

They were worn, dusty, and tarry. One had a cut on the pad.

“They ought to be bathed,” said Jean Pengelly. “Sandy, run a bowl of warm water while I get the disinfectant.”

“What’ll we do about him, Mother?” said Sandy anxiously.

Mrs. Pengelly looked at her daughter’s pleading eyes and sighed.

“He must go back to his owner, of course,” she said, making her voice firm. “Your dad can get the address from the Fisherman’s tomorrow, and phone him or send a telegram. In the meantime he’d better have a long drink and a good meal.”

120 Lob was very grateful for the drink and the meal, and made no objection to having his feet washed. Then he flopped down on the hearth rug and slept in front of the fire they had lit because it was a cold, wet evening, with his head on Sandy’s feet. He was a very tired dog. He had walked all the way from Liverpool to Cornwall, which is more than four hundred miles.

The next day Mr. Pengelly phoned Lob’s owner, and the following morning Mr. Dodsworth arrived off the night train, decidedly put out,⁷ to take his pet home. That parting was worse than the first. Lob whined, Don walked out of the house, the twins burst out crying, and Sandy crept
130 up to her bedroom afterward and lay with her face pressed into the quilt, feeling as if she were bruised all over.

Jean Pengelly took them all into Plymouth to see the circus on the next day and the twins cheered up a little, but even the hour’s ride in the train each way and the Liberty horses⁸ and performing seals could not cure Sandy’s sore heart.

She need not have bothered, though. In ten days’ time Lob was back—limping this time, with a torn ear and a patch missing out of his furry coat, as if he had met and tangled with an enemy or two in the course of his four-hundred-mile walk.

140 Bert Pengelly rang up Liverpool again. Mr. Dodsworth, when he answered, sounded weary. He said, “That dog has already cost me two days that I can’t spare away from my work—plus endless time in police stations and drafting newspaper advertisements. I’m too old for these ups and downs. I think we’d better face the fact, Mr. Pengelly, that it’s your family he wants to stay with—that is, if you want to have him.”

Bert Pengelly gulped. He was not a rich man, and Lob was a pedigreed dog.⁹ He said cautiously, “How much would you be asking for him?”

7. **put out:** annoyed.

8. **Liberty horses:** groups of trained horses, often all white or all black, that perform simultaneously on vocal or visual command.

9. **pedigreed** (pěd’rī-grēd’) **dog:** dog whose ancestry is known and recorded, making the dog more valuable.