

Topsy's Babies.

(Jane L. Hoxie, in 'Kindergarten Review'.)

'I must teach the kittens some tricks,' said Alice, one day. 'They are getting so big and plump! Don't you think they are old enough to learn to do things, mamma?'

'Well, little daughter, suppose you try teaching them,' said mamma.

So Alice went to the door and called: 'Kittens, kittens, kittens! Come, Tip! Come, Trot! Come, kittens!' Now, their real names were Tipkins and Trotkins; but Alice always called them Tip and Trot for short.

When the kittens heard their little mistress call, they came running as fast as their fat little bodies and short little legs would let them come; for 'kittens, kittens, kittens!' almost always meant, 'Here is some nice warm milk to drink.'

Alice gathered the funny little things up in her arms. They looked just exactly alike, for Tipkins had a black spot on the end of his tail, and Trotkins had a black spot on the end of his tail, too. Tipkins' eyes were blue, so were Trotkins'. Tipkins' nose was black and Trotkins' nose was black, too. Alice often wondered how their mother, Topsy, ever told them apart.

'Now,' said the little girl, 'you have grown to be such big pussies that it is time you learned to work. You must earn your dinner. What do you say to that?'

'Meow, meow!' said Tipkins. 'Meow, meow!' said Trotkins. 'Meow, meow, meow!' said Tipkins and Trotkins together. Which seemed to mean, 'That we will, little mistress; only show us how.'

Alice took a tiny bit of meat in her fingers, and let one of the kittens smell of it; then she said very slowly, 'Now, pussy, roll over.' The kitten liked the smell of the meat very much, so he said, 'Meow, meow!' but he did not know in the least what 'roll over' meant, so he did nothing. 'Roll over, kitty,' said his little mistress again, but he only said, 'Meow, meow, meow' once more. Then Alice made pussy lie down and she gently rolled him over with her hand, saying very slowly as she did so, 'Roll over.' After this she gave him a bit of meat.

Then it was the other kitten's turn. He had no more idea than his brother what 'roll over' meant; but, Alice had said the words two or three times, she gently rolled his plump little body over, too, and then gave him the nice bit of meat also. Then she set a big saucer of milk down in front of her pets, and so ended the first lesson of Tipkins and Trotkins.

This was only the first of many lessons, however. Alice worked very patiently with the kittens every day for a whole month; and at the end of that time, both Tipkins and Trotkins knew just what she meant and would roll over every time she told them to, even though they got not a scrap of anything good to eat in return.

Tipkins seemed to think it was great fun and would sometimes roll over and over five or six times without stopping, just as Alice herself often rolled on the grass when at play. But Trotkins never seemed to like doing it and would turn round and round until he was fairly dizzy before finally lying down. Then, as he rolled over, he would give a funny meow, as much as to say, 'I don't like to; but, if I must, I will.'

Tipkins learned to ring a small call bell by striking it with one of his front paws. Trotkins could never be coaxed to touch this bell; but he would sit by when his brother rang it and cry, 'Meow, meow, meow!' Alice thought this was very funny and she said that Trot sang while Tip did the playing.

Both kittens learned to jump over a stick when their mistress held one out in her hand, about a foot from the floor; and Alice taught Tipkins to jump through a small wooden hoop, but she never could persuade Trotkins to even once try to jump through the hoop.

As Tipkins and Trotkins grew older, their mother, Topsy, taught them to hunt for mice in the big dark barn and to catch moles and grasshoppers in the field. They had less and less time, as the days went by, to play with their little mistress; and Alice found them so sleepy, when they did have time, that at last she gave up trying to teach them any new antics.

As the months passed by they grew sleek and fat. They were kittens no longer, but had grown as large and could hunt as well as Mother Topsy; and, although they learned no new tricks now, the old ones taught them by their little mistress were never forgotten by Tipkins and Trotkins.

One of God's Little Heroes.

(A True Incident.)

The patter of feet was on the stair,
As the editor turned in his sanctum chair,
And said, for weary the day had been,
'Don't let another intruder in.'

But scarce had he uttered the words before
A face peered in at the half-closed door,
And a child sobbed out, 'Sir, mother said
I should come and tell you, that Dan is dead.'

'And, pray, who is "Dan"?—the streaming eyes
Looked questioning up, with a strange surprise;
'Not know him? Why, sir, all day he sold
The papers you print, through wet and cold.

'The newsboys say that they could not tell
The reason his stock went off so well.
I knew! With his voice so sweet and low,
Could anyone bear to say him 'No'?

'And the money he made, whatever it be,
He carried straight home to mother and me.
No matter about his rags, he said,
If only he kept us clothed and fed.

'And he did it, sir, trudging through rain and cold;
Nor stopped till the last of his sheets was sold;
But he's dead! he's dead! and we miss him so!
And mother—she thought you might like to know.'

In the paper, next morning, as 'leader,' ran
A paragraph thus: 'The newsboy Dan,
One of God's little heroes, who Did nobly the duty he had to do—
For mother and sister earning bread,
By patient endurance and toil—is dead.'

—Margaret J. Preston, in 'Waif.'

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