



Children's Section

"Nubbin"

By Newel K. Young.

I.

The largest of the three urchins, Billy Squires, was carrying the pup. The poor creature looked more like a drowned rat than a dog. The boys had found it among its dead brothers and sisters, a litter of nine, by old man Hoop's watering trough. The old man had drowned them and thrown them aside into the slushy snow.

As the boys were curiously handling these pups they found this one with a spark of life still lingering in its body. They had decided to send it as a Valentine to Widow Johnson's boy. For this purpose they were now approaching the widow's house.

"Shut up, there she is," whispered one of the boys as they neared the corner a block away from the widow's home.

Mrs. Johnson was passing with two large buckets of coal that she had gathered along the railroad near her house.

"Jedediah, why will you come out in the cold! Run into the house this minute!" called the woman as she neared her home.

"I have a valentine! The prettiest valentine, mama; see!" called the little, weak, white-faced fellow from the outside door of their little hut.

Putting down one bucket of coal at the door, the mother took her sick, five-year old boy under her arm and carried him into the house. She built up a good fire in their old heating stove and sat near it with the child

in her arms. The little fellow was in high spirits over his first valentine, which was really pretty.

Before the woman or child were well warmed there came a loud rap at the outer door. The boy was off his mother's lap and at the door before she caught him.

"Jedediah, don't you know you will never grow to be a big, strong boy unless you keep out of the wet and cold? The doctor says you must stay inside," urged the mother, half scolding, half pleading.

"It's a valentine, mama, -let me go!" challenged the boy trying to escape his mother.

The woman put the boy on a rug near the stove and went for the valentine.

"My, it's a heavy one," said the woman returning to the boy, "It reads, 'For Jedediah's valentine supper,'" continued the woman while opening the box.

"Bah! it's a nasty pup; dead, too." While she spoke the angry woman was on her way to the outer door. She heard the boys laughing and threw the pup in their direction, exclaiming, "You dirty brats! Go home with ye!"

"It's my pup, mama! I'm going to get it. It's mine!" cried the boy defiantly.

"It's dead, I tell ye," protested the mother.

But the child would not be quieted. So the poor, distracted woman brought him the pup to stop his screaming, for fear of the hurt it might do his weak, afflicted heart.

The little fellow took it to the

stove and handled it carefully, tenderly. "Poor puppy! Poor froze puppy!" Then seeing it wriggle, he shouted gleefully, "It's alive! It's alive, mama!"

And it was.

The mother gave the child some woolen clothes and he made it a warm bed in an old clothes basket, and set it near the stove.

After the pup was thoroughly warmed and began to wriggle and stretch the lad took it in his arms again. The woman was seriously troubled by the fear of having to feed the animal.

The little urchin cooed and laughed over it. "It's such a cute puppy, mama. It's just a little nubbin of a dog. See! It's black; only a little white on its face and neck and part of its tail is white."

The mother momentarily forgot her worry in her child's joyous delight.

"What are you going to name him, Jedediah?" she asked him.

"Oh let's see. He's such a little nubbin of a dog, I guess I'll name him Nubbin'!"

(To be continued.)





Children's Section

"Nubbin"

By Newel K. Young.

II.

Nubbin had a hard time of it. For several days the wee thing lingered between death and life. But Jedediah's tender care and nursing, aided by the pup's inherent vitality, gave the victory to life.

The lad seemed possessed with an abiding affection for his pet, and an instinctive gift for caring for it and training it. He shared his too meagre portion of milk with it during its days of sickness and babyhood, though his mother protested in fear and tears. Whenever possible she bought a double portion of milk, but that was not often during the cold weeks of February, for she must buy some coal to keep out what she could gather along the railroad tracks.

The boy would hover over the little creature during its days of sickness and coax and croon to it calling it by name in affectionate words as a fond fearful mother frets over her sick babe; later his joy in its growth was unbounded.

As Nubbin grew stronger the lad was more contented and cheerful; he became a new boy, glad and happy. With the coming of spring days his blanched cheeks showed signs of color. He continued small for his years, and looked rather delicate; still he was well and sound in body, and fun-loving and daring in spirit.

The dog became a big, strong, friendly fellow, peaceful but brave as a lion. He was always clean and

glossy, black as a raven's wing except that his throat and breast and the tip of his tail were as white as snow.

These two, Jedediah and Nubbin, who loved each other very devotedly, were always together. The dog, because of his clever performances at his master's bidding, was a source of amusement among the boys of the village. He also did many useful and brave deeds. But Nubbin first became a village hero when he threw the bully of the school, Billy Squires, on his back and pinned him there, until the braggart begged piteously for mercy, and Nubbin's young master bade the dog let the ruffian up. The dog walked aside and lay down as if nothing had happened.

Billy had attacked Jedediah when the little white-faced lad had exposed the bully in a cowardly lie before the whole school at recess. The dog was then two years old, and was the guardian of the boy during the awful adventure of his first year at school.

It was during the spring floods of this same year that Nubbin dashed into the raging river after Lawyer Brown's little Mabel. Many predicted that neither dog nor child would ever come to shore. But undaunted the dog's young master ran along the bank and cheered and directed his heroic comrade until Nubbin gave Mabel, safe and sound, into her father's hands on the shore.

The widow and her boy refused any reward; but the lawyer gave a dog collar, and harness and wagon to the boy. Henceforth Nubbin was both horse and comrade for his master.

Thus equipped these two were giving kindly service every day to some one. And they took more and more of the burdens from Widow Johnson's shoulders.

But these humble tasks made the dog no less a warrior. It was he who punished the Gypsy's big dog Wolf, that had been a public nuisance for weeks, when he attacked Grandma Bright to take away the meat she was carrying home. Wolf put up a hard fight, but Nubbin killed the cur for his folly.

It was Nubbin who caught the burglar that robbed Spencer's jewelry shop, and held him fast while Jedediah called the police. It was he again who threw old Man Hoop's Jersey bull into the canal just in time to save poor old crippled Tom.

And so it continued until the time of the fire. Captain and Mrs. Sperry had gone to a big political rally. The Johnson boy and his dog first discovered the fire in the Captain's home. The boy gave the alarm, and the firemen came too late to save the house.

No one could be found inside the building by the firemen. Still Jedediah protested that the Captain's baby boy less than two years old, was in the house. The firemen doubted the boy; but the bravest among them made another search until he was driven back by the smoke and heat. The boy was determined, for he had seen Katie Sperry leave without the baby.

Jedediah took the dog to the door nearest the stairway leading to the children's room; and talking to Nubbin as he would talk to a man about the task, the boy sent him in for the child. "Get the baby, Nubbin! Don't come back without the baby! Understand, Old Boy? Get the baby! Good-bye, Nubbin!" called the boy in a strained, tense voice.

Just when everyone had given up hope, the dog appeared with the child

at an open second story window that was all ablaze. The crowd burst into one wild cheer and then were silent as the dead. As the fireman showered the dog and child with a stream of water, Jedediah called out clear and triumphant, "Wait a minute, Nubbin." Then when the men were ready to catch them he ordered, "Jump, Nubbin, Jump." The dog leaped far out and dropped the child into the blanket held for them. He passed over it and lit on his feet on the ground amid the cheering crowd. Jedediah led the dog farther from the fire and hugging him about the neck wept and laughed and talked over him. The dog was scorched from tip to tip.

As the burned child was being carried to the Doctor's car to be rushed to the hospital Nubbin walked up to look at him. The men made way for the dog and as the hero looked at the child the Doctor said, "You saved him, all right, old chap, God bless you." Nubbin licked the child's hand and walked away toward home. There he lay brave and patient while his master cared for his burns.

The child lived, but one side of his neck and face were badly disfigured for life. And though Nubbin lost an eye he retained all his rugged strength and daring.

Nubbin met his last great adventure away from the crowd without an eye to see or a voice to cheer. Jedediah was on the town pond skating, when a terrible wind blowing the snow in darkening clouds, drove the skaters home. He and Nubbin cut across a field and along the railroad tracks to save time. As they were hurrying over the cattle guards at a street crossing a half mile from home the boy's heel caught in the guards and threw him headlong. The lad pulled and kicked and called with all his might, but in vain.

The old dog, comrade and constant companion for five years, appreciating fully the danger of his friend,

pulled and tugged at his master, bit at the guards, and howled for help with all his strength. The boy was stretched over the rail with his hands digging in the grade in his struggles to free himself.

Hearing an approaching train the boy screamed and fought in mad fury as the train thundered toward them. And Nubbin, too, was desperate in his determination to save his master. Finally he raced up the track in a furious effort to give the alarm to stop the oncoming train. Returning at lightning speed, he seized the upper corner of the shoe fastened in the guards, as the train was sweeping upon them; and in his terrible desperation tore the side of the shoe away. The boy tumbled over the grade as the train rushed by.

Returning, Jedediah found his dog, where he had been thrown by the train against a post, dead. Putting his arms around the dog he sobbed, "Nubbin, old boy, speak to me! Look up, look at me Nubbin! Nubbin! Dead? Are you dead, Nubbin? Speak, old boy! You died to save me, dear old dog!"

Not being able to carry the body of his big brave friend the boy dragged it toward home as best he could through the raging blizzard. "Nubbin, I have never gone home without you, and I won't go now without you," he cried.

The wind blew them thus, the dead dog in the boy's embrace, into a ditch against the fence, and was burying them there in the snow.

The widow had become alarmed and started for her boy, when she met Captain Sperry who insisted on going with her. Above the roar of the tempest the mother heard the boy sobbing for his dead. Thus they found them the boy unhurt but broken-hearted; and the dog lying in his master's arms dead with half of the upper part of the boy's shoe in his mouth.

In the town hall is a large slab bearing this inscription: "Nubbin: As true a dog and as brave a comrade as

ever served man. Died January 10, 19— to save his owner, our beloved fellow townsman, Master Jedediah Johnson.

"I scan the whole broad earth around,
For that one heart which real and true,
Bears friendship without end or bond
And find the prize in you."

