

- 6 when I finished I had ¶ to drive him away again. By the next Sunday I had almost forgotten about the incident, when, just as we were in the midst of the second hymn, I suddenly heard a screaming and screeching among the female members of the choir as if some one was scalping them all at once. I looked up just in time to see my friend the snake disappearing with
- 7 a shower of hymn-books and stools hurled by the male members of the ¶ choir flying after him. However, he escaped and I said nothing about my previous acquaintance with the reptile. You may imagine that it broke up the service for awhile, but finally everything quieted down and went on as usual. After that the snake came again for many weeks every time I practised, but it seems that he had become convinced that it was dangerous when others were
- 8 present, so he never again entered the church during service, though doubtless he ¶ was listening at a safe point outside.
- “Soon afterward members of the Church reported that they had heard mysterious breathings of the organ at night in passing the church, and inquired whether I was practising. I assured them that I was not. This occurred several times, and as it could not be satisfactorily explained it aroused a deal of comment, and some of the more superstitious began to whisper
- 9 that the church was haunted, and that the spirit of a ¶ former organist was at the bottom of it. As the mystery was beginning to tell on the nerves of the neighbourhood, as well as on my own, I determined to ferret it out. The music would generally sound as if some one were touching the keys with one finger, although sometimes a number of keys would be depressed simultaneously; but whenever I entered the church I found no one there. The organ would
- 10 be open, though I had left it closed.” ¶

(c.) At the rate of 100 words a minute. Takes 5 minutes.

- Do animals commit suicide? is a question which in its very terms is at once curious and interesting. I am led towards this topic by the appearance in the newspapers of a paragraph which announced the suicide of a dog. The animal is alleged to have held its head under water till it perished, but of the supposed reason for the “rash act” we are left in ignorance. If the dog committed suicide he chose a mode of departing this life which is in tolerably high favour with people who are tired of existence. The whole question which the
- 1 newspaper ¶ paragraph raises is of deep scientific interest. Let me begin by remarking that we have first of all to be careful in our reading of accounts of such incidents. There may be no intent to exaggerate or misinform, but the interpretation of the affair may be erroneous, apart from actual intention to mislead altogether. I can fancy a dog anxious to recover something from the water groping about with his head below the surface, and succumbing in his determination not to leave the object he is seeking. He perishes in such
- 2 a case by misadventure, but it might be reported ¶ as one of suicide. I do not offer this theory as an explanation of any case in which a dog has been drowned; I merely suggest it as an alternative supposition worth examination, and serving as a foil to some of the wonderful stories of dogs we read now and then. My greater difficulty in the way of belief that animals may and do commit suicide is founded on the contention that the idea of self-destruction implies a much higher order of intellect than we can possibly give any animal lower than man the credit for possessing.
- 3 The motives ¶ which impel man to self-destruction are often highly complex. You may run through the whole gamut of human emotions and passions, from jealousy to despair, and from grief to insanity, without exhausting the causes that lead to suicide. But they are all complex things. Even if it is a fit of ungovernable temper and rage that sends a man to the water, or to poison, that rage has been evolved by circumstances which his brain has had to cope with, unsuccessfully, of course. The mere act of suicide is really the end of a complicated series of brain-acts, ¶ thoughts, impulses, call them what you will; and I contend you do not find adequate provision made for the operation of such causes in the so-called suicide of animals. Still, the topic is a very ancient one. I should at once eliminate from cases of suicide in animals those in which, for example, a dog pines away after the death of its master. That is not suicide at all, and yet I find numerous cases of this kind recorded as acts of self-
- 4 destruction. The dog dies of grief. He would eat but he cannot, and therefore pines away. ¶

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