

Slade (D. D.)

"If you must kill them, do it without cruelty. Every animal has a right to justice and protection at the hands of the superior animal,—man; who, if he kills, should do so for a purpose. That purpose is not helped by cruelty."—ANIMAL WORLD.

HOW
TO
KILL ANIMALS
HUMANELY.

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HOW TO KILL ANIMALS HUMANELY.

This essay is intended to give instruction to those who desire to terminate the existence of animals in the most speedy and humane manner, whether such animals are intended for food, or whether they have become useless through age, sickness or other cause. When we reflect upon the vast number of animals which are put to death in our own country alone, for food, estimated at more than fifty millions every year, not to speak of the thousands that are destroyed for other reasons; and when we bear in mind that a great proportion of these animals are put to death, often with the most needless cruelty, simply through ignorance of the proper method of producing speedy death,—it will be readily admitted that an attempt to enlighten the public in this respect may at least serve to diminish the amount of such cruelty, and indirectly lead to other equally satisfactory results. While we write more especially for the farmer, who is from circumstances obliged to slaughter his own animals, and for those who are called upon reluctantly to rid themselves of some fond but disabled pet, we also desire to call the attention of those who pursue the slaughtering of animals as a business to the great necessity of doing their work in the most humane manner possible. To this end, there are certain measures of importance to be kept in view, and to be carried into practice.

PRECAUTIONS.

Thus, the animal to be slaughtered should be conducted to the spot selected as quietly as possible, without the use of goad or club, and everything calculated to alarm him should be removed. All slaughtering premises should be kept thoroughly cleansed from blood and offal, and no car-

cases be allowed to hang in view. No animal should be permitted to witness the death of another. Trifling as these measures may appear to the professional butcher, they are in reality of vast importance, not only in view of avoiding useless cruelty, but as affecting the wholesomeness of meat for food, and the market value of the animal slaughtered; there being no question as to the effects of torture, cruelty and fear upon the secretions, and if upon the secretions, necessarily upon the flesh.

METHODS.

The slaughtering of animals for food at the present day may be classified under three methods: 1. Rendering the animals insensible by a blow on the head, followed by bleeding. 2. Cutting through or injuring the spinal cord (pithing), so as to destroy the powers of motion and sensation, with subsequent bleeding. 3. Cutting the throat, deeply dividing all the blood-vessels, with or without thrusting the knife into the heart, and without previously stunning the animal. This last method is practised by the Jews.

From certain experiments conducted for the purpose a few years since in the abattoirs of Paris, it would seem that the first of these methods, namely, that of producing insensibility by some sudden shock to the brain, such as that of a direct and concentrated blow, especially if followed by immediate blood-letting, is attended by less suffering than when death is effected by decapitation, pithing or cutting the throat without previously producing such insensibility.

A German observer (Dr. Sonderrmann, of Munich) remarks upon this subject: "All methods of slaughtering have for their object the death of the animal in a more or less speedy, but always in the least painful manner possible. But what is death? and when does actual death occur? Simple as these two questions may appear, they are nevertheless very difficult to answer. A mammal whose head has been cut off by a guillotine does not die immediately. Actual death occurs some seconds or minutes afterwards. All methods of slaughtering other than the one in

which insensibility is produced by a severe shock to the brain, followed by bleeding, produce, without exception, only apparent death, after which follows the actual death, the latter being always accompanied with an entire cessation of nervous and muscular excitability."

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY MOTION.

There are two kinds of motion. The one is voluntary, and dependent upon the brain. So long as this organ remains unimpaired, so long will consciousness, sensation and the power of voluntary motion continue. The other is involuntary, and dependent upon the action of the spinal cord as a nervous centre, and is known as reflex action. This kind of motion is exhibited in the movements of animals after decapitation, where all connection with the brain, and consequently with consciousness, has been cut off.

So intimately connected in our minds are pain and action, that in witnessing the slaughter of two animals we are naturally inclined to attribute the greatest amount of suffering to the one that at the time of death exhibits the most violent convulsions. In such a conjecture, however, we may be very much mistaken, for it is possible, nay, even probable, that there may be acute suffering with scarcely a struggle on the part of the animal; while, on the other hand, there may be much struggling, and even distortions, without pain or sensations of any kind, as is often made evident in cases of decapitation, where, as we have just remarked, all connection with the brain has been removed.

Thus we see that the movements of an animal in the act of being killed are not at all to be relied upon as evidences of pain.

PITHING.

The term "pithing" is applied to two methods of inflicting injury to the nervous system, and thereby producing death. By one method, that most commonly in vogue, the spinal cord is severed or punctured between the first and second bones of the neck, where the peculiarity of the

articulation leaves an opening. This is done by a variety of instruments. Although the animal drops immediately, life continues for some seconds and even minutes, the heart continues to beat and the brain to live and act. By the other method, a small spot situated in the lower and posterior portion of the brain is reached and broken up by the introduction of a narrow, sharp instrument. Death is almost instantaneous. "No attempt is made at inspiration, there is no struggle, and no appearance of suffering. The animal dies simply by a want of aeration of the blood, which leads in a few moments to an arrest of the circulation." (Dalton's Physiology.) Both of these modes of slaughtering, especially the last, require an anatomical knowledge as well as a practical dexterity that but few would attain, and, if they are not properly and quickly executed, are undoubtedly attended by more suffering than other methods.

SHOULD BE DEPRIVED OF SENSIBILITY.

Without entering further into the consideration of physiological questions of so much importance, we may with safety lay down the following proposition:—

All animals, when slaughtered, should be deprived of sensibility by inflicting sufficient injury to the brain, either by a sudden and violent blow of the axe or mallet, by the bullet, or by some other equally efficient means, and should then be immediately bled during the state of insensibility.

SITUATION OF THE BRAIN.

Fig. 1.



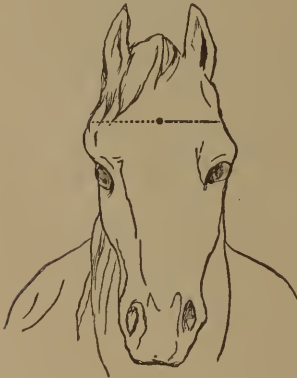
It is important to know the exact situation of the brain in animals, so that the shock to this

organ may be conveyed effectually and at once, and not by clumsy and ill-directed efforts, as is too often the case.

It should be kept in mind that the brain of animals occupies but a comparatively small portion of the entire head. In the attempt to fell them, the tendency is almost always to strike too low. Fig. 1 represents a longitudinal section of the horse's head, showing the situation of the brain and also the thinness of the frontal bone as compared with the corresponding region in the ox.

HORSES.

Fig. 2.



The horse may be destroyed by blows upon the head, by the bullet, or by chloroform.

1. *By Blows.*—Having blindfolded the horse, the operator, armed with a heavy axe or hammer, should stand upon the side and to the front of the animal, directing his blow to a point in the middle of a line drawn across the forehead from

the centre of the pit above the eye. See Fig. 2.

One vigorous and well-directed blow will fell the animal, but the blow should be repeated to make destruction sure.

2. *By the Bullet.*—The operator should stand directly in front of the animal, and place the muzzle of the rifle or pistol within a few inches of the skull, aiming at the spot indicated in Fig. 2.

One shot is generally sufficient, if properly directed in either case; if not, it should be repeated after the animal falls.

In most instances, so great and instantaneous is the shock to the brain from a bullet that death follows instantly.

A shot-gun loaded with buck-shot is effectual and may often be more conveniently procured.

3. *By Chloroform.*—Procure a common feed-bag or small sack made of thick cotton cloth, or of any sufficiently strong material, provided with strings or a strap to fasten over the head, and at the bottom of this place a large sponge or a yard of flannel folded to the size of eight inches square.

The sponge or flannel is to be saturated with chloroform and the bag adjusted. If the suffocation and consequent struggling, which at first attend the administration of anaesthetics, are very great, the application of the chloroform may be gradual, the animal being allowed to respire the outward air for a moment, until these effects pass off. As it is by the exclusion of common air, however, that death is produced, the more persistently the administration of the chloroform is kept up, the more speedy will be the desired result.

The dose requisite varies very much according to circumstances. At least sixteen ounces of chloroform should be procured, and it should be freshly applied through a small slit in the bag every few minutes until death ensues, which will be from five to ten or fifteen minutes after the beginning of the operation.

The difficulties attending the administration of chloroform to so large and powerful an animal as the horse, particularly at the hands of the inexperienced, render its use less applicable than either of the other methods. In cases where sickness and consequent debility have reduced the animal and made him less capable of struggling, it answers a good purpose, or where a pet horse is to be killed, and the owner is unwilling that the deadly blow shall be struck, chloroform may be resorted to, but, as a general rule, we do not recommend its use where the normal amount of strength still remains.

CATTLE.

The skull of the ox is thicker and heavier than that of the horse, and the brain still smaller in

Fig. 3.



comparison with the entire head. The frontal bone is composed of two plates, which are separated by bony ridges, forming cells or sinuses. This arrangement (seen in Fig. 3, which represents a longitudinal section of the head) gives to the parts great strength, and forms a secure defence against injuries to the brain, which lies beneath.

Cattle are most readily and conveniently destroyed by blows on the head with a heavy axe or hammer, followed by immediate blood-letting. The animal which is to be killed should be secured by means of a rope passed round the horns and fastened to a post, or, if practicable, carried through a ring in a floor and held by an assistant or made fast. The animal being blindfolded, the operator, armed with a heavy axe or hammer, stands at the side and a little in front of it, and aims his blow at a spot in the middle of a line drawn across the forehead about one inch and a half below the base of the horns, or, perhaps better, at a spot where two diagonal lines intersect, drawn from the eyes to the base of the horns. (Fig. 4.)

In most cases, if the blow is heavy and properly directed, the animal falls instantly; but it is better even then to repeat the blow, and to follow it by immediate bleeding. This is accomplished either by drawing back the head, and cutting deeply across the neck at the upper portion of the wind-pipe, severing all the blood-

vessels, or by plunging a long and sharp-pointed knife into the heart and large blood-vessels at a point corresponding to the upper portion of

Fig 4.



sufficiently powerful, or that both of these faults were combined.

the brisket, and just above the breast-bone.

Failure to fell the animal at the first blow cannot be attributed to any difference in the anatomical structure of the part, but rather to the fact that the blow was ill-directed, almost invariably too low, that it was not

CALVES.

In the slaughtering of calves it is not a common practice with us, as it is with France and other countries, to render them insensible before bleeding, for fear that the brain may be made less inviting as an article of food by being torn and stained with blood. By using a broad mallet this may be in a great measure avoided, and even if these results do follow they do not in reality alter the quality of the brain for edible purposes. Objections to the humane destruction of an animal on such grounds are as unreasonable as those which are made to juicy and wholesome red veal by people who prefer that which has been rendered white, dry and innutritious by repeated bleedings, which have reduced the calf, before death to a lingering condition of faintness and debility.

The calf should first be stunned by a blow upon the head by a broad mallet or hammer, aimed at a spot relatively the same as in the full-grown animal. This is to be followed by immediate bleeding, by severing the throat at a point corresponding to the upper portion of the windpipe, using a sharp knife and doing the work thoroughly

and at once, so as to open all the arteries and veins of the neck.

SHEEP AND LAMBS.

Sheep and lambs should be rendered insensible by a blow upon the head, to be followed subsequently by severing the throat, as just advised in the case of calves, or by plunging a sharp-pointed knife through the blood-vessels at either side of the neck between the bones and the windpipe.

The place to be selected for a blow is the centre of a line drawn across the head about two inches above the eyes, the brain in the sheep occupying a situation posterior to what at first sight would appear to be the natural one.

SWINE.

There is an idea prevalent among farmers, and even among many of those who practise the slaughtering of swine as an avocation, that, if these animals are first rendered insensible by blows upon the head, it is impossible to empty the blood-vessels.

There is no foundation, however, for any such opinion. Any obstacles to bleeding are due, not to material differences in the anatomical arrangement of the blood-vessels, but solely to the difficulties attending the cutting through of the great mass of fat and flesh which characterizes the necks of swine in order to reach these vessels. This very difficulty is a reason why the animal should be rendered insensible before bleeding, not only on the score of humanity, but also on the score of avoiding the barbarous sights and sounds which so frequently disgrace our towns and villages.

In Europe generally, the swine are always first rendered insensible by being stunned. They should be made insensible by a blow upon the head, directed, not between the eyes, but upon a spot in the middle of a line drawn across the head three to four inches above the eyes. A long sharp knife should then be thrust deeply through the lower portion of the brisket, at a point just above the breast-bone, severing the large vessels leading from the heart. The point of the knife after it

has been thrust in should be swept about and made to cut more extensively in the deep parts than at the surface. This insures the thorough division of the blood-vessels, and the most rapid and effectual bleeding of the animal.

DOGS, CATS, ETC.

Small dogs, cats and other diminutive animals, particularly if sick or in any way disabled, are humanely destroyed by means of chloroform.

This substance should be administered by pouring from two to four tablespoonfuls of it on to a sponge or folded flannel, placed within a thick cloth or towel, and applied over the mouth and nostrils. If the struggling is severe at first, the administration of the chloroform may be made more gradual by removing the sponge or flannel for a moment altogether, and then reapplying it; and, as the animal becomes quiet, it should be kept on closely and constantly, to the entire exclusion of the outward air, adding fresh chloroform from time to time until death occurs. The length of the operation will depend upon the size and condition of the animal, and the persistence with which the administration has been kept up.

As a protection against the struggles of the animal to free itself, the body may be placed in a sack or bag, allowing the head to protrude. Or a blanket may be thrown over the body, by which it may be grasped, while the head is left free for the application of the sponge. Or the animal, together with the saturated sponge, may be placed in a small box and allowed to go quietly to rest.

The young of cats and dogs, when but a few days or hours old, may be humanely destroyed by drowning, if properly executed. This can be best accomplished by placing them in a tight bag containing a stone of sufficient weight to insure speedy sinking.

The quickest method of terminating the existence of a large dog is, undoubtedly, to shoot him. Place the muzzle of a pistol or rifle within a few inches of the head, at the side, just over and in front of the ear. If directed behind the ear, the ball is likely to glance and pass through the soft parts of

the neck, and death would neither be so certain nor so instantaneous as if the brain had been pierced.

In the attempt to destroy it, no animal should be merely maimed. For this reason, if a gun or a fowling-piece should be used, it should be charged with buck-shot, the side of the head aimed at, and sufficiently near to insure speedy death.

The same remarks apply to the destruction of cats. As this animal is smaller, however, death may be instantly effected by small shot fired from a gun at the head, sufficiently near to prevent the scattering of the charge.

POULTRY.

The remarks which we have already made as regards producing insensibility by a blow upon the brain may equally apply to poultry. The almost universal method of killing by chopping of the head of a fowl, and allowing the body to flutter about upon the ground, is not an agreeable sight, and has certainly a demoralizing effect upon those who witness it, especially upon the young and those who are not yet callous to such sights. The same may be said also of the practice of opening the blood-vessels in the necks of poultry, and allowing them to bleed to death more or less slowly. Therefore, to produce insensibility, make use of either of the following modes.

1. Grasp the bird by the legs, place its head upon a block, and strike it a smart, quick blow with a small club, or with some equally efficient weapon, and then immediately sever the head from the body by a sharp cleaver or hatchet. Retain the body in the hand until all fluttering has ceased.

2. Taking the bird up, compress the throat between the thumb and finger for a minute. Retaining the grasp, swing the body round several times, and then remove the head as just described. Hence insensibility is produced by suffocation and loss of motion by the twisting of the bones of the neck.

3. A very sharp blow, with a small but heavy stick, behind the neck, at about the second joint

from the head, will injure the spinal eord so as to destroy sensation and motion, if properly exeecuted; the head to be afterwards severed from the neck.

4. Hang up the bird by the legs, and thrust a long, narrow, sharp-pointed knife, like a penknife, into the brain through the back part of the roof of the mouth. Death is instantaneous. To do this considerable dexterity is required.

FISH.

It has been observed that fish which are instantly killed on being taken from the water are vastly superior, in taste and solidity, to those which are allowed to die, as is the universal eustom with us. And why should this not be the ease? Why should we make a distinetion in this respect between animals that swim and those that fly or run? No one of us would think of eating beast or bird that had died a natural death. Various modes of killing fish are praetised by different people. The Duteh, for example, destroy life by making a slight longitudinal ineision under the tail by means of a very sharp instrument.

On the Rhine they kill the salmon by thrusting a steel needle into their heads.

Fish may be easily destroyed by striking them a quiek, sharp blow with a small stiek on the baek of the head just behind the eyes, or by taking them by the tail and striking the head quiekly against any hard substance.

POISONS AND GASES.

We have made no remarks upon the destruction of animal life by means of deadly poisons, as such agents cannot, with safety, be plaeced in the hands of the unskilled. Neither have we spoken of the use of various gases as a means of humane destruction, such means not being at the disposal of the people generally.

OUR WORK.

To carry forward our work we have issued :—

- 850,000 copies of "Our Dumb Animals."
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These papers and documents have been sent to legislatures, public libraries, Christian associations, courts, police officers, city and town authorities, clergymen, teachers, authors, Sunday schools, colleges and to managers of railroads, drivers, butchers, &c., and to newspapers throughout the United States.

We have also sent—

- 1,000 copies of a valuable essay on Horse-shoeing to the blacksmiths of Massachusetts.

By addresses and otherwise, we have endeavored to induce clergymen to preach and teachers to inculcate the sentiments we advocate.

We have placed bound copies of our paper in leading hotels and steamboats.

We have distributed four hundred prizes to the scholars of Massachusetts for compositions on "Kindness to Animals."

Prizes have been awarded by us at two New England Agricultural Fairs, for improvements in bridles, bits, collars, whiffletrees, horseshoes, and for various other improvements in harness and other articles contributing to the comfort of animals.

Efforts have been made to lessen the suffering of animals on railroads by sending an agent over the various routes, and by visits to stock-yards, and by encouraging the introduction of compartment ears.

A national law has been secured in Congress for the same purpose.

Drinking-troughs have been erected, and a law secured to encourage their introduction throughout the State.

Check-rein signs have been erected at the foot of steep hills.

Hammers and hoods for killing horses mercifully have been provided for police stations in Boston and vicinity.

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29. Drivers and trainers of horses to try kindness.
30. Owners of animals to feed regularly.
31. People to protect insectivorous birds.
32. Boys not to molest birds' nests.
33. Men to take better care of stock.
34. Everybody not to sell their old family horses to owners of tip-carts.
35. People of other States to form societies.
36. Men to give money to forward the cause.
37. Ladies to interest themselves in the work.
38. People to appreciate the intelligence and virtues of animals.
39. And, generally, to make men, women and children better, because more humane.



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