

DO DOGS COMMIT SUICIDE ?

*Editor Kennel Gazette:—*

Reading in the last number of the KENNEL GAZETTE that "General Mite," a Cocker Spaniel, had "committed suicide," induces me to suggest through your columns that this is one of the questions of comparative psychology, (a subject to which the writer has devoted a good deal of attention,) worthy of thoughtful investigation. Though I have read of several instances that seemed to point to deliberate self-destruction none of them has yet convinced me that the mental condition leading to the act is similar in dogs and men, and I am still inclined to believe that the human family has a monopoly of self-destruction as a planned or deliberate act.

There are other ways of accounting for "General Mite's" behaviour. Most of us have experience which enables us to understand "tower giddiness," and that desire which is said to become irresistible in certain cases to precipitate one's self headlong from a height. One feels that he must leave the spot or lose self-control and fall or throw himself downward. It is a strange sensation, never to be forgotten. Again, gazing at anything in constant motion tends to an effect which may be best described as mesmeric. One may lose the preception of the relation of things. They may seem nearer than they are or he may so far forget, lose his bearings so to speak, as to act irrationally. The moving water, like the suggestions of the individual who mesmerizes another, may seem to invite or command movement towards it.

I am inclined to think if it is really true that the Cocker in question did *apparently* deliberately jump into the water that the explanation is to be sought in some one of these directions rather than in suicide.

Those who have not had the peculiar experiences alluded to above may

not be in a position to appreciate my suggestions.

However, if my friend, the owner of "General Mite," or any one else will go to the top of the highest tower of the Parliament Buildings, or a similiar one, and look steadily down for some time, I think he will understand my meaning. Ottawa is also a good place to test the effect of gazing at running water. Of course some persons are much more susceptible to such sensations than others, as some are more readily mesmerized, rendered giddy by turning around, &c. But if anyone has evidence, first-hand, to advance for the belief that any of the higher members of the animal kingdom, except man, commit suicide, I should be glad to hear of it through the columns of the KENNEL GAZETTE.

Thanking you for your space, Mr. Editor, and congratulating you on the rapid growth of this department of the journal.

I am, yours truly,  
WESLEY MILLS, M.D.  
Cote St. Antoine, Montreal.

COCKER TYPE.

*Editor Kennel Gazette:—*

I am much pleased indeed to see the spirit in which Mr. Charlesworth has taken my criticism of his dog, which shows that he has the love of the dog in him, and that he does not write from personal motives. I never yet have been led into a personal controversy, nor do I ever mean to be, so here goes. Mr. C. says there is nothing in the conformation of the IMPROVED modern Cocker Spaniel to prevent his giving a good account of himself in the field. I take issue with him on this point and say that any dog that has a chest girth of 22 inches with height at shoulder of 12½ inches is not built on lines to run or endure. Take for instance the English Setter, the chest girth is usually about 28 inches and height say 22 inches,

and the English Setter is built as the model in dogs, as the blood horse is in horses, for its running and enduring qualities. These figures will show at once that the Cocker of to-day was never meant to go or last.

Again, what are dog shows for if they are not for the improvement of dogs that have a certain work to perform? if they are merely for the purpose of procuring good specimens to look at, the sooner they are done away with the better. If this is what dog shows are got up for they are based on lines far different from any other live stock exhibition. In horses we find the prizes go to those that show the proper action, weight or gait in whichever class they may be shown. In cattle the same holds good, the animal that is likely to produce the best milk or flesh producers gets the prizes. In sheep or swine the qualities for which they are bred must be apparent to the judges. Why should dogs be shown only for their show producing qualities? If a dog is not built to do the work for which he is bred why should he get the prize? Mr. C. is in favor of a Standard which shall create a limit beyond which extremists shall not go. There is a Standard which I think covers the whole question in regard to Cockers, but unfortunately it is either not understood by the judges, or it is not used at all. As to judging by points I am decidedly against its being carried out literally. It is the beautiful whole which should first strike the judges eye, and if he is a judge of the breed and its uses, it is not at all necessary for him to put down each point as a sum in arithmetic, for if he does so he will most surely go astray. Yet in all Standards I think there should be disqualification points which every judge should have in his head, to use for disappointed exhibitors, as for instance the yellow eye in the black Cocker.