

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF J. RUFUS WALLINGFORD

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER, Creator of "Wallingford," and CHARLES W. GODDARD
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CHAPTER II. Selling a Circus.

WITH the first glare of the distant music Blackie Daw leaned eagerly forward in his chair and rested his arms on the rail of the Booby House porch, looking up and down the main street of Burrville with the sparkling eyes of youth never ending. "Boom-de-ra-a-h-dahl! Boom-de-ra-a-h-dahl!" he sang in unison with the strident trombones, beating time with both feet and one hand, while Wallingford, standing against the rail, looked down on him with a indulgent smile.

The band blared louder as it turned from Court House square toward Main street. A horse and buggy, both sleek and shiny, came dashing down Booby street and turned up Main toward the opening parade. The driver was a "oompy" farmer, whose nearness to the soil no city clothes could conceal.

"That's Li Bogger," whispered a pretty waitress, bending down between Wallingford and Blackie. "His wife's dead, and he's sold his farm and put all his money in the bank. He always takes his dinner here when he comes to town, and I've arranged to seat him between you two men."

"Pretty good detective work for two days, Miss Fannie," complimented Wallingford, with a smile into the sparkling brown eyes. "Have any trouble getting a job as waitress?"

"With a circus coming to town?" laughed the blue-eyed girl who came out just behind Fannie Warden. "Of course not. I could have had a job, too, only you thought I had better not."

"Getting information about Mr. Bogger is so easy it's stupid," went on the brown-eyed Fannie. "All the girls know him, for he's a country masher, and they hate him."

"What's his bank roll?" asked Wallingford speculatively.

"There was a mad scramble when the dinner bell rang, but Wallingford and Blackie found seats waiting for them, three tilted chairs being held firmly by the hands of Fannie Warden. They sat down, leaving the middle chair vacant. Fannie, keeping a sharp eye on the door, ran to meet Elias the minute he came in, led him to the vacant chair and seated him triumphantly.

Elias was a spare man, considerably past middle age, whose leathery face, in its queer pattern of bronze cheeks and white jowls, betrayed that his now natty getup had but recently been whiskers. His sparse, long top hair was combed carefully over the spot which had a tendency to become bald, and his neck moved about so uncomfortably in his high collar that it was certain he had not long endured the things.

"Fine day for the circus," he said to Wallingford in a hasty, little high pitched voice, having inspected all the ladies in the room.

Wallingford, laying back to study Bogger, left the conversation to Blackie.

"Back in eighty-four, on July 17, to be more exact, we had just such another day for a circus as this, and none since until now," Blackie stated.

"You don't say!" exclaimed Elias, very much impressed by Blackie's accuracy. "You must be an old circus man. Is this your circus, maybe?"

"Not this one," explained Blackie apologetically, paying no attention to Wallingford's frown; "it belongs to my friend, P. T. Barnes, and he waved his hand suavely in the direction of Wallingford. J. Rufus bowed in reluctant acknowledgment as one bored to be known of strangers. Mr. Bogger inspected him with becoming awe.

"Where's the Miss Violet?" asked Wallingford.

"Up in my room," "Fine!" approved Wallingford. "You girls doll up and go out to the grounds as soon as you can. Go into the 'kid show'—that's the main side show, you know—and look at the freaks until we need you."

Already the country and village folk were overflowing the grounds, though it lacked an hour or more of opening time. Loafing lazily, inspecting the crowd, slouched an enormous man with a violent mustache which gave him a

most ferocious cast of countenance, and to this forbidding citizen Blackie Daw sidled, grinning at him in waiting expectancy.

Texas Ed looked around, and his face immediately lit with welcome.

"Hello, sport!" he roared, giving Blackie's hand a viselike grip. "It's been a cool'n' day since I see you trimmin' the geeks on the pumpkin circuit. What's your gift nowadays?"

"I got a new game," explained Blackie gravely. "I carry around a wad of wet chewing gum on the end of a string and fish coppers out of blind men's cups."

lop," protested Blackie earnestly. "He looks like a remittance from mother."

"Go as far as you like, and see if Barnes cares," airily responded Blackie. "Old P. T. hasn't been with the show a minute this season, and his manager, a fat burglar by the moniker of Joe Unger, is grafting all the velvet. He's so strong at it he hasn't paid salaries for three weeks."

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my friend, Mr. Bogger, wants to ask you a question or two, Mr. Barnes."

"I'm not Barnes," declared Wallingford gruffly. "I am his personal representative and business executive. My name's Sears."

"Unger, I never saw such a dirty lot of uniforms. If I have to sell this circus for Mr. Barnes I want it in decent shape. What are today's profits?"

"Over \$1,000," said Unger brightly.

"A thousand!" Wallingford's face was purple with fury. "Unger, I'm going to investigate this thing. If you know what's good for you you won't let me see you on this lot today!"

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that tent on the dead run, followed by a platoon of chorus ladies, screaming for vengeance. With them was Violet Warden, all dolled up as a lion tamer. It took all of Wallingford's persuasiveness to rescue Elias.

"That was full of women dressing!" panted Mr. Bogger. "What did you shove me in there for?"

"Didn't they know you were the proprietor?" inquired J. Rufus in astonishment.

"Come over to the big top," invited Blackie. "Fred Bristol's going to try out a new flying trapeze act before the performance," and he led the way.

"The main tent was big and high and dim and mysterious, with its one torch lighted. Away up in the dome a tiny trapeze swung on long strands, which, from the ground, looked like spider webs. Upon a little shelf, far away, stood a slender, graceful man in pink tights, and from either side of the shelf stretched down long ropes. A man with a coat and trousers on over his tights hurried up to Bogger and handed him a rope.

"Here, pal," he said; "hold this line, will you?" and he thrust it into Bogger's hands. "Get a good grip on it."

The pink clad acrobat upon the high shelf drew the trapeze far across and up to him with a tape. All at once there came a mighty tug at the rope Bogger was holding, and it was jerked from his clasp. A cry of horror burst from the throats of a score of circus attendants, and down through the dusty air of the big tent, with its rows upon rows of dimly empty benches came whirling and sprawling a pink figure! A shriek burst from the pallid lips of Bogger as it thudded upon the ground. The circus men, mostly acrobats, rushed to the spot where the pink figure lay, concealing it from view. There was a piercing shriek from a woman near the entrance.



A Galley o' Fun!

POSTAGE AND PACKING. "When I was a gander-necked youth," pessimistic-reminiscently remarked the Old Dodger, "I had a habit of answering advertisements wherein Wonder Books, Golden Boxes of Goods, and other rare bargains were offered absolutely free; all I had to do was to send a certain number of cents to pay for postage and packing. Somehow, when I received my loot, the Golden Boxes didn't glitter enough to injure my eyesight, the Wonder Books caused me to wonder why anybody wondered at them, the rare bargains were more or less raw, and, of course, the postage and packing cost more than the goods were worth.

THOSE OLD SONGS.



"I cannot sing the old songs!" Her voice rang sweetly clear; It filled my heart with happiness, It calmed my every fear, I cannot sing the old songs! Gadzooks! But that's all right! For these are those she used to sing From early morn till night:

"Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?" "School Days." "Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet." "I've Got Rings On My Fingers." "Garden of Roses." "By the Light of the Silvery Moon." "Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay." "That Mesmerizing Mendelssohn Tune." "What's the Matter With Father?" "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

TO OUR SUMMER APHRODITE.



Men come and go; changes harass; Old ocean rounds his seasons' surge; New customs age, and pall, and pass— Still dost thou cut thine old-time splurge.

Dainty, superb; Venus or elf; Fair, fond or frigid, bold or coy; Through time and fashion's change, thyself, Still dost thou work us grief—and joy.

A dandy laughing in the sea; A mermaid musing on the shore; A siren, lurine mine to thee— Still art thou as thou wert of yore.

A narrowed skirt, an altered cap, A freer reach of limb and arm, A fall out off or on, mayhap, Still leave thee maid of ruth—and charm.

A siren, Diana, Venus, maid, Temptress and angel, lure and need, Hail! As thy generations fade Still dost thou bloom to meet our need.

AIDS TO THE MEMORY. "What's that string tied on your finger, Billy?" "That? My wife put that there." "To remind you?" "Yes, to remind me to—to— Bless my soul, what was it to remind me of, now? Oh, yes, I know! My wife tied that string on my finger so that if anything worries me I'll remember to forget it!"

THE INDISPENSABLE BOY. Caller.—How is your new office-boy getting along these days? Lawyer D. Fine.—He's got things so mixed up now that I couldn't get along without him!



"Everybody around here knows Elias Bogger," said the other between bits of pie.



There Came a Mighty Tug at the Rops Bogger Was Holding.

ladies of the spectacle, all with Elias Bogger as their objective point, and all screaming a mad demand for money! Gazing about him in desperation, the new proprietor saw Wallingford standing by a big rear tent and rushed toward him for protection. J. Rufus seemed to know instinctively that Bogger was in growing fear of his life, for he lifted up the edge of the tent, shoved Elias through and met the astonished mob himself. The smile on Wallingford's joyful face deepened, as presently there came from the interior of that tent a hubbub of shrill cries. A moment later Mr. Bogger came out of



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ing while a hundred throats yelled decisive directions to the officers and to Bogger. With a parting cheer from the crowd Mr. Bogger, with a rush and a clutter and a whoop, drove around behind the Booby House to the stables.

"Room-de-ra-a-h-dahl! Boom-de-ra-a-h-dahl!" sang Blackie Daw again, springing to his feet with the ecstasy of a boy. "Gee, how I'd like to be a kid again and see this all for the first time! Hooryay! Here come twenty of the P. T. Barnes peg drivers disguised as princes."

"It's a great day for Burrville," chuckled J. Rufus after the passing of the calliope and the local grocery wag-