

She came, the gentle stranger, but soon her heart
sank down,
For all her kind advances they received with pout
and frown.
Their *puny* strength was infinite to harass and
annoy,
Life for the governess just then had surely much
alloy.
She left; but, ah! too soon there came another
and another;
For not of old did children rule their father and
their mother.
Then came a governess from town who knew the
art to rule,
And now the little maidens found they were indeed
in school.
Their mischief, though, found other bent, for fun
will have its way,
And childhood brings its frolics as the sunshine
brings the day.
Now Pamela, the pioneer of all the little crew,
Was dressed one day for visitors, so were her
sisters, too;
And wandering in the garden till their playmates
did appear,
A forbidden turn they took, and to the water-but
drew near.
"I've found out how the tap is drawn," said Pamela;
"just sec."
And down went all the little heads, as close as
close could be.

Intent they watched the moving tap, so hard ere
now to draw;
Exultant stood their leader, nor dangerous flood
foresaw;
But force of water beat the force of Pamela's
small hand,
And out it came, the mighty stream, o'er all the
little band.
In vain did Pamela apply the spigot to its place,
The water squirted out again in every frightened
face.
Some ran, some fell, all screamed aloud in terror
and affright,
While Pamela, in frantic haste, would set the matter
right.
But when she saw no strength of hers would keep
the water in
She threw the spigot in the air, and ran to tell her
sin.

So pleasant were the schoolroom days of all these
little folks,
So frolicsome their playroom hours, so full of fun
their jokes,
That though each one's fair youthful face Time's
silent token bears,
They love to wake the memory of their happy
early years.
And decked in spectacles, in cap which shrouds
the flaxen curls,
They often tell the story of the eight nice little girls.

NORA.

OUR PETS.

PARROTS AND COCKATOOS, AND HOW TO KEEP THEM.



BEFORE you think of getting a parrot or a cockatoo, get his habitation ready for him. Let this be as large and roomy as possible, for it is a very great mistake to suppose that parrots talk best in a small cage. If you choose to keep your parrot on a stand with a chain to his leg, you may do so. Some of these stands are very ornamental; but for my own part, I sacrifice ornament to utility and the comfort of my pet polly. His cage is very large, and I have even taken out the swing because he is a big bird and used to knock his poor head on it. Neither does he care much for swinging. He gets plenty of exercise without that, for I let him out very often during the day, and he will sit for an hour at

a time on the back of my chair. He also goes out on my shoulder through the grounds, and altogether, although only a cockatoo, he is as happy as a king.

Polly's perch should be a good thick one, made of hickory wood, and thicker in the centre than the ends, so that he can fit his grasp as he chooses. I like a square cage best, because then the tail is not rubbed so often and damaged. The cage should be kept exceedingly clean, and the bottom drawer emptied out every morning, and an allowance of sea-sand and coarse gravel given, for, as birds have no teeth, they swallow small stones so that the food may be properly ground in the gizzard.

The bird should have two dishes, one for his water and the other for his seeds, and occasionally a third should be given when you want to give soap for a change. He should have clean water

for drinking purposes once a day, and his seed-tin should be filled twice daily. Both dishes ought to be conveniently deep, as this prevents them from scattering the seeds about.

Always have the bottom of the cage dry, and do not leave any garbage about, such as kernels or sand-papered, else your pet may have sore feet. I wash my polly's feet frequently—no one else dare do it—and he enjoys it; I afterwards dry them with a very soft rag.

If your bird will bathe, let him do so by all means in fine weather, not in frosty; and if he will not go into his tub of his own free will, then take him out into the sunshine, and rain upon him with a fine syringe. This greatly conduces to his health.

I do not think that money spent upon the comfort of a pet is thrown away. This world contains many woes and sorrows, and the animal, whether bird or beast, that helps us many times and often to forget our cares is surely worthy of all the care we can bestow upon him. If you believe this, you will buy your polly a special bath-cage: this will keep the ordinary one dry; cramp and many other minor ailments will be avoided. In fact, nothing conduces more to the health and vigour of a parrot than daily access to the bath.

You will, of course, be careful never to allow your pet's cage to stand in a draught, especially if the bird is wet, as after bathing or syringeing; and in cold nights it is a good plan to cover up the cage with some woollen material. It is sudden change from heat to cold that so often induces illness in birds of this kind.

And now about the feeding.

Cockatoos never care for soft food; the staple of their diet should be canary-seed, with now and then a little hemp, especially in cold weather, well-boiled Indian corn, occasionally a bit of mashed potato, a little rice, nut kernel, or a crust of dry toast.

I know some people give their parrots nothing but soft food day after day, and keep them always in a hot stuffy room, and then they marvel forsooth that the birds never appear well and hearty, and lose their feathers when they ought not to. Now, parrots may occasionally—by way of a change, that is—have a dish of bread and milk, but once or twice a week is often enough; and here is how it should be prepared. First scald the bread and drain off the water, and afterwards add the milk. You must be very careful that the milk is sweet and new, and it ought not to be left in the cage long enough to turn sour.

The seed-tin should be always kept clean and dry, and the canary-seed free from dust. Nuts of various kinds are greatly relished by parrots, but I think the best is that from the hazel; ground nuts and Brazil nuts are so fattening, and a fat parrot can never be healthy.

Macaws are allowed more hemp-seed than others of the parrot race; like other parrots, too, they like ripe fruit, but only in moderation, and *water, of course*, though they do not drink much of this if fed on bread and milk. *It is a cruel mistake to deprive any kind of bird of drinking water*, yet I know it is one that is very often made.

Lories are treated just like parrots.

The blue mountain lory is my favourite; he is so gentle and loving, and withal a good talker. There are many other kinds of lories, of which I have not space here to speak; but any little knowledge I possess I shall be most happy to impart to others, so any information about pets they want to know my readers have only to write and ask for through the "Questions and Answers" pages.

Now about talking. Birds differ much in this respect; and probably the best speakers are the ash-coloured or grey African parrots. I have an idea that they speak more plainly than others. And here, by the way, is another cruel mistake that some people make. They have their birds' tongues slit. This is such a stupid error that I feel quite angry when I think of it. How, then, should you teach your bird to talk? You will have no difficulty at all in doing this if you follow my plan. Be invariably kind to the bird, and love it as much as you can. Never, on any account, let it be rashly approached or frightened. Give it its nuts and its tit-bits with your own hand, and keep it always happy and comfortable and in a place where it can hear the sound of talking and laughing.

Never, on any account, give parrots bones or meat of any kind, if you would avoid skin irritation and feather breaking and plucking. Parrots suffer at times from illness, but prevention is better than cure, and if you treat them as I have told you they will never ail, and will live to a green old age.

These birds moult once a year, and during this period—about three months—they ought to be taken even more than usual care of, and given a more liberal diet. Place a little saffron in their water, and give hemp-seed and Indian corn (well boiled and cold) more frequently, and a little mashed potato dusted over with cayenne, and now and then a chili or two.

ARION.