

A TALK AMONG ANIMALS.

Some very extraordinary things happened in an uptown barnyard the other day. I know about it because, well—because I do; but I can't tell you because I promised not to.

It was haycutting time, and all the folks were in the fields, so there were no meddling people to interrupt the conversation of the animals.

The yard was larger than usual, for the staid old barns, when they saw that their inmates were in an unusually frolicsome mood, had retired a short distance.

Just in front of the hen house, in the shade, lay old



Dog Bruno, who was watching through his half closed eyes, two young roosters who were squabbling over some grains of corn.

What a noise they did make to be sure! Squall! squeak! backbite, front-claw, and so forth.

"Look here," said Bruno, "If you kids don't quit that disturbance, I'll come and make you."



"Whom are you talking to?" saucily enquired Big Beak, who was the youngest of the birds.

"Well," drawled Bruno with a yawn, "not much, to be sure, but you had better take my advice, or as I said, I'll come and make you!"

"Will you though?" muttered Red Comb, the other rooster, as he sauntered off.

"Oh never mind him!" said Terrier, "he feels so almighty big because he sleeps in the house, that he thinks he is capable of bossing the Universe."

"Please sir, what's the Universe?" said a small voice which proceeded from a timid brown rabbit who was usually called Bunny.

"Well," said Terrier, "I thought even you knew that, I learned it in the kindergarten. They teach all those things to babies there."

"Yes," pleaded the rabbit, "But what is it? My mother was too poor to send me to school."

"Oh, he doesn't know himself! Can't you see that?" piped the squirrel from his perch in the apple tree.

"Look here!" retorted the terrier. "If you don't stop being so saucy, I will bite you."

"Will you, dear? All right. Come right up here and begin operations as soon as you like."



"But, please, sir, you haven't told me what universe is yet," again ventured Bunny.

"No!" snarled Terrier, "And I don't intend to. Do you suppose a person educated as I am, is going to waste his time answering your idiotic questions?"

"No, especially when you don't know the answers. Oh dear! to think that Bunny should pose you," said the squirrel.

"Oh, let him alone! He's daft," said Big Beak.

"Hath much learning made him mad?" inquired the timid voice of the rabbit.

"That might be the case," answered Red Comb.

"No!" said Big Beak, "the entire absence of not only learning but the wherewithall to acquire it, is what's the matter with him."

"Correct!" exclaimed the squirrel.

The Terrier scornfully turned his eyes up to the squirrel. "I should think," said he, with a contemptuous curl of his nose, "that a person with such a ridiculous tail as yours should like to keep quiet and not attract attention."

"Well, I would rather be tailed, than curtailed as you are," frisked the squirrel.

"I'm not a cur!" I'm a thoroughbred," indignantly protested Terrier.

"A curtailed one nevertheless," remarked Bruno, who had been present when Terrier had been deprived of his caudal appendage some years before.

Terrier shot a withering glance at Bruno and marched off. "Great times these for the dogs when they are trained up so that they can see everybody's stupidity but their own," clucked a comfortable old grey hen, named Biddy.

"Is that why the stable-boy said that these were dog days?" queried the timid rabbit.

"Spects that's about right, young 'un," said Big Beak.

"With all his education," said the horse, "Terrier has got about as much solid stuff in him as—"

"Yeast," suggested Red Comb.

"Yes, yeast!" assented the Horse.

"Yeast," remarked the squirrel, who was sometimes called Chipmunk, with an abstracted air, "is the elixir of life."

"How do you make that out, Chipmunk," asked the Horse.

"Well, it raises the staff of life, doesn't it?"

"Hear! hear!" cried all in chorus, "where did you hear that?"

"That's original," replied the squirrel, cracking a nut.

"What does original mean?" queried the monotonous voice of the rabbit.

"Oh, shut up! we're not a collection of dictionaries, you interrogation point!" snapped Biddy.

"I don't see why you call me an interrogation point," whimpered Bunny.

"Well, go, look in a mirror, and then you'll see why, for you are just the shape of one," said Big Beak.

