

## The Story of an Old Bible

Where do you keep your Bible? Perhaps it is beside your bed. I am sure you do not keep it in a tin buried in the garden! But once there was a family who kept their Bible in just such a place.

The Klat-tov-sky family lived in Mor-a-vi-a. Today Moravia is part of the Czech Republic. You can find it in your atlas. In those days Moravia was ruled by the Hapsburg family. They did not allow people to have Bibles written in the Czech language. The Klattovsky family owned a Bible. It was very old. It was in Czech. The Klattovsky family did not read their Bible but they did not want to lose it either. It was very old and valuable. It was big too. The old Czech Bible takes so much space that it needs six volumes! From time to time members of their family had jotted down their names in the old Bible. The Klattovsky family knew they would lose their old Bible containing this family history if someone found out about it so they put it in a tin box and buried it in the garden.

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Someone did find out about the Bible – I don't know how. His name was Frank Ne-chu-ta and he was a Christian. He was a friend of the Klattovsky family so perhaps they told him, knowing that he loved the Bible. Frank asked if he could be allowed to just see it. At first the family said no but at last they dug up the box one dark night and opened it up for him.

How amazed he was to see the Bible, all six volumes of it, snug in its tin and safe from harm. As he looked at it he longed to have it. It had been buried as a treasure but if only he could have it to read himself! Would the Klattovsky family sell it to him?

The family considered. They knew the books were worth a lot of money. They knew too that if their treasure was found they would get into trouble. After a few visits from Frank they allowed themselves to be convinced. They decided they would sell – for a high price. Perhaps they made a note of all the family history before they passed the tin box and Bible to Frank.

The books had to be smuggled to Frank's home without anyone knowing. This they did by putting each volume into a sack of hay. One by one each sack of hay was carried to Frank's home. And each sack carried not only food for the animals but food for the

human soul also.

Not long afterwards Frank left Moravia and went to America. Of course, he took his Bible with him. In America no one would try to stop him reading it.

The years went by and the six-book-Bible was passed down through the family. At last it was sold by Frank's granddaughter to a minister who in turn sold it to a museum.<sup>1</sup>

And what about your Bible? I know you do not keep it in a tin buried in your garden. But if you do not read it you might as well bury it! Be like Frank and treasure your Bible, not by burying it but by reading it.

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<sup>1</sup> The Moravian Archives, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in America.