

THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

The Latham Foundation Story Service
for the Public Schools



A HAPPY THANKSGIVING

By ANNA HARRIS SMITH

IT WAS the night before Thanksgiving and cold enough to snow. The wind was blowing so hard in gusts that it sounded as if it were trying to force the blinds off the houses and drive every living creature into some shelter to escape it.

In the dining room of a small city house, on an unfashionable street, a boy and girl, Martin and Ruth Belton, were sitting. On one end of the dining table was a plate, cup and saucer set neatly on a tray cloth; on the other end were some books which the boy was studying, though he got up every now and then and joined his sister, who was looking out the window.

"Mother is late tonight," he said at last. "I think it's too bad to keep her so late the night before Thanksgiving."

"I suppose she is finishing a dress somebody is going to wear tomorrow," said Ruth. "Everybody but us seems to be going away or having company. We shan't have any good time. We've nowhere to go to and nobody to visit us."

"We shall be lucky," said Martin, "if we have a Thanksgiving dinner. Mother said she couldn't afford to get much of a dinner unless she is paid tonight for her work."

A gust of wind swept down the street just then and rattled the blinds. When it died out Ruth said: "Hark! I thought I heard a cat crying in the back yard. It may be that poor little cat that we saw the other day running away from our garbage pail. She jumped up on the fence and went over into the alley. I suppose she's cold and hungry. Mother said some

family must have moved and left her, and she wished we could coax her into our shed. I'm going to see if she is in the yard now."

Martin and Ruth went into the little kitchen and looked out the windows, which opened on the back yard. In the moonlight they saw a cat crouched up against the shed door mewing pitifully. "Why, she is asking us to let her in," said Martin. "I'll go and open the door."

"Better let me go," said Ruth. "Cats and dogs that are homeless are apt to be afraid of boys, they chase them so."

"I never chase them," said Martin. "I wouldn't be so mean as to chase a poor, hungry, homeless cat or dog."

"I know you wouldn't, but the cat doesn't know it. You go and get a saucer of bread and milk. I'm sure mother would let us take it for her, and I'll try to coax her in," and, saying this, Ruth went into the shed and opened the door into the yard very softly and quietly.

The cat did not run away far, only a step or two; she looked up into Ruth's face and again mewed very mournfully. Ruth held the door open and stepped back a little out of sight, calling gently: "Pussy, pussy," and the cat came in very cautiously, crouching down, ready to run if anyone made a sudden motion to catch her.

Martin had the kitchen door open a little way, and now, without coming into the shed himself, he handed Ruth the saucer of bread and milk. Ruth put it on the floor, as far from the outside door as she could,

and after another mew, and another look into Ruth's kind face, the starving cat ventured to approach the warm food. She was so hungry, and lapped it down so eagerly, that Ruth had no trouble in getting to the outside door and closing it.

"Now we have got her! Won't mother be glad!" exclaimed Ruth.

"And now we've got a Thanksgiving visitor," laughed Martin, as the two children went back into the kitchen shivering, for the shed was very cold, and closed the door.

"When mother comes," said Ruth, "I think she will get her in here where it is warm, but if we take her in now she might be wild and run out when we open the door for mother. At any rate, it is better for the poor pussy to be in our shed than out of doors, and the warm bread and milk will do her good."

As the children were about to sit down again the bell rang, and both Martin and Ruth rushed to open the door. A slender little woman, loaded with bundles, stood on the threshold and was dragged into the hall by the eager children, who, without giving her a chance to speak, took her bundles from her and, kissing her cold cheeks, led her into the warm dining room.

"Dear mother you are so late! The kettle is boiling, and I will make the tea in a minute," said Ruth. "And I will toast the bread," said Martin.

"I've had my supper, my dears, and a very good supper, too, but you may make a cup of tea for me, Ruth. I hope you had your supper long ago."

"Oh, yes; we had ours at six, as you told us. Let me take your hat and jacket, mamma. I know you are tired," said Martin.

"I am tired, but you don't know how it rests me to come home to such dear, thoughtful children," Mrs. Belton said, "and I am happy because Mrs. Tolman was so kind, and paid me generously, so I can afford a good dinner for my dear children. After I have had my tea you shall help me stone raisins, and pick over the currants, and make cranberry jelly, and I will make an old-fashioned plum pudding for you this very evening."

Ruth set the tea on the table and then helped Martin open packages of nuts, raisins, apples, oranges, cranberries, squash and sweet potatoes. They spread out the inviting fruit and vegetables on the kitchen table; then Ruth remembered the little stranger in the shed.

"I have got that poor pussy you pitied so much. She is in the shed, but it is so cold there I think you will want to bring her in here."

"Oh, I'm very glad, Ruthie. I have been thinking since I came in about the poor animals out in the cold tonight that have no one to feed them or give them any shelter from the storm that is coming on, and I was wishing so much that I could get some of them and give them shelter and a Thanksgiving dinner. I bought some meat on purpose to put out in our yard, thinking we might get that very cat you have taken in."

Mrs. Belton went out in the shed, Ruth holding a light, and they found the cat crouching down in one corner on an old mat. She cried when she saw them, but did not move. Mrs. Belton stooped down and stroked her gently. "Run in and get that basket in the closet under the stairs," she said, "and put that old piece of blanket in it that I took off the ironing board yesterday. Pussy isn't well, and she needs a bed. I am so thankful you took her in."

In a few moments Ruth came back with the basket. "That is a fine bed for her, mamma," she said.

"Put it on the floor, Ruth, and go back with the light; I'll follow," and Mrs. Belton, lifting the cat carefully, put her in the basket, carried her into the large closet under the stairs, which was warm and snug, and partly closed the door, saying: "We won't disturb her now. I will give her some warm milk again before I go to bed, and I hope she will be all right in the morning."

II.

Thanksgiving morning dawned cloudy and cold. The children were up early, and when they came downstairs they found their mother busy cooking up good things for the day.

"If we only were going to have some company," said Ruth, "it would seem more like Thanksgiving, but we can have a good time anyway, because we will all be together." "All but one," Mrs. Belton said sadly to herself as she looked up at her husband's picture on the wall, but she would not let her lasting grief sadden the day for her children.

"We have got company, my dears," she said cheerfully; "we have three Thanksgiving guests." "Where are they?" Ruth asked.

Mrs. Belton opened the closet door wide and a loud purring was heard.

"Come here and take a little peep, but don't touch," she said, and there in the basket was the homeless cat, her eyes no longer wild and despairing, but full of mother-love and peace as she washed the faces of two of the sweetest little kittens the children said they ever had seen.

"Oh, mother! Aren't they cunning? How thankful I am we took her in last night," cried Ruth.

"The little kitties would surely have been dead this morning if you had not listened to the poor creature's cry for help, and she would have suffered worse than death," said Mrs. Belton. "How people can be so cruel as to desert a cat or a dog or even to turn one away from their door is something I can't understand. They don't realize how much they can suffer."

"Now, children, I am going to ask you to invite another guest. You know Mrs. Bruce, who has a room on the third floor, is very deaf, and old, and lonely, and I found she was going to be alone today. Let us invite her to take dinner with us at five this afternoon. That is the most lonesome time, when it is growing dark and one has been alone all day. Are you willing?"

Neither of the children spoke for a moment, then Ruth said slowly: "If I were deaf, and poor, and old, I would like someone to invite me to dinner. It won't be quite so jolly for us, but I am willing."

"And you, Martin?" said Mrs. Belton.

"Yes, I consent, if you and Ruth say so."

"Then I will write a note and send it up by you, Ruth, and you may wait for an answer."

Mrs. Belton sent up the note, and Ruth came back smiling. "She was so glad she thanked me over and over again and sent you this note."

All the note said was: "You are very kind and thoughtful, and I will accept with pleasure."

"So we shall have a party after all," said Ruth, "Mrs. Bruce, and Mrs. Pussy and her two babies."

It was a happy day for all, and after dinner, which they all enjoyed, Mrs. Bruce told them very interesting stories about what she did, and the pets she had

when she was a little girl, and the children were delighted with her company.

"It has been such a happy day," said Ruth when Mrs. Bruce had left them, "and Martin and I both thought we wouldn't have any Thanksgiving at all."

"I am sure the greatest reason why we have all been so happy today," said Mrs. Belton, "was because we were giving happiness as well as receiving it."

As Mrs. Belton said this there was silence, and in the stillness they plainly heard a steady, gentle murmur of thanksgiving from the closet. They stepped softly to the door and looked in a moment upon Mother Pussy lying in her basket and purring happily with two little heads resting on her soft, warm, loving heart.

"Good night, dear Pussy! Good night, dearest Mother," the children said as they went smiling up to bed.

QUESTIONS

1. What was it that the children rescued from the cold?
2. Why did Ruth coax the cat into the shed instead of Martin?
3. Why should pet animals not be turned out to care for themselves?
4. When the children agreed to invite their neighbor to dinner what did it show on their part?
5. What was the real cause of the happiness of the Martin family on Thanksgiving Day?

CONCERNING CATS

From Humane Education, Approved by The National Congress of Parents and Teachers

SOME people think that only those persons who belong to a Humane Society are expected to report cases of cruelty to animals which they see or know about. This is a mistake. Those who are not members, as well as those who are, should notify the nearest humane agent or police officer when they know of the abuse or suffering of any animal. All communications are confidential.

Cats that are about a neighborhood in the night are a great disturbance to light sleepers or persons who are ill. They are in danger of being attacked by dogs, and in the early morning they may catch the birds that are getting breakfast for their young. No one should keep a cat who is not willing to take some trouble to have it well cared for.

People who go away in the summer and leave their cats to suffer are guilty of great cruelty. A cat that has once had a home is quite unfit to take care of itself. It will suffer and perhaps die from hunger, thirst and loneliness. There is a law against abandoning animals, and the people who do this should be reported for breaking a law.

A starved cat does not make a good mouser. Feed your cat well, give her fresh water often.

In lifting a cat from the ground do not lift by the upper part of the body, leaving the legs hanging down. Lift gently by placing one hand under the fore legs and at the same time lift the hind legs with the other hand. Do not take her by the nape of the neck. A grown cat is too heavy and may be injured if lifted in that way.

Do not put a ribbon or a collar on your cat's neck. Cats have been caught on fences, bushes and limbs of trees by these collars and have not been able to free themselves. They have been known to strangle to death.

If you cannot take care of your cat, or the hungry cats in your neighborhood, send for the agent of an Animal Rescue League or of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or of a good veterinary to dispose of them humanely.

An Exceptional Opportunity For Teachers

THE teachers of today have a golden opportunity to inculcate in the minds of the young people under their care the fundamental principles of true character training through Humane Education in the schools. The simple sentence "Kindness to every living creature," if interpreted in its broadest sense covers life throughout the whole world. The "true" teacher can make this a "real live something" in the heart and mind of the pupil. It can easily be correlated with the every-day studies of the school. Results will be most satisfactory and the good influence of this teaching is sure to be far-reaching in its effect.—Humane Education approved by The National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

How San Francisco Does It

THE following is from the material prepared for introduction in the revised "Course of Study" for the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades of the San Francisco schools, given to us by Mr. Walter C. Nolan, Deputy Superintendent in charge of Personnel and Curriculum:

"The course in Humane Education has attained desirable results when it has created within the social being a kindness and thoughtfulness for all living things whether they be stronger or weaker than himself.

"Ample material for reaching this goal may be had in 'The Kind Deeds Messenger' of the Latham Foundation Story Service for the Public Schools. Copies of 'The Kind Deeds Messenger' are supplied monthly by the Latham Foundation and distributed to all of the schools of San Francisco by the Board of Education.

"Humane Education may best be taught through a Kind Deeds Club, composed of the members of individual classes or of all the classes of a school. The latter form may be organized in such a way that each individual class may be a smaller club federated with the school club.

"The work of the individual class club may be centered around a project. The children may make attractive scrapbooks of kind deeds assembled from various sources; posters, auditorium programs, etc.

"The program of the school club may consist of reports, etc."

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From the 6A Grade of the Grant School, San Francisco, the Latham Foundation has received the following:

"We are very grateful for the pamphlet 'The Kind Deeds Messenger,' No. 10. It was a very nice silent

reading lesson; that is how we made use of those pamphlets. It was the magazines which you sent us which helped our silent reading marks on our report cards. We nearly all got A's. The class would be very grateful if you would send us any of your old pamphlets; there are forty-five children in the class."

The Secretary of the above grade and school wrote us later: "We thank you very much for your kindness in sending the pamphlets. They certainly predict some lovely silent reading lessons. I am sure that every child who reads them will think more of kindness to animals. We have promised these booklets to the 6B, who are waiting for them anxiously. Our class decidedly agrees with you that it is cruel to clip dogs' ears, and will do all in our power to prevent it."

(The children of the above class all signed a pledge "Not to buy any dog with cropped ears, nor to have our own dogs' ears cropped." The signatures to be sent to The American Humane Association, Albany, New York.)

How Hayward Does It

MRS. KATHERINE H. BORNEMAN, Principal of the B Street School, Hayward, and Supervising Principal of the Fairview School, Hayward Heath School, John Gamble School, Orchard Ward School and Pacific Primary School, has introduced Humane Education into the curriculum of all of her schools as a weekly lesson: for the Receiving Class, 20 minutes; First and Second Grades, 25 minutes, and 30 minutes each for the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades.

Mrs. Borneman finds this study an invaluable fundamental of character building. She has said that in introducing it for weekly observance in her schools that it was not done arbitrarily, but with the hearty co-operation of her teachers, who are as keenly interested and alive to the benefits to be derived from Humane Education as she is.

For Which We Are Thankful

THAT the seeds of Kind Deeds sown in one spot may take root and grow hardy plants that bear transplanting to a great distance and burst into flower through the tender care of the gardener, is shown by a letter which has reached the President of The Latham Foundation from Miss Margaret Anne Silveira, who was formerly in charge of Murray School in Alameda County. Miss Silveira has a school now in San Benito County in a rolling country at the foot of a mountain; she writes: "They (her pupils) are learning the Kind Deeds Motto, of which I kept a copy. . . I want to tell you about the genuine love and interest my pupils all take in birds, of which there is an unusually large variety. They have named up to forty kinds, and they know them all, their songs, their nests and all their sweet ways. A boy of twelve, Cecil Cole, is the chief authority and he instructs us all. I have resolved to learn them all, too, and they call me every time a new bird comes in view. They enjoy testing me also, and it keeps me on the alert to distin-

guish between some of the tiny creatures. I am planning to compile a booklet on the bird life of our vicinity for a school project.

"I have told the children about you and Mrs. Tebault and they love you and your work, and ask me every day if I have written to tell you about their birds. They want me to send you a list of all of them, but I shall compromise with a few of the rarer ones. We have Yellowbill Magpie, Mocking Bird, Towhee, Bee Martin, Grosbeak, Oriole, Thrush, Pewee, Snowbird, Oak Wren, Marsh Wren, Bush Sparrow, Barn Sparrow, Titmouse, Mexican Lark, Blue Heron, Chickadee, four kinds of Swallows, and as many more again.

"The Pewees and Swallows build nests in the school yard. Giant boulders keep watch over us all, and on one of them an Eagle family has its home."

So we see the Kind Deeds Club work with the birds, started last spring in Alameda County, has spread to San Benito County within a few months.

All Kinds of Thanksgivings

By Courtesy of the Western Press Committee

Children have cause for Thanksgiving in that corporal punishment diminishes, and that it has almost disappeared from schools.

Birds can be thankful that women and girls wear few feathers on hats compared with the fashion of twenty years ago.

Wild animals can be thankful there is a Jack London Club of hundreds of thousands of members making publicity about cruelty in training animals to do tricks for exhibitions.

The Jack London Club can be thankful that several leading circuses have eliminated trained wild animal acts.

People who want to be safe and live long can be thankful that certain great mail order firms have stopped selling pistols and revolvers by mail.

Peace people can be thankful that peace is popular today and that more people call themselves pacifists than ever before.

Humane Societies can be thankful that cruelty to children and to animals is condemned by the general public, that the laws forbid cruelty, that the enforcement of humane laws improves steadily, that schools teach humane education. And that the work of humane organizations is recognized as a benefit to the communities that support them.

The Kodak Huntsman

"'Tis a beautiful morning," a sportsman cried,

Who carried a kodak instead of a gun;

"The world looks so happy, so golden the sun!

I'll slip to the woods where the wild things hide,"

The deer that he "shot" never dreamed of his aim,

And the bird that he caught went on with her song;

Peace followed his footsteps, not slaughter and wrong,

Yet rich were his "trophies" and varied his game.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



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