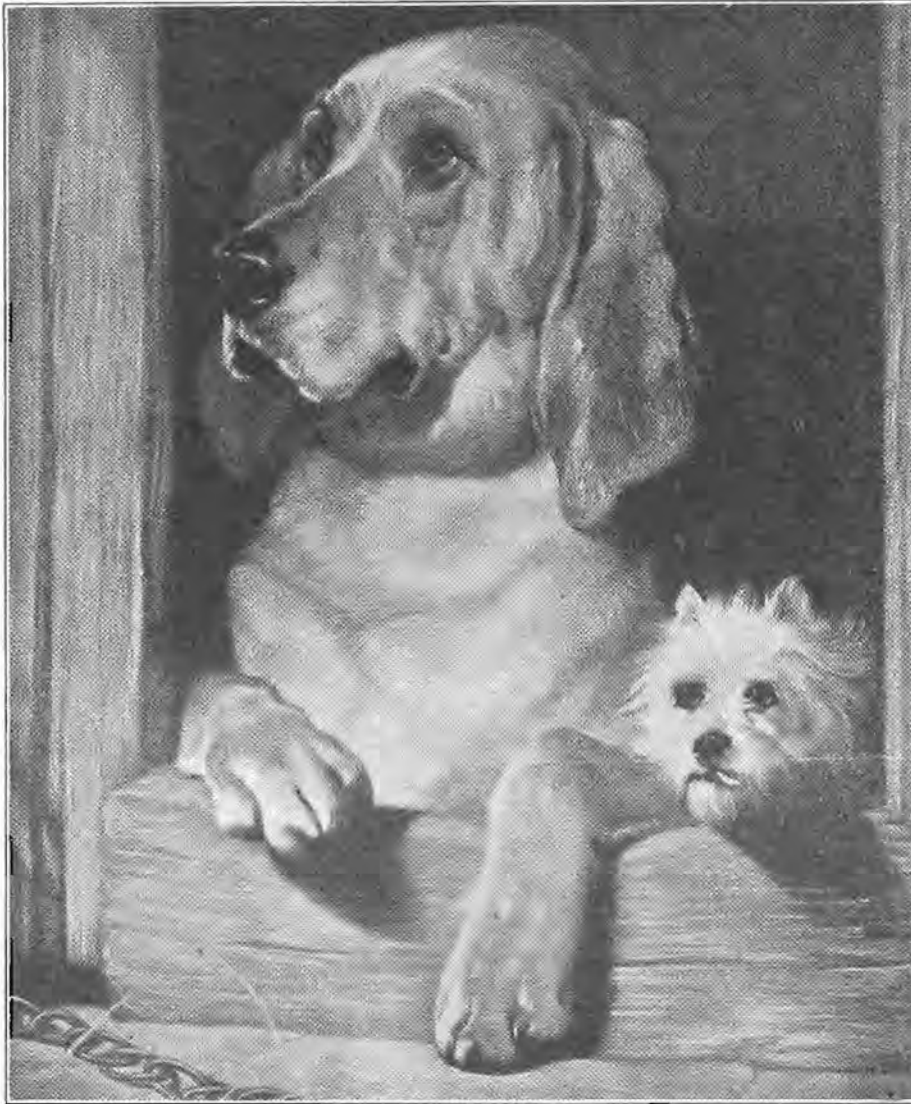


THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

The Latham Foundation Story Service
for the Public Schools



BRAVE BILLY AND HERO REX

Being the True Stories of Dogs

By E. M. S. FITE

“GRACIOUS ME! Gracious me! What will Billy do next, I’d like to know!” exclaimed Tom Mann late one afternoon just as his father was coming in at the front gate. “Father, will you please come here and look at Billy; he is dripping wet and he has a half drowned puppy in his mouth. Where do you suppose he got him?”

Tom scarcely knew what to do, he was so excited, but Mr. Mann saw at once that the puppy needed care, for just as Tom said, he was “half drowned.”

“Run quickly, Tom, and ask Mother for something soft and warm to wrap the puppy in and I will carry him in near the fire,” said Mr. Mann as he called Billy to him and took the tiny white dog from between his jaws, where Billy held him very gently by

the back of his neck. The little wet, shivering creature, with his legs dangling and his long white hair clinging to his body, seemed more dead than alive.

It was an excited household that gathered about the open fire in the living room. Even Nora from the kitchen was there with a dish of warm milk for the puppy. Mrs. Mann folded the little creature in a large warm bath towel with which she dried his body and his long hair to keep him from having a chill. Some of the warm milk was coaxed down his throat and it was not very long before the little fellow began to show decided signs of being very much alive.

Billy came in for his share of attention, too, for Tom gave him a hard rubbing down with a warm, rough towel, and Billy liked that. He was such a big fellow that, just as always when he was bathed, it gave Tom much exercise and took a good deal of time for him to go over him from head to his four feet and get him well dried. This evening everything in the Mann household had to wait until both dogs were dry and warm and comfy by the fire. Supper was late, and it was too late for a bedtime story after supper. Mr. Mann said to Tom and Virginia that he would tell them about the bravery and loyalty of dogs for their story next evening. He was saying to Tom that he should find out how Billy had saved the puppy, when the door bell rang and two of Tom's boy friends came in. They were out of breath from running and each wanted to tell what he knew about Billy and the puppy, so that it was not until Mr. Mann asked them to sit down and said it would be better for one boy to speak at a time that the family finally heard the straight story of how Billy saved the puppy from drowning.

Some boys had found the little white stray dog, and like many thoughtless, cruel boys who have never been told anything about the kindly treatment of animals, they were teasing the little creature, first one way and then another, and finally they threw him into the lake to see him swim in spite of his cries and struggles to get free. The puppy sank but came up and struck out with his little feet and swam back toward the shore as best he could in spite of his fright. The lake was quite deep at the place where he was thrown in and the boys threw him out very far, so that the strength of the little fellow gave out and he whimpered for help. He sank twice and the boys who had thrown him in were frightened and ran off. Tom's friends came by in time to see this, but as neither of them could swim they could not get at the puppy, but they saw Billy trotting by in the distance so they called and whistled to him, and as Billy knows the boys as friends of Tom he went to them, and as soon as he saw the puppy struggling in the water, in he jumped without having to be told, swam out to him and caught him just as he was going down for the last time. The boys said that Billy did not wait for them but made a straight line for home as fast as he could trot, and got there with the puppy well ahead of them.

The next evening when Mr. Mann, with Tom and Virginia in their usual places ready for the promised dog story, Billy stretched himself out on the hearth rug, with the little white puppy snuggled up to him between his front paws. They had become fast friends since the day before. So far no rightful owner had

been found for "Bubbles," as Virginia called the little dog to whom *she* laid claim, as Billy was Tom's dog, and it looked likely that Bubbles would remain a member of the Mann family.

"I promised to tell you about the loyalty and bravery of dogs," Mr. Mann began, "but I scarcely know where to start my story, for there are so many wonderful stories that could be told. There may have been a dog somewhere who did not show his love and gratitude for kindness done to him, but I have never heard of one; the dog is the most loyal creature on earth. But I think that I shall tell you some true things about Billy's father, who was a great dog. As I have told you before, his name was Rex, and he was owned by my old friend Ernest Nixon. Ernest was a "big brother" to all little children and all animals. He loved them so tenderly that he could not bear to have them suffer. He always tried to help those who could not help themselves, so I think that if he were here today and knew of the KIND DEEDS CLUB you children have in your school he would have no trouble to earn his button.

"Ernest had to be out late one bitter cold winter night. The snow lay very deep on the ground, which was frozen hard. The stars were out but there was no moon shining, and just as Ernest started to open the high iron gate into his yard he heard a pitiful little whimper, which seemed to come from near his feet, and sure enough right at his feet, huddled up close to the gate post, was a tiny baby puppy. Without stopping to look at him Ernest picked him up quickly and put him inside of his big overcoat and held him against his breast until he got to the house and unlocked the front door. The puppy was nearly dead; his eyes were closed and he was so thin his little bones showed through the skin. He was almost frozen and he was covered with mange.

"Well, Rex did not die, but it was because Ernest nursed him back to life and health. For three weeks, day and night, he was given the most tender care, even after the animal doctor had said that he could not live.

"When Rex was well enough to run about the house he followed at Ernest's heels wherever he went, upstairs or down, outdoors and in; only when Ernest told him to stay at home would Rex stay away from Ernest, and then he did so because he had learned to be perfectly obedient and he did not want to disobey Ernest, whom he loved with all of his little doggie heart. But he never left Ernest's room as long as his master was away from him, and down the stairs he would bound the moment his sharp ears heard the turn of the key in the latch of the front door.

"Rex grew to be a very big and powerful dog, and when grown he showed how brave and intelligent he was by the way he saved his master's life. At the time Ernest was living in a ground-floor apartment of a house where there were many other apartments. One morning about six o'clock a fire broke out in the basement of the building, and Ernest and two friends who were visiting him were very sound asleep. The fire burned away the gas connections for all the apartments in the building, and the gas coming up through the floor overcame everybody except Rex.

"Rex was on the job in a minute. He could not awaken his master by barking so he went after him

tooth and nail and dragged him off the bed onto the floor near the door, where the fresh air coming under the door brought him to. When Ernest got to his feet he opened the door and dragged his two friends out of the room into the fresh air and then turned in the fire alarm. On his hands, arms and other parts of his body he had 106 tooth and nail marks that Rex had left there in his efforts to save his master. Ernest's friends were so grateful for what Rex had done that they gave a dinner for him and he was the special guest, and they attached a fine bronze medal to his collar in memory of his brave deed. Rex was no worse for the experience, and took all of the extra petting and attention just as a matter of course, for he was used to the perfect love shown him by his master.

"That was but one of several brave deeds done by Rex," continued Mr. Mann. "Another one, where there was fire, was when he saved the life of a little Italian girl. She was playing on the sidewalk near a man who sold roasted chestnuts, and he had his little charcoal stove for roasting the chestnuts setting on the edge of the sidewalk. The child ran into the stove, which turned over and set fire to her skirt. She ran screaming with terror down the street. Ernest and Rex were far down the block on the other side of the street, but not too far to see what had happened. 'Quick, Rex, run and help the little girl,' said Ernest. Away dashed Rex, and without stopping he knocked the little girl to the ground and tore the burning skirt from her body in spite of the flames which burned his face and mouth.

"Rex could do everything but talk like a human being. It is certain that he *understood* everything that was *said* to him by human beings, especially by his master. I never knew him to fail to understand. From puppyhood he learned some cunning ways; one of them was about going to bed. Ernest had put in one corner of his bedroom a child's crib with a side which let down. The crib was furnished with a mattress, blankets and pillow, and had four little posts at the corners. At bedtime Ernest would say: 'Rex, bedtime; come get undressed,' and Rex would march up in a very dignified way and let Ernest take off his collar, then taking the collar in his mouth Rex would go over to his crib and hang it on one of the posts. Ernest would then give him a hug and pat, then Rex would climb up into his bed and with his teeth pull the blanket over himself and snuggle his stuffed teddy-bear down between his front paws and go to sleep. He loved his teddy-bear and had played with one from his puppy days. Usually about daybreak Ernest would feel Rex climb very gently up on *his* bed and lie against his back, and nothing could make him move from there until his master said 'time to get up.'

"Father," asked Tom, "when Rex left so many teeth and nail marks on Ernest when he saved his life wasn't there danger of poison, or anything like hydrophobia?"

"No, nothing of the kind happened," replied Mr. Mann. "And as you have asked that question I might say now that true hydrophobia is so rare that Dr. W. O. Stillman, who practiced medicine for over forty years, said that in spite of being on the constant lookout for hydrophobia and rabies he had never

seen a case. And another well-known doctor, Dr. Charles Dulles, of the University of Pennsylvania, said that 'in the last fourteen years, in handling 1,155,613 small animals taken from the public streets, principally dogs and cats, the animal catchers have been bitten 15,000 times and not a single case of hydrophobia has followed.' Dr. Dulles offered \$100 reward to anyone who would show him a genuine case of dog hydrophobia, but the money was never claimed.

"I am telling you this, Tom, so that you may know should you see a dog frothing at the mouth and acting 'mad' as people call it the dog will most likely be suffering from lack of water, or fits, which may come from one of many causes. The things that cause fits are excitement, worms, teething, exhaustion, overheating, brain troubles or indigestion. Such a condition would not mean that the dog had gone 'mad,' and instead of being run down and killed he should be put in a dark, quiet place, such as a cellar or large closet, but where he can have air; his body should be kept warm, and cold water should be poured over his head or ice bound on his head. A good animal doctor should be sent for. Animal doctors are called veterinarians. Don't forget what I have told you, Tom, for you are old enough now to attend to such matters when needed. Do not let yourself become frightened by a 'mad dog' scare."

Virginia climbed off Daddy's knee and lay on the hearth rug with her arm about her new-found friend, Bubbles, and her head against Billy.

"Daddy," said Virginia, "as I shall have to care for Bubbles my own self, I wish you would just tell me what is the best way to do it."

"Why, yes, Virginia. I was taking for granted that you knew because of Billy, but Tom looks after Billy," replied Mr. Mann, and he continued: "Bubbles will sleep in the house, I suppose, but it will do no harm for you to know that if Bubbles should ever have to sleep outdoors he should have a dry, clean house raised at least six inches off the ground, and it should be placed away from the winds. A flap of carpet over the doorway will help to keep out the rain. Bubbles is too young to be fed as you would feed a full-grown dog, and he should be fed now three times a day; later feed him only twice a day. Young puppies need to be fed six times a day. Broken crackers or oatmeal with milk will make a good breakfast for him, or stale or toasted bread moistened with broth will be good for him. He is past the milk age and can have a little more solid food for his dinner. Do not give him meat, but you may give him vegetables and puppy biscuits. It will be good for him to have some sour milk sometimes as it prevents worms. A full-grown dog should be fed but once a day; his food should be dog biscuits, plenty of vegetables, not too much meat, and he should have boiled liver once or twice a week. No dog should ever be given small bones, such as chicken or fish bones; they lodge in the throat and many a dog has been choked to death that way.

"And Virginia, if you want to keep Bubbles well you had better eat his share of any sweets you get, for sweets are not good for dogs—oh, yes, I know that you are going to say they like sweets—so they do

—but that doesn't mean that they are good for dogs. When a dog is sick he will refuse to eat his food, and will go in search of grass and eat it, for he knows that is the medicine he needs. Above all things never forget to have a dish of clean fresh water, and plenty of it, where Bubbles can get it any time, day or night. Water helps more than anything else to keep a dog 'well, happy and good tempered.'

"Oh, thank you, Daddy dear. I shall try to keep Bubbles well, and I know how he should be kept clean for I see Tom wash Billy. I know he mustn't be washed until two hours after he has been fed, and I must use warm water with good soap, and then—and then, let me see—oh, yes. I know! He must have all the soap washed off with lots and lots of clear warm water, and then he must be rubbed with warm towels until he is dry, just like mother dried him last night, so he won't take cold. And so now I think I'll take Bubbles and say good-night, Daddy," and the little lady gave her Daddy a big squeeze and a kiss and with Bubbles at her heels she went "to find Mother."

Tom, too, said good-night and thanked his father for the splendid true story of Rex. He told his father that he thought that the best friend a fellow could have was his dog, and that he deserved the best care and all the kindness that could be shown him, "for your dog loves you and stays by you no matter what happens."

QUESTIONS

- What should a young puppy be fed, and how often?
- How often should older puppies be fed?
- What is the best food for them?
- How often should a grown dog be fed?
- What is the best food for a grown dog?
- What kind of bones should not be given to a dog, and why?
- Why is sour milk good for dogs?
- Are sweets good for dogs?
- When a dog feels sick what does he do?
- What helps to keep a dog "well, happy and good tempered"?
- Do dogs show love and gratitude for kindness done to them?
- How often should a dog be bathed, and when?
- How should he be dried and why?
- What is the right kind of a house for a dog who sleeps out-of-doors?
- When a dog froths at the mouth is it always a case of hydrophobia?
- What should be done for a dog who has fits and acts "mad"?
- In case a dog is sick or badly hurt who should be sent for?
- Why is it your duty to give your dog the best of care?
- Tell of some brave deeds that dogs have done.

KIND DEEDS CLUB

- K**—indness is a language that even the dumb can speak and the deaf can understand.
- I**—will speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.
- N**—othing is so kingly as kindness, nothing so royal as truth.
- D**—o an act of kindness every day—it will be your greatest source of happiness.
- D**—o unto others as you would that they should do unto you.
- E**—very day in every way do your kindest Deed in the kindest way.
- E**—very Living Creature has its special work to do in the world.
- D**—o not use the steel-trap, as it is very painful and cruel.
- S**—peak kindly to animals as well as to people.
- C**—owards are cruel, but the brave love kindness and delight to save.
- L**—ove for animals guarantees love for man.
- U**—ntil you put yourself in their place you will never know their needs.
- B**—raves people are the tenderest; loving people are the daring.

OUR LETTER BOX

MRS. RUTH S. WHITE of Antone School has written: "I really believe these children are realizing now as never before just how interesting nature really is through the incentive they had from the Kind Deeds Club work. They are all very much more thoughtful of one another's feelings. It has certainly been a great help to me to have Mrs. Tebault to explain things to the children. They all love her and look forward eagerly to the day she will come again."

From Miss Lois Johnson of Townsend School we have the following: "We have laid a strong foundation for better work next year. I hope the children will show you that they are sincere in their efforts. It has given me great joy to see their attitude of co-operation develop. How I wish you might have been here to enjoy it with me, for I know you felt a bit skeptical about us for some time."

May School: "My dear Miss Latham: I wish to express my sincere appreciation of the wonderful work that you and Mrs. Tebault are doing. I know that every child in my school has become a better citizen because he is a member of the Kind Deeds Club. We have enjoyed every moment that you and Mrs. Tebault spent with us.

"The children told me to ask you if you would 'Please come back when school opens.'

"Every one of us is proud to know that we belong to such a wonderful organization, and hope to make you proud of us. Once again let me thank you.

"Sincerely yours, MARGARET SPEARMAN."

