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Friends and Helpers

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FRIENDS AND HELPERS

COMPILED

BY

SARAH J. EDDY

1899

PREFACE.

The object of this book is to teach children to treat all living creatures with considerate kindness and to appreciate the services of man's helpers in the animal world.

In many homes this teaching is entirely neglected, and it is left for the school-teacher to arouse interest in the animals dependent upon us, and to encourage pity and compassion for their suffering.

Sir Arthur Helps says: "The great advancement of the world, throughout all ages, is to be measured by the increase of humanity and the decrease of cruelty."

Cruelty in any form is a species of savagery. Civilization can be brought about only by education. The savage does not know that he is a savage. The child does not realize that he is cruel, until he is shown the ways in which the lower animals suffer and are made miserable.

The thoughtless child makes the selfish man or woman, and selfishness lies at the root of crime.

"Evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart."

Children have tender hearts and quick sensibilities, but they sometimes lack imagination and sympathy through their ignorance of actual conditions. They are easily influenced by one whom they love and respect, and the teacher's power to make the world better by pointing out the great duty of humanity should find more scope than it has done in our educational systems.

"The humane movement is a broad one, reaching from humane treatment of animals on the one hand to peace with all nations on the other. It implies a step beyond animal's rights. It implies character building. Society first said that needless suffering should be prevented; society now says that children must not be permitted to cause pain because of the effect on the children themselves."

Mr. Frank M. Chapman has kindly written for the book the chapters on "Our Friends the Birds," "Feathered Travelers," "When the Birds Return," "Birds' Homes," and "The Robin."

Through the courtesy of Messrs. Houghton Mifflin Company several poems by Celia Thaxter and others have been used. The publications of the English Humanitarian League, especially the pamphlets by Mrs. Florence H. Suckling and some of the writings of Miss Edith Carrington, have proved helpful and suggestive. The compiler has had the assistance of Mrs. Charles A. Lane in editing and preparing material.

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PART I

ROVER AND OTHER STORIES

ROVER AND HIS FRIENDS.

WHY ROVER RAN AWAY.

One morning Rover was very hungry indeed. He had been going from place to place with his master, and now it was two long days since he had eaten a good dinner. His master was a poor tinker who traveled about the country and never stayed long in one place. Rover would have liked this if his master had been kind to him, but the dog was used only to blows and kicks.

Rover was a rough, shaggy dog, and his tail curled down under him in a way that showed he had been ill-treated. But he had good, faithful, brown eyes, and the drooping tail was always ready to wag at a kind word.

The tinker's breakfast was on the table. How good it smelt! Rover looked at it with longing eyes.

"Please give me a bit, master," said Rover. "I am so hungry!"

The tinker did not seem to hear. At last he said roughly: "Be still, Rover!"

Rover waited patiently for a few minutes, but his master had no thought of feeding him. At last Rover put out his long, red tongue and swept the meat and bread into his mouth.

[Illustration: Caption: "Can't you talk?" Small child kneeling in front of dog, while kitten looks on.]

Then the angry tinker struck the poor dog and spoke sharply to him. An hour later Rover had run away.

ROVER'S NEW HOME

It was a hot day in summer, and Rover stopped to drink some water out of a mud-puddle. How hungry and thirsty he was! He ran on for miles and miles. At last he saw a cottage with smoke coming out of the chimney. High hills were all around it, and a thick, dark wood was not far away. On the doorstep were two little children. When they saw the dog they shouted with delight.

"It is Rover!" cried Sandy. "It is Tommy Tinker's dog. Where have you come from, old fellow, and where is your master?"

It was plain that Rover was no stranger to them. He had been there with his master only the week before, and while Tinker Tom was mending the kettle, the children and the dog had made friends. The mother had given him a bone, and though some persons may forget a kindness, a dog never does. Rover could not answer Sandy's question. All he could do was to wag his tail faster than ever. The little girl put her arms about his shaggy neck.

"Poor doggie!" she said. "You shall have some of my supper."

HOW ROVER WAS CARED FOR.

When the children's mother saw Rover she brought him a large bowl of water, which he quickly lapped up. Then she gave him something to eat and made a soft bed for him in a corner of the room. She said: "Perhaps Tinker Tom may come for his dog, and we will keep him till then."

Rover hoped he would never come, but he could not say so. He curled himself up in his bed and, with a long sigh of happiness, went to sleep.

Rover was very happy in his new home. He had no wish to run away again. He had good brown bread to eat, which was better for him than white bread would have been. Sandy learned to make for

him a thick cake out of oatmeal, and sometimes he had a bone. Fortunately for the dog, Sandy's mother was too poor to be able to give him much meat. There was always a dish of fresh water ready for him, and a bit of cabbage with his food kept him well and strong.

Sandy would often talk to Rover, and the dog soon learned to understand what was said to him. He was delighted when Sandy said, "Would you like to go for a walk?" But Sandy never said this unless he was really going to take Rover out, or the dog soon would have learned that the boy did not always mean what he said.

One of the things that Rover liked best to do was to run after a large ball of wool which Sandy made on purpose for him.

[Illustration: Caption: "Speak for it!" Photograph of boy approx. 5 years old holding treat above head of dog sitting expectantly in front of him.]

Sandy often brushed and combed Rover, and this made his coat glossy and clean. One would hardly have recognized the rough, neglected dog in the pet of the household.

TINKER TOM COMES BACK

One day when Rover was playing with the children on the hill, he suddenly ran away as fast as he could go.

"Oh, Rover, come back, come back!" called little Jessie; but Rover kept on until he was lost to sight in the dark woods. In the distance he had seen a well-known figure. Tinker Tom was coming along the road with his pack on his back.

When the tinker came to the house, Sandy's mother told him about Rover.

"You may keep him and welcome," said the tinker, "if you will give me something to eat."

So a good, hot dinner was spread for him, and at last he went away with his pack on his back. When he had been gone a long time

and it was quite dark, Rover appeared. He came in looking pleased and proud, as if he had done some very wise thing. He said as plainly as he could, "Am I not a clever dog?"

You may be sure that Sandy and Jessie were glad to see him again and to know that now nobody could take him away.

ROVER LEARNS TO BE USEFUL.

Sandy's father was a poor man who had charge of a large flock of sheep. In summer he led them from one feeding-place to another over the high hills. Often he was away for many days at a time. In winter the sheep were kept near the cottage and fed with food which had been laid up for them in the autumn. The sheep did not belong to Sandy's father, but he took the best possible care of them.

[Illustration: Caption: "Rover learns to be useful." Group of sheep standing around under a tree. Several appear to be looking at something off to the right – Rover?]

One day when he came home from the hills he said: "We must not let Rover be idle all his life. He must learn to do something useful. I shall take him to the hills in the morning and teach him to look after the sheep. He will be a great help to me, and I will be a good master to him."

So the next morning Rover started off with his master, looking very proud and happy. At first it was hard to make the dog take care of the sheep in the right way. He thought it was great fun to run after them and bark at their heels, but he did not know when to bark and when to be quiet. However, he did his best to learn, and when the shepherd went home he said that Rover would make a very useful dog.