

The Foundations of Peace

Dr. A. L. Bixby, the poet of the Lincoln, Neb., Journal, and the trustworthy guide, philosopher and friend of all men everywhere—and on all subjects, except politics—is authority for the following:

A gentleman traveling through the western part of the state a few days ago stopped off to look at a piece of land that was offered for sale at a bargain. In going to the place it was necessary to cross a tract where the prairie dogs lived. His companion had a target rifle and requested him to take a shot at one of the little animals. He did so with deadly result, and to the great disturbance of his own peace of mind. The wounded beast barely had strength to crawl into its den probably to suffer and die. "Thinking it over afterward," said the gentleman, and he was a gentleman through and through, "I couldn't figure out where I had profited by taking the life of one of God's happy creatures, and I made up my mind then and there never to be guilty of such wanton cruelty again. Even a prairie dog has a right to live."

This is one place where figures won't lie. The best mathematician in all the world could not figure out where any man profits by the needless destruction of life. It is one of the good signs of the times that men are thinking more and more these days on such subjects and that there is a growing disposition to recognize that "even a prairie dog has a right to live." Boys having concern for their standing don't tie tin cans on dogs' tails these days; and those who do, readily discover that that is one of the offenses not condoned under the "boys will be boys" rule.

There are some who, coming in such stern contact with the miseries of men, are disposed to look lightly upon the efforts of the humane society and kindred organizations, contending that a more important work relates to the immediate wants of men rather than of birds and beasts. But organizations like the humane society are doing a very necessary work in the education and the making of men. Every man whose interest has been enlisted in the humane society's work may be depended upon to do valiant service for humanity. Every child who has been impressed with the fact that it is wicked to destroy a nest or to inflict injury upon birds or beasts, has been made familiar with the paths that lead to that ever increasing circle of men and women where "I am my brother's keeper" is the alpha and the omega of the ritual.

Macaulay told us "The Puritan hated bear baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." But today those who protest against the pigeon shoot, the docking of the horse's tail, the high check rein, the needless slaughter of birds or beasts or "any other detested sport that owes its pleasures to another's pain" recognize not only the injury to the spectator but the rights of the dumb creature. The fine character created by Charles Reade gave to the men of his time and to the men of all time an excellent rule in "Put Yourself in His Place."

It is difficult to know just where to draw the line, and the conscience of each individual must determine. Some may not yet be willing to go quite so far as the man who, though passionately fond of fishing, found it difficult to obtain his own consent to run a sharp pointed hook through a beautiful minnow. When his companions laughed at him and told him that it did not hurt the minnow, he asked, "Then what makes the little thing squirm?" Many yet hold that the high check rein is not cruel, but those who have carefully investigated know better; and while on some of these points there will be differences, sooner or later it will be agreed that man's right to destroy animal life terminates with his necessities for food, and that he can not find justification in the destruction of such life in the desire for sport.

"The proper study of mankind is man," and it is an interesting study, too. Because this is so it is strange that there are not more students in that school. Those who have not availed themselves of the privilege of such study have no idea what a wonderfully interesting thing it is. They can learn so many things they never dreamed of be-

fore. And once they enter upon the study of men they will naturally be drawn at the first opportunity to the study of birds and of beasts. In that realm are limitless opportunities. In simple fiction we may obtain inspiration for the study of the horse from "Black Beauty," and for the study of the dog from "Beautiful Joe." John Burroughs can tell us facts we never dreamed of, and yet they are facts lying at our very doors and providing, as do all of Nature's studies, profitable and interesting investigation.

Men disagree as to whether these dumb creatures reason, yet there are many well authenticated tales showing some wonderfully human conduct on the part of these creatures. We are told by "Farm Folks" that "on the top of a steep pinnacle of the Alps mountains surrounded by the dead white of the eternal snows through which an occasional clump of evergreen protrudes, is a grave marked by a simple wooden tablet on which these words are carved: 'Here lies a friend of humanity, the savior of thirty-four men, women and children.' The creature to whom this monument was erected was only a dog. He was one of those great, handsome, gentle-eyed Saint Bernards which trail the dangerous paths of the treacherous mountains, watching for the lost traveler and bringing him to safety when found."

The New Orleans Times-Democrat recently quoted a police officer who said that all the stray dogs who roam the streets at night seem to pick out the uniformed policemen as their friends, and that when the officers return to the station they are accompanied by a long procession of dogs of various degrees. Another and older officer said that he did not see any grounds for objection on this point, because he remembered an instance where two dogs which made it a habit to follow the same policeman every night saved that police officer his job. According to the story, this policeman was not in the least bothered with insomnia, and when he got ready to take his nap on his beat the dogs would take up their positions one at one end of the block and one at the other. Whenever one of the dogs saw the sergeant coming he would run to the sleeping officer and rub his cold nose against the officer's face, arousing him from his sleep and thus warning him of the approach of his superior.

C. R. Wigert of Lincoln, Neb., a retired druggist who has traveled extensively, was not prepared to welcome a dog to his home, but he finally did so, and now no money could purchase that particular animal; and thereby hangs a tale. One day two dogs appeared at Mr. Wigert's house. One of them, a large animal, had been seriously crippled in the back. The other was a little, short-legged creature, and not at all attractive to the eye. The crippled animal hid himself under the house and whenever the little dog was fed it was noticed that instead of eating the food he disappeared with it. He was followed several times and on each occasion was seen to carry the food under the house, place it before the crippled animal, and stand wagging his tail as though grateful for the opportunity of doing that kindness. In a few days the two dogs disappeared. Several days later the smaller dog returned and took up his home on the Wigert premises. His very appearance suggested the name he now bears, "Scrubby," but there is nothing of the scrub in his characteristics. Because of the kindness he showed to his crippled companion he found an appreciative master and a comfortable home. It is needless to say that he has found friends in the neighborhood among all who have learned his interesting story.

It was a good sign, when, despite President Roosevelt's great popularity, many criticisms were made when it was reported that he had participated in a hunt where animals had been captured and locked in a cage to be suddenly released in order that a chase might be made. And it was another good sign when many newspapers criticized former President Cleveland because in one of his newspaper articles he told of the great delight to be found in the chase for jack-rabbits, admitting at the same time that it was necessary for the chasers to take great pains to persuade these little animals to flee from their pursuers.

A police officer in a western city was famous for his tenderness. He had been known to weep at the sight of a man whose skull had been fractured by a police officer's club, and he had shown what seemed to be—at least on the part of a police officer—undignified concern over an injury inflicted upon a dog. Some of his fellow officers good naturedly giped him on his tender

spot, and one of his superiors never lost an opportunity to taunt him. There was no tender spot in this superior's breast. He could stand the sight of blood on man or on beast. The pain which others felt did not disturb him. But we have been told that "the bravest are the tenderest, the loving are the daring," and on one occasion it happened that this tender-hearted man, accompanied this particular superior on a search for a pair of desperate criminals. The criminals were found and they showed fight. The man who had been laughed at because of his tenderness, who had been sneered at because of his tears at the sight of another's woe, stood his ground manfully, risked his own life, and with the aid of citizens whom he called to his support, arrested both of the desperate men after being required to severely wound one of them. The superior—the man who had so often laughed his subordinate to scorn because of his "weakness"—took to his heels at the first shot and ran like a scared wolf. History is replete with instances showing that "cowards are cruel but the brave love mercy and delight to save."

"Nature teaches beasts to know their friends." Have you ever noticed that there is an affinity between the boy and the dog? Turn loose a little child and a little dog—or for that matter an old dog—and see how soon they'll get together. On one occasion a man holding in his lap a puppy dog took a seat in a crowded street car. Beside him sat a woman, and beside the woman a little boy. Leaning forward the boy caught sight of the dog and at the same time the dog caught sight of the boy. In the parlance of the street "there was something doing." The little boy's eyes sparkled and the little dog's tail wagged. The man found great difficulty in holding the animal and in order to prevent it from creating a commotion he found it necessary to pass it over to the boy in whose lap the little animal nestled and was content.

One of the busiest lawyers in a western city was generally regarded as a cross and crabbed man. He was a bachelor and it was noticed—and to his credit it was said—that he had the habit when walking down the street of stopping to rub the noses and pat the necks of the horses attached to the hacks standing in front of hotels. Some who would not be willing to give the devil his due said that he only did that because it cost nothing, and by way of extenuation of his other meannesses. But finally it leaked out—not with this man's consent, however,—that as he had shown kindness to the hack horses he had shown kindness to men and women and little children who were helpless and needed friends. It developed that, unknown to the world and known only to a few, he had regularly and quietly dispensed charity in a most liberal way.

Men who keep their hearts young find pleasure in dwelling on life's simple things. All may not be profound and if we could we would miss the best part of this really good old world. But we may all learn from association with children; we may be of great service in giving a word of cheer to some faltering comrade; we may obtain a wonderful amount of pleasure in doing a kind turn to some abandoned cur, receiving our reward in a hearty wag of the cur's tail like unto that for which the old German said he wouldn't take a thousand dollars.

Most of us are too dignified to repeat—but some of us are simple hearted enough to remember one of the sweetest lessons of childhood conveyed in homely verse: "Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land. Little deeds of kindness, little words of love, help to make earth happy like the heaven above."

The easiest thing in the world is to train a child so that it will be considerate of the rights of birds and beasts, and a child trained in that way is safe. When he is grown he will be considerate of the rights of men. He will learn that the essence of the law is to "deal honestly, hurt nobody (and no thing), and give everyone (and everything) his just due." When he learns to fulfill that law as it relates to the smallest and most helpless of God's creatures he will lose no opportunity to become as a ministering angel to human beings in need.

These are the foundations of peace for if the schoolboy of today is trained to speak softly and carry an olive branch instead of a "big stick," the statesman of tomorrow will be more reluctant to engage in war and more willing to assist in the restoration of order.

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