

# **FOUR-HANDED FOLK**

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Four-handed folk by Ollive Thorne Miller

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**OLLIVE THORNE MILLER**

**FOUR-HANDED  
FOLK**





MR. CROWLEY

# FOUR-HANDED FOLK

BY

OLIVE THORNE MILLER

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*



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## FOUR-HANDED FOLK.

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### I.

#### THE KINKAJOU.

##### L. NISSEY.

THE way it came about that a bird-student set up a menagerie in her parlor, was this. In New York the shops that keep birds for sale are also supplied with beasts. In the largest of them one may buy almost anything, from a white mouse to an elephant, and always when I go there to look for birds, I pass into the room beyond and look at the animals. There is generally a cage or two of monkeys, and half a dozen or more of other animals, just imported from abroad, and not yet placed in some museum or zoölogical garden.

One day while I was going through the room, I stopped before a cage containing what looked like a ball of golden-brown fur, and a lively little beast who was pulling it about. Of course the ball was a sleepy little fellow who wanted to be



let alone, and his cage-mate was trying to wake him up.

For a while the rolled-up creature endured the annoyance of his fellow, but on a harder push than usual, he slowly uncoiled a little, lifted his head, and looked up at me as if asking protection from all this pulling and hauling. Now I am susceptible to the pleading look in any dumb face, and that one was so innocent and mild, and the large eyes so intelligent, that my heart was won on the instant.

"What is that little brown beast?" I asked the man in attendance.

I was told that it was a night monkey, that a sailor had brought it from Africa as a pet, and they had bought it from him.

A night monkey! I had no desire for a monkey, full of pranks and mischief, in my houseful of birds, still less for one who would carry on his performances at night.

I turned away, but, giving one glance back, I was lost. The little fellow had come to the front of the cage, pulled himself up straight, and was looking at me in an earnest way that I could not resist. Without pausing to consider the difficulties to be overcome, I bought him at once, leaving him to be sent home the next day, and then I went home myself and worked out the problem of how to keep a night monkey in a parlor.

First, of course, I must have a cage, and this is what I planned, and had made. A tight box two feet square, of half-inch boards, with the whole front open. Over this open side a door of coarse-meshed wire gauze slid up and down. The bottom of the box was furnished with a zinc tray, with edges an inch high, on the top of which rested a slide of the same coarse wire gauze, and in the upper back corner was nailed a round wooden spicebox. I describe it thus carefully, to show my readers how easily a little beast may be accommodated in a parlor, and with how little care kept clean and sweet.

The wire floor, of course, let everything fall through into the tray under it, and thus the little fellow's fur was beautifully clean. To put the whole thing in order for the day was the work of five minutes. The zinc tray — on the bottom of which was always a sheet of newspaper — was drawn out, the newspaper carpet with its contents dumped bodily into the ash barrel, the tray held a moment under the hot-water faucet in the laundry, and thoroughly scalded. It was then dried, a fresh sheet of paper laid in it, and returned to the cage. All this in the morning, while the resident of the cage was rolled up in his blankets fast asleep, and thus it was left fresh and nice for the day.

He was a cold little beastie, and I feared at

first that we should never make him comfortable, although he was clad in a coat of thick wool, which stood out like the wool of a sheep, and would seem to be very warm. His cage, too, stood close to the register, and was covered all day by a thick double gray blanket. Yet he would not rouse himself at all, unless the thermometer stood at  $78^{\circ}$ , and to be lively he needed it at  $80^{\circ}$ . This was somewhat smothering to the family, but they heroically endured it for the pleasure the little African gave them.

All the long hours of daylight he passed simply as a ball of fur, deaf to all coaxing, oblivious alike of friend and foe; but during the night he was wide awake, and as full of life as any monkey.

Not being able to see in the dark easily, limits our acquaintances in the animal world, and among others, with all my efforts, I never knew my little pet as I wished, for light, even the dimmest, was a damper upon his freedom. I could listen to him, to be sure, and I did, through as many nights as I cared to give to it. What I heard was curious and suggestive, and I could fancy all sorts of performances, — turning of somersaults, dancing of jigs, queer pushing, shuffling, rustling, and gnawing, with straining of the joints of the cage, rattling of dishes, and now and then a fall to the floor, enough to break his bones.