

"A LASS AM I."

A lass am I, and I wait my day;
To some 't will be nay, but to one 't will be yea;
When the time comes, I shall know what to say.
The winter goes, and the warm wind blows,
And who shall keep the color from the red, red rose?

A lass am I, neither high nor low;
My heart is mine now, but I'd have the world know,
When the wind's right away it will go.
The brook sings below, and the birds sing above,
And sweeter in between sings the lover to his love.

—John Vance Cheney, in the Century.

THE PARTNERS

RUDDY COVE called Eli Zitt a "hard" man. In Newfoundland that means "hardy"—not "bad." Eli was gruff-voiced, lowering-eyed, unkempt, big; he could swim with the dogs, out-dare all the reckless spirits of the Cove with the punt in a gale, bare his broad breast to the winter wilds, travel the ice, wet or dry, shoulder a barrel of flour, he was a sturdy, fearless giant, was Eli Zitt of Ruddy Cove. And for this the Cove properly called him a "hard" man.

When Josiah Bunker, his partner, put out to sea and never came back—an off-shoot gale had the guilt of that deed—Eli scowled more than ever and said a deal less.

"He'll be feelin' bad about Josiah," said the Cove.

Which may have been true. However, Eli took care of Josiah's widow and son. The Cove laughed with delight to observe his attachment to the lad. The big fellow seemed to be unable to pass the child without patting him on the back; and sometimes, so exuberant was his affection, the pats were of such a character that Jacky lost his breath. Whereupon, Eli would chuckle the harder, mutter odd endearments, and stride off on his way.

"He'll be likin' that lad pretty well," said the Cove. "Nar a doubt, they'll be partners."

And it came to pass, as the Cove surmised, but much sooner than the Cove expected. Josiah Bunker's widow died when Jacky was 11 years old. When the little gathering at the graveyard in the shelter of Great Hill dispersed, Eli took the lad out in the punt—far out to the quiet fishing grounds, where they could be alone. It was a glowing evening—red and gold in the western sky—the sea was heaving gently, and the face of the waters was untroubled.

"Jacky, b'y!" Eli whispered. "Jacky, lad! Does you hear me? Don't cry no more!"

"Aye, Eli!" sobbed Jacky. "I'll cry no more."

But he kept on crying, just the same; for he could not stop; and Eli looked away quickly to the glowing sunset clouds.

"Jacky," he said, turning at last to the sobbing child, "us'll be partners—jus' you an' me."

Jacky sobbed harder than ever.

"Won't us, lad?"

Eli laid his great hand on Jacky's shoulder. Then Jacky took his fists out of his eyes and looked up into Eli's compassionate face. "Aye, Eli," he said, "us'll be partners—you an' me."

From then on they were partners; and Jacky Bunker was known in the Cove as the foster son of Eli Zitt. They lived together in Eli's cottage by the tickle cove, where Eli had lived alone since many years before his mother had left him to face the world for himself. The salmon net, the her-ring seine, the punt, the flake, the stage—these they held in common; and they went to the grounds together, where they fished the long days through, good friends, good partners. The Cove said that they were happy; and, as always, the Cove was right.

One night Eli came ashore from a trading schooner that had put in in the morning, smiling broadly as he entered the kitchen. He laid his hand on the table, palm down.

"They's a gift for you under that paw, lad!" he said.

"For me, Eli?" cried Jacky.

"Aye, lad—for my partner."

Jacky stared curiously at the big hand. He wondered what it covered.

"What is it, Eli?" he asked. "Come, show me!"

Eli lifted the hand, and gazed at Jacky, grinning the while, with delight.

It was a jack-knife—a stout knife, three-bladed, horn handled, big, serviceable; just the knife for a fisher-lad. Jacky picked it up, but never said a word; for his delight overcame him.

"You're wonderful good 't me, Eli," he said at last, looking up with glistening eyes. "You're wonderful good 't me!"

Eli put his arm around the boy. "You're a good partner, lad," he said. "You're a wonderful good partner!"

Jacky was proud of that.

They put the salmon net out in the spring. The ice was still lingering

off shore. The west wind carried it out; the east wind swept it in; variable winds kept pans and bergs drifting hither and thither, and no man could tell where next the ice would go. Now the sea was clear, from the shore to the jagged, glistening, white line of the near horizon; next day, the day after, and the pack was grinding against the coast rocks. Men had to keep watch to save the nets from destruction.

The partners' net was moored off Break-heart Point. It was a good berth, but a rough one when the wind was in the northeast, the waters off the point were choppy and covered with sheets of foam from the breakers.

"'Tis too rough 't haul the salmon net," said Eli, one day. "I'll be goin' over the hills 't Sou-west Harbor for a sack o' flour. An' you'll be a good b'y 't I gets back?"

"Oh, aye, sir!" said Jack Bunker.

It was a rough day; the wind was blowing from the north, a freshening, gusty breeze, cold and misty; off to sea the sky was laden, threatening, and overhead the dark clouds were driving low and swift with the wind; the water was choppy—rippling black under the squalls. The ice was drifting alongshore, well out from the coast; there were a berg and the wreck of a berg of Arctic ice, and many a pan

Knob o' Heart-break, he saw his own punt staggering through the gray waves toward the net off the point—tossing with the sea and reeling under the gusty wind—with his little partner in the stern. The boat was between the ice and the breakers. The space of open water was fast narrowing; but a few minutes more and the ice would strike the rocks. Eli dropped on his knees, then and there, and prayed God to save the lad.

"Or Lard, save my lad!" he cried.

"O, Lard, save my lad!" he cried.

He saw the punt draw near the first moorings; saw Jacky loose the sheet and let the brown sail flutter like a flag in the wind; saw him leap to the bow, and lean over with a knife in his hand, while the boat tossed in the lops, shipping water every moment; saw him stagger amidships, ball out like mad, snatch up the oars, pull to the second moorings and cut the last net-rope; saw him leap from seat to seat to the stern, grasp the tiller, haul taut the sheet, and stand off to the open sea.

"Clever Jacky!" he screamed, wildly excited. "Clever lad! My partner, my little partner!"

But the wind carried the cry away. Jacky did not hear—did not know, even, that his partner had been a spectator of his brave faithfulness. He was beating out, to make sea-room for the run with the wind to the harbor; and the boat was dipping her gunwale in a way that kept every faculty alert to keep her afloat. Eli watched him until he rounded and stood in for the tickle. Then the man sighed happily and went home.

"Us'll grapple for that net the morrow," he said, when Jacky came in.

Jacky opened his eyes. "Aye," he said. "'Tis safe on the bottom. I thought I'd best cut it adrift 't save it."

"I seed you," said Eli, "from the Knob. 'Twas well done, lad! You're a true partner."

"The knife come in handy," said Jacky, smiling. "'Tis a good knife."

"Aye," said Eli, with a shake of the head. "I bought un' for a good one."

And that was all.

Eli set about rearing young Jacky in a fashion as wise as he knew. He exposed the lad to wet and weather, as judiciously as he could, to make him hardy; he took him to sea in high winds to fix his courage and teach him

to sail; he taught him the weather signs, the fish lore of the coast, the "marks" for the fishing grounds, the whereabouts of shallows and reefs and currents; he took him to church and sent him to Sunday School. And he taught him to swim.

On the fine days of that summer, when there were no fish to be caught, the man and the lad went together to the Wash-tub—a deep, little cove of the sea, clear, quiet, bottomed with smooth rock and sheltered from the wind by high cliffs; but cold—almost as cold as ice-water. Here Jacky delighted to watch Eli dive, leap from the cliff, float on his back, swim far out to sea; here he gazed with "admiration not unmixed with awe" on the man's rugged body—broad shoulders, bulging muscles, great arms and legs. And here, too, he learned to swim.

When the warmest summer days were gone, Jack could paddle about the Wash-tub in promising fashion. He was confident when Eli was at hand—sure, then, that he could keep afloat. But he was not yet sure enough of his power when Eli had gone on the long swim to sea. Eli said that he had done well; and Jacky, himself, often said that he could swim a deal better than a stone. In an emergency, both agreed, Jacky's new accomplishment would be sure to serve him well.

"Sure, if the punt turned over," Jacky innocently boasted, "I'd be able 't swim 't I you righted her."

That was to be proved.

"Eli, b'y," said old James Blunt, one day in the fall of the year, "do you take my new dory to the grounds

t' day. Sure, I'd like 't know how you likes it."

Old James had built his boat after a south-coast model. She was a dory, a flat-bottomed craft, as distinguished from a punt, which has a round bottom and keel. He was proud of her; but somewhat timid; and he wanted Eli's opinion on her quality.

"'Tis a queer lookin' thing," said Eli. "But me an' my partner'll try she, James, just for luck."

That afternoon a full gale caught the dory on the Farthest Grounds far out beyond the Wolf's Teeth Reef. It came from the shore so suddenly that Eli could not escape it. So it was a beat to harbor, with the wind and sea rising fast. Off the Valley, which is half a mile from the narrows, a gust came out between the hills—came strong and swift. It heeled the dory over—still over—down—down until the water poured in over the gunwale.

Eli let go the main sheet, expecting the sail to fall away from the wind and thus ease the boat. But the line caught in the block. Down went the dory—still down. And of a sudden it capsize.

When Jacky came to the surface he began frantically to splash the water, momentarily losing strength, breath and self-possession. Eli was waiting for him, with head and shoulders out of the water, like an eager dog as he waits for the stick his master is about to throw. He swam close, but hung off for a moment—until, indeed, he perceived that Jacky would never of himself regain his self-possession—for he did not want the boy to be too soon beholden to him for aid. Then he slipped his hand under Jacky's breast and buoyed him up.

"Partner!" he said quietly. "Partner!"

Jacky's panic-stricken struggles at once ceased; for he had been used to giving instant obedience to Eli's commands. He looked in Eli's dripping face.

"Easy partner," said Eli, still quietly. "Strike out, now."

Jacky smiled, and struck out as directed. In a moment he was swimming at Eli's side.

"Take it easy, lad," Eli continued. "Just take it easy while I rights the boat. It's all right. I'll have you aboard in a jiffy. Is you—is you—all right, Jacky?"

"Aye," Jacky gasped.

Eli waited for a moment longer. He was loath to leave the boy to take care of himself. Until then he had not known how large a place in his heart his little partner filled, how much he had come to depend upon him for all those things which make life worth while. He had not known, indeed, how far away from the old, lonely life the lad had led him. So he waited for a moment longer, watching Jacky. Then he swam to the overturned dory, where after an anxious glance toward the lad, he dived to cut the gear—and dived again; watching, and yet again; watching Jacky all the time he was at the surface for breath.

The gear cut away, the mast pulled from its socket, Eli righted the boat. It takes a strong man and clever swimmer to do that; but Eli was clever in the water, and strong anywhere. Moreover, it was a trick he had learned.

"Come, Jacky, b'y!" he called.

Jacky swam toward the boat. Eli swam to meet him, and helped him over the last few yards of choppy sea, for the lad was almost exhausted.

Jacky laid a hand on the bow of the dory. Then Eli pulled off one of his long boots and swam to the stern, where he began cautiously to bail the boat. When she was light enough in the water he helped Jacky aboard and Jacky bailed her dry.

"Ha, lad!" Eli ejaculated, with a grin that made his face shine. "You is safe aboard. How is you, b'y?"

"Tired, Eli," Jacky answered.

"You bide quiet, where you is," said Eli. "I'll find the paddles, an' I'll soon have you home."

Eli's great concern had been to get the boy out of the water. He had cared for little else than that—to get him out of reach of the sea. And now he was confronted with the problem of making harbor. The boat was slowly drifting out with the wind; the dusk was approaching; and every moment it was growing more difficult to swim in the choppy sea. It took him a long time to find the paddles.

"Steady the boat, Jacky," he said, when the boy had taken the paddles into the dory. "I'm comin' aboard."

Eli attempted to board the dory over the bow. She was tossing about in a choppy sea; and he was not used to her ways. Had she been a punt—his punt—he would have been aboard in a trice. But she was not his punt—not a punt at all; she was a new boat, a dory, a flat-bottomed craft; he was not used to her ways. Jacky tried desperately to steady her while Eli lifted himself out of the water.

"Take care, Eli," he screamed. "She'll be over!"

Eli got his knee on the gunwale—no more than that. A wave tipped the boat; she lurched; she capsize. And again Eli waited for Jacky to come to the surface of the water; again buoyed him up; again gave him courage; again helped him to the boat;

again bailed the boat—this time with one of Jacky's boots—and again helped Jacky aboard.

"I'm wonderful tired, Eli," said Jacky when the paddles were handed over the second time. "I'm fair' done out."

"'Twill be over soon, lad. I'll have you home by the kitchen fire in half an hour. Come, now, partner! Steady the boat. I'll try again."

Even more cautiously Eli attempted to clamber aboard. Inch by inch he raised himself out of the water. When the greater waves ran under the boat he paused; when she rode on an even keel, he came faster. Inch by inch humoring the cranky boat all the time, he lifted his right leg. But he could not get aboard. Again, when his knee was on the gunwale, the dory capsize.

For the third time the little partner was helped aboard and given a boot with which to bail. His strength was then near gone. He threw the water over the side until he could no longer lift his arms.

"Eli," he gasped. "I can do no more!"

Eli put his hand on the bow as though about to attempt to clamber aboard again. But he withdrew it.

"Jacky, b'y," he said, "could you not manage 't pull a bit with the paddles? I'll swim alongside."

Jacky stared stupidly at him.

Again Eli put his hand on the bow. He was in terror of losing Jacky's life. Never before had he known such dread and fear. He did not dare risk overturning the boat again; for he knew that Jacky would not survive for the fourth time. What could he do? He could not get aboard, and Jacky could not row. How was he to get the boy ashore? His hand touched the painter—the long rope by which the boat was given him an idea; he would tow the boat ashore!

So he took the rope in his teeth and struck out for the tickle in the harbor.

"'Twas a close call, b'y," said Eli when he and Jacky sat by the kitchen fire.

"An' 'twas too bad," said Jacky, "'t lose the gear."

Eli laughed.

"What you laughin' at?" Jacky asked.

"I brought ashore something better than the gear."

"The dory?"

"No, b'y," Eli roared. "My little partner."—Montreal Herald.

COST OF THE WHITE PLAGUE.

Tuberculosis Causes 150,000 Deaths and Loss of Millions Yearly.

Tuberculosis causes annually more than 150,000 deaths in the United States at the average age of 35 years. At this age the normal after-lifetime is about 32 years, so that the real loss of life covered, measured in time, is represented by 4,800,000 years per annum. If we assume that the net value of a year of human life after the age of 35 years is at least \$50, the real loss to the nation resulting from the disease (a large proportion of which is known to be needless) may be estimated at \$240,000,000 per annum.

These astounding and almost incomprehensible figures are far from being an exaggeration, but let us assume that only one-half of this mortality is preventable, and we have a net possible saving to the nation of \$120,000,000 per annum. This estimate does not take into account the social, moral and sentimental value of at least 100,000 lives, which, under different conditions, might reasonably hope to continue for many years.

The mortality from tuberculosis is, therefore, a problem compared with which all other social problems of a medical character sink into insignificance, and it is safe to say that the possible prevention of a large portion of the mortality from this disease is justly deserving of the solicitude, the active personal interest and liberal pecuniary support of all who have the real welfare of the people of this nation at heart.

Biggs estimates that New York City sustains an annual economic loss of \$23,000,000, and that the nation at large must sustain an annual loss of \$330,000,000 because of tuberculosis. There are nearly 100,000 deaths from consumption in New York City. Seven thousand persons died in Illinois in 1903, half of them between the ages of 20 and 50 years, while the estimated loss to the State alone, because of this disease, was \$36,000,000, and the medical authorities of that State have found that consumption is responsible for more deaths than typhoid fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, all forms of bronchitis, influenza, measles and smallpox combined.—New York Medical Journal.

Setting a Difficult Task.

"Jack, dear, I do wish you would get another photo taken."

"How often have I told you I will not?"

"But why not?" (Then, thoughtfully, after a pause.) "Are you afraid of being asked to look pleasant?"—Punch.

After a man has married, his first glance at every caller at his office is at the caller's hands, apprehending a bill in them.



"FOR THE THIRD TIME, THE LITTLE PARTNER WAS HELPED ABOARD."