

Diving Horses.

BY ALBERT H. BROADWELL. PHOTOGRAPHS BY A. J. JOHNSON.

FLYING GIRAFFES, crawling elephants, or grass-eating tigers are merely possibilities, but diving horses are an accomplished fact. The horses whose doings we propose to describe dive for the very fun of it—there is no prodding or pushing; they require a great deal of holding when they scent water in the distance or suspect it to be anywhere within a hundred-mile radius.

They will not run in harness, neither will they be ridden like common horses; they

its tens of thousands, and when London got there its amazement knew no bounds when the horses' clever diving feats actually took place amid thunders of applause.

Mr. H. Gillman, the popular manager of the Crystal Palace, had, with characteristic energy, secured the diving-horse show as his very own and "exclusive." Moreover, he very kindly extended his usual courtesy to the writer, inasmuch as he offered every facility for the taking of the extraordinary pictures which serve to illustrate this article.

In order to get some interesting particulars



WAITING AT THE FOOT OF THE INCLINED PLANE.

have been accustomed, from their very earliest years, to a life of freedom, of wild rushes and plunges, in the Everglade Swamps of Florida.

Not very long ago London was startled by huge hoardings showing a milk-white steed diving head-foremost into a rushing torrent some thirty feet below. London shrugged its shoulders, said it was all bunkum, and then went—as London always does and ever will do—to see the fun.

London flocked to the Crystal Palace in

about those two beautiful milk-white diving steeds we secured an interview with Captain Boynton, the great showman who owns the immense pleasure grounds and water-chutes in Coney Island and Woodside Park, Philadelphia. In the course of our chat we learned that as soon as Captain Boynton heard of the diving horses and their marvellous performances he communicated with their owner and trainer, Professor Geo. F. Holloway, of Bancroft, Iowa, and secured their performances for his chutes at Coney Island.



VIEW OF INCLINED PLANE FROM BEHIND—HORSE RUNNING UP.

Captain Boynton had much of interest to communicate, inasmuch as he has the horses under his management to "do" the Continent, and especially the Paris Exhibition, under the care of Professor Holloway's nephew, Mr. John Whalen, whose thoughtfulness for the animals' welfare is charming to witness.

It appears that King and Queen, as these equine beauties are justly called, are actually descendants of the wild horses that in times gone by disported themselves on the Everglades in Florida. Water, it seems, is partly their natural element, inasmuch as swamps of vast extent are to be found in the Everglades, and part of the distances in their wanderings, which these animals had to cover, had to be done by swimming.

This interesting fact goes a long way to prove that no compulsion has ever been necessary in their training. When they were colts, Professor Holloway's sons used to ride these pets when going for their morning dip, and strangely enough the horses would dive after their masters and follow their gambols in the water.

Another curious and significant fact is that Professor Holloway, who is a great breeder of horses, and owns thousands

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of them on the prairies, has never been successful in training another pair to perform the same diving feats. He selected eighty-five of the most likely animals from his stock, but met with failure every time. None of these were of the same breed as King and Queen. Curiously enough, *all* the horses under trial dived with their heads held high, while King and Queen always dive head-foremost, as will be seen in our illustrations entitled "leaping" and "nearing the water."

At Coney Island Captain Boynton possesses an extensive lake, wherein the horses dive from an elevated platform. Lakes are not made to order, however, so that in their travels the horses are accompanied by a tank, which is fitted into an excavation made for the purpose; the water in winter and autumn is always kept at an almost uniform temperature, somewhere between 65deg. and 85deg., the water being warmed by means of steam-pipes—a precaution which is, of course, unnecessary in the summer months. The elevated platform also accompanies the horses wherever they go.



ARRIVED AT TOP, KING HAS A GOOD LOOK AT HIS AUDIENCE.

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PREPARING TO LEAP.

Mr. Whalen, who has charge of these pets, has given the writer some interesting particulars as to the way in which these beautiful creatures are cared for. It appears that during their trip across the Atlantic his charges had never been ill, or did they even seem to feel uncomfortable. They had extra large padded stalls, each having as much room to himself as would fall to the lot of six less illustrious creatures. Cleverly enough, they made a point of lying down whenever the weather was rough, and the captain, with the majority of the passengers, used to visit them and feed them with dainties every day.

Their food is always examined before it is given to them, and consists of the very best grain sorted by hand, also hay of the very finest quality. In addition they get potatoes, carrots, and apples every day; their food is always kept under lock and key, and they are never, under any pretext whatsoever, left without an attendant to look after their every wish.

The horses' temperature is taken daily, and the degrees of heat in the

stable are kept to a uniform standard. Their blankets, of which they possess a seemingly unlimited supply, are frequently changed, washed, and aired with as much care as the personal linen of a Vanderbilt!

Upon their arrival in London the performance seemed so exceedingly novel and daring that it was openly asserted that cruelty had to be used to make the animals go through the dives in which, as a matter of fact, they take great delight. Such assertions were speedily squashed by a thorough inspection of the show by specially deputed members of the S.P.C.A., who, in the exercise of their commendable duties, investigated charges which were found to be utterly groundless. It may be mentioned, also, that while these horses were performing in Philadelphia an agent of the S.P.C.A. was, by the special request of Professor Holloway, appointed to live with the horses during the whole time of their stay there; he remained with the



LEAPING.

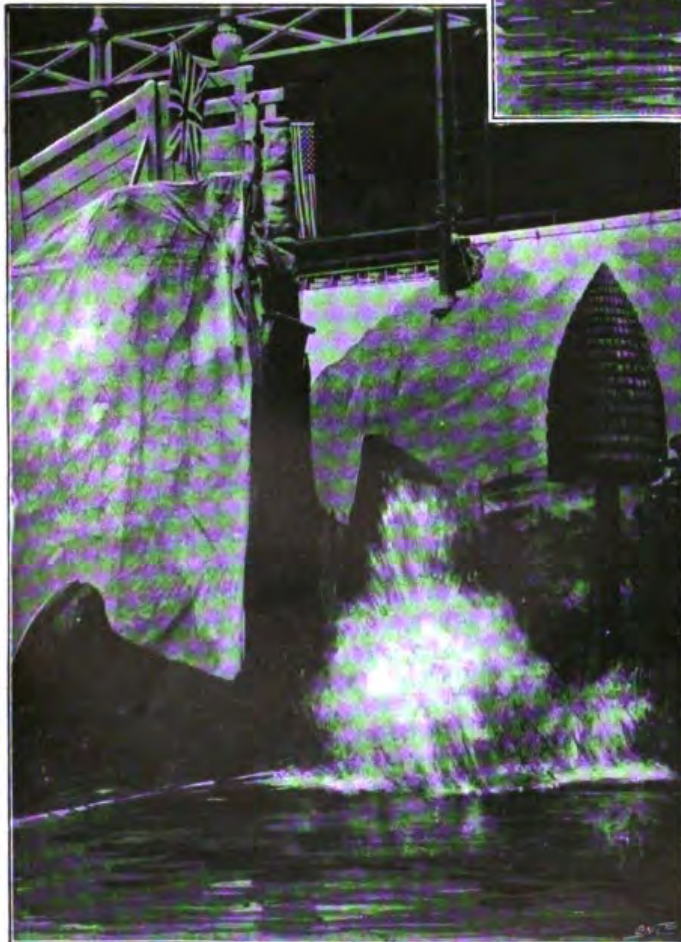
animals day and night, and it is pleasing to record that he expressed himself as entirely satisfied as to the genuineness of the horses' desire to dive of their own free will.

Immediately after their dives King and Queen expect a lump or two of sugar each, and that is a time-honoured custom with both, as Mrs. Holloway always made it a practice to reward them in that way when they had dived well in the course of regular tuition. This also explains their particular fondness for ladies.

King and Queen are passionately fond of each other and have never been separated. They have never been shod, and have also never been in harness for any length of time. In fact, they don't like harness, and they hate buggies, of which they have smashed one or two, which seems to prove once more that they are essentially children of Nature and of a breed as yet so



NEARING THE WATER—NOTE THE PERFECT DIVING ATTITUDE.

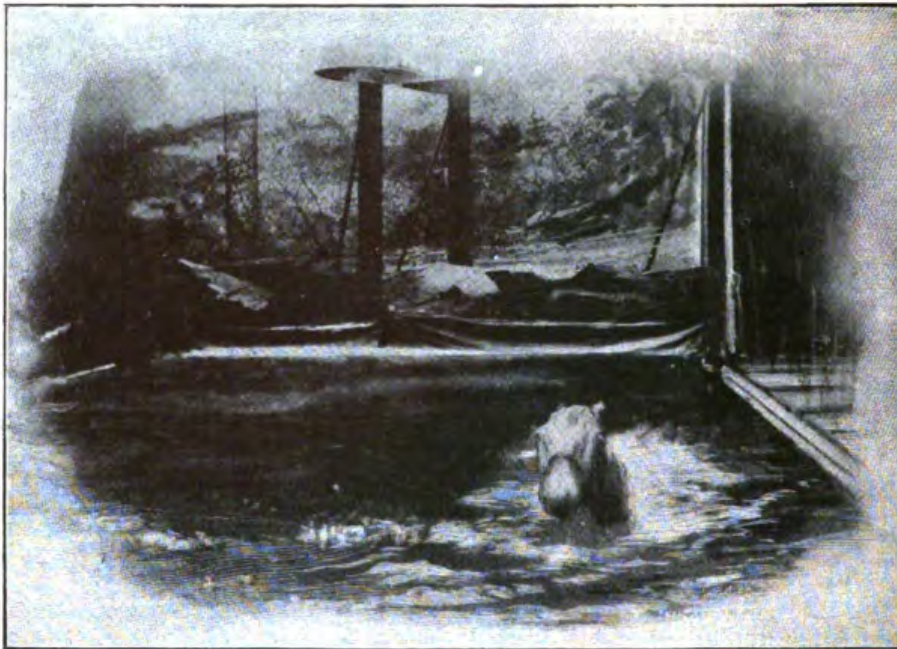


THE SPLASH.

wild as to be likened to the zebra of untamable reputation. King and Queen are pink-skinned and have black eyes, a very pretty combination, coupled with almost milk-white coats that shimmer in the sunlight like the *moiré* silk of a bridal dress.

Twenty thousand dollars have been offered for them, and yet their owner would not part with what may be reckoned to be the most unique pair of horses on earth; no fewer than two millions of people have flocked to see them in their wanderings, and small wonder, for they are assuredly as pretty a pair of steeds as ever trod the green.

There is happily only a single dramatic incident to record in the career of these equine pets, and it occurred at Captain Boynton's show on Coney Island. Captain Boynton keeps any number of pets in his



SWIMMING TO SHORE.

waters, and among those are numbered some huge turtles. It happened that after one of the horses had dived a hard-shelled monster was discovered within less than a yard from the place where the horse had first struck the water. Had the diving animal collided with the turtle it is terrible to think what the consequences might have been. A halt was therefore called, before the second horse was allowed to go through its performance, and every endeavour was made to induce the turtle to

seek more convenient quarters, but instead of doing so the obstructionist calmly sank to the bottom of the lake, at the very spot where the horse was expected to dive.

Strong measures were used: a dynamite cartridge was lowered directly over the spot where the turtle had sunk, and was fired in order to dislodge it from its awkward place of concealment. Strange to say, the animal, while duly blown out of bounds, sustained no injury beyond a thorough shaking, from which it recovered in less than a week!



BEING SCRAPED DOWN AFTER DIVING.