

THE TWILIGHT OF THE ACROBAT

in the streets of Paris in the summer season, living all of them in a roving gipsy wagon as is the custom of these fête people. What a charming moment it was always to see the simple but well built Mlle. Jeanne of twenty-two pick up her stalwart and beautifully proportioned brother of nineteen, a strong, broad-shouldered, manly chap, and balance him on one hand upright in the air. It was a classic moment in the art of the acrobat, interesting to watch the father of them all training the fragile bodies of the younger boys and girls to the systematic movement of the business while the mother sat in the doorway of the caravan nursing the youngest at the breast, no doubt the perfect future acrobat. And how charming it was to look in at the doors of these little houses on wheels and note the excellent domestic order of them, most always with a canary or a linnet at the curtained window and at least one cat or dog or maybe both. This type is the progenitor of our stage acrobat, it is the primitive stage of these old-time troubadours, and it is still prevalent in times of peace in France. The strong man gotten in tawdry pink tights and much worn black velvet with his very elaborate and drawn out speeches, in delicate French, concerning the marvels of his art and the long wait for the stipulated number of *dix centimes* pieces before his marvellous demonstration could begin. This is, so to say, the vagabond element of our type of entertainment, the wandering minstrel who keeps generation after generation to