

SPEECH OF ANIMALS.

A SUBJECT IN WHICH MANY ARE TAKING INTEREST.

A Chicago Physician Relates His Experience With a Pet Squirrel—He is Sure That It "Talks" to Him and Understands Much That He Says—Intelligent Dogs.

That animals have a means of communication among themselves through certain vocal sounds is a well established fact; that these vocal sounds are of sufficient range to express other than mere physical ideas and thus to assume the importance of a language is probable, although as yet unproved.

For the last three years I have had a tame fox squirrel of which I have made a great pet. Polly has occupied a cage in the laboratory where she has been for the most part shut out from the sights and sounds of the outside world. Although at times the laboratory has had other tenants in the shape of squirrels, rabbits and guinea pigs, she has formed no particular attachment for any of them, but when I am about she is usually close to me, either on my shoulder or following me about like a dog.

Unconsciously at first and later with a definite purpose I have talked to her much as one would talk to a young child. About a year ago she began to reply to my conversation. At first it was only in response to my questions as to food, etc., but later her "talk" has assumed larger proportions, until now she will, of her own accord, assume the initiative.

Her vocabulary appears to be quite extensive, and while for the most part it pertains to matters of food and personal comfort there are times when it seems as though she were trying to tell me of other things.

When I first got out where she is in the morning, she immediately asks for food, and until that want is supplied she keeps up a constant muttering. Later when her hunger is appeased she will ask to be let out of the cage. Often when playing about the room she will climb onto my shoulder and "talk" to me for awhile in a low tone and then scamp off. Unless she is sleepy she will always reply to any remark made to her.

Her speech is not the chattering ordinarily observed in squirrels, but a low guttural tone that reminds one both of the low notes of a frog and the cluck of a chicken. Some of the notes I have been able to repeat, and invariably she becomes alert and replies to them. Unfortunately, the effort to reproduce her tones produces an uncomfortable effect on my throat, and I have been obliged to desist from further experiments in that direction. The sounds that she makes are quick and in low tone, so the attempt to imitate words is very difficult, yet there is as much range of inflection as in German.

Another reason why I believe she is endeavoring to communicate with me is that she has used the same sounds toward other squirrels confined in the same cage, and that, while she will answer any one who addresses her, she voluntarily will only talk at length to me. That she understands what is said to her is beyond question, and, furthermore, she will distinguish between a remark made to her and one made to me.

WE understand "talking," and we observe that it is not such, and that the sounds she makes have a definite meaning. Moreover, the sounds she makes in "talking" are not the shrill notes of anger or alarm, but low, clear sounds that are unmistakably articulate.

In my fondness for my pet I have overestimated the value of the sounds she makes, or am I right in assigning to them the characters of speech? Why should an animal not attempt to communicate with man? The higher animals are possessed of a well formed larynx and vocal chords. Why, then, should we deny or ever question the possibility of articulate speech? And if they can converse among themselves why may they not attempt to communicate with man?

Any one who has owned a well bred dog can relate numerous instances in which his dog has clearly understood what was said to it, and the readiness with which a dog learns a new command shows an intelligence of a high order. Although a dog's vocabulary is of limited range, it has certain definite sounds that possess an unmistakable meaning. There is the short, sharp bark that expresses a want, the low nervous bark that means discomfort, the sharp, quick bark of joy, the low whine of distress, the growl of distrust, the deep growl of anger, the low bark of warning and the wailing cry of fright. When these are added the various movements of the body, covering in fear, crouching in anger, the stiff bracing of the body in defense, leaping in joy and many special actions, as licking the hand of the master or gazing at his clothes, we find that a dog can express his likes and dislikes, his wants and his feeling as clearly as though he were human. Any one who in a time of sorrow or depression has had his dog come to him and lay its head in his lap and has looked down into those great brown eyes so full of sympathy and love can ever doubt that the dog understood all and in its own way was trying to comfort.

A friend's cat has an unmistakable word for yes and no. The former is low meow, while the latter is a short, sharp "mow" if Tom wants to go out, that fact is made manifest by a quick meow. If perchance any one should be in the chair which Tom regards as his especial property, no regard for propriety restrains him from indicating that fact and unceremoniously ordering the intruder out. His meow on such an occasion cannot be mistaken. Instances of this sort are not uncommon and ordinarily fail to attract attention, but is there not here a field that will well repay a careful investigation?—Dr. Howard N. Lyon in Science.

Fifteen Cold Bottles a Day. Berry Wall and his friend "Lord" Clag gett dine often at a hotel. They take their dinner in the middle of the day and probably call it "lunch," as Berry is a family man and dines with his wife at night. They take a canvasback, and the "lord" drinks champagne and tea. He is the best tea taster in America, and if he were not so rich might make a fine living as a professional tea taster. As it is he puts away about 15 bottles of champagne every day and tastes a little duck at noon with Berry.—New York Herald.

A Bumper. When a glass is as full as it possibly can be of liquor, the surface of the liquid is slightly convex, and the center lies higher than the brim. In view of this fact such a glassful is called a bumper, because the liquor bumps up or protrudes in the middle.—Exchange.

SELF PRESERVATION.

The Instinct Proves Stronger Than Reason and Will Power Combined.

"I never realized the strength of the instinct of self preservation in man," said John F. Thompson, "until I witnessed a test of it on a steamboat. Among the passengers was a man who had a black rattlesnake in a box with a glass top. The snake was a very vicious one and would strike the glass whenever any one approached. The owner of the reptile challenged any one in the crowd to hold his finger on the glass and let the snake strike at it. There could not be any danger, and there was not a man who did not think it was a very easy thing to do. One big fellow, who looked as if he never knew what nerves were, tried it first, and after repeated attempts gave it up. Then every passenger on the boat attempted it, and failure followed in each case. It simply could not be done. Instinct was stronger than reason and will power combined.

"I witnessed another illustration of this in Paris. A young man had lost his life on a gambling table. Not only was he without means, but he had lost a large sum belonging to his employer. He started for the Seine to drown himself. On the way there was a great commotion, caused by the escape of a tiger from a strolling menagerie. The animal came down the street, and people fled in every direction. Instantly the man who was seeking death climbed a lamp post and hung on to the top of it, trembling in every muscle. When the animal was captured and the danger was over, he went to the river and committed suicide. I was interested in the account of the suicide, and prompted by curiosity went to see the body, instantly recognizing it as that of the young man whom I had seen make so frantic an effort to escape death evidently but a few minutes before he sought it and at the very time that he was seeking an opportunity to end his existence."—St. Louis Globe Democrat.

Cookers Adopting Modern Ways.

The rising generations of the Society of Friends are fast modifying in a marked degree the customs, costumes and manners of their fathers. Peculiarities of dress and language have been almost entirely abandoned, the cultivation of music and the other arts is no longer discouraged, except by a very few, and George Fox would not recognize his present followers, so great have been the changes wrought since the days of Penn. In connection with the cultivation of music an interesting fact was noticed. In an academy in a nearby town, attended only by the children of Friends, a school entertainment was recently given, the programme of which contained several musical numbers. The music comprised such familiar tunes as "Nearer, My God, to Thee," etc., and a lover of music who attended commented afterward on the absence of harmony and euphony in the singing. While not exactly a discord, there was a noticeable lack of melody, rendering the hymns anything but enjoyable. It is quite possible that the far-reaching law of heredity may account for this fact, and that the ancestry of these pupils, who for over 300 years have considered music as only a vain amusement, have transmitted to their children organs unable to properly voice the beauties of this, to them, long unused art.—Philadelphia Record.

Wood Stone.

What may be considered somewhat extraordinary claims are put forth in The Bantechner in behalf of the new substance known as xyloolith, or wood stone, a structural material composed of magnesia cement or calcined magnesite, mixed with sawdust and saturated with a solution of chloride of calcium, this paste subjected to a pressure of more than 1,000 pounds to the square inch. It is made in sheets from a quarter of an inch to 1 1/2 inches thick and of all sizes, the dimensions being almost unchangeable by dryness or moisture. A sheet measuring a meter square when perfectly dry will expand from one to two tenths of 1 per cent when soaked in water, and a moist sheet will contract in drying to about the same extent. Being so little subject to contraction and expansion, it is considered of special adaptation for floors in railroad stations, hospitals and similar buildings and for decks of vessels, etc. It is readily planed, sanded, bored and fashioned with ordinary wood working tools and may be painted or decorated in the same manner as wood. It is itself nearly waterproof and may be made entirely so by painting the surface.

Guests Who Will Not Register.

The average guest at a first class hotel puts his tin in the register and takes when he leaves the key to the room which he has used. There are, however, some who do not register. There are rooms and rooms, just as there are hotels and hotels, and when the hotels are crowded it takes an experienced and determined man to get the best—or a woman. No hotel clerk has ever yet stood up before the onslaught of a lovely female bent on having a front room, lighted on two sides and not higher than the third story. But there is another class of the dwellers in tents—the men who never register. Every hotel has them, and Washington hotels more than any other city. Here it means the game of politics. The man who wants an office and is afraid his rivals are going to put up combinations against him will slip into his hotel and tell the clerk that he does not want to be seen or put on the list, and the clerk tells him that it is all right. In some cities such actions would be rightly regarded as suspicious, but not in Washington. The leading hotels will average two a day during the first year of a new administration. After that they drop off to two a week, but it is a peculiarity of Washington hotels.—Washington Post.

Atoned For the Insult.

Colonel Gilbert Pierce, ex-minister to Portugal, once picked up in his arms a young lady who stood hesitating at the corner of a street in an Indian village, unable to cross it because a shower had filled it with a rushing torrent of water. The young lady submitted without protest while the colonel strode gallantly through the torrent until he deposited her safely on the opposite sidewalk with dry feet. "Sir," she then said indignantly, "are you aware that you have insulted me?" "I am not aware of it," replied the colonel, "but seeing that you are right I beg to make amends." So saying, he picked up the protesting damsel and stored her to the point where he had first met her acquaintance.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Gladstone's Firm Handwriting.

In his earlier years Mr. Gladstone's writing was clear and regular, and age has not withered the variety of his cuning.—Exchange.

EDITORS' TRAGIC DEATHS.

Illustrious New York Journalists Whose Passing Away Was Regretted With Horror. When I began to work in 1860—and it seems as though it were yesterday only, partly because I have good health and have always maintained a high moral tone—the editor of the New York Tribune was Horace Greeley. He died in a madhouse. The editor of the New York Times was Henry J. Raymond, the best friend but one I ever had. He was found dead and stiff in the hallway of his house. The brightest writer in New York then was Charles G. Halpin—Milo O'Reilly—editor of the New York Citizen. He suffered from a neuralgic tooth and went into the Astor House one day, chloretted a towel, put it over his head and joined the majority.

The best known correspondent of that era signed "A. D. R." A. D. Richardson was walking along the street from the Tribune office when a street slipper behind him, fired a bullet in his back, and he died. The managing editor of the New York Herald, Mr. Frederick Hudson, whose name is a living tradition in newspaper circles, having retired on a pension of \$20,000, which of itself is enough to stagger any newspaper man, went to live with his family in Concord, N. H. Drive across the railroad track in front of the cars one day. All killed. The editor of the only rival The Staats-Zeitung ever had, the New York Journal, Dr. Fredor Meison, of German birth, but American in feeling, a great, good, loyal fellow, was being an invalid wife from a train. Didn't see the other, lost his head and has done no work since.

The dearest newspaper working friend I ever had, Stillman S. Conant, managing editor of the New York Times, walked out on the sands of Coney Island one dark night and never returned. The publisher of The Daily News, whose name escapes me just now, but a man whom everybody in the profession knew, had melancholia, superinduced by neuralgia, walked to his office one morning and blew his brains out. The editor of The Commercial Advertiser drove along the beach at Long Branch. Ran into a butcher cart. Killed instantly. So, you see, it is not all funny business in the profession.—Joe Howard's Lecture on Journalism.

Opium Selling Is Profitable.

Whatever opinions may be held respecting the effects of consuming opium, there seems to be no doubt that selling it is a profitable business. Years ago the house of Jardine, Matheson & Co. was among the largest importers of opium into China, and so enormous were the profits that three of the partners, by sheer force of wealth, expanded into barons, while a fourth, the late Mr. James Jardine of Dryden, became one of the largest land owners in the south of Scotland. Sir James Matheson and his brother, Sir Alexander Matheson, spent upward of \$1,000,000 in buying land in the highlands, and the latter left besides over \$400,000. Mr. Matheson, the ex-M. P. who left \$200,000, was also a member of this firm. Sir Robert Jardine of Castle-milk is the old head of the firm and probably the wealthiest of them all. Sir Robert does not only own Castle-milk, one of the finest residences and estates in the south of Scotland, but 10 years ago bought up the Rogersons of Wampary for \$120,000 and later added the property of Laurick castle, in Perthshire, to his already great possessions. He could buy up a score of such places if he so desired.

Dealing in opium is, of course, only one branch of the great firm's business, but it is a most important one, and a trade whether right or wrong which has such potentialities of profits must, like Tennyson's half truth, be a hard matter to fight.—Scottish Leader.

The Canadian Sledge Dogs.

Mr. Cameron, in his talk with a Courier reporter, told of the dogs that are used for sledging during the winter in the north-west territories of Canada. Six or eight dogs are used on each sledge. They are fed only once in 24 hours, and that is in the morning before the start is made and after the dogs are in harness. At that time about four pounds of frozen fish are given to them. Everything must be in readiness for the start, and the men must look to it that they are at hand to jump on the sledges, for at the very instant that the last morsel of fish disappears the dogs are off at a breakneck speed. Strange as it may seem, the drivers do not dare to feed the dogs unless they are in harness. Otherwise they would scatter, and nothing more would be seen of them. They are driven with one long rein attached to the leader. A whip with a very short handle and a very long lash is used to urge them on, though in most cases they need no urging, for they seem to feel that the faster they go the quicker they will come to the post, where food and warmth and a lazy life await them. They travel often as far as 90 miles a day.—Buffalo Courier.

Police-men in Paris.

The Parisian municipal police, which cost the city 200,000,000 of francs every year, number about 10,000, besides 6,000 gendarmes, republicans, horse and foot. These are divided into 20 brigades, one for each district of the city. There is a great difference between the officers of the down town and well districts and those farther out and in less wealthy sections. In the American quarter and along the Boulevard des Capucines and the Rue de Rivoli, so much frequented by foreigners, most of the police understand English, and the befogged and hazy individual who has been "doing" the sights of Paris in the evening, and who cannot speak French, will not find so much difficulty after all, in making his devious way back to the hotel in the dawn. Very generally, too, the Parisian police are uniformly unobtrusive, and unless needed attend strictly to their own business. They are kind and polite, and always ready and willing to set one right or to escort a woman across a street, and they all carry in their pockets street and business directories for the stranger's use.—Philadelphia Press.

A Season of Three Hours and a Half.

Charles II was wont in his humorous way to say of his chaplain, Dr. Barrow, that "he was the most unfair preacher in England because he exhausted every subject and left no room for others to come after him." It was indeed too much the doctor's way. When he got hold of a topic, he never knew how to leave anything unsaid about it. One of his best discourses, that on the duty and reward of bounty to the poor, actually took up 3 1/2 hours in delivering.—Sala's Journal.

Amber.

A member, according to Chambers, is a concretion of birds' tears. In "The Fire-Worshippers" Tom Moore says, "Around thee shall glisten the levelled amber that ever the sorrowing sea bird hath wept."

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