
INSTINCT IN ANIMALS.

Herbivorous animals evince an almost unerring instinct in avoiding poisonous plants, even those which, to the human palate, would fail to betray their noxious properties. Monkeys may nibble at an unknown fruit, but they generally pause to study the result of that test, and nearly always manage to arrive at a correct conclusion.

Such facts suggest a sagacity which seems to indicate the existence of a "sixth sense." The ordinary senses of our fellow-creatures, says the *Philadelphia Record*, may receive warnings from indications which we have not yet learned, or else have forgotten to heed. The Superintendent of the Meteorological Observatory at San Salvador noticed with surprise that both the beasts

and the agricultural Indians of the neighbouring mountains seemed to recognise the omens of an earthquake which he himself would have been unable to predict without the aid of his barometer.

"There will be a temblorito (a little shock) before long," the Indians would remark, in the matter-of-fact way with which a person might comment on the probability of a rain shower. "What makes you think so?" he would ask the prophets. "Is there anything unusual about the weather or the looks of the sky?" "Don't know," was the invariable reply, "but I have felt that way before every earthquake."

The weather, at such times, might appear clear and calm; perhaps even cooler than usual; but soon after sunset the predicted temblorito would rattle along the streets, and shake the loose rocks from the cliffs of a neighbouring quarry.

In the reign of the Emperor Justinian, the coasts of Western Asia were visited by a series of destructive earthquakes, and a few days before the first shock the citizens of Antioch are said to have received a warning of its coming in the sudden departure of a large flock of rooks that had long made their nests in the city walls. The credibility of that seeming miracle has often been questioned; but is it not possible that experience may have taught the birds to connect certain conditions of the atmosphere with the idea of an impending 'quake?

Capenter mentions the case of a wren that built her nest in the slate quarries of Penrhyn in a situation liable to great disturbance from the occasional explosions. She soon learned, however, to take warning by the sound of the bell, which was rung to give notice to the workmen whenever a blast was about to be fired, and would quit her nest and fly to a little distance, where she would remain until the shock of the explosion had passed off.

Storms, too, are thus evidently anticipated by various species of animals and birds, and it is by no means inconceivable that even their supposed ability to forecast the approach of mild or severe winters may be in some measure a fact.—[*Indian Field.*]