

MEN AND ASSES.

"The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?" I Samuel 10:2.

The asses came home and the boy got lost. Saul had to enquire his way back home, but the asses found the way themselves. Stories are told of dogs that found the way back home after being carried across several states. We know that animals have a sense of direction that is denied man.

The ass was a very common beast of burden in Israel. The rich grain growing countries like Egypt and Assyria could afford horses. But food, especially bread grain, was too scarce in Israel for a big grain eater like the horse. An ass could pick his scant living where a horse would starve. He could live on fodder too coarse for a horse.

But the ass was no good in battle. He had too much sense. One can ride a horse onto the point of a spear or over a high precipice. But an ass stops when he sees danger. Therefore the Hebrew soldier usually fought on foot.

About all we know of asses in America is the use we have made of them in the breeding of mules. Men who have handled mules all their lives have a very high respect for the sagacity of mules. They attribute his smartness to his male ancestor.

Dr. George Stuart said a coal operator told him this remarkable story of a mule used in the mines: The mules were used to draw the cars of coal to the surface of the mine. When the car was emptied it was turned loose to run back into the mine by force of gravity. When the day's work was done the mules

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were turned loose to go to the surface of the mine alone.

One day some one turned a mule loose ahead of schedule and he met a car coming into the mine. The tunnel was too narrow for the mule to pass the car and the car going at high speed was heavy enough to crush the mule. He said the mule stood upon his hind legs and let the flat car slide <sup>under</sup> him and rode it back into the mine. Dr. Stuart said the owner took him out of the mine and put him on a pension. He said a mule that smart should not have to pull a coal car.

A story is told of some Kentucky pioneers who were saved by the sagacity of a mule. One evening they were about to strike camp when one of the mules showed signs of alarm. He would stand with his long neck and ears pointed toward the dark forest, then blow loud blasts with his nose. None of the horses or other stock showed alarm. But these men had a high respect for the mule's keen sight and hearing. They placed the wagons in a circle around the camp and doubled the guards. Sure enough, in the night, the Indians attacked. But the mule's timely warning saved them.

Another story is told of some placer miners at the foot of a high mountain who were warned by a mule's keen sense of danger. The mule refused to go back on the ground they were working. The horses showed no sign of alarm or panic. But the miners moved the other animals and machines when the mule turned back. They had hardly finished when the whole side of the mountain came down on the spot. Did the mule feel the ground tremble with his sensitive feet?

One newspaper writer says that mules refused to plow up the corn and cotton when the government was paying the farmers to plow up every third row of their crops. He says

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the horses would plow up the crops just like they would weeds, but the mules refused to do it, and they acted that way all around the country. This writer suggests that the mules had more sense than the law makers.

Man is inferior to many of the lower animals in sight and hearing, he is far behind them in natural instincts, he is inferior in physical strength and swiftness of movement. His superiority to all other creatures is his capacity for growth and improvement. No race of men has ever been found that did not have it; no other creature has ever been found that did. The cultural gap between man and all other creatures is as wide as the seven seas. The beaver is one of the most intelligent of animals. But the beaver has not learned one thing in thousands of years. If a dog learns to stand on his hind legs and bark for food, or to hold out his paw to shake hands, we think he is a very smart dog. What would we think of a man who could go no farther than that?

Did man evolve from some lower form of animal life? If he did, which one of the animals is his ancestor? One of the large apes is generally credited with the high honor. The only reason for his selection is the shape of his feet and skull. The cultural gap between the larger apes and man is just as wide as the gap between man<sup>and</sup> the ass. No ape has ever been taught to use the simplest tool as a tool, no ape has ever been taught to count, to read, to write or to talk. No species of apes has ever been known that had even the simplest tool of their own make.

If a pair of these animals leaped across the gap that separates man from the lower animals at one leap and became a man, such an act of nature was just as miraculous and "un-

scientific" as the simple story in Genesis: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul." Or the other account, just as simple: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

If man evolved from some of the larger apes gradually, where is the "missing link?" Why do not some of the apes today evolve into men? Why do we not find some creatures half man and half ape? If such a creature ever existed on this earth, he left but a dim trace of his existence. Even if such a creature did exist and disappeared in some mysterious manner, what would hinder the apes from producing another like it? Why could not man, with his present knowledge of the laws of breeding, produce a creature that could cross the cultural gap between the apes and man?

If man evolved from some lower form of animal life gradually, the completed act of creation was just as miraculous and "unscientific" as the simple story in Genesis. The theory of evolution of man from some lower form of animal life leaves as many questions unanswered as it answers. No matter how man was created, it was a divine and miraculous act of a living God and man is His child, kin to God as His very breath, the climax of all physical creation.