

CLEVER COCKATOOS.

At a Dress Rehearsal of the Best Trained Troop of Birds in the World.

BY A. N. BENJAMIN.

There is in this country at present a remarkable traveling stock company, composed of natives of Australia, under the active management of Miss Irma Orbanasy, a Hungarian. The troupe consists of fifteen members, the "star" is named "Juno,"—in this case the name is applied to one of the sterner sex—he is well supported by the minor stars, "August," "Hamlet," "Othello," and "Abdullah," while "Mollie" and "Sonia" are the leading women. To the world at large they are merely a group of wondrously trained sulphur-crested white cockatoos of a common variety; to Miss Orbanasy, and to any one who is favored with a close acquaintance with them, they are individuals possessed of a most distinct personality.

A Cockatoo Dress Rehearsal. As soon as we entered the property room the performance began. Two of the birds were ordered to the other end of their little stage and then turned somersaults on their backs down the length of it. Next comes wonderful acrobatic feats on the cross bars, such as hanging head downward and swinging from one to the other. Occasionally they helped matters along by a flutter of their wings.

Miss Orbanasy stuck eight metal letters

up the bit himself. Then there was a little push cart. August stood behind ready to push it and Sonia was ordered down to the other end, where it stood, to take her place upon the seat. They usually ran as fast as they could to do what they were bid, but this time Sonia approached the push cart very slowly and as she neared it the little thing went slower still; suddenly she turned around and turned back in the most abject terror.

"Why does she do that?" I asked. "She is scared to death of August," Miss Orbanasy replied, and ordered the frightened little creature back again, Sonia repeated her first performance—ventured into the jaws of death, as it seemed to her, and fled before they had closed upon her, but the third time she did actually mount the carriage and, perched on the very farthest edge, she trembled visibly as August trundled her into port.

Two of them marched like soldiers from the guard house and then a cannon was brought out. A number of the little birds stood about while one big one pulled a string and set it off and another big one fell dead on its back. An ambulance was immediately called, the seemingly lifeless corpse put inside (I could see him peering



THE STOCK COMPANY AND MANAGER.

along the side of the board supposed to be facing the audience. At the regular performance letters to be chosen or words to be spelled are called out; one of the birds ran along behind the row of letters keeping its eye on Miss Orbanasy's stick, when that was raised a little bit, it picked up the letter that was nearest. To associate the movements of the stick, some distance away, with the letter requires more than animal instinct. After several had done this trick "Juno" skipped down and picked up all the letters, holding them in his beak at the same time, and laid them in a pile. I was as much diverted by the birds who were not performing as by those who were. They were like a parcel of school children. When Miss Orbanasy looked in their direction they were quiet as mice and wore a positively sanctimonious air, but the instant her back was turned they began to squabble and fight until one overcame with emotion, would give a little angry scream which caused Miss Orbanasy to turn round, bang her wand on the table to enforce quiet and give them all a good reprimand.

Finally one very bad one had to be put in his cage as an awful example to the others, who appeared to be deeply impressed but when presently the culprit squeezed himself out between the wires and triumphantly joined his boon companions there was a good deal of excitement and several spats took place on the spur of the moment.

Teaching the Birds. "How long does it take for them to learn a trick?" I asked. "They are just like people; some they learn quick and others slow. The shortest time, it is about six months, and one of them I have been teaching a trick for two years and he does not know it yet. But he will, oh yes."

"They are intelligent, but they do not reason, they are like children. I can make them do what I tell them, but they do not understand why, except Juno. When he rides the velocipede he knows that if he puts his claw against the bar that he works with his beak, and holds it still, the velocipede will stop, and there are several other things that he has found out for himself. Once he had a hard piece of bread and he dropped it in his water when, of course, it became soft and he ate it and was much pleased, so he thought that everything else which he put in the water would grow soft, so that he could eat it, too, so he picked up a pebble and put that in and pushed it round with his beak, and when it wouldn't get soft, that bird, he was so mad! Then he put in a bigger one and when that would not get soft he flew around in a great rage—he ruffled up his feathers and his crest, he was so fussy."

August, The Terrible. When a fresh act was to be rehearsed all were eager to be in it—for Miss Orbanasy trains a number of them to the same trick—and came running down the little stage till she called again, very sternly, the names of those she wished and sent the others back. One of them dragged a berouche in which three of the little ones rode, one driving. The horse stepped into the traces and picked

through a hole in the front) and driven to the imaginary hospital, all the little birds tearing along behind to represent the way the small boys in the street chase real ambulances. The idea was perfectly carried out.

Miss Orbanasy is the pioneer in cockatoo training, and the secret of her great success is that she loves the birds and they know it. She doctors them like a mother when they are ill, knows all their little characteristics and pets them, wheedles them and talks to them till she develops the really wonderful degree of intelligence latent in their small brains.

A YOUNG MAIL CARRIER.

Only Seven Years Old, but Full of Business. Andalusia, Bucks county, Pennsylvania, has a modern boy wonder. His name is Albert Francis Hoffmeyer King, he is 7 years old, a real letter carrier, and so fond of work that he declines to eat his breakfast



ALBERT H. KING.

until he has seen his mail safely to the postoffice. Every morning at 5 o'clock the youngster climbs out of his comfortable bed and trudges down to the postoffice, a little one, not far from his home. The postoffice is called Lower Andalusia. It is quite a tramp—more than a mile—and the route, Uncle Sam has decreed, must be traversed five times every day, beginning with the early morning trip referred to. It makes no difference whether it is sunshine or storm, the little fellow trudges manfully over his "route," as he calls it, on schedule time, and has never during the

year he has acted as mail carrier missed a single mail or in any way caused a letter to be delayed, something very many grown up people in the government postal service cannot truthfully say. Indeed, so notable has this little boy's trustworthiness become that the government officials at Washington have heard of it, and the little carrier at Andalusia is something of a juvenile marvel. In big round handwriting Albert has written a very boyish letter telling what he does. It is not very long, but greatly to the point. This is what he says:

"I carry the mail alone, a mile, to the postoffice, five times a day, and I go to school every day there is school, and I do not miss many days of school here, I tell you. I carry the mail so I can earn some money, for I shall need it when I grow up. I am 7 years old, but I feel a great deal older, because I have what papa calls responsibility. I carry the New York mail at 10 o'clock, I take the morning mail to the postoffice at half past 6 o'clock. At 1 o'clock I take the mail to the postoffice again. At 4 o'clock I make another trip, and at 5 another. "I was born on the 6th of April, 1890, on Easter morning. I was baptized in the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer. I remain yours truly,

"ALBERT FRANCIS HOFFMEYER KING." In connection with the boy's work and his interesting letter, it is worthy of note that his teachers say he stands very high in his studies, that he is, if anything, brighter and fresher, so far as his mentality is concerned, than the boys who have no tasks to interfere with their studies, and that he is as well stocked with ambition as most boys who boast of twice his years.

PRATTLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

Willie—Mamma, didn't everybody at church last Sunday pray "Give us this day our daily bread?" His Mother—Yes, dear. Why? Willie—Cause I had to pay 6 cents for this loaf.

"Oh, mamma," exclaimed 4-year-old Harry, as puss, with arched spine and elevated tail, strutted around the dining room table, "see, kitty's eat so much that she can't pull her tail down."

"Papa," asked 5-year-old Bobbie, "how long will it be till you quit growing?" "Why, Bobbie, I quit growing years ago," was the reply.

"Well," continued the observing youngster, "I thought you were getting taller, as your head's going right up through your hair."

Little Elsie had been told that she, as all others, was made from the dust of the ground. One day while out walking with her mother the wind blew the dust around them in great clouds and she exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, there's enough dust wasted to make a whole stowd of people."

"I have a piece of China in the house over 200 years old," proudly announced the woman visitor. "Then you must do your own work," quickly replied the bright little girl of the family, "for mamma says she'll be blown if she can find a girl that won't smash a whole set of china every six months."

The little daughter of a Buffalo policeman not long ago sent to Captain Robby D. Evans a pennant for the Iowa and received this letter in reply: "My Dear Friend Alberta: The pennant has arrived and I can only say it is a beauty. We will host it when we meet the Spanish ships. Thanking you for your trouble, I am yours very sincerely, R. D. Evans."

A little girl in a Pontiac (Mich.) Sunday school thus told the story of Solomon and the disputing mothers: "Solomon was a very wise man. One day two women went to him, quarrelling about a baby. One woman said, 'This and that is mine,' and the other woman said, 'No, 'tain't; it's mine.' But Solomon spoke up and said, 'No, no, ladies; don't quarrel. Give me my sword and I'll make twins of him, so you can both have one.'"

DOROTHY DIMPLE.

New York Herald. Dorothy Dimple must learn to sew. For Dorothy Dimple, you know, is a lady of six, with doll-like features. A first rate workwoman ought to be:— "I can't sew, dear, my dear, my dear. Will you teach me, please?"

Dorothy Dimple, so gay and sweet. Possesses a work-box all complete; A silver thimble that fits in a shoe. Needle, and cotton, and thread, and a bar full of buttons of every size. And a nice little packet of hooks and eyes.

Dorothy Dimple begins to sew. Hobbly-dobbly, to and fro. She looked so sure, she said why The stitches persist in going awry. Nor why her fingers have suddenly grown As awkward as bits of sticks or stone.

Dorothy Dimple is sure that she And that freestone needle will never agree; For little work-box she, losing heart, At sight of those stitches so far apart; The cotton has got loose, and she says She is tired of sewing, and oh! so hot!

Dorothy Dimple, if you but try, Work will come easier by and by; Remember, dear, that a mother of three A first rate workwoman ought to be. Then try with a will, and soon I know Dorothy Dimple will learn to sew.

SOME LATE INVENTIONS.

A combined chair, crib, cradle, bed and walker for children has been designed by a western inventor, a simple being provided with legs on casters, with a chair suspended from swinging arms to be adjusted in any position to form the cradle or bed.

An improved method of attaching shades to the roller is composed of a groove cut in the face of the roller, with its bottom wider than the top, to receive a flat metal bar, which is forced in after the cloth is in place to wedge it fast.

To prevent wear of the edges of books from sliding over shelves a number of metal rollers are set in a frame and covered with rubber to turn as the books are pushed back on the shelves, or an endless roller may be carried by two rollers, the same purpose.

Tools for cyclists use are placed in a handy position for use by a new holder, which is formed of a box divided into two sections and hinged to a central frame attached to a wheel, the opposite sides of the box dropping in a horizontal position to form a tray to hold the tools.

Self-opening and closing umbrellas are being made in Germany, the handle and flocks being formed of three telescoping tubes, with a coiled spring in the upper portion of the stick, which is set after the umbrella is open or closed in order to reverse the movement by touching a button in the handle.

Stair carpet can be securely fastened without breaking the fabric by using a newly-designed bracket which is formed of a metal bar having one end permanently attached to its center, with the upper end of the latter to be inserted under the edge of the stair above, to lock the bar in a vertical position against the stair riser.

A new hand and arm rest has been invented for meeting the general requirements of bookkeepers and particularly the want felt when writing at the bottom of the page, when support for the arm is essential to steady formation of the characters. The new rest is a departure from those now in use and will not warp, twist or split. It will, in fact, last a lifetime.

Fires can be kindled automatically by a new apparatus, which consists of a lamp, to be placed under the firebox and carrying a wick-tube, which holds a wick constantly match, the latter being ignited by a spring striker released by the clock mechanism.

Sudden jerks and starts of a horse are prevented from making riders in a wicker chair by the use of a spring back rest, which is slung to the seat at the bottom, the top rods supported by coiled springs mounted on rods in cylinders at the ends of the seat.

PASSING ELEGY ON PRUNES

The Great Boarding House Favorite as Moral Agent.

QUALITIES OF THE STEWED VARIETY

Physical, Mental and Other Effects of a Handy Jugful of Prune Juice, Especially When Properly Seasoned.

"What makes you so quiet?" a tall girl, who displayed a big enamelled flag pin, asked a short one as they met at the lunch counter. "Has your best beau enlisted or has some dear friend gone to Santiago?"

"Neither," answered the short girl, pulling herself up on the high stool; "but why do you ask me that?"

"Because you are. I never saw anyone so changed. The last time I saw you you were just after Christmas, and nobody could get in a word edgewise, you talked so fast. Now you have next to nothing to say, and when you do speak you speak so gently that I can scarcely hear you. The whole expression of your face has changed and I must say it's for the better. Your complexion is lovely, your eyes bright and there is such a spirit of content about you. Is it love?"

"No," answered her companion, laughing. "Guess again. But you could. So I'll tell you what has wrought this change in me. It isn't love; it's prunes."

"Prunes!" exclaimed the tall girl, ordering an oyster pate, a slice of strawberry shortcake, with plenty of cream, and a bottle of ginger ale.

"Yes, prunes," answered the other. "Waiter, bring me a big dish of stewed prunes, some bread and butter and a glass of milk."

"Mercy! what a luncheon!" exclaimed the tall girl. "If that's what you like why don't you make your meals at second-rate restaurants? You could get a whole lot of prunes for the first course at breakfast, the same for the last course at luncheon and prune pie for dessert at dinner? I can give you the address of one."

"Laugh all you want to," rejoined the short girl, "but prunes have made a moral agent of me, not only physically, but morally."

"Serve as a sort of atonement for your past, do they?" asked the tall girl. "What a mischievous rogue you used to be! I can't believe that prunes are responsible for this change. No; go tell that to the Spanish. Out with it! What has changed you?"

"I tell you it was prunes," insisted her companion. "You remember how nervous and run down I got last winter? I was either down in the depth of despair or up on the mountain tops of hilarity. Can't you tell me how I was up to all kinds of pranks, teasing everybody, making fun of everybody, sparing nobody's feelings if I could get a laugh and make others laugh; and don't you remember how noisy I used to be and how uneasy everybody felt when I was around, not knowing what I would do or say next? Yes, I thought you would. Well, I'm completely changed and prunes did it."

"Do tell me all about it," urged the tall girl, and a nervous woman sitting next to her listened eagerly for the reply.

A Chicago Fan. "Well, I went out to Chicago about that time it was in February, I think—and I was in such a state that my friends sent me to a well known Chicago physician. He said at once, 'You need prunes, young woman,' and I said, 'You mean prunes?' for my family is always insisting that I had grown wild. It all came from overwork."

"You need prunes," he said. "You need a prune diet, or rather eat plenty of prunes. They'll set you straight; and then he told me that he had proved the prune to be a moral agent, and that European authorities on dietetics were discussing his discovery at that very time and making experiments. I asked him to tell me all about his discovery, and he said that he had made the prune a subject of special study and knew it to be a preventive of crime. He was at one time connected with a reform school for boys, and that's when he found that he was right in believing the prune to be more efficacious than the gospel in pruning out the bad tendencies of the boys who were exceedingly unruly, and had rebelled against everybody and everything tending toward the reformation of their morals. Finally the doctor fed them once a day on prunes for a week, and at the end of that time they were well mannered and docile."

He said that the prune diet, as he called it, was a wonderful thing that he had ever witnessed, though not hard to understand. I said that I thought it was, but he explained that the prune has a certain medicinal property, which acts directly on the nervous system. It makes me laugh to hear people say, 'She has a bad heart,' or, 'He has a bad temper.' When people are honest and true and pure, the nervous system is nine times out of ten, is out of order, and prunes will cure them."

"But now did you take the prunes?" inquired the tall girl, with a great show of interest.

"Well, I kept a stone jar of stewed prunes on hand, and five or six times a day I would go to it and eat three or four. In German households such crocks of prunes have stood for medicine chests for 100 years. The German housewife provides the jar of prunes, and the members of the family dip into it at all hours of the day. It is in a family that prunes were first used in the south dip into a common snuff box. The first thing in the morning and the last at night I took a drink of prune juice, and how it made me sleep! This was prepared by adding a quart of boiled water to every pint of prunes and allowing them to simmer to shreds. After straining a little lemon juice was added, but no sugar. This drink allays fever and is fine for a cold. Prunes that are to be eaten as a medicine should be simmered at least three hours and without sugar."

"How long did you take your prune cure before you began to be benefited?" interrupted the nervous woman, with evident embarrassment.

"Oh, I hadn't been at it more than a fortnight when I felt like a new creature. How was I affected? Why, I slept like a log, ate three square meals a day, and stranger of all, my whole bearing and manner changed. I grew as gentle as a lamb, and my attitude toward people changed, too. I didn't feel like disturbing everybody and stirring up people wherever I went and hurting people just to see them squirm. Now I feel perfectly amiable toward everybody and everything except Spain. I'd like to help crush Spain, of course."

How it Worked. "But, to get back to the prune cure. In a month I began to get plump, my complexion cleared up, my eyes grew bright, my mind clear, and, best of all, I didn't have a nerve left in my body. Now I can stand any amount of hard work, annoyance, worry, without going to pieces. I don't see what anyone wants to join a Don't Worry Circle for when prunes cost only 7 cents a pound. It requires less mental and physical exertion to eat prunes than it does to attend club meetings and for me an am sure that the prune cure beats the Don't Worry Circle at its own object."

"Oh, by the way," she rattled along cheerfully, "I shall sell you another thing about the prune. It can change the most throat-splitting whiskey into the most delicious beverage imaginable, so my brother and his friends say. My brother had some men

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