

**TOM THE CLOWN.**

(BY A. R. ROSE-SOLEY.)

"Oh, I'm so tired, Tom," said the little circus rider; "shall we never get to the end of it?"

She might have been satisfied. She shone in all the glory of a cotton velvet riding habit—some sizes too large—and a flowing cloak, with a gilt crown set upon her streaming, red-gold locks. A mediaeval lady, ambling on her palfrey through the unmediaeval streets of San Francisco.

The circus had newly landed within the Golden Gate, and the populace was supremely alive to the fact. For hours the long train of glitter and tinsel had been winding through the dusty thoroughfares, under a fog-shrouded sky. Women thronged the pavements to gaze admiringly at the noted gymnasts, and enviously at the lion queen in her Cleopatra robes. Men crowded the kerb to appraise the value of the horses. Little boys shouted themselves hoarse over the elephants, the dromedary and the performing dogs. But the chief glory was reserved for the clown, who, in all the dignity of loose cotton pantaloons, bestrode his donkey, facing the tail, and flung jokes at the crowd as liberally as though his hearers had paid entrance fees.

"Ain't that cute, now," observed an admiring small imp, as the clown's winking, plastered face puckered itself at him; "ain't he just cunning? My! I guess I'd rather be a clown than most anything."

The little rider behind the clown heard and smiled. She stooped toward a child who seemed to be the small imp's sister.

"And do you want to be a clown, too?" she asked.

The child looked up with wondering eyes.

"Oh, no, ma'am, thank you, I'd—I'd like to be a fine lady, like you, all velvet and crown. It must be fun."

Then the procession moved on, and the circus rider said, for perhaps the tenth time:

"Oh, Tom, I am so tired! When will it end?"

"We must pay the price of our fun, Myra," he answered, grimly. Turning round he let fly a jeer which set the crowd in a roar. And after that he uttered a peculiar stound; if he hadn't been a clown one might almost have believed that he sighed. The girl did not hear.

"I wish I had your spirits," she said, wearily. "Where do you get them?" "Sour yeast makes light bread, Myra," he answered, bitterly.

Perhaps Myra thought the simile defective. She did not reply.

Myra hated the circus; her hate dated from the day when her happy childhood was warped by her mother's marriage with a circus rider. Still, the girl took to her new training readily enough. From babyhood she had gone up confidently to anything with four legs, and the thing with four legs had returned her confidence. From babyhood, or little more, she had been accustomed to seat herself on kindly, unsaddled backs, and the trick riding of the ring was to her a pastime. Yet it was whispered, and not without truth, that Myra's timidity amounted to cowardice; for the circus atmosphere invariably strained her nerves to tension point. The glitter and sawdust, the glare and applause, which act as wine on some natures, drove her well-nigh frantic; her brain reeled, her sight grew unstead as soon as she caught sight of the noisy, welcoming crowd. Had the circus folk not been watchful, and her horse sympathetic

it would many a time have gone ill with Myra.

And this circus was especially trying; she had not grown used to its extra brilliancy. The troupe was an American one, just returned from an Australian tour, where some of its most agile horse-women had suddenly decamped with admiring swains. Myra was one of the new recruits, enlisted from less pretentious companies, and Myra had entered on her fresh responsibilities with a permanent scar stamped on her winsome little face. Seasickness and a sense of exile had not diminished the scare; she knew that should she fail now the manager could find a substitute at a day's notice, and she would be left penniless in a foreign land. She had but one hope to cling to—the unfailing friendship of Tom the Clown.

Tom it was who, the first day, had patted her rich, red-gold hair and told her to "Cheer up! there's always the clown to tumble on." Tom it was who watched her like a brother, and contrived to have some joke or antic ready to divert public attention when he saw her nerve falling. Tom was her providence, the only creature who had seemed really fond of her since her foolish, loving mother died.

"What makes you so kind to me?" she asked one day.

"My dear, it's your red mop and yellow eyes," he answered, grinning. The rest laughed. But the lion queen looked daggers at Myra, for the clown was a handsome fellow, with brilliant eyes and pink cheeks, when the patches and flour were washed off.

The first evening had passed with a full house. Myra had not done badly, neither had she done well. She had come on with cheeks burning under her paint, limbs quivering beneath her tights. The ringmaster frowned as he noticed a lack of spring in one or two jumps, a hesitation at the hoops. He was not harsh, as circus masters go; he rather liked little Myra's unassuming ways, and he knew that the public were taken by her red locks with the golden tinge and her brown eyes with the golden gleam. But there must be no uncertain riders in his troupe; above all, no risky riders.

"We must do better than that tomorrow, little woman," he said, sharply, though not unkindly; "can't have people stopping to admire their hoops, you know."

The lion queen, peeping through the curtain, heard and laughed. The clown, gamboling round, heard, too; but he did not laugh.

"Christmas Eve, my dear," he said to her, cheerily, next morning; "sweet day for sweet girls. If you're not a good girl tonight you won't find any candy in your stocking."

"I know, Tom," she said, wearily; "but what can I do?" Her eyes filled. She was thinking of the old childish days in dear Australia, when "Mother's" loving hand stuffed her little stocking with good things and "Mother's" gentle voice wished her a merry Christmas. Why couldn't one be always a child? Tom looked at her and bit his lip.

"I believe you're still limp with seasickness," he said at last. "Go and put on your things this very minute and come out with me for a tonic; there's nothing like a good feed after it. What is it you were pleased to suggest—doughnuts and maple syrup? No such thing, miss! I'm going to take you to the top of Telegraph Hill, where the wind will blow you into a damask rose, and then we'll go to an Italian restaurant, and you'll eat oily, cheesy things till you feel like a stuffed cabbage. Quite time you saw

something of San Francisco, you small cornstalk."

The cornstalk flushed with pleasure and ran off to don her daintiest. When the clown sat opposite her beaming face at the "Tarantella," he thought his prescription would have done credit to the Faculty.

"Keep on like that till you go on tonight," he remarked, "and you'll do. Santa Claus is looking you up, my dear; you'll get a stocking full of candies, after all."

The girl suddenly pushed away her ravioli. "Oh, Tom, I am so frightened about tonight! You'll keep your eye on me?"

"Trust the clown! But what's the matter—hoops?"

"No, it's the scarfs. I'm not scared of the hoops, not really. I always know I'll get through somehow, and Sultan times me, too. But I never feel certain of clearing those horrid scarfs, and I'm to have the three in succession on my last round. I know I shall fail."

"I'll watch," said the clown. "Don't fret; just keep your dander up, and eat your food like a Christmas Christian. Was that why you were crying this mornin'? Don't fib, you were crying."

"No," said Myra, flushing scarlet, "not for that."

"What then? Lioness showed her claws?"

He knew the lion queen hated poor Myra; her own hair was dyed. Myra grew redder.

"What did she say, now? Out with it!"

"Nothing that mattered." "Little girl, if you are going to have secrets from the clown you won't come off best."

"Well, it didn't matter. As if I cared!"

"About what?" "About your not being a marrying man."

The clown started, and his cheeks paled. He looked very grave as he watched Myra nervously crumbling her bread.

"Dear little girl," he said at last, slowly, "do you think you could keep the clown's secret?"

She looked at him with parted lips. "The clown isn't a marrying man. He believes he is a married man."

"Believes?" said Myra.

"She left me," he continued, in a strained voice. "Left me four years ago, and left the baby. Poor baby died. I've been looking for the mother ever since. I suppose I'm a fool! But, you see, the man she went away with was the sort of man who would tire of her and fling her aside before long; and I had cared for her ever since we were children together. I can't rest till I know that she is out of want—or dead. . . . God!"

Myra started, and followed the direction of his glance. A fashionably dressed woman had swept out of a private room and was leaving the restaurant. Her back was toward them.

"Why, I declare," cried Myra; "she has my hair!"

"My wife had your hair and eyes," muttered Tom, his glance still following the retreating figure.

Then Myra understood why he was so good to the "red mop and yellow eyes."

The circus was crammed with merry holiday-makers, the applause vociferous; Myra was "on," in her shimmering gauze draperies, and she was doing well. Her time was nearly up, she and Sultan had gone through their single scarf satisfactory, and her spirits rose as she flew round, ready for the trouble ahead.

Once—Well done! The boys shouted

[First Pub. Dec. 15-4]

**Notice to Creditors.—E 1496.**

In the county court of Lancaster county, Nebraska, in re estate of Hobart Van Andel, deceased.

To the creditors of said estate: Take notice that the time limited for the presentation of claims against said estate is July 15, 1901 and for the payment of debts is January 15, 1902. That I will sit at the county court room in said county on April 15, 1901, and on July 15, 1901, to receive, examine, allow and adjust all claims duly filed; notice whereof is ordered published four successive weeks in The Courier of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Witness my hand and seal of said court this 11th day of December, 1900.

(SEAL) FRANK R. WATERS, County Judge.  
By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk County Court.

First Pub. Dec. 15-3

**Notice of Petition for Letters.**

In the county court of Lancaster county, Nebraska E 1507

In re estate of Gena Leonard, deceased. The State of Nebraska, to the children, heirs at law and next of kin of said deceased and to any other persons interested in said matter.

Take notice that a petition signed by H. D. Leonard praying said court to grant letters of administration of said estate to H. D. Leonard has been filed in said court; that the same is set for hearing on the 7th day of January, 1901, at ten o'clock A. M., and that if you do not then appear and contest, said court may grant administration of the said estate to H. D. Leonard.

Notice of this proceeding has been ordered published three weeks successively in The Courier of Lincoln, Nebraska, prior to said hearing.

Witness my hand and the seal of said court this 11th day of December, A. D. 1900.

(SEAL) FRANK R. WATERS, County Judge.

By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk County Court.

First Pub. Dec. 8-4.

**Notice to Creditors.—E 1502.**

County court of Lancaster county, Nebraska, in the Estate of Christian Heidecker, deceased.

The creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation of claims against said estate is July 1, 1901, and for the payment of debts is January 1, 1902; That I will sit at the county court room in said county, on April 1, 1901, and on July 1, 1901, to receive, examine, adjust and allow all claims duly filed.

Notice whereof is ordered published four consecutive weeks in The Courier, of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Witness my hand and seal of said court this 5th day of December, 1900.

(SEAL) FRANK R. WATERS, County Judge.

By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk County Court.



FOR  
Furs  
One 38.

Fur garments made to order. A complete line of Furs always on hand. All work guaranteed.

Seral Cloaks Remodeled, Re-dyed and made into Latest Style.

**O. STEELE,**  
**FURRIER,**  
143 South 12th.

The COURIER  
And any One Dollar  
Woman's Club Magazine { \$1.50

**H. W. BROWN**  
Druggist and  
Bookseller.  
Whiting's  
Fine Stationery  
and  
Calling Cards.....  
127 So. Eleventh Street.  
PHONE 68