

SCRIBE FRAZER'S INTERVIEW WITH THE CIRCUS MAN AT BLYTH.

Since the arrival of the circus in Blyth, a few months ago, the question has come boldly to the front how far the attractions afforded by such an entertainment is supplemental to the legitimate drama, or whether the circus is regarded as coming in direct competition with the theatre and drama. In Blyth, both the theatre and circus have had to contend for an existence. It is well known that when Mr. Fynes, the miners' historian, put forth his arm to rock the cradle of the Blyth Thespian Temple, the Christian bigots of those "early days" were rampant with canting enthusiasm for the detriments of the "strolling players" and the drama. However, the "age of reason" conveniently outlived sectarian monopoly and intolerance, and to-day, under the able management of Mr. A. C. Moody, the old Zion Chapel now resounds the eloquent eloquence of Shakespeare's dramatic plays. Strange to say, what the bigots endeavoured to accomplish in putting their feet on the neck of the legitimate drama in Blyth, some of the present public representatives for Cowpen township have endeavoured to accomplish in the case of the circus. It may be as well to explain two distinctions. In the case of the theatre the opposition was composed by those whose sectarian belief led them to imagine that the morality of the town was at stake by permitting theatricals to expound the genius of Shakespeare and other standard dramatic authors. In the case of the circus the Cowpen Local Board members were under some superstitious adherence to their modern and half-forgotten by-laws, and were on the point of acting as prosecutor, judge, and jury, in the expulsion of an educational circus, because some technical breach had been unintentionally committed. The people of Cowpen have within their township both a theatre and a circus, and it is now regarded as a fact that they are a public boon. An attempt was made to foist a music hall on the people, but it died almost as soon as it was born. While the theatre ministers to the mature judgment of dramatic admirers, the circus provides for the rising youth a certain amount of attraction where they can learn and appreciate the effects of kindness to dumb animals in the remarkable training they receive.

Scribe Fraser, of Wood Hut fame, being anxious to ascertain how circus life differed from the life of the "strolling players," took upon himself the responsibility of making Mr. Tudor, and his manager, Mr. Butler, his guests for an "afternoon tea" within his private sanctum at 23, Waterloo Road, and there interviewed Mr. Tudor respecting the uphill life and downhill grade of a circus manager. The proprietor, Mr. Tudor, is a jolly specimen of the best type of the free-born Englishman. He is a shrewd man of the world, full of generosity, and with no antipathy to any human mortal born of a woman. The dumb animals under his command are his constant study and care, and the perfection at which they have arrived are the most convincing testimony to his love and care for their material welfare. Mr. Tudor appeared soon "at home" with Scribe Fraser, for whom he evinced a common feeling on the lines of good fellowship. Spiritual influence appeared on the table to tempt Mr. Tudor's stomach. Perhaps the following interview between the Scribe and Mr. Tudor will be of some slight interest to the readers of the *Herald*, and go to show that the life of a circus manager, with all its trials and enchantments, is not without its trials and triumphs.

Mr. Tudor.—Now, Mr. Tudor, how do you like Blyth and its people?

Mr. Tudor.—Oh! I like the place well, and never took the action of your Cowpen Local Board as a criterion of the hostility to my circus erection. I really believe the Board's keep action was brought about by some technical misunderstanding.

Mr. Fraser.—Are you aware that several of the Cowpen Board members and its chairman have been bestowing their patronage on your circus, and giving you good chances with unbounded delight?

Mr. Tudor.—I have learned that several of the members and the chairman of the Cowpen Local Board have been frequent attendees, and delighted with the circus and the programme, and therefore I don't think they have any hostility to the management and performance which is well guarded against anything offensive.

Mr. Fraser.—Have you in the past been harassed by any other public body in connection with your circus erection?

Mr. Tudor.—No, sir; and that's what puzzles me why a temporary wood erection should be singled out, not on sanitary grounds, for the production of plans. In fact, the wood circus I have erected is really much safer than the large canvas circus tents that have visited Blyth without any hostility from any one.

Mr. Fraser.—Do you regard your delightful circus in any sense an opposing element to the theatre?

Mr. Tudor.—Oh, dear! nothing of the kind. We each have our different class of audience. The theatre as a rule ministers to one class of minds, while the circus provides for all classes.

Mr. Fraser.—Mr. Tudor, I am afraid there is too much of the American puzzle about that answer. Will you explain your position on that point?

Mr. Tudor.—I shall endeavour to do so. The circus is always appreciated and patronised by all classes of the people with a taste for religion, and who adopt conscientious opinions on what is right and what is wrong. On the other hand the theatre is looked upon with a certain amount of indifference by those holding strong and deeply-grounded religious convictions.

Mr. Fraser.—Is it your opinion that the theatre has a moral or elevating tendency?

Mr. Tudor.—Most decidedly. The theatre may have had objectionable frivolities, but the press and public opinion have been the means of weeding out anything tending to offensiveness.

Mr. Fraser.—What I want to get at is this point—whether you regard yourself as a rival in competing as circus manager against the directors and managers of the Blyth Theatre?

Mr. Tudor.—Both I and my company are on the most friendly terms with Mr. Moody and the theatrical profession that visit the Blyth Octagon Theatre. I am always prepared to reciprocate any compliment extended towards me by the local manager of the legitimate drama.

Mr. Fraser.—What is the chief feature of a circus, as regards education?

Mr. Tudor.—To commence with, the horse is a noble animal and susceptible of great kindness. By its training in the circus you bring out its capabilities and intelligence, and thus shows to the public how the best friend of man can be developed in the faculties which it possesses.

Mr. Fraser.—That is very good. But by putting the horse to one side, what other feature of an educational character have you?

Mr. Tudor.—When the young men and women observe the agility with which our performers manipulate the horses, it has the educational tendency of wishing them to acquire equestrian knowledge and practical ability in riding exercise. Moreover, as a health resource, they will improve their system by learning horse riding accomplishment.

Mr. Fraser.—Now look here, as the horse does not constitute the whole of a circus performance, what about the clowns and jesters, such as Sam and Bob Anderson?

Mr. Tudor.—Ah, my dear Scribe, I can see by the merry twinkle in your eye, you are a jester and no fool, however clownish in appearance.

Mr. Fraser (laughing).—I regret to say I can't resist blushing to your soft impeachment?

Mr. Tudor.—The wit of the supposed fool dressed as clown, sharpens the corresponding wit of the hundreds of listeners to his quibbles and jeers, this also tends to sharpen the intellect of young and old.

Mr. Fraser.—Quite so, I know all that already as a frequenter of all entertainments from the humours of a penny show to the higher grade of Tudor's cultivated circus. But in what other way does the circus educate?

Mr. Tudor.—So far as the performance is concerned it sharpens up the performers. The athletic and acrobatic feats are educational, and young men are induced to imitate such performances, thus developing their muscles; exercising themselves in healthy manœuvres, and in dissipating deformities of the human system.

Mr. Fraser.—Perhaps you will not term me impertinent if I ask whether the religious section of the community are hostile to anything taking place in the circus performances?

Mr. Tudor.—Of course not; it's the reverse. The ministers and leaders of church and chapel attend circus performances, and are always attending the educational programme submitted.

Mr. Fraser.—Perhaps you would have no objection to favour me with a few of your experiences in circus life and its management?

Mr. Tudor.—I have not the slightest objection, for a lesson or two might even be learned from my circus experiences, insignificant as it may perhaps appear to be.

Mr. Fraser.—I dare say you won't remember when you were first enabled, but do you recollect your first appearance in the ring of a circus?

Mr. Tudor.—I can just manage that. I was 4 years old when I was first mounted on a horse.

I was awfully anxious to get on to the horse's back and soon showed signs to get off. It was my uncle, Fenny Foolitt, a remarkable clown, who mounted me first on the horse in Lambeth Circus, London, since converted into swimming baths. I didn't care for my first ride, and got home, but a little later on I had another try

on my uncle's horse, but soon got home sick. When 14 years of age I went back to my uncle as an apprentice to circus life and to learn horse riding and athletic business. Still I got home sick, and went home to my father, who was a blacksmith at Blackfriars Bridge, but the blowing of the bellows, the clank of the anvil hammer, the electric coil sparks, and the strains of the "Village Blacksmith" were not fascinating enough for me, and I actually went back again to my uncle, who started a circus on his own account, under the name of Powell, Foolitt, and Clark, which underwent a commercial change later on.

Mr. Fraser.—Without going into the many details about your uncle's circus, where was your first engagement?

Mr. Tudor.—At Hastings in a large wood building owned by Mr. Batty. I stayed the short season and was successful. I next joined Studley and Harnetton's wood circus, a very large one, and in the midst of my success I took ill and went home to London. I had a season at the Alexandra Palace, success again attending my efforts. I next went to Keith and Bradford's wood circus, and was well taken with it. I also went with the patient circus, a horses, a marvellous erection.

Mr. Fraser.—Has your circus life been confined to southern towns, or did you venture on the continent as a performer?

Mr. Tudor.—My notions for travelling began to extend, and I joined the brothers Cooke for a tour on the continent. At Switzerland a Frenchman had a very large circus, and among those "starring" was Mr. Hine, who was performing in my circus a few weeks ago. Mr. Hine, who appeared as the man on the string, can speak no less than 9 languages exceedingly well. Success attended me at this part of the continent where I was starring in the same business as Mr. Clarence, Welly Cook, at present with me. I adopted the business of English question jockey, and spent about five months in Switzerland.

Mr. Fraser.—How does the people on the continent take the circus business? Do they go more in for horses, or merely the other departments of circus business?

Mr. Tudor.—This Frenchman that I was with kept no less than 90 performing horses. The people on the continent go in for legitimate circus business, and you may rely that is so, for a circus manager would not keep 90 performing horses unless they were appreciated. I left Switzerland with the Frenchman and went to France to a place called Lyons, where there was a stone-built circus, a very large one indeed. I had a month among the Frenchmen, and I found them to be a spendid lot of people, but like other parts of the globe they have their grievances. I next jumped to Germany, where I joined a circus with 105 performing horses, and only two of the horses had shod. The boss of the circus had "black" for his private carriage. The circus was a tremendous large one, and built of wood. I got on well, and the programme was confined to legitimate circus business. I paid a visit to Belgium, Straussberg, and a lot of other towns. I noticed a lot of relief of the late war between Germany and France. In Gravelotte 3,000 soldiers are buried in a space not half as large as my circus, and yet it is called a cemetery. The people hold the spot somewhat sacred, and go frequently to pluck flowers as keepsakes, and no stranger visiting the place is allowed to depart without a florid keepsake. On one occasion we had a picnic in that vicinity, and a ponderous snake scared us away, so you see I not only got a token but a reminder. I left this large circus for a smaller one where there were 90 performing horses, and after a starring engagement went back to the south of France. Altogether I had more than three years on the continent.

Mr. Fraser.—When did you commence as a circus proprietor? I suppose you will be like the majority of circus owners, you will have experienced at times the entire absence of funds, and at other times you will have rubbed your hands with glee at the little piles of golden pieces?

Mr. Tudor.—One would think you had been in the business from the peculiar and original way you have of "sifting." Just before I come to the circus ownership business, I should tell you that I joined old John Swallow's circus at Kidderminster. This old veteran had a good spread of canvas and an outside show, with 43 performing horses. I commenced a tour with old Swallow, and after travelling 2,000 miles by various routes landed at Ayrshire in Scotland, where the partnership dissolved and everything sold off. I then took a winter engagement at Cardiff with an American circus, when I was presented with a gold medal and several other presents. I had a tour into a number of other towns after I left Wales. I commenced some eight years ago as a circus proprietor in Worcester, a town noted for sauce. The elements took a spite at my venture, and the result was that after the first night my circus was snowed up in the month of February, and I lost financially. The people before I went away were very good, and I was made the recipient of a splendid gold medal. On that occasion I had a partner, who has since "gone alone." I next took a starring engagement for the following summer, and was successful in performing, though the lady had a temporary absence, and the "ghost" did not "walk" regular at the week end.

Mr. Fraser.—You seem to be making a pause. Was your next tour any better? I suppose you never went round with the hat?

Mr. Tudor.—No, but I had grave suspicions at one time that I might have to do so. I took a starring engagement at Ipswich and other places where the starting rinks were adopted for a circus. The rinks were never any good. There was no golden egg. It was all glitter and no gold, and I had to resort to the Post Office Savings Bank where I had some money saved up. I next joined Charley Keith, the great English clown, and did well with him, and had the fortune to get a gold medal, silver mounted whip and other presents.

I next took a turn to Hanover, when in the height of summer business was bad at one time. The name may be said of Lowestoft, but at Lynne, Keith and I found business all right. The Railway Company ran special trains to bring people to the circus. I was again presented with practical tokens of esteem. At Yarmouth, business was good, but Sequah made his appearance and people were tempted to part with their money for "medicine." I had a good stock of horses for performing. I next bought a business, and after losing a stiff sum of money, had the business sold by consent, and I closed up and took a starring engagement with Walter Gibb at Folkestone. I enjoyed this engagement though at times the salary was nil. I then started at Boswell's circus, and back again to North Wales where I found Dainte with a circus the same gentleman that was at my circus when I joined at Blyth with his performing animals, dogs and goats. I got on well, and left Dainte and jumped back to Sheffield where I had a starring engagement with Stacey, when a wood theatre was turned into a circus. I had a stock of horses of my own, and the circus of wood was adjoining a public shop, and as Mrs. Tudor was afraid of fire and that the stock of horses would be lost, we cleared out. I next went to Bradford where I had good luck. I next went to Ipswich again, and put up a small circus, a larger one than Blyth, and with my stock of horses did well nearly 6 months. I took a fancy to open another circus at Stockton, and the first 6 weeks the business was bad and I got a little disheartened, and strange to say I had a benefit, and the tradesmen for the first time came and I had a big house, and their sympathy with me tempted me to give them another trial, and I did so, and stayed 27 weeks longer; and then a grand Opera House or Theatre was opened, and I closed and left. While I was at Stockton I opened a circus at Durham. It was a new one, I opened the circus with the patronage of the Mayor of Durham and the Corporation, the "house" was a jolly good one, and after a stay left for Mid-dlesbrough, where I had to encounter the evil hour of labour, trade being bad, and distresses all round, I lost considerably after a two months' stay.

Mr. Fraser.—Under all these testing circumstances, how did you feel? How did you manage to smile in the ring?

Mr. Tudor.—There was no smiling. I thought I was not going to smile any more. I left Mid-dlesbrough and came back over to Durham again, where I resolved to rest on my cars and have a vacation. After being prevailed upon, I re-opened the circus with the patronage of the Mayor of Durham and the Corporation, the "house" was a jolly good one, and after a stay left for Mid-dlesbrough, where I had to encounter the evil hour of labour, trade being bad, and distresses all round, I lost considerably after a two months' stay.

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is now far advanced we will adjourn the interview. I am sure the readers of the *Herald* will be a trifle interested in our afternoon tea chat. By-the-bye, where is your other manager, friend Buckland? He is a genial card. I understand he has been with you for a number of years.

Mr. Tudor.—Buckland is celebrating his birthday to-day with a few friends, and that accounts for his absence from your festive board. You will know what it is to have a birthday, too?

Mr. Fraser.—Oh, yes; they come round as regular as the days in the calendar.

The visitors were seen to leave the front door of the sanctum with a cordial shake of the hand, and as they proceeded on their way (Tudor and his Butler) they filled the air with the fragrance and smoking incense from the Wood Hut Havana.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Communications intended for insertion must be authenticated by the name of the writer and rendered non-removable for publication, or by a signature of a notary public. No notice can be taken of anonymous letters. Rejected communications will not be returned. Letters to be in not later than Wednesday.

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA.

Sirs.—In looking through your issue of January 30th, I was pleased to see that the anniversary of the Scottish poet was commemorated in a way and manner that fits well to the character of the Immortal Burns. I could just fancy myself at Choppington with a lot of the well-known faces, and to see them brighten as some speaker showed forth some of the genius of their poet, or brought it out in the "old Scotch sanga," and to hear the hearty applause given with the honesty and good feeling that is so well known to belong to Northumbrians, and it really did me good to read of their doings. I send you a few lines to the memory of my friend Burns.—

On the banks and brases o' bonnie Doon
Still sweetly sings the warbling bird,
But he who gave its name to song
Will never more on earth be heard.

In spring-time still the daisies bloom
Upon the bonnie banks o' Ayre,
But Burns no more will tread its braes,
Nor tell his tales o' sorrow there.

The streams around Montgomery still
In murmur kiss the pebbly shore;
But Scotland's sweetest minstrel there
Will mourn Glencairn's untimely death.

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His harsh is hushed—its thrilling notes
No more are heard in shady dell;
But heathery hill and flowered brae
Still of its tuneful numbers tell.

His songs are heard in mountan glen,
"Mid Highland hills, on Sunny plains;
And shady woods and meadows green
Still echo to his magic strains.

And while Ben Lomond proudly stands,
And mountain streams their courses run,
The Scottish muse will freshly keep
The memory of her gifted son.

WILLIAM LOGAN.

Greta, New South Wales, Australia.

STATION TOWN AND HUTTON HENRY BELIEF FUND.

DEAR SIR.—Allow me through your valuable paper to thank our kind friends in Northumberland who have contributed so generously to our little children, through our Bicycle Club, who have now returned from their tour amongst our friends in the North, on which they speak with the greatest praise of the kind manner in which they have been received. They have also been able to turn over to the Relief Fund £7 as the fruits of their labour.

Yours respectfully,
WM. HUGALL, Secretary.

May 31st, 1892.

BLYTH LOCAL BOARD AND THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE.

Sirs.—I am pleased to observe in your last issue a letter from Mr. Bately on salpines deposits and the health of the people. I quite agree with Mr. Bately that the proper place for a hospital refuse is the sea, instead of using the links or the snake, or any other place that may in the near future be the site of domestic buildings, without doubt these deposits must be injurious to health, but to a certain extent we can evade their baneful influence by giving them a wide birth. Unfortunately the inhabitants of Cowpen Township have fever beds in closer proximity than these links. With your permission I will briefly state my case which is an isolated one. Last October I had typhoid fever in my house which terminated fatally. I was at once put in quarantine, not even allowed to attend work until my house was disinfected to the satisfaction of the Medical Officer. At that period I called the Officer's attention to a diseased cistern in my yard, after the usual formula had been gone through it was filled up and closely nailed down until a fortnight ago, when I caused it to be opened as the smell of sewerage gas in my house was abominable. The cistern in all its naked prominence is now on view for the edification of the Cowpen Local Board, and all sanitary reformers, as the case is now in the hands of the Local Authority I trust they will use all speed and have the fever bed removed at once or I may have occasion to ask why the delay. Thanking you in anticipation.

I remain, etc.,
JAMES WILLSON.

11, Croft Road, Waterloo,
Blyth, May 31, 1892.

THE NEW GRAVEYARD FOR CHOPPINGTON.

Sirs.—With your permission, I would like to draw the attention of the public, especially the ratepayers of Choppington, to the proposed new graveyard for Choppington. Unfortunately the present one is nearly full, and it has become necessary to seek for a new one. I suppose that the Vicar has agreed to give land between the Glebe Terrace and Francis Villa for that purpose. There can be no fault found with the place where they intend making it. In the first place, it is not in the parish, which means double dues for burials. In the second place, I believe it is against the law to make a new graveyard so near to dwellings; at any rate, it is against sanitary laws to have it so close to the water main. Surely there is plenty fever in Scotland Gate without another source of danger. There might have been some excuse if they could not have got land adjoining the present churchyard, but when there are scores of acres away to the east, and which will never be built upon, I think your readers will agree with me when I say that there ought to be something done to stop such high-handed work. There ought to be a ratemakers' meeting held, and the medical men of the district invited to give their opinion. I trust that this will be done, or other means taken to prevent what, if allowed to proceed, will become a nuisance. Thanking you in anticipation.

I am, yours, &c.,
VIGIL.

MORPETH STREETS.

Sirs.—You seem to be very much afraid of spending water on your streets in Morpeth on a dry day. Surely it would be to your advantage to attend better to the streets and not allow the dust to blow about as it does to the great discomfort of visitors, and business men generally. I am persuaded that the Morpeth tradesmen are extremely good natured, or they would not suffer their goods to be subjected to the clouds of filth that are continually drifting about which must reduce their value to a very great extent indeed. To all parties I think a more frequent use of the water cart would be a boon.

I beg to remain, sir,

Yours truly,
A VISITOR.

EARLY SWARM OF BEES.—Mr. Robert Dickson, farmer, Campfield, Cornhill-on-Tweed, had a very fine swarm of bees on Tuesday, which is the first in the district this season. The weather is exceptionally fine, which no doubt accounts for the early swarming. The old proverb says, "A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay."

REAPPEARANCE OF THE DIAMOND-BACK MOTH.—Miss E. A. Ormerod, the honorary consulting entomologist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England, announces that the diamond-back moth has reappeared near Pocklington, and also that it is feared an attack has been made on the crops in one locality in Northumberland. It was only on Sunday morning that the pest was positively identified in the former case, while the specimens sent from Northumberland were too much rubbed to make identification positive.

BOOTH TREAT AT BOTHALMAGE.—On Friday last the BOOTH Church choir boys, numbering about 15, were entertained to tea at Bothalmaige, when they were waited upon by Lady Louisa Hamilton, the Hon. Mrs. Ellis, and Miss Ellis. They afterwards ran obstacle races, sack races, and jumped upon the lawn for prizes, which were awarded to them by the ladies. The rain some what interfered with their amusement, but they all dispersed in the evening with ringing cheers, having much enjoyed the entertainment.