

Side Show Sidelights

Diverting Chronicles of Circus Life

By FRANCIS METCALFE

THE TRAGEDY OF THE TIGERS AND THE POWER OF HYPNOTISM.

Chauncey Depew was at the bottom of all the trouble; not the once favorite son of New York, but his namesake, one of the handsome double-striped royal Bengal tigers ever captured. Depew was the central figure in the group which Miller, the trainer of tigers, had worked so hard to educate, and it was his rebellion which made the teacher's labors of years come to naught. Late in the season, after months spent in giving the finishing touches to their education while they were with a small part of the show which was exhibited near Cleveland, the tigers were brought to Coney Island; a group of eight magnificent beasts, all hand reared and each worthy of a place in any menagerie. Perhaps it was the discomfort of the journey in the small traveling cages, possibly the change in the surroundings and the nearness of the other animals excited them; but whatever the cause, there was trouble in the narrow runway at the back of the dens when they entered it to go to the exhibition cage for their first Coney Island appearance.

The sound of their snarling and growling, the reports of pistol shots and the cracking of training whips caused a sensation of uneasiness in the audience until the first tiger bounded through the door at the back of the cage, closely followed by a half-dozen others. Dangerous beasts they looked as they threw themselves against the stout bars, which rattled from the impact of their great bodies, and the front seats of the auditorium were quickly vacated by the audience. The noise in the runway continued, but the deep throaty growl which came from behind the dens were of a different quality from the snarling and yapping of the seven beasts in the exhibition cage, and when the last of the tigers appeared in the doorway the first arrivals made renewed efforts to escape through the bars.

It was Depew; not the good-natured-looking great cat whose "have-eaten-the-canary" expression and smug whiskers had suggested his name, but a jungle tiger who had "gone bad," as the animal trainers call it, and who stood for a moment in the doorway, wrathfully surveying his frantic companions and selecting a victim. Froth was dripping from his snarling lips, his small eyes were blazing like two points of flame, the hair on his neck and back stood up like bristles, and his great tail struck the door-casing resounding whacks, as he lashed it from side to side. One moment he stood there, and then the great striped body hurtled through the air as if shot from a catapult, and covering a good 20 feet in the spring it landed fair on Bombay, one of the largest tigers in the group. The aim was a true one and the sound of breaking bone mingled with a scream of pain from his

victim, as Bombay sank under the weight of the blow, his cervical vertebrae crushed between Depew's powerful jaws.

The door had been closed behind Depew when he made his spring, and the other tigers were chasing madly about the great cage, looking for a chance to escape. There was no desire to fight left in them, but when they collided with each other they snapped and struck with the instinct of self-preservation, their sharp claws and teeth cutting gashes in the sleek striped coats. It was evident that all training had been forgotten, that fear of anything so puny as man had departed from the minds of the tigers, and a groan went up from the audience when the door was opened and quickly closed behind Miller, the trainer, who stood, whip and training rod in hand, in the cage with the maddened animals. He went about his work as quietly as if it were only an ordinary performance, his object being to return his pupils to their dens before further damage was done and to try to make them recognize that they were obeying him.

Depew was still crouched on the body of his victim, biting at the neck and growling ferociously, his tail lashing from side to side. Miller never took his eyes from him and kept between him and the door as he called the others by name and tried to regain control of them. One tiger after another was released, glad of the opportunity to escape, as the door to the runway was opened at Miller's signal, until only Depew, the body of Bombay and the trainer occupied the cage.

The other tigers had entered into a general free fight in the runway, but the noise of their bickering was unheeded in the excitement of the contest in the exhibition cage. Depew rose as Miller cracked his whip and approached him, and made a rush which the trainer met with his pronged training rod, driving it hard between the widely opened jaws while his whip rained blows upon the tiger's face. But he was only checked for a moment, and under his fiercer attack the trainer was forced to give ground. They were so close that the tiger could not spring, but he struck savagely with his great forepaws and tried again and again to pass the guard which Miller maintained with the training rod, using it as a fence uses a toll. It was an unequal contest and the trainer realized that he was beaten; Depew would not be driven from the cage. The useless training whip was discarded and a savage rush from the tiger was met by a pistol shot in the face, blank cartridge, of course, but effective for a moment. Five more shots followed in quick succession and the trainer backed quickly toward the door, when his foot slipped, and he was on his back, and Depew, quick

to seize the advantage, stood over him.

Every keeper connected with the show stood about the cage with the Roman candles, fire extinguishers, pistols and irons which are always kept in readiness, and any or all of them would have willingly entered to rescue the man, but experience has taught them that two cannot work together in a cage with animals. They were quick to act and a stream of water under heavy pressure from the fire hose struck the tiger in the side, exploding fireworks scorched his skin, the din of revolver shots was in his ears, while the wads from the cartridges stung him, but he seemed conscious only of the prostrate form beneath him. At last his chance had come; the trainer who for long months had made him do foolish things which were beneath the dignity of a royal tiger was in his power; the revolver which had so often checked him was emptied; the cruel training rod was powerless, for the hand which held it was pinned to the floor by a huge paw. Cat-like he paused to glory in his triumph, leath to give the coup de grace which would put his victim beyond the reach of suffering, and he stood there growling, the bloody slaver from his jaws dripping on the upturned face of the prostrate man.

Animal trainers need to think quickly and to seize the slightest moment of hesitation or indecision on the part of their pupils if they wish to be long-lived, and Miller, as he fell, had thrown his useless pistol out of the cage and uttered the one word "Load!" There was no time for that, but Tudor, seeing that the trainer had one arm free, threw his own pistol through the bars and it slid across the floor of the cage straight as a die to the outstretched hand. It was a time when fractions of a second count and Depew's hesitation robbed him of his revenge. The opened jaws were within a foot of the trainer's throat when the muzzle of the pistol went between them, and Depew, coughing and choking, drew back, his throat scorched by the burning powder, his eyes momentarily blinded by the stream from a fire extinguisher, while Miller struggled to his feet.

"People who see the crowds at my show think that I must coin money," said the proprietor as he joined the press agent and the stranger after the performance. "But that accident in the arena tonight means a loss of \$50,000 to me."

"Isn't that a high figure, even if they all die?" asked the stranger, who had been doing a little mental arithmetic.

"For those eight, yes, although a trained tiger is worth all sorts of money, but I have purchased 28 in all for that group, and the others have been killed one by one, fighting among themselves. They average over a thousand apiece, for I bought only the best, and figure up the cost of their keep, transportation and trainer's sal-

aries for three years and you will find that I am not far out. That is the difficulty of the show business in America, the public demands so much. It is a marvelous thing, when you come to think of it, to see one educated tiger; but if he wore evening clothes and played the fiddle it wouldn't impress the Americans; they would demand a full orchestra. I can give an act an hour long in Paris with one high school horse, but here they want 50 liberty horses in a bunch and only care to watch them for 10 minutes. I realized that from Bonavita's act with the lions; no individual lion did very much, but the fact that there were 27 of them in the cage drew the

and myself had a snake show in New York a few years ago which presented the most complete collection of reptiles ever gotten together, for it contained specimens of every species of wriggler known to herpetology and a good many that were not described in the books. That man Merritt was an inventive genius and had the California sharp, Burbank, beaten a mile when it came to inventing new species. When business was dull he'd take a lot of common, ordinary snakes into the back room and with a bottle of peroxide of hydrogen and an assortment of aniline dyes he would bring out albinos and spotted and striped snakes which made the scientists

if you'll come down and take him away you can have him for nothing. That made Merritt a little suspicious and he asked the captain if it were his ship.

"I reckoned it was until two days ago, when that blame snake broke loose," he answered irritably. "Since then he seems to own it and not a man jack of the crew will go below. I've tried to shoot him, but the beggar's too quick, and I want to discharge my cargo, so if you ain't afraid to tackle him, come on."

"Me afraid! Me?" says Merritt throwing out a chest. "Why, man alive, I'm the only living snake charmer who ever dared handle the danger-

with checks which were so loud they drowned the music of the orchestra, and a shirt which would in a summer sun send its head in disappointment. Patent leather shoes with low tops and a white plug hat with a black band around it completed his costume, except for a few specimens of yellow diamonds which adorned his shirt front and cuffs.

"Merritt snorted contemptuously at the suggestion and we started for the ship. When we got on board he made a little speech before he went into the hold, telling the sailors about his wonderful hypnotic power and how he would exercise it to charm the serpent which was preventing their worthy captain from reaping the rewards of his arduous toil and his hardihood in having braved the perils of the vasty deep. The sailors listened and grinned, but the captain was getting impatient and suggested that Merritt get the snake first and give his spiel afterward, so Merritt went down the ladder with the bag over his shoulder and we all rubbered down the hatchway to watch the capture.

"I knew what he would try to do, for I had seen him work it before. The way to get one of those big snakes is to cover his head with a get into the dark, which is a serpent's idea of safety. The more you prod 'em the faster they'll crawl, and that was the time when Merritt always made passes with his hands and muttered gibberish to impress the spectators. He started in according to program as soon as he located the snake, which was half hidden among a lot of casks. The snake carried out his part and struck at the opened bag which Merritt held out to him, but instead of sticking his head in he grabbed it with his teeth, and as Merritt held on he drew him back among the barrels and there was a pretty fight. Merritt was quick enough to get a strangle hold around the snake's neck and then it kept him busy keeping out of his coils. The captain hadn't lied much about the size of the python—it was about 30 feet long—and Merritt didn't have time to use any incantation, although considerable forcible language floated up through the hatchway. They wiped the deck with each other for about 20 minutes, and Merritt had been bumped against pretty nearly every cask in the hold before he finally succeeded in drawing the sack over the snake's head. Then it was easy, and in spite of his lack of breath the showman in Merritt asserted itself. He put the sack on the floor, and with one foot on the neck of it he prodded the snake's body with the other while he made mysterious passes with his hands until the tip of the tail disappeared. When the sack was securely tied up the python was hoisted on deck, and Merritt, his clothing torn and soiled with pitch and the miscellaneous oily and sticky things which made up the ship's cargo, climbed up after it.

"Did you see me?" he asked proudly, throwing out his chest. "Did you observe the wonderful hypnotic power which overcame the prowess of the serpent?"

"Yes, I noticed it, along toward the finish," answered the captain, grinning skeptically as he sized up Merritt's dilapidated apparel. "But say, professor, what I can't understand is why you didn't get it working sooner." (Copyright, 1914, by W. O. Chapman.)



"Depew, Coughing and Choking, Drew Back."

crowds. That's what made me start in with the group, but now I am back where I started from. I don't believe a troupe of tigers can ever be trained."

"Hagenbeck has them," ventured the stranger. "They seem as tame as kittens with his show."

"That's just the point," answered the proprietor. "They are as tame as kittens; undersized brutes which have been raised in captivity and which go through their act like domestic cats. That isn't what the public wants. A sensation—the realization that every animal in the cage is a wild animal and that he is liable to remember it at any minute—is what holds attention. That is why I always use jungle animals when I can get them, for although they can be as well trained, they always perform under protest and it makes it exciting. But the losses from fighting among themselves make it mighty expensive to keep up the big groups which the American public demands."

"That's one of the things which drove me out of the show business," said the press agent as he set his empty glass on the table and signaled to the waiter. "A guy named Merritt

open their eyes and kept 'em busy inventing new Latin names.

"His biggest success was 'The Great Two-horned Rhinoceros Serpent,' which made 'em all sit up for a month, and if I hadn't seen Merritt working over a common boa-constrictor with a pair of shark's teeth and a dish of bird lime it would have fooled me. That snake was proud of the horns which Merritt glued on his head, too, and he used to chase the other snakes around the cage and butt 'em like a giddy billy-goat. But in spite of all his ingenuity in originating new varieties, business was dropping off, for the public demanded quantity as well as quality and we had skinned the local snake market clean. We were sitting in the office one day, figuring on where we could get additions to our collection, when a stout, red-faced little man who had 'sea captain' written all over him came in and asked if we wanted any more snakes. Merritt allowed that we did if he had the snakes and asked where we could inspect them.

"Well, I've got one that I brought from Borneo and he's on a ship down in the harbor," says the captain. "We won't argue none about the price, for

ous Two-horned Rhinoceros Serpent, and do you think I'd weaken before a common Borneo python?"

"I dunno whether you will or not until I see you try," says the captain. "I've handled a Malay crew, which is worse than serpents, and I've mixed it up with most of the scum that sails the seven seas, but this blame snake's got me bluffed all right. He's three fathom long, as big around as the mainmast, and made up principally of muscle and wickedness."

"Just watch me. Watch me!" says Merritt. "I'll use my wonderful hypnotic power and you'll see the serpent crawl into the bag at my command, to be easily transported to this moral and elevating show for exhibition as an example of the power of mind over matter."

"All right, professor," says the captain. "But if you'll take my advice you'll stow those shore-going togs and get into working rig before you tackle him." Merritt was arrayed in all his finery, and if you'd ever seen him you'd know that that meant a lot, for when he was flush he could make Solomon in all his glory, or any other swell dresser look like a dirty deuce in a new deck. He had on a light suit

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In the event of no one making such a correct forecast, a consolation prize of \$2 will be awarded to whoever comes the nearest to the correct answer.

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There will be found on the Sporting Page each day, while these matches last, a coupon, which must be filled out as directed—only one coupon from each day's issue will be allowed any competitor, and they must reach the Courier office for each Saturday's competition not later than 10 o'clock on Saturday morning.

No employee or relative of employees will be allowed to enter this contest.

See Page 12 For Coupon!

FIRST SEC

FORTY-FO

TERRIBLE IN GL

Extensive Garden lieved T

GLASGOW by the police to-day virtually Glasgow Botan Besides the which were bl tropical and otl A caretaker just before the losing his life b metal and glass Footprints vicinity of the outrage had his set the fuses of

GRANT VOT MARRIED

Hamilton City C mittee Passes to This E

HAMILTON, Jan. 22.—The reception committee which Mayor Allan citizens were present mously decided to ag larior Government wipal for votes" for owning property. This question has content in Hamil nary of the city's wanting women to h marking ballots at Dominion provincial but Mayor Allan is as yet, at least until some of the other Ontario deal with it. He favored last of women having a prop married, and the com strong resolution to Government at Toron London, Ottawa and likely be asked to go through the annual n Ontario Municipal As takes place shortly.

MONTMAGNY DENIES

Aim of His Bill is Barras the Gov Supporter

OTTAWA, Jan. 21.—perance, member fo made a formal state House of Commons of in the matter of the proposes to introduce Laurier Naval Act of a "question of privileg item from a newspaper rumor that he was ag nent with members of tion to barras—the and particularly a Que the Cabinet. Then made this statement: contains two distinct innuendoes, which I e flecting on my honor of this House and a b of the present Govern "I wish to give abou lat any time either d directly, negotiated or negotiate with any lead representative of the connection with this b an emphatic and comp the malicious charge th this bill is to embarr of the Government. I this bill and an accurat personal honor and thi this House will be in appreciate when I mo reading."

THE LIFE OF C NEW YORK, Jan. cable to the "Tribune" trasigent states that G dra of England had rec a letter from Emper- sia, saying that she had caped death on a journ mark to St. Petersburg ploded only ten yards b but no damage was do press had received a n sentence. The accident attributed to a short c tricity.

First Congressional d ulran, which cost \$4,000 of debt, and the chara Gilroy was raised from S