

Assorted Facts About Mother Nature

By LYDIA KING FRESHÉ
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

For your perusal, here are more "pebbles from my nature pocket."
Your scribe makes mandatory one spring rite, that she awaken on a morning in mid-May to the odor of lilacs filling all the house. This takes a little doing, but we think it is worth the effort.

Spent last Saturday at Walden Woods near Hartland with the Audubon society at their camp-out. Not too many birds (too early for a wave of spring migrants). How ever here are variety habits, lake shore, in a s'w, meadow, oak-hickory and birch-maple woods; all fertile territory for the ecologist.

Included was an old-fashioned "hay ride" (via tractor) to the nearby "sugar bush" to review this rich territory as a social lion. Gone, but not forgotten hepatica, sidler's tongue and spring beauty. In bloom, phlox, millium, dwarf ginseng, merry bell, Jack-in-the-pulpit, bishop's cap, toothwort and many another of their kind; all friends of long standing.

THE FERNS were sheathing their fiddle heads to the squeaky notes of the little blue-grey gnatcatcher and the brighter call of the cardinal and the brown thrasher.

The marshes were filled with clumps of marigolds and such elegant rosettes of skunk cabbage with their great bright green leaves arranged "just so" that we wanted to transplant them to some modern interior and forget the perfume.

Time in late afternoon to sit at the rim of the lake, moss bank open in lap. Time to review the collected specimens of the day and discover a new one known hitherto only from the manual. Its name "Hottia" for Professor Pott, a biologist of Brunswick, Germany. Such satisfaction to verify every minute detail just as predicted!

While we are writing of books, have you read Anne Lindberg's "Gift from the Sea"? This is not a "nature" book but the author who has a tremendous responsiveness to the natural world, bases her symbolism upon the shells which she finds cast-up on the shore.

Spring is early this year. All the unseasonable warmth has spiked the annual spring invasion of northern Michigan with the biggest turn-out in history. One reporter has it that the trout fishermen celebrating "opening day" shed his woolen shirt before noon.

As for your scribe, she will have to wait for the Decoration Day holiday to see her favorite sight: the deep-lean and greyed, leaving the cedar swamps to feed again in the open green fields.

WE REALLY dislike coming indoors even on paper but we would like to say how much we enjoyed Marsten Bates' recent lecture at Cranbrook Institute. His book "The

Nature of Natural History" has long been a favorite of ours, and it's always gratifying when an author "looks" and "talks" as well as he "reads."

Dr. Bates reported in words and pictures, a summer spent on a tiny coral atoll in the Pacific, some 300 miles south of Guam. Here an area of six-tenths of a square mile supports 250 people in happy seclusion.

It takes only a few hours to build a house. Food is abundant and free for the taking. Chief sources of starches are bread fruit and arrowroot. Proteins are furnished by eggs from a flock of chickens and a limitless supply of fish and other seafood. Plants grow in tropical profusion, and of the 235 species studied, only 12 were not used in some fashion.

IN THIS society Dr. Bates could find no sure dividing line between work and play. He heard no harsh words exchanged. Security and dignity were natural to all. Children were loved and happy. Said Dr. Bates: "In our western



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civilization man's relationship to man and to nature is "intermediated by our culture."

When Dr. Bates returned to New York, he took up his residence in a many-storied penthouse where he wrote his recent book "The Prevalence of People." This arouses my curiosity.

So much to write about in the crowded days of spring-time and so little space to set it down.

ACE Breakfast On Saturday

Teachers of the Birmingham and Royal Oak areas will be gathering Saturday morning for their annual May breakfast.

Members of the Southern Oakland county association for Childhood Education are ending year's activities with the event at the Townside Community church on Southfield at 11 1/2 Mile at 9:30 a.m.

Members from some 85 schools in the area will hear a program of instrumental music, songs and see a folk dance routine.

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Have You Met

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nelson, 755 N. Woodward, formerly of San Mateo, Cal.; Nelson, an engineer with Eaton Manufacturing Co. in

May 12, 1955 THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC Page 3
Detroit likes to golf. Mrs. Nelson, ton and is a member of the Alpha Phi society. in her former home, expects to do the same here. She is a graduate of the University of Washington. Society deadline is 3 p.m. each Tuesday.

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