

HOLIDAY POND

***Books by
Edith M. Patch***

NATURE STUDY

Dame Bug and Her Babies

Hexapod Stories

Bird Stories

First Lessons in Nature Study

Holiday Pond

Holiday Meadow

Holiday Hill

Holiday Shore

Mountain Neighbors

Desert Neighbors

Forest Neighbors

Prairie Neighbors

NATURE AND SCIENCE READERS

Hunting

Outdoor Visits

Surprises

Through Four Seasons

Science at Home

The Work of Scientists

HOLIDAY POND

by

Edith M. Patch

illustrated by

Wilfrid S. Bronson

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

ITHACA, NEW YORK

Cover and arrangement © 2020 Yesterday's Classics, LLC.

This edition, first published in 2020 by Yesterday's Classics, an imprint of Yesterday's Classics, LLC, is an unabridged republication of the text originally published by The MacMillan Company in 1929. For the complete listing of the books that are published by Yesterday's Classics, please visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of Gateway to the Classics which presents the complete text of hundreds of classic books for children at www.gatewaytotheclassics.com.

ISBN: 978-1-63334-050-3

Yesterday's Classics, LLC

PO Box 339

Ithaca, NY 14851

CONTENTS

I. AN INVITATION	1
II. THE YELPING FROG	4
III. LOTOR, THE WASHER	16
IV. BLUE DAMSEL-FLIES	29
V. VISITORS FROM THE SEA	37
VI. THE PAINTED TURTLE	47
VII. CARDINAL FLOWERS	60
VIII. NIM FAY, THE SAP-DRINKER	67
IX. SANDY THE SWALLOW	78
X. A POND-LILY'S GUESTS	89
XI. THE DUSKY DUCKS	97

CHAPTER I

AN INVITATION

SOMEWHERE, in a pleasant country place, there is a little lake. It is cheerfully called “Holiday Pond.” The name itself sounds like an invitation to come and have a happy vacation.

Blueberry bushes grow on a hill near by; and the fruit, ripened in the sunshine, is very sweet. When you bend over to pick the berries, the sun makes the back of your neck feel warm at first, then hot. In spite of the juice in the berries you become thirsty.

So you go down to the water to bathe your face and drink and wade. After that you rest on the shore where some bushes make a cool shadow.

Then you forget that you have been hot and tired, for you begin to see the stories of Holiday Pond. Real stories—live stories—and so many of them going on at the same time that you may choose the ones that please you most!

There are frogs, those of each kind with manners of their own. The spotted pickerel frogs, sunning themselves in plain sight among the stones a rod or so

HOLIDAY POND

up the bank, hop quietly to the water when you come near them. An old water-soaked trunk of a fallen tree makes a bridge across a corner of the pond. If you walk out on it the clamoring frogs that have been hiding there, plunge and splash into the water. They yell wildly as they leap and the first time you hear them you jump nearly as far as they do. They surprise you so! There is a calm bullfrog sitting on a broad lily leaf. His body is so nearly the color of the leaf that you might not notice him if it were not for his bright eyes. Those eyes watch you but the frog does not seem nervous. He does not bother to jump until you are almost near enough to touch him.

Some tiny painted turtles, all just the same size, are paddling about and stretching their necks while they hunt for their dinner.

Four young sandpipers walk along the edge of the water. Each bird calls to the others often enough to keep the members of the family from straying too far apart.

A damsel-fly, a dainty blue cousin of the dragon-fly, wraps her filmy wings about her body and creeps down the stem of a plant to the bottom of the pond. You can see her moving about in the clear water for many minutes, and you watch to see whether she will come up again and fly away.

The queer tracks at the margin of the pond are those of the raccoon who came down to wash his food before he ate it.

At the outlet, near the mouth of Holiday Stream are a lot of little fishes. They are ready to leave the pond

AN INVITATION

and follow the stream to the sea. You would like to walk along the bank and go with them. But just then something flies down to the yellow pond lily and you creep as near as you can to see what it is.

So you stay at Holiday Pond and choose which of the real stories—live stories—you will watch. Perhaps some of them will be like those which are written in this book.

CHAPTER II

THE YELPING FROG

RANA, the green frog, stretched in his bed of mud and moss. He had slept without moving during the coldest days and nights of the year and now his long winter's nap was over.

The mud and moss had been frozen and he had lain in an icy nest, but the chill had not made him ache. He had known nothing about it. The colder his body was, the less it felt and when it was very, very cold indeed it became numb and felt nothing at all.

The sun of springtime warmed the earth. The blossoms on the willows grew big and furry. The ice was gone from the pond and the melted snow ran down the banks. Some of it flowed into Rana's bed and made a bath tub of it. The stiffness left his arms and legs and he kicked about in the water.

After a few splashes he found himself at the surface of the pond. He poked out his head and breathed deeply. It was good to draw in the warm spring air. He had hardly breathed at all while he slept the winter away, a stiff and numb little object.

THE YELPING FROG

Now that he was breathing and moving and feeling, he became hungry. A young water insect swam near and Rana swallowed it. It was soft and tender, and the taste of it pleased him. He had eaten nothing whatever for weeks and weeks and his appetite was keen. One small morsel was not enough so he hunted in the pond for the rest of his spring breakfast.

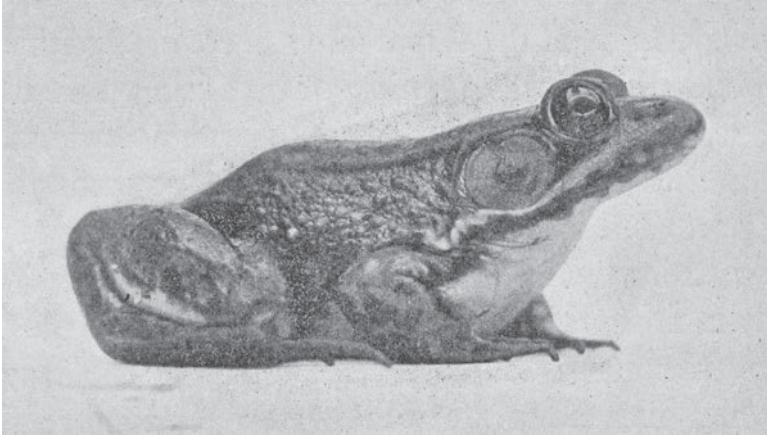
When Rana swam, his legs bent and then straightened out behind him. They were strong little legs and well formed. Even his toes were perfect in every joint. Yet a few years ago he had been a cripple for a time. He had an accident and one of his legs was broken off at the knee. He never knew where the lost part went. It disappeared very quickly. At the time there was a rather pleased turtle near by; but if the turtle knew anything about the missing leg, he did not tell.

However, the accident was not very serious, for it happened while Rana was a tadpole. A tadpole, as you may know, is fortunately able to grow a new leg in place of one he may chance to lose. Of course, since Rana had become a frog he would do well to be more careful of his legs. If he lost one now he would be a cripple for the rest of his life.

When Rana was a tadpole he had a small mouth and a tail that was longer than all the rest of his body. After he became a frog he had a wide mouth and no tail at all. Altogether his body changed very much while it was growing. It changed inside and outside. He even breathed in a different way.

A tadpole breathes with gills much as a fish does.

HOLIDAY POND



The yelping frog had a large flat ear on each side of his head.

The gills are on each side of the throat and are covered with skin. On the left side there is an opening or breathing pore in the skin. The water passes into the mouth and nostrils, flows through the gill chambers, and then goes out through the breathing pore. There is air enough in the water for the gills to use in breathing.

A grown frog takes in air through his nostrils and breathes by means of lungs. At least that is the way he breathes when his head is out of the water. He can breathe a little, however, through his skin—enough so that he can live at the bottom of the pond as long as he cares to stay there. A frog, happily, is in no danger of drowning.

Some tadpoles change into frogs their first summer, but Rana was rather slow in growing up and was a tadpole for two summers. The third summer he was a frog. That season he did a great deal of yelping. So did

THE YELPING FROG

all the other young green frogs in the pond. They sprang into the air and cried every time they were frightened.

Two boys, who were spending the summer at a farm not far away, often came to the pond. One day they ran pell-mell down the slope to the edge of the water where Rana and about forty of his kind were hidden among the sedges.

Suddenly, all about the boys, the frogs leaped into the air, yelled, and splashed into the water. The boys jumped, too. They slipped on some wet stones and fell into the pond with screams and splashes that were even louder than those the frogs made. Then the boys laughed, and after that day, whenever they met a green frog, they called him a “yelping frog.” It was so good a nickname that other children who played by the pond used it too. So that is how it happens that a green frog in that neighborhood is known by the name which is used for the title of this story.

Even after Rana grew older, he still had the habit of jumping high into the air and falling to the water with a splash, if he chanced to be alarmed while he was sitting among the plants at the edge of the pond. But the cry he gave at such times was different, for his voice had changed and the old frog called a low and rather pleasant-sounding “chung” when he was frightened.

Early in the spring Rana had still another note. After he left his cold winter-bed he liked to sit in the shallow water near the edge of the pond and croak his spring song. It was a jerky sort of song, but it was the best he could do. There were neither words nor tune in

HOLIDAY POND

his croaking, but there was joy in it. It seemed to mean that the frozen ground had grown mellow; the quiet, sleepy, stiff old earth was stirring and young again. Sap was running in the trees and bushes. Brooks were racing down their little valleys and chuckling as they went. The big butterflies with yellow edges on their brown wings, after dozing through the cold months in some hollow tree, were flying by day. It was spring!

So in the shallow water at the edge of the pond Rana sat and sang every night. He put so much force into his voice that his whole body jerked with every croak. The water was so cold that had you tried to wade in it, you would have shaken and shivered and stepped quickly to the shore. But it was not chilly to Rana. He was no warm-blooded creature who must wait until summer for his swimming. His little body, with cold blood inside and cold water outside, was comfortable enough. So he croaked and he jerked right cheerfully.

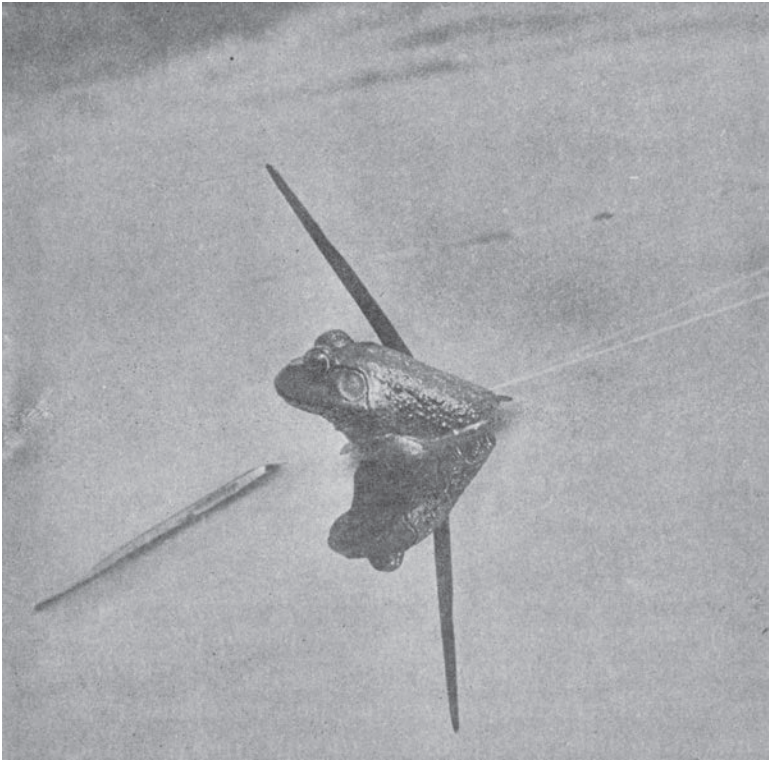
Rana was not singing a solo. He was singing in a chorus. All about him the voices of the other green frogs were croaking the same jerky, tuneless music. Another, different sort of croaking helped make the chorus louder. The spotted pickerel frogs also wakened early in the year, and they too sat in the water and sang at night.

It was during the season of the great spring chorus that Rana met his mate. Her throat was white and her ears were about the same size as her eyes. Rana's throat was yellow as an orange and his ears were larger than his eyes—much larger. Except for the color of their

THE YELPING FROG

throats and the size of their ears, the two frogs looked very much alike.

Their flat, circular ears, at the sides of their heads, had no outer parts to fill with water when they swam. The eardrums were even with the surface of the head and covered with skin. Their heads and shoulders were bright, shiny green, and their backs were the color of olives. Their bodies were white underneath, and their sides were dappled with green and brown. Rana was nearly three inches long from the tip of his nose to the



Mrs. Bullfrog also lived in Holiday Pond.

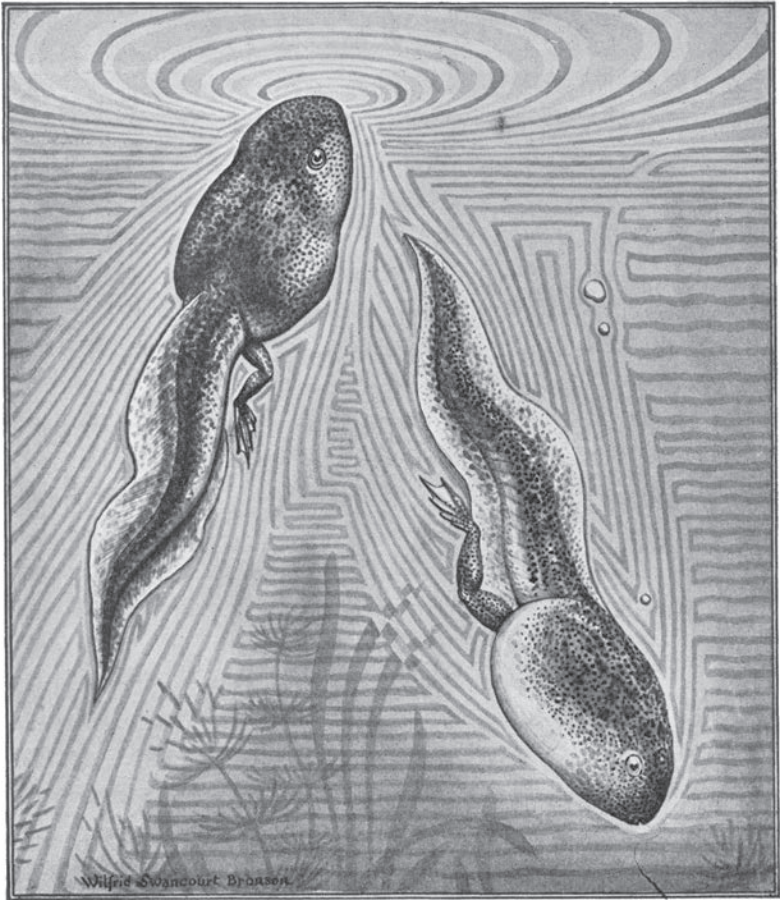
HOLIDAY POND

end of his body (not measuring his legs), and his mate was nearly two inches longer.

Rana and Mrs. Rana looked, indeed, so much like small-sized bullfrogs that it would have been easy to mistake them for bullfrogs. Rana, however, had a little fold of skin along each side, reaching from his eye to the end of his body. So did Mrs. Rana. A bullfrog has no such side fold in his skin. If you ever wish to know whether you are looking at a bullfrog or a yelping frog, you can tell by the side fold, or the lack of it.

One day, rather early in the spring, Mrs. Rana swam off to lay her eggs. Rana went with her. An alder bush was growing at the edge of the pond, and one of its lower branches dipped down into the water. This branch seemed to please Mrs. Rana, and on it she fastened a clear, colorless, jelly-like mass. In the mass were her eggs.

It was a queer sort of nest, and after it was once in place Rana and Mrs. Rana both went off and left it. They never went back to look at it again. They did not know how many days it took the sun, shining on the jelly-mass near the top of the water, to hatch their eggs. When the young tadpoles began to swim about in the pond, Father and Mother Rana did not know their own children from their nephews and nieces. The old frogs did not feed the baby tads even so much as a single mosquito wriggler. The youngsters found their own food. Their legs grew on the outside of their bodies, and their arms grew on the inside, in the gill chambers. All this happened and the parent frogs paid no attention.



*The young tadpoles took care of themselves.
They did not even know who Mother Rana was.*

HOLIDAY POND

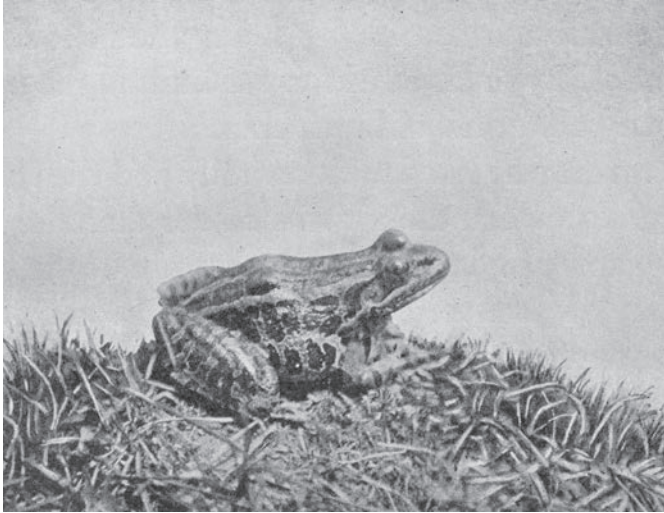
When they were old enough, each young frog thrust his left arm out through the breathing pore and went about with only one free arm. There was no breathing pore on the right side for the other arm to come through. For this reason each tadpole kept his right arm inside, and as it grew bigger and bigger it looked like a bunch in his side. When the arm grew big enough and strong enough, it tore the skin and poked out through the hole. So after a time each little tadpole had two arms outside instead of one arm out and one arm in.

It seems almost a pity that the parent frogs missed all the fun of watching their young grow up. If Mother Rana could have thought, "All our little sons and daughters are poking out their left arms to-day," it might have given her pleasure. If Father Rana could have croaked, "The youngsters have broken through with their strong right arms," he might have liked watching the growth of the tadpoles.

But it is the way of frogs to pay no attention at all to their young ones. And a very good way it is too—for frogs. With so large a family of tadpoles, it would be rather hard on the parents if they needed to take care of the little ones all the time their mouths were growing wider and their tails were growing smaller and their gills were growing useless and their lungs were growing useful.

Rana found enough to do to keep him contented. He hunted for his food. He did not take long hunting trips through the meadows as the spotted pickerel frogs did when they went out to catch grasshoppers.

THE YELPING FROG



*The spotted pickerel frog went into the meadow
to hunt for grasshoppers.*

Rana sometimes hid among the marsh marigolds at the edge of the pond, but he always stayed near enough to leap splashing into the pond if anything frightened him. In fact he spent about as much time in the water as the bullfrogs did.

Now and then, several times a year in fact, he molted his skin. His old skin would loosen on his body. Then it would tear down the middle when he shrugged his shoulders. After that he wriggled out of it as best as he could. He pulled with his legs as if trying to get his feet out of some stockings. He moved his arms as if taking off a pair of gloves. If he happened to be out of the water when he took his skin off, he usually stuffed it into his mouth and ate it. That was one way to get rid of it. If he molted under water, the old skin floated off out of reach and he did not swim after it and catch it.

HOLIDAY POND

There were plenty of kinds of food to hunt in the pond without bothering about his old torn skin.

On warm days he liked to sit on a lily pad with his head in the air. On days when the air was colder than the water, he was in the habit of lying flat on the bottom of the pond.

He did not lead a very busy life. Even in summer he had many idle hours.

As the days grew colder toward the end of the season, he was quiet most of the time. Then there came a day when the pleasant shallow edge of the pond no



One hot summer day three cricket frogs perched on green Rana's back, which was moist and cool.

THE YELPING FROG

longer satisfied him. His body had a queer feeling. He did not seem to like the light. The mud near by was black and soft. Slowly, very slowly, he pushed into the mud. Farther and farther he dug his way, until at last he made a little cave at the end of his journey. He felt drowsy—so very drowsy—and after that he felt nothing at all until the long winter was over. Then he stretched in his bed of mud and sought the light of a fair spring day.