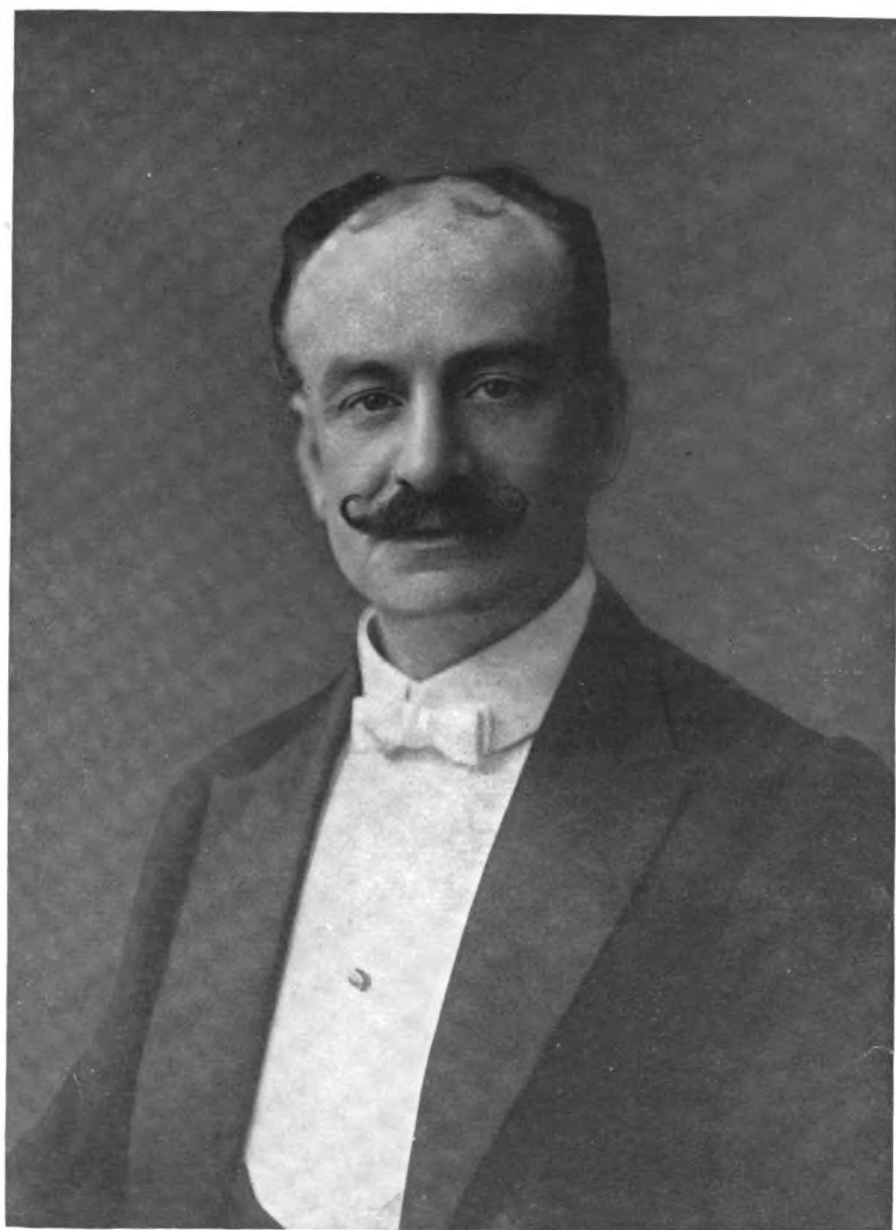


**A Modern Mystery
Merchant :: The Trials,
Tricks and Travels of CARL HERTZ,
the Famous American Illusionist :: ::**

WITH FRONTISPIECE AND 24 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

**LONDON : HUTCHINSON & CO.
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Carl Hertz.

Frontispiece.

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A Modern Mystery Merchant

CHAPTER I

My boyhood—Fascination which conjuring has for me—I am discharged from a dry goods firm for performing conjuring tricks in business hours—I appear at an amateur performance and am a dismal failure—My sad experiences with touring companies—Notwithstanding the opposition of my parents, I decide to make conjuring my profession—I travel from San Francisco to Kansas City in search of an engagement—And arrive with twenty-five cents in my pocket, to find the theatre closed for three weeks—A friend in need—My interview with the manager of the Theatre Comique—I obtain an engagement on the reopening of the theatre—Kindness of my new friend, Hano, to me—My first performance—Its success leads to my securing a number of other engagements—Hano throws up his post as manager of a dry goods store and joins the profession—My meeting with him in New York twenty-five years later.

I AM American born, having first seen the light in San Francisco, California, to which city my parents had immigrated in 1849, the year of the Gold Fever. My father was a Russian ; my mother a Pole ; and, though they have several daughters, I was their only son.

I was educated at the Cosmopolitan Grammar School, a not inappropriate name, by the way, for the school of a man who was destined to become a citizen of the world if there ever was one.

Among my schoolfellows were two who were to become famous, though in very different ways. One was a tall, slim lad called James Corbett, who, on completing his studies, obtained a clerkship in the Bank of California and rose to the post of cashier, but soon quitted commerce for the Prize Ring and became one of the most celebrated pugilists of his time. Even in these early days Jem Corbett was a wonderfully

clever boxer, and I remember several fights between him and bigger boys, who had tried to bully him. In every case the bully got a sound thrashing.

The other, who was in the same class as myself, was Claus Sprekels, afterwards the great Sugar King. He was a fair, rather stout boy, and was always getting into mischief. After I left school I never came across Claus Sprekels again until a couple of years ago, when I met him, a grey-haired, elderly man, in the Rooms at Monte Carlo. I was playing roulette, and, happening to glance across the table, saw him sitting almost opposite me.

I was very quick at mathematics and also at languages—I learned both French and German there—and if my mind had really been set upon my studies, I might have been a star pupil and annexed a good few of the prizes which were going. But, as it happened, there was something which interested me a great deal more than irregular verbs and problems of Euclid.

In those days, all the cleverest conjurers used to visit 'Frisco, and at either the Metropolitan Theatre or Platt's Hall I saw Robert Heller, Cazeneuve, Professor Hermann and others, give performances. Very soon I thought of little else than conjuring, and many was the hiding I got at school for fooling around with tricks when I ought to have been doing my lessons.

When I was sixteen, I left school, and my father, who was in the dry goods trade, took me into his business. After I had been with him a year or two, however, he disposed of it, and I took a situation as clerk with another dry goods firm. I did not keep it long, as I was discharged for doing conjuring tricks in business hours, and, though I had little difficulty in finding other situations, I had even less difficulty in losing them, and always for the same reason. Eventually, I decided to practise the art, for which I felt convinced that I possessed a quite exceptional gift, thoroughly, and go into the profession, and, with this idea, saved up all the money I could and with it bought, invented or had made for me various tricks and illusions.

My first appearance on any stage was as an amateur at Platt's Hall, Montgomery Street, San Francisco. I was a member of a club called the Eclipse Minstrel Club, whose custom it was to give entertainments about once a month during the winter, at which all the members were supposed to assist. These entertainments generally took the form of a minstrel show, for which they all blacked up, but, as this sort of thing was not much in my line, it was arranged that I should give a conjuring performance.

I regret to say that I was a dismal failure. I was horribly nervous, with the result that all my tricks went wrong, and the audience started to hoot and guy me. The last trick I performed—or rather attempted to perform—nearly ended in tragedy.

I was supposed to borrow a handkerchief, set fire to it, put the ashes in a revolver and fire at a lighted candle on the stage, and subsequently produce the handkerchief from the candle. But when I pulled the trigger of the revolver, the confounded thing refused to go off. Again and again I pressed the trigger with the same result, and each time the audience would shout, "Bang! bang!" at the top of their voices. At length, goaded to desperation, I flung the revolver into the auditorium, and, remembering that I had another in my hip-pocket, pulled it out and fired at the candle, without stopping to think that this revolver was loaded with ball-cartridge. The bullet grazed the ear of a man who was standing in the wings, and it was a miracle that he was not killed. I left the stage in disgust, amidst a storm of hooting, vowing that this should be my first and last appearance in public.

I kept to my resolution for some months, until one day I received an offer from the manager of a travelling company to join him on a tour of the towns of Southern California. My parents, who were strongly opposed to my adopting conjuring as a career, objected, but eventually I persuaded them to let me go.

We opened at Santa Cruz, but business was so bad that we only played there one night, and moved on to Watsonville.

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Here it was even worse, and we opened to a house that was almost empty. The next morning, on inquiring for the manager, I found that he had skipped and left his unfortunate company in the lurch. None of us had any money, and, in order to pay my hotel bill and my fare back to 'Frisco, I was obliged to pawn my watch and sleeve-links, a present from my mother and father on my thirteenth birthday. It was lucky for me that I had this jewellery, otherwise I should have had to tramp home—a distance of over a hundred miles—as the other artists were compelled to do. Of course, I could not conceal from my parents that the tour had been a complete failure, but I did not dare to tell them the actual facts, knowing how much they disliked the idea of my going on the stage.

After this experience I came to the conclusion that the profession was hardly the money-making concern it was represented to be, and accordingly I secured another post in a dry goods store. I did not stay there long, however, as one day I got an offer from a well-known theatrical manager to join his company, which was about to tour the mining towns of California. I was a bit chary at first about accepting his offer, but, on inquiry, I found he was a man with quite a good reputation, and so decided to close with it.

We were to open at Petaluma, and I was greatly surprised on arriving at the Ferry Dépôt, at which we were to take the boat to that town, to find that there were only three other artists there—two men and a lady. I asked the manager where the other people were, and was told that they were coming on later. On reaching Petaluma, we went at once to the theatre for rehearsal, and, to my utter astonishment, the manager handed me a part. I looked at it and saw that it was the part of Dick Deadeye in "*H.M.S. Pinafore*."

"What's this?" said I.

"That's your part, of course, and you've got to look sharp and learn it."

"But," I protested, "I can't sing a note and I never played a part in my life! Besides, I am engaged to do a conjuring performance, not to act or sing!"

The manager then explained that the other artists were also going to play parts, and that each of us was to do his speciality in the deck scene in the second act.

I flatly refused to play the part of Dick Deadeye or any other part, upon which the manager flew into a rage and told me that I had either got to play it or get back home as best I could. As I had no money, there was nothing for me to do but to climb down, though I did it with a very bad grace.

When the rehearsal began, I found, to my horror, that we four people were expected to play the whole opera by doubling our parts; but I was so bad in the character of Dick Deadeye that the manager decided that one part was enough for me. "*Pinafore*" was all the rage at this time and drawing packed houses everywhere, and we were billed, not as a vaudeville show, but as "Gilbert and Sullivan's '*Pinafore*' Company."

On the opening night the theatre was packed to the doors, and, since Petaluma was a university town, the audience was largely composed of students. I shall never forget that evening as long as I live.

So soon as the curtain went up, and the audience realised that four people were going to try to play "*Pinafore*" the fat was in the fire. The students kicked up a terrible row, and started to throw things on the stage, and, after a vain attempt to obtain a hearing, the curtain was rung down, amidst a pandemonium of hissing, booing, yells and catcalls and a shower of missiles of every description. After the performance we dared not leave our dressing-rooms to return to our hotel, as a mob of some two or three hundred students were waiting at the stage-door, armed with sticks, stones, rotten eggs and anything they could lay their hands on, to get back on us for having swindled them in the way we had. We were obliged to stay at the theatre until five o'clock the next morning, by which time the young gentlemen had got tired of waiting for us and dispersed.

We were billed to play for three nights, but I need hardly say that one was enough for us, and we caught the early steamer

back to 'Frisco, when I told the manager that I wanted nothing more to do with him or his company, and returned sorrowfully home.

But worse was in store, for my father, having heard of the fiasco at Petaluma, declared that he was not going to allow me to fool away my time any more, and, invading my room, seized upon the whole of my apparatus, smashed it up and threw it on to the fire.

As all my money had gone on the collection of this unfortunate apparatus, there was nothing to be done but to return to the dry goods, until I could save enough to replace what my father had destroyed. This took me some time, but, so soon as I had again fitted myself out, I told my parents that I had made up my mind to make conjuring my profession, and it was not the least use their trying to dissuade me. I then gave performances at various clubs, concerts and private houses, which, as I had now gained confidence in myself and no longer suffered from nervousness, were very successful, and by this means contrived to get sufficient money to pay my fare from 'Frisco to Kansas City, a distance of over 3,000 miles. For, as may be supposed, I had had quite enough of touring companies for the present. I had picked out Kansas City because a friend of mine at 'Frisco, who had lately gone on the stage, had secured his first engagement in that town, and being very young and inexperienced—I was not yet nineteen—I thought that it must be an easy place in which to get one.

Meantime, my parents, seeing that I was absolutely determined to go into the profession, had decided to make a virtue of necessity, and not only gave their consent, but even offered me money to help me to make a start. But, being of a very independent turn of mind, and having my fair share of the optimism of youth, I refused to accept a cent, saying that I had enough to take me to Kansas City, where I felt sure that I should have not the least difficulty in getting an engagement. In the end, however, I was obliged to promise my father that I would write or wire at once if I were in need of money.

The train by which I travelled from 'Frisco to Kansas

City was what is known as an emigrant train. It was really what is called a goods train in England, with a couple of carriages attached to the last coach for emigrant passengers. The journey occupied eleven days, and was one of the most unpleasant that could be imagined, since I was unable to get a proper meal and had to live on tinned food and the contents of a hamper which my mother had made up for me ; while there was no accommodation on the train for washing, which, as it was the height of summer, was a real hardship.

At last, hungry, dirty and weary, I arrived at Kansas City, with the sum of twenty-five cents in my pocket, which was not even enough to pay for my luggage to be taken to an hotel. However, I boldly enquired at the station the name of the best hotel in the town, and entered it with all the assurance in the world, having decided that it would never do for me to advertise my impecunious condition by going to an inferior one, and that the only thing to be done was to make some kind of a bluff and trust to luck to enable me to pay my bill when it should fall due.

I registered at the bureau, and handing my luggage-tickets to the clerk, asked him to send for my trunks and put the charge on my bill. I then had a much-needed bath, after which I repaired to the coffee-room, where dinner was being served, and did justice to the first square meal that had come my way since I left 'Frisco.

The hotel was an imposing one, extending along an entire block ; but the ground floor was occupied by a very large gentlemen's clothing and outfitters' store, called the Boston One Price Clothing Store. It was the biggest in Kansas City, there being eight or ten windows on either side of the entrance to the hotel. As I was standing at the door after dinner, a tall, dark young man in his shirt-sleeves came out of the store and began to give pantomimic instructions to another young man, who was engaged in dressing one of the windows. Presently, he turned to me and, after one or two remarks about the weather, said :—

" You're a stranger here, I reckon ? You look like one,"

" Yes, I've only just arrived from 'Frisco," I answered.

" Are you travelling for pleasure or on business ? "

" On business ; I'm on the stage."

At that he seemed interested and asked me what was my particular line. I told him that I was a conjurer, and he said that he was an amateur performer himself and sang comic songs and gave recitations and imitations.

" Just wait a minute while I get my hat and coat," said he, " and we'll go over the way and have a drink. I'd like to have a talk with you."

I answered that I was a teetotaler, but he laughed and said that, in that case, I could have a lemonade or something equally innocuous. So we went to a big saloon just opposite the hotel, where my new friend told me that his name was Ben Hano and that he was manager of the drapery store, of which his brother-in-law was the proprietor. He then inquired my name and what I was going to do in Kansas City, and I told him that I intended to see the manager of the Theatre Comique in the morning and try and fix an engagement with him.

" Well," said he, " you may be able to fix an engagement all right, but it won't start for three or four weeks. The ' Comique ' is closed for repairs."

You can bet I looked down my nose when I heard that. It was a veritable bolt from the blue. Here I was located in the most expensive hotel in Kansas City, where the charge for my room alone was two dollars a day, to say nothing of the cost of meals, with only a quarter in my pocket, and no prospect that I could see of earning a cent for the next month.

I told my companion of the predicament in which I was placed, but, to my surprise, he seemed to take the matter very lightly.

" You're in a bit of a mess, young man, I'll allow," said he, laughing, " but I happen to have taken a liking to you, and I'll see you through. The first thing you've got to do is to get out of that hotel right away, because it's a pretty expensive place, and you don't want to owe them any more

than you can help. So just go back and pack your things and have them sent down to the store. I've got some rooms at the back which my brother-in-law furnished for me, and there's a spare bedroom there, to which you are welcome until you can get something fixed."

I thanked Mr. Hano heartily for his kind offer and then asked what I was to do about my hotel bill, since I could not even pay the little that I owed. But he replied that he knew the manager and would go and make things all right with him. So I went back to the hotel, and my trunks having meantime arrived from the station, I removed with them to a comfortable little room at the back of the Boston One Price Clothing Store.

Next morning I set out to call on the manager of the Theatre Comique and see if I could not obtain an engagement from him. The great man—for he seemed a great man to me then—received me kindly enough, but told me that the theatre would not be open for another month. I said that if he were willing to offer me an engagement, I would wait until it re-opened, upon which he asked me to give him some idea of my performance. I did so, and he then wanted to know where I had been engaged before, and if I could show him the programmes of some of the other theatres at which I had performed. This, of course, I could not do, never having yet had any professional engagements except with the two touring companies, about which I thought it wiser to say nothing. But I handed him several good Press notices of performances I had given at concerts and charity entertainments in 'Frisco. He looked at them and inquired what salary I wanted. Here I was in a bit of a dilemma. It occurred to me that if I asked too little, he would think I was no good, and, if I asked too much, he would refuse to engage me, which would be nothing short of a disaster. However, after some hesitation, I told him that I wanted sixty dollars a week, a salary which was considered quite a large one in those days.

He laughed.

"My dear boy," said he, "I couldn't dream of paying a salary like that for a performance I've never seen and have

only your word for. But if you like to accept a week's engagement at thirty dollars, when we re-open, I'll give you a contract."

Not wishing to appear too anxious, I replied that I couldn't possibly accept as little as that, but I was ready to take fifty.

"Well, I don't mind springing another five dollars," he said.

"And I don't mind knocking off another five," I answered.

Eventually, he agreed to give me an engagement for one week at forty dollars, and I left the theatre very well pleased with my morning's work. I was, however, a good deal worried as to how I was to live for the next month. I did not at all like the idea of imposing on the good nature of my new friend Hano, and, on the other hand, I did not want to wire home for money. For, as I have said, I was very independent, and to appeal to my parents would seem like a confession of failure. However, when I spoke to Hano on the matter, he soon put my mind at rest.

"See here!" said he. "Don't you go worrying your head about anything. You just stop here, and I'll arrange for you to have all your meals with me until your engagement starts."

I said I couldn't allow him to do that unless he would agree to my defraying the expense to which I should be putting him so soon as I received my salary; and to this, though very reluctantly, the good-natured fellow consented.

As the days went by, I began to find the time hanging pretty heavily on my hands, and so I asked Mr. Fletcher, the proprietor of the store, to whom Hano had introduced me, if he would let me assist in the store as salesman or in any capacity in which I could be of use to him, as I should like to make some return for the kindness which had been shown me. He consented readily enough, and for some days I acted as salesman. Then, one morning, I asked to be allowed to dress one of the windows for him, as window-dressing had been a speciality of mine when I was in the dry goods line. He gave me permission, and was so pleased with the result that he



Carl Hertz, age 9.



Chinese Mandarin's Wife. (Note little feet.)
p. 24.

begged me to give up the idea of going on the stage and accept the post of window-dresser to the firm, offering me a very good salary indeed. Needless to say, I declined, but told him that I should be only too pleased to continue to dress his windows for him so long as I remained in Kansas City.

At last the night arrived for the Theatre Comique to reopen, and for my first appearance on the stage as a professional. There were between forty and fifty clerks at the store, and they all came down to the theatre in a body and gave me a rousing reception, which did me a lot of good, and served to banish the nervousness from which I should otherwise have probably suffered.

My performance consisted of a series of card-tricks, followed by a trick with a borrowed ring and a pigeon, in which the pigeon disappeared and was eventually found with the borrowed ring round its neck in the inside coat-pocket of a member of the audience, and concluding with my afterwards celebrated vanishing cage and canary trick, in which cage and bird instantly disappeared while held in my hand in full view of the audience, without covering them in any way whatever. Of this trick I shall have something more to say later on.

I am giving away one of my professional secrets when I explain that in the ring and pigeon trick it was necessary to place someone in the audience with the pigeon already in his pocket. As I knew no one whom I could trust except my friend Hano, I asked him if he would assist me, and he very kindly consented.

My turn was a huge success, and when it was over, the manager came round to my dressing-room and offered to extend my engagement for a further two weeks. I declined, however, to perform on the same terms, and said that I wanted sixty dollars a week—the same salary, it will be remembered, which I had at first demanded—for the other two weeks. To this, after some demur, he consented and had no reason to regret having done so, since my performance was an immense draw, and the house was packed every night.

I did not, as you may suppose, fail to follow up the hit I

had made, and accordingly lost no time in writing to the managers of a score or more theatres in different parts of the "States" offering them my services and enclosing a programme and bill from the Theatre Comique. The result exceeded all my anticipations, and before my three weeks' engagement in Kansas City came to an end I had secured engagements in Chicago, St. Louis, St. Joseph, Detroit, Toledo, Cincinnati, Louisville and a number of other towns. Altogether, these engagements extended over nearly a year.

During the time that I was in Kansas City, my friend Hano and I were, of course, constantly in each other's company, and eventually he became stage-struck himself and wanted to go into the profession. But I strongly advised him not to do so, pointing out that, as he had an excellent post as manager of his brother-in-law's store, it would be a foolish thing to give it up for so uncertain a calling as the stage.

For some two or three months after we parted we corresponded pretty regularly, and then Hano's letters suddenly ceased, and, though I wrote to him several times, I could get no answer. Finally, I began to fear that something serious had happened to him, and wrote to his brother-in-law to inquire. In reply, I received an angry letter from Mr. Fletcher, in which he told me that some weeks before Hano had suddenly left his employment without giving any notice whatever and had joined a circus. They had not heard a word from him since. He accused me of having put the idea of entering the profession into his head, and declared that he never wanted to see or hear from me again.

For more than twenty-five years I heard not a word of Hano, and concluded that he must be dead. Then one night, shortly after I had returned from a visit to England in order to fulfil an engagement at Hammerstein's New Theatre on Broadway, New York, my wife and I accepted an invitation from Mr. Jules Hurtig, of Hurtig and Seeman, the owners of several theatres in New York and different parts of the "States," to sup with him at a new restaurant which was opening that night in Harlem. While we were at supper, Mr. Hurtig

excused himself for a moment and went over to speak to a gentleman and two ladies who were sitting at a table not far from ours. I looked at them and remarked to my wife:—

“That man’s face seems very familiar. I can’t place him for the moment, but I’m certain that I know him.”

Then suddenly I recognised him. He was none other than my old friend Ben Hano, who had befriended me when I was stranded in Kansas City. When I had last seen him, his hair was black and he was clean-shaven, whereas now he was quite bald, with long grey whiskers. But I felt certain it was he. However, to leave nothing to chance, I told Mr. Hurtig when he returned to our table that I thought I knew the gentleman to whom he had just been talking, and inquired whether his name was not Hano.

“Yes,” he answered, “that’s his name, and one of the ladies with him is his wife and the other her sister.”

He added that Hano was a very wealthy man, and wanted to know where I had met him.

I begged our host to ask Hano and his party to come over to our table to have a glass of wine, but not to mention my name, and to introduce me as Mr. Williams, of London, and he would then see some fun. They joined us, and my wife and I were introduced as Mr. and Mrs. Williams. Hano did not recognise me, and presently I said that I had met someone who, I believed, had once been a friend of his, and asked him if he knew Carl Hertz.

“Good heavens, yes!” he exclaimed. “And I’d give a lot to meet him again. If it hadn’t been for him I might have remained a poor man all my life.”

“How was that, Mr. Hano?” said I.

“Well, Carl Hertz was responsible for my getting stage-struck, and I gave up a good position as manager of a dry goods store and went and joined a circus. I had a rough time with that circus, I can tell you, and more than once was pretty well starving, but it was while I was with it that I hit upon the invention out of which I made my money.”

He then told us that he had to play the part of a nigger

and used to make up for his performance by using a paste composed of corks out of old bottles, burned to a cinder and mixed with lard. This paste was wrapped up in paper, and naturally the paste stuck to the paper. One day he wanted to write a letter, and laid the sheet of paper on top of the paper which had been used to wrap up the black paste. There was an old newspaper underneath it, and when he lifted up the paper he found the impression of what he had written on the first sheet of the newspaper. This gave him the idea of his invention, which was called "Hano's Manifold Letter Press," and consisted of carbon paper interleaved between sheets of white paper. He said that he had made a fortune out of this invention and naturally wanted to meet Carl Hertz again, as he was indirectly responsible for his success.

After a while, I said to him : " Look at me, Mr. Hano. Don't you know me ? "

But he smiled and shook his head.

" Well, *I* am Carl Hertz."

Then at last he recognised me, and was so astonished and delighted that the tears came into his eyes.

We saw a good deal of Hano during our stay in New York, and later his wife was our guest for several months in London. I regret to say that a couple of years ago my old friend died, but Mrs. Hano is still alive, and we often hear from her.

CHAPTER II

A serious illness—A strange coincidence—Unpleasant experiences at Philadelphia—My apparatus is destroyed in a fire—Kindness of a brother professional, who helps me out of my predicament—Another accident—Singular adventure at Montgomery City, Missouri, where I am arrested and imprisoned in mistake for another man—Ludicrous mishap while performing at Louisville.

FOR some time after leaving Kansas City everything went splendidly for me; in town after town to which I went I performed to crowded and enthusiastic houses, and I was able to make as many engagements as I cared to book, on terms a good deal higher than those which I had at first received.

But my luck was too good to last. At Evansville, Indiana, I was taken ill with malaria. I managed, however, to struggle through my week's engagement and went on to my next, which was at Cleveland, Ohio. I arrived there feeling like nothing on earth, notwithstanding which I made up my mind to appear that night. When I went on I could hardly stand, but managed to get through part of my performance, when the stage seemed to rise up and hit me, and down I went in front of the audience in a dead faint. The curtain had to be lowered, and I was carried to my hotel, which was run by the proprietors of the theatre at which I was engaged, and was close to it. A doctor was sent for and pronounced me to be suffering from typhoid fever.

When the manager of the hotel heard this, he declared that he would not allow me to remain there, and gave orders for me to be taken to a hospital. The doctor protested that it would be highly dangerous for me to be moved, as my temperature was 104°; but the other insisted, and it was only through the

intervention of his wife, who was a very kind-hearted woman, that I was eventually permitted to remain.

I was delirious for nearly a fortnight, during which time I was, of course, unable to write to my parents to let them know that I had been taken ill. By a strange coincidence, the train which followed the one on which I had travelled from Evansville to Cleveland had met with a terrible accident, in which some two hundred people were killed and about as many injured. My parents, who knew that I had intended to travel to Cleveland on the day of the accident, and had, of course, received no answer to the letters which they had written me to inquire if I were safe, naturally concluded that I was amongst the casualties, and if not dead, at any rate very severely injured, and were in great distress.

One day, about three or four weeks later, when I was on the road to recovery and permitted to receive visitors, two detectives came into my room and inquired if I were Mr. Carl Hertz, of San Francisco, as they had instructions from the Chief of Police in that town to try to trace the gentleman in question, whose parents feared that he had lost his life in the recent railroad disaster. They said they had been hunting for me in every direction, and were very pleased that they had eventually found me and were able to relieve my parents' anxiety.

My illness, which obliged me to remain in Cleveland for two months, was, of course, a very expensive affair, and swallowed up every dollar that I had saved. In fact, I had to leave my gold watch and chain to make up my hotel bill before starting for Philadelphia, where I was billed to appear at the Walnut Street Theatre.

I arrived in Philadelphia at four o'clock on a bitter winter's morning, three hours or more behind time, the train having been delayed owing to the necessity of clearing the track of snow. There was not a cab to be had, and although it was snowing hard and there was a foot of more of snow already on the ground, and I was still very weak from my recent illness,

I decided to walk to my hotel, rather than spend the rest of the night at the station. And so I started off, with a heavy bag in either hand, and struggled on for some distance, when what little strength I had gave out, and I sank down exhausted.

Happily for me, a baker's van, on its way to deliver the morning bread, chanced to come along at that moment, and the driver, seeing me lying in the snow, got down, helped me up, put me and my bags into his van and drove me to my hotel. I, of course, went at once to bed, and the proprietor, who had once practised as a doctor, came to see me, and gave me some physic.

I was very much afraid that I should be unable to appear that night, and had to stay in bed until just before I was due at the theatre. But I managed to go through my performance, though no sooner had I reached my dressing-room than I crumpled up, and it was some little time before I was able to return to the hotel. I felt pretty queer for some days afterwards, but contrived to pull through my week's engagement, though it required a bit of an effort, I can assure you.

After I left Philadelphia things went very well with me, until I came to fulfil an engagement at St. Joseph, where one night, just before the performance began, fire broke out, and the theatre was burned to the ground. Fortunately, however, I was able to save a good deal of my apparatus.

Not long afterwards, during an engagement at the "Varieties," Troy, New York, I had a similar experience; but this time I was not so fortunate.

It was Christmas Eve and a very cold night. I had just returned to my hotel from the theatre and, having had supper, was sitting by the fire in the smoking-room, when suddenly I heard the fire-bell. I went to the window and saw a big blaze in the sky, and in a minute or two someone came in with the news that the "Varieties" was on fire. I got my hat and coat and ran to the theatre as fast as I could, only to find that the flames had got such a hold on the building that there was no hope of saving it.

As a matter of fact, the place was absolutely gutted, and

I lost, not only the whole of my apparatus, but most of my savings as well, which were in paper money, locked up in the same trunk. So there I was with no apparatus and next to no money, and had it not been for the kindness of a brother professional, Professor Hermann, one of the cleverest conjurers of the day, who fitted me up with enough apparatus to give a satisfactory entertainment, there would have been nothing for it but to take an enforced holiday.

Ill-luck continued to follow me. With the fit-up with which Professor Hermann had provided me, I went on to Boston, where I had an engagement at the Howard Athenæum. On the Monday morning, during rehearsal, the trunk containing it was being hoisted up into my dressing-room, which was near the flies, by a rope attached to the handle, when the handle came off and the trunk fell and was smashed to pieces. However, I contrived to fix some of the apparatus temporarily and, with the assistance of a pack of cards, to give an entertainment which, though less attractive than it would have been had not the accident occurred, was nevertheless quite enthusiastically received.

During these early days on the stage I had a very singular and particularly unpleasant experience.

One evening, when I was performing at Chicago, I received a visit from a certain Mr. M——, a very prosperous-looking and very pleasant-spoken individual, who inquired if I could give a whole evening's entertainment. Although I had never attempted such a thing before—the performances I was then giving did not occupy more than twenty minutes—I told him that I had no doubt I should be able to manage it, and he then offered me an engagement at a place called Mexico, Missouri, on very tempting terms. It appeared that there was to be a fair in that town the following week in which Mr. M——, who was a confectioner by trade, was interested, and that he had engaged the theatre there for the week and was in search of an attraction.

As this Mr. M—— was quite unknown to me, I stipulated

that I was to receive my money each night before the curtain rose, and that he was also to pay my hotel bill and all incidental expenses. To this he agreed.

I arrived in the town on the Monday morning, and, as my first performance was not to take place until the Wednesday, I had plenty of time to prepare a programme which I thought would be long enough to make up an evening's entertainment. On the Wednesday night I went down to the theatre, and just before eight o'clock, when the curtain was to rise, I looked through a little hole in it and saw, to my mortification, that there were scarcely a dozen people in the auditorium. However, I consoled myself by the reflection that, as my agreement stipulated that I was to be paid before the performance began, I was on the right side.

Mr. M—— duly handed me my money, telling me not to bother about the smallness of the audience, as, if my entertainment pleased them, we should have crowded houses for the rest of the week. The performance proved a great success with the few who were there, but alas for Mr. M——'s hopes ! On the following night the audience consisted of exactly eight persons !

I was waiting to receive my money in advance, as I had the previous evening, when Mr. M——arrived and told me that he would let me have it in the morning. I answered that that was not good enough for me ; that, by the terms of my agreement, I was to receive it before the curtain rose ; otherwise, I should not appear. So he had to go out and hustle round to scrape the money together, which he eventually contrived to do, and the curtain rose about three-quarters of an hour late on a very impatient and unruly audience of eight !

The next day Mr. M—— came to me and said : " Mr. Hertz, I guess it's no use going on here any longer, as evidently the people won't patronise the theatre. I know I've made a contract with you for four days. I've already paid you for two, and I'm under contract to pay you for the other two ; but I've lost so much money that I don't wish to proceed any further with it. So, in order to recompense you, I'll make

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you a proposition. I've booked the theatre at Montgomery City, Missouri, for three days next week, during the fair there. I'll let you have all the bills, which you will find in some packages addressed to me in the parcels-office at the station. Go there, tell the clerk that you are Mr. M——, get the packages and have the bills put out and distributed. Then you can give the performance, and the whole of the receipts will be yours. This will amply repay you for the loss I have caused you."

I accepted his proposal, took the train to Montgomery City, and, on my arrival, went to the parcels-office, where I said that I was Mr. M——, and was handed some bulky packages directed to that gentleman, which I signed for in his name, "A. K. M——." I ought, of course, to have known that to use another person's name, even at his own request, is always a pretty unwise thing to do and may lead to all sorts of complications; but in those days I was very young and green.

I had the bills distributed, and then went to the directors of the fair and asked if they would allow me to give a free performance on the first day, in front of the grand stand, during the judging of the horses, as I thought this would be an excellent advertisement. They consented, and I had four tables put up in front of the stand and gave a fifteen minutes' performance, during which I had some boys going round with handbills announcing my appearance at the theatre that night and the two following nights. My performance was a great success, and, as there were some five or six thousand people at the fair, I felt sure of having a packed house in the evening, and was just tickled to death at the thought that all the takings were going into my own pocket.

After I had finished, I was walking through the grounds of the fair when I was stopped by two policemen, who said:

"We arrest you!"

"Arrest me?" I cried in astonishment. "What for?"

"We want you; your name is M——!"

We were soon surrounded by a great crowd of people, most of whom recognised me as the conjurer who had just been

performing in front of the grand stand, and naturally concluded that I must have done something pretty bad to be publicly arrested in that way. I told the policemen that they had made a mistake, that my name was not M——, but Carl Hertz, and taking letters and papers from my pocket, showed them that they were all addressed "Carl Hertz," and explained that M—— was my former manager, who had engaged me for Mexico and Montgomery City, but had made over the theatre at the latter place to me, to give performances on my own.

However, they refused to believe me, and, notwithstanding my protestations, I was marched through the streets to the police-station and locked up. I demanded to know what was the charge against me, and was told that it was for buying jewellery on credit at St. Louis under a false name. Again I tried to explain that they had got hold of the wrong man, and threatened them with an action for false imprisonment. But they only laughed at that, and presently I was handcuffed, marched through the streets again and taken to the railway-station, where I was confronted with the clerk at the parcels-office, who at once identified me as the person who had come for the packages directed to M—— and had signed for them in that name.

I was then conducted back to prison, where I again protested my innocence and told the superintendent that, if I were not permitted to fulfil my engagement at the theatre that evening, I should hold him accountable for the loss which I should suffer. At length, it seemed to dawn upon that personage that, perhaps after all, I might not be the man he wanted ; and he said that he would allow me to give my performance on condition that two of his men were in attendance, for whose services I was to pay at the rate of two dollars an hour.

And so down to the theatre I went, with a stalwart policeman on either side. But the public, who had seen me arrested that afternoon and marched about the town in custody, had not unnaturally come to the conclusion that I must be an

impostor, and the performance was a complete frost, the audience numbering scarcely twenty people. After it was over, I was taken back to the police-station, where I spent a very uncomfortable night. But, about noon the next day, the superintendent appeared and told me that I was at liberty, as he had just received a wire to say that the real M—— had been laid by the heels and was now in gaol at Mexico.

To have been arrested and imprisoned for another man's misdeeds, and to have performed before an empty house, instead of the crowded one I had so fondly anticipated, was bad enough in all conscience. But worse was in store, for, on my release, I learned that this precious scoundrel of an M—— had lied to me, and that the rent of the theatre for the three nights had not been paid, nor the cost of the printing. I had to pay for both, and left that town a sadder and a wiser man.

I had another experience in these early days which I can never recall without a laugh, though I am afraid I did not quite appreciate the humour of it at the time.

During an engagement at the Buckingham Theatre, at Louisville, I was performing a well-known trick, which consisted of passing a marked coin into the centre of an uncut orange—at least, that is what most people thought I was doing. I used a silver dollar and emphasised the trick by passing the coin into the pocket of some boy whom I had enticed on to the stage. I must confess that the boy had to be a confederate, and that the marked dollar had its fellow in one previously prepared by me.

One night, as I was entering the theatre, I looked round for a likely youth to aid me in my double dealing, and having picked one out, promised to pass him in free if he would do what I was going to ask him. Then I showed him a dollar and said :—

“ I am a conjurer, and I want you to put this dollar in your right-hand trousers pocket. I will get you a seat in the front row, and when I ask for someone to come on the stage to assist me, you must come. I shall then produce a dollar

and make it vanish, and ask you to reproduce the same dollar from your pocket."

The boy readily promised to follow my instructions, and, having arranged for him to have a seat in the front row, I left him.

When I was ready for the dollar trick, I saw my young confederate sitting open-mouthed in the front row. I had persuaded another member of the audience to pretend to lend me a dollar marked exactly as was the one I had given the boy; and this "borrowed" dollar I passed into the orange, and when I cut the fruit open, out dropped the coin.

Then I turned to the audience and said:—

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, I will perform a still more difficult feat. I have passed this dollar into the orange. Now I will ask a member of the audience to step on to the stage and, without going anywhere near him, I will pass the same dollar, marked as you have seen, into his right-hand trousers pocket."

True to his bargain, the boy stepped on to the stage. I took my stand opposite him and said:—

"Now, sir, have you ever seen me before this evening?"

"No, sir," was the answer.

It was, of course, the truth, but not quite in the sense which those present imagined.

"I have here a dollar," I went on, "and am going to pass it into your right-hand trousers pocket. One—two—three—go!"

And with that I made the proper magician's pass and smiled complacently upon my audience.

"Now," said I to my youthful confederate, "put your hand in your right trousers pocket and give me that dollar."

The boy looked a bit sheepish, but down went his fist into his pocket. And then, to my utter dismay, he drew out a handful of small change and said:—

"I've only ninety cents of it left, sir. I was thirsty and went out to get a drink of lemonade!" . . .

CHAPTER III

I accept an engagement with a travelling circus—Serious accident to the circus trains on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad—Although only very slightly injured, I decide to try to obtain compensation from the railroad company—My *modus operandi*—My interview with the company's manager at Nashville—I am sent to be examined by a doctor, who discovers that my injuries are faked. At his request I give a private performance under an assumed name, at the Medical College—I receive \$1,500 compensation from the railroad company—I go to New York and take an engagement at a variety theatre on the Bowery—Reply of the German proprietor to my request for my salary—I give a performance at William H. Vanderbilt's house on Fifth Avenue—A comedy of errors.

My next experience was travelling with a circus, as I accepted an engagement with the great Fore-Paugh show, one of the biggest travelling circuses in the States. We travelled in three special trains, and generally played in a different town every night. Immediately a performance was over the enormous tents in which it had been given were taken down, conveyed to the railway station and loaded on to the train. The work of erecting and taking down these huge tents necessitated the employment of a whole regiment of men.

It was nearly always two or three o'clock in the morning before all our paraphernalia was aboard the train, portions of which were arranged as sleeping compartments for the artists and staff, and we generally arrived in the next town between eight and nine. The great tents were then erected again and made ready for the afternoon performance, as we gave two performances in every place we visited, and about eleven o'clock a parade through the town took place in order to advertise the show. It was a very hard life, in fact the hardest

I have ever had during my whole career ; and one season of it was quite enough for me.

My most eventful experience with the circus was a railroad accident, which happened near Birmingham, Alabama, on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. It was about three o'clock in the morning. I was in the second of the three trains ; one had preceded us, and the other was following us. We had stopped to take in water, when train No. 3 ran into us.

I was asleep in an upper berth and was awakened by the shouts of those who had caught sight of the headlights of the approaching train. I jumped down and rushed towards the door, with the intention of going on to the platform of the car to see what was the matter. But before I could reach the door, a negro attendant pushed me back, and got out on to the platform himself, closing the door after him. I seized the handle of the door, and, at the same moment, the other train struck us, and I was sent flying back into the corridor, with the glass door of the carriage, which had been wrenched from its hinges, on top of me.

I lost consciousness, and when I recovered my senses, found myself lying in a farmhouse, to which all the injured passengers had been carried. My face and night-clothes were covered with blood, and at first I thought I must be badly injured. But when the local doctor had examined me, he found that I had got off very lightly, and was unhurt save for cuts on my forehead, nose and chin. The last was rather a deep one, and I still bear the mark of it. It was indeed a fortunate thing for me that the negro attendant had prevented me going out on to the platform of the car, as he was killed, while I escaped.

The doctor washed the cuts and put plaster on them, and then said that I should soon be all right and might go on to Birmingham, at which town the circus was to perform, which was only some few miles away. But, as I was naturally suffering from the shock and feeling pretty bad, I decided, when I arrived there, to go to an hotel and rest for a day or two before rejoining the show.

The next morning it occurred to me that I might be able

to get some compensation out of the railroad company, if I went the right way to work, and I decided to go to the headquarters of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, at Nashville, and interview the manager. During the day the manager of the circus came to see me to know why I hadn't rejoined the show, when I told him that I was staying away because I was going to bring an action against the railroad company to recover damages for the injuries I had received, unless they settled with me to my satisfaction.

He burst out laughing: "You've got some cheek, I guess," said he. "Why, you're not hurt at all, except for these two or three little cuts on your face, while some of the others have got broken arms and collar-bones and worse! You won't get a nickel out of those railroad people."

"Well, we shall see," I answered. "Anyway, I mean to have a good try."

When he had gone, I went to a chemist's and invested half-a-dollar or so in the purchase of sticking-plaster. With this I returned to the hotel, got some hot water, washed off the plaster which the doctor had put on the cuts, and having cut the sticking-plaster into strips, put them all over my face, until nothing was visible but my eyes, nose and mouth. I then wired to the manager of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, telling him that I was one of the persons injured in the accident and that I proposed to come to Nashville and call upon him, in order to see whether I could come to some settlement with his company before bringing an action against them for compensation. In reply, I received a wire requesting me to come at once, at the company's expense.

I started for Nashville that afternoon, and was met at the station by a carriage and pair and driven to the offices of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. On my arrival, I was shown into the manager's private room, which I entered, limping painfully and looking, of course, a most pathetic sight.

The manager stared at me in astonishment.

"Jee-rusalem!" he exclaimed. "You have been knocked about!"

"Yes, sir," I answered grimly, "I should say I have."

I then told him that I was a conjurer, and that, as I could not possibly appear before an audience until my face had healed, to say nothing of the shock which my system had received, it must be a long time before I was again able to earn my living. I hoped that the company would be prepared to offer me adequate compensation; otherwise, it was my intention to bring an action against them.

Of course, this was sheer bluff on my part, for at that time I had no money to spare in legal proceedings, and my injuries were so slight that no lawyer, however speculative, would have cared to take up the case, on the chance of getting his costs out of the railroad company.

"Well," said the manager, touching a bell on his desk, "I'll get one of my clerks to take you along to a doctor, and let him examine you; and when I receive his report, I may be able to make you some kind of offer. Meantime, you can go to any hotel in the town you like and stay there at the company's expense."

When I heard this, I nearly fell through the floor, since I knew the doctor would soon find out that there was practically nothing the matter with me and the game would be up. I tried to get the manager to make me some offer there and then, but he shook his head and said he could do nothing until he had the doctor's report. So, very reluctantly, I drove with the clerk to the doctor's house, where we were told that he was out and would not be back until five o'clock that afternoon, having been called away to visit some patient at a distance.

We accordingly drove to the Marshall Hotel, which the clerk had recommended as being one of the best in Nashville. Here, after telling the manager that the company would be responsible for my bill and that it was to be sent in to them, he left me, saying that he would not be able to come with me to the doctor's at five o'clock, as he had an appointment elsewhere, but would give instructions to the coachman to call for me at that time.

At five o'clock the carriage came round and took me to the doctor's house. I was shown into the surgery and found myself in the presence of a pleasant-looking, elderly man, to whom I introduced myself, telling him that I was one of the people injured in the accident to the circus "specials," and that I had been sent by the railroad company to be examined, with a view to my receiving compensation.

"H'm!" said he. "Your face appears to have been in the wars, anyway. I'll just have a look at it."

He got a bowl of hot water and washed off all the plaster; then looked at me, burst out laughing, and asked:—

"Who in the world put all those plasters on your face?"

I told him the village doctor who had attended me after the accident.

"By Jingo, he must be a born fool!" he exclaimed. "He's put plaster over parts of your face where you're not hurt at all! You've only got slight cuts on your forehead and nose and a gash a bit deeper on your chin, and why on earth he's plastered you all over like this goodness only knows! Those cuts will be healed in a few days, and you'll be all right again."

My hopes of getting anything out of the railroad company seemed to be fading away, and I decided that my only chance was to try to persuade the doctor that I was hurt somewhere else. So I said that I was very much afraid that I had received some internal injury, as I had a terrible pain in my right side. I certainly had some kind of pain there, and in several other places, for that matter—in fact, I was feeling stiff and sore all over—but it was no more than one would expect after the way I had been thrown into the corridor of our train when the other one dashed into it.

"Well," said the doctor, "you'd better strip and let me examine you."

I took off my clothes and lay down on the sofa, and he sounded me all over, and every time he touched the right side of my body I squirmed.

"I can find nothing wrong," said he when he had finished, "not even a bruise. The pain you say you feel is probably

due to the shock you've received more than anything else, and will soon pass off."

With that he looked at me and laughed, and, after washing the cuts on my face and putting three small strips of plaster on them, told me to dress.

I felt very disconsolate, as I was pretty sure, from the doctor's manner, that I might say good-bye to all hopes of touching the railroad company. However, after I had dressed, the doctor, who was a very pleasant fellow, asked me to have a drink, which I accepted, and he then inquired what was my particular line in the circus. I told him that I was a conjurer, at which he seemed very interested.

"I do a bit in that way sometimes myself," said he, "and people are good enough to say that I'm pretty fair for an amateur."

Then he got out a pack of cards and asked me if I would mind showing him one or two tricks. I showed him several, none of which he had ever seen before, and he was simply flabbergasted. We sat talking for over an hour, and, when I got up to go, he asked me if I would do him a great favour. He was giving a lecture at the Medical College the next evening. Would I go there with him and, after the lecture was over, show the students some of the tricks I had shown him?

I answered that I should be only too pleased to do so, but, in the circumstances, I was afraid I must decline, as I had told the railroad company that it would be weeks before I should be able to appear before an audience again, and were they to hear I had given a performance two nights later, it would spoil any chance I might have of receiving compensation.

"Oh, you needn't worry about that," said he. "It's a private affair, and you can come under an assumed name; so they'll never know anything about it. If you will do this for me, the report I shall send in won't do you any harm."

The next evening the doctor sent his carriage to take me to the Medical College, where, at the conclusion of his lecture, I was introduced to the students under an assumed name and gave a performance which was a great success.

Some days later, I received a letter from the manager of the railroad company asking me to call and see him.

"Well, Mr. Hertz," said he, "we have had the doctor's report, and though he says that your injuries are not at all serious, he seems to consider that it is a case which calls for some slight compensation. On what terms will you be prepared to settle?"

I told him I wanted \$4,000, though, of course, I knew that I had no chance of getting anything like it. He refused to listen to that, and offered me \$500, which I said I could not dream of accepting. At last, after a long argument, during which he had doubled his offer, and I had halved my demand, he said that he would speak to two of his directors, who happened to be in an adjoining room. He went out and in a few minutes returned and said:—

"I have had a talk with my directors, Mr. Hertz, and this is our final offer; and if you decline to accept it, you will have to bring your action, and we shall fight the case. We will give you fifteen hundred dollars cash and a first-class ticket, including 'sleepers,' from Nashville to any part of the United States to which you wish to go. Meantime, you are at liberty to remain at your hotel here at our expense, until you feel you are well enough to travel; the carriage will be in attendance to take you for a drive whenever you wish to go out and any extras on your bill will be paid."

I answered that I would accept their terms, as, although I did not consider that the compensation they were offering me was adequate, I had no wish to put the company and myself to the trouble and expense of an action. Needless to say, I should have accepted the \$500 which the manager first offered me, if he had refused to budge from it.

I remained at Nashville for nearly a month, during which I often visited my friend the doctor, and gave him several lessons in conjuring and card tricks, and then left for New York. On the way my train stopped for some twenty minutes at a station, where I met the members of the circus with which I had been performing. The circus season was over, and the

artists were dispersing to their homes. When I told them of the compensation I had got out of the railroad company, they were astonished at my good fortune, as, though several of them had been badly injured, they had been advised that it was useless to try to recover damages, and none of them had, in consequence, attempted to do so.

The first engagement I got after my arrival in New York was at a variety theatre on the Bowery which was being run by a German. The place was always considered a white elephant, and almost everybody who took it came to grief. At that time I was doing a trick with a hat, in which I was supposed to catch money in the air. I held a gentleman's silk hat in one hand, and, reaching out in the air with the other, caught a silver half-dollar, which I threw into the hat. I kept on doing this until I had the hat almost half-filled with these silver half-dollars, which, by the way, were not really half-dollars, but simply copper coins silvered over. Business was very bad, and on some nights there were scarcely a dozen people in the theatre. On the Saturday night, after having finished my performance, I went up to the proprietor's office to get my week's salary.

"Well," said he, "and what do you want?"

"I've come for my salary," I answered.

"Who was you?"

"I am Mr. Carl Hertz."

"Oh, you was the man who catches money in the air, ain't it!"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you will have to catch your salary, because I haven't got it."

And I never got a cent for my week's work, since it was no use to waste money in suing him. There was no doubt that the place had about broken him, as it had done so many others, and you can't get blood out of a stone.

While I was in New York I was engaged to give a performance at William H. Vanderbilt's house on Fifth Avenue during an evening-party.

I was shown through the house, which was reported to have cost \$300,000 to build, and in all my life I have never seen one that could compare with it. The hall, with its pillars of coloured marble, was like that of a palace; the walls and ceilings were decorated most exquisitely, and the art gallery, which contained paintings by all the most celebrated artists in the world, was said to consist of the finest collection of pictures in existence. At supper the service—plates, knives, forks and spoons—was all of solid gold, and I was told afterwards that there were about a dozen detectives in private clothes located in different parts of the house.

My performance, which lasted nearly an hour, pleased the company so much that I was requested to give another after supper, which I did, and it was 3 a.m. before I left, with an assurance that my services would be required on some future occasion.

My entertainment had a singular sequel. On the day of the party I had had two trunks containing my apparatus sent to Vanderbilt's house, and, before leaving, I told the butler that I would be sending for them the following morning, and asked him to give them to the express driver when he called; and this he promised to do. Now, it happened that Vanderbilt and his wife were leaving town the next day for Saratoga, and he had given instructions to his butler to send their trunks to the railroad depôt.

The next evening, when I returned to the boarding-house at which I was staying, I was astonished to find the hall-way stacked up with trunks.

I said to the proprietress:

"Who in the world do all those trunks belong to?"

"Why, they're yours," she answered; "and just let me tell you, Mr. Hertz, they've all got to be taken out of this place the very first thing to-morrow morning, as they're blocking up the whole passage-way and we can't move for them."

I told the indignant lady that the offending trunks certainly did not belong to me, upon which she said that they had arrived in three loads from Vanderbilt's house, where the

express driver had received instructions that they were to be delivered to my address.

I saw at once that a ridiculous mistake had been made, and that my two trunks had gone to the railroad depôt, while Vanderbilt's pyramid of luggage had been sent to me. I took a car to the depôt, where I found Vanderbilt's butler and his staff looking all over the place for their master's property, and well-nigh distracted at its supposed loss. They were, of course, immensely relieved when I told them that all the trunks were at my boarding-house.

I found my trunks at the depôt and took them home, and the next day Vanderbilt's trunks were taken away and sent to Saratoga, whither he and his wife had had to proceed without any luggage.

CHAPTER IV

I sail for Liverpool on my first visit to England—My appearance at the Folly Theatre, Manchester—My great success—My disappearing cage and canary trick—I perform the trick at the offices of the R.S.P.C.A., in Jermyn Street, and successfully refute the charge of cruelty which has been brought against me in connection with it—My appearance at the Crystal Palace—Amusing incident with Mr. Clement Scott, the dramatic critic, at the Alhambra—Engagements at private houses—The house in Grosvenor Square—Conjuring entertainments and baccarat parties—Singular sequel—I give an entertainment at an evening party at Mr. Alfred de Rothschild's house in Seymour Place—A distinguished company—The Prince of Wales and the rabbit—Visit to Mr. Rothschild in the City—His cigars.

IN July, 1884, I paid my first visit to England, where I intended to remain only a few months, but actually stayed over three years. I sailed for Liverpool in the ss. *America*, on board of which were many distinguished passengers, amongst whom were one of the Goulds and Paul Arthur, the dramatic author. During the voyage I gave several performances for the benefit of the Sailors' Orphanage, which were very successful.

My first appearance in England was at the Folly Theatre, in Manchester, on August 4th. I was engaged for one week, but my opening night was such a success that the management at once asked me to extend my engagement for a further fortnight, to which I agreed.

The *Manchester Guardian* of the 6th contained the following notice of my entertainment, which was as kind a one as I could possibly have desired and gave me great encouragement :

“ Mr. Carl Hertz, a young Californian necromancer, made

his first appearance here on Monday, when his clever tricks elicited most enthusiastic applause. The new professor of wonder-working is exceedingly clever, and his many tricks received the heartiest appreciation of all who witnessed them. His feats of necromancy are executed so deftly that he may fairly claim to be considered at the top of the tree in his profession. His manipulation of a pack of cards must be seen to be believed, and one of his specialities, the marvellous disappearance of a cage and bird, is about as clever a trick as has ever been performed on a stage."

My disappearing cage and canary trick, of which I have already spoken, made, indeed, a great sensation wherever I performed it, and was afterwards the cause of a long controversy in the London papers. Letters and articles appeared condemning the trick, on the ground that it was cruel to the bird, and that it could not be performed without killing or injuring it. In fact, so much fuss was made, that at the places where I was engaged to appear the managers gave me notice that I must discontinue the trick, as otherwise I might injure the reputation of their halls, and even lead the County Council to refuse to renew their licenses.

I could not very well cease to perform it, as that would amount to a tacit admission that the charge of cruelty was true. But, at the same time, I saw that something would have to be done in order to prove how groundless such an accusation was. I accordingly went to the offices of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, in Jermyn Street, and offered to perform the trick in their board-room, in the presence of as many persons as they cared to invite, and with a bird which had been secretly marked by them previously. They accepted my offer; a day was arranged and representatives of the Press invited to attend.

I performed the trick with a bird which had been previously marked by a member of the Society. He placed the bird in the cage himself, and, at a word of command from me, bird-cage and bird immediately disappeared, in full view of

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those present. A few moments afterwards, I reproduced the same bird, which, on being examined, was found not to be injured in any way whatever.

One of the members of the committee remarked that perhaps it was a mere chance that the bird had escaped injury on this occasion, and asked me whether I had any objection to performing the trick again with the same bird. I answered that I would do so most willingly, and for the second time reproduced the canary quite unhurt. He then admitted that I had proved my case, and the Society sent me a certificate, which I have still in my possession, stating that they were quite satisfied that it was the same bird which was placed in the cage at the beginning of the performance and exhibited by me afterwards uninjured.

Only recently the matter was brought up again, during the sittings of the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons to hear evidence on the Performing Animals Bill. I was summoned as a witness, and performed the trick before the Committee and again shewed that the bird was not injured in any way. This, I imagine, is the first time that a conjuring entertainment ever took place within the precincts of the Houses of Parliament. I shall have something to say about this performance in a later chapter.

There is absolutely no cruelty whatever in this trick, and I have birds in my possession now which I have used for two or three years, and they are just as strong and healthy as they were when I first performed the experiment with them. Many explanations have been given as to how this trick is performed, but, up to the present, none of them has proved correct, and it still remains my own secret, though I have been performing it for over forty years.

From Manchester I came to London, and made my first appearance at the Crystal Palace, where I performed before an audience of 30,000 people. They gave me a most gratifying reception, and before my engagement concluded I had secured engagements at the Alhambra, the Empire, the old Royal

Music Hall, in Holborn, the Canterbury and most of the principal variety theatres in London.

An incident which occurred on the first occasion on which I performed at the Alhambra was thus described by one of the London correspondents of the New York Press :—

“ An amusing incident happened on the first night of the new ballet at the Alhambra, though it had nothing to do with the ballet itself. It occurred during the performance of a conjurer of the name of Carl Hertz, who undertook to show the audience that he could produce live animals from amongst them. As ill-luck would have it, he hit upon (without knowing who he was) no less a personage than Mr. Clement Scott, the distinguished dramatic critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, who was sitting peacefully in the stalls, little suspecting the liberties which were about to be taken with him. Mr. Hertz exhibited the live rabbit to the audience and then said : ‘ I am now going to make this rabbit vanish and afterwards produce it from that gentleman’s person,’ at the same time indicating Mr. Scott, who seemed, however, to be quite unaware that he was the destined victim. The rabbit duly disappeared from Mr. Hertz’s hands, and he then stepped from the stage into the stalls, and seizing poor Mr. Scott roughly by the collar, after frantic resistance on that gentleman’s part, succeeded in extracting the live rabbit from the back of his Inverness cape. The audience shrieked with laughter, and Mr. Scott was allowed to sink back into his stall, looking as though his usually placid temper had for once been severely ruffled. Everyone who witnessed this little comedy expected to find some cutting remarks in the next morning’s *Daily Telegraph* upon the uncontrollable liberties permitted to artists at variety theatres. These, however, did not appear ; so possibly Mr. Scott is reserving his very natural indignation for some future occasion when Mr. Hertz’s name appears on the programme.”

As time went on, I began to obtain a great many engagements at private houses in London, for which I received very

handsome remuneration. In connection with these private entertainments I once had a singular experience.

One evening, when I was appearing at the Royal Music Hall, in Holborn, a message was brought to my dressing-room that a lady and gentleman in a private box would like to speak to me. After I had finished my performance, I went up to their box, where I found a handsome, middle-aged woman and a tall, slim, rather distinguished-looking man, apparently a few years older than she was. The lady, whom I will call Mrs. Thornton, told me that she and her husband had greatly enjoyed my entertainment and asked if I ever gave private performances, and, on my answering in the affirmative, enquired what my terms would be to come to her house the following Sunday evening, where they were giving a dinner-party.

I told her my terms, to which she agreed, and giving me her address—the house was in no less fashionable a locality than Grosvenor Square—asked me to come there to dinner, saying that I should be introduced, not as a professional artist who was engaged to appear there, but as one of the guests, so that no one would know that I was being paid for my entertainment. She added that, at dinner, the subject of conjuring could be casually introduced, and that I could then start doing a few tricks at the table and gradually work up to a regular performance.

On the following Sunday evening I duly presented myself at the house in Grosvenor Square, which, I believe, belonged to a certain peer, who had let it furnished to Mr. and Mrs. Thornton for six months. There seemed to be a number of well-known Society people amongst the guests, two or three of whom I knew to be very wealthy and of sporting proclivities. Towards the close of dinner our hostess, as had been agreed, adroitly introduced the subject of conjuring, and thus led up to my giving an entertainment, which was a great success.

After my performance was over, a move was made to the drawing-room, where presently they started playing baccarat and chemin-de-fer. The stakes were very high, in fact I have never seen such high play in a private house.

I did not play myself, and after looking on for a little while, during which hundreds of pounds must have changed hands, took my departure. As I was leaving, my hostess came up to me, handed me my fee, and asked if I would come again the following Sunday on the same terms, which I promised to do.

The second Sunday was a repetition of the first, except that there were a good many fresh faces amongst the guests, and the play seemed to me to be even higher than on the occasion of my previous visit. At the baccarat table I saw the bank clean up something like £1,200 in three coups.

I was asked to come once more the following week ; in fact, I came for ten or twelve consecutive Sundays, by which time I had begun to feel quite at home at the house, and more like a friend than a paid performer. In the circumstances, it seemed to me that I ought not to go on accepting the big fee which I was continually receiving ; and so one night, after the hostess had handed it me and asked me to come as usual the following Sunday, I told her that I would only come on condition that I was not to be paid for doing so, as I had become so friendly with her and her husband and daughter that I was really ashamed to take the money. She pressed me to continue to accept the fee, but I would not give way, and finally it was agreed that I should come in future as a real guest.

One morning, three or four weeks later, I was having breakfast in my rooms, when my landlady came to tell me that there were two ladies in a cab outside who wished to see me on a matter of importance. I asked her to show them up, but she returned to say that they would not come in and wanted me to go out and speak to them. I went downstairs and found that my visitors were my hostess of Grosvenor Square and her daughter, a very pretty girl of about twenty-two.

" Mr. Hertz," said the elder lady, " I am in terrible trouble, and am on my way to see my solicitors in the City. Will you get your hat and coat and drive with us as far, and I will tell you about it as we go along ? "

I went in, got my hat and coat, and we drove away. Mrs. Thornton said that she could not very well explain to me what the trouble was, but it would be a most serious matter for her unless she could put her hands on a thousand pounds at once. Would I oblige her by lending it to her ?

I answered that I was very sorry, but I was not in a position to do so at the moment, as nearly all my money was invested in American railroads and so forth, and the securities were with my New York bankers. If, however, she could wait for a little while, it was possible that I might be able to help her.

"But I can't wait!" she exclaimed. "I must have the money to-day! It is a matter of life and death! If you haven't got it yourself, you must surely know someone amongst all your friends who will oblige you."

"I am sorry," I said, "but I have no friends in this country who think so much of me as to oblige me with a thousand pounds at a moment's notice."

The lady reflected for a minute or two. Then she said:—

"Well, Mr. Hertz, if that is really the case, will you let me have that diamond ring and pin that you are wearing? I could raise part at any rate of the money I need on them, as they appear to be very fine stones."

This strange request aroused my suspicions, and I replied that the articles in question were accessory to my business, and, as I had always been in the habit of wearing them, I could not very well appear on the stage without them.

Shortly afterwards the cab stopped, and I got out and took leave of the ladies, who were both looking very dejected, with tears in their eyes. I wondered much what had caused these people who had always appeared so wealthy to be so desperately pressed for money. But the explanation came the next day, when I read in the paper that their house in Grosvenor Square had been raided by the police, and Mrs. Thornton and her pretended husband and daughter—for neither was in any way related to her—had been all three arrested. It transpired that the place had been nothing more than a crook gambling-den, and I subsequently ascertained

that my conjuring performance had been used as an attraction to draw the unsuspecting sheep into the clutches of the shearers. Mrs. Thornton had no doubt been warned that the game was up, and had been endeavouring to lay her hands on all the money she could before seeking safety in flight. Hence her visit to me.

I was naturally very angry when I learned how I had been made the tool of these crooks, who, I am glad to say, were each sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment.

I was several times engaged to give an entertainment at the Sunday evening parties given by Mr. Alfred de Rothschild at his house in Seymour Place, at which some of the most celebrated people in England used to assemble. On the first occasion on which I performed there the company was a most distinguished one, and included H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII.) and his two sons, the Duke of Clarence and Prince George (now King George V.), Mr. Gladstone, the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, Count Herbert von Bismarck, the Duke of Portland, Lord Rothschild, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, the Countess of Dudley and the Countess of Leicester.

I performed, amongst other tricks, that with the cage and canary, for which Prince George held the cage, and afterwards, at the genial host's request, I made a rabbit disappear and produced it from the back of the Prince of Wales's coat. H.R.H. enjoyed the joke, like the sportsman that he was, and laughed heartily, and at the conclusion of my entertainment came up and complimented me upon it.

Mr. Alfred de Rothschild then asked me to have some supper, and said that his guests were so pleased with the tricks I had shown them, that they would be glad if I would give another little performance afterwards. I told him that I had not come prepared to do any more, but if he thought they would be satisfied to see some card tricks, I would most willingly oblige them. I performed a number of card tricks, which seemed to interest the company very much, and Mr. Rothschild again expressed himself very pleased with my

entertainment and asked me to call at their place in the City next morning for my cheque.

On arriving in St. Swithin's Lane, I was shown into " Mr. Alfred's " private room, where I had quite a long conversation with him. Presently, he brought out his cigar-case and asked me to have a cigar. Now, up to that time I had never smoked in my life, but, somehow or other, I felt ashamed to say that I did not, and so, with many misgivings, accepted the cigar and lit it.

" How do you like that cigar ? " inquired Mr. Rothschild, after I had taken one or two puffs at it.

" It is the finest cigar I've ever smoked in my life," I replied, which, of course, was perfectly true. It might have been a twopenny " smoke " for all I knew.

He handed me an envelope containing my fee for the previous night's performance, and I rose to go, for I did not like to throw the cigar away in the presence of the giver, but felt that, if I went on smoking it, I should most certainly be ill.

" Wait a minute," said he. " Sit down again. I've something else for you."

I obliged, and manfully took another pull at my cigar, which did not make me feel any better. Mr. Rothschild rang a bell on his desk, which was answered by his butler, to whom he gave some order in a low tone. The butler went out and returned with a parcel, which his master handed to me, saying :—

" Since you like that cigar so much, I am going to ask you to accept a box of them as some acknowledgment of the extra performance you gave with the cards last night."

I thanked him for his generous gift and took my departure, and as soon as I reached the street, that cigar and I parted company. If I had gone on smoking it for another couple of minutes the consequences would have been disastrous.

On my way home, I called on my agent, Mr. Richard Warner, at his office in Wellington Street, Strand, and told him that I had just been to Rothschild's office and had received his cheque for the performance I had given at his house.

“ What’s that you’ve got under your arm ? ” said he.

I told him that it was a box of cigars which Mr. Rothschild had made me a present of, upon which he wanted to know what I was going to do with them, as he knew I did not smoke myself at that time.

“ Oh, I don’t know,” I answered. “ Give them away to people, I suppose.”

“ Well, I’ll give you a ‘ quid ’ for them, if you like,” said he, and though I didn’t think a ‘ quid ’ very much for a box of cigars which a Rothschild was in the habit of smoking, I accepted it and handed over the box.

When he opened it, there, on top of the cigars, was a cheque for £25, with a sheet of notepaper on which was written :

“ With compliments from Alfred de Rothschild for the extra performance given last night.”

I was naturally very pleased to receive this additional fee ; but I was sorry afterwards that I let the cigars go for next to nothing, as I learned that they were a brand made specially for Alfred de Rothschild, and were worth about 5s. each, and that my friend Mr. Warner had made himself very popular at the Eccentric Club by handing the boys “ one of Rothschild’s five ‘ bob ’ cigars.”

CHAPTER V

An adventure at Ascot—Mr. Jennings, of the Oxford Music Hall—I give an impromptu entertainment to fill a gap in the programme—Indignation of Mr. Jennings at my refusal to accept payment for my performance—The Vanishing Lady Illusion—Difficulty of finding a lady to assist me in this trick—I engage Mlle. D'Alton, who subsequently becomes my wife—Ludicrous misadventure of an illusionist while performing this trick at Plymouth—My provincial tours—Singular requests made to me by persons who imagine me to possess supernatural powers—I leave England on a tour through Germany and Austro-Hungary—Amusing incident at the Reichsallen Theatre, Berlin—The missing pocket-book—I give a performance before King Ludwig II. of Bavaria, who is the only person present—"Where are you, George?"

DURING my second summer in England—that of 1885—I was told that I ought to go to Ascot on Cup Day, my friends saying that the sight on that day could not be equalled on any race-course in the world. They gave me instructions as to how I was to dress for the occasion, and I repaired to Waterloo arrayed like Solomon in all his glory: brand-new silk hat, frock coat, white waistcoat, light kid gloves, shepherd's plaid trousers, patent-leather boots and white spats, and a gardenia in my buttonhole. I did look a swell, I can assure you.

When I arrived at Ascot, I did not know where the course was or which was the proper entrance, and, as I wanted to go in the best part, I thought I could not do better than follow four gentlemen as immaculately attired as myself, who were walking just in front of me. I kept close to their heels; so close, indeed, that it might well have been supposed that I was in their company, and eventually found myself on the race-course, in a small enclosure, which did not seem half so crowded as the others. I thought it very strange that I was not asked

for a ticket or to pay any money, and wondered if people were allowed in free of charge.

Presently, the numbers went up for the first race, and though I took no interest in racing at that time and knew nothing about any of the horses, I thought I would have a sovereign on something just for the sport of the thing. So I picked a horse, and going up to one of the bookmakers who were leaning over the rails, inquired the price.

"Ten to one to you, my lord," was the answer.

"All right," I said. "I'll take ten pounds to one."

"Ten pounds to one!" exclaimed the metalician. "Surely you're joking! You mean ten 'monkeys' or ten hundreds?"

"No, I only want a sovereign on."

"Come now! Let me lay you ten 'ponies,' at any rate?" persisted the bookmaker.

But I was not to be tempted into a bigger bet.

"Very well, then, have your little joke, my lord," said he. "Ten pounds to one." And, taking out a sovereign, I was about to hand it him, when he said:—

"That's all right. You can pay me after the race."

I thought it strange how the bookmakers in England seemed to trust people whom they had never seen before, and that they must make a lot of bad debts in this way.

My horse got beat, and I went up and paid the bookmaker the sovereign I owed him.

"Thank you, my lord," said he, laughing. "I see you will have your little joke."

I was moving away, when I saw one of the other bookmakers beckoning to me, and went back to the rails.

"I say," said he, in a low tone, "you're Carl Hertz, aren't you? I saw you at the Alhambra last night."

"Yes, I am Carl Hertz."

"Then what the devil are you doing in there? How did you get in?"

"What's that got to do with you?" I answered angrily.

"Well, d'you know where you are? No? Well, you're in the Prince of Wales's private enclosure, and if

you don't look sharp and get out, the police will turn you out."

I was flabbergasted at the mistake I had made, and, as may be supposed, lost no time in following the bookmaker's advice.

During my first visit to England I secured engagements at every variety theatre of any importance in London, with one exception. This was the Oxford Music Hall, then under the control of Mr. Jennings. Mr. Jennings had the reputation of being a somewhat eccentric old gentleman, and whether it was that he did not care for my performance, or had conceived a dislike to me personally, he never would engage me, although my agent, Mr. Warner, approached him several times on the matter. Nevertheless, though I never had an engagement at the Oxford, I did give a performance there on one occasion. It came about in the following manner :—

One Saturday I looked in at the Oxford during a matinée, and took a seat in the stalls. Now it happened that, on this particular afternoon, for various reasons, no less than five of the principal turns were unable to appear, which left, of course, an enormous gap in the programme.

Mr. Warner, who was also in the Oxford that afternoon, came to me and said :—

" Mr. Jennings is in a terrible fix ; five of his turns can't appear, and it's impossible at this time of day to find any substitutes. Will you oblige him by going on and giving a performance in order to fill up the programme ? "

I answered that this was impossible for two reasons. In the first place, I could not well appear in my street-clothes and without the apparatus necessary for a performance ; and, in the second, I should not like Mr. Jennings or the audience to judge of my entertainment or my abilities from an impromptu performance of this kind. But Mr. Warner begged me to come to the rescue, saying that, if I only did some card-tricks, that would be quite enough to entertain the audience, and that Mr. Jennings would be so grateful to me for helping

him out of his predicament that he would be sure to give me an engagement later on.

Finally, I allowed myself to be persuaded, and, going out, bought two packs of cards at a shop close by. With these two packs I went on the stage, and for a whole hour entertained the audience ; and, considering that my performance was quite an impromptu one and that I had nothing but card-tricks with which to amuse them, it was a great success.

Mr. Jennings was just tickled to death, thanked me most profusely and invited me to join him in a bottle of wine. Then he said :—

“Come up to my office in about five minutes, Mr. Hertz, and I will settle with you for your services.”

I went up to his office, and he inquired what he owed me for my performance.

“That’s all right, Mr. Jennings,” I answered. “It was not my regular performance, so I can’t ask you anything for it. I did it as a favour, to help you out of your difficulty, and, as it cost me nothing beyond the two packs of cards which I bought, I must refuse to accept any payment. Perhaps we can make it up in some other way later on.”

To my astonishment, the old gentleman flew into a regular passion.

“What !” he exclaimed. “You refuse to take money for your performance ? Whom, pray, do you think you are ? You’re too damned independent to be in this business, let me tell you ; you ought to be in a bank ! Get out of my office at once and don’t you ever dare come to my place again !”

And it was not until some ten years later that he was at length persuaded to give me an engagement.

I was the first to present the trick known as the Vanishing Lady in the London music-halls. It was first produced at the Cambridge Music Hall in 1886, and afterwards I performed it at five different halls each night, receiving a salary of £20 at each hall, making £100 a week. At that time this was considered a record.

The trick consisted of a newspaper being spread out in the centre of the stage, and on the centre of the newspaper was placed an ordinary-looking chair. In this chair a lady would take her seat, and she would then be covered with a thin silk shawl. The shawl was whisked away, and the chair was seen to be empty, the lady making her appearance the next moment in the stalls.

This illusion caused an immense sensation and was the talk of London and the provinces, and had I been able to protect it, I should have made a fortune out of it. But, unfortunately, it was imitated by other conjurers, good, bad, and indifferent, with the consequence that it was soon played out.

When I first decided to produce the illusion, I was confronted by a serious difficulty, which was that I knew no lady who could assist me in the trick ; that is to say, no one whom I knew well enough to trust, for, of course, it had to be kept a profound secret. At this time I was giving my performances single-handed, without any assistants. I made inquiries of various agents, with the object of finding some lady who combined personal attractions with the necessary discretion. But at first they could suggest no one whom I considered likely to answer my requirements. Those who were attractive appeared to me to know too much, while those who were warranted discreet lacked attractions. Finally, however, I was introduced to a charming and innocent-looking maiden from the country, who knew nothing about the stage, and who I decided would be the very person for the trick. I engaged her forthwith and took her to my agent to sign a contract.

It had been agreed between us that she should swear not to divulge any of the secrets of my business, and I drew my agent aside, told him of this, and inquired whether he had a Bible on which she could take the oath.

"No," said he, "but I've got something which looks very much like one." And he handed me an old date-book. "Let her swear on this ; she won't know the difference."

The oath was duly administered, and the contract signed, and thus Emelie D'Alton became the original Vanishing Lady,



Emilie D'Alton (Mrs. Carl Hertz).

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and, a little later, in order to make my secrets more secure, she became Mrs. Carl Hertz.

While we were performing this trick at the Royal Music Hall, now the Holborn Empire, the following amusing verses appeared in one of the London papers :

THE DISAPPEARING LADY

Where do you go to, my pretty maid ?
I really can't tell you, sir, she said,
Sir, she said, sir, she said.
And pray does it Hertz you much, my pretty maid ?
It Hertz not at all, kind sir, she said,
Sir, she said, sir, she said.
It Hertz not at all, kind sir, she said.
Oh ! would that my wife were but you, sweet maid !
But why, should you wish it, good sir, she said,
Sir, she said, sir, she said.
But why should you wish it, good sir, she said.
She'd then disappear, do you twig, dear maid ?
Yes, and come back again as I do, sir, she said.
Sir, she said, sir, she said.
Yes, she'd come back again, so good-night, sweet maid.

It is, of course, now well known that this trick was performed by the help of a trap in the stage, but at that time it was understood that no traps were used. At a performance given at Plymouth, an illusionist whom I will call Smith, a man weighing about sixteen stone, rather short and very stout, came upon the stage and said :—

“Ladies and gentlemen, I will now present to you the celebrated Vanishing Lady trick, which is being performed in London and causing a great sensation. Before I begin, I would like to have it distinctly understood that this illusion is performed without the aid of any glasses, mirrors or traps on the stage.”

And with that he began to walk about the stage, stamping his foot to show that there was no trap anywhere. But, as ill-luck would have it, in so doing, he stepped upon the trap, which gave way, and down he went, and, being so stout, stuck half-way, unable to get up or down. There he remained, struggling and shouting for help, whilst the audience roared

with laughter, until someone came and pulled him out. The curtain had to be lowered, and there was no Vanishing Lady that night.

Although most of my time was passed in London, I made several provincial tours and performed at nearly all the principal towns in England, Wales and Scotland. I also paid a visit to Ireland and fulfilled engagements at Dublin and Belfast.

It is singular that, though I have never laid claim to anything in the shape of supernatural powers, and have always regarded those who do as quacks and charlatans, whose pretensions I have done not a little to expose, people have from time to time persisted in attributing such powers to me, and have requested me to perform the most impossible things on their behalf. Two instances of this happened during my visits to the provinces.

One morning, while fulfilling an engagement at Southampton, I was in my dressing-room at the theatre arranging my apparatus for the evening performance, when one of my assistants came to tell me that a gentleman wished to see me. He would not give his name, but looked like an officer in one of the Services. I told him to show the gentleman in, and in walked a tall, soldierly man of about thirty.

"Mr. Hertz," said he, "I have had the pleasure of seeing some of the wonderful things that you can do, and have heard that you are able to perform things still more marvellous, and I have come to ask a very great favour of you. I am in love with a certain young lady—madly in love with her—but she refuses to have anything to do with me. I want to know if you will use your influence on my behalf, and in some way cast a mystic spell over her, or by suggestion or mesmerism make her care for me. I am willing to pay you any sum in reason if you will do this."

I thought for a moment that the man must be mad, but, as he seemed very rational, I inquired if this young lady were in Southampton.

He answered that she was in London, upon which I said that, in that case, I was afraid I could not assist him. If he brought her to me, it was just possible that I might be able to do something for him ; otherwise, it was out of the question.

" But, surely, Mr. Hertz," said he, " you are able, if you wish, to mesmerise people from a distance ? "

I assured him that such a thing was quite impossible, and he left me, looking very disappointed.

A somewhat similar incident occurred at Kilmarnock, in Scotland, not long afterwards.

One evening, just as I had finished dinner, I received a visit from an elderly lady, who told me that she was in sore trouble and had been told that I might be able to help her. She seemed a very nice old lady, and I at once replied that if I could assist her in any way I should be only too pleased to do so, and inquired what her trouble was. She then told me that she had a son who had left Scotland six years before for the Klondyke. She had had a letter from him on his arrival at Yukon, but since then she had not heard a word from him, though she had written any number of letters to the address he had given her, and did not know whether he was alive or dead. She had been told that I could throw myself into a trance, and, while in that condition, see people thousands of miles away. So probably I would be able to see her son, if he were still alive, and tell her where he was.

I told the poor lady that neither I nor anyone else I had ever heard of possessed such powers, and that therefore I could not assist her, upon which she burst into tears. I felt very sorry for her, and advised her to write to the Chief of Police at Yukon, giving her son's name and his last address and a description of him, and then perhaps they would be able to trace him. This she promised to do, and went away, still crying bitterly.

In the autumn of 1886 I left England on a tour through Germany and Austro-Hungary.

I went first to Berlin, where I appeared at the Reichsallen

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Theatre and made a great hit, the house being crowded night after night. A most amusing incident occurred here.

I was performing the Vanishing Lady trick, in which my wife, known on the stage as Mlle. D'Alton, as usual assisted me. Before I made her disappear, I used to ask her if she were alive, when she would answer, "Yes." Then, after covering her with the silk shawl, I used to ask her if she had already gone, when her answer would be "No." The next moment I would pull the shawl away, and it would be seen that she had vanished.

Now, my wife could not at this time speak a word of German. So I told her that when I asked her in that language if she were alive, she must say "*Ja*," which meant Yes, and when I asked her if she had already gone, she must answer, "*Nein*," which meant No. Imagine my dismay when, on my asking her if she were alive, she shouted "*Nein*," and, on my asking if she had already gone, she shouted "*Ja*." Needless to say, the audience roared with laughter.

At an evening party in Berlin, at which I was engaged to give an entertainment, I played, at the hostess's suggestion, a practical joke upon one of her guests, a very wealthy, but mean, old gentleman, who had refused to contribute to a deserving charity in which the lady was interested. The old gentleman had about him a pocket-book containing a large sum in notes, and this I contrived to get possession of. When he discovered his loss, he loudly proclaimed that he had been robbed and demanded that everyone should be searched. The other guests objected to this, but a policeman was sent for, and, on the orders of the old gentleman, they were all searched, though without the missing pocket-book being found. Then the hostess suggested that the policeman himself should be searched and, despite that indignant official's protest, this was done, and the pocket-book found on him.

When the joke was explained to the company, everyone laughed heartily, with the exception of the two victims of it. However, the policeman was consoled for the liberty which had been taken with him by a generous tip, and the old gentleman, on being told that it had been perpetrated to punish

him for having declined to contribute to his hostess's pet charity, decided to take it in good part, and, opening his restored pocket-book, handed her the sum which he had previously refused to give.

On leaving Berlin, I went to Dresden and Breslau ; then to Vienna and Budapest, and afterwards to Munich, Stuttgart and Frankfort.

While at Munich I had the singular experience of giving my entertainment before an audience of one, who was no less a personage than King Ludwig II., known to history as the mad King of Bavaria.

As is well known, towards the end of his life the King's love of solitude was such that he would not permit anyone but himself to witness the plays which were performed before him in his own small but beautifully-decorated theatre. On this occasion he sat alone in the stalls, and seemed much interested and amused by my entertainment, laughing and applauding repeatedly. At its conclusion, he signed me to approach, complimented me upon it and talked to me very graciously for some minutes. He was a singularly handsome man, with fine eyes and great charm of manner, and, had I not heard so much about his eccentricities, I should have considered him as sane a person as I ever met in my life. Indeed, he struck me as being more than ordinarily intelligent.

Some months after I left Munich the unfortunate king was declared insane, and a regent appointed, and three days later he drowned himself and his physician, Dr. von Gudden, who had courageously endeavoured to save him, in the Sternberg Lake.

While performing at a small town in Bavaria, I was on the stage one evening, and in the middle of doing one of my tricks, when I was startled by a tap on my shoulder. I turned round, to find a postman standing behind me. I put the telegram in my pocket and went on with my performance. I thought it strange that the audience took no notice of this incident, but I learned afterwards that it was customary in Bavaria for telegrams to be delivered immediately to the actual person

to whom they were addressed, no matter where he might be or what he might be doing. When I had finished my performance I opened the telegram, which was a cable from San Francisco, and was deeply grieved to learn that my mother had just died there.

At Budapest, when doing a box-trick, my assistant, after having been tied up and put in the box, used to get through a secret opening in it, go down through a trap on the stage, and then go out through the stage-door and run as hard as he could through the street to the gallery-door and up into the gallery, so as to be ready to answer when I opened the box to find it empty and shouted out to ask where he had got to.

The trick went all right the first night and was greatly applauded, but on the next when I called out : "Where are you, George ? " there was no answer, and I repeated the question again and again with the same result.

The explanation, which was not forthcoming until the following morning, was that George was in gaol. Seeing him run so madly through the street, a policeman had stopped him and demanded the reason of his haste. As poor George could not speak a word of the language, he, of course, was unable to account for it, and the policeman, concluding that he had committed some breach of the law and was trying to escape, marched him off to the station and locked him up.

CHAPTER VI

I sail for New York in s.s. *City of Chicago*—The young Englishman and the cardsharpers—I intervene, and the shearers are shorn—Sequel to this adventure—My American tour—The pigeon and the diamond ring—The hat and the cake—Singular misadventure while performing at San Francisco—My reputation is saved by the presence of mind of my assistant—A lucky chance enables me to perform a trick which is regarded as really marvellous—" *He is coming! . . . He is here! . . . He has gone!* "—The German proprietor and the red fire—I am the innocent cause of a young man being thrown over by his sweetheart, but succeed in reuniting the lovers—An audience of one—I perform card tricks for an hour at St. Louis to allow time for the rest of the company to arrive—I quell a racecourse riot—A facetious gentleman—Practical joke which I perpetrate at an hotel at Buffalo necessitates my abrupt departure from that town—Curious experience at Leadville, Colorado.

IN September, 1887, after an absence of over three years, I returned to America to fulfil a series of engagements there, and sailed from Liverpool to New York in the s.s. *City of Chicago*.

Amongst my fellow-passengers was a certain Englishman, a good-looking young fellow, scarcely more than a boy, and we had not been out more than two or three days before I noticed that he spent a good part of his time playing poker in the smoking-room. One afternoon I strolled up to the table at which he was playing and stood for a while watching the game, and what I saw left me in no doubt that the youngster, who, I ascertained, had recently inherited a considerable fortune, was in the toils of one of those gangs of cardsharpers which infest the Atlantic liners.

I knew, of course, that, sooner or later, all the money that he was prepared to lose would find its way into these rogues'

pockets, and that evening, taking advantage of a favourable opportunity, I warned him to be on his guard. The young gentleman, however, seemed to resent my solicitude for his welfare.

"My dear sir," said he, "I assure you that you are quite mistaken about the persons you speak of. They have told me something about themselves, and they are all gentlemen and men of good position in the 'States.'"

"They've only been gammoning you," I rejoined; "they're cardsharps and nothing else."

He shrugged his shoulders in a supercilious sort of way, upon which I asked him if he knew who I was. No, he had not that pleasure, and he certainly looked as though he had no very overwhelming desire for a closer acquaintance with me. I gave him my card, telling him, at the same time, that when unfair play was going on at a card-table I never failed to detect it instantly, so that I was not likely to be mistaken about the persons with whom he had been playing. But he still hesitated to believe that these irreproachably-dressed and well-mannered individuals could be other than what they represented themselves to be. Finally, however, he weakened so far as to promise that he would keep his eyes open, and that, if he saw anything in the least suspicious, he would play no more.

I did not see him again until a couple of days later, when he came up, drew me aside, and said:—

"Mr. Hertz, I believe you were right about those fellows. Anyway, they've cleared me out of over a thousand pounds! I was a fool to go on playing with them, after you had been so kind as to go out of your way to warn me, and I deserve all I've got."

I felt really sorry for the youngster, who took his losses like a sportsman, and I determined to help him.

"Well," said I, "your money's gone, and it's no use crying over it; but, if you care to put up some more, I may be able to get back what you've lost. Wait here till I come back."

I went to the captain, explained to him what had happened,

and got his permission to hoist the sharpers with their own petard, if I could. Then I returned to my young friend and asked him if he were playing again that day. He answered that he had promised to do so after dinner, upon which I said :—

“ Look here ! After dinner go into the smoking-room and play for a while, taking care to lose as little as you can, though they’ll probably let you win at first. Then get up, tell these rogues that you’re very sorry, but you’re afraid you won’t be able to play any more, as you’ve got a bad headache or something, and suggest to them that I shall take your place. I shall be sitting near you, pretending to read a newspaper.”

The youngster followed my instructions, and the sharpers, who did not know who I was, and no doubt believed that another golden fly was about to walk into their parlour, readily agreed to my taking his place.

We sat down to play, and for some time nothing very exciting took place. Sometimes I won and sometimes I lost, and contrived to give them the impression that I was a very ordinary player indeed. The cards we were using were the ship’s cards, so that whatever was to be done must, of course, be done by pure sleight of hand and manipulation. It was my deal, and I manipulated the pack in such a way, that, after the draw, one of my opponents had the four jacks, another the four queens, and the third the four kings, while I held the four aces. Then we began betting, and, as the stakes rose, quite a crowd began to gather round the table, including the captain, whom I had asked to be present, and all the ship’s officers who were not on duty. The sharpers had, of course, their code of signals, by which each of them knew the hands which his confederates held, and it seemed to them absolutely impossible that I could win, for the odds against my holding the only hand which could beat them was simply incalculable. Very soon the money on the table amounted to over a thousand pounds, and my opponents had no more cash about them, though I had plenty ; the young Englishman had seen to that. But still they went on raising me, taking off their rings, pulling out their watches and scarf-pins, and throwing them down. By this

time people were standing three and four deep round the table, and the excitement had risen to fever heat.

At last, my opponents having come to the end of their resources, we agreed to show hands.

"I guess it's my money," said the man with the four jacks, throwing down his cards and stretching out his hand towards the "pot."

"Hold on!" exclaimed the one with the four queens, "I rather think it's mine."

"No, it's not," cried the third man, showing four kings. "It's mine!" And he began to scoop the money in.

Then it was my turn.

"Not good enough, gentlemen," said I, smiling, "for I've got four aces!" And I laid them on the table.

No sooner did I attempt to annex the "pot" than one of the confederates, realising that they had been tricked, drew a revolver on me. But he was promptly seized and disarmed by the officers, as were the others, and before the astonished crowd I told the story of the rooking of the young Englishman, and appealed to them if I had not been perfectly justified in serving these rascals with a little of their own sauce. The verdict being in my favour, I begged the captain to take charge of the money I had won and to do with it as he thought fit. He at once repaid the Englishman the money which had been filched from him, expressing, at the same time, the hope that his recent experience would be a lesson to the lad of the folly of playing cards for high stakes with strangers, and the balance was given to the funds of the Sailors' Orphanage.

As for the three cardsharppers, they were put under arrest, and, on our arrival in New York, the captain gave them into custody. They were tried and sentenced, I believe, to two years' imprisonment. And the amusing part of it all is that they never found out who I was, and probably believed me to be a sort of super-sharper turned honest.

A sequel to this adventure, which happened some years ago, may not be without interest.

I was fulfilling an engagement at the Coliseum in Glasgow, and one of the local papers happened to recall my game with the cardsharppers, of which numerous accounts had appeared in the English and American Press at the time. The next day I was stopped in the street by two well, if somewhat flashily-dressed men, one of whom inquired if I were Mr. Hertz. I answered in the affirmative, upon which he said:—

“I read a story in the papers yesterday about your playing poker with three fellows going over to America, and manipulating the cards so that each of you held ‘fours,’ and you had the aces. Is it true, or just an advertisement stunt?”

“It is quite true,” I answered.

“I don’t believe it,” remarked the other man; “it couldn’t be done.”

“Oh yes, it can,” said I. “It’s very easy for me to give a man any hand I like at poker.”

“If that’s the case,” exclaimed the one who had first spoken, “all I can say is that you ought to be ashamed of yourself for taking away people’s living. Those men had to earn a living the same as you have, and you wouldn’t like anyone to come to the Coliseum and spoil your performance.”

I did not attempt to argue with these gentlemen, who were no doubt of the same profession as those for whom they seemed to entertain so much sympathy, but turned and walked away.

I was naturally delighted to see my relatives and friends again after so long an absence, but I was unable to spend much time with them, as I had engagements extending over several months which would take me all over the ‘States,’ from Maine to California.

I had some curious experiences during this tour.

At that time I was performing a trick in which I borrowed a lady’s ring and caused it to disappear. Then I produced a bottle and poured wine from it, after which the bottle was broken open and found to contain a pigeon with the lady’s ring tied to its neck. One evening a lady in the audience lent me a

very valuable diamond ring. She seemed to be very fussy and asked me to be most careful with it, and, of course, I promised her I would. Everything went well until the bottle was broken open, when the pigeon, with the ring tied to its neck, flew from the stage into the auditorium, and, to my dismay, made its escape through a ventilator which, as it was a very hot summer's night, had been left open. It was some little time before we could catch it, but eventually we did so, and restored the ring to its owner, who had given it up for lost and was in a state bordering on hysteria.

Speaking of mishaps, reminds me of an incident which occurred during my early days on the stage. I used to perform a trick in which I borrowed a gentleman's silk hat, and then appeared to break eggs into it and put in flour, water, currants and so forth. Finally, I would wave my hand and produce from the hat a beautiful cake, which I cut and passed round amongst the audience. Needless to say, I did not actually put the eggs and other things in the hat. The eggs, etc., were dropped into a tin receptacle, which I used to slip into the hat, and in one portion of the receptacle the cake was hidden. They were then secretly removed from the hat, leaving the cake behind. On the occasion in question, I performed the trick as usual, dropping in the eggs and other ingredients, but upon removing the tin receptacle, I found, to my horror, that there was no cake in the hat. I was in a nice predicament, as may be supposed, and had to make some excuse and get out of it the best way I could. I learned afterwards that someone had stolen the cake and eaten it !

During this tour, I had another mishap while performing the same trick, though on this occasion it was not a cake, but an omelette which I had undertaken to produce from the hat. It occurred on my opening night at my native town, San Francisco, where I met with a most enthusiastic reception, and came very near to spoiling my entertainment, if not my reputation as well.

Those who have seen this trick know that, with ordinary care on the performer's part, the borrowed hat runs no risk ;

but even the most experienced conjurer is inclined to be a trifle careless at times. The first part of the trick, which consisted of breaking and beating up the eggs, mixing the other ingredients with them and throwing the whole into the hat, I got through safely enough. After this I had to feign the frying of the omelette. I placed the candle on the ground and holding the hat sufficiently high above it—as I imagined—to escape the flame, I began turning it gently round, while making some of the stereotyped jokes suitable to the trick. The audience laughed so heartily and so loudly that I could scarcely hear myself speak, but at first I did not suspect the cause of their hilarity. Unfortunately, I detected it only too soon. A strong smell of burning caused me to turn my eyes on the candle. It had gone out ! I then looked at the hat. The crown was all burned and singed ; in fact, it was quite ruined ! I had kept on turning the hat round unsuspectingly, until at length I had put it on top of the candle and covered it with grease !

Quite dazed by this catastrophe, I stopped, not knowing how I was to escape from the predicament in which my carelessness had landed me. Happily for me, my alarm, though only too genuine, was regarded by the audience as well-played farce. It was supposed that I was cleverly simulating consternation in order to heighten the effect, and this confidence in my skill was an additional torture. For no magic power could repair a ruined hat. My only chance was to gain time, and so I continued the trick with a tolerably easy air and produced to the public a beautifully-cooked omelette, which I had enough courage left to season with a few jokes. However, that quarter-of-an-hour of which Rabelais speaks had arrived. I must restore the hat and confess myself a clumsy impostor.

I had resigned myself to this, determined to carry it through with all the dignity I could muster, when I heard my assistant calling me from the wings. His voice restored my courage, for I felt sure he had prepared some way of escape. I went up to him and found him standing with a silk hat in his hand.

“ Look ! ” said he, taking the borrowed hat from me and

giving me the other in exchange, " this is your own hat. But no matter, put on a bold face, rub it as though you were removing the stains, and, on handing it to the owner, ask him quietly to read this note which is fastened inside the crown."

With, it must be confessed, no little trepidation, I approached the owner of the borrowed hat. He looked at it, saw at once that it was not his property, and was about to betray me when I pointed to the note fastened in the crown, and, in a low voice, begged him to read it. It was as follows :—

" An act of carelessness has caused me to commit a fault which I will repair. To-morrow I will do myself the honour of asking your hatter's address. In the meanwhile, be kind enough to act as my accomplice."

The owner of the hat was a sportsman. He read the note, burst out laughing, and readily promised to do what I asked of him. He kept his word, and my professional reputation was saved.

Just as a piece of sheer bad luck may seriously damage a conjurer's reputation, so some lucky chance may enable him greatly to enhance it. I will relate an instance of this :—

While fulfilling engagements in New York, I used frequently on a Sunday evening to visit a family with whom I was very friendly, and after dinner generally performed some little tricks for their amusement. On one occasion they had a large dinner-party, and, though I at first refused to perform, as I had been there so often that I had pretty well exhausted my repertoire, and could not think of anything which I had not already shown them, I at last gave way and said that, if they had a pack of cards, I would show them some card tricks. They rang for the maid and asked her to bring a pack of cards, but, after some time, the girl returned, saying that she had looked all over the house and could not find a pack anywhere.

The hostess then remembered that there was a loose pack of cards on top of the small shelf of the sideboard in the room in which we were dining, and the maid mounted a chair in order

to get them. Even then, however, she could only just manage to reach the cards.

The pack was handed to me, and I started to do some tricks. While manipulating the cards, I discovered that one was missing, and, on looking through the pack, I found that this card was the two of clubs. It at once occurred to me that the two of clubs must have been left on the shelf when the pack was taken down, and that here was a chance to perform a trick which would seem absolutely impossible and astound everyone. I should have been in a pretty fix if the card had not been there, but I took the big chance, and luckily it came off.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said I, "I am going to show you the most wonderful trick which you have ever seen."

I then asked one of the ladies to select a card from the pack, and "forced" her to take the three of clubs. After she had drawn the card, I told her to hand it to me without looking at it, which she did. I placed my fingers over the middle of the card in such a way that the middle pip was hidden, and, holding the card up at some distance from the company, I said :—

"You see, ladies and gentlemen, that the two of clubs has been selected from the pack." And, as the card looked exactly like the two of clubs, the centre pip being covered by my fingers, everyone thought that it was really the card I had named.

I then handed the pack to one of the gentlemen present, and also the card face downwards, asking him to replace it and shuffle the pack well.

"Now," said I, "hold the pack in your hand. I will not touch it myself, but, at a word of command from me, I will make that two of clubs disappear from the pack." And, of course, when he looked through the pack afterwards the two of clubs was missing.

They all thought that this was very wonderful and applauded me greatly ; but I told them that the most wonderful part of the trick was now to come.

"You will admit, ladies and gentlemen," I continued, "that I have never moved from the table where I am now

standing. Nevertheless, if someone will get a chair and look on the top shelf of that sideboard, they will find the missing card there." And, luckily for me, the two of clubs was really found on the shelf.

My friends never finished talking of this wonderful trick for months afterwards, and, on a subsequent occasion when I visited the house, they tried hard to persuade me to perform it again. Needless to say, I excused myself.

Some time after my visit to San Francisco, a most audacious fraud was perpetrated at the expense of the theatre-going public of that city.,

One morning people awoke to find the town covered with huge bills on which were these words: "*He is coming!*" Everyone was inquiring and wondering who this mysterious person could be. A week later fresh bills were posted up containing the announcement: "*He is here!*" Another week passed, and then a third lot of bills appeared with the words: "*He is here and will appear on Monday next at eight o'clock for one week at Dashaway Hall.*"

Early on Monday evening, long queues began to assemble outside Dashaway Hall—a well-known concert-hall—and when the doors were opened, the place was soon packed to its utmost capacity, while hundreds were turned away. For the secret of the identity of this mysterious person had been most carefully kept, and no one even seemed to know under whose auspices he was appearing. In consequence, the curiosity to see him and what he did was intense. The orchestra played the overture, and the audience waited with increasing impatience for the curtain to rise until a quarter-past eight, when they began to express their resentment at the delay by clapping, stamping their feet and so forth.

These demonstrations, however, were without result, and at the end of another quarter-of-an-hour two or three persons made their way behind the scenes, only to find the stage and dressing-rooms deserted; not a soul was to be found anywhere!

So soon as the news spread, the people made a rush to the

box-office to try to get their money back. But the money-takers had long since vanished with the spoil. Thereupon a regular riot began, the infuriated audience proceeding to smash chairs, chandeliers, scenery and everything they could lay their hands on. When at last the police succeeded in clearing the hall the departing crowd found themselves confronted with a huge poster on which appeared the words : "*He has gone !*"

I had a week's engagement at Cincinatti, at a theatre run by a German who had just taken over the place. This German had the reputation of being a very close-fisted individual indeed, who would not purchase any properties for the artists if he could possibly help it. The week I was there the chief attraction was a tight-rope performer named Eddy, known professionally as El Nino. Eddy used to wear a belt round his waist to which fireworks were attached, and at the conclusion of his performance he would light these fireworks, which would shoot out from his body in every direction. At the same time he would produce American and British flags, and red fire would be lit in the wings, thus making a very spectacular finish to his turn.

At rehearsal on the day of his first performance, Eddy went to the stage-manager and told him that he had to have this red fire, and that it must be lighted at the same time as he lit his belt of fireworks. The stage-manager inquired if he had brought the red fire with him, to which Eddy answered that he had not, as all the theatres at which he had ever appeared had supplied him with this. The stage-manager then told him that the proprietor would not allow him to purchase any properties for the artists, so that, if Eddy considered red fire really necessary for his performance, he was afraid he would have to buy it himself. This the latter indignantly declined to do, and declared that, unless the red fire were forthcoming, he would not appear that night.

As Eddy was a star turn, and it would be a serious matter to disappoint the audience, the stage-manager went to the German proprietor, told him what the artist had said, and

advised him to give way and supply the red fire. After a good deal of persuasion, he agreed to do this, and asked the stage-manager to tell Eddy that it would be all right and that he would attend to the matter himself.

Eddy therefore duly made his appearance and did a really wonderful performance. Towards the end, just as he was about to light his firework belt, he called out to the stage-manager, who was standing in the wings :—

“ Quick ! Get the red fire ready and light it as soon as you see me light my belt.”

The stage-manager rushed off to look for the proprietor, whom he found serving beer behind the bar in his shirt-sleeves, having apparently forgotten all about the red fire which he had promised to see to.

“ Come quick ! ” he exclaimed. “ Mr. Eddy is just finishing his turn and is waiting for the red fire. He must have it at once ! ”

The German left the bar, ran breathlessly on to the stage, and, putting his head out of the wings, shouted out to Eddy :

“ Hey, mister ! What kind of red fire do you want ? Blue or green ? ”

While performing card tricks at Springfield, Illinois, I required an assistant from the audience, and coaxed a young man sitting in the front row of the stalls to come on to the stage to help me, much against the will of a young lady who was with him. When he came, I started producing cards from all over his body. The audience roared with laughter as they poured in hundreds from him ; but the girl quite failed to see the fun of it and shouted to him to come down at once and not allow me to make an exhibition of him, and I had no little difficulty in persuading him to remain until I had finished the trick. The girl kept on shouting at him all the time, which, of course, made the audience laugh all the more.

When the young man returned to his seat, she refused to speak to him, but, taking hold of him by the ear, marched him up the centre gangway of the stalls and out of the theatre amidst shrieks of laughter.

The next day I received a letter from the young man telling me that I had blasted his hopes of happiness. He had been engaged, he said, to be married to the young lady, but, on account of my getting him on the stage and making an exhibition of him, she now declined to have anything more to do with him, and he was quite broken-hearted. I told him to send me the lady's address, and I wrote to her asking her to call and see me. This she did, and, after talking to her for a while, I managed to convince her that the whole thing had been merely a joke, and she graciously consented to overlook it and to receive her disconsolate swain back into favour.

I had a singular experience at a little town in Pennsylvania, the name of which I forget. I was at this time fulfilling an engagement with a company which was playing one night stands, that is to say, performing in a different town every night. We were to arrive at this town about two o'clock in the afternoon, which would give us plenty of time to prepare everything for the show, which started at eight o'clock. Unfortunately, there was an accident on the line, and some goods trains, which were in front of us, and our train could not pass until the wreckage had been cleared away. This delayed us so much that we did not reach our destination until about ten minutes to eight, and had to rush at once to the theatre, though none of us had had anything to eat since breakfast and we were all desperately hungry.

While the last bars of the overture were being played, someone happening to look through the peep-hole of the curtain, saw, to his astonishment, that there was only one solitary man in the auditorium ! We sent for the manager of the theatre and told him that it was impossible to give a performance for this one man, whose money was accordingly returned to him, with many apologies, while we dressed, packed up our things and made a bee-line for our hotel and supper. We could not imagine what could have been the cause of this extraordinary fiasco, but, on inquiry, our manager ascertained that not a bill of ours had been put up in the town, and, in fact, no one knew that there was going to be a performance

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that night. The solitary individual who was present came in, it appeared, because he happened to be passing and saw the place lit up and heard the orchestra playing inside. We learned later on that our advance-manager, who should have billed the town a week ahead, had been on the drink and forgotten all about it.

The occasion of which I have just spoken was not the only one on which we were seriously delayed by a railway accident. The same thing occurred when we were on our way to fulfil an engagement at St. Louis. We were then about ten miles from that town, and when our manager saw that it was impossible for us to arrive in time to begin at eight o'clock, the hour we were advertised to start, he asked me if I could suggest anything to help him out. I told him that, if he could hire a horse and trap, I would go on ahead, start the performance and keep it going until the rest of the company arrived. A horse and trap were accordingly hired, and I set off for St. Louis, where I arrived about 7.30. I had none of my apparatus with me, but I got a couple of packs of cards, and when the curtain rose, went on the stage in my street-clothes, explained to the audience what had happened and asked if they would allow me to entertain them with card tricks until the other artists arrived. To this they consented, and for nearly an hour I contrived to keep them amused, just as I did the audience that afternoon at the Oxford, in London. By that time the rest of the company, who had made up in the train, had put in an appearance, and the performance proceeded in the usual way.

While at St. Louis I attended a local race-meeting, which ended in a riot. One or two of the early races had given the crowd only too much reason to believe that the results had been amicably arranged beforehand—"cronk," or crooked racing, was pretty frequent in those days—and they manifested their resentment by refusing to allow the meeting to continue, and, proceeding to the grand stand, began to demolish it. I offered my services to the committee, who, after some hesitation, accepted them, and from the top of the grand stand I harangued the crowd and offered to show them some card tricks. The

rioters paused in their work of destruction to watch me, and by the time I had finished my impromptu performance, good-humour was restored, and they dispersed without doing any further damage.

At Dayton, Ohio, I was performing my cage and canary trick and called for someone to come on the stage to hold the cage and bird, which I would then cause to vanish out of his hands. A young man came and the cage duly disappeared. I thanked him and said that that was all I wanted of him. But he continued to stand before me, with a broad grin on his face. I said again :—

“That is all I require of you, sir ; you can go back to your seat.”

“I can’t move,” said he.

“Can’t move ! Why ? ”

“Because I am ‘paralysed.’ ”

It took me some time to persuade this facetious young gentleman to leave the stage and allow me to proceed with my performance.

At an hotel in which I was staying at Buffalo I perpetrated a practical joke which I very nearly had cause to regret. In a room on the third floor of the hotel, some weeks before, a man had committed suicide, and I was told that strange noises had been heard in the room ever since, and that it was common talk amongst the chambermaids and visitors that it was haunted. The room had not been occupied since, and everybody was afraid to go into it. When I heard this, I thought it would be a good advertisement if I could play some trick or practical joke in connection with it.

The bells in this hotel are what are called “pull-bells,” which run along the ceiling of the corridors in strands and down into the office in the hall. A number was under each bell in the office, so that they could tell in which room the bell had been rung. Getting a ladder, I tied a cord to the wire connected with the bell of the haunted room, and another cord to all the other wires together, both cords leading into my

room, so that, by pulling one cord, I could ring the bell in the haunted room, and, by pulling the other, I could ring all the bells on that floor at the same time. I had at that time two doves which I used in my performance, and these doves used to coo and make a weird sound at night when covered up in their cage. The door of the haunted room was kept locked, but I contrived to get hold of a key which opened it and put the cage containing my two doves there. Then, with some luminous paint which I had bought, I painted some grotesque figures on the walls, after which I went out, locking the door after me.

About midnight, when there were a number of commercial travellers sitting in the lounge of the hotel and the manager was in his office, I went upstairs and started to pull the cord which I had connected with the bell of the haunted room. When the manager saw what bell it was which was ringing he jumped up, I was afterwards told, in great excitement, exclaiming :

“ Why, that is the bell of the haunted room. There is no one there ! Who on earth can be ringing it ? ”

The bell kept on ringing, until at last the manager, supported by two or three of the commercial travellers, went upstairs to investigate the mystery. They unlocked the door of the haunted room, and, at that moment, my two doves began to coo, and hearing this weird sound and seeing the luminous figures on the walls they all beat a precipitate retreat. No sooner had they got downstairs than the bell of the haunted room began to ring furiously again, and the next moment every bell on that floor rang at the same time. Three or four other people attempted to enter the room, but the cooing of the doves and the sight of the figures on the wall frightened them away. Some of the visitors in the hotel were greatly alarmed and threatened to leave, as they were sure there must be ghosts about, and the manager had great difficulty in pacifying them. When the excitement had subsided, and everyone had gone to bed, I removed my doves from the room and untied the cords which I had attached to the bell-wires.

I had, of course, intended to let the mystery remain one until I had left Buffalo. But next day it got whispered about that it was some practical joke played by me, and I heard that the manager and some of the people who had been so frightened the night before were furious and were vowing to give me a thrashing which I should remember all my life.

In these circumstances, I decided to leave the town as quickly as possible, and, fortunately, succeeded in slipping away unperceived.

While performing at Leadville, Colorado, which is over 14,000 feet above the level of the sea, I was rather astonished, not to say frightened, at some of the incidents which occurred there. I was unaware of the fact that Leadville, being so high up in the mountains, would have the effect on me that it had. For instance, when I arrived at the hotel, after going up about a dozen stairs to my room, I found I was so exhausted that I could hardly breathe, and when I went on the stage, it was as much as I could do to finish my performance. We had two acrobats in our show who did a trapeze act, and after doing two or three of their tricks, they fell from the trapeze exhausted, though fortunately they were not badly hurt. A little later in the evening, a lady dancer also fell exhausted on the stage in the middle of her dance.

It was then explained to me that all this was owing to the high altitude of the town, the air being so strong that it affected the heart and lungs of all newcomers.

When I reached my room at the hotel that evening, I happened to touch the brass-railing of the bed, upon which some electric sparks flew out of my fingers. I could not understand what was the matter and quite thought something had happened to me. I called my wife's attention to it. She tried, and the same thing happened to her ; and, soon afterwards, happening to touch the steam-radiator, she received another shock. I then told her that I had heard of this before but never believed it, and asked her to watch what I was going to do. Turning on the gas tap, I shuffled my feet along the carpet and put my fingers over the burner. A spark flew out of my fingers, and

the gas immediately lit. My wife was astonished when she saw this, but I told her to try it. She did so, and also lit the gas. I was told afterwards that it was impossible to boil an egg or a potato in this place, for no matter how long the egg or the potato was in boiling water it would not cook. The reason is that at high altitudes the pressure becomes less as the altitude increases, and on the top of a mountain boiling-point is much lower than at sea level.

CHAPTER VII

Madame O'Della Diss De Bar, the celebrated medium, is prosecuted for fraud—I am called as an expert witness at the trial, and perform all the medium's manifestations in open court—Madame Diss De Bar sentenced to two years' imprisonment—The Swami case in England—I communicate with Scotland Yard and Swami is identified with Madame Diss De Bar—Story of August and Adolphe—I sail for England—My interest in mesmerism—My first attempt to mesmerise a person—An alarming experience—I acquire proficiency—My experiments in mesmerism during the voyage to England—Donovan's Derby—The gentleman with the revolver—I make the acquaintance of an apparently wealthy young man, who persuades me to allow him to accompany me to the different halls at which I am performing—Presents of jewellery which he makes to a lady singer and myself—I receive a visit from two detectives, who inform me that the jewellery is stolen property.

IN the spring of 1888 New York was much interested in a sensational case at the Tombs Police Court, where a celebrated medium called Madame O'Della Diss De Bar was being tried for obtaining money and valuable property by fraud from Luther R. Marsh, a well-known and very wealthy lawyer.

The medium professed to produce spirit-paintings and communications from the departed, which she afterwards sold for fabulous sums to her dupes. Most of the communications asked for money, which Mr. Marsh generally gave, and finally Madame Diss De Bar induced him to deed over to her a valuable piece of property on Fifth Avenue, which, she told him, was to be converted into a temple for the spirits. The lawyer's friend here stepped in and had the lady arrested for fraud, though Mr. Marsh himself could not be persuaded that there was anything wrong.

A number of witnesses were called on both sides. I was subpoenaed by the prosecution to give evidence as an expert, and performed all the medium's manifestations in open court, using both Madame Diss De Bar herself and Mr. Marsh as my subjects.

One of the tests was spirit-writing on a sheet of blank paper. A sheet of blank paper was shown to the judge and jury. It was then folded and held against my forehead by the subject, and kept there for a minute or so, when it was opened and found to have a "communication" written upon it. I afterwards showed the judge and jury that this was done by sleight-of-hand, the sheet of paper which had been handed to them having been exchanged for another upon which the "communication" had already been written.

One of Madame Diss De Bar's greatest tests was what was called the Writing Pad Test, which consisted of a pad of about a hundred sheets of white writing-paper, pasted together at one end, so that the sheets could be torn off one at a time. Each sheet was shown to be perfectly blank, and the pad was then wrapped up in a newspaper, held by the medium at one end and the subject at the other. Immediately a sound was heard as though a pen was going rapidly over the paper, and, on the pad being taken out of the newspaper, almost every sheet was found to contain writing.

This test was the defence's great stronghold, and they defied me to do it, but, expecting this, I had come prepared.

I asked Mr. Marsh himself to come into the witness-box, which he did. I showed him the pad, he examined it, and I was about to place it in the newspaper when Madame Diss De Bar shouted out :—

"Mark it, so that it can't be changed!"

This I allowed Mr. Marsh to do, he tearing off the corners of some of the sheets of paper.

The pad was then placed in the newspaper, wrapped up and held at one end with both hands by Mr. Marsh and at the other by myself. Immediately the sound of writing was heard, and when the pad was taken out of the newspaper, it was found to contain writing on nearly every sheet.

I need hardly say that the blank pad had been exchanged for one that had been prepared beforehand. The sound of writing was produced by the nail of one of my fingers, which I had purposely split with a pen-knife for the experiment.

After I had explained how it was done to the judge and jury, Mr. Marsh remarked that it was no trick, but that I was a medium myself, although I did not know it. Well, perhaps I am !

I need hardly say that Madame Diss De Bar lost her case. She was found guilty of fraud and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and the credulous Mr. Marsh got back his property.

There was an interesting sequel to this affair. This was the sensational Swami case, which came before the English courts some years later, during my second visit to England. On reading the evidence given in the police-court proceedings, and from the description of this woman, I at once came to the conclusion that Swami could be no one else but Madame Diss De Bar, who had, in the meantime, served her sentence and come to England. I lost no time in communicating with Scotland Yard, who sent Detective-Inspector Cane to see me. I showed him photographs of Madame Diss De Bar and told him her history, and he agreed with me that there was no doubt that she and Swami were one and the same person. When the trial at the Old Bailey came on, this was brought up in evidence against her, and she was convicted and received seven years.

While on the subject of spiritualism, here is an amusing story :

There were two old farmers, brothers, living on the East Side of New York City, whose names were August and Adolphe. They were good Lutherans, but, out of curiosity, they attended one or two spiritualistic séances. Shortly afterwards Adolphe died. August bore his loneliness as long as he could, but finally, in desperation, he sought out the medium whom he had previously visited, and it was arranged that a séance should be held, and that the medium should call up the spirit of Adolphe.

On the night of the séance the shade duly appeared.

"Is that you, Adolphe?" asked August.

"It is," came the reply in a husky whisper.

"Well, how are you getting on on the other side?"

"Very well, August."

"Do you get your Schnappes regularly, Adolphe?"

"I drink no Schnappes here."

"Well, maybe it is lager beer?"

"No, no lager beer either."

"Adolphe," exclaimed August, "tell me the truth. Do you or do you not play pinochle?" (a card game).

"I do not, August," was the reply.

August jumped up.

"Impostor, faker, thief!" he shouted, pointing an accusing finger at the medium. "I asked you for der spirit of my brudder Adolphe, and you say it is 'im, but it is not. You bring me instead the ghost of some damn Swede!"

Shortly after the Diss De Bar trial I sailed from New York on my second visit to England, little thinking that before I saw my native land again nearly seven years would have passed, and I should have travelled over the greater part of the world.

During this trip I had some very interesting experiences in regard to mesmerism, a subject which has always interested me profoundly and which I have studied a great deal.

It was only during my previous visit to England that I accidentally discovered that I possessed the power to mesmerise, and I am never likely to forget the first person on whom I practised. I was spending the evening at the house of some people I knew at Brighton, and, after giving some of my sleight-of-hand performances, I was asked by one of the guests if I could mesmerise people. I answered that I thought I should be able to do so provided I could get a good subject, upon which one of the young ladies present volunteered to allow me to experiment upon her. I accordingly asked her to sit down in a chair in front of me, and she was evidently an excellent

subject for, after a very few passes, I succeeded in sending her off into an hypnotic sleep.

Naturally very pleased with my success, I then informed the company that while she was in this condition no one could wake her but myself, and that no matter how loudly anyone else might shout in her ear it would have no effect, since mine was the only voice she could hear. And I added that even if I spoke in a whisper at some distance from her, she would be able to hear me.

After performing several tests to prove that she was really mesmerised, and challenging anyone in the room to wake her up, I essayed to show the company how easy it was for me to do so.

Standing at some little distance from my subject and speaking in a low voice, I commanded her to wake. She did not move. I came nearer and spoke louder. Still she remained motionless. I went up to her, bent down and spoke to her, and, finally, getting very uneasy, shook her by the shoulder and shouted in her ear. But there was no sign of the girl waking, and I became really frightened, while her parents were in a terrible state of alarm. For nearly an hour I worked, doing everything I could think of to rouse her from her hypnotic sleep, until the perspiration ran in rivulets down my face. But it was all to no purpose, and at last it was decided to send for a doctor.

The doctor arrived and endeavoured to wake her, but without success, and, on its being explained to him how the girl had got into this condition, he said that the only person who could wake her was the one who had sent her to sleep. I told him that I had tried for nearly an hour, and that I was scared to death lest something might happen to her, for which I should be held responsible. He then explained to me that the reason I had failed to wake her was that I had got frightened and had lost confidence in my powers, adding that I must never under-estimate my will-power, but always be convinced that I could wake anyone whom I had put to sleep whenever I chose.

And so, after a brief rest, I tried again, and in about ten

minutes the girl opened her eyes and sat up, apparently none the worse for what had happened.

I was, of course, immensely relieved, as was everyone present, and I thanked the doctor warmly for the advice he had given me.

For a long time after this I did not attempt to mesmerise anyone, as I had had a bad fright and regarded the experiment as too dangerous. But I studied the subject whenever I could, and having gained confidence in my own powers, I eventually became quite proficient. I have mesmerised dozens of people in my time, and nothing in any way resembling my first experience has ever occurred.

But to come to my experiences during the voyage to England.

We had on board one of Mr. George Edwardes's companies, which was returning after a very successful tour of the "States," and amongst the company were Miss Violet Lloyd, George Grossmith, and Miss Connie Ediss, then at the height of her popularity. One evening, when we were all sitting on deck, Miss Ediss remarked that she was suffering badly from insomnia and had hardly slept at all for three nights. The subject of mesmerism cropped up, and I asked her if she had ever been mesmerised.

"No," said she, "I never have; I don't believe in that kind of thing."

I then told her that I possessed the power to mesmerise and that, if she would allow me, I would see if she were a good subject, in which case I could make her go to sleep and get the rest she so much needed. After some persuasion, she consented, and we went into the saloon, where I discovered that she was a splendid subject and that I could make her do whatever I wished.

Accordingly, while she was still under the influence, I told her that she must go to her cabin and get into bed, and that the moment her head touched the pillow she would fall asleep and would not wake until nine o'clock the next morning.

When I saw her the following morning, I inquired what sort of a night she had had, and she answered that she had gone to sleep immediately she got into bed, and had slept until nine o'clock.

When Miss Ediss told her friends of what had taken place, they laughed at her and refused to believe it. However, that evening I went with her into the saloon, and, in the presence of ten or a dozen members of the company, I mesmerised her and made her do all kinds of things—in fact anything I wished. A friend of Miss Connie Ediss was in the smoking-room at this time playing cards, and someone went and told him what she was doing. He seemed rather annoyed, and later in the evening came to me and said :—

“What have you been doing with Miss Ediss. I hear you have been mesmerising her?”

“Yes,” I replied, “and she is a splendid subject.”

“Oh, that’s all nonsense!” he rejoined. “She was only making believe and acting the part.”

“You’re quite mistaken,” said I. “I can tell in a minute whether a person is really mesmerised or whether he is only pretending to be; and, further, if you do not believe me, you can ask Miss Ediss, and she will tell you that last night I commanded her to go to sleep and not wake up until nine o'clock this morning, and that she did so, and got the first good night’s rest she has had since we left New York.”

“Well,” said he, “I will bet you half-a-dozen bottles of champagne that you could not mesmerise me.”

I told him that I would not undertake to mesmerise anyone for a wager, as the subject whom I was trying to mesmerise would naturally fight against me and do all in his power to resist my influence. And I explained that, in order to mesmerise a person, he must be in sympathy with you and willing to submit, otherwise it would be a most difficult task. However, if he liked, I would try, to do it, but not for a wager.

“No,” he exclaimed contemptuously, “because you know well enough you couldn’t.”

“Well,” I answered, “it is no use arguing the question,

and, if you will not let me try, there is nothing more to be said."

That night at the dinner-table, which, by the way, was the doctor's table, one of the ladies complained that she was suffering from toothache. I told her that if she would allow me to mesmerise her I would take it away immediately, and she gladly accepted my offer. After a few passes from me she went to sleep, upon which I willed her toothache to disappear, and when I awoke her again, the pain had quite gone.

The doctor thought this was very wonderful, and asked me if I would mesmerise her again, as he wanted to try an experiment. The lady was quite willing, and in a few seconds she was off again. This time the doctor came up to her and examined her eyes, and found that the eyeballs were strongly turned inwards, so that the whites only were visible. It is a well-known fact that when a person is under the influence of mesmerism the eyeballs always turn inwards. I told the doctor that she had no feeling whatever in her body, and that I could pick up a large fold of skin in her wrist and pass a pin right through it and she would not feel it, and that there would be no blood; neither would she feel any pain subsequently. I then borrowed a gentleman's scarf-pin, which I put into the lady's wrist. She was perfectly insensible to any pain and did not move, and I drew out the pin.

The doctor then pushed the upper and lower lids of one of her eyes back, causing the eye to protrude in such a way that it looked as if it were hanging out, and she still remained motionless. Just as he had done this, Miss Connie Ediss's friend, to whom I have previously referred, happened to come in, and when he saw the lady lying there with one of her eyes apparently hanging out and me standing over her, he promptly made a bee-line for the door.

I thought that now was the time to get back on him for having dared me to mesmerise him, so I persuaded two or three of the men present to go and bring him back. They had to bring him by force, for he struggled hard and looked so scared

that I was half-inclined to let him off. But he had spoken so contemptuously of my powers that I felt he needed a lesson. So I said :—

“ You offered this evening to bet me half-a-dozen bottles of champagne that I could not mesmerise you. Well, I will take your bet, and I am going to do it now.”

“ No, no ! ” he exclaimed. “ I was only joking. I don’t want to be mesmerised.”

“ You’ve just got to be,” said I, laughing. And we forced him into a chair and in a few minutes he was off, for he was one of the most apt subjects with whom I have ever come in contact.

So soon as he was asleep, I borrowed the scarf-pin again and ran it into his right thigh. Now, I knew that if I removed the pin while he was under the influence he would feel nothing, just as the lady whom I had previously mesmerised had felt nothing, but that if I woke him first he would feel the pain. So, as I wanted to teach him a lesson, I woke him with the pin still in his thigh. At first he felt nothing, but in a few minutes he cried out and clapped his hand to his thigh, upon which I said :—

“ If you will apologise for the way you spoke to me, admit yourself beaten and promise to pay for the champagne, I will remove the cause of your pain.”

This he readily did, upon which I drew out the pin ; and, though he was a bit annoyed with me at first, he was too good a fellow not to forgive me for the trick I had played on him, knowing that he had brought it on himself.

An experiment I performed once on my wife I have never been able to understand myself. It was as follows :—

I put my wife into an hypnotic sleep, and while she was in this state I picked up eight or ten plain white cards, each of which I showed her in turn, telling her that they were photographs of different people she knew. She looked at the cards and seemed to have not the slightest doubt that they were really photographs of the persons whom I said they were. On one card, which I told her was a photograph of her father,

I had put a little dot in pencil, so that I might be able to recognise it again, as all the cards were blank on both sides. After having shown her all the supposed photographs, I mixed the cards together and asked her to give me her father's photograph, and she picked out the marked card without the slightest hesitation.

The Derby of 1889, won by the Duke of Portland's great colt Donovan, was the first which I ever saw, for, though I had intended to go to the Derby more than once during my previous visit to England, something had always occurred to prevent my doing so.

Although the great event was that year, on all form, a "one horse" race, the attendance was simply enormous, in fact it was computed to be the largest on record, and I had never seen so astonishing a sight as that of those "black acres of humanity."

As I never betted more than a pound or two, in those days, on the rare occasions when I went to a race-meeting, I naturally did not care about laying the odds on Donovan which the bookmakers were asking for, and so decided to entrust my modest stake to a colt called Miguel, belonging to Mr. Douglas Baird and trained by John Porter, about which I got, I think, 20 to 1.

Having made my bet I went up into one of the stands, and was just getting out my race-glasses to watch the horses who were beginning to line up for the start, when a voice beside me said abruptly :—

"Well, what have you backed?"

I turned and saw that the question came from a tall, well-dressed, but rather dissipated-looking, man, with restless, dark eyes and a heavy moustache, at which he was pulling with long, nervous fingers.

"Miguel," I answered.

"Then you've been chucking your money away. He hasn't a chance; nothing has a chance against the favourite."

"I don't know so much about that," I said, nettled by the way the stranger spoke. "Racing is a very uncertain game.

Donovan was considered a sure thing for the Guineas—he was an even hotter favourite then than he is to-day—and yet Enthusiast managed to beat him.”

“It was an infernal fluke,” he exclaimed angrily, “as was proved when Donovan beat the other all ends up in the New-market Stakes the other day.”

“I’ve no doubt it was,” I said, “but isn’t it quite possible that there might be another such fluke to-day?”

“Nonsense! I tell you Donovan can’t lose, unless he falls down or Tom Loates falls off. Look here!” he went on, lowering his voice. “Do you know what I’ve done? I consider that horse such a cast-iron certainty that I’ve mortgaged my house, sold or pawned everything of value that my wife and I have got, and put it all on him. He carries every shilling I’ve got in the world.”

“And what will you do if he doesn’t win?” I asked.

“This,” said he, and drew a revolver from his pocket. “I shall blow out my brains just where I’m standing now!”

I judged, from his manner and the look in his eyes, that he was quite capable of carrying out his threat, in the event of the favourite getting beaten. So I said:—

“Excuse me; I’ll be back in a minute,” and quitted.

In the race, Miguel, the horse I had picked out, was always amongst the first lot, and about a quarter of a mile from home I thought for a moment that I was going to land the nice little bet I had about him, as he was then leading and apparently going well. But directly afterwards Donovan ranged up alongside and, drawing away at every stride, won quite easily at the finish.

And so the gentleman with the revolver saved his brains, or what did duty for them.

One night at the Oxford I happened to go into the lounge after my performance, when a gentlemanly young man in evening clothes came up and, after complimenting me on my entertainment, asked me to join him in a bottle of champagne. We had quite a long conversation, which ended in his inviting

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me to supper. I was at that time performing at four different halls a night, and during supper he asked me, as a great favour, if I would take him with me one evening, as he wanted to see what such an experience was like. I consented and told him to come to my rooms the following evening, and he should come with me.

On arriving at the first hall at which I was appearing, I got him a seat in the stalls and then went on to give my performance. At its conclusion I took him to the other halls: the Oxford, the Paragon, and the Bedford, in Camden Town. When I had finished my last turn, he expressed himself delighted with his experience and again asked me to have supper with him.

The next day he called at my rooms, bringing with him a pair of diamond sleeve-links, which he begged me to accept as a souvenir of our pleasant evening together, and asked if he might come with me some other evening. He accompanied me again two or three nights later and on several other occasions, and each time he came he used to bring me some present in the way of jewellery: a diamond scarf-pin, a gold cigarette-case with my initials in diamonds, a gold match-box and so forth, which he would insist on my accepting, and, though we nearly always had supper together, he never would allow me to pay for anything. I naturally thought that he must be a young man of considerable means to be able to spend money in this way.

One evening he asked me if I would let him come on the stage and stand in the wings, as he had never been on a stage before and he wanted to get some idea of what it was like. I told him that I did not allow anyone on the stage during my performance, but, if he liked, I would put him in the wings until I got ready to go on, and then he would have to leave.

To this he agreed, and, accordingly, when we got to the Paragon, I put him in the first entrance in the wings and, leaving him there, went to my dressing-room to prepare for my entertainment.

When I returned, I found him engaged in an animated conversation with a very pretty girl who was beginning to make a reputation as a singer. I told him that he must now leave



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the stage as he had promised, which he did, though with obvious reluctance. As we were driving to the next hall at which I had to appear, he remarked what a charming girl was the one he had been talking to, and asked me if I knew her. I said I did, but only very slightly, through seeing her at the Paragon, and that I was afraid I could not give him any information about her, at which he seemed disappointed.

For some little time after this he came with me practically every night, always going on the stage at the Paragon and seeking out the same lady. He no longer brought me any presents, but I noticed that nearly every evening this young singer was wearing some article of jewellery which I had never seen before : large single-stone diamond earrings, a diamond ring, a diamond bracelet, and so on.

At length, one night when he had arranged to accompany me he did not turn up, and for two or three weeks I neither saw nor heard anything of him. Then one morning I was told that two gentlemen were asking to see me on a very important matter.

They were shown in, and, to my astonishment, informed me that they were detectives from Scotland Yard. One of them took out a note-book and said :—

“ I believe you have received the following articles as presents from a certain Mr. X—— ? ”

He then read out a description of the different presents which my young friend had made me and inquired if the list were correct.

I admitted that it was, upon which he said :—

“ These articles were all stolen by this man from a well-known West-End jeweller, where he was employed. We must request you to give them up at once, if you do not want to get into trouble.”

As I naturally did not wish to be mixed up in so unpleasant an affair, I immediately handed the articles over to the detectives, who, before leaving, inquired if I could tell them where the young singer upon whom Mr. X—— had lavished so many costly presents was to be found, as her engagement at the

Paragon had now terminated. But this I was unable to do.

Not long afterwards, I read in the papers that Mr. X—— had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He had, it appeared, stolen a good many other articles from his employers besides those which he had presented to the young singer and myself.

Some months later I met this young lady again, when she told me that she had received a visit from the detectives, and asked me whether they had also called on me, and if I had returned all the presents I had received. I told her that I had, of course, given them all up, upon which she said that I was a fool for doing this, as she had only returned two or three of the articles which had been given to her, saying that she had lost or sold the rest.

CHAPTER VIII

I leave England on a tour of the Continent—The “Phoenix Illusion” —I accept an engagement to perform it at a music hall in Berlin on the understanding that the stage there is about to be rebuilt—On my arrival I find that the stage has not been altered, and is quite unsuitable—A noisy audience—I decline to continue to perform the illusion—Refusal of the management to pay me my full salary—But they are eventually compelled to do so—Unscrupulous treatment of foreign artists by German music-hall managers—Instances of this—I am engaged to introduce the “Phoenix Illusion” into a revue at the Eden Theatre, Paris—Refusal of Madam Granier, who plays the part of Jeanne d’Arc, to allow herself to be “burned”—Ingenious manner in which this difficulty is surmounted—A “Vanishing Lady” who did not reappear—A wealthy young woman with stage ambitions—I am engaged to instruct her in the performance of the “Phoenix Illusion”—Her failure—My tour in Spain—I perform before Queen Christina and King Alfonso—Visit to a bull-fight.

IN the autumn of 1889 I went again to the Continent, opening at Ronacher’s Theatre, in Vienna, where I had a two months’ engagement. I was at this time doing an illusion called “The Phoenix,” in which I was supposed to set fire to a lady and burn her in full view of the audience and then restore her to life again. One evening two men who ran a music-hall in Berlin happened to be in front, and were so taken with this illusion that they sent for me and asked if I would sign a contract to appear at their theatre for a month, at the conclusion of my engagements in Austro-Hungary and Southern Germany.

Now, having appeared at their music-hall before, I knew that “The Phoenix” would not be suitable for such a place, because the hall was a long, oblong room, without any circles or galleries. The audience sat all on one floor, and the stage was in the centre of the hall. Consequently, only those sitting

immediately in front of the stage would be able to see the entire performance. The people at the sides could not see anything, unless the performer came right in front, to the footlights. I therefore told the two managers that it was useless for me to accept a contract at their hall for this illusion, as less than half the audience would be able to see it, because it was necessary for me to work pretty far back on the stage, otherwise I should expose the illusion. But they answered that they were having the stage rebuilt, and placed at the end of the hall instead of in the middle. Thus, everyone in the audience would have a good view. In these circumstances, I accepted their offer and in due course proceeded to Berlin.

When I came to the theatre for rehearsal, on the day I was to open, I found, to my astonishment, that the stage had not been altered at all, but was in the same place as it had always been. I saw at once that it would be impossible for me to perform my "Phoenix Illusion" on that stage, and in great wrath repaired to the managers' office, and asked what they meant by getting me to sign that contract on an assurance that they were going to have the stage altered, whereas it was still in the same position. I said that I would have to omit "The Phoenix" from my performances and only do the first part, which I could do well enough in front, so that all would have a good view of it.

They made all kinds of excuses, declaring that they had been unable to carry out their intention to have the stage altered because the police authorities had refused to allow them to put it where they wanted; and they told me not to omit the illusion, but to do it as far in front as I possibly could without exposing it. I answered that that would be no good, as only those sitting in the middle of the hall would be able to see it. But they said:—

"We don't trouble about the people in the side seats. The highest-price seats are in the centre, and so long as the people there can see, it doesn't matter much about the rest of the house."

I went back to the stage, and with the help of my

assistants I got the illusion built up, and experimented with it to find how far I could possibly get it in front without exposing the secret. After working several hours, we contrived to get it a little further in front, but I knew it would be useless ; the people in the side seats would never be able to see it properly. I went again to the office and told the managers what I had done, and they said that I had got it quite far enough in front, and that it would be all right at night. But I felt pretty sure that it would be very far from being so.

The first part of my entertainment that evening met with tremendous success. But when I came to the illusion, all the audience on both sides of the theatre began to shout :—

“ Come in front, come in front ! We can’t see ! ”

I took no notice and went on with my performance, but they continued to shout, and finally started hissing and whistling, and I finished amidst a perfect uproar, those in the centre, who were able to see the illusion, applauding loudly, and those in the side seats, who could not see anything, booing and shouting.

As soon as I came off the stage I went to the office in a furious temper and told the management that I should refuse to go on any more under these conditions, and I accused them of having induced me to sign a contract under false pretences. I was very excited and very angry, and finally one of the managers said that I had better go home and see them the next morning and talk the matter over quietly, when perhaps we might be able to find some way out of the difficulty.

Next morning I returned to the theatre and asked them what they proposed should be done, as I could think of nothing. They said :—

“ Never mind. You go back to the stage and experiment again, and probably you will find some means of doing the trick a few feet further in front, so that most of the audience, at any rate, will be able to see it.”

After four or five hours’ work with my assistants, I managed to get the illusion a couple of feet further in front than I had had it the night before. But I still saw that the greater part of the audience would be unable to see it. The managers, however,

assured me that the two feet further forward would make all the difference in the world.

That evening the first part of my entertainment again went splendidly. But when I came to the illusion, the scene of the previous night was repeated—it was, if anything, worse—and I left the stage amidst a great uproar. I went at once to the office and told the managers that I would not perform the illusion again, and though they tried to persuade me to continue it, I would not budge. At last they said :—

“ Well, cut it out, then, and only do the first part of your performance to-morrow night and for the rest of your engagement.”

Accordingly, the next night “ The Phoenix ” was omitted, and my entertainment went through without any mishap, amidst great applause. And so I continued until the 16th of the month, which was pay-day, the artists usually being paid on the 16th and the last day of each month. When I went into the office to receive my salary, I was astonished to find only half the amount I ought to have received in my pay-envelope. I, of course, called the attention of the managers to the fact that they had not paid me my right money.

“ Oh,” replied one of them coolly, “ you only did half your performance, and therefore you only get half your salary.”

I said that that was not my fault, but the fault of their stage, and that I insisted on receiving my salary in full. But this they refused to pay me, saying that by rights they ought not to pay me anything at all and cancel my contract, because I was engaged to present “ The Phoenix ” Illusion, and had only performed it on two occasions. However, as I had appeared at their hall before and they liked me, they had decided to give me half the money and allow me to finish my engagement.

I told them what I thought of them very frankly, and wound up by declaring that unless they paid me my salary in full at once I would not appear that night, and would put the matter into the hands of a lawyer and bring an action against them for its recovery.

This threat, however, did not seem to alarm them, and one of them laughed and said :—

“ Go and see a lawyer by all means and show him your contract. He will only tell you that you’ve got no case, as the contract states that you were specially engaged for ‘The Phoenix’ Illusion.”

I went back to my hotel and got the contract, with the intention of taking it to a lawyer. But, on reading it through, I found to my astonishment that by some oversight they had omitted to put in anything at all about “The Phoenix.” The contract merely stated that I was engaged as a conjurer and illusionist to give my entertainment.

I was naturally delighted, and, going back to the music hall, saw the two managers again and told them that I had consulted a lawyer, who advised me to take proceedings against them forthwith, if they refused to pay me what was due to me under the contract. They only laughed.

“ Go ahead with your action,” said they. “ You stand no chance of winning it, as you have not done what you were engaged to do.”

“ There you are quite wrong,” I answered. “ I was not engaged to do ‘The Phoenix’ Illusion at all ; I was engaged merely as a conjurer and illusionist.”

“ Nonsense ! You were engaged specially to do ‘The Phoenix.’ ”

“ Go and look at your contract,” I said, “ and see what I was engaged to do.”

They got the contract out of the safe, and when they saw that it contained no mention of “The Phoenix” the expression on their faces was worth going a long way to see. They were furious with one another, each declaring that it was the other’s fault that nothing about the illusion had been inserted. Finally, recognising that they had no chance if I brought an action against them, they paid me in full, and I appeared that night and for the rest of my engagement without any further trouble.

These two men did not hesitate to play the most unscrupulous tricks on artists whom they did not like or who did not meet

with what they considered a success commensurate with the salary which they were receiving.

On one occasion they engaged a French *chanteuse* at a very large salary, but as she did not prove the "draw" they had expected, they tried all manner of tricks to make her break her contract. One night they put her on as the first turn, which was supposed to be an insult for a "star" artist. But, though the poor lady was greatly upset, she said nothing, for she saw what their game was and she was determined not to throw up her engagement. The next night they put her on last, which was just as bad, but she made no complaint. Finally, they put her on after the entire programme was over, and she had to come before the curtain and sing to the waiters, who were instructed to hiss and hoot her. Still, however, she would not give way. And so the management had to think of some other way of getting rid of her.

It was the custom at the music-hall in question to put the programme up on the side of the stage each evening some time before the performance began, as it was sometimes changed two or three times a week ; and the artists used to come and look at the programme to see what time they would be on. A few nights later the singer came to the theatre, and, on looking at the programme, saw that hers was the last turn, which meant somewhere about midnight. So, naturally, she thought she would go home and return at eleven o'clock, which would give her plenty of time to dress for her performance. But the managers were on the watch, and so soon as they saw her leave the theatre they took the programme down, made out another, and put her on first.

At eleven o'clock the singer, all unconscious of the shabby trick which had been played on her, returned, and was making her way to her dressing-room, when she was stopped by the stage-manager.

"Why were you not here in time for your turn, Fraülein ?" he exclaimed with well-simulated indignation.

"Not here in time for my turn !" cried the astonished lady. "I am in plenty of time ! Why, I'm not on till last !"

"Nothing of the kind," rejoined the stage-manager. "You were on first, and, as you were not here, we had to carry on the programme without you, and were put to the greatest inconvenience, and therefore you have broken your contract."

"But I saw the programme, and I was on last!" protested the singer.

She hurried off, in great indignation, to interview the managers, but naturally she got no satisfaction from these worthies. They insisted that she had broken her contract, and the poor woman was not allowed to appear any more.

On another occasion two comedians came from America to fulfil an engagement at this hall. According to one of the clauses in the contract, the management had the right to demand that they should do their performance before they opened, at the rehearsal; and, much to their annoyance, for they could not very well do their act unless there was an audience to play to, one of the managers insisted on their dressing and making-up and going through it before him.

Now, this he did because these artists had been engaged at a very large salary, and he wanted to find some pretext to compel them to take less. Accordingly, after they had finished their performance, he told them that he could not allow them to appear in the costumes which they were wearing, as they were not suitable for his theatre. The artists declared that they had appeared in similar costumes at any number of theatres in America, and that no one had ever taken exception to them. But the manager replied that what might pass muster in America would not be suitable for Germany. The Germans were a modest people. No, they must obtain fresh costumes by the evening.

The artists protested that it would be quite impossible for them to get new costumes made in time for the evening performance; it might, indeed, be several days before they would be able to procure them.

"In that case," said the manager, "you cannot go on to-night, and you will, of course, break your contract."

The Americans got very angry and declared that it would

be perfectly monstrous to cancel their contract because they could not obtain fresh costumes at a few hours' notice ; and at last the cunning Teuton said :—

“ Well, I do not wish to be hard on you, so I'll tell you what I'll do. If you are willing to accept half the salary you were engaged for, I will, until you are able to procure more suitable costumes, allow you to appear in those which you have, and take the risk of them displeasing my patrons.”

The two artists indignantly refused this impudent offer and left at once for England, having come all the way from America at great expense to have this shabby trick played on them !

The managers of this music-hall were, however, certainly no more unscrupulous in their dealings with foreign artists than many other music-hall managers in Germany, as the following anecdotes will show :—

About this time a man was appearing at the Royal Aquarium, in London, with a troupe of performing ponies, and proving a great draw. The manager of a Hamburg music-hall, who happened to be in London, saw his performance, and was anxious to engage him for his theatre. But the man wanted such an enormous salary that it was some time before he could make up his mind to agree to the terms he demanded. Eventually, however, he did so, and gave him a contract engaging him to appear at Hamburg for fifteen days, beginning on the first of a certain month.

The trainer of the ponies duly arrived in Hamburg, and the first performance was quite a success, but not the success which the manager considered it should have been, having regard to the huge salary which he was to receive. And so next morning he sent for him, pointed out that his performance had not made anything like the hit that had been anticipated, and said that unless he were prepared, in consideration of this, to accept two-thirds of the salary agreed upon, the proprietors of the theatre would be heavy losers by having engaged him.

The trainer answered that he was very sorry if his performance had not proved the success that the manager had expected, but, as the expense of transporting his ponies and their attendants from London to Hamburg and back again was very great, he could not possibly consent to accept less than the salary provided for in the contract.

Finding that he could not induce the trainer to take a less sum than he was entitled to, the manager resolved to find some means of forcing him to break the contract.

The next evening the trainer came down to the theatre to ascertain what number he had on the programme, and found to his amazement that his name was not there at all. He immediately went to the stage-manager and asked for an explanation.

"Oh, it's quite all right," answered that gentleman. "You see, things are usually a bit quiet with us during the week. You will no doubt be put in the bill again on Saturday and Sunday, when we expect to get big houses."

The trainer naturally thought that it was a very strange thing to engage a "star turn" and only put him in the bill twice a week. However, so long as he got his salary, whether he appeared or not, it was no business of his, and he certainly had no objection to taking a holiday. He came down to the theatre every evening, but it was not until the Saturday that his name again figured on the programme. He gave his performance that night and also on the Sunday, and then until the following Saturday and Sunday he was once more out of the bill.

On the Sunday night his fifteen days' engagement terminated, although he had, in fact, only given five performances, and accordingly the next morning he went to the manager's office to receive his salary. The manager urbanely inquired what he wanted.

"Why, I want my salary!" said he. "The fifteen days for which you engaged me were up last night."

"Oh, no, they were not," rejoined the manager. "You were certainly engaged for fifteen days, but, if you will look at the contract, you will see that nothing is said there about them

being *consecutive* days. And so, as you have only so far performed on five days, you have got to give ten more performances, and I can keep you here another two months if I like."

As it was quite true that the contract did not stipulate that the performances were to take place on *consecutive* days, and the law was therefore on the side of the unscrupulous manager, the poor trainer had no alternative but to take his ponies back to England, without having received a penny.

At a certain music-hall in Berlin an Englishman with a troupe of ten performing dogs had been engaged at a very high salary. As his dogs, like the ponies at Hamburg, did not make the hit which the manager expected, that worthy resolved to find some excuse to make him take less than his salary, and accordingly had recourse to the following disgraceful expedient :—

Pieces of poisoned meat were put under the stage, where the dogs used to assemble while waiting to go on the stage for their performance, and two of the dogs ate some of this meat, with the result that they both died next day. The trainer, who had found other pieces of poisoned meat in the same place, was, of course, furious, and went to the manager to complain, but the latter, of course, denied all knowledge of the person who had put it there. Fortunately for the trainer, the two dogs he had lost were not important ones—they did not perform any tricks which the others did not do—and, though he had to appear for the rest of his engagement with eight dogs instead of ten, he gave exactly the same performance, trick for trick, as the ten dogs had given. Nevertheless, when he went for his salary on pay-day, the manager refused to pay him more than half, on the ground that he had not performed with his full troupe of dogs, as he had engaged to do in the contract.

While I was appearing at the music-hall in Berlin, two of the directors of the Eden Theatre, in Paris, happened to witness my performance of "The Phoenix." They had an

excellent view of it, as they happened to be seated immediately facing the stage. They asked me to come and see them at their hotel, when they said that they were producing a revue at the Eden, in which a scene from *Jeanne d'Arc*, then being played at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, with the "divine Sarah" in the title part, was to be presented. A celebrated actress, Madame Jeanne Granier, was to impersonate Sarah Bernhardt. It had occurred to them that if I could produce my illusion, which was far more realistic than the burning at the stake in *Jeanne d'Arc*, in this scene, it would be a big attraction and draw all Paris. And they inquired whether I could teach Madame Granier to perform this illusion, and also if there were any danger. I answered that I should no doubt be able to teach Madame Granier to perform it, and assured them that there was no danger whatever, and I was shortly afterwards engaged to appear in Paris.

When I attended the first rehearsal at the Eden Theatre and told Madame Granier what she had to do, she absolutely refused to do it, unless she could witness the illusion first and see the effect. So I said I would perform the illusion first with my wife, and she could see exactly what the effect was. I accordingly had my apparatus fixed up on the stage; the curtain rose, and my wife appeared at the stake. I set fire to the faggots, upon which the flames rose on all sides around her, and the effect was so realistic that the firemen, who were stationed in the wings both at performances and rehearsals, rushed forward with buckets of water and wet blankets, and spoiled the whole performance.

After an interval, I repeated the performance, having told the firemen that there was no danger and that they must not interfere again. However, at the finish of the second rehearsal of the illusion, Madame Granier obstinately refused to have anything to do with it, declaring that she would sooner throw up her engagement than run the risk of being burned to death. I explained to her how the illusion was done, and tried to convince her in every possible way that there was no danger whatever connected with it, but she was adamant. I therefore had

a consultation with the directors, as the result of which it was decided to get over the difficulty in the following way :—

My wife was to be dressed exactly as Madame Granier was dressed and to wear a wig of the same colour as Madame Granier's hair, so that it would be practically impossible to tell one lady from the other. I was to try to seize Madame Granier to drag her to the stake, but she would elude me and rush off the stage. I would rush after her and bring back, not Madame Granier, but her double—my wife—and having tied her to the stake, set fire to the faggots. The performance was an immense success, and next day Madame Granier received flattering notices in all the papers, complimenting her on her courage in standing in the flames.

While appearing at the Folies-Bergères a little later, my "Vanishing Lady" trick made a big hit, and a certain viscount offered me a generous fee to teach him the illusion, which he afterwards performed with his beautiful young wife at a party at his own house, where I was engaged to give an entertainment. The lady duly disappeared amidst a storm of applause, which sounded scarcely complimentary.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen," said M. le Vicomte, smiling complacently, "I shall have the honour to bring the vanished lady back."

But that was where he failed, for the lady had really vanished, leaving a note behind her, in which she informed her husband that, finding his society no longer supportable, she had taken this opportunity to leave his house and return to her friends. Certainly, Madame la Vicomtesse was not without a sense of humour.

To return for a moment to "The Phoenix."

Some years later, while performing at the Empire Theatre, in London, a gentleman called to see me and told me that a lady friend of his, who had any amount of money and was very anxious to go on the stage, wanted to know if I could arrange some kind of illusion for her. He said that she was a most beautiful woman, with a perfect figure, but could neither sing, dance nor act. Therefore, the only thing that would be

suitable for her to do was to appear in some illusion, in which she would have merely to show herself. She would not mind how much she paid, if I could provide her with what she wanted. I told my visitor that I should no doubt be able to do this, and the next day we signed an agreement under which I was to fix up a suitable illusion for the lady, and receive in return a large fee, half to be paid in advance and the remainder when the illusion was ready and I had taught her how to perform it.

I thought of all the different illusions that I had ever done, and finally decided that "The Phoenix," which I had not performed for several years, and did not expect to use again, at any rate in Europe, would be the very thing for the lady, as it was very simple and also very effective. So, a few days later, I called on her at the Hôtel Cecil, where she had one of the best suites of rooms in the hotel, explained the illusion to her, and suggested that it should be called "Cleopatra" and that she should impersonate that celebrated enchantress of men. She was delighted with the idea, and I accordingly got "The Phoenix" out of my storehouse, redecorated and repainted it and, when it was ready, asked her to come and see it. I then performed the illusion with my wife, and the lady was so charmed with it that she immediately paid me the remainder of the money and asked me to start rehearsing her the next day.

Now this lady was as beautiful a woman as one could well wish to see, with almost faultlessly regular features, and a tall and admirably-proportioned figure ; in fact, so far as appearance went, well worthy to represent one of the great beauties of history. But, on the other hand, I do not think I have ever met a more clumsy and stupid creature. It took me nearly three weeks to teach her what a woman of ordinary intelligence would have learned in three days. However, I persevered, and in the end she could perform the illusion fairly well.

I had the apparatus for the illusion packed up and sent to the hotel, and advised her to appear with it on the Continent first and later on endeavour to secure a London engagement.

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I had little hope of her making a success of it, as she was too nervous and clumsy, but, of course, I did not tell her that, being unwilling to discourage her ; and she accordingly decided to go to Paris.

The next day I received a telegram asking me to call on her. I went, when she asked me who was to perform the illusion with her. I told her that she would no doubt be able to get some little-known artist in Paris for a few pounds a week, as she was performing the principal part of the illusion, and the man she engaged would merely have to introduce it.

"But," she said, "I want you to come with me. I don't like the idea of performing with a stranger."

I told her that it would be absurd for her to pay me a large salary for a few moments' work which any number of artists in Paris could do just as well as myself, besides which I had contracts to fulfil and should have to pay heavily if I broke them.

"Money is no object to me whatever, Mr. Hertz," she rejoined. "I will willingly pay the sums which you may have to forfeit by breaking your contracts, however heavy they may be, and give you any salary you care to ask, if you will come with me."

I assured her that it was impossible, upon which she burst into tears, declaring that she would not go to Paris unless I accompanied her ; she would not appear on the stage with a stranger. After much difficulty, I succeeded in persuading her to engage someone else, and she left for Paris without me.

Some two months afterwards, I heard that this singular pupil of mine had given a trial performance at the Folies-Bergères, but it was so bad that the management had refused to engage her. A little later, I received a letter from the lady telling me that she was going to be married and had, in consequence, given up all idea of going on the stage. It was certainly the most sensible thing that she could have done. Why a rich woman as she was should ever have wanted to enter a profession for which she had no sort of qualification except good looks is difficult to understand. But I presume her object was merely the gratification of an inordinate vanity.

From Paris I went to Spain, where I performed at San Sebastian, Barcelona, Seville and Madrid. At the Teatro de Price at Madrid my entertainment was witnessed by Queen Christina and King Alfonso. The little king was so delighted with it, that the queen-mother brought him a second time a few days later.

While in Madrid my wife and I went to see a bull-fight, and she was so shocked at the slaughter of the horses that she fainted and had to be carried out of the building. I thought it the most disgusting spectacle I had ever seen, and I left the place, vowing that I would never witness such an exhibition again. But, strange to say, there is a sort of fascination about bull-fighting, which, notwithstanding the disgust with which the first one you attend always arouses, makes you anxious to see another, and I am ashamed to say I did not keep my resolution.

My tour ended at Lisbon, whence I returned to England.

CHAPTER IX

I sail for Australia—Trick which I play with a passenger's watch during the voyage—I open at the Opera House in Melbourne—A novel method of advertisement—After visiting the principal towns of Australia, I tour New Zealand—Amusing experience in the market at Auckland—I escape from an unpleasant predicament—I sail for San Francisco *en route* for England—The two priests—I detect one of them cheating at poker—With the consent of the other players, I manipulate the cards, and he loses heavily—His money is subsequently returned to him with a sharp lecture—On reaching San Francisco, I learn that he is a cardsharp in disguise—England again—Sad experiences of my friend G. W. Hunter and myself at the Liverpool Autumn Meeting of 1892—Vanishing gentlemen—Herbert Campbell's watch.

IN January, 1892, I sailed for Australia, taking with me my own company. The tour was to be under the management of Messrs. Williamson and Musgrove.

I had a very enjoyable time on the way out to the Antipodes, during which I gave several performances for the amusement of my fellow-passengers. A certain gentleman amongst the passengers, not content with witnessing these public entertainments, was continually worrying me to show him tricks privately, until he became a perfect nuisance and I determined to read him a lesson.

Accordingly, while we were in harbour at Port Said, I asked him to lend me his watch, which was a very valuable one, and, while examining it, pretended to drop it overboard. The owner, who thought that through my carelessness his property had really gone to the bottom of the sea, was exceedingly angry, and, though I assured him that it should be restored to him undamaged, refused to believe me. I found a fishing-rod and line, baited the hook and threw it over the side. Presently,

I got a bite and hauled my capture—a good-sized fish—on board. I then cut it open and disclosed the lost watch in all its pristine beauty. The gentleman looked decidedly foolish as I gave it him back and told him that, if he bothered me to show him any more tricks, the next article he lent me might disappear for good.

My tour opened at the Opera House, in Melbourne. The Opera House was a very old building, in fact one of the oldest in Melbourne, but it has since been rebuilt and is now a very beautiful theatre. While I was playing here my manager conceived a novel and singular method of advertising me.

One day the following advertisement appeared in all the Melbourne papers :—

“Wanted, 1,000 cats of all descriptions. Apply at Stage Door, Opera House, with cats, at 9 a.m. to-morrow. One shilling or a free seat for the evening performance will be given for each cat.”

Next morning cats came by the hundred : in sacks, baskets, boxes and all manner of things, black cats, tabby cats, ginger cats, every cat imaginable. Most of them were brought by boys, who had probably stolen them or picked them up in the street. The cats were put in a large room, until there were about 2,000 of them. My manager had prepared white bands on which was printed : “See Carl Hertz at the Opera House to-night,” and one of these bands was fastened round the neck of every cat. In the afternoon the door was opened and the cats driven out into the street, when they flew in all directions with their white collars. It was a very big “advert” for me, and the house was packed for the rest of the week.

I performed for six weeks in Melbourne with great success, and afterwards visited Adelaide, Sydney and all the principal towns in Australia. I then toured New Zealand, playing at Wellington, Dunedin, Auckland and other towns.

At Auckland I had a very amusing experience. One morning I visited the Market, and going up to one of the stalls, behind

which sat a stout, rosy-cheeked old woman, inquired the price of eggs. She told me two shillings a dozen.

"Well," said I. "I'll have two dozen, but I must be sure that they're really fresh. I'll just break one open and see."

I picked up an egg, broke it open, and to the old woman's astonishment produced from the yolk a golden sovereign. I wiped the sovereign, put it in my pocket and tried a second and a third, with the same result. I then offered to buy all the eggs she had, but the old lady evidently didn't see why I should have all the sovereigns, and refused to sell any of them.

I paid her for the three eggs and moved off to another stall, from behind which I watched to see what she would do. And, sure enough, no sooner had I departed than she went gold-seeking herself and broke open every egg in the basket, looking more and more disgusted as the fruitless search for sovereigns proceeded. When she had finished, I went back and said to her :—

"Look here ! I'll give you a sovereign a dozen for those eggs."

"Damn your impudence !" cried the indignant old lady. "If you don't go away, and pretty quick, too, I'll put the police on to you !"

When I could speak for laughing, I explained to her that I was a conjurer and had been having a little practice, and having paid her the value of her basket of eggs—the fun I had had was well worth the money—took my departure, leaving her no loser except in self-esteem.

While performing card tricks at Dunedin, I asked for the assistance of a gentleman in the audience. A prosperous-looking, middle-aged man came upon the stage, and I produced cards from his inside coat-pocket and from all over his body. At the conclusion of the performance I was in my dressing-room, getting ready to go home, when the door-keeper came and told me that a gentleman wished to speak to me at once on a very important matter. I asked him to show the gentleman

in, and he proved to be the same who had come upon the stage to help me.

"What can I do for you, sir?" I asked.

"Well," said he, looking very confused, "when I came on to the stage to help you, I had a pocket-book in one of my inside coat-pockets with twenty pounds in notes in it, and when I returned to my seat in the stalls I found that it was no longer there. If you took it for a joke, perhaps you will be kind enough to give it me back? If not, I'm afraid I shall be obliged to go to the police about it."

"My dear sir," I exclaimed, "you are entirely mistaken in supposing that I have taken your pocket-book; I don't play practical jokes of that kind."

"Well, where is it, then?" said he. "All I know is that I had it in my pocket before I came on to the stage, and that when I got back to my seat it had gone."

I suggested that he might have dropped it in the stalls, but he declared that he had looked in the chair in which he had been sitting and all over the floor and there was no sign of it. So I asked him to wait a few moments, and, having got a lantern, went with him into the stalls and hunted about, but without finding any trace of his pocket-book.

I could see that the man had quite made up his mind that I had got the wretched thing, and though such a conclusion was no doubt a tribute to my professional skill, it was scarcely flattering to my honesty; and, if he were to go to the police and make a charge against me, the affair might become a very unpleasant one. So I said to him:—

"It is a very serious thing to make an accusation of this kind against anyone. Now tell me, when did you have your pocket-book last in your hands?"

"When I paid for my ticket at the box-office," said he.

"Did you change a note out of your pocket-book to pay for your ticket?"

"No, I changed a sovereign out of my purse; but the purse was in the same pocket as my pocket-book, and I had to take out the pocket-book to get it."

I took him to the box-office and asked the cashier if she had seen anything of a pocket-book which had been lost. But she had not seen one, and we looked all over the floor of the lobby without success.

"Now," said I, "when did you last have your pocket-book in your hands, before you bought your ticket?"

"Look here!" he exclaimed angrily. "It's not the least use your asking me these questions. As I've already told you, I'm positive I had that pocket-book in my pocket when I came on to the stage to help you."

"But," I rejoined, "that is impossible, and I am trying to help you to find it. So please try to remember when you last had it before entering the theatre."

Eventually, he told me that he had taken it out of his pocket when he went to buy some cigarettes at a tobacconist's not far from the theatre. I persuaded him to go with me to this shop, the proprietor of which I knew, as I was in the habit of buying my cigars there, and said:—

"This gentleman has lost his pocket-book and has come to enquire whether by chance he left it here, as he bought some cigarettes from you just before going to the theatre."

"Perhaps the gentleman will describe it," said the tobacconist, and my companion having done so, the other produced the missing pocket-book, saying that he had found it lying on his counter about eight o'clock that evening.

The owner overwhelmed me with apologies, and showing me a letter-case very similar in size and shape to the pocket-book, explained that it must have been the former which he took out of his pocket when he was getting his purse to pay for his ticket, though he had felt certain that it was the pocket-book.

After a highly successful and very pleasant tour, we left for England by way of America. Amongst the passengers on our steamer was the Earl of X——, who was shortly afterwards appointed Governor of one of the Dominions. He and I became very friendly, and, with three or four other men, we made up a little party to play poker of an afternoon in the smoking-room.

We had on board two Roman Catholic priests—at least, that is what they called themselves and what everyone supposed them to be at the time—whom I will call Father Black and Father White. They seemed very nice, gentlemanly men, and made themselves very pleasant to everyone, particularly to the ladies.

One afternoon, while we were playing poker as usual, Father Black came in and, taking a seat near the card-table, remained for some time watching the game. When we had finished, he remarked that poker was a game of which he was very fond, though he seldom had the chance to play it, and asked us if we had any objection to him joining us the next day. Of course, we did not like to refuse him, though at the same time we thought it rather out of place for a priest to play poker.

Accordingly, the next afternoon when we repaired to the smoking-room for our usual game, there was Father Black waiting to join us. We began to play and, after a while, I detected the reverend gentleman correcting Fortune. I did not like to say anything in the circumstances, but I watched him closely during the remainder of the game and caught him at it two or three times.

When we rose from the table, I called Lord X—— and the other players aside, told them what I had seen the priest do, and said that we must not allow him to play with us any more. But they all declared that I must be mistaken, as such a thing was unbelievable.

“Very well,” said I, “let him play with us again to-morrow, only, if I catch him cheating again, I will make you some sign, so that you can see for yourselves.”

So the next day Father Black played with us again, and the same thing happened. I gave the rest of the party the signal we had agreed upon, and they saw that what I had told them was quite true. We stopped the game shortly afterwards and held a counsel of war to decide what was to be done. We all agreed that the fact that the offender was a priest made the matter a very awkward one. We did not like to tell him that we had caught him cheating, but, if we did not do so, we

could not very well refuse to allow him to play with us. The only solution seemed to be to give up our game, but this we were reluctant to do as it helped to pass away the afternoon. The others asked me if I could suggest some other way out of the difficulty, and, after thinking for a minute or two, I said :—

“ Well, there is one thing we can do, and that is to treat him as he has been treating us. Let him play to-morrow, and I will deal him four aces, and to one of you other gentlemen a straight flush. He is pretty sure to bet heavily on his four aces, and will lose so much that he probably won't care to play any more.”

To this proposal of mine Lord X—— at first objected, but, after talking it over with the others, he agreed to it, on condition that we should hand all the money that the priest might lose over to the captain to take charge of, and that at the end of the voyage it should be given back to him.

The next afternoon Father Black joined us, as he had on the two previous days. After we had been playing for some time and there was a big pot, I dealt the priest, as arranged, four aces and to one of the other players a straight flush. These two started betting against one another, the rest of us dropping out of the game. Father Black naturally thought he had an unbeatable hand, and when all the money he had about him was gone he sent for the other priest, Father White, and borrowed all the money that he could lend him, considerably over £100. But as his opponent covered that also, he had to call him.

“ I've got four aces,” exclaimed the priest triumphantly, showing his hand. “ What have you got ? ”

“ A straight flush,” answered the other, quietly laying down his cards. And he proceeded to scoop the pool.

The priest went very white, and muttering something which sounded uncommonly like an oath, rose from the table, declaring that he would never play poker again. That was, of course, just what we wanted, and we had our game to ourselves for the rest of the voyage.

Three days before the ship reached San Francisco, we met in

the captain's cabin, and a message was sent to Father Black that the captain would be glad if he could spare him a few minutes. The priest arrived and looked very surprised to find us all sitting there. A gentleman whom we had chosen to act as spokesman then said :—

“ My friends and I have asked Captain —— to send for you, Father Black, in order that in his presence we might give you back the money which you lost at cards the other day. We detected you cheating and, I need hardly say, were greatly astonished that one of your calling should stoop so low as that. We therefore determined to teach you a lesson, and you will no doubt be surprised to hear that the hand upon which you lost your money and the hand which beat yours were dealt purposely. So you see that others can cheat as well as you, only in a more dexterous manner. We had at first decided to ask Captain —— to hand this money over to the Sailors' Orphanage, but, on the advice of Lord X——, we have now agreed to give it back to you. We hope, however, that this will be a lesson to you, and that should you play cards again you will play fairly.”

The priest, with tears in his eyes, overwhelmed us with thanks, asked our pardon most humbly for the sorry part he had played, and swore that nothing should ever induce him to touch a card again. He would certainly not have got his money back, but would have been clapped in irons and handed over to the police so soon as we reached 'Frisco, together with his friend Father White, had we only known what I subsequently learned about this precious pair.

Two or three days after we landed, I happened to meet the Chief of Police, who was an old friend of mine, and mentioned the matter to him. He asked me to describe the two priests, and then told me that he had not the least doubt that they were two well-known “ bunco-steerers,” or cardsharps, who had been masquerading in clerical garb. It was, it appeared, not the first time they had done so.

All I can say is, that the scoundrels ought to have been on the stage, as they were certainly both most admirable actors.

They must have studied the part they played with extraordinary care to have carried it through as they did. There were several Roman Catholic passengers on the steamer, yet none of them seemed to have any suspicion that they were not what they pretended to be.

This episode reminds me of a very amusing incident which took place at the Vaudeville Club, one evening some years ago, when I was playing poker there. We were seven players and, as often happens at this game, two of them, whom I will call A. and B., kept continually beating one another. If A. had what he thought a strong hand, B. had always something just a little better, and *vice versa*. At last they became positively antagonistic towards one another, and it was really comical to listen to their comments.

There were several people looking on at the game, and presently one of them, who was standing just behind me, whispered in my ear and asked me to deal each of them a royal flush to see what would happen. All the other players were put wise to what was going to happen, and when it came to my deal, I dealt A. a royal flush in hearts and B. a royal flush in diamonds. For the benefit of the uninitiated, I may here remark that these hands are of exactly the same value and the highest that can be held at poker.

The betting started, all the players coming in. When it reached A. he raised the "pot"; B. re-raised, and the other players all came in again. Then A. re-raised once more, and B. did the same. Meantime the rest of us had dropped out of the game and quietly withdrawn our money from the table, the holders of the royal flushes being so excited that they did not notice what had been done. Consequently, the pot consisted only of what they had put in themselves.

The two continued to raise one another, until presently A. said to his opponent:—

"Look here! Don't raise me again, because I've got you beat."

"Have you!" inquired the other sarcastically. "Are you quite sure?"



First Cinema (for pictures only) in the World, San Francisco.
It belonged to Mr. Hertz's brother-in-law, M. Furst.

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" Yes, you can't possibly win ! "

" Very well, then I'll raise you again."

And so they went on, until at last the other players intervened, saying that they could not possibly countenance such gambling in a game amongst friends and that they must show their hands. To this they agreed, and A. triumphantly proclaimed that he held a royal flush and laid his cards on the table. His face was a study when B. announced that he held a similar hand, and we could hardly contain our merriment. The pot was accordingly divided, each getting the money he had staked, but nothing more, for, as I have mentioned, they had been too excited to notice when we withdrew ours.

They were both so pleased at having been the heroes of such an astonishing coincidence that they stood champagne all round, and when told that it was all a joke, and that the hands had been dealt to them purposely, they refused to believe it and declared that we were trying to " kid " them.

After spending a fortnight with my relatives at San Francisco, we proceeded to New York, and thence sailed for England. On my arrival I treated myself to a short holiday, which I thought I deserved, and then proceeded to Manchester to fulfil an engagement at the Palace Theatre.

While I was performing there the Liverpool Autumn Meeting took place, and on the day the Autumn Cup was run an old friend of mine, G. W. Hunter, a well-known comedian, persuaded me to go to the races with him.

Hunter was a friend of " Morny " Cannon, at that time, of course, one of our crack jockeys, and he told me that he would no doubt be able to get some good information from him.

When we arrived at Aintree, Hunter went into the paddock, where he saw " Morny " Cannon and came back looking very elated.

" We're in for a good day, my boy," said he. " ' Morny ' tells me that he fancies all his mounts above a bit, and thinks he's got a real good chance of winning the Cup on Ermak.

He's not riding anything in the first race, but says the favourite ought to about win."

We accordingly backed the favourite, but he cut up badly and finished down the course.

This was not exactly a promising start, but we hoped for better fortune in the next race, in which "Morny" Cannon was riding. His mount was made favourite and ran well, but found one too good for him at the finish, and our faces began to lengthen.

"Never mind," said my friend, "we'll get it back over "Morny's" next mount.

So again we backed "Morny," but once more the famous jockey had to put up with second place, though it was a very near thing.

Then came the Liverpool Cup, in which Hunter announced his intention of backing Ermak, whom his jockey friend was riding, and urged me to do the same. But by this time I had got a bit fed up with his tips and thought I would pick out a horse myself, as I couldn't do much worse backing my own fancy than I had done betting on "information." After a little hesitation, I decided to back the favourite, Baron Hirsch's Windgall, and accepted a bet of £25 to £5 from a very prosperous-looking and affable gentleman, who was accompanied by an equally prosperous-looking clerk.

It struck me as just a little odd that this gentleman should be willing to lay me "fives" against Windgall, when most of the other metalicians would lay no more than 7 to 2. But I didn't know much about racing at that time, and he seemed so eminently respectable an individual that I never dreamed of doubting his stability.

The Liverpool Cup of that year was one of the most exciting races I ever saw, and in a desperate finish Windgall, beautifully ridden by George Barrett, just squeezed home by a short head from Ermak, with that good mare Lady Rosebery half a length behind the latter.

I was naturally very pleased at having backed the winner and inclined to crow a bit over my friend Hunter. But my

satisfaction was very short-lived, for when the "All right" was signalled and I went to draw my £30, there was no sign of the prosperous-looking bookmaker and his clerk who had laid me so generous a price against Windgall. They had, in fact, performed what I may call the "vanishing gentleman" trick, and on the spot where they had been standing was an angry and excited crowd, all of whom had been victimised like myself.

Sadly I went to look for Hunter, whom I found in the paddock.

"Hullo!" said he. "Got your money all right?"

"No," I replied, "I've been welshed!"

It was now his turn to crow over me, and he didn't forget to do it.

"My dear chap," he observed, with the smile begotten of superior knowledge, "what else can you expect when you will go and bet with people who are laying over the odds? You should have put your money on with the chap I've been betting with, and then you'd have got paid all right. You can always trust me to tell a straight man from a wrong 'un. But cheer up! I have just seen 'Morny' Cannon again, and he tells me that he thinks Ballyhooley, the horse he's riding in the next race, can hardly lose, barring accidents. So we shall probably be able to get back what we've dropped to-day and a bit over besides."

I wasn't particularly keen on backing another of "Morny" Cannon's mounts, as that jockey had now ridden three seconds in succession and seemed to be out of luck. However, I allowed Hunter to talk me over, and we went up to the bookmaker with whom my friend had been betting all the afternoon and who was, if possible, an even more prosperous-looking individual than the one who had just gone off with my money, and each took £50 to £20 about Ballyhooley. He was second favourite, odds being laid on a horse called Earthquake, but this time Hunter's faith in "Morny" was justified, Ballyhooley winning easily by a couple of lengths.

"There you are, my boy!" exclaimed my companion,

clapping me joyously on the shoulder. "I told you I'd get you out of your troubles and put you on the right side before the end of the day. It was too bad your getting done out of your money over Windgall, or I'd have made you have more on this 'good thing,' and you would have been quite a big winner. However, it's something to have got the best of the bookies, even if we haven't won very much. Let's go and have a bottle to celebrate our luck."

We repaired in high feather to the bar, where he stood me a "bottle," and I returned the compliment, after which we went to draw our money from Hunter's bookmaker. But, to our astonishment, the pitch where that gentleman and his clerk had stood throughout the afternoon was unoccupied. They had gone, and their overcoats, mackintoshes, satchels, betting-books and everything belonging to them had gone too. We waited about for some minutes, together with several other punters who had also backed the winner, in the faint hope of their reappearing, until it gradually dawned upon us that beyond "every possible shadow of doubt whatever," as the Grand Inquisitor in "The Gondoliers" would have put it, that highly-respectable bookmaker and his clerk had "done a guy," and I had been "welshed" for the second time that afternoon.

Perhaps it was somewhat unkind of me to rub it in, but I was feeling so sore that I could not resist the temptation. So, turning to Hunter, I remarked:—

"And you said that I could always trust you to tell a straight man from a wrong 'un!"

He did not reply; his heart was too full for words, and in silence we made our way to the station. There was still another race to be run, but we had no heart for further speculation. It seemed to be too one-sided a game altogether!

Magnus, by the way, was a great friend of the late Herbert Campbell, and he used to tell a good story of an adventure which that popular comedian once had at Ascot.

Magnus was in the habit of coming up from Liverpool every year to "do" Ascot, and one Cup Day he called on Herbert Campbell and persuaded him to accompany him. Just as

they were starting Magnus noticed that Campbell was wearing a valuable gold watch and chain.

"I say, Herbert," said he, "you're surely not going to wear that watch and chain to Ascot? There are always a lot of pick-pockets there, and you'll get it pinched to a certainty."

Campbell accordingly left the gold watch and chain at home, but, as he said he did not care to be without a watch, he stopped at a shop on his way to Waterloo and bought a cheap silver watch and a brass chain for a few shillings. While watching the big race he felt a tug at his waistcoat, and, looking down, saw that both watch and chain had disappeared.

"What a lucky thing it was that I took your advice and left my gold watch and chain at home!" he exclaimed, turning to Magnus. "Look! That watch and chain I bought have gone!"

About an hour afterwards a sharp-featured individual came up to Herbert Campbell.

"Beg pardon," said he, "but you're Mr. 'Erbert Campbell, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I 'opes there ain't no offence?" said the man coolly, handing back the watch and chain as he spoke. "You see," he added, with an explanatory grin, "they weren't worth taking!"

CHAPTER X

A little game of "Nap"—"Carl Hertz, the King of Cards"—Laughable incident on the way to Newmarket—I produce my "Vanity Fair" Illusion at the Empire—The Irish parlour-maid—"What's the good of me clothes!"—Provincial tour—I produce "Yum Yum, or the Pagoda Mystery" at the Palace Theatre, and "Noah's Ark" at the Alhambra—Tour in the North of England—Strange adventures of a pig—Mishap with a "cannon-ball" at the Empire.

AT the conclusion of my engagement at the Palace Theatre, Manchester, I returned to London, and on the journey had an amusing adventure.

In the compartment in which I was travelling were three well-dressed and gentlemanly men, one of whom presently produced a pack of cards and asked me if I would care to join him and his friends in a game of "Nap." I answered that I very seldom played cards, but he pressed me to join them, saying that it would pass the time away and make the journey seem shorter, and eventually I consented. After we had been playing for some time, during which I had lost a couple of pounds, I noticed that one of these gentlemen was assisting Fortune. I did not say anything, but I kept my eyes open and carefully watched the movements of the three of them. Very soon I saw that they were all at the same game. They dealt me hands that I was bound to go "Nap" on each time, but every time I called it I lost, as one or other of my opponents always had a card to beat it. I let them do this for a time, and then, when they expected me to go "Nap," only called "four," which, of course, I got. Then, whenever it came to my deal, I retaliated by giving one of them a "Nap" hand and myself a hand which was just good enough to prevent him getting it. In this way,

by the time we reached Euston, I had not only got back what I had lost, but was a winner of some £5.

When we got out at the station, I turned to them and said :—

“ Well, gentlemen, I am very pleased to have met you, as our little game has made the journey seem so much shorter, and I hope to have the pleasure of having another game with you at some future time. Allow me to present you with my card.”

And, with that, I handed them one of my advertisement cards, the size of a playing-card, on which was a portrait of myself in the act of doing a card trick, and underneath the inscription :—

Carl Hertz, the King of Cards.

They gave one look at the card, and then turned and hurried out of the station as quickly as they could.

It was a case of the biter getting bit !

This incident reminds me of a very laughable one which occurred some years later.

I was going to one of the autumn meetings at Newmarket, and arriving at Liverpool Street very late, had only just time to get my ticket, run on to the platform and jump into the first compartment I could reach before the train started. It proved to be a third-class carriage, and was occupied by four of the East End “ Boys.” One of them, who sat in the far corner of the carriage, seemed to know me, for he nodded and smiled.

Presently, the other three “ Boys ” suggested a game of “ solo,” playing four half-crowns, *i.e.*, half-a-crown for a “ proposal,” five shillings for a “ solo,” seven-and-sixpence for a “ misere,” and ten shillings for an “ abundance,” and asked me if I would join them. I agreed and, the cards having been cut, one of them was about to deal when the man in the far corner said to them :—

“ D’you happen to know who that gentleman you’re going to play with is ? ”

“ No,” answered one of them.

“ Why, that’s Carl Hertz ? ”

"What!" all three shouted in chorus. "Then we'll play four sixpences."

Soon after my return from Manchester I left for Scotland to fulfil engagements at Edinburgh and Glasgow. The New Year found me again in London, where I opened at the Empire, at which I had a three months' engagement, and produced my "Vanity Fair" Illusion, which was a very great success.

A long mirror, about eleven feet high and five feet in width, resembling a lady's dressing-mirror or cheval-glass, was wheeled in and placed in the middle of the stage. On either side of the glass, about a quarter of the way up, a bracket was fixed, and across this another iron bar was placed. In the centre and resting upon the iron rod or bar was a plate of glass an inch thick which served as a shelf. My wife, Mlle. D'Alton, mounted upon the shelf, using a step-ladder to reach it. (The mirror reached to within about two feet of the stage.)

While standing on this shelf she turned to the mirror and began inspecting her reflection. I then turned her with her face to the audience, and she again turned back. A screen was now placed around her, but the screen was so narrow that a considerable portion of the mirror showed on either side and above it. All was quiet for a moment, and then the screen was taken down, and Mlle. D'Alton had disappeared. The mystification was completed by the removal of the portable mirror, it being thus made evident that the performer was not hidden behind it. The next moment Mlle. D'Alton appeared from the first entrance of the stage.

At the conclusion of my engagement at the Empire I appeared at most of the other principal halls in London. I also gave a good many entertainments at private houses, at one of which a most amusing incident occurred.

While I was performing a thought-reading experiment one of the maids had come in with refreshment. She was, I afterwards learned, a raw, Irish girl whose usual place was the kitchen, but who, in the absence of one of the parlourmaids, had been called on to take her place. This daughter of Erin

appeared very much interested in my performance, and when the hostess gave a sign that nothing more was required she still lingered by the door to see the completion of the trick which I had just begun.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said I, "I have here some white visiting cards and envelopes. I will pass them round amongst the company, who can write anything they like on the cards, place them in the envelopes and seal them up, after which one of you can collect them. I will submit to be blindfolded, and, as an additional precaution, to have a heavy shawl and travelling rug thrown over my head, so that it will be absolutely impossible for me to see anything. Nevertheless, I shall be able to tell you what is written on the cards inside the sealed envelopes."

With that I proceeded to hand the cards and envelopes round, observing as I did so that the maid by the door was looking on with parted lips and eyes bright with excitement. Then I was blindfolded and a shawl and rug thrown over my head.

"Now," said I, "will some lady or gentleman kindly hand me one of the envelopes?" A lady did so, with trembling fingers. I then asked her to place the envelope against my forehead outside the shawl and rug. This was done, the thickness of the shawl and rug being, of course, between my forehead and the paper. There was a moment's silence, and then I said:—

"There are three figures written upon the card inside this envelope, and the figures are 'seven, six and one.'"

It was correct. I had apparently seen right through the thick shawl and rug, and for the moment everyone was dumb-founded with amazement. Then upon the silence broke the cry of the Irish maid by the door.

"What's the good of me clothes!" she yelled at the top of her voice, and fled.

I remained in London during the whole of 1893, but in the following year I made an extended tour of the provinces, performing at Birmingham, Bristol, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Blackpool, York, Liverpool, Glasgow and other towns,

In the late autumn I returned to London and produced a new illusion entitled : " Yum Yum, or the Pagoda Mystery " at the Palace Theatre, which, like my " Vanity Fair " Illusion of the previous year, proved a great success. It was as follows :—

Miss Yum Yum (Mlle. D'Alton), dressed in Japanese costume, ascended by means of a ladder into a pagoda, which was suspended about eight feet from the stage. I then proceeded, in full view of the audience, to array myself as a Chinaman, pigtail and all complete, after which I mounted into a similar pagoda on the other side of the stage. Two footmen attendants stepped on to the stage and ascending the ladders closed the doors of these aerial summer-houses. A pistol was fired, and in the twinkling of an eye Miss Yum Yum passed from one pagoda to the other, the one which she had a moment before occupied being shown quite empty. Finally, one of the footmen attendants returned for the purpose of closing the door of the empty pagoda and, removing his wig, revealed to the astonished audience that he was none other than myself.

Encouraged by the success which had attended these two illusions, at the beginning of 1895 I produced, at the Alhambra, a third, called " Noah's Ark, " which was as follows :—

Standing upon two trestles in the centre of the stage was a miniature ark, supposed to be a faithful representation of the original article. The front, sides and back, which were hinged, were let down to show that the ark was empty. They were then closed up again, and the roof of the ark put on.

Next, instead of the ark being put into the water, as it originally was, water was put into the ark, bucket after bucket being poured in. Presently, through the windows of the ark appeared doves, pigeons, rabbits, guinea-pigs, ducks, fowls, dogs, cats, and lastly a pig, of which animal more anon. Finally, the sides, front and back fell down, and there was discovered, sleeping peacefully on the floor of the ark, a beautifully-dressed lady (Mlle. D'Alton), all signs of the water having disappeared.

At the beginning of the spring I went on tour in the North of England, taking with me my " Noah's Ark " Illusion and all the

paraphernalia connected with it, including the pig. I reached Liverpool a few days before Easter, and going down to the Star Music Hall, at which I was engaged to appear, inquired if my luggage had arrived and also if the pig had come with it. Just then the proprietor of the "Star," Mr. Fineberg, senior, a highly-respected member of the Jewish fraternity, happened to come up.

"What's that?" he exclaimed. "A pig! And this Passover Week! Mr. Hertz, I am surprised at you! And I really don't know whether I ought not to get an injunction to stop you performing with it, for you know very well I won't have any pork in my house this week?"

Although he made a joke of the matter, I fancy the good man was not a little annoyed at the presence of the pig at such a time, and would have been very glad if I could have dispensed with it in my performance, as he was a very strict Jew.

I had some fearful and wonderful adventures with this pig before I returned to town. When I was about to leave York the authorities placed an embargo on "piggie," as, owing to the prevalence of swine fever, an Order in Council prohibited the moving of pigs from one place to another. Then came the tug of war. I explained that my pig was different from other pigs; in fact, it was a domestic animal and of singularly gentlemanly habits. The Mayor, the County Council and the Board of Agriculture were in turn appealed to, and finally, after obtaining about six veterinary surgeons' certificates, and—according to one of the newspapers—"a sworn declaration from the pig itself," it was allowed to depart. At Leeds, however, it was again stopped and detained a night at the public expense, while the authorities satisfied themselves that everything was in order, and that it was in the same condition of health as when it left York. At last, after many vicissitudes, it managed to save its bacon, and I arrived in London with enough certificates and permits to fill a portmanteau.

I had a singular experience during an engagement at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, in 1895.

At that time I used to perform a trick in which I borrowed a gentleman's silk hat, and, after producing various articles from this hat, to hand it to my assistant and tell him to return it to its owner.

In going down the platform of the orchestra, my assistant used to fall, as though by accident, thereby apparently crushing the hat. I would then pretend to be very angry with him and say that he would have to buy the gentleman a new hat. Then I would tell him to bring me a large cannon, which looked like metal, but was really made of wood and painted black. Still pretending to be very angry, I would tear the hat into pieces and push the pieces down the mouth of the cannon, after which I would tell my assistant to bring me a cannon-ball. He would come struggling on to the stage with something which looked like a large, iron cannon-ball, about eight inches in circumference, although it was really an indiarubber ball painted black. This I would also put down the mouth of the cannon and, pointing the cannon towards the gallery, I would fire it. The ball would be sent by the force of the powder into the gallery, and, at the same moment, the silk hat would appear on the ceiling of the theatre, and, at a word of command from me, would drop down from the ceiling into my hands, when I would return it to the gentleman from whom I had borrowed it, quite uninjured.

On one occasion I had performed the trick as usual, and the ball had gone into the gallery. But one of the boys in the gallery, having got possession of the ball, threw it down into the dress-circle, where, unfortunately, it struck a lady in the face who was sitting there. A couple of days later the management of the Empire received a letter from a gentleman stating that his wife was seated in the dress-circle on that particular evening, and that the ball had struck her with its full force, coming direct from the cannon into her eye.

Of course this was impossible, as, in the first place, the ball when fired from the cannon had gone, not into the dress-circle, but into the gallery, and, in the second, as the ball was eight inches in circumference, it was too large to hit anyone in the

eye, as the cheek-bone and nose would prevent it doing so. However, the management sent for me and showed me the letter.

I said that the ball being made of rubber could not hurt anyone. But, a few days later, they received another letter, this time from the lady's solicitors, saying that, unless they were prepared to compensate their client, whose eye had been dangerously injured, proceedings would be taken against them.

This letter they also showed me, and, at their suggestion, I sent an eye specialist to visit the lady, who reported that her eye was not injured in any way and gave me a written statement to that effect. I took this to the management and advised them to pay nothing as the woman was not hurt. However, she went on with her action, and as those were the days of the crusade against the Empire promenade, and the directors did not want to go to law, they settled the matter out of Court by paying her £50.

CHAPTER XI

I leave England for New York to fulfil an engagement at Oscar Hammerstein's new theatre on Broadway—Hammerstein's wagers—His extraordinary versatility—I return to England and prepare to start on a tour of South Africa—The cinematograph—Difficulty in procuring a machine to take with me—I sail for South Africa in the *Norman* and give the first cinematograph performance ever given at sea—Troublous times in South Africa—My adventures with Boer officials at Vereeniging—Arrival in Johannesburg—An expensive bath—Scene in the theatre on the night of the release of the Reformers who had been sentenced to death—Success of the cinematograph—In order to show fresh pictures, I make use of Kinetoscope films—Racing at Auckland Park—A bet of £10 to a cigarette won by the punter—Barney Barnato—Anecdotes of him—A "Johnny" plays poker.

EARLY in January, 1896, I left England for New York, having been specially engaged by Oscar Hammerstein to open his new theatre on Broadway, called the New York Theatre. Hammerstein's theatre was a wonderful building, in fact there were two theatres separated by a concert hall, the other theatre being called the Olympic. When I arrived in New York the place was not nearly finished; indeed, the roof was not yet on. But Hammerstein had made a bet of \$10,000 that he would open it on a certain day and, rather than lose his wager, he did so on the date advertised, though the paint on some of the orchestra seats was not even dry, in consequence of which the dresses of most of the ladies present were ruined, and he had, of course, to pay for new dresses for them. This cost him a considerable sum of money, but he did not mind, saying that the advertisement was worth it.

For the opening of the Olympic Theatre he had also wagered a large sum that he would be locked in a room for twenty-four

hours, and in that time would write and compose a new opera, including the full score connected with it. This he did, and the opera called "Marguerite" was produced on February 10th, 1896.

Hammerstein was a wonderful man and a most ingenious one ; he could do pretty well anything. During the rehearsals, at one moment he would be in the orchestra leading the band ; the next on the stage assisting the stage-carpenter, and directly afterwards he would be found in the wardrobe-room helping to make the ladies' costumes. When you next saw him he would be painting scenery ; in fact, he was a Jack-of-all-trades.

At the beginning of March I returned to England and, a few days after my arrival, left Southampton on my first visit to South Africa, on which I took with me the first cinematograph that was ever exhibited there. I can also claim to have given the first cinematograph performance ever given at sea, which I gave on the s.s. *Norman*, during my voyage to the Cape.

The cinematograph had lately been shown, for the first time in London, at the Polytechnic, by Treway, formerly a well-known juggler and a relative of the Lumières, who were one of the first makers of cinematograph machines. It was subsequently transferred to the Empire Theatre, where it was shown at *matinées* only. Shortly afterwards an English machine, made by a man named Paul, was exhibited at the Alhambra. At this time these were the only two types of machine on the market.

It occurred to me that it would be good speculation if I could get one of these machines to take to South Africa with me and introduce into my entertainment. I accordingly went to see Treway, whom I knew very well, to try either to purchase or hire a machine, but he would not let me have one. So I went to see Paul, in the hope that he would prove more accommodating.

Paul agreed to sell me a machine for £50, but said that he could not deliver it for two or three months. I told him that I was leaving for South Africa on the following Saturday—it

was then Wednesday—and that I would like to take the machine with me. But he said that he only had two machines, and that these were on the stage at the Alhambra, where he was fulfilling a six months' engagement at £100 a week. I asked him whether he would not let me have one of these machines, to which he replied that that was impossible, as he had to have a spare machine in readiness, in case the other got out of order. I offered him £80, but he would not listen to me, and I went away much disappointed.

The next night I called to see him again, took him out to my club to supper and did all I could to induce him to sell me one of his machines. But it was no use; he would not do so. However, on the Friday night, the night before I was to sail for South Africa, I determined to make a last attempt, and accordingly took him out to supper again and offered him £100 for one of his machines. He repeated, however, that he could not risk parting with one; he must have a machine in reserve in case of accidents.

"Well," said I, "you had better take me over to the Alhambra and explain to me the working of the machine and all about it, so that I shall understand how to use it when one is sent out to me."

So we went back to the Alhambra, where he took me on to the stage and showed me the whole working of the machine—how to fix the films in and everything concerning it. We were there for over an hour, during which I kept on pressing him to let me have one of the machines. Finally, I said:—

"Look here! I am going to take one of these machines with me now."

With that, I took out £100 in notes, put them into his hand, got a screw-driver, and almost before he knew it, I had one of the machines unscrewed from the floor of the stage and on to a four-wheeler.

The next day I sailed for South Africa on the *Norman* with the first cinematograph which had ever left England. I knew very little about it, as I had not paid much attention to Paul's instructions the night before, having been too busy thinking

how I could get possession of one of the machines. However, so soon as we were at sea, I got the machine out and began to study it, and when I thought I knew all about it I went to the captain and obtained his permission to give an exhibition in the saloon.

A notice was accordingly put up in the gangway that on the following evening an exhibition of the cinematograph, the latest London sensation, would be given, which created much pleasurable anticipation amongst the passengers. Late that night, when nearly everyone had gone to bed, one of the ship's electricians and myself fitted up the cinematograph and the screen in the saloon. But, as neither of us knew much about focussing, we could not get a picture on the screen, though we were working until nearly five o'clock in the morning. So there was nothing to be done but to put up another notice to the effect that the announced exhibition had been unavoidably postponed.

We were up the next night, and the night after that, trying to master the machine, and at last, just when we were beginning to despair, we succeeded in getting a picture on the screen after nearly setting fire to one of the films. After that everything went smoothly enough, and two or three evenings later I was able to give the first cinematograph exhibition ever witnessed at sea.

I arrived in South Africa at a very troubled time. It was the time of the Jameson Raid. I left Cape Town for Johannesburg not long after the Raid and did not reach the Golden City without an adventure.

At Vereeniging, the frontier town, all our luggage was examined and searched for arms and ammunition.

I had with me forty large trunks and packing-cases, and saw at once that if I were forced to open them I should have no end of trouble and delay the train for hours. So I explained to the chief inspector that the boxes contained only theatrical properties and begged him not to put us all to the inconvenience and delay which an examination of them must entail. At first I could not induce the obstinate Boer to budge an inch ; he had

instructions, he said, to examine all luggage, and he was going to carry them out. But at last he consented to open one case, and, if he found nothing contraband in it, to allow the rest to go through.

As ill luck would have it, the very case he selected for examination contained a trick cannon, which was made of wood, but was painted black to look like metal. You should have seen the Boer when he set eyes on this thing. He was furious, and I was forthwith marched off and taken before half-a-dozen commissioners, whom I had the utmost difficulty in persuading that I was not smuggling some infernal device of modern science into the country.

When at last I was allowed to go back to the station, I found my fellow-passengers frowning at the way in which I had delayed the train, but they were destined to be kept a little longer. For, I regret to say, some demon of mischief prompted me to play a practical joke on the official who had caused me so much trouble. So, having offered him a cigar which he accepted, I handed him my match-box, which was a trick one, and was so contrived that a small cartridge exploded whenever you opened it.

When the thing went off the Boer was so astonished that he fairly jumped. Then, in a great wrath, he seized me by the arm and hauled me before the commissioners for the second time. Another long explanation followed, but eventually, after admonishing me very severely, they let me go, and our train departed.

On reaching Johannesburg, my wife and I went to the Victoria Hotel, where rooms had been engaged for us. The two days' journey from Cape Town to Johannesburg had been a most unpleasant one, and I had got covered with a peculiar kind of red dust which had penetrated my clothes and in places stained my skin a reddish colour. Naturally, therefore, I badly wanted a bath, and so soon as we got to our room I undressed, put on my pyjamas and dressing-gown, rang for the chambermaid and asked her where the bath-room was. The girl looked at me in astonishment.

" Good gracious, there's no bathroom here ! " she exclaimed. " They're so short of water in Johannesburg, that the hotel can hardly get enough for cooking ! " And she went out laughing.

When she had gone, I said to my wife :—

" This is all nonsense ! There must be a bath-room in the hotel, and I'm going to hunt around and find it."

I went out into the corridor, opened a door, and, to my joy, found what looked like a bath-tub half-filled with clean water. So I rushed back to our rooms and said to my wife, who was engaged in unpacking :—

" Quick ! Give me a sponge, some soap and a bath-towel. I'm in luck, for I've found a bath half full of water, and I'm going to have a bath before anyone else finds it."

I hurried off to the bath-room, locked the door, took off my pyjamas, and was on the point of stepping into the water, when there came a thunderous knock at the door and a man's voice shouted :—

" Open the door at once ! "

I did so, and the manager of the hotel came in.

" I say," he exclaimed, " you haven't been in that water, have you ? "

" No," I answered ; " but I was just going to get in ? "

" Thank heaven ! " he exclaimed fervently.

" What do you mean ? " I asked.

" Mean ! " he exclaimed. " Why, man, it's all the water we've got in the hotel for cooking ! "

And so, to my disgust, I had to go back to my room without a bath ; but I was determined to have one somehow, and, having managed to get a tub, I ordered two dozen bottles of soda-water, of which there was fortunately plenty in the hotel, though they charged pretty heavily for it. The soda-water I emptied into the tub, and, though it was the most expensive bath I ever had, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I had another rather unusual experience at this hotel. On our arrival I had arranged with the manager to board and lodge my wife and myself for eight guineas a week each, but a day or two afterwards he came to me and said :—

" Mr. Hertz, I'm very sorry, but I shall have to raise the price of your board."

" Why ? " said I. " You agreed to take us for eight guineas a week each."

" Quite so, but since then the price of meat has gone up ! "

Those were stirring days in Johannesburg. Martial law was in force and it affected our business a good deal, and sometimes the Empire Theatre, where we were performing, was only half-filled. One night some shots were fired just outside, and everyone in the theatre jumped up and rushed out, leaving me standing there alone.

I shall never forget the scene in the theatre on the night of the release of the Reformers who had been sentenced to death. When they came in, the whole audience rose to their feet, and there was a scene of tremendous enthusiasm. Needless to say, there were no more conjuring feats that night. The released prisoners got on to the stage and made speeches, and then invited everyone in the theatre to have drinks at their expense. Waiters were kept busy running into the auditorium with drinks from the adjoining bars, and now and again some reckless enthusiast would knock tray and glasses out of the hands of a waiter and send them spinning into the air, whereupon he would merely inquire the damage and pay at once.

When things had quieted down, we did big business and played to crowded houses, the cinematograph proving a tremendous draw. Unfortunately, however, I only had five fifty-foot films, which did not allow of much change of programme, with the result that after a while the audience began to fall off. Meantime, I had been cabling to London to try to get fresh pictures, but without success, and I had almost abandoned hope of being able to show anything new when one day, while passing through an arcade in Johannesburg, I caught sight of the following notice in the window of a rubber-shop :—

KINETOSCOPE : ADMISSION SIXPENCE.

I went in and found that this was the machine in which

you looked down into an upright case and saw moving pictures which were on films. An idea suddenly occurred to me, and I asked the proprietor if he had any old films which he would be willing to sell me. After some conversation, he sold me twenty films for £10, and I went away rejoicing, thinking I had enough fresh pictures to last me for a month. But, to my intense disappointment, I found when I got to the theatre that the films from the Kinetoscope would not fit my machine, as the sprocket-holes were all differently arranged. However, I thought of a way out of the difficulty, and accordingly set to work to cement all the sprocket-holes with fresh strips of film and make fresh sprocket-holes which would fit my machine. It is only those who understand films who can have any idea what a terribly tedious job this was. But at last it was completed, and I was able the next night to announce an entire change of programme. The movements of the persons and animals on the screen were so slow as to be really comical, for the films were worked on the Kinetoscope by electricity, whereas the first cinematograph machines were worked by hand. But the audience, who knew no better, thought the pictures great, and we did wonderful business.

While at Johannesburg I made the acquaintance of a gentleman who was the official starter at the Auckland Park Racecourse, and one day he invited me to accompany him to a meeting there.

In the third race I saw one of the most singular incidents I ever witnessed on a racecourse. It was a five-furlong affair, and the horses had lined up ready to start, when suddenly one of the jockeys broke the line, cantered his mount right up to the stands and shouted to a bookmaker :—

“What price mine?”

“Five to one,” was the answer.

“All right—twenty-five to five,” cried the jockey, and, turning his horse, rode back to the starting-post. I smiled, thinking that this was merely a ruse to get people to back an animal that was not “spinning,” and thus make a market for something that was. But, to my surprise, the horse won.

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Another amusing incident happened in a later race.

Among the competitors for this event were two horses from the same stable, named, if I remember rightly, Esmeralda and Bon Marché. Esmeralda was backed for pounds, shillings and pence and was soon an odds-on chance, while the other was knocked out to any price you liked to ask. I heard a bookmaker offer "fifties," then 66 to 1, and finally 100 to 1 against him, but without attracting a single shilling.

"Well," he exclaimed, laughing, "I'll see if I can't get someone to back this thing. Here's ten pounds to a cigarette Bon Marché!"

"I'll take that!" cried a young man who was standing next me, and going up to the bookmaker, he pulled out his cigarette-case and handed him a cigarette.

And, marvellous to relate, Bon Marché, that most hopeless of outsiders, got up almost in the last stride, and beat his stable companion, the odds-on favourite, a head!

The lucky punter walked up to the bookmaker who had laid him the bet, presented his ticket, and was duly paid his winnings. But still he lingered.

"Hullo! What do you want?" inquired the layer.

"I want my cigarette back," answered the youth coolly.

While at Johannesburg I became very friendly with the late Barney Barnato, the South African plutocrat of whom so many stories are told. Barney was indeed a singular character. Although he was supposed to be a multi-millionaire, he never had any money in his pocket. He was always borrowing a shilling or a two-shilling piece, and, if he asked you to have a drink, in nine cases out of ten he would borrow the money from you to pay for it.

I remember the occasion of my benefit at the Empire Theatre. There were eight private boxes in the theatre, and it was customary for the artists whose benefit it was to sell the boxes for whatever they could get for them, and the stalls were usually sold at a guinea each. When you sold a box you would simply say to the person whom you thought would buy it: "Here's a box for my benefit. You can send me a

cheque on some time," and the cheque usually varied from ten to twenty-five guineas.

A couple of days before my benefit took place I had sold all my boxes but one (amongst those who had bought them being Mr. Solly Joel, who had sent me a cheque for twenty-five guineas), and, meeting Barney Barnato in the street, I said to him :—

"Barney, my benefit is on Friday night. I have sold all my boxes except one, and that one I have saved specially for you. I could have sold it half-a-dozen times over, but I knew you would be sure to want one." And I was about to hand him the ticket for the box when he said :—

"Has Solly"—meaning Solly Joel—"bought one?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well then," said he, "I'll go in his box, and it won't cost me anything."

I had, however, no trouble in disposing of the box, and I had a bumper house.

On another occasion, Barney Barnato asked my wife and myself to supper after the theatre. I was standing at the bar of the Empire Theatre at the time he gave me the invitation, and I told him I would ask my wife, as I did not know what arrangements she might have made for that evening. I came back and told him that we could not come, as my wife had already promised to go to supper with Marie Belfry, who was also playing in Johannesburg at this time, and a friend of hers.

"That's all right," said Barney, "you ask them to come along with you to my supper-party, and if you see any other friends of yours ask them as well."

I went on the stage again and asked several people, and that evening after the performance a party of ten of us, including Barney Barnato, went to a well-known restaurant and were given a table large enough to accommodate us all. As soon as we sat down, the waiters came for orders, and we of course expected Barney to ask us what we would like to have. But he never said a word. After a long and very embarrassing silence, I said :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, give your orders. What are you all going to have?"

"No, no, Mr. Hertz," said the man who was with Marie Belfry, "this supper is on me." And, as he insisted, I gave way, and the waiters went round the tables taking our orders for supper. When they came to Barney Barnato he said that all he wanted was a cup of coffee, and he let Miss Belfry's friend pay for the refreshments.

It was customary for the results of all the big races in England to be posted up in the bar of the Empire Theatre. As a rule, the cables came about seven o'clock in the evening, by which time the bar was usually packed. In the Liverpool Cup of that year Barney Barnato had a horse running called Stowmarket, which was well backed in Johannesburg, though the owner did not fancy its chance. I was in the bar at the Empire when the cable with the result of the race arrived, and before it was posted up the messenger showed it me, and I saw that Barney Barnato's horse had won at 100 to 8. As I knew that it would be a big surprise for him, I and another man called a cab and drove to his house to tell him the good news. Telling the cabman to wait for us, we went in and found Barney having tea.

"We've got some good news for you, Barney," I exclaimed. "Your horse has won the Liverpool Cup. We thought we would come and tell you."

He didn't seem particularly pleased, but asked us to sit down and wait till he had had his tea, without inviting us to have tea with him or any other refreshment. I said:—

"We won't wait, we've got the cab waiting outside."

"Never mind," he said, "let the cab wait till I'm ready."

He kept us a good half-hour and then drove with us to the theatre. When we got there, he let me pay for the cab, and we went into the bar, which by this time was packed. When they saw him come in they gave him a tremendous cheer, but, instead of saying: "Thank you, gentlemen," and calling for drinks all round, he took not the slightest notice, but walked up to the counter and said: "Give me a whiskey-and-soda."

With all his faults and eccentricities, however, Barney Barnato was at bottom a very good-hearted man, who could never see a friend in need, and I must say he gave me some very good times during my stay at Johannesburg.

"Jo'burg" was in those days the happy hunting-ground of the knights of industry, and woe betide the pigeon who fell into their clutches, as the following story which I heard will show.

Shortly before my visit to the Golden City, a well-gilt and extremely callow youth of the "Johnny" variety, who was seeing the world, arrived there and was introduced to a certain club which did not bear the very best of reputations. Here he was presently enticed by certain of the members, who had very speedily sized him up as a "mug" of the purest type, into a game of poker.

The stakes were high, and though the Johnny won at first, he soon began to lose steadily, and at the end of an hour or so was a very considerable sum out of pocket. Presently, however, he found himself with a "full hand" and saw a chance of getting some of his money back. Accordingly, he doubled the pool, but one of his opponents also seemed to hold a strong hand, as he promptly redoubled; and the two went on betting against one another, the other players having dropped out of the game. At last the Johnny called his opponent.

"I've got a 'full hand,'" said he. "What have you got?"

"I've got a 'pluit,'" answered the sharp, showing his hand, which did not contain even a pair, but was a mixture of a 2, a 5, an 8, a 9, and a queen of different suits. "So you're beat."

"Why, you've got nothing at all!" exclaimed the astonished Johnny.

"I tell you I've got a 'pluit,' as you can see for yourself, and a 'pluit' beats everything."

"But I've never heard of such a hand!" protested the Johnny. "I shall refuse to pay." (As they had soon exhausted the ready cash they had about them, they had been putting L.O.U.'s in the pool.)

"Then you can't know much about poker. But look here—are you willing to abide by the rules of this club?"

"Certainly I am," answered the other; upon which the sharp rang for a waiter and told him to bring a book of the club rules. On the book being brought, he turned over the pages and then handed it to his opponent, indicating a certain paragraph relating to the game of poker as played in this particular establishment, at the end of which the astonished youth read the following words:—

"A 'pluit' beats everything."

"Well," said he, "I suppose I have lost and I must pay, but I don't mind telling you that I've held that kind of hand over and over again and thrown it away."

The game was resumed, and presently the Johnny got the same hand as his opponent had recently held.

"Now," said he to himself, "this is where I get my own back."

So he and the sharp, who held a "full hand" this time, started betting furiously again, until at length the latter called him, saying:—

"I've got a 'full hand'!"

"Not good enough!" cried the youth exultingly. "I've got you beat; for I've got a 'pluit' this time!" And he threw his cards face upwards on the table.

"That's no good," remarked the sharp contemptuously.

"No good! Why, a 'pluit' beats everything!"

For answer, the sharp picked up the book of rules and handed it to the other, pointing to the bottom of the last page, on which was printed in italics:

"Notice.

"It has been decided by the committee that a 'pluit' at poker can only occur once during the game."

CHAPTER XII

Continuation of my South African tour—I sail for Australia—Huge success of the cinematograph at Melbourne—I am summoned for permitting overcrowding in the theatre—Visit to New Zealand—I buy a derelict steamer by way of advertisement—The cockatoo of Charters Towers—I return to Australia and set out from Perth with a caravan of twenty camels on a tour through West Australia—Fatigues and discomforts of travel through this waterless country—Improvised theatres in mining-camps—Seats paid for with gold dust and nuggets—Liberality of the miners—My adventure with the Bushmen—Arrival at Coolgardie—A “sacred” illusion show—I sail for Ceylon.

ON leaving Johannesburg, I toured all through South Africa, performing at Pretoria, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg, Durban, King William’s Town and other places. In July, 1896, I sailed from Cape Town on a second visit to Australia, and opened, as during my previous visit, at the Melbourne Opera House, where I introduced the cinematograph in connection with my own entertainment. It proved a tremendous draw, and the theatre was so packed that I was summoned and fined on three different occasions for permitting overcrowding.

After visiting Sydney and Adelaide, I toured the principal towns of New Zealand, the cinematograph being everywhere a great success. While I was at Napier a derelict steamer, which had been wrecked just outside the harbour, and which it had been found impossible to refloat, was put up at auction, and, to my manager’s astonishment, I told him to go to the sale, and, if the steamer could be bought at a low price, to buy it for me.

" Good heavens ! " he exclaimed, " what on earth are you going to do with a wrecked steamer ? "

" That," said I, " is just what everyone will say, and is just what I want. It will be a good advertisement for me, since everyone will be asking : ' Why on earth has Carl Hertz bought this wrecked steamer ? Is he going to do some trick with it ? ' "

There was no opposition at the sale, and the steamer was knocked down to my manager for the sum of £5, and, as I had foreseen, the news that I had acquired it was telegraphed all over New Zealand and Australia. I don't know what became of that steamer ; it may be lying there still for all I know. But it was the best five-pounds'-worth of publicity I ever had.

On leaving New Zealand, I made a tour of Queensland. At the hotel I stayed at in Charters Towers they had a cockatoo which was a wonderful talker. He was not kept in a cage, but was always out in the open, fastened to a Tee-piece by a chain attached to his leg. The proprietor of the hotel told me that it was no use putting him in a cage, as he invariably managed to break open the door and get away.

" He's never forgiven me for having fastened him to a chain," said he, " and ever since the word ' chain ' has merely to be mentioned to him, in any form whatever, for him to use the most awful language."

He then asked me to say to the bird : " What about the chain ? " So I said :

" Hallo, Cocky, what about the chain ? "

" Oh, to hell with the chain ! " was the answer.

Later in the day I brought one of the members of my company up to the hotel, and, showing him the cockatoo, told him that he was such an extraordinarily intelligent bird that he understood all that was said to him and could carry on a conversation just like a human being.

" Just try him," I said. " Tell him that you're thinking of buying him a watch, but don't quite know what to do about the chain."

He went up to the bird and said :—

“ Good afternoon, Cocky. I’ve just seen a nice watch down the street which I’m thinking of buying for you, but I’m not quite certain what to do about the chain.”

“ Oh, to hell with the chain ! ” said the bird.

From Queensland I journeyed back to Sydney, for a return engagement ; thence to Melbourne and Adelaide, after which I set out on one of the most eventful tours I ever undertook, through West Australia.

Eight assistants accompanied my wife and myself on our travels, and, in order to get through the country in certain parts, we were obliged to charter twenty camels to transport ourselves and all the apparatus necessary for my illusions, since I presented my audiences even in the most out-of-the-way places with precisely the same entertainment as I gave in England. The effect of some of them on the natives was often very amusing, and I have frightened them to the point of panic by transforming a man into a woman, or making a lady float round and turn somersaults in the air. On witnessing the latter illusion it was quite a common occurrence for half of the native part of the audience in country places to jump up and rush out.

I started from Perth and made a trip five hundred miles inland to Boulder City, stopping at about a dozen mining camps on the way. Some idea of the discomforts of travel through that country may be gauged from the fact that every drop of water used by man or beast over that five hundred miles or in the camps had to be carted from Perth. By the time one gets to Coolgardie water is worth £1 a bucket, and I have paid that price many a time for water to wash up with after my show. And at the hotel that was the price charged for a bath. There was no bathroom, and the bath consisted of an oil tin, about eighteen inches high and six inches in diameter, suspended from a nail over your head. To this was attached a cord, which, when pulled, tilted the tin and upset the water over you. This was what was called a first-class bath ; but the water

was not allowed to be wasted, and, if no soap were used, you were only charged half-price for your bath, as in that case the water could be given to the animals.

In some locations they were able to procure water by boring very deep, but it was totally unfit for household use, much less for drinking. One does not fully value the convenience of a plentiful water supply until a tour is made into a desert country; but a peculiarity of travel through such countries is that nowhere does one need water so much as was the case in Western Australia. The red dust penetrates the very clothing; it is impossible to keep it out.

All caravans to the interior are organised at Perth. The camels in the mining camps are all owned by natives, who are a hard lot to deal with and have no hesitation in holding up a stranger and making him pay about double the usual rate. I spent some weeks in Perth before I started, and, as I took care to pick up all the information I could, I was pretty well posted by the time I was ready to organise my expedition. I secured a caravan of twenty camels and agreed to pay £50 for the trip, which, of course, sounds very cheap, but then I had to feed them and their drivers as well, and this was a pretty heavy item. As I said before, I had to transport all my apparatus, but I only took one set of stage scenery, and that had to do duty for every act.

Next to the scarcity of water, the great drawback in that country is the lack of fresh meat. In Boulder City and Menzies mutton was five shillings a pound and fresh eggs cost six shillings a dozen. But Chicago comes nobly to the rescue, for it pretty nearly feeds the entire country with tinned corned-beef, roast beef and condensed soup. But even these are expensive luxuries, for a two-pound tin of corned-beef sells at six shillings, and sometimes, when the supply trains are delayed, the price jumps up nearly a hundred per cent.

I shall never forget my first day out from Perth. I had heard a good deal of the terrors of riding on camel-back, and during our stay in Perth my wife and I would go out occasionally and take a ride on a camel, in order to accustom



Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hertz on Camels in Western Australia.

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ourselves to the peculiar motion of the beast. We soon found, however, that riding all day on a camel over a desert was quite a different experience from half-an-hour's trot over the smooth streets of Perth. There is one kind of work that camels are experts in. They can kick up more dust and make less fuss about it than any quadruped that walks the earth, and when you get thirty or forty of them in tow they raise a cloud of dust which pretty well suffocates everyone but themselves. You can sight a caravan of camels a long distance off by its dust-cloud, just as you can locate a steamer at sea by its smoke.

We made slow progress the first day, since no one but the natives could stand the fatigue and discomfort, but long before the trip was over we all got hardened to camel-riding and could endure it almost as well as they could.

My advance-manager had gone on ahead about two months before, for he had far more work to do than is the case in England, and in some of the towns which we visited he was obliged to build his own theatre before we could show. But in this there is one advantage, in that you can make the theatre of any size you want and arrange it to suit your own convenience. The theatre consists of a sort of corral built of sage bush, and you can enclose as much ground as you think fit. The fence is about twelve feet high, and the natives weave the twigs so closely together that the "Peeping Toms" cannot see through, much less crawl through.

A theatre capable of accommodating about a thousand people can be put up at a cost of some £20, which is cheaper than renting, in the event of one intending to stay a week or more in the town. In those cases where the theatre was rented we paid about £5 a night, and for this the proprietors not only furnished the theatre, but guaranteed to keep the enclosure in such condition that no one could peep through; and, to make doubly sure, a guard of four or five men was placed round the sage while the show was going on. The proprietor of the theatre provided and paid the guards.

All through the country the price for reserved seats was 24s. and the other seats 12s., while 6s. was charged for standing

room. Any old thing, from a bench down to a kerosene-box, answered for a reserved seat. Sometimes it happened that not enough chairs and boxes could be found in the town to fill the reserved seat section, and I paid as much as £1 for the loan of a ten-foot board and a further 8s. for the use of three boxes on which to place it. But since that plank brought in £7 on the sale of reserved seats, it turned out a highly profitable investment. In some places the miners used to pay the 6s. admission to stand up at the back of the house to see the first act, and, if they liked the show, there would then be a scramble for the reserved seats. Sometimes they would bring a chair along with them, but we charged 12s. for it, just as though it belonged to the theatre.

Very little currency is seen in that country. Nearly all the trade was carried on in gold dust and nuggets, and to have travelled through it without a pair of gold scales would have been like sailing a ship across the Atlantic without a compass. As the miners everywhere were very liberal there was always a good profit in the box-office in overweight gold. In the rush of buying reserved seats the miners were not very particular as to the exact weight of the gold which they threw down, and were almost sure to give a little more than the required amount. Indeed, I have sometimes found on weighing up after the show that I had nearly £20 worth more than the box-office count of tickets called for.

I met with many strange experiences during this tour, but the most singular of all was one I had in Boulder City, where a number of Bushmen who had seen my performance plotted to kidnap me. They were much impressed by my manipulation of cards and coins and similar feats, and must have concluded that a man who could handle these coins so dexterously would be a great addition to their tribe.

As a rule, there is a very strong feeling against the whites amongst these Bushmen,, in fact, their case is somewhat parallel to that of the Indians in the Western States of America. They consider that the whites have deprived them of their country and homes, but they are treacherous even towards one another,

and it was owing to this that their plot against me came to nothing.

One of their number, to whom I had been very kind, warned me of what was in the wind, and though, of course, I might have reported the matter to the authorities, who would have punished them very severely, I decided to deal with them myself.

Accordingly, I arranged, through the man who had given me warning of their intentions, to meet some of them outside the town and give them a private exhibition of my magic powers. They thought, I learned afterwards, that this would afford them an excellent opportunity for carrying me off, and had arranged to do so as soon as I had concluded my performance.

After I had done several tricks, I told them that I would now call down fire from heaven, and that, if I pleased, my power was such that I could cause it to consume them all. I made a few passes and, in tragic tones, began repeating sentences in Spanish, which they probably regarded as my means of communicating with heaven. Suddenly the clothes of the bushmen burst into flames, and they ran in every direction, yelling with terror and tearing off their burning clothing. Having got rid of it, they made a bolt for the woods, and I never saw one of them again.

The trick which I had played on them was very simple, and similar to one which I employed on the stage. I had a combustible fluid, which was perfectly harmless until exposed to the air. While talking to the Bushmen I had, unobserved by them, sprinkled a little of this fluid on their clothing, and I so timed my work as to know at about what moment it would break into flames. The Bushmen of West Australia to this day tell stories of the man who could call down fire from heaven; in fact the story grew with repetition, until they credited me with powers I never dreamed of.

When I arrived at Coolgardie it was a Sunday evening, and I was astonished to find the streets crowded with people walking aimlessly up and down. I inquired of the manager

of our hotel where all these people came from and if they had no place to go to on a Sunday night.

"No," said he, "there is nothing for them to do but parade the streets like this."

I thought to myself what a fortune a person could make if he could give a theatrical performance, or, in fact, any kind of an entertainment on a Sunday night which would attract these people. But I was told that no performance of any kind was permitted on Sundays. However, I made up my mind that I would have a good try to give one.

Accordingly, next day I called on the mayor, gave him some complimentary tickets for my performance that night, and contrived to get on quite friendly terms with him. A day or two later, I called again and asked him if he would give me permission to give a performance on the following Sunday evening. He answered that he was very sorry that he could not oblige me, as no entertainment of any kind was allowed on Sundays, except a sacred concert.

"Well," said I, "what about a sacred illusion show?"

"Whatever is a sacred illusion show?" inquired the worthy magistrate in astonishment.

"Well, I am doing an illusion called 'Noah's Ark.' It is, as the title implies, a Biblical illusion and of a very sacred character. Besides this illusion, I have some pictures which I can show on the cinematograph representing 'The March of the Holy Carpet' and several other religious films, so that I can manage to give an entirely sacred performance."

On these conditions, the mayor finally granted me the permission I asked for, and bills were accordingly got out announcing 'A Grand Sacred Magical and Cinematograph Entertainment' to be given on the following Sunday. It proved an immense success, the theatre being packed to suffocation, while hundreds were turned away from the doors.

Some few weeks later, I happened to meet a friend of mine, Mr. Fitzgerald, manager of the Fitzgerald Brothers' Circus, a well-known circus which was travelling through Australia at this time, and when I told him of this incident he said :—

“ That was a great idea of yours ! We are going to Coolgardie next week, and I must try to get on the right side of your friend the mayor and persuade him to let me give ‘ A Grand Sacred Circus ’ on the Sunday evening ! ”

At the close of our tour in West Australia, we sailed for Colombo, Ceylon, where I engaged the Town Hall for three performances, but our entertainment was such a success that we remained twelve days, when we went on to Kandy. From Kandy we returned to Colombo and gave a further series of performances before sailing for Bombay.

CHAPTER XIII

Refusal of the manager of the Novelty Theatre, Bombay, to give me another date, notwithstanding the fact that the plague is raging there—I decide to open on the date I have booked and sail for Bombay—Notwithstanding the epidemic, we play to packed houses—Method by which the theatre is darkened to allow of the cinematograph being shown at a matinée—Extraordinary cheapness of native labour—Continuation of my Indian tour—The Fakirs and their tricks—The Mango Trick—The Rope Trick—Version of the latter trick performed by me—My opinion of Indian conjurers.

I HAD engaged the Novelty Theatre at Bombay for two weeks, and, as is the custom in India, paid the full rent for the theatre in advance, about £120. While at Colombo, the news came that the plague, which had broken out in Bombay some weeks before, had spread to such an extent that the death-rate was something like three hundred a day. The theatres had been closed for nearly a month, as it was not considered advisable for people to congregate in crowds until the epidemic had abated.

In these circumstances, I was strongly advised by people at Colombo not to go on to Bombay, both on account of the danger and also because, even if I were to succeed in obtaining permission to give my performance, I should probably have to play to empty houses, as few people would care to come to the theatre while the plague continued. Accordingly, I cabled to the manager of the Novelty Theatre to ask him if he would oblige me by postponing my date to such a time as the epidemic should have ceased or at any rate abated. But he replied that I must either open on the date booked or lose the rent I had paid him. I cabled again offering to cancel the date and

forfeit half the rent, if he would return me the other half. But again he refused, saying that I must either play or pay.

And so, with many misgivings, I sailed for Bombay, and, having obtained permission from the authorities, opened at the Novelty Theatre on the date I had booked. Matters were in a terrible state when we arrived ; people were dying at the rate of five hundred a day, and I myself on several occasions saw natives drop down in the street, stricken by this terrible disease. Often they died where they had fallen, and lay there until picked up by one of the carts which went about the streets collecting the dead. The door of every house in which there was a case of plague had to be marked by a circle with a cross in the centre, and house after house I passed was marked in this way. Everyone told me how foolish I was to come to Bombay at such a time, but I explained that I had booked the theatre and could not get out of it, and therefore had decided to take my chance.

Greatly to my surprise, we opened to an enormous house, which was literally packed from floor to ceiling, and every night numbers of people had to be turned away. The fact was that, as all the theatres had been closed, the people had seen no performance of any kind for about six weeks, so that they were only too pleased to have some place to which they could go to divert their minds from the plague. I was the first to show the cinematograph in India, and it proved such a success that my manager suggested that I should give a *matinée* on Saturday afternoon, beginning at three o'clock and concluding about five.

The Novelty Theatre was a wooden building, standing on an open plot of land, and the theatre was so constructed that there was a space of two or three inches between the boards, so as to admit the air, for, otherwise, it would have been too hot for people to sit there. I had had made all arrangements for giving this *matinée*, when, two days before, it suddenly occurred to me that it would be impossible for me to show the cinematograph on account of the light which would come through these openings between the boards, as it did not get dark until about eight o'clock. Accordingly, I went to the proprietor and

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asked him if there were any possible way to darken the theatre, so as to enable me to show the pictures for the benefit of all the children whom I expected to come.

"Yes," said he, "I can get the entire theatre covered up on all four sides, but it would make it terribly hot in there, and besides, if you decide to have it covered, the covering will have to be removed immediately after the *matinée*, so as to make it cool for the evening performance."

I asked the manager if he could give me some idea of what it would cost to have the theatre covered and uncovered again—it was a good-sized theatre capable of accommodating some 1,500 people—and I begged him to get it done as cheaply as he could, as I did not think the *matinée* would be much of a success, *matinées* being seldom given in India on account of the heat, while the price of admission for children was very small. However, he would give me no definite price or estimate, but said that if I would leave it to him he would get it done for me as cheaply as possible.

At seven o'clock on the Saturday morning about a hundred natives started to cover the building with long sheets of brown paper, which they tacked on to the woodwork, and they only completed their task just in time for the *matinée*. We had a pretty fair house, though it was not full, which was not surprising, as it was simply stifling. However, the children were highly delighted, and I was quite satisfied, even if I did not make much out of it. So soon as the *matinée* was over the natives began to uncover the theatre, in order to allow time for it to get cool again for the evening performance, and finished their work so quickly that at night the audience experienced but little discomfort.

In the evening I went to the manager, thanked him for having arranged everything so well, and said :—

"Well, what do I owe you? I hope it is not a great deal, as I didn't make much out of the *matinée*?"

He smiled and said :

"Will two and a half rupees (about two shillings) be too much?"

I was simply astonished, and at first could not believe that he was serious. But he told me that the natives usually work for next to nothing, and that the paper and tacks had been borrowed and returned afterwards.

To give an idea of how cheap native labour is in the East ; at one of the towns in Java which I visited I was unable to obtain a suitable building to give my performance in, so my advance-agent had to have one put up. The total cost came to just £1. It was made of palm leaves and bamboo, and the wood used was borrowed, and returned at the end of my engagement.

After leaving Bombay, we visited Poona, Allahabad, Calcutta and others towns and did exceedingly well.

I had, of course, all the lore of the white magician at my fingers' ends, but I desired to graduate in the great university of the Eastern World, and accordingly had Fakirs gathered from far and near to give their exhibitions. But the tricks they showed me were very ordinary ones, and, when their performance was over, I told them, through the interpreter, that I was very displeased with the childish things which I had seen. Amongst other tricks, they showed me the mango trick, and I saw at once that it was done by substitution. With their loose sleeves and robes, they have, of course, much greater facilities for concealing things than Western conjurers.

They began by planting a mango-seed, which they covered with a cloth. Under this cloth they worked with their hands, removing it at intervals to show us the mango-bush growing larger and larger. Finally, they showed us a large bush with fruit on it. It appeared to have grown from seed, but it was all a trick, done by substitution.

Almost everyone, I suppose, has heard of the famous Indian Rope Trick, an illusion which has been frequently described in books about the East, and is said to be performed by the Fakirs as a religious rite. I have long sought the secret of this particular trick and have probed deeply into the literature and tradition which surrounds Indian magic. Many novelists, in writing stories with an Indian setting, have

mentioned the Rope Trick, but it is another matter to find someone who has really seen it. The trick, which is usually performed out of doors, is as follows :—

The Fakir takes in his hand one end of a coil of rope and throws it to the sky. The first sensation is that the rope stays up, the coils unfolding until the rope, apparently supported by nothing, has attained a height of some 150 feet. Up the rope climbs a small native boy. He goes up hand-over-hand until he gets about half-way, when he disappears, and the rope behaves as any ordinary rope would behave—it falls to the ground. Before the audience have recovered from their astonishment, the boy comes running back out of space, as though nothing at all extraordinary had happened.

Sometimes, as a variant, the Indian magician will make a few passes over the coiled rope, and induce it to start going up straight into the air of its own accord.

Another and very interesting account of this famous trick is given by Mr. William Athey, of London, who claims to have seen the trick performed in Calcutta some forty-six years ago, towards the end of 1876. This is what he says :—

“ One evening, I was walking alone in the streets of Calcutta. It was just about dusk, and there was a thick haze in the air. You often get such a haze in Calcutta after a very hot day at the back-end of the year. I had nothing particular to do and, noticing a crowd in a small public garden in one of the streets, I went over to see what was going on. As I walked over I saw a Fakir about to commence his performance. He was a man about five foot six or seven in height, with long arms, which he kept waving about, and a long, flowing robe. He had with him a boy, quite a youngster and very light, dressed in just a linen cloth, with a rag over his shoulders. I should think he would weigh only four to five stone. There were only a few Europeans in the crowd, not more than six, I should think.

“ The Fakir stood with his back to some railings. There were some trees in the garden, I think, but they were not overhanging the place where the Fakir stood. Soon after he



The Indian Rope Trick, as Reported to be Performed in India.
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got there, he started to exhibit the rope ; he had the coils on his left arm. It was a rope no bigger than a good-sized clothes-line, and taking half of it in his other hand, he threw it up. It seemed to stay up. I could not see the end of the rope that had gone out of sight in the mist, but the other hung down on the ground. Then it seemed the boy came forward and climbed the rope ; he went up very quickly and was soon lost in the mist.

" The Fakir called out to the boy, and the boy answered him. They spoke in Hindustani, and I could not understand what they said ; but the Fakir seemed to get very angry with the boy and presently threw an open knife up to him. There was a scream, and a few drops of blood spattered down and splashed on the ground near the rope. Then the conversation between the man and the boy ceased, and the boy came walking into the crowd from behind the man.

" I have often thought about it," continued Mr. Athey, " and I firmly believe that the Fakir had simply mesmerised every European who was there. At most there were only five Europeans in the crowd, and whether the natives were mesmerised or not I cannot say, but if they were not, they are clannish enough not to have given him away. I am sure he mesmerised me. He talked incessantly in Hindustani, waved his arms about as if he were making passes, and fixed his eyes on each of the Europeans in turn. He had very queer eyes in his head. He seemed to look you right through. Thinking it over, I believe that I was mesmerised at the very beginning. I know well enough that it would take a very strong man even to throw a rope fifty feet up, and this seemed to go a hundred and fifty. The mist was rather low, and often you can't see the house-tops at dusk in Calcutta. I am as strong-minded as most men about that sort of thing, but some of those Fakirs would mesmerise the devil."

Mr. Athey adds that there was no indication that the natives regarded the trick as in any way part of a religious ceremony. The Fakir, he says, made a collection at the end, just the same as any other charlatan.

Another account I had given me of this trick was that it was performed at great festivals held in the open air, and in the presence of thousands of followers, to the accompaniment of the beating of drums, the chanting of music and the burning of incense. After a few preliminaries, in the course of which the multitude had been worked up into an acute state of excitement, the Fakir throws a coil of rope into the air, the rope being apparently suspended in a perpendicular position. A boy climbs the rope and is supposed to disappear into space.

To the onlookers, the act appears to be genuine enough ; in fact, a well-known music-hall manager claims to have witnessed a similar ceremony, only, in this case, the Fakir was supposed to climb the rope after the boy and cut him to pieces, because he refused to come down. First one leg would drop down ; then the other ; then an arm, then another arm, and, lastly, the head. The boy, however, later on was brought from an Indian basket, none the worse for his experience.

I have toured all over India, and I have over and over again endeavoured to find someone who has seen this trick performed, but I have never come across any European upon whose word I was able to rely who could say that he had seen it done. I have gone off the beaten track and made expeditions to remote districts to try and see the trick performed, but I was always unsuccessful, and although I have myself asked scores of Fakirs to perform the trick for me and offered to pay them large sums, they all professed themselves unable to do it, and some even went so far as to say that they had never even heard of it.

There are stories current which seem to bear out the theory of hypnotism, and one is to the effect that a person in the audience, who imagined he was actually witnessing the trick being performed, secretly took two photographic snapshots, one while the rope was supposed to be in the air, and the other while the boy was apparently on top of it. But, when the photographs came to be developed, they were both alike and showed the conjurer squatting on the ground, toying with the rope, while the boy was sitting quietly by his side.

At a meeting of the members of the Magic Circle, held a couple of years ago at Anderton's Hotel, in Fleet Street, a discussion took place amongst the conjurers and others present regarding the Rope Trick, and it was unanimously decided that no such trick had ever been performed.

When the late King Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, went to India in 1876, that country was, at his special request, scoured to find someone who could perform the trick. But no one was forthcoming.

I myself have for two or three years been performing a version of the Rope Trick, and, to all intents and purposes, the effect is the same. One of the London papers thus describes it :—

“ Carl Hertz has mystified the Palace audiences with the greatest feat of all—the Indian Rope Trick—which he claims that he is the only one to produce with a near approach to the skill of the Hindu fakir. There was a rich Oriental setting for this act. A Purdee lady reclines on a divan, fanned by a Punkah Wallah and amused by a Nautch dancer. Then enters Carl Hertz dressed as an Eastern despot. Dusky attendants rush about. Carl Hertz throws up the rope, which rises to the top of the proscenium, which is then tested to be sufficiently strong to support a person. A semi-naked Hindu youth climbs the rope in full view of the spectators. A cloth is then thrown over the youth still clinging to the rope, then the cloth is suddenly whisked away and it is found that the boy himself has vanished and the rope drops to the ground. The next moment the same boy appears from the front of the stalls.”

In conclusion, I may say that, in my opinion, the skill of the Indian conjurers is greatly exaggerated, and that they cannot be compared with any of our first-class Western conjurers. I have shown an Indian conjurer a simple trick such as the cigarette-paper trick, which consists of tearing a cigarette-paper to pieces and restoring it whole again, and the man was so astonished at it that he followed me about for hours, begging me to show him how it was done.

CHAPTER XIV

Burma—Singapore—Manila—Return to Singapore—Java—I fall ill of malaria at Batavia—"The Actors' Graveyard"—I receive an invitation to journey to Borneo to perform before a wealthy Dyak Rajah in the northern provinces—After some hesitation, I accept and sail for Borneo—Journey into the interior—The Rajah's "palace"—Visit to the town—A Dyak house—Human skulls, trophies of head-hunting—Appearance of the Dyaks—Their dress—Their ornaments—Terrible mutilation of the ear—The Rajah and his daughter—First performance—The Dyaks' manner of applause—Second performance—I am requested by the Rajah to defer my departure—The princess smiles—I receive a message from the Rajah offering me his daughter's hand in marriage—I decline the proposition, on the ground that my religion does not permit me to have more than one wife—The Rajah proposes that I shall change my religion—Serious situation in which I am placed—I feign acquiescence and resolve to effect my escape by the exercise of my art—My plan—Its success—A night in a property-basket.

FROM India we proceeded to Burma, where we played at Rangoon and Mandalay. From there we went to the Straits Settlements, and, after performing for a week at Singapore, sailed for Manila, the capital of the Philippines, which a few weeks before had been captured by the Americans under General Merrett. The town was full of American troops of both services, and for a fortnight we played to crowded and enthusiastic houses ; then we returned to Singapore. Here we played another week and then sailed for Java.

On reaching Batavia, I fell ill with malaria and was laid up for a fortnight, in consequence of which we were, of course, unable to open at the advertised time. I was told that everyone gets malaria in Java, and, so soon as I was convalescent, I was taken to see the cemetery, which is one of the sights of Batavia and is known as "The Actors' Graveyard," being so named

because nearly every theatrical company which goes there leaves someone behind. I felt thankful that I had managed to pull through, and, though during our stay in Java nearly every member of our company was taken ill with malaria, we were fortunate enough to lose no one.

I had intended on leaving Java to return to Singapore, but it appeared that my fame as a magician had penetrated to Borneo, for, while we were at Sourabaya, an agent of a wealthy Dyak rajah in the northern provinces arrived there with an invitation to journey with my company to Borneo and exhibit my magical powers before this potentate. I must confess that the proposal did not at first appeal to me, as a great part of Borneo was still in a lawless state and Europeans regarded with little favour. But the agent assured me that the Rajah's capital was only a few hours' journey from the coast and that we should be well guarded both going and returning, and, as the terms he offered were certainly very tempting, and he readily agreed to the payment of a substantial sum in advance, I finally consented to go. Little did I think that I was about to meet with the strangest adventure of my whole career!

We left Sourabaya in a steamer which the Rajah's agent had chartered and sailed through the Straits of Macassar and across the Celebs Sea to Sesaya. The first part of the journey into the interior was made on horseback, the last part by water in praus which the Rajah had sent to meet us. The prau in which my wife and I travelled was, we were informed, the Rajah's own, and was a very fine boat, about fifty feet long with a small cabin in the centre, and propelled by some twenty rowers, who were quite naked except for their waist-cloths. As dusk was falling we landed at a rickety structure which did duty for a pier or landing-stage, and were conducted to the Rajah's "palace," a large, square wooden building, approached through a long, covered courtyard. Crossing the courtyard, we passed through a door and found ourselves in a long, lofty room, which was the hall, or reception chamber, of the palace, lighted by lamps suspended from the roof, which was supported by massive pillars of ironwood.

At the far end of the hall facing the door was a raised platform on which was a sort of throne, while in a corner near the entrance was a huge wooden idol of hideous aspect. It would, however, perhaps be incorrect to call this image an idol, as it was not actually worshipped, but regarded as a talisman to drive away evil spirits and ill luck.

Presently, a grave old man, who seemed to be some kind of official, made his appearance and, motioning us to follow him, conducted us to a long, narrow room, furnished with a rough, unpolished table and a few chairs made of bamboo with straw bottoms. Small wooden bowls of water were brought us to wash our hands—evidently the Dyaks did not consider that we might desire more thorough ablutions after our journey—and, when these had been removed, supper was served. It consisted of a kind of salad composed of rice, raw fish and vegetables, which was, on the whole, quite palatable, and various kinds of fruit. To drink we had a concoction of lemon-juice and water, slightly sweetened with honey.

Our food was brought in on earthenware dishes, and the lemonade was poured out of a blue china jar ornamented with figures of lizards and serpents. But we ate off plates of ironwood, with short-handled, bamboo spoons, and drank out of bowls made of coconut shells. The fact is that though the richer Dyaks usually possess plenty of crockery, most of which is imported from China, it serves for ornament rather than for use, and is reserved for state occasions, wedding-feasts and so forth.

Supper over, the old man again appeared and conducted us to our bedrooms. The room which my wife and I were allotted was a small apartment, with a narrow slit in the outer wall to serve as a window. On the floor were spread sleeping mats, and we were each provided with a not-too-clean blanket. This, we afterwards learned, was a concession to the fact that we were foreigners, as the Dyak usually sleeps without any covering.

We were awakened next morning between six and seven o'clock and conducted to the room in which we had supped the

previous evening, where breakfast, which consisted of tea flavoured with lemon-juice, a kind of dry biscuit and fruit awaited us. While we were at breakfast, the Rajah's agent arrived and suggested that we might like to pay a visit to the town, to which he offered to be our guide, and, as we were all curious to see something of the manners and customs of the Dyaks, we willingly consented.

The Rajah's capital, which was situated about a quarter of a mile from the "palace," was a long, straggling town, or rather a series of villages, built along the river bank. Some of the houses were merely huts, but the majority were of fair size, long, narrow, one-storeyed structures, built chiefly of bamboo and raised about twenty feet above the ground on strong timber posts. Under each house was a raised floor or platform of boards and bamboo poles, about four to six feet from the ground and open on all sides. On these platforms we could see women pounding rice and children playing about. The floor of the house proper was reached by a kind of ladder, consisting of a block of timber, in which deep notches had been cut to form steps.

Our guide stopped and spoke to a man who was sitting on the platform under one of the houses mending a fishing-net, and then, turning to us, said that the man had consented to show us his residence. We accordingly mounted the primitive ladder which led to it, a task which we found very difficult, though the bare-footed Dyak ascended it with the greatest ease, and entered the house, which I judged to be about 150 feet long and thirty wide. It was, we were told, one of the largest in the town and served to accommodate three or four families. A bamboo partition extended almost the whole length of the house, dividing it into two compartments. One of these compartments, which we entered through a sliding-door, was used by day as a general living-room for all the occupants, and at night served as a dormitory for the unmarried youths and men. The other compartment was sub-divided into a number of smaller rooms, for the married residents and the unmarried women.

We saw neither chairs nor tables, for these form no part of the furniture of an ordinary Dyak house. For seats the Dyak uses mats of finely-plaited rattan stained different colours and worked into various patterns.

On the walls hung various weapons : *mandaus*, or swords, one or two old flint-lock guns, spears, used in hunting the wild boar, and blow-pipes, through which poisoned darts are discharged with deadly accuracy.

In one of the smaller rooms I caught sight of two objects, partly covered by banana leaves, suspended from the roof. I asked our guide what they were, and, raising his arm, he moved some of the leaves aside, and I saw that they were dried human skulls. I got my wife out of the room as quickly as I could, as I did not wish her to see these ghastly trophies.

I had, of course, heard a good deal about the head-hunting propensities of the Dyaks, but was under the impression that the practice had now been abandoned. I learned from the Rajah's agent, however, that such was not the case, and that in certain parts of the country it was still carried on, though on a much less extensive scale than formerly. He said that the practice had been forbidden under severe penalties by the present Rajah, who had embraced Mohammedanism, and that the heads I had seen were probably very old heads, procured many years before in the time of his predecessor, as none of his subjects would venture to disobey his commands. It was no doubt true enough that there was a law against head-hunting, but that it was always observed I beg leave to doubt, since this horrible practice forms part of the Dyaks' religion and will probably never be altogether stamped out.

The Dyaks are of a yellowish-brown copper colour, most of the women we saw being of lighter complexion than the men. Their hair was black or very dark brown, coarse and straight, trimmed over the forehead, but worn long behind by both sexes. Their eyes were dark and very bright, and they had broad nostrils and prominent cheek-bones. With some few exceptions they were below the middle height, but strongly-built and well-proportioned.

The dress of the men consisted of a *tjawat*, or waist-cloth: a long scarf of blue cloth or white cotton, which is wound several times round the waist, the ends being left to hang loosely down, one in front and one behind, and a turban of the same materials, the crown of the head being, however, left uncovered. The *mandau*, or sword, which is as much a part of the male Dyak's dress as was the small sword that of an English gentleman in the eighteenth century, is suspended by a cord or belt from the left side.

I was allowed to examine one of these swords. The hilt was of deer-horn, ornamented with figures of animals, trees and so forth. The blade, which was about two feet long, was nearly straight, broad in the middle and tapering at the end to a sharp point. The edge was sharp as a razor, and I could well imagine that in war it would prove a most formidable weapon.

The ladies' wardrobe was scarcely more elaborate than that of the men. Most of them were uncovered to the waist, from which hung a petticoat of some bright cloth, in some cases barely reaching to the knees, in others, nearly touching the ground. A few of them, however, wore a short, loose jacket, ornamented with some rough embroidery. Their head-dress was a tall, conical cap, without a crown, embroidered with beads, which my wife declared to be very becoming. Some women, however, who were going off to work in the fields, wore straw hats with enormous brims, very similar to those we had seen in Java.

The Dyaks of both sexes, however, made amends for the scantiness of their clothing by the profusion of their ornaments, which far exceeded in number those worn by any coloured people I had seen in my travels. In order to load their persons with them they submit to the most painful tortures. The lobes of their ears are pierced in childhood, and gradually enlarged by the insertion of various heavy rings, until they form loops sometimes three or four inches long. Often the lobe gives way under the strain and splits. We saw a woman who must have had at least a dozen rings in one of her ears, each

of them the size of a five-shilling piece. In addition to mutilating the lobe, the upper part of the ear is pierced or slit in several places, and feathers, red or blue ribbons, or pieces of coloured wood inserted.

Ear-rings and ear-ribbons were by no means the only ornaments worn by the Dyaks. Nearly all the women we saw were loaded with necklaces, bracelets and amulets of various kinds. Round their necks were several strings of beads or coloured stones, and girdles of beads encircled their waists. Their arms were covered with bracelets of brass or ivory or shells and coils of copper wire, and their legs were adorned with brass or tin rings.

Although much interested in what we saw, we were, nevertheless, very glad to leave the place, as the ground outside the houses was in a filthy state, it being the Dyak custom to throw all their garbage out of the windows, where it is devoured by their pigs, which were rooting about in every direction. It was no easy matter to pick our way through the heaps of refuse which lay about, the smell from which was most unpleasant.

On our return to the "palace," we busied ourselves with preparations for my performance which was to take place that night in the hall, or reception room, which I have already described. I told the Rajah's agent what I should require, and, under his instructions, in a surprisingly short time a temporary stage was erected facing the platform on which was the Rajah's throne, for all the country round abounded in timber, and the Dyaks are excellent workmen.

About noon, by which time the stage was already well on its way to completion, we dined, the menu being very much the same as that of the previous evening, except that chicken took the place of fish. After dinner we had a much-needed siesta, for the heat was very great.

Shortly before the time fixed for the entertainment the Rajah's agent came to conduct us to the hall, to which I had already paid more than one visit to see that everything was in order. To our surprise, the Rajah was already there, seated upon his throne and surrounded by his Court. Those whom we



Carl Hertz's Bills in a Street in Java.

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supposed to be the highest in rank or their sovereign's favour stood around the throne ; the rest stood or squatted on mats below the platform. There was only one person seated on the platform—a young woman, who sat immediately at the Rajah's feet. The agent whispered to me that this young woman was the Rajah's favourite daughter.

The Rajah was a stoutish man, whom I judged to be about fifty, somewhat taller than most of the Dyaks we had seen, with a clean-shaven, rather heavy face, and fine and very bright dark eyes. He was dressed in a costume of green and crimson silk, decorated with beads and embroidery, with a turban fastened by a diamond clasp on his head. His plump fingers sparkled with rings, and in the hilt of his sword, which he wore in a richly-embroidered sash round his waist, was a large ruby.

His daughter, who had fine eyes like the Rajah and also his tendency to embonpoint, was in native dress. But her jacket and petticoat were of bright blue silk instead of cloth, and embroidered with flowers—it was probably an importation from China—the ear-rings which adorned her mutilated ears and the bracelets and anklets which decorated her arms and legs were of gold, while round her neck were several strings of different coloured beads and a necklace of agates.

The agent led me to the foot of the throne, and, after a profound obeisance, presented me to the Rajah and then to his daughter.

I bowed low to each in turn, and they slightly inclined their heads in response, the princess's lips parting in a smile which revealed what might have been considered a fine set of teeth, had they not been black as Whitby jet from betel-chewing. The Rajah asked me one or two questions about my travels through the interpreter and then intimated his desire that the performance should begin.

I certainly could not complain of any lack of appreciation on the part of my audience, for they followed every trick I performed with the most rapt attention.

The princess appeared to be particularly interested, and signified her approval, not in the Western manner, by clapping

the hands, but in the native style, by a series of short grunts, which, when the rest of the audience, who evidently were expected to take their cue from her, followed suit, somewhat disconcerted me, as I was unaccustomed to this form of applause. When I performed tricks with coins and plucked them from the air, the grunts became louder and louder, and when I brought the entertainment to a conclusion by performing the "Phoenix" Illusion, which I have described elsewhere, they honoured me with a perfect fusillade of grunts.

Before the audience dispersed, I was summoned before the Rajah and informed that he was much pleased with my entertainment and desired that I should give a second performance in two days' time. Meanwhile, we should be well taken care of, and anything we might wish for procured for us.

Although the agreement had been for one performance only, and I had no wish to prolong my stay amongst the Dyaks, I thought it might be unwise to refuse, and accordingly I told the interpreter to thank the Rajah and to say that it would give me great pleasure to obey his commands.

Time hung very heavily on our hands during the next two days. It was very hot, and our rooms in the "palace" were horribly close and stuffy. We could not bathe in the river, as we were told that it would be unsafe to do so owing to the crocodiles which infested it, and we were unable to obtain any satisfactory substitute for a bath. Naturally, we did not care to go into the town again, as its unpleasant odours still seemed to linger in our nostrils, and so there was nothing to be done but stroll about the forest which surrounded the palace on three sides, where the great trees afforded a welcome protection from the broiling sun, or go down to the river to watch the Dyaks fishing. We were glad indeed when the time came for the second performance, as on the morrow we should be on our way back to civilisation.

To judge by the loud and prolonged grunting with which the tricks I performed were received, my second entertainment was as much appreciated as the first, and at its conclusion the Rajah again sent for me and intimated that I had given great pleasure

both to him and his daughter. I asked the interpreter to convey to the Rajah my thanks and that of my wife and company for the hospitable manner in which we had been treated, and to bid him and the princess farewell. This he did, and then turned to me with a puzzled expression on his face, and said that it was his Highness's desire that I should defer my departure for the present. I inquired of the agent whether he wished me to give a third performance, but he answered that he had said nothing about that. I was much surprised and annoyed, and was about to refuse, when the agent gave me a warning look, which decided me to consent, though I did so with a very bad grace. As I was leaving the dais, the princess flashed her jet-black teeth at me in an expansive smile. Somehow or other I did not like that smile !

About an hour later, just as we had finished supper, the agent entered and asked to speak to me alone. I ought perhaps to have mentioned that this man was not a Dyak, but a Malay, a very intelligent man and, I believe, a very honest fellow. He had been at one time in the service of a British firm in Singapore and spoke English with some fluency. We went out into the courtyard, which at this hour was almost deserted. I noticed that he seemed silent and ill at ease, and wondered what could be the reason, for, as a rule, he was a cheerful and loquacious sort of individual.

" Well," I said, " what is it you want to speak to me about my friend ? You look as if you had had bad news."

" Yes," he replied, " something very serious has happened. I would give much not to have persuaded you to come here, but I could not have foreseen what would follow."

" Well, what is it ? " I said impatiently.

" After you and your company had left the hall, the Rajah called me back and told me you were a great magician and had found favour with his daughter. It was her desire that you should become her husband, and he had consented. And he charged me to come to you and to offer you her hand in marriage."

To say that I was astonished would be to express but

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feebly what I felt at this extraordinary proposition. I was utterly dumbfounded and stood staring at the speaker, scarcely able to believe that I had heard aright.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed at length, "I never heard anything so ridiculous in my life! Don't they know that I am already married, and that no white man has more than one wife?"

"Yes, but the princess asked me to assure your wife that she need have no uneasiness about the future, as she was prepared to treat her as a sister and an equal."

I began to laugh, but stopped, perceiving that I was in a very awkward situation. Unless I were very diplomatic in my refusal, I might give mortal offence to this copper-coloured potentate and his daughter, and then all sorts of unpleasant things might happen. I therefore asked the agent to inform the Rajah that I was deeply sensible of the honour which he proposed to do me in giving me his daughter in marriage, but that I was strictly prohibited by my religion from having more than one wife, and I was therefore obliged to decline.

The agent replied that he would deliver my answer, but he feared that it would have no effect, as the princess was evidently determined on marrying me, and the Rajah could refuse her nothing. It appeared that she was of a very masterful and ambitious character and practically governed the province, and she no doubt considered that her importance would be greatly increased by having as a husband a man who could perform such miracles as I could.

He took his departure, and I went to my wife and told her what had happened. She was at first inclined to treat the affair as a joke, but I pointed out to her that it might easily become a very serious matter. In these interior provinces the rulers were autocrats with more power than the late Czar of Russia possessed. So long as they did not interfere with the administration of any foreign government they could do as they liked, and no one troubled to ask questions, much less to call them to account. If the Rajah and his daughter took offence at my refusal, they might keep us there indefinitely or even put

us to death, and no one outside would be the wiser, for they would, of course, take good care to prevent our communicating with the British authorities at Sesaya.

I slept but little that night, but tossed about wondering how I was to get out of this wretched imbroglio, and cursing myself for having been so foolish as to come to Borneo and put my wife and myself in the power of these semi-savages. Soon after breakfast the agent arrived, and I saw at once by his manner that he was the bearer of no good news. He glanced uneasily at my wife, but I told him that he might speak freely before her, as she wished to hear everything.

"I gave your answer to the Rajah," said he. "The princess was with him, and, after she had heard what I had to say, she ordered me to withdraw to the end of the room, and she and the Rajah talked together for some time in low tones. Then the Rajah bade me approach and said that he understood the difficulty about your religion, but there was an easy way out of it. As I told you the other day, the Rajah is a Mohammedan; he became one some years ago. At least, he professes that faith, though there is very little of the Mohammedan about him except his harem, which was probably the chief reason for his change of religion, since the Dyak religion does not allow a man to have more than one wife. The princess has not yet followed her father's example, but now she proposes that both she and yourself shall become Mohammedans. Then there will be no obstacle to your marriage, so far as religion is concerned.

"The Rajah's imam is at present away, but he returns in two days' time, when it is proposed that you shall both be received into the Mohammedan faith and married according to the rites of that religion. The Rajah desired me to say that your assistants must remain here until after the marriage, when they will if they wish be conveyed back to Sesaya. If, however, they prefer to stay here altogether, they will be provided with lands and houses and wives."

I glanced at my wife, who had grown very white, and turning to the agent inquired what he would advise me to do.

"I should advise you," he replied, "to return a favourable answer which will put the Rajah and his daughter off their guard and give you time to think of some means of escape."

"And can you suggest any way?" I asked.

"Yes; these Dyaks are very ignorant and very credulous. They believe you to be a very great magician, gifted with supernatural powers, and are firmly convinced that you really perform all that you pretend to, though I, who have travelled far and lived much amongst white people, know that when you make persons and objects appear and disappear you are merely performing clever tricks. It is possible that you may be able to devise some means of persuading them that you are dead or have spirited yourself away, and thus effect your escape."

I clutched at his suggestion as a drowning man might clutch at a lifebelt, and, after he had left, bearing with him a message to the Rajah to the effect that I consented to the arrangement which her Highness his daughter had been graciously pleased to propose, my wife and I sent for my chief assistant and proceeded to hold a council of war. After a short discussion, it was decided that my best chance of escape lay in the "Phoenix" Illusion. I was to get the Rajah's consent to give another performance in celebration of my approaching nuptials with his daughter, which would conclude with the "Phoenix" Illusion; but on this occasion, in place of using my wife as the sacrifice, I should enter the fiery furnace myself, and, in due course, descend through the trap-door to the floor below. There two of my assistants would be awaiting me with a large property-basket, and, instead of rising again from my own ashes, as my wife had done, I should enter the basket, which my assistants would immediately close and lock, and lie *perdu* until, aided by the lamentations of my wife and my company, the audience had persuaded themselves that I had really been consumed in the flames.

The Rajah willingly consented to my giving the proposed performance, which was fixed for the following evening. But, in order to assure the success of our plan, it was necessary for me to obtain his permission for my assistants, who had respectfully

declined his Highness's offer to provide them with wives and lands if they elected to remain with me, to return with their luggage to Sesaya immediately after the entertainment. For, of course, it would be impossible for me to remain for many hours imprisoned in the property-basket.

By a fortunate circumstance, that evening one of my company had a slight return of the malaria which had attacked him in Java, and I accordingly told the agent to represent to the Rajah that the man, who he was to say was a near relative of mine, was very ill and would certainly die if he were not conveyed as soon as possible to Sesaya for medical attention.

After some demur, that potentate, who, thanks to the agent, was now fully persuaded that I was, not only willing but positively anxious to enter his family, agreed to allow my company to take their departure after the performance, and gave orders for the praus to be in readiness to take them to the village where the horses had been left to await our return.

The next morning I received a summons to the Rajah's presence, and was conducted to a room in which the agent informed me his Highness was accustomed to give private audiences to persons of importance. The Rajah, who was seated on a divan which was raised a little above the level of the floor, with the princess squatting as usual on a mat at his feet, smiled upon me most graciously, and instructed the interpreter to inform me that he was very pleased that I was willing to embrace his faith and become his son-in-law, and that next to himself and his children I should be the first person in his realm. Then the princess approached me, and taking my hands in hers, kissed me solemnly three times, once on the forehead and once on either cheek. It was a trying moment, but, by a great effort, I managed to preserve my composure, and, raising one of the lady's hands to my lips, gravely saluted it.

Much to my relief, the Rajah then intimated that the audience was at an end, and I bowed myself out.

When the time arrived for the performance, I proceeded, with my wife and assistants, to the hall. The audience was

much larger than on the two previous occasions, and my appearance on the stage was greeted with loud grunts of applause. Apparently, the forthcoming matrimonial event, if not officially announced, was already an open secret. I felt more nervous than I ever had in my life, and how I contrived to get through my different tricks without any mishap has always been a mystery to me. At last, the time came for the "Phoenix" Illusion, and my wife was preparing to step into the fire as she had done at the previous performances, when I brushed her aside and leaped into the fire myself. As the flames began to rise around me, I waved my hand to the princess, who uttered a piercing shriek and, springing to her feet, rushed towards the stage, evidently with the intention of plucking her intended husband from the fire.

But the people about her, imagining that she would be really endangering her life, seized and held her, and I went down through the trap-door into the property-basket, and was promptly locked in by the two assistants who were waiting for me.

For some minutes there was the hush of expectancy in the hall; the audience was waiting for me to rise from my ashes, as my wife had risen. Then an indescribable tumult arose; people rushed wildly about over my head, and the place resounded with cries and lamentations. This went on for some time, when one of my assistants came and whispered to me:—

"It's all right, sir; they think you're really burned up, and the princess has been going on something awful. We'll have you aboard the boat in half-an-hour."

He went away, promising to return for me in a few minutes, but the time passed, and he did not come. I began to get very uneasy, fearing that the Rajah and his daughter were not satisfied that I was really dead and had decided to detain my wife and company. In which event I might have to remain in that confounded basket until I could endure it no longer, and would be obliged to resuscitate myself. Presently the lights in the hall were extinguished, leaving me in total darkness, which naturally did not tend to make me feel the more cheerful,

At length, to my intense relief, I saw a light approaching and heard the voices of two of my assistants. They told me that everything was all right, and that we were about to start on our journey, but that I must on no account show myself, and must keep as still as possible, until we reached the village where we were to land, as the Rajah was sending an escort with us. Then they picked up the basket and carried me down to the river.

I began to congratulate myself on the success which had attended our scheme, but I was not out of danger yet ; indeed, the worst part of my experience was to come.

While my assistants were attending to the rest of our luggage, some of the Dyaks picked up my basket and put it on the prau containing the escort, which immediately started, as their orders were to precede the other boats. My people shouted to them to bring it back, but they did not understand and rowed on. Two of the escort came and sat down close to the basket, and I scarcely dared to breathe, for there was a small opening in the lid, which had been made to give me air, and had I made any sound to attract their attention, they would have been bound to discover me. They moved away after a time, but then some mosquitoes arrived to keep me company, and I passed a night of torment, being unable to defend myself against the attacks of the bloodthirsty insects, from fear of making a noise which might lead to my being discovered.

At length, after what seemed an eternity, we arrived, just as day was breaking, at the village where we were to land, and a few minutes later, the praus and the escort having departed, I was set free. I felt like nothing on earth and promptly collapsed. I had been cooped up in that infernal basket for six mortal hours, the longest I had ever spent in my life !

Later in the day I learned what had happened after I disappeared through the trap into the property-basket. It appears that my wife waited for some minutes for my expected resurrection, and then, with admirably-simulated anguish, rushed to the front of the stage, cried out that I was indeed dead and would return no more, and sank down in an apparent

swoon. Thereupon the princess, like a creature distraught, rushed upon the stage, followed by all the ladies of the Court, and began to bewail my untimely demise at the top of her voice, the other ladies mingling their tears and lamentations with hers, as etiquette apparently demanded. This was the hubbub which I had heard over my head as I lay in the basket.

The delay in fetching me away which had caused me so much uneasiness was due to the fact that my wife and my assistants had been summoned before the Rajah and closely questioned, through the interpreter, as to why my supernatural powers had suddenly failed me. My assistants professed themselves unable to explain it, but my wife declared that it was because I had omitted to pronounce the usual incantations before entering the fire. Asked if she could account for the omission, she boldly replied that it was her belief that I had been suddenly stricken with remorse, because, led astray by love and ambition, I had consented to abandon the faith of my fathers in order to espouse the beautiful daughter of the Rajah, and had resolved to sacrifice my life to appease the wrath of Heaven.

This answer appeared to cause the Rajah considerable disquietude, and he bade her and my assistants hasten their departure, lest evil should befall him and his realm.

CHAPTER XV

Singapore again—Saigon—Terrific heat—Flying-bats in the theatre—Hong-Kong—Shanghai—Performances in the Chinese city—Burning crackers to drive the devil away—Great success of my entertainment with the Celestials—Canton—My manager employs a hose against the Chinese who are endeavouring to get a free sight of the performance—We are besieged in the theatre—Sad fate of a favourite dog—We sail for Japan—A typhoon—On our arrival at Nagasaki we are placed in quarantine—An unpleasant fortnight—We are liberated and proceed to Kobe—Embarrassing experience while taking a bath at Kioto—Remark of Arthur Roberts on hearing of this—A Japanese dinner-party—Sad effect of drinking saki—The cherry dance at Kioto—Danjaro, the Henry Irving of Japan—His wonderful acting—Japanese and Chinese theatres—Fires in Japan—Fiji—Honolulu—We sail for San Francisco *en route* for England—Invaluable assistance rendered me by my wife during my tour in the Antipodes and the East.

FROM Borneo we went again to Singapore, where we had a return engagement to fulfil, and thence to Saigon, Cochin China, en route for Hong Kong.

At Saigon I was offered the theatre, with staff, lighting and everything free of charge, provided I would give a performance. I had, however, some difficulty in getting a piano for my accompanist, as there was none in the theatre, and I was told that there was only one in the town, and that belonged to the Mayor. As I could not very well give a performance without a piano, I called on the Mayor and explained to him the predicament I was in, upon which he very kindly offered to lend his piano and even paid for its cartage to the theatre.

We had to open the box-office for the sale of tickets from five to seven in the morning, as the heat during the day is so great that no one will go out, unless absolutely obliged, and at

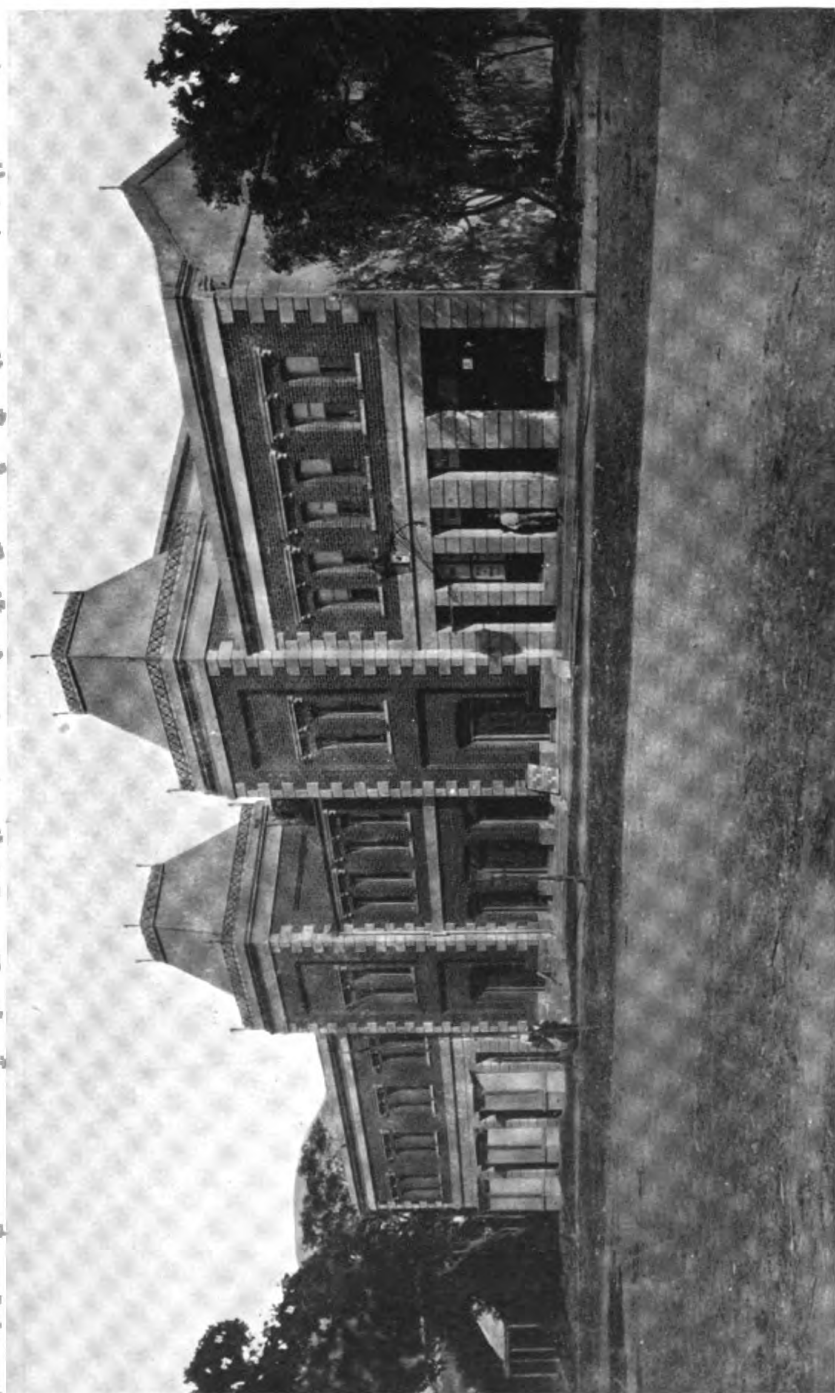
mid-day, I was told, no one is ever seen in the streets except Englishmen and dogs. It certainly was about the hottest place I had ever struck, and the first night I performed there I had to leave the stage at least half-a-dozen times to put on a fresh collar, and my evening-dress coat was soaked with perspiration.

The theatre was built with openings between the boards, like the Novelty Theatre at Bombay, and during the whole evening flying-bats were circling round the stage, some coming so close as to hit me in the face with their wings. They are horrid-looking creatures, and my wife nearly fainted when, just before the performance began, one got into her dressing-room. She rushed out in terror, saying that there was a thing like a rat with wings just over her mirror. We stayed for a week at Saigon and, notwithstanding the heat and the bats, had a very enjoyable time and were quite sorry to leave.

From Saigon we went to Hong Kong, and from there to Shanghai, where we opened to an audience of over 2,000 at the Lyceum Theatre, a theatre run by European amateurs. After playing there for two weeks, I went to the No 1. Theatre in the Chinese City. I made a great success here, though, as I heard no applause, I was at first afraid that my performance did not appeal to them. But I was told afterwards that the Chinese, like the natives in some of the other countries which I have visited, do not applaud to show their appreciation, but merely grunt.

In China no woman is allowed to appear on the stage with a man. The performers must be either all men or all women. If all men, the men have to play women's parts, and if all women, the women have to play men's parts. In consequence, I had to give my performance here without the assistance of my wife. Even in showing pictures on the cinematograph, I had to deposit 1,000 dollars, as a guarantee that I would not exhibit a picture in which a woman appeared.

Immediately the curtain was lowered, the proprietors of the theatre set fire to hundreds of Chinese crackers, which were hung on long poles and which they had secretly planted near



Theatre at Saigon, Cochinchina.

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the footlights. They held these crackers over every part of the stage where I had stood and also in my dressing-room. This was done for the purpose of chasing the devil and his attendant demons away and of purifying the atmosphere, the burning of this compound of saltpetre being apparently considered as an antidote to the sulphurous presence of his Satanic Majesty.

My entertainment proved so great a draw that, though it did not start until eight o'clock in the evening, there were queues of Chinese outside the theatre as early as 10 a.m. They brought their meals with them and small stoves, on which they cooked their dinners while waiting for the show to open. The Chinaman never grudges money for his amusements, and it was no uncommon thing for a wealthy Chinese merchant to take a score or more of the best seats for his wives, assistant-wives and other members of his family. In the language of the local Press, I had got Chow (the cant term for the heathen Chinese) by the pigtail, and the result of my séances amongst the Celestials spelt cash with a very large "C."

At Canton, to which we went on leaving Shanghai, there was a curious custom in existence somewhat resembling the ancient Curfew. Every street there has a gate which is locked at eight o'clock, and, in order to get an audience, I had to secure permission from the Totai (or Mayor) for these gates to be left open. I also had to get the Totai to furnish my wife and myself with an escort when we walked about the town, as there was at that time a very strong feeling against Europeans amongst part of the population, and we were continually being called "foreign devils" and were sometimes pelted with stones.

One night, during my entertainment, some of the side-windows of the theatre were opened owing to the heat, and a crowd of Chinese congregated at them to enjoy a free sight of the performance. My manager went out and ordered them away, but no sooner was his back turned than they were all there again, and this went on for some time. Eventually, he lost patience, and, getting a hose, drenched them with water. When the performance was over, we learned that a crowd of

Chinamen—armed with sticks and stones—were waiting at the stage-door, ready to attack us when we made our appearance, and we were strongly advised not to venture out. Consequently, we had to spend the night in our dressing-rooms.

During my engagement at Canton I lost a valuable dog, a great pet of my wife's, which I used in my performances, and, though I offered a reward, we got no news of him. However, just before leaving Canton, while removing our baggage from the theatre, we found the bones of the dog underneath the stage. So, apparently, some of the Chinese had stolen and eaten him, out of revenge for the drenching they had received.

From Shanghai we sailed for Nagasaki. Our advance-manager had, of course, preceded us to Japan, which was lucky for him in more ways than one, as about three days out from Shanghai we were caught in a typhoon. During all my travels this was the first typhoon which I had ever been in, and I sincerely hope it will be the last, as the experience was one I am never likely to forget. It came on without any warning, and our steamer seemed to be lifted clean out of the water and turned right round, until her stern was in the opposite direction from the one in which we had been proceeding. The typhoon lasted for about twenty-four hours, and during that time all the passengers were in a terrible state. The Chinese sailors behaved in the most cowardly manner, lashing themselves to the masts and other parts of the vessel and leaving their wives and other Chinese women to navigate the boat. Several of the Chinese were washed overboard, and after the typhoon had subsided the sea was literally strewn with the bodies of those who had been lost from our own and other vessels.

Eventually, we arrived safely at Nagasaki, and stopped just outside the harbour, when the police and Custom House officers came on board with letters and telegrams for the passengers, and I received a telegram from our advance-manager informing me that the theatre at Kobe, where we were to open, was sold out for our first performance.

I was naturally very pleased at this, but my satisfaction



Street in Hong Kong, China.

did not last very long, for soon after the Health Officer came on board we learned that a case of bubonic plague had been discovered amongst the crew, in consequence of which we would not be allowed to proceed on our journey. We were to be taken to Nagasaki and put in quarantine on an island which is used for that purpose.

In due course we were taken in boats to this island and all our belongings as well. When we arrived at the quarantine station, the first thing they did was to separate the men and women. Some Health Officers took charge of the former, and some Japanese women of the latter. The men were conducted to bathrooms, each one having a bathroom to himself, and told to get into a bath-tub which had been prepared with some powerful kind of disinfectant, and the officers stood by and saw that we washed ourselves thoroughly with this concoction, which smelt most horribly. My wife told me afterwards that she went through the same performance.

When we came out of the bath, we were given some Japanese-made clothes to put on, as all our own clothes had to be disinfected, and you should have seen the sights we looked in these grotesque-fitting and ill-shaped garments. We were then taken to a large room and given some food and tea, and afterwards shown where we were to sleep at night. All the men slept in one long room, and the ladies in another.

The quarantine station was the only building on the island. We were kept there for over two weeks, which seemed more like two years to us, as we were without any news from the outside world in the shape of letters or newspapers. Meantime, the clothes which we were wearing when we arrived, and also all the clothes in our trunks, had been put in an oven and baked, this being their mode of fumigating apparel. When our time was up, and they were given back to us, the sight they presented was a thing to marvel at. All my wife's and my own clothes were practically ruined. They had shrunk until they were the size of children's clothes, my trousers being up to my knees and my coat-sleeves up to my elbows. But we were so pleased to get away from the island, that I verily believe

we would have gone as Adam and Eve rather than remain there any longer.

On our arrival at Kobewere met by our advance-manager, who told us that all the money had had to be returned to the people who had bought tickets for the opening night, but that our coming was very eagerly awaited, and that he did not doubt the house would be sold out again, so soon as we announced our first performance. This, indeed, proved to be the case, and our opening night was such a success that we played to crowded houses during the whole of our stay at Kobe.

From Kobe we went to Kioto, and from there to Osaki, Yokohama and Tokio, playing everywhere to large and appreciative audiences and being treated with much courtesy and kindness.

I had an amusing, but decidedly embarrassing, experience at our hotel at Kioto. On my arrival, I rang for the chambermaid and asked her to have a bath prepared for me. She went away to get it ready, and, meantime, I undressed and put on my pyjamas. Presently, the maid returned and conducted me to the bathroom, but, instead of leaving me, as I, of course, expected her to do, she locked the door, took up my flannel and, after soaping it well, stood there, apparently waiting for me to get into the bath. I began to take off my pyjamas, but the girl still stood there, and eventually I got into the bath, and she sponged and washed me as though I had been a child.

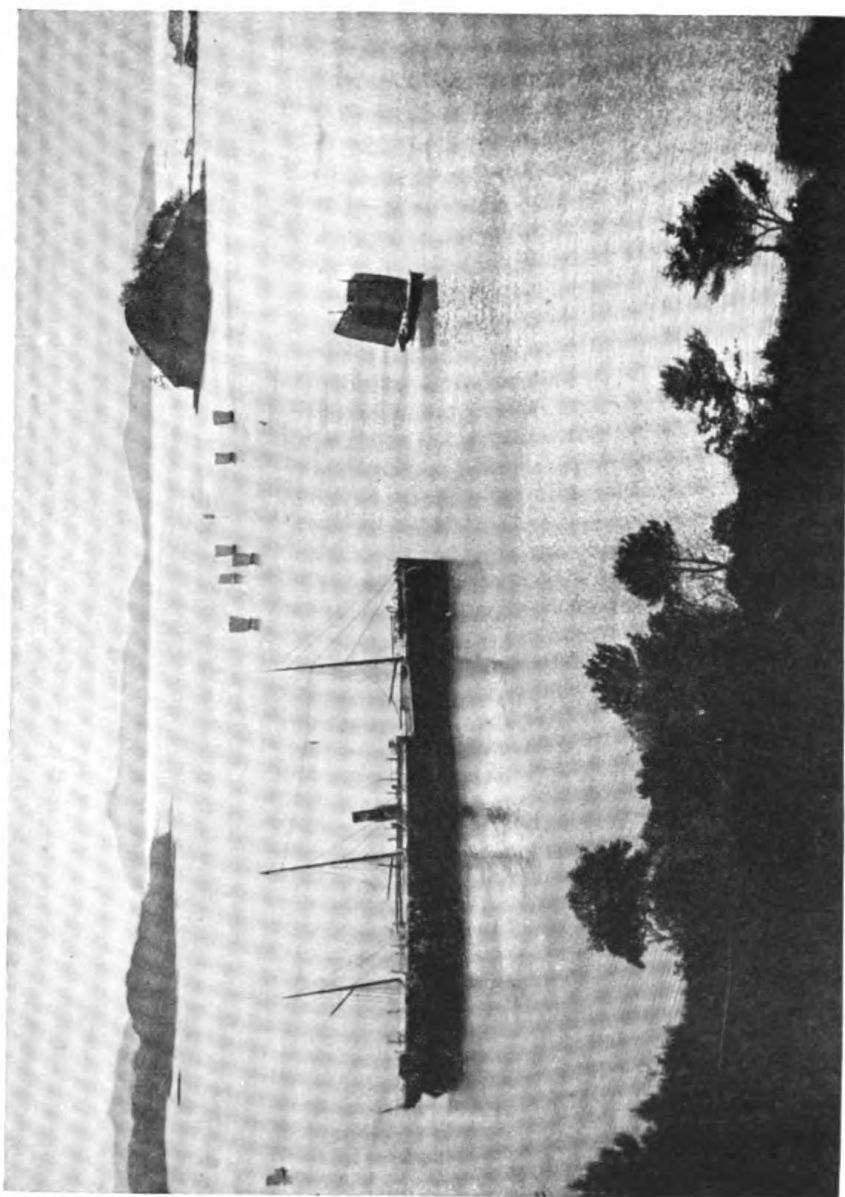
When I returned to my room and told my wife of what had happened, she said :—

“ You must certainly have no more baths while you are in Japan.”

On speaking to the proprietor of the hotel about it later, I was told that this was the custom of the country.

One night, after my return to England, I was relating my experiences at the Eccentric Club, in London. Arthur Roberts, the well-known comedian, happened to be present, and when I came to the tale of my first bath in Japan he jumped up, exclaiming :—

“ I say, when does the first boat leave for Japan ? ”



Passenger Ship "Rohilla," Quarantined outside Nagasaki Harbour, Japan.

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During our visit to Tokio, I made the acquaintance of a wealthy Japanese merchant, who invited my wife and myself to dinner at his house. When we arrived, we were asked to take off our shoes and were then conducted into the room in which we were to dine, where we had to sit cross-legged on the floor, as there are no chairs in Japanese houses. Dinner was served, and between each course a troupe of Geisha girls, which had been specially engaged for the occasion, entertained us by singing, dancing and playing on musical instruments. The whole thing seemed rather weird, but it was a pleasant novelty.

At intervals during the meal a large bowl was passed round containing the national drink saki (made of rice). It was almost tasteless, and I felt that one could drink a dozen bowls of it without it affecting one. But I was told by my host to be very careful not to drink too much as, since I was not used to it, it might go to my head. I said :—

“ Why, one could drink a dozen bowls of this ; it tastes like nothing on earth ! ”

I could hardly touch some of the food. The fish, for instance, was not cooked at all, but served raw, with a little sauce. The only things I really did enjoy in the whole dinner were the salad, which was made of chrysanthemums and was really delightful, and the sweets. I was told that no one is supposed to leave anything on their plates, to do so being considered an insult to your host, and if you really cannot finish what you have you must take home what is left. You are also supposed to take your plate home with you, as Japanese etiquette prescribes that no one else shall eat off that plate again.

We left after a very pleasant evening, but when I got into the street I found I could not stand ; the saki had gone to my head. It had the same effect on my wife, and we had to be taken home to our hotel in rickshaws and put to bed.

I was also invited to dinner by Tenichi, the renowned magician. He was the inventor of the celebrated Water Trick, in which he would produce fountains from all kinds of receptacles and instruments and from his own body. He

gave me a very good time, but I took care not to touch any saki on this occasion !

During our stay at Kioto we had the pleasure of witnessing the Cherry Dance, which is one of the prettiest sights of Japan. It took place at the native theatre, which looks from the outside more like a second-hand shoe-shop, owing to the fact that all the natives must leave their sandals and clogs at the door. We were shown up a narrow flight of stairs into a very small waiting-room, where, with several other sightseers, we had to wait our turn for the ceremonial tea which is given to all who take tickets for the upper and best part of the house. Presently, we were invited to enter another small room, conspicuous for its cleanliness, in which stood a number of small black-lacquer tables, in the form of a square, at which little stools were placed for seating accommodation. One corner of the room was partitioned off, and beside the partition stood two other small lacquer tables, on which were bowls for making tea.

When we were seated like so many school children and silent as mutes, from the corner of the room a young Japanese girl made her appearance, beautifully attired in a black satin kimono, exquisitely embroidered, the under kimono being of white silk, and, like all the indoor kimonos, worn very long, so that it trailed on the ground all the way round, completely hiding the feet. With this was worn a very bright brocaded silk obi, with long sash-ends instead of the ordinary short bow. This is the ordinary full dress for state occasions.

The young lady's hair was most wonderfully and perfectly dressed. She was also a very pretty girl. She sat down at one of the tables and, taking up a small square of red silk, folded it crosswise very neatly and methodically ; but, from the leisurely manner in which she did it, one would have thought that she had a thousand years in which to accomplish her task. Next she took up a Japanese teacup without handles and gently wiped it inside and out, and so with each cup in succession, until all were ready. Then, when the water boiled in the large bowl, she put in the tea, and there appeared two

little girls, quite tots of about seven or eight years of age, who brought us each a round, sugar-coated ball made of some kind of sweetstuff. It was horrible and uneatable, but the little tots were delightfully quaint and pretty in their bright red embroidered kimonos and gorgeous obis, with their hair most daintily dressed.

The elder girl now ladled out the tea with a large wooden ladle into the cups and handed them to these little tots, who carried them round. After handing a cup to each person, they would bow very low and retire most gracefully. We all drank the tea, which seemed to me very poor stuff and most nauseous. Those who did not eat their cake or sweetmeat were supposed to take it away with them, and were given a piece of paper for that purpose.

On leaving the tea-room, we were shown into the theatre. One performance having just finished the audience had not yet quite dispersed, so we had to wait a few minutes. There were no seats anywhere in the whole building, even in the balcony where we found ourselves. So we had to squat on the floor, which we did in true Japanese fashion, and I don't believe I ever had "pins and needles" so badly before in all my life.

The theatre was a small building, with a small, low stage which reminded one of a marionette performance. On each side of the theatre was a kind of raised platform, the same height as the stage, which I learned afterwards was a continuation of the stage. Now the audience began to come in, thronging and filling the lower part of the house, squatting on the floor, pushing, crowding and joking, and shouting to one another from all parts of the building. Some of them carried lanterns, and in so careless a manner that it seemed a most marvellous thing that they did not set the place on fire. They walked about everywhere, even on the stage, without any fear of being warned off. The place was so crowded with people that we were hemmed in and could not move.

The footlights, which were enormous candles protected by pieces of tin, were now lit. There were two gangways, on either side of the stage leading from the auditorium, up which came

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little Geisha girls in very bright kimonos, singing and dancing and posing with their little fans. The curtain then rose, and the girls went on the stage, where they continued the same performance. The scenery and background were cherry-trees in full bloom. On each of the other two stages on either side of the auditorium, occupying the same position as the stage-boxes would in our theatres, sat twelve girls, playing samosans and other instruments. They were all dressed in blue kimonos, with their hair wonderfully arranged. They formed what we should call the orchestra. They sang and played in unison with the girls on the centre stage, making a very pretty picture and also a charming performance. Finally, the girls who occupied the centre stage departed down each gangway-plank in the same way as they had arrived, and I wondered where their dressing-rooms could be. Afterwards came several little sketches of Japanese life.

Their method of changing scenery is distinctly peculiar. Instead of being pulled up, as in our theatres, it turned upside down, showing another scene painted on the other side. The actors continued to play during the change. The performance continued from early morning until late at night, and no doubt they are the originators of the continuous shows, as well as of the revolving stage, which we saw for the first time in Tokio.

I tried to arrange to bring the Cherry Dance, with its original actresses, to England, but the Japanese Government would not allow the girls to leave the country without a guarantee of their safe return. I am quite sure that the Cherry Dance as I saw it in Kioto would make a sensation in London or in any other of the big European cities.

While at Tokio, I had the good fortune to witness a play in which the great actor Danjuro, the Henry Irving of Japan, was appearing. His acting was perfectly wonderful, and at times the whole audience would be in tears, and, though I did not understand a word of what was said, his performance made a profound impression on me.

Danjuro, I may here remark, is the stage-name of a family of actors which has been famous in Japan for something like a

hundred and fifty years. The first of the line was Ichikawa Danjuro, who at the time of his death in 1704—he was murdered on the stage by a fellow-player—had long been the leading actor of Yedo. His son, Kuzo, then a lad of sixteen, succeeded to his stage-name. Kuzo made a journey to the shrine of Marika, some forty miles from Yedo, to invoke the god to aid him in his art, and when he, in his turn, became a famous actor, he attributed his success to the interposition of Marika and took in gratitude the name of Maritaya as his “trade-name.”

Every actor in Japan has since then had three names; his own name, which seldom becomes public, his stage-name, by which he is always known, and his trade-name, which distinguishes his branch from others of the same professional family. All Danjuro’s pupils took the stage-name of Ichikawa, but some of them, on subsequently making their mark, founded their own historic families with new trade-names, which were also bestowed on all their pupils. In the theatre the audience shout out the actor’s trade-name, where in other countries he would be greeted with plaudits. Beyond this distinction between the various branches of the same professional family, the trade-name appears to be of little use.

In all there have been nine actors of the name of Danjuro, though for nearly twenty years after the death of the eighth the name was in abeyance, when it was assumed by his half-brother, the great tragedian whose marvellous acting so impressed me.

On entering the theatre we had to remove our shoes, which were hung upon pegs in the hall-way and a metal check handed to us, after which we were given a pair of slippers to put on before going into the auditorium. In Japanese theatres scenery is used, but there is neither curtain nor act-drop. The stages are made to revolve, so that, while one scene is being acted another is being set at the back, and at the conclusion of the scene which is being performed the stage revolves, and the new scene comes to the front, thus doing away with the necessity for any interval. When properties have to be brought on the stage, or removed, this is done by two men

dressed in black alpaca, their heads covered by black hoods, and their hands encased in black gloves. Thus dressed, the audience are not supposed to see them. At the side of the stage is a sort of box, in which sits a man with a book, who sings or chants from this book before a scene begins, to tell you what is going to take place.

The Chinese theatres are entirely different from those of Japan. In China the scene in the auditorium beggars description, but the acting is of a high order. Very little or any stage scenery is used, and the Philistine may be prone to think that this detracts from the realism of the play. On the contrary, it affords almost unlimited opportunity for the exercise of gestures, posturing and implication on the part of the actors. For instance, in the event of a scene by a graveside, the grave may be represented by a small dome-like structure of lath and canvas, which one of the numerous attendants carries in and places on the stage. Or, if a vehicle is being represented, a super will walk on with a sign-board, on which is painted: "This is a carriage." Similarly, on entering a house, the actor goes through the movements natural to crossing a threshold, such as stepping over the sill, stooping to avoid striking his head against the lintel and so forth.

One of the things which most astonishes a foreigner in Japan is a fire. So soon as a fire breaks out in a house, all the furniture and everything of any value it contains are thrown out by the occupants, for, as the houses are made of wood and paper, they are very quickly consumed. On the engines arriving on the scene, instead of starting at once to play the hose on the flames, the chief of the Fire Brigade and his colleagues hold a sort of council of war and deliberate as to the best way to extinguish the fire. It is really comical, for by the time they have made up their minds how to set about it, probably a dozen houses have been burned down.

On leaving Japan we sailed for Fiji, on the way to Honolulu, where we were to take the steamer for San Francisco.

In Fiji the natives paid for admission to my entertainment in vegetables, poultry, pigs and so forth. If a pig were handed



Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hertz in Rickshaws. (This Idol of the Great Buddha is believed to be the largest in Japan.)

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in at the pay-box, two persons were passed in to the cheapest part of the house. In exchange for a goat I gave a four-shilling seat. While for a sack of potatoes three of the best seats were allowed. Some of the poorer people brought a cabbage or two apiece for admission.

The Fijians are a peculiar people ; they must be about the most punctual race on earth. For the evening performance, like the Chinese, they invariably assembled outside the theatre at nine o'clock in the morning, bringing their meals with them. If a native of Fiji wants to catch a boat which leaves at ten o'clock at night, he arrives at the pier at seven in the morning. They firmly believed I was gifted with supernatural powers, and on one occasion a Fiji chief, after witnessing one of my illusions, jumped on to the stage and, kneeling at my feet, kissed my hand in the most devoted fashion ; and when I was leaving Fiji dozens of the natives came down to the steamer and decorated my wife and myself with garlands of flowers.

On our arrival at Honolulu we found the theatre occupied by an amateur company, and had to wait over a week before it was at our disposal. I performed there for a fortnight and then sent my entire company with most of my luggage and paraphernalia direct to England. My wife and I sailed for San Francisco, as I wanted to visit my relatives, whom I had not seen for nine years, before returning to London.

Throughout the whole of my three years' tour in the Antipodes and the East, my wife, Mlle. D'Alton, accompanied me, and the assistance she rendered me in my performances was simply invaluable. It would be difficult to praise too highly the pluck and endurance she displayed, often in the most trying circumstances.

It is no easy matter for a woman to travel where my wife went. Much of our travelling had to be done on the wobbling backs of camels, in rolling hoodahs on the spines of elephants, or in jolting palanquins. Women do not take readily to these sort of conveyances, but my wife seemed positively to enjoy them.

Itinerant showing in the Orient is a trying business for all

concerned, and, besides the fatigue of travel, the journey from point to point along the highway never fails to excite the curiosity of the population, and from the Red Sea to the Indies, from Bombay to Singapore, the travellers are beset by swarms of dark-skinned natives, importunate beggars, crippled or afflicted with all kinds of loathsome diseases, thieves and what not. To be mobbed by such crowds, as we often were, was a singularly alarming experience for a woman, but my wife never showed any trace of fear.

She was the first woman illusionist ever seen in India, and she had to overcome the prejudice which exists in the East against the publicity of her sex. But she succeeded beyond all our hopes, and aroused among the natives, who could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw her, in our aerial illusions, walking and turning somersaults in the air, seemingly without any support whatever, an admiration almost amounting to worship. They were firmly convinced that she was possessed of occult powers and called her the "Wonder Woman," and it was no uncommon thing to see them go down on their knees and bow their heads to the ground as she passed by.

CHAPTER XVI

I buy a film of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight—It proves to be a fake—I determine to get my money back—A risky experiment, which, however, is attended with success—Return to England—I take a house at Brixton Hill—My curio room—I meet with a serious accident while rehearsing at the Metropolitan Music Hall and am unable to perform for three months—I present "Iris, the Mystic Cameleon," at the Empire.

WHILE I was performing in Christchurch, New Zealand, where I exhibited the first cinematograph which had ever been seen there, I learned that Robert Fitzsimmons, the well-known boxer, who was a native of this town, and had recently defeated my old schoolfellow Jem Corbett, the American champion, had had a film of the fight taken. I thought it would be a fine feather in my cap if I could get the Australian and New Zealand rights of this film, and that it would prove a big money-maker, particularly in New Zealand, where Fitzsimmons was so well known and had become a popular hero.

Accordingly, I cabled to a brother-in-law of mine in San Francisco asking him to try to get me at any cost the film of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight and send it at once to New Zealand. I got a reply saying that William Brady had secured the Australian rights of this film and that it could not be had at any price. I was, of course, greatly disappointed, but about a week later I received another cable from my brother-in-law, who informed me that a second film of the fight had been taken by a firm of film-producers in Philadelphia, and could be bought for a thousand dollars (£200). I immediately cabled the money, with instructions to send the film immediately, and

meantime boomed and advertised it as coming shortly to New Zealand.

The film duly came, and, on the morning of its arrival, after removing it from the Custom House, I invited representatives of all the Press at Christchurch to a private show of the picture. Alas! the film was a fake! The combatants were not Corbett and Fitzsimmons, but two men made up to look like them, with wigs on, and at one stage of the "fight" the man who was supposed to be Fitzsimmons nearly got his wig knocked off. It was the most wretched thing I had ever seen! After the performance I was advised by all the Press not to show this film to the public under any consideration, as, Fitzsimmons being a native of the town, everybody knew him, and they might raise a riot, which would ruin my reputation all through Australia and New Zealand. So the film was never shown there, and I was greatly annoyed at the money I had lost in purchasing this worthless picture.

When I sailed for San Francisco I took with me the cinematograph machine and all the films which I had been showing, including the faked Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight, in the hope of being able to sell the lot to someone there, as I had no further use for them. The first thing I did when I met my brother-in-law was to pitch into him for sending me that worthless picture which had cost me £200, but he said that he knew nothing about films and had no idea that the thing was a fake, and so I had to forgive him.

A couple of days later, while walking along Market Street, one of the main streets of San Francisco, I happened to pass a very large, empty shop. An idea occurred to me, and turning to my brother-in-law, who was with me, I said:

"See here! I've got a great idea how I can get back the thousand dollars I lost over that faked film. Let's go and find out where the landlord of that empty shop we've just passed lives."

We went to see the landlord, and I asked him what he would charge me for one day's rent of his empty shop on Market Street.

"What do you want it for?" said he.

"To show a picture," I replied.

He did not ask me what kind of picture I wanted to show, probably thinking it was an oil-painting, and agreed to let me have the shop the following Sunday for ten dollars; which I paid him at once.

"What on earth do you want that empty shop for on Sunday?" inquired my brother-in-law as we left the office.

"To show the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight," I answered.

He looked at me in astonishment.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "You're surely not going to show that thing here if it really is as bad as you say? Why, Corbett used to live here, and the people know him as well as the people in Christchurch knew Fitzsimmons. They'll see at once that it's faked and burn the place down!"

"Never mind about that," said I. "Has the real Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight been shown here yet?"

"No, not yet."

"Then that's all I want to know. I'll take my chance about there being a row."

My brother-in-law begged me not to show the film on any account, but I told him that I had made up my mind to do so and it was no good his trying to dissuade me, and, going to a sign-painter's, I had a large calico sign painted, with the following inscription:

Sunday next, from 10 a.m. to midnight.

Burlesque of

The Great Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight.

Admission 25 cents.

The words "The Great Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight" were in extra large letters, and the words "Burlesque of" in very small letters.

This sign I displayed in the window of the shop, and from the interest it seemed to arouse amongst the passers-by I felt sure that I should have a full house when Sunday came.

I had the screen on which the picture was to be shown put up at the back of the shop, and fixed my machine in the front part, and on Sunday morning I put on an old and none-too-clean suit and an old cap and made myself look like a workman.

Long before 10 a.m. there was an enormous queue of people waiting for admission to my improvised cinema, and the police had to regulate the traffic. From this I judged that few of my prospective patrons could have noticed the words, "Burlesque of" above the staring letters announcing the fight.

At ten o'clock we opened the doors, and the people literally fought to get in. There were no chairs or seats of any kind in the shop. It was quite bare save for the screen at one end and the machine at the other. When the place would hold no more the doors were closed for the first performance, and, in my workman's clothes, I went to the machine and began to operate it. Thereupon the fight started both on the screen and in the shop. The audience hooted and hissed and shouted: "Fake! Swindle!" and all sorts of uncomplimentary things. Some of them wanted to interfere with me, but I told them that I was only a workman getting two dollars for the job, and they let me alone.

Singularly enough, the people stood and saw the picture through, and though, when it was over, I was afraid they might smash up my machine and destroy the screen, they departed without doing me any more damage than a few slashes across the screen, which would not prevent my continuing to show the film.

Meantime, an immense crowd had gathered outside, waiting to come in for the second performance. I thought that the people who were leaving would warn those who were waiting as to what was in store for them and that they would go away. But, apparently, the first crowd, having been taken in by this faked film, wanted to see the others caught in the same way as they had been. Anyway, they must have said nothing to them about it, for presently a fresh crowd came pouring in, to be succeeded in their turn by another; and I went on showing the

picture until past midnight, by which time we had taken over \$2,500.

At the finish my brother-in-law, who was assisting me, and myself were completely done up. We had had nothing to eat all day, and had been showing continuously. But I did not mind that, as I had got back the money I had lost over that faked film and a handsome profit into the bargain.

The next day I said to my brother-in-law :

"I'm quite satisfied now. I never want to see this film again."

So we took the film out into a back street, put a match to it, and that was the last of "The Great Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight."

After spending a month with my relatives at San Francisco, my wife and I went to New York, whence at the beginning of December, 1898, we sailed for England. On my arrival in London I took a house at Brixton Hill, in which I had one room decorated and furnished with the curios my wife and I had gathered together during our tour round the world, which included, amongst many other interesting mementoes, a national costume of every country we had visited. One of the London papers sent one of its staff to inspect my curio-room, of which he afterwards wrote the following description :—

Even in these days of universal and world-wide travel, Mr. Carl Hertz must be reckoned among the most extensive of globe-trotters, at all events so far as the profession of entertaining is concerned. Of course, everyone who is anyone has done the "States" or South Africa or Australia or New Zealand, or two or more of them, but to encompass the whole lot, and more also, in a single professional tour is a feat worthy of note even to-day.

Through India, Burma, Java, Japan, China, Borneo and the Philippines, and, at a very uncertain and critical time during the late campaign, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States : these are included in the range of journeyings which Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hertz have just brought to an eminently successful close.

But work and travel have not exclusively occupied the time

of Mr. Hertz or of his very energetic wife. Between them—and it is a little difficult and might be invidious to attempt any apportionment of their spheres of activity—they have acquired a remarkable collection of curios. Not the sort of curios which anyone with money in inverse ratio to the extent of his knowledge may pick up from wily dealers in the neighbourhood of the Docks or Tower Hill, but genuine specimens of the handicraft and mementoes of the various places of interest visited by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hertz and acquired by them on the spot.

We say that these are of exceptional interest, as unquestionably they are. We are able to speak only from a partial inspection of the collection, a great part of which still remains unpacked. What, however, our representative did see, after threading some of the picturesque passes of South-West London suburbia, forms an ample and eloquent testimony to the industry and good taste of the collectors.

It is not surprising to find that the bulk of the curios come from India, China and Japan, the mysterious Shining East whose secrets always exert an irresistible fascination over the Occidental mind. Mr. Hertz, by virtue of his travel and experience, is by way of being learned on these matters, and if he is cyclopædic in his knowledge, his method of imparting it is eminently pleasant, unaffected and entertaining.

For instance, he will point out to you the characteristic differences between the embroideries of India, China and Japan, and he has some extremely rich and beautiful specimens of each, wherewith to illustrate his dissertation.

He will indicate the charm of a gorgeous purple satin curtain, with a yellow lining, and with irises and marguerites worked in silk in relief, with a superb screen also worked with purple and white wisterias, and he will point out the prevalence of these flowers in all things Japanese, illustrating it with coloured photographs, of which he must possess some hundreds, showing the beautiful flowers in cascades, so to speak, giving in purple what our laburnum gives in gold. These in contrast with a magnificent piece of Chinese work, silk worked on silk in the most brilliant colours, most subtly and delicately graded, the iridescent effect of which is most extremely beautiful, even to a Western eye. There is a court dress of a Chinese mandarin's wife or a lady of similar rank. It comes from the interior Palace of Peking, and bears upon it the potent emblem of the five-clawed dragon. Its decoration consists of flowers and

animals embroidered on a pale blue ground, the over-skirt being of bright colours on a yellow ground.

One interesting fact in connection with the wearing of this costume is that its owner is supposed always to be provided on her visit to the Court with a phial of poison in a pocket designed for the purpose, in case she should have the misfortune to displease the Emperor, in which deplorable event it would be her duty to follow the example set by Ingoldsby's heroine who "took prussic acid without any water, and died like a duke and a duchess's daughter."

There was also for your inspection a genuine pair of ladies' silk crepe trousers, worn by Chinese ladies on ordinary occasions. Then you see, as a sample of the textile work of India, an extremely handsome table-cloth made in Bombay. This was made there specially for Mrs. Hertz, who explains that during their stay in Bombay they had the greatest difficulty in getting things done for them, as most of the people had fled in panic from the disease-stricken city. The table-cloth is a strikingly handsome composition of gold and pale pink.

With a certain air of mystery, Mr. Hertz lifts carefully two tiny little structures, a pair of Chinese ladies' shoes, the soles and heels of which together are not a fraction over two inches long, and on the wall you may see a photograph of the foot-binding process. Not a very attractive spectacle, as may be imagined, with the lady's toes curled up under the sole of the foot.

From walking to carriage is not a far step, and specimens are put before you of the Japanese rickshaw daintily carved in ivory, and the Chinese neatly constructed of wood.

Then a Japanese lady's comb and hairpins, the latter a formidable weapon, and, since the Japanese lady does not do her hair every day, a wooden block or pillow on which she sleeps in order not to disarrange the elaborate superstructure. As a rule, the Japanese lady's hair is done up once a fortnight.

Next we are shown a delightful little figure in silver—a Chinese joss decorated with what looks like a blue enamel, but is really the feather of a kingfisher. Water colours on rice-paper, a Chinese marble specimen, different specimens of opium pipes, Chinese, Japanese and, for ladies, the Burmese lady's cigarette, which looks immensely like a pale edition of that wondrous show cigar which we read of in "The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green."

There are one or two articles of grim interest : photographs

of executions, very realistic and showing the severed heads and trunks ; a hari-kari, showing the blood trickling down the gentleman's robes, and the executioner preparing to sheer off a head. Much more innocent-looking is a little lump of half-fused florins and shillings. This is from Coolgardie, and represents all that was left of an unhappy gentleman who lost his life in a big hotel fire there. His small change amounted to about 6s. 6d., all melted together.

It is impossible in reasonable space to deal with anything like the bulk of Mr. Hertz's art treasures. So far we have given scarcely more than a one-sided glimpse of what is a very various, instructive and suggestive collection. Australia and Africa are both represented, some of the Zulu ladies' dresses being as exiguous as the warmest climate could require. One gem heads the collection and deserves seeing for itself ; the most dainty and delightful little Satsuma tea-service which the heart of man—or woman—could desire. Mrs. Hertz has also a collection of costumes. She is positively enthusiastic as to the beauty of the Burmese ladies, but the sweetest specimen of feminine beauty in Mr. Hertz's gallery is a half-bred English-Japanese girl.

After my return to England I rested until the end of May, when I opened at the Metropolitan Music Hall. Here I had the misfortune to meet with a serious accident.

One morning, while rehearsing a new illusion, I happened to have in my hand an uncoiled piece of wire. A page-boy, with a message for one of the artists, came running across the stage, caught his foot in the wire and dragged it along with him, cutting the second finger of my left hand to the bone. I was taken to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, where they put in nine stitches, and it was not until September that I was able to perform again. I then appeared at the Empire, where I presented a new illusion called " Iris, the Mystic Cameleon," which was most cordially received. It was as follows :—

Mlle. D'Alton underwent a species of hypnotism, or artificial catalepsy, at my hands, and, while in a mesmeric state, her volition was subordinated to me, and ruled and guided in accordance with my commands. In this condition she followed me as docilely as a lamb, sat on the back of a chair,

and, when the chair was slanted backwards, sat still, in apparent defiance of the laws of gravity. She next stood erect on a throne or couch, and, by means of a lantern and coloured slides, seemed to wear an infinity of coloured dresses. The final experiment showed the lady lying on her back at full length on the throne, which, by invisible means, rose higher and higher, and I then passed over her a hoop or ring to show that there were no obstructions, and that the subject was really without any visible means of support.

CHAPTER XVII

I leave England on a tour of Germany, Italy and France—Command performance before the Kaiser at Potsdam—Present which I receive from the "All-Highest"—The accommodating railway official at Dusseldorf—An unpleasant surprise—A packed house at Lucca—I learn after the performance that it is three parts "paper"—An unclaimed set of artificial teeth—Performance in a half-finished theatre at Turin—Singular adventure of one of my assistants during my engagement at the Folies-Bergères in Paris—Return to London—"The Demon, or Magic Kettle" at the Canterbury—Difficulties which I experience in procuring the liquid air required for this—Fortunate chance through which I am able to surmount them.

In April, 1902, I left England with my company on a Continental tour, which was to comprise Germany, Italy and France.

During my visit to Berlin I gave a command performance before the Kaiser and his Court at Potsdam. I regret to say that the "All-Highest" did not seem altogether to appreciate my entertainment; in fact, he looked distinctly bored. The Crown Prince, on the other hand, appeared to be highly amused, and laughed boisterously on several occasions, which served to console me for his august father's indifference. At the conclusion of my performance the Kaiser presented me with a scarf-pin in the shape of the German eagle in diamonds.

The last town in Germany at which I performed before going on to Italy was Dusseldorf, where I had a singular experience with my luggage.

At that time I used to travel with about two tons of luggage, and as luggage is a very expensive thing to take about on the Continent, every pound having to be paid for, and it

had to travel by passenger-train with me, it was a very big item in my expenditure. One evening one of the railway officials at Dusseldorf came to see my entertainment at the theatre and got into conversation with me, in the course of which I told him that at the conclusion of my engagement there I was leaving for Milan. He inquired if I proposed taking my luggage with me, and, when I told him that I did, remarked that the cost would be very heavy.

"I suppose it will," I said, "but it can't be helped, unfortunately."

"Well," said he, "there is a way in which it can be done much more cheaply. Come and see me the day before you are leaving, and I think I may be able to get your luggage through for about a quarter of what you would otherwise have to pay."

I was naturally very pleased to hear this, though I didn't quite see how he was going to do it, and the day before I left Dusseldorf I called on this kind official. He then told me that I must bring my luggage down to the station at the last possible moment, so that there would not be time to weigh it. He would then give the luggage-clerk an estimated weight of the entire lot, and I should pay according to this estimate.

His plan sounded beautifully simple, and, in point of fact, it went off without a hitch. I arrived, with my company, at the station only just in time for our luggage to be bundled into the train, and the estimate which my friend gave, and according to which I paid, was less than a quarter of the amount it should have been.

I was just tickled to death at having got off so cheaply, gave my friend a hundred-mark note for himself, which was of course the equivalent of a "fiver" in those days, and went off to Italy, chuckling over my good fortune.

On our arrival at Milan, about seven o'clock in the morning, I handed the luggage-ticket to my assistants, with instructions to have the luggage taken at once to the Eden Theatre, where we were to open that evening. My wife and I then drove to our hotel, but, while at breakfast, one of my assistants came

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to tell me that the railway people would not let them have the luggage, saying that there was another £75 to pay, and, until the money was forthcoming, the luggage could not be removed.

I at once sent for a cab and drove to the station, where I went to the booking-office, saw the head-clerk and angrily demanded an explanation. I was taken to the station-master, and was told that the luggage had been incorrectly weighed at Dusseldorf, as it was more than three times as heavy as the amount for which I had been charged, and that I must either pay the balance or they would keep the luggage. It was not the least use arguing the matter, and so I paid up and left the station, vowing never to trust a German again.

From Milan we journeyed to Lucca and opened at a beautiful theatre there, built in honour of Puccini, the composer of "*La Bohème*." On looking through the curtain before the performance began, I was delighted to see a packed house; but when, after it was over, I went into the manager's office, I was told that only about a quarter of the audience had paid for admission, and that the rest had all come in free. I was naturally very angry, and demanded an explanation, upon which the manager said that the theatre was run by subscribers, and that each subscriber had free admission on first nights. I was so disgusted that I refused to appear again, and left next day for Genoa, where I performed for fifteen nights with great success. But I took good care that there were no subscribers.

At the conclusion of my engagement at Genoa we went on to Turin. A few minutes before the train left, one of the porters from our hotel came rushing breathlessly up to me with a little package in his hand, which, he said, one of my company had left behind. As none of them claimed the package, I opened it in their presence, and found that it contained a set of lady's artificial teeth. No one would own that the teeth were theirs, and I do not know to this day to whom they belonged.

On arriving at Turin we went to the theatre. It was a



Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hertz outside Theatre Stage Door, Genoa, Italy.
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new one, and I had been engaged as the opening attraction. What was my astonishment to find that the theatre was only half-finished! There were no seats; the plasterers were still at work, and the scaffolding was still up, and I could not see how on earth they could get the place ready for that night's performance. However, they managed to get the auditorium cleared, and seats put in, though they were only partially finished; but at the back of the stage the artists had to dress in half-finished dressing-rooms without any doors or any accommodation for washing. Nevertheless, we contrived to get through the performance, and by the next night everything was properly finished.

After leaving Turin we visited Venice, Savona, and other towns in Italy, and then started for Paris, where I had a month's engagement at the Folies-Bergères, performing at Nice, Toulon and Marseilles on the way.

During my engagement at the Folies Bergères a singular incident happened.

One afternoon my principal assistant, a good-looking, gentlemanly young Frenchman, came and asked me to give him leave of absence that evening, as he had an important engagement. Since I could not well do without him—a fact of which he was quite aware—I was very astonished, and reminded him sharply that he was under contract with me, and that my business came before even the most important of engagements. He then told me that, if he could have the evening off, he had a chance of making 5,000 francs. Naturally, I inquired how he was going to make that sum, and though he at first declined to say, eventually, after a good deal of persuasion, he told me the following remarkable story:—

He said that a married lady whose acquaintance he had made had offered to pay him 5,000 francs in return for a service which he was to render her. She was to provide him with a suit of evening clothes, white kid gloves, opera-hat and everything complete, and, thus attired, he was to take her to the theatre that night, afterwards to supper, and then back to the hotel at which she and her husband were staying.

She was, it appeared, anxious to force her husband to divorce her, presumably in order that she might marry someone whom she liked better, and, on arriving at the hotel, she was to admit my assistant to her bedroom and lock the door ; and, when her husband came home later, he was to find him in the room.

I strongly advised my assistant to have nothing to do with such an affair, warning him that there was no telling what the husband might not do on discovering another man in his wife's room ; it was quite possible that, if he carried a revolver, he might shoot him at sight. But he did not seem in the least alarmed, and said :—

“ I am quite prepared to take the risk in order to earn such a large sum.” (His salary was, I think, 100 francs a week.)

Finding that his mind was made up and that it was no use trying to dissuade him, I told him that I could not have my performance upset by his absence, and that, though I did not care what he did after the performance, he would have to be at the theatre at the usual time in order to assist me. Eventually, it was settled that he should bring the lady to the Folies-Bergères, and afterwards take her out to supper and do what he had promised her ; and in this way my performance would not be interfered with.

That evening he came to the theatre in well-cut evening clothes, and I was astonished at his appearance. He was, as I have said, a good-looking, gentlemanly young man, and he certainly looked the part which he had undertaken to play. After the performance I was told that he had been seen going away with a tall, handsome woman, and I felt very anxious to hear the outcome of this extraordinary affair.

Next day my assistant arrived at the theatre looking very glum, from which I concluded that matters had not gone exactly as he and the lady anticipated. I asked him what had happened, when he told me that he had taken the lady out to supper, and afterwards to the hotel, where, as arranged, she had admitted him to her room. About one o'clock in the morning, the husband arrived, and finding the door locked, called upon his wife to open it.

Instead of doing so the woman began to scream and whispered to my assistant to take his coat off. The husband thereupon went downstairs and returned with the manager of the hotel. They broke open the door, and there stood the lady in her wrapper and my assistant with his coat off. The husband turned to the manager and said :—

“ Monsieur, you are a witness that I have found this man in my wife’s room.”

Then, without saying a word to his wife or my assistant, he left the hotel.

My assistant left shortly afterwards, the lady telling him to call next morning at eleven o’clock for the 5,000 francs she had promised him. But, when he called, he found, to his astonishment and mortification, that she had gone away, leaving no address.

When he had finished his tale, I told him that it served him right for having mixed himself up in such an affair, and, at the same time, I gave him a week’s notice.

In January, 1903, I returned to England and, after fulfilling a number of engagements in London, made an extensive tour of the provinces, Scotland and Ireland.

In September, 1904, I returned to London and opened at the Canterbury. During this engagement I presented a sensational episode called “ The Demon, or Magic Kettle,” to the production of which there is quite a history attached. Some months before, a great friend of mine in America wrote to me and explained that some wonderful effects could be produced by “ liquid air.” My friend was a great scientist, and, from the explanation and instructions he sent me, I made up my mind to produce this sensational performance. The effects of which were as follows :—

A kettle was shown to the audience steaming like wild-fire and capable of producing all kinds of uncanny effects. For instance, it boiled on a block of ice, and the steaming water from it, apparently as hot as boiling water can be, did not scald, but positively froze anything put into it. As a

scientific fact, the magic kettle had to be seen to be appreciated, and had to be tested to be understood. There was no trickery and no legerdemain about the matter. Science had discovered this strange mystery, which is doubtless still in its infancy, for, from what has been and is being done, there is no saying what may arise from it in the future.

When the water from the kettle was poured on flowers, grapes or any other soft and delicate product, or when they were dipped into the steaming liquid, they would in a few seconds become converted into hard and brittle ice, and the grapes, when dropped on the floor, would sound like bullets. If an egg were broken and put into a pan, a few drops of this liquid air poured upon it would fry the egg, and, to all appearance, it would be just the same as if it had been fried over a fire. Ice-cream could be made in a few seconds by simply pouring some of the liquid air over a mixture of cream, eggs and so forth. There seemed to be no end to the things which this wonderful scientific discovery could do.

The trouble was to get this liquid air. Nobody seemed to know what it was, and I had practically given up all hope of being able to procure it, when my friend, Sir Joseph Lyons, gave me a letter of introduction to Professor Dewar, the great scientist, at the Medical College in Gower Street, who explained to me what liquid air really was. He said that it was actually condensed air, and was sometimes, but very seldom, used for cauterising wounds. It was, he added, very expensive and very difficult to obtain, as a special machine, which was also very expensive, had to be constructed in order to produce it, and it would cost something like £5 a teaspoonful. He did not know of the existence of any such machine in England.

As there seemed to be no machine in this country capable of producing liquid air, I had decided that it was no use my troubling further about the matter, when by chance I learned that there was a small one at the Brinn Oxygen Works, in Westminster. I went to see them and found, to my delight, that they had such a machine, but it was out of order and had not been used for some time. I agreed, however, to purchase

the liquid air, if they would put the machine in order and start making it.

The machine was very small and could only produce the condensed air at the rate of about one drop in ten minutes. However, by the end of the week I managed to get a litre of it, which had to be carried in vacuum bottles, resembling thermos flasks. With this I experimented until I could produce all the effects I have mentioned. I then tried to get the managers of various halls to book the show, but, as they did not seem to understand what it was, none of them would give me an engagement for it.

Meantime, before I could publicly produce the show, a man arrived from America and opened at the Palace Theatre with it. I was, of course, greatly disappointed when I learned this, as I was most anxious to be the first to produce it in London. However, I got Mr. George Adney Payne, the proprietor of the Canterbury and Paragon Music Halls, to witness a private performance, and he immediately engaged me, and I produced my magic kettle at the Canterbury about a week later.

But when I went to Westminster to get a further supply of liquid air, I was informed that I could not have any more, as the gentleman who was performing at the Palace Theatre had entered into an agreement with them to take all they could make, and that they were not to supply it to anyone else. This was a veritable bolt from the blue; but fortunately I had enough in stock to last me for the first two days of my engagement.

Meantime, I was inquiring all over England, France and Germany to try to get it from somewhere else, and eventually I ascertained that there was another small machine at Retford. I at once sent a man down there, and luckily he brought me back enough to carry me through the first week of my engagement. But, on sending him to Retford a second time, he returned with the news that the same man who had entered into the agreement with Brinn's had also entered into an agreement with the Retford people to take all they could make, on condition that they would not supply anyone else. I then

rushed my assistant over to Paris, as I had heard that there was a small machine at Charcot's Institute, but the message I received from him next morning was as follows :—

" Leaving Paris. No air."

I was in a terrible quandary, and did not know what to do, as I had an eight weeks' engagement booked at a large salary ; but it was impossible for me to continue to perform, the man from the Palace having forestalled me at the only two places from which I could procure the liquid air.

Matters looked so hopeless that I actually went round to my agent with the intention of telling him to cancel my contract, when, just as I was about to enter his office, I came face to face with my competitor ! I had never met the gentleman before, but he evidently knew who I was, for he said :—

" Well, Mr. Hertz, how are you getting on with your Magic Kettle ? "

I answered that I was getting on all right—which, of course, was very far from being the case, but I did not intend to let him know the predicament in which I was placed.

He smiled sarcastically.

" Where do you get your liquid air from ? " he asked.

" That is my business," I replied.

" Oh, you needn't be so close about it," he rejoined with a short laugh. " I know very well where you get it from, but you won't be able to do so much longer, let me tell you. I have stopped you getting it from Brinn's and also from Retford, and I am going to stop you getting it from Lister's as well."

" Very well," I said, " we'll see."

I had not the least idea who " Lister " was, but he had given me a tip which I meant to take advantage of, and I said to myself :—

" I am going to find out who ' Lister ' is."

I accordingly got a Directory and looked through all the names of Lister and Lyster. I copied them all down, and those who looked like having anything to do with science or

chemistry I made a special note of, and for three days I went round in a cab from one to the other, but without success. At the end of that time I was tired and dejected, and though I had not yet got more than half-way through the list, was on the point of giving up the search in despair, when I noticed among my list of names, "Lister, Scientific Institute of Medicine." So, as a last resource, I called on them, and had an interview with the professor who was at the head of the Institute. I asked him if he had a machine for making liquid air, and my delight can be imagined when he replied that he had the largest one in existence. He added, however, that it was out of order and had not been working for over a year, a statement which considerably discounted my joy.

After some conversation, he took me downstairs and showed me the most wonderful machine I had ever seen. It occupied a long room by itself, and, when in working order, was capable of producing fifty times as much liquid air as the others I had seen or heard of. The professor said he was very sorry that he could not supply me with any, as the machine would take some time to repair, and as liquid air was very seldom used, it was not worth while to go to the expense of having it done. However, after a long talk with him, he finally agreed to put two or three men on to the machine at once to get it into working order, and to supply me with as much liquid air as I wanted at about a quarter of the price which I had been paying for it ; and inside of a week I had seven different shows running in different parts of Great Britain exhibiting the Magic Kettle. This shows what a hint can do for a man who is wide-a-woke.

CHAPTER XVIII

Engagement at Copenhagen—My exposure of a well-known medium—On my return to London I receive news of the serious illness of my father and sail, with my wife, for New York *en route* for San Francisco—At a wayside station on the Union Pacific we learn of the San Francisco earthquake—We are obliged to remain the night at Oakland, which is crowded with refugees from the stricken city—We obtain permission to go to San Francisco—Appalling scenes of destruction—I find, to my intense relief, that my relatives are safe—We are obliged to remain in San Francisco for two months—The scenes in Golden Gate Park—A strange meeting—Death of my father—We leave for New York—Engagements there and at Chicago—Singular story of a cardsharp—We return to England—My second tour in South Africa—Nervous breakdown, which obliges me to spend some weeks at Las Palmas and Madeira.

At the beginning of 1906, I left England for Copenhagen to fulfil a two months' engagement at the Scala Theatre. My entertainment was so great a success that I received a command to give a performance before the King, Christian IX., but this never took place, as before the date fixed for it the King died suddenly. While at Copenhagen I was the means of exposing a well-known spiritualistic medium by giving on the stage a demonstration of all the tests he had been performing.

I returned to England in March, 1906, and was booked well ahead to appear in various parts of the country, when one day I received a cable from one of my sisters in San Francisco informing me that my father was ill and begging me to come home as soon as possible. This news necessitated a change of all my plans, and, leaving instructions with my agent to cancel my contracts, I sailed for New York, *en route* for San Francisco, in the s.s. *St. Paul*, accompanied by my wife.

On our arrival in New York, after a very stormy passage,

we were met by a relation of mine, who handed me a telegram from my sister asking me to come on to San Francisco without delay. So we only stayed the night in New York, and left next day for California *via* Chicago. At a wayside station on the Union Pacific we were horrified to hear of the appalling calamity which had befallen San Francisco on the morning of April 16th.

As all my sisters and other relatives, as well as my father, were in the ill-fated town, my feelings may be imagined! It was at first reported that nearly the whole of the town had been destroyed by earthquake, and what had escaped the earthquake had been destroyed by fire. We got as far as Oakland, on the other side of the Bay, about seven miles from San Francisco, which can only be reached by boat. The authorities would not allow anyone to go over to San Francisco, and the anxiety and suspense I experienced at being at such a short distance from my relatives, and yet unable to ascertain whether they were safe or not, I shall never forget.

We tried to get a room for the night, but this was impossible, every hotel and house in the place being full, while all the churches and public buildings were being used to shelter the refugees from the stricken city, as thousands of people had flocked over to Oakland for safety when the fire broke out.

Next morning I went to see the Chief of Police and got a special permit to go over to San Francisco, with my wife, who was to act as a nurse. I shall never forget the sight when we arrived in the burning city. Over 200,000 people had been rendered homeless, and they were living in tents, in tram-cars, and in roughly-constructed wooden shelters. As the earthquake and fire had occurred at five o'clock in the morning, when everybody was asleep, people had had no time to dress, but had seized the first thing they could lay their hands on, and rushed out of their houses to save themselves. The "gets-up" of some of them were really comical, and we saw women walking about with men's top-hats and overcoats on. Even in the tragic circumstances, one could not help but laugh.

The town was under martial law; the fire was still

burning, and not a building intact for miles. I walked across acres of bricks and stones to try to reach the district where my relatives lived. All along the route were ruined buildings; some had collapsed entirely, of others the walls alone were standing. Amongst those which I passed was the Majestic Theatre, which had been the finest theatre in San Francisco, but was now a heap of ruins. The streets were strewn with débris, and the billows in the pavement, showing where the ground had lifted and fallen, told the story of destruction. I had to pick my way carefully, keeping as far as I could from the walls which were still standing and might at any moment collapse.

At last I reached that part of the city which had been partly spared. All the people were huddled together in front of their houses. Fearful of another earthquake, they refused to remain in their houses. Their nerves seemed completely unstrung; they started at the mere rumbling of a wagon, and showed by their haggard faces what they had been through.

After walking for five hours, I arrived, tired and footsore, at my father's house, and, to my intense relief, found that he and all my relatives were safe, though my father was so ill that he did not recognise me. They had had a terrible time. The house had survived the earthquake, but all the walls were cracked and plaster was lying all over the place, and every bit of china and glass had been broken. The police had ordered them to leave, on account of the proximity of the fire, and my father had been put on a stretcher and carried from one street to another as the fire drew nearer. Finally, he had been taken outside the city and placed in one of the tents which had been erected there to shelter those who had been obliged to leave their homes.

After the fire had practically burned itself out came the scarcity of food. All communication with other towns was cut off, and what food could be procured was taken charge of and distributed by the authorities to the people, who had to line up to receive it. My wife and I had to stand in a queue



San Francisco after the Earthquake and Fire.

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awaiting our turn, and on one occasion all that we got was a piece of bread and cheese.

All the railroad lines were broken up, cables down, and there was no way of letting our friends in England know whether we were alive or dead, for, aware that we were going to San Francisco, they were naturally anxious about us.

We were obliged to remain in San Francisco for nearly two months before we were able to leave, during which time we were in great straits for money. I had brought very little money with me, and I could not cable to London for any, or draw upon the banking account I had in San Francisco, for the banks, like other buildings, had been destroyed, and the money in their vaults could not be touched until the vaults had cooled—a matter of some weeks. The heat generated some kind of gas, which entered the vaults, and if the safes were opened without being thoroughly cooled there would be danger of their contents bursting into flames. I saw, as a matter of fact, a safe which had been opened in the street burst into flames and thousands of dollars in paper-money which it contained destroyed, and this even after the safe had had water played on it for two or three days.

Out in Golden Gate Park thousands of people were assembled, living in tents, in old packing-cases, under bits of carpet propped up by poles and any old thing that would shelter them. A couple of weeks before I left London I was having supper in Romano's Restaurant, in the Strand, and a friend of mine introduced me to a handsomely-dressed woman covered with diamonds. One afternoon when I was in Golden Gate Park, I heard someone call my name. I turned round and saw coming towards me a young woman, attired in a man's light overcoat and silk hat, with grimy face and hands and her hair hanging down her back.

"You are Mr. Hertz, are you not?" said she.

I replied in the affirmative, upon which she asked me if I did not recognise her. I said I was sorry, but that I did not, upon which she told me that she was the lady who had been introduced to me that night at Romano's. It appeared that

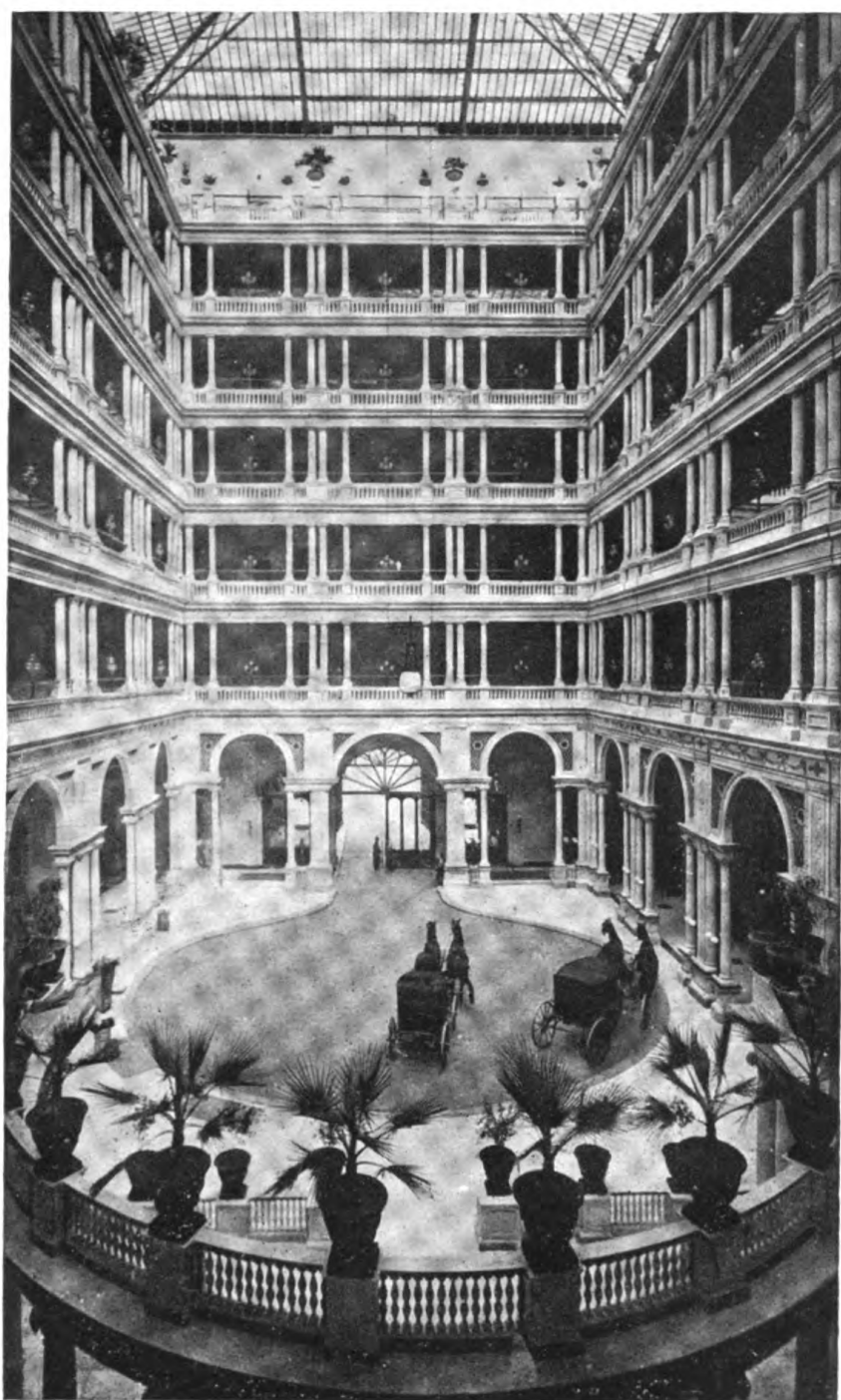
she had come to San Francisco to get married, and she and her husband had rushed out of their house, leaving behind everything except what she was now wearing.

A strange incident happened to a man who had come from London to San Francisco to negotiate the sale of some property which he had inherited there. He completed the sale the day before the calamity and received the money, amounting to \$55,000, in notes. These notes he placed in an inside waistcoat-pocket, and when he went to bed that night put the waistcoat under his pillow. When the earthquake occurred, he rushed out of the hotel to save his life, forgetting for the moment in his terror the money under his pillow. On reaching the street he remembered it and was about to run back to try to save his fortune when the whole building came down with a crash, and the fire afterwards consumed everything. Although he was not yet thirty, the shock turned his hair snow-white in less than twenty-four hours.

Caruso, the celebrated singer, was in San Francisco at the time, and I was told that, when the earthquake occurred, he sprang out of bed, rushed out into the square in front of his hotel, and the first thing he did was to try his voice, to see if it had gone.

When I left New York for San Francisco, my company who had come over with me from England, as I intended giving performances in America later on, remained behind, with instructions to go to an hotel and await my return. I had expected to be away only a short time ; and, in the event of my being detained longer than I anticipated, I, of course, intended to send them what money they would require. But, owing to the earthquake, there was no way of communicating with them, and in consequence they were without money for some weeks and in a terrible predicament.

When the panic caused by the calamity had partially subsided, those who had their homes, or a portion of their homes, left began to return to them. But the authorities would not allow lights or fires of any kind in the houses, and people had to do their cooking in the middle of the street, on



Courtyard of Palace Hotel, San Francisco, before the
Earthquake and Fire.

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any improvised stove or fire they could rig up. This lasted for some weeks.

Meantime, my father had become worse, and although, singularly enough, he recognised my wife, whom he had only seen once, a good many years before, he did not recognise me. However, just before he passed away he did so and burst into tears.

I experienced the utmost difficulty in procuring a decent burial for my father, and had to send some fifty miles for a coffin, as it was impossible to obtain one in San Francisco. The bodies of most of the victims of the calamity were taken out into the Bay and buried there.

The sight that met my eyes on entering the cemetery was a terrible one. Nearly all the tombstones were broken, graves were thrown open—for the ground was full of deep fissures—and, in some cases, the coffins seemed to have been lifted right out of the earth. It was weeks before I could banish the memory of what I saw that day.

So soon as traffic was once more resumed my wife and I left San Francisco for New York, the manager of my bank, with whom I was well acquainted, having lent me some money out of his own pocket.

On my return to New York I played a three weeks' engagement at Proctors' Theatre, after which I went to Chicago to perform at the Academy of Music. During my visit to Chicago I heard a singular story about one of the cleverest cardsharppers in America.

This individual, whom, for convenience sake, I will call Smith, was a man of fine appearance and the most engaging manners and invariably well, though quietly, dressed. When in Chicago he generally stayed at the Palmer House, one of the best hotels in the city, where he appears to have found many victims. On the occasion of which I am about to speak he made the acquaintance of a wealthy Milwaukee merchant, who had come to Chicago on business and was likewise staying at the Palmer House. The two became very friendly, and went about together a good deal to theatres, restaurants and so

forth. Smith always insisted on paying for everything, and made himself so very pleasant that when Mr. Brown, as we may call the other, left Chicago, he gave him his card and told him that, if ever he came to Milwaukee, he must on no account fail to pay him a visit, promising that he would do all he could to give him a good time.

Some weeks later, Smith went to Milwaukee, put up at the best hotel there, and, taking a cab, drove out to the suburb where his friend Brown lived and entered a chemist's shop close to the merchant's house.

"I want some playing-cards," said he. "How many packs have you got?"

(Cards, I may here remark, are sold in nearly all chemists' shops in America.)

"About half-a-dozen," answered the chemist. "We don't keep a large stock, as there is not much demand for them hereabouts."

"Well, I will take the lot," said Smith, and returned to his hotel with the six packs. These he carefully steamed open, removed the outside covers and, after marking the packs so that he would know every card in them from its back, replaced them in their separate coverings and did the packs up again so neatly that it would be impossible to tell that they had ever been tampered with.

The next day he called on Mr. Brown, who gave him a most cordial welcome and invited him to dine with him and his family that evening. He spent a very pleasant evening, making himself most agreeable to everyone; and before he left his host invited him to dinner again the following Sunday, saying that he would ask four or five other gentlemen to meet him, and they would have a game of cards afterwards. This was exactly what the astute Mr. Smith wanted.

On the Saturday evening the sharper took a cab and returned to the chemist, with the six packs of cards which he had purchased from him two or three days before.

"I suppose you remember me?" said he. "I bought some cards from you the other day as I was giving a card-

party at my house, but unfortunately there has been a death in my family, so the party cannot take place. Perhaps you won't mind taking these cards back, and I will buy something else from you instead of them ? "

The chemist readily agreed to this, remarking, as he did so, that he was rather glad to have the cards returned as he had forgotten to order a fresh supply ; and Smith went back to his hotel very well pleased, since he knew that the chemist had no other packs in stock except those he had marked.

The next evening Smith again presented himself at Mr. Brown's house, and, so soon as dinner was over, the company sat down to a game of poker. The stakes were pretty high, for all the players were men of means, and Smith took care to lose steadily.

Now, it is a common custom amongst those who play for high stakes, if they have no luck with one pack of cards, to fling them on the floor and ask for another pack, and I myself have seen, in a big game of poker at Denver, Colorado (when the play started at eight o'clock in the evening and went on until ten the next morning), the floor so literally covered with cards that you could not see the carpet. Smith kept continually throwing down the cards and asking for a fresh pack, until his host's stock of cards were all but exhausted.

Accordingly, the unsuspecting Mr. Brown summoned his butler and despatched him to the chemist's—chemists, as a rule, are open in America on Sundays—telling him to buy all the cards he had in stock. The butler returned with the same six packs of cards which the sharper had bought and returned and, in the interval, had so cleverly marked. So soon as these cards were brought into play Smith's luck began to change, and he eventually left the house a winner of over \$50,000. Next day he left Milwaukee, and had not been seen since.

The swindle was not discovered until some weeks later, when Mr. Brown happened to go to the chemist's shop to buy something and, while talking to him, the subject of playing-cards happened to crop up. The chemist remarked that it

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was an odd thing about the six packs of cards which Mr. Brown's butler had bought that Sunday, as these cards had been previously bought by some gentleman who had come the evening before and asked him to take them back, as, owing to a death having occurred in his family, the card-party for which he had bought them was not to take place. Mr. Brown, his suspicions aroused, asked for a description of this gentleman and found that it was none other than the one he had met at the Palmer House, in Chicago.

From Chicago I returned to New York, and thence sailed for England, where I fulfilled such of my engagements as I had not been obliged to cancel on my hurried departure for San Francisco.

In July, 1907, I left England for a second tour in South Africa, visiting Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg; then on through Natal along the east coast to East London, and back again to Johannesburg and Capetown. From Capetown I sailed for England, where I arrived at the end of November.

In the spring of 1908 I had a nervous breakdown and was ordered by the doctors to take a complete rest. I accordingly left England for Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands, where I remained for some weeks. I then went to Madeira, and returned to London at the end of June, greatly benefited in health.

CHAPTER XIX

I visit Vienna and Berlin and then proceed to Moscow—Russian music-halls—A generous prince—Religious character of the Russians in those days—Objections to an illusion of mine called "The Sign of the Cross"—I am obliged to change the cross into a tree—St. Petersburg—Command performance before the Czar and Czarina—Present of a cigarette-case—Racing in Russia—Tip which I receive from an American trainer—A nice little win—Riot on the racecourse—Return to England—Another Continental tour—Fire at the Eldorado Theatre at Nice—My first visit to Monte Carlo—I am ordered to leave the Rooms—Interview with the Director, who explains to me the reason for this—Further experiences at Monte Carlo—Engagement at the Alhambra in Paris—Harry Fragson—Incident at the Bal Tabarin—Fragson's unfortunate infatuation—His tragic death—An autographed cigarette-case—The Great Lafayette and his dog "Beauty"—Terrible fate of Lafayette—His funeral—Chung Ling Soo.

IN May, 1910, I made another Continental tour, visiting Vienna and Berlin and then going to Russia, where I opened at the Establishment Yord in Moscow. In this theatre I performed for two months and created a big sensation. I used to appear on the stage at two o'clock in the morning, for, as a rule, the performance did not begin until about ten o'clock in the evening. We had mostly lady singers on the programme, and I have seen as many as fifty turns, the ladies going on, one after the other, and each singing one song.

During the performances the audience usually sat at small tables, smoking and having refreshments, and on New Year's Eve a certain wealthy prince, who had taken a box for the occasion, gave orders to the waiters to put a bottle of champagne on every table in the theatre. I was told afterwards that the prince's bill came to over £1,000.

The Russians are very religious, almost fanatically so—or, at least, the bulk of them were in those pre-war days before Lenin, Trotsky and Co. had turned things upside down—and each lady before she went on the stage used to cross herself. There was an ikon at almost every street corner, and when I went out in a cab the driver used to cross himself every time he passed one of them.

I was doing an illusion at this time called "The Sign of the Cross." In this illusion I had a very large cross, to which I used to tie a man with ropes by the neck, arms, and legs. The curtains of the cabinet would then be drawn, but, at a word of command from me, they would open, when the man would be found to have vanished, and, in his place, tied by the same ropes to the same cross, would be a lady, the man reappearing the next moment in the front of the house. After I had performed this trick for two nights, the manager of the theatre sent for me and told me that I could not be allowed to perform it any longer, unless I discontinued the use of the cross, as people had complained to him about it, saying that it was sacrilege to use a cross on the stage. I told him that it was impossible for me to do the trick without the cross, but eventually I got over the difficulty by disguising the cross with some leaves and bark and making it look like a tree; after which no further objection was taken to it.

From Moscow I went to St. Petersburg (now Petrograd), and while there had the honour of giving a command performance before the late Czar and Czarina. At its conclusion I was presented with a beautiful cigarette-case on which was the Imperial Arms in diamonds and other precious stones.

During my stay in Russia I became acquainted with an American trainer who used to train horses for all the Royalties. As my hotel was near the racecourse and near his training quarters, I used to visit him nearly every morning. We became very great friends, and whenever I went to the races, he always used to mark my card, telling me what horses to back. He gave me a good many winners. In summer, races in Russia start at four in the afternoon and go on

Ресторанъ „ЯРЪ“.

СЕГОДНЯ

КАРЛЪ ГЕРЦЪ

первый разъ въ Россіи, всемірно-извѣстный иллюзіонистъ,
съ участіемъ

Миссъ **АМАЛІИ Д'АЛЬТОНЪ**



полчаса
въ царствѣ чудесъ!

ИСПОЛНЯТЬ:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Дама въ воздухѣ подѣ гипнозомъ. | 5) Крематорій. |
| 2) Таинственный крестъ. | 6) Летящая клѣтка. |
| 3) Потерянные часы. | 7) Свадебная комната. |
| 4) Удобный чемоданъ. | 8) Веселый китаецъ. |

Сопровож. А. А. ЛЕВЕНКО, Москва.

Programme of Theatre, Restaurant Yard, Moscow, Russia.

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till ten o'clock at night, and I have seen as many as twenty-five events run in one day.

One Sunday morning I went to visit my friend the trainer as usual, when he asked me if I were going to the races that day. I told him I did not think I was. "But I want you to go," said he.

I said, "I'm tired of it. But why do you want me to go?"

"Because," said he, "there is a particular horse in the last race I want you to back." I went out and bought a race-card, which are usually sold in the streets on the morning of the races, returned to him, and he marked on the card a horse that I was to back. He continued :—

"Don't go near the racecourse until just before the last race; then go and back this horse." I thanked him very much and left, and later on in the afternoon, although it was against his orders, I went to the races about four o'clock. I had made up my mind that whatever I was winning by the time that the last race came round I would put on the horse that he had marked on my card. I was winning about £60. It had been a very bad day for the favourites, as mostly outsiders kept winning.

There were only four runners for the last race, including the horse that the trainer wanted me to back. On all form the race appeared a certainty for one of the others, and, when I went to look at the totalisator, I saw that nearly every one seemed to be backing this horse, while my friend's "tip" had hardly a bet against its number. I spoke to two or three acquaintances of mine who knew far more about Russian racing than I did, and they ridiculed the idea of the latter having any chance against the favourite, for whom they considered the race to be a "gift." In these circumstances, I did not have the courage to lump down all the money I had won that day on the outsider, as I had originally intended, but limited myself to a bet of £10. Indeed, I was in two minds whether to have a bet at all, but finally decided to do so, as I did not like the idea of allowing a horse to run loose which

had been given me by a man who had put me on to so many winners.

It was fortunate indeed for me that I did back him, for that hopeless outsider beat the favourite "all ends up" by something like ten lengths, and the Totalisator paid out over him at the astonishing rate of 175 to 1.

No sooner had the horses passed the post than a regular riot broke out. An infuriated crowd surrounded the beaten favourite, hooting and groaning and trying to strike the jockey with their sticks and umbrellas, and it was only with the aid of the police that he succeeded in making his escape. The mob then began to pull down the rails, smash the stands and the refreshment rooms, and do all the damage they could. The militia had to be called out to quell the disturbance, but I did not wait to see the end of the affair, and, having drawn my winnings, left the course as quickly as I could.

That evening the trainer came to the theatre to see me, and asked me if I had backed the winner as he had advised me. I told him that I had, but only for £10, as I had been told that the favourite could not be beaten and was as near a certainty as there was in racing.

"So he was," said he, laughing, "if his jockey had been spinning' (*i.e.*, out to win), but he didn't happen to be, you see."

He then told me that in a race run the previous Sunday, which had been won by the beaten favourite, and in which his conqueror that day and the other two horses had been amongst the competitors, his son, who was a well-known jockey, had ridden the winner. Just before the race his son had been approached by the jockeys of these three horses and asked to "pull" his mount, in order that my horse might win. But he had refused to be a party to the proposed "ramp" and had duly won the race. Learning that the same horses were running again that day, and that the winner of the previous Sunday was to be ridden by a jockey who did not bear the highest reputation for honesty, instead of his son, the trainer came to the conclusion that this time they would

be pretty sure to fix it up between them, and that was why he had advised me to back an animal which apparently had no chance at all.

I could not help remarking that I only wished he had told me his reasons for fancying the horse, in which case I should have had a lot more on. However, I gave a big supper the next night to celebrate my success, and before saying farewell to Russia I made the trainer a handsome present.

After leaving Russia I returned to England, but two months later started on another Continental tour, performing at various theatres in Germany and Austro-Hungary, including the Orpheum, at Budapest, and the Apollo, at Dusseldorf, and then proceeding to Nice.

When I reached Nice I found, to my disgust, that there had been a fire the night before at the Eldorado Theatre, where I was engaged to perform, which had done so much damage that it would be impossible for me to appear on my original date. Fortunately, however, I was able to make engagements to perform at Toulon and Marseilles, and by the time I had finished these the theatre at Nice had been partly restored and I returned there to fulfil my engagement.

I had never been to Monte Carlo, but, of course, had heard and read a good deal about it, and naturally both my wife and I were very anxious to see it. So a day or two after our return to Nice I went to the manager of our hotel and asked him if he would give me a letter to the Director of the Casino, as I thought that it was necessary to show credentials of some kind to gain admission to the Rooms. In point of fact, an introduction is quite unnecessary, all that is required being to hand your card to the officials at the Bureau and inform them of your nationality, profession, and the hotel at which you are staying. But I did not know this, and the manager gave me the letter I asked for.

The next afternoon my wife and I went over to Monte Carlo, where I presented my letter at the Bureau, and we each received a one-day admission card to the Rooms. We went

in, and I was astonished at the sight which greeted us ; it was one of the most impressive I had ever beheld. I had always imagined that the Rooms were a noisy place, with the chink of money, loud voices, excitement and bustle. The actual scene was very different.

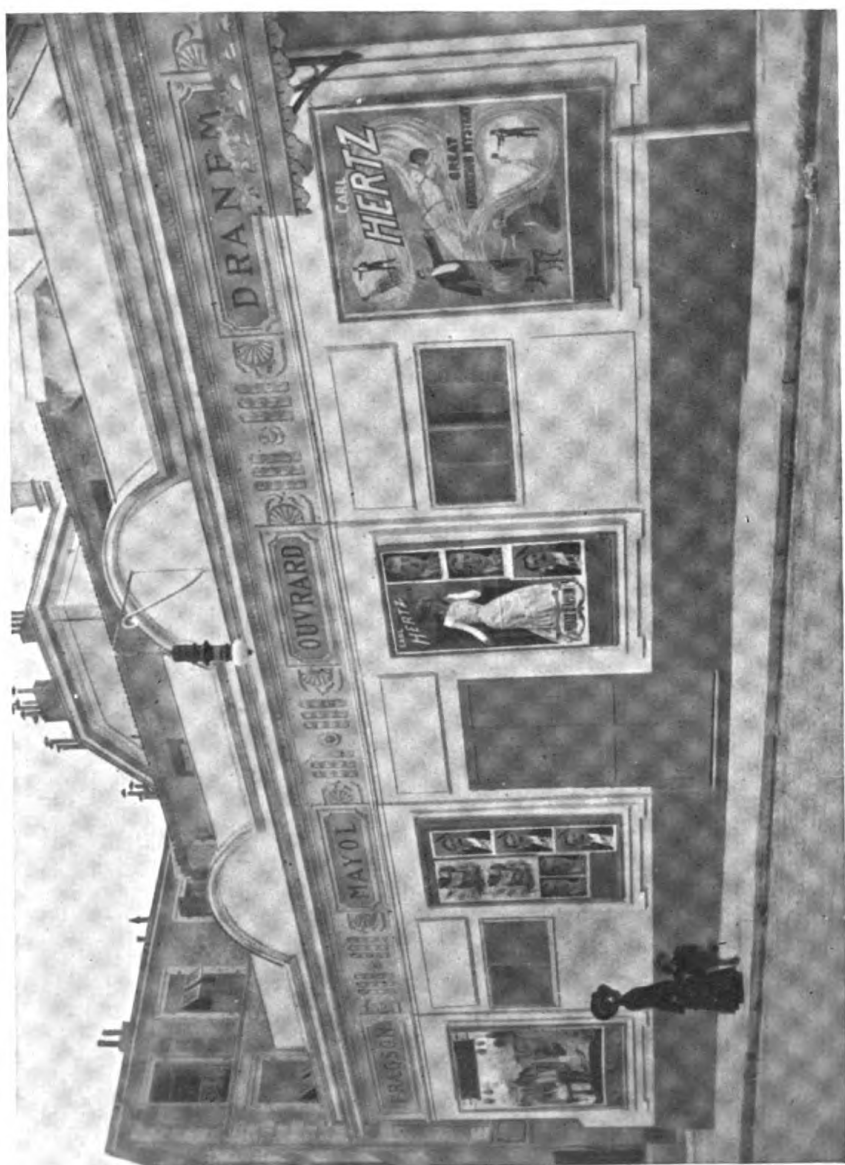
There was, indeed, "a certain liveliness" around the roulette-tables, where the punters were engaged in placing their stakes, as some of them could not reach the numbers or combination of numbers which they wanted to back, and had to ask the croupiers to put their money on for them. But in the trente-et-quarante room it was more like a church than anything else. No sound broke the stillness but the stereotyped voice of the *tailleur*, or dealer, as he announced the result of the deal : "*Cinq, trois ; rouge gagne et couleur perd !*" and so forth, and the chink of money as it was raked in or paid out. The punters hardly ever spoke, except when those who were playing high desired to insure their stakes against the chance of an *un après* being dealt, which at trente-et-quarante is the same as the zero at roulette.

For some reason or other, before coming to Monte Carlo that day, I had decided that my first bet should be a louis "en plein" on No. 2 at roulette, and that if I were lucky enough to win I would play up my winnings upon the same number and its "chevaux," that is to say, on *zéro-deux*, 1 and 2, 2 and 3, and 2 and 5. Accordingly, after walking about the Rooms for a while, I went up to one of the roulette-tables and put a louis on No. 2. The croupier spun the wheel, the little ivory ball flew round and, to my delight, dropped with a rattle into the number I had backed.

"*A qui le louis ?*" demanded the croupier, tapping my louis with the end of his rake.

I claimed it, and was duly handed my winnings—a five-hundred-franc note and ten louis.

I picked up my stake, cashed the note into gold and, after a moment's hesitation, decided to put eight louis on No. 2, and seven louis on each of its "chevaux," when I received a tap on the shoulder, and, turning round, was confronted by two



Eldorado Casino, Nice.

of the officials of the Casino, wearing black frock-coats and black ties, who called me aside and told me that I must leave the Rooms at once.

I was thunderstruck and, of course, demanded an explanation, but they would give me none, saying that if I went with them to the Director's office I should be told the reason. Meantime the game had again been made; the ball went spinning once more on its journey round the wheel and clicked into its fate-appointed socket, and I heard the croupier announce :—

" Deux, noir, pair et manque ! "

My number had won a second time.

I do not think I was ever more angry or more disgusted in my life, since, but for this interruption, I should have won over 15,000 francs on that single coup. However, the officials repeated that I must leave the Rooms at once, and placing themselves one on either side of me conducted me into the Atrium, feeling for all the world like a pickpocket at being marched away like this. Fortunately, my wife had wandered round to one of the other tables and did not see anything of this scene; otherwise, she would have been terribly alarmed.

On reaching the Atrium I was taken to the Director's office, where I angrily demanded why I had been turned out of the Rooms.

" You are M. Carl Hertz, the illusionist, monsieur, are you not ? " said the Director blandly.

" Yes."

" And you are playing at the Eldorado Theatre at Nice ? "

" Yes, but what has that to do with it ? "

" Well, it is one of our rules that no one earning money in the Principality of Monaco, or in the municipalities of Nice and Mentone, is permitted to enter the Casino, and as you are performing at Nice you come under that rule."

" But I was given a ticket of admission at the Bureau."

" *Parfaitement*, monsieur, but we were not then aware that you were performing at Nice. I am distressed, but so long as your engagement lasts you cannot have the *entrée*. When

it is at an end, we shall, of course, be charmed to see you again."

And he rose and bowed as a signal that the interview was at an end.

Seeing that it was useless to argue the matter, I left the Casino and waited outside until my wife, who had been looking for me everywhere, and could not imagine where I had got to, joined me.

On our return to Nice I related my adventure to the manager of the theatre, and he told me that the rule of which the Director had spoken had been made because formerly clerks and servants who had been sent out by their employers to collect or pay bills had come into the Casino and gambled away the money entrusted to them. But he had never heard of it being applied to an artist performing with his own company like myself. However, since they had chosen to do so, it was no use remonstrating, and I would have to wait until my engagement was over before I paid another visit to Monte Carlo.

I was determined not to wait until then, and a day or two later I went to the manager of my hotel and asked him to give me another letter, but to put my real name on it instead of my stage-name of Carl Hertz. This he did, and, putting on a different suit of clothes and a different hat, I again went over to Monte Carlo. I presented the letter at the Bureau as before, and it was duly passed on to the official who makes out the admission cards. He began to fill up the card, then stopped, looked at me and said :—

"Is this your name, monsieur ?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, it is not the name which you gave us the other day."

So he had recognised me ; the officials of Monte Carlo have certainly a wonderful memory for faces !

For the moment I was quite taken aback. Then I said :

"Oh, no, this is my right name ; the name I gave you the other day was my stage-name."

" Yes," said he, " but you were asked to leave the Casino the other day because, as was explained to you at the time, you were earning money at Nice and were therefore not eligible for admission. How is it that you have come here again ? "

He spoke so sharply that my wife began to get quite frightened, and whispered to me to come away at once or I should get myself into trouble. But I told her that it was all right and said to the official :—

" That is quite correct, but I have finished my engagement at Nice, and am now staying there merely for pleasure."

Upon that he filled in the admission card and handed it to me, and also one for my wife, and we found ourselves once more in the Rooms.

I had decided to tempt Fortune once more on *deux en plein*, and going to a roulette-table I staked on that number and lost. I went to another and again backed No. 2, with the same result, and, though I repeated the experiment at every table in the Rooms in turn, I did not win once. Evidently, it was not my day out, and I left off a loser of over 5,000 francs and wished heartily that they had not let me in.

At the conclusion of my engagement at Nice my wife and I decided to spend a couple of weeks at Monte Carlo, where we no longer had the bother of getting our admission tickets every day, being each given a monthly ticket. I had worked out a little roulette system of my own, to win a certain amount at each sitting, and though I do not claim that it is infallible it worked very well all the time I was at Monte Carlo, and I soon got back the 5,000 francs I had lost in the pursuit of the elusive *deux en plein*.

I was at one of the roulette-tables one afternoon, and having won the amount I had come to win according to my system, I stopped playing and sat for a while watching the game. There was a stylishly-dressed Frenchwoman sitting next me, with a pile of notes and gold in front of her, and, seeing me suddenly cease playing, she turned to me and said in broken English :—

"Why are you not playing, monsieur? Is it that you have lost all your money?"

For a joke I answered that I had, upon which she took five one-thousand-franc notes and pushing them towards me, said:—

"Will you take this 5,000 francs and try to get back what you have lost?"

I was naturally astonished that a perfect stranger should offer to lend me 5,000 francs, and said:—

"My dear madame, this is most generous of you, but I cannot accept it."

"Oh, but you must," said she. "I want to see you get your money back."

Again I refused, but she kept on pressing me, and finally I said:—

"I can't accept this money to play for myself, but I have a system of my own, and if you like I will take it and play for you."

To this she agreed, and I took the 5,000 francs and began to play.

I was "in the vein," and in less than an hour I had won 40,000 francs, which I handed to the lady, together with the 5,000 francs she had lent me. She divided the winnings and, retaining 20,000 francs for herself, handed me the rest, saying:—

"This is yours."

"I beg your pardon," I replied, "but it is not mine, and I cannot accept it. I was playing for you and it is yours."

"Oh, but you won it," she exclaimed, "and you are entitled to half."

"I thank you very much, madame," I said, "but I cannot possibly take it." And, though she tried to persuade me to accept the money, I again refused and rose to leave the table.

"Well," said she, "if you really won't accept what is certainly yours, will you come and have tea with me to-morrow afternoon at the Hôtel de Paris? Here is my card, and my apartments are on the first floor."

"I thank you, madame," I said. "I will ask my wife and see what she says."

At which the lady smiled, and I bowed and took my departure.

Speaking of systems, the majority of people at Monte Carlo seem to have a system of some kind by which they believe they are sure to win. Many of them do win for a time, but sooner or later every system comes to grief, and the punter goes broke.

Some years ago a particular friend of mine told me that he had an infallible system at roulette and was going to Monte Carlo to play it. I told him that there was no such thing as an infallible system, but he laughed and said that he was convinced that his really was infallible. About a week after he had left for Monte Carlo I happened to meet his wife and said to her :—

"Have you heard from your husband? How is he getting along with his system?"

"Oh, yes," she answered. "Here is a telegram I received from him this morning."

I looked at the telegram which she handed me, and read the following words :—

"System going well. Send more money."

It is a well-known fact that if anyone loses all his money at Monte Carlo and is unable to pay his fare home, the directors of the Casino will pay it for him, though "le viatique," as it is called, is only given to those whose losses exceed a certain amount, and should they come to Monte Carlo again they are not allowed to enter the Rooms until it has been repaid. On one occasion a man went to the directors and asked for "le viatique," saying that he had lost all the money he had, amounting to some 5,000 francs, and had nothing to take him home. The directors asked at what tables he had lost it, and told him to come and see them again later in the day, as they would have to verify his statement. When he returned they said :—

" Yes, monsieur, what you told us this morning about the money you have lost appears to be quite correct, and we are willing to pay your fare home. Where do you live ? "

" In Melbourne, Australia," was the answer.

I was playing roulette one evening at the Sporting Club, when a lady came and sat down in a vacant chair next me. She took a louis out of her purse, but she did not seem to know what to do with it, stretching out her hand, as though to put the money on one of the numbers, and then drawing it back again. It was quite evident that she had never played before, and at last I asked her if I could be of any assistance.

" Thank you very much," said she. " I have never had a bet before, and I hardly know what to do."

I advised her to back the last six numbers, 31 to 36, and showed her where to place her louis. No. 33 came up and she won five louis. I don't think I ever saw anyone get so excited before.

" How did you know that that number was going to win ? " she asked.

I answered that I did not know, but, according to a system that I had been playing, I thought that it was the proper time to back these six numbers.

" I am so pleased," she said, " because I've never won anything before, and now I think I shall go."

" Don't go yet," said I. " You're winning five louis ; you ought to play them up ; you may win again."

" Oh, no, I'm quite satisfied ; I think I'd better go."

Eventually, however, she took my advice and put two louis on the *transversale* 1 to 6. No. 4 came up, and she won another ten louis. Upon this she got more excited than ever.

" Isn't it wonderful ! " she exclaimed. " I've won fifteen louis, and now I really must go."

" No," said I, " give your winnings one more chance, and, if you lose, then you had better stop."

So, again on my advice, she put five louis on the six numbers from 25 to 30, and this time 29 came up. Thus she won

another twenty-five louis, making forty louis altogether. She was trembling with excitement as she received her winnings.

"Now I must really stop!" she exclaimed. "This is the limit!"

She rose from the table, and, after thanking me profusely, hurried over to three ladies, evidently friends of hers, who were standing some little distance away, and showed them the money she had won. After she had been talking to them for some minutes, they all made a move towards the door, but, before reaching it, the lady turned back, came up to me and said:

"Excuse me, sir, but are you here every night?"

On leaving Monte Carlo, my wife and I proceeded to Paris, where we had an engagement at the Alhambra Theatre. On the second night of our engagement there was a strike amongst the musicians of the Paris theatres and we had, in consequence, to perform without an orchestra. After some trouble, we managed to get a pianist, and the next night the whole performance had to be given to the accompaniment of a jazz band.

On the programme with us was Harry Fragson, the well-known singer and composer, who not long afterwards came to such a tragic end. It was during this engagement that Fragson met the girl his infatuation for whom was the cause of his death. I was with him at the time. He had composed a new piece of music which was going to be played one evening at the Bal Tabarin, and he asked Mr. Neighbour, the manager of the Alhambra Theatre, and myself to go with him to hear the orchestra play this piece, as he wanted to have our opinion of it. So we went, accompanied by our wives, to the Bal Tabarin, where Fragson had engaged a box. The boxes were all in a row along the balcony, overlooking the dancing-room below.

Fragson sat with us for a few minutes, and then excused himself, saying he would be back shortly. He did not return, however, and we were wondering what had become of him,

when Mr. Neighbour caught sight of him in the dancing-room below, talking to a girl. Mr. Neighbour said to me :—

“ There’s Fragson downstairs, talking to a girl. Let’s go down and, for a joke, tell him before the girl that his wife and baby are outside waiting for him.” (Fragson was, of course, unmarried.)

We went downstairs and did as Mr. Neighbour suggested, but Fragson took no notice of us, and we could not get him away from that girl. She was a very ordinary-looking girl and struck me as being rather common. After a time we returned to our box, but Fragson never came near us for the rest of the evening, and about three o’clock in the morning we went home without him.

At the *matinée* at the Alhambra the next day we were astonished to see Fragson come in with the same girl. He took no notice of anyone. The following evening he was again accompanied by the girl, but what a change was there ! At the *matinée* she had been very plainly dressed in clothes which appeared to have seen some service ; at least, so the ladies said. Now she wore an expensive fur coat and a silk gown, and was covered with jewels.

Fragson’s father, who lived with him at his flat in Paris, was very fond of his son. He did not like the idea of his bringing this girl to the flat, and I was told he and the girl were continually quarrelling. The elder Fragson begged him to break off his relations with her, but Fragson would not listen to him ; he was far too much infatuated. As is well known, the wretched affair ended by the elder Fragson shooting his son, who died shortly afterwards. The father was arrested for murder and eventually died in prison. Some people say that the shot was intended for the girl instead of his son, as he was too fond of his son ever to think of killing him.

I have in my possession a cigarette-case, which, in its way, is quite a unique souvenir, as it is decorated with the autographs of over fifty well-known professionals, many of which can never now be replaced. Among them is that of Harry Fragson, which he had had put on a few days before the

tragedy. It is singular that upon this cigarette-case are the autographs of two other artists, both of whom also met with tragic deaths, namely, the Great Lafayette, the well-known illusionist, who was burned to death in the fire at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1911, and Chung Ling Soo, the Chinese conjurer, who was shot dead on the stage at the Wood Green Empire.

Lafayette, who was a great friend of mine, was one of the most eccentric men I have ever met. Although he was not a great illusionist or conjurer, he was a wonderful showman, and he succeeded in making people think that he really was great. He had a dog in his show called "Beauty," to whom he was devoted. At his house in Torrington Square, in London, he had a special bathroom built for this dog, and when he returned home from the theatre at night the dog used to have supper with him, seated on a satin cushion, with a waiter specially told off to wait upon him. The dog would be served with a regular table d'hôte meal; first the waiter would bring soup, then fish and then meat. Beauty slept on a special cushion on the same bed as his master.

Lafayette thought so much of this dog that he had pictures of him on the outside of his house, and in the dining-room was a painting of him, beneath which was this inscription:—

TO MY FRIENDS.

My house is yours, my food is yours,
But the dog belongs to me.

He would never sign an engagement on the ordinary contracts which managers sent him, but had a special contract of his own printed, at the bottom of which was a photograph of his dog and underneath the words: "If managers were as loyal and honest as you, this contract would not be necessary." He even had special cheque-books printed with pictures of his dog upon them.

I remember going to lunch with him once at the Cavour Restaurant, in Leicester Square. He left his dog outside in

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his motor-car, which was fitted up with electric chandeliers inside, while in front, over the mudguard, were two large models of the dog sitting up on its haunches. On coming out of the Cavour we found a crowd looking at the showy car and at the dog inside. Some passer-by pushed his way through the crowd and exclaimed :—

“ What’s the matter ? What’s all the crowd about ? ”

“ Oh, it’s some dog-trainer,” answered a man.

On another occasion Lafayette’s car was standing in front of his house and a crowd as usual gathered round it. Someone again inquired what was the matter, and was told that it was “ only some damn Yank.”

Four days before Lafayette’s tragic end his dog Beauty died, and Lafayette was nearly broken-hearted. He tried to have the dog buried in the cemetery at Edinburgh, where he was then performing, but although he offered a large sum of money, he could not get permission, and was told that the only way he could get the dog buried in the cemetery was to buy a vault for himself, and then he could have the remains of the dog put in his own vault. This he did, and, strange to say, shortly afterwards he met with his awful death, and was buried with his dog in the vault which he had bought. There is an imposing effigy of Beauty over the vault.

The terrible circumstances of Lafayette’s death are well known. He was performing at the Empire Theatre, in Edinburgh, and had just finished his show ; he had given orders for the iron pass-door which led from the stage to the auditorium to be locked, and, when the fire broke out, he made his way out of the stage-door into the street at the back, but returned in order to try to save his horse. When he found that it was impossible to save the horse, he endeavoured to get out again by the stage-door, but found his retreat cut off by the flames. So he rushed to the iron pass-door and tried to escape that way, forgetting that he had given orders for this door to be locked. When the fire was extinguished they found his charred remains by the door.

Lafayette’s funeral must have been a sight to be remembered

in Edinburgh. All traffic was suspended, and no Royal personage could have had a more imposing funeral. We had made arrangements to tour the Continent together, he and I giving the entire performance, and, had he lived, I have no doubt that we should have made a wonderful success of it and a small fortune.

Chung Ling Soo's death occurred at the Wood Green Empire during the performance of a trick in which he used to allow marked bullets which had been put in a gun to be fired at him. These bullets he would catch on a plate held in front of him. Many years ago I myself used to perform the same trick, but it was always a very dangerous one, and I left off doing it after the following incident:—

At that time I was in the habit of using a large old-fashioned revolver, which was loaded with powder and a wad. My assistant used to take a bullet down amongst the audience, which they were allowed to mark and drop into the revolver. On one occasion, I was performing in one of the mining camps in Colorado, when a sailor, who was slightly the worse for liquor, dropped a brass-button which he had taken from his coat into the revolver, retaining the bullet in his hand, and my assistant, whose attention had been diverted for a few seconds, did not notice what had been done. The sailor no doubt thought that if I could catch a bullet I could catch a button just as well. Happily, when my assistant fired the button missed me by a few inches. After this I discarded the trick and have never performed it since.

CHAPTER XX

The Continent again—Racing at Vienna—A lucky mistake—"The horse with the pretty colours"—1914—The outbreak of war finds my wife and myself at Ostend—Difficulty of getting back to England—Refusal of a South Wales manager to allow me to fulfil an engagement at his theatre on the ground that I am a German—I bring an action against him and win it—Performance which I give in hospitals during the war—Tour in France and Belgium in 1919—Visit to Ireland—I decline to continue a performance in Dublin owing to the conduct of the audience—The Lord Mayor's motor-car.

IN 1912 I made another Continental tour, visiting Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and other cities. During my stay in Vienna, where I performed at Ronacher's Theatre, I had a very singular experience at the races.

One night an American jockey whom I knew was at the theatre and told me that he was riding a horse the next day which, if it were all right, would be as near a certainty as you could wish to have. He said that he would see me again in the paddock the next day before the race and let me know if it was advisable to back it. Accordingly, next day I went to the races and met my jockey friend in the paddock as arranged; he told me that the horse was all right, but that there was a chance that he might not relish the "going," which was on the hard side. I had better stand at the rails near the winning-post and watch him as he went past in the preliminary canter. If he touched his cap when he passed me, that would be a sign that I must let the horse run loose, but if he made no sign, I was to take it that the horse was striding out properly, and that I might back him with every confidence.

Accordingly, I took my place at the spot he told me, and, as he made no sign as he cantered past me, I went to the Totalisator—there are no bookmakers in Vienna—and backed the horse for a good deal more than I usually put on one. I, of course, backed the horse by its number, which was No. 2.

After investing my money, I went into the paddock, where I happened to meet a friend of mine who was also performing at Ronacher's Theatre. He asked me what I was backing, and I told him that I was backing No. 2.

"How much have you got on?" he said. "Ten gulden?"

"No, I've got 500 gulden on."

"Go on!" he exclaimed. "You're joking! I know you don't put as much as that on a horse."

"I don't as a rule," said I, "but I've got a tip for this horse from the jockey who is riding it, who thinks it something like a certainty, and so I've gone beyond my limit and put 500 gulden on."

"Oh, don't kid me!" said he. "Tell me the truth. How much have you really got on?"

I repeated that I had backed the horse for 500 gulden, and, as he still refused to believe me, I got rather annoyed and said:—

"Well, if you don't believe me, here is my ticket; see for yourself."

With that I put my hand in my pocket and drew out my ticket to prove to him that I was speaking the truth, and that I really had 500 gulden on, when, to my consternation, I discovered that the clerk at the Totalisator had given me a ticket for Horse No. 5, instead of Horse No. 2, the one I wished to back. My friend must have thought I had suddenly taken leave of my senses, as, without saying a word to him, I rushed out of the paddock and ran as hard as I could to the Totalisator, to tell the clerk of the mistake he had made.

But just as I reached it the electric bell rang denoting that the horses were off, and the windows of the Totalisator were automatically shut in my face. I shouted out to the clerk that he had made a mistake and given me a ticket with the

wrong number, but he answered that it was too late and that, the race having started, no mistake could now be rectified. I tried to argue the matter with him, but it was no use, and having called him all the hard names I could think of in German, French and English, I came away, fully convinced that my 500 gulden had been thrown into the gutter.

I had been too busy arguing with the clerk to see anything of the race, and my astonishment and delight may be imagined when, on looking at the number board, I saw that No. 5 had won, No. 2, the horse I had intended to back, being second ! Needless to say, I made no further complaints about the mistake which had been made, and, as the winner was returned at 10 to 1, my ticket won 5,000 gulden.

During that same tour, while performing at the Alhambra Theatre in Paris, I went with my wife to a race-meeting at Chantilly. One of the jockeys, with whom I was well acquainted, gave me £100 to put on a horse for him which he was going to ride in the big event. He told me that he thought the race was a " real good thing " for his mount, and asked me to put the money on with a bookmaker instead of with the Pari-Mutuel, as I would get a better price in this way. He also advised me to have a nice bet myself, and, thinking that what was good enough for him to have £100 of his own money on, was good enough for me to back for a bit extra, I went to a well-known bookmaker and took £450 to £150 about the horse. A lot of money came for it soon afterwards, and eventually it became a hot favourite at 6 to 4, and I was naturally very pleased at having got the best of the market.

I went back to the grand-stand, where I had left my wife, to watch the race, and when the horses came out for the preliminary canter she said to me :—

" What horse is that in the pretty colours, mauve and yellow ? "

I looked at my race-card, and told her the name of the horse, adding that it was a rank outsider.

Not a little to my surprise—for I am pleased to say that my wife, though she is very fond of going to a race-meeting

occasionally, seldom or never cares to have a bet—turned to me and said :—

“ I’d like to have ten francs on that horse.”

“ Don’t be silly and throw your money away like that ! ” I exclaimed. “ That horse has no earthly chance. The favourite will win this right enough. I’ve got three to one about it, and it is only six to four now. If you want to have a bet, you can stand ten francs with me at the price I’ve got.”

“ I don’t want to back your horse,” said she. “ I want to back the one with the pretty colours.”

“ But that horse has got no chance, and the other is almost sure to win,” I objected, and I told her about the jockey having given me £100 to put on for him, and that I had £50 on myself.

“ Well, anyway, go and find out the price of the horse.”

I obeyed, and came and told her that it was 40 to 1, upon which she handed me ten francs, saying :

“ Here you are ! Put this on the horse at 40 to 1, or the best price you can get.”

I tried to persuade her not to throw her money away, but she had made up her mind and would not listen to reason. So I took her ten francs and went towards the paddock with the intention of putting it on the horse she had picked out. But, on the way, I thought that it would be a pity to let her throw her money away on a horse which had no chance, and decided that I would keep it in my pocket and, if the favourite won, as I felt quite sure it would, give her a pleasant little surprise by handing her forty francs and telling her that I had put her ten francs on the winner.

When I returned to the stand my wife asked me if I had executed her commission. I answered that I had and had got her 40 to 1.

“ So I get 400 francs if the horse wins ? ” said she.

“ Yes, but the horse has about as much chance of winning, as I have of jumping over the moon,” I answered, laughing.

“ That remains to be seen,” she rejoined.

In the race, to my annoyance and mortification, my wife’s selection took up the running when about half the distance

had been covered, and, though the favourite tried hard to overhaul him and was catching him fast at the finish, he could not quite get up, and the despised outsider got home by a neck. My wife was, of course, jubilant, and, besides losing my £50, I had to hand her over 400 francs.

I returned to England in April, 1913, and remained there until the end of July, 1914, when I went with my wife to Belgium. We were at Ostend at the time war was declared. Of course, we at once decided to return to London, but when I went to pay our bill at the Hôtel Splendide, where we were staying, they refused to take English banknotes and told me they would only accept payment in English gold or French money. I had nothing with me except five-pound notes, and though I tried to get these changed, no one would accept them. I was in a great predicament and did not know what to do, when fortunately I met an old acquaintance who paid my bill, and we were able to leave Ostend by the last boat which left before traffic was suspended.

After arriving in London, I made arrangements for a tour in the provinces, one of my engagements being at Bargoed, in South Wales. As will be remembered, for the first few weeks of the War business was very bad at the theatres and music-halls, but, as I had a guarantee from the manager of the theatre at Bargoed, I knew I was on the right side. I had sent in my billing matter, which, according to my contract, had to be delivered two weeks before my opening, when I was astonished to receive a letter from the manager, stating that he could not allow me to appear, as the people in South Wales were greatly prejudiced against Germans, and he would not take the risk of permitting one to perform in his theatre.

I wrote and informed him that he was mistaken, that I was not a German, but an American born and bred, that Carl Hertz was only my stage-name, and that, if he wished, I would send him my passport and papers and birth certificate to prove that I was an American citizen. He replied that that did not matter, as the people would think I was a German. I wrote

again saying that he would either have to pay me the guarantee according to my contract, or I should be there to fulfil my engagement ; to which he answered that it would be no use my coming, as he would not allow me to appear.

I consulted my solicitor, who told me to write and tell him that he need not bill me as Carl Hertz, and might do so in any other name he liked. But it was no use ; he would not allow me to appear, and so I brought an action against him for breach of contract, and also for calling me a German, which was libellous. The case was tried at the Town Hall at Merthyr, and, needless to say, I won and got damages and costs for breach of contract. As the manager apologised for calling me a German, I did not proceed with the action for libel.

During the War I gave over three hundred performances at different hospitals in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and I think I must have entertained at least a quarter of a million wounded soldiers. I also sold over a million postcards during my performances, the proceeds of which were sent to the various hospitals in each town in which I played for the purchase of cigarettes and tobacco for the wounded "Tommies."

I am sorry to say that during the War I lost two of my most valued assistants who had been with me a good many years, both being killed in action. One of them, who was serving in Mesopotamia, was on the march one day through the desert when he caught sight of a small piece of a newspaper about eight inches square lying on the sand. He picked it up and found that it was a piece of a Leicester paper, and contained part of a long notice of a performance of mine at the Palace Theatre in that town. This piece of paper he sent to me just before his death.

In the autumn of 1919 I made another Continental tour, playing in Paris, Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent. During this tour I visited Lille, Dunkirk, Ypres, Louvain, Bruges and many of the battlefields in Belgium and north-eastern France. I shall never forget the terrible sight of havoc and destruction in these places. I was glad to get away, as it had a most depressing effect upon me.

I visited Dublin and Belfast during the troubles of 1921. One night during my engagement at the Theatre Royal, in Dublin, I asked for some gentleman to come on the stage to assist me. A gentleman came from the stalls, and I was starting to do one of my card tricks, when some of the audience shouted :—

“Get another man ; you know he’s a pal of yours !”

“Ladies and gentlemen,” I exclaimed, “you are mistaken. This gentleman is a perfect stranger to me. I never saw him before in my whole life.” And then to the gentleman I said : “Have you ever seen me before ?”

“No,” was the answer, upon which the audience yelled with laughter.

Seeing that they would not be quiet, I thanked the gentleman for his offer of assistance and asked him if he would kindly leave the stage and I would get someone else to come in his place. But, to my embarrassment, he said :—

“No, I paid my money to come in, and I’ve just as much right as anyone else to come up here and see the trick, and I’m not going to leave.”

“But,” said I, “the audience think that I know you and they will not let me proceed with my performance. So oblige me by kindly returning to your seat, and I will get someone else.”

Still, however, he refused to budge, and, though I continued to reason with him and pointed out that my whole entertainment was being held up, it was some time before I at last succeeded in persuading him to go back to his seat.

When he had gone, I advanced to the footlights again and said :

“Ladies and gentlemen, as you think I knew that gentleman, will some other gentleman kindly step on the stage, and I will then proceed with my performance.”

A second gentleman came forward, and I began my card trick again, when the audience started to shout once more :

“Oh, you know him, too !”

This was a little bit too much, and, after remonstrating

with them without the least effect, I became so disgusted that I left the stage without finishing my performance.

During my engagement in Dublin a strange incident happened one night. The Lord Mayor was present, and his motor-car was waiting for him at the door. Just before the house was out, a crowd gathered round the car, upset it and turned it completely over. Not one of those who were leaving the theatre would stir a finger to put it right again, and, in the end, the Lord Mayor had to send to the nearest police-station for assistance.

CHAPTER XXI

Prosecution of the Vaudeville Club for permitting poker to be played there—I visit the secretaries of the principal London clubs and raise a fund to fight the case—It is decided that poker is not an unlawful game—Amusing incident during the trial of the case—Jokes played by the members of the Vaudeville Club upon one another—The Performing Animals Bill—I am summoned as a witness before the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons—Repetition of the charge of cruelty in connection with my cage and canary trick—I smuggle cage and bird into the committee room and am allowed to perform the trick—Amusing account of this incident in the *Daily Express*—Remarks on the training of animals—Mr. Bostock's bear and the policeman—Mr. Ginnett and the lioness—The Wild Australia Show—Bonita, the rifle-shot, and her two suitors—A race for a wife.

JUST after the War I was elected one of the committee of the Vaudeville Club, and about this time the Club was prosecuted for allowing poker to be played, the authorities claiming that poker was an illegal game, as it was one of chance, and not of skill. This was a very serious thing, not only for the Vaudeville Club, but for every other club in London, so I suggested to the committee that we should fight this case out and prove that poker was not a game of chance, but of skill, just as much as bridge and whist were. As it would cost a great deal of money to fight the case, I visited the secretaries of nearly all the principal clubs in London and asked them each to donate a certain sum of money to enable us to fight the case, it being as much to their interest as it was to ours that we should win it. My appeal met with a ready response, and sufficient money was subscribed to enable us to secure the services of first-class counsel, and expert witnesses to give evidence.

The charge was that the police found five men seated at a table in the club playing poker, and the prosecution endeavoured to show that poker was an unlawful game. It was admitted at the various hearings of the case that there was no attempt at concealment, either by the manager of the club or by any of those taking part in the game, and that the club was conducted in a perfectly proper manner. The police, in fact, stated that there was no question as to the proper conduct of the club. For the defence, it was contended that no charge could lie against the management, inasmuch as poker was in itself not an unlawful game nor a game of chance.

The magistrate, Mr. A. Lawrie, defined the limits of the charge in stating that the only question the jury had to decide was whether poker was a game of chance or a game of skill. If the latter, then the club could not be said to be a common gaming-house. The jury decided that poker was not an unlawful game, and pronounced Mr. Dave Carter, the manager of the club, not guilty of the offence.

Since the hearing of the case at the London Sessions those responsible for the conduct of the various clubs in London have acknowledged their indebtedness to the management of the Vaudeville Club for fighting this test case on behalf of the poker-playing community, and certainly Variety folk can congratulate themselves upon the initiative of their representatives in obtaining a legal ruling on a question which had caused a considerable flutter of apprehension in Clubland.

An amusing incident happened while one of the expert witnesses was giving evidence. The magistrate did not understand poker, so he requested the witness to give him some idea of the game. This the latter did, explaining that two pair beat one pair, three of a kind beat two pair, a straight three of a kind, a flush a straight, a full house a flush, four of a kind a full house, and a straight, or royal, flush, four of a kind. After he had finished, the magistrate said :—

“ Now tell me, for instance, supposing you held four aces, what would you do ? ”

“ I'd drop down dead ! ” answered the expert witness.

The Vaudeville was a very lively club, and many were the jokes played by its members upon one another. One afternoon, about two years ago, four or five well-known professionals were sitting together there, when one of them, an American artist, whose first visit to England it was, and who was known to be most surprisingly ignorant of the geography of the British Isles, inquired if anyone knew any good rooms in Hanley, as he was going there to fulfil an engagement the following week. One of the others replied that there was only one place worth stopping at in Hanley, and that was the Pier Hotel.

"It is facing the sea," said he, "and the bedrooms look out on a verandah, and in the morning, when you wake up, you go out on to the verandah, sit in an easy chair and get the beautiful sea-breeze. Then, after breakfast, you go to the end of the pier, have a couple of hours' splendid fishing, and come back in time for lunch. After lunch, you go on to the verandah again, smoke your cigar, read the papers, get some more ozone and take it easy till dinner-time. And the terms, inclusive of everything, for professionals, are only thirty-five shillings a week."

Now, as everyone knows, Hanley is a dull, dreary town in the Potteries, far away from the sea !

The American thanked him, wrote down the name of the hotel, and said that he should most certainly stop there; he thought the terms were wonderfully moderate. About ten days' later, he returned to town, and this was his experience in his own words :

"When I arrived in Hanley, I told a porter to get me a four-wheeler, had my baggage put on top and got into the cab. 'Where to, sir?' asked the driver. 'The Pier Hotel,' I replied. 'Where?' he said. 'The Pier Hotel.' 'Pier Hotel!' said the driver, 'I don't know it. Whereabouts is it?' 'Why, don't you know?' said I. 'It's facing the sea, with a big verandah running along the front of it.' The driver jumped off his seat, put his head in at the window and said: 'Look here, sir, I think you've got into the wrong train!'"

There was another American artist at the club, who, aware that I did a bit at racing, used continually to be bothering me for tips. He knew nothing whatever about racing and never had more than five or ten shillings on a horse, but he used to be almost childishly delighted when he won. So some of us made up our minds to lay for him and have a bit of fun. The next morning when I went to the club up he came as usual and inquired if I "knew anything."

"Yes," I replied, "I do, and something that's as near a certainty as there can be in racing, although it will probably start at a decent price. But I'm not going to tell you what it is, unless you promise to have at least a 'fiver' on it, as I want you to do yourself a bit of good."

"But," said he, "you know I never have anything like that on a horse. I don't mind having a pound on, as you say it's such a good thing, but I won't go further than that."

"No," said I, "unless you'll have a 'fiver' on the horse I won't tell you what it is."

He took a bit of persuading, but at length agreed, on condition that I should promise to say nothing about it to his wife, who, it seemed, disapproved of his turf speculations.

"And now what's the horse?" he asked.

"Victor Wild, for the Irish Derby. Come along and I will introduce you to my bookmaker, and you can back it with him."

I took him round to a bookmaker I knew, whose office was close by and whom I had told what to expect, and introduced him. The bookmaker, though he could hardly keep his countenance, entered his name as a client, and he put £5 on Victor Wild, and I had £20 on myself.

We then went back to the club for lunch, and about half past three I went into the card-room, where my unsuspecting compatriot was playing bridge, and, clapping him on the back, showed him a telegram which I had arranged for someone to send me saying that Victor Wild had won at 8 to 1.

I never saw anyone so delighted in my life. He jumped up, shook me by the hand, thanked me effusively for having

made him back it, and then insisted on standing champagne all round. When they started playing again he was so excited that he trumped his partner's ace, but he said it didn't matter, as he would pay his partner's losses, as well as his own. Presently, however, a page-boy brought me another telegram, which read :

" Victor Wild objected to for bumping and boring."

I showed it to my friend, and his face was a study.

" Cheer up," I said, " very likely the objection will be overruled, and, anyway, we shall know about it in a few minutes ; I'm sure to get another telegram."

But more than half-an-hour passed and no telegram came, and at last he could stand the suspense no longer and sent for an evening paper. But, of course, there was nothing about the Irish Derby there—it wasn't run, as a matter of fact, until the following week—and the only racing in Ireland that day was some little " tin-pot " meeting of which they didn't bother to give the results.

Then one of us suggested that he should ring up the *Sporting Life*, as they would be sure to know what had happened. So he went to the telephone and, having got on to the *Sporting Life*, said :—

" Can you tell me what was the result of the objection to Victor Wild for the Irish Derby ? "

" Well, what did they say ? " we asked.

" They told me to go to blazes," he answered, with a puzzled expression on his face.

The murder was out then, and we all rocked with laughter. Our victim was, of course, pretty sore at first about the way he had been " had," but he was a good fellow, and when I put him on to a winner a day or two later which enabled him to get back what he had paid for the champagne, and a bit over as well, he forgave me.

I have spoken in a preceding chapter of my celebrated

disappearing cage and canary trick. In reference to this trick, I was asked by the executive committee of the Variety Artists' Federation, in August, 1921, to give evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Performing Animals Bill. I accordingly attended, and was astonished to hear one of the witnesses on the other side declare that Mr. Carl Hertz, in his performance with the cage and canary, killed a bird every time he did this trick. The same witness further stated that he would give £100 if I could perform the trick without killing the bird.

I made up my mind to confute this gentleman by accepting his challenge, and, on the day when the Committee met again, I wrapped up birdcage and bird and went down to the House of Commons for the purpose of performing my trick there and proving to the Committee that the witness's assertion was absolutely false.

When I reached Westminster, I found two or three of the Committee of the Variety Artists' Federation there, and told them what I intended to do. But they said that the police had orders not to allow anyone to bring any packages or any animals into the House of Commons, and outside I saw several performers with monkeys, dogs, baboons, parrots and so forth, but none of them was allowed to enter. One of the committee told me that I had better take my cage and bird away and come back again. I accordingly walked away, but I was determined to get my cage and bird into the House of Commons somehow, and perform the trick there.

A few minutes later I returned, with my cage and bird concealed beneath a long, loose overcoat which I was wearing, and in this way I managed to pass the guard of six policemen and get into the House without what I was carrying being discovered. I entered the committee-room where the Select Committee was sitting, took the cage from beneath my coat and put it under my chair. Presently, I was called upon to give evidence, when I indignantly denied the accusation of cruelty which had been made against me, and ended by informing the Committee that I had my cage and canary with

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me, and would perform the trick before them, first allowing them to mark the bird in any way they pleased, and prove to them conclusively that the bird was not injured in the slightest degree.

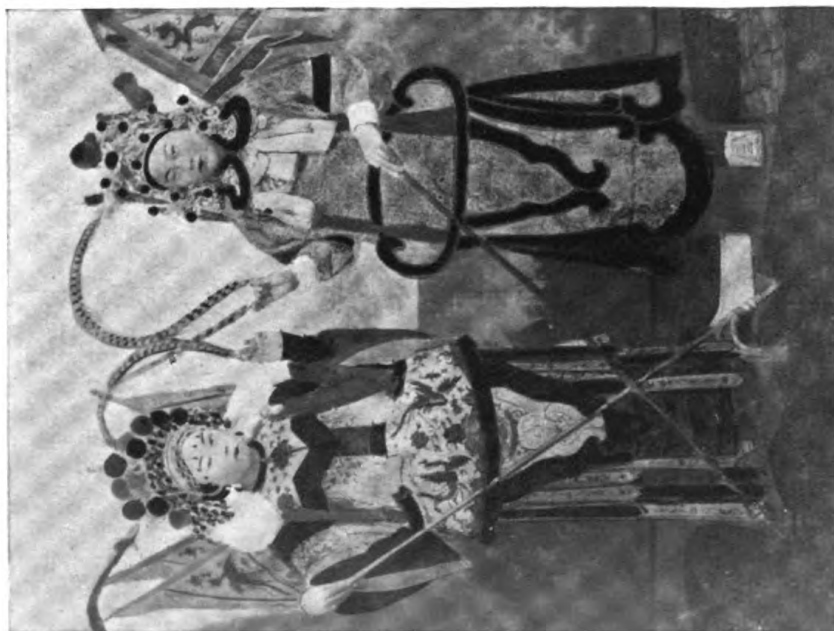
When I said that I had brought the cage and bird with me, two or three members of the Committee rose and said that it was against the rules to bring anything into the House, and that they ought to be removed at once. The Chairman, Brigadier-General Colvin, however, took a different view of the matter, and sent one of the ushers to me with a note which was as follows :—

“ The Chairman has no objection to Mr. Hertz performing his cage and canary trick here.”

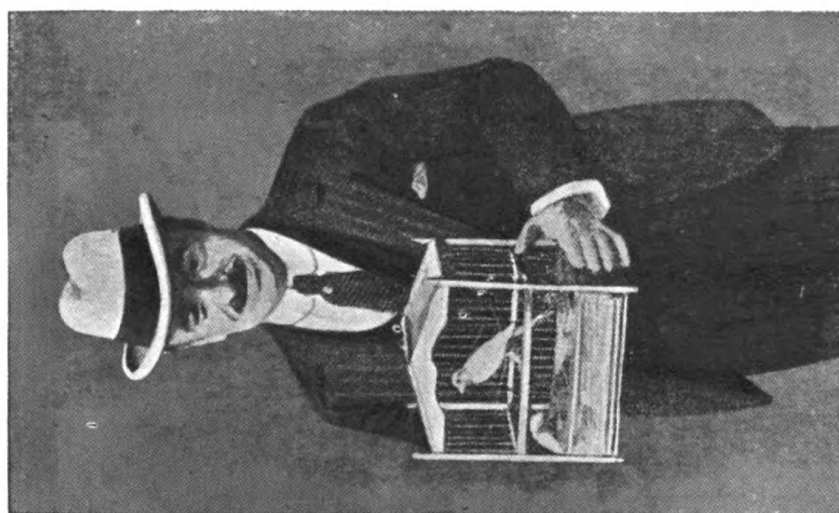
Accordingly, I performed the trick in the committee-room, with the members of the Select Committee sitting around me.

The *Daily Express* of the next day contained the following amusing account of the incident :—

“ A lively canary entertained the Select Committee on Performing Animals at the House of Commons yesterday. The canary's name is ‘ Connie,’ and she disappears four times a day, explained Mr. Carl Hertz, who is the canary's owner. He had brought ‘ Connie ’ (in answer to a hundred pound challenge by an earlier witness, Mr. Haverley, formerly a theatrical manager), to disprove before the Committee the allegation that he killed a bird each time he made it disappear together with the cage. Mr. Hertz placed ‘ Connie ’ on the centre table and asked members to mark it, so that there should be no deception. ‘ That is not necessary,’ said Mr. James O'Grady, M.P. ‘ I know something about birds. Let me examine it, and I shall recognise it again.’ Mr. F. O. Roberts, M.P., removed the canary and placed it in the cage. ‘ One ! Two ! Three ! ’ cried Mr. Hertz, and suddenly threw up his hands. Sir John Butcher was startled and half-rose from his seat, and meanwhile both ‘ Connie ’ and her cage had vanished. Mr. Hertz took off his coat, retired a moment, and reappeared two seconds later holding the bird, which chirped



Chinese Dancers in Gala Costume.



Birdcage Trick at the House of Commons.

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happily, and everybody was satisfied that it was indeed 'Connie.'

" 'I do not want Mr. Haverley's hundred pounds,' said Mr. Hertz in evidence ; 'I am glad to do the trick for nothing, in order to refute one of the wild charges made by an earlier witness. The statement that I kill a canary at each performance is absurd on the face of it ; I have had this bird for twelve months, and some of my earlier birds have remained with me for six years.'

" The exhibition given by Mr. Hertz, the illusionist, in the House of Commons differed, not in kind, but only in degree, from many similar tricks which are daily performed in that august assembly. The trick as performed by Prime Ministers does not consist of making canaries disappear only to appear again, but they show great sleight-of-hand in dealing with facts and figures. They make on occasion facts disappear, only to appear again as fictions. With figures they are even more skilful. The trick by which a deficit is converted into a surplus sometimes calls for the highest praise. This sensation is always caused by the annual transformation of a sinking fund into a floating debt. The Members of Parliament who were temporarily converted from performers in legerdemain into spectators of it must have had a fellow feeling for their brothers in the theatrical world. It must not be forgotten also that the present Parliament is particularly fortunate in having a wizard as its star-performer.

" Mr. Carl Hertz's performance is unique, as it is the first time in the annals of history that a conjuring performance has ever been given within the Houses of Parliament."

While on the subject of the training of animals, I should like to state that in all my experience of over thirty-five years on the stage I have never seen any cruelty whatever used in the training. I have had several intimate friends, like the late Frank Bostock and Fred Ginnett, both great animal trainers, with whom I have spent a great deal of time and have seen their *modus operandi* for the training of animals.

There was nothing in it to which exception could be taken, and Mr. Ginnett told me himself that the allegations of cruelty which are so frequently made are absurd.

No animal can ever be trained to perform a trick which it dislikes, and no trainer who knew anything of his business would be so foolish as to try to force an animal to do it. On the contrary, it is the first object of every trainer to discover how animals play when at liberty and to attempt to imitate their games in the performances which he devises. An animal which will not play is useless from the trainer's point of view.

Mr. Ginnett told me how he first got the idea of teaching a horse to walk the tight-rope. He was in Ireland, and he happened to see a colt passing along the top of a very narrow bank. He bought the animal and tried it with a two-foot plank. The lessons were given in public at Portsmouth and lasted about a quarter of an hour each night. Gradually he reduced the width of the plank to seven inches and raised it a little way from the ground. The trick pleased the horse almost as much as it pleased Mr. Ginnett. It was a great success in public.

If rubber balls had not been invented there would have been no performing dogs. Dan, the drunken dog, was trained by rolling a ball from side to side in front of him. The dog, of course, followed every movement of the ball. Afterwards, the ball was dispensed with, the trainer's hands indicating the necessary movements. In a similar way dogs are taught to turn somersaults. A ball is thrown, and the dog springs up at it. The next throw is directed behind the dog, which, in consequence, flings itself backwards. Once the idea is grasped, subsequent training is easy.

Mr. Ginnett pointed out that elephants, in their natural state, rise on their hind legs to pull down trees, and bend down until their heads touch the ground in order to plumb deep wells with their trunks. He told me a good story of a performing elephant he had which broke loose while on tour in Wales and invaded a girls' boarding-school during the night. The scholars mistook the visitor

for a burglar and gathered on the lawn to await the arrival of the village policeman, whom they had summoned by telephone. On the policeman seeing the elephant and reporting, a general stampede ensued. Mr. Ginnett was sent for and found his pet in the kitchen regaling himself with loaves of bread and soapy water from a washing-tub. Unfortunately, this fare had the effect of distending the creature to such an extent that it could not pass through the doorway; but elephants have no respect for doors, a heave of the great shoulders, and door-posts and walls were scattered like chaff, and the elephant emerged. Several of the scholars fainted and the policeman incontinently bolted.

Elephants are exceedingly timid animals. They are especially afraid of mice, which sometimes run up their trunks; when this happens the elephant usually breaks loose and stampedes. Mr. Ginnett once had to pay heavy damages because four of his elephants, which had been startled by a flock of sheep, ran amok on a country estate and destroyed a greenhouse. An elephant has wonderful balancing powers, and is thus able to perform tricks like rope-walking with ease. It is the rarest thing in the world for an elephant to miss its footing.

Sea-lions, like elephants, are natural balancers. The wonderful balancing feats performed by Captain Woodward's sea-lions were first suggested by the sea-lions at play in San Francisco Bay. The animals were noticed tossing pieces of wreckage from one to the other, and it was remarked that they hardly ever made a miss.

The lion is a noble animal, and easy to train, if one takes him the right way. He is a natural hunter; the tiger and the leopard, on the other hand, are assassins. No trainer would dare to strike a tiger. The red-hot pokers one hears about in connection with these animals are pieces of painted wood; they are used for effect only. Wolves are the most treacherous of all wild animals. They are so stupid that it is a waste of time to attempt to do anything with them. On the other hand, it is a wonderful tribute to

the trainer's skill that he has succeeded in evolving so faithful a companion as the dog from this unpromising material.

"Consul," the ape-man in Mr. Bostock's show, was brought up from his early years as a human being. He always sat at a table, wore clothes and slept in a bed. He was never at any time subject to cruel treatment. On one occasion Mr. Bostock entered his dressing-room and, slapping him on the back in a friendly way, said: "Well, Consul, how are you to-night?" Consul grinned and returned the salute, but so forcibly that his trainer was felled to the ground. Three times the blow was repeated, always in the most amiable manner. Mr. Bostock was rather severely knocked about. Animals of that sort are not, one would imagine, favourable subjects for cruelty. If you want to see real brutality, go to a fat-stock show or watch poultry being forcibly fed. As a lover of animals, that sort of thing disgusts me, and I would abolish it if I could.

Some years ago while I was spending a few days with Mr. Bostock I was witness of a very comical incident.

He was travelling with his menagerie in which was a very big bear. Bears, as a rule, are very difficult animals to travel, as the cages they are kept in have to be floored with zinc or some other metal to prevent the bear from scraping through the bottom of his cage. When wooden flooring was used it was found that, by the continuous scraping of his claws, the bear could work through a plank very quickly, no matter how thick it was. And when he had got a board clawed through, it was a very easy matter for him to get his head down and chew away enough of the boards to make a hole large enough for him to escape.

One night—or rather early one morning—when the menagerie was at Boston, in Lincolnshire, the bear in question clawed and chewed through the bottom of his cage and made a hole through which he got out. It was about six o'clock and, being mid-winter, still dark. The bear made his way into the street, which was deserted except for a policeman, who, observing a dark object approaching, turned his lantern on it

and saw that it was a bear. He immediately started to run for his life, and the bear promptly ran after him. For it is a well-known fact that if a person meeting a bear runs away the bear will give chase, but, if he stands still, the bear, unless he is absolutely wild, will probably pass on without doing him any harm.

The faster the policeman ran, the faster Bruin ran after him, and, finding that the bear was gaining on him, the policeman climbed as high as he could get up a lamp-post and began to shout lustily for help and to blow his whistle. This brought another policeman on the scene, who, seeing the trouble his colleague was in, and not daring to go near the bear himself, ran to the police-station for assistance. Meantime, the bear was trying to climb the lamp-post to get at the policeman, who, on his side, kept hitting it with his truncheon to prevent it from reaching him.

When the other policeman reported the matter at the station, they at once decided that the bear must belong to Bostock's menagerie, and a constable was despatched to Mr. Bostock, who was called out of bed to hear that his bear was at large and amusing himself by assaulting policemen in the execution of their duty. Having awakened four or five of his men and told them to get ropes, he set off with the messenger for the lamp-post, where the besieged policeman was still defending himself against the efforts of the bear to reach him. He was as yet unhurt, although the bottoms of his trousers had been torn to shreds by the bear's claws, and the sight was so comical that Mr. Bostock could not help laughing.

"For God's sake, call your brute of a bear away and let me get down!" cried the unfortunate policeman. "I've been up here long enough!"

Mr. Bostock was about to tell his men to secure the bear, when it occurred to him that here was a chance of advertisement too good to be lost. So he told the policeman to hold on for a minute or two longer, and despatched one of his men to the offices of a newspaper, which were near at hand, to ask them to send a reporter. When the reporter had arrived on the

scene and got his "copy," the bear was secured without the least difficulty and marched back to the menagerie.

While on the subject of animals escaping from menageries, I may mention a most exciting incident which occurred at Cork, where I was spending a few days with Mr. Ginnett.

It happened that one of the lionesses had sustained an injury to one of her paws, which had been stepped on by another lioness. Mr. J. H. Peard, the well-known veterinary surgeon, was sent for, and came to the menagerie to see the animal. It was then about eight o'clock in the morning, and none of the attendants had yet arrived, so that Mr. Ginnett and Mr. Peard were alone in the place. The former got a step-ladder and placed it against the cage, his intention being to enter and force the beast's paw through the bars, so that Mr. Peard could examine it. He had half opened the gate and was about to pass in when the lioness made a spring at him and knocked him over, and he fell, ladder and all, on Mr. Peard, who was standing by.

Mr. Peard saw the lioness bounding over him and remembered nothing more, until he found himself outside the premises with a good high wall between himself and the escaped beast. Hearing the roaring, as he thought, of several wild animals, he concluded that some of the other lions and tigers had also got out of their cages, and shouted as loudly as he could for Mr. Ginnett to leave the place.

Mr. Ginnett, however, whose courage and presence of mind never failed him, was searching for the escaped lioness, revolver in hand. He thought he saw her lying in a corner under her cage, but presently he heard a terrible noise, and going in the direction from which it proceeded, caught sight of the lioness hanging on to the throat of one of the camels. As he approached, she pulled the camel to the ground and began to tear its flesh with her claws and teeth, the unfortunate creature uttering the most pitiful cries the while.

Mr. Ginnett fired a shot at the lioness, but missed, and the lioness, with a large piece of the camel's flesh in her jaws, retreated into an outhouse and, lying down, proceeded to devour

it. The outhouse had a barred window, at which Mr. Ginnett stationed himself, and seeing a favourable opportunity, shot the beast through the head, and she toppled over stone dead. The camel was still alive, but soon succumbed to the terrible injuries it had received. A second camel, which had been tethered alongside the first, was not touched. The lioness was valued at £200 and its victim at £100.

Something exciting always seemed to happen during my visits to Mr. Ginnett, and on another occasion, while staying with him at Blackheath, that locality once the happy hunting-ground of highwaymen, and still haunted, so it is said, by the restless spirits of gentlemen of the road long since gone to their account, I witnessed a romantic comedy which was worth going a long way to see. In the presence of an enthusiastic crowd of some two thousand people, a great race was run for the hand, if not the heart, of a fair lady, by two devoted admirers, between whom she found it quite impossible to decide.

All three belonged to Mr. Ginnett's Wild Australia Show. The lady, who was called Bonita, was a rifle-shot of marvellous dexterity, while her two suitors, Billy Lee and Frank Joy, were roughriders and members of the same troupe. All three were of the same age—twenty-three—and had worked and played together in this happy company for two years. The two young men both fell in love with Bonita at the same time, and both paid her the most ardent court. Bonita, "wedded to her art," as she expressed it, did not know which of them to choose for a husband. And the two lovers were visibly losing flesh in their pining for her.

"I'd marry you both if I only could," said she, with a sigh. "It makes my heart ache to see you both so miserable on my account."

And still the duel went on! A most alarming railway accident near Wolverhampton, which happened a little later, only served to add fuel to the flames. The train in which the whole company was travelling was run into by another train, Bonita was pinned under the wreckage of her carriage, and

two huge snakes which were journeying with her were killed. She was rescued, bruised and bleeding, by the herculean efforts of her two suitors, who tore away the wreckage, though they themselves had been hurt in the smash, and so saved her life (exactly one half each). Each, too, salved a snake from the splintered baggage-wagon, only to find, to their sorrow (for both were very kind-hearted fellows), that the reptiles had passed away. At the pythons' funeral, Billy and Frank shared the beautiful Bonitas' mourning-coach and mingled their tears with hers.

It was clear that this state of affairs could not continue indefinitely, and, in a moment of inspiration, Bonita suggested that her two gallant suitors should ride a race for her. Billy and Frank simply jumped at the proposal; the bargain was sealed, and the lady solemnly vowed that she would wed the winner.

And thus it was that this quiet corner of Essex witnessed a sight such as it had never seen before, and most probably never will again. Until that afternoon a race for a wife had only existed in the thrilling pages of novels and illustrated magazines; but now one was to take place in very truth.

The news spread like wildfire through the town and surrounding villages. It was early-closing day in Colchester, and all the shop lads and lasses scurried off at dinner-time in high feather at the prospect of an afternoon's sport. All roads led to Blackheath, where, hard by the Old Cherry Tree Inn, was the starting-post, and along them came an endless procession of charabancs, motors, cabs and carriages. The local aristocracy were there, aloof and mildly excited, in their high-wheeled dogcarts. And there, too, on their mettlesome steeds, were the reckless, good-hearted "coo-eeing" crowd of the Wild Australia Show, and Bonita herself, booted and spurred and sombreroed, astride a mild-mannered, old grey mare, a slim, dark, slip of a girl with pretty, sun-burned face, looking just a little bit sad.

The two competitors rode up side by side. They saluted Bonita gravely, and the smile with which she returned their



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greeting was carefully apportioned into two equal parts, one for William and the other for Frank. A squadron of the 20th Hussars, on their spirited Irish horses, cleared the course and shepherded the crowd, and then . . . Bonita dropped her handkerchief, and to a tremendous shout of "They're off!" the two roughriders started on the race of their lives.

The course was a circular one of a mile and a half, and Bonita, sitting like a statue on her old grey mare, was the winning-post. Lee rode a stocky chestnut called The Swell; Joy, a hardy-looking bay mare named Snowflake. With a shout and a squelching of hoofs the other roughriders followed close behind, a squadron at full charge. The pace was a warm one from the start, and though first one led and then the other, for the latter part of the journey they were close together. As they approached the post they were neck and neck, and the excitement was intense, for it was impossible to say which one would win. But in the last few strides Snowflake faltered, and Billy Lee on The Swell won by a length.

Amidst uproarious cheering, the victor leaped from the back of his exhausted mount, and approaching the prize he had won, kissed her on both cheeks with a hearty smack. And then, together, on the same placid old grey mare, they rode through the delighted crowd, with Bonita at the helm, where she doubtless always intended to be. She looked somewhat sad and pensive. Had she done wrong? But, no, perish the thought! Anyway, it was all over, except the wedding.

The happy sequel to this race for a bride took place at St. Philips Church, Kennington, a few days later, when William Lee, roughrider and stock-whip expert, was married to Bonita, champion rifle-shot. A great crowd waited at the church door for the wedding-party, and when a little group of horsemen, headed by a roughriders' band, came into sight there was a scene of great enthusiasm. Bonita and Billy rode in front: Bonita, a radiant and blushing bride, in a light-brown riding skirt and bright red shirt-blouse with ribbon and streamlets flowing in all directions, Billy in a yellow shirt, with long llama-skin leggings, and a lasso slung across his shoulder.

They both wore sombreros : only his was white, and hers was red.

A few minutes later they were made man and wife. Then every man sprang to his saddle, and there was one great chorus of "Coo-ee ! coo-ee !" followed by a triumphant gallop and the cracking of stock-whips down the Kennington Road to the home of the bride's parents. The streets were crowded with people, who shouted out their good wishes to the bride and bridegroom. Frank Joy, who might have been the bridegroom, but who was the best man instead, was the first to follow the wedded couple.

CHAPTER XXII

Devices of cardsharps and other swindlers—The Three Card Trick—The Top and Bottom Dice Game—The Strap Game—The Padlock Game—The Dummy Bags—Finding the Ace—The Swindle Trick—The so-called mystery of Mind-Reading—Claims of its exponents to the possession of occult powers exposed—An exhibition of mind-reading by myself—How the tests were performed—P——, the Chicago mind-reader—His exposure by Dr. Gatchell.

It has occurred to me that it may be as well if I say something here about the devices which are employed by cardsharps and other swindlers for the victimising of a gullible public. Of these there are a great variety, but space forbids me to describe more than a few of them.

The "Three Card" or "Find the Lady" Trick.—This game is so well and generally known that an explanation of it would be superfluous. It will be sufficient to say that when a person throws three cards, be it on a table or open umbrella at a fair or on a racecourse, or on an overcoat spread over his knees in a railway carriage, and challenges you to bet on your ability to "find the lady," *don't do it*. The money is as comfortable in your pocket as it would be in his, and for this reason a transfer is undesirable.

Many rich and rare anecdotes could be told about people—some of them very level-headed men in ordinary affairs—who have been victimised by this time-honoured swindle, but the following one must suffice :—

Some years ago I went with a friend to the Derby. On our way from the station to the course, we found a crowd round a man who was manipulating the three cards on an open

umbrella and challenging any one in the audience for any amount, from one pound to ten, "to find the lady." I was going to pass on, but my friend said :—

"Wait a moment, I want to see this."

"Oh, it's only a man doing the three-card trick," I answered. "Don't waste your time watching it."

"Oh, but I've never seen it done," said he, "and I'd like to see it."

So we stopped to watch the man—at least, my friend did, while I studied my race-card and tried to make up my mind what horse I should back in the first race. Presently, happening to look up, I saw him take two pounds out of his pocket, and before I could stop him he had put it on a card.

"Good heavens, what have you done that for?" I exclaimed.

"It's all right," he answered, "I'm certain that the card I've backed is the queen."

I told him he had no earthly chance of winning, as these men were all swindlers, and, sure enough, when the card was turned over, it was not "the lady," and my friend lost his two pounds.

I felt very angry with him for throwing away his money like that, and, though he deserved to lose it, I decided to get it back for him, and a bit over as well, just to show the three-card gentleman that there were people about who were as smart as himself. So I called him aside and told him that if he put his money on the card which I told him he would get his money back.

Meantime, the operator had taken up the cards again and was calling out :—

"I'll bet anything from one pound to ten that no one can find 'the lady.'"

I watched the cards carefully, and when he had finished manipulating them whispered to my friend :—

"Put five pounds on the right-hand card."

"No," he objected, "that's not 'the lady'; it's the left-hand card."

"Do as I tell you," I said ; "put five pounds on the right-hand card."

Very reluctantly he obeyed, and no sooner had he put the money down than the operator shouted : "Here comes the police!" and picking up the five pounds, made a dash and disappeared in the crowd, leaving his umbrella and the cards behind. It was, of course, hopeless to follow him, and we turned sadly away.

The Top and Bottom Dice Game.—This is generally operated with three dice, each three dice having seven spots on any two opposite sides (added together). Three dice will consequently represent twenty-one spots. This is explained to the intended victim, who may satisfy himself of the fact by examining the dice. He may win for ever, so it seems, by betting on twenty-one, and the chances are that he will try it. Should he wager his money, then—of course, without his knowledge—one of the three dice will be removed and replaced by one not quite so correct ; at least, any two opposite sides of it will never add up seven, and the victim who unknowingly bets that it will is not likely to add to his wealth. Therefore, beware of this game, as you would of all others of a like nature, for there is nothing in it, except for the operator.

The Strap Game.—This is operated by a leather strap about an inch wide and from twelve to fourteen inches long, made for the purpose. The point is to catch the loop of the strap when rolled up. The same game is played also with a long piece of string or a long chain, which is substituted for the strap. The whole secret is in the way the strap, string or chain is laid out on the table. When the operator wishes the punter to win to encourage him to increase his stakes, he will lay it out in a straightforward manner. But when he wants him to lose, he has merely to give it a twist, and then it is any odds against him doing it.

The Padlock Game.—A padlock is introduced which can be opened by the touch of a secret spring, and the intended victim is shown how to do it. A little later, the confederate makes his appearance, and, of course, tries to open the lock,

but finally concludes that it cannot be done and offers to back his opinion with any amount of money. The dupe, as a rule, promptly rises to the bait ; he has just learned how to open the padlock and thinks that he will be betting on a certainty. A wager is accordingly made, and he proceeds to try to open the padlock, for which he is generally allowed ten minutes, but fails to find the hidden spring, and, after tearing all his finger-nails, gives up the attempt in despair. The padlock which he was shown how to open has been replaced by one perfectly solid, but otherwise exactly like it.

The Dummy Bags.—The operator, who pretends to be suffering from toothache, has two little bags about one inch in circumference filled with salt. One of these bags he puts in his mouth and the other in his coat-sleeve or pocket, and enters a bar or café, to which his confederate has preceded him. The operator sits down at a table by himself and calls for a glass of beer or other refreshment, while drinking which he removes the little bag from his mouth and lays it on the table.

Before finishing his beer he will have occasion to leave the table for a moment, and this is the confederate's opportunity to do his part of the programme. In the presence of other customers, he picks up the bag, opens it and shows them that it contains salt. This he pours out on to the floor, refilling the bag with sawdust or whatever else may be at hand and replaces it on the table.

The operator now returns, complaining of his horrible toothache and cursing freely for having left his salt-bag on the table. He grabs it and puts it in his mouth, preparatory to taking his departure. The others, now very much amused, inquire of him what he has in the bag, and he will answer positively : " Salt ! " The others will say that it is not salt. He says that it is, and, in order to settle the dispute, a wager is made, most of the spectators contributing their share to swell the stake. The operator takes the bag out of his mouth, which, on being opened, is found to contain salt, and he pockets the money of the dupes who have betted against him.

The reader need hardly be told that, on returning to the table, the operator quickly exchanges the bag now filled with sawdust for one filled with salt, and that the bag of sawdust disappears up his sleeve, while the bag of salt, which is exactly similar to it, goes into his mouth. The writer has seen large sums change hands over this swindling trick.

Finding the Ace.—The operator in this, as in all other games of a like character, is, of course, assisted by a confederate. The game—or rather trick—consists in placing a pack of cards in three equal parts on the table, reserving two aces, one of which is placed on top of one of the packs and the other in the middle of another. The object now is to bring the two aces out of the pack together.

The operator takes the pack on top of which is the first ace and places it in his left hand face downwards, with the fourth finger resting on the top. He next takes the other two parts and places them on top of the part which is in his left hand. Then he takes off the cards one by one, until he comes to the first ace, which he places on the table with the other cards, showing the next card to the spectators, who will, of course, see that it is not an ace. He makes a quick pass, that is, brings the bottom part of the pack to the top and the other ace will now be on top.

The confederate's duty is to exchange one of the aces with another card in the first stage of the game, ostensibly unknown to and for the purpose of misleading the operator, but in reality to deceive the spectators, for it matters not to the operator where one ace is, so long as he knows the whereabouts of the other. This game is very tempting to the uninitiated, but to bet on it is certain loss. It is generally introduced by the operator proceeding to tell someone's fortune, provided that such a person was not born on a Sunday, which the operator must first ascertain by placing the two aces as described above.

The Swindle Trick.—The sharper has a card selected and returned to the pack and the pack shuffled. The cards are then strewn face downwards about the table. The sharper picks up the cards one at a time, turns each over, looks at it

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and looks at the spectator who drew the card, as though he were trying to read his thoughts, and then puts the card in his left hand. He continues to do this until he has a number of cards in his left hand, each one of which the spectator has seen. Among them is the card which the spectator originally chose and returned to the pack. Therefore, when the sharper boldly says: "The next card I turn over will be yours," the spectator having seen that the card he chose has already been picked up and put in the sharper's hand, will certainly say: "You're wrong." "Impossible!" exclaims the sharper, "the next card I turn over will be yours." "But you've passed it," says the dupe. "You're wrong," says the sharper again, working up the excitement, and, finally, he challenges the other to bet on it. When the bet has been made, the sharper quietly takes the card from those he already has in his hand—not "one from the table, as the spectator thought"—and turns it over. It is, of course, the selected card.

Very little explanation is necessary for this trick. When the card is returned to the pack in the first instance, the sharper holds his finger under the pack and quickly bends a corner of the card. He is thus able to tell, from feeling the card, when he picks up the chosen one, and in putting it into his left hand keeps his little finger on top of it. He takes care, of course, that the spectator gets a good view of this card, and then goes on picking up the other cards and looking at each one before he brings the swindle to its proper conclusion, to make the other think that he has already passed the chosen card.

There is a trick frequently practised by cardsharps and confidence gamblers which has caused many an "innocent abroad" to stake and lose every penny he has about him. It is as follows:—

Two players divide the twenty-four lowest cards in the pack (aces and sixes inclusive) between them, taking an equal number of all denominations to the extent of twelve cards each. The cards count on their face value (by the number of pips), the ace one, the deuce two, and so forth, the highest being six. The two players play one card alternately, adding up the

points as they proceed. For example: No. 1 plays a six, and No. 2 plays a five, making a total of 11. No. 1 plays a three, making the whole 14, and No. 2 plays a four, making 18, and so on, until the total reaches 31 points, the player playing the card which makes that number first being the winner.

The method pursued by the cardsharper, which, by the way, never fails to win the game, is to make the count 10, 17, or 24 points. If his opponent plays first, and plays an ace or a deuce, he plays a card which will make the total three. His opponent could not make a ten, for six (the six being the highest card) and three are only nine, and by playing an ace the sharper can make the desired ten points first. If his opponent had made the total five or six or seven, he would, of course, have played a five or a four or a three and made the count ten. In the same way, he will make 17 or 24 points, and when that number is reached, it is no longer possible for his opponent to win. If the cardsharper plays first, he plays a three, and he will make sure of winning the game, for from that he can easily make the score ten, 17 or 24 points. 38, 45 or 52 points may be played for in the same way, to the like advantage of the person who understands the game.

Much attention has been paid of late years to the so-called mystery of mind-reading, and thousands who have witnessed the apparently wonderful manifestations of certain well-known exponents of the art are convinced that some occult power is behind them. As a matter of fact, however, mind-readers, in the exercise of their calling, only make use of the ordinary faculties vouchsafed to every human being, the sole difference being that they have brought these faculties to a high state of development. There is no such thing as a supernatural gift of mind-reading, such as that claimed by Bishop, Tyndall, Cumberland, Brown and others. It is all trickery, accomplished by a thorough training of the eye and muscles.

Now, we are all, in a certain sense and to a certain degree,

mind-readers, but the power is only a natural one and can be acquired by any person possessing the proper qualifications. Professors of occult science and claimants of supernatural powers have flourished in the world as far back as history or even tradition reaches, yet none of them has ever really established their claims, and their tricks, though apparently wonderful to those who do not understand them, can all be explained.

From our knowledge of the average intellectual qualities of mankind and their common habits of thought, we can form some idea of what is habitually passing in their minds. It is this knowledge which enables strong, discerning men to read public sentiment aright and work upon it. Then, in individual cases, from the signs that are given us unconsciously, we can read or guess very accurately the thoughts of those with whom we come in contact. There is a vast amount of mind-reading practised in every-day business, in political, social and professional life. Successful barristers, physicians, financiers, gamblers and adventurers of both sexes are all more or less mind-readers. They accomplish their purposes by accurately reading what is passing in the minds of those with whom they have to deal, and thereby bend them to their wishes. These are the genuine mind-readers, but that there are supernatural powers bestowed upon a few favoured persons has certainly never been demonstrated.

The professional mind-readers usually specify some of the conditions under which these so-called marvellous powers are to be manifested. This alone is distinctly a confession of pretence and deception, as anyone possessed of genuine supernatural gifts would be independent of conditions. If these persons actually have the powers they pretend, why, it may well be asked, do not they turn them to practical financial account? They cannot claim that their supernatural faculties render them superior to the altogether natural desire to make money. A genuine mind-reader would not be under the necessity of seeking affluence or a doubtful livelihood through the admission fees of uncertain and variable audiences!

Even as a gambler a genuine mind-reader could quickly

make a fortune. He could sit back serenely behind his cards and, by reading the thoughts of his opponent, by, in fact, looking into his hands, win nearly always. He would never go broke on three aces against a full hand at poker. What an aid it would be in business, when a man could penetrate the minds of those with whom he dealt with and be certain of buying at the lowest and selling at the highest prices obtainable! What an easy task a barrister would have with witnesses! What marvellous opportunities the stock-markets would offer to him who could read the minds of great financiers!

I might continue to reason thus, but it will be better for me to explain how these illusions or tricks are performed, for I dislike to see people gulled by impostors, when they might easily learn that there is nothing supernatural in so-called mind-reading, clairvoyance, second sight or similar frauds.

Second sight was first introduced by an Italian conjurer named Pinitti, at the Haymarket Theatre, in London, in 1774. His act was performed by means of a confederate and the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. Robert Houdin, the clever French magician, followed in his footsteps and also made use of a confederate. The first person to give second sight séances in America was Leopold Steen, a Bohemian magician. He first performed in the Old Bowery Theatre, in New York. Steen invented a system of cues and signs by which the wonders of thought-reading were accomplished by himself and a blind-folded confederate on the stage. It created a great sensation. These performances ante-date those of Robert Heller and the original Hermann, who died over half a century ago.

Now as to how the work is done. Mind-reading is nothing but muscle-reading. In all the cases where the mind-reader is supposed to lead a person to a hidden object, the spectator is guided entirely by an involuntary movement of the subject's muscles. A person keeping a hidden object in mind naturally reveals a slight inclination to move hands, limbs or head in that direction. So long as a subject is in this condition he will lead the mind-reader, who is thoroughly practised in his

art of watching for the movement of the muscles, directly to the object.

This is all there is in it. It makes no difference whether I take a person's hand in mine or place mine on his head, shoulder or leg, so long as it is where there are muscles. The practice all mind-readers have is sufficient to enable them to detect the slightest movement of the muscles. No convulsions are necessary; the system is not so greatly worked up, and cataleptic fits are as bad fakes as convulsions, and perpetrated only to inspire belief in the supernatural and for advertising purposes. Blindfolding is also unnecessary; it makes no difference whether they are blindfolded or not. I can, of course, more easily demonstrate this by actual tests, than by words, but I will try to explain.

Take the hand of your subject and ask him or her to think of an object in the room. Ask the subject to keep his mind on it and then begin changing rapidly from one object to another in the room, the movements being correctly guided. As the performer moves away from the object, the subject will involuntarily pull him back towards it. If you try this, it will prove the truth of this exposé. The mind-reader can step into another room, and while there the subject can write a name on a piece of paper unseen by the mind-reader. The paper can be folded several times, but when he returns he will find out the name. How? By muscle-reading simply. After the usual affected touching of the forehead, rubbing of hands and so forth, the subject is asked to write the letters of the alphabet on a piece of paper. Then the mind-reader takes the first finger of the writer's right hand between two of his fingers and slowly places them on the subject's index finger over the letters, beginning with A and pausing over each letter. When the correct letter is reached, the subject will try to divert the mind-reader's attention from the letter, but will succeed only temporarily, and the mind-reader knows that this is the chosen letter of the name. In a similar manner the second and each subsequent letter is discovered. It is successful muscle-reading of the name selected by a person who tried to

be natural and neither aid nor hinder the accomplishment of the feat.

I will explain a mathematical trick often used by mind-readers. Let anyone write down a number of three figures, reverse it and subtract the lesser number from the greater. For instance, put down 471 and reverse it, making it 174. Subtract one from the other, and it leaves you 297. Now cross out either the left-hand or the right-hand figure and tell the mind-reader which one and what the figure was. Then the mind-reader knows that the remaining figures are 29. It is a mathematical fact that any three figures so treated, which have a remainder of three figures, will have a 9 for the central figure, and the sum of the other two will also be 9. When the mind-reader has been told what figure has been crossed out, he instantly knows the others, and still this test is used as mind reading.

S——, a great mind-reader, who caused much talk by his so-called convulsions and cataleptic fits, used to perform the following trick, which he claimed to be done by mind-reading : While blindfolded, he would ask someone to pick out a card from a pack and bring it to him. He would then ask the person to give him one of his hands, so that he might be able to read his mind, and, with the other hand, to hold the card he had drawn at arm's length, and face upwards, so that he might see the spots on it and keep them in mind. Then he immediately told the person the name of the card. The trick was quite simple. When S—— was standing close to the person who held the card, he, too, could look down under the handkerchief which covered his eyes and see the card, as the nose held off the handkerchief and allowed a view of objects near the floor. All the tricks of the mind-reader are capable of similar explanation. No living being can do anything by supernatural aid, and mediums, mind-readers and others who claim to work by such means are frauds.

I remember some years ago, while giving an entertainment at a private house in London, I was asked to give an exhibition of mind-reading, when I performed certain tests which appeared

to my audience to be very wonderful, though to me they were simple enough.

I asked one of the ladies to act as my medium, and, while I was locked in another room in the house, a pin was hidden by dropping it into one of the holes of a pepper-box which stood in a cruet on the dining-room table. The pin dropped into the hole, as far as the head, which stopped it from going right into the box. I was then brought into the room and told that the article which had been hidden was a pin. Taking hold of the medium's hand, I asked her to concentrate her mind on the spot where the pin was hidden, and in less than two minutes I found the pin in the pepper-box, to the great astonishment of the company. It was all done by the movements of the muscles of my subject.

A little later I was asked if I could repeat my performance, one of the gentlemen present acting as my subject on this occasion. I was led from the room again, and this time the pin was hidden in a place where it seemed almost an utter impossibility for it to be found, even by the person who had placed it there. On the sideboard stood a box of cigars. One of the cigars was taken from the box, and the pin pushed lengthways right into the middle of it, so that it could not even be seen by the naked eye. This cigar was then put back in the box, and the whole lot mixed up together. I am perfectly sure that no one present could tell in which cigar the pin had been placed; yet, strange to say, when I was brought back into the room and took the hand of my medium, in less than five minutes I found the cigar, broke it in half, and there, in the centre, lay the pin.

This may seem to the reader altogether impossible, as my medium could not even tell himself in which cigar the pin was hidden, as the cigars were all mixed up in the box. But he will be wrong, because my medium really did know which cigar it was in, as, in pushing the pin into the cigar, a little of the tobacco had been loosened, and his mind was, in consequence, concentrated on a cigar which had a little of the leaf displaced. And so, as I took one cigar after another in my

hand, I could tell by the movements of his muscles, when I came to the right cigar, that this was the one the pin was in.

Some years ago, there was in Chicago a celebrated mind-reader whom I will call P——, who used to faint or go into convulsions, so great was the alleged strain on his brain. He was extraordinarily successful, and created so great a sensation that his feats were the topic of the hour in hotels, clubs, and, in fact, everywhere. But Dr. Gatchell, editor of the *Medical Era*, who followed P—— on his mind-reading trips through the city, did not hesitate to declare that he was a fraud, and that his feats were tricks of the shabbiest sort.

He compared notes with Dr. G. F. Butler, who was a member of the committee in charge of the mind-reader when he performed his feats. They examined the hood which was supposed to cover P——'s eyes. It was found to be a "sight-seeing" affair, while the other coverings were transparent or easily displaced by muscular contraction of the eyebrows. Dr. Gatchell not only broke up P——'s performances by exposure, but he performed the same tricks without, however, having recourse to the fainting fits and hysteria which P—— had employed to delude the spectators. Gloves were put over his eyes, and a hood—a double thickness of black cloth—drawn over his face, as an additional safeguard. Thus blindfolded, Dr. Gatchell found the hidden articles just as P—— had done before him.

"I will show you how it is done," said he. "Look at these two gloves. You see I fold them and place them against my eyes. This is P——'s first deceit. It looks like an additional safeguard against fraud, but he couldn't read a mind without it. Tie this handkerchief about my head; tie it as tightly as you can and knot it above my ears. P—— always tells you to tie it tight, and that seems like another safeguard, but without it he could not do his trick."

The doctor's eyes were apparently securely bandaged, the strain of the handkerchief falling on that part of the gloves which rested against his contracted eyebrows. When he

raised his brows, up went the bandage, and the twinkling eyes, peering out under the gloves, saw everything in the room.

"Now," said Dr. Gatchell, "look at this hood," and, with a quick motion of his hands, he jerked the hood apart and drew the outer cover over his head. The cloth was mohair and as transparent as a woman's veil. He then showed the inner hood, which was of thick broadcloth and as difficult to see through as a board.

"Wait a moment," said he, and with that pulled the strings which secured the hood around his neck, whereupon the front seam opened wide.

That was all there was of it. The apparently supernatural feat of mind-reading becomes as simple as the commonest parlour trick. Dr. Gatchell declared that he was satisfied that what had looked like attacks of congestion of the brain from which P—— used to suffer after his feats of mind-reading was nothing but whiskey and hysteria—"the kind of hysteria which a woman gets when she wants to frighten her husband into buying her a new bonnet"—and concluded by offering to pay a large sum to charity if P—— would repeat his performance and allow him to do the blindfolding.

CHAPTER XXIII

Experiments apparently simple, but actually very difficult—The cork and the bottle—The finger-tips—The silk cigar-band—The silk hat and the pack of cards—The reel of cotton, the pins and the penny—The clenched fists—Some amusing card tricks—Cartomancy, or divination by playing-cards.

It may not be unwelcome to my readers if I suggest to them some experiments which will provide considerable amusement at Christmas parties and similar gatherings. Most of them seem simple enough, but they will be astonished to find how difficult they are when they attempt to put them into actual practice.

For instance, to place a small piece of cork in a wide-necked bottle and then to blow it right in seems a delightfully easy accomplishment. But just try and see if you can do it. You will find that all you can do is to blow it right out of the bottle again, and very likely into your own face, and the harder you blow the less chance you stand of accomplishing the feat.

Another experiment is to just lightly put the tips of your fingers together horizontally. Now invite anyone to try to separate them by taking your wrists and endeavouring to draw them apart in a direct line with each other. They will be very much surprised to find that no amount of strength will avail them at all, as the thing is almost impossible.

If you take a silk cigar-band and, holding it in both hands in the form of a loop, take the sharpest razor or knife and attempt to chop it in half by a swift action, you will be astonished to find that, far from cutting it in halves, you are unable to cut it at all.

Place a coin upon the edge of the table, and closing one eye by the opposite hand, that is the left eye by the right hand or *vice versa*, attempt to knock it off with the forefinger of the disengaged hand. You will be surprised to find that your judgment is at fault, and that in nine cases out of ten you are jabbing away at nothing but thin air. To do this effectively you should stand at arm's length from the coin.

Many people find it most difficult to stand in an upright position and then bend the arms inwards until the fingers are touching beneath the armpits. It looks easy enough—but try it!

Borrow a gentleman's silk hat, and, instead of producing a rabbit or a guinea-pig therefrom, just try to throw in a pack of cards from a distance of two or three feet, throwing the cards in one at a time. You will provide the entertainment just the same, but as card after card falls anywhere but in the hat, you will discover that the audience provides the entertainment at your expense.

Try the following simple experiment :—

In the top of a large reel of cotton stick three long pins in a slanting direction, so that a penny will pass in and out between them easily. Remove all paper from the reel, top and bottom. Place a penny in position, and then placing the other end to the lips attempt to blow the penny out of the pins. The result will be surprising, and continued efforts will prove more surprising still.

Another curiosity of strength is that of placing your clenched fists one upon the other and inviting anyone to separate them by pushing them aside. They will be quite unable to do so, although you are exerting your strength but little against them. Let them, however, approach you with the forefinger of each hand only and give a sharp rap at your knuckles in opposite directions, and the two fists immediately become separated. You will find in this case that you are quite powerless against this kind of onslaught and cannot keep your fists together at all. Finally, let anyone place his or her hand firmly, yet without any undue pressure, upon the

crown of the head, and you may do your utmost to drag, lift or push it from its direction, but it will be impossible.

What seems a very extraordinary card trick can be explained in a few words. Two cards are selected from an ordinary pack. One card is returned and shuffled fairly into the pack; the second card is then returned and likewise shuffled with the rest by the audience. The performer now places the pack behind his back and instantly produces the two chosen cards from the pack. The effect of the trick depends upon a new application of an old principle, viz., the difficulty of remembering for more than a few seconds the suits and values of the two cards, say, the eight of hearts and the seven of diamonds, without confusing them with other cards alike in value, but of the opposite suits. The difficulty is rendered greater by the fact that the person upon whom the trick is played is unaware of its existence, and, in the unlikely event of there being any question, will confess *by his silence* that he must have made a mistake. He will not care to admit his inability to remember the names of the two cards.

An illustration will make the matter clear. For instance, what is the difference between the following two pairs of cards?—

Eight of diamonds and seven of hearts.

Eight of hearts and seven of diamonds.

Or the following two pairs:—

Seven of clubs and eight of spades.

Seven of spades and eight of clubs.

Just read them over again and you will no doubt grasp the situation. Then write down similar pairs quickly, after which you should thoroughly understand the nature of the trick. It amounts to this:—

The performer steps forward and, putting a couple of cards into the hands of a spectator, apparently in a haphazard

manner, requests him to take notice of the same and to examine them for a few minutes. The two cards are, we will suppose, the eight of diamonds and the seven of hearts. Without giving the person much time for reflection, the performer hands him the pack of cards and requests him to shuffle one of the cards with the rest, and, when he has done this, to treat the remaining card in a like manner : in fact, to shuffle the pack to any extent. When the person is satisfied that the two cards are completely lost amongst the rest, the performer takes the pack, and, placing it behind his back, forthwith extracts and brings forward the two cards, which are at once acknowledged by the person who noted them. But, as a matter of fact, the two cards mentally noted remain in the pack undisturbed. All the performer does while his hands are behind his back is to remove from his back trouser pocket two cards alike in value, but opposite in suits, that is the eight of hearts and the seven of diamonds, which the person, for the reason explained, unhesitatingly identifies.

The way I generally perform the trick is to "force" the eight of diamonds and seven of hearts on a person, having placed beforehand the seven of diamonds and eight of hearts on the top of the pack. After the person has noted the two cards, which he apparently selected of his own free will, I ask him to hold the pack of cards in his hands in a horizontal position between his thumb and forefinger, oblong in his right hand. I next take the two selected cards from him and slowly push the two cards one in each side of the pack, until they are clean in out of sight. Then I tell him that he will be surprised to find that, although I have not taken the pack from his fingers, if he removes the two top cards from the pack, he will find his two cards are now there. He removes the two cards and firmly believes that these are the two cards he selected.

A very clever little trick is to take thirteen cards and arrange them in such an order as will enable you to spell out the cards in sequence from the ace to the king, by simply holding the thirteen cards in your hand face downwards and



Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hertz outside Theatre, Cheltenham, England.

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removing each card from the top with each letter you spell. To perform this trick you arrange the cards in the following sequence : 3-8-7-1-Q-6-4-2-J-K-10-9-5, which arrangement, with faces downwards, makes the three the top card of the pack and the five the bottom card.

Beginning at the top, you remove one card with each letter you spell, but be careful not to disarrange the sequence of the cards as previously prepared : viz., O-N-E, one. Having removed one card with each letter, you turn over the fourth card, when you pronounce the word, "One," and it will be found to be the ace. This you place on the table, as you have no further use for the card, and, if it is returned to the pack, it will break up your previously arranged sequence. Next spell T-W-O, two, and the fourth card will again be turned up and discarded upon the table, and will be found to be the two or deuce card. Next T-H-R-E-E, three, is spelt, and, with the pronunciation of the word "Three," the card is turned up, discarded upon the table, and will be found to be the three.

Continue in this way to spell F-O-U-R, four ; F-I-V-E, five ; S-I-X, six ; S-E-V-E-N, seven ; E-I-G-H-T, eight ; N-I-N-E, nine ; T-E-N, ten ; J-A-C-K, Jack ; Q-U-E-E-N, Queen ; and K-I-N-G, King.

The trick affords excellent pastime, and is very simple, if you will only remember not to disturb the sequence of the cards, and be sure not to place a card back into the pack when it has been spelt and discarded. Should you prefer to spell the Jack by its other name, K-N-A-V-E, Knave, the sequence is as follows : 3-8-7-1-K-6-4-2-Q-J-10-9-5, and it must be remembered that the card to be spelt must be turned up and discarded with the last letter named of the word spelt, viz., O-N-E, as the "E" is named the card is turned up and will be found to be the ace ; T-W-O, as the "O" is named, the card is turned up and will be found to be the two ; T-H-R-E-E, as the "E" is named, the card is turned up, and will be found to be the three. And so continue to spell each number, turning up the spelt card with the naming of each last letter,

and remembering not to break the pre-arranged sequence and not to return the spelt card to the pack.

Of tricks with cards the number is legion, but comparatively few are really ingenious or well executed. It goes without saying that in order to execute a really mysterious trick with cards one must be thoroughly familiar with all the various passes and sleights, and this requires a good deal of practice. There are, perhaps, five thousand different games played with cards, and possibly the same number of tricks could be executed with them. Nor is this all. They are necessary adjuncts to fortune-telling, and the astrologer and the gypsy, the prestidigitator and the magician alike make use of them. Even the politicians use them, as, for instance, a "Card" to the public.

A very mysterious trick consists in placing a pack of cards thoroughly mixed and shuffled in thirteen different parts, four cards in each part face down on the table, and in such order that the aces will be altogether in one part, the kings and the queens in another, and so on. In order to perform this trick it is necessary to study and observe the following rules:—

Put up the pack of cards as follows, beginning with the eight of clubs, which is laid on the table first, face upwards, with the others in succession on top of one another. Eight of clubs, six of diamonds, nine of spades, five of hearts, ten of clubs, four of diamonds, jack of spades, three of hearts, queen of clubs, deuce of diamonds, king of spades, ace of hearts, seven of clubs. Eight of diamonds, six of spades, nine of hearts, five of clubs, ten of diamonds, four of spades, jack of hearts, three of clubs, queen of diamonds, deuce of spades, king of hearts, ace of clubs, seven of diamonds. Eight of spades, six of hearts, nine of clubs, five of diamonds, ten of spades, four of hearts, jack of clubs, three of diamonds, queen of spades, deuce of hearts, king of clubs, ace of diamonds, seven of spades. Eight of hearts, six of clubs, nine of diamonds, five of spades, ten of hearts, four of clubs, jack of diamonds, three of spades, queen of hearts, deuce of clubs, king of diamonds, ace of spades, seven of hearts.

It will be observed that the first, fourteenth, twenty-seventh

and fortieth cards are eights, and that every fourth card from the eight of clubs (on top) is a club. The next card to the eight of clubs is the six of diamonds, and every fourth card from that is a diamond; the fifteenth, twenty-eighth and forty-first cards are sixes, the next card is the nine of spades; every fourth card down from that is a spade, and the sixteenth, twenty-ninth and forty-second cards are nines. The next card (the fourth from the top) is the five of hearts; every fourth card from that is a heart, and the seventeenth, thirtieth and forty-third cards are fives. The next card is the ten of clubs; every fourth card from that is a club, and the eighteenth, thirty-first and forty-fourth cards are tens, and so forth through the entire pack. You will remember that the cards are laid alternately, black and red, clubs, diamonds, spades, and hearts; also in this order: 8-6-9-5-10-4-J-3-Q-2-K-A-7.

Having placed the cards as indicated above, you are now prepared to proceed with the trick. You will keep the prepared pack out of sight, handing over another pack to the spectators for mixing and shuffling, and, when this is returned, you change the pack unknown to them and proceed with the cards which you have already arranged for the purpose. If you can make a false shuffle, that is apparently shuffle the cards without displacing the order, then you can dispense with the exchange of packs.

Before placing the cards (in thirteen parts) on the table, you must observe the card at the bottom of the pack, in order to ascertain from that which card is on top. For example, if the ten of spades is at the bottom of the pack, the four of hearts is on top. Knowing this, you now lay the four of hearts on the table, face downwards, taking care that the spectators do not see the face. Lay the next club from the top, which will be the Jack of clubs, by itself, and the next and next, each separate, until there are thirteen cards on the table. The fourteenth card, the four of clubs, is placed on top of the first card laid on the table (the four of hearts), the next card on the second card and so on, until you have gone the round of the thirteen cards again, each part now containing two cards.

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Repeat this a third and a fourth time, and all the cards will be on the table in the following position :—

Fours	Queens	Aces	Sixes	Tens
Jacks	Deuces	Sevens	Nines	
Threes	Kings	Eights	Fives	

In picking up the different parts of the cards from the table, you begin with the kings, then the queens, the jacks, the tens, the nines, the eights, sevens, sixes, fives, fours, threes, deuces, and aces. The whole pack of cards being now in the left hand, the four aces on top, the four deuces next and so on, observe that, in placing the cards on the table, you begin at the upper left hand corner, proceeding downwards three cards as in illustration. Then begin at the top again and place the next three cards in a similar row downwards, and continue this until you come to the thirteenth card, which you place at the right hand side of the whole. It matters not what card is on the top, for you will know from the bottom card what position the different cards are in. Always remember the first card placed on the table, and there can be no difficulty in performing the whole trick satisfactorily. At a social gathering this trick well executed will amuse and astonish the company.

If you are not adept enough to exchange one pack for another or do the false shuffle, then a simpler way would be to use the prepared pack only, and have it cut several times by different people in the audience. This will look as if the pack were well shuffled, but, in reality, it does not alter the position of the cards, as you have only to look at the bottom card to know what the top card is.

I have been asked times out of number the method or system of divination by playing-cards, and therefore the following explanation may interest some of my readers, not that I imagine any of them to be weak enough to pin their faith to the turn of a card, but because the art has become a favourite diversion, with which many amuse themselves, but few understand.

The earliest work on cartomancy was written or compiled by one Francesco Marcolini and printed at Venice in 1530. There are many modern French, Italian and German works on the subject, but, so far as my knowledge goes, very few in English. The system of cartomancy as laid down by the former is very different from that used in England, both as regards the individual interpretation of the cards and the general method of reading or deciphering their combinations. The English system is used in all British settlements all over the globe, having no doubt been carried thither by soldiers' wives, who, as is well known to the initiated, have ever been considered peculiarly skilful practitioners of the art. Indeed, it is to a soldier's wife that the present exposition is attributed :—

DIAMONDS

King—a man of very fair complexion, quick to anger, but soon appeased.

Queen—a very fair woman, fond of gaiety and a coquette.

Knave—a selfish and deceitful relative, fair and false.

Ten—money. Success in honourable business.

Nine—a roving disposition, combined with honourable and successful adventures in foreign lands.

Eight—a happy, prudent marriage, though rather late in life.

Seven—unpleasant business matters.

Six—marriage early in life, succeeded by widowhood.

Five—unexpected news, generally of a good kind.

Four—an unfaithful friend, a secret betrayed.

Three—domestic troubles, quarrels and unhappiness.

Two—a clandestine engagement. A card of caution.

Ace—a wedding ring and offer of marriage.

HEARTS

King—a fair, but not very fair, complexioned man, good-natured, but rather obstinate, and when angry not easily appeased.

- Queen—a woman of the same complexion as the King, faithful, prudent and affectionate.
Knave—an unselfish relative, a sincere friend.
Ten—health and happiness, with many children.
Nine—wealth, high position in society. This is the “Wish” card.
Eight—fine clothes, pleasure, mixing in good society, going to balls, theatres, and so forth.
Seven—many good friends.
Six—honourable courtship.
Five—a present.
Four—domestic troubles caused by jealousy.
Three—poverty, shame and sorrow, caused by imprudence.
A card of caution.
Two—success in life, position in society, and a happy marriage, attended by virtuous discretion.
Ace—the house of the person consulting the decrees of Fate.

SPADES

- King—a man of very dark complexion, ambitious and unscrupulous.
Queen—a very dark complexioned woman, of malicious disposition, a widow.
Knave—disgrace, crime, imprisonment, death on the scaffold.
A card of caution.
Ten—tears, sickness, or a prison.
Nine—grief, ruin, sickness, death.
Eight—great danger from imprudence. A card of caution.
Seven—unexpected poverty caused by the death of a relative.
A lean sorrow.
Six—a child. To the unmarried a card of caution.
Five—great danger from giving way to bad temper. A card of caution.
Four—sickness.
Three—a journey by land. Tears.
Two—a removal.
Ace—death, malice, a duel, a general misfortune.

CLUBS

King—A dark complexioned man, though not so dark as the King of Spades. Upright, true and affectionate.

Queen—a woman of the same complexion, agreeable, genteel and witty.

Knave—a sincere but rather hasty friend.

Ten—unexpected wealth through the death of a relative.
A fat sorrow

Nine—danger caused by drunkenness. A card of caution.

Eight—danger from covetousness. A card of caution.

Seven—a prison. Danger arising from the opposite sex. A card of caution.

Six—competence by hard-working industry.

Five—a happy, though not wealthy marriage.

Four—danger of misfortunes caused by inconstancy or capricious temper. A card of caution.

Three—quarrels, or in reference to time, may signify three years, months, weeks, or days. It also denotes that a person will be married more than once.

Two—vexation, disappointment.

Ace—a letter.

The foregoing is merely the alphabet of the art, the letters, as it were, of the sentences formed by the various combinations of the cards. The person who desires to explore the hidden mysteries of Fate is represented, if a male, by the king, if a female, by the queen of the suit which accords with his or her complexion. If a married woman consults the cards, the king of her own suit or complexion represents her husband, but with single women the lover either in *esse* or *posse* is represented by his own colour. Some general rules are applicable to the ace of hearts, which denotes the house of the person consulting the decrees of fate. Thus, the ace of clubs signifying a letter, its position either before or after the ace of hearts, shows whether the letter is to be sent to the house or from it.

The ace of diamonds when close to the ace of hearts foretells a wedding in the house, but the ace of spades betokens sickness and death. The knaves represent the thoughts of their respective kings and queens in accordance with their complexion. For instance, a young lady of a rather, but not decidedly, dark complexion, represented by the queen of clubs, when consulting the cards may be shocked to find her fair lover (the king of diamonds) flirting with the wealthy widow (the queen of spades, attended by the king of diamonds). But she will be reassured by finding his thoughts (the knave of diamonds) in combination with a letter (ace of clubs), a wedding ring (ace of diamonds) and her house (ace of hearts), clearly signifying that, though he is actually flirting with a rich widow, he is nevertheless thinking of sending a letter with an offer of marriage to the young lady herself.

And, look ! where are her own thoughts represented by the knave of clubs ? They are far away with the old lover, that dark man (king of spades), who, as is plainly shown by his being attended by the nine of diamonds, is prospering in his adventure in foreign lands. Let us shuffle the cards once more and see if the dark man ever thinks of his old flame, the club-complexioned young lady far away. No ! He does not. Here are his thoughts (the knave of spades) directed to this fair, but rather gay and coquettish, woman (the queen of diamonds). They are separated but by a few hearts, one of them the sixth (honourable courtship) showing the excellent understanding that exists between them. Count now from the six of hearts to the ninth card, from it, and lo ! it is a wedding ring (ace of diamonds). They will be married before the expiration of a twelvemonth.

The general mode of manipulating the cards when fortune-telling is very simple. The person who is desirous to know the future, after shuffling the cards *ad libitum*, cuts the pack into three parts. The seer, then, taking up these cards, lays the cards out one by one, face upwards, upon the table, sometimes in a circular form, but often in rows consisting of nine cards in each row. Nine is the mystical number. Every nine

consecutive cards form a separate combination complete in itself ; yet, like a word in a sentence, no more than a fractional part of the grand scroll of Fate.

Again, every card, something like the octaves in music, is *en rapport* with the ninth card from it, and these ninth cards form other complete combinations of nine, yet parts of the general whole. The nine of hearts is termed " The Wish Card." After the general fortune has been told, a separate and different manipulation is performed to learn if the pryor into futurity will obtain a particular wish, and from the position of the wish card in the pack the required answer is deduced.

CHAPTER XXIV

Difficulty which I experience in observing the practices of the Jewish religion while travelling in remote parts of the world—I keep the Day of Atonement twice over in Queensland, owing to having mistaken the date on the first occasion—A Jewish service and a dancing class held simultaneously in the same hall in Honolulu—I commemorate the anniversary of my father's death with the help of Chinese Jews—Curious experiences with my assistants—A singular epistle—My reply—Episode of a lost diamond stud.

It is not easy for people who travel all over the world like myself to observe the practices of their religion. Being of the Jewish faith, there are two holy days which I always keep, which are the New Year, and the most solemn day of all : the Day of Atonement, when no Jew is supposed to take food or drink or do any business for twenty-four hours. When in remote parts of the globe, I have sometimes had great difficulty in observing this fast, or even in ascertaining the exact date on which it fell. While in Charters Towers, Queensland, aware that the Day of Atonement was somewhere near, but being ignorant of the exact day, I determined to try to find out. I was a stranger in the town, and therefore knew no one of my religion of whom I could inquire. Accordingly, I took a walk down the main street, looking at the names over the shops, until I saw the name of a jeweller which I thought was Jewish. I entered the shop, asked for the proprietor, and said :—

“ Excuse me, but I am Mr. Carl Hertz. I am playing at the theatre, and I believe that the Day of Atonement is some day this week. Would you please tell me on what day it falls, as I, of course, do not wish to give a performance on that night.”

He answered that it fell on the following Thursday, and I then asked him where the service was held.

"Unfortunately," said he, "there is no synagogue here, as there are only five Jews in the town. According to the Jewish Law, no service can be held unless there are ten or more men present."

"But," I said, "if there are only five Jews in the town, how do you manage?"

"Well," he replied, "there are always a good many commercial travellers coming from Sydney and Melbourne, and we generally have enough to make up the required number. But, as you are here, we shall only require four more, and those we shall easily get. Come in on Thursday morning, and I will give you full particulars where the service will be held. Each year it is held at the residence of one of the Jews who live here. Last year it was at my house. I don't know at whose house it will be this year, but I shall be able to tell you everything when you call on Thursday morning.

I accordingly put an advertisement in the papers announcing that there would be no performance at the theatre on Thursday night, and on Thursday morning I called on my friend the jeweller.

"Mr. Hertz," said he, "I am sorry, but I have some bad news for you. Unfortunately, no travellers have come to Charters Towers this week. I have been living here fifteen years, and this is the first year we have not been able to have a service."

"Well, what is to be done in a case like this?" I asked. "I am not very well versed in these matters myself."

"Well," said he, "the only thing you can do is to fast for twenty-four hours, say your prayers, and give no performance on Thursday night."

I followed his instructions, and from six o'clock on the Thursday evening until six o'clock the next evening not a morsel of food or a drop of water passed my lips. I said my prayers, and on the Friday night my performance took place as usual. My engagement terminated on Saturday, and on Sunday

morning I left for Townsville, which is also in Queensland and about four hours' journey from Charters Towers.

That afternoon, as I was sitting in the smoking-room of the hotel reading a newspaper, I noticed that a gentleman who sat opposite me was looking at me very hard as though he knew me. At last he said :—

“ I beg your pardon, but are you not Mr. Carl Hertz ? ”

I answered in the affirmative, and he said :

“ I thought so ; I saw you both in Melbourne and Sydney. What are you doing here ? ”

“ I begin a week's engagement at the theatre here to-morrow night.”

“ Oh,” said he, “ then you'll be able to come to the synagogue on Thursday night.”

“ What's on then ? ” I asked.

“ Why, it's the Day of Atonement.”

“ No,” I exclaimed, “ you must be mistaken ! The Day of Atonement was last Thursday.”

“ Oh, no, it's next Thursday.”

And I found that he was quite correct, and had to go through it all over again : fasting, praying, and, of course, no performance. So I think I made ample atonement for all the sins I had committed during the previous twelve months.

On another Day of Atonement I arrived at Honolulu, in the Sandwich Islands. We should have arrived the day before, but unfortunately we had been delayed by bad weather. I landed about ten o'clock in the morning, and, going to my hotel, at once inquired if there were a synagogue in the town. I was told there was not one, but that the Jewish community always engaged a hall purposely for that day. I found out where it was and proceeded there. It was like a large dance hall, with a stage at one end, and a piano below it. In the further corner of the hall a pulpit had been put up for the services and rows of chairs arranged in front of it to accommodate the worshippers.

I was astonished on entering the hall to find that there

was not a soul there except the Rabbi, who was saying his prayers to himself. I went up and asked him if the services were held there and where the people were. He answered that the people had all gone home, and would be back again about two o'clock. So I returned to my hotel, and about two o'clock I went back to the hall and found the service going on, with about twenty or thirty people present. I sat down with my prayer-book, and everything went on all right for about an hour, when a woman entered the hall with about forty children, and going to the other end of the hall, where the stage and the piano were, started to play the piano, while the children began to dance. The Rabbi immediately stopped the service, went up to the woman and asked her to take the children away, as he and his people had engaged the hall for the services of this solemn day and they could not allow music and dancing to go on while the services were being held.

"But this is the day on which I always give my dancing lessons," replied the woman. "I have engaged the hall for the Thursday of each week and I cannot give up my lesson."

The Rabbi argued with the woman and tried to persuade her to leave, but all to no purpose. The proprietor of the hall was sent for, and he tried also, but the dancing mistress would not give way. Finally, after half-an-hour's debate, one of the strangest scenes I ever saw in my life took place: services were held at one end of the hall and piano-playing and dancing at the other.

It is customary in the Jewish religion for the death of a parent to be solemnly commemorated by the son on the anniversary of the death each year, and on this occasion prayers for the dead are said. There must, however, always be ten male persons present, and during my travels in foreign countries I have experienced great difficulty in getting the required number when I have been in out-of-the-way places. On one occasion the anniversary of the death of one of my parents came round when I was in China, and I was wondering how I could possibly manage to commemorate it, when I learned,

to my great surprise, that there were Chinese Jews. After great difficulty, I succeeded in getting the required number of Chinamen.

I have had some very curious experiences with the assistants who help me during my performances. One of the most amusing, I think, was with a coloured boy, whom I had engaged to assist me in the Indian Rope Trick.

Besides climbing the rope in this scene, his duties were to set the stage ready for my performance and keep my apparatus and so forth clean. He was not very well educated, and he has handed me out many a good laugh. I used to have two small tables on either side of the stage, and on each of these he had to lay a small embroidered silk tablecloth. He kept continually putting these covers on the table wrong side up, and so one night, just before going on the stage, I called him and said :—

“ Look, Albert, you’ve put this last cloth on wrong side up. Can’t you tell the difference between the right side and the wrong side ? It is quite easy, if you look at the tablecloth on both sides. On the right side you will notice that the tablecloth looks like cotton, but, if you turn it over, you will see all the raw silk from the embroidered flowers, and therefore it is impossible to make a mistake. You see, this side is silk, and the other side looks like cotton. You surely know the difference between silk and cotton ? If you went into a shop to buy a silk necktie, and the man offered you a cotton one, you wouldn’t take it, would you ? ”

“ No,” said Albert.

“ Well, then,” said I, “ why don’t you look at both sides of the cover before you put it on the table, and then you will make no further mistake ? ”

He went away, and stood for some moments apparently deep in thought. Then suddenly he came back and said :—

“ I’ve got a necktie home, and it isn’t silk and it isn’t cotton.”

“ Well, what is it ? ” I asked.

"It's *poplar*," said he.

On another occasion, just as I was going on to the stage, I saw him sitting in a chair with his hands across his stomach, looking very dejected, so I went up to him and asked if he were unwell.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I feel very bad."

"What is the matter with you!"

"I've got a pain in my *private apartments*," he said.

Seeing him walking very lame one day, I inquired if he had hurt his foot.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "and it's very bad. I hit it against something last night, and it's made me quite lame; but it will be all right to-morrow, as I am going to have it *massacred*."

Once, while we were playing in Manchester, Albert came and asked me if I would let him off on the following afternoon, as he wanted to go to the Belle Vue Gardens to see the animals there. I gave him leave, and when he came to the theatre in the evening I enquired which of the animals he had seen interested him most.

"The big *chemises*," he replied.

It appeared that he meant the chimpanzees.

When we were playing in London, Albert used to live with his father and mother at Chiswick, and he used to be continually asking me when we were going to play at Chiswick, as he was very anxious for his father and mother to see him do the Rope Trick. So at last I fixed an engagement to play at the Chiswick Empire, but I did not say anything to him about this, as I wanted to give him a surprise.

However, he heard one of my other assistants talking about it, and two or three nights before I was to go to Chiswick he knocked at my dressing-room door and asked if he could see me on a matter of great importance. I could not imagine what it was that he wanted to see me about, and I was rather annoyed, as there was a gentleman, a friend of mine, in the room who had come to the theatre to see me. However, I told him to come in, and said:—

" Well, Albert ; what is this important matter you want to see me about ? "

" It's very private, sir," said he, glancing uneasily at the friend who was with me.

I asked the latter if he would mind leaving the room for a moment, and he went out.

" Now, then, what is it ? " I asked.

" Well, sir," said Albert, " is it *official* that we go to Chiswick next week ? "

Once, when I was performing at the Holborn Empire, I had engaged a boy named Lewis to look after some birds and rabbits which I used in my performance. His duties were to take the birds and rabbits home each evening, clean their cages out, feed them and bring them to the theatre next evening in time for the performance.

On Friday evening, I told him that we had a *matinée* on the following day and that I wanted him to bring the birds and rabbits to the theatre by half-past two. When I arrived the next afternoon about three o'clock, Lewis had not yet turned up. I began to get anxious, as the birds and rabbits were absolutely necessary for my performance, and when four o'clock came and there was still no sign of him, I was in a terrible quandary, as my turn was at 4.10. At last I went to the manager and asked him if he could alter the programme and let me go on some time later, by which time perhaps the boy would have arrived. To this he kindly consented, and my turn was postponed until 4.30. But when 4.30 came, and the boy was still absent, the manager said he could wait no longer, and that I must either go on then or lose my salary for the afternoon's performance.

Accordingly, I decided to go on, though, instead of doing my regular performance, I had to entertain the audience with card tricks. I had finished my turn and was in my dressing-room, it being then past five o'clock, when there came a knock at the door, and in walked Lewis with the birds and rabbits. I said :—

" What do you mean by coming at this time ? Didn't I

tell you last night to be here at 2.30, as there was a *matinée*. You've ruined my whole performance, as you know very well that I have to have the birds and rabbits."

"Well," he replied as coolly as possible, "I thought I'd go and have a look at the Houses of Parliament, as I'd never seen them before, and the time somehow slipped away."

When I had recovered my astonishment, I gave him a week's notice, telling him that he could then take a whole month's holiday, and in that time would no doubt know the Houses of Parliament by heart.

Having an engagement to perform at the Metropolitan Music Hall, in London, I came to the theatre for rehearsal at twelve o'clock on the Monday morning and found that, though my assistant had brought my luggage there the previous day, no one had seen him since then. It was customary for him always to bring my luggage to the theatre at which I was to perform on a Sunday, and to begin early on the Monday morning to fix up my paraphernalia ; and I was therefore greatly surprised to find he was not there. I waited until six o'clock in the evening, but, as he had not come even then, I had to start fixing up my apparatus myself, thinking by the time I had finished he would arrive. I worked till eight o'clock, but still there was no sign of him, and I was obliged to alter the whole routine of my entertainment, as he used to assist me in several of the tricks and illusions I was then doing, and I could not perform them without his help. I managed to get through my turn somehow, but, of course, my performance was not so good as it would have been had he been there.

Next morning I went to his lodgings to find out what was wrong, and was astonished when the landlady told me that she had not seen him since the Sunday morning, and that his bed had not been slept in since then. I thought something serious must have happened to him and went to the police to make inquiries, but could get no news. That evening, just as I was going on the stage, I got a message from — Gaol, saying that he had been arrested on Sunday afternoon for fighting in the street, and, in default of being able to pay the fine which had

been imposed, sent to prison. On the Wednesday morning I paid his fine and got him out, and having made him promise to commit no more breaches of the peace, reinstated him.

I used to perform a trick for which I borrowed two lady's rings. I would then produce a frying-pan, break two or three eggs into it, pour some rum over the eggs and set fire to the rum. Then I would clap a cover on to the frying-pan, which would put the fire out, and, upon lifting up the cover, in place of the eggs there would be two pigeons, with the lady's rings tied round their necks with a bit of ribbon.

I am giving the secret of my trick away when I say that the cover had a false bottom, and that the pigeons, with the rings tied round their necks, were placed in it beforehand by my assistant. When I clapped the cover on the frying-pan, the bottom of the cover remained in the frying-pan, and when I lifted the cover itself, the two pigeons were discovered.

One evening, someone, for a practical joke, removed the two pigeons from the cover and substituted two kittens, and my astonishment can be imagined when, on lifting up the cover, I beheld two kittens instead of the two pigeons. The audience roared with laughter, and I have never discovered to this day who played this practical joke on me, as my assistant swore he had put the pigeons in as usual.

I receive a good many curious letters. Some years ago, while performing at the Palace Theatre, Manchester, I received the following epistle:—

“DEAR MR. HERTZ,

“Together with a friend of mine, I visited the Palace Theatre the other evening and saw your wonderful performance in the trick where you are supposed to mesmerise a lady and, after laying her down on the stage, she rises horizontally in the air and remains suspended some six or seven feet from the floor of the stage without any visible means of support, and, while in that position, you pass a stick over her and under her, and also a hoop right along her body, to show



Carl Hertz and Pet Pomeranian, Dolly.



Emilie D'Alton (Mrs. Carl Hertz), as Ogira in
the Indian Rope Trick Scene.
p. 304.

that there are no wires. My friend and I discussed how the trick was done, and finally he wagered me £5 that his solution was the correct one. This I disputed, and said that mine was the only correct solution. He said that it was performed by the aid of very strong magnets, the lady having a steel corset under her costume, while I suggested that it was done by the aid of wires. In order to settle the wager, would you kindly let me know by return which of us is correct ? ”

To this letter I replied as follows :—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ Your letter received with regard to the explanation of how I perform my Levitation Trick, and I regret to say that both of you are wrong. So please send me the £5.”

Needless to say, I heard nothing further.

During that same engagement at the Palace Theatre, I had a very curious and lucky experience. One evening, at the conclusion of my performance, I came off the stage and, going into my dressing-room, which was on a level with it, began to change into my street-clothes, and, while doing so, removed a very valuable single-stone diamond stud which I usually wore in my shirt-front and placed it on my dressing-table. This stud had a spiral screw at the back. I had got partly dressed when I happened accidentally to knock the stud off the dressing-table on to the floor. Knowing that the stud would be quite safe, as there was no one but myself in the room, I finished dressing and then started to look for it. I looked in every corner, but no trace of that stud could be found. I thought that it was the greatest mystery I had ever known, and that it even surpassed some of my own wonderful mysteries. I knew the stud had dropped on the floor, and, in fact, had heard it drop. But, though I looked high and low, I could not find it. I went on my hands and knees, and there was not a square inch of the floor that I did not examine. Still no trace of the stud !

Suddenly, I caught sight of a small round hole, about half-an-inch in circumference, and I came to the conclusion that the

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stud must have gone down that hole. I accordingly sent for the stage-carpenter and asked him what was underneath the flooring of my dressing-room. He replied that there was about six feet of space and that at the bottom was a lot of sand and dirt. I asked him how we could get underneath, as I had lost my diamond stud from my shirt-front, and that it must have gone down that small hole, which I pointed out to him, as I had hunted everywhere, but could not find it. He said that there was only one way of getting underneath, and that was by taking up the flooring. So we decided to wait until the performance was over, and he would then take up the flooring and we would institute a thorough search.

So, about half-past eleven, the performance being then over, the stage-carpenter removed the flooring, and, having obtained a couple of lanterns and a sieve, we sieved all that sand and dirt. But though we worked till four o'clock, still there was no sign of my stud. Eventually, I decided to give up the hunt until the next day—or, rather, later the same day—when I said I would come back and have another look.

When I came out of the theatre with my wife, who had very kindly remained to help me in my futile search, it was a terrible morning, the rain coming down in torrents. We could not get a cab for love or money, and were obliged to walk all the way home, a distance of nearly a mile. We arrived at last, and found our supper still on the table, where it had stood since eleven o'clock. But I was so wet and tired that I decided to go straight to bed. I went up to my bedroom and began to undress, and while removing my trousers I heard something drop on the carpet. I looked down to see what it was, and, lo and behold, there was my diamond stud! What had happened was that the stud, having a spiral at the back, had bounced up again when it fell on the floor and dropped into the turn-up of one of my trouser-legs. But it was certainly most extraordinary that, though I had been crawling about the floor of my dressing-room and walking about for hours afterwards, it should not have dropped out.

CHAPTER XXV

A few stories—The electric chair—Too much of a good thing—The Scotsman's cigars—A belated performance—"Pinch the baby!"—"Blackleg" elephants—The frown of Mr. Snelbecker—A singular orchestra—A dressing-room incident—"Ain't they on speaking terms?"—"The Bucket of Blood"—Conjurers' blunders.

I SHALL conclude with a few anecdotes, some about myself, some about others.

Some years ago I used to do a trick in which I would ask a gentleman from the stalls to come on the stage and assist me, and, when he came, would invite him to take a seat on a nice, innocent-looking chair.

This he would proceed to do, but immediately afterwards bounce up again, declaring that there was either dynamite or an infernal machine in the bottom of the chair, and that he would positively refuse to sit down again. Amidst the smiles of his friends and the hoots of the gallery gods, he would return to his place in the stalls, but no sooner had he resumed his seat, than he would bounce up again, just as he had done on the stage. I had a battery at the back of the stage, the wires of which ran out into the auditorium to this particular chair, and each night I would change the position of the chair. By touching a button on my table on the stage a slight shock would be communicated to the person occupying the prepared chair.

One morning a gentleman, who had been my victim the previous evening, called to see me and said:—

"I came on the stage to assist you last night, Mr. Hertz, and you made me jump off the chair I sat down on, and again when I reached my seat in the stalls. Now, I want to play a

joke on a pal of mine. I have booked two seats in the front row of the stalls for to-night, Numbers 7 and 8, A Row ; my friend will sit in No. 8. I want you to make him jump off his seat, just as you did me last night."

I promised that I would do as he asked me, but, instead of putting the wires on to his friend's chair, I put them on to his own. In the evening, all through my performance I could see him smiling and giggling in anticipation of the moment when his friend was to jump off his chair. When it came to the finish of the trick, I touched the button on my table, and, instead of his friend jumping off his chair, he got a terrible shock himself, which made him leap about three feet in the air. After my performance, he came to me in a terrible temper and demanded an explanation. I excused myself by saying that the wires must have somehow got mixed, and I think this experience must have cured him of wanting to play practical jokes.

While performing at Halifax, a well-known doctor of that town, who was interested in conjuring, invited me one night after my performance to his house, where he was having a bridge party. I arrived about eleven o'clock and found five tables going. As I entered the room my host said :—

"Gentlemen, Mr. Hertz," but all the players were so interested in their game that they took very little notice of me. The doctor said to me :—

"One of these games will be finished shortly, and then you can come in," and presently a game at one of the tables being over, a gentleman got up and I was invited to take his place.

I sat down ; we cut for partners, and I won the deal. On picking up my hand, I found that I had the four aces amongst my cards, and I thereupon called No Trumps, and we got a Grand Slam. When the deal came round to me once more, by a strange coincidence, I held the four aces again. I felt quite embarrassed and did not know what to do, but, as I had to study my partner, there was nothing left for me but to call No Trumps again. This I did, upon which one of our opponents remarked :—

" I hope you haven't got those four aces again ! "

We got another Grand Slam, and when it came to my deal for the third time, a most extraordinary thing happened. I actually held those four aces once more !

I felt exceedingly awkward, and I would sooner have lost £50 than have held those four aces the third time, because I knew these gentlemen would be sure to suspect me of manipulating the cards. However, I thought once more that my partner would be annoyed if I did not call my hand properly, so again I declared No Trumps, and again we got a Grand Slam.

The other players looked at one another in astonishment, and then one of them called our host, who had no idea of what had happened.

" Doctor," said he, " who did you say this gentleman was ? We didn't quite catch his name."

" Why, that's Mr. Carl Hertz, the conjurer, who is playing at the theatre this week ! " was the answer.

They all three immediately rose from the table, got their hats and coats and left the house ; and I never felt so sheepish and cheap in all my life !

I had an old friend in Edinburgh, a Scotsman whom I will call MacDougal, although that was not his name, and whenever I performed there, he was sure to come to the theatre on my opening night. On one occasion I had an engagement at the Empire, and on the Monday night, just before I was to go on the stage, I went upstairs into the dress-circle and ran into MacDougal, who was very pleased to see me, as we had not met for some time. After we had been talking for a minute or two, he pulled out a cigar-case, opened it, and asked me to have a cigar. There were three cigars on each side of the case. I was going to take one from the left-hand side when he stopped me, saying :—

" No, no ! Don't take one of those ; take from the other side."

" Why," said I, " what is the matter with the others ? "

"Those are no good ; they are only very cheap cigars, though I have to keep them to give to people sometimes ; but those on the other side are Havanas."

I took one of the good cigars and lit it, and MacDougal put the cigar-case back in his pocket.

Presently, I saw a man coming towards us who was also engaged at the Empire, though I only knew him by sight.

MacDougal went to meet him, shook him heartily by the hand, and said :—

"How are you, my dear fellow ? I am so pleased to see you again."

Then, turning to me, he added :—

"Hertz, let me introduce you to Mr. —, the best friend I have in the world. I have known him for over thirty years."

I shook hands with the gentleman, while MacDougal took his cigar-case out again, and, holding his hand over the right side of the case, offered his friend of thirty years a cigar.

Seeing only those on the left side, the latter naturally had to take one of these. When he had gone, MacDougal said to me :—

"Now you see why I keep two kinds of cigars in my case !"

While appearing at Bishop Auckland, I gave two performances nightly, the first beginning at seven and the second at nine o'clock. One afternoon I went for a motor-drive, intending to return at about six o'clock. But we had a breakdown, and though we did everything we could to get the car in running order again it was to no purpose. We were in the depths of the country, miles away from any telegraph-office or telephone, so that there was no way of letting the manager of the theatre know that I could not be there in time for the first house. I determined to do my best to get there in time for the second, and, leaving the car, started off to try to find some kind of conveyance. After walking for several miles, I came across a farmer who agreed for a most exorbitant sum to drive me into Bishop Auckland, but it was then so late and we were

so far from the town that we did not arrive until after ten o'clock.

When I did not put in an appearance at the theatre at my usual hour, my assistants, knowing that something must have happened to delay me, got the rest of the artists to draw out their turns as much as possible, in order to gain time. But when nine o'clock came—the time for the second performance to begin—and there was still no sign of me, the manager came before the curtain and announced to the audience that, as Mr. Hertz had probably met with some accident, he would not be able to appear at the first house.

The audience, however, most of whom had paid expressly to see me, refused to leave the building, so the only alternative was for the artists to go through their performances all over again, in order to give me further time to get there. Eventually I arrived, and, without stopping to change, went on to the stage as I was, though my clothes were in a very dirty state. The audience, however, accepted my apologies and gave me a very kind reception, and I managed to give quite a satisfactory performance.

There was an enormous queue for the second house, people having been waiting since about 8.30. It was not until 10.45 that they were admitted, but they took the delay in very good part and appeared very pleased with my entertainment, which did not conclude until nearly one o'clock. And so I got well out of an awkward situation, but I made up my mind that in future I would take no more motor drives into the country except during week-ends or holidays.

Some years ago, a conjurer while giving a two-hours' show in a small American town was much interrupted during the first part of his performance by a crying baby, who had been brought in by a young couple in the front of the house. There was a notice on the bills which read: "Infants in arms five dollars extra," but this one had got in somehow unseen by the door-keeper.

The baby cried lustily all through the first act, and at its

close, the conjurer sent for one of the attendants and told him to tell the parents that they would have to keep the baby quiet or else leave the theatre and have their money returned. The attendant having notified them to this effect, they succeeded in squelching the baby, and for a time all went well. The performance was drawing to an end, when the young husband turned towards his wife and said :—

“ How do you like the show ? ”

“ Rotten ! ” was the answer.

The husband was silent for a minute or two, when he again turned towards his wife, and said in a low tone :—

“ Pinch the baby ! ”

During the music-hall strike of 1907 the various managers experienced great difficulty in getting artists to appear. The few who did continue to perform had to play at five or six different halls a night, in order to make up a programme at each hall. At the South London one night two turns only had appeared on the programme, one being the cinematograph pictures and the other some performing elephants. When the elephants had finished, the artists for the next turn had not arrived. In order to give them time to arrive the orchestra started to play a selection of music, but after it had been playing for some twenty minutes the audience began to get very impatient. The manager accordingly came before the curtain and said :—

“ Ladies and gentlemen, I am very sorry to say that the other artists have not yet arrived, but so that you should not have to wait any longer, I will let either the pictures or the elephants appear again, in order to fill up the time. Now, which will you have ? The pictures or the elephants ? ”

“ The elephants ! ” shouted the audience, and so the elephants appeared again.

After they had finished their performance, there being still no sign of the artists, the orchestra began to play, but, as the audience soon showed signs of impatience, the manager came forward once more and said :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, the artists have not yet arrived, though I expect them every minute, so we had better have the elephants or the pictures again. Which will you have this time?"

"The elephants!" cried the audience, and the elephants were coming on for the third time, when some wag got up and shouted:

"Blacklegs!"

During my early days in America I was travelling with a company called Snelbecker's Majestics. Mr. Snelbecker, the proprietor of the show, was a very big man, well over six feet, who had formerly been a policeman in Cincinnati. In addition to almost herculean strength, he was the possessor of a violent temper and was reported to have once killed a fellow-policeman, in consequence of which everyone was afraid of him. We had been travelling for some time, and business had been very bad: in fact, none of the artists had been paid any salary for three weeks, though, as it was customary in those days for the proprietors of travelling companies to engage their artists at so much per week, which included board and lodging, we were not in want of food or a roof over our heads at night.

We were all sitting one Monday morning in the lounge of the St. Claire Hotel, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, where we were to open that night, and grumbling to one another because our salaries were so much in arrears. But we were all so much in awe of the ferocious Snelbecker that none of us had dared to make a complaint. There were two performers in the company called Murray and Murphy; Murray was a terrible growler and kicker, and that Monday morning he told the rest of the company that he had made up his mind to stand this sort of thing no longer, and that the moment he saw Snelbecker he was going to tell him that he would not proceed further on the tour, or even appear that night, unless he were paid the money that was owing to him. And he declared that he didn't care if he were twice as big as he was, or had killed a dozen policemen;

he was not frightened of him and meant to have his money or quit. Of course, we all egged him on and told him he was quite right, thinking that, if he got his money, we should also get ours.

Presently, in walked Mr. Snelbecker. The moment he appeared, Murray hurried up to him and said :—

“ See here, Mr. Snelbecker, I’m not going to stand it any longer ! There are three weeks’ salary owing to me, and, unless I get my money, I shall refuse to appear this evening ! ”

“ What ! ” shouted Snelbecker, in his most truculent tones. “ What’s that you say ? You want your money ? ”

Poor Murray looked at the big man towering over him and all the courage oozed out at his finger-tips.

“ Well, let me have ten cents to get shaved with, anyway,” said he.

Speaking of Pennsylvania, reminds me of another incident which happened there during my early days on the stage, when I was travelling with Harry Williams’ company through the coal-mining towns. We had an orchestra engaged for our performance, but through some trouble with the musicians, who quarrelled amongst themselves, they all refused to play, and we could not get any other musicians for love or money to take their places. In the end, we had to give the entire entertainment with no other music than that supplied by a Jew’s harp, which one of our company played for every turn that came on.

A very good story is told of Tony Pastor, the well-known American showman. Tony Pastor used to travel one of the best companies on the road, and he was always very particular about the artists he engaged. At one time there were two artists in his company named Sandford and Wilson who used to do a black-face musical act, that is to say, they used to black up with burnt cork, and after the show was over they would have to strip themselves and wash all the cork off. It so happened that Tony Pastor engaged a young lady, a very fine ballad vocalist, who had not been accustomed to travel with

vaudeville shows. The first week after this lady joined the company they were playing at a little town in Pennsylvania, and she had to pass the dressing-room occupied by Messrs. Sandford and Wilson. They were both very big men, particularly Wilson, weighing something like fifteen stone and over six feet in height.

Wilson used to have a habit of leaving the dressing-room door open, and on more than one occasion the lady vocalist, when passing by, caught sight of him standing as Nature had made him, engaged in washing the burnt cork off his body. She was so shocked that she went to Tony Pastor and made a complaint about it. Pastor sent for Wilson and asked him what he meant by leaving the door open when he was in the act of washing himself and was stark naked, saying that Miss Ainsworth had seen him and complained about it.

"Did she say I was stark naked?" inquired Wilson.

"Yes."

"Then she tells an untruth," exclaimed the artist indignantly. "Why, I had my socks on!"

The dressing-room accommodation in some of the small towns in America often left a very great deal to be desired, though the following experience of a certain advance-manager is probably unique.

Arriving at a town three or four days ahead of his company, this gentleman proceeded to the theatre to interview the local manager. Having inspected the stage and auditorium, he asked to be shown the dressing-rooms, and the local manager took him back of the stage and showed him a large dressing-room.

"This'll do very nicely," said the advance-manager. "Now where are the other dressing-rooms?"

"Oh, there aren't any others," answered the local manager.

"Do you really mean to say," exclaimed the astonished visitor, "that this is the only dressing-room you've got in this theatre?"

"That's so,"

" But there are ladies as well as men in our company ! "

" Well, ain't they on speaking terms ? " said the local manager.

In the old days the people who ran variety theatres in the Western States were a pretty rough lot, as were those who patronised them. There was one place at Colorado Springs nick-named " The Bucket of Blood," on account of several mysterious murders having taken place there. The proprietor, a big, burly man of violent temper, was said to have killed two or three persons and to have thrown their bodies into a river which ran at the back of the stage. Anyway, these people suddenly disappeared and nothing more was ever seen or heard of them.

On one occasion, two comedians were engaged to appear at this theatre, where the performances used to last till about two o'clock in the morning. They finished their performance, which was a big success, about midnight, and were dressing in their dressing-room, which was also occupied by a female impersonator, when the stage-manager came in.

" What are you boys dressing for ? " he said. " Where are you going ? "

" Oh, we've finished our turn and are going home," they replied.

" But you must not go yet," said the stage-manager. " You've got to appear in the after-piece." And he explained to them that it was customary for all artists who performed there to appear in a short sketch at the end, called the after-piece.

The two comedians protested, saying that they had only been engaged to give their usual performance, and, having done that, they were going home. The stage-manager, however, warned them not to make any objections, as the proprietor was a very rough man, and, if he was to go and tell him that they refused to appear in the after-piece he would come and make a terrible row.

The artists rejoined that they didn't care how rough he was,

they were not frightened of anyone and should refuse to go on again.

When the stage-manager saw that all persuasion was useless, he said :—

“ Very well, I shall have to go and tell the proprietor, and I warn you that it will go very hard with you when he hears that you have refused.”

With that he went out and told the proprietor that these two artists refused to appear in the after-piece, and the proprietor—a big six-footer—came into their dressing-room in a terrible rage and said :—

“ Where are these two men who refuse to go on in the after-piece ? ”

“ Here we are,” replied the two artists. “ We’ve done our business and now we’re going home.”

“ Well,” exclaimed the proprietor, “ I’ll ask you once more. Are you going on or not ? ”

“ No,” replied one of the artists, “ we are not.”

Without any further parley, the proprietor suddenly dealt the speaker a tremendous blow between the eyes and sent him sprawling. His partner went to his assistance, and met the same fate. Then, standing over the two men as they lay on the floor, the proprietor looked up and saw the female impersonator at the other end of the room, “ making up ” as fast as he could and trembling like a leaf. When the female impersonator caught the manager’s eye, he said :—

“ Well, thank God, I’ve always done my level best ! ”

Conjurers, despite the quickness of hand generally credited to them, make some awkward mistakes and amusing blunders. But they have this in their favour : that the audience seldom know of the mishap that has occurred. As is well known, a great many of the articles used in their performances are borrowed from members of the audience : such as watches, banknotes, rings, handkerchiefs and so forth ; and the owners of these articles should not be surprised if they occasionally receive them back in a damaged condition when the treatment to

which they are subjected is taken into consideration. They are supposed to be smashed, burned, or in some other way destroyed, and then mysteriously put to rights again ; and although sensible people know full well that the genuine article has not really been destroyed, but that a substitution has been adroitly effected, still the process of substitution is often attended by great risk to the articles used, such as dropping them quickly into the operator's pocket or into traps, or slipping them into an assistant's hand.

A conjurer performing recently in the South of Scotland asked for the loan of a watch, and a gentleman lent him a valuable old chronometer. A wonderful trick was performed with it, and the audience accorded the performer a hearty round of applause. But, when the gentleman got his watch back, a note was slipped into his hand intimating that his watch had been damaged, but that he would be compensated for this at the close of the entertainment. The watch was indeed damaged ; it was irrevocably ruined, but the performer paid the owner its full price. Some performers have been most unfortunate in this way. I know one who had to pay the full price for damaged watches three times in as many years, and each time owing to the gross carelessness of his assistant.

A few years ago a young conjurer, who has since acquired some celebrity, gave his first public entertainment, and was assisted behind the scenes by some kind friends. The loan of a banknote was asked for, and one for twenty pounds was handed to the performer. This he successfully substituted for a sham note, passing the genuine one, by means of a trap in his table, to his assistant. He then proceeded to burn the duplicate at the flame of a candle, all the while enjoying the discomfiture of the lender, who believed that his twenty-pound-note was being destroyed and was heard to remark : " If I had known he was going to do that with it, he wouldn't have got it ! "

But the performer's enjoyment was of short duration, for when the time came for him to restore the note to its anxious owner, he discovered, to his horror, that his assistant had as completely destroyed the genuine note as he had the sham one.

The audience was, however, permitted to know nothing of the disaster, as an explanation was given to the lender, who before the conclusion of the performance was compensated for his loss.

Another conjurer, hailing from the North of Scotland, had acquired great dexterity in his manipulation of eggs, with which he performed a number of really clever tricks. In practising these feats, he generally used hard-boiled eggs; but he very carelessly allowed several unboiled eggs to get mixed up with the boiled ones, so that, after some time, he could not tell the boiled from the unboiled. He was punished for his carelessness in a way he little dreamed of. He was engaged to perform at the house of the Lord Provost of a certain Scotch city, and his audience was the most distinguished one before which he had ever appeared.

The first experiment consisted of extracting eggs from the flame of a candle which stood upon his table. These eggs were successfully produced, after which he proceeded, as was his custom, to hand them round amongst the audience to prove their genuineness. But, in handing one of them to a gentleman to examine, he allowed one of the others to fall, which, happening to strike the knee of a lady, broke and besmeared her dress. The egg having been for some time in the performer's possession, was very decidedly "stale," and a most disagreeable odour speedily pervaded the room. Handkerchiefs and smelling-bottles were freely requisitioned, and the lady had to retire and change her dress, which she was never able to wear again. The other ladies also quitted the room, and the entertainment came to an abrupt conclusion.

THE END

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