A HAPPY FAMILY.



Some dozen years or so ago a singular sight was to be seen in Boston, Mass. If you had gone to a certain house as a visitor you would have been ushered into a daintily-furnished sitting-room, where the family mostly lived and received their friends. But the curious thing about this room was that in one wall a strongly-barred and grated door had been let in, and behind this during the greater part of the day might be seen two almost full-grown lions stretched out at their ease. Their favourite position was just behind the bars, where they would lie and watch the operations of the people in the room. Besides their den, which was large and airy, they had the run of a part of the garden behind the house, where they were

taken for their daily exercise.

The walls of their room were built of brick, the floor being of wood. There was one long window looking out into their own particular yard, and altogether they were about as happily placed as it was possible for animals in captivity to be.

The lions were a little over two years of age,

BITS ABOUT ANIMALS.

and strong and large for their age. They were male and female, and the only survivors of their respective litters. One was an orphan, while the parents of the other were travelling about the country earning a comfortable living for their owners.

The little ones were born in New York, and their owner, the widow of a showman, took them under her own care, and fondly called them her "babies." She would speak to them about their "mamma," and they responded to her caresses and would kiss her face. She has been their sole keeper, and while they were quite young, used to nurse them on her lap. They even slept on her bed at night until they became too large and heavy.

One she named "Willie," and the other

One she named "Willie," and the other "Martha," and she would pet them and fondle them with no more fear than if they were dogs or cats. She used to let them have the run of the house, but when they grew up visitors stood a little in fear of them, and so she had a room turned into the den we have described, and kept them behind the grating. But the lions seemed to like to press as close to the grating as they could, where they would stretch themselves out in the most satisfied manner possible.

Their mistress gave them each day twelve pounds of good beef, and no other food, as they seemed to thrive best on that meat. On Sunday, it seemed, they got nothing, that being, apparently, the custom then in menageries.

A visitor to this interesting family at the time thus described the interview:

"Nobody goes inside their room but this lady, Mrs. Lincoln, and nobody else feeds them or does anything for them. I could not help asking what would happen if the beautiful Maltese-and-white kitten that was frolicking about the room should stray within the reach of 'Willie's' great, quick paw. But Mrs. Lincoln said they had always had a cat there, and nothing had befallen her; she knew better than to go near the grating.

"The lady took a little rattan in her hand, opened the door of the den, and walked in. Willie was lying just under her feet, and she said 'Get up, sir!' and 'Roll over!' and he obeyed. Something else that she asked him to do he seemed to feel rather lazy about, and she gave him a rap, after which he appeared to be very sorry, and made a plaintive little whine, and reached up his great head and

kissed her, as if to coax her; at which she said, 'Yes, kiss mamma,' which made him happy. She made him stand up on his hind feet and stretch his fore paws up as high as he could. She put her hand in his mouth, between his long, sharp teeth, and patted him on the head. Then he came back to the door and lay down again, growling a little, perhaps with satisfaction that it was over. She says they never attempted to harm her, and she has no fear they ever will."

"Martha" was a much quieter animal, but her beautiful quick eyes gave sufficient evidence that she could be lively enough when the occasion called for it.

Such a sight has probably never been seen anywhere else, as these two great lions thus living on such amicable terms with a woman, and being so absolutely under her control. There was no way out of their own den except through the living-room, and so they were conducted day after day to their playground out of doors. That neither the lions nor their mistress felt any fear was of course due to her having brought them up from infancy: in fact, all along they seemed to have been treated more like human babies than lion's cubs. They were fed from a baby's feeding-bottle until they were old enough to lap milk from a dish. When their teeth were strong enough to tackle a beef bone they were fed only once a day, at noon, when they were also given a drink of water. They were playful with each other, but sometimes roared rather loudly, no doubt to the annoyance of the neighbours.

What became of them subsequently we do not know, but probably they are now travelling

