



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

THE FURTHER
ADVENTURES OF LAD

Albert Payson Terhune

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

Further Adventures of Lad

ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE



This edition published 2023
by Living Book Press
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ISBN: 978-1-922919-94-6 (hardcover)
978-1-922919-93-9 (softcover)

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MY BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF

LAN

THOROUGHbred IN BODY AND SOUL

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FOREWORD

Sunnybank Lad won a million friends through my book, "*LAD: A DOG*"; and through the Lad-anecdotes in "Buff: A Collie." These books themselves were in no sense great. But Laddie was great in every sense; and his life-story could not be marred, past interest, by my clumsy way of telling it.

People have written in gratifying numbers asking for more stories about Lad. More than seventeen hundred visitors have come all the way to Sunnybank to see his grave. So I wrote the collection of tales which are now included in "Further Adventures of Lad." Most of them appeared, in condensed form, in the Ladies' Home Journal.

Very much, I hope you may like them.

ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

"Sunnybank"
Pompton Lakes,
New Jersey

CHAPTER I.
THE COMING OF LAD

In the mile-away village of Hampton, there had been a veritable epidemic of burglaries—ranging from the theft of a brand-new ash-can from the steps of the Methodist chapel to the ravaging of Mrs. Blauvelt's whole lineful of clothes, on a washday dusk.

Up the Valley and down it, from Tuxedo to Ridgewood, there had been a half-score robberies of a very different order—depredations wrought, manifestly, by professionals; thieves whose motor cars served the twentieth century purpose of such historic steeds as Dick Turpin's Black Bess and Jack Shepard's Ranter. These thefts were in the line of jewelry and the like; and were as daringly wrought as were the modest local operators' raids on ash-can and laundry.

It is the easiest thing in the world to stir humankind's ever-tense burglar-nerves into hysterical jangling. In house after house, for miles of the peaceful North Jersey region, old pistols were cleaned and loaded; window fastenings and doorlocks were inspected and new hiding-places found for portable family treasures.

Across the lake from the village, and down the Valley from a dozen country homes, seeped the tide of precautions. And it swirled at last around the Place,—a thirty-acre homestead, isolated and sweet, whose grounds ran from highway to lake; and whose wistaria-clad gray house drowsed among big oaks midway between road and water; a furlong or more distant from either.

The Place's family dog,—a pointer,—had died, rich in years and honor. And the new peril of burglary made it highly needful to choose a successor for him.

The Master talked of buying a whalebone-and-steel-and-snow bull terrier, or a more formidable if more greedy Great Dane. But

the Mistress wanted a collie. So they compromised by getting the collie.

He reached the Place in a crampy and smelly crate; preceded by a long envelope containing an intricate and imposing pedigree. The burglary-preventing problem seemed solved.

But when the crate was opened and its occupant stepped gravely forth, on the Place's veranda, the problem was revived.

All the Master and the Mistress had known about the newcomer,—apart from his price and lofty lineage,—was that his breeder had named him "Lad."

From these meager facts they had somehow built up a picture of a huge and grimly ferocious animal that should be a terror to all intruders and that might in time be induced to make friends with the Place's vouched-for occupants. In view of this, they had had a stout kennel made and to it they had affixed with double staples a chain strong enough to restrain a bull.

(It may as well be said here that never in all the sixteen years of his beautiful life did Lad occupy that or any other kennel nor wear that or any other chain.)

Even the crate which brought the new dog to the Place failed somehow to destroy the illusion of size and fierceness. But, the moment the crate door was opened the delusion was wrecked by Lad himself.

Out on to the porch he walked. The ramshackle crate behind him had a ridiculous air of a chrysalis from which some bright thing had departed. For a shaft of sunlight was shimmering athwart the veranda floor. And into the middle of the warm bar of radiance Laddie stepped,—and stood.

His fluffy puppy-coat of wavy mahogany-and-white caught a million sunbeams, reflecting them back in tawny-orange glints and in a dazzle as of snow. His forepaws were absurdly small, even for a puppy's. Above them the ridging of the stocky leg-bones gave as clear promise of mighty size and strength as did the amazingly deep little chest and square shoulders.

Here one day would stand a giant among dogs, powerful as a timber-wolf, lithe as a cat, as dangerous to foes as an angry tiger; a dog without fear or treachery; a dog of uncanny brain and great lovingly loyal heart and, withal, a dancing sense of fun. A dog with a soul.

All this, any canine physiologist might have read from the compact frame, the proud head-carriage, the smolder in the deep-set sorrowful dark eyes. To the casual observer, he was but a beautiful and appealing and wonderfully cuddleable bunch of puppyhood.

Lad's dark eyes swept the porch, the soft swelling green of the lawn, the flash of fire-blue lake among the trees below. Then, he deigned to look at the group of humans at one side of him. Gravely, impersonally, he surveyed them; not at all cowed or strange in his new surroundings; courteously inquisitive as to the twist of luck that had set him down here and as to the people who, presumably, were to be his future companions.

Perhaps the stout little heart quivered just a bit, if memory went back to his home kennel and to the rowdy throng of brothers and sisters and most of all, to the soft furry mother against whose side he had nestled every night since he was born. But if so, Lad was too valiant to show homesickness by so much as a whimper. And, assuredly, this House of Peace was infinitely better than the miserable crate wherein he had spent twenty horrible and jouncing and smelly and noisy hours.

From one to another of the group strayed the level sorrowful gaze. After the swift inspection, Laddie's eyes rested again on the Mistress. For an instant, he stood, looking at her, in that mildly polite curiosity which held no hint of personal interest.

Then, all at once, his plummy tail began to wave. Into his sad eyes sprang a flicker of warm friendliness. Unbidden—oblivious of everyone else he trotted across to where the Mistress sat. He put one tiny white paw in her lap; and stood thus, looking up lovingly into her face, tail awag, eyes shining.

"There's no question whose dog he's going to be," laughed the Master. "He's elected you,—by acclamation."

The Mistress caught up into her arms the halfgrown youngster, petting his silken head, running her white fingers through his shining mahogany coat; making crooning little friendly noises to him.

Lad forgot he was a dignified and stately pocket-edition of a collie. Under this spell, he changed in a second to an excessively loving and nestling and adoring puppy.

"Just the same," interposed the Master, "we've been stung. I wanted a dog to guard the Place and to be a menace to burglars and all that sort of thing. And they've sent us a Teddy-Bear. I think I'll ship him back and get a grown one. What sort of use is—?"

"He is going to be all those things," eagerly prophesied the Mistress. "And a hundred more. See how he loves to have me pet him! And, look—he's learned, already, to shake hands; and—"

"Fine!" applauded the Master. "So when it comes our turn to be visited by this motor-Raffles, the puppy will shake hands with him, and register love of petting; and the burly marauder will be so touched by Lad's friendliness that he'll not only spare our house but lead an upright life ever after. I—"

"Don't send him back!" she pleaded. "He'll grow up, soon, and—"

"And if only the courteous burglars will wait till he's a couple of years old," suggested the Master, "he—"

Set gently on the floor by the Mistress, Laddie had crossed to where the Master stood. The man, glancing down, met the puppy's gaze. For an instant he scowled at the miniature watchdog, so ludicrously different from the ferocious brute he had expected. Then,—for some queer reason,—he stooped and ran his hand roughly over the tawny coat, letting it rest at last on the shapely head that did not flinch or wriggle at his touch.

"All right," he decreed. "Let him stay. He'll be an amusing pet for you, anyhow. And his eye has the true thoroughbred expression,—'the look of eagles.' He may amount to something after all. Let him stay. We'll take a chance on burglars."

So it was that Lad came to the Place. So it was that he demanded and received due welcome which was ever Lad's way. The Master

had been right about the pup's proving "an amusing pet," for the Mistress. From that first hour, Lad was never willingly out of her sight. He had adopted her. The Master, too,—in only a little lesser wholeheartedness,—he adopted. Toward the rest of the world, from the first, he was friendly but more or less indifferent.

Almost at once, his owners noted an odd trait in the dog's nature. He would of course get into any or all of the thousand mischief-scrapes which are the heritage of puppies. But, a single reproof was enough to cure him forever of the particular form of mischief which had just been chidden. He was one of those rare dogs that learn the Law by instinct; and that remember for all time a command or a prohibition once given them.

For example:—On his second day at the Place, he made a furious rush at a neurotic mother hen and her golden convoy of chicks. The Mistress,—luckily for all concerned,—was within call. At her sharp summons the puppy wheeled, midway in his charge, and trotted back to her. Severely, yet trying not to laugh at his worried aspect, she scolded Lad for his misdeed.

An hour later, as Lad was scampering ahead of her, past the stables, they rounded a corner and came flush upon the same nerve-wrecked hen and her brood. Lad halted in his scamper, with a suddenness that made him skid. Then, walking as though on eggs, he made an idiotically wide circle about the feathered dam and her silly chicks. Never thereafter did he assail any of the Place's fowls.

It was the same, when he sprang up merrily at a line of laundry, flapping in alluring invitation from the drying ground lines. A single word of rebuke,—and thenceforth the family wash was safe from him.

And so on with the myriad perplexing "Don'ts" which spatter the career of a fun-loving collie pup. Versed in the patience-fraying ways of pups in general, the Mistress and the Master marveled and bragged and praised.

All day and every day, life was a delight to the little dog. He had friends everywhere, willing to romp with him. He had squirrels to

chase, among the oaks. He had the lake to splash ecstatically in: He had all he wanted to eat; and he had all the petting his hungry little heart could crave.

He was even allowed, with certain restrictions, to come into the mysterious house itself. Nor, after one defiant bark at a leopard-skin rug, did he molest anything therein. In the house, too, he found a genuine cave:—a wonderful place to lie and watch the world at large, and to stay cool in and to pretend he was a wolf. The cave was the deep space beneath the piano in the music room. It seemed to have a peculiar charm to Lad. To the end of his days, by the way, this cave was his chosen resting place. Nor, in his lifetime, did any other dog set foot therein.

So much for “all day and every day.” But the nights were different.

Lad hated the nights. In the first place, everybody went to bed and left him alone. In the second, his hard-hearted owners made him sleep on a fluffy rug in a corner of the veranda instead of in his delectable piano-cave. Moreover, there was no food at night. And there was nobody to play with or to go for walks with or to listen to. There was nothing but gloom and silence and dullness. When a puppy takes fifty cat-naps in the course of the day, he cannot always be expected to sleep the night through. It is too much to ask. And Lad’s waking hours at night were times of desolation and of utter boredom. True, he might have consoled himself, as does many a lesser pup, with voicing his woes in a series of melancholy howls. That, in time, would have drawn plenty of human attention to the lonely youngster; even if the attention were not wholly flattering.

But Lad did not belong to the howling type. When he was unhappy, he waxed silent. And his sorrowful eyes took on a deeper woe. By the way, if there is anything more sorrowful than the eyes of a collie pup that has never known sorrow, I have yet to see it.

No, Lad could not howl. And he could not hunt for squirrels. For these enemies of his were not content with the unsportsmanliness of climbing out of his reach in the daytime, when he chased them; but they added to their sins by joining the rest of the world,—except

Lad,—in sleeping all night. Even the lake that was so friendly by day was a chilly and forbidding playfellow on the cool North Jersey nights.

There was nothing for a poor lonely pup to do but stretch out on his rug and stare in unhappy silence up the driveway, in the impossible hope that someone might happen along through the darkness to play with him.

At such an hour and in such lonesomeness, Lad would gladly have tossed aside all prejudices of caste,—and all his natural dislikes, and would have frolicked in mad joy with the veriest stranger. Anything was better than this drear solitude throughout the million hours before the first of the maids should be stirring or the first of the farmhands report for work. Yes, night was a disgusting time; and it had not one single redeeming trait for the puppy.

Lad was not even consoled by the knowledge that he was guarding the slumbrous house. He was not guarding it. He had not the very remotest idea what it meant to be a watchdog. In all his five months he had never learned that there is unfriendliness in the world; or that there is anything to guard a house against.

True, it was instinctive with him to bark when People came down the drive, or appeared at the gates without warning. But more than once the Master had bidden him be silent when a rackety Puppy salvo of barking had broken in on the arrival of some guest. And Lad was still in perplexed doubt as to whether barking was something forbidden or merely limited.

One night,—a solemn, black, breathless August night, when half-visible heat lightning turned the murk of the western horizon to pulses of dirty sulphur, Lad awoke from a fitful dream of chasing squirrels which had never learned to climb.

He sat up on his rug, blinking around through the gloom in the half hope that some of those non-climbing squirrels might still be in sight. As they were not, he sighed unhappily and prepared to lay his classic young head back again on the rug for another spell of night-shortening sleep.

But, before his head could touch the rug, he reared it and half of his small body from the floor and focused his nearsighted eyes on the driveway. At the same time, his tail began to wag a thumping welcome.

Now, by day, a dog cannot see so far nor so clearly as can a human. But by night,—for comparatively short distances,—he can see much better than can his master. By day or by darkness, his keen hearing and keener scent make up for all defects of eyesight.

And now three of Lad's senses told him he was no longer alone in his tedious vigil. Down the drive, moving with amusing slowness and silence, a man was coming. He was on foot. And he was fairly well dressed. Dogs, the foremost snobs in creation,—are quick to note the difference between a well-clad and a disreputable stranger.

Here unquestionably was a visitor:—some such man as so often came to the Place and paid such flattering attention to the puppy. No longer need Lad be bored by the solitude of this particular night. Someone was coming towards the house;—and carrying a small bag under his arm. Someone to make friends with. Lad was very happy.

Deep in his throat a welcoming bark was born. But he stilled it. Once, when he had barked at the approach of a stranger, the stranger had gone away. If this stranger were to go away, all the night's fun would go with him. Also, no later than yesterday, the Master had scolded Lad for barking at a man who had called. Wherefore the dog held his peace.

Getting to his feet and stretching himself, fore and aft, in true collie fashion, the pup gamboled up the drive to meet the visitor.

The man was feeling his way through the pitch darkness, groping cautiously; halting once or twice for a smolder of lightning to silhouette the house he was nearing. In a wooded lane, a quarter mile away, his lightless motor car waited.

Lad trotted up to him, the tiny white feet noiseless in the soft dust of the drive. The man did not see him, but passed so close to the dog's hospitably upthrust nose that he all but touched it.

Only slightly rebuffed at such chill lack of cordiality, Lad fell in behind him, tail awag, and followed him to the porch. When the guest should ring the bell, the Master or one of the maids would come to the door. There would be lights and talk; and perhaps Laddie himself might be allowed to slip in to his beloved cave.

But the man did not ring. He did not stop at the door at all. On tiptoe he skirted the veranda to the old-fashioned bay windows at the south side of the living room; windows with catches as old-fashioned and as simple to open as themselves.

Lad padded along, a pace or so to the rear;—still hopeful of being petted or perhaps even romped with. The man gave a faint but promising sign of intent to romp, by swinging his small and very shiny brown bag to and fro as he walked. Thus ever did the Master swing Lad's precious canton flannel doll before throwing it for him to retrieve. Lad made a tentative snap at the bag, his tail wagging harder than ever. But he missed it. And, in another moment the man stopped swinging the bag and tucked it under his arm again as he began to mumble with a bit of steel.

There was the very faintest of clicks. Then, noiselessly the window slid upward. A second fumbling sent the wooden inside shutters ajar. The man worked with no uncertainty. Ever since his visit to the Place, a week earlier, behind the aegis of a big and bright and newly forged telephone-inspector badge, he had carried in his trained memory the location of windows and of obstructing furniture and of the primitive small safe in the living room wall, with its pitifully pickable lock;—the safe wherein the Place's few bits of valuable jewelry and other compact treasures reposed at night.

Lad was tempted to follow the creeping body and the fascinatingly swinging bag indoors. But his one effort to enter the house,—with muddy paws,—by way of an open window, had been rebuked by the Lawgivers. He had been led to understand that really well-bred little dogs come in by way of the door; and then only on permission.

So he waited, doubtfully, at the veranda edge; in the hope that his new friend might reappear or that the Master might perhaps

want to show off his pup to the caller, as so often the Master was wont to do.

Head cocked to one side, tulip ears alert, Laddie stood listening. To the keenest human ears the thief's soft progress across the wide living room to the wall-safe would have been all but inaudible. But Lad could follow every phase of it; the cautious skirting of each chair; the hesitant pause as a bit of ancient furniture creaked; the halt in front of the safe; the queer grinding noise, muffled but persevering, at the lock; then the faint creak of the swinging iron door, and the deft groping of fingers.

Soon, the man started back toward the pale oblong of gloom which marked the window's outlines from the surrounding black. Lad's tail began to wag again. Apparently, this eccentric person was coming out, after all, to keep him company. Now, the man was kneeling on the window-seat. Now, in gingerly fashion, he reached forward and set the small bag down on the veranda; before negotiating the climb across the broad seat,—a climb that might well call for the use of both his hands.

Lad was entranced. Here was a game he understood. Thus, more than once, had the Mistress tossed out to him his flannel doll, as he had stood in pathetic invitation on the porch, looking in at her as she read or talked. She had laughed at his wild tossings and other maltreatments of the limp doll. He had felt he was scoring a real hit. And this hit he decided to repeat.

Snatching up the swollen little satchel, almost before it left the intruder's hand, Lad shook it, joyously, reveling in the faint clink and jingle of the contents. He backed playfully away; the bag-handle swinging in his jaws. Crouching low, he wagged his tail in ardent invitation to the stranger to chase him and get back the satchel. Thus did the Master romp with Lad, when the flannel doll was the prize of their game. And Lad loved such races.

Yes, the stranger was accepting the invitation. The moment he had crawled out on the veranda he reached down for the bag. As it was not where he thought he had left it, he swung his groping hand forward in a half-circle, his fingers sweeping the floor.

Make that enticing motion, directly in front of a playful collie

pup; specially if he has something he doesn't want you to take from him;—and watch the effect.

Instantly, Lad was athrill with the spirit of the game. In one scurrying backward jump, he was off the veranda and on the lawn, tail vibrating, eyes dancing; satchel held tantalizingly towards its would-be possessor.

The light sound of his body touching ground reached the man. Reasoning that the sweep of his own arm had somehow knocked the bag off the porch, he ventured off the edge of the veranda and flashed a swathed ray of his pocket light along the ground in search of it.

The flashlight's lens was cleverly muffled; in a way to give forth but a single subdued finger of illumination. That one brief glimmer was enough to show the thief a right impossible sight. The glow struck answering lights from the polished sides of the brown bag. The bag was hanging in air, some six inches above the grass and perhaps five feet away from him. Then he saw it swig frivolously to one side and vanish in the night.

The astonished man had seen more. Feeble was the flashlight's shrouded ray, too feeble to outline against the night the small dark body behind the shining brown bag. But that same ray caught and reflected back to the incredulous beholder two splashes of pale fire;—glints from a pair of deep-set collie-eyes.

As the bag disappeared, the eerie fire-points were gone. The thief all but dropped his flashlight. He gaped in nervous dread; and sought vainly to account for the witch-work he had witnessed. He had plenty of nerve. He had plenty of experience along his chosen line of endeavor. But, while a crook may control his nerve, he cannot make it phlegmatic or steady. Always, he must be conscious of holding it in check, as a clever driver checks and steadies and keeps in subjection a plunging horse. Let the vigilance slacken, and there is a runaway.

Now this particular marauder had long ago keyed his nerve to the chance of interruption from some gun-brandishing householder;

and to the possible pursuit of police; and to the need of fighting or of fleeing. But all his preparations had not taken into account this newest emergency. He had not steeled himself to watch unmoved the gliding away of a treasure-satchel, apparently moving of its own will; nor the shimmer of two greenish sparks in the air just above it. And, for an instant, the man had to battle against a craven desire to bolt.

Lad, meanwhile, was having a beautiful time. Sincerely, he appreciated the playful grab his nocturnal friend had made in his general direction. Lad had countered this, by frisking away for another five or six feet, and then wheeling about to face once more his playfellow and to await the next move in the blithe gambol. The pup could see tolerably well, in the darkness quite well enough to play the game his guest had devised. And of course, he had no way of knowing that the man could not see equally well.

Shaking off his momentary terror, the thief once more pressed the button of his flashlight; swinging the torch in a swift semicircle and extinguishing it at once; lest the dim glow be seen by any wakeful member of the family.

That one quick sweep revealed to his gaze the shiny brown bag a half-dozen feet ahead of him, still swinging several inches above ground. He flung himself forward at it; refusing to believe he also saw that queer double glow of pale light just above. He dived for the satchel with the speed and the accuracy of a football tackle. And that was all the good it did him.

Perhaps there is something in nature more agile and dismayingly elusive than a romping young collie. But that "something" is not a mortal man. As the thief sprang, Lad sprang in unison with him; darting to the left and a yard or so backward. He came to an expectant standstill once more; his tail wildly vibrating, his entire furry body tingling with the glad excitement of the game. This sportive visitor of his was a veritable godsend. If only he could be coaxed into coming to play with him every night—!

But presently he noted that the other seemed to have wearied

of the game. After plunging through the air and landing on all fours with his grasping hands closing on nothingness, the man had remained thus, as if dazed, for a second or so. Then he had felt the ground all about him. Then, bewildered, he had scrambled to his feet. Now he was standing, moveless, his lips working.

Yes, he seemed to be tired of the lovely game;—and just when Laddie was beginning to enter into the full spirit of it. Once in a while, the Mistress or the Master stopped playing, during the romps with the flannel doll. And Laddie had long since hit on a trick for reviving their interest. He employed this ruse now.

As the man stood, puzzled and scared, something brushed very lightly,—even coquettishly,—against his knuckles. He started in nervous fright. An instant later, the same thing brushed his knuckles again, this time more insistently. The man, in a spurt of fear-driven rage, grabbed at the invisible object. His fingers slipped along the smooth sides of the bewitched bag that Lad was shoving invitingly at him.

Brief as was the contact, it was long enough for the thief's sensitive finger tips to recognize what they touched. And both hands were brought suddenly into play, in a mad snatch for the prize. The ten avid fingers missed the bag; and came together with clawing force. But, before they met, the finger tips of the left hand telegraphed to the man's brain that they had had momentary light experience with something hairy and warm,—something that had slipped, eel-like, past them into the night;—something that most assuredly was no satchel, but *alive!*

The man's throat contracted, in gagging fright. And, as before, fear scourged him to feverish rage.

Recklessly he pressed the flashlight's button; and swung the muffled bar of light in every direction. In his other hand he leveled the pistol he had drawn. This time the shaded ray revealed to him not only his bag, but,—vaguely,—the Thing that held it.

He could not make out what manner of creature it was which gripped the satchel's handle and whose eyes pulsed back greenish

flares into the torch's dim glow. But it was an animal of some kind;—distorted and formless in the wavering finger of blunted light; but still an animal. Not a ghost.

And fear departed. The intruder feared nothing mortal. The mystery in part explained, he did not bother to puzzle out the remainder of it. Impossible as it seemed, his bag was carried by some living thing. All that remained for him was to capture the thing, and recover his bag. The weak light still turned on, he gave chase.

Lad's spirits arose with a bound. His ruse had succeeded. He had reawakened in this easily-discouraged chum a new interest in the game. And he gamboled across the lawn, fairly wriggling with delight. He did not wish to make his friend lose interest again. So instead of dashing off at full speed, he frisked daintily, just out of reach of the clawing hand.

And in this pleasant fashion the two playfellows covered a hundred yards of ground. More than once, the man came within an inch of his quarry. But always, by the most imperceptible spurt of speed, Laddie arranged to keep himself and his dear satchel from capture.

Then, in no time at all, the game ended; and with it ended Lad's baby faith in the friendliness and trustworthiness of all human nature.

Realizing that the sound of his own stumblingly running feet and the intermittent flashes of his torch might well awaken some light sleeper in the house, the thief resolved on a daring move. This creature in front of him,—dog or bear or goat, or whatever it was,—was uncatchable. But by sending a bullet through it, he could bring the animal to a sudden and permanent stop.

Then, snatching up his bag and running at top speed, he himself could easily win clear of the Place before anyone of the household should appear. And his car would be a mile away before the neighborhood could be aroused. Fury at the weird beast and the wrenching strain on his own nerves lent eagerness to his acceptance of the idea.

He reached back again for his pistol, whipped it out, and, coming to a standstill, aimed at the pup. Lad, waiting only to bound over

an obstruction in his path, came to a corresponding pause, not ten feet ahead of his playmate.

It was an easy shot. Yet the bullet went several inches above the obligingly waiting dog's back. Nine men out of ten, shooting by moonlight or by flashlight, aim too high. The thief had heard this old marksman-maxim fifty times. But, like most hearers of maxims, he had forgotten it at the one time in his speckled career when it might have been of any use to him.

He had fired. He had missed. In another second, every sleeper in the house and in the gate-lodge would be out of bed. His night's work was a blank, unless—

With a bull rush he hurled himself forward at the interestedly waiting Lad. And, as he sprang, he fired again. Then several things happened.

Everyone, except movie actors and newly-appointed policemen, knows that a man on foot cannot shoot straight, unless he is standing stock still. Yet, as luck would have it, this second shot found a mark where the first and better aimed bullet had gone wild.

Lad had leaped the narrow and deep ditch left along the lawn-edge by workers who were putting in a new water-main for the Place. On the far side of this obstacle he had stopped, and had waited for his friend to follow. But the friend had not followed. Instead, he had been somehow responsible for a spurt of red flame and for a most thrilling racket. Lad was more impressed than ever by the man's wondrous possibilities as a midnight entertainer. He waited, gayly expectant, for more. He got it.

There was a second rackety explosion and a second puff of lightning from the man's out-flung hand. But, this time, something like a red-hot whip-lash smote Lad with horribly agonizing force athwart the right hip.

The man had done this,—the man whom Laddie had thought so friendly and playful!

He had not done it by accident. For his hand had been out-flung directly at the pup, just as once had been the arm of the kennelman,

back at Lad's birthplace, in beating a disobedient mongrel. It was the only beating Lad had ever seen. And it had stuck, shudderingly, in his uncannily sensitive memory. Yet now, he himself had just had a like experience.

In an instant, the pup's trustful friendliness was gone. The man had come on the Place, at dead of night, and had struck him. That must be paid for! Never would the pup forget,—his agonizing lesson that night intruders are not to be trusted or even to be tolerated. Within a single second, he had graduated from a little friend of all the world, into a vigilant watchdog.

With a snarl, he dropped the bag and whizzed forward at his assailant. Needle-sharp milk-teeth bared, head low, ruff a-bristle, friendly soft eyes as ferocious as a wolf's, he charged.

There had been scarce a breathing-space between the second report of the pistol and the collie's counterattack. But there had been time enough for the onward-plunging thief to step into the narrow lip of the water-pipe ditch. The momentum of his own rush hurled the upper part of his body forward. But his left leg, caught between the ditch-sides, did not keep pace with the rest of him. There was a hideous snapping sound, a screech of mortal anguish; and the man crashed to earth, in a dead faint of pain and shock,—his broken left leg still thrust at an impossible angle in the ditch.

Lad checked himself midway in his own fierce charge. Teeth bare, throat agrowl, he hesitated. It had seemed to him right and natural to assail the man who had struck him so painfully. But now this same man was lying still and helpless under him. And the sporting instincts of a hundred generations of thoroughbreds cried out to him not to mangle the defenseless.

Wherefore, he stood, irresolute; alert for sign of movement on the part of his foe. But there was no such sign. And the light bullet-graze on his hip was hurting like the very mischief.

Moreover, every window in the house beyond was blossoming forth into lights. There were sounds,—reassuring human sounds. And doors were opening. His deities were coming forth.

All at once, Laddie stopped being a vengeful beast of prey; and remembered that he was a very small and very much hurt and very lonely and worried puppy. He craved the Mistress's dear touch on his wound, and a word of crooning comfort from her soft voice. This yearning was mingled with a doubt lest perhaps he had been transgressing the Place's Law, in some new way; and lest he might have let himself in for a scolding. The Law was still so queer and so illogical!

Lad started toward the house. Then, pausing, he picked up the bag which had been so exhilarating a plaything for him this past few minutes and which he had forgotten in his pain.

It was Lad's collie way to pick up offerings (ranging from slippers to very dead fish) and to carry them to the Mistress. Sometimes he was petted for this. Sometimes the offering was lifted gingerly between aloof fingers and tossed back into the lake. But, nobody could well refuse so jingly and pretty a gift as this satchel.

The Master, sketchily attired, came running down the lawn, flashlight in hand. Past him, unnoticed, as he sped toward the ditch, a collie pup limped;—a very unhappy and comfort-seeking puppy who carried in his mouth a blood-spattered brown bag.

"It doesn't make sense to me!" complained the Master, next day, as he told the story for the dozenth time, to a new group of callers. "I heard the shots and I went out to investigate. There he was lying, half in and half out of the ditch. The fellow was unconscious. He didn't get his senses back till after the police came. Then he told some babbling yarn about a creature that had stolen his bag of loot and that had lured him to the ditch. He was all unnerved and upset, and almost out of his head with pain. So the police had little enough trouble in 'sweating' him. He told everything he knew. And there's a wholesale round-up of the motor-robbery bunch going on this afternoon as a result of it. But what I can't understand—"

"It's as clear as day," insisted the Mistress, stroking a silken head that pressed lovingly against her knee. "As clear as day. I was

standing in the doorway here when Laddie came pattering up to me and laid a little satchel at my feet. I opened it, and well, it had everything of value in it that had been in the safe over there. That and the thief's story make it perfectly plain. Laddie caught the man as he was climbing out of that window. He got the bag away from him; and the man chased him, firing as he went. And he stumbled into the ditch and—"

"Nonsense!" laughed the Master. "I'll grant all you say about Lad's being the most marvelous puppy on earth. And I'll even believe all the miracles of his cleverness. But when it comes to taking a bag of jewelry from a burglar and then enticing him to a ditch and then coming back here to you with the bag—"

"Then how do you account—?"

"I don't. None of it makes sense to me. As I just said. But, whatever happened, it's turned Laddie into a real watchdog. Did you notice how he went for the police when they started down the drive, last night? We've got a watchdog at last."

"We've got more than a watchdog," amended the Mistress. "An ordinary watchdog would just scare away thieves or bite them. Lad captured the thief and then brought the stolen jewelry back to us. No other dog could have done that."

Lad, enraptured by the note of praise in the Mistress's soft voice, looked adoringly up into the face that smiled so proudly down at him. Then, catching the sound of a step on the drive, he dashed out to bark in murderous fashion at a wholly harmless delivery boy whom he had seen every day for weeks.

A watchdog can't afford to relax vigilance, for a single instant,—especially at the responsible age of five months.