

PRICE 10 CENTS

FIFTY-SIX PAGES.

THEATRES ~ CIRCUSES

FAIRS ~ MUSICIANS

The Billboard

America's Leading

Theatrical Weekly

REGISTERED IN UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

Volume XVIII. No. 51.

CINCINNATI - NEW YORK - CHICAGO

December 22, 1906.



MME. ELZA SZAMOSY. (See page 11.)

Tent Shows

Circus
Museum
Menagerie
Wild West

THE BOSS CANVASMAN'S STORY

Written for The Billboard by Willard D. Coxe, the "Story Man" of the Barnum & Bailey Press Bureau.



WILLARD D. COXEY.

YOU needn't think because a man is travelin' with a show, And doesn't go to Sunday school, or know the things you know, And kinder scrawls his letters and his spellin's not the best, And now and then forgets himself and starts a "swearin' fest," And wears a suit that's "hand-me-down" and a hat that's out of date, And thinks the "push" are Reubens and the circus all that's great— That he's a tough and ruffian, and always on the "do," For the white tent shelters lots of men that's just as good as you— Men with hearts and conscience, who never stop to "lend"; Who'd give the last cent that they had to help a "busted" friend; Who love, and hate, and suffer, who go wrong now and then Just like the world around them, just like all other men.

Sittin' 'round the fire in the "quarters" winter nights We tell a lot of stories of "the road" and its delights. But there are other stories that might appeal to you; For though they're sad, they're full of heart, and most of 'em are true.

I'll tell you one—it's gettin' late and I must make it short. But when I'm through you'll say with me, "Jack was the proper sort." I "joined him out" in Oakland; he'd just got off a spree And was the toughest lookin' "guy" I think I ever see.

He went to work on canvas, and I told him fair That if I caught him drinkin', I'd "fire" him then and there!

I'll not forget his answer, as he slowly turned about: "You needn't worry, Governor, the boozin's all cut out! But there was reason for it, and that's what made me start; I lost my wife in 'Frisco, and it nearly broke my heart! I'm kinder rough and reckless, and I don't look like I'd care; But, say! I loved that woman, and in my blind despair I took again to boozin'—the first since I was East— I just forgot I was a man, and tried to be a beast. I don't know how I'd ended, if it hadn't been for Sal— (I most forgot to tell you that I've got a little gal!) You might not think her pretty, but she's sweet as she can be; She's all I have to live for, and that's what sobered me. She's 'crosst the bay in 'Frisco, in the Little Sister's care, And every cent I get this fall is goin' over there. I'll save my wages, every bit, and when the season's done I'll go and spend the Christmas time with my little one."

We hear so many stories, and often clever, too, It's hard to tell which ones are "pipes" and which are half way true. But I kept my eyes on Sailor Jack, and watched him day by day, And what he suffered in his thirst, is more than I can say. But 'twas an awful battle, and often, with a cry, He'd clench his fists and shriek aloud: "I'll conquer it or die!" Sometimes the "gang" would tease him (they didn't stop to think); They weren't really cruel, but they tempted him to drink;

And one day, when the joshin' went just a bit too far, He lost his nerve and temper, and went against the bar. That day he "blowed" the cook tent, and I heard the news with pain That Sailor Jack had broken out upon a "tear" again.

The show was in Los Angeles, it was the second day; The matinee was over, and the crowd was coming 'way When a boy came with a message, addressed to Sailor Jack, And I thought it best to open it in case he wasn't back. 'Twas from the Little Sisters, and this is what it said: "Come back at once to 'Frisco; your little girl is dead!" For a time the message dazed me; I wondered what to do— To find her missing father, or pretend it wasn't true; When I heard a great commotion, and I fairly cried aloud As I saw a team of horses dash madly toward the crowd. They were a pair of sorrels we had only got that day; The elephants had scared them, and made them run away. I gave a shout of warning, but the crowd had seen them, too, And pushed and fought like demons to make a pathway through.

I'm used to seein' accidents—we have 'em day and night— But I turned away in horror at that awful sight; 'Twas only for a moment, and when I looked again I saw a drabbed figure spring toward the horses' rein— A tottering, hatless creature, but I knew it all too well— 'Twas Sailor Jack, and he'd come back to face that living hell. 'Twas a short and fearful struggle, and his pluck and courage won, But when the frightened team was stopped, his work on earth was done— The horses' hoofs had crushed him, he was very near to death, And when we pushed the crowd aside he said with gasping breath: "I wouldn't mind the croakin' if I hadn't thrown away The money that I'd saved to give her Christmas day! I want to ask a favor, it isn't much," he said; "Just write and tell my little gal, when her old dad is dead; Don't let her know how weak I was, or of my boozin' past— Just tell her that I loved her, an loved her to the last!"

It was the end of Sailor Jack, he'd had his final say, And he never knew his little girl had also passed away. But the faces of the circus men were clouded with regret, And they begged the dead man's pardon, and hoped he would forget The joshin' and the teasin' in which they'd taken part. (We circus men are often rough, but we've got a tender heart) And when, with sudden impulse, one fellow passed the hat, They turned their pockets inside out, and didn't stop at that— But went among the "actors," and even to the "door."

And got as much as poor Jack spent, and many dollars more; And back to San Francisco they sent him to rest Beside the mother and the child, the ones that he loved best. Upon a shaft of marble was carved this tribute grand: "He was a man—a hero—his faults are 'writ in sand." And you needn't tell me, stranger, that God, who knows us all, Won't have a place for Sailor Jack, when He makes the final call!

WERE NOT MARRIED AT SAVANNAH.

It was inadvertently stated in The Billboard of Dec. 8 that Harry Williams and Ritta LaForce had been married at Savannah, Ga., Nov. 27. The item was received by mail at The Billboard office in the usual manner and was edited in the customary pursuit of the editor's duties, he taking it for a bona fide item. However, it was false, because both Mr. Williams and Mrs. LaForce say so. A letter from Mr. Williams says it is a malicious lie on the part of the one who sent the item in and that he will prosecute the person if he attempts to repeat a like deed. Ritta LaForce asks us to deny the statement, because she says she is already married to one man, and is now living with him. Friends of both uncontracting parties will kindly take notice.

WILL WINTER IN LOS ANGELES.

Punch Wheeler writes: The Sells-Floto Shows close their season in Mexico Dec. 12 at Chihuahua. The whole outfit will be brought to El Paso and there disband after a season of thirty-six weeks. The show trains will run direct to Los Angeles, Cal., which will be the winter quarters. The shows will open early in March on the Pacific coast for the season of 1907.

TIGERS ELECT OFFICERS.

The Benevolent Order of American Tigers held their semi-annual election of officers recently at their headquarters in Bridgeport, Conn. The new officers are, Wm. O'Hara, president;

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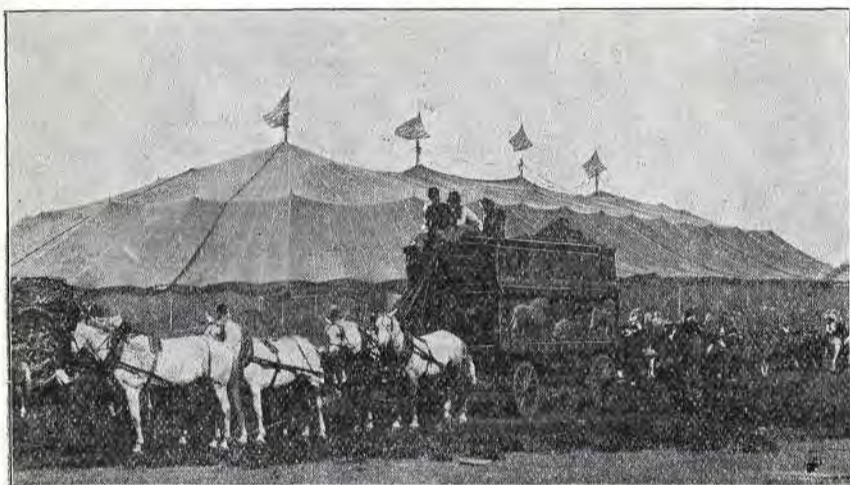
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CIRCUS GOSSIP.

The Harper Brothers' Show, which opened at Tuscaloosa, Ala., Nov. 29, is now packing them in in Mississippi and are headed for Louisiana. The roster of the show is as follows: W. Godfrey, proprietor and manager; "Kid" Bartlett, treasurer; M. Mack, advance with four assistants; Mrs. C. Wider, manager of car; Harry Folk, porter, and P. H. Bradford, chef with three assistants. Prof. C. H. Jennison's band consists of J. Loveridge, B. N. Peck, H. Gilbo, H. Chipman, W. Eber, W. L. Roberts, O. Hess, L. Haskill and J. A. Williams. The performers are Ed. Guthrie, equestrian director; Four Guthries, triple trapeze and Roman ladders; W. J. Langer, wire artist; Dekous, Japanese foot juggler, wire and magic; Andro Brothers, acrobats and gymnasts; J. R. "Doc" Grant, clown; Sharpstein and Wheeler, song and dance artists; Albert Edward, dancer; The Jennisons, Chas. and Ethel, musical artists; Ida May, song and dance artists, and the Welder Children, singers and dancers.

Horace Webb, with the Hagenbeck Show this past season, is now at his home in Fulton, N. Y., after playing the Florida State Fair for F. M. Barnes. He is putting together a new act that will be known as the Horace-Ellanor-Webb Trio; it will be a combination wire, globe and acrobatic turn, and will be a feature with the Hagenbeck Show next season. Mr. and Mrs. Webb and Harry Kerr, late topnotcher of the Three Bartletts, make up the trio.

B. L. Bowman, manager of the vaudeville side show of the Hagenbeck Greater Shows this past season, is resting at his home near Sanford, Fla., where he will spend the winter fishing and hunting. Mr. Bowman enjoyed a most profitable season with the Hagenbeck Show this year.

The Kennedy Brothers' Overland Circus is enjoying good business and the members are all happy, waiting for the band to strike up Home, Sweet Home. Most all the people have signed again for next season, which will open about Feb. 10 in southern Texas.

"Whale Oil Gus" and "Little Monday" closed a very enjoyable season of twenty-eight weeks with their mammoth whaling exhibition Nov. 20 at Bainbridge, Ga., and are resting at New Orleans, La. They open again March 1 with a complete new outfit.

"Coonie" Salters and "Sugar" Carver, who were with the advance car of the Van Amburg Shows, closed Dec. 1 and returned to their homes in Tipton, Ind., where they will be connected with the local billposting department during the winter.

The Aherns joined the Circu Publilones in Cuba Dec. 8. Publilone is recognized as the Barnum of Cuba and his show at the National Theatre is making an immense hit. The Aherns enjoy life in Cuba and are in the best of health.

Tom J. Myers, who has been acting as general press representative and treasurer of the Norris & Rowe Show for the past four seasons, has been appointed general manager of the Novelty Theatre at Fresno and at Los Angeles, Cal.

Geo. A. (Deacon) Baldwin will send Wild Rose south this winter. She has been with the Pawnee Bill Show this past season. In addition, Deacon will be interested in the promotion of fistic encounters during the cold months.

The Millettes, Ed., Maude and Baby Ira, are resting at their home near Greensboro, Ga., after a very successful season with the Great Van Amburg Show. Their friends may address them at Greensboro until April 1.

Joe Stirk, of Stirk and London, sensational cycle acrobats and jumpers, was a Billboard caller last week. His team is now en route with the Trocadero Burlesquers and its new combination novelty is a hit.

Lew H. Morris has opened a swell lunch room and cafe in the Euson Theatre Building, 48 N. Clark street, Chicago, and is able to serve his friends with the best when they are in the Windy City.

James Thomas, the old driver with the Barnum & Bailey Show, is at the New York Hippodrome making good as the driver of the stage coach. Dick Cameron is also at the Hippodrome.

The Armers, Al. and Rosa, with the Hagenbeck Show this past season, are playing vaudeville dates. They opened with a three weeks' engagement at Wonderland, Chicago.

Sylow, for the past two seasons with the Cole Brothers' Show, will go with the Forepaugh-Sells Show next season. He will spend the winter playing vaudeville dates.

After a long and successful season with the Great Van Amburg Show, the Jennier Family are resting at 1510 Washington avenue, St. Louis, Mo., until after the holidays.

W. W. Scott, of the Hagenbeck Show, is spending the holidays in Chicago with his wife, better known in the theatrical world as Kittle Scott, Irish comedienne.

W. R. Kellogg, adjuster with the Van Amburg Show, closed a successful season at Houston, Texas, and will rest a few weeks at 1208 Preston avenue, that city.

Madam Jacinta, palmist, is spending the holidays at East Liverpool, O.



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William Toombs is running a boarding house at 226 west 24th street, New York City, and many of the show people at the Hippodrome are his patrons.

Araminta May, with the Campbell Brothers' Show this season, is resting at her home in Kansas City, Mo., owing to the closing of The Cow Boy Girl Co.

The Gentry Brothers' Show have a splendid place to winter at the fair grounds in San Antonio, Tex. Both will open early, probably about March 1.

H. W. Dunlap, twenty-four hour man with the Sells-Floto Show for the past two years, is filling a like position with the Hagenbeck Show in Mexico.

The Huegel Brothers, "the boys that made the Sultan of Turkey laugh," have booked eighteen weeks with the Circu Publilones, Havana, Cuba.

The Bell Brothers, Joe and Charles, are wintering at their home in Chicago after a pleasant and profitable season with the Van Amburg Show.

G. P. Kemp is at home in Lamar, Mo., from the east where he made contracts with park managers for his wild west show next season.

"Doc" Hadley, Tom Manard and Tom Fay will winter again at Birmingham, Ala., after a big season with the Cole Brothers' Show.