

Herford Oliver

# A Child's Primer Of Natural History



**Oliver Herford**  
**A Child's Primer**  
**Of Natural History**

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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

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