

11 Plain Speaking

At Birtwick, the sense of pride and happiness within Black Beauty only grew with time, owing largely to the respect and love the master and mistress commanded among all living beings, not just humans. Their kindness extended to animals of all sorts, ensuring no creature suffered under their watch. Notably, their influence inspired a culture of compassion, leading to a significant reduction in the use of check-reins on cart horses within their community, a cause the mistress actively advocated against through gentle persuasion.

The story delves into the mistress's unmatched efficacy in advocating for the welfare of animals, a sentiment echoed by our narrator who wishes all individuals shared her empathy. A particular incident involving a man named Sawyer and his rough treatment of a bay pony highlights the master's firm yet reasoned stance on animal cruelty. Witnessing Sawyer's harsh disciplining of the pony, the master confronts him, emphasizing the importance of treating animals with respect and cautioning him about the moral implications of his actions.

Further, an encounter with Captain Langley showcases a polite yet candid critique of the use of check-reins, drawing a parallel to military discipline misplaced in the treatment of horses. This conversation subtly underscores the master's commitment to animal welfare and his willingness to address such issues regardless of the social standing of his interlocutor.

Through these vignettes, the chapter not only accentuates the moral fiber of the main human characters but also serves as a critique of common practices deemed cruel towards animals. The narrative, rich in moral conviction, seamlessly blends advocacy for animal rights with a reflection on human character and ethics.