

Helpfulness Among Animals

Zoology

JAMES H. LEUBA in *Morality Among The Animals* (Harpers Magazine):

A chimpanzee's burst of affectionate concern in the presence of a suffering fellow-creature, especially when small and weak, would put to shame the callous indifference of many a human being. One of the younger and smaller apes of Professor Köhler's, Konsul by name, was sick. He had just been let out of the infirmary and was dragging himself painfully towards his fellows, engaged in eating green fodder some distance away. After a few steps his strength gave out and he fell to the ground uttering a piercing cry. Tercera, a female ape, chewing nearby, sprang up in great excitement, uttering cries of distress, and reached Konsul in a few strides. She caught hold of him under the arms, trying to set him on his feet, her face expressive of the utmost concern. The witness of this scene adds, "One could not imagine anything more maternal than this female chimpanzee's behavior."

These apes befriended and helped one another in all sorts of circum-

stances. When one was being punished the others showed not only passive sympathy, but they sought to stop the punishment. Little Konsul, whom I have just mentioned, would run up excitedly and, with a pleading countenance, stretch out his arms to the punisher. He would even try to hold his arm tight; and if the chastisement continued, growing exasperated, he would hit out at the big man!

Apes excepted, it is probably among elephants, of all mammals, that mutual helpfulness is best developed. When an elephant is wounded by a bullet others have frequently been observed to come to its help and support it. If it falls some of its fellows will kneel by its side, pass their tusks under its body, while others wind their trunks about its neck in an attempt to put the wounded animal on its feet.

Science News-Letter, June 9, 1928

A recent study of college students shows that one of the chief causes of failure in college is inability to read.

Carbon monoxide last year killed some 700 automobile drivers who allowed their motors to idle in closed garages.

The course of an underground stream in England was traced for eight miles by placing coloring matter in the water where an opening occurred.

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Fact vs. Opinion

Psychology

GUY M. WHIPPLE, in *How to Study Effectively* (Public School Pub. Co.):

Seek always to distinguish between facts and opinions.

Another way in which the critical attitude can be exercised is in seeking to keep clear, as you read, the difference between statements of established facts and statements of opinions. Sometimes this distinction is easily made. If the author says: "The great wall of China, built 200 B. C., was 1,250 miles in length, 20 feet high, and 25 feet thick at the base," it is clear that you are confronted with a factual statement. If he says: "It is thought that several million men were probably occupied for the space of ten years on its construction," it is clear that you are confronted with an opinion. Statements may sometimes seem at first blush to be definite statements of fact, but a more careful reading will show that they are, after all, only statements of opinion. For example, a writer in Johnson's *Universal Encyclopedia*, discussing the dynamo in 1881, said: "It has long since been regarded as settled that motive-power derived from electro-magnetic combinations can only be secured at an expense which forbids its employment on a large scale." Here, the phrases "long since" and "settled" make the statement sound like the statement of an assured fact, but no doubt the man who wrote it has since then been transported many miles on electric cars powered by an "electro-magnetic combination." The statement was only an opinion, and a rather poor one at that.

Students cannot avoid being thus confronted with hundreds of statements, especially in such fields as politics, economics, the social sciences, and religion, some of which are statements of fact, but many of which are statements of opinion. The good student will do well to cultivate the habit of trying to disentangle mere opinions from established facts. The capacity to do this is greatly needed in present-day life.

Science News Letter, June 9, 1928

Before 1700, the average number of children in an American family was double what it is today.

A duck hospital for ailing ducks was established recently by California's fish and game department.

In the factories of Shanghai there are 103,000 girls and 44,000 boys under 13 years of age at work.

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