

THE MIGHT OF THE LOWLY

It is so common to express greatness by the spectacular. Today we are going to talk about some workers that perform in silence and secrecy; the decaying organisms that dispose of the wastes of all forms of life. The gay assembly of wildflowers and the tall forest trees depend upon these workers. Some of them are our friends, and some of them are our enemies. They cause the bread to rise, fruit to spoil. They reduce leaves to humus and spoil the milk that is not properly taken care of. They blacken the ears of corn and the heads of wheat. They cause diseases among plants and many of the diseases that cause epidemics among children. They are plants in miniature that are mighty in effect.

Probably the best way to bring this realistically to children is to take two pieces of bread about two inches square. Dampen each and place in a saucer. With the finger take some dust from the woodwork and rub lightly over each piece. Place a water glass over each. Place one in a dark corner and the other in a dry sunny place. Which one develops a mold? Are lowly plants in some form to be found everywhere?

we hit the trail

Some of the broadcast will be devoted to events of historic importance brought about by the working of these lowly plants—the blight that visited the potato crops in Ireland in 1840 that sent thousands of Irish to America where they built our railroads and became our policemen; the Dutch elm disease now threatening our elms; the blight that destroyed our chestnut trees; and others.

Then we will show the beneficial results of the working of these lowly plants—how nature uses them to keep up the balance and to get rid of the wastes. We will learn how some of these plants are used in industries, in medicines, and in the kitchen. We will talk about the work done at colleges of agriculture to grow these plants that help the soil to produce better crops. We will use such words as spores, fungi, mycelium, bacteria, parasite, and saprophyte. Do you think that a good microscope would be helpful in a school?

April 21, 1952

THE HUMAN SIDE OF BIRDS

The birds are returning; it is already a little late to give special attention to their charm and beauty and the joy to be derived from their companionship. Birds are the favorite of out-door loving people. We would hesitate to estimate the number of thousands of persons who got up at 4 o'clock this morning to renew acquaintance with them and to enjoy their unmatched music, grace, and color. It does the human being good to study birds for thereby they learn the qualities of living such as devotion, loyalty, artistry, and gladness that make their own lives great. There is a reason for the popularity of birds. Many of these morning observers will return home saying of birds: "Teach me half the gladness that thy brain must know."

Which of our native birds is the greatest artist in nest construction? the best songster? most sociable? the best mimic? the most beautiful in plumage? the fastest flyer? the best swimmer? the best diver? the most despicable so far as family life is concerned? Have pupils relate some of their observations of birds showing human qualities we admire such as fidelity, bravery, perseverance, safety, pride, gladness.

we hit the trail

In this broadcast Ranger Mac will relate bird life and behavior to that of human beings. Birds display the qualities found in human beings; besides there are among birds: artists, policemen, dancers, fishermen, musicians, mimics, athletes, judges, garbagemen, thieves.

How do you account for the spotted coloring on the eggs of a Killdeer while the eggs of the Kingfisher are not so marked? Listen for the names of birds laying colorless eggs. Where do they build their nests? What is the purpose of this artistic coloring of eggs?

Some thought will be given in the broadcast to the feeding habits of birds. This activity extends into most every realm of nature—air, plants, water, and ground. As with humans, food-getting is one of the major activities of bird life.



April 28, 1952