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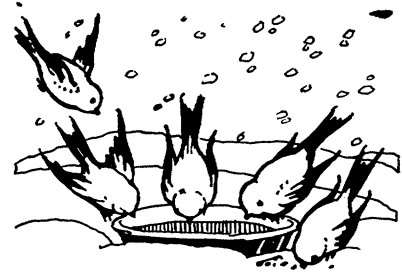
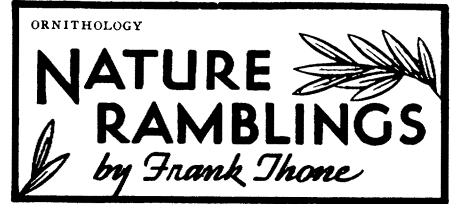
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A Cup of Warm Water

HE WHOSE BIRTH we celebrate on Christmas Day once assured us that he would remember even a cup of cold water given to the least of his creatures. That he loved birds is evidenced by his frequent references to them during the recorded years of his life. Charity to the birds would seem, therefore, a most fitting Christmas benevolence.

We often think to give birds food in winter. It involves no more than scattering table crumbs on the snow; though if our benevolent instincts be more fully developed we may build feeding trays more or less elaborate. But water is no less necessary to birds than food, and they are often harder pressed for something to slake their thirst than they are for something to eat. This is especially so in severe weather, when the chance pools that usually afford them a supply are frozen solid. It is then that a pan of water set out in a sheltered spot (but one clear of cat-danger!) will be most welcome to the birds.

And do not set out merely a pan of cold water, if the weather be freezing. It will immediately seal itself with ice, perhaps before all the bird clients that visit your yard shall have had a chance to drink. Let it be warmed up—make it as hot as you like your own tea or coffee. Then it will be a long time freezing, for water has an astonishing capacity for heat and loses it more slowly than any other common substance. Birds do not have the same prejudice American humans have in favor of ice water, especially in winter. They are glad to get something warm to drink. There is no charity bought so cheap that can make so many living creatures happy, as a cup of warm water.

Science News Letter, December 12, 1936

