

THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

THE LATHAM FOUNDATION STORY SERVICE
FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



THE FARMER'S BOY

by
ANNA HARRIS SMITH, President
The Animal Rescue League, Boston, Mass.

IT WAS dark, and snowing, when James Fenton, after a weary walk, saw ahead of him the lighted windows of a house. He quickened his steps, saying to himself, "That must be the place. Oh I hope I haven't got to walk any farther to-night."

James had left his home before noon and had ridden several hours in the train. He did not expect anyone to meet him at the station, but the long, lonely walk had been almost too much for his courage, and tears were very near his eyes as he turned into the gate.

When he left home that morning his mother had said to him, "It is going to be hard for you, dear boy, but you must keep up your courage by thinking what a wonderful thing you are doing, a boy only twelve years old to leave his home and go to work to help his mother support the family. The money you are going to earn will keep us together until your father gets over the dreadful accident and is able to go to work again. I'm sorry you had to go before Christmas. It won't seem Christmas without you, but you can look for a little Christmas box from home. I hope the farmer and his wife are the kind of people that try to make a happy Christmas for everybody. Wherever we are, if we have the right Christmas spirit, we can do that. Now good-bye. Take for companions three good friends,—PATIENCE, COURAGE and KINDNESS. Call on them when you need their help. They won't fail you."

James remembered these last words, and as he felt the snow driving in his face, beating his hands together to keep warm, he said aloud, "Come, Patience and Courage, I need you."

His first timid knock at the door did not bring anyone. At a second louder knock the door opened and a woman stood there.

"Are you the boy sent to work here?" she asked. "Come right in. It is so late I had given you up."

Coming in out of the darkness the large kitchen looked quite bright and cheerful. Some children were clearing away a supper table, carrying away the dishes and putting them in the sink. The room seemed full of children; afterwards he found there were four, and a baby fastened in a high chair.

Mrs. Manser, the mother of the family, put a chair near the stove and said kindly, "You must be cold and tired. I'll have something hot for you in a minute."

This was a pleasant welcome for the homesick boy. Soon he was sitting at the table enjoying a hot supper. He had already noticed a cat, and the children were laughing at a little story he had told them about his own cat, when a stamping was heard and the back door was opened noisily to admit a man with a stern, unhappy face. The children stopped talking and the cat ran under the stove. James arose from the table to meet his new employer. To his

polite, "How do you do, Mr Manser," the man growled out, "I expected you this forenoon. What made you so late? It's a bad beginning to be late."

"There was no earlier train I could take," James replied, his face flushing at the man's disagreeable manner. Then he said to himself, "Patience," and quietly sat down to finish his supper.

"The boy walked up from the station in the snow and he was cold and tired when he got here," said Mrs. Manser.

"I've walked up from the station in the snow a good many times and didn't call it anything. I suppose he isn't too tired to come out and help me finish the milking after you've fed him. You can milk a cow, can't you? The man that wrote to me said you could."

"Yes sir," answered James, rising from the table. "I'll come right out."

"But you haven't finished your supper," said Mrs. Manser, looking at a piece of ginger-bread left on his plate.

James did not stop. He glanced at Mrs. Manser and said, "I've had a good supper, thank you," and went out to the barn.

The barn was dimly lighted by a lantern. There was a long row of cow stalls, and the soft eyes of twenty cows looked at him curiously as he passed along behind his employer.

"I'll let you try your hand on this one," he said, "I've milked them all but two. They all ought to have been milked an hour ago. Tomorrow morning I'll tell you which you must take care of and see how many you can milk. There are four or five ugly beasts here; they'd rather kick over a pail of milk than to eat their supper, I believe; I leave them till the last. Now you begin on this one; she's all right."

James went into the cow's stall. He stroked her head, patted her gently, spoke to her kindly. "Don't waste time," said Mr. Manser, "fooling around her, but get to work!"

"I don't call it wasting time to get acquainted with a cow before I begin to milk her," answered James. "Cows are timid about strangers, and she will give down her milk much better if she gets acquainted with me and likes me."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Manser. "Take your pail and get to work."

James gave a last gentle touch, rubbing the cow's neck, then sat down and began to milk. "You go at it as if you were afraid of her," exclaimed Mr. Manser loudly. "Take hold as if you meant it."

"I'm not afraid of her," said James patiently but decidedly. "Please step away from her. You make her nervous. When I get through with her you can see by the amount of milk I get whether I know how to milk or not"

Mr. Manser looked very angry. He was going to bluster and say something ugly, then he looked at James' quiet determined face and he could not help seeing how gently and carefully he handled the cow, so he stepped into the next stall and began to milk the cow he said was cross.

"No wonder she is nervous and cross," said James to himself, as he heard Mr. Manser shout at her. Once he even struck her. "I never can stand this. I shall ask him tomorrow to let me milk the cross cows."

It was not until he was going out of the barn that James heard two sounds which startled him. First, a soft whinny. "I didn't know you had a horse here," he said to Mr. Manser.

Mr. Manser held up his lantern and in a narrow stall, with no bedding or blanket, James saw a thin old horse turning his head and looking with sad, pleading eyes at them. "He wants his supper, or water, I suppose," said James. "Shall I attend to him?"

"He's got hay, and I gave him water when I got through hauling wood with him. He isn't worth his feed; he is an old beast that a horse trader cheated me into buying, and I paid fifteen dollars for him."

"That was hard on you, but harder on the horse," said James. "He probably had been well taken care of when he was younger and it must be terribly hard to be sold in his old age and have to work when he ought to rest. I pity old horses."

"I don't work him hard enough to hurt him and I've got to get my money's worth out of him somehow. You'd better pity me for being taken in—not that old beast."

James was stepping into the stall. He could not bear to pass by with those pleading eyes on him.

"His hay is pretty coarse. Perhaps his teeth are gone so he can't chew it. Old horses need soft food and cut-up hay. Haven't you a blanket or bedding for him?"

"Come on in the house and don't stop to talk."

"Is there a dog lying there in that dark corner?" asked James. "I thought I heard a dog whine."

"Yes, it's a dog. You can stay here in the dark with the horse and dog if you want to," said Mr. Manser, walking off with the lantern.

James followed but with a very heavy heart. The sad eyes of the old horse; the pathetic whine of the dog; the shouts and the blow given to the useful cow, all worried him, and he asked himself, "What can I do? How can I bear it?" Then he seemed to hear his mother's voice saying, "Call on your friends, Courage, Patience, Kindness—they will show you the way," and he went into the house.

II

When Mr. Manser was alone with his wife that night he said, "That boy won't do. I would have sent him off tonight, I was so mad with him, but I can't get any help right off and I must get my apples and vegetables to market before Christmas. What did your uncle mean by sending a boy like that here to me?"

"What is the matter with him? Can't he milk?" asked Mrs. Manser.

"Yes, he can milk fast enough, but he undertook to tell me how I ought to treat the cows and feed the horse before he had been in the barn an hour."

"My uncle says he is a remarkably fine boy and understands all about farm work."

"Perhaps he does, but I won't have him telling me how to treat my own animals."

Mrs. Manser sighed, for she knew her husband did not treat his animals, or, in fact, his children or herself with kindness, and her own life was very sad on that account, but she was afraid of arousing his unpleasant temper, so said nothing more.

III

Mr. Manser was so busy the next day that he got home very late from the village and as he put the horse in the barn he noticed that James was busy milking.

"I've got to cat," he said. "I didn't have time to get any dinner and I've been selling my vegetables all the afternoon. I'll be out and help you finish milking soon. You can leave the cross cows."

James said nothing. He had finished milking the cross cows, besides his own share, and he had had no trouble, for the cross cows were not vicious, they were only nervous, and needed very gentle handling. James gave them a little treat of some carrots and apples he had cut up before he began to milk them. He petted them, talked to them soothingly, and was very careful how he milked them. They did not attempt to kick, and gave down more milk, than usual. He hurried to the old horse that was standing with his harness still on wet, and shaking with cold and fatigue. He removed the harness and rubbed the wet body and tired legs with a piece of sacking, then he found an old blanket with which he covered the horse.

He went into the kitchen with a pail to get some warm water to mix a good, warm supper for the shivering horse, but when he started to fill the pail Mr. Manser called out, "What's that? What do you want hot water for?"

"For the horse," answered James quietly. "He's pretty nearly ready to drop. An old horse can't stand what a young one can."

"You let that alone!" shouted Mr. Manser. "Give him his hay. I never coddle him and you shan't."

Then it was that James had to call on his friend Courage.

"Mr. Manser," he said, "I'm trying to save that horse's life. I wouldn't wonder if he died before morning if you put him in his stall wet and cold and hungry. He's half starved anyway. I told you so. Either you let me feed him, and the dog, too, or I leave you tomorrow. I can't stay here and see animals starving. You may not know it," James hurried on, for he saw that Mr. Manser was going to speak, "but you are getting an awful bad name, and you're riving your church a bad name. I heard a man say yesterday, 'Don't ask me to go to church! What good does it do? Look at Deacon Manser, starving his old horse and dog! That's the way people are talking about you, but nobody dares to tell you of it.'" So said James, and before the astonished farmer could answer he walked out with his pail of hot water to the barn.

Mr. Manser was very angry. His children looked frightened; his wife turned pale, but she, also, called on Courage, and Courage came to her to speak for the right.

"Be careful what you do, Thomas," she said, as he started for the door. "Don't do anything you'll be sorry for tomorrow. The boy is right. I've told you so before. If I hadn't gone out and fed the horse myself he'd have given out weeks ago, and the dog would have starved if I hadn't fed him, too. You will never get another boy like James, again—I can tell you that."

Meanwhile James went on with his work steadily, though he found he was trembling with excitement. Only a few months ago he had committed to memory Longfellow's verses:

"They are slaves who will not speak
For the fallen and the weak,
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

Poor old Billy had a supper such as he had not known since his thoughtless owners, saying he was "too good to kill," sent him up in the country to do "easy work," as they were told, on a farm—and then forgot him.

When Mr. Manser, still very angry, but, for the first time really afraid to give way to his temper, came out to the barn, James was just finishing milking the last cow and spoke so pleasantly to the angry man that Mr. Manser, who had never had anyone tell him the truth about himself to his face before, began to feel ashamed of himself.

"The milking is all done, Mr. Manser," said James, "and the cross cows behaved beautifully. I got two quarts extra tonight. I began early, because I thought you would be tired when you got home. Besides, I promised the children I would help them make plans for Christmas."

"We don't spend any time fussing about Christmas here," said Mr. Manser gruffly. "We go to church Christmas forenoon, and that's enough."

"But I'm sure you wouldn't mind if I get up a sort of Merry Christmas for the children and the animals, would you? We always have a beautiful time celebrating the Great Birthday at home."

"What birthday are you talking about? Is it your birthday?" growled Mr. Manser.

James stood still, preplexed. He looked up at Mr. Manser.

"Why—I always thought it was Jesus' birthday."

My father always give all our cattle a special treat and a happy day. We put apples and carrots and any nice things the animals like in the mangers, and we don't forget the dog or cat or birds. Then we give each other gifts. I suppose it is in memory of the Wise Men who came bringing gifts with them, don't you?"

The boy stood with his bright face upturned, looking earnestly at Mr. Manser. How could he be angry with such a boy? He was confused and ashamed that he had no reply ready—he, a deacon of the church!

"I don't know—perhaps so—I never thought much about Christmas," he said, turning and going out of the barn. James, seeing that all the animals were eating their supper and had good bedding to lie on, followed close after, and the dog followed him.

IV

Mrs. Manser was sitting in the warm, pleasant kitchen, but she did not look happy. She was trying to hide from the children that she had been crying, but the children, excepting the baby, were all very quiet and looked as if they feared something. Only the baby, lying on the floor playing with his own little shoes—for the Manser children never had any playthings given them—seemed happy. When a heavy footfall was heard coming through the shed Mrs. Manser started and turned a face that was pale and full of fear towards the door. But her pale face flushed crimson and she could not speak a word when she saw her husband come quietly through the door and behind him, talking cheerfully about Christmas, James, with his hand on good old Scottie's head.

"We can do lots of things that won't cost much of anything," he was saying. "We can make molasses candy sticks and popcorn balls. Did you ever eat any molasses corn balls, Mr. Manser?" James was asking. And to Mrs. Manser's great surprise her husband answered, though rather hesitatingly, "Yes, I believe I did once." Whereupon, the children, after a glance at their father's face, ran to him and cried, "Oh father, when did you eat them—tell us all about it!"

Mrs. Manser had to run out of the room, for she found she must cry a little for very joy, and when in a few minutes she came back she almost broke down again, for she saw a sight she had never expected to see—her surly, ill-tempered husband sitting by the stove, the baby in his lap pulling at his whiskers, the three older children sitting on the floor, one little one leaning against his knee, and James at the table paper and pencil before him. James looked up brightly as she came in and said as if it were quite an ordinary thing:

"Mr. Manser and I are planning a Christmas stable party and a house party, but of course we are all going to have secrets from each other, too. That's part of the fun."

"Oh, mother, mother," the children all cried together, "we're going to have a real Christmas and father is helping us! Isn't he good?"

Mr. Manser looked up at her with a half-ashamed expression, which ended in a smile making him look like such a different man that even old Scottie came over from the rug where he had settled himself doubtfully, evidently with fear of being turned out, and licked his hand, while the cat tried to jump on his lap beside the baby.

In the background, where no one but James could see them, stood James' three friends, the good spirits that had brought about this wonderful change in the Manser family: Courage, Patience and the most powerful of all, Kindness.



— Photo by Hartsook

Mrs. K. H. Borneman

PROGRESS OF THE CLUBS

THE MODEL PLAN

Mrs. K. H. Borneman, Principal of the Hayward B Street School and Supervising Principal of five other schools in the Hayward district, is a born organizer and her plan for humane education which is being successfully applied with approximately twelve hundred and fifty students is a model plan for large schools. We promised a description of it in this issue of our Story Service.

When our work was introduced to Mrs. Borneman through the office of Supt. Martin, a whole day was spent watching its demonstration in all grades of the B Street School. Busy as Mrs. Borneman is with demands which keep her at her post from seven o'clock in the morning until six at night, she still found time after our first visit to go with us over miles of country to give us a personal introduction to the principals under her charge. What Mrs. Borneman was happy to do in the interest of a work which she considers important to her children gave us supreme courage in our difficult undertaking of "blazing the trail."

After a few short months the seed sown has germinated, the children have taken hold of what Humaneness means with enthusiasm and understanding, and most important of all, teachers are giving whole-hearted cooperation.

They realize that it is not our intention to add to their perplexities with a new subject, but to furnish a new kind of material which can be projected through the well-established curriculum studies; that in thus using the love which children so generally entertain for animals they are helping the child to build into his character qualities which are of supreme importance if he is to become a good neighbor, a responsible citizen and a credit to the community of which he will later form a part.

When our KIND DEEDS CLUB was organized Mrs. Borneman appointed representatives from the different grades to meet her once a month in her office and each representative was asked to have ready a report of conditions in his or her room relative to humane expression, and of the actual outstanding deeds performed during that period.

Today the Council meets regularly the first Tuesday in every month, its size has increased from three to seventeen representatives and children come from as far distant a point as Hayward Heath to attend the meetings. A report from the Council is sent to the office of the Foundation, which is now looked forward to with eager interest. Nothing that is brought before the Foundation's trustees stirs them with as much genuine pleasure as the reported acts of little children who are forming at an impressionable age habits of thoughtfulness and humaneness. These qualities give the child an attractiveness above mental endowment or physical perfection.

Mrs. Borneman's Council has a general secretary whose duty it is to keep the Minutes and to compile a report of the monthly meetings. His name is Willie Miranda. He has an assistant in

the fourth grade, Hazel Cambra, who is one of our valued correspondents. In Miss Gray's class of the John Gamble school a Kind Deeds box is kept in the class-room into which the children drop an account of what they have done or seen others do and once a week the box is opened and the stories are read. We wish we had space for all the deeds reported. We give what we can.

Willie Miranda reports: "Ernest ——— was walking to school and saw a dog. He seemed to be much in pain, so Ernest walked up to him and found that he had a sticker in his foot. He pulled it out and the dog got better and ran away.

Fay Livingston helped a blind lady across the street.

Carmen took a dog with a broken leg and put a splint on it.

Manuel fed a little dog that was starving.

Victor Alves gets up from the rocking chair and lets his father sit down and he sits in another chair.

Lillian Vargas helped a dog that fell out of a machine and gave it back to the owner.

As Melvin was coming to school by way of the track he met a woman leading a goat. The train was coming. The goat became frightened and broke away. Melvin caught it and brought it back to its owner.

Joe was over at Sam's house and found a dove with a broken bill. He took the dove home, fed it, but it died the next day.

Barbara visited a sick friend at San Leandro. While there she washed dishes, swept the floor and fed the animals for this friend.

A neighbor of Eileen's had a sore arm. Eileen carried home a package for her.

On his way to school Eloyd Dias noticed a number of children hammering at something and approaching found they had a cartridge. He immediately took it away from them and took it to Judge Harder. Mr. Harder praised him and said he no doubt had saved the lives of several children.

Hazel Cambra says: "The children of Miss Stephen's class of John Gamble School are collecting and mounting pictures which show kindness to animals or people."

There were so many kind deeds. "Evangeline Sherwood went on an errand for an elderly lady. She was offered some money. She said 'No thank you'."

Laura Rodericks shared money with another girl so she could go to the show.

James Consalves took a turkey out of a trap. The turkey's leg was broken, so James bandaged it and cared for the turkey.

Katherine Silva ran three blocks to find a lady who lost her purse.

A lady in Oakland dropped a bottle of medicine on the pavement and it broke. Freddie Souza picked up the pieces and put them in the gutter for her.

Phyllis Flannigan spent her money for bones for a dog.