

Dumb-Bell
of
Brookfield
John Taintor Foote

1st of 1st

To Donald

From Leonard

July 16th 1918.

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*Dumb-Bell
of Brookfield*

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Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

BY

John Taintor Foote

Author of "The Look of Eagles"



Frontispiece

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To
A. C. F.

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THE RUNT

I

THE RUNT

THE king sat on his throne and blinked at the sunlight streaming through the French window. His eyes were pools of liquid amber filled with a brooding dignity, and kind beyond expression. His throne was a big leather chair, worn and slouchy, that stood in the bay window of the Brookfield living-room. He had slept there all night, and it was time for a maid to come, open the French window, and let him out into the dew-washed rose garden.

The king was old. He had seized the throne years before. He had been put on the train one day, with nothing but his pedigree and a prayer. He had come

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home, six months later, champion of champions, greatest field trial setter of his time, lion-hearted defender of the honor of Brookfield.

He never saw the inside of the kennels again. He had been given humbly the freedom of the house. After due sniffings at one place and another he had taken the leather chair for his own. From then on visitors were asked to sit elsewhere, if they didn't mind, because *he* might want his chair, and *he* was Champion Brookfield Roderigo.

So now the king sat on his throne, or rather lay curled up in it, with his long, deep muzzle resting on his paws. At the end of that muzzle was a nose. A nose uncanny in its swift certainty. A nose which had allowed him to go down wind, running like fire, stiffen in the middle of one of his effortless bounds, twist himself

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in the air, and light rigid at a bevy a hundred feet away. He had done this again and again when only a "derby." He had done it in the National Championship until hard-riding men, galloping behind him, had yelled like boys, and Judge Beldon, mad beyond all ethics, had called across to another judge, "The dog never lived that could beat him, Tom!"

This was a flagrant breach of form. It was unpardonable for a field trial judge to indicate his choice before the official vote. That night Judge Beldon apologized to the owner of the pointer, Rip Rap Messenger, who was running with, or rather far behind, the king at the time.

But the owner of the pointer only said: "Forget it, Judge! Why, I was as crazy as any of you. Man, oh, man, ain't he some dog!"

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All this was long ago. It was no longer part of the king's life, and he was not thinking of those triumphant days of his youth. He wondered how soon the maid would come and let him out. Once in the garden he might find a toad under a rose-bush at which to paw tentatively. Perhaps he would dig up the piece of dog cake he had buried in the black earth near the sundial. And there was that mole the terrier had killed, it was certainly worth a sniff or two. No doubt a gardener had removed it by this time, though . . . meddling things, gardeners—an unguarded bone was scarcely safe a moment when one of them was about!

Where was that maid? Why didn't she come? Perhaps he had better take a little nap. He closed his eyes. . . . He never opened them again. The heart that had pumped so stanch a beat for

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Brookfield decided to pump no more. A shudder passed over the king's body . . . then it was still.

The maid came presently and called his name. When he didn't stir she went to the leather chair and looked, her eyes growing wide. She hurried from the room and up the stairs.

"Mister Gregory, sir," she panted at a door, "won't you come down, please? Roderigo—he don't move. He don't move at all, sir!"

She was beside the chair again when the master of Brookfield arrived in his dressing gown.

"He don't move—" she repeated.

The master of Brookfield put his hand on the king's head. He slid his other hand under the king's body between the fore legs and held it there for a moment. Then he stooped, gathered a dangling

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paw, and rubbed the raspy pad of it against his cheek.

“No. He won’t move—any more,” he said. “Ask Mrs. Gregory to come down.”

When the mistress of Brookfield came, she kneeled before the king in a patch of the streaming sunlight at which he had blinked early that morning. She kneeled a long time, twisting one of the king’s soft ears between her fingers.

“He liked to have me do that,” she said, looking up.

The master of Brookfield nodded.

The mistress of Brookfield bent until her lips were close to the ear she had been stroking.

“Old lover . . . old lover!” she whispered. Then she got up suddenly and went out into the rose garden.

And so there was a chair which no one ever sat in standing in the bay window

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of the living-room. And it was understood that the chair would remain empty until a dog was born at Brookfield who could lie in it without shame.

Highland Lassie was in disgrace. Her field trial record was forgotten. She had brought three puppies into the world and had smothered two of them before they were six hours old.

“An’ to think,” wailed Peter, head kennel man at Brookfield, “the ’ussy’s went an’ rolled on the only Roderigo puppies this world’ll ever see again! Look what she’s got left—one pup, an’ ’im the runt!” He poked the pinky-white atom with a stumpy forefinger, and Highland Lassie cuddled the puppy hastily to her side.

Leona, the big blond waitress, removed a straw from Peter’s coat and allowed her hand to linger on his sleeve.

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“Are you not to your breakfast coming?” she asked.

But Peter had forgotten for the time that her eyes were blue, that her bosom was deep, and that she looked like gold and milk and roses.

“Breakfust?” he snorted. “An’ what do I care about breakfast? ’Aven’t I just told you she’s gone an’ killed two Roderigo pups, an’ ’im layin’ out there in the orchard?”

Leona gave a gentle tug at his sleeve.

“Always more puppies there will be,” she said, and her words were like the notes of a flute.

Peter straightened up and glared at her.

“Always more puppies there will be!” he repeated with dreadful scorn. “You go back to the ’ouse!”

Leona departed with a quivering lip,

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to have her statement swiftly verified. That very day Black-Eyed Susan became the mother of seven, of whom Dan Gath, winner of the Manitoba All Age, was the indifferent father.

“A fine litter by a good young sire!” said Peter. “Brookfield ain’t done yet. ’Ow’s that for a grand pup—the second one there? ’E’ll be a movin’ picture, you ’ear me!”

“Maybe he’ll be champion,” suggested a kennel boy, hopefully.

“Champion!” said Peter. “So’ll your grandmother. ’Ere, put some fresh straw in that corner an’ don’t you bother the bitch whilst you’re doin’ it, neither.”

But when the boy had gone Peter filled his pipe and stared thoughtfully at Black-Eyed Susan, her eyes still fever bright from birth pangs.

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“’E might at that, old gel,” said Peter softly. “’E might at that.”

Four months later the second puppy in the row of seven had grown into a thing of beauty that made you gasp when you saw him. From his proudly chiseled head to the glistening plume of his tail he was a triumph.

“The grandest pup we’ve ever bred at Brookfield!” said Peter. “For looks, that is,” he added, glancing out toward the orchard. “Only for looks.”

Highland Lassie’s puppy grew also. He lived in a land of plenty unshared by crowding brothers and sisters. He did not dine in frantic haste, but deliberately and at his ease, his soft-eyed mother watching.

He was seldom disturbed by callers. Even the abundance he received failed to give him size. He could add nothing,

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therefore, to the honor of Brookfield. He could only dim, a little, the glory of his sire—and so they let him alone.

Then weaning time came, and his mother neglected him more and more. At last she gave him up altogether, and he was left to his own devices.

He tried hard to make the time pass. A sparrow lighting in his runway was a great event. He would creep toward it, and at the proper distance would halt and stand rigid until the sparrow flew away. Sometimes the sparrow would fly to a wire above the kennel and make a shadow on the ground. When this happened he pointed the shadow very carefully until it, too, was gone. Always he wished to pounce upon the sparrow, or its shadow; but he was a son of Roderigo—the great Roderigo who never flushed a bird—and

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so he held his point, with no one there to see.

Sparrows were few, however. They seldom came to his yard. In the long hours between their visits he was lonesome. He grew to have a wistful expression, and a grin that went to the heart. He seemed to be grinning at himself. The last son of Roderigo was a runt! It was a joke, a grim joke, and he grinned at it.

When winter withdrew at last and spring marched over the hills to Brookfield, a great washing descended upon the kennels and no one escaped.

Highland Lassie's puppy was smitten with the rest. He was taken by a kennel boy to the washroom and there he suffered in silence. The bath brought out his markings clearly, and after a casual glance at him Peter bent over and examined his left side.

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“Now ain’t that a curious mark?” he said. “It might ’ave been painted on ’im, it’s that perfect. It’s like one of them things the strong man ’olds up in the circus—I forget what you call ’em. ’E’s the runt, by the old dog out of the Lassie bitch, ain’t ’e?”

“Yep,” said the kennel boy. “He’s all alone in No. 9 runway.”

“You ’aven’t growed much, ’ave you?” said Peter.

The wee son of Roderigo, his eyes still smarting from carbolic soap, looked up at Peter and grinned.

Peter drew in his breath sharply.

“Bli’ me!” he said. “The beggar knows. . . . Not much doin’ down there in No. 9, is there? ’Ow’d you like to see the world for a while?”

Once more the puppy grinned up at him.

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“All right,” said Peter. “I’ll come an’ get you when I’m through.”

An hour later Peter opened the gate of runway No. 9.

“Come on out, Runt!” he said cheerfully. And the runt, for that, it seemed, was to be his name, came out. He stood for a moment, dazed by sudden freedom, then sped like an arrow far across the lawn. Peter’s eyes lighted.

“’E can move!” he said. Then his face fell. “But what’ll that get him?” he muttered. “’E couldn’t step over a lead pencil!”

Each morning from then on the runt was let out to follow Peter about the place. Peter was in a cheerful mood these days. The master and mistress of Brookfield would soon return from Florida, and he was anticipating a triumph.

“Won’t the missus squeal when she sees

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'im!" he thought, as he brushed the shining coat of the Dan Gath puppy. "Eh, Runt?" he said aloud. And the runt, who had been gravely watching, grinned.

"I wish you'd quit that!" Peter told him. "It gives me the creeps!"

When at last the great day came, Peter scorned delay. The mistress of Brookfield was still in her hat and gloves when she heard that he was waiting in the rose garden.

"What does he want?" she asked. "I've hardly caught my breath!"

She was told that he had something to show her.

"Oh!" she said, and went to the terrace that looked down into the garden.

Then Peter had his triumph. He was standing at the foot of the terrace in the sunshine, and by his side was a living marvel, new washed and glistening.

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The mistress of Brookfield stared, breathless for a moment.

"Oh, Peter!" she gasped. "He's a wonder dog! Bring him inside!"

"Yes, mem," said Peter, beaming.

"Bring him to the living-room, Peter. Mr. Gregory's in there!"

She turned to the door, failing to see that other who had followed Peter uncertainly into the rose garden. She was excited to begin with, and *he* was very small. Also, he felt that he did not belong in the sunshine beside the wonder dog; so he had hidden himself behind a rosebush and watched her through the leaves.

When they went into the house and left him, he crept up the steps, crossed the terrace, and halted at the open door. . . . Peter had gone in here with the pretty lady, and it was his habit to fol-

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low Peter. He put a timid forepaw across the threshold—nothing happened. He tried the other paw—still nothing happened. He caught the scent of Peter now, so slowly and with caution he took up the trail.

Presently he came to a big room, and saw Peter and the pretty lady and a tall man looking at the wonder dog. He wished to keep out of sight until Peter was ready to go. The recess of the bay window seemed an excellent retreat and he slipped into it. A doggy smell came to him as he did so. He advanced and found a huge chair with bulging arms and a well-hollowed seat.

He loved the chair at sight. It seemed so friendly and safe. It seemed to hold out its arms to him in welcome. Why, it actually seemed glad to see him! Perhaps it didn't know that he was a

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runt. . . . He curled down into its soft hollow with a deep sigh of contentment.

The master of Brookfield was still staring at the wonder dog.

"How did you do it, Peter?" he said at last. "He's too good to be true!"

"'E'll be true," said Peter, "if breedin'll do it. 'E's by Dan Gath, out of Black-Eyed Susan. You get one like 'im out of a thousand matin's—maybe."

"He's handsome enough," said the master of Brookfield. "But—what will he do in the field?"

"Listen," said Peter; "I've 'ad 'im on larks a time or two, an' I'm tellin' you now, we never bred a faster, wider, 'igher-'eaded goin' pup . . . but one." He glanced toward the leather chair, and a look of bewilderment came into his face,

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which changed to one of horror. "Eavens above!" he said. "Look there!"

They followed his gaze, conscious for the first time of a strange sound which rose and fell steadily in the bay window.

Curled deep in Roderigo's chair was the runt, and, as Peter told the kennel men afterward, "'E was snorin' that 'eavy you could 'ear 'im all through the room."

"And what the devil is that?" said the master of Brookfield, after a stunned silence.

"The runt of the last litter by the old dog," said Peter. "'E just come along."

"Yes—I see he did," said the master of Brookfield. "Come here, you!" he called.

The runt opened one eye, twitched his tail sleepily, and closed the eye again. That was all.

A whip hung in the bay window. The

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terrier who lived at the house could have told the runt what that whip was for. In a moment the tall man stood above him.

“Get down out of that!” he said, and flicked the whip over the chair.

The runt was frightened. The big chair was his only friend, it seemed. He shrank deeper into it as the whip was raised above him.

“Don’t! Please, Jim!” said the mistress of Brookfield. “He’s so little. He’ll learn soon enough.” She came and took the runt by his scruff. “Get down, little mannie,” she said, “this place isn’t for you.”

“I ’ope not!” said Peter.

“Never mind, Peter,” she said. “It isn’t his fault that he’s little, and that was his daddy’s chair. . . . Oh, Jim! See that dumb-bell on his side! Look! It’s perfect!”

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"That's too bad!" said the master of Brookfield, examining the mark.

"Why too bad?" asked Mrs. Gregory.

The master of Brookfield winked at Peter.

"We'll never be able to lose him," he explained. "Will we?" he said to the runt, and the runt looked up and grinned.

Mrs. Gregory gave a quick little gasp.

"I hate such jokes!" she said. "Is he registered, Peter?"

"No, mem," said Peter.

"Well, register him as Brookfield Dumb-Bell—and give him every chance." Suddenly she stepped close to the runt. "You two may have the *beauty* there," she flashed; "and his missy will look after *him!*"

"Why, Chief!" said the master of Brookfield.

"I don't care!" she said. "He's little

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—and I think he knows it—and it isn't his fault!" Then she went out of the room.

The master of Brookfield rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"Now what did *we* do, Peter?" he asked.

It was a hot summer that year. Day after day the sun glared down at Brookfield, and the runt panted as he followed Peter. Often when visitors arrived and Peter was told to bring the wonder dog to the house the runt came along.

He was always embarrassed during these visits. He felt smaller than ever in the stately rooms of the big house. But he remembered his friend the chair, and while the visitors were exclaiming over the wonder dog he would slip away quietly and crawl into it.

He was whipped for this several times,

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but he never seemed to learn; so at last he was put back in runway No. 9, where there were no chairs at all, only loneliness and an occasional sparrow.

One day the master of Brookfield visited the kennels.

"Peter," he said, "ship the Dan Gath puppy to Ramsey, in Tennessee. Ship him tomorrow night. Wire Ramsey. . . . Hot, isn't it?"

"What about *'im?*" said Peter, jerking his thumb toward a runway.

"What do you mean?" asked the master of Brookfield. Then he saw the occupant of No. 9 staring wistfully out at Peter.

"Oh!" he said, "*you* break him this fall for a shooting dog. He ought to have a nose on him."

As Peter was going over a dog crate next day, he looked up to find the mistress of Brookfield watching him.

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“Good morning, Peter,” she said.
“What’s that crate for?”

“I’m shippin’ the Dan Gath pup away tonight, mem,” said Peter. “E’s to ’ave a chance at the trials.”

“Why have you brought out only one crate?” asked the mistress of Brookfield.

“I’m only shippin’ one dog,” said Peter, tapping away with his hammer.

“Ah!” said she. “And when does the runt go?”

“E don’t go,” said Peter. “I’m to break ’im myself—for a shootin’ dog.”

“Peter!” said the mistress of Brookfield.

“Yes, mem,” said Peter uneasily.

“Get out another crate, please.” And when two crates stood side by side, the mistress of Brookfield touched one of them with her finger tips.

“The little chap,” she said, “goes in this

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crate tonight. Do you understand me, Peter?"

"Yes, mem," said Peter.

"And, Peter—tell Ramsey to send the training bills to *me*."

"Yes, mem," said Peter.

Two weeks later the mails brought a letter to Brookfield. It was addressed to Peter, and this is how it ran:

Emeryville, Tennessee, R. R. No. 4

Sept. 6, 19—

FRIEND PETER:

I take shame in telling you the small pup is lost. He found a bevy the first day I took him out, chased when they flushed, and I ain't seen him since. I've hunted the country over and offered big rewards. Tell Mrs. Gregory, and say a good word for me. The big pup is doing fine. I like every move he makes. I'll keep on looking for the little pup, and that's all at present.

Yours in friendship,

W. RAMSEY.

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Peter sat on a sawhorse and slowly read his letter. He moved to an overturned grindstone, seeking a better light, and read it again. He looked up toward the house, a black pile against the setting sun, and whistled softly.

"'Ell will be to pay shortly," he muttered, and moved reluctantly to his doom.

The master of Brookfield had been to the cattle barns to watch the milking. When he returned he found that Peter was something of a prophet. He found his lady bathed in tears, Peter standing miserably before her, and maids running in all directions.

"I'm going to Tennessee tonight!" she gasped. "Read that!"

"But, Chief!" said the master of Brookfield when he had read the letter. "You couldn't possibly do any good down there. If Ramsey, who knows every foot of the

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country, can't find him, how can you expect to?"

"I'll send down a motor and ride all day," she told him. "You can come too—and Peter—and Felix to drive . . ."

"Is that all?" he said. "We'll be quite a party. It's out of the question, my dear. . . . I'll tell Ramsey to double the reward and do everything possible. . . . You'll make yourself sick if you don't stop crying!"

"We *have* lost him, you see! In spite of your horrid joke about it. *Now* I hope you and Peter are satisfied! I'll write to Ramsey!" she added ominously. "Oh, I'll write to *him!*"

When W. Ramsey, Esq., received a letter a few days later he whistled over it much as Peter had whistled over his.

"I guess I'd better quit trainin'," he

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muttered, "an' go to pup huntin' for a perfession!"

And until he went West with his "string," the redoubtable Bill Ramsey, high-priced specialist in the training and handling of field trial setters, turned his field work and yard-breaking over to an assistant, and scoured the country day after day. But no one had seen a "real small setter with a funny mark on his side," and he never found a trace of what he sought.

Brookfield Beau Brummell No. 43721 F. D. S. B., for such was now the wonder dog's official title, was taken to a country where he could go far, and fast, and wide.

In the cramped valleys and thicket-rimmed fields of the East, bobwhite lives close to cover, and field trial dogs are edu-

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cated in the land of the prairie chicken, where their handlers can keep them in sight for mile after level mile.

The Beau was put down one morning with the veteran Rappahannock as guide, counselor, and friend. The sun was beginning to climb the eastern side of the huge blue void which domed an ocean of grass.

"Hi, yah! Get away!" yelled Ramsey. Rappahannock, free of the leash, shot over a gentle rise and was gone. He had eaten up a good half-mile of country when the frostbitten grass began to whisper just behind him. He flattened out in a desperate effort to shake off the whisper, but the whisper grew to the soft pad, pad of flying feet, as the Beau, moving like oil, flowed past.

Ramsey lowered his field glasses and smiled.

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“Look out for that one, Mike!” he called to his assistant. “They’ve bred another bird dog at Brookfield!”

As time went on and the Beau developed into a prodigy of speed, range, and nose, Peter went about his work with a far-away look in his eyes. His body was at Brookfield, his spirit in Manitoba. The Beau would make his first start in the great Canadian stake, and— “They can’t beat him!” was the word that came from Ramsey.

On the day the stake was run Peter sat on the grindstone and whittled. He spoke no word to anyone. Late in the evening the telephone bell rang in the kennels, but Peter never stirred. A kennel boy approached him timidly.

“They want you up to the house,” said the boy; and Peter closed his knife and rose.

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He found the mistress of Brookfield in the living-room. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes like stars. She was dancing about the master of Brookfield with a fluttering telegram in her hand.

"Peter!" she said, *"Oh, Peter! See what our boy's done!"*

Peter read the telegram, then looked at the master of Brookfield through half shut lids.

"If they don't watch 'im 'e'll likely take the National," he said.

"It's possible," said the master of Brookfield. "Yes, it's possible."

"Why, of course," said Mrs. Gregory. "Didn't you know that? He's to be champion. . . . Outclassed his field!" she sang. "Did you read that, Peter? Read it again."

This was only the beginning. The Beau swept through field trial after field trial,

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piling victory upon victory. He won again in Canada. He came nearer home, into Illinois, to take the Independent All Age from the best dogs in the land. He went down into Georgia, and left his field gasping behind him in the select Continental. He won "off by himself," as Ramsey said, in the Eastern Subscription against twenty-five starters, and "every dog worth a million dollars!"

He was certain to take the National. No other dog could stand his pace in the three-hour running of the Championship. Rival handlers conceded this, and Black-Eyed Susan came into her own.

"Susan is trying not to look down on the rest of us, Peter," explained the mistress of Brookfield.

Peter watched Black-Eyed Susan partake of crackers and cream languidly, and from a silver spoon

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“I can’t say as ’ow you’re ’elpin’ ’er much,” he said.

Then suddenly Ramsey was smitten with inflammatory rheumatism, and the Beau was turned over to Scott Benson, who would handle him in his other engagements.

“Don’t worry,” Peter told the master of Brookfield. “Scott’s a good ’andler. It’s all over, anyway, but the United States *and* the Championship. . . . Are you goin’ down?”

“To the National? Why, yes,” said the master of Brookfield. He caught a wistful look in Peter’s eyes. “Would *you* care to go?” he asked.

Peter bent over and picked up a willow twig for whittling purposes.

“Why, I expect the boys could look after things here for a day or two,” he said.

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The United States All Age was the last big stake before the Championship. On the morning after it was run, Peter was whistling as he sprinkled the whelping shed with disinfectant. Footsteps crunched on the gravel outside and he stepped to the door. The master of Brookfield stood there with a newspaper in his hand.

“He was beaten, Peter,” he said.

“No!” said Peter. And after a silence— “What beat ’im?”

“Little Sam,” said the master of Brookfield.

“An’ who is Little Sam?” asked Peter.

“I don’t know,” said the master of Brookfield. “I never heard of him before. Our dog was second. Here! Read it yourself.”

The dispatch was short:

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Grand Junction, Tenn., Jan. 8.

In the All Age stake of the United States Field Trial Club, Little Sam, lemon and white setter, handled by C. E. Todd, was first. Brookfield Beau Brummell, black, white, and ticked setter, handled by Scott Benson, was second. Thirty-two starters.

“C. E. Todd!” said Peter. “Why, that’s Old Man Todd—’e’s eighty years old if ’e’s a day! What’s ’e doin’ back in the game?”

“Don’t ask me!” said the master of Brookfield. “He’s back, it would seem, and he’s brought a dog.”

“Do you think ’e’ll start ’im in the National?” Peter inquired.

“I presume so,” said the master of Brookfield. “You’re to bring the Beau home, Peter—if he wins.”

“An’ if ’e don’t—win?” asked Peter.

“Why, then,” said the master of Brook-

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field, "he can stay in training and try again next year."

Three days later the mistress of Brookfield stood with Black-Eyed Susan in the high stone arch of the front entrance. "You're to bring home the champion, Peter!" she called. "Don't fail us, will you?—Susy and me? There's some light underwear in the black bag, Jim; it may be warm in Tennessee. Good-by . . . Good-by, Peter. . . . Your shaving things are in the small bag, Jim! Peter—Peter! Don't forget Susy and me—we'll be waiting!"

"No, mem," said Peter stoutly. But as he watched the landscape slide steadily northward the ties clicked a fearsome refrain: "*Little Sam!*" they said, "*Little Sam!*"

Grand Junction was reached at last. Scott Benson was the first to greet

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them at the packed and roaring hotel.

“Well,” said the master of Brookfield, “how does it look?”

The trainer shook his head.

“Bad, Mr. Gregory,” he said. “We’ve got an awful dog to beat.”

“You mean the dog that old Todd’s got?” said Peter.

“Yes,” said Scott. “That’s what I mean—but he ain’t a dog.”

“What is ’e, then?” asked Peter.

“He’s a flyin’ machine, with a telescope nose. You got a grand dog, Mr. Gregory, a grand dog. A gamer dog never lived—he’ll try all the way; but this here dog that old fool’s got a hold of somehow ain’t human. In three hours he’ll find all the quail in the state!”

“What’s ’e look like, an’ ’ow’s ’e bred?” Peter inquired.

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“Get ready to laugh,” said Scott. “I forgot to tell you. His breedin’s unknown, an’ he ain’t as big as a stud beagle.”

That evening was a trial. Beau Brummell seemed forgotten. The hotel lobby echoed with the name of Little Sam.

“He must be a great dog,” smiled the master of Brookfield. “I’ll enjoy seeing him run. I think I’ll turn in now, Major, if you’ll excuse me. I’m a little tired from the trip.”

Peter sat up longer, half listening to the babble about him. At last he became conscious of a hissing for silence as the secretary climbed to a table top and began to read the drawings for the National.

“Belwin with Dan’s Lady!” read the secretary. “Opal Jane with Rappahannock! Bingo with Prince Rodney!” and so the starters in the Championship were

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paired. At last, at the very end, the secretary paused an instant and smiled grimly. "Brookfield Beau Brummell with Little Sam!" he read, and there was a roar that shook the hotel.

Chuck Sellers leaped upon Peter and took him to his bosom.

"Stick around, Pete!" he yelled. "Stick around fur the big show!"

Peter shoved him aside.

"I'm goin' to bed," he growled. "I 'ope I get a decent 'oss tomorrow."

But fate had a blow in store for Peter. In the scramble for mounts next morning, a big gray mule with a will of his own was "wished on him" as Chuck Sellers put it, and he devoted the next few hours to equestrianism. By the time the second brace was cast off he had conquered, and he saw good old Rappahannock win on his courage from dashing

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

Opal Jane, who failed to last the three hot hours and was running slower and slower, with a dull nose, when they took her up.

The Championship was run off smoothly. Brace after brace was put down, until at last came Thursday morning and the pair for which they waited.

Peter had been having an argument with his mount, who hated to start in for the day. When it was settled he looked up to see an old man standing ahead of the judges, with a lemon and white setter who tugged and tugged to be gone. He was small beyond belief, this setter, so small that Peter rubbed his eyes. Then he rode down the line of horsemen until he found Chuck Sellers.

“Don’t tell me that’s ’im, Chuck?” he said.

“That’s him,” said Chuck.

The Runt

"Why, a bunch of grass'll stop 'im!" said Peter. "'E ain't big enough to jump it."

"*He* don't jump nothin'," Chuck informed him. "He's got wings."

"'E may lose 'em before three hours," said Peter. "'Im an' 'is breedin' unknown."

"Maybe," said Chuck. "Here's the dog to clip 'em, or it can't be done," and he pointed to Beau Brummell going out to his position.

He was still the wonder dog, a glory every inch of him, and a murmur of admiration rippled down the line of horsemen. . . . Peter felt a sudden glow of pride and hope.

But it didn't last. The next moment he was watching a white speck fade away across the stubble. As it grew dimmer and dimmer so did Peter's hopes. The

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

white speck was Little Sam, breeding unknown. When he whirled and came to point, at the far edge of the woods, Brookfield Beau Brummell was a hundred feet behind.

Peter was among the stragglers in the stampede across the field which followed. When he reached the mass of waiting horsemen, Old Man Todd was being helped out of his saddle to shoot over his dog.

With a feeling of numb despair Peter looked for the master of Brookfield. He saw him at last, sitting his horse a little apart from the crowd, his face the color of ashes.

Peter rode to him quickly.

"What's the matter, sir?" he asked.
"Are you unwell?"

The master of Brookfield kept his eyes on the pointing dog.

The Runt

"*Look!*" he said, "*look!*" And Peter looked at Little Sam. Then his heart skipped a beat, fluttered, and sent the blood surging against his eardrums.

Little Sam had his bevy nailed. He stood as though of stone. He looked like white marble against the dark of the woods. And on his side, his left and nearest side, was a perfect lemon dumb-bell. . . .

"My Gawd!" said Peter. "My Gawd!"

He swung his eyes along the woods and found another statue. It was Beau Brummell, still as death itself, in honor of his brace mate.

"My Gawd!" said Peter again. "What'll we do?"

"Nothing—*now*," said the master of Brookfield. "Let the best dog win."

A man should only whisper while the championship is run, but Peter rose in his

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

stirrups, not fifty feet from a brace on point, and disgraced himself forever.

“My money’s on the old dog’s blood,” he howled; “*an’ let the best dog win!*”

“*Peter! Peter!*” said the master of Brookfield, and took him by the arm.

“I forgot,” said Peter sheepishly.

There have been field trials in the past, there will be field trials in the future. But those who saw the whirlwind struggle between the great Beau Brummell and the white ghost with the magic nose will not listen while you tell of them. Eighteen bexies they found that day, and they went at top speed to do it. Not a bird was flushed as they flashed into point after dazzling point, backing each other like gentlemen.

It was perfect bird work, done with marvelous speed, and the Beau had the sympathy of those who watched, for they

The Runt

knew that he was beaten. He had everything that makes a champion, including looks and heart. But the little white dog who skimmed from one covey to the next was more than a champion—he was a miracle. The blazing soul of Roderigo had leaped to life in this, his son, and would not be denied.

An hour or more had passed when Chuck Sellers thought of Peter and sought him out to offer what consolation he could.

“The little dog may quit, Pete,” he said, “any time now. It’s the last half that tells on the short-bred ones.”

Then Peter gave the puzzled Chuck a wide calm smile.

“Nothing is certain in this ’ere world,” he said. “But I’ll tell you one thing that is. That little dog won’t quit till the pads wear off his feet.”

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And Peter was right. The announcement of the new champion finished with "breeding unknown."

The crowd swarmed toward the winner, who grinned as they closed about him. They had never seen a National Champion without a pedigree, and they pushed and pulled and laughed and hooted.

A *Field* reporter was yelling at Old Man Todd above the noise.

"The country wants to know this dog's breeding, old man," he said. "And it's got to be traced, if possible."

"He ain' got no breedin', I tell you!" screamed Old Man Todd. "He's a niggah-raised dawg—jes' a niggah-raised dawg!"

The runt was frightened. It must be terrible to be a nigger-raised dog, or all these men wouldn't glare at him and yell! He remembered leaving the place where

The Runt

the big house was, long ago, and riding on a train. He remembered running for miles and miles until he had found that nice shed where he could rest. A black man had come to the shed and given him some milk. He drank it all and went to sleep.

Next he remembered hunting birds with the black man every day. One day an old man had watched him find some birds and had talked with the black man. Then he was taken away by the old man, and had hunted birds with him ever since.

They had had a good hunt today. But now he was tired, and they all yelled at him so— Then someone pushed and fought his way through the crowd, and the runt was glad to see him, for it was Peter, whom he had followed long ago.

The runt went to him quickly, and

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

Peter fell on one knee and put an arm about him.

“Runt!” said Peter. “Runt!—You’re yer daddy’s own son!”

The runt grinned, and Peter put him down and took hold of the leash.

“Let go of this, Old Man,” he said.

It is not a good thing to win the championship with a “niggah-raised” dog when that dog has been advertised over an entire state as lost. Old Man Todd looked into Peter’s eyes.

“Why—why—” he began, and stopped. Then his fingers unclosed from the leash and he backed slowly into the crowd.

Peter whirled about and faced the reporter, with the runt close at his side.

“Now, Mr. Reporter,” he said, “you can put in your paper that Brookfield Dumb-Bell by Champion Brookfield Roderigo ’as won the National. You can say

The Runt

the new champion is out of Brookfield 'Ighland Lassie. You can tell 'em 'e was bred and whelped at Brookfield—and now 'e's goin' 'ome."

The reporter was dancing up and down. His face was red and he had lost his hat.

"How can I verify this?" he yelled.

"How can I verify this?"

Suddenly the runt saw the tall man who lived in the big house he dimly remembered. He had always been afraid of the tall man—he was so quiet. He was quiet now. He didn't yell at all, but when he held up his hand everybody kept still.

"I can verify it for you," he said.

"Mr. Gregory!" said the reporter. "Good, very good—excellent! Will you let me have the facts as quickly as possible, please? I've got to catch the evening papers!"

Peter didn't stay to hear what the tall

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

man said, and the runt was glad for he was tired. But Peter put him on a train and he couldn't sleep it jiggled so, and the baggage man gave him part of his supper. When other men came into the car, the baggage man pointed to him and said something about "National Champion," and "worth ten thousand dollars," and the men came and stared at the runt.

At last they got out of the train, and he and Peter and the tall man rode in an automobile till they went through some gates, and the runt saw the lights of the big house shining through the trees.

"Where shall I take him," asked Peter, "to the kennels?"

The tall man dropped his hand on the runt's head.

"I think not, Peter," he said; and they all got out at the front door.

As they came into the hall someone

The Runt

called from upstairs, and the runt recognized the voice of the pretty lady.

“Oh, Jim!” said the voice. “Why didn’t you wire? Did Beau Brummell win?”

“No,” said the tall man. “He was runner up.”

“Oh!” said the voice, and then nothing more for a while, and the runt could hear the big clock ticking in the hall.

“Is Peter there?” said the voice at last.

“Yes, mem,” said Peter.

“You went back on Susy and me, didn’t you, Peter?” said the voice.

“Come down here, Chief!” said the tall man. “Unleash him!” he directed in a low voice, and Peter did so.

The runt threw up his head and sniffed. He was so tired by now that his legs were beginning to shake, and he wanted a place to lie down . . . then suddenly he remembered. He walked to the living-room

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

and peered in. . . . Yes, there was his friend the chair, holding out its arms to him. . . . The runt gave a deep sigh as he curled himself into it.

The tall man who had followed laughed softly.

“And *that's* all right!” he said.

Just then the pretty lady came in.

“Why—what dog is that?” she asked.

“Don't you know?” said the tall man.

The pretty lady stared at the runt very hard. He became uneasy, and grinned. The pretty lady shrieked and ran to him.

“Little mannie!” she said, hugging him until he could feel her heart beating against his side. “Where did they find you, little mannie?”

“At Grand Junction,” said the tall man.

“What was he doing there?” asked the pretty lady.

The Runt

“A good deal,” said the tall man.

The pretty lady gave the runt a last big squeeze, then she straightened up.

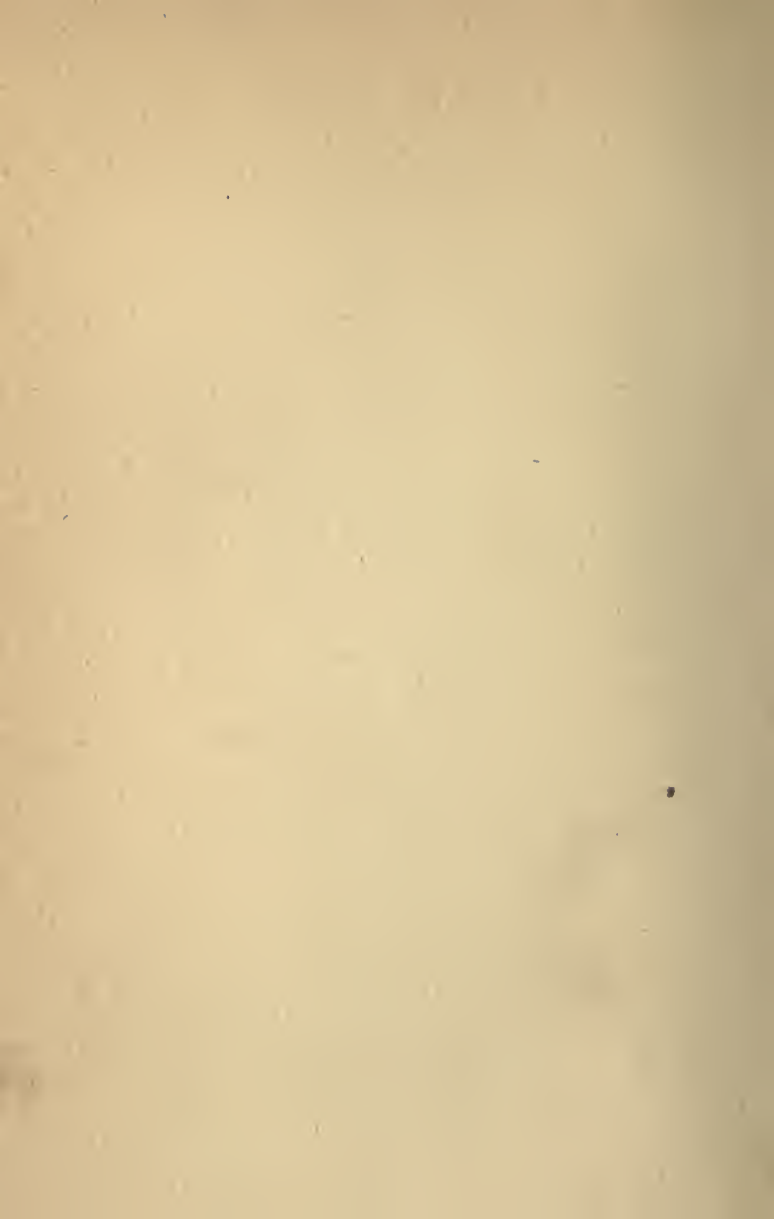
“Oh, Runt!” she said. “Darling Runt—you’re just as bad as ever!” She put her hand on his collar. “Come!” she said. “This place isn’t for you.”

But the tall man stepped forward, and took her hand from the collar. His eyes were shining queerly and his voice was husky.

“Let him alone, my dear!” he said. “Let him alone!”

It was nice of the tall man to do this, thought the runt. He must have known how tired, how very tired, he was. He curled himself deep in the chair and began to snore. . . . In his dreams he heard the tall man talking, and then the pretty lady bent above him, and a wet drop fell on his nose.

A RELUCTANT TRAVELER



II

A RELUCTANT TRAVELER

LEONA was a Catholic. Also, she adored church weddings. Also, she was aided and abetted in her madness, and Peter was sunk in gloom.

From the bottom of his soul he favored an unostentatious, not to say stealthy, visit to the justice of the peace. Why prolong this hour of pain? Why be butchered to make a Brookfield holiday?

Beyond all doubt his new shoes would hurt him. His boiled shirt would creak when he breathed. He would have to wear suspenders, which he loathed, and lately there had been a growing murmur in favor of kid gloves.

His collar would choke him: but this

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

would be a transitory affliction. Nature, kind nature, would aid him here: before, during, and immediately following the ceremony he would, as he told himself, "sweat to beat 'ell."

He was justified in this prophecy. At the mere recollection of the wedding of Felix and Minnie he broke into a gentle perspiration. He remembered how that laundress, the fat one, who was by nature a tearful person, had turned the ceremony into a cataclysm of grief. He remembered how at the dance which followed the wedding he himself had been forced to take a turn with the bride, and how, after one round of the carriage house, she had informed him that it was lucky she was going to Niagara Falls because it was now doubtful if she could ever find enough cold water to relieve her feet.

Well, at any rate, there would be no

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trip to Niagara Falls for him; there were certain limits beyond which he would not be driven. Leona had suggested it, of course. But the new brick cottage near the kennels was finished and furnished and waiting. He would make no "oly show" of himself at the station, "dodgin' shoes an' such!" That was final.

Then one morning he was passing the stables and was halted by a harrowing spectacle. The doors of the carriage house stood open. Clustered about the victoria was a chattering feminine group who bent to their dreadful task with giggles and much white ribbon.

Between a rage and a panic Peter sought the master of Brookfield.

"Beggin' your pardon," he began. "But this 'ere 'as gone far enough."

The master of Brookfield was spending a dreamy hour in the gun room among

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

a welter of firearms, fishing tackle, the game heads of four continents, and the smell of oil and leather. He looked up vaguely from a battered tin box choked with salmon flies, and blinked at Peter.

"If that's the case, let's stop it," he said. "But what are you talking about?"

Peter raised a quivering finger. "I am a plain man!" he roared.

"Granted," said the master of Brookfield.

"I'm no frog-eatin' French shofer!"

"True," said the master of Brookfield.

"An'," declared Peter, "I'll not drive 'ome in nothing with ribbons on it!"

The master of Brookfield picked up a patent reel and turned quickly to the window. He became absorbed in the reel's mechanism for some moments.

At last, with his back to Peter, he spoke. "I suppose you've told Leona?"

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"I 'ave not," said Peter, "an' 'ere's why: She 'as every female on the place behind 'er. I 'ave gave up on this 'ere church notion, with 'alf the town there an' Father Vincent in 'is shirt tail sayin' 'okus pokus at me. I 'ave gave up on kid gloves. I 'ave gave up on 'avin' a stinkin' posy pinned to me. But drivin' 'ome in a bloomin' birdcage is more than I will do."

"Well, that settles it, doesn't it? Why do you come to me?"

Peter glanced cautiously about him, and directed a meaning look at the master of Brookfield. "Be'ind all this," he confided hoarsely, "is the missus!"

"Ah!" said the master of Brookfield.

"Could you now," said Peter, "be of 'elp to me in that quarter?"

The master of Brookfield shook with a sudden spasm of coughing. When he

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

was sufficiently recovered he extended his hand to Peter.

“We’ll make a try of it,” he said. “But I’m afraid we don’t amount to much at a time like this, Peter.”

A moment later they were advancing manfully on the breakfast-room.

“Chief,” began the master of Brookfield, “we have a complaint to make.”

Mrs. Gregory broke a French roll crisply in half.

“The cream, please, Leona,” she said. “Well, what is it?” she inquired over her coffee cup.

“Peter shrinks from the spectacular,” explained the master of Brookfield. “He is a believer in—er—quiet simplicity. He objects, particularly, to ribbons on his carriage. Couldn’t you get along without this feature?”

As the last words fell from the lips of

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the master of Brookfield, Leona forgot a lifetime's training. She shot one venomous glance at Peter, and burst into tears.

"Like that he is!" she sobbed. "Always like that he is. Nothing does he think of but p-p-puppies." She made a hasty clutch at her apron and the cream jug tilted a yellow pool straight into Mrs. Gregory's lap. "Ah!" came a wail of horror from Leona. "Pardon, madam."

Confusion and the flourishing of napkins followed. Despite them, when the mistress of Brookfield could rise from the table the front of her morning gown was a woeful sight. She patted the grief-stricken Leona reassuringly, and turned to Peter.

"Now, I hope you're satisfied!" She said, and swept from the room.

"You see?" said the master of Brook-

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

field when they were safely in the gun-room once more.

Peter nodded gloomily. "Oh, I've gave up on that," he said; "but you 'ear me now—I'll not go to Nihagara Falls!"

Leona had accused Peter of thinking only of puppies. This, however, was not true. For instance, as his wedding day drew near he was particularly concerned over Peg o' My Heart, who was on the verge of motherhood and who turned listlessly from the most tempting morsels he could offer.

"What is it, old lady?" asked Peter. "Ere's a nice piece of liver now. Be a good gel and take it! No? Well 'ow about this good warm milk? The little 'uns'll need it. Come on now, Peggy dear!"

At his urging Peggy sniffed at the milk

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bowl, then lapped a swallow or two. She drew back, thanked Peter with a wave of her tail, and sank down into the straw.

Peter lifted her muzzle and stared into her eyes. He found them dark and glittering, and his own narrowed with anxiety.

“What is it?” he asked once more, and Peggy voiced her trouble with a gentle whine. “Yes, I know,” Peter told her softly; but this was not the truth. He could only, like the most pompous of whiskered medicos, guess and guess again.

However, he got his thermometer from the medicine chest, and shook his head over the tiny line of quicksilver a moment later. . . . This much he knew: Brookfield Peg o’ My Heart, bench and field trial winner, with the blood of twenty champions in her veins, faced her *ac-*

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

couchement with a temperature of one hundred and three.

Peter looked up from the thermometer to find Leona standing in the doorway. She had a slim white box in her hand and a warm, shy look in her eyes.

"For you," she said. "From me. Tomorrow you wear it when—when—" She became speechless, flushing hotly.

Peter took the box automatically, opened it and beheld a lavender tie of knitted silk. He gazed at the tie vaguely for a moment, replaced the cover, and put the box in his pocket.

"This 'ere bitch," he said, "ain't well by no means." He stooped over Peg o' My Heart. "If you're going to the 'ouse," he threw over his shoulder, "telephone Slosson to come out 'ere."

The warm, shy look fled swiftly from Leona's eyes. The flush left her cheeks

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as they paled with indignation. She had knitted the tie with her own fair hands and had gone back through rows and rows to recover a stitch not even dropped but loosely woven.

A silence that bristled followed Peter's words. At last he glanced her way.

"Did you 'ear me?" he inquired, and was shocked by the countenance of his bride-to-be. Wrath blazed in her eyes. Scorn curled her lips. Her chin quivered ominously. Even as he opened his lips to ascertain the cause of her displeasure she turned stiffly from him and was gone.

Peter regarded the empty doorway for a moment with a puzzled frown.

"Now what?" he said aloud. Then he shut his jaws. "If it's Nihagara Falls," he muttered, "she can take on till the cows come 'ome—'er an' the missus, too."

He spent the next few hours with Peg

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

o' My Heart, and Powder and Shot howled a protest to him as he passed their runway. They were the pick of the first litter by Brookfield Dumb-Bell, were through with yard breaking, and should have gone afield that day.

"I'll thank you for less noise," Peter told them. "You'll get your run tomorrow." He made the promise in good faith, and then it dawned on him what day tomorrow was. He grinned sheepishly. "On the 'ole," he decided, staring at the wildly eager Powder and Shot, "I'll 'ave my 'ands full tomorrow, I expect."

Then he remembered that Peg o' My Heart had never had distemper. She showed no signs of the disease, but he did not know what ailed her as yet, and until her malady developed these youngsters would be better farther from the whelping shed. He put them on leash and took

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them to a runway at the extreme end of the line.

“In you go,” he said, and closed the gate in their despairing faces.

Through such small incidents as this come large affairs. The runways at Brookfield have two feet of grouting below the fences. In this particular runway the frost had been at work that winter. It had lifted the grouting and forced up the east fence several inches. Peter had noticed this some months before and had removed the inmate of the runway—also the loose grouting, intending to repair the damage later.

And now, with the pressure of events distracting him, he had forgotten; and Powder and Shot, after a careful inspection of their new quarters, set joyfully to work. Inside that fence was a dreary world in which the hours dragged by on

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

leaden feet. Outside was a heaven containing Peter and the rolling fields. To reach it one must dig industriously; but what was a little digging?

They dug until the moon came up to watch their labors. They rested toward morning, and when the sun rose a kennel boy brought them food and went his way, and then for hours they were undisturbed.

It was queer how quiet it was at the kennels. They missed Peter's morning inspection. They missed his footsteps and his voice and his whistle. Well, he was somewhere outside, that was certain. . . . The situation seemed to require more digging.

By nine o'clock, Powder, who was a shade the smaller, squeezed, with a whimper of excitement, to freedom.

Shot wailed in agony and flung himself at the hole. By a desperate effort he won

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through, leaving a tuft of hair behind him.

He gave a triumphant yelp, then shot down the line of runways. He met Powder, a white flash, returning, and together they explored the kennel house. The scent of Peter was all about, but Peter himself was strangely absent. Well, he had worked them over the marshy ground by the creek the last time he had taken them out. There were snipe in the marsh. Perhaps Peter was looking for snipe! . . . They went over the hill toward the marsh like twin streaks.

Peter was not at the marsh, but they found a fat jacksnipe, and they chased it madly across the oozy meadows while the snipe said: "Scai-ip! Scai-ip!" and they acquired a coating of black muck and green slime.

The snipe became disgusted at last and disappeared in the sky, and their thoughts

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

returned uneasily to Peter. They had chased, which was wrong. Guilt was heavy on their souls. They must find Peter, take a whipping if necessary, and be forgiven.

They turned homeward and scoured the place from end to end. At last Shot found a trace of Peter in the drive. He followed the scent until it disappeared unaccountably. It was replaced by the smell of rubber tires. Ah, that was it! Peter had gone away on the thing that made the rubber smell. To find Peter it was necessary to follow the rubber smell. He explained this to Powder, and a moment later they arrived at the main gates and the wide road leading out into the world.

They hesitated here. They had never been off the place before. It was a tremendous venture; but the trail of the

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rubber smell led straight away from the gates. They sniffed at it, whined anxiously, then slowly it drew them on.

There had been friction between the groom and the best man. It had developed over the groom's toilet. In particular, a fawn-colored waistcoat which the best man had extracted from his own wardrobe had proved an irritant. It had taken all of ten minutes to persuade the groom that its splendors would not transform its wearer into a "oly show."

At last this was accomplished, a coat was slipped on over the waistcoat, and a whisk broom applied to the *tout ensemble*.

"An' now," said Peter ungratefully, "I 'ope to Gawd you're through."

Griggs, the butler, stepped back and surveyed his work with growing pride. He had felt his task to be hopeless until

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

now; but he had builded better than he knew. The result surprised him.

“Not bad,” he said, revolving slowly and with half shut eyes about Peter’s person. “Very genteel, I should say, if you ask me. Try to stand more as if you was made of something besides cement.”

He smoothed a lapel, tweaked the lavender silk tie, and withdrew a *boutonnière* from Peter’s shaving mug.

“Mrs. Gregory’s orders,” he said firmly, as he pinned the flowers to a shrinking bosom. “If you’d take things as they come,” he suggested, “you’d ’elp appearances by sweating less profuse.”

A gleam of satisfaction flickered for an instant in Peter’s dripping countenance.

“I’ll ’andle that matter to suit myself,” he stated.

Griggs consulted his watch.

“Well, take ’old of yourself,” he ad-

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vised. "I must 'ave you at the church in ten minutes. 'Ere's the motor now. . . . Kindly put that chewing tobacco back where you got it!"

Ten minutes later Peter was staring fixedly at nothing. His eyes were glazed, his knees shook, his hands had become extraordinarily prominent. There stretched before him a white-ribboned aisle that cut a blurred mass of rustling, whispering, staring humanity squarely in half. All Brookfield was there, of course, and most of the village besides; but Peter knew them not as individuals. They were nothing but eyes, devouring eyes, that feasted on the very soul of him as it palpitated somewhere beneath the fawn-colored waistcoat.

Then a face swam out of the blurred mass before him, and it was the face of the master of Brookfield, and it grinned

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

mockingly at him and then faded away.

There was a sort of moaning sound, and Peter knew that it came from the organ, and then the church door filled and there bore down on him a floating cloudy whiteness, and somewhere in it was a new pair of eyes, big and blue and mysterious.

The mistress of Brookfield cooed once with delight.

“Isn’t she adorable, Jim?” she gasped. “And Peter, I’m proud of Peter, too. . . . It’s going splendidly!”

The master of Brookfield gave the bride a brief glance. Then his fascinated eye swung back and settled on a lavender tie, white *boutonnière* and fawn-colored waistcoat.

“Superb!” he murmured, and bowed his head in the darkest corner of the pew. He looked up at last just as Father Vincent

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rolled forth the first sonorous Latin of the service.

Then the master of Brookfield became conscious of a vague and rustling murmur from the back of the church. He heard the booming voice of Father Vincent falter. He turned toward the growing murmur, and a look of such unhallowed joy came into his face that the mistress of Brookfield marveled, and quickly followed his glance with her own. Her face froze with horror as she did so.

Down the ribboned aisle, the rubber smell discarded for the more certain scent of Peter's footsteps, came two animated mops of dust and swamp ooze. They came swiftly, surely, and they threw themselves with abandon at Peter, whom they had come so far to find.

The next few moments were full to overflowing. It is a pleasure to record

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

that the best man was equal to the emergency. He plunged to the rescue of the groom—or was it the fawn-colored waist-coat?—at the expense of his own apparel. He succeeded in fastening a pudgy hand on Powder's collar, but the fingers of his other hand closed wildly on one of Shot's long, silky, sensitive ears, and Shot raised his voice in a despairing wail.

Father Vincent had thus far proved his mettle. He had no more than hesitated for an instant at the first whirlwind entrance of the puppies. Then, without a visible tremor, he continued the service.

But now the groom was moved to speech. He glared once at the worthy Griggs, and addressed Father Vincent briefly.

“Old your 'orses,” he said. He whirled and advanced on the best man, and fire

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was in his eye. "Aven't you no sense?" he inquired. "Do you think you can 'old a setter by the ear. 'E ain't a 'og nor yet a calf! Leggo of 'im!"

Griggs obeyed, and Shot flew to his rescuer with a whine of gratitude.

"Ow," said Peter, advancing another step, "would you like for a big fat-'anded bum to take 'old of your ear?"

Griggs backed hurriedly against the chancel railing, still holding Powder mechanically by the collar. Peter pointed to the puppy.

"Leggo of 'im, too," he ordered, and Griggs's nerveless fingers unclosed from the collar.

"A setter's ear," explained Peter to the awestricken front pews, "is that delicate it ought never to be touched, 'ardly, let alone 'anging to it."

At these words a distressing thing oc-

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

curred. For some moments the master of Brookfield, unnoticed for the time being, had been rocking back and forth as though in terrible agony. But now attention swung his way, for there burst from him a sound difficult to describe. It was as though a hen, afflicted with bronchitis, were attempting to cackle. That he was suffering there could be no doubt, for he writhed in his seat. Quite suddenly he disappeared altogether, and those nearest him realized that he had collapsed entirely, and now half sat, half lay, in the corner of the pew.

The mistress of Brookfield bent over him. Her attitude was one of tender solicitude. It was deceiving, however.

“Jim Gregory,” she hissed, “sit up this instant!”

Strange words, harsh words, to a man overtaken by a dire seizure, and the mas-

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ter of Brookfield sent back a husky appeal for mercy.

“‘I am dying, Egypt, dying,’” he informed her.

His life partner proved herself a cruel, a heartless woman. She straightened up and sat stiffly erect, coldly, proudly pale.

“I’ll not forgive you!” she told him, looking straight before her, and added, regardless of her grammar, “*Never!*”

All this is minor detail. The central figure was Peter, who proved at this moment his right to the attention of the audience. He turned from the abashed and shrinking Griggs and uttered one word.

“Eel!” he said.

Powder and Shot now did their mentor proud. They obeyed the command instantly, and halted just behind Peter, one to the right, one to the left of him. Peter

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

took his place at Leona's side, the puppies following.

"Charge!" he ordered.

Powder and Shot sank dutifully down behind him. Peter gave Father Vincent a look of supreme triumph.

"Ow's that," he inquired in a confidential whisper, "for only eight months?"

Father Vincent did not reply. His face, which had been cherry red, became a vivid purple. Above all else he wished to meet the eye of the master of Brookfield. He knew, however, that to do so would be fatal. He made a supreme effort.

"Join hands," he directed; and then, despite the countenance of the bride, which seemed to hold in check the lightning's blast, he went on with the service, while Powder and Shot, their heads tilting now and then to hear the better, gave

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his flowing Latin a close, a respectful attention.

They were good. They were good as gold, and Peter swelled with pride. His face shone with it as he turned at last from the altar, a bachelor no longer. There remained, however, the long journey down a lane of whispering humans. Would Powder and Shot stand this acid test?

“Eel!” commanded Peter with some anxiety. He was rewarded by such prompt obedience that he was reassured. He began the march down the aisle in visible triumph. Then, as he passed the pew wherein was the mistress of Brookfield, he received a dagger glance that made him falter. He looked uneasily behind him to see if the puppies were at heel. They were; but Leona, unfortunately, was three paces in the rear of them.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

Then Peter remembered. He had been told to bear his bride from the altar on his right arm. He slackened his pace until she came abreast of him, then poked his elbow at her invitingly.

“Eer,” he muttered, “take ’old of this!”

And then Leona repudiated her marriage vows with startling swiftness. The echo of her promise to obey had scarcely ceased to whisper from the vaulted ceiling, yet at this first connubial command she became insurgent. She shrank from Peter’s offered arm as though it were an adder. Without acknowledging his presence by so much as the quiver of an eyelash, she swept on—at Peter’s side, to be sure, but as far from physical contact with him as the width of the aisle would permit.

They reached the door at last, to find the victoria and a pair of hunters, pressed into unaccustomed service, waiting at the

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curb. Peter surveyed the victoria dubiously. Once, long ago, it had been Brookfield's pride. He glanced from its cloth upholstery to the bedraggled Powder and Shot. The comparison was odious; but this was an emergency, and what must be must be.

"I'll keep 'em on the floor like," he explained to old Marcus, who was on the box. "They'd be 'ell-'oooping over 'alf the country if I let 'em go. 'Op in!" he told Leona, "an' 'old on to one of 'em when I 'and 'im to you."

Then, for the first time in her married life, Leona addressed her husband.

"Assassin!" she gasped, and fled.

Peter's mouth opened with amazement as he watched her. She went as though pursued, her veil trailing behind her, her hands clasped at her bosom. As she reached the Brookfield limousine she

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

swerved, climbed wildly in, and sank, a sobbing heap, into the deep cushions of the back seat.

Peter's mouth was still open as the mistress of Brookfield appeared hurriedly in the church door. Her eyes swept past the victoria and caught the huddled figure in the limousine. She favored Peter with one crushing look as she flew to Leona's side.

The master of Brookfield followed her leisurely. As he reached the car its door closed in his face.

"Home, Felix," said the mistress of Brookfield succinctly, and the big car rolled like a battleship from the curb.

Peter and the master of Brookfield watched it until it turned the corner and disappeared. Then their eyes met.

Peter put Powder and Shot into the victoria, climbed in himself, and looked

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uncertainly at the master of Brookfield.

“Ow about a lift?” he suggested with an apologetic glance at the bows of white ribbon which gleamed like snow against the dark running gear of the victoria.

The master of Brookfield accepted the invitation with alacrity.

“You’re on,” he said with a gleam.

At the end of two strenuously tearful hours the mistress of Brookfield had succeeded in convincing the bride that her life was not wrecked beyond repair,

“And now,” said the mistress of Brookfield, “drink your tea and no more crying. I’ll see that you have your wedding trip.”

“Yes, madam,” said Leona.

“I’m going to send for Peter now. You can leave on the six o’clock train tonight.”

“To Niagara Falls we will go, madam?” questioned Leona.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

“If you prefer,” promised the mistress of Brookfield, and was rewarded by a quivering smile.

When Peter entered, hat in hand, a few moments later, he, too, was smiling. He beamed joyfully at Leona and the mistress of Brookfield.

“The Peg bitch,” he said, “as ’ad six grand pups. ’Er fever’s gone down, an’ Slosson says she’ll be ’erself in no time. ’E thinks mebbly as ’ow—”

“Peter,” cried the mistress of Brookfield, “stop this instant! There, there,” she said soothingly to Leona, “he doesn’t mean it. Don’t you dare,” she threw at Peter, “mention dogs again!”

Peter swallowed hastily, reached for his chewing tobacco, recollected himself in time, and touched his forehead.

“No, mem,” he said dazedly.

There was a moment’s pause.

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“Peter,” said the mistress of Brookfield at last, “are you fond of Leona?”

Peter blushed to the roots of his hair and dropped his eyes. He raised them then until they met a pair of moist blue ones, into which he gazed.

“Why,” he burst out suddenly, “she’s just the finest gel that ever stood on two legs!”

“Yes,” said the mistress of Brookfield. “Now give her a kiss.” She became busy at her desk for a moment, then turned to Peter and put a folded piece of paper in his hand. “You’re going on a little trip together,” she explained. “You leave at six o’clock. Drive to town now and have that cashed.”

Peter’s face fell as he unfolded the paper mechanically. He brightened somewhat when his eye took in the check’s figures.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

“Why, now,” he said, “I’ve been thinking as ’ow I’d like to go down to Chuck Sellers’s place in Tennessee. ’E’s got a strain of these ’ere Pointin’ Griffons ’e wants me to look over.”

A quavering moan came from Leona. The mistress of Brookfield shot Peter an icy glance.

“You will go,” she said frigidly, “to Niagara Falls. Felix will take you to the train.”

“Yes, mem,” said Peter, and withdrew.

At five forty-five that evening he struggled with a bulging suitcase into the limousine and took his seat beside his beaming bride.

The master of Brookfield strolled out of the dusk, cigarette in hand, and halted by the car.

“Where to now?” he inquired.

“Nihagara Falls,” said Peter.

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“But I thought—” began the master of Brookfield.

Peter kicked the suitcase viciously, and slumped down in his seat.

“Oh, I’ve gave up on *that*,” he said.

DUMB-BELL'S CHECK



III

DUMB-BELL'S CHECK

DURING the summer months early dinner was the custom at Brookfield. It was served out of doors, weather permitting, either on the terrace or beneath the canopy of vines which crept with artful abandon from end to end of the pergola.

In the latter case it meant that the master and mistress of Brookfield were alone and it would be a "cozy" dinner, as they called it, hidden from the many staring windows of the big house by the dumb and eyeless vine.

At such times those who served them did so swiftly, and withdrew. Then they helped themselves and stole choice mor-

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

sels from each other's plates, and giggled, and "scrapped," as in days gone by, and sometimes upset things, which was dreadful. But no one would come except at the voice of the silver bell with the carved ivory handle, and they were careful not to touch it lest its fatal clamor occur.

"Chief," said the master of Brookfield, one August evening, "pass the jam!" He indicated with a lordly gesture a mound of currant jelly glowing in a crystal dish.

Since jam had to do with childhood his words were a challenge which Mrs. Gregory at once accepted.

"Why, certainly," she said politely, and placed a buttered ear of corn in his extended palm.

The master of Brookfield scooped a lump of ice from his drinking goblet, en-

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circled his lady with his arm, and drew her slowly to him.

"It's not fair to use strength," she wailed. "You know it's not. You're breaking a rule."

At that exact moment Leona stood round-eyed in the entrance to the pergola.

The mistress of Brookfield became particularly dignified. She returned to her chair unhurriedly, patted her hair, and then addressed Leona.

"What is it?" she said. "I didn't ring."

"Peter to you weesh to speak," explained Leona with a gulp.

Mrs. Gregory looked at Leona in amazement.

"Peter?" she said. "Why, what's got into the man?" Then apprehension seized her. "Is anything wrong at the kennels?" she asked quickly. "Where is Peter?"

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

“Ere, mem, beggin’ your pardon,” said Peter, and appeared miraculously beside Leona. “I thought as ’ow you’d like to see this ’ere,” he explained, as he pulled a copy of *The American Field* from his pocket. “It’s just come.”

“What’s the matter with you, Peter?” asked the master of Brookfield. “Have you lost your mind?”

“No, sir, beggin’ your pardon,” said Peter. “They’ve challenged with the big pointer to run a three-hour match against Dumb-Bell for a thousand dollars. It’s all in ’ere,” he added, flourishing the paper. “You can see for yourself.”

The master of Brookfield scowled at Peter.

“What of it?” he said. “Why do you come here with it *now*?”

“Well, you see,” said Peter, a shade uncertainly, “the quicker you knew about

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it, the quicker you could take 'em up. You can wire yet tonight, sir."

Mrs. Gregory watched the master of Brookfield with dancing eyes. But the master of Brookfield did not smile. "Why should I 'take 'em up'?" he asked.

Peter's jaw dropped.

"Why, now—er—" he began, and became speechless as his world fell about him. At last he looked up, dull-eyed. "I never thought," he said, "as 'ow you'd let 'em say we was afraid to race the big 'ound. . . . I ax your pardon for disturbin' of you." He folded the paper, stuffed it into his pocket, and turned slowly away. "Good night, mem," he threw over his shoulder, and was gone.

"Oh, Jim!" said Mrs. Gregory. "He's heartbroken—he thinks you mean it! Peter!" she called, "Peter!" But Peter

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

was out of earshot, and she rang the silver bell.

While someone went to summon Peter, the master of Brookfield wrote a telegram. As he finished, Peter again appeared.

"They said as 'ow you wanted me," he muttered, looking straight before him.

"Why, yes," said the master of Brookfield. "You left in such a hurry you forgot to take this with you. . . . I want it sent tonight."

Peter took the telegram and read it carefully. He looked up with blazing eyes.

"That's tellin' 'em!" he said. "I'll start workin' the little dog tomorrow. We'll need all of two months to get 'im ready—'e'll 'ave to go to Ramsey for a month on chicken."

There are two championships in which

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field trial dogs compete. The winning of either means everlasting glory. One, the National, is run in Tennessee on quail. The other, the All America, is run in the Far West on prairie chicken.

The winner of the National or the All America has Champion written before his name from that day on, and never again may he compete in open trials. He is a crowned king, whose sons and daughters are of the blood royal. He may not stoop to struggle with more common clay.

But a champion may run a match race against any dog with the temerity to meet him. And now Champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell, winner of the National, had been defied in public print by the owner of Champion Windem Bang, winner of the All America, and Peter was in a fever.

The telegram he sent that night read:

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

Meet you any time after October first, at any place, for any sum.

And it meant that "the little white ghost" must leave his leather chair in the living-room and take to the open for the honor of Brookfield.

So, early next morning, Peter, a kennel boy, and the small champion went over the hill to the broad meadows across which the brook lay like a silver serpent.

Peter rode a good horse. Dumb-Bell had not been hunted for pleasure as yet, and no man on foot could keep within sight of the ghost at his work.

"Turn 'im loose!" said Peter to the kennel boy. "An' meet me by them there willows in thirty minutes."

"O-o-o-o!" said the kennel boy a moment later, his eyes on something white fading, fading in the distance.

"E's 'ell, ain't 'e!" said Peter, gather-

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ing up his reins. "Come on, 'oss! You wouldn't let a little thing like that get away from you, would you?"

Morning after morning from then on they went forth, and little by little the thirty minutes were increased until at last Dumb-Bell could do the full three hours at top speed, wolf down his meal that night, and ask for more.

According to science, fatigue produces a toxin. When an animal is overworked he cannot throw this off. The poison dulls the nerves of his stomach and plays havoc with his appetite. Peter knew nothing of science, but he scanned a tin plate anxiously every evening. When, after the full three hours, it was licked to mirror brightness—

"E's ready," said Peter, "to beat anybody's dog!"

Meanwhile the field trial world divided

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

over this meeting of champions. Pointer men prayed, in private, for big slashing, smashing Windem Bang. In public they admitted that perhaps the Brookfield setter had a shade in nose and bird sense, but for courage and headlong brilliancy there was "nothing to it" but the pointer. Furthermore, since Gregory had allowed his adversary to name the place for the meeting, the owner of the pointer had of course chosen North Dakota, the home of the prairie chicken. The country and the birds were an old story to the pointer, whereas the Brookfield dog was more familiar with the haunts of quail.

Setter men thought of the white ghost with his uncanny nose, and smiled. *Their* champion was to have a month's work on the prairies before the battle.

"And," said Scott Benson, "if they just let him go, in a month he'll be an old

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friend to every chicken from the Gulf to Canada.”

On one subject, however, everyone was in accord. Dog men all over the land had learned to hate the owner of the pointer. For years he had bred dogs—good dogs, they regretfully admitted—and at last fate had breathed the spirit of a champion into one of them. Furthermore, he was a great champion. This they admitted, also, but with more than regrets. That Emmett Fry should own such a dog was beyond mere regretting—it was a calamity.

Chuck Sellers relieved himself on the subject with a few well-chosen words.

“There’s more class in the tip of that pointer’s tail,” he said, “than Emmett’s got in his whole blame carcass.”

Since the tail of Champion Windem Bang was needle pointed, this was re-

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peated broadcast and found much favor.

All this was man's talk, and not for women's ears, so the mistress of Brookfield heard no word of it; but she felt cold steel in the air when Emmett Fry was mentioned, and it puzzled her.

"You don't like this man Fry, do you?" she said to Gregory one morning, and felt his arm stiffen within her own.

"I don't know him," said the master of Brookfield shortly. "Are you sure you want to go out to this match, Chief? It's a hard trip."

"I'm going," she stated. "I've never seen Dumb-Bell run, you know, and this may be my last chance. . . . Why don't you like him?" she asked, returning to the charge.

"I don't know him," he repeated. "How can I like him or dislike him?"

She knew this to be an evasion, but let

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it pass, and questioned Peter the next day.

“What sort of a man is Mr. Fry?” she asked him.

Peter was dusting a puppy with flea powder. He straightened up and spoke with difficulty, for flea powder is as certain in its action as snuff.

“A-choo-o!” he said. “Just plain skunk . . . a-choo-o! . . . beggin’ your pardon!”

“What has he done, what does he do, that makes you say that, Peter?” she questioned.

“Well,” said Peter, “I’ll tell you one thing he done. Six years ago, come November, Emmett Fry starts a pointer derby, by Damascus out of Old Rose, in the Continental. ’E was a nice-goin’ pup but a leetle gun-shy—just flinchy-like. ’E run a good ’eat an’ it was between ’im an’ a young bitch by Gladstone in the

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

finals. The judges were 'ard put to it for a decision, but they noticed that Emmett don't stand close to 'is pup when 'e fires.

“‘At his next point, Mr. Fry, shoot directly over your dog,’ they tells Emmett, an’ he done so. At the crack of the gun the pup breaks for the woods, 'is tail between 'is legs—an’ that lets 'im out.

“Well, Emmett goes into the woods after 'is pup, an’ next we 'ear 'is gun—both barrels. When 'e comes out of the woods, . . . 'e's alone. ‘An’,’ says Emmett, ‘'e'll not run away from a gun no more.’”

Peter caught up the can of flea powder, and bent abruptly to his work.

“Oh!” said Mrs. Gregory. “The beast . . . the beast!”

And presently the master of Brookfield looked up from his desk into a white and quivering face.

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“Good Lord, Chief!” he said, “what’s happened?”

“You knew about it all along!” she accused. “And let Dumb-Bell meet his dog . . . a man like that! How could you do such a thing! . . . How could you!”

“I’ve never met this man,” the master of Brookfield said slowly. “When he did . . . what he did, I used what influence I had to have his entries refused by all field trial clubs in America. Since then I have made it a point never to enter a dog where he was a competitor. But now—it is a question of setter against pointer; and because I believe in the setter as the greatest of all bird dogs, and many men agree with me and look to my dog to prove it, we owe it to them to beat this pointer—if we can. . . . Don’t you think so?”

There was a moment’s silence.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

“What about the thousand dollars you may win from him?”

The master of Brookfield regarded her gravely. Then the corners of his mouth twitched ever so little.

“Why,” he said, with a bow, “*you* may have that, Chief.”

She had him by the coat lapels in an instant, and did her futile best to shake him.

“I’ll tear it up!” she said, between her teeth.

“Indeed?” said Gregory. “And what about that family on Rock Ridge who haven’t a shoe to their back, and the lame man who needs a wooden leg or an aëroplane or something, and the woman who has delirium trem— Excuse me, it’s her husband—isn’t it? And that girl who should have her voice cultivated, and—er—all the rest of ’em?”

Dumb-Bell's Check

The mistress of Brookfield knitted her brows in thought.

“They won’t get a cent of it!” she announced at last. “If Dumb-Bell wins it, *he* will send it to the S. P. C. A!”

The hotel at Belmont, North Dakota, was packed to bursting. Its occupants lifted up their voices and discussed bird dogs, past, present, and to come. The noise was bewildering. From a little distance it sounded like the roar of falling waters, and seemed as endless.

Back in the kennels it was comparatively quiet. Derbys might bay a neighbor, old veterans might rustle the straw as they dreamed of whirring birds; but though the match between Brookfield Dumb-Bell and Windem Bang was to be run as a final to the Great Western Trials, and a hundred dogs were all

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

about them, Peter spoke almost in a whisper to Bill Ramsey as they examined the white ghost by lantern light.

"I don't like it!" said Peter. "'E never ate a bite. . . . 'Is eyes don't look good to me, neither."

"Pshaw, Pete!" said Ramsey. "There's nothin' wrong with him. He knows why he's here as well as you an' me. He's excited, that's all. Why, look how you passed up them ham an' eggs yourself tonight! Let him alone—let him get his rest!"

"Feel 'is nose!" said Peter. "An' why don't 'e lie down like 'e'd ought?"

Ramsey took Peter by the arm.

"Come on out of here!" he urged. "If a big mutt was to keep a-rubbin' at your nose you wouldn't go to sleep, neither. He'll run his race if you let him alone. If you mess with him all night Emmett'll

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beat me tomorrow. *I've* got charge of this dog . . . now, come on out of here!"

So Peter, with a last troubled look at the suspiciously bright eyes of the Brookfield champion, followed the handler from the kennels; and Dumb-Bell dropped his head on his paws to pass the night in a twitching and uneasy slumber.

A pale blue sky appeared next morning and hung above an endless rolling stubble. Two months before this stubble had been wheat, a golden guaranty that North Dakota could put bread into the mouths of half a continent. But the gold had been garnered and now in its place was a lesser metal, for the stubble was heavy with frost and the rising sun had turned it to a plain of glistening silver.

Calm to majesty was this plain of sil-

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

ver, unruffled by the fact that it would soon become a battlefield. The last day of the Great Western Trials had arrived; two champions would meet that morning, and over the stubble would prove the mettle of their sires.

When the sun was an hour high, black dots appeared at the far edge of the plain. Presently they became horsemen—hundreds of horsemen—with a sprinkling of buggies, buckboards, and even an automobile or so, strung about a wagon from which came, now and then, a beseeching whine.

This whine was the voice of Champion Windem Bang, who gazed out through the slats that penned him in and longed to be away.

His small rival was quieter. The white ghost knew what all these horsemen meant; he knew what was expected

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of him that day; but he knew that his body ached, that his throat was dry, and that the rolling stubble called but faintly to him. The day before he had eaten a piece of tainted meat no bigger than a lump of sugar, and now it was better to lie quietly in the soft straw than to pit one's speed and nose against another over those long, long miles.

So the gulf which never can be crossed, between the human animal and his most passionately devoted friend, was between the little setter and fair play. One word would have told these humans, one word—and yet it was denied him. He would be judged by what he did that day, without it. . . . And so he lay in the wagon and grinned a hopeless grin when the big pointer yelped reproaches at those about him, or scratched and bit at the slats.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

An iron-gray man on a big roan horse drew rein at last.

"I think we might put them down here, Frank," he said. "What time is it?"

A man riding beside him nodded and took out his watch.

"All right, Mr. Fry! All right, Mr. Ramsey!" he called. "We'll let them go at eight sharp—that gives you five minutes."

It was only after a struggle that his handler snapped the leash on Windem Bang. When this was done, the pointer soared out of the wagon with a yelp, and bounded like a rubber ball to the end of his tether. Emmett Fry threw his weight against the leash and smiled.

Chuck Sellers saw the smile, and leaned down confidentially from the saddle.

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"Better save some of that, Emmett!" he advised. "You'll need it."

The handler looked up with a sneer.

"A hundred even on him!" he said.

"Got you!" said Chuck cheerfully. "Come again!"

"Make it two!" said Fry.

"Got you!" Chuck repeated. "Are you through?" But the pointer had dragged his handler out of earshot, and Chuck turned to Ramsey. "You heard that, Bill?" he asked.

Ramsey nodded as he snapped the leash on the white ghost.

"We'll give you a run for your money," he promised, and led his dog to the starting point.

With the feel of the stubble underfoot, with the big pointer straining at his leash beside him, Dumb-Bell's spirits revived a little. He was better; there

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

was no doubt of that. The water that Ramsey had given him a moment before had cooled his throat. His legs felt stronger, too. He even wanted to run. He *would* run, that was sure! Fast enough, perhaps, to beat an ordinary dog. But Windem Bang, big, splendid Windem Bang, was not an ordinary dog. And in addition to the running the white ghost must read the crisp wind that sang across a thousand miles of prairie, and miss no word of its message.

The little setter lifted his head. His nostrils quivered as they explored the wind. Then he knew that his nose would betray him. It was no longer the nose of a champion, but a dull, uncertain thing—the kind with which ordinary shooting dogs go slowly and make mistakes. As he heard the “Get away!” of

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his handler, which is the field trial call to battle, he grinned his hopeless grin.

When his leash is slipped, a field trial dog races straight away. He is driven to this first exultant rush by an overwhelming energy. A pair of high-class dogs make this preliminary flight a trial of pure speed. It was the custom of the white ghost to give his rival fifty feet or so and then sweep by him.

That Windem Bang could go like a comet made no difference to him. Had Dumb-Bell been himself, he would have matched the pointer stride for stride, with joy in his heart. But now his heels had failed him and he called on the big brain of Roderigo that was in his little head. He let Windem Bang go on alone into the far distance, while he shot away to the left.

He saw a patch of green alfalfa as

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

he ran, and he headed for it. It was a likely place for chickens; there was a good half mile of it and he went down the lower edge, his head well up, as fast as he could go.

But Windem Bang did not run blindly long. He, too, had brains; a champion always has. When he found himself alone, he looked about him. Then he caught the green of the alfalfa, and he swung in a magnificent curve to strike the lower edge, down wind. He was moving like a race horse, directly behind the ghost. At each terrific bound he made he cut down the distance between them.

Dumb-Bell heard him coming. He must get wind of the covey somewhere in the green alfalfa before the pointer passed him! He put every ounce of strength he had into his running. He

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no longer heard the pointer. Good! He could still run, it seemed. Then he heard, far away, another sound. It was the spectators shouting. He turned his head, and there was Windem Bang, on the very spot where he himself had passed ten seconds before, tense as steel, as moveless as a stone.

There could be no mistaking what that panther crouch of the big pointer meant. From his eager lifted muzzle, to his stiff and lancelike tail, every line of him said: "Birds!"

Dumb-Bell's heart was bitter within him as he whirled and acknowledged his rival's find with an honor point.

"Missed 'em!" burst out a pointer man. "Missed 'em clean! *There's* your setter champion for you! Oh, mamma! Did you see that Bang dog nail 'em?"

"He—he didn't d-do very well that

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

time, did he, Jim?" said the mistress of Brookfield, as their buckboard swayed and bounded toward the pointing dogs.

"No," said Gregory. "I don't understand it. It may be a false point."

But it wasn't a false point. Emmett Fry flushed a mighty bevy of prairie chickens thirty feet ahead of Windem Bang. They rose like one bird, and sailed off in stately flight to scatter in the stubble nearly a mile away.

The man on the roan horse kept his eyes on the two champions. Neither moved.

"Send them on, gentlemen!" he called to the handlers. "We'll follow this covey up. We'll let them work on singles for a while."

Then followed a terrible half-hour for Dumb-Bell. In the race to the scattered covey he was beaten, and he saw the

Dumb-Bell's Check

pointer make a smashing find two hundred feet ahead of him. Once more he came to an honor point. Once more a yell of delight went up from those who favored Windem Bang. Once more the setter men looked at each other and were silent.

And now it was a race among a scattered covey at top speed, for champions must catch the faint scent of a lone bird while going like a rocket; and this takes nose, and nose, and nose, fine as a hair and certain as a compass . . . Dumb-Bell's was hot with fever.

So he drove his aching body along, while Emmett Fry called, "Point, Judge!" again and again, as his dog cut down the singles with swift precision.

For Dumb-Bell the wind was a blank. Had he slowed down he might have read

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

it, but he was a champion, and he must make his points high-headed and like a flash of lighting, or not at all. He worked in a frenzy, his sides heaving, his eyes shot with blood, only to honor Windem Bang, who was going faster than he, and with a razor nose.

“Why, Pete!” said Chuck Sellers at last in wide amazement. “They’re goin’ to beat us!”

Peter turned to him with a set and stony face.

“Beat us!” he said. “An’ why wouldn’t they beat us? ’E ’asn’t no more nose than I ’ave! I knowed it last night, an’ I let Bill talk me out of it! ’E’s a sick dog! An’ we’re tryin’ to beat the best pointer that ever lived, with ’im. I ain’t a trainer, I’m a bum! An’ *Bill!* . . . They’d ought to shoot ’*im!* ’E’s sick, I tell you . . . ’e’s sick this min-

Dumb-Bell's Check

ute!" He turned his horse and galloped back to the master of Brookfield.

"'Ave him took up, sir!" he said.
"'E's off—away off—'e ain't got nothin'.
'Ave him took up!"

The master of Brookfield hesitated.

"It won't do, Peter," he said finally.
"We should have known that before they started."

"*I knowed it!*" said Peter. "*I knowed it last night! I'm a big slob—beggin' your pardon—I ain't fit to 'andle 'untin' dogs, let alone 'im! You can fire me to-morrow, sir; but take the little dog up! 'E's sick—we may be 'armin' of 'im!*"

They had come to a halt while a chicken was flushed to the credit of Windem Bang. Peter's voice had risen to a wail, and many heard what he had said.

"That's right, Gregory!" called a

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

pointer man. "Take him up! He's got no business with *that* kind of a dog. *He's* sick, all right, and gettin' sicker! . . . Take him up!"

The master of Brookfield felt a slender hand creep into his own. He squeezed it slightly, and smiled a grim smile.

"He'll have to take a beating, Peter," he said quietly. "Go on, driver!"

So Dumb-Bell took his beating for half of the three hours that he must run, and a fearful beating it was. For an hour and thirty minutes he ran, gasping for air, slobbering at the mouth, while his nose told him nothing.

Then as he passed a patch of ragweed he caught a faint trace on the wind. He turned like a flash and froze into a statue. He had taken a desperate chance of making a false point. He had

Dumb-Bell's Check

acted with the certainty of a good nose when he was far from certain. He grinned with anxiety as he waited for his handler, while faint, very faint, came that trace on the wind.

“Steady, boy!” said Ramsy. An instant later twenty feathered bombs shot up from the stubble and sailed away.

“Some find!” said Chuck Sellers, brightening. “How does that suit you, Pete?”

But Peter did not reply. He was watching a white streak flash along the stubble, neck and neck with Windem Bang.

This was the turning of the tide. The violent effort he had made on courage alone was the little setter's salvation. His pounding heart had at last cleared his blood of the ptomaine that had drugged him.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

As he raced for the scattered covey he felt a new vitality surge within him. . . . Ten minutes more and Dumb-Bell was himself again—a white ghost with a magic nose.

But Windem Bang was a great dog, backed by a tremendous lead. Only a miracle could save the day for Brookfield. The white ghost knew this as well as those who watched, and from that moment he became a miracle in nose and range and speed. Windem Bang was still going like the wind—few dogs could have held him even. But now ahead of him, always ahead of him, was a white and fleeting thing that skimmed the stubble with no apparent effort, and found birds in all directions.

The big pointer was puzzled. For the first time in his life he was being out-paced, and he couldn't understand it.

Dumb-Bell's Check

He had run rings around this little setter until now! He would do it again, he told himself—then every sinew in his body drank deep of his vitality while he ran as he had never run before.

An hour went by, and Windem Bang began to wonder. A shadow came and dimmed the eager light in his eyes. The shadow was fatigue, and it frightened him.

He fled from it in a tremendous burst of speed, found a bevy, and went on. But the shadow grew deeper. It was blotting out all the fire, all the brilliancy of his efforts. In nose and heels and heart he felt it now, and he looked anxiously ahead. Despair seized him as he looked; for Brookfield Dumb-Bell was going like a driven spirit, immune from the weakness of flesh.

“Call in your dogs, gentlemen!” said

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

the man on the roan house. "They have been down three hours."

In another moment he was the center of a crowding mass of horsemen that grew larger every instant.

"Who wins?" they howled. "Who wins?" And many answered the question themselves.

The man on the roan horse held up his hand for silence, and obtained it.

"Gentlemen," he began, "the judges have decided that this match, so far, is a draw. We—" He got no further.

"Draw! Hell! The setter couldn't smell nothin' for two hours!" . . . "Two hours! Forget it! Look what he done all the last end! The setter wins!" . . . "You're a liar!" . . . "Get down off that horse an' say it again!"

At last quiet was restored.

"As I said before, gentlemen, this

Dumb-Bell's Check

match, as it now stands, is a *draw*. It becomes a matter of stamina. The judges ask that the dogs go on until we can render a decision!"

"Why, certainly," said the master of Brookfield when Peter brought him the word.

But Emmett Fry faced the judges with the panting Windem Bang on leash beside him.

"Do you think these are huntin' dogs?" he inquired. "Do you want 'em to go all day? This was a three-hour match. I've run it *and* won it, and I want a decision *now!* I won't turn this dog loose again for nobody!"

The man on the roan horse looked at Emmett coldly.

"Very well, Mr. Fry," he said. "If you refuse to go on, we shall decide now—in favor of the setter."

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

The handler's face became gray with rage. He took a step forward, opened his lips, closed them again, and turned abruptly to Bill Ramsey.

"I'm ready whenever you are," he said hoarsely.

Ramsey stooped and cast off his dog.

"Get away!" he said, with a wave of his hand—and the white ghost was gone.

An instant later Windem Bang flung himself across the stubble at the top of his clip, and the battle was on again.

The short rest had helped the big pointer. He went away with a rush. For twenty minutes more he went, a splendid thing to see. Then suddenly a red darkness fell about him. It was hot and suffocating; it filled his nostrils so that his breath came in struggling gasps.

It was hard to go on in this darkness. But champions must go on and on until

Dumb-Bell's Check

they hear a whistle. He went on until a weight, an immense weight, seemed to fall across his loins. It was not fair to make him carry such a weight, he thought, and faltered in his stride. . . . The voice of his handler came like the lash of a whip:

“You Bang!—Go on!” it said.

Yes, he must go on. He had forgotten for a moment. He saw a swale ahead and to the right. Its edge was dark with ragweed, and he plunged toward it. The swale was half a mile away, and he called on the last of his strength to reach it. He was nearly there when a white flash shot from the left, cut in ahead of him, and stiffened into marble. Windem Bang lurched to a point in acknowledgment, swaying where he stood.

This was the end. As the birds were flushed, the pointer staggered on—he

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

didn't know where. The voice of his handler had lost its meaning. He must go on, he knew that. So he went—in an aimless circle.

The man on the roan horse rode forward to the pointer's handler. His eyes were full of pity.

"You have a great dog, Mr. Fry," he said, "but—call him in, please."

"Damn his heart . . . damn his yellow heart!" said Emmett Fry, and blew his whistle.

Windem Bang swung toward the sound of it, and came in. He was too far gone to dodge the loaded butt of the heavy dog whip, and he went down without a sound when it descended across his back. Nor did he make much of an outcry as it descended again and again. Only a moan came from him. He was too exhausted to do more. . . .

Dumb-Bell's Check

The mistress of Brookfield gave a choking cry, flung herself from the buckboard, and rushed forward like a fury. Emmett Fry heard her coming, and looked up blindly.

"The dirty hound quit!" he said. "He had it won . . . the dirty hound . . . but he quit!"

"You vile beast!" flamed the mistress of Brookfield. "Don't you dare touch him again!" She dropped in the stubble beside Windem Bang, throwing her coat over him as she did so.

The master of Brookfield lifted her up.

"This won't do, Chief," he said, and all but carried her to the buckboard.

"Oh, Jim!" she pleaded. "He tried so hard!"

Then a thumping sound, followed by a moaning whimper, came to her. She

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

covered her ears and sank in a heap to the floor of the buckboard.

“If Dumb-Bell had only lost!” she sobbed. “If Dumb-Bell had only lost. . . .”

“Never mind, little Chief!” said the master of Brookfield. “*I’ll* take care of that.”

He strode back until he faced the owner of Windem Bang.

“I have taken—a fancy—to your dog . . .” he managed to say, but could get no further. Suddenly he tore a checkbook from his pocket and wrote with a shaking hand. He held out a signed check for the other to see. “Fill it in—quick—for God’s sake!” he said.

No one will ever know what Champion Windem Bang cost the master of Brookfield. He said no word to any

Dumb-Bell's Check

man as he led the first pointer he had ever owned to the buckboard. But as he drove away a pair of dog eyes, trusting, faithful, looked up into his face, and a slim arm went about his neck. So, perhaps, everything considered, he did not pay too much.

A few days later the secretary of a certain benevolent society received the following letter:

Being heartily in sympathy with the work you do, it gives me great pleasure to inclose my check for one thousand dollars.

Faithfully yours,
Champion BROOKFIELD DUMB-BELL.

A PERMANENT INTRUDER

IV

A PERMANENT INTRUDER

THE last thirty miles had been slid over somehow, and the car, sheathed in the mud of five counties, shot between brick gateposts to decent footing at last. I went into high gear—for the first time in hours, it seemed to me—with a sigh of relief. The mile spin up the graveled drive was a humming flash, and soon I was getting out of my coat in the dusky paneled hall which bisects the house, clean as a knife cut, from front to back.

The man disappeared with my bags after telling me that Mr. and Mrs. Gregory were out on the place somewhere “huntin’ mushrooms.” I went to the

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dining-room, poured myself a drink of raw Scotch, and then drifted, as one does at Brookfield, to the living-room with its big open fire. I was halfway across the room when there came a hoarse rumble from the fireplace that nailed my feet to the floor.

“That-a-boy?” I said cheerfully, and took a step toward the fireplace.

There was another cavernous rumble.

“Now see here,” I said with authority. “You stop this nonsense.”

A gargoyle head was lifted from the bricks before the fireplace, a pair of bloodshot eyes were rolled in my direction and the rumble ceased. The eyes inspected me lazily and—I was glad to note this—without malice. Presently thump, thump went a clublike tail on the bricks. At the invitation I advanced.

A Permanent Intruder

He was an astonishing thing to find in his present surroundings. He was huge, he was a tawny yellow, he had lost an ear. He had been arrived at through the haphazard matings of bull terriers, English bulls, mastiffs, and heaven knows what else. Yet here he was, stretched comfortably before the living-room fire at Brookfield, where chickens, pigeons, cats, cattle, horses, and, above all, dogs, show an impeccable line of ancestors who made no steps aside.

He was a mystery, a friendly mystery, after that first deep-throated challenge, and my curiosity grew as I examined the unlovely bulk of him. I wondered in what disreputable proceedings he had lost his ear. I wondered why four of his lower front teeth were gone. Most of all I wondered at his serene content-

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

ment; at his air of being perfectly at home.

At last I pushed his bullet head aside, pulled his one good ear, gave him a solid thump on the ribs, and took my way to the kennels, and Peter, for an explanation.

“Peter,” I said, while shaking hands, “why is that”—I hesitated—“bulldog allowed in the living-room?”

Peter took his stumpy fingers from mine and grinned.

“You ’ad ’ard work gettin’ it out, didn’t you?” he said. “Oh, ’e belongs ’ere all right. ’Aven’t you seen the people?”

“No,” I replied. “They don’t know I’ve come. He looks like bad medicine. I should think you’d be afraid he’d take hold of one of the setters.”

“I was,” said Peter thoughtfully—“at

A Permanent Intruder

first. I put up a 'ell of a row about 'im. 'E come 'ere all along of horchids."

"Orchids!" I repeated. "What have orchids got to do with it?"

Peter indicated a sawhorse.

"'Ave a seat," he invited, and wadded a startling handful of fine cut into his mouth.

"You know," he began, after a necessary pause, "the missus was all for raisin' these 'ere horchids awhile back?"

I nodded.

"Well," said Peter, "we 'ad our troubles till it was over. Whilst we was goin' through this horchid business everything else was forgot. Why, she wouldn't come 'ere once a month, an' my best litters by Dumb-Bell bein' whelped at the time. I'd go up to the 'ouse after breakfast and I'd say: 'Beggin' your pardon, mem, but Sue Whit-

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

stone 'as nine grand ones by the little dog."

"'Yes,' she'd say; 'that's fine, Peter. I'll come down in a little while—just as soon as I see Jerry.'

"Then she'd start for the green'ouses, an' 'er an' ole Jerry 'ud 'ave their 'eads together the rest of the day.

"For all Jerry's sweatin' an' stewin', though, an' 'er an' 'im readin' books an' such, it seemed like the horchids was too shifty for 'em. Jerry 'as been a good gardener in 'is time, but 'e 'adn't never messed with horchids an' 'e couldn't seem to get the 'ang of 'em somehow.

"Right in the midst of it comes wood-cock season, an' I got the missus' Lamp-ton 20 oiled up nice for 'er. The day before the season opened the mister tells me we'll go over to the big 'ollow after cock next mornin'.

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“ ‘We’ll take Bang and Beau,’ ’e says. ‘We’ll start at five o’clock.’

“ ‘I’ve been workin’ a pair of young Dumb-Bells on cock,’ I says; ‘an’ while they’re not finished yet they ’ave sweet noses on ’em—that Bang sets a ’ot pace for the missus.’

“ ‘She’s not going,’ ’e says. ‘She’s too busy to get away.’

“ ‘Well, I ’ardly expected it,’ I says. ‘She ’asn’t looked in this direction for a month.’

“ ‘Try flowers, Peter,’ ’e says, grinnin’ at me. ‘Why don’t you plant some nice geraniums along the runways?’

“ ‘Me an’ the mister ’unted cock alone all that week an’ the next. One noon we’re ’aving a bite at the ’ickory grove spring.

“ ‘ ‘Ow long now,’ I says, ‘do you think it’ll last?’

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“‘Last?’ ’e says. ‘Why, ten days more, of course.’

“‘I don’t mean the season,’ I says. ‘I mean horchids.’

“‘E was just reachin’ for a sandwich, but ’e didn’t take it. Instead ’e rolls in the leaves.

“‘Don’t ask me,’ ’e says, settin’ up with dead leaves in ’is ’air. ‘She’s sent to Scotland for an expert. ’E’ll be ’ere soon, I fancy. Then we’ll see some regular horchids. Cheer up, Peter; perhaps she’ll let us wear one now and then.’

“Well, it was so. One day ’ere comes a specimin up the drive—it’s a long-necked Scotchman with reddish ’air like. ’E ’as a shiny black ’amper in one ’and an’ a bundle tied with rope in the other. At ’is ’eels was a yellow-’ided butcher’s bull as big as ’e was ugly.

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“ ‘Where,’ I says to ’im, ‘did you find little Buttercup?’

“ ‘Mon,’ ’e says, ‘will ye tell Missus MacGregor I’m koom?’”

“ ‘I will that,’ I says. ‘I’ll mention both of you to ’er. Stay ’ere till I’m back.’

“ ‘I found the missus in a green’ouse. ’Er sleeves was rolled up an’ she ’ad loam on ’er ’ands an’ face.

“ ‘Mem,’ I says, ‘your horchid man ’as come with something that’ll ’ave to be got off the place in a ’urry.’

“ ‘Bring him ’ere to me, Peter,’ she says; an’ I done so. But first I ’ad ’im shut ’is dog in a runaway.

“ ‘When we got to the green’ouse I points inside, an’ Scotty an’ ’is ’amper an’ ’is bundle all goes in. ’E took a look at the missus.

“ ‘Lassie,’ ’e says, ‘whur’s your lady?’

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“The missus gave me a look out of the corner of her eye.

“‘Won’t I do?’ she says.

“I must say this—Scotty, for all ’is long neck, surprised me. But then ’e ’ad red ’air. ’E put down ’is ’amper an’ ’is bundle.

“‘Aye, lass,’ ’e says, ‘ye’ll do, though soap an’ watter would na harm ye.’ With that ’e steps to the missus an’ takes a kiss at ’er. An’ as I’m a livin’ man she never moved an inch.

“‘Thank you,’ she says. ‘Now what else can I do for you? I’m Mrs. Gregory.’

“Scotty looked at ’er close. ’Er rings was layin’ on the window edge where she’d been diggin’, an’ the flash of ’em in the sunlight caught ’is eye. It ’it ’im all at once. Man, I’m tellin’ you it was ’ard to tell where ’is face stopped

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and 'is 'air begun. Next 'e grabbed up 'is 'amper an' 'is bundle an' out an' away 'e went.

“ 'E climbed the stone wall at the edge of the south lawn an' 'is coat tails goin' over it was the last we ever saw of 'im. The missus come to the green-ouse door an' watched 'im streak it across the lawn.

“ ‘ 'E seems to be going, Peter,’ she says, an' 'er eyes was dancin' in 'er 'ead.

“ ‘ 'E 'as that appearance, mem,’ I says.

“She looked anxious all of a sudden.

“ ‘ 'E'll surely come back, won't 'e?’ she says. ‘I paid his passage from Aberdeen.’

“ ‘Beggin' your pardon, mem,’ I says, ‘but just at the wall there 'e didn't strike me, take it all in all, like a person who

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

'ad 'opes of returning.' Then I remembered something.

“‘Oh, Lord!’ I says. ‘‘E’s went an’ left Buttercup.’

“‘Buttercup?’ says the missus. ‘What’s Buttercup?’

“‘If the horchids,’ I says, ‘could get on by themselves, mem, whilst you’re walkin’ down to the kennels,’ I says, ‘you can see for yourself.’

“‘She ’adn’t nothing to say to that an’ we started for the kennels.

“‘Peter,’ she says all of a sudden, ‘I ’aven’t treated you very well lately. I’m sorry.’

“‘Who am I to complain, mem?’ I says.

“‘I’m going for woodcock tomorrow,’ she says. ‘But, Peter,’ she says, ‘this mustn’t get out, you know—I’d never ’ear the last of it.’

A Permanent Intruder

“We’d got to the runways by now. Buttercup was in No. 4 an’ I ’eaded for it.

“ ‘ ’Ave no fear of me, mem,’ I says. ‘But,’ I says, stoppin’ at the runway gate, ‘what’s to be done with ’im? ’E’ll need a lot of explainin’.’

“Buttercup was settin’ on ’is ’unkers, lookin’ mournful an’ lettin’ a kind of low thunder come off ’is chest.

“ ‘ ’Eavens, what a brute!’ says the missus. ‘Where did ’e come from?’

“ ‘ ’E belonged,’ I says, ‘to our late friend from Scotland. ’E don’t seem to like the climate ’ere, does ’e?’

“ ‘This is dreadful, Peter,’ she says. ‘What’ll we do with ’im?’

“ ‘Give him away to somebody,’ I says, ‘for a pet.’

“ ‘Peter!’ she says. ‘Open that gate!’

“ ‘Yes, mem,’ I says, an’ put my ’and

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to the gate latch. With that Buttercup goes plumb crazy. 'E let out a roar 'an 'it the gate like a tornado.

“‘Oh, that’s the way you feel about it, is it?’ I says. Then I went to the carpenter shop and got me a piece of lead pipe about two foot long.

“‘What are you goin’ to do, Peter?’ says the missus when I’m back.

“‘I’m goin’ in,’ I says, ‘an’ explain about ’is disposition to ’im.’

“‘No, no,’ she says. ‘Just let ’im alone for a while. Get water to ’im somehow, then drive to town as fast as you can and find ’is master. If you find him, telephone me.’

“I done what she said, but I couldn’t find ’ide nor ’air of Scotty until I thought of the junction a mile this side of town. I drove out there, an’ the man at the tower told me Scotty ’ad climbed

A Permanent Intruder

the noon train goin' east when she stopped for water.

"Well, that left Buttercup on our 'ands. I was for puttin' a charge of shot in 'is ugly 'ead, but the missus wouldn't 'ear of it. She says that Scotty may send for 'im.

"'An' suppose he does,' I says. 'Who'll get 'im out of there an' ship 'im?"

"'I thought you were a dog trainer,' says the missus.

"'I am,' I says; 'I'm just that. But I'm no lion tamer. An' then suppose 'e don't send for 'im—will 'e live an' die 'in a runaway?"

"'No,' she says; 'I'm going to 'andle 'im myself. 'E'll be fond of me in a month, Peter.'

"I done all I could to change 'er mind, but she wouldn't listen, an' she tells me

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not to feed Buttercup nothin' that day.

"The next morning she's 'ere bright an' early with a package of meat. The dog is back in 'is kennel an' all you can see of 'im is 'is green eyes shinin', but you can 'ear 'im easy enough, if you go up to the gate.

"The missus stands by the runway an' begins a conversation with 'im.

"'What's the matter?' says the missus. 'Lonesome?'

"'Gr-r-r-rh!'" says Buttercup.

"'Come out an' get acquainted,' says the missus.

"'Gr-r-r-rh!'" says Buttercup; an' that's the way it goes.

"'You want 'im out of there, mem?' I says after a while.

"'Yes,' she says. 'I'd like to have 'im come 'ere to the fence.'

"'That can be arranged,' I says. I

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stepped up to the gate an' rattled the catch, an' 'e come out all right. 'E kep' comin' too, till 'e 'it the gate, an' 'e tried to tear it down when 'e got there.

"The missus flinched back a step or two. I didn't blame 'er neither.

"'Better let me put a charge of shot in 'im an' get it over with, mem,' I says.

"But she looks at me as pleased as Punch.

"'Why, Peter,' she says, 'I wouldn't miss it for anything. Isn't he splendid! It's just what you said it was—lion taming.'

"She throws the meat over the fence, tells me not to feed the dog, an' goes up to the 'ouse. Anybody could see she was 'aving the time of 'er life.

"She comes every day for a week with meat, or dog cakes, or something, an'

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puts in an hour with Buttercup; but it never fazed 'im. 'E 'ad the worst disposition on 'im I ever saw. She'd set by the gate an' call 'im a lamb an' such, an' 'im ragin' inside with 'is back like a 'airbrush.

“Despite what she'd told me, she tells the whole business to the mister, an' never warned me neither. So when 'e asks me about Buttercup I horiginates 'ow the horchid man, not likin' the place, 'ad left without 'is dog.

“‘Why didn't 'e like it 'ere?’ 'e says when I'm done.

“‘'E didn't say,’ I says. ‘'E just left 'urriedly.’

“'Is eyes crinkled up the way they do when 'e's tickled.

“‘'Urriedly, eh?’ 'e says. ‘I think that describes it. Talk some more, Peter; I like to 'ear you.’

A Permanent Intruder

“‘She’s told you,’ I says. ‘An’ never let me know.’

“‘Well, anyway,’ ’e says, ‘I think we’re through with horchids. But be careful, Peter; lion taming is all right if it isn’t overdone, you understand?’

“I shows ’im the butt of a thirty-eight stickin’ out of my ’ip pocket.

“‘If the fence should ’appen to bust,’ I says, ‘we’ll lose a lion round ’ere sudden.’

“‘Exactly,’ ’e says, an’ goes over to the cattle barns.

“Well, the lion tamin’ goes on as usual for a week or so more, an’ then ’er work begun to tell. Buttercup got so’ ’e begun to look for ’er when ten o’clock came, which was the time she always showed up.

“‘E’d give ’er a growl or two just to show ’e ’adn’t lost ’is voice, but ’e left

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the gate alone an' 'e begun to listen to what she 'ad to say.

“One day she 'olds a piece of meat in 'er 'and an' pokes it through the fence. 'E looks at it an' then looks away like 'e 'asn't no interest in meat.

“‘Come on!’ she says. ‘You know you want it.’

“‘Gr-r-r-rh!’ 'e says, an' took another look at the meat.

“They argued about it for a while, but 'e wouldn't touch it. Next day she done the same thing, an' at last 'e come up careful, grabbed the meat, takes it back in the runway an' drops it.

“‘Very good!’ she says. ‘But never snatch; it's not polite. Aren't you going to eat it?’

“'E smelled it an' then ate it an' come back for more. I don't think 'e ever growled at 'er after that.

A Permanent Intruder

“‘When ’e wags ’is tail, Peter, I’m going in,’ she says, an’ that’s what she done. She ’ad fed ’im by ’and for quite a while. Then one morning she was late an’ ’e stood at the fence lookin’ up the drive toward the ’ouse. After a while ’e give a whine or two, an’ all of a sudden ’is tail begun to go. I looked up the drive an’ ’ere she come.

“‘E stood up on ’is ’ind legs pawin’ at the gate when she got there, ’is tail as busy as a bee.

“‘Good morning, Big Boy!’ she says. An’ before ever I knowed what she was at she opened the gate an’ stepped in. I ’ollered an’ run for it, but she shut it in my face.

“‘You stay outside with your fine large revolver,’ she says. I didn’t know she ’ad noticed the gun till then.

“‘She goes to feedin’ ’im by ’and, a

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piece at a time. 'E grabbed at the first one, an' I'm tellin' you now she give 'im a slap on the nose.

“‘Table manners!’ she says, an' 'e took the rest more careful. When 'e'd ate it all she 'ad me get 'er a chair. Then she sets an' talks to 'im, an' after a while 'e puts 'is ugly mug in 'er lap.

“Well, that ended the 'lion tamin'. But 'e 'ad to be shut up for fear 'e'd kill a real dog for us, an' the missus took 'im out on leash every day. She'd go way over in the fields with 'im an' let 'im run there, an' I will say 'e minded 'er good.

“I 'ated the sight of 'im at the kennels, more especial when dog men came to see my stuff. Chuck Sellers, 'e visited me once, an' I was goin' down the runways with 'im.

“‘This,’ I says, pointin' to a dog we'd

A Permanent Intruder

just brought over, 'is the Duke of Kent. We himported 'im for an outcross on the Roderigo blood. 'Andsome, ain't 'e?

“‘Yes,’ says Chuck, an’ looks over in the next runway where the big mongrel was kep.’ ‘What you goin’ to do with Count Cesspool?’ ‘e says. ‘Raise little ‘ippopotamuses?’

“I got so I ‘ated the big slob like a skunk, but the missus wouldn’t get rid of ‘im. She says that Scotty may send for ‘im; but that wasn’t it. You see ‘e would ‘ave bit a leg off any but ‘er that monkeyed with ‘im, an’ she knowed it an’ it tickled ‘er.

“‘E ‘ad been on the place three months or so when one day ‘ere comes a man from the cattle barns on the run.

“‘Get a gun quick an’ come on!’ he ‘ollers. ‘The Regent is loose.’

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“ ‘E meant Cordova Regent. You’ve ’eard of ’im, I expect—the worst Jersey bull that ever stood on four feet.

“ ‘That’s a fine business,’ I says. ‘Who let ’im loose?’

“ ‘We tried to put another ring in ’is nose an’ ’e broke the ropes,’ ’e says. ‘ ’Urry up!’

“I grabbed an automatic from the kennel gun rack with a ’andful of shells, an’ started for the barns. As I went down the runways I banged into an open gate. It was Buttercup’s runway, so ’e was out with the missus somewhere, an’ I cussed ’im an’ run on.

“I run through the dairy ’ouse, thinkin’ to go out the back way an’ save time. Well, the back door was locked, ’eaven knows why, so I come out again an’ went round.

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“At the barnyard was the men, some up on sheds, some on the straw stack, an’ one or two on the barn. They ’ad clubs an’ pitchforks an’ such, but I didn’t see nobody on the ground.

“There was a panel of the barnyard fence tore down, an’ the Regent was trottin’ across the fields toward a bunch of cows, shakin’ ’is big black ’ead an’ bellerin’.

“Then something came up out of the ’ollow just ahead of the Regent. It was the missus an’ she ’ad her back to ’im, an’ then I lost my mind.

“‘Run, mem!’ I says. ‘For God’s sake, run!’ I whispered it, that’s what I done, an’ ’er a ’alf mile away.

“The Regent put down ’is ’ead when ’e saw ’er, gave a roar, an’ started. She ’ad stooped down for something—she told afterward she ’ad seen a four-leaf clover

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

—but she 'eard 'im an' straightened up. Then she tried to run.

“Do you 'appen to know 'ow fast a bull can move? I didn't until then. She might as well 'ave stood still in 'er tracks.

“Just about as the bull 'it 'er, Buttercup come up over the bank at the brook. 'E 'ad been diggin' at a ground 'og 'ole or something, an' is 'head an' chest was covered with mud.

“The Regent seemed to strike the missus fair—that's the way it looked, any'ow. Man, it was 'orrible! The fact is, 'is left 'orn went through 'er skirt, whirled her in the air like, an' tore it clean off of 'er. 'E never touched 'er else.

“The Regent stopped an' turned to come back, but 'e didn't get far. 'E 'ad no more than turned, I'll say to you, when the dog 'ad 'im by the nose.

A Permanent Intruder

“I don’t know ’ow long it took for me to get to where they were—long enough. The Regent would swing ’is ’ead in the air, then bring it down an’ batter Buttercup against the ground. I was ’opin’ the dog would ’ave enough life left in ’im to ’old ’is grip until I come, an’ ’e done it, although the Regent got ’im under ’is feet at the last.

“As I come up the missus got on ’er knees—she’d been lyin’ still till then.

“‘Shoot—quick!’ she says. ‘’E’s killin’ ’im!’ An’ I done so.

“Well, sir, when the missus tells me she ain’t ’urt, I tried to make that dog let go the dead bull’s nose; but ’e wouldn’t think of it. ’E ’ad ’is jaws an’ eyes shut tight an’ ’e didn’t open neither of ’em.

“At last the missus tries what she can do. She puts ’er ’and on ’is ’ead.

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“‘Let go, Big Boy!’ she says. ‘It’s all over.’ She keeps talkin’ to ‘im, an’ after a while ‘e lets go an’ rolls on ‘is side.

“‘E lay there very limp, one ear gone an’ bleedin’ from the mouth. One of the men gets ‘is ‘at full of water from the brook an’ the missus pours it over Buttercup’s ‘ead, an’ then bathes ‘is muzzle.

“‘I got ‘er skirt where the Regent ‘ad tossed it an’ brought it to ‘er.

“‘Don’t you want this, mem?’ I says. ‘You can wrap it round you like.’

“‘What difference does it make?’ she says. ‘‘E’s going to die, Peter.’

“‘‘Ow do you know, mem?’ I says. ‘We’ll carry ‘im up to the kennels an’ ‘ave a vet take a look at ‘im.’

“‘What a fool I am!’ she says. ‘Of course. ‘Ave Felix go for Doctor Slos-

A Permanent Intruder

son as fast as 'e can. Tell 'im to take the roadster.'

“ ‘Yes, mem,’ I says, an’ the men carried the dog to the stables whilst I went to ’ustle Felix off.

“By the time Felix drove in with the vet Buttercup was settin’ up an’ takin’ notice.

“The vet went over ’im careful. ‘Two ribs,’ ’e says, ‘one ear an’ four front teeth. Outside of that ’e’ll do. ’E’s not worth much, is ’e?’

“ ‘Not much, Doc,’ I says. ‘Just ’is weight in gold, that’s all.’

“The missus looks at me quick an’ I see ’er eyes flood up.

“ ‘Thank you, Peter, dear old Peter,’ she says. ‘There’s quite a lot of ’im, you know.’

“With that she drops ’er ’ead in ’er ’ands an’ cries like ’er ’eart would break.

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Ain't that funny, now—she 'adn't shed a tear till then.

“Well, that's about all, an' 'ere she comes down the drive. She's after you, I expect.”

I got to my feet and waved to the slender figure approaching.

“But, Peter,” I said, “how can a dog as cross as that be kept at the house?”

“Cross!” said Peter. “Huh! 'E's old 'ome folks now.”

DUMB-BELL'S GUEST

V

DUMB-BELL'S GUEST

HOW long can you stay?" asked Mrs. Gregory.

"Three days, three whole blissful days," I answered. I put my arm about her and I led her to the north end of the terrace, from which point Brookfield rolls away in emerald or flame or duns and browns, depending on the season.

The rose garden lapping the terrace was bare. Stiff, thorny spikes were all that November had left of a riot of bending, lifting, swaying roses and green-enamel leaves. The white marble shaft of the sundial was bold against a flat background of chocolate brown

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

earth. The garden wall was edged with hydrangeas. Their creamy petals had become ghosts in Japanese grays and tans which the afterglow was changing to heliotrope. Beyond the garden was the north, some of the east, and nearly all of the west lawn. These flowed away to far vine-clad flint walls guessed at in the half-light where they passed a vista in the trees.

Drives, maple bordered, swept in curves to stables, garage, greenhouses and gates. Oaks, hickories, elms and the dark mystery of scattered pines broke the red of the western sky. Behind us was the black pile of the house itself, in which friendly lights were springing up. And behind that the meadows of Brookfield ran and ran to distant hills.

“It is lovely, isn’t it?” said Mrs. Greg-

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ory after a time. Her hand tightened on my arm. "My dear, we nearly lost it!"

I turned and met her eyes. "Lost it!" I said. "What do you mean?"

"Money!" she explained.

"But that's impossible. Jim wrote me the works were running night and day on war orders."

"That was it—war orders. Jim will tell you. You'll find him changed, a little. Things like that change people. We go along for years never knowing. Life seems so simple, so easy, then—something happens, some small thing, a little human thing, and you're ground to pieces, nearly. We were saved by—a miracle, I think."

I heard well-known footsteps on the terrace behind us. They had the swinging stride which comes from mile on

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

mile of stubble or briars, or crackling leaves.

"Spooning, eh?" said the master of Brookfield.

"Of course," said Mrs. Gregory.

"What's all this the Chief's been telling me?" I demanded.

"Spare me," said Gregory, releasing my hand. "What does a lady tell a gentleman when he stands with his arm about her in the gloaming?" Then he grew serious. "After dinner," he said.

"He's not changed much that I can see," I told Mrs. Gregory.

But at dinner I did see a change. His grin, his irrepressible boyish grin, had become a smile. And in those comfortable silences which are the hallmark of abiding friendship I had time to wonder.

So they had nearly lost it! I glanced about the big shadow-filled room. It

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seemed incredible. It was all so secure, so permanent. Why, the sideboard alone was immovable! It stood there, ponderous, majestic, defying mortal hands to budge it. And the serving tables—stolid, silent. I felt that they would set their broad backs and massive legs and remain stubbornly against those walls while we who dined, and our children's children, became dust.

And yet, what kept them there? What made Brookfield, every stick and stone of it, a thing of joy, a place which filled all those who entered its gates with indescribable contentment? I knew, I had seen it. It was six miles down the valley. It was referred to, casually, as "the works." It was a place of din and dirt and sweat. Tall stacks belched sootily into the face of heaven while white-hot mouths of hell opened

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

and closed below. In infancy it had been a tiny forge at which a great-great-grandfather had labored placidly. It had grown into a huge black demon disgorging thousands of tons of greasy gray ingots in a manner which was beyond my understanding. Gregory, shouting above the terrifying noise, had attempted to explain; but my head was aching and I very much desired to leave that place to its own infernal devices.

I had never seen it since. Submerged in the tranquillity of Brookfield, I had forgotten it entirely. Even Gregory gave it scant attention. He motored down the valley once or twice a month, was gone perhaps three hours, and returned to his dogs and his guns.

But something had gone amiss, apparently. Perhaps the trouble had been in the demon's entrails. Perhaps it had re-

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fused to digest the ore and lime and coke which pygmies poured down its gullet.

A gray shadow padded through the doorway. It stopped just at the entrance and surveyed us silently.

“Good evening,” said Gregory. “Won’t you join us?”

The shadow waved a plumed tail. It advanced unhurriedly until the candle light showed a small white setter with a lemon dumb-bell on his side.

He was quite small, as setters go, but he had the dignity of kings. He was the double champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell who had won the National and All America and twenty lesser stakes besides. He outclassed the setters and pointers of the world, and I think he knew it.

With all this he was not above the

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duties of hospitality. Straight to my chair he came, sniffed once to assure himself of my identity, then raised his eyes to mine.

“How do you do?” I said and slid my hand along his head until one of his ears slipped through my fingers.

He waved his tail and stretched his lips in the suggestion of a grin, an uncanny habit he had—and I remembered how many birds I had missed the year before after some of his matchless finds.

“It’s not polite to laugh at a duffer,” I told him.

He poked a cold nose into the hollow of my hand, then sauntered around the table. He waved his tail as he passed both his master and mistress, stood a moment in thought, and withdrew as unhurriedly as he had come. We heard his nails click as he passed from rug to

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rug on the hardwood floor of the main hall and we listened until the sound grew fainter and was gone.

"Back to the throne," I said, and this proved to be true. When we went to the living-room a few moments later he was curled up in his chair with his eyes closed. "Asleep, eh?" I said; but he denied it feebly with a slight thump of his tail against the leather chair seat. Presently he was snoring.

"How much could you get for him?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know," said Gregory. "His size is against him for a stud dog."

"How much would you take?"

Gregory joined me by the chair. He looked down at the sleeping Dumb-Bell. "Well, I hadn't thought of selling him. Had you, Chief?"

"Oh, yes, often. He tracks the house

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up so, with his blessed muddy paws. Come here, you silly things, and drink your coffee."

Gregory took a gold and white egg-shell of a cup to the fireplace. He stood with his back to the fire stirring his coffee thoughtfully.

"I can tell you how much he is worth," he said suddenly: "one million, two hundred and fifteen thousand dollars."

"He should find a pleasant home for that," I said. "Would you throw off the fifteen thousand for cash?" Then I saw that he was serious. "What do you mean?" I asked. "Why the exact sum?"

"Do you happen to know an old Mr. Parmalee, of Chicago, R. H. Parmalee?"

I considered a moment. "Yes, I think I do. That is, I knew of him when I was scratching for the *Tribune*. He's

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the *betê noir* of the higher-ups in Wall Street. He lives in Chicago, won't leave it, and is chairman of the board or a big stockholder in heaven knows how many Eastern concerns. He won't go East to board meetings, so board meetings go to him, and the elect groan and moan at the trip. He hates ostentation like the devil, and looks like a tramp. Is he the man you mean?"

"Yes, that's the man. Especially the tramp part."

"He's a queer old codger," I said. "He supports a flock of no-account relatives who are ashamed to meet him on the street."

A coffee spoon clattered. "He's not a queer old codger!" said Mrs. Gregory. "He's a dear! I adore him. Imagine being ashamed to meet him! What do his clothes matter? Why—"

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“Hold on there,” Gregory put in. “What did you say when Griggs took him upstairs?—Griggs was carrying his bag as though it might explode at any moment—What was it you said?”

Mrs. Gregory recovered her spoon. “I’m sure I’ve forgotten.”

“You asked me where I’d picked him up, didn’t you?”

“Well, perhaps I did, but I simply meant—”

Gregory turned to me. “If you should hear your hostess ask where you had been picked up, how would it strike you?”

“Why, has he been here?” I asked. “Where did you meet him? What’s all this about, anyway?”

“It’s about—what the Chief was telling you on the terrace. Are you ready to smoke? Cigarettes in that silver doo-

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dab. Cigars just behind you. Want a liqueur? Well, take that other chair; it's more comfortable. Don't interrupt at mere exaggeration, Chief. Man, it would make a play! Perhaps you can do something with it. And I thought I was doing a kind act." He grinned at his wife. "Succoring the poor and needy, eh, Chief? She was Lady Bountiful—Oh, golly! And then Dumb-Bell saved the day. And the Chief—I think he was fond of the Chief, too, she'd been so sweet to the poor old man. He—"

"Are you going to tell what happened, or are you going to stand there and—"

"Well, you tell him!"

"Indeed I'll not. Sit down here and be serious. You were serious enough—then."

Gregory's smile was gone the instant

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she had spoken. "Yes, Chief," he said gravely. "We were both a bit serious, I thought." He left the fireplace and let himself slowly down into a chair close to where his wife was sitting. "I hope we'll never be quite so serious again." He crossed his long legs, lit a cigar, and stared into the bluish flames of the applewood fire. "The war did it," he said at last. "And playing a new game. Do you know anything about high explosive shells?"

"Not a thing," I said. "Except that they go off with a bang, and everybody's getting rich making them."

"Just so. That's what I knew, last year. Of course I thought, still think, the Allies are doing our work. We didn't have the sweepers to get into the housecleaning properly and—they needed brooms. Well, things'll be more

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tidy when they get through, but it's been a dirty job. A year ago it looked bad. I rather wanted to help in a small way.

“Of course you know I'm not very active at the works. Braithwaite runs things to suit himself, and that lets me knock about pretty much as I please. He loves work and I love play, and there you are—everybody satisfied.

“Well, along comes a chap from the Midland Iron Company with his pockets full of subcontracts and his head full of everything from barbed wire to aëroplanes. He spent two days with Braithwaite and Gaston, and they came up here, all mad as hatters, and routed me out. The idea was to build a plant in nine or ten minutes and take on the machining of three million three-inch high explosives for Russia on a subcontract

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from Midland Iron, who'd furnish the rough casings.

"All play and no work makes Jack a bright boy, and I inquired gently about Midland Iron.

"They smiled at me pityingly. 'You tell him,' said Braithwaite. So the sub-contract chap mentioned the names of the directors in a hushed voice, and I blinked. 'But,' I said, 'I've never heard of it before, and outside of hunting season I do read the papers now and then.' They explained that it was a lot of junk consolidated solely for war business with 'all the money in the world' behind it. This was so, all right. Both Dun and Bradstreet sent a report a few days later that made me blink again.

"Well, there seemed to be a quarter of a million in it sure, but I went in more for the reason I've told you than

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for the profit on the job. Business had been bad for two years and I was down pretty fine; but all you had to do was to mention Midland Iron at any bank and you could walk in and help yourself. We built a plant—equipment, three hundred lathes, three hundred electric motors, and a lot of odds and ends. I went on the paper, of course.

“There was some delay at first. We wanted master gauges, and Midland couldn't let us have 'em. When we hollered they passed the buck to Russia. The Grand Dukes were too busy or too tired or something to send on the drawings, so we paid three hundred machinists for an eight-hour day and they sat among the lathes and played pinochle. We didn't dare let 'em go. Skilled labor is skilled labor these days. That was all right, because we put it up to Mid-

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land and they never whimpered. Just O.K.'d our pay roll and charged it to—the Czar, I guess.

“This went on for two months. Then we got our gauges and a Russian inspector who talked French, all in one day; and the rough cases began to roll in from Midland in trainload lots, and pinochle ceased to be a vocation around there.

“All during this the field trial season was on, and it was breaking my heart. We had a nice birdy pup by Dumb-Bell out of Miss Nance in the derbys, and Peter went to a trial or two. He came home quite gloomy, though, because the pointers were winning all down the line. ‘Ell’-oooping all over the country like a lot o’ gray’ounds,’ is what he told me. ‘Don’t they find birds?’ I asked, and I gathered from what he said that when a

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pointer stumbled over a bevy he stopped in astonishment.

“War or no war, I was going to see the National at least, and things got to running so nicely I decided to make it three weeks and take in the United States and another stake. Braithwaite said to go—he was glad to get rid of me, I think. I left for the South with everybody happy and the Russian inspector walking around twisting his little stick-up mustache and saying ‘*C’est très bien,*’ at everything, including the three-star Hennessy, which he liked and we furnished. He drank a quart a day without a quiver. Think of it!

“Peter was right about the pointers. It was a pointer year. They were a poor lot, too; but the setters were worse, and our crowd was in the dumps. There was a lot of grumbling about the judging.

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Some of us think that first of all a bird dog must find birds. We believe he can go just as fast as his nose will let him and no faster. And that brings me to old Mr. Parmalee.

“He got in the second night of the United States. He had the same old frowsy leather bag he has brought to every field trial as long as anybody can remember. He was looking seedy, even for him, and that’s saying a good deal. He came in the door of the hotel, and the boys yelled at him and grabbed him and hammered him on the back, and he blushed—he’s a diffident little old cuss.

“Nobody knew anything about him, except that he came down to the trials year after year, that he loved a setter as well as any man in the world, and that he was a stickler for nose rather than speed. He’d forget all embarrassment and speak

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right up when it came to arguing about that.

“He had a bully round with Fosdick of the Argot strain that first night. Fosdick was a little overbearing, I thought—he has a twenty-thousand-acre preserve on the James River and twenty feet of water at his own dock when he runs down in his yacht—and finally he said: ‘Well, if you don’t like the kind of dogs we’re sending to the trials, why don’t you breed some to suit you?’

“Everybody felt uncomfortable. You don’t hear things like that often at the trials.

“But the old gentleman looked Fosdick in the eye and came back as pat as you please. ‘I don’t have to breed one,’ he said; ‘it’s already been done. If you want to find out just what you’ve got, pick out the best one you ever bred and

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put him down for three hours with Brookfield Dumb-Bell.'

"Well, the setter men yelled at that—everybody did, in fact—and Fosdick shut up like a clam. The old gentleman came over to where I was sitting, and we talked for the rest of the evening.

"He said that he was from Chicago, and that he took his vacation each year when the National was run. He said he hoped to 'slip out of the harness some day' and spend the rest of his life with a twenty gauge and a pair of Llewellyns. I thought perhaps he was keeping books; I don't know why, except that he was stoop-shouldered and spoke of having to work too hard at his age. I had a vision of him perched on a high stool doing double entry.

"I didn't see much of him after that until the finals of the Championship. He

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rode with me that afternoon, and we followed the dogs as best we could, hoping for bird work, which we didn't get. He was fairly chipper when we started, but as the dogs ran he got more and more quiet. I don't think he spoke once during the last hour.

"Well, they gave it to a rangy, wild-eyed, bitch-headed pointer who had covered most of a county and found two bebies and one single in three hours' running; and I rode home with old Mr. Parmalee. He got off his horse and sighed, and went into the hotel without a word.

"I went upstairs and packed. When I came down he was standing looking out the window, and I walked over to him.

"The new champion was on leash in front of the hotel with a crowd around him. His handler was telling everybody what a great dog they were looking at.

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Once he said: 'He's a bird dog, men!' and old Mr. Parmalee snorted. He turned to me and, by George, he looked all broken up. 'This is my last trip,' he said; 'I'm getting too old to come down here and see—what we saw today.'

"I said something about it being an off year, but he didn't answer. He looked out the window and clicked with his tongue. 'So that's a National Champion!' he said. Then he turned to me again. 'Five years ago today,' he said, 'I saw a real champion win this stake. I can remember every move he made. He found sixteen bebies and twenty-three singles, and he went a mile at every cast. I have wanted to see something like that again, . . . but I don't think I shall . . . I don't think I shall.'

"I'm something of a soft ass at times, and he looked rather old and forlorn; so

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I took hold of his arm and said, 'You come back to Brookfield with me, and we'll shoot some quail over him and watch him work for a week or so. What do you say?'

"He said a lot about being an old nuisance and that sort of thing, but his eyes were shining like a child's, and I hustled him upstairs and helped him pack his duds—you should have seen 'em—and we caught the five o'clock train. The Chief met us at the front door next day and Dumb-Bell was standing beside her.

"I didn't see much of him after that—I had other things on my mind—but the Chief took him under her wing, and he took to it all like a wet setter to a wood fire. Didn't he, Chief?"

"He was just sweet; one of the very nicest guests we ever had. He understood everything so. Of course at first I

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was—well, not startled exactly, but Jim chums with terrible creatures if they shoot well or can walk as far as he can. You know he adores that Slade man who's been in jail I don't know how many times, and sells whisky on the sly, and fights bulldogs and game chickens. Jim takes him to the gun room and they sit and roar at each other. Sometimes I wonder who tells the worst stories, the Slade man or Jim.

“Jim hadn't told me he was bringing anyone home with him, and when they got out of the motor and I saw Mr. Parmalee for the first time, well!—really his clothes are shocking. And his collars and cuffs and ties! And his hat! Where do you suppose he got that hat, Jim? Then he was not at all at his ease when Jim presented him; I didn't know how diffident he was, then, so when he went upstairs I

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asked Jim—what he told you just now.”

Gregory chuckled. “About picking him up, she means. He’s worth a hundred millions.”

“What of it? If he hadn’t been the charming old thing he is what difference would that make?”

“Of course, of course; but, even so, ‘picking up’ a multimillionaire isn’t the way I’d put it—exactly.”

“It wasn’t any time until I knew. He had beautiful old-school manners when his shyness wore off. Mr. Braithwaite had been telephoning for Jim, so he went off to the works, and I showed Mr. Parmalee the place, and he loved it all. We spent most of the afternoon at the kennels. He knew Peter, he’d seen him somewhere at the trials, and they looked at all the dogs and talked and talked. Then I showed him Roderigo’s grave in the orchard, and

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he stood looking down at it, and I knew I was going to like him.

“We came to the house because he wanted to see Dumb-Bell again, but the mannie was out in the garden digging for moles with his face all dirty. He was having a splendid time and I didn’t want to call him in, and Mr. Parmalee said, ‘Of course not.’

“We had tea in here and Mr. Parmalee sat down in Dumb-Bell’s chair—not knowing—and I asked him if he would mind changing his seat. He looked surprised and embarrassed, and said, ‘Why, certainly.’ So when he had taken another chair I told him.

“I said that Roderigo had had it first and it was his very own chair. And then it was empty for a long time, and then Dumb-Bell did—what he did, and now it was his, and nobody else sat in it.

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“Mr. Parmalee said, ‘I see, I see,’ and went over and looked at the chair, and then he said, rather to himself, ‘It’s not for mere humans, is it?’ and then he blew his nose.

“‘Sometimes,’ I said, ‘people sit in it and hold him in their laps. That’s all right, of course.’ And he said, ‘I should like to do that very much’; and then we had our tea. We got along splendidly after that.”

“I should say they did,” said Gregory. “She took to the Lady Bountiful business like a duck. She fancied she was showing the poor old man the time of his life.”

“I was,” said Mrs. Gregory calmly.

“He’s coming back, at any rate. And the Lord knows I didn’t do so much to make his visit pleasant. After I saw Braithwaite I didn’t have time to work dogs for old Mr. Parmalee or anybody

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else. I told him I was busy, and Peter took him out every morning, and he knocked about with the Chief in the afternoon. It was out of season, but I told Peter to let the old man kill a few quail over Dumb-Bell just to say he'd done it. I thought Peter would shoot me.

“He came up to the house that night, though, and looked at me as though I were a convict. It seems the old man had refused point blank to take a gun along out of season. ‘E’s a sportsman,’ said Peter, ‘and, ’eaven knows, they’re rare enough!’ I admitted it, and Peter left with his head in the air.

“This was at first. I saw the old chap each night of course and he’d describe every point Dumb-Bell had made that day. Later he could have had a fit in the front hall without my noticing it.”

“That isn’t so. Through it all he re-

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membered his guest. At dinner he'd sit with a look on his face that made me want to scream, and talk hunting dogs and field trials and trout fishing with that old man, and laugh at his stories, too."

"Stuff. I simply wanted to forget during dinner that I owed a million."

"What!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, yes," said Gregory cheerfully. "Well over a million. I gave you the figures a while ago."

"It isn't possible!"

"That's what I said until Braithwaite got through. It's quite simple. Our contract was for three dollars and forty-five cents per shell for three million shells and it was costing us three eighty-five and a half to turn 'em out."

"But how could that be? Why were your estimates so far off?"

"New game. We didn't know the an-

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gles. And then things broke badly for us. For instance, we figured on three hundred lathes at eight hundred dollars. Well, everything went sky high and our lathes cost fifteen hundred each, and we had to get down on our knees and pray for 'em at that price. Same thing with our motors. They should have been a hundred and thirty-five; they were two hundred and fifty. We figured on seventeen-cent copper, which is high enough. We paid twenty-six cents a pound for every pound, and you could take it or leave it, they didn't care which; so every band on every shell cost forty-five cents instead of thirty-two. Then we got into a mess through improper heat treatment. The cases were annealed at too low a temperature, and they broke our machines and chewed up our tools and played the dickens generally. Same with the fuse

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sockets. We'd figured on free-cutting cold-rolled bar stock, point forty-five. Instead it was fifty-eight to sixty, and machine tools holler for help in that kind of going. Oh, it was a fine party, but expensive.

"To make everything perfect, the Russian inspector left the Hennessey long enough to wander from the office over to the plant and throw out the first batch of finished shells because the interiors weren't smooth.

"Of course anyone knows the exterior of a shell must be polished on account of air friction, but the inside—

"Braithwaite kept his temper somehow, so he told me, and asked in bad French if they wanted 'em polished just to be tidy, or what? And the inspector explained that the trinitro toluol went into 'em under pressure and was extremely sensitive.

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Therefore a little roughness of the chamber wall might cause a spark if the shell were dropped, in which case—
'Pouf!'

"'Oh, pouf! eh?' said Braithwaite. 'Well, we're a liberal crowd; at three forty-five we throw in a "pouf" with every shell.' But our Russian friend drew him gently to the office and got out the contract and it read: 'Surfaces must be polished.' One little s did the trick and Braithwaite beat the inspector to the Hennessy bottle.

"Of course we put it up to Midland at once, by letter, by wire, by long distance; then Braithwaite and I went on. After wrestling with 'em for two days and a night they agreed to allow us ten cents a shell, and that was final.

"I came home with two hands and the clothes on my back. I'm a good wing

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shot, throw a fairly accurate fly, and—I'll be forty next month.

"I sat in the smoker all night. I kept seeing the Chief in the rose garden. She had on a floppy pink sun hat and she cut roses, armloads of 'em—and sang."

Gregory stopped abruptly.

"Good Lord!" I said. I saw white fingers steal over and twine themselves about a lean brown hand clenched on the chair arm. I became absorbed in the fireplace with its bed of glowing ashes.

"Isn't it the deuce," said Gregory at last, "what just money will do! Just money. Think of it!"

I thought of it while the big clock tick-tocked in the hall, and something was done with an absurdly small handkerchief, and the pinched look left Gregory's face.

"I hadn't told the Chief anything," he began again. "I'd been hoping that Mid-

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land might see us through. Of course she knew something was in the wind, but she hadn't an idea how bad it was. On the train coming back I made up my mind to tell her as soon as I got in the house; so we walked in here as soon as we'd said hello.

“She asked me if I was tired, and I said ‘A little,’ and looked about the room. I'd forgotten old Mr. Parmalee was on earth, but I thought a servant might be about. I never looked in the bay window. There's nothing there but the chair and no one would be sitting in that.

“I sat down where you're sitting now, and I said, ‘Come here, Chief,’ and she came and sat in my lap, and then I told her.

“I got far enough along to mention Midland Iron, and then I heard a noise in the bay window as though someone had

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moved a foot on the floor. I said, 'Wait a moment,' to the Chief, and got up and went over to the chair.

"Old Mr. Parmalee was sitting there with Dumb-Bell asleep in his lap. The dog was wet and muddy and snoring—you know how he snores when he's tired.

" 'Oh, hello!' I said, and the old chap looked as though I'd caught him stealing the silver.

" 'I didn't want to wake him,' he said in a whisper; and I said, 'Won't he ruin your clothes?'

"He didn't answer—just looked down at the dog. 'We've had a wonderful day,' he said, 'wonderful!' And I said, 'That's good,' and took the Chief in the library, and finished telling her there.

"I had dinner alone with the old man that night. The Chief couldn't come down. You see she'd got both barrels at

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once, and it flattened her out for a few hours.

“I didn’t say much, and neither did he. As soon as we’d had coffee I asked him to excuse me, and he said, ‘Certainly,’ but he fidgeted a bit and finally got out that he wanted to ask a favor, and I told him to go ahead.

“He said, ‘You know I expected to leave tomorrow morning.’ I said, ‘Yes.’ I hadn’t known it, but I wanted to get rid of him, under the circumstances.

“‘Would it be asking too much,’ he said, ‘if I stayed a day or so longer?’ I told him to go ahead and stay. I wasn’t very cordial, I’m afraid. I wanted to get up to the Chief, and I wanted him to go.

“I didn’t see him at all next morning. The Chief wanted to look at the place and wanted me with her, so we wandered

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about and looked at everything as though we were seeing it for the first time."

"We were," Mrs. Gregory put in; "I saw things I'd never seen before."

"What with?" asked Gregory.

"Oh, I didn't cry all the time—just when things happened that would nearly kill you. . . . The cows, with their big kind eyes, all giving as much milk as they possibly could. And the work horses, the dear old work horses that would go away from the safe, warm stables. And the dogs, our own little doggies that were so glad to see us. And the grass and the trees and the fields, and Peter and Jerry and Felix—and all the men, so good and faithful, who had to be taken care of when they grew old. They were all so proud of what they were doing, even the man who was putting in tile, Jim, do you remember?"

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“Yes,” said Gregory.

“And then we came back to the house and in here and—there was the chair, all worn, and—” the ridiculous handkerchief was out again, “—and then I wanted to die before it all happened. . . . And just then—just then—You tell him, Jim!”

“Well,” said Gregory, “just then old Mr. Parmalee came in, very much embarrassed, and asked if we were in trouble. And the Chief said yes, we were. And old Mr. Parmalee asked if he couldn’t help. And I said no, and thanked him. Then he said—”

“And the way he said it, Jim! ‘Sometimes people can help—other people.’ That’s what he said. Wasn’t it, Jim?”

Gregory nodded. “Well, of course I said he couldn’t help in this case, and he said, ‘I heard you mention Midland Iron yesterday. Has that corporation any-

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thing to do with it?' I was surprised he even knew the name, but I said yes, and he said, 'If that's the case I think you'd better tell me about it.' He sat down then and folded his arms as though ready to listen, and for some reason, I don't know why, I sat down, too, and told him the whole business.

"When I got through he said, 'Yes, I see.' Then he got up and walked over and looked down at Dumb-Bell and said, 'He'd have to leave his chair as things are, wouldn't he?' Then he looked at the Chief, 'We can't have that, can we?' he said, and the Chief began to weep again.

"The old man said, 'There, there,' and picked up the phone and asked for long distance, and then for A. L. Warrington at Pittsburgh—he's president of Midland. I thought the old man had lost his

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mind. I sat there looking at him, wondering what the deuce Warrington would say when he found what he had on the wire.

“Nobody said anything while we waited for the connection. I patted the Chief while she sniffled, and the old man patted Dumb-Bell while he snored. It was quite a tableau. At last the bell rang.

“‘Hello!’ said the old man. ‘Is that you, Alfred? This is Mr. Parmalee.’ Think that over for a moment! The president of Midland Iron was Alfred and that old scarecrow was Mr. Parmalee! ‘Alfred,’ he said, ‘do you know anything about a contract with the Gregory Furnace Company for machining three-inch shells?’

“Evidently Warrington said he did. If he didn’t he had a poor memory; I’d spent sixteen hours with him over it. ‘Well,’

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said the old man, 'have a new contract made out at three-ninety per shell, and mail it to Gregory tomorrow. Do you understand, Alfred? . . . All right.' Then he rang off.

"The Chief and I were sitting there gaping. I was wondering if I were crazy, too.

"The old man coughed nervously—we were both staring at him—then he said, 'You see, it just happens that I have an interest in—er—that is, I own a majority of stock in—er—the Midland Iron Company.' Then he sneaked out of the room. He was frightfully embarrassed."

Gregory tossed what was left of his cigar into the fire. We watched the small flame it made until it flickered into a wisp of smoke.

The sound of snoring in the bay window ceased. Dumb-Bell sat up in his

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

chair, yawned tremendously, regarded us all for a moment—and grinned.

“Oh, yes,” said Gregory, “it’s very funny—*now*.”

ORDERED ON



VI

ORDERED ON

THE wood fire leaped and crackled, and shot small embers out upon the bricks. The embers changed from white to red, from red to gray, from gray to sullen black. Their lives were short. One moment glowing, brilliant—dead smudges on the hearth the next. Dumb-Bell watched them.

It was the first time Dumb-Bell had noticed the embers. His chair had always stood in the bay window across the big room. That day they had moved it nearer the fire. He wondered why.

They had moved the leather-covered stool, too. He blinked down at it. The leather-covered stool had stood, for the

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past six months, just in front of his chair. He had disliked it at first because it was strange. He disliked strange things that interfered with his habits. It had been his habit, until the last year, to get into his chair by a single easy bound. Then he had found it better to put his forepaws in the chair seat, pull one hind leg up, and then the other.

One day he had hunted quail from a pink dawn to a red eve. They had taken out as his brace mate young Susan Whitestone, who was something of a flibbertigibbet. The perverse creature had insisted on flying to far dim thickets in her searchings, leaving nearer cover unexplored. It was that way with the young—success was always just over the hill. Dumb-Bell had humored the silly thing, had even been caught up by her infectious, sweeping flights. He had run with-

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out restraint, without dignity, with abandon.

. Not as he had run in those all-conquering days when his sobriquet was the White Ghost; but he had held the flitting Susan, even, for a time, and there was this difference between them: now and then she would flash blithely past a bit of cover, without a thought, without a sign; and then he would come plunging by, weary in heels and heart, but with a champion's nose. One instant he was in his stride, the next moveless, high-headed, tense. Within the thicket, perhaps a hundred feet away, was a breathless huddle of brown feathers and close-held wings!

And then the airy Susan would come creeping back, awed by the splendor of his pose, vaguely troubled by the thought that, flit as she might for all her days, such miracles were not for her.

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That night, when Dumb-Bell put his forepaws in the chair his hind legs, for some reason, refused to follow. He had tried to lift them up, his toes scratching on the slippery leather, until his mistress came and helped him into the chair.

Limping in from the garden next day Dumb-Bell had found the stool before his chair. He waited for someone to move it. No one did, and he decided to climb into the chair despite it. He found the stool was like a step. By using it he could walk right into his chair. He tried it several times to make sure. It worked perfectly every time. From then on he liked the stool.

And now they had moved his chair and his stool nearer the fire. It had seemed a little chilly in the bay window the last few nights. It must be a very cold fall. It was certainly nice and warm here by the

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fire. And then he could watch the embers.

He was alone with the fire and his thoughts. He could hear a faint murmur of voices coming from the dining-room. The people were about the pleasant, glistening table. It might be well to go in there and stand by his mistress. Then, just before Griggs took her plate away, her fork would come stealing down quite quietly with something delicious on the end. He would be careful not to let his teeth click on the silver tines. Not that it made any difference who heard, but they had done it that way for years.

It had begun when he was always hungry and inclined to beg, and perhaps annoy the guests, and rules had been made. Nowadays he was never very hungry and guests were never annoyed at anything he did. They were, as a matter

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of fact, quite flattered if he noticed them at all.

Dumb-Bell raised his head from his paws, stirred, and glanced at the door. It was a long way to the dining-room, and he was not in the least hungry. He had left three pieces of liver untouched on his plate in the butler's pantry. . . .

He was still watching the embers when the people came in from dinner—his master and mistress and that old man named Parmalee. Dumb-Bell gave the two thumps on the chair seat which hospitality required, and Mr. Parmalee came and scratched him back of the ears.

It was pleasant, this scratching. He closed his eyes. The voices and the snapping of the fire grew fainter and fainter. At last they drifted away altogether, and he was in a queer thicket in which quail rose with a whir at every step he took but

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gave no scent, although he tried and tried to smell them. Why he, Champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell, was flushing birds! It was horrible. He twitched and whined in his sleep.

While he slept the people talked.

"Jim," said Mr. Parmalee, "I've come here this time to tell you something. I've discovered the Happy Hunting Ground. I want to take you there."

The master of Brookfield looked at him inquiringly.

"I not only discovered it, I made it," Mr. Parmalee went on. "No, I can't say that. Come to think of it, the Good Lord did most of the work. I just put on the finishing touches. It's in Minnesota."

"Are there quail up there?" asked Gregory doubtfully. "I've understood not. Nothing to speak of, at any rate."

"No, no," said Mr. Parmalee. "Bob-

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white must have his comforts—his corn and his ragweed and his wheat. Some day, perhaps, he'll get there, but not now. The wilderness frightens him. We'll hunt a braver bird, king of them all."

"Ruffed grouse!" said the master of Brookfield quickly.

"Just so," said Mr. Parmalee, and then he explained. He owned, it seemed, a big tract of timber land in northern Minnesota. He coughed slightly as he admitted it—the things he owned embarrassed Mr. Parmalee. He had gone up there last year. He wanted to see the great pines tremble, sway, and crash down before the deep biting axes and snoring saws of the lumberjacks. He had seen this, and other things. In particular he had seen, or rather heard, the flight of innumerable ruffed grouse getting up before him in the thickets.

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It was all but impenetrable cover, much too thick for wing shooting; and yet here was a country filled with the greatest of all game birds. He thought about it for several days.

In any direction he pushed his way through second-growth pine, silver birch, alders, and a riot of bushes and vines, a thrilling roar of wings was all about him.

One night he talked with the logging superintendent who recommended and sent for one Red Harry, log boss extraordinary. He came, a big red man, as thick through the chest as one of the pines he smote, and stood in the doorway. Mr. Parmalee told him what he wanted. Could it be done?

“Sure, anything kin be done; but it’ll cost—”

“That’s my part of it,” said Mr. Par-

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malee, who had taken stock of his man and was never embarrassed when it came to large affairs.

Red Harry turned and spat unhurriedly through the doorway. "I'll get a hundred rough-necks from Brainerd. You want some of the stuff left standin', an' brush heaps made every little bit. Have I got you right?"

"Exactly. If you thin it too much the birds will leave, and they like brush heaps."

"Twenty square miles?"

"About that," said Mr. Parmalee; "and a good, tight, four-room cabin."

"All set," said Red Harry, and slouched into the night.

The master and mistress of Brookfield listened to further deeds of Red Harry and his rough-necks. The eyes of the mistress of Brookfield widened at this whole-

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sale conversion of the wilderness into a shooting preserve.

“And so,” Mr. Parmalee wound up, “the Happy Hunting Ground is ready.” He turned to his hostess. “I hoped you would come, too. It will be a little rough, but—”

“I’d love it,” said Mrs. Gregory. “And Jim will go quite mad.”

“The trouble is,” said Gregory, “I haven’t a dog that will do. My stuff is all too fast for grouse. I’ll talk to Peter tomorrow though and see what he’s got.”

But Peter tilted his hat over one eye and scratched the back of his head when asked, next morning, to produce a grouse dog. He let his eye rove down the line of runways and back to the master of Brookfield. A grouse dog must be a plodding, creeping, silent worker. A field trial kennel was not the place to look for one.

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“Old Jane Aus’in, now, might do,” said Peter at last. “She always was sly like, an’ what with age an’ whelpin’ an’ one thing an’ other she might stay around where you could get a look at her now and then.”

“All right,” said the master of Brookfield promptly, “we’ll take her along.”

“Wait a minute,” said Peter. “I ain’t told you yet. She’s ’eavy in whelp to Beau Brummell.”

“Oh!” said the master of Brookfield. “Well, why didn’t you say so at first?”

“Ow can I say it all at once?” Peter wanted to know. “You come ’ere askin’ me this an’ askin’ me that, an’ I’m just tellin’ you.” He spent a moment in thought. “Ole Bang ’e’s gone,” he said meditatively. “Now the Beau ’imself might do. ’E’s slowed down to nothin’ an’ ’e’s got a grand nose—”

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“Just the thing,” said the master of Brookfield. “We’ll give him a trial at any rate. What else have you got?”

“Old your ’orses a bit,” said Peter. “Is rheumatism ’as been so bad ’ere lately ’e can’t ’ardly get out of ’is kennel.”

The master of Brookfield got out his cigarette case and seated himself on the kennel house doorstep. There followed a gloomy silence. It was broken by Peter at last.

“Lord!” he exploded suddenly, “I never thought.” He folded his arms and directed a reproachful eye at the master of Brookfield. “You come ’ere askin’ me for a grouse dog,” he said. “Why didn’t you look around afore you come?” He nodded toward the house. “What about *’im?*” he inquired. “With all the brains an’ all the nose in the world, an’ ’is speed gone from ’im. Take ’im with you up

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there, an' if 'e flushes a single bird, once 'e knows what they're like, you can 'ave my wages for a year."

"I believe you're right," said the master of Brookfield, brightening. "It's queer I didn't think of it. And yet, when you consider everything—" He broke off, overwhelmed by visions of the past in which a white speck swept distant horizons while horsemen cursed him lovingly and galloped after.

"It is funny now, ain't it?" said Peter. "'Untin' grouse with 'im. Lord save us!"

The pines had done it. At first Dumb-Bell had suspected the loons which laughed wildly from somewhere out on the black mystery of the lake. But it wasn't the loons; they, at least, were alive. It was the pines, the brooding pines—and the silence. Always before, wherever he

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had gone, there had been noises, reassuring noises. Early in the morning, like this, birds should chirp and roosters crow; dogs give tongue and cattle rumble a greeting to the dawn. Horses might nicker and stamp. Sheep quaver to one another. And, best of all, there would be human voices, or a laugh, or a song, or a whistle. And the trees, where these things happened, rustled comfortably and seemed to take an interest.

All this was far away, and Dumb-Bell had the shivers, and the pines had done it. He had heard them all night. When the wind blew, the pines made a noise. He did not like that noise. The silence in which, no matter how hard he listened, nothing could be heard was almost better.

Although the kitchen fire was banked and he lay on a shooting coat close to the

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stove he had begun to shiver as the noise went on. He had hoped that when it stopped he would stop shivering, but the wind had died out and the noise had stopped, and still he shivered. He could see the pines now through the cabin window, black and still against the sky, plainer every minute as the light grew. So many of them! There were a few pines at Brookfield. There had been a lot of them on one side of the course when he won the Continental. He had not shivered at them then. He had just run, with hundreds of men watching, and smashed into his bevy finds and gone on, while the men yelled.

But the pines down there were smaller and not so black and proud, and he had been wild with excitement, for of course he was winning, he always won, and he knew the men would crowd about him

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later and talk about him in hushed voices while he pretended not to hear what they said.

There had been so many people that day. Here there were so few. His master and mistress and Mr. Parmalee and the cook man. That was all. And millions of pines. Dumb-Bell shivered and watched them through the window, his head between his paws.

They called this place the Happy Hunting Ground; but Dumb-Bell was not happy as he lay there, although he had hunted every day since they came.

Of course it was not in the least like quail hunting—nothing was like that! You went as fast as you could when you hunted quail, and saw the country for miles and miles. It was glorious!

But they wouldn't let him do that any more, and these new birds were interest-

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ing. You must go very quietly, and at the first faint scent slow to a walk and then to a creep and then to a crawl, until something told you you could go no farther.

Dumb-Bell had flushed two grouse that first day before he had understood how they would burst out of the cover and roar off when he was fifty feet away. His master had said "Careful" to him reproachfully, and Dumb-Bell had grinned in an agony of remorse. After that no more birds were flushed. He just crept about and found them in every direction, while his master and Mr. Parmalee shot, and his mistress called him silly names and even hugged him, now and then, when he came back with the dead bird unruffled in his mouth.

He had disapproved of this hugging business. He was hunting, and even

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though he went slowly and was stiff for some reason, when night came he was still Champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell at his work and not a "precious lamb."

This was the dawn of their last day in the Happy Hunting Ground. Some of the things were packed already. The wagons would come tomorrow; and Dumb-Bell was glad.

The wagons would take them for miles through the pines. But the train would come along, and after a while the pines would not stand in towering ranks on both sides of the track, and he would stop shivering.

He lay and watched the pines until the cook man came and gave the stove its breakfast. Dumb-Bell wondered why it always ate wood instead of the good-smelling things that were put on top of it.

Presently his mistress called good

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morning to Mr. Parmalee and came into the kitchen, and the last day in the Happy Hunting Ground had begun.

His mistress stayed at the cabin that day to finish packing, and he and his master and Mr. Parmalee started out. As they were leaving, his mistress gave him a hug and felt him shiver, and thought he was cold.

But his master said, "He'll warm up when he gets to moving. Won't you, old snoozer?"

Dumb-Bell grinned, and galloped stiffly to a small thicket. He skirted it with care to show that he was ready. . . . It was much better to hunt and forget the pines.

He did forget them all morning long. Early in the day his master made a wonderful double, both of them cross shots, and soon after that Dumb-Bell pointed a

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live bird a long way off, with a dead bird in his mouth, and Mr. Parmalee—well, it wasn't exactly hugging, but it was near it.

They ate lunch in a small clearing where the low gray sky seemed to rest on the tops of the pine trees. Dumb-Bell ate his two sandwiches slowly, and stared at it.

There was something about the sky he did not like. As he watched it the shivers came back, and he was glad when lunch was over and he could go to work again.

Late in the afternoon, although he was working as hard as he could, he began to shiver worse than ever, and suddenly he knew. . . .

It was not the pines that had made him shiver. It was something else. It was something that was coming. It would be here soon now. It had been coming all

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night. The pines had been telling him. Why, perhaps they were not so proud, so aloof, as they had seemed! Perhaps they really cared like the friendly trees at Brookfield.

This thing that was coming was in the sky. In the gray sky that was growing dark now—and the pines were beginning to talk about it again.

Dumb-Bell stopped hunting, and stared into the north. As he stared his eyes changed, his soft, kindly, setter eyes. They filled with green lights. Those from which he sprang, centuries and centuries before, had fled and died before this thing, coming out of the north, and the sleeping wolf within him was awake and was afraid.

“Getting pretty dark, isn’t it?” said the master of Brookfield. “Let’s hunt this piece out and break for camp. We’re

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going to have a storm I think. Dumb-Bell! Go on, old man!"

At the words Dumb-Bell turned. Rebellion was in his heart. He would not go on. He would put his tail between his legs and run. He would run to where the stove was that ate wood.

This tall man who said "Go on," who was he? Dumb-Bell looked at him wildly, and their eyes met . . . Dumb-Bell grinned, whined, and started—not for the stove and safety; he went carefully toward a distant brush heap. There might be a grouse in there, and the tall man, his man, in the old tan shooting coat which he had slept on so many times, had ordered him to find it.

Yes, there was a grouse in the brush heap. Dumb-Bell slowed to a creep and then to a crawl, until something told him he could go no farther. Then he stopped,

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his eyes no longer green and shifting. They were warm, faithful, eager—the eyes of Champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell on point.

And then, with one last wailing shriek from the pines, the thing that had been coming, that had made him shiver so, was there. Dumb-Bell did not move. His fear, the fear of slinking ancestors, was gone. What if there was a roar that deafened him! What if it was as dark as night! What if he could scarcely breathe for the smothering ice particles that stung his muzzle and filled his eyes and his nostrils! The years had thinned his blood and stiffened his limbs, but his nose, which was his soul, they could not touch. It was the nose of a champion still, and wind and dark and snow could not prevail against it—there was a grouse in the brush heap.

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A blizzard was a terrible thing. The pines had moaned all night about it. It was here now, roaring and biting, all but lifting him off his feet. Still—there was a grouse in the brush heap. You couldn't change that.

The wind was the worst. It was so hard to hold himself erect, and he must do that, whatever happened. He was on point, and champions pointed with a high head and level tail.

If he moved, the grouse would flush, and he never flushed birds. Why, long ago, when he was a tiny puppy and they called him the runt and were ashamed of him, he never flushed birds. He had pointed sparrows when they kept him alone day after day in the runway. Of course no one knew he was pointing and no one came to flush the sparrows. They would hop about in the runway for a long

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time—so long that his legs would begin to tremble and his back would ache, and someone should have come—but no one ever did.

It was like that now, only worse. The wind was so cold. The winds were all much colder, lately. This one seemed to cut right into his chest as he held his head high against it. His hind legs were going back on him, too. They were beginning to let him down a little. He must straighten up somehow.

Why didn't they come? He was so cold, so very cold. If he could change his position it would help his legs. They felt numb and queer. He felt queer all over. But there was a grouse in the brush heap. They would come and flush it soon, now.

They had better hurry. He could not hold his head up much longer. It was not

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the wind, the wind was growing warmer, almost like summer, but he was sleepy. That was queer. He had never felt sleepy on point before. But then he had worked hard today and he had not slept well last night because of the shivers. He would sleep better tonight, much better. Why, he could go to sleep this minute. The wind wouldn't hurt him. The wind was his friend. It had blown the snow all over him, and it was nice warm snow. It packed itself under his chest. He could even rest a little weight on it and help his legs.

But they were gone away, his legs. Back to Brookfield, perhaps. He must go, too, back to Brookfield. It was bright and cheerful there. And always there were sounds that he knew, nice sounds—not like the pines and the loons.

He would come to the big gates first

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and then he would leave the drive and cut across the lawn toward the lights of the house shining through the trees. He would scratch on the front door and someone would let him in, and Peter would be glad to see him, and so would his chair, his own chair near the fire. And then—
But there was a grouse in the brush heap!
He had almost forgotten . . . No, he couldn't leave just now. He must stay a little longer, alone in the dark in the nice warm snow.

The snow was getting higher about him all the time. Perhaps it would cover him up after a while. He was not very big. They had called him the runt long ago . . . He had never flushed birds, though, even then. And now, although his master called him old snoozer, he was Champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell, with his picture in the papers, and there was a grouse in

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the brush heap! A grouse—in—the—
brush—heap . . .

The mistress of Brookfield raised her gun. "All ready, Tom," she said.

The cook put his shoulder to the door and let it swing open a scant foot. There was a whistling shriek, the room was filled with a vortex of snow, both lamps went out, and the cook threw his weight against the door until the latch clicked in its socket. It was done in five seconds, practice had made him perfect; but a tongue of flame had leaped out of the door as the twelve-gauge spoke in an abrupt yelp that just managed to rise above the voice of the storm.

The cook lit the lamps again. Mrs. Gregory dropped the gun butt to the floor and felt the muscles of her right arm. She was shooting three and a quarter

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drams of nitro. Her own little twenty-gauge could not have been heard to the edge of the clearing. Her arm and shoulder were bruised to a throbbing ache.

She stood at the door listening for a time, then she broke the gun and slipped a shell in the right barrel. "All ready, Tom?"

"Yes, ma'am."

This time the heavy charge made her stagger and forced an "Oh!" of pain through her clenched teeth.

The cook reached for the gun. "You can't do that no more," he said. "It'll tear the arm off of you."

"I must," she said. "I can't hold the door. If the lamp blows over again it might explode."

"I'll hold her or bust a lung," said the cook, "an' shoot with one hand."

Mrs. Gregory drew the gun away and

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gave the cook a white smile. "You're a good man," she said with a nod. "When this is over you must come back with us to— What was that?"

The cook listened intently. He heard what he had heard for the past hour, the shriek of the wind and the rattle of ice particles against the window.

But the mistress of Brookfield was a woman, and women listen with more than ears.

"Open the door!" she cried. "Quick, quick!"

The cook obeyed. For an instant the lamplight cut a yellow square a few yards into the blackness before the door. It was filled with a myriad particles of hissing snow. These gave place to a staggering figure that carried another figure in its arms. Then the lamps blew out again.

When they were lighted a man of ice

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

stood in the room. He crackled and tinkled when he moved, but he had the voice of the master of Brookfield.

“Glad you fired,” he croaked. “I’d been hoping you would.” He looked down at the quiet figure he carried. “Come and get him, Tom. I can’t unbend my arms.”

The mistress of Brookfield did not explain that she had been firing for an hour or more. She flew to the medicine case, then to the kitchen, then back with a steaming kettle. It was not until Mr. Parmalee stirred beneath the blankets a few moments later, then opened his eyes and muttered her name, that she flew to the master of Brookfield and asked a question.

“Where,” she said, “is Dumb-Bell?”

The master of Brookfield sat in an unheated room with his hands in a dishpan

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filled with snow. His face, despite him, was twisted with pain. But the pain in his eyes as she met them was not physical. It was deeper and more lasting than the small agony of frozen fingers.

"I ordered him on," he said, "just before it hit us. I looked as long as I dared, and fired and whistled. I thought he'd come back here."

"Oh!" she said, with a sudden intaking of the breath. She returned to the main room and picked up the twelve-gauge. She picked the cook up bodily with her eyes and set him at the door, daring him with the same look to mention her arm and shoulder.

"All ready, Tom," she said. "He'll come to the gun if he hears it."

She fired until her blue-black arm refused to lift the twelve-gauge any longer. Then she took a camp stool close to the

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

door and sat there, waiting—listening for a whine or a scratch that never came.

When a grayness appeared at the windows at last, the outside world was still in a shrieking, whirling frenzy. But an hour later the storm swept away to the south as abruptly as it had come, and a red sun was climbing a salmon sky above the snow-bowed pines.

Beneath the pines the drifted snow was blue, but in the clearings it was a dazzling, shimmering pink which crept up the pines themselves, changing them to lavender plumes filled with violet shadows.

Not a breath of wind remained. The pines were only painted on a painted sky. The pink snow, too, was painted. The whole wilderness had become unreal. It was too scenic, too theatrical to be true,

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and Mrs. Gregory gasped as she stepped into it.

"Jim," she said, "this isn't the world, is it? There never were such colors in the world before."

The master of Brookfield squinted at the blushing snow, the unbelievable sky, and the still miracle of the pines with their impossible shadows.

"Why, no," he said, at last. "It isn't the world. It's—the Happy Hunting Ground, don't you remember?"

At this she looked at him.

"Ah, little Chief!" he said. And one of his bandaged hands fumbled for one of hers, and found it, and so they set out with Tom ahead breaking trail and Mr. Parmalee waving feebly from the doorway.

They floundered on, peering into thickets, eying small mounds of snow fearfully

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

but passing them without examination. They would not admit, just yet, that one of those innocent mounds could have a dreadful secret. Now and then Tom would fire into the air, and they would stop and listen to the echoes of the shot crashing among the pines. They called, of course, and the master of Brookfield whistled, but the clearings were filled with snow and sunlight and the thickets with snow and shadows, and that was all.

At last they found something. It was a gun standing against a tree.

"It's mine," said Gregory. "Now I know where I am."

He broke open the gun, took out the shells, and blew the snow from the barrels. He slipped the shells into the breech automatically, closed the gun, and looked about him.

"We were standing in the middle of

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that clearing," he said, pointing, "and I ordered him on. He went toward the farther end—that's north, isn't it, Tom?—and then it hit us, and I never saw him after that. Chief, you stand here to give us our bearings and we'll make a circle around you. You go one way, Tom, and I'll go the other. We'll make the first circle to take in the edge of the clearing and widen for the next when we meet."

The mistress of Brookfield stood and watched them go. Somehow it was a comfort to be here where the mannie had been. His blessed paws must have pattered by close to where she was standing. She knew exactly how he looked when he went by. He would be so earnest, so intent. He seemed to take on a remoteness when at work that shut her away almost completely from him. It was almost a sacrilege to hug him when he had to come in

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

with a dead bird and could not avoid her. But who could help it when he looked like that, so proud and important!

If she had only been here yesterday. If she only had! If it was only now, this minute, that he was passing and she could call his name and see by the flicker of his eye that he heard!

She tried it. "Dumb-Bell!" she said softly. "Mannie! Oh, Mannie!" . . . She could not see whether he passed or not. She could see nothing until she found a handkerchief in her sweater pocket.

Then, when she could see again, her heart stopped beating, for Tom was waving to her and calling, and she ran toward him floundering, stumbling, falling in the snow.

When she had crossed the clearing and saw what Tom was looking at she gave a cry of thankfulness and joy. . . . There

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was the mannie—alive! He was standing deep in the snow. He was pointing with a high head and a level tail as he always did.

And then she saw a look of amazement in Tom's face. She came closer, and the light left her eyes as she sank down on a log and covered them with her hands. . . . She did not move when the master of Brookfield came and stood beside her.

Dumb-Bell was in a small glade, just beyond the shadow of a great black pine. He seemed to be carved in silver, for the sunlight flashed and twinkled on the sheath of ice which covered him from the tip of his outstretched nose to the tip of his outstretched tail. And if the ice had been enduring silver, the perfection, the certainty of his pose, could have served as a model for all the champions yet to come.

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

They watched him for awed moments in a vast silence. And then the silence was broken. From a white mound at which he pointed there came a sound, a scratching flutter.

The white mound, once a refuge, was now an icy prison. Its occupant was pecking and fluttering to be free. There was a grouse in the brush heap!

“Good God!” exclaimed Gregory, and then, “Let him out, Tom; kick the snow away!”

But the mistress of Brookfield put her hand on his arm. “No, no!” she said. “No, no! He’s held it for you all this dreadful night—in this horrible land where he doesn’t belong . . . my mannie, my own little mannie!”

“I see,” said Gregory. “Good girl!” He waded to the white mound, kicked the snow away and swung his foot against

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the pile of brush, the ice tinkling in the dead branches.

The brush heap shivered. There was a drumming of wings, a shower of snow, and a big cock grouse shot for the blue above the pines. There was a staccato crash, a pungent breath of nitro powder, and still he went, like a bronze rocket, straight for that bit of sky.

The master of Brookfield winked the dimness from his eyes and set his jaw. The grouse topped the pines in a flashing curve. He was gone! No, not quite. He had spread his wings for his sail over the tree tops when he crumpled suddenly in the air.

The master of Brookfield broke open his smoking gun and looked at the small white statue, banked in snow.

“Dead bird!” he said. “Dead bird, old snoozer!”

Dumb-Bell of Brookfield

But Champion Brookfield Dumb-Bell gave no sign that he heard. He could no longer stoop to a ruffed grouse lying in the snow. His spirit was sweeping like the wind over Elysian Fields and flashing into point after point on celestial quail.

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