

RICHARD AND ROVER.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.



REVISED BY D. P. KIDDER.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY LANE & TIPPETT,
FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION OF THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 200 MULBERRY-ST.

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“WHAT a noisy, savage dog!” said Richard; “he wants a good beating to quiet him; do you not think so, sir?”

Richard was walking with a gentleman who had asked him to spend the day at his house. They were now at the gate of a farm-yard, and there

was a fine, handsome dog, chained to a kennel, barking and trying to get loose.

Mr. Wilkins answered Richard's question, saying, "Why, no, my boy; I do not think that a beating is what he wants."

"Will anything else quiet him, sir, and teach him better-tempered ways?"

"You see," said Mr. Wilkins, "there are some rude boys just opposite him, taking up stones and making believe to throw them at him; they are clapping their hands, crying, Hist! and doing all they can to provoke the dog. If they were sent away, I believe he would not bark any longer. Then, as to his temper, if it is so bad as you think, I should not expect to mend it by beating him. A little freedom and play would do more a great deal than ill usage."

"I should not like to be near if he were free," said Richard.

"I am sorry for that, because I am going to beg to have him let loose."

"O, sir, pray, sir, do not!" cried Richard, in a great fright.

"Why, you may have my stick to beat him with, if he attacks you," said Mr. Wilkins.

"O, I dare not beat him if he were unchained!"

Mr. Wilkins smiled, but said nothing. Presently the farmer came up, and the old gentleman asked him to drive off the boys who were teasing Rover, and to let him loose, that he might walk with him in the fields. The farmer soon sent the boys off, by telling them he was going to unchain the dog; and when they were at a safe distance—and I promise you they ran fast enough to get out of the way, though there were four of them

—he went and took off Rover's collar.

But you should have seen Richard then. He shook all over; and when the dog came running and bounding right up to where they stood, he got behind Mr. Wilkins, and kept fast hold of his coat, and looked as if he expected to be eaten up in a minute. All the while Rover was jumping and fawning upon the good old man, licking his hands, and barking very merrily. He took no notice of Richard, who at last peeped out; and when he saw the dog's long tail wagging, and his bright eyes so full of joy and love, he took courage to stand out again by his friend's side. Mr. Wilkins patted Rover, and said, "Poor fellow! a holyday is a great treat to him, and he loves me dearly because I often call here to give him a run. Now, Richard, do you want my stick?"

"No, sir," said Richard, stoutly ;
"I am not at all afraid."

"Well, then, here, Rover, catch it, sir ;" and he threw his stick to a good distance. Away bounded the dog after it, and brought it back in his mouth, playing all the way in the greatest delight.

"O, how good-tempered he is!" said Richard. "May I throw it, sir?"

"Yes ; bid him give it to you ;" and Rover did as he was told ; and you would have laughed if you had seen what a game of play there was between the two. Mr. Wilkins was quite happy to walk on alone, and watch them sporting about, all round his path, over the green grass, and jumping from bank to bank.

All on a sudden he was surprised to hear an angry growl, and hastening on to where Rover stood, with his hair bristling, and his eyes fiery red,

what should he see but the four boys who had been teasing him at home! They were much frightened, and crowded together against the bank, for they were in a hollow, and could not get away; and the dog really seemed ready to spring on them.

Mr. Wilkins called Rover off. "Come, sir, come away! Rover, I say, leave off, and come here!" and the dog, after giving another very sharp growl at his enemies, obeyed him. But Richard felt a little shy, and kept close to his friend, as if afraid that Rover knew of his old plan of a beating for him.

"Now, my fine fellow, hie, fetch it!" said Mr. Wilkins, throwing his stick again; and Rover was all joy and frolic as before; and Richard forgot his fears, and had another game with him. Next, they came to a river, and when the stick was thrown into the water, Rover dived, and swam,

and brought it out, to Richard's great delight.



"I dare say," said he, "if I fell into the river he would bring me out, too."

"No doubt he would. God has given him both the power and the will to do so. Many a life has been saved by such means."

So they went on talking, and at last came back to the farm-yard, when Rover's master thanked Mr. Wilkins, and tied up his dog. Poor fellow! he looked very sorrowful while the collar was locked; but he licked his master's hand; and when he got a pat on the head from him, and a kind word, he seemed quite happy again. Richard stroked him many times, and was not willing to leave him; but it was getting late, and they must go home to dinner.

As they went through a field, they saw a pretty sight—a fine, well-grown lamb, with a broad tape tied round its neck, galloping along so fast that the little girl who held the string was forced to run to keep pace with him. Another little girl was trying to stop him, stretching out her hands, and calling him Little Beauty. Richard wished to play with him, too; and when they had passed, he said,

"How different the little lamb looks to what Rover did when I first saw him; yet both are as merry and good-tempered as can be."

"There is some difference," said Mr. Wilkins; "nothing would make the lamb look so fierce, or be so dangerous, as Rover when he met the four boys just now. A dog is strong, and bold, and brave, able and willing to fight his own battles; a sheep is very weak and fearful. It always runs away from danger, and never thinks of revenging itself, but looks for protection to others. In this the sheep is like a true child of God, who never thinks that he can stand alone against any danger or evil, but always looks to a stronger power to guide and guard him. You know the dog is often named in Scripture as being most unlike what God's people ought to be; and this, I think, is the reason."

“God made all the animals,” said Richard; “and he said that all that he had made was good.”

“All, all is good, my dear boy, as it comes from the great Creator’s hand.

“Man, alas! is no longer good, because he is not now as God made him, but he is like sinful Adam after he disobeyed and fell. The same sin brought a great deal of mischief and misery among the other creatures, as we see every day; but man has still the power to soften much of what is savage among them, and to make their little lives much happier than they usually are. See the difference between the boys who were teasing and provoking a poor dog because he was chained up, and those girls who are taking such care not to hurt or to frighten the lamb. Do you not think if the little girls had a dog to bring up, it would lead a happy

life, and be a good-tempered, gentle creature?"

"Yes, sir. Rover was like a lamb to you."

"But if I had gone and beaten him for barking at the rude boys, what would have happened?"

"I suppose, sir, Rover would have sneaked into his kennel, and always have hated the sight of you and your stick."

"Just so; instead of which, my stick is his favorite plaything. Yet you saw how well he obeyed me, and gave up revenging himself on the boys when they were really in his power, because I ordered him to do so."

"Did you ever beat him, sir?"

"Never."

"Then it must have been because he loves you so much."

"Yes, and fears me too; for there is no fear like that which comes from

love. "Suppose there was a person whom you knew to be very severe and harsh; and you wanted to do a thing that he would punish you for, you would say to yourself, 'If I do it, he will beat me.' But suppose your dear papa and mamma, whom I know you love very tenderly, wished you to do that very thing, and you said to yourself, 'If I do not do it, papa and mamma will be grieved; and if I do it, it will make them happy;' what do you think you would choose?"

"I would do it directly, sir. I would rather have ten beatings than grieve my dear parents."

"That shows how much stronger love is than fear; it shows that the fear of hurting those whom you love is much stronger than the fear of being punished. Now I want you to understand by this what the apostle Paul means when he says, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' I want you

to feel, my dear boy, that the way to fear God, and to obey him, is to think very much of his great and wonderful love to you. He has not dealt with you according to your sins, by casting you into the pit of fire; but he has given a great price for your soul, even the precious blood of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross that we might live for ever, and rose again from the dead, to prove that the great price was paid, and that God's justice was satisfied. Instead of severely ruling you, the good God offers to give you the Holy Spirit, to teach you all truth, and to lead you in the right way. Besides this, he gives you health, and friends, and all the blessings of life. O let this great love be ever present to your thoughts, and it will make you so love him, that you will think nothing so grievous as the sin of disobeying him who has so loved you, and every day gives you

fresh proofs that his mercy endureth
for ever!

“Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With light and comfort from above;
Be thou our Guardian, thou our Guide;
O'er every thought and step preside.

“To us the light of truth display,
And make us know and choose the way;
Plant holy fear in every heart,
That we from God may ne'er depart.

“Lead us to holiness—the road
Which we must take to dwell with God;
Lead us to Christ—the living way,
Nor let us from his pastures stray:

“Lead us to God—our final rest—
To be with him for ever blest;
Lead us to heaven, its bliss to share—
Fullness of joy for ever there.”

THE END.

William Thackeray

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