

# BING



CLARENCE HAWKES



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**BING**  
**THE STORY OF A SMALL**  
**DOG'S LOVE**







THE REASON FOR BING'S EXCITEMENT WAS PLAIN TO HIM.  
*Page 152.*



# BING

THE STORY OF A SMALL  
DOG'S LOVE

By CLARENCE HAWKES

Illustrated by  
GRISWOLD TYNG



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**BING**

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*Dedicated to the Officers and Members of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as a slight recognition of the great work they are doing for the disappearance of cruelty to our Dumb Animals. Their work uplifts both man and beast, for no heart can be really true to humanity that is not considerate towards animals.*

*What better slogan for kindness to all God's Creatures could we have than this stanza by Coleridge, from the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner":*

*"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things, both great and small.  
For the Dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."*





# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION. "FAITHFUL AND TRUE"	11
I. THE CHRISTMAS PUP . . . . .	27
II. HOMESICK . . . . .	45
III. ALONE IN THE WORLD . . . . .	58
IV. BING GROWS UP . . . . .	78
V. THE LITTLE FELLOW . . . . .	99
VI. HIS MASTER'S EYES . . . . .	122
VII. A TIMELY TRICK . . . . .	137
VIII. THE GREAT RIVER GOES MAD . . . . .	158
IX. ADRIFT IN THE NIGHT . . . . .	181
X. THE LONG VIGIL . . . . .	197



## ILLUSTRATIONS

The reason for Bing's excitement was  
plain to him (Page 152) *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

The sudden appearance of a large foxhound . . . . .	74
“ Hold on, Bing, hold on tight! ” . . .	112
A dog none of them had ever seen before . . . . .	164
He noticed the small hound perched on the ridge-pole . . . . .	192





## INTRODUCTION

### “ FAITHFUL AND TRUE ”

*“ Faithful and true, will be found upon four  
short legs,  
Ten times, for one upon two.”*

IN these two quaint lines, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, has expressed the sentiments of most Englishmen, as well as those of nearly all truly great souls. To hate dogs is a sign of narrow-mindedness; and his fellow men may well watch a man who habitually, and without any special reason, cannot endure the finest member of the animal creation.

Maeterlinck says that the dog has more nearly broken down the barrier between man and the animal kingdom than has any other animal. Not only is this true, but the dog has also aroused in man some of

his loftiest sentiments and most unselfish love. Man has doubtless had a great influence on the dog's character and disposition, but it is equally true that the dog has both elevated and ennobled man.

If dogs and men have influenced each other greatly in a spiritual way, they have materially influenced each other even more. Who could have dreamed that out of his common ancestor, the grey wolf, could have sprung so many and varied breeds of dogs; yet each branch of this great family of two hundred breeds is a true son of a wolf. Breeding, selection, training, and environment have made all the difference between the great Dane, or the powerful wolfhound, and the Pekinese, or toy poodle. Climate has doubtless done much to mould the different strains, just as it has created different races of men; but climate is not all. The

dog has been as clay in the potter's hand, and man has moulded him almost at will. Not only has he moulded his size, shape, and color, but also his disposition and habits of mind, for the dog in good hands is as plastic as wax. Man has taught dogs to be as savage as wolves, or as gentle and loving as any person; he has taught the dog to range the forests and the plains in pursuit of wild game, and has also taught him to act as a faithful watchman—a policeman neither to be bribed nor brow-beaten.

Brave dogs have never hesitated in serving their masters, even when their own lives were in danger, else how could Barry, the faithful St. Bernard, have scaled the crags and mountain-high snowdrifts for so many years in search of lost travellers and saved so many lives? Few human life-savers in any service have a better record

than has this noble dog. Yet, to him, it was not heroism, but just a part of the day's work, when men lashed his life-saving outfit upon this massive dog and sent him forth into the howling, swirling storm where no man dared to venture.

The men, women, and children that dogs have saved from drowning are legion; while faithful fire dogs, and police dogs do valiant service for mankind.

Not only is the dog a good policeman, but he is often a fine detective with a superhuman sense of evil thoughts in the minds and hearts of bad men. There is one great business house which has a large dog stationed in the outer office. Each visitor to the building is scrutinized critically and, when the stranger who wishes to see the general manager finally reaches the inner office, a little slip of paper has preceded him, telling the manager how



the caller has been sized up by the four-footed detective in the outer office. If he goes up to the stranger and sniffs him in a friendly way, the caller always does business with the firm, if it is possible, for the dog has given him all the recommendation the company requires.

No family circle is ever quite complete, especially if the family contains children, without a dog. Merwin writes, in “ DOGS AND MEN ”: “ Blessed are they whose furniture is so inexpensive and so shabby that children and dogs are not excluded from its sacred precincts.”

It means so much to the different members of the family to hear that joyous bark when they open the front door, or to feel an inquisitive muzzle thrust into the hand. To Father and the boys, it is comradeship; and to Mother and the girls, it is protection and endearment. How joyously

the happy canine bounds to bring Father's slippers, now that Master is at home! How the inquisitive nose goes sniffing at the different bundles just arrived from the grocery or market, to see if there is any possibility of a bone for a poor hungry dog's supper!

If there are children in the family, the need of a good dog is great. It is the part of wisdom, when the baby comes, to get a puppy and let the two grow up together. The dog will learn to look after the baby even more faithfully than any nurse-girl, while from the dog the growing child can learn patience, gentleness, and how to love, for only a dog really knows how to love. It does not matter to him whether his master be rich or poor, black or white, virtuous or vicious; he loves him just the same. He is the only friend who sticks by when the family fortunes sink to the

zero point, and there is little left in the house but love. The faithful dog shares the poor man's poverty just as joyously as he does the rich man's generosity, and he is faithful to the last breath in either event.

A good and loving dog is a sure barometer of the family fortune, for his tail droops with his master's sorrow and waves high and joyously when the family fortunes soar. A man can fool his wife when he is worried, but he cannot deceive his dog. Somehow that faithful old companion will smell out the trouble and come around and climb up into his master's lap to see if he can heal the wound. He responds instantly to a better mood.

The disposition of a dog is often an index of the disposition of his master, or his family; so we should strive to be at our very best in order that the family canine

may reflect our own benevolence and goodness.

Nor has the dog always been without honor. Dog-lovers will recall the little black-and-tan terrier, Cæsar, owned by the late King Edward of England, that, in the great funeral procession of the dead monarch, marched immediately after the bier, while thirty thousand British soldiers, with arms at rest, followed behind him. It was a fine tribute of the British royal family to the nobility of the dead monarch's little canine friend, that had been his constant companion in his last hours.

Nor has the dog been backward in the strenuous adventurous life of his god, the man creature. The Alaskan dog has drawn him along the snowbound trails of that bleak land when the thermometer was fifty below zero. In the great Alaskan sweepstake race which was given up



in 1917, because it took so much out of both dogs and men, the dog was the chief actor. On bloody battle-fields, dogs have drawn powder-wagons where it was so rough that horses or motor vehicles could not travel. When the smoke of battle had died away, other brave dogs went over the battle-field carrying first aid to the wounded, and saving many gallant lives for patriotic service.

On the lonely moors of Scotland and England, the shepherd is never alone so long as he has his faithful dog with him, but he is hopelessly lost without his four-footed friend.

Thus it will be seen in many of the most stirring adventures of his life that the faithful dog has been by man's side, sharing his hardships and keeping him company.

Since the dog is such a true and worthy

friend to man, I bespeak from all my readers such treatment of him as his nobility deserves. I beseech the vivisectionist to stay the knife that he holds above his helpless friend, for the dog, alive, can do much more for humanity than he can dead. Vivisection is a relic of barbarism and no part of true science. It is destined to disappear as a hideous nightmare, something that is best forgotten.

Officers who restrain dogs and enforce laws concerning them should temper justice with mercy, for they little dream what good friends to man they lose when they ruthlessly slaughter dogs.

Boys who stone dogs should stop and think before they throw the missile, for some day this very dog may pull them from the water and save their lives.

Automobilists who mercilessly run dogs down on the public highways should re-

member that, although they can take life, they cannot give it. They have no right to blot carelessly out a life which may be very dear to some child, or to some older dog-lover.

Owners of dogs,—yours is a great responsibility! Always see that your dog's collar is sufficiently loose, and if he is chained, be sure that he has a generous leash. Look to his food and his water as you would wish to be treated yourself. He will pay you back for all your care in the golden coin of love; such love as money cannot buy; a love which is always faithful and which never wavers.

If fortune flouts you, other friends may slight you, but never your dog. You may fall in grace in the eyes of the world, but you can never fall in his esteem. To him you will always be master, his first and last love, and his god, often a very sorry god,



disgracing the love and trust that he gives you, yet still his god.

He will lick the empty hand with just as much affection as he does the hand of opulence, and all he asks in return is to be near you, to share your joys and your sorrows, to comfort your lonely moments with his silent adoration, and to kiss away your tears with his soft tongue, if you are overwhelmed with grief. If you speak to him kindly now and then; if you give back just a fraction of the lavish love he is always outpouring; if you call him chum or pal occasionally and tell him confidentially all those things that perplex you; he will understand much better than you imagine, and his dumb affection will do much to assuage the sharpest grief. If you treat him as such a friend deserves to be treated, it is all he asks.

He will lie for hours looking up at you

with those adoring eyes, perfectly happy. If you treat him right, you will find his love as constant as the magnetic needle is to the pole. Others may fluctuate, but never he. In riches and poverty, joy and sorrow, honor and disgrace, heat and cold, he is always the same adoring, worshipful friend, faithful unto death, giving his all, and giving it gladly.

Fidelity, loyalty, valor, trustfulness, honesty, devotion, selflessness, thy name is Dog, the best friend that God ever vouchsafed to man.



**BING**  
**THE STORY OF A SMALL**  
**DOG'S LOVE**





## CHAPTER I

### THE CHRISTMAS PUP

MRS. BROWNING stood on the corner of Broad Street, at the point where Bay Path crosses it on its way from Boston to Albany. She was waiting for a trolley car to Meadowdale. In summer, this street on which she stood was a nature-lover's paradise, with its four rows of gigantic elms stretching their long arms far out over the green carpet. At close of day, when the

dark shadows stole from behind the trunks of the mighty trees and stray sunbeams filtered down through the leaves and made patches of gold on the green carpet, it was a child's paradise.

But, now, as Mrs. Browning saw it on Christmas Eve, its beauty was of another order, and it fairly took away her breath as she gazed in awe upon it. There had been a heavy snowfall two days before, and this had been succeeded by rain which had frozen as it fell, so that now the village green and adjacent fields were covered with a coating of crystals that glistened and glimmered in the moonlight like a woodland lake with its first coating of ice.

Every twig of the great elms was bejeweled with ice, and all the weeds and bushes were hung with diamonds. It looked more like a fairy world than the staid old town. The icicles on the trees



caught the moonbeams and refracted them in all the colors of the prism, while countless stars in the heavens added to the brilliancy of the scene.

It was an animated picture, with children shouting and laughing and, occasionally, a sleigh-ride party crossing the street. The loads of merry youngsters sang and shouted and rang discordant cow-bells as they passed. But when there came an occasional lull in the merrymaking, it seemed to Mrs. Browning that the stillness which followed had a peculiar quality, as though the hush of that far-off Christmas, nineteen hundred years before, had come down through the centuries and settled like a benediction on the old town.

At this point in Mrs. Browning's reflections, the trolley car stopped at her corner and she hurried inside to quite another world. Outside, the air had been clear,

crisp, and bracing; but inside the car, the artificial warmth was heavy with many perfumes strangely mingled together. Every one in the car was excited and full of good spirits. Many were talking and laughing and already extending Christmas greetings, although it was only Christmas Eve. There was a sound of animated conversation, a general Christmas chatter, each advising the other as to what they should get for Johnnie or Susie, or debating concerning their gifts for their husbands this year. It was so hard to get just the right thing for one's husband. Presently, Mrs. Browning was seated and chatting with a neighbor, for she, too, was in quest of a Christmas present.

Mrs. Browning did not ride into town, but stopped by a cross street about a mile from the center. A brisk walk for five minutes down this street brought her to

a low old-fashioned house, where she mounted the piazza steps and rang the bell. At the sound of the tinkling bell, there was a chorus of barks from the dog company inside. There was the high staccato of the Pomeranian, the deep bay of the police dog, and several other tones ranging in between these two in pitch.

Presently, a tall lank man with a stoop in his shoulders opened the door.

“Good evening, Mr. Manson,” said Mrs. Browning.

He did not at first recognize his visitor.

“Oh, is that you, Mrs. Browning?” he exclaimed. “Come right in,” and he threw wide the door.

As Mrs. Browning entered, a beautiful English setter crowded up to her and put her muzzle into the woman’s hand, and received a pat on her noble head. The police dog looked curiously in from a side door,

and the two Pomeranians viewed the newcomer from a distance.

“Here, you dogs, get back there! This is your friend, Mrs. Browning. Don’t you know her? Come right in. Mrs. Manson has stepped out for a minute,” and he led the way to the sitting-room.

“Here, you, Queenie,” said the man peremptorily to a sleek greyhound that was in the large easy chair, “get up and give Mrs. Browning the chair.”

The greyhound raised herself, yawned, and jumped lightly to the floor.

“Thank you, Queenie,” said Mrs. Browning, as she seated herself.

“How is Mr. Browning?” inquired Mr. Manson. “I understand he has been in the hospital.”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Browning. “He just arrived home this afternoon. He is tired out. We can’t blame him. This



pounding away at a typewriter for twenty-five years with an endless round of dictionaries, manuscripts, and then more manuscripts is enough to tire out any one. I don't see how he stands it."

"That's so," said Mr. Manson. "It's all I can do to just keep track of the titles of his books, to say nothing of reading them."

"And that brings me to my errand," explained Mrs. Browning. "I must not be away too long. He is all alone. I have come over to buy the fox terrier you advertised in the paper this morning. I want it for a Christmas present for Mr. Browning. He is tired and discouraged, and I know a little dog will do him good. He wants something snugly to cuddle. I think the paper said the price was twenty-five dollars," and Mrs. Browning reached for her pocket-book.

At these words, Mr. Manson looked troubled and ran his fingers through his hair.

“ I’m mighty sorry, Mrs. Browning, but I sold that little fox terrier an hour ago. I don’t know of any one in the whole world I would rather have sold him to than to you and Mr. Browning, but he is gone. I’m very sorry.”

Mrs. Browning’s astonishment and disappointment were so great that she dropped her pocket-book, and change rolled in every direction. When the money had been recovered and the pocket-book had been put back in the bag, Mr. Manson said: “ I think I can fix you up all right. Fox terriers are good, but I have got some other dogs that will do just as well.”

“ Oh, no, you haven’t,” put in Mrs. Browning. “ A fox terrier was just what

I wanted. I have made up my mind, and another dog won't do."

But Mr. Manson was not discouraged. He knew dogs, and he also thought he knew men and women, so he kept right on just as though he had not heard Mrs. Browning. "You come out to the kennels and see what I have. I've got the most wonderful lot of beagle pups you ever saw in your whole life, as many as twenty of them, and every one a beauty. I know you will like them, once you see them."

"I do not think I should want to buy one," said Mrs. Browning. "I had made up my mind to buy a fox terrier."

"Well, it won't cost anything to look at them," returned Mr. Manson. "Come out and see them. They are such beauties, and so full of life."

As Mr. Manson had said, the beagle pups were beauties. There were nearly



twenty of them jumping about in their own particular pen. They moved so rapidly that it was almost impossible to pick out one and then be sure you still had your eyes on the same dog a minute after. Mrs. Browning gazed at them in perfect silence for at least a minute, and Mr. Manson, like the wise man that he was, said nothing.

“Well,” he inquired at last, “how do they look to you? What do you think of them?”

“They are great,” said Mrs. Browning enthusiastically. “They are beautiful little dogs. I don’t know —— Perhaps one of them would do for Mr. Browning, even though I had made up my mind to get a fox terrier.”

“I am sure it would,” returned her host. “I tell you what I will do. You pick out one, and we will make Mr. Browning a

Christmas present of it together. I will give half and you half.”

“No, that will never do,” returned Mrs. Browning. “I want to give the whole myself.”

“All right,” said Mr. Manson good-naturedly. “I will let you have the pup at half-price.”

The next question was to select a pup from the wriggling mass. Mrs. Browning selected at least a half-dozen and then changed her mind when she thought she had discovered one which was better than her last choice. Finally, in utter perplexity, she asked Mr. Manson to pick out one, and there was no question in his mind as to which was the best one. Almost immediately he caught his favorite and held him up for Mrs. Browning’s inspection. The little dog was symmetrically formed and beautifully marked.

“I will take it,” said Mrs. Browning. So the purchase was made then and there, and they returned to the house and found an empty basket in which to carry the pup home.

“Now, if he isn’t satisfactory in every way and Mr. Browning doesn’t like him, you bring him right back and I will give you another,” said Mr. Manson, as Mrs. Browning departed with her purchase.

Arrived at the street corner, she found that there were still several minutes before the car was due, so she went into a little store to wait. She placed the basket on the counter and extended Christmas greetings to the grocery man. They were still talking when a pleasant woman of about fifty bustled in.

“Oh, hello, Mrs. Browning, is that you? Aren’t you lost? I wish you a Merry Christmas.”

“Why,” said Mrs. Browning, “I have just been up to your place. I wanted to see you, but I couldn’t wait. I have got to get home as soon as possible, as I left Mr. Browning alone.”

“What have you got in the basket?” inquired Mrs. Manson suspiciously. “It isn’t one of the babies, is it?”

At the sound of her voice, there was a great commotion inside the basket and a pathetic whimpering.

“There, now, I knew you had one of the babies,” exclaimed Mrs. Manson. “I wonder which one it is. It sounds like Bing. It couldn’t be Bing, though; Mr. Manson wouldn’t sell him. Why, he is the pick of the kennels!”

At this instant, the pup pushed up the lid from the basket and quickly stuck out his head.

“Oh, oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Manson.

“It *is* Bing! I thought it sounded like him. Mr. Manson wouldn’t have sold him to anybody except you. He was intending to keep him.”

“How did you happen to name him Bing?” inquired Mrs. Browning. “I am glad if he is the pick of the kennels.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” returned her friend. “They just seem to name themselves. One day he was sniffing around my feet and I said, ‘I know what your name is, little dog, it is Bingo.’ It is after the old song, Bingo, don’t you remember?” and Mrs. Manson hummed the old ditty:

“Johnny had a little dog and Bingo was his  
name, sir,  
B-I-N-G-O go, B-I-N-G-O go, Bingo was his  
name, sir.”

Half an hour later, Mrs. Browning hurried into her own house and deposited the basket on the sofa.



“ I have a Christmas present for you, Lawrence,” she said, snapping on the light; “ come over here to the sofa. I want you to see it.”

“ A Christmas present for me? Why, it won't be Christmas until to-morrow.”

“ Yes, I know,” returned Mrs. Browning, “ but I wanted you to have it right off.”

The man got up slowly and went over to the lounge. In the meantime Mrs. Browning had opened the basket and deposited the little dog beside it.

“ What is it, another puppy? ” inquired the man. “ You know I always said, after Scottie died, I never could bear to have another dog.”

“ I know you said that,” returned Mrs. Browning. “ That is what you always say when we lose an old dog, and somehow we always get another.”



Mr. Browning lifted the pup in his arms and returned to his easy-chair, and the little dog snuggled down in his lap while his new master caressed his long silky ears and stroked his head.

“What breed is it?” he inquired finally. “Not that it matters, if it is just dog.”

“I intended to get you a fox terrier,” replied Mrs. Browning, “but the one I went for was sold. This is a beagle hound.”

“Humph,” said Mr. Browning, “a beagle hound. Why, I used to have one when I was a small boy, and I thought the world of it. Perhaps this one will be just as good.”

At this point in the conversation, Mrs. Browning went into the kitchen to do the dishes which she had left in her haste to go to the city, and Mr. Browning was left with the new puppy. As the man felt the

warm little body of the dog nestling against him and the little head lying confidently in the palm of his hand, this mite of a dog did something for him that weeks of treatment in the hospital and much medicine had failed to accomplish, for it unlocked a well-spring of love in his being. A great tension in his mind was relieved, nerves relaxed, and happy tears filled his eyes. Yes, he was going to love this little dog. He had come at just the right time and he was as welcome as sunlight in a darkened room. Yes, he would be one of the family and take the place of their old collie.

Fifteen minutes later, when Mrs. Browning returned to the room, she found the man asleep in the easy-chair, and the little dog resting on his shoulder and nestling against the man's face in an attitude of perfect contentment. The dog,

too, was asleep, so Mrs. Browning tip-toed out of the room lest she should disturb the sleepers. A great joy filled her heart. Her Christmas gift was the right sort because it had brought love, which is the light of the world, into a darkened life. Yes, the little dog would be one of the family.



## CHAPTER II

### HOMESICK

THAT evening, when Mrs. Browning went to look at the furnace and put on a couple of shovels of coal for the night, Bing went down cellar with her. He thought the cellar a very strange and interesting place. He had never been in one before, as he had spent the whole of his short life above ground. He explored all the dark interesting corners, and finally

climbed up on the wood-pile and peeked out the cellar window. Then he hurried down and tried to dig a hole in the cellar bottom, but the dirt was too hard and he soon gave it up. Finally, he discovered the potato barrel in the very darkest corner of the cellar, and behind it was an exciting scent that interested him. It was more than exciting; it thrilled him and made his every nerve to tingle and the hair along his neck and back to stand erect. So he squeezed in behind the barrel, uttering sharp, excited barks. But these barks soon changed to yelps of pain, and he scrambled out from behind the barrel much faster than he had gone in and ran whimpering to Mrs. Browning. That kind lady at once took him up in her arms. She found a few drops of blood on his upper lip.

“ You poor little dog,” she said sympa-



thetically, "that horrid, long-tailed, gray-whiskered, old rat has bitten you in the face. I must doctor the wound at once," and she hurried up-stairs with Bing.

The sylpho-nathol bottle was brought into play and a few drops were put on Bing's wound. This made the cut smart, and he thought that the treatment was worse than the original accident. After that, whenever he saw Mrs. Browning looking for the sylpho-nathol bottle, he would stick his tail between his legs and crawl under the stove and try to hide.

The last thing before the Brownings retired for the night, Mrs. Browning arranged a warm blanket in the basket in which she had brought the puppy home, and placed it close to the furnace in the cellar. Then she tucked Bing up for the night, and he was so tired from the exciting five hours that had elapsed since he

had left his home in the kennels that he at once went to sleep.

“ He went right off to sleep, just like a baby,” reported Mrs. Browning to her husband as they prepared to retire. “ He isn’t going to give us a particle of trouble. I am sure he will be a great comfort to you.”

“ I hope so,” replied the man.

Mr. Browning did not go to sleep immediately, for sleeplessness was one of his bugaboos, but Mrs. Browning was soon snoring peacefully. Presently a new sound was heard in the Browning establishment, and the listening man at once knew that it came from the cellar. The sound began with a hoarse bark, which gradually ascended in a pathetic crescendo until it ended in a wail of sound; then it would begin at the top of the scale and come sliding down, only to end in a hoarse

little bark. Then there was absolute silence for perhaps thirty seconds, after that a half-dozen excited yelps, then another silence, just long enough to see if the outcry produced any results; then came a dozen angry, explosive little barks.

As the sounds from the cellar persisted and Mrs. Browning continued to snore peacefully, Mr. Browning pulled the coverlet over his head and tried to shut out the duet, but all to no purpose. Then he thrust his head under the pillow to see if that would help, but he could still hear the pitiful wailing.

Presently Mrs. Browning awoke with a start and sat up in bed. "Did I hear something?" she inquired. "What is that wailing down-stairs?"

"Oh, that's our new dog," replied Mr. Browning. "He has been at it fifteen

minutes. I guess we are in for it this time.”

“The poor little chap,” returned his wife sympathetically. “I should have known better than to put him down cellar. He is afraid of that miserable old rat. I will go right down and bring him up to the kitchen.”

So she put on her bathrobe and, thrusting her feet into her slippers, hurried down cellar. When she returned, she reported that she had moved the basket beside the kitchen stove and the little dog was again sleeping. Their troubles seemed over for that night, but Mr. Browning was skeptical, although he said never a word.

A half-hour later the pathetic concert below was resumed, but it was much louder than before, as the performer was now in the kitchen instead of the cellar. He went all through his entire program just

as he had in the first instance, only this time it was much more vigorous, and it seemed to Mr. Browning more agonizing.

He pulled the blanket over his head and finally stuffed the ends of his handkerchief in his ears, but still the pathetic whimpering of the homesick puppy floated up to him.

“Oh! Is that poor little dog crying again?” exclaimed Mrs. Browning, raising herself on her elbow once more.

“Oh, yes,” replied her husband, “he has been at it for the last half-hour. I just don’t see how we are going to get any sleep to-night.”

Mrs. Browning made another trip to the kitchen and fed and watered and cuddled the lonesome little dog, and once again she reported that he was fast asleep.

“He is worse than twins,” said Mr. Browning, “or, at least, he is worse than a



baby. I hope he has quieted down now for good.”

But he had not, for, off and on for the better part of the night, the noise from the kitchen continued, and the new member of the family was quiet only when Mrs. Browning was tending to him.

Mr. Browning loved dogs, there was no question about that, but he did not like to hear them bark and whimper when he wanted to sleep. He stood it for the better part of the night and, towards morning, lost that patience that we should always have with very small children and small dogs. Finally, he crept quietly out of bed and made a trip to the kitchen himself. Bing greeted him joyously at the kitchen door, but his hilarity was not reciprocated, for Mr. Browning took him, none too carefully, by the scruff of the neck and cuffed his ears soundly and then

threw him back into his basket, not forgetting to slam the kitchen door when he went back to bed.

This chastisement had the desired effect, for not another bark or whimper was heard that night from the kitchen, but Mr. Browning paid for it dearly, for it was at least two weeks before he could fully regain the little dog's confidence and get him once more to snuggle down in his lap as he had done that first night.

He had violated a fundamental rule in training a puppy, that is, not to punish a very small dog too severely before he has learned to love you. After he has learned to love his master, he can forgive him anything, but it bewilders him to punish him before that time has come.

Mr. Browning was very much surprised the following day to discover that Bing belonged entirely to Mrs. Browning, al-

though he was supposed to be his own Christmas present. But, do what he would, the master could not get the little dog to so much as look at him all that day, not even when he tried to coax him with a gingersnap. When Mr. Browning thrust the gingersnap into the side of Bing's mouth, he held it for a minute wistfully and then, looking up at the man with a reproachful expression on his little dog face, dropped the dainty that he so much coveted and climbed into Mrs. Browning's lap.

“ Well, what do you know about that? ” exclaimed Mr. Browning. “ Who would have thought that he was so sensitive? I shouldn't have done it, only you know how my sleep has been broken for so many weeks, and last night was just the last straw.”

There was one member of the Browning family that Bing at once made friends

with, and that was the Professor, a large buff-colored Angora cat. The Professor was so full of love and friendship for everybody that he at once took the little dog under his special care and, in a very few hours, the two were the best of friends. They would sleep together in the same chair, and the Professor tried to wash Bing's face that first evening, just as though he had been another cat.

Although Bing followed Mrs. Browning about like her shadow, and although he enjoyed the Professor greatly, yet he was not happy. He had come from a great kennel where there were twenty other beagle pups. They had enjoyed such romps and such wonderful sham fights, and now there was nobody to roll and tumble with or play with, the way he had romped with his brothers and sisters.

It was a beautiful home that he had

come to, much more comfortable than the cheerless kennels had been. There he had slept with a half-dozen other puppies in the cold shelter; here he was always warm and comfortable, but Bing missed his dog family more than any one in the Browning household even dreamed.

One morning, when he had been at Sunshine Cottage about two weeks, this longing for his friends in the big kennels and for Mr. Manson became too great for Bing to bear, and he did a thing which nearly cost him his life.

Mrs. Browning was sweeping and, in the course of her house-cleaning, opened wide the kitchen door to air the room. She had supposed that Bing was sleeping on the window ledge of the living-room, but instead he was under the kitchen stove. So, when her back was turned, he slipped out through the open door and hurried



down the street, going he knew not whither, but determined to seek and find his old home and all his brothers and sisters that had romped with him only a couple of weeks before.



## CHAPTER III

### ALONE IN THE WORLD

BING trotted rapidly down the street for perhaps a hundred yards, occasionally looking back over his shoulder to see if he were being followed. But his absence from the Browning home had not yet been discovered, so, of course, no one followed him.

Presently he came to a cross street and

there were three possibilities before him. Then the thought occurred to him that he did not know the way back to the kennels and kind Mr. Manson. So he stopped and sat down upon his tail to think, or rather to wonder, for his thinking was not very definite.

Should he continue along the way he was going, or turn to the left or right? Finally he decided to go ahead, but after a little he concluded this was not the way, so he came back to the intersection of the streets and went to the right. This street also did not satisfy him, so he again retraced his steps and took the left. By this time he could not even have found his way back to the Brownings.

A few rods down the street to the left, he discovered a large yellow cat sunning himself on the piazza. He looked for all the world like the Professor, so Bing de-

cided to interview him. He would surely know the way home to the kennels.

As the strange puppy started to mount the piazza steps, the big yellow cat arched his back and began spitting. The sounds did not seem to be exactly friendly, but Bing's need was very great, so he continued to climb.

Now Bing was wagging his tail vehemently and grinning his most persuasive dog grin, but the big cat either did not notice these friendly overtures or else he was a cat grouch and did not wish to be friendly, for, when Bing's paw touched the top step, something happened which he had not even dreamed of, for, with a nasty yowl and spit, the great cat sprang across the piazza and landed fairly upon Bing's back. He came with such fury that he bowled the unsuspecting puppy over and sent him sprawling to the bottom

of the steps. This probably saved him a bad scratching, for before the belligerent cat could gather himself together for another spring, the terrified pup had fled down the pathway yelping in fright. He had learned his first lesson in the great wide world, namely, that things and people are not always just what they seem to be, and that it is well to be slow in making friendships,—a philosophy that applies equally well to men and dogs.

After that, Bing did not seek to ask the way to the homes of either cats, dogs, or men, but wandered miserably about looking this way and that, hoping that something would turn up.

It was while wandering about in this aimless way, and getting farther and farther from his haven at the Brownings', that some boys spied the lost pup. Arthur Guiterman has written:



“ Oh, the saddest of sights in a world of sin,  
Is a little lost pup with his tail tucked in! ”

Now the boys should have noticed that this was a lost pup and have taken him to their hearts, and tried to help him, but this did not even occur to them. They just saw in the forlorn little dog an object for fun, or rather something that they, in their thoughtlessness, called fun, but it should never be fun to a right-minded boy to torment any of the dumb creatures.

So one boy scooped up a handful of snow and cried to his fellows: “ I bet I’ll be the first one to hit him.”

Bing divined at once that he was the object of their mirth, yet he never dreamed that their intent was anything but kindly. Perhaps these boys were going to help him find the way to the kennel. So he advanced, wagging his tail.

Zip, went a snowball so close to him that

it kicked up a cloud of snow crystals. The boy who had thrown the snow missile laughed with delight.

Zip, zip, went two other snowballs, and then another from the first boy hit poor frightened little Bing a glancing blow. He did not wait to see more. The intent of these boys was certainly unfriendly, so he ran with all his might away from the flying missiles.

He did not stop running until he had left the thoughtless boys far behind, but, even so, they chased him for a score of rods, throwing snowballs as they ran.

Bing had learned another lesson, which was not to trust strangers implicitly until you have found them out. All was not gold that glittered in this strange and fearful world into which he had fled so confidently. Perhaps the great wide world was not a good place at all. He had

better try to find his way back to Sunshine Cottage and the Brownings; they had really been very good to him. This was his conclusion as he now saw them through the vista of his sorry adventures of the past hour. It was a case of distance lending enchantment. But he had become so bewildered in fleeing from the hateful boys that he had lost all sense of direction and didn't even know the way back to Sunshine Cottage, although it was barely a quarter of a mile away and really almost within sight, if he had looked in the right direction. So Bing decided to make the acquaintance of a big bulldog that was gnawing a bone on a piazza near by. Perhaps he would help him.

His experience with dogs had always been pleasant. All the dogs at the kennels had been friendly; surely this one would be, also. Bing advanced wagging

his tail, but, to his great astonishment, the bulldog arose and stood over his bone and growled most viciously when the lost pup came close to him. Bing was so frightened that he fled, not even taking time to explain in dog language that he did not want the bone, but was just inquiring his way home to his folks. He had learned another lesson,—the lesson of proprietorship in one's home, which is very strong in dogs and one of their most zealously guarded rights. No dog should ever trespass upon another dog's piazza, or even look at his bone, unless he is invited. Yes, Bing would remember that. Why, the growl of that bulldog even made him cold, and he shivered and whimpered miserably!

Several other houses he reconnoitered cautiously, but they were all either guarded by dogs, or else children saw him and drove him away. Finally, he became

convinced that all the world hated him, or at least all the world but the Brownings, and that he was an outcast. What would he not give to see those good people again!

At the thought of the pleasant quarters at Sunshine Cottage, a great wave of loneliness and despair seized Bing, and he sat down upon his tail and lifted up his nose and howled dolefully.

“Oh, the saddest of sights in a world of sin,  
Is a little lost pup with his tail tucked in!”

Then Bing remembered that he was very hungry. The excitement of the past hour and its loneliness had made his appetite like that of a wolf, so he set about to find himself some food.

He inspected several outbuildings and farmyards and, after a long search, discovered a small animal which had been freshly skinned and thrown upon a compost heap. He fell upon it savagely. At



first he thought it rather good meat, he was so hungry. But finally he bit into a portion of the carcass that fairly nauseated him, and Bing left the odorous meat in great haste. The truth was, Bing had been eating a freshly skinned skunk and had bitten into the carcass near to the scent-bag. No wonder it was strong meat. How his fortunes had fallen!

At Sunshine Cottage at this very minute, on a plate behind the kitchen range, were plenty of dog biscuits warranted to contain just the right ingredients for a growing pup, both bone and muscle. Also, there were dog cubes which would keep any dog in the pink of condition and a generous saucer of milk, not to mention the company of the Professor. The thoughts of that old cat and his lost plate of dog goodies made Bing again sit upon his tail and wail dismally.

And what a commotion he had created at Sunshine Cottage, for Mr. Browning sat at his desk telephoning frantically in every direction for "a little dog with his tail tucked in." Had any one seen a little lost beagle hound? He was black and white, with tan ears and tan markings around the eyes. His name was Bing, and if any one saw him, would he return him to Sunshine Cottage where a reward was waiting? The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were finally pressed into service in the search for the little lost pup. Meanwhile, Mrs. Browning ran hither and thither to all the neighbors, asking the same question: "Has any one seen a little lost pup?"

When Mr. Browning finally telephoned to Mr. Manson at the kennels, that kind dog-man tried to reassure Bing's new owner.

“ I guess he will be all right,” he said. “ You see, Mr. Browning, a dog hasn’t lost all of his wild-animal instincts. They can take care of themselves a great deal better than we humans can under hard conditions. I guess he will dig in somewhere. I shouldn’t worry, if I were you.”

But hours passed with no word from Bing. Some people thought they had seen him, or a puppy just like him, but they were not sure. Several thought their children had seen him. They would keep a sharp lookout and, if anything was seen of him, they would report.

Thus hour after hour went by and the anxiety at Sunshine Cottage grew steadily, and, in the meantime, the fear that had held Mr. Manson when he had heard the news of the lost dog came to pass, for a blinding, swirling snowstorm set in, with every prospect of a deep snowfall.

The snow came down in pelting, swirling gusts, and the cold grew steadily. A blizzard was upon them, such as had not been seen in many a winter, and a little lost pup, only three months old, was out in the storm, pitting his small strength and his slight wits against the mighty force of the snow and the cold.

It was terrible. Mr. Browning paced up and down the rooms or listened at the window to the howling of the wind.

“I am afraid we shall never see him again,” he said. “He never can stand this storm. If he is out in this terrible blizzard, he will surely perish.”

“I shouldn’t worry,” returned his wife. “Some one will take him in. As Mr. Manson says, he will dig in somewhere.”

But he did not. That is, he did not dig into any human shelter. For, after trying house after house and being driven away

by either dogs or children or strange noises, little Bing took to the woods. He sought shelter in a desolate swamp about a quarter of a mile from the nearest farmhouse and a mile from the village. Here he dug a hole under the top of a fallen hemlock. He dug deep, as far down as he could, and the white snow soon covered him. There, all through the night, at the heart of the desolate swamp, poor little Bing shivered and cowered, trying to sleep and to keep from freezing, while his master and mistress worried themselves nearly sick and sent up silent prayers to Heaven for a little lost pup.

For the next ten days, Old Winter put on such a program of blinding snowstorms, howling wind, and biting cold as even the oldest resident could not recall. People who did not have very urgent business out of doors stayed close to the fire,



and those who did venture outside put on their warmest furs.

And all this time Mr. Browning kept up his search for the missing pup. He telephoned to every friend in the village and surrounding hamlets. He advertised in the local paper, while the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the local police scoured the country for miles around, but not a sign of Bing could they find.

Meanwhile, the object of all this anxiety was having an even harder time. For the better part of each day and all through the night, he skulked in the swamp. Each day at dusk he came forth and went to the compost heap for his ration of frozen skunk. It was lucky for him that the boy whose dump he was pillaging was a good trapper. For, as soon as the first skunk had been eaten, another appeared, and that was soon followed by a dead muskrat.

This meat was not so strong, but "wow," wasn't it tough! As Bing munched away upon it, he must have longed with a pitiful longing for his plate of dog biscuit and cubes, or the saucer of warm milk.

He had one desperate adventure in the dark swamp which nearly ended fatally. It was merely by a stroke of good luck that he escaped. It happened that a big red fox also made his home in the swamp, and one day when he was prowling about, he discovered the fresh tracks of the small dog. Somehow it angered the old fox to know that a puppy was snooping about in his swamp, so he followed the tracks, determined to make an end of the small dog, should he discover him alone.

Finally, he spied him wandering disconsolately about and gave chase. Now Bing had a very keen nose, and this warned him of his danger before it was too

late. He did not know just what the danger was, but, without waiting to see, he fled in and out among the clumps of laurel, the old fox gaining on him at every jump. Out and in they raced, and Bing's pursuer had almost reached him when this headlong flight was checked by the sudden appearance of a large foxhound that was also prowling about in the swamp.

Bing ran almost between the hound's legs before he noticed him, and the fox was following him so closely that he barely escaped the open jaws of the foxhound. In a flash the entire scene changed. From being the pursuer, the fox became the pursued; and it was a desperate race. Again and again the hound reached for him, and he barely escaped, but finally the fox evaded his pursuer and Bing heard the deep baying of the hound die away in the distance.





THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF A LARGE FOXHOUND.—Page 74.





It was on the tenth day of his hiding in the swamp that a young farmer who happened to go to the woods discovered him. Even then, he was not at first sure that the small animal that scurried away so rapidly was a dog. But he was one of those to whom Mr. Browning had telephoned. So he began whistling and calling, but it was at least fifteen minutes before he could coax the terrified little dog into the open. And this was only a beginning, for it took another half-hour to coax him up where he could get a hand on him. Finally, cringing and crawling on his belly, poor Bing crept to the man's feet, and he stooped down and picked him up.

What a forlorn little chap he was! His hair was rough and unkempt, his ears and lips were frostbitten, and he was so emaciated and weak that he could hardly stand.

The young man hurried to the house with him and soon he was lapping frantically at a pan of warm milk. He would gulp it down until he choked, and then would run about the room choking and whimpering. Soon they discovered that the heat from the stove made the frost-bitten ears ache and smart.

“ I guess we had better get him home as soon as possible. I will hitch up the horse at once,” said the young man.

Mr. Browning was getting a few last winks of his morning sleep when Mrs. Browning burst into his room.

“ Lawrence, wake up!” she cried. “ You can never guess who is here.”

But Mr. Browning did not need to guess, for the newcomer was already on the bed licking the man's face frantically and trying in every way to express his boundless dog love.

“It’s Bing,” cried Mrs. Browning excitedly, “and he is back. He is very weak, and his soft little ears are frost-bitten. If he goes near the stove, it makes him whimper. But I guess he is all right, aside from that. We can patch him up all right, and he is mighty glad to get home.”

“I see he is,” returned Mr. Browning stroking the small dog gently. “We’ve been anxious about you, little pup.”

Bing began all over again, kissing his master’s face and wagging his tail to tell him how glad he was to be home.

He had learned his lesson well, although it had been at a terrible cost. He knew now what home meant. Yes, it was “Home, Sweet Home,” the only place on earth for Bing from that time forth. This was his haven, and he was anchored here for the rest of his life.



## CHAPTER IV

### BING GROWS UP

OF all the puppies ever raised at Sunshine Cottage, Bing was the most unfortunate. All of the ills that puppyhood is heir to seemed to come to him. This was partly because of his sorry adventure while he was in hiding in the swamp during those ten dreadful days in winter. Every one to whom the adventure was described

said it was a miracle that he ever came through alive.

For weeks he suffered from frostbitten ears. They were especially painful whenever he went near the stove and, since his favorite hiding-place was under the kitchen range, he often felt a burning and smarting in the frostbitten ears from being near the stove. Then he would climb whimpering into his master's lap and that patient man would take him to the sink and bathe his ears until the pain had abated. It was not so hard to do this in the daytime, but at night it was quite another story. Several times each night Mr. Browning would hear the whimpering of the little dog down in the kitchen and would crawl out of his warm bed and, in bathrobe and slippers, go down and minister to the suffering puppy. But the little dog was so patient and so grateful for all



their efforts that they loved him more each day, even though he caused them so much trouble.

The ears had barely healed when the little hound developed stomatitis, a serious disease of the mouth. When the veterinary first looked into Bing's mouth, he shook his head.

"You will have to keep right after this trouble or you will lose him," he said. "Get a bottle of peroxide of hydrogen and sop it on the gums. Do this several times each day, and don't neglect it if you want to keep your dog."

So, half a dozen times each day, Mr. Browning would get Bing between his knees and hold his mouth open, pulling the lips back from the gums so that Mrs. Browning could sop on the remedy, using a small swab for the purpose. After a few treatments, Bing seemed to under-

stand that they were trying to do him good, so, as soon as he was in position, his tail would begin to thump the floor and he would keep up the thumping until the operation was over.

After the stomatitis had been conquered, a swelling came in the neck. This soon developed into a very angry-looking abscess. The only remedy was a hot application, so an old stocking was filled with steaming bread and milk, the end was sewed up, and then it was sewed around Bing's neck. When this strange necktie was in place, he was a very queer-looking little object. He seemed to know that this was done for his good, and was very grateful and would wag his tail while the bread-and-milk poultice was being renewed.

The pain in his neck was so great that he often ran whimpering to his master or mis-

tress in the night to have them renew the poultice and so keep down the pain.

Then there were the usual small troubles with worms and fleas, not to mention baths with flea soap and generous sprinklings with flea powder.

When the springtime came and the little dog could get out on the lawn and play in the green grass, the Brownings thought their troubles were over. But, one day when he was playing with another puppy in the street, an automobile bowled him over and passed over him even before he knew what had happened.

Mrs. Browning witnessed the accident from the piazza and ran to his assistance, but he scrambled to his feet to the surprise of every one and ran yelping into the yard and out into the orchard. Around and around the place he ran, ki-yi-ing and occasionally stopping to roll on the grass.

It was at least five minutes before he quieted down enough for his good friends to examine him and see what was the matter, but they could not discover any broken or dislocated bones. He had escaped as by a miracle, merely suffering a bad shaking up.

In the late spring, or by the time Bing was nine months old, he had developed into a very alert little watch-dog, without any training on the part of his master. His first accomplishment was the guarding of the inside of the house. When the front door-bell rang or some one knocked on the back door, he would come scrambling down from the window-seat to take up his position by the side of his master or mistress, uttering belligerent little growls. This was his way of telling the caller to beware, for there was a dog in the house.

From guarding the inside of the house,

he gradually assumed censorship over the outside. On cold days, he would station himself in the bay window and watch the passers-by. If any one turned into the walk to come up on the piazza, he at once barked and ran to tell his master or mistress that some one was coming. Later on, when it was warmer, he would lie by the cellar window on the south side of the house and, from this vantage point, he guarded the entire premises. If any one so much as stepped a foot upon his master's land, the little dog at once gave warning.

In the springtime when his mistress began to dig among her flowers, he was always on hand to watch the process. He would lie in the grass for hours looking up at his mistress with adoring eyes, yet it was exasperating to find one of his dirty bones in the very midst of the tulip-bed.



When Bing was scolded because of the bone, he would carry it away and hide it under a bush, but it was quite apt to turn up again in the tulip-bed or in some other equally choice flower-bed.

Bing very early conceived the idea that his mistress' flowers were very dear to her, so he guarded them from the depredations of children in a most zealous manner.

Bird Acre, as the Brownings called their grounds, was generously stocked with fruit, and the little watchman had to guard this, also, but his mistress often hinted that his efforts along these lines were not altogether altruistic, as he was very fond of fruit himself, but Mr. Browning scoffed at this idea and said that he would guard a pumpkin vine just as faithfully as he did the pear-tree, if he knew it belonged to his master.

Few dogs have ever been so fond of

fruit as was this little hound. When the first currants ripened, he would search carefully along under the side of the bushes and snip them off one by one. But it was not until his mistress was picking strawberries that the fruit season for him really opened. He would follow after her all over the bed, searching for the ripe berries. Raspberries and blackberries were also quite to his liking, but probably the fruit that suited him best of all was that from the pear-trees. He was especially fond of an early sweet pear. As soon as the pears began to fall, woe betide any boy who tried to pilfer the Brownings' fruit, for did one so much as set a foot upon the place, the little watchman was after him. He never tried to bite, but would circle round and round his victim, barking incessantly. He seemed to be calling to his master to come and help him.

“ I’ve got him, I’ve got him, I’ve got him,” his sharp barks seemed to be saying. “ You come and help hold him.”

The peach-trees and plum-trees had to be guarded from boys, and it was not until the last tomatoes and late apples were gathered that the vigilance of the little watchman was in any way diminished.

Bing soon learned the habitual callers to the house—the butcher, iceman, laundry-man, grocer, and all the other tradesmen. He early evinced a dislike for the electric-light man, for he would come stamping into the house without knocking or ringing the bell as a respectable citizen should do. This greatly angered the little watchman.

Bing also learned that it was one of his duties as watchman to guard the wheelbarrow, the lawn-mower, and any other

garden or lawn tools which had been left outside. By the time he was a year old, Mr. Browning said that any one who could take either flowers or fruit when the little dog was on guard would be welcome to them.

Perhaps the greatest fun that Bing experienced in guarding the place was that of driving off trespassing chickens, for, when he chased them, they squawked and flapped their wings and made a great fuss, which made the whole affair very exciting. He soon learned that he should not drive them beyond the boundary line, so, in time, he came to know where the boundaries were as well as his master did.

Bird Acre, as you will guess, was a haven for the birds, as the Brownings were very fond of their feathered friends. They fed them throughout the year, put up bird-houses, and also helped in nest-building.

For this reason, the entire grounds were fairly alive with birds.

Woodpeckers, flycatchers, tanagers, and grackles swarmed in the orchard. Robins and other small birds nested in the pear-trees near the house. The catbirds reared their young in the lilac-bushes north of the house, while the oriole swung her nest from a branch in the top of the elm-tree.

Stray cats were always prowling about in search of fledglings, and Bing conceived the idea that he must guard the birds from these stray cats. If ever on rare occasions the Professor forgot himself and tried to stalk a bird, Bing would at once place himself between the old cat and his quarry. So, on many occasions, he saved some of the rare songsters on Bird Acre, including a wonderful catbird that the Brownings called The Little Chorister.

Mr. Browning was continually drawn



into arguments with his dog-fancier friends as to the merits of large or small dogs for watch-dogs. The master defended Bing, that his dog-fancier friends thought was too small for a watch-dog.

He always concluded his argument in the same way. "You see, Bing can make as much noise as any large dog, and that is all that is necessary. No one wants a watch-dog that will bite. It is simply his office to make a great racket and call his folks, and they will do all the fighting."

But when Bing was about eleven months old, he put up a fight in the defence of his mistress that made Mr. Browning proud of him, and which vindicated all he had said in favor of the little watchman.

It was an evening in late August, just after dusk. Mrs. Browning was in the kitchen working over the cook-stove with

her back to the door when a sinister-looking tramp silently lifted the latch and noiselessly stepped inside.

“Don’t cry out,” he hissed under his breath, raising his hand threateningly. “I want what money there is in the house, and you’ve got to give it to me quick.”

In spite of herself, Mrs. Browning uttered a little cry as she turned to face the man. Bing had been lying on the window-seat in a deep sleep, else he would have heard the man sooner, although he had entered silently. But this slight outcry from his mistress brought him to his feet and, before the man even guessed his presence, he sprang at his throat like a little fury.

Taken off his guard, the intruder backed away, then let his half-clenched fist fall heavily on the side of the small dog’s head, sending him to the floor with a loud

thump. But Bing was game and was up again like a flash and sank his teeth in the tramp's trouser leg just above the knee, also including in his grip a portion of the man's leg.

"Get out, you little devil," roared the now infuriated burglar, kicking at the small dog with his other leg, but Bing held on with a desperate grip and the man could not break his hold.

"Don't you dare kick that dog again," cried Mrs. Browning, seizing a heavy poker that lay on the stove hearth and brandishing it over the man's head. "I will dash your brains out if you dare to kick him again."

Seeing that he was threatened from two quarters and being now fully cowed, the tramp backed away towards the door, putting up one hand to ward off the poker and striking at Bing with the other.

“You call off your dog, ma’am,” he finally blubbered, “and I will get out.”

But there was no calling off Bing. His mistress had been attacked and he intended fully to avenge the insult. So it was not until after the tramp was out in the yard that he loosed his hold and let him go, and even then he circled around and around the fleeing impostor, snarling and barking like a little fury. And he did not give up the pursuit until the tramp was well off the premises.

A couple of weeks later Mrs. Browning noticed another hobo standing by the maple in front of the house, looking at a strange monogram that some one had recently cut in the smooth bark of the tree. The tramp was scrutinizing this character so intently that the woman’s curiosity was aroused and she finally ventured to accost him.

“Perhaps you know what that strange figure means,” she said.

“Reckon I do, ma’am,” returned the hobo. “It is as plain to me as the nose on your face.”

“I wish you would tell me what it means,” returned the woman. “I am quite curious to know.”

The tramp grinned at her quizzically, and a look of avarice overspread his face.

“I’ll tell you for a dollar, ma’am,” he said, “and that’s my lowest figure.”

“I’ll give you twenty-five cents,” returned Mrs. Browning. “I don’t care much what it means, anyway.”

“Make it fifty,” said the hobo.

“All right,” replied Mrs. Browning, holding up a shiny half-dollar. “What does it mean?”

“Well,” said the tramp, “that’s a little sign that some friend of mine put on this



tree to tell me that there's a nasty little dog in this house that will tear your trousers off, if you do not look out for him."

Mrs. Browning laughed. "He is not a nasty little dog," she retorted, "but he will tear your trousers off if you get bold around here, so you had better move on," and she gave him the half-dollar.

The hobo first smelled the money, then bit it and weighed it in his palm before he put it in his pocket. He then hurried down the street, occasionally looking back over his shoulder to see if that nasty little dog that might tear his trousers had put in an appearance.

One evening, about the middle of September, Mr. and Mrs. Browning sat at the supper table with Bing on the floor between them. He was most impartial and always sat half-way between them, not

wishing to slight either. Before they had sat down to supper, he had walked leisurely around the table, standing on his hind legs making a careful inventory of the food on it. He had discovered a plate of gingersnaps which were quite to his liking, and he was now on his good behavior, thinking that, if Mr. Browning did not give him some, his mistress would.

When the man reached for his tea, he surreptitiously slid off a gingersnap and dropped it in his lap, where Bing found it a minute later.

“You mustn’t feed him at the table,” remonstrated Mrs. Browning. “You’ll spoil his manners.”

“Weren’t you feeding him toast a minute ago?” returned the man. “I thought I heard him crunching it over by your chair.”

“Well,” returned Mrs. Browning,

“you see, it is Bing’s birthday. He is a year old to-day. And besides, toast is good for him, and you know all the dog books say that cake and gingersnaps are harmful.”

“Well, the doctor’s books say that cake and gingersnaps are harmful for folks, but we eat them just the same, don’t we, Bing?” and Mr. Browning threw him another gingersnap.

“I don’t see,” he said, passing his cup for more tea, “but that the old, old thing has happened again, the thing which always happens when we get a new dog.”

“Why, what do you mean?” inquired Mrs. Browning in surprise, returning the cup filled with hot tea.

“Oh, just the same old thing. Once more we have given our hearts to a dog to tear.”

“Why, Bing wouldn’t even tear my

finger, much less my heart," returned the mistress. "You ought to see how gently he takes the toast from my hand."

"Oh, I don't mean that!" replied the master. "Don't you remember Kipling's poem, 'THE POWER OF A DOG'?"

"When the fourteen years which Nature permits  
Are closing in asthma, or tumor, or fits,  
And the vet's unspoken prescription runs  
To lethal chambers or loaded guns,  
*Then you will find—it's your own affair—  
But . . . you've given your heart to a  
dog to tear.'*"



## CHAPTER V

### THE LITTLE FELLOW

UNTIL the coming of the little fellow into his life, Bing had never cared very much for children; in fact, his attitude towards them had been either one of suspicion or indifference. There were no children at Sunshine Cottage, and, while many parties of young people came to visit Mr. Browning because of his books for children, yet Bing had had little to



do with them, because he was usually out in the kitchen or somewhere outside when these visits took place. But with the coming of the little fellow, his attitude towards children was changed. The little fellow was Mr. Browning's nephew, and he was as sweet a little boy as ever wore a natty sailor suit or smiled up at you from under a jaunty sailor hat. According to his own statement, he was half-past five, which meant that he was born on the first day of December, and when he and his parents visited the Brownings, everybody and everything was "knee-deep in June."

When the visitors arrived, there was much excitement at Sunshine Cottage, and Bing at once retreated to the kitchen where he stood in the doorway eyeing the newcomers curiously. As soon as the little fellow discovered him, he shouted with delight and rushed to the kitchen, but

Bing at once retreated under the range. This was his favorite refuge when he was tired and wanted to sleep. The little fellow got down on his hands and knees and tried to coax him out. Bing growled warningly, but would not come forth.

It was not an ugly growl, but just one of admonishment. It seemed to say: "Go away, boy, I do not know you! We are not friends yet."

The little fellow ran to his uncle in great surprise and climbed up into his lap.

"Why doesn't Bing like me?" he asked in an injured tone. "Every one likes me, down where I live."

"Oh, you mustn't mind that," returned his uncle. "You see, Bing doesn't know you and he has never had much to do with children. As soon as he gets acquainted, you and he will be great pals. You just wait and see. Besides, he has

had to guard the place from bad girls who steal flowers and bad boys who rob the pear-tree and berry-patch, so that has made him suspicious of children. But you wait for a few days. Be patient, and Bing will come to you himself and make friends!”

Bing did not at once declare friendship with the little fellow. For several days, he eyed him from a distance, but each day his curiosity as to this newcomer who was so much beloved by his master and mistress grew. Perhaps when he saw the little fellow climb into his own favorite resting-place, Mr. Browning's lap, he experienced a qualm of jealousy, but even this helped in breaking the ice. Finally one day, after about a week, Mr. Browning and his nephew were sitting on the front-door steps when Bing came around to the other side of his master and snug-

gled up close to him. Mr. Browning reached down and took the little dog by the collar.

“You come around on this side,” he said to the small boy. “I guess Bing is ready to have you pat his head.”

Delighted with this prospect, the small boy hastened to do his uncle's bidding. At first Bing drew away, but finally consented to have his head stroked and his long, silky ears fondled. Presently he reached up and gave the little fellow a kiss on the cheek and then one on the mouth, and their friendship was sealed then and there.

Overjoyed with the progress he was making, the little boy put his arms around Bing's neck and hugged him with delight. From that day forth the two were inseparable and, wherever the little fellow went, Bing followed like a faithful shadow.



With the coming of his nephew, the boy in Mr. Browning was reborn, and he made bows and arrows, quivers, and tomahawks, and all of the rest of the Indian regalia for his nephew. Soon a gaily decorated Indian was seen prowling about Bird Acre, with a faithful hunter following at his heels. They would creep forward with great stealth, stalking some imaginary quarry. If Bing became too excited and rushed forward, he was at once called back by his young master. Finally, the little fellow would kneel on one knee just like a picture of Hiawatha he had seen in a magazine, and the arrow would be discharged. Then both the Indian and the dog would rush forward to the kill.

One day both the little boy and Bing were missing, and for half an hour there was an excited hunt for them. Finally they were discovered in a neighbor's barn,



asleep on some new-mown hay in a cow manger.

Often Bing and his little comrade would seek out Mr. Browning, when he was not busy writing books, and would entreat him to tell them a story. He very early evolved the plan of making Bing the hero of these stories, and this greatly delighted his nephew. The small boy and Bing would sit on either side of the man as he told the tales. In these stories Bing would be a hunter in a great forest, with his game-bag on his back, in search of strange and unheard-of animals. Finally, when one of these animals was discovered, there would be a terrible fight, at the end of which Bing would put the conquered quarry into his game-bag and return home.

During the telling of these tales the little boy often clapped his hands with de-

light, while Bing, in best 'dog fashion, would thump his approval on the piazza floor with his tail.

On other occasions, the little fellow would get out his express wagon and two neighboring boys would serve as horses. The small boy would take his place in the front of the wagon as driver, and Bing would sit in the back. He sat up straight as a drum-major, and looked very pompous and important.

Whenever they met a pedestrian on the sidewalk, the little boy would stop his horses and, looking up with his most engaging smile, would ask: "Don't you love Bing, Mister?"

If the pedestrian replied: "Yes, of course I do," the smile he received was wonderful to behold. If, on the other hand, the pedestrian returned a doubtful answer, the little boy would look at him

in undisguised astonishment and Bing himself would look reproachful.

If the passer-by was so ungracious as to say he did not care for dogs, the little boy was nearly reduced to tears, while Bing would look away in utter disgust.

Thus the summer passed and each day the friendship between the small boy and the dog grew.

Some of the very best times that the little boy had during that wonderful summer at Bird Acre were on those days when he went with his parents and Bing to Sandy Beach. This was a remarkable fresh-water beach at the foot of Broad Street.

As one journeyed down to Sandy Beach through the meadows, he went by a winding road bordered with tall, luxuriant, lush grass which rose and fell in the June breeze. The air was vibrant

with the liquid song of the bobolink; the redwing also joined in with his o-ka-lee song; while the meadow-lark filled in the gaps with his high, shrill whistle. The meadows stretched away as far as eye could reach, while the twin mountains dreamed in the distance against a cerulean sky. Away to the south as far as eye could reach was a gateway where the river had cut its way through the solid rock as it journeyed to the sea. It was a scene of surpassing beauty; and a wonderful sense of peace was over all the landscape.

The little boy liked to dig in the sand, to make canals and inland lakes, as he called them, and, if he could catch some pollywogs or shiners to put in his lakes, his cup of joy was full. Bing loved to romp with him on the sand, or to sit on his tail watching the labors of his little master.

On one never-to-be-forgotten day when

the little boy and Bing had tired of their play, and the father was lying in the sand looking at the blue mountains and trying to think out a new plan for cutting down overhead and increasing the profits in a great store in the distant city, and while the little boy's mother was reading an interesting book, the little fellow went wading. Usually the whole family took a swim, but on this special day the man was busy with his business problems and the woman with her book, so finally, after much pleading, the little boy was allowed to don his bathing-suit and to wade, but he promised faithfully not to venture in above his waist.

The beach was nearly deserted, the only other bathers being nearly a hundred yards away.

For a time the little boy amused himself close to the shore, but finally he be-



came venturesome and waded out farther and farther. The beach was very sloping in most places, but at one point there was a treacherous shelf where the depth increased suddenly. This spot should have been marked by a red flag, but it was not. Suddenly the small boy threw up his arms and, without a sound, sank beneath the glittering surface of the great river. His father had been busy with his day-dreams at the time and his mother was engrossed in her book, so neither had seen the accident. The other bathers had been too far away to see, but there was one pair of faithful eyes that had seen his dilemma. Bing was on guard, watching each movement of his little master, so, when he threw up his arms and went down so mysteriously, the small hound sprang to his feet and rushed towards the water. In less time than it takes to tell it, he was

swimming for the spot where his little master had disappeared.

Almost at the same instant the man sprang from his prone position on the sand and looked wildly about him; the woman dropped her book with a little cry. Neither had seen what had happened, yet both had had a sudden premonition of disaster.

“Where is the boy?” cried the man, looking wildly about in every direction.

“Oh, where is he?” echoed the woman. “The last I saw of him, he was wading close to the shore. Where is Bing? What’s he doing swimming about out there?”

“Perhaps the boy is in the bushes. I will look,” and the man hurried away, while the woman ran down the beach to ask the distant bathers if they had seen anything of a small boy.

Meanwhile, faithful little Bing was treading water just above the spot where he had last seen his small master. Twice during his swim to the spot he had seen the small head appear just above the water, and he now waited to see if it came in sight again. A full minute he waited, treading water, but no small boy appeared, though he thought he could see him lying on the bottom just beneath the spot where he was swimming. I have never heard of a dog's diving, but in some incredulous manner Bing accomplished the feat. The water was not over three or four feet deep and, in some way best known to himself, he managed to reach his little master and to fasten his teeth in his bathing-suit. A second later he struggled to the surface and began painfully towing his heavy load towards the shore.

“My God, there he is!” cried the man,





“HOLD ON, BING, HOLD ON TIGHT!”—Page 113.





suddenly appearing from the bushes. "Bing has got him. Hold on, Bing, hold on tight!"

He rushed into the water and waded out to the struggling dog. It was but the work of a few seconds for the strong man to bring the boy ashore, and Bing followed eagerly in their wake.

The whole incident had taken only three or four minutes, but the little boy had taken so much water into his lungs that he was unconscious and he lay pale and, to all appearance, lifeless in his father's arms.

"Some one run to the pavilion," cried the man, "and telephone for the pulmotor at Meadowdale!"

An obliging bather hastened to do the errand and, a few seconds later, the telephone bell rang in the fire-station at Meadowdale.

“All right,” said the deputy. “We’ll be over in no time.”

Two men jumped into the chief’s automobile, and one of them carried a suitcase. Then the doors of the engine-house opened automatically and the chief’s car rolled out. Five seconds later, it was tearing down Main Street which, at that time of day, was nearly deserted. A policeman saw the red machine coming and waved for pedestrians and automobiles to give it the right of way, so, when the car flashed under the railroad track at the end of Main Street, it was going at the rate of forty miles an hour. Down the long street leading to the bridge the car increased its speed, and it struck the bridge at fifty miles an hour. Through the meadows the chief pressed the accelerator to the floor, and the speedometer mounted to fifty-five, sixty, and then

sixty-five. Like a whirlwind, the car rushed onward until Broad Street was reached. Then it slowed down again to make the turn.

People in Meadowdale had never seen a car go down its principal street at such a rate of speed. Just six minutes after the telephone message had been delivered, two men sprang from the car at Sandy Beach and hastened to the relief of the little boy who still lay pale and limp on the sand.

It was an anxious group that gathered around him, but not even the frantic mother or the grief-stricken father looked more pathetic or sorrowful than did a little hound that hung on the outskirts of the group. His face was drawn and wrinkled with dumb dog anguish that he had no words to express.

For two minutes there was no sound

except that of the rhythmic sucking of the pulmotor. Then the chief shook his head.

“I’m afraid there’s water in his lungs,” he said. “Take away the pulmotor.”

Tenderly he turned the little fellow over on his stomach and, with one hand under his chest and the other on his back, tried to force out the water.

“Some one lift him up,” he said, “and hold the body higher than the head. Here—do it this way.”

Presently a small trickle of water was seen coming from his mouth.

“Good,” said the chief.

When the water had ceased to flow, the pulmotor was again adjusted and its steady sucking began.

After about a minute the little boy was heard to gasp, once, twice, three times, and then he heaved a deep sigh.

“Good,” cried the chief. “I guess he

is coming around all right. Take away the pulmotor.”

As soon as this was done, the little boy gasped several times and then began breathing, at first in short spasmodic breaths, but finally deep and naturally. Then, to the surprise of everybody, he opened his eyes and raised himself on one elbow.

“I want Bing,” he said. “Where is Bing?”

At the sound of his name, the small dog squeezed through between the legs of his friends and joyfully licked his young master’s face while the little boy stroked his head.

“If it hadn’t been for Bing,” he said, “the whale that swallowed Jonah would have got me, too.”

“Don’t let him do too much,” said the chief. “He is still weak. You will have



to be careful that he doesn't take cold. Wrap him up in a blanket and get him home as soon as possible. I can take him in my car."

"I don't want to go in the car," whimpered the little fellow. "I want to go in my wagon with Bing."

"But he will get you all wet," put in the small boy's mother.

"I can't get any wetter than I am," protested the little fellow stoutly. "Bing is the one that saved me, and I want him in my wagon."

"All right," said the boy's father, wiping off the dripping coat of the small dog as well as he could with his handkerchief.

Then the little boy was wrapped in his mother's sweater and, without a second invitation, Bing jumped in beside him and the triumphal procession started.

The news of the accident and Bing's

heroic part in it spread like wild-fire, the children saw to that, and before the little party reached Sunshine Cottage, a dozen children were tagging after the small express wagon and all eyes were riveted on Bing and, from that day forth, the beagle hound was a hero among the children of Shadyville.

“Say,” said Tommy Perkins to Billy Thompson that evening as he recounted the story. “I ain’t a-gonna throw anything more at Bing. I ain’t gonna steal any more of his pears, because I might fall in the river sometime myself and I would want him to pull me out.”

All too soon the summer passed. Almost before any one realized it, the little boy and his parents were packing up to go home. All that eventful day, Bing followed his little master about like a shadow and stuck to him like a burr. In

some strange way he seemed to understand that he was about to lose him.

Finally, when the taxi rolled away to the depot with his pal, he was the most sorrowful-looking member of the household that waved good-bye from the piazza of Sunshine Cottage.

In the evening after supper, Mr. Browning suddenly inquired: "Where is Bing? I haven't seen him for two hours."

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Browning. "He is probably somewhere about the place. Why don't you go out and see?"

So Mr. Browning went out and whistled and whistled, but got no response. Finally he heard the telltale thump of Bing's tail on the back piazza, so he went out to see where he was, and he found the small dog lying on the mat close up to the back door and, do what he would, he

could not coax him away. This was the door of the tenement where the little fellow had lived during the summer, and Bing was on guard by his small master's door, waiting for he knew not what.

“You poor little chap,” said Mr. Browning, patting the small dog affectionately on the head. “I know just how you feel. The little fellow has taken away a piece of my heart, also. You come down-stairs with me and we will listen to the radio.”

So Mr. Browning picked up the small dog in his arms and carried him down to the living-room and turned on the radio. But it was hours before Bing could shake off the sorrow that seemed to engulf him, and for days he haunted the door on the back piazza where the little fellow had lived during the happy time when they had been such good pals.



## CHAPTER VI

### HIS MASTER'S EYES

FEW dogs have ever loved their families more than little Bing did his, yet his attitude towards his master and mistress was quite different. Mrs. Browning he loved, yet Mr. Browning he loved, worshipped, and adored. He would take liberties with his mistress and, upon occasion, would even play pranks upon her or



try to bully her, but with his master it was quite different. Mr. Browning had owned dogs ever since he was a small boy and understood them as few men do. Bing recognized this fact, and it was more pleasure to him to obey his master than it was to play pranks on his mistress.

It was quite by accident that Mrs. Browning discovered how deeply the dog loved his master. One day she chanced to go into the bathroom and, to her surprise, discovered Bing there. He was standing on his hind legs before a chair, caressing one of Mr. Browning's old shirts that he had discarded that very morning. Bing would move one side of his face up and down on the shirt, then he would turn the other cheek to this garment which reminded him so strongly of his beloved master. His expressive dog countenance was eloquent with love. When he dis-

covered that he was being watched, he ran to Mrs. Browning apologetically, but at once returned to the shirt and again began his expressions of endearment.

“That’s right, Bing,” said the mistress, “he is a good man and I love him, also.”

It was not until Bing was fifteen months old that he made a discovery concerning his master which greatly changed his attitude towards the man from that day.

It was a warm spring morning in early April and Mr. Browning was sitting on the piazza in the sunshine, listening to the occasional bird songs that glorified the spring air. Several of their old friends had come back to Bird Acre.

Bing and another small dog were having a wonderful romp in the yard. They were rolling each other over and over, snapping, snarling, and barking, and hav-

ing a furious sham battle. Presently, above the din, there rang out a whistle, shrill, clear, and imperative. It was the call with which Mr. Browning always summoned Bing. Now a poorly trained dog might not have heeded it, but not so Bing. Instantly he withdrew from the sham battle and trotted to his master, eager to do his bidding. But it happened that, at just that time, a dump-cart went by, making a great rattling over the cobble-stones so Mr. Browning did not notice Bing's approach. Again the shrill whistle rang out, and Bing glanced up at his master with a surprised expression. Once again Mr. Browning whistled shrilly, and then Bing put his front paws on the man's knees.

“Why, Bing, good chap! You were here all the time,” exclaimed the man. “What a stupid old fellow your master is!

Well, Bing, we can't help it, so we shall have to make the best of it."

So from that day forth Bing understood that, when his master called him, he might not know of his approach unless he rattled the license tag on his collar, or barked, or opened his mouth very wide and said *oorw-ee-uu*, which is a word in dog language meaning many things.

Bing also soon discovered that his master sometimes missed the pathway leading from the sidewalk to the bone store. The bone store was a combination market and grocery, but the master and mistress always referred to it as the bone store. This was out of respect to Bing, who understood the word "bone." In fact he understood a great many words, perhaps fifty, and also two or three dozen short sentences. So it will be seen that he was a very good companion when one had no

human being to talk to. Bing likewise discovered that, when they returned from the bone store, his master would sometimes go by the walk leading up to the house. This was most likely to happen when he had his arms full of bundles and could not freely use his cane, so Bing would run ahead of him and up the piazza walk rattling his little license tag to give the requisite cue.

Each morning they took the half-mile walk to the post-office. When the master had secured his mail, he would call Bing over to the candy counter and ask him if he would have a stick of candy. Then Bing would stand upon his hind legs and peer through the glass at the tempting array of sweets. When the storekeeper asked what kind he would take, the master always replied, "Cinnamon." He said it was Bing's favorite. Then the store-



keeper would ask why cinnamon was his favorite, and the master would reply: "Because of the bark in it," at which the storekeeper would laugh and all the children who were watching Bing stand on his hind legs would join in the laugh. Then Bing himself would know that something funny had been said and would grin and wag his tail. After that, the master would break off a piece of the cinnamon candy and give it to Bing. When he had swallowed it with a gulp, as he usually did, he would bark three or four times to show that the bark in the candy was having the proper effect, at which the children were thrown into great glee.

Bing's master was a great joker, and Bing soon learned to watch for these pleasant things which his master said that made everybody so happy, and invariably he would grin and wag his tail at the right

point, all of which soon gained him the reputation of being a dog of considerable humor.

There was a strange psychological accord between Bing and his master that has rarely been equalled between man and dog. If Mr. Browning was tired or discouraged, he could not hide it from this little pal. The dog also had a knowledge of his master's whereabouts and movements that was almost uncanny.

Often the master spent half the night in writing on his books, and so, in the morning, he would be very late in getting up. But when he opened the door leading from his bedroom to the bathroom, no matter where little Bing was, in some strange way he knew it. He might be a hundred rods away playing with other dogs, but, at the instant this door clicked, he would turn his nose towards the house

and run with all his might so that, when his master finally came down-stairs to breakfast, he would be standing at the foot of the stairway, rattling his collar in morning greeting.

Bing's fidelity in watching over his master was remarkable. The good people of the town observed it, and often strangers who came to the village noted the devotion of the little 'dog. When the master walked up and down in front of the house for exercise each morning, Bing would take up his position by the maple-tree opposite the front door, a faithful little sentry on guard.

Frequently in the winter the master would go to the city, taking the trolley car at the corner by the bone store. No matter how long he was gone or how cold it was, when he returned and alighted from the trolley car, little Bing would be wait-

ing at the corner. Often he would lie in the snow for hours, shaking with the cold, patiently waiting for his master's return. If Mr. Browning sat down of an evening to listen to the radio, Bing always came scurrying into the living-room and plumped himself down under the table close by. Then Mr. Browning would pick out some soft melodious music that he knew the dog liked. Bing would give a deep sigh of satisfaction and thump the floor with his tail. One evening the two were listening to a lecture from a near-by college. The subject was geology. One of the professors was very much excited about a new fossil-bone he had discovered that very day, during one of his walks. At the sound of the word, bone, Bing's tail began thumping the floor and his mouth began to water. Again and again the professors used this word in their discussion.



“How old do you think this bone is?” finally inquired one of the professors.

“Oh,” replied the other, “perhaps it is two hundred and fifty million years.”

By this time Bing was standing in his excitement. He could even smell that bone, but at this statement the master broke into peals of laughter, and poor Bing fled to the kitchen and hid under the stove. He did not know just what had happened, but the joke was on him, and he knew it full well.

We often read of dogs that detect unseen danger and guard the folks they love from it. Many a time little Bing kept his master from getting lost, and on one occasion he even saved him from a severe injury.

The man had gone to the post-office one morning without Bing. At the time he had been visiting a neighbor's dog and



did not hear his master's whistle. Mr. Browning had stopped at a neighbor's house near by for a call, so that Bing had time to come home and crawl under the kitchen stove and fall fast asleep, without even knowing his master had gone.

Presently his sleep beneath the stove became troubled. He whimpered and whined and then came scratching out from under his favorite hiding-place and started for the front door. His efforts to open it were so frantic that Mrs. Browning hurried to his assistance.

As she flung the door wide open, he shot out of the house like a rocket and ran up the street as she had never seen him run before.

“What in the world is the matter with him?” exclaimed his mistress excitedly.

She ran to the end of the piazza to watch his wild flight. At the corner by

the bone store he turned and took the street leading to the post-office. Then Mrs. Browning went into the house that she might follow his flight from the north kitchen window. The street leading to the post-office had few houses on it, so she could get an occasional glimpse of him in the spaces between the buildings.

“ I do believe he has gone stark mad ! ” she exclaimed, as she followed the frenzied flight of the little dog.

At the next gap she discovered Mr. Browning walking at a rapid stride along the street towards the post-office. Bing was perhaps two hundred feet behind; then, when they came to the next gap, she saw the dog quicken his pace and, half-way between the two houses, he was seen to spring upon his master and grab him by the trouser leg. Then, as nearly as Mrs. Browning could discover, he braced

his paws and pulled back with all his might.

“What a strange performance,” said his mistress. “I can’t make it out, but I don’t believe he would bite Mr. Browning.”

Then several people came running up, and there seemed to be an animated discussion. Finally Mr. Browning and Bing turned about and hurried home. Mrs. Browning met them at the front door.

“What in the world has got into Bing?” she asked. “He was lying under the kitchen stove asleep, and he shot out from under it like a bullet and nearly tore the front door down before I could open it for him. Then he ran up the street as though he had lost his wits, and I thought it looked as though he tried to bite you or tear your trousers.”

“He didn’t do anything of the kind,”

returned Mr. Browning stoutly. "You can thank your lucky stars to-day that we have got him. One more step and I should have plunged into an open sewer, a fall of six or eight feet. It would have cost me a broken leg at the very least, and possibly have crippled me for life. The ditch was dug directly across the sidewalk, and there was no one to warn me of it."

Mrs. Browning knelt down on the floor and took the little dog in her arms. He kissed her upon each cheek and then on the mouth.

"Bingsey, you're a dear little dog," she said, "and there is not money enough in the whole world to buy you."



## CHAPTER VII

### A TIMELY TRICK

BING was never a great trick dog, not that he did not have the capacity to learn tricks, but his master did not have time to teach them to him. Yet he invented many little tricks of his own that were most clever for a dog, and showed considerable reasoning power.

One morning in early spring Mrs. Browning discovered Bing in the yard gnawing a well-polished ham-bone. He had been working on this bone for two days, and the goodness was all gone out



of it. As Mrs. Browning saw the dog working away wistfully at the meager bone, a bright idea came to her and she took the bone into the wood-shed and, with two or three sharp blows of the hatchet, split it from end to end, thus laying open a fine section of marrow, succulent, and very much to a dog's liking.

If any one had observed Bing the following morning, he might have seen him trotting hither and thither about the place, digging holes in the garden and also in some of Mrs. Browning's choicest flower-beds. Finally Bing came to the kitchen door and barked sharply, as he always did when he wanted to be let in or wished to attract the attention of his family. But Mrs. Browning was busy sweeping, so paid no attention to him. Then Bing ran barking towards the sidewalk, just as though the place had been invaded by at

least half a dozen ugly tramps. Mrs. Browning at once went to the door, but no intruder was in sight. Instead, little Bing sat on the lower step looking up at her, grinning and wagging his tail furiously.

“What is it, Bing?” inquired his mistress.

Delighted at being recognized, the little hound trotted around to the wood-shed, looking back over his shoulder to see if his mistress was coming. Mrs. Browning who was an adept at dog language understood, so she followed, wondering what was up.

Bing stopped before the chopping-block and looked back imploringly at his mistress, saying, just as plainly as a dog could talk with his ears and tail: “Don’t you see what a wonderful collection I’ve got. Please help me with them.”

Mrs. Browning looked and, to her great

surprise, saw at least twenty old bones piled up by the chopping-block. There were beef-bones and ham-bones, ribs and hock-bones, in all stages of disintegration. Some of them were so putrid that Mrs. Browning made Bing carry them away to the garden, but several of the most promising she split with the hatchet, and so provided the enterprising Bing with a good two-days' feast.

The one trick that Mr. Browning taught Bing was to put out a lighted match. The master would light a match and hold it out, saying, "Put it out, Bing," and he would fly at it like a little fury, striking with his paw until he had quite extinguished the flame. Then, if the smoldering match did not die down quick enough to suit him, he would take it in his mouth and so smother it.

This was a trick that greatly pleased

Bing's friends, but the master was obliged to forbid the children lighting matches for Bing to put out, as it was too much of a fire hazard.

One day when the Browning family returned home after several hours' absence, they discovered that Bing's trick of putting out a match had stood the whole household in good stead. As soon as Mr. Browning opened the front door, he smelled smoke, and both he and the mistress hurried in to see what was the matter. Bing at once led them to the living-room where a large hole had been burned in the best rug. A spark had probably snapped from the fireplace and ignited the rug during their absence, but all traces of the fire were now extinguished.

"I wonder how it happened to go out of its own accord," said Mrs. Browning.

"I don't think it did," replied her hus-



band. "Take a look at Bing's nose and his paws."

His suggestion was a good one, for both the nose and paws were black with smoke and the dog's nose was slightly burned.

"Good dog," said Mr. Browning. "So you were the little fireman that put out the fire," and Bing acknowledged his part in the happening as well as a dog could.

Every evening when Mrs. Browning went down cellar to look at the furnace, Bing always went with her, if he was around. Sometimes he would investigate rat holes excitedly or dig holes of his own accord, but usually he would sit on the top of the wood-pile near by, observing every movement of his mistress.

One evening the two had gone to the cellar as usual and, after raking out the coals beneath the grate and leaving them on the cement floor to cool, Mrs. Brown-



ing stooped down to pick up the coal shovel which had tumbled down from its position near the coal-bin. As she did so, the bottom of her skirt touched the glowing coals. It was only for an instant, but it was just long enough for the dress to ignite. There was a spurt of bright flame, and Mrs. Browning sprang to her feet with a scream of fright.

But the little fireman from his perch on the wood-pile had seen the sudden tongue of flame and, in two bounds, he was by his mistress' side. He caught the skirt in his teeth and pulled at it vehemently, beating frantically at the blazing dress with his paws. The flames were several times beaten out, but they would flash up again. Finally Bing gave a desperate wrench, and most of the smoking, blazing dress was torn from his beloved mistress, and the little fireman valiantly beat out

the last of the flame, once he had the dress on the floor.

It all happened so quickly that Mrs. Browning hardly knew what had taken place, but she did realize that her back was smarting and burning, and that most of her dress was gone. So she hurried upstairs and called to Mr. Browning to bring her her bathrobe.

“Hurry,” she said. “I have just escaped a terrible accident.”

There was so much excitement in getting another dress for the mistress and lotions for the burns that, for the time being, Bing was forgotten. Finally Mr. Browning went down cellar to discover what he was up to.

He found him groping blindly about the cellar, whimpering and trying vainly to feel his way to the cellar stairs. He made such bad work of it that Mr. Brown-

ing picked him up in his arms and carried him up-stairs.

“His eyelids are swollen terribly,” cried Mrs. Browning, “and his eyebrows are nearly burned off. His nose is blistered, and I do not think he can see a thing. See how he bumps into the furniture. I hope the poor little fellow is not going to be blind.”

“Heaven forbid!” said Mr. Browning, and he hurried to the office to telephone for the veterinary.

“It is impossible for me to tell at present whether the eyesight is affected or not,” said the dog doctor. “His eyelids are so badly swollen that it will take a day or two to get them open so we can see what shape his eyes are in. Don’t worry; perhaps he will be all right.”

So, for the next two or three days, instead of Bing being his master’s eyes, his

master was his eyes and gladly toted him about from room to room, placing him first on the couch and then on the window-seat in the living-room, which was his favorite bed. Finally, the swelling in the eyelids went down and the eyes that had been so alert before the accident again opened and, to the great joy of all, the veterinary pronounced the sight unimpaired, so little Bing again took his place as his master's eyes.

Each spring when it became warm enough, Bing's bed was moved from the kitchen to the garage where he had a fine kennel back of the car. The Brownings always felt easier about the place when Bing took up his quarters in the garage, as he could then come and go at any hour of the day or night and so keep a sharp watch over their property.

As soon as he moved into the garage,



Bing himself changed his manner of living and slept more in the daytime and less at night, just as a well-trained watch-dog should. Even when he was asleep, he was on guard, for any unusual sound or scent would awaken him, so well were his senses trained to guard his master's property from all trespassing.

One morning about the first of April, the spring after he had rescued his mistress from the flames in the cellar, Bing suddenly awoke from a sound sleep and sprang up in his kennel. He did not usually get up until about daylight, but something out of the ordinary had aroused him, so he stuck his head cautiously out of the kennel door and sniffed the air appraisingly, while he listened with cocked ears for any unusual sound.

There was something about the air that he did not just like, so he crawled out of



his kennel and felt his way in the darkness to a small opening which had been made in the garage door for his special use. As he thrust his head out in the open, a fresh puff of morning wind blew full in his face, and the mystery of his sudden awakening was plain. He smelled smoke. With a half-smothered growl, he trotted into the yard and looked about in every direction, but could not make out just where the smoke came from. Then, to his great astonishment, a lighted match, or what seemed to him to be a lighted match, came floating down out of the air above him and fell almost under his nose. He was upon it like a cat on a mouse, striking at the flame with his paws, and soon had it extinguished. But, almost immediately, another match fell in the grass close to him, and this one was much larger and brighter than the first had been, so

he pounced on it and had quite a struggle in putting it out.

This had barely been accomplished when two more matches came sputtering down out of the air above and fell on either side of him. This was getting exciting, and he pounced first upon one and then upon the other, but before he had them out there were several more brightly blazing matches in the grass by him, and one of them started a small flame in the dead last year's grass. By this time Bing had scorched one paw and singed his nose, and still the blazing matches were all about him. What should he do? Summon some one? and he barked loudly for help. Surely his master would hear, even if his mistress did not, but no one came to his assistance. Then he heard the rapid explosive sound of a motorcycle crossing the street on the state road a hundred

yards away. It must be his friend Jerry, the State policeman. He would go to him for assistance. Jerry would help him put out these hissing, sputtering matches which were too much for him. So he raced after the motorcycle policeman, trying to head him off before he had crossed the street and passed from sight.

Lieutenant Monyhan was very much surprised when Bing bore down upon him, barking frantically and racing after his motorcycle. Bing was usually a quiet dog and he had never seen him chase any vehicle before. What had got into him! But, as the motorcycle drew away from the dog, the officer plainly heard an appealing howl from poor Bing. Something must be the matter, so he slowed down his machine and turned to greet his friend.

Again, to his surprise, Bing came gal-

loping up and seized him imperatively by the trouser leg and tugged away at his legging with all his might.

“Hold on, old chap. What is the matter, Bing? You’ll tear my legging. Here, don’t pull so hard! What has got into you?”

For answer Bing released his hold and started towards Sunshine Cottage, looking back over his shoulder to see if his friend, Jerry, was following him.

“Oh, ho,” said the officer, “that’s the idea, is it? You want me to come back with you, do you?”

Bing could not say yes, but he whimpered it so plainly that he made Jerry understand.

“All right, old pal,” he said, “I’m coming.” And he started after the dog, wheeling his motorcycle by his side.

Seeing that he had been understood,

Bing was jubilant, but he made every possible effort to get his friend to hurry. Finally Jerry took the cue from the frenzied dog, now feeling sure that something serious was afoot.

As he trundled his motorcycle into the yard where he got a full view of the south side of the house, the reason for Bing's excitement was plain to him. The roof of the ell part of the house was blazing brightly, and a shower of sparks and small cinders was falling in the yard. These had been the matches that poor Bing had been unable to extinguish.

"Fire! Fire!" yelled Jerry at the top of his lungs, dropping his motorcycle and rushing up to the front door and pounding on it with might and main. Bing added his frantic barking to the efforts of his friend, but they could not arouse the people inside, so they went around to the



back door, and again Jerry pounded and Bing barked.

“What in the dickens is the matter with them!” exclaimed the officer. “Can’t we get in some way, Bing?”

And just as though the question had been understood, Bing shot through the small door in the garage and began jumping against another door which led from the garage to the kitchen. Jerry peered in through the window and saw what he was doing, so hurried to his assistance. Sure enough, this door into the kitchen was not locked, and the officer and the excited dog hurried into the smoke-filled room.

“Where are they, Bing?” exclaimed Jerry excitedly. “You lead the way.”

But Bing did not need to be encouraged. He was racing ahead of his friend, quickly searching in this room and that,

and all the time keeping up a frantic barking.

Then he led the way up-stairs, and Jerry followed close behind. There was not so much smoke here in the main part of the house as there had been in the ell, and they were soon pounding on the Brownings' bedroom door.

At this sound, Mr. Browning jumped out of bed.

"What is the matter?" he called.  
"Who is there?"

"It's me, Jerry," said the officer.  
"Get up and hurry about it; your house is on fire."

The Brownings needed no further admonitions, but, seizing what clothes they could in their arms, hurried after Bing and the officer down the stairway and out into the open.

At this moment the fire-engine came

shrieking up the street and turned in at Bird Acre and, in a very few seconds, a large stream of water was playing on the ell part of Sunshine Cottage.

At this point in the exciting drama, Mrs. Browning uttered a little cry.

“Where is the Professor?” she exclaimed. “Has any one seen the Professor?”

No one had, so every one concluded that he must still be in the house.

“Can’t some one go in and get my cat?” cried Mrs. Browning.

“No,” replied a fireman who had already taken charge of the fire. “We can’t risk our lives for an old cat.”

But there was some one present over whom the fireman had no authority, and little Bing shot like a bullet, almost between the fireman’s legs and into the house.

“He has gone after the Professor,” said Mr. Browning. “I hope he will find him.”

“There is more chance that you will lose your dog, too,” returned the fireman.

But his prophecy was a poor one, for in a minute or two, little Bing came struggling out of the front door, coughing and sneezing, but master of the situation, for his teeth were firmly set in the scruff of the Professor’s neck and he was dragging him forth to safety.

Although he was merely a dog hero and the one for whom he had risked his life was just an old yellow cat, yet this exhibition of courage was not lost on the crowd, and a lusty cheer for little Bing went up from the spectators.

In fifteen minutes’ time the fire was under control and in half an hour it was nearly out, but this was not until the

wood-shed and the garage had been burned and Sunshine Cottage itself badly scorched. But the Brownings were very grateful to escape with such slight losses, and the hero of the entire dramatic happening was little Bing. For, had he not discovered the fire and summoned the officer to help him? Had he not led him to the bedroom of his sleeping master and mistress, and finally, through his own efforts and courage, had he not dragged the old Professor to safety? Surely, if there ever was a dog that deserved to be called a fireman, it was little Bing.





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GREAT RIVER GOES MAD

ON the evening of November 3rd, 19—, Mr. and Mrs. Browning were sitting in their cozy dining-room at Sunshine Cottage, enjoying the evening meal. Little Bing was not in his usual place on the floor between them, and they greatly missed him.

“I don’t see where Bing is,” remarked Mrs. Browning after a long silence. “He has hardly been in the house to-day and,

whenever I have seen him, he has seemed to be full of business, trotting about with a great air of importance.”

“Perhaps there has been a ‘dog sociable,’” returned Mr. Browning, “or maybe the dog club meets this evening. I wouldn’t worry about him if I were you.”

With these words the master reached for a cup of tea, but paused with the steaming beverage half-way to his lips. He seemed to be listening, and Mrs. Browning at once noticed this.

“What is it, Lawrence?” she inquired quickly.

“I don’t just know,” he returned. “I thought I heard a dog howl, and it sounded like Bing. Listen.”

For ten seconds there was absolute silence, then an unmistakable howl came from the end of the home lot. Both mas-

ter and mistress rose hurriedly and went to the door.

For perhaps half a minute there was no sound outside, save the usual autumnal night noises, but presently the howl was repeated, and this time it was unmistakable.

It began with a chest tone, angry and passionate, but rose rapidly in the scale, increasing in pathos as it went higher and higher, and finally it died away in a very shred of sound, almost like a sob.

“That’s Bing, sure enough,” said Mr. Browning, and he whistled shrilly for the dog, but the little hound, usually quick to come at his master’s call, paid no attention to the whistle, but sat dolefully on his tail lifting up his voice to Heaven with a melancholy howl.

Soon another howl was heard, coming from far down the street, but this howl

was quite different from the one Bing had uttered. It was deep and sonorous, a dog diapason, beginning away down in the chest and seemingly full of anger and rage, but it rapidly mounted, growing in intensity and pathos until it finally ended in a pathetic wail, dying away in a tone so unearthly that it sounded almost like the cry of a lost soul.

“That’s Watchman, the big police dog down at Higginses’,” remarked Mr. Browning. “I wonder what’s the matter. There isn’t any one dead in town, is there? You know Watchman howled in just that way the night Grandpa Higgins died.”

“I haven’t heard of any one,” returned Mrs. Browning. “Listen!”

From up the street came a howl pitched half-way between that of little Bing and the deep howl of Watchman.

“That’s Scotty Jones,” said Mr.



Browning. "He has got the message, too, whatever it is. I wonder what is afoot. For all we think we know so much about dogs, there is still a great deal to learn. They seem to have psychological powers of which we know nothing, and strange premonitions of death and coming dangers. I am almost convinced that a dog actually beholds the death spectre when it finally comes, through some psychological vision of which we have no knowledge."

"Well," said Mrs. Browning, "this is the most doleful concert I ever heard, and I am going into the house."

After whistling for Bing for several minutes without avail, Mr. Browning followed her, but all through the evening they continued to discuss the meaning of this strange night serenade.

They would have been still more mys-



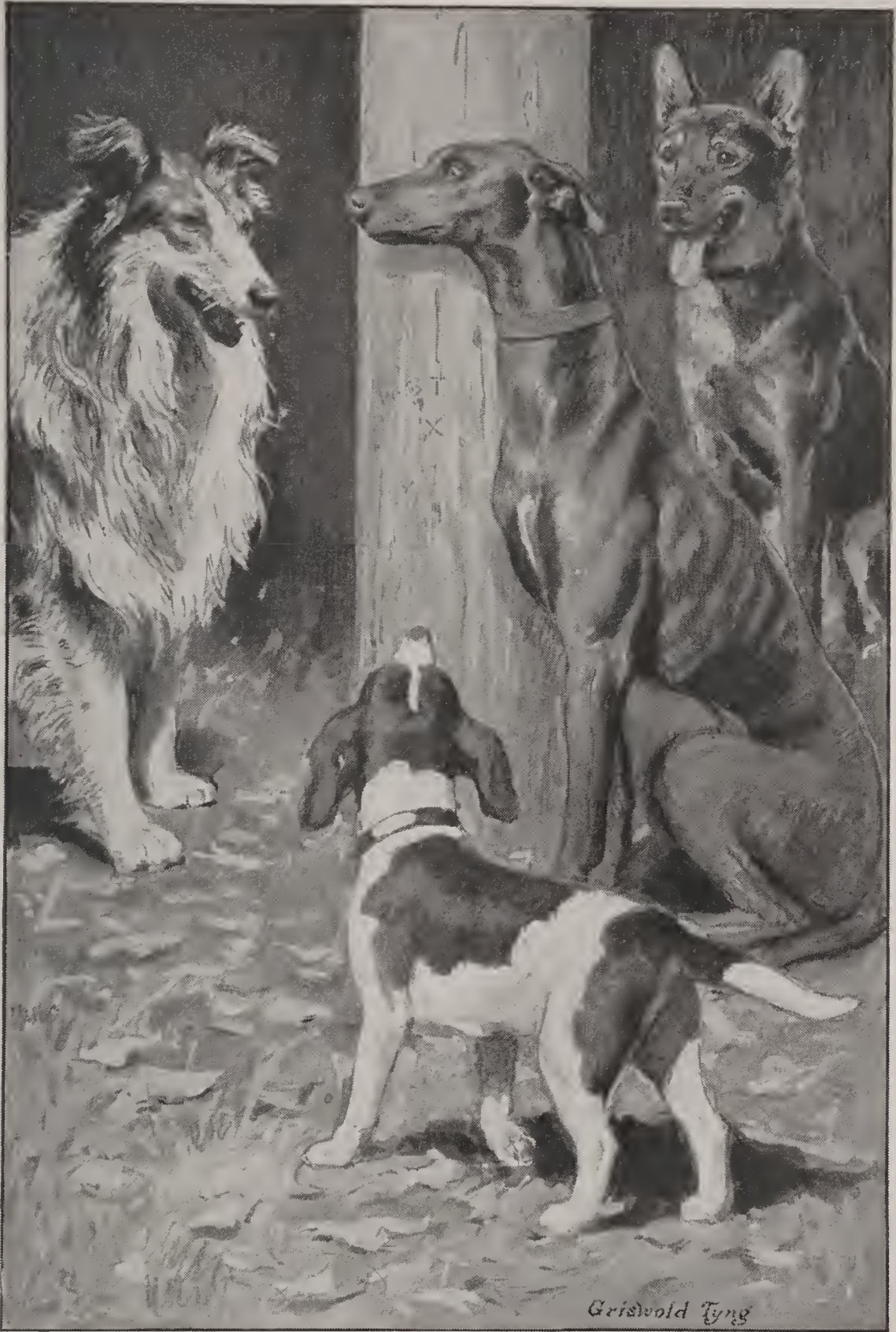
tified later in the evening, had they beheld Watchman, Scotty, and Bing all come together as by a common impulse at the corner above Sunshine Cottage, at the place where the road to Meadowdale crossed Broad Street.

Apparently these three dogs had not made any previous appointment, but had answered a common impulse. Whatever it might be, something outside them and yet within them had told them that they were to meet at this place at just this particular time.

For a minute or two they sniffed noses, looked up at the November sky, and then returned to their confab. Finally they seemed to reach a decision and Watchman, the big police dog, led the way down the trolley track towards Meadowdale at a long swinging gallop. Scotty followed close behind, while little Bing brought up

the rear, running with might and main to keep up with his two friends. Occasionally, when the pace became too much for him, he would stop and utter a despairing wail, at which the larger dogs would slow up until he overtook them. They did not slacken their pace until they reached the great river, and then it was merely to cross over to the travel bridge on which they crossed the river.

At the farther end of the bridge they went straight to a telephone pole some one hundred feet away and there, leaning exhaustedly against the pole, was a great gaunt greyhound, a dog none of them had ever seen before. He was so spent with running that he could scarcely stand. He was footsore and his feet were bleeding. His breath came spasmodically, with occasional short sobs. For several minutes the three newcomers stood round him,



A DOG NONE OF THEM HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE.—Page 164.





awaiting his pleasure. Finally he pulled himself together and stood erect, awaiting the advance of the newcomers.

First, Watchman went up to him and stood with his nose touching that of the greyhound for at least a minute. Then he turned suddenly, slunk away fifteen or twenty paces, and sat down on his tail and gave vent to that primitive wolf howl which had so recently been heard along the broad street of Shadyville.

Next, Scotty went up to the lank-looking dog and rubbed noses with him. He likewise soon retired and sat down on his tail and added his voice to that of Watchman.

Lastly, little Bing greeted the stranger. As soon as his nose touched that of the greyhound, he began to whimper and tremble and, after a very few seconds, he, likewise, retired and added his voice to the



mournful duet that had preceded him. The old greyhound did not howl, he was too spent for that, but he stood looking mournfully at the other dogs with sad, half-closed eyes.

I do not know what the old greyhound told the three dogs from Shadyville, but he certainly told them something. I do not know what the dog mode of communication is, but I am inclined to think it is either a sign language or telepathic, probably the latter. I do not know that it is vocal, but the fact was that the exhausted greyhound was a dog courier from the flood-swept north. During the past forty-eight hours he had galloped unceasingly, covering two hundred miles. He had left the crest of the terrible flood twenty hours behind, and here he was at the end of the great bridge telling the dogs of Shadyville in some strange way of the things he

had seen during the past forty-eight hours.

Two days before, just at dusk, he had been out on a hilltop overlooking a little Vermont village which slept in a peaceful valley. The sun was just setting and, as the great greyhound stood on the hilltop, his tall figure was sharply silhouetted against the evening sky. Then it was that he beheld a terrible sight, for, without warning, a mighty wall of water came roaring and seething down the valley. He had seen the house in which his master and mistress and two little children lived, roll over and over before the oncoming flood.

He had seen houses, barns, hen-coops, automobiles, cows, and horses, and even men and women, floating down the valley on the crest of this mountain of water. For fifteen minutes the old hound had

stood spellbound, and then he had been seized with a great terror. This rushing, seething monster which was destroying everything in its wake would stretch up its mighty mouth for him, so he had turned and pointed his nose southward. All that night he had galloped and, at daybreak, had eaten a hasty breakfast at a garbage heap; then he had sped on, southward, southward, southward. He was galloping, he knew not where or why, but he must leave this seething, hissing, foaming monster that had destroyed his home and his friends far behind.

For another night and another day he had galloped, and so, at the end of forty-eight hours, he was sitting here by a telephone pole at the end of the great bridge telling the dogs of Shadyville the story of the terrible monster that was roaring, rushing, and foaming down upon the crest

of the great river, bringing death and destruction to all who awaited its coming.

The following morning, Mr. Browning and a friend went to attend some meetings at a local college in which they were both interested, and the incident of the howling dogs the evening before was forgotten.

The morning papers contained scare-heads concerning the great flood to the northward, but, as it was a balmy autumnal day, such disasters as this flood seemed far off, and it was soon forgotten.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the great, seething, rushing, roaring, hissing monster of a river overflowed its banks on both sides below the three bridges, and the flood was on. At one point the shelving bank gave way for one hundred feet and a great tidal wave went rushing over the lowlands. Some farmers who were doing their autumn plowing in the meadows



were obliged to flee for their lives. The great, hissing, seething, foaming monster spread over the meadows like a devastating demon, picking up driftwood, sticks, and anything that would float, as it swept on its relentless way. By four o'clock the houses and barns on Meadow Street were surrounded, and the farmers came and went on rafts or in boats. But the good people on Meadow Street were immune to floods. They had seen the water as high as this and higher, so they made no effort to remove their stock or household belongings. By five o'clock the great meadows were entirely submerged and the water was creeping into the lower end of Broad Street, and Shadyville village was threatened.

That evening when the little Polish boy brought the milk to Sunshine Cottage, he was very much excited.



“ Oh, Mr. Browning,” he cried, “ the river has gone crazy and is running backwards into the street. My house is surrounded and I had to wear my rubber boots. If I don’t hurry up and get home, it will be up to my middle.”

“ Oh, I wouldn’t worry,” returned Mr. Browning. “ We often have high water here in Shadyville. Two or three times I have seen it so high that we could take a boat right out in front of the house.”

But Mr. Browning was really surprised when he retired at eleven o’clock and the mistress reported that the water was coming up in the ditches in front of the house.

“ I wouldn’t worry,” said the man as he crawled into bed. “ We have seen high water before. I guess it will begin to fall by morning.”

But, in spite of herself, Mrs. Browning was worried and could not retire. In-

stead, she and Bing wandered restlessly about the buildings, watching the ever-advancing water.

At two o'clock in the morning, every bell in the sleepy old village began ringing violently and Mr. Browning came out of bed with a jump and, gathering up his clothes, hurried down-stairs. Something had surely happened, or was about to happen, or they would not give a general alarm like this.

Then the telephone rang and a friend told them that the river was coming over its banks at the head of the street. Every able-bodied man in the town was called to the dikes, or rather to the place where the dikes should have been, for there were none.

Then Mr. Browning remembered that he had known old-timers to shake their heads and say that, if the river ever came

over the banks at the head of the street, it would be good-night to Shadyville. In fifteen minutes' time, automobiles were rushing to and fro, honking their horns and calling for men to get up. Half an hour later, trucks loaded with bags of sand could be seen hurrying towards the vulnerable north end of the town. At first, the dike was only two or three rods long, but, as the water rose, it was extended until, by daylight, it was half a mile in length and four bags high, and still the water rose.

As daylight came on, the scene on Broad Street in Shadyville was indescribable to one who was used to its usual calm. For hours a procession of fugitives had been marching by Sunshine Cottage. Little children carrying household utensils and clothing were in the van. Some of them were stolid and philosophical, but

others were crying. Close behind them came the women carrying suitcases in which they had hurriedly thrust clothing and their most valuable possessions, and behind them came the great two-horse wagons, groaning under a load of stock. The cattle were lowing, excited calves were bleating, but the most hideous din of all was that made by the pigs. They had been suddenly aroused from sleep in their warm sties, caught and hog-tied, and thrust unceremoniously into boats, going to what doom they knew not. But one thing was certain, their squealing was incessant and harrowing to the last degree.

By noon, Sunshine Cottage was entirely surrounded by water, three or four feet deep. The Brownings and one other family just across the street were all the people that still stayed in their houses on the lower end of Broad Street. The rest



of the inhabitants had fled with what belongings they could take with them. They had abandoned their homes and their homesteads to the devastating flood.

But the Brownings were old-timers; they had seen high water before. As long as the dike held at the head of the street, there was no reason for abandoning their home. At two o'clock in the afternoon, although the scene was anything but reassuring, Mr. Browning sat before the radio listening to a football game in a distant city, Bing occupying his usual place under a table near by. The master had concluded that they might as well get what fun they could out of the day, but the play had barely started and the game was scarcely under way when there came a violent knocking at the front door, and a State officer hurried in.

“ I am sorry, Mister,” he said, “ but the



dam at Werner's Falls has given way and you have just fifteen minutes to get into the boat. Take what you can in that time, and come quickly."

Now Mr. Browning had read just the day before that, if this great dam, which was a model of modern engineering, ever gave way, a flood of water twenty-five feet high and running at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour would sweep down the valley, carrying everything before it. So the Brownings needed no further urging. Hastily Mr. Browning filled a suitcase with some of his most valuable manuscripts, while Mrs. Browning filled another with clothing and other valuables. Just at the last minute, as Mr. Browning was handing the suitcase to the officer in the boat, Mrs. Browning rushed out in great excitement.

"I can't find Bing or the Professor

anywhere," she cried, "and we can't go without them. What shall we do?"

For answer, one of the officers took her firmly by the arm. "Get into the boat, madam," he said. "There is not a minute to lose. At such a time as this, we cannot stop for cats and dogs."

"But we can't go without our pets," objected Mr. Browning.

"You will have to," said another officer, pushing him back into a seat.

While they had been talking, a third officer had locked the front door on Bing and the Professor and, a second later, the boat pushed off.

It was a terrible scene and one that the Brownings never forgot. Their beloved Sunshine Cottage was entirely surrounded by water which was gurgling and foaming as it rushed under the piazza and into the cellar.

There was water, water everywhere, dark, foaming, and gurgling. Above the sound of its sucking and seething came the cries of excited men as they urged their frantic horses through the flood, the lowing of the cattle, the squealing of the pigs, the excited barking of dogs, and, above all and worst of all, the sobbing of women and little children.

As the boat reached the corner of Broad Street and the road to Meadowdale, Mrs. Browning glanced back for a parting look at Sunshine Cottage.

“Officer, look!” she cried. “See if you can make out what that is in the garret window.”

The officer turned his glance in the direction indicated and said: “It is your cat and dog. They have taken refuge in the garret. They surely understand the situation.”

And that was the last glimpse that the Brownings had of Bing and the Professor, for, a second later, the boat rounded the corner and Sunshine Cottage was blotted from sight. A few blocks farther on they were transferred to an automobile, for the village was not entirely submerged. The automobile in turn took them to the house of some good friends who lived on higher ground.

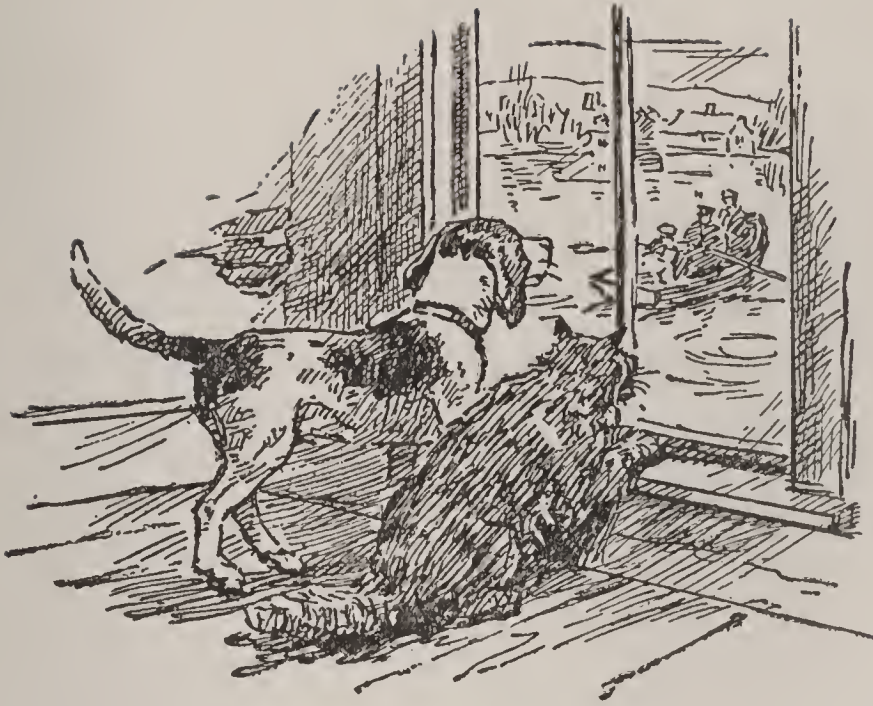
All that afternoon they waited feverishly for reports of the flood. Every man in Shadyville who could work was busy. Trucks loaded with sand-bags were rushing by, while farmers, business men, and professional men stood waist-deep in the water, piling the precious sand-bags on the dike.

By night, the waters were still rising. Nearly all the cellars on Broad Street were full of water and some of the first

stories were partly submerged, but still no further word from the great dam at Werner's Falls. Had it really gone out? No one seemed to know, and this added to the agony of the situation.

All through that night the Brownings tossed on sleepless pillows, listening to the booming of the big clock near by. It was an interminable night. Would morning never come? What was going on out there in the dark? What was happening to old Shadyville? Would they ever see Sunshine Cottage again? Would little Bing and the Professor be safe? What a night! Would it never end? And thus the hours dragged by.





## CHAPTER IX

### ADRIFT IN THE NIGHT

ON that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning when the sun arose and the good people of Shadyville looked out over the landscape, they were filled with joy and gratitude to see that the old town was still there. In some miraculous way the flimsy dike of sand-bags had held. The square colonial houses still stood on Broad Street, with the great elms standing guard

over them. But this Shadyville looked more like an inland lake than a peaceful New England town. Its commons were lagoons, while its roads and sidewalks were rivers. Many of the outbuildings were gone, but the houses and barns still stood. The water in the river was four feet above the level of that in the town, so there was still grave danger, but the people of Shadyville had hopes.

Immediately after breakfast, the good people with whom the Brownings were staying took them in their automobile on a sightseeing trip. They went along a street at the back of the village which was on higher ground, and so had a good view of the village. It was water, water everywhere. Mrs. Browning, who was using the field-glass, reported to the others.

“Sunshine Cottage is still there,” she said. “Everything seems to be all right,

but I guess my carpets and furniture on the first floor have got a good wetting. I wish I could get a glimpse of Bing and the Professor, but it is too far away for that. The door which leads to the back piazza is open. I thought I locked it before we left, and the hen-house is gone. I did not notice that before."

"We can easily spare it," said Mr. Browning, who was overjoyed that Sunshine Cottage was still safe. "We will give it as an offering to the water gods."

Then came the report from up north that the Werner's Falls dam had probably not gone out, although the water had been so high the day before that engineers were not sure. The crest of the flood would reach Shadyville at noon and, if the dikes held a few hours longer, the worst would be over. Noon came, and the crest of the flood swept by the marooned town and the

dikes held. By two o'clock in the afternoon, the water had begun to fall and, by sundown, it had fallen a foot, and Shadyville breathed easier.

When the sun arose on Monday morning and the people of the marooned town again beheld their village, to their great surprise they found that most of the water which had flooded the streets, roadways, and the common had disappeared. There was still good boating in the low places and it would be several days before the water entirely disappeared, but the roads were again in shape for travel. So the Brownings lost no time in going back to Sunshine Cottage. They went in an automobile over the road they had traveled in a boat two days before.

“Everything looks all right,” said Mrs. Browning as they mounted the steps to the front piazza.



“ I don’t see why Bing isn’t scratching at the door,” remarked Mr. Browning as he unlocked it.

But a hurried search of the house revealed the astonishing fact that Bing and the Professor were not there. They had disappeared as though by magic.

“ Are you sure you saw them in the garret window? ” inquired Mr. Browning for the third time, after he and Mrs. Browning had ransacked every room.

“ Perfectly,” she replied, “ and the officer saw them also. It is the queerest thing I ever heard of.”

So, while the Brownings are wondering about the strange disappearance of their dog and cat, let us go back to that first night when they sat by the garret window and watched the boat taking the master and mistress far away, and see what happened.



With the disappearance of the family, Bing and the old cat did not linger long in the garret, but soon returned to the first floor where they wandered restlessly from room to room wondering what it was all about.

But it was not until the water began creeping in over the floor that they really got excited. Then Bing noticed that it was spoiling his dog biscuit in the kitchen, so he carried them up-stairs, one at a time, and finally both he and the Professor took refuge in the second story.

They slept in the guest chamber on the best bed until about two o'clock in the morning and then became restless because their master and mistress did not return. In the course of their wanderings about the house, they came to the door leading to the up-stairs back porch. It was partly open, and Bing and the Professor went

out on the back porch. But this gave them little consolation, for at the foot of the stairway was a great lake, and neither dog nor cat had any mind to escape in that way. Then they noticed the board leading from the back piazza to the roof of the hen-house which the Brownings used when they scattered grain to the birds. Bing finally led the way across to the hen-house, and the Professor followed.

They fidgeted about on the roof for several minutes and finally Bing turned to go back to the piazza, but, to his surprise, there was a broad gap between the end of the plank and the hen-house roof. Then it was that he noticed that the hen-house was moving, not rapidly but steadily, and this movement soon carried them out into the orchard where the strong current took this clumsy craft and, in another minute, the little hound and the big yellow cat had

started on their perilous journey towards Long Island Sound.

As the hen-house swept out into the current and started steadily southward, Bing appreciated the fact that a strange and irresistible force was carrying him away from Sunshine Cottage and his folks. It was a force that he could not fight, and this fact filled him with terror. He walked excitedly up and down on the hen-house roof for several minutes, then he sat down on his tail and gave vent to a series of howls. It was indeed a terrifying scene.

Overhead were the heavens with their countless stars and beneath was the water, seemingly as endless as the sky and also dotted with stars. The trees and buildings all had their counterpart in dark unearthly shadows in the water. There were few sounds save the distant roar of

the river and the occasional splash of the officers' oars as they rowed up and down Broad Street on their strange, unearthly beat.

Just opposite the lower end of Broad Street, the hen-house grounded for half an hour, and Bing might have escaped as the water was shallow here, but he did not know it, as the shadows at this point made it look dark and forbidding. But finally the wind shifted and there was just enough push in it to start the hen-house anew on its perilous ride. As soon as the clumsy building drifted into the meadows below Broad Street, it felt the titanic pull of the great river and quickened its pace. A mile below Shadyville the river turned sharply to the left and here, as it swirled back to the right to resume its southern direction, it had piled up a strange conglomeration of wreckage upon a small



meadow. There were planks, logs, trees and bushes, hen-houses and hen-coops, corn-cribs, gates and fences, and scattered in among this medley were chairs, tables, and bedsteads, all articles of a more human touch. At one point a shiny square piano was ended up between a corn-crib and a portion of a bridge. But this was not all. The tragedy was even worse than this, for there were dead cows in the wreckage, also horses. Good swimmers that they were, they could not stem this terrible tide. Who can imagine the fearful sights that little Bing saw as he shivered on the roof of the hen-house while this strange procession went by? For it is a matter of history that, during this flood, three thousand cows and hundreds of horses, pigs, and sheep went floating to the sea, while one hundred and fifty men, women, and children found a watery grave



somewhere between northern Vermont and Long Island Sound.

After two hours more, débris piled up behind the hen-house, and the rising water forced it again into the current, and once more little Bing and the Professor began their strange ride to the sea. Eight miles below this spot was the great dam at Millville. Ordinarily, at this point, the water took a thirty-foot drop, and even now, at flood time, the fall was fifteen feet, so when the hen-house should finally take that plunge it would turn over and over and Bing and the old cat would find a watery grave. An hour passed and they drifted slowly by the Pelham river bridge which was partly submerged. They had covered two of the eight perilous miles, and the great dam and fatal plunge were now but six miles away. Another half-hour, and they saw the end of old Mount

Wachusett being left behind. It was now about four miles to the dam; two more of these miles had been covered, and it seemed that only a miracle could save little Bing and his companion on their strange craft, when the unexpected happened. And so it is in our human lives; often the deepest darkness precedes the dawn, and "joy cometh in the morning."

Now it happened that Billy Anderson who lived just two miles above the Millville dam was out in his motor-boat looking for valuable wreckage. He was provided with a long rope and grappling-iron, and whenever he saw anything that he thought would be of value, he caught the article with his grappling-iron and towed it ashore.

Bing, having been anxiously searching the water in every direction for possible help, discovered Billy long before the man



HE NOTICED THE SMALL HOUND PERCHED ON THE RIDGE-POLE.  
*Page 193.*





saw him. The frantic barking of the dog soon attracted the young man's attention and he looked in every direction, as sound coming over the water is very deceptive. Finally he espied the hen-house and turned his motor-boat towards it. Then it was that he noticed the small hound perched on the ridge-pole. At the sight of the boat, Bing redoubled his barking, fairly prancing up and down in his excitement and, finally, as the boat drew nearer, the Professor crowded up close to him, wishing also to add his persuasion.

As Billy came close to the hen-house, not wishing to come in collision with it, he headed the boat up-stream and Bing thought the young man had passed them by, and his joyful barking was turned to dolorous howling. But Billy's next move was firmly to fasten the grappling-iron to a window-sill, and then he headed the



motor-boat towards shore, but the current was so strong and the hen-house was so clumsy that it was fifteen minutes before he made very much headway with it. Both hen-house and motor-boat went steadily down-stream, but Billy could see that, little by little, he was getting the clumsy craft towards the shore, and finally he brought it to rest on terra firma just half a mile above the great dam.

It was but the work of a few minutes to climb to the roof and help Bing into the boat, and the young man soon followed with the Professor under his arm. After making the hen-house secure to a tree near by, Billy set out for his own home, feeling that he had accomplished quite a stroke. But it was not until he was inside the house and had looked at Bing's collar that he was able to identify the little hound for, on the collar, he read:

“ Name, Bing. Owner, Lawrence Browning, Shadyville, Mass.” But when young Anderson tried to call Sunshine Cottage, the operator told him that the house was empty, as nearly all of Shadyville had been evacuated. The following day he received the same report. No one seemed to know where the Brownings had gone. It was on the afternoon of the second day after the strange rescue that young Anderson got out his motor-car and Bing promptly took his place on the front seat beside the driver, while the Professor was content to ride between them.

The Brownings were just at the height of their discussion as to what had become of Bing and the Professor, and Mr. Browning was outlining a plan for their recovery, when they heard a sharp bark in front of the house. There was only one dog in the world that barked like that, and

it was Bing. So both master and mistress hurried to the door just in time to see him jump from the car and come bounding towards them with great leaps, and he was closely followed by the Professor.

Such a home-coming and such a reunion had never been seen at Sunshine Cottage before, and we may be certain that the young man who had rescued the Brown-ing pets came in for his share of glory and reward.



## CHAPTER X

### THE LONG VIGIL

FOR several months after the great flood, Mrs. Browning was not well. In spite of all her efforts, she could not throw off the horror of that great disaster. Whenever it rained and surface water appeared, either in the orchard behind the house or on the common, it made her nervous. The winter that followed was a long and hard one, and all the members of Sunshine Cottage were glad when spring came.

One morning at the breakfast table, late in April, Mrs. Browning greatly surprised her husband by saying, "I wish Bing would stop looking at me so. He makes me nervous."

The little hound that had been gazing at his mistress with adoring eyes at once turned his head and went to Mr. Browning who patted him affectionately.

"You may look at me, Bingsey, just as much as you want to," he said. "I should be glad to have a nice dog like you look at me."

"You don't understand what I mean," replied Mrs. Browning irritably. "I do not mind his looking at me, but he looks as though he saw something."

Mr. Browning laughed. "The fact is, he is seeing a fine-looking woman."

"Stop your joking and be serious! I am, Heaven knows," returned the mis-



tress. "Bing not only looks at me, but he looks through me. He looks as though he saw something standing over me or behind me. Half a dozen times a day I turn about to see what he is looking at."

Mr. Browning looked serious. "Why, you're just tired, Betty," he said. "It's nerves. Bing doesn't see anything that the rest of us do not see."

"But you have often said, Lawrence, that you thought dogs had premonitions of danger to come and that they could even see the death spectre. That's what I mean. I wonder if Bing sees something behind me that neither you nor I can behold," and she concluded the sentence with a little sob.

"Nonsense, fiddlesticks!" replied Mr. Browning, but nevertheless he was deeply troubled over the conversation.

So he was not altogether surprised

when, a few days later, his wife announced: "I can't get up this morning, Lawrence. I don't know what the trouble is, but the bed seems to spin around like a top. I'm afraid we are in for it."

"I guess you will be all right," returned the master. "You're just tired out. I'll get up and get things started."

But, instead, he went down-stairs and telephoned for good old Dr. Hampton. The physician made a long and careful examination of Mrs. Browning and asked many questions, then retired to the study for a consultation with Mr. Browning.

"It's typhoid fever or something of the kind," he said. "She's very nervous. We must have a nurse at once."

The nurse came the same afternoon. Her name was Miss Stevenson, and she had just graduated from a large hospital in the city and looked very immaculate in

her new uniform. She was brimful of theories and efficiency, but, as Dr. Hampton remarked to Mr. Browning: "She's got about as much love in her make-up as an icicle, and she's just about as sympathetic as a broomstick, but I guess she's a good nurse in her way."

Miss Stevenson early took a dislike to Bing. Whenever he could slip away to the hall up-stairs, the little hound would do so, as he wished to be near his mistress. Whenever the nurse came out of the sick-room, she would glare at him and drive him down-stairs, an act that nearly broke his heart. On several occasions when Mrs. Browning heard the patter of the small dog's feet in the hallway, she would call him in, but the nurse always frowned on this procedure and, as soon as the call was over, she would carefully wash the patient's hands.

“What are you doing that for?” asked Mrs. Browning one day. “Bing’s kisses contain nothing but love, and love is not infectious.”

“Well,” replied the nurse, “perhaps it isn’t, but I’ll take my chance with sylvanathol or carbolic any day.”

During this terrible ordeal, Mr. Browning and Bing became greater pals than ever. Often, the master took Bing’s part against Miss Stevenson and entreated her to be more thoughtful of him.

One day when they were discussing the case, the nurse spoke to the doctor about the dog.

“Doctor,” she said, “have we got to have that dog in the upper hall all the time? I don’t like dogs, and he gives me the creeps with his mournful face forever looking at Mrs. Browning’s door.”

“Bing is a personality,” returned the

old man gently, "and he has more character than many people. You will find that out, if you see enough of him. I wouldn't disturb him. I am sure that Mrs. Browning would like to have him in the hallway, if she knew. You see, we never can tell just what the golden thread is that holds our loved ones to earth. Often a bit of love, even a dog's love, may do more than medicine and nursing, so I wouldn't be too hard on Bing."

The days that were so full of anxiety for Mr. Browning and Bing dragged slowly by, and there was no improvement in the patient. The little hound finally became so heart-broken that he would scarcely eat a mouthful of food, so each day Mr. Browning took it upon himself to feed the dog, fairly coaxing the dog biscuit down his mouth.

The terrible strain was telling upon



both man and dog. Mr. Browning became haggard, and Bing was finally so weak that he tottered when he climbed the stairs to the upper hall.

One morning, about the first of May, the crisis came. The patient lay on the bed as one dead, white as the pillows. Mr. Browning sat by a window, leaning his aching head on his hands. The doctor had done all that he could, and he sat by another window, looking out at the bright May sky. They were waiting, waiting, waiting for they knew not what.

Mr. Browning could not help but notice as he sat by the open window how different the world outside was from the sick-room. From out-of-doors came the heavy fragrance of a syringa-bush in full bloom and the sweet scent of new grass, the pungent aroma of the spice-bush and other indescribable scents which made the May air

vital and vibrant. The sunbeams, too, seemed joyous and full of life, and the birds that always flocked to Bird Acre in the spring-time were all there. The robins were busily flying to and fro, chattering and scolding. A bluebird was fluting from the top of the pear-tree and the blithe little oriole was there also, for it was the seventh of May, and this day had been oriole day at Bird Acre for the past fifteen years. Only once had the orioles failed to appear on that day. Life was out there in the open,—life that vibrated and tingled and was glad, but inside the sick-room it was so still that the ticking of a little clock on the mantelpiece seemed to Mr. Browning's overwrought nerves like loudest thunder. There was no sign of life inside the room; instead there was gloom and heartache.

Presently the old doctor once more tip-

toed to the bedside and took the thin white hand in his and let his fingers rest for a few seconds on the wrist. Then he quickly laid the hand down, and, stooping, placed his ear over the woman's heart and listened for a few seconds. Then he quickly crossed the room and, taking a small looking-glass from the mantelpiece, hurried back to the bedside and, with trembling hands, held it close to the woman's face for at least thirty seconds, then turned it about. It was as bright as silver; there was not the slightest cloud upon it. Then, with heavy steps the old physician came over and laid his hand on Mr. Browning's shoulder. The doctor said gently: "She is dying." With a moan of unspeakable agony, Mr. Browning sank down on his knees beside the bed and laid his head on the pillow beside that of his wife. The old doctor returned to

his seat by the window and sat down heavily. He had fought a good fight, doing the best he could, and was losing. Only he knew how impotent and helpless he felt as he sat looking out at the May sky.

Just at the moment when Mr. Browning had fallen on his knees by the bedside, the woman, lying so still and seemingly lifeless upon the bed, felt the soul of her, her real life, slowly rising from the body, the poor tired body that she was leaving. There was nothing sudden about this going; instead it was very leisurely. She saw Mr. Browning kneeling by the bed, and a great wave of pity for the stricken man swept over her. She wanted to stay with him and comfort him, but she could not, for something above and beyond was calling to her and drawing her with an irresistible force. She saw the old doctor



sitting by the window, and she pitied him also. He had worked so hard, and they thought he had lost. There was another figure that she beheld likewise, and that was little Bing in the outer hall. He was sitting on his mat with his forefeet braced, his head held high, with a look of utter agony on his small dog face. He seemed to be looking, or listening for something, she knew not what. She pitied Bing, too, and wished that she might go to him, but the urge from outside was still more insistent. She could not stay, it would not let her; she must answer this call. So she drifted away from Sunshine Cottage and Bird Acre into a great wide world of light and unspeakable beauty. The sunshine in this world was like amber, and the air was more vital than anything she had ever experienced before. She drank in deep impetuous draughts, and it tingled in her



veins like old wine. She was no longer tired, but young and glad. Life, such life as she had never known before, was all about her, and she revelled in it and gloried in her new inexhaustible strength.

And this air was also filled with wonderful music, bird-songs, and sounds of running brooks, and voices of little children and their laughter. Presently she noticed that the birds were winging about her head, one of them with an undulating motion that seemed familiar. Then she noted with a little thrill of joy that it was Snip, an old red-crested woodpecker they had fed at Bird Acre for many years. A sparrow-hawk had killed him the year before, but even that did not seem to matter for, here he was, calling "Snip," just as he used to. The little chorister, a marvelous catbird that had sung for them at Bird Acre in years gone by, was there, singing

on the top of a fantastic tree. Rabbits were there, hopping about, and squirrels were chattering from the tree-tops. All the wild creatures they had loved and fed at Bird Acre were there.

Presently a familiar figure came bounding towards the woman and she saw to her great surprise that it was old Scotty, Mr. Browning's beloved collie that they had buried in the orchard the year before, when he had been killed by an automobile. But here he was, safe and full of life and overjoyed to see his mistress. Other dogs that they had owned at Bird Acre were also bounding about and barking gleefully. But all the time a great light in the distance seemed calling to the woman, dragging her irresistibly forward.

As she stopped to pat old Scotty on the head, she thought she heard a pathetic sound in the distance, and looking up she

saw another dog figure away at the end of a long vista, dim and indistinct. Then for a moment the shadow in the background of this vista opened, and a vast distance away she beheld Bird Acre and Sunshine Cottage and there, in the upper hall, still standing on his mat, was little Bing. His head was up, his eyes wild, and every hair on his back on end, and he was howling as though his heart would break.

At the sight of the little hound that had loved her so long and so faithfully, a great tenderness swept over the woman and, heedless of the beauty and the wonder about her and the bird-songs and all the heavenly atmosphere, she turned and started hurriedly back towards the heart-broken little hound that was calling, calling, calling for her at the end of that interminable vista, such a distance away at Bird Acre.

Not all this beauty and bliss could hold her back, and Bing seemed to see her coming, for he started running towards her in great bounds, his ears flopping up and down as though they would fly off.

Perhaps two minutes had elapsed since that dramatic moment when the old doctor had sat down heavily in his chair by the window and Mr. Browning had thrown himself in unspeakable grief on his knees by the bed, when they heard a quick step in the hallway and Miss Stevenson, the nurse, hurried in and said in an excited stage whisper, "I think Bing is dead."

With his left hand, the doctor motioned solemnly towards the bed while, with an imperious gesture with his right, he fairly pushed the nurse from the room. Very gently she closed the door and they heard her footsteps going slowly down-stairs.

Then something happened in the sick-



room that strained to the breaking point the credulity of the two waiting men. If the roof above them had suddenly flown off into space and they had beheld the blue sky, or the floor beneath them had sunk from sight and they had been left sitting in space, they would not have been more astonished. For there was a message from the woman so pale and quiet on the bed. There were words spoken in the faintest kind of a whisper, yet they were as clear and distinct as though they had been shouted from the housetop, and as clean-cut as new coins from the mint, and this is what she said:

“Bing is not dead. He has just brought me back over the Great Divide. Go to him, doctor, for if he dies I shall go back to the Great Beyond; nothing can keep me.”

In two steps, the doctor was by the bed-



side. "My God, Browning, have I been mistaken?" he cried. "I would have taken my oath that she was going. Did you hear that?"

"Yes," said his companion between sobs. "Do what she says."

Now the doctor was an old and experienced physician. Every consideration in the medical code bade him stay by the bedside of this woman who held to life by so slight a thread, yet he was wise in the wisdom which is not of this world, so he hurried from the room.

He found Miss Stevenson in the kitchen, bending over the prostrate form of the little hound. At the sound of his entrance, she lifted a tear-stained face.

"Doctor," she said. "I am a wretch. I am a heartless creature. I hope you despise me; you ought to. For all this time I have been despising this little dog, driv-

ing him out of the sick chamber whenever I had a chance and always maligning him; and here he was all the time eating out his little heart for love of his mistress. Doctor, I am a heartless, soulless little wretch!”

“ Oh, it is not so bad as that!” returned the doctor. “ Don’t be too hard on yourself. I said you would respect Bing, once you came to know him. Let me see him. I don’t believe he’s gone.”

“ How is Mrs. Browning?” asked the nurse in her professional voice.

“ She nearly left us two minutes ago,” replied the doctor in an even tone, responsive to that of the nurse.

At this announcement the well-trained nurse from the great hospital gave no sign. She had expected it, and to meet such crises as a soldier was a part of her business.

“ I don't think Bing is dead,” said the old physician, lifting the small dog's head. “ He has just collapsed; he is all worn out. You hold his mouth open, and I'll see if I can get some stimulant down him. Mrs. Browning said I must save him if I wanted to save her.”

The young woman gazed at him with open mouth. “ I thought you said she was leaving us,” she gasped.

“ So I did,” replied the doctor, “ but Bingsey went out over the Great Divide and brought her back.”

Now there was nothing in the young woman's training at the hospital or in the advice she had heard in many lectures by great physicians which covered this exigency, so, with a little moan, she swooned and would have fallen had not the old doctor caught her.

“ Here, here,” he said gently. “ Now

don't you go flopping over in that way. I have got enough on my hands with a woman who is almost dead and yet talks, and a dog that has apparently died and still breathes, without having you swooning on my hands. So brace up."

These words steadied the nurse, and she knelt to do the doctor's bidding.

A minute later, there was a slight sound on the floor behind them.

"What was that?" asked the nurse, for her nerves were wrought to the breaking point.

"That," replied the doctor with a friendly smile, "was the first note in a pæan of gratitude. Don't you know the song of praise and thanksgiving that a dog can sing with his tail? Listen."

There were two slow and solemn thumps on the floor. Yes, little Bing was coming round, and was telling his friends

with his eloquent tail how grateful he was to them all and how glad he was to be alive.

But the old doctor kept on pouring the whiskey down his throat, and in ten minutes more he was able to stand.

“I guess I will take Doctor Bing up to the patient,” he said finally, lifting the small hound in his arms and starting for the sick-room. “This is a case where medicine and nursing don’t seem to count. The only thing that holds this woman to earth is the golden thread of a small dog’s love.”

Contrary to all ethics and the usual procedure in the case of a patient who was so near death’s door, the old doctor laid the small hound upon the bed by his mistress, and he frantically licked her hands. At this sign from the material world, the world to which she still clung by a thread,



Mrs. Browning opened her eyes and smiled at them all.

Then she spoke again in that faint whisper which carried so far and was so distinct. "I love you all," she said, "but it was Bingsey that brought me back."

Again Mr. Browning and the doctor took refuge at their windows, the former that he might not agitate his wife with his emotion that he could scarcely control. So Bingsey and his mistress had it all their own way on the bed.

Presently she spoke again, and this time in a stronger voice. "I am coming back fast," she said. "Somehow it rested me out there in that other world and helped to make me well. I have come back to stay, so don't worry about me any more."

"It is strange," said Mr. Browning to the doctor, "the most wonderful and most

beautiful thing I have ever known. And it suggests again the old, old question I have asked philosophers and sages so many times, but none of them knows the answer. It is this: Why was it that when God created the most untiring devotion, the most unflinching loyalty, the most spontaneous forgiveness, and the most perfect love, he put these heavenly qualities, not in the brain of a man, but in the heart of a dog?"



















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