

attempts to catch and kill the small canary futile, finally flew away.

Two thoughts occurred to me at the time. First, it was interesting to observe how the canary, born and bred in a cage, could recognize danger on the instant; and, secondly, I found myself wondering: would a wild bird on the approach of a hawk show as much agitation as did this little canary? Possibly a wild bird would, if it was caged under similar conditions, but I feel morally certain that if it was allowed the free life of the woods, its first motive would be self-preservation and it would not attempt to make itself conspicuous by any form of agitation or flight. I remember at the time thinking that the canary—by domestication and lack of experience—had not developed the sense of self-preservation while it could realize danger. However, the realization of danger was the most important observation, and being so it helps to recall other instances of a similar nature.

To one who has raised chickens, for instance, how usual it is to notice a hen call her chickens to her when any danger approaches. She can spy a hawk aloft far quicker than can a human being and can realize that it is a hawk and that her chickens are in danger even if she had never seen one before. Is not this case quite similar to the canary? They are two cases of pure instinct—instinct being defined as a term including all original impulses and that apparent knowledge and skill which animals have without experience.

I was reading only the other day about a case, told by Ernest Thompson Seton, of a "young mink, still blind, which sucked at a mother cat till fed and then tried to kill her." Surely, if such a case was true, and I have no reason to doubt that it was not, coming from such an authority, it is interesting to notice the hereditary instinct of legitimate prey present in the mind of this young mink. I believe it is a generally recognized rule that among wild animals it is very uncommon to find them destroying one of their own kind. This young mink would not have attacked its own mother and yet it realized, even in that young state of its career, that the cat was lawful prey.

Such cases as these demonstrate very forcibly that natural untaught wisdom of the animal world—and we designate it as instinct. Classify it as we will, however, we could not say it was the product of mental activity, or in other words reason similar to the human reason.

Nevertheless, with but a moment's thought we find that a great deal of the conduct in the human life is the result of this same unconsciousness, unreasoning obedience to natural forces. How common it is for us to utter exclamations of surprise or