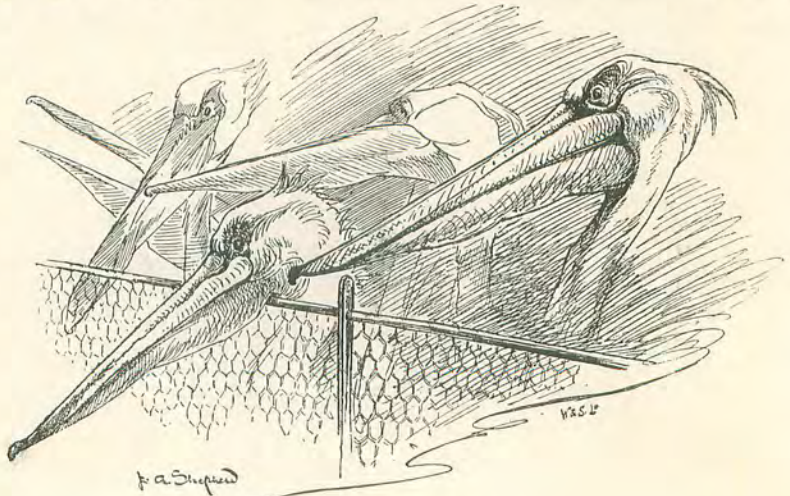




Dinner at the Zoo.

HE place, the Zoological Gardens. Time, nearly half-past two. The visitors, having been deprived of their shillings by the man at the gate, make a bold push for the pelicans' enclosure, for 2.30 is the pelican dinner-hour. A pelican who is not eating is commonly a melancholy sort of bird, with a conviction that too much of his leg material has been used up to construct a beak, and a disposition to brood over the inequitable distribution of things. But dinner-time works a marvellous change in the pelican. His beak isn't half big enough then, and he would gladly, if he could, add a yard of material to the floppy pouch hanging beneath it. When the keeper arrives with a basket of fish, the casual observer sees little in the enclosure but a complication of very large beaks, like snapping shears, which bite, snap, flop, grunt, and become entangled together generally. But the budding Prognomist observes the varying actions of those beaks. He views the floppy pouches with discretion and the stumpy legs with judgment. Consider the corner enclosure, now. Here there are white pelicans (it is more majestic to call the white pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*) with one specimen of the crested pelican, whose Latin name is not so many feet long. As the keeper opens his basket, and when most of the beaks snap wildly in the air, our crested friend uses his own beak

to belabour the heads and snatch at the eyes of those about him. The worthy old fellow objects, and very naturally, to anybody getting anything to eat but himself; so he wastes his time and loses his opportunities in attempts to chey his relatives away from the fence, one at a time. Then, when herrings fall in a silvery shower his time is so much occupied in punishing those who catch them that his own score must average rather low. Prognomically, it is reasonable to say that if that crested pelican had been born human he would have been a reviewer—a superfine reviewer. Among the other common, scrambling, uncrested pelicans, most, in waiting for the herrings, reach away over the fence, snapping and gobbling madly at nothing. One, however—sly old fellow, with one eye shut—stands quietly behind with his other eye on the keeper and waits. He knows that the keeper will throw the bloaters *into* the enclosure, not a yard or two on the other side of the fence, where the row of straining necks puts forth the bill-file—or rank, as you look at it. He is right, and, in consequence, comes out several bloaters ahead. This pelican need never fear transmigration into human shape. He will do well anywhere. The herrings having all disappeared, gloomy



"THE BEAKS SNAP WILDLY."

meditations are renewed, and the crested superfine reviewer, with a parting snap or two, approaches a stump about a foot high. This he solemnly regards for five minutes, stretching his wings the while, and preparing, apparently, for a flight many miles high. Then, with a great effort and an excited grunt, he flies—on to the stump, where he sits in solemn elevation, and gobbles savagely at such of the vulgar rabble as come within reach.

From up on the terrace one may look over into the bear-pit, and drop whatever one pleases to the two most respectably fat bears below. Sometimes people drop what they don't please; I saw a tall hat go once, on a windy day. One bear sniffed it over rather contemptuously, turned it with his paw, and picked it up doubtfully by the brim. It was quite a new sort of present. Biscuits and buns were common, a cigar-end came sometimes, and now and again a pebble or a piece of slate-pencil; these he was used to, and managed to digest pretty well, one with another. But this new-fangled, shiny thing—perhaps a dark design to poison him, or even dynamite—who knew? And then, again—what! no, it couldn't be—sniff—yes, without a doubt, it actually smelt of bear's grease inside! All that bear's nobler feelings were aroused; he was no cannibal, nor would he accept a meal—particularly one he didn't understand—from the slayer of an ursine brother. He dropped the hat in disgust, while the owner started off to find a keeper. Before he came back, however, the other bear, expecting a bun, got up on his hind legs and sat on that hat. There are few hatters who will undertake

to iron a hat which a bear has been sitting on, for sixpence.

These two bears, being chiefly supported by voluntary contributions, exhibit all the fine artistic laziness of the professional tramp. If you begin throwing biscuits, one will, indeed, sit up to catch them; but that is really only to save trouble and get the morsels sooner, for you are expected to pitch them into his mouth. Throw one two or three feet away, and observe the expression

of reproach which creeps over that bear's face. You are either a shocking duffer, he thinks, or a most malicious person, and he slowly rolls over on all fours and finds the biscuit. Starvation will compel him to ascend the pole; that is to say, if the brutal callousness of visitors has kept him without the necessaries of life for about ten minutes, he may, with persuasion, be induced to climb for a bun. But it must be made perfectly clear that without the climb starvation will continue; and the bun must be plainly and temptingly exhibited in all its sticky gloriousness, on the end of a stick. Then *Ursus arctos*, resigning himself to the inevitable, looks first for commiseration to the other bear. "Here's a nice state o' things," he seems to say, "for a pore workin' bear as has to pick up his livin' permiskus. I'd strike if I wasn't famishing. They ought to be obliged to chuck 'em down into our mouths by Act of Parlyment."

And then he reluctantly starts up the pole.

Arrived at the top, and having devoured the bun, he looks about, as though to say, "Well, where's the rest? I want something for my climbing, I do. You're the sort as



"SUPPORTED BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS."

wants people to work for nothin', you are. I want my rights as a workin' bear"; and he opens his contribution box to its fullest extent. Biscuits and another bun follow the first, and still the collecting-box is offered, till the crowd melts away. Then the bear looks round for more commiseration. Nobody being there to commiserate him, he commiserates himself. "Got to climb down again for nothin', I s'pose. Who's goin' to pay me for that, I'd like to know? Nice sort o' world this." If we had to compare this bear to a human being, who would the human being be? Let us think. There's the threat of a strike; the demand of his rights as a working bear; the peculiar English dialect he thinks in—I know he thinks in that dialect; such a bear couldn't think in any other—and there is the contribution box. Why, can it be a peculiar section of—but no, comparisons are odious.

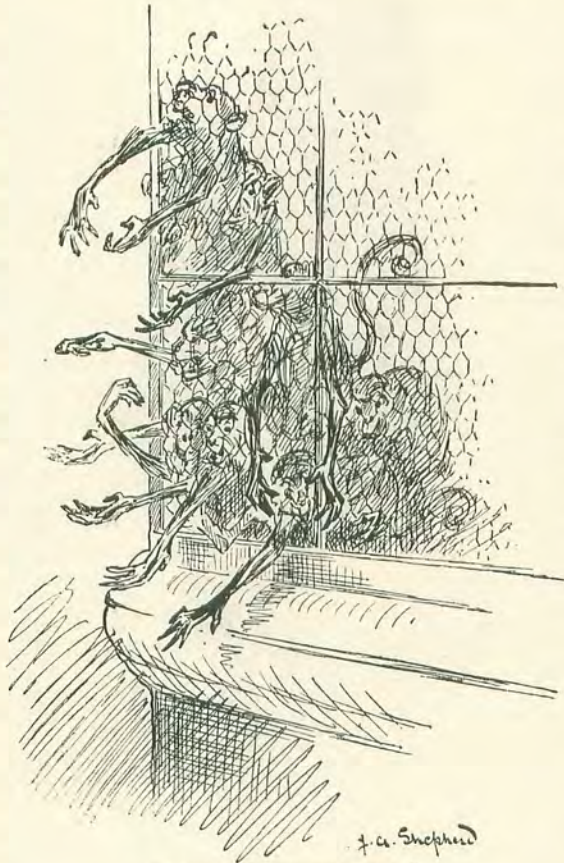
Arriving at the monkey-house, the animal Pro-gnomist is apt to be nonplussed. It is scarcely fair to a beginner to set him to deal with an advanced genus like the monkeys—only one remove in the class below the human family. And, besides, what sort of individual study can he make opposite a large cage, when the exhibition of a single crumb will produce the sort of demonstration which the artist here gives us? A crowd of clutching paws and chattering teeth can scarcely give grounds for any definite scientific conclusion, except that all the monkeys want the same morsel. Careful watching,

however, will tell many things. How one monkey would prefer, beyond all things, the glasses off the nose of an interested bystander; but, through difficulties with the mesh of the wires, has never been able to achieve more than a single eyeglass. How even the offer of a nut will not seduce others from mutual cuticular investigations. How the Diaua monkey, pretty as it is, is clearly misnamed, since it is disrespectful to suggest the possibility of the chaste goddess turning rapid summersaults by way of earning a biscuit. Many more things

than these will be learned, and instructive theories based thereupon; but for our present purposes monkeys are too large a study.

A stork is a bird of a very different mental mould from the pelican. The pelican broods, the stork meditates; the pelican is a Jeremiah, the stork is a Solomon. This, of course, in the monumental or non-eating condition. A much respected if not very numerous class of Hindoo pundit achieves immortality and avoids the transmigration of his soul into an inferior body by sitting in strict seclusion, and concentrating his whole mental faculties on no-

thing whatever for many years, or, perhaps, by fixing his eyes upon his outstretched little finger and his thumb against his nose for as long a period. Now, if during all this time this sacred personage were to make a mistake—allow his attention to wander, for instance, in the direction of cutlets for dinner, or the Home Rule question, or his fingers, in a moment of forgetfulness, to leave his nose



"A CROWD OF CLUTCHING PAWS."

and scratch his ear—if he were to do something of this sort, and thus incur transmigration in the regular Buddhist course, I believe he would become a stork. Indeed, I have no doubt that the storks whose profundity of meditation we all so much admire in the Zoological Society's Gardens are incarnations of most respectable and influential Mahatmas who have had an accident in training, and so become scratched from the race of immortals. Observe their attempts to renew training. Did ever Mahatma in this world so solemnly, so intensely, so severely bring his whole mental faculties to bear on nothing for hours together as one of these? The stork is endeavouring to make up for lost time. There he stands, with his shoulders humped, his eyes half open, looking at nothing; all the brains under his almost bald pate are set to work upon the same object. But he

will never complete his allotted term of meditation—never, that is to say, so long as it is the custom to feed him regularly. Look! the time for dinner approaches. Most would observe no change in the demeanour of the stork; but the close examiner will detect a slight quiver of the eye: the temptation is too strong, and his glance almost imperceptibly wanders to where the keeper usually appears with the fish. Alas! the flesh is weak. His eyes have strayed from their contemplation of nothing, and his mind follows.

"Wonder what's for dinner today?" thinks the stork. "White-

nice trout with—well, there!" Soon the keeper appears. The stork doesn't run after him—that would not be becoming in a Mahatma; he waits with pretended indifference. And the keeper throws toward him—herrings, actually and literally herrings! It is too bad. Bloaters again! But he doesn't fly into an undignified and unphilosophic rage; without moving otherwise, he simply elevates his eyelids to their furthest extent, and turns from under them a sadly, resignedly reproachful gaze on the keeper. Oh the sorrow of it! All his noble resolves, his heroic concentration, his immortal training, thrown to the winds for two penn'orth of bloaters! Bitterness and woe! Notwithstanding which he swallows the bloaters.

Walk quietly away round beyond the southern ponds. Here is a cage from which some well-satisfied carnivore has retired into his den, leaving the end of his tail over the threshold as an intimation to visitors. He has also left a fairly well picked bone, and a scrap or two of biscuit thrown in by human admirers. Step softly. A syndicate of three mice has gone into business with the bone, and a saucy sparrow is levying a distress on the biscuit. The sparrow flies away without affording an opportunity for study; but from what can be seen of the mice their principles seem to be dishonest. The morals of the mouse are hopeless.

Along past here are the wolves' and foxes' cages. The fox is a sharp feeder, but a well-behaved one; the wolf isn't. A pair of animals that fight and yelp and make a swirl of unholy confusion over food which is quite enough for two are unimproving examples of domestic concord. Leave them alone.



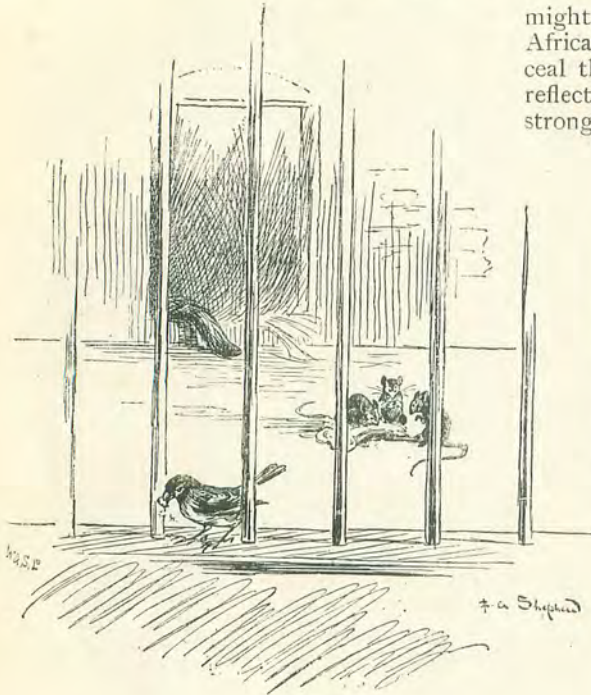
J. C. Shipman

"WHITEBAIT OR SOLES?"

bait, perhaps, or soles—glorious! Something worth being a stork for! Even a whiting wouldn't be so bad, while, as for a



"BLOATERS AGAIN!"



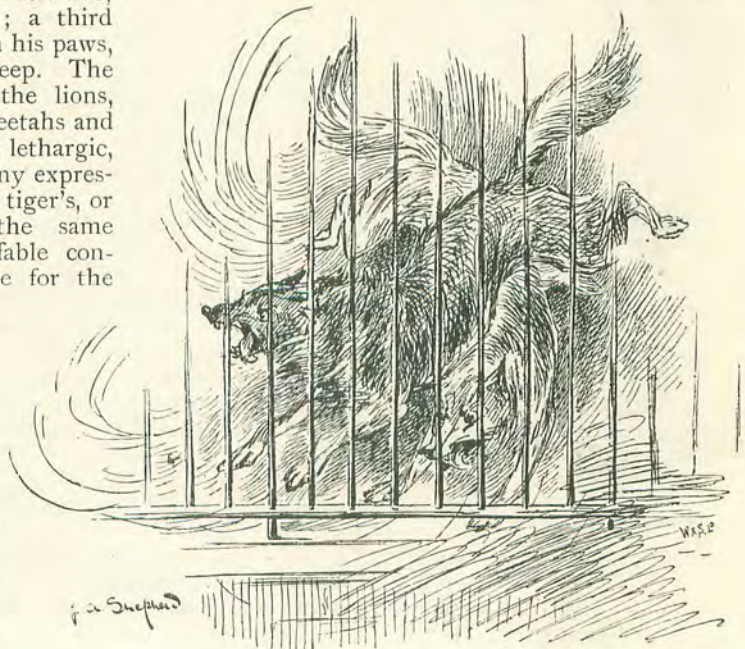
"UNINVITED."

Here is a gravel walk leading to a handsome red building—the lion house. Feeding time is still in the future, consequently one lion is lying on his left side, another on his right; a third with his nose between his paws, and most of them asleep. The tigers are as lazy as the lions, only more so. The cheetahs and panthers are a little less lethargic, but every face with any expression at all in it—lion's, tiger's, or leopard's—expresses the same thing—an utter, ineffable contempt and indifference for the whole human race and all its works. If the Emperor of Russia, Mr. John L. Sullivan, "General" Booth, and Mr. Tracy Turnerelli were to walk past arm in arm, no eye would turn, nor tail wag, and not a symptom of interest would these lions show. If Lord Randolph Churchill were in the group, they

might tremble a little (at any rate, the African ones would), but they would conceal their terror, even then. They would reflect that Lord Randolph was safe beyond strong bars, and this would have a large

effect in calming their agitation. Which leads me to mention a little theory of my own in regard to the listlessness and boredom of these lions and tigers. Seeing the bars before them, it is, I believe, their firm conviction that all the human sight-seers are caged off, and are passed before them in review as interesting curiosities, being kept from annoying the august spectators, the lions and tigers, by strong bars, a low railing, and the notices which are stuck on the wall. They have become bored and listless because the show is so long and so monotonous. A continual procession of lions and tigers, miles long, day after day, for several years, would bore *us*. Being just such a show ourselves, we bore the lions and tigers. Some-

times a little variety is introduced by a mischievous boy, in spite of the printed notice, throwing a biscuit with great accu-

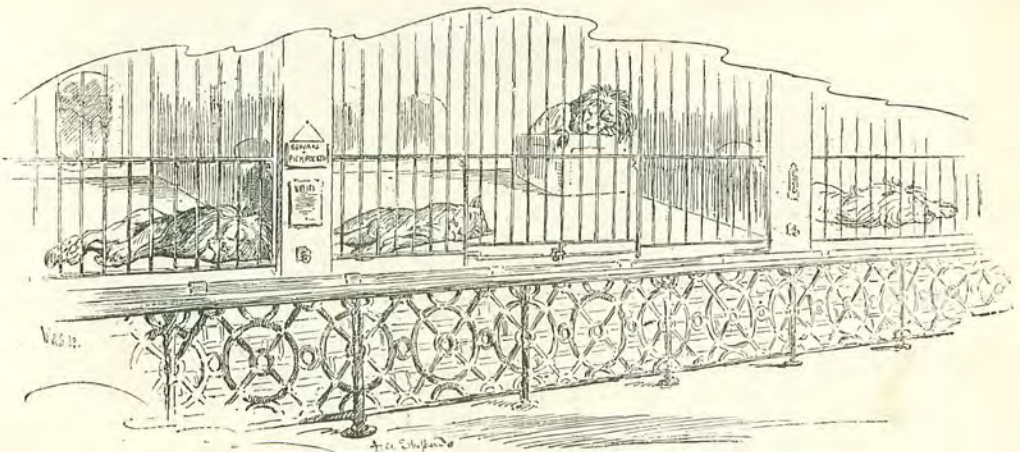


"IMPATIENT"

racy into a tiger's eye, or pitching a small paper of snuff under a lion's nose; then they growl aloud or roar to the keepers, their body servants, to let those faithful men know that someone is hurting their felines. I once saw the notice about irritating the animals set at naught by a bold, bad artist who was trying to sketch a rampant lion. The lion wouldn't ramp a bit, but lay in the most maddeningly supine attitude possible, on his side, with his nose on his paws against the bars and his eyes shut. He had observed that one of the strange two-legged creatures before him had been provided with a sketch-book and pencil—probably in order to interest him by a little change in the usual programme—but he wasn't interested; so he lay as I have said. The artist whistled, hissed, and growled at him; but he was sublimely indifferent. Then a bright thought struck that artist. Observing the keeper looking out of window at the other end of the house, he leant well over the barrier and took a good hold of one of Leo's whiskers, protruding through the bars; this he tugged vigorously, and immediately produced a rampant lion, ready-made, on the spot, with tail, claws, teeth, and roar complete. The sketch was a great success, but I do not recommend the process for general use, for several reasons. Even in this case retribution fell on the artist some time afterwards; for he became a lion-tamer himself, and while at a show in Germany gave another lion an opportunity of biting a piece off his head, which the sagacious animal availed itself of. But—as a distin-

guished author would say—that is another story, I mean.

But four o'clock slowly approaches, and the animals soon become conscious of this. The lionesses give the first indications of the approach of dinner time by walking along inside the bars and doing all possible to look sidelong toward the keeper and round the corner, whence, at the blissful hour, emerges the trolley of beef. Thus the wives. The faithful husbands still lie indifferent, merely turning an eye from time to time in the direction of their helpmeets, as who would say, "The old woman's unnecessarily excited—just like the sex. All that anxiety won't bring the dinner sooner; and it's very undignified." But soon, as the lioness grows more restless, the master of the house rises to his feet, which is sensible. If a healthy, full-sized lioness were running about near me, and treading on my stomach occasionally, I should want to get up myself. Once upon his feet he becomes to some extent infected by the agitation of the lady, and, although he never allows it quite so far to overcome his dignity, he can't conceal his interest in the forthcoming business. Soon rumours begin to pass up and down among the cages, by the medium of growl and roar. The third tiger from the end, counting from the west door, can just get a glimpse of the clock by standing on his hind legs and squeezing his left eye into the corner against the bars. He reports that it is already two minutes to four, albeit there is no sign yet of the appearance of the usual refreshments. The news is passed along amid general indigna-



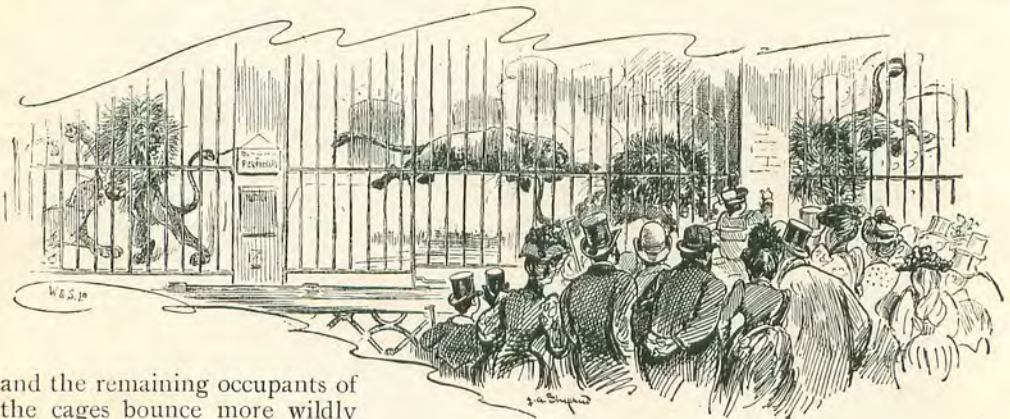
THE LION HOUSE: BEFORE 4 P.M.

tion, and there are hints of an organised strike. Then a second keeper is reported to have appeared, and the crowd of visitors has become visibly larger. At these hopeful indications great enthusiasm is displayed and prime beef stock regains its premium. Just now a slight diversion is created by a domestic tiff between two leopards who both want to trot up and down against the bars at once, and object to being run against. They bare their teeth with a mutual yell, and the lady goes for the countenance of her lord and master with her nails. Said lord and master promptly rolls on his back, and elevating his own finger nails and opening his mouth in an uninviting grin, awaits the attack. Lady surveys the situation generally, and changes her mind.

The third tiger from the end is reported to have expressed his opinion that the clock is slow. Immense sensation. One of the keepers being seen to retire toward the back of the building, lion and lioness rise to equal excitement and join in a general roar and dance.

The human crowd has largely increased,

nose through the bars, and reaches madly with both paws for all the beef and the trolley and keepers complete. He seizes the piece of beef offered him on the end of a pole, and promptly subsides into low grunts, growls, and purrs, as he tears it apart. Others perform in the same way, and soon a row of lions is busy in the matter of refreshments—much too absorbed to be grateful, and never remembering the waiter. Such married couples as may feed together manœuvre deftly before the keeper as he selects the "portions," each intent on getting opposite the first piece, to which end they maintain a continual game of leap-frog, taking each other's backs in pauseless succession. The third tiger from the end, as he turns his regular circle, never stops when the trolley arrives opposite his cage, although he steadfastly regards it from the corner of his eye. He is a careful tiger, and means to measure up to the very second he is served. So he continues his trot after his tail, although it becomes visibly a quicker trot in a smaller circle, until the beef is thrust under the bars, when he promptly exchanges his gyratory attitude for that here depicted.

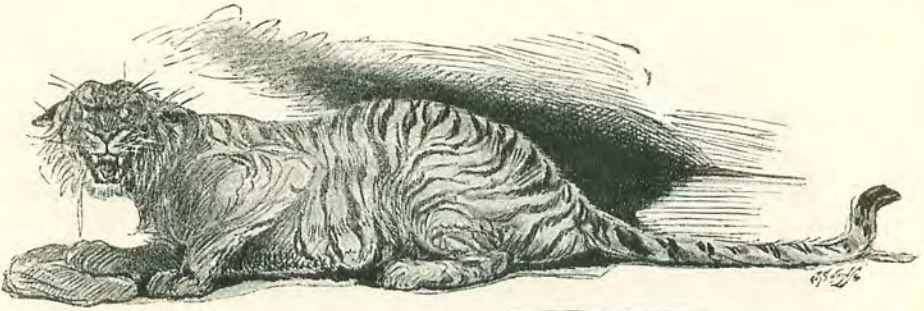


THE LION HOUSE: 4 P.M.

and the remaining occupants of the cages bounce more wildly than ever. The third tiger from the end, who is quite a horological character in his way, abandons contemplation of the clock, and begins measuring the remaining seconds, and working off his excitement by running round after his tail in a small circle. And now, with a grateful, gurgling roll in the tram lines provided for its reception, the trolley appears. Multiply all the previous bouncing, jumping, dancing, and roaring by five, and realise the effect of this apparition. Accompanied by two keepers it proceeds to the end cage, where a wickedly handsome ruffian of a Nubian lion attempts to cram his

All are fed, and grunting content possesses the lion house. It will be perceived, however, that married couples who feed together do it in opposite corners, keeping each an eye on the other, and taking care to finish the repast at least as soon, lest any part of that juicy beef remain to be disputed, and possibly lost.

A more docile sort of lion is fed half an hour later—the sea-lion, who is really only a very big kind of seal, badly wanting a shave. He possesses also the distinction above other seals of a pair of ears, and the



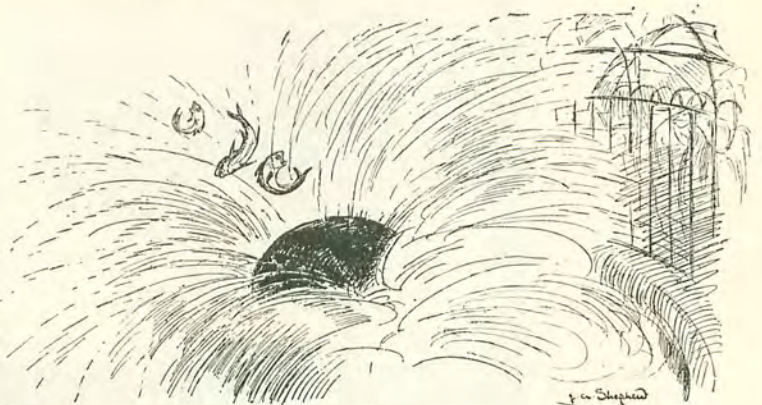
F. A. Shepherd

"A JUICY MORSEL."

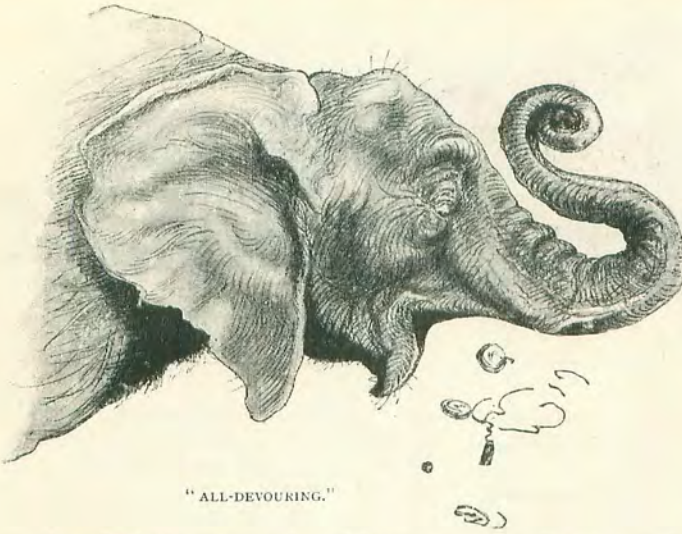
tenancy of an unusually eligible and commodious pond, with a platform to crawl upon and a chair if he wants to sit. He is a good swimmer, but his walk is not captivating. He can't help it; it is not easy to cultivate a military stride on flappers. He is as impatient for his dinner in his way as the big cats, but he is quieter and better behaved. He climbs out of his pond, ambles up the gravel path to the gate, and receives the condolences of the visitors through the bars. The keeper is a good friend of his, so he does not blame him for not bringing those fish half an hour before the proper time, but he feels grieved, nevertheless. When the keeper does come, he has no more loyal and obedient friend than the sea-lion. He will do anything for him—or for a herring. He will climb up on the chair and catch the fish unerringly in his mouth. He will run (or as near it as possible) up an inclined plane for one. He will rear up most affectionately and kiss the keeper—keeping one eye on the basket all the time. But readiest of all he will plunge into the water with a mighty splash for any number of them, while the surrounding spectators turn tail or open umbrellas to avert the consequent drenching. Altogether the sea-lion is a pleasant beast, but he drops into his pond with all the weight of a large bull-calf, which is inconsiderate to a radius of a good many yards.

Reporters at a fire continually speak of

the "all-devouring element." This is a perversion of a stock term which, I am convinced, should read "all-devouring elephant." For an elephant devours things which no fire will consume. He will curl up his trunk before a small crowd, and receive good-humouredly a miscellaneous shower, in which biscuits, buns, apples, cigar-ends, pebbles, and fragments of lead-pencil mingle in a riot of miscellaneousness. He has been known, certainly, to shy at snuff, but that was probably in the case of some ignorant elephant not properly educated to its use. Most of the elephants here are quite up to snuff. If you have stuffed a prominent pocket full of sandwiches or apples, it is inadvisable to turn your back to Jingo. He is a very respectable elephant, but that is no reason for unnecessarily exposing him to temptation, and placing his honourable reputation in danger. I have observed of late, I regret to say, a disposition on the part of the Zoological Society's elephants, after leaving their daily work, to frequent Messrs. Spiers & Pond's bar—the small one, just under



"A MIGHTY SPLASH."



"ALL-DEVOURING."

the arch. This is very sad. Of course, there are buns there, and people to buy them, but I fear the effect of the habit. Jung Perchad, as a very large and sober animal, ought to set a better example.

Sad, sad, that the Prognomist can no

for Paddy, and wish him well of all his colds. For Paddy is certainly a gentleman, since he wipes his mouth after drinking, and would be a master of polite manners could he overcome his shyness.

more study the ways of Sally, the famous chimpanzee; for Sally is dead, and hath not left her peer, wherein she resembles our old acquaintance Lycidas. The immortal Sally no more counts up to five and takes her afternoon tea with a cup and spoon, like a Christian soul. She has a successor, it is true, in Paddy, who may become as great a genius in his time, but who hasn't had time yet, and very often has a bad cold. Let us hope, however,

