

TIGER is not a lion. This will be understood, though I treat of tigers in a leonine chapter. For neither is a leopard a lion, nor a cheetah, nor a puma, yet all these live in the lion-house.

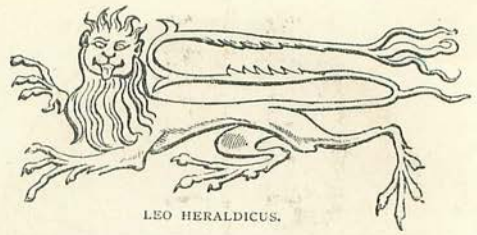
Wherefore must the title be held to refer to the locality, and not to a section of its inhabitants. This is probably called the lion-house in a formal survival of the spirit which gives the lion a kingship among the lower animals.

But the lion really is a fraud—as much so, at any rate, as the camel. It is very sad to find so many downright frauds among the innocent lower animals,

but there isn't a department in these Gardens where you shall not discover a humbug of some sort. In this house, perhaps, there is less humbug about the tigers than about any of the others, although even the tiger has his little hypocrisies; still he is justly and honestly indignant that the place, by title, should be given to the lions, and is supercilious in his bearing to human creatures in consequence.

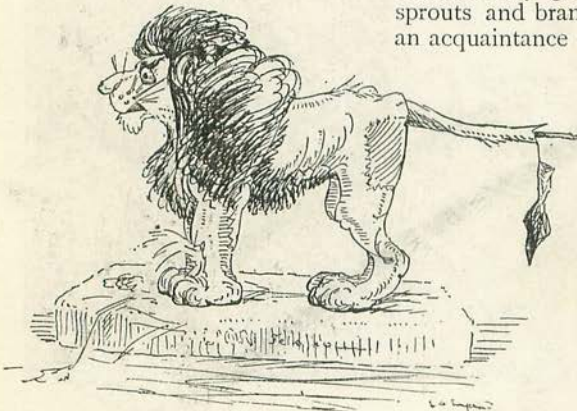


It must be noted that the show of lions here to be seen, large as it is, is by no means fully representative of the various species. There are none of the more familiar of our English lions; the Red Lion, the White Lion, the Blue Lion—to say nothing of the accompanying stomach-warmer—familiar as they are in our town streets, are not to be found here; nor is that noble creature, the lion of heraldry. This is a pity; because here he would be fed, and would get rid of that painfully greyhound-like waist which is among the more noticeable of his characteristics; and I should have an opportunity of inspecting that extraordinary growth, his tail, with its many vigorous sprouts and branches; and many other of his members, an acquaintance of which in the flesh I have long much desired.



LEO HERALDICUS.

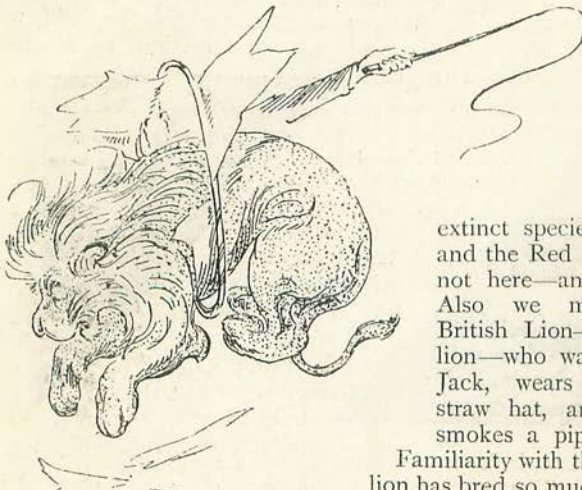
Nor is the King of Beasts represented as he was of old in the British Museum—by the remarkable species *Leo shagbagger stufficus*; wherefore also I grieve. For in the museum variety were many strange bodily developments and physical functions unknown among others. *Leo shagbagger stufficus* might be approached with perfect safety, and any naturalist sufficiently intrepid might, in the fabled manner of Richard Cœur de Lion, boldly thrust his hand deep between the beast's open jaws, and from his innermost vitals extract upholstery.



LEO SHAGBAGGA STUFFICUS.

It was never very good upholstery, being chiefly flue and dusty straw, but it was quite equal to imparting a distinctive want of shape which at once stamped *Leo shagbagger* an unique species. The tail, also, has been known to yield walking sticks. External patches of differing tints, attached by large stitches of pack-thread, did not indicate a separate variety of this species, being peculiar to individuals only.

I fear *Leo shagbagger* is now an extinct species, but the Blue Lion, the White Lion, and the Red Lion we may see every day—although not here—and become intimately acquainted with. Also we may see the British Lion—the cartoon lion—who waves a Union Jack, wears a straw hat, and smokes a pipe. Familiarity with the lion has bred so much contempt for him that really we shall be going very little further in classing him a domestic animal. They keep him in a shed, whack him with a stick, and make him jump through a hoop—and a poor old sheep he seems, he



LEO IGNOMINIOSUS.

They keep him in a shed, whack him with a stick, and make him jump through a hoop—and a poor old sheep he seems, he

Leo Britannicus is now an extinct species, but the Blue Lion, the White Lion, and the Red Lion we may see every day—although not here—and become intimately acquainted with. Also we may see the British Lion—the cartoon lion—who waves a Union Jack, wears a straw hat, and smokes a pipe.



LEO BRITANNICUS.



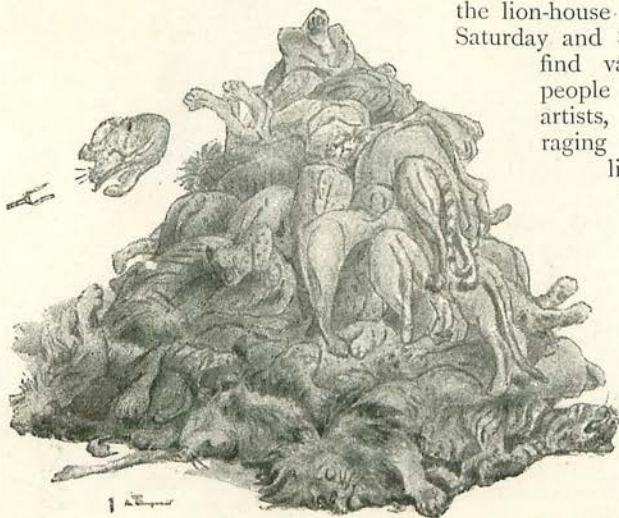


A SUPERIOR PERSON.

a mere beer-drinking vulgarian and a smoker of pipes. So always with the lion; he will pose fine and large if he meet you out for a walk in a jungle, and do his utmost to terrify you; if driven to it he may take the liberty of helping himself to a mouthful of you. But all this is only if he has first failed to sneak away unobserved. In South Africa a team-driver, finding a family of lions in his path, will calmly take his long stock-whip and whip them away; and they go meekly, glad to escape the lash. When no stock-whip is handy, a traveller from England is used—preferably with a title.



A BEER-DRINKING VULGARIAN.



FOR CARTAGE.

who is treated thus in caravans. The lion, as I have said, is a fraud; a posing, theatrical, Turveydrop and Bobadil of a fraud. Look at him in this, his house. He turns up his nose at the visitors and affects a magnanimous superiority. If he were a human thing he would wear *pince-nez* and a velvet jacket, and look pityingly great at picture shows, though in his inner heart

Here in one respect only are the lions treated with absolute cruelty, but in that respect the cruelty is of an aggravated sort. Come into the lion-house at what time, on what day (except Saturday and Sunday) you please, and you shall find various artists, and more various people who are not, nor ever will be artists, sketching and daubing and outraging the features and the feelings of lions and tigers. Perhaps, however, it is a moral dispensation, teaching the animals to look forward to Sunday with longing, as a day of blessed relief and rest; guarding their conduct in the matter of Sunday observance, while the bars and the keeper take care of it in other matters.

Little defence is available against all these daubers; but it is possible for a lion or a tiger to lie lifelessly and flat upon its side, offering only the uninspiring outline of a





DUKE.

the artists—of the pinchings of tails left near bars, of the twitchings of protrusive whiskers, and the pea-shootings in the countenance—let there be silence, lest others be tempted to imitate and fall victims to the casual paw, or to the little less deadly detection of Sutton, the keeper.



THE GENTLEMAN NEXT DOOR.

his own selection. When they are chosen by the keepers he chews them himself. He once gave a lioness a fatal bite, but that is his only claim to the designation of a lady-killer. And so he lies curled up alone, hugging himself with reciprocal affection. I remember a keeper once making a long and elaborate joke about this lion putting up his dukes and putting down the Duchesses, but have forgotten its exact terms.

Another lion, a little further along, does all Duke's share of love-making, in addition to more than his own. The keepers have their own name for this lion, but I prefer to call him The Gentleman Next Door, any lioness who happens to be in the adjoining cage being Mrs. Nickleby. He does not throw her cucumbers and vegetable marrows, for several obvious reasons; but he roars and scratches at the iron partition door with a vigour proper to the part, while Mrs. Nickleby lolls indifferently

rug or an empty sack, as though the pelt had been cast, and the animal were somewhere else. This expedient is largely practised, until it would seem the most natural thing in the world for a keeper to enter with a pitchfork and toss all those empty skins into one heap, to be carried away on wheelbarrows. Of the counter-expedients of

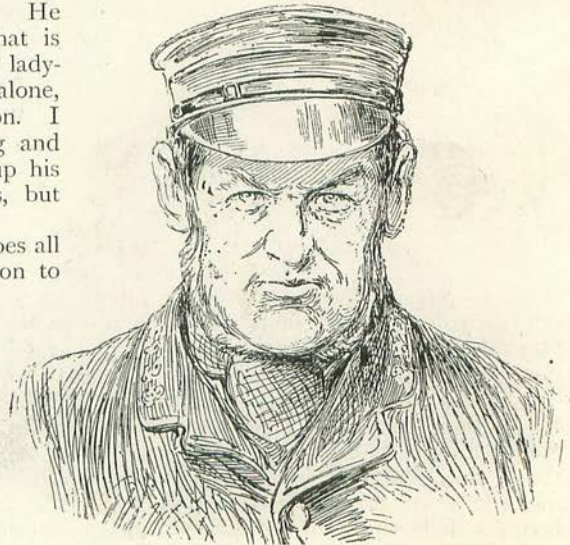
Even a humbug may be a handsome humbug. Look at Duke, the wicked old Nubian in the end cage, as he sits serenely and loftily looking over your head. He knows better than you do that

you admire his fine, up-lifted head and his great tawny and black mane. Duke is a great character in his way. Handsome old chap as he is, and proud of it, Duke never was a gallant—never a lioness's lion. All sorts of attempts have been made during his

long residence here to mate him, but Duke draws the line at Duchesses. Perhaps he would treat the ladies better if he were allowed to make



MRS. NICKLEBY.



THE LION-KEEPER.



in her own place. Prince and Nancy are a fine old couple of lions—married fifteen years, and a peaceable, comfortable old pair still. Ask Sutton, the head lion-keeper, about Prince and Nancy. Sutton, by-the-by, will soon have been employed in these gardens for forty years. If I were a statistician I probably could prove, by rule of arithmetic, that Sutton has been killed many times over, in the course of so many years among lions and tigers. Not being a statistician, I am compelled to admit that he hasn't. Sutton enjoys the distinction of being the only thing in the lion-house never sketched by the artists and the sketchers who are not artists.

It is noticeable that a lion—any lion, every lion—likes to take his ease with his nose stuffed out between the bars—by way, probably, of sniffing the air of freedom, and feeling as much at liberty as possible in the circumstances, regardless of contact with the iron of the cage.

I am not sure that this muzzle-exposure is always good for Felis Leo; I have a suspicion that it may be responsible for some of the toothaches wherewith he now and again is afflicted, and ascribes, probably, to Sutton's partiality for open windows. A lion with a toothache is a pitiable thing; still, a thing to which I should prefer to administer comfort from the opposite side of the bars; and one the extraction of whose tooth I could leave, without envy, in other hands. Any person of ordinary humanity would prefer losing a tooth of his own to inflicting the pain of extraction upon—say Duke here—with his own hand. There is more tenderness for the feelings of dumb animals than one might imagine in the world, in such circumstances as these. Although why Duke should be called a dumb animal is not easy to explain after hearing his shocking language if dinner arrives a little later than suits him.

Notwithstanding all his grandeur and all his posing, the lion doesn't sufficiently wash his face; nor, indeed, any other part of himself. A tiger's ablutionary lickings are disproportionately few and small

in area compared with those of the humble tom-cat of our native tiles. But compared with those of the lion they are profuse, excessive, superfluous. The lion has not yet learned the lesson of personal cleanliness. Some day, if I think of it when I see him, I shall suggest to Sutton the expedient of turning the garden hose on these lions. I don't believe they would enjoy it at first, but their education must begin somewhere. And Sutton might find this process more convenient than an actual bodily assault with soap and towels, although, considered as a spectacle, this plan would have its merits; and



THE AIR OF FREEDOM.



TOOTHACHE.



YOU DIRTY LION.



might command its price as an advertisement for the soap. There are other respects in which the lion compares unfavourably with the tiger. Watch them yawning. Yawning, by-the-bye, is the only really fashionable amusement here in the lion-house—after eating. One of the cheetahs has a wooden ball to play with, but a cheetah is naturally low in

his tastes, and even he is ashamed of the amusement, pursuing it by stealth,

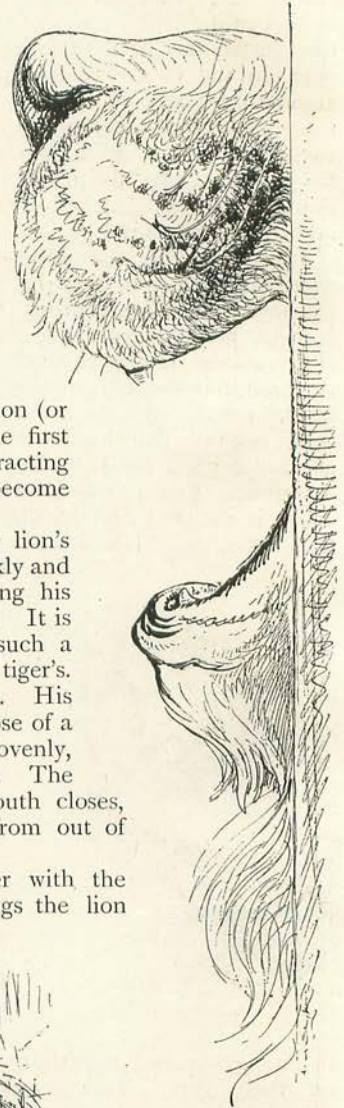
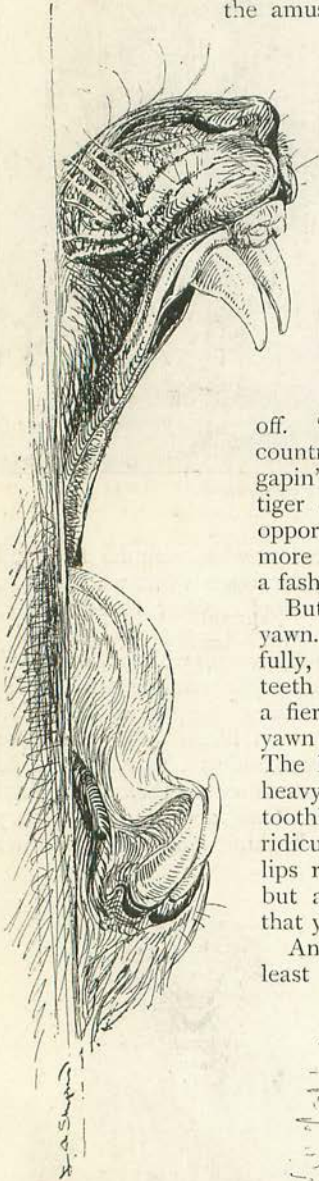
when unobserved, and concealing the ball by lying before it when visitors arrive; and in his inner heart I feel sure he prefers eating—if not yawning.

I have before now felt suspicious of the genuine character of some of the yawns here to be inspected. There are really too many of them. It is largely a mere posing and show-

off. "Law, Maria," says the country cousin, "look at him a-gapin'; what awful teeth!" and the lion (or tiger as may be) likes it, seizing the first opportunity of gaping again, and extracting more flattery. So that yawning has become a fashionable pursuit.

But there is an inferiority in the lion's yawn. The tiger opens his head frankly and fully, baring his gums and exposing his teeth in all their vicious pointedness. It is a fierce yawn, a downright yawn, such a yawn as could be no yawn but a tiger's. The lion's might almost be a sheep's. His heavy lips overhang his gums like those of a toothless old woman. It is a mere slovenly, ridiculous yawn, with no terror in it. The lips retract a little perhaps as the mouth closes, but all the lustre is already gone from out of that yawn.

Anybody who looks at the matter with the least care may see that in all things the lion



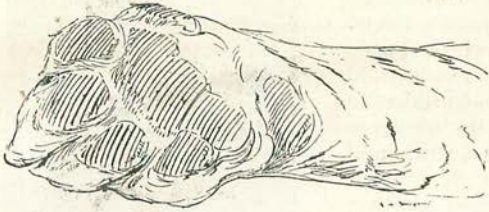
has been accorded an elevation which is not his right. The superstition is long a-dying, even among the lower animals themselves. The puma here, for instance, puffed up



DRESSING THE PART.

with a ridiculous vanity born of having been called the American lion by some naturalist who should have known better, rolls among his bed-straw until enough hangs





ILLUSTRATIONS OF PALMISTRY—I.

about his ears to represent a mane, and then stalks forth to be admired. He is encouraged by ignorant visitors who, from his size and colour, assume him to be a young lion, and call him one. I have even heard these sages disputing about his age, and walking off saturated with the animosity born of contentious ignorance, without once looking at the label which published the creature's pumaship to all the world. This sort of thing turns the puma's head, and makes a fool of him.

The tiger's superiority to the lion consists chiefly in his candour. He is a wicked, vicious rascal, a thief and a



II.

murderer, and he owns it. He doesn't pose. He would always rather run away than be bothered with fighting, unless he happen to be hungry, and so would the lion. But the lion will attitudinize if he thinks you have observed him, and try to make his running away look like magnanimity. The tiger simply bundles off, without any false pride. These particulars I give on hearsay evidence. They did not seem sufficiently important to warrant the expense of a personal test. Anybody anxious to know more of the lion or tiger has open to him several means of acquiring information at first hand—among others, palmistry. Both the lion and the tiger have paws of great



THE TIGER IS AMUSED.

mobility of expression. I have no doubt that if a skilful chiromancist were carefully and painstakingly to examine the paws of either Duke the lion or Tommy the big tiger here, he would before very long be greatly struck by them. Indeed, persons with very little practical knowledge of palmistry have been known, after a very short acquaintance with a tiger's paw, to carry away an extremely vivid impression thereof.

It should be more generally understood that a tiger does not eat buns. There is a popular superstition that he does—a superstition extending also to lunch biscuits, bull's-eyes, and acidulated drops. Worthy old ladies are the chief votaries of the bun superstition, little boys and girls attending school treats taking the bull's-eye and acidulated drop branch. A tiger doesn't resent the offer of a bun as an insult—he is merely amused. Offer a bun to Duke, and he will express a desire to bite off half of you at once.

Tommy and Minnie are a long-wedded tiger couple—at the opposite end to Duke. And in their cage, if feeding-time be near, you shall see a quaint thing. Every animal in this place carries an internal clock of extreme accuracy, which sets him roaring furiously a little before four o'clock—every one but Tommy. Tommy makes a clock of himself



TOMMY.



entirely, to measure up the tedious minutes. He makes no sound, but walks, persistently following his tail, in a circle. As the minutes pass the circle narrows and the pace quickens, until, as the dinner-waggon rolls in its appointed grooves, he turns completely on an axis, his head making to the left, his tail to the right. And so until his dinner is actually within the bars, when he picks it up in his stride and retreats with it to a corner.

The smallest cat here is not on show. This is Dodger, the baby tiger. He lives in an elegant private bed-sitting-room, built of strong planks, at the back of the house,

by the door of Sutton's quarters, and in full view of the iron bathing-machine arrangement whereby the lions and tigers pass out to their back playgrounds in fine weather. The Dodger is not, perhaps, altogether beautiful—in a physical sense. He runs largely to ears and feet, and has the general appearance of having been put together hurriedly, with the wrong neck. But Dodger

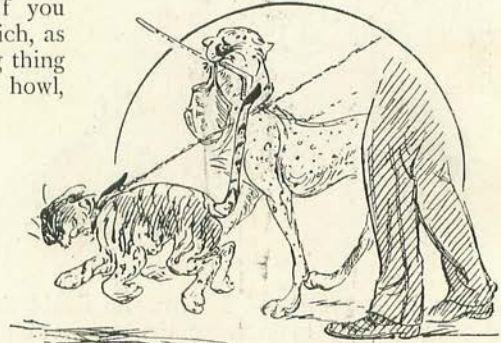


THE DODGER.

means well, and will play with your hands as long as you please to risk a nip of the teeth. If you are a stranger he will mew at you at first, which, as his voice is just breaking, is an exhilarating thing to hear, being a varying compound of roar, howl, mew, and whimper, grateful to the tympanum. But he soon grows friendly, especially if you place your hand casually on the dinner-waggon standing near his quarters.

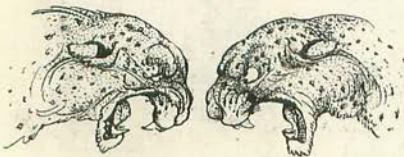
Another affable creature is the cheetah. With his lithe limbs, strong neck, and small bullet head, he has a certain prize-fighting appearance, but, like the Game Chicken, is quite affable. The cheetahs here are subjected to a certain ignominy which I trust and believe the Society is not intentionally responsible for. A board inscribed "Beware of Pickpockets" is hung conspicuously over their heads. It is scarcely credible that the proximity is intended as suggesting a horrible pun upon the name of the poor animals, but it arouses suspicions in the minds of some people, and is apt to place the unfortunate cheetahs in the abject position of accomplices in the outrage. And when the Dodger is promoted to one of these large cages, the suspicion in his case may even be greater, and naturally; with the possibly redeeming feature that only a lame joke, and not an inhuman pun, will be suspected. Before then, however, the reproach may be removed.

In the early morning, before the gardens are opened, Sutton, Dodger, and the cheetah go out for a walk about the grounds, amid a shower of envy. Michael, the big bear, in particular, looks from behind his window blinds in much displeasure. I should like to take Michael out for a stroll—say along the Strand; there would be a deal to amuse him.



A WALK.

S. S. S.



A FAMILY JAR.

S. S. S.

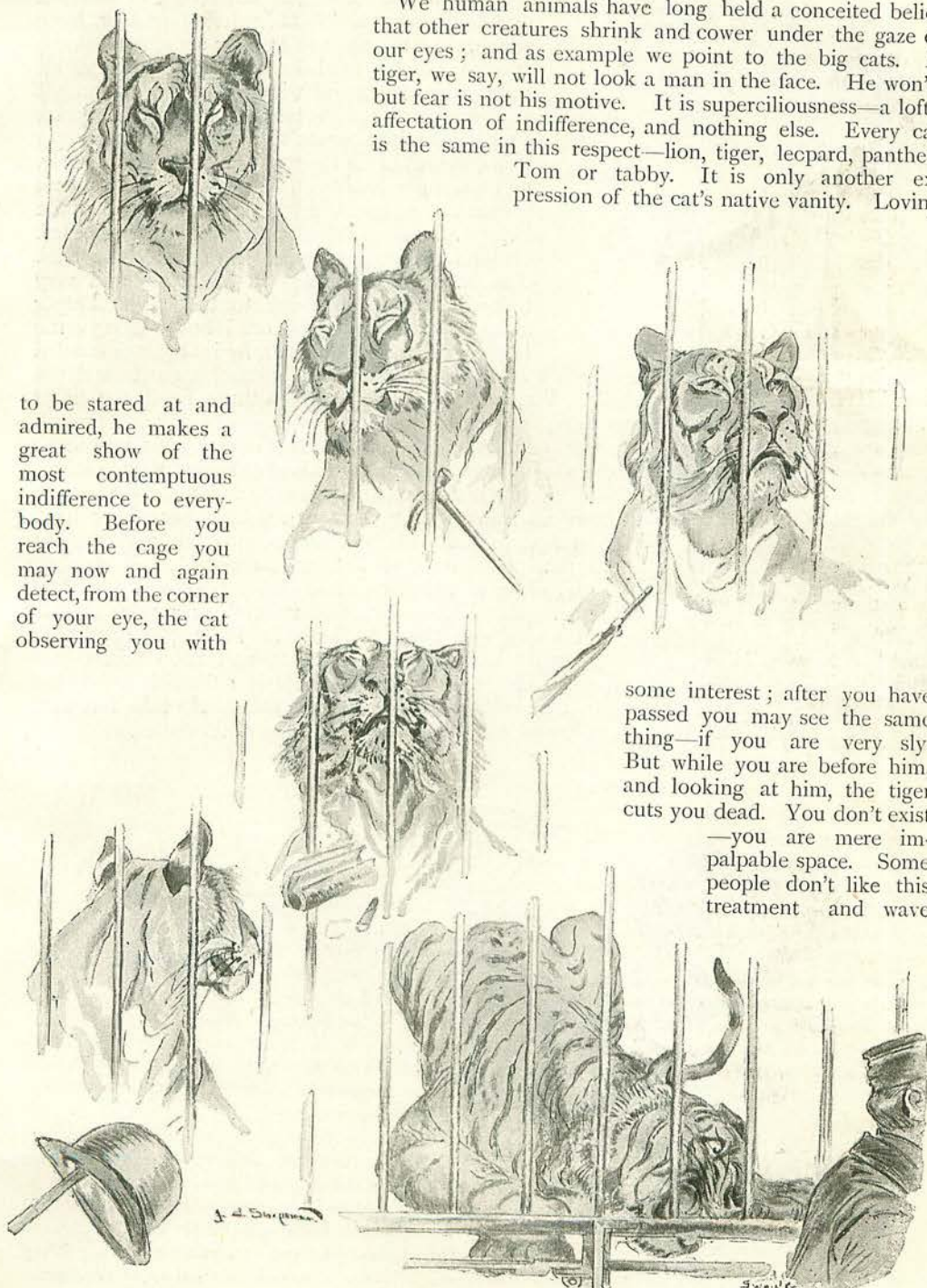


It is a pity that some of the leopards are not as good-humoured as Dodger and the cheetahs. One particular pair live in a perpetual mutual threat to bite off each other's heads. Anything is a sufficient provocation. Whatever the one is doing arouses the jealousy of the other—and there you are!

We human animals have long held a concealed belief that other creatures shrink and cower under the gaze of our eyes; and as example we point to the big cats. A tiger, we say, will not look a man in the face. He won't, but fear is not his motive. It is superciliousness—a lofty affectation of indifference, and nothing else. Every cat is the same in this respect—lion, tiger, leopard, panther, Tom or tabby. It is only another expression of the cat's native vanity. Loving

to be stared at and admired, he makes a great show of the most contemptuous indifference to everybody. Before you reach the cage you may now and again detect, from the corner of your eye, the cat observing you with

some interest; after you have passed you may see the same thing—if you are very sly. But while you are before him, and looking at him, the tiger cuts you dead. You don't exist—you are mere impalpable space. Some people don't like this treatment and wave







CONNECTED WITH ROYALTY.

sticks and umbrellas to attract his attention ; but he only gazes dreamily away into some other region of space. They get angrier, and hurl guide-books and cigar-ends ; and he stares placidly at the ceiling. They waggle hats on sticks, as irritatingly as possible, and he glances casually at his bedroom door. Even when it seems proper to transfer his gaze from the space at the left of his interviewer to that at his right, it sweeps round with a most offensive air of passing over mere space ; or perhaps it passes over the insulted person's head. With the keeper it is different. No tiger is a hero to his keeper, and the tiger knows it. The keeper has found him out long ago, and it is useless to attitudinize before *him*, or to attempt to ignore his existence. So the tiger tries to rush at him under the bars. The keeper is associated in his mind, and very naturally, with something to eat. The keeper always appears with the beef, but although the beef comes between the bars, he is always defrauded

of the keeper. Wherefore the keeper is a *bête-noir*, a constant reminder of a good meal put under his nose and taken away again. Perhaps it may be hinted to those nobly ambitious of attracting the notice of a lion or tiger, that the hat-trick may be expensive if tried upon a young and frolicsome animal. A sudden temptation, such as the offer of a new hat, may cause a young lion or tiger to forget his dignity for some little time—as long as the hat lasts. It was a very few Sundays ago that Victoria—the young lioness here belonging to the Queen—secured a very decent bowler, which had been extended with a view of reaching something from the ledge before the cage. Victor, her mate, although, of course, connected with Royalty by marriage, so far unbent as to participate in that hat, which provided a pleasant twenty minutes' entertainment ; at the close of which the late owner borrowed a peaked cap from the keeper, and went home. But Victor does not unbend as a rule. He is an affable lion, however, perfectly friendly with those he knows. He might almost be allowed out, were it not that the artists and the photographers, and the daubers and sketchers who are neither, would probably suffer from his natural indignation. So he sits behind the bars and dreams of the golden time when all things shall be free and equal, and he shall kick those people and all their works into the outer darkness.

