

NATURE STORIES FOR  
YOUNG READERS

*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.

## PREFACE.

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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

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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.

## TO THE CHILDREN.

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.

When we learn so many wonderful things of these "little people" about us, they seem almost like fairies, do they not?

Remember that you are a giant in this fairy-land.

I hope you will try to be a gentle giant.

Do not harm them, if you can help it.

Enjoy them by looking at them, just as you do the bright sunshine, the blue hills, and the golden sunset and every other beautiful thing in this great world of ours.

Your friend,

FLORENCE BASS.

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## NATURE STORIES FOR YOUNG READERS.

### A LITTLE MOTHER.

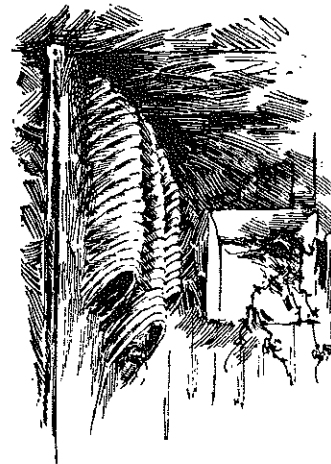
Children, did you ever think how much your mothers do for you?

They give you good things to eat,



clothes to wear,  
and help to make  
a pleasant home  
for you.

Let us look at  
some of the very  
"little people"  
about us.



See how these little mothers take care of their little ones.

Here is a picture of a little mother. She is Mrs. Mud Wasp. She is working very hard.

She seems never to stop for a minute.

What can she be doing?

Just now she is building her house.

See her come with a little ball of mud.

Watch her spread out this mud with her jaws.

She begins at the middle and spreads it down one side.

Now see her dart away. She has gone for more soft mud.

Soon she comes back with another piece.

She begins at the top and spreads it out on the other side.

What a noise she makes as she works!

Soon she will have one room done.

Then she goes in and leaves a little egg.

Now she must find something for her baby to eat, when it creeps out of that egg.

What do you suppose she gets? Why! Little spiders!

I have seen as many as eight spiders put in for one baby wasp to eat.

Perhaps it likes them as well as you and I like fried chicken, which our mothers get for us.

Mother Wasp walls up these spiders in a room with her egg.

Perhaps she makes many more rooms like this.



Then she flies away and never comes back.

She never sees her own little ones.

Perhaps she knows that she has taken all the care of them that they need.



#### THE LITTLE CHILDREN.

Would you like to know what goes on inside this mud house? I will tell you about it.

A tiny white grub creeps out of each of those eggs. It looks like a little worm.

"What!" you say, "a worm out of a wasp's egg!"

Yes, that is just what a baby wasp looks like.

It eats the spiders Mrs. Wasp left for it.

It grows bigger very fast.

I fear it does not know how hard its mother worked to get all that food for it and make its house.

After a while it goes to sleep in a little case.

It seems to be dead, but it is not.

It is only growing to be a wasp like its mother.

By and by it wakes up, — a full-grown wasp.

It never grows any more.

It bites a hole through its mud house and flies away.

Do you think it knows yet how much its mother did for it?

We cannot tell that.

It surely knows how to do the same things for its own little ones.

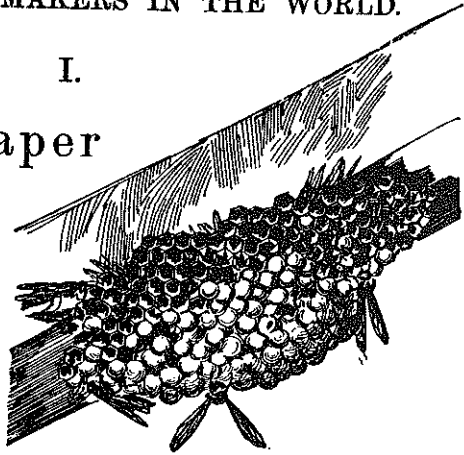
## WASP &amp; CO.

OLDEST PAPER MAKERS IN THE WORLD.

## I.

See this paper  
house.

It belongs to  
Mrs. Wasp. She  
is a cousin of  
Mrs. Mud Wasp.



She makes a much finer house than  
her cousin.

Her house is all made of paper.

Where do you suppose she got the  
paper? Can you guess?

Why! She made it her-  
self—every bit of it.

Her folks knew how to  
make paper long before men did.

She picks little pieces off of old



fence rails. She bites them up fine  
and makes them into paper.

But I must tell you the story of  
Mrs. Wasp and her house.

Then you will see what a wise  
little being she is.

She did not have this pretty house  
to live in last winter.

She slept in a little crack in the  
barn.

It was very hard to keep from  
freezing.

She did not need to come out to  
get anything to eat.