

*Be Kind to Animals Week--April 15 to 21*

# THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

The Latham Foundation Story Service  
for the Public Schools

Number 17

The Be Kind to Animals movement is not mere sentimentality. It springs from noble and uplifting impulses, and the advancement of the principle for which it stands will make the world a happier place, not only for the dumb creatures it seeks to befriend, but also for the boys and girls, the men and women whose hearts and lives will be bettered by its influence.—Kate McLemore, Montgomery, Alabama.

## Tom and Virginia Learn More About Birds

By E. M. S. FITE

*"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?"—Emerson.*

"LET me see, let me see," said Mr. Mann, as he settled himself for the evening talk with Tom and Virginia, "shall we speak of birds this evening? It has been a long time since I have thought of birds in particular; you remember I told you something about birds, but mostly about seagulls last year. However, I dare say I can tell you other things of interest which may be new to you"

"Yes, yes, birds; let's hear about birds!" exclaimed both children.

"Well, the building of a bird-house for birds to eat, such as was written about in your Kind Deeds Messenger last Christmas, is a fine thing for the winter months, but do you know that early in the fall, if the houses for nesting are put out, that many birds can be persuaded to stay for the winter who otherwise would go away? You would be surprised to find how many birds would remain for the winter if they felt sure of a house and something to eat. Then when they get used to their houses it is easy for them to decide where to build their nests in the spring. If you make your yard a bird sanctuary, Tom, they will very soon know it to be one, and they will come back to you year



**MAKE BIRDS  
YOUR  
FRIENDS**

This bird illustration was the second prize winner in Group III of the Latham Foundation Humane Poster Contest, 1926. It was drawn by Earl Anderson, Fremont High School, Oakland, California.

after year. A sanctuary, you know, is where food and water and nesting boxes are always to be found, and where there is never any shooting or other kind of killing; birds are very quick to learn of a safe location. I tell you all of this now as I may not think to remind you of it in the fall, but I feel sure that you will remember it with the love of birds in your hearts which you have."

"Daddy, dear, tell us about the little eggs," said Virginia. "They are so cunning and so pretty; I know they must never be handled, but I have peeped at them sometimes."

"Yes, Virginia dear, they are cunning and pretty, but they are more than that. Did you ever think of the egg as the baby bird's cradle? In the egg is the beginning of the little bird, and the food to make it grow, and the air, for it has to have air while in the shell—that is why the shell is porous, and through the porous shell the baby bird gets the light, too. Inside of the shell there are two very fine waterproof linings that keep the liquid from coming out through the shell. And did you ever think about the shape of the egg? Old Mother Nature is very wonderful in the way she takes care of everything. The egg is curved because that is the strongest shape and will bear the weight of the mother bird when she sits on the eggs. The arch of the egg, like the arch of a bridge over a stream, makes for strength, and yet the young bird can crack the shell when ready to come out."

Mr. Mann continued: "In every egg (you may have seen it in a hen's egg) there is a little white speck in the yolk—the yolk is the yellow part of the egg. That speck is the life germ, and no matter how the egg is turned, that germ always turns to the top so as to be next to the mother's breast for warmth. Of course, you know that a bird is made to live very differently from the way little boys and girls live. Their bones and their feather-clothes, their body and wings all show us that. The bones of a bird are not solid, nor is there marrow in them, like in the bones of an animal, but his bones are hollow so that he can force air into them from his lungs. This makes him very light so that he can fly easily. Isn't that wonderful?"

"Nothing better could be thought of for the bird's clothing—it is perfect. The feathers that cover the body are for warmth, so they are soft and downy and loose, and the feathers that are set in the wings for flying are stiff and strong. There is a little sack of oil at the base of some of the feathers which Mr. Bird uses to keep his clothes well oiled, so that when it rains his clothes shed the rain. He does not get soaked as we would if we were out in the rain. These little feathered brothers of ours have been given wings with which to fly, therefore it is very cruel to shut them up in a cage. Many men think that the worst kind of punishment is to be shut up alone. That is called solitary confinement. If this is so for a man, think how much worse it must be for a little bird made to be joyous and free, a creature with wings made to fly. We are told, too, that if a bird cannot use his wings he can never be perfectly well."

"Father, do you think that birds help the farmer more than they do harm to crops? So many farmers around here seem to want to kill the birds," asked Tom.

"It is very shortsighted on the part of the farmer to kill the birds," said Mr. Mann. "If it were not for the birds the crops would be completely ruined by insects which the birds eat; you remember I told you something about this before. It is estimated that every year insects cause a loss of more than \$1,300,000,000 to the farmers, truck raisers and fruit growers of the United States. The farmers are the producers, and whatever loss they sustain affects every consumer in the country. About every-where means, except one, has been used in an effort to exterminate the insect pests. Let's try that one—bring back the birds, the natural enemies of all insect life. Birds and birds alone can keep in check the ravages of insects. Ninety per cent of the bird life of this country has been destroyed, hence the increase in insects.' Birds do eat some grain and some fruit, Tom, but less fruit would be eaten if the farmers would take the trouble to place pans of water here and there throughout their orchards, for it has been well proven that it is thirst that causes the birds to eat much of the fruit, and surely we should do that much for the little creatures who work constantly to keep the farms free from the insect pests. Edith Carrington, an authority on this subject, says that it has been proved that the house-sparrow alone kills 4000 grubs a day while she is feeding her babies, and throughout the summer nearly all birds of about the same size are engaged in the same useful work."

"It is told of Frederick the Great (he was the ruler of Prussia, and lived many, many years ago) that he saw some sparrows eating cherries from his favorite trees. He determined to get rid of the birds, so he offered to pay for every sparrow killed. In two or three years no birds were to be found in his orchards, but he did find his trees covered with insects which destroyed the cherries and the leaves as well. Trees and grain crops, too, were destroyed, so he had to offer a reward for importing many pairs of sparrows into Prussia again, and that is the way many a farmer has had to learn that the bird is really his friend."

"You see, Father, we don't know much about birds as pets, for you have always told us it wasn't kind to shut them up in cages, so we have had no birds in the house. Are birds very smart, and can you tame them and make pets of them?" asked Tom.

"Yes, Tom," said Mr. Mann, "birds are very intelligent and quick to learn, and you can make pets of them. Years ago I knew a lady in the South who had a pet canary. Of course he was kept in a cage, but when his cage was in the house the door of the cage was left open so that he used to fly all about the room and was as much at home there as in his cage. But when the cage was hung out on the porch the door was closed. One day a beautiful Kentucky cardinal came to visit Mr. Canary and lit on top of his cage. The canary was much frightened, as he was not used to seeing such a large bird, and he scolded and fluttered about in his cage at a great rate. But when the cardinal began to sing the canary stopped fluttering and scolding and with his little head on one side he listened intently. Presently the cardinal stopped his song and the canary tried to take it up. He sang a few notes, then the cardinal sang the notes

for him again. This kept up for a long time, the cardinal giving the canary a singing lesson. And for several days the cardinal returned and gave a singing lesson to Mr. Canary, and the canary left off singing his own song until he had learned the cardinal's song, and then he learned to weave the cardinal's song in with his song. Then one day the canary sang the cardinal's song perfectly. But when the cardinal stopped coming to see him the canary was never heard to sing the cardinal's song again. This is a true story.

"This same canary would fly to the telephone when it rang and would perch on the receiver and showed great interest in what his mistress was saying, and at times she would have him talk into the receiver. He would cock his little head and listen to the voice from the other end and get terribly excited and would cheep-cheep, and sing into the receiver as if his little throat would burst. He would perch on her shoulder or hand and eat the seed which she held between her lips.

"Sparrows are particularly intelligent," continued Mr. Mann, "and it is quite easy to make friends with them and with the robins, to get them to come at a given time to be fed and to feed from your hand. You and Virginia should be able to do this quite easily because there is never any killing in our yard and the birds feel safe and free to go and come there. You might build a couple of houses and a cornbread house and see what birds you can attract, then you can make friends with them.

"There is a lady who has made a great study of birds and has written many stories about them. Her name is Olive Thorne Miller. She tells of some sparrows who were rescued from cruel street boys and taken into a home where there were many birds. One of the sparrows took a great fancy to the canaries in the house and learned their song. She said that he was shy about showing off, but when he did sing he poured out with great freedom all the warbles and quavers of the canary song, concluding a remarkable trill, and he did it better than the canaries who taught him because his natural voice is better than theirs, being richer and fuller and not so shrill. Another of the rescued sparrows was so injured that he could never fly again. He was very affectionate and loved to be petted by his mistress, and was never so happy as when he was cuddled up in her hand or held against her cheek. The third one she tells about knew the meaning of the dinner bell and insisted upon going to the dining room, where he would walk about the table and peck at the food he liked. Butter was his favorite dish, and he had a habit of pecking at the butter, then going to where the master sat at the head of the table and wiping his beak on his coat sleeve. This is told as a true story.

"Always remember," said Mr. Mann as he kissed Tom and Virginia good-night, "always remember that you can make friends of the birds by gentleness and kindness. They have feelings the same as you have and they are made happy or sad according to the way they are treated. So if you want a happy little songster for a friend be kind to him and he will repay you many times over in the way that only he can. Of course you understand that a bird who has been born and raised in a cage should

never be turned loose outdoors, for he would not know how to care for himself; but he may be given the freedom of the house or a room without harm."

## QUESTIONS

1. What is in the bird's egg?
2. Why is the shell curved, and what can you tell about the shell?
3. What can you tell about the bird's clothing?
4. How do birds make their feathers waterproof?
5. What can you tell about his bones?
6. Why do birds eat so much fruit?
7. How can this be prevented?
8. Should birds be killed because they eat some of the crops?
9. What happens to the crops when all of the birds are killed off?
10. How are birds friends to the farmers?
11. How can you get birds to stay with you for the winter?
12. Can we make friends of birds without caging them?
13. Why should we not cage birds?
14. What is a bird sanctuary?

## The 1928 Easter Egg Hunt

**O**AKLAND goes on record this Easter as taking a stand against the cruel custom of giving live rabbits to children for prizes at the Easter egg hunt. Instead of this barbarous custom a bag of candy eggs will be given each child. To the Oakland Tribune is due the credit for this change. After observing the suffering of the rabbits last year the Tribune, under whose auspices the Easter celebration is held, decided against a further exploitation of the little creatures.

As a result of complaints received by The Latham Foundation in regard to the fate of rabbits presented to children in Oakland and San Francisco on Easter of last year, the Foundation undertook a painstaking survey of the names and addresses of the children receiving the rabbits.

Two weeks later a house-to-house tour of investigation was made to ascertain the condition of the animals; very few, in fact much less than half, were found in good condition. The balance had died, been killed or run away. The official report of the Foundation representative closes with this: "Note—The majority of people stated that they did not think it right to give live rabbits. They have not got the proper place to keep them, so it is a hardship on the rabbit. If the rabbit dies or it is necessary to part with it, the child grieves. Some said voluntarily that the child would be as well satisfied with a toy." The terror of the small animals handled by many rough children was painful to witness.

The Latham Foundation has entered a protest against this custom with the San Francisco Park Commissioners, believing that when the well-meaning donors of the live rabbits were fully informed of the cruelty involved they would gladly substitute candy bunnies or toys. They petitioned the Commission to endorse the substitution.

The Superintendent and Deputies of Education in San Francisco discussed this petition in meeting and it was favored without a dissenting voice. It

was also endorsed by the California State Humane Association and by the San Francisco S. P. C. A.

The Latham Foundation urges The Kind Deeds Clubs and the humane workers throughout the state, wherever this Easter custom obtains, of giving either chickens or rabbits to children, to be active in behalf of the candy or toy substitutes. With the kindest intention in the world a small child will injure a live rabbit or chicken through ignorance as to the handling or care of them. Here are a few things it is well to know about the care of a rabbit:

#### The Care of Your Rabbit

To keep a pet rabbit gentle, healthy and happy, he needs the same kind of thought and tender care that your pet dog or cat needs.

#### What to Feed Him

It is well to have regular daily feeding times for a rabbit, the same as for any other pet, and to learn how much food to put in the trough by watching the amount that he eats at a meal; uneaten food should never be allowed to remain over night to dry up and clutter up the hutch. A rabbit's teeth are so placed in the mouth that they are used for grinding, so he likes root vegetables and twigs and fresh bark on which to grind his teeth and keep them in good condition; he likes green vegetables, fruit, grain and clover. Freshly picked vegetables wet with dew are an especial dainty with him, so if the lettuce, celery tops and other greens which are to be fed him are first dipped in water and well shaken, so that the surplus water is got rid of, master rabbit will be found to be a most grateful little animal.

#### The Rabbit House

The little rabbit house, or hutch, as it is called, should have two rooms, one of which should be dark for Bunnie to sleep in or for the baby rabbits to stay in if the pet happens to be a mother rabbit. The large room should have an open front on one of its four sides, and this should be covered with wire netting, with a piece of heavy canvas or carpet tacked across the top which may be dropped down over the wire, like a curtain, on cold or rainy nights. The hutch should be built of double thick, matched boards if possible. It should have a sloping roof and plenty of small holes bored in the floor for drainage, as rabbits like and need dry living quarters; it should be raised off the ground and placed where it will be protected from the wind, but have plenty of fresh air and good ventilation.

In the front or larger room there should be a trough for food and a dish in one corner for drinking water. It is a mistaken idea that rabbits do not drink water; they need fresh drinking water every day. The bedding should be placed in the dark room, and it should be of dry hay, or shavings, or excelsior; dry hay is the best. Grass should never be used for bedding. A rabbit likes to make his own bed, and to make it extra soft and comfortable

he will often pull bits of fur from his own breast with which to line it.

#### The Yard or Run

If you live in the country your rabbit may be allowed to run loose in the yard, but in town he will need a specially built yard to run in. To build such a yard dig a trench 12 inches deep around four sides of the space to be enclosed. In the bottom of this trench set a chicken wire fence, 6 feet high, which should be well packed down with earth until the trench is filled even with the surface of the ground. Rabbits like to dig and will make an effort to dig under the fence, but when they find that the wire extends down 12 inches they are likely to discontinue their efforts, as they seldom dig deeper than 12 or 18 inches.

#### Things to Remember

The rabbit is by nature a timid animal and should always be treated and handled with extreme gentleness. He should never be chased.

When lifting a rabbit do not lift him by his ears without also putting one hand under his haunches to support his weight.

Feed your rabbit at regular hours. Wash out his drinking dish and fill it with fresh water every day. Set the drinking dish at a place in the hutch where he is least likely to turn it over.

Give the hutch a thorough cleaning twice a week at least. Never permit it to become damp.

Rabbits must have fresh air and freedom to run about if they are to be healthy. For that reason one SHOULD NEVER BE KEPT IN THE HOUSE AS A "HOUSE PET." It is better not to have a rabbit for a pet if the conditions are such that he cannot be made comfortable and happy in his surroundings.

#### THE VALUE PLACED UPON HUMANE THOUGHT BY ONE TEACHER

WHEN mailing in the essays for the contest from the Alviso School to The Latham Foundation, Mrs. Marie Dutra wrote in the letter which accompanied them: "These little papers, although they do not bring in a prize, have made the children more thoughtful, more loving, and more kind, if I may put it so. There is a difference since they belong to The Kind Deeds Club! (The underlined words are hers.)"

"And, may I add, your stories are a source of pleasure to the children. Each month brings this question: 'Has the Kind Deeds story come yet, Mrs. Dutra?' Not only do the children look for the stories, but so do I. They give me extra material to work with—the information they contain, the good questions, and the lessons they teach."

Such encouragement is very helpful to the Foundation workers. Thank you, Mrs. Dutra.

#### FAIRVIEW ACTIVITIES

AND now comes the news that The Kind Deeds Club members of the Fairview School are building a real Bird Bath. What do you think of that? They are building it in the school yard from rocks and cement. The bath is to be shallow, as must be any bath the birds will use, and as they have no running water in the yard part of their duties will be to keep it filled with water. Already the boy who is to attend to this duty during the summer has been elected to the job. He lives next to the school. Now, isn't that a splendid Kind Deed?



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