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# Clown the Circus Dog



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# CLOWN

## The Circus Dog

Story and Illustrations

By

A. Vimar

Author of "The Curly-Haired Hen"

Translated by Nora K. Hills



The Reilly & Britton Company

Chicago

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*Clown, the Circus Dog*



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*To My Little Daughter*

*Genevieve Vimar*





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## 1

### CLOWN'S PUPPY DAYS



Summer was here at last. The winter had not been very cold, but it had stayed long after spring should have come. Now it seemed almost too warm, perhaps because only a few days before it had been so cold.

It was the end of the school-year, the time for examinations and the giving of prizes, and these last few days were hard on both teachers and children.



insects and the singing of birds made one think of the fun that would come with vacation.

Among the scholars bending over their desks was Bertha, a little dark-haired girl, her black eyes fringed with long lashes. She was twelve years old and was working for her first certificate. Morning and afternoon she came to the school, sometimes brought by the maid, but more often by her mother.

As a child she had always been petted and spoiled by her parents, who gave her all the candies and toys she wanted. Her little room was crowded with dolls and playthings of all sorts, each of which had its name.

There were fair dolls, dark dolls, white dolls, black dolls, big dolls—some even were life-size—fat dolls, thin dolls, little dolls, tiny dolls; there were jointed dolls, who opened and shut their eyes; there were dolls who could talk, and dolls who kept silent. I believe myself that Bertha loved the silent ones best; they could not answer back, you see.

Uncle Jean, the brother of Bertha's father, had made a point of giving Bertha her first toy. He brought her, one fine morning, a lovely white poodle, which had pink silk ribbons on it and little tinkly bells. There was a spring inside, and when Bertha pressed this gently with her fingers, the dog barked. It was altogether so well made that you would have thought it was alive. [Pg 18]

When he gave it to her, before the whole family, Uncle Jean made her the following speech:



"My dear niece, I give you this dog rather than a doll, because the dog is the friend of man, but a doll—" here he mumbled into his big moustache a lot of long words which got so mixed up with the barking of the dog that nobody could catch them. Perhaps it was just as well. [Pg 19]



Uncle Jean was always saying funny clever things to make people laugh but really he was very wise and thoughtful. Everybody liked him and he was invited places all the time.

So Bertha's first plaything was this dog, who was then and there given the name of "Clown." Why they hit upon this name I really cannot say. [Pg 20]

After the dog there came, one by one, all the dolls I just told you about, but Bertha loved Clown best. You see, he was the only dog she had, but there were many dolls to share her love.



Every night he was put to bed at the feet of his little mistress, who, each morning as she woke up, took him into her arms and hugged him tight.

Later on, as Bertha grew older, she would talk to him for hours, Clown answering with long barks, really made by Bertha's fingers pressing on the spring.

They were then, as I was just now telling you, on the eve of the examinations. Bertha was working her hardest. For several days she had been very, very quiet, and just a little worried; her parents were quite anxious and petted her even more than usual. [Pg 21]



At last one morning, when her mother asked her what was the matter, Bertha decided to tell her all about it. After a long sigh she said:

"Mother, if I pass my examination, will you give me what I have been wanting for a long, long time?" [Pg 22]

Then, without waiting for an answer, she went on:

"I want a dog, a little dog, but—a real live one. It will be quite easy to get one if you will only let me. Miss Lewis, our principal at school, is going to have some. Don't laugh, Mother, it is quite true. She told me so herself, and she promised to give me one if you and father would let me have it. Oh, you will ask father, won't you? Everything depends on him," she murmured, snuggling up to her mother and hugging her, "for I know you will let me, won't you, sweetest? Oh, I am so happy, so proud to think of having a dog of my very own." She was so excited, she clapped her hands and danced for joy.

Bertha passed her examinations with honors and, true to his promise, her father said that she might have her dog.

After that nobody could think of anything but the doggie, so eagerly expected. What would he be like? What color would he be? She imagined him now black, now white, now black and white, now sandy. She asked all sorts of questions of everybody she met. She dreamed of him, she thought of him all day long, of nothing but him.



Her father told her not to get too excited, as he was afraid she might be disappointed. Bertha listened at last to his good advice, but even then she could not resist stopping to look in at the windows of the leather goods stores, where muzzles, collars, chains, leashes, whips, boots for the mud, coats and blankets—in short, all the things a dog could need—were displayed.

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Dreamily she gazed at the poodles and pet-dogs which passed her, led by fine ladies.

But, what was this? Marie with a letter for the little girl? Bertha recognized the handwriting. Miss Lewis had written to tell her the great news—the puppies had arrived. Five of them. Five little puppies, each with different markings, and Miss Lewis graciously invited her pupil to come and choose.



Bertha was breathless, wild with joy.

"Mother, Mother, let's go quick! My doggie is waiting."

Dressing hastily, mother and daughter went straight to Miss Lewis's house, where they found her beside a beautiful black poodle, who, jealously ready to protect her babies, looked at her visitors as though she didn't quite trust them.

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After much hesitation Bertha at last decided upon a sturdy little black puppy, with a white lock set exactly in the middle of his forehead, like a pennant, which made him look very quaint and cunning. Perhaps it was the white lock that decided Bertha, anyhow, directly she saw him, the darling, she cried:

"That's the one I want! I choose him."

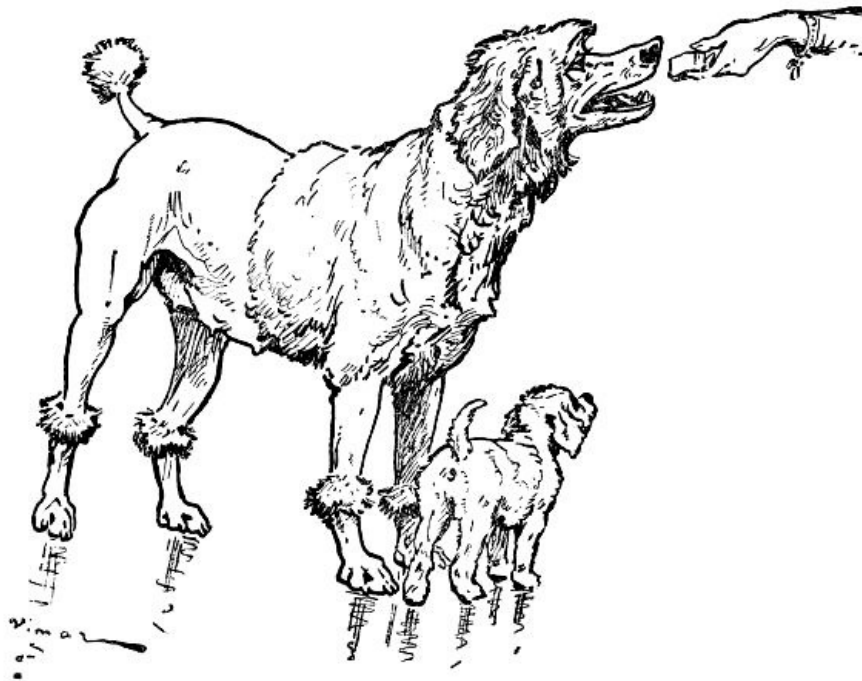
She couldn't have told you herself why she chose

that one. She thought his brothers and sisters all very pretty, but he was the one she wanted. Love is often like that.

Bertha, who already loved the puppy she had chosen, wanted to take him home with her at once, but her mother and even Miss Lewis insisted that he was too young yet. Just think, he was only just born. It would not be wise to bring him up on the bottle—such a bother—and then the risk of sickness and all that might cause his little mistress all sorts of worry.



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Bertha saw that they were right, but she begged Miss Lewis to let her come every day to see him, to which her teacher willingly agreed.

After that Bertha did not let a day go by without a visit to her little friend. The mother-dog soon grew used to seeing the girl; she was a trifle greedy, I must confess, and her affection was quite won by the cakes and dainties which Bertha brought her.

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For more than a month the puppy stayed with his mother. He had to be entirely weaned before his mistress could have him.

In the meantime Bertha was busier than ever, busier than she would have been if she had had the doggie at home. She was making all sorts of preparations for him. She bought a regular outfit for her baby, as she called him, and she even wanted to get him nightcaps and pajamas. These her mother did not think necessary. However, to make up for not getting them, she had to get all kinds of other things: curtains for his bed, cushions, ribbons, a collar, a leash, even a tiny muzzle. Her doggie must be well provided for.

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After hesitating a long time over the name to be given to the newcomer, Bertha decided to call him "Clown," after her first dog, Uncle Jean's toy. Besides, the name suited him exactly; he was very active, and had a happy look and clumsy ways which made you laugh.

He would spend hours chasing his tail, but as it was rather short and his body very chubby, he never quite caught it. The look of disgust which came over his face when he finally gave up was so funny that Bertha laughed till the tears came to her eyes.

[Pg 29]

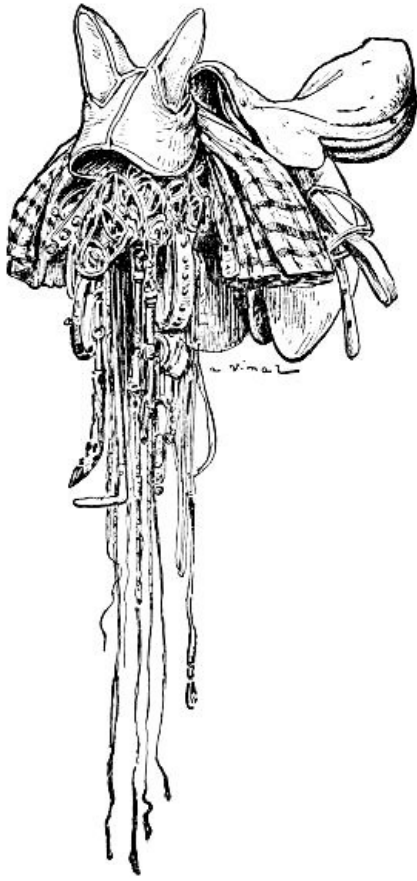
Meantime all his brothers and sisters had been given away. This did not worry Clown a bit; he certainly did not lose his appetite over it; on the contrary, he stuffed himself nearly sick. He drank so hard that sometimes the milk would run out of his nose. Eating like that, he soon became a big fat doggie, strong and active, barking at everything, and snapping at flies.

When Clown was at last old enough to be taken away, Bertha, with her faithful maid, Marie, went to get the little fellow and bring him to his new home.

They had a regular christening party to which all Bertha's little friends and their brothers were invited. There was a fine lunch with lots of candy; they even drank fruit-juice punch. The party was talked of long after by the guests, who enjoyed themselves immensely.

But, alas, a month afterward, a cloud dimmed Bertha's happiness. Uncle Jean did not like the looks of Clown. It is

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true that although his coat was well brushed and curled and perfumed, the dog did look more like a little bear than a poodle. Uncle Jean was very particular about the training of dogs. He had horses and dogs of his own (he even had a monkey) and he insisted that his grooms keep all his animals, of whom he was very fond, slick and clean.



No poodle of his would have remained unshaven, with tail uncut, when all proper poodles are shaven and have their tails trimmed off.

He said so much about it that at last it was decided that the dog should be sent to the veterinary surgeon, who in a minute had cut off Clown's tail and shaved him like a lion, leaving just a rim of hair around his hind-quarters as an ornament, and a bushy tuft at the end of his trimmed-off tail.

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Poor little Clown was terribly upset.

He was brought home looking like a martyr and horribly ashamed; for more than a week he was feverish and had fits of trembling. Bertha cried and cried. I need not tell you what care she took of him. You can guess that for yourself.

Cured at last, he soon forgot about having his hair cut, and became a proud, fine-looking dog. Only he could not bear the sound of shears, and when he heard the dog-clippers go past he would fall into a rage, wanting to run out and bite them, barking furiously in chorus with the other dogs who felt as he did about it.

Bertha ceased to be angry with her uncle. When as she led Clown on the leash she noticed people turn round and go into raptures over the looks of her dog, it made her feel very proud.



[Pg 32]



The dog grew so fast you could almost see him getting bigger. His training was undertaken carefully, Uncle Jean looking after it himself. Clown learned quickly and easily; he was naturally intelligent and had a truly wonderful memory.

Uncle Jean found that Clown learned tricks easily—he seemed to like to show off—but in other ways he was not so easily managed. He was rather fond of having his own way, and his young mistress got more than one scolding for spoiling him. He insisted on being fed from her own hand, and he would sleep nowhere but in Bertha's room. [Pg 33]

Men are conceited things and think themselves much wiser than the animals, but I don't believe they know so very much more after all. It's a question whether the animal's instinct isn't of as much use to him as intelligence is to man. Anyhow, animals can understand one another, even animals of different kinds. I rather think they understand one another better than we understand them.

However that may be, Clown was a wonder. You had only to say what you wanted him to do and he would do it like an old hand. He would jump through a hoop, give his right or left hand as he was asked, leap backward or forward, walk on his hands or feet—all this was child's play to him.

He dearly loved games—such as he could play, of course. He would toss a ball, hunt the thimble, and without ever making a mistake bring back the handkerchief to its owner, grinning with delight. With a policeman's helmet on his head, and a piece of sugar on his nose, looking like a soldier on parade, he would carry arms for hours at a time. What surprising things he could do! You would scarcely believe it, but he had learned to recognize certain letters of the alphabet and to put together the word, B-E-R-T-H-A.

He never made a mistake in spelling the name of his little mistress, although that was, however, the first and last word that they succeeded in teaching him.

Alas, with all his good qualities Clown had his failings. Nobody, sad to say, is faultless. He was given to stealing. A sugar bowl left within his reach had a very bad time of it; he ate all the sugar, to the very last piece, and it was a lucky thing if he didn't break the bowl as well. Clown was greedy, there was no denying. [Pg 35]





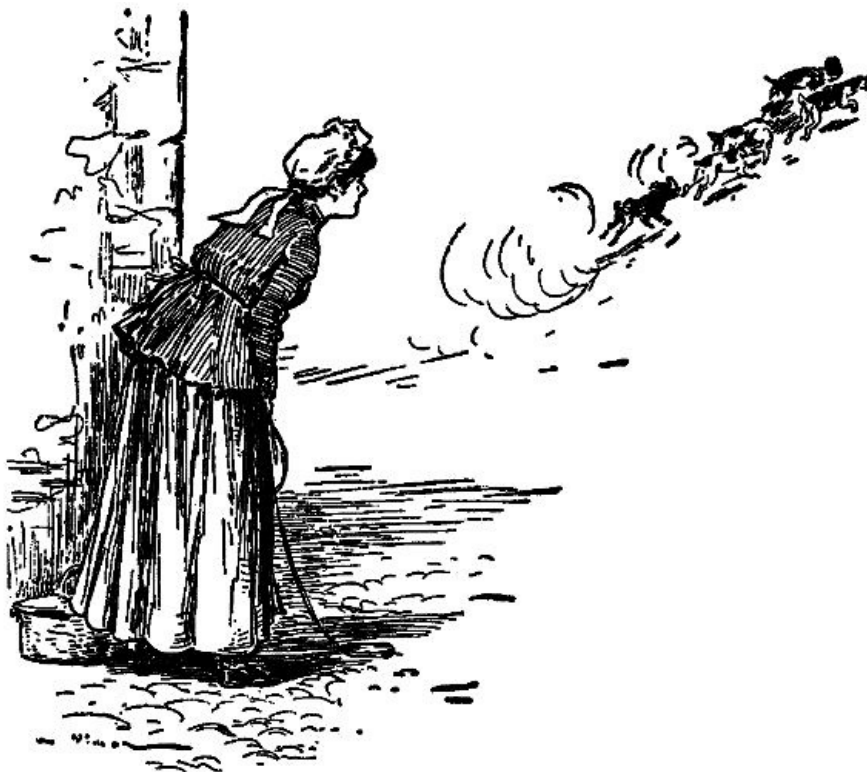
After a while, sadly spoiled, unfortunately, he began to put on airs of independence. His leash made him impatient, and when he met a dog friend running free about the streets he would behave badly, forcing Bertha to drag him along like a toy without wheels, or he would wallow in the dust, both of which made his mistress very angry.

One day, when he had gone marketing with Marie, he managed to slip his head out of his collar [Pg 36] and set off with a rush to join a group of very ill-kept tramp dogs.



Poor Marie called and called, but in vain. Then she ran after him. Not only could she not overtake him but, worse still, at a turning in the road she lost sight of him altogether. In vain she searched the neighborhood, questioning everyone she met, but no one had seen poor Clown.

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The excited woman began to cry, not daring to return home without the dog. Anxiously she walked up and down in front of the house. After about half an hour she heard a noise and soon saw a band of children appear, yelling and running after a poor wretched, muddy little dog, to whose tail was tied an old tin can which knocked against the pavement with every jump he took.

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Marie could not believe her eyes.

You would never have known it was poor Clown, so terrified, his eyes almost bursting from his head, his tongue hanging. As soon as he caught sight of Marie, he hurled himself into her arms, covering her with both kisses and mud.

Marie was so sorry for him that she hadn't the heart to scold the poor animal. She took him in her apron and after untying the horrible tin can he had been dragging after him, she carried him up to her room and there bathed him from head to foot. He needed it, I can tell you.

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"If this will only be a lesson to him," she said to herself; but she did not dare to tell anybody about his running away.



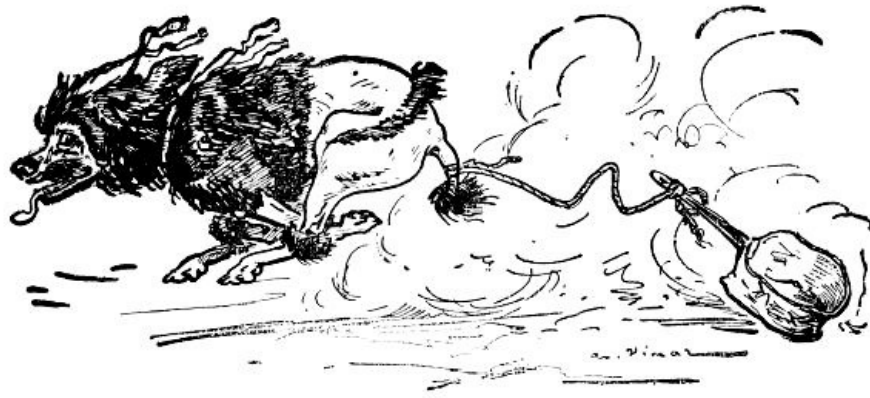
After this adventure Clown behaved very much better and was quiet and obedient for several weeks. When his mistress took him out he followed her quietly on the leash, without making any objection. Thus his life flowed on, calm and happy. He had everything a dog could wish, except, perhaps, a little more freedom. In the house, in the garden, in the country, he could run about as he pleased, but in the streets Bertha always kept him on the leash. The leash was held by a hand very gentle, very easy and discreet, but in spite of that he always resented it. He had tried everything he could to get rid of it. When he could get at it, he would hide it or chew it up so that it was not fit to use. Bertha just bought another one at once. Then, to show his hatred of it, Clown invented all sorts of tricks, winding himself round the feet of passers-by, getting himself caught behind a tree, planting his feet and refusing to move. That was his revenge.

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In this way, two years passed without anything happening worth telling you about. Our doggie, cared for as he was, had grown into a very handsome creature.

[Pg 42]



### THE CAPTURE OF CLOWN

Generally Clown slept late and did not leave Bertha's room, where he had his bed, until he was ready for the public eye—that is to say, until he was combed and brushed, beribboned and perfumed.

One morning, I don't exactly know why, the maid entered Bertha's room long before getting-up time, and going out again she forgot to shut the door. Clown, once awakened, did not go to sleep again. What he was thinking about I can't tell you. Anyhow he yawned, stretched himself slowly, then crept slyly toward the half-open door, pushed it softly with his nose, and there he was in the hall. It was not far to the kitchen and the pantry door which opened onto the back steps leading into the street was not shut either.







"'Tis opportunity makes the thief," so they say. After a moment's hesitation, after looking carefully at the steps to be sure no one would see and stop him, Clown thought that it would be rather pleasant to take a morning stroll through the streets; he felt proud for once not to be held in leash, and was delighted at the thought of being able to rout at his own sweet will amongst the heaps of garbage, the one thing of all others strictly forbidden him. [Pg 45]



Nobody saw him, nobody stopped him. He reached the door; a glance, a sniff here and there, and he was free.

Once outside he walked quietly for a hundred yards or so, nose in air.

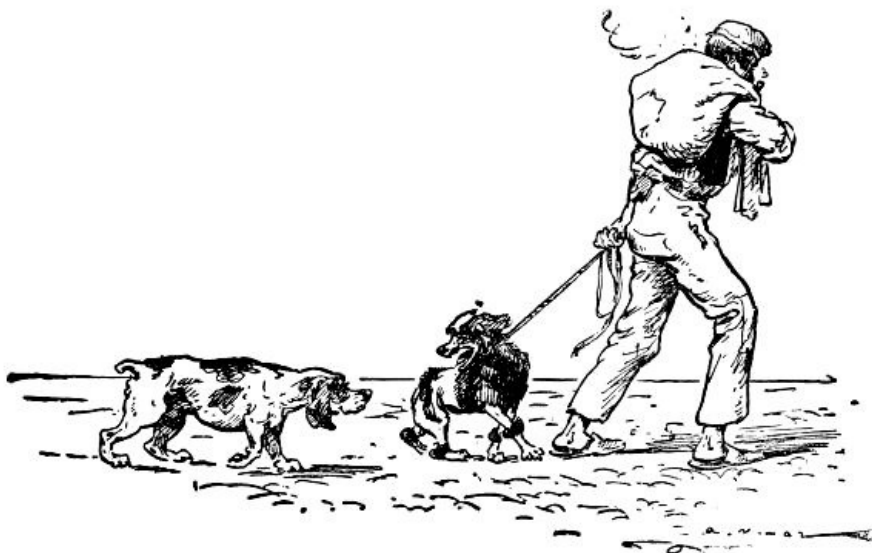
[Pg 46]



Soon, however, he was ready to come back and was just thinking of going in again when he saw at the corner of the street five or six other dogs following a man who was carrying a parcel. This made him curious; there was a queer smell, too, which attracted him. In a trice he had joined the group.

"After all," he said to himself pretty soon, "though the smell is appetizing enough, I have better than that at home. Good-bye, my friends, and good luck. I am going home to breakfast." [Pg 47]

Whereupon, giving up the chase, he turned to go home. Alas! it was too late. The man had just thrown a lasso, which caught Clown around the neck. He tried to get away, to cry out, to struggle, to bite; the knot tightened, choking him. He was muzzled, and forced by kicks—the first he ever received in his life—to go, willy-nilly, with the dog-thief. For that was what the man was, and one of the very worst of his kind, too.





It was a fine day, and Paris began to awaken. In the streets there were more and more passers-by, and the man walked faster and faster; Clown, full of sad thoughts, let himself be dragged along. With hanging head he was thinking of his little mistress, how probably at this very minute she had discovered his flight. He saw her despair, and big tears rolled from his eyes; he trembled from head to foot. Perhaps he would never see her again! At this, heart-rending sobs burst from his poor little throat. Sometimes he tried to drive away these sad thoughts by imagining he would soon have a chance to escape from his torturer. If only they did not take him too far from Paris, his native town, he could find his way home again easily enough with his eyes shut.

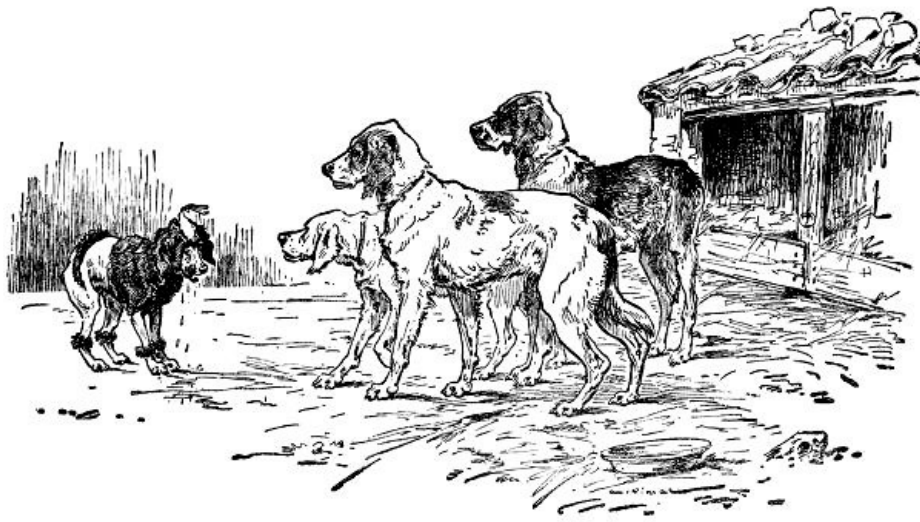
[Pg 49]

After a long and painful walk through streets and avenues, the man stopped at last in front of a wretched hut. At the end of a yard, in a corner, there was a horrible kennel, with no cover, surrounded by a strong wooden fence.

Clown, although worn out in mind and body, pulled back with disgust from the door of this evil-smelling hole. The man pushed him in brutally with his foot, and with another well-directed kick shut the door to behind him. Then Clown gave himself up to despair. He felt utterly lost. He would never see his dear ones again. How foolish he had been! How miserable he was!

Attracted by his cries and tears, three beautiful setters, who had been stolen the day before, came out of the back of the kennel and grouped themselves around the newcomer. They did their best to comfort and console him.

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After telling one another their sad stories, they talked over ways of escape. The very idea of getting away cheered them up a lot. [Pg 51]  
It was clear that they were all to be sold.



Next morning they were all tightly chained to one another and the man, whip in hand, led them to the dog-market.  
This market was held in a large square, slightly shaded by big elm trees. Ragged old women, squatting on their heels, or crouching on old chairs or baskets, held little dogs on their knees, petting them, cleaning them, offering them for sale to anyone who stopped to look. Some people had dogs on leashes. Suspicious-looking men walked dogs to and fro. [Pg 52]



In front there was a long line of hunting dogs of every kind and breed; farther on, a line of pet-dogs; then a group of poodles—newly shaved and beribboned. Here and there were cats, monkeys, parrots, birds of all kinds, and, lastly, guinea-pigs and white rats.

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All these creatures barked, whined, mewed, chattered, screamed. The din was beyond description.

Clown, confused, a white poodle on either side of him, was silent. With hanging head he pretended that he had quite given up the thought of escape, but just the same, when no one was looking, he turned his eyes quickly from side to side, ready to seize the first chance to get away.



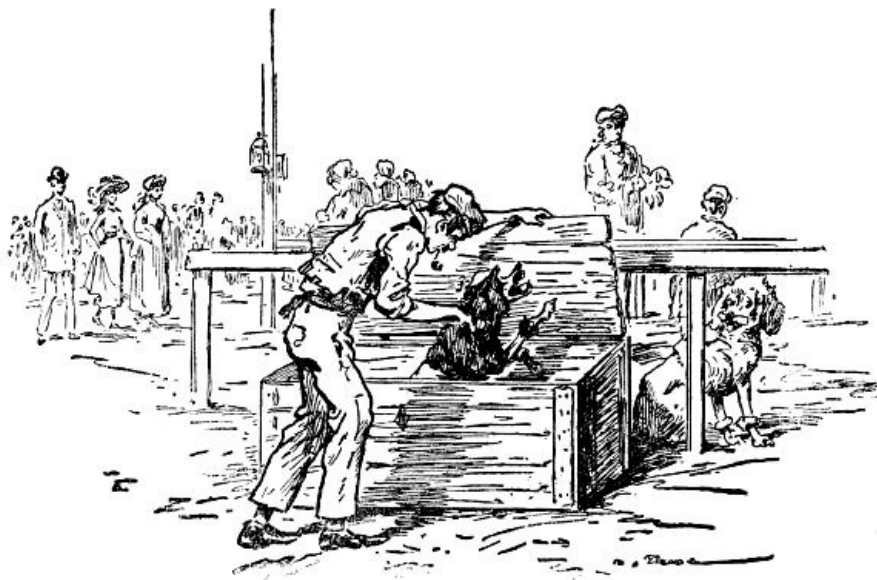


## 3

**CLOWN ESCAPES**

It was not long before Clown's absence was noticed in his old home. The whole household was alarmed. They searched the house from top to bottom, whistling, calling to him, weeping. The servants ran to and fro; nobody could understand how the dog had got away. Huddled in an arm-chair, Bertha sobbed, with hardly the heart or strength to move. In vain they searched all Paris. The police were informed, the pound visited, the description and photograph of Clown scattered broadcast. A large reward was offered to anyone finding him or giving information about him. In spite of all this, the day and night passed without news of the dog.

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On the advice of the Chief of Police, Bertha went next morning to the dog-market, accompanied by Marie and the footman. No sooner was she there than Clown, without seeing her, even, sniffed her from afar. He pulled so hard on his chain that he nearly broke it. Alas, where he was, Bertha could not see him. The thief understood at once that something was the matter. He seized the unhappy dog before he knew what was happening, flung him into a box near at hand and banged down the lid.

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'Twas thus that poor Clown, at the moment when his rescue seemed certain, learned to his cost that there are times in this life when it is wise to hide one's feelings.

Anyhow, his young mistress was looking for him everywhere. This was enough to make him feel much more cheerful.

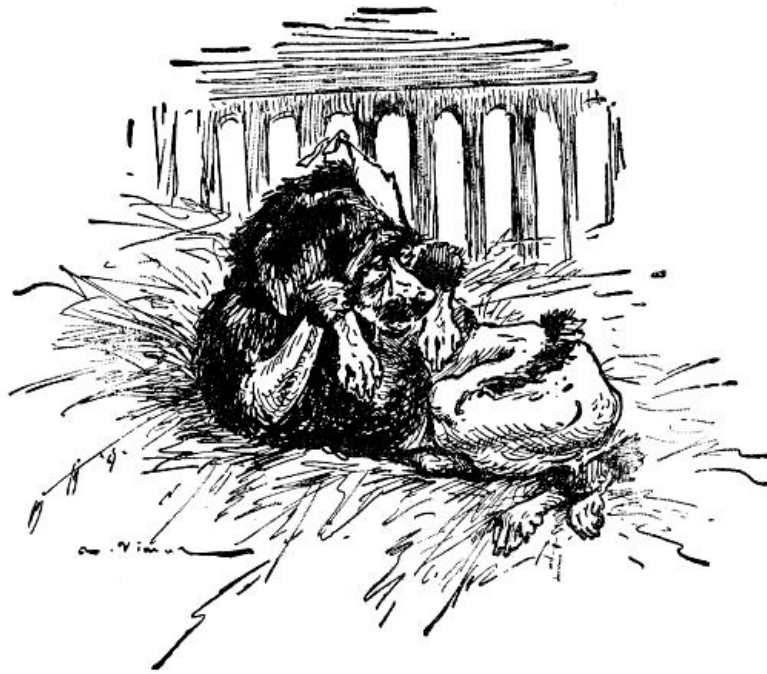
[Pg 57]



That day Clown was sold. When he saw the money counted out, he understood and was at first quite delighted, but his joy did not last long. He soon discovered from the gestures of the two men that his new owner did not live in Paris and that he was leaving that very night, for his home far, far away in the south. Then Clown felt desperate. He shook with rage and fear lest he should be lost forever. He was so upset by his bad luck that he hardly heard the thief offer to take him to the station that evening in time for the train, and his new owner accept the offer.

[Pg 58]

He lost all hope on hearing that, for his last chance of escape would be gone the minute he was taken away from Paris.



On the way to the station Clown was held so tightly that he saw it would be no use to struggle. When he reached there at nightfall, he was shut up in the hated dog-kennel until the time came for the train to start.

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When the noisy whistles blew, as they always do when the great expresses are about to draw out, and the train started with that horrid grating sound they always make, Clown began to sob wildly and to howl in a most dismal fashion. To make it all the worse he saw through the iron bars of his cage the shadows of the last houses of his native city. For a moment he thought he should go mad. Little by little the cool evening air revived him, calmed his fever. Snuggling down in a corner of his box, he determined to wait for the chance of escape which must come some time or other. He would cross the whole of France, if necessary, to find his beloved mistress. Death alone could deprive him of his one great hope.

[Pg 60]

At last, after passing through Burgundy, the express stopped. It was morning and already quite light. Clown saw his new master approach his prison and open the padlock so that he could come out and stretch his legs on the platform. The prisoner did not hesitate. No sooner was he free than he was off like a shot, tearing along the platform, then back along the railway track, taking no notice of the calls of his master or of the laughter of the travelers, to whom the whole thing



was a joke.

Quite happy now, forgetting all his past troubles and full of hope again, he thought that, thanks to his hurried flight, he could not be so very far from Paris.



All morning Clown walked bravely along the dusty road, but at last he began to feel hungry and tired. After going miles and miles, towards midday he was lucky enough to meet in the fields a large flock of sheep, guarded by sheep-dogs. These dogs, when Clown told them his tragic story, were very kind to him and even asked him to share their dinner with them. But they could give no real help as to how to get to Paris.

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"All that we know is, that it is several days' walk from here, down that way," they told him, pointing with their paws.

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After comforting himself with cheese, milk, and brown bread, Clown left them, thanking them politely for their kindness. All the same, as he set off, he felt very sad, for he saw that the good dogs he had just visited did not think that his plan seemed a very good one, and he began to be afraid he never should get back home after all.



To make him still more uneasy, toward four o'clock the wind began to blow and big clouds darkened the sky. Clown fled along as fast as his legs would carry him, trying to get ahead of the awful storm which hung above his head. But the clouds went faster than he did; the lightning and thunder grew nearer and nearer, louder and louder.

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With the storm had come darkness. Now torrents of rain hurled themselves madly from the sky. The poor dog was terribly frightened. He didn't know where to go, what road to take, valley, forest, or hill.



Wet to the skin, muddy, blinded by the rain, deafened by the thunder, he saw no sign of shelter. He just ran on wildly, battered by rain and wind, faster and faster, following his nose.

## CLOWN AT THE CIRCUS



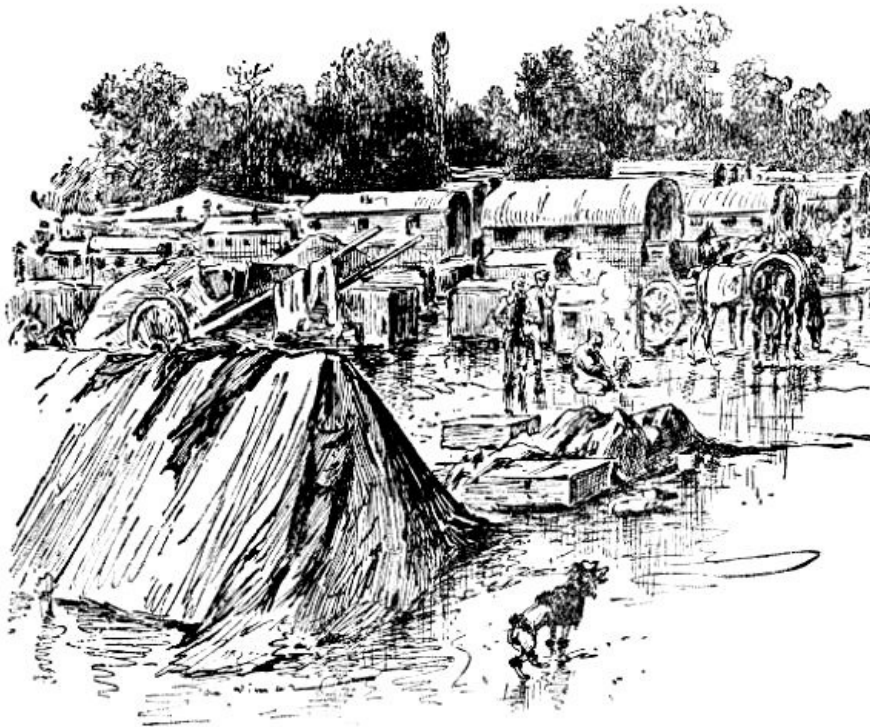
However, as he reached the edge of the wood, the rain grew less violent. Night was coming on but among the trees he could see bright lights shining.

Drawing nearer, Clown made out some kind of a big camp; carriages and closed wagons and tents stood out against the background of the forest. At last he saw people and animals coming and going in all directions.

When he was quite close to this busy scene, Clown stopped, breathless and anxious, sniffing the air, listening keenly to the slightest sound.

He was not quite satisfied, and in his doubt he thought of going farther on the chance of finding other shelter. But he was more tired than he was afraid. Plucking up his courage, poor Clown crept slowly toward the larger of the two lighted vans that stood on the edge of the woods.

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Just at this moment the curtain that closed the rear of one of these vans opened and a young girl came out and stood on the doorstep. She wore a gleaming costume of spangles, with a very short, fluffy skirt, covered with shiny stones, and she had little satin slippers on her feet, and the daintiest of pink stockings. A plaid shawl hung from her shoulders.

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Clown was dumbfounded. Never had he seen his dear mistress in such a dress. While he was gazing in astonishment at her, the girl stretched out her hand to see if it was still raining. As she looked down she caught sight of our poor little doggie, who, squatting in front of her, wet through and muddy, raised imploring eyes, waiting till she should take pity on him.

"What's this? A lost dog?" and, bending toward him, she coaxed him nearer, saying:

"Poor doggie, poor little thing."

[Pg 67]

Clown went forward at once, trembling, anxious to please but still half afraid. He let this strange girl pet him, and made himself so agreeable, so eager and so interesting, that ten minutes later she had him all cleaned, combed and brushed.

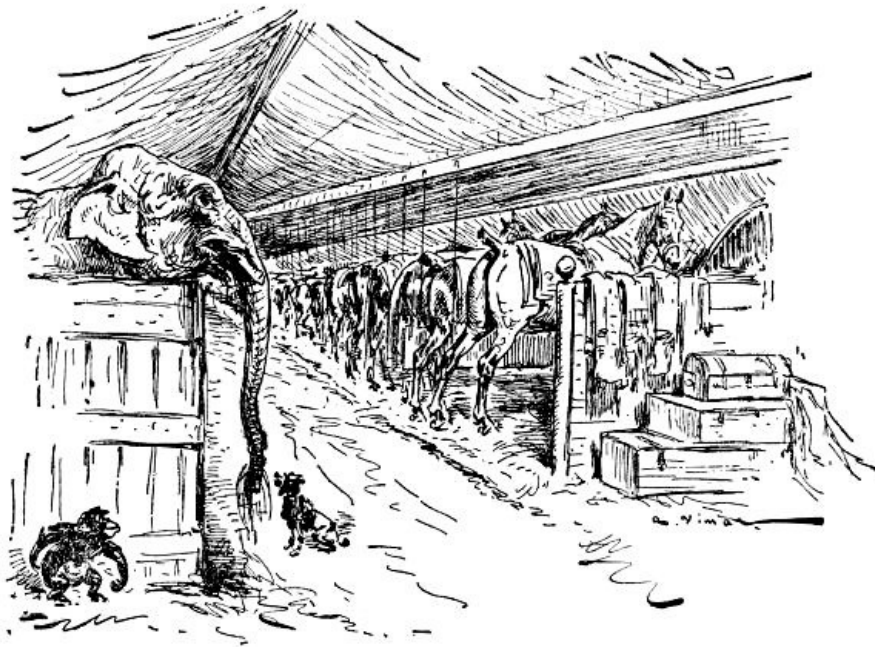


Having won the favor of this kind-hearted girl, Clown became once more his old handsome self.

On a soft pile of blankets he passed an excellent night. Now and again strange noises troubled his ears, but completely worn out, and drowsy from so much fresh air, he fell asleep again and dreamed golden dreams.

The next morning the sky was clear again and the air was fresh and balmy.

[Pg 68]



Clown was awakened at dawn by the sound of people rushing about, packing up, just as though they were moving house. Without leaving his bed, his eyes still half-closed, he listened closely, and finally understood with what kind of people he had to deal. Then were explained the low growls which had so puzzled and frightened him during the night. The carriages, the cages, were the dwelling places of strange and terrifying animals, such as he remembered having seen at the fair of Neuilly, whither his dear mistress, Bertha, had taken him one evening when he was still a baby.

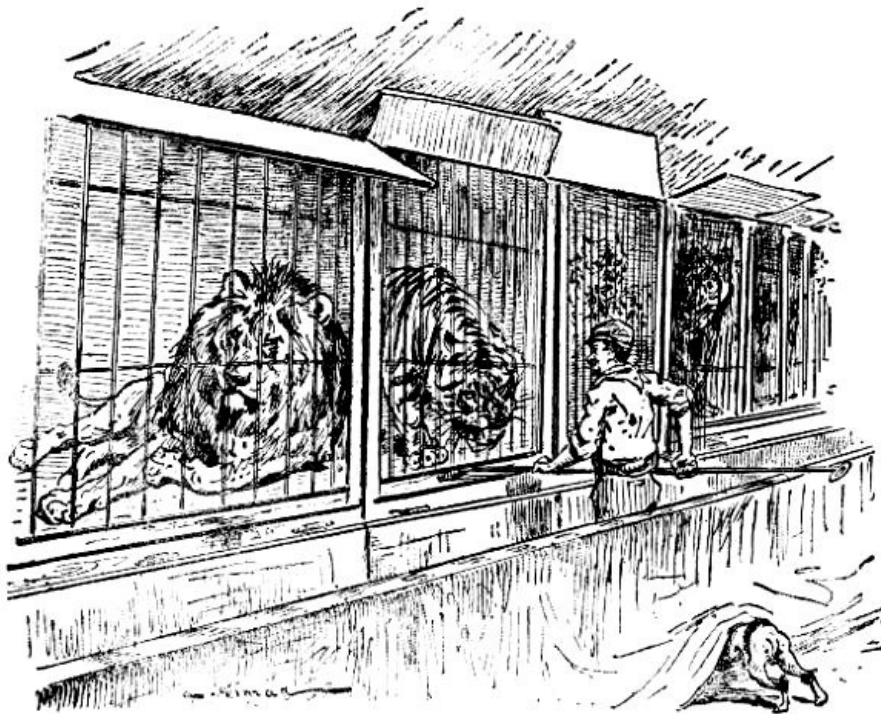
[Pg 69]



He had, then, fallen in with an immense traveling circus which, constantly on the move, gave performances in the principal cities of the world. Just now it was headed, by gentle stages, for the center of France. Clown was quite comforted and happy at the thought of one day or another reaching Paris. Then—then—then he would manage somehow to see her again, her for whom he yearned, her whom he loved with all his faithful little heart.

Traveling this way was much nicer than running along the highroad. He was a sturdy fellow, but, all the same, that one day of walking under such conditions had made him somewhat thin. In short, he had had enough of it, especially when he remembered that he hadn't the least idea how to get to Paris.

[Pg 70]



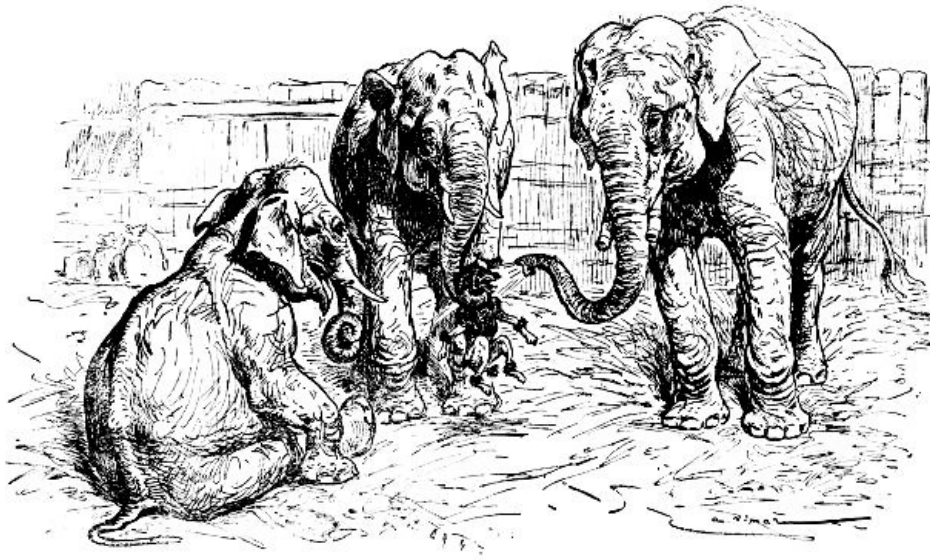
Slipping cautiously under the tents which sheltered the cages, Clown took a good look around the place.

The stables, huge affairs, contained no less than one hundred and fifty horses of all kinds and colors. He saw, too, three monstrous elephants, dromedaries, giraffes, zebras, donkeys, and even pigs. [Pg 71]



Then came the turn of the menagerie—a fine collection of lions, tigers, panthers, jaguars, foxes, hyenas, boars. What didn't he see? Boxes full of snakes, crocodiles, monkeys in cages—a chimpanzee who was walking about all alone gave him a terrible fright.

Parrots of every hue swayed on swinging perches, uttering, for no reason that Clown could see, harsh discordant cries.



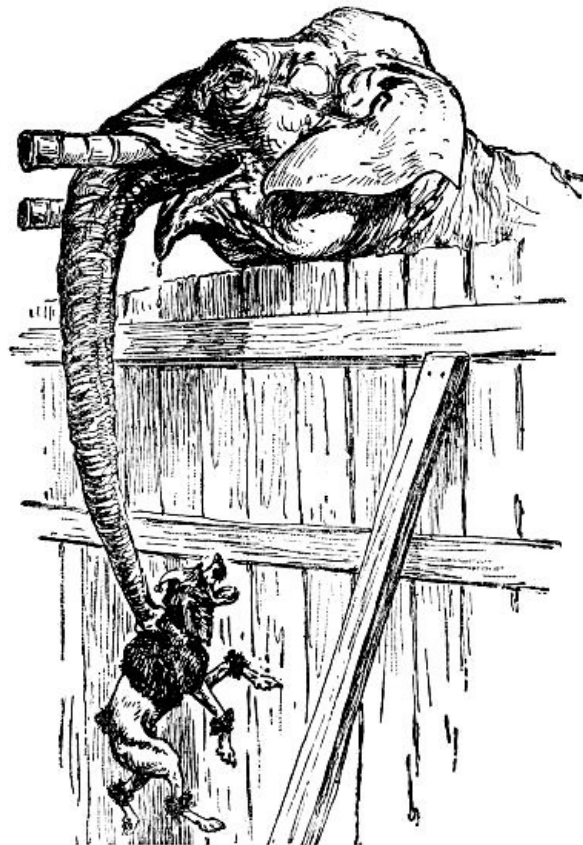
Thus he passed slowly through the whole menagerie, seeing all the animals. He even grew bold enough to lap freely at a large lake of milk, put there, he thought, for the snakes and monkeys, who are very fond of it. After this light breakfast he felt stronger and more light-hearted. He spent some time visiting and making much of his new mistress, and then went on to finish his visit with the animals so happily begun.

[Pg 73]

Passing close to the elephants, he noticed their small intelligent eyes, contrasting so queerly with their huge size. While he was wondering about them, Clown, who was by nature very curious, drew nearer, wanting to sniff more closely at those long noses which swayed so slowly and calmly from side to side. He succeeded in getting close enough to touch them, but at the slightest movement of the trunk he leaped back, his tail between his legs, although he just had to return.

Suddenly, without being in the least hurt, he felt himself lifted like a feather, and cleverly drawn into the elephant-house. Now it was the elephants' turn to sniff at him. One blew upon his nose until he could scarcely breathe, while another gently pinched his hind-quarters, and they all laughed at the figure he cut. I can tell you, Clown did not enjoy all this one bit. He did not even dare to show his teeth, he was so afraid of being torn to pieces if he made the slightest movement. Those five minutes in the air seemed to him very long and terrible.

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At last he was gently put upon his feet again. He made one bound for liberty, a bound which brought him close to the giraffes. Here again he felt a keen pang of fear, for one of them, suddenly stretching his long neck over the top of the box, touched him quite unexpectedly with his long black tongue.

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After this Clown was much more watchful and did not come too close to the animals in the boxes. Even the sound of a fly buzzing put him on his guard, and this was a good thing for him, for he was in the midst of a horde not always pleasant and sometimes quite dangerous, where all sorts of accidents might have happened to him. Fortunately he had escaped harm, and these lessons made him very careful afterwards.

A bell rang. Immediately commotion arose; people moved about in all directions; the feeling of unrest showed more and more in the cages; the inmates turned and twisted. Clown wondered what could be the matter. The wild beasts roared, the horses whinnied; all the animals clamored at once.

[Pg 76]

There was a medley of sounds that was simply deafening. It was feeding time.

Barrows full of fresh meat, loaves of bread and bundles of forage, were passed around freely. Each animal was served in turn according to his taste. After the first bite or two calm gradually returned, in the cages anyhow.

Clown was served apart and lunched with excellent appetite. His new mistress fairly stuffed him with dainties, feeding him out of her own hand. Her kindness made Clown love her more and more.

When the animals were all fed and the men had finished their own meals, the whole circus got ready to move. By noon everything was ready, and at a given signal, the entire troupe set off.

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As the country was flat, and they were to march until evening before reaching their next stopping place, orders were given to leave the shutters of the cages open and to lead as many of the animals as possible so that they might breathe in the fresh air and stretch their legs a bit. You can guess that the passing of such animals on the road frightened more than one good peasant as they went along, although everyone along the road was warned in time by the tamer and his helpers, who rode at the head of the procession so as to avoid accidents.

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[Pg 79]



It was in an elegant carriage, with good springs, drawn by two fine young horses, that Clown made the journey, seated beside his new mistress. The longing to go quickly, made him hang his tongue out of his mouth so that his white teeth showed under his black moustache, and his eyes, turning from his mistress to the splendid horses and back again, spoke his impatience but at the same time his delight at the progress they were making.

[Pg 80]



They went on and on, over miles of road bordered by poplars, on into the golden dust, into the purple sunset.

A few miles more, and there lay Dijon.

A week before, the town had been prepared, by bright-colored posters, for the coming of the

[Pg 81]

great, the marvelous circus. The walls and fences were simply covered with pictures of the wonderful performance.



Performing horses, looking huge as elephants, clowns at their most amusing tricks, gymnasts doing their most thrilling feats, all were pictured.

The tamer was there too, life-size, his head in the mouth of Sultan, the big black Persian lion, while Mademoiselle Reine, his charming daughter, Clown's new mistress, beneath a cloudless sky drove four white does, scattering flowers as she went.

At last the travelers came to the first country houses, the vineyards and finally the spires, the tower of St. John the Fearless and the other buildings of the capital of Burgundy standing out against the evening gloom.

[Pg 82]



Before they entered the town, a halt was called. Order was restored, the cages were shut, a moment's rest was taken; then the troupe set out again, to encamp at last on a large piece of open ground near the gates of the city.

While the tents were being set up and the cages placed—in short, the whole circus installed—a huge procession bearing torches was organized, which rode through Dijon, led by a band of music.

Knights in shining armor, mounted on magnificent horses, handed out bills telling of a big performance for the next evening and giving the program.

[Pg 83]



The whole town was abroad to see and admire this strange sight. Men, women, children, all came out to meet them. It was a grand spectacle. Everybody wanted a program. Just imagine a procession of elephants, decked with gold and silver, a hundred and fifty horses, some ridden and some driven but all with magnificent harnesses, dromedaries, parade chariots shimmering with gold and gleaming with precious stones, and all these lighted up by flaring torches.

[Pg 84]

Clown had been dressed up for the occasion with yellow ribbons, a color which suited his black coat to perfection. Seated beside his new mistress he was radiant upon a canopied chair of gold borne by four zebras.



After going through the principal streets the troupe at last came back to camp to rest for the night, still followed by a vast crowd who did not think of sleep until long after the circus fires were all out.

The night was calm, but at daybreak, as on the preceding day, the noise in the camp started again, perhaps even a little louder this morning on account of the rehearsal which was to take place in preparation for the evening's performance.

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Clown, always very curious, was present at all the rehearsals and enjoyed them thoroughly—so much, indeed, that he suddenly joined in and showed how well he could skip. Then he wanted to jump over and through everything. At last he got so excited that Reine made him take a nice hot sugar-drink with a little orange flower in it to calm him. [Pg 86]

After this, Clown was considered one of the troupe.



Always on the watch, our doggie learned at breakfast that three days hence they were to go to Fontainebleau, where they were to give two performances, and after that they were to set off for Paris, so as to arrive in time for the opening of the big festival at Neuilly.

This made him so happy that for the moment he quite forgot to eat. Then, hope in his soul and joy in his heart, he made up his mind to do his very best at the next performance. He wanted to make all the people admire him, to do something that would repay Reine and her father for their kindness. Perhaps, too, he hoped that by acting in this way he might get talked about and get his name into the papers. Man is vain and even a dog has his pride. His fame might perhaps reach Bertha, his dear, tender, much-regretted mistress. All this made him very serious when at last the time for the performance arrived. [Pg 87]



Beneath an immense tent, brilliantly lighted, decorated with garlands of foliage and flowers, the orchestra struck up a joyous march. [Pg 88]

Immediately the doors were flung open, and to the sound of the music a great crowd poured into the huge tent and took seats.



For about an hour and a half the menagerie held the floor. Then the animals were put back into their cages. The wild beasts were obedient and rebellious in turn; whips sounded continuously. The noise of squibs, firecrackers, and growls almost drowned the orchestra. [Pg 89]



Three times did the tamer put his head into Sultan's great mouth. The excitement of the audience was tremendous. They really thought he was done for.

"Enough, enough," was heard on all sides, and amid a thunder of applause, the first part of the performance came to an end. [Pg 90]

Then came an interval of ten minutes.



Soon the second part was announced by a cheerful burst of music and the mad entrance of the clowns. Our Clown only waited for this moment to show off his talents, those already known and those nobody had ever seen before. He entered barking, in a series of wild leaps exactly like those of his companions. It was then that an artist in the troupe, astonished and enthusiastic, took off his clown's collar, and then and there put it round the neck of the poodle, naming him the "Dog-Clown."

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So, for the second time, although until then they had not known what to call him, he received the name of Clown—"Dog-Clown."

During the first number, Clown set to work to copy all the fun-making tricks of the other clowns, and succeeded wonderfully well. Jumping through hoops and over barrels, he gave himself up to the pleasure of the thing; pleasing everyone so well that they clapped and clapped until he came back several times.

[Pg 92]



When the second number was called, there appeared on the scene a very handsome horse led by a groom dressed in the latest fashion. No sooner had they entered than they were followed by Clown, who, as he had seen done at the rehearsal, leaped with one bound into the saddle. They had great difficulty in coaxing him down. He could not see that this was not the place for him. Reine, beautifully dressed in a blue spangled gown, was placed with her father, in the saddle and set off at a gallop, to the sound of music and the gay cracking of the whip.

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[Pg 94]



A clown joined the groom and Dog-Clown, who in spite of everything had remained on the scene, began to limp along behind them, to the great amusement of the spectators.

He was the success of the evening. He even, it is said, caused some jealousy among the artists of the troupe. Thus from the very beginning Clown felt the thrill of stage life and became a privileged actor.

Petted and adored by the public, he became so important that he hardly ever appeared on the scene until the end of the first and second numbers, a place reserved always for the stars of the troupe.

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As was fitting, Dog-Clown had the place of honor on the circus posters. Sometimes he was a groom, sometimes a clown, but he did not stop there. He succeeded in showing that he was a mimic, and in a little play written for him by the manager, he made a huge success. Reine, who introduced Clown, shared the applause with her favorite. [Pg 96]



Between whiles—and this was what astonished the company most—the dog invented unexpected and novel entrances. He gradually became a part of the circus life, and always watching what was going on around him, he was cute enough to make a place for himself in every number, and the tricks he played were so funny that everyone howled with laughter. [Pg 97]



When the circus left Dijon, the people of that town were heart-broken. The mayor himself even begged that the manager give a few more performances. In vain. The manager was sorry, but time pressed; he had made arrangements for a certain date at Fontainebleau.

[Pg 98]

When Dog-Clown appeared for the first time in public in this town, even before he began he received such a welcome that he was moved to tears. The people had heard all about him and were wild to see him. In a moment the stage was covered with a mass of good things, thrown to him from all parts of the house, from the nearest seats to the farthest. Some threw sugar, some cakes; the clown even picked up cigars and oranges.

Dog-Clown, by way of thanks, gave such a performance as even he had never given before. His success was almost unbelievable. At last so great did his fame become that the Paris papers took it up, giving long accounts of this wonderful dog.

Clown was glad to be on the road again, for each move brought him that much closer to Paris. Besides, now that he was an important member of the company he always rode in state beside Reine, with velvet cushions to nap on if he chose.

It was late in the afternoon when they reached Fontainebleau, so no performance was given till next day, and the animals had a needed rest. Clown spent his time in thinking up new tricks with which to surprise the people who came to see him.

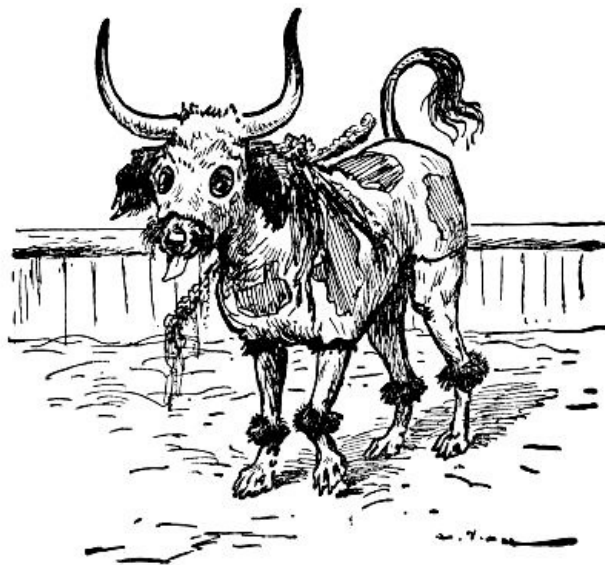
[Pg 99]



I must tell you that, as soon as Clown had shown what an artist he was, and how wonderfully he could adorn a collarette, the management had attached to his person a dressmaker who made for him all sorts of quaint costumes.

[Pg 100]

Soon he had a rich and thoroughly equipped wardrobe, from a frock-coat to a bull's skin and horns, a costume which he wore to act the bull in a mock bullfight in which young dwarfs figured as matadors and teased him.



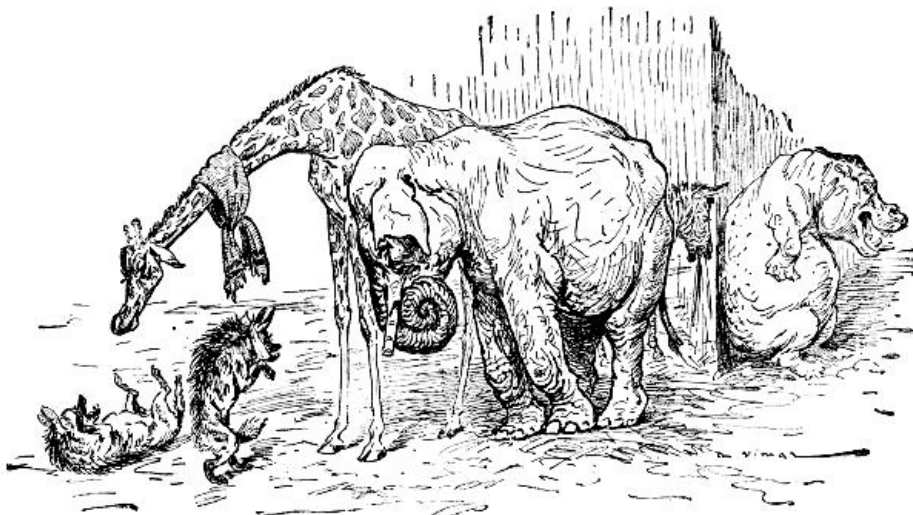


## 5

## THE RETURN HOME

Meantime Clown was growing tired of his popularity. The fame, the applause of the friendly public, the pleasure he felt in knowing that Reine and her father were doing a fine business, the liberty he enjoyed, the honors paid him daily, all these worldly vanities flattered his pride, but neither success nor his pleasant relations with the members of the troupe could make him happy.

[Pg 102]



He was always longing for his dear mistress Bertha. Often in the night, overtaken by a horrible nightmare, he would wake with a start, not knowing where he was. Like many other artists, comic on the stage, he was silent and gloomy away from it.

[Pg 103]

After three big performances, given one after the other, without counting rehearsals, some of the most important members of the menagerie became ill, owing to the heat and their hard work. It was the animals who suffered most. For two days Sultan, whose appetite was usually hard to satisfy, had refused his food—a thing hitherto unheard-of.

One of the white bears complained of terrible colic; the llamas sneezed continually; Hercules, the giant elephant, with trunk rolled up like a snail, could hardly stand upright; a giraffe trumpeted; the hippopotamus, "Poivro," stung by mosquitoes, scratched himself till his cage shook. From the hyena-cage came forth dismal howls; two of the poor creatures, down with toothache, were rolling about in agony. Several horses, a zebra, and a rooster all felt very far from well.

The truth was the whole troupe was worn out. The manager, too, felt that a rest was absolutely necessary for all of them. Everybody agreed that the director should announce to the public,

[Pg 104]

giving any reason he chose, that for the next forty-eight hours there would be no performances.



No one was allowed even to visit the menagerie. It was only after much delay and because he begged so hard that one stranger was admitted. This was a reporter from one of the important Paris newspapers, who, having heard by the many-tongued mouth of rumor of the queer tricks of Dog-Clown, was most anxious to see the dog for himself, and if possible to learn all about him, for he wanted his paper to be the first to tell the people of Paris the true story of this wonderful dog. [Pg 105]



At the time Clown was resting on a pile of blankets; although he seemed to be asleep he was listening to the conversation, for like a policeman, he always slept with one eye open. As soon as he realized what it was all about, he got up on his hind legs and went straight to the reporter, understanding probably how much what the newspaper said might help Bertha to find him.

He was polite as he could be to this reporter and took great pains to show off before him, and—this was really a flash of genius—succeeded three different times, using as his letters the print on a rolled placard lying near him, in putting together the word "B-E-R-T-H-A," by placing his foot on the letters in the right order. [Pg 106]



Greatly puzzled as to what it could mean the reporter wrote down on his tablet the word Clown had spelled. He could not help being surprised by this strange sign of intelligence. He bowed respectfully to this strangest of all subjects for interview, and as he left him he said gravely:

"Delighted to have met you, my dear sir."

Clown returned his bow, no less politely. He felt a trifle proud, perhaps, but he was charmed to have made himself understood by a human being.

I leave you to imagine, dear friends, what a stir was caused by this article which appeared on the front page of the paper. It was headed: [Pg 107]

### DOG-CLOWN, OR THE DOG WITH A BRAIN



It gave details of Clown's wonderful tricks—it described them as simply beyond belief—and ended by calling upon men of science to come and see for themselves this curious, this strangely gifted dog.

That day Bertha, who since the moment of Clown's disappearance had not ceased to mourn for him and to seek him everywhere, was even sadder than usual, having at last given up hope of ever seeing him again, now that all her attempts had ended in failure. [Pg 108]



At noon her father came home to lunch as he generally did. She ran to meet him and was struck by his jovial manner. She guessed something pleasant was in the air.

"You have good news, father dear?" she said.

[Pg 109]

"Well, I think so, but don't make too sure yet. I really do think though that we have found your dog."

Bertha turned pale and nearly fainted for joy. Her father read her the article and when he came to the part where the journalist told how the dog had spelled, without a doubt, the name "Bertha," she cried:

"There's no doubt about it! It is—it is my dog. Let's go—let's go at once and get him!"

Two hours later the express train going at its fastest to Fontainebleau, bore Bertha and her father and mother.

There was a matinee that day. When Bertha and her family took places beside the ring the performance had already begun. The wild animals had been shown and the second part of the performance announced the appearance of Dog-Clown. This clever individual kept them waiting a moment or two to enhance the importance of his entry. The audience began to grow impatient, cries of "Dog-Clown, Dog-Clown!" were heard repeatedly.

It was a critical moment.

The father, the mother, the daughter sat motionless, wide-open eyes glued to the door through which he would come.

Like a ball which, vigorously hurled, bounces on the pavement, Dog-Clown in a succession of wild leaps went rapidly round the arena.

It was impossible to see his face, especially as he was all dressed up and powdered.



[Pg 110]

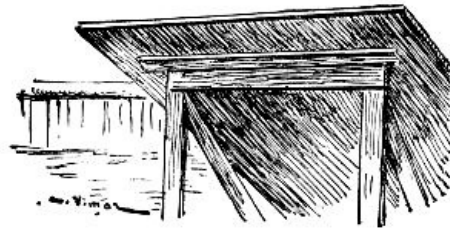




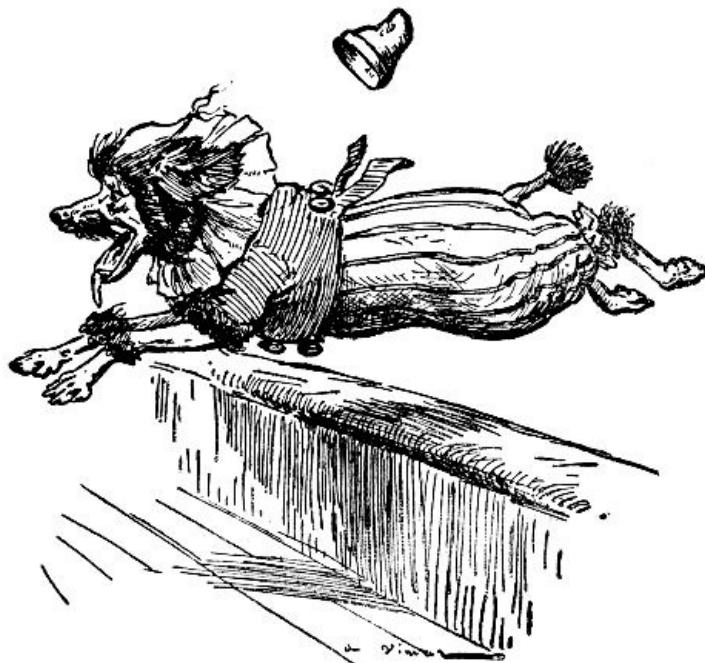
[Pg 111]

Having finished his first act, he went to the center of the stage, and there standing on his hind legs made his bow to the audience.

One sniff and he had recognized his owners.



It was like a flash of lightning. Next instant he had hurled off his clown's hat and leaped at them like a mad thing. He bounded over benches and fell, eyes full of tears, whimpering softly, into the arms of Bertha, who held him trembling and sobbing. [Pg 112]



For a long time they clung to one another. This performance amazed the public; the circus people thought at first that this was just one of Clown's mad tricks—to which they were growing accustomed—but soon the truth was known when Reine, surprised and anxious, came forward and asked for an explanation.

"Mademoiselle," said Bertha's father, "I am extremely sorry to interrupt the performance, but, as you see, the dog is ours. He was stolen from us. There is no doubt at all that he is our dog, and I demand that the manager give him back to us at once." [Pg 113]

His decided tone convinced the young girl.



"As we are honest people," she said in her turn, "and so that you may not think that we stole him, as you seem to suggest, I will tell you how, three weeks ago, he became one of us."

Thus begun, the conversation was continued in a friendly way. True, a policeman was called, but only to inform the audience, at the manager's request, of the adventures of Dog-Clown who had delighted them all. [Pg 114]



Reine wept for the handsome poodle who would now no longer be with her on her travels, and there was weeping and wailing in the menagerie, when his comrades heard the news, for all the animals loved Clown.

This last scene was so affecting that the audience itself, moved to tears, made no complaint.

It's a sad thing but true, alas, that what brings happiness to one brings sorrow to others.

Bertha was too happy and this time too anxious, to leave Clown any longer, even in the midst of these kind circus people. She thanked them warmly for the good care they had taken of her dog, Mademoiselle Reine especially, whom she kissed very sweetly. She promised, too, to take Clown to see her as soon as they reached Neuilly, and giving her address, begged the young girl to come to visit her in Paris. [Pg 115]



After this Bertha departed in haste, hardly giving Clown time to say good-bye to his best friends and comrades, all of whom wept at the parting. [Pg 116]



That evening four joyful travelers took the train for Paris. During the trip, Clown, seated on the cushion between Bertha and her mother, his head against the shoulder of his dear mistress, gazed at her with moist, affectionate eyes. Licking her hands, wagging his pompom of a tail, and uttering plaintive little cries, he tried to tell her about all his past sufferings and his present happiness.

Who could describe Clown's joy when he reached home after his long journey, when he saw his own part of town, his own house, his own room, where once again he would have lovely naps and dream golden dreams? [Pg 117]



When he caught sight of Marie, he jumped into her arms like a child. Marie burst into tears and could not utter a word of reproach. He leaped all over the footman, and did not forget even the cook. Then, smiling to himself, he went off to see what they were to have for dinner—and seemed well satisfied.

In a word, he took up once more his happy family life, full of delightful things: pleasant strolls with Marie, delightful wanderings with Bertha, caresses lovingly given and returned.

From this memorable day, Clown, who had learned his lesson, and grown wise by experience, was the first to bring his leash when it was time to go out. [Pg 118]



He would carry it triumphantly in his mouth as if to say, "Don't let's forget it!" For nothing in the world could you get him to venture alone upon the streets.

At the present time Clown is perfectly happy. His adventures are all in the past.

[Pg 119]



Now that he no longer has anything to worry him he is getting fatter and lazier, but he is always ready for a frolic with his beloved mistress, Bertha. I am sure that very few people who meet the contented dog and his devoted mistress have any idea that this is the famous Clown.

[Pg 120]



As to the moral of this story, you have understood it, I am sure; but don't forget it, dear little readers. If you don't take the wise advice of your parents you are likely to suffer. Just because he didn't obey his little mistress, Clown, in spite of all his intelligence and wit, was very nearly lost forever.

[Pg 121]





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[Pg 125]

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