

Monkey Society.

BY ONE OF ITS ORNAMENTS.

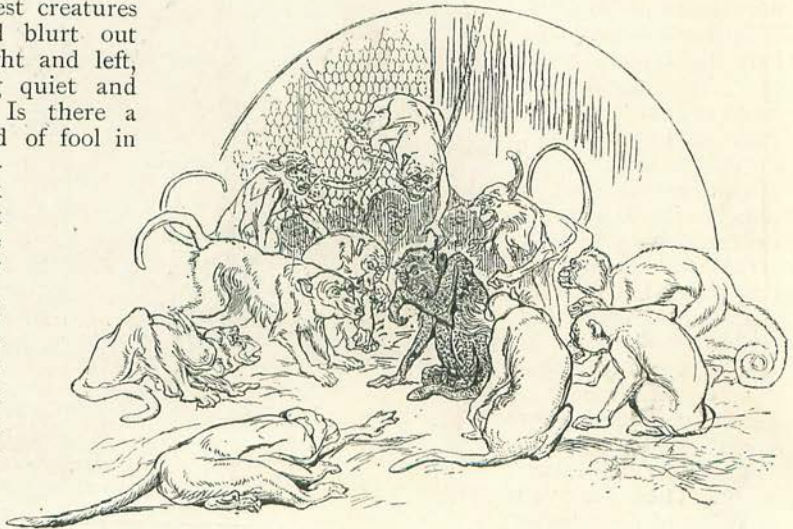


OME days ago I overheard two of those wretched descendants of our noble race—humans, I mean—talking outside my wires. They were telling each other about some fellow-human of theirs—his name was Garner—who had, by years of slow study, arrived at some sort of knowledge of three or four of the simpler words of our language—the ancient and eloquent tongue of the monkeys. Of course, this was only one more evidence of the human stupidity and conceit we chuckle over. Here were we monkeys for all these thousands of years perfectly understanding every syllable of human language that we heard, and never letting on once to the silly men that we knew a word of what they were saying; and all the while talking freely in our own tongue without a chance of detection, and laughing at them. And now, forsooth, because one of them has discovered—or thinks he has—two or three of our words, they are all cock-a-whoop with conceit, think themselves the finest creatures on this earth, and blurt out their discovery right and left, instead of keeping quiet and learning more! Is there a name for this kind of fool in any tongue whatever? I don't think there is. So that after listening to the two creatures till my patience gave way, I reached out and grabbed the flower from one of their button-holes. It didn't taste particularly pleasant, but I had the gratification of hearing its late owner tell his friend that it had cost him

eighteenpence. Besides which there was thin wire about the stem which has since been very handy for pricking the pig-faced baboon with, when he wasn't looking. I owe the pig-faced baboon one for himself.

I have owed a grudge to most of them in this cage at one time or another, but nearly all the accounts are settled. I have lived here rather a less time than might be imagined in view of the influential position which I now occupy. A few months ago, when I first came, I was not a very popular monkey—no new monkey is. I had been considerably elated at the docks when I learned that the London Zoological Gardens was to be my destination, because there's a certain tone about such a destination as that—very different from going merely to a dealer or a private owner, or even to a circus, such as did others of my fellow passengers. One even went to an organ-grinder, but he was a low monkey naturally. So I bossed it pretty considerably at the docks, I tell you, and patronised the others as offensively as I could. Still, I wasn't very comfortable when first they put me into this big cage.

You see, the others didn't show me the respect which was my due. I am a green monkey, with a fine long Latin name; such



J. A. Shepherd

"THEY ALL CALLED AT ONCE."

a name as *Cercopithecus callitrichus* ought to command respect anywhere, but here it only excited envy and malice. When I found myself among all these strangers I was prepared to expect a few courteous calls at intervals, and that a few cards would be left where I should find them, but immediately upon my entrance the whole cageful called upon me at once, except the pig-faced baboon, who is always chained up. Their greetings were rather vulgar than otherwise.

"Hullo, here's another green 'un," said the Rhesus, intending this, I believe, to mean something beside my actual colour.

"How are you, old chap?" said another, pulling my tail away from under me, so that I fell forward on my hands.

"Can you fight?" asked somebody else, digging me in the ribs.

Then a big Chacma came along, and saying, "Got any nuts?" without giving me time to reply seized my jaw, threw me over, and forcing his dirty paw into my mouth, emptied my pouch of a little lunch I had brought with me.

After this I had to submit to other insults, but of these I will say nothing. My feelings were outraged and my tail was sore. My tail remained sore, indeed, for a few days, but I soothed my feelings soon after the crowd dispersed. I found a very small Capuchin, whom I had not before noticed among them, and—well, I let him have it.

But I found my proper level—socially a high one, of course. To tell you the truth I don't think much of society here; compared with what I have always been used to it is dull. Anyone can see that at a glance. Look at any of our cages; where is the life and motion proper in good monkey society? Nowhere. The humans outside think we are active and lively, but we who know what these things are know that our state is one of simple stagnation. Very few of us can now manage to be in more than five places at once, and we are even getting slow at that. It is a growing habit of laziness, acquired from the humans, who seem to have no business in hand but to stare,



'A STATE OF SIMPLE STAGNATION.'

and never pull each others' tails, being quite ignorant of the usages of politeness.

Some amusements, however, of a pleasing and elevating character, we have. One of the most fashionable is tormenting the pig-faced baboon. He is a low, unprincipled ruffian, and I owe him one for himself, as I think I observed before. He is bigger than most of us, but as he is chained up the amusement is safe as well as genteel—if you are careful about it. The usual course is, after a select party has been made up, first to fix exactly the utmost radius of reach which the chain will allow the pig-faced baboon. Then a semicircle is formed just outside the radius, and one of the party is told off to drop hot ashes out of a pipe upon the enemy's head—in his eye if possible. A pipe can almost always be snatched when required from the breast pocket of some handy human, who puts it there in deference to the printed notice against smoking in our presence, but leaves the bowl sticking out for fear of catching fire. The hot ashes having found their billet, the rest of the procedure is obvious. The pipe having been hurled after the ashes, every other available missile is hurled after the pipe, and the pig-faced gentleman's bad language and frantic attempts at universal assault are received with cheerful sarcasm and pleasant grimace by the assembled company, who keep our friend well in exercise in the meantime by such pokes, pinches, and twitches of the tail from unforeseen directions as may seem judicious. This pursuit, beside affording cheap and innocent amusement and instruction for young and old of all classes, is healthy for the pig-faced baboon, preventing his liver from stagnating, and stimulating his digestion.

I have mentioned that I owe this fellow one for himself. This is why. Soon after I came, and had seen the entertainment

just described once or twice, I made up my mind to devote some time to a little private practice myself. So, producing the necessary inflamed condition on the chained savage with the point of a pocket pen (which a human boy had offered me under the delusion that he could pull it back before I could snatch it), I awaited developments just beyond reach of his teeth and fingers. I enjoyed the game, and after a little refreshing diversion, went so far as to spread my fingers out and plant my thumb against my nose. I had seen a human boy do this,

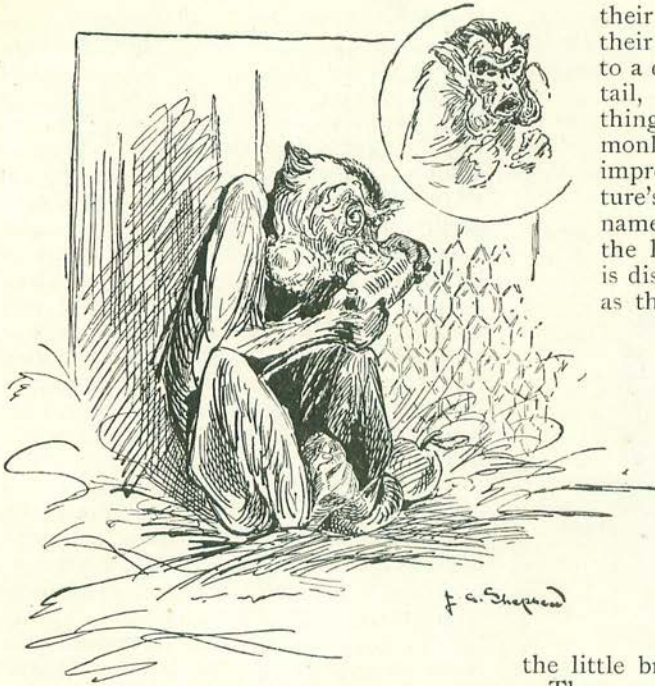
and it struck me as rather a smart invention for such a creature. Old Piggy tugged and strained at his chain until he reached me within half an inch; then he suddenly turned tail-foremost and—well, I only remember two or three summersaults and an awful pain in the stomach. The fact was, the old scoundrel had let out with his hind legs, and so poached another foot of reach, just when I didn't expect it. It's an old trick



"A LOW, UNPRINCIPLED RUFFIAN."

of his. I've seen him do it since to another new monkey, and it looks very neat viewed in that way. Personally, I was very much upset, and, having caught the little brown capuchin again, I administered toko. Notwithstanding which, I still owe the pig-faced baboon one for himself.

There is another to whom I owe a bite or two. He tries to monopolise one of our amusements himself. That is eating. He can't climb or run. He staggers about the place with both pouches hanging like immense whiskers from his cheeks, but solid and heavy. No matter what the humans outside may offer through the wires, he is always handy and grabs it. I flatter myself that very few of the others have a chance at biscuits or nuts if I am anywhere handy, but this unholy thief gets ahead even of me. I hate such greediness.



"GREEDINESS!"

One day an artless-looking boy came to the wires, munching. He offered a little biscuit to a small Mona. I do not approve of spoiling the digestions of young monkeys with biscuits, so I hastened to get this tit-bit. Of course the greedy beast with the full pouches got there first, and popped it into his mouth before I could touch it. *There was mustard in that biscuit.* That's what I call an interposition of Providence. Greediness is bad enough, but this chap aggravates it by hypocrisy. Pleads the large family he has to support—as though he ever gave *them* any! If I could see that artless-looking boy again I would suggest another biscuit with dynamite in it. That would empty his pouches!

Speaking of owing grudges, bites, and ones for themselves, reminds me that we in this cage owe a lot of these things in different parts of the house which we can't pay. The vanity of some of those in the cages about the walls is sickeningly irritating. The lemurs, for instance, are continually showing off their long bushy tails, pretending coyly to hide their faces behind them—brazen baggages! And they loop them round their necks, too, like a boa, because they have seen the women humans do it, who come here to gape and giggle at nothing. One might almost suppose, to see

their airs, that these lemurs *prefer* their great useless feather-brushes to a decent and useful smooth, long tail, which you can hang on to things with. Then the Diana monkey at the end is positively improper. To begin with, the creature's insupportable pride in the name of some goddess—whom even the humans won't own nowadays—is distinctly objectionable, especially as the name is quite inappropriate.

Diana never had a white beard and whiskers; I don't believe she had a tail. And if she behaved in the servile, cadging manner of that monkey, trying to attract the attention of those human animals, and turning heels over head for nuts—well, she was no lady. The irritating thing is that the beast always gets the nuts. I can't stand seeing this. I always have to go and whack

the little brown capuchin.

There are others we all owe something to, but on the whole the score is fairly balanced. I am alluding to two or three big rascals wired off in separate cages near ours because of their ill manners and roughness. They reach through now and again and claw at us, but we collect a little party and extract almost as much fun from the business as in the case of the pig-faced baboon. And then the visitor-creatures rarely give them anything, being afraid of them; and the mesh of their wires is so close that they can't get anything desirable, such as a bonnet ornament or a pair of spectacles, through them. So that they have their punishment.

But the Barbary ape isn't so easily forgiven. He is one of these segregated savages, in every respect as bad as the others, besides possessing one insufferable iniquity fortunately rare among us, but, I fear, spreading. I mean a low, mean, unworthy snobbishness and abasement which treats the humans as superior creatures, and affects a ludicrous familiarity and connection with them. This fellow, glad enough to steal our nuts when no visitors are about, in their presence mounts his perch with his back to us, and turns up his nose. He gives himself away, however, if they offer him anything, by his ill-mannered grab—taking a biscuit as though it were a flower or an eyeglass. He gets into the habit through

stealing from us, and can't overcome it. He always pretends to have an appointment with a human, more especially if visitors



are about. He sits on his perch with as much pre-occupation as he can cram on his ugly face, and looks expectantly towards the door. Every time a door opens, he glances anxiously over his shoulder, after which he assumes an expression of annoyed importance, as who would say, "This is all very fine, but it isn't business. When people make appointments they should keep them." I have even caught him making believe to look at an imaginary watch. If he would only attend to business instead of playing the fool, he might snatch a real one from somebody's hand, as I have done.

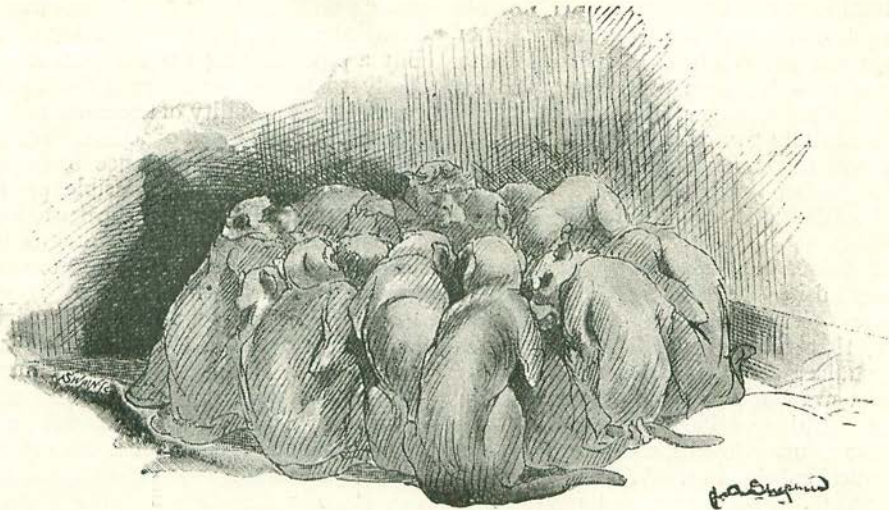
The orang-outang is just as annoying, and would be more so

if we could see him. He is away from here, over in the sloths' house where they used to keep Sally, but we know all about him. Nice fuss they make over him, just because he's got no tail; trying to make the deformity fashionable among us, I suppose, like the fox in the story. There he is, with a cage almost as big as this, and warmer, all to himself. Has a blanket to sleep in, and a special keeper as valet to call him in the morning, and bring his shaving water. Can stay in his blanket all day if he likes, no one else to pull him up by the tail, not only having no tail to pull, but no neighbours to pull it. And all this by way of reward for positive degeneration, physical, moral, and mental; in fact, for his degraded approximation to a low animal type, the human, and for his cadging servility—going so far, I am told, as to shake hands with visitors, and with his own servant, the keeper. He is allowed, now and again, to come out of his cage and crawl slothfully about—not having the courage to bolt up the chimney—if there were one—or to bite the keeper's fingers. There he sits, bloated, coddled, waited on (they even give him tea with a cup and spoon!), while I, with becoming instincts, a Latin name twice as long as his, and a charming tail, I—well, there, I lose patience when I think of it. Where's that little brown capuchin?

I don't know how big the Aye-aye is, never having seen him, but if he is no bigger



"HOW'S THE WEATHER THIS MORNING, KEEPER?"



"FORTY WINKS"

than the brown capuchin, I'd give something to have hold of him for ten minutes. The lazy beggar sleeps the whole day long in the box at the top of his cage, and they let him. If a few of *us* club together, and organise a little party for forty winks, it soon gets stopped. Someone falls in among us, or we get dragged apart by the tails, and quite right, too. No decent member of the community has the right or even the wish to deprive the others of the benefit of his society for longer than absolutely necessary to rest the frame and brighten the intellect. Personally, I believe the Aye-aye is sulking because of the eclipse of his name. *Chiromys Madagascariensis* is

a very fine name, anyone will admit, but when I came with *Cercopithecus callitrichus* I beat it by one letter. So he sulks. Then in the night, when we *want* quiet, he comes out and rackets about his cage.

Altogether, however, especially in this cage, we are, although slow, a fairly select set. Our manners, at any rate, will compare favourably with those of any other set in the house. One rule of etiquette is never, in any circumstances, violated in this cage, except in the case of the pig-faced baboon. That is the rule that enjoins that should one stand still (an undesirable thing in itself) it must never be opposite the ticket bearing his name and birthplace. It is



"A FAIRLY SELECT SET."

humiliating enough to have these humans staring at and commenting on the details of our private life, without admitting them into one's family concerns. So that whether "born in the menagerie," "presented," or merely sordidly "purchased," we can keep the matter to ourselves; all but the unfortunate pig-faced baboon, who is chained near his label, and serve him right. I owe him one.

I have already alluded to the fact of our set patronising amusements of a refined character. There are, of course, others besides that mentioned. The Malbrouck, for instance, affects the sportsman, and carries a straw or a twig of some sort in his mouth. This gratifies him, and is not offensive to us. Scientific amusements are also much indulged in. We are all most enthusiastic, persevering, and painstaking entomologists, and our researches are often the subject of admiring comment. But the serious business of life largely occupies our attention.

I allude, of course, to the collection of *bric-à-brac* and other portable property. Of course, the chief difficulty is with the wires. Something really ought to be done about these wires; they are a most serious obstruction to business. Personally I don't see what we want with wires at all; they keep us select, and prevent some of the more low-minded from mixing with the humans—but, then, one's proper self-respect ought to do that. But, even admitting the desirableness of wires at all, the small-mesh wire now in use obviously must be abolished at once; it positively prevents some classes of business altogether. Where it is a matter of difficulty and dexterity to get a fairly large pair of blue spectacles through, the acquisition of a bonnet or an old lady's wig becomes almost an impossibility until the articles have been torn in small pieces. Of course, it may be argued that is what would be done with them in any case, but the necessity of conducting the operation on the outer side of the wires often results in total loss.

Proper circumspection is absolutely necessary, and any appearance of too great eagerness to do business is fatal. Much depends on the class of goods dealt in. A pipe sticking out of a breast pocket is a fairly easy transaction to begin with, although some recommend a single eye-glass with a cord. This latter certainly has the advantage that it effectually blinds the eye in which it is used, so that successful ap-

proach on that side is tolerably certain; the cord, also, is very convenient to snatch. But a pipe sticking from a pocket is more likely to be forgotten by its owner; and beside, the possibility of the bowl being very hot teaches quickness of action. It is advisable to assume an appearance of innocence and pre-occupation; if possible, of melancholy. The back should be turned to the human who is to be experimented upon, and the object, pipe or what not, viewed from the corner of the eye. It should always be remembered that the wires are irregular in mesh, and the widest available hole should be selected. These preliminaries having been carefully attended to, a sudden grab will successfully complete the business.

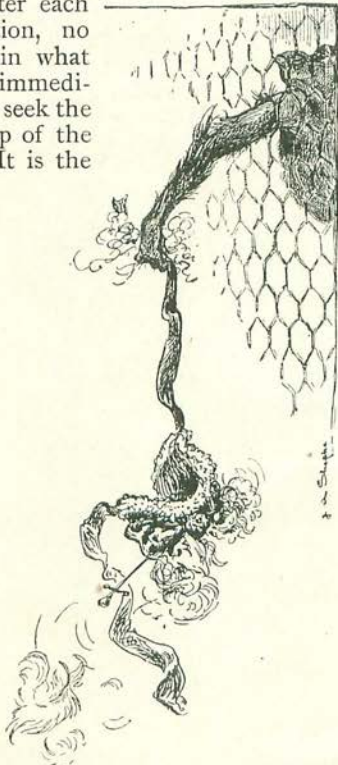
Pocket handkerchiefs it is usually best to take direct from the pocket, although an expert practitioner will now and again achieve a fancy stroke by snatching one from the hand. In the matter of gloves it is safest to keep to those from the female creature; they are thinner and (sometimes) smaller, and so easier to bring through the



"A MISFIT."

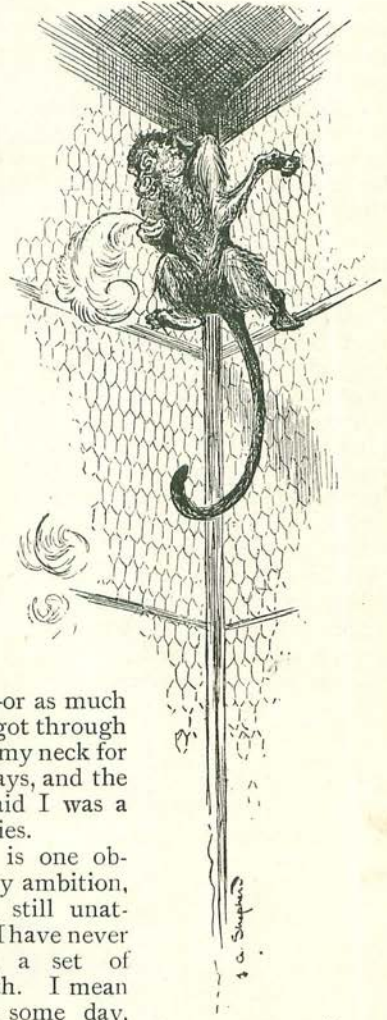
wires, and the woman is usually too frightened to snatch back. They are, however, rarer than the male glove, being less frequently carried loose.

Spectacles and eye-glasses, as I have hinted, afford fairly good sport, although the larger kinds are apt to get into complications with the wires. In all cases of difficulty with the wires, whether with glasses or other goods, the only expedient is a mighty tug; something is sure to come through, whatever smashes, and often you get the lot. I once got a pair of gold-rimmed glasses on the end of a tortoiseshell stick complete, from a most offensive old woman—only got through with a reckless tug. Bonnets, and feathers and flowers therefrom must, of course, be grabbed from above, high up the wires. A good, comprehensive grab at a bonnet often results in a splendid haul. You get bonnet, feathers, flowers, fruit, little birds, bonnet pin, and—with any luck—a lot of false hair, all at once. Indeed, in the matter of quantity, nothing, in my opinion, beats a bonnet—you fetch away all kinds of things with it, and you never know how much you'll get. Always remember, however, after each transaction, no matter in what goods, immediately to seek the very top of the cage. It is the



"A SPLENDID HAUL."

safest place. I am the only monkey in this cage who ever got a man's wig; he was looking for something in his hat. It was a most fraudulent wig, showing a genuine bald spot in the most artful fashion; I



"THE SAFEST PLACE."

wore it—or as much of it as I got through—round my neck for several days, and the people said I was a new species.

There is one object of my ambition, however, still unattained—I have never snatched a set of false teeth. I mean to do it some day, though, and am watching my opportunity day by day; and when I have them I will lay them at the feet of—ah! there is my confession. She doesn't want false teeth, having a very capital set of her own; but, as a token of undying affection, what a glorious thing would be a set of false teeth—in gold—to offer the adorable creature in the cage a little further along! May the raptures of a devoted lover be pardoned if once more I contemplate that sad and lovely face, that angelic form,

those adorable whiskers? There she sits, pensive and sweetly melancholy—dreaming, doubtless, of her sylvan home far away, where the lion roareth and the whang-doodle mourneth. For her I hoard my every day's takings (although those dishonest keepers always take them away);

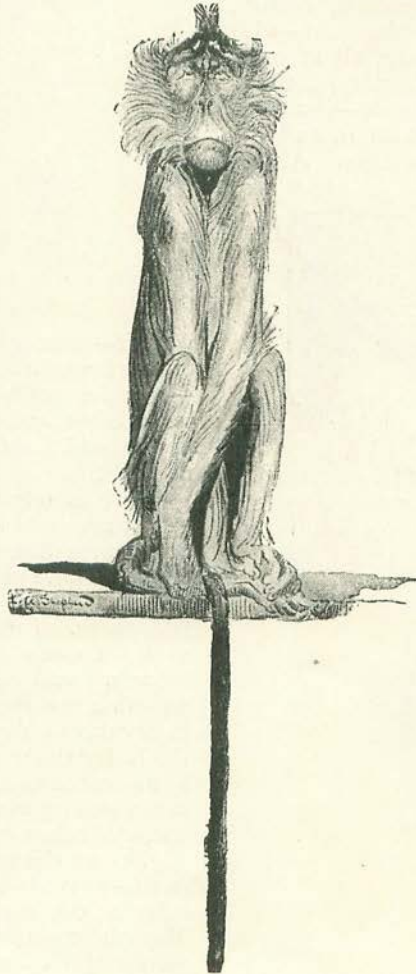
for her I snatch feathers from bonnets, flowers from buttonholes, pipes from pockets; for her do I faithfully watch, day by day, after a set of false teeth. But still, my fluttering heart, lie still! How can I hope? How can I even approach her to throw myself before her, to offer her my all, to take one pull at that bewitching tail? Alas! my lot is despair. There is a gibbon in a nearer cage than this, who is making eyes at



"THE DAY'S TAKINGS."

her this moment. Confound him! May this Gibbon quickly Decline and Fall! Ah, I am racked with hate and jealousy!

I will even go and pitch into the little brown capuchin. And now I bethink me, there is a bonnet-pin I have today acquired with the *débris* of a hat and false front. I will get behind him and stick that bonnet-pin far into the pig-faced baboon. I owe him one for himself



"SWEETLY MELANCHOLY."