

## SHOULD BOYS BE ABOLISHED?

### Interview With the Caterpillar

#### A TALK WHILE HE TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF

By Our Correspondent in Wonderland

"You mustn't disturb me," said the Caterpillar, laying down its hookah. "Why not?" I inquired. "Because," it replied, "I am just getting used to the new leaf I turned over; it takes time to become accustomed to a change so topsy-turvical."

"Do you always turn over a new leaf at this time of the year?" I asked, getting out my camp-stool, sitting down, and taking out my tobacco pouch.

"What's that?" asked the Caterpillar, nodding towards the pouch.

"Baccy," I replied.

"Pray sit down," said the Caterpillar, beaming all over its face.

I explained that I was already seated.

"And make yourself quite comfortable," it added very suavely.

"You are more than kind," I said.

"I think you told me that your pouch contained tobacco?" remarked the Caterpillar, after a pause.

"I did."

"I can now smell it," said the Caterpillar; "the aroma is delicious. I am *revelling* in the smell. Thank you."

"Not at all," I answered, "I am only too pleased to oblige you."

"Ah," sighed the Caterpillar, looking sorrowfully into its empty hookah, "anybody could tell by the *bee-oo-tiful* aroma that the new leaf of your tobacco was turned over by a good, gentle, unselfish, *generous* spirit."

It was unkind to keep the creature any longer in suspense. I turned the new tobacco leaf over to the Caterpillar.

"Ah," it cried, puffing with a very affectionate deliberation, "if only all the bad people in the world would turn over a new leaf, how happy life would be for the rest of us! I was thinking yesterday that perhaps something might be done by turning over a new leaf in my poetry book and composing an entirely new lyric on the question of Boys—the terrible and tragical question which is now afflicting the world."

"Why *now* more than any other time?" I asked.

"It is the unhappy season of holidays through which we have passed," replied the Caterpillar. "I will read you what I wrote."

Here the creature opened its notebook, drew down its spectacles, and,

"You are old, Father Wilhelm," the young man said;

"In fact, Dad, you're antediluvian; And yet you are ready to bite off my head, While your bark, it is simply Peruvian."

"Ha, ha!" Father Willie replied to his son,

And laughed till he creaked like a flunkey. "And wouldn't you like just to know how it's done?"

You talkative, ginger-haired monkey!"

"O PAPA, dear Papa," begged the son, with a sob

Which was heard by the people in Swahage;

"I am hungry and cold, and I can't get a job,

Pray tell me the tale of your nonage."

"MY son," said Ole Bill, "I won't grant your request

Till you've turned a new leaf in your squalor;

Meantime, I observe stains of egg on your breast,

And a sad lot of dirt on your collar."

"DAD! Dad!" cried the boy, in a flood of black tears,

"O, forgive those small faults, I importune,

And tell me how you, in your earliest years,

Found the road to your present good fortune!"

OLE Bill left his chair, and went off like a gun,

Or a submarine crossing the Channel, And after two minutes returned to his son

With a toothbrush, a sponge, and a flannel.

"That's all," said the Caterpillar, slipping the mouthpiece of the hookah between its lips. The way in which it looked up to the sky was very touching.

I waited a moment, and then remarked: "You evidently attach considerable importance to cleanliness."

"It's *allemorical*," said the Caterpillar.

"And what is *allemorical*?" I asked.

"There is more than one scrubbing-brush," replied the Caterpillar, "and more than one soap. My poem is *allemorical*. That is to say, it is an allegory with a moral."

I smoked in silence for five minutes.

"Perhaps you will allow me," said the Caterpillar, taking up its notebook

and laying down its hookah, "to turn over a new leaf. The poem I will now read carries my theory a step farther."

"I am all ears," I answered:

The creature heaved a great sigh, and, once more adjusting its spectacles, read to me the effusion which follows.

IF I had a son,

Before he could run

I'd rinse him and scrape him and

souse him and tub him;

In fact, I would currycomb, vacuum-

clean, and scr-r-r-rub him,

Both body and mind,

With every conceivable kind

Of soap,

Giving him no rope.

But, to save him from fears, sobs,

groans, sighs, and blushes,

I should employ for my soap the

hereinafter mentioned brushes:

The scrubbing-brush for cleaning

muddy floors and grimy stairs,

The ordinary scrubbing-brush com-

posed of wood and hairs,

I'd scrub the brat with that:

The scrubbing-brush of learning which

the teacher must employ

To rasp away thickheadedness from

every human boy,

I'd scrub the pet with that:

The scrubbing-brush of manners,

which must polish day and night,

To make the least offensive boy even

a scrap polite,

I'd scrub my love with that:

BUT the scrubbing-brush of goodness

which alone can shift the stains

Of something worse than egg or jam

from little heathen brains,

I'd scrub my lamb with that:

I would scrub him, rub him, tub him,

In the fond and foolish hope

That perhaps my toil might snub him,

With the aid of endless soap,

Into something less repulsive, less

more certain to annoy,

Than a careless, selfish, greedy, sulk-

ing, slouching human boy,

Than a moth-collecting, caterpillar-

hunting fiendish boy.

The last line seemed to suggest to me

the true reason of the Caterpillar's un-

mistakable aversion to boys.

"I suppose," said I, "that you

would look more kindly on the species

if they took no notice of you!"

I laughed at my wit, but alone. The

world did *not* laugh with me.

The Caterpillar's voice died away, a

tear rolled out of its eye, a sigh shook

it from stern to stern, and it groaned.

## WILD HORSE IN TOWN

### The Fox that Changes Its Coat

#### BATCH OF QUAIN ARRIVALS AT THE ZOO

By Our Zoological Correspondent

London Zoo

An interesting addition to the Zoo is a Mongolian wild horse. This kind of animal was first discovered in 1879, when a single individual was obtained by the late Colonel Prejevalski from Mongolia.

As is generally the case when anything unusual is brought to light, there were plenty of people who were inclined to scoff at the idea of a true wild horse still surviving, suggesting that the animal was merely the descendant of domestic horses that had run wild.

For a number of years nothing more was heard of these horses, but others were obtained in time, some being brought to Paris. Zoologists quickly made the most of the opportunity of inspecting the new arrivals, with the result that they were unanimous in proclaiming the animal a true wild species.

The first wild horses seen in England were twelve colts purchased by the Duke of Bedford in 1901. In appearance these creatures are not unlike Shetland ponies. They are small in stature, somewhat heavily built, have small ears, and their mane is bushy and upstanding.

#### CHANGING THEIR COATS

The arrival of two Arctic foxes fills a long-felt gap, as none have been seen at the Zoo for a considerable time.

These animals are unlike any other fox, their ears being shorter and rounder, and their muzzles less pointed. The soles of their feet are clothed with a covering of woolly hair, which prevents them from slipping about on the ice.

They are further remarkable because they change the colour of their coats. During the summer the fur is usually of a smoky-brown tint, but as winter approaches each hair turns white from the tip to the base, until the animal is eventually clad in a pure white coat.

This change, however, does not always take place, for in more southern parts the animals sometimes remain the same colour throughout the year.

#### HE LOVES THE CROCODILE'S EGGS

Among the new reptiles is a Nile monitor. These creatures are the largest of all lizards, some being twenty feet.

They possess a long tail, a long neck, and a tongue that is forked at the tip and can be withdrawn into a sheath at the base, like that of a serpent.

They are very active, and climb up trees in search of birds' eggs. The Nile monitor is fond of the crocodile's eggs.

#### A BATCH OF VISITORS FROM INDIA

An important collection of Indian animals, including four leopards, two hyenas, an axis deer, a sambar deer, a jungle cat, two muntjacs, a leopard cat, two blackbuck, a nyloghaie, and a number of birds, have been creating much interest of late.

The axis deer is known also as the spotted deer. It is a very beautiful creature, the pure white marks on its body showing up in brilliant relief against its bright chestnut coat. Unlike the majority of deer, which have a spotted coat only when young, this one retains the marks throughout its life.

The sambar is a far less graceful creature, with a dark-brown coat. But it is exceptionally interesting, for the stags, instead of shedding their horns annually, as most deer do, frequently retain their antlers for several years.

The species has been introduced into New Zealand, where it is thriving well.

## THE WEEK IN HISTORY

### MAN WHO WORKED FOR HAPPINESS

#### Hero on the Wrong Side

#### THE GREATEST MEAN MAN

Jan. 18. German Empire proclaimed, Versailles, 1871  
19. James Watt born at Greenock . . . . . 1736  
20. John Howard died at Kherson, Russia . . 1790  
21. Stonewall Jackson born at Clarksburg . . 1824  
22. Francis Bacon born in London . . . . . 1561  
23. Charles Kingsley died at Eversley . . . . 1875  
24. Frederick the Great born at Berlin . . . 1712

#### John Howard

JOHN HOWARD was a plain, earnest man who, in the opinion of the whole world, stands high among reformers seeking to check the cruelty of men, and so promote happiness. He lived and died working to alter the dark and bitter wrongs of the prison system.

Howard was born in London in 1726, the son of a tradesman who left him with independent means, and from his youth he travelled widely. In his thirtieth year, while voyaging to Portugal, he was captured by a French ship and imprisoned at Brest, and what he endured there caused him to devote himself to relieving prisoners everywhere.

His visits to prisons took him all over the British Islands and the greater part of Europe, gathering information and trying to move the hearts of men so that they might alter the terrible conditions under which prisoners lived, pinched by poverty and decimated by disease. While engaged in this merciful work he caught prison fever and died from it at Kherson, in Russia, where a monument stands honouring his memory.

#### Stonewall Jackson

GENERAL Thomas Jonathan Jackson, known best by his nickname "Stonewall," was an American soldier who fought in the great American Civil War on the wrong side, but was so good and staunch that all men, even those he opposed, regarded him with respect.

He was born in the slave State of Virginia, and was trained for the army. His service in the Mexican wars singled him out for generalship when the Civil War on the slavery question began, and he fought with a stubborn courage that won him the name Stonewall.

He had always been kind and helpful to the slaves of his native State, and they rallied round him though he was commanding against the cause of freedom. His statue in Richmond was erected by a negro congregation.

At the close of a terrible battle in which he had been victorious, he was shot by mistake at dusk by his own men.

As a brave man of deep piety and sincerity, Stonewall Jackson was lamented universally, though his early associations led him to fight on the wrong side.

#### Francis Bacon

FRANCIS BACON, commonly but not correctly called Lord Bacon, was a London man, descended from a family of distinction, who became Lord Chancellor by a clever and unscrupulous use of great abilities, and then, when he had gained his ambition, was charged with taking bribes while acting as a judge.

The charge was true, and Bacon was fined, removed, and disgraced. His learning and gifts of mind, associated with weakness of moral character, make him one of the saddest figures in our history.

For Bacon was far more than a clever lawyer. His Essays rank among the masterpieces of English prose. His sketch of The Advancement of Learning, and his unfinished books, in which he aimed at surveying all human knowledge, mark him as a true philosopher, and one of the founders of modern science, who taught men how to think afresh unhampered by the worn-out fashions of the past. But he failed to be a great man, though he was a fine thinker. He had not enough character to keep him upright, and so drooped—a broken reed. He has been called the greatest, wisest, and meanest of men.