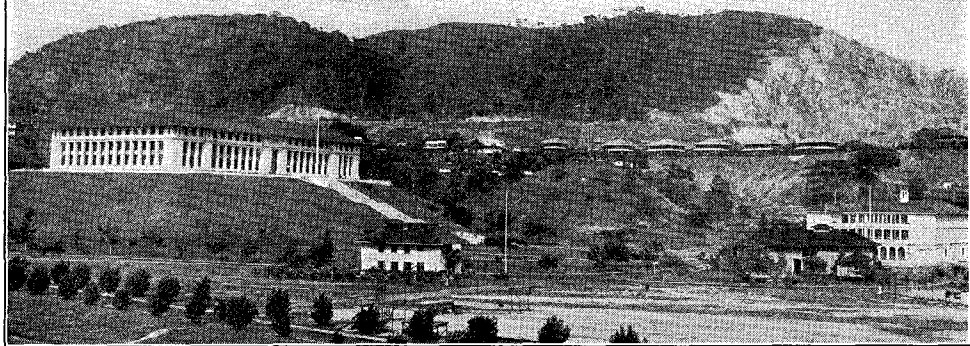
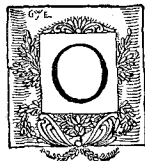


# Eight Years After

By HARRY A. FRANCK



The present capital of the Canal Zone, Administration Building. Balboa school-house on right



On the morning of June 18, 1912, I turned in my police-badge to the proper Canal Zone authorities and sailed away to South America.

It was entirely by accident that I found myself entering the same harbor of Colon again eight years later.

The changes that had taken place in the interim began to appear while we were still at sea. What had been an open roadstead when I last saw it was now a great placid lagoon inclosed behind a mammoth stone breakwater, through the narrow entrance to which we steamed slowly and dropped anchor. Pilot, doctor, and custom inspector, all as American as if their habitat were Sandy Hook, having performed their duties, several tugs took us in tow and jockeyed our great freighter in toward the wharves. The tugs seemed incongruous in the tropical sea we had been sailing all winter, on which steamers habitually trust not only to their own locomotion, but to the guidance of their own captains in port or out. But the wharves were still more amazing. In the place where there had been a few aged landing-places eight years before, great pier warehouses of reinforced concrete stretched out one after another into the edge of the immense harbor. These in turn sank into insignificance as we slipped up to the mighty coaling-station.

In the other ports of the Caribbean the coaling of a ship had meant hour after hour of singsonging negro men and women jogging in endless chain up and down a gang-plank, the very sun shrouded by the sooty pall that arose from their exertions. Here a score of electrically operated cars slipped noiselessly down upon us and poured several hundred tons of coal into our bunkers almost before we were aware that the operation had begun.

Cristobal, the American section of Colon, bore a certain resemblance to the town as I had last seen it; but they were resemblances like the few recognizable features of the boy who has grown to manhood during an absence of several years. Abutting the familiar streets of screened, clapboarded, green residences of Zone employees, there were new concrete buildings, and Cristobal had stretched far out around the curving beach on the farther side of the native town, covering with the ever-similar dwellings of "Zoners" ground that was a mere swamp and dumping-place in the days of the canal digging. Colon, however, separated by the width of a street from the American city that now completely walls it in, had changed but little. It was as clean as the powers of the American sanitary officers provided by the treaty could make it, and no cleaner; it had adopted those features of American business methods and architecture which

are indispensable to the attraction of American clients, without abating in the least the rather sour attitude toward the nation that made the ancient city the gateway between two oceans. Though they live side by side for many years, there seems to be no more likelihood of the American and his Latin neighbor finding a meeting-place than of two parallel lines intersecting.

Three daily passenger trains in each direction rumble away with American precision as in the days of construction; the first-class coaches, habitually, though not forcibly, confined to "gold employees" (which is a Zone aphorism for white Americans), still make up the Panama baggage- and mail-cars from the lower end of the train, and are separated by the grade coaches, where ebony complexions are the rule. The latter have changed from cane cross-seats to a long wooden bench along each wall; the sprightly bright yellow of the outer car walls has degenerated to the sooty drab common to our own railway trains; the coaches are seldom more than comfortably filled; otherwise there is little to remind the returning "Zoner" that ships now compete with the railroad, which once monopolized all traffic between the two oceans.

Out along a main shopping street of Colon, with its numerous displays of Panama hats that are made anywhere but in the country which gives them their name, past Monkey Hill, where many "Zoners" of the olden days have mingled with the reddish soil, to Gatun, with its permanent stone station just as we left it eight years ago, the "P. R. R." shows little sign of change except the evidence that it is soon to be electrified. From Gatun onward, however, the route has changed. That we once followed lies fathoms deep beneath the waters of Gatun Lake, around the incredibly far-reaching edge of which the trains now pass by what was known in our days as the "relocation." A few familiar names, Frijoles and Monte Lirio, for instance, give the rare stations a false similarity to those we knew; for they are the same in name only, their very sites being miles different. Not until the Chagres, with its fluvigraph and trestled bridge, emerges from the jungle does the old-timer recognize his sur-

roundings—and he loses them again almost instantly; for instead of crossing the canal at the entrance to the cut and discharging a host of travelers in the proud Zone metropolis and capital of Empire and Culebra, the train plunges on along the left bank. Paraiso, which to the "Zoner" has remained "P'reeso" through nearly two decades of American occupancy, has come into its own, prosperous and portly with its attachment to the main line; what the brakeman still boldly announces as "Peter M'Gill" is a now haughty and dignified town of considerable reinforced concrete construction and an increased importance which would seem to entitle it to its legitimate appellation of Pedro Miguel. But Miraflores! It, too, is still there, yet to those of us who knew the canal only in the building it is gone. The post-office where an old friend once penned the tropical tales that hindered messenger boys in the cold and dismal North from keeping their appointments, the police station once presided over by the traveling companion of an Andean journey, all Miraflores familiar to us of the digging generation, lie now forty feet beneath the man-built lake of the same name.

The tunnel through a mole-hill still forms the exit from the reconstructed town of the flowery name, however, and the jungle beyond, with its white lighthouse among the palms, has changed but little. But the familiar by no means keeps pace with the strange and new. Where the eye expects to fall upon the Corozal hotel, in which an appetite sharpened by sleuthing through the bush was often assuaged, there is nothing but the suggestion of a foundation; and where once stretched cosmopolitan laborers' quarters or open fields, are the long rows of stables and corrals of an outfit of cavalry. Still farther on, where the Pacific begins to break upon the horizon, the railway that once dashed straight across the flatlands to Panama City swings now in a wide circle that brings it into the bustling port and the new Zone capital; but here the changes are so great that they require more leisure than a train journey permits, if they are to be so much as noted.

Not even the canal-diggers of eight years ago would know the Pacific end of

the waterway should they come upon it unprepared. On the canal side of Ancon Hill, where a single shack stood in 1912, a populous city has grown up—a city with concrete houses and large office buildings, roofed with red tiles, a mammoth administration building that is instantly recognizable as a first cousin of those in Washington, with broad boulevards and excellently proportioned open spaces leading up to it. Ancon, once little more than a hamlet, and almost the entire collection of American residences at this end of the canal, has grown around the flanks of its hill until it has joined this new capital of Balboa Heights; down at the edge of the waterway, on ground that was once no ground at all, but merely the dumping-place for the hundreds of daily train-loads of dirt and rock that the giant steam shovels tore out of Culebra cut, is as teeming a port as that of Cristobal, with similar immense pier warehouses of reinforced concrete, another mammoth coaling-station, docks and shops in which anything may be done to ships which the mishaps of the sea require. Nor is that by any means all the change that may be seen from the crest of Ancon Hill. Just over the edge of it, somewhat above the level of the mere civilians who dwell below, is the haughty town of Quarry Heights, sacred to army officers and their still more socially immaculate families, on land that in our days was a mere place for gathering rock. Farther out many flat acres at the edge of the sea, most of which did not exist at all eight years ago, hold a military city with all that pertains thereto. In the digging days the several little islands off this Pacific entrance to the canal-to-be could be reached only by miniature ocean voyages, and were patrolled by a single Zone policeman known to his fellows as the "Admiral of the Pacific Fleet." To-day a great stone causeway bears a stream of trucks, automobiles, and motorcycles out to them, and elevators run up and down through the solid rock to carry the hundreds of uniformed defenders to their places in the hidden batteries that protect our rights to the "Big Ditch."

Panama City, like Colon, is readily recognizable as the place we left it in the year the cut was finished. But it shows

a few more signs of advancement, as befits the capital of a sovereign republic. The first rails of what optimists believed would some day be a street-car line were being laid through its main street when last I saw Panama, and pessimistic "Zoners" laughed sardonically at the idea of "the old Spig town" ever reaching that eminence of modernity. To-day electric tramways not only ply through all Panama City, but reach to Balboa, and, crossing the hunch-backed bridge across the "P. R. R.," scream on across the plain to the beach in the opposite direction, where "Zoners" still occasionally come of a Sunday; while other branches penetrate still farther into the country and make suburban towns of what were once mere isolated villages, roofed with thatch.

If the visitor to the Canal Zone of to-day has an even choice, he will probably do best to make his journey through the canal from the Atlantic Pacificward. It will probably mean early rising, for the pilots usually like to have the ship in their charge under way by six, and to see this accomplished one must join them in the new three-story custom-house by the first peep of dawn. As he strides away across the wharves to the launch that is to set him on board, the uniformed official ship's guide picks up and trails in his wake, like a magnet dragged through a heap of iron filings, a dozen or a score of negro helpers, West Indians with exceedingly rare exceptions. By the time these have followed him over the rail of the vessel waiting to be "put through," the latter is moving toward the interior apex of the placid lagoon harbor. The pilot stalks back and forth on the bridge with a conscious knowledge of outranking all on board, including the captain himself; his helpers sprawl about the main deck in the attitude of men who believe in making the most of leisure moments, even though their life is chiefly made up of them. Off to the left, beyond the coaling-station, opens up the beginning of what was to have been the French canal, wreckage of machinery brought by De Lesseps still rusting here and there along the jungle-clad bank. For a few short miles the real canal remains flat and featureless; an uninformed traveler would probably take it for a natural

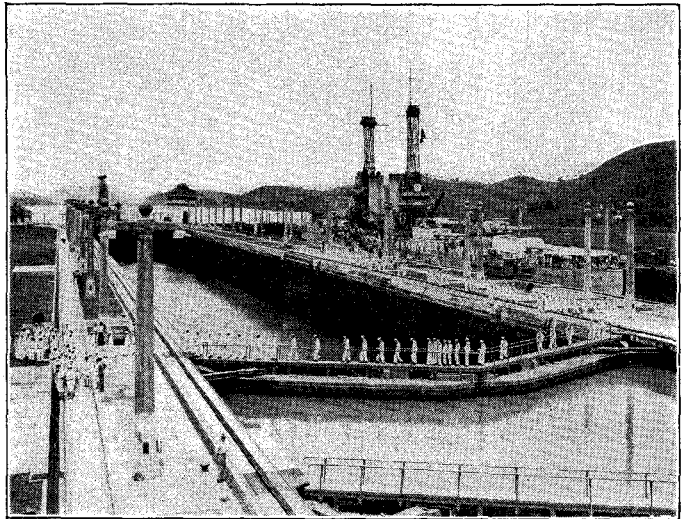


river entrance. Then all at once there stand forth on the horizon close ahead Gatun's three mammoth locks, rising one above the other like the steps of some superhuman stairway reaching to a gigantic throne unseen in the tropical morning mists.

An enormous arrow, red-lighted with electricity by night, indicates which of the two chambers the ship is to enter, by majestically descending from its upright position in one or the other direction. Massive stone walls, rising even higher than our main deck, soon shut us in. On their summits, on each side, men are efficiently, yet unhurriedly, going through their customary day's work. Other groups of negroes catch the lines thrown to them by those on the ship's deck, attach them with leisurely quickness to great steel hawsers, which are swiftly hauled on board and looped over bollards, fore, aft, and midships. These hawsers protrude from turrets on curious, double-headed electric engines, three of which attach themselves to the ship on each side and guide it with what seems the delicate touch of long experienced nurses through the operation that follows. "Gold employees" conduct the engines; a white American or two may be seen giving orders along the tops of the locks: with those exceptions the visible manipulators are the same happy-go-lucky blacks from the West Indies who once completely strewed the landscape of all the Zone.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the whole operation, especially to those of us who recall Gatun locks as mighty chasms filled with uproar and seeming chaos, with whole trains of cars and hiding-places for a dozen criminals, is the perfect clockwork with which it is carried out. By the time the hawsers have

been attached, the mammoth steel gates which, in the building, appeared capable of making the earth tremble at every slightest movement, have swung in together as noiselessly as velvet curtains, and water from a dozen unseen sources is silently welling up beneath us, raising the mighty ship imperceptibly yet swiftly, with the ease of the lifting of a pillow, until the deck that had been on a level with the lower lock-top looks down upon it as from the roof of a two-story building. From the bridge one may recognize the exact moment when the two levels of water coincide on opposite sides of the gate ahead, and at that same instant, as automatically as if its movements were ruled entirely by nature's forces, this swings silently open. A sound that is more nearly a gigantic purring than the usual discordant uproar of machinery arises from the six engines as they begin to move leisurely forward. One by one they reach the steep inclines between the different lock levels, only to march up



The Pacific fleet. The Texas in West chamber, Pedro Miguel Locks

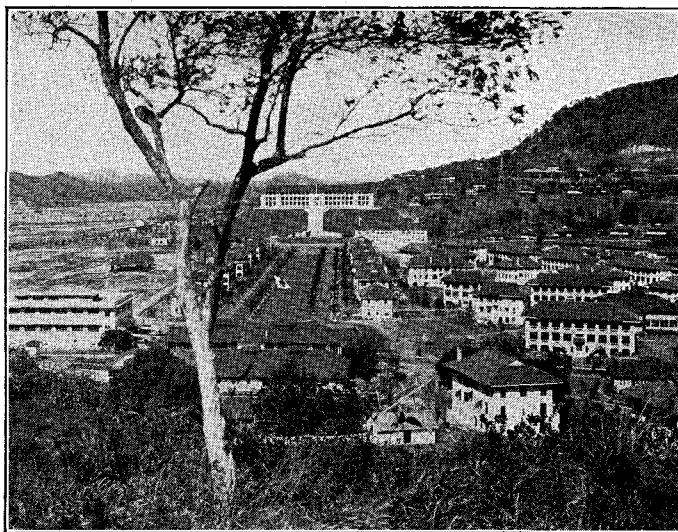
them as easily as a fly climbs a house wall, keeping their hawsers taut by a turn of the turrets during the operation.

Three times this is repeated before the temporary deck-hands cast off the steel lines, and the ship glides motionlessly away across Gatun Lake. To those of us who knew it as a mere pond, Gatun

Lake of to-day is incredibly mammoth. The mere statistical fact that it has risen, by the command of man, eighty-seven feet above the level which nature set for it, that it covers one hundred and sixty-four square miles of territory, reaching far outside the ten-mile strip of land granted us in perpetuity by the treaty, means less than the vast expanse of blue-gray, studded with dead tree-trunks

hundred steam-shovels snorted and strained, where a dozen railroad tracks carried as many long rock-bearing trains away to the present site of Balboa at brief intervals through eight hours a day, six days a week, for more than five years? No wonder the modern visitor to the canal strives in vain to picture the swarming cosmopolitan hordes which once filled the cut, feverishly toiling to rend a mountain chain in twain, or confesses his inability to account for the vast amount of time and money that was expended on so simple an undertaking.

Grass has grown down the sides of the canal walls to where they disappear beneath the water, or the bare rocks has become rusty and aged of appearance, as if they were mere natural cliffs. Here and there the hills towering sheer above excite a mild interest from the travel-



The Prado, Balboa, looking toward Administration Building from Sosa Hill

much farther than the eye can see in any direction, does to the senses.

For a space inland the lake is free from protruding trees, though these speckle the horizon on every hand; then it narrows and turns gradually to a merely wide waterway at the point where the Chagres pours its varying flood into it. A few more turns of the propellers, and the ship slides quietly into the beginning of the great cut.

If the rest of the Canal Zone of to-day is strangely leisurely, peaceful, and orderly to those of us who helped to make the dirt fly and went our way when the task showed signs of nearing completion, I know no language capable of expressing our astonishment at the change that has been wrought in the cut. Can it be possible that this placid ditch, flooded with blue water from the lake for a little distance, then with a muddy brown, is the same as that mighty chasm in which a

ers who know naught of the glorious days when Culebra was synonymous with mankind's greatest single undertaking, but it is such an interest as one might have for the pretty banks of some inland river.

Ships frequently tie up at the foot of the cliffs of Empire, for the slides are still troublesome just beyond, and two ocean liners cannot pass the narrower places at the same time. Out of the chasm ahead looms perhaps a Peruvian steamer, then an Australian, followed by one bearing the flag of Chile. Then from a signal station high on a jungled hill a cryptic sign is flashed, the shore lines are cast off by negroes who lounge out their lives in a little shanty at the foot of the cliff for this very purpose, and our ship glides on. Now the pilot is restless with attention; his eyes roam ceaselessly from one side of the bow to the other. His low-voiced yet distinct

commands, repeated by the wheelman to whom he addresses them, fall in constant swift succession.

It is the same spot where many steam-shovels were buried during the digging days, the spot which experienced "Zoners" of long ago grew accustomed to eye suspiciously as often as they passed along the bottom of the cut. Towering Gold Hill has fallen into the canal so continuously that it now slopes away at barely forty-five degrees, yet its loose soil continues to menace the world's commerce. A mammoth hose plays a constant stream of water upon it, washing the earth down into the canal, from which it is dredged and carried away. But even here the cut presents a peaceful scene compared with the uproar of digging days. Instead of a score of steam-shovels swaying on their rails as they bit great chunks out of the rocky hillsides

and tumbled them on to trains of flat cars, there are merely two amphibian dredgers, toiling day and night, to be sure, as long as there is important work to do, but at that leisurely, comfortable pace to which the Zone has settled down.

Beyond the slides, past which ships crawl cautiously with often not six inches to spare under their keels, the hills grow lower, and are here and there speckled with reddish cattle. For the opinion of "the Colonel," as the commander-in-chief of our digging days was invariably known, that the Zone could best form a protection for the canal by giving the jungle free play again, has been modified to the extent of pasturing on it stock enough from the acclimated herds of Colombia to supply not only all the Zone with meat, but eventually to provision all passing ships.

Down the single step at "Peter M'Gill," across Miraflores Lake, and

down two steps more to the level of the Pacific, the ship passes as calmly as it climbed at Gatun. High above the locks at all three stations stand great operating-towers that are veritable stone mansions. In them are miniature locks exact in the slightest detail, and the pressing of a button not merely opens one of the massive water-gates or draws into place a mammoth protective chain



The playground at Balboa

in the real locks below, but duplicates the action in the toy model before the operator's eye. It is easier for the layman to understand the automatic perfection with which even the largest ships are carried from ocean to ocean when he has seen how completely science has girdled round every step of the operation with protection against human fallibility.

If it has changed immensely in its material aspects in the eight years since the water was turned into the cut, the Canal Zone remains the same model community, a species of socialism under a benevolent despot, which it was under "the Colonel." Its employees, from the governor down to the last negro watchman who chooses to live on the Zone rather than over the line in more easy-going Panama or Colon, are looked after in every detail with a parental care. Here are no mad quests for a house to live in, no exactions of landlords, plumbers,



furniture-dealers; the employee reports for duty, mentions his family status, and receives a slip of paper with which he enters at once into full possession of the quarters to which his rank entitles him—quarters furnished down to the last salt-spoon and pillow-case. If a fuse burns out, he has only to notify the proper authority; there is no imploring of aid, no struggles with insolent, indifferent workmen, no bill to be paid at the end. His food, his clothing, every necessity of life he may have from the government commissary without fear of profiteers or commercial trickery, and he may pay for them with futures on his labor, tickets from a coupon-book which take the place of money. Every eventuality in the "Zoner's" life has been foreseen by his guardian, Uncle Sam; every accommodation which human foresight can devise protects him against trouble and annoyance. Buses, with responsible persons in charge, are even provided to gather up the children for school and bring them home again; so long as he remains in the inhabited portion of the Zone the "Zoner" can scarcely want for a drink of water without finding it ready for him within easy reach. Small wonder a few years of this life robs many a man and woman of the initiative and foresight necessary to front the cold, unofficial world.

The faults of the Zone are those you would expect under such conditions. With everything provided in abundance and payment seldom required, little care is taken of what belongs to no one in particular. Waste, natural to the average American and well-nigh universal among government employees, comes to be an unconscious failing among the most circumspect of "Zoners." For every electric light that is in actual use ten blaze on, often through the whole night; Zone towns light up the heavens above them even on evenings when almost the entire populace is known to be absent from them; lighthouses tucked away in the jungle wink solemnly all through the blazing tropical day; the free ice that uselessly melts away on the Zone is beyond computation. Those who should know assert that there are four persons employed wherever one is needed, that sinecures are sometimes

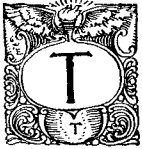
given to the favorites of politicians, or that higher officials have not the heart to drop unnecessary subordinates so long as it is no money out of their own pockets. But these things are seldom seen on the surface; they are probably minor faults which on the whole scarcely sum up to any great importance. After all, who minds the mere wasting of public funds in these days?

On the whole there is evidence that the Canal Zone is conducted in a manner as near perfection as can reasonably be expected of faulty humanity. Not the least of the good signs to us old-timers is to find the men whom we recognized as most capable back in the busy days now in positions of importance, irrespective of their political complexion or their possession of influential friends. When the right man can climb from the postmastership of an obscure Zone town to "civil governor" in a few years and by his own unaided efforts, or privates of the Zone police become chief custom officials merely because they are fitted for the task, there is not much reason to grumble at the slight flaws that may be picked in what is on the whole a smooth and well-oiled system.

The Canal Zone of to-day is to that of the noisy years of construction what a staid family man approaching middle age is to a venturesome young bachelor. It has settled down. Each day's task now is definitely laid out into the weeks ahead; there is no necessity for straining oneself to accomplish it, no adventure to be expected in attacking it. Life has calmed down to the routine beloved of the average man, and with increasing age many of the same men who were in their element in the adventurous days when the dirt flew fit equally well into the new order of things. Those who do not, those who will not see in graying hairs a sign for abating the adventurous ardor of youth, have flown to new scenes of energetic, pioneer endeavor; they have gone to build railroad in Alaska, to bring South American wildernesses into touch with civilization, to die in France. The old-timers who have remained have with rare exceptions fallen in with the new spirit of the Zone; they, too, have become staid married men, with only daily tasks awaiting them.

# The Rabbit-Cat

By ANNE BOSWORTH GREENE



HE long-promised yellow kitten was held up to me in the shaking hands of the old grandmother as I sat on my horse before the farm-house door.

"He ain't got no tail," she quavered apologetically. "Rabbit-cat, *we* call him. Awful' cunnin'. Won't scratch ye, will he?"

Tucking the fluffy mite inside the breast of my coat, I started cautiously down the hill, mindful of the antics of another small pussy once carried like this who had spit and clawed all the way home. The fuzzy head under my chin turned slightly now and then, gazing about with baby wonder; otherwise the rabbit-kitten never moved. He hung on tightly when my horse trotted or cantered, staring with a somewhat heightened intensity in his round, blue eyes; but the warm little body did not stir.

"You 're an angel, Bobby," I murmured, dismounting at our own farm-house. "Come in and meet your Uncle Tikey."

Tikey, otherwise Stripes, a great gray cat, was sitting placidly in the kitchen. He had been born on the farm, and though accustomed to his solitary state, was still a courteous creature and tolerant of other animals. If he met even a hen on the path to the barn, he would raise his tail in greeting, and turn out to let the lady pass! So I set the little new-comer confidently down upon the floor. At once an awful change shot through Tikey's sea-green eyes; he crouched, glaring hate at the yellow baby, then with a lashing tail stalked to the door and disappeared.

The next morning, however, as I stepped into the kitchen, there again, to my amazement, sat the big cat, blandly washing a milky mouth with a strong, white forearm, while behind him the

little rabbit-kitten hopped innocently about, actually patting the long and hitherto sacred tail. I went softly out, rejoiced at this transformation, and feeling sure that it must be due in part to small Bobby's unlikeness to his race. Had he been mere undiluted kitten, his Uncle Tikey, a tenacious beast, and evidently jealous of cat solitude on the farm, might not have endured the little fellow near him for months.

And Bobby continued to be engagingly different from his kind. His build was queer, being stubby and compact, with peggy fore legs and long, ungainly hind heels that lifted him higher in the rear than in front. His back line was straight, with no cat curves or slinkings, and at its end stood up a puffball of a stub, a fluffy, round thing like a cotton-tail's, carried high and triumphantly above his back. It was an ill moment indeed that made our Bobby's tail droop. As he trotted stubbly along on those peggy legs, he had the look of a plucky terrier; in fact, we could never decide whether he was more like a dog or a rabbit, for he developed noticeably dog-gish ways, answering his name instantly, and coming at a cordial trot if one snapped one's fingers at him.

"Boo-boo!" some one would call (his name had soon dwindled to this absurdity), and he would promptly look up, though there was little to be read in his pale, now lemon-colored eyes, monotonous and unemotional as a rabbit's. If he was absorbed in some mischief and did not immediately obey, "Boo-Boo!" was roared at him irately, and he came at once. When one shouted louder than usual, he often remarked, "Pr-oo?" inquiringly, and with every sign of pleasure as he trotted across the floor, although any ordinary feline would have fled in fright if thus addressed.

On summer mornings, as I opened the porch door to the fresh air and the