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Me and Andy

ME AND ANDY

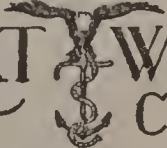
A Boy and Dog Story

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Me and Andy

CHAPTER ONE

I'M GOING to tell you, as well as I can, about the trip that my dog, Andy, and I took right after Dad died. Of course, I can't tell all of it, or I'd never get it into a book short enough for anyone to bother with reading; so I'll just tell the principal things. But first, I'll tell about Mother and Dad and Andy.

It won't take me so very long to tell you all I know about Mother, I having been only a few weeks old when she died. But I have a photograph of her, and I've heard Dad talk about her a little, when he hadn't been drinking, and so wasn't ashamed of himself. That was Dad's only bad fault. He did drink sometimes.

Mother's picture shows her sitting in a straight-back chair, and holding some flowers and a long, white roll of paper in her lap. The paper was her wedding diploma, I guess. Her face was the sweetest one that ever was, and her hair was like a crown above it, for it was braided and then wrapped about her head. I suppose that bobbed hair is all right, but I'm sort of glad, when I look at Mother's

picture, that it hadn't come into style in her day. She was prettier the way she was. Her dress was very pretty, too. It was all white, and came clear down to the floor, with just the tips of her little, white shoes sticking out from under it. The sleeves were almost as big as a whole dress is now days, but somehow they seemed to belong in the picture, and not to be funny at all.

Dad thought a lot of that picture. Usually he kept it on the shelf by the clock, but when he'd been drunk he would hide it a few days. I guess he was ashamed to face Mother's picture, when he'd been acting in a way that he knew would have hurt her, if she had been alive. When he had drink in him, Dad was sort of rough, like most of the men at the freight-house where he worked, but when he was sober he had good manners, and was polite, even to me. When he got very drunk, he was still different, and would walk up and down our room reciting poetry. Lots of it was in Latin, or Greek, or some other language that I couldn't understand, but it sounded fine, and the way that words rolled was just beautiful.

I liked that kind of poetry, but I liked it better when Dad would pretend that he was a fellow named Hamlet, or another one called Macbeth. Both of these fellows were kings, or dukes, or some such

folks, and they had a wonderful time of it, making long-winded speeches, killing folks, and raising Old Harry generally. You could just see them for yourself, when Dad got to going it good.

Dad had an old fiddle, too, and sometimes he'd play it for hours at a stretch. Most of his tunes were sort of sad-like and lonesome, but not all of them. Once in a while, that old fiddle would fairly laugh and talk, as though it was so happy it just couldn't stand it. Both kinds of music were pretty, but I liked the happy kind the best. Sometimes the family that lived in the front half of the attic would pound on the wall for Dad to stop, but he always pretended it was only applause and kept right on.

By and by, Dad would lay down his fiddle and would drop off to sleep in his chair. Then I'd roll him up on our bed, take his shoes off and cover him up. He'd be good to sleep for at least sixteen hours; so I'd get what was left of his money, and then Andy and I'd go down to the Greek's at Forty-seventh Street for a regular meal. Dad had told me to do that, for he was awfully good to me when he was sober, and was terribly ashamed of having been drunk. While I was looking for the money, Andy would sit watching me, with his head cocked on one side; he was terribly disappointed if I didn't find any money. Usually I did, though. Once I

found five dollars, and Andy and I ate high for three days.

I didn't go to school as much as I ought to have done in those days, and I didn't like it much, when I did go, because most of the fellows were sort of hostile. Besides, I couldn't take Andy. The teachers in that school weren't any too friendly, either. Once, one of them slapped me, because she thought that I was lying to her when I said that I wasn't chewing gum. I wasn't lying, because it wasn't gum, but an old rubber band. I didn't care much for it, but I'd had no breakfast that morning, and it's easier to get along empty when you chew on something. But that was none of her business; so when she insisted on knowing why I was working my jaws, if I wasn't chewing gum, I just set my teeth and said nothing. So I was expelled for being stubborn, and I was glad of it, because I didn't like that school, anyhow. I got to be almost as good at dodging the truant officer as Andy was at keeping out of the way of dog-catchers.

Andy's a mighty good dog, and always was. He started out in life to be an Airedale, but he forgot to stop growing at the right time, and his hair got too long around his neck, which discouraged him, I guess. But he weighs eighty-eight pounds, and he can lick lots of fancy dogs that think they're bet-

ter than he is, when they're not. Dogs are a lot like folks that way.

Of course, Andy's size is one thing that makes people stop to look at him, but he's different from most dogs in other ways, too. He's a gentleman, and no one needs a second look to tell that. You can see from the very way he walks that he fears no man or dog in the world, but his eyes are as gentle as a puppy's. Those great teeth can crush a beef knuckle; yet a baby can walk up to him and pull his ears while he's eating, and he'll not even growl at it. As a matter of fact, I've never seen Andy angry, except when he's had to defend either himself or me. He's terrible then.

Andy's honest, too; he never did steal, except, maybe, when he was hungry and couldn't find any garbage pails open, or else in winter when they were all frozen up. He's smart, too, and could do lots of tricks when he was younger. He could now, if he wanted to, but since he hasn't had to hustle for his meals he's been getting a bit fat and lazy. That's another way that dogs are like folks.

CHAPTER TWO

DAD quit drinking all of a sudden, and began to be interested in me and in Andy. I never knew how he came to do it, for he never said a word about it; he just seemed to brace up and to be twice the man that he had been. He quit talking rough, too, and shaved every day, instead of only on Sundays, and he pressed his clothes and shined his shoes. He was a fine looking man, but I'd never realized how much so before, because his face had been kind of puffy. Now, though, it was smooth and thin, tanned dark, but with a kind of paleness that seemed to shine through from underneath. He was a very tall man, broad but thin and he had dark eyes and a perfect tangle of black hair. Black, that is, except next to his ears; it was gray there. When he walked, he carried himself very straight, and looked straight ahead of him. I was mighty proud of Dad. I can tell you, now that he'd slicked up. I'd always tried to be, but I didn't have to try now. It was easy.

He quit the job at the freight-house, too, and got him another one. The new job was selling something or other to stores and to offices, and I don't think he made any more money than he had before,

but he spent it in a different way, which was just as good as more money. For example; he got new suits of clothes for each of us, and bought a license for Andy, so that I shouldn't have to hide him when the dog-catchers came around. Take it all in all, we had things pretty fine those days, with meat and canned fruit in the house all the time and milk for me to drink. I had a clean blouse, too, for every day in the week except Saturday. But I had to go to school regular.

I didn't mind that so very much now, though, for things at school seemed to go better for me. My new teacher was nice to me, and the boys weren't hostile any more. Funny, isn't it, what a difference a few new clothes can make in the way most people treat you? I was rather behind in my school work, on account of having gone so little; so I used to bring all my books home and study at night by our table. It was pretty slow business at first, but Dad helped me whenever I got really stuck, which made things much pleasanter for me. I'd never known that Dad knew so much. Why, my teacher couldn't hold a candle to him.

When I wasn't needing his help, Dad would sit there by the table with his pipe and a book, sometimes reading and smoking, but more often doing neither; just sitting, kind of watching me and

dreaming-like. Andy would lie beside his chair then, looking up at Dad, and once in a while thumping his stubby tail on the floor to show that he approved of things around there. He was wise, was Andy, and knew that Dad was different and more friendly. But Andy had to quit bringing bones into the house and I had to quit smoking. I quit cussing too, seeing that Dad had, though I'd slip once in a while, especially at first. But I really did try to learn to talk more like Dad did and less like I had been doing.

Dad talked of moving to a better neighborhood as soon as he could get a bit of money saved up, and he told me that I might join the Boy Scouts and go camping with them that summer, if I wished. And he brought home a big piece of linoleum for the floor of our room, so that we might keep it cleaner. He got new bed-clothes, too. I tell you, life was pretty slick around our place those days; I had everything any of the fellows had, except a mother.

I might have known that it was too good to last. Dad came home one night in April, feeling kind of bad and coughing a little. I was out in the alley with Andy at the time, which was a way we'd had of late, when we knew he'd be coming soon; so we ran to meet him, and right away I saw that some-

thing was wrong with him. At first, just for a second, I thought that maybe he'd gone to drinking again, but I'd no sooner thought that than I became ashamed of myself, for I saw that it wasn't true, but that he was sick.

There was one long flight of stairs that ran straight out into the back yard from our room in the attic, and they were pretty steep. There were thirty-four steps in that flight of stairs, and it must have taken Dad nearly five minutes to climb them that evening, even with me helping him. But we finally made it, and Dad let himself down into his chair, breathing hard and holding his hand as close as he could to the place under his shoulder blade, which was where he hurt worst.

"I didn't get into the store, Jack," said he, "so you'll have to get something for supper." Then he gave me a dollar, and Andy and I went out and fetched home a can of beans, some bread, and a little bottle of cream. There was some butter and some coffee on hand, and so I got things together and helped Dad to the table, where he drank a little coffee, but ate nothing. Then he lighted his pipe, but laid it down at once and asked me to help him into bed.

I noticed while I was helping him undress that Dad was terribly hot to the touch. He acted in a

peculiar way, too, and asked me to kiss him good-night, a thing I never remember his having done before. I thought it was kind of queer, but I did it, and he said I was a good boy. I knew better, of course, but I wouldn't contradict him when he was so sick. Then he said, "How would you like to go to Missouri and live with your grandfather? You have one in a little town down there, you know." I hadn't known it before, and any other time I'd have been interested.

But just then, I couldn't think of anything except the fact that Dad was so sick. So I never even asked the name of the town where my grandfather lived, but said, "No Sir; I'd rather stay right here, and live with you," which seemed to please him, for he said, "Thank you, Jack," and patted my hand. Then he turned his face to the wall and seemed to go to sleep.

I went back to my chair and picked up the evening paper, and tried to read for a while, but it was no go. The room was too lonesome; so I gave it up and crawled into bed with Dad.

Along about three in the morning I waked up. Dad was tossing around too much for me to stay asleep any longer, and he was talking away to himself in a queer, high voice. He kept saying, "Yes, yes, yes," over and over again almost a hundred

times in a row. Then he'd sing or whistle a little, but break off almost in the middle of a note to say, "I'm so happy." He did that whole performance half a dozen times, without changing it one little bit. Then, just as I was beginning to think he'd never stop, he sat straight up in bed, pointed his finger across the room and said, "Very well, Gentlemen; you have my resignation, and I wish you every success. I'll teach only what I believe. I'd rather be a day laborer than do otherwise. Good day, Gentlemen." Then he got up from the bed and stood in the middle of the floor, sort of swaying there in the moon-light as though he were about to fall.

You can just bet your bottom dollar that I was more than scared then. I was out of bed quicker than you could say, "Jack Robinson," and had lit the light. Dad's eyes were all glazy, as though he was more than half asleep, but they were shiny too. At first he didn't know what I was talking about, when I tried to get him to go back to bed. But, by and by, he understood me and minded me, as though he were a little child. He wasn't able to lift his feet into bed, though; I had to do that.

When I'd got him sitting in the bed again, I noticed that his night-shirt was open over his chest and that on each side there was a spot that was

flushed as red with fever as his face was. He was terribly hot all over; so I thought that maybe a big drink of water might help, and got it for him. He drank it almost at one gulp, and just let the glass fall to the bed, instead of handing it back to me.



I thought maybe a drink of water might help

Then he reached up and took my face between his two hands and looked at me for a long time, as though he were puzzled. Finally, he said in a surprised way, "Why, it's Jack, isn't it? You're a good boy, Jack. I'll be all right in the morning."

I told Andy to stay there with Dad, and then I

jumped into my clothes a lot faster than I'd ever done before, slid down our stair rail, and cut through the alley for the doctor. He was such an awfully long time getting dressed that I went on home and waited there for him. When, at last, he came, he went all over Dad's chest with a funny-looking sort of a telephone thing that had little rubber pipes running up to his ears. Then he shook his head in a very serious way, and said, "Double pneumonia." That's a fairly hard word but, at that, I guess I'll never forget how to spell it.

For about half an hour, the doctor just sat there beside Dad, watching his face, and once in a while reaching over to feel his pulse. Every time he felt the pulse, the doctor would clear his throat a bit, and then shake his head again. Usually he'd mutter, "Not so good, not so good." Finally, he seemed to have made up his mind about things, for he wrote a prescription and sent me out to get it filled. He said he'd wait there till I got back. I hurried as fast as I could, but the night man at the drug-store was even harder to rouse than the doctor had been, and was a bit cross, too, when he saw that he'd been waked to wait on a boy. The medicine was eighty-five cents, but there was quite a lot of it.

As soon as I got back to our room with the medicine, the doctor gave a dose of it to Dad and told

me to give him another in three hours, if he was awake. "I'll come back in a few hours," said the doctor, and he did.

Dad was sick just three days, and then he died. Along towards the last, he kept thinking that Mother was sitting there beside him, but it was only the nurse that the doctor had brought in. Thinking that made Dad very happy, but it was sort of hard on me. Sometimes, I couldn't quite stand it, and then I'd go out in the alley and talk to Andy for a while. He was an awfully fine man, Dad was, and there hadn't anybody better try to tell me different.

There was some insurance in the freight-handlers' union that hadn't run out yet; so they came and gave Dad a fine funeral with flowers and a preacher and three automobiles. A lot of the men that Dad had worked with came, and so did some from the office he worked at after he left the freight-house. The man who ran the second-hand book store was there, too. After the funeral was over, I heard the preacher telling the boss of the Union that he'd attend to taking me into court, and having me put into a Home. I was scared stiff, when I heard that.

CHAPTER THREE

THE reason I was so scared at the idea of being taken to court was that I'd already been there once, and knew better than to want to go again. It was all on account of old Behnke, the meat-market man.

You see, I'd gone into Behnke's shop one time and asked him to let me have some sausage, or a little cold ham, or something, and I'd told him that I'd pay him, as soon as I could find Dad and get the money. That was before Dad had straightened up, you know. Well, I didn't think I was asking for such a very big favor, because Behnke would get his money all right, and would sell some meat that otherwise he wouldn't, but he didn't look at it that way at all. He flared right up and yelled at me, "You get out of here, you little devil! You're going to be a dead-beat, just like your old man. He owes me three dollars now that I'm never going to get."

My, but that made me mad! It wasn't true, either, because Dad never beat anybody in his life, even though he had to be a bit slow about paying, sometimes. It wasn't the three dollars that made Behnke hate us at all. It was because Dad had

laughed at Behnke one time when there was a crowd standing around.

Somehow or other, Behnke had got the notion into his head that he wanted to be a congressman. In fact, he was so sure he could be one, that he went and got him a wide, black hat and a long-tailed coat to wear on the street; so that when folks saw him they would know how he'd look down in Washington. Evenings, after his shop was closed, Behnke would put on his new outfit and walk up and down our street, stopping folks now and then to talk to them, and tell them what a fine congressman he thought he would make. Naturally, he finally ran into Dad. As soon as Dad caught sight of Behnke in his new outfit, he was amused and asked where the tent was, pretending he thought Behnke was an actor in an Uncle Tom's Cabin show. But Behnke explained to him that he wanted to go to Congress. "May I not rely upon your vote, Mr. Bradford?" he asked Dad. I'd never heard Behnke use words like that before, and they didn't sound to me as though they really belonged to him. But Dad became very solemn, and took his hat off and stood with it under his arm.

"This is a most important matter, Sir," said he in a very loud voice, which brought a small crowd around them. "Before I can vouchsafe you my bal-

lot, Sir," Dad went on, "I must know how you stand upon the burning issues of the hour."

"I'm for a high tariff, a full dinner pail, and all the rights of the workingman," answered Behnke, trying to look as solemn as Dad did.

"Excellent, Sir, excellent," Dad boomed, "but there is another measure that is very close to my heart, and before I promise you my vote I must have your solemn pledge on that measure. You must promise me to work unceasingly for the repeal of Mendel's Law. That law, Sir, has done more harm than any other."

"Then I'll wipe it out," said Behnke. "What does the law say?"

"That a jackass must have ears like his father's," answered Dad, and the crowd whooped. Nobody ever saw Behnke's long-tailed coat again after that night, but Behnke never forgave Dad, and that's why he called him a dead-beat to me.

I was so mad at Behnke's calling my father a dead-beat that I wanted to do something mean to him. That's a wrong way to feel, and I know it now, but just then I was too angry to think about that. So, when I got out in the street, I stood and looked around, trying to think of something to do to Behnke. It didn't take me long to decide, either, for the things I needed were right at hand. They

always are, when you're about to do something you shouldn't.

Right in front of his meat-market, Behnke had a barrel standing. The barrel was half filled with rabbits, and there were other rabbits hanging on the outside of it. They were frozen stiff, for it was winter at the time, but I managed to move them apart far enough to make room for a cat that had learned about automobiles too late to get any good from his lesson. I could have had a rabbit in trade for him, if I hadn't been more honest than I was hungry, but I'm not that sort. I just hung the cat there and went on about my business.

But Mike Polska had seen me hang him there, and he went and told Behnke. So Behnke had me arrested, because everybody in the neighborhood was laughing at him again. Lots of people hate to be laughed at; I do, myself, and so does Andy.

As soon as Dad came home, every kid in the block ran to tell him I'd been locked up, and he came down to get me out. By good luck, it was his payday; so he left ten dollars with the man at the desk, and they let me out. Dad scolded me for what I'd done, but, when I told him how it happened, he never said another word. He just took me into the nearest restaurant and bought me a square meal. He was that kind of a father. He

laid off from his work to go to court with me the next day, too.

The court-room was upstairs over the police-station, and was a big room cut in half by a wooden rail. Only lawyers, witnesses and folks that had been arrested were allowed inside the rail. The others had to sit on the benches outside. Most of them looked as though they ought to be arrested, too. The judge sat up behind a high counter that had electric lights at each end. He didn't have any wig, like judges always wear in pictures, but he needed one. I guess he couldn't have afforded it, though, for he couldn't have been getting much money for judging, because he had only half an eye-glass for each eye. The top halves were missing.

By and by, when I'd almost begun to think that the other cases were going to take all morning, they got around to mine, and the man who was helping the judge told me to raise my right hand and be sworn. I was glad then that there'd been other cases ahead of mine, for the man talked so fast that, if I hadn't heard him half a dozen times already, I couldn't have understood a word he was saying. As it was, I missed about half of it.

Then Behnke climbed up in a chair at the end of the counter, and told the judge and everybody there how mean I was and how Dad had insulted

him about going to Congress. He was going along at a great rate, but the judge stopped him and told him to stick to the cat and the rabbits. That was pretty decent of the judge, I thought; so when it came to my turn to climb up into the chair and talk, I was real polite. Anyhow, I tried to be.

“What’s your name?” the judge asked me.

“Jack Bradford.”

“Did you hang that dead cat in front of this man’s store?”

“Yes,” said I.

“Say Sir to me,” said the judge. So I said it.

“That’s better,” said he. “Now tell me why you did this thing.”

“Because you told me to,” I answered, supposing he was still talking about manners. But he wasn’t talking about manners at all any more. He was back to talking about that cat again. But how was I to know that?

“Confound your impudence!” he yelled at me. “I mean why did you hang that dead cat in front of this man’s store?”

“Because I don’t like him,” I said, which was the truth, exactly as I’d promised to tell it.

“Well, see here, young man,” said the judge to me. “You can’t go around playing dirty, disorderly tricks on everybody you happen not to like.

If you ever are brought into my court again, I'll put you in a school for bad boys and leave you there until you grow up. You may go now, but see to it that you don't forget what I've told you."

You can just bet that I didn't forget, either, and when I heard that minister say he was going to take me into court, I said to myself real quiet-like, "You think you will."

There wasn't any room for me in the automobiles that went out to the cemetery, on account of there being only three cars and so many important grown folks that had to ride, but it was all right with me, because I'd already said good-bye to Dad, and wanted just to be alone with Andy. Besides, I had to hurry up and clear out before that preacher got hold of me to take me into court. So, while they were climbing into the cars, I slipped away and went home.

Andy was waiting for me when I got there, and we went up-stairs together. I was glad to have him with me, too, for, though I'd already missed Dad a lot, it was a great deal worse to come into the room where I'd been so used to seeing him, and to realize that he'd never be there again. And, when I saw his pipe and the old coat he'd worn around the room evenings, I just sat down in his old chair and blubbered like a baby. I don't care

how big a fellow is, he can't help crying at a time like that. I'd known for two days that Dad was gone, but it seemed then as though I'd only just found out what it all meant to me.

It was so quiet in the room that I got our old alarm clock and wound it up for company for me and Andy. I never did hear a clock tick quite so loudly before, but it only made the place seem lonelier than ever. I couldn't have stood it at all, if it hadn't been for Andy. He seemed to understand everything, for he came up, and stood with his great head resting on the arm of the chair, looking up into my face, as if to tell me he'd help me if he could. That's the best thing there is about a dog. He always feels the same way you do about everything.

I sat and thought for a while, and I decided that probably I'd better go to Missouri and live with my grandfather. I didn't even know his name, or what town he lived in, but I reckoned that I could find him all right, if I took time enough for it and asked enough questions. I figured that I'd have to walk it, because there was only six dollars left in the house, and I couldn't live very long on that, if I was paying railroad fare. If I was going to walk, I'd have to travel pretty light; so I left Dad's

big satchel, and took the little one he'd got for me to carry my school books in.

Of course the little satchel wouldn't hold much, but there was room in it for a couple of clean blouses and some stockings. My good suit I already was wearing. So I put into the little satchel only the blouses and stockings, with Mother's picture, my handkerchiefs and one fish-line. I had a lot of junk that I'd collected, but I had to leave all of it. But I took Dad's pocket-knife, and his violin. I could play it pretty well by ear.

Our room was no great place, I know, but I'd lived there ever since I could remember, and I felt very queer about leaving it. I straightened it up as well as I could, and stood in the doorway looking around for a minute. Then I shut the door as softly as I could and tip-toed down the stairs. I don't know why I walked that way, I just did.

CHAPTER FOUR

I HAD been longer than I had expected in getting ready to go away, for it was night, when I came down our back stairs and rested for a moment in the alley. But I was rather glad of that, since there was that much less chance of my being seen and so being taken before the judge. Night is a very pleasant time, anyhow, when the weather is fine, for the air has a softness that you never feel in the day-time. Besides, nothing ever looks ugly in the dark; ash-heaps and garbage-cans just melt into shadows, while even the smells are less mean than they are in the day-time, for there is almost always a bit of night-breeze a-blowing. And the sky over an alley is every mite as beautiful as it is over the boulevard, where rich people live.

You can spend a great deal of time looking up at the sky, and not waste a bit of it. First, you try to count the stars, starting out at it bravely enough, but not getting very far with your work; for, before you've been at the job five minutes, your eye has been caught by some star that is brighter than the others about it, and you fall to wondering. You wonder how big the star really is, and how far away; whether it truly is a world like ours, and,

if so, whether the people on it are anything like we are; and whether there is anybody among them who is looking at our world and wondering about us.

Somehow, by the time your neck has got to aching so badly that you can't look up any longer, you have forgotten most of your troubles. You feel mightly small and unimportant, but you feel sort of clean and washed-like, too, and decide that you never again will be quite so mean as you have been. It's a good deal the same way that you feel after listening to a big organ; only it's more so and stays with you better.

There's a thrilly feeling about being out alone at night, too, provided you're brave enough not to mind being scared a little. You can get it best when you've just finished reading some corking good book, such as *Treasure Island*, or *Robinson Crusoe*, or *Buffalo Bill's Revenge*. Then, there are Indians and pirates, and cannibals in every shadow; but you pay no attention to them, except to hitch your belt a bit tighter and to make sure that your cutlass and pistols are ready to use. Of course, they're only wooden ones, but, all the same, you feel a bit more comfortable for having them, and you stalk along with your chest stuck out, maybe whistling a bit to bid defiance to all mutineers and malcontents.

I always did like that fine, especially when I had Andy along for company. A big dog trotting beside a fellow can't help but make him a little braver than he would be when absolutely alone. In fact, a good dog is mighty fine company at any time. I suppose I've probably said that before, but it's worth repeating. As a matter of fact, I guess that everything I ever said in my life, or ever will say, has been said before by somebody else and said better. But there's this advantage in being reasonably ignorant; when you think what you think is a big thought, you aren't always remembering right away who it was that said it before. I suppose that that idea is an old one, too.

Goodness me! Here I am, rambling along about cannibals and stars, ash-heaps and thoughts, when what I started out to tell you was about me and Andy leaving home. It sounds as though I must have stood in the alley for hours and hours, but it was really only a very few minutes before I picked up my fiddle and the little, old school satchel, and was on my way, with Andy at my heels.

We went down alleys for about a mile, so as not to be noticed until we got a ways from home; then we cut across some vacant lots to a street that runs clear out of the city and for miles without end farther. It's called Western Avenue, and it runs south.

So as Missouri is south and west from Chicago, I figured that we'd take Western Avenue until we came to some cross road that we liked, and then turn west. When we got too tired of walking west, we could walk south some more and, maybe, if we were real lucky, by and by we'd stumble on to some road that slanted right up to my grandfather's door. Then, if he and I liked each other, and he liked Andy, we'd live with him; but if he didn't, or we didn't, we wouldn't, but would keep on walking until we got to some place we liked, and where they liked us. I hadn't the least doubt in the world that we'd run into somebody, somewhere, who'd appreciate a dog like Andy enough to let me earn a home for both of us.

I'd decided that we'd walk twenty or twenty-five miles a day, but that fifteen miles would probably be enough for the first night. It was, too, as you already know, if you've ever hoofed it along a road at night with a satchel in one hand and a fiddle case in the other, turning out of the road every few feet in order to let an automobile whiz by you. It takes a very few miles of that to tire you.

The first two hours or so, we got along finely, but then I began to count the telephone poles, figuring that there must be about fifty of them to the mile, and forty steps from pole to pole. That makes two

thousand steps to the mile, and it meant that I had about thirteen thousand more steps to take that night, which sounded like an awful lot, and was. But I started in bravely enough to count them off, and kept right at it until I got up to three thousand; then I tried counting backwards to see if the distance wouldn't seem shorter when it was all the time reducing. But a mile is a mile any way you count it, except that a tired mile is much longer than a fresh one.

So, I changed from steps and telephone poles to counting automobiles, deciding that as soon as I'd met five hundred more cars I'd call it a night, and hunt for a place where Andy and I might sleep. Perhaps, I'd have had to give up the automobile counting too, if I hadn't had a bit of good luck, when I was still two hundred short in my count. The good luck was in our coming to a place where the road was blocked by a freight train that kept switching back and forth, as though it had all the time there was. Of course, there was no traveling for us, while that train was in the way; so I sat down on the low wall of a little bridge, just short of the track, to rest my feet, and to count my sore spots, which were plenty. It seemed as though I never would want to stand up or to walk again as long as I lived. Andy lay down in the dust, close to my

feet, and seemed glad to rest, though he wasn't too tired to keep an eye on my fiddle and satchel, or to growl when someone turned a spot-light on us.

The automobilists kept jawing about having to wait so long, but I didn't. It was duck-soup for me, because the automobiles were lining up on the other side of the track just as they were on the side where we were. When, at last, the train pulled out, all the cars I'd promised myself to meet that night were there waiting for me. All I had to do was to stand aside and count them as they went by. Really, there were fifty more than I needed, which was a great help, because I like to finish what I begin and to make a good job of it. I hate a quitter, you know.

Having all those cars handed to me wasn't all of my good luck, either, for the lights of the cars that were going my way shone across a field at a bend in the road, and showed a barn that looked to be just the place for me and Andy to park ourselves for the rest of the night. The fence-gate was locked, but it was no bother to me to crawl under it. A fellow doesn't mind a little thing like that, when he's dog-tired and sees a good barn.

You may think that you appreciate your dog but, unless you've had him along the first time you've crawled into a strange barn to sleep, you don't

know what a comfort he really is, because you've never been really, honest-to-goodness lonesome. You can guess how ashamed I was then, when Andy sat up to beg for his supper, and I hadn't a bite of anything to give him.



I went right off to sleep

Gee! How cheap I felt. I'd had so much misery and worry of my own that day that I'd never realized we'd have to go right on eating, just as we'd always done, and would even need food before we slept. I didn't make any excuses, though, because I knew that, though a fellow has a right to forget

his own dinner, a boy that forgets his dog's meals is simply no good. So I just promised Andy that it would never happen again, and he seemed to understand, for he quit begging at once.

I cried a bit that night on account of missing Dad. I knew I was too big to cry, but I just couldn't help it, and I'm not ashamed to admit it. I've never really cried since, but I've come pretty close to it a good many times, and I guess that if I get to be as big as Methuselah, who lived and grew for a thousand years, I'll always get lumpy in the throat when I think about him.

One thing I did that night, that I forget sometimes, was to say my prayers. Somehow or other, they're easier to remember when you're miserable. After I'd said them, I went right off to sleep, and the next thing I knew was Andy's licking my face to tell me that it was morning.



CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN I sat up in the hay on the barn floor that morning, I saw something that was worth going a long way to look at. The sun was just coming up over the top of a little hill half a mile down the road, and I leaned back against the barn wall to watch it through the open door. Doing that made the door-way into a regular picture-frame; only the picture was much more beautiful than the ones you see printed. Since that time I've often looked through door-ways, pretending that they were picture-frames, and I've always been well paid for my trouble. When I've wanted a picture that was a bit larger than the one I was seeing, all I've had to do was to go one step nearer the door. Try it, yourself, some time; you'll be surprised, for it's fine and it doesn't cost you a cent.

I've seen a lot of pictures that way, but that first one was by far the best. I ought to know a good picture when I see one, too, for once I watched a real artist all morning. He was in a window over on Ashland Avenue, and he was a crackajack, all right, for he could paint a picture that had in it a man in a boat, a lake with a mountain on the far side of it, and a farm-house with a barn, trees, cows

and a hay-stack, and could do the whole job in ten minutes. He sold some of them, too, right while I stood there watching him. One that he sold had real knife-handle-pearl windows, and it fetched him four dollars, counting the frame of course. So you can see for yourself that he was no slouch of an artist. But a sunrise seen through an open barn-door has any hand-painted picture beaten a mile, and you may tell anyone you wish that Jack Bradford says so.

Pretty soon, the sun was clear up above the hill, and then I remembered that I'd had no supper the night before. So I said to Andy, "Breakfast-time, Andy. Want your breakfast?" Usually, when I say that to him, Andy'll lie down and roll over two or three times, but that morning he did nothing of the sort. He just sat there, with one ear down and one ear up, listening to me. So I asked him again, and he yawned.

"That's funny," I thought. "He was hungry enough last night. Somebody must have fed him." Then I said aloud, "Andy, where did you get your breakfast?"

Mind you, now, I'm not saying that Andy understands everything that I say to him. I'm only telling you what he did, and letting you decide for yourself as to how smart he is. Whether it was

just luck, or whether Andy really understood me, what he did was to turn right around and walk out through that door-way. Then he barked once for me to follow him and, as soon as he saw that I was really coming, he trotted up a little path that led past two more barns, and then through an orchard and up to the back door of a house. When he got there, he went up on the porch and walked straight over to a pan that was sitting there. He licked the pan once or twice; then turned around and looked at me, with his tongue hanging out and a grin on his face, as much as to say, "Well, this is the place." Now, was that brains, or was it only instinct?

I decided right then that it was brains, and that it was up to me to show as much sense as my dog had done. So, I went to the door and knocked, and right away it was opened.

You can tell a great deal about a woman by the way in which she answers her back door. If she pulls it open with a jerk, and sticks her head out to look at you, you can save yourself a bit of time by asking neither favors nor questions, because you know her answer already. It's, "No!" because she's that sort of woman. Some are that way all the time, and some only a part of the time; some are born that way, and some get that way as they get older. There are some women, too, who come to the

door on tip-toe, and then only after they've peeked around the edge of the curtain to see who is there. That kind is scared, and either afraid of tramps, or else expecting a bill collector when they haven't the money to pay. They've probably got so used to being afraid that they sort of like it, and would be lonesome without their fears.

But the lady who came to the back door that Andy had picked out was none of those sorts that I've been talking about, and I could tell by the very way she came across the room that she would swing the door wide open and would ask me in. That's just what she did, too, and I remembered my manners; wiping my feet on the bit of old carpet that lay outside the door, and taking off my cap, as I stepped across the threshold, after first telling Andy to wait for me; which he did. He always does, you know.

The woman was a good deal as you would expect her to be, opening the door that way, and the room was the sort a fellow likes to be invited into; nice and clean, but not fancy; with a floor of wide, soft-wood boards that had been scrubbed until it was as white as milk, and with pretty bits of rag carpet lying about here and there. There was a big stove, too, and two tables, a little one for working and a big one for eating. The window curtains weren't

lace, but they couldn't have been any whiter than they were. On the wall, there was a shelf of dark wood with a big, solemn clock, and there were at least half a dozen calendars, each with a pretty picture on it. You could tell the date from any point in that room without bothering to turn around. I like things to be convenient like that.

There was a rocking chair in that kitchen, too, and that always tells a lot. A rocking chair in a dirty kitchen spells laziness, but in a clean one it means good common sense. Of course, there were straight-back chairs too.

I hardly need to tell you what the woman herself was like, for you'd have guessed from the way I've been describing the room that she was wearing a blue dress and that she had white hair. She had a good many wrinkles, too, but they were the kind that only come to people who smile a lot. It was a good thing for her that folks can't choose their own grandmothers, for she'd have had so many grandchildren that it would have taken a barrel of flour a day just to keep them in cookies. I'd never had a grandmother, but I had a good mind-picture of what one ought to look like, and she fitted it to a T. So I felt at home right away.

"Sit down, Sonny, and tell me about yourself," said the old lady. "Are you and your dog just visit-

ing in the neighborhood, or do you plan to settle down and farm hereabouts?" I knew, of course, that she was just joking with me, but I didn't mind that at all, because she wasn't the kind to make her jokes sting. They were just her way of being friendly. So I smiled right back at her, and told her that Andy and I were just traveling through on our way to Missouri, that we had slept in one of her barns, and that I wanted to pay for Andy's breakfast and to buy some for myself, if I could. "We're not tramps," I said.

"Goodness, gracious, no!" she said. "I can tell a tramp, boy, man or dog as far as I see one." She ran all her wrinkles together into one smile as she said that, and I liked her even better than I had. Then she told me that it was long past their breakfast time, but that, perhaps, she could hunt up a snack for me.

"Could you do with bread, milk and a piece of pie?" she asked me. "That is, if you don't regard breakfast pie as bad for the digestion. I'm from Connecticut, myself, and I stick to the old ways, though I've lived here since long before the city came so far out. Ours is the only farm left this close in now. Coming back to the subject of pie for breakfast, though, all I've got to say is that I'm sixty-six and it hasn't killed me yet. You may

decide for yourself; though perhaps you'd like to look at the pie before you pass any opinion."

"I'd like some pie," I answered, and told her that having it for breakfast struck me as a very fine idea, although I'd never had the opportunity to try it before. "How much will it be?" I asked her, for I knew that I must be pretty careful of my money.

"Why, I couldn't think of charging a friend for just a few victuals," said she. "I've never sold anything to eat in my life, except, of course, at our church bazaar. I just do little favors for my friends, and they do little favors for me. For instance, if you can spare the time, I'd be glad to have you turn the churn for me a while, after you've had your breakfast. My son usually does it, but he's hauling shelled corn today." So we agreed on that, and then I sat down to the table and just filled up to the very top on milk and bread and pie. I was sort of ashamed to eat so much, and I wouldn't have done so, hungry as I was, if she hadn't claimed that she'd feel hurt if I stopped while I had room for any more.

But, no matter how hungry you are, you're sure to get filled, if you eat long enough. So by and by, when I could hold no more, I stopped eating and helped Mrs. May (that was the lady's name) bring

in the churn from the little shed at the west end of the kitchen.

I'd never seen a churn before, and maybe you never have; so I'll tell you that this one was a little barrel that stood between two legs and was cranked like an automobile; only it had no engine, and so would stop as soon as you quit cranking. There was a little door that unscrewed in one end of the churn, and that was where she put in the milk; though it wasn't milk, but cream and so thick that it would hardly run. Then she screwed the little door shut, and let me turn the crank, which I did for almost an hour, and learned that there's nothing like turning a churn to settle you down after a heavy meal. You don't feel one-half so full after the first ten minutes.

But you can turn a churn and talk at the same time, if you have anyone there to talk to, which I had, for Mrs. May made me tell about myself and about Andy, and all about where we'd lived and were going and why. When I told her about Behnke and the rabbits, she laughed, but when I told her about losing Dad, she came over and stood by me and brushed the hair back out of my eyes. I didn't say anything more just then, either, but kept on turning the churn until the butter was ready to

take out. Then Mrs. May unscrewed the little door in the end of the churn. The butter, which was floating around in the butter-milk, she skimmed out and put into a big, wooden bowl; then worked it around and around with a little wooden shovel that was bored all over with holes. She squeezed out all the loose milk from it in that way, and she also put in some salt. "There's been many a worse batch of butter than this," she said, "if I do say so myself, as oughtn't." She was dead right about that, too, for she gave me some on some of her bread, and it was licking good, I can tell you. I also drank some of the buttermilk, and was surprised to find that I liked it. Then, after Mrs. May had scalded out the churn, we set it out on the porch where the sun could shine right into it for a while.

By that time it was past ten o'clock; so Mrs. May wrapped up a package of lunch for me and Andy. Then we said good-bye, and started out again on the road to Missouri, first stopping at the barn for the satchel and the fiddle. I've never seen Mrs. May since that morning, but I'm going back again some day and visit with her.

CHAPTER SIX

A GREAT many things that I tell you of, as though I'd noticed them as I went along, I really never thought much about for some time after. I reckon, though, that most of us are a bit that way, when we're talking over what we remember; it's awfully hard for us to tell what part we really saw, or heard, or felt at the time it happened and what we got by putting two and two together. Lots of times, I know that I see something without particularly noticing it, and then later when it's gone, I notice it when it isn't there to see. That sounds horribly jumbled up, but I guess you can understand it just as well as though I had it straight, and maybe better.

I know it was that way with me about the man I met at the golf club, where Andy and I stopped, two or three hours after we'd left Mrs. May's house. There was any number of things about him that should have shown me at a glance that he was bad medicine and wasn't to be trusted, but I never noticed any of them until I was in and out of trouble and had left the place. That ought to make me make up my mind to do my noticing in advance, and so avoid bother, but it doesn't. I

don't make good resolutions very often any more, because I've quite a stock of them on hand that I've never as yet been able to live up to. Most folks have, I guess.

The golf club I'm telling about was about five or six miles farther out from the city than Mrs. May's home was. It was a very scrumptious place with big stone gate posts that had brass plates on them. The posts were even finer than the ones the real-estate men put up before they start selling lots, and they were put up more solidly too. There was also another sign besides these brass ones. It was just a paper one tacked to a board and it said, "Caddies Wanted, Permanent; must be over sixteen."

Well, I was only fourteen, and I was on my way to Missouri, but I've always made it a point to be as permanent as I know how to be; so I saw no harm in going in to see whether there might not be a chance to earn a bit of money by stopping off and caddying for a while. I was going to offer to work until they got some regular caddies, if they'd let me do so. The sign had said to apply to Mr. Brown at the caddy-shed, and while I was making my way up the gravel path that ran along the cement driveway, I was making up a nice little speech to say to him so that he would be glad to

hire me. All of which goes to show how much it sometimes pays to make plans. I was as much out of luck as the fellow who spent all his Saturday afternoons at the poor farm, playing checkers with the paupers, so as to have friends in the place when he got so old he'd have to go there, and then died the week after he inherited a million dollars. Of course that has nothing to do with what happened to me at the golf club. I just said it now for fear I wouldn't remember it later.

Anyway, I went up the path until I came to the caddy-shed, which was over behind the club house and just a few feet from the place where folks started out to play. I knew it was the caddy-shed, all right, for there were a half dozen fellows my age or a bit older loafing on a bench in front of the place, and waiting their turn at caddying.

Perhaps I did look peculiar, walking along with a fiddle in one hand, and a satchel in the other, and followed by a big, shaggy dog; so it was all right for them to laugh at me. But it was all wrong for one of them to say "Sic 'em," to the white bull-terrier that was lying beside the bench; not that I was in the least afraid for Andy, for he weighs eighty-eight pounds, and is all dog, able to take care of himself and me too; but I don't like him to fight, and he never does fight, unless

some other dog picks on him. Even then, I can stop the fight, so far as Andy is concerned, if the other fellow will do as much with his dog.

That's what I supposed Mr. Brown the caddy-master, who was standing right there, would do. So, when the bull-terrier started for Andy, I just dropped my luggage and took hold of Andy's collar to do my part in preventing the fight, though I ought to have known by one look at Mr. Brown's face that the decent thing was just what he wouldn't do. You see, he was one of those men whose eyes are not quite the same color, and the two sides of whose faces are enough different to be noticed, one ear being a bit larger and lower down than the other. Maybe some such men are to be trusted, but not by me. At any rate, Mr. Brown did not even try to call off his dog. I saw that the fight couldn't be avoided then, but in some way I'd got my fingers caught in Andy's collar. So I tried to get between the two dogs for a second, and, as a result of that, the terrier crashed straight into me, dogs, boy, satchel and fiddle-case rolling on the ground together; no wonder then that the terrier got hold of my arm instead of Andy's throat.

That was mighty hard luck for that terrier, though, for I yelled out with the pain, and Andy wasn't a dog any more; he was twenty fighting

lions rolled up in one dog-hide. There was one roar from Andy, a sort of scream from the bull-terrier, and by the time I could scramble to my feet, the terrier was lying ten feet away with his legs twitching. Andy had broken his neck. But, in another second, Andy was stretched out, too, for Mr. Brown had rushed up and struck him as hard as he could with an iron golf-club.

I went plumb crazy then, and I rushed at Mr. Brown, striking and kicking at him, but he merely laughed in a nasty way and gave me one slap with his open hand that sent me flying as though I hadn't weighed more than a pound and a half. It certainly does make a fellow feel angry and helpless, when he's past fourteen and most grown up, to find that a mean man can still throw him around like that. Right then, I put that man on the same list as Behnke, the butcher. I was going to whip him when I grew up. What made me maddest of all was that all those caddies fairly roared with laughter to see me swatted that way. I don't suppose that they were really bad fellows at all, but they'd been mean, and they knew it; so now they were trying to show that they didn't care. Besides, Mr. Brown hired and fired the caddies, and it wouldn't have paid one of them to let him see that what he did was thought low-down. I'm ashamed to admit that I've pre-

tended that I didn't care, myself, when down inside of me I was as ashamed of myself as I could be. I must have realized that in a way at that time, for all my anger was at Mr. Brown and not at those boys.

But I didn't say anything to Mr. Brown then, for there was nothing to say. All I could do was to pick up old Andy and carry him away with me, leaving my fiddle-case and satchel there on the ground, where they had fallen. I wouldn't have thought of leaving my dog lying there like an alley cur shot for mad by some thick-headed policeman. So I turned away from them all, and went over to Andy.

And then, all of a sudden, my slapped face and bitten arm stopped hurting. For, as I reached out my hand to slip it under Andy's head, the fine old fellow put out his tongue and licked my fingers. He had only been stunned and, though his poor old head was badly cut from that terrible blow with the golf-iron, I could see in a moment that he was coming around all right. In a few minutes more he was up on his feet, but the fight was pretty well out of him for the time being, and he slunk close to my legs, as I picked up my things and started back down the path towards the road.

To tell the truth, I wasn't feeling any too chipper

myself, for, besides a nasty dog-bite in my arm, my hands and knees were badly scratched up from my roll in the gravel of the pathway, and my pants and stockings pretty much torn. My face had begun to ache again, too, from the slap I'd had. But, at that, we hadn't come out as badly as we might have done, which was more than could be said for Mr. Brown's terrier, which was as dead as it ever would be. So I strutted a little, as we went down the path, in order to let them know that we were leaving, but not licked. I'd have whistled, too, but my face hurt too much.

But, when we had come clear of the golf grounds and had gone down the road a little piece, both of us were glad to rest beside a big creek that came out from the grounds and flowed under a bridge. We stretched out there in the shade of that bridge, and I wet my handkerchief in the creek in order to wash the dirt from our cuts. Then I plastered them with nice, blue clay which is fine for hurt places, as any dog knows, but most people don't.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I READ one time in the Sunday paper, about a fellow, who was thrown from his horse and landed so hard on his head that he found a gold-mine, and so was rich and famous ever after. I used to believe that story, but since I've started out to authorize this book I've had my doubts about its being quite true. More than a dozen times, I've had to scratch out something that almost seemed to put itself on the paper, just because there didn't happen to be a word of truth in it, and the worst of it has been that those were the most interesting things of all. A lot of interesting things never happened, I guess. But that gold-mine story might be partly true, at that, for I was dog-bitten and gravel-rolled into a piece of good luck.

You see, if I hadn't been bitten and scratched like that, I probably wouldn't have stopped at that creek to patch myself with blue clay, and then I'd not have been on hand, when the little, fat man came up and tried to drive his golf-ball across the water.

The creek was pretty large for a creek, but away too small ever to have any real hope of becoming a river, being just about a hundred feet across, but it might as well have been the Atlantic Ocean for all

the good it did that fellow to try and shoot over it. He just kept putting ball after ball upon little sand-piles, and then whanging away with first one stick and then another, but the only improvement he made was in changing to balls that floated instead of sinking. He kept at it with that kind of balls until he had the water along the edge of the dam looking as though it was Hallowe'en and he was getting ready to bob for crab-apples.

Every time his ball went into the water, that fat little man would jump up and down, and would cuss something terrible. Once he said that it was a lucky thing for the man that invented the game that he was dead, because otherwise he'd certainly kill him himself. Then he cussed some more. I never had noticed before what a fool a fellow sounds like when he gets mad and takes it out in swearing. I could have told the man that, but I didn't. Somehow, I didn't think it would be likely to do him any good. So I just sat there under my bridge, and looked out at him, until he ran out of golf balls and cuss-words.

When that happened, the little fat man got so mad that he threw the club he'd used last so hard it went clear over the fence and slid across to the road, bringing up under the bridge almost at my feet. I think he had really intended to throw the club into the water, but was so angry that he tried

to hurl it with too much force, and so couldn't control it any better than he had his golf-shots. Anyhow, it wasn't my club; so I picked it up and went over to the fence to give it to him. He was so mad still, though, that he wouldn't take it.

"You can have the fool thing, and all the rest of this trash, too, if you're idiot enough to want it," he yelled. "I'm off this pasture-pool for life and I'll never touch a club again, unless it's to use one on the next doctor that orders me to play the game." Then he seemed to get good-natured all of a sudden, for he grinned at me and said, "I'm pretty rotten at golf, eh Sonny?" I supposed then that, being over his angry spell, he'd go back on giving me his clubs, but he didn't. He held the bag out towards me, and said, "Better take your trash, Sonny, before I lose my mind again and decide to play some more."

Now, I already had all the things I wanted to carry, and I had as much use for golf-clubs as Andy'd have for snowshoes, but a present is something for nothing, and so when people offer me one, I most generally take it. I'm different that way, you know.

"Are those golf-balls floating out there in the water mine, too?" I asked him, and he said that they were. So I told Andy to fetch them, and he did,

bringing them in one at a time. There were nine of them and almost all of them were brand new, but the little man didn't seem sorry he'd given them to me. He made a big fuss over Andy, too, and said he'd never seen a smarter dog; so seeing that we were so popular with him, I asked if it was all right for me to shoot a few balls across the water.

"Why not?" said he. "My golf expense ends today, and the worst they can do is to charge me a guest fee. Go right ahead. Then he grinned again and stuck out his hand to me to shake. "My name is Smith," he said, "and I like to know the names of my guests. What's yours?" So I told him and we shook hands. Then I made a whole row of those little sand-piles, and put a ball on top of each one. After I'd felt over all nine of the clubs in the bag, I ran across one that just seemed to fit my hands. It waggled just right; I'd played enough games of shinny to know that. So I stepped up and hit the first ball with it.

I was still stiff and sore from the rough treatment that I'd had only an hour or two before, but at that my shot was too good, for that ball sailed over the water and then travelled about two hundred feet more. For that reason, I didn't hit quite so hard after that, and the next three balls went right onto

the green and stayed there, which got Mr. Smith all excited. He grabbed the club out of my hands and, you may believe it or not, he shot a ball across almost as well as I could have done myself. Not only that, but he did the same thing twice more.

Tickled? Say, he was so happy and excited that he almost danced the Charleston. He was so proud of himself that he strutted around with his chest stuck out almost as far as his stomach, which was a good way. He decided right then to take up golf again, and made me an offer of two dollars for my outfit. Probably I could have had more for it, but since it hadn't cost me anything, I saw no reason to charge him more than that. He was a very nice man, and offered me another dollar to stay and caddy for him, but I'd seen too much of the sort of caddies they had around there to want to be one of them.

Besides, it was after half-past three and more than time for me and Andy to be on our way to Missouri. All-in-all, it hadn't been such a bad day. I'd been dog-bitten and gravelled, but I'd learned to play golf and to make butter, and was two dollars to the good besides. If Mr. Brown, the caddy-master, had come along then the day would have been perfect. I wanted to thumb my nose at



You don't have to catch fish to enjoy fishing

him before I left there for good. So I just pretended he was there, and did it anyhow, first making sure that Mr. Smith was out of sight, as I didn't want him to think I wasn't being polite.



CHAPTER EIGHT

AS I GUESS I told you, Andy and I had started out with the idea of walking a good big distance every day; perhaps even as much as twenty or twenty-five miles. Doing that would have brought us to the edge of Missouri in three weeks at the most, and then I figured I'd have a look at all the towns there were down there, until I ran across the one where my grandfather lived. All I knew about the place was that it was a small town of about one thousand people.

Now, I know that a fellow, who'd start out that way with no more notion of where he was going than I had, and without even brains enough to realize that he would have to spend at least twenty years of his life wandering around in order to visit all the small towns in a big state like Missouri, must seem like a plumb idiot to you. But, you see, I'd never have been more than five or six miles from my own back door in Chicago in all my life, except possibly three or four times. All I knew about states was what I'd learned in Geography, and that was very little. So it must have been at least four weeks before I began to worry much

about my being able to do what I'd started out to get done.

It didn't take me that long, though, to realize that I wasn't going to do any twenty-five miles a day, for night-time of my second day on the road found me only about twenty miles from our old place in Chicago, and stumbling along in the dark just as I had done the night before. There were about as many automobiles to turn out for as there'd been the night before, too, and, what with all I'd been through that day, I was even tireder. Take it altogether, though, it hadn't been such a bad day for me, for I'd made two friends, even if I might never happen to see either of them again. Besides, I'd learned to play golf and to make butter, and a fellow can never tell when knowledge like that is going to come in handy. Another besides was that I was two dollars richer at night than I had been in the morning.

Perhaps I'd have been fairly happy that night, if it hadn't been for two or three small things. One of them was that I'd had nothing to eat for about eight hours, and so was hungry again. Another was that there was a hole in one of my stockings, and it had rubbed a blister on my big toe; still another was that it had begun to rain, not hard, but with a misty, moisty drizzle that dripped off of my

cap and ran down the back of my neck. Between times of meeting automobiles, it was terribly dark, too, and I kept wishing that I had a lantern or a flash-light, though my hands were full enough as it was. What I needed right then was either three hands and a lantern, or else a good twenty-five cent restaurant that was fitted out with a first-class hay-mow.

Of course, I didn't hope to find a restaurant that had a hay-mow, but I did keep on hoping that I'd find both the restaurant *and* the hay-mow, and that it wouldn't be too far from the one to the other. So I kept plugging along, looking about me from time to time for a place either to eat or to sleep. Of places to eat I saw a plenty, but they were not for me, since they were road-houses. Road-houses are country restaurants for city people who have time, money and automobiles, and they charge whatever you have with you just for one little sandwich. I'd never been inside one of these places, and I haven't been there yet, but I'd read the newspapers enough to know that my eight dollars wouldn't last long in one of them. I didn't think that any sandwich in the world was worth my eight dollars. Besides, Andy was as hungry as I was.

There was nothing for me to do except to keep on rambling down that road, and I did so until I

came to a place where it forked. Most of the cars were taking the right-hand fork, but I'd heard that the surest way to be right is to do what other folks don't. Then too, the left-hand fork went southwest, which was the way I wanted to go, anyhow. It certainly is fine, when what you ought to do and what you want to do are the same thing. It ought to happen that way a good deal oftener than it does.

But even the road you want and ought to take may turn out to be no road at all, as I found out that night, for in less than two miles the concrete petered out into the measliest mud I ever set a foot into. Every step I took, my shoes went, "squash, squash" as they sank, while each time that I pulled one out of the mush there was a sound such as chewing gum makes, when you pop it. Finally, my left shoe-string broke and the shoe came off; so that I had the fun of standing on one foot in the mud, tying the string together and putting a muddy shoe back on a still muddier foot. I know now why people sometimes call feet, "mud-hooks"; it's because that's just what they are.

In some ways, Andy had a big advantage over me, for he had no load to carry, and he knew how to run along on the top of a rut for a little way at a time. But he found it pretty hard going, at that, and every little while he'd stop and whine, as much

as to say, "Are we going to keep this up all night?" which was just exactly what I was wondering myself. But I needn't have worried about him, for when a rabbit popped out of some bushes and did a Nurmi down the side of the road, Andy came to life at once, and went after that animal, hot as a griddle and yelping at every jump. There's nothing that cures a dog's discouragement as well as a right good rabbit chase. You'd never have known that Andy had been tired at all.

That affair increased my respect for Andy a lot, too, because he'd probably never seen a live rabbit in his life; yet he knew just what a dog ought to do when one turned up. That's instinct, I suppose, and it's a great deal handier to have than brains, because it can always be counted upon, while brains are likely to go back on you just when you have most need of their help. I know, for I have brains myself. Anyhow, Andy's instinct was a great help to us both that night, because the rabbit turned off the road and holed-in under a hay-stack. By following the sound of Andy's wild yelps, I located the place, and finally managed to quiet him down, but not until he'd torn out almost enough hay to make us a bed for the night. Andy was terribly disappointed about losing that rabbit, but he finally decided to crawl in with me under the hay.

My old satchel didn't make such an awfully bad pillow that night and the overhang of the hay-stack, made by the cattle eating into it, was as good a roof as a fellow ought to ask. Even the water my clothes had soaked up was a help and not a hindrance, for, when we'd got ourselves snuggled down into the hay for a while, we steamed up so well I had to throw off some of our covering. We were right snug and comfortable, although a meal would have been useful. It's a good idea, when you're tramping it, to get your supper before dark; otherwise you may do without. This was my second lesson in that, and I can say that I've never needed the third.

However, there's good in everything; even in going to bed hungry; it's the one certain way to be around on time in the morning and with a good healthy appetite for breakfast. So I was up with the sun, and feeling pretty chipper, although a bit stiff and sore, especially in my bitten arm. But even that was much better, thanks to the blue clay; so I decided that I wasn't going to have hydrophobia, which was a great relief, but not as much so as it would have been, if I had ever really thought so.

But hungry? Say, you don't know what hunger is. I almost wished myself a cow, so that I might

fill up on hay, and if someone had come along then and offered me four good breakfasts at two dollars each, I'd have bought all of them, and would have been broke but happy.

Now, the very best thing to do when you're hungry is to look about you for something to eat, and that's just what I did right then. It paid, too, for in less than a minute my eyes fell on what, at first, looked to be a white stone, but turned out to be a big lump of pressed salt. Well, salt is food, even though you can't very well eat it straight; so I decided to lay in my salt first, and then look around for the rest of my breakfast. The outside of the lump had been pretty well cow and calf-licked, but the inside hadn't been licked on at all, as far as I was able to tell. So I bored a hole with my knife, and in a few minutes had as much salt as I'd need for a week. I put it in an old arithmetic paper that I found in my pocket. The paper was only marked fifty-five, but it was good enough to hold salt.

Well, having plenty of salt on hand, I spent a few minutes thinking of as many kinds of food as I could that would be good with salt. There was an awfully long list of them, but the only kind that was handy was beef-steak, which I couldn't use, because the cows were still wearing it. Besides, they weren't my cows. I wouldn't have minded

picking up an apple, if it had been that time of year, but a cow seemed, somehow, different. A fellow can't be too careful about things like that. Lots of men, I bet, have started out by just taking a cow, or a sack of flour, or some little thing like that and have ended up by becoming really dishonest.

I was about to start in at pretending that I wasn't hungry enough to make eating breakfast at all worth while, when my eye lit on an old night-crawler, who'd been out late, and was just wiggling his way home. "Night-crawlers are angle-worms; angle-worms are bait; bait is used to catch fish, and I have a fishing line with me," said I to myself. "All I need is a pole, a lake, and a little luck, and the breakfast question will settle itself." The pole was a poplar branch that I cut from a tree in that pasture, the lake was a quarry-hole half a mile further down the road and the luck was there waiting for me.

Nobody knows how fish get into old quarry-holes way out in the country, but they often do, and this particular quarry-hole was fairly alive with little perch and sun-fish about five or six inches long. So I went to work at them, and inside of fifteen minutes my angle-worm was all worn out, while I had six mighty fine little fish.

I'd have had to quit fishing then for lack of bait, if Nature hadn't built perch without any family feelings. They're cannibals, and would as soon lunch on a bite of perch-meat as on anything else, which is a great help to fishermen, and serves the fish right for being so unmoral. Nature is very just about things like that, I've noticed.

I certainly had a fine time at that quarry-hole that morning, while the fishing lasted, which must have been more than an hour. Then they quit biting, which was all right with me, for, if they never quit, a fellow might starve, because he had no time to stop and eat them. As it was, I felt pretty proud, as I laid my fifty-three little fish all in a row on the grass, and I bragged a bit to Andy about them. "Now," said I, "we'll have a regular breakfast." You see, it hadn't occurred to me at all yet that, in order to cook fish, people usually had a frying-pan and some butter or lard. It always surprises me, when I find out how dumb I can be.

But, after I'd stood there helpless for a few minutes, I said to myself, "You can just bet that Buffalo Bill, or The Deerslayer, or Long John Silver would never have starved to death for lack of a little, old frying-pan. They'd have invented some new way to cook fish." So I put my mind to work at finding a plan to cook my breakfast, while my

hands were busy at getting it ready to cook, for there's no use in wasting your time when you're thinking. You can think just as well, while you're doing some kinds of work, as you can when you're idle.

I went ahead, thinking and fish-cleaning, and, sure enough, by the time I was ready to cook my fish, I had worked out a way of doing it. I got my idea from remembering a picture in *The Supplementary Reading Book*, which showed where some Indians had strung a lot of fish on switches, and had put them in the sun to dry. Of course, I couldn't wait six months for my breakfast; so drying my fish that way was out of the question, but a bit of fire under them would hurry them along, cooking being a lot like drying, but faster. So I rubbed some of my salt into a dozen of those fish, strung them on a willow switch, and hung the switch-load of fish across two notched sticks that I'd driven into the ground. Then I built a fire under them. The first switch-full of fish burned up, because I let the flame strike them, but from then on I kept the fire down to hot coals, and the rest were perfect, though awfully hot.

Andy couldn't help any with the cooking, but he was right on hand when it came to the eating; some dogs won't touch fish, but Andy has sense, you

know. So he waded right into his meal, and I did the same. In an hour, we were both too full of broiled fish and fresh quarry-hole water to move comfortably. So we stretched out in the sun and took a nap until almost noon. Then we went swimming. It was a very nice way to spend the morning.



CHAPTER NINE

THE very commonest sort of days is the sort when nothing happens. Some weeks have seven days of that sort, while others have only four, or five or six, but I never yet have lived through a week that hadn't any. You'd scarcely think that you'd run into that kind of days when you were travelling through the country on foot, and with a fine dog for company, but you'd be surprised, for you'd find more days like that than you would have done if you'd stayed home.

Days like that, a fellow just plugs, plugs along down the road between two lines of barbed-wire fence put there to herd him in where he belongs, and passes farm after farm, each just like the others, if not more so. Nothing is there to catch his interest, and it's just as well that there isn't, for he wouldn't be interested anyhow. His dog, if he has one, seems to feel the same way about things, too, for instead of zigzagging back and forth across the road, and trying to nose out something to chase, he keeps lagging behind, and is always looking for an excuse to lie down and rest. You'd do it yourself, if it weren't that there's not even anything worth being tired about.

On some such days, there's a fine, misty rain falling, not enough to wet you clean through in a few minutes, but a plenty to make a good thorough job of it by the time you are ready to hole-up for the night; and if there's anything more wretched than sleeping, night after night, in wet clothes, I'll let you have my turn at it, and say that you're quite welcome.

Such days are lonely, too. When you are in *real* trouble, you're never lonely; you're as interested in yourself as Andy is, when he has a flea working on him in a place he can't reach to scratch, and you keep on feeling sorrier and sorrier for yourself, until at last you are so miserable that you are having a perfectly wonderful time. Then your troubles are at least half-way over.

But there's one good thing to be said for the plug-along days. You get over a good deal of ground on them. I know, for I had about a dozen of them in a row, right after that morning at the quarry-hole; and I managed to cover almost ninety miles, without seeing anything that it would be worth your while to hear about. My meals I bought at little road-side eating-stands and I was pretty extravagant, I guess, for I found myself, on the morning of my fifteenth day after leaving home, with

only two dollars and fifteen cents. I'd spent about thirty-five cents a day.

My stockings were worn out, too, both pairs of them, and my shoes had said good-bye to most of their soles, but May had got well started by then, and May isn't any too early to begin going bare-foot, especially when you don't own any shoes. Going bare-foot is the quickest way there is to toughen the soles of your feet. So I threw away what was left of my shoes and stockings, and felt better right away. I'd have been able to buy a pair of rubber-soled canvas shoes for my two dollars, but that meant doing without about twenty sandwiches, and I much prefer sandwiches to shoes, when the weather is warm.

But not even twenty sandwiches are a great deal of food for a fourteen-year-old boy and a two-year-old dog, who are healthy and have several hundred miles of traveling to do. So, after thinking the matter over for a while, I decided that it would be a good idea for us to find some sort of a job, and earn some money, before going ahead on our way to Missouri. I put the idea straight-up to Andy, and he answered it with two short, sharp barks, which is his way of saying, "Suits me." Then I went to job-hunting.

I'd had a notion that all I'd have to do would be

to walk into some farmer's door-yard and ask him for a job, and that I'd find work at the first, or at worst the second place that I called, but I found myself mighty badly fooled. Some said that I was too young and too green to be of any use on a farm; others offered to have me arrested as a runaway boy; and still others just naturally wouldn't hire a hand of any age, if he owned a dog. They claimed that strange dogs would tree their cats, chase their cattle, and kill their sheep and chickens. Of course, I explained to them that Andy didn't have any of those habits except that of treeing cats, but my talk did no good at all. They didn't want to believe me. Only one fellow offered me a job.

That one said that, if we'd stay all summer, he'd feed us and let us sleep in his hay-loft, and that when fall came he'd give me some old clothes and ten dollars. I figured that, if his old clothes were no better than the ones he was wearing, I'd be as well off without them, but it didn't seem polite to say so; so I didn't. Just to give the place a trial, I agreed to saw wood for my dinner, and the farmer took me over to his wood-pile. That was the poorest bargain I ever made, for the saw-buck was rickety, and the saw was rickety, too. Besides, it was so dull that each length of wood I cut was good for a new blister, although I'd thought my hands

pretty well calloused already from carrying my satchel and fiddle-case. I certainly was glad, when the farmer's wife came out and called me to come in and wash-up for dinner.



I agreed to saw wood for my dinner

But, hungry as I was, I'd about as soon have kept on sawing with a rusty saw, as to put in my time at a dinner such as that one, for all that they had to eat was turnip-greens and pancakes that had been mixed with water, instead of with eggs and milk. There wasn't any butter for the pancakes, either, because they sold all their milk to the creamery.

The woman told me that, and she said, too, that the reason she made her syrup so thin was that it wasn't so sticky that way.

When dinner was over, the woman let me help with the dishes, which didn't take as long as it should have done, as she was very saving of soap. All in all, I figured that I'd be as well off starving to death without a job as with one, and I was sure Andy felt the same way about the matter, for he very soon gave up the idea of trying to get any meat off of the bone they gave him. So I thanked the farmer for his offer of a job, and was on my way. If I intended to stay dirt-poor all my life, which I don't, I'd be that way in the city. A fellow's appetite is too good out in the country.

But, at that, I was ahead of the game by having stopped at that place, for I'd learned that a fellow can work for his meals, and still keep on traveling. So, when night ended that day, I'd earned my supper and Andy's too, as well as the right to sleep in a regular bed, by helping a farmer feed and water his stock. That bed was so comfortable that at first I was afraid I wouldn't be able to get to sleep, but I managed it all right and slept hard, too. I didn't need any alarm clock though. The farmer had one. They get up awfully early on farms, I

found, and they work hard, as I already knew, but there is a big difference in the way they feed you at different ones. I know, for I've tried both kinds the same day.



CHAPTER TEN

I SUPPOSE that I ought to be ashamed to admit it, but I got to like the life I was leading by the time that I'd been hiking with Andy for about three weeks. There was nothing to worry about; nothing to do for anyone except ourselves, for I had to work very little in order to get what we needed. Three days out of five, I did no work at all, and some days I didn't even bother to travel.

As soon as it was dark, I would camp for the night in some sheltered place, with my head stuck through the bottom of some old gunny-sacks a fellow at a country grain-elevator had given me, and would go to sleep with my feet towards the coals of the little fire where I'd cooked our supper. That is, of course, I camped out that way, when I was reasonably sure that it wasn't going to rain, and I slept very comfortably, too, for I'd learned to scoop out a place in the ground for my hips and another for my shoulders.

At dawn, I was awake, and listening to the chatter of the birds and the squirrels, while I rubbed my eyes to get the sleepiness out of them. Then I'd get up, stretch myself to get rid of the stiff places in my arms and legs, wash, if water was

handy, and my day was begun. When I came to a place where there looked to be good fishing, I fished, if I felt like it, and if the fish chose not to bite, that was their business and not mine. I was getting pretty tired of eating fish, anyhow.

Almost every afternoon, I went in swimming at some quiet place away from the road, and Andy always went in with me. The water was usually rather cold, but we'd got hardened to it by now, and enjoyed it. Besides, we could always get warm as soon as we came out, just by lying around in the sunshine. At first, I got badly sunburned, but that soon wore off, and I got to be about as brown all over as a white boy could very well get. I guess we were both pretty much like tramps, for we took things as they came, and didn't care a great deal whether we ever got to Missouri or not.

But, in lots of ways, I was very different from the tramps I met. They were sneaky-eyed and sneaky-walking fellows, most of them, who crossed the road to keep from walking close to dogs. We didn't do that; we walked straight ahead, giving half the path to anyone, man, boy or dog we met, and if any strange dog took a notion that the whole road belonged to him, he soon got over the idea. Andy is very convincing about little things like that. We never begged, as tramps do, and we never

stole, either. When we needed anything, we bought it, if we had the money; when we hadn't we did without, and just pretended we didn't want anything, and wouldn't until there came a chance to earn a little money.

Usually, it was very hard work I did to pick up the small bits of cash I earned, but once I came across a country dance, where the fiddler hadn't shown up, and, rather than have no dance, they gave me two dollars and all the ice-cream and cake that I could eat, just for playing the few tunes I knew. I had to play the same ones over and over again, but the crowd didn't seem to mind that at all. They were very nice to me, too, though they asked too many questions; not that I had anything to hide, but I didn't care to tell all about myself everywhere I stopped for a few hours.

Some of the girls at the dance took a great shine to Andy, feeding him sandwiches as long as he would keep on eating. He'd never known anything about girls before that night, but he's liked them ever since. So far, though, it hasn't brought him any more sandwiches, which always seems to puzzle him a bit. We had a very nice time at that dance, and after it was over, a young man and his wife, who were going our way, took us home with them to spend the night. Andy slept on the porch,

but I had a good bed. In the morning we were both given a good breakfast and the man rode us as far as the next town, where he happened to be going that day. He and his wife were very nice people, but terribly homely. Lots of nice people are, I guess.

That was the only lift we had on our whole trip, for we were even less like hitch-hikers than we were like honest-to-goodness tramps. Hitch-hikers, I think, are just about the cheapest animals you'll find along the road. They dress up in silly-looking clothes, and stand beside the road, leaning on long sticks, and pointing with a thumb in the direction they want to go. They're about nine-tenths hitch and one-tenth hike, and their main amusement is making smart-aleck remarks to each other about the people they meet along the way. They think a fellow is too dumb to know that they're talking about him, I guess. Hitch-hikers are a pest, and when I get to own a car I'm going to whizz by every last one of them.

Where Andy and I *were* like regular tramps was in our not caring to stay more than a day or two in one place, and in being just as well satisfied to sleep in a hay-barn or under the shelter of a hedge, as we would have been in a regular bed with sheets. We were like tramps, too, in not having any people

of our own, but that was no fault of ours; we'd have liked them, if we'd had them. I know that about myself, at least, and I'm sure Andy felt the same way, for he makes it a point to like everybody that I do.

Sometimes, for a fact, I'd get pretty lonesome for someone to talk to or play with, and then I'd look for a country school that hadn't closed yet. We'd hang around outside until recess, and then there'd usually be a game of one o'cat that we could both get into; for Andy played, too, and made a good outfielder. The boys were glad to have us join in, for those little schools had so few pupils that, even when they let the girls play they couldn't have regular ball games, but had to stick to one or two o'cat. As a rule, though, Andy and I wouldn't get to finish a game, because the teacher would notice that there was a strange boy in the yard. As soon as that happened, our fun was over, for she was pretty sure to come into the yard and ask me a lot of questions, most of them about things that were no one's business but our own; not that I was ashamed of anything, but it hurt to be always telling about my being an orphan, and then, on top of that, having my word doubted. Boys aren't like that; they ask your name and tell you theirs. Then, if they like you, they play with you. If they hap-

pen not to like you, they usually fight with you first, and then make up and play as nicely as though you had been friends for years. It's a very pleasant way, and saves a lot of trouble.

I couldn't blame those country school-teachers much, though, for being a little bit nosey, for most of the schools had so few pupils that the board was talking about not running them another year, but sending the children to town school in a bus. So the teachers didn't feel that they could afford to let any boy who lived near there escape them, even for the few days they had left that year. I'd have been glad to help one of them out by going to her school for a few days, if I'd had the time, but I hadn't; so as soon as the teacher showed up, I got into the habit of picking up my satchel and fiddle-case, whistling for Andy, and moseying off down the road. That's always a good plan when trouble shows up.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

IT WAS well into May by now, and the fruit trees were all in blossom. They smelled mighty sweet, too, and the bees were more than busy around them. You could lean across an old fence and hear them humming at their work, as if they knew that the honey crop wasn't going to last long and they were hustling like all get-out in order to save as much of it as they could. It was spring along the roads and especially along the back roads.

Roads are always interesing, but the back roads, the ordinary old dirt and turnpike ones are the most so, because they zig-zag and wander around a lot without ever really quite forgetting where they're going. A road like that is right human, and you want to get acquainted with it and follow it to see where it will end. Most roads don't end, though; they just run into other roads. You never wonder where one of these new-fangled cement roads goes; you know and it knows, too. It's on its way and it's mighty hard about it. When it comes to a hill, it goes right on over it, and maybe takes the top off of the hill to do it. A little thing like spoiling a pretty hill never bothers a cement road. But it's a poor place to walk, because it just naturally wears

your feet out; besides keeping you forever on the jump, so as not to be run down by automobiles.

There are other nice things about dirt roads, too, that you don't find along the cement trail. Take dust, for instance. Andy and I are both mighty fond of walking in nice soft dust and letting it squash in between our toes. Mud is good that way, too, but it tires you more than dust does. Dust is mighty soothing to the feet, when it's not too hot, and when your feet feel good, you most generally feel good all over.

If the dust on the dirt road gets too hot to be comfortable, you'll usually have to travel only a little way farther, before you come to a little stream that wanders across the road, singing to itself as it goes; and there'll be a little plank bridge, with cool shade underneath and a nice, flat stone for you to sit on, while you watch the minnows go darting around between the sunshine and the shadow. And, sometimes, there are bigger fish there, loafing in the deeper places, where the water is sort of black, and waiting for a minnow to come along and get grabbed.

Once in a while, you can catch one of those big fellows for a fry, but generally they're too smart for a hook. That's how they get big, I suppose. But you don't need to catch fish to get pleasure out

of fishing. You just sit on your flat rock, with your feet in the water, and rest yourself, while you watch the black bugs using the creek for a skating pond, for all the world as though there was ice on it. And you pick you out one particular bug and try to keep your eye on him as he goes in and out among all the other bugs; but you can't stick to one bug very long, because their tracks cross each other so often that they get you all mixed up. You never mind that, though; you just pick out another bug and start all over again. I used to try and pretend to myself that it was the same bug as the first one, but I had to give that up. I'm just naturally too honest to cheat myself.

Maybe, by and by, when you're beginning to find bug-watching a bit tiresome, your cork will start bobbing up and down, and right away you're interested in things again. Of course, it's probably only a baby sun-fish a-nibbling away at your bait, but you never can tell. It might be a regular old he-fish and the chance of that keeps the nibbles from getting monotonous.

If you do happen to land one of those big fellows, why then, you can have a regular meal, provided of course, that you have some salt. I don't think much of fish without salt, though Andy prefers them that way.

Another pleasant thing about the dirt road, is the trees. Lots of kinds of trees are nice, but I like elms and apple trees the best, because they look so permanent, as though they'd been there a long time and would be there always. Elm trees around a place are different from poplars in that way. When folks want to fix up a place so as to sell it to somebody else and move away, they most always stick out a lot of poplars for the first big wind to tear to pieces. But, when they intend to live in a house for always, you can just bet that they'll put in an elm or two, and add some apple trees, so as to have fruit. If the elms and the apple trees are big, and old and gnarly, that means that the folks who are living in the house on the place are, as like as not, the children of the ones who built it. Some of that I learned for myself, and some of it I remember Dad telling me one time when we went for a walk in the country. He took me only once, but we'd have gone a great deal, if he'd lived.

I used to lie under an old elm, or an apple tree, by the roadside and think a lot about Dad. At first, it kind of hurt me to do that but, by and by, I got to see the pleasure that could be got out of remembering him, and then it didn't hurt any more. And I'd think of other things, too, and wonder about things in general, without bothering to think. You

can do a lot of wondering without thinking any to speak of, especially when you're lying under a gnarly old tree, by the side of a twisty old, dusty old road.

You just flop there on your back with your knees bent and one leg crossed over the other, and a-swinging free and easy, and you put your hands under your head, which is very comfortable. Then you chew on one end of a piece of green hay that's so long its tassel bends down and tickles your nose, as you look up lazy-like at the little patch of blue sky you can see through an open place among the leaves. Little, teeny bits of pink and white cloud drift across the blue once in a while, and no two of them are shaped alike. That and the hum of the bees is enough to keep you as happy as you'd want.

Once in a while, you shift yourself a little, in order to keep on being comfortable, and you reach out a hand to scratch your dog back of the ear, so as to make sure that he's enjoying himself as much as you are. He's satisfied just to be with you, but a little ear-scratching helps too.

By and by, you drift off to sleep and, when you wake up, you're as hungry as though you'd never had a meal in all your born days. That's when you're glad to be on the old turnpike, instead of on

the cement road, for back-road folks may not have their barns as well painted as cement-road folks have, but they are usually willing to let you earn a meal, and they'll allow you to sleep in their hay-mows, provided you're sure you haven't any matches in your clothes. Yes siree; the old dirt road for me, every time.



CHAPTER TWELVE

ONE mean thing about trying to travel with a satchel in one hand and a fiddle-case in the other is that you can't keep your hands in your pockets which makes it pretty hard to whistle. Why you have to have your hands in your pockets before you can whistle, I don't know, but I do know that whistling never amounts to much without it. That's one reason girls mostly can't whistle. Once Dad took me to a vaudeville show that had a girl in it who sure could whistle, and she wore an apron that had pockets in it. Her hands were in them, too.

I whistle a good deal, myself; not that I'm so good at it, but because, when I'm feeling good, whistling keeps me that way, and when I'm not, why then, somehow, whistling drives my blues away. In fact, the less I have to whistle about, the more I feel the need of whistling; I guess I'm different that way. So you can see that having both hands full interfered a lot during the first part of my trip.

Of course, my satchel didn't weigh much, and so Andy could carry it a little way once in a while, but the handle was real leather, which is a big temptation to any dog. At home, Andy had always



She sat rocking and laughing at me while I was doing my washing

had an old shoe that was his own special property, but on the road there wasn't any old shoe for him most of the time. For that reason I didn't feel like blaming him a whole lot, when he chewed the handle off my satchel, even though I've never had any appetite for old leather myself.

Besides, I really didn't need a satchel as much as I had when I started out, because I'd been throwing away worn-out things as I went along. So a satchel without a handle being of no use to me, I decided to get rid of it. I put my fishing line in my pocket, stuffed my spare blouse inside the one I was wearing, and threw the satchel over the rail of a bridge. It floated finely for a way, but then it got caught in an eddy and was pushed up against some willows.

It had been a good satchel, when it was new, and I wanted to give it a decent send-off; so I went down along the creek and fished it out. Then I poked a little hole in one of the sides, stuck in a switch for a mast, and made a sail out of a piece of cardboard from a box that happened to be lying there. I tied a couple of feet of fish line to one end of the satchel and a heavy short stick to the other end of the little line. Then I launched her again and she sailed away down stream as prettily as any boat you ever saw. The wind was blowing the same way that the

river ran, and there were little waves, but the old school satchel rode them in fine style till she was clear out of sight.

I was sorry to part with my satchel, but I was mighty glad to be without it, at that, for now I had one hand free and could switch the fiddle from that hand to the other without stopping to set it down. It's funny how good it feels to get rid of something that you've thought you couldn't do without. Money isn't that way, though. You like to spend it, but you never are glad it's gone, especially if you are hungry yourself, and have a dog on your hands that was born hungry and will always be that way. Dogs are even worse than boys about that, I guess, and the bigger the dog, the bigger the appetite.

Well, what would you do, if you were broke and hungry, but had a fiddle that was worth a hundred dollars? You might try your luck at fishing, and at finding raw things to eat in the fields. But sometimes the fish don't bite, and in the spring there's mighty little raw stuff that's fit to eat. Summer and fall are the time for that. Then there are berries along the roadside. They are very good, though they aren't as filling as fish or fried eggs.

I guess that if you were in that sort of a fix, you'd think considerably about selling your fiddle, even if you thought a lot of it and it had belonged

to your dad. You might want to keep it, but every time you got hungry you'd get to thinking about what an awful lot of hot-dogs or ham-and-eggs a fellow could get for one hundred dollars, or fifty, or even five. It was that way with me. I think a great deal when I'm hungry, but when I'm fed as full as I can stand without its hurting me, I can get along right comfortably for a whole string of hours without bothering to think at all.

So, I decided to sell my fiddle. That meant going into some town, a thing I'd been avoiding as much as possible for a lot of reasons. In the first place, all towns have cops, and all cops are curious, especially small-town ones. Nobody ever misbehaves much there, and the cops just live in hope that the next stranger who comes along will be a desperate criminal or a run-away boy. Criminals suit them all right, but a run-away boy is better. He isn't dangerous, and they get just as much glory for picking him up, as if he were a bank-robber.

There's another danger for a boy in a strange town, and that is that some home-town boy may not know any better than to sic his dog on the stranger boy's dog. Then, if the stranger boy's dog is like Andy, the home-town dog isn't any good for dog purposes any more. You can play funeral with him, but that's all. A thing like that is likely to

make the home-town boy so mad that he goes and gets his Pa, and his Pa gets the policeman. Then the stranger boy is lucky to get out of town fast enough to keep the policeman from shooting his dog! Andy and I had one experience like that, but it happened that the policeman had forgotten to bring any bullets along for his gun. He went home for them, but Andy and I didn't have time to wait. A man who didn't like that policeman gave us a ride out of town on his truck.

So, you can see that I wasn't particularly keen on going into any strange towns that I could keep out of. But it looked as if I wasn't going to have any choice in the matter. That fiddle had to be sold, or I was going to get clean out of the habit of eating.

I figured that I'd get more money for the fiddle, if I was sort of slicked up and prosperous looking, and to be that way I needed a good bath and a clean blouse. So I hunted me a pond that wasn't in plain sight of the road, and then went up to the next farm-house and asked the lady there if she'd lend me a cake of soap. I offered to do some work for it, but she said it was worth the soap to meet a boy, who was going to take a bath because he wanted to. She asked me whether I was sure I wasn't coming down with measles, and when I said

I'd had them a long while ago, she let me have the soap.

She did more than that for me, too, for she let me take a bath in her wood-shed and gave me all the hot water I wanted. She kept the water in a place she called a "resevoy." It was a part of the kitchen stove, and you scooped the hot water out with a dipper. She gave me a towel to use, too.

When I'd finished my bath, the woman had me put on one of her husband's night shirts while I washed my pants and both my blouses in the tub. I had to use fresh water for that.

While I was doing my washing, the woman sat in an old broken rocking chair on the back porch, rocking back and forth and laughing at me. She certainly was a funny woman.

She was a mighty good woman, though, for she ironed my pants and my two blouses for me and mended the torn places. The pants were in pretty bad shape and had to be what she called "half-soled." Then she cut my hair for me. It needed it pretty badly or I wouldn't have let her do it, because just as I suspected, she wasn't any too good as a barber. She had to use a bowl to straighten the job, but, at that, it was an improvement on the way it had been; at least, it stayed out of my eyes.

After I'd had my hair cut, the woman gave me

and Andy our lunch and told us that the next town was a big one, where there were four or five stores that sold violins. She said that maybe one of them might buy mine, though she supposed a second-hand fiddle wouldn't bring much.

All the time that we were eating, the old woman kept on talking and she was mighty smart about the way she did it, for every minute or so she'd break off sharp and fire a question at me. Every question hooked onto the one she'd asked a while back, too, but not having anything to lie about, I didn't mind that. I think that woman would have been a wonderful school teacher. I asked her if she'd been one, and she laughed and said she hadn't. "But I've raised a big parcel of boys," she said, "and I've got eyes in the back of my head. One of my boys is a preacher, and one's a lawyer and one's a mighty good farmer, but they can't any of them pull the wool over their old mother's eyes and they know better than to try. I raised them right." I bet she did, too.

Before I left, she made me wash my neck once more. Then she put a necktie on me and boxed my ears and kissed me. She boxed my ears so easy it didn't hurt, but I hadn't worn a necktie for a long time, and it sort of choked me at first.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE town where I went to sell my fiddle was the biggest I'd been anywhere near since I'd left Chicago. It had honest-to-goodness street-cars and traffic cops; and everything, such as big buildings, railroad yards and a river. The buildings weren't as tall as those down-town in Chicago, but the river was a whale of a lot bigger. The name of the town was Peoria, and I'd read about it in my Geography, but had forgotten all except the name. I suppose I ought to be ashamed to admit that, but it's true.

It takes a long time to hike it into a big town, even after you've reached the outside edge of it, and I guess that Andy and I must have tramped for more than two hours before we got down-town where the big stores were. It was about five-thirty in the afternoon, when we finally made it, and people were beginning to go home from work. So I knew that the fiddle wasn't very likely to get sold that day. I hated awfully to spend my last thirty-three cents before I'd made some kind of a deal, because I had sense enough to know that when you're broke in town you're much broker than you are, when you're broke out in the country. There

are no haylofts in town, you know, and no wood-piles.

I offered to help several news-boys with selling their papers, if they'd give me a dime for doing it, but it seemed that they preferred to earn the money themselves. They were right friendly, though, and allowed me to read from the papers on their stands. It was the first time I'd read any for weeks, but I could do it as well as ever. One of the fellows told me his name was Sam, and he offered to run away with me, and go to Missouri, if I'd give him a half interest in Andy; but I explained to him that Andy wasn't the half-interest kind of dog, and that, even if I gave him a share in him, Andy would never stick by any such bargain. Sam said that he'd run away a lot of times which showed poor sense, I think, because he said that his home was all right.

Sam said, too, that once he'd been gone for nearly three weeks. He was really proud of that, but you ought to have seen his eyes pop out, when I told him that I'd been on the road for almost six weeks, without having run away at all. I told him I wouldn't think of being a runaway, and he winked and said, "Neither would your old man," which is a thing we'd quit saying in Chicago over a month before I left there. Sam was awfully slangy, but

lots of his slang was so far out of date that I'd never even heard of it before. I suppose it went out in Chicago before I was born.

All the same, though, Sam knew one or two things that were of use to me, and one of them was that sometimes you could get your meals and a bit of change for washing dishes in a restaurant. He said that he'd lived that way for a week once, when his money was gone, before he was ready to come home. So I tackled it, and I had good luck, too, for the fifth place I tried needed a dish-washer for that night. You see, the Greek that had that job had a boil on the end of his nose, which prevented him from being able to wash dishes, because your nose always itches when you wash dishes, and it's not safe to scratch a boil. There was another fellow working there, who might have done the work for that night, but he'd managed to get one of his fingers smashed in a meat chopper. I wouldn't want to work in a restaurant as a steady job. It's too dangerous.

The Greek who owned the restaurant offered me fifty cents and two meals to wash dishes all night, but I stuck out for a dollar and got it. It took all my nerve to insist on that dollar, because I needed the work, but, long before morning, I was mighty glad I'd done it. I'd never have supposed that there

could be so many dirty dishes in the world as they piled on me that night. And sleepy! Say, when I got through at seven o'clock the next morning I was asleep on my feet.

Breakfast helped me a lot, though, and I sure had a fine appetite. I ate a big steak with some potatoes, and three fried eggs. I ate six slices of bread and butter, too, and drank three glasses of milk. Then I ate part of a piece of pie. It was good pie, but I didn't want all of it.

Andy had a plateful of bones and a lot of stale bread with gravy over it. He made a good meal, but there was too much for him, and he had to quit when over half what I'd given him was still on the plate. It was the first time that that had ever happened to Andy, and I had to laugh to see him give up and quit. He looked puzzled, as though he were afraid he was getting old. So I wrapped the rest of his meal up in a piece of newspaper for next time. Then we went out of the restaurant's back door and down the hill to where there was a railroad yard that ran alongside the river. There was a big pile of railroad ties there, and I climbed up on them and slept in the sunshine for about four hours.

Probably I'd have slept longer than that, if Andy hadn't waked me up with his growling. He was

making a terrible noise in his throat, and I could hear a man crying. I'd never heard a man cry like that before, and I looked over the edge of the pile of ties to see what it was all about.

There was a tramp lying there, and Andy was standing squarely over him, ready to crush the tramp's throat, if he should even try to get up. Gee! but that fellow was a scared one. I told Andy to let him get up, and the tramp did so, but he was still scared. I asked him what had happened, and he said that he hadn't been doing a thing. He said he was just walking by, when Andy jumped on him and knocked him down. That puzzled me for a moment, because it didn't sound like Andy to do that. Then I noticed that my fiddle was lying on the ground, instead of being on top the pile of ties, where I'd laid it, and in a flash I understood what was going on. That tramp had seen that I was asleep, and had tried to steal my fiddle. He must not have known that Andy was my dog, because, as a rule, tramps are terribly afraid of dogs. Anyhow, this one would be that way from now on, which would be a good thing because then he would be honest whenever there was a dog around.

Of course, when I had collared Andy, the tramp got very brave and tried to show off. He said he was going to call a policeman and have me arrested

and Andy shot. That didn't worry me any, because I knew that calling a policeman would be just about the last thing in the world that a tramp, who had been trying to steal, would think of doing. Tramps don't tell their troubles to police officers. They know better than that.

But it just happened that a policeman did show up there while the tramp was talking about calling one, and he went through the tramp's clothes to see if he had a pistol. The tramp didn't have any; so the policeman didn't arrest him. He just told him to get out of that town and stay out. Then the policeman turned to me and told me to run along and take my music lesson, if I hadn't yet had it, and, if I had had it, to get for home.

"If I catch you hanging around this railroad yard again, I'll run you in," he told me, and I answered, "Yes Sir," as politely as I knew how, and got out of there as fast as I could go without running. So far, it was my lucky day. If it hadn't been a Saturday, he'd have picked me up for a truant, just as sure as a gun's a pistol.

Sleeping in the sun certainly does make you hungry. I'd had the biggest meal of my whole life only a bit over four hours before, and now I was as hungry as if food and I had been strangers all our lives. So I went back to the Greek restaurant again

and ate a good lunch that I paid money for. Andy waited outside for me, and, when I came out, I offered him the bones I'd saved from his breakfast, but he wasn't hungry yet. So I put the package back in my pocket; it made me feel more comfortable to know where his supper was coming from. A fellow shouldn't keep a dog unless he's willing to do his worrying for him, you know.

Being sure that I'd have plenty of money as soon as I'd sold my fiddle, I thought I could afford a nickel for a chocolate bar and a penny to weigh myself. You just have to waste a few cents now and then, you see, or you never get the full enjoyment there is in earning and having money. That penny was well spent, anyhow, for I found out that I'd gained six pounds since I'd left Chicago, which proved that hiking hadn't hurt me any. I'd been wet and cold many times in those six weeks, but I'd eaten pretty regularly after the first day or so, and I'd got in some right good fishing. All in all, I hadn't had a bad time of it, except of course, for lonesomeness and one dog-bite and a toe that was stubbed pretty badly. So I felt pretty good, as I went along, eating my chocolate bar and looking for the right place to sell my fiddle.

I passed two or three music stores that were away too swagger for me to go into with bare feet

and patched pants, but it began to look as if there wasn't any store there of the kind I was hunting. You can never tell, though, for just as I was going to give up for a while, and look for a place to sit down and rest, I found exactly the store I wanted. It was on a little side street that had barely missed being an alley, and it was a kind of musty, dusty-looking old place; but there was no question about its being a fiddle store, for the window was full of them.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE store had looked queer enough from the street, but when I got inside the door I saw that the place was even stranger than I had thought. Along one side of the room was an old show-case that hadn't had any varnish on it for more years than I was old. It was a tall show-case with shelves in it, and both shelves were loaded with fiddles; big fiddles, middle-sized fiddles, and little fiddles. One of them was so small that I guess it must have been meant for a dwarf. Then there were wires strung across the room up near the ceiling, and on these wires fiddles were hung by the neck, for all the world like butcher-shop turkeys the week before Thanksgiving. There was no oil-cloth on the floor, but it surely needed one, for it was so old that it was all worn splintery. At the back of the room was a door-way. There was no door there, though. The door-way was just closed by a curtain that had been green once, but wasn't any more.

When I opened the door from the street, a little bell tinkled in the room that was back of the curtain, and a voice called out, "All right." Then, in a minute, the fiddle-shop man came through the

door-way. He looked, somehow, as though he had been a very large man, when he was young, but had got all dried up and stooped over as he grew old, for now he was thin and wrinkled and so



I tried to jerk away from the old fellow

humped that he was only two or three inches taller than I was.

His eyes had faded until they scarcely were blue at all any more, but he could see all right in spite of all the dust that was on his queer old spectacles, because he seemed to look right through me, as I

went up to him and said, "Excuse me, Sir, but would you like to buy——?" which was as far as I got when he grabbed me in both his arms and most hugged the life out of me. As he did so, the old fellow yelled out, "Jim, you little devil, you quit playing tricks like that on your poor old dad. Poppy's old, and he doesn't like it. You oughtn't to use Poppy that way."

I tried to jerk away from the old fellow, but, withered as he was, he was really very strong, and held onto me so tightly that I was as helpless as a baby. It was a lucky thing for him that I'd left Andy outside. If I hadn't, I'm afraid he'd have bitten that old man terribly. Andy'd never allow anyone to hurt or frighten me, when he was around, I know. As it was, Andy heard me yell out for the old man to let me go and, thinking I was in trouble threw himself against the glass of the street-door so hard that it was a wonder he didn't come right through it.

Well, Sir, the old man kept on a-talking and a-hugging me, and pretty soon I saw that he didn't mean me any harm, but really had a notion that I was his boy, and was tickled to death to see me. So I quit trying to get away from him, and promised I'd not run out of the door, if he let go of me. Then he said, "All right, Jim; kiss Poppy," and I

did. He was awfully whiskery, but I stood it better than I thought I could.

But, just as soon as I began to try to argue him out of the notion that I belonged to him, the old fellow began to get worked up again, so that I knew I was never going to get out of my promise to him in that way, and had to try something else. So I said to him, "Poppy, may I let my dog into the store?"

"Let Pedro in? Why not?" said he. "When did I ever make Pedro stay outside? You and he must both be nearly starved to death, anyhow. The idea of you two gallivanting around for a week and a half at a time." Then I let Andy in, and the poor old man made an awful fuss over him, calling him Pedro, though, instead of Andy.

Now, as a general rule, Andy treats strangers as though they weren't on earth at all. He's never cross, unless they bother him or me, but he's no puppy to go playing around with every Tom, Dick, or Harry that comes along. So, I was more than a bit surprised to see him almost wriggle himself out of his skin, when the old man began to pet him. I have a lot of confidence in Andy's judgment of folks; so I said to myself, "This old man probably is crazy, for he acts that way, but, crazy or not, he must be a fine fellow or Andy wouldn't make up

with him like that. Having decided on that much, I decided also that I might as well stick around a while, seeing as how I wasn't in any particular hurry and was welcome.

The old man gave us both a fine feed, mostly canned stuff, but all right at that. Then after we'd sat and talked for an hour or so, with him doing most of the talking and me understanding what I could, he told me it was time for me to get to bed. My bed was a shake-down on the floor, and Andy's was a bit of old rag carpet, but we were a lot better off than we'd have been in any hay-mow. Besides, Poppy Vaughn said he'd hunt me up a new bed in the morning. "For the life of me, I can't remember where I set your old one," said he.

It looked as though Andy and I were in for a long stay with a lunatic, but as I whispered to Andy, "There are worse folks than a right nice lunatic. Being crazy would improve some people a lot."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

EVERY time I get to thinking that I'm smart enough to make a plan and stick to it, something turns up to knock my figuring for a block-long row of ash-cans. For instance, I went into Poppy Vaughn's shop intending to stay, at most, five or ten minutes, just long enough to sell my fiddle and be on my way, but by the time I got away from that shop for keeps I was months older than I was when I first went in the door.

Not that I'd have had any real trouble in getting away, if I'd really wanted to skip out, for I wouldn't have had; but that I didn't want to make myself a liar. You see, every time I went out of the door, the old fellow made me promise him to be back in an hour or two, or three, as the case might be. Then he'd cock his head over on one side, and say, "All right, Jim. Have a good time. Poppy knows you wouldn't lie to him on purpose." Now, I ask you, what can a fellow do with an old fool like that, except to keep the word he's passed?

Even lying about coming back might not have bothered me any at first, but I didn't want to start out without getting the money I knew my fiddle was worth, or else the fiddle itself, and he seemed

to think the fiddle was his, and kept it over back of his bench, except when he made me practice on it, which was two hours every day. Of course, I could have helped myself to as much money as I thought the fiddle was worth, and have just walked off with it, because Poppy didn't hide his money from me at all like he did from other folks, but that would have been away too close to stealing to suit me. Besides, if I took too much, I'd have been an honest-to-goodness thief, and if I didn't take enough I'd have been half thief and half fool. I don't know anything worse than that. The whole business was too mixed up for my head, so I sort of let things slide, and just stuck around to see what would happen. That's always a very comfortable way, even though it doesn't often get you anywhere. I do that way a lot.

Poppy was pretty rich. He had over a hundred fiddles, worth whatever people might pay for them, besides nearly nine hundred dollars that he kept in the old coffee-can on his work-bench. The coffee-can had two tops and no bottom. I mean, that is, that both ends were tops and that the bottom was inside, about the middle of the can. The top top was usually off the can, and you saw only a lot of tuning pegs for fiddles, but when you put the top top on and turned the coffee-can upside down, you

could lift off the bottom too and see the money. I thought that was a pretty slick scheme for a crazy man to figure out all by himself, and I think so yet.

The nine hundred dollars was all in big bills. One of them was a five hundred dollar one, and I used to wonder what it would be like to walk into a restaurant and lay that bill down to pay for a mess of ham and eggs. I'd be willing to bet they'd think you were a millionaire, if you did that. I asked Poppy, and he gave me a sharp look and said, "Jim, you keep away from that can. If you want any money take it out of the drawer. What's in the drawer is yours and mine. What's in the coffee-can is all mine." That would have been pie for me, if I'd really been Jim Vaughn, for I could have taken a bit every day until my fiddle was paid for. But I wasn't going to take any such advantage of the old man's craziness. I knew mighty well that Dad would have whaled me for anything like that, if he'd been alive, and I wasn't doing things I knew Dad would have hated, when I knew what they were. He'd told me that, when you want to do a thing and don't know whether or not it's wrong, you can pretty safely bet it is. So I let Poppy Vaughn's money alone, cash-drawer, coffee-can and all.

Eating Poppy's food and sleeping in back of his

shop didn't worry me any, though, because I figured I just about earned my keep and Andy's by the work I did. I swept out the shop every day, and I did most of the cooking and about all the dish-washing. The place was pretty dirty when I came, and I guess Poppy sort of liked it that way, for he grumbled a lot at first, whenever I slicked things up a bit. I'm a perfect fool about cleanliness, though, and want my bed made up fresh every Saturday, and my dishes held under the faucet every day. I may be finicky, but I just can't help it. It's my nature, I guess.

There was another way that I helped to earn my keep and that was by practicing two hours a day on the violin, learning to play by note, which was an awful nuisance, and a waste of time, too, because playing by ear is a whole lot easier. But Poppy said ear-playing was an abomination, and he threatened to lick me every time he caught me at it. He said that there was only one decent way to fiddle, and that was to play by note until you knew the piece so well that you didn't need notes any more, which is all foolishness, as anybody can see. For, if you are going to quit using the notes by and by, why fool with them to start? But you can't argue with a lunatic, even when he's as nice as Poppy Vaughn. So I let him have his way,

which is a good plan with lunatics and most other folks.

Poppy couldn't fiddle worth a hang, himself, which was a funny thing, when you remember that he could make or fix a violin better than anybody else anywhere, except for some fellows that had been dead a hundred years. Everybody said that, and all the musicians in that part of the state used to bring their fiddles to the old man when they needed fixing. Once a really great fiddler came to town to play a concert, and he visited Poppy, and played for him on the special fiddle the old man kept locked up in a drawer. Poppy called it a Guarnerius and said that there weren't more than a dozen fellows in the world that were fit to play on it.

Another funny thing about Poppy Vaughn was that, though he couldn't play music, he could make it up, and write it down on paper for other folks to play. People had found out about that, and once in a while somebody would come in and whistle a tune for him to write down, or they would have one written down, but it would be wrong some way, and the old man would have to fix it for them. Sometimes they'd pay him for his work along that line, but usually they'd just say that they'd come back and settle up. They never did, though. I

guess they'd forget all about it, and so would he.

Poppy loved to talk politics, but he was all mixed up about it. He'd be talking about the World Court, or something, and, all of a sudden, he'd stop short and lay one finger along his nose. Then he'd wink at me and say that King George, or Mussolini, or the president had been in to see him and had told him all about it. Then, when I'd tell him that there wasn't anything in the papers about their being in town, he'd look very wise and say, "Naturally, my boy. Incog, Sonny, incog." He certainly was incog, all right, the incoggest man I ever met; but he was mighty interesting company at that.

As I've already told you, one of the things Poppy was incog about was that idea of his that I was his boy, Jim, and I wondered if there'd ever really been such a person until one day I got to looking over some old books he had and found the name James Vaughn in some of them, together with the dates when Poppy had given them to him. They were very old books. The very newest one had written on the blank page in front, "To Jim from Poppy and Mom on his fourteenth birthday, July 10th, 1888." So I figured that, if Jim was living, he was an old man by now. I found out afterwards, though, that Jim and his mother had been drowned on an excursion, and that Poppy had been

sort of cracked ever since. He'd tried to grab a lot of different boys, thinking that each one was Jim, but I was the first one that hadn't had anybody to interfere. The cop on the corner next to Poppy's shop told me about that. He asked me if I had any folks, and when I told him I didn't know, he told me I might be a lot worse off some place else and would be wise to say nothing and to stay where I was.

You'd think that I'd have been scared stiff at living with a crazy man that way, but I wasn't the least bit, after I'd really got to know him. When you like folks you don't mind their being crazy at all, and I was happier than I'd been at any time since Dad died. Poppy needed me, and being needed is about the most useful thing there is to keep a fellow contented.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

COMPARED to Chicago, Peoria isn't such a very big town, but there are quite a lot of people there at that, and an average number of them are boys, which makes it an all-right kind of place for a boy like me to live. It didn't take me very long to begin to get acquainted, and in that I found Andy a great help, because everybody wants to know a fellow who has the best dog in town.

The name of the boy, who lived in the flat above Poppy's shop was George Zeller. He was a very nice boy. He was in first year at high-school, but he was nearly a year younger than I was. I'd only been through seventh grade myself on account of not having gone to school as regular as I ought.

George didn't have any dog, because his mother said they tracked in dirt, but he cottened to Andy right away, and when he came home from school the Monday after I got to town, he showed me an alley where we could catch rats. We had a fine time that afternoon and Andy caught seventeen rats, which George said was probably a world record. George was a pretty smart boy, all right. He knew how to get in the papers. What he did,

was to tie all the rats on a string by their tails. Then he took hold of one end of the string and I took hold of the other and we went down and stood in front of the newspaper office until a man came out and took our picture. Andy was in the pic-



Andy caught seventeen rats

ture, too, which was only fair, as he was the one who had caught the rats. They printed the picture the next day.

I guess it's easier to get your picture in the paper in a small town than in a really big city; for in Chicago Andy'd been catching rats for over

two years and no paper had ever thought of printing anything about it. I told George that, but he said that was because Andy needed a manager, and had never really had one before. Pete Johnson said so, too, and so did Frank Beckert and both of the Pahlman boys.

Of course, I told the fellows my real name, but they all understood that they weren't to call me anything except Jim when Poppy Vaughn was around. They stuck to it, too, and called me that, even when I was with them alone; so that pretty soon I was so used to being Jim instead of Jack that I might not have turned around to see who it was, if someone had called me by my right name. When anybody new asked me my name, I always said, "My friends call me Jim, and you can do that if you want to," which wasn't a lie, but served the purpose just as well as a lie would have done, and left me feeling ever so much more honest. I guess people usually believe about what you want them to believe, without your needing to tell lies, anyhow.

When Sunday came around, I went to Sunday School with George Zeller, and he gave my name to the teacher as Jim Vaughn, which was what she wrote down in her little book. She made quite a fuss over George for bringing me. She was a very

nice teacher but kind of dumb. I don't believe she would have lasted long in a regular day school. She couldn't keep discipline well enough.

One of the other Sunday Schools was having a new membership contest between its classes, and a contest in how much the scholars knew. You got ten points for knowing the golden text and another ten points for each of the commandments and beatitudes you could recite; but new scholars were good for fifty points apiece. George Zeller's Sunday School only allowed twenty-five points for new scholars. I'd have preferred to go to the school where they'd value me the highest, but George Zeller and one of the Pahlman boys had a wrestling match about it, and George won. George was a very good wrestler. He could throw me sometimes, but not always.

The wrestling match between George and the Pahlman boy might have ended up in a fight, if I hadn't found out that George's Sunday School came an hour and a quarter earlier than the other one, and offered to go to that one too, if the Pahlman boys would let me play their mouth organ when I wanted to. At that, I lost on the deal, because the collection cost me a nickel, and I could have rented the mouth organ all day for three cents. But both Sunday Schools had the same lesson, and

my having been all over it once that morning, made me the best pupil in my class at the second school. So I marched up in front with the smartest one from each of the other classes, and the superintendent gave each of us a picture card with a wreath of flowers and a verse printed on it. It was all very nice, but I wouldn't care for two Sunday Schools the same day as a regular thing. It's too much of a strain on a fellow. The text on my card was, "Thou shalt not lie," which made me glad that I hadn't claimed my name really was Jim Vaughn.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

IT'S QUEER, when you stop to think of it, how quickly you can settle down in a new place, and get to feeling as though you had lived there all your life. That's how it was with me at Poppy's. It wasn't that I'd forgotten Dad, or about having lived in Chicago, or about my being on my way to Missouri. It was just that it seemed easier to sort of drift along, sweeping out the shop, helping with the kitchen-work, and playing around with George Zeller and the other boys, than it would be to make any effort to be on my way. It almost seemed to me that Jack Bradford had been some other boy, whom I had known a long time back, and that I really was Jim Vaughn. I even took to calling my dog Pedro, instead of Andy, because Poppy Vaughn did.

A little thing like that doesn't bother Andy, though. He doesn't care what I call him; only wanting me to call him often. Andy understands contentment right well. All he wants is regular meals, a dry bed and me to talk to him.

About my life before coming to Poppy Vaughn's, I told the fellows in our gang little or nothing, that I'd lost my parents and had come to live with



Andy was standing squarely over him

Poppy, and let them take anything they wanted for granted. My being there was a good thing for the old man, though, because the boys had used to bother him a lot by opening the door of his shop and yelling at him, because they knew he was kind of cracked. They quit that because I lived with Poppy and they liked me, but they would have had to quit it anyhow. I would never have stood for their bothering the old fellow. Crazy or not, he was good to me and to my dog, and anybody who treats me and Andy right is a pal of ours.

Vacation for the Peoria schools began the week after I landed there, which was a great relief for me, as with the schools going on I'd never have kept out of them. Not that I objected to school, for I intended to go again, but I wasn't planning to stay forever with Poppy; I was going to be on my way to my grandfather's when I got around to it. Besides, if I went to school, there was an even chance of my affairs being nosed into, and then I might be sent back to Chicago to be taken into court. The best that I could hope from that was that I'd be sent to some orphanage to be raised. I wanted to raise myself, and if an orphanage took over the job, they probably wouldn't do it my way. Besides, I'd have to give up Andy. Orphanages are all right,

I guess, but I'd rather have Andy and sleep in a hay-stack than own every orphanage there is.

Well, anyhow it was vacation, and that's always a nice time. It's nicest, though, when there's a river handy, and you have the use of a canoe. The Pahlman boys had one—a canoe, I mean—and they used to take George Zeller, and me and Andy along with them. Most dogs would be in the way in a canoe, and as likely as not to upset you, but Andy wasn't that way at all. He'd sit in the bow, looking out over the water, and never moving at all except to turn his head; but quiet as he was, you could tell that he was enjoying himself as much as the rest of us.

So Andy always got to go along, when we paddled down to Pekin Lake after perch and sun-fish, or bull-heads. Once we caught over a hundred fish and, after we'd had a good swim at the sand-bar, and had let Andy rescue us, when we pretended to be drowning, we had a fry and cooked our whole catch. They tasted fine, but, afterwards, we were so filled up with fish and with rye-bread and bananas and cheese that we had to stretch out in the sun for most three hours, before we were able to paddle back up stream to town.

It was away after dark when I got home to Poppy Vaughn's, and the old man was so worried

about me that he was almost wild. He was so relieved to get me back that he licked me, and I had to tie Andy in the back yard while I was getting my medicine, for fear that he might chew Poppy. I'd figured that the old man was entitled to relieve his feelings, and that the licking wouldn't amount to much, which would have worked out all right, if I hadn't forgotten about being freshly re-sunburned. Licking is very bad for sunburn.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

LOAFING is a very nice way to put in a part of your time during the summer, provided that you have something pleasant to think about while you're doing it. When you haven't, loafing is an awful bore. Usually, though, I can always think of something I'd like to do, or be, or have, or somewhere I'd like to go.

One of the nicest subjects that I've ever found for that kind of thinking is, what I'd do with a million dollars, if I had it. I put in a lot of time at thinking of that, until, one day, I happened to see down in one corner of a newspaper that the interest on a million dollars was almost two hundred dollars a day. Right away, then, I knew that I didn't want any million dollars because, if I had it, I'd have to hire someone to help me spend my income, and I prefer to spend my money myself.

Of course, a fellow could hire a lot of plasterers to work for him at ten or twelve dollars a day, and could have a lot of fun bossing them, but he'd be paid for having the job done, and would be just where he started out, besides being all tired out and unable to enjoy himself when the day was over. Bossing is very wearing work, you know.

So, as a million dollars was much too much, I cut myself down to a hundred thousand and got along some better, though even that was a strain. But when I had reduced my plans to a couple of thousands, I got along fine. A fellow like me wouldn't have any trouble at all in getting rid of a couple of thousands. I know, because I walked up and down Adams and Jefferson streets, and had everything figured out in less than an hour; it wasn't even hard work.

First, I picked out a long pants suit that would have looked fine on me. I surely needed it, too, for my clothes were so small for me by that time that the only reason I could wear them was that they were broken in enough places to make them fairly comfortable.

Having attended to the clothes question, I next picked out an automobile that just suited me. It had a green body and red wheels, and there was a place in back, where I could put my new clothes and a tent to sleep in. That automobile cost twelve hundred dollars, which would have made quite a hole in my two thousand, if I had had it.

I figured that with an automobile like that and a few hundred dollars cash in my pockets, I could roll up before the door of my Missouri grandfather in style, and that he would be mighty proud to have

me for a relative; especially with Andy sitting on the seat beside me, and wearing one of those fancy harness affairs that all rich folks' dogs have.

Thinking about spending all that money gave me a very pleasant afternoon, and by the time I had to go back to Poppy's and peel the potatoes for supper, it seemed to me that I really had had the money. It was such a jolt to me to come back to being as poor as ever, after being rich all afternoon, that I decided to keep my imagination down to what I'd do with a dollar, if I ever had one again. That was a snap. If I had a dollar, I'd go to the circus that was advertised as coming to town in a couple of weeks.

Now, as a matter of fact, I had had over a dollar, when I landed at Poppy's, but I'd been down the river a few times with George Zeller and the Pahlman boys, and my share of the food for the trips had cost money. That didn't take all of it, of course, but one day it had been so hot that I decided that I just naturally had to have a chocolate ice-cream soda. Then just as I'd started to get my nose into that soda, who should show up but the Pahlman boys.

They're wonders that way, those Pahlmans. You might be broke for two weeks and never lay eyes on one of them; but just as sure as a gun's a pistol, if

you found yourself with a dime and set out to treat yourself to a few gum drops, you'd look up to see at least one Pahlman standing there and looking hungry. You had to ask them to share your treat with you, too, because they were the only fel-



I had never been to a circus

lows in our gang that had a canoe. Fellows who own canoes have to be treated right by anybody who's half-way polite and who enjoys going canoe-riding.

Anyhow, my money was gone, and it was up to me to earn some more, if I was intending to have

a seat at that circus. One thing I was certain of, and that was that I didn't have any intention of taking advantage of Poppy's craziness by accepting his invitation to help myself from the cash-drawer. I'd made up my mind that I wasn't going to do that, if I never saw a circus in all my born days.

But, every time that I looked at those circus billboards, I felt more and more the need of going to see that show. I was fourteen years old and had never been to a circus in all my life. When I'd had the money, there had been no circus, and, when there'd been a circus, I'd never had the money. Things are that way a lot of times with me. I'm afraid I'm just different that way.

So, there was nothing for me to do, if I wanted to see that show, except to get me a part-time job somewhere. It would have to be a part-time one, because at Poppy's I had to do dishes and help with the cooking, as well as practice at violin-playing, which was even worse than the dish-washing. Dish-washing isn't so bad, when no one looks them over after you're through.

Did you ever sit down on an old box in the alley and try to figure out a plan to get some money right away? It sounds easy until you try it. First, you decide that you'll make something and sell it,

but you soon see that you cannot do that without tools and material. Tools and material cost money, and, if you had money you would not need to make anything to get some. So, you give that idea up, and look around for a better one.

Next, you decide that you'll sell something that you already have on hand, and you go into the house and paw over the junk in your dresser to see what you can get along without. There's a lot of it, but the trouble with it is that anybody else could do without it just about as well as you could, because it was no good in the first place, and is all worn out, besides. At least, it was that way with me, when I was at Poppy's. I had a perfectly good shot-gun without any barrel or trigger, a watch with half the works missing, and a violin that I couldn't take out of Poppy's sight.

Of course, I had Andy, and almost anybody that had money would jump at the chance to buy a dog like him. But, though I'm pretty mean sometimes, I never have got to the stage where I'd think seriously of selling Andy for circus money, or any other kind of money, either. A fellow that would sell his dog for pleasure is too mean even to think about. I wouldn't trust him for a used two-cent stamp.

So, take it altogether, things were looking far from circusy for me that week.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

ONE of the most hindering things there is to a fellow who is sort of thinking about maybe looking for a job is not knowing exactly what kind of a job he's thinking of looking for. I found that out, when I picked up a morning newspaper and began reading the help-wanted ads. There were several places open that I'd rather have liked to have, but I sort of figured that they weren't looking for boys to fill them. For instance; one ad called for a steam-shovel operator.

Now, there's a *real* job for you, for a steam-shovel is about the most human piece of hardware that there is. Maybe, though, I ought to say animal-like, instead of human, for it slides its long neck out like a mossy, old mud-turtle, and then lowers its head as a horse does, and, grazes along the ground, biting off sand, gravel, dirt and big pieces of smashed-up concrete, as if they were good to eat and it was hungry. I know I'm not the only fellow that's been hit with that notion, because, over at the library there's a book with a lot of faked-up pictures that pretend to be photographs of animals living here about 400,000 years ago. Of course anyone knows that there were no photog-

raphers in town that far back, and that the writer got the idea of such animals from watching a steam-shovel.

The man that runs the steam-shovel is a mighty smooth article, too, as a rule. He just stands up there on his little platform, and pulls the right lever without bothering to look and see which one it is. He makes that steam-shovel mind him as smoothly as though it were a trick poodle, and he a ring-master. You can bet your last dollar that I'd like to be a crack steam-shovel engineer, and stand up there doing my stuff, with half the loafers in town hanging over a board railing to gawk at me.

I spent so much time that morning making mind-pictures of myself as a steam-shovel man that I almost missed the advertisement that really fitted me. It was away down in one corner of the paper and was only three lines. You could tell from reading it that the fellow, who'd put it in, had counted his words to make the lines come out even. He'd have to be that sort, or he wouldn't advertise for a large, strong boy, because that kind of ad always means that someone is wanted, who has a back strong enough to do a man's work, and a mind weak enough to accept a boy's wages. When the ad calls for an old man, you can bet that they're

not figuring on paying out much money either. That morning, though, I didn't figure much about what might be behind the ad. I just answered it, and let it go at that.

The address given in the paper showed that the place was way up on the hill, all of three miles from Poppy Vaughn's shop, and I'd have had to take a street-car to get there, if I hadn't had Andy for company. A good dog can sure save a fellow a lot of carfare that way, though he probably slows him down a bit sometimes. It's worth it, though.

When I got to the house that was mentioned in the advertisement, I almost backed down about hunting a job there, because the place was so big I reckoned I wouldn't be swell enough for it, but I noticed the grass had needed cutting for a long time, which took the edge off a bit. So I went around to the back door, and rang the bell there. Lots of fine places have back-door bells.

Well, anyhow, I rang that door-bell and when a hired girl came to answer it, I told her why I was there, and she let me in. She led me through a little hall and then through a big one that opened into a front room large enough to hold a church meeting, if there'd been enough chairs. There weren't, though. The furniture was nice but kind of frail and skimpy, and there wasn't much of it.

There wasn't even a center-table, and the rugs were all away too small for such a big floor.

We went across that room and stopped before a door over in one corner. The woman rapped, and the crossest voice I'd ever heard yelled out, "Well, what do you want?"



The door was locked

"It's Katie, Sir," said the hired girl.

"I know that, you old fool," the voice answered. "I didn't ask who you were. I asked what the deuce you wanted."

"There's a boy here looking for work, Sir. He says there was an ad in the paper."

“Well, why don’t you bring him in, instead of hanging around and chinning through the door like a galumping galoot?” cried the voice, angrier than ever. So Katie took hold of the door-knob and tried to get into the room, but the door was locked.

“Take your time! Take your time, you old granny!” called out whoever was behind the door. “Can’t you even tell when a door is locked?” Then there was the sound of rubber tired wheels crossing the floor, and the door was unlocked and opened with a jerk.

The man who opened it was in a wheel-chair. He had a face that was as cross as his voice, with sunk-in black eyes that seemed to look right through a fellow. His hair was long and black with gray in it, and it looked as though it never had been combed, while his teeth were so big and so white that they made me think of the old wolf in the fairy story. His arms and chest and shoulders were thick and strong, but his legs were as thin and as weak-looking as a very little boy’s. You could tell right away that he couldn’t use them. At first look, I thought he was an old man, but a second one told me that the lines in his face came from hurt and from being angry all the time. It made me feel both scared and sorry just to see him.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE room I went into was a crackajack. There were cases around the walls with books enough to last a fellow a most tremendous time, and on the floor were animal skins—one was a tiger's and another a bear's—that would have been wonderful to lie on when you read. I love to read and I can enjoy it much better when I lie on my stomach and let my heels knock together, but it's awfully hard on the elbows when it's done on a bare floor or an oil-cloth.

There was a plenty of pictures in the room, too, some of them painted ones and some photographs. One of the photographs was of a boy about my size or a bit bigger and he was wearing a foot-ball suit and holding the ball under his arm. There was a good-natured smile on his face, and I didn't blame him. I'd like to be photographed like that myself. It gave me a shivery kind of a start, though, when I noticed that the face of the boy in the picture was a lot like that of the crippled man in the wheel-chair. He saw that I'd noticed that and it seemed to make him angry again, for he yelled at me.

“Well, if you're through playing that you're in

a museum and gaping around, we'll talk business. How old are you?"

"Fourteen, Sir," I answered him.

"Can you work hard?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Well, will you, if I give you a job?"

"Yes, Sir."

"How many hours a day?"

"From ten until four. I have to practice my music before Poppy'll let me out."

"What do you mean by Poppy?" he yelled. "You talk like a bottle-baby. If you mean your father, say so."

"He's not my father. Dad's not living," I answered as quietly as I could, though I was getting madder every minute.

"Hump," grunted the man. "Father dead, eh? He's lucky." Then he leaned forward and pointed his finger straight at me and almost yelled, "Do you steal?"

I almost boiled over at that, I was so mad. "You can keep your darned old job," I said. "You probably wouldn't pay me, anyhow," and I stuck my cap on right in the house, and started for the door. Say; you never saw such a change in your life as came over that man then. He called me back and apologized to me and asked me to shake hands.



Andy sat in the bow, looking out over the water

What he wanted done was to have the yard around the house cleaned up, and he wheeled himself out on the porch, and watched me, while I started to work. There was plenty to do, because he had been gone for a couple of months, or more, and the grass had been allowed to grow so long you couldn't push a mower through it, but had to cut it all with a sickle first.

I was busy in that yard all the spare time I had for four days, before I got the grass whacked down with the sickle and a big pair of shears to where I could do anything with a lawn-mower. Even then it didn't look any too good, because, when grass gets too long, it is sort of dead underneath.

All the time I was working, Andy would lie under a tree and watch me. He was a great encouragement to me, because the sickle handle made my hands so sore that I had to hold them under the hose-nozzle to cool the blisters. Then I'd rest a few minutes and visit with Andy. A good dog is always a comfort to a fellow.

The fifth day was Saturday, and that day I had only to run the lawn-mower and smooth-up the job. It was so much easier than snagging off long grass with a sickle that I made the old mower hum, I can tell you. There was an awful lot of lawn, but in three hours I was all through and had the rake and

mower put away in the back room of the garage where they belonged.

Then Mr. Barnes wheeled himself out the front door and had me let his chair down the steps, so that he could look at the job. He found fault every place he could and was so cross that Andy got suspicious, and growled at him. He hadn't noticed before that Andy was with me, and he hollered at him to get out, but of course Andy paid no attention to him. Andy takes his orders from me.

So Mr. Barnes said, "Here's your money; now take your hound and get off my place," and instead of the two or three dollars I expected, he handed me a single quarter. A quarter, mind you, for nearly twenty-five hours work. I'd had a lot of mean tricks played me, but that was the meanest. There was nothing I could do about it, though. I couldn't sass a cripple or of set my dog on him. The tears came into my eyes a bit, I'm afraid, but I just held my head up and laid the quarter on his chair arm. I said, "I couldn't think of charging for a charity job." I'd a said that, if I was to be hanged for it.

Then I started to turn away, but Mr. Barnes grabbed my arm, and I saw he was laughing. It was the first time I'd seen him do that.

"Youngster," he said, "before you start working

for strangers, always make a bargain with them. You're sure to be cheated, if you don't. I had an estimate of twenty dollars on this job, but it was too high. Sixteen strikes me as fair. How about it?"

I tried to say that it was too much, but the only word that would come was "Gee!" Then he gave me the money, and I put it in my right hand hip-pocket, which was the only one that was in shape to be trusted, and started away again.

But he called me back once more and asked me how I was fixed for sporting goods. First off, I didn't know what he meant; then I recollected and told him I had a good yarn ball. So he laughed again, and had his hired girl fetch out a big box that was almost filled up with balls, and bats, and foot-ball things. They were all old, but mighty good. He told me to help myself, and I took a bat and a tennis racket. I'd have liked a lot more of the stuff, but I'm no hog. I think it kind of tickled Mr. Barnes, too, that I wasn't, because he smiled at me and shook hands again. He told me to cut the grass every week; so that it wouldn't get in any such condition again and said the price would be a dollar each time, which was mighty handsome, I think.

When I got to the corner, I glanced back and Mr. Barnes was still sitting there in his wheel chair, looking after me. I waved at him and then Andy and I turned the corner and went down the hill, rich as kings and a million times happier.



CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

MONEY is mighty mean stuff in some ways. When you have none, you feel like a tramp, and every place you look, you see something you simply have to have, and can't get; so you decide to earn some money right away. Then you get some kind of a job and work your head nearly off to get that money.

Bye and bye, it's pay-day and you feel fine when you get your cash. But does that feeling last? It does not. You're perfectly miserable until you get that money spent.

Oh, I admit that it's fine to stand with your hands in your pockets and clink two half dollars together with each fist, leaning over a little, now and then, to make the new paper money in your hip-pocket crackle a bit. I like that fine and Andy seems to like it, too, for he'll sit looking up at me with his head on one side, and giving a bark now and then.

Yes, it's very nice to crinkle and clink your money for a little while, but unless you're a lot different from me, it's not going to take you very long to find yourself in front of a store, and then you're a goner, because the outside of a store is only the

thickness of an unlocked glass door from the inside, and an unlocked store door never stopped anybody. It's not intended to stop them, either. So it was perfectly natural that, with sixteen dollars in my pocket and a little time on my hands, I took a walk along Adams Street, and looked in the windows at the clothes and things.

The more I looked at new clothes, the shabbier my old ones seemed to me, which was no wonder, when I stopped to think about the fact that I had had them for eight months and had spent three weeks of that time tramping and sleeping in barns and hay-stacks. Besides, I had grown over three inches since I got the pants I was wearing, and I was twelve pounds heavier.

"Well," said I to myself, "it's no disgrace to be shabby when you're broke, but a fellow ought to be slicked up a bit when he has the price. So I laid aside a dollar for circus money, and went into a store to price suits.

It didn't take long to see that I'd had my last short-pants suit, which was a jolt to me in a way; not that I wasn't glad to be growing up, but long-pants suits cost more money. Still, I could make it, I figured.

But as soon as I tried on a pair of long pants and looked in the mirror, I knew I was done for,

because long pants and bare feet is a combination that you just can't get away with at all.

So I thanked the salesman and said I guessed I'd wait a couple of weeks.

He was a wizard, that salesman, for he guessed



Long pants and bare feet is a combination you can't get away with

right off what was the matter, and made me wait while he figured a bit with me. He was the sort of man a fellow would just naturally loosen up and talk to, and in five minutes he had my story, and had worked out a scheme that fixed me up finely. Here is what I bought:

1 Pair corduroy pants.....	\$ 5.50
(They were dandies too)	
2 Shirts (not blouses but regular men's work-shirts)...	2.00
3 Pairs of socks.....	1.00
Garters35
2 Suits of summer underwear. I'd never worn any before, but the salesman said it was more respectable	1.80
1 Classy necktie75
1 Strong pair rubber-soled shoes	3.00
1 Trip to barber shop for a bath and a hair cut.....	1.00
	<hr/>
	\$15.40

Leaving me 50 cents for my circus ticket and a dime to go on until time to cut Mr. Barnes' lawn again.

Mr. Sprague, the salesman, did my things up in two packages, one for me to wear as soon as I'd had my bath, and the other with the extra things for me to carry along, and I went around the corner to the barber shop.

Andy was sure proud of me, and knew me right away as soon as I came out of the barber-shop

bath-room (a bath doesn't make you smell any different to your dog), but I was afraid Poppy Vaughn would think me a stranger and not let me in. But, pshaw! Poppy never even noticed that I'd changed at all. That man certainly was incog.



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

ONE thing I do better than most fellows is wondering. I can be sitting still thinking about nothing at all one minute, and the next I'll have wonder-wandered myself half-way round the world. You might think that would be a hard thing to do, and I suppose it is for most folks, but for me it's no trouble at all. I never bother to decide what I'll wonder about, either. I just sit down and let the notions come to me.

Sometimes, though, I don't even sit down to wonder. I can do it just as well standing up or even while I'm walking along, but I couldn't if it weren't for Andy. He stays right alongside of me and keeps me from getting run over, or running into posts and things.

Wondering was what I was doing one evening about two weeks after I got my new clothes. I'd cut Mr. Barnes' grass again that day and had the dollar in my pocket. I was wondering whether, if there was another circus in town the next day, I'd spend the money to go to it. There was a lot to be thought on both sides of that question, but I had just about finished with it when I heard a lot of shouting and hollering and a man rushed by me,

running as fast as he could. Of course, I thought he was going to a fire, or something of that sort, and followed him. There was a whole crowd going that way, but that man had a big start on everybody except me and Andy. He had only a little start on us.

It was almost too warm a night to make it worth a fellow's while to run his best; so I didn't, but just loped along, keeping the man ahead in sight, which of course, let the crowd gain on me. Then I noticed for the first time what they were shouting. It wasn't "fire" at all; it was "Stop thief!"

As soon as I heard that, I started to run faster, thinking that, perhaps, Andy and I could pull down the thief ourselves; but the crowd had become confused about who was being chased and some of them had decided I was the one, for they yelled louder than ever and someone shot at me, the bullet singing past my ear with a whining sort of noise that sounded mighty unpleasant. At that, I made up my mind that it was time for me to stop, and do any explaining I expected to live to do. So, I turned around and headed back towards the crowd.

In half a minute, they were all around me, and, before you could say "Jack Robinson," a policeman had put hand-cuffs on me, and Andy had bit him

in the leg. It was a right good bite, but the policeman was wearing heavy leather leggings and so didn't get the full benefit of it, which was a lucky thing, as he'd probably have tried to shoot Andy on the spot. Before Andy could bite again, I ordered him to lie down and he did, which also was lucky, both for him and the policeman, for even his gun might not have saved the policeman, once Andy got really started.

Some of the crowd were in favor of handling me pretty roughly, but I wasn't much worried about that, because the policeman stood them off. Besides, all I'd have had to do was to point at the people and say, "Sic 'em, Andy," and they'd have scattered pronto, which is a word meaning anything faster than right away quick. But I was afraid Andy would get into trouble in spite of all I could do; so I said "Home, Andy! Go home. Go find Poppy," and he went. He didn't want to go, but I'd taught him to mind me, and, so, he had no choice, but to trot away, looking back at me every few feet.

Then the policeman led me to the corner, where there was a patrol-box and called for the wagon, and in a few minutes, I was unloaded and marched into the police-station. There, the desk-sergeant asked me my name, and I answered before I stopped

to think and said. "Jim Vaughn, I mean Jack Bradford."

"Pretty young for the alias stuff, ain't you, kid?" asked the sergeant, and I tried to explain, but he paid no attention to me. "Mug him in the morning," he said. "The Captain wants to see him now." Then the policeman who had me jerked me around and shoved me through a door that was right next to the desk, and into another room, where there was a carpet on the floor and a flat desk with a glass top.

There was a fine-looking old fellow sitting at the desk. He was dressed as a policeman, except that his uniform seemed to be a bit fancier, and his star wasn't as big as the one that the man who had arrested me wore. He was writing and didn't look up for a minute or so, though I think he knew we were there all the time. When he did look up he just glanced once at me. Then he roared:

"Take those bracelets off that kid. Who do you think he is? Jack the Ripper or the Seven Sutherland Sisters?"

"I, 'er I," the policeman sort of stuttered, but he was quick enough to unlock the hand-cuffs and get them into his pocket, where they'd be out of sight.

"Come over here, son," said the captain, "and

tell me about yourself.” He was so kind to me that I was most ready to cry. Maybe I’d have done it, too, if I’d never had any worse troubles than being arrested for nothing at all, and if I hadn’t been too proud. As it was, I just stood by the captain’s desk and told him my real name, and why I was called Jim Vaughn and how I’d thought the man was running to a fire and had just followed him and how I’d been shot at and had been arrested and hand-cuffed.

“Looks like a horse on you, Schmidt,” said the captain. “I don’t believe you have a thing on the kid. Has he been searched?”

“No,” said the policeman, looking cheaper than ever. “Then,” said the captain, “search him and if you don’t turn up anything, let him go. It’s a good thing for you, your shot went wild.” So the policeman went through my pockets, but he didn’t find anything I was ashamed of except my handkerchief. That was pretty dirty, I admit.

They were just about to turn me loose, when the door swung open again, and two more policemen came in with a prisoner held between them. He was a medium-sized man with one eye a little darker than the other, and one ear a bit larger and set lower than the other. I was so startled that

I nearly jumped out of my skin, for the prisoner was Mr. Brown, the caddy-master whose dog Andy had killed.

He recognized me, too, in spite of my having grown so and having on long pants, and the captain saw at once that we knew each other. He was a shrewd fellow, that captain.

“What’s this fellow held for, Kowalski?” he asked, and one of the policemen answered, “He ran right into our arms and, seeing that he was all out of breath, we grabbed him. He tried to pull a gun; so we had to rough him up a little. Then we searched him to see if he had another gun and found his pockets full of jewelry. So we brought him in. The sergeant says you’ve got his partner in here. They threw a brick through a jeweler’s window and scooped up what they could at one grab.”

“How about it, son?” asked the captain. “Did you ever see this man before?”

“Yes sir,” I answered, “but I’ve never associated with him. He’s no friend of mine.”

“That so, fellow?” the captain asked, turning to Mr. Brown, and then I got the surprise of my life.

“We were both in on it,” said Mr. Brown.

“Throw them both in, and go get this Poppy

Vaughn the kid talks about," snapped the captain. "It's Pontiac for yours, young man," and in less than a minute I was locked up in a cell. They took my dollar and my pocket-knife away from me, too.





I said, "I wouldn't think of charging for a charity job"

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

WERE you ever locked up in a jail? It sounds horrid, and it's really worse than it sounds; at least if all jails are like the one where I stayed that night. That was my only experience (except for the few minutes I had to wait for Dad to get me out the time Behnke had me arrested on account of his rabbits), but it was enough to convince me that between any two prisons in this world I'd choose neither. Worst of all, I hadn't a friend in the world to come and get me out this time. The other time I'd known that I could count on Dad. A fellow certainly appreciates a family, when he hasn't any, and needs one.

Strictly speaking, a police station isn't a jail at all, but it smells jaily enough to suit a fellow who isn't more particular about such things than I am, and a cell is a cell wherever you find it. There are bars there to keep you in, but they don't keep the drafts out. If you have your cell to yourself, you're sure to be pretty lonely, and if you have company, it's almost certain to be of a sort you would just as soon be without.

I was lucky in that respect, however, for when my company came it was no stranger they pushed

in there with me. It was poor old Poppy Vaughn, for it seems that being connected in any way with a fellow that's in trouble means you're in trouble too. I suppose it's a police habit to gather in all the friends of a fellow they think is a crook. Probably it's necessary for the police to work that way, or they wouldn't do so, but it's most uncomfortably rough on innocent people who happen to get into trouble. It looks to me as though there ought to be some better way of catching crooks than just arresting everyone in sight, and then sorting them over to pick out the ones you want.

Poppy was just hopping mad when they brought him in, and he used a lot of words I'd never even known he knew. Some of them were corking good words too; such as minions, and myrmidons, and shackles. He also said he was going to take the matter up with the president and with Lloyd George, and Mussolini, and was going to have the whole police force habeas corpused for treason de luxe.

When Poppy said that, the lock-up keeper laughed so loudly that the old man got insulted and wouldn't talk any more, but went over and sat on the bench, muttering away to himself at a great rate. But, after a little, he quit that too, and dropped off to sleep with his head on my shoulder. It seemed to me then that I felt good and bad all at the same

time; sort of sorry for Poppy because he was old and queer, but sort of glad, too, that there was someone who depended on me to comfort him when things went wrong. It was a swelled-up-in-the-throat kind of feeling that nobody could understand unless he'd had it.

But you can't keep on feeling that way, or any other way either, for such a very long time, for you're pretty sure to drift off from feeling into thinking. That's how it worked with me that night; I got to wondering why Mr. Brown, the caddy master, had claimed I was with him when he robbed that jeweler's window.

Offhand, it looked as though the answer to that question was because he quite naturally hated me and Andy on account on his bull-dog's having been killed. But, when I thought longer about the matter, I wasn't so sure of that as I'd been at first, for I remembered that almost as soon as Mr. Brown had spoken, there had come into his eyes a queer look, as though he wished he hadn't.

"Perhaps," I said to myself, "he was sorry for having thrown suspicion on me when I was innocent." Somehow, though, that idea didn't seem to fit in very well with what little I knew about Mr. Brown. So I went ahead thinking some more about the matter, only to get more puzzled the longer I

thought, until, finally, I gave it up as too hard a nut for me to crack.

Then, of course, the idea that I'd been hunting for, hopped from nowhere into the middle of my mind. "Mr. Brown was sorry he'd admitted knowing you," said my mind to me. "He just blurted the first thing that came into his head, thinking he'd keep you from talking too much about him. Then he was sorry because he realized that it would have been better for him, if you'd been let go."

"Thank you, Mind," said I to myself. "You're quite a friend of mine, when you decide to be useful. But, why was Mr. Brown afraid of having folks know who he was? Was it because he was ashamed of being arrested, or because he'd been doing something even worse than robbing jeweler's windows, and so couldn't afford to be recognized?"

When that thought came to me, I was so much excited that I forgot all about Poppy, and jumped to my feet so fast that the poor old fellow's head slid off my shoulder and bounced hard against the wall. Poppy was so tired, though, that he didn't even wake up; he just grunted a bit and went on snoring at a great rate. Once in a while his false teeth would come loose from the top of his mouth and drop down on his real ones, but Poppy just gave them a flip with his tongue to throw them

back into place, and went right ahead without waking up or even missing a snore. He was right clever at it, and, worried as I was, I had to stop to admire him.

All that wasn't getting us out of jail, though, and as I couldn't seem to plan anything that would work, I just gave it up and went to sleep too.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

BY THE time I waked up, dawn was beginning to come, as I could tell even there inside the jail, for the electric globe in the corridor was dimmed by a thin, grayish light that sneaked in through the bars of a little window high up in the wall. I shivered a little, for it was damp in there, and I hadn't had enough sleep. I felt sort of angry at Poppy, too, for having got me into such a mess of trouble by being so helpless that I just naturally had to stay around and take care of him, instead of being on my way weeks before, as I should have been.

Anyhow, it was morning, and that always helps some, no matter how bad the night has been. I don't know why it is so, but I do know that I always expect today to be better than yesterday, whether or not there is any reason for such a hope. I don't know why I am that way, but I'm glad of it, for it's a nice way to be. Besides, there's always breakfast.

Jail breakfasts are nothing to brag about; black coffee, dry bread, and oatmeal without either sugar or cream. I'd rather be loose, without anything to eat, than locked in, with a mean breakfast, but then

so would almost anyone else. All the same, I ate mine and so did Poppy.

A while after breakfast, the lock-up keeper came to the door of our cell, bringing another man with him. The lock-up keeper told us that the other man was a friend of his, and was a lawyer. Then he let the lawyer in with us, without waiting to see whether we wanted him or not.

Now, as a general rule, I like almost everybody, but I didn't have to look twice at that lawyer to know that he was the sort of man Andy growls at. So I decided not to have anything to do with him and told him so at once.

Did he leave there on learning that I didn't want him? He did not. He just planted himself on our bench and began a long-winded how-do-you-do about how terrible it was that such a nice old man and so fine a boy should be locked up for nothing at all.

"It's a good thing that I happened to hear about the case," he went on.

"Why?" said I.

"So I could get you out of here," he answered.

"Oh! are we leaving here now?" I asked him, thinking I could fluster him.

But I might as well have tried to rattle a plush cushion as that lawyer. I couldn't fluster him and I couldn't make him angry, try as hard as I could.

He just refused to be offended, and kept on about his friendship for us and it was only until I finally mentioned the fact that I hadn't any money, and Poppy, who wasn't as foolish in some ways as he was in others, admitted that he had some but was going to keep it that that lawyer decided to leave. He was that kind of lawyer.

But after he had gone away, I began to wonder whether, perhaps, it might not have been a good idea to let the lock-up keeper's lawyer friend see what he could do about getting us out. I was almost, but not quite, ready to call him back.

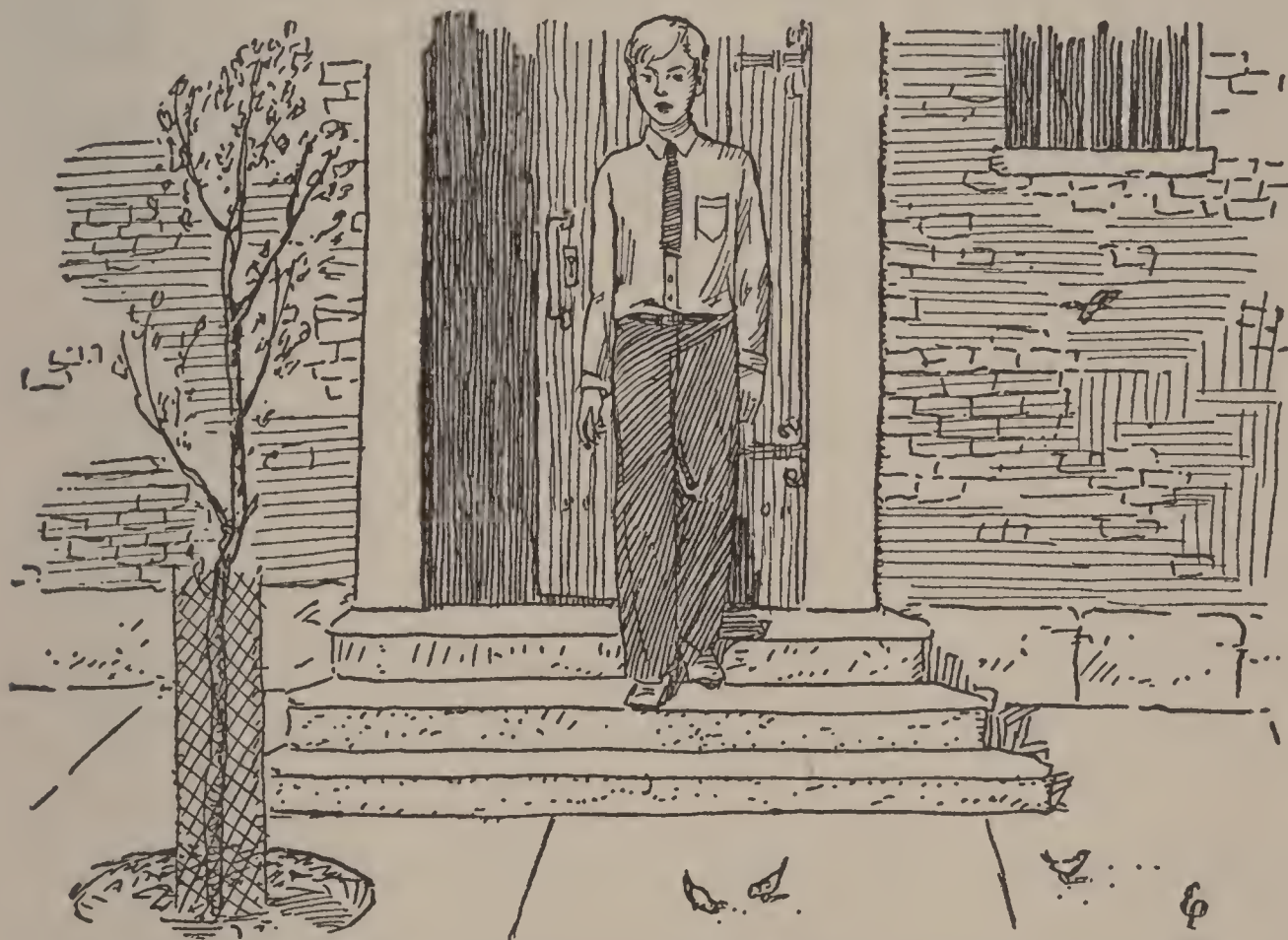
It was a good thing, though, that I didn't do that, for in a very few minutes the lock-up keeper came back again and said, "Your name Jim Vaughn?" and not wanting him to think I was trying to be smart, I answered, "Yes, Sir," instead of "That's what they call me."

"There's a friend of yours here to see you, and he can't very well come in; so I'm taking you out to him. Mind you, though, no tricks! If you try to make a run for it, you'll wish you hadn't; that is, of course, provided, you're that lucky."

So I said, "Yes Sir" and "No Sir" in what I judged to be the right places, and followed him out of the cell room and out of the police-station.

For just a minute, I stopped on the police-station

steps and took a long breath. Street air tasted better than it ever had before, and the sunlight was pleasanter than I'd ever known it to be. Even the sparrows quarreling there in the gutter seemed like old friends to me that morning, for it was wonder-



I stopped on the police-station steps and took a long breath

ful to be out of jail, even if only for a moment. That may seem pretty far fetched, considering that I'd been locked up only one night, but you see I'd never spent all night in jail before, and so wasn't used to it.

How long I'd have stood there dreaming, I can't

say, but the lock-up keeper jarred me awake by pushing me towards a large, shiny automobile, parked near by.

The chauffeur looked at me very suspiciously, but he opened the door for me and the lock-up keeper got in with me. There I found myself sitting between Mr. Barnes and the lock-up keeper. I don't know when I'd been so glad to see anybody as I was to see Mr. Barnes then, and yet I'd never even thought of him while I was locked up.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

IT WAS plain that Mr. Barnes was a pretty important man, for all that he was a cripple, for the lock-up man took his word that he'd be responsible for my not running away. So the lock-up keeper went and leaned against the police-station wall.

As soon as we were alone in the car, Mr. Barnes, roaring at me in a terrible voice, said, "What's the matter with you, anyhow? This is a fine mess you've got yourself into, hanging around with thieves and throwing bricks through jewelers' windows. If you needed money, why didn't you come to me?"

He yelled at me so loudly, and with so fierce a look in his eye, that I knew right away that he was interested in me and wanted to be my friend. People like Mr. Barnes always save their bad tempers for folks they like well enough to help, I've noticed.

So, I just kept cool and told him my story and he sat there and listened without interrupting me at all, until I got to Mr. Brown's saying I was his partner in robbing that window.

"Brown," said he. "What Brown?"

“Why,” I answered, “the one who was arrested and who said I was with him.”

“See here, young man,” he snapped. “Don’t you try any shenanigan on me. You call this man by a different name from the one he gives himself; yet, you claim, never to have set eyes on him before. Your story doesn’t hang together.”

Well, I was inclined to be angry at him for doubting my word, and should have walked back to my cell without listening any more, but I know that Mr. Barnes was really friendly to me or he wouldn’t have come at all. So I answered him quietly enough.

“I never said I’d never seen him before. I only said that I wasn’t with him last night. And the reason I called him Mr. Brown was that that was the name he went by at the golf club near Chicago where my dog killed his. He was caddy-master there.”

“What Club was it?” he asked, and I happening to remember the name, told him, “The Rivermere.”

“Son,” asked Mr. Barnes in a queer sort of voice, “when did you last read a newspaper?” I had to own up that it was almost two weeks. I was ashamed of my ignorance, but it was the truth and I had to out with it.

“Jim, you hurry right in and tell the captain I want to see him out here at my car. Tell him it’s

mighty important. Skip now, and don't let any grass grow under your feet. No, come back here. Sergeant, you go!" he yelled out of the car window. I'd never seen Mr. Barnes so much interested in anything before. But I realized then that he must have had even more money than I'd thought, or he couldn't have sent for a police-captain as though he were a telegraph boy. I wondered whether the captain would really come.

I needn't have worried though, for in about three minutes the sergeant came back out of the station and the captain with him. They came over to the car and the sergeant held the door open for the captain to climb in with us. Evidently, he knew Mr. Barnes, for he called him Frank and told him it was good to see him again. "What can I do for you, Frank?" he asked.

"Well, in the first place," answered Mr. Barnes, "you can turn my young friend here, and his old friend, Poppy Vaughn, loose."

"Glad to do so, Frank," said the captain, "since Brown has just admitted that he's wanted for murder in Chicago, and that the boy was not with him at all last night. What's the second thing you want?"

Mr. Barnes rubbed his chin with his hand and looked a bit sheepish. "Well, I guess you've stolen

my thunder," he said. "I was going to claim the reward on Brown for the boy, but since Brown has already confessed, I'm afraid we're too late. The youngster could have used that thousand very nicely, too."

That just goes to show you that a mean man can be mean all over. That man Brown hadn't been satisfied with nearly killing Andy, and with getting me and Poppy locked up all night. He had to cheat me out of a thousand dollars and let it go to a perfect stranger. I get mad every time I think about him, and I think he deserves every day of the thirty years he's been sentenced to prison.



CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

BEING arrested is a very annoying thing, and it's bad for your reputation, too, but it can do you a great deal of good in some ways. At least, my being arrested for a robbery I had nothing to do with worked out that way.

In the first place, I became more than ever determined to behave myself, so that if I ever was arrested again I'd be innocent and could be let go. A fellow's a fool, if he doesn't learn something from his troubles, even when he's not to blame for them.

In the second place, I learned to appreciate Andy more than ever before. It was the first time that we'd ever been separated all night since he was a sprawly puppy, and we'd missed each other most tremendously. He almost knocked me down, he was so glad to see me when Poppy and I climbed out of Mr. Barnes' car at the old violin shop. I'd been worried almost sick for fear he'd be hungry but I needn't have been, for George Zeller and the Pahlman boys had fed him for me. They're all mighty fine boys, and I'd do as much for them any time.

Those things would have been almost enough to pay me for all I'd been through, but they weren't

the half of what happened to me, because Mr. Brown's being caught got the whole story into every paper in the country and my picture was printed and so were Andy's and Poppy's. I got letters from everywhere and one of them was from a man in a town down in Missouri.

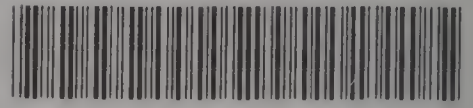
The letter said that my grandfather had died a year before my father did and had left a thousand dollars to each of his twelve grand-children. I was to get mine if I was ever found, but not unless I went to college. That part will be easy, for I'm going to study very hard. Then if anything else ever happens to me and I write a book about it, there won't be as many mistakes as there are in this one. There wasn't any sense in my going on to Missouri, and Poppy's sister had turned up to take care of him, as a result of reading about us; so there was no reason why I shouldn't accept Mr. Barnes' invitation to come and live at his house and be his boy. I call him Uncle Frank and he calls me Jim-Jack. But Poppy calls me Jim and still thinks I'm his lost son. I go to see him almost every day and always get scolded for having been out so long.

Andy sleeps under a grand piano now, but it hasn't spoiled him in the least. Andy's a mighty fine dog.





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