

JOCKO, THE BRAZILIAN APE.



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Adapted from the German by MADAME DE CHATELAIN.

Second Edition.

LONDON: A. N. MYERS & CO., 15, BERNERS STREET, OXFORD STREET, W.

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NOW my dear little folks, if you listen attentively to this story, you will learn that it is not always wise to aim at a condition above the one in which we are born; and that many live to rue the day when they left a comfortable home, out of mere ambition.

Jocko was born in one of the grand old forests of Brazil, and spent his childhood in a secure retreat, where no human footsteps had ever intruded, and where the monkeys had everything their own way, and were as happy as the day was long. Jocko's time was divided between climbing trees, eating nuts, and cutting as many capers as heart could wish.

Don't you think he had good cause to be contented with his lot?

But it is not only human hearts that are changeful; and monkeys being an inferior imitation of the animal man, it is no wonder if they partake of most of his defects, without any of his redeeming virtues.

Now Jocko did not know when he was well off. The forest with its leafy covert of giant vegetation was as beautiful as could be, but the young monkey thought that out beyond the forest there must be something more beautiful still, and he began to complain that the trees hindered his seeing the world.

It was in vain his parents told him he would not find such good nuts anywhere else, and that there existed a terrible kind of two-legged monkey in the world out beyond, who wore clothes, and made prisoners of four-legged monkeys. Go Jocko would. Indeed he only half believed what was told him, thinking his parents merely meant to frighten him into staying at home. Accordingly one morning he set out on his travels.

On reaching the outskirts of the forest, Jocko was quite delighted to see how big the world was; for though he thought the horizon was the end of everything, still he fancied he might be tired before he reached even that.

After walking on a good bit, he at last came to a village, where he saw some of the two-legged monkeys his parents had warned him against; and as he peeped at them from afar, he thought how foolish they were to live in those big square things (he meant houses) instead of roosting in trees. By this time Jocko had grown hungry, and began prowling about for something to eat, in doing which he picked up a pair of boots.

"Ho ho!" said he, "I'll put on these, as I see the two-legged monkeys wear them, and then they'll take me for one of themselves, and I shall get a good dinner."



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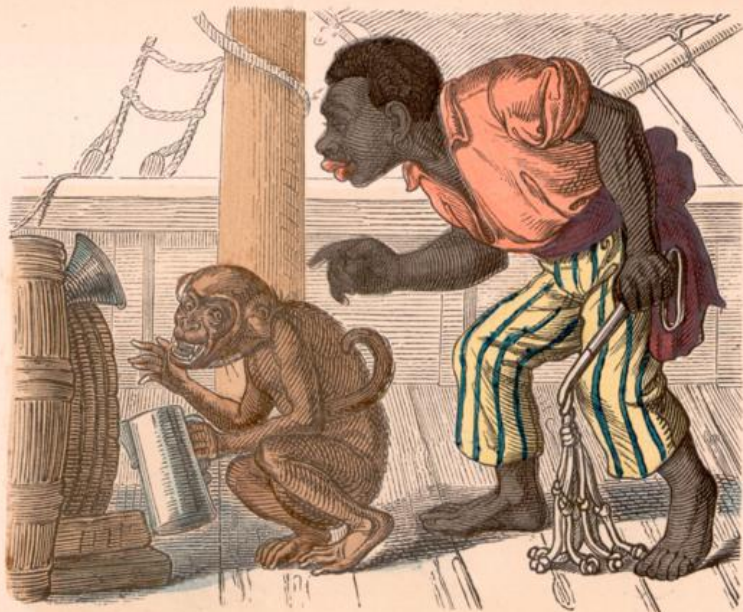
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But Jocko had cause to repent putting on the boots; for they had been lined with pitch, and set there by a cunning planter, who was in the habit of catching monkeys for sale. And while poor Jocko was trying to get out of them as fast as he could, he was seized and bound by the stranger, and not set at liberty till he was on board a vessel on the point of sailing for Europe.

Now though Jocko had wished to see the world, he would rather have seen it after his own fashion, and did not much relish the great bare masts instead of the beautiful trees of his native forest; but what was worse still, he had to take his meals with a couple of Angola cats, and as they always wanted to have the lion's share, and Jocko stood up for his rights, there was a great deal of scratching and clawing, and the monkey had generally the worst of it between the two.

Now Jocko thought it quite beneath his dignity to be treated as a cat, instead of a two-legged monkey, and seeing that others helped themselves to drink from a cask, he took a can, and resolved to do the same. The cask contained brandy, which Jocko had never tasted before. It rather burnt his throat at first, still he thought it would look like a two-legged monkey to take a good draught of it, so he drank on till he began to think it very nice, and presently he grew quite tipsy; and no wonder, for he had completely drained the can. Master Jocko had now proceeded so far in his imitation of two-legged monkeys, that like other toppers, who never think they have had enough, he was going to draw another can-full; when the negro cook happened to see him, and snatching up the cat-o'-nine-tails, gave him such a hearty thrashing, that he never got tipsy again.



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Jocko was very indignant at having been whipped by the cook, for he could see no difference between himself and a negro: but as blackey was a big, stout fellow, he did not dare play off any of his pranks on him. Not so however with the boatswain's son. Master Tom, it must be confessed, was very provoking, and liked to tease the monkey, forgetting that he would not have relished being served the same way himself. So one day Jocko thought he would teach him better manners, and picking him up in his forepaws, was about to fling the boy into the sea, when the boatswain caught him by the tail. "You rascally monkey!" cried he, "we'll see whether you'll sink or swim!"

And so saying he flung Jocko overboard.

Luckily for monkeys, nature teaches them to swim, without their having to take any lessons. Thus Jocko, though not much relishing being cast into a rather rough sea, that felt cold to the native of a warm climate, battled against the waves, while thinking all the while: "O that I was safe back in my beautiful forest! The world is not half so pretty, and the sea not half so nice as green grass!"

At last he reached land, which happened to be the coast of Germany, where the learned Professor Klecks was collecting specimens of sea-weeds, shells, and other marine curiosities: and as Jocko was himself a zoological specimen that might have its value, the Professor pressed him into his service.

Now the Professor had no notion that monkeys were to be idle, being mindful of the saying of a shrewd negro, who insisted on it that monkeys could speak as well as human beings if they chose, only they took care not to do so, for fear of being set to work. And acting on this principle, the Professor argued thus: "Let him hold his tongue as long as he pleases, for silence is valuable in a servant—but let him work for his bread." Accordingly he loaded Jocko with his luggage, his box of specimens, his net for catching butterflies, his telescope, and in short all his traps, while he strutted along, smoking his pipe and reflecting on the difference between men and monkeys.

As to Jocko's reflections, they were rather gloomy, and he began to think land was no better than sea.



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When Jocko and his new master reached home, there came a visitor, who was no less a personage than Professor Rudiger, the great geographer. The latter was highly pleased with the monkey, and gave him an apple, and seemed to take so much interest in him, that his brother Professor offered to make him a present of the animal. The offer was joyfully accepted, and though Jocko thought Professor Klecks had no business to give him away, as he belonged to himself after all, still he preferred the Professor who gave him the apple, to the one who had set him to carry his things, and gladly followed the geographer home.

Professor Rudiger knew every district on the globe by heart, and was better informed about what was going on in Kamtschatka or at Timbuctoo, than in the neighbouring parish: but with all his learning he forgot that monkeys are ever bent on mischief. So one day Jocko crept into his study, and pouncing on his books, said to himself: "My master is always poring over these nonsensical bits of paper, till he forgets to come to dinner, and eat his meat for me to have the remains. I'll tear them to pieces for his good."

In the midst of this notable feat, in walked his master who had just come home.

The Professor of geography was a very good sort of man, as long as people let alone his books and his globes; but he would have been less annoyed if all the sovereigns of Europe combined, had invaded his country, than at this single monkey making an irruption into his study. In this case however, the remedy was shorter and easier than it would have been in the other. The worthy Professor took the law into his own hands, and ejected the intruder by the same way as he came, namely, the window, saying by way of excuse to himself: "Monkeys no doubt alight on their feet like cats."

But Jocko did not exactly alight on his feet, being pitched head foremost into an earthen jar, belonging to the stock of a market woman, whose wares were spread upon the ground in the crockery market, and who set up a frightful scream at this unexpected sight.

Fortunately for Jocko his head was hard, and fortunately for the market woman, her jar was hard too, so neither broke the other; and he presently scrambled out, and was about to play his pranks throughout the market, when she called aloud to a chimney sweeper, who happened to pass that way, to come and rid her of so dangerous a customer.



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The chimney-sweeper took him readily enough, and was considering whether he could turn him to any account in his own line, when he happened to meet a gentleman's footman, to whom he offered him for sale.

After a little haggling about the price, the chimney-sweeper trying to make the best bargain by extolling Jocko's cleverness, and the footman declaring that monkeys were the plague of a household, and worse than having to wait on twenty masters; the hairy stranger was sold for the humble sum of twelve Groschen (about eighteen pence) and taken away.

Jocko thought this was far better than being thrown into the sea or out of window, and felt rather proud of having a price set on his head, which proved him to be a person of more consequence in Europe than he had been in Brazil.

The cunning footman knew what he was about when he bought the monkey, for before half an hour had gone by, he had sold Jocko for ten dollars to the wealthy Baron Silvermore.

Jocko now thought himself a personage of the highest importance, and the sort of life he led was quite to his liking. His master was lazy, and did little more than lie all day long on a sofa, and smoke his meerschaum; while Jocko had still less to do, no other service being required of him, than to fan his master with a feather fan, with which he "blew hot and cold" so irregularly, that the Baron generally bid him cease after three minutes' exercise. In point of fact he had only to wear a fine livery, of which he was vastly proud, and that put him quite on a level with the two-legged monkeys, in his estimation; and to amuse his master by his pranks, in return for which he was treated to an unlimited quantity of nuts, apples, cakes and sweetmeats, to say nothing of all that he stole into the bargain.

"Now," thought Jocko, "this is something like! I did well to come to Europe, for here I am somebody,—while in my native forest, who ever dreamt of what a clever monkey I really am?"

But the same ambition that had always fermented in Jocko's brain, now whispered to him that he was quite as capable of being the master of the house as the Baron himself,—indeed much more capable he thought, for was not he quite as handsome as the two-legged monkey, and much slimmer, and twenty times more nimble?



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One day therefore, when his master had gone to take a drive in his carriage, Jocko rigged himself out in his handsome silk dressing gown, and Turkish smoking cap; and having added a pair of spectacles as the finishing touch, he reclined on the sofa with the ease of a man of fashion, and thought himself the most elegant monkey in the world.

Presently there came a General to pay a visit to the wealthy Baron, and after many bows and pretty speeches, he requested the loan of a good round sum, to pay his debts. After listening patiently for a while to his long speech, which seemed only so much noise and clatter to him, Jocko could bear it no longer, and jumping up on his seat he seized the General by his epaulet with one paw, and was about to clutch his hair with the other, when the military man began shouting out: "Murder! murder!" and beat a hasty retreat.

The General had no sooner left the house than he began to be afraid he had not displayed quite as much courage and coolness as becomes a military man. But then to be sure he had never been to war, having been raised to the rank of General merely by virtue of his high birth. Only he thought as people would talk, it might be disagreeable if the neighbours were to say that General Ironerve had been seen running away. So he said to himself: "It is evident that my friend the Baron has gone mad—I had better haste and fetch a doctor, and that will account for everything."

And off the General posted to Dr. Chloroform, and begged him to come as fast as he could, to cure Baron Silvermore, who had gone raving mad.

Thinking the case must be very serious, by the alarm depicted in the General's countenance, and that the madman might prove dangerous, the doctor thought it but prudent to request the escort of a constable—"For I am not obliged to be brave, since even a General is afraid," argued he.

Accordingly he proceeded in company with a military looking guardian of public order and tranquility, to the Baron's house, where he was told by the footman that his master was out.

"Out of his senses you mean!" said the medical man, "but I shall come in all the same."

And having forced an entrance by the aid of the constable, he hastened upstairs to confront the supposed Baron, when he found Jocko gravely smoking a cigar in imitation of his master.

The doctor now thought the General had played him this trick on purpose, and was proportionately angry; while the constable, in turn, fancying the doctor had hoaxed him, began to talk very big; and there's no saying what might have happened, had not the Baron suddenly returned to set everything to rights, and satisfied all parties by giving Jocko into custody, and declaring he should never darken his doors nor even his windows again. Thereupon the constable took him in charge, as in duty bound, and dragged him to the watch-house, where poor Jocko was sentenced, without any trial of course, to receive a sound whipping. Nor did his troubles end there: for the guardians of public safety and order, considering him to be a dangerous subject to be left at large, sold him to a neighbouring manager of a theatre, whose actors were dogs, assuring him that Jocko had first rate talents for the stage.



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Whether Jocko had any dramatic talent or not, certain it is that he had no inclination to become an actor, nor anything else indeed that would give him the slightest trouble. He liked to cut capers on his own account, all monkeys being born with the instincts of a harlequin or a clown—but he had no notion of executing somersaults at stated hours to please other people. However there was no help for it. He was obliged to bend to necessity, which appeared under the form of a cudgel whenever he proved refractory, and to think himself fortunate not to be endowed with speech, or he would have had to learn parts by heart. But he made many sad reflections while marshalling his canine army, regretting his days of idleness at the Baron's, and blaming his silly ambition in personating his master. Alas! that was a more attractive character than any he was now called upon to play! And as often as this recollection chafed him, woe to the careless cur who did not perform his evolutions properly! For Jocko would lay about him with his wooden sword, as if he were a real Field Marshal. Only his soldiers not being under quite such strict discipline as two-legged ones, would not only growl, but bite him in return, and the manager had continually to interfere in their squabbles, which were usually ended by their being all beaten and sent to bed without any supper.

"O my beloved forest! why did I ever leave you?" would poor Jocko say to himself.—"How foolish was I not to mind what my parents said! It is true I'm a General here, and wear a fine uniform, but I'd rather be a free monkey!"

And he watched his opportunity, until one day he broke loose, and escaped from the theatre.

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But he was too important an actor not to be speedily missed, and the manager raised a hue and cry after him, by running into the street, and offering a reward to anybody who would catch him. Then the market woman who had not forgiven Jocko for frightening her so, the day he fell into the jar, pointed out to the manager that the lost monkey had climbed on to the roof of a neighbouring house, where he sat jibbering, and setting his master at defiance. "The chimney-sweep would fetch him down I'll warrant," added she.

The manager, fearful of having to close his doors if he could not recover his principal actor, soon agreed to give the sweep a handsome reward for catching him, and the latter entered the house for that purpose. But Jocko after pulling off every article of his uniform, and flinging each down into the street with great vehemence, no sooner saw the sweep appear to dispute the empire of the roof with him, than he took a dangerous leap on to another house, whither the sweep could not venture to follow him, —and then he went from roof to roof, while the distracted manager followed in the street below, keeping an eye upon the monkey, and appealing to everybody to catch the runaway actor.

At last Jocko gained the port, and jumping from boat to boat, till he reached a vessel, climbed to the top of the mast, and hid himself in the shrouds: nor did he come down till the manager seemed to have given up the chase, when he descended and knelt before a good-natured looking seaman, the only person on deck at that moment.



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Jocko had so often had to kneel in an imploring attitude in one of the pieces he had acted in, that he performed this action as naturally as a human being, and the sailor caught himself saying: "Well! what is it you want, old fellow?" when finding he did not answer, he replied for him: "Some nuts—eh? or a free passage?"

Jocko still remained in his humble posture, when the sailor granted his mute appeal by saying: "You shall have both, my man,—only I'll hide you below till we're under way."

Jocko made no resistance, and was soon stowed away in safety in the hold of the ship.

Presently the chimney-sweeper, still in hopes of the promised reward, came to the port, where the manager told him he had lost sight of Jocko, and jumping from one boat to another as the monkey had done, till he was within speaking distance of the ship where the fugitive had found a refuge, enquired of the sailor if he had a monkey on board?

"What then?" asked the sailor.

The chimney-sweeper told him the monkey was wanted by the manager of a theatre, and that if he could catch him, they should go shares for the reward.

"But perhaps the poor brute prefers being a sailor?" suggested the seaman. And then he laughed heartily as he added: "I'll ask him, and you may come again to-morrow for an answer."

The chimney-sweeper thinking that as Jocko was a theatrical performer, he might probably be able to give an answer, went back and told the manager that although he could not bring the monkey home for that evening, he would no doubt be forthcoming by next day.

Accordingly on the following morning, as soon as it was light, he again made his way to the port, but the ship was no longer there; she had heaved anchor, and was sailing away, and there sat that provoking monkey on the top of the mast, grinning and making faces at him!

Thanks to the kind seaman, Jocko reached Brazil once more; and oh! how delighted was he, when once again let loose, and able to reach the green recesses of his native forest!

"Well, Jocko, what have you learnt in the world out beyond?" said his fond parents, delighted to see him return.

"Why, that there's nothing like green trees and liberty!" said the traveller.

"You might have learnt that without going so far," muttered his sire.

But Jocko did not hear this philosophical remark; for he was already profiting by his liberty, to walk upon his head and cut capers without fear of professors, market women, barons, or police officers, or in short any of the inconveniences of social life.

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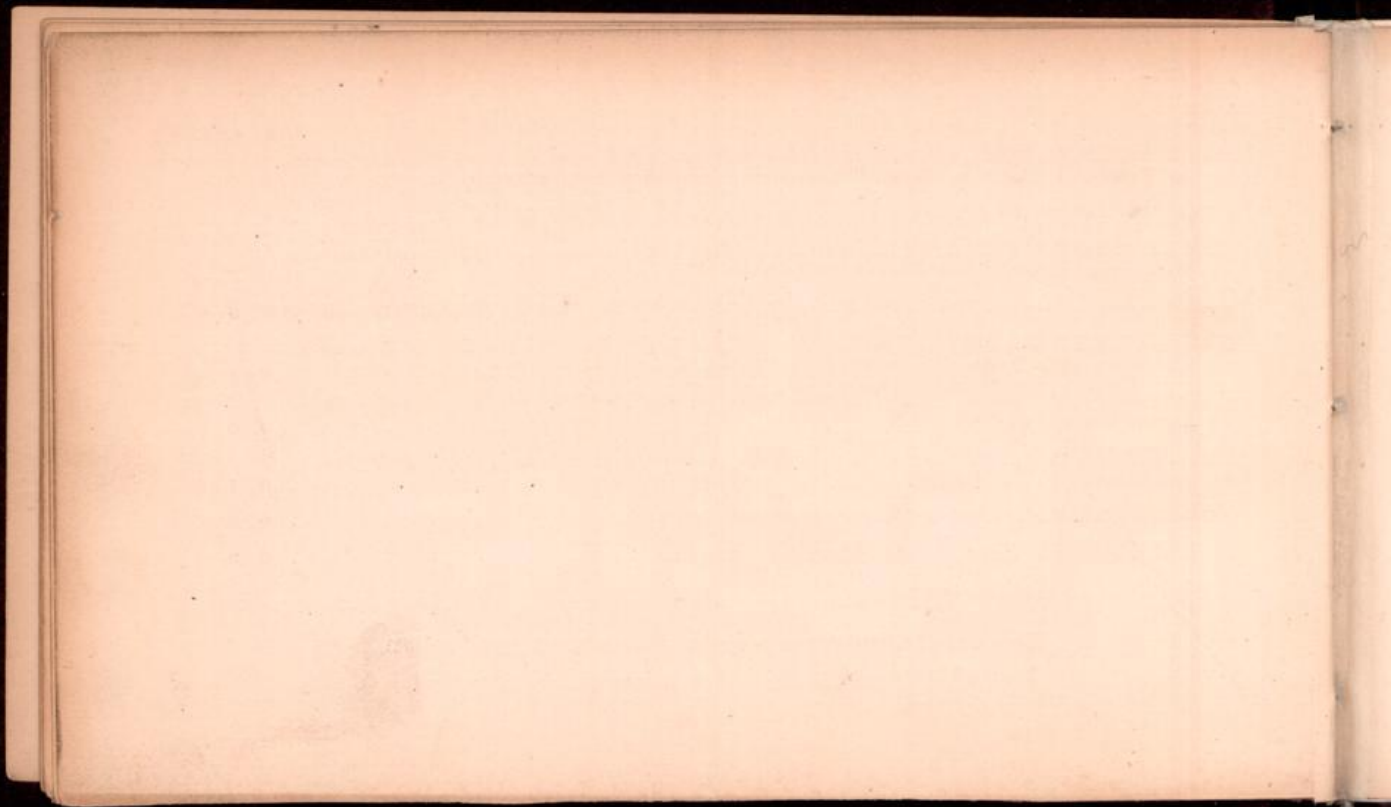
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