

MORINI'S ORINOCO CUCKOOS

By E. F. POWER

(© by Short Story Pub. Co.)

A SMALL round table supporting a wicker cage stood in the middle of the stage, and inside the cage were three birds, about the size of pigeons and of a bluish white color. On the program they were mentioned as "Morini's Orinoco Cuckoos," and the audience watched them attentively. Morini's widely advertised bird act had been awaited with eager anticipation at the Columbia.

One man in the great audience was particularly interested. This was Professor Murray, the famous ornithologist, who occupied a front seat in the orchestra circle. He knew that all authorities agreed that the Orinoco cuckoo could not be trained, or even domesticated, yet the announcement stated that the three birds would perform feats that would be impossible for even a trained canary. The professor was in a state of evident excitement as he awaited the appearance of the bird trainer.

Morini soon made his entrance. He was a small, dapper man, wearing over his evening dress a loose Inverness coat and carrying in his hand a small gilt wand, which he twirled awkwardly as he stepped to the footlights to address the waiting audience.

His speech was brief, but to the point. He explained that he had succeeded, after months of laborious work, in arousing the reasoning faculties of the three birds so that he could control their flight by word. They would fly in any direction the audience wished and come back to him at his call.

"They are known as the Orinoco cuckoo," he added, smiling as he moved toward the cage, "but I call them the boomerang bird because they always come back to me."

Opening the cage, he placed one of the three on the wand and stepped to the footlights, the cuckoo remaining perfectly quiet. The audience now saw that the bird carried upon its breast a bright heart-shaped medal suspended from a thin chain placed around its neck. Morini explained that the three performers were so alike that he had adopted this method of distinguishing them apart, each medal bearing a different number.

"Now," continued the bird trainer, "I want someone to say in what direction he would like bird number one to fly."

There was silence for a moment, and then a boy in the gallery shouted: "Aw, send him up here to me—'n' den get him back if youse kin."

A laugh ran through the audience, and Morini, smiling pleasantly, gently tossed the cuckoo from his wand and, pointing at the boy in the gallery, called out: "Fly up there."

The order had scarcely been given when the bird flew slowly but directly toward the youngster. With outstretched necks and expressions of astonishment the audience noted its flight. Here was a phenomenon that they had never witnessed before. The bird was obeying verbal instructions in a way that amazed the most indifferent.

When the cuckoo was within a few feet of the boy's outstretched hand Morini called sharply: "Stop!" Instantly the bird paused in its flight and remained suspended on beating wings. It was evident to the astonished spectators that it was entirely under the control of its owner. After the cuckoo fluttered in this position for a few seconds, Morini commanded, "Come back," and the audience received new evidence of the bird's intelligence. It turned instantly and, flying swiftly back to the stage alighted on the wand held out to it.

Professor Murray thought rapidly while the audience applauded. Morini had accomplished the marvelous. With apparent ease he had performed something that every authority on bird life had pronounced impossible. Text books on ornithology were being blown to the winds by the actions of the little man in the Inverness overcoat.

The other two birds even excelled the performance of the one that had flown to the gallery. They started, wheeled, paused, circled and returned, as Morini repeated the wishes of the audience, who tested the obedience of the cuckoos in every possible way. Morini himself never suggested in what direction they should fly—he was simply the mouthpiece of his astonished spectators. At Professor Murray's own suggestion one of the birds had come to him and alighted on his shoulder, and the miracle appeared greater than ever.

The professor left the theater pondering deeply. The performance was a marvelous one. He had witnessed something that all his knowledge and experience had led him to believe was impossible, and he did not feel comfortable at finding his preconceived ideas shattered.

On the following evening Professor Murray, armed with an opera glass, never kept his eyes off the birds and their trainer, but he did not discover the slightest evidence of trickery. His incredulous mind had caused him to particularly watch the wand, but this slight suggestion of fraud was swept away when Morini in the final stage of the act, entirely discarded the little gilt wand, lifted the birds from their cage with his hand, and directed their flight with a finger.

In the weeks that followed the Orinoco cuckoos added nightly to their fame. Other ornithologists besides Murray came to witness and wonder, but although the doings of Morini were opposed to all their teachings they could not explain the mystery. While insisting that the cuckoos could not be trained to understand human speech, they were forced in the next breath to admit that Morini had accomplished the miraculous.

Professor Murray sought the acquaintance of the little man at the Columbia, but the latter had no information to give beyond that which he nightly imparted to his big audiences. Every attempt to probe the means by which he obtained the strange power over the cuckoos was met with the one reply that it was only by months of arduous labor that he had made the birds obey his commands. The statements of ornithologists the little man met with smiles. He was combating arguments with acts, and Murray recognized that Morini had the advantage.

The Orinoco cuckoos were beginning their seventh week at the Columbia when Professor Murray, still brooding over the unsolved mystery, received word that his friend, Doctor Alfred Farraday, the noted scientist, had that day arrived unexpectedly from Paris. With this message came an inspiration. He would, without commenting upon the mysterious performance, invite the distinguished Frenchman to witness it in the hope that his eye or brain might suggest the solution of the seeming bewitchment of the birds.

Eight o'clock found the two at the Columbia. The curtain rose, and Morini had not reached the footlights when Farraday started violently and gripped the arm of his companion. "Come with me," he whispered excitedly, and fairly pulled Murray toward the door. Upon reaching the foyer he demanded, trembling with agitation, that a policeman be summoned. In company with the officer the two men made their way to the rear of the stage, where they awaited the conclusion of Morini's act. As the bird trainer, still bowing to the applauding house, stepped behind the scenes, he collided with the trio. "Arrest that man," cried Farraday. "He was my valet and I have searched Europe to find him." As the officer stepped forward the excited doctor continued: "I invented an electric battery that so controls the waves of magnetic force as to move a metallic object at will within a radius of a thousand feet. This scoundrel stole the battery and by its aid controls the flight of these birds. His wand or finger ring is attached to the battery, which he carries concealed under his coat, and the metal disks attached to the birds establish the connection."

And thus it came to pass that on that eventful evening the Orinoco cuckoos regained their liberty while their master lost his!

Fate Mocked Dealer in Alligator Hides

A few years ago a young business man from Philadelphia made the trip up the Magdalena river and saw what he deemed to be a fortune in alligators. The river swarms with them, which is one reason why no traveler tries to swim or wade ashore when the boat is impeded. The Philadelphian, to while away the time which his steamboat lost on one shoal after another, got busy with pad and pencil and calculated his future profits in alligator skins at the prevailing market rate. Ultimately, when he got ashore he turned alligator farmer and devoted a year to it.

The alligators cost him nothing. Alligator hunters were cheap and expert and plentiful. A professional tanner was his main expense. At the end of a year he had thousands of hides ready to ship and the gratitude of all Colombia for the number of alligators he had removed from the state and the people.

But no one, so far in its history, ever found wealth in the River of Temperament. Just when the joyous Philadelphian was ready to ship his hides to the United States, Uncle Sam passed a law denying entrance by import to hides from certain territories supposed to be fever impregnated, the Magdalena delta among them. All the Philadelphian ever got out of his enterprise was experience and the same fever which had afflicted the alligators never turned into money.

Umbrellas Long in Use
A New Jersey man believes that he holds the world's record for the length of time anyone has kept one umbrella. He has had his for 45 years, and has carried it with him more than 600,000 miles in 110 different countries. It has probably never occurred to him that the time he has spent in looking after it would have bought him at least 10 new ones. Besides, he doesn't hold the record. We know a man in Boston who has had the same umbrella for 60 years. The ribs are of whalebone, and it is so large and heavy that only a very strong man could steal it, and so homely that no one would want to.—Youth's Companion.

Boys Given Opportunity
Every boy in Alabama has opportunity to equip himself with an education and to become self-supporting. For the boy of limited means and in such financial circumstances as to require him to become a quick producer, the state has established the Alabama school of trades and industries, a state-endowed institution to train craftsmen. Added to craftsmanship will be such cultural advantages as may be speedily absorbed.

Eleanor Boardman



This is the latest picture of handsome Eleanor Boardman, the well-known "movie" star, who advises the too fat or too lean to go on a milk diet—either one will profit by such diet, asserts this popular feature player, who has been seen in many pleasing pictures.

"What's in a Name?"

By MILDRED MARSHALL

Facts about your name; its history; meaning; whence it was derived; significance; your lucky day, lucky jewel

MONICA

MONICA is not nearly as popular a name as it deserves to be. Not only has it beauty of sound and significance, but a strikingly interesting history, as well. It comes to us almost direct from the Spanish, but is nevertheless regarded as an English name and is more popular in England than in its native country. Many a golden-haired, blue-eyed English girl bears the name first used to designate a raven-tressed, red-lipped, coquette of Spain.

Monica is thought to have its earliest origin with the Greek term "dome," meaning "to rule." Dominica is a direct offspring of this word and there have been Saints Dominica, Domingo and Dominico, without number. One holy man by that name, who is associated with the Inquisition, had namesakes in all the Romanist lands, and the feminine of this popular title came to be officially Domenica; for short Menica.

The mother of Saint Augustine was the first to be called Monica. Some etymologists even believe that her name should be classified as one coming directly from the Latin verb "moneo," meaning "to advise," but the consensus of opinion is that Monica was evolved in the manner aforementioned. Monica is also a favorite in France and the peasantry call it Monique. Moncha is the Irish form. The emerald is Monica's talisman gem. It is believed to bestow upon her the gift of foretelling or sensing future events. She will have especially keen perception when she wears the jewel and will be guarded against deceit. Wednesday is her lucky day and 1 her lucky number. (© by Wheeler Syndicate.)



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Modern Wanderlust

There is little cause for alarm over the increasing number of schoolboy hoboes, said the principal of a suburban high school recently. Present-day ease of transportation has made it possible for the modern boy to wander further in the same length of time. The boy of twenty years ago was content to go camping in the back lot because it was impossible for him to travel further. But boys nowadays have shared in the mature contempt for distance and frequently travel a hundred miles, begging rides on the highways, just to go fishing or camping out for a few days.—Detroit News

PRIZE CATTLE PAY DEARLY FOR GLORY

Chicago, Ill.—Kings of the baryard Friday paid the price of glory when they went under the hammer at the International Livestock Exposition. Many of the blue-ribbon holders will be converted into Christmas beef.

Mah Jongg, champion steer of the show and owned by the Iowa State college, brought \$3 a pound, a total of \$4680, the highest price ever paid for a grand champion. The Aberdeen-Angus was purchased for the Biltmore hotel, New York.

More than a dozen leading American hotels participated in the bidding. The best previous price paid for a champion steer was \$2.62. The animal will be shipped to New York and exhibited before being slaughtered.

Another record-breaking price was paid for the prize carload of cattle, also Aberdeen-Angus, when 15 head sold for 43 cents a pound, bringing \$6772.50. The cattle were bought by the New Palmer House, Chicago.

King of the Fairies, prize-winning shorthorn bull owned by the Prince of Wales, was sold for \$1050 to Frank C. Baker of Kansas City, Mo.

AUTO MISHAPS CLIMB TO 22,312 FOR 1925

There were 22,312 traffic accidents in Portland during the fiscal year ending November 30, and a total of 35 deaths from automobile accidents, according to figures compiled by the record bureau at central police station. Of the 35 deaths 11 were due to drunken drivers.

The total of 22,312 accidents for 1925 is an increase of 2452 over 1924, when 19,860 accidents were reported. While the number of accidents increased perceptibly, the number of deaths from these accidents has remained practically stationary for the last four years. There were 35 deaths in 1922, 34 in 1923 and 33 in 1924.

Millions Lost in Blaze

Council Bluffs, Ia.—Property damage of nearly \$1,000,000 was caused and two persons seriously injured by a fire which swept one block of Council Bluffs' business district early Thursday.

The fire started from an explosion of a defective boiler in the basement of the Continental Furniture company, and before it could be put under control had destroyed nine business buildings, a hotel, and left 50 business and professional men without offices and equipment.

Greece Ordered to Pay

Geneva.—The league of nations commission, which inquired into the recent Greco-Bulgarian frontier incident, finds that Greece should pay Bulgaria 20,000,000 leva (about \$146,000) damages. The commission decided to recommend that Greece should pay Bulgaria an additional 10,000,000 leva (about \$73,000) for the loss of lives, for the wounded, for the loss of working days and for the cost of military measures by Bulgaria.

Melons Yet Ripening

Cottage Grove, Or.—Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Peek of this place report having picked a ripe watermelon from their garden for Thanksgiving dinner and having others ripening for Christmas. They are of the ice cream variety.

Raspberry bushes in protected positions are reported bearing a second crop and are heavily laden with green berries.

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Phone, wire or write, Phone, EAst 1428. MACK TRUCK COMPANY, 285 Oregon St., Portland, Ore.—Adv.

Mayor Brown Appeals

Seattle, Wash.—Mayor E. J. Brown late Saturday filed a petition in superior court demanding that attacks on his administration be deleted from the grand report. The Rev. Ambrose Bailey has 2500 petitions for Brown's recall in circulation. Topic of his sermon in the First Baptist church Sunday night was "Can advertising dentistry cure political halitosis in Seattle?" Brown owns a dental office.

Nothing Goes to Waste

Dried rabbit skins are used for the manufacture of felt hats. No part of the skin is wasted—the fur goes to hat factories, while the skins, reduced to shreds by the fur-clipping process, are made into glue, and the overhair and waste underfur are disposed of to manufacturers of fertilizer.

Fire Sur-la destroyed three of the largest business blocks in Portsmouth, Ohio. The loss was estimated at more than half a million dollars.

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First Gas Tip.

The first gas pipes were gun barrels, soldered together. The lighted gas flared from the end and one day the gas tip developed by accident.

Murdock wanted to stop the flow of gas and used his wife's thimble. The top of the thimble was full of holes through which the gas escaped. It gave a much whiter, brighter light this way and the old open flame burner thus came into being.

Tree Surgeons Advance.

Tree surgery is making marked advances. Many of the professionals in the business are discarding the concrete and cement filler and use a material made from baked cork, put under high pressure. This new filling is both permanent and flexible. Being lighter than the wood it replaces, it is conducive to quick healing through the growth pressure.

Parsley Ball.

Moisten a sponge with water, then sprinkle parsley seeds over it and, by means of a loop, hang it up in a convenient place. After a few days the seeds sprout and then the green leaves begin to show. The curly leaves make quite attractive decorations, and there is always some parsley handy for cooking purposes.

Angora Goats.

As a rule Angora goats are small, weighing from 80 to 100 pounds. Sometimes in the United States they weigh as much as 140 pounds, with an occasional one even heavier than this. Both males and females usually have horns and beards. The fleece weighs from 3 to 12 pounds.

Reward for Heroes.

The Carnegie hero fund was created by Andrew Carnegie in April, 1904. It provides rewards which consist of medals and money grants to persons injuring themselves or to relatives of those losing their lives in an effort to save their fellow men.

Philadelphia Led.

Philadelphia was the first of modern municipalities whose plan was prepared for a particular size and the rectangular plan there adopted has guided city planning in America ever since.

Dwarf Begets Mastodon.

The giant mastodon which lived in the prehistoric forests of eastern North America is thought to be the descendant of a dwarf animal which lived on the banks of the Nile. — Science Service.

Spared Great Grief.

Notwithstanding the life of a paper dollar is only seven or eight months we have never had one die on our hands.—Toledo Blade.

School at 4 A. M.

In Siam there are boys' schools which meet every day in the year, and in which classes begin at 4 a. m. and continue until 10 p. m., with three brief intervals for refreshments.

The Aurora Borealis.

Until electricity was discovered, the cause of the aurora borealis was unknown. It is generally supposed to be caused by the recombination of positive and negative electricity. It exists only in the region of the poles.

Stick to It.

Persistence wins. "Diamonds are only chunks of coal that stuck to their jobs," says Forbes. — Boston Transcript.

Quarrelsome.

Marrybone Wife—My husband has no need to quarrel with neighbors. He can get plenty of quarreling at home. —London Answers.

Not Popular in Practice.

Humility is a virtue all preach, none practice; and yet everybody is content to hear.—John Selden.

Thoroughly Done.

"Mamma," said a little boy who had been sent to dry a towel before the fire, "is it done when it's brown?" — Arts and Crafts.

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Balsa is the lightest known wood. It is found in commercial quantities in Cuba, parts of Porto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad and along the east coast of Central America, where it is confined very largely to the mangrove swamps and to other inaccessible swampy places. Exploiters often experience the greatest difficulty in getting the logs out of these swamps.

Has Done Good Service.

Practically all the world's vessels are babies compared with the Italian ship Anita, which was broken up during the present century at Genoa. She was built in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and for well over three centuries had sailed the world's seas. She was not only the oldest but the slowest ship in existence. No wonder, for her hull was of oak 12 inches thick.

Mark the Line.

New lead pipe is expensive, and also expensive to lay, hence this little stunt may help you save some money. Where lead pipes are covered by a rough floor there is always the danger that the steamfitter may cut through the floor and through the pipe, but if the line of pipe is marked on the floor there will be little danger.

Ancient Needlework.

The earliest example of needlework known to exist comes from the tomb of a Pharaoh 1,500 years before the Christian era, and there are specimens of Greek work dating from twelve centuries later.

Prophetic Bridget.

A medical authority recommends the eating of semi-raw potatoes. Our cook has insisted on this for years.—The Passing Show.

Moorish Superstitions.

One of the first things a traveler notices in a Moorish town are the "hands," painted or drawn, on the walls of many dwellings. These are to avert the "evil spirit"; five, the number of fingers, is considered a sacred number.

Kittiwake Flies Atlantic.

A kittiwake bird recently shot in Newfoundland has flown across the Atlantic ocean, a numbered band on his leg revealed.—Science Service.



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