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AUCKLAND

AT THE ZOO [III]

JUMUNA PAYS HER WAY

"I SUPPOSE Jumuna eats like an elephant," I said to the keeper, as we walked towards the elephant-house.

"Well," he said, "you'd be surprised. She doesn't eat all that much."

"For instance, if I give my horse a couple of buckets of chaff and oats mixed for his breakfast, how much would I give to Jumuna?"

"You'd give her the same," he answered. "Only she has bran. And of course, she has her hay and green feed as well."

By this time, we had arrived. Jumuna greeted us with a honk-honk which she pronounced through her nose "henk-henk." Her way of saying thank you, the keeper said. So I gave her a piece of bread, and she honked again. She was swaying gently from side to side, continually raising and lowering her huge feet, decorated on their lower edges with half-moon toe-nails. Her ears fanned backwards and forwards like gigantic moth wings. Her elastic trunk was busy all the time lifting straw on to her back and in between times pushing wisps into her great crinkled pink mouth.

"Oh, she's no lady, she eats her bedding," the keeper said.

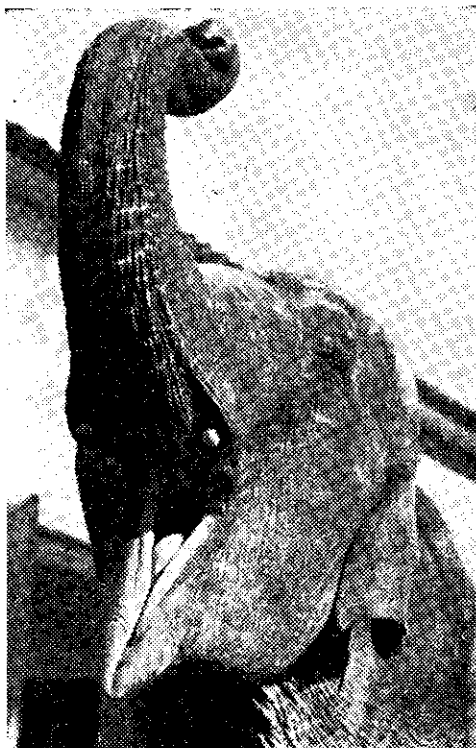
"And drinks her bath water?"

"Yes, drinks that, too. But at least she pays her way. In January, for instance, she carried 5,500 children at 2d a time. Of course we had a huge attendance—more than 10,000 visitors these holidays."

Cheaper Than A Horse!

Jumuna is an Indian elephant and is about 35 years of age; she has been in the zoo for 16 years and it costs about £85 a year to feed her on her bran and hay and maize. But she has always paid her way and this year she has already earned £130, with two months still to go till the accounts are balanced. A big racing man in England says that it costs him £600 a year to keep one horse. In New Zealand it probably costs about half that—or perhaps only about a tenth of that if you keep him off the race-track. It's obviously a better paying proposition to keep an elephant. But then, "We can't all and some of us don't," as I think Winnie the Pooh said about something else.

Moreover, Jumuna costs nothing in dentist's bills. She has four teeth, one in each corner of her mouth. When one is worn out she puts in her trunk and pulls it out and another grows. This can happen six times, as elephants have six



The holidays are over: Jumuna is happy

sets of four teeth. After that they die—in the wilds at about 100 years, in captivity rather later, because they eat slightly softer food.

It's a Hap-Hap-Happy Day

The day after the school holidays finished was a happy one for Jumuna. As I walked down the hill into the zoo I heard her blowing off steam blithely as she sauntered at ease in the paddock with her keeper. She was fingering the grass and the leaves of trees with that exploratory tip of her trunk and she kept making short "Whoo-onk" trumpetings much as if she were a small railway engine not very energetic about its whistling. In fact she reminded me in this and in her obvious happiness of the little train in Walt Disney's *Reluctant Dragon*—you'll remember how it sang "Aall-abooooard!" I offered Jumuna an apple and she lumbered towards me and put that snuffling waving trunk under my hand. I dropped the apple in the convenient hole and sloosh! it was thrust down her mouth and followed by a mouthful of grass. "A sandwich," explained the keeper. "She must always have her bit of hay or grass to wrap round apple or bread."

Jumuna's own keeper was sitting on the grass; she went over to him and waved her trunk about him. Suddenly I noticed her "go lame" in her near hind leg. It began to crumple, concertina-fashion. Then both hind legs and slowly the front ones began to crumple, and then WUMP! Jumuna was lying on her side by her keeper, pushing him with her trunk for a little room.

"Well," said the head keeper, "in 16 years I've never seen her do that before."

But Jumuna's keeper said that she often does this when he and she are out in the paddock in the free time in the mornings, or on a day such as this when there are no children to be carried. Jumuna and her keeper, you see, are devoted to each other; but the keeper

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