

## SPECIALISTS FAILED.



### "DRIFTER."

By GEORGE E. WALSH

**P**OOR little fellow! Let me see your paw. Does it hurt so much? Drifter will try to make it better. He'll tie this bandage around it, an' to-morrow the pain will be all gone."

Drifter was crouching down in the corner of the cage occupied by a large red fox, holding one of the paws of the animal in his hands. To his words of sympathy the suffering fox responded with a dismal moan.

"Yes, it's too bad—too bad! But we all have to suffer sometimes."

He patted the animal on the head and stroked the sleek body until the moaning ceased. A sudden wild crash of music disturbed him in his soothing process.

"There; I'll have to leave you now; they're coming."

He rose from his position by the fox's side and stepped outside of the cage just as the head of a regiment of wild animals came trooping into the tent. There were elephants and bears, dogs and cats, pigs and donkeys, birds, rabbits, a female leopard, a lordly lion, and a surly-looking tiger with a chain attached to its hind foot.

As the elephants reached the tent they trumpeted loudly and swung their heads from side to side. The dogs barked and frisked about under the legs of the big brutes. The leopard skulked slyly along the edge of the tent, as if it would spring upon its prey, and the tiger with the chain snapped savagely at a donkey that trotted too near it. The lion stalked along, voiceless and majestic, neither turning to the right nor left.

Drifter faced this approaching cavalcade of wild beasts unflinchingly, and as the head of the troop reached the line of cages, he shouted:

"Hi, there, Tip and Tom! Where are you going?"

He raised his hand to stop the two elephants, and then turned them in their course as easily as if they had been horses.

"Here, Bill, jump into your cage!" he cried to one of the black bears, "an' you, Bruno, go on to yours."

"Stop that fighting, Sly," and he made as if he would strike the snarling leopard, which was threatening a tall, formidable-looking Dane hound.

In a moment he was right in the midst of the medley of trained animals, directing this one to its cage and that one to its stall. Mr. Tempster, the trainer of the animals, came hurrying up from the rear at this juncture and assisted him in caging the most unruly ones. When they were all locked up securely for the night it was nearly one o'clock.

Drifter then rolled himself up in a blanket and went to sleep on a pile of tent covering and bagging. The animals dropped off to sleep one after another; but the suffering fox could find no release from its pain in slumber. All through the night it moaned softly, but dimly. The other animals were too sleepy to be disturbed by the noise.

In the short, restful sleep that followed, Drifter dreamed that he was no longer a mere boy-of-all-work among the circus animals, but a full-fledged and successful trainer and performer.

This had been Drifter's ambition ever since Mr. Tempster had taken pity on him in the streets, when he was homeless and hungry, and had given him a position. The trainer was not always an easy master; he was more often harsh and overbearing than gentle; but Drifter felt that he owed him much.

As the days and weeks and months passed, the boy learned the ways of the trainer, and grew less and less afraid of the wild animals. It was an eventful day for him when he first dared to enter the cage of the lion and stroke his shaggy mane.

At first Mr. Tempster did not like this intimacy between his animals and his chore-boy; but, in time, he saw that it made Drifter more useful to him, and he said nothing. He could throw more and more of his work upon Drifter.

But the ambition had entered the boy's mind to become a great trainer of wild animals, and on every occasion Mr. Tempster was away he devoted himself to the work of coaxing the animals to go through certain evolutions. He never used harsh means to accomplish this; his own tender heart prevented him from striking or prodding the creatures to do his bidding.

Thus for two years he had practiced training the animals secretly, and he was looking hopefully forward to the day when he might obtain a position as trainer, which would give him the absolute command of the circus ring performers.

It was not Drifter's fault that Mr. Tempster had failed to give entire satisfaction to the owners of the great traveling circus. Either through slothfulness or drink the trainer had neglected his duties, and the animals were learning no new tricks and only indifferently performing their old ones.

One day he caught Drifter in the act of putting his favorite fox—now wounded by an accident—through a performance, and instead of reprimanding the boy, he said calmly:

"Well, you do it good enough to go in the ring. I guess I'll let you do the teaching hereafter, an' I'll take the credit for it all!"

He laughed harshly and turned upon his heel.

After that the boy trained his animals more openly, and taught them many new tricks, which Mr. Tempster took up and adopted after the animals were broken into the work.

"You'll make a good trainer some day, an' then you'll go with another circus," were all the thanks Drifter received from this new service.

But it was enough. It encouraged him to persevere in his work. In a short time he had every animal in the cage devoted to him. His invariable kindness and patience had won their hearts, while the harsher methods of Mr. Tempster caused more or less sullen rebellion.

Outside of the big animal tent, Drifter knew little of what was going on among the circus people, for they very seldom ventured into his quarters. So one day when he looked up from his work of putting the leopard through a new trick and saw a man standing back of him, he did not know that it was the manager of the circus. But he stopped instantly, intuitively guessing that the big stranger was a man of authority.

"Go on, my lad; go on," he said, in a voice that was not unduly modulated. "You are doing splendidly." Thus encouraged, Drifter put the leopard through all of the tricks he had taught it, directing the animal so skillfully by gentle words and motions of the hand that its natural grace was ten-fold enhanced.

"Bravo, my lad! You do it well! Will any of the other animals perform tricks for you?"

"Yes, sir; all of them," Drifter replied.

"How old are you?" the man suddenly asked.

"Eighteen," Drifter replied.

"Humph! Eighteen? Well, it's remarkable. I never heard Tempster speak of you before; but you must have been with us for some time."

"With the circus, you mean? Yes, sir; I've been with it three years."

"Then you ought to know our needs," the man added, a moment later. "I'm going to give you a chance to exhibit in public. To-morrow night I'll give you a chance in the ring to put these animals through their tricks. Report to me at four, in person, and I'll give you further instructions."

Mr. Tempster was away that afternoon and did not appear until night. He knew that his animals were in safe keeping, and so he worried little about them. Drifter could hardly contain himself until then; he wanted to tell somebody of his good fortune.

He dreamed of all sorts of successes, and he mapped out his future life. He would be introduced to the public, and he was sure he would attain fame. He would become the greatest animal trainer of the age, and win money and applause. All he needed was a chance to demonstrate his abilities before the public, and here was his opportunity at last.

Then he fell to picturing the circus ring, the sea of faces that would surround him, the bright tinsel and apparel of the performers, and the elegant garb of the spectators. He wondered if he would feel any stage fright.

It is possible that he forgot some of his duties that afternoon, in day-dreaming of his future success. Certainly he was late in feeding the animals, when Mr. Tempster entered the tent. The man walked unsteadily, and for a moment Drifter thought that he was under the influence of liquor. But when he caught sight of his face he knew that something was wrong. He was deathly white, and his brow was drawn into a scowl.

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"What do you mean, Mr. Tempster? Are they going to get a new trainer?"

"Yes, I'm discharged after to-night—that is, I suppose I am. The manager told me yesterday, when I returned, that he had a new and better trainer in view, and that he would give him my place in the ring to-night. I'm to look on and see the new fellow win applause; then I'll be told to leave."

For a moment Drifter's face blanched white, as a terrible suspicion entered his mind.

"It's too hard on me; I don't deserve so much as that," the man continued.

"I've been neglectful, but they might have given me warning. I've a wife and four children and they'll have nothing to live on if I lose my job. It ain't easy to get another position as trainer. It's more'n I can stand."

"It's more than I deserve, Drifter—more than I deserve."

But Drifter, homesick and friendless, wound his arm around his neck, and whispered something in his ear that made the man say audibly:

"My boy, yes; I have five children now and I shall love them all!"—N.Y. Ledger.

There were tears trickling down the man's cheek, and the boy tried to console him.

"It might not be so bad as that," he said. "Maybe the other man won't suit."

"You don't know the manager. When he's set on takin' a man he'll take him. He's got hold of some good trainer, an' he knows a good thing when he sees it. And do you know, Drifter, you'll have to go, too, for I, and not the manager, employ you?"

The boy's face flushed, and his eyes dropped before the trainer's steady gaze.

"But I'll speak a good word for you," Mr. Tempster said. "You've been a good helper, an' I'll try to get the new man to take you. I think he will. I'll try it."

"Thank you, Mr. Tempster," Drifter said, with a little gulp in his throat.

"I wish I had somebody to speak for me; but there ain't anybody who would take the trouble."

"Yes, there is," the boy replied quickly.

"Who?"

Then, seeing Drifter's earnestness, he added, with a smile:

"Yes, I know you would, Drifter; but I'm afraid the manager wouldn't consider it of much account."

"We'll see. I never met the manager but once, an' then I didn't know him until he had left."

It was a solemn afternoon in the big menagerie tent. Mr. Tempster went about his duties with a sad, dejected countenance, and Drifter was almost as quiet and serious in his demeanor. He asked for leave of absence at four o'clock, and then did not appear again that evening.

"Well, the boy deserves a vacation," the trainer said, as he prepared the animals for the ring, "and I'll gladly do his work for him to-night. Maybe it will be my last chance."

He wondered why the new trainer did not appear. He would certainly want to familiarize himself with the animals that were to perform tricks for him. No man would be such a fool as to exhibit with new animals without seeing them beforehand!

Nevertheless, the time came for sending them into the ring. He drove them in and placed them in their positions. Then he waited for developments.

Suddenly from one of the side doors emerged the new performer, and, walking lightly toward the center of the big tent, he made a low obeisance to the audience. There was loud applause, for it could be seen that he was only a boy.

Mr. Tempster looked for a minute at his rival and then muttered aloud:

"Drifter!"

The gong clanged out notice for operations to begin. Drifter led out Sly, the leopard, and started to make him jump through a hoop. The animal made a clean leap, and returned to his former position. Then the performer spoke sharply to him, and rolled a barrel into the ring, accompanying the action with a sharp snap of his whip on the leopard's nose.

The animal jumped back with a snarl and refused to be pacified. Drifter ordered and threatened, but the animal became unruly, and had to be taken out of the ring.

Next the boy snapped his whip close to Tom's trunk, and ordered the big elephant to dance. But the beady eyes snapped, and the trunk swayed uneasily. Picking up an iron hook he prodded the surly animal with it. The elephant screamed with pain, and raced around the ring like an angry bull.

Something seemed to be in the animals that night which made them ignore the boy's orders. Even his pet fox performed its tricks indifferently, although Drifter repeatedly boxed its ears to liven it up a little.

After 20 minutes of desperate labor, the whole menagerie was involved in difficulties, and there was danger of an uproar. The people began to grow anxious and excited. Then the manager stepped down from his box and ordered Drifter back to the dressing-room. Mr. Tempster was called to subdue the excited animals and make them go through their performance as usual.

When the circus closed at midnight, the trainer looked in vain among the cages for Drifter. It was an hour before he found him, curled up on a heap of blankets. The boy had been crying. Mr. Tempster looked at him a moment, and then said brokenly, as he lifted the boy up:

"I saw it all; I saw it all. It was noble of you; but it must have been hard—very hard."

The boy gave vent to a sob.

"I shall never forget it, Drifter, an' I wouldn't have permitted it if hadn't been for my wife and four children. I said to myself that I needed the position more than you did, an' I will keep quiet."

He wound his arm around the boy, and continued:

"You'll get a position some day as performer, an' then you'll show them what you can do."

"It isn't that," Drifter sobbed. "I didn't want the position, when I found they had to turn you out. But it—it was so hard to hit them—poor Sly, an' Tom, an'—they'll never forgive me. They looked so surprised and hurt when I snapped the whip at them. I never did it before; but I had to—to—make them unruly, or they would have obeyed me, an' then—"

"I would have been discharged," interrupted Mr. Tempster. Then in a voice that choked, he added:

"It's more than I deserve, Drifter—more than I deserve."

But Drifter, homesick and friendless, wound his arm around his neck, and whispered something in his ear that made the man say audibly:

"My boy, yes; I have five children now and I shall love them all!"—N.Y. Ledger.

### SERVANTS IN SANTIAGO.

Sunday School Lesson for December 12, 1892—*Trying to Destroy God's Word*—Jeremiah 36:20-32.

[Based upon Peloubet's Select Noyau. GOLDEN TEXT.—The word of our God shall stand forever.—Isa. 40:8.]

LESSON NOTES.

I. The Prophet Jeremiah and his Work.—Our section to-day is brief, but is a part of an important era. It gives us an insight into the inner life of the kings and prophets. We may well study here something of the life and character of Jeremiah, the great prophet of these troublous times. (1) His name means "exalted of the Lord."

(2) His father was Hilkiah (1:1), probably the high priest who found the book of the law for Josiah (2 Kings 22:8, etc.). (3) His birth was at Annoth, a priestly city close by Jerusalem, on the north. He was born probably about B.C. 647, the same year as King Josiah; for he began to prophesy a young man, in the thirteenth year of Josiah, 627 (1:6), and Josiah was 11 years old at that time. (4) His office was that of both priest and prophet. (5) He never married. (6) His public life continued from the thirteenth year of Josiah (B.C. 627) till some time after the destruction of Jerusalem (B.C. 586), or more than forty years. (7) His character. Jeremiah was naturally of a shy and timid disposition, shrinking from public life, sensitive to a most painful degree, and desponding. The great work he had to do was contrary to his natural disposition, but it was done better on this very account. At the same time, as often occurs, he was the bravest of the brave. Timid in resolve, he was unflinching in execution, fearless when he had to face the whole world. He stood almost alone.

II. The Circumstances of the Early Part of Jehoiakim's Reign.—(1) The Egyptians under Pharaoh Necho marched through Palestine up to the Euphrates to attack and conquer Assyria, B.C. 609-8. (2) Josiah joined the Assyrians, and attacked the Egyptians. He was defeated and slain, and the Egyptians tried to make themselves masters of Syria and Palestine. (3) His third son Jehoahaz was made king, but Pharaoh Necho took him prisoner, after a three-months' reign, and carried him away captive in chains. (4) Jehoiakim, an older brother, was made king. (5) He neglected the people, and built a magnificent palace (Jer. 22:13-15) to hold his mere "shadow of royalty" among a poor and oppressed people