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The Bear's Face

By Charles G. D. Roberts

THERE ain't no denying but what you give us a great show, Job," said the barkeeper, with that air of patronage which befits the man who presides over and autocratically controls the varied activities of a saloon in a Western lumber town.

"It is a good show!" assented Job Toomey, modestly. He leaned up against the bar in orthodox fashion, just as if his order had been "whisky fer mine!" but, being a really great animal trainer, whose eye must be always clear and his nerve always steady as a rock, his glass contained nothing stronger than milk and Vichy.

Fifteen years before, Job Toomey had gone away with a little traveling menagerie, because he loved wild animals. He had come back famous; and the town of Grantham Mills, metropolis of his native county, was proud of him. He was head of the menagerie of the Sillaby and Hopkins Circus, and trainer of one of the finest troupes of performing beasts in all America. It was a great thing for Grantham Mills to have had a visit from the Sillaby and Hopkins Circus, on its way from one important center to another. There had been two great performances, afternoon and evening. And now, after the last performance, some of Toomey's old-time acquaintances were making things pleasant for him in the bar of the "Continental."

"I don't see how ye do it, Job!" said Sanderson, an old river man who had formerly trapped and hunted with Toomey. "I mind ye was always kind o' slick an' understandin' with the wild critters; but the way them lions an' painters an' bears an' wolves jest folly yer eye an' yer nod, willin' as so many poodle dogs, beats me. They seem to like it, too."

"They do," said Toomey. "Secret of it is, I like them; so, by-an'-by, they learn to like me, well enough, an' try to please me. I make it worth their while, too. Also, they know I'll stand no fooling. Fear an' love, rightly mixed, boys—plenty of love, an' jest enough fear to keep it from spilin'—that's a mixture'll

carry a man far—leastways, with animals!"

The barkeeper smiled, and was about to say the obvious thing; but he was interrupted by a long, lean-jawed, leather-faced man, captain of one of the river tugs, whose eyes had grown sharp as gimlets with looking out for snags and sand-banks.

"The finest beast in the whole menagerie, that big grizzly," said he, spitting accurately into a spacious box of sawdust, "I noticed as how ye didn't have him in your performance, Mr. Toomey. Now, I kind o' thought as how I'd like to see you put him through his stunts."

Toomey was silent for a moment. Then, with a certain reserve in his voice, he answered: "Oh, he ain't exactly strong on stunts."

The leather-faced captain grinned quizzically. "Which does he go shy on, Mr. Toomey, the love or the fear?" he asked.

"Both," said Toomey, shortly. Then his stern face relaxed, and he laughed good-humoredly. "Fact is, I think we'll have to be sellin' that there grizzly to some zoological park. He's kind of bad fer my prestige."

"How's that, Job?" asked Sanderson, expectant of a story.

"Well," replied Toomey, "to tell you the truth, boys—an' I only say it because I'm here at home, among friends—it's me that's afraid of him! An' he knows it. He's the only beast that's ever been able to make me feel fear—the real, deep-down fear. An' I've never been able to git quit of that ugly notion. I go an' stand in front o' his cage; an' he jest puts that great face of his up agin the bars an' stares at me. An' I look straight into his eyes, an' remember what has passed between us, an' I feel afraid still. Yes, it wouldn't be much use me tryin' to train that bear, boys; an' I'm free to acknowledge it to you all."

"Tell us about it, Job!" suggested the barkeeper, settling his large frame precariously on the top of a small, high stool. An urgent chorus of approval

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