

us the goodness of God and incessantly proclaim the wisdom and bounty of the Creator. To treat the lower animals then with cruelty, to unnecessarily cause them pain to abuse them through passion or to use them for purposes contrary to those for which they were created, may indeed, in a certain sense, be looked upon as entering the category of the things forbidden by the fifth commandment: for it is said in Holy Writ: «The just regardeth the lives of his beasts, but the bowels of the wicked are cruel.» (Prov. XII, 10.) And our Lord Himself says that «Not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without your father.» (St. Matt. X, 29).

If on the one hand we should not be cruel to animals and cause them unnecessary pain, we should not on the other be ridiculously fond of them. We sometimes find men and women showing greater affection for dumb animals and pampering them nauseously, who are hard-hearted and cruel in their conduct towards their neighbors, even the poor and needy. How disgusting it is to see people lavish on a pet dog or cat acts of kindness and affection which, in many cases, they would refuse to their own offspring.

Of the different kinds of murder we shall only speak of two, viz: suicide and homicide.

1st, Suicide.--Suicide is the destroying of one's own life with knowledge and deliberation. To be culpable the suicide must have the age of discretion and the use of his intellectual faculties. The crime of the self-destroyer is one of the most odious that man can commit, for it directly deprives God of His right and leaves to the culprit himself no time for repentance. The suicide's last act is his greatest crime. We repeat, life belongs to God alone and He only can prolong it or hasten its end. If any of the saints have hastened the hour of their death, as is related of St. Appollonia, who rushed into the fire prepared for her martyrdom by the executioner, they have done so by an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to