

Millions to Catch the Dimes

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IT MUST have cost a pile of money" is the universal comment of the crowds that issue forth many times a day from the portals of the average summer amusement place. "It must have cost at least several thousands of dollars."

Multiply the thousands by ten and you will be much nearer the cost of the average production lining the beaches at such places as Coney Island and Atlantic City, and those drawing the quarters from your pockets as you stroll along the Pike at St. Louis. But if you want to have some idea of the money poured into the premier attractions, then reckon in hundreds of thousands up to the million point, and beyond.

The day has passed when the public can be wheedled into the belief that it is having a fine old half-day's outing in some cheap contraption of a building watching the antics of a second-rate soubrette or listening to the witticisms of "America's leading burnt-cork artist." That could be done fairly successfully even five years ago; in England the chief form of recreation still centers around Punch and Judy. But then the English are conservative, while the pleasure-seeking American of today demands that the whole world contribute to his outing, and that these attractions from the uttermost ends of the earth be shown him in buildings which, both by day and night, are feasts for the eye and continual cause for wonderment. Hence the outpouring of millions of money by the capitalists back of the promoters; and neither party has cause to complain about the returns on their investment of capital and brains since they inaugurated the new order of things, replacing the cheap and tawdry with the artistically striking and the enormously costly.

Take the representative show of today, stemize its cost, and you will find that money has been spent like water all along the line. The building alone, designed by a capable architect to be an attraction in itself, costs all the way from eight to ten thousand dollars, a sum of money that a few years ago covered the entire cost of a leading amusement. If the show is an illusion, as for example the creation of the world or a trip in an airship or under the sea, there are hundreds of square yards of scenery, painted at an expenditure of five thousand dollars to say the least, and the machinery to produce the desired optical effects, also representing an investment of thousands. The initial cost of producing the illusion of the world's creation, exclusive of the great domed structure in which it is shown, was close on to thirty-five thousand dollars, while that amount, less eight thousand, was spent on the illusion which takes the World's Fair visitor under the ocean in a submarine boat to Paris, up the Eiffel Tower and back again to St. Louis in an airship that runs into violent storms, and altogether gives the passenger a realistic journey through space.

Illusions are popular this year. At one big resort there are no fewer than a baker's dozen of such attractions, the aggregate initial cost of which all but reaches the three-quarter million mark.

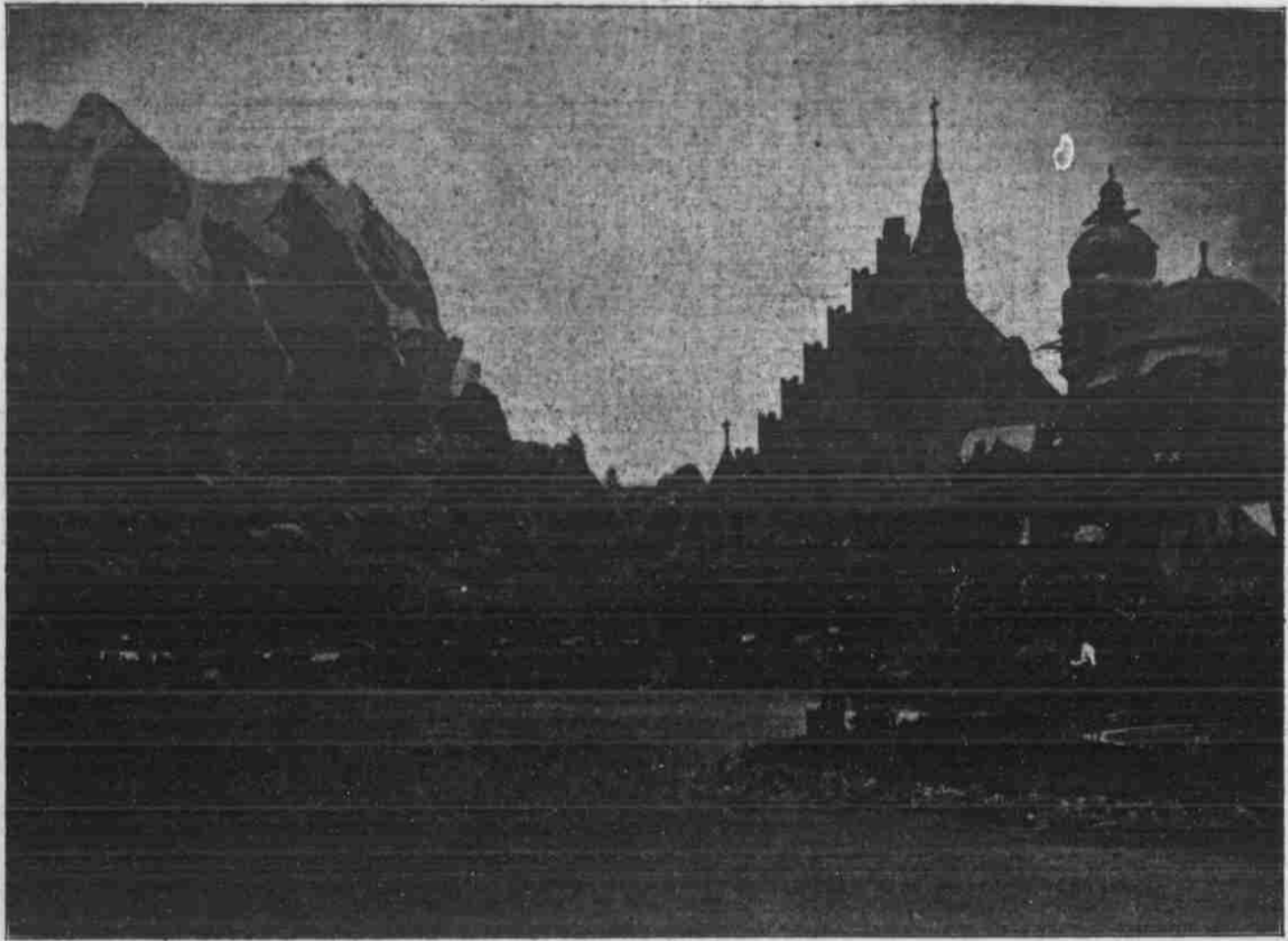
But this is by no means the most expensive form of amusement, although it is well up to the top. The show made up of queer peoples can truthfully claim an investment of \$2,000 to every \$1 put in an illusion, and as for the trained menagerie the interest alone on the money tied up in hundreds of animals would make a comfortable fortune for the man whose aspiration is to get enough money together so he can live in comfort off its income in a third-rate American city.

One of these trained menageries boasts of four trick elephants that \$25,000 could not buy. Another has a small school of porpoises, each of which can be driven to bit and bridle, and whose broad back serves as an equipage for children. Quite naturally, each of these mammals is placed in the menagerie's inventory as being worth \$5,000.

This same show has no fewer than 500 animals. Its mimic jungle alone, wherein by an illusionary panoramic trick, lions, tigers, elephants, camels, deer, zebras and what not are shown feeding together in their wild stage, covers two acres. The entire show takes up a ground space of five acres, and the money invested runs close to the million mark.

Just as the beasts of the field are gathered the world over to make a summer holiday for Americans, so the peoples of the earth are got together for our amusement at no slight cost. For example, in round figures there are 1,600 animals along the Pike and 4,000 people, three-fourths of whom came from the north pole country, the jungles of Africa, the little known wilds of Asia and other equally outlandish places.

These people do not agree to juggle, dance and reveal the customs of their lands to wondering Americans for a song. Even a donkey boy from the banks of the Nile demands \$10 a week as wages, and gets it. A dancing girl from Poland or Egypt, or a Singalese stick dancer cannot be secured for less than half again



A REPRESENTATIVE BIT OF AMUSEMENT PLACE ARCHITECTURE—THIS PARTICULAR SIMULATION OF BAVARIAN PALACES AND TYROLEAN ALPS COVERS SEVEN ACRES AND COST NEARLY A MILLION DOLLARS TO ERECT.

as much; so the attraction that numbers its foreign performers by the hundred has a weekly payroll mounting up into the thousands. The American Indian sells his services more cheaply than the Asian or Egyptian, but notwithstanding this fact, the man who manages a troupe of 600 Redskins has to pay his war-whooping performers a weekly stipend of some \$3,500. This is exclusive of their keep. As the Indians are hired to appear during the twenty weeks of warm weather, the total investment in wages alone aggregates \$70,000.

Moreover, every show numbers among its drawing cards the domestic animals that are associated with its particular type of strange peoples—camels, Eskimo dogs, Egyptian donkeys, llamas and so on. Everything considered, \$475,000 was spent on a show of this kind at Coney Island, and a like sum on one at the St. Louis Fair, which consists of buildings covering four acres, 150 people, camels in sufficient numbers to make a good sized caravan and several animals of minor size and commercial importance.

Many of the donkey boys, the dancers, the jugglers and the swordsmen who do their turns in the various "streets" have been making their living in this fashion since the days of the Chicago Fair. When the season closes in America they return to their respective lands, and until a promoter comes after them again, live in opulence off the money made when they were on exhibit. Once they get the show fever they are good for nothing else, and their little farms along the banks of the Nile, or their reindeer in Lapland may go hang for all they care. For if they were to labor a life-time in the ways of their fathers they could not make so much money by half as they can get together in one good season in this country.

Large as are these figures, they sink into insignificance beside those which represent the expenditure on what may be called the "three-ringed" attractions for want of a better term.

Such an amusement has as many, if not more, offerings to divide the pleasure seeker's attention as a big circus, with its rings and trapezes and platforms full at one and the same time. Within its circumference are twenty or thirty separate shows, each taking thousands of dollars to get in operation and employing all the way from a score to three or four hundred persons.

One of these colossal amusement places at Coney Island was built at a cost of \$3,500,000. This sum is inclusive of the price of the ground, and exclusive of the money necessary to establish a line of three steamers running between New York and the island. A sturdy rival has a capital of \$1,000,000 for running expenses, and one of its leading spectacles is so mammoth that sixty-seven ele-

phants take part in it. None of the far-famed circuses carry such a large troupe of pachyderms, and the number of people who find employment, would make a town of 5,000 population.

The Chicago Midway was hailed as a record breaker in the amusement line, yet all the shows along its seductive length did not represent a combined investment of much more than \$2,000,000. That was ten years ago. Today we have conservative capitalists pouring their money by the millions into a single enterprise, and what is more to the point with them, getting it all back, with goodly interest to boot, the first season. This is a little circumstance which causes them ruthlessly to tear down what was good last year and replace it with something the amusement promoters in partnership with them declare will surely astonish, puzzle, captivate, frighten and thrill the public more thoroughly than anything ever before attempted. **ARNOLD M. GARDNER.**

According to Man

Men marry by accident; women by design.

Matrimony is a stratagem of the aliminally inclined.

The world is divided into two great classes; the women who love him and the woman he loves.

His wife never displays any tact; either she makes a fool of herself by sitting up for him, or shows her negligence of comfort by retiring.

The squalls of the sea of matrimony have never been so perilous as to deter a woman from taking the last boat out.—**Town Topics.**



DANCING GIRL FROM POLAND—ONE OF THOUSANDS OF FOREIGNERS WHO COME FROM THE FOUR QUARTERS OF THE GLOBE TO ENTERTAIN AMERICANS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS.



FAC SIMILE OF PAGE HEADING IN JULY NUMBER OF ST NICHOLAS FOR WHICH F. MILES GREENLEAF OF OMAHA WAS AWARDED A CASH PRIZE.