

## The Meek Inherit

*Evolution*

JAMES J. MONTAGUE, in the *New York Herald-Tribune*:

The fox is wily and astute,  
He lives by craft and stealth and loot.

He has far more than average wit  
And makes the very most of it.

And well might any one expect  
With such great wealth of intellect

That he'd outlive the quadrupeds  
Which aren't so clever with their  
heads

And often stumble unawares  
In traps and gins and nets and snares.

Yet soon he's due to disappear  
From this mundane terrestrial sphere,

And with the creatures to be linked  
Which now are stuffed and marked  
extinct.

The rabbit has but little sense,  
He's noted for incompetence,

And yet though clumsy and unwise  
He multiplies and multiplies

And promises to linger on  
When every fox is dead and gone.

Which leads us sadly to admit  
That now and then the most unfit

In this old world can get a start  
On those who are too gosh-darned  
smart.

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## The Fossilized Teacher

*Education*

SIR WILLIAM OSLER, in *Counsels and Ideals*:

After all, no men among us need refreshment and renovating more frequently than those who occupy positions in our schools of learning. Upon none does intellectual staleness more readily steal "with velvet step, unheeded, softly," but none the less relentlessly. Dogmatic to a greater or less degree all successful teaching must be, but year by year, unless watchful, this very dogmatism may react upon the teacher, who finds it so much easier to say to-day what he said last year. After a decade he may find it less trouble to draw on home supplies than to go into the open market for wares, perhaps not a whit better, but just a wee bit fresher. After twenty years the new, even when true, startles, too often repels; after thirty—well, he may be out of the race, still on the track perhaps, even running hard, but quite unconscious that the colts have long passed the winning-post. These unrefreshed, unregenerate teachers are often powerful instruments of harm, and time and again have spread the blight of blind conservatism in the profession. Safely enthroned in assured positions, men of strong and ardent convictions, with faithful friends and still more faithful students, they too often come within the scathing condemnation of the blind leaders of the blind, of those who would neither themselves enter into the possession of new knowledge nor suffer those who would to enter. The profession has suffered so sorely

from this blight of old fogginess that I may refer to the most glaring instance in our history. In the scientific annals of this great metropolis there is no occasion more memorable than April 16, 1616, when Harvey began his revolutionary teaching. Why the long, the more than Horatian delay, in publishing his great discovery? He knew his day and generation, and even after twelve years of demonstration, which should have disarmed all opposition, we know how coldly the discovery was received, particularly in certain quarters. Harvey, indeed, is reported to have said that he did not think any above forty years of age had accepted the new truth. Many of us have lived through and taken part in two other great struggles. The din of battle over the germ theory of disease still rings in our ears. Koch's brilliant demonstration of the tuberculosis bacillus had a hard uphill fight to recognition. The vested interests of many minds were naturally against it, and it was only the watchers among us, men like Austin Flint, who were awake when the dawn appeared. It is notorious that the great principles of antiseptic surgery have grown slowly to acceptance, and nowhere more slowly than in the country in which they were announced, the country which has the great honour to claim Lord Lister as a citizen. Old fogginess of the most malignant type stood in the way, and in some places, strange to stay, still stands.

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## A Teaching Elephant

*Zoology*

TH. KNOTTNERUS-MEYER, in *Birds and Beasts of the Roman Zoo* (Century):

One day near Hagenback's *Tierpark* a motor-car ran into a ditch and then stuck fast. The chauffeur suddenly bethought himself of asking Hagenback for assistance. Hagenback sent his trusty working elephant Ruma, a splendid female, and Ruma did herself credit. She quietly pressed her forehead against the back of the car and pushed it, without any appearance of exertion, out of the ditch and up on the causeway. . . .

What I have said of the great cats is true of the elephants also, and indeed

of all sorts of animals—namely, they cannot endure to be shouted at. The hearing of animals, the elephant included, is so sensitive that we can speak to them quite softly and be plainly understood. The Indian mahout speaks quietly to his elephant, emphasizing his orders by kicking the beast behind the ears with his naked feet. The belief that one must necessarily shout at so huge an animal is of course comprehensible, but it is entirely erroneous.

Like all trained elephants, Ruma was a good teacher. One day some other elephants were roped to her in order to take them for a walk in the *Tierpark* and accustom them to walking in the open. The first to be roped

to her was Minnie, an almost full-grown female, who was followed by a couple of smaller animals. The Indian mahout sat on Ruma's neck. They set out in good order, but things soon went amiss. Minnie took fright at something, thrust her ears forward, trumpeted in terror, and tried to turn about. Ruma straightway turned round, beat Minnie soundly with her trunk, and pushed her into place again; indeed, the mahout had some difficulty in restraining Ruma's rather violent educational zeal. However, Minnie understood that resistance was useless, and after a few more lessons of this kind from Ruma she learned to accompany her willingly.

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