

# Chapter One of

## “Stories of Scotch”

Copyright © Enos Mills Cabin. All Rights Reserved.

A famous collie and her five little puppies came into the possession of a Swedish farmer of my acquaintance. For an unimportant and forgotten kindness which I had shown his children, he decided that I should have one of these promising puppies. To his delight I chose the “wisest one,” wee “Scotch,” who afterwards gave pleasure to hundreds of people and who for eight years was a factor in my life.

I carried little Scotch all day long in my overcoat pocket as I rode through the mountains on the way to my cabin. His cheerful, cunning face, his good behavior, and the bright way in which he poked his head out of my pocket, licked my hand, and looked at the scenery, completely won my heart before I had ridden an hour. That night he showed so strikingly the strong, faithful characteristics for which collies are noted that I resolved never to part with him. Since then we have had great years together. We have been hungry and happy together, and together we have played by the cabin, faced danger in the wilds, slept peacefully among the flowers, followed trails by starlight, and cuddled down in winter’s drifting snow.

We camped for the night by a dim road near a deserted ranch-house in the mountains. Scotch was quiet during the long ride, but while I was lighting the camp-fire he climbed out of my overcoat and proceeded, puppy fashion, to explore the camp. After one bark at my pony he went over to make her

acquaintance. He playfully smelled each of her feet, gave a happy bark, and jumped up to touch her nose with his own. Cricket, the pony, intently watched his performance with lowered head and finally nosed him in a friendly manner.

I shut him up in a small abandoned cabin for the night. He at once objected and set up a terrible barking and howling, gnawing fiercely at the crack beneath the door and trying to tear his way out. Fearing he would break his little puppy teeth, or possibly die from frantic and persistent efforts to be free, I concluded to release him from the cabin. My fears that he would run away if left free were groundless. He made his way to my saddle, which lay on the ground near by, crawled under it, turned round beneath it, thrust his little head from beneath the arch of the horn, and lay down with a look of contentment, and also with an air which said: "I'll take care of this saddle. I'd like to see any one touch it."

And watch it he did. At midnight a cowboy came to my camp-fire. He had been thrown from his bronco and was making back to his outfit on foot. Tiny Scotch flew at him ferociously; never have I seen such faithful ferocity in a dog so small and young. I took him in my hands and assured him that the visitor was welcome, and in a moment little Scotch and the cowboy were side by side gazing at the fire.

On our arrival at my cabin he at once took possession of an old tub in a corner of the porch. This he liked, and it remained his kennel for a long time. Here, protected from wind and rain, he was comfortable even in cold weather.

We were intimate from the start, and we lived most of the time apart from the world. I watched his development with satisfaction. He grew rapidly in size, strength, comprehension, and accomplishments. He was watchful and fearless through life.

His first experience with the unfriendly side of life came from a burro. A prospector came by with one of those long-eared beasts. Confiding Scotch went

out to play with the burro and was kicked. Thenceforward he looked upon all burros with distrust, and every one that came near the cabin promptly and precipitously retreated before him like a boy before an aggressive bumble-bee.

The summer that Scotch was growing up, I raised Johnny, a jolly young grizzly bear. At first the smaller, Johnny early became the larger. Both these youngsters were keenly alert, playful, and inclined to be friendly. Each, however, was a trifle suspicious of the other. Unfortunately, I was away during the period in which a complete understanding between them could have been established and, as a result, there never came about the intimate companionship that really should have existed between these two highly developed animals; but their relations, though ever peculiar, were never strained. At times both had the freedom of the yard at once, and naturally they sometimes met while going to and fro. On these occasions each passed the other by as though unconscious of his presence.

Sometimes they lay at close range for an hour at a time, quietly, half-admiringly watching each other. A bone was used as a medium the few times they played together. Each in turn guarded this bone while the other tried to take it away. Scotch was enjoying this, when he discovered Johnny watching him eagerly. Plainly Johnny wanted that bone. After a little while Scotch leaped to his feet, looked off in the direction beyond Johnny and barked, as though some object of interest was coming from that direction. Then, picking up the bone, he walked away. As he passed in front of Johnny he dropped the bone and gave a bark. Going on a short distance, he barked once or twice more and lay down watching this pretended object in the distance. Johnny was more interested in the bone, but Scotch had dropped this a foot or two beyond his reach, chained as he was. For some time Johnny stood with his nose pointing at the bone, apparently thinking deeply as to how he might reach it. At last, stretching his chain to the utmost he reached out with his right arm. But he could not touch it. Although realizing that he probably could not reach it with the left arm,

nevertheless he tried.

At this time Scotch was watching Johnny out of the corner of his eye and plainly enjoyed his failures. Johnny stood looking at the bone; Scotch continued looking at Johnny. Suddenly Johnny had an idea. He wheeled about, reached back with his hind foot and knocked the bone forward where he could pick it up with fore paws. Scotch, astonished, leaped to his feet and walked off without a bark or once looking back. This brought out from both a lively lot of striking, feinting, boxing, dodging, and grabbing, which usually ended in clinching and wrestling. Ofttimes they wrestled, and sometimes in their rough and tumble they played pretty roughly. As a climax often Scotch would aim for a neck-hold on Johnny and hammer him on the tip of his sensitive nose with one fore paw, while Johnny if possible would seize Scotch's tail in his mouth and shut down on it with his needle-like teeth.

Scotch was an old-fashioned collie and had a face that was exceptionally expressive and pleasing. He was short-nosed, and his fine eyes were set wide apart. When grown he was a trifle larger than the average dog, and was surprisingly agile and powerful for his size. His coat was a shaggy, silky black, with feet, tip of tail, and breast of pure white. He was always well dressed and took good care of his coat and feet. Daily he immersed himself in the cold waters of the brook, when it was not frozen, and he frequently lay in the water, lapping it and enjoying himself.

I never knew of his killing anything, though often in the woods he merrily chased the lively, playful chipmunks. Never, however, did he disturb bird or chipmunk in the yard around the cabin. Often two or three chipmunks romped over him as he lay, with half-shut eyes, near the door. Occasionally, a bird hopped upon him, and frequently birds, chipmunks, and Scotch ate together from the same bowl.

Scotch did but little barking. In the country most dogs bow-wow at strangers, and frequently make the night hideous with prolonged barking at far-

off sounds or imaginary objects. In summer Scotch allowed the scores of daily callers to come and go without a bark, but he reserved the right to announce, with a bark or two, the approach of the semi-occasional stranger who invaded our winter isolation. I suppose his bravery and watchful spirit may be instinct inherited from his famous forbears who lived so long and so cheerfully on Scotland's heaths and moors. But, with all due respect for inherited qualities, he also has a brain that does a little thinking and meets emergencies promptly and ably.

Talking to animals appears to make them gentler and more responsive. Scotch never tired of listening to me, and I often talked to him as if he were a child. He came to understand many of the words used. If I said "hatchet", he hastened to bring it; if "fire", he at once endeavored to discover where it was. Cheerfully and intelligently he endeavored to help me, and early became efficient in driving cattle, horses, and burros. Instinctively he was a "heeler," and with swift heel nips quickly awakened and gave directions to lazy or unwilling "critters."

Purchase ["Stories of Scotch"](#)

and read more great stories at the

Enos Mills Cabin!

[www.enosmills.com](http://www.enosmills.com)