

Animal Actualities.

NOTE.—These articles consist of a series of perfectly authentic anecdotes of animal life, illustrated by Mr. J. A. Shepherd, an artist long a favourite with readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE. While the stories themselves are matters of fact, it must be understood that the artist treats the subject with freedom and fancy, more with a view to an amusing commentary than to a mere representation of the occurrence.



XV.

Misunderstood



THIS is an older story than most of our others. It dates back, indeed, to the year 1864, when the pet of a British regiment, stationed in Jamaica, was a baboon. He was a meditative and ex-

windows his dwelling was placed. He was tethered by a long, light chain, but even with this restraint he managed to get into a good deal of mischief. As, for instance, on one day, when he conceived himself insulted by a certain young officer, and instantly fell



HALF-STRANGLER.

tremely thoughtful baboon, and his habits and manners provided continual amusement for the officers, before whose mess-room

to pelting the mess-room windows with such terrific effect that his habitation was removed to a less commanding spot. Here his amuse-



DANDLED AND FONDLED-



THIS WAY—

ments still went on, however. Any living creature that ventured within his chain-radius was apt to have a busy minute or two, and the unhappy fowls, who often strayed within reach, were grabbed instantly, and sometimes

but he neither plucked it nor wrung its neck, but, instead, dandled and fondled it with such demonstrative affection that quite possibly the unfortunate cock would have preferred plucking. He squeezed it, he stroked



THAT WAY—

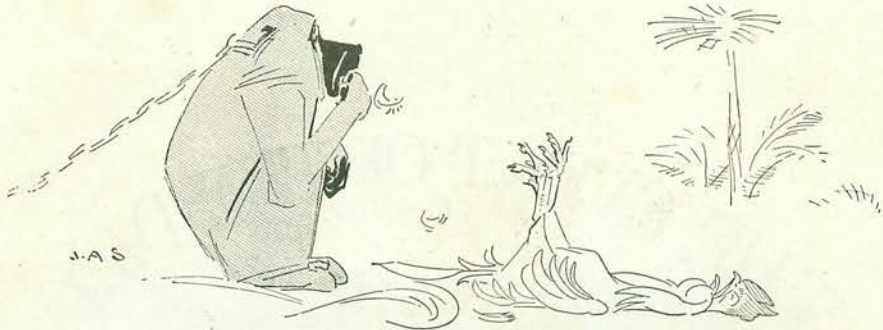
strangled, though he more often amused himself by plucking or half-plucking his unhappy prisoner before releasing it.

One fowl, however, he took a sudden and violent fancy for. He grabbed it, it is true,

it, rubbed it, nursed it, held it aloft and danced it, released it for a moment, and playfully hauled it back by the leg when it made for liberty. The bird did not in any way reciprocate his affection; in fact,

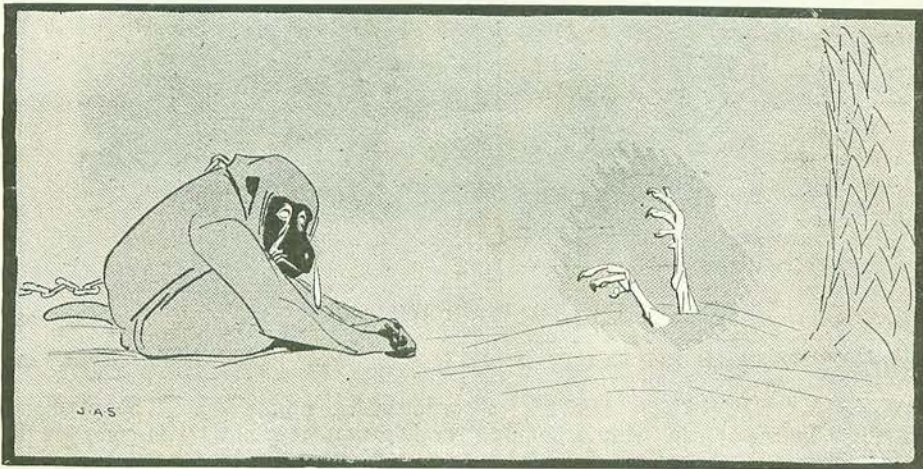


AND THE OTHER.



KILLED BY KINDNESS.

altogether misunderstood it. But the when he had secured a creature he could really
 baboon persevered, and held firmly on to love, it should die ere he could induce it



MOURNED.

his pet. He felt confident of winning it over by persistent kindness, and since his earlier demonstrations had proved unsuccessful, he renewed them with more vigour. He stroked it the other way, rubbed it more persistently, danced it more quickly, and squeezed it a good deal harder. But even these attentions failed to rouse its affection, and at last, in the midst of an extra-friendly hug, the perverse cock died, misunderstanding the devoted baboon to the last.

He was overwhelmed with grief. To think that at last,



A CANNIBAL SAVAGE.

fittingly to reciprocate his affection! It was very sad. He set about the last sad rites with every manifestation of sorrow. In solemn grief he buried his departed playmate at the foot of a tall tree, where the grass might grow and the birds sing over its grave. Then he sat him down before the grave and mourned; neglected all his usual amusements, and mourned sorely day by day for a fortnight. But at the end of that time he could bear his grief no longer; so he dug up his departed pet and ATE IT!