

# CURING A PREJUDICE Little Stories From Nature Written for The Junior Call

By William F. File

By Lillian Cone

WILL HINSDALE, wandering down a country road in the glow of an August sunset, peered through Barclay's hospitably open gate, then emitted a cheerful whistle.

"Come in, Will, come in," the call came simultaneously from a half a dozen throats.

"I didn't know whether to stop here or go on to Barstow's, but I knew you would be somewhere exchanging vacation experiences," he remarked, advancing among the group and glancing about for a desirable spot to deposit his 5 feet 10 of lanky boyhood.

"Here, Will, take this," and Joe Barclay jerked a pillow from under Lou Barstow's curly head. Will caught the cushion and gave it a toss, then planted himself comfortably.

"Thanky, kindly, Lawrence," he remarked to the defrauded one with extreme politeness. "Hello, Belle! Howdy, Edith! Lucile, why don't you rub your wits' head?" He contemplated the bounding group approvingly. "Seems good to see you all again," he continued, "though it strikes me the air is a trifle foggy. What ails it?"

"Teachers," Belle Fairchild answered disdainfully. "Will jumped and turned about hastily when he remarked:

"I know you don't have to go to our school, and never did," Lucile said argumentatively, "but just the same you know how we all adore Miss Hanford; and now to put up with Miss Sedgwick!"

"Awful!" Will soothingly agreed. "And what is to become of Miss Hanford, the beloved?"

"She's going to be married." This statement came from several disgusted voices.

"I see," Will's interest was profound. "And that—what vile Miss Sedgwick did it all?"

"Well, no," but before any one had gathered up his reasoning powers sufficiently to explain Miss Hanford's culpability Will had fallen over on his cushion in a fit of irrepressible laughter.

"Will be blest if I see the joke," Joe Barclay protested, grinning in spite of his eyes.

"Will got up and wiped his eyes. "A sudden fit of homesickness overwhelmed me," he explained. "Your mournful predicament brought me back to an experience of my own that occurred the year I left Massachusetts."

"That's the last," Edith remarked. "Tell us about it, Will."

"Yes," agreed Joe, "if it's so extremely funny, let's hear about it by all means."

"I laughed again, then looked sabbily over the circle of interested young faces.

"I believe I will," he said, "although there is only one person besides me who knows the whole story. I think it may be a good thing for you people to hear how easily a prejudice can be conceived and cured." He thumped the pillow with a jovial wink at Lou, and settled himself thereon. Will's voice was mellow and clear and he was an easy story teller.

"It happened the year I left home," he began, "the school I attended there was a small one, never over 25 or 30 pupils. There were generally quite a class of large boys and perhaps it was the reason that we, as a rule, had a man teacher."

"Mr. Hurd had the school for several years. He was a jolly chap; a good teacher, and we were all devoted to him. So when he resigned at the Christmas vacation we felt quite ill at ease."

"At this time there was a class of boys, myself being one, that was to graduate the following June. Mr. Hurd had taken lots of interest in us, and somehow we got it into our heads that we would miss him very much, but him. We tried hard to persuade him to stay, but it was no use, I suppose, liking him as well as we did, no less person than Teddy R. would have pacified us anyway, so you may imagine our disgust when we heard we were to have a girl teacher. Not an experienced woman, mind you, but a dinky cub of a girl just out of normal school."

"We got together, and after talking it over, decided that such a proceeding was an insult to our manhood and it was our duty to put a stop to it."

"Father was on the school board at the time, so we thought first of all had better enter our protest with him, as possibly consideration of his son's future might cause him to use his influence against this objectionable person. Imagine, if you can, how I felt when dad just went into howls of laughter and told me that he and he alone had foisted this silly girl upon the school."

"Here Lucile entered protest. "Perhaps she wasn't silly," Will waved her away. "Of course she was, just as much as Miss Sedgwick is obnoxious; now wait till I get there."

"It seems," Will took up his narrative, "that Miss Carroll was the daughter of an old college chum of dad's and had written to him for assistance in getting a school, and even though the rest of the board preferred a man, he persisted till he got his way. And you just wait till you see her," he said, patting me as though I was a 4 year old. "You boys will be falling over each other to get the inside track."

"I felt about as small as a 4 year old, too, when I had to go to those boys and tell them father's share in getting that girl, and how he treated our protest."

"Now," I told them, "we've given the school board to understand how we feel and they choose to disregard us. I propose we attend to this matter in our own way."

"I grew a lot after I made that speech," Will giggled reflectively.

"Go on," cried Lucile, "what did you do?"

"Well," continued Will, "if we had done all the things we planned that day the new teacher would have cleared out a nervous wreck, inside of a week. The only scheme that materialized, however, was where she was to open her desk the first morning and find a nest of mice there."

"There were several horrified shrieks, but Will went on unheeding.

"Because I wanted to show zeal in undoing the mischief wrought by my meddlesome daddy, I took wholly upon myself the part of getting the mice inside the desk. The other boys were to catch them and get them to me, and you can pile 'em up thick, kids," says I. "I'll put as many in the desk as you will bring."

"This was where I stood pledged the next morning, Thursday, before school when the new teacher put in her appearance at our house. More of dad's doings, you see."

"Will was so long silent at this interesting point that he had to be prodded again."

"Go on, Will," "What was she like?" "Tell us about her."

"The narrator heaved a long reminiscent sigh. "She was a peach, kids," he affirmed briefly.

"Ho, ho," sneered Lou. "While you gets a case on the teacher, breaks his pledge; goes back on his class. Ho, ho, he, he!"



"Be quiet, Lou," admonished Lucile. "Didn't Will say he did put the mice in the desk? Do go ahead, Will; don't make us wait so."

"No, I didn't go back on my pledge," Will continued, "that you must bear in mind, was to put as many mice into the desk as the boys provided."

"I didn't go back on the class, either. For to this day Miss Carroll don't know, at least from me, who my fellow conspirators were. As to having a 'case,' she wasn't that kind, in the way you mean, although she was a dandy for looks. She was more like a jolly comrade, full of fun, quick to see a joke, and make one, too, but one of those people you'd—well, you'd just rather die than have catch you sneaking or playing any low down trick."

"I'll own up I was ready to call the contract off if the others would, but if you'll believe me, I did not see one of those three kids again till Monday morning."

"They told me afterward that they had a glimpse of the new teacher before I did, and being suspicious of my powers of endurance, made a point to steer clear of me so to give me no chance to renege."

"Sunday evening, however, while I sat in the family circle listening to the new teacher playing an anthem on the piano, there came a peculiar whistle outside, that I recognized as our class call."

"Lisped out, expecting to meet the boys laden with rodents, but instead, it was Tommy Dowd—he was an apple core in a little, tow-headed brother. He thrust a box in my hand and, with an impish giggle, fled. Investigation showed three small mice inside the box; on the outside, neatly lettered in red, the warning: 'It's up to you.'"

"That night I deposited three small mice in the teacher's desk at the school house."

"The next morning," Will's voice grew impressive now, and his listeners assumed attitudes of tense expectancy. "I purposely kept away from school till just about time to slide into my seat when the bell rang. The boys hadn't given me any show, and I thought I'd let them wonder a little till events developed."

"After ringing the bell Miss Carroll was a little slow in relieving our nerves. She took our names and so on before she opened the desk; then she gave a little talk that put every one in a good humor, except perhaps we four, and I guess we were too nervous to take in anything she was saying."

"Well, after what seemed several years, she sat down and turned the key in the lock. She raised the corner a little, then let it fall with a bang. I swallowed my heart—some thing that threatened to choke me, and glared steadily at my book."

"Pretty soon Miss Carroll's voice came cool and steady: 'Thomas, have a good, brisk fire in the stove?'"

"Tommy Dowd—he was janitor—grasped a sickly 'Yes'm.'"

"Will you kindly see that the drafts are all open, Thomas," she asked again. Tommy went shuffling up to the stove."

"By this time I mustered courage enough to glance up. Miss Carroll had her apron spread over the desk and was sitting there, a little red in the face, but steady as a judge, as far as I could see."

"Some mice have made a nest here in the desk during vacation," she said, "and I think the best thing to do is to drop them into the fire, if I can get hold of them. Seems a little cruel," she added, sorrowfully, "but we must remember that it won't last an instant."

"Then she slid her hand under the apron and presently held up by the tail, wiggling and twisting, a little brown mouse."

"Oh!" gasped Lucile, and "Oh! oh!" shrieked Belle and Edith.

"Fact!" cried Will, triumphant. "Wouldn't believe a girl would walk over to the stove and dropped it in as calmly as though it was an apple core. He walked back and fished up another by the tail, and that went wigwagging after the first. Then followed the third. She had to claw around some after the last one, and by that time her face was redder than a head, but she landed it all right, and sent the squirming thing after the others; then she dropped into her chair and hid her face for a moment. We could see that she was shaking."

"Poor thing!" cried Lucile, indignant. "Bully girl!" Joe murmured in warm approval. "Bet she beat the Hurd man silly."

"She did," agreed Will, struggling a little with his voice. "She was the most popular teacher that school ever had. You ought to have been there when she stood up as sedate as pie to go on with the work. Tommy Dowd just leaped up in his seat and yelled out: 'Three cheers for the new teacher,' and you could have heard those cheers a mile off."

"Apparently the story was told, but Will's unseemly gust of laughter after a recital of so much coolness and heroism jarred upon his hearers. They eyed him speculatively."

"See here," demanded Lou, "did Miss Carroll know those mice were in the desk?"

"Even then," argued Joe, "it was mighty gritty in her to fish them out the way she did."

"It was," agreed Will with enthusiasm. "What if one of their tails had fallen off when she twirled them about?"

"Tails come off!"

"Will nodded solemnly. "Yes, think of it! I bought a dozen and we picked out the three that seemed most reliable, but you know there is always uncertainty about the tails of chocolate mice."

I HAVE thought, after reading of the shells and the ferns and the baby buffalo, that the readers of The Junior Call would be interested in some bird-stories.

Birds are among the most charming living objects and their study affords pleasure and instruction in the best sense. The variety, the habits, place of residence and the manner of building nests all offer fields for investigation that ought to keep us forever out of mischief and make the learning of useful lessons a delight to be coveted.

I used to spend days at a time in the woods studying the birds and squirrels and other animals. This was when I was a boy and lived in Illinois close to the edge of a forest where bird life and animal life was abundant, and it was there that I learned many of the sweetest, most helpful lessons of my life. So if I turn this time to you, you may know that I have been thinking of the time when I was a boy and that I am introducing some of the friends I have known all my life, and who have contributed a great deal to make my life happy and helped to keep me young.

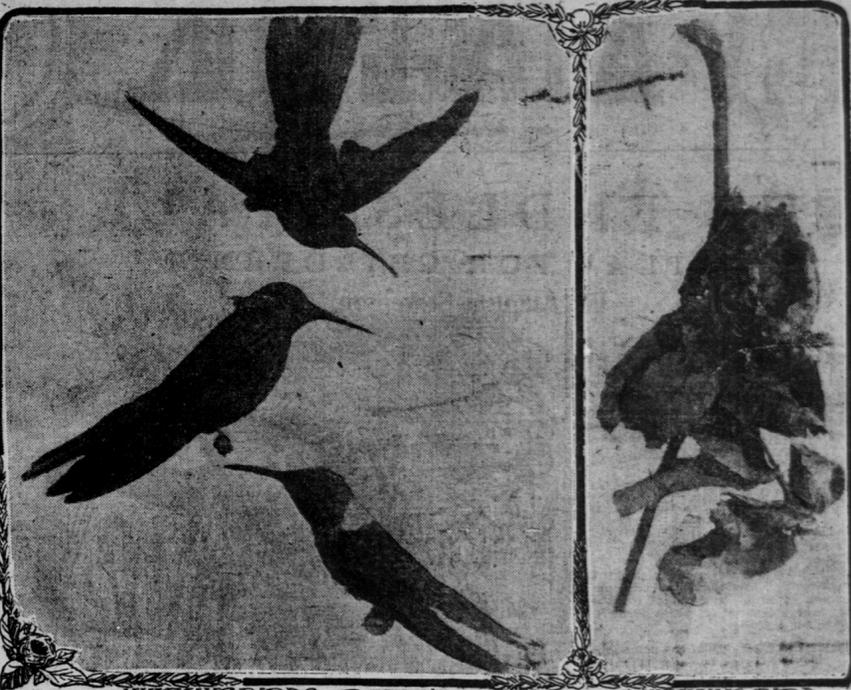
The little sprites in green and gold, the smallest of the bird family, are humming birds. They belong to a large family. There are 467 species of humming birds and they are widely distributed. Nature seems to have considered the bird tribe to be incomplete without the busy, buzzing little elf, for in every country on all the continents the humming birds are represented.

There are 17 in North America and the United States may lay claim to seven of these. One only is found in all the country east of the Rocky mountains, and California has six. The humming birds of the middle and eastern states are very plentiful and their favorite flowers are the big bell shaped trumpet flower and nasturtiums.

In our home in Illinois a big trumpet vine spread over a locust tree and it covered it with its clusters of bright red flowers. The humming birds regarded this as their special possession and the family and they are widely distributed. Nature seems to have considered the bird tribe to be incomplete without the busy, buzzing little elf, for in every country on all the continents the humming birds are represented.

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He makes his nest of plant down and lines it with feathers and to conceal it covers it with lichen, bark and leaves. He seemed to enjoy the notice we gave him.

The most familiar humming bird is the Anna. It is found throughout the entire length of the state, its range extends also into Arizona and Lower California. The nest pictured here is of the Anna humming bird and was found at a hotel in the Santa Cruz mountains.

They have built their nests and reared their young in my own doorway in Cragmont, in the Berkeley hills. Every morning about 5:30 we would hear his whirring wings as he came fluttering among the nasturtiums at our windows. He got his early morning feast and then retired, for we heard nothing more of him until breakfast time. At the same time to a minute every morning he would perch himself on a twig and sing his little song, "Te-wit, te-wit, te-wit, when, when." A singing humming bird was new to us, but there was no doubt of the song, and this species is known as the singing humming bird. We found him very willing to make friends and when we talked to him he answered. He seemed to enjoy the notice we gave him.

Another humming bird that has a wide range of habitat is the Rufus, or Nootka, or Cinnamon humming bird. It is described as having an intensely brilliant flame colored gorget, with orange and green lights, bronze green iridescent plume; rest of the plumage reddish brown. It is found among the summer flowers of Alaska and is common even above the timber line in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

The Allen humming bird is only a summer resident of California. It has a back and crown of bronze green; the throat, breast and gorget, brilliant flame color, changing to orange and green. It is a permanent resident of the Santa Catalina islands. It may frequently be seen about San Francisco bay, and he is smaller than the Anna and is very brave. He will attack birds twice his size and drive them away from his nest.

The smallest humming bird in America is the Calliope. He ranges along the coast of California and to the east to the Rocky mountains, and into Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Gorget, pinkish purple, streaked with white; upper parts, streaked with iridescent green. He builds his nest in the pine cones and covers it with bits of bark and cone to conceal it. The color is just the color of the cone and it is difficult to find the nest so cleverly is the work done.

The humming bird's nest is a very cunning little cradle, fashioned out of hair and moss and fine feathers and covered with moss from the oak tree and lichens, and so concealed that very sharp eyes must be used to find it.

I think the pictures of the birds and of the nests will interest the readers of The Junior Call as well as the descriptions of the humming birds I have given. Remember we have six humming birds out of seven for the whole country and that we can claim as our special favorite the Anna, the singing humming bird.

## MY IMPRESSIONS OF A DAY AT THE OSTRICH FARM

By FAY WATKINS.

Beulah Heights, Age 12 Years

LOUISE LOMAX looked at her mother in delight.

"Really, mamma," she said, "I can't imagine what a real live ostrich would be like."

To see an ostrich was quite an event for Louise, who had always lived in the east and consequently had never seen one.

"Well, get ready quickly, dear," said Mrs. Lomax, "because we must meet papa at the ferry at 10 o'clock."

"It is just 9 now, so we only have half an hour in which to dress."

About an hour later all three were crossing the ferry.

When they found themselves at the ostrich farm, they passed through the gate with a throng of interested sight seers.

The farm was inclosed by a high board fence so that it was impossible for an ostrich to obtain freedom. The yard itself was fenced off in large pens of different sizes.

There was a gravel walk running on each side of the farm, and in the center was a lawn, some benches and also a few young trees. The first pen was for ostriches about a year old, the lecturer said.

"How long do they live?" asked Louise of the guide.

"They live about as long as a human being," he said. "You see, these birds here are about a year old." He pointed to a pen where there were a few young ostriches enjoying a bath in the hot sun.

"A strange thing about these ostriches," he resumed, "is that they mate themselves; and once mated, always keep no divorces"—this with a twinkle in his eye. "The full grown birds weigh from 250 to 300 pounds, according to their age. You will notice that their feet are like a spear. They kick harder than a mule and can run faster than a racehorse. If a person were to go into a pen unarmed they would tear him to pieces in a little while."

"Do you sell them?" asked a middle aged lady in the crowd.

"We don't sell them till they are about 5 years old. They are worth about \$1,500 a pair. Their plumage gets more valuable as they grow older. At the first clipping they get merely a quill, but they soon get a full grown pen on. We clip them when they are a year old and every eight months thereafter. They don't lay till they are 5 years old. Their eggs weigh from three to four pounds; they are worth a dollar each. The eggs hatch in six weeks. We hatch them in the incubator."

When Louise learned of their unlovable natures and unintelligent minds, her interest and enthusiasm decreased.

The lecturer led the crowd to one pen to another all around the yard, and at last they came to the different pairs; one was Mr. and Mrs. George Dewey, a very interesting pair, especially as they fight so hard that they pull at one another's feathers out of their bodies. Mr. and Mrs. George Dewey are 20 years old; the oldest and most valuable birds on the farm.

Another amiable couple is Mr. and Mrs. Oom Paul, in whose pen was found an egg. "The keeper will take the egg out of the pen and put it in the incubator to hatch when he comes around," said the lecturer.

The last but not least were the baby ostriches and the incubator. There was a board about a foot high propped up to form a kind of fence. On the other side of this board were three little ostriches. One was about a foot high, and the other two a little smaller.

"Oh! what darling things, mamma, just look," said Louise as she glanced at them.

"Aren't they the dearest things. Oh! how like a ball of fluff down they are!"

Their bodies are oval shape (as are all birds' bodies) and of a yellowish brown color. They have long yellow necks with stripes of dark brown. They are not at all vicious like the older ones. Louise stood watching one of them as it picked her dress. Then she put her hand on its back to stroke it. Oh! what a disappointment.

"Mamma, their backs are like little brushes," cried Louise in an odd mixture of surprise and disappointment.

"Those are the pin feathers," said the lecturer.

"How would you like to have one of those for a pet, Louise?" said her

father. "Could you make pets of them?" he asked the lecturer.

"No," replied the lecturer, "they get too vicious when they grow large. These are only 2 weeks old. The largest one is 4 weeks old."

"We shall have some more out this week," he added as he led the way to the incubator house. Louise was loth to leave the little ones, but she was reassured by the lecturer, who told her she might look at them again after she had seen the incubator from which they hatched.

The keeper came up just then and went with them into the incubator house, carrying the egg.

Louise followed and he asked her to feel how heavy the egg was. She did, and was very much surprised to find that it weighed so much. While the lecturer was talking to the crowd the keeper went into the other incubator room (there are two rooms, with an incubator in each one), and brought out a large piece of the shell, which he gave to Louise. She accepted it with due thanks and a grateful look.

The shell was very hard and like a piece of porcelain. It is white on the inside and a light yellow on the outside. There are dents all over the outside, some of them as large as a pin-

head, but most of them a trifle smaller. The keeper said that he had to help a great many little birds out of the shell because it is so hard.

Soon Mr. and Mrs. Lomax sat down on a bench while Louise went with the keeper "to get some ostrich feathers for Mary Jane's new hat."

Mary Jane is Louise's most beloved doll.

A moment later the keeper had a under prong in his hand and was entering the pen. Louise supposed that the prong was to pluck the feathers, but instead it was to ward off the vicious birds. He soon secured the feathers and gave them to her with, "Now your doll will be fixed in fine style." She thanked him and then stood a moment to watch him give the ostriches their water.

Then she returned to her mother and father, to whom she showed her piece of eggshell and ostrich feathers.

"We shall have to start home in a little while," said her father as he laid his hand affectionately on her head.

"It never thought I would have such a lovely time," sighed Louise. "I am sorry we must leave so soon."

"It is 20 minutes past 1 o'clock," answered father, looking at his watch.

"I am rather hungry. We have been here since 11. Let us go to a restaurant and have something to eat."

They all agreed and Mr. Lomax inquired of the keeper where the nearest restaurant was. He replied that they could find one on Fruitvale avenue, near the station; but as they did not know where Fruitvale avenue was his directions were of little advantage. Then he asked a gentleman who was standing near, and he gave him the exact directions.

Mr. Lomax thanked him, and accompanied by Mrs. Lomax and Louise made his way to the street.

When they returned home they all felt that they had had a very interesting day with the queerest of all birds, the ostrich.

**Found the Thief**

A pet crow in a family at Rockport, Ky., has been found to have been the thief which for several years has been purloining articles of jewelry that the family had missed from time to time, and for the theft of which several servants had been accused and discharged. The crow was seen to fly from the house with a diamond brooch in its mouth, and a search of his nest in a nearby tree, revealed a gold watch, two rings, two \$10 bills, one \$20 gold piece, and many other articles.

## THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

ON September first of each year there is celebrated in Japan a curious ceremony, known as the "Feast of Lanterns," which is supposed to be a formal reception given to all the spirits of the dead.

Upon the first day of the feast, the ghosts of the departed are believed to leave the spirit land, in order to revisit their homes upon earth. On this day, the head of each family, in his best apparel, sits in the reception room of his house, the entrances to which are all thrown open. At frequent intervals he bows ceremoniously and utters words of welcome, in order that the spirits, as they enter, may not feel themselves to be neglected.

This procedure is carried on far into the night, especially by such conscientious Buddhists as have numerous spirits to receive.

On the second day, all the spirits are supposed to have arrived, and the household temple—a small cabinet apartment, which is to be found in the house of every believer in Buddha, set apart for the use of the dead—is garishly decorated with flowers and filled with choice stores of fruit, rice, tea, wine and other delicacies.

The family of the house, sitting in the room to which the spirit chamber is attached, hold high festival, eating and drinking and enjoying themselves after the Japanese fashion.

The feasting of the living with the spirits of the dead continues throughout the whole of the second day, and the greater part of the third, but the night of the third day is the time appointed when the ghosts must return to their places in the spirit land; and, as the evening draws on, the people, young and old, in vast numbers, betake themselves to the burial places and deck out the graves with bright paper banners and many colored lanterns, which are lighted as the sun goes down and darkness comes on.

This decoration and illumination is made as beautiful and brilliant as possible, so that the last view of the earth taken by the departing spirits may be pleasing and happy.

Toward midnight, as the time for departure draws nigh, the male portion of the people form themselves into pro-

## A Family Incident

Johnny had a splinter in his foot, but refused to let any one touch it. His mother finally appeared with a low switch in her hand, and under cruel threats, Johnny was ordered to lie, still while grandma applied a poultice.

"Ma," began Johnny, "silence" commanded his mother. The poultice was finally applied and the bandage carefully sewed. Just as grandma and mother were leaving the room, Johnny called, "Say, ma, you've put the poultice on the wrong foot."

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