

Seen at the Chutes Zoo

There are mighty lions and fierce tigers at the Chutes zoo; there is a grizzly that could crush your skull with a blow of his good right paw; there is a spotted lady leopard that would be a cyclone in a fight; there is an elephant of meek and peaceful ways when things run smooth, but capable of terrible things when things go wrong. There is a panther with a bad reputation and a drove of llamas with bad breaths. Which of these do you suppose put the machinery of the Chutes out of business, kept twenty stalwart employees cursing and fuming and working and perspiring for a good two hours, and in the end beat the whole working force of the zoo to a standstill?

None of these, but only three baby puma lions, with little bodies no bigger than those of a well-developed tomcat, but with spirits as big as a house and lot. This shows what persistence can accomplish in a good cause.

Thus it happened: They were moving the menagerie at the Chutes and the brute population was vastly agitated over it. It came at the end of a disturbed and nerve-racking week around the menagerie. Many things had been doing, and most of them were things that had no reason and were full of dreadful portent. Great thuds of falling bodies could be heard outside; mysterious hammerings and shouting that ceased not, day or night. There was no quiet and no privacy. Sleep was impossible, for when the curious, peanut-throwing, disturbing crowd was not in, other and even noisier people were. The skylights of the zoo had been taken off, letting the cold air in, and that was a thing that had not happened there in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The residents took it in various ways. Wallace, the loudest-mouthed, if not exactly the largest and handsomest lion in the world, would lie back at intervals and complain. The others would take it up and talk it over in every manner of voice from the basso rumble of old Nero, the patriarch lion, to the snarling yelp of Gentle Willie, the striped hyena.

Especially hard was this state of affairs upon Victoria and Leonine, the twin young girl lionesses, so near alike that their keepers cannot tell one from the other, and their brother, Young Nero. They were born three years ago at the Chutes and never knew another world. To see this, their world, torn asunder and cast away was a matter for fear which their lion pride could not conceal. Young Nero put a brazen front on it and roared fiercely whenever he could endure it no longer, and the sisters sat up close to one another and whimpered at intervals in great, gurgling whimpers. They are only at the debutante age, these two, and are just preparing to make their bow before an audience. This apparent lack of fortitude must, therefore, be excused.

Old Nero, he of the battered nose and grizzly hair, took it more like a philosopher, as did his wife, Sultana. She is the mother of the twins, is Sultana. She was divorced from their father when they were too young to know of the trouble that had entered into the family, and being a lioness of strong and certain mind, she took unto herself at once another husband in Nero, who is, therefore, the stepfather of the twins. Both Nero and Sultana have been moved so often that it is no new thing to them, and they know the preliminary signs. Nero lay, therefore, and sharpened his claws on the cage floor and chewed the end of his tail into rather much the same as ever, and Sultana ground sharp her talons on the cell wall, as your home kitten attends to her claws on the legs of the kitchen table or the palm in the front yard. They and the long-necked, haughty llamas and the deer were the only beasts about the place that did not share in the disturbance. The llamas held their stiff necks high and were calm, because they had been used to shifting camp where they came from, and because it is vulgar and not befitting the proud beast of the Incas to be disturbed about anything. The deer were too soft-hearted and generally too wishy-washy to be vexed about anything. So voted the people of the menagerie, who saw no use in deer except to toast.

Then, finally, on St. Patrick's day in the morning, there came a time of fear and trembling. At the first glimpse of dawn a crowd of men came into the zoo and brought with them five little cages, all laced and bound with iron. One end opened, like the regular cages; the other was closed tight. The menagerie held its breath and waited developments.

The first on the list was Juno, the old dowager lioness, and here the spectators witnessed an exhibition of leonine depravity in striking contrast to the good breeding displayed by Mr. and Mrs. Nero, Sr. When the cage was brought up to the entrance, she growled and slunk into the corner, lowering her great head to the floor and thrusting out her long,ropy tail in a straight line. When the doors were opened she slunk back still more, and made remarks that would not bear translation from lionese into English. Hers was the attitude of the old woman, who is having her house torn down about her ears, and like the old woman she did not propose to stand it. So she lay back in the corner of her cage and sulked. And forthwith the iron, the great revivifier of sulky lionesses, came out from under the cage and through the bars and prodded her thrice on her great, lean ribs. She whirled like the wind and took the iron between her jaws and chewed it as a dog gnaws a bone. The keepers smiled calmly and let her chew. When she began to damage her teeth the iron was torn away, she following and worrying it until it passed through the bars. Then did Juno lose her temper and go to the bad completely. She flew at the bars, she clung to them with her great paws, and tore at them impotently with her big, sheath-knife claws. They poked her from the bars in one place, and she leaped up, and repeated the performance in another, all the time uttering heart-daunting growls. And in the end she dropped to the floor weak with passion, and crawled into a corner and sulked. Not even the most energetic prodding of the avenging rod could stir her. So deeming her ripe and ready, the keepers sent for the rope. It was noosed and passed first through the ventilation-hole in the back of the movable den, then through the two open doors fitting into one another and thence into Juno's cell. The noose was caught up on the end of an iron, passed over her head, she still sulking, little knowing that by so doing she was defeating her own ends. The iron was directed at her nearest foot; this was caressed and prodded and tickled until she drew it up toward her body. A swift motion and the noose was over this foreleg and safe from choking her when it tightened.

And then—the rope tightened with the altogether pull of a dozen keepers, and a red and yellow heap of hair and howl and snarl and pure, unadulterated rage, was dragged from her own little den in which she had grown old, to the new shifting cage, biting at every hand that came within three feet of the bars, and at intervals sulking with her tongue out and wondering what had struck her. The keepers wiped their foreheads and called for the water boy, and exchanged reminiscences while they got their breath. Then they lifted the cage, Juno and all, to the floor, while she, determined to die game, said things. And for the rest of the day she stuck out her tongue and sulked.

The next real fight was with a female leopard, and that was a fight worth seeing. Empress is her name, and she is the wife of Spitfire, who may have lived up to his name once, though he is an old leopard now, and toothless. And he lets Empress do the firsitting for the family. To the suggestion of iron that he go into the cage he responded willingly, if a bit rheumatically, and trailed in with a look of resignation. But when the iron touched Empress on her sleek, beautiful hide it awoke in one electric thrill all the feminine resentment in her nature, and forthwith there was a hot time in the Chutes.

First Empress began leaping, faster than the eye could follow, from floor to floor, around the corner of the wall and back to the floor again, a beautiful circle that whizzed so fast that her spotted hide looked like red and black stripes. So swift were her motions that no iron wielded by the hands of a mere man could catch her in the course, and the keepers waited until she had cooled down. She became tired presently and crunched in the corner, looking untarned hatred from her beautiful eyes. The iron shot in and took her mid-ribs. She spat venom, but held her position. The rakelike head curved behind her back, was jerked forward suddenly, and she came sprawling to the cage's center. With a snarling growl of pure rage she sprang for the bars and mouthed them, clinging on tight by her flexible feet. The bar struck her again, and she fell sprawling to the floor.

Now the cages in the Chutes are made with a roof sloping upward from back to front, and the bars do not begin at the very top of the cage but a foot or two down from the ceiling. The consequence is that there is at the top and front of each cage a little acute angle, where a monkey or a leopard or any other beast that lives by climbing may hide. And when she landed on the floor she sprang for this place of refuge, and touched the bars only once as she tucked herself away. From the ground one would have said that the cage was empty, so closely had she compressed herself. They tried to reach her with the iron, and could get only a little useless corner on her hide. They tried to persuade her to come out by throwing meat upon the floor and she refused to bait. And finally they had to saw a hole in the top of the cage and operate with a sharp two-pronged spear before she dropped again with a display of temper that outdevil the devils. Then she sulked, and then the rope was brought into play again. She made the shifting den shake with her wild rage as they drew her in and clapped down the door.

Next were the pumas—the three babies. As I have said, they were about as big as a very large Maltese cat—perhaps a little larger, but not much. They are at any rate considerably smaller than the wildcat of commerce. They have not had their eyes opened and been promoted to the meat-eating stage so very long; their time of life is that represented in human infants by the first reader. They still have their baby prettiness and roundness and awkward grace. They are a beautiful golden brown that shows light in front when they sit up to watch visitors. Their cheeks are black and their noses white, as though they had been in the cream jug, and their eyes are like the purest smoky topaz, polished into a globe. And beneath this fair exterior is the wildest soul that God ever made. It is something to know that these beasts come from North America. It is a matter of pride to think that this continent can do the best of anything when it sets out to do it, and that when the Western Hemisphere starts to grow wild animals it does it so successfully that lions and tigers and hyenas are lambs beside the product. For you can put a lion or a tiger in a leash of the spirit, can make him sit on a stool and jump through a hoop for the enjoyment of a foolish crowd; but you cannot train a puma lion. For pure, unadulterated wildness you cannot find his match in the whole broad world except in another puma lion.

These three are kept in a cage by themselves away from their mother, because it is feared from previous experiences with pumas that if she were allowed in the same cage with her offspring she would choose for them death rather than captivity and would finish them as she threatens to finish the people who throw peanuts at her cage. Into the cage of the three babies they thrust their iron and before its door they placed the movable cage, which they opened. And thus they prepared to transfer the little pumas.

In less than a minute there were three golden yellow balls of fire revolving and whirling and scooting around the cage like shooting stars. The little boy puma, who is the largest, was on his back fighting the iron right valiantly, and his little sisters were tumbling around, squalling and yelling at the top of their voices. From the next cage their mother was calling them encouragement.

There was no use in trying to pin them to the edge of the cage, as they had done with the larger beasts, because they were too agile; the little boy dodged out of the way whenever the iron came down on him and continued to fight it, swearing all the time in a manner shocking in one so young. The keepers tried a pointed trident of an iron. They might as well have used a broom straw for all the effect it had upon the valiant babies. The head keeper swore lustily and called for an iron and a hatchment cover. Holding this cover as a shield he tried the risky experiment of invading the cage. The little boy puma sprang at his throat, but the keeper interposed his wooden shield, and fought the little fiend backward and ever backward until, when he recovered, he found himself and his sisters in the shifting cage with the door snapped. He sat on the floor and spat at the universe while the keepers shifted the other beasts.

No further trouble was reported. Tommy, the jaguar, is as tame as a cat, and is left tied up like a dog by the collar while his cell is being cleaned; so that it was no trouble at all to get him into the shifting den. He was led in by the collar, half-walking, half-crawling, in a villainous sort of way, which is the manner

of even the most gentle and domestic jaguar. The twin lionesses notwithstanding their timidity and the fact that they have never been moved before, were as good and obedient as ever.

The cages were all empty, all except those of young Nero and the grizzly bear, who were saved for another moving, and the beasts were carried into the street. There was a joyous time for the children of the Park Panhandle region when this free show was trundled past on go-carts and up to a street car of the Ellis street line. The street-car company had let them a special construction car; on this the beasts were loaded, and so away for the first animal trolley party in history. They behaved admirably on the journey, albeit most of them were a little nervous. Only old Nero, experienced traveler that he is, yawned and looked bored and and tried to get some sleep.

The llamas and Princess walked, Princess leading. It is on record that Princess covered herself with humiliation by invading a saloon and stealing the free lunch, and that the llamas felt their company most keenly after that. Behind them, in a leash, were led the deer. At the new Chutes the unloading was a rapid process. The animals that were the most stubborn about getting into the cages were easiest to get out into the comparative freedom of the larger dens. When they were not willing, a bar thrust through the rear openings worked wonders.

All but the baby pumas. And there is the point of this tale. The baby pumas absolutely refused to be unloaded. No, sir, they said to the keepers, you bunked us once and you won't do it again. You got us out of our nice warm den and took us on a horrid cold ride and be darned to you. And they refused to budge. The dens of the new Chutes are high from the ground. The unloading cage had to be held up on the shoulders of workmen while the unloading process was accomplished. It was shoulder-stiffening, back-breaking work. Head Keeper Hall added to the burden by kneeling on top of the cage and fishing for pumas through the front bars in the manner in which one fishes for a hat in a well. Just what happened inside the cage none outside could say, but they refused to be caught by the bar. Then the keepers tried rocking the shifting den back and forth. The little pumas held on with their little claws and refused to budge. Meat thrown in the new den had not the least effect; they were not to be bribed. The keepers tried to rope them, and the little boy puma led his sisters in another imitation of a shooting star. Backs ached under the cage and the keepers swore in concert, but high above their profanity rose the remarks of the little boy puma telling what he thought of men and their ways.

Something had to give way, and it was the patience of the men, not the persistence of the pumas, that snapped. With a final blank the keeper came down, the cage door was closed and the cage of the three little pumas was laid out upon the floor to remain while the rest of the animals were moved. The pumas, tired but unconquered, sat down to rest. The little boy sat in the center and panted, but revived himself whenever any stranger came near the cage long enough to rise up and spit energetically and hatefully. His little sisters sat one on either side and rested, with their great, topaz, liquid eyes half closed and ropes of spume running from their mouths. One had a cut on her beautiful, cream-jug nose, and the other was bleeding at the nostril from the fight with the keepers' bars, but they all looked happy and triumphant. Twenty men had done their worst and had conquered fierce lions and agile tigers; but they had failed with the three little American pumas.

But, alas and alack! next day a keeper came along and bored the back of their cage full of holes and thrust through it an iron and poked the baby pumas at its point into the new cage.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Short Hours.

A certain secretary of war, says London Tit-Bits, was very zealous in regard to the duties of his office, and in seeing that others were not unmindful of theirs. One day he visited the rooms of the infantry depot at Warley, and inquired as to details. Meeting a man clad in a sergeant's uniform in the passage, he asked at what hour he usually came on his duty.

"Oh," said the sergeant, "I usually stroll in about eleven or twelve o'clock."

"Stroll in?" said the surprised minister. "Then I presume you do not leave until a late hour?"

"Well," replied the man, "I generally slip off at three o'clock."

"Slip off at three o'clock!" returned the minister, scandalized. "Pray, sir, may I ask what department you belong to?"

"Certainly," said the other. "I come every Saturday to wind the clocks."

Lost \$1,400 in Cash.

Thursday Mrs. Mary Morrison of this city while en route to lower Dominion to pay off a gang of men on her mining claim, had the misfortune to lose a hand satchel in which

was her purse containing \$1400 in cash. The satchel was lost from the stage in which Mrs. Morrison was riding some place between 10 and 20 below on Dominion. On discovering her loss she got out and walked back over the distance but saw nothing of the satchel. The lost money consisted of ten \$100 bills, four \$50 bills, the remaining \$200 being in tens and twenties.

The loss has been reported to the police and no effort will be spared in the search for the lost satchel and its contents.

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