

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANE EDUCATION

As early as 1864, George T. Angell had the following clause written into his will: "I do therefore direct that all the remainder of my property not herein before disposed of shall, within two years after the decease of my mother or myself, or the survivor, be expended by my trustees in circulating in common schools, sabbath schools, or other schools, or other schools, in such manner as my trustees deem best, such books, tracts, or pamphlets as in their judgment will tend most to impress upon the minds of youth their duty toward those domestic animals which God may make dependent upon them." <sup>1</sup> Five years later the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, at Mr. Angell's instigation, organized a Women's Humane Education Committee, "the object being to carry humane education for the protection of men and beast into the schools of all countries." <sup>2</sup> While these pioneering steps appear at the beginning of the humane movement they were not indicative of a general interest in the educational approach of that early day. Some decades were to elapse before education was to be given the importance that it holds in the humane movement today. The humane societies were too preoccupied with their self-appointed task of arresting and punishing perpetrators of flagrant acts of cruelty to be able to devote their attention to other phases of humane work. It was only after humane agents again and again had heard the plea of ignorance brought forward in excuse of cruel acts that they came to the conclusion that more could be accomplished by going to the root of the evil and educating the guilty than could ever be achieved by threats of punishment. "It has been found that punishing a man by fine or imprisonment for cruelty to his animals accomplishes little in the way of reforming a man or relieving the animal of its pain or protecting it in the future, so long as the man has no conception of the rights of the animal or a belief in its capacity to suffer pain." <sup>3</sup>

The first form of humane education tried at all extensively by the societies was teaching those who owned or regularly used animals the proper care and handling of such animals. The societies issued cards of advice suitable for posting

1. Angell, George T., Autobiography, p. 7.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

3. Stillman, William, Humane Education, American Humane Association Leaflet.

and pamphlets with detailed instructions as to the best care of animals. These cards were widely circulated among animal owners. A sample of these early leaflets is one issued by the American Humane Association giving information to horse owners. Among the rules emphasized were:

“1. Always enter a stall from the left; speak to the horse before doing so.

“2. Water a horse at least three times a day; also feed hay and grain three times a day.

“3. Do not give water or grain when horse is overheated.

“4. Have your horse shod at least once a month. Do not allow the blacksmith to be abusive or pound the feet too hard.

“5. Sore backs and shoulders may be avoided by keeping inside of saddle and collar perfectly clean and by sponging off harness marks.”<sup>1</sup>

Often those leaflets contained not only information as to the care of the animal but also sought to explain to the owner that he as well as his horse benefited when his animal received good care. They showed that a well-fed, well-housed animal was more valuable, more useful, and could do more work than an animal which was undernourished and poorly sheltered.

It was a common practice also to include on these leaflets excerpts from the laws governing cruelty to animals. These passages lent emphasis to the leaflets by telling the owners what punishment to expect if he did not obey the instructions.

These educational efforts were at first haphazard. A humane agent investigated complaints of cruelty and at the same time would take with him instructional pamphlets and hand them out to persons guilty of cruelty along with verbal warning and advice. Educational leaflets were mailed to stable owners and to poultry raisers and shippers; enlarged cards giving all sorts of information were posted in prominent places.

The idea of distributing educational literature still is a popular one among humane societies. Every year hundreds of thousands of such leaflets are issued. These pamphlets deal with the housing, feeding and general care of all kinds of

1. The Horse; Suggestions on its Care, No. 213, American Humane Association Pamphlets.

domestic animals. Leaflets about special abuses, docking, cock fighting, rodeos, trapping, are also given out. The distribution of literature of this type directly to owners and custodians continues to be an important part of the humane educational program of most humane societies. The practice is based on the contention, as one writer puts it, that “in the long run, more can be accomplished by the prevention of cruelty by peaceful means than by waiting until an act of cruelty has been committed and then prosecuting and punishing by the imposition of a stiff fine or by imprisonment.”<sup>1</sup> Along with the distribution of literature some societies provide for the giving of instructional talks to animal owners and to workingmen who come into daily contact with animals. After the lectures reading material is given out and discussion of particular problems takes place.

A second important influence in instigating humane educational activity on the part of the societies was the need of reaching the public, of arousing their sympathy in and support of humane work. The success or failure of a society, as both Mr. Angell and Mr. Bergh were quick to realize, depends almost entirely upon the backing which the general public accords it. It was in the interests of the societies, therefore, to do all in their power to educate the public to a better understanding of their aims and activities. “Lectures, addresses, sermons, press appeals, and comment, exhibitions and special literature of every type were used as vehicles for informing the public and for stirring them to a more humane attitude and to a larger interest in humane work.”<sup>2</sup>

It was largely through this educational activity that the early organizations managed to survive. “I saw it was necessary to make an impression to bring the law before the public,”<sup>3</sup> said Mr. Bergh. It was because of this conviction that he often adopted spectacular methods in handling cases of cruelty. He carried on a regular newspaper campaign to keep his work constantly before the public eye. Later humane workers have found it expedient to follow his example. The larger and more active a society is, the more time is spent by its officers and workers in giving lectures before men’s and women’s clubs, in delivering radio talks, and in preparing interesting bits of news for newspaper publication. Everything possible is done to make the work outstanding; every individual is looked upon as a potential member,

1. Our Fourfooted Friends, Vol. 36, No. 4, p. 14.

2. McCrea, Roswell, The Humane Movement, p. 106.

3. Coleman, Sydney H., Humane Society Leaders in America, p. 40.

who if approached in the right way will lend his support.

In 1940 at the sixty-fourth convention of the American Humane Association Mr. Sydney Coleman reiterated this opinion. He said:

“The humane cause must galvanize public attention. Its work is news. The local press will gladly give it attention if given a chance. Through publicity new friends and supporters will be gained. Its literature and its annual reports need to be bright and readable.

“In recognition of this tact the association has given ‘The National Humane Review’ a new dress and is striving to make every piece of literature it publishes winsome and appealing. Its posters, the new calendar and its leaflets are part of such a scheme. They till a vital need and should be used. Our now well-established Be Kind to Animals week is but another medium to captivate public attention.”<sup>1</sup>

It is clearly the conviction of leaders in the movement that this promotional use or humane education is an essential one. Without it, it is probable that many societies would lose the interest and support of the public and their work would become ineffective.

Important as is the work carried on for the education of adults, that concerned with the education of children is of far greater significance. The teaching of humaneness to children is not by any means a new idea. In this field, also, Mr. Angell was a pioneer. Mr. Angell, in the years after the rounding of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, traveled up and down the country proclaiming the doctrine of kindness to animals and helping to organize new societies. “He realized that all their work was really outside and beyond that of the Massachusetts S. P. C. A. which was then his only incorporated organization. He felt the need of something different, something not limited to state boundaries, something that should deal not with prosecutions and the enforcement of laws, however necessary, but some sort of organization that should be national in its scope, that should deal with theories and principles, that, in short, should be so

1. “The American Humane Association Looks Ahead”, National Humane Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 10, p. 6.

set up as to reach practically everybody, everywhere. And so, with a master stroke, in March, 1889, Mr. Angell perfected the organization of, and secured from the Massachusetts Legislature the incorporation of, the American Humane Education Society, the first of its kind in the world. ....”<sup>1</sup> “As stated in its constitution, its primal purpose is to carry Humane Education, in all possible ways into American schools and homes.”<sup>2</sup>

The new society took upon itself many tasks. In its fifty years of existence it has published more humane literature than any other organization in this or other countries. Most of this literature is in the form of leaflets, usually averaging four pages, or of pamphlets of twelve to a hundred pages. They cover all aspects of the humane movement.

Supplementing all this humane literature are lantern slides and moving pictures especially prepared by the society for humane talks and lectures.

The organization also sponsors “Be Kind to Animals” essay and poster contests in the schools and prepares special programs for the celebration of Kindness to Animals Week. The forming of school clubs is also encouraged by the society which sends pins, merit badges, leaflets and the periodical Our Dumb Animals to such groups.

From the viewpoint of the whole humane movement, the most important activity of this society has been the steadfast assistance rendered in the organization of now humane educational institutions. Since its formation the society has sent field agents to every part of the United States whose duties are either to encourage existing humane societies to establish active humane education departments or committees, or to organize new societies whose aims shall be principally educational. Such an agent will stay for six months or a year if necessary in one particular city until the new work or organization has become well-established under their own guidance. The American Humane Education Society sends supplies to these organizations to help them in their work. This type of activity has been a large factor in the organization of humane education in the schools of America. At the present time the society has eleven agents scattered throughout the country.

1. Richardson, Guy, Fifty Years of Humane Education, p. 4.

2. Rowley, Francis H., A Great Prophecy, p. 1.

From 1900 on the most notable development in humane work was the realization of the importance of humane education. Scarcely an animal protective society exists which has not either added a humane education department or brought about the organization of an independent humane education society. Typical is the case of the Humane Society of St. Joseph and Buchanan County. In her report for 1941 Miss Marie French, secretary, said, "Extremes in cruelty are on the decrease because of Humane Education. The Society felt it was attacking the problem at the wrong end. They were entering the picture after the animal or child had been abused, that the evils were being curbed but not halted. So, the preventive method was launched in 1920.

"In promoting our Humane Education Program we have featured Essay Contests, Building for the Birds, Humane Poster Contests, (first in 1920) and our new feature added this year, a Diorama Contest." <sup>1</sup> This society is a small one having only two employees and taking both child and animal cases. It shows the importance attached to humane education that such a society should further tax its limited resources by the addition of educational activity, however inadequate.

In not a few cases when a humane education department has been set up as a supplementary activity, that department has developed into the major aspect of the work. The recognition of the importance of the educational phase of the humane movement has in some cases led to the formation of a separate society for the educational activity instead of merely a committee or department of the original society. Miss Elizabeth Olney, one of the founders of the Rhode Island Humane Education Society, gives the following account of that society's organization: "For several years before this Society was organized Miss Sarah J. Eddy who was then a member of the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals bore the expense of a humane education committee in that society, and furnished an acceptable speaker to go to the schools and address the pupils. Miss Eddy provided humane calendars and other literature. After a few years Miss Eddy was not able to continue the work and pay all the expenses. Believing the work to be a distinct department of humane endeavor, and that it should be in charge of a special board of directors, a proportion of which should be educators, and most especially that it should be brought to the attention of our citizens, not as a side issue of a

1. National Humane Review, Vol. XXIX, No. 8, p. 14.

prosecuting society, in order that it might be properly understood and supported, she secured the assistance of a little company which included among others ... Mr. Louis L. Angell, both a lawyer and humanitarian, and Mr. Howard O. Sturges.

“After much consideration it was decided to have the work incorporated under the name Rhode Island Humane Education Society.”<sup>1</sup>

Whether humane education can best be accomplished through the agency of an independent society created for that purpose or whether it can more advantageously be carried on by a well-established society versed in all aspects of humane work is still an unsettled question. In the case of the Rhode Island society it was felt that each society functions better if independent of the other. In other cases, like that of the Animal Rescue League of Boston, it is felt that it is an advantage to have the welfare and educational work in the one society. The teacher of humane education then has at his disposal practical illustrations of animal work. The hospitals and shelters can be used as points of departure for the teaching of the wider aspects of humane education.

It is interesting to note the development of the meaning of humane education. Originally, the term meant to most humane workers merely teaching the custodians of animals the advantages of better treatment. The appeal was made on grounds of practicality and common sense. Few men would be so foolish as intentionally to mistreat their animals if they were convinced that good care would result in better work and more profits.

Gradually the idea was expanded and it became recognized as a good policy to extend this education to the school children. It was thought that since ignorance was the largest factor in the mistreatment of animals, if children were early taught right methods of care, much cruelty would be prevented.

About the same time, the early 1900's, both educators and humane workers alike were arriving at the conviction that humane education held much greater values than the earlier conceptions had contemplated; that, indeed, it constituted an appropriate and essential part of general cultural and moral education. The conviction arose that the intelligent care of animals that might arise from the teachings was by no means the only result achieved nor the most significant. Far

1. Olney, Elizabeth, Letter to Members, p. 2.

more important, it was felt, was the influence of humane teaching on the character growth of the child in helping to develop such qualities of good citizenship as consideration for others, kindness, loyalty, and fairness in human relations as well as in dealing with animals. Under the drive of this new conception the societies redoubled their efforts in the interests of humane education. Attempts were made to have the teaching of this subject made compulsory in the public schools. Many prominent humane workers wrote vigorously in an endeavor to point out the advantages of such a step. "The time will come," said Dr. William O. Stillman, many years president of the American Humane Association, "when the state will recognize that a fence at the top of the precipice is better than an ambulance at the bottom, and that humane education will serve as such a fence when it is introduced into the public schools of the state. By educating the young in the direction of kindness, justice, and duty, the state will certainly improve the quality of its citizenship and eliminate a very large percentage of the lawlessness which makes prisons and reformatories necessary, and which increases so largely the cost of the maintenance of the government. This is no idle theory but a well-demonstrated fact." <sup>1</sup>.

Vast numbers of leaflets designed to assist in the teaching of humane education from this point of view were prepared and distributed. Normal schools were visited by lecturers who stressed the need of such a subject, and the advantages to be gotten from incorporating it in the program of teaching. These activities have been largely rewarded. Many states have passed laws providing that humane education shall be taught each week. Several teacher training schools have included it in their curricula. The representatives of numerous humane societies have been authorized by law to enter the schools and to deliver lectures on humane education.

As early as 1906, a special bulletin was issued by the State Normal School of San Diego, California, giving instructions and suggestions for an elementary course of study in humane education. Since the theory is still sound and serviceable, an extract follows: "The purpose of humane education is to contribute to the highest and most enduring happiness of the human race. The only right anything possesses

1. Thoughts on Humane Education, Reynolds, Harriet, ed., p. 26.



is the right to be useful. All living things must subserve some beneficial purpose or finally be eliminated in the process of evolution. The economic or utilitarian value of animals has been emphasized throughout the course.”<sup>1</sup>

As the concept of humane education broadened and developed there followed naturally many writings to analyse the aims of such education and to justify its claims. Dr. Rowley, as president of the American Humane Education Society, is vitally interested in this matter of the aims and values of humane education. He has written many pamphlets dealing with the different phases of the subject. What he has to say is indicative of the beliefs and attitudes held by most humane writers. The following are representative excerpts from his writings on the subject of humane education: “What is its object? To awaken and roster, above all in the heart of the child, the principles of justice and compassion toward all sentient life. At first particularly toward the world of animal life. And is this primarily for the sake of the animal? No. Primarily for the sake of the child. It is the reaction upon the character of the child of the principles of justice and compassion finding expression in conduct and life that is the fundamental thing in humane education. The child trained to treat the lowly creatures about him as he would like to be treated, fairly, kindly, grows into manhood governed in its relation toward his fellows in accordance with these same high ideals. It cannot be said too often that whatever humane societies have done for animals they have done vastly more for men, women and children by awakening in the soul the spirit of a great and noble humanity.”<sup>2</sup>

In a second pamphlet he states what he firmly believes to be the duty of every humane society: “To help the school and the home to become the wisest and most efficient forces in the child’s moral, spiritual, intellectual, economic, industrial, physical development to the end that it may become a helpful and co-operative member of the social order and a citizen strong to guard and maintain an enduring republic--this is the supreme goal not only of the parent and teacher but of the statesman and teacher of religion. And that is the purpose of the American Humane Education Society.”<sup>3</sup>

1. McCrea, Roswell, The Humane Movement, p. 210.

2. Rowley, Francis H., Humane Education the Vital Need, p.1.

3. Rowley, Francis H., Humane Education, pp. 7-8.