

The Rockwood Review

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE.

The average man rarely considers the subject of animal intelligence and is so accustomed to hearing the time honored platitudes uttered regarding the stupidity of our friends, that he puts down any departure from the supposedly ordinary course of events, to what he learnedly dubs instinct. Very few realize that a horse in order to get through a day's work in a satisfactory manner, must frequently use as much intelligence as the average driver. Possibly the fact that the majority of horses are sooner or later rendered unsound by the thoughtlessness of this same average driver, would not make the comparison too great a compliment in favor of the horse, but the conclusions are undisputed. Perhaps the fact that it is difficult for us to look at things from the animal's point of view, will account for many failures to note little exhibitions of a very high grade of intelligence on their part. We are quite willing to express contempt rather than admiration for the craftiness of the fox, and are reluctant to believe that Mon^r. Reynard is really a clever fellow, still as a matter of fact he knows many wonderful things. The legitimate prey of the fox is no fool and even if the saving of Rome was quite unintentional on the part of tee geese, I can remember one ancient gander, too old for table adornment, who was a model in the way of guiding and caring for his flock of wives and goslings. In the village where I was brought up geese were free commoners in

every sense of the word, and in the morning the poor people let their flocks of geese out of the yards, and sometimes I fear into other peoples yards. The gander I have reference to was most discreet, and returned to his own yard every evening and invariably opened the gate himself. This required a good deal of ingenuity and some perseverance of the Robert Bruce order. The gate had a latch to which was fastened a piece of chain. The gander would seize the chain, brace himself well and stick at it until he succeeded in opening the gate. I regret to say that his intelligence never suggested closing the gate after the triumphant entry of the flock, however he may have followed the precedent established by many people we all know. It is commonly noticed that some dogs show great admiration for horses, and not unfrequently affection is mutual, but I have never heard that goats exhibited similar likes. However, the following instance is worth detailing, being so clearly established by the evidence of reliable witnesses, and as I saw the friendship carried for months, there could be no mistake. Mr. Dalby in the village of Elora, had a faithful mare called Maggie. As time went on she became feeble through old age, and finally blind. The owner was unwilling to destroy such a faithful servant, and so it happened that Maggie was fed and saved from further work. A goat named Billy belonged to the same establishment, and a remarkable attachment sprang