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THE HUMAN TUMBLER.

How the Circus Craze Drives Boys into the Profession.

The Inner Secrets of the Ring and the Mysteries of Somersaults Explained by an Expert.

New York Journal.

"More people go into tumbling than into any other line of circus business," said a performer, a brawny, big-limbed, lusty fellow, standing in the dressing-room of Barnum's show. He had just vaulted over five elephants, and was brushing the sawdust from his knees. "An ordinary tumbler gets \$30 a week; an extraordinary one, \$50. A leeper who is able to turn a double back spiral corkscrow pirouette over four elephants on the ground, and one elephant in mid air, standing on a tub, may command \$75 a week, which is increased to \$100 when he does a trapeze act."

"How does one learn the business?" "I will tell you how I learned it. My experience, in part, is that of many. When I was a green country boy I dropped out for six cents a day and sold wild blackberries for three cents a quart to get money to go to a circus with. I looked forward to the show for four months; talked about it daytimes and dreamed of it nights. I walked five miles into town to see the circus, and seven miles out of town to meet it. I went into the side show. I saw the anaconda, the bearded woman, and the educated hog, which could spell backwards and forwards and was immensely better in figures than I was. I went into the circus. Such riding! I was delirious with joy. When the trick mule came out I got on his back, just as the regulation drunken man belonging to the circus made a broad swathe through the crowd at the front door and fell over against the ropes. I clung to the mule like grim death. He bucked with me, he backed me against the center pole. He rolled over and over in the ring and wipped up most of the sawdust with me. The clown lifted me off. When I came to my senses the clown was bending over me. I was in the dressing room just as I am now."

"He's a plucky chap," said a man in tights. A half dozen other tights and spangles said I was a plucky fellow, and then the first man asked me to travel with him. I had made arrangements to go to sea with the captain of a canal boat. I broke my romantic engagement with the captain, and when the circus left town I went away, covered with plasters, in the band wagon.

"The man said he would take me as an apprentice for four years. This is the regular time to serve at the present day. Sometimes circuses take apprentices. Sometimes performers take them. The conditions are the same. Circus actors invariably begin to learn their art when children. It is useless for any one to try to become a performer after he has grown up. I never knew such a one to succeed. My teacher and patron gave me my board and clothes, some spending money, many whippings, and when I had become a little proficient drew my salary along with his own. I practiced an hour a day. Longer practice is hurtful. I first learned to balance myself on my hands; then to turn a back somersault; it being an easier somersault than a front one. Then in turn I learned flip-flaps, hand springs, forward somersaults, rows of forward somersaults, backward somersaults in rows, progressive and retrogressive flip-flaps and combinations. The first feat belongs to circus tumblers, the most difficult kind. Not every performer does it. A flip-flap is turned by throwing yourself on your hands on the very spot your feet were a moment before and then springing to an upright position. To throw yourself on your hands a yard or so from where you stand is a 'lob-gob.' Only amateurs do it. A professional can turn twenty-four flip-flaps in succession on a space six inches square.

"It took me two years to learn the routine of tumbling and five years to become proficient. I never lost practice for a single day. In winter I performed my feats every afternoon in the circus barn."

"It is hard to turn a somersault over five elephants."

"It requires great nerve and entire self-confidence. If a man loses his self-confidence he will never do it. Sometimes we fall because we do not strike the spring board right; sometimes because we do not take the right step. I never knew any accident to a tumbler more serious than a sprain or the breaking of his arm. I have noticed that short men make better artists than tall ones, and that alertness is a greater requisite than strength. When the fellow jumps on the spring board the least skilful tumbler and the ways come first, a less skilful second, and so on; the best tumbler comes last."

"Is it possible for a cross-eyed man to turn a somersault over five elephants?" "Empathically, no."

"Are any performers trying to learn to turn the triple somersault?" "Yes. It has already been done, but never satisfactorily. It is impossible to get command of the third somersault. An expert performer sometimes slips him up by accident, but it is never sure. In the third somersault one whirls around three times as fast as he does in the first one and it is only by chance that he may strike on his feet or keep on his feet when he does strike. In a double somersault you go round twice as fast the second time as you do the first."

"Is the art of tumbling developing?" "We now turn a double back somersault from a man's hand. A few years ago only one somersault was turned in this way. Half our art consists in the grace with which we do our feats. The style of the tumbler is one of the principal points on which he is judged by professionals. No two tumblers do the same thing in the same manner. For instance, one man begins a round-off with one hand, in this way; a second, with the other hand in another way."

"Are there different kinds of single somersaults?" "We have four. They are called divers, tucks, twisters and pirouettes. The first is, excepting the pirouette,

the most difficult. In performing it the tumbler projects his body at full length into the air like a diver, and does not turn till almost over the cushion. In the second he leaps straight up from the springboard, he gathers himself up like a ball and goes over at once. In a twister he turns his body in such fashion that he alights with his face toward the springboard. In a pirouette he twists himself twice as much as in a twister.

"Do you think of any interesting fact connected with your profession?" "Yes; there are more religious people among the tumblers than in any other line of circus performers, save only the lady riders."

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 15, 1880.

GENTLEMEN—Having been a sufferer for a long time from nervous prostration and general debility, I was advised to try Hop Bitters. I have taken one bottle, and I have been rapidly getting better ever since, and I think it the best medicine I ever used. I am now gaining strength and appetite, which was all gone, and I was in despair until I tried your Bitters. I am now well, able to go about and do my own work. Before taking it, I was completely prostrated.

MRS. MARY STUART.

A REFORMED "FAKIR" Who Gives Away Some of the Alleged Secrets of the Show Business.

Cleveland Leader.

"I am a reformed fakir," said a sleek-looking young man, as he drew the reporter over into a corner, "and I assure you it won't kill me if I give away some of the secrets of the business. Do you know, sir, that the smallest show on the road has to carry eight or ten sleazy-looking fellows, who are the biggest thieves along? Yes, sir, and the bigger the show the more numerous the workers. I know of one big show last season that had sixty men at work and received \$8,000 a week in privilege. Of course the proprietors of the show disclaim all relationship with the fakirs, but every Monday morning the poor fellows have to come down with the dust. It is wonderful how many of these fellows are with a big show, and how they manage to get away with it. One man contracts to work the big joint, and pays from \$250 to \$1,000 a week for the privilege.

"Don't know what a big joint is? Why, it is where a fat guy drops his boodle on a represent. You never hear about it unless he makes a kick, and as the chances are he is a deacon in a church, or a model man in the community, he keeps quiet, bearing his loss in silence. The big joint is only worked for big money, a greedy lawyer, or whoever is spotted, is induced to go over to the show grounds by two finely dressed, moral looking men, whom he has met on the street while watching the procession. As they sidle around the sidewalk tent talking about the weather, or the crops, or something, No. 3 is given the slip, and he comes out. These fakirs are the strangest of them all. They are not really interested in the show, but merely want to advertise his show, etc., and the victim goes in. He runs against a 'brace.' His new acquaintances tell him how to win. If he has the money in his clothes he lays it down, and if he hasn't he goes to the bank and gets it. No. 5 accompanying him. Of course, the poor man sees the show before he comes out. These fat guys are worked for from \$20 to \$4,500, according to the amount of credit they have in the bank, and you can bet your life that the big joint has it all sized up before the meat is tackled.

"If the gilly makes a kick then the square has to work. A square is one of the most important men on the show, and he is the one who makes a kick made to 'square' the authorities, and then if the victim attempts to have anybody arrested he cannot succeed. In some places we were in the square would go around in the morning and square the town, that is, he would 'fix' the mayor, police and justices, and then the boys could work all day and night, and if any one threatened they would laugh at him. I remember in an Indiana town an Indian had fixed the place, and the very first man roped in was the high sheriff of the county. The lads got \$6,000 off him and he kicked. By paying back \$1,200 they got it settled. I know a man who had the big joint with a show last season who cleared \$30,000. As soon as the season was over he went to Chicago and bought out a clothing store. He says he'll never go on the road again, but that's all say that."

"Well, there's the 'little joint,' the 'drop case,' the 'go-out,' and dozens of other privileges for thieving in a small way, and the show gets a big share of the plunder. The reason they rent these privileges is this: These thieves would go right along anyway and the proprietors might as well have a benefit. You have seen the man who sells tickets away from the wagon? Well, the fellow who rents a piece of ground every ticket he sells gets a share of the money for just the same, and besides, pays from \$15 to \$30 a week for the privilege of doing it. How does he make any money? In making change. The man who sells tickets for the side-show works in the same way. Lots of 'butchers' work without any salary whatever. One man pays from \$100 to \$200 per week for the privilege of working the 'go-out'—selling tickets in the tent after the show."

"But I thought the large shows carried detectives along?" "Ha, ha, ha—! So they do, and those detectives are paid their salaries by the other thieves. All they have to do is to keep outside thieves from working on the ground. If an outsider is detected he is handed over to the police. The privilege men are never detected. I was a detective part of last season, and the big shows are glad to bill the detective feature largely, as it shuts up the eye of the masses. But I've quit the business. I do think that some men are so greedy they ought to be knocked down and their money taken from them, but somebody else may do it hereafter."

"What is the reason so many apparently well-informed men bite at the big and little joints?" "Because everything is done on a represent. You make a man believe that he can get something for nothing and he's pretty sure to come in."

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A KING BATHING HIS PEASANTS' FEET.

An Annual Ceremony in Austria—King and Queen Humble Before the Poor.

From the London Standard.

The Hofburg, the chief palace of the Austrian sovereigns, has been the scene of an ecclesiastical ceremony of act of devotion which is a curious relic of medieval customs. In accordance with a usage observed from time immemorial on Maunday Thursday the ceremony of "washing the feet of the poor" was this morning performed as usual by their Majesties at the imperial residence. In the Middle Ages the custom prevailed at many other Catholic Courts, but in the present day to find a parallel would be impossible, except at the Vatican and the palace of the King of Spain.

The proceedings opened at 9 o'clock, when twelve old men, of whom the oldest is in his ninety-third year and the youngest eighty-seven, and twelve old women, the oldest ninety-six and the youngest ninety, dressed, as usual, in the old German costume, presented to them by the emperor an empress, entered the court chapel, in order to receive the sacrament, and were then brought into the hall of ceremonies at the Hofburg. On each side of the hall was a table with twelve covers, the one table for the old men and the other for the old woman. They are all citizens of Vienna, and many among them showed by their behavior that they had taken part in the ceremony more than once.

The appearance of the clergyman at 11 a. m. the ceremony began. The Emperor who was followed by all the Archdukes present in Vienna, served the old men, and the Empress, followed by all the Archduchesses and court ladies, served the old women at their respective tables.

The corps diplomatique was, as usual, in attendance, but this year, for reasons generally known, the British, French and Turkish ambassadors did not appear. All the ministers were present, as well as court dignitaries and privy councillors, the chamberlains, the grand masters and the highest representatives of the army. The tables being removed, the emperor and empress knelt down in front of each of the old people, took off a shoe and stocking from each, washed the foot with wine moistened from a golden ewer, held in a chamberlain's hand, and then a chamberlain. After the feet of the old people had been wiped the archdukes and archduchesses replaced the shoe and stocking, and their majesties concluded the ceremony by hanging round the neck of each of the old people a purse with thirty silver florins. The old folks were then sent home in cabs, each with a well-filled box of provisions and wine.

Money for the Unmarried.

One of the most solid and substantial institutions in this country is the *Farmer's Fund and Mutual Trust Association*, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This Association, organized under the laws of Iowa, and hereof officers and directors are among the leading and most prominent business men of Cedar Rapids. Every unmarried person should have a certificate in this association. It is a splendid investment, as safe as government bonds. You can just as well have a good sum of money to commence married life on as not. A large number of members have been paid off, receiving 300 per cent on their investment. Write for circulars fully detailing the plan, which is the finest known. Do not postpone it. Good agents wanted. Mention where you saw this notice.

Some of the Big Gold Nuggets. Sierra County, Cal., Tribune.

On the 12th of August, 1860, a large piece of gold was taken from the Monumental Quartz mine, Sierra Buttes, which weighed 1,500 ounces pure, the value of which was estimated at from \$21,000 to \$30,000. The nugget was sold to H. H. Woodward, of San Francisco, for \$21,636.52. A fine specimen was taken from the Rainbow Quartz mine, Chipp's Flat, in 1881. It was taken from a depth of 200 feet. Later it was shipped to London and worked there. It yielded \$22,000. In 1865 a nugget was found at French Ravine that weighed 522 ounces, and was worth \$10,000. It contained considerable quartz, which is not calculated in its weight. In 1851, at French Ravine, a nugget was found which weighed 426 ounces, and was valued at \$8,000. A nugget is reported to have been found at Minnesota valued at \$5,000. In 1850 a piece of gold quartz was found in French Ravine which contained 203 ounces of gold, worth \$4,873. At Smith's Flat, in 1866, a piece of gold was taken from a claim which was worth \$2,716, and weighed 146 ounces. At Smith's Flat, in 1864, a nugget was found weighing 140 ounces and worth \$2,605. At Little Grizzly Diggings, in 1869, a nugget worth \$2,000 was found. A nugget weighing 94 ounces and valued at \$1,770 was found at the Hope claim four miles below the mountain House. At French Ravine, in 1860, a nugget was found worth \$1,767, weighing 93 ounces. At Smith's Flat in 1861, a nugget was found which weighed 80 ounces and was valued at \$1,569. From 1854 to 1862 12 gold nuggets, ranging from 30 to 147 ounces were taken from the Live Yankee claim at Forest City. From 1860 to 1862 a number of gold nuggets, varying from 30 to 100 ounces, were found in the Oregon claim at Forest City. A specimen worth \$5,000 was taken from the Oriental Gold Gate quartz mine.

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