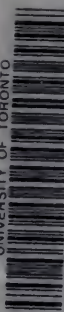


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CIRCUS LIFE AND CIRCUS CELEBRITIES

BY
THOMAS FROST

AUTHOR OF 'THE OLD SHOWMEN AND THE OLD LONDON FAIRS,' 'LIVES
OF THE CONJURERS,' ETC.



A NEW EDITION

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PREFACE.

THERE are probably few persons who do not number among the most pleasant recollections of their youth their first visit to a circus, whether their earliest sniff of the saw-dust was inhaled in the building made classical by Ducrow, or under the canvas canopy of Samwell or Clarke. In my boyish days, the cry of 'This way for the riders!' bawled from the stentorian vocal organs of the proprietor or ring-master of a travelling circus, never failed to attract all the boys, and no small proportion of the men and women, to the part of the fair from which it proceeded. Fairs have become things of the past within twelve or fifteen miles of the metropolis; but ever and anon a

tenting circus pitches, for a day or two, in a meadow, and the performances prove as attractive as ever. The boys, who protest that they are better than a play,—the young women, who are delighted with the ‘loves of horses,’—the old gentlemen, who are never so pleased as when they are amusing their grandchildren,—the admirers of graceful horsemanship of all ages,—crowd the benches, and find the old tricks and the old ‘wheezes,’ as the poet found the view from Grongar Hill, ‘ever charming—ever new.’

What boy is there who, though he may have seen it before, does not follow with sparkling eyes the Pawnee Chief in his rapid career upon a bare-backed steed,—the lady in the scarlet habit and high hat, who leaps over hurdles,—the stout farmer who, while his horse bears him round the ring, divests himself of any number of coats and vests, until he finally appears in tights and trunks,—the juggler who plays at cup and ball, and tosses knives in an endless shower, as he is whirled round the arena? And which of us has not, in the days of our boyhood, fallen in love with the fascinating young lady in short

skirts who leaps through 'balloons' and over banners? Even when we have attained man's estate, and learned a wrinkle or two, we take our children to Astley's or Hengler's, and enjoy the time-honoured feats of equitation, the tumbling, the gymnastics, and the rope-dancing, as much as the boys and girls.

But of the circus *artistes*—the riders, the clowns, the acrobats, the gymnasts,—what do we know? How many are there, unconnected with the saw-dust, who can say that they have known a member of that strange race? Charles Dickens, who was perhaps as well acquainted with the physiology of the less known sections of society as any man of his day, whetted public curiosity by introducing his readers to the humours of Sleary's circus; and the world wants to know more about the subject. When, it is asked, will another saw-dust *artiste* give us such an amusing book as Walleth presented the world with, in his autobiography? When are the reminiscences of the late Nelson Lee to be published? With the exception of the autobiography of Walleth,

and a few passages in Elliston's memoirs, the circus has hitherto been without any exponent whatever. Under the heading of 'Amphitheatres,' Watts's *Bibliotheca Britannica*, that boon to literary readers at the British Museum in quest of information upon occult subjects, mentions only a collection of the bills of Astley's from 1819 to 1845.

Circus proprietors are not, as a rule, so garrulous as poor old Sleary; they are specially reticent concerning their own antecedents, and the varied fortunes of their respective shows. To this cause must be ascribed whatever shortcomings may be found in the following pages in the matter of circus records. Circus men, too, are very apt to meet a hint that a few reminiscences of their lives and adventures would be acceptable with the reply of Canning's needy knife-grinder,—'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir.' There are exceptions, however, and as a rule the better educated members of the profession are the least unwilling to impart information concerning its history and mysteries to those outside of their circle. To the kindness and

courtesy of several of these I am considerably indebted, and beg them to accept this public expression of my thanks.

T. FROST.

LONG DITTON, *Oct. 1st, 1873.*



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CIRCUS LIFE

AND

CIRCUS CELEBRITIES.

CHAPTER I.

Beginnings of the Circus in England—Tumblers and Performing Horses of the Middle Ages—Jacob Hall, the Rope-dancer — Francis Forcer and Sadler's Wells — Vauxhall Gardens—Price's Equestrian Performances at Johnson's Gardens—Sampson's Feats of Horsemanship—Philip Astley —His Open-air Performances near Halfpenny Hatch—The First Circus—Erection of the Amphitheatre in Westminster Road—First Performances there—Rival Establishment in Blackfriars Road—Hughes and Clementina.

CONSIDERING the national love of everything in which the horse plays a part, and the lasting popularity of circus entertainments in modern times, it seems strange that the equine amphitheatre should have been unknown in England until the close of the last century. That the Romans, during their occupation of the southern portion of our island, introduced the sports of the arena, in which chariot-racing varied the combats

of the gladiators, and the fierce encounters of wild beasts, is shown by the remains of the Amphitheatre at Dorchester, and by records of the existence of similar structures near St Alban's, and at Banbury and Caerleon. After the departure of the Romans, the amphitheatres which they had erected fell into disuse and decay; but at a later period they were appropriated to bull-baiting and bear-baiting, and the arena at Banbury was known as the bull-ring down to a comparatively recent period. An illumination of one of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the Harleian collection shows one of these ancient amphitheatres, outside a town; there is a single musician in the arena, to whose music a man is dancing, while another performer exhibits a tame bear, which appears to be simulating sleep or death; the spectators are sitting or standing around, and one of them is applauding the performance in the modern manner, by clapping his hands.

But from the Anglo-Saxon period to about the middle of the seventeenth century, the nearest approximation to circus performances was afforded by the 'glee-men,' and the exhibitors of bears that travestied a dance, and horses that beat a kettle-drum with their fore-feet. Some of the 'glee-men' were tumblers and jugglers, and

their feats are pourtrayed in several illuminated manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. One of these illuminations, engraved in Strutt's *Sports*, shows a boy leaping through a hoop; another, in the Cottonian collection, represents a juggler throwing three balls and three knives alternately. What is technically called 'the shower' is shown in another illumination of mediæval juggling; and that there were female acrobats in those days appears from a drawing in one of the Sloane collection of manuscripts, in which a girl is shown in the attitude of bending backward. One of the Arundel manuscripts, in the British Museum, shows a dancing bear; and other illuminations, of a later date, represent a horse on the tight-rope, and an ox standing on the back of a horse.

Strutt quotes from the seventh volume of the *Archæologia*, the following account of a rope-flying feat performed by a Spaniard in the reign of Edward VI. 'There was a great rope, as great as the cable of a ship, stretched from the battlements of Paul's steeple, with a great anchor at one end, fastened a little before the Dean of Paul's house-gate; and when his Majesty approached near the same, there came a man, a stranger, being a native of Arragon, lying on the

rope with his head forward, casting his arms and legs abroad, running on his breast on the rope from the battlement to the ground, as if it had been an arrow out of a bow, and stayed on the ground. Then he came to his Majesty, and kissed his foot; and so, after certain words to his Highness, he departed from him again, and went upwards upon the rope, till he came over the midst of the churchyard, where he, having a rope about him, played certain mysteries on the rope, as tumbling, and casting one leg from another. Then took he the rope, and tied it to the cable, and tied himself by the right leg a little space beneath the wrist of the foot, and hung by one leg a certain space, and after recovered himself again with the said rope, and unknit the knot, and came down again. Which stayed his Majesty, with all the train, a good space of time.'

Holinshed mentions a similar feat which was performed in the following reign, and which, unhappily, resulted in the death of the performer. In the reign of Elizabeth lived the famous Banks, whom Sir Walter Raleigh thought worthy of mention in his *History of the World*, saying that 'if Banks had lived in older times, he would have shamed all the enchanters in the world;

for whosoever was most famous among them could never master or instruct any beast as he did.' The animal associated with the performer so eulogized was a bay horse named Morocco, which was one of the marvels of the time. An old print represents the animal standing on his hind legs, with Banks directing his movements.

Morocco seems to have been equally famous for his saltatory exercises and for his arithmetical calculations and his powers of memory. Moth, in *Love's Labour Lost*, puzzling Armado with arithmetical questions, says, 'The dancing horse will tell you,' an allusion which is explained by a line of one of Hall's satires—

'Strange Morocco's dumb arithmetic.'

Sir Kenelm Digby records that the animal 'would restore a glove to the due owner after the master had whispered the man's name in his ear; and would tell the just number of pence in any piece of silver coin newly showed him by his master.' De Melleray, in a note to his translation of the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, says that he witnessed the performance of this animal in the Rue St Jacques, in Paris, to which city Banks proceeded in or before 1608; and he states that Morocco could not only tell the number of francs in a

crown, but knew that the crown was depreciated at that time, and also the exact amount of the depreciation.

The fame which Banks and his horse acquired in France, brought the former under the imputation of being a sorcerer, and he probably had a narrow escape of being burned at a stake in that character. Bishop Morton tells the story as follows:—

‘Which bringeth into my remembrance a story which Banks told me at Frankfort, from his own experience in France among the Capuchins, by whom he was brought into suspicion of magic, because of the strange feats which his horse Morocco played (as I take it) at Orleans, where he, to redeem his credit, promised to manifest to the world, that his horse was nothing less than a devil. To this end he commanded his horse to seek out one in the press of the people who had a crucifix on his hat; which done, he bade him kneel down unto it, and not this only, but also to rise up again and to kiss it. And now, gentlemen (quoth he), I think my horse hath acquitted both me and himself; and so his adversaries rested satisfied; conceiving (as it might seem) that the devil had no power to come near the cross.’

That Banks travelled with his learned horse from Paris to Orleans, and thence to Frankfort, is shown by this extract; but his further wanderings are unrecorded. It has been inferred, from the following lines of a burlesque poem by Jonson, that he suffered at last the fate he escaped at Orleans; but the grounds which the poet had for supposing such a dreadful end for the poor horse-charmer are unknown.

‘But ’mongst these Tiberts, who do you think there was?
Old Banks, the juggler, our Pythagoras,
Grave tutor to the learned horse; both which,
Being, beyond sea, burned for one witch,
Their spirits transmigrated to a cat.’

These itinerant performers seem to have divided their time between town and country, as many of them do at the present day. Sir William Davenant, describing the street sights of the metropolis in his curious poem entitled *The Long Vacation in London*, says—

‘Now, vaulter good, and dancing lass
On rope, and man that cries, Hey, pass!
And tumbler young that needs but stoop,
Lay head to heel to creep through hoop;
And man in chimney hid to dress
Puppet that acts our old Queen Bess;
And man, that while the puppets play,
Through nose expoundeth what they say;
And white oat-eater that does dwell
In stable small at sign of Bell,

That lifts up hoof to show the pranks
Taught by magician styled Banks ;
And ape led captive still in chain
Till he renounce the Pope and Spain ;
All these on hoof now trudge from town
To cheat poor turnip-eating clown.'

About the middle of the seventeenth century, some of these wandering performers began to locate themselves permanently in the metropolis. Jacob Hall, the rope-dancer, was scarcely less famous as an acrobat, being clever and alert in somersaults and flip-flaps, performing the former over naked rapiers and men's heads, and through hoops. He is mentioned by contemporary memoir writers as the first lover of Nell Gwynne, who appears, however, in a short time to have transferred her favours to Harte, the actor. In 1683, one Sadler opened the music-house at Islington which, from the circumstance of a mineral spring being discovered on the spot, became known by the name of Sadler's Wells, which it has retained to this day. It was not until after Sadler's death, however, that ropedancing and acrobats' performances were added to the musical entertainments which, with the water, were the sole attraction of the place in its earliest days. The change was made by Francis Forcer, whose son was for several years the principal performer there. Forcer sold the establish-

ment to Rosamond, the builder of Rosamond's Row, Clerkenwell, who contrived, by judicious management, to amass a considerable fortune.

Of the nature of the amusements in Forcer's time we have a curious account in a communication made to the *European Magazine* by a gentleman who received it from Macklin, the actor, whom he met at Sadler's Wells towards the close of his life. 'Sir,' said the veteran comedian, 'I remember the time when the price of admission here was threepence, except a few places scuttled off at the sides of the stage at sixpence, and which were usually reserved for people of fashion, who occasionally came to see the fun. Here we smoked and drank porter and rum-and-water as much as we could pay for, and every man had his doxy that liked; and, although we had a mixture of very odd company,—for I believe it was a good deal the baiting-place of thieves and highwaymen,—there was little or no rioting.'

During the period between Rosamond's management and the conversion of the place into a theatre for dramas of the kind for which the Adelphi and the Coburg became famous at a later day, the entertainments at Sadler's Wells consisted of pantomimes and musical interludes. In Forcer's time, according to the account said

to have been given by Macklin, they consisted of 'hornpipes and ballad singing, with a kind of pantomime-ballet, and some lofty tumbling; and all done by daylight, with four or five exhibitions every day. The proprietors had always a fellow on the outside of the booth to calculate how many people were collected for a second exhibition; and when he thought there were enough, he came to the back of the upper seats, and cried out, "Is Hiram Fisteman here?" That was the cant word agreed upon between the parties to know the state of the people without: upon which they concluded the entertainment with a song, dismissed the audience, and prepared for a second representation.'

Joseph Clark, the posturer, was one of the wonders of London during the reigns of James II. and William III., obtaining mention even in the Transactions of the Philosophical Society, as having 'such an absolute command of all his muscles and joints that he could disjoint almost his whole body.' His exhibitions do not seem, however, to have been of a pleasing character, consisting chiefly in the imitation of every kind of human deformity. He could produce at will, and in a moment, without padding, the semblance of a Quasimodo or a Tichborne Claimant,

his 'fair round belly, with good capon lined,' shift his temporary hump from one side to the other, project either hip, and twist his limbs into every conceivable complication. He could change his form so much as to defy a tailor to measure him, and imposed so completely on Molins, a famous surgeon of that time, as to be regarded by him as an incurable cripple. His portrait in Tempest's collection shows him shouldering his leg, an antic which is imitated by a monkey.

There was a famous vaulter of this time, named William Stokes, who seems to have been the first to introduce horses in the performance; and in a book called the *Vaulting Master*, published at Oxford in 1652, boasts that he had reduced vaulting to a method. The book is illustrated by plates, representing different examples of his practice, in which he is shown vaulting over one or more horses, or leaping upon them; in one alighting in the saddle, and in another upon the bare back of a horse. It is singular that this last feat should not have been performed after Stokes's time, until Alfred Bradbury exhibited it a few years ago at the Amphitheatre in Holborn. It is improbable that Bradbury had seen the book, and his performance of the feat is, in that case, one more instance

of the performance of an original act by more than one person at considerable intervals of time.

May Fair, which has given its name to a locality now aristocratic, introduces us, in 1702—the year in which the fearful riot occurred in which a constable was killed there—to Thomas Simpson, an equestrian vaulter, described in a bill of Husband's booth as 'the famous vaulting master of England.' A few years later a bill of the entertainments of Bartholomew Fair, preserved in Bagford's collection in the library of the British Museum, mentions tight-rope dancing and some performing dogs, which had had the honour of appearing before Queen Anne and 'most of the quality.' The vaulters, and posturers, and tight-rope performers of this period were not all the vagabonds they were in the eye of the law. Fawkes, a posturer and juggler of the first half of the eighteenth century, started, in conjunction with a partner named Pinchbeck, a show which was for many years one of the chief attractions of the London fairs, and appears to have realized a considerable fortune.

The earliest notice of Vauxhall Gardens occurs in the *Spectator* of May 20th, 1712, in a paper written by Addison, when they had

probably just been opened. They were then a fashionable promenade, the entertainments for which the place was afterwards famous not being introduced until at least a century later. In 1732 they were leased to Jonathan Tyers, whose name is preserved in two neighbouring streets, Tyers Street and Jonathan Street ; and ten years later they were purchased by the same individual, and became as famous as Ranelagh Gardens for musical entertainments and masked balls. Admission was by season tickets only, and it is worthy of note that the inimitable Hogarth, from whose designs of the four parts of the day Hayman decorated the concert-room, furnished the design for the tickets, which were of silver. Tyers gave Hogarth a gold ticket of perpetual admission for six persons, or one coach ; and the artist's widow bequeathed it to a relative. This unique relic of the departed glories of Vauxhall was last used in 1836, and is now in the possession of Mr Frederick Gye, who gave twenty pounds for it.

Hogarth's picture of Southwark Fair introduces to us more than one of that generation of the strange race whose several varieties contribute so much to the amusement of the public. The slack-rope performer is Violante, of whom

we read in Malcolm's *Londinium Redivivus* that, 'soon after the completion of the steeple [St Martin's in the Fields], an adventurous Italian, named Violante, descended from the arches, head foremost, on a rope stretched thence across St Martin's Lane to the Royal Mews; the princesses being present, and many eminent persons.' Hogarth shows another performer of this feat in the background of his picture, namely, Cadman, who was killed in 1740, in an attempt to descend from the summit of a church-steeple in Shrewsbury. The circumstances of this sad catastrophe are set forth in the epitaph on the unfortunate man's gravestone, which is as follows:—

' Let this small monument record the name
Of Cadman, and to future times proclaim
Here, by an attempt to fly from this high spire
Across the Sabrine stream, he did acquire
His fatal end. 'Twas not for want of skill
Or courage to perform the task, he fell :
No, no—a faulty cord, being drawn too tight
Hurried his soul on high to take her flight,
Which bid the body here beneath good night.'

The earliest advertisement of Sadler's Wells which I have been able to find is one of 1739, which states that 'the usual diversions will begin this day at five o'clock in the evening, with a variety of rope-dancing, tumbling, singing, and

several new entertainments of dancing, both serious and comic; concluding with the revived grotesque pantomime called *Happy Despair*, with additions and alterations.' An advertisement of the following year introduces Miss Rayner as a performer on the tight rope, who in 1748 appeared in conjunction with a younger sister. The acrobats of the latter period were Williams, Hough, and Rayner, the latter probably father or brother of the fair performers on the *corde elastique*.

The New Wells, at the bottom of Leman Street, Goodman's Fields, were opened at this time, and introduced to the public a French rope-dancer named Dugée, who also tumbled, in conjunction with Williams, who had left the Islington place of entertainment, and another acrobat named Janno. Williams is announced in an advertisement of 1748 to vault over the heads of ten men. The admission here was by payment for a pint of wine or punch, which was the case also at Sadler's Wells at this time; but in an announcement of a benefit the charges for admission are stated at eighteen-pence and half-a-crown, with the addition that the night will be moonlight, and that wine may be obtained at two shillings per bottle.

Twenty years later, we find announced at

Sadler's Wells, 'feats of activity by Signor Nomora and Signora Rossi, and many curious and uncommon equilibres by Le Chevalier des Linges.' In 1771 the rope-dancers here were Ferzi (sometimes spelt Farci) and Garmon, who was, a few years later, a member of the first company formed by the celebrated Philip Astley for the Amphitheatre in the Westminster Road.

The first equestrian performances ever seen in England, other than those of the itinerant exhibitors of performing horses, were given on the site of Dobney's Place, at the back of Penton Street, Islington. It was then a tea-garden and bowling-green, to which one Johnson, who obtained a lease of the premises in 1767, added such performances as then attracted seekers after amusement to Sadler's Wells. One Price, concerning whose antecedents the strictest research has failed to discover any information, gave equestrian performances at this place in 1770, and soon had a rival in one Sampson, who performed similar feats in a field behind the Old Hats.

About the same time, feats of horsemanship were exhibited in Lambeth, in a field near Halfpenny Hatch, which, it may be necessary to

inform our readers, stood where a broad ditch, which then ran through the fields and market gardens now covered by the streets between Westminster Road and Blackfriars Road, was crossed by a swivel bridge. There was a narrow pathway through the fields and gardens, for the privilege of using which a halfpenny was paid to the owners at a cottage near the bridge. In one of these fields Philip Astley—a great name in circus annals—formed his first ring with a rope and some stakes, going round with his hat after each performance to collect the loose halfpence of the admiring spectators.

This remarkable man was born in 1742, at Newcastle-under-Lyme, where his father carried on the business of a cabinet-maker. He received little or no education, and after working a few years with his father, enlisted in a cavalry regiment. His imposing appearance, being over six feet in height, with the proportions of a Hercules, and the voice of a Stentor, attracted attention to him; and his capture of a standard at the battle of Emsdorff made him one of the celebrities of his regiment. While serving in the army, he learned some feats of horsemanship from an itinerant equestrian named Johnson, perhaps the man under whose management Price introduced equestrian

performances at Sadler's Wells,—and often exhibited them for the amusement of his comrades. On his discharge from the army, he was presented by General Elliot with a horse, and thereupon he bought another in Smithfield, and commenced those open-air performances in Lambeth which have already been noticed.

After a time, he built a rude circus upon a piece of ground near Westminster Bridge which had been used as a timber-yard, being the site of the theatre which has been known by his name for nearly a century. Only the seats were roofed over, the ring in which he performed being open to the air. One of his horses, which he had taught to perform a variety of tricks, he soon began to exhibit, at an earlier period of each day, in a large room in Piccadilly, where the entertainment was eked out with conjuring and *ombres Chinoises*—a kind of shadow pantomime.

One of the earliest advertisements of the Surrey side establishment sets forth that the entertainment consisted of 'horsemanship by Mr Astley, Mr Taylor, Signor Markutchy, Miss Vangable, and other transcendent performers,'—a minuet by two horses, 'in a most extraordinary manner,'—a comical musical interlude, called *The Awkward Recruit*, and an 'amazing exhibi-

tion of dancing dogs from France and Italy, and other genteel parts of the globe.'

One of the advertisements of Astley's performances for 1772, one of the very few that can be found of that early date, is as follows:—


'Horsemanship and New Feats of Activity. This and every Evening at six, Mr and Mrs Astley, Mrs Griffiths, Costmethopila, and a young Gentleman, will exhibit several extraordinary feats on one, two, three, and four horses, at the foot of Westminster Bridge.

'These feats of activity are in number upwards of fifty; to which is added the new French piece, the different characters by Mr Astley, Griffiths, Costmethopila, &c. Each will be dressed and mounted on droll horses.

'Between the acts of horsemanship, a young gentleman will exhibit several pleasing heavy balances, particularly this night, with a young Lady nine years old, never performed before in Europe; after which Mr Astley will carry her on his head in a manner quite different from all others. Mrs Astley will likewise perform with two horses in the same manner as she did before their Majesties of England and France, being the only one of her sex that ever had that honour. The doors to be opened at five, and begin at six

o'clock. A commodious gallery, 120 feet long, is fitted up in an elegant manner. Admittance there as usual.

'N.B. Mr Astley will display the broad-sword, also ride on a single horse, with one foot on the saddle, the other on his head, and every other feat which can be exhibited by any other. With an addition of twenty extraordinary feats, such as riding on full speed, with his head on a common pint pot, at the rate of twelve miles an hour, &c.

' To specify the particulars of Mr Astley's performance would fill this side of the paper, therefore please to ask for a bill at the door, and see that the number of fifty feats are performed, Mr Astley having placed them in acts as the performance is exhibited. The amazing little Military Horse, which fires a pistol at the word of command, will this night exhibit upwards of twenty feats in a manner far superior to any other, and meets with the greatest applause.'

An advertisement issued at the close of the season, in 1775, announces 'the last new feats of horsemanship, four persons on three horses, or a journey to Paris; also, the *pynamida* on full speed by Astley, Griffin, and Master Phillips.'

This curious word is probably a misprint for 'pyramids.'

In this year, Richer, the famous harlequin, revived the ladder-dancing feat at Sadler's Wells, where he also joined in the acrobatic performances of Rayner, Garmon, and Huntley, the last being a new addition to the *troupe*. Other 'feats of activity' were performed by the Sigols, and Ferzi and others exhibited their evolutions on the tight-rope. The same names appear in the advertisements of the following year, when rivals appeared in vaulting and tight-rope dancing at Marylebone Gardens.

'As Mr Astley's celebrated new performances at Westminster Bridge draws near to a conclusion,' says one of the great equestrian's advertisements of 1776, 'it is humbly requested the present opportunity may not escape the notice of the ladies and gentlemen. Perhaps such another exhibition is not to be found in Europe. To the several entertainments of the riding-school is added, the Grand Temple of Minerva, acknowledged by all ranks of people to be extremely beautiful. The curtain of the Temple to ascend at five o'clock, and descend at six, at which time the grand display will be made in a capital manner, consisting of rope-vaulting on full swing,

with many new pleasing additions of horsemanship, both serious and comic; various feats of activity and comic tumbling, the learned little horse, the Roman battle, *le force d'Hercule*, or the Egyptian pyramids, an entertainment never seen in England; with a variety of other performances extremely entertaining. The doors to be opened at five, and begin at six precisely. Admittance in the gallery 2s., the riding school 1s. A price by no means adequate to the evening's diversion.'

Having saved some money out of the proceeds of these performances, Astley erected the Amphitheatre, which, in its early years, resembled the present circus in Holborn more than the building subsequently identified with the equestrian triumphs of Ducrow. Chinese shadows were still found attractive, it seems, for they constitute the first item in one of the programmes of 1780, in which year the Amphitheatre was opened. Then came feats of horsemanship by Griffin, Jones, and Miller, the clown to the ring being Burt. Tumbling — 'acrobatics' had not been extracted from the Greek dictionary in those days — by Nevit, Porter, Dawson, and Garmon followed; and it is worthy of remark that none of the circus performers of the last century seem

to have deemed it expedient to Italianize their names, or to assume fanciful appellations, such as the Olympian Brothers, or the Marvels of Peru. After the tumbling, the feat of riding two and three horses at the same time was exhibited, the performer modestly concealing his name, which was probably Philip Astley. Next came 'slack-rope vaulting in full swing, in different attitudes,' tricks on chairs and ladders, a burlesque equestrian act by the clown, and, lastly, 'the amazing performance of men piled upon men, or the Egyptian pyramid.'

About the same time that the Amphitheatre was opened, the Royal Circus, which afterwards became the Surrey Theatre, was erected in Blackfriar's Road by the elder Dibdin and an equestrian named Hughes, who is described as a man of fine appearance and immense strength. The place being unlicensed, the lessees had to close it in the midst of success; but a license was obtained, and it was re-opened in March, 1783. Burlettas were here combined with equestrian performances, and for some time a spirited competition with Astley's was maintained. The advertisements of the Circus are as curious for their grammar and strange sprinkling of capitals as for their personal allusions. A few specimens

culled from the newspapers of the period are subjoined :—

No. 1.—‘The celebrated Sobieska Clementina and Mr Hughes on Horseback will end on Monday next, the 4th of October; until then they will display the whole of their Performances, which are allowed, by those who know best, to be the completest of the kind in Europe. Hughes humbly thanks the Nobility, &c., for the honour of their support, and also acquaints them his Antagonist has caught a bad cold so near to Westminster bridge, and for his recovery is gone to a warmer Climate, which is Bath in Somersetshire. He boasts, poor Fellow, no more of activity, and is now turned Conjuror, in the character of ‘Sieur the Great.’ Therefore Hughes is unrivalled, and will perform his surprising feats accordingly at his Horse Academy, until the above Day. The Doors to be opened at Four o’clock, and Mounts at half-past precisely. H. has a commodious Room, eighty feet long. N. B. Sobieska rides on one, two, and three horses, being the only one of her Sex that ever performed on one, two, and three.’

No. 2.—‘Hughes has the honour to inform the Nobility, &c., that he has no intention of setting out every day to France for three following Sea-

sons, his Ambition being fully satisfied by the applause he has received from Foreign Gentlemen who come over the Sea to See him. Clementina and Miss Huntly ride one, two, and three horses at full speed, and takes Leaps surprising. A little Lady, only Eight Years old, rides Two Horses at full gallop by herself, without the assistance of any one to hold her on. Enough to put any one in fits to see her. H. will engage to ride in Twenty Attitudes that never were before attempted; in particular, he will introduce his Horse of Knowledge, being the only wise animal in the Metropolis. A Sailor in full gallop to Portsmouth, without a bit of Bridle or Saddle. The Maccaroni Tailor riding to Paris for new Fashions. This being Mr Pottinger's night, he will speak a Prologue adapted to the noble art of Riding, and an Epilogue also suited to Extraordinary Leaps. Tickets (2s.) to be had of Mr Wheble, bookseller, Paternoster-row, and at H.'s Riding School. Mounts half-past four.'

No. 3.—'Hughes, with the celebrated Sobieska Clementina, the famous Miss Huntly, and an astonishing Young Gentleman (son of a Person of Quality), will exhibit at Blackfriars-road more Extraordinary things than ever yet witnessed,

such as leaping over a Horse forty times without stopping between the springs—Leaps the Bar standing on the Saddle with his Back to the Horse's Tail, and, *Vice-Versa*, Rides at full speed with his right Foot on the Saddle, and his left Toe in his Mouth, two surprising Feet. Mrs Hughes takes a fly and fires a Pistol—rides at full speed standing on Pint Pots—mounts pot by pot, higher still, to the terror of all who see her. H. carries a lady at full speed over his head—surprising! The young gentleman will recite verses of his own making, and act Mark Antony, between the leaps. Clementina every night—a commodious room for the nobility.'

The excitement of apparent danger was evidently as much an element of the popular interest in circus performances a century ago as at the present day.

Colonel West, to whom the ground on which the circus was erected belonged, became a partner in the enterprise, and invested a large amount in it. On his death the concern became very much embarrassed, and struggled for several years with a load of debt. Hughes was succeeded as manager by Grimaldi, a Portuguese, the grandfather of the famous clown whom some of us remember at Covent Garden; and Grimaldi, in

1780, by Delpini, an Italian buffo singer, under whose management the novel spectacle of a stag-hunt was introduced in the arena.

Sadler's Wells continued to give the usual entertainment, the advertisements of 1780 announcing 'a great variety of singing, dancing, tumbling, posturing, rope-dancing,' &c., by the usual very capital performers, and others, more particularly tumbling by Rayner, Tully, Huntley, Garmon, and Grainger, 'pleasing and surprising feats of strength and agility' by Richer and Baptiste, and their pupils, and tight-rope dancing by Richer, Baptiste, and Signora Mariana, varied during a portion of the season by the last-named *artiste's* 'new and extraordinary performance on the slack wire, particularly a curious display of two flags, and a pleasing trick with a hoop and three glasses of wine.'

Astley's soon became a popular place of amusement for all classes. Horace Walpole, writing to Lord Stafford, says:—

'London, at this time of the year [September], is as nauseous a drug as any in an apothecary's shop. I could find nothing at all to do, and so went to Astley's, which, indeed, was much beyond my expectation. I do not wonder any longer that Darius was chosen King by the

instructions he gave to his horse; nor that Caligula made his Consul. Astley can make his dance minuets and hornpipes. But I shall not have even Astley now: Her Majesty the Queen of France, who has as much taste as Caligula, has sent for the whole of the *dramatis personæ* to Paris.'

Among the expedients to which Astley occasionally had recourse for the purpose of drawing a great concourse of people to the Surrey side of the Thames was a balloon ascent, an attraction frequently had recourse to in after times at Vauxhall, the Surrey Gardens, Cremorne, the Crystal Palace, and other places of popular resort. The balloon was despatched from St George's Fields on the 12th of March, 1784, 'in the presence,' says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 'of a greater number of spectators than were, perhaps, ever assembled together on any occasion;' and he adds that, 'many of the spectators will have reason to remember it; for a more ample harvest for the pickpockets never was presented. Some noblemen and gentlemen lost their watches, and many their purses. The balloon, launched about half-past one in the afternoon, was found at Faversham.' This ascent took place within two months after that of the

Montgolfiere balloon at Lyons, and was, therefore, probably the first ever attempted in this country; while, by a strange coincidence, the first aerostatic experiment ever made in Scotland was made on the same day that Astley's ascended, but about an hour later, from Heriot's Gardens, Edinburgh.

Horace Walpole writes, in allusion to a subsequent balloon ascent, and the excitement which it created in the public mind,—

'I doubt it has put young Astley's nose out of joint, who went to Paris lately under their Queen's protection, and expected to be Prime Minister, though he only ventured his neck by dancing a minuet on three horses at full gallop, and really in that attitude has as much grace as the Apollo Belvedere.' The fame of the Astleys receives further illustration from a remark of Johnson's, that 'Whitfield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does: he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley to preach a sermon standing on his head, or on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear him; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that.'

The earliest displayed advertisement of Ast-

ley's which I have been able to discover, is as follows, which appeared in 1788 :

ASTLEY'S AMPHITHEATRE, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

YOUNG ASTLEY'S

SURPRISING EQUESTRIAN EXERCISES.

In the intervals

A NEW WAR ENTERTAINMENT,

In which will be introduced a SINGLE COMBAT with the BROADSWORD between YOUNG ASTLEY, as a British Sailor, and MR J. TAYLOR, as a Savage Chief; after which a General Engagement between British Sailors and Savages. The Scenery, Machinery, Songs, Dances, and Dresses, adapted to the manners of the different Countries.

TUMBLING .

By a most capital Group.

A NEW COMIC DANCE, CALLED

THE GERMAN CHASSEURS,

With New Music, Dresses, &c.

A MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT, CALLED

THE INVITATION.

The Songs and Choruses, together with the Dresses, entirely new.

A GRAND ENTRY OF HORSES.

A MINUET DANCE BY TWO HORSES,

And other extraordinary performances by the
Horses.

A New Comic Dance, called

THE ETHIOPIAN FESTIVAL,

In which will be introduced a New Pas de
Trois, never performed in London, Composed by
Mons. Vermigli, *Eleve de l'Opera*, and danced by
him, Mr Marqui, and Mr J. Taylor, represent-
ing the whimsical Actions and Attitudes made
use of by the Negroes. After which a Pas de
Deux, composed by Mons. Ferrer, and danced
by him and Mad. Fuzzi, in the character of an
Indian Prince and Princess. The Music and
Dresses entirely new.

A New favourite Song, by MR JOHANNOT, Called

Bow-wow-wow.

HORSEMANSHIP.

AND OTHER EXERCISES,

By Master Crossman, Mr Jenkins, Mr Lons-
dale, Mr J. Taylor, and Miss Vangabel; Clown,
Mr Miller.

The whole to conclude with a New Entertain-

ment of Singing, Dancing, and Dumb-Shew to Speaking Music, called the

MAGIC WORLD.

In which will be introduced, behind a large transparent Painting, representing the enchanted World, a variety of Magical, Pantomimical, Farcical, Tragical, Comic Deceptions; together with a grand Procession of Caricature Figures, displaying a variety of whimsical Devices in a manner entirely New.

Doors to be opened at half-past Five, and to begin precisely at half-past Six.

BOXES 3s.—PIT 2s.—GALL. 1s.—

SIDE GALL. 6d.

I found this advertisement, and the following one, which was issued in the same year, but at a later period, in a collection of similar literary curiosities purchased at the sale of the effects of the late Mr Lacey, the well-known theatrical bookseller, of the Strand.

THIS EVENING, will be presented at

ASTLEY'S,

An entire new pantomimic Dance, called

THE HUMOURS OF GIL BLAS

(A Parody)

As performed with applause at the Theatres on the Boulevards, Paris.

Gil Blas, *Mr Jenkins*—His Father, *Mr Henley*—Uncle, *Mr Lonsdale*—Servant, *Mr Bell*—Flash the Spaniard, *Mr Ferrere*—Mungo, his Servant, *Master Collet*—Doctor, *Mr Fox*—Maria (fat Cook), *Mr Connell*—Spanish Lady, *Mrs Stevens*—Gil Blas Mother, *Mrs Henley*—Post Boy, *Master Crossman*—Captain of the Banditti, *Mr Johannot*—Lieutenant, *Mr Fox*—Signal Man, *Mr De Castro*—Spy, *Mr Millard*—Captain of the Cavern, *Mr Wallack*.

The Rest of the Banditti, by the Remainder of the Company. Dancers, *Mons. Vermigli*, *Madame Ferrere*, and *Mademoiselle Meziere*.

To conclude with

A SPANISH FAIR,

In which will be introduced a multiplicity of Drolls, Shews, &c., with a surprising Real Gigantic Spanish Pig, measuring from head to tail 12 feet, and 12 hands high, weighing 12 cwt., which will be rode by a Monkey.

HORSEMANSHIP

By YOUNG ASTLEY, and other Capital

Performers.

A Musical Piece, called
 THE DIAMOND RING:
 Or, THE JEW OUTWITTED.

Israel, *Mr De Castro* — Harry, *Mr Millard* —
 Feignlove, *Mr Fox* — Maid, *Mrs Wallack* — Lucy
 Feignlove, *Mrs Henley*.

TUMBLING

By Mr Lonsdale, Mr Jenkins, Mr Bell, Master
 Crossman, Master Jenkinson, Master Collet, and
 others.

A favourite Dance, composed by Mons. Vermigli,
 (*Eleve de l'Opera*) called

THE SPORTS OF THE VILLAGE.

A Musical Piece, called
 THE BLACK AND WHITE MILLINERS.

Tiffany, *Mr Connell* — Myrtle, *Mr Wallack* —
 Timewell, *Mr Miller* — Doctor Spruce, *Mr Fox* —
 Sprightly, *Mr Johannot* — Nancy, *Mrs Wallack* —
 Fanny, *Mrs Wigley* — Mrs Tiffany, *Mrs Henley*.

The whole to conclude with a Pantomime, called

THE MAGIC WORLD,

In which will be introduced behind a large trans-

parent Painting, representing the enchanted World, a variety of magical, pantomimical, farcical, tragical, comic Deceptions, together with a Grand Procession of Caricature Figures, displaying a variety of whimsical Devices, with the Emblems of the Inhabitants of the Four Quarters of the Globe, in a Manner entirely New.

To finish with

THE GIBRALTAR CHARGER:

Surrounded by a Chain of Fire.

Equestrianism does not make a very important figure in the announcements of the Royal Circus at this period, which simply inform the public that 'the performances will commence with horsemanship by Mr Hughes and his unrivalled pupils.' The programme was chiefly musical, and concluded with a pantomime, in which Rayner, the acrobat, from Sadler's Wells, sustained the part of Harlequin. At the latter place of amusement, charges ranging from a shilling to three shillings and sixpence were now made for admission, and the performances, other than music and dancing, consisted of posturing by a boy called the Infant Hercules, and tight-rope dancing by Madame Romaine, another female *artiste*

known as *La Belle Espagnole*, and two lads, one of whom was a son of Richer, the other known as the Little Devil. Grimaldi the Second, son of the manager of the Royal Circus, and father of the famous Joey Grimaldi, was clown at this establishment for many years, commencing, it is said, at the munificent salary of three shillings per week, which was gradually raised until, in 1794, we find him receiving four pounds per week.

I cannot better conclude this chapter than with the following strictures upon the places of amusement to which it chiefly relates, culled from a newspaper of 1788:—

‘If the objections which are made to permitting the present existing theatres or places of public amusement to continue arises from a principle of morality, which indeed is the only plea of opposition which can be alleged, it is somewhat strange that the only exception should be made in favour of Sadler’s Wells, at which *alone*, it is worthy of remark, a man may if he chooses get drunk. A pint of liquor is included in the price of admittance, but as much more may be had as any person chooses to call for. The heat of the place is a great inducement, and we believe many *females* have from that cause drank more than has let them depart in their sober senses, the consequences of which are obvious.

This is not permitted at Astley's, the Circus, or the Royalty.'

The last-mentioned place of amusement was a Variety Theatre, in Wells Street, Goodman's Fields, which had risen out of the New Wells, and gave entertainments similar to those of Sadler's Wells and the Royal Circus.

CHAPTER II.

Fortunes of the Royal Circus—Destruction of Astley's Amphitheatre by Fire—Its Reconstruction—Second Conflagration—Astley in Paris—Burning of the Royal Circus—Erection of the Olympic Pavilion—Hengler, the Rope-dancer—Astley's Horses—Dancing Horses—The Trick Horse, Billy—Abraham Saunders—John Astley and William Davis—Death of Philip Astley—Vauxhall Gardens—Andrew Ducrow—John Clarke—Barrymore's Season at Astley's—Hippo-dramatic Spectacles—The first Circus Camel.

FOR nearly forty years after the opening of Astley's Amphitheatre, the performances did not differ, in any respect, from the usual entertainment of the smallest tenting company now travelling. The earliest bill of the collection in the library of the British Museum was issued in 1791, when the great attraction of the place appears to have been the somersault over twelve horses, called *le grand saut du Trampoline*, of James Lawrence, whose vaulting feats gained him the name (in the bills) of the Great Devil.

In 1792, the entertainments comprised a con-

siderable musical element, and concluded with a pantomime. One of the advertisements of this year announces the performances in the arena as follows:—

‘Horsemanship, and exercises for the Light Dragoons—Ground and lofty tumbling—A grand entry of horses—Equestrian exercises, particularly the metamorphose of the sack—Wonderful equilibres on a single horse—Whimsical piece of horsemanship, called *The Taylor riding to Brentford.*’

Sadler’s Wells continued to vary its programme with tumbling and rope-dancing, and in 1792 gave ‘a pleasing exhibition of strength and posture-work, entirely new, called *Le Tableau Chinois*, by Signor Bologna and his children, in which will be displayed a variety of curious and striking manœuvres. Tight-rope dancing by the Little Devil and Master Bologna, with the comic accompaniment of Signor Pietro Bologna.’

From the Royal Circus announcements of the following year, I select the following two, as good illustrations of the kind of performances then given, and curious examples of circus bills eighty years ago:—

ROYAL CIRCUS.

The Company at the CIRCUS beg leave to acquaint the Nobility, Gentry, and Public, that

young CROSSMAN will appear this-present Evening, August 7, on HORSEBACK, and challenge all the Horsemen in Europe.

FRICAPEE DANCING, VAULTING, TIGHT-ROPE

DANCING, PYRAMIDS, GROUND AND

LOFTY TUMBLING, &c. &c. &c.

The performance will commence with a Grand Entry of Horses, mounted by the Troop. Young CROSSMAN's unparalleled Peasant Hornpipe, and Hag Dance, not to be equalled by any Horseman in this Kingdom.

LE GRAND SAUT DE TRAMPOLINE by Mr PORTER, (Clown) who will jump over a garter 15 feet from the ground, and fire off two Pistols.

THE MUSICAL CHILD, (only nine years of age) will go through his wonderful Performance. Mr SMITH will go through a variety of Performances on a Single Horse.

THE HUMOURS OF THE SACK,

OR, THE CLOWN DECEIVED BY A WOMAN.

FRICASSEE DANCE,

By Mr CROSSMAN and Mr PORTER.

Mr INGHAM (from Dublin) will throw an innumerable Row of Flipflaps.

Mr CROSSMAN will vault over the Horse backwards and forwards, with his Legs Tied, in a manner not to be equalled by any Performer in this Kingdom.

GROUND AND LOFTY TUMBLING,

by the whole Troop.

The AFRICAN will go through his astonishing Stage and Equestrian Performances.

LA FORCE DE HERCULES :

Or, THE RUINS OF TROY.

Mr PORTER will perform on a single Horse, in a ludicrous manner.

Young CROSSMAN will leap from a single Horse over Two Garters, 12 feet high, and alight again on the Saddle, and Play the Violin in various Attitudes.

THE TAYLOR'S DISASTER,

Or, his Wonderful Journey to Brentford,

By MR PORTER.

To conclude with a REAL FOX and STAG CHASE, by twelve couple of Hounds, and two real FOXES, and a real STAG HUNT, as performed before their Majesties.

Crossman, it will be seen, had transferred his services from Astley's to the rival establishment,

where he must have been an acquisition of some importance. The Ducrow mentioned in the second bill, must have been the father of the celebrated equestrian of that name.

CHANGE OF PERFORMANCES.

THE WINDSOR HUNT.

This and every Evening, until further Notice,
at the

ROYAL CIRCUS,

In which will be introduced a Representation of

THE DEER CARRIAGE AND STAG,

With Horsemen and Women coming out of Holyport Mead to see the Stag turned out; the Hunt will be then joined by Ten Male and Three Female Equestrians. The Stag will be Twice, and the Horsemen and Horsewomen Five Times, in FULL VIEW.

AN ENTIRE NEW DANCE, CALLED
THE CROATIAN MERCHANTS,

Composed by MONS. FERRERE. Principal Dancers, *Mons. Ferrere, Madame Ferrere, Mons. D'Equille,* and *Signora Fuzi*, with Six Couple of Figurants. The Dresses and Decorations entirely New, by Mr RISLEBEN.

YOUNG CROSSMAN

Will appear this and every Evening on HORSEBACK, and challenge all the Horsemen in Europe.

TIGHT-ROPE DANCING,

By the celebrated SAXONI, from Rome.

PYRAMIDS, GROUND and LOFTY TUMBLING, &c.

The Grand Leaps over SEVEN HORSES.

Also, through the HOOP on FIRE, fourteen feet high, by MR PORTER and MR DUCROW. The former will leap over more Horses than any Man in Europe.

MR FRANKLIN'S inimitable Performances with

THE CHILD OF PROMISE,

In various attitudes. Playing on the violin, &c., MR SMITH, MR INGHAM, MR PORTER, MR DUCROW, MR MEREDITH, MR ALLERS, MR JONES, MR BENGE, MR QUIN, MR FRANCIS, and

THE FAMOUS AFRICAN,

(Who is not to be equalled) will go through the TILTS and TOURNAMENTS, and MILITARY EXERCISES, as performed on HORSEBACK, in the FIELD and MANAGE.

To which will be added,

THE TAYLOR'S DISASTER!

AND FOX HUNT.

By the above Male and Female Equestrians.

The performances at Sadler's Wells this year included 'a series of varied equilibres and posture-work, called *Le Tableau Chinois*, by Signor Bologna and his children,' and 'a capital display of agility on the tight-rope by the inimitable Mr Richer, from Petersburgh; also the pleasing exertions of *La Belle Espagnole*.' There does not appear to have been many changes in the programme of this establishment, which in the following year presented 'a new and picturesque exhibition, called the Pastimes of Pekin, or Kien Quang's Family Tree; in which will be displayed, by a group of ten capital performers, under the direction of the Great Kien Quang, a variety of entertainments and active manœuvres, *a la Chinois*, with banners, garlands, and umbrellas;' and 'the pleasing and varied exertions of Messrs Bologna and *La Belle Espagnole*.'

Astley's Amphitheatre was destroyed by fire in 1794, to the serious loss of the proprietor, who was not insured; but such was his indomitable energy and enterprise that it was rebuilt in time to be opened on Easter Monday, in the following year. In the mean while, in order to keep his company

and stud employed, he had converted the Lyceum into a circus, in conjunction with a partner named Handy.

The Royal Circus was far from prosperous. The load of debt upon it kept the lessees in a position of constant difficulty and embarrassment, and in 1795 Mrs West levied an execution on the premises. It was then opened by Jones and Cross, the latter a writer of spectacles and pantomimes for Covent Garden; and in their hands it remained until it was destroyed by fire in 1805.

Handy was still Astley's partner in 1796, when the advertisements announce 'thirty-five new acts by Astley's and Handy's riders, and two surprising females,' in addition to pony races, the performances of a clever little pony, only thirty inches in height, a performance on two ropes, and a novel act by a performer named Carr, who stood on his head in the centre of a globe, and ascended thirty feet 'turning round in a most surprising manner, like a boy's top.' Later advertisements of this year describe the Amphitheatre as 'under the patronage of the Duke of York,' and announce the special engagement of two Catawba Indians—both chiefs, of course, as American Indians and Arabs who appear in the arena always are represented to be. These copper-coloured gentlemen gave their war

dance and tomahawk exercise, and performed feats of dexterity with bows and arrows. The only mention of equestrianism at this time is, that 'various equestrian and other exercises' will be given 'by pupils of both the Astleys.'

Sadler's Wells gave this year 'various elegant and admired exercises on the tight-rope, by the inimitable Mr Richer and *La Belle Espagnole*, particularly Richer's astonishing leap over the two garters, with various feats of agility and comic accompaniment by Dubois.' This establishment and the Royalty gradually abandoned entertainments of this kind, and were at length converted into theatres; and the like change was effected at the Royal Circus, or rather at the building which rose upon the ruins made by the conflagration of 1805.

Astley's was burned again in 1803, when Mrs Woodhams, the mother of Mrs Astley, perished in the flames. Astley was again a heavy sufferer, the insurance not covering more than a fourth of the damage; but once more the building rose from its ruins, and it was again re-opened in 1804. Astley being occupied at the time with the construction of a circus in Paris, since known as Franconi's, the new Amphitheatre was leased by him to his son, John Astley, with whom William Davis soon became associated as a partner.

In 1805, the Royal Circus having been destroyed by fire, Philip Astley leased the site of the Olympic Theatre from Lord Craven for a term of sixty-one years, at a yearly rental of one hundred pounds, with the stipulation that two thousand five hundred pounds should be expended in the erection of a theatre. It was an odd-shaped piece of ground, and required some contrivance to adapt it to the purpose; but Astley, who was his own architect and surveyor, and indeed his own builder, for he is said to have employed the workmen he required without the intervention of a master, overcame all difficulties with his usual energy and fertility of resource.

He bought the timbers of an old man-of-war, captured from the French, and with these built the framework of the theatre, a portion of which could, it was said, be seen at the rear of the boxes of the old Olympic Theatre before it was destroyed by fire. There was very little brickwork, the frame being covered externally with sheet iron, and internally with canvas. The arrangements of the auditorium were very similar to those of the provincial circuses of the present day; there was a single tier of boxes, a pit running round the circle, and a gallery behind, separated from the pit by a grating, which caused the 'gods' to be likened to the wild beasts in Cross's menagerie, Exeter

Change. There was no orchestra, but a few musicians sat in a stage box on each side. The chandelier was a present from the king. The building was licensed for music, dancing, and equestrian performances, and called the Olympic Pavilion. It passed in 1812 into the possession of Elliston, who purchased it, with the remaining term of the lease, for two thousand eight hundred pounds and an annuity of twenty pounds contingent on the continuance of the license. The annuity soon ceased to be payable, for Elliston opened the theatre for burlettas and musical farces in 1813, and it was closed a few weeks afterwards by order of the Lord Chamberlain, on the ground that the license had been granted on the supposition that the theatre was to be used for the same kind of entertainment as had been given by Astley, and only during the same portion of the year.

The Amphitheatre continued to be conducted in the same manner as it had been when in the hands of the proprietor, and brought before the public a succession of clever equestrians, tumblers, and rope-dancers. In a bill of 1807 we first meet with the name of Hengler, its then owner being a performer of some celebrity on the tight-rope. The travelling circuses which were springing into existence at this time, both in England and on the continent, furnished

the lessees with a constant succession of *artistes*; and the admirably trained horses fairly divided the attention of the public with the biped performers.

Philip Astley was the best breaker and trainer of horses then living. He bought his horses in Smithfield, seldom giving more than five pounds for one, and selecting them for their docility, without regard to symmetry or colour. He seems to have been the first equestrian who taught horses to dance, the animals going through the figure, and stepping in time to the music. One of his horses, called Billy, would lift a kettle off a fire, and arrange the tea equipage for company, in a manner which elicited rounds of applause. He was a very playful animal, and would play with Astley and the grooms like a kitten. His owner was once induced to lend him for a week or two to Abraham Saunders, who had been brought up by Astley, and was at that time, as well as at many other times, involved in pecuniary difficulties. While Billy was in the possession of Saunders, he was seized for debt, with the borrower's own stud, and sold before his owner could be communicated with. Two of Astley's company, happening shortly afterwards to be perambulating the streets of the metropolis, were surprised to see Billy harnessed to a cart. They could scarcely be-

lieve their eyes, but could doubt no longer when the animal, on receiving a signal to which he was accustomed, pricked up his ears, and began to caper and curvet in a manner seldom seen out of the circle. His new owner was found in a public-house, and was not unwilling to part with him, as Billy, 'though a main good-tempered creature,' as he told the equestrians, 'is so full o' all manner of tricks that we calls him the Mountebank.'

Saunders, at this time a prisoner for debt in the now demolished Fleet Prison, was well known as a showman and equestrian for three quarters of a century. Many who remember him as the proprietor of a travelling circus, visiting the fairs throughout the south of England, are not aware that he once had a lease of the old Royalty Theatre, and that in 1808 he opened, as a circus, the concert-rooms afterwards known as the Queen's Theatre, now the Prince of Wales's. After experiencing many vicissitudes, he fell in his old age into poverty, owing to two heavy losses, namely, by the burning of the Royalty Theatre, and by the drowning of fifteen horses at sea, the vessel in which they were being transported being wrecked in a storm. In his latter years, he was the proprietor of a penny 'gaff' at Haggerstone, and, being prosecuted for keeping it, drove to Worship Street police-court in a box-on

wheels, drawn by a Shetland pony, and presented himself before the magistrate in a garment made of a bearskin. He was then in his ninetieth year, and died two years afterwards, in a miserable lodging in Mill Street, Lambeth Walk.

There is a story told of Astley, by way of illustration of his ignorance of music, which, if true, would show that the Amphitheatre boasted an orchestra even in these early years of its existence. The nature of the story requires us to suppose that the orchestral performers were then engaged for the first time; and, as we are told by Fitzball that the occasion was the rehearsal of a hippo-dramatic spectacle, it seems probable that there is some mistake, and that the anecdote should be associated with Ducrow, instead of with his precursor, no performances of that kind having been given at the Amphitheatre in Astley's time. But Fitzball may have been in error as to the occasion. As the story goes, Astley, on some of the musicians suspending their performances, demanded the reason.

'It is a rest,' returned the leader.

'Let them go on, then,' said the equestrian. 'I pay them to play, not to rest.'

Presently a chromatic passage occurred.

'What do you call that?' demanded Astley.

'Have you all got the stomach-ache?'

‘It is a chromatic passage,’ rejoined the leader, with a smile.

‘Rheumatic passage?’ said Astley, not comprehending the term. ‘It is in your arm, I suppose; but I hope you’ll get rid of it before you play with the people in front.’

‘You misunderstand me, Mr Astley,’ returned the leader. ‘It is a chromatic passage; all the instruments have to run up the passage.’

‘The devil they do!’ exclaimed Astley. ‘Then I hope they’ll soon run back again, or the audience will think they are running away.’

Hitherto the quadrupeds whose docility and intelligence rendered them available for the entertainment of the public had been limited to the circle; but in 1811 the example was set at Covent Garden of introducing horses, elephants, and camels on the stage. This was done in the grand cavalcade in *Bluebeard*, the first representation of which was attended with a singular accident. A trap gave way under the camel ridden by an actor named Gallot, who saved his own neck or limbs from dislocation or fracture, by throwing himself off as the animal sank down. He was unhurt, but the camel was so much injured by the fall that it died before it could be extricated. The elephant, though docile enough, could not be induced to go upon the stage

until one of the ladies of the ballet, who had become familiar with the animal during the rehearsals, led it on by one of its ears. This went so well with the audience, that the young lady repeated the performance at every representation of the spectacle.

Philip Astley died in Paris, at the ripe age of seventy-two, in 1814,—the year in which the celebrated Ducrow made his first appearance on the stage as Eloi, the dumb boy, in the *The Forest of Bondy*. The Amphitheatre was conducted, after the death of its founder, by his son, John Astley, in conjunction with Davis; but not without opposition. The Surrey had ceased to present equestrian performances under the management of Elliston; but in 1815, on his lease expiring, it was taken by Dunn, Heywood, and Branscomb, who were encouraged by the success of Astley to convert it into a circus. The experiment was not, however, a successful one.

In the following year, Vauxhall Gardens assumed the form and character by which they were known to the present generation; and the celebrated Madame Saqui was engaged for a tight-rope performance, in which she had long been famous in Paris. She was then in her thirty-second year, and even then far from prepossessing, her masculine cast of countenance and development of muscle giving her the appearance of a little man, rather

than of the attractive young women we are accustomed to see on the *corde elastique* in this country. Her performance created a great sensation, however, and she was re-engaged for the two following seasons. She mounted the rope at midnight, in a dress glistening with tinsel and spangles, and wearing a nodding plume of ostrich feathers on her head; and became the centre of attraction for the thousands who congregated to behold her ascent from the gallery, under the brilliant illumination of the fireworks that rained their myriads of sparks around her.

Andrew Ducrow, who now came into notice, was born in Southwark, in 1793, in which year his father, Peter Ducrow, who was a native of Bruges, appeared at Astley's as the Flemish Hercules, in a performance of feats of strength. Andrew was as famous in his youthful days as a pantomimist as he subsequently became as an equestrian, and was the originator of the *poses plastiques*, the performance in which he first attracted attention, and which was at that time a novel feature of circus entertainments, being a series of studies of classical statuary on the back of a horse. He appeared at the Amphitheatre during only one season, however, leaving England shortly afterwards, accompanied by several members of his family, to fulfil en-

agements on the continent. The first of these was with Blondin's Cirque Olympique, then in Holland. He had at this time only one horse; but, as his gains increased with his fame, he was soon enabled to procure others, until he had as many as six. After performing at several of the principal towns in Belgium and France, he was engaged, with his family and stud, for Franconi's Cirque, where he was the first to introduce the equestrian pageant termed an *entrée*. There he exhibited his double acts of Cupid and Zephyr, Red Riding Hood, &c., in which he was accompanied by his sister, a child of three or four years old, whose performances were at that time unequalled.

Simultaneously with the rise of Ducrow, the well-known names of Clarke and Bradbury appear in circus records. When Barrymore, the lessee of the Coburg Theatre (now the Victoria), opened Astley's in the autumn of 1819 for a limited winter season, his company was joined by John Clarke, fresh from saw-dust triumphs at Liverpool, and Bradbury, who was the first representative on the equestrian stage of Dick Turpin, the renowned highwayman, whose famous ride to York had not then been related by Ainsworth, but was preserved in the six-penny books, with folding coloured plates, which constituted the favourite reading of boys fifty years

ago. Clarke's little daughter, only five years of age, made her appearance on the tight-rope in the following year, when Madame Saqui re-appeared at Vauxhall, and was one of the principal attractions of that season.

John Astley survived his father only a few years, dying in 1821, on the same day of the year, in the same house, and in the same room, as his more famous progenitor. After his death the Amphitheatre was conducted for a few years by Davis alone; and by him hippo-dramatic spectacles, the production of which afterwards made Ducrow so famous, and which greatly extended the popularity of Astley's; were first introduced there. Davis also signalized his management by the introduction of a camel on the stage for the first time in a circus, the occasion being the production of the romantic spectacle of *Alexander the Great and Thalestris the Amazon*.

In the circle a constant variety of attractive, and often novel, feats of horsemanship and gymnastics continued to be presented. All through the season of 1821 the great attraction in the circle was the graceful riding of a young lady named Bannister—probably the daughter of the circus proprietor of that name, whose name we shall presently meet with, and who had, shortly before that time, fallen into difficulties. During the following season the

public were attracted by the novel and sensational performance of Jean Bellinck on the flying rope, stretched across the pit at an altitude of nearly a hundred feet, according to the bills, in which a little exaggeration was probably indulged. The great attraction of 1823 was Longuemare's ascent of a rope from the stage to the gallery, amidst fireworks, which had been the sensation of the preceding season at Vauxhall Gardens, where, at the same time, Ramo Samee, the renowned Indian juggler, made his first appearance in this country.

CHAPTER III.

Ducrow at Covent Garden—Engagement at Astley's—Double Acts in the circle—Ducrow at Manchester—Rapid Act on Six Horses—'Raphael's Dream'—Miss Woolford—Cross's performing Elephant—O'Donnel's Antipodean Feats—First year of Ducrow and West—Henry Adams—Ducrow at Hull—The Wild Horse of the Ukraine—Ducrow at Sheffield—Travelling Circuses—An Entrée at Holloway's—Wild's Show—Constantine, the Posturer—Circus Horses—Tenting at Fairs—The Mountebanks.

WHEN Elliston produced the spectacle of the *Cataract of the Ganges* at Drury Lane Theatre, in 1823, Bunn, who was then lessee of Covent Garden Theatre, was induced by its success to engage Ducrow, who made his first appearance at that theatre on Easter Monday, 1824, in the lyrical and spectacular drama of *Cortez*. Davis, fearing a rival in the famous equestrian, offered him an engagement at Astley's, where he soon became the chief attraction.

The double act of Cupid and Zephyr, now represented by himself and his wife, was received with as much applause as it had elicited at Franconi's;

and a perfect *furore* was created when he appeared on two bare-back horses, as an Indian hunter. Cline's rope-walking feats varied the programme of the circle in 1826, and in the following year Ducrow, having first given the performance with immense success at Manchester, introduced his great feat, then unparalleled, of riding six horses at the same time, in his rapid act as a Russian courier.

Fresh novelties were produced in 1828, the most attractive being the equestrian act called 'Raphael's Dream,' in which Ducrow reproduced, on horseback, the finest conceptions of the sculptors of ancient Greece, receiving immense applause at every exhibition. Miss Woolford and George Cooke made their first appearance at Astley's in this year, in a double performance on the tight-rope, in which the former *artiste* was for a long time without a rival. Aptitude for this exhibition seems, as in other branches of circus business, to be hereditary; and a Miss Woolford may have been found as a tight-rope performer in some circus or other any time within the last half-century. I remember seeing a tight-rope performer of this name in a little show which attended the July fair at Croydon about thirty years ago.

Ducrow's stud was engaged this year for Vauxhall Gardens, where the hippo-dramatic spectacle of

The Battle of Waterloo was revived, and proved as attractive as it had been some years previously at Astley's. The year 1828 is also memorable for the first introduction of an elephant into the arena, a colossal performing animal of that genus being brought, with its keeper, from Cross's menagerie, which many readers, even old residents in the metropolis, may require to be informed had its location on the site of what afterwards became Exeter Arcade, in the rear of the houses on the north side of the Strand, between Exeter Street and Catherine Street. The elephant was also led in the bridal procession which constituted one of the displays of the quadrupedal resources of the establishment in the spectacular drama of *Bluebeard*.

In travelling over the records of saw-dust performances, we are frequently reminded of the saying of the wise monarch of Israel, that there is no new thing under the sun. The bills of Astley's, the advertisements of the Royal Circus and the Olympic Pavilion, the traditions of travelling circuses, present us with the originals of almost every feat that the acrobats and posturers of the present day have ever attempted. Ducrow, it has been seen, was the originator of the *poses plastiques*, revived and made famous a quarter of a century ago by Madame Wharton and troupe, at the Walhalla, in Leicester Square,

and subsequently by Harry Boleno, the clown, at the Alhambra. Another instance comes under notice in 1829, when a performer named O'Donnel exhibited at Astley's the antipodean feats performed a few years ago at the London Pavilion, and other music-halls, by Jean Bond. O'Donnel mounted a ladder, stood on his head on the top of one of the uprights, kicked away the other, with all its rungs, and in that position drank a glass of wine, and performed several tricks. The kicking away of the unfixed portion of the ladder invariably creates a sensation among the spectators, but adds nothing to the difficulty or danger of the performance.

On the lease of the Amphitheatre expiring in 1830, the owner of the premises raised the rent so much that Davis relinquished the undertaking. Ducrow, who possessed much of the energy and enterprise by which Philip Astley had been distinguished, saw his opportunity at once, and, obtaining a partner in William West, took the lease on the terms which his less enterprising predecessor had shrunk from. He produced a gorgeous Eastern spectacle, and engaged Stickney and young Bridges for the circle. Stickney was an admirable equestrian, the first of the many famous riders who have learned their art on the other side of the Atlantic, where he had already

achieved a considerable reputation. Bridges was a rope-dancer, and gained great applause by turning a somersault on the rope, a feat which he appears to have been the first to perform. Later in the season, Henry Adams (the father of Charles Adams) made his appearance as a performer of rapid acts of equitation, the travelling circus which he had lately owned having passed into the possession of his late groom, John Milton.

During the portion of this year when Astley's was closed, Ducrow and his company, bipeds and quadrupeds, performed for a short time at Hull. Returning to the metropolis, he opened the Amphitheatre for the season of 1831 with the spectacular drama of *Mazeppa*, the only enduring performance of the kind with which Astley's was for so many years associated. Most of them, elaborately as they were got up,—for Ducrow never spared expense,—and attractive as they proved at the time of their production, owed their popularity to recent military events; but the fortunes of the daring youth immortalized by the genius of Byron, and the headlong flight of the wild horse of the Ukraine, have proved an unfailing source of attraction, and made *Mazeppa* the trump-card of every hippo-dramatic manager who possesses or can borrow a white horse qualified to enact the part of the 'fiery, untamed steed' upon

whose bare back the hero is borne into the steppes of the Don Cossack country.

Adams and Stickney continued to attract in the circle, but Ducrow engaged in addition an acrobatic performer named Williams, who turned tourbillions at the height of twelve feet from the ground, and repeated them through hoops at the same height, over a tilted waggon, over eight horses, and, finally, over a troop of mounted cavalry. The famous performing elephant, Mdlle Jeck, also made its appearance during this season. When the Amphitheatre closed, Ducrow took his company and stud to Sheffield, where he had had an immense structure of a temporary character erected for their performances. He ruined the prospect of a successful provincial season, however, by indulgence of his overbearing disposition, which manifested itself on all occasions, in and out of the arena. The Master Cutler and Town Council determined to patronize the circus officially, and appeared at the head of a cortege of between forty and fifty carriages, containing the principal manufacturers and their families. But, on the Master Cutler sending his card to Ducrow, in the anticipation of being personally received, Ducrow replied, through one of his subordinates, that he only waited upon crowned heads, and not upon a set of dirty knife-

grinders. The astounded and indignant chief magistrate immediately ordered his coachman to turn about, and the entire cavalcade returned to the Town Hall, where a ball was improvised, instead of the intended visit to the circus. Thus Ducrow's prospects in the hardware borough were ruined by his own hasty temper and overbearing disposition.

It is now time to say a few words about the travelling circuses that had been springing into existence during the preceding fifteen or sixteen years, and some of which have already been mentioned. The northern and midland counties were travelled at this time by Holloway's, Milton's, Wild's, and Bannister's; the eastern, southern, and western by Saunders's, Cooke's, Samwell's, and Clarke's. We find Holloway in possession of the circus at Sheffield after its vacation by Ducrow. Wallett, who first comes into observation about this time, was one of Holloway's clowns, and also did posturing, and played Simkin in saw-dust ballets. He states, in his autobiography, that they opened with a powerful company and a numerous stud; but it seems that there were not a dozen of the troupe, including grooms, who could ride. The first item in the programme for the opening night was an *entrée* of twelve, five of whom were thrown off their horses before the round of the circle had been made, one of them having

Wallett, William Jacobson, James Wilson,
 1st. June 26th 1812

three of his fingers broken. The horses do not appear to have been in fault, for they continued their progress as steadily as if nothing had happened. Wallett accounts for this untoward incident by stating that the dismounted cavaliers were clowns and acrobats, and that few members of those sections of the profession can ride; but, considering that grooms could have been made available, a 'powerful company' should have been able to mount twelve horses for an *entrée* without putting into the saddle men who could not ride.

James Wild's show was a small concern, combining a drama, à la *Richardson*, with the performances of a tight-rope dancer and a fortune-telling pony. Wallett, who had made his first appearance before the public as a 'super' at the theatre of his native town, Hull, when Ducrow was there, and had afterwards clowned on the outside of Charles Yeoman's Royal Pavilion at Gainsborough fair, joined Wild's show at Leeds, but soon transferred his talent to a rival establishment. Both shows were soon afterwards at Keighley fair, for which occasion Wild had engaged four acrobats from London, named Constantine, Heng, Morris, and Whitton. The popularity of Ducrow's representations of Grecian statuary had induced Constantine to study them, and having provided himself with

the requisite properties, he exhibited them very successfully in Wild's show.

The proprietor of the rival establishment was in agony, for his loudest braying through a speaking-trumpet, and the wildest beating of his gong, did not avail to stop the rush to Wild's which left the front of his own show deserted. Wallett ruminated over the situation, and at night sought Constantine, and made overtures to him for the purchase of his tights and 'props.' The acrobat entertained them,—perhaps the bargain was very liberally wetted,—and Wallett became the triumphant possessor of the means of personating Ajax and Achilles, and all the gods and heroes of Homer's classic pages. Next day, the show in which he was engaged was crowded to see him 'do the Grecian statues,' while Wild's was deserted, Constantine dejected, and his employer despairing.

Bannister's circus travelled Scotland and the northern counties of England, and it is a noteworthy point in his history that David Roberts was engaged by its proprietor as scene painter when he added a stage and a company of pantomimists to the attractions of the ring. This was in 1817, when the circus was located in Edinburgh, and the future R.A. had just completed his apprenticeship to a house-painter. Roberts says, in his diary, that he could

néver forget the tremor he felt, the faintness that came over him, when he ascended to the second floor of the house in Nicholson Street in which Bannister lodged, and, after much hesitation, mustered courage to ring the bell. Bannister received him very kindly, looked at his drawings, and engaged him to paint a set of wings for a palace. The canvas was brought, and laid down on the floor, and Roberts began to work there and then. At the close of the circus season, he was engaged at a salary of twenty-five shillings a week to travel with the company into England, paint all the scenery and properties that might be required, and make himself generally useful. Roberts says that he found that the last clause of the contract involved the necessity of taking small parts in pantomimes, which, he says, he rather over-did than under-did. His circus experiences were brief, however, for Bannister became bankrupt before long, and Roberts betook himself to house-painting again until he was engaged by Corri to paint scenery for the Pantheon, at Edinburgh. It may be remarked that he received no higher salary from Corri than from Bannister, and did not reach thirty shillings a week until he was engaged as scene-painter to the theatre at Glasgow.

The tenting circuses of those days were on a

more limited scale than those of the present time, and were met with chiefly at fairs. They had seldom more than three or four horses, of which perhaps only two appeared in the circle. Their proprietors were not so regardless of colour as Philip Astley was, and favoured cream-coloured, pied, and spotted horses. While the acrobats performed 'flips' and hand springs, and the clown cracked his 'wheezes,' on the outside, while the proprietor beat his gong, or bawled through a speaking-trumpet his invitations to the spectators to 'walk up,' the horses stood in a row on the platform; and when the proprietor shouted 'all in, to begin!' the animals were led or ridden down the steps in front, and taken round to the entrance at the side, whence they emerged on the conclusion of the performance, to ascend the steps, and resume their position on the platform. The performances were short, consisting of two or three acts of horsemanship, some tumbling, and a tight-rope performance; but they were repeated from noon till near midnight as often as the seats could be filled.

Even in the palmy days of fairs, the vicissitudes of showmen were a marked feature of their lives, owing, in part at least, to their dependence upon the weather for success, and the variability of the English climate. A wet fair was a serious matter

for them, and the October fair at Croydon, one of the best in the south, seldom passed over without rain, which sometimes reduced the field to such a state of quagmire that hurdles had to be laid down upon the mud for the pleasure-seekers to walk upon. Saunders, as we have seen, was seldom out of difficulties; and Clarke had not always even a tent, but pitched his ring in a field, or on a common, in the open air, after the manner of Philip Astley and his predecessors, Price and Sampson, in the early days of equestrian performances. He did not, however, make a collection—called in the slang of the profession, ‘doing a nob,’—but made his gains by the sale, at a shilling each, of tickets for a kind of ‘lucky-bag’ speculation among the spectators whom the performances attracted to the spot. Sometimes additional *éclat* would be given to the event by the announcement that a greasy pole would be climbed by competitors for the leg of mutton affixed to the top, or a piece of printed cotton would be offered as a prize for the winner in a race, for which only girls were allowed to enter. Then, while the equestrian of the company enacted the Drunken Hussar, or the Sailor’s Return, or Billy Button’s ride to Brentford, the acrobats would walk round with the tickets; or the equestrian would condescend to do so, while the Polish Brothers tied themselves up in knots, or

wriggled between the rungs of a ladder, or Miss Clarke delighted the spectators by her graceful movements upon the tight-rope. The business concluded with the drawing for prizes, which were few in proportion to the blanks, and consisted of plated tea-pots and milk jugs, work-boxes, japanned tea-trays, silk handkerchiefs, &c. This kind of entertainment was given within the last forty years; but Clarke was then an old man, and with his death the race of the mountebanks, as they were popularly called, became extinct.

The last section of a mock Act of Parliament published about this time gives a good idea of the clown's business five-and-thirty years ago, and affords the means of comparing the circus wit and humour of that period with the laughter-provocatives of the Merrymans of the present day. It runs as follows :—

' And be it further enacted, that when the scenes in the circus commence, the Merriman, Grotesque, or Clown shall not, after the first equestrian feat, exclaim, " Now I'll have a turn to myself," previous to his toppling like a coach-wheel round the ring; nor shall he fall flat on his face, and then collecting some saw-dust in his hands drop it down from the level of his head, and say his nose bleeds; nor shall he attempt to make the rope-dancer's balance-pole

stand on its end by propping it up with the said saw-dust ; nor shall he, after chalking the performer's shoes, conclude by chalking his own nose, to prevent his foot from slipping when he treads on it ; nor shall he take long pieces of striped cloth for Mr Stickney to jump over, while his horse goes under ; previous to which he shall not pull the groom off the stool, who holds the other end of the same cloth, neither shall he find any difficulty in holding it at the proper level ; nor, after having held it higher and lower, shall he ask, " Will that do ? " and, on being answered in the affirmative, he shall not jump down, and put his hands in his pockets, saying, " I'm glad of it ; " nor shall he pick up a small piece of straw, for fear he should fall over it, and afterwards balance the said straw on his chin as he runs about. Neither shall the Master of the Ring say to the Merriman, Grotesque, or Clown, when they are leaving the circus, " I never follow the fool, sir ; " nor shall the fool reply, " Then I do, ' and walk out after him ; nor, moreover, shall the Clown say that " the horses are as clever as the barber who shaved bald magpies at twopence a dozen ; " nor tell the groom in the red jacket and top boots, when he takes the said horses away, to " rub them well down with cabbage-puddings, for fear they should get the collywobbleums in their pandenoodles ; " such

speeches being manifestly very absurd and incomprehensible.

‘*Saving always*, that the divers ladies and gentlemen, young ladies and young gentlemen, maid-servants, apprentices, and little boys, who patronise the theatre, should see no reason why the above alterations should be made; under which circumstances, they had better remain as they are.’

CHAPTER IV.

A few words about Menageries—George Wombwell—The Lion Baitings at Warwick—Atkins's Lion and Tigress at Astley's—A Bull-fight and a Zebra Hunt—Ducrow at the Pavilion—The Stud at Drury Lane—Letter from Wooler to Elliston—Ducrow and the Drury 'Supers'—Zebras on the Stage—The first Arab Troupe—Contention between Ducrow and Clarkson Stanfield—Deaths of John Ducrow and Madame Ducrow—Miss Woolfórd.

CIRCUSES and menageries are now so frequently associated, and the inmates of the latter have at all times been so frequently brought into connection with the former, that it becomes desirable, at this stage of the record, to say a few words about the zoological collections of former times. Without going back to the formation of the royal menagerie in the Tower of London in the thirteenth century, it may be stated that, when that appendage of regal state was abolished, most of the animals were purchased by an enterprising speculator named Cross, who located them at Exeter Change. The want of sufficient space there subsequently induced Cross to

remove the collection to the site afterwards known as the Surrey Gardens, where, under the more favourable conditions as to space, light, and air afforded by that locality, it long rivalled that of the Royal Zoological Society, which had, in the mean time, grown up on the north side of Regent's Park.

The travelling menageries probably grew, on a small scale, side by side, as it were, with the royal collection at the Tower, until they developed into such exhibitions as, half a century ago, travelled from fair to fair, in company with Richardson's and Gygell's theatres, Cooke's and Samwell's circuses, Algar's dancing booth, and the pig-faced lady. Wombwell's menagerie was formed about 1805, and Atkins's must have begun travelling soon afterwards. These two shows were for many years among the chief attractions of the great fairs, in the days when fairs were annual red-letter days in the calendar of the young, and even the upper classes of society did not deem it beneath their dignity to patronize the itinerant menagerie and the tenting circus.

'Wombwell's,' said the reporter of a London morning journal, about three years ago, by way of introducing a report of the sale of Fairgrievés's menagerie, 'had its great show traditions; for its founder was a showman of no ordinary enter-

prise and skill. He built up the menagerie, so to speak, and he made it by far the finest travelling collection of wild animals in the country. His heart was in his work, and he spared nothing that could help it forward. Tales of his enterprise are many. He never missed Bartlemy fair as long as it was held; once, however, he was very near doing so. His show was at Newcastle within a fortnight of Bartlemy's, and there were no railways. He had given up all intention of going to the fair; but, being in London buying specimens, he found that his rival—a man named Atkins—was advertising that his would be the only wild beast show at the fair.

‘Forthwith Wombwell posted down to Newcastle, struck his tent, and began to move southward. By dint of extraordinary exertions he reached London on the morning of the fair. But a terrible loss was his. The one elephant in the collection—a fine brute—had so over-exerted itself on the journey that it died just as it arrived at the fair. Atkins thought to make capital of this, and placarded at once that he had “the only live elephant in the fair.” Wombwell saw his chance, and had a huge canvas painted, bearing the words that within his show was to be seen “the only dead elephant in the fair.” There never was a greater success; a live elephant was not a great rarity, but the chance of

seeing a dead elephant came only once now and then. Atkins's was deserted; Wombwell's was crowded.'

It is not easy to reconcile the keen rivalry between the two shows which this story is intended to illustrate with the fact that they never visited Croydon fair together, but always agreed to take that popular resort in their tours in alternate years. The story may be true, or it may be as apocryphal as that of the lion and dog fights with which the readers of another London morning journal were entertained three months previously, when the tragical incident of the death of the lion-tamer, Macarthy, had invested leonine matters with more than ordinary interest.

'Did you ever hear of old Wallace's fight with the dogs?' an ex-lion-tamer was reported as having said to the gentleman by whom the conversation was communicated to the journal.

'George Wombwell was at very low water, and not knowing how to get his head up again, he thought of a fight between an old lion he had sometimes called Wallace, sometimes Nero, and a dozen of mastiff dogs. Wallace was tame as a sheep—I knew him well—I wish all lions were like him. The prices of admission ranged from a guinea up to five guineas, and had the menagerie been three times as

large it would have been full. It was a queer go, and no mistake! Sometimes the old lion would scratch a lump out of a dog, and sometimes the dogs would make as if they were going to worry the old lion, but neither side showed any serious fight; and at length the patience of the audience got exhausted and they went away in disgust. George's excuse was, "We can't make 'em fight, can we, if they won't?" There was no getting over this; and George cleared over two thousand pounds by the night's work.'

In this account two different animals are confounded; the old lion, whose name was Nero, and a younger, but full-grown one, named Wallace. The blunder is strange and unaccountable in one who professes to have known the animals and their keeper, and renders it probable that he is altogether in error about the fight he describes. The newspapers and sporting magazines of the period—about fifty years ago—describe two lion-baitings, which took place in Wombwell's menagerie in the Old Factory Yard, at Warwick; and some vague report or dim recollection of them seems to have been in the mind of the 'ex-lion-king,' when he dictated the graphic narrative for the morning journal. The fights were said to have originated in a bet between two sporting gentlemen, and the dogs

were not mastiffs, but bull-dogs. The first fight, the incidents of which were similar in character to those described by the 'ex-lion-king,' was between Nero and the dogs; and, this not being considered satisfactory, a second encounter was arranged, in which Wallace was substituted for the old lion, with very different results. Every dog that faced the lion was killed or disabled, the last that did so being carried about in the lion's mouth as a rat is by a terrier or a cat.

I may add, that I have a perfect recollection of both the lions, having made their acquaintance at Croydon fair when a very small boy. I remember the excitement which was once created amongst the visitors to that fair by Wombwell's announcement that he had on exhibition that most wonderful animal, the 'bonassus,' being the first specimen which had ever been brought to Europe. As no one had ever seen, heard, or read of such an animal before, the curious flocked in crowds to see the beast, which proved to be a very fine male specimen of the bison, or American buffalo. Under the name given to it by Wombwell, it found its way into the epilogue of the Westminster play as one of the wonders of the day. It was afterwards purchased by the Zoological Society; but it had been enfeebled by confinement and disease, and died soon after its removal to the

Society's gardens in the Regent's Park. The Hudson's Bay Company supplied its place by presenting a young cow, which lived there for many years.

Atkins had a very fine collection of the feline genus, and was famous for the production of hybrids between the lion and the tigress. The cubs so produced united some of the external characteristics of both parents, their colour being tawny, marked while they were young with dark stripes, such as may be observed in the fur of black kittens, the progeny of a tabby cat. These markings disappeared, however, as they do in the cat, as the lion-tigers attained maturity, at which time the males had the mane entirely deficient, or very little developed. I remember seeing a male puma and a leopardess in the same cage in this menagerie, but am unable to state whether the union was fruitful.

Atkins's lion and tigress, with their playful cubs, were engaged by Ducrow and West as one of the attractions of the season of 1832, and were introduced to the frequenters of Astley's by their keeper, Winney. A zebra hunt was also exhibited in the circle, in which four zebras appeared; and with this novel spectacle was combined, on the occasion of Ducrow's benefit, a mimic representation of a Spanish bull-fight, in which the great equestrian

enacted the part of the matador. When a similar exhibition was got up, many years afterwards, at the Alhambra, during the time when it was temporarily converted into a circus, a horse was trained to wear the horns and hide of an ox, and do duty for Toro ; and, though I have not been able to verify the fact, this was probably the case at Astley's.

It was during this season that Ducrow had the honour of performing before William IV., who ordered a temporary amphitheatre to be erected within the grounds of the Pavilion at Brighton, in order that he might witness the performances of this celebrated equestrian, which included several of his most admired feats of horsemanship.

In the following year the bull-fight was repeated, and the zebras re-appeared in the spectacle of *Aladdin*. After the Amphitheatre was closed the stud appeared at Drury Lane, instead of going into the provinces ; and this arrangement between Elliston and the lessees of Astley's was repeated in more than one season. Elliston's biographer relates that when the stud was engaged for Croly's *Enchanted Courser*, the horses and their grooms were at the stage door of Drury Lane Theatre, at the time fixed for the first rehearsal, but there was no one to direct the important share which they were to take in the performance. A note was sent to Ducrow, who

replied that his agreement with Elliston only related to the horses. This was found to be correct, though undoubtedly an oversight on the part of Elliston, the Drury Lane manager, who had to make a second agreement with Ducrow for his personal services in superintending the training of the horses, and the general arrangement of the scenes in which they were to be introduced.

The introduction of horses on the stage of Drury Lane was the subject of a letter to Elliston from Thomas Wooler, of *Yellow Dwarf* fame, from which the following passages are extracted, as bearing upon the long subsequent production of *Richard III.* at Astley's, while under the management of William Cooke.

‘What think you of mounting Shakespeare's heroes, as the bard himself would rejoice they should be? Why not allow the wand of Ducrow to aid the representation of his dramas, as well as the pencil of Stanfield? “Saddle White Surrey” in good earnest, and, as from The Surrey you once banished these animals, and have taken them up at Drury Lane, think of doing them justice. I fancy your giving up the circle in St George's Fields, and bringing your stable into a Theatre Royal, a little inconsistent; but no matter, it is done, and reminds me of a friend of mine, who swept away his poultry-

yard from his suitable villa at Fulham, and yet kept cocks and hens in Fleet Street.

‘But to return; instead of niggardly furnishing Richard and Richmond with armies that do not muster the force of a serjeant’s guard, give them an efficient force of horse and foot. Your two-legged actors would be in arms against this project, but disregard their jealousy, and remember that four to two are two to one in your favour. Richard should march to the field in the full panoply of all your cavalry, and not trudge like a poor pedlar, whom no one would dream of “interrupting in his expedition.” He might impressively dismount in compliment to the ladies; and when in the field he cries, “My kingdom for a horse!” the audience might fairly deem such a price only a fair offer for the recovery of so noble an animal. The audience would wish Hotspur to manage his roan as well as his lady, and though amongst your spectators there might be perhaps a grey mare, yet she would be content that Hotspur should be the “better horse” for her night’s amusement.’

What Walleth says of the absence of a good seat on horseback from the list of the qualifications of clowns and acrobats is true of actors, and in a greater degree, in the sense, I mean, that is attached to riding by professional entertainers of the public.

The number of actors who can ride at all is comparatively small; and among those who can, and who make a decent figure in Rotten Row, there are probably not two who would venture to gallop across a stage, and much less to take part in an equestrian combat or joust. Hence it is only in the arena of a circus that Richmond wins his crown as he did at Bosworth; and, though horses were again introduced on the stage of Drury Lane in the drama of *Rebecca*, they were not ridden by the actors whose names appeared in the bills. The horses belonged to a circus company, and were ridden by the practised equestrians accustomed to bestride them—‘doubles’ of the Knight of Ivanhoe and Sir Brian Bois-Guilbert.

When Bernard’s hippo-dramatic spectacle of *St George and the Dragon* was produced at Drury Lane, under the superintendence of Ducrow, who had acquired great experience in the arrangement of equestrian cavalcades, pageants, and tableaux, there was a great deal of trouble with the supernumeraries, who were not accustomed to doing their business in the manner expected from them by so accomplished a pantomimist as the lessee of Astley’s. While the scene was being rehearsed in which the people appear excitedly before the Egyptian king, with the news of the devastation and dismay caused

by the dragon, the 'supers' exhausted Ducrow's not very large stock of patience, and, after making them go through their business two or three times, without any improvement, his temper burst out, in his characteristic manner.

'Look here, you damned fools!' he exclaimed. 'You should rush up to the King,—that chap there—and say, "Old fellow, the dragon has come, and we are in a mess, and you must get us out of it." The King says, "Go to Brougham," and you all go off to Brougham; and he says, "What the devil do I know about the dragon? Go to your gods," and your gods is that lump of tow burning on that block of timber.'

This strange address was accompanied by an exhibition of the pantomimic skill of which Ducrow possessed a greater degree than any man of his day, and which was intended to impress the subordinate actors and supernumeraries of the theatre with a correct idea of the manner in which their business should be performed.

This was Ducrow's manner on all occasions. One morning, during the season of 1833, he was on the stage, in his dressing-gown and slippers, to witness the first rehearsal of a new feat by the German rope-walker, Cline. The rope was stretched from the stage to the gallery, and the performer

was to ascend it, and return. Cline was a little nervous; perhaps the rope had been arranged more in accordance with Ducrow's ideas than with his own. Whatever the cause, he hesitated to ascend the rope, when Ducrow snatched the balancing-pole from his hands, and walked up the rope in his slippers, his dressing-gown flapping about his legs in the draught from the stage in a manner that caused his ascent to be watched with no small amount of anxiety, though he did not appear to feel the slightest trepidation himself.

The special attractions in the circle during the season of 1834 were the Vintner family, who presented a novel performance on two and three ropes, with double and single ascensions, which had been much applauded the year before at Franconi's; and a troupe of Arab vaulters and acrobats, who seem to have been the first of their race who had visited Europe in that capacity. On the conclusion of the season at Astley's, the stud went again to Drury Lane, where Pocock's spectacle of *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table* was produced. The production of this piece was the occasion of an unfortunate contention between Ducrow and Clarkson Stanfield, who was then scene-painter to Drury Lane. The scenic artist had painted a beautiful view of Carlisle, which he wished to be seen by the

spectators before their attention was diverted from it by the entry of Arthur and his knights. Ducrow crowded the stage with men and horses, and wished the curtain to rise upon this animated spectacle—knights caracoling, banners waving, trumpets blaring, people shouting their welcome. Bunn sided with Ducrow, and Stanfield retired from his post, mortified and offended.

Queen Adelaide witnessed the performance of this spectacle, as she had that of the preceding season, and was so much gratified that she ordered a hundred pounds to be distributed among the company. Count D'Orsay was so pleased with it, that he presented Ducrow with a gold and ivory-mounted dirk, and a pair of pistols inlaid with gold, which had been worn by Lord Byron, and presented by him to the Count.

Henry Adams was again a prominent member of Ducrow's company in 1835, when he appeared in the circle as the Mexican lasso-thrower, a part which he performed with great dexterity. In the following year, the Vintners and the Arabs were found a source of undiminished attraction, but were joined with Price, called the Bounding Ball, who exhibited the then unparalleled feat of throwing thirty somersaults.

John Ducrow, brother of the renowned equestrian,

who had been the principal clown of the Amphitheatre during the preceding ten years, died in 1834; and Andrew Ducrow's first wife, the companion of his early triumphs, died about two years afterwards. Widdicomb, who had been ring-master of the establishment for many years, died the same year, at the age of sixty-seven. Ducrow subsequently married Miss Woolford, who had for several years been one of the leading attractions of his establishment, and various members of whose family helped to supply the travelling circuses with equestrians and tight-rope performers for a long period.

CHAPTER V.

Lions and Lion-tamers—Manchester Jack—Van Amburgh—Carter's Feats—What is a Tiger?—Lion-driving and Tiger-fighting—Van Amburgh and the Duke of Wellington—Vaulting Competition between Price and North—Burning of the Amphitheatre—Death of Ducrow—Equestrian Performances at the Surrey Theatre—Travelling Circuses—Wells and Miller—Thomas Cooke—Van Amburgh—Edwin Hughes—William Batty—Pablo Fanque.

HE must have been a bold man who first undertook to tame and train a lion. It has been jocosely remarked that he must have been a courageous man who first ventured to eat an oyster; but a very different degree of courage must have been possessed by the man who first ventured upon familiarities with the tawny monarch of the African forests. The distinction is attributed to Hanno, the Carthaginian general; but the first public exhibition of trained lions was given in the Amphitheatre at Rome, where Mark Antony, seated in a car, with a lady by his side, drove a pair of lions round the arena. But we must come down to

modern times for the first exhibition of tamed and trained lions and tigers in this country. Van Amburgh is generally credited with the distinction of having been the first lion-tamer of modern times; but I remember seeing, when a very small boy, the keeper of the lions in Wombwell's menagerie enter the cage of a fine old lion, Nero; and sit on the animal's back, open his mouth, &c. As this was more than forty years ago, the performer must have been 'Manchester Jack,' who was enacting the part of 'lion king' in Wombwell's menagerie when Van Amburgh, an American of Dutch descent, arrived in England with his trained lions, tigers, and leopards.

It has been said that arrangements were made for a trial of skill and daring between the American and Manchester Jack, and that it was to have taken place at Southampton, but fell through in consequence of Van Amburgh showing the white feather. The story seems improbable, for Van Amburgh's daring in his performances has never been exceeded.

'Were you ever afraid?' the Duke of Wellington once asked him.

'The first time I am afraid, your Grace,' replied the lion-tamer, 'or that I fancy my pupils are no longer afraid of me, I shall retire from the wild beast line.'

After having been killed in the newspapers half a dozen times, his back broken twice, and his head once bitten off by a tiger, Van did retire, undevoured, and died quietly in his bed about five years ago. Manchester Jack also retired from the profession, and kept an inn at Taunton for many years afterwards, dying in 1865.

Van Amburgh and his trained animals were engaged by Ducrow and West during the season of 1838 at Astley's, and proved a great attraction. Then came Carter, another lion-tamer, who appeared with his animals, in a drama specially written for them, as Afghar, a lion-tamer, in which part he drove a lion in harness and maintained a mimic fight with an animal called in the bills a tiger. I have not been able to ascertain whether this animal was really a tiger, a point upon which doubt arises from the fact of Carter's collection being announced as containing a fine 'Brazilian tiger,' and from the application of the name by travellers and colonists imperfectly acquainted with zoology to every feline animal which is larger than a cat, and does not possess a mane. The beautiful striped animal properly called a tiger has a very circumscribed range, being found only in the hot regions of Asia, south of the Himalayan mountains and east of the Indus. But the South African colonists call the leopard a tiger, and many travellers

in the tropical regions of America speak of the jaguar by that name. Carter's 'Brazilian tiger' was, of course, a jaguar; but his collection *may* have contained a veritable tiger, and it *may* have been the latter animal that he engaged in mimic conflict with on the stage. Tigers are not usually sufficiently docile to be trusted in such performances; but the possibility of their being so trained is proved by the fact that I saw a struggle between a man and a tiger, about five and thirty years ago, in a small show pitched on a piece of waste ground at Norwood. It was a rather tame affair, however, and, coupled with the fact that the tiger was the sole representative of the 'group of trained animals' announced in the bills, caused my boyish disappointment to vent itself, as I passed out of the show, in a remark on the discrepancy between the promise and the performance. 'What can you expect for a penny?' was the rejoinder of the shabby woman who acted as money-taker; and, though I felt that I ought to have seen at least another animal, I passed on, silently wondering how a tiger and several human beings could be fed upon the scanty receipts of a little penny show; for there was a drama produced, the hero of which was an English traveller, who underwent harrowing adventures among savages and wild beasts in Central Africa.

The ex-lion king, whose reminiscences and experiences were recorded three years ago in a London morning journal, computes the number of lions in this country at about fifty; but this seems erroneous, as there were ten in Fairgrieve's menagerie, and probably as many in each of the other two shows into which Wombwell's collection was divided at his death, five in Manders's, and five attached to Sanger's circus, besides those in Hilton's, Day's, and other menageries, Bell and Myers's circus, and the Zoological Gardens of London, Bristol, and Manchester. The greater number of them have been bred in cages.. These are cheaper than the imported lions, but seldom attain so large a size as the latter. Jamrach, of Ratcliffe Highway, is the agent through whom most of the imported lions are procured. He has agents abroad, and also buys from captains and stewards of ships, who sometimes bring home wild animals as a commercial speculation. As I lay claim to no practical knowledge of the business of lion-taming and lion-training, I quote here what the 'ex-lion king' said on the subject two years ago, in preference to writing at random about it.

'The lion-tamer,' we are told, 'likes to get his beasts as young as he can, because then they are more easily brought into order, although, no doubt, there are many instances where a full-grown forest

lion has been trained to high perfection. The lion-tamer begins by taking the feeding of them into his own hands, and so gets them to know him. He commences feeding them from the outside of the den, then ventures inside to one at a time, always carefully keeping his face to the animal, and avoiding any violence, which is a mistake whenever it can be avoided, as it rouses the dormant devil in the beasts. Getting to handle the lion, the tamer begins by stroking him down the back, gradually working up to the head, which he begins to scratch, and the lion, which, like a cat, likes friction, begins to rub his head against the hand. When this familiarity is well established, a board is handed in to the trainer, which he places across the den, and teaches the lion to jump over it, using a whip with a thong, but not for the purpose of punishment. Gradually this board is heightened, the lion jumping over it at every stage; and then come the hoops, &c.; held on the top of the board to quicken the beast's understanding. To teach the animal to jump over the trainer, the latter stoops alongside the board, so that when the lion clears one he clears the other, and half a dozen lessons are ordinarily about sufficient to teach this. To get a lion to lie down, and allow the tamer to stand on him, is more difficult. It is done by flicking the beast over the

back with a small tickling whip, and at the same time pressing him down with one hand. By raising his head, and taking hold of the nostril with the right hand, and the under lip and lower jaw with the left, the lion, by this pressure on the nostril and lip, loses greatly the power of his jaws, so that a man can pull them open, and put his head inside the beast's mouth, the feat with which Van Amburgh's name was so much associated. The only danger is, lest the animal should raise one of its fore-paws, and stick his talons in; and if he does, the tamer must stand fast for 'his life till he has shifted the paw.'

This is a fool-hardy feat, in which a considerable amount of risk is incurred, without exhibiting any intelligence, grace, or docility on the part of the lion. But the concluding bit of advice is noteworthy, as lions and tigers, like cats, sometimes extend their claws without intending any mischief, and many injuries from them might be prevented by presence of mind on the part of the exhibitor.

Stickney re-appeared at Astley's during the season of Van Amburgh and Carter, and the vaulting performances of Price were supplemented by the engagement of an American vaulter named North. Between these two famous vaulters a competition took place in the circle, when the unprece-

dented number of one hundred and twenty somersaults were turned by each man.

Ducrow's stud appeared, for a short season, in the summer of 1841, at Vauxhall Gardens, returning to the Amphitheatre for the winter. His last production was the *Dumb Man of Manchester*, and the performance of the principal character in that drama was one of the most successful efforts as a pantomimist which he ever exhibited. The conflagration by which the Amphitheatre was destroyed for the third time gave such a shock to his system that mental aberration and physical paralysis resulted, and he died on the 27th of January 1842. His remains were interred in Kensal Green cemetery, where the monument erected to his memory is one of the most remarkable objects which arrest the eye of the visitor.

The performers at Astley's, biped and quadruped, found a temporary refuge, after the conflagration, at the Surrey theatre, which, having been originally an amphitheatre, admitted of ready adaptation to circus requirements. The dramatic company being retained, a melo-drama was first presented, and then the orchestra and a portion of the benches of the pit were removed, and a ring formed in its place. During the performance of the scenes in the circle the orchestra and the displaced spectators

occupied seats amphitheatrically arranged on the stage. The original status was then restored and the performances concluded with the popular hippodramatic spectacle of *Mazeppa*.

As the taste for equestrian and acrobatic performances became more widely diffused, amphitheatres were erected at Liverpool by Copeland, and at Bristol, Birmingham, and Sheffield by James Ryan; while the travelling circuses increased yearly in number and repute. Samwell's was still travelling, but the rapid increase of wealth and population in the northern towns, consequent upon the development of manufactures, had induced its proprietor to leave the southern circuit, and pitch his show near the great industrial hives of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

New names are presented to us in Wells and Miller, in whose circus, then located at Wakefield, Wallett first assumed the distinctive designation of 'the Shakspearian Jester.' Tom Barry, afterwards so well known in connection with Astley's, was then clowning in Samwell's circus. Wells and Miller soon dissolved their partnership, and the former started a separate concern, opening a very fine circus at Dewsbury.

Thomas Cocke, after a professional tour in the United States, returned to England and opened at

Hull, afterwards visiting the principal towns in the northern and midland counties. Van Amburgh also, obtaining a partner with capital, started a circus with his performing lions, tigers, and leopards as an adjunct of no inconsiderable attractiveness. One of John Clarke's daughters was his principal *equestrienne*, and he engaged Walleth as clown.

Edwin Hughes brought out one of the largest establishments of the kind which, at that time, had ever been seen; but he could not make headway against William Batty, who now came into notice, and to ample means joined the indomitable energy and enterprise of Astley and Ducrow. We find Batty in 1836 at Nottingham, with a company which included Pablo Fanque, a negro rope-dancer, whose real name was William Darby; Powell and Polaski, for principal equestrians; Mulligan, as head vaulter; and Dewhurst, as chief clown, with capacities for every branch of the profession, being an admirable vaulter and acrobat, and a good rider. The stud was as good as the company, and included a pair of zebras, a wild ass, and an elephant, all of which, with a contempt of local colouring worthy of Ducrow, Batty introduced on the stage in *Mazeppa!*

Batty did not limit his movements to any part of the United Kingdom. In 1838 we find him at Newcastle and Edinburgh, and in 1840 at Ports-

mouth and Southampton. Some changes had been made in the company, of which James Newsome, now proprietor of one of the best of the provincial circuses, Lavater Lee, the vaulter, and Plége, the French rope-dancer, were prominent members. At the time when Astley's was burnt for the third time, Batty's circus was in Dublin, where a good stroke of business had been done. On hearing of the conflagration, Batty started for London by the next steamer, made arrangements for the immediate rebuilding of the Amphitheatre, and returned to Dublin. The receipts were beginning to decline there, and, pending the completion of the new Amphitheatre in Westminster Road, Batty resolved to construct a temporary circus at Oxford. To that city he accordingly proceeded, leaving the circus under the management of Wallett, who, after travelling for several years with Cooke, and two years with Van Amburgh, had joined Batty in Dublin. On the termination of the season in the Irish capital, Wallett took the company and the stud to Liverpool, and, as the circus at Oxford was not yet ready for opening, arranged with Copeland for twelve nights at the Amphitheatre. This engagement, being made without the knowledge and sanction of Batty, caused a warm dispute between the latter and Wallett, which did not, however,

have the immediate effect of terminating the clown's engagement.

Wallett tells a humorous story of Pablo Fanque, with whom he became intimately acquainted, and who used to fish in the Isis. The black was a very successful angler, and would pull the golden chub, the silvery roach, and the bearded barbel out of the river by the dozen when Oxonian disciples of Walton could not get a nibble. One intelligent undergraduate came to the conclusion that the circus man's success must be due to his dusky complexion, and astonished his brothers of the rod by appearing one morning on the bank of the stream with a face suggestive of the surmise that he must have been playing Othello or Zanga at some private theatricals the preceding night, and have gone to bed, as Thornton—well known in the annals of provincial theatres at the beginning of the present century—once did, without wiping the black off. The Oxonian caught no more fish, however, than he had done before.

While Batty's circus was still at Oxford, Pablo Fanque terminated his engagement, and started a circus on his own account. Wallett, always a rolling stone, joined him, and they proceeded to the north together, opening at Wakefield, where, for the present, we must leave them.

CHAPTER VI.

Conversion of the Lambeth Baths into a Circus—Garlick and the Wild Beasts—Batty's Company at the Surrey—White Conduit Gardens—Re-opening of Astley's—Batty's Circus on its Travels—Batty and the Sussex Justices—Equestrianism at the Lyceum—Lions and Lion-tamers at Astley's—Franconi's Circus at Cremorne Gardens—An Elephant on the Tight-rope—The Art of Balancing—Franconi's Company at Drury Lane—Van Amburgh at Astley's—The Black Tiger—Pablo Fanque—Rivalry of Wallett and Barry—Wallett's Circus—Junction with Franconi's.

WHILE waiting for the reconstruction of Astley's, Batty obtained possession of the Lambeth Baths, a spacious building in the immediate vicinity of the Amphitheatre, and converted them, without loss of time, into a circus, which he was enabled to open at the close of November, 1841. Though the process of conversion had been hastily carried out, the accommodation and decorations left little to be desired; and, as Dewhurst, the clown, observed on the opening night, 'it, like a punch-bowl, looked all the better for being full.'

'The performances last night,' said a critic,

'were multifarious. First, there was the phenomenon rider, the volant Mr T. Lee, who, while riding one or more fiery steeds, made "extraordinary and wonderful leaps," as the play-bill says, round the arena, and whose sinewy and symmetrical form, and untiring activity, drew forth the admiration of the audience. The clown, however, thought proper to pass a criticism upon his leg, declaring it was like a bad candle, having more cotton than fat. Next came Herr Ludovic's "celebrated extravaganza of Jim Crow and his granny," in which the old trick of carrying two faces under one hat is ludicrously exemplified. Mr Walker followed, with his wonderful feats on the flying rope and his celebrated *tourbillions*, in which he proved himself to be anything but a walker. He was speedily displaced by M. Leonard, the great French rider, on two fleet steeds, who was miraculously adventurous,—“hazarding contusion of neck and spine.” A group of ponies was then introduced, and delighted the spectators with a variety of amusing and sagacious tricks; they fought, they leaped over poles, and through hoops, they sat down and stood up at command, they wore cocked hats and cloaks, lace caps and mantles, and supped with the clowns on oaten pies, sitting at the table with all proper decorum; they fetched and carried, they played at leap-frog,

they marched, they danced, they walked on their hind legs, they bowed, and they went down on their knees, for here that was an accomplishment, and not a detriment, to any nag.

‘A company of vaulters next performed some daring leaps and threw somersaults *ad infinitum* backwards or forwards, in rapid succession. After this Miss O’Donnell performed some pretty evolutions on horseback. Wonderful feats of “ponderosity” were next displayed by M. Lavater Lee, who balanced a feather and a plank forty feet long with equal dexterity, and by various jugglings frequently placed his physiognomy in jeopardy. These performances being over there came, “for the first time, a novel introduction, replete with new and splendid dresses, properties, and state carriage drawn by four diminutive steeds,” in which the whole juvenile company appeared, entitled *The Little Glass Slipper*. The foundation of this pantomime is old; but it was produced with new faces last night, and elicited loud and universal approbation. Some of the performers were scarcely able to toddle, but the acting of the whole was unique, and deserving of all the praise it received. The dresses and arrangements were superlative in their style and effect. A series of gymnastics and equestrian exhibitions, with a new piece, called *The Wanderers of Hohonor*

and the *Sifans*, wound up the entertainments of the evening, which were interspersed with the witticisms and waggeries of two very clever clowns, one of whom is a good punster, and the other a supple posture-master and a capital performer on—the penny trumpet.’

Early in 1842, the programme was varied by a romantic spectacle called *The Council of Clermont*, devised for the introduction of a group of trained lions, tigers, and leopards, brought from Batty’s menagerie, accompanied by their performer, Garlick. The spectacle comprised a triumphal cavalcade of Frankish warriors, mediæval sports in rejoicing for victory, the tricks of a Greek captive’s horse, and the adventures of the Greek among the wild beasts to whom he is thrown to be devoured. It had a very brief run, however, and was succeeded by the elephant, and subsequently by a tournament, to which was given the anachronical title of *The Eglinton Tournament, or The Lists of Ashby!* Shakspeare, it may be said, has given, as the locality of the scene of an incident in one of his plays, ‘a sea-port in Bohemia;’ but the making the Eglinton tournament take place at Ashby-de-la-Zouch is an anachronism as glaring as the incongruity of elephants and zebras in a Cossack camp.

The Olympic Arena, as Batty’s new circus was

called, was the scene of some feats too remarkable to be omitted from this record. Walker, on one occasion, sustained the weight of six men, and held six cart-wheels suspended, while hanging by the feet from slings; but it must be remarked that he held only two of the wheels with his hands, the others being attached in pairs to his feet, which were secured in the slings, so that the weight fell chiefly upon the rope to which the slings were attached. More remarkable feats were performed by Lavater Lee on his benefit night, when he vaulted over fourteen horses, threw a dozen half-hundred weights over his head, bent backward over a chair, and in that position lifted a bar of iron weighing a hundred pounds, threw a back somersault on a horse going at full speed, and turned twenty-one forward somersaults, without the aid of a spring-board.

Dewhurst, the clown, must be allowed to speak for himself in the bill which he issued for his benefit, and which, as regards his own performances, was as follows:—

‘This is the night to see DEWHURST’S long and LOFTY JUMPS, without the assistance of a spring-board:—1. Over a garter 14 feet high. 2. Over a man standing on a horse lengthways. 3. Through a hoop of fire two feet in diameter. 4. Through a circle of pointed daggers. 5. Over 10 horses. 6.

Through six balloons. 7. Over three horses, one standing on the backs of the other two. And finally, to crown his extraordinary efforts, he will leap through a MILITARY DRUM, and over a REAL POST-CHAISE AND PAIR OF HORSES.

‘During the evening will be introduced several NEW ACTS OF HORSEMANSHIP, during the intervals of which Mr DEWHURST will perform many surprising Feats; amongst the number, he will *tie his body in a complete knot*. After which he will *walk on his hands*, and carry in his mouth *two fifty-six pound weights*; in finis, it will be a GRAND BANQUET NIGHT!! More entertainments than all the Aldermen in London can swallow. Dishes to please Old and Young, Father and Son—Daughter and Mother, Sister and Brother—Fat and Lean, Dirty and Clean—Short and Small, Big and Tall—Wise and Witty, Ugly and Pretty—Good and Bad, Simple or Sad—All may enjoy, and plenty to pick and choose among—Curious Speeches, Mild Observations, Strange Questions, and Ugly Answers—Shakspeare reversed, and Milton with a glass eye—Conundrums, Riddles, Charades, Enigmas, and Problems—With a variety of real Nonsensical Nonsense, too innumerable to mention—hem!

‘Mr DEWHURST will on this night dance an ORIGINAL MOCK CACHOUCA, in a style nothing like

MADAME TAGLIONI. Mr D. will likewise dance the CRACOVIENNE, as originally danced by Mademoiselle FANNY ELSLER, at her Majesty's Theatre, Italian Opera House. He will also *burlesque a favourite dance of MADAME CELESTE*; and conclude with a New Comic Lancashire HORNPIPE IN CLOGS.'

Batty removed his company and stud at Whitsuntide to the Surrey, for a short season, Dewhurst taking another benefit, on which occasion he issued the following characteristic appeal:—

'On this particular occasion Mr Dewhurst's tongue will be placed on a swivel in the centre, and black-leaded at both ends, to bring laughing into fashion.

'I wonder how the people can
 Call me Mr Merryman !
 Worn are my clothes almost out
 By being whipped and knocked about ;
 Torn is my face in twenty places
 By stretching wide to make grimaces.
 My worthy cits,
 Now is it fit
 That you should sit,
 Gallanting it,
 The whole kit,
 In box and pit,
 To see me hit,
 Boxed, cuffed, and smit,
 Sham dead as a nit,
 And laugh at it,
 Till your sides split ?
 There you sit,
 Though requisite

To rack my wit
These rhymes to knit,
Which I have writ
To bring the folks to a house well lit,
To fill the house before we quit,
For a great attraction all admit
Will be on Dewhurst's benefit.'

From the Surrey, Batty and his company removed to White Conduit Gardens, where a temporary circus was erected for the summer season, and in early autumn to the theatre at Brighton. Astley's was re-opened shortly afterwards with a powerful company and a numerous stud of beautiful and well-trained horses. Batty was himself a capital rider; Newsome, his artiled pupil, was already a very promising equestrian; and the company was now joined by the celebrated Stickney, who was a great attraction during several seasons. A bull-fight was one of the special features of the programme of 1842-3, a horse being, as on other occasions when the conflicts of the *Corrida de los Toros* have been represented in the arena, trained to play the part of the bull.

While performing at Brighton, Batty was convicted of having performed a pantomime in a place unlicensed for theatrical performances, whereby he had incurred a penalty of £50 under an Act of the reign of George II., which has been exercised on several occasions to the vexation and loss of the

circus proprietors against whom it has been enforced. Batty appealed against the conviction, and engaged counsel, by whom it was elicited from the witnesses that the dialogue did not exceed fourteen lines, and was merely an introduction to an equestrian and acrobatic entertainment without scenery. It was argued for the appellant that the spectacle which had been represented was neither a pantomime nor a stage play; and that if an entertainment without a stage or scenery was a 'stage play,' the well-known tailor's ride to Brentford was a stage play, and, if dialogue alone made an entertainment a stage play, the clown must not crack jokes with the ring-master, nor Punch appeal to the drummer outside his temple. Counsel reminded the bench that the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction did not extend to the Surrey side of the Thames, and that magistrates had power to grant licenses only at a distance of twenty miles from the metropolis; so that Astley's, the Surrey, the Victoria, and the Bower infringed with impunity the Act under which Batty had been convicted. The conviction was quashed, but the result of the appeal has not prevented other circus proprietors from being similarly molested in other parts of the country.

During the summer of 1843, Batty's company performed in the Victoria Gardens, at Norwich,

where the feats of Masotta, 'the dare-devil rider,' from Franconi's, formed a striking feature of the programme. He was famous for leaping on and off the horse, from side to side, and backward and forward, while the animal was in full career. Plége, the rope-dancer, and Kemp, the pole performer, were also in the company.

On the company and stud returning to Astley's in the autumn, the stirring events of the war in Afghanistan were embodied in one of those patriotic and military spectacles for which the establishment was famous. The national pulse did not beat so ardently at beat of drum and call of trumpet as it had done a quarter of a century before, however, and the run of the piece was proportionately short. It was followed by a spectacular play founded upon incidents connected with the battle of Worcester; a romantic equestrian drama, illustrative of the final struggle between the Spaniards and the Moors; and, towards the close of the season, by the ever-attractive *Mazeppa*.

Young Newsome, who displayed considerable ability as an equestrian pantomimist, was a great attraction in the circle, which now began to be enlivened by the humour of Tom Barry, who continued to be principal clown at this establishment for several years. Among the more remarkable of

the ring performances during this season, other than equestrian, were the feats of one of the Henglers on the *corde volante*, and Kemp's tricks on the 'magic pole.'

Equestrian entertainments were given in 1844, for a short season, at the Lyceum Theatre; and, in the absence of rivalry, attracted good houses. At Astley's, new aspirants to fame and popular favour appeared in Plége, the French rope-dancer, and Germani, a clever equestrian juggler, whose performance seems to have somewhat resembled that given a few years ago at the Holborn Amphitheatre by Agouste, with the difference that Germani performed his feats on the back of a horse. He juggled with balls, oranges, and knives alternately, and then with a marble, which he caught in the neck of a bottle while the horse was in full career.

Carter, the lion-tamer, was also engaged towards the close of the season; and, his re-appearance having shown that the exhibition of trained lions and tigers was still attractive, another of the profession, named White, was engaged by Batty in 1845, with a group of performing lions, tigers, and leopards. White, however, never produced the sensation created by the performances of Van Amburgh and Carter. The equestrianism was a very strong feature of the programme this season, those

accomplished riders, John Bridges and Alfred Cooke, being engaged, while Batty and Newsome were pillars of strength in themselves. Cooke's company appeared this year at the Standard, and was succeeded in the two following years by Tournaire's and Columbia's, but equestrian performances did not attract there.

In 1846, Simpson, host of the Albion Tavern, opposite Drury Lane Theatre, opened Cremorne Gardens, for which he engaged the company and stud of the famous Parisian circus of Franconi.

At Astley's, in this year, Newsome revived Ducrow's feat of riding six horses at once, in an act called the Post-boy of Antwerp; and a German equestrian named Hinné, with his daughter Pauline, were engaged. Young Newsome and Mdlle Hinné sometimes rode together in double acts, and in this manner an acquaintance sprang up between them which, becoming tenderer as it progressed, eventually ripened into marriage.

It was during the season of 1846 that the extraordinary spectacle was witnessed at Astley's of an elephant on the tight-rope. It is not more difficult, however, for an elephant, or any other beast, to balance itself upon a stretched rope than for a man to do so; the real difficulty is in inducing the animal to mount the rope. The art of balancing consists

in the maintenance of the centre of gravity, which, it may be explained, is that point in any body, animate or inanimate, upon or about which it balances itself, or remains in a state of equilibrium in any position. In any regular-shaped body, whether round or angular, provided its density is uniform through all its parts, the centre of gravity is the centre of the body; but in an irregular-shaped body, or a combination of two or more bodies, the centre of gravity is the point at which they balance each other. If we place any regular-shaped body on a table, it will remain stationary, or in a state of rest, provided an imaginary line drawn from its centre of gravity, and passing downward in a direction perpendicular to the table, falls within its base. But, if the centre of gravity is in a part of the body above any part of the table that is outside the base, the object will topple over, and assume some position in which the centre of gravity will be within the base. Take, for example, a five-sided block of wood, and place it upon the table. If the five sides are each of the same superficies, it will stand upon either of them; but if they are unequal, and it is so placed that the centre of gravity is above a part of the table that is outside the face upon which you attempt to make it stand, it will fall down.

There is a little toy which I remember having

seen when a child, and which, as it illustrates the natural law upon which the art of balancing depends, I will here describe. It was made of elder pith, fashioned and coloured into a rough resemblance to the human figure, and weighted with a piece of lead, like the half of a small bullet, which was attached to its feet with glue. The centre of gravity was, consequently, so low that, in whatever position the figure might be placed, it immediately assumed the perpendicular, and could be kept in any other only by holding it. Now, if the feet of a human being were as much heavier than the head and trunk, as the lead in this toy was heavier than the pith, we should never be in any danger of losing our balance; and an infant might be allowed to make its first essay in walking as soon as its legs were strong enough to support it, without being in any danger of a fall. But the head is, in proportion to its bulk, much heavier than the trunk; and the breadth of the trunk considerably exceeds that of the feet, which constitute the base. The balance is, therefore, easily lost; because a stumble throws the centre of gravity beyond the base.

Though the maintenance of the centre of gravity is rendered more difficult in proportion to the height to which it is raised above the base, as my younger readers may have found when constructing a house

of cards, this is not the case when any disturbance of the equilibrium can be counteracted immediately, as in the case of a stick balanced on the tip of the finger. A stick three or four feet long is more easily balanced on the finger than one much shorter, because the tendency to topple over can be counteracted by the movement of the finger in the direction in which it leans, so as to maintain the centre of gravity. Those who make an experiment of this kind for the first time will be apt to find that the balancing of a stick or a broom upon the finger is difficult, owing to the smallness of the base in proportion to the height of the centre of gravity, unless the eyes are directed towards the top. The stick is at rest at the base, and any deviation from the perpendicular must commence at the upper extremity. Keep your eye on the top, and you can balance a scaffold-pole or a ladder, if you can sustain the weight. Whatever difficulty there was in the feat of balancing a ladder, to the top of which a small donkey was attached, as exhibited in my juvenile days by an itinerating performer,—whence the saying, ‘Twopence more, and up goes the donkey!’—was due entirely to the weight of the animal; because, if it was properly attached to the ladder, the centre of gravity would be in precisely the same situation as if the ladder alone had to be balanced.

In the animal world, the centre of gravity is invariably so placed as to produce an exact equilibrium and harmony of parts. Every animal furnished with legs is balanced upon them ; so that in man the centre of gravity is the crown of the head. The reader may test this by leaning forward or laterally, with the arms by the side, and the legs straight, when a tendency to fall will be experienced, which can be counteracted only by extending an arm or a leg in the opposite direction. The art of balancing the body in extraordinary situations, as exemplified in the feats of rope-walkers and gymnasts, depends, therefore, on the same natural law as that which enables us to balance a stick upon the finger. The centre of gravity must be kept perpendicular to the rope or bar, any tendency to sway to the right or left being corrected by the arms, or by the balancing-pole, if preferred, by performers on the rope.

I have dwelt upon this subject a little after the manner of a lecturer, because so many of the feats performed in the arena of a circus depend upon the natural law which I have endeavoured to explain, and many of my readers, who have witnessed them, without being able to account for them, may like to know something of the *rationale*. It may be asked, and the question is a very pertinent one, why do not equestrians fall in performing feats of horsemanship

in a standing position, in which, as the horse careers round the ring, they lean inward? This phenomenon is due to the counterpoise which, in the case of bodies in a state of rapid motion, the centrifugal force presents to the weight of the body.

Centrifugal force, it must be explained, is the tendency which bodies have to fly off in a straight line from motion round a centre; and the power which prevents bodies from flying off, and draws them towards a centre, is called centripetal force. All bodies moving in a circle are constantly acted upon by these opposing forces, as may be seen by attaching one end of a piece of string to a ball, and the other to a stick driven into the ground. If the ball is thrown horizontally, with the string in a state of tension, it will fly round the stick; but, if it becomes disengaged from the string, the centrifugal force, or its tendency to fly off, will cause it to proceed in a straight line from the point at which the separation is effected.

Let us now see how these forces operate in the case of the riders in a circus. The equestrian leans inward so much that, if he were to stand still in that position, he would inevitably fall off the horse; but the centrifugal force, which has a tendency to impel him outward from the circle, or in a straight line of motion, sustains him, and he careers onward safely

and gracefully. The tendency of the centrifugal force to impel him outward is counteracted by the inward leaning, while it forms an invisible support to the overhanging body. It will be observed also that the horse assumes the same counteracting posture; and a horse quickly turning a corner does the same.

Resuming our record of circus performances, we find Pablo Fanque at Astley's in 1847, with a wonderful trained horse, Plége again appearing on the tight-rope, and Le Fort, 'the sprite of the pole,' in a novel and clever gymnastic performance. The political events of which Paris was the scene in the following year caused the managers of Franconi's Cirque to transfer their company and stud to Drury Lane Theatre, so that London had two circuses open at the same time for the first time since the days of Astley and Hughes.

John Powell appeared during this season at Astley's, and an additional attraction was provided in Van Amburgh's trained animals, to which there was now added a black tiger, a rare variety, and one which had never been exhibited in a state of docility before. It was introduced in the drama of the *Wandering Jew*, a story which was then creating a great sensation all over Europe; and Van Amburgh personated the beast-tamer, Morok, through

whose instrumentality the Jesuits endeavour to delay the old soldier, Dagobert, on his journey to Paris, by exposing his horse to the fangs of a ferocious black panther.

It was in this year, it may here be remarked, that Sir Edwin Landseer's great picture of Van Amburgh in the midst of his beasts was exhibited at the Royal Academy, where it attracted as much attention as the originals had done at Astley's.

Pablo Fanque's circus had, in the mean time, moved from Wakefield to Leeds, where a catastrophe occurred which has, unfortunately, had too many parallels in the annals of travelling circuses. On a benefit night in March, 1848, the circus was so crowded that the gallery fell, and Pablo's wife was killed, and Wallett's wife and several other persons were more or less injured. Wallett then joined Ryan's circus, which, however, was on its last legs; bailiffs were in possession, and its declining fortunes were brought to a climax by a 'strike' of the band. At this crisis Wallett had the good fortune to be engaged for Astley's, where a keen rivalry soon ensued between him and Barry, who claimed the choice of acts in the ring, in his exercise of which Wallett was not disposed to acquiesce. Thompson, the manager, took the same view as the latter of the equality of position of the two clowns;

and Barry, in consequence, refused to perform, unless the choice of acts was conceded to him. A very attractive act was in rehearsal at this time, in which John Dale was to appear as an Arab, with a highly-trained horse, and Barry as a rollicking Irishman. As Walleth had attended all the rehearsals he was as capable of taking this part as the other clown was, and, on Barry failing to appear, he was requested by Thompson to take the part which had been assigned to his rival. Walleth complied, and enacted the part of Barney Brallaghan with complete success. Barry thereupon retired, and for many years afterwards kept a public-house in the immediate vicinity of the theatre.

Thompson was succeeded in the management by William Broadfoot, the brother-in-law of Ducrow, whom he resembled very much in disposition and temper. One day, during the rehearsal of a military spectacle, a cannon ball, which was among the stage properties, was thrown at him, which so enraged him that he offered a reward of £2 for information as to the person by whom it had been thrown, the hand which had impelled the missile being unknown at least to himself. There was a fine of ten shillings for practical joking during rehearsals, but the reward left a wide margin for its payment, and tempted Walleth to acknowledge that he was the

offender. Broadfoot paid the reward, and Wallett paid the fine, afterwards expending the balance of thirty shillings in a supper, shared with Ben Crowther, Tom Lee, and Harvey, the dancer.

There was another supper at Astley's which the parties did not find quite so pleasant. Batty produced an equestrian drama called the *Devil's Horse*, in which Wallett had to play a subordinate part, one agreeable incident of which was the eating of a plate of soup. One night, James Harwood, the equestrian actor, intercepted the soup in transit, and refreshed himself with a portion of it, which so enraged Wallett that he broke the plate on the offender's head. By this assault he incurred the penalty of being mulcted of a week's salary, the means of evading which exercised his mind in an unusual degree. The expedient which he hit upon was the borrowing of ten pounds from the treasurer, George Francis, having obtained which he went his way rejoicing. He did not present himself at the treasury on the following Saturday; and Batty, meeting him on Monday morning, inquired the reason of his absence.

'I had no salary to receive,' replied Wallett. 'I had borrowed ten pounds of Mr Francis in the week.'

'Then your fine will be a set off against next week's salary,' observed Batty.

‘Aren’t you aware, sir,’ rejoined Wallett, ‘that the time I was engaged for expired on Saturday night?’

By this stratagem he escaped the payment of the fine; but his engagement was not renewed, and, having saved some money, he started a circus, and opened with it at Yarmouth. Business was very bad there, and he proceeded to Colchester, where part of the circus was blown down by a high wind, and this accident created an impression of insecurity which damaged his prospects in that town beyond repair. At Bury St Edmunds and Leicester he was equally unsuccessful, and determined to proceed northward. Nottingham afforded good houses, but Leeds was a failure, and at Huddersfield the gallery gave way, and the alarm created by the accident deterred persons from venturing into the circus afterwards. Franconi’s company were doing good business at Manchester, in the Free Trade Hall, at this time; and Wallett, after two more experiments, at Burnley and Wigan, with continued ill fortune, effected an amalgamation with the French troupe. James Hernandez, one of the most accomplished equestrians who have ever entered the arena, made his *début* at Manchester while the combined companies and studs were performing there, and proved so sterling an attraction that he was engaged for the following season at Astley’s.

Crowther, who has been incidentally mentioned in connection with Walleth, married Miss Vincent, 'the acknowledged heroine of the domestic drama,' as she was styled in the Victoria bills. The union was not a happy one, though the cause of its infelicity never transpired. It was whispered about, however, that a prior attachment on Crowther's part to another lady had something to do with it; and there were many significant nods and winks, and grave shakings of the head, at the bar of the Victoria Tavern, and at the Rodney and the Pheasant, over the circumstance of his strange behaviour in the church at which he and the fair Eliza were married. The talk was, that the bride's position and worldly possessions had tempted him to break the word of promise he had plighted to another, and that compunction for his faithlessness was the cause of his strangeness of demeanour on the wedding-day, and of the domestic infelicity which it precluded. But nothing ever transpired to show that these rumours had any foundation in fact.

CHAPTER VII.

Hengler's Circus—John and George Sanger—Managerial Anachronisms and Incongruities—James Hernandez—Eaton and Stone—Horses at Drury Lane—James Newsome—Howes and Cushing's Circus—George Sanger and the Fighting Lions—Crockett and the Lions at Astley's—The Lions at large—Hilton's Circus—Lion-queens—Miss Chapman—Macomo and the Fighting Tigers.

THE haze which envelopes the movements of travelling circuses prior to the time when they began to be recorded weekly in the *Era* cannot always be penetrated, even after the most diligent research. Circus proprietors are, as a rule, disposed to reticence upon the subject; and the bills of tenting establishments are seldom preserved, and would afford no information if they were, being printed without the names of the towns and the dates of the performances. I have been unable, therefore, to trace Hengler's and Sanger's circuses to their beginnings; but, having seen the former pitched many years ago in the fair-field, Croydon, I know that it was tenting long before its proprietor

adopted the system of locating his establishment for some months together in a permanent building. Both Hengler's and Sanger's must have been travelling nearly a quarter of a century, and the career of both has been prosperous.

Indeed, the most successful men in the profession have been those who have lived from their infancy in the odour of the stables and the sawdust. Such a man was Ducrow, and such also are the Cookes, the Powells, the Newsomes, the Henglers, the Sangers, and, I believe, almost every man of note in the profession. They are not, as a rule, possessed of much education, which may account for the incongruities so frequently exhibited in the 'getting up' of equestrian spectacles, and the perplexities which so often meet the eye when the proprietor of a tenting circus parades in type the quadrupedal resources of his establishment.

I remember seeing a zebra in the Cossack camp in *Mazeppa*, and that, too, at Astley's; for neither Ducrow nor Batty cared much for correctness of local colouring, if they could produce an effect by disregarding it. Lewis, when reminded of the incongruity of the introduction of a negro in a Northumbrian castle, in the supposed era of the *Castle Spectre*, replied that he did it for effect; and if an effect could have been produced by making his

heroine blue, blue she should have been. The effect, however, is sometimes perplexity, rather than excitement, so far at least as the educated portion of the community is concerned.

I saw at Kingston, some years ago, immense placards announcing the coming of Sanger's circus, and informing the public that the stud included some Brazilian zebras, and the only specimen ever brought to Europe of the 'vedo, or Peruvian god-horse.' Every one who has read any work on natural history knows that the zebra is confined to Africa, and that the equine genus was unknown in America until the horses were introduced there by the Spaniards. Not having seen the animal, I am not in a position to say what the 'vedo' really is or was; but it is certain that the only beasts of burden possessed by the Peruvians before horses were introduced by their Spanish conquerors were the llama and the alpaca, which are more nearly allied to the sheep than to any animal of the pachydermatous class, to which the horse belongs.

Leaving these wandering circuses for a time, we must turn our attention for a little while to the permanent temples of equestrianism in the metropolis. James Hernandez made his appearance at Astley's during the season of 1849, in company with John Powell, John Bridges, and Hengler, the rope-dancer.

Bridges exhibited a wonderful leaping act, and Powell's acts were also much admired; but the palm was awarded by public acclamation to Hernandez, whose backward jumps and feats on one leg elicited a *furor* of applause at every appearance. His success, and consequent gains, enabled him, on leaving Astley's, and in conjunction with two partners, Eaton and Stone, to form a stud, with which they opened on the classic boards of Drury Lane.

Among the company was an equestrian who appeared as Mdlle Ella, and whose graceful acts of equitation elicited almost as much applause as those of Hernandez, while the young artiste's charms of face and form were a never-ending theme of conversation and meditation for the thousands of admirers who nightly followed them round the ring with enraptured eyes. It was the same wherever Ella appeared, and great was the surprise and mortification of the young equestrian's admirers when it became known, several years afterwards, that the beautiful, the graceful, the accomplished Ella was not a woman, but a man! Ella is now a husband and a father.

James Newsome was also a member of the very talented company which Hernandez and his partners had brought together under the roof of Drury Lane. After completing his engagement with Batty, and entering into matrimonial obligations with Pauline

Hinné, he had proceeded to Paris, where he applied himself earnestly to the art of which he soon became a leading master, namely, the breaking of horses in what is termed the *haute école*, then almost unknown in this country. The fame which he acquired in Paris procured him an engagement in Brussels, where he taught riding to the Guides, by whose officers he was presented, on leaving the Belgian capital, with a service of plate. From Brussels he proceeded to Berlin, of which city Madame Newsome is a native. There the famous English riding master added to his laurels by breaking a vicious horse named Mirza, belonging to Prince Frederick William (now heir to the imperial crown of Germany), who presented him with the animal, in recognition of his skill. It may here be added, that he had the honour, some years afterwards, of exhibiting his system of horse-breaking before the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, by whom it was highly commended.

On the termination of their season at Drury Lane, Hernandez and his partners associated Newsome with themselves in the firm, and made a successful tour of the provinces. In the following season, however, Newsome separated from his partners, and started a well-appointed circus of his own. The distinctive features of his establishment

are, that he breaks his horses himself—other circus proprietors, not having the advantage of himself, Batty, and Ducrow, of being trained in the profession, being compelled to hire horse-breakers; and that the performances are not given under a tent, set up for a couple of days only, and then removed to the next town, as in the case of most other circuses, but in buildings erected for the purpose in most of the large towns of the north of England, and permanently maintained.

The great Anglo-American circus of Howes and Cushing was added to the number of the circuses travelling in England and Scotland about this time. The strength of the company and stud, and the resources of the proprietors, threatening to render it a formidable rival to the English circuses, the Sangers were prompted by the spirit of competition to take a leaf from Batty's book, and introduce performing lions. The lions were obtained, and the appointment of 'lion king' was offered to a musician in the band, named Crockett, chiefly on account of his imposing appearance, he being a tall, handsome man, with a full beard. He had had no previous experience with wild beasts, but he was suffering from a pulmonary disease, which performing on a wind instrument aggravated, and the salary was tempting. So he accepted the appointment, and

followed the profession literally till the day of his death. It is worthy of remark, as bearing on the causes of accidents with lions and tigers, that Crockett was a strictly sober man ; and so also was the equally celebrated African lion-tamer, Macomo, who never drank any beverage stronger than coffee. Many anecdotes are current in circuses and menageries of the rare courage and coolness of both men.

One of Sanger's lions was so tame that it used to be taken from the cage to personate the British lion, lying at the feet of Mrs George Sanger, in the character of Britannia, in the cavalcades customary with tenting circuses when they enter a town, and which are professionally termed parades. One morning, when the circus had been pitched near Weymouth, the keepers, on going to the cage to take out this docile specimen of the leonine tribe, found the five lions fighting furiously with each other, their manes up, their talons out, their eyes flashing, and their shoulders and flanks bloody. Crockett and the keepers were afraid to enter. But George Sanger, taking a whip, entered the cage, beat the lions on one side, and the lioness, who was the object of their contention, on the other, and made a barrier between them of the boards which were quickly passed in to him for the purpose. This exciting affair did not prevent the lions from being

taken into the ring on the conclusion of the equestrian performance, and put through their regular feats.

If Crockett temporarily lost his nerve on this occasion, it must be acknowledged that he exhibited it in a wonderful degree at the time when the lions got loose at Astley's. The beasts had arrived the night before from Edmonton, where Sanger's circus was at that time located. How they got loose is unknown, but it has been whispered, as a conjecture which was supposed not to be devoid of foundation, that one of the grooms liberated them in resentment of the fines by which he and his fellows were mulcted by Batty, and in the malicious hope that they would destroy the horses. Loose they were, however, and before Crockett, to whose lodging a messenger was sent in hot haste, could reach the theatre, one of the grooms was killed, and the lions were roaming about the auditorium. Crockett went amongst them alone, with only a switch in his hand, and in a few minutes he had safely caged the animals, without receiving a scratch.

These lions were afterwards sold by the Sangers to Howes and Cushing, when the latter were about to return to America, and Crockett accompanied them at a salary of £20 a week. He had been two years in the United States, when one day, while the

circus was at Chicago, he fell down while passing from the dressing-room to the ring, and died on the spot. The Sangers possess lions at the present day, and one of them is so tame that, as I am informed, it is allowed to roam at large in their house, like a domestic tabby. This is probably the animal which, on the occasion of the Queen's thanksgiving visit to St Paul's, reclined at the feet of Mrs George Sanger, on a triumphal car, in the 'parade' with which the day was celebrated by the Sangers and their troupe.

While Crockett was still travelling with the Sangers, and to counterbalance the attractiveness of his exhibitions, it was suggested to Joseph Hilton by James Lee, brother of the late Nelson Lee, that the former's daughter should be 'brought out' in his circus as a 'lion queen.' The young lady was familiar with lions, another of the family being the proprietor of a menagerie, and she did not shrink from the distinction. She made her first public appearance with the lions at the fair, since suppressed, which used to be held annually on Stepney Green. The attractiveness of the spectacle was tempting to the proprietors of circuses and menageries, and the example was contagious. Edmunds, the proprietor of one of the three menageries into which Wombwell's famous collection was divided on

the death of the original proprietor in 1850, formed a fine group of lions, tigers, and leopards, and Miss Chapman—now Mrs George Sanger—volunteered to perform with them as a rival to Miss Hilton.

Miss Chapman, who had the honour of appearing before the royal family at Windsor, had not long been before the public when a third 'lion-queen' appeared at another of the three menageries just referred to in the person of Helen Blight, the daughter of a musician in the band. The career of this young lady was a brief one, and its termination most shocking. She was performing with the animals at Greenwich fair one day, when a tiger exhibited some sullenness or waywardness, for which she very imprudently struck it with a riding whip which she carried. The infuriated beast immediately sprang upon her, with a hoarse roar, seized her by the throat and killed her before she could be rescued. This melancholy affair led to the prohibition of such performances by women; but the leading menageries have continued to have 'lion-kings' attached to them to this day.

Twenty years ago the lion-tamer of George Hilton's menagerie was Newsome, brother of the circus proprietor of that name; and on this performer throwing up his engagement at an hour's notice, owing to some dispute with the proprietor,

a man named Strand, who travelled about to fairs with a gingerbread stall, volunteered to take his place. His qualifications for the profession were not equal to his own estimate of them, however, and James Lee, who was Hilton's manager, looked about him for his successor. One day, when the menagerie was at Greenwich fair, a powerful-looking negro accosted one of the musicians, saying that he was a sailor, just returned from a voyage, and would like to get employment about the beasts. The musician informed Manders, into whose hands the menagerie had just passed, and the negro was invited into the show. Manders liked the man's appearance, and at once agreed to give him an opportunity of displaying his qualifications for the leonine regality to which he aspired. The negro entered the lions' cage, and displayed so much courage and address in putting the animals through their performances that he was engaged forthwith; and the 'gingerbread king,' as Strand was called by the showmen, lost his crown, receiving a week's notice of dismissal on the spot.

This black sailor was the performer who afterwards became famous far and wide by the name of Macomo. The daring displayed by him, and which has often caused the spectators to tremble for his safety, was without a parallel. 'Macomo,' says the

ex-lion king, in the account before quoted, 'was the most daring man among lions and tigers I ever saw.' Many stories of his exploits are told by showmen. One of the finest tigers ever imported into this country, and said to be the identical beast that escaped from Jamrach's possession, and killed a boy before it was recaptured, was purchased by Manders, and placed in a cage with another tiger. The two beasts soon began to fight, and were engaged in a furious conflict, when Macomo entered the cage, armed only with a whip, and attempted to separate them. Both the tigers immediately turned their fury upon him, and severely lacerated him with their sharp claws; but, covered with blood as he was, he continued to belabour them with the whip until they cowered before him, and knew him for their master. Then, with the assistance of the keepers, he succeeded in getting one of the tigers into another cage, and proceeded to bind up his wounds. This was not the only occasion on which Macomo received injuries, the scars of which he bore to his grave. Every one who witnessed his performances predicted for him a violent death. But, like Van Amburgh, like Crockett, he seemed to bear a charmed life; and he died a natural death towards the close of 1870.

CHAPTER VIII.

Pablo Fanque—James Cooke—Pablo Fanque and the Celestials—
 Ludicrous affair in the Glasgow Police-court—Batty's transactions
 with Pablo Fanque—The Liverpool Amphitheatre—John Clarke
 —William Cooke—Astley's—Fitzball and the Supers—Batty's
 Hippodrome—Vauxhall Gardens—Ginnett's Circus—The Alham-
 bra—Gymnastic Performances in Music-Halls—Gymnastic Mis-
 haps.

WHEN Walleth, the clown, returned from his American tour, he had arranged to meet Pablo Fanque at Liverpool, with a view to performances in the amphitheatre there; but when the Shakspearian humourist arrived in the Mersey, his dusky friend was giving circus performances in the theatre at Glasgow, with James Cooke's large circus on the Green, in opposition to him. London was not, at that time, thought capable of supporting more than one circus, and it was not to be expected that Glasgow could support two, even for a limited period. Pablo Fanque retired from the contest, therefore, and removed his company and stud to Paisley.

Doing a good business in that town, he returned to Glasgow with a larger circus, a stronger company, and a more numerous stud, and Cooke retired in his turn.

Walleth, who had been clowning in Franconi's circus, then located in Dublin, joined Pablo Fanque in Glasgow, and between them they devised an entertainment which was found attractive, but which produced most ludicrous consequences. There was a posturer in the company, whose Hibernian origin was concealed under the *nom d'arena* of Vilderini; and it was proposed that this man should be transformed, in semblance at least, into a Chinese. The Irishman did not object, though the process involved the shaving of his head, and the staining of his skin with a wash to the dusky yellow tint characteristic of the veritable compatriots of Confucius. The metamorphosis was completed by arraying him in a Chinese costume, and conferring upon him the name of Ki-hi-chin-fan-foo, which appeared upon the bills in Chinese characters, as well as in the English equivalents. Whether his sponsors had recourse to a professor of the peculiar language of the Flowery Land, or took the characters from the more convenient source presented by a tea-chest or a cake of Indian ink, I am unable to say; but the strange scrawl served its purpose,

which was to attract attention and excite curiosity, and the few Celestials in Glasgow were either more unsophisticated than the 'heathen Chinees' immortalized by Bret Harte, and suspected no deception, or they were too illiterate to detect it.

It happened that an enterprising tea-dealer in the city had, some time previously, conceived the idea of engaging a native of China to stand at the shop-door, in Chinese costume, and give handbills to the Glasgoweians as they passed. A Chinese was soon obtained, and posted at the door, where, in a few weeks, he found himself confronted with a fellow-countryman, who was similarly engaged at a rival tea-shop on the other side of the street. The two Chinese—Milton is my authority for that word—could not behold the circus bills, with their graphic design of a Chinese festival and the large characters forming the name of the great posturer who had performed before the brother of the sun and the moon, without being moved. They went to the circus, and, in a posturing act, to which a Chinese character was imparted by a profuse display of Chinese lanterns and a discordant beating of gongs, thumping of tom-toms, and clashing of cymbals, by supernumeraries in Chinese costumes, they beheld the great Ki-hi-chin-fan-foo.

On the conclusion of the performance, they went.

round to what in a theatre would be termed the stage-door, asked for their countryman, and evinced undisguised disappointment on being informed that he could not be seen. They repeated their application several times, but always with the same result; and, the idea growing up in their minds that their countryman was held in durance, and only liberated to appear in the ring, they went to the police-court, and made an affidavit that such was their belief. Pablo Fanque was, in consequence, called upon for an explanation, and found himself obliged to produce the posturer in court, and put him in the witness box to depose that he was not a countryman of the troublesome Chinese, but a native of the Emerald Isle, who could not speak a word of Chinese, and had never been in China in his life.

Pablo Fanque moved southward on leaving Glasgow, but he fell into difficulties, and borrowed money of Batty, giving him a bill of sale upon the circus and stud. Going into the midland districts, and finding Newsome's circus at Birmingham, he went on to Kidderminster, where, failing to carry out his engagements with Batty, the latter took possession of the concern, and announced it for sale. .Becoming the purchaser himself, he constituted Fanque manager, thus displacing Wallett,

who had been acting in that capacity for the late proprietor.

Walleth endeavoured to make an arrangement for the company and stud to appear in the amphitheatre at Liverpool, but could not obtain Batty's acquiescence. Having engaged with Copeland to provide a circus company and horses, Batty's refusal to allow the Fanque troupe to go to Liverpool put him to his shifts. Having to form a company in some way, he engaged two equestrians, Hemming and Dale, who happened to be in Liverpool without engagements; and hearing that John Clarke, then a very old man, was in the neighbourhood, with three horses and as many clever lads, he arranged with him for the whole. He then started for London by the night train, roused William Cooke early in the morning, and hired of him eight ring horses and a menage horse, at the same time engaging Thomas Cooke for ring-master, with his pony, Prince, and his son, James Cooke, the younger, as an equestrian. These were got down to Liverpool with as little delay as possible, and the amphitheatre was opened for a season that proved highly prosperous.

In 1851, the expectation of great gains from the concourse of foreigners and provincials to the Great International Exhibition in Hyde Park induced

Batty to erect a spacious wooden structure, capable of accommodating fourteen thousand persons, upon a piece of ground at Kensington, opposite the gates terminating the broad walk of the Gardens. It was opened in May as the Hippodrome, with amusements similar to those presented in the Parisian establishment of the same name, from which the company and stud were brought, under the direction of M. Soullière. Besides slack-rope feats and the clever globe performance of Debach, there was a race in which monkeys represented the jockeys, a steeple chase by ladies, an ostrich race, a chariot race, with horses four abreast, after the manner of the ancients, and the feat of riding two horses, and driving two others at the same time, the performances concluding with one of those grand equestrian pageants, the production of which subsequently made the name of the Sangers famous, in connection with the Agricultural Hall.

Fitzball wrote some half-dozen spectacular dramas for Batty during the latter's management of Astley's, one of the earliest of which was *The White Maiden of California*, in which an effect was introduced which elicited immense applause at every representation. The hero falls asleep in a mountain cavern, and dreams that the spirits of the Indians who have been buried there rise up from their

graves around him. The departed braves, each bestriding a cream-coloured horse, rose slowly through traps, to appropriate music; and the sensation produced among the audience by their unexpected appearance was enhanced by the statue-like bearing of the men and horses, the latter being so well trained that they stood, while rising to the stage, and afterwards, as motionless as if they had been sculptured in marble.

Fitzball adapted to the hippo-dramatic stage the spectacle of *Azael*, produced in 1851 at Drury Lane. At the first rehearsal, there was as much difficulty in drilling the gentlemen of the chorus into unison, to say nothing of decorum, as Ducrow had experienced at Drury Lane in instructing the small fry of the profession in the graces of elocution. There was an invocation to be chanted to the sacred bull by the priests of Isis, and the choristers, who seem to have been drawn from the stables, entered in an abrupt and disorderly manner, some booted and spurred, and carrying whips, others holding a curry-comb or a wisp of hay or straw. Kneeling before the shrine, they shouted the invocation in stentorian tones, and with a total disregard of unison; and during a pause they disgusted the author still more by indulging in horse-play and vulgar 'chaff.'

Fitzball made them repeat the chorus, but with-

out obtaining any improvement. They would play, and they would not sing in unison. Fitzball glanced at his watch; it indicated ten minutes to the dinner hour of the fellows. He thereupon desired the call-boy to give his compliments to Mr Batty, and request that the dinner-bell might not be rung until he gave the word for the tintinnabulic summons. The choristers heard the message, and, as they wanted their dinners, and knew that Batty was a strict disciplinarian, it had the desired effect. There was no more 'chaffing,' no more practical jokes; they repeated the invocation in a chastened and subdued manner, and before the ten minutes had expired their practice was as good as that of the chorus at Covent Garden.

Mazeppa was revived at Astley's during the season of 1851-2, and the acts in the arena comprised the fox-hunting scene of Anthony Bridges with a real fox; the great leaping act of John Bridges; the *cachuca* and the *Cracovienne* on the back of a horse, danced by Amelia Bridges; the graceful equestrian exercises of Mademoiselles Soullier and Ma-sotta; the gymnastic feats of the Italian Brothers; and the humours and witticisms of Barry and Wheal, the clowns.

The Hippodrome re-opened in the summer of 1852, under the management of Henri Franconi, the

most striking features of the entertainment being Mr Barr's exhibition of the sport of hawking, with living hawks and falcons; the acrobatic and rope-dancing feats of the clever Brothers Elliot; and Mademoiselle Elsler's ascent of a rope over the roof of the circus.

Batty, who was reputed to have died worth half a million sterling, was succeeded in the lesseeship of Astley's by William Cooke, who, with his talented family, for several years well maintained the traditional renown of that popular place of amusement. Like the Ducrows, the Henglers, the Powells, and others, the Cookes are a family of equestrians; and not the least elements of the success achieved by the new lessee of Astley's were the wonderful feats of equestrianism performed by John Henry Cooke, Henry Welby Cooke, and Emily Cooke (now Mrs George Belmore). Welby Cooke's juggling acts on horseback were greatly admired, and John H. Cooke's feat of springing from the back of a horse at full speed to a platform, under which the horse passed, and alighting on its back again, was quite unique.

Vauxhall Gardens re-opened in 1854 with the additional attraction of a circus, in rivalry with Cremorne, now become one of the most popular places of amusement in the metropolis. The sensa-

tion of the season was the gymnastic performance of a couple of youths known as the Italian Brothers on a trapeze suspended beneath the car of a balloon, while the aërial machine was ascending. The perilous nature of the performance caused it to be prohibited by the Commissioners of Police, by direction of the Home Secretary; a course which was also adopted in the case of Madame Poitevin's similar ascent from Cremorne, seated on the back of a bull, in the character of Europa, though in that instance on the ground of the cruelty of slinging the bovine representative of Jupiter beneath the car.

Some years afterwards, the gymnasts who bore the professional designation of the Brothers Francisco advertised their willingness to engage for a trapeze performance beneath the car of a balloon; but they received no response, probably owing to the official prohibition in the case of the Italian Brothers.

'Would not such a performance be rather hazardous?' I said to one of them.

'Oh, we should only do a few easy tricks,' he replied. 'We should soon be too high for anybody to see what we were doing, and need only make believe. Once out of sight, we should pull up into the car.'

'Of course,' I observed, 'the risk of falling would be no greater than if you were only thirty or forty

feet from the ground; but, if you did fall, there would be a difference, you would come down like poor Cocking.'

'Squash!' said the gymnast. 'As the nigger said, it wouldn't be the falling, but the stopping, that would hurt us. But the risk would have to be considered in the screw; and then there is something in the offer to do the thing that ought to induce managers to offer us an engagement.'

In 1858, Astley's had a rival in the Alhambra, which, having failed to realize the anticipations of its founders as a Leicester Square Polytechnic, under the name of the Panopticon, was converted by Mr E. T. Smith into an amphitheatre. Charles Keith, known all over Europe as 'the roving English clown,' and Harry Croneste were the clowns; and Walleth was also engaged in the same capacity during a portion of the season. One of the special attractions of the Alhambra circle was the vaulting and tumbling of an Arab troupe from Algeria. Vaulting is usually performed by European artistes with the aid of a spring-board, and over the backs of the horses, placed side by side. The head vaulter leads, and the rest of the company—clowns, riders, acrobats, and gymnasts—follow, repeating the bound until the difficulty of the feat, increasing as one horse after another is added to the group, causes

the less skilful performers to drop, one by one, out of the line. The Arab vaulters at the Alhambra dispensed with the spring-board, and threw somersaults over bayonets fixed on the shouldered muskets of a line of soldiers. This feat has since been performed by an Arab named Hassan, who, with his wife, a French rope-dancer, has performed in several circuses in this country.

Vauxhall Gardens, which had been closed for several years, opened on the 25th of July, in this year, for a farewell performance, in which a circus troupe played an important part, with Harry Croueste as clown. Then the once famous Gardens were given over to darkness and decay, until the fences were levelled, the trees grubbed up, and the site covered with streets, some of which, as Gye Street and Italian Street, still recall the former glories of Vauxhall by their names.

Some reminiscences of the provincial circus entertainments of this period have been furnished by Mr C. W. Montague, formerly with Sanger's, Bell's, F. Ginnett's, Myers's, and William and George Ginnett's circuses, and now manager of Newsome's establishment. 'Early in the spring of 1859,' says this gentleman, 'some business took me into the neighbourhood of Whitechapel, and while passing the London Apprentice public-house, I heard my

name shouted, and looking round espied Harry Graham, whom I had known in the elder Ginnett's circus. He was doing a conjuring trick outside a miserable booth, at the same time inviting the public to walk in, the charge being only one halfpenny. On the completion of the trick, he jumped off the platform, and insisted on our adjourning to the public-house, where he explained the difficulty he was in, having been laid up all the winter with rheumatic gout. On his partial recovery, he was compelled to accept the first thing that offered, which was an engagement with the owner of the booth, a man known in the profession as the Dudley Devil.

‘ Poor Harry begged me to give him a start ; so I came to an arrangement to take him through the provinces as M. Phillipi, the Wizard. This was on a Friday ; on the following Wednesday he appeared at Ramsgate to an eighteen pound morning performance and a fourteen pound one at night, our prices being three shillings, two shillings, and one shilling, although in Whitechapel he would not have earned five shillings per day. Among other places I visited was Dartford, where I took the Bull Hotel assembly-room, which had been recently rebuilt, but not yet opened. Mrs Satherwaite, a lady of considerable distinction, kindly gave me

her patronage, and I arranged for a band at Gravesend. On the day of the performance, towards the afternoon, the band not having arrived, I sent my assistant to Gravesend, with instructions to bring a band with him. Half-past seven arrived, the time announced for opening the doors, when a large crowd had assembled, as much out of curiosity to see the new room as the conjurer, and in a short time every seat was occupied.

‘Just before the clock struck eight, the time for commencement, in came my assistant, saying the band had gone to Dover, to a permanent engagement. I ran round to the stage-door, and told Graham. He said it was impossible to give the entertainment without music. In my despair, I rushed into the street, with the intention of asking Reeves, the music-seller, if he could let me have a pianoforte. I had not got many yards when I heard a squeaking noise, and found it proceeded from *three* very dirty German boys, one playing a cornopean, another a trombone, and the third a flageolet. On accosting them, I found they could not speak a word of English; so I took two of them by the collar, and the other followed. On reaching the stage-door, I could hear the impatient audience making a noise for a commencement.

‘Harry Graham, on seeing my musicians, said

it would queer everything to let them be seen by the audience. "I can manage that," I said; "we will just put them under the stage, and I will motion them when to go on and when to leave off." In another moment M. Phillipi was on the stage, and received with shouts of applause from the impatient audience. On the conclusion of the performance, I went to the front, and thanked Mrs Satherwaite for her kindness, when she said, "He is very clever; but, oh! that horrid unearthly music!"

'On finishing the watering towns, I took the Cabinet Theatre, King's Cross, where M. Phillipi appeared with success. One evening, to vary the performance, we arranged to do the bottle trick, and specially engaged a confederate, who was to change the bottles from the top of the ladder, through one of the stage-traps. By some error, the man took his position directly the bell rang for the curtain to go up, instead of doing so, as he should have done, at the commencement of the second part of the entertainment. M. Phillipi commenced his usual address, explaining to the audience that he did not use machinery or employ confederates, as other conjurers are wont to do; and to convince them, he pulled up the cloth of the table, at the same time saying, "you see there is nothing

here but a common deal table." To his surprise, the audience exclaimed, "There's a man there!" But he was equal to the occasion, and went on with his address, taking the first opportunity to give the confederate a kick, when down the ladder he went.

'At this establishment; while under my management, the earthly career of poor Harry Graham was brought to a close. For many years it had been his boast that his Richard III. was second only to Edmund Kean's, and that he only lacked the opportunity to astound all London with his impersonation of the character. Now the opportunity had arrived, and he determined to play it for his benefit; but, unfortunately, the excitement of this dream of years was too much for him, and he died a few days afterwards. Those who are curious about the last resting-place of this world-renowned showman may find his grave in the Tower Hamlets cemetery.

'In the following winter, I joined Ginnett's circus at Greenwich, and found the business in a wretched condition. The principal reason for this state of things was, that the circus had only a tin roof and wooden boarding around, and the weather being very severe, the place could not be kept warm. I was at my wits' ends to improve the receipts when, being one day in a barber's shop, getting shaved,

the barber remarked, "There goes poor Townsend." On inquiring I found that the gentleman referred to had been M. P. for Greenwich, but in consequence of great pecuniary difficulties had had to resign. My informant told me that he was a most excellent actor, he having seen him, on more than one occasion, perform Richard III. with great success; and what was more, he was an immense favourite in Greenwich and Deptford, he having been the means, when in the House of Commons, of getting the dockyard labourers' wages considerably advanced.

'It immediately struck me that, if I could get the ex-M. P. to perform in our circus, it would be a great draw. With this object in my mind, I waited on Mr Townsend the next morning, and explained to him my views. "Heaven knows," he said in reply, "I want money bad enough; but to do this in Greenwich would be impossible." I did not give it up, however, but pressed him on several occasions, until at last he consented to appear as Richard III. for a fortnight, on sharing terms. The next difficulty was as to who should sustain the other characters in the play, there being no one in the company, except Mr Ginnett and myself, capable of taking a part. We got over the difficulty by cutting the piece down, and Mr Ginnett and myself doubling for Richmond, Catesby, Norfolk, Ratcliffe, Stanley, and the

Ghosts. The business, notwithstanding these drawbacks, turned out a great success ; so much so, that Mr Townsend insisted on treating the whole of the company to a supper. Shortly afterwards, he went to America.

‘In the following year, while at Cardiff, we got up an equestrian spectacle entitled *The Tournament; or, Kenilworth Castle in the Days of Good Queen Bess*, for which we required many supernumeraries to take part in the procession, the most important being a handsome-looking female to impersonate the maiden Queen. Walking down Bute Street one day, I espied, serving in a fruiterer’s shop, a female whom I thought would answer our purpose admirably. So I walked in, and made a small purchase, which led to conversation ; and by dint of a little persuasion, and explaining the magnificent costume to be worn, the lady consented to attend a rehearsal on the following day. She came to the circus, received the necessary instructions, and seemed highly gratified when seated on the throne, surrounded by her attendants.

‘On the first night of the piece, everything went off well until its close, when Mr Ginnett rushed into my dressing-room, in great excitement, exclaiming, “There is that infernal woman sitting on her throne !” I immediately proceeded to the

ring-doors, and there, to my dismay, saw the Queen on the throne by herself, and the boys in the gallery pelting her with orange peel. I beckoned to her, but she seemed to have lost all presence of mind. I sent one of the grooms to fetch her off, and amidst roars of laughter her royal highness gathered up her robes, and made a bolt. It appeared that the Earl of Leicester, who should have led her off, had, for a joke, told her to stay until she was sent for.'

Gymnastics continued in the ascendant at the Alhambra long after its conversion into a music-hall, and crowds flocked there nightly to witness the wondrous, and then novel, feats of Leotard, Victor Julien, Verrecke, and Bonnaire on the flying trapeze. Somersaults over horses in the ring, being performed by the aid of a spring-board, are far surpassed by the similar feats of gymnasts between the bars of the flying trapeze. The single somersaults of Leotard and Victor Julien were regarded with wonder, but they have been excelled by the double somersault executed by Niblo, which, in its turn, has been surpassed by the triple turn achieved by the young lady known to fame as 'Lulu.' I am not aware that a quadruple somersault has ever been accomplished, if indeed it has ever been attempted. It was stated, about three years ago, that a gymnast who had attempted the

feat in Dublin paid the penalty of his hardihood in loss of life; but experience has rendered me somewhat incredulous as to the rumours of fatal accidents to gymnasts and acrobats which are not confirmed by the report of a coroner's inquest.

Besznak, the cornet-player of the London Pavilion orchestra, said to me one evening, several years ago, 'You know Willio, the bender? Well, he is dead; went into the country to perform at a gala, and caught a cold, poor fellow!' Willio is, however, still living. I will give another instance. About two years ago, one of the Brothers Ridgway met with an accident at the Canterbury Hall, while practising. Some weeks afterwards, it was currently reported that his injuries had proved fatal. Subsequently, however, a gentleman engaged in the ballet at the Alhambra, and who, at the time of the accident, had been similarly engaged at the Canterbury, was accosted one evening, while returning home, in the well-known voice of the young gymnast who had been reported dead. Turning round in surprise, he saw that it was indeed Ridgway who had spoken, looking somewhat paler than he did before the accident, but far more lively than a corpse.

Great as the risks attending gymnastic feats really are, they are not greater than those which are

braved every day by sailors, miners, and many other classes, as well as in hunting, shooting, rowing, and other sports, not excluding even cricket. While there are few gymnasts who have not met with casualties in the course of their career, the proportion of fatal accidents to the number of professional gymnasts performing is certainly not greater than among the classes just mentioned, and I believe it to be even less. During the period between the advent of Leonard at the Alhambra and the present time, only two gymnasts, so far as I have been able to ascertain, have been killed while performing; and the prophecy attributed to that renowned gymnast, that all his emulators would break their necks, has, happily, not been fulfilled.

CHAPTER IX.

Cremorne Gardens—The Female Blondin—Fatal Accident at Aston Park—Reproduction of the Eglinton Tournament—Newsome and Wallett—Pablo Fanque's Circus—Equestrianism at Drury Lane—Spence Stokes—Talliott's Circus—The Gymnasts of the Music-halls—Fatal Accident at the Canterbury—Gymnastic Brotherhoods—Sensational Feats—Sergeant Bates and the Berringtons—The Rope-trick—How to do it.

THOUGH the history of circus performances would be scarcely complete without an occasional passing glance at the music-halls, it would be impracticable to give a consecutive record of the performances at places now so numerous without producing a work that would rival in voluminousness, and, I may add, in tedium, the dramatic history of Geneste. I shall, therefore, give only a general view of them, including in the survey places which, during the summer, divide with them the patronage of the pleasure-seeking public.

While the graceful performance of Leotard was attracting nightly crowds to the Alhambra, the

public were invited by the lessee of Cremorne Gardens to witness the crossing of the Thames on a rope by a lady who assumed the name of the Female Blondin, and whose performance was probably suggested by the more adventurous feat of her masculine prototype over the cataract of Niagara. The performance was decidedly sensational, and attracted a great crowd ; besides having the advantage of being attended with much less risk to the performer than any exhibition ever given by the cool-headed and intrepid Frenchman whose name she borrowed. Had Blondin fell at Niagara, he would have been carried over the cataract, and been dashed to pieces ; if he should fall from his lofty elevation at the Crystal Palace, he would be killed instantaneously.

Miss Young incurred no such risk ; if she had fallen into the river, she would have found it soft, and so many boats were on its surface that the risk of drowning could not enter into the calculation. Leotard practised his aerial somersault over water before he performed in public ; and it would have been well for Miss Young if she had confined her rope-walking feats to localities in which she had the water beneath her. The experiment at Cremorne served its purpose in recommending her to the attention of managers as a rival of Blondin on the high rope ; but it was not long before she met with

an accident which rendered her a cripple for life, while another young woman, whom her success led to emulate her lofty feats, fell from a rope at Aston Park, in the environs of Birmingham, and was killed on the spot.

The great attraction of the Cremorne season of 1863 was a tournament, got up on the model of the one which attracted so large a proportion of the upper ten thousand to Eglinton Castle in the summer of 1844. There was a grand procession to the lists, and an imposing display of banners, and all the pomp and pageantry of bygone times; and then the encounters of the armoured knights, for which the lists at Cremorne afforded much more scope than the stage at Astley's, or even at Drury Lane. Doubtless there were some dummies, as I have seen in the tournament scene in *Mazeppa*; but the living knights acquitted themselves very creditably, and the spectacle proved a powerful source of attraction.

The Queen of Beauty was a lady whose ordinary business was to ride in *entrées*, and who was known professionally as Madame Caroline. If she did not, like Thackeray's Miss Montmorency, live in the New Cut, she had her abode in the vicinage of that thoroughfare, in the somewhat more westerly region which receives, after midnight, so large a proportion of those who, in various ways, contribute to the

amusement of the public. Yet there may have been some of the critical spectators of the Cremorne tournament who, looking upon Madame Caroline, may have felt the force of the remark made by Willis as to the comparative suitability of Lady Seymour and Fanny Kemble to have occupied the throne of the Queen of Beauty at Eglinton Castle.

‘The eyes,’ said Willis, ‘to flash over a crowd at a tournament, to be admired from a distance, to beam down upon a knight kneeling for a public award of honour, should be full of command; dark, lustrous, and fiery. Hers are of the sweetest and most tranquil blue that ever reflected the serene heaven of a happy hearth—eyes to love, not wonder at—to adore and rely upon, not admire and tremble for. At the distance at which most of the spectators of the tournament saw Lady Seymour, Fanny Kemble’s stormy orbs would have shown much finer; and the forced and imperative action of a stage-taught head and figure would have been more applauded than the quiet, nameless, and indescribable grace, lost to all but those immediately around her.’

Walleth, the clown, on his return from his second American tour, having acquired some money, was taken into partnership by Newsome, whose circus was, in the words of the former, ‘one of the most

complete concerns ever seen.' They opened at Birmingham, where good business was done for a few months, after which they started on a tenting tour, with a stud of forty horses. They returned to Birmingham for the winter, and showed their thousands of patrons one of the finest amphitheatres ever opened in this country. The ring, instead of having saw-dust or tan laid down, was covered with pile matting of cocoa-nut fibre for the horses to run on, while the central portion, where the ring-master cracks his whip and the clown his 'wheeze,' boasted a circular carpet. The decorations of the interior were rich and tasteful, and it was illuminated by a chandelier by Defries, which had cost a thousand guineas.

The association of Wallett with Newsome continued for two years, after which the circus was conducted by the latter single-handed, and the former joined Pablo Fanque's circus as clown. He is next found engaging the talented Delavanti family for a tour, and afterwards coming with them to London, where they were all engaged at Drury Lane Theatre, then temporarily open for circus performances, under the management of Spence Stokes, an American.

In 1865, Hengler's company and stud came to London, and gave a series of performances at the

Stereorama, temporarily converted into a circus for the purpose.

On the termination of these performances, and of William Cooke's lesseeship of Astley's, London was without an amphitheatre for several years, with the exception of a few months, when a small temporary circus was opened in the back-slums of Lambeth Walk, by James Talliott, formerly well known as a trapeze performer. The company and stud, which were on a very limited scale, were supplied from Fossett's circus, which tented at fairs during the summer, and Talliott erected a temporary circus for them on the yards at the back of a row of houses belonging to him.

During the time that Astley's ceased to exist as a circus, the music-halls of the metropolis, which were now springing up in every quarter, supplied the seekers after amusement with a constant succession of performers of those portions of a circus entertainment which can be exhibited upon a platform. The fatal accident which befell a gymnast named Majilton at the Canterbury caused the proprietors of those places of amusement to discountenance the flying trapeze for a time, and the rising school of young gymnasts who intended to transcend the feats of Leotard began to practise on the fixed trapeze, single or double, the horizontal bar,

and the flying rings. The gymnast known professionally as Airec made balancing the distinctive feature of his performances, and exhibited it on the trapeze in every position. Others gave to their feats on the trapeze the sensational character which was so striking an element in the performances of Leotard and Victor Julien by exhibiting what is called 'the drop,' in which one of the performers falls headlong from the bar, as if by accident, and is caught by the foot by his companion, who himself hangs from the bar by his feet, which are locked in the angles formed by the bar and its supporting ropes.

The gymnasts known as the Brothers Ellis, and sometimes as the Brothers Ellistria, were two of the best performers on the horizontal bar that I ever witnessed. The slow pull-up of James Ellis was inimitable; but in feats in which ease and grace were displayed more than strength he was excelled, I think, by his partner, who, after their separation, assumed the name of Castelli. I must here remark that gymnastic and acrobatic 'brothers' seldom bear the relationship to each other which the designation conveys. Though it exists in some instances, as in the case of the Brothers Ridley (both, I believe, now dead), they are the exceptions; the Brothers Francisco, who performed in numerous circuses and

provincial music-halls several years ago, but have since retired from the profession, were cousins. The Brothers Ellis, the Brothers Price, and many other professional fraternities that could be named were not even partners, one of them making engagements and receiving the salary, taking the lion's share for himself, and paying a stipulated sum to his companion, in or out of an engagement.

The partnership of the Brothers Price, who performed on the double trapeze, was of brief duration. Price, for only one of them bore that patronymic in private life, had the good fortune to receive a legacy of considerable amount, and thereupon retired from the profession ; and his partner, whose real name was Welsh, assumed the name of Jean Price, and, knowing that single trapeze performances did not 'go' like the double, he began to practise the 'long flight,' and made it his specialty. Suspending his trapeze above the platform, as usual, he erected a perch, as for the flying trapeze, at the opposite end of the hall, and at the same altitude as the trapeze. Midway between the perch and the trapeze a pair of ropes were suspended from the ceiling, and provided with rings or stirrups, as for the flying rings performance, but long enough to reach the perch. Taking his stand on the perch, and grasping the rings firmly with his hands, the gymnast sprang off

into the air, and swung to the trapeze, which he caught with his legs, at the same moment loosing his hold of the rings. He then performed some ordinary feats on the trapeze, and catching the climbing rope swung to him by an attendant, descended by it to the platform, from which he bowed his acknowledgments of the warm applause with which such sensational feats as the long flight are invariably received.

Remarks are often made by gymnasts as to the ease with which they perform on the trapeze and the horizontal bar many of the feats which elicit the most applause, as compared with those which often excite no demonstration whatever. Every one who has witnessed the tight-rope performances of the inimitable Blondin must have observed how much more he is applauded when he appears on a rope stretched at a great elevation than when he performs his feats on a low rope. There is, however, no more difficulty, and no greater risk of falling, whether the rope is stretched at an elevation of four feet only, or of forty feet, while the feats performed are the same. But the greater elevation conveys to most minds the idea of a greater amount of skill and courage being required for their performance, and hence the louder and more general applause which they elicit when they are performed on the high rope. People admire dar-

ing, and the more sensational a gymnastic performance of any kind is the more it is sure to be applauded.

Antipodean balancing feats have been exhibited by several music-hall *artistes*, in various modes, and with a considerable variety of accessories. James King, known as the bottle equilibrist, places a stool on a table, four wine glasses on the stool, a tray upon the glasses, and a decanter upon the tray; and then, grasping the upper part of the decanter with both hands, raises himself to a head-balance. Another *artiste* of this class, Jean Bond, balances himself upon his head upon the summit of one of the uprights of a ladder, which is surmounted by a revolving cap, and by turning the cap with his hands, he spins round in that position. A more interesting performance, to my mind, than either of these was shown three or four years ago by an acrobat named Carl, who walked upon his hands along a wire stretched from the gallery to a temporary platform on the stage. In performing this feat, the whole weight of the body rests on the right and left hands alternately, and the equilibrium is maintained by following each movement of the hands along the wire with a corresponding motion of the body, so that, whether the weight is resting on the right hand or the left, the centre of gravity is directly above the wire.

The flying rings, being a less sensational performance than the trapeze, has not been much favoured by gymnasts, though they frequently practise with the rings while training, as a preparation for the flying trapeze. Some very good tricks can be shown with them, however, and several years ago the performance was made a specialty by a brace of gymnasts known as Parelli and Costello. Parelli is not an Italian, as his professional name would lead the *incognoscenti* in such matters to infer, but a native of Westminster, and his real name is Francis Ber-rington. Having practised gymnastics with a view to a public appearance, he found a partner in a young acrobat named Costello, also a native of Westminster, whose performances had hitherto been exhibited in quiet streets, and been followed by a 'nob.' He is not, however, the only performer whom the multiplication of music-halls, and the consequent demand for gymnasts and acrobats in such establishments, has elevated from the streets to the platform; and it is certain that the change, while it has raised the status of the vocation, has produced a great improvement in the quality of the performance, by furnishing the performer with a constant incentive thereto. It is a curious illustration of the system of adopting professional names differing from their real patronymics, and which obtains equally among all classes

that contribute to the amusement of the public in theatres, circuses, and music-halls, that Parelli is the brother of Luke Berrington, who performs under the name of Majilton. Luke Berrington is a very creditable artist in water-colours, and his views of the various portions of the exterior and interior of Westminster Abbey have been greatly admired by competent judges for their artistic finish and the fidelity with which every portion of the venerable edifice has been reproduced. To the general public, however, he is better known as a clever performer of the tricks with a hat of soft felt which were first exhibited in this country by the French clowns, Arthur and Bertrand.

Mr Berrington, senior, the father of Luke and Frank, is not a little proud of his clever sons and daughter. When Serjeant Bates, to win a wager and make a book, carried the flag of the American Union from Glasgow to London, the elder Berrington welcomed him to the metropolis in an epistle signed 'Majilton,' without the prefix of his baptismal name, as if the writer was a peer of the realm, and used his title. He refers, with pardonable parental pride, to his olive-branches, then making a professional tour in the United States, Luke and Frank being accompanied by their sister and Costello; and the serjeant, who had probably

never heard of them before, speaks of them as a talented family of actors! Their entertainment was really a ballet of *diablerie*, like those of Fred Evans and the Lauri family, with a good deal of tumbling and hat-spinning.

Seven or eight years ago, the great 'sensation' of the London music-halls was a balancing feat of a novel character, which was exhibited by an acrobat named professionally Sextillian, but whose real name is James Lee. He arranged about a score of glass tumblers in the form of an inverted pyramid, and balanced the fragile structure on his forehead, the base being formed by a single tumbler. But this was not all. He changed his position several times, constantly assuming attitudes which would have won the admiration of the world, if they could have been perpetuated in marble, and even passed in various positions through a hoop, all the time maintaining the equilibrium of the glittering pile that rested upon such a narrow base upon his forehead. If any of my readers should be disposed to attempt the performance of this feat as a private drawing-room entertainment, they must be prepared with a good supply of tumblers, for I am able to assure them, on the excellent authority of Sextillian himself, that the wondrous dexterity with which he

performs it was not attained without an extensive destruction of glass.

Another performance which excited a large amount of public attention, partly through the mystery in which the *modus operandi* was enveloped, and partly by reason of the excitement previously produced by the Brothers Davenport's exhibition of alleged spirit-manifestations, was the 'rope-trick,' shown first by an expert performer named Redmond at Astley's, and afterwards at most of the music-halls. The performer was enclosed in a cabinet about three feet square, and five or six feet high, with a door facing the spectators, and provided with a small aperture near the top. In a few minutes an attendant opened the door, when Redmond was seen within, securely bound in a chair. The spectators were allowed to satisfy themselves that he was bound as securely as if a second person had bound him, and then the door was closed. In a few moments he rang a bell, then he showed one hand at the aperture; in a few seconds more he began to beat a tambourine, and in a minute and a half from the time he was shut in the door was opened again, and he walked out, with the rope in his hands. This performance proved so attractive that it soon had many imitators, but none of them did it in so

genuine and puzzling a manner, or displayed equal dexterity in its exhibition.

The trick was not original, but it was new to the public, or at least to the present generation. I have heard it called both the American rope-trick and the Indian rope-trick, but the former name may have been derived from the similar performance of the Brothers Davenport, who pretended to be passive agents in the business, and to be tied and untied by spirits. Long before the pretended spiritual phenomena were ever heard of, the rope-trick was in the *repertoire* of the famous Hindoo juggler, Ramo Samee, who performed at the Adelphi and the Victoria some forty years ago. The manner of its performance is said to have been communicated by him to one of the Brothers Nemo, who thought so little of it that he never exhibited it until the public mind had become excited by the tricks of the Davenports and the antagonistic performance of Redmond. Next to the latter, Nemo was the best exhibitor of the trick that I ever saw; but that is not saying much, for most of them were so incompetent to perform it that the effect produced by its exhibition by them was simply ludicrous. I remember one of them—I will not mention his name—complaining, when he found that he could not release himself, that he had not been treated as a

gentleman by the person—one of the spectators—by whom he had been bound; and another, that he had been tied so tightly that the rope hurt his wrists, and stipulating, on another occasion, that he should not be tied tight!

The peculiarity which distinguished Redmond's feats in a remarkable manner from those of his imitators was, that he not only released himself from the rope in less time than was occupied in binding him, whoever the operator might be, but bound himself in a manner that baffled the skill and exhausted the patience of every one who attempted to unbind him. I was present one evening at the decision of a wager which had been made by a West-end butcher, that he would unbind Redmond in a given time, the tying up being done by Redmond himself. The performer entered the cabinet, carrying the rope, and was shut in; in less than two minutes the door was opened, and he was seen bound, hand and foot, to the chair on which he was sitting. The butcher immediately set to work, several gentlemen standing around, with their watches in their hands, surveying the operation with the keenest interest. It was very soon seen that the butcher was at fault; he could not find either end of the rope. He sought in Redmond's boots, up his sleeves, inside his vest, but the rope seemed

endless. He fumed, he perspired, as the seconds grew into minutes, and the minutes swiftly chased each other down the stream of time; but no end could he discover. Time was called, and the butcher's wager was lost. Redmond was then enclosed in the cabinet again, and in less than two minutes he was free.

The secret of this trick is unknown to me, but I was not long in discovering that the mere untying by a person of a rope which has been bound about him by another is, however securely the rope may be tied, a very simple matter. It does not follow, however, that the feat can be performed by every one. The operator must possess good muscles, sound lungs, small hands, and strong fingers. If he clenches his hands, raises the muscles of his arms, and keeps his chest inflated during the operation of tying, he will find that his work is half done by the simple process of opening his hands, relaxing the muscles of the arms, and restoring the natural respiration. If the wrists are bound together without being separately secured, the releasing of one hand frees the other by the slackening of the rope; but the operator is thought to be more securely tied when the rope is tied with a knot about the right wrist, and then passed round the other, both drawn close together, and a second knot tied. In this

case, the right hand must be drawn through the hempen bracelet by arching it lengthwise, and bringing the thumb within the palm, so that the breadth of the hand shall very little exceed that of the wrist; and this operation is greatly facilitated by a smooth, hard skin. With the right hand at liberty, there is little more to be done; for a skilful and experienced manipulator finds it easier to slip out of his bonds than to untie the knots which are supposed to increase his difficulty. Any man possessing the physical qualifications which I have mentioned ought to be able to liberate himself, however securely he is tied, in a minute and a half.

I have performed this feat on several occasions for the satisfaction of friends, and have always released myself in Redmond's time, except on one occasion, when I failed entirely, and had to be released by the gentleman who had bound me. He had, unknown to me, made a noose at one end of the rope, and this he passed over my head, after binding my arms and knotting the rope behind me in such a manner that I could not move either hand without producing a lively sense of strangulation.

'I learned that trick in Australia,' observed the author of my discomfiture. 'I tied up a black fellow like that in the bush; *and he is there now.*'

CHAPTER X.

Opening of the Holborn Amphitheatre—Friend's season at Astley's—Adah Isaacs Menken—Sanger's Company at the Agricultural Hall—The Carré troupe at the Holborn Amphitheatre—Wandering Stars of the Arena—Albert Smith and the Clown—Guillaume's Circus—The Circo Price—Hengler's Company at the Palais Royal—Re-opening of Astley's by the Sangers—Franconi's Circus—Newsome's Circus—Miss Newsome and the Cheshire Hunt—Rivalry between the Sangers and Howes and Cushing.

AFTER the lapse of several years, during which no equestrian performances were given in the metropolis, though gymnastic and acrobatic feats were exhibited nightly at a score of music-halls, a new amphitheatre was, in 1868, erected on the north side of Holborn. There, under the excellent management of Messrs Charmar and Maccollum, have been exhibited some of the finest acts of horsemanship, and the most striking gymnastic feats, ever witnessed by this or any other generation. Alfred Bradbury's wonderful jockey act; James Robinson's great feat

of hurdle-leaping on the bare back of a horse with a boy standing upon his shoulders; the marvellous leap through a series of hoops of George Delavanti; the astounding gymnastic performances of the Hanlons and the Rizarelis; the extraordinary somersaulting and rocket-like bound of the young lady known as Lulu; and the graceful riding of Beatrice Chiarini, without saddle or bridle, will not soon be forgotten by those who had the gratification of witnessing them.

In the same year that the Holborn Amphitheatre was opened, Astley's was re-opened as a circus by Mr Friend. The chief attraction upon which Mr Friend relied was the impersonation of Mazeppa by Adah Isaacs Menken, a young lady of Jewish extraction, who came from America with the reputation of a female Crichton of the nineteenth century. According to a biographical sketch prefixed to a Paris version of the drama, *The Pirate of the Savannah*, in which she appeared in that city, she had written verses and essays at an age at which other girls are occupied with dolls, and translated the *Iliad* in her thirteenth year. In Latin and Hebrew, Spanish and German, she was as proficient as in Greek; French, her enthusiastic Gallic biographer does not seem to consider it necessary to mention. Her mother being left in reduced circum-

stances at her second widowhood, Adah resolved to devote her natural talents and acquired accomplishments to the stage, and made her appearance as a dancer at the opera-house at New Orleans, of which city she was a native.

After achieving the greatest artistic triumphs there and at Havanna, she abandoned the boards for the literary profession, publishing a volume of poems, and contributing for some time to two New Orleans journals. In 1858, being then seventeen years of age, she made her *début* as an actress in her native city, and subsequently performed in the chief towns of the West. In 1863 she went to San Francisco, and afterwards made a professional tour of the Eastern States, raising her reputation, according to her biographer, to the highest pitch.

Unfortunately for the maintenance of the exalted fame which she brought from the United States, this versatile lady appeared, not at the Italian Opera as a dancer, nor at Drury Lane or Covent Garden as an actress, which such fame should have entitled her to do, but at Astley's in the character of Mazeppa; and it was still more unfortunate that the management pinned their faith in her powers of attraction, not upon her talent as an actress, but upon her beauty and grace, and her ability to play the part without recourse to a double for the fencing

and riding. Enormous posters everywhere met the eye, representing the lady, apparently in a nude state, stretched on the back of a wild horse, and inviting the public to go to Astley's, and see 'the beautiful Menken.' Young men thronged the theatre to witness this combination of *poses plastiques* with dramatic spectacle, and 'girls of the period' dressed their hair *à la Menken*, that is, like the frizzled crop of a negress; but the theatrical critics looked coldly and sadly upon the performance, and accused the management of ministering to a vitiated taste.

Adah Menken was at this time in her twenty-seventh year, and had a few years previously become the wife of Heenan, the pugilist, whose fine figure had won her regards when the wealthiest men in California were competing for her favours. The union was not a happy one, for which result both the parties have been blamed; and the cause of difference was probably one in respect of which neither could reproach the other without provoking recrimination. Heenan, who was then in London, might often have been seen at Astley's during his wife's engagement, and it was said that both desired a reconciliation, and that Adah had come to England with that view; but nothing came of it. 'The beautiful Menken' went to Paris, and was said to be

on terms of tender intimacy with the elder Dumas. She died in Paris shortly afterwards, and her remains rest in the cemetery of Père La Chaise.

Adah Isaacs Menken was undoubtedly a woman of rare natural talents and great accomplishments. While in London, she published a volume of poems, with the general title of *Infelicia*, which correctly describes their tone and character. Some of them are as wild as anything which has emanated from Walt Whitman, and more are replete with the weird fancies and wayward genius of Poe; but all are pervaded by a deep and touching melancholy, which seems to shadow forth the spectre that haunted the author's gay and brilliant life, like the garlanded skeleton at the festive board of the ancient Egyptians. From the suggestive title to the last of the little head-and-tail pieces, designed probably by Adah herself, everything in the book impresses a lesson which may be read in Ecclesiastes. In the first of these tiny engravings we seem to read the moral of the author's life-story. It represents a woman stretched on the shore of a stormy sea, with her face to the earth, and her dark hair flowing over her recumbent form, which is faintly illuminated by the fitful light of a moon half-obscured by drifting masses of black clouds. The book was dedicated to Dickens, and contains a photographic reproduction

of a letter from the great novelist, thanking 'Dear Miss Menken' for her portrait, and giving the desired permission to the dedication.

On the legal principle, it would seem, that two lawyers will live where one would starve, the Sangers brought their company and stud to the Agricultural Hall, where, for several successive winters, their performances attracted thousands of spectators. This establishment continues to travel during the summer, however, only resorting to a permanent building in the metropolis when the approach of winter renders 'tenting' as unpleasant as it is unprofitable. The Agricultural Hall, not having been constructed for equestrian entertainments, is not so well adapted for them as for the purpose for which it was especially designed, and the locality is far inferior, as a site for a circus, to that of the Holborn Amphitheatre, of the circus subsequently erected by Charles Hengler, or even Astley's.

It was at the Holborn Amphitheatre that the first female trapezist appeared, in the person of a beautiful young woman rejoicing in the *nom d'arena* of Azella, the attractiveness of whose performances, as in the case of female lion-tamers, soon produced many imitators. Azella was announced to appear on the flying trapeze, and to turn a somersault; but this feat, which created such a sensation when performed

by Leotard and Victor Julien, was exhibited by the fair aspirant to the highest gymnastic honours in a manner which caused some disappointment to those who had witnessed the performances of those renowned gymnasts at the Alhambra. Instead of throwing off from one bar, turning the somersault, and catching the next bar, Azella threw off, and somersaulted in her descent from the bar to the bed placed for her to alight upon. The grace with which all her evolutions were performed combined, however, with the beauty of her person and the novelty of seeing such feats performed by a woman, to secure her an enthusiastic reception whenever she appeared.

Azella was succeeded at the Amphitheatre by Mdlle Pereira, who performed similar feats, which she had exhibited in 1868 at Cremorne. Imitators soon appeared at all the music-halls in the metropolis. At some of these the long flight of Jean Price was emulated by a lady named Haynes, who transformed herself, for professional purposes, into Madame Senyah by the device of spelling her real name backward. A variation from Price's mode of performing the feat was presented by this lady, whose husband appeared with her in a double trapeze act, and hanging from the bar by his feet, caught her with his arms as she swung towards him on loosing her hold of the stirrups.

The company with which the Amphitheatre was opened was succeeded, after a long and successful career, by the Carré troupe, which introduced to the metropolis Alfred Burgess, who unites the qualifications of a clown with those of an accomplished equestrian and clever revolving globe performer. Clowns would seem to be precluded, by the nature of their business, from the cosmopolitan wanderings of other circus performers; but the name of Burgess is almost as famous on the continent as that of Charles Keith, who has performed in nearly every European capital, though Albert Smith has given a picture of clowning under difficulties which might well deter those who cannot crack a 'wheeze' in half a dozen languages from venturing into lands where English is not spoken.

'One evening,' says the humourist, 'I went to the Grand Circo Olympico—an equestrian entertainment in a vast circular tent, on a piece of open ground up in Pera; and it was as curious a sight as one could well witness. The play-bill was in three languages—Turkish, Armenian, and Italian; and the audience was composed almost entirely of Levantines, nothing but fezzes being seen round the benches. There were few females present, and of Turkish women none; but the house was well filled, both with spectators and the smoke from the pipes

which nearly all of them carried. There was no buzz of talk, no distant hailings, no whistlings, no sounds of impatience. They all sat as grave as judges, and would, I believe, have done so for any period of time, whether the performance had been given or not.

‘I have said the sight was a curious one, but my surprise was excited beyond bounds when a real clown—a perfect Mr Merriman of the arena—jumped into the ring, and cried out, in perfect English: “Here we are again—all of a lump! How are you?” There was no response to his salutation, for it was evidently incomprehensible; and so it fell flat, and the poor clown looked as if he would have given his salary for a boy to have called out “Hot codlins!” I looked at the bill, and found him described as the “Grottesco Inglese,” Whittayne. I did not recognize the name in connection with the annals of Astley’s, but he was a clever fellow, notwithstanding; and, when he addressed the master of the ring, and observed, “If you please, Mr Guillaume, he says, that you said, that I said, that they said, that nobody had said, nothing to anybody,” it was with a drollery of manner that at last agitated the fezzes, like poppies in the wind, although the meaning of the speech was still like a sealed book to them.

‘I don’t know whether great writers of Eastern travel would have gone to this circus; but yet it was a strange sight. For aught that one could tell we were about to see all the mishaps of Billy Button’s journey to Brentford represented in their vivid discomfort upon the shores of the Bosphorus, and within range of the sunset shadows from the minarets of St Sophia! The company was a very fair one, and they went through the usual programme of the amphitheatre. One clever fellow threw a bullet in the air, and caught it in a bottle during a “rapid act;” and another twisted himself amongst the rounds and legs of a chair, keeping a glass full of wine in his mouth. They leaped over lengths of stair-carpet, and through hoops, and did painful things as Olympic youths and Lion Vaulters of Arabia.

‘The attraction of the evening, however, was a very handsome girl—Maddalena Guillaume—with a fine Gitana face and exquisite figure. Her performance consisted in clinging to a horse, with merely a strap hung to its side. In this she put one foot, and flew round the ring in the most reckless manner, leaping with the horse over poles and gates, and hanging on, apparently, by nothing, until the fezzes were in a quiver of delight, for her costume was not precisely that of the Stamboul

ladies—in fact, very little was left to the imagination.’

I quote this passage for the purpose of showing that the wanderings of the men and women whose vocation it is to entertain the public as equestrians, clowns, acrobats, and jugglers are not confined to the limits within which actors and singers obtain foreign engagements. There are very few men or women of eminence in the profession who have not visited nearly every European capital, and many of them have made the tour of the world. ‘Price’s circus was for many years one of the most popular institutions of Madrid, and the Circo Price was to English circus *artistes* what Cape Horn is to American seamen. Tell an equestrian or an acrobat that you think you have seen him before, and he will ask, ‘Was it at the Circo Price?’ just as a Yankee sailor will snuffle, ‘I guess it was round the Horn.’ To have appeared at the Hippodrome or the *Cirque Imperiale* is a very small distinction indeed, when so many have performed in Madrid and Naples, Berlin and St Petersburg, and not a few have traversed the United States from New York to San Francisco, and then crossed the ocean, and performed in Sydney and Melbourne, or Yokohama, Hong Kong, and Calcutta.

Circus performers wander about the world more

generally, and to a greater extent, than the acrobats and jugglers who perform in music-halls, from whom they are separated into a distinct class by the requirements of circus engagements. All aspirants to saw-dust honours being engaged for 'general utility,' it is necessary for them to understand the whole routine of circus business, whether their specialty is riding, vaulting, clowning, or any other branch. They are required to take part in vaulting acts, to hold hoops, balloons, banners, &c., which requires some practice before it can be done properly, and to line the entrance to the ring when a lady of the company flutters into it, or bows herself out of it. For this last duty, the proprietors of the best appointed circuses provide uniform dresses, which are worn by all the male members of the company, when not engaged in their performances, from the time the circus opens until they retire to the dressing-room for the last time. I am speaking, of course, of those who form the permanent company of a circus, and not of those engaged, as 'stars,' for six or twelve nights.

The 'bright particular star' of the Amphitheatre, during the season of 1870, was the young lady known as Lulu, and who was recognized by frequenters of that popular place of entertainment as the agile and graceful child who had appeared, a

few years previously, with her father, at the Alhambra and Cremorne, as 'the flying Farinis,' in a performance somewhat resembling that of the Brothers Hanlon and the child called 'Little Bob.' She was then supposed to be a boy, and much amusement was created after her appearance at the Amphitheatre as an avowed woman, by the recollection of her having, after descending from the lofty arrangement of trapezes and ladders on which she performed at the Alhambra, advanced to the foot-lights, and sang a song, each verse of which ended with the words, 'Wait till I'm a man.' The secret of her sex was at that time unknown even to the performers at the Alhambra, at least to the masculine portion, among whom the circumstance of her being accompanied by her mother, and performing the operations of the toilet in the ladies' dressing-room, was a frequent subject of wonder and speculation.

There was a doubt also about the sex of the child who for a long time did a gymnastic performance at the London Pavilion, very similar to that given by Olmar at the Alhambra. The child was announced as 'Little Corelli,' and was generally supposed to be a boy; but I have since heard that it was a girl.

The performances of Azella and Pereira had not

satiated the public appetite for the feats of female gymnasts, and the manager of the Amphitheatre secured in Lulu a star of the first magnitude. Her triple somersault is a feat in which she is still unrivalled; and though George Conquest has since achieved her wonderful vertical spring of twenty-five feet from the ring-fence, the means by which it is accomplished is still a mystery. Lulu was succeeded by the Brothers Rizar, as they now chose to be called, though they had gained immense applause a few years previously at the Alhambra as the Brothers Rizareli. The double trapeze of these clever gymnasts is perfectly unique, and must be seen to be believed.

The Amphitheatre did not continue without a competitor for the patronage of that portion of the public which delights in witnessing feats of equestrianism and gymnastics. Hengler's circus, after being located for some time in Bristol, and afterwards in Dublin, settled down at the Palais Royal, in Argyle Street, and introduced to the metropolis all the Henglers and Powells, male and female, whose praises had been sounded by the provincial press all over the kingdom. The most noteworthy members of the company were Louise Hengler, an admirable horse-woman, who, like Adele Newsome, rides and leaps in a 'cross country' fashion, over

hurdles and six-barred gates; James Lloyd, most experienced in his art, and one of the neatest, as well as of the boldest, of riders; John Milton Hengler, who danced on a tight-rope with a grace and skill which fully justified the warmth of the applause with which the performance was received; and Franks, the clown, who, before joining the Hengler troupe, had been the chief exponent of fun and humour attached to Newsome's circus.

The circumstance of John M. Hengler dispensing with the balancing-pole in his performance was mentioned by some of the newspaper critics as if it was unique; but every frequenter of the London music-halls must have observed the same feature in the similar performance of a member of the clever Elliott family.

Scarcely had the lovers of circus entertainments had time to solve the problem of the possibilities of success for two amphitheatres in London when Astley's was re-opened as a circus by the Sangers. Circus performances are necessarily so much alike that it is only by the production of a constant succession of novelties, as was done at the Holborn establishment, or by combining hippo-dramatic spectacles with the ring performances, as Ducrow and Batty did, that any distinctive character can be established. The Sangers followed the example of

their predecessors, and preceded the acts in the arena by an equestrian drama of the kind which had been found attractive in the palmy days of Astley's. The ring performances were good, but presented no novelty. Lavinia Sanger deserved her tribute of applause as a skilful rider, who gracefully leaped over banners and boldly dashed through 'balloons;' and her brother's, or cousin's, feat of riding, or rather driving, a number of horses at once, in emulation of Ducrow, was very creditably performed, but who has not seen similar feats as well performed in every circus he has entered? We should be sorry to miss them; but they should be the 'padding' of the programme, and not its staple.

I have often heard the question asked, 'What can be done upon a horse which has not been done before?' The question has been answered again and again by the equestrian feats of such masters of the art of equitation as Andrew Ducrow, Henry Adams, John Henry Cooke, Henry Welby Cooke, George Delavanti, James Robinson, and Alfred Bradbury. It is only by doing something which has never been done before, or by performing some feat in a very superior style to that of previous exhibitors, that a circus *artiste* can emerge from the ruck, whether he is a rider, a tumbler, a juggler, or a gymnast.

‘If you want to get your name up,’ I said, several years ago, to a young gymnast, ‘you must do something that has not been done before, and not be content with performing such feats as may be seen every night, in every music-hall in London.’

‘What can we do?’ he inquired.

‘Ay, “there’s the rub!” Only a gymnastic genius can answer the question. You may be sure that question was asked of themselves by Leotard, and Olmar, and Farini, and all the other fellows who have made their names famous, as the first performers of a skilful and daring feat. You know how they answered it, and what salaries they got. As in the story of Columbus and the egg, when a trick has once been done, there are many who can repeat it, but it is the first performer that gets the greatest fame and the highest salary.’

I must conclude this chapter with a brief notice of the changes and movements of the principal travelling circuses during the last ten years. In 1864, Franconi’s was at Nottingham for a time, with Charlie Keith as clown and the Madlles Monfroid holding a conspicuous place among the equestrian members of the company. Newsome’s circus was, later in the year, at Chester, as I find by the following passage in a local journal descriptive of a fox-hunt:—‘The pace was terrific, and the country the

stiffest in Cheshire. This description would be incomplete if I omitted to mention Miss Newsome, of the Chester Circus. This young lady astonished the whole field by the plucky way in which she rode. She unquestionably led the whole way, and never came to grief once. *Straight* was her motto, and straight she went; brook, hedge, and cop were cleared by her in a style never seen in Cheshire before, and when Reynard was deprived of his brush, it was most deservedly presented to her amidst the cheers of all present.'

The movements of this circus during the following year are related, in another chapter, by a gentleman who was at that time a member of the company. In the spring of 1870, Messrs Sanger, whose circus is the largest and most complete tenting establishment travelling in this country, were threatened with a formidable rivalry by the appearance in the field of the great American circus of Howes and Cushing. How they met it is thus told by Mr Montague, who was then their agent in advance:—

'It is well known that two large tenting concerns will not pay in England. Under these circumstances, Messrs Sanger determined to drive the Yankees off the road, which we ultimately succeeded in doing. Our mode of fighting them was to bill all

the towns taken by them as though we were coming the following day, it being known to us that English people will always wait for the last circus, when two or more companies are advertised at the same time. Our next move was to take all the best towns in the North first. We succeeded so well with this mode of operation that we ultimately performed in the same town with them, namely, Preston, in Lancashire. On this memorable occasion, showmen came from all parts of England, two such concerns never having been seen in one town on the same day. Messrs Howes and Cushing acknowledged themselves beaten, and shortly afterwards returned to America.'

William Darby, better known as Pablo Fanque, died in the following year, at the ripe age of seventy-five. Charles Hengler had adopted the plan so successfully followed by Newsome, of locating his circus in permanent buildings, maintaining several for the purpose, and remaining several months at each place. The principal members of his company in 1873, were Miss Jenny Louise Hengler, Miss Cottrell, John Henry Cooke, Hubert Cooke, William Powell, Herr Oscar, the Hogini family, the Brothers Alexander, and the clowns, Bibb and 'Little Sandy.' Newsome's company comprised, at the same time, in addition to the clever ladies of his family, Charles

and Andrew Ducrow (descendants of the great equestrian of that name), Hubert Mears, Fredericks, and the gymnast known as Avolo.

Sanger's is the only great circus which follows the tenting system, which can be successfully pursued only by those who possess a numerous stud of showy horses. A less powerful company than Hengler or Newsome finds necessary will do, because, the performances being given only two nights in a town, the programme does not require to be changed so frequently as when the company perform every night for a period of three months in the same place; and the horses may be ridden in parades by the grooms and their wives or daughters. But the public do not believe in a tenting circus, unless its resources are put forth in a parade, for which purpose a large number of horses are required, with a handsome band-carriage, an elephant, and a couple of camels. The cost of maintaining such an establishment is so great that the system cannot be successfully pursued without a large capital, and the most complete and efficient organization. Without both these requisites a bad season will ruin the proprietor, as many have found by sad experience.

CHAPTER XI.

Reminiscences of the Henglers—The Rope-dancing Henglers at Astley's—Circus of Price and Powell—Its Acquisition by the Henglers—Clerical Presentation to Frowde, the Clown—Circus Difficulties at Liverpool—Retirement of Edward Hengler—Rivalry of Howes and Cushing—Discontinuance of the Tenting System—Miss Jenny Louise Hengler—Conversion of the Palais Royal into an Amphitheatre—Felix Rivolti, the Ring-master.

CONSCIOUS as I am of the imperfections of the foregoing record of circus performances in this country, it is a relief to my mind to be enabled to supplement the history with some further particulars concerning the establishments so long, and with such well-deserved success, conducted by the gentlemen who bear the renowned names of Hengler and Sanger. I am indebted for the following memoir of the Henglers to a gentleman well known in the equestrian profession, and who has for many years held the important position of acting-manager in one of the best-appointed and most admirably-conducted circuses in this country.

Mr Charles Hengler, the proprietor of the cirque in Argyle Street, may be said to have been born to the equestrian profession, his father having been a celebrated tight-rope dancer with Ducrow, in whose service he remained for several years; and thus had an opportunity of teaching his sons his own profession.

Edward Henry Hengler, the eldest, became famous in England and on the Continent under the title of Herr Hengler, and was the most celebrated professor of that art in his day. He died a few years since. John Milton Hengler, a younger son, inherited the family talent, and also became famous in America, and on the Continent. He came to England on the retirement of his elder brother, and was considered a worthy successor. A few years ago he retired from active service, and opened a riding school in Liverpool, where he is still residing, highly respected and esteemed by all who know him. Charles Hengler was, fortunately for him, too tall to follow in the footsteps of his brothers, so his father determined to make him the business man of the family, and his present position is ample proof of his father's success in so doing.

After leaving Ducrow, Hengler, with his sons, joined the circus of Price and Powell—Powell having married one of his daughters. Here they remained

some time, Charles attending to the business department, and his father and brothers performing in the ring. As the showman's life is, at the best, a very precarious one, Price and Powell got into difficulties while performing at Greenwich, and were consequently obliged to dispose of their concern, which was purchased by Charles and Edward Hengler. Price went abroad, and Powell, who was an excellent equestrian, accepted an engagement with the new proprietors, who carried on the business for several years with varied success, sometimes making money, and as frequently losing what they had worked so hard to obtain. It must be remarked that in those days, equestrianism was not so popular as it has since become, and there were two men in the business who carried all before them, namely, Ducrow and Batty; so young and struggling beginners had a hard battle to fight, the best towns in England being in the possession of the former. But, as usual in all such cases, courage and perseverance, combined with honesty of purpose and strict attention to business, ultimately met its reward; for Henglers' circus at last made a name for itself, being the most respectably conducted establishment of that class travelling the provinces.

During the summer months they 'tented,' and in the winter erected temporary wooden build-

ings in populous towns, in which the second visit was invariably more remunerative than the previous one—a sufficient proof of the high estimation in which the company were held. This is not to be wondered at, when it is stated that several performers, who were then with Mr Hengler, are yet on his establishment; notably, Mr James Franks, one of the best clowns in his line of business of this or any other day. Also Mr Bridges, Mr Powell, and a few others. Of course, with the exception of Mr Powell, they were very young men when they first joined him. There was also another very clever clown on the establishment, of whom I must say a few words. This was James Frowde, a nephew of the proprietors. This gentleman, who several years since retired from the equestrian profession, was an immense favourite with all classes. His appearance in the ring was invariably greeted with acclamations, and in private life his company was sought by many of the most respectable members of the community. To give some idea of the popularity of this gentleman, I may state that while the company were located in Chester in 1856, several clergymen presented him with a very valuable Bible. This was made the subject of an eulogistic paragraph in *Punch*, in which the recipient and the donors were equally complimented—

the one for deserving such a testimonial, the others for their liberal appreciation of his conduct as clown, Christian, and gentleman. It would be well if more of our divines followed so excellent an example; not necessarily by presenting Bibles, for the poor player not only possesses the book, but in most instances acts up to its teachings.

It was while residing in Chester that Mr Hengler obtained the patronage of the Marquis of Westminster; of course on previous occasions he had been patronized by many distinguished personages, and this particular instance is mentioned only because it was the source of Mr Hengler's gaining a footing in Liverpool. I may here be allowed to quote a short paragraph which appeared in the *Chester Observer* :—

‘HENGLER’S CIRQUE.—The patronage and presence of the Mayor at this admirably-conducted place of entertainment on Tuesday last filled the building to overflowing. . . Last night the performances were under the patronage of Earl Grosvenor, M.P. In the morning the Marquis of Westminster honoured the establishment with his patronage and presence, the noble lord kindly and duly appreciating the just claim that Mr Hengler has on the public as regards talent, attraction, and propriety, and so, with his usual discretion and

sound judgment, took this opportunity to signify to Mr Henry, the manager, his conscientious approval of Mr Hengler's admirably-conducted establishment.' Mr Hengler also received a letter from the Marquis conveying a similar opinion.

For several years it had been the desire of Mr Hengler and other equestrian managers to obtain permission from the authorities of Liverpool to erect a temporary circus in that town. Applications were frequently made, and as frequently refused. The invariable answer was, 'If you wish to perform in this town, you must make an arrangement with Mr Copeland; he has the Amphitheatre, and we cannot allow any one to oppose him.' Now although the Amphitheatre, as its name imports, had been originally built for equestrian performances, they had with one or two exceptions, and these in its earliest days, proved failures. Of course no manager possessing the knowledge of Mr Hengler would risk going there, especially as the best arrangement it was possible to make with the then proprietor was something like 'Heads I win, tails you lose.' I think I am not far wrong in stating that Mr Hengler had made seven or eight applications; and invariably received a similar reply, 'You can't be allowed to build here. The Amphitheatre is open to you; go there, or go away.' Armed with the Marquis of Westminster's

letter, and several other valuable testimonials, Mr Hengler determined to make one more trial; with what success I shall presently show.

A piece of ground, the property of the corporation, was vacant in Dale Street, and was a capital site for the erection of a temporary circus.

Mr Hengler, and his architect, Mr O'Hara, went to Liverpool, and obtained an interview with the then Mayor, a celebrated builder and a liberal-minded gentleman.

The testimonials were shown and a promise was made, that, at the next meeting of the Council, Mr Hengler's request should be brought forward, and that the Mayor would assist him by using his influence. With this Mr Hengler was compelled to be satisfied.

From Chester, Mr Hengler went to Bradford, on which occasion the following paragraph appeared in the *Leeds Mercury*, of January 10, 1857—

'Mr Hengler's Establishment receives, as it deserves, the patronage of immense audiences. The performances are so unique and varied, that they cannot fail to please; while it is gratifying to perceive the strict care that is taken to prevent anything that could offend the most fastidious. The generality of such entertainments are more or less loose in their morality; but the able and correct manner in

which these performances are conducted is testified by the fact, that they have met with the approbation of the local clergy. The Rev. Vicar patronizes the performance on Monday next. And on that occasion Mr Hengler affords free admission to the day-schools connected with the Church of England.' This, of course, was of great value to Mr Hengler; and the authorities at Liverpool were duly apprised of it; and, in a few days, the welcome intelligence was conveyed to Mr Hengler that his request had been complied with, and Mr O'Hara was started off to make arrangements for the erection of the circus. This he soon succeeded in doing, Messrs Holmes and Nicol, the eminent builders, undertaking its erection.

This circus was opened by Mr Hengler on March the 15th, 1857. To give some idea of its style and appointments, I cannot do better than quote the following description from the *Liverpool Daily Mail* of March 20th, 1857.

'HENGLER'S CIRQUE VARIETIES. — During the present week Mr Charles Hengler has opened, in Dale Street, a handsome, commodious, and spacious theatre, devoted to equestrian performances, which has been constructed by Messrs Holmes and Nicol of this town, on the model of Franconi's famous Cirque, in the Champs Elysees, Paris. The building, though

of a temporary character, is most admirably suited for the purpose for which it is designed ; and while accommodating an immense number of spectators, who can all easily witness the performances, the ventilation is perfect, and with an entire absence of draughts. There is nothing to offend the senses of smell or sight. The audience is placed in compartments round the circle ; the frequenters of the boxes being seated on cushioned chairs, with a carpeted flooring under their feet. The compartments entitled pit and gallery are also very comfortable, while round the whole building runs a spacious promenade. The ceiling is covered with coloured folds of chintz, which give a brilliant and cleanly appearance ; and the pillars supporting the roof are neatly papered, and ornamented with flags and shields. The whole aspect is, in fact, what has long been a desideratum in this country, and we regret it will have to be pulled down again in a few months.

‘ With respect to the performances, we can only speak most highly ; they are decidedly the best we have witnessed here since the appearance of the French Company.

‘ The horses are beautiful and well trained, the grooms smart and natty, and the dresses of all connected with the establishment new and tasteful. We have not space to mention a tithe of the perform-

ances, which present many novelties, and display the varied talent of the company to great advantage; the gentlemen being all daring and skilful, and the ladies, equally clever, yet modest and charming. In fact, we can strongly recommend our readers to pay a visit to Mr Hengler's circus; for, as we were surprised and delighted ourselves, we feel assured that no one can regret patronizing an entertainment so harmless, pleasing, and exciting.'

In one respect, the writer of the above paragraph made a mistake, for, although the circus was originally intended to be a temporary building, the success was so great that it remained standing for five years, Mr Hengler visiting Liverpool for four months each winter. At this time the company comprised William Powell, Anthony and John Bridges, the Brothers Francisco, the clowns Frowde, Hogini, and Bibb, Ferdinand and Eugene, Madame Bridges, Miss Adrian, etc. The performing horses were introduced by Mr Hengler. Previous to Mr Hengler visiting Liverpool, the partnership terminated between him and his brother Edward, the latter having realized sufficient to retire from the profession.

The ground in Dale Street being wanted by the corporation for building purposes, Mr Hengler obtained a site for the erection of a building in

Newington, and a lease of the ground for seven years. He here built a very fine and capacious cirque, the builders who erected the one in Dale Street undertaking the contract. It was to be a brick building; and they were under heavy penalties to get it completed by a certain time. Unfortunately for them, they had no sooner commenced, than a strike took place amongst the brick-makers; and the builders had to appeal to Mr Hengler, who allowed them to erect a wooden structure, they agreeing to erect, at the expiration of the strike, brick walls around it, which was done.

Here Mr Hengler remained for seven years, the term of his lease. The ground was then required for a new railway, and he had to leave Liverpool, not being able to find a site adapted to his purpose. While Mr Hengler remained here, several other circuses attempted to oppose him, the authorities, who had remained inflexible for so many years, granting indiscriminate permission to whoever applied to them. All of them failed, and soon left the town. A notable example occurred in one especial case.

Hówes and Cushing, the American equestrian managers, chartered a vessel, and landed at Liverpool with the largest company and stud that had ever visited these shores. They obtained the best position in Liverpool for the erection of their tent :

and this, only after Mr Hengler had been open in Dale Street about one month. They inundated the town with their large pictorial posters, paid fabulous sums for fronts and sides of houses on which to have them affixed. Liverpool really went Howes and Cushing mad. The American colours were flying from every house in which any of the company lodged. Columns of advertisements were in all the Liverpool newspapers; and the day upon which they advertised to parade the town every house in the line of procession was closed. The streets were crowded; all Liverpool seemed to have congregated on the line of route. Special trains came from the surrounding districts.

The procession was certainly a noble one. A huge car, in which the band was seated, was drawn by forty horses, driven in hand. The whole of the company, a very extensive one, was placed in the other cars, which were elaborately carved and gilt. The pageant terminated with a procession of Indians, and a huge musical instrument which was played by steam power. And what was the result? The morning after their first performance the papers were unanimous in saying Mr Hengler's entertainment was far superior. One of them stated that 'the greatest circus in America has met more than its match in Liverpool.' They remained but two

weeks ; the business falling off very considerably, while Mr Hengler's increased nightly.

After a few very successful seasons in Liverpool Mr Hengler discontinued the tenting business in the summer months,—never to him a very congenial occupation, and erected large buildings in several important towns, notably, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and Hull. Those in Glasgow and Hull are still in existence ; and, when not occupied by the proprietor, are let for concerts, and entertainments of a similar character.

In 1865 Mr Hengler was offered an engagement at Cremorne Gardens, where there was a very fine building, originally erected for equestrian purposes, but used latterly for exhibiting a Stereorama, which proved a great failure, although the paintings were by those eminent artists, Grieve and Telbin. For several years Mr Hengler had been desirous of performing before a London audience, and thought this a good opportunity of feeling the pulse of the metropolitan public. He therefore came to terms with the then proprietor, Mr E. T. Smith ; but, even in those days, Cremorne was in its decadence, and the engagement was neither pleasant to Mr Hengler nor his company. With the exception of one or two miserable attempts, circus performers bade a final adieu to a place which has lately gained such unen-

viable notoriety. After leaving Cremorne Mr Hengler went to Hull, where he had a most successful season.

It may be a matter of surprise to many people that Mr Hengler never brought any of his family (a very numerous one) up to the equestrian business, with the exception of his daughter, Miss Jenny Louise. He was always desirous that they should receive a good education. Now it would be almost an impossibility to combine the two things, for, at the very time children should be studying their lessons in school, they would be compelled to be practising in the ring, and performing at night, as Infant Prodigies, Lightning Lilliputians, or Bound-ing Brothers. Then how about Miss Jenny Louise? it may be asked. That young lady did not commence riding before the public until she was eighteen years of age; but she had such an intense desire to become an *equestrienne*, that she learned, under her father's tuition, more in one year, than many others would have learned in a lifetime. She was naturally graceful, very feminine, and she possessed the necessary nerve and firmness. She was always most deservedly an immense favourite with the public, her skilful horsemanship and charmingly graceful appearance never failing to secure her hosts of admirers of both sexes.

I now come to Mr Hengler's second appearance in London, which had such a different result to the previous one, as will be shown in the sequel. In 1871, a gutta percha merchant, who had made several ventures in the equestrian business, obtained possession of the Palais Royal in Argyle Street, the site of the present cirque, and wished Mr Hengler to join him. Mr Hengler took time to consider the proposal, which after due consideration he declined, the previous experiments of the gutta percha merchant in the equestrian business having invariably proved so unsuccessful that his shows became known amongst equestrians as the Gutta Percha Circus, an appropriate title, they having in most instances so suddenly collapsed.

After some difficulty, Mr Hengler succeeded in obtaining possession of the Palais Royal, as it was then called, and speedily converted it into the elegant theatre, so admirably adapted for its present purposes, which was opened in the autumn of 1871. His first season was not a profitable one, in a pecuniary sense; and this, in a great measure, is to be accounted for by the fact, that circus entertainments in London had become very unpopular. In the first place, the circus in Holborn had been badly managed, the proprietors not understanding the business. In this year it was again opened by one of the former

proprietors, and the season not having proved profitable, the place was soon closed.

In 1872 it was opened under the auspices of the gutta percha merchant, though his name did not appear publicly in the matter. Astley's also opened under the management of the Brothers Sanger, gentlemen of great experience in the profession, and who, as a matter of course, were formidable rivals. There were now 'three Richmonds in the field,' and, as Mr Hengler, although popular in the provinces, was not known to any great extent in London, he had to bide his time, until the superiority of his entertainments became known and appreciated. At any rate he had sown the seed; the harvest was to be gathered hereafter. All who visited the place were delighted with the high character of the entertainments. Everything was neat and elegant; the horses were considered, by good judges, to be far superior to those usually exhibited in places of this description. Miss Jenny Louise Hengler had already become a great favourite with lovers of high-class riding.

At Christmas, *Cinderella*, with a host of juveniles, was for the first time produced in a London Cirque. Everybody who witnessed it left the place delighted; and it became the talk of London. The mid-day performances were invariably well attended,

and by the best families in London and its suburbs ; but Mr Hengler's expenses were very great, and the receipts, though good, were not commensurate with his outlay and risk. He remained in London until the beginning of May, and then went into the provinces, where he met with his usual success.

In November, 1872, he again opened the Cirque in Argyle Street, to which he brought a very clever company, the principal features being Miss Jenny Louise Hengler, 'Little Sandy,' who made his first appearance in London, and the performing horses. This season, the Prince and Princess of Wales and family honoured the Cirque with a visit, and expressed themselves highly delighted with the entertainment. Mr Joe Bibb, another very clever grotesque and clown, appeared during this season, and soon became popular. Mr H. B. Williams, a lyrical jester, was also a favourite. Mr Charles Fish, an American rider, made his first appearance in England, and created a sensation.

At Christmas, *Jack the Giant Killer* was produced, with an army of forty juveniles, whose evolutions were highly commended. This season was a very profitable one, although the circus in Holborn and Astley's were open at the same time. Mr Hengler remained until the beginning of March, when he left for Dublin.

After visiting several towns, he returned to London in November, 1873. This was a very successful season—several new engagements having been effected, notably Mr William Bell, one of the best, if not the very best, equestrians in the profession, and Mr Lloyd, another extraordinary rider. Little Sandy now became, if possible, more popular than before; and the portrait of Miss Jenny Louise Hengler was in all the photographers' windows, and in everybody's album.

Mr Felix Rivolti, the genial ring-master who had been with Mr Hengler, with the exception of a few months, about eighteen years, was still in great force. This gentleman had the happy knack of pleasing all audiences, as one half invariably laughed with him, the other half as certainly laughed at him. Very good judges considered him the best ring-master since the celebrated Widdicomb delighted his audiences at Astley's.

Observe with what a self-sufficient smirk Rivolti enters the arena, gracefully handing in the young lady; see how he places her on her horse, and then looks round the house, as much as to say, 'In one minute you will be delighted to see what I can make her do.' He cracks his whip, the horse starts into a canter, the young lady leaps from his back, over garlands, through hoops, etc., etc., when the horse

stops, and while the audience are applauding, how happy Rivolti appears! He looks around as much as to say to the audience, 'I told you I could do it. But wait a minute. You see this clown; now I am going to make him do all manner of funny things.' Then 'Little Sandy' performs some of his quaint tricks as only 'Little Sandy' can, and while the audience are laughing and applauding, with what complacency Rivolti looks at them, every feature in his face beaming with gratification. His many admirers will be sorry to hear that he has for the present left the profession, to which, however, he will probably soon return.

Mr John Henry Cooke returned from America this year, and again joined Mr Hengler's Company. *Cinderella* was reproduced for the Christmas holidays, and with greater splendour than on the previous occasion. Large audiences visited the circus, and the season proved a very profitable one. The Prince and Princess of Wales and family again visited the cirque. From London Mr Hengler and his company went to Dublin, and from thence to Hull and Glasgow, returning to London to open for the fourth season in December 1874. The company was of the usual excellence, including a new importation from America, Mr Wooda Cook, a very clever equestrian; 'Little Sandy,' and Mr Barry, a very

pleasing lyrical jester, a great favourite in America, where he has been located several years. The other performers are all excellent. The great feature for the Christmas holidays was a new pantomime, entitled *Little Red Riding Hood*, performed (with the exception of 'Little Sandy,' who enacts the Wicked Wolf) entirely by children, original music being composed by Messieurs Rivière and Stanislaus. The idea of this piece is entirely original, nothing of a similar description having been produced in the arena. The cirque is crowded at every representation, and the present promises to be a greater success than either of Mr Hengler's previous seasons in Argyle Street.

CHAPTER XII.

The Brothers Sanger—First Appearance in London—Vicissitudes of Astley's—Batty and Cooke—Purchase of the Theatre by the Brothers Sanger—Their Travelling Circus—The Tenting System—Barnum and the Sangers.

AN impenetrable mist hangs over the early history of the industrious and enterprising gentlemen who now own the 'home of the equestrian drama' in the Westminster Road. The names of Hengler, and Cooke, and Adams have been, to our fathers and grandfathers, as well as to the present generation, 'familiar in their mouths as household words;' but circus records, and even circus traditions, are silent concerning the progenitors of John and George Sanger. There is a whisper floating about circus dressing-rooms that the latter gentleman might have been seen, many years ago, doing a conjuring trick on the narrow 'parade' of a little show at fairs; but the Brothers Sanger are most reticent concerning their antecedents, and all that

can be said of them with certainty is that they were travelling with a well-appointed circus, and a numerous company and stud, many years before they became known as public entertainers in the metropolis.

They first became known to a London audience by their successful series of performances at the Agricultural Hall, which place of amusement they occupied for several seasons.

During their tenancy they produced several equestrian spectacles, all mounted in a costly and elaborate manner. The first was entitled 'The Congress of Monarchs,' and, nothing of a similar character having been previously produced in London, it attracted an immense concourse of persons to the Hall. To give some idea of the vast number who attended, I am enabled to state, on authority, that on several occasions upwards of 37,000 persons witnessed the performances in one day.

Their last season in this place was in 1872, in which year they also acquired possession of Astley's, which had, since the earlier days of Batty, gradually sunk to the lowest grade in the estimation of the pleasure-seeking portion of the public, all Batty's successors, with the exception of William Cooke, having signally failed. Upon the termination of

Cooke's lease, Batty wished to raise the rental, or sell the property, and as Cooke declined paying more than he had hitherto done, he retired from Astley's and the profession, and Batty, not finding a purchaser or a suitable tenant, after keeping the place closed for some time, opened it himself, having Hughes, a once celebrated equestrian proprietor, as acting manager, and William West as stage director. The military spectacle with which the theatre was re-opened, entitled *The Story of a Flag*, was a failure; and after lingering for a few months the theatre was closed.

Mr E. T. Smith then obtained possession on very advantageous terms, and in a short time was fortunate enough to find a tenant in Mr Nation, who paid £5000 for the unexpired term of the lease. This not proving a profitable investment, the theatre was again in the market, when Mr Boucicault, with the same view of 'regenerating the National Drama,' which he subsequently essayed at Covent Garden with *Babil and Bijou*, obtained a lease, made great alterations, and renamed the building the Royal Westminster Theatre, advertising it as 'the nearest theatre to the West End, through the parks, which extend to the foot of Westminster Bridge, close to which the theatre is situate.' The inhabitants of Lambeth laughed, and the dwellers in Belgravia

wondered; but the Royal Westminster was not frequented by the play-goers of either quarter, and after an unsuccessful season the theatre was again closed.

Mr Batty again trying to dispose of the property, but without effect, it remained closed for a considerable period, until the present proprietors obtained possession of it, and opened it for the Christmas holidays. The experiment of keeping both Astley's and the Agricultural Hall open at the same time did not, however, answer their expectations, and they ultimately concentrated their forces at Astley's, having purchased the property upon extremely advantageous terms.

They expended a large sum of money in having the interior almost entirely remodelled, the well-known theatrical architect, Mr Robinson, being employed for the purpose. Under the present arrangement the building is adapted for the accommodation of nearly 4000 persons. During the winter season the Brothers Sanger remain in London; the other portion of the year is passed in visiting the principal provincial towns, where the extent and splendour of their parade invariably attracts large audiences. The performances are given, sometimes in a huge tent, and sometimes in the open air, in a large field near the town. Their stay in one place

is usually from one to four days, according to the population. Their expenses are necessarily very heavy, and their takings, as a rule, enormous.

It may be interesting to some persons to know how an affair of this description is managed. The proprietors themselves are most industrious and indefatigable, and they have in their service, as acting manager, a very clever and experienced gentleman named Twigg, late lieutenant in one of Her Majesty's regiments. Mr Twigg engages several persons, whose duty it is to make arrangements in advance for the numerous company and stud. They hire ground suitable for the purpose, and engage bill-posters, who placard the town with large and brilliantly-coloured pictorial representations of the performances, and distribute printed bills, containing the names of the performers, also giving a description of the procession, and the route it will take in parading the town. These are distributed in all the villages within a radius of fifteen miles. Lengthened advertisements are also inserted in all the local newspapers, and thus the public curiosity is excited, and it is no uncommon thing for a general holiday to be held upon the day of their grand procession through the town.

Previous to the company arriving, the tent-men,

with the baggage-waggon, proceed to the field, erect the tent, make the ring, and prepare for the various performances,—fixing the hurdles, gates, etc. When the company arrives everything is prepared. The horses are stabled, groomed, and fed; the ‘Tableaux Carriages’ (as they are termed) are washed, and everything made ready for the grand parade, which usually starts from the tent about an hour and a half previous to the first performance. After the parade the show commences—the first one occupying about two hours. After this is over the performers dine and rest until the evening—the second performance commencing about seven, and terminating about ten o’clock.

Immediately after the last act, the whole of the company are advised at what hour they will be required to start in the morning for the next place; this, of course, depends in a great measure upon the length of the journey and the state of the roads; the usual time for starting is about five o’clock, and they travel at the rate of five or six miles an hour. The tent and baggage men leave earlier. Many of the principal members of the company have their own ‘living carriages,’ which are fitted up with every convenience, and a very jolly and healthy life the occupants lead. Two performances are invari-

ably given each day, consisting of the usual equestrian and gymnastic feats, horse and pony racing, hurdle-leaping, and Roman chariot races.

The stud of the Brothers Sanger comprises upwards of 200 horses, the greater number of which are used for drawing their show-cars, conveying the performers and paraphernalia, etc. The trained animals used in their entertainments are very numerous, however, and they have also no fewer than 11 elephants. The company is, necessarily, a very numerous one, consisting of male and female performers, band, grooms, stable-helpers, tent-men, etc.; seldom less than 200 persons altogether. It would surprise most people to see how easily all the arrangements are carried out; when once started on its tour the whole affair moves on like clock-work. The advent of the circus in each town at the time announced may be regarded as an absolute certainty, so complete is the organization in every respect.

This immense establishment has grown to its present gigantic dimensions from very small beginnings, the Brothers Sanger being proud to acknowledge that they commenced their career at the lowest rung of the ladder.

In addition to his share in Astley's Amphitheatre, Mr John Sanger is also proprietor of the 'Hall by the Sea' at Margate, which is managed by his son-

in-law, Mr Reeves, and is highly popular as a place of recreation with the thousands of persons who visit that salubrious watering-place during the summer.

The fame of the Brothers Sanger having reached the United States, Mr P. T. Barnum, the world-renowned American showman, came to England in 1873 expressly to purchase from them the whole of the dresses and material used in the grand spectacle of 'The Congress of Monarchs' (produced by them, as before stated, at the Agricultural Hall), at a cost (as advertised) of £30,000. This has been an immense attraction in New York, and has added considerably to the fortunes of the 'prince of showmen,' as Barnum calls himself.

The Christmas entertainment of the present season has been, as everybody knows, a pantomime entitled—*Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, and the Forty Thieves, and the Flying Horses of Lambeth*—a strange and rather peculiar conglomeration of titles. It has been produced and placed on the stage regardless of cost, the scenic effects being very beautiful, the costumes magnificent and elaborate, and one scene, in which all the company appear, forming a brilliant combination of colour, certainly deserving of the highest praise, and reflecting the greatest credit upon all concerned.

The eleven elephants are here introduced, the 'white' one especially attracting much attention, and Mr George Sanger's address previous to its introduction being not the least amusing part of the performance. These elephants play a very conspicuous part in the tableaux, and the general effect far surpasses anything of a similar description ever produced by the Brothers Sanger, who certainly deserve the fame and fortune which their industry and enterprise have acquired for them.

Until within the last few years it was supposed that the circus-loving portion of the metropolitan population was not numerous enough to support more than one equestrian establishment; but the contrary may now be regarded as proven, and, though it may still be doubted whether London would support as many circuses as the much less populous city of Paris, we trust to see the company and stud of Mr Hengler at his most comfortable *cirque* in Argyle Street, and those of the Brothers Sanger at Astley's, for many years to come, and to be assured that with each recurring season the proprietors of both establishments are augmenting the fame and fortune which they have so deservedly won.

CHAPTER XIII.

American Circuses—American Performers in England, and English Performers in the United States—The Cookes in America—Barnum's great Show—Yankee Parades—Van Amburgh's Circus and Menagerie—Robinson's combined Shows—Stone and Murray's Circus—The Forepaughs—Joel Warner—Side Shows—Amphitheatres of New York and New Orleans.

THE circus in America is a highly popular entertainment, and is organized upon a very extensive scale, as everything is there, like the country itself, with its illimitable prairies, rivers thousands of miles long, and lakes like inland seas. Americans have a boundless admiration of everything big; they seem to revel even in 'big' bankruptcies and 'big' fires, such as that which desolated Chicago a few years ago. Circus proprietors bring their establishments before the public, not by vaunting the talent of the company, or the beauty and sagacity of the horses, but by announcing the thousands of square feet which the circus covers, the thousands of dollars

to which their daily or weekly expenses amount, and the number of miles to which their parades extend. 'This is a big concern,' say those who read the announcement, and their patronage is proportionate to its extent and cost.

The American circuses are all conducted on the tenting system, and, as there are few towns in the Union which could support one only of the many colossal establishments which travel during the summer, most of them are idle during the winter; many of them are combined with a menagerie, in which cases one charge admits to both. Except in the matter of size, they do not differ materially from tenting circuses in this country; but the tents are larger, the parades longer, and the rifle-targets, the Aunt Sallies, and the acrobats in dirty tights who follow Sanger, and the Ginnetts, and Quaglieni, and other tenting circuses in England, are replaced by small shows, such as attend fairs in this country, and in which giants, dwarfs, albinos, and monstrosities of various kinds are exhibited.

The interchange of circus performers between England and the United States, which has existed almost as long as circuses, has made us better acquainted in this country with the kind and quality of the performances to be witnessed in American circuses than with the manner in which they are

conducted. Stickney and North were known and appreciated at Astley's by the last generation, and the present has seen and admired, at the Holborn Amphitheatre, those inimitable gymnasts, the Brothers Hanlon, the incomparable vaulter, Kelly, and some others. Wallett, the Cookes, and many others, besides French, German, and Italian performers who have appeared in English circuses and music-halls, have found their way to America, and proved as attractive there as here. Four years ago, the Cooke family was represented in the United States by Emily Henrietta Cooke, John Henry Cooke, and George Cooke, prominent members of Stone and Murray's company, and James E. Cooke with French's circus.

The largest circus now travelling is Barnum's, forming a portion of the great combination advertised as the 'Great Travelling World's Fair.' Barnum has long been famous in both hemispheres as the greatest showman in the world. He is certainly a man of remarkable enterprise and energy. He is quick in arriving at conclusions, and when he has resolved upon any undertaking, he exercises all his energy, and brings into force all the results of his long and varied experience, in carrying it into execution.

Coup, a gentleman well known among public en-

tertainers across the Atlantic, said to Barnum one day, 'What do you say to putting a big show on the road?'

'How much will it cost?' inquired Barnum, after a moment's reflection.

'Two hundred thousand dollars,' was the reply.

'I'll let you know to-morrow,' said Barnum.

On the following day, he told Coup that 'Barnum's great show' was a fact, and that he (Coup) was to be its manager, as he is to this day. The establishment then formed was, however, far from being the mammoth concern with which the great showman took the field in 1873. Notwithstanding the great loss which he sustained by the burning of the museum which so long attracted attention in the Broadway, New York, at the close of the preceding year, he came before the public a few months afterwards with a circus, a menagerie, a museum, a gallery of pictures and statuary, and a show of mechanical wonders and curiosities, all combined in one, and to which the public were admitted for a single payment of half-a-dollar.

The address to the public with which this colossal combination of entertainments was inaugurated is so unique and characteristic that I need make no apology for inserting it entire.

‘LADIES, GENTLEMEN, FAMILIES, CHILDREN, FRIENDS :

‘My career for forty years as a public Manager of amusements, blended with instruction, is well known. You have all heard of my three New York Museums; my great triumphal tour with Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, and my immense travelling exhibitions. Everybody concedes that I give ten times the money’s worth, and always delight my patrons. I now come before you with the
LAST GRAND CROWNING TRIUMPH OF MY MANAGERIAL LIFE.

‘Notwithstanding the burning of my last Museum, in December (which, however, did not destroy any of my great travelling chariots, vans, cages, or horses, nor duplicates of most of my living wild animals, which were then on exhibition in New Orleans), I have been enabled, through the aid of cable dispatches, electricity and steam, and the expenditure of nearly a million of dollars, to place upon the road by far the largest and most interesting combination of MUSEUM, MENAGERIE, and HIPPODROME ever known before—a veritable WORLD’S FAIR.

‘No description will convey an adequate idea of its vastness, its beauty, and its marvellous collection of wonders. It travels by rail, and requires more than one hundred cars, besides FIFTY OF MY OWN, made expressly for this purpose, and five or six

locomotives to transport it. My daily expenses exceed \$5,000. We can only stop in large towns, and leave it to those residing elsewhere to reach us by cheap excursion trains, which they can easily get up.

‘Among some of my novelties is a FREE FULL MENAGERIE OF WILD ANIMALS, including all, and more than are usually seen in a travelling menagerie, which I now open to be seen by everybody, WITHOUT ANY CHARGE WHATSOEVER. Although I have consolidated more than twenty shows in one, containing nearly one hundred gorgeously magnificent gold and enamelled cages, dens and vans, requiring the services of nearly 1,000 men and over 500 horses, the price of admission to the entire combination of exhibition is only the same as is charged to a common show, viz. 50 cents; children half price. My great Hippodrome Tent comfortably seats 14,000 persons at one time, while my numerous other tents cover several acres of ground.

‘The Museum Department contains 100,000 curiosities, including Professor Faber’s wonderful TALKING MACHINE, costing me \$20,000 for its use six months. Also, a National Portrait Gallery of 100 life-size Oil Paintings, including all the Presidents of the United States, our Statesmen and Military Heroes, as well as foreign Potentates and Celebrities,

and the entire Collection of the celebrated John Rogers' groups of Historical and Classic Statuary. Also, an almost endless variety of Curiosities, including numberless Automaton Musicians and Mechanicians, and Moving Scenes, Transformation Landscapes, Sailing Ships, Running Water-mills, Railroad Trains, etc., made in Paris and Geneva, more beautiful and marvellous than can be imagined, and all kept in motion by a Steam Engine. Here, also, are Giants, Dwarfs, Fiji Cannibals, Modoc and Digger Indians, Circassian Girls, the No-armed Boy, etc.

'Among the rare wild animals are MONSTER SEA LIONS, transported in great water-tanks; the largest RHINOCEROS ever captured alive, and 1,500 Wild Beasts and Rare Birds, Lions, Elephants, Elands, Gnus, Tigers, Polar Bears, Ostriches, and every description of wild animal hitherto exhibited, besides many never before seen on this Continent.

'In the Hippodrome Department are THREE DISTINCT RINGS, wherein three sets of rival performances are taking place at the same time, in full view of all the audience. Here will be seen Performing Elephants, Horse-riding Goats, Educated Horses, Elk and Deer in Harness, Ponies, Trick Mules, and Bears, and three distinct Equestrian Companies (with six clowns), including by far the best Male

and Female Bare-back Riders in the World, with numerous Athletes and Gymnasts who have no equal. Everything is perfectly chaste and unobjectionable. Its like will never be known.

‘THE GREAT STREET-PROCESSION, three miles long, takes place every morning at half-past eight o’clock. It is worth going 100 miles to see. It consists of trains of Elephants, Camels, Dromedaries, Zebras, and Elks in harness; nearly 100 Gold Enamelled and Cerulean Chariots, Vans, Dens, and Cages; Arabian Horses, Trick Ponies, three Bands of Music, and a most marvellous display of Gymnastic, Automatic, and Musical performances in the public streets.

‘THREE FULL EXHIBITIONS will be given each day at ten, one, and seven o’clock. No one should miss the early Procession.

‘The Public’s Obedient Servant,

‘P. T. BARNUM.’

The circus department of this unrivalled combination show is managed by Dan Castello, who is described in the bills as ‘a gentleman of rare accomplishments as a jester and conversationalist, whose varied and ripe experience in Continental Europe, and North and South America, render his services of great value.’ The company comprised Celeste

Pauliere, the dashing bare-back rider of the Cirque Français; D'Atalie, 'the man with the iron jaw,' who appeared a year or two ago at some of the London music-halls; the Sisters Marion, who then appeared in America for the first time; Frank Barry, Vinnie Cook, Montenard and Aymar, Madame Aymar, Marie Girardeau, and Carlotta Davoli: and among performers less known on this side of the Atlantic, Lucille Watson, Angela ('the female Samson'), Sebastian and Romeo, the Mathews family, Lazelle and Millison, the Bliss family, Bushnell, Nathan, Nichols, Lee, and Hopper.

The grand parade is a thing to be seen once in a life, and talked of ever afterwards. Here I must let the Prince of Showmen, as Barnum has been called, speak for himself; no other's pen could do justice to the theme. 'The grand street pageant,' says one of his bills, 'which heralds the advent into each town of the longest and grandest spectacular demonstration ever witnessed, is nearly three miles in length. Prominent among the grand and attractive features of the innumerable caravan, are the twelve golden chariots, eight statuary and four tableau, including the gorgeous moving Temple of Juno, 30 feet high, built in London at a cost of \$20,000, the musical Chariot of Mnemosyne, the revolving Temple of the Muses, the great steam

Calliope, three bands of music, and one hundred resplendent cages and vans.

‘These magnificently gilded Palaces and Dens, plated and elaborated by the most cunning artisans, after vivid designs and gorgeous impersonations from the Dreams of Hesiod, are drawn in the Great Procession by trained Elephants, Camels, Dromedaries, Arabian Thoroughbreds, Liliputian Ponies, herds of Elk and Reindeer in harness, and a gorgeously caparisoned retinue of dapple Steeds and Shetland Palfreys. They are of such rich and varied attractions as to excite the envy of a CRESUS or BELLEROPHONTES.

‘The Great Procession will be interspersed with grotesque figures, such as automaton gymnasts, mechanical trapezists, globe and ball jugglers, comic clowns, and athletic sports, performing on the tops of the cages and chariots, in open streets, all the difficult feats of the celebrated living gymnasts. The different brass bands, musical chariots, Polyhymnian organs, steam pianos, and Calliopes, &c., are equivalent to one hundred skilful musicians. Persons anxious to see the procession should come early, as three performances a day are given to accommodate the multitudes, viz., at 10 a.m., also at one and seven o’clock in the afternoon and evening. Prof. Fritz Hartman’s silver cornet band, Herr

Hessler's celebrated brass and string bands, Mons. Joseph Mesmer's French cornet band, and the great orchestra Polyhymnia, will enliven the community with their choicest rhapsodies, in alternate succession, while passing through the streets.'

The bill concludes with the following announcement, eminently characteristic of the people, and of Barnum in particular:—'Tickets will be carefully but rapidly dispensed, not only by BEN LUSBIE, Esq., the "Lightning Ticket Seller," whose achievement of disposing of tickets at the rate of 6,000 per hour is one of the sensational features of the great free show, but from several ticket waggons, and also from the elegant carriage of Mr Barnum's Book Agent, who furnishes Tickets FREE to all buyers of the Life of P. T. Barnum, written by himself, reduced from \$3.50 to \$1.50.'

Circuses on such a scale as this, and many similar concerns now travelling in the United States, can only be conducted successfully by those who combine a large amount of reserve capital with the requisite judgment, experience, and energy for undertakings so great and onerous. There are in that country, though its population is much less and scattered over an area far more extensive than that of Great Britain, many more circuses than exist in this country, and most of them organized on a scale

which can be matched in England only by Sanger's. Conducted as such enterprises are in America, under conditions unknown in this country, a bad season is ruin to circus proprietors whose reserve capital is insufficient to enable them to hold their own against a year's losses, maintain their stud during the winter in idleness, and take the field with undiminished strength and untarnished splendour in the following spring.

American circus proprietors, managers, performers, and all connected with them, will not soon forget the season of 1869, which ruined several concerns, sapped the strength of more, and disappointed all. 'During the winter of 1868-9,' writes an American gentleman, fully acquainted with the subject, 'the most extensive preparations were made by them. New canvases were bought, new wagons built, the entire paraphernalia refitted, and considerable expense gone to for what they all anticipated would be a prosperous season. The rainy term struck a good many of the shows in the western country as soon as they got fairly on the road, and some of them did not see the sun any day for three weeks. This proved disastrous, as it put them back several weeks. The rainy weather made the roads in a horrible condition and almost impassable, while in some parts of the far west one concern came to a

dead stand for a week, not being able to get along with the heavy wagons through a country that had to be forded. In this manner several concerns lost many of their stands. Then, when they did strike a clear country, business did not come up to expectations. It is very doubtful if, out of the twenty-eight circuses and menageries that started out in April and May, more than six concerns came home with the right side of a balance-sheet. Of this number were the European, Bailey's, Stone and Murray's, and two or three of the menageries. Some of the other shows managed by close figuring to worry through the season and come home with their horses pretty well jaded out, their wagons worn, and their canvas in a dilapidated condition. There were other shows that collapsed before the season was half over.

'Profiting by experience, and having not much better hopes for next season, scarcely a manager went heavily into preparations during the winter for the summer's campaign. The general impression with all the old and experienced managers was that it was going to be another hard one for them to pull through, and could they have made any satisfactory disposal of their live stock, they would willingly have done so sooner than go through such another summer as the last one. Some of the old managers

believe in "Never say die," and launched out a little more boldly than the rest, believing that "Nothing venture, nothing win." The big concerns that have wealthy managers, who can stand a few weeks of bad luck, hold out; but there are several new managers getting into the business—as well as several old ones—who have just money enough to get their shows on the road. These are the concerns that go by the board first, should times be bad, for, having no money to fall back on, the "jig's up." There are many shows that go on the road without a dollar in the treasury, comparatively speaking. They manage to crawl along by paying no salaries, their daily receipts just about meeting their hotel bill for keep of men and horses. Finally, they reach a town, the weather is very stormy, and the receipts do not come up to the daily expense. The consequence is the landlord of the hotel has to accompany the show to the next stand to get his money, and in some instances keep along for two or three days.

'I know of a circus that once travelled through Vermont and did a good business, but on their return home through New York State met with five weeks of horrible business, the weather being rainy nearly every day. There were from two to three landlords accompanying the show all the time to collect back bills, and as fast as one was dropped

another would be taken on. In one town one landlord, who had been along for nearly a week, grew out of patience, and, becoming desperate, had the canvas attached, and as soon as the company got ready to start for the next town it was hauled down to a stable under charge of the sheriff. Of course there was no use of the show going to the next town without a canvas, so at last the sheriff kindly consented to take two of the baggage horses for the debt, and they were left behind. This caused a delay, and the canvas did not arrive in the next town until it was too late to give the afternoon show. This is only one of the hundreds of little events that transpire during the tenting season.

‘But the greatest trouble experienced by circus managers is the attempt on the part of crowds of roughs to gain free admittance to the circus. In a body they go to the door and attempt to pass; upon being stopped, they show fight. If they are worsted, they soon re-appear on the scene, considerably strengthened in numbers, and they either cut the guy ropes and let down the canvas, or they get into a fight with the circus boys. Generally speaking, serious results follow, and if one of the citizens of the town is hurt the concern is followed to the next town and hunted like dogs, and probably the same scenes occur there. There are several towns where

trouble is generally looked for. West Troy, N. Y., is one of these, and we could mention half a dozen others. In scarcely one of these towns are the police strong enough to break up these regular circus riots. A circus manager is compelled to pay to the corporation a heavy license fee for the privilege of showing in the town, a goodly tax for ground rent for pitching his canvas, he is charged exorbitantly for everything he wants during his stay there, and he has a United States licence also to pay, and it is but justice that the corporation should be prepared beforehand, and see that said manager's property is protected.'

Next to Barnum's, the best organized and appointed circuses now travelling are Van Amburgh's, Robinson's, and Stone and Murray's. Van Amburgh and Co. own two menageries, one of which accompanies the circus. It will surprise persons acquainted only with English circuses to learn that the staff of the combined shows comprises a manager and an assistant manager, advertiser, treasurer, equestrian director, riding-master, band leader, lion performer, elephant man, doorkeeper, and head ostler, besides grooms, tent-men, &c., to the number, all told, of nearly a hundred. The number of horses, including those used for draught, is about a hundred and forty.

In 1870, the management adopted the plan of camping the horses and providing lodgings and board for the entire company, so as to be independent of hotel and stable keepers, whose demands upon circus companies are said to have often been extortionate. To this end, they had constructed a canvas stable, and two large carriages, eighteen feet long, to be set eighteen feet apart, with swinging sides, was to form a house eighteen feet by thirty. This is their hotel, and the cooking is done in a portable kitchen, drawn by four horses. Fifty men are lodged and boarded in this construction, which is called, after the manager, Hyatt Frost, the Hotel Frost. Among the cooking utensils provided for the travelling kitchen is a frying-pan thirty inches in diameter, which will cook a gross of eggs at once.

Robinson, the manager of the concern known as the Yankee Robinson Consolidated Shows, combines a menagerie and a ballet *troupe* with a circus, the former containing a group of performing bears. The parades of this circus are organized on a great scale, and usually present some feature of novelty, or more than ordinary splendour. A new Polyhymnia, used as an advertising car, and which produces a volume of sound equal to that of a brass band, was added to its attractions in 1870. The

Hayneses or Senyahs, who performed at several of the London music-halls a few years ago, and whose performance has been described in a previous chapter, were at that time in the company, and had been during the previous winter at the Olympic Theatre, Brooklyn. There also another female gymnast known to the frequenters of metropolitan music-halls, namely, Madlle Geraldine, appeared that season. Robinson is said to be the only man that so far has been successful as a circus manager, performer, and Yankee comedian, having appeared with considerable success as a representative of Yankee characters at Wood's Museum and the Olympic Theatre, New York, as well as in other cities.

Stone and Murray's circus enjoyed, until Barnum took the field, a reputation second to none in the Union. 'Wherever they have been,' says the writer already quoted, 'they have left a good name behind them, and they give a really good circus entertainment. Everything about the show presents a neat appearance, and the company are noted for behaving themselves wherever they appear.' This is the circus in which two or three of the numerous and talented Cooke family performed during the season of 1870, together with Jeannette Elslser, who in 1852 performed at Batty's Hippodrome, being

then a member of Franconi's company. Charles Bliss, now in Barnum's company, and William Ducrow, were also members of Stone and Murray's company four years ago. For the parade, this circus has a band chariot, drawn by forty horses; and in 1870, as an additional outside attraction, Madlle Elsler made an ascent on a wire from the ground to the top of the pavilion, a feat which she had performed eighteen years previously at Batty's Hippodrome.

Forepaugh's 'zoological and equestrian aggregation,' as the show is called, combines a circus with a menagerie, and possesses no fewer than three elephants and as many camels. Adam Forepaugh is the proprietor of this show, which must not be confounded with Gardner and Forepaugh's circus and menagerie, which was organized in 1870 by the amalgamation of Gardner and Kenyon's menagerie with James Robinson's circus. Kenyon retired from the former in 1869, and John Forepaugh, brother of Adam, took his place. The two elephants and other animals forming the zoological collection belong, however, to Adam Forepaugh, from whom they are hired on a per centage arrangement. Madlle Virginie, who appeared at the Holborn Amphitheatre a few years ago, has since been travelling with Adam Forepaugh; while Gardner

and Forepaugh's circus has included in its company J. M. Kelly, brother of George Kelly, the champion vaulter, whose double somersaults over a dozen horses will long linger in the memory of those who witnessed the feat in the same arena.

Joel Warner, who was formerly Adam Forepaugh's advertiser, started a circus and menagerie on his own account in 1871. 'He said,' writes the gentleman who relates the story of the origin of Barnum's show, 'that he was "bound to have some money, or die;" and he added that he would "fifty per cent. rather have the money than die." Well, he started out, and met with but poor encouragement; still his indomitable energy kept him above-water until he got into Indiana, when he found, to his utter consternation, that he was to meet with strong opposition. "Well," he said, "there's just one way to get out of this," and Warner quietly disappeared. Two or three days after a travel-worn stranger stepped into the counting-room of Russell, Morgan, & Co.'s great printing house, in Cincinnati, and, sitting himself down in a chair, exclaimed:—"Well, here I am, and here I'll stay." It was Warner, and the way that man disturbed the placid bosom of quart-bottles of ink was a warning to writists. For two weeks he sat at a desk running off "proof" from his pen, while the printers ran it

off from the press, and when he got through, J. E. Warner & Co.'s Menagerie and Circus was among the best advertised shows in America. He courted the muses too, and fair poetry shed her light upon Warner's wearied brain, while she tipped his fingers with:—

“One summer's eve, amid the bowers
Of Grand river's peaceful stream,
Sleeping 'mong the breathing flowers,
Joel Warner had a dream:
Argosies came richly freighted,
Birds and beasts, from every land,
At his calling came and waited,
Till he raised his magic hand.”

The “magic hand,” was raised, and Hoosiers and Michiganders filled it with “rocks.” I met him in the summer at Fort Wayne. “Well, Warner, what success?” I asked. “Red hot!” was the answer, and off he started to hire every bill-board and bill-poster and newspaper in the town. As an advertiser he stands “ever so high,” and as a gentleman he is, as Captain Cuttle remarked of his watch, “equalled by few and excelled by none.”

‘One day Charley Castle—of course, everybody knows Charley Castle, and has heard him mention Syracuse—one day Charley Castle lost a beautiful topaz from a ring, and after a thorough search he gave it up as gone; “still,” said he, “I’ll give two dollars to the finder if he returns it.” Warner

quietly walked across the street to the dollar-store and bought a glass stone which bore a remarkable resemblance to the one lost. Laying it in a corner, he sat down, and in a few moments delighted Castle by pointing out his lost gem. It fitted the setting exactly, and Charley was happy. "Well," said Warner, "I won't ask you for the two dollars, Charley, but you must set 'em up." "All right." They were set up accordingly, and it cost three dollars exactly. A short time after, Castle made a startling discovery—his beautiful topaz was beautiful glass. There was war in that camp, and in order to move Charley Castle it is only necessary to go and whisper "topaz" in his ear.

'But Castle is full of tricks too. Out in Ohio, when he was agent of O'Brien's big show—"Great Monster Menagerie, National Natural Kingdom and Aviary of Exotic Birds"—that's what he calls it—a landlord gave him a cross word. "Hitch up them horses," he shouted to his groom, and leaving the landlord a left-handed blessing, he drove three miles away, and showed in an open farm, to a crowded house. Landlords and showmen often have little passages, and generally the showmen come out winners. I remember a landlord in a southern town, who once contracted to keep fifty men, and when the show arrived he had just ten beds in the

house. This was rough on the showmen, but the way the landlord suffered was enough to "point a moral and adorn a tale."

Bailey's circus also combines a menagerie with the attractions of the arena, and the former, which includes two large elephants and no fewer than ten camels, is exhibited during the winter at Wood's Museum, New York. Though called Bailey's, George Bailey is only the junior partner and general director, the senior partners being Avery Smith and John Nathans, who are also the proprietors, in partnership with George Burnell, of the European Circus. Sebastian and Romeo, now travelling with Barnum's show, were performing in this circus a few years ago, together with George Derious, a gymnast who, in 1869, performed some sensational feats at the Bowery theatre, New York.

The European circus of Smith, Nathans, and Burnell travels with a company of a hundred and twenty-five persons, and a stud of a hundred and thirty-four horses. The famous Frank Pastor was lately the principal equestrian, and the Conrads were among the gymnastic artistes.

French's circus was the first in America in which the system of lodging and boarding the company and stabling the horses, independently of hotels, was introduced. The cooking and dining carriage is

eighteen feet long, eight feet wide, and ten feet high; and there are several large carriages for sleeping purposes. French employs a hundred and twenty persons, all told, and his stud numbers as many horses, besides two elephants, fifteen camels, and two cages of performing lions.

Campbell's show, which comprises a circus and a menagerie, is a good one of the second, or rather third, class. The circus company lately included Madame Brown (better known as Marie Tournaire), Madlle Josephine, and Sam Stickney—a name still famous in the arena. The zoological collection includes an elephant and a group of performing lions, tigers, and leopards, who are exercised by Signor Balize.

There remains to be noticed several tenting circuses of minor extent and repute, but which make a figure that would be more highly esteemed in this country. Wheeler and Cushing have a band of silver cornet players, and their company lately included Madame Tournaire, Annie Warner, and Pardon Dean, the oldest English equestrian in America. Wilson's circus included the world-famed Brothers Risareli in the company just before their appearance at the Holborn Amphitheatre. Johnson's circus was strengthened a few years ago by amalgamation with Levi North's show, which in-

cluded a group of performing animals, and is now able to give a parade extending to the length of a mile. Older's circus and menagerie is a fourth-rate concern, but yet possesses two camels.

Thayer's circus was broken up by the bad business of 1869, and the stud and effects sold by auction. A new concern was organized in the same name in the following year by James Anderson, with fifty people and as many horses, Thayer being manager, Samuel Stickney equestrian director, and Charlie Abbott—the vanishing clown of a few years ago at the Holborn Amphitheatre—as clown. Ward's circus started in 1869, and broke up the same year, when Bunnell and Jones bought the stud and effects at auction for little more than one-seventh of the money they had cost, and started it again in Ward's name, in 1870. Lake's circus was sold by auction about the same time, when the ring horses were bought by Van Amburgh, and the draught stock by Noyes. There are three other circuses—Watson's, De Haven's, and Alexander Robinson's — which though they bear the high-sounding names of the Metropolitan, the Sensation, and the International Hippo-comique and World Circus, are of comparative small importance.

Besides these, there are some circuses which travel the Southern States, where the climaté enables

them to tent all the year round. Foremost among these is Noyes' circus, a great feature in the parade of which is the globe band chariot, drawn by eight cream-coloured horses. Hemmings, Cooper, and Whitby's show combines with the circus a small menagerie, and includes an elephant and a cage of performing lions. Grady's circus lately numbered in its company Madame Macarte, who formerly travelled with Batty, and whose real name is, I believe, Macarthy. John Robinson's circus and menagerie also possesses an elephant, and the zoological collection has been greatly enlarged of late years. Stowe's circus appears to be a very small concern.

Most of the American circuses, including all the most considerable, are accompanied, as before stated, by what are termed 'side shows,' of which the following account is given by the gentleman to whom I am indebted for the statement of the troubles of American circuses in the beginning of this chapter. 'The side show,' he says, 'is an institution of itself—one in which considerable money is invested with some concerns, while with others not so much capital is required. What is known as a side show is an entertainment given in a small canvas in close proximity to the big show. To secure the sole privilege of conducting this entertainment on the same ground

as used by the big concern, and for being permitted to accompany it on its summer tour, a considerable bonus has to be paid. There is a great rivalry among side showmen to secure the privilege with the larger concerns, as a great deal of money is made during a tenting season. Some of these entertainments consist of a regular minstrel performance or the exhibition of some monstrosity, such as a five-legged cow, a double-headed calf, collection of anacondas, sword-swallowers, stone-eaters, dwarf, giant, fat woman, and anything else, no matter what, so long as it is a curiosity.

‘The *modus operandi* of running a side show is as follows:—The manager has a two-horse waggon, into which he packs his canvas and traps. He starts off early in the morning, so as to reach the town in which the circus is to exhibit about an hour before the procession is made. He drives to the lot, and in less than an hour every preparation has been completed and the side show commences, with the “blower” taking his position at the door of the entrance, and in a stentorian voice expatiating at large upon what is to be seen within for the small sum of ten cents; sometimes the admission is twenty-five cents. The term “blower” is given to this individual because he talks so much and tells a great deal more than what proves to be true. A crowd

always gathers about a circus lot early in the morning, and many a nimble tenpence is picked up before the procession is made in town. When that is over and has reached the lot, an immense crowd gathers around to see the pitching of the big canvas, and from them many drop in to see the side show. As soon as the big show opens for the afternoon performance the "kid" show, as the side show is called, shuts up and does not open again until about five minutes before the big show is out. Then the "blower" mounts a box or anything that is handy, and goes at it with a will, "blowing" and taking in the stamps at the same time. This is kept up for about half an hour, by which time all have gone in that can, while the rest have departed. The side show entertainment lasts about half an hour, when the doors are closed and remain so until the evening performance of the big show is over. And then, with a huge torch-ball blazing each side of him, the "blower" commences. This torch ball consists of balls of cotton wicking, such as was used in olden times for oil lamps; having been soaked well in alcohol and lighted, it is fixed upon an iron rod, about six feet long, which is placed upright in the ground and the ball will burn for half an hour or more; two balls will make the whole neighbourhood nearly as light as day.

'The receipts from some side shows reach over \$150 a day, and with the larger concerns a still greater amount than this is taken. I know of a side show that travelled with a circus company through Vermont and the Canadas, about ten years ago, that actually came home in the fall with more money than the circus had; not that it took more money, but it did a big business, and had little or no expense. The side show belonged to the manager of the big show, and consisted of a couple of snakes, a cage of monkeys, and a deformed negro wench, who was represented as a wild woman, caught by a party of slaves in the swamps of Florida. While the big show did a poor business the "kid" show made money. Some of the circus managers do not dispose of the side show privilege, but run it themselves. Then, again, the manager of the big show rents out what is called the "concert privilege;" that is, the right of giving a minstrel entertainment within the canvas of the big show as soon as the regular afternoon and evening performances are over. This consists of a regular first part and variety minstrel entertainment, given by the circus performers, who can either play some musical instrument or dance; occasionally some of the ladies of the company dance. The show lasts about three quarters of an hour, and the charge is twenty-five

cents. The clown announces to the audience, just before the big show is over, that the entertainment will be given immediately after, and those who wish to witness it can keep their seats. Several parties then skirmish among the assembled multitude and cry "tickets for the concert, twenty-five cents," and just before the entertainment commences the tickets are collected.'

New York and New Orleans are provided with permanent buildings in which circus performances are given during the winter by companies which travel in the tenting season. At the New York Amphitheatre the company comprises some of the best equestrians and gymnasts, American and European, whose services can be secured, such as Robert Stickney, William Conrad (who, with his brother, will be remembered by many as gymnasts at the Alhambra), and Joe Pentland, one of the oldest and best clowns in the Union. The stud comprises between forty and fifty horses, all used in turn in the ring, as the summer campaign is made by rail, and only the principal towns are visited. Mr Lent is lessee and manager in New York.

The New Orleans Amphitheatre combines a menagerie with its circus attractions, and is owned by C. T. Ames. There are twelve camels attached to it, and a 'mio,' whatever that may be,

the animal being as unknown to naturalists, by that name at least, as the 'vedo' of Sanger's circus. Lucille Watson, now with Barnum's company, was previously a member of the New Orleans troupe.

CHAPTER XIV.

Reminiscences of a Gymnast—Training and Practising—A Professional Rendezvous—Circus Agencies—The First Engagement—Springthorp's Music-hall—Newsome's Circus—Reception in the Dressing-room—The Company and the Stud—The Newsome Family—Miss Newsome's Wonderful Leap across a green lane—The Handkerchief Trick—An Equine Veteran from the Crimea—Engagement to travel.

THE picture of circus life and manners which I have endeavoured to portray would not be complete without a narrative of the professional experiences of the performers engaged in circuses. I shall next, therefore, present the reminiscences of a gymnast, as I heard them related a few years ago by one who has since retired from the avocation; and I shall endeavour to do so, as nearly as may be possible, in his own words.

'I was not born and bred a circus man, as most of them are—Alf Burgess, for instance, who was born, as I may say, in the saw-dust, and brought up on the back of a horse. Neither was my partner.

He was a clerk in the advertising department of a London evening newspaper, and I was an apprentice in a London printing-office, and not quite out of my time, when we went in for gymnastics at the Alhambra gymnasium. My partner was practising the flying trapeze, and was just beginning to do his flights with confidence, when that poor fellow fell, and broke his back, at the Canterbury, and the proprietors of the London music-halls set their faces against the flying trapeze, and would not engage gymnasts for it. In consequence of that, he had to drop the flying trapeze, and practise for the fixed trapeze; and, as the single trapeze doesn't draw, he began to look out for a partner, to do it double. Price was looking out for a partner at the same time, but, as he was more advanced in his training than Fred was, and was not disposed to wait till he was proficient, he took Joe Welsh,—Alhambra Joe, as he used to be called,—and Fred had to look out for somebody else.

‘The partnership of the Brothers Price, as they called themselves, did not last long; for Price dropped in for a slice of luck, in the shape of a thumping legacy,—twenty thousand pounds, I have heard,—and then he turned up the profession, and Joe Welsh went in for the long flight. In the mean time, I had made up my mind to follow Fred's

example, and to be his partner; and, besides fixing up the ropes for the flying rings in my grandmother's orchard at Norwood, for practice on Sundays, we took our fakements nearly every evening to the "ruins," as they were called, in Victoria Street. Do you know where I mean?'

I did know the place, and remembered that it conveyed the idea that a Metropolitan Improvement Commission's notions of street improvements consisted in demolishing some three or four hundred houses, and creating a wilderness of unfinished houses, yawning chasms, and heaps of rubbish. The place remained in that condition for several years, and was the rendezvous and free gymnasium of most of the gymnasts, acrobats, rope-dancers, and other professors of muscular sensationalism in the metropolis.

'Well, we fixed our fakements up in the "ruins," and when the evenings began to get dark we had candles. A lot of us used to be there—Frank Berrington, and Costello, and Jemmy Lee, and Joe Welsh, and Bill George, and ever so many more. There used to be all kinds of gymnastic exercises going on there; and there my partner and I went, night after night, until we could do a tidy slang on the trapeze, the rings, or the bar. Then we went to Roberts; he used to live in Compton Street then,

and he and Maynard, in York Road, Lambeth, were agents for all the circuses and music-halls in the three kingdoms, and often had commissions from foreign establishments to engage *artistes* for them. They get engagements for you, and you pay them a commission of fifteen per cent. on the salary they get for you ; so it is their interest to get you as good a screw as they can, and it is your interest to keep the commission paid regularly, because if you don't, you will have to look out for yourselves when you want another engagement. If you don't act honourable, and you try to get another engagement without the intervention of an agent, the circus or music-hall proprietor or manager says, "I engage my people through Roberts," or Maynard, as the case may be ; and there you are—flummoxed !

' Well, we went to Roberts, and had to wait our turn, while he did business with other fellows who were before us. We looked at the framed collections of photographs of gymnasts, acrobats, clowns, riders, jugglers, singers, and dancers which hung against the wall, and then we looked about us. There was Hassan, the Arab, a wiry-looking tawny man, black bearded and moustached, and wearing a scarlet fez, a blue zouave jacket, and baggy crimson breeches ; and old Zamezou, with a broad-brimmed felt hat overshadowing his face, and his portly figure

enveloped in the folds of a large blue cloak ; and George Christoff, the rope-dancer, buttoned up in his over-coat, and looking rather blue, as if he had just stepped up from the chilly fog in the street ; and Luke Berrington, looking quite the swell, as he always does ; and one or two more that I didn't know, or can't remember. One by one, they dropped out, and others came in, till at last our turn came.

“ Well,” says Roberts, who is a nice sort of fellow—a smart dark-complexioned man, with gold rings in his ears, “ I want a couple of good gymnasts for Springthorp's, at Hull ; but, you see, I don't know you : where have you been ? ”

‘ That was a floorer ; but, before my partner could answer, a young fellow who had just come in, and who had seen us practising at the “ ruins,” and knew what we could do, says, “ I know them ; they have just come from the Cirque Imperiale.”

“ Oh ! ” says Roberts, “ if you have been at the Cirque Imperiale, you will do for Springthorp's. The engagement will be for six nights, commencing on Saturday next ; and you will have five pounds.”

‘ That was gorgeous, we thought. There was I, getting, as an apprentice, a pound a week, with three-and-thirty shillings, or six-and-thirty at the most, in perspective ; and my partner, out of collar

for months, and receiving the munificent salary of twelve bob a week when in : and we had jumped into fifty shillings a week each, for a nightly performance of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour ! It is no wonder that we fell to work, building castles in the air, as soon as we got into the street. We should go to the Cirque Imperiale some day, though we had not been there yet, and then to Madrid or St Petersburg, and come back to England, and be engaged for the Alhambra at fifty pounds a week. From the lofty height to which we had soared before we reached the Haymarket we were brought to the ground by considerations of finance. We were both at low-water mark, and the denarlies had to be found for our tights and trunks, and our expenses down to Hull. We got over that little difficulty, however, and started for Hull with hearts as light as our purses.

‘Do you know Springthorp’s? You were never in Hull, perhaps ; but, if you should ever happen to be there, and should lose yourself, as you are very likely to do, in the neighbourhood of the docks, and should wander into the dullest part of the town, towards Sculcoates, you will come upon a dreary-looking building, which was once a chapel, and afterwards a wax-work exhibition. That is Springthorp’s ; and there, in the dreariest, dingiest hall

that was ever mocked with the name of a place of amusement, we gave our first performance. The Vokes family were performing there at the same time, and very agreeable people we found them. The six nights came to an end too soon,—before we had got used to seeing our name in the bills, in the largest type and the reddest ink. Then we came back to London, and presented ourselves again before our agent. We had given entire satisfaction at Springthorp's, he told us; but he couldn't offer us another engagement just then. He should put our name on his list, and, if anything should turn up, he would let us know.

‘The first offer came from a music-hall at Plymouth, but the screw was too low for the distance, unless we had had other engagements in the western towns to follow, and we didn't take it. The next chance was at the Hippodrome, in Paris, and we should have gone there, but another brace of gymnasts, whose terms were lower than ours, cut us out of it. As if to confirm the vulgar superstition about times, the third time was lucky. Newsome wanted a couple of good gymnasts for his circus, and offered the same terms we had had at Springthorp's, and for twelve nights. The distance was a drawback, for the circus was then at Greenock; but we both desired a circus engagement, and hoped that New-

some might be disposed to engage us to travel with him. So we accepted the offer, and, reaching Edinburgh by steamer to Granton, went on by rail to Greenock.

‘We had never seen any other circus than Hengler’s, except Astley’s, and, as we did not expect to see a theatre, we expected to find a tent. To our surprise, we found a large wooden building, well and substantially built, though without any pretensions to elegance or beauty of architecture ; and we were still more surprised when we went into the ring to fix up our trapeze. The boxes and balcony were as prettily painted and gilded as in any theatre, and the ring-fence was covered with red cloth, and a handsome chandelier hung from a canopy such as Charman had at the Amphi. in Holborn.

“‘This is better than Hengler’s by a lump,” says my partner, as we looked about us. “Why, it must look like Astley’s, when the chandelier and those gas jets all round the balcony are lighted.”

‘We did not see many of the company till we presented ourselves in the dressing-room on the first night of our engagement. As we walked in an old clown was applying the last touch of vermilion to his whitened face, and a younger one was balancing a feather on the tip of his nose. There were seven or eight fellows in tights and trunks,

ready for the vaulting act, and two or three in the gilt-buttoned blue tunic and gold-striped trousers which constituted the uniform in which the male members of the company stood at the ring-doors when not engaged in their several performances in the ring. They all stared at us as we went in, and I heard one of them say, "Here are the star gymnasts from London!" One or two said "good evening," and one gave us a glance of inquiry as he pronounced our professional name.

"That's us," returned my partner.

"Haven't I seen your face before?" said another, looking hard at him.

"Very likely," said Fred. "Were you ever at the Circo Price, in Madrid?"

"No," answered the other fellow, still looking hard at him.

"Then it couldn't have been there," said my partner, without a muscle of his face moving, though I had to bite my lips to keep from laughing.

"We found all of them very good fellows to pal with when we knew them. There was Webster Vernon, the ring-master; Alf Burgess, the head vaulter and revolving globe performer, who had been all over the continent, and was supposed to have accumulated some coin; Coleman, the bare-back rider, a brother, I believe, of the theatrical

manager of that name, well known in the north; Charlie Ducrow, a direct descendant of the great successor of Astley, and emulating him in his rapid act on six horses; old Zamezou and his boys; the Brothers Ridley, also acrobats, and very good in their chair act and at hand-balancing—Joe Ridley's one-arm balance was the best I ever saw; Franks, the first clown, with a fund of dry, quiet humour that earned his salary, which was higher than any other man's in the company, except Burgess's; Joe Hogini, singing clown, and better at comic singing than at clowning, though he could do some clever balancing tricks; and old Adams, clown and property-man, whose wife was money-taker at the gallery entrance, and whose daughter took small parts in the ballets when required.

'If I mention the gentlemen before the ladies, which isn't manners, it is because I saw them first, and saw them oftenest. The ladies, as is often the case in a circus, were all members of the proprietor's family. Madame Newsome only appeared in the ring when her clever manege horse, Brunette, was introduced. Miss Adele was great in leaping acts, and has been repeatedly acknowledged by the leading gentlemen of the north country hunts to be the finest horsewoman across country in England. One of the wonderful stories related of her is, that a

splendid black hunter which she was riding leaped, in the excitement of the chase, over two hedges, with a narrow lane between them, landing safely in the field beyond. Miss Emma did double acts with Burgess, who is as good a rider as he is a vaulter and a juggler on the globe. Miss Marie only appeared in ballets at that time, but she is famous now for her daring acts of horsemanship, without saddle or bridle, like Beatrice Chiarini, whom you may have seen at the Amphitheatre. But there was Lizzie Keys, a bold and graceful rider, who used to take her hoops and balloons beautifully; they called her the Little Wonder, and she was said to be only fourteen years of age, but she looked more like a diminutive girl of eighteen.

‘There was a capital stud. Newsome selected his horses as they say Astley did, without caring much for the colour of them; they were not chosen for show, like the cream-coloured, and spotted, and piebald horses you see in circuses that do a parade, but every horse was a good one in the ring, and had been selected for docility and intelligence. There was Emperor, the handsome black horse which the governor, and sometimes Miss Adele, used to ride; he was worth a hundred guineas, at the very least, as a hunter, and was a clever trick horse besides. It was a treat to see that horse find, with his eyes

bandaged, a handkerchief which was buried in the saw-dust ; you might bury it as deep as you could, and be as careful as you liked to make the saw-dust look as if it had not been disturbed, but he would be sure to find it. He would step slowly round the ring till he came to the place, and then he would scrape the saw-dust away with his hoof, pick up the handkerchief with his teeth, and carry it to Newsome. One night Franks took the handkerchief out of the saw-dust, ran over to the other side of the ring, and buried it in another place, chuckling and gesticulating in assumed anticipation of the horse's discomfiture. The horse found it as easily as usual. In fact, I never knew him miss it but once ; he then passed the place, but Newsome said, "*En arrière,*"—circus horses are always spoken to in the ring in French,—and he stepped back directly, and found it. Then there was Brunette, a brown mare, the most docile and intelligent creature that ever went on hoofs ; and Balaklava, a scar-covered veteran that had served in the Scots Greys, and had received his name from having been wounded in the charge of the heavy cavalry at the battle of Balaklava. Lizzie Keys used to ride him.

‘ From the company and the stud, I must return to ourselves. The twelve nights we were engaged for, like the six at Hull, came to an end too soon ;

and my partner spoke to Henry, the manager, about our travelling with the circus, as we had set our minds upon doing. Henry, who was a very gentlemanly fellow, said he would mention it to the governor; and Newsome called us to him.

“I am afraid,” said he, “you wouldn’t be of much use to me. You have not been used to circus business, and you know nothing about it. The general routine of a circus is very different to a starring engagement, or a turn at a music-hall. You can’t vault, or hold a banner or a balloon.”

“We should soon learn,” said Fred.

“Well, look here,” said the governor, “it’s as I said just now, you are not of much use to me at present; but you are good on the trapeze, and, on the understanding that you are to make yourselves useful in the general business as soon as you can, I will put you on the establishment, the engagement to be terminable at any time by a week’s notice on either side.”

“I should like travelling with a circus, of all things,” said Fred.

“Of course, I couldn’t give you the salary you have been having as stars,” said the governor. “The best man in the company doesn’t get much more than I have been giving each of you. But if two pounds a week for you and your partner

will satisfy you, you may consider yourself engaged."

'Of course, we thanked him, and we accepted the offer, thinking that we should be worth more some day, and that it would be better to have two pounds a week regular than to have five pounds for a week or a fortnight only, and then be for several weeks without an engagement.'

CHAPTER XV.

Continuation of the Gymnast's Reminiscences—A Circus on the move—Three Months at Carlisle—Performance for the Benefit of local Charities—Removal to Middlesborough—A Stockton Man's Adventure—Journey to York—Circus Ballets—The Paynes in the Arena—Accidents in the Ring—A Circus Benefit—Removal to Scarborough—A Gymnastic Adventure—Twelve Nights at the Pantheon—On the Tramp—Return to London.

'THE circus was near the end of its stay at Greenock when we engaged for "general utility," and we were not sorry to leave the banks of the Clyde for a more genial climate. It rained more or less, generally more, all the time we were there, and I can quite believe the boy who assured an English tourist that it didn't always rain in Scotland, adding, "whiles it snaws." There was a frigate lying in the Clyde at the time, and whenever the crew practised gunnery down came the rain in torrents. I don't know how that phenomenon is to be accounted for; but it is a fact that there was a change from a drizzle to a down-pour whenever the big guns were

fired. And then the Sundays—not a drop of beer ! But what do you think the thirsty folks do ? There are a great many people thirsty on Sundays in Scotland, and especially in Greenock and Glasgow ; for they try to drink enough on Saturday night to last them till Monday, and that plan doesn't work satisfactorily. They go to a place called Gourock, where they can get as much ale or whiskey as they can pay for. That is how something like the Permissive Bill works in Scotland.

‘On the last night of our stay in Greenock, as soon as we had doffed the circus uniform, and the audience had departed, we took down our trapeze, and proceeded to the railway station. A special train had been engaged for the removal to Carlisle of all the company, the band, the stud, and the properties, Newsome paying for all. Having to make the journey by night, we did not see much of the scenery we passed through ; but we had a good time, as the Yankees say, talking, joking, laughing, and singing all the way. We found at Carlisle as good a building as we had left at Greenock, and, having fixed up our trapeze, and taken a lodging, we walked round the city to see the lions, which are rather tame ones.

‘While we were at Carlisle, Hubert Mears was starring with us for a short time, doing the flying

trapeze, and doing it, too, as well as ever I have seen it done. After him, we had Sadi Jalma, "the serpent of the desert," for a time, and very serpent-like his contortions are; he can wriggle in and out the rounds of a ladder or a chair like an eel. He is like the acrobats that I once heard a couple of small boys holding a discussion about, one maintaining that they had no bones, and the other that their bones were made of gutta percha. He calls himself a Persian prince, but I don't believe he is any relation to the Shah. He may be a Persian, for there are Arab, Hindoo, Chinese, and Japanese acrobats and jugglers knocking about over England, as well as Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians; but nationalities are as often assumed as names, and he may be no more a Persian than I am a Spaniard.

'It is a praiseworthy custom of Newsome, to devote one night's receipts to the charities of every town which he visits. It would require more time than he has to spare to make the inquiries and calculations that would be necessary before a stranger could distribute the money among the several institutions, so as to effect the greatest amount of good; and it is placed for that purpose at the disposal of the Mayor. The amount of money which he has thus given for the relief of the sick, the infirm, and the indigent during the time his circus has been

travelling would have been a fortune in itself, if he had put it into his own pocket. He divides the year between four towns, and in one year he gave two hundred pounds to the charities of Preston, and forty pounds to the Seamen's Orphans' Asylum at Liverpool, besides what he gave to the similar institutions of the other towns which he visited that year.

'Our next move was to Middlesborough, where a very laughable incident occurred. A party of us ferried over to Stockton one day, and went into a public-house there for refreshment. Circus men are always courted and sought after, as soldiers are in a place where they are only occasionally seen; and, as soon as we were recognised by the Stockton men in the room as belonging to the circus, there was a great disposition shown to treat us, and to get into conversation with us. Well, a short time afterwards, one of those men came over to Middlesborough, to see the circus again, and, after the performance, he went into a public-house where he recognized Sam Sault, a gymnast from Manchester, who had lately joined us, and insisted upon treating him. Sam had no objection to be treated, and the Stockton man was elated with the opportunity of showing that he was acquainted with a circus man. So one glass followed another until the Stockton man be-

came, all at once, helplessly drunk. Sam, who retained the use of his limbs, and some glimmering of reason, good-naturedly took his drunken friend to his lodging to save him from being turned out of the public-house, and then locked up by the police. He had no sooner reached his lodgings, and helped the drunken man up the stairs, however, than he felt a doubt as to the safety of his purse; and, on immediately thrusting his hand into his pocket, he found that it was gone. He reflected as well as he was able, and came to the conclusion that he must have left it on the parlour table at the public-house. Depositing his helpless companion upon the sofa, he ran down-stairs, and rushed off to the tavern, where, by great good fortune, he found his purse on the chair on which he had been sitting, where he had placed it, it seems, when he thought he had returned it to his pocket.

‘ While he was at the public-house Joe Ridley and I, and my partner, who lodged in the same house with Sam Sault, returned to our lodging, and found the drunken man asleep on the sofa, smelling horribly of gin and tobacco smoke, and snoring like a fat hog. We looked at the fellow in surprise, wondering who he was, and how he came to be there. Neither of us recognized him as any one we had seen before. Then the question was raised,—

What should we do with him. "Throw him out of the window," says Joe Ridley. "Take him down into the yard and pump on him," says Fred. "No, let us paint his face," says I. So I got some carmine, and Fred got some burnt cork, and we each painted him to our own fancy till he looked like an Ojibbeway in his war-paint. By that time Sam Sault got back from the public-house, and found us laughing heartily at the queer figure cut by the recumbent Stocktonian.

"Oh, if he is a friend of yours, we'll wipe it off," says I, when Sam had explained how the man came to be there.

"Oh, let it be," says Sam, "and let him be where he is; we'll turn him out in the morning, without his knowing what a beauty you have made him, and that will serve him right for giving me so much trouble."

'So the fellow was left snoring on the sofa till morning, when, it appears, he woke before we were about, and, finding himself in a strange place, walked down-stairs, and quitted the house. We never saw him again, but we often laughed as we thought of the figure the man must have cut as he stalked into Stockton, and how he must have been laughed at by his mates and the people he met on his way.

‘From Middlesborough we went to York, where the circus stood on St George’s Field, an open space between the castle and the Ouse. About that time, Webster Vernon left the company, and was succeeded as ring-master by a gentleman named Vivian, who was quite new to the profession, and whose adoption of it added another to the changes which he had already known, though he was still quite a young man. He had been a lawyer’s clerk, then a photographic colourist, and afterwards an actor ; and was a quiet, gentlemanly fellow, unlike the majority of circus men, who are generally a fast, slangy set. He had married early, and his wife, who was an actress, had an engagement in London—a frequent cause of temporary separation among those whose business it is to amuse the public, whether their lines lie in circuses, theatres, or music-halls. Joe Ridley’s wife was in London, and Sam Sault had left his better half in Manchester. Franks, and Adams, and old Zamezou, and Jem Ridley, and the head groom had their wives with them ; but two of the five were connected with the circus, Adams’s wife taking money at the gallery entrance, and the groom’s riding in *entrées*.

‘How did we do ballets? Well, they were *ballets d’ action*, such as used to be done at the music-halls by the Lauri family, and more lately by Fred Evans and troupe. The Paynes starred in

them at one time, but generally they were done by the regular members of the company, usually by Alf Burgess, and Funny Franks, and Joe Hogini, with Adele Newsome in the leading lady's part, the subordinate characters being taken by Marie Newsome and Jane Adams, and my partner and I, and Charley Ducrow.

' Who starred with us at this time, besides the Paynes? Well, there was Hassan, the Arab, who did vaulting and balancing feats, and his wife, who danced on the tight rope. He vaulted one night over a line of mounted dragoons from Fulwood barracks, turning a somersault over their heads and drawn sabres. Didn't we have accidents in the ring sometimes? Well, none of a very serious character, and nearly all that happened in twelve months might be counted on the fingers of one hand. Coleman slipped off the bare back of a horse one night, and cut his hand with a sword. Burgess had a finger cut one night in catching the knives for his juggling act, which used to be thrown to him from the ring-doors while he was on the globe, and keeping it in motion with his feet. Adele Newsome was thrown one night, and pitched amongst the spectators, but received no injuries beyond a bruise or two. Lizzie Keys slipped off the pad one night, but came down comfortably on the sawdust, and wasn't hurt at all. Fred fell from the trapeze once, and that was very

near being the most serious accident of all. He fell head foremost, and was taken up insensible by the fellows at the ring-doors, and carried into the dressing-room. We thought his neck was broken, but Sam Sault, who had seen such accidents before, pulled his head right, and, when his senses came back to him, it did not appear that he was much the worse for the fall after all. Then my turn came. One night, when the performances were to commence with a vaulting act, I went to the circus so much more than half tight that I was advised on all sides to stand out of it, and Henry, the manager, very kindly said that I should be excused; but, with the obstinacy of men in that condition, and their usual belief that they are sober enough for anything, I persisted in going into the ring with the rest. What happened was just what might have been expected, and everybody but myself feared. Instead of clearing the horses I touched one of them, and, in consequence, instead of dropping on my feet, I was thrown upon my back; and that accident, with a violent attack of inflammation of the lungs, laid me up for two or three weeks, during which I was treated with great liberality by Newsome, and received many kindnesses from more than one of the good people of York.

‘ My partner and I had a benefit while we were

in York, but we didn't make more than £3 by it. The way benefits are given in circuses is by admitting the tickets sold by the party whose benefit it is, and of course the number of tickets a circus man can sell among the inhabitants of a town where he was a stranger till the circus appeared, and where he has lived only two or three months, can't be very great. We were thankful for what we got, however, and had new trunks made on the strength of it—black velvet, spangled. Soon after this we removed to Scarborough, where I had a rather perilous adventure. I attempted to ascend the cliff, and found myself, when half way up, in an awkward position. I had reached a narrow ledge, above which the cliff rose almost perpendicularly, without any projection within reach that I could grasp with one hand, or plant so much as one toe upon. Descent was almost as impracticable as the completion of the ascent, for, besides the difficulty of having to feel for a footing with my feet while descending backward, a portion of the cliff, which I had been standing upon a few minutes before, had given way and plunged down to the beach. It seemed probable that the ledge I was standing upon might give way if I stood still much longer, and in that case I should go down after it. So I shouted "help!" as loud as I could, and in a few minutes I saw the shako-covered head

of a volunteer projected over the edge of the precipice, and heard him call out, "A man over the cliff!" His corps was encamped on the cliff, and in a few minutes I was an object of interest to a large number of spectators, whom his alarm had attracted to the edge of the cliff. Presently a rope was lowered to me, and held fast by men above, while I went up it, hand over hand, as I did every night in the circus, when we ascended to the trapeze.

'When we had been in Scarborough about a month, my partner and I had a disagreement, and I left the circus, and procured an engagement for twelve nights at the Pantheon music-hall. That completed, "the world was all before me, where to choose!" I thought there might be a chance of obtaining an engagement at one or other of the music-halls at Leeds and Bradford, and I visited both towns; but without meeting with success. By the time I arrived at the conclusion that I must return to London I was pretty nigh hard up. I counted my coin the morning I left Leeds, and found that I had little more than enough to enable me to reach Hull, where I expected to receive a remittance from "the old house at home!" I had a long and weary walk to Selby, where I sat down beside the river, to await the arrival of the

steamer that runs between Hull and York. Once more I counted my money, and had the satisfaction of ascertaining that I had just one penny above the fare from Selby to Hull. I shoved my fingers into each corner of every pocket, but the search did not result in the discovery of a single copper more. It was something to have that penny, though, for besides being thirsty, I was so fatigued that I needed some sort of stimulant.

“I must have half a pint,” I thought, and I went into the nearest public-house, and had it. Then I sat down again, and looked up the brown Ouse, where at last I saw the black hull and smoking funnel of the steamer. As soon as she came alongside the landing-place, I went aboard, and descended into the fore-cabin, where I lay down, and smoked my last bit of tobacco, after which I dozed till the steamer bumped against the pier at Hull. There I was all right, as far as my immediate wants were concerned. I dined, replenished my tobacco pouch, and strolled up to Springthorp’s, to see if there was any chance there. There was no immediate opening, however, and on the following day I took a passage for London in one of the steamers running between the Humber and the Thames.’

CHAPTER XVI.

Continuation of the Gymnast's Reminiscences—Circus Men in Difficulties—Heavy Security for a small Debt—The Sheriff's Officer and the Elephant—Taking Refuge with the Lions—Another Provincial Tour—With a Circus in Dublin—A Joke in the wrong place—A Fenian Hoax—A Case of Pikes—Return to England—At the Kentish Watering-places—Off to the North.

‘SEVERAL weeks elapsed before I got another engagement. Two gymnasts can do so much more showy and sensational a performance than one can, that a single slang doesn't go near so well as a double one, and it is, in consequence, only those who produce something novel, such as Jean Price's long flight and Avolo's performance on two bars, who can procure single-handed engagements. Knowing this to be the case, I looked about for a new partner, and found that the Brothers Athos had separated, and that one of them was in just the same fix as myself. When we met, and talked the matter over, however, a difficulty arose in the fact that we had both worked as bearers,—that is, we

had supported our respective partners in the double tricks, that require one man to bear the entire weight of the other, as in the drop, or when one, hanging by the hocks, holds a single trapeze for the other to do a trick or two upon beneath him. Our respective necessities might have urged us to overcome this difficulty if Christmas had not been approaching, at which season unemployed gymnasts and acrobats often obtain engagements at the theatres, as demons and sprites. Athos got an engagement to sprite at the East London, and I was left out in the cold.

‘Newsome’s circus had moved, in the mean time, from Scarborough to Middlesborough, where some changes were made in the company. Burgess and two or three more left, and my late partner was among them. I heard afterwards one of the many stories that are current in circuses of the devices resorted to by circus men in difficulties to evade arrest. A friend of one of the parties who had ceased to belong to Newsome’s company called at the house where he had lodged, and found that he had left, and that his landlady didn’t know where he had gone to.

“But I am sure to see him again,” said she, “for he has left a large box, so heavy that I can’t move it.”

“Then you can have good security for what he owes you,” observed the friend. “I suppose he owes you something?”

“Well, yes,” rejoined the woman, “he does owe me something for board and lodging.”

Her lodger never returned, however, and his friend meeting him some time afterwards in York, alluded to the manner in which he had “mysteriously dried up,” as his friend called it.

“Ah, I was under a heavy cloud!” observed the defaulter. “What did the old lady say about me?”

“That she was sure to see you again, because you had left a heavy box in the room you occupied,” replied his friend.

“I should think it was heavy,” said the other. “Couldn’t move it, could she?”

His friend replied in the negative, and he laughed so heartily that he spilled some of the ale he was drinking.

“What is the joke?” inquired his friend.

“Why, you see, the box was once full of togs,” replied the mysterious lodger, “but when I left Middlesborough such of them as were not adorning the person of this swell were hypothecated.”

“What is the meaning of that hard word?” inquired a third circus man who was present.

“In the vulgar tongue, up the spout,” replied the defaulter.

“Then what made the box so heavy?” inquired his friend.

“A score of bricks,” suggested the third party.

“Wrong, cully,” said the Artful Dodger. “I couldn’t have smuggled bricks into the room without being observed; but a big screw went through the bottom of the box, and held it fast to the floor.”

Another of the stories I have alluded to relates to a man that used to look after an elephant in a circus, and put him through his performance. He got pretty deeply in debt—the man I mean—in a midland town where the circus had been staying some time, and his creditor, not being able to obtain payment, and finding that the company were about to remove to another town, determined to arrest him.

The cavalcade of horses, performing mules, camels, and other quadrupeds was just ready to start from the circus when the sheriff’s officer appeared on the scene, and tapped his man on the shoulder. He was recognized at a glance, and the man ran into the stables, with the sheriff’s officer after him. Running to the elephant, the debtor dived under its belly, and took up a safe position on the other side of the beast. The officer attempted a passage in the rear, but was cut off by a sudden movement of the

elephant's hind quarters. Then he screwed up his courage for a dive under the animal's belly, but the beast turned its head, and fetched him a slap with its trunk.

“I'll have you, if I wait here all day,” said he, as he drew back hastily.

“You had better not wait till I unfasten this chain,” says the elephant keeper, pretending to do what he threatened.

‘The officer growled, and went off to find the proprietor ; but he didn't succeed, and when he returned to the stables, his man was gone. That was as good a dodge as the lion-tamer's, who, when the officers went to the circus to arrest him, took refuge in the cage containing the lions. They looked through the grating, and saw him in the midst of a group of lions and lionesses. They were philosophic enough to console themselves with the reflection that their man would come out when he wanted his dinner ; but they had not waited long when the lions began to roar.

“The lions are getting hungry,” says the keeper. “If he lets them out of the cage, you will have to run.”

‘The officers exchanged frightened glances, and were out of the show in two minutes.

‘To return to my story ; my late partner found

himself in much the same fix as myself, and this discovery paved the way for a mutual friend to bridge over the gulf that had kept us apart. As soon as we had agreed to work together again, we got a twelve nights' engagement at the Prince of Wales concert-hall at Wolverhampton. We found the other professionals engaged there very good people to pal with, and spent Christmas Day with the comic singer and his wife, two niggers also being of the party, and bringing their banjo and bones to promote its hilarity. While we were in Wolverhampton, we arranged for twelve nights, to follow, at the London Museum music-hall at Birmingham, which has received its name from the cases of stuffed birds and small animals of all kinds, which cover all the wall space of the front of the bar and the passage leading to the hall. After our twelve nights there, we were engaged for six nights longer; and then we went down to Oldham, for a twelve nights' engagement at the Co-operative Hall. For all these engagements, and for all we made afterwards, the terms we obtained were four pounds ten a week.

'Our next engagement was with a circus in Dublin, to which city we crossed from Liverpool. The company and stud of this concern were very different in strength and quality to Newsome's, and they were doing very poor business. It is very

seldom that a circus proprietor ventures upon the experiment of an Irish tour, which more rarely pays, both because of the poverty of the people, and the difficulty which all caterers for their amusement find in avoiding grounds for manifestations of national antipathies between English and Irish. Of this we had an instance on the first night of our engagement. I dare say you have heard Sam Collins or Harry Baker, or some other Irish *comique*, interlard a song with a spoken flourish about the Irish, something after this fashion :—“ Who was it made the French run at Waterloo? The Irish! Who won all the battles in the Crimea? The Irish! Who put down the rebellion in India? The Irish! Who mans your men of war and recruits your army? The Irish! Who builds all your houses and churches? The Irish! Who builds your prisons and your workhouses? The Irish! And who fills them? The Irish!” In England this is laughed at, even by the Irish themselves; but in Ireland nothing of the kind is tolerated. One of the clowns delivered himself of this stuff in the ring, and was warmly applauded until the anti-climax was reached, when such a howl burst forth as I shouldn't have thought the human voice could utter. The fellows in the gallery jumped up, and raved, stamped, gesticulated, as if they were Ojib-

beways performing a war-dance; and everybody expected that the seats would be pulled up, and flung into the ring, as had been done in another circus, under something similar circumstances, some time before. But the storm was hushed as suddenly as it arose. It happened fortunately that our performance was next in the programme, and that, knowing how popular everything American was in Ireland, we had provided for its musical accompaniment a fantasia on American national airs, such as "Yankee Doodle," "Hail, Columbia!" and "The star-spangled banner." The band struck up this music as the offending clown ran out of the ring, expecting to have a bottle flung at his head, and the howlers in the gallery hearing it, and seeing pink stars on our white trunks, thought we were Yankees. The effect of our appearance, and of the music, was like pouring oil on the waves. The howling ceased, and harmony was restored as suddenly as it had been interrupted.

'This was the time, you must know, when the Fenian plot was in everybody's mouth, and when the wildest rumours were in circulation of an intended rising in Ireland, and the coming of Americans, or rather Americanized Irishmen, to support it. One day, while we were in Dublin, a superintendent of constabulary received an anonym-

ous letter, informing him that a case of pikes had been buried at a spot near the Liffey, which was so particularly described that the men who were sent to search for it had no difficulty in finding it. When they had dug a pretty deep hole, they found a deal box, which was raised to the surface, and carted off to a police-station, with an escort of constabulary. It was opened in the presence of the superintendent, and there were the pikes!—not such as Slievenamon bristled with in '48, but a couple of stale fishes.

‘Before leaving Dublin, we arranged for a twelve nights’ engagement at the Alexandra music-hall, at Ramsgate, which, as you perhaps know, is under the same management as the Raglan, in London. The Sisters Bullen, and Miss Lucette, and the Brothers Keeling were at the Alexandra at the same time; and, as music-hall professionals are, as a rule, disposed to fraternize with each other, we had a very pleasant time. From Ramsgate we went to Dover, for twelve nights at the Clarence music-hall, and then back to Ramsgate for another twelve nights at the Alexandra.

‘Among the professionals engaged for the following week at the Clarence was a versatile lady bearing the name of Cora Woski, and the town, during the second week of our engagement, was

placarded with the inquiry, "Have you seen Cora?" This soon became a common question in the streets, and at all places of public resort; and one of the company, entering the Clarence on the day the bills appeared, without having seen one of them, was equally surprised and confused at being greeted with the inquiry, "Have you seen Cora?" He was only slightly acquainted with the querist, and it happened that he was engaged to marry the only lady of that rather uncommon name whom he knew.

"What do you know of Cora?" he demanded, his face reddening as he frowned upon the questioner.

"Why, she is coming here," returned the amused querist, who saw at once the cause of the young fellow's confusion.

"How do you know?" was the next question of the bewildered *artiste*.

"How do I know? Why, it's all over the town," was the reply.

A nudge from a friend drew the other's attention from his tormentor for a moment, and, following the direction of his friend's glance, he saw upon the wall one of the placards bearing the question with which he had been greeted on entering the bar.

Engagements now followed each other pretty close. Returning to London after our second en-

gement at Ramsgate, we were soon afterwards engaged for twelve nights at Macfarlane's music-hall, Dundee, and six nights, to follow, at a similar place of amusement at Arbroath, under the same management. We found the Gregories there, with their performing dogs; and there was a ballet, in which the pretty illusion of Parkes's silver rain was introduced. No other engagement awaited us in the north when we left Arbroath, and we returned to Dundee, and from thence to London.'

CHAPTER XVII.

Lions and Lion-tamers—Lorenzo and the Lions—Androcles and the Lion—The Successor of Macomo—Accident in Bell and Myers's Circus—Lion Hunting—Death of Macarthy—True Causes of Accidents with Lions and Tigers—Performing Leopards—Anticipating the Millennium—Tame Hyenas—Fairgrieve's Menagerie—Performing Lions, Tigers, Leopards, and Hyenas—Camels and Dromedaries—The Great Elephant.

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SINCE the death of the negro, Macomo, the most successful performer with lions and other large members of the feline genus has been Lorenzo, who travelled with Fairgrieve's menagerie for several years preceding its dispersion in the summer of 1872. On the death of George Wombwell, in 1850, his collection, which had grown to an almost unmanageable extent during nearly half a century, was divided, according to his testamentary directions, into three parts. With one of these his widow continued to travel until 1866, when she retired from the business, and the menagerie was transferred to Fairgrieve, who had married her niece.

Another third was bequeathed to Wombwell's niece, Mrs Edmonds, who travelled with it until the close of 1872, when it was announced for sale. Who had the remaining third I am unable to say; it was travelling for several years in the original name, as the menageries of Fairgrieve and Edmonds did long after Wombwell's decease, and is now owned by Mrs Day.

Fairgrieve's group of performing animals consisted of several lions and lionesses, a tigress, two or three leopards, and a hyena. Tigers are not, as a rule, liked so well by lion-tamers as lions; but Fairgrieve's tigress exhibited as much docility and intelligence as her performing companions. There was a famous lion, named Wallace, with which Lorenzo represented the story of Androcles, the slave, who, flying from the cruel tyranny of his Roman master, met in the forest in which he sought refuge a lion that had been lamed by a thorn. Observing the suffering of the beast, which made no hostile demonstrations, he ventured to approach it, and was allowed to extract the thorn from the elastic pad of its foot, the lion testifying its gratitude for the relief by rubbing its head against him. Some time afterwards, the fugitive was captured, and was doomed by his master to be exposed in the arena of the amphitheatre to a recently trapped lion. But,

to the amazement of the spectators, the lion, instead of falling upon Androcles, and tearing him to pieces, seemed to recognize him, and, after rubbing its head against him, lay down at his feet. It was the lion from whose foot Androcles had extracted the thorn in the forest. The slave told the story and received his pardon and his liberty on the spot.

The successor of Macomo was an Irishman named Macarthy, who had previously travelled, in the same capacity, with Bell and Myers's circus; and in 1862, while performing with the lions belonging to that establishment, had his left arm so severely mangled by one of the beasts that he had to undergo amputation. This circumstance seems to have added to the *eclat* of the unfortunate man's performances, but he had neither the nerve of Crockett and Macomo, nor their resolution to abstain from stimulants. Whether from carelessness or nervousness, he often turned his back upon the animals, though he had been repeatedly cautioned that it was dangerous to do so; and to this circumstance, and his intemperate habits, the lion-taming fraternity attribute his terrible end.

It is to be observed that Macarthy lost his life, not in the course of the ordinary performances of lion-tamers, but while giving a sensational exhibition termed 'lion-hunting,' which had been introduced

by Macomo, and consists in chasing the animals about the cage, the performer being armed with a sword and pistols, and throwing into the mimic sport as much semblance of reality as may be possible. It will be obvious that this is a dangerous exhibition, and it should never be attempted with any but young animals. For ordinary performances, most lion-tamers prefer full-grown animals, as being better trained; but when lions become full-grown, they are not disposed to be driven and hustled about in this manner, and they are so excited by it that it cannot be repeatedly performed with the same animals.

Macarthy had been bitten on three occasions previously to the catastrophe at Bolton. The first time was in 1862, when he lost his left arm, as already related; the second while performing at Edinburgh in 1871, when one of the lions made a snap at his arm, but only slightly grazed it. The third occasion was only a few days before the accident which terminated his career and his life, when one of the lions bit him slightly on the wrist. The fatal struggle at Bolton was preceded by a trifling accident, which may perhaps have done something to lessen the never remarkable steadiness of the man's nerves. In driving the animals from one end of the cage to the other, one of them ran against his

legs, and threw him down. He regained his feet, however, and drove the animals into a corner. He then walked to the centre of the cage, and was stamping his feet upon the floor, to make the beasts run past him, when one of the lions crept stealthily out from the group and sprang upon him, seizing him by the right hip, and throwing him upon his side. For a moment the spectators imagined that this attack was part of the performance; but the agonized features of Macarthy soon convinced them of their mistake. A scene of wild and terrible confusion ensued. Three other lions sprang upon Macarthy, who was vainly endeavouring to regain his feet, and making desperate lunges amongst the excited animals with his sword. Presently one of the lions seized his arm, and the sword dropped from his hand. Several men were by this time endeavouring to beat the animals off, and to slide a partition between the bars of the cage, with the view of driving them behind it. This was a task of considerable difficulty, however, for as soon as one lion was compelled to relinquish his hold, another took his place. Fire-arms and heated bars of iron were then procured, and, by applying the irons to the paws and jaws of the lions, and firing upon them with blank cartridges, four of them were driven behind the partition.

Macarthy was then lying in the centre of the cage, with the lion which had first attacked him still biting and tearing him. Discharges of blank cartridge being found ineffectual to make it loose its hold of the unfortunate man, the heated iron was applied to his nose, and then it released him, and ran behind the partition, which had been drawn out a little to admit him. Even then the terrible scene was not concluded. Before the opening could be closed again, the lion which had been foremost in the onslaught ran out again, seized Macarthy by the foot, and dragged him into the corner, where all the lions again fell upon him with redoubled fury. A quarter of an hour elapsed from the commencement of the attack before he could be rescued; and, as the lions were then all caged at the end where the entrance was, the opposite end of the cage had to be opened before his mangled body could be lifted out.

This lamentable affair caused an outcry to be raised against the exhibition of performing lions such as had been heard a few years previously against such feats as those of Blondin and Leotard. 'The display of wild animals in a menagerie,' said a London morning journalist, 'may be tolerated, and even encouraged for the sake of science, and for the rational amusement of the public; but there is no

analogy between the case of beasts secured in strong dens, and approached only with the greatest caution by wary and experienced keepers, and that of a caravan open on all sides, illuminated by flaring gas, and surrounded by a noisy audience.' The distinction is one without a difference, even if we suppose that the writer mentally restricted the term 'menagerie' to the Zoological Gardens; for the proprietor of a travelling menagerie, or a circus, consults his own interests, as well as the safety of the public, in providing strong cages, and engaging wary and experienced keepers. It is childish to talk of prohibiting every performance or exhibition from which an accident has resulted. Some years ago, one of the keepers of the Zoological Gardens in the Regent's Park, being somewhat intoxicated, chose to irritate a hooded snake, which thereupon seized him by the nose. He died within an hour. Would the journalist who proposed to exclude lion-tamers from menageries and circuses close the Zoological Gardens on that account?

'The caravans,' continues the author of the article just quoted, 'are tenanted by wild beasts weary with previous performances, irritated by the heat and the clamour around them, and teased by being obliged to perform tricks at the bidding of a man whom they hate, since his mandates are gen-

erally seconded by the blows of a whip or the searing of a branding-iron. Now and again, in a well-ordered zoological collection, some lazy, drowsy old lion, who passes the major part of his time in a corner of his den, blinking at the sunshine, and who is cloyed with abundant meals, and surfeited with cakes and sweetmeats, may exhibit passable good-nature, and allow his keeper to take liberties; but such placability can rarely be expected from animals moved continually from place to place, and ceaselessly pestered into going through movements which they detest. Lions or tigers may have the cunning of that feline race to which they pertain; yet they are assuredly destitute of the docility, the intelligence, or the fidelity of the dog or the horse; and such cunning as they possess will prompt them rather to elude performance of the tasks assigned them, or to fall upon their instructor unawares and rend him, than to go through their feats with the cheerful obedience manifested by creatures friendly to man. It is no secret that the customary method of taming wild beasts for purposes of exhibition is, to thrash them with gutta percha whips and iron bars, and when it is considered necessary, to scarify them with red-hot poker.''

I quote this for the sake of refuting it by the evidence of one who, unlike the journalist, understood

what he was writing about. The ex-lion king, whose experiences and reminiscences were recorded about the same time in another journal, and who must be admitted to be a competent authority, says, 'Violence is a mistake;' and he adds, that he has never known heated irons to be held in readiness, except when lions and lionesses are together at times such as led to the terrific struggle in Sanger's circus, which has been related in the seventh chapter. The true causes of accidents with lions and tigers are intemperance and violence. 'It's the drink,' says the ex-lion king, 'that plays the mischief with us fellows. There are plenty of people always ready to treat the daring fellow that plays with the lions as if they were kittens; and so he gets reckless, lets the dangerous animal—on which, if he were sober, he would know he must always keep his eye—get dodging round behind him; he *hits* a beast in which he ought to know that a blow rouses the sleeping devil; or makes a stagger and goes down, and then they set upon him.' He expected, he says, to hear of Macarthy's death from the time when he heard that he had given way to intemperance; and we have seen how a hasty cut with a whip brought the tiger upon Helen Blight.

To this evidence of the ex-lion king I may add what I witnessed about thirty years ago in one of the smaller class of travelling menageries, exhibiting at

the time at Mitcham fair. There were no lions or tigers, but four performing leopards, a hyena, a wolf which anticipated the Millennium by lying down with a lamb, and several smaller animals. The showman entered the leopards' cage, with a light whip in one hand, and a hoop in the other. The animals leaped over the whip, through the hoop, and over the man's back, exhibiting as much docility throughout the performance as cats or dogs. The whip was used merely as part of the properties. Indeed, since cats can be taught to leap in the same way, without the use of whips or iron bars, why not leopards, which are merely a larger species of the same genus? The showman also entered the cage of the hyena, which fawned upon him after the manner of a dog, and allowed him to open its mouth. The hyena has the reputation of being untameable; but, in addition to this instance to the contrary, and another in Fairgrieve's menagerie, Bishop Heber had a hyena at Calcutta, which followed him about like a dog.

When Fairgrieve's collection was sold by auction at Edinburgh in 1872, the lions and tigers excited much attention, and good prices were realized, though in some instances they were not so great as had been expected. Rice, a dealer in animals, whose repository, like Jamrach's, is in Ratcliff Highway, bought, for £185, the famous lion, Wallace, aged

seven years and a half, with which Lorenzo used to represent the story of Androcles. The auctioneer assured those present that the animal was as tame as a lamb, and that he was inclined to enter the cage himself, and perform Androcles 'for that time only,' but was afraid of the lion's gratitude. There were six other lions and three lionesses, five of which were also bought by Rice, at prices varying, according to the age and sex of the animals, from £80 for a full grown lioness, and £90 each for lions a year and a half old, to £140 for full-grown lions, from three to seven years old. A six-year old lion named Hannibal, said to be the largest and handsomest lion in this country, was bought by the proprietors of the Zoological Gardens at Bristol for £270; and his mate, four years old, was bought by Jennison, of the Belle Vue Gardens, Manchester, for 100 guineas. The third lioness realized £80, and the remaining lion, bought by Jamrach, £200.

The magnificent tigress, Tippoo, which used to perform with Lorenzo, was also purchased by Jamrach for £155; and the same enterprising dealer became the possessor of three of the four leopards for £60. As these leopards, two of which were females, were trained performing animals, the sum they realized must be considered extremely low. Another leopardess, advanced in years, realized only

6 guineas. Ferguson, the agent of Van Amburgh, the great American menagerist, secured the spotted hyena for £15; while a performing hyena of the striped variety was knocked down at only three guineas. A polar bear, 'young, healthy, and lively as a trout,' as the auctioneer said, was sold for £40, a Thibetian bear for 5 guineas, and a pair of wolves for 2 guineas.

Rice, who was the largest purchaser, became the possessor of the zebra for £50. The Bactrian camels, bought principally for travelling menageries, brought from £14 to £30. The largest male camel, twelve years old, was sold for £19; and another, six months younger, but a foot less in stature, for £14. Of the three females, one, six feet and a half high, and ten years old, brought £30; and another, of the same height, and only half the age of the former, £23. The third, only a year and a half old, and not yet full grown, brought £14. All three were in young. A baby camel, nine weeks old, realized 9 guineas. The male 'dromedary,' as it was described in the catalogue, but called by naturalists the Syrian camel, was sold for £30, and the female for 20 guineas. Menagerists restrict the term 'camel' to the Bactrian or two-humped variety, and call the one-humped animals dromedaries; but the dromedary, according to naturalists,

is a small variety of the Syrian camel, bearing the same relation to the latter as a pony does to a horse. The animals described as dromedaries in the catalogue of Fairgrieve's collection were, on the contrary, taller than the Bactrian camels.

There was a spirited competition for the two elephants, ending in the female, a musical phenomenon, playing the organ and the harmonium, being bought by Rice for £145; and the noble full-tusked male, rising eight years old, and seven feet six inches in height, being purchased by Jennison for £680. This enormous beast was described as the largest and cleverest performing elephant ever exhibited. In point of fact, he is surpassed in stature, I believe, by the Czar's elephant, kept at his country residence at Tzarski-Seloe; but that beast's performances have never gone beyond occasionally killing his keeper, whilst the elephant now in the Belle Vue Gardens, at Manchester, is one of the most docile and intelligent beasts ever exhibited. He will go in harness, and was accustomed to draw the band carriage when a parade was made. He will either drag or push a waggon up a hill, and during the last eighteen months that the menagerie was travelling, he placed all the vans in position, with the assistance only of a couple of men to guide the wheels.

The entire proceeds of the sale were a little under £3,000. The daily cost of the food of the animals in a menagerie is, I may add, far from a trifle. The quantity of hay, cabbages, bread, and boiled rice, sweetened with sugar, which an elephant will consume, in addition to the fruit, buns, and biscuits given to him by visitors, is enormous. The amount of animal food for the carnivora in Fairgrieve's menagerie was about four hundred-weight a day, consisting chiefly of the shins, hearts, and heads of bullocks. Each lion is said to have consumed twelve pounds of meat every day; but this is more, I believe, than is allowed in the Gardens of the Zoological Society. The appetite of the tiger is almost equal to that of his leonine relative; and all these beasts seem to insist upon having beef for dinner. We hear nothing of hippophagy among lions and tigers in a state of confinement; though, in their native jungles, they eat horse, pig, deer, antelope, sheep, or goat indiscriminately. The bears get meat only in very cold weather; at other seasons, their diet consists of bread, sopped biscuits, and boiled rice.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Circus Slang—Its Peculiarities and Derivation—Certain Phrases used by others of the Amusing Classes—Technicalities of the Circus—The Riders and Clowns of Dickens—Slavery's Circus—Circus Men and Women in Fiction and in Real Life—Domestic Habits of Circus People—Dress and Manners—The Professional Quarter of the Metropolis.

CIRCUS men are much addicted to the use of slang, and much of their slang is peculiar to themselves. To those who are uninitiated in the mysteries of life among what may be termed the amusing classes, the greater part of their vocabulary would seem an unknown tongue; but a distinction must be made between slang words and phrases and the technical terms used in the profession, and also between the forms of expression peculiar to circus men and those which they use in common with members of the theatrical and musical professions. These distinctions being duly observed, the words and phrases which are peculiar to the ring will be found to be

less numerous than might be expected from the abundance of slang with which the conversation of circus *artistes* seems to be garnished; though it is probable that no man, not even a circus man, could give a complete vocabulary of circus slang, which, like that of other slang-speaking classes, is constantly receiving additions, while words and phrases which have been long in use often become obsolete, and fall into disuse.

There is an impression among circus men that much of the slang peculiar to themselves is derived from the languages of Italy and Spain, and the affirmative, *si*, has been cited to me as an instance; but I have never heard this word used by them, and its use has probably been observed only in the case of men or women who have recently been in Italy. The few words in common use among the class which can be traced to an Italian or Spanish origin may be counted on the fingers of one hand. *Bono* (good) is used both as an adjective, and as an exclamation of approval or admiration. *Dona* (lady) is so constantly used that I have seldom heard a circus man mention a woman by any other term. The other words referred to are used in monetary transactions, which are the constant subject of slang among all classes of the community. *Saulty* (penny) may be derived from the Italian *soldi*, and *duey*

(twopence) and *tray saulty* (threepence) are also of foreign origin, like the deuce and tray of card-players. *Dollar* is in constant use as the equivalent of five shillings, and money generally is spoken of as *denarlies*, which may be a corruption of the Latin *denarii*.

Rot is a term of contempt, used in strong and emphatic contradistinction to *bono*; and of late years it has been adopted by other sections of the amusing classes, and by young men of the 'fast' sort, who seem to think the use of slang a commendable distinction. *Toe rags* is another expression of contempt, less frequently used, and chiefly by the lower grades of circus men, and the acrobats who stroll about the country, performing at fairs and races, in the open air. These wanderers, and those who are still seen occasionally in the back streets of the metropolis, are said to 'go a-pitching;' the spot they select for their performance is their 'pitch,' and any interruption of their feats, such as an accident, or the interference of a policeman, is said to 'queer the pitch,'—in other words, to spoil it. Going round the assemblage with a hat, to collect the largesses of the on-lookers, is 'doing a nob,' and to do this at the windows of a street, sometimes done by one performer standing on the shoulders of another, is 'nobbing the glazes.' The sum collected is the 'nob.'

The verb 'to fake,' means, in the thieves' vocabulary, to steal; but circus men use it in a different sense, 'faked up' meaning 'fixed,' while 'fake-ments' is applied particularly to circus apparatus and properties, and generally to moveables of any kind. 'Letty' is used both as a noun and a verb, signifying 'lodging' and 'to lodge.' To abscond from a place, to evade payment of debts, or from apprenticeship, is sometimes called 'doing a bunk,' but this phrase is used by other classes also, circus men more frequently using the phrase, 'doing a Johnny Scaparey,' the last word being accented on the second syllable. The circus is always called the 'show;' I have never heard it termed the 'booth,' which is the word which Dickens puts into the mouth of Cissy Jupe, the little daughter of the clown of Sleary's circus, in *Hard Times*. Gymnasts call their performance a 'slang,' but I am not aware that the term is used by other circus *artistes*. The joke or anecdote of a clown is called 'a wheeze,' and he is said when engaged in that part of his business, to be 'cracking a wheeze.'

Balloons, banners, and garters are merely special applications to circus uses of ordinary English terms. A balloon is a large hoop, covered with tissue paper, held up for an equestrian *artiste* to jump through; a banner is a bordered cloth held horizontally, to be

jumped over,—what Albert Smith calls a length of stair carpet; and garters are narrow bands held in the same manner, and for the same purpose. When an equestrian fails to clear these, he is said to ‘miss his tip,’ which is the gravest article of Childers’s impeachment of Jupe, in Dickens’s interesting story of the fortunes and misfortunes of the Gradgrinds and the Bounderbys. Dickens put two or three other words into the mouth of the same member of Sleary’s company which I have never heard, and which do not appear to be now in use. Jupe is said to have become ‘loose in his ponging,’ though still a good ‘cackler;’ and Bounderby is reminded sarcastically that he is on the ‘tight jeff.’ Childers explains that ‘ponging’ means tumbling, ‘cackling’ talking, and ‘jeff’ a rope.

‘Cully’ is the circus man’s equivalent for the mechanic’s ‘mate’ and the soldier’s ‘comrade.’ ‘Prossing’ is a delicate mode of indicating a desire for anything, as when old Ben, the drummer, in *Life in a Circus*, says, in response to the acrobat’s exhortation to his fair companion, to make the best of things,—‘That’s the philosophy to pitch with! Not but what a drop of beer helps it, you know; and I declare my throat’s that dry that it’s as much as I can do to blow the pipes.’ ‘Pro’ is simply an abbreviation of ‘professional,’ and is used by all the

amusing classes to designate actors, singers, dancers, clowns, acrobats, &c., to whom the term seems to be restricted among them. Amongst all the amusing classes, the salary received is the 'screw,' the 'ghost walks' when it is paid, and an *artiste* is 'goosed,' or 'gets the goose,' when the spectators or auditors testify by sibillant sounds disapproval or dissatisfaction. As in every other avocation, there are a great many technical terms used, which are not to be confounded with slang. Such is 'the Plymouth,' a term applied to one of the movements by which gymnasts return to a sitting position on the horizontal bar, after hanging from it by the hands in an inverted position. 'Slobber swing' is applied to a single circle upon the bar, after which a beginner, from not having given himself sufficient impetus, hangs by the hands. The 'Hindoo punishment' is what is more often called the 'muscle grind,' a rather painful exercise upon the bar, in which the arms are turned backward to embrace the bar, and then brought forward upon the chest, in which position the performer revolves.

Having mentioned that Dickens has put some slang words into the mouths of his circus characters which I have not found in use among circus men of the present day, I cannot refrain from quoting a passage in *Hard Times*, and giving a circus man's brief,

but emphatic, commentary upon it. Speaking of Sleary's company, the great novelist says :—' All the fathers could dance upon rolling casks, stand upon bottles, catch knives and balls, twirl hand basins, ride upon anything, jump over everything, and stick at nothing. All the mothers could (and did) dance upon the slack wire and the tight rope, and perform rapid acts on bare-backed steeds.' The circus man's criticism of this statement, and of all the circus business introduced into the story, was summed up in the one word—' Rot ! ' Sleary's people must certainly have been exceptionally clever, so much versatility being very rarely found. There are few clowns and acrobats who can ride, even in the ordinary, and not in the circus acceptation of the word ; and of a score of *equestriennes* who can ride a pad-horse, and fly through hoops and balloons, and over banners and garters, there will not be found more than one or two who can perform rapid acts on the bare back of a horse.

So far, also, from ' all the mothers ' doing all the performances mentioned by Dickens, there are more often none who do them. I call to mind at this moment a circus in which seven of the male members of the company were married, not one of whose wives ever appeared in the ring, or ever had done so.

The picture of the domestic life of the men and women performing in Sleary's circus differs as much from reality as their versatile talents and accomplishments differ from the powers exhibited by the riders, clowns, and tumblers of real life. The company seems to be a rather strong one, and most of the men have wives and children; yet the whole of them, including the proprietor, are represented as lodging in one house, an obscure inn in an obscure part of the outskirts of the town. Such deviations from probability do not lessen the interest of the story, which I have read again and again with pleasure; but they render it of little or no value as a picture of circus life and character. Circus men, if married, and accompanied by their wives, will generally be found occupying private apartments. Riders and others who are unmarried sometimes prefer to lodge in public-houses, and often have no choice in the matter, owing to the early hours at which the inhabitants of provincial towns retire to rest, and the unwillingness of many persons to receive 'professionals' as lodgers, which applies equally to actors and vocalists. But the Pegasus's Arms must have had an unusual number of apartments for a house of its class to have accommodated all Sleary's people, with their families; and the company must have been gregarious in a very remarkable degree.

The dress, the manners, and the talk of circus men are peculiar, but in none of these particulars are they at all 'horsey,' as all Sleary's company are described, unless they are equestrians, and even these are less so than grooms and jockeys. They may be recognized by their dress alone as readily as foreigners who have just arrived in England, and who do not belong to those social classes that affect the latest Parisian fashions, and in which national distinctions have disappeared. Watch the men who enter a circus by the side-doors about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, or walk on two or three successive mornings, between ten and twelve, from Westminster Bridge to Waterloo Road, and you may recognize the acrobats and rope-dancers of the circuses and music-halls by their dress; you may meet one wearing a sealskin coat, unbuttoned, and displaying beneath a crimson velvet vest, crossed by a heavy gold chain. He is a 'tip-topper,' of course; one of those who used to get their fifty or sixty pounds a week at the Alhambra, or who has had nuggets thrown to him at San Francisco and Melbourne. Perhaps the next you will meet will be a man of lower grade, wearing a brown coat, with velvet collar, over a sealskin vest, with a brassy-looking chain festooned across it. Another wears a drab over-coat, with broad collar and cuffs of Astrakhan

lamb-skin ; an Alpine hat, with a tail-feather of a peacock stuck in the band, is worn jauntily on his head ; a pin, headed with a gilt horse-shoe or horse's head or hoof, adorns his fancy neck-tie ; and an Alaska diamond glistens on the fourth finger of an ungloved hand. Further on you meet a man whose form is enveloped in a capacious blue cloak, and whose head is surmounted by the tallest felt hat, with the broadest brim, you have ever seen. But you are not done with these strange people yet. You have nearly reached the end of York Road when there issues from the office of Roberts or Maynard, the equestrian and musical agents, a man wearing a low-crowned hat and a grey coat, braided with black ; or, it may be, a black velvet coat, buttoned across his chest, whatever the weather may be, and ornamented with a gold chain festooned from the breast-pocket to one of the button-holes.

This is the professional quarter of the metropolis. At least three-fourths of what I have termed the amusing classes, whether connected with circuses, theatres, public gardens, or music-halls,—actors, singers, dancers, equestrians, clowns, gymnasts, acrobats, jugglers, posturers,—may be found, in the day-time at least, within the area bounded by a line drawn from Waterloo Bridge to the Victoria Theatre, and thence along Gibson Street

and Oakley Street, down Kennington Road as far as the Cross, and thence to Vauxhall Bridge. Towards the edges of this area they are more sparsely scattered than nearer the bridges. They are well sprinkled along York Road, and in some of the streets between the Albert Embankment and Kennington Lane they constitute a considerable proportion of the population. You may enter Barnard's tavern, opposite Astley's, or the Pheasant, in the rear of the theatre, and find circus and music-hall *artistes* making two to one of the men before the bar.

They are, as a class, a light-hearted set, not remarkable for providence, but bearing the vicissitudes of fortune to which they are so liable with tolerable equanimity, showing a laudable desire to alleviate each other's ills to the utmost extent of their power, and regarding leniently each other's failings, without exhibiting a greater tendency to vice than any other class. There is not much education among them, as I have before indicated, and they are not much addicted to literature of any kind. This seems to arise, not from any deficiency of natural aptitude for learning, but from their wandering lives and the early age at which they begin to practise the feats by which they are to be enabled to live. The training of a circus rider, a

gymnast, or an acrobat begins as soon as he or she can walk. From that time they practise every day, and they are often introduced in the ring, or on the platform of a music-hall, at an age at which other children have not left the nursery. They wander over the United Kingdom—Europe—the world. The lads whom you see tumbling in one of the quiet streets between the Strand and the Victoria Embankment one day, may be seen doing the same performance a week or two afterwards on the sands at Ramsgate, the downs at Epsom, or the heath at Newmarket. The equestrian or the gymnast who amazes you at the Amphitheatre may be seen the following season at the Hippodrome or the Circo Price. They may be met passing from one continent to another, from one hemisphere to another, sometimes gorgeously attired, sometimes out at elbows, but always light-hearted and gay, excepting perhaps the clowns, who always seem, out of the ring, the gravest and most taciturn of the race. I do not know how a moral phenomenon of such strangeness is to be accounted for; perhaps all their hilarity evaporates in the saw-dust, or on the boards; but I am afraid that their humour is very often forced, their jests borrowed from the latest collection of *facetiae*, their merry interludes with the ring-master rehearsed before-hand.

They are, as a rule, long-lived, and seem never to become superannuated. Stickney died at forty, I believe; but Astley was seventy-two when he departed this life, Pablo Fanque seventy-five, Madame Saqui eighty, and Saunders ninety-two. Constant practice enables even gymnasts and acrobats to continue their performances when they are far down the decline of life; and I have seen middle-aged, and even grey-headed men, who had been 'pitching' or 'tenting' all their lives, and could still throw a forward somersault, or form the base of an acrobatic pyramid. Both men and women generally marry young, but the latter go on riding or rope-dancing until they are superseded by younger ones; and their husbands ride, vault, tumble, or juggle, until their—

—————' little life
Is rounded with a sleep.'

The human mind craves amusement in every phase of society, and in none more than in that which is exemplified in the large towns of Europe and the United States, where, and especially among the commercial and industrial classes, the brain is in activity, the nerves in a state of tension, from morn till eve. Released from business or labour for the day, the nervous system requires relaxation;

and if its demands are not attended to, the strain of the day cannot long be sustained. The entertaining classes are, therefore, a necessary element of present society; and, in now taking leave of them, I cannot too strongly urge upon all who may read these pages the appeal which the inimitable Dickens has put into the mouth of Sleary: 'People mutht be amuthed. They can't be alwayth a-learning, nor they can't be alwayth a-working; they an't made for it. You *mutht* have uth. Do the withe thing and the kind thing too, and make the betht of uth; not the wutht.' Let us indeed make the best of our entertainers; for we owe them much.

THE END.

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