

FALLEN INTO ELD.

I sit before my window
And watch the sullen rain,
The hand of age is on me,
And weakness grows to pain.

My sons are men, far from me;
Their father—he is dead;
I own the roof above me,
I do not lack for bread.

But O the lonely morning!
And O the dreary night!
Ah, life itself should follow
When love and hope take flight

No happy days await me,
No joy that all must crave;
The only path before me
Ends in an open grave.
—Ninette M. Lowater, in New York Sun.

A DOG OF RUDDY COVE.

By Norman Duncan.

HE was a Newfoundland dog, born of reputable parents at Back Arm and decently bred in Ruddy Cove, which is on the northeast coast. He had black hair, short, straight and wiry, the curly-haired breed has fallen on the island, and broad, ample shoulders, which his forbears had transmitted to him from generations of hauling wood.

He was heavy, awkward and ugly, resembling somewhat a great draft-horse. But he pulled with a will, fended for himself, and within the knowledge of men had never stolen a fish; so he had a high place in the hearts of all the people of the Cove, and a safe one in their estimation.

"Skipper! Skipper! Here, b'y!" The ringing call, in the voice of young Billy Topsail, his master, a fisherman's son, never failed to bring the dog from the kitchen with an eager rush, when the snow lay deep on the rocks and all the paths of the wilderness were ready for the sled. He stood stock-still for the harness, and at the first "Hi, b'y! Gee up, there!" he bounded away with a wagging tail and a glad bark. It was as if nothing pleased him so much on a frosty morning as the prospect of a hard day's work.

If the call came in summer-time when the Skipper was dozing in the cool shadow of a flake, a platform of boughs for drying fish, he scrambled to his feet, took his clog in his mouth and ran, all a-quiver for what might come, to where young Billy waited. (In Newfoundland the law requires that all dogs shall be clogged as a precaution against their killing sheep and goats which run wild. The clog is in the form of a billet of wood, weighing at least seven and a half pounds, and tied to the dog's neck.) If the clog were taken off, as it was almost sure to be, it meant sport in the water. Then the Skipper would paw the ground and whine until the stick was flung out for him. But best of all he loved to dive for stones.

At the peep of many a day, too, he went out in the punt to the fishing grounds with Billy Topsail, and there kept the lad good company all the day long. It was because he sat on the little cuddy in the bow, as if keeping a lookout ahead, that he was called the Skipper.

"Sure, 'tis a clever dog, that!" was Billy's boast. "He would save life—that dog would!"

This was proved beyond doubt when little Isaiah Tommy Goodman toddled over the wharfhead, where he had been playing with a squid. Isaiah Tommy was four years old, and would surely have been drowned had not the Skipper strolled down the wharf just at that moment.

The Skipper was obedient to the instinct of all Newfoundland dogs to drag the sons of men from the water. He plunged in and caught Isaiah Tommy by the collar of his pinafore. Still following his instinct, he kept the child's head above water with powerful strokes of his fore paws while he towed him to shore. Then the outcry which Isaiah Tommy immediately set up brought his mother to complete the rescue.

For this deed the Skipper was petted a day and a half, and fed with fried caplin and salt pork, to his evident gratification. No doubt he was persuaded that he had acted worthily. However that be, he continued in merry moods, in affectionate behavior, in honesty—although the fish were even then drying on the flakes, all exposed, and he carried his clog like a hero.

"Skipper," Billy Topsail would ejaculate, "you do be a clever dog!"

One day in the fall of the year, when high winds spring suddenly from the land, Billy Topsail was fishing from the punt, the Never Give Up, over the shadows of Molly's Head. It was "fish weather," as the Ruddy Cove men say—gray, cold and misty. The harbor entrance lay two miles to the southwest. The bluffs which marked it were hardly discernible, for the mist hung thick off the shore. Four punts and a skiff were bobbing half a mile farther out to sea, their crews fishing with hook and line over the side. Thicker weather threatened, and the day was near spent.

"'Tis time to be off home, b'y," said Billy to the dog. "'Tis getting thick in the son'west."

The Skipper stretched himself and wagged his tail. He had no word to

say, but Billy, who, like all fishermen in remote places, had formed the habit of talking to himself, supplied the answer.

"'Tis that, Billy, b'y," said he. "The punt's as much as one hand can manage in a fair wind. An' 'tis a dead beat to the harbor now."

Then Billy said a word for himself. "We'll put in for ballast. The punt's too light for a gale."

He sculled the punt to the little cove by the Head, and there loaded her with rocks. Her sails, mainsail and tiny jib were spread, and she was headed for Grassy Island, on the first leg of her beat into the wind. By this time the other two punts were under way, and the sails of the skiff were fluttering as her crew prepared to beat home for the night. The Never Give Up was ahead of the fleet, and held her lead in such fine fashion as made Billy Topsail's heart swell with pride.

The wind had gained in force. It was sweeping down from the hills in gusts. Now it fell to a breeze, and again it came swiftly with angry strength. Nor could its advance be perceived, for the sea was choppy and the bluffs shielded the inshore waters. "We'll fetch the harbor on the next tack," Billy muttered to the Skipper, who was whining in the bow.

He put the steering oar hard alee to bring the punt about. A gust caught the sails. The boat heeled before it, and her gunwale was under water before Billy could make a move to save her. The wind forced her down, pressing heavily upon the canvas. Her ballast shifted and she toppled over.

Boy and dog were thrown into the sea—the one aft, the other forward. Billy dived deep to escape entanglement with the rigging of the boat. He had long ago learned the lesson that presence of mind wins half the fight in perilous emergencies. The coward miserably perishes, where the brave man survives. With his courage leaping to meet his predicament, he struck out for windward and rose to the surface.

He looked about for the punt. She had been heavily weighted with ballast and he feared for her. What was he to do if she had been too heavily weighted? Even as he looked she sank. She had righted under water; the tip of the mast was the last he saw of her.

The sea—cold, fretful, vast—lay all about him. The coast was half a mile to windward; the punts, out to sea, were laboriously beating toward him, and could make no greater speed. He had to choose between the punt and the rocks.

A whine—with a strange note in it—attracted his attention. The big dog had caught sight of him, and was beating the water in a frantic effort to approach quickly. But the dog had never whined like that before.

"Hi, Skipper!" Billy called. "Steady, b'y! Steady!" Billy took off his boots as fast as he could. The dog was coming nearer, still whining strangely and madly pawing the water. Billy was mystified. What possessed the dog? It was as if he had been seized with a fit of terror. Was he afraid of drowning? His eyes were fairly flaring. Such a light had never been in them before.

In the instant he had for speculation the boy lifted himself high in the water and looked intently into the dog's eyes. It was terror he saw in them; there could be no doubt about that, he thought. The dog was afraid for his life. At once Billy was filled with dread. He could not crush the feeling down. Afraid of the Skipper, the old, affectionate Skipper—his own dog, which he had reared from a puppy! It was absurd. But he was afraid, nevertheless—desperately afraid. "Back, b'y!" he cried. "Get back, sir!"

Billy was a strong swimmer. He had learned to swim where the water is cold—cold, often, as the icebergs stranded in the harbor can make it. The water was bitter cold now, but he did not fear it, nor did he doubt that he could accomplish the long swim which lay before him. It was the unaccountable failure of the dog which disturbed him—his failure in obedience, which could not be explained. The dog was now within three yards, and excited past all reason.

"Back, sir!" Billy screamed. "Get back with you!"

The dog was not deterred by the command. He did not so much as hesitate. Billy raised his hand as if to

strike him—a threatening gesture which had sent the Skipper home with his tail between his legs many a time. But it had no effect now.

"Get back!" Billy screamed again.

It was plain that the dog was not to be bidden. Billy threw himself on his back, supported himself with his hands and kicked at the dog with his feet. The Skipper was blinded by the splashing. He whined and held back. Then blindly he came again. Billy moved slowly from him, head foremost, still churning the water with his feet. But swimming thus, he was no match for the dog. With his head thrown back to escape the blows, the Skipper forged after him. He was struck in the jaws, in the throat and again in the jaws. But he pawed on, taking every blow without complaint and gaining inch by inch. Soon he was so close that the lad could no longer move his feet freely. Then the dog chanced to catch one foot with his paw, and forced it under. Billy could not beat him off.

No longer opposed, the dog crept up—paw over paw, forcing the boy's body lower and lower. His object was clear to Billy. The Skipper, frenzied by terror, the boy thought, would try to save himself by climbing on his shoulders.

"Skipper!" he cried, "you'll drown me! Get back!"

The futility of attempting to command obedience from a crazy dog struck Billy Topsail with force. He must act otherwise, and that quickly, if he were to escape. There seemed to be but one thing to do. He took a long breath and let himself sink—down—down—as deep as he dared. Down—down—until he retained breath sufficient but to strike to the right and rise again.

The dog—as it was made known later—rose as high as he could force himself, and looked about in every direction, with his mouth open and his ears rigidly cocked. He gave two short barks, like sobs, and a long, mournful whine. Then, as if acting upon sudden thought, he dived.

For a moment nothing was to be seen of either boy or dog. There was nothing but a choppy sea in that place. Men who were watching thought that both had followed the Never Give Up to the bottom.

In the momentary respite under water Billy perceived that his situation was desperate. He would rise, he was sure, but only to renew the struggle. How long he could keep the dog off he could not tell. Until the punts came down to his aid? He thought not.

He came to the surface prepared to dive again. But the Skipper had disappeared. An ejaculation of thanksgiving was yet on the boy's lips, when the dog's black head rose and moved swiftly toward him. Billy had a start of ten yards—or something more.

He turned on his side and set off at top speed. There was no better swimmer among the lads of the harbor. Was he a match for a powerful Newfoundland dog? It was soon evident that he was not.

The Skipper gained rapidly. Billy felt a paw strike his foot. He put more force into his strokes. Next the paw struck the calf of his leg. The dog was now upon him—pawing his back. Billy could not sustain the weight. To escape, that he might take up the fight in another way, he dived again.

The dog was waiting when Billy came up—waiting eagerly, on the alert to continue the chase.

"Skipper, old fellow—good old dog!" Billy called in a soothing voice. "Steady, sir! Down, sir—back!"

The dog was not to be deceived. He came, by turns whining and gasping. He was more excited, more determined, than ever. Billy waited for him. The fight was to be face to face. The boy had determined to keep him off with his hands until strength failed—to drown him if he could. All love for the dog had gone out of his heart. The weeks of close and merry companionship, of romps and rambles and sport, were forgotten. Billy was fighting for life. So he waited without pity, hoping only that his strength might last until he had conquered.

When the dog was within reach Billy struck him in the face. A snarl and an angry snap was the result.

Rage seemed suddenly to possess the dog. He held back for a moment, growling fiercely, and then attacked with a rush. Billy fought as best he could, trying to catch his enemy by the neck and to force his head beneath the waves. The effort was vain; the dog eluded his grasp and renewed the attack. In another moment he had laid his heavy paws on the boy's shoulders.

The weight was too much for Billy. Down he went, freed himself, and struggled to the surface, gasping for breath. It appeared to him now that he had but a moment to live. He felt his self-possession going from him—and at that moment his ears caught the sound of a voice.

"Put your arm—"

The voice seemed to come from far away. Before the sentence was completed the dog's paws were again on Billy's shoulders and the water stopped the boy's hearing. What were they calling to him? The thought that some helping hand was near inspired him.

With this new courage to aid, he dived for the third time. The voice was nearer—clearer—when he came up, and he heard every word.

"Put your arm around his neck!" one man cried.

"Catch him by the scruff of the neck!" cried another.

Billy's self-possession returned. He would follow this direction. The Skipper swam anxiously to him. It may be that he wondered what this new attitude meant. It may be that he hoped reason had returned to the boy—that at last he would allow himself to be saved. Billy caught the dog by the scruff of the neck when he was within arm's length. The Skipper wagged his tail and turned about. There was a brief pause, during which the faithful old dog determined upon the direction he would take. He espied the punts, which had borne down with all speed. Toward them he swam, and there was something of pride in his mighty strokes, something of exultation in his whine. Billy struck out with his free hand, and soon boy and dog were pulled over the side of the nearest punt.

Through it all, as Billy now knew, the dog had only wanted to save him.

That night Billy Topsail took the Skipper aside for a long and confidential talk. "Skipper," said he, "I beg your pardon. You see, I didn't know what 'twas you wanted. I'm sorry I ever had a hard thought against you, and I'm sorry I tried to drown you. When I thought you only wanted to save yourself, 'twas Billy Topsail you were thinking of. When I thought you wanted to climb atop of me, 'twas my collar you wanted to catch. When I thought you wanted to bite me, 'twas a scolding you were giving me for my foolishness. Skipper, b'y, honest, I beg your pardon. Next time I'll know that all a Newfoundland dog wants is a chance to tow me ashore. And I'll give him a whole chance. But, Skipper, don't you think you might have given me a chance to do something for myself?"

At which the Skipper wagged his tail.—Youth's Companion.

ENGINEERS' FALSE ALARMS.

Why Things Look Different From What They Are.

"When a man's sitting in an engine cab, looking up the track with a constant watch for danger a burden on his mind," said an engineer, "things sometimes look different from what they really are. This is especially true if after long service his eyes begin to be a little affected.

"I used to know an old engineer who was one of the most careful men on the road. In fact, he was always worried and fear of an accident got to be almost a mania with him. One day he was pulling a long freight down a pretty fair grade when he suddenly clapped on the air and gave the 'highball' with the whistle, sending the brakemen out over the train setting the hand brakes as fast as they could. Finally they brought the train to a stop, and everybody ran up to see what was the matter. Among the men who came up was a red-shirted section man. When the fellow got close, Jack, the engineer, began to rip out the biggest string of expletives I ever heard. He dressed up and down any man who would wear a red shirt while working on the section, for Jack had seen that shirt and thought it was a red flag and stopped the train."

"I had an experience myself not long ago," spoke up another engineer. "It was since the new electric headlights were put in. You know how they look coming up the track. They're so bright you can't see anything else, and it's hard to tell whether they are moving or not. I was running a freight, and had a pretty heavy train. We were coming around a curve just before making a siding to pass another train, when one of those electric headlights flashed on me. I thought it was all over with me, but I stopped to put on the brakes and reverse, and hung on just a minute in the hope of getting the train stopped before I jumped. The grade wasn't very heavy, and I got the train stopped all right. Before I started to jump I looked again. I discovered then that the light didn't seem to be any nearer. I investigated, and found that the other train was at a stand still waiting for me at the switch."—Salt Lake Herald.

Some Mistaken Impressions.

Children in the Paola (Kan.) public schools have established a correspondence with children in the Edinburgh (Scotland) public schools, and the letters that pass between them contain much that is amusing. For example, one Scotch boy is very indignant at the mistaken ideas which are held of his people. He says: "Many people, even in England, think that our male sex dress in kilts, but they are quite wrong, for there is hardly a man in Edinburgh, or anywhere in the middle or south of Scotland who wears kilts. It also is thought that the language of the Scotch is bad English, but it is quite the reverse, for the English is bad, broken Scotch."

Of the 1557 towns in New England 101 manage their schools under the district system, eighty-one of them being in Connecticut.



Unselfish.

The man who thinks he knows it all is an unselfish elf. He wants to talk to you instead of thinking to himself.

If I his wondrous wisdom had, I'd work awhile and then I'd be so rich I'd have no time To talk to other men. —Washington Star

Easily Granted.

Tommy—"Ma, can I have two pieces of pie this noon?"
Ma—"Certainly, Tommy. Cut the piece you have in two."—Somerset (Mass.) Journal.

A Touching Friendship.

Rusty—"Where'd ye git de quarter?"
Dusty—"I struck up an acquaintance wid a trained dog wot was goin' to de bakery fer two bits' worth of bread."—Indianapolis Sun.

The Dissatisfied.

"If I had my way," said the practicing man, "there would be no poetry written."

"Well," answered the cynical reader of magazines, "I guess you've got your way, all right."—Washington Star

Revenge.

Mrs. Gossip—"How does it come that Mrs. Swagger invited you to her party? I thought you were enemies."
Mrs. Snappen—"We are; but she thought I had nothing fit to wear and wanted to make me feel bad."—Tit-Bits.

On the Spur of the Moment.

"It would surprise you to know how much counterfeit money we receive in the contribution boxes in the course of the year."

Thoughtless Friend—"I suppose so. How do you manage to get rid of all?"—Tit-Bits.

Blind Man's Buff.



Willie—"This is John Jones. I can tell him by his rough voice."—New York Journal.

What He Needed.

"What's this thing?" asked a man who was inspecting a music caporium.

"That? Oh, that's used on violins. We call it a chin-rest."
"Gimme one!" exclaimed the visitor.
"S'pose it would work on my wife?"—Tit-Bits.

Putting the Seal On.

"He gave me a message to deliver to brother George," she explained demurely.

"Was it necessary to kiss you in order to do that?" demanded her mother.
"Yes," she answered, "it was sealed message."—Chicago Post.

A Confession.

Tess—"How do you know Bess is going to marry Mr. Hoamling for his money?"

Jess—"She told me so herself."
Tess—"What! Did she really say that?"

Jess—"Same thing. She said she was going to marry him."—Philadelphia Press.

Quite a Difference.

The department store is useful and convenient, but the multifarious nature of its activities sometimes leads to a dilemma.

"Where shall I find something nice to oil for the dining room?" asked a stout, smiling woman of the floor walker in a department store.

"On the third—" began the floor walker; then he paused and looked doubtfully at the inquirer. "Did you mean a painting or something in the sardine line?" he asked.—Philadelphia Record.

His Limit.

"When men are as provoking as you are," she said warmly, "it is no wonder woman is at a loss for a word to express her feelings."

"At a loss for a word," he repeated, musingly. "Ah, that explains it!"

"Explains what?"

"Explains why, when she has any feelings to express she uses two or three."

"Two or three what? Words?"

"Oh, dear, no—two or three thousand words."

Naturally she was provoked, but presently he found a chance to suggest that he was in error.

"You admit it, do you?" she asked.
"Yes, my dear," he replied; "I should have made the limit 5000."—Chicago Post.