



OUR PETS AND HOW TO TREAT THEM.

I SIT down to write this short paper on Pets, quite confident in my own mind that there are not any of my young readers who would be wantonly or willingly unkind to any animal they have power over. But one may be cruel to a pet unintentionally, and through ignorance of the correct way to treat it. Why, the very kindness of many people towards pets kills them sometimes; for instance, I have known lap dogs fed at all hours of the day, and on all kinds of dainties, until they grew so fat that their lives were a burden to them, and being unable to get about they died miserably. I have known canaries pampered and coddled, kept in close rooms and fed on all kinds of non-descript food, bread, butter, and sugar included,



till asthma came on, and the little songsters' days were numbered. Parrots, too, are over-fed in the same way, and given bones to pick, until the blood gets so hot, that they tear their feathers out by the roots, and subsequently pine and die, or go off in fits. Pigeons fare no better at the hands of kind, or rather I should say would-be-kind masters or mistresses, get too much soft food, and perhaps hemp, and this is sure to bring on disease.

Now let me say a few words about Dogs to begin with; they are man's noblest friends, and have been so for centuries. Well, I care not what kind or breed of dog you happen to possess, whether the grand and kingly mastiff, or the sprightly Pomeranian that nestles close by his side, as if courting protection, or whether it be a sheep-dog, a poodle, or a lively lovable little fox-terrier—they must all be treated on the same general principles. They all want good wholesome food, water, a nice bed, a dry kennel, and exercise, combined with romps and fun.

A word about the food first. Small dogs may be fed from the scraps from the table, but never give them fish-bones or small bones of any kind. If bones are to be given, they should be put after the dog has eaten his dinner, by way of dessert.

Break the scraps well up, soak the crusts, mash the potatoes and greens, and pour a little gravy over all. This food should be for dinner. For breakfast he should have bread and milk, porridge and milk, or biscuit and gravy. Give plenty to eat, but take the dish away when the dog seems to have had enough. Give no food between meals, and feed only twice a day.

The larger dogs, especially those kept out of doors, want regular meals—breakfast and dinner, the latter about five o'clock. Keep a pail to steep every night the exact number of biscuits, and no more, that you know the animal can manage next day. If you steep too many they will get sour before they are used. Break up the biscuits well in the dish, and pour in it an allowance of milk or broth. The bones that are left from the table with the vegetables will boil into a delicious soup for him. Paunches and liver may be given for a change, but should be well cleaned and boiled.

Remember that you cannot keep a dog in good health without giving him mashed green vegetables about twice a week, and that frequent changes of food are necessary as well. You yourselves would not like to be kept constantly on the same kind of diet.

Feed at the same time, every day, and have the dog's dish always standing in the same place, that he may know where to find it. Let the water be

changed every day, and let him have plenty of it.

If the dog sleep in the house he should constantly occupy the same place at night. The bed should be a mat of some kind, not a cushion.

If he sleep in a kennel out of doors, it ought to be a large, roomy, warm one, well sheltered from rain or snow, and wind. He ought to have abundance of straw, both in summer and winter, and this should be changed as soon as it gets soiled or dusty.

The water-pan should not be placed in the sun in summer, or allowed to accumulate ice in winter. Exercise is a necessity of life with a dog. I know no species of cruelty more terrible than that of chaining a poor animal up to a box or barrel, and never letting him free to make use of his limbs, and bring his blood into healthy motion. You could all of you do much during the long lives which I trust are before you, to do away with the cruelty of chaining dogs. Pray point out to the owners of dogs, who keep them constantly on the galling chain, the extreme inhumanity of their conduct.

Dogs want plenty of romping and fun, so when out for exercise, let them have it. Play with them: they dearly love to run after a ball or a stick—such exercise will bring the blood of health to your own cheeks, as well as happiness to the heart of your honest dog.

Muzzling dogs is a cruel practice. If ever the law demand such treatment, use the open wire muzzle, and never a leathern bag or strap.

Cats are seldom very well treated in our country, but I am happy to say people are beginning to appreciate them far more, and to study their comforts.

You would like your pussy to be really happy, would you not? Well I'll try to tell you in a few words how to make her so.

First, then, she must have her full liberty out of doors or in, so far as roaming about all day is concerned. You can teach her to be honest in two ways! you must feed her well three times a day, giving her all she can eat, and then if she attempt to jump on the table, chastise her across the paws with a little bit of whalebone, which ought to be kept for the purpose. But never strike a cat with your hand, or over the head even, with the switch.

Secondly, she may have food for breakfast, like that recommended for small dogs, but for dinner she must have either fish or flesh. Boiled lights forms excellent food; so does horse-flesh.

Thirdly, give her water every day as well as milk, and lastly teach her to keep indoors all

night. She may otherwise get killed. It is very cruel to destroy cats, yet many people do so in the most wanton manner, and if you possess a favourite pussy and permit her to stay out at night, perhaps occupied in tearing up beds of valuable flowers, or killing pet pigeons, you are partly to blame if any evil come to her.

A cat, especially if she have long fur, should be often brushed and combed—this prevents matting, and keeps the skin clear.

There are times when cats are ill, with white tongues and feverish bodies. A small tea-spoonful of castor-oil should be poured into the throat, and next day and every day for a fortnight, five grains of a white powder called the trinitrate of bismuth should be placed on the tongue. Sometimes a little flowers of sulphur mixed with the food will do them good.

When pussy has kittens, some people destroy them all at once. This is most cruel. One or two ought *always* to be left, and for these you should try to find good homes.

Feed your pussy abundantly—cats eat more than many people would suppose; love her and make much of her, and she will keep the house well clear of mice and rats too. But a starved cat is never a good mouser.

Cats love a kind master or mistress far better than they do the house in which they dwell. The reverse is generally believed, but I could produce a thousand lovers of the feline race to prove that what I say is correct.

Never leave your cat alone at home when going away on a holiday. If no one is to be left in the house give her to some kind neighbour to keep for you. But a better plan is to take her with you in a basket. A cat will make herself at home anywhere with those of whom she is fond.

Pigeons and Doves make very nice pets. Never, however, keep less than a pair, and whether their home be a dove-cot or only a wicker cage, feed them well, get them to know you, and let them have plenty of liberty. They will not go far away. Indeed, I do not know of any creature in the world that is more fond of its home than a dove or pigeon. They must have plenty of food and abundance of clean water, and a change of food is also necessary to keep them in health.

Pigeons and doves require grain of different kinds, the smaller peas, tick beans, rice, Indian corn, &c., and some soft food as well, like crumbs of bread and biscuits, or meal draggled or moistened with milk.

They must also have free access to gravel; green food must not be forgotten; and they dearly like to peck at a mixture composed of clay, old lime

from walls, and salt, equal parts mixed up with water. If you make much of them, pigeons or doves soon come to know you, and get very affectionate indeed.

All kinds of pets must be kept in a state of perfect cleanliness, and birds require bathing-water as well as water to drink.

The great mistake people make in keeping pet Canaries in cages is giving them dainties, and never letting them out into the room to have exercise by flying about. Feed them on plain black and white canary-seeds mixed, and give plenty of clean water daily, fresh air, and now and then a bath in the sunshine.

In summer give chickweed, groundsel, lettuce-leaf, &c., and in winter a tiny bit of boiled carrot or morsel of sweet apple; but sugar is not good for them. Clean the cages every day.

Rabbits require a good deal of attention to keep them happy and healthy; when they are so they make most amusing pets. The hutch ought to be so made that it can be easily cleaned, and the bed in the darkest corner of the box should be always dry and warm. Soft hay, withered ferns, or straw makes a nice bed for them. Feed them well three times a day, but beware of giving too much green food, or food that is wet. Give oats and bran in the morning; and some nice clovery hay or vetches, and oats may be given at night. During the day give roots, such as turnips, carrots, parsnips, &c.

Give water to drink, and sometimes, in cold weather, a little warm milk and water. Rabbits are fond of dandelion and sow-thistle, and many other common garden weeds, but they should all be given with a sparing hand.

Tea-leaves are sometimes given by way of tonic to rabbits, but whether they are good for them or not I never felt quite sure.

Guinea-pigs, especially the rough-coated kinds, are very pretty, but I do not think they are particularly affectionate. They should be treated like rabbits, and have roomy hutches, plenty of good food, fresh air, and cleanliness.

Try to win the affections of all pets by love and gentleness, never by harsh means, and always talk to them as if they really were thinking creatures.

You have a duty to perform to whatever pet you possess; if you neglect that duty you are committing a great sin, and do not deserve to possess anything that lives and breathes.

Always feed and tend your pets before you sit down to your own meals; if you do so your conscience will be easy, and I think your appetite will be good.

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