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THE ANIMAL
STORY BOOK

Andrew Lang
The Animal Story Book

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The Animal Story Book:

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Various

The Animal Story Book

PREFACE

Children who have read our Fairy Books may have noticed that there are not so very many fairies in the stories after all. The most common characters are birds, beasts, and fishes, who talk and act like Christians. The reason of this is that the first people who told the stories were not very clever, or, if they were clever, they had never been taught to read and write, or to distinguish between Vegetable, Animal, and Mineral. They took it that all things were ‘much of a muchness:’ they were not proud, and held that beast and bird could talk like themselves, only, of course, in a different language.

After offering, then, so many Fairy Books (though the stories are not all told yet), we now present you (in return for a coin or two) with a book about the friends of children and of fairies – the beasts. The stories are all true, more or less, but it is possible that Monsieur Dumas and Monsieur Théophile Gautier rather improved upon their tales. I own that I have my doubts about the bears and serpents in the tales by the Baron Wogan. This gentleman’s ancestors were famous Irish people. One of them held Cromwell’s soldiers back when they were pursuing Charles

II. after Worcester fight. He also led a troop of horse from Dover to the Highlands, where he died of a wound, after fighting for the King. The next Wogan was a friend of Pope and Swift; he escaped from prison after Preston fight, in 1715, and, later, rescued Prince Charlie's mother from confinement in Austria, and took her to marry King James. He next became Governor of Don Quixote's province, La Mancha, in Spain, and was still alive and merry in 1752. Baron Wogan, descended from these heroes, saw no longer any king to fight for, so he went to America and fought bears. No doubt he was as brave as his ancestors, but whether all his stories of serpents are absolutely correct I am not so certain. People have also been heard to express doubts about Mr. Waterton and the Cayman. The terrible tale of Mr. Gully and his deeds of war I know to be accurate, and the story of Oscar, the sentimental tyke, is believed in firmly by the lady who wrote it. As for the stories about Greek and Roman beasts, Pliny, who tells them, is a most respectable author. On the whole, then, this is more or less of a true story-book.

There ought to be a moral; if so, it probably is that we should be kind to all sorts of animals, and, above all, knock trout on the head when they are caught, and don't let the poor things jump about till they die. A chapter of a very learned sort was written about the cleverness of beasts, proving that there must have been great inventive geniuses among beasts long ago, and that now they have rather got into a habit (which I think a very good one) of being content with the discoveries of their ancestors. This led

naturally to some observations on Instinct and Reason; but there may be children who are glad that there was no room for this chapter.

The longer stories from Monsieur Dumas were translated from the French by Miss Cheape.

‘A Rat Tale’ is by Miss Evelyn Grieve, who knew the rats.

‘Mr. Gully’ is by Miss Elspeth Campbell, to whom Mr. Gully belonged.

‘The Dog of Montargis,’ ‘More Faithful than Favoured,’ and ‘Androcles’ are by Miss Eleanor Sellar.

Snakes, Bears, Ants, Wolves, Monkeys, and some Lions are by Miss Lang.

‘Two Highland Dogs’ is by Miss Goodrich Freer.

‘Fido’ and ‘Oscar’ and ‘Patch’ are by Miss A. M. Alleyne.

‘Djijam’ is by his master.

‘The Starling of Segringen’ and ‘Grateful Dogs’ are by Mr. Bartells.

‘Tom the Bear,’ ‘The Frog,’ ‘Jacko the Monkey’ and ‘Gazelle’ are from Dumas by Miss Blackley.

All the rest are by Mrs. Lang.

‘TOM’

AN ADVENTURE IN THE LIFE OF A BEAR IN PARIS

From Alexandre Dumas

Some sixty years ago and more, a well-known artist named Décamps lived in Paris. He was the intimate friend of some of the first authors, artists, and scientific men of the day, and was devotedly fond of animals of all sorts. He loved to paint them, and he kept quite a small ménagerie in his studio where a bear, a monkey, a tortoise, and a frog lived (more or less) in peace and harmony together.

The bear's name was ‘Tom,’ the monkey was called ‘Jacko I.,’¹ the frog was ‘Mademoiselle Camargo,’ and the tortoise ‘Gazelle.’

Here follows the story of Tom, the bear.

It was the night of Shrove Tuesday in the year 1832. Tom had as yet only spent six months in Paris, but he was really one of the most attractive bears you could wish to meet.

He ran to open the door when the bell rang, he mounted guard

¹ To distinguish him from Jacko II., a monkey belonging to Tony Johannot, the painter.

for hours together, halberd in hand, standing on his hind legs, and he danced a minuet with infinite grace, holding a broomstick behind his head.

He had spent the whole day in the exercise of these varied accomplishments, to the great delight of the frequenters of his master's studio, and had just retired to the press which did duty as his hutch, to seek a little repose, when there was a knock at the street door. Jacko instantly showed such signs of joy that Décamps made a shrewd guess that the visitor could be no other than Fan, the self-elected tutor in chief to the two animals – nor was he mistaken. The door opened, Fan appeared, dressed as a clown, and Jacko flung himself in rapture into his arms.

‘Very good, very good,’ said Fan, placing the monkey on the table and handing him a cane. ‘You’re really a charming creature. Carry arms, present arms, make ready, fire! Capital!’

‘I’ll have a complete uniform made for you, and you shall mount guard instead of me. But I haven’t come for you to-night; it’s your friend Tom I want. Where may he be?’

‘Why, in his hutch, I suppose,’ said Décamps.

‘Tom! here, Tom!’ cried Fan.

Tom gave a low growl, just to show that he knew very well who they were talking of, but that he was in no hurry to show himself.

‘Well!’ exclaimed Fan, ‘is this how my orders are obeyed? Tom, my friend, don’t force me to resort to extreme measures.’

Tom stretched one great paw beyond the cupboard without

allowing any more of his person to be seen, and began to yawn plaintively like a child just wakened from its first sleep.

‘Where is the broomstick?’ inquired Fan in threatening tones, and rattling the collection of Indian bows, arrows, and spears which stood behind the door.

‘Ready!’ cried Décamps, pointing to Tom, who, on hearing these well known sounds, had roused himself without more ado, and advanced towards his tutor with a perfectly innocent and unconscious air.

‘That’s right,’ said Fan: ‘now be a good fellow, particularly as one has come all this way on purpose to fetch you.’

Tom waved his head up and down.

‘So, so – now shake hands with your friends: – first rate!’

‘Do you mean to take him with you?’ asked Décamps.

‘Rather!’ replied Fan; ‘and give him a good time into the bargain.’

‘And where are you going?’

‘To the Carnival Masked Ball, nothing less! Now then Tom, my friend, come along. We’ve got a cab outside waiting by the hour.’

As though fully appreciating the force of this argument, Tom trundled down stairs four steps at a time followed by his friend. The driver opened the cab door, and Tom, under Fan’s guidance, stepped in as if he had done nothing else all his life.

‘My eye! that’s a queer sort of a fancy dress,’ said cabby; ‘anyone might take him for a real bear. Where to, gentlemen?’

‘Odéon Theatre,’ said Fan.

‘Grrrooonnn,’ observed Tom.

‘All right,’ said the cabman. ‘Keep your temper. It’s a good step from here, but we shall get there all in good time.’

Half an hour later the cab drew up at the door of the theatre. Fan got down first, paid the driver, handed out Tom, took two tickets, and passed in without exciting any special attention.

At the second turn they made round the crush-room people began to follow Fan. The perfection with which the newcomer imitated the walk and movements of the animal whose skin he wore attracted the notice of some lovers of natural history. They pressed closer and closer, and anxious to find out whether he was equally clever in imitating the bear’s voice, they began to pull his hairs and prick his ears – ‘Grrrooonnn,’ said Tom.

A murmur of admiration ran through the crowd – nothing could be more lifelike.

Fan led Tom to the buffet and offered him some little cakes, to which he was very partial, and which he proceeded to swallow with so admirable a pretence of voracity that the bystanders burst out laughing. Then the mentor poured out a tumbler full of water, which Tom took gingerly between his paws, as he was accustomed to whenever Décamps did him the honour of permitting him to appear at table, and gulped down the contents at one draught. Enthusiasm knew no bounds! Indeed such was the delight and interest shown that when, at length, Fan wished to leave the buffet, he found they were hemmed in by so dense

a crowd that he felt nervous lest Tom should think of clearing the road with claws and teeth. So he promptly led his bear to a corner, placed him with his back against the wall, and told him to stay there till further orders.

As has been already mentioned, this kind of drill was quite familiar to Tom, and was well suited to his natural indolence, and when a harlequin offered his hat to complete the picture, he settled himself comfortably, gravely laying one great paw on his wooden gun.

‘Do you happen to know,’ said Fan to the obliging harlequin, ‘*who* you have lent your hat to?’

‘No,’ replied harlequin.

‘You mean to say you don’t guess?’

‘Not in the least.’

‘Come, take a good look at him. From the grace of all his movements, from the manner in which he carries his head, slightly on one side, like Alexander the Great – from the admirable imitations of the bear’s voice – you don’t mean to say you don’t recognise him?’

‘Upon my word I don’t.’

‘Odry!’² whispered Fan mysteriously; ‘Odry, in his costume from “The Bear and the Pacha”!’

‘Oh, but he acts a *white* bear, you know.’

‘Just so; that’s why he has chosen a brown bear’s skin as a disguise.’

² A well-known actor of the time.

‘Ho, ho! You’re a good one,’ cried harlequin.

‘Grroooooonnn,’ observed Tom.

‘Well, now you mention it, I *do* recognise his voice. Really, I wonder it had not struck me before. Do ask him to disguise it better.’

‘Yes, yes,’ said Fan, moving towards the ball-room, ‘but it will never do to worry him. However, I’ll try to persuade him to dance a minuet presently.’

‘Oh, could you really?’

‘He promised to do so. Just give a hint to your friends and try to prevent their teasing him.’

‘All right.’

Tom made his way through the crowd, whilst the delighted harlequin moved from one mask to another, telling his news with warnings to be discreet, which were well received. Just then, too, the sounds of a lively galop were heard, and a general rush to the ball-room took place, harlequin only pausing to murmur in Tom’s ear: ‘I know you, my fine mask.’

‘Grroooooonnn,’ replied Tom.

‘Ah, it’s all very well to growl, but you’ll dance a minuet, won’t you, old fellow?’

Tom waved his head up and down as his way was when anyone asked him a question, and harlequin, satisfied with this silent consent, ran off to find a columbine and to dance the galop.

Meanwhile, Tom remained alone with the waiters; motionless at his post, but with longing eyes turned towards the counter on

which the most tempting piles of cake were heaped on numerous dishes. The waiters, remarking his rapt attention, and pleased to tempt a customer, stretched out a dish, Tom extended his paw and gingerly took a cake – then a second – then a third: the waiters seemed never tired of offering, or Tom of accepting these delicacies, and so, when the galop ended and the dancers returned to the crush-room, he had made short work of some dozens of little cakes.

Harlequin had recruited a columbine and a shepherdess, and he introduced these ladies as partners for the promised minuet. With all the air of an old friend he whispered a few words to Tom, who, in the best of humours after so many cakes, replied with his most gracious growl. The harlequin, turning towards the gallery, announced that his lordship had much pleasure in complying with the universal request, and amidst loud applause, the shepherdess took one of Tom's paws and the columbine the other. Tom, for his part, like an accomplished cavalier, walked between his two partners, glancing at them by turns with looks of some surprise, and soon found himself with them in the middle of the pit of the theatre which was used as a ball-room. All took their places, some in the boxes, others in the galleries, the greater number forming a circle round the dancers. The band struck up.

The minuet was Tom's greatest triumph and Fan's masterpiece, and with the very first steps success was assured and went on increasing with each movement, till at the last figure the applause became delirious. Tom was swept off in triumph

to a stage box where the shepherdess, removing her wreath of roses, crowned him with it, whilst the whole theatre resounded with the applause of the spectators.

Tom leant over the front of the box with a grace all his own; at the same time the strains of a fresh dance were heard, and everyone hurried to secure partners except a few courtiers of the new star who hovered round in hope of extracting an order for the play from him, but Tom only replied to their broadest hints with his perpetual 'Grroonnn.'

By degrees this became rather monotonous, and gradually Tom's court dwindled away, people murmuring that, though his dancing powers were certainly unrivalled, his conversation was a trifle insipid. An hour later Tom was alone! So fleeting is public favour.

And now the hour of departure drew near. The pit was thinning and the boxes empty, and pale rays of morning light were glinting into the hall when the box-opener, who was going her rounds, heard sounds of snoring proceeding from one of the stage boxes. She opened the door, and there was Tom, who, tired out after his eventful night, had fallen fast asleep on the floor. The box-opener stepped in and politely hinted that it was six o'clock and time to go home.

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'Grrroonnn,' said Tom.

'I hear you,' said the box-opener; 'you're asleep, my good man, but you'll sleep better still in your own bed. Come, come, your wife must be getting quite anxious! Upon my word I don't believe he hears a word I say. How heavily he sleeps!' And she shook him by the shoulder.

'Grrroonnn!'

'All right, all right! This isn't a time to make believe. Besides, we all know you. There now, they're putting out the lights. Shall I send for a cab for you?'

'Grrrooonnn.'

'Come, come, the Odéon Theatre isn't an inn; come, be off! Oh, *that's* what you're after, is it? Fie, Monsieur Odry, fie! I shall call the guard; the inspector hasn't gone to bed yet. Ah, indeed! You won't obey rules! You are trying to beat me, are you? You would beat a woman – and a former artiste to M. Odry, would you? For shame! But we shall see. Here, help – police – inspector – help!'

'What's the matter?' cried the fireman on duty.

'Help!' screamed the box-opener, 'help!'

'What's the matter?' asked the sergeant commanding the patrol.

‘Oh, it’s old mother what’s her name, shrieking for help in one of the stage boxes.’

‘Coming!’ shouted the sergeant.

‘This way, Mr. Sergeant, this way,’ cried the box-opener.

‘All right, my dear, here I am. But where are you?’

‘Don’t be afraid; there are no steps – straight on this way – he’s in the corner. Oh, the rascal, he’s as strong as a Turk!’

‘Grrrooonnn,’ said Tom.

‘There, do you hear him? Is that to be called a Christian language?’

‘Come, come, my friend,’ said the sergeant, who had at last managed to distinguish Tom in the faint twilight. ‘We all know what it is to be young – no one likes a joke better than I do – but rules are rules, and the hour for going home has struck, so right about face, march! and quick step too.’

‘Grrrooonnn’ —

‘Very pretty; a first-rate imitation. But suppose we try something else now for a change. Come, old fellow, step out with a good will. Ah! you won’t. You’re going to cut up rough, are you? Here, my man, lay hold and turn him out.’

‘He won’t walk, sergeant.’

‘Well, what are the butt ends of your muskets for? Come, a tap or two will do no harm.’

‘Grrrooonnn – Grrrooonnn – Grrrooonnn –’

‘Go on, give it him well!’

‘I say, sergeant,’ said one of the men, ‘it strikes me he’s a *real*

bear. I caught hold of him by the collar just now, and the skin seems to grow on the flesh.'

'Oh, if he's a real bear treat him with every consideration. His owner might claim damages. Go and fetch the fireman's lantern.'

'Grrrooonnn.'

'Here's the lantern,' said a man; 'now then, throw some light on the prisoner.'

The soldier obeyed.

'It is certainly a real snout,' declared the sergeant.

'Goodness gracious me!' shrieked the box-opener as she took to her heels, 'a real live bear!'

'Well, yes, a real live bear. Let's see if he has any name or address on him and take him home. I expect he has strayed, and being of a sociable disposition, came in to the Masked Ball.'

'Grrrooonnn.'

'There, you see, he agrees.'

'Hallo!' exclaimed one of the soldiers.

'What's the matter?'

He has a little bag hung round his neck.' 'Open the bag.' 'A card.' 'Read the card.' The soldier took it and read: 'My name is Tom. I live at No. 109 Rue Faubourg St. – Denis. I have five francs in my purse. Two for a cab, and three for whoever takes me home.'

'He has a little bag hung round his neck.'

'Open the bag.'

'A card.'

‘Read the card.’

The soldier took it and read:

‘My name is Tom. I live at No. 109 Rue Faubourg St. – Denis. I have five francs in my purse. Two for a cab, and three for whoever takes me home.’

‘True enough; there are the five francs,’ cried the sergeant. ‘Now then, two volunteers for escort duty.’

‘Here!’ cried the guard in chorus.

‘Don’t all speak at once! Let the two seniors have the benefit of the job; off with you, my lads.’

Two of the municipal guards advanced towards Tom, slipped a rope round his neck and, for precaution’s sake, gave it a twist or two round his snout. Tom offered no resistance – the butt ends of the muskets had made him as supple as a glove. When they were fifty yards from the theatre, ‘Bah!’ said one of the soldiers, ‘tis a fine morning. Suppose we don’t take a cab. The walk will do him good.’

‘Besides,’ remarked the other, ‘we should each have two and a half francs instead of only one and a half.’

‘Agreed.’

Half an hour later they stood at the door of 109. After some knocking, a very sleepy portress looked out.

‘Look here, Mother Wideawake,’ said one of the guard; ‘here’s one of your lodgers. Do you recognise him?’

‘Why, I should rather think so. It’s Monsieur Décamps’ bear!’

The same day, Odry the actor received a bill for little cakes,

amounting to seven francs and a half.

SAÏ THE PANTHER

From Loudon's Magazine of Natural History

About seventy or eighty years ago two little panthers were deserted by their mother in one of the forests of Ashantee. They were too young to get food for themselves, and would probably have died had they not been found by a passing traveller, and by him taken to the palace as a present to the king. Here they lived and played happily for several weeks, when one day the elder and larger, whose name was Saï, gave his brother, in fun, such a dreadful squeeze that, without meaning it, he suffocated him. This frightened the king, who did not care to keep such a powerful pet about him, and he gave him away to Mr. Hutchison, an English gentleman, who was a sort of governor for the English traders settled in that part of Africa.

Mr. Hutchison and Saï took a great fancy to each other, and spent a great deal of time together, and when, a few months later, Mr. Hutchison returned to Cape Coast he brought Saï with him. The two friends always had dinner at the same time, Saï sitting at his master's side and eating quietly whatever was given him. In general he was quite content with his portion, but once or twice, when he was hungrier than usual, he managed to steal a fowl out

of the dish. For the sake of his manners the fowl was always taken from him, although he was invariably given some other food to satisfy his hunger.

At first the inhabitants of the castle and the children were much afraid of him, but he soon became very tame, and his teeth and claws were filed so that he should not hurt anyone, even in play. When he got a little accustomed to the place, he was allowed to go where he liked within the castle grounds, and a boy was told off to look after him. Sometimes the boy would go to sleep when he ought to have been watching his charge, and then Saï, who knew perfectly well that this was not at all right, would steal quietly away and amuse himself till he thought his keeper would be awake again. One day, when he returned from his wanderings, he found the boy, as usual, comfortably curled up in a cool corner of the doorstep sound asleep. Saï looked at him for a moment, and then, thinking that it was full time for him to be taught his duty, he gave him one pat on his head, which sent the boy over like a ninepin and gave him a good fright, though it did not do him any harm.

Saï was very popular with everybody, but he had his own favourites, and the chief of these was the governor, whom he could not bear to let out of his sight. When his master went out he would station himself at the drawing-room window, where he could watch all that was going on, and catch the first sight of his returning friend. Being by this time nearly grown up, Saï's great body took up all the space, to the great disgust of the children,

who could see nothing. They tried to make him move, first by coaxings and then by threats, but as Saï did not pay the smallest attention to either one or the other, they at last all took hold of his tail and pulled so hard that he was forced to move.

Strange to say, the black people were a great deal more afraid of Saï than any of the white ones, and one of his pranks nearly caused the death of an old woman who was the object of it. It was her business to sweep out and keep clean the great hall of the castle, and one morning she was crouching down on all fours with a short broom in her hand, thinking of nothing but how to get the dust out of the floor, when Saï, who had hidden himself under a sofa, and was biding his time, suddenly sprang on to her back, where he stood triumphantly. The old woman believed her last hour had come, and the other servants all ran away shrieking, lest it should be their turn next. Saï would not budge from his position till the governor, who had been alarmed by the terrible noise, came to see what was the matter, and soon made Master Saï behave himself.

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At this time it was settled that Saï was to travel to England under the care of one of his Cape Coast friends and be presented to the Duchess of York, who was very fond of animals. In those days, of course, journeys took much longer than they do now, and there were other dangers than any which might arise from storms and tempests. While the strong cage of wood and iron was being built which was to form Saï's house on the way to England, his lady keeper thought it would be a good opportunity to make friends with him, and used to spend part of every day talking to him and playing with him; for this, as everyone knows, is the only way to gain the affection of bird or beast. It was very easy to love Saï; he was so gentle and caressing, especially with children; and he was very handsome besides in his silky yellow coat with black spots, which, as the French say, does not spoil anything. Many creatures and many men might have made a great fuss at being shut into a cage instead of being allowed to walk about their own house and grounds, but everyone had always been kind to Saï, so he took for granted it was all right, and made himself as comfortable as he could, and was quite prepared to submit to anything disagreeable that he thought reasonable. But it very

nearly happened that poor Saï had no voyage at all, for while he was being hauled from the canoe which had brought him from the shore into the ship, the men were so afraid to come near him that they let his cage fall into the sea, and if the sailors from the vessel had not been very quick in lowering a boat it would have been too late to save him. As it was, for many days he would not look up or eat or speak, and his friend was quite unhappy about him, although the same symptoms have sometimes been shown by human beings who have only been *on* the sea instead of *in* it. At last he was roused from his sad condition by hearing the lady's voice. He raised his head and cocked his ears, first a little, then more; and when she came up to the cage he rolled over and over with delight, and howled and cried and tried to reach her. When he got a little calmer she told him to put his paws through the bars and shake hands, and from that moment Saï was himself again.

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Now it was a very strange taste on the part of a panther whose fathers and grandfathers had lived and died in the heart

of African forests, but Saï loved nothing so much as lavender water, which white people use a great deal in hot countries. If anyone took out a handkerchief which had been sprinkled with lavender water, Saï would instantly snatch it away, and in his delight would handle it so roughly that it was soon torn to atoms. His friend in charge knew of this odd fancy, and on the voyage she amused herself regularly twice a week with making a little cup of paper, which she filled with the scent and passed through the bars, taking care never to give it him till he had drawn back his claws into their sheaths. Directly he got hold of the cup Saï would roll over and over it, and would pay no attention to anyone as long as the smell lasted. It almost seemed as if he liked it better than his food!

For some reason or other the vessel lay at anchor for nearly two months in the river Gaboon, and Saï might have been allowed to leave his cage if he had not been an animal of such very strong prejudices. Black people he could not endure, and, of course, they came daily in swarms with food for the ship. Pigs, too, he hated, and they ran constantly past his cage, while as for an orang-outang monkey about three feet high, which a black trader once tried to sell to the sailors, Saï showed such mad symptoms at the very sight of it that the poor beast rushed in terror to the other end of the vessel, knocking down everything that came in its way. If the monkey took some time to recover from his fright, it was very long before Saï could forget the shock he had received. Day and night he watched and listened, and sometimes, when he

fancied his enemy was near, he would give a low growl and arch his back and set up his tail; yet, as far as we know, he had never from his babyhood killed anything.

But when at last the winds were favourable, and the ship set sail for the open sea, other adventures were in store for the passengers. Pirates infested the coast of Africa in those days, and they came on board and carried off everything of value, including the stores of provisions. The only things they did not think worth removing were the parrots, of which three hundred had been brought by the sailors, and as these birds could not stand the cold, and died off fast as the ship steered north, Saï was allowed one a day, which just managed to keep him alive. Still, there is very little nourishment to be got out of a parrot, especially when you eat it with the feathers on, and Saï soon became very ill and did not care even for parrots. His keeper felt his nose and found it dry and feverish, so she begged that she might take him out of his cage and doctor him herself. A little while before, Saï would have been enchanted to be free, but now he was too ill to enjoy anything, and he just stretched himself out on deck, with his head on his mistress's feet. Luckily she had some fever medicine with her, good for panthers as well as men and women, and she made up three large pills which she hoped might cure Saï. Of course it was not to be expected that he would take them of his own free will, so she got the boy who looked after him to hold open his mouth, while she pushed down the pills. Then he was put back into his cage, the boy insisting on going with

him, and both slept comfortably together. In a few days, with the help of better food than he had been having, he got quite well, and on his arrival in England won the admiration of the Duchess of York, his new mistress, by his beauty and gentle ways. As his country house was not quite ready for him, he was left for a few weeks with a man who understood animals, and seemed contented and happy, and was allowed to walk about as he liked. Here the Duchess of York used constantly to visit him and play with him, even going to see him the very day before he – and she – were to move into the country. He was in excellent spirits, and appeared perfectly well, but he must somehow have taken a chill, for when, on the following day, the Duchess's coachman came to fetch him, he found poor Saï had died after a few hours' illness from inflammation of the lungs.

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After all he is not so much to be pitied. He had had a very

happy life, with plenty of fun and plenty of kindness, and he had a very rapid and painless death.

THE BUZZARD AND THE PRIEST

Bingley's Animal Biography

About one hundred and forty years ago a French priest received a present of a large brown and grey bird, which had been taken in a snare intended for some other creature, and was very wild and savage. The man who brought it was quite ignorant what kind of bird it was, but the priest knew it to be the common buzzard, and made up his mind to try to tame it. He began by keeping it shut up, and allowing it to take no food except out of his hand, and after about six weeks of this treatment it grew much quieter, and had learnt to know its master. The priest then thought it would be safe to give the buzzard a little more freedom, and after carefully tying its wings, so that it could not fly away, he turned it out into the garden. Of course it was highly delighted to find itself in the sun once more, and hopped about with joy, and the time passed quickly till it began to get hungry, when it was glad to hear its master calling it to come in to dinner. Indeed, the bird always seemed so fond of the priest, that in a few days he thought he might leave it quite free, so he unfastened its wings and left them loose, merely hanging a label with his own name round its neck, and putting a little bell round its leg. But what

was the poor man's disgust, to see the buzzard instantly spread out its great wings and make for the neighbouring forest, deaf to all his calls! He naturally expected that, in spite of his trouble and precautions, the bird had flown away for ever, and sat sadly down to prepare his next day's sermon. Now sermons are things that take up a great deal of attention, and he had almost forgotten his lost favourite when he was startled by a tremendous noise in the hall outside his study, and on opening the door to see what was the matter, he saw his buzzard rushing about, followed by five others, who were so jealous of its copper plate and bell, that they had tried to peck them off, and the poor thing had flown as fast as it could to its master's house, where it knew it was safe.

After this it took care not to wander too far from home, and came back every night to sleep on the priest's window sill. Soon it grew bolder still, and would sit on the corner of the table when he was at dinner, and now and then would rub his head against his shoulder, uttering a low cry of affection and pleasure. Sometimes it would even do more, and follow him for several miles when he happened to be riding.

But the buzzard was not the only pet the priest had to look after. There were ducks, and chickens, and dogs, and four large cats. The ducks and chickens it did not mind, at least those that belonged to the house, and it would even take its bath at the same time with the ducklings, and never trod upon them when they got in its way, or got cross and pecked them. And if hawks or any such birds tried to snap up the little ones who had left their

mother's wing to take a peep at the world, the buzzard would instantly fly to their help, and never once was beaten in the battle. Curiously enough, however, it seemed to think it might do as it liked with the fowls and ducks that belonged to other people, and so many were the complaints of cocks and hens lamed and killed, that the priest was obliged to let it be known that he would pay for all such damage, in order to save his favourite's life. As to dogs and cats, it always got the better of *them*; in any experiment which it amused the priest to make. One day he threw a piece of raw meat into the garden where the cats were collected, to be scrambled for. A young and active puss instantly seized it and ran away with her prize, with all the other cats after her. But quick as she was, the buzzard, who had been watching her movements from the bough of a tree, was quicker still. Down it pounced on her back, squeezed her sides with its claws, and bit her ears so sharply, that she was forced to let go. In one moment another cat had picked the morsel up in its teeth, but it did not hold it long. The process that had answered for one cat would answer for a second, as the buzzard very well knew. Down he swooped again, and even when the whole four cats, who saw in him a common enemy, attacked the bird at once, they proved no match for him, and in the end they were clever enough to find that out.

It is not easy to know what buzzards in general think about things, but this one hated scarlet as much as any bull. Whenever he saw a red cap on any of the peasants' heads, he would hide himself among the thick boughs overhanging the road where the

man had to pass, and would nip it off so softly that the peasant never felt his loss. He would even manage to take off the wigs which every one wore then, and that was cleverer still, and off he would carry both wigs and caps to a tall tree in a park near by, and hang them all over it, like a new kind of fruit.

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As may be imagined, a bird so bold made many enemies, and was often shot at by the keepers, but for a long time it appeared to bear a charmed life, and nothing did it any harm. However, one unlucky day a keeper who was going his rounds in the forest, and who did not know what a strange and clever bird this buzzard was, saw him on the back of a fox which he had attacked for want of something better to do, and fired two shots at them. One shot killed the fox; the other broke the wing of the buzzard, but he managed to fly out of reach of the keeper, and hid himself. Meanwhile the tinkling of the bell made the keeper guess that this must be the priest's pet, of which he had so often heard; and being anxious to do what he could to repair the damage he

had done, he at once told the priest what had happened. The priest went out directly to the forest, and gave his usual whistle, but neither on that evening nor on several others was there any reply. At last on the seventh night he heard a low answer, and on searching narrowly all through the wood, the priest found the poor buzzard, which had hopped nearly two miles towards its old home, dragging its broken wing after it. The bird was very thin, but was enchanted to see his old master, who carried him home and nursed him for six weeks, when he got quite well, and was able to fly about as boldly as ever.

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COWPER AND HIS HARES

From Bingley's *British Quadrupeds*

No one was fonder of animals, or kinder to them, than Cowper the poet, who lived towards the end of the last century; but of all creatures he loved hares best, perhaps because he, like them, was timid and easily frightened. He has left a very interesting account of three hares that were given to him when he was living in the country in the year 1774, and as far as possible the poet shall tell his own story of the friendship between himself and his pets – Puss, Tiney, and Bess, as he called them.

Cowper was not at all a strong man, and suffered terribly from fits of low spirits, and at these times he could not read, and disliked the company of people, who teased him by giving him advice or asking him questions. It was during one of these seasons of solitude and melancholy that he noticed a poor little hare belonging to the children of one of his neighbours, who, without meaning really to be unkind, had worried the little thing almost to death. Soon they got tired even of playing with it, and the poor hare was in danger of being starved to death, when their father, whose heart was more tender than theirs, proposed that it should be given to their neighbour Mr. Cowper.

Now Cowper, besides feeling pity for the poor little creature, felt that he should like to teach and train it, and as just then he was too unhappy to care for his usual occupations, he gladly accepted the present. In a very short time Puss was given two companions, Tiney and Bess, and could have had dozens more if Cowper had wanted them, for the villagers offered to catch him enough to have filled the whole countryside if he would only give the order.

However, Cowper decided that three would be ample for his purposes, and as he wished them to learn nice clean habits, he began with his own hands to build them a house. The house contained a large hall and three bedrooms, each with a separate bed, and it was astonishing how soon every hare knew its own bedroom, and how careful he was (for in spite of their names they were all males) never to go into those of his friends.

Very soon all three made themselves much at home in their comfortable quarters, and Puss, the first comer, would jump on his master's lap and, standing up on his hind legs, would bite the hair on his temples. He enjoyed being carried about like a baby, and would even go to sleep in Cowper's arms, which is a very strange thing for a hare to do. Once Puss got ill, and then the poet took care to keep him apart from the other two, for animals have a horror of their sick companions, and are generally very unkind to them. So he nursed Puss himself, and gave him all sorts of herbs and grasses as medicine, and at last Puss began to get better, and took notice of what was going on round him. When he was strong enough to take his first little walk, his pleasure knew

no bounds; and in token of his gratitude he licked his master's hand, first back, then front, and then between every finger. As soon as he felt himself quite strong again, he went with the poet every day, after breakfast, into the garden, where he lay all the morning under a trailing cucumber, sometimes asleep, but every now and then eating a leaf or two by way of luncheon. If the poet was ever later than usual in leaving the house, Puss would down on his knees and look up into his eyes with a pleading expression, or, if these means failed, he would seize his master's coat between his teeth, and pull as hard as he could towards the window. Puss was, perhaps, the pleasantest of all the hares, but Bess, who died young, was the cleverest and most amusing. He had his little tempers, and when he was not feeling very well, he was glad to be petted and made much of; but no sooner had he recovered than he resented any little attentions, and would growl and run away or even bite if you attempted to touch him. It was impossible really to tame Tiney, but there was something so serious and solemn in all he did, that it made you laugh even to watch him.

Bess, the third, was very different from the other two. He did not need taming, for he was tame from the beginning, as it never entered into his head that anyone could be unkind to him. In many things he had the same tastes as his friends. All three loved lettuces, dandelions, and oats; and every night little dishes were placed in their bedrooms, in case they might feel hungry. One day their master was clearing out a birdcage while his three hares

were sitting by, and he placed on the floor a pot containing some white sand, such as birds use instead of a carpet. The moment they saw the sand, they made a rush for it and ate it up greedily. Cowper took the hint, and always saw, after that, that sand was placed where the hares could get at it.

After supper they all spent the evenings in the parlour, and would tumble over together, and jump over each other's backs, and see which could spring the farthest, just like a set of kittens. But the cleverest of them all was Bess, and he was also the strongest.

Poor Bess! he was the first to die, soon after he was grown up, and Tiney and Puss had to get on as best they could without him, which was not half as much fun. There was no one now to invent queer games, or to keep the cat in order when it tried to take liberties; and no one, too, to prevent Tiney from bullying Puss, as he was rather fond of doing. Tiney lived to be nine, quite a respectable age for a hare, and died at last from the effects of a fall. Puss went on for another three years, and showed no signs of decay, except that he was a little less playful, which was only to be expected. His last act was to make friends with a dog called Marquis, to whom he was introduced by his master; and though the spaniel could not take the place of Puss's early companions, he was better than nobody, and the two got on quite happily together, till the sad day (March 9, 1796) when Puss stretched himself at his master's feet and died peacefully and without pain, aged eleven years and eleven months.

A RAT TALE

Huggy was an old rat when he died – very old indeed. He was born in the middle of a corn-rick, and there he might have lived his little life had not the farmer who owned the rick caused it to be pulled down. That was Huggy's first experience of flitting, and it was done in such a hurry that he had hardly time to be sorry. It was pitch dark when his mother shook him up roughly and told him to 'come along, or he would be killed by the farmer,' and poor Huggy, blinking his sleepy eyes, struggled out of his snug little bed into the cold black night.

Several old rats met him at the entrance, and sternly bade him stay where he was and make no noise, for the leader was about to speak. Huggy was wide-awake by this time. The rat spirit of adventure was roused within him by the scent of coming danger, and eagerly he listened to the shrill, clear voice of the leader:

'Friends, old and young, this is not a time for many words, but I want you all to know the cause of this sudden disturbance. Last night I was scavenging round the farmer's kitchen, seeking what I might devour, when in came the stable-boy tapping an empty corn-sieve which he had in his hand. He said a few words to the farmer, who rose hastily, and together they left the kitchen, I following at a convenient distance. They went straight to the stable, and talked for some time with their backs to the corn-bin, which was standing open in the window. After a while I managed

to scramble up and peer into it, only to confirm what I dreaded most – the corn-bin was empty! To-morrow they will pull down this rick, thresh the corn, and replenish the empty bin. So, my friends, unless we mean to die by dog, stick, or fork, we had better be off as soon as it is daylight.’

There was a shuffle of feet all round, and a general rush of anxious mothers into the rick to fetch out their young. Huggy was waiting at the entrance; so, as soon as he caught sight of his mother, he raced off with her to join the fast-assembling crowd at the back of the rick. The leader ranged them in lines of ten abreast, and, after walking up and down to see that all were in their places, he gave a shrill squeak, and the column started. They marched steadily for about two miles – slowly, of course, because of the young ones. Nothing proved an obstacle to them. Sometimes a high wall crossed their path, but they merely ran up one side and down the other, as if it was level road. Sometimes it was a broad river which confronted them, but that they swam without hesitation – rats will not stop at such trifles.

At length they came to a field where a man with a pair of horses was ploughing. His coat, in which his dinner was wrapt, lay on the wall some little distance from him. Seeing such a number of rats, he left his horses and ran for his life, and hid behind a knoll, whence he could view the proceedings without himself being seen. To his great disgust, he saw the creatures first crowd round his coat, then run over it, and finally eat out of his pocket the bread and cheese his wife had provided for his dinner!

That was a stroke of luck for the rats. They had not counted on so early a breakfast; so it was with lightsome hearts they performed the rest of their journey.

Huggy was very glad when it was over. He had never been so far in his life – he was only three weeks old. Their new home proved to be a cellar, which communicated on one side with sundry pipes running straight to the kitchen, and on the other with a large ventilator opening to the outside air. A paradise for rats! and as to the inhabitants of the house – we shall see.

It was early in the afternoon when they arrived, so they had plenty of time to settle down before night. Huggy, having selected his corner, left his mother to make it comfortable for him, and scampered off for ‘a poke round,’ as he called it. First he went to the kitchen, peeped up through a hole in the floor, and, seeing no one about, cautiously crept out and sniffed into all the cupboards. As he was emerging from the last he beheld a sight which made his little heart turn sick. There, in a corner which Huggy had not noticed before, lay a huge dog half asleep! And so great was Huggy’s fright that he squeaked, very faintly indeed, yet loud enough to set Master Dog upon his feet. Next minute they were both tearing across the kitchen. Huggy was a wee bit in front, but so little that he could feel the dog’s hot breath behind him. There was the hole – bump – scrabble, scrabble – Huggy was safe! Safe! yes – but oh, so frightened! – and what made him smart so dreadfully? Why, his tail ... was gone – bitten off by the dog! Ah, Huggy, my poor little rat, if it had not been for

that foolish little squeak of fright you might have been as other rats are – but now! Huggy almost squeaked again, it was so very sad – and painful. Slowly he crept back to the cellar, where he had to endure the jeers of his young companions and the good advice of his elders.

It was some weeks before Huggy fully recovered himself, and more weeks still before he could screw up his courage to appear among his companions as the ‘tailless rat;’ but at long and at last he did crawl out, and, because he looked so shy and frightened, the other rats were merciful, and let him alone. The old rat, too – the leader – took a great fancy to him, and used to allow Huggy to accompany him on his various exploits, which was considered a great privilege among the older rats, and Huggy was very proud of it. One night he and the leader were out together, when their walk happened to take them (as it generally did) round by the pantry. As a matter of course, they went in, and had a good meal off a loaf which the careless table-maid had left standing on the shelf. Beside the loaf was a box of matches, and Huggy could not be happy till he had found out what was inside. First he gnawed the box a little, then he dragged it up and down, then he gnawed a little more, and, finding it was not very good to eat, he began to play with it. Suddenly, without any warning, there was a splutter and a flare. Huggy and the leader were outside in a twinkling, leaving the pantry in a blaze. Luckily no great damage was done, for the flames were seen and put out in time.

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So, little by little, Huggy was led on. In vain did his mother plead with him to be careful. He was 'a big rat now, and could look after himself,' he said. The following week the leader organised a party to invade the hen-house. Of course Huggy was among the number chosen. It required no little skill to creep noiselessly up the broken ladder, visiting the various nests ranged along each side of the walls; for laying hens are nervous ladies,

and, if startled, make enough noise to waken a town. But the leader had selected his party well, and not a sound was made till the proper time came. Once up the ladder, each rat took it in turn to slip in behind the hen, and gently roll one egg at a time from under her. The poor birds rarely resisted; experience had taught them long since the futility of such conduct. It was the young and ignorant fowls who gave all the trouble; they fluttered about in a fright and disturbed the whole house. But the rats knew pretty well which to go to; so they worked on without interruption. When they had collected about a dozen eggs, the next move was to take them safely down the ladder into the cellar. This was very soon done. Huggy lay down on his back, nestled an egg cosily between himself and his two front paws; a feather was put through his mouth, by which means a rat on either side dragged him along. Huggy found it rather rough on his back going down the ladder, but, with a good supper in view, he could bear most things. The eggs having been brought thus to the level of the ground, the rats dragged them in the same way slowly and carefully down to the cellar.

So time went on. Night after night parties of rats went out, and each morning they returned with tales of adventure and cunning – all more or less daring. But the leader was getting old. Huggy had noticed for some time how grey and feeble he was becoming; nor was he much surprised when, one day, the leader told him that he (Huggy) would have to take his place as leader of the rats. Two days after this the old rat died, leaving Huggy to succeed

him; and a fine lot of scrapes did that rat and his followers get into.

The larder was their favourite haunt, where joints of meat were hung on hooks 'quite out o' reach o' them rats,' as the cook said. But Huggy thought differently, and in a trice ten large rats had run up the wall and down the hook, and were gobbling the meat as fast as they could. But there was one hook in the centre of the ceiling which Huggy could not reach; from this hook a nice fat duck was suspended by a string. 'If only I could get on to that hook I should gnaw the string, and the duck would fall, and –'

Huggy got no further. An idea had come to him which he communicated quickly to the others. The plan seemed to be appreciated, for they all ran to an old chair, which was standing just under this difficult centre hook. The strongest rat went first, climbed up the back of the chair, and balanced himself on the top; Number 2 followed, and carefully balanced on Number 1; Number 1 then squeaked, which meant he could bear no more. It was a pity he could not stand *one* more; for, as they were, the topmost rat could just reach the prize, and though he nibbled all round as far as he could, it was not what might be called 'a square meal.' The cook was indeed amazed when, next morning, she found only three-fourths of her precious duck remaining. 'Ah!' she said, 'I'll be even with you yet, you cunning beasts!' And that night she sliced up part of a duck with some cheese, and put it in a plate on the larder floor. At his usual hour, when all was dark and quiet, Huggy and his followers arrived, and, seeing their

much-coveted prize under their very noses, were cautious. But Huggy was up to the trick. 'To-night and to-morrow night you may eat it,' he said, 'but beware of the third.' So they partook of the duck, and enjoyed it that night and the next, but the third the dish was left untouched.

The cook was up betimes that morning, so that she might bury the corpses before breakfast. Her dog (the same who had robbed Huggy of his tail), according to his custom, followed her into the larder. On seeing the plate just as she had left it the night before, the cook, in her astonishment, forgot the dog, who, finding no one gainsay him, licked the dish with infinite relish. Poor dog! In spite of all efforts to save him he died ten minutes afterwards; and the cook learnt her lesson also, for she never tried poisoning rats again.

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Here end the chief events of Huggy's life – all, at least, that are worth recording.

Some years after the death of the dog I was sitting in the

gloaming close to a steep path which led from the cellar down to the river, when what should I see but three large rats coming slowly towards me. The middle one was the largest, and evidently blind, for he had in his mouth a long straw, by which the other two led him carefully down the path. As the trio passed I recognised the centre one to be Huggy the Tailless.

Next morning my little Irish terrier, Jick, brought him to me in his mouth, dead; and I buried him under a Gloire de Dijon in a sunny corner of the garden.

Fantastic as some of the incidents may sound, they are, nevertheless, true, having been collected mainly from an old rat-catcher living in the town of Hawick.

SNAKE STORIES

In 1850 Baron de Wogan, a French gentleman, left his native land and set sail for North America, to seek his fortune and adventures. He was descended from two noble adventurers, the Wogan who led a cavalry troop from Dover to the Highlands, to fight for Charles II., and the Wogan who rescued Queen Clementina, wife of James III., from prison in Innsbruck. In 1850 adventures, wild beasts, and Red Indians were more plentiful than now, and Wogan had some narrow escapes from snakes and bears. Soon after coming to North America he had his first adventure with a rattlesnake; he was then camping at the gold fields of California, seeking for gold in order to have money enough to start on his voyages of discovery. His house was a log hut, built by himself, and his bed a sack filled with dry oak leaves.

One day, finding that his mattress required renewing, he went out with the sack and his gun. Having filled the sack with leaves, he went off with his gun in search of game for his larder, and only came home at nightfall. After having cooked and eaten his supper, he threw himself on his new mattress, and soon was asleep. He awoke about three, and would soon have fallen asleep again, but he felt something moving in the sack. His first thought was that it was a rat, but he soon felt by the way it moved that it was no quadruped, but a reptile, no rat, but a snake! He must have put it in the sack with the leaves, as might easily happen in winter

when these creatures are torpid from the cold, and sleep all curled up. With one leap the Baron was out of its reach, but wishing to examine it more closely, he took his gun to protect him in case of danger, and came near the bed again; but the ungrateful beast, forgetting that they had been bedfellows, threw itself on the gun and began to bite the muzzle. Fearing that it might turn and bite him next the Baron pulled the trigger, and hitting the serpent, literally cut it in two. It measured two feet long, and when the Baron cut off its tail, he found a quantity of scales which made the rattling sound from which this serpent gets its name.

As soon as the Baron had found enough gold, he bought a mule whom he called Cadi, and whom he became very fond of, and set off into the backwoods in search of sport and adventure. (Poor Cadi eventually met a terrible end, but that is a Bear story.) He soon added another companion, a young Indian girl, Calooa by name. She was the daughter of a chief of the Utah tribe, and had been taken prisoner, with several other women, by a tribe of hostile Indians whom the Baron fell in with. She would have been tortured and then burnt with the other prisoners had the Baron not saved her life by buying her for a silk handkerchief, a knife and fork, and some coloured pictures. She wandered with him and shared all his adventures, till she was found again by her tribe and taken back to them. One hot day they had been marching together about thirty miles through a country infested with panthers and pumas. The Baron was heading the little procession, when suddenly a cry from Calooa that she only

used in moments of danger made him turn round. Then he saw that what he had taken to be a huge rotten branch of a tree, and had even thought of taking with him for their camp fire, that evening, was in reality an enormous serpent. It lay across the path asleep, its head resting on the trunk of a tree. The Baron raised his gun to his shoulder, and came nearer the monster to get a good aim. He fired, but missed. The horrid creature reared itself nearly on end and looked at him with that fixed stare by which the serpent fascinates and paralyses its victim. The Baron felt all the fascination, but conquering it, he fired a second time, and this time wounded the creature without killing it outright. Though mortally wounded, the snake's dying struggles were so violent that the young trees all round were levelled as if they had been cut with a scythe. As soon as they were sure that life was extinct, Calooa and the Baron came nearer to examine the snake's dead body. Though part of his tail was missing, he measured nevertheless five yards long and eighteen inches round. Thinking that it seemed of unusual girth, the Baron cut it open with an axe, and found inside the body of a young prairie wolf, probably about a week old. The peculiarity of this snake was that it gave out a strong odour of musk, like the sea serpent in Mr. Kipling's book.

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The most horrible serpent that the Baron encountered and slew was the horned snake; he learned afterwards from the Indians that it is the most deadly of all the snakes of North America, for not only is its bite venomous, but its tail has a sting which contains the same poison. It crawls like other snakes, but when it attacks it forms itself into a circle, and then suddenly unbending itself flings itself like a lion on its victim, head forward and tail raised, thus attacking with both ends at once. If by chance it misses its aim and its tail strikes a young tree and penetrates the bark, that tree immediately begins to droop, and before long withers and dies. On the occasion when the Baron encountered it, Calooa and he had been fleeing all night fearing an attack of hostile Indians. About daylight they ventured to stop to take rest and food. While Calooa lit the fire the Baron took his gun and went in search of game. In about half an hour he returned with a wild turkey. When they had cooked and eaten it, he lay down and fell asleep, but had only slept two hours when he awoke, feeling his hand touched. It was Calooa, who woke him with a terror-stricken face. Looking in the direction she pointed, he saw about fifty yards away an enormous horned snake wound

round a branch of sassafras. It was lying in wait for a poor little squirrel, that cowered in the hollow of an oak. As soon as the squirrel dared to show even the tip of its nose, the serpent flung itself at it, but in vain, as its great head could not get into the hole.

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squirrel dared to show even the tip of its nose, the serpent flung itself at it, but in vain, as its great head could not get into the hole.

Fortunately,' the Baron says, 'my gun was by my side. I rose and went to the rescue of the defenceless little creature. When the serpent saw me he knew he had another sort of enemy to deal with, and hissing furiously hurled himself in my direction, though without quitting his branch. I stopped and took aim. The serpent evidently understood my attitude perfectly, for unwinding himself he began to crawl with all his speed towards me. Between us there was fortunately an obstacle, a fallen chestnut tree; to reach me he must either climb over it or go round, and he was too furious to put up with any delay. Ten paces from the tree I waited for him to appear, one knee on the ground, my gun at my shoulder, and the other elbow resting on my knee to steady my aim. At last I saw his horrid head appear above the fallen tree, at the same moment I fired, and the ball pierced his head through and through, though without instantly killing him. Quick as lightning he wound himself round a branch, lashing out with his tail in all directions. It was his dying struggle; slowly his fury subsided, and uncoiling himself he fell dead alongside the tree. I measured him and found he was eight feet long, and seven or eight inches round. He was dark brown, and his head had two horns, or rather hard knobs. Wishing to carry away some souvenir to remember him by when I should be at home again in France, I tried to cut off his horns, but found it impossible. Out of curiosity I then took an axe and cut him open, when I

found inside a little bird, dazed but living. Presently it revived and began to flutter about, and soon flew away among the bushes and was lost to sight. I did not then know that this is a common occurrence, and that when the Indians find a serpent asleep, as is generally the case after the creature has gorged itself, they hit it on the head with a stick, which makes it throw up what it has swallowed whole, and its victims are often still living.'

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Calooa on one occasion had a narrow escape. She had put her hand into a hollow in a branch of a cherry-tree where was a blue jay's nest, to take eggs as she thought. Hardly had she put in her hand when she screamed with pain; a rattlesnake that had taken possession of the nest had stung her. The Baron, much alarmed, expected to see Calooa die before his eyes. He did not know of the remedy the Indians use for snake bites. Calooa herself was quite undisturbed, and hunted about among the bushes till she found the plant she knew of, then crushing some of the leaves between two stones, she applied them to the bite, and in a couple of hours was completely cured.

Besides these snakes the Baron learned from the Indians that there is another even more dangerous, not from its sting, which is not poisonous, but because it winds itself round its victim, and

strangles him to death. Fortunately the Baron never met one, or he would probably not have lived to tell his snake stories.

WHAT ELEPHANTS CAN DO

Long, long ago the earth was very different from what it is now, and was covered with huge forests made up of enormous trees, and in these forests there roamed immense beasts, whose skeletons may sometimes be seen in our museums.

Of all these beasts there is only one remaining, and that is the elephant. Now the elephant is so big and shapeless that he makes one think he has been turned out by a child who did not know how to finish his work properly. He seems to need some feet badly and to want pinching about his body. He would also be the better for a more imposing tail; but such as he is, the elephant is more useful and interesting than many creatures of ten times his beauty. Large and clumsy though he may be, he alone of all animals has 'between his eyes a serpent for a hand,' and he turns his trunk to better account than most men do their two hands.

Ever since we first read about elephants in history they were just the same as they are now. They have not learnt, from associating with men, fresh habits which they hand down from father to son; each elephant, quick though he is to learn, has to be taught everything over again.

Yet there is no beast who has lived in such unbroken contact with man for so many thousands of years. We do not know when he first began to be distinguished for his qualities from the other wild animals, but as far back as we can trace the sculptures

which adorn the Indian temples the elephant has a place. Several hundred years before Christ, the Greek traveller Herodotus was passing through Babylon and found a large number of elephants employed in the daily life of the city, and from time to time we catch glimpses of them in Eastern warfare, though it was not till the third century B.C. that they were introduced into Europe by Alexander the Great. The Mediterranean nations were quick to see the immense profit to which the elephant could be put, both in respect to the great weights he could carry, and also for his extraordinary teachableness. In India at the present day he performs all kinds of varied duties, and many are the stories told about his cleverness, for he is the only animal that can be taught to push as well as pull.

Most of us have seen elephants trained to perform in a circus, and there is something rather sad in watching their great clumsy bodies gambolling about in a way that is unnatural as well as ungraceful. But there is no question as to the amount that elephants can be taught, particularly by kindness, or how skilfully they will revenge themselves for any ill-treatment.

In the early part of this century an elephant was sent by a lady in India as a present to the Duke of Devonshire, who had a large villa at Chiswick.

This lucky captive had a roomy house of its own, built expressly for it in the park, a field to walk about in, and a keeper to look after it, and to do a little light gardening besides. This man treated the elephant (a female) with great kindness, and

they soon became the best of friends. The moment he called out she stopped, and at his bidding would take a broom in her trunk and sweep the dead leaves off the grass; after which she would carefully carry after him a large pail of water for him to re-fill his watering pot – for in those days the garden-hose was not invented. When the tidying up was all done, the elephant was given a carrot and some of the water, but very often the keeper would amuse himself with handing her a soda-water bottle tightly corked, and telling her to empty it. This she did by placing the bottle in an inclined position on the ground and holding it at the proper angle with her foot, while she twisted the cork out with her trunk. This accomplished, she would empty all the water into her trunk without spilling a drop, and then hand the bottle back to her keeper.

In India small children are often given into the charge of an elephant, and it is wonderful to see what care the animals take of them. One elephant took such a fancy to a small baby, that it used to stand over its cradle, and drive away the flies that teased it while it slept. When it grew restless the elephant would rock the cradle, or gently lift it to the floor and let it crawl about between its legs, till the child at last declined to take any food unless her friend was by to see her eat it.

Amazing tales have been told of what elephants can be trained to do, but none is stranger than a story related by a missionary named Caunter, about some wild elephants in Ceylon. Some native soldiers who had been set to guard a large storehouse

containing rice, were suddenly ordered off to put down a rising in a village a little distance away. Hardly were their backs turned when a wild elephant was seen advancing to the storehouse, which was situated in a lonely place, and after walking carefully round it, he returned whence he came. In a short time he was noticed advancing for the second time, accompanied by a whole herd of elephants, all marching in an orderly and military manner.

Now in order to secure the granary as much as possible, the only entrance had been made in the roof, and had to be reached by a ladder. This was soon found out by the elephants, who examined the whole building attentively, and being baffled in their designs, retired to consult as to what they should do next. Finally one of the largest among them began to attack one of the corners with his tusks, and some of the others followed his example. When the first relay was tired out, another set took its place, but all their efforts seemed useless; the building was too strong for them. At length a third elephant came forward and attacked the place at which the others had laboured with such ill-success, and, by a prodigious effort, he managed to loosen one brick. After this it did not take long to dig a hole big enough to let the whole herd pass through, and soon the two spectators, hidden in a banyan-tree, saw little companies of three or four enter the granary and take their fill of rice until they all were satisfied. The last batch were still eating busily, when a shrill noise from the sentinel they had set on guard caused them to rush out. From

afar they could perceive the white dress of the soldiers who had subdued the unruly villagers and were returning to their post, and the elephants, trunks in air, took refuge in the jungle, and only wagged their tails mockingly at the bullets sent after them by the discomfited soldiers.

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THE DOG OF MONTARGIS

For three days Aubrey de Montdidier had not been seen by his friends and comrades in arms. On Sunday morning he had attended mass in the Church of Our Lady, but it was noticed that in the afternoon he was absent from the great tournament which was held at Saint Katherine's. This astonished his friend the young Sieur de Narsac, who had appointed to meet him there, that they might watch together the encounter between a Burgundian knight and a gentleman from Provence, both renowned in tilting, who were to meet together for the first time that day in Paris. It was unlike Aubrey to fail to be present on such an occasion, and when for three successive days he did not appear at his accustomed haunts, his friends grew anxious, and began to question among themselves whether some accident might not have befallen him. Early on the morning of the fourth day De Narsac was awakened by a continuous sound, as of something scratching against his door. Starting up to listen, he heard, in the intervals of the scratching, a low whine, as of a dog in pain. Thoroughly aroused, he got up and opened the door. Stretched before it, apparently too weak to stand, was a great, gaunt greyhound, spent with exhaustion and hunger. His ribs stood out like the bars of a gridiron beneath his smooth coat; his tongue hung down between his jaws, parched and stiff; his eyes were bloodshot, and he trembled in every limb.

On seeing De Narsac the poor creature struggled to his feet, feebly wagged his tail, and thrust his nose into the young man's hands. Then only did De Narsac recognise in the half-starved skeleton before him the favourite dog and constant companion of his friend, Aubrey de Montdidier. It was clear from the poor animal's emaciated appearance that it was in the last stage of exhaustion. Summoning his servant, De Narsac ordered food and water to be brought at once, and the dog devoured the huge meal set before it. From his starved appearance, and from the voracity with which he devoured the food set before him, it was evident that he had had nothing to eat for some days. No sooner was his hunger appeased than he began to move uneasily about the room. Uttering low howls of distress from time to time, he approached the door; then, returning to De Narsac's side, he looked up in his face and gently tugged at his mantle, as if to attract attention. There was something at once so appealing and peculiar in the dog's behaviour that De Narsac's curiosity was aroused, and he became convinced that there was some connection between the dog's starved appearance and strange manner and the unaccountable disappearance of his master. Perhaps the dog might supply the clue to Aubrey's place of concealment. Watching the dog's behaviour closely, De Narsac became aware that the dumb beast was inviting him to accompany him. Accordingly he yielded to the dog's apparent wish, and, leaving the house, followed him out into the streets of Paris.

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Looking round from time to time to see that De Narsac was coming after him, the greyhound pursued its way through the narrow, tortuous streets of the ancient city, over the Bridge, and out by the Porte St. – Martin, into the open country outside the gates of the town. Then, continuing on its track, the dog headed for the Forest of Bondy, a place of evil fame in those far-off days, as its solitudes were known to be infested by bands of robbers. Stopping suddenly in a deep and densely wooded glade of the wood, the dog uttered a succession of low, angry growls; then, tugging at De Narsac's mantle, it led him to some freshly turned-up earth, beneath a wide-spreading oak-tree. With a piteous whine the dog stretched himself on the spot, and could not be induced by De Narsac to follow him back to Paris, where he straightway betook himself, as he at once suspected foul play. A few hours later a party of men, guided to the spot by the young Sieur de Narsac, removed the earth and dead leaves and ferns from the hole into which they had been hastily flung, and discovered the murdered body of Aubrey de Montdidier. Hurriedly a litter was constructed of boughs of trees, and, followed by the dog, the body was borne into Paris, where it was soon afterwards buried.

From that hour the greyhound attached himself to the Sieur de Narsac. It slept in his room, ate from his table, and followed close at his heels when he went out of doors. One morning, as the two were threading their way through the crowded Rue St. – Martin, De Narsac was startled by hearing a low, fierce growl

from the greyhound. Looking down he saw that the creature was shaking in every limb; his smooth coat was bristling, his tail was straight and stiff, and he was showing his teeth. In another moment he had made a dart from De Narsac's side, and had sprung on a young gentleman named Macaire, in the uniform of the king's bodyguard, who, with several comrades in arms, was sauntering along on the opposite side of the street. There was something so sudden in the attack that the Chevalier Macaire was almost thrown on the ground. With their walking-canes he and his friends beat off the dog, and on De Narsac coming up, it was called away, and, still trembling and growling, followed its master down the street.

A few days later the same thing occurred. De Narsac and the Chevalier Macaire chanced to encounter each other walking in the royal park. In a moment the dog had rushed at Macaire, and, with a fierce spring at his throat, had tried to pull him to the ground. De Narsac and some officers of the king's bodyguard came to Macaire's assistance, and the dog was called off. The rumour of this attack reached the ears of the king, and mixed with the rumour were whisperings of a long-standing quarrel between Macaire and Aubrey de Montdidier. Might not the dog's strange and unaccountable hatred for the young officer be a clue to the mysterious murder of his late master? Determined to sift the matter to the bottom, the king summoned De Narsac and the dog to his presence at the Hôtel St. – Pol. Following close on his master's heels, the greyhound entered the audience-room, where

the king was seated, surrounded by his courtiers. As De Narsac bowed low before his sovereign, a short, fierce bark was heard from the dog, and, before he could be held back, he had darted in among the startled courtiers, and had sprung at the throat of the Chevalier Macaire, who, with several other knights, formed a little group behind the king's chair.

It was impossible longer to doubt that there was some ground for the surmises that had rapidly grown to suspicion, and that had received sudden confirmation from the fresh evidence of the dog's hatred.

The king decided that there should be a trial by the judgment of God, and that a combat should take place between man, the accused, and dog, the accuser. The place chosen for the combat was a waste, uninhabited plot of ground, frequently selected as a duelling-ground by the young gallants of Paris.

In the presence of the king and his courtiers the strange unnatural combat took place that afternoon. The knight was armed with a short thick stick; the dog was provided with an empty barrel, as a retreating ground from the attacks of his adversary. At a given signal the combatants entered the lists. The dog seemed quite to understand the strange duel on which it was engaged. Barking savagely, and darting round his opponent, he made attempts to leap at his throat; now on this side, now on that he sprang, jumping into the air, and then bounding back out of reach of the stick. There was such swiftness and determination about his movements, and something so unnatural in the combat,

that Macaire's nerve failed him. His blows beat the air, without hitting the dog; his breath came in quick short gasps; there was a look of terror on his face, and for a moment, overcome by the horror of the situation, his eye quailed and sought the ground. At that instant the dog sprang at his throat and pinned him to the earth. In his terror, he called out and acknowledged his crime, and implored the king's mercy. But the judgment of God had decided. The dog was called off before it had strangled its victim, but the man was hurried away to the place of execution, and atoned that evening for the murder of the faithful greyhound's master.

The dog has been known to posterity as the Dog of Montargis, as in the Castle of Montargis there stood for many centuries a sculptured stone mantelpiece, on which the combat was carved.

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HOW A BEAVER BUILDS HIS HOUSE

Bingley's Animal Biography

If we could look back and see England and Wales as they were about a thousand years ago, we should most likely think that the best houses and most prosperous villages were the work not of the Saxon or British natives, but of the little beavers, which were then to be found in some of the rivers, though they have long ceased to exist there. Those who want to see what beavers can do, must look to America, and there, either in Canada or even as far south as Louisiana, they will find the little creatures as busy as ever and as clever at house-building as when they taught our forefathers a lesson in the time of Athelstan or Canute.

A beaver is a small animal measuring about three feet, and has fine glossy dark brown hair. Its tail, which is its trowel, and call bell, and many other things besides, is nearly a foot long, and has no hair at all, and is divided into little scales, something like a fish. Beavers cannot bear to live by themselves, and are never happy unless they have two or three hundred friends close at hand whom they can visit every day and all day, and they are the best and most kindly neighbours in the world, always ready

to help each other either in building new villages or in repairing old ones.

Of course the first thing to be done when you wish to erect a house or a village is to fix on a suitable site, and the spot which every beaver of sense thinks most desirable is either a large pond or, if no pond is to be had, a flat low plain with a stream running through, out of which a pond can be made.

It must be a very, very long while since beavers first found out that the way to make a pond out of a stream was to build a dam across it so strong that the water could not break through. To begin with, they have to know which way the stream runs, and in this they never make a mistake. Then they gather together stakes about five feet long, and fix them in rows tight into the ground on each side of the stream; and while the older and more experienced beavers are doing this – for the safety of the village depends on the strength of the foundation – the younger and more active ones are fetching and heaping up green branches of trees. These branches are plaited in and out of the rows of stakes, which by this time stretch right across the river, and form a dam often as much as a hundred feet from end to end. When the best workmen among them declare the foundation solid, the rest form a large wall over the whole, of stones, clay, and sand, which gradually tapers up from ten or twelve feet at the bottom, where it has to resist the pressure of the stream, to two or three at the top, so that the beavers can, if necessary, pass each other in comfort. And when the dam is pronounced finished, the overseer

or head beaver goes carefully over every part, to see that it is the proper shape and exactly smooth and even, for beavers cannot bear bad work, and would punish any of their tribe who were lazy or careless.

The dam being ready and the pond made, they can now begin to think about their houses, and as all beavers have a great dislike to damp floors and wet beds, they have to raise their dwellings quite six or eight feet above the level of the stream, so that no sudden swelling of the river during the rainy season shall make them cold and uncomfortable. Beavers are always quite clear in their minds as to what they want, and how to get it, and they like to keep things distinct. When they are in the water they are perfectly happy, but when they are out of it they like to be dry, and in order to keep their houses warm and snug they wait till the water is low during the summer, and then they can drive piles into the bed of the stream with more safety and less trouble than if the river is running hard. It generally takes two or three months before the village is finished, and the bark and shoots of young trees, which is their favourite food, collected and stored up. But the little round huts, not unlike beehives, are only intended for winter homes, as no beaver would think of sleeping indoors during the summer, or, indeed, of staying two days in the same place. So every three or four years they spend the long days in making their village of earth, stones, and sticks, plastered together with some kind of mortar which they carry about on their tails, to spread neatly over the inside of their houses. All

that a beaver does is beautifully finished as well as substantial. The walls of his house are usually about two feet thick, and sometimes he has as many as three stories to his house, when he has a large family or a number of friends to live with him. One thing is quite certain: no beaver will ever set up housekeeping alone; but sometimes he will be content with one companion, and sometimes he will have as many as thirty. But however full the hut may be, there is never any confusion; each beaver has his fixed place on the floor, which is covered with dried leaves and moss, and as they manage to keep open a door right below the surface of the stream, where their food is carefully stored up, there is no fear that they will ever be starved out. And there they lie all through the winter, and get very fat.

Once a French gentleman who was travelling through Louisiana, was very anxious to see the little beaver colony at work, so he hid himself with some other men close to a dam, and in the night they cut a channel about a foot wide right through, and very hard labour they found it.

The men had made no noise in breaking the dam, but the rush of the water aroused one beaver who slept more lightly than the rest, and he instantly left his hut and swam to the dam to examine what was wrong. He then struck four loud blows with his tail, and at the sound of his call every beaver left his bed and came rushing to see what was the matter. No sooner did they reach the dam and see the large hole made in it, than they took counsel, and then the one in whom they put the most trust gave orders to the rest,

and they all went to the bank to make mortar. When they had collected as much as they could carry, they formed a procession, two and two, each pair loading each others' tails, and so travelling they arrived at the dam, where a relay of fresh labourers were ready to load. The mortar was then placed in the hole and bound tight by repeated blows from the beavers' tails. So hard did they work and so much sense did they show, that in a short time all was as firm as ever. Then one of the leading spirits clapped his tail twice, and in a moment all were in bed and asleep again.

Beavers are very hard-working, but they know how to make themselves comfortable too, and if they are content with bark and twigs at home, they appreciate nicer food if they can get it. A gentleman once took a beaver with him to New York, and it used to wander about the house like a dog, feeding chiefly upon bread, with fish now and then for a treat. Not being able to find any moss or leaves for a bed, it used to seize upon all the soft bits of stuff that came in its way, and carry them off to its sleeping corner. One day a cat discovered its hiding place, and thought it would be a nice comfortable place for her kittens to sleep, and when the beaver came back from his walk he found, like the three bears, that someone was sleeping in his bed. He had never seen things of that kind before, but they were small and he was big, so he said nothing and lay down somewhere else. Only, if ever their mother was away, he would go and hold one of them to his breast to warm it, and keep it there till its mother came back.

THE WAR HORSE OF ALEXANDER

**Part of the story of Bucephalus
is taken from Plutarch**

There are not so many stories about horses as there are about dogs and cats, yet almost every great general has had his favourite horse, who has gone with him through many campaigns and borne him safe in many battle-fields. At a town in Sicily called Agrigentum, they set such store by their horses, that pyramids were raised over their burial-place, and the Emperor Augustus built a splendid monument over the grave of an old favourite.

The most famous horse, perhaps, who ever lived, was one belonging to Alexander the Great, and was called Bucephalus. When the king was a boy, Bucephalus was brought before Philip, King of Macedon, Alexander's father, by Philonicus the Thessalian, and offered for sale for the large sum of thirteen talents. Beautiful though he was, Philip wisely declined to buy him before knowing what manner of horse he was, and ordered him to be led into a neighbouring field, and a groom to mount him. But it was in vain that the best and most experienced riders approached the horse; he reared up on his hind legs, and would

suffer none to come near him. So Philonicus the Thessalian was told to take his horse back whence he came, for the king would have none of him.

Now the boy Alexander stood by, and his heart went out to the beautiful creature. And he cried out, 'What a good horse do we lose for lack of skill to mount him!' Philip the king heard these words, and his soul was vexed to see the horse depart, but yet he knew not what else to do. Then he turned to Alexander and said: 'Do you think that you, young and untried, can ride this horse better than those who have grown old in the stables?' To which Alexander made answer, 'This horse I know I could ride better than they.' 'And if you fail,' asked Philip, 'what price will you pay for your good conceit of yourself?' And Alexander laughed out and said gaily, 'I will pay the price of the horse.' And thus it was settled.

So Alexander drew near to the horse, and took him by the bridle, turning his face to the sun so that he might not be frightened at the movements of his own shadow, for the prince had noticed that it scared him greatly. Then Alexander stroked his head and led him forwards, feeling his temper all the while, and when the horse began to get uneasy, the prince suddenly leapt on his back, and gradually curbed him with the bridle. Suddenly, as Bucephalus gave up trying to throw his rider, and only pawed the ground impatient to be off, Alexander shook the reins, and bidding him go, they flew like lightning round the course. This was Alexander's first conquest, and as he jumped down from the

horse, his father exclaimed, 'Go, my son, and seek for a kingdom that is worthy, for Macedon is too small for such as thee.'

Henceforth Bucephalus made it clear that he served Alexander and no one else. He would submit quietly to having the gay trappings of a king's steed fastened on his head, and the royal saddle put on, but if any groom tried to mount him, back would go his ears and up would go his heels, and none dared come near him. For ten years after Alexander succeeded his father on the throne of Macedon (B.C. 336), Bucephalus bore him through all his battles, and was, says Pliny, 'of a passing good and memorable service in the wars,' and even when wounded, as he once was at the taking of Thebes, would not suffer his master to mount another horse. Together these two swam rivers, crossed mountains, penetrated into the dominions of the Great King, and farther still into the heart of Asia, beyond the Caspian and the river Oxus, where never European army had gone before. Then turning sharp south, he crossed the range of the Hindoo Koosh, and entering the country of the Five Rivers, he prepared to attack Porus, king of India. But age and the wanderings of ten years had worn Bucephalus out. One last victory near the Hydaspes or Jelum, and the old horse sank down and died, full of years and honours (B.C. 326). Bitter were the lamentations of the king for the friend of his childhood, but his grief did not show itself only in weeping. The most splendid funeral Alexander could devise was given to Bucephalus, and a gorgeous tomb erected over his body. And more than that, Alexander resolved that the memory

of his old horse should be kept green in these burning Indian deserts, thousands of miles from the Thessalian plains where he was born, so round his tomb the king built a city, and it was called

‘Bucephalia.’

STORIES ABOUT BEARS

Baron de Wogan, a French gentleman, whose adventures with snakes are also curious, was the hero of some encounters with the grizzly bear of North America. First, I would have you understand what sort of a creature he had for an opponent. Imagine a monster measuring when standing upright eight or nine feet, weighing 900 lbs., of a most terrifying appearance, in agility and strength surpassing all other animals, and cruel in proportion. Like his cousin the brown bear, whom he resembles in shape, he is a hermit and lives alone in the immense trackless forests which covered the Rocky Mountains, and indeed (at least in olden times) the greater part of North America. During the day he sleeps in the depths of some mountain cavern, and wakes up at dusk to go out in search of prey. All the beasts of the forest live in terror of him – even the white bear flies before him. He would go down to the valleys and attack the immense herds of buffaloes which grazed there, and which were powerless against him, in spite of their numbers and their great horns. They join themselves closely together and form one compact rank, but the grizzly bear hurls himself at them, breaks their ranks, scatters them, and then pursuing them till he catches them up, flings himself on the back of one, hugs it in his iron embrace, breaks its skull with his teeth, and so goes slaying right and left before he eats one. Before the Baron's first, so to say, hand-to-hand encounter with a grizzly, he

had been long enough in the country to know something of their ways, and how worse than useless a shot is unless in a fatal spot.

After the return to her tribe of Calooa, a young Indian girl, who had been his one human companion in many days of wandering, the Baron was left with only his mule Cadi for friend and companion, and naturally felt very lonely. He set his heart on getting to the top of the Rocky Mountains, at the foot of which he then happened to be. Their glittering summits had so irresistible an attraction for him, that he did not stay to consider the difficulties which soon beset him at every step. No sooner did he conquer one than another arose, added to which the cold of these high regions was intense, and it constantly snowed. After three days he had to declare himself not only beaten, but so worn out that he must take a week's rest if he did not want to fall ill. First it was necessary to have some sort of a shelter, and by great good luck he found just at hand a cavern in the rock, which, without being exactly a palace, seemed as if it would answer his purpose.

Upon closer examination he found that it had more drawbacks than he cared about. All round were scattered gnawed bones of animals, and the prints of bear's claws on the ground left no doubt as to who the last inmate had been. The Baron, however, preferred to risk an invasion rather than seek another abode, and prepared for probable inroads by making across the entrance to the cave a barricade of branches of oak tied together with flax, a quantity of which grew near. He then lit a good fire inside

the cave, but as the last tenant had not considered a chimney necessary; the dense smoke soon obliged him to beat a hasty retreat. Besides he had to go out to get supplies for his larder, at present as bare as Mother Hubbard's. With his usual good luck the Baron found, first, a large salmon flapping wildly in its effort to get out of a pool, where the fallen river had left it. This he killed, and next he shot a young deer about a mile away and carried it to camp on his back. In order to preserve these eatables he salted some of them with salt that he had previously found in a lake near, and had carefully preserved for future use. He then dug a hole in a corner of the cave, putting a thick layer of dry hay at the bottom, and buried his provisions Indian fashion, in order to preserve them.

As it was still only twelve o'clock, the Baron thought he would spend the rest of the day in exploring the neighbourhood; first he examined the cave, which he found to be formed of big blocks of rock firmly joined together; above the cave rose the cliff, and in front of it grew a fir-tree, which served at the same time to defend the entrance, and as a ladder to enable him to mount the cliff. As he could not take Cadi with him, he fastened him to the fir-tree by his halter and girth joined together, so as to leave him plenty of room to graze. Then he put some eatables in his game bag, and set off on a tour of discovery. When he had walked about three hours, and had reached a rocky point from which he had a fine view of the surrounding country, he sat down to rest under an oak-tree. He knew nothing more till the cold awoke

him – it was now six o'clock, and he had slept three hours. He started with all the haste he could to get back to his cave and Cadi before dark, but so tired and footsore was he that he was obliged to give in and camp where he was, for night was coming on fast. It was bitterly cold and snow fell constantly, so he lit a large fire, which at the same time warmed him, and kept away the bears whom he heard wandering round the camp most of the night. As soon as the sun was up in the morning, he set off with all his speed to see what had become of Cadi; but though fifteen miles is not much to bears balked of their prey, it is much to a weary and footsore man, and when he had hobbled to within half a mile of the camp, he saw that it was too late: the bears, whom he had driven away from his camp in the night with fire-brands, had scented poor Cadi, and four of them were now devouring him – father, mother, and two cubs. Imagine his rage and grief at seeing his only friend and companion devoured piecemeal before his very eyes!

His first impulse was to fire, but he reflected in time that they were four to one, and that, instead of avenging Cadi, he would only share his fate. He decided to wait on a high rock till the meal was ended. It lasted an hour, and then he saw the whole family set off to climb the mountain, from the top of which he had been watching them. They seemed to be making straight for him, and as it would be certain death to sit and wait for them, he slipped into a cranny in the rock, hoping that he might not be perceived; even if he was, he could only be attacked by one at a time. He had

not long to wait: soon all four bears passed in single file, without smelling him or being aware of him; for this he had to thank poor Cadi: their horrid snouts and jaws being smeared with his blood prevented their scenting fresh prey.

When he had seen them at a safe distance, he ventured to go down to the cave he could no longer call his own. Of Cadi, nothing remained but his head, still fastened to the tree by his halter. The barricade was gone, too, and from the cave came low but unmistakable growls. With one bound the Baron was up the tree, and from the tree on to the cliff. From there he threw stones down before the entrance to the cave, to induce the present inmate to come out, in order that he might take possession again. The bear soon came out, and, perceiving him, made for the fir-tree. By its slow and languid movements the Baron saw that it was curiosity more than anger that prompted it, and, moreover, it was evidently a very old bear, probably a grandfather, whose children and grandchildren had been to pay it a visit. Curiosity or not, the Baron had no wish to make a closer acquaintance, and fired a shot at the brute by way of a hint to that effect. This immediately turned his curiosity into wrath. Seizing the fir-tree, which he was going to use as a ladder, he began to climb up. A second shot hit him in the shoulder. He fell mortally wounded, but even after a third shot, which took him in the flank, his dying struggles lasted twenty minutes, during which he tore at the roots of the fir-trees with his terrific claws. The Baron did not care to waste any of his bullets, now getting scarce, in putting out of his

pain one of Cadi's murderers. When finally the bear was dead, the Baron came down to take possession of his cave, and at the same time of the bear's skin. On penetrating into the cave, he found that the rascal had paid him out in his own coin, and, in revenge for the Baron taking his cave, had eaten his provisions. The Baron was quits in the end, however, as the bear's carcass furnished him meat enough for several days. The Baron cut off pounds of steak, which he salted and dried over the fire. The useless remains he threw over the nearest precipice, so that they should not attract wild beasts, to keep him awake all night with their cries. Then, having made a huge fire in front of the entrance, which, moreover, he barricaded with branches, he threw himself on his bed of dry leaves to sleep the sleep of exhaustion.

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Some time passed before the Baron's next encounter with a bear. He was camping one night in a dense forest, sleeping, as usual, with one eye and one ear open, and his weapon at hand, all ready loaded. His rest was broken by the usual nightly sounds

of the forest, of leaves crunched and branches broken, showing that many of the inmates of the woods were astir; but he did not let these usual sounds disturb him, till he heard in the distance the hoarse and unmistakable cry of the bear; then he thought it time to change the shot in his gun for something more worthy of such a foe. This preparation made, he set off at dawn on his day's march, which up to midday led him along the bank of a large river. He thought no more of the blood-curdling howls of the night, till suddenly he heard from a distance terror-stricken cries. He put his ear to the ground, Indian fashion, to listen better, and as the danger, whatever it was, seemed to be coming nearer, he jumped into a thicket of wild cherry and willow trees, and waited there in ambush, gun in hand. In a few minutes, a band of Indians with their squaws appeared on the opposite bank of the river, and straightway leaped into the water, like so many frogs jumping into an undisturbed swamp. At first he thought he was being attacked, but soon saw it was the Indians who were being pursued, and that they all, men and women, were swimming for dear life; moreover, the women were laden with their children, one, and sometimes two, being strapped to their backs in a sort of cradle of birch bark. This additional weight made them swim slower than the men, who soon reached the opposite shore, and then took to their heels helter-skelter, except three, who remained behind to encourage the women.

The Baron at first thought it was an attack of other Indians, and that it would be prudent to beat a retreat, when suddenly the

same terrible cry that had kept him awake in the latter part of the night resounded through the forest, and at the same time there appeared on a high bank on the other shore a huge mass of a dirty grey colour, which hurled itself downhill, plunged into the river, and began to swim across at a terrific speed. It was a grizzly bear of tremendous size. So fast did it swim, that in no time it had nearly caught up with the last of the squaws, a young woman with twin babies at her back, whose cries, often interrupted by the water getting into their mouths, would have melted the heart of a stone. The three Indians who had remained on the bank did their utmost to stop the bear by shooting their poisoned arrows at it; but the distance was too great, and the huge animal came on so fast that in another minute mother and children would be lost. The Baron could not remain a spectator of so terrible a scene. He came out of the thicket where he was hidden, and frightened the Indians almost as much as if he had been another bear. Resting his gun on the trunk of a tree, he fired at the distance of 125 yards, and hit the animal right on the head. It dived several times, and the water all round was dyed red with blood; but the wound was not mortal, and it continued on its way, only more slowly. After urging the Indian, who seemed to be the unhappy woman's husband, to go into the water to help her – for, through terror and fatigue, she could no longer swim – the Baron took deliberate aim again and fired. The second shot, like the first, hit the bear on the head, but again without killing it. It stopped the brute, however, long enough to let the poor woman get to shore, where

she fainted, and was carried away by the men to the forest, leaving the Baron and the bear to fight out their duel alone. The Baron had barely time to reload and climb to the top of one of the trees, when the bear was already at the foot of it. So near was he when he stood upright, that the Baron could feel his horrid breath. Up to then the Baron thought that all bears could climb like squirrels; fortunately for him he was mistaken. Expecting to be taken by storm, he fired straight in the creature's face. The two balls took a different course: one went through the jaw and came out by the neck, the other went into the chest. The bear uttered a terrific roar, stiffened itself in a last effort to reach him, and fell heavily on its back at the foot of the tree. The Baron might have thought him dead had he not already seen such wonderful resurrections on the part of bears; but the four shots, though at first they dazed and troubled the beast, seemed afterwards to act as spurs, and he rose furious and returned to the charge. The Baron tried to use his revolver, but, finding it impossible, he drew out his axe from his belt, and dealt a violent blow at the bear's head, which nearly split it in two, and sent the blood splashing in all directions. The bear again fell to the ground, this time to rise no more. The Baron being now convinced that the grizzly bear is no tree-climber, took his time to draw out his revolver, to take aim and fire. The shot put out one of the bear's eyes, the axe had already taken out the other. This finished him, but his death struggles lasted twenty minutes, during which the tree was nearly uprooted. When all was at an end the Baron came

down; he cut off the formidable claws, and broke off the teeth with an axe to make a trophy in imitation of the Indians, and then proceeded to skin him and cut him up. The Indians, who had been watching the combat at a safe distance, now came back, enthusiastic. They surrounded them, the victor and the vanquished, and danced a war-dance, singing impromptu words. The Baron, seated on the bear's carcass, joined in the chorus; but the Indians, not content with that, insisted on his joining in the dance as well. The rejoicing over, the Baron divided among the twenty Indians the flesh of the bear – about 15 lb. or 20 lb. fell to each. The skin he kept to himself, and the claws, of which the Indians made him a warrior's necklace, hanging it round his neck like an order of knighthood.³

³ The young reader must no longer expect such adventures as the Baron de Wogan achieved.

STORIES ABOUT ANTS

If any one will watch an ant-hill on a fine day in April, he will see the little inhabitants begin to rouse themselves from their winter's sleep, which lasts from the month of October, with the red ant at all events. Groups of them come out to the top of the ant-hill to warm and thaw themselves in the rays of the sun. Some, more active and robust, run in and out, waking up the lazy, hurrying the laggards, and rousing all the little community to begin their summer habits. But this activity does not last long; they are as yet only half awake, and still numb and torpid from the winter's cold, and the little throng increases or diminishes as the sun shines or disappears behind a cloud. As two, half-past two, and three o'clock arrive, they have nearly all disappeared inside the ant-heap, leaving only a few warriors, of a larger make and tried courage, to watch over the well-being of the little republic and to close up all openings with tiny chips of wood, dry leaves, and shreds of moss, so as to hide the entrances from human eye. Two or three sentinels wander round to see that all is secure. And then they enter, and all is still.

If we come back again in about a week, we shall find the ants in the middle of their regular migration to their summer quarters, not far from their winter ones. This takes place, with the red ant, at all events, with great regularity every April and October. The red ant is beyond doubt a slave-owner; the slaves may be easily

recognised from their masters by being of a smaller make and light yellow colour. As soon as the masters have fixed the day of their 'flitting,' they begin probably to ensure the consent of the slaves by violently seizing them, and rolling them into a ball, and then grasping them firmly they set off towards the summer quarters at full gallop, if an ant can be said to gallop. The master ant is in a great hurry to get rid of his living burden; he goes straight ahead in spite of all obstacles, avoiding all interruptions and delays, and as soon as he arrives at the summer ant-heap, plunges in, deposits the slave all breathless and terrified from his forced journey, and sets off back for another.

Darwin, who closely studied the migrations of the ant, says that they differ in their means of transport: one sort is carried by the slaves; the other, our friend the red ant, scientifically called 'formica sanguinea,' carries his property carefully in his mouth. It seems strange to us that the master should carry the slave, but no stranger than it would appear to the ants if they should begin to study our habits, that some of us should sit in a carriage and be driven by the coachman. The slave, once installed in his summer quarters, seldom appears again before the autumn exodus, unless in the event of some disturbance in the camp, or its invasion by some ants of a hostile tribe, when the slaves take part in the defence and especially watch over the young ones. The slaves seem to be carpenters and miners, and warriors when necessary. They build the dwelling, repair it, of which it has constant need, and defend it in case of attack with dauntless courage. But their

principal duties seem to be to take charge of the development of the young, and to feed the masters – no small task, as there seem to be ten masters to one slave, and they seem incapable of eating unless fed. Experiments have been tried of removing the slaves from them, and though sugar and every sort of tempting food is put down beside them, they will starve rather than help themselves. In fact, one wonders what the masters can be left for but to drive the slaves, which they do with great ardour. A French gentleman who spent years studying the habits of the ants, tried one day, by way of experiment, to take a slave away from its master; he had great difficulty in removing it from its bearer, who struggled furiously and clung to its burden. When at last the slave was set free, instead of profiting by its liberty, it turned round and round in a circle as if dazed, then hid itself under a dead leaf. A master ant presently came along, an animated conversation took place, and the slave ant was seized upon and borne off again to bondage. The same gentleman another day observed a slave ant venture out to the entrance to the ant-hill to enjoy the warmth of the sun. A great master ant spied it and set to with blows of its horns (antennæ they are called) to persuade it that that was not its place. Finding the slave persisted in not understanding, the master resorted to force, and seizing it by its head, without taking the trouble to roll it up, as they are generally carried, he hurled it into the ant-hill, where no doubt it received the punishment it deserved.

If we came back to the ant-heap a week after our last visit,

we should find the migration finished if the weather has been fine; but ants, especially after their first awaking, are extremely sensitive to wind and rain, and only work well in fine weather. They are equally affected by weather before a storm: even though the sun may be shining, they will remain in the ant-heap with closed doors. If it is shut before midday, the storm will burst before evening; if it is shut before eight or nine in the morning, the rain will fall before noon.

All this time we have been speaking only of the red ant; but there are any number of different kinds in Europe, not to mention the enormous ants of the tropics, who march in such armies that the people fly before them, deserting their villages. Different species differ totally in their habits and ways of building and living. The greater number of species live apart, and not in a community with an elaborately constructed house like the red ant. The little black ant is the commonest in this country, and the busiest and most active. She is the first to awake, in March, sometimes in February, and the last to sleep, sometimes not till November. Their instincts and habits of activity, however, are apt to deceive them, and they get up too soon. The French gentleman already mentioned observed an instance of the kind. On February 24, after an unusually mild winter, the sun shone as if it were already summer, and it was difficult to persuade oneself that it was not, except that there were no leaves on the trees, no birds singing in the branches, and no insects humming in the air. First our friend went to examine the red-ant heap, which was closed as

usual, all the inhabitants being still plunged in their winter sleep. The black ants, on the contrary, were all awake and lively, and seemed persuaded that the fine weather had come to stay. Their instincts deceived them, for that night it froze; rain, snow, and fog succeeded each other in turn, and when next he visited the ant-heap he found them lying in masses, stiff and dead, before the entrance to their dwelling.

Between the red and black ants there is great enmity, and terrible combats take place. When they fight they grasp each other like men wrestling, and each tries to throw the other down, and break his back. The conquered remain on the battlefield, nearly broken in two, and feebly waving their paws, till they slowly expire in agonies. The conqueror, on the other hand, carries away his dead to burial and his wounded to the camp, and then, entering triumphantly himself, closes the doors after him. The gentleman already quoted witnessed the funeral of an ant. He had passed the ant-heap about a quarter of an hour, and left, as he thought, all the inhabitants behind him, when he saw what appeared to be an enormous red ant making for home. On stooping to look more closely, he saw that it was one ant carrying another. He succeeded in separating them from each other, and then saw that the burden was neither a slave nor a prisoner, but a dead comrade being carried back to the ant-heap for a decent burial; for if ants fall into the hands of the enemy, they are subjected if alive to the most cruel tortures and if dead to mutilations. Usually, when an ant is relieved of anything it is

carrying – whether it be a slave, a wounded ant, or some eatable – it will set off at full speed and let the burden be picked up by the next passing ant; but this one made no attempt to run away, and only turned round and round in a perplexed and irresolute way, till its dead friend was put down beside it, then it seized its precious burden and set off homewards with it. Travellers even tell that in Algeria there are ant cemeteries near the ant-heaps.

No lover of animals doubts that they have a language of their own, which we are too stupid or deaf to understand. Anyone who studies the ways of the ants sees, beyond a doubt, that they too have a way of communicating with each other. For instance, an ant was one day seen at some distance from the ant-hill, and evidently in no hurry to go back to it. In the middle of the path she perceived a large dead snail. She began by going round and round it, then climbed on its back, and walked all over it. Having satisfied herself that it was a choice morsel, but too large for her to carry home alone, she set off at once to seek help. On the way she met one of her companions; she ran at once to her; they rubbed their antennæ together, and evidently an animated conversation took place, for the second ant set off immediately in the direction of the snail. The first one continued on her way home, communicating with every ant she met in the same way; by the time she disappeared inside the ant-heap, an endless file of busy little ants were on their way to take their share of the spoil. In ten minutes the snail was completely covered by the little throng, and by the evening every trace of it had vanished.

Recent observations have proved that the time-honoured idea of the ant storing up provision for the winter is a delusion, a delusion which La Fontaine's famous fable, 'Le Fourmis et la Cigale,' has done much to spread and confirm. It is now known, as we have already seen, that ants sleep all winter, and that the food which we constantly see them laden with is for immediate consumption in the camp. They eat all kinds of insects – hornets and cockchafers are favourite dishes – but the choicest morsel is a fine fat green caterpillar, caught alive. They seize it, some by its head, some by its tail; it struggles, it writhes, and sometimes succeeds in freeing itself from its enemies; but they do not consider themselves beaten, and attack it again. Little by little it becomes stupefied from the discharges of formic acid the ants throw out from their bodies, and presently it succumbs to their renewed forces. Finally, though the struggle may last an hour or more, it is borne to the ant-heap and disappears, to be devoured by the inmates. Perhaps these short 'Stories about Ants' may induce some of you to follow the advice of the Preacher, and 'go to the ant' yourselves for more.

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