

ALPATOK

THE STORY OF AN ESKIMO DOG



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MARSHALL SAUNDERS



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THE STORY OF AN ESKIMO DOG

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- DIANITA W. HORN -

"A TALL LAD WAS STANDING OVER HIM."

(See page 3)

Cosy Corner Series

ALPATOK

THE STORY OF AN ESKIMO DOG

By

Marshall Saunders

Author of "Beautiful Joe's Paradise," "Tilda Jane,"
"Nita, the Story of an Irish Setter," "For His
Country," etc.

Illustrated by

Diantha W. Horne



Boston ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁

L. C. Page & Company

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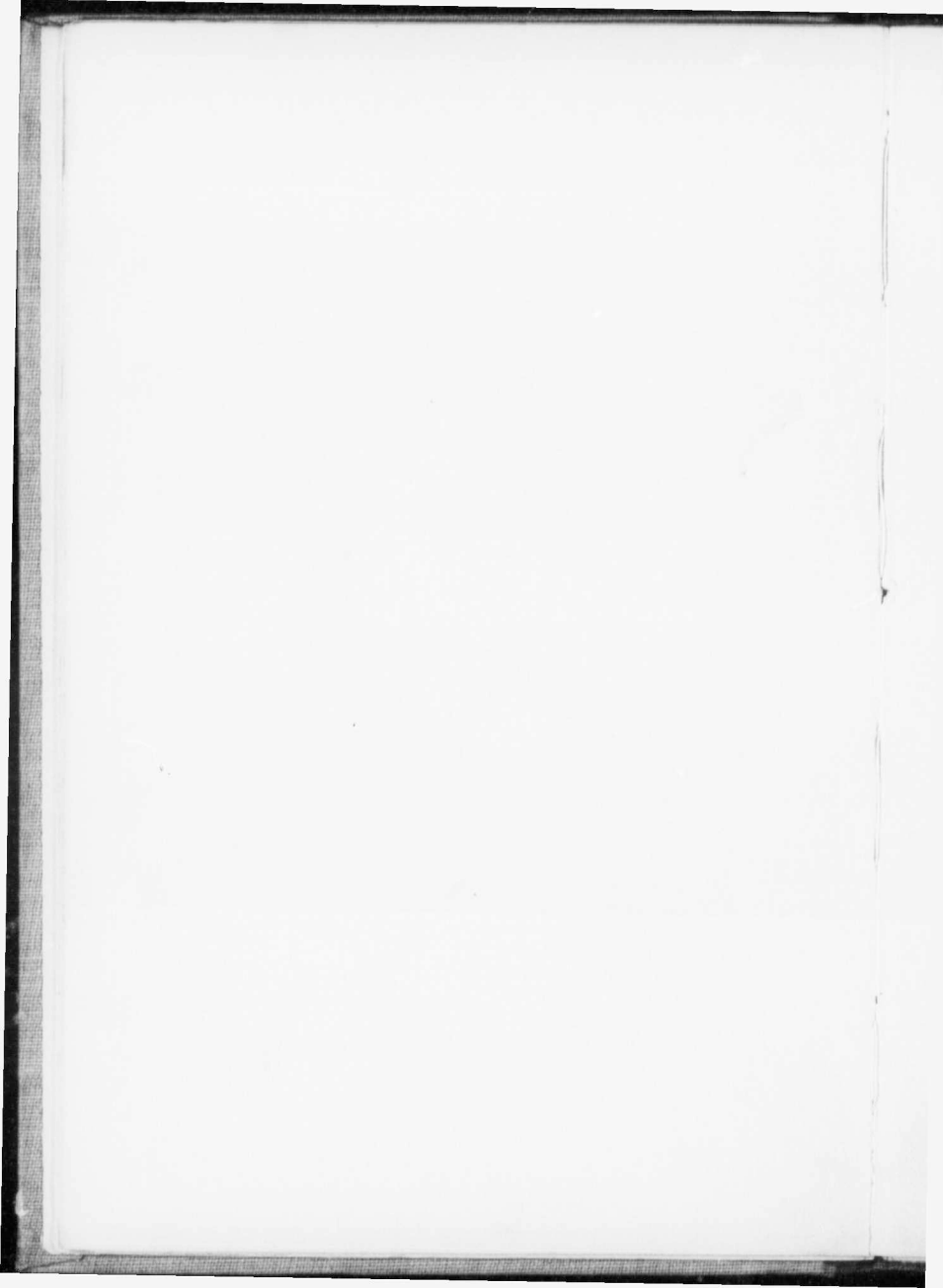
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ALPATOK

THE STORY OF AN ESKIMO DOG

HE was a young dog, but he looked like an old one. Wearily shambling along the street, he stared hungrily at the grocers' tempting windows. Oh, for a taste — not of the hams and the tongues, but of the salted herring, the creamy codfish, the glistening heaps of smelts in their wicker baskets!

All winter he had supported himself in the most miserable of ways. Now spring was coming, and he was tired out — so very, very tired.

The dogs of this Canadian city knew that he was a stranger and had fought him continuously. There were certain streets, the best streets for pickings, that he dared not enter. The shopping streets were not good ones for scrap boxes and barrels of rubbish, and he had become hungry — very hungry — and,

stopping short, he sat down on the frosty pavement and looked disconsolately about him.



No home, no master — and he had been brought up like a baby! These well-dressed persons contemptuously avoided the place

where he sat. He was dirty, and there were sore spots on him where he had been bitten. Ladies drew their skirts aside; children started back in affright from his lean and shaggy form. One little girl called him a sheep. Another said, "Look, mamma, at the funny wolf!"

Poor sad-eyed dog! He was almost at the end of his power of endurance, but he did not know it. He thought he would just lie down here on the hard pavement in sight of the delicious morsels in the windows, and when he was rested he would move on, on in his endless quest for food.

He curled himself up in a ball, his tired eyes were just closing—closing in a sleep which if begun would never have ended—when he was roused by an exclamation: "Hello, dog! You look beat out!"

He raised his head. A tall lad was standing over him, an overgrown lad with twinkling eyes, a thin jacket, and bare hands thrust into his pockets to keep them warm.

The dog attempted to get on his feet. This was the first kind word he had heard for many a day, but, strangely enough, his legs

doubled under him whenever he tried to stand on them.

"Blest if he isn't played out," pursued the boy. "Can't you stand up, dog? Come, try again."

The animal did try again; his lip curled back in a feeble dog smile, but the strength was all gone out of his limbs, and, gazing up helplessly into the lad's face, he seemed to say, "It's of no use — better let me alone."

"Cricky!" observed the boy. "Isn't he queer-looking? I believe he's an Indian dog. Some old Micmac from the camps has brought him into the city and deserted him. They often do when food is scarce out there. Poor brute! He hasn't been able to pick up much of a living in the streets, and he's starving to death. How much of the needful have I about me?" And he drew one red hand from his pocket. "Three cents — not a fortune; still enough to buy sodas. I say, mister," and he entered a near-by grocery, "give me three cents' worth of crackers."

The grocer tossed the boy a bag, and he slipped out to the dog.

"Here, old man. eat some."

The dog put out his pink tongue and licked feebly at the crackers. What was the matter with him? He wanted to eat them, yet he could not.

"I'll tell you what, dog," said the boy, briskly. "You're most at the end of your tether. You want hot stuff inside you. Come on home with me. If you stay here it's all up with you. A policeman will catch you; then it's a shot in that wolfy head of yours and the bottom of the harbour. I'll help you."

The dog was absolutely unable to move, and the boy bent over him.

"Confederation! What a smell! I guess you don't know what the inside of a bath looks like. However, I'd be dirty, too, if I'd never been washed, and I'm not going to see a dog go under, if he doesn't smell as sweet as a rose. Here you go!" And, taking the weary beast in his strong young arms, he flung him over his shoulder and went staggering up the hill.

Every boy that he met jeered at him, and to every one he flung a saucy answer. In their hearts, he knew, they were sympathizing, and if it had not been close upon meal-

time he would have had a following of approving scoffers.

When he reached the outskirts of the city he began to talk to the dog.

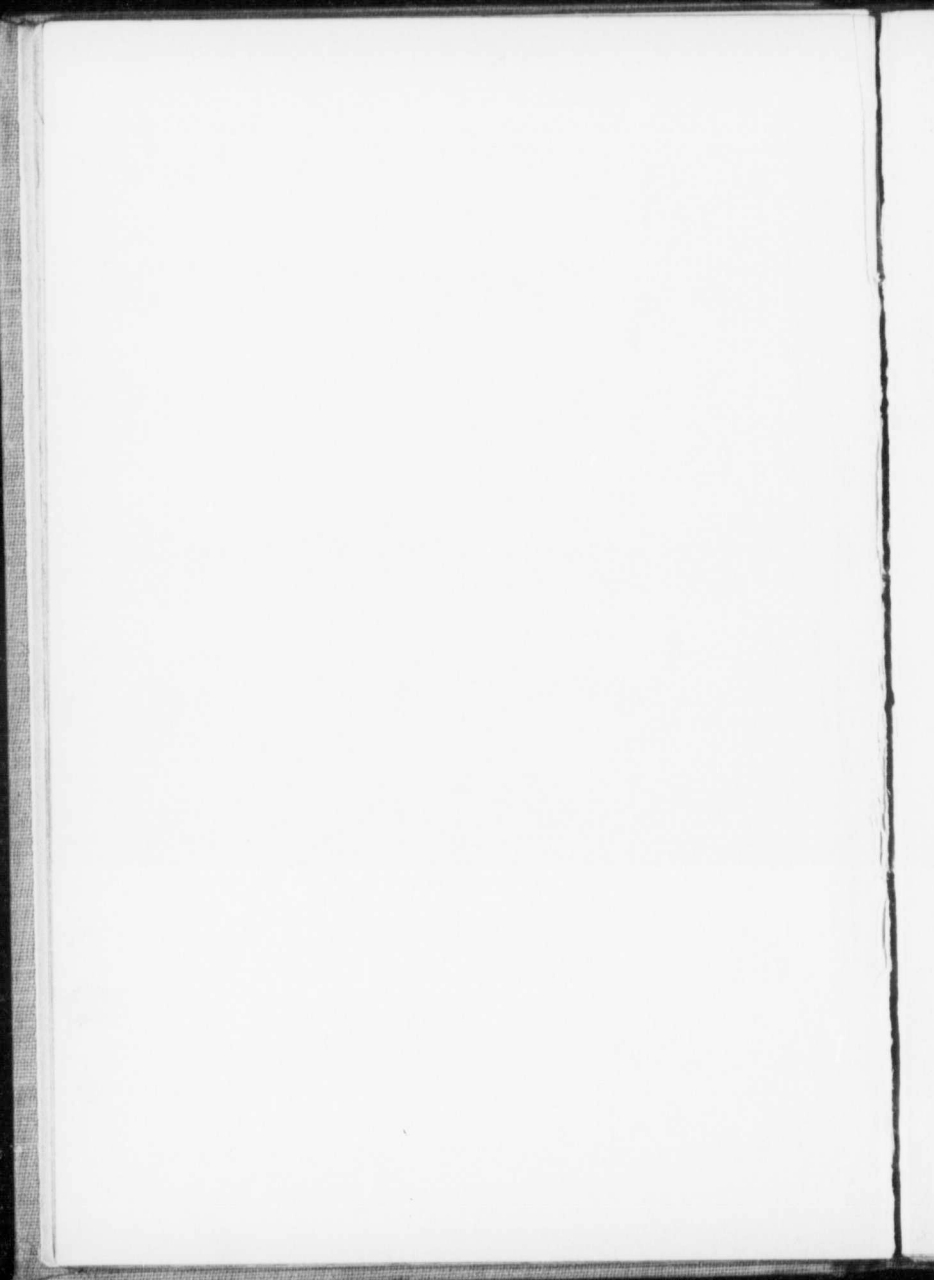
“Do you see that little cottage yonder, with the yard about as big as a pocket-handkerchief? That’s where I live. Once we used to have a larger house, but, like you, I’ve come down in the world. Father’s dead — only stepma and me left, dog. If it weren’t for her I’d take you right in the back yard, but it wouldn’t do, dog; it wouldn’t do.”

The dog, of course, made no response. In a weary heap he lay over the boy’s shoulder. He was in good hands, and he was content.

“I’m going to take you to the dumps, dog,” said the boy, “and in case you’re a stranger and don’t know what the dumps are I’ll just explain that it’s the common where the ashes from the city are dumped. I’ll find you a nice warm heap and cover something over you. Here we are; don’t make a noise.” And, cautiously skirting the yard of the cottage, he made his way over the soft, yielding heaps of ashes to a spot some distance from his home.



"IN A WEARY HEAP HE LAY OVER THE BOY'S
SHOULDER."



"There" — and he gently laid the dog down — "that's a nice bed for you! Now for a roof to keep out the rain," and he looked anxiously about. "Cricky, there's a packing-case!" And, springing up, he ran like a deer to the place where a large wooden box was protruding from a heap of rubbish.

"And some sheets of tin," he went on joyfully, "just the thing to keep the rain out, and an old barrel for a front hall, by which you can enter your mansion, dog," and, dragging his spoils after him, he came back to the place where the starving animal lay.

"Cold, eh?" and he laid his hand on the dog's back. "No, you're not shivering. You must be an Indian dog — think I'll call you Koojemook. That's all the Micmac I know, and it means 'Get out!' I guess that's what people have been saying to you all winter. Now, isn't that snug?" And, carefully toppling the box over the dog, he pulled off a couple of loose boards, fitted the barrel in the aperture, propped a coal-hod and some battered tin cans beside it, and finally had a rain-proof, if not very elegant, kennel.

The dog made no show of pleasure, ex-

cept that his brown eyes followed the boy wherever he went. The look in those eyes was enough. The boy understood him.

"Now, Koojemook," said the lad, at last, "I must run over to the house, but I'll be back just as soon as I can pull the wool over stepma's eyes. She's pretty cute, and it isn't easy to fool her, but I'll make a try. So long." And, with a farewell tap on the box, he started off for the cottage.

"Is that you, Thaddy?" called a metallic voice, as he was stamping his feet in the little back porch.

"Yes, ma'am," he said, vigorously.

"You're late," went on the voice. "You've kept tea waiting."

"No, I'm not," said Thaddy, still stamping, "and I haven't — mustn't give up contradicting her," he went on under his breath, "or she'd down me."

"You're getting careless," went on the voice, and, stepping into the kitchen, Thaddy found himself confronted by a small-sized, black-eyed young woman, who held a toasting-fork in her hand.

"If you won't run me through, stepma,

"I'll give you a kiss," said the boy, with an extra twinkle in his eye.

The little woman lowered her fork. She had a sharp tongue, but she loved to be petted.

The boy's eyes were running approvingly around the room. "Good fire! Nice tea! Stepma, how long has that fire been lighted? It looks fresh, and, upon my word, there is hardly a mite of ashes."

Before the woman could prevent him he had opened the stove door. "Now, stepma, you've been sitting in this cold house without a speck of fire."

"I wasn't cold," she said, stoutly. "I was by the window in the sun, and I had my big shawl on."

"That's what my Latin grammar calls a *fraus pia*," remarked Thaddy, sitting down at the table. "The end of your little nose is as red as a beet. Just you wait, though, till I get to be a man. I'll build fires big enough to roast you to death."

"Thank you," said the woman, smartly.

Thaddy jumped up from the table. "Oh, have manners, boy!" he said, roughly, to himself. "Here you are sitting down to the

table before your stepmother. You're losing all your politeness, and if you haven't politeness you'll never get on in the world." And he shook himself vigorously.

"You're a queer fellow, Thaddy," said his stepmother, spearing a piece of toast in the oven.

Thaddy bent his tall, ungainly form in an ungraceful bow. "Just what I think about you, stepma."

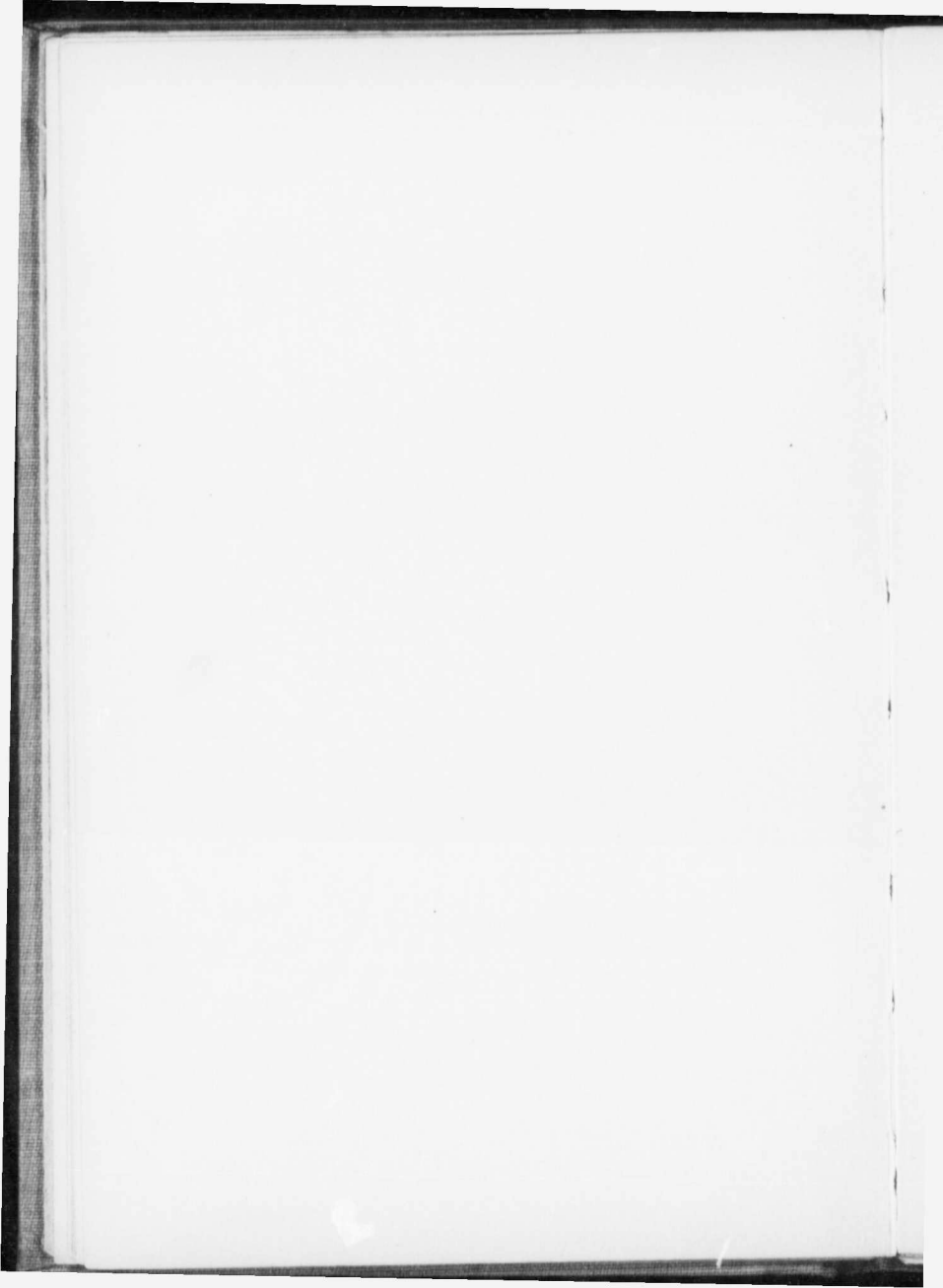
The woman laughed. "Oh, well, we get on — you and I."

"Do I smell hot muffins?" asked Thaddy, working his nose.

"Yes, boy," said his stepmother, "and lots of 'em. I got reckless because we're so near the end of the flour barrel."

"Wouldn't that be a good time to get careful?" remarked Thaddy, cautiously.

"The best of times," snapped the woman. "But, lackadaisy, I get tired sometimes of being careful and just feel I must do something desperate. Here they are. They're only warmed over; they were baked this morning." And she emptied a small panful of smoking hot muffins in a plate on the table.



"Just wait till I get to be a man," said Thaddy, moistening his lips. "You shall sit eating hot bread from morning till night."

"And die of indigestion," said Mrs. Timbs, dryly. "Sit down, Thaddy. I'm just going to light myself."

"Will you say grace, blackbird, or shall I?" asked the boy, gravely.

"You do it this evening, Thaddy," said the woman, wearily. "I'm too ugly to thank the Lord for anything."

"For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful," murmured the boy, reverently.

"Here's a bowl of soup for you," said Mrs. Timbs, getting up and going to the oven. "I most forgot it."

"Where's yours?" asked Thaddy, peering over at her.

She smiled in a tired way, and, leaning back in her chair, played with her piece of toast.

"I'm not hungry," she said, at last. "If you'll excuse me, I'll run over to Mrs. Goldman's. She said she knew a woman who

would give me fine sewing, and she was going to find out the address."

As soon as Mrs. Timbs left the room the boy tiptoed to the window. He watched her enter a cottage a short distance down the street; then, rapidly emptying the plate of muffins into his bowl of soup, he darted from the house in the direction of the famishing dog.

"Here, dog," he said, pushing in the bowl to the sick animal, who lay luxuriously on his bed of ashes; "I wish you were a few sizes smaller, but this will help to fill up."

It was dark inside the box, but the boy could hear the pleased and hurried lapping of the starving animal.

Sitting back on his heels, he stared across the dumps in a kind of comical dismay. "He's going to live, and now I've got two wolves to feed — one inside of me, and the other inside of that dog — and stepma's nose getting sharper and sharper from denying herself. I believe I ought to have this dog put out of the world. I'll tell a policeman tomorrow. Hello, dog, have you finished?"

The sound of lapping had ceased and there

was a scratching inside the box. When the boy stretched out his hand for the bowl he found the dog had partly raised himself and was weakly pawing the air.

"Blest if he isn't trying to shake hands," muttered the boy. "Some one's taught him that. Very well, old fellow; you're powerful dirty, still I'll not refuse to shake a paw. Yes, it's all right. I'll not give you up to the police — not after that paw shake. Guess I wouldn't like any one to shoot the life out of me. Good night, now, but before I go listen to me and take another look at that brown cottage I pointed out to you. Don't you go near it. There's a lady in it with double-barrelled eyes and an awful mouth full of swords, and ears that can hear a mile off. You're a goner if you venture near her. D'ye hear?"

The dog did hear and understood. He curled himself up on his bed, and, hastily replacing his shelter, the boy ran back to the house.

When his stepmother returned he was at the sink, whistling cheerfully, and washing his soup-bowl.

"Was it nice, Thaddy?" asked Mrs. Timbs.

"Lovely, stepma," replied Thaddy. "I guess if you just knew how that soup was appreciated you'd think you were the best cook in creation."

"I thought you weren't very fond of soup, Thaddy," she said, suspiciously, "but I just had to make that because I had the bones."

"Stepma," said Thaddy, solemnly, "can't you believe me when I tell you that that soup went right to the spot?"

"Yes, I believe you, Thaddy. You've never told me a lie yet," she returned, kindly.

Thaddy at once became dejected and stifled a heavy sigh as he put his bowl on the dresser and went to a cupboard for his school-books.

"Isn't it too soon to work after eating?" asked his stepmother.

"No," said Thaddy, soberly, "it isn't."

"I should think you'd want to rest awhile if you've disposed of all those muffins," continued Mrs. Timbs, with a gesture toward the empty plate on the table.

The boy's eyes twinkled. "Strange to say,

they make me feel more like work. I'm just crazy to get education enough to start in business."

"You'll get on, Thaddy," said the woman, proudly, "if you keep up your steady ways."

"I'm going to get on," said the boy, doggedly. "Work doesn't scare me. Fact is, I love it. Now, what has my brain got to get outside of to-night? Algebra, geometry, modern history, and geography." And he piled his books up in front of his seat at the table.

His stepmother pushed the lamp nearer to him, and the boy, sitting down, was soon absorbed in his tasks.

Presently she heard him snickering. "What's the matter, boy?" she asked, looking up from her darning.

"I'm reading about the Eskimos, stepma. They're awful eaters. Two Eskimos will easily dispose of a seal at a sitting, and a man will lie on his back and allow his wife to feed him tidbits of blubber and flesh until he is unable to move."

"Pigs!" said Mrs. Timbs, shortly.

"And the other evening," continued

Thaddy, "I was reading that in some parts of India there is such a scarcity of food that many natives never know what it is to have a full meal. They do not starve to death, but they are always mildly hungry."

"I guess some white people know that feeling," observed Mrs. Timbs, calmly.

Thaddy looked at her sharply; then his face flushed, and, abruptly closing his book, he laid his head down on his arm. "Oh, Lord, it's hard to be so poor!"

"'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth,'" said Mrs. Timbs, calmly.

The boy flung up his head. "But what about women? Does the Bible say anything about yokes being good for young women who marry men older than themselves who die and leave a big boy to bring up?"

His stepmother smiled. "I guess I'd be lonely without you, Thaddy."

The boy pounded on the table with his fist. "You daisy — just you wait until I'm twenty-one. I'll take that yoke off your neck pretty quick. What are you laughing at?"

"Nothing much — just the notion of a daisy with a yoke on."

The boy laughed, too — laughed from pure youthfulness and light-heartedness.

Finally he sobered himself. "I guess we can have a little fun if we are poor."

The woman smiled shrewdly at him; then, taking up his old sock, already a mass of darns, she added another to it.

After a time she heard him giggling again. "What's the matter now, Thaddy?"

"I'm reading about a fat king," he snickered. "Stepma, when I get in business I'm going to fatten you up to three hundred pounds."

"What has sent your thoughts to food this evening?" she asked, curiously. "You seem bewitched."

"Oh, nothing," he replied, and, closing his books, he got up and went to the window.

"I think I'll go to bed," he said, drawing the curtain aside, and looking earnestly out.

"What is there outside?" she asked, getting up and going to him.

"The moon and the ashes," said Thaddy, calmly, "and the usual blue haze yonder

where the men are burning rubbish. What a lovely smell it makes! If we were rich people the city wouldn't dare to burn old bones and rags behind our mansion. Good night, stepma." And he abruptly ascended the small back stairway.

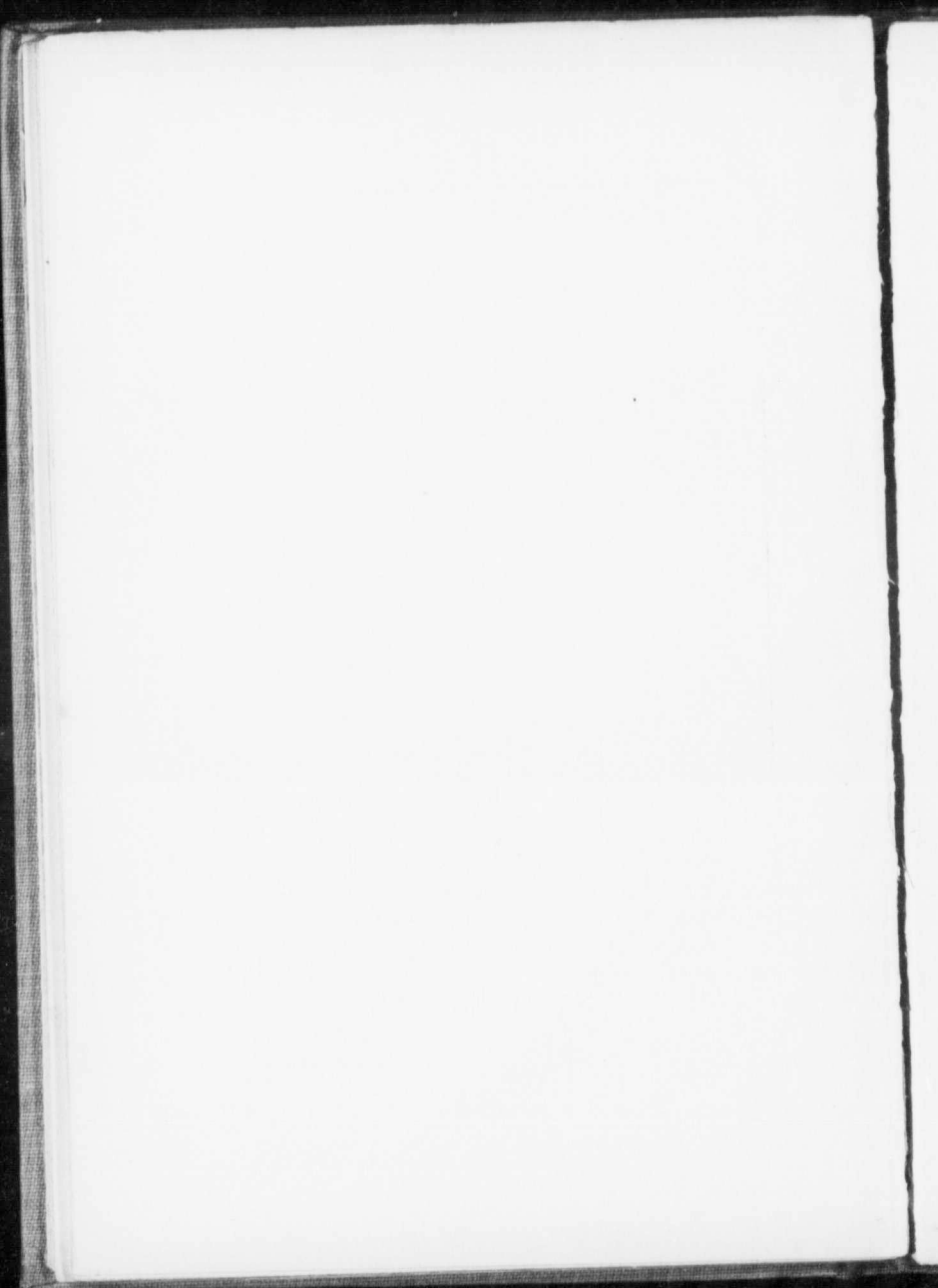
After he left Mrs. Timbs drew aside the curtain again. "There's a new heap of trash there," she said; "looks like a hut. Upon my word, I believe that boy has got another sick animal!" And she despairingly dropped into a chair.

"Have I got to starve myself again?" she went on. "First it was a lame cat, then a sick hen, then a blind rabbit. Deary me, I've got enough to bear without feeding another mouth! But if I don't do it, he will. He's as obstinate as a mule about a sick thing, and he's a growing boy and needs his food, while I've got my growth. Oh, dear, dear; I've got to do it, and I hate animals so!" And, with tears in her eyes, she locked the door, put out the light, and went up stairs.

The starving dog, up betimes the next morning, had his eye at a large crack in the box, watching for the boy, when he saw the



"SHE COMMENTED ON HIS APPEARANCE."



yard gate of the cottage open and a woman come out.

It was very early in the morning, and few persons were stirring. Thin lines of smoke ascended from some of the cottages where labouring men were preparing to go to their work.

The dog joyfully wagged his tail. The woman had a plate in her hand. She and the kind boy were in league to help him.

When she pulled aside the barrel, he could have fawned on her for very pleasure, but a look at her face restrained him.

"Here, brute — eat," she commanded, slipping the food on the ashes. Then, as he did eat, soberly and quietly, she commented on his appearance.

"Well, if you're not the ugliest and the dirtiest! If it wouldn't break Thaddy's heart, I'd telephone to the S. P. C. to put you out of your misery. I wish you'd never been born!"

The dog's pricked ears gently drooped, his bushy tail lowered itself apologetically, but he went on eating.

"Glutton!" said the woman. "That's my

breakfast and dinner — only soup meat and bread, but still a feast for a poor wretch who never knows what it is to have a full meal in this land of plenty. So much for genteel poverty. If I'd go to the poorhouse I'd live on the fat of the land. Ugh, you beast! You've eaten it all, and you'll be happy and comfortable all day, and I'll have a rat inside me. Now, don't you act hungry when Thaddy comes. I'll drag away the boards against this barrel, and he'll think you've been out foraging on the dumps. You needn't look for him yet. He sleeps like a top, and he'll not be up for two hours. And you needn't lick your lips. I'll not give you a drop of water. He can do it when he comes. Still, he might forget. Boys are careless, and it's dreadful to suffer from thirst. Water is cheap. I'll give you all you want." And, picking up an empty tomato can, she went to the house.

Koojemook did not altogether understand the affair, but he blinked his little, sly, kindly eyes at her, and when she returned he drank the water until his new friend began to make pointed remarks.

Then he stopped. "Go into your den, wolf," she said, and, throwing aside the can, she discontentedly made her way to the house.

Koojemook lay down and had another sleep until three hours later, when Thaddy came out of the cottage with a pile of books under his arm.

"Hist," said the boy, edging along in an apparently careless manner. "Not a word out of you. Stepma's been watching me like a cat. Here's a crust of bread, the only thing I could get. What, you don't want it? You've been out of your kennel, you rascal, and I told you to stay in. Here's your barrel door pushed aside. Oh, well, I don't care if you'll be a wise dog and don't hang about the cottage. I guess it's just as well for you to skirmish round; then I won't have to take poor stepma's food for you. Good-bye. I'll call on you later. Mind you lie low." And Thaddy went whistling away.

After dark that evening Thaddy slipped out to say good night to Koojemook. "What! Not hungry yet?" he said, offering him a slice of ham that he had saved

from his lunch. "This is fine for me. I'll leave your barrel door open so you can come out again to-night if you like."

Koojemook, looking gravely at him, made no explanation, and Thaddy ran happily back to the house.

The next morning the strange woman called again upon Koojemook, and once more presented him with a heaping plate of food. This time she had a little milk for him that he, however, would not drink.

"I wonder where you were brought up," she said, staring at him with wide open eyes.

Koojemook preserved a discreet silence. Morning after morning the woman appeared at the same early hour, and morning after morning the dog listened calmly to remarks upon his appearance. He was old; he was sick; he looked like a wolf. Why didn't he die if he were going to?

These words coming from a person whose deeds were so highly to be approved of met with slight attention from the philosophic dog. Indeed, he began to like the woman. She fed him; the boy only gave him water. And every day after Thaddy went to school Koo-

jemook took up his station on a near-by ash-heap and attentively watched Mrs. Timbs's comings and goings about the back door and yard of her cottage.



When Thaddy returned home he slunk into his box.

“Oh, you old tramp!” said the boy to him one day. “I expect you go all over the city when no one is watching you.”

Koojemook curled his lip. He had never

been beyond the dumps. A winter of starvation and ill-usage was not so easily overcome. And he had work to do nearer home when he was able for it.

On the morning of the tenth day of his entrance into the packing-box he began an excavation behind it, working as steadily as his strength would allow.

"What are you up to now?" asked the boy, with a puzzled face.

He soon found out. Koojemook was making a burrow — roomy and comfortable and water-proof.

"Well!" said Thaddy, in bewilderment. "I don't know what's the matter with that packing-case, but if you don't want it, let it go." And he gaily scattered the box, the sheets of tin, the coal-hod, the barrel, and the oil-cans to the four winds of heaven.

"Now there's nothing to attract stepma's attention," he said. "It was too conspicuous an ornament to the dustscape anyway." And he gave the last vestige of the box a gleeful kick.

Three more weeks went by, and the month was completed. Koojemook was now a fine,

plump dog. His sores had been licked into cleanness and health; the bad smell, thanks to his dust baths, was quite gone, and Mrs. Timbs, staring down at him one morning, said, with something nearly akin to pride: "You're not bad looking now that you've got on your bones the ten pounds that have slipped from mine this month. But understand, dog, this is for Thaddy's sake, not yours."

Koojemook violently wagged his tail. It did not matter in whose name the kindness was done. He reaped the benefit, and he loved the outspoken woman.

"Stepma's pretty cute," said Thaddy to him later in the day, "but she's not so cute as you and me, Koojemook. I notice that you always lie low when she's about. You're a good dog. Just wait till summer comes and I'm earning money. Then I'll acknowledge you and confess how I've been keeping you. She has so much to worry her that I hate to mention you now, and she'd never believe that you support yourself."

The dog discreetly acquiesced, and for a day or two longer things went on as they

had gone before. Koojemook kept to his burrow, only emerging to watch Mrs. Timbs, or to note with affectionate interest the comings and goings of the boy who had befriended him.

One night, when the dog was sleeping soundly, he suddenly woke, lifted his head, and listened. Then, creeping outside his burrow, he sat on the top of it and stretched his neck in the direction of the town.

To ordinary hearing there were no sounds audible but the usual ones of the night — the subdued hum from the near-by city, the rolling of carriages, the sighing of the wind, the whirring of distant electric cars, the shouts of the men to the horses that were dragging loads of ashes to the outskirts of the dump. But Koojemook, with his mysterious dog sense, was aware of something else, and soon he set out running hurriedly in the direction of the city.¹

Away in the distance, beyond his sight, be-

[NOTE. — My father when hunting has had a hound come to him across a wood. The dog would come directly. He could neither hear nor see his master. The wind was not in the right direction to carry the scent. — M. S.]

yond his hearing, a stout seafaring man was making his way toward the city's rubbish grounds, and as he went he whistled—a long, loud whistle, an uncivilized whistle, heard for the first time in this civilized city.



One or two pedestrians stared at him angrily, and put their hands to their ears as they passed him, whereupon a policeman felt it his duty to remonstrate.

The bluff old captain gave him a resounding thwack on the back. "I'm up in Labrador, man, whistling for my sledge dogs. Can't you

see them scuttling over the frozen ground to get their frozen fish?"

The policeman grinned and stood watching the sturdy, respectable old white-haired, red-faced sailor who was going on his way, still making the extraordinary racket with his lips.

After awhile the old man paused and drew a long breath. "Poor doggie, ye're not in the city. They've driven ye out to rat-trap and scuttledom if ye're still alive." And he whistled more vociferously than ever.

He had now reached the long, desolate street on which Thaddy and his stepmother lived. Here the old sea-dog put his fingers to his lips and blew a trumpet blast.

Suddenly his hand fell; his mouth opened; he stopped stort.

"Ah, there ye be!" he said, with terrible calm. Then he walked on briskly.

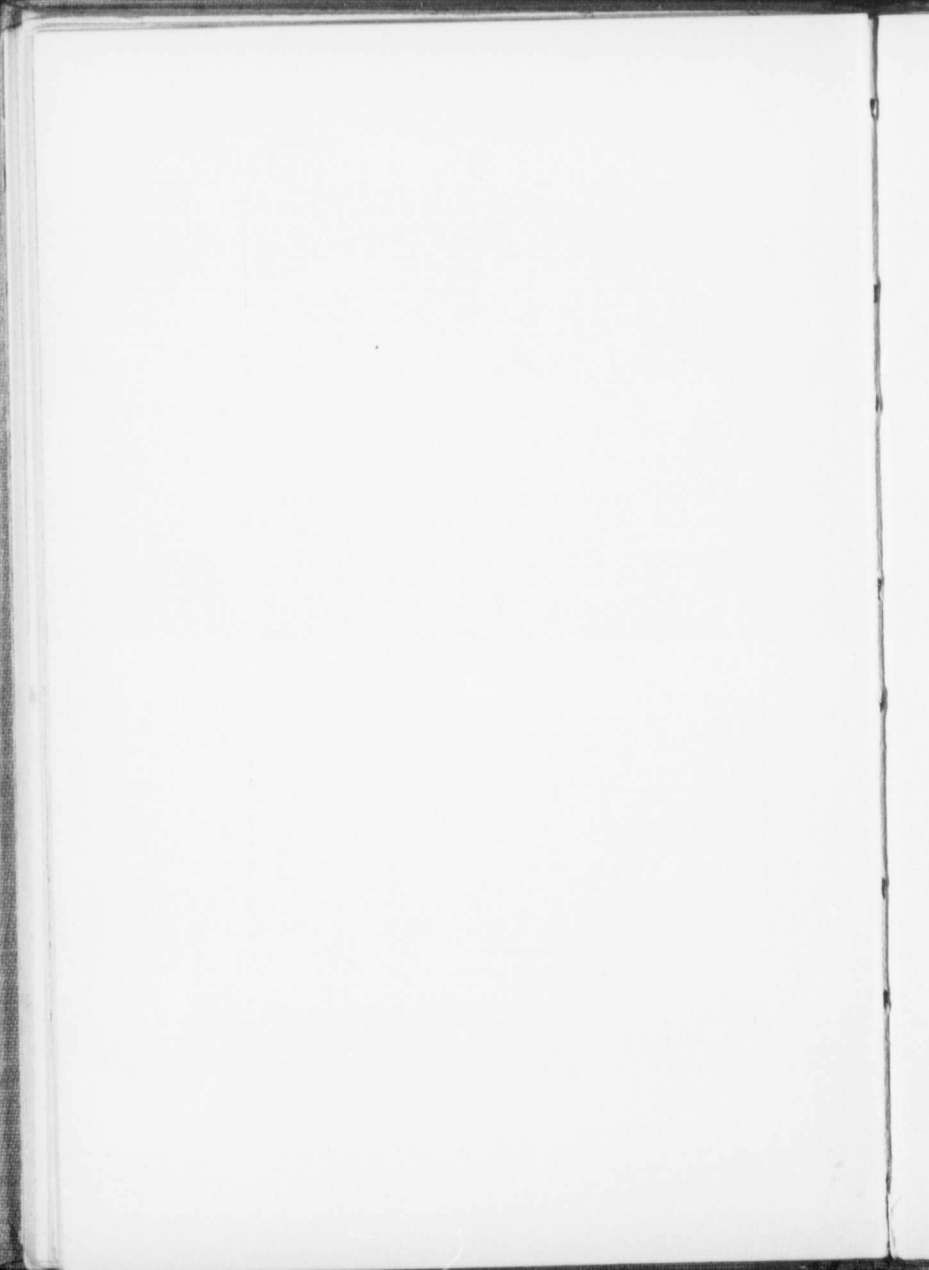
Away ahead in the sickly gleam of a distant electric light was a bunch of yellowish-white fur, nose on paws, body crouched for a spring.

"Alpatok!" roared the old man.

The spring came; the furry whirlwind precipitated itself against his breast.



"HE PUT ONE ARM ROUND THE DOG."



The old man, staggering back, clutched the dog with one hand and with the other raised his hat.

"Lord, I thank thee!" he muttered, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "My prayer is heard; my poor doggie is found."

There was no neat pavement out here with a stone curb; merely a rough sidewalk and a deep ditch. The seafaring man sat down on the ground and let his feet dangle over the ditch. Then he put one arm round the dog, who had thrown himself across his knees and lay there like a tired child.

"Boy," remarked the old man, "I doubt but ye've had hard usage."

The dog looked up into his eyes.

"Don't ye," said the old man, hoarsely; then he raised his clinched hand toward the sky, "Lord, rain down fire and brimstone on the brutes that ill use thy creatures!

"It don't come," he muttered, looking about him. "We've got to wait." Then he again directed his attention to his dog.

"Ye're fat, boy," he said, feeling his ribs.

"Some one's been good to ye. Any one that's been a neighbour to Timothy Slocum's

dog sha'n't suffer for it. Lead me to him, boy."

The dog sprang up. Pressing close to his master, looking up at him from time to time with eyes that shone in an unutterable devotion, he lead the way, not to the cottage, but to his burrow.

"At the old tricks of the wolves, your forebears, to get out of the nipping winds," chuckled the old man. "Ye forgot the feather bed ye'd slept on with me. But Alpatok, who's fed ye here? This dry fodder wouldn't keep ye." And he glanced contemptuously about him at the heaps of ashes.

Alpatok made no response. He merely kept on wagging his tail and staring at his adored master.

The old man surveyed the scattered cottages with a puzzled face. "It's likely it's some one in them that's been nourishing ye. Come on, Alpa, dog, lead me to him."

Alpatock did not budge.

"Well, ye're a wise dog, and doubtless ye've got a good reason," said the man, "and if ye won't stir, at least give a howl and bring him to me. Mayhap he's never heard your pretty

tones, for ye can't bark on account of ancestral difficulties. Come on; sing, boy." And he threw his own head back as a sign to the dog.

Immediately there burst upon the night air a sound or a commingling of sounds the most melancholy and ear-splitting, with also a hint of ferocity, that the residents of Common Street had ever been treated to in the way of a dog's howl.

It was the cry of a wild beast, not of a domesticated animal, and, seeing lights spring into darkened cottages and windows suddenly opened, the old man chuckled mischievously.

"I doubt if ye've serenaded him before, Alpa. Now him as loves ye will seek ye."

The old man was right. Alpatok had never before had occasion to howl, but to the startled Mrs. Timbs and Thaddy, springing from sleep, there was presented an immediate picture of their strange pet in some sudden distress.

Thaddy rushed to the window. The night was not very dark, and he dimly made out a man's form beside the burrow. Flinging on only the most necessary of his garments, he tore out of the cottage.

His stepmother was not far behind him. The dog was in great trouble. Perhaps some



one was trying to steal him, and with a strange, jealous feeling of ownership she hurriedly thrust her feet into her shoes, slipped on

her dress, and seizing her gray shawl, hastened after Thaddy.

"Oh, oh, oh!" called a voice from the shadowy group beside the burrow. "This is Kooje's master, and he's an Eskimo dog!"

The old man pulled off his hat. "Your servant, sir, not a dog."

Thaddy, excitedly hugging Alpatok, was not listening to him.

"Do you own this dog?" asked Mrs. Timbs briefly, addressing the old man.

"Yes, ma'am, him and his mother before him. She was one of my sledge dogs when I traded in Labrador after I give up the sea. She was half-wolf, and if she'd been landed here she'd have fought her way or swum her way to me, and, if she couldn't have done that, she'd have been queen of this city. She saved my life once, and when I went to Newfoundland to live I took her with me. She died and left this pup. He's not like her. He's been brought up soft, and his hard side ain't developed yet."

"How did you lose him?" asked Mrs. Timbs, sharply.

“Have ye got any enemies, ma'am?” asked the old man, abruptly.

“Yes, a few.”

“I've got a hundred — one of 'em, the worst one — swore he'd get even with me. He stole my dog, the pup I was bringing up like a child. If he'd 'a' shot him, I'd have forgiven him, but he brought him to this strange place; he let him loose in the streets. Then he come to me, says he: 'I've took your baby-fied dog. I've freed him in a foreign place, where he'll get a foreign welcome. Most likely he's inching along to death of starvation and being bit to pieces by native dogs.'”

“Oh,” said Mrs. Timbs, with a sudden in-drawing of her breath.

Thaddy stamped on the ash-heap. “I'd have killed that man.”

The old captain looked earnestly at him. “That's the way I felt, boy. I raised my arm. I couldn't have downed him, for he is young, and I am old, but I'd have tried. Howsomer, something come over me, ma'am,” he said, again turning to Mrs. Timbs. “Did ye ever get aggravated and aggravated, till ye felt as if there was seventy devils inside of ye, and

just at the moment ye thought they'd have to break loose something come over ye — an awful calm, a kind of way up in the sky feeling, as if something said to ye, 'Poor soul, ye've hated all ye can; now give it up!'"

The woman's thin face flushed. "Yes, yes," she murmured; "I've felt that way against the men who ruined my husband and broke his health. I've suffered till I thought my heart would break; then I gave it up."

"And so did I," said Captain Slocum, heartily. "The Lord sent a holy harpoon into my wicked heart. My arm fell to my side. 'Look here, Dolsen,' I said to my enemy, 'ye've afflicted me sore, but I forgive ye. I'm an old man, and ye've taken my only comfort from me, but maybe I was making an idol of a common clay dog.'"

"And what did he say?" asked Thaddy, eagerly, when the old man paused.

"He never said a word. He slunk away like a fox. But the next day he came back. Says he: 'Slocum, you made a fool of yourself over that dog, but he's pretty tough. Maybe he's outlasted the winter. Step aboard my schooner, and I'll take ye to the place

where I let him loose.' So I come, and the Lord led me to my dog."

"And now I've got to give him up!" cried Thaddy, with a wail of dismay. "But, dear me," and he turned to his stepmother, "I feel so bad that I forgot you don't know. I found this dog on the street ever so long ago, and I've had him out here, and I felt so sneaky to deceive you, but I didn't want you to take your food to give him, the way you did the hen and the cat. You'll forgive me, won't you?"

"Yes, I forgive you," said the woman, in a peculiar voice.

The boy, stooping over to caress the dog, was unconscious of her change of tone. Captain Slocum was not. He gave her a sharp look and for a second time noted her painful thinness, the weary droop of her shoulders.

"I'm keeping you out here," he said, quickly. "That's your home, ain't it?"

"Yes," said Thaddy, "that's our house, and if we go in you'll take the dog away. Oh, Kooje, Kooje, or Alpatok, or whatever your name is, I don't want to give you up."

"Who are you?" asked the old man, shortly.

The lad stopped petting the dog and stood up. "My name is Thaddeus Timbs, sir."

"What you do?"

"Go to school," said Thaddy, proudly.

"Want to get an education?"

"Yes, sir, I just do."

"That's right. I'd have got on better if I'd had one. This your sister?" And he again turned his keen eyes on Thaddy's stepmother.

"No, sir; my father's second wife. He's dead."

"Indeed!" said the old man, and his gaze went again to the tiny cottage. "Have a hard time to get along?"

Mrs. Timbs drew herself up stiffly, but Thaddy smiled a charming, boyish smile. "Yes, sir; in winter. Not so bad in summer, when I'm earning wages running errands."

"How long have you had this dog?"

"A month last Thursday," said Mrs. Timbs, quietly.

"Stepma!" exclaimed Thaddy, and his astonishment was pitiable to see.

There was a mystery here that Captain Slocum was anxious to clear up.

"My dog's grandfather was a wolf," he

said, "and Alpatok has a wolf's appetite. Who's been feeding him?"

"She has!" cried Thaddy, wildly pointing an accusing finger at his stepmother. "Oh, stepma, stepma, you had so little to give away."

"Who did you think fed him?" asked the captain.

"I—I thought he picked up stuff on the dumps and about the streets, sir," said Thaddy, in a choking voice. "She's crept out and fed him to save my victuals. Just see how thin she is," and he stared in sorrowful distress at his slender young stepmother.

"Thaddy," she said, "there's a proverb about low-down persons that clean their soiled linen before strangers."

"F-forgive me, stepma," stuttered the boy, "but I don't know when I've had such a blow!"

"Is she a good cook?" asked Captain Slocum, with a motion of his head toward Mrs. Timbs.

"Yes," said the boy, bitterly, "when she has anything to cook. Just wait till I'm a



“WILL YOU TAKE ME TO BOARD WITH YOU?”



man. I'll pile her kitchen table with groceries to the ceiling."

The old sailor was a shrewd judge of character. He gave one more glance at the woman's face, then he said: "Will you take me to board with you? I'm getting too old to live alone."

She hesitated.

"Ask for my character down at Whitehall's shipping-office," said the old man, shortly. "They know me."

"It isn't that" — and she hesitated — "but our house is small. We have few comforts."

"A man that's been used to a ship's bunk half his life don't want oceans of room."

Her face cleared. "I'll take you, sir. If you don't like us you can leave us."

"All right, it's a bargain," he said, briefly. "Here's some earnest-money." And he forced a roll of bills into her hand.

"Hurrah!" cried Thaddy, throwing an arm around Alpatok. "Now I'll not lose my dog. Will you tell me of sealing voyages, sir, and strange countries?"

"That I will," said the old man, heartily.

"I'll move my trunk out to-morrow. Come, Alpa, boy, down to the hotel with me."

"He doesn't want to leave us," cried Thaddy. "See him look at stepma and me. Come on, Alpa, I'll run a little way with you," and, kicking up his heels in glee, he seized the dog by his shaggy neck and scampered over the ash-heaps with him.

"You've been scrimping yourself, ma'am," said the old man, turning to Mrs. Timbs, who was weakly crying over the roll of bills.

She made no response beyond slightly shaking her head.

"For those two," said the old captain, pointing to the boy and the dog. "And neither of them beauties nor thoroughbreds."

She threw up her head. "Mixed blood is the best blood."

"I guess you're right," he said, slowly, "but don't fret no more. I've got no kith nor kin but that dog, and them that is good to him, I'll be good to."

Mrs. Timbs's lip was trembling. "I didn't do it for a reward, sir. 'Twas for Thaddy's sake. But I think the Lord sent you to us. There isn't a bite in the cupboard, and to-

morrow I was planning to take him from school, though I just hated to do it."

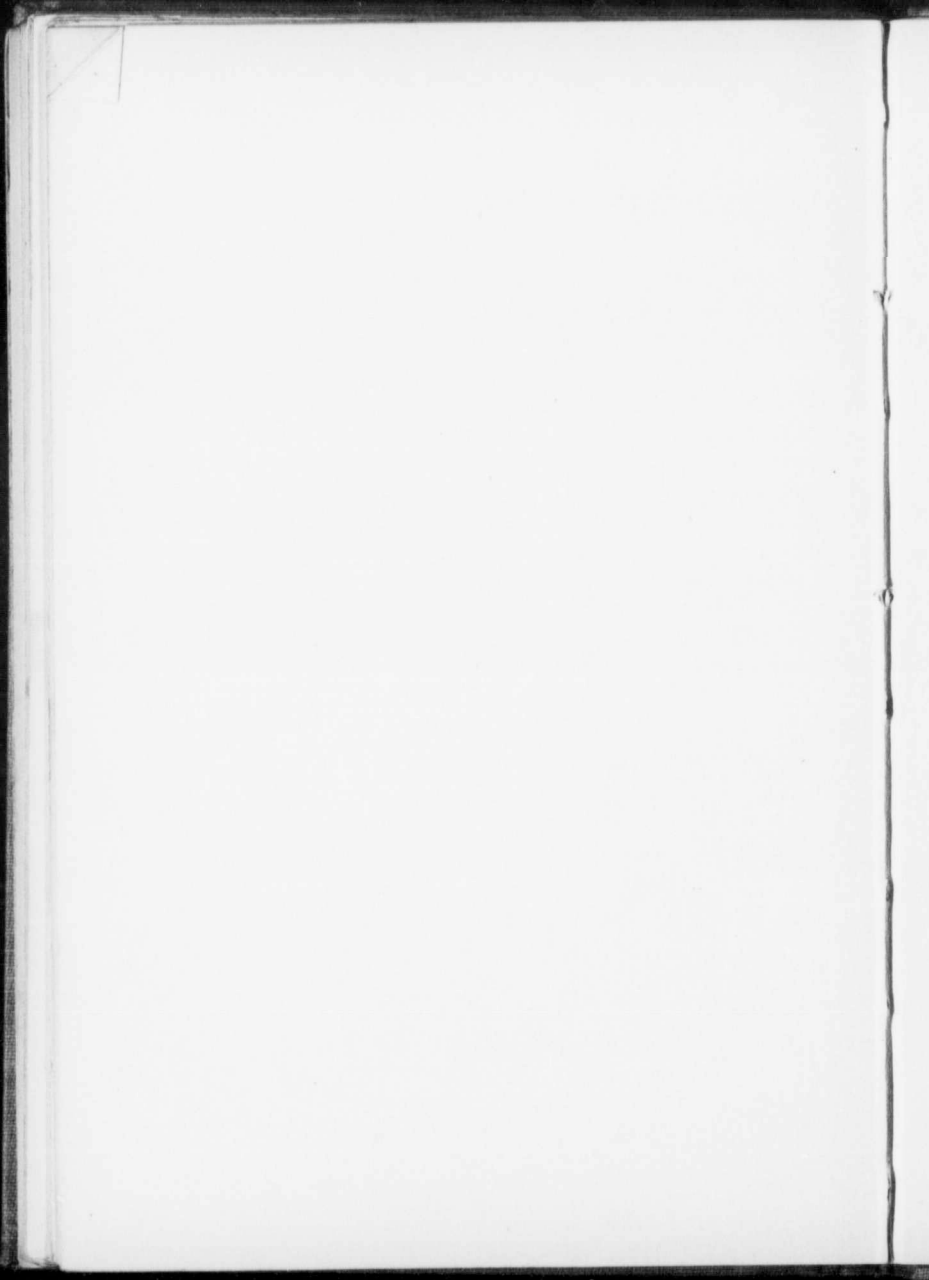
"And he's only your stepson," said the old man, curiously.

"But he loves me," she replied, softly.

The old man smiled. "Well, let him get an education. You're right there. Education and always education, otherwise you're bound to go lame-legged through life. Good night, ma'am."

Captain Slocum went away, but the next day he arrived with his trunk. He is now installed in Mrs. Timbs's best room, and Alpatok is growing to be a huge dog, who walks with a firm and masterful tread the streets of the city that he once roamed as a starved and forsaken puppy.

THE END.



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