

About Some Dogs



Bunk

We have decided to write about dogs for this Holiday Number, and will commence with Nig since Nig was our boyhood dog that companioned our move by covered wagon from western Kansas to Kingfisher, Oklahoma—rather, to the Cheyenne and Arapaho country near Kingfisher where Jim, our eldest brother, and Charlie, just turned his majority, had taken up adjoining homesteads. Cornering with the section in which Jim's homestead lay was a school quarter occupied by Mother Dalton; a creek with considerable forest along its banks meandered through this farm, excellent cover for the notorious Dalton Boys on occasion. Jim was a deputy United States marshal under Bill Grimes, and haunted that creek many a night to bag a Dalton or two, never with any luck. But when five of the gang came together late one afternoon, to return these neighborly visits, Nig was on the lookout and barked the alarm. He kept it up, louder as the men rode closer round the house, and disconcerted them so much that they readily believed Jim's wife when she told Jim was not yet home.

This was the truth.

Not one of the desperadoes made the least move to silence Nig, who imagined he was chasing them away when they turned back toward the rendezvous on the creek.

Nig went back to Kansas with us later that spring, we had a fiver for the two of us, by train, and it lasted nicely. It was 1892, if you don't remember.

Charlie had been in charge of our wagon, coupled long under a flat hayrack with a double wagonbox atop it, the rack accommodating a load of plows and other useful farm tools and box loaded with grain. Four of our best Kansas mares were the motive power, and if it had not been that they had a good deal of Hambletonian in them they would have died of the abuse the road laid on them. This is specially true of the leaders, Nell and Maud, because the wheel team, much heavier, was black Norman. We had a small herd of other horses along, loose: including yearlings and two-year-olds, and it was my job, on Zebe, an Indian pony, Nig helping me, to road herd this loose stock. The worst ordeal was making Medicine Lodge, because after leaving sandhill country where the load was dead weight in the flowing sand, there was high ridge country to pass before the rode shelved off

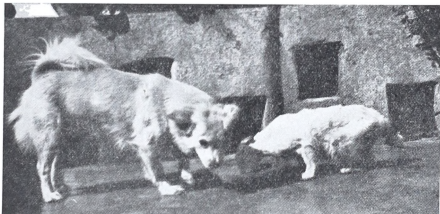
to the flats where Jerry Simpson's and Carry Nation's celebrated town stood.

We might say we were twelve years old at that time, not much help to down-lipped Charlie; for instance, when he found his brakes wouldn't hold on the sharp grades after we had laboriously climbed its summit, when he had to take to chaining the back wheels. Such going lasted until about midnight, on a very dark night which threatened rain. Nig got no attention, but we vaguely knew he was on the alert at Zebe's heels; he didn't need to herd because the stock, sensing the weird danger as well as we did ourselves, huddled one another as if close-tied. We passed no houses, saw no sign of ranch or farm, and at last a sleety rain added to our discomfort. It was still more dangerous on the grades now, even with the chains.

Charlie and we called through the dark to each other, he from his springseat high on the wagon, we from our very wet saddle on a very bedraggled Zebe, just to make sure momentarily that each was safe. And we both longed for a light, toward which, from any direction whence it might appear, we determined to make our way even if it meant leaving the wagon midroad. If you've ever done roughing of this sort, you remember its sounds: the harness sounds, when sudden dead pulls had to be made, and the more staccato ones as the load eased along better; the clop-clop of hoofs, some bare, some shod; the grinding of a tire on the shoulder of a stubborn rock rising out of the clay road, and the screech of the locked wheels as we managed past one grade after another—and sometimes a singletree scraping against a front wheel, as a tired mare momentarily missed her cue as the load swerved up out of a wallow or eased free at a level where Charlie loosened the chains; and even these chains, along the levels, dangling and clanking from the axle.



Each with a dog



Ming Toy with an unwelcome guest.

seen a light, the first in the farthest-out shanty of Medicine Lodge, because dogs see very little—can indeed see clearly the distance but a few feet—but he had smelled man, which was just as good, and when we looked, there at last was a light, ever so dim yet ever so constant. We riveted our eyes to it, gloated over it, and soon rumbled up to the main corner on Main Street of Medicine Lodge, a lively stable, where Charlie gave his faithful team the best that was to be had.

The longing we had for a settler's light is in us yet, and presently Nig ran ahead and barked. He had not

Nig shared our midnight supper, warmed at the monkey stove in the stable office, and got many a pat on his curly back. Then he went, as usual, to keep vigil among the horses. Next morning Charlie paid \$5 for the strongest breeding he could buy, hip breaching, for his wheelers, but the fine colts Nellie and Maud would have brought us that spring were sacrifices to the night of horrors—yet that very afternoon, Nellie and Maud, for the Hambletonian that was in them, could take their places as leaders just the same. There was no help for it, we had to put them in and they were too well bred to let us down.

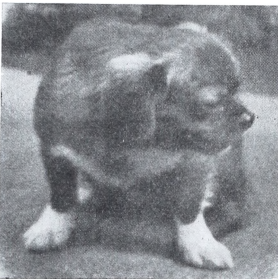
Pulling out of Kiowa into the Cherokee Strip, with the trip across fifty miles, Charlie thought best to fall in with another outfit loaded much as ours was, and with a good many horses, all inferior to ours. This scared him, once we really got to Strip, by which time he believed we were traveling with horse thieves, which was probably the case. From that hour on, Charlie only got such sleep as he could snatch on the wagonset during daylight, because at night he night-herded our horses, with his muzzle-loading 12-gauge shotgun slung over the saddle: he told the strangers he thought it best to look out for horse thieves, and they believed his remark innocent. We ditched them at Twin Springs, where cowboys encamped there, driving the last Longhorns from the Strip, shooed them on ahead by some subterfuge or other: if they were thieves, they were dumb ones.

Nig and we thus saw the last Texas longhorns driven off the Cherokee Strip. Nig badgered some of the stragglers, making them take their way with the herd. It was symbolic, after a fashion, as looked back upon now... the settler's son and his dog, and the herd giving up their ancient plains. One of these very cowboys, no longer dashing and gay in his saddle, as the *Cowboys Lament* describes the build, dug the well on Jim's homestead. He still remembered helping us out of the creek north of Twin Springs, where our outfit had stuck in the quick sand; he had got a hitch on the load, with a hitch at the other end of the rope round his saddle horn, and one or two his fellows had done the same, and what their ponies together could pull was enough to help us out of the creek and clear of the bank.

Nig helped Charlie night-herd, of course—it was right up his alley. Later, at Kingfisher, this helping with the horses was his wind-up. This time he had moved from Kansas in a freight car bringing all the family and all its belongings, to live on a rented farm for a season while awaiting the opening of the Strip. Among the belongings was a black stag the meanest animal that ever wore horseflesh. A negro liveryman had had him in Kansas, and

when we had taken him in foreclosure of a mortgage, we had of course put it beyond him to adorn the equine world with any more of his ilk. We had stagged him.

It fell to us at Kingfisher to work this monster who had turned killer, and he it was who killed Nig. Before breakfast, we had gone to the pasture with Nig to round up the work stock, and when this creature would not come along, Nig dogged him, running at his nose (as Nig always



Boots

would, habit from which we could never break him). The lunge of a mad fore-foot caught Nig in the middle of the back, and while we only heard him whine a little and thought nothing of it, after breakfast when we went searching for him we found him dead, his back broken, his head between his paws in the manner in which he always liked to nap. Nig was a great dog for a Kansas boy with lots of chores among the stock. He had no tricks, but he did like to play, and what he en-

joyed most was being put into a sack head-first and scrimmaging around to get out of it—which he had learned to do in trick time—and then having an even-steven race to some goal, such as the barn or the milkshed.

It seems very little for a boy and a dog to get fun out of, but they did. Perhaps anything was fun then that wasn't downright work. Nig in his black coat was buried at the willow roots on Uncle John's Creek. It was one thing to carry him there, and another to walk away and leave him: you understand these things when you have a dog.

Dogs don't live very long, save sometimes in the movies—boys and men outlive generations of them. So other dogs came along after Nig, but no other black dog turned up until he appeared in the guise of Shep. We were married by that time, and again living in Kingfisher county, but far east of the town of Kingfisher, and north a little bit, on our homestead north of the Cimmaron. We were to learn from Shep that the person in the family that dogs really worship is *her*. For *she* stole Shep in almost no time, and rare is the man from whom *she* could not, even yet, sequester his dog; not of course surreptitiously, quite openly, because the dog would leave the man and go to her.

Shep was in his prime, a good big shepherd, when he began coming to our house on the Cimmaron with his master, a bachelor by divorce. He had homesteaded east of us, in 1889, on good land, where he had made the best home in the township and prettied it up with all sorts of things. In fact, he had made himself a slave, for a woman unable to appreciate his humil-

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About Some . . .

(Continued from page 17)

ty, and after a few years she had walked out of the pretty cottage under the apple trees and had never gone back to it. So when we came along, he was no longer a good farmer but a broken-hearted neglectful one who liked best to be a little tight all the time, and he got to coming to our house for Christmas dinner, Thanksgiving and such seasonal occasions because we both invited him and made him and Shep welcome. But it was no time until he would start away home again, then have to turn back for Shep, who had not followed him as he should.

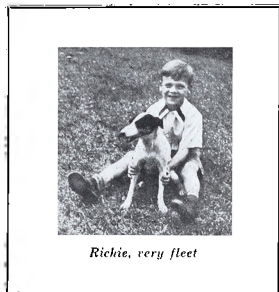
Then Shep got to coming over the sandhills on his own, which would bring his master for him in a day or two and at last he gave up and for an extra piece of orange pie, gave her Shep in fee simple.

Years passed, and when we were getting off from Kingfisher for Manila Shep was our last problem. Pet and the buggy had gone to an old lady whom we knew would be to Pet kindness itself. Shep we had found a like home for. But Shep a dog, had other ideas—nothing short of coming with us to the Islands. We had delivered him rightly enough, to the friends who wanted him, and they had locked him in or tied him up or something: it makes no difference, when we were on the train and it was moving, who should be coming down the aisle but Shep, nuzzling at every seat to find us. The emergency was up to us alone, we had to gather Shep up quickly and toss him off the train and we did it in a way to make him roll, so he wouldn't be hurt. When we looked back he was already up on his feet, and looking, and we are sure, not at all understanding. But he did go back to his new home, letters told about that.

You may be sure that dogs, whose love of the men and families that keep them is literally boundless, experience many anxious moments that pass with us without a thought. We are so convinced of this that we think that whenever possible, at least one member of the family that keeps a dog should stay at home when all the others go out, just to make the dog's misgivings less poignant. For dogs can never tell, on these occasions of desertion of the home, whether any who leave are ever coming back; and if any do return, or even all, dogs never know whether it is to be in an hour or two, or after weeks, or months, or years. Ming Toy, our current dog, who smiles (we meant it! she does smile, and it isn't a snarl!) at every homecoming, has made us reflect on this keenly. A son goes away, as if just downtown again, and doesn't come back for years, and this is a son whose bruises Ming Toy has licked well countless times

a soul beloved of the dog, for whose footsteps she yearns unceasingly, and so will until she dies. Or a daughter goes away, as if downtown, and never comes back at all; and Ming Toy mourns, and will mourn all her days, for the daughter was kind and thoughtful to Ming Toy, who loves her deeply. Since our dogs do have these experiences, from which they recover with the greatest ecstasy when a family turns up home again soon, none missing, at least none more missing, we know they have good memories and it is a reasonable conclusion that on every occasion when they are left alone at home they undergo the keenest distress: they do not know whether man has made these ties lightly, and will lightly sever them. Haven't you thought of it? Dogs are the truest torch-singers in life. Their gratitude and absolute fidelity, often in return for very shabby treatment and appreciation, never flag.

Bunk was given us a pup, a playmate for a daughter with whom he grew up—a



Richie, very fleet

playmate ever at her heels, who stopped the play if it got rough, with peremptory intervention in behalf of his charge. Sometimes this was annoying, more often it was common sense. Bunk was indifferent as to how it was taken, his charge simply could not be pushed around. He was a fox terrier, shorthaired. This good breed of dogs for a tropical climate is not invariably good mannered, but Bunk's manners were unexceptionable. As day-and-night watchman he had no superior. When he was quite young, he tackled a man with a cane who was coming up the walk to the house—a stranger of course—and the man struck him with the cane, breaking his right foreleg. Put in splints, the leg soon mended, and after that, all men with cudgels were on Bunk's index; lunge or strike as they might, none could ever reach him, and on the contrary, he would heel them every time, asking no quarter and giving none.

Dogs, terriers at least, can harbor a grudge—Bunk proved that to us. Ordinarily he was very obedient, but not in these crises. He made it awkward for the man who brings the paper, whose habit was to

roll the paper in order to throw it farther up on the porch. But when the paper was rolled it looked to Bunk's myopic eyes like a stick of some sort, and so he would lie in wait, prepared to tackle: the man had to learn to leave the paper folded, and then there was no further trouble, Bunk knew he had some legitimate errand to effect. It can not be repeated too often that a dog's vision is very defective. Never depend on their seeing anything clearly, because they can't. It is their hearing that is sharp and their sense of smell. They scent you, or hear you — they never really see you and will hardly be interested in their own image when held before a mirror. When you know this, you don't blame them for faults they can't avoid.

Bunk lived about twelve years, and died of rheumatism. On the afternoon he died she was serving some friends tea on the porch, and Bunk lay under her chair—a customary place for him. Feeling a paroxysm perhaps, and never wishing to cause anyone the least concern on his account—and never having done so voluntarily in his life — Bunk got up slowly, brushed against her legs gently, and made his way to the street, where he lay down at the curb. When the women who had come to tea were leaving presently and going out to their cars, there was Bunk, dead — a badly rheumatic heart had got him. Thus a fond companion gives up the ghost, keeping the best of manner to the last. If Bunk had been up to it, he would have gone back in the garden and nuzzled out a place in the ground in which to lie. Sick dogs go to Earth for their cure, and often she accommodates them, helping them, with her cool bosom, ride out a fever.

Bunk had got his rheumatism at the Pound whose wagon-men hang their nets on poles, for which reason Bunk would assault them and become an easy catch. So Bunk, all his life, was often at the Pound—never once having deserved to be there. This experience led us to conclude that instead of dogs going to the Pound, caught up indiscriminately in the dog wagon, the Pound should go to the dogs' masters. The Pound should come round periodically with their tetanus injections, administer them, return in a day or two to see how things were going, collect their charge, also the yearly license fee, and be off with a thank-you. This would work for all homed dogs, and greatly reduce the incidence of infection among the city's dog population, besides adding no little to the Pound's revenue. The wagon could still handle homeless dogs, and the mercies of the Pound for these most pitiful of creatures are a blessing. But in finding out what dogs had homes, by visiting neighborhoods systematically, the Pound would also discover the homeless dogs it should take off the streets.

In recent years the Pound under Dr.

Villar is much improved over what it once was, when Bunk was first incarcerated there, but it still needs more useful and practical contact with dogs and their owners.

Most of our dogs have been mutts. Ming Toy is, her father was Chow and her mother Pekinese, believe it or not. She is a perfect member of the family, almost able to participate in the conversation; she is so quiet and unobtrusive that for years we supposed she had lost the skill of barking; more recently she will bark, though never loud, if anyone steps into the yard at night, or pauses long in front of the house, though we have no delusion that she would bite, since she willingly laps milk with the cat and shows a proper contempt for such unstable creatures only by wofling more than her share. Nevertheless, if she admonishes, Ming Toy will abandon the dish and let the cat have all. But her look, when this happens, speaks fully of how silly she thinks it is.

Cats, bah! That's what Ming Toy thinks. We are convinced that she condemns their infidelity: cats are loyal to places, not to persons, and dogs reverse the rule. Of other dogs, Ming Toy is so painfully jealous that we can have none about: if we were to bring home another dog, Ming Toy would die, of a broken heart, her implicit faith in man shattered. This speaks in her whole demeanor, and so we never dream of it. Bunk was not quite so much that way, and in time would make friends of new dogs.

Before we got Ming Toy we had Boots for a while, a real Pekinese, called Boots because he had white ones. He was, of course, *her* dog. It makes no difference who may claim ownership of a dog in our household, and it never has; the dogs themselves bestow that favor, and always on *her*. For her and his amusement only, Boots devised the pillow game. It followed his bath, which *she* always gave him. Short-legged, Boots could still leap prodigiously. The pillow game began with his leaping on the bed, seizing a pillow and worrying it. Her part was to get the pillow from him, toss it to neutral ground on the floor, then run for it and toss it back on the bed, if she could, before Boots leaped from the bed and got it first. It was a genuine game, and a most fair one; it worked its participants up the highest pitch of excitement and hilarity every day, honors more or less even, and ended in momentary exhaustion for both, Boots, with triumphant eyes, lying across the pillow and puffing like a bellows, and *she* collapsing on the bed in gales of healthful laughter. Believe us, there was no sham in the game—Boots had invented a real one with ample hazards for each side.

Boots was another of the dogs we have had along the way who never needed a course in manners. But we didn't have

him many years. There was at that time a pest in the neighborhood who habitually drove a station wagon past the house at racing speed. Boot's rendezvous of mornings was a vacant lot across the street, and in time, of course, as if it had always aimed at doing so, this station wagon ran him down, agile and alert as he was. It was painful to let *her* know, and we couldn't bring ourselves to do it until the next day; we had even to go to a dinner that night, out at the neighbors, with the burden on our soul. When Sunday came, in a day or two, we buried Boots, with honors, under a hibiscus out by the playhouse where he had often been a solemn and appreciative guest; and over the little box in which he lay, we read Senator Vest's classic tribute to the dog, Vest's unstudied utterly spontaneous address to a jury in behalf of a poor man unable to fee him a dollar, at a time when his retainers from more fortunate clients were princes' ransoms, an address not merely immortal, but one that won from the jury a costly penance from the man who had wantonly killed Vest's client's dog—the one friend the poor man had in all the world.

Mourners, said Vest, the last rites silent, leave the grave of the most beloved. But a dog lingers there alone, unable to accept the separation... unable and unwilling to understand. And it is true.

New National Designs . . .

(Continued from page 15)

does taste much like canned tuna. Maybe a compromise will finally be struck, with both fish grown for canning purposes—



Jose C. Espinosa

of course in separate ponds or in separate districts. The effort is aimed at reducing imports of canned fish and canned vegetables, and the Guagua plant is expected to be followed by others, at Iloilo, at Cagayan de Misamis, and at Samar or Leyte.

Guagua's will be the proving plant. The Roxas group thinks it will stimulate production not of fish alone, but of vegetables and fruits.

The niceties of canning Philippine mangoes are giving the group difficulty, to preserve the flavor; fresh mangoes are mangoes sure enough, but canned mangoes, up to date, are more like peaches. Fish at Guagua will no doubt be the main reliance for years to come. A model of the plant stands in the laboratories at the Pasig plant. In these very laboratories you are surprised to see girls sorting navy beans, and still more surprised to learn that these beans grew in Mindanao, where a large supply is obtainable. They are being canned, as pork & beans, not as Americans prefer this dish, but seasoned, partly with garlic, as the Filipino taste runs; and it may not be gaisnaded that the garlic, if your gastric equipment tolerates it, is dietetically desirable. If everything clicks, Mindanao will have a market for its beans and farmers in the Luzon valley a wider market for their hogs—quantities of canned pork & beans will be made and sold.

"I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me," sings Stevenson to the world's children. The Roxas group has such a shadow, and is aware of it—the shadow of Japanese readiness to take a hand in Philippine manufacturing, as already evidenced in textiles. In the end, things may not be so *national* as they are named here at the very beginning, but a shrug of the shoulders suggest that with worst come to worst, at least a foreign factory will hire Philippine labor. Guagua may be an incentive to Japanese, leaders in ocean fishing here, to can fish themselves. If so, they may buy cans; and in any case, the Roxas group's attitude is forge ahead and try for a half loaf if you can't get a whole one. They sit pretty soft, some will say — the government risking all the money and they having quite a free hand. This is true, but not a very broad view; if they fail, the loss of face will never be lived down. We have looked them over a number of times, and have known a number of them a long time, and we rate them responsible rather than irresponsible. They are handling 4 million pesos, but it is certainly no intention of theirs to fritter any of it away.

As the *Journal* said some time ago, they can be given a few honest errors. It is past the stage of debate now, that the country ought to manufacture for its domestic market if this market is large enough to absorb the products manufactured. It is not past debating that the government should do the manufacturing, but as we get it, the Roxas group stands ready to step aside for private capital whenever such capital is prepared to accept the challenge of the governing circumstances. (Experiments in plastics have been run at the Pasig plant. A local

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