

[Page 466 of the 25 February 1893 issue of 'The Million' with an article on Elizabeth Lyska, a Russian giantess over 7 feet tall, exhibiting at The Royal Aquarium, Westminster with dwarf, Princess Topaze, 26" tall].

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THE TALLEST AND SMALLEST WOMEN IN BRITAIN.

A GIANTESSE AND A MIDGET.



O interview, within the short space of an hour, the smallest and the tallest women in Britain is a feat practically unique. And yet, if so disposed, you may do this any day at the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, where the queer couple are on exhibition.

The midget is Princess Topaze, who resembles nothing so much as one of the dolls which figured in the *Tit-Bits* Christmas doll exhibition. She was born in Buenos Ayres, of French parents, and has lived in France since she reached her fourth year. She is now about fifteen years old, and weighs some fifteen pounds. Twenty-six inches is her height, 2½ inches is the span of her tiny wrist, whilst a shoe 4 inches in length fits her mite of a foot. At her birth she measured 10 inches, and weighed about twenty ounces. At the age of nine she stopped growing, although she continued to develop as she grew older. There is no suggestion of deformity in the little lady's figure, although her head is rather large when compared with other parts of her body. A brilliant blonde, she is extremely proud of her appearance. Her waist measures 11 inches. The Princess is a curious contrast to her mother, a tall, stout woman, whilst her father, now dead, was quite a giant. Neither she nor her mother can express themselves in more than half a dozen words of English, and my conversation with the Princess—short as it was—had to be carried on in French.

"Well, Princess, how did you like the passage across the Channel to England?"

The Princess put her little head on one side like a bird, and then answered in a quick, sharp voice, infantile in its shrillness:

"I liked it very much, and felt quite well; but the giant"—referring to her attendant, a Scotchman named Sinclair, who is seven feet in height—"was very ill. Oh, how he did suffer!" And she laughed gleefully at the thought of the poor man's troubles.

"And do you care for these public exhibitions?"

"Oh, yes; you soon become used to them, although I didn't like the idea at first."

All the furniture in her boudoir is of Lilliputian proportions—chair, table, and couch.

"I sleep," said the little lady, "in a tiny bed, a swing cot, and go to bed about eleven or half-past, when I get home after the performance."

"Ah, here is my dog Rubis, a clever little poodle, who performs all sorts of tricks."

At this moment, a glass of wine and a cake are brought to the Princess. Carrying the glass and plate—the latter almost as large as herself—to her diminutive table, she sips the wine and nibbles the cake in the most dignified way. The Princess is very partial to stimulants, likes a glass of champagne immensely, and possesses an appetite quite equal to that of an ordinary person. Like many midgets, Princess Topaze owns a temper hardly ideal, and if anyone offends her she uses her hands pretty freely. Her dog, Rubis, is the chief culprit, and is frequently thrashed when his performance fails to satisfy her. When he raises himself on his hind legs he is more than a head taller than his mistress. But, this notwithstanding, she holds him in complete subjection, and with her two hands drags him forth when he curls himself up under a chair.

Princess Topaze is an ardent lover of dancing. Besides the ordinary dances, she can execute a Spanish bolero and a sailor's hornpipe. She is essentially feminine in her love of dress. Her wardrobe is exceedingly varied and handsome; and she proudly showed me her rings, bangles, and necklace in a manner worthy a true daughter of Eve.

The Princess and I now pay a visit to the apartment in which the tallest woman in Britain may be seen. She is Elizabeth Lyska, a young Russian, fourteen years of age. She is 7 ft. 7 in. in height, and certainly represents the "infinitely great" as the Princess does the "infinitely little." As she is unable to speak English, and I did not know Russian, we managed to find in German the happy medium, in which language we conversed tolerably well. Lyska's proportions, as measured against those of the tiny dwarf, are overwhelming. She showed me a portrait of her mother, whose stature is quite normal, as is that of her brother. When Lyska visited the Zoological Gardens in St. Petersburg a curious thing happened—the lions shrank back in affright at the sight of this tremendous creature!

The giantess is an extremely good-humoured looking girl. With Princess Topaze she is very friendly and tender, and the two seem mutually interested in each other. She tells me that her parents are land-owners, and that she is extremely quick in picking up languages. Already, after but a short sojourn in England, she has caught up a few of our expressions, and, in broken English, asks visitors to buy her portrait.

"And where were you educated?"

"I have never been to school," the young giantess replies. "I was taught at home."

"And how do you employ yourself all day?"

"I read and write, and do a good deal of needlework;" and she shows me her full, white blouse, on which is embroidered, in the Russian cross-stitch, sprays of flowers in red and blue.

"Can you play the piano?"

"Oh, yes, a little." And then she tells me that she sleeps in bed about nine feet long, and strongly made of copper and iron. She weighs 27½ lbs. Her voice is not deep in volume, but varies like that of a boy when undergoing the process of "breaking." Lyska was of only average proportions until she reached the age of four, and now Professor Virchow is of opinion that she will grow another 13 inches. She has three brothers and sisters all of normal size, whilst Princess Topaze possesses two sisters and a brother also differing in no way from the run of common humanity. Our talk finishes, and Lyska draws the Princess's tiny hand affectionately into her enormous palm and smiles down at her benignly. The little Princess kisses her other hand affably to me, and with a "bon jour" and "guten-morgen" from these two strangely different young girls, I take my leave.

Here is a personal item from a local journal in India: "We are very glad to learn that the marriage of Mr. Rughoonathidas Madhowdas, a Kupola Bania merchant of Bombay, and the widow of Shet Gudhurdas Mohunddas, and the widow of Luchnichand Dhurmsey, was celebrated at Chinch-poogly."



ELIZABETH LYSKA AND PRINCESS TOPAZE.

with Dhuncoorbal, the daughter of Shet Gudhurdas Mohunddas, and the widow of Luchnichand Dhurmsey, was celebrated at Chinch-poogly."

THE MILLION MUG.

Next week we shall publish the names of the lucky recipients of THE MILLION MUGS for babies born in January. The parents of babies born that month have a unique advantage. They can try for a MILLION MUG for every month in the year. We are now engraving the names of the little ones on the MUGS, and in a few days the winners will receive them.

A Page of Prizes

SOME EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS.

TEN MILLION MUGS TO BE GIVEN AWAY.

As announced in our last issue we have completed arrangements for the distribution of some of the most extraordinary gifts in the history of popular journalism. For the past twelve months we have been trying, with gratifying success, to make THE MILLION acceptable to every household in the land that cares for bright, coloured pictures, and healthy, entertaining reading. Our circle of readers is now a wide and expanding one, but we are anxious to reach homes in which THE MILLION is still unknown. To this end we intend to distribute each month a number of handsome presents, which, by their novelty and acceptability, will tend to spread the name and fame of this paper. Our offer is to married people only, but it is of such a character that all the unmarried friends of an applicant may help to achieve the victory, even if they do not actually receive the prize.

In a word, THE MILLION is going to be a sort of universal god-father to the children of its readers. Each month we shall distribute

TEN BEAUTIFUL CHRISTENING MUGS

to the married people who have babies born to them during 1893. We have arranged with Messrs. Mappin Brothers, the well-known silversmiths of London and Sheffield, to supply each month ten elegantly-chased "Queen's Plate" christening mugs, bearing upon them, in ornamentally engraved letters, the best wishes of THE MILLION, and the names of the little recipients. We are confident that the distribution of such gifts will take THE MILLION right into the homes of the million for whom it is designed, and be far more valued than any money prizes we can offer.



THE MILLION MUG

How will THE MILLION prizes be awarded? In

this way. We invite all parents whose homes have been brightened this year by the advent of a little *one* of humanity to cut out the coupon below and send it to us on or before FEBRUARY 28. Applicants for these gifts may send as many coupons as they please, which may be cut from any issue of THE MILLION containing them right up to the end of February. The coupons may also be collected from readers who have no use for them, and in this way the unmarried friends of an applicant may help to secure the success of his application. All the coupons thus obtained should be sent to THE MILLION Offices in one envelope on or before March 1, on which day we shall carefully go through them. To each of the five applicants who have sent in the most coupons we shall forward

A "MILLION MUG,"

suitably engraved with the name of the child on whose behalf it has been awarded. These five awards having been made, we shall place all the remaining coupons together and draw five from them at random, to the senders of which the remaining five mugs will be forwarded.

In this way we hope to give every applicant a chance of winning a prize—a prize which, we venture to say, he will treasure on behalf of the little one in whose name it has been awarded.

THE MILLION MUG.

I desire a MILLION MUG for the son (daughter) of

.....

 who was born, 1893.

Name of applicant

Address

The coupon has been framed so that the relatives and friends, as well as the parents, of a child may apply for these gifts. The name of the child and its parents should be stated in every case, and when a number of applications are made on behalf of one child the whole of the coupons should be sent in one envelope. The gifts will be forwarded direct to the address of the parents, and not to the addresses of the applicants.

Mark the envelopes "MILLION MUG," and address them to THE MILLION Offices, 8, 9, 10, 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

TWENTY-EIGHT BIRTHDAY GIFTS.

Does your birthday happen this month? If so, we want to make you a birthday present. There are twenty-eight days in February, and we shall send, with our congratulations,

TWENTY-EIGHT PRIZES OF HALF A GUINEA EACH TO TWENTY-EIGHT READERS

whose birthdays occur during the month. If you want any of these birthday gifts simply write your name, address, and day of birth—not year—on the accompanying coupon, and send it to us by March 1. All the envelopes will remain unopened until that day, when we shall go through them at random, until there is

A WINNER FOR EVERY DAY THAT THE MONTH CONTAINS.

It is likely, of course, that there will be many applicants for these gifts whose birthdays are alike, in which case we shall award the prize to the applicant whose letter for that day is first opened.

NO NOTICE

will be taken of applications in which the coupon is omitted. Applicants may send in as many coupons as they like, provided the same date is on each. Mark the envelopes "Birthday," and address them to THE MILLION Offices, 8, 9, 10, 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.

(BIRTHDAY GIFTS.

My birthday is the of February.

Name.....

Address.....

A LITERARY PUZZLE.

Here is another literary puzzle which we want the readers of THE MILLION to solve:

THE FIRST ORGAN TO GO TO SLEEP.

It is said by scientists to be a fact that all our senses fall into a happy state of insensibility one after another. It is curious that, although the sense of smell is one of the next to lose its susceptibility, then follow smelling, hearing and first to slumber, it is the last to wake. Hearing, after touch; the last-named being the lightest sleeper and most easily aroused. The eyelids take the lead and obscure sight; the sense of taste is the centre of nervous action. This will explain the necessity of having the feet comfortably warm before sleep is possible. Commencing with the feet, the slumbrous influence works its way to the touch, soonest regains consciousness. Certain muscles do not slumber simultaneously, but that they and parts of the body begin to sleep before others.

This is simply an ordinary newspaper item, but the lines have got mixed up a little. Try to separate them, and make a complete and sensible paragraph. For the first six correct solutions we shall award

SIX PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH.

Solutions must reach us not later than Tuesday morning next. Put "Literary Puzzle" on the envelopes or postcards, and address them to THE MILLION Offices, 8, 9, 10, 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.