

DO ANIMALS REASON?

It is not easy to nail down the word reason so securely that everyone can apply it uniformly to all acts of animals. A little leeway in our definition at this point may make a world of difference later on—just the difference we want.

Something happened here the other day which illustrates very well this point: A barrel of molasses arrived at the monastery which some of the students were told to tap. Instead of up-ending the big barrel they bored into the head as it lay on the concrete floor. Had they stopped to think, i. e., reason, they would have foreseen the result; as it was the molasses quirted half-way across the kitchen. Instantly the student who had done the boring clapped his hand over the hole, stopping the flow until a plug could be found.

Now this act, this simple, obvious act of stopping the flow or waste of molasses with his hand, was something quite beyond the mental capacity of any animal. Simple as it was it showed reason, showed a conception of quantity and waste, showed resource in the face of new and unexpected conditions. Although animals show all the instincts—and more—that we show, have all our senses and more, have all the emotions of hate, fear, love, jealousy, etc., that we have, and can be trained to do wonderful and complicated things, yet not an animal in the world would have had reasoning powers enough to save its food supply by simply holding its paw on a hole through which it was escaping.

Place a dozen intelligent dogs in a room with a slat floor and give them their supply of water once in two days in a tall, easily upset vessel. The chances are that they would upset and so lose their water every time, nor would they learn before they had perished of thirst. Place a piece of meat just out of reach of a hungry, chained-up dog. Place a hooked stick within his reach. Will the dog take the stick in his mouth and draw the meat to himself? Will he even turn around and haul the meat in reach of his mouth with his hind foot? No, simply because any of these acts involves a mental conception, an act of what the psychologists call reason.

A friend told me a story of something a dog did which he said was an act of reason. I replied by telling him of a weed, called the red root, that grows on our farm and what it did this summer. This red root begins to grow as soon as it gets warm in June. Last year the drought and the cultivator prevented its growing until the drought and the cultivator stopped in September. Immediately thousands of red roots came up, which, instead of growing to be tall, luxuriant, branching plants, as is their habit of growth, put out only one or two leaves and a seed stalk. Ordinarily the red root grows shoulder high; those plants tried—and many succeeded—to ripen a few seeds, often one-hundredth part of what a red root bears, an inch or two off the ground. Now, those weeds reasoned that since the season was late, it being September, there was no time for their customary growth. Who would say a weed can reason? Yet this act, not of one but of thousands, is just as much an act of reason as any dog, wild animal or bird story that I have yet encountered.—J. Burroughs, in *Forest and Stream*.

If a chameleon becomes blind, it ceases to change its color, and remains a blackish hue.

NEWS BY TELEPHONE.

Budapest Bureau Distributes Information by Wire.

Budapest, long known to the "globe trotter" as one of the gayest show cities of Europe, famous for its cosmopolitanism, now comes into prominence in a new way. It has a telephone newspaper.

The name of the sheet is the Telephone *Hirmondo*, which, translated into English, means Telephone Journal. There is a central office, connected with over 15,000 subscribers to the paper. All the news of the day, from all parts of the world, is sent out over the telephone to every one of the subscribers. This news service is given at frequent intervals from 8 A. M. until midnight.

The paper has its reporters who gather the local news just as they do in American cities, and who are trained to use the highest degree of brevity and conciseness in writing up their copy. This local news is then approved by the news editor, after which it is passed on to the news distributor, whose position differs entirely from anything in our American newspaper organizations. There are also telegraph, society and financial editors, each of them performing duties similar to what is done by corresponding members of our own newspaper staffs. The news of these different departments, after the final approval of their editors, goes on to the news distributor.

This "news distributor" holds a position that had to be especially created for the telephone newspaper. He is the man who repeats, into a transmitter newly designed for the purpose, all of the news which is heard by the subscribers at their end of the telephone circuits. He must have a good "telephone voice," which will be heard with the greatest distinctness over the telephone circuit. There are at present three of these news distributors on the Budapest paper, and they take turns in announcing the news.

Definite kinds of news are sent out at fixed times during the day. For example, from 8 to 8:30 A. M. a condensed summary of the news that ordinarily appears in our morning papers is sent out. The subscriber may have his telephone located in the dining room of his house, and a large mouthpiece, similar to a small phonographic horn, attached to the receiver. By placing this on a corner of the table the whole family may hear the news repeated to it while at breakfast.

Financial news is sent out at 10 A. M., 11:30 A. M. and 3 P. M. Political news is issued at 11:45 A. M., 2:30 P. M. and 3:15 P. M. Theatrical news is issued at 11:15 A. M. and at 3:45 P. M. By following a schedule of this sort, subscribers may take up the telephone at the appropriate times to head what news they are interested in, and many disregard it at other times.

A summary of the news of the day is sent over the wires from 6 until 6:30 P. M., so that the man of the household may receive it while he is dressing for dinner. If there is important news to communicate at any time during the day, a special bell is rung to call the subscriber to the telephone.

The paper also has its advertising department, which receives "ads" to be read over the telephone between the news items at a rate of 50 cents for ten seconds.

The cost of operating the newspaper, after the preliminary expense of the telephone installation and the apparatus have been met, is said to be less than five cents per day per subscriber.—*Kansas City Star*.

The rumor that a Roman Prince intends to sell abroad a quantity of Galileo's letters has raised a storm of protest in the scientific world and in the local press.

An animal with the strength of a lion and the jumping capacity of a flea would hop one-third of a mile.

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