



Aunt Julia's True Stories

## ERNESTO'S EXCURSION TO THE WOODS

(Continued)

FATHER, are all birds useful? I do not know of any harmful one." Ernesto asked.

"There are very few birds which can be called harmful. In fact, even those that are harmful have some usefulness."

"I know the names of only very few. Father, please teach me the names of some more. You have told me about the *martines* and the *kuliawan*."

"Among the best of the farmer's friends are the *luclac*, the *tarat*, and the *tagak*."

"Oh, I know the *tarat*. I have seen boys set traps for catching that bird. The trap is called *bitag*."

"These birds are useful because they feed upon insects and caterpillars which destroy grains and fruit. You can hear the noisy *luclacs* in the guava, ratiles, and *dapdap* trees when these are in bloom. They go alone or in pairs. One *luclac* can eat 100 caterpillars in a day."

"Can we find some *tarat* in this place, Father?"

"I don't believe so. The *tarat* does not live in the Philippines throughout the year. It comes from northern China and Korea in September. After the cold months, it goes back home. I believe it builds its nest and lays eggs in its native home."

As Ernesto and his father emerged from the orchard, they came upon an open field.

"Father, what birds are those? Look!

They are taking a carabao ride," Ernesto exclaimed pointing to a group of carabaos with white long-necked birds perched on their backs.

"Those long-billed birds are the *tagak* or cattle egret. They feed on locusts, insects, and small snakes. In exchange for the ride, they pick insects from the carabao's back. They like to live in groups and can be utilized in catching locusts."

"How interesting! Even animals know how to help one another. Both the *tagak* and the carabao seem to be happy and contented."

"It takes very little to make animals happy. And they know how to entertain themselves. You will sometimes see birds chase one another in playful merriment. Birds have been seen dropping small objects in mid-air and then swoop down to catch them before they reach the ground, with the greatest evidence of enjoyment."

"Do they also feel sad, Father?"

"Birds display a variety of feeling. According to close observers of bird life, birds find pleasure in feeding their young. Where there is danger, they suffer very real fear. They are even subject to jealousy. You must have seen rival cocks fight to the death over a hen. The ravens, black birds which resemble the crows, show some sense of humor. Two will combine to tease a dog or a cat, one occupying its attention from the

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## CHILDREN'S SCHOOL SONG

## CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS

Composed exclusively for  
THE YOUNG CITIZEN

Words and Music by  
RODOLFO V. CHAVES

*Allegretto*

Clean-li-ness is next to god-li-ness  
 so I'll al-ways be clean  
 Clean in mind so gold-en thoughts I'll find  
 Clean in heart s love can do its part  
 Clean in soul for I'm God's child, His  
 all, If I'm strong and health-y all a-long,  
 If I'm true and brave and live-ly too,  
 It's be-cause I'm clean from head to toe.

## THE SKY AND THE

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The American Indians had a legend respecting this constellation. Some Indian hunters lost their way. After praying to their gods to show them the way, a little child ap-

peared. She introduced herself as the spirit of the Pole Star. Following her, the hunters reached home safely. When the hunters died, they were carried up into the heavens forming the Little Dipper and following the Pole Star faithfully every clear night.

## ERNESTO'S EXCURSION

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fronts, and the other stealing behind to tweak its tail.

"Father, I want to know more about birds."

"I shall tell you more about other interesting birds of the Philippines."