

HOW ANIMALS PLAY

BY DAN BEARD



TAME monkeys, like children, are very fond of pets, and take great delight in fondling white rats and other small creatures. Raccoons, on the contrary, do not seem to indulge in live pets, but the baby wild raccoons often have a knot of wood, which answers as a sort of doll baby, with which they play.

Young wolves will accept an old shoe, a ball, or any other object that will appeal to a domestic dog as a plaything. A coyote with which I became acquainted, while visiting the Canadian National Park at Banff, had such a wild frolic with my cap that when I at last regained possession of it the thing was a wreck.

Foxes never seem to tire of playing with each other; a feather delights them beyond measure, and in pursuit of it they will make phenomenal leaps. I have watched young red foxes playing together for more than an hour at a time, and I doubt if there lives any more graceful and playful creatures in wood or field.

It would be a difficult matter to determine just what animals do not

play, for youth and play seem to go hand in hand. However, it must not be understood from this broad statement that the writer looks upon the oyster, for instance, as a frolicsome, fun-loving creature.

But even this lowly bivalve is a more highly organized animal than might be supposed by any one whose only knowledge of the oyster is its appearance on the half-shell, or its flavor as it goes sliding down his gullet. The oyster has a heart, a liver, an intestine and a rudimentary brain. The baby oyster swims free, and, for aught we know to the contrary, may be a playful creature before it attaches itself to some stationary object and settles down to the stupid vegetable life of a true gentleman of leisure.

By experiment I have found that even insects enjoy recreation and have an appreciation of fun. A pet katydid, which I kept in my library one winter, would pretend to fight my finger and assume the most laughable poses while so doing. At the same time it kept up a queer scolding noise, made with its wings, that I have never heard among the trees.

Last summer, from an ambush in the forests, I watched the little four-footed brownies and wood fairies as

they rustled among the leaves, peeped from under the ferns or scampered up the tree trunks, but the ones which interested me most were the American white-footed mice, or deer mice, as some call them. One of the little fellows appeared upon a log at the edge of the water, and in the exuberance of its joy, leaped so high into the air that it lost its footing when it again struck the log, and fell with a splash into the water. But this seemed to be part of the game, and the mouse was out again in a jiffy, rolling on its back like a wet dog. Then away it scampered over the water, leaping from one lily pad to another, and noisily disappearing into the top of a fallen tree.

One summer day, as my boat was floating quietly with the tide, my attention was caught by the unusual

movements of some kiddies. The little fish seemed to be engaged in a game of "I conquer" or "Follow the leader," and were leaping over a small raft of salt hay. The kiddies were not feeding, the closest scrutiny failed to reveal a trace of food on the hay, and it was evident that the bunch of floating straw was being used as a plaything by the aquatic children.

A young chimpanzee resembles a human child so closely that it is not strange that the play of these two children should be similar in many respects; but the young troglodyte is much stronger than the human infant, and consequently its play is much rougher.

When vainly attempting to make a finished drawing of one of these animals while it played with a straw, a rung of a chair, or an old silk hat, I was compelled to laugh until utterly exhausted. I sank helplessly upon a bench. It is needless to say that the sketches made under such circumstances look more like shorthand notes made by a lunatic than serious at-

tempts at pictures, but I learned much of the ways of the chimpanzees. The sense of the proprieties of life is undeveloped in these animals, and this will prevent a full report ever being made of their outrageous comicalities; but can never prevent the witness of their boisterous fun from enjoying a hearty laugh. In fact, a lack of appreciation on the part of the audience will often cause the primitive comedian to fly into a wild and ungovernable fit of anger.

The domestic pig is a much misunderstood and maligned animal. True, a pig-sty is not a New England housewife's idea of cleanliness, but it is the best the pig can do under the circumstances, and is never so offensive as some of the human sties which answer for jails in some parts of the country. Like any other prisoner, the pig is dirty when he is forced to live in filth.

A pig I once owned in Kentucky was so clean that its white bristles shone like spun glass, and the pig's skin showed as pink as a baby's foot. There was nothing this pig enjoyed more than a bath from the garden hose, unless it was the game of tag on the lawn, which followed with its young master and the house dog.

When the pig was "It," she would tag the boy by using her snout to trip him, and tag the dog by giving it a toss into the air. Then with "gough!" away the hog would scamper, with the others in hot pursuit.

Not the lamb which Mary loved, but a big horn lamb from the Rocky Mountains, owned by a Western gentleman, was wont to climb to the top of the tallest pieces of furniture in the house, from which it would playfully leap to the floor, where it landed stiff legged and with feet close together.

A Rocky Mountain goat kid I once met would climb to my shoulders and jump to the ground, and for variety's sake would butt me with its little, white, woolly head. I could detect no difference in its play from that of the kid of a domestic goat.

"All work and no play" makes a Jack rabbit as dull as it does a Jack boy; but it is interesting to note that all animals seem to use their play as kindergarten schooling for the more serious pursuits of their maturer years. The puppy engages in a mimic chase, the kitten stalks imaginary mice, and so the idea of play developing the faculties runs through all the animal world.

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Japanese Women at Work

THE sewing in the kimono consists of one small and one long stitch, a species of artistic basting. There is reason in this, for whenever the kimono is washed, it is ripped to pieces. This is, perhaps, why the Japanese, who bathe daily, wear such dirty clothes, while the Chinese, who bathe sometimes, wear such clean clothes. The kimono strips are dabbed up and down without soap, scrubbed with a brush and are ironed by drying them carefully on boards. One of the sights of a town are these boards, with their strips of silk, leaning against the sides of the houses.

The peasant women not only do the housework, but out-of-door work as

well. Like the coolies, they wear trousers and stand knee-deep in the slush of the rice paddies, guide the water buffaloes at the plough, or bind up the straw to dry on the trees. This is the Japanese idea of a hay stack, and makes the trees look as if they were wearing skirts.

One of the novel sights is the old women mowers, clipping the lawns with scissors as neatly as a lawn mower, and stopping now and then to gossip over their tea. Both in China and Japan the tending of silk worms is not only done by women, but is regarded as an elegant duty. In China each year the Empress inaugurates it ceremonially, as the Emperor does the spring ploughing. In each country the other important industry—the tea growing—is largely in the hands of women.

Where White Ants Are Useful.

A white ant's nest is about the last thing in the world one would expect to be of practical service to mankind, yet in western Australia white ants and their nests are put to a variety of economic uses.

In the first place, the aborigines sometimes eat the ants, and there are even a few white residents who have tasted them, for the sake of experience, and say they are not bad. But it is not a habit with the aborigines to eat the insects; they prefer to devour the mould out of which the ants build their nests.

Capital owners are frequently impressed by the Australian prospector out of these white ant mounds. They make a solid floor, almost like cement, for the settlers' huts; and in the township of Derby, in western Australia, they have been turned to profitable use by being rolled in as a top layer on the public roads.

Some Things Worth Knowing

One of the favorite new belts for wear with the black skirt is made of black silk elastic. The latter is run through sterling silver rings, studded with cut steel nail heads. A sterling silver clasp closes the belt in front.

The ingenious contrivances of women are sometimes amusing, even if they are practical. A humorous idea is to fill a rubber bag full of hot water at night to keep the baby's nursing bottle warm. This device is further augmented by covering the bottle and bag with a large, white blanket so that the heat will be retained. The milk will thus be warm at a moment's notice, without the discomfort of getting wide awake while heating it.

A Botanical Adventure.

I found a flower named Bouncing Bet this morning in the roadside grass; I got my skirts all sopping wet. I took it to the Botany class.

And teacher showed us very plain. The little pistol that it had. Beneath the Maggie flying glass. And then we wrote down in our books: "The poplar name is Bouncing Bet. And it was found in wayside nooks. Escaped from gardens where it grew; But sometimes cultivated yet."

Dear Bouncing Bet! how spirited And fine that was of you! To run away and to escape From stiff old gardens long ago And paths made prim by hoe and tape. A brave adventure to have planned! Oh, I can see you, stooping low, Creep slyly underneath the gate, Your little pistol in your hand. —Florence Wilkinson.

The Butcher Bird's Free Lunch

When the barbed wire fence first came into use in California, cattlemen cursed the inventor. Not so the butcher bird. The butcher bird is a creature about the size of a small crow, and he lives on insects and smaller birds.

When the butcher bird saw the first barbed wire fence he lighted upon it, flapped his wings three times and crowed. He had discovered what he had wanted for a long while. At first the farmers who instituted the barbed wire wondered how so many grasshoppers, beetles, field mice and small birds became impaled upon the barbs of their fence wires. They soon learned, for the butcher bird is not a secretive creature. When grasshoppers and other bugs were plentiful, he gathered great stores and stuck them on the barbs of the fences.

To Cleanse Piano Keys.

It is a simple matter to whiten piano keys by washing them with a strong solution of nitric acid to an ounce of soft water. Use a piece of soft cheesecloth to wash the keys, being careful that the solution does not come in contact with the wood.

Whiting or prepared chalk mixed with lemon juice is an excellent polish to apply while the keys are moist. Badly discolored keys can only be remedied by calling in a careful workman.

THE LAND OF KOREA, QUEEREST KINGDOM ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH

IMAGINE a country where the people are said never to wash themselves, and are only washed twice—when they are born and after they are dead—and who yet spend all their spare cash on laundry bills for their clothes; where frightful threats are written upon the walls in Chinese characters to scare the rats away, and yet snakes are allowed the liberty of the house; where the policeman holds one of the highest social ranks, and yet has no attention paid to his authority; imagine all this, and a thousand other things equally quaint and contradictory, and you will have Korea, the most topsy-turvy kingdom on earth.

Until shortly before the Chinese-Japanese war, the King of Korea, although theoretically a despot, never had any money. In that respect he was like the rest of the rich men in the country. They had never handled large coin and knew absolutely nothing of money in general, outside of the long strings of "cash" which are universal in the Far East. The Korean "cash" is a little circle of brass, bronze, or copper with a very large hole in the center, by which it is

strung. It is worth about one-twentieth of an American cent, so that the man who staggers along under as much "cash" as he can carry is not "overburdened with wealth," in the usual sense of the phrase.

The King's annual revenue in coin amounted to 1,700,000 "cash"—\$850. But the royal budget also contained many contributions in kind, such as 90,000 stones of the best rice, 41,000 stones of beans, 20,000 stones of peas,

20,000 dried fish, 100 ponies, 2,500 staves of cheap rice for the use of soldiers, 1,000 yards of cotton cloth, several hundred yards of grass cloth, and slave girls to the value of 6,000,000 "cash." The King, of course, paid his servants in kind—he could not do otherwise. It was disconcerting to his early American advisers, when they applied for their first quarter's salary, to have a gang of a hundred coolies come staggering into the office, each one carrying a bag of rice and laying their burdens indiscriminately around the place.

Korea has a currency now and has been opened up by American, European and Japanese commerce; but the people are still very backward and primitive, densely ignorant and superstitious. They are proud of all their old customs and methods, however foolish these may appear in the eyes of enlightened foreigners. They cannot be persuaded to change their slovenly white cotton garments for anything more modern, or to use steel traps instead of Chinese ideographs in their unending campaign against the rats who gnaw through the paper walls of their houses.

"They insist on squatting on their heels when they work in your garden," said an American who has lived in Korea and knows the people well. "They use the short-handled, awkward Korean hoe of the past ages, instead of the civilized implement of to-day.

"This squatting posture is a favorite one with them. You see long lines of squatting men by the roadside, in the hot sunshine, resting. They never seem to wish for work, leaving that to the women; but they are perfectly happy, for they are usually in a half-

comatose condition after a surfeit of rice and pickle, dog chops and soup of garlic, strings of meat and dough, and some indescribable white lumps, neither flesh nor fish, bread nor fat, which tastes as if they might be lizard or snake."



Korean women at Fusan.



Korean children.