

# **MOTHER NATURE'S CHILDREN**

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Mother Nature's Children by Allen Walton Gould

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**ALLEN WALTON GOULD**

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CHILDREN**



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BY

ALLEN WALTON GOULD



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Dedicated to  
My Little Daughter





## PREFACE.

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THIS book aims to help the young to see the spirit rather than the form of nature. It traces the love and care and mutual dependence of living things from human beings down to plants. And while it is set in an imaginative framework, no facts are stated and no illustrations used save on good scientific authority. Recognizing the power of pictures to reach the child, such subjects are treated as can be illustrated. Each chapter opens with a picture by some artist of acknowledged ability and contains other interesting pictures bearing directly on the text.

In using the book in the schoolroom it might be well to have the children look at the pictures and tell what they see before the descriptions are read. They will thus learn to observe and to think for themselves as well as to express themselves. The pictures and descriptions can be made more real by bringing into the class-room some specimen of the plant or animal or nest or other object that is described.

But in dwelling on these material facts of nature, we must be careful not to let them obscure the truth we wish to teach, or bewilder the child by their multiplicity. We must remember that it is not the formal part of nature, but the spiritual part we wish to teach through the forms. We must try to give the children no more of body than shows soul, as Browning says of painting.

Our purpose is to teach only the actual facts about nature. But as every fact is a fairy tale in the mind of the child, these facts will "take form and limb" in a way that would make them untrue for us. They may seem childish to us, but we must remember that all conceptions are necessarily childish when really imaged by children. That is the only way the truth can be held by the child. If we impress upon the child the love and faithfulness of nature, and also the way in which nature requires effort and desert, we can safely leave the reconciliation of those ideas to the later years of the pupil.

Heartfelt thanks are due to many friends, on both sides of the water, who have helped with suggestions and criticisms and encouragement in this effort to put the everlasting gospel of nature in such a form that even the children may read and understand it. If this result is achieved, surely we shall all feel that we have our exceeding great reward.

ALLEN WALTON GOULD.

CHICAGO INSTITUTE.

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