

**NATURE STORIES FOR
YOUNG READERS:
ANIMAL LIFE**

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Nature Stories for Young Readers: Animal Life by Florence Bass

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ANIMAL LIFE

BY

FLORENCE BASS

"I would not enter on my list of friends,
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet lacking sensibility, the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm." — COWPER.

BOSTON, U.S.A.

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PREFACE.

THE subjects of this series of lessons are mainly such insects or other animals as the children may observe for themselves.

The lessons aim to give illustrations of some of the varied means of self-protection employed by animals; their methods of home-building and of caring for their young; the transformations they undergo; the adaptability to their surroundings as shown by their coverings and the "tools" with which the various animals are provided.

The purpose in attempting to bring these thoughts to the youngest readers is manifold.

It is hoped that such readers may become interested, while children, in the abundant life about them, and that when this interest is gratified by learning of the wonderful lives and habits of these "little people," a respect for all life may be inculcated.

It is desirable that children acquire such feeling for lives weaker than their own, that they may never give unnecessary pain to any creature and never take

a life except in self-defense or for some other very good reason. A child thus trained to feel for the lower forms of life cannot fail to be more considerate of his own kind.

By interesting children in the wonderful ways of insects, it is hoped that the timid, fearful children, who scream if a "bug" happens to come near them, may become less fearful and find pleasure where they once found only pain. Let them learn that in most cases these insects will do them no harm, if unmolested. Let the children see that it is possible for us to learn much about insects or animals without hurting, or even touching them.

The purpose is to discourage the study of any animal at the cost of its life, or of giving it pain. If the animal cannot be kept in the school-room with a home and comforts reasonably like its own, it should not be kept at all. The children may be led to search and observe it in its natural environment. That is the place to study life.

Leave the collecting and pulling to pieces and naming of parts to older and more scientific people, if such work must be done. Do not ask it of the tender-hearted little children, and do not countenance it in the children more cruel by nature. All knowledge that children gain by taking life or giving pain

to beings weaker than themselves, seems to me to be gained at the expense of their moral nature, and is therefore better done without.

Finally, it is surely impossible to become acquainted, even in a slight degree, with these expressions of the wondrous thoughts of God, without being drawn nearer to their Maker and ours.

F. B.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

TO THE CHILDREN.

DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS:—

Some time ago I wrote you some little stories about plants.

I tried to show you how all plant mothers have the same thing to do: they make seeds.

These are really little cradles in which baby plants are wrapped up.

Food is left in the seed for them to eat when they begin to grow.

I tried also to let you see some of the ways the plant has to keep her seed babies from harm till they are grown.

Sometimes it is done with thorns or briars or hard shells or bitter fruit.

We saw, too, that many of them have ways of sending their little ones out into the world.

Now I wish to tell you a few things about animals.

You will see that an animal mother must also provide for her little ones.

Sometimes she has no more to do than the plant mother.

She leaves her eggs where the little ones will find food when they begin to grow.

But you may be sure she will do that much.

Sometimes she takes care of them till they are grown.

Sometimes she even gives her life for them.

In these little stories we will read of some of the many ways animal mothers do these things.

As you take your walks into the country, look about you to see how many little stories you may see acted out, for yourself.

Plants told us many things by what they did.

Now because animals can act so much more, they can tell us more.

Perhaps they really do have a way of talking to one another. They often act as if they did.

As you watch these little insects you may see them treat one another in a way that seems very cruel to you.

Suppose you watch to see why they do these things.

See if you find one animal taking the life of another except for food, or to defend itself or its home from harm.

We do that ourselves. I hope we do not do more.