

GAMES OF THE FAKIRS.

Who Prey Upon Circus Patrons.

How the Candy Butchers and Circus Pirates Plunder the Unsuspecting Verdants at the Mammoth Shows—Paying Premiums for "Privileges."

Chicago Herald.

The Gentle Annie season approaches, and the day of the circus is at hand. In a few weeks at the furthest the tents of somebody's "Mammoth Consolidation of Stupendous Railroad Shows—Seventeen Unparalleled Marvels Under One Grand Pavilion"—will be pitched in Indianapolis.

"You bet there's money in it," said the veteran, with a knowing shake of the head. "Why, I've been layin' around here in the spring so darn poor that if pig-iron was sellin' at two cents a ton I couldn't have bought a single nail; standin' lunch counter keepers offer sandwiches, and pullin' their legs for pie, and then coin off with the circus, runnin' the candy-fake for the season, and come home in the fall with a roll in my pocket."

"The recruit's eyes opened at the prospect of the 'big money' which he was assured was in the business, but sighed despairingly as he remarked that he had no money to start business with."

"Ain't got no capital, eh?" said the old timer. "You don't need any. You go with the show to tend the candy business, and the bosses give you fifteen cents on the dollar for all the stuff you sell. Then you pay 'em about twelve dollars a week for your board and transportation on the trains. You whack with 'em on all the boddie you go away with—over what comes in on the square—make an even divvy'—understand?"

"The Journal man became interested, and ventured to inquire of the 'candy butcher' if he meant that the proprietors of the show countenanced stealing from customers and shared in the profits, at which that guileless citizen laughed outright."

"Do they know it?" said he. "Well, I should say. Of course they know it, an' if a guy ain't purty slick, an' ain't got no use for 'em."

"How do you get more money than you are entitled to?" innocently inquired the reporter.

"How do we get it? Well, there's a thousand ways. For instance, a gray country jake, you know, comes up to your stand an' says: 'Gimme a quarter's worth o' cigars, an' forks over a five to get changed. You have a one, folded lengthwise and caught over your finger; you slip the five into the palm of your hand, lay down the one and give him 'em cents change. Nine cases out o' ten he won't notice it at all, but I'll pocket his change and move on. But in case he makes a kick to the bosses and has got you purty foul, they've got to let on to be madder'n bizans an' 'll give him his money back. Then you've got to square the kick with 'em."

"Down south is the place to work all kinds of rackets, though," resumed the speaker. "The dickies are a pud-din'. Mr. Nix comes along an' hands over a twenty-dollar gold piece that he got for his cotton to pay for a glass o' red lemonade as long as a yardstick. Mr. Nix gets out of the glass, an' she's yourn. You'll get their whole cotton crop 'fore they get away, if you'll work the snap slick enough. The man'll hand over his gold piece, an' you slip a silver dollar into your hand an' sneak the gold piece into your pocket. He an' the old woman each had a glass of lemonade, an' you give 'em 90 cents Gulch. Maybe he notices it an' maybe he don't. If he does, an' says he gave you a gold piece, you jes' say, 'Go 'way, nigger, you don't know the difference 'tween gold and silver; this is white, ain't it, an' ain't gold yaller!'"

"Look, heah, 'Liza,'" says Mr. Nix to Mrs. Nix, "that 'ar twenty-dollar gold piece I got from Mass. Cleveison, for that cotton; an' 'Liza answers every time: 'No, Pomp; that war the dollah you got from Boss Gluckison for them yams, or somethin'' of that kind. I tell you, you can get 'em every time. Mr. Coon goes off shakin' his head, perhaps, but he won't see through the game."

"I made a good haul onet on a mulatto woman. She had plenty o' money, an' sailed into the big tent as if she had somebody big. She waltzed up to the feller who was sellin' reserved seats an' asked for a seat, but there was a rule agin' sellin' to coons, an' he wouldn't let her have 'em. But he got a glimpse into her leather an' saw that she had a roll, so he calls me out an' says, 'D'ye see that coon settin' up on the fifth row there? Well, you work her good; she wants reserved seats, an' I'll pay well for 'em. So I took some tickets an' mounted the seats, yellin' 'Reserved seats' as loud as I could. She called me over and asked me for three tickets. 'Dollar-an'-a-half,' says I, 'an' she opened her leather an' took out a tinner, an' as she did that I reached over an' pinched a twenty. I got my silver ready, an' as she handed me the tinner I says: 'Lady, couldn't you please give me a larger bill? I've got more change here'n I know what to do with.' 'Oh, of course,' says she, an' yanks out a twenty. I forgot to give back her ten, an' she put her change for the twenty into her wallet; I nipped that. Then I had to watch for fear she would try to buy some juice or somethin', an' I know'd if she did, she'd find out that she'd been touched for all the wealth she had, an' make a kick to the bosses. After

a while she got to yellin' for a fan, an' I had to wait till the Japanese opera-cooler fakir come along, an' told him she didn't have a cent; so he steered clear."

"How do you keep from having two men with different articles for sale from approaching a person who has already been fleeced?" the reporter ventured to inquire.

"You see, we divide the tent off into districts. For instance, one man'll work the seats between one set of poles, and another'll begin where he leaves off. When the candy man has touched a feller, he prints him out by the juice-slinger and puts him onto the snap. 'Don't touch that blikie over there,' 'don't hold up his ribs with the slingers,' 'don't speak to his old slogs on the top row yonder,' and so on, until he knows just who you've worked."

"Are you never found out and arrested?" again interposed the newspaper man.

"Ain't we?" responsively queried the "butcher."

"Well, I should cause my features to relax. Why, I got salted for ninety days out down in a little town in Tennessee, me an' two other guys. There was an internal revenue officer come along and asked for a quarter's worth of segars an' handed me a \$10 note. I worked the dollar racket on him, an' give him back 75 cents change. I wasn't on to him, though, no more'n he was to me. He was layin' for us for sellin' segars without license, so he went to another feller an' buys another quarter's worth, but the other guy pinched him for a fifty. The feller had a big roll o' bills and throwed 'em aroun' purty free. He tackled one other feller and left. Purty soon a feller comes up to me an' says, 'How are ye?' stickin' out both hands. I didn't drop to his game, an' put out my hands to shake with him, at the same time wonderin' how much I could hold out on him, an' makin' up my mind to squeeze him all I could; but for I know'd what I was about he had a pair o' nippers on me, an' I tumbled to the racket. I held up my hands an' hollered to the other fellers, 'Hello, boys, how do they fit?' They cut an' run, but the marshal caught 'em, an' in we went."

"Did the show help you out?" asked the new recruit.

"Well, you bet they didn't. When you get into that kind of a scrape the show people don't know you. The bosses say you are just follerin' their show and sellin' stuff on the outside, and they don't care a darn what comes of you. If they did the show would be held over, an' that wouldn't do at all, you know. The revenue officer didn't miss anything except the \$10 that I nipped, but that was enough, and it costs us about \$300 apiece, an' three weeks stretch in jail to get out o' that. Many a time I have had to skip out across the cold field an' join the show train at some outside station, or else stay an' go in the hole."

"How much money can a fellow make?" asked the recruit.

"Depends on how slick a man he is. I know'd one fellow that give the show \$20 a day for the privilege o' peddlin' razors outside the canvas in Alabama. He was the slickest cuss I ever see. He'd tackle a coon an' try to sell him a razor for 50 cents, an' while he was tryin' to slip the razor into the bloke's pocket with one hand he'd be all over an' under an' around him with the other, feelin' every pocket an' pinchin' everyt'ing he had about him that was worth a shuck. I tell you it's a great graft, an' beats layin' aroun' 'her all summer."

When the reporter left the party the veteran was still engaged in explaining to the aspirant for honors the secrets of the "candy-butcher's" profession and picturing in glowing colors the beauties of the business.

Profit, \$1,200. "To sum it up, six long years of bed-ridden sickness, costing \$200 per year, total \$1,200—all of this expense was stopped by three bottles of Hop Bitters, taken by my wife. She has done her own housework for a year since, without the loss of a day, and I wait everybody to know it, for their benefit.—N. E. Farmer.

LIFE AT LEADVILLE.

A Bright and Interesting Letter About the Folks in California Gulch.

The Heavy Players of the Mining Club Taught a "Chinning" Lesson in Draw-Poker.

Opium Smoking Becoming Alarmingly Prevalent Among Women of Upper California—A Diamond Find—Annie Maegon's Misfortunes.

Leadville Correspondence of the Denver Tribune. Within the past six months a certain evil has grown to such alarming proportions in this city as to act upon and horrify anyone who has looked into it. I allude to opium smoking. It is a well known fact that the gambling fraternity are all more or less addicted to it, but of late it has spread to all classes. There is a point near the corner of Fifth and Poplar streets here that is frequented by women who move in decidedly upper circles. No sporting women are admitted and the utmost caution is observed to keep everything as quiet as possible. The police talk of pulling the place, but it is said that the influence of the parties who frequent it makes the authorities reluctant about taking any steps in that direction. There was a singular loss on the Aspen road the other day. The Farwell Consolidated mine at Independence deposited \$20,000 in two gold bricks at the Independence bank, that institution shipping it by their own express to Leadville. The precious bars were loaded on the back of a pack horse in a couple of gunny sacks secured by leather straps. About twelve miles from Independence the armed messenger examined the gunny sacks to see if the treasure was safe, and was astounded and terrified to find that the friction against the cloth had worn a hole through it, and that one of the bricks was gone. He at once turned around

and slowly retraced his steps, closely examining the snow, which lies deep upon the road, for some trace of the lost gold. The tracks of the horse were plainly visible, but although the snow was trampled down hard there was no sign of a track. Ford was at once sent to the bank and over one hundred men were sent out on the search, but without success, and at the present time it seems very likely that some wandering prospector came upon more gold in a lump than he is liable to dig in the whole course of his natural life. The bank will have to stand the loss—an even \$10,000. [The brick has since been found.—Ed.]

One of the aristocratic institutions of Leadville is the Mining Club—an organization composed of the blue blood of the city, and not exactly, as the name implies, made up of mining magnates. The apartments of the organization include a daintily furnished little apartment sacred to the great American game of draw-poker. Here the club men are wont to congregate at an evening and sometimes the game runs high. Now in draw poker—even 'among gentlemen'—the player pretends to win rather than to lose, and consequently some very desperate points are occasionally strained. A few evenings ago a well-known member—the superintendent of a mine east of the city—sat down in a mine of the hardest and heaviest players in the camp. In about an hour he had lost \$750 poorer than when he sat down. Later in the evening he discomfitedly narrated the fact to a friend, and cursed and gambled and gamblers in a loud, deep and emphatic style. It so happened that this friend was a trifle more "fly" in the vernacular of the gang than he, and closing one optic, told him he could assist him in making the Miner club remarkably sick as far as draw-poker was concerned. The mining man expressed his willingness to be assisted and the "fly" friend produced what is technically known as a "shiner." This may be dark and gloomy mystery to those uninitiated, but to old sports it is far from one. A "shiner" is nothing but a silver dollar on one side of which a concave mirror about the size of a man's little finger nail is set. This is brightly polished and unnoticed in the surrounding silver. When the game begins the "shiner" is laid on top of a pile of notes and coin and the cards dealt over it. The result is that the concave mirror catches the reflection of all cards dealt over it and the dealer has a pretty accurate knowledge of what everybody else holds. A few lessons made the mining man an adept and armed with the "shiner" he hid him to the Mining club. A poker was in progress, and he took his seat at the table. For the next couple of hours the players were tempted to think he had suddenly become gifted with the powers of clairvoyance. The result was, so singularly accurate was his knowledge of what they held. At the end of that time he had the crowd in such a state of utter and complete dead-brokedness that they were obliged to stand off the steward of the club for their potations. Since then the Mining club has experienced a season of financial depression which seriously lamed their political potency in the city election.

Some bard of latter day has written: "What's in a name? Ah Shakespeare there you blundered. Sticker a name's worth, there's cold cash in a hundred." Acting on this suggestion a Leadville lady is getting up a novelty in the line of an autograph quilt, which she proposes to raffle off for the benefit of Mrs. Sam Townsend, the widow of the officer shot the other day. She has sent a square of cloth and a pencil of indelible ink to all the American celebrities, with the request that they return the same with their autograph and a sentiment endorsing the cause. The result has been flattering, and she has amassed already quite a collection. Some of the returns have been witty, and some fraught with good common sense.

Ned Foster, of Foster's Delmonico, the leading European hotel here, is a happy man. While opening a case of early spring vegetables just received from Florida yesterday, he saw something that glittered in the bottom of the box, and picking it up was amazed to see that it was a handsome diamond brooch. It is mounted in Roman gold and consists of a center one of the purest water, weighing two and one-sixteenth carats, surrounded by smaller but not less purer brilliants. On the back is engraved the initials "A. S." and the whole is worth enough to make that a very profitable case of vegetables, indeed. How the brooch got there, or whose it is, Mr. Foster is just as despatchly ignorant of as any body.

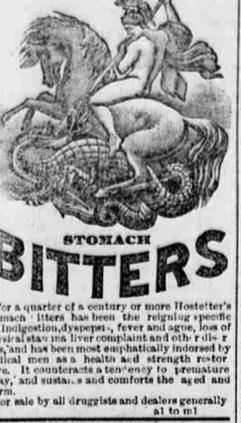
Quite a pleasant little romance in real life occurred here the other day, all the facts being vouchered for as strictly correct. Something like two or three weeks ago a pretty servant girl named Annie Maegon, who works for a family on Capitol hill, received a letter from New York stating that an uncle living there had died, leaving her about \$12,000—quite a snug little sum for a hard-working girl. Annie was somewhat dubious about the information, claiming that she never had any relatives in New York, but her friends insisted that she must be the party meant, and she became quite happy in the sun of her new-found prosperity. Then admirers came by droves. Dozens of men wondered why they had never been attracted by her before, and she had for the time being more attention than she could stand. Several proposed marriage, and while she was deliberating which one to have, the chilling news came that the letter was not intended for her at all, but for another Annie who lives at Kokomo, and who is a horny-handed washer-woman. Her dream of bliss was knocked higher than the kite of the late Mr. Gilderoy, and her admirers fled to the four winds. It was a touching instance of man's inconstancy, and one which she will probably never forget.

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