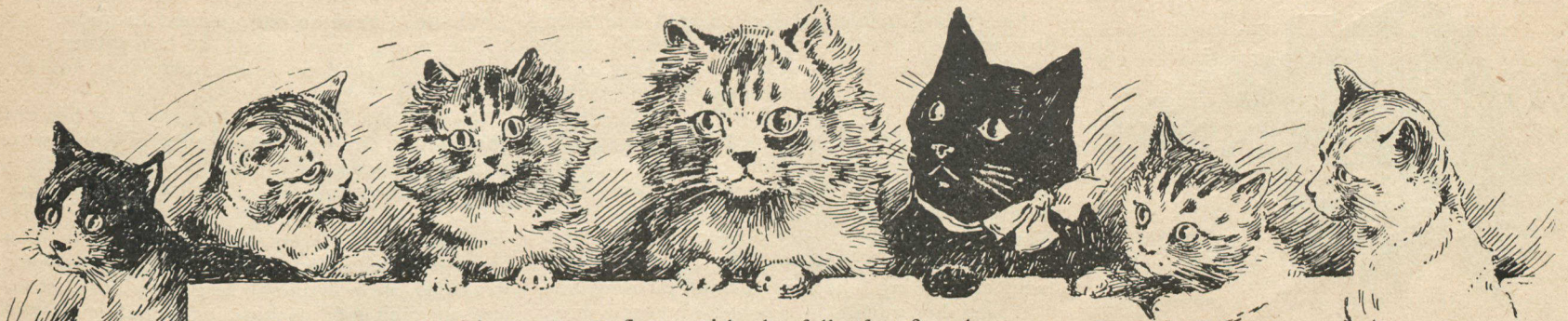




A fair evening of a fair day; and we are on the grand stand, mere atoms in the mass of human beings assembled. Before us stretches the picturesque scene,—similar in outline though differing in detail,—with which we have grown familiar in recurring Septembers; the broad platform; the darkling pond waters; the net-work of poles, meshes and gleaming wires; the old-time scenic structures so full of enchantment.

High-swung electric globes flash clear light upon the foreground. Beyond we note the fast darkening lake waters, whose outer verge is dotted with low clusters of yellow beaded gleamings. A magnificent site this for the pretty mimic show—none could surpass it.



Mr. Gladstone.

The platform performance goes merrily on with gymnasts and tricksters of hand and foot. There is a fascination about these feats, in their exhibition of muscle, sense and nerve,—each wrought to the highest stage of perfection. We see results, not the processes; and as we laugh and admire, we rarely think of the long, laborious days and months of training; the risks taken, the physical pain borne, before attaining the almost miraculous skill which wins our favor. Beneath the night sky, and under the magic of colored lights, these gymnasts sway and twist in mid-air, with the grace of daring which suits our mood.

How silent the vast throng grows at that last dangerous feat,—the forty-foot dive. The man's form, in its close-clinging tights, climbs swiftly up the white pole, higher and higher, until he seems a statue touching the starry sky. The men below send up a flaming torch and loose wrappings. We see him envelop himself in them; we see him apply the flaming brand,—then, in that instant of breathless stillness,

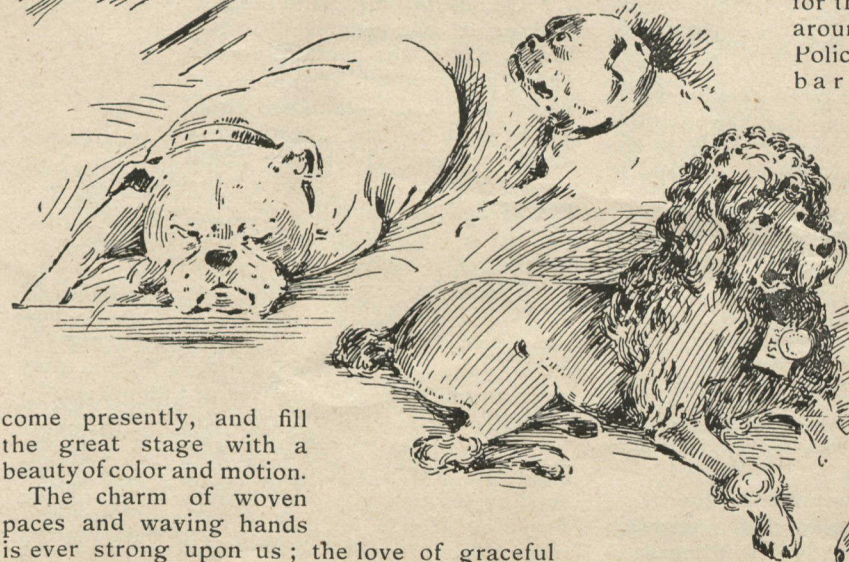
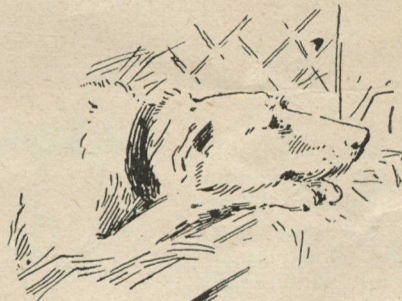
our eyes flame with the fall of a fiery human torch, which drops in swift, red flash into the water below. And even as the loud cheer reverberates, we see head and shoulders lifted, and dripping and smiling the man emerges whole from his awful plunge.

The trained elephants are a revelation. These, the slow-moving, ponderous, dignified creatures of long repute? It is nonsense. The phrase, 'clumsy as an elephant,' must vanish forever; for the elephants we see upon the stand are giddy, rakish, nimble creatures, who waltz and gymnaze, play and prank about with surprising celerity. The man with 'the elephant on his hands' will be henceforth viewed as fortunate as he with a gold mine.

How amusing it is to see the great creatures, with trunks affectionately entwined and forelegs lifted, moving about on those huge flat hind feet to the lilting valse tune; and how well they do it.

And when with table napkins fastened beneath the huge necks they sit on small chairs, with small tables before them, ringing their dinner bells, tossing their plates upon the floor, calling for food, and behaving generally like spoiled children, the apotheosis of elephantine absurdity seems to be reached indeed.

The elephants and the high dive are climactic points even beyond the dancers; but, with silken banners aripping, these



come presently, and fill the great stage with a beauty of color and motion.

The charm of woven paces and waving hands is ever strong upon us; the love of graceful motion and curving pose is an instinct born mayhap with the angelhood of Edenic days. Under the wide starry sky on the broad stage, with illusive colored lights, and distance to add enchantment, the dance is one of graceful caprice, which our eyes, wearied with hours of busy inspection, look upon with dreamy half-veiled vision.

Then follow the closing scenes;—the picturesque pretense of revolution, the little amusing pantomime, the play of fireworks and

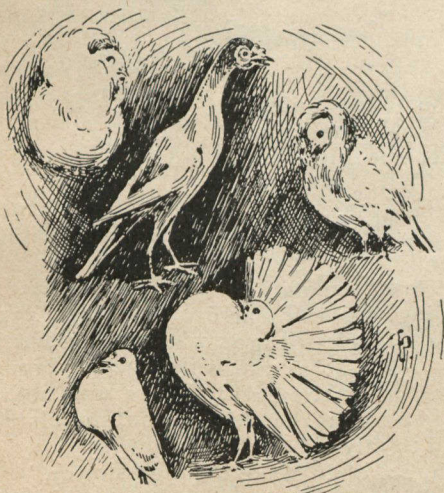
roar of harmless fusillade that constitutes the storming of the Bastille. The band play,—but it is not the 'National Anthem' nor yet the stirring strains of 'Rule Britannia,'—the gaily attired soldiers manœuvre in mimic encounter, but they are toy figures in French uniform, not our own scarlet-coated infantry or red-striped Queen's Own. And although we smile amusedly, never once do we forget that these are toy soldiers; never once do they stir a patriotic thrill in that vast sea of spectators, or rouse the loyal spontaneous impulse of former years,—an impulse that, in that pretty pantomime siege the Relief of Lucknow brought an old farmer to his feet, with waving arms and hearty hurrah. Yet, the cannons boom, the musketry rattle, crimson fires belch forth, showers of yellow balls burst upward, and amid a hiss of rockets and whirl of darting lights the walls totter and fall. The play is ended.



Oh, Dear!

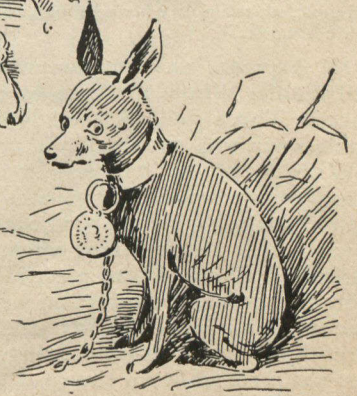
We come away along the curving avenue, under the arches of colored lights. The young maples on the boulevard quiver their whirl of leaves beneath the brilliant white globes. The vendors yet call their wares as the people throng gaily on out through the wide gateways. With laughter and rush, they break for the trolleys that twinkled around the waiting switch. Policemen good-naturedly bar out all irregularities, and the throng as good-naturedly submit; but as each carswings into place it is deluged with the jovial crowd and then speeds off cityward.

An hour goes by, and midnight stillness enwraps the



In the Pigeon House.

busy scene, the fresh, cool breeze sweeps up from the lake, and far above the lesser lights shines the still white radiance of a young moon.



Prize Dogs.