

PERFORMERS.

A Bit of Sentiment Indulged in Just Before the Performance—Danger Dreaded Is More Than Half Invited—Japanese Jugglers.

The Vaidi sisters are two pretty English girls who do some very good trapeze work. One of them performs a dive, head foremost, from the very top of the proscenium arch, a dizzy height, into a net suspended just above the heads of the spectators in the parquet. That is one of the most thrillingly effective feats ever shown here in public, but, in point of fact, is very little if any more dangerous than a number of things that they do together on the trapeze before that finale. So long as the performer comes down into the net there need be no fear. There is more danger in the breaking of a tightly strained guy wire at a critical moment, by which the trapeze might be violently jerked out of place and the performer thrown off, away outside of the net, to fall upon the backs of the orchestra chairs and be picked up a mass of broken bones and mangled flesh, perhaps dead. To guard against this as far as possible the greatest care is exercised in the stretching of the wire and rope guys, which is all gone over and examined before each performance. This, with the stretching of the net, takes several minutes.

A BIT OF SENTIMENT.

While these things are being done the two sisters stand waiting in the first entrance, on the "prompt" side of the stage, with big cloaks draped about their scantily clad forms, and their mother close behind them. When the signal is given that all is ready, the mother draws off their cloaks. Then the two girls embrace and kiss each other's hands. After that they dart out on the stage, and a moment later they are up in the air, risking their necks. If that little bit of sentimental business were done in public, it would be understood as a tawdry conceit for effect, like many other things in which gymnasts and acrobats indulge, with a view to impressing the spectators. But it is not. The embracing and kissing are all done "in the wings," where it is only by accident that a person near the footlights in the parquet on the opposite side of the stage may perchance see it. The general disposition to ascribe to superstition of some sort the motive impelling people to do somewhat unusual things naturally suggests that as a reason for the Vaidi girls' demonstration. But upon inquiry it is learned that this is prompted by simple affection, nothing more. Each knows that it is well within the range of possibilities that the slipping of her hand, the failure by a hair's breadth of the other's grasp or a break of the apparatus may cause her sister's plunge to death, or that that fate may be her own, within the next few minutes. With that feeling in mind, the hand clasps, embraces and kisses between the girls are simply a tender demonstration of the impulse that prompts comrades, when going into battle, to shake hands silently. It may be for the last time, and they know it.

There is little superstition among the limb and life venturing classes of public performers, far less than exists among people in the histrionic profession. Whether it is that the vigorous life of the former develops a more healthful and consequently sounder philosophy, or that their training has drilled them into a higher confidence in themselves and appreciation of the possibilities of human control over what weaker natures deem fate and luck, need not be discussed here. The fact is enough for present consideration. Of course there are exceptions to this, as to every other rule, but even when they do occur they are not violent, and generally have some pretty fair reason back of the seeming superstition alleged. Mattie Jackson, for instance, will not ride in the circus ring on Good Friday. She avows a fear that some accident will happen to her if she does, as one did once upon a time when she broke the rule, or perhaps before she made it. But the fact is that she has a vague idea that it isn't right. And several other well known riders have the same notion.

A DANGER DREADED.

It indeed appears that the dread of having a superstition is more rife among circus people than any superstition is, for the excellent reason that they know a danger dreaded is more than half invited. A man whose nerves are to the slightest degree unstrung by expectancy of accident is likely to realize his expectation when attempting some feat that demands all the strength, skill, coolness and nerve that he possesses. Very often a rider's performance is made timid and measurably ineffective simply by a groom's report to him that his horse "does not seem to be feeling all right." There is no superstition about that, but a consciousness that if the horse is not "all right" and up to good remembrance and observation of his training, the backing of his rider's leg, or perhaps his neck, may be the consequence.

It may hardly be fair to classify as superstitious the practice of carrying potatoes or horse chestnuts in the pockets as talismans against rheumatism. If it is so, then there is a good deal of that sort of superstition among show folk, but they vehemently affirm that it is prompted by knowledge of the proved medicinal virtues of these articles.

A process has been discovered for producing photographs on metal.

Cincinnati boasts the biggest pin pool game in the country.

Russian Convicts and Their Chains.

While a number of convicts were engaged in games of hazard in the corridor, most of those in the rooms were absorbed in another occupation. Heavy metallic strokes rang through the prison, the falling of chains upon the floor could be heard from time to time, but the noise disturbed nobody, neither those who were fast asleep in the same rooms nor the commanding officer or the soldiers who slept in the same building. The convicts worked on the solution of one problem, namely, on making the chain rings embracing their legs so extended as to be a position to take them off or push them on over the ankles and the foot heels at any time. Thus the chains could be carried on the soldier or around the waist, instead of around the legs, and walking was much easier.

Of course, the soldiers and their commander knew well what the metallic sounds meant, but they did not care to interfere. Some of the escort officers were good natured men, and paid no attention to these "little transgressions" of the law; others were strict and rigid, not tolerating any such liberties on the part of the convicts, and as the latter had a marvelous ability for "sizing up" their commanders, they marched one day with the chains around their legs and another with the chains around their waists. Many of the convicts managed to throw off the chains even from their arms. These being very short, give such a posture to the wearer as to render his ten or twelve hours' march extremely difficult. The contact of the iron of the chains, moreover, occasions, in the bones during the intense Siberian heats or frosts, an insupportable rheumatic pain, which after several weeks of walking becomes a real torture.—Michael Mal'koff in Chicago News.

A Novel Test in Fasting.

A novel bet was won and lost in a Vine-street resort the other evening. A party of gentlemen were indulging in a social glass, and finally the conversation turned upon the quality of liquors and the ability of certain persons to judge them by the sense of smell and taste. One man in the party claimed that the best judges could be fooled by the compounders, and, after the argument became quite warm, made the astounding assertion that a large percentage of bar patrons did not know what they were drinking.

The debate grew hotter and hotter, and finally the man who had advanced such outrageous ideas offered to bet a basket of wine that he could confound any one of the party so that he could not tell water from whisky. John Hummel, the circus man, who has had a varied experience in the drinking line, accepted the wager, and the preliminaries began. John was first heavily blindfolded, and then a number of glasses, containing water, milk, whisky, sherry, claret, Rhine wine and gin were set out on the bar. They were handed to the blindfolded man one at a time, and he was told to name the liquor after tasting it. He got through the list bravely until he came to the gin, which he called port wine. Then the man started him back, but it was soon very evident that Hummel's palate had lost its power. He called milk water, and finally was forced to admit that all the liquors tasted alike, and that he had lost his bet. It was some time before he was able to enjoy the wine he had lost.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Excessive Eating in Gotham.

From the 1st of December to the last of April, dinners are in order, and many fashionable folk scarcely dine at home once a month unless they play host under their own roof. How they manage their digestion I know not, for a season's elaborate dinners are enough to disturb the interior of an ostrich. I am aware that cooking of the Carême kind claims to insure eupepsy; but, while this may be true in theory, it is not in practice. Scores of men die here annually from excessive dining out, and I am acquainted with dozens who have lost their health from the same cause. Women seldom suffer, because they are not educated, and cannot be educated into epicures. If they are tortured by gout it is usually an inheritance; most men earn their goit by protracted stomachic abuse. Excessive eating, say experienced physicians, destroys many constitutions as does excessive drinking. And excessive eating is the bane of New York society men and men of leisure, who are represented by round, protruding eyes, double chins and oleaginous complexions—"Deucecece" in Globe Democrat.

In California's "Flush" Days.

It was the "flushiest" kind of a "flush" time. The years 1852 and 1853, especially the latter, were years of rapid growth as well as unexampled prosperity. Every thing flourished. Fortunes were made in a day. Some idea of the ease with which money was gained and the prodigality with which it was spent may be derived from the following entries in an old ledger of a general store of that period: "One candle, \$3; 1 dozen French sardines, \$25; 2 white shirts, \$10; 200 pounds of white flour, \$150; 1 fine tooth comb, \$8; 1 tin pan, \$9; 1 barrel of mess pork, \$210." Whisky was 50 cents a drink, and butchers' knives, with which miners picked gold from the crevices of the rocks, sold for \$30 each. Adventurers, villains and scoundrels from every quarter of the globe flocked here in greater numbers than ever before. The extravagance, the dissipation, the complete abandonment to self-indulgence and sensual gratification, the sudden ups and downs of fortunes, and all the other evils of such a state of society were rampant.—San Francisco Cor. Chicago Times.

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