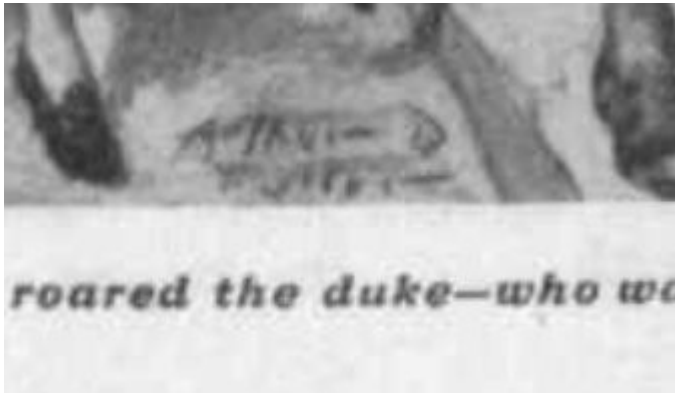


Was Lassie on Edward Hopper's mind in 1939, too?

By Catherine Ryan, August 2023



Illustrations: The short story, *Lassie Come-Home* by Edward Knight with illustrations by Arthur D. Fuller*, was an instant must-read-and-share when it was first published in the popular magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post* on December 17, 1938. Edward Hopper painted *Cape Cod, Evening* in 1939. *The illustrator's signature is tough to read without the credit beneath the byline. (Scroll down to see and read the story pages.)

You may know the memorable and unbreakable bond of the boy and his dog which *Lassie Come-Home* describes, and the small and epic journeys.

The short story is set in England and opens with a small family of three in recurring and searing pain: Two parents who have fallen on hard times and are under great emotional strain struggle to comfort their only child because they sold the family dog. Their beautiful collie, "Lassie", is so devoted to their son, the dog runs away from the new owner straight back to the boy over and over again. Under the circumstances, any and every solution is untenable. His parents' misplaced anger, adult exchanges, and silence confuse the boy. Their anguish and love is palpable.

Out of desperation, Lassie is removed to Scotland which they believe will be an insurmountable distance to cover.

It's not. And it's no wonder a legend is born!

The first Lassie novel was published in 1940. Swift adaptations followed. It's easy to see how the story resonated with American audiences during the Great Depression, even perhaps the great American artist, Edward Hopper.

If not Lassie herself, it's tempting to consider the intergenerational communication and couple dynamics explored in Knight's story as themes Hopper noticed, too.

"...Then they heard his opening of the door and the voice stopped and the cottage was silent. That's how it was now, the boy thought. They stopped talking in front of you. And this, somehow, was too much for him to bear. He closed the door, ran out into the night, and onto the moor, that great flat expanse of land where all the people of that village walked in lonesomeness when life and its troubles seemed past bearing..." *Lassie Come-Home*, Edward Knight, *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1938 Dec. 17

Both creatives used punctuation in titles. Knight offset the story's title with a vital hyphen, *Lassie Come-Home* (command-comfort) that might have caught Hopper's attention. Hopper used commas often for emphasis--as in *Cape Cod, Evening*.

Beyond the Great Depression, 1938 may have appeared especially distant, simpler, on first pass. Yet, with international tensions rising year by year and the horrors of WWI just a generation past, neither 1938 nor 1939 were simple. Jan Struther, another UK author, broached topics of peacetime, lengthy stasis, and looming loss in the popular *Mrs. Miniver* pieces, published in *The Times* London newspaper (1937-39), at the same times as Lassie. *Reader's Digest* distribution was international beginning in 1938.

In *Cape Cod, Evening* 1939, Hopper's dog reacts, hears something, like a whippoorwill, or so the story goes. (Lloyd Goodrich's Hopper bio, 1971; also Gail Levin, 1995) Levin's book takes time to introduce the reader to Hoppers' friends, and so we understand the grief from the loss of their friend Harriet Jenness who died "in early July of 1939. It was she who had firmed up the Hoppers' courage to build in the first place and provided a roof till theirs was done." (Levin, 1995.)

Cape Cod, Evening is constantly changing because it's laden with enigmatic motifs. It's late summer and fall. Unsettling and calm. Are the man and woman taking a momentary break together (as with the son and father walking in the Lassie story) or engaged in a forced desist (as with the parents going silent in the Lassie story)? Active fight or passive summer ennui? And what about that evergreen Hopper forest at the edge? Is it a cool and reachable retreat? Are the trees leaning, falling? Is the sea of dry grass sunlit and waving or scorched and still? And why no path? The man and woman are lost in thought. Worried? Families will have to have difficult conversations. Some won't return. And what about the significance of that star dog with the striking fur?

Hopper was 35 at the onset of WWI, registered, but not called for duty. He was 57 in 1939.

1939

Edward Hopper paintings dated *Bridle Path* (Bruce Museum, CT), 1939 *Ground Swell* (NGA collection), *Cape Cod, Evening* (NGA collection), and *New York Movie* (MoMa)



Edward Hopper and Jo Hopper were on the Cape when war broke out.

On August 29, 1939, friends dropped by their summer home in Truro and Jo Hopper noted in her diary how the woman said, "...She'd been to England last week. Said they all prepared for way—everyone has his funkhole ready for an air raid." On August 30 she added "E." went to town on errands and picked up a magazine:

"Aug. 30. Still raining. After lunch E. went to P.O. & bought back kerosene, *Readers Dig*, postcard from Ginny at fair + the note from D R.—to see us Sept. 18 at 11. Onion soup & banana salad for lunch & tummy ache over dishes. E. so tired. Standing up at canvas. Canvas seems standing still. But I've seen that happen before..." *Josephine N. Hopper, Aug. 30, 1929 diary page. Provincetown Art Museum Collection, 2016. ["Donation by Laurence C. and J. Anton Schifffenhaus in honor of their mother Mary Schifffenhaus \(a close and personal friend of Josephine and Edward Hopper\)"](#)*

On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland, and England and France declared war on Germany just two days later. On September 3, Jo mentions art and war:

"...E's 2 canvases. Sailboat without sky as yet. Tonight Bertha Frank & Edgar Cobb came up to say good bye for the season. Everyone else in Truro had their supper dishes washed—but we hadn't begun yet. E. was still working when they arrived. He's been plenty interrupted today. We didn't swim—it looked so cold. Ginny said not cold but very dirty + water full of pink jelly fish.*

*So war is declared today & yesterday we saw that over into Poland. E. had a Times yesterday & we saw that. How Nat. news dwarfs everything. Why Pittsburgh festivities. Why anything. E. said he could drive an ambulance. I hope not. We most of everything need to get well..." Josephine N. Hopper, Sept. 3, 1939. *Ground Swell and Cape Cod, Evening*

STAR DOGS

Examples of dogs in famous visual arts and letters abound before Lassie. During WWI, the soon to be famous German shepherd puppy Rin Tin Tin was rescued from the battlefield by Lee Duncan, and brought back to the United States. He was trained exceptionally well then on a hunch for the Silent Movie era. The original Rin Tin Tin's first Hollywood movie was a bit part in 1922. He starred in so many box office hits, when he died in 1932 his death 'stopped the presses'. Generations of Rin Tin Tin descendants followed, representing his public legacy if not his agility and acting chops. Other shepherds were used in later vehicles. For more about Rin Tin Tin's global fame and impact and Duncan's life—he did not trademark the name—see Susan Orleans biography, *Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend*. (Also her short piece *The Dog Star*, *New Yorker*, Aug. 2011 and a preview excerpt *NY Times Oct. 2011*.)

And before Rin Tin Tin? There would be no Dorothy without Toto. Frank Baum wrote the *The Wizard of Oz* in 1900. The production of the movie adaptation made news and was released August 29th, 1939. It failed to earn a profit until re-releases decades later.

Jack London's Buck in *The Call of the Wild* debuted in 1903.

The Whitney Museum holds an early portrait drawing by Hopper of a contented dog—framed in a doghouse door naturally—dated 1893.



Edward Hopper *Cape Cod, Evening* 1939 was acquired by the National Gallery of Art in 1982.



BEACH GRASS, ARCHITECTURE, COLOR, COMPOSITION, AND...

I think about Wyeth and Chase a lot when I look at Hopper's *Cape Cod, Evening*.

WYETH

A decade after *Cape Cod, Evening*, American artist and fan of Hopper, Andrew Wyeth, completed *Christina's World*, 1948 (Museum of Modern Art, New York).



WILLIAM MERRITT CHASE

Dry grass dunes and vegetation in the Hamptons on Long Island painted by American artist William Merritt Chase, one of Hopper's esteemed fine art professors.

photos: C. Ryan. Installation views from the William Merritt Chase exhibition at the MFA in 2017. Shinnecock Hills of Southampton seen in two works: *Bayberry Bush* 1895 (Parrish Art Museum) and *Seaside Flowers* (Crystal Bridges) The photo with the supercharged green is how it's often depicted, but not how I experience this Chase series in person. Chase painted a bevy of great dogs in other works.





THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

The Saturday Evening Post tag line "Founded 1728 by Benj. Franklin"

LASSIE COME-HOME

By
ERIC KNIGHT

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR D. FULLER

THE dog had met the boy by the school gate for five years. Now she couldn't understand that times were changed and she wasn't supposed to be there any more. But the boy knew.

So when he opened the door of the cottage, he spoke before he entered.

"Mother," he said, "Lassie's come home again."

He waited a moment, as if in hope of something. But the man and woman inside the cottage did not speak.

"Come in, Lassie," the boy said.

He held open the door, and the tricolor collie walked in obediently. Going head down, as a collie will when it knows something is wrong, it went to the rug and lay down before the hearth, a black-white-and-gold aristocrat. The man, sitting on a low stool by the fireside, kept his eyes turned away. The woman went to the sink and busied herself there.

"She were waiting at school for me, just like always," the boy went on. He spoke fast, as if racing against time. "She must ha' got away again. I thought, happen this time, we might just —"

"No!" the woman exploded.

The boy's carelessness dropped. His voice rose in pleading.

"But this time, mother! Just this time. We could hide her. They wouldn't never know."

"Dogs, dogs, dogs!" the woman cried. The words poured from her as if the boy's pleading had been a

signal gun for her own anger. "I'm sick o' hearing about tykes round this house. Well, she's sold and gone and done with, so the quicker she's taken back the better. Now get her back quick, or first thing ye know we'll have Hynes round here again. Mr. Hynes!"

Her voice sharpened in imitation of the Cockney accent of the south: "Hi know you Yorkshiremen and yer come-one dogs. Training yer dogs to come 'ome so's yer can sell 'em bover and bover again."

"Well, she's sold, so ye can take her out o' my house and home to them as bought her!"

The boy's bottom lip crept out stubbornly, and there was silence in the cottage. Then the dog lifted its head and nudged the man's hand, as a dog will when asking for patting. But the man drew away and stared, silently, into the fire.

The boy tried again, with the ceaseless guile of a child, his voice coaxing.

"Look, byther, she wants thee to bid her welcome. Aye, she's that glad to be home. Happen they don't tak' good care on her up there? Look, her coat's a



"Fie," roared the duke—who was a Yorkshireman, and couldn't help being a bit sharp about money.

bit poorly, don't ye think? A bit o' linseed strained through her drinking water—that's what I'd gi' her."

Still looking in the fire, the man nodded. But the woman, as if perceiving the boy's new attack, sniffed.

"Aye, tha wouldn't be a Carnelough if tha didn't know more about tykes nor breaking eggs wi' a stick. Nor a Yorkshireman. My goodness, it seems to me sometimes that chaps in this village thinks more on their tykes nor they do o' their own flesh and blood. They'll sit by their firesides and let their own bairns starve so long as t' dog gets fed."

The man stirred, suddenly, but the boy cut in quickly.

"But she does look thin. Look, truly—they're not feeding her right. Just look!"

"Aye," the woman chattered. "I wouldn't put it past Hynes to steal t' best part o' t' dog meat for himself. And Lassie always was a strong eater."

"She's fair thin now," the boy said.

Almost unawares the man and woman looked at the dog for the first time.

"My gum, she is off a bit," the woman said. Then she caught herself. "Ma goodness, I suppose I'll have to fix her a bit o' summat. She can do wi' it. But soon as she's fed, back she goes. And never another dog I'll have in my house. Never another. Cooking and nursing for 'em, and as much trouble to bring up as a bairn!"

So, grumbling and chattering as a village woman will, she moved about, warming a pan of food for the dog. The man and boy watched the collie eat. When it was done, the boy took from the mantelpiece a folded cloth and a brush, and began prettying the collie's coat. The man watched for several minutes, and then could stand it no longer.



There would be moors to cross. And then those great, long locks that stretch almost from one side of that dour land to another, would bar the way and send a dog questing a hundred miles before it could find a crossing.

"Here," he said.

He took the cloth and brush from the boy and began working expertly on the dog, rubbing the rich, deep coat, then brushing the snowy whiteness of the full ruff and the apron, bringing out the heavy leggings on the forelegs. He lost himself in his work, and the boy sat on the rug, watching contentedly. The woman stood it as long as she could.

"Now will ye please tak' that tyke out o' here?"

The man flared in anger.

"Well, ye wouldn't have me tak' her back looking like a mucky Monday wash, wouldta?"

He bent again, and began fluffing out the collie's petticoats.

"Joe!" the woman pleaded. "Will ye tak' her out o' here? Hynes'll be nosing round afore ye know it. And I won't have that man in my house. Wearing his hat inside, and going on like he's the duke himself—him and his leggings!"

"All right, lass."

"And this time, Joe, tak' young Joe wi' ye."

"What for?"

"Well, let's get the business done and over with. It's him that Lassie runs away fur. She comes for young Joe. So if he went wi' thee, and told her to stay, happen she'd be content and not run away no more, and then we'd have a little peace and quiet in the bonie—though heaven knows there's not much hope o' that these days, things being like they are." The woman's voice trailed away, as if she would soon cry in weariness.

The man rose. "Come, Joe," he said. "Get thy cap."

The Duke of Rudling walked along the gravel paths of his place with his granddaughter, Philippa.

Philippa was a bright and knowing young woman, allegedly the only member of the duke's family he could address in unspotted language. For it was also alleged that the duke was the most irascible, vile-tempered old man in the three Ridings of Yorkshire.

"Country going to pot!" the duke roared, stabbing at the walk with his great blackthorn stick. "When I was a young man! Hah! Women today not as pretty. Horses today not as fast. As for dogs—ye don't see dogs today like —"

Just then the duke and Philippa came round a clump of rhododendrons and saw a man, a boy and a dog.

"Ah," said the duke, in admiration. Then his brow knotted. "Damme, Carracough! What're ye doing with my dog?"

He shouted it quite as if the others were in the next county, for it was also the opinion of the Duke of Rudling that people were not nearly so keen of hearing as they used to be when he was a young man.

"It's Lassie," Carracough said. "She runned away again and I brought her back."

Carracough lifted his cap, and poiced the boy to do the same, not in any servile gesture, but to show that they were as well brought up as the next.

"Damme, run away again!" the duke roared. "And I told that utter nincompoop Hynes te—where is he? Hynes! Hynes! Damme, Hynes, what're ye hiding for?"

"Coming, your lordship!" sounded a voice, far away behind the shrubberies. And soon Hynes appeared, a sharp-faced man in check coat, riding breeches, and the cloth leggings that grooms wear.

"Take this dog," roared the duke, "and pen her up! And, damme, if she breaks out again, I'll—I'll —"

The duke waved his great stick threateningly, and then, without so much as a thank you or kiss the back of my hand to Joe Carracough, he went stamping and muttering away.

"I'll pen 'er up," Hynes muttered, when the duke was gone. "And if she ever gets awye agyne, I'll —"

He made as if to grab the dog, but Joe Carracough's hobnailed boot trod heavily on Hynes' foot.

"I brought my lad wi' me to bid her stay, so we'll pen her up this time. Eigh—sorry! I didn't see I were on thy foot. Come, Joe, lad."

They walked down the crunching gravel path, along by the neat kennel buildings. When Lassie was behind the closed door, she raced into the high wire run where she could see them as they went. She pressed close against the wire, waiting.

The boy stood close, too, his fingers through the meshes touching the dog's nose.

"Go on, lad," his father ordered. "Bid her stay!"

The boy looked around, as if for help that he did not find. He swallowed, and then spoke, low and quickly.

"Stay here, Lassie, and don't come home no more," he said. "And don't come to school for me no more. Because I don't want to see ye no more. 'Cause tha's a bad dog, and we don't love thee no more, and we don't want thee. So stay there forever and leave us be, and don't never come home no more."

Then he turned, and because it was hard to see the path plainly, he stumbled. But his father, who was holding his head very high as they walked away from Hynes, shook him savagely, and snapped roughly: "Look where tha's going!"

Then the boy trotted beside his father. He was thinking that he'd never

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LASSIE COME-HOME

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be able to understand why grownups sometimes were so bad-tempered with you, just when you needed them most.

After that, there were days and days that passed, and the dog did not come to the school gate any more. So then it was not like old times. There were so many things that were not like old times.

The boy was thinking that as he came wearily up the path and opened the cottage door and heard his father's voice, tense with anger: ". . . walk my feet off. If tha thinks I like —"

Then they heard his opening of the door and the voice stopped and the cottage was silent.

That's how it was now, the boy thought. They stopped talking in front of you. And this, somehow, was too much for him to bear.

He closed the door, ran out into the night, and onto the moor, that great flat expanse of land where all the people of that village walked in lonesomeness when life and its troubles seemed past bearing.

A long while later, his father's voice cut through the darkness.

"What's tha doing out here, Joe lad?"

"Walking."

"Aye."

They went on together, aimlessly, each following his own thoughts. And they both thought about the dog that had been sold.

"Tha maun't think we're hard on thee, Joe," the man said at last. "It's just that a chap's got to be honest. There's that to it. Sometimes, when a chap doesn't have much, he clings right hard to what he's got. And honest is honest, and there's no two ways about it."

"Why, look, Joe. Seventeen year I worked in that Clarabelle Pit till she shut down, and a good collier too. Seventeen year! And butties I've had by the dozen, and never a man of 'em can ever say that Joe Carracloough kept what wasn't his, nor spoke what wasn't true. Not a man in this Riding can ever call a Carracloough mishonest."

"And when ye've sold a man summat, and ye've taken his brass, and ye've spent it—well, then done's done. That's all. And ye've got to stand by that."

"But Lassie was —"

"Now, Joe! Ye can't alter it, ever. It's done—and happen it's for t' best. No two ways. Joe, she were getting hard to feed. Why, ye wouldn't want

Lassie to be going around getting peaked and pined, like some chaps round here keep their tykes. And if ye're fond of her, then just think on it that now she's got lots to eat, and a private kennel, and a good run to herself, and living like a varritable princess, she is. Ain't that best for her?"

"We wouldn't pine her. We've always got lots to eat."

The man blew out his breath, angrily. "Eigh, Joe, nowt pleases thee. Well then, tha might as well have it. Tha'll never see Lassie no more. She run home once too often, so the duke's taken her wi' him up to his place in Scotland, and there she'll stay. So it's good-by and good luck to her, and she'll never come home no more, she won't. Now, I weren't off to tell thee, but there it is, so put it in thy pipe and smoke it, and let's never say a word about it no more—especially in front of thy mother."

The boy stumbled on in the darkness. Then the man halted.

"We ought to be getting back, lad. We left thy mother alone."

He turned the boy about, and then went on, but as if he were talking to himself.

"Tha sees, Joe, women's not like men. They have to stay home and

manage best they can, and just spend the time in wishing. And when things don't go right, well, they have to take it out in talk and give a man hell. But it don't mean nowt, really, so tha shouldn't mind when thy mother talks hard."

"Ye just got to learn to be patient and let 'em talk, and just let it go up t' chimney wi' th' smoke."

Then they were quiet, until, over the rise, they saw the lights of the village. Then the boy spoke: "How far away is Scotland, feyther?"

"Nay, lad, it's a long, long road."

"But how far, feyther?"

"I don't know—but it's a longer road than thee or me'll ever walk. Now, lad. Don't fret no more, and try to be a man—and don't plague thy mother no more, wilta?"

Joe Carracloough was right. It is a long road, as they say in the North, from Yorkshire to Scotland. Much too far for a man to walk—or a boy. And though the boy often thought of it, he remembered his father's words on the moor, and he put the thought behind him.

But there is another way of looking at it; and that's the distance from

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Scotland to Yorkshire. And that is just as far as from Yorkshire to Scotland. A matter of about four hundred miles, it would be, from the Duke of Rudling's place far up in the Highlands, to the village of Holdersby. That would be for a man, who could go fairly straight.

To an animal, how much farther would it be? For a dog can study no maps, read no signposts, ask no directions. It could only go blindly, by instinct, knowing that it must keep on to the south, to the south. It would wander and err, quest and quarter, run into firths and lochs that would send it side-tracking and back-tracking before it could go again on its way—south.

A thousand miles, it would be, going that way—a thousand miles over strange terrain.

There would be moors to cross, and burns to swim. And then those great, long lochs that stretch almost from one side of that dour land to another, would bar the way and send a dog questing a hundred miles before it could find a crossing that would allow it to go south.

And, too, there would be rivers to cross, wide rivers like the Forth and the Clyde, the Tweed and the Tyne, where one must go miles to find bridges. And the bridges would be in towns. And in the towns there would be officials—like the one in Lanarkshire. In all his life he had never let a captured dog get away—except one. That one was a gaunt, snarling collie that whirled on him right in the pound itself, and fought and twisted loose to race away down the city street—going south.

But there are also kind people, too; ones knowing and understanding in the ways of dogs. There was an old couple in Durham who found a dog lying exhausted in a ditch one night—lying there with its head to the south. They took that dog into their cottage and warmed it and fed it and nursed it. And because it seemed an understanding, wise dog, they kept it in their home, hoping it would learn to be content. But, as it grew stronger, every afternoon toward four o'clock it would go to the door and whine, and then begin pacing back and forth between the door and the window, back and forth as the animals do in their cages at the zoo.

They tried every wile and every kindness to make it bide with them, but finally, when the dog began to refuse food, the old people knew what they must do. Because they understood dogs, they opened the door one afternoon and they watched a collie go, not down the road to the right, or to the left, but straight across a field toward the south; going steadily at a trot, as if it knew it still had a long, long road to travel.

Ah, a thousand miles of tor and brae, of shire and moor, of path and road and plowland, of river and stream and burn and brook and beck, of snow and rain and fog and sun, is a long way, even for a human being. But it would seem too far—much, much too far—for any dog to travel blindly and win through.

And yet—and yet—who shall say why, when so many weeks had passed that hope against hope was dying, a boy coming out of school, out of the cloakroom that always smelled of damp wool drying, across the concrete play yard with the black, waxed slides, should turn his eyes to a spot by the school gate from force of five years of habit, and see there a dog? Not a dog, this one, that lifted glad ears above a proud, slim head with its black-and-

gold mask; but a dog that lay weakly, trying to lift a head that would no longer lift, trying to wag a tail that was torn and blotched and matted with dirt and burrs, and managing to do nothing much except to whine in a weak, happy, crying way as a boy on his knees threw arms about it, and hands touched it that had not touched it for many a day.

Then who shall picture the urgency of a boy, running, awkwardly, with a great dog in his arms—running through the village, past the empty mill, past the Labor Exchange, where the men looked up from their deep ponderings on life and the dole? Or who shall describe the high tones of a voice—a boy's voice, calling as he runs up a path: "Mother! Oh, mother! Lassie's come home! Lassie's come home!"

Nor does anyone who ever owned a dog need to be told the sounds a man makes as he bends over a dog that has been his for many years; nor how a woman moves quickly, preparing food—which might be the family's condensed milk stirred into warm water; nor how the jowl of a dog is lifted so that raw egg and brandy, bought with precious pence, should be spooned in; nor how bleeding pads are bandaged, tenderly.

That was one day. There was another day when the woman in the cottage sighed with pleasure, for a dog lifted itself to its feet for the first time to stand over a bowl of oatmeal, putting its head down and lapping again and again while its pinched flanks quivered.

And there was another day when the boy realized that, even now, the dog was not to be his again. So the cottage rang again with protests and cries, and a woman shrilling: "Is there never to be no more peace in my house and home?" Long after he was in bed that night the boy heard the rise and fall of the woman's voice, and the steady, reiterative tone of the man's. It went on long after he was asleep.

In the morning the man spoke, not looking at the boy, saying the words as if he had long rehearsed them.

"Thy mother and me have decided upon it that Lassie shall stay here till she's better. Anyhow, nobody could nurse her better than us. But the day that t' duke comes back, then back she goes, too. For she belongs to him, and that's honest, too. Now that has her for a while, so be content."

In childhood, "for a while" is such a great stretch of days when seen from one end. It is a terribly short time seen from the other.

The boy knew how short it was that morning as he went to school and saw a motorcar driven by a young woman. And in the car was a gray-blotched, terrible old man, who waved a cane and shouted: "Hi! Hi, there! Damme, lad! You there! Hi!"

Then it was no use running, for the car could go faster than you, and soon it was beside you and the man was

saying: "Damme, Philipps, will you make this smelly thing stand still a moment? Hi, lad!"

"Yes, sir."

"You're What's-is-Name's lad, aren't you?"

"Ma feyther's Joe Carrasclough."

"I know, I know. Is he home now?"

"No, sir. He's away to Alierby. A mate spoke for him at the pit and he's gone to see if there's a chance."

"When'll he be back?"

"I don't know. I think about tea."

"Eh, yes. Well, yes. I'll drop round about fiveish to see that father of yours. Something important."

It was hard to pretend to listen to lessons. There was only waiting for noon. Then the boy ran home.

"Mother! T' duke is back and he's coming to take Lassie away."

"Eight, drat my buttons. Never no pence in this house. Is tha sure?"

"Aye. He stopped me. He said tell feyther he'll be round at five. Can't we hide her? Oh, mother."

"Nay, thy feyther—"

"Won't you beg him? Please, please. Beg feyther to—"

"Young Joe, now it's no use. So stop thy teasing! Thy feyther'll not lie. That much I'll give him. Come good, come bad, he'll not lie."

"But just this once, mother. Please beg him, just this once. Just one lie wouldn't hurt him. I'll make it up to him. I will. When I'm grown up, I'll get a job. I'll make money. I'll buy him things—and you, too. I'll buy you both anything you want if you'll only—"

For the first time in his trouble the boy became a child, and the mother, looking over, saw the tears that ran openly down his contorted face. She turned her face to the fire, and there was a pause. Then she spoke.

"Joe, tha mustn't," she said softly. "Tha must learn never to want nothing in life like that. It don't do, lad. Tha mustn't want things bad, like tha wants Lassie."

The boy shook his clenched fists in impatience.

"It ain't that, mother. Ye don't understand. Don't ye see—it ain't me that wants her. It's her that wants us! That's what made her come all them miles. It's her that wants us, so terrible bad!"

The woman turned and stared. It was as if, in that moment, she were seeing this child, this boy, this son of her own, for the first time in many years. She turned her head down toward the table. It was surrender.

"Come and eat, then," she said. "I'll talk to him. I will that, all right. I feel sure he won't lie. But I'll talk to him, all right. I'll talk to Mr. Joe Carrasclough. I will indeed!"

At five that afternoon, the Duke of Rudling, fuming and muttering, got out of a car at a cottage gate to find a boy barring his way. This was a boy who stood, stubbornly, saying fiercely: "Away wif thee! Thy tyke's net here!"

"Damme, Philipps, th' lad's touched," the duke said. "He is. He's touched."

Scowling and thumping his stick, the old duke advanced until the boy gave way, backing down the path out of the reach of the waving blackthorn stick.

"Thy tyke's net here," the boy protested.

"What's he saying?" the girl asked.

"Says my dog isn't here. Damme, you going deaf? I'm supposed to be deaf, and I hear him plainly enough. Now, ma lad, what tyke o' mine's net here?"

As he turned to the boy, the duke spoke in broadest Yorkshire, as he did always to the people of the cottages—a habit which the Duchess of Rudling, and many more members of the duke's family, deplored.

"Coom, coom, ma lad. Whet tyke's net here?"

"No tyke o' thine. Us hasn't got it." The words began running faster and faster as the boy backed away from the fearful old man who advanced. "No tyke could have done it. No tyke can come all them miles. It isn't Lassie. It's another one that looks like her. It isn't Lassie!"

"Why, bless ma heart and soul," the duke puffed. "Where's thy father, ma lad?"

The door behind the boy opened, and a woman's voice spoke.

"If it's Joe Carrasclough ye want, he's out in the shed—and been there shut up half the afternoon."

"What's this lad talking about—a dog of mine being here?"

"Nay," the woman snapped quickly. "He didn't say a tyke o' thine was here. He said it wasn't here."

"Well, what dog o' mine isn't here, then?"

The woman swallowed, and looked about as if for help. The duke stood, peering from under his jutting eyebrows. Her answer, truth or lie, was never spoken, for then they heard the rattle of a door opening, and a man making a purring sound with his lips, as he will when he wants a dog to follow, and then Joe Carrasclough's voice said: "This is t' only tyke us has here. Does it look like any dog that belongs to thee?"

With his mouth opening to cry one last protest, the boy turned. And his mouth stayed open. For there he saw his father, Joe Carrasclough, the collie fancier, standing with a dog at his heels—a dog that sat at his left heel patiently, as any well-trained dog should do—as Lassie used to do. But this dog was not Lassie. In fact, it was ridiculous to think of it at the same moment as you thought of Lassie.

For where Lassie's skull was aristocratic and slim, this dog's head was clumsy and rough. Where Lassie's ears stood in twin-lapped symmetry, this dog had one ear dragging and the other standing up Alsatian fashion in a way to give any collie breeder the cold shivers. Where Lassie's coat had ugly patches of black; and where Lassie's apron was a billowing stretch of snow-white, this dog had puddles of off-color blue-merle mixture. Besides, Lassie had four white paws, and this one had one paw white, two dirty-brown, and one almost black.

That is the dog they all looked at as Joe Carrasclough stood there, having told no lie, having only asked a question. They all stood, waiting the duke's verdict.

But the duke said nothing. He only walked forward, slowly, as if he were

(Continued on Page 54)



"It's HIM again, it up like a — ah, ah!"



(Continued from Page 52)

seeing a dream. He bent beside the collie, looking with eyes that were as knowing about dogs as any Yorkshireman alive. And those eyes did not waste themselves upon twisted ears, or blotched marking, or rough head. Instead they were looking at a paw that the duke lifted, looking at the underside of the paw, staring intently at five black pads, crossed and recrossed with the scars where thorns had lacerated, and stones had torn.

For a long time the duke stared, and when he got up he did not speak in Yorkshire accents any more. He spoke as a gentleman should, and he said: "Joe Carracough. I never owned this dog. 'Pon my soul, she's never belonged to me. Never!"

Then he turned and went stumping down the path, thumping his cane and saying: "Bless my soul. Four hundred miles! Damme, wouldn't ha' believed it. Damme—five hundred miles!"

He was at the gate when his granddaughter whispered to him fiercely.

"Of course," he cried. "Mind your own business. Exactly what I came for. Talking about dogs made me forget. Carracough! Carracough! What're ye hiding for?"

"I'm still here, sir."

"Ah, there you are. You working?"

"Eigh, now. Working," Joe said. That's the best he could manage.

"Yes, working, working!" The duke fumed.

"Well, now ——" Joe began.

Then Mrs. Carracough came to his rescue, as a good housewife in Yorkshire will.

"Why, Joe's got three or four things that he's been considering," she said, with proper display of pride. "But he hasn't quite said yes or no to any of them yet."

"Then say no, quick," the old man puffed. "Had to sack Hynes. Didn't know a dog from a drunken filly. Should ha' known all along no damn Londoner could handle dogs fit for Yorkshire taste. How much, Carracough?"

"Well, now," Joe began.

"Seven pounds a week, and worth every penny," Mrs. Carracough chipped in. "One o' them other offers may come up to eight," she lied, expertly. For there's always a certain amount of lying to be done in life, and when a woman's married to a man who has made a lifelong cult of being honest, then she's got to learn to do the lying for two.

"Five," roared the duke—who, after all, was a Yorkshireman, and couldn't help being a bit sharp about things that pertained to money.

"Six," said Mrs. Carracough.

"Five pound ten," bargained the duke, cannily.

"Done," said Mrs. Carracough, who would have been willing to settle for three pounds in the first place. "But, o' course, us gets the cottage too."

"All right," puffed the duke. "Five pounds ten and the cottage. Begin Monday. But—on one condition. Carracough, you can live on my land, but I won't have that thick-skulled, screw-lugged, gay-tailed eyesore of a misshapen mongrel on my property. Now never let me see her again. You'll get rid of her?"

He waited, and Joe fumbled for words. But it was the boy who answered, happily, gaily: "Oh, no, sir. She'll be waiting at school for me most o' the time. And, anyway, in a day or so we'll have her fixed up and coped up so's ye'd never, never recognize her."

"I don't doubt that," puffed the duke, as he went to the ear. "I don't doubt ye could do just exactly that."

It was a long time afterward, in the ear, that the girl said: "Don't sit there like a lion on the Nelson column. And I thought you were supposed to be a hard man."

"Fiddlesticks, m'dear. I'm a ruthless realist. For five years I've sworn I'd have that dog by hook or crook, and now, egad, at last I've got her."

"Pooh! You had to buy the man before you could get his dog."

"Well, perhaps that's not the worst part of the bargain."

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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Cover Design by Norman Rockwell
Mr. Pickwick sets out by the Muggleton Coach for Christmas at Dingley Dell.

The names of all characters that we use in short stories, serials and serial fiction articles are that with types are fictitious. Use of a name which is the same as that of any living person is coincidental.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



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Dec. 17, 1938

Norman
Rockwell

Merric Christmas

BEGINNING

MRS. WOODROW WILSON'S STORY

Man's eye view of a REAL DINNER

PLACE a heaping plate of tempting, golden-brown beans before your husband and hark the sigh of *delight!* Beans oven-baked by Heinz, true Boston-style, will take him back through the years to an aromatic old farm kitchen and unforgettable Saturday night suppers of days long gone by . . .

Honest-to-Goodness Oven-Baking

Heinz chefs dexterously follow a rigid old colonial ritual. They bake the world's choicest beans in dry-heat ovens till every last morsel is placidly plump and ready to absorb the savory, enticing sauce of rich molasses and spice. Then that flavorful finale—a topping of tender, succulent young pork—is added!

Heinz remembered, too, the nation's geographical preferences. To please everybody's tastes, we oven-bake *four* kinds of beans!

You Have Four Delectable Choices

First choice among New Englanders are Boston-style beans in molasses sauce with pork, while down Texas-way red kidney beans are a heavy favorite. Westerners like tomato-sauced beans with pork, and vegetarians go for beans in a ruddy tomato sauce *without* pork! Keep a supply of all four fully-prepared kinds on hand—see how highly Heinz Oven-Baked Beans rate with the hungry men-in-your-life!



HEINZ OVEN BAKED BEANS

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



The Case of the Saginaw Sleuth

Case #307



a true story from the files
on Gulfpride—the motor oil
that gives you better, yet
thrifter, lubrication.

"WHAT I WANT are the facts about motor oil..." thought the superintendent of a Saginaw, Michigan, manufacturing plant. "And I'm going to dig them out if I have to turn Sherlock Holmes to do it!"

So he picked a test route between Saginaw and Columbus, Ohio, and began a piece of scientific detective work that was to reveal some astonishing facts about oil economy... facts of interest to everyone who drives a car.

Taking one of the company's heavy trucks—a truck with more than 85,000 miles on it—he sent

it over the test route first with one oil and then another in the crankcase. He tried the finest premium oils, including Gulfpride, Gulf's unique 100% Pure Pennsylvania.

And after weeks of patient "shadowing" he had the evidence down cold! Every time the truck made the trip with any other oil but Gulfpride, it burned up from one to two quarts. But with Gulfpride in the crankcase... scarcely a drop was consumed!

"This test proved to us," reports the enthusiastic superintendent, "that Gulfpride is the finest motor oil on the market."

Why you save with Gulfpride

If Gulfpride Oil stands up like this in a heavy truck that's travelled 85,000 miles, you can judge what it will do in your car!

But don't expect the same results with any other oil. For Gulfpride is unique. It is the one and only 100% Pure Pennsylvania

oil refined not simply by conventional methods, but also by Gulf's patented Alchlor process. This process removes as much as 20% extra waste and gives Gulfpride its truly phenomenal lubricating qualities.

Begin using Gulfpride regularly and discover how much you save...in cutting oil consumption between drains...in avoiding carbon-cleaning bills and expensive repairs. It's the premium oil that saves you money! Get a filling of Gulfpride today at the Sign of the Gulf Orange Disc. Gulf Oil Corporation... Gulf Refining Company, Pittsburgh, Pa.



Gulfpride Oil

The World's Finest Motor Oil

100% Pure Pennsylvania. At dealers' in Sealed Cans Only

REHEARSAL FOR STATE MEDICINE

By
SAMUEL LUBELL
and
WALTER EVERETT

ON OCTOBER thirteenth, reporters covering the Department of Agriculture were handed a three-page press release announcing the approval of plans to provide emergency medical care for 77,000 Farm Security Administration clients in North and South Dakota for two dollars a month.

The handout quoted Administrator W. W. Alexander as basing the programs on the experiences of the FSA with similar plans "in these and sixteen other states," and developing them because it was found that "good health is a necessary part of a family's rehabilitation." The FSA's maiden name, you will recall, was the Resettlement Administration.

Tucked away on the last page of the release was this single sentence: "The pooling of funds serves as a form of voluntary insurance against disaster for the patient and against unreasonable hardship for the doctor."

Thus was the paying public let in on the secret that, though Congress and the nation are still debating the prickly issue of state medicine, one Federal agency has jumped the legislative gun and instituted its own program of socialized medicine. While doctors and lawmakers and the millions who will be affected have been weighing the pros and cons of the question, the Farm Security Administration has been fostering a system of health insurance that today is guaranteeing or subsidizing the medical bills of perhaps half a million farmers, their wives and children—and occasionally visiting relatives.

Working with unaccustomed modesty and publicity shyness, the FSA, in effect, has staged a gigantic rehearsal for health insurance. It has brought together some 3000 country doctors and more than 100,000 families in twenty-odd states. It has given them a chance to show what would happen if a health-insurance law were enacted for them tomorrow. And the performance has been truly startling. Friends and foes of socialized medicine alike will be surprised.

Something like 150 of these health-insurance co-operatives have been peppered around the country in the last two to three years. Most of them cover between 100 and 200 households. Those in the

Dakotas have been caring for 58,000 families. As announced by Doctor Alexander, 19,000 more eligibles have been added, bringing the total to one half the farm, or about one fourth the entire population of the two states. Our newly elected Seventy-sixth Congress may be asked to decide whether this country wants some form of state medicine, but the Dakotas have it.

Rural Guinea Pigs

ALTHOUGH styled co-operatives, none of these groups whose tribe increases weekly really has any identity apart from the Farm Security Administration. They have been financed by FSA loans, organized and managed by the agency's personnel and their members drawn from FSA clients. These are farmers a shade or two above the relief level, with cash incomes of generally less than \$500, and who have been deemed worthy of rehabilitation.

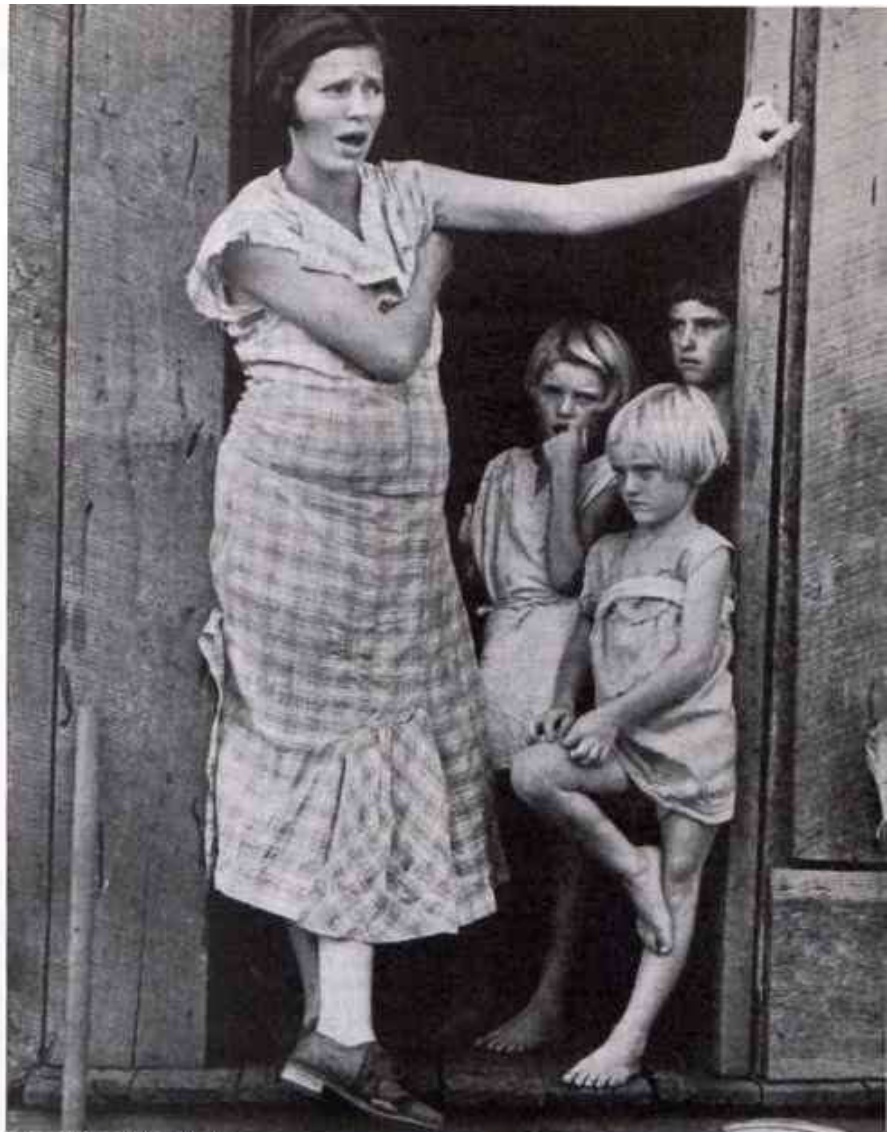
By the end of June, Dr. R. C. Williams, FSA's medical adviser, figures on having 150,000 of the half million Farm Security families in the country in his fold. In more optimistic moments he numbers his potential flock at 200,000 farmers, nearly 1,000,000 persons with their dependents. Averaging about twenty-five dollars per family, as he estimates, that

would run this year's tryout to between \$3,000,000 and \$5,000,000.

FSA health-insurance cards already have come to mean bread and butter to several hundred doctors, cake to more than 2000. They have been accepted by physicians 1000 miles away and in Canada. A single year's work with a submarginal Arkansas group is credited with the dubious boon of bumpering the baby crop by 50 per cent. Some co-operatives soon will celebrate their third birthday; others have been buried deep under heaps of unpaid bills. Identical plans are being hailed as the salvation of farmer and doctor, and denounced as "making chislers of both patient and physician."

As the biggest group-health venture ever undertaken in this country, fathered and financed by a Federal agency, what the FSA is doing affords a rare glimpse into what the future may bring. A fair review of what has happened should help in deciding whether health insurance is good or bad. That is the purpose of this article—to swing the spotlight on a performance that, until recently, was diligently shielded from public view; to present the facts, letting the morals point where they may.

That these health associations have been set up at all and in such abundance is astonishing in itself. For several years leaders (Continued on Page 82)



FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION PHOTO

"They don't know how to use a doctor; they've never had one." An Arkansas share-cropper's family.

The issue also featured a Norman Rockwell on the cover, a serialized Agatha Christie installment, an investigative long read about universal healthcare– illustrated with a Farm Security Administration (FSA) photograph by Arthur Rothstein in Arkansas about 1935—and several classic ads. New Yorkers Jo and Ed Hopper did not eat at home much, and when they did...beans were a big draw. The prominent full page color Heinz ad was on the inside cover of this issue. I do not know the illustrator of the Gulfpride Oil ad, but it's great. For more information [about the FSA continue reading here](#).

-by Catherine Ryan

www.cryanaid.com

Edward Hopper All Around Gloucester

**First published 8/26/2023 on the occasion of National Dog Day. *August 26 is International Dog Day.*

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