

THE KIND DEEDS MESSENGER

The Latham Foundation Story Service
for the Public Schools

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Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchell Stephenson Fite

IN the death of Mrs. Fite at Stockton, California, on June 29th, the Latham Foundation sustains an irreparable loss. Mrs. Fite was born of southern parents and was educated at Knoxville, Tennessee. She married Campbell Colwell Fite, M. D., also of Tennessee, who later located in New York City, where he became well-known as a brain and nerve specialist. In the long illness and death of Dr. Fite she experienced the most tragic event of her life.

Mrs. Fite was well known in the world of art and music. She was for many years an active member of the Pen and Brush Club of New York City and she established offices at Carnegie Hall as Concert Director. She presented to the public many of the notables of that period, including Mme. Sembrich, Brabazon Lowther and Michael Elliott. She was also impressario of the Pittsburgh Symphony. She terminated after a severe illness her career as musical director to come to the Pacific Coast, where she became manager for the San Francisco branch of the Behymer Musical Bureau, which she conducted very successfully.

She became well equipped to undertake the work of The Latham Foundation, having been for a period of eight years with Funk and Wagnall as associate editor of *The Circle Magazine* and she was the only woman editor on their staff as long as they owned that periodical. When this became the property of The Circle Publishing Company Mrs. Fite was retained as managing editor.

At heart Mrs. Fite was a profound humanitarian, seeking to express in universal brotherhood her ideal of the relation which should exist as a fundamental basis of living. With her background intellectually and spiritually she gave to The Latham Foundation the best that her years of service and achievement had brought to her. Through her splendid work she has awakened a wider range of interest in humane education and has helped to firmly establish in the public mind the urgent need of public school participation to eliminate during the early years of childhood the tendency to cruelty, which is responsible for so much of the crime of today.

To our thousands of children in the public schools Mrs. Fite will be lovingly remembered for her stories of Mr. Mann, Tom and Virginia, who became through her vivid portrayal of them living characters and helpful friends. Mrs. Fite's last service to the work was to prepare the stories for the 1928-29 issues of THE MESSENGER in anticipation that her life might not be prolonged here.

Mr. Herbert H. Hallett, Director Department Humane Education State Commission for Protection of Children and Animals, pays Mrs. Fite a tribute which all who remember the value to the world of her devoted service appreciate for its sympathetic understanding of her character and achievements: "Her sterling character and brilliant intellectual attainments," he writes, "were beautifully blended with that tenderness only the truly great possess. No one more than Mrs. Fite would want the work so near her own and all our hearts to 'carry on' with ever-increasing enthusiasm, and I shall always think of her with reverence and in the beautiful memory she has left will receive added inspiration to do all possible to bring about the better day for all of God's helpless creatures."



Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchell Stephenson Fite

*For Life is ever Lord of Death
And Love can never lose its own!*
WHITTIER.

*"I carry adornments on my
soul,
I go caparisoned in gems un-
seen."*

We have received an interesting letter from Oamaru, New Zealand, where two KIND DEEDS CLUBS have already been established. During ANIMAL WELFARE WEEK, October 25 to 31, Mr. J. A. Forbes, the founder of the Clubs, plans to distribute 1000 copies of our KIND DEEDS MESSENGER. Mr. Forbes states that he has worked with young people for the last fifty years, but no movement he has been connected with has appealed to him so strongly as does that of the KIND DEEDS CLUB.

We have also received an order from Melbourne, Australia, for 300 copies monthly of the KIND DEEDS MESSENGER. We look forward to splendid reports regarding humane work in and outside of the schools from both of these distant countries.

We are glad to be able to announce that the poster showing cruelty of trapping, by Bob Oyarzo of the Technical High School, Oakland, which won a first special prize in the Latham Foundation Humane Poster Contest this year, also received a five dollar prize in the American Humane Association Competition.

Our Little Brother Flat-Tail

By E. M. S. FITE

"OUR Brother Flat-Tail," said Mr. Mann one evening at story hour to Tom and Virginia, "Our Brother Flat-Tail is a most useful and peace-loving animal. In spite of which man is his worst enemy; other enemies are the otter, the lion, the lynx, the coyote, the wolf and the bear. The hawks and owls, too, go after the young Flat-Tails and catch them when they can."

"Who is Brother Flat-Tail?" asked Virginia. "I never heard of any such animal."

"By Brother Flat-Tail I mean the beaver. He has to be constantly on the watch for these enemies of his. Men set traps for him, the very wicked steel traps. They want him for his beautiful fur. Sometimes he gnaws his foot off to get free. Can you feel how he suffers? If the trapper finds him still alive in the trap, Brother Flat-Tail puts up both of his little forepaws, which are like hands, to shield his head from the hard blows of the trapper, for that is the way the trapper kills him. How very dreadful to kill so brutally such a peace-loving little creature. Enos Mills, who made a study of the beaver and his habits for twenty-seven years, says 'As animal life goes, that of the beaver stands among the best. That he is an intelligent, reasoning animal I have long believed. His life is full of industry and is rich in repose. He is home-loving and avoids fighting.'"

"Please tell us what the beaver does, Daddy, I have never seen one," said Tom.

"Well, the beaver, or as I call him Brother Flat-Tail, is a water animal. He slides and dives quickly and deep in the water and swims very gracefully, but on land he looks awkward. He builds his house partly under the water and also builds dams across streams. If there is not enough feeling ground for him,—that means where he can get the kind of food he likes,—he will build a dam across the creek and flood a certain amount of ground to one side, making marsh land of it. He is a vegetarian; that is, he does not eat fish nor flesh of any kind. He prefers young aspen, willow, cottonwood trees and the bark of the birch, alder and maple. He likes berries and mushrooms, too, and sedge grass and leaves.

"Brother Flat-Tail is one of the busiest little animal workers we have, his longest period of labor being in September and October when he gets ready for winter. In getting food he often has to meet many dangers and overcome big obstacles, all of which seems to show he is a clear thinking animal. You have heard the saying 'as busy as a beaver.' But he knows how to loaf and have a good time, too, when it is the *right* time. In the summer he is a great loafer. But in the fall of the year when he selects a place in a creek where he wants to build a house and a dam, he sets to work with a will to cut down trees. He prefers to cut trees less than four or six inches in diameter, that means through from one side to the other. But he cuts trees larger than that, sometimes 12 to 15 inches, and one man reported seeing a tree 3 feet 6 inches in diameter in Montana which a beaver

had cut down. He works mostly at night; perhaps for fear of man and his gun.

"When Brother Flat-Tail decides to get to work he picks out his tree as near the water as possible and, with his forepaws against the tree, he sits upright, with his tail out behind him to act as a prop, or else with it folded under him as a seat, and starts to bite into the tree about 16 inches up from the ground. His most valuable tools are his four large, strong front teeth. These teeth grow fast, are self-sharpening, and the muscles which control them are most powerful."

"Daddy, what color is Brother Flat-Tail?" asked Virginia.

"He is usually reddish brown in color, Virginia, but some have been seen who are white or black. The fur is so thick and beautiful that man kills him to get it. He spends a great deal of time combing it out and keeping it clean. The fur next to the body is waterproof. His two hind feet are large and webbed like the feet of a goose, which helps him in swimming, you know. The second claw of each hind foot is double and is used in combing the fur. His fore feet are more like little hands and he uses them much as you have seen monkeys use their hands; he can carry sticks and straw and other things in his forepaws. There are little flaps fitted to his mouth, ears and nostrils by which he can shut out the water. But the queer thing about a beaver that marks him as entirely different from other animals is his tail, which is my reason for calling him Brother Flat-Tail. His tail is very broad and flat and looks as if it were covered with scales, but it isn't. It is the black skin on it that looks that way; it is a powerful muscle which he uses in many ways. His eyes are very weak and he depends more upon his sense of smell and on his sense of hearing to protect him, which is *very* highly developed.

"Now then to get back to Brother Flat-Tail who is getting busy to build his home and a dam across the creek he has chosen. What do we find him doing first? Who can tell me," asked Mr. Mann.

"I know, I know," cried Virginia, "he goes out and selects his trees that he is to cut down."

"Well," replied Mr. Mann, "that is a good start. But instead of calling all of them trees, we will call some of them saplings, which are young trees, for when Brother Flat-Tail can find plenty of young green saplings to build with he chooses them. Now he is a very clever engineer or builder. Think of it: he has taught us humans many useful things about building. It is a debt we've never paid. It takes him about one hour to cut down a four-inch sapling. Now how does he get his trees to the pond? Very skillfully for he digs a canal down which he floats the trees to where he is to build the dam. After he has cut down his tree the next thing he does is to cut off the large branches, leaving on the smallest branches and twigs. Then he cuts the trunk up in sections. When he gets his trees to the creek he places them with the cut end

up stream and the ends with the branches down stream. This makes the large ends stand up higher than the lower bushy ends. Next he braces all these and if there is much of a current in the stream he weights them down with mud and stones. When using mud he makes his tail plaster it down. This done, he places other trunks across, some being woven through, so that his dam is well braced and the water cannot wash it away.

"Sometimes a dam will be built and added to from time to time until it is very large indeed, and the Flat-Tail family will live in their house near it for several generations. Again he may build a small dam and leave it after a short while. All Flat-Tails do not build equally well. Their work is just like that of people; it is individual; some of them are more careful builders than others. They all have, however, one quality in common; they are all very cleanly in their habits, the insides of their houses showing this."

"Why does the beaver want the pond deep that the dam forms? you ask. As Flat-Tail is a water animal, he wants the water deep so that he can move about in safety and carry his food supplies with the greatest ease. And then he can plunge into it when chased by his enemies.

"Flat-Tail seldom builds a dam straight across a stream. Nearly always he builds a very crooked dam and when finished it is a regular highway for the forest folk, the deer, foxes and other animals crossing from one side of the stream to the other on the top. Such a dam more often than not changes the course of the water. That in turn changes the country all about, for by holding back the waters and enlarging the stream it enriches the land, brings new birds, nourishes new plant-life. It provides a harbor and a home for fish through the changing seasons and there is much more of good that Flat-Tail's dam does of which you can learn by reading. When he gets everything placed as he wants it, he fills in the openings with mud and grass and as the water flows down against it all of the twigs and leaves and other floating things are sucked into and against the dam and help to fill the crevices."

"But what about Flat-Tail's house, Father?" asked Tom. "Does he build his house under water?"

"Sometimes he does but not always," replied Mr. Mann. "Sometimes he builds it right on the edge of the water or again it may be on the land several feet away. It is usually dome-shaped and the main room is large, about 12 feet across and at times as much as 20 feet. It is always snug and clean and has smooth walls. Some houses are built with a mud support in the center, but not all of them. A house usually has two entrances and some of them have more. They all have inclined passage ways or tunnels. The upper opening of these entrances is in the floor of the main room a few inches above the water level and the lower opening in the bottom of the pond under about three feet of water. This leads up through the cellar which is partly filled with water, and is under the main room. The house is built of mud and sticks and thickly plastered on the outside with mud as winter comes on. Brother Flat-Tail makes his bed of grass, leaves or moss, but more often of thin split pieces of wood. Flat-Tail has to watch carefully that ice does not cover the opening to his house in the winter. It is very necessary that his doorways be kept clear. You see he stores his winter

food supply of tender green woods in a place near his house in the bottom of the pond and he must be able to reach it. He can swim under the ice to his storehouse, by going down through the cellar."

"How many years do beavers live, Daddy?" asked Virginia.

"Ten or twelve years and sometimes longer," replied Mr. Mann. "Brother Flat-Tail is full grown about his third summer and then he chooses a mate and they go off to build for themselves. It has been proved by careful study of beavers and their habits that they make good parents and also that the mother beaver is good to orphans. Often she will adopt and care for them along with her own young. When mother beaver has babies to care for and needs the room the father does not stay in the home, but leaves it to her so that she will not be disturbed. The eyes of the babies are open from the start and in two weeks' time they are in the water. Mr. Mills tells how he saw a father and a mother beaver offer their lives to save their babies. He calls this noble and so do I."

"But they are quite wild, aren't they, Father? You can't make pets of them, can you?" asked Tom.

"Indeed you can, Tom," replied his father. "I will tell you what Enos Mills has had to say about that very thing from his own experience. He says that when he was on a trail in western Montana a trapper gave him a young beaver. He was just a baby, about one month old, and ate only twigs and tender bark. He named the little fellow Diver and in a short time he was as chummy as a young puppy. Mr. Mills said that he played about the camp in the evening and often swam in the nearby water. At times he played at dam building and gnawed down trees about the size of a lead pencil. He always came when Mr. Mills whistled for him. At night he usually slept under the edge of the canvas on which Mr. Mills spread his bedding and in the daytime he traveled on top of the pack on the horse's back. He liked that and never wanted to be taken down. When his master was packing, making ready for a start, Diver would come close. Before his master was quite ready for him he would stand up on his hind feet, hold up his hands and beg in a whining sort of muttering voice, pleading to be lifted up at once to his seat on the pack. Can't you just see that cunning little creature?"

"One evening they camped near a stream and Diver went in for his swim and left the stream on the opposite side to the camp, where he dug out the roots of the wild Oregon grape and started to eat them. Just then a coyote dashed out from his hiding place behind a boulder, which is a big rock, and made straight for Diver; Diver dodged and gave a crying wail like a frightened child; he rolled into the water and dived and swam across the stream under the water and came out near where his master sat on a log. Diver crawled quickly behind the log and hid under his master's coat-tail.

"It seems that the cry that Diver gave was heard by the beavers whose home was in a pond about a quarter of a mile up that stream. Very soon two old beavers were seen swimming cautiously down the stream. They held their heads low and circled about in the water. They scented the place where the coyote had gone for Diver and waded out of the stream and sniffed all about. One came out on the shore where Diver and his master were, but suspected danger in

the man's presence. He gave a low whistle and Diver came out to see what was going on, but the old ones scuttled back into the water when Mr. Mills moved and gave two or three hard slaps to the water with their tails, which is always the sign of danger they give to their brothers.

"At the end of his outing, Mr. Mills gave Diver for a pet to two children who lived on Snake River. Diver loved them and followed them about and romped with them like another child, but when he was three years old he was shot by a hunter who was in that region.

"Mr. Mills had other experiences with beavers that made him know that beavers can be tamed very easily, their great intelligence making them see no harm in meant. All that causes us to feel doubly sad and doubly sympathetic in regard to our peaceful Little Brothers who cannot speak for themselves. It is hard to accomplish much so long as men think they have the right to kill every animal they see in the wilds and they have killed off nearly all of the beavers.

"Now kiddies," said Mr. Mann, "I have told you but a small part of the life of our wonderful little Brother Flat-Tail. He is world-famous as a great engineer when it comes to building but that hasn't protected him from men's greed. He and his kin build and live in great colonies, for he doesn't live just to himself. I feel sure that you will like to read up on the subject so as to know more about him."

Mr. Mills says that more beavers would reduce river and harbor appropriations, make rivers more manageable, keep America beautiful. He thinks they ought to have a larger place in our hearts.

"Thank you, thank you, Daddy!" exclaimed both children, "Flat-Tail's story is a fine one, a regular dandy!"

QUESTIONS

1. Is the beaver a land or water animal?
2. Tell what the beaver has that marks him as different from other animals.
3. Tell how he lives and what he eats.
4. Has man learned anything from him?
5. Has man appreciated this? Has he repaid him?
6. Tell how the beaver builds his dam, house, storehouse and where.
7. Is the beaver a fighting animal or one of gentle nature?
8. Why does he need to fear man?
9. Do beavers love their young?
10. What often happens to trapped animals that are not killed instantly?
11. Is the steel trap used generally for getting other fur-bearing animals?
12. Is trapping fair play? Give your reasons for what you think regarding this.
13. In what way has the beaver's work been good for the country?
14. Do you know Longfellow's lines in *HIAWATHA* about the beaver? Mary Howitt's poem: "THE BEAVER"?

How to Form Kind Deeds Clubs

By request we are reprinting the directions for forming a Latham Foundation KIND DEEDS CLUB, and also some hints as to conducting the club.

First there is the *pledge* to be learned by each child who wishes to become a member. The pledge—"I will try to be kind to every living creature and to cultivate a spirit of protection toward all who are weaker than myself, and I will try to treat animals as I would wish to be treated if I were in their place"—is printed at the top of a club enrollment card, on which there is space for the members to sign their names. Each child should understand what it means to take a pledge—that it should not be done thoughtlessly.

Next the *poem* is to be learned so that the child understands it and may tell in his or her own words the meaning

of the poem. Here are two, either of which may be used, according to the age of the child:

BE KIND TO LIVING THINGS

Little children, bright and fair,	Kind not only to our friends,
Blest with every needful care,	Those on whom our life depends,
Always bear this thing in mind,	Kind not only to the poor,
God commands us to be kind,	Those who poverty endure:

But, in spite of form or feature,
Kind to every living creature,
Never pain or anguish bring
Even to the smallest thing.

ON KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

EDGAR A. GUEST

They have no voice to ask us	We call them God's dumb
For the pity which they need,	creatures,
With shame they cannot task us	And yet we know they feel,
How'er their hearts may	For oft their anguished features
bleed.	Their sufferings reveal.

However they despise us	They cannot ask for kindness,
For all the hurts they bear,	Nor for our mercy plead,
They cannot criticize us	Yet cruel is our blindness
Or say that we're unfair,	Which does not see their need.

World-over, town or city,
God trusts us with this task;
To give our love and pity
To those who cannot ask.

When these things have been done the children may get together, and with the advice and counsel of their teacher form their club by electing a President, a Secretary and a Treasurer from among their own members. It is well to have a regular time set for the club meetings, once a week or once a month, as desired. The President should preside at the meetings, and the Secretary should keep a record of all reports of Kind Deeds done, which are handed in. When the Treasurer calls the roll it is suggested that each member pay his or her dues by telling in very few words a kind deed done. This is the way of paying "do's" which is much nicer than handling money, and of greater value.

To win the *KIND DEEDS BUTTON*, which is the next step, a club member must do two *KIND DEEDS*, one to a human being and one to an animal. Then when the Secretary reports to the Foundation the number of buttons earned and the *KIND DEEDS* that earned them the buttons will be mailed to the class teacher, who will distribute them. Should a member forget the pledge taken and do an unkind deed the button will be forfeited and must be given to the teacher to keep until it is again earned. The members decide in meeting if a button has been forfeited and when it has been re-earned. A member doing an unkind deed is in honor bound to report it to members in meeting. Members should be encouraged to perform all duties connected with their club and call upon their teacher when necessary in an advisory capacity only.

It will be found that when a child really tries to live up to the pledge a greater courtesy and consideration will extend to playmates and adults in consequence of the constant thought and care in regard to pets and other animals. The desire to see justice and kindness meted out to all living creatures will in time become second nature. The desire for ruthless destruction of things, animate or inanimate, which appears to be inborn in some natures, will be modified and in most instances entirely eradicated.

THE PUZZLE

We are sorry but the *PUZZLE*, which none of you filled in correctly and which we promised to reprint, has been crowded out. Some of you may be able to look it up in the No. 16 issue and try for the prizes again. The missing words begin with b, b, s and b.



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