

THE FIGHT TO LIVE

Hello Boys and Girls:

Yesterday is but a dream,
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But Today, well lived
Makes every Yesterday
A Dream of Happiness,
And Every Tomorrow
A Vision of Hope.

The important time is TODAY;
So, let's be up and away!

The fight to live! What a title for us who are in search for happiness. Fight and happiness are not teammates, you say. Maybe we should use the word struggle - the struggle to live instead of the fight to live. When I wrote this broadcast in a hotel at Medford, I was looking out on an open field grown up with weeds and some brush. Birds were feeding on the seeds of the weeds. A cat had spied the birds and was using all its cunning, a cunning developed in its struggle to live, to secure food, a cunning acquired to protect itself from other animals that would devour it; it was using this cunning as it stalked closer and closer to the birds. Its deadly claws were well hidden in cushions that made noiseless feet; its body lengthened in order to be hidden beneath the grass. In all animals that prey upon other animals, that must surprise and then kill for food, Nature has developed through countless ages this treacherous cunning, and developed the implements to strike and kill. The lion, the leopard, the jaguar, the Bob-cat, the tiger - all similarly equipped; all have developed cunning, razor-like sharpness of claws, strong muscles that move over each other as though oiled.

In this broadcast Ranger Mac wants to show the many clever ways and devices that Nature has developed in all of its creatures by which these creatures can secure food for their own lives and at the same time protect themselves from being made food of by their enemies. Let me cite a very common example of what I mean. A dog chases a rabbit. The wild dogs, before they were domesticated, secured their food in that way - by the chase. To do that they gradually developed, thru-long

periods of time, long muscular legs, a steady energy-saving gait, and a very sensitive nose - one that enabled them to follow the scent left by the feet of animals on the snow or on the bare ground. The dog chasing the rabbit is on the offensive, and the instincts and weapons Nature has provided are called offensive weapons. The rabbit is on the defensive. It is a meek, timid creature with no claws, no strong muscular body, no protruding teeth; no poison gas, no quills - nothing of the kind to defend himself. But Nature has provided the rabbit with two weapons of defense to prevent its being taken from the earth entirely. One is a cunning by which it can fool the dog, or wolf, or hawk; and the other is found in its ability to have large families frequently. You know the joke about the rabbit being a good mathematician because it can multiply so rapidly. Well, this ability to have large families, two or three times a year, is the rabbit's main effective weapon of defense. Without it the rabbit would have disappeared from the face of the earth long ago.

So, do you see what Ranger Mac means by the struggle to live, and by weapons of offense and defense? Last Saturday night as I drove home from up north, I saw a skunk in the road, still squirming, for the car ahead had run over it. The strong penetrating odor entered my car even though the car was closed and I was travelling rather rapidly. That strong terrible odor of the acid fluid that the skunk has the ability to discharge when it needs to, is the skunk's defensive weapon. So effective is it that all animals have learned to have a respect for the skunk and to leave it alone. The skunk may be said to be never so offensive as when on the defensive. From the skunk, many with his superior intelligence has learned to use poison gas and tear gas as weapons of offense and defense.

Hibernation, that is the death-like sleep of animals, sometimes in frozen condition, is a weapon of defense against the rigors of winter. Most of the insects in these cold climates and many of the animals have acquired this weapon of defense. Otherwise winter would have killed them all, long ago. Migration of birds is a weapon of defense against the scarcity of food and freezing temperatures. Likewise the hoarding of food, as in cases of the chipmunk and squirrel; the building of homes as

in cases of the muskrat and beaver are weapons of defense against winter. So is the instinct that drives the frog, toad and turtle deep into the mud when cold weather comes. The instinct that prompts the great crested flycatcher to weave a snake skin in its nest may be a weapon of defense to frighten off enemies. I have a mounted specimen of the cobra moth. The upper tips of its broad wings are colored just like the head of a snake, eyes, mouth and all are as fine an illustration of a snake ready to strike as you could draw. These frightening boggy markings among insects could be multiplied many hundreds of times. The owl butterfly has on its wings two staring spots which contain light speckles producing the frightening effect of the glitter of eyes. The ugly horn and false eyes on many of our common caterpillars, the ill-smelling liquid that some secrete when disturbed, the hairs on some of them, are all weapons to repel attack from enemies. Weapons of defense in the fight to live.

Sometimes it is poisonous skin secretions that afford protection against being destroyed. One time as I was walking in a marsh I heard the croaking of a frog and, glancing in the direction of the sound, saw a snake pursuing a frog over the dead reeds. Soon the snake was upon it, seized it by a leg and started to move its jaws in that forward and backward motion which draws the prey into its elastic mouth. I watch for a little while and then noticed that the snake threw its jaws apart as tho it had something distasteful, and the frog jumped off. The snake gaped and moved its head from side to side as if in distress; and distress, it was, for it had tried to make a meal of a pickerel frog, our only frog that can give off a poisonous skin secretion. Our common toad has small glands scattered over the skin and a pair of large glands at the rear of the head. These contain a creamy poison that is very irritating to the lining of the mouth of its enemies, and they soon learn that it is best to leave such a toad alone in the same way that a dog learns that it is not safe to attack a porcupine. You see, out in the open, the danger of enemies is always present, and Nature has helped her creatures to build up methods of defense.

Next Saturday, the deer hunting season opens, and it might be timely for us to see what Nature has done for these four footed animals. Of course, they have antlers which are effective for a part of the year against wolves and their kind,

but of greater value to these hunted animals are the great keenness of scent, their speed, and their protective coloration and markings. I am always glad when drifting down stream in a canoe to have the air currents move up stream, for then I know at eventide when the deer come to the stream they will not catch my scent and it will be possible for me to get close to them. Deer are equipped with a very keen sense of smell. I suppose it is possible for deer to run for a time at the rate of 50 miles an hour; while their leaping powers have been so well developed that they can clear obstructions in soaring bounds while the enemy must follow with all feet on the ground. Nature has given deer another weapon, and that is a color that blends into the hues of its surroundings and makes it difficult to detect. The vivid markings on such animals as ringed antelopes, zebras, and giraffes help break up the outlines of the animals among the foliage where the splashes of sunlight and the shadows are mixed. The spotted fawn of our deer is a good example of how the bright markings break the outline of the body and blend with the hues of the ground upon which it lies. The mother love keeps to the thickets with her fawn and the youngster lies quietly and alone while the mother wanders off to browse. I have heard it said that these fawn give off no scent, and it must be so, because their prowling enemies seldom if ever discover them.

Many birds have colors that blend with their surroundings so perfectly that it is difficult to discover them. One time I stood within three yards of a killdeer on her nest, for fully ten minutes, knowing full well that she was near at hand and within plain sight, but was unable to separate her outlines from the ground which was covered with pebbles and dry chips of wood. The partridges, grouse, whip-poor-wills, woodcock, and many other birds have mottled plumage that match perfectly the colors of the dead leaves and woodland litter about them. This camouflage is an artful means of helping these birds in their fight to live. Some of these birds have artful, tricky ways of deceiving their enemies. I remember once when a lad how I chased a brownish bird with a drooping wing, thinking that I might catch it, for I supposed it was wounded. The bird kept ahead of me, hopping and fluttering, but always with its wing dragging.

After I had pursued it across the meadow, I was astonished to see it rise and fly away in a normal fashion. I know now that I had disturbed a bird on or near its nest among the reeds and her antics had been to lure me away so I wouldn't find the nest. In the same way these birds lure cats, weasels and snakes from their nests. It is a method they have learned to use in the fight to live.

Man's main weapon in the fight to live is intelligence. In your history you read about the many great plagues. In 534 A.D. 10,000 persons died each day in Constantinople from bubonic plague. In the 14th century this plague is estimated to have taken 14,000,000 lives. The death toll from cholera and malaria has been about as bad. The diseases of children took numbers it would be appalling to tell. Here was a field that required intelligence in the fight to live. Man invented the microscope, and located the cause of these diseases. He learned from the wasp and the fangs of the serpent how to use the hypodermic needle. He learned from animals how to make the human body resistant to disease. With this knowledge the ancient diseases and small pox, diphtheria and typhoid have been practically wiped out. He will discover how to wipe out infantile paralysis and cancer. Along with these efforts have come the importance of sanitation of clean methods of living; a knowledge of foods and better habits of diet; of proper regulation of our bodies; improved ways of finding our pleasures; importance of proper thinking, so that in the last 50 years the average age of life has been prolonged from 35 years to 57 years, over 20 years longer to live because of man's use of intelligence in the fight to live.

So man with his superior brain has made rapid advance in the comparative short time since he walked upright with his head pointing heavenward. If the Creator had intended it to be otherwise, he would have provided man with legs with seven league boots instead of a brain to invent locomotives, automobiles and airplanes; strong arms to remove dirt instead of brain to invent the steam shovel; ears to catch distant sounds instead of instrument to capture sound for him; eyes keen enough to see long distances instead of a brain to discover the telescope to bring distant objects to him. With intelligence man has subdued the animals of the world and made them

serve his needs; he has multiplied and developed the grains and grasses and vegetables to meet his needs; he has destroyed distance; he has pulled sound out of the air. Of all the animals of the world, man has the greatest weapon in the struggle to live - intelligence. He hasn't always used this weapon kindly nor wisely, but in the main down the years it has been most to the good. And this good is our heritage, let's be thankful for it.

And so closes our trip Afield for today.

May the Great Spirit

Put Sunshine into your Heart

Today and Forevermore, heap wuchi!