



THE HUMANE REVIEW

APRIL, 1910.

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MOVEMENT.

Magnus Schwantje.

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SLAUGHTER.

Agnes von Kneow.

London:

Ernest Bell, York House,
Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn.

Published Quarterly, 1/6. Post free, for One Year, 4/2.

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THE HUMANE REVIEW

THE ANIMALS' DEFENCE MOVEMENT IN ITS RELATION TO OTHER REFORMS.*

IN thousands of publications we Animal Defenders have pointed out that the conduct of men towards other animals exercises an incalculable influence on their conduct towards each other, and that consequently all workers in efforts for the uplifting of human morality should support Animals' Defence. But I have only very rarely found in our literature any reference to the converse fact, namely, that the conduct of men towards each other affects their treatment of animals; and that we should therefore support those who are fighting against abuses in human social life. In fact, men's conduct towards one another and towards animals act and react upon each other; injustice and brutality towards animals is not only a *cause* but an *effect* of injustice and brutality towards men. Every unjust exploitation of the industrially weak; every violation of the rights of the human races which Europeans have brought under their yoke; every injustice in criminal law administration, especially the lenient punishment of the ill-treatment of children and the like cruelties; every glorification of military exploits, except indeed such as were a people's act of self-defence; every error and omission in the training of

* Being part of a paper contributed to the Animal Protection Congress.

orphans and of other children in need of public oversight—every instance of these and of other wrongs and cruelties must necessarily lead to the blunting of sympathy and of the sense of justice towards animals.

Certainly I am of opinion that Animals' Defence is more important than any other movement of our time. Vivisection, the orgies of cruelty connected with hunting, the tortures inflicted, often only to improve their taste, on animals killed for food, the working to death of beasts of burden, and numerous other cruelties, are a wrong far more outrageous than all the ordinary acts of injustice to men practised at the present day. Our conduct towards animals stands in sharp conflict even with the views of morality now generally accepted. Even *before* our whole moral tone and practice is improved, we can therefore bring about some better laws for the protection of animals, and inspire thousands of men to the practical exercise of Animals' Defence. But a fundamental and permanent improvement in the position of animals will not be possible until great moral reforms have appeared in other departments as well; nay, some of our most important aims will remain wholly unintelligible to the majority of mankind so long as they live in their present circumstances, though this should of course not prevent us from even now declaring our fullest demands. Animals' Defence is, undoubtedly, the most potent means of human improvement; without it, the attainment of a high stage of morality is impossible. But many Animal Defenders are assuredly making a mistake when they think that the practice of animal protection is by itself sufficient to effect a moral transformation in every department of human life, while they bestow no notice on the influence of the general state of civilisation on the treatment of animals. We should not, from the fact that the peoples among which the kindest treatment of animals prevailed were the most highly civilised, draw the one-sided conclusion that the practice of the love of animals was the only cause

of the high morality of such peoples, but consider that, conversely, the establishment of righteous social conditions and respect for the rights of man improved the treatment of animals.

We should therefore regard all ethical societies as our confederates, and extend to them our support. To be sure, every man cannot take part in every good movement. Division of labour is indispensable. It argues great simplicity or deliberate unfairness, to reproach men who devote their whole energy to the protection of animals with being unmoved at the spectacle of human misery. Every man must work in that field to which he considers himself best adapted by nature, or to which he is constrained by the external circumstances of his life. We must have specialists in Animal Defence, as we must have specialists for the Protection of Children, for the suppression of Alcoholism, for the Peace movement, for Social Reform, and so forth. I think it, however, urgently necessary that Animal Defenders should associate themselves more than hitherto with other societies, and support those societies in particular which have made it their aim to bring about a better mutual understanding between the workers in different departments; such are—*e.g.*, "The Humanitarian League" in London and "The Society for the Promotion of Animals' Defence and Kindred Aims" in Berlin.

I consider the personal association of Animal Defenders with the advocates of other ethical causes to be the most important means of winning new and zealous fellow-workers in our own movement. In the societies for the suppression of the evils above enumerated and of others, many men of high intellectual and moral worth are working; these are already our comrades in spirit, and they need only a slight inducement to become our comrades in work. Moreover, we find in these societies thousands who, through ignorance of the psychical nature of the animals, or of their present distress, regard Animals' Defence as of

no great importance, or even as a waste of energy; they will, however, examine our views without prejudice if they find us intelligently seconding their own efforts. The absurd but to our movement very obstructive prejudice, that Animal Defenders have no feeling for human misery, can be extirpated only if numerous Animal Defenders become prominent in other fields of ethical endeavour, or if many Animal Defence Societies assist other ethical societies by distributing their literature and in other ways. And if these other societies feel gratitude towards us because we have assisted them, they will allow our speakers to address their meetings, reprint our articles in their periodicals, and distribute our literature.

I shall now mention some of the reasons why we should in particular support the Societies for Social Reforms, for the Combating of Alcoholism, for Women's Rights, for the Protection of Children, for Criminal Law Reform, and for International Peace; I shall also set forth certain considerations which we should bring forward in the meetings of such societies, in order to induce their members to support our own efforts.

Above all, we must endeavour to convince all who are working for the elevation of human conduct, that the source of all morality is sympathy—the capacity to feel the sorrow and the joy of all creatures as our own.

There is at the present day, especially in Germany, made widely prevalent through the influence of Nietzsche, a contempt of sympathy: an opinion that sympathy and a sense of justice are essentially different, and that a lively sense of justice can subsist without sympathy: that sympathy is something unnatural, a sign of weakness and degeneration. Now, we must take it to be one of our principal tasks to combat this absurd opinion. A man to whom the sufferings and joys of other beings are indifferent can surely feel no impulse to respect or defend their rights. The origin of the sense of justice is therefore sympathy. Sympathy is not a weakness, but the source

of all heroic self-sacrifice. When we have brought home this truth to our fellow-men, we can then easily convince them that the Animals' Defence movement has a higher significance for the development of humanity than any other movement whatsoever. For Animals' Defence is the most thoroughgoing exercise of sympathy. The man who feels for the sufferings of beings lower than himself is, generally speaking, moved likewise by the sufferings of his equals. In the recognition of the right of animals to be exempt from all suffering which we can spare them, without bringing greater suffering on ourselves, we assert implicitly that men have the same right. He who condemns the enslavement of men considered to belong to the lower races, thereby recognises the right of men of his own race to liberty. If we induce the State to prevent the ill-treatment and neglect of children born with moral, mental, and bodily defects, the State will be bound to supply to orphan children not afflicted with such failings a kindlier upbringing. Thus the recognition of the rights of creatures lower than ourselves will have as its result an extension of the rights of man.

Our adversaries urge, as against our efforts, that the wrong now practised on man is greater than the cruelty inflicted on animals, and should therefore be attacked first. This opinion indicates a false notion of the psychical nature of the animals, and particularly of the degree of their capacity for suffering, or it betrays ignorance of the common animal tortures of our time. But even if we had to concede that the sufferings of animals were much slighter than those from which we can defend our fellow-men, we should not on that ground allow any less significance to the protection of animals. For small errors are the cause of great errors; we can best prevent vices and crimes by combating those evil customs and habits which the majority of mankind look upon as harmless. The more our moral judgments are preserved from concessions to evil, the less is mankind in danger of falling

into error on a large scale. That is to say, an ethical system is the more valuable, the more radical it is. He who recognises sympathy as the source of justice must therefore, first of all, endeavour to combat those cruelties which men tend to regard as harmless, and into which they are apt to fall most early, even in childhood, and these are the torturing of various animals. Were animals creatures so lowly, so little capable of suffering that the torturing of them would only be a small evil, it would still be a mistake to leave Animals' Defence to future generations; for if a man accustoms himself to cruelty of any kind, he passes on to worse cruelties. If he endures the causing of any unnecessary pain, he blunts by this concession to evil his whole moral sensibility. A German proverb says: "If you offer the devil your little finger, he at once takes your whole hand." And this is why the Animals' Defence Movement is the noblest and holiest movement of the last century—it warns men not to offer to the devil of cruelty their little finger. Were it not for the wide prevalence—for reasons which cannot here be investigated—in the early centuries of the Christian era, of the opinion that man's conduct towards animals was morally indifferent, the Christian nations would have been spared most of the atrocities of the Middle Ages and of the first centuries of our modern era.

One of the greatest and most successful movements of our time, the fight against Alcoholism, owes most of its progress to its tactics, to its devoting itself less to the curing of dipsomaniacs than to the suppression of the habit of indulging in small quantities of alcohol. Temperance Reformers know that small errors necessarily lead many men to vice and moral disease, while the spectacle of a vicious man does not as a rule provoke imitation, but deters the ordinary man from yielding to that vice. Again, the fight against Alcoholism has shown that in combating a vice great success is obtained only by radicalism; for the abstainers have won far greater

victories than have the advocates of moderation. Now, this very fact should make it easy for us to convince many of the champions of total abstinence of the significance of our movement. We must say to them, "For the very same reasons as those for which you think it more important to combat the habit of drinking alcohol in small quantities than to combat drunkenness directly, you must see that the struggle against animal torture is even more important than the struggle against the cruelties and crimes committed upon human beings." Further, we must point out to the Temperance Reformers that Alcoholism is mainly a consequence of flesh-eating; for the vegetarian feels, in general, a violent dislike of alcohol, even though he feels uncomfortable without it before adopting a vegetarian diet. We may demand that Temperance Reformers should recognise this indisputable fact, and should recommend more than hitherto, as a means towards facilitating abstinence from alcohol, a vegetarian diet. The believer in a righteous ordering of the world must look upon the misery produced by alcohol as the effect of a curse which humanity has brought upon itself by the massacre of the animals.

We may ask those Temperance advocates who attack drinking chiefly because most drunken men are disposed to cruelty, to mention in their description of the harmful effects of drinking the horrible suffering which millions of animals have to endure all their lives long from drunken men. I maintain that drunkards allow their cruel impulses much freer play with animals in work or in the slaughter-house than with women and children. For many cruelties to animals they do not consider to be wrong at all, and the animals are even more defenceless than women and children, who can at least cry out, run away, or summon the assistance of the police. I have, however, never found in temperance publications a single reference to this ocean of torture, though in most towns every one who walks the streets with open eyes sees at

every step deeds of maniacal cruelty committed by drunken men upon animals. If this happens in the open street, what orgies can these scoundrels perform unobserved in the slaughter-house, in the vivisectioning laboratory, and similar places! We animal defenders must therefore regard it as our duty to support the temperance movement. So long as drunkenness prevails so generally among the men who are in charge of animals at work, we must regard drinking as one of the chief causes of cruelty to animals.

As with the Temperance Reformers, so we can in particular convince of the importance of Animal Defence those who are fighting for juster social conditions, for the reform of Criminal Law Administration, and for the Protection of Children, if we prove to them that sympathy is the origin of the sense of justice, and that Animals' Defence is the most important means for the cultivation of sympathy.

To the adherents of the Labour Movement we can point out that a man makes himself contemptible if he complains with moral indignation of a wrong done to himself, while he himself denies to his inferiors the right to considerate treatment. One of the chief differences between the churlish and the noble-minded man is that the one is hardened against sympathy by his own suffering, while the other is thereby the more disposed to sympathise. The whole doctrine of the Rights of Man collapses unless we recognise the rights of *all sentient beings* to be spared all unnecessary suffering. All the objections which many adherents of the Labour Movement use against the Animal Defence Movement ought, if they are justified, to have been used by them some decades ago for the defence of human slavery. Even those workers who honestly admit that they are fighting for the amelioration of the lot of their class from purely selfish motives, ought to encourage Animals' Defence, for the torture of animals exercises a baneful influence on the well-being of the working classes, as well as of all man-

kind. Thus, for example, the vivisection of animals leads to the vivisection of human beings, especially of the poor in the hospitals; and the spread of vegetarianism would radically modify the economic situation to the advantage of the working classes. But the man who talks with the note of moral indignation of the exploitation of the working classes, and remains unmoved at the sight of the cruel whipping of a horse, or, indeed, himself takes part in it, is a knave and a hypocrite. We must, however, reckon with the fact that the majority of mankind are hypocrites and egoists, who obey the dictates of justice only when they consider themselves to be unjustly treated. We must therefore regard the improvement of the position of the workers and other social reforms as a condition precedent to any great success in our own endeavours, and we should support such reforms, though our societies must avoid identifying themselves with any political party.

We should point to the women as a shining example for the adherents of the Labour Movement. They likewise are fighting for the extension of their rights, fighting against the prejudice which denies them the higher mental and moral qualities. But it is not their practice, as it is, at least in Germany, of most Socialists and other workers, to withhold their help from the animals, who are even more unjustly judged and more grievously oppressed than themselves; on the contrary, animals have found far more champions in the ranks of the women than of the men; and in their work for Animals' Defence women have shown so much self-forgetfulness, perseverance, and courage, so much diplomatic prudence, such great talent for organisation, that even these achievements of women in the field of Animals' Defence, however little noticed, however little discussed in public, sufficiently refute the prejudice that woman is mentally and morally inferior to man.

When we have won the majority of the women who are working for ethical aims over to our side, it will not

be difficult for us to obtain an entry into the societies for the Protection of Children and for Educational Reform, for, in Germany at least, more women than men are active in these societies. We must convince all educational theorists and protectors of children of the educative importance of the fostering of the love of animals, and of the training of children to defend them. When we can give addresses in societies for the Protection of Children and publish articles in their periodicals, we shall doubtless be able to win many new members; for most protectors of children are certainly drawn to their work by a strong feeling of pity, and they can therefore be easily convinced of the close connection between our efforts and their own. If we help to improve the up-bringing of orphans and deserted children, we shall greatly diminish the number of animal tormentors; for thousands of carters and other workmen are in the habit of treating animals inconsiderately or cruelly, only because they as children were likewise the victims of the bad tempers of their guardians, and have been accustomed from their childhood to seeing men venting their annoyance on those subject to their power. Only a man of unusually good disposition, if he has himself been much ill-treated as a child, will treat animals considerately or patiently. On the other hand, every advance in the protection of animals will help the protection of children. So long as every man witnesses daily the beating of innocent horses, beating will assuredly be regarded as the simplest and best means of bringing up children.

The demands made by the Child Protection Societies on the criminal law will not be fulfilled until lawyers and politicians understand that the greatest enemy of human well-being is not dishonesty, but cruelty, and that the unjust causing of bodily pain, especially when done from delight in torture, should be punished much more severely than the violation of the rights of property. It seems to me that at present the criminal laws of every country

treat the wrong done by bodily injury too mildly, and the wrong done by the violation of the rights of property too harshly; and this seems to me the most serious defect in existing criminal law. So long as a large number of teachers of law declare cruelty to animals to be in itself undeserving of punishment, and only the nuisance indirectly caused to men by such cruelty to deserve punishment, so long we cannot wonder at the mild punishment of the ill-treatment of children and of other cruelties, nor hope for the complete abolition of unjustified harshnesses in our penal methods. On the other hand, the mild punishment of cruelties to men is an obstacle to our efforts to secure for animals a more effective protection from the criminal law.

The horror of cruelty offers also the best guarantee for the prevention of wars. Let no one object that a people which shrinks from all bloodshed would be too cowardly to repel under compulsion the attacks of its enemies with the sword. History and daily life show that the greatest coward is the cruel man. War is considered inevitable by the majority of men because they think that the "war of every man against every man" is an unchangeable ordinance of Nature. Boundless as is men's contempt for the beasts, they none the less regard the behaviour of animals towards each other as a model for mankind; and when utterance is given to altruistic views, or the efforts of Peace Societies defended, the almost invariable answer is that such efforts are a struggle against laws of Nature, for every animal thinks only of itself and members of its own species, and only such animals could preserve their species which were shrewd enough to circumvent or overpower other species. Therefore man is driven to ruthless selfishness, and cannot yield to altruistic impulses, until his own well-being is secured; and this law of Nature is valid also for the relations of nations to one another. In reality, however, we find in the animal world, side by side with the egoistic, altruistic impulses as well—

nay, *self-sacrificing* friendship and willingness to help even between members of *diverse species*. Mutual help is, indeed, as in recent years Prince Kropotkin has demonstrated, a more important factor in evolution than the struggle for existence. Everyone who contemplates without prejudice the facts of life in Nature must recognise that animals are less selfish and less cruel than men. Men persuade themselves of the false opinion of the universal pitiless struggle for existence, only in order to be able to look upon their own egoism as something healthy and natural, and especially to justify flesh-eating to their own consciences. All adherents of an altruistic view of the world should help the Animal Defenders to destroy one-sided views of the cruelty of the animals. The adherents of the Peace Movement should, however, call men's attention to the fact that the destructive rage against members of the same species, such as men practise in war, is, we may say, hardly ever, or at least very rarely, to be observed in the animal world; that the animals who attain to the highest development are those who help each other; and that, if we consider such analogical reasoning to be admissible at all, we must assume that the *nations* are likewise dependent upon mutual help. But, above all, the adherents of the Peace Movement should regard vegetarianism as their ally. Every intelligent man must understand that the practice of indulging in food which is obtained by the slaughtering of animals deadens the horror of the massacres of the battle-field.

MAGNUS SCHWANTJE.

A POET OF SOCIALISM.

It is sometimes said that Socialism, unlike the earlier phases of the progressive movement, is incapable of producing poetry. But before we acquiesce in this criticism, and set it down to the discredit of the socialistic temperament, it may be well to note two facts—first, that it is still too early to form an adverse decision on such a point, inasmuch as all revolutionary poems, even if afterwards appreciated, are distasteful to contemporary judgment; and secondly, that the critics who find "no poetry in Socialism" are in the curious position of not having yet discovered who the socialist poets are! For example, many literary folk, and some Socialists themselves, are under the mistaken impression that William Morris was the typical poet of Socialism, whereas Morris was what is a very different thing—a poet who became a Socialist. The author of "The Earthly Paradise," though in his later years a staunch champion of Socialism, and now justly honoured by Socialists the world over, had made his poetical reputation on other lines, and at an earlier period; and when, in a few later lyrics, he tried to turn his genius to the service of "the Cause," the result was scarcely a success. His poetry as such (I am not speaking of his prose romances) is quite separable from his politics, though we may trace in it clearly enough the great human qualities that converted "the idle singer of an empty day" into the author of "News from Nowhere" and "John Ball."

Turn, however, to a younger writer, such as Francis