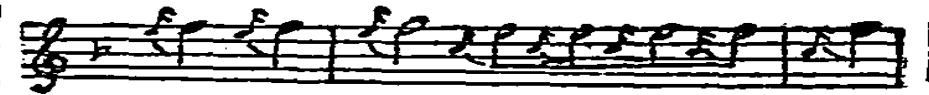


NOISES OF THE ANIMAL WORLD ARE REALLY MUSICAL

Properly Analyzed, the Mooing of a Cow or the Barking of a Dog Accord with the Rules of Composers.

ACCORDING to a musical authority, the mooing of a cow is set to a perfect fifth, octave, or tenth; the barking of a dog to a fourth or fifth; the neighing of a horse is a descent on the chromatic scale; while the donkey brays in a perfect octave. Yet it is thought that the quality of the donkey's voice might be improved."

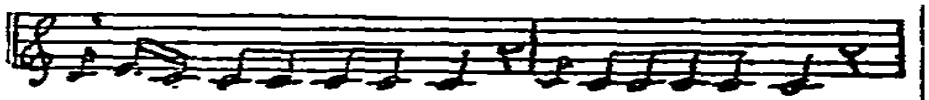
For some time past the foregoing little paragraph has been going the rounds of the exchanges, along with a bunch of others, under some such alluring caption as "Pointless Paragraphs," "Useless Information," &c. Just why some enterprising vaudeville manager has not been capti-



1. Dog's bark—Joy at going out.

vated by the brilliant possibilities it suggests, and sprung on the suffering public a brand-new animal act, a spirited rendition of "The Pilgrims' Chorus," by a specially selected barnyard chorus, is one of those things that can only be explained as a fortunate oversight.

Local musical authorities are not inclined to place unlimited faith in the statements therein contained. To be accurate, they are politely incredulous. One of the best-known vocal instructors in town was mildly indignant at any one so slandering an octave. He didn't know anything about the donkey's bray, but he had far too good an opinion of the ever-useful octave to allow so base a libel to pass without protest. Others had really never had the matter brought to their attention.



2. Mastiff baying.

They didn't believe there was anything in it, but short of bringing the animals to their studios and getting them to try their voices they knew of no way of settling the question, and from such a course they begged to be excused, on the ground of the probable just remonstrances of their respective landlords.

As a matter of fact, the statement is all right so far as it goes. The only trouble is that it does not go far enough. Animals are not so limited in the expression of their emotions. Take the dog, for instance, as the most familiar example. Everybody knows that different dogs have different barks, that a true lover of dogs



3. Cur's yelp—foot trodden on.

knows the voice of his own as surely as he knows that of some particular friend.

And even the same beast has as many different barks as he has emotions. You remember, in the first act of "Peter Pan," Nana, the dog nurse, barks; and the children comment that is not Nana's angry bark, but her frightened bark. "The

watchdog's voice that bays the whispering wind" is an entirely different one from that in which he greets his returning master, nor is its melancholy tone to be mistaken for an instant for the frenzied excitement with which he tells of a stray cat passing by just out of reach. These differ not merely in expression, but in note.

One dog's bark of delight, (see illustration 1,) when he understood that he was to be taken after hours of the confinement to which unfortunate city dogs must submit, was noted. It differs radically from the baying of the mastiff, (2,) chained up



4. Whine of a dog tied up.

back of the barn, and equally from the barking of a great dog, (5,) introduced by Haydn in one of his quartets, the thirty-fourth, if memory serves. That is not confined to fourths and fifths. Not having been personally acquainted with the dog whom Haydn plagiarized, it is of course impossible to vouch for the accuracy of the transcription. But no dog with a particle of self-respect would limit his vocal accomplishments to measly little fourths and fifths, even in the barking line.

And dogs can do other things besides bark. They growl at times, under great provocation, and in moments of bitterness of spirit have been known to howl or whine; while a sudden sharp pang elicits a sudden sharp yelp of remonstrance, frequently followed by ten or fifteen minutes of grieved whimpering, like the sob-



5. Haydn—after a great dog.

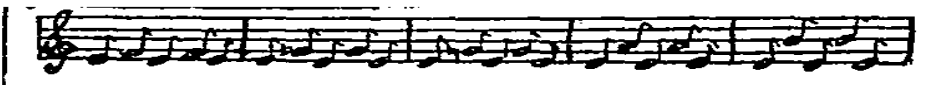
bing of a child, till the pain has quite passed away.

Barking proper is said to be an accomplishment peculiar to civilized dogs—an effort on their part to communicate with their masters. The aboriginal dog—what little there is left of him—whines, growls, or howls, but never barks. It is even recorded that Columbus, returning to America, found that certain dogs that he had left on a previous voyage had relapsed into a state of nature and had forgotten how to bark.

The voice of protest against bondage, the whine of a dog tied up, was in one instance expressed as in illustration 3.

Another dog might have put it quite differently, and made his meaning equally clear. A cur whose foot was trodden on voiced his grieved remonstrance as in illustration 4.

Nor was he content with giving expression to his feelings just once. He reiterated his remarks again and again, not with the same marked emphasis, for his tones grew fainter and fainter as the pain grew less. He began with a good vigorous



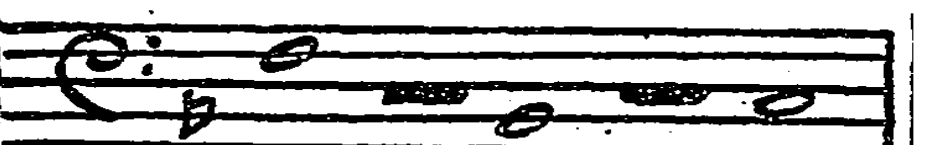
6. How a cat purrs.

"forte" and trailed off into the faintest of "pianissimos."

Cats have three separate ways of audibly making known their feelings, each one more expressive than the last. There is the purr of satisfied cathood—the song of thanksgiving to the "God of things as they are." Is there any sound on earth more thoroughly expressive? The drowsy, sleek, warm, well-fed, blissful content of it is a thing that mortals may envy, but need never hope to achieve. Yet it is almost entirely a matter of expression. The notes puss uses to voice her soul's content are comparatively few and simple. By listening a while it will be found that she varies the intervals, from seconds to fifths. Having rumbled along peacefully for a while on one interval, she will try the next for a change, and so on. (6.)

Her two expressions of dissatisfaction—her mew and her yowl—are much more complex. Her mew, if she manages it well, can express almost as many things as a dog's bark. As an expression of plaintive reproach, it is probably unequaled in the world of sound. Her "yowl," which is, after all, merely the mew at its strongest and most terrible, is a thing to shudder at. It is almost entirely a creature of darkness. Heard on the back fence by night, it has caused many a sleepless mortal to gnash his teeth in impotent rage verging on gibbering idiocy. No one has yet been found capable of reducing it to cold type. It arouses emotions not entirely conducive to calm, scientific observation.

To get out of doors among the farm animals—probably when the lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea—no two of it does its lowing in exactly the same notes.



7. Cow wanting to be let out to grass.

The mooing of a cow set to a perfect fifth, forsooth! Why, the mooing of a cow is set to whatever notes suits that particular cow's fancy and voice.

A careful observer has noted the demand of a young cow to be let out to grass. (7) It contains three notes—starts with a descent of a fifth, and then rises one note. But does any one suppose that Goldsmith's "sober herd that lowed to

meet its young" expressed itself with any such engaging simplicity? Not at all. Some of its remarks have been gathered up (8) and noted for the benefit of the unbeliever. No two of it, thus recorded, said the same thing, in the same way. As for a certain two-year-old bull, his infrequent expressions of his feeling displayed a truly masculine terseness and vigor. One could not but suspect him of "saying things" after his own fashion—a fashion of most compelling brevity and explosiveness (9.)

That animals do say things, by the way, is beyond peradventure. It is no modern

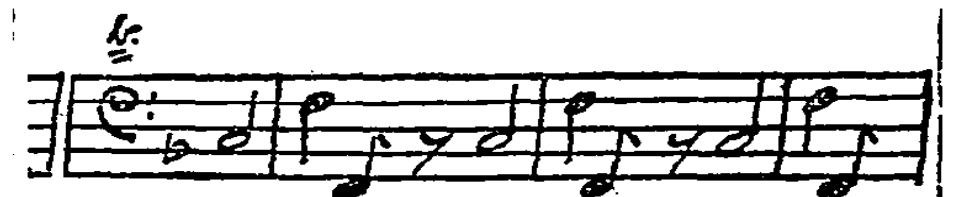


8a. Remarks of a cow.

upstart theory, first enunciated by Prof. Garner, and applicable only to monkeys. As far back as 1800 there was published in Vienna a curious little book by G. E. Wetzel, called "A New Discovery of the Language of Animals, Founded Upon Reason and Experience." There had been others before it, but none of such elaborate, if unconvincing seriousness. In it the author tried to prove that animals make themselves understood by a combination of sounds, which constitute the simplest language. He actually published a sort of rudimentary dictionary of this language, and tried to translate into his native German dialogues of dogs, cats, chickens, and other birds in illustration of his principles. He printed an animated conversation—composed of little abrupt cries—in

strictly speaking, a necessity, perhaps. They might almost be counted as one of the luxuries of the equine menu. She likes them, but she can do without them.

As for the donkey and his cousins, the ass and the mule, all three must, with all due respect for the octave, be credited with most frequently using it. Sometimes, in fact, they make a sudden drop of two octaves. Sometimes, of course, they make use of some of the intervening notes; but most frequently they give hideous vent to their feelings "in sonorous octaves, loud and shrill."



8b. By another cow.

which it is alleged some captive frogs were planning their escape. As he weakly admits, however, that several of them did escape, it is fair to conclude that he had not thoroughly gathered the drift of their remarks.

That animals do talk, or have some means of communication, at least with those of their own species, seems perfectly plausible. That any mere man has so far mastered their language is more than doubtful.

A young greeting, for instance, had one word of greeting for a strange horse, another for his mother, another still for his owner; and his remarks when he was alone out of doors and a bit uneasy were unmistakably different from any of these. Possibly his mother and the other horse understood exactly what he said in each case. His owner merely understood that he did not say the same thing. (10.)

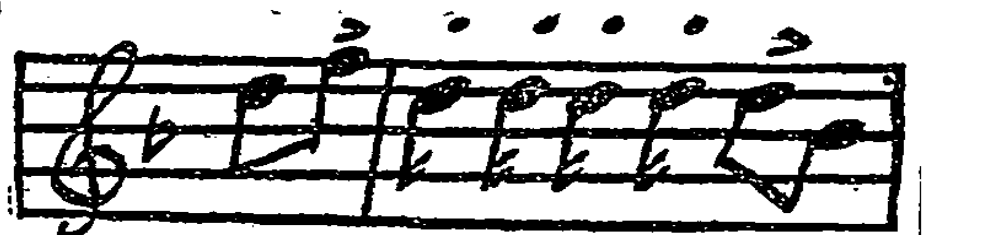
The horse, full grown, is rather a silent animal. He rarely gives voice to his feelings. When he does, it must be confessed



9. By a two-year-old bull.

that he is rather partial to the chromatic scale. A horse's neighing in four cases out of five takes in part of that scale, and a real good, prolonged whinny will take in the whole of it. It is not hard to see where the phrase a "horse laugh" comes from, for it certainly does sound like a hideously harsh parody on human laughter. Long ago the unknown author of the Book of Job noticed the same thing, and said of the horse: "He saith among the trumpets, 'Ha! Ha!' and smelleth the battle afar off."

When one is hungry, horse or human, it is no laughing matter, no cause for wild paroxysms of mirth. The neigh of a mare for hay has been noted. It is short and sharp. She has apparently no time to dally with all the notes of the chromatic scale. Her demand for oats is a trifle more leisurely. Oats are not,

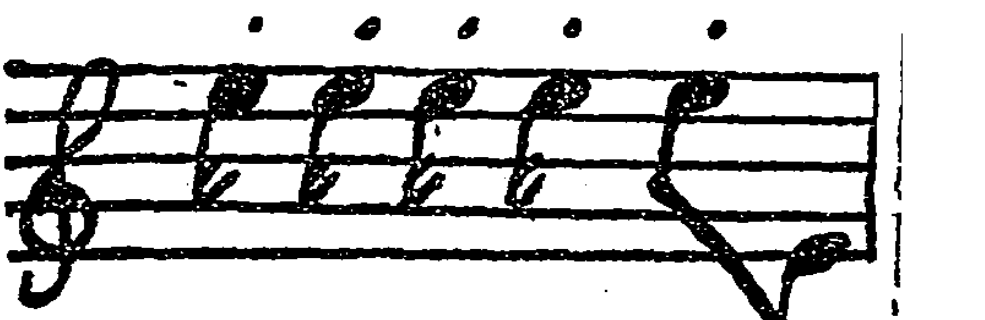


10a. Colt talking to a strange horse.

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That there is to the human ear nothing musical in the cries of animals proves nothing. Music is entirely a question of taste. Some there be who find it in Wag-

ner and Brahms, others who love it best in coon songs. Sound is sound. Whether or not it be music depends on the listener. Humans don't like the music of animals. One has but to contemplate the misery of a pet dog during an evening of what we humans consider music to realize that animals return the compliment.



10b. Same colt talking to his mother.