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RY OF JACK



J. Horace Lytle



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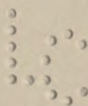
THE STORY OF JACK

A Tale of the North



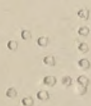
by

John
J. Horace Lytle



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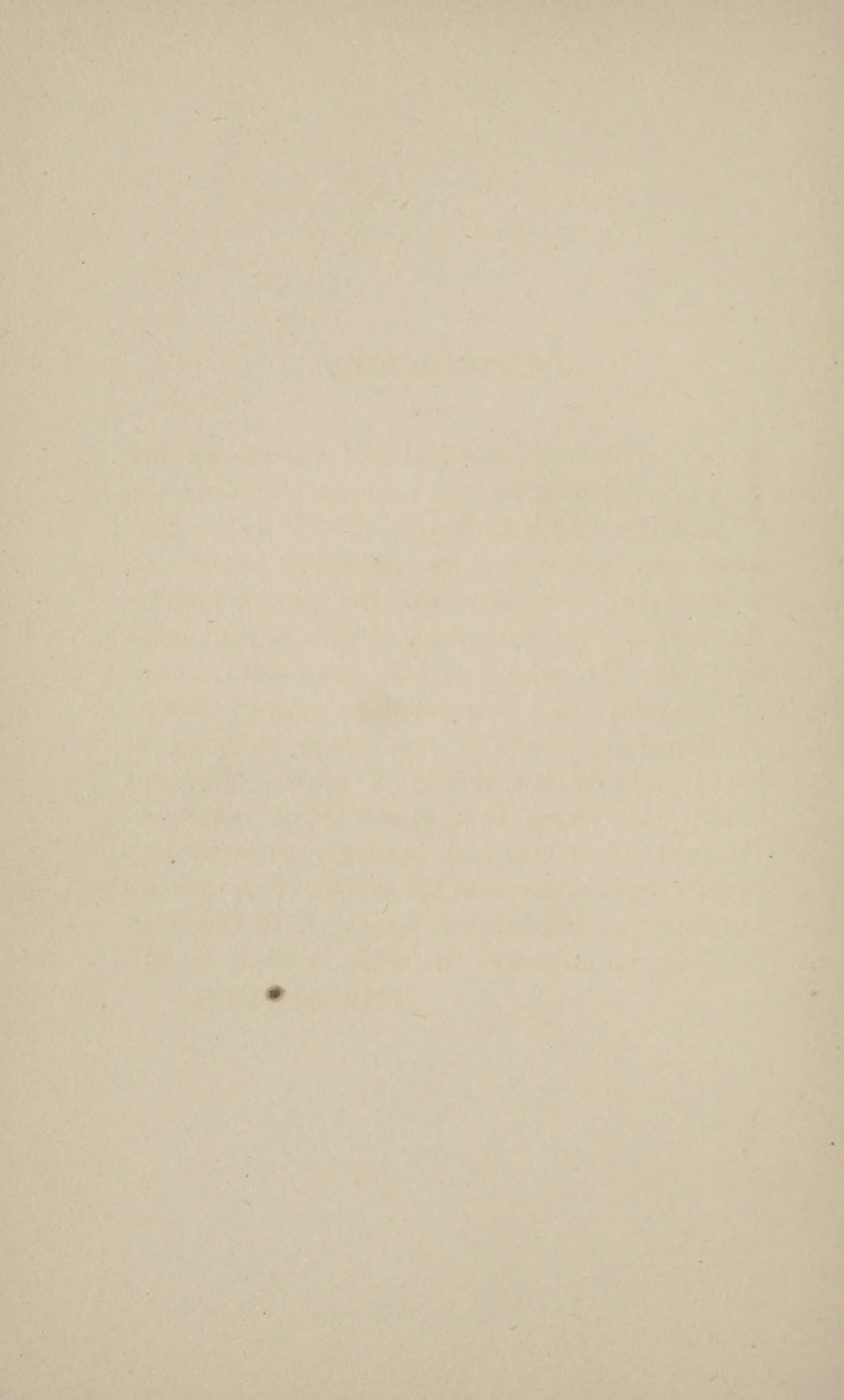
Dedication

*This little book is affectionately
dedicated to*

MY BOY

*in the hope that when he reads it
his appreciation of and love for man's
truest friend, the DOG, may be
enhanced, and that he may have a
correct and true realization of what
a dog's faith and friendship can and
should, and usually does, mean.*

J. H. L.



Introductory

I DO not intend—nor feel that I need—to offer any apologies for the manner of telling the story in this little book. Yet I realize that some may pronounce its treatment brutal. It is my belief, however, that the climax justifies the means. To have treated the subject more delicately throughout would have left an unquestionably and unavoidably weaker climax. Furthermore, there is too much dodging of harsh facts by the dainty of mind. Why not boldly face issues that exist? It is better so. Without, therefore, any apology—or even any further explanation—on the matter of my *worldly* treatment of the subject, I leave it to the story itself (in its entirety) to justify me—or to fail.

THE AUTHOR.





Coon's Corners

The Story of Jack

LITTLE Joe Shepard dodged into the big, dimly lighted entrance of "Doc" Sullivan's livery stable and burst into the stuffy office, stuffier still with tobacco smoke, dog-talk and the "regulars" that congregated there nightly.

"Hey!" he cried, "d' you know who's comin'?"

"Who?"

"Perry Crooks!", exclaimed Joe.

"He is!—When?"

"Well, who's this 'ere Perry Crooks?" drawled Jim Scanlon.

The Story of Jack

“Who’s Perry Crooks!” “Y’ don’t know who Perry Crooks is!” Joe was justly astonished at Jim’s question.

“I reckon y’ve hit ’er right, Joe—er I wouldn’t have asked.”

“Jim’s only been here ’n Coon’s Corners goin’ on four year, Joe—an’ ’t must be all o’ nigh on to six since Perry left. Still I do allow it seems as if he ought to ’ave heard tell o’ Perry many a time in them four year. Perry, Jim, was the best dog fighter we ever had ’n these parts. An’ his dogs likewise was the best. Mighty seldom Perry ever lost a fight. He could pick the comin’ winner out of a litter o’ pups most ev’ry time. An’ Perry knew how to handle ’em too.” It was “Doc” Sullivan who spoke.

“ ’Member the time, Lem,” continued “Doc,” turning to Lem Zengle, “when Perry licked them three Mosiertown guys all b’his self when he caught ’em rubbin’ red pepper wash on their dog ’tween scratches?”

“Sure do remember, Doc, and alus



“Hey!” he cried “d’you know who’s coming?”

The Story of Jack

will. Perry was some scrapper his self. His dogs didn't have nothin' on him when it come to fightin'. Never seen 'im whipped; an' I bet he ain't been up there'n Alaske, neither. Fight!—why, gol durn it, Perry wasn't 'fraid o' nothin' t' ever walked."

"This 'ere Perry mus' be *some man*," drawled Jim Scanlon again.

"An' that he was!" spoke up an enthusiastic member of the crowd.

The reader by this time will have formed somewhat his own conclusions of Coon's Corners and at least that portion of its inhabitants who have so far entered into our story. But to make doubly sure that the impression given is correct, let me explain that Coon's Corners is a little town of about eight hundred people which *may not* be found on the map, in a still rather undeveloped section of Ohio. The chief interests in the town were the bottling works and dog fighting—the latter probably predominating. This same crowd of "regulars" could be found

The Story of Jack

assembled almost any evening at "Doc" Sullivan's stable, where most of the dog fights were staged when the second floor of the bottling works was not available.

And, in these surroundings, Perry Crooks had been the greatest dog fighter of them all. In the fine art of picking and training and handling pit bull terriers he always had been their master. In a locality where the number of fighting dogs almost equaled the voting population—those handled by Perry had seldom lost. And his friends had not forgotten it.

"How soon'll Perry be gettin' here, Joe?" inquired Frank Walters. "Le's see, today's the first o' September."

"Letter says he'll land in here two weeks from t'day," answered Joe.

"Well", resumed Frank, "It's still kinda warm yet to start the fall festiv'ties, but if Perry's comin' home, reckon ther's nothin' else to do. Ther'll be purty near two week yet, an' it may turn a cool spell so's the dogs could stand



A Crowd of Regulars

it right well. Wouldn't do not to welcome Perry home in regular style. Boys, le's pull off a real bout fer ol' time's sake."

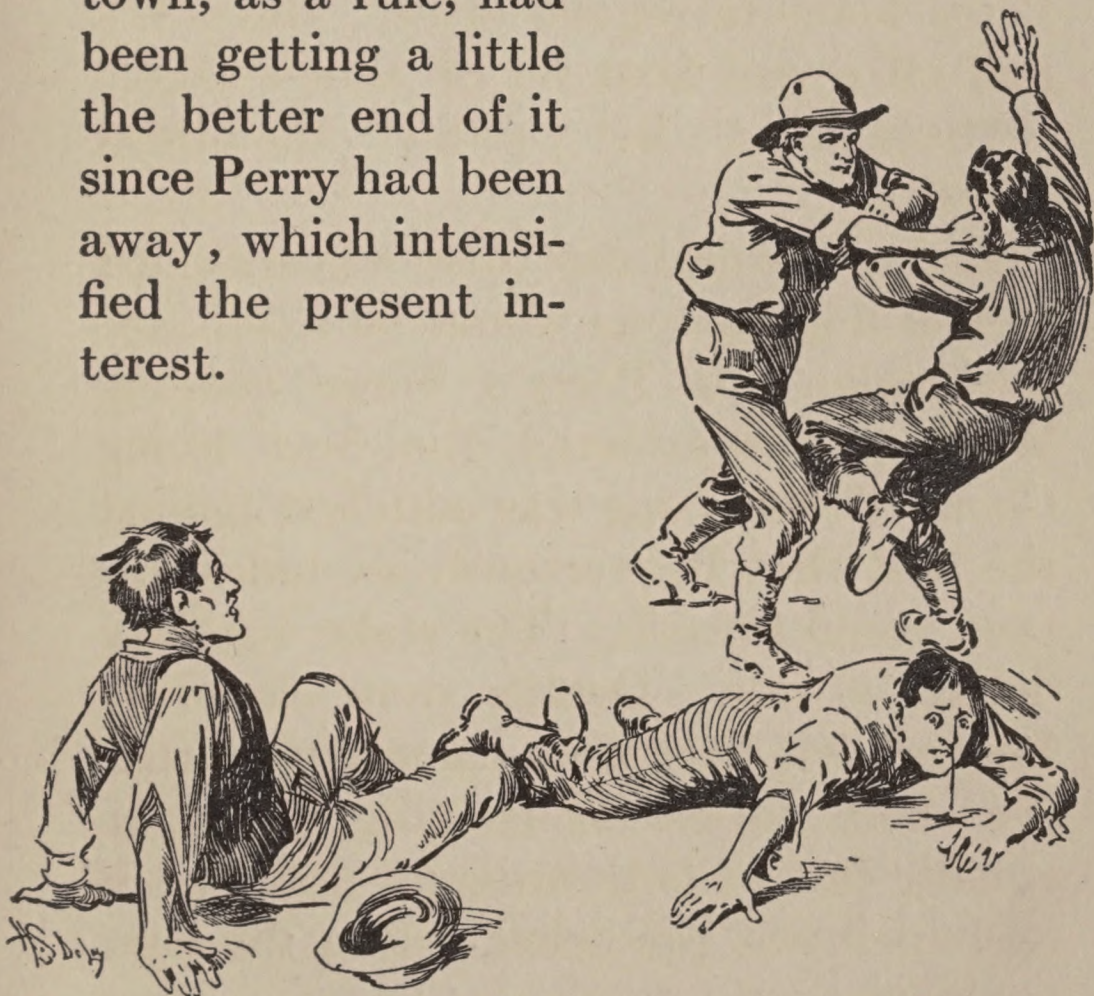
"Sure mike! Bet y're life!" the others agreed.

And so the next day there was arranged such a dog fight as would be a suitable celebration for Perry's home coming. What was considered the best living Coon's Corners dog was matched against the best that Beavertown, six miles distant, could furnish. The stake was fifty dollars a side. Details were closed in Beavertown after it was pointed out that the short notice for training would be equally fair to both animals, and that a cool spell was predicted within the next few days.

So all was in readiness for Perry's

The Story of Jack

arrival. It was to be fittingly celebrated in the way that Coon's Corners knew he would most enjoy. The fight was to take place at "Doc" Sullivan's. All Coon's Corners was alive with excitement—which was not lessened by the rivalry of long standing between the two towns. Beavertown, as a rule, had been getting a little the better end of it since Perry had been away, which intensified the present interest.



Perry licked them three Mosiertown guys all b' his self



Perry arrived home true to schedule

And then the day came, and Perry arrived home true to schedule. It had been agreed that the fight should be kept as a complete surprise, so he learned nothing during the day of the great treat which was coming in the evening.

About seven o'clock that night, Joe Shepard called for Perry and asked him if he wouldn't like to stroll around to "Doc's" and see some of the gang he had not met during the day.

"Sure," was the answer; and they were off. Everything was in readiness when the guest of honor arrived. Just a few preliminaries remained and the "go" would be in full swing. The dogs had not yet been brought in; but the referee was standing in the pit and ready to flip

The Story of Jack

the coin to decide which dog should make the first "scratch."

Then the strange thing happened. Perry stepped to the edge of the pit and faced the friends he had left six years before.

"Boys," he asked, "what's the purse y're fightin' fer?"

"Fifty dollars."



The Referee

"But we'll raise 'er to a hundred if yuh want to make it more, Perry," called one of the followers of the Beavertown dog.

But Perry was already speaking again:

The Story of Jack

“Ain’t it most too early yet to start the game, boys? We never useta pit the dogs ’fore ’long late’n October; an’ mos’ gener’ly not ’fore early November. It’s mighty bad to send ’em the real route while it’s still a bit warm.”

“Them’s true words, Perry,” broke in “Doc” Sullivan, “but this ’ere little bout bein’ ’ranged to sorta show yuh the boys ain’t fergot ol’ times—y’see we couldn’t jest pick the weather. But she’s turned purty cool these few days—mos’ equal to November. An’ we’ve been shapin’ them dogs up hard fer two weeks, so’s they’re mos’ fit as fiddles. What’s the dope, Perry? Ha’n’t we better let Rooney’s dog git started masticatin’ this ’ere spec’min from over’n Beavertown?”

“Boys,” Perry continued, “I’d like leave to take jest er few minutes ’fore this here fricus an’ tell yuh all ’bout a dog fight I seen up’n Alaska. ’Twas a good one an’ she’s worth hearin’. Er yuh fellas agreed I may tell it? G’on an’ gi’me a risin’ vote—an’ all o’ yuh rise—



What's the purse yer fightin fer?

The Story of Jack

'fore either o' them terriers makes the first 'scratch' t'night."

"Sure, but le's have the fight first, Perry." And this suggestion seemed to find general approval.

"No—I don't think I'll want to tell it later on."

Joe Shepard got to his feet.

"Bein' as this here's Perry's fight anyhow—a sorta home comin' welcome from us all—kinda seems to me like grantin' the wish o' the bes' ol' fightin' dog man w'ever had round these parts is purty much'n order, an' we can't do mor'n leave Perry have the floor right now like he asks for. The dogs ain't been bro't in yet nohow. So what's the harm? I say le's ev'ry man agree."

"Well, this *is* onusu'l doin's," growled big Joe Black of Beavertown. "I ain't got all night t' listen to no stories. I come over to *see* a dog fight—not *hear* 'bout none. I've got money on't, an' I'm agoin' to see'er start *now*. Git 'em goin', Red. Toss up fer first scratch."

The Story of Jack

Thus encouraged, Beavertown arose almost to a man to support Joe Black's demands. Such a crowd as this, raised on fights of one sort or another, is never to be trusted or tampered with.

But Perry stood his ground—and *thundered* at the crowd: "I ask'd yuh to hear me. Now y've *got* to—d'ye hear that! Yuh all know me, ev'ry one o' yuh. No monkey bis'ness goes. The first man to butt in 'll have to take the cons'quences. They act first, an' don't do their thinkin' till aft'wards up'n the gold country. D'yuh *get* me?"

They evidently "got" him. It was the same old Perry—but with multiplied determination. Even Joe Black kept his seat.

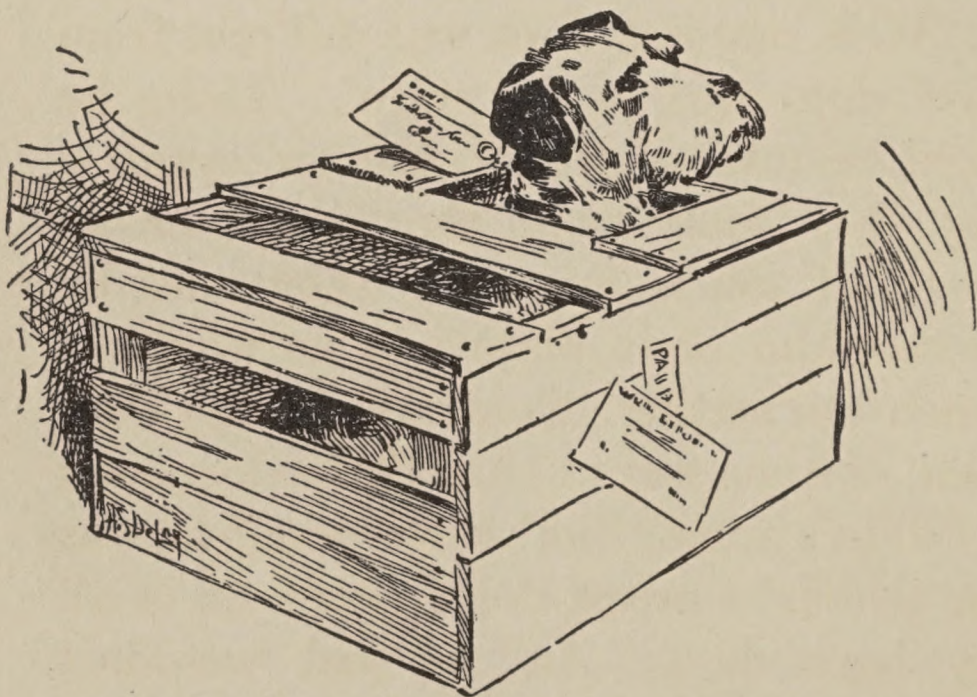
And Perry began his story, still standing at the edge of the pit:

"Yuh'll all rec'llect that 'fore pullin' stakes fer Alaska I sold all my pit stock. But y'may not mind 'bout that crazy lookin', shagly haired pup 'at was sent me fer a present jest shortly 'fore I left these

The Story of Jack

parts. Still, some o' yuh may remember him at that. 'Member what an on'ry lookin' little runt he was? Most of us wondered *what* he was—tho they'd said he was an Airedale. I couldn't make out what he was ever goin' to be good fer. But I'd kinda took a fancy fer the little cuss, 'at I was 'shamed to admit even to yuh fellas. An' this pup was the only dog I took away from here with me when I got the gold fever.

“Don't know why I didn't sell him—er



*That crazy lookin', shagly haired pup 'at was sent
me fer a present*

The Story of Jack

give him away, if any one would 'ave took him. Don't know why, no mor'n I know why I ever took him in the beginnin' when he was give to me. Reckon the reason I took 'im North was on account of him havin' shagly hair, an' I thought he'd 'mount to somethin', mebbe fer to help pullin' sledges, er some way er other up'n the Klondike country. Well, anyhow, I took him. I'd heard the price o' dogs was high up there. Mebbe I could use him somehow, I figgered.

“Well, one way Jack was diff'rent from mos' dogs was in his eatin'. Thing he liked best was batter cakes an' syrup—but they mus' have the syrup, er he wouldn't touch 'em. An' they mus' be served him on a plate!—er he wouldn't touch 'em neither. Contrariest dog y'ever seen, in some ways. An' I'll be doggoned if I didn't humor him! Sure 'nough he was the tender'st raised dog I ever seen in all my born days. An' he just wouldn't leave me a minute—alus under my feet, er somethin'. Made the biggest fuss

The Story of Jack

over me y'ever seen. An' along he went with me to Alaska."

"'Magine Perry feedin' a dog batter cakes!" exclaimed Frank Walters.

"Yes, 'twas jest like I'm tellin' yuh," answered Perry. And then he continued: "The way we went was by boat from

Things he liked best was batter cakes and syrup



The Story of Jack

Seattle, an' on up to Dyea an' Skagway. We wintered in Skagway, waitin' fer the weather to open up so's we could get on to Nome. Built our boats on Lake Bennett an' waited fer the ice to go out, 'fore we could get down to Dawson, an' from there down the river an' out to St. Michael an' over to Nome.

“In that winter Jack growed up. Got pretty big, too. But not so big as them huskies an' malamutes. He never seemed to want trouble, tho—so's I figgered he didn't have any too much sand. But he was a cocky little cuss at that, an' his little ol' tail was alus stuck up straight over his back—an' I never seen him curl it in. His legs got 'specially strong—an' his front ones was straight as a rifle barrel.

“Well, one day in Skagway a cur jumped him,” continued Perry, “an' at first the cur was gettin' kinda the best of it. But purty soon Jack begun to put up some exhibition. Kept comin' stronger all the time. He sure did s'prise me. All't

The Story of Jack

once, jest when the Alaska dog was strainin' to get a throat hold, Jack kinda reached up an' closed down over his whole jaw. Then he closed his eyes an' sure did rip 'er up some!"

"H'rrah fer Jack," shouted Joe Shepard. The crowd by this time was beginning to show many signs of quite general interest. They had almost forgotten, for the time being, the real event of the evening.

"The cur shook an' shook, but Jack hung on an' liked to shake the day lights outa him. It sure was some tough hold he had. The cur couldn't even holler. But he certainly did thrash 'round consider'ble. 'Twas Jack's first fight—but what they'd been tellin' me 'bout Airedales was showin' up in him. Still, never havin' had no experience 'ceptin' with real pit dogs, I couldn't believe he'd stick dead game."

Even the Beavertown men were beginning to really enthuse over the story by this time.



I broke Jack's hold

“Then some guy come 'long an' 'lowed I better take my dog off. I give him the laugh, till he started to draw a gun—then I tol' him I'd part 'em. Didn't want to take no chances on Jack's gettin' hurt—an' the cur was already cowed bad 'nough anyhow to last him fer quite a spell. So I hollered to the fellow to hold on a minute—an' I broke Jack's hold. An' 'twas a sight harder to break than I'd of figgered 't would be.”

The Story of Jack

“Who’d ever tho’t it o’ that pup!” exclaimed Roy Caton.

“Well, after that ’twas common talk ’round Skagway ’bout that fight. Every day er so some guy with a huskie er malamute’d come ’round an’ offer to bet most any kind o’ money his dog could lick mine. All o’ which made me powerful sorry that I hadn’t took ol’ Butch ’long with me—but I wouldn’t let Jack have no reg’lar go with them big North dogs. They’re rough fighters, them fellas, an’ I wouldn’t consider none o’ them chances to pit my pet—fer that’s jest what he was”.

“Let ’em bluff you, Perry!” cried Lem Zengle.

“*You jest wait*”! answered Perry. “In the Spring I pulled stakes for Nome—an’ that’s when Jack come in useful. I bought five malamutes to pull the sledge up int’ the gold country—an’ used Jack in with ’em as the wheel dog, direc’ly in front of the sledge. Only place I’d ’ave dared put him, or them five critters ’d



I used Jack in with 'em as wheel dog

The Story of Jack

'ave ate him alive. But tacked on behind 'em at the tail end o' the team it worked fine, an' he more'n pulled his share. Well, as I've said, he was strong in the legs—an' he'd do anythin' fer me. Liked to pull hisself to pieces tryin' to please me. But it did 'im good. 'Stead of gettin' weak—he got stronger. If he'd only been bigger, I b'lieve he'd 'ave licked any two o' them malamutes t'gether—but as 'twas it give me the devil's own time to keep 'em off him. Couldn't leave him 'lone fer a minute—never. An' at night had to keep them other five rascals tied up tight. But 'fore we got to Nome, I wouldn't 'ave give Jack fer the ten best sledge dogs in all the North."

"Trus' you, Perry, to make a dog good fer somethin'," called someone in the crowd. The already keen interest of the listeners was even increasing.

"One day, while we was still in Nome, there come up from Skagway one Jim Tillman—an'with him he brung the story o' that fight of Jack's in Skagway. An'

The Story of Jack

then all Nome begun coaxin' fer a dog fight. There was even more challenges than what I'd got at Skagway."

"Why didn't y'send back home, Perry, fer some live stock as could bring them guys down a peg er two! Why didn't y'send fer Butch. What *did* y'do, Perry? Didn't leave 'em git the laugh on yuh up there, did yuh?" The man who spoke voiced a sentiment that was unanimous, as was evidenced only too keenly by the crowd.

"No!" cried Perry—"boys, I took 'em up on one o' them challenges—an' took on the best fightin' dog in Nome. Just figgered I'd do her right while I was at it. But cut out buttin' in, yuh guys, an' leave me hurry up an git done tellin' this. I ain't'n the habit o' talkin' so much.

"The fight was to be fer five hundred dollars—money's big up'n that country. Jack was to fight one o' the meanest malamutes y'ever seen. Not a growed up man er woman there but had some



One of the meanest malmutes y' ever seen

kind of bet placed. An' that's all they talked 'bout in Nome every time there was a crowd together. Course the odds favored the malamute 'bout five to one. I had my five hundred even—out o' consid'ration fer Jack. Was willin' to lose that much on him. Fact is, boys, after that fricus at Skagway, I was kinda cur'ous myself to see what he'd do'n a pinch. He sure was an onusu'l dog—had me beat tryin' to figger 'im out, in lots o' ways. But I'd made up my mind that'd be the last fight I'd ever pit him, no matter what way it come out. Knew he'd have to stand a lot o' gaff even if he won—an' I didn't count on 'im much to win. For one thing, he was too much lighter.

The Story of Jack

“Boys, that was the greatest battle y’ever seen. The trip up from Skagway an’ down the river’d made Jack strong ’s an ox in the legs. An’ in spite o’ givin’ ’way so much weight, that great dog o’ mine was winnin’. D’you hear me—I tell yuh he was winnin’! He was every bit as quick’s the malamute—an’ a heap sight cleverer. Seemed to figger ahead from one hold t’ the next. An’ his teeth ripped an’ tore full equal t’ the malamute’s—an’ that’s a North dog’s long suit, which they get from bein’ purty near wolves, I reckon.

“One ear hold Jack got like to ruined t’other dog—mos’ tore it clean off complete. Jack kep’ all four legs squared solid under ’im, an’ spread wide apart—an’ every little bit he’d yank down with a new hold that’d d’light the best o’ yuh. Yes, he sure was makin’ some fight—one I’d ’ave gone a good many miles to see. I wouldn’t ’ave b’lieved any dog could do it, givin’ ’way all the weight he did.”

Perry’s own excitement in the telling

The Story of Jack

showed how he was himself completely absorbed by the relating of the details of that stirring event.

“Thing that s’prised me most of all, boys, was the *way* Jack fought—jest like them huskies an’ malamutes all fight, cuttin’ a dog all to pieces, tearin’, rippin’ an’ slashin’, *to kill*. So ’twas a battle where the style o’ fightin’ of both dogs was purty nigh the same—only Jack was jest a bit quicker’n even the malamute was. But the malamute had a big advantage in the weight.

“Ain’t none o’ yuh guys ever seen such a fight as that!” shouted Perry. “The pit dogs ’round here grab a holt—an’ jes’ hang on. They may do a lot o’ damage—an’ then again sometimes they don’t. Depends on *where* the holt is. But that ain’t the way with Airedales, er them Alaska brutes. They grab one holt quick, an’ jes’ natur’lly rip a dog open’n a secon’. Then they grab a new holt and rip him again. Purty quick they’ll have him tore all to pieces—ain’t

The Story of Jack

nothin' left of him. Airedales'll yank a dog open, an' clean finish him—while a pit bull might be sleepin' on some undangerous holt somewheres. Yuh all might doubt them words—I did till I seen with m'own eyes. But I tell yuh that dog Jack o' mine could finish both them critters yuh got here tonight, in the same pit, in 'bout twenty minutes."

"*Yes he could!* Don't come none o' that on us, Perry." The crowd disapproved.

"Well he could, now—an' I don't care a rap if yuh b'lieve me er not. But speakin' 'bout this here fight up at Nome—'scuse me fer gettin' kinda off'n the subject. I was sayin' 'twas 'bout an even draw, with Jack really winnin' jes' a little. An' I've tol' yuh 'bout Jack havin' some points on the malamute, an' the malamute havin' the best o' Jack on weight.

"Well, 'fore I hardly re'lized it, that weight mighty near beat Jack. I kinda noticed him beginnin' to tire first, from havin' to stack up 'gainst s'much weight.



Hurrah fer Jack

Then fer the first time he took his eyes off'n the malamute—fer jest a second—to look fer me. He wasn't scared—not a mite. Reckon he jes' wanted to see where I was. But it come purty close to bein' his finish.

“The malamute was powerful quick an' clever too—most equal to Jack. Best scrapper I ever seen, 'ceptin Jack. An' jes' the second Jack took that peek fer me—the malamute grabbed 'im by the shoulder an' laid 'im open horrible—an' switching' quick to a new holt—well, 'twas purty near the end o' my Jack, tha's all.

“Jack took such a turrible knifin' 'at I don't like to be even tellin' yuh 'bout it now. Funny thing to me was, though,



After workin' over 'im a bit, I seen he'd come out of it

that he didn't seem to be tryin' to pr'tect hisself, er strainin' to git loose. First I tho' he'd quit cold. But he didn't holler none. Boys, he was jes' restin'—an' out-wittin' 'tother dog. Fightin' was com-min' t'im natur'l, out of his ancestors, I reckon. Wasn't no use wastin' his strength while there wasn't no chance. But what got me was, I couldn't see as he was even lookin' fer no chance, an' he was gettin' a dangerous lashin'. He fooled me though; an' he fooled the malamute, too!"

The Story of Jack

“That critter figgered like I did ’at Jack was ’bout done—an’ he got kinda over anxious to finish ’im, an’ he laid hisself open, an’ Jack got him—then! Got his juglar, too!

“My Airedale had won! An’ the fight was over. Boys, my dog won me five hundred dollars—yuh understand! The malamute was as dead a dog as yuh’ll ever see. Jack had worked fast on the juglar—jest like all them dogs do up North. Faster’n pit bulls ever work. Airedales *is* like them northern wolf dogs in lots o’ ways—’sceptin’ *Airedales ain’t never treacherous*, like they are.”

“H’rrah fer Jack!” The crowd shouted and cheered to the echo. Their uncontrollable enthusiasm broke forth from every fibre of their rough beings. Hats were thrown wildly into the air, feet were stamped, they pounded one another on the back. The old hero of Coon’s Corners had made good in Alaska—had shown them a thing or two about fighting dogs—as his friends had known all along

The Story of Jack

he would do. But Perry was not through with his story—and they finally become quiet again and listened for the rest, as he went on.

“I went over to Jack, lyin’ there’n the pit. He wasn’t quite able to hardly stan’ up yet, he was so awful cut up an’ all in. But after workin’ over ’im a bit, I seen he’d come out of it. The sledgin’ work had made ’im tough an’ hard to kill. I worked over ’im quite a bit ’fore I got ’im in shape to start home. But we finally did git started—me goin’ slow, an’ Jack jes’ kinda wobblin’ ’long behind.

“ ’Twas purty dark when we left the pit, an’ we was jest kinda pickin’ our way down the street slower’n a funeral. Purty soon ’long come a big huskie, an’ I seen he kinda had his eye set for Jack. Beats all how them North dogs’ll alus pick on a dog that’s down, er badly cut up.

“When this huskie come closer, I seen fer sure what he’s up to, an’ I hollers: ‘Git out o’ here,’ an’ kicks out at ’im.



He jumped at me straight for the throat

The Story of Jack

Quicker'n a wink he jumped at me—straight fer the throat. I dodged 'im jes' bar'ly in time. When he wheeled an' come back at me, he'd plumb fergot Jack. An' that's right when Jack nailed him—an' con'ected. 'Fore I could do a thing Jack had liked to chewed one o' the huskie's legs off, an' here I was now with another fight on!"

Perry's listeners were breathless—Coon's Corners and Beavertown alike. Every ear was strained to miss



I emptied every ca'tridge in the automatic

The Story of Jack

not a word—and no word was uttered by the crowd.

“I knowed Jack couldn’t last long—weak as he was. But I couldn’t shoot fer fear o’ hittin’ him ’stead o’ the huskie. The fight didn’t last long, though, ’fore somethin’ happened—Jack bein’ too weak already to stand the pace. The huskie, bein’ strong an’ fresh, soon throwed ’im



I picked up Jack and carried him home

The Story of Jack

over an' reached fer the juglar—an' got there. Right then, quicker'n a wink, I emptied every ca'tridge in the automatic!

“All four pieces o' the lead found the huskie. But them dogs works faster'n lightin' when they finds the vein—an' he must 'ave finished Jack jest 'bout the time I begun shootin'.”

There was not a sound in the room as Perry went on with the story.

“I picked Jack up an' carried 'im home. He'd given his life fer mine when that huskie jumped me. Never even stopped to consider nothin'—an' he was so weak then he could hardly stand. *An' all from a fight I'd put him in.*”

“Jack's lyin' up back of Nome now, boys, in a reg'lar grave with a reg'lar headstone better'n any other in all that country—even over humans. An' from that day to now I ain't never willf'ly fought a dog o' mine—an' never will again. Wouldn't own no dog as couldn't fight—but none o' mine'll ever have to



The Story of Jack

fight again jest fer money. I've seen 'nough o' pit dog fights to last me.

"An' now, boys, I'm done. I do 'preciate y're home comin' welcome—an' I'm sorry if I've spoilt the sport—but if Coon's Corners 'll give up this little fight now in favor o' Beavertown, why I'll pay the fifty dollars—an' here it is!" But Perry smiled, as he added: "I guess it'd be the first of my money Beavertown ever got."





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