



A . . . Monkey Theatre.

Part II.

BY FAITH FENTON.

THE curtain had dropped for intermission; the musical specialist, who was engaged to give variety to the entertainment, was before the house. With his bells, glasses and reeds, his jokes and songs, he was engaged to keep the large audience amused for half-an-hour.

Behind the curtain there was general relaxation. The dogs sprang down from their bench, the monkeys from their chairs. There was a rush toward the Professor, who picked up as many as he conveniently could—the smallest and frailest of his family seemed his instinctive pets—and sat down for a chat. Pansy, the little blind poodle, nestled a silky white fluff in one arm, the baby monkey rested, a tiny solemnity, in the other; the dainty wee greyhound crowded between them, while Pete, who was inclined to be jealous, took possession of one foot, and snarlingly warned off all other approach.

Charlie, with one or two chums, second only to himself in mischief, raced for the lap of his favorite attendant; but Boo-boo, who was pronouncedly in love with the musician, scorned all our advances and stationed herself at a loop-hole in the curtain, through which she could watch the object of her adoration.

"About myself?" said the Professor. "No, I am not a foreigner, but an American by birth. I was always fond of animals, and went in for a veterinary degree, which I obtained. My lungs were weak and out-door life was necessary, also I had to make my travelling expenses; so I took two monkeys and two dogs, and spent a year in training them, then with a couple of assistants and a little wagon, I started overland, and travelled from one end of the country to the other. We were our own advance agents, bill-posters—everything. When we came to a town or village, it did not take us long to announce our presence, and we gathered an audience in a few hours. Those four animals were able to give a whole evening's entertainment. It seems hardly creditable but we cleared \$17,000 in that overland trip.

"Then I got Roger. Oh, you must hear about Roger," and the Professor grew so earnest that he forgot to respond to Boo-boo, who weary of waiting her liege lord at the curtain, had climbed on the back of his chair and was making unblushing advances, in the way of petting. "Roger was a Mexican dog that I bought down south. Such a splendid intelligent fellow. There was no trick

too difficult to teach him. He could walk a fine wire better than any animal I ever saw. Well; I was something of an elocutionist, and it occurred to me that Trowbridge's poem, "The Vagabonds," would take well, if I were to train Roger to his part. You remember the poem; it was very popular a few years ago:

We are two travellers—Roger and I,
Roger's my dog;—Come here you scamp,
Jump for the gentleman, mind your eye!
Over the table,—look out for the lamp.
The rogue is growing a little old;
Five years we've tramped thro' wind and weather,
And slept out-doors when nights were cold,
And ate and drank and starved together.

No thank you sir,—I never drink,
Roger and I are exceedingly moral,—
Aren't we Roger?—See him wink!—
Well, something hot then,—we won't quarrel.
He's thirsty, too,—see him nod his head?
What a pity, Sir, that dogs can't talk!
He understands every word that's said—
And he knows good milk from water and chalk.

"A few months trained Roger perfectly. Indeed, the dear fellow seemed the original Roger of the poem, so thoroughly he went into the spirit of the thing. I was dressed as a tramp, of course; and during those first lines, he would put his paws on my arm, and look up in my face with his big brown eyes.

"There is a little acting, you remember:

We'll have some music, if you're willing,
And Roger (hem! what a plague a cough is, Sir!)
Shall march a little.—Start you villain!
Stand straight! 'Bout face! Salute your officer!
Put up that paw! Dress! Take your rifle!
(Some dogs have arms, you see). Now hold your
Cap while the gentlemen give a trifle
To aid a poor old patriot soldier!



PROFESSOR WORMWOOD.

"Roger never missed a movement. And at those pathetic closing lines:

I'm better now! that glass was warming—
You rascal! limber your lazy feet!
We must be fiddling and performing
For supper and bed, or starve in the street.—
Not a gay life to lead, you think?
But soon we shall go where lodgings are free
And the sleepers need neither victuals nor drink,
The sooner the better for Roger and me!

"Roger would look up into my face, and at the right moment follow me off into the wings with his head down, but close at my side.

"It took amazingly, and 'Roger and I' became known all over."

"What became of Roger?" I asked, as the Professor paused.

"He, with five other dogs and four monkeys, were accidentally smothered in a railway car. I would almost have given my life for his; he saved

mine several times,"—the Professor's voice grew husky, and he bent down to stroke the little blind dog on his lap.

A sudden commotion among the dogs here drew our attention to the fact that "Pete" and "Uncle," two well trained but crochety little old men-monkeys, had taken advantage of the Professor's pre-occupation, to bestride a fat pug and curly poodle, respectively, and tweak their ears—which, as an act not upon the programme, the latter naturally resented. The attendants came to the rescue, and sent the little fellows back to their chairs, where they sat in their queer little garments, and with rouged cheeks, looking infinitely old and quaint and cranky.

"I think I may train that fellow to be a second Roger, some day," continued the Professor, pointing to a fine young Newfoundland. He's pure bred, and cost me a pretty penny. He's only a pup yet, but is very intelligent.

"I took Roger into vaudeville; and after he died, went into training for shows, handling all kinds of animals, from elephants down. But I like working with little animals best; and I find the public like them best also, so I came back to them."

"Which would you rather train, Professor, monkeys or dogs?"

"Dogs. The monkeys are more intelligent; they judge more by looks than words, and will shirk their work if they dare. They are perverse, too; and will often refuse to try a trick, until such time as they think you are not watching. Then they attempt it for their own amusement. After showing a monkey a trick, and he refuses to try it, I sometimes wait until I catch him performing it on the sly, then I make him do it."

"Is there any difference in their degrees of intelligence?"

"As much as there is in people" answered the Professor. "The larger monkeys are the most intelligent, the chimpanzee and gorilla first, then the apes and baboons; after that perhaps the Australian rhesus such as Uncle over there. The smaller monkeys decline into the squirrel species—marmosettes for instance who have very little brains."

"Is it possible to breed monkeys in this country." There have never been but two born and bred in captivity that I have heard of. One was born a year or two ago in Central Park; we called it Tony Pastor; and it was the cutest little thing. It trained splendidly but it only lived ten months. Its death was the result of an accident, but I doubt whether we could have raised it. As a rule they die before they are a year old. The other is this little one." He stooped to pick up the baby monkey, who was creeping in regular baby fashion about the stage floor.

"She does not walk yet," he said "but she will in a month or two."

"Do you think she will live?"

"No, I'm afraid not. She is not strong, and will probably go into decline. We lose so many of our monkeys in that way. The climate is too hard for them. One of my cleverest little fellows is now in consumption. You can see him down in the cage room. Five years is about the age limit of monkeys in this country. When captured in their native country they are brought to Hamburg and Liverpool, where they are kept six months in order to become acclimatized. But so many die during the process that dealers only count upon a survival of fifty per cent. on reaching this country. If we could breed them here they would be less expensive, but that seems almost impossible.

