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Title: A Child's Primer of Natural History

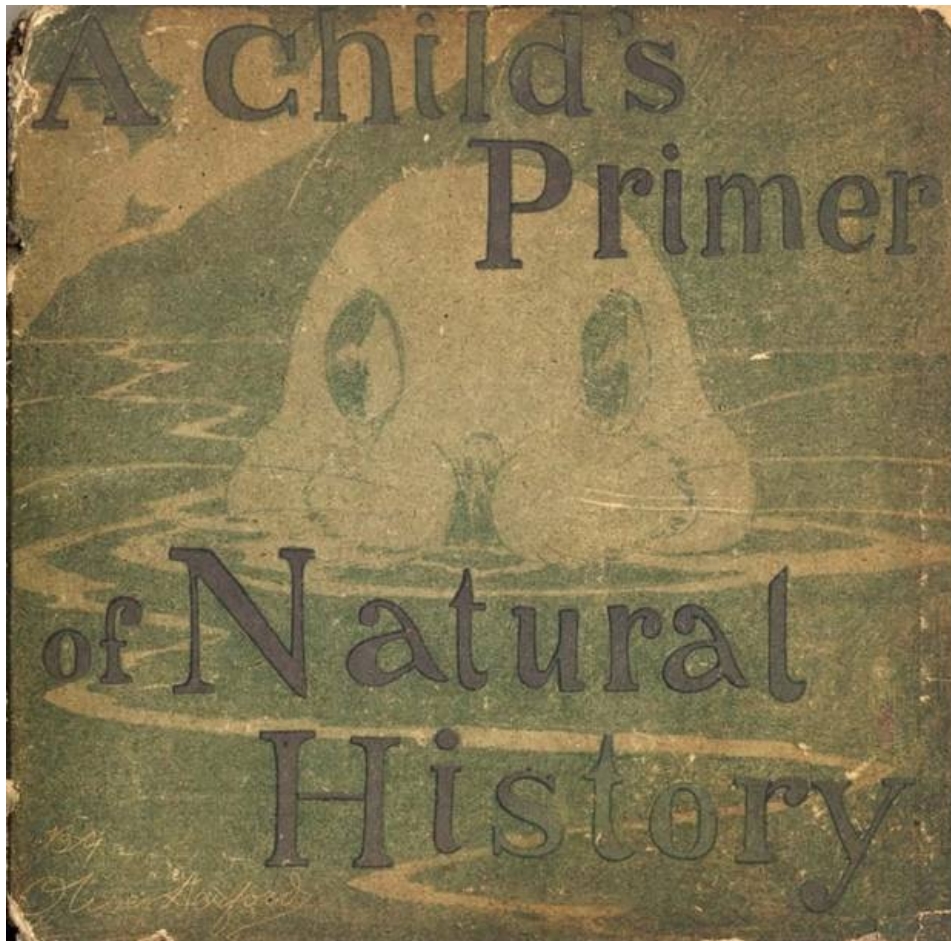
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## **A Child's Primer Of Natural History**



By **Oliver Herford**

with Pictures by  
the Author

Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899

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### A Seal.

SEE, chil-dren, the Fur-bear-ing Seal;  
Ob-serve his mis-di-rect-ed zeal:  
He dines with most ab-ste-mi-ous care  
On Fish, Ice Water and Fresh Air  
A-void-ing cond-i-ments or spice,  
For fear his fur should not be nice  
And fine and smooth and soft and meet  
For Broad-way or for Re-gent Street  
And yet some-how I of-ten feel  
(Though for the kind Fur-bear-ing Seal  
I har-bor a Re-spect Pro-found)



### The Giraffe.

SEE the Gi-raffe; he is so tall  
There is not room to get him all  
U-pon the page. His head is high-er—  
The pic-ture proves it—than the Spire.  
That's why the na-tives, when they race



To catch him, call it stee-ple-chase.  
His chief de-light it is to set  
A good example: shine or wet  
He rises ere the break of day,  
And starts his break-fast right away.  
His food has such a way to go,—  
His throat's so very long,—and so  
An early break-fast he must munch  
To get it down ere time for lunch.



## The Yak.

THIS is the Yak, so neg-li-gée:  
His coif-fure's like a stack of hay;  
He lives so far from Any-where,  
I fear the Yak neg-lects his hair,  
And thinks, since there is none to see,  
What mat-ter how un-kempt he be.  
How would he feel if he but knew  
That in this Pic-ture-book I drew  
His Phys-i-og-no-my un-shorn,  
For chil-dren to de-ride and scorn?



## A Whale.

THE con-sci-en-tious art-ist tries  
On-ly to draw what meets his eyes.  
This is the Whale; he seems to be  
A spout of wa-ter in the sea.  
Now, Hux-ley from one bone could make  
An un-known beast; so if I take  
This spout of wa-ter, and from thence  
Con-struct a Whale by in-fer-ence,  
A Whale, I ven-ture to as-ert,  
Must be an an-i-mat-ed squirt!  
Thus, chil-dren, we the truth may sift  
By use of Log-ic's Price-less Gift.



## The Leopard.

THIS is the Le-o-pard, my child;  
His tem-per's any-thing but mild.  
The Le-o-pard can't change his spots,  
And that—so say the Hot-ten-tots—  
Is why he is so wild.  
Year in, year out, he may not change,  
No mat-ter how the wea-ther range,  
From cold to hot. No won-der, child,  
We hear the Le-o-pard is wild.



## The Sloth.

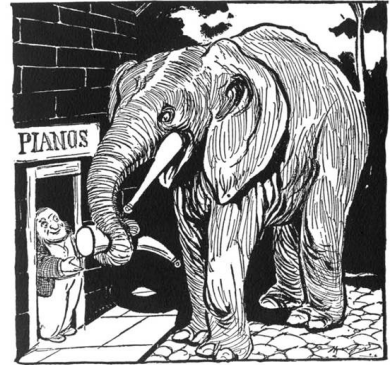
THE Sloth en-joys a life of Ease;  
He hangs in-vert-ed from the trees,  
And views life up-side down.  
If you, my child, are noth-ing loath

To live in In-dol-ence and Sloth,  
 Un-heed-ing the World's frown,  
 You, too, un-vexed by Toil and Strife,  
 May take a hu-mor-ous view of life.



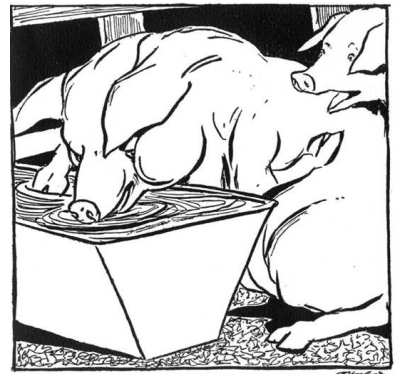
### The Elephant.

THIS is the El-e-phant, who lives  
 With but one aim—to please.  
 His i-vo-ry tusk he free-ly gives  
 To make pi-a-no keys.  
 One grief he has—how-e'er he tries,  
 He nev-er can for-get  
 That one of his e-nor-mous size  
 Can't be a house-hold pet.  
 Then does he to his grief give way,  
 Or sink 'neath sor-row's ban?  
 Oh, no; in-stead he spends each day  
 Con-tri-ving some un-sel-fish way  
 To be of use to Man.



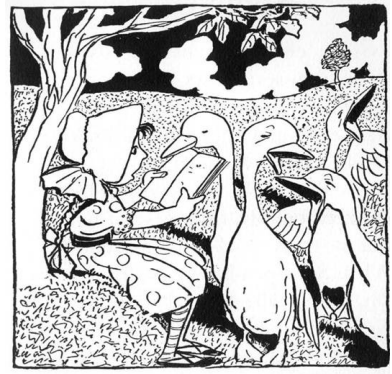
### The Pig-Pen.

OH, turn not from the hum-ble Pig,  
 My child, or think him in-fra dig.  
 We oft hear lit-er-a-ry men  
 Boast of the in-flu-ence of the Pen;  
 Yet when we read in His-to-ry's Page  
 Of Hu-man Pigs in ev-er-y age,  
 From Cr[oe]sus to the pres-ent day,  
 Is it, my child, so hard to say  
 (De-spite the Scribes' vain-glo-ri-ous boast)  
 What Pen has in-flu-enced Man the most?



### Some Geese.

EV-ER-Y child who has the use  
 Of his sen-ses knows a goose.  
 See them un-der-neath the tree  
 Gath-er round the goose-girl's knee,  
 While she reads them by the hour  
 From the works of Scho-pen-hau-er.  
 How pa-tient-ly the geese at-tend!  
 But do they re-al-ly com-pre-hend  
 What Scho-pen-hau-er's driv-ing at?  
 Oh, not at all; but what of that?  
 Nei-ther do I; nei-ther does she;  
 And, for that mat-ter, nor does he.

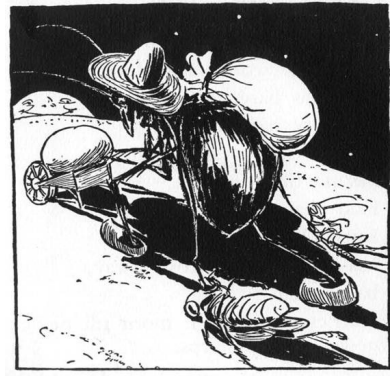


### The Ant.

MY child, ob-serve the use-ful Ant,  
 How hard she works each day.  
 She works as hard as ad-a-mant  
 (That's very hard, they say).  
 She has no time to gal-li-vant;

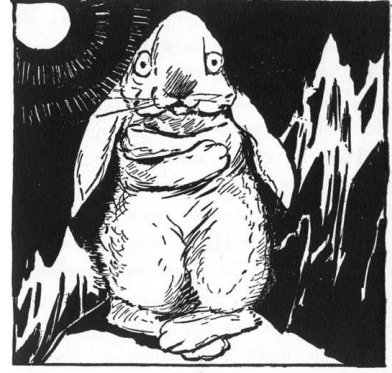


She has no time to play.  
 Let Fido chase his tail all day;  
 Let Kitty play at tag;  
 She has no time to throw a-way,  
 She has no tail to wag.  
 She scurries round from morn till night;  
 She ne-ver, ne-ver sleeps;  
 She seiz-es ev-ery-thing in sight,  
 And drags it home with all her might,  
 And all she takes she keeps.



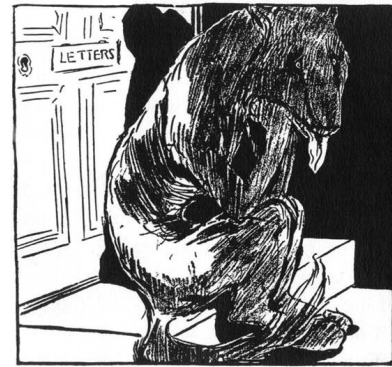
### An Arctic Hare.

AN Arc-tic Hare we now be-hold.  
 The hair, you will ob-serve, is white;  
 But if you think the Hare is old,  
 You will be ver-y far from right.  
 The Hare is young, and yet the hair  
 Grew white in but a sin-gle night.  
 Why, then it must have been a scare  
 That turned this Hare. No; 't was not fright  
 (Al-though such cases are well known);  
 I fear that once a-gain you're wrong.  
 Know then, that in the Arc-tic Zone  
 A sin-gle night is six months long.



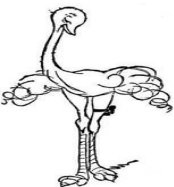
### The Wolf.

OH, yes, the Wolf is bad, it's true;  
 But how with-out him could we do?  
 If there were not a wolf, what good  
 Would be the tale of RID-ING-HOOD?  
 The Lit-tle Child from sin will fly  
 When told the wick-ed Wolf is nigh;  
 And when, ar-rived at Man's es-tate,  
 He hears the Wolf out-side his gate,  
 He knows it's time to put a-way  
 I-dle fri-vol-i-ty and play.  
 That's how (but do not men-tion it)  
 This prim-er hap-pened to be writ.



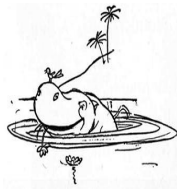
### An Ostrich.

THIS is an Os-trich. See him stand:  
 His head is bur-ied in the sand.  
 It is not that he seeks for food,  
 Nor is he shy, nor is he rude;  
 But he is sen-si-tive, and shrinks  
 And hides his head when-e'er he thinks  
 How, on the Gains-bor-ough hat some day  
 Of some fine la-dy at the play,  
 His fea-thers may ob-struct the view  
 Of all the stage from me or you.



### The Hippopotamus.





"OH, say, what is this fearful, wild  
In-cor-ri-gible cuss?"  
"This \_crea-ture\_ (don't say 'cuss,' my child;  
'T is slang)—this crea-ture fierce is styled The Hip-po-pot-  
am-us.  
His curious name de-rives its source  
From two Greek words: \_hippos\_—a horse,  
\_Potamos\_—river. See?  
The river's plain e-nough, of course;  
But why they called that thing a horse,  
That's what is Greek to me."



## The Fly.



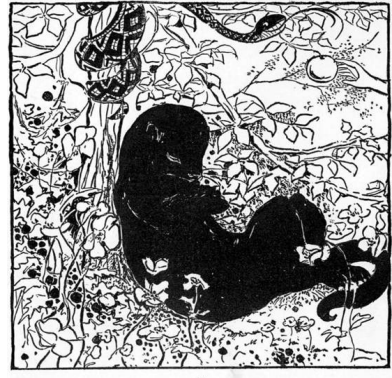
OB-SERVE, my child, the House-hold Fly,  
With his ex-traor-di-na-ry eye:  
What-ev-er thing he may be-hold  
Is mul-ti-plied a thou-sand-fold.  
\_We\_ do not need a com-plex eye  
When we ob-serve the House-hold Fly:  
He is so vol-a-tile that he  
In \_ev-ery\_ place at once can be;  
He is the buzz-ing in-car-na-tion  
Of an-i-mate mul-ti-pli-ca-tion.  
Ah! chil-dren, who can tell the Why  
And Where-fore of the House-hold Fly?



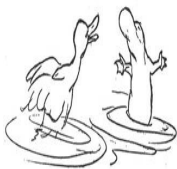
## The Mongoos.



THIS, Chil-dren, is the famed Mon-goos.  
He has an ap-pe-tite ab-struse;  
Strange to re-late, this crea-ture takes  
A cu-ri-ous joy in eat-ing snakes—  
All kinds, though, it must be con-fessed,  
He likes the poi-son-ous ones the best.  
From him we learn how ve-ry small  
A thing can bring a-bout a Fall.  
Oh, Mon-goos, where were you that day  
When Mis-tress Eve was led a-stray?  
If you'd but seen the ser-pent first,  
Our Parents would not have been cursed,  
And so there would be no ex-cuse  
For MIL-TON, but for you—Mon-goos!



## The Platypus.



MY child, the Duck-billed Plat-y-pus  
A sad ex-am-ple sets for us:  
From him we learn how In-de-ci-sion  
Of char-ac-ter pro-vo-kes De-ri-sion.  
This vac-il-lat-ing Thing, you see,  
Could not de-cide which he would be,  
Fish, Flesh, or Fowl, and chose all three.  
The sci-en-tists were sore-ly vexed  
To clas-si-fy him; so per-plexed  
Their brains that they, with Rage at bay,  
Called him a hor-rid name one day,—  
A name that baf-fles, frights, and shocks us,—  
Or-ni-tho-rhyn-chus Par-a-dox-us.



## The Chimpanzee.

CHIL-DREN, be-hold the Chim-pan-zee:  
He sits on the an-ces-tral tree  
From which we sprang in ag-es gone.  
I'm glad we sprang: had we held on,  
We might, for aught that I can say,  
Be hor-rid Chim-pan-zees to-day.



## A Mole.

SEE, chil-dren, the mis-guid-ed Mole.  
He lives down in a deep, dark hole;  
Sweet-ness, and Light, and good Fresh Air  
Are things for which he does not care.  
He has not e-ven that make-shift  
Of fee-ble minds—the \_so-cial gift\_.  
But say not that he has no soul,  
Lest hap-ly we misjudge the Mole;  
Nay, if we mea-sure him by Men,  
No doubt he sits in his dark den  
In-struct-ing oth-ers blind as he  
Ex-act-ly how the world \_should\_ be.

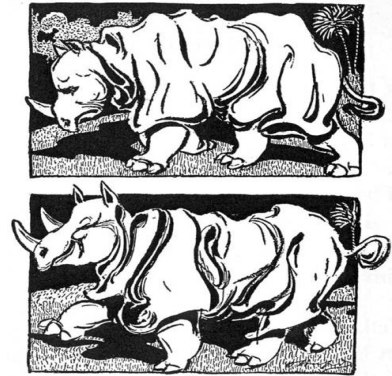


## The Rhinoceros.

SO this is the Rhi-no-ce-ros!  
I won-der why he looks so cross.  
Per-haps he is an-nyed a bit  
Be-cause his cloth-ing does not fit.  
(They say he got it read-y made!)  
It is not that, I am a-fraid.  
He looks so cross be-cause I drew  
Him with one horn in-stead of two.



Well, since he cares so much for style,  
Let's give him two and see him smile.



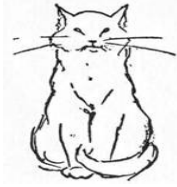
## A Penguin.

THE Pen-guin sits up-on the shore  
And loves the lit-tle fish to bore;  
He has one en-er-vat-ing joke  
That would a very Saint pro-voke:  
"The Pen-guin's might-i-er than the Sword-fish";  
He tells this dai-ly to the bored fish,  
Un-til they are so weak, they float  
With-out re-sis-tance down his throat.



## The Cat.

OB-SERVE the Cat up-on this page.  
Phil-os-o-phers in ev-er-y age,  
The ver-y \_wis-est\_ of the wise,



Have tried her mind to an-a-lyze  
 In vain, for noth-ing can they learn.  
 She haf-fles them at ev-er-y turn  
 Like Mis-ter Ham-let in the play.  
 She leads their rea-son-ing a-stray;  
 She feigns an in-ter-est in string  
 Or yarn or any roll-ing thing.  
 Un-like the Dog, she does not care  
 With com-mon Man her thoughts to share.  
 She teach-es us that in life's walk  
 'T is bet-ter to let oth-ers talk,  
 And lis-ten while they say in-stead  
 The fool-ish things we might have said.

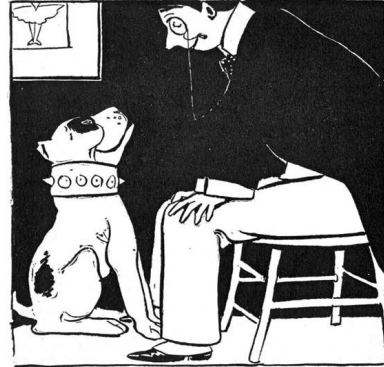


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### The Dog.

HERE is the Dog. Since time be-gan,  
 The Dog has been the friend of MAN,  
 The Dog loves MAN be-cause he shears  
 His coat and clips his tail and ears.  
 MAN loves the Dog be-cause he'll stay  
 And lis-ten to his talk all day,  
 And wag his tail and show de-light  
 At all his jokes, how-ev-er trite.  
 His bark is far worse than his bite,  
 So peo-ple say. They may be right;  
 Yet if to make a choice I had,  
 I'd choose his bark, how-ev-er bad.



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### A Chameleon.

A USE-FUL les-son you may con,  
 My Child, from the Cha-me-le-on:  
 He has the gift, ex-treme-ly rare  
 In an-i-mals, of sav-oir-faire.  
 And if the se-cret you would guess  
 Of the Cha-me-le-on's suc-cess,



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[Transcriber's Note: In this file, the ligatured oe character is represented by "[oe]".]

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