



PURRINGTON FLATS WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS.

What Uncle Tom Did.

(By Alix Thorn, in 'S.S. Times'.)

The cat-hole must be closed, for Tim, the dear, loving old pussy, was dead, and strange cats of every size and description came in unchallenged and roamed about the furnace-room, sometimes venturing even into the hall, now that no large, dignified Tim was there to defend his premises.

The cat-hole, you must know, was a round opening made in the latticework under the piazza. It was near the small cellar window that was opened wide enough for Tim to slip through, and thus gain the shelter of his home when he was scared or hungry. Yes, the cat-hole must be closed, so said Grandpa; and eight-year old Helen's brown eyes brimmed over with tears at the announcement.

The little girl was spending the winter with her grandparents while her father and her mother were abroad, and she had learned to pity the homeless cats who skulked around the grounds trying to find shelter from the cold winds. Indeed, she knew several of the un-

welcome visitors by sight, and she had carefully written down the sad list on her own little tablet:

- 1 big maltese kittie,
- 1 grey and white puss,
- 1 old yellow cat,
- 1 thin tiger cat.

Oh, how warm and cozy the living-room looked this November day, while little, wandering snowflakes were blown against the windows, and the bare boughs tossed to and fro. It was Uncle Tom, jolly Uncle Tom, down for his college vacation, who came in to find his little niece curled up in the window-seat, and looking so pathetic that he exclaimed:

'Why, girlie, tell me what is the matter? Thanksgiving just passed, and every day bringing Christmas nearer—I certainly cannot see why a small child should be so mournful.'

'Oh, but, Uncle Tom,' cried Helen, 'it's just this. You see I'm thinking, and thinking about those poor cats that can't get into the cat-hole any more. I know four of them pretty well. They haven't any homes, I'm sure. See,' handing him the list; 'think of it, Uncle

Tom, no home,' and with a pathetic hiccough, 'p'raps no friends—they'll certainly freeze.'

Uncle Tom, usually the most cheerful and hopeful of uncles, only shook his head soberly, and soon after left the room.

Presently from the basement sounded a steady hammering and pounding, interspersed with a merry whistle very like Uncle Tom's. Half an hour later Helen was summoned down to inspect the work. Before her astonished eyes appeared a something that resembled a roughly built doll-house. It was really too large, strong boxes lying upon their sides, nailed one upon the other, and divided, each into two sections. Across the lower front of each compartment boards were fastened securely, and the boxes were filled with dry leaves, making deep, warm nests.

'Oh, what is it, Uncle Tom? what is it for?' cried Helen, breathlessly. Uncle Tom did not reply, but dipping a little brush into India ink, he printed in fine large letters on the front of the quaint little house:

THE PURRINGTON—CAT APARTMENTS.

'Isn't that plain enough for even an uneducated barn cat to read?' he said, and Helen's only answer was a delighted giggle.

'It's a beautiful home, Uncle Tom,' she smiled; 'any cat must think so; but where shall we put it?'

'I've the very place decided upon,' replied her uncle. 'By one of the basement windows behind the steps, where it will be well sheltered from the wind.'

Late that same day the cook reported that an old yellow cat had discovered the house, peered in curiously, inspected the whole place, and finally decided to occupy the lower right-hand rent. As the days went by there was no doubt that Purrington Flats was a complete success, ever well patronized. At almost any hour might be seen the whisk of a gray or striped tail disappearing in one of the openings, or from another an inquisitive maltese head peering out to see what was going on in the world.

And each week letters written