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For the REVIEW].

BANDS OF MERCY.—S. P. C. A.

Teachers often become discouraged in dealing with a certain class of pupils whom it appears difficult to interest in ordinary branches of study; there is a dullness of perception and perhaps often a lack of interest in their work. That this does not proceed from want of intelligence is shown by the fact that when their minds are awakened by some new and interesting object of study we frequently find them developing powers, the existence of which was little suspected.

What will best tend to arouse these dormant abilities? Some branch of natural science is eminently adapted for this purpose, and this can be most easily done by directing the attention of the scholars to habits and peculiarities of various animals, and this will not only develop a love for God's creatures, which is of great value in refining the character, but will also be of benefit in arousing general intelligence and quickening the mental powers when required to grasp other subjects of study.

The "Ferndale School" gives admirable lessons about the insect world, and it is impossible to say how much good has already been done by awakening an interest in the varied forms of insect life by which we are surrounded. The study of birds and animals in their native haunts, though delightful, is not within the reach of any large number of students; but to observe intelligently not only the habits but the character of the domestic animals is within the reach of all. It has been found that a great impetus has been given in this direction by the formation of Bands of Mercy, which, apart from the primary object of binding children to show kindness to animals, tends to develop an interest in and love for all living creatures, and the voices and gestures of "animated nature" thus become an open secret to all who observe closely and reason intelligently on the subject.

Eastern legends delight to chronicle the wonderful achievements of King Solomon, and among these there are few that are more fascinating than those which relate his ability to interpret the speech of beasts and birds. In the later years of this world's history we may, in this respect, emulate the wisdom of the wisest of kings. If we will but listen, beast, bird and insect may speak to us in ever clearer and more intelligible tones.

Cowper tells us of one, doubtless himself, to whom

Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,
Who serve mankind or shun them, wild or tame.
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears
Have all articulation in his ears;
He spells them true by intuition's light,
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This thought was suggested to his mind by a very simple incident. He observed a flock of timid sheep, startled by a sudden sound, rush wildly round the field, and were apparently just about to precipitate themselves into an old quarry to escape the threatened danger, when they were arrested in their headlong course by a wise old ram who stationed himself directly in front of the pit and appeared to be expostulating with them on the absurdity of rushing into certain danger to escape a fancied evil.

Many stories have been written illustrating the nobility and devotion of what we call the *lower* animals, but perhaps we are too prone to overlook the manifestations of the finer feelings which, no doubt, they share with the human race.

All will recall Landseer's well-known picture, "The Highland Shepherd's Chief Mourner," where the utter abandonment to grief and despair shown by the dog, as he rests his head on the rude coffin containing the form of his beloved master, forms a noble subject for the painter's art. Edgar Quinet, in his *Journal*, relates a striking incident which shows that the power of sympathy, one of our noblest gifts, is not confined to mankind alone. He thus describes a visit to the Jardin des Plantes, accompanied by the naturalist, M. Geoffroi de St. Hilaire. "In one of the cages were a lion and a lioness standing quite motionless, not even seeming to see us. Presently the lion, lifting up his great paw, placed it slowly and softly on the forehead of the lioness, and both continued in the same attitude as long as we remained before them. What was intended by the gesture? A painter who desired to represent calm grief and the deepest compassion could not have invented anything more striking. 'What does it mean?' said I to Geoffroi. 'Their lion cub died this morning,' replied he. Then I understood what I saw; pity, good-will, sympathy, all those sentiments might be read in those fierce countenances."

It is not necessary to visit a menagerie to witness such exhibitions of feeling; our own domestic animals would show the same tender love and sympathy, but we check the manifestation of it by our utter indifference.

I have seen a spaniel, who, though not allowed in the house, would watch till his invalid master was