



Bats

BATS are not birds, but animals that fly with their arms and fingers. Their wings are a fold of skin like brown satin which stretches between each finger down the sides of the body to the ankles. The small thumbs outside the wings have hooked claws. When the bat alights it holds on by these hooks and then hangs upside down by the feet to rest with wings folded together like an umbrella or wrapped round the body for warmth. They are sociable, sleeping by day under roofs, in hollow trees or caves, coming out at twilight and dawn to feed. They are acrobats in flight, darting, twisting, stopping and dodging with great speed. They hunt by smell and hearing which are acute; some have strange growths of skin in front of the ears and nose called "earlets" and "nose leaves" which probably help them to sense and avoid

obstacles in the dark. They have high-squeaking voices; a French boy who kept tame ones noted about twelve different sounds in Bat language. Some American scientists have recently discovered that the bat emits shrill cries while it is flying and these cries echo from obstacles and so warn the bat. A single young one is born each spring, and the mother carries it about clasped to her breast. By the autumn it is able to fly and feed itself. Bats can fly in rain, but feel the cold and you will probably only see them on summer evenings. They sleep in winter. In the drawing **Noctule, the Great Bat**, is on the left, his wings are about 15 inches across. The **Long-Eared Bat** is in the middle—his ears fold down over the body in sleep. The **Horseshoe Bat** hangs on the tree by his hooks; he has the horseshoe-shaped nose leaves.

***I**F you love animals and want to know all about them, you will have to learn to read Nature, just as you had to learn letters in order to read books. Not to know how to read nature is just as if you had a shelf full of lovely books but could not read one. How dull it would be. Well, some people grow up and when they walk through the woods or fields they never learn to understand what is going on all around them, amongst the plants, the trees or animals.*

Animals have grown shy of men so you must learn to keep quite still if you want to observe them. You will gradually learn their ways, and however long you live there will always be more to learn. Machines can be lovely things too and very interesting, but if a factory makes a hundred engines of the same model, they all behave exactly the same, or should, if properly made. But no two animals are quite alike, any more than two children are exactly alike. Each has a character, just as you have. The Red Indians called animals "the little people." An Englishman who lived as a Red Indian and was given the name "Grey Owl," grew so fond of animals that he finally gave up his whole life to being with them to defend them from cruelty. He said: "Remember that you belong to Nature, not it to you. Remember that all animals as well as the 'lesser' races and humbler classes of men have their rights."

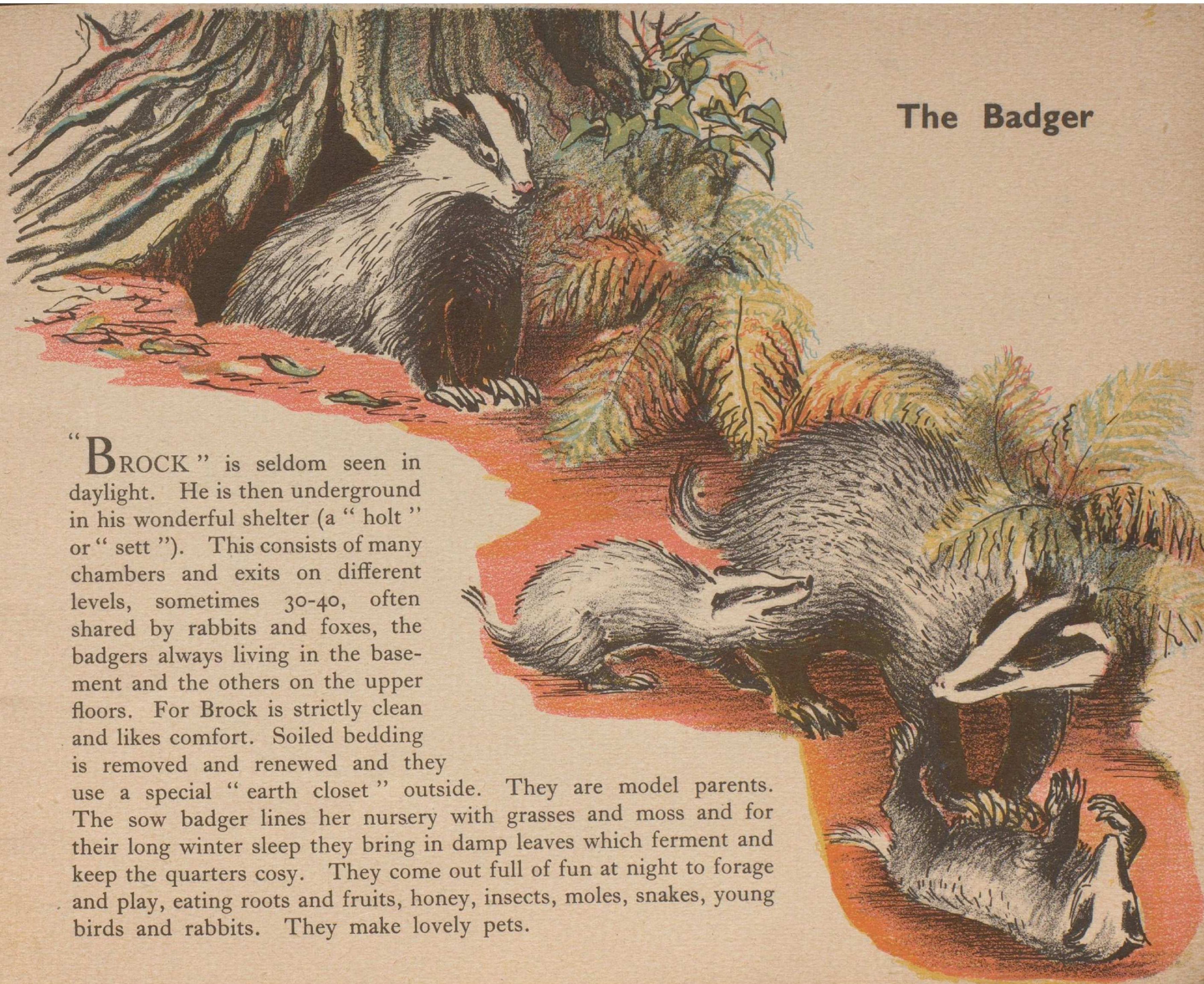
The Fox

REYNARD lives in the woods and seldom makes his own home ("earth"), but uses a rabbit's burrow or badger's "sett." He is very clever. He knows that the strong scent in a gland by his tail betrays him, so when he is being hunted he will take to water, mingle with sheep, or roll in muck to conceal it. He can mimic other animal's voices; he will fascinate rabbits by gambolling in front of them, gradually getting nearer and nearer until he can pounce upon one unawares—he is full of cunning tricks to outwit victim or foe. In mid-winter you hear the dog fox bark at night when he is out courting. The cubs are born in May or June and are cared



for by both parents. They begin "school" when they are a month old; the vixen brings them rats and mice at first and then through endless games and expeditions they grow sturdy and alert and learn how to hunt for themselves. Foxes eat all kinds of flesh, dead or alive, and they destroy more than they can eat. They are much hunted and shot.

The Badger



"BROCK" is seldom seen in daylight. He is then underground in his wonderful shelter (a "holt" or "sett"). This consists of many chambers and exits on different levels, sometimes 30-40, often shared by rabbits and foxes, the badgers always living in the basement and the others on the upper floors. For Brock is strictly clean and likes comfort. Soiled bedding is removed and renewed and they use a special "earth closet" outside. They are model parents. The sow badger lines her nursery with grasses and moss and for their long winter sleep they bring in damp leaves which ferment and keep the quarters cosy. They come out full of fun at night to forage and play, eating roots and fruits, honey, insects, moles, snakes, young birds and rabbits. They make lovely pets.

**A PUFFIN
PICTURE BOOK**



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by ARNRID JOHNSTON.

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