





KATHERINE
HAMMERSLEY
• COLLINS •

THE WISDOM OF THE BEASTS

THE WISDOM OF THE BEASTS

BY

CHARLES AUGUSTUS STRONG



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

1922

THE WISDOM
OF THE HEAVENS

SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY COPIES PRINTED FOR
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY R. & R. CLARK
LIMITED OF EDINBURGH



THE WISDOM
OF THE HEAVENS

Preface

As I have been accused of an over-use of technical terms in my serious books, and of sacrificing the style to the idea—a grave defect, I admit, in a philosopher—I have endeavoured in these fables to say the same thing in words that he who runs, or travels by train or motor, may read. If, in addition, he should mark and inwardly digest, I trust he will suffer no harm from my stories, and, indeed, think no harm of them. The Wisdom of the Beasts will not seem a pretentious title, if the nature and limitations of their wisdom, as here set forth, be considered. Some of the beasts turn out wiser than others, but so do some men and even some philosophers. They

The Wisdom of the Beasts

are all God's creatures. And I shall be satisfied if the reader, who may fancy the views of some particular beast, or (if a philosopher) perchance find himself here depicted, sees his way, in the end, to include the author too in that category.

Contents

	PAGE
THE TOP AND THE BEE	1
THE BIRD AND THE FISH	7
ACHILLES AND THE TORTOISE	15
THE EAGLE AND THE BULLET	23
THE TRUTH-SEEKERS	31
THE BEE AND THE WASP	39
THE APE AND THE DOG	47
THE LAMB AND ITS MOTHER	55
THE MOLE AND THE LARK	61
THE STOIC AND THE CHRISTIAN MARTYR	69

*Calumniari si quis autem voluerit
Quod et arbores loquantur, non tantum ferae :
Fictis jocari nos meminerit fabulis.*

The Top and the Bee

I

B

The Top and the Bee

THERE was once a top, with a round body ending below in a point, but — unlike most tops — a head on its shoulders. And as it spun, an idea came into its head. How do I know it is I that am spinning, and not rather the world that is whirling about me? And, as it was still spinning very fast, it hummed this idea aloud.

At the amazing suggestion, the choir of heaven and furniture of earth stood perfectly still, but only for an instant; for they had other things to do, and could not afford the time for reasoning. But a bee, who had been attracted by the humming (and, indeed, had at first thought the top a member of its own species), but who was revolted when it caught the sense underneath the sound,