

VARIOUS

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Содержание

THE PIGEONS AND THEIR FRIEND	5
A TRUE STORY	5
ROWDY-DOWDY	6
THE OBEDIENT CHICKENS	7
JOHN RAY'S PERFORMING DOGS	8
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	9

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THE PIGEONS AND THEIR FRIEND

A TRUE STORY

WHEN I was in Boston about a year ago, I stopped one day at the corner of Washington Street and Franklin Street to witness a pretty sight.

Here, just as you turn into Franklin Street, on the right, a poor peddler used to stand with a few baskets of oranges or apples or peanuts, which he offered for sale to the passers-by.

The street-pigeons had found in him a good friend; for he used to feed them with bits of peanuts, crumbs of bread, and seed: and every day, at a certain hour, they would fly down to get their food.

On the day when I stopped to see them, the sun shone, and the street was crowded; and many people stopped, like myself, to see the pretty sight.

The pigeons did not seem to be at all disturbed or frightened by the noise of carriages or the press of people; but would fly down, and light on the peddler's wrist, and peck the food from the palm of his hand.

He had made them so tame, that they would often light on his shoulders or on his head; and, if he put food in his mouth, they would try to get it even from between his teeth.

The children would flock round to see him; and even the busy newsboy would pause, and forget the newspapers under his arm, while he watched these interviews between the birds and their good friend.

A year afterwards I was in Boston again; but the poor peddler and his birds were not to be seen. All Franklin Street, and much of the eastern side of Washington Street, were in ruins. There had been a great fire in Boston,—the largest that was ever known there; and more than fifty acres, crowded with buildings, had been made desolate, so that nothing but smoking ruins was left. This was in November, 1872.

I do not know where the poor peddler has gone; but I hope that his little friends, the pigeons, have found him out, and that they still fly down to bid him good-day, and take their dinner from his open hand.

The picture is an actual drawing from life, made on the spot, and not from memory. The likeness of the peddler is a faithful one; and I thank the artist for reproducing the scene so well to my mind. Folks *do* say that he has hit off *my* likeness also in the man standing behind the taller of the two little girls.

Alfred Selwyn.

ROWDY-DOWDY

Rowdy-dowdy loves a noise;
Cannot play with quiet boys;
Cannot play with quiet toys:
Rowdy-dowdy loves a noise!

In the street he takes delight,—
In the street from morn till night:
Don't I tell the story right,
Rowdy-dowdy, noisy sprite?

Rowdy-dowdy's full of fun;
Never walks if he can run;
Never likes the setting sun:
That stops Rowdy-dowdy's fun.

He is full of prankish ways;
Never still one moment stays;
Boys are fond of boyish plays:
These are Dowdy's rowdy days.

Out at elbows, out at toes,
Out at knees, the urchin goes:
Still he laughs, and still he grows
Rowdier, dowdier, I suppose.

Rowdy-dowdy, don't you see,
Full of noisy, boys-y glee,
Is as sweet as he can be,
For the sprite belongs to me!

He is mine to have and hold,
Worth his weight in solid gold:
Ah! I've not the heart to scold
Rowdy-dowdy, brave and bold!

Josephine Pollard.

THE OBEDIENT CHICKENS

When I was a little girl, I had a nice great Shanghai hen given to me. She soon laid a nest full of eggs; and then I let her sit on them, till, to my great joy, she brought out a beautiful brood of chickens.

They were big fellows even at first, and had longer legs and fewer feathers than the other little yellow roly-poly broods that lived in our barn-yard. But, although I could see that they were not quite so pretty as the others, I made great pets of them.

They were a lively, stirring family, and used to go roving all over the farm; but never was there a better behaved, or more thoroughly trained set of children. If a hawk, or even a big robin, went sailing over head, how quickly they scampered, and hid themselves at their mother's note of warning! and how meekly they all trotted roost-ward at the first sound of her brooding-call! I wish all little folks were as ready to go to bed at the right time.

One day when the chickens were five or six weeks' old, I saw them all following their mother into an old shed near the house. She led them up into one corner, and then, after talking to them for a few minutes in the hen language, went out and left them all huddled together.

She was gone for nearly an hour; and never once did they stir away from the place where she left them. Then she came back, and said just as plain as your mother could say it, only in another way, "Cluck, cluck, cluck! You've all been good chickens while I was away; have you? Well, now, we'll see what a good dinner we can pick up."

Out they rushed, pell-mell, as glad to be let out of their prison, and as pleased to see their mother again, as so many boys and girls would have been.

Well, day after day, this same thing happened. It came to be a regular morning performance; and we hardly knew what to make of it, until one day we followed old Mother Shanghai, and discovered her secret.

She had begun to lay eggs again, and was afraid some harm would come to her young family if she left them out in the field while she was in the barn on her nest. So she took this way of keeping them out of danger.

Of course, what she said to her brood when she left them must have been, "My dears, my duties now call me away from you for a little while; and you must stay right here, where no harm can come to you, till I come back. Good-by!" And then off she would march as dignified and earnest as you please.

She did this for a number of weeks, until she thought her young folks were old and wise enough to be trusted out alone. Then she let them take care of themselves.

This is a true story.

East Dorset, Vt. M. H. F.

JOHN RAY'S PERFORMING DOGS

There was once a little boy whose name was John Ray, and who lived near a large manufacturing town in England. When only seven years old, he fell from a tree, and was made a cripple for life.

His father, who was a sailor, was lost at sea soon afterwards; and then, John's mother dying, the little boy was left an orphan. He was nine years of age when he went to live with Mrs. Lamson, his aunt,—a poor woman with a large family of young children.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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