

THE DIARY --THE ARRIVAL OF CAIN

A Humorous Reading

by
Mark Twain



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From "The Diary of Adam."

Next year.--We have named it Cain. She caught it while I was up country trapping; caught it in the timber a couple of miles from our dugout--or it might have been four she isn't certain which. It resembles us in some ways, and may be a relation. That is what she thinks, but this is an error in my judgment. The difference in size warrants the conclusion that it is a different and new kind of animal--a fish, perhaps, though when I put it in the water to see, it sank, and she plunged in and snatched it out before there was opportunity for the experiment to determine the matter. I still think it is a fish, but she is indifferent about what it is, and will not let me have it to try. I do not understand this. The coming of the creature seems to have changed her whole nature and made her unreasonable about experiments. She thinks more of it than she does of any of the other animals, but is not able to explain why. Her mind is disordered--everything shows it. Sometimes she carries it in her arms half the night when it complains. At such times the water comes out of the places in her face that she looks out of, and she pats the fish on the back and makes soft sounds with her mouth to soothe it, and betrays sorrow and solicitude in a hundred ways. I have never seen her do like this with any other fish, and it troubles me greatly. She used to carry the young tigers around so, and play with them, but she never took on about them like this when their dinner disagreed with them.

Sunday.--She doesn't work, Sundays, but lies around all tired out, and likes to have the fish wallow over her; and she makes fool noises to amuse it, and pretends to chew its paws, and that makes it laugh. This makes me doubt. I have come to like Sunday myself. Superintending all the week tires a body so. There ought to be more Sundays. In the old days they were tough, but now they come handy.

Wednesday.--It isn't a fish. I cannot quite make out what it is. It makes curious, unpleasant noises when not satisfied, and says "goo-goo" when it is. It is not one of us, for it doesn't walk; it is not a bird, for it doesn't fly; it is not a frog, for it doesn't hop; it is not a snake, for it doesn't crawl. It merely lies around, and mostly on its back, with its feet up. I have not seen any other animal do that before. I said I believed it was an enigma; but she only admired the word without understanding it. In my judgment it is either an enigma or some kind of a bug. If it dies, I will take it apart and see what its arrangements are. I never had a thing perplex me so!

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