leading one of the world for aged trotters, was published, the turf press had a regular riot of sarcasm.

As usual the preparation of Wish was a joy for his trainer. Buck moved his bed room temporarily to the fair grounds, spending his nights and much of the day time in Wish's stall. He also learned to go to the track repeat day, and when Wish was finishing a mile, he would jump and bark with joy, being too smart to run out onto the track, but was always the first to greet the horse when he was pulled up after a heat. On his part Wish was just as keen to hear that sharp bark also, for invariably he would flash his ears forward whenever its joyous call reached them.

The last keying-up miles—what gems of speed and the ability to carry it they were! The fastest ones were 2:03, evenly rated, and 2:02½, last half in :59½, then a last half in :59½, last quarter in :28¼—and now we were ready to find out whether Buck's friendship would be of any value as a campaign asset.

Shipping day came and I watched the caravan to see if Wish would show the former signs of disquietude at leaving home; but with Buck on his back as they marched to the station, I failed to see one single symptom of his former regret at starting away. The occupants of the express car were Rufus Paul, trainer; Patsy McGonigal, valet; Buck Johnston, chum, confidant and appetite furnisher; and Wish, eligible to any class—all billed to Springfield, O., and there to see if the combination would work. I failed to even take one wink of sleep the night after seeing the forlorn hope off on the train. Quietly I told Patsy to wire me if the horse ate anything on the car en-route, and the day after arriving this is what he duly wired back: "Yes. Three square meals every day since we left, including a four dollar hole in my Panama hat."

I had planned to try at least two or three races over the half-mile tracks, to get some little line on what to expect of the world's champion fasting race horse, so made the trip to Springfield on Monday of race week there, and with a quaking feeling asked Patsy, when I reached our stall, if he needed any feed. He said, "Well, I don't today; but if this wolf don't keep his nose out of the manger, you will have to send on a car load before we ever see Toledo."

"You don't mean it, do you?"

"Of course I do. He eats like a free-lunch fend all the time."

"How's Buck?"

"Oh, he's the whole show around this race track. He's talked the secretary out of two passes for a couple of stray pups he has boarding with him now."

Race day dawned and Rufus won the 2:30 trot so easy there was no semblance of a contest; best time 2:12½, and did I feel good? Patsy wrote home to all the boys how things were coming along with the chestnut, and we shipped on over to Finlay.

Again Patsy reported the same old thing—nothing at all but eat for Mr. Wish. "Sure enough, Patsy," says I, "he does eat like a real campaigner. But—"

"Say," he answered, "just give me some more money to buy oats with. Don't ask, Does he eat? Ask me how much it costs for alfalfa!"

A party of my friends came round to see me and the horse, and one of them remarked: "Say, Blazer, is this the Hoover horse?"—the one that can't eat anything but home cooking!"

I looked a little vacantly at him, saying simply, "Yes, this is the one."

"Well, he don't look like a steed that had ever missed a meal!" Then

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FOR the benefit of growing Red B wheat for the future it is advisable to their character few suggestions with time to cut and are no two varieties variety of every characters that are other variety. The is made that it is sort than Marquis or wheat excepting I other very early sort. It is altogether parcels of this wheat seeded this season a thin side in order to as much ground as small quantities of through the seeder, the hopper of the se case, Red Bobs being sort, may not ripen be expected, or as at the same rate arrive at a fair test as compared with should be sown under or nearly so. It depends on reasonable factors, grown on new land setting—stubble-plow fall plowing, or on the farm, as to the ripen this wheat. grown this season, trials of the three under many different would be well to try. Red Bobs as early ripening compared with Mar seeded under equal expected to mature days sooner.

As this article Bob and Kitcher describe them separately.

Characteristic

The earlier a variety ripening the lower yield. Early ripen as freely as later-maturing growing season is the case with Red yield, while it does as some sorts, it is Beside its earliness other good character which really is the every grower; no ripening a variety carded for a variety average yields. Red Bobs has been issues of The Guide out a few of them Red Bobs may stooling wheat.

field or plot it makes thickly on the ground. Still in spite of equally and in other sorts. The fact that it produces filled head, with t

A Field of B