

Extra Copy

THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

The Latham Foundation Story Service
for the Public Schools



The orphaned baby deer were fed that way until they no longer needed milk for food. This Kind Deed won for the little girls the love and lasting friendship of the deer; they followed their little human mothers everywhere and showed wonderful love for them.

OUR WILD BROTHERS—THE DEER

By E. M. S. FITE

WELL, WELL! What shall we talk about this evening?" Mr. Mann asked Tom and Virginia after supper when he settled himself in his easy chair for the usual quiet story-hour. "What animal friend shall we discuss?"

"The deer, Father, please, the deer," exclaimed Tom. "Today I heard some men say that they would be going deer-hunting soon, and it made me feel sick to think of them going out to shoot down those lovely creatures. Why do some men always want to kill something, why can't they hunt deer with a camera instead of shooting them? That's what I would do."

Virginia snuggled a little closer to her Father and said, "Yes, Daddy, tell us about the deer; we don't know very much about them, we see them in the Zoo and they look so unhappy all fenced in."

"Well, then, the deer it shall be," said Mr. Mann, "and let me tell you at the start that the deer is a very

sensitive, gentle, and intelligent animal, and would be on friendly terms with man if he was not hunted so terribly.

"I remember that one time when I was camping with some men friends, some people who were having a picnic nearby came to our camp and told us they had seen some poor little fawns; fawns are the baby deer, you know. They said these fawns looked starved and hungry and acted as though they had been deserted; they wanted us to catch the fawns and feed them, for *they* did not know what a young fawn would eat. All very young fawns are thin, and look hungry, but those people did not know that.

"Those people meant to be kind, but we had to tell them that the mother deer had probably gone off to find food or water or was in search of another good place to feed. Sometimes the mother deer may be gone from her babies for hours, but she will never desert them; she is always ready and willing to protect her

young, and unless the mother deer has been shot by some one the baby fawns will be cared for. If a person sees a fawn which seems deserted he should notify the forest ranger. I have been told that the men whose business it is to live in the forests and protect the wild animals (they are called forest rangers) are very often asked by kind-hearted people to let them keep 'abandoned' and 'starving' fawns.

"If fawns are left alone and not taken up by anyone they will always wait for their mother near the place where they were last fed. And they will be fed as Nature meant they should be fed. The fawns live on milk. They suckle their mother just as a young calf suckles the mother cow, and both of you have seen how our old Bossie cow gives dinner to her calf. But sometimes the rangers do find fawns whose mothers have been killed by thoughtless men, and one ranger who found two helpless baby deer, who were very weak from starvation, took them out of the forest to a family on a very, very large ranch. He knew that this family loved deer for there were 2000 head of deer which they allowed to roam all over their great ranch, and those deer were never hunted. The owner of the ranch had two little daughters and they took over the care of the two orphan deer at once, and from that day they fed them regularly. Each of the little girls put slightly warmed milk in a large bottle with a rubber nipple over the opening of the neck of the bottle, just as a human baby's nursing bottle is fixed, and the baby deer sucked the milk from the bottles.

"Those baby deer were fed that way until they no longer needed milk for food. You may well know that *kind deed* won for those little girls the love and lasting friendship of the two deer. The fawns followed their little human mothers everywhere and showed wonderful love for them, and they trusted them as long as they lived.

"The body of a fawn has no scent (that means no odor) by which a man can find her, and her pretty spotted coat helps to keep her from being seen when standing in among the high ferns and bushes in the forest. So it is only by stumbling across one that anybody is likely to see a baby deer."

"Are all deer spotted, Daddy, and do they all have horns?" asked Virginia.

"No, all deer are not spotted, Virginia," said Mr. Mann. "There are many kind of deer and in nearly all kind the father deer has horns. The father deer is called a 'buck,' and the mother deer is called a 'doe.' With the kind of deer we call the Reindeer, both buck and doe have horns; but the Musk deer have no horns. In summer deer feed on tender green growing things found in the forest, and in the winter they feed on dried grass and moss. In the far north, where the snow is very deep and covers the ground for many months of the year, the deer can live where other animals would die, for, with their sharp hoofs, they dig down and scrape away the snow and eat a certain kind of moss that grows there under the snow.

"In America the largest deer are called Moose, and in Europe the largest living deer are called Elk. The smallest deer are the Musk deer and the Muntjacs. Isn't that a funny name? Muntjacs! But it isn't hard to remember. Deer live in nearly all countries, but there are none in South Africa nor in Australia.

"The Virginia deer, known as the White-Tailed deer, is the most widely known of the deer family in this country, and is loved by everybody. This deer is very graceful in his movements and when he jumps he skims through the air as easily as a bird flies. He lives in all parts of this country from the far south to the great northern forests; the only place he is not to be found is in the open plains of the middle west, for he loves the forest and makes his home there."

"Why is he called the White-Tailed deer, Daddy; is his tail all white?" asked Virginia. "It must look funny if his body is another color."

"He is called the White-Tailed deer, Virginia, because when he is in danger and runs his tail goes up and it is pure white underneath and this white spot of the leader acts as a signal to other deer who follow him; the top of his tail is the same color as his coat, and when he is not running his tail hangs down and the only white that shows is around the edges," Mr. Mann replied.

"Now as to the deer horns we hear so much about. A deer does not have horns; he has *antlers*, and he sheds his antlers every year; that means they fall off, and then he grows new antlers. When they first show on his head they look like two little round knobs and they are very soft and are filled with blood like any other part of his body, but as they continue to grow they get hard and are covered with a sort of furry skin which looks and feels something like velvet. When the antlers are fully grown Mr. Deer scrapes this furry covering off against the rough trunks of the trees, which leaves the antlers polished."

"Father, you say a deer has antlers which are not horns. They grow on the deer's head, don't they? What is the difference between antlers and horns?" asked Tom.

"Horns are hollow, Tom, like the horns of a cow; you have seen them, you will remember," replied Mr. Mann. "Yes, antlers grow on the deer's head, but they are solid, not hollow inside. You know that you have seen pictures of horns of olden times, before brass horns or bugles were made, that were used to blow through to sound a warning or to call men together for some purpose. This kind of horn or bugle was made by cutting off the small tip end of the cow's horn as far as it was solid, until the hollow opening was reached. Well, a deer's antler could not be used for such a purpose because it would have no opening through the center."

"Tell us something about the Moose deer, Father. Is he *very* big?" asked Tom.

"Yes," replied Mr. Mann, "sometimes he weighs as much as 1000 pounds; he has *enormous* horns, and they are *very* broad, and he has a kind of a bag

that hangs down from his throat, and his legs are thick and his feet, which are hoofs, are very broad; his tail is almost no tail at all, it is so short. He has large ears which flop over, and a very broad nose; his upper lip is thick and hangs over the lower lip. The color of the Moose is brown, but not always the same shade of brown. The mother Moose is smaller and she has no horns. The Moose is not as pretty and graceful as some other kinds of deer," said Mr. Mann.

"Daddy, dear, do you know any stories about what deer have done?" asked little Virginia, who had listened with great interest in spite of eyelids that were getting heavy with sleep.

"Yes, I do," said Mr. Mann. "I know a story about the wonderful bravery of a young buck deer who tried to save his mother. This was the way it was told to me by the girl who saw it. Her name was Miriam Smith and she was spending her vacation at Siwash Lake one summer. One day she heard the hounds baying across the lake; hounds are hunting dogs, you know; and she heard shots, too, which made her feel very sad, for she knew that some wild creature was being hunted to its death by men, and all wild creatures were to her, her brothers.

"Miriam ran out and hid in some bushes to watch, and to see if she could prevent any killing. She saw a young buck deer being chased down the hillside on the other side of the lake. Then she saw a doe, the mother deer, with her baby fawn leap out from the bushes to a clear spot near where she was hidden. The mother deer didn't know what to do. She was worried and did not know which way to turn. The young buck across the lake saw the doe and the fawn and he dashed into the water and swam across the lake to reach them. Then Miriam saw three men running toward the lake led by the dogs who followed the buck, and she knew one of the men to be Bob, who was a guide for hunters. Miriam knew Bob, and Bob knew that it was wrong to follow and shoot a deer after the deer had gone into the water. When the deer goes into the water it is wrong for men to shoot him—that is what is called being in *sanctuary*.

"The buck deer ran to his mother and stood between her, the fawn, and the hunters so as to shield them from the shots of the hunters. The blood was running down his flank from the wound where he had been shot, but he stood there protecting his mother and the young fawn, where any shots that were fired would have to enter his body instead of theirs; he never thought of running away to protect himself. The fawn had fallen and lay sprawling on the ground where she had caught her leg in some branches in the underbrush.

"The hunters got into a boat and followed the buck, and when they landed they made ready to shoot again. Miriam said that she could not bear to see the deer killed, so she ran out from her hiding place and went to the side of the young buck and put her arms around his neck. He did not try to get away but pressed against her as though he knew she wanted to help him, and was his friend.



A DEER FAMILY

"The men were so surprised that they lowered their guns. She called to Bob and asked him how he could allow the men to shoot at the brave, defending buck; and she told him, too, that he knew when a deer reached the sanctuary of the water he must not be killed.

"Miriam said that Bob did not say anything to her at that time, but when the men went away he told her that he knew he was breaking the law, but he said, too, 'It may be kind of foolish, but somehow I don't think I can raise my gun on a deer again; that buck has cured me!' Bob saw how fearless and brave a deer could be when he had someone to protect, even when he knew he might be killed.

"Miriam and Bob untangled the little fawn, and they bathed the wound of the buck. His eyes lost their hunted look and he became gentle, and trusted them; then, when his legs grew steady, they led him, with the doe and the fawn, to a place where few hunters came, where the tall ferns, alders and maples made a screen for them, and Miriam and Bob heard the faint swish of the underbrush as they passed through.

"Now, that is a true story, kiddies, and one that will cause you to love your wild deer brothers all the more; so, good night to you and happy dreams," said Mr. Mann as he gave Virginia and Tom their good-night kisses and sent them to bed with thoughts of the beautiful, brave deer in their minds and love for them in their hearts.

QUESTIONS

- 1.—Is there one or are there many kind of deer?
- 2.—Where do deer live?
- 3.—Name the largest living deer in America.
- 4.—Name the largest living deer in Europe.
- 5.—Name the smallest deer.
- 6.—Is the deer intelligent and brave, and is he loving and gentle by nature?
- 7.—Tell how a deer shows his love and gratitude in return for a *kind deed* done to him.
- 8.—Can you tell a story that shows his intelligence and bravery?
- 9.—By what names are the father, mother, and baby deer known?
- 10.—What is the natural food for deer?
- 11.—What do young fawns eat, and how do they get their food?
- 12.—Should a fawn be carried off when he is found alone in the forest?
- 13.—What should be done about it?
- 14.—Is there any way of tracing a fawn by his scent?
- 15.—Have all kind of deer the same markings, and do they look alike?
- 16.—Describe the Moose deer.
- 17.—Tell what you know of the Virginia Deer.
- 18.—What grows on a deer's head and what do you know about them?

FAMILIES OF ANIMALS

Hunters seldom think of the pain of their victims or of the happy families among the wild creatures which their guns bring bitter sorrow to.

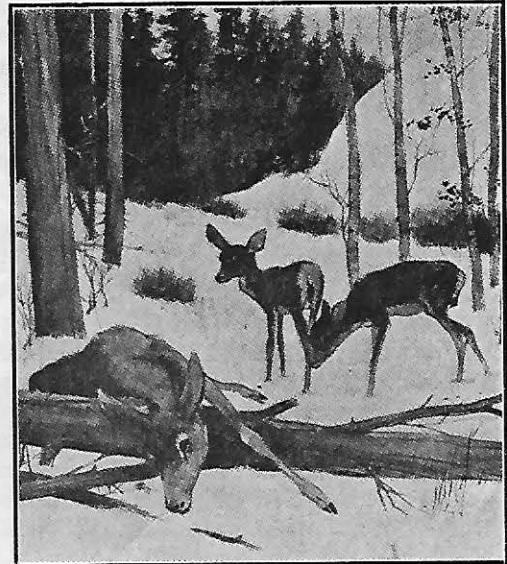
Yet we know how birds and many other creatures mourn for their dead mates, how the little ones starve and die when their fathers and mothers are killed and how animal parents grieve over their dead children.

It is all very much like our families—just how much we do not know. We know the dog mother loves her puppies, which are her babies, like a human mother; that she will freeze, burn, starve, thirst, fight and die for them with a fondness, courage, sacrifice and devotion not all human mothers are capable of. The same is true of the cat.

We know the wild creatures love and nurse their children in the same way. We know how the timid little birds fight to protect their young. But all the suffering and sorrow *hunting* causes, besides that of

A CRIME OF THE WILDS

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By E. K. Whitehead



MOTHER DEER SHOT BY HUNTERS
Courtesy of "The Denver Post"

Fawns will starve or be devoured by ferocious animals.
What do you think of the man who shot her?

JUST another mother murdered;
One more pair of weaklings left
Shivering with fear and anguish,
Weak and helpless and bereft.

Night is near; the snarling winter
Wind comes, chilling to the bone.
O, ye strong and mighty hunters,
Have ye children of your own?

Will your blood-lust ne'er be sated?
Will ye always arm and arm
And go forth and slay—forever—
Slay the thing that does no harm?

—WALTER JUAN DAVIS.

the creatures wounded or killed outright, we can only guess at. As time goes on and we grow wiser and kinder there will be less and less hunting done.

E. R. WHITEHEAD.

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