

CIRCUSES AND CIRCUS PEOPLE.

How These Things are Managed in America.

Extent of Their Travels—Nearly all Parts of the World at Some Time Visited—Pay of Circus-Actors—Riders, Clowns, and Ring-Masters—Trained Horses and Trick Mules—Capital Employed—Some Interesting Statistics.

The true American circus is one of our greatest "institutions." The spending of that Spanish quarter which first admitted us within a circus, gave us impressions which nothing can efface. How that courier of St. Petersburg, on four horses, dashed through whirling mists of snow (saw-dust!) to carry his message to his Imperial master, regardless of wolves or frozen rivers! How purely oriental, redolent of Arabian nights, the Bedouin entrée! How nicely all the cream-spotted chargers sat down! and that little girl, who brought them a plentiful feed of oats, all around in a flower-basket! And then the alarm trumpet! The dash, the flurry, the combat! We have seen real Arabs since, and very dirty fellows were they; also a cavalry charge or so, but our circus heroes are still the handsomest, and bravest of the brave. And the real Indian (Mr. DE COURTENAY SIMPSON) who said "Hough! Hough!" who plied the bow, the club, the paddle. That latter instrument; will there ever be a fresher joke to our ears than that expressed by the clown, when he said "his mother used just sich to turn buckwheat cakes with!" The coon shot, mysteriously thrown into the ring, which as magically attaches itself to the clown. The side-splitting agonies of that clown, and then the real dog, who, furiously bounding in with fearful howl, clutches at the coon and pulls down clown and all. Notwithstanding AYTOUN'S mock heroics.

And the master moved toward her
With a proud and stately walk;
And in reverential homage,
Rubbed her soles with virgin chalk."
No Count D'Orsay can ever be so elegant as the ring-master of our day, with the gold braid down his pantaloons seam, and the shepherd and shepherdess. Well! well! FLORIAN may write bucolics, or WATTEAU paint them, but never will such impressions come to us again. Even when the circus left the town, folding

— their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently stealing away,
all was not lost! There still remained the circle, lingering like some huge fairy ring, which neither snow nor rain could efface; then boy-centaurs, how we raced round and round, at times Shetland ponies, or untamed steeds of the Ukraine. If the pantomime be English, the vaudeville French, the circus is American. If not invented by us, we have at least so amplified, so improved it, that now an American circus has the same cachet of distinction as the Italian opera. That was a very cruel philosopher who said a people advanced in civilization as they drained their lands, or retrograded as they paid to see people run the chances of breaking their necks. Let us rather hope, with the Darwinian theory, that human progress has so perfected our organism that what was dangerous to our grandfathers becomes child-play to ourselves. If in good Queen ANNE'S time a famous acrobat jumped over six horses, as such is handed down to posterity, we have vaulters nowadays who can take their flying leap over a dozen, and if old MARCO POLO was astonished at the Court of the Great Mogul, at the man who sprang over an elephant, what would he say to the performer of today, who would bound over a mastodon, if such an animal was extant!

CIRCUSES OF THE PRESENT DAY.
Circuses ephemeral, save in London and Paris, are in most of the large cities of the United States permanent performances throughout the year. Summer is, however, the best season for their business, and many of them remain idle during the Winter. When pleasant May is half over, they prepare for their long journey. Sometimes their objective point is a thousand miles distant, and they give performances at all the various cities, towns and hamlets by the way. Occasionally peregrinations are made to distant countries beyond the seas. Journeys to Europe are not unfrequent. The West Indies is a common stamping-ground, and South America has been harvested. A fragment of a troupe once got to Australia, and as long ago as the Crimean war, that little difficulty only prevented a company from landing at Odessa and working its way to St. Petersburg via Moscow. On a circus campaign everything is carefully studied; distances, questions of forage are accurately examined; and such is the precision of movement that last season Mr. LENT'S New-York Circus performed along a route of travel from here to St. Louis for five months and twenty days without missing a single day's exhibition. The majority of circuses adopt the primitive style of caravan movement, and plod along across country with their animals and baggage vans. A company of this nature may employ as many as 150 people, with 100 horses. Of this force about forty may be riders, gymnasts and musicians; the remainder canvassers, agents, contractors, bill-stickers, grooms and teamsters, and perhaps among the latter centre-pole Bill. But, as in military movements, railroads are used, the best companies now adopt this method, and arrive fresh at their point of destination. This is also found, for certain sections of the country, to be the most economical.

RIDERS' SALARIES.
One would be surprised at the large salaries paid circus people in Summer, which we think would make many anxious to adopt the bare-back business. Three hundred and fifty dollars a week has been paid to Mr. ROBINSON and his son, and from \$100 to \$150 for less celebrated riders per week is no uncommon price. The Bavarian Brothers, or the Corfu Cousins, or the Uruguay Uncles, if well up in the *all-together* business, will bring two hundred a week at least in the circus market. A Mademoiselle Saute Barriere will draw her \$150 per week, and a young, handsome, rather stately Madame Haute Ecole, who can ride well *en Amazone*, handling her horse in good style, being scarce in the business just now, might be worth more. Minor performers, general utilities, *fill-ups*, get their \$25 per week. These prices are cut down about one-third in Winter.

CLOWNS AND RING-MASTERS.
Clowns vary much in price, from the fact that everybody wants to play clown, and competition has lowered somewhat the salary. It is hardly creditable, however, but we have been assured of the fact, that DAN RICE has received as much as \$4,000 a month for his performances with his trick-horse. A good talking and tumbling clown is worth from \$75 to \$100 per week. The public requiring variety, three clowns to a circus is now a common occurrence. We are pleased to say that, with a return to the higher realms of art, the Shakespearean clown is now out of favor. Only tolerated in the provinces, he is not appreciated in the large cities. As was quaintly remarked to us by a gentleman in "the business," "all those fellows who could not spell their own names wanted to be Shakespearean clowns. It's played out. Drive Shakespearean clowns. Good ring-masters are always difficult to obtain. They must have mien, and deportment, and acting as Greek chorus to the performance, and, at the same time, a thorough knowledge of the horses during the acts. It is a position much sought after, and not so often well filled. Alas! the school of the illustrious WIDDICOMB has few imitators. Their salary is about \$100 per week.

TRAINED HORSES AND TRICK-MULES.
Well-trained horses, that do not swerve at a play-bill fluttering in the barrier, that have an easy pace and no shy in them, are worth their price. If they are nicely mottled, in good calico colors, \$1,500 will hardly buy them. Lately, one or two good horses "changed hands" at these figures. A first-rate trick-horse, well put up, is cheap at \$5,000. Trick-mules, like Shakespearean clowns, (stating openly our preference for the mules,) are out of favor. The dollar part of the house does not care for them.

and, besides that, broken jaw-bones and fractured clavicles have sometimes to be compounded for. "You could ride that mule there," said our polite friend, pointing out to us in Mr. DENT'S stables a most philosophical animal, "from here to Harlem. You would go as steady as in a street-car; but get him in the ring, and he would take great pleasure in kicking your brains out. We have to employ a professional mule-rider for him, and that's a peculiar talent. Such parties are very scarce, and in the season the man who rides him gets a first-class book-keeper's salary." The eagle is supposed to be a long-lived animal; we have heard of a revolutionary goose; but as to longevity, when comparing the circus horse with the rest of his family, the former animal seems to live to twice and thrice his age. Some horses appearing nightly at the New-York Circus started business with Mr. LENT; and nothing can shake our mind from the firm belief that we recognized a certain white horse with a flesh-color nose as the same one we paid our first quarter to see, some time during Gen. JACKSON'S dynasty. Late hours seem to do them no harm; but we suppose careful handling, perfect cleanliness, and good usage prolong their lives.

LONGEVITY OF CIRCUS ACTORS.
Physiologically, circus actors ought to die early, but facts are against theory. If over-muscular exertion tends to diseases of the heart, it would be just as prone to end early the careers of blacksmiths' strikers. From early training the frame gradually fits itself to the profession, and no ill-consequences are felt. Professionals of sixty are not uncommon, who, when called upon, will throw you a backward somersault as readily as other people out of the business and of the same age, can walk up stairs. Of course accidents will happen. Of late, the attempts to throw double-somersaults have resulted in several broken necks, and an accident or so occurs every year from the flying-trapeze; but in the absence of any statistics on the subject, we should think that street painters and roofers kill themselves more frequently than our friends the gymnasts.

EXTENT OF THE BUSINESS.
The amount of capital employed in a first-class circus is fully \$100,000, and lately one-eighth of an establishment found a purchaser at \$18,000. New-York has no less than five circuses, which make it a centre of operations, though there is but one (Mr. LENT'S) which is a permanent affair. Philadelphia has two, and Cincinnati the same. Combinations with menageries are common, and some of these are remarkably fine. One in Philadelphia has thirty dens of animals. Besides the above there are over the country some ten minor establishments, called by the profession cross-road shows. The number of performers, musicians, grooms, &c., attached to a well-organized establishment like Mr. LENT'S is about seventy. In the stables are over forty horses, their skins smooth and glossy as silk, and as a thorough toilet is a necessity, their full, nicely-combed manes and tails looked as well cared for as a lady's tresses. Extreme gentleness and docility seemed to pervade this happy family, and any little fondling was responded to with a gentle whinny.

ROUTES—ENTERING THE TOWNS.
As to routes the West pays about as well as the East, though an imposing entrée and proper billing has much to do with the success. Some companies adopt the grand cavalcade turn-out, where the whole troupe is mounted; others carry the town with a triumphal car rivaling Juggernaut's. The one lately smashed up and paid for by the Erie Railroad, cost Mr. LENT \$8,000. Amid circus statistics we may state that Mr. LENT'S twenty-four horse driver, who drives the car is unique of his kind. Like an organ soloist he plays or drives his horses with his hands and feet. The South was once the El Dorado of circus routes, but just now it is scarcely paying ground. The Southern negro is the greatest of circus patrons. Not at all times a very economical creature, his nature changes when the circus bill is posted up. Then every cent of money is hoarded, and during its stay corn, cotton and tobacco must take care of themselves. Repeating the old Greek chronological ideas of events occurring in such and such olympiads, they date facts from circuses, as "Daddy Pompey him die de circus afore last," "or "Dat child him born de bery day de circus lef." We are inclined to think the story true, that at a small town in Alabama a circus arrived just after the war. There was a flourishing freedman's savings bank there. The circus stayed two days—the bank was broken.