

THE
WILD BEAST-SHOW.



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SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW;
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THE WILD BEAST-SHOW.



WHEN old Preece, the errand man, came back to the village one Thursday morning from the neighbouring town, he was laden with parcels. He had brought two parcels for the parsonage-house, newspapers for the squire, a new pair of boots for the churchwarden, a packet of garden seeds for captain Hawker, a basket of grocery for widow Wilkins, and two fur-caps for young William and Thomas Baker.

Now William and Thomas, who expected that old Preece would bring home their new caps, were waiting at the end of the orchard, from which place they could see along the lane for some distance : no sooner did they get sight of the old errand man, limping along, than off they ran, scampering as fast as they could towards him, and nothing would do but they must carry their caps themselves. So Preece let them have their own way, and he came up the village with the rest of his parcels, with William on one side and Thomas on the other. Old Preece had generally some news or other to speak of to the young folks, and he began to tell William and Thomas Baker that, as he came out of the town, three large caravans, full of wild beasts, came in ; and that he believed they were going to make a show of them ; for four or five men, dressed in crimson, were blowing their trumpets in front of the caravans. Now, pleased as the boys were with their new fur-caps, they were much more delighted with the news of the wild beasts ; for their grandfather, who set his face against wakes and fairs, on account of the drinking, gambling, and other evil practices indulged in at such seasons, had promised, whenever a favourable opportunity occurred, he would

take them to see a wild beast show ; and they knew that what their grandfather promised he was sure to perform. Their grandfather talked of the distance, spoke of the rheumatism in his hip, pointed to a little cloud in the sky, and observed that it might not be a good collection of wild beasts ; but this he did only to make his grandsons happier when he agreed to accompany them ; and never, sure, were two boys more delighted when it was a settled thing to go and see the wild beasts.

It was not long before they were dressed in their green jackets, new fur-caps, and clean frills, and they were soon joined by their grandpapa in his well brushed black coat, black silk stockings, and silver knee buckles. He had a stout horn handled cane in his hand, with a leathern tassel hanging from the hole in the horn, and if you had seen the cheerful countenance of the old gentleman as he walked along with his grandsons, one on each side, you would have found it difficult to decidè which was the happier,—the young lads, who thought of nothing but being happy themselves, or the old man, who, having enjoyed his wild beast shows long ago, now found his greatest pleasure in giving happiness to others.

When they entered the bustle near the wild beast show, it was as much as ever



old Mr. Baker could do to answer the questions of his grandsons, and to make his way through the crowd. First, he had to look on this side and explain something to William ; and before he had done speaking, Thomas would give him a pull on the other side, to tell him something which he wished to know.

On entering, the first thing that caught William's eye was the great elephant at the farther end, and he laid hold of his brother, who was staring at a dromedary, and pointed to the elephant, but the old gentleman took hold of their hands and led

them to the lion's den. "This is the king of the beasts," said he; "so we will have a look at his majesty first." The lion was



lying down with his head towards them on his paws, and while they were looking at him, he stretched himself out, and gave such a gape that William and Thomas both agreed that they had never seen such a mouth before in all their lives. William now pulled his grandpapa by the sleeve, to come up to the elephant who was very busy receiving cakes with his long trunk from the people who stood round. "Grandpapa," said William, "I never saw such a large animal; I cannot think how any man could master him." "I wonder," said Thomas, "he does not get loose; I am sure he is strong enough to break down the den." "That he is strong enough," replied Mr. Baker, "I have no doubt; but he has been tamed and brought into subjection,

so he does not attempt to do it." While they were looking at the elephant, the lion set up such a roar that William and Thomas were quite frightened, and caught hold of their grandpapa. Next they looked at the bear, and then at a beautiful panther, walking backwards and forwards along its den. The keeper then came in and described all the animals, rousing some of them up with his stick. "Here is the royal striped tiger from Bengal in the East Indies," said the keeper, touching him with the stick. The tiger growled, and looked fiercely with his large bright eyes; and the savage looks of the untameable hyena fixed the attention of William and Thomas for some time. At one end of the show was a large boa constrictor, and William fetched his brother to look at it; for Thomas was laughing at the monkeys, who were cracking nuts and making faces in the uppermost pens. There were also a number of small animals, such as jackals, beavers, and foxes, and a great many birds.

"Come, my boys," said old Mr. Baker, after they had been in the show full half an hour, taking out his watch, "it is time for us to be going;" so William and Thomas gave another look round at the wild beasts, and then followed their grand-

papa out of the show, and they had enough to talk about all the way home, though they could not say much until they had cleared the crowd. "Well, and how have you enjoyed the wild beast show?" said old Mr. Baker, as soon as they turned into a quiet street. "O very much, indeed!" they replied, "but grandpapa," said William, "I cannot help thinking what a terrible thing it would be if any of those savage animals were to get loose." "It would, indeed," replied Mr. Baker, "and as I have often told you we may learn a useful lesson from almost every thing, let us see if we cannot learn one from the wild beast show. we should endeavour to obtain wisdom in the midst of our pleasures. The wild and furious animals we have seen, remind me of our sinful and unruly passions; and it would be well if we were as careful that the evil inclinations of our wicked hearts were as securely confined as the wild beasts in the show." William and Thomas listened attentively to their grandpapa, and he went on speaking. "The ferocity of the lion and the tiger, the untamable fierceness of the hyena, the guile of the serpent, and the cunning of the fox, are not so destructive as the envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness of the

human heart ; and unless these are repressed by Almighty power, they will break out as furiously as the wildest animals in the world, for they are all the agents of that wicked one who goeth about as a roaring lion, ' seeking whom he may devour.'

" Often have I told you of the mercy of the Redeemer to those who seek his mercy, but none do this until they are convinced that they are sinners. Pray then that you may both know your sins, and find pardon through the merits and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ ; for then even your strongest passions will not be permitted to overcome you, but will be closely confined like the wild beasts which you have seen.

Though, like the deep unsettled sea,
They rudely rage and roar ;
Your Saviour your defence shall be,
And bless you evermore."



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CREATION.

COME, child, look upward to the sky,
Behold the sun and moon ;
The host of stars that sparkle high
To cheer the midnight gloom.

Come, child, and now behold the earth
In varied beauty stand,
The product view of six day's birth,
How wondrous and how grand !

'Twas God who made the earth and sea,
To whom the angels bow ;
That God who made both thee and me.
The God who sees us now.