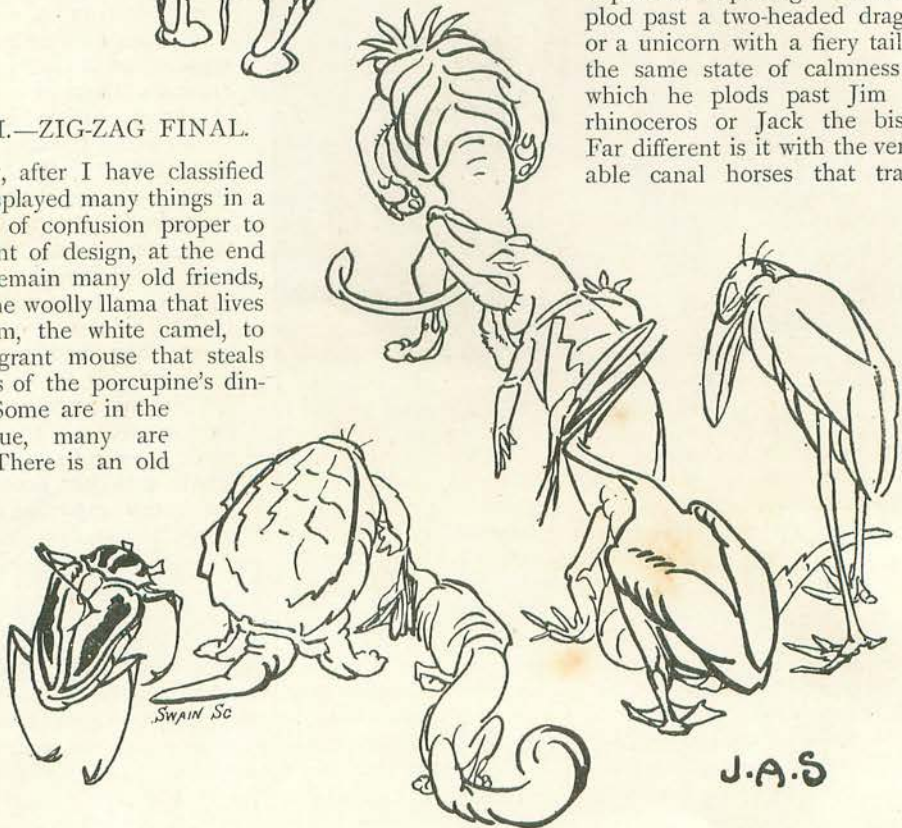


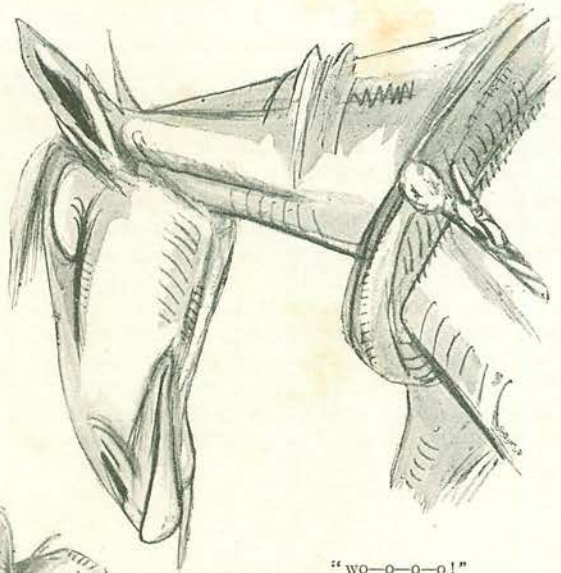
## XXVI.—ZIG-ZAG FINAL.

Now, after I have classified and displayed many things in a system of confusion proper to my want of design, at the end there remain many old friends, from the woolly llama that lives by Tom, the white camel, to the vagrant mouse that steals pinches of the porcupine's dinner. Some are in the catalogue, many are not. There is an old

horse that drags a refuse cart, and, having been here for years, is past all surprising. He would plod past a two-headed dragon, or a unicorn with a fiery tail, in the same state of calmness in which he plods past Jim the rhinoceros or Jack the bison. Far different is it with the venerable canal horses that tramp

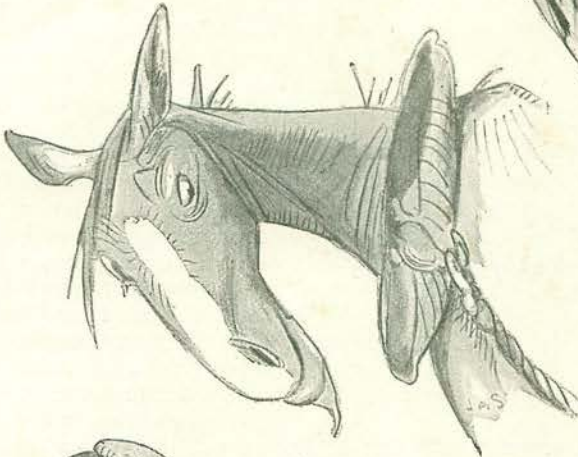


resignedly by the Regent's Canal, where it cuts the Gardens in two. They see nothing, for that costs a shilling, and the Society spend many shillings in fences; but they hear, and most of all they hear the parrots when they hang out for an airing on a warm day. There is a wicked old blue macaw—a fine, big fellow, whose name should be Blue Peter—who tricks the unhappy canal horses all day; shouting "Wo—o—o—o!" at the top of his voice, and chuckling with unholy delight when the angular victim welcomes the opportunity for a rest.



"wo—o—o—o!"

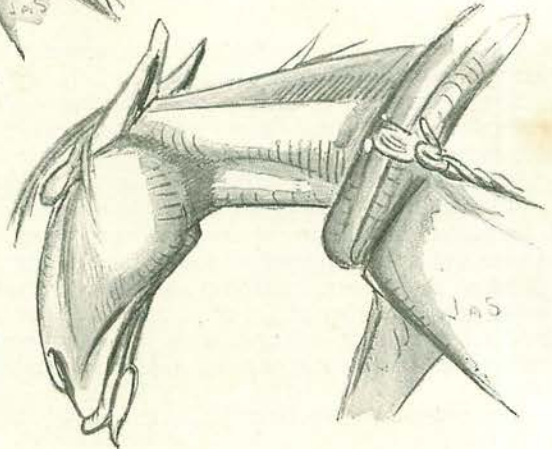
Some creatures there are that are uncatalogued because they hold official positions. Such are Nell, Church's terrier, divers cats, and the matronly old hens that hatch out eggs for rarer birds. The fat importance of one old Cochin hen and the tremendous number and



"WHAT! A REST?"



"HAD HIM AGAIN!"

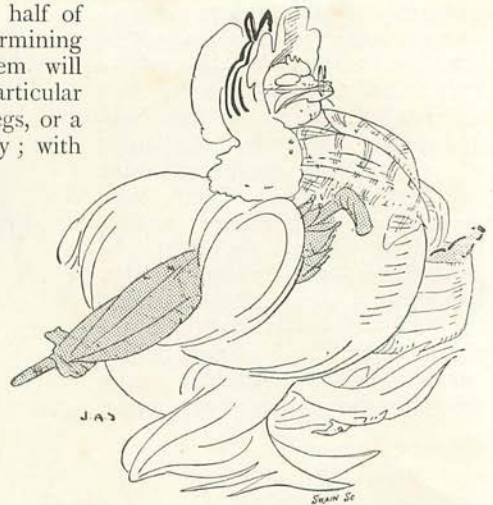


ONLY ANOTHER SELL.

thickness of her garments make out a complete claim on her behalf to be called Mrs. Gamp. Mrs. Gamp's must be a life of surprises. For a respectable suburban hen of the strictest propriety and the most regular and orderly habits is naturally surprised when a long and conscientious sitting results in a brood of spindly cranes or an ear-splitting choir of laughing jackasses. It shocks her sense of the proper and respectable, and confuses her orderly intellect. For in her suburban intelligence what is eccentric is disreputable, and so she trots

about distracted, half afraid of her family and half of the gallinaceous Mrs. Grundy. The life is undermining her nervous system. No hen's nervous system will stand an eternal uncertainty as to whether a particular egg will turn to a thing all beak, or a thing all legs, or a thing to swim, a thing to run, or a thing to fly; with a reserve possibility that it may turn to a snake or a lizard. There is dignity in Mrs. Gamp's official position, I grant; but it is a wearing work, hatching out a perpetual succession of nightmares.

In the Zoo you may find curiosities on both sides of the bars. On the human side there are, at least, as many as on the other. Maybe a company of sailors, who go to a show for a laugh, and guffaw conscientiously at everything, to the intense scandal of the



MRS. GAMP.



COME FOR FUN.

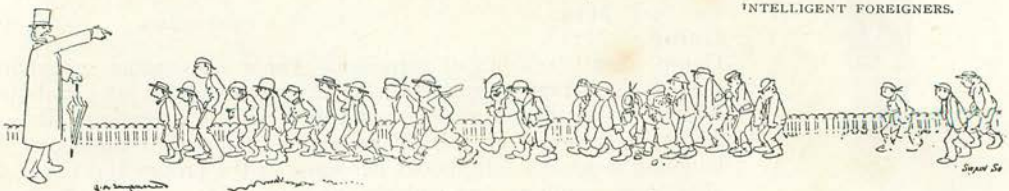
serious creatures, like Bob the Bactrian and most of the owls: or a worthy group of country cousins, each brimming over with perfect ignorance of any animal more recondite than a cow, and imparting their mis-information to each other with great freedom and confidence. The intelligent foreigner comes here, too, in those

peculiar felt and straw hats that only he knows how to get; hats often with little cockades of feathers stuck in the sides of the bands. He begins at house number one, and solemnly and diligently broods over each animal in succession, to the very last in house sixty-four. He is fat of face, and usually wears spectacles. Also there is the unhappy elementary school, sternly marshalled in a trotting column and dragged neck and crop through the grounds for the enlargement of their information and the improvement of their beraddled minds; whom the unbending schoolmaster impels over the gravel paths at the pace calculated to get them out of the gate within the time allowed for their free visit; and whose precise acquisitions in zoology on the run, and impressions of the whole business in general, one would rather like to analyze.

But pre-eminent, perkiest, cheekiest of all things not in



INTELLIGENT FOREIGNERS.



"NOW THEN! HURRY UP BEHIND THERE!"



"HOW DO, TOMMY?"



"AH, JIM, DEAH BOY!"

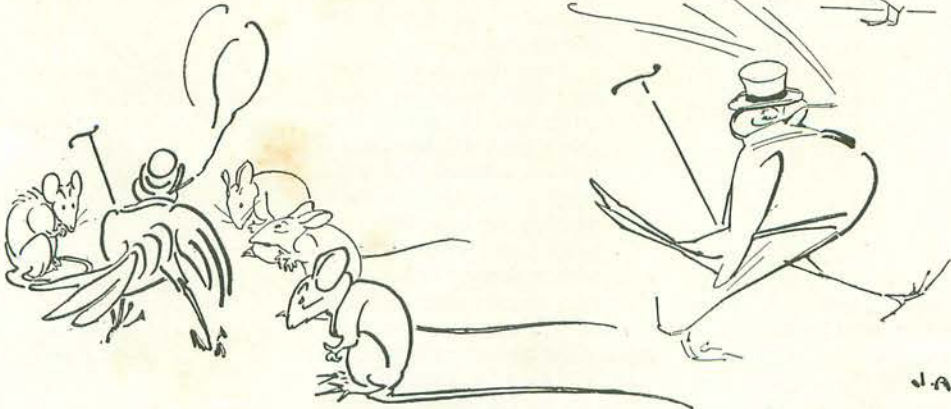
the catalogue, is the sparrow. He flies casually to and fro among wolves, tigers, and leopards, with an airy confidence and self-sufficiency that nothing

bigger than a sparrow can imitate. He drops in casually on Tom, the big tiger, as he takes his afternoon nap in his back-yard, and bounces to and fro under Tom's nose, discussing zoological politics on a footing of perfect equality, and disturbing Tom's nap. Feeling his vast importance, and quite recognising the prin-



"MORNIN', DUKE! FEEL CHIPPY?"

ciple that his exalted position carries with it certain social duties which he must not neglect, he makes a flying call on Duke, the Nubian lion, and patronizes



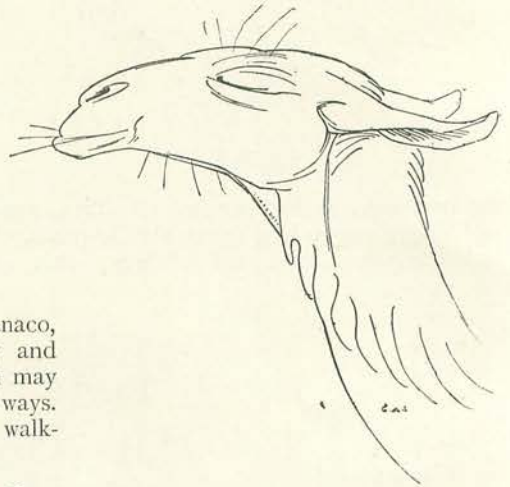


PREPARATION.

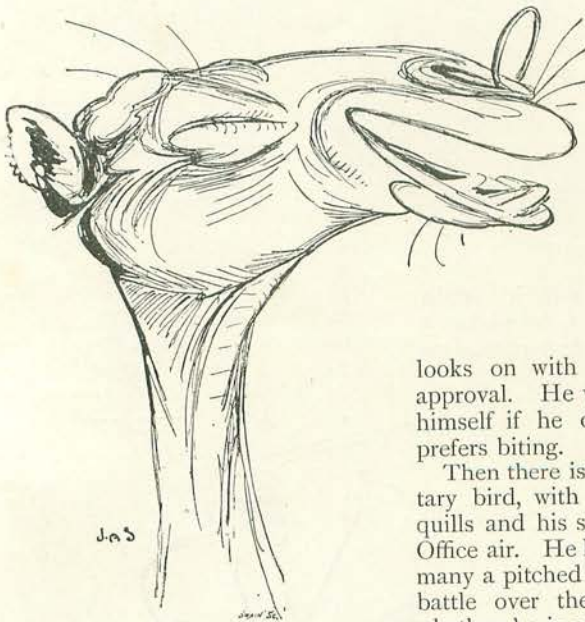
him with the proper grace, suggesting various impossible alterations in regimen by way of improving Duke's digestion and mending his temper. He hops across the Gardens and discusses the prospects of the hay-crop with Jim the rhinoceros, who is dietetically interested in the matter; then, having swaggered past the retiring mice who assume a residuary interest in Jim's dinner, he hangs about a little at a bar—partly because it is the nobby thing, and partly because of the crumbs—and so across Regent's Park and off to a cricket match at Lord's.

But there are creatures that have not been spoken of in these pages, yet still have respectable positions in the catalogue. Instance the llamas and guanacos. I am not fond of the guanaco. He spits—and with an accurate aim. Take care how you rouse the ire of the guanaco, for he spits suddenly and without warning. You may

rouse his ire in many hundreds of thousands of ways. By wearing a peculiar hat or an ordinary hat; walk-



EXPECTORATION.



APPROBATION.

ing quietly or with a swagger, or running or sitting or standing still; by speaking, shouting, or remaining silent, or by existing in the same world; and, his ire roused, he promptly spits, while Tom, the wicked old white camel next door,

looks on with delighted approval. He would spit himself if he could, but prefers biting.

Then there is the secretary bird, with his many quills and his smart, War Office air. He has caused many a pitched zoological battle over the question whether he is a stork or a hawk; and his own battles with snakes cover him with

glory and fill him with snake. He struts smartly about, plainly a secretary who knows his business and will stand no nonsense. There are all the stags, finest and largest and most disdainful of all being the wapiti. But a stag is always in a preliminary and incipient state of weeping, in spite of his assumption of



A SMART SECRETARY.

"side," and until he becomes venison is really an uninteresting creature. Some day, perhaps, he will properly make up his mind and have a good cry and get it over. Then he may turn his mind to something else and take a worthy



THE YAK.



"SIDE."

position in society. As it is, the stag at best, if he has any definite character at all, is a hypocrite. He poses as the beautiful, mild, benignant, timid, loving and oppressed creature, and is at heart a savage. Worthy and well-meaning people, with soft hearts and heads of blubber, sob and squeal because he is hunted. He is such a darling, timid, trustful creature, say they, and to hunt him is the act of cowardly brutality. Now, I challenge any of these kind people to approach a group of the mildest park deer, any day late in August, select a

quiet-looking buck, and attempt, in the most friendly way, to pat or stroke him. I am not particular as to the sort of deer—big red deer or little roebuck—but I hope the challenge won't be accepted, because the worthy adventurer will probably experience a dig in the ribs that will cause him a ride home on a hurdle. I say nothing of wilder deer. *Verb. sat sap.* Still, the stag is a characterless creature. There is even more character in the yak, just

opposite, mild creature as it is, with its old womanish air of coddling in its black silk shawl, and its pathetic grunt.

Also there are the Barbary wild sheep, who turn up in all sorts of unexpected corners of the place. There is something truculently timid, savagely mild, about the name of the



SAVAGELY MILD.



NELL.

Barbary wild sheep. It begins like thunder and dies away like a zephyr. It reminds one of Sidney Smith's lethally-preaching Wild Curates.

But behold, I have forgotten some of the most noble of the uncatalogued; chief among them Nell, Church's fox-terrier, who (herself and her numerous descendants) makes deadly war on the uncatalogued, un-housed, uninvited undesired rats, themselves a large part of the population of this place, and a destructive. An



UNCATALOGUED.

excellent official is Nell, honest, diligent, and with quick jaws. But no less worthy in their way are the regiment of battle-scarred cats, terrors among mice and rats both. Chief among these is Mr. Toots, of the camel-house, the intimate friend of Bob the Bactrian; and the elephant-house cat and the ostrich-house cat occupy high positions. But many a stout heart beats quicker at the smell of mouse beneath the fur of the more obscure rank and file of the uncatalogued cats.

