

THE TORONTO HUMANE SOCIETY.

WE have already expressed our warmest sympathy with the objects of the Societies in Toronto, Ottawa, and elsewhere, that seek to prevent cruelty to animals and to promote a more humane and merciful treatment of God's creatures over whom man has dominion. The Toronto society properly embraces children in the scope of its work—why not adults as well? No creature is more cruelly used than the human, for "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Indeed, at the root of all forms of cruelty to dumb animals is the heartless conduct shown by parents to their young, and by adults to their weaker brethren. If in this matter charity does not begin at home it will never be shown outside home life. Children reared in gentleness are rarely unkind to their dumb companions, while those roughly used by words and blows usually extend this cruelty to all creatures over whom they have power.

The Toronto Humane Society has published a book setting forth its aims and objects, with a large collection of illustrations, literary and artistic.* We doubt the wisdom of making a work of this class so bulky, especially when a large proportion of the materials used have only a remote bearing upon the objects of the Society, while many of the selections are more suited to a child's reading book than to one to be read by adults. Of course, we know what the reply will be—that children are sought to be influenced, but in seeking to provide them with pretty stories the book has been so encumbered with such matter that the force of the work, as a whole, is greatly weakened, as its interest to mature readers is materially reduced by being apparently intended for the nursery or school-room. Had Dr. Hodgins published a short, telling, practical appeal to the public, he might have adorned it with a few literary extracts from the classical writers, ancient and modern, with whose humane appeals for the kindly usage of the brute creation he is doubtless familiar, but whom he has entirely ignored. There is more true poetry and pathos in Mrs. Browning's "The Cry of the Children," than in all the selections in this volume. Indeed a highly interesting book of extracts might be compiled of passages in poetical literature appealing for the gentle treatment of dumb animals. They would be found, we believe, scattered in the writings of the poets of all ages and all lands. One of the philanthropic reforms of this century was chiefly the result of James Montgomery's tender verses asking for more humane treatment of boys. Calderon, the eminent Spanish poet, goes to the core of this question by speaking of every law being violated by cruelty, for all crime is essentially cruel, and all criminals hard-hearted. Hence to clear away "the habitations of cruelty," and to make the tender mercies of the wicked no longer cruel, there needs to be such training of the young as will

*Aims and object of the Toronto Humane Society with 112 illustrations. Edited by J. George Hodgins, LL.D., and printed for the Society by William Briggs. Toronto. Price 25c.

counteract the innate selfishness and callousness of the natural heart. That is the function of religion, by religion alone is it possible to be effected, thus a secular training of the young is so deplorable in its results as it leaves the victim of this delusion untouched by those influences which alone develop habits of gentleness to all creatures. One of the greatest living mathematicians said in our hearing, "There are two systems of education—Christian and secular, the first trains a child for God, the other educates it for the devil, and of all forms of cruelty to the young, I regard, therefore, their mere secular training as the worst." We invite Dr. Hodgins' attention to this. We publish below a celebrated article on "Cruelty to Animals," written near two centuries ago by one of the greatest of English classics.

We should rejoice to know that the book of the Humane Society was being very widely read. Still we are convinced that after all there must be something more practical done than publishing works about animals to save them from cruelty. Cruel men do not read, and if they did they would scoff. What is needed is that the police to a man shall have plenary powers in stopping all forms of cruelty, to dumb beast, bird, child, man or woman. The savage element in our society needs the sternest repression, there is too much pandering to the "roughs and toughs" in our midst, what for Heaven only knows. Sentimentalism by reducing the sentences in burglars and the like, who are guilty of the most hideous cruelty, has made the law a terror to those who do well. The Humane Society might do society a service by seeking to prevent cruelty to those animals—the public at large, whose peace and comfort seems less thought of by the judiciary than the liberty of scoundrels who live by deeds of violence. Failing this the Humane Society should see to it that every division at least of the city has one officer detailed especially in its interest. We have seen excellent results in cities in the old land from engaging the police as a body in the aim and objects of a Humane Society.

As to the children to provide remedies for their ill-usage at home and in the street is a more difficult problem. But if there were any wisely directed, earnest Christian spirit in the city, it would be easy to prevent a very large amount of the terrible cruelty inflicted on girls and boys, in allowing them to run the streets on any pretence when they ought to be at school, or playing, or in bed.

Very soon the winter will be here in all its rigor. During its coldest days and late into its zero and boys half-clad will be nights young girls crying their papers for sale. Cannot the Society stop this infamous cruelty? It is prevented in some cities that make less cry about their moral elevation over their neighbors. We cultivate immorality like as in a hot bed, then scream and fuss over it when it grows strong and rank. What Toronto needs is less sentimental excitement, and more wisdom, self-sacrifice, and cool common sense in dealing with the aims and objects of a Humane Society, with whose endeavours we most earnestly sympathize.

ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

I CANNOT think it extravagant to imagine, that mankind are no less in proportion accountable for the ill use of their dominion over creatures of the lower ranks of being, than for the exercise of tyranny over their own species. The more entirely the inferior creation is submitted to our power, the more answerable we should seem for our mismanagement of it; and the rather, as the very condition of nature renders these creatures incapable of receiving any recompense in another life for their illtreatment in this. It is observable of those noxious animals, which have qualities most powerful to injure us, that they naturally avoid mankind, and never hurt us unless provoked or necessitated by hunger. Man, on the other hand, seeks out and pursues even the most inoffensive animals, on purpose to persecute and destroy them.

Montaigne thinks it some reflection upon human nature itself, that few people take delight in seeing beasts caress or play together, but almost every one is pleased to see them lacerate and worry one another. I am sorry this temper is become almost a distinguishing character of our own nation, from the observation which is made by foreigners of our beloved pastimes, bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and the like. We should find it hard to vindicate the destroying of any thing that has life, merely out of wantonness; yet in this principle our children are bred up, and one of the first pleasures we allow them is the license of inflicting pain upon poor animals; almost as soon as we are sensible what life is ourselves, we make it our sport to take it from other creatures. I cannot but believe a very good use might be made of the fancy which children have for birds and insects. Mr. Locke takes notice of a mother who permitted them to her children but rewarded or punished them as they treated them well or ill. This was no other than entering them betimes into a daily exercise of humanity, and improving their very diversion to a virtue.

I fancy, too, some advantage might be taken of the common notions, that it is ominous or unlucky to destroy some sorts of birds, as swallows and martins; this opinion might possibly arise from the confidence these birds seem to put in us by building under our roofs, so that it is a kind of violation of the laws of hospitality to murder them. As for robin-red breasts in particular, it is not improbable they owe their security to the old ballad of the Children in the Wood. However it be, I do not know, I say, why this prejudice, well improved and carried as far as it would go, might be made to conduce to the preservation of many innocent creatures, which are now exposed to all the wantonness of an ignorant barbarity.

There are other animals that have the misfortune for no manner of reason, to be treated as common enemies wherever found. The conceit that a cat has nine lives has cost at least nine lives in ten of the whole race of them. Scarce a boy in the streets but has in