

LITTLE KARL



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LITTLE KARL

A Story for Children

By UNCLE MILTON



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'M going to tell you a story that happened in Holland, a country that lies far away across the big ocean.

There was once upon a time a family consisting of father, mother and five children. Their father was a fisherman who went out to sea in a big boat, and was often gone for weeks at a time, leaving the mother to take care of the children, but they were very good children and very helpful.

Hans used to go out with his gun and dog, and many a rabbit he brought back for dinner. Fritz worked with a coppersmith, and learned to make beautiful pots and pans out of shining copper.



FATHER.

Two little girls, Frieda and Greta, helped their mother at home, doing the marketing and the cooking, while the mother wove the cloth and made the clothes for the family. The youngest was a boy, Karl, and he used to take the sheep out to pasture, a long way from the house, and attend to them all day, bringing them home at night. He was a very good boy, and his parents knew the sheep would be well taken care of, because he never stopped to play with other boys and never did anything he knew would displease his parents.

If you have ever been to Holland you will know that it is a very flat country right by the sea, with no hills at all. When the tide is high the water would overflow the land, if it were not for the



MOTHER.

long walls of stone and sand which the people built to keep out the sea. These are called "Dykes," and they are very necessary indeed. Every five miles there is a wooden gate in the Dyke to let the waters of the canals and boats get through; but these gates must be kept closed or the sea would pour in and drown the people. It is all very curious, and there is nothing like it in this country.

One day Karl was herding his sheep as usual. It was a cold day in November. In the afternoon it began to storm, and for an hour or more it rained hard. The boy called his sheep together, and started for home. He felt



HANS
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wet and hungry, and thought of his comfortable home and the good supper his mother would have ready for him.

He had not gone far before he came to a Dyke, which he had to cross. The sea was roaring and the wind howling, and his poor, cold sheep were huddled together to keep warm. In spite of the noise of the storm, Karl thought he heard the rush of water over the Dyke, and he looked about to see what caused it.

In the water-gate that separated the canal from the sea, there was a hole where the storm had broken through the rotting wood of the gate. The water was running through it. It was not a

big hole, but Karl knew that every hour the water would make it larger, and that before morning the sea would be pouring in and flooding the land. Trees and houses would be washed away, and maybe people might be drowned.

Karl didn't know what to do. If only he had some good strong boards and a hammer and nails, he might fix it, but there was no one near and no house in sight. He tried stuffing the hole with earth and grass, but the pressing water washed it out again. "I know what I'll do," said Karl, "I'll put my hand in the hole and keep it there till help comes." So he doubled up his fist and with it closed the hole so that the water couldn't come in.



It was bitter cold, and the icy water against his hand nearly froze it. He could have cried with pain, but he knew he was doing a brave deed, one that would save much loss and prevent damage to others.

The patient sheep stood around him, looking on, wondering, no doubt, why their little shepherd didn't take them home, as he used to do. The wind blew terribly across the sea, dashing the waves up against the Dyke, but Karl never moved.

At home his parents began to worry. It grew darker and darker. The supper hour was long since past, and still Karl and his sheep did not come back. "May be the storm has hurt him," said the mother anxiously.



Young Girl
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"I will go after him," said the father, at length. "Come, Hans and Fritz, get the lanterns and your sticks and we will try to find him." So they put on warm coats and went out into the dark night.

They walked for an hour, calling "Karl! Karl!" but they got no reply. At length they heard a faint voice cry "Here I am!" With much difficulty they found the spot, and there was Karl with his poor little hand filling up the hole in the wood, and almost frozen with cold.

"What are you doing?" asked his father.

"Trying to save the land from being flooded," said the boy, bravely; and he told his father all about it.



KARL.

The End.

