BARNUM



M. R. Werner

PIPCUB EDITIONS

Barnum

M. R. Werner

THE AUTHOR



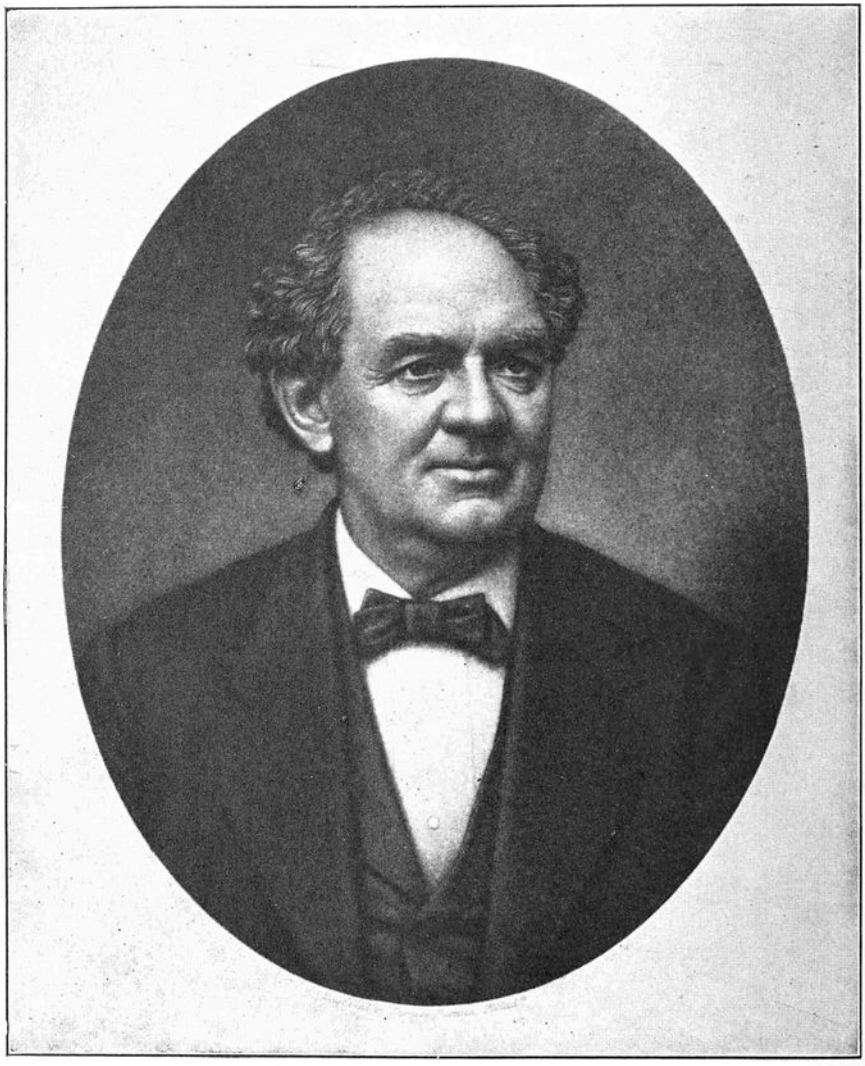
M. R. Werner

Author vignette inspired by the published work.

M. R. Werner

Morris Robert Werner was an American biographer. Among his subjects were public figures whose influence depended on their ability to organize people, command attention or make institutions work to their advantage.

In Barnum, the career of a showman opens onto the business of popular entertainment. Publicity, spectacle and the audience's own curiosity are all part of the biographer's subject.



P T Barnum

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From the 1870 edition of Barnum's Autobiography

M. R. WERNER



BARNUM



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TO
JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

PREFACE

P. T. Barnum wrote a voluminous autobiography, the many editions of which have long been out of print. This autobiography is one of the most ingenious and fascinating, and at the same time one of the most bombastic and verbose books in American literature. It will be discussed here in its proper place in detail, and it is mentioned in the very beginning because some explanation is necessary, besides the story of this extraordinary man, for telling it now. Barnum was taken for many years at his own valuation, by his friends and critics alike; those who admired him accepted him for what he himself always said he was, "The Prince of Humbugs," and those who despised him admitted readily that he deserved that title. His autobiography was regarded during his lifetime as the perfect embodiment of the facts of that life and their interpretation, and no attempt has been made since to review one of America's greatest shows. In the Preface to some of his editions of the *Life of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself*, and *Struggles and Triumphs, Forty Years' Recollections of P. T. Barnum*, as it was sometimes called, Barnum wrote:

> "There is an almost universal, and not unworthy curiosity to learn the methods and measures, the ups and downs, the strifes and victories, the mental and moral *personnel* of those who have taken an active and prominent part in human affairs. But an autobiography has attractions and merits superior to those of a 'Life' written by another, who, however intimate with its subject, cannot know all that helps to give interest and accuracy to the narrative, or completeness to the character. The story from the actor's own lips has always a charm it can never have when told by another."

The story from the actor's own lips is likely to be prejudiced in favor of the author who is also the hero. When Rudyard Kipling first toured the United States, he interviewed Mark Twain. Mark Twain told this young Anglo-Indian, who had visited the Hartford shrine to worship before an American whom he believed to be a master, something that applies to Barnum and his autobiography:

> "Returning to the big chair, he [Mark Twain], speaking of truth and the like in literature, said that an autobiography was the one work in which a man, against his own will and in spite of his utmost striving to the contrary, revealed himself in his true light to the world....
>
> "'But in genuine autobiography, I believe it is impossible for a man to tell the truth about himself or to avoid impressing the reader with the truth about himself.... It is not in human nature to write the truth about itself. None the less the reader gets a general impression from an autobiography whether the man is a fraud or a good man. The reader can't give his reasons any more than a man can explain why a woman struck him as being lovely when he doesn't remember her hair, eyes, teeth, or figure. And the impression that the reader gets is a correct one.'
>
> "'Do you ever intend to write an autobiography?' Kipling asked.
>
> "'If I do, it will be as other men have done—with the most earnest desire to make myself out to be the better man in every little business that has been to my discredit; and I shall fail, like the others, to make my readers believe anything except the truth.'"[1]

Even so with Barnum: it is impossible for him to tell the truth about himself, and yet he does not avoid impressing the reader with the truth about himself. No one thanks P. T. Barnum more than I for publishing his voluminous autobiography, for without it this book would have been more difficult, and with it the task of interpreting the story and character of one of the most typical Americans was a business of checking the inaccuracies that necessarily follow from what Mark Twain called the earnest desire to make himself out to be the better man in every little business that has been to his discredit. There was also the work of coördinating the material found in the seven different editions of the autobiography, for Barnum continually found it necessary in later editions to suppress things contained in early editions which seemed unseemly after mature consideration, even though they happened to be the truth about himself. He also added appendices each year towards the end of his career that gave interesting information about his activities, so that in order to get a complete picture of the man from his autobiography it is necessary to read about ten different volumes. After these duties were finished, there remained only the larger task of ferreting out those things which the author of his own life always sees fit to omit entirely. Every eminent or notorious person should write his autobiography, if only to provide his future biographer with a skeleton to articulate.

Since Barnum's death in 1891 there has been ample time to estimate accurately his influence and position in our life. It is my conviction that both of these were important. A distinguished American editor said recently that he considers Lincoln and Barnum the most typical American figures, and that he is rather afraid to think which is the more typical. William Roscoe Thayer wrote in *The Life of John Hay*: "If the question had been asked during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, 'Who is the typical American of this period?' a perspicacious observer might have replied, 'Phineas T. Barnum.'" And it is because he was so typical and at the same time so unique that Barnum remains to-day one of the outstanding figures of our national life, for Barnum was a most typical American without ever becoming an average American. In newspapers, books, and magazines we frequently see the sentence, "P. T. Barnum was right." There was a popular song beginning, "P. T. Barnum had the right idea." But the people to-day who use these expressions are rather doubtful of the

details of the showman's social psychology, which made him successful, and therefore right. That social psychology is usually summed up popularly in the phrase attributed to him, "There's a sucker born every minute." But there was more to Barnum than that, and it is the purpose of this book to give an impression of that idea, or group of ideas, which has interested the world in Barnum since the year 1841, when Barnum's American Museum opened its doors at Ann Street and Broadway.

The things that Barnum did were often so curious, sometimes so incredible, and always so picturesque, that the reader may be inclined to doubt their accuracy. I am not writing a romance, however, and there is ample authority for every statement and anecdote included in this book; the bibliography at the end indicates the sources of information. The footnote is one of the banes of a reader's continued interest. If he is a curious reader, the footnote plagues him with the necessity to look at the bottom of the page; if he is a cursory reader, the footnote which he skips is always an annoyance because he is compelled to skip it. Therefore, I have omitted, at the risk of being called a romancer and in the hope of being more entertaining, all footnotes except those absolutely necessary to my reputation for veracity.

Many persons have aided me in the composition of this book. My thanks are especially due to Leonidas Westervelt, whose private collection of Barnum and Jenny Lind books, pamphlets, and letters, which is probably the largest in existence, he so kindly placed at my disposal; to C. Barnum Seeley, for information about his grandfather; to Harry Houdini, for permission to use pictures and showbills from his huge private collection of theatrical material; to Elizabeth Hall Dietz, for valuable assistance; and to the New York Public Library and the Harvard College Library.

M. R. W.

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BARNUM

CHAPTER I

THE CONNECTICUT YANKEE

I

FIRECRACKERS had just celebrated the thirty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States in the small town of Bethel, Connecticut, when the first son by his second wife was born to Philo F. Barnum. P. T. Barnum was born on July 5, 1810. He arrived late. It was a pity, for he would so much have enjoyed being born on the Fourth of July. He himself wrote that after peace and quiet were restored, and the audience had regained their seats, he made his début. Probably his tardiness was for the best: competition between P. T. Barnum and the national holiday would have been too much—for the national holiday.

Lincoln had just about cut his first tooth, and Poe was in his swaddling clothes, when Barnum appeared on the American scene. When, in 1891, he died, Free Silver was beginning to be discussed in the Senate, and William James's *Principles of Psychology* was a new book. The span his life covered was as significant as any in American history, and he managed to make himself as much at home among his contemporaries as the Fourth of July. Barnum wrote to Matthew Arnold when Arnold was lecturing in this country, inviting him to visit at Bridgeport, Connecticut. The invitation read: "You and I, Mr. Arnold, ought to be acquainted. You are a celebrity, I am a notoriety." This remained his self-appointed position among his fellowmen during his entire lifetime.

They named him Phineas Taylor Barnum, after his maternal grandfather, Phineas Taylor, from whom he inherited a tract of swampy, snake-infested land, known as "Ivy Island," and a propensity for practical jokes which the boy never outgrew. Barnum wrote of his grandfather: "He would go farther, wait longer, work harder, and contrive deeper, to carry out a practical joke, than for anything else under heaven." Barnum admitted the influence of Phineas Taylor's

propensity, and throughout his own life he exercised it with all the force which heredity gives to individual action. The paternal grandfather was Ephraim Barnum—Captain Ephraim Barnum, a captain of militia in the Revolutionary War. Captain Ephraim Barnum had fourteen children by two wives, and died at the age of eighty-four, when P. T. Barnum was seven years old. His grandson tells us that "he relished a joke better than the average of mankind."

Philo F. Barnum, P. T. Barnum's father, was sometime tailor, farmer, tavern-keeper, livery-stable proprietor, and country store merchant. He also operated a small express company, and his son wrote that "with greater opportunities and a larger field for his efforts and energies, he might have been a man of mark and means." He never did a profitable business in any of these capacities.

Phineas began the little schooling he received when he was six years old. He later wrote that "a school-house in those days was a thing to be dreaded—a schoolmaster, a kind of being to make the children tremble." The first three male teachers he sat under—a Mr. Camp, a Mr. Zerah Judson, and a Mr. Curtiss—"used the ferule prodigiously." For one season he attended the private school of Laurens P. Hickok, later Professor Hickok, the educational philosopher and metaphysician. Hickok's sweetheart, Eliza Taylor, was also a pupil. "One day he threw a ruler at my head," Barnum wrote. "I dodged, and it struck Eliza in the face. He quietly apologized and said she might apply that to some other time when she might deserve it." Young Phineas excelled all other scholars in Bethel in arithmetic, he admits, and his later career shows a constant development by the rules of arithmetical progression and sometimes even as fast as a geometrical progression. He recalled that his teacher and a neighbor got him out of bed late at night at the age of twelve to settle a wager. The teacher had bet that Phineas could figure up the correct number of feet in a load of wood in five minutes. Phineas marked down on the stovepipe in his father's kitchen the given dimensions and in less than two minutes gave the correct result, much to the delight of his teacher, his mother, and himself, and the incredulous astonishment of the neighbor.

He was often kept out of school to help on his father's farm, and he records as one of his earliest emotions an aversion to hand-work that earned him a reputation as the laziest boy in town. This impression of

him by his neighbors, however, was false, Barnum said, “because I was always busy at head-work to evade the sentence of gaining bread by the sweat of my brow.” Throughout his life he hated manual labor and routine work, but the number of enterprises in which he sometimes engaged simultaneously would indicate that he never disliked work if he was allowed to choose its nature. What Barnum called “my organ of acquisitiveness” was large. At an early age he earned money by selling cherry-rum to soldiers, and when he was twelve years old he owned a sheep, a calf, and a sum of money in his own right. He would have been a wealthy boy for his environment, if his father had not insisted that he buy his own clothes.

When he was about twelve years old, Barnum paid his first visit to New York City, assisting a neighbor to deliver a drove of cattle there. To “go to York” from Connecticut in 1821 was not a trip, but a journey, which had some of the elements of a pilgrimage; it took Phineas four days to reach the big city with his cattle. During this period passengers traveled from Connecticut to New York via the New York-Boston stage coach or by boat via Long Island Sound. The stage coach was not allowed to take on passengers in any Connecticut town on Sunday, and any man who rode on horseback or in his carriage before sundown on the Lord’s Day was arrested by a deacon of the church. If the stage coach driver was found with passengers in his possession, he was arrested by meeting house sentinels, posted along the Connecticut route of the coach. In Barnum’s youth the Blue Laws were Connecticut’s contribution to American life. The voyage to New York by boat depended upon the state of the wind, sometimes requiring eight hours and sometimes several days. Barnum’s grandfather, Phineas Taylor, took this voyage upon an occasion which gave him an opportunity to enact what seemed to impress his grandson as Phineas Taylor’s most famous practical joke. On this particular voyage the fourteen jolly jokers from Bethel were becalmed for seven days, at the end of which all needed to shave. There was one razor on board, belonging to Phineas Taylor, who professed himself against the practice of shaving and refused the loan of his razor. Finally, the boat approached New York on Sunday afternoon. Barnum’s grandfather was persuaded to lend his razor since the barber shops would be closed when the party arrived in New York. Because time was short, he stipulated that each man must shave half

his face and pass the razor on to the next. After all had finished, each could begin shaving the other half of his face. Half of each face was shaved, and Phineas Taylor began on the other half of his own face. When he had finished, Barnum's grandfather stropped the razor, and, as if by accident, it flew from his hand into the water. All the other passengers created a sensation with their half-shaved faces when they arrived in New York on Sunday afternoon. Barnum himself never ceased to delight in this type of joke.

Barnum's father soon despaired of ever being able to make his son useful on the farm, and Barnum admitted that he "generally contrived to shirk the work altogether, or, by slighting it, get through with the day's work." His father opened a country store in Bethel and made Phineas the clerk. Here he drove sharp bargains with old women who paid for their purchases in butter, eggs, beeswax, feathers, and rags. The atmosphere of the country store exercised an important influence on Barnum's later career. On wet days there was no business, and then, he tells us, "from six to twenty social, jolly, story-telling, joke-playing wags and wits, regular originals, would get together at the tavern or store, and spend their evenings or stormy afternoons in relating anecdotes, describing their adventures, playing off practical jokes upon each other, and engaging in every project out of which a little fun could be extracted by village wits whose ideas were usually sharpened at brief intervals by a 'treat,' otherwise known as a glass of Santa Cruz rum, old Holland gin, or Jamaica spirits." Practical jokes of a crude nature, the product of brains whose sole aim was to get the better of the other fellow somehow, were a great source of amusement and one of the few sources of instruction of young Phineas. These Connecticut Yankees must have made this Connecticut Yankee realize that if he was to survive in this world, he must be sharp and not too scrupulous, except on Sunday.

His own grandfather played what Barnum called a practical joke, and which we might be inclined to call something more, on the boy the day he was born. It has been mentioned that Barnum inherited a tract of land called "Ivy Island" from Phineas Taylor in consideration of taking the name Phineas through life. His grandfather never spoke of the boy in the presence of strangers without saying that he was the richest boy in town because he owned "Ivy Island." For about six years these allusions to "Ivy Island" continued, and finally, when he

was twelve years old, permission was granted him to visit the property which was deeded in his name. The property consisted of bogs, snakes, hornets, and stunted ivies, mostly under water. When he asked for an explanation, Phineas was told that it could not be an island unless it was literally surrounded by water, and that it could not be "Ivy Island" unless its main product was stunted ivies. We shall see how Barnum used "Ivy Island" to advantage, but at the time it was a profound disappointment, and the incident must have influenced his impression of the ways of the world.

Deception was common practice in the country store business. Barnum wrote that often he cut open bundles of rags brought to the store by country women to exchange for goods, and found that what were ostensibly good linen and cotton rags contained in their midst extra weight in the shape of stone, gravel or ashes; and farmers regularly brought their loads of oats, corn, and rye into town short of their stated weights. Many years later Barnum told a story in his book, *The Humbugs of the World*, that he would agree characterizes the atmosphere in which he found himself as a boy:

> "There is a much older and better-known story about a grocer who was a deacon, and who was heard to call downstairs before breakfast to his clerk:
>
> "'John, have you watered the rum?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And sanded the sugar?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And dusted the pepper?' 'Yes, sir.' 'And chicoried the coffee?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Then come up to prayers.'"

The boy was brought up to attend church regularly. Barnum's grandfather was a Universalist, and that was the religion which he strenuously defended during his maturity and unto his death, but apparently he also came under the stern influence of strict Methodism. Of his early religious experiences Barnum told a reporter for the *New York Sun* when he was seventy-three years old: "I was brought up in the fear of hell, and when I went to Methodist prayer meetings, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, I used to go home and pray and cry and beg God to take me out of existence if He would only save me; but I didn't see much chance for me in the way they put it." There was only one meeting house in Bethel, where all attended, and no differences of sects seemed to disrupt the harmony of religion, but

seemingly this did not detract from the severity with which worship was indulged. Doubtless it was partly as a reaction from the fiery hell of those early Methodist influences that Barnum as soon as he was able to choose for himself turned to Universalism, by which salvation is guaranteed more or less to all those who seek for it, without regard to their previous condition of sinful servitude. The meeting house at Bethel, without steeple or bell, was also without heat in winter, for one of the brethren said when a stove was suggested by an irreverent reformer, "A pretty pass, indeed, when professing Christians need a fire to warm their zeal." The women were allowed to bring to church tin boxes with live coals, as foot-stoves, but the men were expected to endure with hardihood the cold Connecticut winter draughts during the long sermons, which usually lasted one hour and a half, and sometimes continued for two hours.

Phineas attended a Bible class at which the students drew texts for their compositions from the clergyman's hat. In his autobiography Barnum told that he once drew forth the text from Luke x. 42: "But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." "*Question*: What is the one thing needful?" His answer is short, but it serves as a concise creed from which he did not deviate later in life:

> "This question, 'What is the one thing needful?' is capable of receiving various answers, depending much upon the persons to whom it is addressed.
>
> "The merchant might answer that 'the one thing needful is plenty of customers, who buy liberally without "beating down," and pay cash for all their purchases.'
>
> "The farmer might reply that 'the one thing needful is large harvests and high prices.'
>
> "The physician might answer that 'it is plenty of patients.'
>
> "The lawyer might be of opinion that 'it is an unruly community, always engaged in bickerings and litigations.'
>
> "The clergyman might reply, 'It is a fat salary, with multitudes of sinners seeking salvation and paying large pew rents.'
>
> "The bachelor might exclaim, 'It is a pretty wife who loves her husband, and who knows how to sew on buttons.'

> "The maiden might answer, 'It is a good husband, who will love, cherish, and protect me while life shall last.'
>
> "But the most proper answer, and doubtless that which applied to the case of Mary, would be, 'The one thing needful is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, follow in his footsteps, love God and obey his commandments, love our fellow-man, and embrace every opportunity of administering to his necessities. In short, the one thing needful is to live a life that we can always look back upon with satisfaction, and be enabled ever to contemplate its termination with trust in Him who has so kindly vouchsafed it to us, surrounding us with innumerable blessings, if we have but the heart and wisdom to receive them in a proper manner.'"

The clergyman approved highly this essay of the thirteen-year-old Barnum, and he himself approved it many times in later life, when he wrote the same thing in different words. To his mind, one must look carefully to the main chance, attain monetary success by all odds, and practise humility by means of a proper respect for God and Jesus Christ. In short, Barnum lived a life that he himself always did look back upon with satisfaction—a satisfaction which stands out triumphantly in his autobiography.

The character of his early environment in Bethel, Connecticut, was admirably summed up by Barnum when he was seventy-one years old. He presented a bronze fountain eighteen feet high, "the design a Triton of heroic size, spouting water from an uplifted horn," to the inhabitants of his birthplace. The town was decorated with flags and bunting, and the police and fire companies, with apparatus and bands of music, greeted their native son, their returned hero, the conqueror of Success. Barnum made this speech, which is inserted here because it tells with characteristic altiloquence more of his early life than anything he ever wrote, or which ever could be written by another:

> "My friends: Among all the varied scenes of an active and eventful life, crowded with strange incidents of struggle and excitement, of joy and sorrow, taking me often through foreign lands and bringing me face to face with the king in his palace and the peasant in his turf-covered hut, I have invariably cherished with the most affectionate remembrance the place of my birth, the old village meeting house, without steeple or bell, where in its

square family pew I sweltered in summer and shivered through my Sunday-school lessons in winter, and the old school-house where the ferule, the birchen rod and rattan did active duty, and which I deserved and received a liberal share. I am surprised to find that I can distinctly remember events which occurred before I was four years old.

"I can see as if but yesterday our hard-working mothers hetcheling their flax, carding their tow and wool, spinning, reeling, and weaving it into fabrics for bedding and clothing for all the family of both sexes. The same good mothers did the knitting, darning, mending, washing, ironing, cooking, soap and candle making, picked the geese, milked the cows, made butter and cheese, and did many other things for the support of the family.

"We babies of 1810, when at home, were dressed in tow frocks, and the garments of our elders were not much superior, except on Sunday, when they wore their 'go-to-meeting clothes' of homespun and linsey-woolsey.

"Rain water was caught and used for washing, while that for drinking and cooking was drawn from wells with their 'old oaken bucket' and long poles and well sweeps.

"Fire was kept over night by banking up the brands in ashes in the fireplace, and if it went out one neighbor would visit another about daylight the next morning with a pair of tongs to borrow a coal of fire to kindle with. Our candles were tallow, home-made, with dark tow wicks. In summer nearly all retired to rest at early dark without lighting a candle except on extraordinary occasions. Home-made soft soap was used for washing hands, faces, and everything else. The children in families of ordinary circumstances ate their meals on trenchers, wooden plates. As I grew older our family and others got an extravagant streak, discarded the trenchers and rose to the dignity of pewter plates and leaden spoons. Tin peddlers who traveled through the country with their wagons supplied these and other luxuries. Our food consisted chiefly of boiled and baked beans, bean porridge, coarse rye bread, apple sauce, hasty pudding beaten in milk, of which we all had plenty. The elder portion of the family ate meat twice a day —had plenty of vegetables, fish of their own catching, and occasionally big clams, which were cheap in those days, and shad in their season....

"Our dinners several times each week consisted of 'pot luck,' which was corned beef, salt pork, and vegetables, all boiled together in the same big iron pot hanging from the crane which was supplied with iron hooks and trammels and swung in and out of the huge fireplace. In the same pot with the salt pork, potatoes, turnips, parsnips, beets, carrots, cabbage, and sometimes onions, was placed an Indian pudding, consisting of plain Indian meal mixed in water, pretty thick, salted and poured into a home-made brown linen bag which was tied at the top. When dinner was ready the Indian pudding was *first* taken from the pot, slipped out of the bag and eaten with molasses. Then followed the 'pot luck.'...

"There were but few wagons or carriages in Bethel when I was a boy. Our grists of grain were taken to the mill in bags on horseback, and the women rode to church on Sundays and around the country on week days on horseback, usually on a cushion called a pillion fastened behind the saddle, the husband, father, brother, or lover riding in front on the saddle. The country doctor visited his patients on horseback, carrying his saddle-bags, containing calomel, jalap, Epsom salts, lancet and a turnkey, those being the principal aids in relieving the sick. Nearly every person sick or well was bled every spring.

"Teeth were pulled with a turnkey, and a dreadful instrument it was in looks, and terrible in execution....

"I remember seeing my father and our neighbors put through military drill every day by Capt. Noah Ferry in 1814, for the war with Great Britain of 1812–15.

"My uncles, aunts, and others, when I was a child, often spoke about ravages of Indians from which their ancestors had suffered, and numbers of them remembered and described the burning of Danbury by the British in 1777....

"Esquire Tom Taylor sometimes wore white-topped boots. He was a large, majestic-looking man, of great will-force, and was considered the richest man in Bethel. Mr. Eli Judd was marked second in point of wealth. Every year I took twelve dollars to Esquire Tom Taylor to pay the interest on a two hundred dollar note which my father owed him. I also annually carried four dollars and fifty cents to Eli Judd for interest on a seventy-five dollar note which he held against my father. As these wealthy men quietly turned over each note filed away in a small package till they found the note of my father, and then indorsed the interest

thereon, I trembled with awe to think I stood in the presence of such wonderfully rich men. It was estimated that the richer of them was actually worth three thousand dollars!

"Esquire Tom Taylor made quite a revolution here by one act. He got two yards of figured carpet to put down in front of his bed in the winter, because the bare board floor was too cold for his feet, while he was dressing. This was a big event in the social life of that day, and Esquire Tom was thought to be putting on airs which his great wealth alone permitted.

"When I was but ten years old, newspapers came only once a week. The man who brought us the week's papers came up from Norwalk, and drove through this section with newspapers for subscribers and pins and needles for customers. He was called Uncle Silliman. I can remember well his weekly visit through Bethel, and his queer cry. On coming to a house or village he would shout, 'News! News! The Lord reigns!' One time he passed our school-house when a snow storm was prevailing. He shouted: 'News! News! The Lord reigns—and snows a little.'

"Everybody had barrels of cider in their cellars and drank cider-spirits called 'gumption.' Professors of religion and the clergy all drank liquor. They drank it in all the hat and comb shops, the farmers had it at hay and harvest times. Every sort of excuse was made for being treated. A new journeyman must give a pint or quart of rum to pay his footing. If a man had a new coat he must 'sponge' it by treating. Even at funerals the clergy, mourners, and friends drank liquor. At public vendues the auctioneer held a bottle of liquor in his hand and when bidding lagged he would cry 'a dram to the next bidder,' the bid would be raised a cent, and the bidder would take his boldly and be the envy of most of the others.

"The public whipping post and imprisonment for debt both flourished in Bethel in my youthful days. Suicides were buried at crossroads. How blessed are we to live in a more charitable and enlightened age, to enjoy the comforts and conveniences of modern times, and to realize that the world is continually growing wiser and better.

"I sincerely congratulate my native village on her character for temperance, industry, and other good qualities.

"And now, my friends, I take very great pleasure in presenting this fountain to the town and borough of Bethel as a small evidence of the love which I bear them and the respect which I feel

for my successors, the present and future citizens of my native village."

II

Among the many ways Barnum found for making money during his boyhood, the lottery business was his most important enterprise; from the ages of twelve to fifteen he was a lottery manager and salesman, selling his tickets to the workmen in the hat and comb factories near Danbury. Lotteries at this time were permitted by the state and often indulged in by churches and educational institutions, and in Bethel lotteries were held for the benefit of the church, where, according to Barnum, the minister often preached against gambling. That grandfather, Phineas Taylor, who appears at every turn in the early career of Barnum, was manager of a lottery, and it was by his example and with his advice that Phineas tried this means of growing rich quickly.

In September, 1825, when Barnum was fifteen years old, his father died insolvent. Phineas had loaned his father all his savings and held Philo Barnum's note for the money, but as he was a minor his debt was ruled out, and he was compelled to serve as clerk in a store just before the funeral in order to get money for shoes to follow the coffin to the grave. Irena Barnum, his mother, continued to keep the tavern at Bethel to support herself and her five children, of whom Phineas was the oldest. Phineas soon became a clerk in the general store at Grassy Plain, a village one mile northwest of Bethel, where he worked for six dollars a month and his board. Here his duties were much the same as they had been in his father's country store at Bethel, but he showed signs of the advertising ability and the power to attract by unusual enterprises which were later to make him famous, when he organized at this store in Grassy Plain a lottery for the purpose of moving his boss's old stock of tinware and green glass bottles. Those who won prizes in the lottery received their choice of a tin dipper or some green glass bottles.

It was while he was a clerk at Grassy Plain that Phineas met Charity Hallett. Charity had visited Grassy Plain on a Saturday to buy a hat from Aunt "Rushia," the only milliner of the two towns. It was

Phineas's custom to return to Bethel every Saturday night, remaining with his mother until Monday, so that he might go to church with her. He was told that Charity was afraid to return to Bethel alone in the storm on this particular Saturday night. During the ride he learned that "the fair, rosy-cheeked, buxom girl, with beautiful white teeth," as he later described her appearance at the time, was a tailoress in Bethel. Her face haunted him in his dreams that Saturday night. He met her in church the next morning, and the reality seemed to fulfil the pictures of his imagination. But he was able to see her only in church every Sunday that season, for they were separated by the distance between Bethel and Grassy Plain.

As his job continued in a country store, Barnum became more inured to the ways and means of country store success. In his autobiography he recorded the gist of these: "It was 'dog eat dog'—'tit for tat.' Our cottons were sold for wool, our wool and cotton for silk and linen; in fact nearly everything was different from what it was represented. The customers cheated us in their fabrics: we cheated the customers with our goods. Each party expected to be cheated, if it was possible. Our eyes, and not our ears, had to be our masters. We must believe little that we saw, and less that we heard.... Such a school would 'cut eye-teeth,' but if it did not cut conscience, morals, and integrity all up by the roots, it would be because the scholars quit before their education was completed." He did quit for a time and went to Brooklyn, New York, where he was offered a position in a grocery store, but the humdrum of this existence of petty trade was beginning to annoy him. His disposition was speculative, and a regular salary never satisfied him, especially since all these early salaries were small. Although he was only seventeen years old, he was ambitious enough to want his own business, and he opened a porter-house in Brooklyn. He soon sold it at a profit and on the basis of his experience became a bartender in another porter-house in New York City. While working and living in New York, he visited the theater frequently, and soon became in his own opinion "a close critic."

Grandfather Phineas Taylor wrote his grandson in 1828, offering him half of his carriage-house rent free, if young Phineas would return from New York and establish some kind of business in Bethel. Before he left New York Phineas made arrangements for shipments with wholesale merchants, and upon his return to Bethel turned the

carriage-house, which was situated on the main street of Bethel, into a retail fruit and confectionery store, where ale and oysters were also sold. Phineas invested his entire fortune, $120, in his Bethel store, and during the first day's business took in $63. Grandfather Phineas Taylor was much pleased with his boy's success; he advised him to take the agency for some country-wide lottery in addition to his store business, and Barnum followed his advice. The store was the resort of the country loungers and the town wits, and the practical jokes which were played there, and which delighted Barnum so much that he reproduced them in detail in his autobiography, contributed to make him what he later was. In the autobiography he himself attributes his development in part to the influence of these stale puns and crude practical jokes, which he did not seem to realize, even in his middle age, were far-fetched, and often barbaric.

When Barnum was eighteen years old, his store in Bethel was visited by the first showman he ever met, Hackariah Bailey, not related to James A. Bailey, who was Barnum's partner many years later. Hackariah Bailey was a "character." He imported the first elephant that was ever brought to this country and made a fortune by exhibiting it. Later he toured with several traveling menageries, operated opposition steamboats on the Hudson River, and finally built a hostelry in Somers, New York, which he called "Elephant Hotel," where a golden elephant stood on a large stone pillar in front of the veranda as homage to the foundation of the Bailey fortune. Young Barnum listened with great interest to the stories of Hackariah Bailey.

Barnum made another trip to New York City in his nineteenth year to investigate opportunities, of which he had been told, for a thriving lottery business in Pittsburg. An agency for the whole state of Tennessee was vacant, and the offer of it was tempting, but there was Charity Hallett, tailoress in Bethel, and Tennessee was too far from Bethel. The possibilities of profit in the lottery business impressed Barnum, and he used all the time he could spare from his store in selling lottery tickets throughout near-by Connecticut counties. He established agents throughout the surrounding country and soon was selling from five hundred dollars' worth to two thousand dollars' worth of lottery tickets each day. It was in this business that Barnum first used advertising. He issued handbills and circulars with

extravagant language and huge pictures. Immense gold signs and posters in many colored inks covered the front of Barnum's lottery office, and "home-made poetry" persuaded prospective purchasers. Oyster suppers at his mother's tavern followed the drawing of prizes.

Charity Hallett, the "attractive tailoress," continued to occupy an important place in Barnum's mind; he was still meeting her at church, and whenever the sale of oysters, lottery tickets, and general merchandise permitted him spare time. In the summer of 1829, when he was just nineteen years old, Barnum, without mentioning his intentions to his mother, proposed marriage. Those intentions must have been obvious, however, for some time, because in his autobiography Barnum wrote that his mother and his other relatives thought that his enterprise, if not his origin, entitled him to aim higher in the social scale than a local tailoress. But there were many impartial townspeople, said Barnum, who thought that Charity Hallett "was altogether too good for Taylor Barnum." They were married that November in New York City at the house of Charity's uncle. Barnum went on record in his autobiography as opposed to early marriages, but he hastily prefaced these admonitions with the statement, "had I waited twenty years longer, I could not have found another woman so well suited to my disposition, and so valuable as a wife, a mother, and a friend." Barnum's mother was angry at his secret marriage in New York, but, after a month of Sundays, he was invited to bring his wife to Sabbath dinner. During the two years after his marriage Barnum continued his country store, his lottery business, with branches in Danbury, Stamford, Norwalk, and Middletown, and found time to engage in religious and political controversy.

III

At this period in New England history religion was rife, and in 1831, particularly in the section where Barnum lived and throughout the rest of New England as well, it was also violent. Converts were being made wholesale by means of protracted religious meetings and hortatory witchery; some of these converts worked themselves into religious frenzy, and suicides as well as murders in the name of God

were common occurrences. Many of the more imaginative ministers advocated a Christian Party in politics, and were in favor of confining the right to hold public office to those only who professed faith in God and belief in Jesus Christ. At the age of twenty-one Barnum was sagacious enough to realize that in spite of all his respect for clergymen and his reliance on their work they must be kept in their proper place, which was in church. Many persons besides himself were alarmed at the prospect of a religious fanaticism that would conquer civil government to the destruction of liberty. Barnum wrote several articles on the dangers of religious usurpation, which he sent to the nearest weekly newspaper, a Danbury publication. The editor regretted that he could not find space for Mr. Barnum's contributions, whereupon, like many writers on controversial subjects, Barnum was convinced that the editor did not dare to print his articles, and that there was no free press. But unlike most of his rejected brethren, Barnum took action. He purchased a press and types, and within a few weeks after the rejection of his religious opinions began publication of his own weekly newspaper in Danbury, Connecticut, which was called, of course, *The Herald of Freedom*.

There are no files of this paper extant, which is unfortunate, for they would undoubtedly reveal interesting character developments in our hero's history. He himself tells us that "the boldness and vigor with which this paper was conducted soon commanded a liberal circulation, not only in the vicinity of its publication, but large numbers of copies were sent into nearly every State in the Union." The vigor and boldness are not Barnum's exaggerations, for we know that he was always vehement, but particularly so at this period, and it was not long before he was sued for libel. A Danbury butcher whom Barnum accused in his paper as a spy in the Democratic Party caucus, sued for libel and collected several hundred dollars. But this did not deter the twenty-one-year-old editor and publisher, and soon afterwards he had another and more important libel suit to defend. *The Herald of Freedom* accused a deacon of "taking usury of an orphan boy." Had he called the deacon a "note-shaver" and extortioner, or merely remarked that he was "grinding the face of a poor orphan boy," the court would have been lenient, but to call a deacon a usurer was ungodly, for usury is forbidden in the Bible, and the judge, who was also a churchman, charged the jury vigorously;

and when they brought in the appropriate verdict, he sentenced Phineas T. Barnum, editor, to sixty days in the common jail and to pay a fine of $100.

Barnum went to jail in Danbury, where his room was papered and carpeted, and where friends were allowed to visit him daily. He continued to edit *The Herald of Freedom* there, and several hundred additional subscriptions came in during his period of servitude. Mr. P. F. Madigan, the New York autograph dealer, recently found the following letter from Barnum, written while he was in jail. It was addressed to Gideon Welles, then a member of the Connecticut Legislature, and afterwards Secretary of the Navy under President Lincoln:

"Danbury, 'Common Jail,' Oct. 7, 1832.

"Mr. Welles D'r Sir:

"I am by the unhallowed decree of that lump of superstition David Daggett sent within these gloomy walls sixty days for daring to tell the truth!! My trial with Hanson Taylor did not come on this term on account of the absence of witnesses; but my trial with Seth Seelye has come and the best counsel in the country were employed against me. Seelye testified in his own defense, and in his testimony he contradicted four unimpeachable witnesses. Daggett charged the jury in such a manner that many intelligent men who were present remarked that he was the best lawyer that had pled in behalf of the State. The bar and seat of the Judge was filled with priests, there being no less than eight present. Brother Holly of the *Sentinel* will report the case at length, and I hope you will take the trouble to read the trial and then make such remarks as justice demands. The excitement in this and the neighboring towns is very great, and it will have a grand effect. Public opinion is greatly in my favor. After the judge had given his cursed charge I was advised by many to forfeit the bonds which were but $100, but I chose to go to prison, thinking that such a step would be the means of opening many eyes, as it no doubt will. A number of the Presbyterians in this town have declared it to be oppression, and are beginning to raise their voices against it. The same spirit governs my enemies that imprisoned Sellick Osborn and burnt to death Michael Servetus by order of John Calvin. But the people are more enlightened than in the days of Calvin and they will

upon reading my trial express their indignation at such oppression and persecution. You will observe that the Democrats in this County have a Convention at Bridgeport on Thursday next. I am constantly writing to our friends in different parts of the country urging upon them the importance of attending this meeting, and I think it will be well attended and be the means of helping our party very much in this county. Judge Wildman is so lame with the rheumatics that he cannot walk; but he declares he will attend the convention if he is obliged to hire men to carry him in their arms. He is a man of spirit and sense. It is a great pity we had not about twenty men like him in this country.

"You will observe in my paper of last week that I have engaged the services of our friend Andrews; if you can give him a compliment you would much oblige me, as by my copying it into my columns it might prove of much service to my paper. Please accept my warmest thanks and those of my wife for your assistance in recovering the lost shawl. It came safe and my wife was thrown into ecstasies as an offset for the tears, which (womanlike) she had shed over the loss of it. Lest I might tire your patience too much I will draw to a close. Please give my respects to Judge Niles and the rest of our friends, tell them that I am suffering for daring to tell the truth but that the kindness of friends keeps my spirits buoyed up in this day of trial. Let me hear from you when opportunity shall offer and believe this to be from your Ob't servant in good spirits.

P. T. Barnum.

"G. Welles, Esq."

Barnum in his early years was a Democrat, because Grandfather Phineas Taylor was a staunch Democrat, and his father had also voted that ticket. If we are to judge from the above letter, written when he was twenty-two years old, Barnum had some of the qualifications of a ward politician. He refers several times to "our friends," and he seems to have believed firmly that it was a duty as well as a privilege to attend party conventions.

The end of Barnum's term in the Danbury Common Jail was celebrated by indignant defenders of a free press from the surrounding country. In the court-room where he had been convicted and sentenced an ode, written for the occasion, was sung, and an

eloquent oration on the Freedom of the Press was delivered by the Rev. Theophilus Fiske. Both the ode and the oration have disappeared into limbo. "A sumptuous repast" was served to several hundred guests, and speeches and toasts continued most of the afternoon. But the most imposing part of the celebration was still to come. It was reported in Barnum's paper, *The Herald of Freedom*, for December 12, 1832:

> "P. T. Barnum and the band of music took their seats in a coach drawn by six horses, which had been prepared for the occasion. The coach was preceded by forty horsemen, and a marshal, bearing the national standard. Immediately in the rear of the coach was the carriage of the Orator and the President of the day, followed by the Committee on Arrangements and sixty carriages of citizens, which joined in escorting the editor to his home in Bethel.
>
> "When the procession commenced its march amidst the roar of cannon, three cheers were given by several hundred citizens who did not join in the procession. The band of music continued to play a variety of national airs until their arrival in Bethel, a distance of three miles, when they struck up the beautiful and appropriate tune of 'Home, Sweet Home!' After giving three hearty cheers, the procession returned to Danbury. The utmost harmony and unanimity of feeling prevailed throughout the day, and we are happy to add that no accident occurred to mar the festivities of the occasion."

While he was indulging in political and religious controversy, Barnum was also buying recklessly for his country store. In order to do business faster than the ordinary country store, he extended credit and soon had an accumulation of bad debts. Many of these accounts are balanced in his old ledger: "By death, to balance;" "By running away, in full;" "By cheating me out of my dues, to balance;" "By failing in full;" "By swearing he would not pay me, in full." Barnum became disgusted and sold his interest in the store. And that year lotteries were prohibited in Connecticut by law. *The Herald of Freedom* was not making money, and No. 160 of that paper was the last issue published under Barnum's name. He was compelled to seek new and

more profitable enterprises, and he decided to enlarge his horizon. In the winter of 1834–1835, when he was twenty-four years old, Barnum removed his wife and daughter to New York City.

Thus ends the early Yankee influence that shaped Barnum's character. It made of him a creature that in its development was to become the apotheosis of the Yankee, with all the distinguishing characteristics of that type and some very distinctive qualities all his own. Mrs. Trollope in her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* characterizes the Yankee with traits that are appropriate to Barnum's personality as it was bred by his early environment. "In acuteness, cautiousness, industry, and perseverance," wrote Mrs. Trollope of the Yankee, "he resembles the Scotch; in habits of frugal neatness, he resembles the Dutch; in love of lucre he doth greatly resemble the sons of Abraham; but in frank admission and superlative admiration of all his own peculiarities, he is like nothing on earth but himself." The Connecticut Yankee with his wife, Charity, and their daughter, Caroline, left Bethel with nothing but the crafty, bold and thrifty Yankee heritage and the practical education that were calculated to make him preëminent if the proper outlet and channel were offered for his energies.

CHAPTER II

GROWING PAINS

I

THE New York to which Barnum emigrated late in the winter of 1834 is a New York with which we must become acquainted. Its population was slightly more than 200,000, and Mrs. Martha J. Lamb in her *History of the City of New York* deplored the overcrowding: "New York City by this time appeared like a youth much overgrown for his years. It had shot up with a rapidity that defied calculation. Wealth was increasing faster than sobriety was inclined to measure. Swarming multitudes from every quarter of the globe were rendering the community in a certain sense unformed." In contrast to this picture of wild growth we can record that stage coaches were the only means of public conveyance, and the newfangled horse car was forcing its clattering way up one street on a single-tracked line, in spite of the opposition of the large majority, who preferred their safe and sure stage coaches. Broadway, according to Charles Dickens, who visited New York a few years after Barnum became a resident, was "a wide and bustling street, which, from the Battery Gardens to its opposite termination in a country road, may be four miles long," and in Mrs. Lamb's opinion "Washington Square was quite a long distance from the city." The number of omnibuses surprised Dickens—"half-a-dozen have gone by within as many minutes"—and he was also impressed by the large-wheeled tilburies, the gigs, the phaetons, and the hackney coaches, by which the upper classes were carried about the city. But when Dickens crossed the wide and bustling street called Broadway, he found it necessary to look out for the pigs, who trotted clumsily behind the carriages and acted as the city scavengers.

The dress of the ladies interested Dickens just as much as it has interested visiting authors since. "Heaven save the ladies, how they dress!" he wrote. "We have seen more colors in these ten minutes than we should have seen elsewhere in as many days. What various

parasols! what rainbow silks and satins! what pinking of thin stockings, and pinching of thin shoes, and fluttering of ribbons and silk tassels, and display of rich cloaks with gaudy hoods and linings!" Here was a community apparently awaiting a Barnum. The gaudy hoods and linings, the fluttering ribbons and rainbow silks and satins indicate a certain wealth and a taste for the gay and amusing. Barnum must have been conscious here in New York as he walked the streets and pondered how to support his wife and baby, of an atmosphere more favorable to his talents and their expression than the New England which he had just left, where the "pinking of thin stockings, and pinching of thin shoes" would have been punished by means of the whipping post, or at least with the jealous and shocked disdain of neighbors and the exclamatory menaces of the town clergyman. In the New York of 1835 to adorn the body and to divert the mind were not crimes, and a corresponding share of the trade and industry of the city were devoted to the satisfaction of those ends. Broadway had shops that were handsome enough to impress Mrs. Trollope, who found most of America new, brazen, and boring when it was not offensive. She also admired the uniform houses in the residential sections of the city where neat iron railings and pretty green blinds gave an impression of ease and luxury that she found nowhere else in the United States.

That New Yorkers of 1835 could be unrestrained in their enjoyments when the occasion was presented we know from the many accounts of the nature of New Year celebrations. James Gordon Bennett, the elder, wrote in the *New York Herald*: "We were sorry to see so much intoxication in our streets ... and it even extended into the Mayor's office. In consequence of the improper behavior of many of his visitors, by which the carpets were completely ruined, he was compelled to close up and go home at one o'clock, and deprived many of the pleasure of seeing him."

Soon after Barnum arrived in New York the city was almost destroyed by the largest fire in its early history. The fire started on a cold day, December 16, 1835, and burned steadily for three days because there was no efficient water supply, and the water available froze in the pipes. More than seven hundred buildings were turned to ruins, and almost all the insurance companies went into bankruptcy. Many mercantile establishments were forced out of business, and the

banks suspended payment. It was during this fire that the *New York Herald*, founded in that same year by James Gordon Bennett, became popular. Cross-eyed James Gordon Bennett, owner, editor, and reporter for his new enterprise, went through the ruins of the fire with a note-book and gave New York its only vivid account of the results and causes of the disaster. This kept the *Herald*, which both in friendship and enmity was such a potent advertising medium for Barnum for many years, from almost certain bankruptcy, because the demand for the paper during the fire did not fall off afterwards, and a large advertising contract from Dr. Brandreth's pills kept it alive. Times were hard, but the fire made them worse, and during the first five years of Barnum's residence in New York the city, as well as the rest of the country, suffered great financial distress. President Jackson's famous "specie circular" caused the government treasury to gather in all the gold of the country, and the result was a drastic panic, from which Barnum's efforts must have suffered a severe check. In April, 1837, more than two hundred and fifty large New York business houses suspended payments, and every bank in the city did the same.

II

Barnum had no money worth mentioning when he arrived in New York. In Connecticut he had made large sums of money for his age and for his environment, but he had also spent large sums without any anxiety about his ability to continue to earn then. He sought in New York for an opportunity with a business organization, where he could share in the profits rather than work for a fixed salary. Business was bad, opportunities were limited, and Barnum found nothing to his taste. His money began to disappear, and his family was in ill health; in order to relieve immediate needs, he became a "drummer" in a cap store and watched the "Want" advertisements in *The Sun*. In his mind was the fixed idea that if he could get something to exhibit to the New York amusement-loving public, he would succeed. But, meanwhile, he answered advertisements of inventors and adventurers, always to discover that they wanted money immediately in order to produce it in the future. Barnum's present was immediate

in its demands, and he could not afford to consider a vague future, but his self-confidence in the face of hardship was great enough to enable him to refuse to bind himself for three years when he applied to William Niblo, proprietor of Niblo's Garden, for the position as bartender at that establishment. Barnum did not get the position, for William Niblo, who was later one of Barnum's good friends, insisted that his bartender must contract for three years of service. During the entire winter of 1834 he could find no work, except as commission agent for the cap store, which was not very profitable. In the spring of 1835 he received several hundred dollars of the debts owed to him in Bethel for groceries and lottery tickets, and with the money he opened a private boarding house at 52 Frankfort Street. The Connecticut transients stopped at Barnum's when in New York, and soon Barnum and his wife had enough trade to enable him to capitalize his spare time by purchasing an interest in a grocery store.

Mr. Coley Bartram, of Redding, Connecticut, called at Barnum's grocery store in July, 1835. He mentioned to Barnum that he had just sold his interest in an extraordinary negress, and he handed him a copy of *The Pennsylvania Inquirer* for July 15, 1835, with the following advertisement:

> "CURIOSITY.—The citizens of Philadelphia and its vicinity have an opportunity of witnessing at the Masonic Hall, one of the greatest natural curiosities ever witnessed, viz., JOICE HETH, a negress aged 161 years, who formerly belonged to the father of Gen. Washington. She has been a member of the Baptist Church one hundred and sixteen years, and can rehearse many hymns, and sing them according to former custom. She was born near the old Potomac River in Virginia, and has for ninety or one hundred years lived in Paris, Kentucky, with the Bowling family.
>
> "All who have seen this extraordinary woman are satisfied of the truth of the account of her age. The evidence of the Bowling family, which is respectable, is strong, but the original bill of sale of Augustine Washington, in his own handwriting, and other evidence which the proprietor has in his possession, will satisfy even the most incredulous.
>
> "A lady will attend at the hall during the afternoon and evening for the accommodation of those ladies who may call."

Mr. Coley Bartram told Barnum that this extraordinary slave was now owned by R. W. Lindsay, who was exhibiting her in Philadelphia, but who did not have much ability as a showman and was therefore anxious to sell his purchase and return to his home in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Barnum was excited. He had read short paragraphs about this negress in the New York newspapers, and he had been interested, but this detailed description of her superb qualifications for his purposes enthralled him. He hurried to Philadelphia to look at Joice Heth, and he was "favorably impressed with the appearance of the old woman," who "might almost as well have been called a thousand years old as any other age." She was lying on a lounge, her lower extremities doubled up. She could move one of her arms, but the other was stiffly clasped to her breast, and both legs were completely beyond her control and could not be straightened. She was blind, and she had no teeth. Thick, bushy, savage gray hair added to her value as a monstrosity. The nails of her left hand, which lay immovable across her breast, were four inches long, and as the fingers were helplessly turned down, the nails extended above the wrist; her toe nails were equally large.

Joice Heth was sociable, and she could talk intelligibly with any one who would talk with her. She referred to George Washington as "dear little George," swore that she was present at his birth, and that she was the first person to put clothes on the future father of his country. "In fact," she told Barnum, and it was one of her favorite expressions, "I raised him." Mr. Lindsay showed Barnum the bill of sale from Augustine Washington, George Washington's father, dated February 5, 1727, by which Augustine Washington deeded to his sister-in-law and neighbor, Elizabeth Atwood, "one negro woman, named Joice Heth, aged fifty-four years, for and in consideration of the sum of thirty-three pounds lawful money of Virginia." Five years later, when George Washington was born, Joice Heth, being an old family nurse, was called in to assist at his arrival and in his subsequent education, according to her story.

All this seemed plausible to Barnum, and the bill of sale did look creased, fragile, and old. Barnum asked how such an old woman with such historic associations had only then come to the public attention, why she had never aroused the curiosity of showmen and audiences before; but when it appeared that she had lived in an outhouse on the

Kentucky estate of the Bowling family, the respectable family of the advertisement, Barnum was contented that she was authentic. The discovery of the bill of sale in the Virginia record office by one of the Bowling sons made the family realize the value of its property, Barnum was told. He asked how much a piece of property like Joice Heth might be worth, and the answer was three thousand dollars. At the time he possessed five hundred dollars of his own. He persuaded Lindsay that one thousand dollars was enough, and, returning to New York, he borrowed an additional five hundred dollars and sold his interest in the grocery store. By his contract with Lindsay Barnum came into "the possession of the person of the African woman, Joice Heth," and Lindsay offered to continue his exhibitions in Philadelphia while Barnum made preparations for her reception in New York. He called upon William Niblo, who did not recognize him as the young man who a few months before had applied for the position of bartender at Niblo's Garden. Niblo agreed for one-half the receipts of Joice Heth's exhibition to allow Barnum the use of a room near his saloon, and also paid the expense of whatever printing and advertising was necessary. Levi Lyman, whom he characterized as a "shrewd, sociable, and somewhat indolent Yankee" lawyer of Penn Yan, New York, was engaged by Barnum as his assistant. Lyman wrote a memoir of Joice Heth, and Barnum distributed throughout the city small handbills and posters announcing his phenomenon. The newspapers printed advertisements on the day of her début, written by Barnum, and containing the following partial descriptions of her attractions:

"She is cheerful and healthy, although she weighs but forty-nine pounds. She relates many anecdotes of her young master; she speaks also of the red-coats during the Revolutionary War, but does not appear to hold them in high estimation. She has been visited by crowds of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were many clergymen and physicians, who have pronounced her the most ancient specimen of mortality the oldest of them has ever seen or heard of, and consider her a very great curiosity." And again: "Joice Heth is unquestionably the most astonishing and interesting curiosity in the world. She was the slave of Augustine Washington (the father of George Washington), and was the first person *who put clothes on the unconscious infant* who was destined in after days to lead our heroic

fathers to glory, to victory, and to freedom. To use her own language when speaking of her young master, George Washington, 'she raised him.'" (Italics are *always* Barnum's.)

The newspapers took up Joice Heth readily. The *New York Evening Star* wrote: "Her appearance is much like an Egyptian mummy just escaped from its sarcophagus." And the *New York Daily Advertiser* said of her: "Ancient or modern times furnish no parallel to the great age of this woman. Methuselah was 969 years old when he died, but nothing is said of the age of his wife. Adam attained nearly the age of his antiquated descendant. It is not unlikely that the sex in the olden time were like the daughters at the present day—unwilling to tell their age. Joice Heth is an exception; she comes out boldly, and says she is rising 160." Joice Heth was an habitual smoker of a corn cob pipe, and when a reporter of the *Evening Star* asked her how long she had smoked a pipe, she answered glibly, "One hundred and twenty years." Barnum acknowledged in his autobiography that Joice Heth taught him many facts about the Washington family which he never knew before.

The gross receipts in New York for the Joice Heth exhibition were $1,500 each week. Visitors continued for some weeks to come to Niblo's Garden, asked her questions about the Washington family, listened to her sing hymns and discuss theology, and departed satisfied as to her age and previous condition of servitude. After the New York public had paid all the tribute it was likely to pay, Barnum toured New England with his slave, exhibiting at Providence, Boston, and other large cities. In Boston he met Maelzel, who was then exhibiting his automaton chess-player. Barnum enjoyed many conversations with this inventor and showman, whom he regarded as the father of public entertainers. Maelzel told Barnum that he would succeed as a showman, "because you understand the value of the press, and that is the great thing. Nothing helps the showman like the types and the ink." "When your old woman dies," he added, "you come to me, and I will make your fortune."

Barnum kept up a steady stream of publicity concerning Joice Heth, and when the Boston audiences began to decrease in numbers, a notice appeared in one of the newspapers signed, "A Visitor," in which it was stated that Joice Heth was a humbug, that she was made of india rubber, whalebone, and hidden springs, and that the

exhibitor was a ventriloquist, which accounted for her powers of conversation. The presence of Maelzel's automaton in the same city, in fact, in the same hall, made this announcement more interesting to the public. Those who had not seen Joice Heth went to see the ingenious mechanism, and those who had seen her went again to satisfy themselves that she was not alive. Barnum thus created controversy, which he realized from the beginning of his career was the life of trade in the show business.

While he was exhibiting Joice Heth in Albany, New York, Barnum met a "Signor Antonio," who balanced crockery and guns with bayonets on his nose, a feat which was a novelty in this country at the time. Signor Antonio told Barnum that he was an Italian by birth, that he had sailed from England to Canada, and that Albany was the first city in the United States where he had ever exhibited his talents in public. Barnum engaged him for one year to perform anywhere in the United States at a salary of $12 per week and his expenses. When Antonio, Joice Heth, Levi Lyman, and Barnum returned to New York, Barnum insisted that Antonio submit to two indignities: first, he must be thoroughly washed, and secondly, he must change his name to Signor Vivalla. A notice soon afterwards appeared in the newspapers that Signor Vivalla, who could do wonders with his nose and on stilts, had just arrived from Italy, and Barnum sent copies of these notices to all the theatrical managers in New York City. The manager of the Franklin Theater called and was favorably impressed with the artist Mr. Barnum said he had just imported from Italy, and a contract was made for the performances of Signor Vivalla in the Franklin Theater at $50 per week. Although Vivalla had spent much time in England, Barnum always refused to allow him to speak English and accompanied him upon the stage to assist him and to explain the tricks to the audience, this being Barnum's first appearance on any stage. During the second week of Signor Vivalla at the Franklin Theater, he was so popular that Barnum received $150 for his services, and he then took his juggler and balancer to Boston and Washington. Meanwhile, Levi Lyman was exhibiting Joice Heth in New England for Barnum. A snow storm caused bad business for Vivalla's exhibitions in Washington, and Barnum was forced to pawn his watch and chain for thirty-five dollars in order to get money enough to proceed to Philadelphia. By arousing a controversy there

concerning Signor Vivalla's ability, and by organizing a defiant contest with another performer, whom he paid, Barnum created enough excitement to yield large profits.

In February, 1836, Barnum's brother sent a message to the boarding house in New York, which Mrs. Barnum was still operating, that Joice Heth, who had been resting at Bethel after an illness, was dead. The body was sent to Barnum in New York. He called upon a well-known New York surgeon, who had once expressed a desire to hold a post-mortem examination of Joice Heth, if she should not prove to be immortal. The body was dissected before a large and distinguished company of doctors, clergymen, and editors, and the operating surgeon found an absence of ossification of the arteries in the region of the heart, leading him to the opinion, he told Barnum and Levi Lyman privately, that Joice Heth was probably not more than eighty years old. Thus with a few strokes of a surgeon's knife were dispelled all the eye-witness stories of the birth and youth of George Washington, and apparently the surgeon did not keep his opinion private, for *The Sun* on the day following the operation printed the story of the dissection and accused Barnum of fraud in Joice Heth's age. Levi Lyman, interested in playing jokes on editors, then called upon James Gordon Bennett, and told him that as a matter of fact Joice Heth had never died, that she was still living in Connecticut, and that the dissection had been performed on the body of an old Harlem negress. Bennett was thankful for the story and printed these revelations in full. When his story was emphatically denied by the surgeon, Levi Lyman offered to give the editor the real inside history of Joice Heth. He told Bennett that Barnum had invented Joice Heth's background and had taught her the hymns and instructed her in the George Washington family history. Bennett printed this account, and that story was generally accepted thereafter as the truth about Joice Heth. Barnum himself never denied any of these stories until twenty years later, when in his first autobiography he told the facts as they have been presented here. Barnum inaugurated then a policy which he maintained throughout his long public career, namely, never to contradict any implication, nor to protest against any epithet. When people read that Joice Heth was a fraud perpetrated upon their credulity by Barnum, what must have impressed them most in the controversy was Barnum's cleverness,

and it was for the general propagation of this impression that he was striving always. "... Never, until the present writing," he said in his autobiography, "have I said or written a word by way of contradiction or correction. Newspaper and social controversy on the subject (and seldom have vastly more important matters been so largely discussed) served my purpose as 'a showman' by keeping my name before the public." Joice Heth was buried respectably at Bethel, Connecticut. She must be regarded as one of the most interesting of Barnum's ventures, not only because she was the first of her kind, but because of his unique exploitation of her repulsive qualities, even though in the fullness of his mature notoriety he grew to be ashamed of her and of his own lowly origin in the field of showmanship; he referred to her in the last edition of his autobiography as "the least deserving of all my efforts in the show line...."

Some years after the death of Joice Heth, R. W. Lindsay, who sold Barnum the negress, lost all his money and became ill. Barnum wrote the following letter, which throws interesting light upon the Joice Heth episode, and still more interesting light on Barnum's character:

"Mr. Baker:

"Dear Sir.—Yours of the 3rd inst. has been forwarded to me. Please read and then seal the enclosed to Lindsay. I send along $100, which I wish you to use in the best possible manner for *his benefit*. I really expect that if he had the money himself, he would lay it out foolishly, and that if a little pains was taken to get him into a Hospital in Boston or elsewhere that money, or less, would procure for him a *permanent cure* and then leave him in health to look out for himself. If he is allowed to *live out* this $100 in food and clothing he will soon be begging again and the relief will be but *temporary*. I earnestly trust that you will try to have this prove a *real* benefit to him. On reflection perhaps he had better not receive my letter, nor know that you have got my check, until you have got it cashed, and looked about and determined how it is best to use it. His assertions that I understand he has made to others that I am under obligations to him are *ridiculously false*. I never had anything to do with him except to buy from him in *perfect good faith* and pay him the money for an old *negress*, which he falsely represented as the 'Nurse of Washington' and which he imposed on me as such, by aid of a *forged Bill of Sale*

> purporting to have been made by the *father* of George Washington. I honestly *believed* all this and exhibited accordingly as Lindsay had done for months previous—finally she died and the imposition became manifest, and *I* have ever since borne the stigma of *originating* that imposture. I never denied it before—but I might have done so truly. This is all the 'obligation' I am under to Lindsay, but he is a poor devil, and I hope to see him recover. Please take his receipt or some acknowledgment when he receives the benefit of this sum if convenient—if not—no matter. I would be pleased to hear from you at Charleston, S. C. Truly yours,
>
> "P. T. Barnum."[2]

If Barnum would have us believe that he bought Joice Heth "in *perfect good faith*," that he "*believed* all this," he must convince us that suddenly at the age of twenty-five his mind developed an artlessness and gullibility which it had never had even during his boyhood, and which it did not manifest during his later career.

III

Barnum and his Italian continued to travel about New England, New York, and New Jersey, but with poor success, for juggling, balancing crockery, and walking on stilts were as nothing compared to just being 161 years old, and the public were more interested in the family history of George Washington than in feats of skill and accuracy; there is also reason to believe that Signor Vivalla's skill was not vastly entertaining.

In April of 1836 Barnum met Aaron Turner, one of the early circus proprietors of America. They formed a partnership by which Barnum became ticket-seller, secretary, and treasurer of Turner's traveling circus at $30 per month and twenty per cent. of the net receipts. He was also to receive $50 per month for the services of Signor Vivalla. Charity and their small daughter Caroline returned to Bethel, and Barnum toured the country with Turner's circus, traveling in New England, the middle Atlantic states, and some of the South.

Turner may be regarded as one of Barnum's masters, in so far as he had any at all. Barnum listened with approval as Turner told him and the rest of the company that any man of health with common sense was capable of making a fortune. "Who am I?" he used to say. "I don't know who I am, or where I came from. I never had father or mother that I know of.... What little I can read I picked up myself after I was eighteen years old; and as for writing I used at first to make my mark, but being a poor devil I had to give my note so often that I finally learned to write my name."

Turner was another active practical joker, and Barnum once more found himself in an atmosphere where that type of humor won great applause. Upon one occasion a joke of Turner's endangered Barnum's life. The company was in Annapolis, Maryland. The murder in Rhode Island of a Miss Cornell had aroused the entire population of the eastern states against the accused, the Rev. Ephraim K. Avery, who had been acquitted in the face of general conviction of his guilt. Turner pointed out Barnum to some of the loungers in the bar-room of the Annapolis hotel as the Rev. Ephraim K. Avery, incognito. The bar-room was quickly emptied as the righteous Maryland townsmen started after Barnum with the intention of taking the Rhode Island law into their own hands. He was roughly seized and informed of the intention of the mob to tar and feather him, which process was to be followed by a regulation lynching. When Barnum protested that he was Barnum, the name being then unknown, the outraged citizens refused to listen. It was only with great difficulty that he persuaded these enraged advocates of direct action to return with him to the hotel and confront Aaron Turner with his own hoax. Turner told the mob, which had been increased by fifty or sixty persons as Barnum was marched up the main street to the hotel, that "he believed there was some mistake about it. The fact is my friend Barnum has a new suit of black clothes on, and it makes him look so much like a priest I concluded it must be Avery." The mob, appreciative of Turner's joke, dispersed, but Barnum was left with his new coat torn off his back and his other clothes damaged from the rolling in the dirt which he had received at the hands of the mob. When he became angry with Turner, the showman said: "My dear Barnum, it was all for our good. Remember, all we need to insure success is *notoriety*. You will see that the whole town will be talking about the trick played by one of

the circus managers on the other, and our pavilion will be crammed to-morrow night." The pavilion was crammed the next night, but Barnum was incapable of considering impersonally the value of such dangerous personal publicity.

The character of Aaron Turner was the most important early influence that shaped Barnum's own methods, excepting his own boyhood environment in Connecticut. Turner's procedure in the face of difficulties, his insane love of a practical joke, his insistence upon notoriety at any cost, gave Barnum the first lessons in the school of which he himself was to become the master. Upon one occasion the company arrived at Hanover Court House, near Richmond, Virginia, during a storm. It was impossible to give the show, and Turner purposed to move on to Richmond, but the landlord at Hanover Court House insisted that since an agent of the circus had engaged rooms and three meals for the entire company of thirty-six, he must be paid for those conveniences whether or not they were used. This argument arose just before the noon meal. Turner tried persuasion, but the landlord was firm. He therefore ordered dinner, which was promptly eaten by the whole company. As soon as the table was cleared, supper for thirty-six was ordered for half-after noon. After the thirty-six had eaten as much as possible of the supper, Turner ordered lighted candles for every member of the company, and directed that they all go to their rooms and get into bed at one o'clock in the afternoon. Half an hour later they dressed and went down to breakfast, which Turner had ordered for two o'clock sharp. They ate as much as possible under the circumstances, and at half-past two the company left for Richmond. Turner insisted upon carrying out this program with due solemnity in spite of the protests of the landlord and the convulsive mirth of his own performers.

Barnum, having received $1,200 as his share of the profits, separated from his partner after a few months, and organized his own traveling circus, consisting of Vivalla, musicians, and a negro singer and dancer. With these performers, his horses and wagons and a small canvas tent, Barnum started on a tour of the South. On this tour he exhibited a personal versatility that is interesting in the light of the later triumph of his personality. When his company reached Rocky Mount Falls, North Carolina, on a Sunday, Barnum delivered an inspiring sermon before the population of the town, after its regular

clergyman had finished his services. He assured the congregation, "We cannot violate the laws of God with impunity, and he will not keep back the wages of well-doing.... Diamonds may glitter on a vicious breast, but the soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy is virtue's prize." In Camden, South Carolina, the negro singer, Sandford, left Barnum without notice, just before the show. The audience must not be disappointed, and so the Barnum who had played the clergyman the previous Sunday blacked his face thoroughly and sang the songs advertised, including "Zip Coon," "The Raccoon Hunt, or Sitting on a Rail," and "Gittin' Up Stairs." Many of the congregation came up after the prayer meeting to congratulate the impromptu preacher, some even to take down his name; and the coon songs were encored vigorously.

Aaron Turner disbanded his circus soon after Barnum left him, and Barnum bought some of its equipment for his own show. He also hired another negro singer to relieve him of the part, which he had taken every day since the departure of the original, giving the impression successfully to most of his audiences in Southern territory that he was a real negro. Barnum added Joe Pentland, clown, ventriloquist, comic singer, and legerdemain artist, to his company, and the enlarged show was known as "Barnum's Grand Scientific and Musical Theater," the first traveling show to carry the name of P. T. Barnum. In May, 1837, Barnum's company disbanded at Nashville, Tennessee, because of poor business. After a short trip to New York, he took his circus into Kentucky and down the Mississippi, to New Orleans, where it was finally disbanded; Barnum returned to New York, disgusted at the lack of opportunities to make money with a traveling show.

IV

Barnum advertised in the New York newspapers that he had $2,500 to invest in a reliable business and wanted a partner with such an organized business. He received ninety-three answers, one third from saloonkeepers and the rest from interesting miscellaneous promoters. One man was a counterfeiter and needed Barnum's $2,500, he admitted, to purchase paper, ink, and new dies. Finally Barnum

entered into partnership with Proler, a German manufacturer of water-proof blacking for boots, Cologne water, and bear's grease. Proler took charge of the factory, and Barnum opened a store on the Bowery, where he sold the products of the factory. Their capital, that is, Barnum's money, was soon absorbed, and Barnum sold his interest to his partner, taking Proler's note for $2,600. Before his note came due, Proler sailed for Rotterdam, and Barnum was left with nothing for his $2,500 but four recipes, one for bear's grease, which grew hair on a bald head, one for Cologne water, one for blacking, and one for water-proof paste.[3]

Without money again, Barnum was also without employment in the spring of 1840. He hired the saloon of Vauxhall Garden in New York and offered a variety performance, in which Mary Taylor, later one of the country's favorites, first appeared in New York. Jack Diamond, the first, and for a long time the most popular, dancer of negro dances in this country, also performed under Barnum's management. But the Vauxhall Garden venture did not make money, and after less than two months Barnum was forced to close his show. He hated the thought of once more becoming a traveling showman, separated from family, but he had just enough money left for one more trial at this business, and he took Master Jack Diamond, the dancer, a fiddler, and a delineator of Yankee characters on a tour of Canada, New York State, and the Northwest. They finally reached New Orleans, and Barnum had $100. He had left New York with that amount, so that his four months' tour had yielded nothing but expenses. In New Orleans the receipts were good, but Master Diamond, who had borrowed large sums from Barnum, absconded, and Barnum returned to New York in April, 1841, determined never to leave it again in the capacity of traveling showman.

He was thirty-one years old, and had had varied experiences, but no success. The foundation of his subsequent career was being laid, but up to this time the small accident which starts one on the way to partial realization of dreams had not yet happened to him. Barnum had tried vigorously to contribute by his enterprise to his success, but the financial depression that reigned throughout the country during this period, together with losses sustained by the duplicity of a

partner, or the state of the weather, caused him to find himself at the age of thirty-one in the same financial position he had occupied upon his arrival in New York five years before.

On his way back to New York Barnum read in a Pittsburg newspaper an advertisement for *Sears' Pictorial Illustrations of The Bible*, and three days after his return to the city he called upon Robert Sears, its publisher. For $500 Barnum received 500 copies of the book and received the agency for its sale in the United States. He opened an office in New York, advertised widely, and in six months he had sold several thousand copies of the book; but he had appointed agents and sub-agents in other cities, who cheated him of all his profits and also of his capital. For the third time he was swindled because of his trust in other people. Only after serious financial losses, and not until late in life, did Barnum learn to question the integrity of those he was forced to trust. It is doubtful if he ever gave up an implicit faith in man's innate righteousness, for a skeptical opinion of mankind, although it might be justified by his continual experiences, would clash with his sincere piety, and his earnest belief that the dead shall be raised. Virtue, to him, undoubtedly bore its own reward, and he seldom guarded against the attempt to cheat him out of it.

Soon his funds were completely exhausted, and Barnum sought any kind of employment and found none that was lucrative. At the age of thirty-one, with a wife and two daughters to support, and a third daughter in prospect, he was compelled to grasp at straws, and he wrote advertisements for the Bowery Amphitheater at four dollars per week. He added to this by means of occasional articles which he wrote for the Sunday newspapers. Heretofore theatrical managers had most of them contented themselves with announcements in the newspapers of the names of their plays and the names of their performers, and Barnum was one of the first men in the United States to realize the power of the paid adjective in advertising theatrical attractions. Adjectives were lavished at this time on patent medicines, and the advertising columns in the newspapers of the day were made up largely of extravagant praise of pills by their makers. Theaters were sparing in their advertisements. His daily visits to the newspaper offices for the purpose of inserting his advertisements

made him acquainted at this time with those persons who were to contribute so much to his success during the rest of his life by advertising his wares, not least of which was his personality.

CHAPTER III

BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM

I

WHEN, in his thirty-second year, Barnum was "at the foot of fortune's ladder,"—his own description of his position as a writer of advertisements and newspaper articles—he learned that Scudder's American Museum was for sale. Scudder's American Museum had been founded in 1810, and it had gradually risen in the estimation of the population, so that in 1840 it was New York's greatest storehouse of curiosities, natural, theatrical, and unnatural. Scudder, its founder, had spent more than $50,000 on the collection, and for many years the profits had kept him comfortable. When he died he left a considerable fortune and the Museum to his daughters; but ladies in 1840 were neither permitted by custom nor fitted by education to manage a museum, and the Scudder establishment had been losing money since the death of its founder, because of lack of proper administration. Barnum had visited the American Museum many times, and he coveted the opportunity to exercise his energy in such a fertile field, so suited to his talents and previous experience. The price asked for the Museum, however, was $15,000, and Barnum was forced to admit to himself that his dreams were presumptuous. But he never admitted that to himself for long; he preferred to act on the assumption that anything was within his grasp, materially and intellectually, and to consider difficulties later. When he discussed his intentions with a friend who knew his circumstances, the friend said, "You *buy* the American Museum? What do you intend to buy it with?" "*Brass*," said Barnum, "for silver and gold I have none."

The building of the American Museum at the corner of Broadway and Ann Street was owned by Francis W. Olmsted, a retired merchant, and the Museum collection was owned by the estate of Scudder, administered for Scudder's daughters by John Heath. Barnum's first step was to approach Mr. Olmsted, but he did not

know that gentleman, and he knew no one who did. He dared not visit this important person, who had a suite of rooms in Park Place. In a letter he told Mr. Olmsted that he wished to buy the Museum collection, and though he had no money, he knew that by devotion to business, and because of his past experience as a showman, he would be able to make it successful, if it could be purchased on reasonable credit. In his letter Barnum asked Mr. Olmsted to purchase the Museum collection in his own name from the Scudder estate, and to give him twelve dollars and a half per week out of the profits to support his family. All the rest of the profits were to be Olmsted's until the cost of the collection and the rent of the Museum building were paid. Barnum only asked in addition for an agreement in writing that the Museum would be his property as soon as he had made all the payments to Mr. Olmsted. If Barnum failed to meet any instalments, the property reverted to Mr. Olmsted, Barnum would forfeit all his payments to date, and withdraw from the management. His letter ended with this earnest appeal: "In fact, Mr. Olmsted, you may bind me in any way, and as tightly as you please—only give me a chance to dig out, or scratch out, and I will either do so or forfeit all the labor and trouble which I may have incurred." Barnum added that by means of his plan Mr. Olmsted would have a permanent tenant for his Museum building, while the present indications were that the Museum would fail and the building would become vacant.

Barnum did not trust the mail. He took his letter personally to Mr. Olmsted's door and left it with the servant. Soon he received an appointment for an interview, in the course of which he persuasively explained to Mr. Olmsted his past experience with Vauxhall Garden, the traveling circus, and Joice Heth, and gave as references William Niblo, Aaron Turner, Moses Y. Beach, of *The Sun*, and many other showmen and newspaper men. He made arrangements for some of these men to call on Mr. Olmsted the next day, and when Barnum saw his prospective landlord again, Mr. Olmsted said, "I don't like your references, Mr. Barnum. They all speak too well of you. In fact, they all talk as if they were partners of yours and intended to share the profits." Barnum was delighted. Mr. Olmsted then said that he was thinking of carrying out Barnum's scheme, and insisted that he must have the right to appoint, at Barnum's expense, a ticket-seller and accountant. It was also agreed that Barnum should take an apartment

for his wife and children in the building adjoining the Museum for an additional rent of $500 a year, making his total rent $3,000 each year, on a lease of ten years. Mr. Olmsted was about ready to conclude the agreement. There was only one small matter to settle; did Mr. Barnum own any small piece of unencumbered real estate which he could offer as security? Barnum thought of all his small holdings in Connecticut, but every one that was worth anything was mortgaged to the extent of its value. He saw his dream slipping away; and then he thought of Ivy Island. He hesitated; Ivy Island was surrounded and largely covered with water, and its main product was stunted ivies. The temptation was great. Mr. Olmsted was already amply secured, in Barnum's opinion, for Barnum was confident of his ability to make the Museum a great success; why shouldn't he offer Ivy Island as security? He told Mr. Olmsted that he had five acres of land in Connecticut free from all mortgages, but he omitted to mention that no one would have given a mortgage on them. Mr. Olmsted asked how much Barnum had paid for his land. It was a present from his grandfather, Phineas Taylor, for taking his name. Mr. Olmsted supposed that Barnum would be reluctant to part with such a piece of property, because of its fond associations, and Barnum replied that he did not expect to part with it, for he intended to make his payments punctually. The security was accepted.

Barnum's next step was to interview John Heath, the administrator of the Scudder estate, and make him an offer for the Museum collection in the name of Mr. Olmsted. Twelve thousand dollars was agreed upon as the price, and Barnum was to take possession of the American Museum on November 15, 1841. A day was appointed to draw up the agreements with Mr. Olmsted, and on that day Heath appeared and informed Barnum that he must decline his offer, since he had meanwhile sold the collection to the New York Museum Company for $15,000 and had accepted an advance payment of $1,000. Barnum appealed to Heath's honor, but Heath replied that he had not put it in writing, and that he was obliged to do the best he could for Scudder's orphan daughters. Mr. Olmsted was perfectly satisfied with the new arrangements, for he would now have a permanent tenant for his Museum building, and Barnum was disregarded and forgotten.

But he was not inactive. He gathered information about the company known as the New York Museum Company. The chairman of the board of directors, he learned, was the ex-president of an unsuccessful bank, and the other directors were stock speculators. Barnum discovered that their scheme was to purchase the American Museum, join it to Peale's Museum, which the chairman of the board of directors of the New York Museum Company already owned, and to issue stock to the public to the amount of $50,000. Then the directors planned to appropriate $30,000 and allow the stockholders to take care of themselves on the principle of *caveat emptor*. Barnum visited his newspaper friends, Moses Y. Beach, Major M. M. Noah, and several other newspaper owners. He told them his troubles and explained the plans of the New York Museum Company. He asked for the use of their columns "to blow that speculation sky-high," and they agreed with him that it was a public duty as well as a personal favor. Barnum wrote daily editorial notes for almost every newspaper in New York warning the public not to buy stock in the New York Museum Company. He described the board of directors as broken-down bank directors engaged in the exhibition of stuffed monkey and gander skins, and he cited the instance of the Zoölogical Institute, which had failed because of just such a financial plan as that proposed by the New York Museum Company. He branded the Peale speculation as more fantastic than Dickens's "Grand United Metropolitan Hot Muffin and Crumpet-Baking and Punctual Delivery Company."

After planning his press campaign against the New York Museum Company, Barnum called upon Heath and asked when the company of speculators was to pay the additional $14,000 and take over the Museum. He was told that December 26 was the day agreed upon, and he assured Heath that the stock speculators would never pay the $14,000 on that day. With a disinterested air, he announced his intention of traveling in the South with his circus, and said that unless he could purchase the Museum on December 27, if the New York Museum Company should forfeit its option, he would never buy the Museum at any price, because of his other interests. He agreed to postpone his trip to the South until December 27, but not a day later, and this time the agreement of sale was put in writing. This

agreement, Barnum insisted, must be kept strictly confidential, and he told all his friends who inquired that he had lost the chance to buy the Museum.

Meanwhile Barnum kept up his stream of publicity against the bogus stock company. On December 1 he was asked to call upon the board of directors of the New York Museum Company, in order to learn something to his advantage. The directors offered Barnum the position as manager of the new combined museums at his own price of $3,000 a year. He stipulated that his duties and salary were not to commence until January 1, 1842. As he was leaving the directors' room, the chairman remarked with a smile that, of course, the newspaper paragraphs would now cease. Barnum replied that he always tried to serve the interests of his employers; Barnum loved ambiguity and a pun. In order that the public might forget Barnum's paragraphs, the directors determined to withdraw their stock-selling advertisements until after January 1. They forgot completely about December 26 and their promised payment in full, knowing that no one but Barnum wanted to purchase the Museum; and did they not have him in their employ? On the morning of December 27 Barnum and his lawyer met Heath and Mr. Olmsted at Mr. Olmsted's suite in Park Place. At two o'clock in the afternoon he was in possession of the American Museum, and his first official act was the dispatch of the following letter:

> "American Museum, New York, Dec. 27, 1841.
>
> "*To the President and Directors of the New York Museum*:
>
> "Gentlemen:—It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you are placed upon the Free List of this establishment until further notice.
>
> P. T. Barnum, Proprietor."

II

The amusements of New York were somewhat limited in their number and rather crude in their character when Barnum bought the American Museum. New York had its native favorites and its imported celebrities in the persons of Edmund Kean, Junius Booth,

Edwin Forrest, Tyrone Power, William Macready, and Charlotte Cushman, but the opportunities offered to see these and their less talented contemporaries were not many, for the God-fearing section of the population were certain that the theater was under the management of the devil, and there was an even larger number who did not care whether it was or not, so that between indifference and straight-laced morality theatrical property suffered from a general depression.

There were only three theaters in New York that were recognized by those who guarded their human contacts carefully, so that they might always be fit to associate with each other. These theaters were the Park, the Bowery, and Mitchell's Olympic. The Park Theater was the theater of fashion, and the Bowery was just a grade lower, although the circumspectly critical Mrs. Trollope called it "as pretty a theater as I ever entered." At the Park during the season of 1841 Fanny Elssler began an engagement in "The petite comedy of 'The Dumb Belle.'" Edwin Forrest was playing at the Bowery Theater one night in "Metamora! The Last of the Wampanaogs," an Indian play, and the next night, October 13, in "Damon and Pythias." The Chatham Theater, which was out of bounds for fashionable society, offered "The Six Degrees of Crime, or Wine, Women, Gaming, Theft, Murder, the Scaffold." It was in this theater, where she went in spite of the warnings and pleas of her New York society friends, that Mrs. Trollope saw a woman in one of the boxes "performing the most maternal office possible" during the intermission. Mitchell's Olympic presented on Friday evening, December 17, 1841, "Why Did You Die, after which Tableaux Vivans." (The spelling of *vivants* is Mitchell's.) "Jonah, or a Trip to Whales," ran for several nights at the Bowery Theater, and Niblo's Garden, adhering to its policy as a summer garden, offered during the summer of 1841 "Godenski, or The Skaters of Wilna, a pantomimic ballet." The attraction in the hall of the American Museum just before Barnum took charge was "Love and Physic." Dickens described the Bowery and Park theaters as "large, elegant, and handsome buildings, and are, I grieve to write it, generally deserted."

While the theater generally suffered from a bad reputation among classes of the community that adhered sternly to conventions and propriety, many of the establishments catered to those classes which

did not. The gallery of each theater was reserved almost exclusively for prostitutes and negroes, and was known familiarly as "the third tier." No woman without an escort was allowed in either the orchestra or the balcony seats, and the gallery readily became a place of assignation for the young bloods and their accompanists. Those who frequented the theaters were not usually scrupulous in their efforts to impress their neighbors by their manners, and in her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* Mrs. Trollope referred to the practice of the men in the balcony, who were in the habit of placing their feet on the brass rail in front of the first row, slouching into their seats, and exposing their hind quarters to the patrons of the orchestra. For some years after the publication of Mrs. Trollope's book, this practice was greeted with shouts from orchestra audiences of "Trollope! Trollope!"

Barnum's American Museum, on Broadway at Ann Street, was in the heart of the New York of its day. Opposite was the hotel of best repute, the Astor House; four blocks north was the city's best restaurant, Delmonico's; between the two was The Park, that is, City Hall Park. St. Paul's Church was across the street, and Trinity Church was five minutes' walk from the Museum. The *Tribune* and *Herald* offices were near by, and the other newspapers were published in the same district. No Metropolitan Museum of Art offered free exhibitions of pictures, and no American Museum of Natural History educated the public in real natural life; Barnum's Museum was therefore patronized by those who to-day would patronize the Zoölogical Gardens and the American Museum of Natural History for satisfaction of their generic curiosity, as well as by those who enjoyed freaks. The curiosities in the Museum when Barnum purchased the collection included relics sent in from all over this country by those who found them, and curiosities brought in by sea captains who had made voyages to China, Siam, and other distant places. Among its main attractions under Scudder's management were the stuffed animals, a live anaconda, a tame alligator, and the gallery of paintings, supposed to be national portraits.

III

One of Barnum's first acquisitions was a model of that object of national pride, Niagara Falls. The falls were eighteen inches high, and everything else in the model was in proportion. Into this model Barnum arranged to have water pumped, and he advertised widely "The Great Model of Niagara Falls, With Real Water," and many couples who could not afford a honeymoon visited the Museum instead, attracted by Barnum's promise of real water. Soon after his advertisements appeared in the newspapers Barnum was ordered to come before the Croton Board of Water Commissioners. In that year, 1842, water first flowed through the Croton Reservoir, for after the great fire of 1835 the citizens were aroused to the necessity for a sufficient supply of water, and the Croton Reservoir was the result. It was opened on the Fourth of July, 1842, and a seven-mile parade, with red-shirt firemen, torch lights and the other paraphernalia of a monster procession commemorated the occasion. The president of the Board of Water Commissioners informed Barnum that the city could not furnish him with water for a Niagara Falls at twenty-five dollars a year. Barnum asked the president not to believe all he read in the newspapers and showbills and offered to pay one dollar a drop for all the water he used more than one barrelful for his Niagara Falls; he explained the operation of the pump behind the scenes, and the water commissioners enjoyed the deception. In his autobiography Barnum thought it necessary to excuse himself by means of the argument that if visitors found his Niagara Falls "small potatoes" they had the rest of the magnificent Museum for twenty-five cents admission. It was always his opinion that any misrepresentation was justified if he gave patrons what they had not come for after they entered his Museum. Another of Barnum's early improvements of such a nature was what he advertised as an "aerial garden," which consisted of two cedar plants, ten pots of wilted flowers, and several small tables, located on the roof of the Museum building, where ice cream was served.

But Barnum's activities were not confined to such minor improvements. He opened the Museum on January 1, 1842, under his own management, and on July 4, 1842, Bennett's *Herald* referred to him as "the Napoleon of public caterers." Besides the experiments in

animal magnetism, which were popular before Barnum became proprietor, he introduced a classic scene by Mr. Bennie, entitled "Il Studio or Living Statues." A splendid attraction for one week only was the family of Industrious Fleas. "These insects," Barnum advertised, "have been taught by a gentleman from Germany, and rendered so docile as to be harnessed to carriages and other vehicles of several thousand times their own weight, which they will draw with as much precision as a cart horse." Jugglers, albinos, educated dogs, automatons, rope-dancers, dioramas of The Creation, The Deluge, and A Storm at Sea, fat boys, giants, gipsies, ventriloquists, knitting machines, models of Dublin, Paris, and Jerusalem, and examples of fancy glass-blowing were a few of the attractions at the Museum for twenty-five cents admission, children half-price. The first Punch and Judy Show ever exhibited in this country was one of Barnum's early attractions.

Barnum's aim was to make the Museum the talk of New York, and he used for this purpose every available means of advertising, creating means when they were not available. A man came to the box-office of the Museum one morning and asked for money. Barnum inquired why he did not work, and, after buying him a breakfast, employed him at $1.50 for the day. The man's job was to place a brick at the corner of Broadway and Ann Street, another brick at the corner of Broadway and Vesey Street, another in front of the Astor House, and another in front of St. Paul's Church. This brick-layer was to hold a fifth brick in his hand, and he was to continue from brick to brick, exchanging the brick in his hand for the brick on the walk, without talking to any one en route. At the end of every hour of this work, he was to present a ticket at the Museum, walk through the building and pass out to continue solemnly his brick work. Half an hour after the man began his rounds five hundred men and women were watching him, and trying by conjecture and questions to solve the mystery of his purpose. Solemn and taciturn, he went from brick to brick, ignoring the comments and questions of the crowd, and at the end of the first hour the streets surrounding the Museum were filled with people. Whenever he entered the Museum, people bought tickets and followed him, hoping that inside was the solution to the riddle of his strange actions. After several days of this walking advertisement, the police interfered and insisted that Barnum must withdraw his man

because of the congestion of traffic he caused, for the crowds practically closed all streets near the Museum. But Barnum's bricks were discussed for several weeks and received due newspaper notice.

The ordinary devices of showmen were used by Barnum on his own exaggerated scale. Huge posters outside announced the contents of the Museum, and long descriptive advertisements in the newspapers heralded new attractions. On a balcony which circled the outside of the Museum building, a band of music played all day long, and a huge poster announced, "Free Music for the Million!" Barnum took care, he confessed, to choose the worst band he could find, on the chance that the discordant notes would drive the crowd into the Museum. This appears a far-fetched method of advertising, but he assured the readers of his autobiography that it was profitable. Powerful Drummond lights, the first New York saw, shone from the top of the Museum and lighted Broadway from the Battery to Niblo's Garden. Barnum planned in advance to dispose of the entire profit of the first year in advertising, and the profits came in so fast that he had difficulty devising enough media. Paintings of strange animals were made for Barnum in panels and attached to the entire outside surface of the Museum. The work of putting up the paintings was performed in one night without advance notice, and the next morning when New York saw its popular landmark, it looked as if it had broken out into a huge rash. The changed appearance caused people to hurry inside to see if corresponding changes had been made there. Barnum estimated that these gaudy pictures increased his profits by one hundred dollars a day, and they never fell back after the novelty had become a tradition; it may be that it was impossible to grow accustomed to Barnum's animals, and undoubtedly they always attracted the streams of immigrants and Western visitors ever flowing into New York City.

It was the world's way, Barnum wrote, "to promise everything for next to nothing," and he confessed that he fell rapidly into that way and excelled in it. This, he insisted, was not because he was less scrupulous, but because he was more ingenious and energetic than his competitors. However, there were instances of deception in which Barnum allowed the association of ideas to work to his advantage. He promised nothing, but allowed an innocent observer to jump to his own conclusions, contributing by his advertisements a slight shove in

the wrong direction. The best of these was Barnum's exploitation of a negro violinist. He engaged this negro artist, who had a foreign musical education and a reputation in musical circles, to play at the Museum, and he advertised the negro widely, but the public did not appear to be interested. The receipts did not increase, and Barnum issued instructions for the large colored posters, showing the negro violinist in action, to be posted on the boards upside down. This was no sooner carried out than the Museum was crowded, on the assumption that the negro violinist played the violin while standing on his head. It was a source of great disappointment to many when they only heard him play the violin right side up, but, said Barnum, never mind, they had the Industrious Fleas and the Albinos for their money.

Barnum's first object was publicity for the Museum and for the name of P. T. Barnum, and he went to any lengths to carry out those purposes. He soon succeeded in making his Museum and his personality the talk of New York, and it was then his ambition to make them national institutions. In his use of the newspapers, which seemed in those days to be naïve in the extreme, he was indefatigable. Many years later Barnum told a reporter for the *Indianapolis Journal*: "In the old Museum days ... night after night at the midnight hour, and later, I crawled up these several newspaper staircases to put in these journals some fresh and startling announcement about my business. I even did this after the editor had gone home, but the foreman in the composing room had some authority then and would often put the matter I offered in type or make an announcement for me." Barnum added, "If I am ever profoundly thankful for any instrumentalities, it is for the editor and his paper. They furnish the wind for my sails." Barnum owed this debt of gratitude, but he must be given credit as the inventor of steam navigation in the seas of publicity.[4] The editors of the day were not philanthropists, and Barnum worked in devious ways for his notoriety. It was his genius that he realized the value in dollars and cents of his name and his activities and at the same time attached no estimable value to the character he might establish in the world. Charlatan, humbug, mountebank, and impostor were names he delighted in and conjured with, and it was possible for him to do so because his character was a composite of Baron Munchausen and Pecksniff, with an intensely

practical turn of mind. He was the father of publicity in a country where it may be said to have grown to be a monster akin to Frankenstein's, and his child supported him in luxury for many years. He combined with a genial temperament that would not allow him to worry about details a rhinoceros hide that refused to allow the slings and arrows of outraged editors and citizens to penetrate to his heart; his disposition was such that it was inevitable that he should succeed as an exploiter of monstrous hoaxes or legitimate extravaganzas.

IV

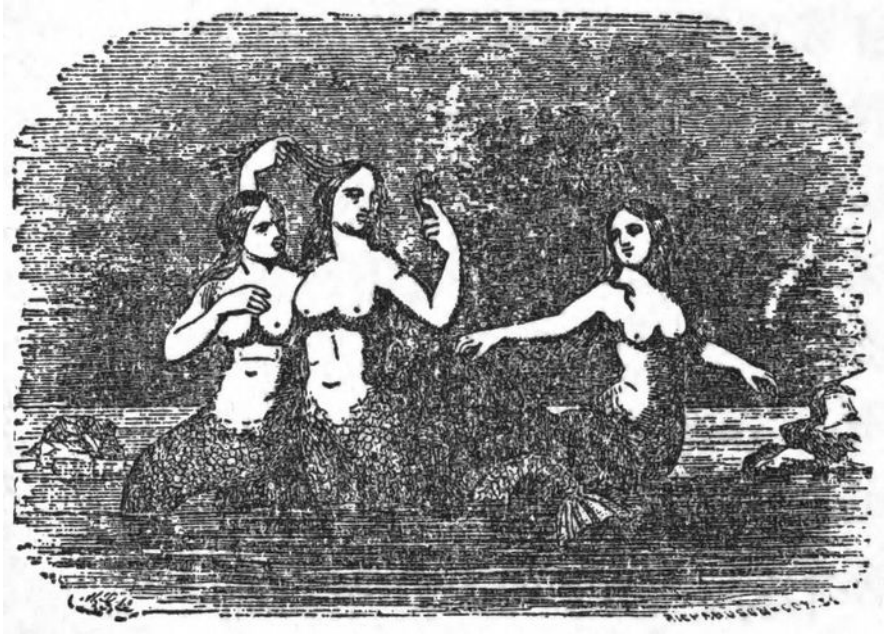
The greatest of Barnum's early curiosities, if we are to judge from the controversy caused by its exhibition, was The Fejee Mermaid. In the summer of 1842 the proprietor of the Boston Museum, Moses Kimball, brought to Barnum a figure supposed to be a preserved mermaid. Kimball had purchased it from a sailor, whose father, the captain of an American ship, bought it in Calcutta and honestly believed it to be a preserved mermaid found by Japanese sailors off the coast of Japan. The captain thought so highly of this mermaid that he appropriated $6,000 of the ship's funds in order to purchase it. His employers did not think so highly of his purchase, and the captain was forced to serve on his ship without pay until he had made up the misappropriation. He died in that service, leaving to his son nothing but the mermaid.

Barnum wrote that he was much impressed with the genuineness of this article of his commerce, but he did not trust his own judgment alone. He consulted his favorite naturalist, who had advised him on other phenomena. The naturalist, after a careful examination, admitted that he could find no sign of joining or other traces of artificial manufacture, but he shook his head dubiously and said that he had never seen a monkey with such strange arms and teeth, nor a fish with such queer fins. Barnum asked why he should assume that it was manufactured. "Because," answered the naturalist, "I don't believe in mermaids." Barnum thought that was bad logic; he preferred for the purposes of the occasion to believe in mermaids, and he hired this one. But to believe in mermaids yourself, and to make the public believe in mermaids, are not synonymous. However,

Barnum's confidence in the general credulity of his patrons was not unfounded upon both precedent and his own experience. He had learned much from Joice Heth, and this same mermaid had been exhibited in London twenty years before by the sea captain who owned it, and according to the London *Times* of the period every day three hundred persons paid a shilling each to see it.

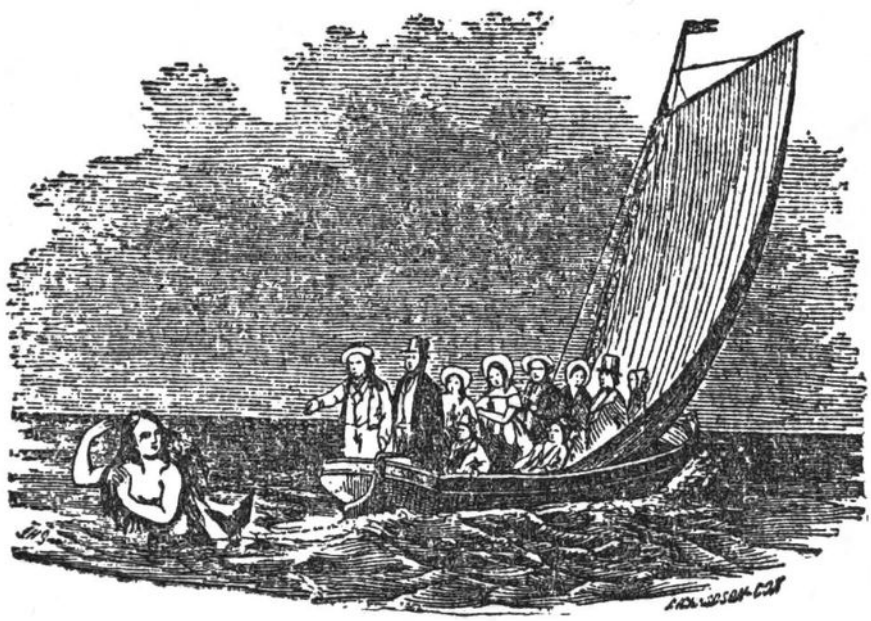
Soon after the mermaid came into Barnum's possession, a news letter appeared in the *New York Herald* from Montgomery, Alabama. It told of the state of trade, the condition of the crops, the political situation, and mentioned near the end that a Dr. Griffin, of the Lyceum of Natural History, London, who had but recently returned from Pernambuco, had in his trunk a most remarkable curiosity, a real mermaid, found by Chinese in the Fiji Islands, preserved by them, and purchased by Dr. Griffin for the London Lyceum of Natural History. One week later another news letter, this time from Charleston, South Carolina, telling the same story, was published in another New York newspaper. A third letter, mailed from Washington to another New York newspaper one week after the second news letter, announced the mermaid and mentioned that Dr. Griffin was soon to visit New York en route to London, and expressed the hope that New Yorkers would have the opportunity to see this extraordinary curiosity. Several days after the Washington letter, Levi Lyman, Barnum's assistant in the business of Joice Heth, registered at a Philadelphia hotel as Dr. Griffin, of Pernambuco and London. He remained there several days, and, just after paying his bill, he thanked the landlord for his constant courtesy and attention, and offered to show him, in gratitude for the excellent treatment he had received at the hostelry, a unique curiosity. The landlord gazed in wonderment at a real mermaid, and asked for permission to invite a few friends to see it. The doctor said that he did not suppose that it would do the Lyceum of Natural History of London much harm if a few of the landlord's best friends saw the mermaid; the Philadelphia newspapers for the next day and several days later commented at length on the great natural phenomenon.

Finally Dr. Griffin arrived in New York and registered at the Pacific Hotel. Reporters soon learned that the mermaid was in town, and the polite and genial agent of the Lyceum of Natural History allowed them to look at his curiosity. Barnum had meanwhile prepared



THE MERMAID IN HER NATURAL ELEMENT
From *The Sunday Mercury*

illustrations of the mermaid and printed 10,000 copies of a pamphlet describing it. These were stored in the Museum until the time came to use them publicly. Barnum, of course, had written the three news letters and sent them to friends in Montgomery, Charleston, and Washington, who could be trusted to mail them from those cities; the newspapers of the day were not particular about the source of their news, if it was news. Barnum called upon the editors of the *Herald*, the *Mercury*, and the *Atlas*, with his engravings of the mermaid. He told them that he had hoped to use these engravings when he exhibited the mermaid at the Museum, but that Dr. Griffin had decided that as agent for the Lyceum of Natural History it would be quite impossible for him to exhibit his curiosity in public anywhere except in London. Therefore, Barnum magnanimously offered his engravings, now worthless to him, for the editors to print. They thanked him, and the following Sunday each newspaper printed a different picture of the mermaid, and each editor realized Barnum's deception only when he saw the rival newspapers.



CAPTURE OF THE FEJEE MERMAID
Inserted by Barnum in *The Sunday Atlas*

The public was now interested in the mermaid. Most newspaper readers had seen at least one illustration or one of Barnum's out-of-town letters. The 10,000 pamphlets were turned over to newsboys to sell at a penny each in all the hotels, stores, and public places. Then Barnum hired, through an agent, Concert Hall on Broadway, and the newspapers printed advertisements which announced that Dr. Griffin, because of the solicitations of gentlemen of science, had consented to exhibit his mermaid for one week only at Concert Hall. Dr. Griffin would also show, for one week only, the other scientific specimens he had collected for the London Lyceum of Natural History, including the Ornithorhinchus, or the connecting link between the seal and the duck; two distinct species of flying fish, one from the Gulf Stream and one from the West Indies, which undoubtedly connected the bird and the fish; the Paddle Tail Snake of South America; the Siren, or Mud Iguana, a connecting link between reptiles and fish; the Proteus Sanguihus, a subterraneous animal from Australia; "with other animals forming connecting links in the great

chain of Animated Nature." Darwin did not publish *The Origin of Species* until seventeen years after Barnum's unique natural specimens were exhibited in New York.

There was no indication in the Fejee Mermaid of a junction between the fish body and the monkey head. The spine extended unbroken to the base of the skull. The shoulders were covered with animal hair, and under a microscope fish scales were visible beneath the hair. The face was of a monstrous ugliness, and the whole specimen, which was three feet long, was dried up and black. The misshapen arms, with their hideous long fingers on the ends of distorted hands, were turned up, and the right hand covered the right side of the face. The mouth was wide open, revealing bestial teeth, and the whole expression of the face gave the vivid impression that the animal had died in an extreme agony, which had been carefully preserved by its embalmers. It was Barnum's private opinion, which he did not express until many years later, that The Fejee Mermaid, as he spelled it, was made in Japan, China, or India, and that it was probably an object of worship in one of those countries. Profoundly religious himself, in a Christian way, Barnum always enjoyed attributing hideousness to so-called pagan faiths. He found in Dr. Ph. Fr. von Siebold's *Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century* an account of a Japanese fisherman who joined the upper half of a monkey to the lower half of a fish so deftly that the joint could not be detected. The Japanese then announced to his fellow-countrymen that he had caught the object in his net, and that it had died soon after its capture. The mermaid was exhibited in Japan, and its Japanese owner maintained that it had spoken a few words before it died, in which it had predicted some years of fertility, to be followed by years of a fatal epidemic, the only remedy against which would be the possession of the prophet's likeness. The sale in Japan of crude pictures of the animal was great, and the figure itself was finally sold to Dutch traders, who carried it to Batavia, "where," according to Dr. von Siebold, "it fell into the hands of a shrewd American, who brought it to Europe, and there, in the years 1822–23, exhibited his purchase as a real mermaid, at every capital, to the admiration of the ignorant, the perplexity of the learned, and the filling of his own purse." Barnum was convinced that this was his mermaid, and this its origin, and he hailed the Japanese fisherman as one of his brothers



THE CORRECT LIKENESS OF THE FEJEE MERMAID
From *The Sunday Herald*

under the skin, who by his scheme for selling pictures and attracting

crowds to the mermaid was entitled to occupy a throne along with Barnum as a Prince of Humbugs.

Concert Hall was crowded as soon as The Fejee Mermaid moved in. Levi Lyman, as Dr. Griffin, told the audiences of his travels and adventures in far-off places in search of unnatural curiosities. Barnum was afraid that some of those who visited Concert Hall might recognize Dr. Griffin as the Levi Lyman who had accompanied Joice Heth, but Joice Heth had been dead six years, and no one doubted Dr. Griffin; he looked scientific. He was dignified and polite, and he explained with great pains and patience the science and natural history of the connecting links by which he was surrounded. After one week at Concert Hall, Barnum announced that at last, after much trouble and expense, he had induced Dr. Griffin to exhibit The Fejee Mermaid at Barnum's American Museum, where it could be seen daily, along with the other curiosities, without extra charge. Barnum designed an enormous flag, representing a mermaid eighteen feet long, which, when it was unfurled, covered the front of the Museum. This was too much, even for Lyman, who protested against such a colossal deception: The Fejee Mermaid was only three feet long. Lyman indignantly told Barnum that the public would not swallow such a difference between its expectations and the reality, and he insisted that the flag be taken down. Barnum answered that he had paid seventy dollars for that flag, and it must remain in front of the Museum. "Well, Mr. Barnum," Lyman answered, "if you like to fight under that flag, you can do so, but *I* won't." Barnum could not dispense with Professor Griffin, and the flag was hauled in. It is strange that Lyman should choose this flag as an issue, and Barnum does not explain it, but it was likely that Lyman was having considerable difficulty satisfying many disappointed visitors with his wizened mermaid, and could endure no further difficulties. Lyman later went to Nauvoo, Illinois, where he became an influential Mormon.

In later years, and in the last editions of his autobiography, Barnum did not give the details of The Fejee Mermaid with so much pride in his own ingenuity. He wrote in the 1888 edition of his autobiography, published three years before his death: "I used it mainly to advertise the regular business of the Museum, and this effective indirect advertising is the only feature I can commend, in a special show of

which, I confess, I am not proud. Newspapers throughout the country copied the mermaid notices, for they were novel and caught the attention of readers. Thus was the fame of the Museum, as well as the mermaid, wafted from one end of the land to the other. I was careful to keep up the excitement, for I knew that every dollar sown in advertising would return in tens, and perhaps hundreds, in a future harvest, and after obtaining all the notoriety possible by advertising and by exhibiting the mermaid at the Museum, I sent the curiosity throughout the country, directing my agent to everywhere advertise it as 'From Barnum's Great American Museum, New York.' The effect was immediately felt; money flowed in rapidly, and was readily expended in more advertising."

While The Fejee Mermaid was on exhibition at the Museum, one of the visitors said to Barnum, "I lived two years on the Fiji Islands, and I never heard of any such thing as a mermaid." "There's no accounting for some men's ignorance," was Barnum's answer. But most of the public seemed satisfied, and apparently sent their friends, for during the first four weeks of the mermaid's exhibition at the Museum the receipts were $3,341.93. During the four weeks preceding its arrival the receipts had been only $1,272.

The Museum was now well on its way to financial success. Barnum and his family had lived on the $600 a year allowed him out of the profits until the Museum was paid for. Six months after he had purchased the Museum, Mr. Olmsted found him in the ticket office one day eating his dinner of corned beef and bread. "Is that the way you eat your dinner?" he asked. "I have not eaten a warm dinner since I bought the Museum, except on the Sabbath," Barnum answered, "and I intend never to eat another on a week day until I am out of debt." Mr. Olmsted was much pleased, clapped Barnum on the shoulder, and assured him that he was a safe investment. The assertion that he ate only one hot dinner a week is possibly a Barnumization of the truth, for it is this type of statement Barnum was most likely to exaggerate in his autobiography, and which in some instances can be proved untrue. But in less than one year after he arranged for its purchase, Barnum owned the American Museum in his own name and had paid his rent out of the profits. The profits

for the year 1842, according to Barnum's account books, were $27,912.62. For the year before he became its proprietor, the profits had been $10,862.

The bogus New York Museum Company sold Peale's Museum to Henry Bennett, who created publicity by parodying Barnum's attractions. When Barnum exhibited The Fejee Mermaid, Bennett advertised a "Fudg-ee Mermaid," and when Barnum advertised a family of singers as the "Orphean Family," Bennett presented the "Orphan Family." The novelty of this opposition, however, did not pay expenses, and Barnum soon bought out Bennett, but he hired Bennett as manager of his own museum and instructed him to continue the opposition and the parodies, which created publicity for the American Museum. At the end of six months the collections were combined.

Within a year, by means of ingenious, and sometimes unscrupulous, advertising, Barnum's American Museum became New York's most popular place of amusement. For New Yorkers it was a place of regular resort, and families brought their lunches and ate them in the Museum rooms so that they might spend the whole day among the curiosities. The Museum was known throughout the country, and visitors to New York, who arrived early in the morning, often visited Barnum's before they went to their hotels or to their breakfast, for the Museum was opened every morning at sunrise. Barnum once compared the number of visitors to his Museum with those of the British Museum, which, of course, was free of charge, and found that his patrons were more numerous.

V

Besides his notorious curiosities, Barnum enlarged the Lecture Room of the Museum, and presented regular dramatic performances there. He felt that what he called the "Moral Drama" would pay better than anything that was attractively immoral; and the "Moral Drama" was more palatable to his own conscience, for from childhood until his last year he had a sincere religious fear of impropriety in public presentation. The greatest manifestation of Barnum's genius for theatrical management in this country was his instinctive realization that the largest part of the community is eminently respectable in

public, and it was what, more than anything else, contributed to his financial success, that Barnum catered to the reputable who still retained vestiges of curiosity. Many persons who would not be seen in a theater visited regularly the Museum Lecture Room—Barnum would never consent to calling it a theater—where the moral dramas of "Joseph and His Brethren," "Moses," and "The Drunkard" were performed. One afternoon a New England lady walked into Barnum's office and sat down on the sofa. She examined Barnum curiously for a minute, and then remarked that he looked "much like other common folks, after all." "Mr. Barnum," she said "I never went to any Museum before, nor to any place of amusement or public entertainment, except our school exhibitions; and I have sometimes felt that they even may be wicked, because some parts of the dialogue seemed frivolous; but I have heard so much of your 'moral dramas,' and the great good you are doing for the rising generation, that I thought I must come here and see for myself." At that moment the gong announcing the beginning of the show in the Lecture Room rang. The lady jumped from the sofa. "Are the services about to commence?" she asked anxiously. There was the noise of shuffling feet as the crowd hurried to the seats. "Yes," said Barnum, "the congregation is now going up." Barnum wrote concerning his moral performances: "I resolved, as far as possible, to elevate and refine such amusements as I dispensed. Even Shakespeare's dramas were shorn of their objectionable features when placed upon my stage."

E. A. Sothern, Tony Pastor, and Barney Williams received their first stage training on the stage of Barnum's Lecture Room. On holidays performances were given every hour throughout the afternoon and evening, and Barnum is given credit in histories of the theater for originating the continuous performance, which has since proved so popular in vaudeville.

These continuous programs on holidays were very popular, and on the first Fourth of July of Barnum's management of the Museum so many people visited the building that the sale of tickets was stopped. This Barnum described as "exceedingly harrowing to my feelings." He noted sadly that thousands were waiting outside to purchase tickets, and that those inside did not seem in a hurry to leave. Barnum ordered his carpenter to build a temporary flight of stairs at the rear of the building, which opened out into Ann Street. At three o'clock

that afternoon this exit was opened, but much money had been lost. When, on the next St. Patrick's Day, Barnum was informed in advance that the Irish population intended to visit the Museum in large numbers, he opened the rear exit again. Before noon the Museum was crowded, and the sale of tickets had to be stopped. Barnum rushed to the rear exit and asked how many hundreds had passed out that way. He was told that three persons had used it during the whole morning, for the visitors had brought their dinners and intended to remain in the Museum all day and night. Barnum hurriedly called his sign painter and ordered a sign in large letters

☞ TO THE EGRESS.

This was nailed over the rear door. Some of the Irish visitors spelled out the sign, "To the Aigress," and many remarked, "Sure, that's an animal we haven't seen," and found themselves on Ann Street, with no chance of re-entering the Museum.

It was on his first Fourth of July in the Museum that Barnum exhibited another instance of his ingenuity in the face of a difficulty. In order to make the most of the holiday by utilizing the publicity value of the American flag, Barnum fastened a string of large flags across Broadway, tying one end to the Museum and the other to a tree in St. Paul's Churchyard. Several days before Independence Day Barnum had visited the vestrymen of St. Paul's and requested permission to use the tree in the churchyard, but they called his request insulting and talked of sacrilege. On the Fourth of July he gave orders for the flags to be attached, as he had originally planned. The flags attracted huge crowds, and at half-past nine in the morning two indignant vestrymen entered Barnum's office and demanded that they be detached from their church immediately. Barnum answered pleasantly that he would go into the street with them and see what could be done. He looked at the flags and remarked solemnly that they were a beautiful sight. He argued with the vestrymen that he always had stopped his Free Music for the Million when they held their services, and he merely requested this favor in return. One of the vestrymen lost patience and shouted that unless Barnum took down the flags within ten minutes he would *cut* them down. The crowd was attracted by the angry gestures. Barnum suddenly took off his coat,

rolled up his shirt sleeves, and shouted in his sonorous voice, tinged with anger, loudly enough for all in the crowd to overhear, “I should like to see you dare to cut down the American flag on the Fourth of July; you must be a Britisher to make such a threat, but I’ll show you a thousand pairs of Yankee hands in two minutes, if you dare to take down the stars and stripes on this great birthday of American freedom.” In a moment the vestrymen were surrounded by several heavy, angry men, who threatened varied punishment. The poor bewildered vestrymen disappeared quietly from the crowd, and Barnum with obsequious smiles enjoyed his triumph.

Barnum was apparently indefatigable in his personal interest in the Museum and in his personal efforts to make it ever more popular. He often appeared before his audiences with stunts or speeches, because he knew he could entertain them, and because he liked to think that they were interested in him. When Peale, of Peale’s Museum, presented an actor who pretended to conduct experiments in Mesmerism, Barnum personally conducted his own experiments in Animal Magnetism from the stage of the Moral Lecture Room. A young girl, carefully trained in advance, sat on the stage. Barnum made a few passes with his hand in front of her, and she was then under his control; she raised her hands when he requested her to do so, grimaced when he put tobacco in his mouth, and smiled when he ate candy. Then it was his practice to turn to the audience and offer to forfeit fifty dollars if he could not put any member of the audience in the same state within five minutes. At the end of three minutes the volunteer was, of course, wide awake. Barnum would look at his watch, remark that he had two minutes, which was plenty of time, and offer to demonstrate to the audience that a person mesmerized was a person insensible to pain, by cutting off one of the fingers of the small girl, who was still asleep. He would take out his knife, feel the sharp edge, and turn towards the girl, who had meanwhile fled behind the scenes in a fright that delighted the audience. Barnum would say in an astonished tone of voice, “Then she was wide awake, was she?” His volunteer from the audience usually answered, “Of course she was, she was wide awake all the time.” “I suppose so,” was Barnum’s answer, “and, my dear sir, I promised that you should be ‘in the same

state' at the end of five minutes, and as I believe you are so, I do not forfeit fifty dollars." This type of trick never seemed to anger, rather than to amuse, the audiences.

No such trickery was too much for Barnum, and he carried out a similar deception on a public scale with no harm to his reputation and no qualms of conscience. In June of 1843 he attended the Bunker Hill celebration, where Daniel Webster delivered a stirring oration, but Barnum was just as interested in an old canvas tent near the Bunker Hill Monument as he was in the ceremonies of the day. He found in that tent a herd of fifteen one-year-old calf buffaloes, which he immediately purchased for $700; a scheme by which he could utilize these buffaloes had hatched in his mind almost as soon as he saw them. The animals were docile and tired, for they had been driven east from the western plains. At Barnum's order they were brought to New York and then transported to a New Jersey barn near Hoboken. Barnum hired their former owner, C. D. French, to take care of the animals for thirty dollars per month, because French understood the lasso. The newspapers shortly afterwards announced that a herd of wild buffaloes, captured in the Rocky Mountains, was passing through New York soon on its way to Europe, in charge of the very men who had captured the animals, and during the next few days suggestions appeared in the newspapers that it would be a fine thing for New York if the owners of these buffaloes could be induced to present a buffalo chase on a race course near New York, demonstrating to the eastern population the use of the lasso and the ferocity of the buffalo. One of the correspondents expressed it as his sincere opinion that it would be worth a dollar to see such a sight, and that he for one would be willing to pay that amount. Another estimated that no less than fifty thousand persons would be interested in a buffalo chase without the danger but with the thrills, and other obliging correspondents suggested places for the hunt, including the race course at Hoboken, New Jersey. Before long advertisements appeared in all the newspapers, and handbills were circulated throughout New York announcing that there would be a "Grand Buffalo Hunt, Free of Charge—At Hoboken, on Thursday, August 31, at 3, 4, and 5 o'clock p. m. Mr. C. D. French, one of the most daring and experienced hunters of the West, has arrived thus far on his way to Europe with a Herd of Buffaloes, captured by himself, near Santa

Fé. He will exhibit a method of hunting the Wild Buffaloes, and throwing the lasso, by which the animals were captured in their most wild and untamed state. This is perhaps one of the most exciting and difficult feats that can be performed, requiring at the same time the most expert horsemanship and the greatest skill and dexterity. Every man, woman, and child can here witness *the wild sports of the Western Prairies*, as the exhibition is to be free to all, and will take place on the extensive grounds and Race Course of Messrs. Stevens, within a few rods of the Hoboken Ferry." The public was further assured that, "No possible danger need be apprehended, as a double railing has been put around the whole course, to prevent the possibility of the Buffaloes approaching the multitude."

These announcements mystified and delighted New York. Who was the city's anonymous benefactor? Who supplied such entertainment free of charge and kept modestly in the background? Barnum meanwhile had purchased the rights to the receipts of all the ferry boats which crossed between New York and Hoboken on August 31, 1843, and extra ferry boats were provided for the day. The weather was clear, and the boats, under the administration of Captain Barnum, were crowded to the railings with adventurers. Twenty-four thousand people went to Hoboken that day. They stood on the railings and clutched the awnings to support themselves, and each paid six and a quarter cents going and the same to return.

When the crowds arrived in Hoboken, they waited in the arena for the wild buffaloes, who finally appeared in reluctant and tame parade of their alleged ferocity. The animals were thin and pale from lack of nourishment during their first master's patronage, and although they had been crammed with extra rations of oats for several days they refused at the outset to be wild. C. D. French, "one of the most daring and experienced hunters of the West," dressed and painted as an Indian, poked his wild buffaloes with a goad, but the most they would do for the twenty-four thousand interested spectators was to trot. There was much laughter and shouting at their recalcitrance, and the noise made by the crowd frightened the nervous buffaloes so much that they galloped from the enclosure in terror and threw the spectators, who believed that they had actually grown wild, into a panic. The buffaloes took refuge from their oppressors in a near-by swamp, and all that C. D. French could do would not persuade them

to return to the Race Course. He finally lassoed one of them, and entertained the crowd with this beast, and with exhibitions of lassoing on horses and horsemen. No one suspected the ferry boat arrangement, and no one suspected Barnum. It was after midnight when the last of the crowds succeeded in getting home from Hoboken, but, apparently, a good time was had by all, for there were no riots, and the receipts of the ferry boats turned over to Barnum amounted to $3,500. After the exhibition Barnum sent his buffaloes to Camden, New Jersey, where they attracted Philadelphia crowds in the same manner. Some of the herd then went to England and were sold, while the others were fattened on a farm and sold for buffalo steak in Fulton Market at fifty cents per pound. In order that the Museum might profit by the advertisement, Barnum made public his responsibility for the Great Buffalo Hunt.

Some time after his success with the buffaloes, Barnum presented the first Wild West Show New York had seen. He engaged a band of Indians from Iowa, among whom were impressive men, beautiful squaws, and two or three papooses. The Indians appeared on the stage of the Moral Lecture Room in real war dances, which they performed with all the vigor and realistic interpretation of their savage origin. In fact, it was necessary to rope them in, for fear that in their frenzy towards the end of a dance they might forget that they were merely players, and make for members of the audience; for Barnum's Indians had never before seen a railroad or a steamboat, and scalps were not yet obsolete in their minds. They seemed thoroughly under the impression that they were not acting but living, which in one particular caused the proprietor of the American Museum some expense. After a week of war dances, Barnum suggested a change of program, including an Indian wedding dance. The interpreter explained, and the chief agreed. On Monday afternoon when the first change to the wedding dance was to take place, Barnum was informed by the chief that he must supply a red woolen blanket as a wedding present for the bridegroom to give to the father of the bride, an inviolable Indian custom. After each performance the chief insisted that he must have another new blanket for the next performance, and when Barnum attempted to explain

that the wedding was only “make believe,” the chief gave forth an ugly “Ugh!” terrifying Barnum into spending $120 for twelve red woolen blankets for the rest of the week.

These special exhibitions were supplemented by flower shows, dog shows, and poultry shows at the Museum, and Barnum, soon after he became manager, decided that he must have a baby show. He organized such an exhibition with graduated scales of prizes for triplets, the fattest baby, the most beautiful baby, and the handsomest twins. The main prize of $100 for the most perfect baby was a source of considerable difficulty. Barnum thought that it would be a fine thing for him to award this prize himself, a fine thing in publicity for himself, and also for the baby, who could say in later years that he had been personally selected as unique by P. T. Barnum. In later years he did meet many men and women who claimed that honor, but at the time of the awards the defeated mothers stormed about Barnum, and their indignation could not be appeased until he announced that he would award a second prize of $100 to the baby selected by a committee of mothers. Whereupon each mother became the enemy of every other, and Barnum’s $100 was safe. In deciding future baby contests, however, he sent in written reports and was not to be disturbed for the rest of the day.

VI

In November, 1842, Barnum stopped one night at the Franklin Hotel in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which was kept by his brother, Philo F. Barnum. His brother mentioned that there was a dwarf in Bridgeport, who played daily in the streets, and was accepted by the rest of the population as a natural curiosity. Barnum asked his brother to bring the child to the Franklin Hotel, and as soon as he saw this dwarf he realized that here was a natural curiosity who could be transformed by instruction and publicity into a unique and profitable one. The child was the smallest Barnum had ever seen, and was in excellent health, without any deformities. He was two feet, one inch in height and weighed fifteen pounds. His hair was flaxen, and his eyes dark; his cheeks were pink and his whole appearance gave the impression of health, symmetry, and whimsical charm on a lovely, diminutive

scale. He was very bashful, and Barnum only learned after difficulty that his name was Charles S. Stratton, and that he was five years old. Barnum visited Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood E. Stratton, the child's parents, and after some persuasion they consented to exhibit their son at Barnum's Museum for three dollars per week and board for himself and his mother. Barnum hired him for four weeks only, because at the time he was doubtful whether a five-year-old child who was only two feet in height might not grow before long to a normality that would make him mediocre.

The dwarf and his mother arrived in New York on Thanksgiving Day, 1842, and Barnum had something to be thankful for that day. Mrs. Stratton was astonished and somewhat annoyed when she noticed that her son was announced in large handbills as "General Tom Thumb, a dwarf eleven years of age, just arrived from England." The "just arrived from England" was the first instance of a method Barnum often repeated. He realized early in his career the love of the American mind for an importation, and he never advertised anything as domestic if he could possibly deceive his patrons into believing that he had incurred much trouble and expense by importing it from abroad, where its popularity was always stupendous. He hoped, patriotically, in his autobiography that such deception might check "our disgraceful preference for foreigners."

Barnum made his dwarf eleven years old for fear that the public might not believe that a child five years old would not grow beyond his present height. In the various pamphlets concerning the life of General Tom Thumb, which were sold at his exhibitions, it is recorded that when he was born he weighed nine pounds, two ounces, more than the average weight of a new-born baby, and that at five months he had ceased to grow and weighed only fifteen pounds. His weight of fifteen pounds and his height of two feet, one inch, were said to have remained unchanged from the age of five months until the age of five years and for many years thereafter.

The change of name from Charles S. Stratton to General Tom Thumb was a stroke of Barnum's inspiration, and it contributed largely to the General's subsequent success. Tom Thumb is the most appropriate name a dwarf ever had, and besides it possessed the advantage of some familiarity from the story of the legendary Tom Thumb, of whom it will be remembered:

"In Arthur's court Tom Thumbe did live,
A man of mickle might,
The best of all the table round,
And eke a doughty knight;
His stature but an inch in height,
Or quarter of a span;
Then think you not this little knight
Was prov'd a valiant man?"

According to nursery lore, the legendary Tom Thumbe was swallowed by a cow when he crossed the cow's blade of grass but was soon delivered up again from the cow's stomach, only to meet his death by a bumble bee after a series of valiant adventures. Barnum's addition of "General" to Tom Thumb enriched the name by a pompous mockery that was more valuable because of its incongruity.

General Tom Thumb was soon domesticated to the ways of public exhibition. Barnum taught his pupil day and night new jokes and old rôles, which he learned quickly, for the child, according to Barnum, had a love of the ludicrous and a humorous charm. When he was ready to make his début, Barnum took General Tom Thumb first on a tour of the newspaper offices, and even invaded the home of one newspaper editor, who happened to be eating dinner. Tom Thumb danced between the tumblers and hopped over the roast. James Gordon Bennett wrote in the *Herald* on December 15, 1842: "We were visited yesterday by the comical little gentleman who is at present holding nightly levees at the American Museum. He is certainly the smallest specimen of a man we have ever seen."

The General's popularity was immediate, and after the first four-weeks' engagement was finished, Barnum reëngaged him for one year at seven dollars a week, with a bonus of fifty dollars at the end of the engagement. It is clear that neither General Tom Thumb nor his father had any idea of the value of a dwarf, and Barnum took advantage of the age of the boy and the ignorance of his father. Barnum also retained the privilege of sending the General on a tour of the country. Before the end of the year Barnum increased Tom Thumb's salary to twenty-five dollars per week, and he assures us that the General deserved the raise. Besides exhibiting frequently at the

Museum, where he sang songs, danced, and told stories in the pert and saucy manner of people who are too small to be slapped, General Tom Thumb was sent to other cities, where he made money for Barnum and advertised the American Museum.

At the same time as the exhibition of General Tom Thumb in New York, Barnum presented at the Museum two famous giants, M. Bihin, the tall, thin French giant, and Colonel Goshen, a portly Arab. The giants were amiable enough, but jealous of each other's success, and quarreled furiously one day when the Arab called M. Bihin "a Shanghai" and M. Bihin called the Arab "a nigger." They seized clubs and medieval swords on exhibition in cases, and made for each other, until Barnum interfered. He informed them that he had no objection to their fighting, maiming or killing each other, but they were both under engagement to him, and if there was to be a duel, it must be duly advertised and take place on the stage of the Lecture Room. "No performance of yours would be a greater attraction, and if you kill each other, our engagement can end with your duel," Barnum assured them. The giants enjoyed the humor of the situation, and lived in peace until the end of their engagement.

After the contract with General Tom Thumb expired, Barnum engaged him for another year at fifty dollars per week and all his expenses, with the right to exhibit him in Europe. The Museum was so successful and operating with so little friction after less than three years that Barnum was looking for new worlds to conquer, and he took his General under his arm and went to Europe. Passage was booked on the packet ship *Yorkshire* for Liverpool, and General Tom Thumb, his father and mother, the General's tutor, Professor Guillaudeu, and Barnum made ready to sail on January 18, 1844. Barnum made use of the General at the Museum until the last moment before sailing. Advertisements appeared in the newspapers of the day announcing that the opportunity to see General Tom Thumb was rapidly slipping away. When the boat was delayed by adverse winds and tides, the General remained another day at the Museum, and thousands of people visited him in a desperate attempt to get a last look. *The Evening Post* announced as an item of news on January 16, 1844: "A few hours more remain for General Tom Thumb to be seen at the American Museum, as the packet in which he has engaged passage to England does not sail to-day, in consequence of

the easterly winds now prevailing. He may be seen throughout the entire day and evening; and at three and seven o'clock p. m. there will be grand performances; at each of which the General appears on the stage in the same characters which have excited so much admiration and applause of late." The next day the weather was still bad, and people stormed the Museum. On the day of sailing, January 19, General Tom Thumb was on exhibition until eleven o'clock in the morning; the boat sailed at noon. He was escorted to the dock by the municipal brass band, and more than 10,000 persons saw him off. It was estimated that more than 80,000 persons had visited General Tom Thumb at the Museum.

CHAPTER IV

TRAVELS WITH A MIDGET

I

AFTER a long and stormy passage of nineteen days, during which Barnum entertained the passengers with choice samples of practical jokes, the packet *Yorkshire* arrived at Liverpool. A crowd was waiting on the docks to look at General Tom Thumb, for it had been announced that he would arrive on the *Yorkshire*, and the fame of his popularity in America had spread to England even before Barnum had decided on the venture abroad. But Mrs. Stratton managed to smuggle her little treasure ashore without attracting notice.

For the first time in his life as a showman, except in the early days of his struggle for opportunities, Barnum was deeply depressed at his prospects. After he had been in Liverpool only a few days, disheartening and panicky sensations overcame his natural exuberance. He was among strangers, and he was homesick; everything appeared different, and the foreign atmosphere took on the shape of a ghostly hostility in Barnum's mind. He tells us that as the boat was leaving the dock in New York, he was in "the melting mood," and soon after his arrival in Liverpool this thirty-three-year-old showman, whose reputation for bold enterprise had already spread throughout a large part of the United States, sat down in his dismal hotel room and had a good cry. The cause of this dejection was doubt of his ability to succeed in different surroundings, and regret that he had so hastily made the attempt. These in turn were caused by several encounters and predictions of his first days in England. The proprietor of a Liverpool waxworks called at the hotel; he had heard of the arrival of General Tom Thumb, and he was anxious to add this unique curiosity to his collection of waxworks at ten dollars per week for both the curiosity and the manager. Soon afterwards Madame Céleste, who was performing at the Theater Royal in Williamson Square, presented her compliments to Mr. Barnum and invited him to

use her private box. In the box adjoining were a dignified lady and gentleman, who looked with approval at General Tom Thumb, partly hidden from the audience by his tutor's cloak. They became interested in the General as soon as they learned who he was and urged Barnum to exhibit him in Manchester, where they lived. Barnum asked how much they thought he could charge for admission in Manchester, and the lady answered that since the General was such a decided curiosity, she thought twopence for each person would not be too much. But her husband cried nonsense, remarked that women knew nothing of such things, and assured Barnum that one penny was the usual price for seeing giants and dwarfs in England, and that the public would never pay more. It was this conversation more than anything else that caused Barnum to wish he were in New York, where admission was twenty-five cents, children half-price, and he swore solemnly to himself that General Tom Thumb should never be seen for less than a shilling a head.

It had been Barnum's plan to proceed at once to London, but he learned that the royal family was in mourning because of the death of Prince Albert's father, and he had made up his mind before he had been in England one week to present General Tom Thumb at Buckingham Palace, which, he naïvely admits, he intended to appropriate as his headquarters. Meanwhile, he presented his letters of introduction in Liverpool, and was induced by friends to hire a hall and give a few exhibitions. Mr. Maddox, of the Princess's Theater, London, visited Liverpool incognito with the special purpose of sizing up Tom Thumb and possibly proposing an engagement to Barnum. An arrangement was made for three appearances at the Princess's Theater, for Barnum was unwilling to contract with another showman for any long engagement, and he consented to the exhibition at the Princess's only for the purposes of advertisement.

To his first three performances in London General Tom Thumb attracted large crowds, and Barnum once more felt sanguine. He declined an offer for a reëngagement and prepared to exploit his prodigy on a grand scale. He hired Lord Talbot's mansion in Grafton Street, where Lord Brougham was one of his neighbors, and from this house he sent invitations to the nobility and the editors to visit General Tom Thumb. They came in large numbers and told their friends about the General. The friends, who were not invited, also

came in large numbers, and were turned away by the butler. Barnum was in England, and he planned to do what no English showman would have dared to do: he treated himself, unobtrusively, as an equal of every one from the Queen to the coster. But he also catered to their opinions of themselves. He realized that he must maintain a dignity, if he was to receive upper-class patronage, and he instructed the servants to admit no one to the private at-homes of General Tom Thumb without a ticket of invitation. But he was always careful to send invitations the next day to all those who had not been admitted. The premonitions of failure which he had suffered in Liverpool made Barnum certain that the only way to establish Tom Thumb financially in England was to make him the darling of fashion; the common people could be trusted to follow in the tracks of their betters. And Barnum knew also that the one road to sure success lay in the direction of approval by Her Majesty the Queen. He therefore turned all his persistent and cunning attention towards this consummation.

Since the Court was in mourning, it was extremely doubtful that he could be received, but as it was not impossible, Barnum refused to relinquish the hope. Horace Greeley, one of Barnum's best friends and an adviser to whom he always listened attentively, had given him a letter of introduction to Edward Everett, American Minister to the Court of St. James's, and Barnum admitted that "to that letter, perhaps more than to anything else, I was indebted for my first introduction to Her Majesty." It was fortunate for Barnum that he had such a letter of introduction, if we are to take the word of a keen observer of the times on the personality of Edward Everett. Maunsell B. Field, whose book, *Memories of Many Men and Some Women*, is one of the most interesting American books of reminiscences, visited Edward Everett at the American Ministry about the same time as Barnum. Field was then a young man traveling for his education; later he became one of New York's eminent lawyers and the partner of John Jay, but Edward Everett could not be expected to foresee that. "I found Mr. Everett," Field wrote, "as frigid as an iceberg. He was as polished as his own writings, but equally cold. To a young man just out of college, this sort of reception operated like a wet blanket. After my first call, I never ventured upon him again. I feared taking cold." But Everett was quite different with Barnum. During his first week in London the American Minister called and was delighted with General

Tom Thumb. They dined with the Minister next day, and the Everett family gave Tom Thumb many presents. Mr. Everett promised to use all his influence at the Palace to insure a presentation before Queen Victoria.

Meanwhile, the Baroness Rothschild sent her carriage for General Tom Thumb and his guardian. Barnum and his tiny ward passed a cordon of liveried servants and walked into a brilliant hall, lined with statuary. They ascended a flight of magnificent marble stairs and were announced by an elegant servant. The Baroness was seated on a "gorgeous couch," and lords and ladies everywhere were sitting on gold chairs that looked to Barnum like solid gold, "except the bottoms, which were rich velvet." Ebony, pearl, and gold dazzled Barnum's eyes wherever he looked, and when they were about to leave after a session of two hours, a fat purse was quietly slipped into Barnum's hand. That, too, contained gold. Other receptions at the homes of other bankers and members of the nobility followed, and they invariably ended with some one slipping a fat purse into Barnum's hand.

Barnum thought that the time had now come for a public exhibition. It was true that he had not yet seen the Queen, or, rather, the Queen had not yet seen him and his child wonder; but he must not wait longer and lose the shillings per head that were ripe and ready to drop into his purse. There was also danger that the *haut ton* would monopolize General Tom Thumb, and the shillings of the multitude were more valuable in Barnum's eyes than the generous admiration of lords and ladies of fashion. He engaged Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, and the élite flocked to the exhibitions, followed by enough of the common people to pay large profits.

One morning at breakfast at the house of Edward Everett, Barnum met Mr. Charles Murray, the Master of the Royal Household, who had visited the United States and written a book about them. Barnum happened to have read the book, and he assured Murray how much he admired the opinion of the Master of the Royal Household on the American people. He also hinted that he intended to take General Tom Thumb over to Paris to see Louis Philippe. Mr. Murray felt sure that Queen Victoria would want to see the General before Louis Philippe; and he was correct. Soon afterwards a handsome member of the Life Guards brought Barnum a note inviting General Tom Thumb

and his guardian, Mr. Barnum, to appear at Buckingham Palace. Mr. Murray called the same day and told Barnum that it was Her Majesty's command that General Tom Thumb should appear before her as he would appear anywhere else; she did not want him primed with etiquette, she wished to see him in his natural state.

On the night of the appointment at the Palace, Barnum placed a placard on the door of Egyptian Hall, reading: "Closed this evening, General Tom Thumb being at Buckingham Palace by command of Her Majesty." When they arrived at the Palace, Barnum was told by a Lord-in-Waiting that he must answer all questions addressed to him by Her Majesty through the Lord-in-Waiting, and under no circumstances must the Queen be addressed directly. He was also told that in leaving the presence of the Queen he must "back out," so that the Queen always saw his face; and the Lord-in-Waiting illustrated his instructions by a few steps in the proper direction.

Everything was then quite clear, and the party was conducted up a marble staircase to the Queen's picture gallery, where Her Majesty, Prince Albert, the Duchess of Kent, and about twenty of the nobility were waiting. General Tom Thumb strutted proudly up the long gallery towards the end of which the royal party was standing, and as soon as he came within speaking distance, bowed deeply and said in his high treble voice, "Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen." Every one laughed merrily at the dwarf's simplicity, but the dwarf did not mean to be facetious; he thought they *were* ladies and gentlemen. Queen Victoria took his hand and led him about the picture gallery, asking him many questions, and his answers caused her to laugh continually. He informed the Queen that her picture gallery was "first-rate," one of his common expressions of approval, and he expressed a desire to see the Prince of Wales. But the Queen regretted that the Prince of Wales was in bed, and invited General Tom Thumb to call again, when he would see him. The General sang and danced for the company, and after conversations with Prince Albert and other members of the party, lasting more than an hour, Barnum and General Tom Thumb made ready to leave the royal presence.

Barnum had been talking with the Queen while General Tom Thumb was entertaining Prince Albert. After two or three questions, put through the Lord-in-Waiting and answered via that official, Barnum began to feel uncomfortable, and he entered directly into

conversation with the Queen. The Lord-in-Waiting was shocked, but Victoria did not seem to object, for she immediately entered into direct conversation with Barnum.

The time for backing out arrived, and Barnum mollified the Lord-in-Waiting by following carefully his instructions and example. But General Tom Thumb's legs were short, and he found his manager and the Lord-in-Waiting were retreating towards the door more rapidly than he could step backwards. The General turned and ran a few steps, then faced again towards the Queen and respectfully bowed and walked backwards, continuing this method of catching up whenever he found himself behind in the race for the door. The royal party found these antics of the little General delightful, and Barnum said that the spectacle of Tom Thumb's little feet running through the room and then solemnly stepping backwards was a performance funnier than any he had ever seen the General give. Barnum, six feet two in height, and General Tom Thumb two feet one in height, bowing respectfully as possible under the circumstances, was assuredly a sight to set before a Queen; the droll contrast of the dwarf and his manager should have been enough to make even Prince Albert giggle. The sight was not displeasing to the Queen, but it was to her poodle-dog, who barked sharply at General Tom Thumb and made for his legs. The General, frightened out of all propriety, raised his little cane and attacked the poodle, causing more merriment than ever. When they finally arrived in the ante-room, an attendant hurried after them to ask in the name of the Queen whether the General had been injured.

In another room refreshments were served, but Barnum could not enjoy them; he was thinking of something else. He asked who edited the Court Circular and was told that the gentleman happened to be in the Palace at the time. He was sent for, and Barnum asked if it would be possible for him to have more than a mere mention of the audience. The editor was quite willing to give Barnum a favorable notice and asked him to write out what he wished printed. Barnum did so, and, much to his delight, his own words were printed the next day in all the newspapers. The Court Circular said in part: "His personation of the Emperor Napoleon elicited great mirth, and this

was followed by a representation of the Grecian Statues, after which the General danced a nautical hornpipe, and sang several of his favorite songs."

The audience with the Queen, and the newspaper notices of it, caused such a demand for a sight of General Tom Thumb that Barnum was forced to engage a larger room in Egyptian Hall. A second visit to the Queen soon followed, and this time the General was received in the Yellow Drawing Room, draped entirely in yellow satin damask, with sofas and chairs of the same material, "surpassing in splendor and gorgeousness anything of the kind" Barnum had ever seen. As Barnum and General Tom Thumb entered the room, the Queen and her suite were leaving the dining-room. The General remarked familiarly that he had seen her before, and praised the Yellow Drawing Room enthusiastically. "I think this is a prettier room than the picture gallery; that chandelier is very fine," he said.

He was introduced by the Queen to the Prince of Wales. They shook hands cordially, and General Tom Thumb measured his height against that of the Prince, remarking, "The Prince is taller than I am, but I *feel* as big as anybody." Then he strutted up and down the room in mock pride, to the delight of the audience. The Queen introduced the Princess Royal, and Tom Thumb led her immediately to a sofa built for his size, which Barnum had brought along, and chatted familiarly with her tête-à-tête. The Queen then handed the General a souvenir made expressly for him, an elegant ornament of mother-of-pearl set in emeralds and enameled with the General's coat of arms, although what that was would be interesting to discover, for Barnum advertised Tom Thumb as the son of a carpenter. General Tom Thumb told the Queen that he was very much obliged and would keep her souvenir as long as he lived. The Queen of the Belgians was present at this second visit, and on a third visit to Buckingham Palace which they paid soon afterwards, King Leopold was also present.

It was on this third visit that General Tom Thumb noticed a Shetland pony, belonging to the Queen, outside the Palace. It was just suited to Tom Thumb's size, and he coveted it. When they came before the Queen, she asked the General to sing his favorite song, and he sang "Yankee Doodle," causing much merriment by his controversial choice. But the General was not thinking of the Revolutionary War; he was thinking of the pony, which he dared not

ask for. While singing "Yankee Doodle" to the Queen, he pointed his finger significantly at her when he came to the line, "Yankee Doodle, Yankee Doodle, riding on a pony," but the Queen either did not take the hint, or did not understand it, and the General had to be content with the gold pencil case which he received on this occasion. After every visit at Buckingham Palace, a large sum of money was sent to Barnum by command of the Queen.

Since Queen Victoria had received General Tom Thumb three times, it was almost an act of disloyalty for any of her subjects in London to neglect to visit him. At a country fair Barnum heard the English proprietor of a small collection of waxworks, whose articles of trade were beginning to turn yellow with neglect, say to some of his fellow craftsmen: "Tom Thumb has got the name, and you all know the name's everything. Tom Thumb couldn't never shine, even in my van, 'long side of a dozen dwarfs I knows, if this Yankee hadn't bamboozled our Queen—Gawd bless her—by getting him afore her half a dozen times." "Yes, yes—that's the ticket," another agreed, "our Queen patronizes everything *foreign*, and yet she wouldn't visit my beautiful waxworks to save the crown of *H*ingland." This recommendation of his publicity skill must have pleased Barnum, but his lowly rivals were not accurate, for, as much as General Tom Thumb owed his success to Barnum, the manager had good raw material with which to work; it was General Tom Thumb's pert and whimsical charm that won the Queen after Barnum gained the audience. Her subjects were equally enthusiastic, and the receipts from March until July of 1844 for the public exhibitions averaged more than $500 each day. Carriages lined up outside Egyptian Hall as if for a command performance at the opera, and portraits of the General appeared in all the illustrated newspapers. The Duke of Wellington called frequently at Egyptian Hall, and on one occasion the Duke was delighted with the General's costume and imitation of Napoleon. When Wellington asked the miniature Napoleon on what he was pondering so deeply, Tom Thumb, retaining his sober expression, said that he was thinking of the loss of the Battle of Waterloo. This obvious display of wit delighted the Duke and was published all over England, thereby increasing Barnum's receipts.

Besides their public exhibitions Barnum and his midget visited the houses of the nobility three or four nights each week and gave private exhibitions at ten guineas each. They often visited two parties in an evening. The Dowager Queen, Adelaide, invited General Tom Thumb to Marlborough House and gave him a watch and chain made for his size; she also gave him moral advice, which he promised to observe carefully when he grew up. The Duke of Devonshire presented him with a gold and turquoise snuff-box.

While Barnum and General Tom Thumb were in London, the Emperor of Russia visited Queen Victoria, and the two popular Americans were present at the grand review of British troops held by the Duke of Wellington in honor of the Emperor Nicholas. They also visited the King of Saxony and Ibrahim Pasha, who were guests in London. Sir Robert and Lady Peel, the Dukes and Duchesses of Buckingham, Bedford, and Devonshire, Count D'Orsay, Daniel O'Connell, Lord Chesterfield, and Mr. Joshua Bates, of Baring Brothers, were especial friends of General Tom Thumb. He and Barnum enjoyed the freedom of all the theaters and public places of entertainment, as well as the hospitality of private residences. But Barnum never neglected the larger rewards from the populace in favor of the perquisites of the nobility and royalty. The General appeared at the Lyceum Theater in a play written for him by Albert Smith, called "Hop o' My Thumb." Songs were sung in London music halls in honor of Tom Thumb, music was dedicated to him, and polkas were named after him.

In the management of this English engagement Barnum proved himself a perfect showman, readily adaptable to changed conditions. He believed that when in London he must do as the toffs did, if he was afterwards to attract the crowds who believed in the nobility of their constituted betters. A method that would have earned him an injurious reputation as a snob in this country caused the London aristocracy to storm his mansion and the mass of the people to crowd Egyptian Hall. After a tour of the provinces that was as successful as the London engagement, preparations were made for General Tom Thumb's appearance in Paris.

II

Barnum had preceded Tom Thumb to Paris, where he met Dion Boucicault, who was living there at the time. Boucicault gave Barnum much valuable advice and spent a day with him looking for a suitable exhibition hall. They finally selected the Salle Musard in the Rue Vivienne as the General's French headquarters. Barnum issued preliminary paragraphs in the newspapers concerning "Le Général Tom Pouce" and returned to London to get the littlest star. Before his departure from Paris he called upon William Rufus King, American Minister at the Court of France, who assured him that after his success with Queen Victoria there would be no difficulty with Louis Philippe, the affable King, who was distinguished by his green umbrella when he walked unattended through the streets of Paris. Barnum returned to Paris with his entire party and the day after his arrival received a command to appear at the Tuileries on the following Sunday evening. When they arrived at the Palace, Barnum and General Tom Thumb were received by Louis Philippe, the Queen, and the Princess Adelaide, the Duchess d'Orléans and her son, the Count de Paris, Prince de Joinville, the Duke and Duchess de Nemours, the Duchess d'Aumale, and the editor of the *Journal des Débats*, the official journal. After his quaint performances, Louis Philippe presented Tom Thumb with an emerald and diamond brooch.

The King was so genial that Barnum, who later wrote that he felt quite at home in the royal presence, decided to ask a favor. The Longchamps celebration, one of the gala days of fête and display for the new court and society, was to take place within a few days after Barnum's arrival. He asked Louis Philippe if General Tom Thumb's carriage might appear in the avenue reserved for the court and the diplomatic corps, for he feared that unless this favor was granted the small carriage with its tiny ponies would be crushed and the General hurt. The King arranged this small matter with one of his officials and told Barnum to call upon the Prefect of Police the next day for a permit. Other members of the court gave General Tom Thumb presents, and after a visit of two hours the entertainers left. The Queen had asked Tom Thumb how he spent his spare time. He answered, "I frequently draw and do it pretty well," meaning that he drew audiences to his exhibition halls, but Her Majesty was not

accustomed to Yankee puns, and several days later a mahogany paint box with a silver plate on which were the General's initials was sent to him with the compliments of the Queen.

On the day of the Longchamps celebration General Tom Thumb in his little carriage with four ponies, and a coachman and footman powdered and in livery, rode up the Champs Elysées with the ambassadors to the Court of Louis Philippe. The General's coach had been built in England. It was twenty inches high and eleven inches wide. The body was an intense blue and the wheels were blue and red. On the inside it was richly upholstered. On the doors were the General's coat of arms, conferred upon him for the occasion by Barnum: Britannia and the Goddess of Liberty, supported by the British lion and the American eagle. The crest was the rising sun and the British and American flags. Underneath was the motto, "Go Ahead!" The same crest was on the body of the coach and on the harness. The coachman's box was of red velvet, embroidered with a silver star and flowers of red and green. The equipage was drawn by Shetland ponies, and two small boys acted as coachman and footman. These equerries wore sky-blue coats trimmed with silver lace, and aiguillettes tipped with silver. Their breeches were red, with silver buckles and silver garters attached, and they wore cocked hats and wigs. The footman also carried a cane. The cost of this imposing advertisement was between three hundred and four hundred pounds.[5] As this carriage, with the tiny General bowing from right to left and left to right, proceeded in the line of court equipages along the Champs Elysées, thousands cheered enthusiastically for "Le Général Tom Pouce."

This exclusive advertising swelled the profits at the first public exhibition. The receipts on the first day were 5,500 francs and were limited to that amount because no more people could possibly be accommodated in the large Salle Musard. Performances were given every afternoon and evening, and seats were reserved two months in advance. Barnum's profits were so heavy that, he tells us, he was compelled to take a cab every night to carry his francs. Tom Pouce became the rage of Paris, and he attained cosmopolitan fame when at the age of six a boulevard café was named after him. He was visited and kissed by the leading actresses of Paris and also by the ladies-in-waiting to the Queen. Louis Philippe asked for two more audiences

with General Tom Thumb, and he received a special invitation to the King's birthday party. On the last visit to the King at St. Cloud, Louis Philippe asked specially to see the General in his impersonation of Napoleon Bonaparte. This costume had been carefully kept in the bottom of a trunk while Barnum was in Paris, but he granted the King's request, and the newspapers were careful not to mention the sacrilege to Napoleon's memory.

Every member of the royal family bore a gift for General Tom Thumb, and none of the ladies of the royal household missed an opportunity to kiss his pink cheeks. A quaint history of General Tom Thumb written for young children and published at Philadelphia in 1849 made this comment on the reception at the Court of Louis Philippe: "Other and valuable presents were heaped upon the little traveler by the royal family. How the world changes! Louis Philippe has, since that time, been driven from his throne, and with his wife and children is in England; and it is very likely that the money which the gifts were worth, which were given to the little dwarf, would have been many times within the last year [1848] very acceptable to the dethroned monarch. Tom Thumb is Tom Thumb still, but Louis Philippe is a king no longer."

In Paris Barnum picked up a bargain, which pleased him so much that he mentioned it in all the editions of his autobiography. The effects of a Russian prince were sold at auction, and Barnum bought among other things a gold tea-set and a silver dining-service. What delighted him most, however, was that the initials of the nobleman were engraved on the plate, and that therefore it was sold for its weight value; and the initials were "P. T.," which needed only an addition of "B" to make them appropriate for Phineas's and Charity's table.

After a long engagement in Paris, Barnum and General Tom Thumb visited with great financial success Rouen, Orléans, Bordeaux, Brest, Toulon, Montpellier, Nîmes, Marseilles, Nantes, and other cities. Barnum had turned his acquisition into something of an actor, for throughout France he appeared in a comedy called "Petit Poucet," and the revenue authorities recognized the General's histrionic ability by classifying him officially as subject to only the theatrical tax of eleven per cent. instead of the twenty-five per cent. tax for natural curiosities.

General Tom Thumb visited Spain, where he was received by Queen Isabella, with whom he attended a bull fight. On his return trip to France, many European newspapers of the day report, he was held up by brigands, one of whom mounted the box of the coach and drove off rapidly with his prize. It was rumored, according to the *Illustrated London News* for September 20, 1845, that "a lady, from excess of fantasy, has eloped with him to the neighborhood of Guilligomach." The fact that seemed certain to the *Illustrated London News* was that the General had not been seen or heard of since his departure from the Spanish border. Possibly this was Barnum's foreign publicity, but he neglects to say so, and if it were an example of his successful cunning, he would have mentioned it in his autobiography.

At Brussels Barnum and Tom Thumb spent the day after their arrival at the palace of King Leopold and the Queen, where they entertained the children of royalty and distinguished guests. After this engagement and several exhibitions at other cities in Belgium, Barnum brought his party back to London, where they appeared again with great success in Egyptian Hall. The triumphant tours of France and Belgium had increased General Tom Thumb's popularity, and the London receipts were larger than during the first engagement. In October, 1844, Barnum returned to New York in order to renew the lease of the American Museum and to bring his wife and daughters back to London. He left General Tom Thumb under the management of his father, Sherwood Stratton, a shrewd Yankee. Upon Barnum's return the party toured England, Scotland, and Ireland. At Oxford the students of the University came in large numbers and paid their admission in farthings, forty-eight to the shilling, arguing that the smallest curiosity should be paid for in the smallest coin, to the exasperation of Sherwood Stratton, who besides being the father of General Tom Thumb was also ticket seller at all the exhibitions. Stratton was often pointed out by Barnum to visitors at the exhibitions as the normal father of a subnormal celebrity, which caused the father to become a notoriety himself, for people surrounded him at the box office and asked many questions about the birth and early life of his boy. Upon one occasion a dowager said to Stratton, who was Yankee in habits of speech as well as in character, "Are you really the father of General Tom Thumb?" "Wa'al, I have to support him," answered the ticket-seller.

At the end of the tour of Great Britain Barnum returned to London again, and General Tom Thumb appeared once more at the Egyptian Hall. This time he impersonated Cupid with wings and quiver, Samson carrying away the gates of Gaza, the Grecian Statues, the Fighting Gladiator, the Slave whetting his knife, Ajax, Discobolus, Cincinnatus, Hercules with the Nemean Lion, Napoleon, and Frederick the Great.

A few days before Barnum brought Tom Thumb back to the Egyptian Hall, Benjamin Robert Haydon, the historical painter, had taken another room in the hall to exhibit his latest painting, "The Banishment of Aristides," together with his "Nero Playing His Lyre While Rome Is Burning." Haydon depended upon this exhibition to relieve him from debt. He wrote in his now famous diary, "I fear nothing on earth but my banker, where I have not five shillings on account, and have a bill coming due and want help." Haydon's two paintings were part of a series he planned for the decoration of the House of Lords, but Sir Robert Peel, who was one of his patrons, told Haydon he feared the House would not accept the works. Haydon was the personal friend of Keats, who sent him his poems for criticism as he wrote them, and also of Wordsworth, who sent his sonnets, "piping hot from the brain," as one of the poet's letters expressed it.

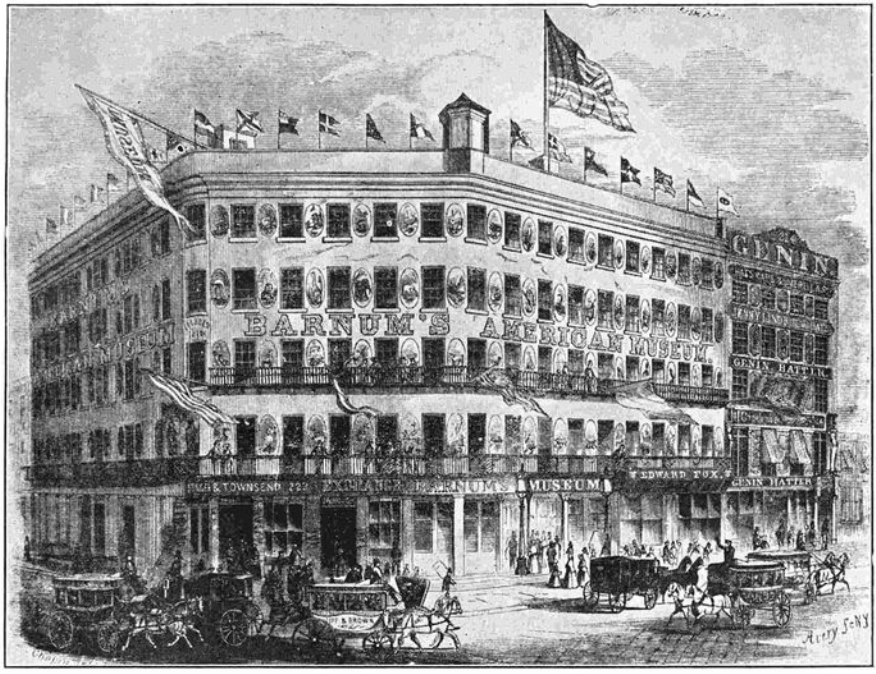
When Haydon exhibited at Egyptian Hall, he was sixty years old, and worried almost to frenzy by the struggles of those years. He trembled in fear of the debtor's prison, which he had already experienced once. His father had been a printer and bookseller, and Haydon had no means but his art. His independent spirit and lack of patience with ignorance caused him to upbraid for their stupidity those patrons he was lucky enough to get. William Michael Rossetti wrote that he was vain and combative, and *Blackwood's Magazine* had nicknamed him "The Cockney Raphael." Haydon's grand conception was a series of historical paintings to adorn England's public buildings. He had already painted "Solomon," "Jerusalem," "The Banishment of Aristides with His Wife and Children," "Nero Playing His Lyre While Rome Is Burning," and he was at work on "Alfred and the First Jury," when General Tom Thumb moved into Egyptian Hall. Haydon's scheme for a series of historical paintings had been taken up with George IV, but that king was always more interested in private affairs than in public works.

Haydon had married a widow with children, and although this marriage added materially to his burdens, his diary is filled with praises of their loveliness. He wrote in the diary: "I sat all day and looked into the fire.... A man who has had so many misfortunes as I have had gets frightened at leaving his family for a day." On Easter Monday, 1846, he wrote: "O God, bless my receipts this day, for the sake of my creditors, my family, and my art. Amen." The receipts that day were only one pound, two shillings. Later he wrote: "Tom Thumb had 12,000 people last week. B. Haydon, 133½, the ½ a little girl. Exquisite taste of the English people." The next entry reads: "They rush by thousands to see Tom Thumb. They push, they fight, they scream, they faint, they cry help and murder! and oh! and ah! They see my bills, my boards, my caravans and don't read them. Their eyes are open, but their sense is shut. It is an insanity, a *rabies*, a madness, a *furor*, a dream. I would not have believed it of the English people." Haydon's exhibition brought in 17 pounds, 13 shillings after Tom Thumb came to Egyptian Hall, and Tom Thumb took in 600 pounds a day. The deadly contrast, coupled with his seemingly illimitable woe, caused Haydon to go home in despair. His diary reads: "Cleared out my exhibition. Next to victory is a skilful retreat, and I marched out before General Tom Thumb, a beaten, but not conquered exhibitor." But he was also conquered, if not by Tom Thumb, then by circumstances. His wife was going to visit friends in the country, and he embraced her fervently. An hour later his daughter walked into the studio and found her father lying on the floor. There was a deep gash in his throat; a blood-stained razor and a small pistol, with which he had blown out his brains, lay beside his body. Above him was the easel with the unfinished "Alfred and the First Jury." He had but a few minutes before written in his diary a will in which he appointed friendly administrators of his debts, and the journal of his life closed with the harrowing words, "Stretch me no longer on this rough world."

Tom Thumb cannot be said to have caused Haydon's death, he was merely the last straw. A large conclave followed the body to its grave, and among the mourners were Wordsworth and Sir Robert Peel.

III

In February of 1847, after having been abroad with General Tom Thumb for three years, punctuated by two short trips to New York, Barnum returned to this country. He had renewed the lease of the American Museum for ten years at a rental of $10,000 a year, and taxes; he also leased the adjoining buildings and enlarged the Museum and the Lecture Room. The news of Barnum's triumphs on the continent as well as the receptions of the Connecticut Yankee at the Court of Queen Victoria had been copied by the New York newspapers from the foreign journals, and after Barnum's return the Museum was more popular than ever. In Europe he had kept it constantly in mind, and he made many purchases for the ever-increasing collection. Models of machinery and duplicates of the dissolving views which were so popular in London, were shipped to the Museum.



BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM
From "Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion"
Westervelt Collection



GENERAL TOM THUMB

An engraving made in England during his first appearance, 1844

Houdini Collection

Barnum also made an offer for Shakespeare's home, which he knew would never be permitted to leave England, but which he planned to remove in sections to his Museum, if he could get away with it, for he admitted to his own mind no impossibility until everything had been tried in an endeavor. Barnum's designs became public in London, Englishmen interfered, and the Shakespeare home was purchased by the Shakespearean Association. "Had they slept a few days longer," Barnum wrote of this project, "I should have made a rare speculation, for I was subsequently assured that the British people, rather than suffer that house to be removed to America, would have bought me off with twenty thousand pounds."

He made an offer of 500 pounds for a tree on which Lord Byron had carved his name, and which was then growing on the poet's English estate. Colonel Wildman, who had bought Byron's estate and cherished it, flew into a military rage of great proportions at the indignity of Barnum's offer.

In London Barnum also made complete arrangements for the transfer of Mme. Tussaud's famous Waxworks to New York, but after the papers were drawn up the enterprise was canceled by the English owners. In Paris Barnum purchased Robert Houdin's automatic writer, which had won the gold medal at the Quinquennial Exposition. Barnum visited Robert Houdin at his home, and was delighted with the mechanical conveniences and contrivances of the magician's residence. Instead of a butler, a slot for a visiting card greeted Barnum after he rang the bell. Doors opened apparently by their own volition, and luncheon was served when Houdin pressed a button that caused the dining table to rise from the floor. Barnum also purchased in Paris a diorama of Napoleon's funeral, showing all the processional details from the embarkation of the body at St. Helena to its entombment in the Invalides.

Barnum met at Liverpool by appointment a troupe of Lancashire Bell Ringers, who were then enjoying popularity throughout the United Kingdom. He hired them for a tour of the United States and an engagement at the Museum, on condition that they would consent to a change of name to the "Swiss Bell Ringers" and would also consent to allow their mustaches to grow and to dress in Swiss costumes. When they objected that they spoke only English, Barnum assured

them that if they kept their Lancashire dialect unspoiled by purer accents the American people would never know that they were not talking Swiss.

In order to compensate the English people for the loss of some of their curiosities, Barnum sent to England a party of American Indians, who were exhibited successfully throughout Great Britain. He also sent Professor Faber's automaton speaker, a machine he had obtained while in New York on one of his short trips. When played upon with proper piano keys, this mechanical figure spoke English and German.

During the last two years of their tour abroad Barnum had taken General Tom Thumb, through the agency of his father, into partnership, and the profits of the successful tour were divided equally between them after the first year. A London newspaper on September 18, 1847, reported that Tom Thumb's secretary had furnished one of the American newspapers with a statement of his receipts in Europe, which were said to be more than £150,000.

A few days after their arrival in New York Barnum put General Tom Thumb on exhibition at the Museum. He advertised in the New York newspapers of February 25, 1847:

> GENERAL TOM THUMB, The Smallest man in Miniature in the known world, weighing only FIFTEEN POUNDS, who has been patronized by all the CROWNED HEADS of Europe, and been seen by over 5,000,000 persons, has returned to America, in the packet ship *Cambria*, and will make his GRAND DEBUT at his former headquarters in this city, the American Museum, where the most extensive preparations have been made to receive him.
>
> He will be seen this MORNING FROM 11½ to 1 O'CLOCK. On the platform in one of the main halls of the Museum, in his extraordinary and popular performances, including his CITIZEN'S DRESS, in which he will relate his History, Travels, &c., sing a variety of songs, dance the Polka, Sailor's Hornpipe, give representations of NAPOLEON, FREDERICK THE GREAT, GRECIAN STATUES, &c., &c. He will also appear in his magnificent COURT DRESS Presented him by Queen Victoria, of England, and worn before all the principal Courts of Europe. After which he will appear in his BEAUTIFUL SCOTCH COSTUME, in which he will dance the HIGHLAND FLING, &c.

THE MAGNIFICENT PRESENTS received from Queen Victoria and the principal Crowned Heads of Europe will be exhibited in the afternoon from 3 to 5 o'clock, and in the evening from 7½ to 9 o'clock.

The Little General will appear in various Costumes and Performances on the Stage.

In the Lecture Room, in connection with other splendid performances, including ETHIOPIAN MINSTRELS OR SERENADERS, the Panoramic Representation of the

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN, GREAT WESTERN, the Yankee Comedian.

MISSES WHEELER AND JULIEN.

LIVING OURANG OUTANGS to be seen at all hours.

TWO MONSTER SNAKES, 20 feet long.

ANATOMICAL VENUS, to be seen at 1s. extra.

MADAME ROCKWELL, Fortune Teller.

It appears that some one had been converting the Moral Lecture Room into a popular medical laboratory during Barnum's absence abroad, if the Anatomical Venus, to be seen at one shilling extra, is any indication of a change of policy.

The crowds that welcomed General Tom Thumb home were larger than the Museum had ever previously accommodated. His European reputation had increased his popularity, and Barnum exploited it fully. It seems that other showmen exploited it also. W. C. Coup, who many years later became associated with Barnum in the circus, wrote in his book of circus life, *Sawdust and Spangles*, of an enterprising circus crier, who, many years after General Tom Thumb had ceased to exhibit, announced a small boy as General Tom Thumb. He had a coach and ponies for his exhibition, and the barker shouted:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: We have little Tom Thumb inside. More than this, we have the carriage which was presented to him by her Majesty, Queen Victoria, of England. Ladies and gentlemen, Queen Victoria gave this superb outfit to him with the words: 'Here, Tom Thumb, is the little carriage, together with the horses, together with the harness—here, Thomas, take it. Take

these to America; show it to your countrymen. Tell the people of America that it cost three thousand pounds in our money or $15,000 in their money. Take it, Thomas; take it.'"

In April, 1847, Barnum and Tom Thumb's parents toured the United States with their foreign and domestic celebrity. They visited all the large cities of the East and many New England towns. In Washington they were received at the White House by President Polk and Mrs. Polk. In Philadelphia the receipts for twelve days were $5,594.91, and for the entire tour the receipts averaged $500 a day, the expenses being twenty-five dollars a day for the party. Barnum once said, pointing to General Tom Thumb, "That is my piece of goods; I have sold it hundreds of thousands of times, and have never delivered it." In November they exhibited in the South and also visited Havana, Cuba, where they found it difficult to get a good meal but received large amounts of money from the excited population for a sight of General Tom Thumb and his autograph. The General's tiny autograph was always in demand, and he sold it often, but sometimes he gave it away and with it interesting sentiments. He wrote at this time the following letter on his small stationery in his tiny handwriting, to a clergyman who had requested his autograph:

"Congress Hall, Albany, July 22d, '47.

"Respected Sir:

"In accordance with your request, I send you a *little* note. My travels have thus far been chiefly in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Belgium, Spain, and a portion of the United States.

"I was born in Bridgeport, Ct., the 11 of January, 1832. I have traveled fifty thousand miles, been before more crowned heads than any other Yankee living, except my friend Mr. Barnum, and have kissed nearly Two Millions of ladies, including the Queens of England, France, Belgium, and Spain.

"I read the Bible every day, and am very fond of reading the New Testament. I love my Saviour and it makes me happy. I adore my Creator and know that He is good to us all. He has given me a small body, but I believe he has not contracted my heart, nor brain, nor *soul*. I shall praise his name evermore.

"Time compels me to make this note *short* like *myself*.

"I am, my dear sir,

"Truly yours,

"Charles S. Stratton,

"known as

"General Tom Thumb.[6]

"To Rev. Dr. Sprague, Albany."

IV

While Barnum was traveling in this country with General Tom Thumb in the summer of 1848, he saw in Cincinnati what was to become one of his best known curiosities and shams. A woolly horse was announced for exhibition in Cincinnati, and Barnum, ever on the alert for Museum material, inspected the freak of nature. He was a small, well-formed animal with no mane and very little hair on his tail, but the body and legs were completely covered with a natural growth of curly, thick hair, similar to sheep's wool. Barnum saw excellent possibilities in this animal, if he was properly exploited by opportune publicity. He purchased the woolly horse and sent him to Bridgeport, to be kept in strict retirement until the proper occasion for his début should present itself. Barnum knew that a woolly horse exhibited at the Museum would be nothing but another curiosity, and his unfailing instinct for appropriate publicity told him that if The Woolly Horse were to become a phenomenon, he must be tied to a public event.

Not long after Barnum bought The Woolly Horse, Colonel Frémont was lost in the Rocky Mountains. The whole country was interested in his fate, and news of his expedition was telegraphed everywhere every day. It was feared that he and his party had died during the severe winter in the mountains. Finally, after weeks of public anxiety, news of Colonel Frémont's safety came from the West and was telegraphed throughout the country. The public was relieved, and thankful for a new hero.

Barnum saw his opportunity. The Woolly Horse was led out of the Bridgeport barn, covered with blankets and leggins to conceal his unique features, and shipped to New York, where he remained in an obscure livery stable until Barnum's publicity was ripe. The next despatches to the New York newspapers from the West announced

that Colonel Frémont had captured near the Gila River a most extraordinary animal, who had no mane and no hair on his tail, but whose body was covered with a thick coat of wool. The despatches added that the Colonel had sent the animal to the United States Quartermaster General as a token of his esteem. Two days later this advertisement appeared in the New York newspapers:

> "COL. FREMONT'S NONDESCRIPT OR WOOLLY HORSE will be exhibited for a few days at the corner of Broadway and Reade Street, previous to his departure for London. Nature seems to have exerted all her ingenuity in the production of this astounding animal. He is extremely complex—made up of the Elephant, Deer, Horse, Buffalo, Camel, and Sheep. It is the full size of a Horse, has the haunches of a Deer, the tail of the Elephant, a fine curled wool of camel's hair color, and easily bounds twelve or fifteen feet high. Naturalists and the oldest trappers assured Col. Frémont that it was never known previous to his discovery. It is undoubtedly 'Nature's last,' and the richest specimen received from California. To be seen every day this week. Admittance 25 cents; children half price."

This was the third time that Barnum had used the same method with different curiosities. He had been successful in this anonymous manner of presentation with The Fejee Mermaid and the Buffalo Hunt of Hoboken, and there was no suspicion of Barnum in this third venture. Pictures of Colonel Frémont and his brave soldiers chasing Barnum's Woolly Horse through the Rocky Mountains were posted about New York, and the public rushed to see the curiosity, for it was avid of concrete evidence of Colonel Frémont's expedition, which was thrilling because it had almost been tragic. No one questioned the authenticity of The Woolly Horse; Colonel Frémont had not yet come out of the West, and there was no one else interested enough to deny with authority the animal's relations with the Colonel.

After New York had more than paid for the expenses of The Woolly Horse, Barnum sent the animal to several other large cities, enjoying equal success. Finally, he appeared in Washington, where Barnum planned, as he expressed it, "to pull the wool over the eyes of the politicians." He was successful in this endeavor for several days, and then Colonel Benton, who was senator from Missouri, and who was

the father-in-law of Colonel Frémont, saw The Woolly Horse, and denied publicly and with emphasis that his son-in-law had ever seen the animal. Colonel Benton instituted a suit against Barnum's agent for obtaining twenty-five cents from him under false pretenses. At the trial the senator testified that he had received many letters from his son-in-law since Colonel Frémont had come out of the mountains, and that no mention had ever been made of The Woolly Horse; he was sure that Colonel Frémont had never seen the animal. But the court was not so sure, for it was decided that the evidence against Barnum's agent was not substantial enough, and Colonel Benton's case was dismissed. The publicity of the trial caused an increase in the receipts, and Barnum kept The Woolly Horse in Washington only long enough to satisfy public curiosity without turning his discovery from a joke into an outrage in the public mind. The horse was sent back to Bridgeport, where he was turned loose in a field adjoining Barnum's new home, and served as an advertisement for P. T. Barnum and his Museum, because every one who passed Bridgeport in the trains saw The Woolly Horse eating Barnum's grass.

This deception enraged the newspaper editors, who had been fooled by it, and delighted the public, who enjoy being fooled at a moderate sum so long as they have plenty of company. It was referred to for many years, along with The Fejee Mermaid, by hostile editors, and particularly by James Gordon Bennett, whenever they wanted to write against Barnum. And he himself grew rather ashamed of it, as he did of Joice Heth and The Fejee Mermaid, for it is only in the first edition of his autobiography that he mentions this deception.

CHAPTER V

HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

I

UPON his return to New York from Europe, Barnum found that he had many new friends. "I could hardly credit my senses," he wrote in a newspaper article at the time, "when I discovered so many wealthy men extending their hands to me and expressing their delight at seeing me again, who before I left New York would have looked down on me with disdain had I presumed to speak to them. I really forgot, until they forced the truth upon my mind, that since I left them I had accumulated a few more dirty dollars, and that now therefore we stood on equal ground! On the other hand, I met some honest friends in humble circumstances, who approached me with diffidence never before exhibited—and then again I felt ashamed of human nature. What a pitiful state of society it is which elevates a booby or a tyrant to its summit, provided he has more gold than others—while a good heart or a wise head is contemptuously disregarded if their owner happens to be poor.

"This coat, I am sorry to say, will fit many of my acquaintances in New York. I beg them, for their own sakes and for mine, to wear it. I wish *them* and all the world to know that my father was a *tailor*, and that I am '*a showman*' by profession, and all *the gilding* shall make nothing else of me...."

This is the first proud public utterance of an attitude Barnum seems to have retained fervently throughout life; he was ostentatiously unpretentious. This sort of speech, and the continual parade of one's lack of pride, was likely to appeal strongly to the great public whose motto was "I'm as good as him, and better"; it was not an attitude that could have hurt Barnum's business, for his public was the large public, whose great pride was its mediocrity. But Barnum meant what he wrote; it was his sincere belief that all men are created equal, a misconception that he shared with some of the more

distinguished and less disinterested demagogues of his period. Barnum merely failed to appreciate what he should have accepted as a commonplace: that there are levels which we cannot bridge, and which must be recognized. In simple fashion he grandly denies the existence of differences, but he himself would not have found much in common with Edgar Allan Poe, one of his most distinguished contemporaries, or, on the other hand, with the bartender across the way from the Museum. Barnum would have been at a bewildering loss to understand Poe's melancholy outlook and cynical distrust of a world that had not trusted in his ability; and his temperance views, which will be discussed in this chapter, would have separated him to some extent from sympathetic association with a bartender. The social levels which Barnum wished to remove with one glorious gesture of democracy save most people much valuable time by relieving them of the necessity for establishing a minute and general interest in all the various specimens of mankind. But it was just that interest, curiosity, and concern in the welfare of his fellowmen that always entertained Barnum, for he had something in his character of the Y. M. C. A. worker, but not enough to mar his appreciation of the desires of a vast proportion of his prospective patrons. He never catered down to a particular public, nor, except in some things that were most dear to his deepest convictions, did he try to raise them up. His was the curiosity of most of his patrons, and he had in his own mind an almost infallible test of what his public would want. But there is such a thing as being proud of one's lack of pride, and it was this type of militant modesty which Barnum possessed.

II

In 1846 Barnum found that his personal fortune was large. What it amounted to he does not say, contenting himself with the statement in his autobiography that fortune continued to smile upon him. Five years of sensational popularity had turned the Museum into a gold mine, and the Tom Thumb tour had yielded a large capital both to General Tom Thumb and to his promoter. The time had come for Barnum to choose a residence, where at some time in the near future he could live in the bosom of his family and forget the details of

showmanship forever. It was always Barnum's intention to retire, and almost his last words as he lay dying were an inquiry about the day's receipts at the circus. Retirement to such a character, fed on notoriety, was as impossible as it would have been for Hercules to settle down as the instructor of a gymnasium.

Barnum and Mrs. Barnum selected Bridgeport, Connecticut, as a place to live, for Bridgeport is on Long Island Sound, which gives it an expansive view across the waters, is in the state of their nativity, and is only a short distance from New York City, where Barnum's activities were always centered. He purchased seventeen acres of land one mile from the center of Bridgeport and prepared to build.

When he was in England, Barnum visited Brighton and was impressed by the Brighton Pavilion, the gorgeous memorial to his extravagance built by Queen Victoria's wicked uncle, George IV. This was one of the first examples of Oriental architecture in England, and one of the most hideously uncomfortable buildings of which any king could boast. Barnum engaged a London architect to furnish him with plans and drawings in the style of the Brighton Pavilion; its spires and minarets appealed to his spectacular imagination.

On one of his short trips to this country from England, he began negotiations with architects for the erection of such a building on his Bridgeport property, and while he was touring the United States with General Tom Thumb, "Iranistan," the name he gave his Oriental palace, was completed. It was a combination of Byzantine, Moorish, and Turkish architectures. There were three stories, with broad piazzas, and large arched window-ways. Minarets and spires stood up all over the building in logical but profuse style, and domed conservatories bulged at either end. A large iron fence enclosed the extensive grounds, and fountains were scattered lavishly about. Reindeer and elk pranced through the park. The whole, Barnum assures us, was built regardless of expense, and he had no desire to ascertain the cost. He had his money's worth in detail, at least, and it was undoubtedly satisfying for him to live in a house that must have been constantly mistaken for the Museum. He admitted that in deciding upon the type of home he needed, he considered convenience and comfort and had no desire for style, but he felt that it must at the same time be unique; in this he had an eye for business, "for I thought that a pile of buildings of a novel order might indirectly

serve as an advertisement of my various enterprises." His purpose was eminently successful; no one could pass "Iranistan" in the train without, at least, inquiring what it was.

The interior was correspondingly ornate. A large winding staircase, probably something in the style of those staircases in the mansion of Baroness Rothschild and the palace of Queen Victoria, led up from the main hall, and along its luxurious way marble statuary abounded. The panels of the drawing-room walls represented the four seasons, and the ceiling was white and gold. Pier glasses and mirrored folding doors added to the drawing-room's glamor. The dining-room walls were richly paneled with figures representing Music, Painting, and Poetry. A Chinese library with Chinese landscapes in oils and Chinese furniture, where there was a tortoise-shell table with brass trimmings, adjoined the dining-room. The walls in Barnum's private study were brocaded with rich orange satin, and adjoining the study was a bathroom, with a shower of hot and cold water. An enthusiastic New York visitor to "Iranistan" said that inside it was "as elegant as a steamboat."

In November, 1848, the family moved in, and a housewarming at which one thousand guests participated took place soon afterwards. Barnum stocked "Iranistan" with fancy poultry and varied live stock, and in 1848 he was elected president of the Fairfield County Agricultural Society, where he often made homely speeches. Soon afterwards he was chosen president of the Pequennock Bank, and his prosperity became an established and recognized part of his fame. In 1849 Barnum extended his activities to Philadelphia, where he opened another museum.

III

When he first built "Iranistan" Barnum was proud of his wine cellars, but it was not long before he was ashamed of them. In the fall of 1847 he visited Saratoga Springs with General Tom Thumb. The New York State Fair was in progress, and Barnum saw so much intoxication among men of wealth and distinction that he was constrained to think about his own soul. Seldom do we find a prohibitionist so frank and naïve in his objection to spirits as was Barnum. He wrote in his

autobiography: “I saw so much intoxication among men of wealth and intellect, filling the highest positions in society, that I began to ask myself the question, What guarantee is there that *I* may not become a drunkard? I reflected that many wiser and better men than myself had fallen victims to intemperance; and although I was not in the habit of partaking often of strong drink, I was liable to do so whenever I met friends, which in my travels occurred every day. Hence I resolved to fly the danger, and I pledged myself at that time never again to partake of any kind of spirituous liquors as a beverage.”

Barnum kept his pledge, which did not include light wines and beer, and he felt himself out of danger. He went about among his friends and urged them to follow his example, to give up whisky. Later he arranged public lectures in Bridgeport, and his friend, the Rev. E. H. Chapin, one of the leading temperance orators of the country, spoke in the Bridgeport Baptist Church at Barnum’s request.

The Rev. Mr. Chapin dwelt on the risks which moderate drinkers imposed upon themselves, and the moderate drinker’s evil influence upon the community, for it is the example of the man who knows when he has had enough that the young man emulates when he first takes up a glass of liquor. “If you say that you can drink or let it alone, that you can quit it forever without considering it a self-denial, then I appeal to you as a man, to do it for the sake of your suffering fellow-beings,” was Mr. Chapin’s exhortation. If a man was a public character, he said, this act of self-denial was a duty, and Barnum felt that he was assuredly a public character, an example of success. Another of Mr. Chapin’s arguments that appealed strongly to Barnum, perhaps more even than the first, was this: “If, on the other hand, you say that you like to indulge moderately in the use of intoxicating drinks, and that it would be a self-denial on your part to abandon the practice, then, sir, I warn you in the light of all human experience, that you are *in danger*, and should give it up *for your own sake*. When appetite has so far got its hold upon you as to make the thought of abandoning strong drink uncomfortable, I tell you that the chances are strongly in favor of your dying a drunkard, unless you renounce the use of intoxicating beverages altogether.”

It was the force of this possibility that he would die a drunkard which worried Barnum most. He returned home from the lecture terribly impressed and went to bed, but not to sleep. He was awfully conscious of having throughout his life pursued a course of wrongdoing, pernicious in its effect not only on himself but also on the community. “I arose from my bed,” he wrote afterwards, “and feeling that as a man I could not persist in a practice which I could not conscientiously and logically defend, I took my champagne bottles, knocked off their heads, and poured their contents upon the ground. I then called upon Mr. Chapin, asked him for the teetotal pledge, and signed it.”

After he returned from his wine cellar, having knocked the heads off his champagne bottles, Barnum informed his wife of what he had done. The tears streamed down Charity’s face. Many weary nights of weeping had she spent, she said, in fear for his strength of character and powers of resistance to the temptation constantly offered to the moderate drinker to become an habitual drunkard. Barnum reproached her for not telling him of her fears, but she replied that she also feared her warnings would be received in anger. Barnum’s was a frank admission of the personal lack of self-control which drinking men have often charged against prohibitionists, and he was human enough to confess the personal element in his attempted conversion of mankind. For he did not rest with himself. “I now felt I had a great duty to perform,” he wrote. “I had been groping in darkness, was rescued, and I knew it was my duty to try and save others. The morning I signed the pledge I obtained over twenty signatures in Bridgeport.” He talked temperance wherever he went, and toured New England with a lecture on the subject. Soon what had at first appealed to him as a personal concern became a national issue, a cause, and his most significant admission of this process of thought was his statement: “We had become convinced that it was a matter of life and death; that we must *kill* Alcohol, or Alcohol would kill *us*; or our friends.”

From an advocate of personal redemption and a propagandist in fear of his soul, Barnum soon became a temperance orator extraordinary, and he was able in his pseudo-public capacity to contribute largely to the cause. Before long he must have been a crank on the subject, for he never missed an opportunity to urge

temperance in his personal conversations, and he was always ready to deliver a lecture on the subject. A deep sense of mankind's obligation to him and a just satisfaction in his accomplishment caused Barnum to tell in his autobiography of the people he saved from themselves and their ruin. In Philadelphia a man came to him to offer thanks for his salvation and brought his partner along. "This gentleman," said the convert, pointing to his partner, "is my partner in business, and I know that he is glad I have signed the pledge to-night." "Yes, indeed, I am, George, and it is the best thing you ever did," replied the frank partner, "if you'll only stick to it." "That will I do till the day of my death; and won't my dear little wife Mary cry for joy to-night when I tell her what I have done!" "At that moment," wrote Barnum, "he was a happy man—but he could not have been more so than I was."

Soon after he was convinced of the advantage of temperance, Barnum became a prohibitionist and advocated prohibiting by law the sale of liquor. In 1853 the *New York Illustrated News*, a weekly newspaper in which Barnum owned a third of the stock, reported the following meeting:

> "P. T. Barnum, Esq., lately addressed a very large Temperance meeting at Metropolitan Hall, New York. In the course of his speech, he said that Intemperance was the cause of an annual expenditure or loss of two hundred and fifty millions of dollars in this nation. In this city he estimated that there were 7,000 grog shops, and allowing that the expenditure in each averaged $10 per day, the aggregate in one year's time would be $25,550,000 besides the wholesale business. He offered, if the city would give him that sum and stop liquor-selling for one year, to pay all the city taxes, amounting to about four millions, send every child to a good school, present every family with a library of one hundred good books, three barrels of flour, and a silk dress to every female, old or young, a suit of broadcloth to every male citizen, old or young, and an admission to each to the Museum."

Barnum never forgot to advertise the Museum.

And the Museum was also devoted to Temperance. A pamphlet called *Sights and Wonders of New York, including a description of the miracles, marvels, phenomena, curiosities, and nondescripts, contained in that great Congress of Wonders, Barnum's Museum*,

which is an account of the trip of a supposititious uncle and his nephews through the Museum, gave the following evidence of the extension of Barnum's temperance activities to the Museum:

> "Mrs. Pelby's celebrated groups of wax figures then came in for a share of deep and thoughtful consideration by the whole party.
>
> "And first, the Intemperate Family. The group composes one family: the old man at the table, with the bottle in his pocket, is the father of the dying man; both are drunkards. The fruits of the poisonous bottle are too clearly depictured in the misery, poverty, and wretchedness, around the unfortunate group. 'Look well, my boys, on that picture of woe—remember an uncle warns you—see that you touch not, taste not, handle not, the contents of the intoxicating bottle, lest your condition should be as unfortunate as the one you are now gazing upon.' They shuddered, and passed on to the other side, to the groups representing the last Supper of our Lord with the disciples.
>
> "Uncle Find-out informed his nephews that the moment selected by the artist was where Jesus says—'One of you shall betray me.' He then drew their attention to the countenances of the disciples, and requested them to point out the one that appeared the most faithful delineation of the betrayer of Jesus. In a few minutes the two boys recognized Judas, and each exclaimed, 'That, uncle, is the man!'—and he quietly nodding assent, they pressed on to the groups representing the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate.... Here Uncle Find-out purchased for six cents a pamphlet describing all the wax statuary, and also containing a copy of the Death Warrant of Our Saviour."

For many hundreds of performances Barnum presented in his Moral Lecture Room, "The Moral, Domestic Drama of The Drunkard, or the Fallen Saved." In the first act of this drama, which was more popular than any play Barnum ever presented in the Museum, we see The Moderate Drinker. "In the second act we have his progress, step by step, to ruin," read the newspaper advertisement, "his increased appetite for strong drink; the distress of his relations; the embarrassments of himself and family. In the third act we have his Drunken orgies in Broadway, his bar-room debauchery, the degradation of himself and vileness of his associates, loss of time, &c.

In the fourth act we have Despair and Attempted Suicide, and in the fifth act his restitution to sobriety and society by the aid of a Temperance Philanthropist." There is no record that Barnum took the last part himself. The advertisements said, "It is a most thrilling and affecting performance. The whole drama is relieved with lively sparks of wit and humor, and the comic characters, funny scenes, country dances, songs, choruses, &c., serve to render the piece as *amusing* as it is instructive."

After performances of "The Drunkard" it was announced from the stage that all those who wished to sign the teetotal pledge could do so at the box office. Barnum wrote that "almost every hour during the day and evening women could be seen bringing their husbands to the Museum to sign the pledge." No bar was allowed on the Museum premises, and when Barnum discovered that men were in the habit of going out for a drink between the acts of "The Drunkard" he refused to give return checks. "The Loan of a Lover" was the attraction in the Lecture Room during the afternoon, while "The Drunkard" was performed at night.

Horace Greeley's *Tribune* was delighted with the success of Barnum's "Drunkard." Horace Greeley probably wrote the editorial himself which said: "When Barnum presents his reformatory piece of 'The Drunkard' night after night to two or three thousand persons at a time; when we hear his stage manager, as in his speech Monday evening, speak of his 'present proud position' as Director of Amusements, tending, not to debase, but to elevate the moral tone of the community; when we see three Theaters in this vicinity, and Theaters in other places, dropping their customary performances, and hastily getting up this same drama of 'The Drunkard' and boasting of its wholesome effects, we may think what we please of the inconsistency of these copyists, and admire, if we choose, the course of the original, but we *must* feel gratified at the evidences which all present of the emancipation of the public mind from the shackles of prejudice and its restoration to a sound and promising condition of moral healthfulness on the subject of Temperance." And the *Tribune* continued: "When the Theater,—which for years has attracted by its artful disguise of vice the youthful mind, has excited by its *double entendres* and indelicate allusions, the youthful mind, then tempted by its showy bar-rooms to a grosser abandonment, and completed by

its third tier its course of iniquitous fascinations,—when the Theater really commences to hold the mirror up to nature, and paint the blackness of that very vice a taste for which it has ever done so much to cultivate, we may hope for reform indeed." It is doubtful whether there is reason in such acclaim of the substitution of slush for smut. It is still a question, awaiting scientific research, whether in both the long and the short run, tawdry, false, and stultifying intellectual sentiments passed out over the stage are more harmful to the formation of the mind of the race than obscenities which assuredly seem to wear off sooner.

Barnum became by his success with "The Drunkard" something of a dictator of public amusements, as well as a caterer. But he would not have been permitted to exercise any autocratic powers. "The Drunkard" was successful, in fact, it became a mania, because it satisfied a need of the moment, and Barnum had been the first to recognize that vice dramatized in lurid enough colors could support a very thick coating of moralic acid.

CHAPTER VI

JENNY LIND

I

THE conceit that to induce Jenny Lind to sing in this country would add to his reputation and fortune and to her fortune and reputation came to Barnum in October, 1849. He had been resting, as much as he ever rested, at "Iranistan," and was devoting his leisure to schemes for the improvement of his Museum and his dignity. He considered a Congress of Nations, an exhibition to excite the admiration and awe of the United States and Europe, which would consist of a man and a woman, the most perfect specimens available, from every accessible country in the civilized and savage world. He sent an agent abroad to scout for the appropriate types, but the project was one that required large financial outlay and considerable time for its proper execution, and in the meantime Barnum became interested in Jenny Lind.

He had never heard Jenny Lind sing, and he had never even seen her, since she arrived in London a few weeks after he left there with General Tom Thumb; but he had heard of her singing and her personality, for both were objects of universal admiration abroad. In Europe she was the idol and the ideal of the moment, and whatever people she visited readily accepted her as a genius whose gifts they were happy and privileged to enjoy. In this country she was unknown to all except the few transatlantic travelers and those who read the musical notes from abroad.

For several days after he thought of importing Jenny Lind Barnum made calculations on the backs of envelopes, and all his calculations led to what seemed to him the inevitable result of a properly executed conception: immense success. He realized that his work would not be easy, in fact that it would be more speculative and more exacting than anything he had ever previously attempted. But Barnum's two conclusions were, in his own words: "1st. The chances were greatly in favor of immense pecuniary success; and 2d. Inasmuch as my name

has long been associated with 'humbug,' and the American public suspect that my capacities do not extend beyond the power to exhibit a stuffed monkey-skin or a dead mermaid, I can afford to lose fifty thousand dollars in such an enterprise as bringing to this country, in the zenith of her life and celebrity, the greatest musical wonder in the world, provided the engagement is carried out with credit to the management." To this second consideration Barnum attached great importance, for it is clear that his Congress of Nations was conceived with the same purpose, which was a desire to show America that he was a man of esteem as well as an amusing and extraordinary character, and that his mind worked along high lines for the edification of his countrymen. Although the term "humbug" was self-imposed, and fruitful of publicity, there was no getting away from its reproachful implications, and Barnum sometimes rankled under its insinuations of guilt; though he was too wise to deny them as just, he aimed to prove them unjustified. Jenny Lind, he knew, would transform him from a showman into an impresario, and he also expected that if her tour was properly managed it would make both of them more wealthy than they had ever been.

Barnum looked about for an agent to entice her to the United States by means of stupendous bait, and he found him in the person of John Hall Wilton, an Englishman who was visiting this country with The Sax-Horn Players. In a few minutes' conversation Barnum and Wilton agreed that if Wilton secured Jenny Lind's services for Barnum he was to have a liberal commission, and that if he was not successful he would receive only his expenses and a small sum for his time. There is some reason to believe that Wilton suggested the Jenny Lind project to Barnum in the first place. Barnum's letter of instruction to Wilton begins, "In reply to *your proposal* to attempt a negotiation with Mlle. Jenny Lind to visit the United States professionally." As we shall see later, Barnum often omitted credit in his autobiography where it was due, preferring to take the admiration of his readers for his own perspicacity in many instances of conceptions which originated in the minds of other men. Wilton left for Europe on November 6, 1849, carrying letters of instruction from Barnum and letters of introduction to his bankers, Baring Brothers. His instructions were to engage Jenny Lind on the basis of a share in the profits of the concerts, if possible, and if that was not possible, to engage her at

$60,000 for one hundred concerts, or, if absolutely necessary, to offer her $150,000 for one hundred and fifty concerts. Wilton was also empowered to engage an orchestra conductor and another singer.

Wilton visited London, where he discovered that Jenny Lind was resting at Lübeck in Germany. He wrote to her and learned that one of her stipulations for an American tour, to which she was not averse, was that she be accompanied to the United States by Julius Benedict, afterwards Sir Julius Benedict, the composer, pianist, and orchestra director, and by Giovanni Belletti, an Italian baritone. Wilton engaged both these artists in London and proceeded to Lübeck. Jenny Lind told him during their first interview that she had offers from several persons for a tour of the United States. One of these was from the famous Chevalier Wyckoff, who had toured this country as the manager of Fanny Elssler, the danseuse, with great success. Wyckoff was an American, who was well known for many years at the courts of Europe, and who had attained notoriety by a speculative marriage with a titled lady and by the account which he later wrote of his love affairs. Chevalier Wyckoff told Jenny Lind when she happened to mention Mr. Barnum that Barnum was a mere showman, and that in order to make money out of her he would put her in a box and exhibit her about the United States at twenty-five cents admission. This prediction had frightened her, and she wrote to Joshua Bates, of Baring Brothers, at whose London house General Tom Thumb had performed; he had reassured her that if she dealt with Barnum she would not be dealing with an adventurer.

There were two other things that attracted Jenny Lind to Barnum: he was the only manager who did not ask her to share in the losses as well as the profits, and she liked the picture of "Iranistan" that was engraved on Barnum's letterhead. After she came to this country and stayed a night at "Iranistan," she said to Barnum: "Do you know, Mr. Barnum, if you had not built 'Iranistan,' I should never have come to America for you? I had received several applications to visit the United States," she explained, "but I did not much like the appearance of the applicants, nor did I relish the idea of crossing 3,000 miles of ocean; so I declined them all. But the first letter which Mr. Wilton addressed me was written on a sheet headed with a beautiful engraving of 'Iranistan.' It attracted my attention. I said to myself, a gentleman who has been so successful in his business as to be able to

build and reside in such a palace cannot be a mere adventurer.' So I wrote to your agent, and consented to an interview, which I should have declined, if I had not seen the picture of 'Iranistan'!" Which was a confirmation of Barnum's already firm conviction that it pays to advertise.

However, the story is not so simple as Jenny Lind made it. As her letters and her biographers show, she had been considering a tour of the United States for some time. In 1849 she was at the height of her popularity, and in that year she had abandoned forever the medium through which she had gained that popularity, the opera. After much profound feeling, rather than thought, on the subject, she had come to the conclusion, induced by the influences surrounding her throughout her life, that to sing in opera was immoral, that the stage was immoral, and that opera was merely drama set to music. The dangers and pitfalls surrounding a virtuous prima donna, as well as the innuendoes and implications, were not, in the opinion of Jenny Lind, worth the adulation she received everywhere. She had determined never again to sing in opera as long as she lived, and she kept to that determination. But she had another profound desire: she wanted money, not for herself, but in order to endow a hospital for poor children in Stockholm, where she was born. Before her American tour she had enough money to use for her own comfort for life, but she did not have enough for her hospital, and she could never be thoroughly happy without the great sense of personal satisfaction which her charities gave her. In order to carry out this desire, she was considering a Russian tour, at the invitation of royal personages, when Barnum's offer came. She did not much like the idea of a Russian tour, because Josephine, her constant companion and religious mentor for many years, Mlle. Josephine Åhmansson, was ill and could not tour Russia in comfort. There is also in Jenny Lind's correspondence the hint of another reason, always powerful with her. Russia was too much like France, which she hated and never had visited professionally since the days of her education, because France was immoral. Barnum's offer was larger than any she had received to sing anywhere. In the Hotel du Nord at Lübeck, with no one but Josephine Åhmansson and the Swedish consul to advise her, Jenny Lind signed the Barnum contract. She had been accustomed to take much advice and counsel before making any professional or business

decision, but here she acted quickly and without any of her usual hesitation and nervous distrust of herself and the world. The Barnum contract meant two things for her: she would never be compelled to sing in opera again, and she could afford to build her hospital in Stockholm, and those were all she wanted at the time.

Barnum's contract with Jenny Lind provided that she was to sing under his management in one hundred and fifty concerts or oratorio performances, distributed over a period of one year, if possible, or at most eighteen months from the date of her arrival in New York, the concerts to take place in the United States and Havana, Cuba. She was to have control of the number of concerts to be given each week, providing that there should be no less than two in each week, and there was a special provision that never was she to be required to sing in opera. Barnum in consideration for these services agreed to furnish her with a maid, a male servant, and place at her disposal a carriage and horses with the necessary attendants in every city visited; to pay the traveling and board expenses of Jenny Lind, her companion, and her secretary; and to pay her $1,000 for each concert and oratorio in which she sang. It was also provided that if, after seventy-five concerts, Barnum should have realized a clear profit of $75,000 for himself, then Jenny Lind was to receive, in addition to her $1,000 a night, one-fifth of the net profits of the remaining seventy-five concerts. If, on the other hand, the receipts fell short of expectations after fifty concerts, the agreement was to be revised. Barnum also agreed to pay Julius Benedict $25,000 for his services as musical director of the concerts, and Signor Giovanni Belletti, the baritone vocalist, $12,500. A clause was added to the effect that Jenny Lind was always at liberty to sing for charity, providing only that the first and second concerts in each city should not be for any charity. The contract required that before Jenny Lind, Julius Benedict, and Signor Belletti left Europe, Barnum must place the entire sum of $187,500 in the hands of Baring Brothers, as security for his fulfilment of the terms of the agreement.

Barnum scraped together all his resources and made efforts to raise $187,500 in cash. He visited Wall Street and offered the president of his bank some second mortgages as security for a loan; he suggested that the Jenny Lind contract be made over to the bank, which was to appoint a receiver of all profits exceeding $3,000 a concert. The

banker laughed and said: “Mr. Barnum, it is generally believed in Wall Street that your engagement with Jenny Lind will ruin you. I do not think you will ever receive so much as three thousand dollars at a single concert.” Barnum was angry; he answered that he would not take $150,000 for his contract, but upon further inquiry in Wall Street he discovered that nobody was willing to offer anything for it. Finally, John L. Aspinwall, of the reputable banking firm of Howland & Aspinwall, gave him a letter of credit on Baring Brothers for a large sum on his mortgages. He then sold some of his real estate and discovered that with all his efforts he was still $5,000 short of the required sum. He knew no way of getting it. He happened to mention his predicament to the Rev. Abel C. Thomas, a good friend, who was one of the leading Universalist preachers of this country; Barnum was also an active Universalist, and the Rev. Abel C. Thomas lent him the necessary $5,000.

Meanwhile, John Hall Wilton had returned to the United States with the signed contract. There was no cable across the Atlantic then, and when Wilton arrived in New York on February 19, 1850, Barnum did not yet know whether his mission had been successful. He was at his Museum in Philadelphia, and Wilton immediately telegraphed him in code that he had secured Jenny Lind’s services, and that she was to begin the concerts the following September. Barnum was uneasy; he felt that the time between the signing of the contract and the first concert was too long for the maintenance of continued public interest, and he telegraphed Wilton to mention the contract to no one until he met him next day in New York. But news of this nature is difficult to keep secret, and the next morning, as Barnum was riding in the train from Philadelphia to New York, he read about his Jenny Lind contract in the New York newspapers.

He was anxious to see how this announcement would strike a member of the general public. While the cars were being changed at Princeton, Barnum told the conductor, who was an acquaintance, that he had just engaged Jenny Lind to visit this country. “Jenny Lind? Is she a dancer?” asked the conductor. The question chilled Barnum. He informed the conductor who and what Jenny Lind was, as his first step in educating the public, and he realized that he could not have too much time for the work before him. “Really, thought I,” he wrote in his autobiography, “if this is all that a man in the capacity of a

railroad conductor between Philadelphia and New York knows of the greatest songstress in the world, I am not sure that six months will be too long a time for me to occupy in enlightening the entire public in regard to her merits." Classical music has never had a circus appeal, but in order to come out of his contract with a profit, Barnum had to sell Jenny Lind as extensively as he sold the circus in later years. His instinct was sound when he quizzed the conductor on Jenny Lind, for it was to conductors and even to brakemen that Barnum had to appeal for financial support of his huge enterprise.

II

Though Jenny Lind was unfamiliar, even as a name, to the vast multitude in the United States, she was known throughout every country in Europe as The Swedish Nightingale, a name which was said to have been given her by Douglas Jerrold, a writer in *Punch*, who later gave the glass house of London the name of Crystal Palace. One would like to believe that this was the origin of that famous sobriquet, but, unfortunately, Jenny Lind had been called The Swedish Nightingale by her early admirers in her native country, Sweden.

She was born in Stockholm, October 6, 1820, and was christened Johanna Maria Lind, but no one from her early childhood ever called her anything but that charming combination of sounds, with its implications of familiarity and Victorian virtue, Jenny Lind. Her father, Nicolas Jonas Lind, was a good-natured roisterer, twenty-two years old when Jenny was born. He was able to do little towards the support of his family by means of his position as bookkeeper. But he loved Bellman's songs, and Bellman was the Swedish Burns, and he sang those songs with a good voice. All the practical management of the family affairs was left to Jenny's mother, the influence of whose piety, austerity, and stubbornness on her daughter was undeniably great. At the period of Jenny's birth her mother was keeping a day-school for girls. In her early years she was also influenced by her grandmother on her mother's side, who implanted firm religious beliefs in the child. It was this grandmother who first discovered that

Jenny Lind had musical talent. At the age of three Jenny reproduced on the square piano which her half-sister used for practising her scales a military fanfare she had heard.

Later when Frau Lind was compelled to go out as a governess, Jenny was cared for by her grandmother in the Home for Widows of Stockholm Burghers. Thus her religious instruction was continued. Jenny used to sit at the window in the Home for Widows of Stockholm Burghers and sing to a cat "with a blue ribbon round its neck." On one morning the maid of a dancer at the Royal Opera House heard the child singing and reported the discovery of a phenomenal voice to her mistress, who sent for Jenny. Her mother took her to the Royal Opera House, and when the dancer heard the child's voice she immediately pronounced her a genius and advised the parents to have her educated for the stage. But both Jenny's mother and grandmother believed fiercely that the stage was immoral. Her mother, however, agreed to allow the child to be taught singing, and she accepted a letter from Mademoiselle Lundberg, the dancer, to Herr Croelius, Court-Secretary and Singing-Master of the Royal Theater. Jenny sang for Herr Croelius, who took her to Count Puke, the head of the Royal Theater. He asked how old she was, and when he was told that she was nine years old said irritably, "But this is not a *crèche*." With great difficulty he was persuaded to listen to the child. Jenny herself explained later that she was "a small, ugly, broad-nosed, shy, gauche, under-grown girl." But as Count Puke listened to her sing, he was moved to tears, and he made arrangements to have her taught singing and brought up at the expense of the government. Frau Lind felt that she was "sacrificing her child to the stage," but her financial condition was such that she could not afford the luxury of allowing one of the world's greatest voices to go uncultivated. A contract was signed with Frau Lind, by which it was provided that the Royal Theater would supply the child with food, clothes, and lodging, tuition in singing, elocution, and dancing, while Frau Lind was to teach her daughter "the Piano, Religion, French, History, Geography, Writing, Arithmetic, and Drawing." After the child was educated, the Royal Theater was to have her services at a salary.

Jenny Lind, as much as she may have been troubled by uncongenial home environment—for her mother was stern and cruel as well as bigoted and intolerant—never suffered from lack of recognition of her

talent. Her official biographers[7] report that: "From her earliest childhood, her gifts were felt to be surpassing; and this feeling never flagged. From the beginning of her dramatic career to its close, it is one unbroken triumph; and she had this singular good fortune of finding her way to the exercise of her gifts, before a sympathetic public, as soon as she had them to exercise." It was as a child actress that Jenny Lind was first praised, for at the age of ten she took parts in the Royal Theater productions. A Stockholm newspaper protested that it was immoral to allow a child of her age to play with such innocent abandon a part of such immorality in "Thirty Years of a Gambler's Life." She also sang at private concerts, and at the age of seventeen made her début in opera and was received with great applause. Throughout her lifetime she kept the seventh of March, for that was the day in 1838 of her début, as a second birthday, that of her art. She won popularity and acclaim almost at once and continued to sing in opera.

By her twentieth year Jenny Lind was recognized and idolized by the Swedish public both as a singer and an actress. The musicians of Stockholm, and in fact of all Sweden, had no more to teach her, and they were content to praise her. The directors of the Royal Theater offered her the highest salary they were allowed to offer, $750 a year for three years. But Jenny Lind refused their offer, arguing that it was "not with half-developed, if even happy, natural gifts, that an artist can keep his ground." She had decided to study abroad. Several influences persuaded her to this decision. Geijer, the eminent Swedish historian, who wrote *lieder* which Jenny Lind sang, had written a song to her in which he said:

"Oh! if from yon Eternal Fire,
Which slays the souls that it sets free—
Consuming them, as they aspire—
One burning spark have fallen on thee!

"Fear not! Though upward still it haste,
That living fire, that tongue of flame!
Thy days it turns to bitter waste;
But ah! from heaven—from heaven it came!"

These words, she afterwards felt, launched her into the open sea of public appearance. They told her that it was not wrong of her to aspire to fame, which was hedged with temptations, or to think of her talent in high spiritual terms, for after all it came from heaven. Where else should the poor daughter of a boarding-school mistress and an accountant with an ear for popular lyrics get a voice that was gaining universal praise? Thus she squared her religious doubts as to the propriety of utilizing her accomplishments.

Herr Berg, who had taken Croelius's place as her instructor, admitted to Jenny Lind that he had no more to teach her. Then Signor Giovanni Battista Belletti, who was afterwards to accompany her to America, came to Stockholm from Italy and joined the Royal Theater company. Jenny Lind admired the technical features of this baritone's voice, and when asked where he learned his technique, Belletti replied, "At Paris under Garcia." Manuel Garcia was the most celebrated maestro of Europe; Jenny Lind determined to visit him, and in July, 1841, she left for Paris with a female companion.

Soon after her arrival in Paris, Jenny Lind called upon Garcia. He was the brother of Mme. Malibran and Mme. Viardot, the two most famous divas of the day, and his reputation as a teacher was unsurpassed. He listened to Jenny Lind sing scales and the *Perche non ho* of *Lucia*. She broke down completely. The strain of an extended concert tour in Sweden, which she made in order to get enough money to live in Paris, and the excessive number of performances at the Royal Theater since she had discovered her voice, had chosen this vital moment to reveal their effect. Garcia said, "Mademoiselle, vous n'avez plus de voix." He did not say what was later attributed to him by some newspapers, "Mademoiselle, you have no voice," but, "Mademoiselle, you no longer have a voice," which was bad enough. The shock was a terrible one, and in great distress Jenny asked Garcia what she could do to recuperate. He told her not to sing a note for six weeks, to talk as little as possible, and then to visit him again, when he would decide if he could take her as a pupil. She spent the six weeks learning Italian and refurbishing her French, for she knew that eventually she would sing in those languages. The rest of the days she listened to the agonizing melody of the Paris street vendors, and the two themes which afterwards remained in her head were, "Haricots, haricots, verts!" and "Ah, le vitrier!" Mme.

Ruffiaques, at whose *pension* Jenny Lind boarded, wrote in a letter that "she scarcely could have believed such dignity of conduct possible in a young person coming alone to Paris."

After the six weeks of probation, Garcia consented to give Jenny Lind two lessons a week. He taught her the management of her breath, the production of the voice, and the blending of its registers, of which she had known nothing. For ten months she continued her studies under Garcia. The problem then arose whether she should appear somewhere on the Continent or return immediately to Stockholm. Paris she hated. It was too immoral. Its frivolity displeased her, its selfishness irritated her, but its restless love of excitement in all forms horrified her. To return to Stockholm without having sung in Paris would be to incur the implication that she was not good enough to sing in Paris, and Stockholm received its opinions on art and music from Paris. In a letter written at this time she told of her despair: "It might perhaps be better for me to engage myself somewhere as nursery-maid; for it is a very difficult thing to appear, here, in public. On the stage it would be out of the question. It could only be in the concert-room: and there I am at my weakest point, and shall always remain so. What is wanted here is—'admirers.' Were I inclined to receive them, all would be smooth sailing. But there I say—STOP!" She was no longer the "small, ugly, broad-nosed, shy, gauche, under-grown girl." She was beginning to burgeon into a plain, but not unattractive, womanhood. Never was she what might be called beautiful, and her most ardent admirers have always been ready to admit that she was plain, confining their raptures to her voice and its effect on her appearance as she became inspired by its loveliness and the force of the music she was singing.

Meyerbeer heard her on the stage of the Paris opera house privately, and he said of her voice, "Une voix chaste et pure, pleine de grâce et de virginalité." He advised her to sing at once in Germany, but she had already signed her Swedish contract and was homesick for Stockholm. She never sang in public at Paris during her life, and the Parisians resented her refusal to sing there, but she kept her determination to reproach France by ignoring it, and made only one public appearance in France, a concert for charity at Nice in her last years. When invited to sing at the Paris opera, she wrote the director, "For the more I think of it, the more I am persuaded that I am not

suited for Paris, nor Paris for me." She was quite right. It is very unlikely that Paris would ever have become wildly enthusiastic about "une voix chaste et pure, pleine de virginalité"; and it would have been impossible for Jenny Lind to be happy in a city where the senses were of more interest than the pleasures of the *religieuse* to which she was so passionately addicted.

The next two years were spent in Sweden and Denmark. A triumph at Copenhagen awakened Jenny Lind to the possibility of extending her popularity. She had thought merely of Sweden as the sphere of her activities until Denmark expressed its approval. In Copenhagen too she met Hans Christian Andersen, who wrote of her in his autobiographical *Das Märchen meines Lebens*: "Through Jenny Lind I first became sensible of the holiness of Art. Through her I learned that one must forget one's self in the service of the Supreme. No books, no men, have had a more ennobling influence upon me as a poet than Jenny Lind; and therefore have I spoken of her so fully and so warmly. Her praises were sounded everywhere, the praises not of the artist only but of the woman. The two united awoke for her a true enthusiasm." It is this combination that makes that enthusiasm so unique in the history of artistic and dramatic triumphs; praise of her personality and praise of her voice were equal, and it was that combination which no other singer had ever achieved, which none has since surpassed. The history of her triumphs in this country and in Europe is the story of one of the world's great furors, if nothing else; its spread was so wide and its legendary development so exalted that even to-day we who have no impression of the sound of her voice know the name of Jenny Lind. And like many a legend, distance has added charm to the reality.

Meyerbeer remembered that voice he had heard in Paris, and he sent for her to sing in his operas in Germany. But she was inclined to remain in Sweden, where the directors of the Royal Theater were awakening to her importance and offered her $2,100 a year for eight years, to be followed by a life pension. To friends who urged upon her the value of a European reputation she would not pay attention, and she decided to accept this offer and continue to shine in the light of her familiar popularity. She was always doubtful of her ability to conquer strange audiences and ever ready to sacrifice wide success to her timidity. A friend in despair mentioned to another friend that

Jenny Lind intended to sign this Swedish contract. The second expressed it as his opinion that Jenny Lind was wise to do so; that she knew her limitations, that she realized Sweden was not Germany, and that it showed good judgment to face the fact that she could not win triumphs in an extended sphere. The friend hurried to Jenny Lind with these opinions, and she became so angry that she tore up her Swedish contract. A challenge to her pride always proved successful at every turn in her career; and she never seemed to entertain any desire for achievement until some one expressed doubt of her ability to attain it. Nevertheless, she left for Germany doubtful and uneasy about her future, for Berlin had heard such stars as Malibran, Sontag, Grisi, Persiani, and even the great Madame Catalani herself, and Jenny Lind must appear before audiences who would compare her accomplishments with the memories, and in some cases the present talent, of these cherished favorites. But this thin, pale, plain girl, with marked broad Scandinavian features, who looked at first glance to an observer "like a very shy country school-girl," was accepted by kings and queens, critics and composers as soon as she opened her mouth. She made her public début in Bellini's *Norma* and was received with tremendous enthusiasm by the Germans, and when she followed this with Meyerbeer's *Camp of Silesia*, which had been written for her, she became the rage of Berlin.

From this time on Jenny Lind's career becomes a series of unbroken triumphs which trailed themselves through every country she visited and increased in volume as they progressed. In Vienna a staid music critic of the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung* declared the appearance of Jenny Lind "an event altogether exceptional; such as has never before been witnessed, and will probably never be repeated." She was called before the curtain twenty-five times there, and the Empress Mother of Austria dropped a wreath before her feet. Thousands of people waited for her to leave the opera house until daybreak, and then the horses of her carriage were unharnessed by enthusiastic students, and she was only able to proceed to her lodgings with the aid of a detachment of cavalry.

And all the time she was homesick for Sweden, and melancholy. She had not wanted to sing in Vienna and only did so at the earnest solicitation of Prince Metternich and Baron Rothschild. Again she had feared she might lose the reputation she had won in Germany, and

once more she felt repugnance for the stage. Even after accepting Herr Pokorny's offer to appear at his theater in Vienna, she wrote to her friend and adviser, Madame Birch-Pfeiffer: "Tell Herr Pokorny that I am very grateful to him for the offered half-receipts and quite satisfied on the score of money; but—that he must engage some other singer; for he cannot reckon on me, as I cannot accept the engagement, and cannot believe that I should be able to carry it out in Vienna. Break it off, good mother. I am contented with very little, and shall perhaps sing no longer than till next spring, as I can then go home, by Hamburg, and afterwards live in peace. For, you see, mother Birch, this life does not suit me at all. If you could only see me —the despair I am in whenever I go to the theater to sing! It is too much for me. This terrible nervousness destroys everything for me. I sing far less well than I should, if it were not for this enemy. I cannot understand how it is that everything goes so well with me. People all take me by the hand. But all this helps nothing! Herr Pokorny would not be very well pleased, for instance, if I were to sing there once only and, that once, fail. For the money he offers me he can get singers anywhere who are not so difficult to satisfy as I am, and who, at least, wish for something, while I wish for nothing at all!" In this and other letters of a similar character one gets the impression that Jenny Lind was extremely proud of her humility. She often alluded to the fact that managers could get other singers who would do as well as she for the same money, and who really enjoy singing on the stage. But through it all there is a note of superiority to those poor deluded persons, an unconscious implication that the right attitude is her attitude, and the sly, lurking assurance that really there are no other singers who would be worth the same money.

The Jenny Lind fever is so interesting in artistic annals, because it was not merely a popular excitement, but just as much a *succès d'estime*. There were mad rushes to get to her concerts, and frenzied efforts to catch a glimpse of her face, but wherever she performed she also conquered the critics and gained high praise from musicians of enduring fame. Her voice must have been one of the best Europe has ever heard. The people will readily rush to worship a golden calf, but Berlioz, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Meyerbeer could not be stampeded into inordinate praise, and if their opinions seem to us to-day somewhat extravagant, we must remember that they were written

under the influence of an extraordinary emotional accomplishment. Even Richard Wagner, who would not have been moved by the white dresses and holy innocence of this operatic virgin, was impressed with her voice and individuality when he heard her at Berlin in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Chopin wrote of her art: "She does not show herself in the ordinary light, but in the magic rays of the aurora borealis. Her singing is infallibly pure and true and has an indescribable charm." Moscheles, Thalberg, Taubert, and Schumann were her admirers, and Mendelssohn, who wrote his *Elijah* for her, kept up a correspondence which only ended with his death in 1847. He said of Jenny Lind, "She is as great an artist as ever lived; and the greatest I have known." It is rumored that Mendelssohn was in love with her, and it may be so; however, he was married, apparently quite happily, and Jenny Lind could never have been cast in the rôle of home-breaker. Jenny Lind, if she had met Mendelssohn before he had met his wife, might have had a greater artistic fame than she enjoyed, for she needed the humanizing and inspiring influence of an artist to counteract the religious repression to which she constantly subjected herself. She also needed some one to tell her, or at least to make her realize, what was art, for even Mendelssohn was constrained to admit in bewildered perplexity, "She sings bad music the best."

When she was ill for a few days in Berlin, Meyerbeer wrote to her and asked that Heaven might grant her "relief from those doubts in the power of your talent which turn even your days of triumph into days of anxiety." It was just that which she needed to perfect her art and her personality, but Meyerbeer was asking too much from Heaven. These doubts were a concentrated compound, consisting of lack of self-confidence, pious preoccupations and moral repressions, together with a crafty fear of losing altogether whatever she had already gained. They did not affect her popularity, for even with her doubts she did sing wherever she had the opportunity, but they undoubtedly affected her art, and without them she might have been the greatest singer the world has ever known. With them she was held back from supreme artistic triumph in this world that she might enjoy comfort in the next, and it is to be hoped that her spiritual promises to herself have been fulfilled.

There were disparagers of Jenny Lind, but they rarely found fault any more discriminately than those who shrieked praise of both her personality and her powers. The testimony of several great artists in other fields, who found her unimportant and even dull, was natural, for she must have been so to any one who could not become enraptured with her vocal perfection, but yet it is a reflection on the powers of that voice that it could not move the emotions of several great men, unprejudiced by too much technical knowledge of music. Carlyle heard her in England and was thoroughly bored. "Lind seemed to me," he wrote, "a very true, clear, genuine little creature, with a voice of extraordinary *extent* and *little* richness of tone; who sang, acted, etc., with consummate fidelity, but had unfortunately nothing but mere *non*-sense to sing or act; a defect not much felt by the audience, as would appear, but very heavily pressing upon me for one. 'Depend upon it,' said I to Fuz, 'the Devil is busy *here* to-night, wherever he may be idle!'—Old Wellington had come staggering in to attend the thing. Thackeray was there; d'Orsay, Lady Blessington,—to all of whom (Wellington excepted!) I had to be presented and grin some kind of foolery,—much against the grain. It was one o'clock when we got home; on the whole, I do not design to hear Lind again; it would not bring me sixpence worth of benefit, I think, to hear her sing six months in that kind of material." She sang *La Somnambula* when Carlyle heard her.

Hawthorne heard her in England, and "on the whole, was not very much interested in her." Thackeray wrote his wife from Cambridge, England: "Then we went to Jenny Lind's concert, for which a gentleman here gave us tickets, and at the end of the first act we agreed to come away. It struck me as atrociously stupid. I was thinking of something else the whole time she was jugulating away, and O! I was so glad to get to the end and have a cigar, and I wanted so to go away with Mr. Williams, for I feel entirely out of place in this town." It is significant that Carlyle and Thackeray, and as we shall see when we come to America, Walt Whitman, were all dissenters from the Lind religious wave, but it does not necessarily mean that she did not have a good voice. It does seem to indicate clearly, however, taken along with the evidence of Mendelssohn's reluctant admission, that she did not sing good music. Then, too, the very extravagance of the popular mania with its false sentiment and absurd idolatry were likely

to prejudice these men against what had been heralded to them as a phenomenon of the ages and what turned out to be only a benevolent soul coupled with a lovely voice, who usually sang most commonplace and oftentimes dull music to the accompaniment of large-scale fatuity upon the part of her doting audiences.

III

Jenny Lind went to England in April, 1847, and was greeted cordially by Mendelssohn, who was conducting four performances in London of his new oratorio, *Elijah*. She was also welcomed by her friends, Grote, the historian, and his wife. She made her début at Lumely's Her Majesty's Theater on May 4, 1847, and the excitement was intense. From early hours in the afternoon, until half-past seven when the doors were opened, crowds stood outside in the Haymarket, and when the theater was finally opened, there was a crush which was named later "the Jenny Lind crush," in which gentlemen lost their hats and ladies parts of their dresses. Before she sang a note the audiences applauded loudly, and after her concerts the newspapers were extravagant in their adulation.

After a tremendous public success, and a welcome by all the best people, Jenny Lind returned to Stockholm, with an intervening engagement in Germany. Upon her arrival in Stockholm, she was unfavorably impressed with its moral differences from England. She wrote to her Viennese friend, Madame von Jaeger: "There is, here, I confess, such frivolousness in everything that I am sad.... I sometimes doubt whether I can find joy and happiness here. The last three years have given me a great deal clearer insight. Do not imagine that they do not treat me well; on the contrary: I have nothing at all to complain of, myself: only, it does pain me that our nation should, through French influence, have lost so much of its true self." In order to counterbalance this insidious French influence in some measure, Jenny Lind devoted the entire proceeds of her Swedish performances to the foundation of a Theater School, which would help to rescue the stage from what her biographers call "the perverting influences which

had largely dominated it since the early part of the century." She returned to her beloved Victorian England for renewed triumphs in 1848.

And on this second trip Herr Julius Günther accompanied her. He and she had sung together in opera and in the concert hall since the time of her return from Paris. Just before leaving for her début in Berlin, which led to her first great triumph, they had become somewhat engaged. After her first London success she met him in Stockholm, and when he saw that her successes had not placed her out of his reach, he spoke again, and rings were exchanged. Jenny Lind's biographers do not go into this relationship intimately because it is not their purpose, their book declares, "to enter into all the private and domestic incidents of our heroine's life, except so far as they touch her artistic career." It is doubtful whether in the life of a public character there are any private and domestic incidents that do not touch her artistic career. Undoubtedly, love, marriage, or betrothal have an influence upon a personality which must not be overemphasized, but which surely need not be underestimated.

Religious influences on Jenny Lind were heavy. In England she had met among others Bishop Stanley, and she associated with and was continually surrounded by churchgoers whose interest in their spiritual life made it impossible for them to see with a wholesome outlook many advantages in worldly existence. The moral repugnance which she had early entertained for the stage, inherited from her mother and grandmother and fostered by her intimate associations, bred a feverish anxiety to be done with theatrical life. Besides the feeling that opera was improper morally, she hated its Bohemianism and was annoyed by its intrigue. Then there was Mademoiselle Josephine Åhmansson. Jenny Lind was deeply impressed by the strong piety of this woman, who was her constant companion. Mrs. Stanley, wife of the Bishop, at whose palace Jenny Lind stayed several times, wrote in a letter to her sister: "Her companion is the best that could be for her; and as Jenny said, 'She has lived so much with clergymen, she is so clever at explaining to me the Bible, and we talk all out of it on Sundays.'" Josephine Åhmansson was throwing her influence against opera, and Jenny was disturbed at the prospect of the future. Herr Günther, now returned to Stockholm, was an opera singer; marriage with him would mean that even if she herself retired

from the stage she would always live in its professional environment. Herr Günther could not give up opera, apparently, although there is no record of any attempt upon the part of Jenny Lind to persuade him to do so. There was an exchange of letters, and the engagement was ended.

At Newcastle about this time in the house of Joseph Grote, brother of the historian, Jenny Lind met Captain Claudius Harris, of Her Majesty's Indian Service. Captain Claudius Harris was fascinated by The Swedish Nightingale, and she liked his manners. She said that he had a "pure mind," but apparently he was not very good company, for when she was first introduced to him she said, "Oh! What a dull young man!" But he was handsome, tall, with regular features, and profoundly religious. Later in the winter she was singing at Bath, and she called on Captain Claudius Harris's mother to inquire after her son's health. He hurried to his mother's house, saw her frequently at Bath and wherever she appeared in the neighborhood. They were engaged to be married. She told him that he must tell his mother, to which he answered, "Do not be angry with me: I have already talked to her about it," and she was not angry, but thought his filial devotion only proper.

But Captain Claudius Harris consulted his mother too much. She had brought him up a strict Evangelical and instilled in him her own complete horror at the thought of the theater. Captain Harris regarded Jenny Lind's dramatic powers as temptations in her path, and Jenny Lind began to grow uneasy. It was one thing for her to dislike the stage on moral grounds, but it was quite another for any one to challenge the propriety of her career. She wanted, she said, to live quietly near "trees, water, and a cathedral," but she did not want to look back upon her whole careful life as a career of sin. Captain Harris and his mother had been doubtful about Jenny Lind from the first, for, after all, she *was* an actress, although Captain Claudius Harris assured his mother that a sweeter, purer soul than Jenny Lind never lived. A marriage settlement was drawn up, and Captain Claudius Harris wished to bind his bride in writing never to return to the stage again. She insisted that the marriage settlement must give her absolute control of her own destiny, and also, incidentally, of her own fortune. This last Captain Claudius Harris declared to be "unscriptural." Jenny Lind refused to sign, and the Captain, with his

mother behind him, was firm. She confided her troubles to Mr. Nassau Senior, a lawyer and a writer, who later made a private record of the whole affair, which was published by his son. She told him that she was plagued by people who wanted her "to think the theater a temple of Satan, and all the actors priests of the Devil," that they required her "not only to abandon her profession, but to be ashamed of it," and "to go down to Bath, among people who care for nothing but clergymen and sermons, as a sort of convert or penitent." Jenny Lind would have enjoyed the company of clergymen and the people who cared about nothing but them and their sermons, but she, who had looked upon her whole life as spiritually superior, would not be considered a convert to something she already believed in so profoundly and a penitent for sins she had never allowed even to tempt her.

Nassau Senior advised her if she needed comfort to come to Paris after she had settled with Captain Claudius Harris, or to remain happily engaged to him if he agreed to her terms. Captain Harris terrified her by "threats of torment here and hereafter if she broke her word," Nassau Senior said, "and last of all, when in the joy of reconciliation she was singing to him, she turned round and saw that he had gone to sleep." This was too much, and as Mrs. Grote was sitting, nursing a headache, by the fire of her Paris apartment, there was a tap at the door, and Jenny Lind entered.

She had broken her engagement to Herr Günther because he could not give up the stage, and her engagement to Captain Claudius Harris because he insisted that she give up the stage. She regarded herself as stubborn and independent, but it was a modest request that she made of Captain Claudius Harris: some slight control of her own personality. Immediately after this crisis she did retire from the stage. She had attempted to sing her operas in concert halls in England without scenery or acting, and the attempt was the one and only failure to attract crowds. This goaded her to give a few last operatic performances in England, a final gesture to the world that she was not to be underestimated except by herself. Then she went to Germany for rest and a milk cure and a grape cure. And while Jenny Lind was resting at Lübeck, Barnum's offer, with its opportunity to make

enough money to retire and build her hospital for Stockholm children, came like a dispensation from heaven and was accepted without hesitation.

After a hurried trip to Stockholm, Jenny Lind and Josephine Åhmansson left for England, where she was to give a few concerts before her departure for the United States. Barnum had arranged these concerts, and had also hired a music critic to write accounts of them for a Liverpool newspaper. These criticisms were sent to him on the boat that left for New York just before Jenny Lind's departure and were reprinted in American newspapers.

Jenny Lind's farewell English concerts were a series of frenzied triumphs, much to the satisfaction of Barnum, who had counted upon them to stimulate excitement in this country. At Manchester the bed on which Jenny Lind was said to have slept in *La Somnambula* was put on exhibition and offered for sale. Just before going aboard the steamer *Atlantic* she was presented with a bunch of grapes measuring three feet, six inches in circumference, fourteen inches in diameter, and one foot, six inches in length, weighing eight pounds. She went aboard the *Atlantic* on August 21, 1850, and the Liverpool police found it necessary to warn Barnum's agent to have her on the ship several hours before the time of departure, or they would not guarantee her safety from the crowds.

A passenger on the same steamer, who published his account of the departure in the *New York Herald* for September 2, 1850, reported this incident just before the boat sailed: "An amusing incident, however, occurred about this time, which excited the mirth of even Jenny herself, and which I quietly noted as one of the many desperate cases of 'Lind fever' that fell under my observation. Accompanying us in the tender was an elderly man of very genteel appearance, who paced the deck in evident anxiety and impatience, and whose luggage seemed to consist of a solitary pair of unmentionables, which were carelessly rolled up and 'tucked' under his arm. Arriving alongside of the leviathan *Atlantic*, he sprang over the gangway with surprising agility, and exclaimed, 'Where's Jenny Lind? Can anybody tell me if Jenny Lind is to be seen? Oh! where the devil is Jenny Lind?' Not obtaining a very satisfactory reply to his beseeching queries (and especially to the last, which was uttered in a tone betokening the strongest kind of despair), and being informed that he must either

leave the ship or submit to summary ejectment, he broke away from the gangway and rushed forward, muttering, 'Impossible! I must go. Can't be helped. Borrow clothes on board, no doubt,' &c."

The enthusiasm was unparalleled, and more of it was personal than artistic. It was natural that thousands should bid her good-bye, for in 1847, 1848, 1849, and 1850 Jenny Lind was more popular personally in England than Queen Victoria. Her charities had contributed somewhat to this effect, for she had sung many times for the benefit of hospitals and other institutions.

This was the state of the public mind about Jenny Lind when Barnum imported her in August, 1850. And he had taken steps to insure that that state of mind would be transplanted with her to the United States in even greater measure.

IV

Music was not flourishing in the United States when Barnum engaged Jenny Lind. Lyman Abbott's father, who enjoyed music, his son writes in his *Reminiscences*, went regularly to Christy's Minstrels, because the voices were good, although the jokes were bad. Madame Malibran, the sister of Manuel Garcia, who taught Jenny Lind, appeared in opera in New York under the management of her father in 1826. But the Havana Opera Company, of which she was the star, did not create much enthusiasm when it performed opera in English. N. P. Willis, the poet, who wrote a memoir of Jenny Lind, said that her arrival in the United States marked an epoch for music in America. "No singer, who could still please a court and an European capital, thought yet of a trip to the transatlantic Republic; and though sometimes, as in the case of Malibran, we have had great celebrities here *before* they were famous, and oftener still, have had them here *after* their dawn and in their twilight—we had never seen one of the first magnitude during her meridian."

Such was the situation with which Barnum was confronted when Jenny Lind signed his contract, and though he had in her personality and ability excellent material for his ends, it was necessary for him to work hard on almost barren ground in order to make his $187,500 come back with accretions.

CHAPTER VII

THE SWEDISH NIGHTINGALE IN THE AMERICAN WOODS

I

After the conductor on the Philadelphia-New York train had guessed that Jenny Lind was a dancer, Barnum began to remove all possible misconceptions in the public mind concerning his new purchase, which he had this time literally procured after much trouble and expense. He wrote a statement to the press, confirming the rumor that he had engaged Jenny Lind. It was printed in all the New York newspapers for February 22, 1850, and copied by newspapers in other cities. With a noble gesture Barnum said to the public:

> "Perhaps I may not make any money by this enterprise; but I assure you that if I knew I should not make a farthing profit, I would ratify the engagement, so anxious am I that the United States should be visited by a lady whose vocal powers have never been approached by any other human being, and whose character is charity, simplicity, and goodness personified.
>
> "Miss Lind has numerous better offers than the one she has accepted from me; but she has great anxiety to visit America. She speaks of this country and its institutions in the highest terms of praise, and as money is by no means the greatest inducement that can be laid before her, she is determined to visit us.
>
> "In her engagement with me (which includes Havana), she expressly reserves the right to give charitable concerts whenever she thinks proper. Since her début in England, she has given to the poor from her own private purse more than the whole amount which I have engaged to pay her, and the proceeds of concerts for charitable purposes in Great Britain, where she has sung gratuitously, have realized more than ten times that amount."

It was this mention of Jenny Lind's charities, used casually but pointedly in every publicity notice Barnum wrote that turned his speculation into a certain success. It is proof of his sagacity as a showman that he utilized all sides of his materials, and even exploited as effectively as he did their main claims to fame, any incidental personal characteristics they might reveal. He not only exploited them thoroughly, but he also foresaw the possibilities of them, at least in the case of Jenny Lind. A few years later Barnum looked back upon his accomplishment and confessed: "I may as well state," he wrote in his autobiography, "that although I relied prominently upon Jenny Lind's reputation as a great musical *artiste*, I also took largely into my estimate of her success with all classes of the American public, her character for extraordinary benevolence and generosity. Without this peculiarity in her disposition, I never would have dared make the engagement which I did, as I felt sure that there were multitudes of individuals in America who would be prompted to attend her concerts by this feeling alone." Previously divas had sung for charity, and there are those who do so unobtrusively every day, yet never before or since have we heard of an artist's benevolence in the same breath as we heard of her talents; but Jenny Lind during the entire period of her fame in America was known and discussed more as a Florence Nightingale than as The Swedish Nightingale.

Barnum, as he himself expressed it, "had put innumerable means and appliances into operation for the furtherance of my object, and little did the public see of the hand that indirectly pulled at their heart-strings, preparatory to a relaxation of their purse-strings; and these means and appliances were continued and enlarged throughout the whole of that triumphal musical campaign." It was not necessary for Barnum to work very hard with the New York newspapers; they could be depended upon to realize that Jenny Lind was a story, and in the days when James Gordon Bennett, the elder, was hurling almost daily competitive epithets at Horace Greeley, a story was sought after with even greater zeal than to-day, when cables, wireless telegraphy and airplanes make so many of them. In 1850 the New York newspapers gave much space to the news from Europe, and Jenny Lind was creating a European sensation. The English and Continental newspapers were received by the New York newspapers on the fastest steamers, and long extracts from them took the place of local stories.

Although the conductor of the Philadelphia train may have ignored it, the Jenny Lind mania in Europe did not escape the eye of the metropolitan editor. Extracts of European criticisms, accounts of her personal and artistic triumphs, comments on her benevolence, appear regularly in the newspapers of the period, so she was not exactly unknown to those in America who read the European news.

But there were undoubtedly many who did not read the European news, and it was for those that Barnum worked, because they were to pay the bills. He met an English newspaper writer who had seen Jenny Lind and had heard her sing. Barnum hired him to write articles of one or two newspaper columns once or twice each week, as long as his ingenuity and Barnum's suggestions held out. He wrote of her personal characteristics and the warmth of her receptions in Europe, so that those who could not be fascinated by the sentimentality of her benevolence could be impressed by the prestige of European opinion. The articles were dated "London" and appeared as special correspondence from that city. Barnum told a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* in June, 1890, "I suppose that was the first attempt in this country to 'work the press.' I am free to confess that it couldn't be done now. Besides, it is not necessary." This last was in deference to his guest, for he always regarded reporters as guests, "whom he frequently did not wait for, but sent for," as a friend said. But Barnum "worked the press" until he died, not always so crudely, but with invariable effect, and to-day also young men with imaginations think publicly for motion picture stars and prima donnas, bank presidents and national governments.

On August 14, 1850, the *New York Tribune* printed an alleged letter received by Barnum from Julius Benedict, who wrote that he had just heard Jenny Lind again and assured Barnum that "her voice has acquired—*if that were possible*—even additional power and effect by a timely and well-chosen repose." Julius Benedict also said: "Mlle. Lind is very anxious to give a Welcome to America in a kind of National Song, which, if I can obtain the poetry of one of your first-rate literary men, I shall set to music, and which she will sing in addition to the pieces originally fixed upon." This letter was without doubt written by Barnum. It was dated from Schlangenbad, Germany, August 24, and was printed in the *New York Tribune* of August 14. This may have been a misprint in the *Tribune*, and it may have been

an error in calculation upon the part of Barnum or his employees. However, even if the letter were mailed from Germany on August 4 or August 1, it could not possibly have reached Barnum in time to print in the *Tribune* of August 14. Besides, Barnum, as he tells in his autobiography, had been thinking for some time of this Welcome to America, and we know that the desire for such a song not only did not originate with Jenny Lind, but that she was reluctant to sing it after Barnum had made the arrangements necessary; then, Julius Benedict would not have suggested a song by a "first-rate" literary man, using one of Barnum's favorite Yankee adjectives. Three days later the *Morning Courier and Enquirer*, a New York newspaper, printed the following card of announcement from Barnum:

> "Messrs. Editors:—
>
> "Will you please to state that Jenny Lind having expressed a strong desire to sing at her first concert in New York a 'Welcome to America,' and Mr. Jules Benedict, the eminent composer, having volunteered to set such a composition to music, I hereby offer two hundred dollars for such a song as may be accepted for the above purpose by the following committee:—Messrs. George Ripley, Jules Benedict, Lewis Gaylord Clarke, J. S. Redfield, and Geo. P. Putnam. The songs to be addressed to the committee box, No. 2743 Post Office, New York, and to reach here by the 1st of September."

Seven hundred and fifty-three poems were submitted to the judges, and the prize was finally awarded to Bayard Taylor, whose contribution does not do him any credit. In its report the Prize Committee stated frankly that a large proportion of the productions were "not fit to feed the pigs." The announcement that Taylor's poem had won the prize created a storm of protest, and most of the other 752 poets rushed or wrote to favorite newspaper editors, crying fraud. Putnam, one of the judges, was Bayard Taylor's publisher, and George Ripley was one of Taylor's colleagues on the staff of the *New York Tribune*. But the judges were not guilty of fraud, however appearances may have been against them. They submitted two poems, the one by Taylor, and one by Epes Sargent, to Jenny Lind, who, reluctant to sing any such song, chose Bayard Taylor's because it was shorter.[8]

Taylor's ode read:

GREETING TO AMERICA

Words by Bayard Taylor—Music by Julius Benedict

"I greet with a full heart the Land of the West,
Whose Banner of Stars o'er a world is unrolled;
Whose empire o'ershadows Atlantic's wide breast,
And opens to sunset its gateway of gold!
The land of the mountain, the land of the lake,
And rivers that roll in magnificent tide—
Where the souls of the mighty from slumber awake,
And hallow the soil for whose freedom they died!

"Thou Cradle of Empire! though wide be the foam
That severs the land of my fathers and thee,
I hear, from thy bosom, the welcome of home,
For song has a home in the hearts of the Free!
And long as thy waters shall gleam in the sun,
And long as thy heroes remember their scars,
Be the hands of thy children united as one,
And Peace shed her light on thy Banner of Stars!"

There was another stanza, but this is quite enough, which is what Julius Benedict and Jenny Lind thought, for only those two stanzas were set to music and sung. Bayard Taylor himself was not proud of his effort. Both he and Richard Henry Stoddard, his best friend, competed for the prize, because they both needed the $200. Taylor wrote to a friend that his "only inspiration was the hope of getting the two hundred dollars," and the protests of the other competitors, coupled with the knowledge that he had not written a good poem, made him regret that he had ever yielded to temptation. He was worried about the effect of the poem upon his reputation, and he told Stoddard before the protests of the other competitors that he anticipated them because two of the judges were his friends. Two months after the prize was announced he wrote to Stoddard: "Did you see the Brooklyn announcement of my lecture? ('Bayard Taylor, the successful competitor of the Jenny Lind prize.') Is that song to be the

only thing which will save my name from oblivion?" It was not necessary for him to worry: his translation of Goethe's *Faust* has outlived the "Welcome to America."

William Allen Butler, author of "Nothing to Wear," wrote a book of parodies which went into three editions, called *Barnum's Parnassus*, purporting to be confidential disclosures of the Jenny Lind Prize Committee. The following is the most interesting poem in the book:

A VOLUNTEER ODE

By the 'Acknowledged Best Song Writer'—Not a Competitor

I

"Ho! all ye bards, from best to worst,
In village, town or city;
Hand in your Songs before the 1st
To Barnum's Prize Committee!

"Ho! every charming poetess
Pick out your choicest ditty,
And send it on, post-paid—express—
To Barnum's Prize Committee!

* * * * *

IV

"$200, cash! My eyes!
In *cash*, two hundred dollars!
Why, in the good old centuries
Your Spensers and your Wallers,
And those Elizabethan gents,
In ruffs, and beards and bonnets,
Were glad to get as many *pence*
For one of their short sonnets!"

* * * * *

The protesting poetical voices pleased Barnum immensely. He had offered his $200 for a prize ode, and he received as well several hundred letters of indignation written to the newspapers, a book of parodies, in every one of which his name was mentioned several times, and a reputation for generosity to poor literary men, who were also newspaper men.

At the same time enterprising publishers, without Barnum's solicitation and much to his advantage, were publishing brochures on the life of Jenny Lind, in all of which her virtues were exaggerated and her powers over-rated. Her portraits were in every shop window. Jenny Lind songsters, Jenny Lind Musical Monthlies, and Jenny Lind Annuals were announced for sale six months before her arrival. A few days before she landed in New York the *Morning Courier and Enquirer* told its anxious readers that "she possesses a greater combination of greater excellence than all who have gone before her, and ... she adds to these a divine purity and grace peculiarly her own.... Her method is fertile, her manner fervid, her execution finished to the last possible degree, and her powers as an actress remarkable.... It seems to be admitted, in fact, that she approaches as nearly to perfection in her art as can be expected of a human being unaided by magic power." These and other advance ecstasies concerning Jenny Lind's voice, before she had sung a note, worked up newspaper readers to a high pitch of anticipatory delight. Jenny Lind was to appear, as Barnum later expressed it, "in the presence of a jury already excited to enthusiasm in her behalf."

II

Every berth was occupied in the *Atlantic*, which was known as the "Jenny Lind Boat," Americans in Europe being eager to return home as her traveling companions. Accounts of her very last moments in England, her visit to Queen Victoria to bid farewell, the enthusiasm of the Liverpool mobs, were published in the newspapers here before her arrival, and they all came, as the *Morning Courier and Enquirer* naïvely said, from "a source likely to be well informed." On August 21, 1850, she sailed from Liverpool, and the steamer *Atlantic* was due in New York on September 1.

In eleven days and two hours the "Jenny Lind Boat" made the passage from Liverpool to New York, and on each of those days there was an item of excitement in almost every New York newspaper about the divine creature who was honoring America with her presence. On Sunday, September 1, 1850, the *Atlantic* was sighted. Even the elements were in favor of Barnum; the boat arrived on a holiday from work, and almost all New York tried to welcome Jenny Lind to the city. Barnum went aboard the ship with the health officer, Dr. Doane, at noon Sunday, and with a large bouquet of flowers tucked into his white waistcoat, climbed hurriedly up the ladder to greet his prima donna. But he had been anticipated, for Mr. Collins, owner of the line of "leviathans" of which the *Atlantic* was one, had already reached the steamer with a bouquet three times larger than Barnum's.

After they had conversed for a few minutes, Jenny Lind asked Barnum when and where he had heard her sing. "I never had the pleasure of seeing you before in my life," he answered. She was astonished, and wondered how he had dared to risk so much money without a knowledge of what he was buying. "I risked it on your reputation, which in musical matters I would much rather trust than my own judgment," was Barnum's answer. He did not mention her reputation as Lady Bountiful, but he had it in mind, for it was at this point in his autobiography that he confessed that he would never have imported a woman who could only sing.

As the boat slowly rode up the harbor to its dock at the foot of Canal Street, to the accompaniment of whistles, fog-horns, waving and shouting, Jenny Lind went into raptures about the view. She said what all prima donnas and prime ministers have said since upon arriving in New York harbor. She saw an American flag and threw it a kiss, exclaiming, "There is the beautiful standard of freedom; the oppressed of all nations worship it." Signor Giovanni Battista Belletti, with characteristic Latin ardor, made some fervent remarks. "Here is the New World at last," he shouted with appropriate gestures, "the grand New World, first seen by my fellow-countryman, Columbus!" To have a countryman of Columbus in the party must have been of supreme publicity delight to Barnum.

More than 30,000 persons were standing about the dock, according to all the newspapers of the day, and as Jenny Lind looked at them and listened to their clamorous greetings, she said with the

proper intonation of surprise, “But have you no poor people, all these people are so well dressed!” West Street for a dozen blocks was thronged with people ready and anxious to make an enthusiastic holiday of her arrival.

A large bower of green plants was decorated with flags, and two triumphal arches adorned the dock, the center of each arch bearing a large device: “Welcome, Jenny Lind!” was on the first; the second, surmounted by the American eagle, read “Welcome to America!” Barnum had arranged for the building of these arches, but quietly, so that the impression given to both Jenny Lind and the multitude was that of an official municipal greeting. Just before the steamer touched the dock, some one suggested that a Swedish flag would not be out of place. None was to be found on such short notice, and the German flag was hurriedly hoisted as an effective substitute.

Cheering broke loose, and the 30,000 swayed with excitement as the *Atlantic* docked. As soon as the boat touched the pier, the crowd broke bounds, and the strong detachment of Fifth Ward police with great difficulty prevented many persons from being swept into the water. One man did fall off the dock, and Jenny Lind watched the rescue with sympathetic excitement. People were crowded on all roofs in the neighborhood, and all the windows looking out on to West Street were filled. Spars and rigging of near-by vessels were covered with the reckless, and the fenders and bulkheads of the Hoboken Ferry House and wharves were densely packed with men and women. As Jenny Lind stepped down the gangplank, which was covered with carpet for the occasion, the crowd made a mad dash to get nearer and snapped the gates of the dock; some men and women were trampled under others’ feet, and many were injured, but none killed. The *Tribune* reporter saw a man, “squeezed under the mass and hardly able to breathe, holding out his new hat at arm’s length and imploring somebody to take it and prevent it from being smashed.”

Captain West, master of the *Atlantic*, escorted Jenny Lind to Barnum’s carriage. On the dock Barnum had lined up some of his Museum employees, and as Jenny Lind approached the carriage, they threw bouquets into it, making the public and newspapers believe that here was a spontaneous tribute to a great popular favorite. Writing to her cousin in the country two days after Jenny Lind’s

arrival, Miss Julia Knapp, a young girl, said that as she came down the gangplank she wore "a pale blue silk hat, trimmed with lace, a slate-colored dress, with a broadcloth cloak, trimmed with velvet."[9]

When the party was seated in his carriage, Barnum mounted the box beside the driver, because the people knew him, and "my presence on the outside of the carriage aided those who filled the windows and sidewalks along the whole route in coming to the conclusion that Jenny Lind had arrived." It may be, too, that he wanted to give those who had no opportunity to see his songstress something for their trouble; there were nudgings and shouts of "That's Barnum; there's Barnum." The crowd pressed on after the carriage, and it was with difficulty that it reached the Irving House, where Barnum had engaged rooms. Jenny Lind appeared several times at the window of the carriage and bowed to the people who were throwing flowers into it.

It was a quarter to three o'clock before the party finally arrived at the Irving House, where more than 5,000 persons had taken up places in an effort to catch a glimpse of Jenny Lind. The police cleared a passage, and she was able to proceed to her room, but the crowd would not go away and would not be quiet until loud cries for The Swedish Nightingale were finally answered by her appearance on a balcony; she waved her handkerchief to the mass of people, who howled their gratitude.

Barnum dined with Jenny Lind that afternoon, and she courteously asked to drink his health. "Miss Lind," Barnum responded, "I do not think you can ask any other favor on earth which I would not gladly grant; but I am a teetotaler, and must beg to be permitted to drink your health and happiness in a glass of cold water." She was much astonished that there should be a man who did not drink European light wines, but she understood and respected his views.

The crowds continued outside the Irving House all day, and every time a shadow passed before Jenny Lind's window, or what the crowd chose as her window, enthusiastic cheers greeted it. At half-past twelve that night, the New York Musical Fund Society, which had been preparing for this occasion for three weeks, began an instrumental serenade. The musicians were escorted by three hundred firemen in red shirts, bearing lighted torches. More than 20,000 people watched, listened and cheered. Broadway was

completely blocked, and the three hundred spluttering torches revealed figures on the roofs, in the neighboring windows, and hanging to lamp posts and awning frames. Barnum led Jenny Lind to one of the hotel balconies, after the loud demands for her presence threatened to drown the music of the serenade. He asked the musicians to play "Yankee Doodle" and "Hail Columbia," and Jenny Lind with admirable tact encored both those songs. The crowd cheered madly, and she repeatedly waved her handkerchief. At quarter past one the music was finished, and she tried to go to bed, but the crowd was not yet ready for bed. George Loder, head of the Musical Fund Society, made a speech of welcome, which, by common agreement, was much too long. One of the newspaper correspondents intimated that the serenade and the speech were offered in the hope that Jenny Lind would return the compliment by giving a benefit performance for the New York Musical Fund Society.

The New York correspondent of the *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch* reported the following conversation which he gathered in the crowd:

> "Sa-ay, Joe, don't you think Barnum'll make a lose? Thousand dollars a night's a big pile, and singin' isn't dancin'; Fanny Elssler was the gal for *my* money."
>
> "Oh, shut up! What the hell do *we* know about singin'?"
>
> "I'll go in for her too; but I thought she was one of Barnum's hums, for I heered he said he didn't care if she hadn't no more voice than a crow, he knowed we'd all swear she sung like an angel, if it cost us ten dollars to say we'd heered her. You know the time he showed the horse with his tail where his head ought to be? Well, all of them that paid their two shillings was satisfied. Wasn't he stood in his stall with his tail in the manger—and didn't they tell all the rest to go in and win, for it was a fus' rate curiosity, jes so and no mistake?"
>
> "Well, there ain't no use of your talkin', Pete; Barnum knows what he's about. Why, s'pose he *did* lose fifty thousand by her, he'd more an' make it up in the Museum. The glory of the thing's what *he* looks at."

But it did not look as if Barnum would lose his fifty thousand dollars. The excitement kept up unabated for weeks. The small girl, Julia Knapp, writing to her cousin Susan in Greenwich, Connecticut,

said, “They call her the New Messiah we will send you a paper all about her, I suppose you have heard of Dr. Webster he was hung on Friday last.”

Not only the common people besieged Jenny Lind. The Mayor called upon her at her rooms, and she was visited all day and part of the night by people who used various claims to distinction as cards of admission to her private suite. Milliners, tailors and furniture dealers sent her articles which they had manufactured and named for her; they were grateful for her autograph in return. Water carafes with her face and name were sold. Songs and poems were dedicated to her, dances were named after her, and she conquered the kingdom of man when a cigar was called the Jenny Lind. Crowds gathered outside the hotel to watch her enter or leave. Society called in large contingents, and Barnum was fearful that the *haut ton* of Bleecker Street would monopolize his prize and thus make her repugnant to the masses, for he realized that he was not in England with General Tom Thumb. But her reputation for kindness and simplicity won the admiration of the people, and shopkeepers continued to send gloves, hats, shawls, chairs and gowns. On the day after her arrival in New York all the morning newspapers devoted their first pages to the prima donna. The *New York Tribune* printed four columns on the first page concerning her reception, and a poem with fifty-two footnotes explaining its Scandinavian allegorical allusions. The other newspapers gave her the same amount of space, and the interest in her was maintained at the same high pitch during her entire stay in New York.

III

On the day after her arrival, Barnum and Jenny Lind visited together with Benedict and Belletti all the public halls in New York to choose a place for her first concerts. The sky was cloudy and rain was falling, but eager spectators were out in large numbers and followed the party from amusement hall to amusement hall, so that a contemporary was able to describe the tour of inspection as a royal procession. Many of the enthusiasts were disappointed, for Jenny Lind wore a veil. In anticipation of her visit A. B. Tripler, a twenty-five-year-old

speculator, built a hall which he intended to name for Jenny Lind, and which was to be used for her concerts in New York, but it was not finished in time. Therefore, Barnum, with the approval of Jenny Lind and Julius Benedict, chose Castle Garden, the largest place of amusement in the city, for her first concerts. Barnum now realized that his audiences would be larger than even he had hoped, and he accordingly hired the largest available hall and made arrangements for its alteration in order to provide more seating capacity and increased standing-room.

Barnum wrote in his autobiography: "On the Tuesday after her arrival I informed Miss Lind that I wished to make a slight alteration in our agreement. 'What is it?' she asked in surprise. 'I am convinced,' I replied, 'that our enterprise will be much more successful than either of us anticipated. I wish, therefore, to stipulate that you shall always receive $1,000 for each concert, besides all the expenses, as heretofore agreed on, and that after taking $5,500 per night for expenses and my services, the balance shall be equally divided between us.' Jenny looked at me with astonishment. She could not comprehend my proposition. After I had repeated it, and she fully understood its import, she grasped me cordially by the hand, and exclaimed, 'Mr. Barnum, you are a gentleman of honor. You are generous. It is just as Mr. Bates told me. I will sing for you as long as you please. I will sing for you in America—in Europe—anywhere!'" Here we have a picture of such exceptional magnanimity on the one side, and on the other such joyous gratitude—it is a pity that it is untrue.

Concerning this change in the contract, Barnum was frank enough to add this warning in his autobiographical account of the incident: "Let it not be supposed that the increase in her compensation was wholly an act of generosity on my part. I had become convinced that there was money enough in the enterprise for all of us, and I also felt that although she should have been satisfied by my complying with the terms of the agreement, yet envious persons would doubtless endeavor to create discontent in her mind, and it would be a stroke of policy to prevent the possibility of such an occurrence." This attitude is one which Barnum afterwards dubbed "profitable philanthropy" in

speaking of his own charitable endeavors, and we could admire his foresight and his compassion, if other men's books did not make him out to be inaccurate, to say the least.

Maunsell B. Field, whose *Memories of Many Men and Some Women* has already been quoted in another connection, played an important part in the negotiations between Barnum and Jenny Lind. He was a member of the law firm of Jay and Field, and Jenny Lind when she first came to New York presented a letter of introduction to John Jay, Field's partner. Jay was in Europe, and when Jenny Lind learned this, she asked Field to visit her at the Irving House, as she had urgent business for him. "Upon my arrival," wrote Field, "I mentioned whom I desired to see, and was at once accosted by a stranger, who introduced himself to me as Mr. Barnum. He offered to accompany me to Miss Lind's drawing-room, and I followed him upstairs. On the way, he turned to me and said, 'I am going to introduce you to an angel, sir—to an angel!'" While they were waiting for Jenny Lind to appear, Barnum poured "ceaseless praises of her" into Field's ear. When she finally did appear, Field noted that she looked "wonderfully substantial for an angel."

According to Field, Jenny Lind had left for America without any formal contract with Barnum, but merely on the strength of a memorandum executed by his agent. She wanted Field's advice in drawing up a formal contract, and Barnum, Jenny Lind, and Field sat down together and discussed terms. Field executed the contract, and it was signed the next day by Barnum and Jenny Lind. He did not state the terms of the contract, but he wrote: "After a time Miss Lind became dissatisfied with her contract, and I was sent for to revise it. Mr. Barnum made the required concessions.... Again and again Miss Lind desired changes made in the contract to her own advantage, and every time Mr. Barnum yielded. Whatever his motive, he was most obliging and complaisant, and although I have never since met him, I have always esteemed him for the good-nature and liberality which he exhibited at this time in his business relations with Miss Lind. I believe that she received every farthing that belonged to her, and that he treated her with the most scrupulous honor."

This would seem to indicate on reputable authority that the initiative for changes in the contract came invariably from Jenny Lind, and that while Barnum was not voluntarily magnanimous,

Jenny Lind was persistently dissatisfied. Many years later at a dinner party in England Jenny Lind discussed her Barnum contract with W. P. Frith, the artist, who recorded the conversation in *My Autobiography and Reminiscences*. She told Frith that she went to America bound by a legal engagement with Barnum. "Whether from being badly advised, or from the undervaluing of powers common to genius, Mademoiselle Lind found on her arrival in America, that she had made a terrible mistake in the terms of the engagement." Immediately after her arrival she took up the terms of the agreement with Barnum, she told Frith, and it was in this reconsideration of terms that Field undoubtedly participated. Before asking for a new contract, Jenny Lind told Barnum that she was prepared to fulfil her duties, if he should demand the letter of the original agreement, and according to her own story, he listened carefully and when she had finished, said: "This, madam, is the document you signed in England, is it not?" "Undoubtedly," said Miss Lind, "and I am ready to abide by it, if I have been unable to convince—" "Be so good as to destroy it. Tear it up, madam; and if you will instruct your lawyer to prepare another from your own dictation, naming whatever you think fair for your services, I will sign it without hesitation."

This account gives Barnum credit for sufficient magnanimity, and it is therefore a reflection on the degree of his human vanity that he saw fit to color the truth when it was so bright in its natural complexion. Field and Jenny Lind herself make Barnum out as complaisant and yielding beyond the degree of most men of business, but Barnum is not satisfied with that glory; he must also take the initiative in magnanimity and make us believe that it was he who voluntarily offered changes in the contract. Besides, he must have known, what his lawyers could have told him, that the most he could ever accomplish in a court of equity by refusing Jenny Lind's demands was an injunction restraining her from singing under other management in this country. It would not have been to Barnum's advantage, if Jenny Lind had returned home dissatisfied; and rather than sacrifice the opportunities his publicity had created, it was wisdom on his part to accede to any demands. On the other hand, Jenny Lind apparently gave W. P. Frith the impression that she had bartered her gift for a pittance, when as a matter of fact the terms of the original agreement gave her $1,000 for each concert and her expenses, which was not

such a "terrible mistake." The inevitable conclusion is that neither Barnum nor Jenny Lind was acting out of the bigness of his heart or the simplicity of hers, but rather on the larger body of business principles. Under her new contract Jenny Lind received one-half of the net profits, with a guarantee of $1,000 for each concert, and a stipulation that after one hundred concerts the contract could be terminated by either party to it.

After Castle Garden had been selected, and while preparations were being made for the first concerts, Barnum took Jenny Lind to visit all the leading newspaper offices, where she watched with appropriate interest the papers being run off the presses. Mayor Caleb S. Woodhull conferred upon her the freedom of the city, which she could hardly enjoy because of the dense crowds that followed her everywhere. The president of the Art Union invited her to the opening of the season's exhibition; after a private view of the pictures, "a magnificent collation was served," according to a contemporary, and she was enrolled as a member of the Art Union "in the midst of a perfect shower of compliments." Mr. Daniel T. Curtis, of Boston, sent her what the *Tribune* described as "some of the most splendid nectarines ever grown in this country—they were a marvel to all who beheld them."

Barnum and Jenny Lind inspected the institution for the blind, a riding academy, houses of correction, Greenwood Cemetery and the city prison. Every day each newspaper printed a special column headed "Movements of The Swedish Nightingale," wherein it was told what she visited and who visited her. Many clergymen and people of the best reputation in the community were her daily visitors. Dr. Anson Jones, the last president of Texas, called and was delighted with The Swedish Nightingale. The Rev. Dr. Cummings with the little girls of his school visited her, and the little girls presented her with "a six dollar bouquet," according to the exact *Herald*.

The first rehearsal was held at Castle Garden a few days after Jenny Lind's arrival. Barnum had invited all the music critics, who brought with them all their friends, so that the audience was large enough to frighten Jenny Lind, who insisted upon comparative privacy, and at all subsequent rehearsals Barnum's generosity was limited to the critics and a few invalids who could not bear the crush of the regular performances. While Jenny Lind was singing the *Casta Diva* from

Norma at this first rehearsal, the Battery guns attached to Castle Garden boomed loudly, startling the singer and surprising the audience. It was explained that California had just been admitted to the Union, and Jenny Lind smiled her interest in the popular enthusiasm over the gold state. During the first rehearsal the Battery was crowded with people, anxious to catch the few notes of this marvelous voice that might escape from the bulky Castle Garden. After the rehearsal, Jenny Lind attempted to get to her carriage through the crowd, and she took the arm of Maunsell B. Field, who attended the rehearsal and reported the scene in his book. The crowd pressed close, and the police forced a passage for the singer. Some of the crowd broke the cordon of policemen and tried to thrust petitions for charity into Jenny Lind's hands, while others made desperate efforts to gaze into her face, that they might tell their grandchildren they had seen Jenny Lind plain. The people took Maunsell B. Field for Barnum and addressed him familiarly by that name, as he and Jenny Lind proceeded with difficulty to her carriage. At later rehearsals various excuses were used by eager admirers to gain admission, and some men brought violins and other portable musical instruments in order to make the doorkeeper believe that they were members of the orchestra.

Barnum had decided to sell the tickets for the first concert at auction. In his youth, while touring with his traveling circus, he had witnessed an auction of tickets for Fanny Elssler's dancing performance in New Orleans, and at the time he was much impressed with the publicity value of the scheme and with the profits it yielded. Accordingly, on Saturday, September 7, the auction was held at Castle Garden. Barnum entered the hall, late and excited, and was cheered heartily by the crowd of 4,000. He ascended into the pulpit beside the auctioneer and addressed the people. He said that he was surprised and mortified to discover that those who were present had been compelled to pay a shilling [a coin of the period worth 12½ cents] for admission to the sale. He had understood that the Garden would be open to the public free of charge for the auction sale; there was protracted applause. He announced when the tickets sold at the auction would be delivered, and a sarcastic voice from the crowd shouted the inquiry, "Another shilling admission?" The auctioneer replied heatedly, "Certainly not!" But Barnum, the champion of the

people against the interests, turned towards the auctioneer and said with vehemence, “I don’t know about that! How can you tell? Let the tickets be delivered at the outer gate! (Applause with a round of groans for the exactors of the shilling admission.)”



JENNY LIND
Engraving from a daguerreotype
Houdini Collection



INTERIOR OF CASTLE GARDEN
Illustrating the first appearance of Jenny Lind in America
By permission of the New York Aquarium

The bidding for the first ticket was lively, and the four thousand persons who had come out on a rainy day to pay their money and take their choice, grew excited. Prices rose rapidly, and the first ticket was finally sold for $225 to Genin, the hatter, whose establishment adjoined Barnum's American Museum. This was the best stroke of business Genin ever did. Newspapers in Houston, Texas, Portland, Maine, and intervening cities and villages, announced to their interested readers that Genin, the Broadway hatter, had purchased the first ticket for the first Jenny Lind concert at the enormous price of $225. More than two million readers knew the next morning that Genin was a hatter. An Iowa editor printed the story of one of his neighbors who discovered that he owned a hat with Genin's label. He pointed it out to the loungers at the village post office, and he was urged to give his neighbors an opportunity for distinction by putting the hat up at auction. It was finally sold to an excited townsman for fourteen dollars. In New York men hurried to Genin's shop to purchase hats, and, if possible, to catch a glimpse of the man who had paid $225 for the first ticket.

Barnum advised Genin to purchase this first ticket at any price for its publicity value. Some newspapers said that Genin was Barnum's brother-in-law, and that the purchase was framed up before the auction; but Genin was not Barnum's brother-in-law. He was merely a business neighbor and a personal friend. Genin profited by Barnum's instructions in publicity, for a few years later, when Louis Kossuth visited this country, he took down from his shelves some of his old style hats, named them after the Hungarian revolutionist, and sold them at high prices. Genin was also the author of a *History of the Hat from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time*. Other hatters were envious of Genin's Barnumized notoriety, and Knox, the hatter of 128 Fulton Street, advertised in the *New York Tribune* two days after Genin's purchase: "There is no truth in the assertion that Knox, the hatter, paid $225 for the choice of a seat at Jenny Lind's first concert. Knox can't afford it; and it must have been done by some Broadway Hatter, who sells a poor article at a high price, as Knox is contented with very small profits. His Fall style of Hats is the admiration of everybody." Espenscheid, of 107 Nassau Street, advertised: "THAT TICKET—The sensible portion of the community begin to see the folly of contributing to the support of the Broadway $4 hatters in luxury and idleness, and paying for their expensive show-shops, and $225 Concert Tickets, when they have only to turn the corner of the Museum and walk a few steps to Espenscheid's, 107 Nassau Street, where a better, lighter, more graceful and durable Hat is sold for $3.50."

The auction sale was more successful than even Barnum had expected. Tickets near the stage, where it is not desirable to sit at a concert, brought higher prices at the auction than those in the center of the building, because almost as many persons went to Castle Garden to see Jenny Lind as those who came to hear her sing. The average price paid for the tickets to the first concert was $6.38 for each ticket. In two sessions the auctioneer sold out all the seats in Castle Garden and collected $17,864.05 for Barnum. Upon this occasion a system which has since become a regular part of the theatrical business was inaugurated: the first theater ticket speculators New York knew started shop. Hall & Son, Jolie's, both

music publishers, the Irving House and other New York hotels bought up large numbers of seats at the public auction and sold them at a large increase.

IV

Castle Garden, which since its construction in 1807 had been a fort, a cabaret, a music hall and an opera house, and which is now the Aquarium, was capable of accommodating almost 10,000 people, standing and sitting. Barnum had divided the hall into three sections, each of which was marked by lamps of different colors, red, yellow, and blue. The tickets corresponded in color with the lamps, and the one hundred ushers wore rosettes of those colors and carried wands of those colors, so that the audience gained their seats without the devastating crushes which occurred at the Jenny Lind performances in England.

The newspapers of Wednesday morning, September 11, 1850, reflect the feverish excitement that was in the air. The *Tribune* had imported from Boston a special critic to report the concerts, and that paper informed its readers on the morning of the first concert: "To-night will be a new Avatar in our musical history—the first appearance of another divinity in the world of Song." The *Courier and Enquirer* warned those who intended to be present not to applaud until they were quite sure Jenny Lind had finished, "as Jenny Lind is said to diminish a final note until her audience are quite sure it has ceased, and then swell it out again upon their astonished and delighted ears." The *Herald* wrote: "Jenny Lind is the most popular woman in the world at this moment,—perhaps the most popular that ever was in it." In the excitement of the moment the *Herald* apparently forgot the Virgin Mary.

This advance adulation placed Jenny Lind at a disadvantage, for it made it necessary for her to live up to a tremendous expectation, if she was to please the discriminating. The *Courier and Enquirer* sensed this difficulty, and begged its readers on the morning of the first concert not to be disappointed "if Jenny Lind's singing be at all like any they ever heard from mortal lips," for, the editor insisted gravely, "Jenny Lind is merely a mortal woman, of very substantial

flesh and blood, who, gifted by nature with genius and a voice, has made herself a great singer by hard labor; just such labor, such daily practice as provokes them to wish that their neighbor, Miss A., who is an amateur vocalist, lived a square or two further down the street, when she takes her music lessons." Barnum, too, was afraid that the great expectations which he had so largely created by his advance publicity, would act as a boomerang and cause the public to accept the reality with disappointment.

Evening came at last. The doors were opened at five o'clock, although the concert was scheduled to begin at eight, and more than seven thousand persons were seated, "with as much order and quiet as was ever witnessed in the assembling of a congregation at church," according to Barnum's description. A double row of policemen kept order and regulated the stream of carriages. The wooden bridge which approached the entrance to Castle Garden was brilliantly lighted the length of its two hundred feet, giving the effect of a triumphal avenue. More than two hundred boats were anchored as near as possible to the Garden, and more than a thousand people caught escaping strains of music from this vantage point; and when they could not hear, they shouted and yelled indignant interruptions, thus preventing those in the rear parts of the hall from hearing.

Inside, the hall was a mass of gas light. A wooden arch bordered the stage, and from it were hanging the flags of the United States and Sweden, with arabesque ornaments in white and gold beneath them. A large bank of flowers, spelling out the words, "Welcome Sweet Warbler," was suspended over the pillars of the balcony directly in front of the stage. Julius Benedict and his sixty musicians entered promptly at eight o'clock and were received with applause. They began the overture from Weber's *Oberon*, but the audience paid little attention. They were waiting for Jenny Lind, and they tolerated the preliminaries only because preliminaries increased the suspense and nervous excitement, but they were too restless to listen to them. Signor Belletti sang the *Sorgete* from Rossini's *Mahomet II*, and the audience applauded after he was finished with something of relief as well as appreciation.

There was a breathless moment of silent anticipation. The doors at the back of the stage opened. Jenny Lind, in a white, virginal dress, came gracefully down between the music stands, escorted by Julius

Benedict, while Barnum watched nervously in the wings.

That placid face, with its thick nose and heavy Scandinavian features and its oval simplicity, stared out with frightened, earnest, blue eyes at this immense gathering, which rose to its feet in tumult, cheered as if for the foundation of a republic or the downfall of a monarchy, and hurled things handy into the air. She curtsied deeply in profound appreciation. But it was impossible to stop the riot of enthusiasm. The screaming, the shouting, the waving and the wild cheering oppressed her, as she stood in her white dress, gazing bewilderedly at the multitude of her admirers. The experience was disconcerting and alarming, as if she were suddenly, without any reason to expect it, thrown into the general assembly hall of an insane asylum. She may have been thinking of this orgy, when she said later in her broken English that Americans "are all firemens," which the *Herald* took to mean that "we are all on fire with musical enthusiasm." But, possibly, Jenny Lind did not mean anything so complimentary.

The wild scene, accustomed as she was to enthusiasm, frightened her into an approach to panic, and the hysteria of the audience communicated itself in some degree to the star, who trembled and wavered in the first notes of Bellini's *Casta Diva*, until those who listened anxiously feared that she would break down completely. But she soon regained confidence and the control of her nerves, and she finished her song in loud and clear tones that indicated complete self-possession. The last notes of the air were drowned in the appreciation of the audience, and at the moment of her conclusion a shower of bouquets hit the stage in front of her, while handkerchiefs waved, and the men cheered hoarsely.

Benedict and Richard Hoffman played a duet by Thalberg on two pianos, but no one listened; each had to tell his neighbor how superb was Jenny Lind. She appeared with Belletti and sang the duet from Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*, "How Shall I Please the Lady Fair?" At this point an attempt was made by those in the boats outside to besiege the hall and gain entrance, which was frustrated with difficulty and much noise by the police. Benedict and the orchestra played the overture to Benedict's own opera, *The Crusaders*, and the audience paid their respect to the composer by listening to it, but every one sat up in his seat again when Jenny Lind sang the song with

accompaniment of two flutes from Meyerbeer's *Camp of Silesia*. She followed this with a Swedish melody, *Herdsman's Song*, accompanying herself on the piano. This song caused tremendous enthusiasm at the first concert, and wherever Jenny Lind sang it, for it involved a perfect imitation of an echo, as the herdsman called to his flock. It was popularly dubbed "The Echo Song" and was demanded everywhere as an encore. The last number on the program was Bayard Taylor's "Greeting to America," which Benedict had set to music in less than a week. It was received with thundering applause, and even the critics did not dare to admit that it was the worst piece of music and poetry on the program.

At the close of the concert there were loud cries of "Barnum! Barnum!" This was as it should have been, for in America he was the author of the Jenny Lind comedy. Barnum "reluctantly" appeared. He said to the audience: "My friends, you have often heard it asked, 'Where's Barnum?' Henceforth you may say, 'Barnum's nowhere!'" Then he said that he felt "compelled to disregard the fact that Mademoiselle Lind had herself begged him not to mention on this evening one of her own noble and spontaneous deeds of beneficence." She would devote her share of the proceeds of the first concert, $10,000, to charity, to be distributed as follows: The Fire Department Fund, $3,000; Musical Fund Society, $2,000; Home for the Friendless, $500; Lying-in Asylum for Destitute Females, $500; Home for Indigent Females, $500; Protestant Half Orphan Asylum, Roman Catholic Half Orphan Asylum, and New York Orphan Asylum, $500 each; the Dramatic Fund Association, $500; the Old Ladies' Asylum, $500; and the Home for Colored and Aged Persons and the Colored Orphan Asylum, each $500. The charities were chosen by Barnum, Mayor Woodhull, and Jenny Lind, and Barnum took care that no discrimination was made because of race, creed, or previous condition of servitude.

It is interesting in this connection to know that Jenny Lind abhorred negroes. She exclaimed to Maunsell B. Field in disgust, "They are *so* ugly!" Apparently, she forgot for the moment that they are God's creatures. Although she had æsthetic feelings about their appearance, these did not interfere with her charitable instinct, for she sent Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe $100 as a contribution to the fund for buying slaves into freedom. She also wrote Mrs. Stowe to

thank her for a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and said in her letter: "I have the feeling about 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' that ... the writer of that book can fall asleep to-day or to-morrow with the bright, sweet conscience of having been a strong means in the Creator's hand of operating essential good in one of the most important questions for the welfare of our black brethren."

After the announcement of the charities, three cheers were given for Jenny Lind, and three cheers were given for Barnum. The Musical Fund Society gave her another serenade in gratitude for her donation of $2,000, and then she was allowed to retire to the New York Hotel, where she had removed to avoid the crowds that thronged the district of the Irving House. It was said that Barnum collected $1,000 from the proprietor of the hotel where Jenny Lind stayed for the privilege of her patronage, and wherever she went in the United States, it was said, hotel proprietors paid Barnum for the advertising value of her presence. If this was true, it reduced considerably Jenny Lind's living expenses, which under the contract were to be paid by Barnum. The newspapers of the period printed this as an accusation against Barnum, and as a fact; there is no confirmation of it, nor is there any possibility of a positive denial. Barnum does not mention it in his autobiography, but the scheme is one that would have appealed to his business ingenuity.

The newspapers of the day after the first concert were beside themselves, and the undiscriminating praise increased with the number of concerts. The *Herald* in an effulgence of mixed metaphors wrote of Jenny Lind's song, "which she spins out from her throat like the attenuated fiber from the silkworm, dying away so sweetly and so gradually, till it seems melting into the song of the seraphim and is lost in eternity." After the first rehearsal, *The Spirit of the Times* critic wrote: "As a bird just alighted upon a spray begins to sing, he knows not why, and pours forth the increasing volume of his voice from an instinct implanted within him by that Power which made him vocal,—as flowers unfold their petals to the air, as zephyrs breathe, as rivulets leave their founts, as thoughts flow, as affections rise, as feelings develop,—so this wondrous creature sang. It was not Art. It was a manifestation of Nature." *The Spirit of the Times* was not a comic paper. The *Herald* remarked casually that Jenny Lind's appearance in the old world was "as significant an event as the appearance of Dante,

Tasso, Raphael, Shakespeare, Goethe, Thorwaldsen, or Michael Angelo." "As a cantatrice," continued the *Herald* writer, "she is as much superior to all her northern predecessors as Napoleon was to his contemporaries, or as Eli Whitney, the inventor of the cotton gin, was to the first 'gemman ob color' who used it. She has changed all men's ideas of music as much so as Bacon's inductive system revolutionized philosophy." The *Herald* sincerely believed that the advent of Jenny Lind was an indication that "the wand of civilization has fallen from the hands of the southern nations and passed to the hardy northern races.... All feel her power, all go mad who see her, and they cannot explain the secret of her influence." Had the *Herald* stopped in its abandon to analyze the depths of its own sentimentality, it might have had the secret of that influence. In his lofty peroration this inspired editorial writer sings that Jenny Lind has left "the effete monarchies of Europe" to sing as she confessed she never could sing in her former languishing environment to the great and free American democracy, where things never stand still. In all these criticisms there was little comment on her voice, as such. Those who did venture to criticize it found in it a certain coolness, which her champions called its purity, and a lack of ardor, which her worshipers commended as the absence of the common Latin display of disgraceful passion. But those who attempted to qualify their praise were overwhelmed by the recriminations against their judgment of those who were confirmed fanatics.

At her other concerts in New York the programs did not differ much in quality from the first, but in the later concerts Jenny Lind sang sacred music, and in these oratorios she was very popular. In his *Reminiscences*, written many years after the event, Lyman Abbott wrote: "It was impossible to doubt the Resurrection while she was singing 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' She seemed a celestial witness; to doubt her testimony was to doubt her veracity." And Jenny Lind surely would not have lied about such a thing as the Resurrection. Dr. Abbott knew a chorus girl in the oratorio choir, and when Jenny Lind sang "The Messiah" he escorted his friend to the concert. Probably Lyman Abbott as a young man enjoyed a much higher spiritual reaction than most of his contemporaries, for it is hard to believe that Jenny Lind impressed the general population as a celestial witness of the Resurrection under the exclusive management

of P. T. Barnum. Another critic, however, said that her rendition of "I know that my Redeemer liveth" was "an appeal to shake the heart of a Jew."

Other members of the Jenny Lind audiences were impressed differently. Walt Whitman wrote in the *New York Evening Post* of August 14, 1851, in one of his *Letters from Paumanok*: "The Swedish Swan, with all her blandishments, never touched my heart in the least. I wondered at so much vocal dexterity; and indeed they were all very pretty, those leaps and double somersets. But even in the grandest religious airs, genuine masterpieces as they are, of the German composers, executed by this strangely overpraised woman in perfect scientific style, let critics say what they like, it was a failure; for there was a vacuum in the head of the performance. Beauty pervaded it no doubt, and that of a high order. It was the beauty of Adam before God breathed into his nostrils." And in speaking of Jenny Lind later in his *Good-Bye My Fancy*, Whitman said: "... the canary, and several other sweet birds are wondrous fine—but there is something in song that goes deeper—isn't there?"

Washington Irving, who was an old man when Jenny Lind came to New York in 1850, overcame his reluctance to combat with the crowds and finally heard her sing; he wrote to Miss Mary M. Hamilton: "I have seen and heard her but once, but have at once enrolled myself among her admirers. I cannot say, however, how much of my admiration goes to her singing, how much to herself. As a singer, she appears to me of the very first order; as a specimen of womankind, a little more. She is enough of herself to counterbalance all the evil that the world is threatened with by the great convention of women. So God save Jenny Lind!"

There seems to be no doubt from the records of the period that Jenny Lind's voice was a brilliant and powerful soprano, dramatic, flexible and rich, and she was praised very highly for her ability to control the shake and the skilful management of her breath. She always insisted also that a singer should "look pleasant" while singing and never allow herself contortions of any kind. She had a perfect horror of careless enunciation.

After the first concerts had confirmed the greatest hopes and most fervent expectations, the personal, popular enthusiasm increased, if possible. The rumor went about that one of Jenny Lind's gloves had

been found by a citizen of New York, and the finder exhibited the glove to large crowds, charging one shilling to kiss its outside and two shillings to kiss the inside. A crowd gathered outside her hotel one evening saw two ladies appear on a balcony. The crowd looked eagerly; it could not be sure, but some of the members believed that one of the ladies was Jenny Lind. Just then the lady dropped a peach pit from the balcony, and a mad scramble followed for the possible peach pit that had lodged for a moment in the divine mouth of Jenny Lind. The only Whig candidate for Assembly in one of the districts of Rensselaer County, New York, was Jenny Lind. She had previously received a vote for Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, and she received several votes in New York City for mayor.

These and other absurdities were ridiculed and held against the population of New York in newspapers of other cities, and especially by the London press. The London *Athenæum*, commenting upon the reports of Jenny Lind's reception in New York, wrote: "'Jenny's in New York,' 'Jenny's in America,' shout the papers—they can scarcely credit their own good fortune. They go about asking one another if it can be true.... The gentle little lady has come amongst them to sing a few of her pastoral airs 'for a consideration,'—and they greet her with a perfect Niagara of welcome. We never remember child's play performed before by such a company. The whole thing looks like a vast 'make-believe.' America seems to have no serious business in life; and the whole people—bishops, magistrates and all—are engaged in a huge game of 'High Jinks.'" But this criticism resembled the sober reflections of a reformed drunkard, as he sees a fellow man rolling in the gutter. The London *Athenæum* forgot its own account by a Frankfort, Germany, correspondent published several years before: "Dine where you would during the Frankfort Fair, you heard of 'Free Trade'—and Jenny Lind; of Railroads—and next of Jenny Lind; of the Spanish Match [the marriage of the Spanish princess]—and, still, Jenny Lind; of the Pope and the people—and, always, Jenny Lind! When she was coming—what she would sing—how much be paid—who get the places—and the like." The London papers forgot in their ridicule of American adulation the scenes in Liverpool just before her departure, and that when she first arrived in England she bore a letter of introduction from the King of Prussia to Queen Victoria, in which His Majesty asked Her Majesty "to show every possible kindness to

one of the most modest, exemplary and talented singers which any time has yet produced." And they also forgot that when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited the opera when Jenny Lind sang, the glasses were leveled at the stage, and the royal box was almost like any other box; yet when Charles Macready performed in *King Lear*, one of his most famous rôles, while Jenny Lind was present, the stage was ignored in favor of her box. In the English provinces crowds had gathered outside Jenny Lind's hotels, singing,

"Jenny Lind O! Jenny Lind O!
Come to the window!"

And Jenny seldom would respond. *Gants* and *mouchoirs à la* Jenny Lind were started in London and imitated in New York. Carlyle was able to write with justice to his brother: "All people are rushing after a little Swedish woman, an Opera Singer, called Jenny Lind: 40 pounds is the price of a box (four sittings) for one night, in some cases! I saw Jenny, one day, dined with her, and had to speak French to her all dinner,—a nice little innocent, clear, *thin* 'bit lassie'; somewhat like a douce minister's daughter; sense enough, too; but my notion was that I could easily raise fifty women with much *more* sense (one in Dumfries with twice as much perhaps); and that, as to singing, with such a *shrew* of a voice,—I would *not* give 10 pounds or hardly 10 pence, to hear Jenny!"

It is a curious phase of the Jenny Lind mania that in cities which had not yet heard her sing, the enthusiasm of other cities was always ridiculed. Boston laughed at New York, and Philadelphia scorned both, until it was forced to hold its tongue and listen to its own raptures. And as soon as she had left a city, and the trance had worn off slightly, people shook their heads over the antics of their neighbors: London ridiculed New York, and New York laughed at Boston.

But while Jenny Lind remained in a city the enthusiasm was unbounded, and not the least enthusiastic were those who came to seek her charity. Swedes came from all over the country to remind her in her benevolence that after all they were Swedes. Maunsell B. Field was asked by Jenny Lind, according to his book, to select appropriate

charities. He presented a list of institutions for her approval, and she approved them without looking at his list. Then Field started on his mission of mercy, and he was to regret that he had ever undertaken the job. "Scarcely anybody," he wrote, "—there were a few praiseworthy exceptions—was satisfied. At almost every establishment at which I called, they tried to persuade me that a larger allotment should have been made to their particular institution, and that its needs and deservings were so much greater than those of such a sister one." Jenny Lind herself was literally hounded by charity seekers as soon as it became generally known that she practised charity. Every day people visited her and gained admission on various pretexts, only to beg when they came within her hearing. Some ladies who called for a gift, when they received one, turned up their noses and asked, "Is that all?" Upon another occasion an indignant petitioner declared that he had not come for alms but for a donation, when the sum he received did not exceed his expectations.

She received begging letters daily, and Barnum also received his share. He said that he received an average of twenty begging letters every day during her tour of the country. One woman in Pittsburg informed Barnum that she had just given birth to twins, a boy and a girl, and that she had named them P. T. Barnum and Jenny Lind respectively, adding that in gratitude it was his duty to send her $5,000 for the immediate wants of the pair, and also that she thought Barnum should make provision for their future education and support. One man wrote: "god Nose I am Poore," and another, who said he was too decrepit to earn a living, took advantage of Barnum's love of religion, when he wrote: "I tak grait pleshur in Readin my bibel, speshily the Proffits."

Acknowledgments of Jenny Lind's donations appeared every day in the newspapers, which was excellent publicity, but it was also appropriate, for her charities were large enough to be exceptional news. There was something in Jenny Lind's character that made charity necessary, and that was probably, as her letters intimate, a sense of possessing a gift from God, which she considered that she held in trust, and which it was therefore her duty to dispense; for all life was a terrible obligation to Jenny Lind. If she made a pecuniary fortune by means of a God-given art, it was part of the divine justice that ruled her world for her to give much of that fortune to God's

creatures, individually, and through the agencies of homes for indigent females, firemen's funds and university scholarships. But this obligation carried with it as many worries and annoyances as it did delights and satisfactions. It even extended its annoyances to other persons, who in some cases were not even remotely associated with her. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote in his Journal for September 11, 1850: "In the twilight, a visit from a vendor of essences, who offered a great bargain; namely, that he would give me a dollar's worth of his essences, and I should write for him a poetical epistle to Jenny Lind asking charity in his behalf. Stupid dolt! it took me some time to make him comprehend the indecency of his behavior. Truly an ignoble Yankee is a very ignoble being."

Barnum was accused continually in the newspapers of contributing nothing to charity, while his Angel gave away her money in profusion. A conundrum went the rounds of the newspapers throughout the country which read: "Why is it that Jenny Lind and Barnum will never fall out?" Answer: "Because he is always for-getting, and she is always forgiving." It was said that Barnum himself invented this disparagement, and it would not be unlikely, for he never cared what the public thought of him so long as they talked about him. Without doubt it was Barnum's wise policy to elevate Jenny Lind to the skies even at the expense of himself. He may have realized that every good story, including those in the Bible, has a villain, and he was quite willing to take the rôle providing the receipts were large enough. Almost every day for several weeks in October of 1850 James Gordon Bennett attacked Barnum in the *Herald* and demanded to know when he was going to give something to charity. A sample of these misstatements read: "Jenny Lind does all the generous acts, and Barnum perpetrates all the mean doings. He has not given a penny as yet for any charitable purpose, although he makes more out of Jenny's talents than Jenny does herself." This was untrue, for whenever Jenny Lind gave a concert for charity, she gave her voice. Barnum paid all the expenses of the hall, the orchestra, printing and advertising. She frequently urged him to deduct the expenses from the proceeds and give the remainder to charity, but he wrote in his autobiography that he insisted on paying his share to charity, for "it was purely a business operation, 'bread cast upon the waters,'" which "would return, perhaps, buttered; for the larger her reputation for

liberality, the more liberal the public would surely be to us and to our enterprise." Before the first concert Barnum thought the receipts might total $20,000, and he announced that Jenny Lind would give her share, $10,000, to charity. When her share totaled only $8,500, he made up the difference without any announcement of his own liberality. It was one of the ingredients of his disposition which contributed to his success that allowed Barnum, with the knowledge that he had contributed largely to Jenny Lind's charities, to enjoy in silence what would have caused most men to write indignant letters and institute exorbitant libel suits. Barnum was never indignant publicly, and by laughing at his detractors he always gained the applause of the large numbers of his fellow citizens, who respected him because he was successful and enjoyed him because he was entertaining.

V

There were a hundred men in New York the day after Jenny Lind's first concert who would have given Barnum $200,000 for his contract. He received offers for an eighth, a tenth, and even a sixteenth of a share in the profits, but he kept the entire contract to himself, for he did not relish assistance which refuses to take a risk. The receipts of the second concert in New York were $14,203.03, and the remaining four concerts there brought in a total of $54,988.81, making the total for the six New York concerts, Jenny Lind's first appearances, $87,055.89. Then Barnum moved on Boston.

The party left on the *Empire State* on the evening of September 26. As the steamer passed Blackwells Island, the prisoners were drawn up to greet Jenny Lind. She seemed much pleased and asked Barnum who these enthusiastic lovers of music were, and when she was told that they were prisoners, she hurried to the opposite side of the deck; she could not sympathize with creatures who had done wrong. Along the banks of the East River cheering crowds gathered to salute her, and as the boat passed Fort Adams at half-past two in the morning, the officers serenaded her.

In spite of the rain a large crowd assembled at the Old Colony Depot to welcome Jenny Lind to Boston. The entrance to the Revere House, where she stayed in Boston, was completely blocked with people. Soon after her arrival the Mayor and a group of his selectmen hurried to the hotel and were introduced. The Mayor assured her that, in spite of its reputation, Boston was as cordial as any place in the United States, and that she would find greater appreciation there for her talent than elsewhere. "It is not your superhuman musical endowments," he added, "that have captivated our senses, it is your unblemished private character, and—" But here Jenny Lind interrupted and asked the Mayor, "What do you know of my private character? What *can* you know of my private character? Sir, I am no better than other people, no better." "Madam," the Mayor insisted, "where there is so much goodness of heart as you display, there must be virtue. Your Christian conduct is sufficient excuse for allusion to your exalted reputation. It has charmed the world; and though small communities may be deceived in their estimate of an individual, the world, I think, cannot. The world has conceded to you all that I have pronounced of your history. Your fame has been domesticated, not only in your own country, but throughout Europe; and in America your name has become a household word. The object of this visit, Miss Lind, on the part of myself and the aldermen and other gentlemen who accompany me, is not to utter fulsome adulations; we have come to do honor to ourselves, and to testify respect for genius and virtue. We are happy to find you in such good health and spirits, and hope that your visit to America may be pleasant." Jenny Lind's response was that they praised her too much, and she probably meant it, for she had a very fair sense of proportion.

The people outside the Revere House refused to leave, although they were dripping with rain, until the Mayor requested them to do so. The New York newspapers eagerly copied this account, and the *Tribune*, heading its reprint "Alas for Boston!", interpolated sarcastic comments on the Mayor's remarks. The auction of the first ticket in Boston started at $250, twenty-five dollars more than the last bid in New York; as a Boston newspaper expressed the difference, it "at once clapped a broad-brimmed beaver extinguisher upon the flaming glories of the Mammoth Manhattan hatter, and the great city that owned him for its champion. Genin was instantaneously swamped in

ticket-buying supremacy. His cake of immortality was dough, his felt and fur transcendentalism was scattered to the four winds, and he sank at once with a crashing souse into a mere eightpenny oblivion." Ossian F. Dodge, a vocalist, paid $625 for the first ticket. The publicity Genin received had taught others its value, and Dodge paid this high price as an investment, which was successful, for immediately after Jenny Lind's departure his own concerts were well attended.

Longfellow and the Hon. Edward S. Everett called upon Jenny Lind at her hotel, and the poet was charmed with her personality, and later with her voice. She visited Cambridge and looked through the telescope of the astronomical observatory. As she was gazing at the skies a large meteor crossed the path of the telescope, and some of the newspapers took this as a gigantic omen of "the brilliant reputation which is to attend the great vocalist on her travels through the United States." But Barnum was attending to the details of that, and he needed no meteor's assistance. The newspapers were kept supplied daily with fresh stories of Jenny Lind. One of these told of the antics of the coachman who had driven her to the Revere House. In mockery of his unbalanced fellow citizens, he rose on the steps of the hotel, and, extending his hands, shouted to the crowd: "Here's the hand that lifted Jenny Lind out of the coach, gentlemen. You can, any of you, kiss it, who choose to buy that privilege for five dollars, children half-price." A Boston newspaper told of the invention of a "Jenny Lind Tea Kettle," which, "being filled with water and placed on the fire, begins to sing in a few minutes," and a provision dealer in Lynn, Massachusetts, offered for sale "Jenny Lind Sausages."

The Boston concerts were successful, and Jenny Lind's renditions of Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* were especially popular. But the last concert in Boston was a riot. It was held in the Fitchburg Depot, a building badly adapted to the needs of a concert hall. Those who had purchased only standing-room stormed the hall early and took many of the seats, which led to the impression that Barnum had sold too many tickets. The hall was without ventilation, for the windows were nailed down, and the heat was oppressive. The audience kept up a loud, indignant conversation to alleviate its discomfort, and it was impossible to hear Belletti's solo beyond the first rows of the orchestra. While he was singing, some

one suggested relief by breaking the windows, and the impromptu accompaniment of the sound of smashing glass gave to his song a weird effect. When Jenny Lind herself appeared, there was more quiet, but not enough for all to hear her. A rumor that the floor would not hold the weight of the crowd threatened to become the source of a panic until Benjamin Peirce, America's most eminent mathematician, mounted a chair and reassured the crowd by stating it as his emphatic expert opinion that the floor would hold their weight.[10] The confusion continued until the end of the concert. Barnum was threatened with violence by the crowd and was compelled to go to his hotel quietly before the concert was finished. Announcement was made that the tickets which could not be used by their rightful owners because of the appropriation of seats by the mob would be redeemed at cost price, but the mob was angry, and there was much talk of tar and feathers for Barnum, who left Boston the next day, allowing his manager, Le Grand Smith, to pay off the dissatisfied ticket-holders.

This episode, which is one of many omitted from Barnum's autobiography, caused Jenny Lind to become dissatisfied with her manager. Throughout their tour it was difficult for Barnum to reconcile his methods with her temperament, but this was the first sign of disagreement. Jenny Lind hated crowds, and to Barnum they were a delight as well as a necessity. She hated humbug, a word which was constantly on her lips to describe all that was abhorrent to her; and Barnum called himself the "Prince of Humbugs." When she heard that Ossian F. Dodge had paid $625 for the first ticket to her Boston concert, she said, "What a fool!"

The newspapers were also angry at Barnum for the riot in the Fitchburg depot, and one of them published an attack upon his methods that accused him openly of fraud. The editor of another Boston newspaper wrote to Barnum: "One of our occasional correspondents has sent an article which I find is in type, handling you very severely. Thinking that you would dislike very much to be placed before the public in an unfavorable light, especially at this particular time, I concluded to write this and say, that if you desire it, I will prevent its appearing in our columns. Please reply by bearer, and believe me, Faithfully yours, ——. P. S. Please loan me one hundred dollars for a few days to aid me in making an improvement in our paper." Barnum answered: "Sir—I hope you will by no means

curtail the privilege of 'correspondents' or editors on my account. Publish what you please, so far as I am concerned. I have no money to lend, and never yet paid a farthing 'blackmail,' and, *so help me God, I never will.* P. T. Barnum." Then Barnum published the entire correspondence in the Boston newspapers, omitting the name of the editor.

From Boston the party went to Philadelphia. Philadelphia was determined not to lose its head and heart, as Boston and New York had done, and the audience that assembled in the Chestnut Street Theater was quiet, staid, and cold; they could not have been more skeptical had they been from Missouri. When Belletti came upon the stage, there was a dead silence, and after his song only a few daring hands ventured to break the heavy hostility. Jenny Lind's appearance was greeted with a few cheers, which were conspicuous for their individuality rather than their communal strength. The first of her arias was received with only slight applause, but when she sang "Take This Lute," the ice was broken, and the rest of the program was received with enthusiasm appropriate to her reputation.

She returned to New York from Philadelphia, and gave fifteen more concerts in Tripler Hall. At one of these Daniel Webster, who had paid a personal call in Boston, and who impressed her as America's greatest intellect, heard her sing. He twisted impatiently in his seat while she sang florid arias, and finally whispered to one of his friends, "Why doesn't she give us one of the simple mountain melodies of her native land?" The remark was overheard and carried to Jenny Lind, who obliged Daniel Webster with the "Mountain Song." When she finished, he rose in his seat and bowed his large head respectfully and solemnly at the simple maiden who was curtsying to him from the stage.

After dispensing more than $5,000 in public charity, Jenny Lind returned to Philadelphia, and then went to Baltimore, where she was greeted enthusiastically by a crowd, who insisted that she appear on the balcony of her hotel. She dropped her shawl by accident, and the people below fell on top of one another and tore the shawl to bits for souvenirs. During her second visit to Philadelphia she had been subjected to evidences of popularity, but she had a bad headache and refused to appear on the hotel balcony. The crowd would not go away, and finally, in order that Jenny Lind might get rest, Barnum dressed

her pious companion, Josephine Åhmansson, in the singer's cloak and bonnet, and to authenticate the deception he smilingly received the applause of the multitude as he stood by Miss Åhmansson's side.

In Washington Jenny Lind became a national character. The morning after her arrival President Fillmore called at her hotel and left his card, Jenny Lind being out. She was impressed with this mark of esteem and considered it a command for her presence. She wished to go at once to the White House in answer to the command, but Barnum convinced her that in the United States the President does not command individuals, and that the next morning would be time enough to return the compliment. Barnum and Jenny Lind spent the next evening in the private circle of the President at the White House, and she was charmed with the simplicity of her reception at the American court.

The concerts in Washington were held in a hall that was being built especially for Jenny Lind, and which was not finished when she arrived. Planks instead of steps, unpainted walls and rough benches, were accepted by the President, the members of his cabinet, and the leaders of Washington's political society, in order that they might hear Jenny Lind sing. Among others, Daniel Webster, General Cass and General Scott were at the first concert. Soon after Benedict began the overture a murmur was heard in the rear of the hall. It died down, and the overture was finished. There was great applause, and Benedict turned to face the audience in gratitude. But the audience was not looking at the stage, and the applause had not been for the overture. The figure of an aged man was slowly advancing to the front of the hall. Every one made way for him, and as he crept along, the shouts and the applause increased. Bowing to the right and to the left, he feebly groped his way to his seat. Finally he reached the seat, and there was silence as all watched him slowly sink into it. Then a voice from the gallery shouted, "Three cheers for Harry Clay!"

On the morning after her first Washington concert Henry Clay called upon Jenny Lind and enjoyed a long conversation with her. Webster sent a note asking for an appointment, and it soon became a matter of state importance for the most prominent senators and representatives to visit her at the hotel. She made the trip to Mt. Vernon, and Colonel Washington, one of the President's descendants,

guided her through the George Washington house and estate. Mrs. Washington gave her a book with his autograph from the first President's library.

On the occasion of the second concert in Washington the President and the same celebrities attended again, and Barnum was unfortunately persuaded to request Jenny Lind to sing "Hail Columbia," which was hardly suited to her voice. Even this audience which was anxious to please was not enthusiastic over her rendition of the popular tune, and Barnum after that experience declined to suggest any songs for his star.

Richmond and Charleston paid tribute after Washington had heard Jenny Lind, and then the party left for Havana, Cuba. At Charleston she celebrated Christmas, and she ironically presented Barnum with a statue of Bacchus in Parian marble, which he kept at "Iranistan" for many years.

Jenny Lind was dissatisfied with the dirty hotel in Havana, and she left the rest of the party and went out alone to find a house. She returned a short time later and invited Barnum and his daughter to share with her a pleasant house in a suburban district, where she rested and played ball on the lawn. She insisted that Barnum too must come out on the lawn, but Barnum was getting corpulent, and he tells us that when he grew tired too soon, Jenny Lind would exclaim in "her rich, musical laugh," "Oh, Mr. Barnum, you are too fat and too lazy; you cannot stand to play ball with me!" In Havana she met again Fredrika Bremer, the Swedish writer, who had been touring America. Fredrika Bremer had known Jenny Lind in Sweden, and when they met in Havana they talked of their Swedish friends, for Jenny Lind seemed reluctant to discuss her concerts or her triumphs. "I fancied," wrote Fredrika Bremer, "that Jenny Lind was tired of her wandering life and her rôle of singer. We talked of—marriage and domestic life. Of a certainty a change of this kind is approaching for Jenny Lind. But will it satisfy her soul and be enough for her? I doubt."

An Italian opera company was performing in Havana when Jenny Lind arrived, and the population was divided concerning the relative merits of singing inspired by the cold north, and that which was nurtured in southern warmth. The Creoles favored Jenny Lind, but the Castilians supported the Italians, and all the newspapers were also on their side. There was much sentiment against Barnum

because of the high prices he asked for his tickets, and the hall was not crowded when the first concert began. The audience was divided into hostile factions, and Belletti, although he was an Italian, was received in silence and got no applause when he had finished. When Jenny Lind entered, a few daring hands clapped, but they were almost immediately silenced by hisses. This attitude angered her, and she pitted her voice in all its power against this hostility which seemed to her so unreasonable. After her first recitative there was a silent pause. The audience seemed afraid and undecided, but as she prepared to retire, there was a burst of applause, and she was brought back five times. Although encores were forbidden by the rules of the opera house, upon this occasion the regulation was relaxed, and Jenny Lind repeated the *Casta Diva*. Barnum could not restrain tears of joy, as he watched from his post in the wings Jenny Lind's triumph over hostility. When she came back stage, he rushed up to her and said, "God bless you, Jenny, you have settled them!" She threw her arms about his neck, wept, and asked, "Are you satisfied?"

After four concerts in Havana, although they were financially and artistically successful, the original intention to give twelve concerts there was abandoned, and the party left for New Orleans. On this voyage Jenny Lind was troubled and distressed at the presence in the ship of four hundred reveling gold-hunters from California. When the boat arrived in New Orleans, the wharf was crowded with people who were anxious to welcome her, and she dreaded the encounter, for the quiet of her Havana vacation had increased her hatred of crowds. "Mr. Barnum," she said, "I am sure I can never get through that crowd." "Leave that to me," Barnum answered. He dressed his daughter in a veil, and, taking her arm, proceeded down the gangplank, while Jenny Lind remained in her cabin. Many of the people on the wharf recognized Barnum immediately, and his manager, Le Grand Smith, stood against the rail of the deck, shouting, "Make way, if you please, for Mr. Barnum and Miss Lind." Barnum and his daughter made their way through the crowd with difficulty and drove to the hotel where Jenny Lind's suite had been engaged. A few minutes later Jenny Lind drove through the empty, tranquil streets of New Orleans to the hotel.

In New Orleans the concerts were very successful, and after her first appearance, the planters and other wealthy residents of the near-by Mississippi River towns came down the Mississippi to hear her. New Orleans at that time was described by a member of the Jenny Lind party as the city where "drinking seems to hold its chief abiding place in the New World," and where "drunkenness may be regarded as one of the more prominent features of the lower classes." Therefore Barnum chose New Orleans as a most appropriate place for his lecture on temperance. He had contributed $500 to the temperance cause, which was under the leadership in Louisiana of Father Matthew. Possibly at Barnum's dictation or suggestion, Father Matthew wrote to all the newspapers in acknowledgment of this gift. Soon afterwards Mayor Crossman and some of the leading citizens asked Barnum to lecture on temperance. He was in excellent form that evening. He spoke of the poisonous qualities of alcohol, and when a member of the audience asked, "How does it affect us, externally or internally?" Barnum replied, "*E*-ternally." He spoke for one hour and a quarter, and a contemporary account suggests that another hour would not have been too much. At the end of his temperance lecture he announced the date of Jenny Lind's last concert, but the demand for tickets was great, and Jenny Lind refused to travel on the Sabbath, so that, not very reluctantly, Barnum was forced to give two farewell concerts. It was at the last concert that, according to the *New Orleans Picayune* of the next day, "one enthusiastic individual in the pit of the St. Charles' Theater, who vociferously encored Jenny Lind in the 'Last Rose of Summer,' for the third time, finding his 'call' not responded to, rushed out and made his way among the quadroon flower-girls on St. Charles Street, asking, 'Have you got the last rose of summer?—where's the last rose of summer? I'll give five—I'll give ten dollars for the last rose of summer.'"

The concert party proceeded up the Mississippi River, and Jenny Lind gave performances at Natchez and Memphis. At Nashville, Tennessee, they arrived just before April Fool's Day, and on the first of April Barnum exercised his cruel and unthinking practical sense of humor by obtaining blank telegraph forms and sending his companions and employees alarming despatches from home. Le Grand Smith received a message from his old father in Connecticut

that the family homestead was in ashes, and some of the minor employees had offers for their services from banks and other institutions. The musical performers were offered long engagements in New York or London, and one of the married men was informed that he was the father of twins. The next morning they read in a Nashville newspaper an account of the deception, for Barnum was proud of his wit and anxious to make publicity even at the expense of other persons' anxiety or false hopes. In his early circus days Aaron Turner had played the same kind of trick on him, and he forgot how angry he had been at this type of practical joke.

In Cincinnati the crowd on the wharf was so large that once more Jenny Lind was distressed. The news of how Barnum kept the crowds from Jenny Lind in New Orleans had spread, and it was impossible for him to repeat the trick at Cincinnati. Therefore, this time he took Jenny Lind's arm. She was heavily veiled. Le Grand Smith shouted from the deck of the ship, "That's no go, Mr. Barnum, you can't pass your daughter off for Jenny Lind this time." The crowd backed away from the couple of celebrities and jeered wisely at Barnum, assuring him that he could fool New Orleans, but not Cincinnati. In five minutes Jenny Lind was in her rooms, and the crowd persisted for an hour on the wharf.

In May, 1851, Barnum and Jenny Lind returned to New York, where she gave fourteen concerts with great success. Then they went to Philadelphia, where three concerts were scheduled, but when Jenny Lind arrived there, she discovered that Barnum had hired the National Theater, which had been used for a circus only a short time before. The dressing room smelled like a stable, and Jenny Lind assured Barnum indignantly that she was not a horse. This disagreement brought to a head other causes of dissatisfaction. Barnum said many times in his autobiography that Jenny Lind's advisers, and particularly John Jay, who had succeeded his partner, Maunsell B. Field, as Jenny Lind's legal representative, plagued him continually during the tour. They poured into Jenny Lind's ears the suggestion that while she was getting large sums of money from Barnum, he was making much more out of her talents. Her secretary, who was anxious to become her manager, used this argument whenever the opportunity presented itself. Also, at this time, Otto Goldschmidt, a young German whom Jenny Lind had known in

Europe, joined the party to take the place of Julius Benedict, whose ill health made it necessary for him to return home. This serious student and frigid musician, whose Teutonic personality as gleaned from the few stories about him, leads to the impression that he was more precise than he was interesting, would not have been attracted either by Barnum's character or his methods.[11] And Jenny Lind, as we shall see, paid special attention to the opinions of Otto Goldschmidt.

Matters reached a crisis after the first of the additional Philadelphia concerts. The latest contract provided that after one hundred concerts either party could terminate the agreement with the consent of the other party. Ninety-three concerts had been given, and Barnum and Jenny Lind agreed to abrogate the contract forthwith. She paid him $1,000 for each of the remaining seven concerts, and the $25,000 agreed upon as the forfeit to be paid for the termination of the contract.

Barnum's management of the Jenny Lind tour had been successful, but not easy. Besides the constant necessity of keeping up a steady stream of publicity, which was a burden as well as a delight to Barnum, he had to contend with dissatisfied newspapers, beggars, and the dignity of Jenny Lind's friends, who kept assuring her that after all Barnum was a showman and not an impresario. At the end of the nine months of work and anxiety Barnum was tired of the bickerings and the misunderstandings and the clashes of different temperaments, even if he was not weary of the vanity, the notoriety and the little pleasantries which always characterized his enterprises; so that he was glad to retire for a rest under the gilded domes and shining minarets of "Iranistan," while Jenny Lind continued to give concerts under her own management.

The ninety-three concerts under Barnum's management had yielded a total of $712,161.34 in a period of nine months. Of this amount Jenny Lind received from Barnum, besides all her expenses, $208,675.09 as her share of the proceeds, including her guaranteed stipend of $1,000 per concert. She refunded to Barnum $32,000 to break the contract after the ninety-three concerts, so that her net profit from the tour totaled $176,675.09. Barnum's gross receipts, after paying Jenny Lind her share, were $535,486.25. He never printed what proportion of this was net profit, but his expenses probably reached $350,000.

The Jenny Lind tour, besides the financial profit to the two principals and the beneficial effect on Barnum's prestige and Jenny Lind's popularity, had an effect of great importance on the history of music in the United States. No star in her ascendancy had ventured into the barbarous American woods in search of gold, but the success of Jenny Lind, which was so much greater financially and emotionally than any of her European triumphs, opened the eyes of other musical celebrities to possibilities in an American tour; it also awakened American impresarios to the opportunities in this country. Grisi and Mario, who were Europe's favorites before the Jenny Lind vogue, made plans to visit the United States, and Johanna Wagner at one time entertained that intention. Henriette Sontag visited New York when Jenny Lind was preparing to leave. She enjoyed some success here, due in part to her beauty and charming manner, as well as to her voice, but she did not create a Jenny Lind furor. At the time when Mme. Sontag visited the United States, Von Bülow called her in compliment to her beauty, "a forty-eight-year-old soubrette." She had many admirers in Europe, and some of these were personal. Lord Clanwilliam, British Ambassador at Berlin, was so persistent in his unwelcome attentions to Mme. Sontag that he was called "Lord Montag following Sontag." After Barnum retired, Le Grand Smith became an impresario in his own name and brought Mme. Alboni to this country in 1852. Neither of these stars enjoyed the success of Jenny Lind, for, aside from any difference in the qualities of their voices, it was well known that young men in Europe drank champagne from Henriette Sontag's slipper, and Alboni's lovers were almost as many as Jenny Lind's charities: church has always been more popular in America than burlesque.

In 1855 Thalberg came to the United States and was received by appreciative audiences. Barnum imported an Englishwoman, Catherine Hayes, who gave concerts in California, where gold was being discovered. Julien presented a successful series of operas in many large cities. New musical halls were built in New York, Philadelphia, and other populous cities. Less than one year after Jenny Lind left this country, J. S. Dwight, editor of the *Boston Journal of Music*, wrote in his magazine: "Verily, we need not go abroad for music. The last ten days at home have been rich with musical events.... There has been the oratorio of Beethoven, and there

has been the Mendelssohn Festival; and there has been another of the choicest and purest kind of Chamber Concerts; and there have been three or four nights of Alboni's opera; and last, but not the least significant as a sign of the times, the two weekly afternoon orchestra 'rehearsals,' both (as usual) largely attended, and one inordinately crowded—either of these were text enough for quite as long a disquisition as could be profitable for one week. We can only take them in their order and pass lightly over topics, any one of which would be a perfect God-send and meat for weeks of gossip and excitement at almost any other time—*as times were once*."

Credit must be given to Barnum for the impetus to musical enterprise in the United States, even though his intentions were not purely educational or philanthropic. "It is a mistake," he told a reporter in 1890, "to say the fame of Jenny Lind rests solely upon her ability to sing. She was a woman who would have been adored if she had had the voice of a crow." It would be a mistake to say that music in America depended for its success on Barnum, but it was his ability as a publicity entrepreneur that caused thousands to realize for the first time what pleasure they had been missing in their ignorance of music. He created a large scale demand, the satisfaction of which was carried out by men of superior musical judgment, but music in the United States was advanced many years in its progress by Barnum's daring importation and unique exploitation of Jenny Lind.

VI

Jenny Lind continued to give concerts after she and Barnum separated, but her success was not so great as that she had enjoyed under his management. This was due in some measure, and probably very largely, to the absence of Barnum, who was always resourceful in the face of public indifference, which he combated with new inducements. But it was also due to the fact that her novelty was wearing off, and even a public that adored a heroine in white was beginning to find unrelieved perfection dull. A French writer has set it down, "Pretend to a fault if you haven't one, for the one thing the world never forgives is perfection," and Jenny Lind had not even a fault she could pretend to. Disraeli once said of Gladstone that he was

"a man without a single redeeming vice," and the characterization fits perfectly the public side of Jenny Lind's personality. Barnum had succeeded admirably in keeping her perfection a source of delight to the public. His manager, Le Grand Smith, remarked, "Well, Mr. Barnum, you have managed wonderfully in always keeping Jenny's 'angel' side outside with the public." This accomplishment was admired by showmen and theatrical agents throughout this country and England, and it increased Barnum's reputation among impresarios as much as the successful management of the concerts raised his esteem with the general public.

It was only after Barnum and Jenny Lind severed their connection that the public began to find fault. Possibly this equivocal perfection would have been penetrated finally, even under Barnum's management, but while he was her manager he strove energetically to maintain it, and afterwards there was no one capable of taking his place. For almost a year Jenny Lind had been a Dickens heroine in the hearts of Americans, a David Copperfield doll wife to the great sentimental public, and the first intense ardors of love were beginning to relax into the type of criticism in which every husband sooner or later indulges. Behind the crinolines people began to look for humanity and did not rest until they found satisfactory flaws. It was inevitable that this should happen, for, as Fielding has pointed out, characters of angelic perfection in a story are discouraging to the reader, since he must accept "a pattern of excellence which he may reasonably despair of ever arriving at." The Jenny Lind of public repute represents a character of angelic perfection and a pattern of excellence it would be difficult to emulate; and it was more than likely that there were few who would have cared to make the attempt. While Barnum, another public character, was in the play there was a villain to whom the audience could fasten whatever of pique or dissatisfaction assailed them. Almost as soon as he left the scene, the heroine fell from her pedestal. The newspapers found in Jenny Lind's actions signs and portents of temperament and irritability, stubbornness and irrationality. In the flood tide of its eulogy the *New York Herald* had written: "If Jenny Lind has faults, they are like spots on the sun, swallowed up and lost in the glorious effulgence of the luminary of the world." The spots on the sun were beginning to be faintly discernible, and some newspapers even used telescopes in

their efforts to find them. They discovered that she had a strong will, which on occasion could be described as pig-headedness, that when she felt uneasy she was cold and irritable, but instead of loving these imperfections as part of the character of a human being, those newspapers which brought them to light used them iconoclastically to prove that the idol they had set up before their eyes was not pure gold.

When Otto Goldschmidt joined the concert party, he did not add to her popularity. Jenny Lind had first met him in England, where she was attracted to him from the fact that he was a pupil of her friend, Mendelssohn, and because of his ability as a pianist. He played at one of her concerts for charity in England, and he also played solos at several of her provincial concerts. He came to America, and at her suggestion took Julius Benedict's place. Soon he fell in love with her, or she fell in love with him; there is no record. But eventually they fell in love with each other. There had been rumors of Jenny Lind's engagement to many persons while she was in this country. Once she told Barnum that she had just heard a rumor that he and she were to be married and asked him how he supposed that had ever originated. "Probably from the fact that we are engaged," he answered. According to Maunsell B. Field's book, Signor Belletti was frantically in love with Jenny Lind. Field wrote that "the baritone of the troupe which accompanied her, who was in the same house [The New York Hotel], was madly in love with her, and he used to lie in bed all day, weeping and howling over his unrequited affection." Before Otto Goldschmidt joined the party at Niagara Falls, where Jenny Lind was resting, she had seemed to show interest in Belletti. She invariably selected him as a companion in her walks, and she appealed to him for advice on all subjects. But the serious young German, who was eight years younger than she was, soon became the dominating force in her life. Belletti despaired and left the company soon after Otto Goldschmidt arrived.

Whenever Otto Goldschmidt played piano solos at her concerts, Jenny Lind sat near him on the stage and fixed her attention on the player. The audience took the hint and applauded his playing,—or possibly her presence. Goldschmidt was apparently a good musician, but there is plenty of newspaper evidence that the public found him dull, and that Jenny Lind found it necessary to force her friend upon her audiences. In Philadelphia he was led to foreshorten his

performances on the program because of the excess of obviously ironical applause, but Jenny Lind met him as he came off the stage and defiantly shook his hand in public.

They were married at Boston in February, 1852, and lived quietly for several months at Northampton, Massachusetts. Jenny Lind had never had congenial home life, and she always enjoyed the happy surface surroundings of the families she visited in Germany. There was in her character from the beginning of her womanhood a tendency to shrink from the world, with its dangers, into the arms of a protecting husband, whose intimacy would be a refuge from the distrust she always felt for strangers.

After her marriage Jenny Lind gave a few concerts, and the advertisements always read "Madame Otto Goldschmidt (late Mlle. Jenny Lind)." But she was tired of public life, and although Otto Goldschmidt was in favor of a few more profitable concerts, she was anxious to return to Europe as soon as possible. This decision was wise, if we can judge from a Philadelphia newspaper of December 19, 1851:

> "Jenny Lind has resolved to give no more concerts in Philadelphia; few persons will regret her determination, unless she should be able to better suppress the evidences of ill temper and vexation than she did on Tuesday evening last. She looked as stingey as a hive of wasps, and as black as a thunder-cloud, and all because the house was not crowded. The fact is that Jenny Lind's attractions were not strong enough to counteract the dullness of Goldschmidt's piano playing, or the merely mediocre ability of Burke on the violin. The absence too of orchestra was a disgusting exhibition of parsimony, and a determination to make the most money she possibly could. Miss Lind has never succeeded since she left the guardianship of Mr. Barnum; and then she has had poor advisers, and has been in ill humor when even the homage paid to her talent was not manifested with the greatest enthusiasm. The nightingale has feathered her nest well in our country, and she can go back to her Swedish home where we wish her long health, a better disposition and a good husband to cheer her declining years."

Barnum saw her several times after the end of their agreement, for they were still very friendly to each other. She told him that she found it annoying to give concerts under her own management, because people were constantly cheating her.

Madame Otto Goldschmidt (late Mlle. Jenny Lind) announced her farewell concert at Castle Garden for Monday, May 24, 1852. The concert was well attended, but not crowded. It rained heavily on May 24, 1852, and that may have been one reason for the moderate attendance, but one cannot believe that Barnum would have allowed rain to interfere with the positively last appearance in America of The Swedish Nightingale. It was estimated by a newspaper that the receipts for the last concert were $7,000; the receipts of the first concert under Barnum's management had been $17,864.05, and none of his concerts held in Castle Garden yielded less than $10,000.

Jenny Lind sang a "Farewell to America," the words of which were written specially for her use by C. P. Cranch, but it did not cause enthusiasm. The *New York Herald*, her erstwhile champion, and many of the other New York newspapers, did not trouble to review her farewell concert, contenting their readers with short notes concerning it. The *Herald* that had called Jenny Lind the most popular woman the world had ever known, the same *Herald* that had compared her genius to that of Raphael, Shakespeare, Columbus, Eli Whitney, Napoleon, Bacon, Dante and Michael Angelo, sent her from America with these words: "There has been very little of the classic or pure artistic in her concerts; and she has been applauded not as an artist, but as a clever vocalist." That sun, whose spots the *Herald* said were "swallowed up and lost in the glorious effulgence," was setting more rapidly, perhaps, than a real sun should, and the *Herald* itself with characteristic inconsistency would doubtless have admitted that possibly it was only a sky rocket.

Barnum visited Jenny Lind in her dressing room after her last concert. She told him that she would never sing in public again, but he reminded her that her voice was a gift Providence had invested in her for the edification and delight of her fellow men, and that she owed it to God and man to devote that voice to charity and mankind's enjoyment, if she herself no longer needed money. "Ah! Mr. Barnum," she answered, "that is very true, and it would be ungrateful in me to not continue to use for the benefit of the poor and lowly that gift

which our kind Heavenly Father has so graciously bestowed upon me. Yes, I will continue to sing so long as my voice lasts, but it will be mostly for charitable objects, for I am thankful to say I have all the money which I shall ever need." The New Messiah and her advance agent in pious obeisance paid tribute to their idea of a beneficent Providence, whose all-seeing eye watches over both a Swedish Nightingale and a Connecticut Yankee.

At one o'clock of the morning of Jenny Lind's departure, only a few hundred people gathered for a farewell serenade. The hour, and the fact that it was still raining, undoubtedly prevented a larger attendance, but the conviction that she was no longer a goddess contributed somewhat to the neglect. The firemen were her only faithful admirers. In gratitude for her donations they presented her with a copy of Audubon's *Birds and Quadrupeds of America* in a rosewood case, and also with a gold box, seven inches by three inches, the largest gold box made in America up to that time, they said. The Musical Society was not present at the serenade, but the same number of firemen, three hundred, with their red shirts and their lighted torches, waited in the rain under her window.

"Jenny Lind O! Jenny Lind O!
Come to the window!"

But in spite of the cries of several hundred admirers, Madame Otto Goldschmidt and her husband refused to appear on the balcony.

At the dock when her ship left two thousand people gathered to make a noise, in contrast to the thirty thousand who had shoved their way to greet her. The *Herald* on the morning of her departure gave her this parting thrust: "She has been principally engaged in singing pieces of operas and catches of all kinds, which were considerably more of the clap-trap style than in accordance with the rigid rules of classical music. When she returns to London and makes her reappearance in opera, she will have to prune away a great deal of her *ad libitum* redundancies in which she indulged during her career in this land." This was the same woman whose song seemed to the *Herald* of a little more than a year before to be "melting into the song of the seraphim" until it was "lost in eternity."

After her return to England, where she and her husband settled eventually, Jenny Lind was rarely heard in public. She and Otto Goldschmidt lived at Malvern Hills, where near by there are the three things she admired most, "trees, water, and a cathedral." She gave a few oratorio concerts in England and several concerts for charity on the Continent, but after her marriage her retirement was practically complete. It is significant of her character that without a pang of regret she could still her voice as soon as she changed her name from Jenny Lind to Madame Otto Goldschmidt. After 1863 she was seldom heard in public, even for charity, although she was only forty-three years old. Her last appearance took place in 1883, and in 1887 she died at Malvern Hills, England, after suffering from complete paralysis for five weeks.

At one time Jenny Lind intended to write an autobiography, but when the public did not receive Carlyle's *Reminiscences* with the applause she thought it deserved, she abandoned her idea with the comment, "No! let the waves of oblivion pass over my poor little life!" There must have been moments in those later years of uninterrupted existence along common family lines when Jenny Lind was restless—for what, she did not know; but, unfortunately for the development of her talents, in such moments she could always take quick refuge in God. Some pagan influences might have made her a great woman, for the God she adored had done all he could in the way of native gifts. If she had listened to the dictates of her emotions with half the unresisting attention she paid to the Bishop of Norwich and Josephine Åhmansson, the world to-day would know of Jenny Lind as something more than the spiritual toy of its grandfathers. The development of her talents and personality into genius was thwarted by suppression of the ordinary aims and aspirations of men. She smothered her desire for money by an inordinate indulgence in charity; a more natural appetite for worldly possessions might have led to artistic tastes, of which there is absolutely no indication beyond the technical development of her voice. Even in music there is no important discrimination and no predilection for the great, and of literature and art she knew nothing, because she did not allow herself even the little mental freedom necessary for their wide acquaintance. The desire for fame was lost in a constant consideration of God, making man's aspirations unimportant in her mind. She could write

to a young boy who was just entering the University of Heidelberg, when she herself was still under thirty: "You are just going to begin life, dear Rudolph; and life has quite as much joy as it has sorrow: but I, for my part, prefer the sorrow: for there is something exalted about it, whenever one's heart is full of pain: for then it is that we first feel how poor we are on earth, how rich in heaven." Any tendency towards intellectual supremacy through the agency of her great natural voice was thwarted by her weak dependence upon the advice of others, leading eventually to the retirement of marriage.

It was rumored that Jenny Lind's last years were unhappy, that she was treated with indifference by her husband, and that her grave in 1890 had fallen into neglect. This story, printed in a London newspaper and reprinted by the *New York Tribune*, was denied vigorously by Barnum. He said that he had visited Otto Goldschmidt in London, and that he happened to know that Jenny Lind's husband sent fresh flowers to her grave every day. The London newspaper had printed that she died broken-hearted, but Barnum declared confidently, "Her whole life was a song, and her last days were spent in singing for indigent clergymen."

In their introduction Jenny Lind's biographers wrote: "And, certainly, the tale of Jenny Lind may well be told for the sake of bearing splendid witness, to all those who feel themselves stirred by some inherent native power, of the unconquerable force with which a pure and strong individuality, if it be true to the inner light and loyal to the outward call, can dominate circumstances, however harsh and rude, and can, with a single eye on the far goal of artistic perfection, and upheld by faith in God, move straight to its aim with an unswerving and irresistible security, shaping its passage, amid pitfalls and snares, over this perilous earth with a motion as free and sure and faithful as a star that passes, in unhindered obedience, over the steady face of heaven." This is not, to my mind, the main interest of Jenny Lind's life. In her existence and triumphs lies a tale wherein is contained the extraordinary circumstances by which a mädchen who wanted most to be a hausfrau attained by means of a sweet and charitable disposition and a superb voice to a celebrity as well, and failed to become a great artist because she succeeded so well in becoming a hausfrau.

CHAPTER VIII

SUNDRIES AND AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I

Barnum wrote that he "did not know a waking moment that was entirely free from anxiety" during the nine months of the Jenny Lind tour; but, despite the labor and annoyances of that enterprise, it was not his only occupation during the period. Barnum's American Museum was still flourishing, and it received additional patronage because of the national advertising that Barnum gave Jenny Lind, and which Jenny Lind gave Barnum. Always mindful of the success of his Museum, Barnum sold the tickets for Jenny Lind concerts in New York at the Museum, in the expectation, which was usually gratified, that those who came to buy Jenny Lind tickets would stay to look at the diorama of Napoleon's funeral.

But Jenny Lind and his Museum were not enough for the Barnum who had capital to invest. In 1849 he and Sherwood E. Stratton, General Tom Thumb's father, organized "Barnum's Great Asiatic Caravan, Museum, and Menagerie." They chartered a ship which was sent to Ceylon in May, 1850, to bring back twelve or more live elephants, and any other available wild animals. On the Island of St. Helena the ship left five hundred tons of hay to be used for feeding the beasts on the return trip. The ship arrived in New York with its extraordinary cargo in 1851, and ten of the elephants, harnessed in pairs to a chariot, paraded up Broadway and were reviewed by Jenny Lind from the Irving House.

"Barnum's Great Asiatic Caravan, Museum, and Menagerie," including General Tom Thumb, traveled the country for four years, yielding large profits to its owners. After four years all the equipment was sold, except one elephant, which Barnum retained for his personal use. In charge of a keeper the elephant was sent to Bridgeport, and on Barnum's farming land adjoining "Iranistan" both were put to new uses. The keeper was dressed in Oriental costume of

silken breeches, turban, and yellow silk tunic. A six-acre field, facing the railroad tracks of the New York & New Haven Railroad, was set aside for the exclusive use of the elephant. Barnum gave the keeper a railroad time table, and whenever a passenger train came into sight the elephant busily plowed the land, the keeper goading him on and leading him as close as possible to the railroad tracks, so that he who rode might see. This publicity plan was arranged by Barnum for the benefit of his American Museum.

The newspapers of this country and Europe printed accounts of the phenomenon, and everywhere it soon became known that "P. T. Barnum, proprietor of the American Museum in New York," had been the first man in the world to make use of the elephant as an agricultural animal. Many people visited Bridgeport especially to watch the elephant in action, and hundreds of letters came to Barnum from agricultural societies. In his autobiography he summed up the questions asked, as follows:

1. Is the elephant a profitable agricultural animal?
2. How much can an elephant plow in a day?
3. How much can he draw?
4. How much does he eat?
5. Will elephants make themselves generally useful on a farm?
6. What is the price of an elephant?
7. Where can elephants be purchased?

Concerning, "Will elephants make themselves generally useful on a farm?" Barnum said, "I suppose some of my inquirers thought the elephant would pick up chips, or even pins as they have been taught to do, and would rock the baby and do all the chores, including the occasional carrying of a trunk, other than his own, to the depot." The elephant's trunk was an inexhaustible source of puns to Barnum. Some anxious farmers asked whether an elephant would quarrel with a cow, if it was possible to breed elephants on the farm, and how old calf elephants must be before they would begin to earn their own living. The number of letters he received, written with a serious inquiring purpose, caused Barnum to fear that some farmers would buy elephants, and he printed a form letter, headed "Strictly Confidential." In this letter, a copy of which was sent to each of his correspondents, Barnum said that to him the elephant was a

profitable agricultural animal because he advertised the Museum, but that other farmers might find the animal a burden. The original cost of an elephant, Barnum pointed out, was from $3,000 to $10,000. In cold weather the animal would not work at all; and in any weather he could not earn his keep, since every year he would eat up the value of his head, trunk, and body. He concluded by asking his correspondents to keep these facts secret, so that each of the hundreds felt himself in the confidence of a great man.

The newspapers worked Barnum's elephant for all he was worth. Reporters made special trips to Bridgeport from distant points to write of the scene accurately. Some of their stories said that Barnum's elephant built a stone wall around the farm, planted corn with his trunk, washed the windows of "Iranistan," and sprinkled the walks and lawns by inhaling water into his trunk and using that instrument as a garden hose. The elephant was also credited with feeding the pigs and picking the fruit, and one writer had the audacity to print that since he was a male elephant he carried Barnum's letters to and from the post office. Millions of readers throughout the country saw pictures of Barnum's elephant, and after the six-acre field had been plowed more than fifty times, the animal was sold to Van Amburgh's Menagerie.

For several years at this period Barnum was president of the Fairfield County Agricultural Society, although his practical knowledge of farming was nothing. But he proved useful as manager of the county fairs of the society. His knowledge of showmanship was exhibited in this capacity with great effect in at least one instance. At one of the last sessions of Barnum's last fair a pickpocket was caught. Pickpockets visited the fair annually and usually came away with large profits, and this particular pickpocket had a reputation for that work both here and in England. The day after his arrest was the last day of the fair, and Barnum anticipated light receipts. He therefore obtained permission from the sheriff to exhibit the pickpocket at the agricultural fair, for the purpose, he urged the sheriff, of giving those who had been robbed an opportunity to identify him. Barnum issued handbills announcing that for the last day of the fair the management had obtained an unusual attraction, "a live pickpocket," who would be exhibited, safely handcuffed, without extra charge. Some farmers brought their children ten miles to see the extraordinary sight.

Barnum was now recognized by his fellow citizens as a superior organizer of large-scale entertainment. When the New York Crystal Palace was in financial difficulties, he was asked to become president. By means of Julien's concerts and a celebration of the Independence of the United States, he tried to save it from bankruptcy, but he came to the conclusion after three months' work that "the dead could not be raised," and when he discovered that the creditors of the Crystal Palace expected him personally to pay all its debts he resigned.

Demands were continually made upon Barnum's time and his money at this period. Men with inventions visited him almost daily, offering him the opportunity to make a profit of never less than $100,000 and often as high as $1,000,000 in a remarkably short time. He was offered thousands of acres of land if he would lend his name to the sale of many more acres by stock companies, and impromptu miners offered similar inducements for the use of his notoriety. These adventurers in finance, Barnum tells us, usually began their conversations with, "Mr. Barnum, I know you are always ready to join in anything that will make money on a large scale." Barnum's answer usually was: "You are much mistaken in supposing that I am so ready or anxious to make money. On the contrary, there is but one thing in the world that I desire—that is, tranquillity. I am quite certain your project will not give me that, for you probably would not have called upon me if you did not wish to draw upon my brains or my purse—very likely on both. Now of the first, I have none to spare. Of the second, what I have is invested, and I have no desire to disturb it." The schemer usually protested that his plan only required a stock company for its promotion, and that Barnum would not be bothered with details. "If you should propose to get up a stock company for converting paving stones into diamonds, with a prospect of my making a million a year, I would not join you," Barnum tells us he always replied. When he was assailed with the glittering prospects of money to be made, he answered: "I do not want to make any money, sir; I have sufficient already to spoil my children." But these answers did not turn away the pests. A man in Nashville, Tennessee, begged Barnum to join him in a project for a cemetery in that city, and when Barnum doubted whether people would die fast enough to make it profitable, the prospector answered, "Oh, the money is not to be made out of the necessities of the dead, but from the pride of the

living." Another man planned to carry passengers overland to California on camels, and Barnum told him he thought asses preferable, but he did not wish to be one of them. Professor Gardner, the New England soap manufacturer, wrote to Barnum:

> "Barnum:—I never saw you, nor you me, yet we are not strangers. You have soaped the community, and so have I. You are rich, I am not. I have a plan to add half a million to your wealth, and many laurels to your brow. I manufacture by far the best soap ever known, as a million of gentlemen, and three millions of God's greatest work, beautiful women, will testify. I send you a sample to prove the truth of my words. Try it, and when you find that I state FACTS, put $10,000 in the soap business, join me as an equal partner, and we will thoroughly soap the American Continent in three years, at a profit of a million dollars.
>
> "By doing this, sir, you will erect a monument in the hearts of the people worthy of your name! You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have conferred a boon upon your countrymen. Cleanliness is next to godliness. You, sir, can aid in cleaning and purifying at least ten millions of your dirty fellow-citizens. It is a duty you owe to them and yourself. Look at my portrait on the soap wrapper, and you will see the face of an honest man. Send me your check next week for $5,000, and the week after for $5,000 more. This additional capital will enable me to supply the demand for my unrivaled soap, and I will send you quarterly returns of profits. Come, old fellow, fork over, and no grumbling! You will thus become a public benefactor, and unwashed millions shall chant your name in praise.
>
> "My soap makes soft hands and cures soft heads. It removes paint and grease, is unsurpassed for shaving, cures chaps on hands or face, and is death on foul teeth. It cures eruptions to a charm. I have no doubt that a sufficient quantity, properly applied, would cure the eruption of Vesuvius.
>
> "Address me immediately at Providence, Rhode Island.
>
> "Yours, etc.,
> "Professor Gardner,
> "Known as the New England Soap Man."

That Barnum declined the offer is strange, for, undoubtedly, he believed that cleanliness is next to godliness. But he tried the cake of soap and found it to be excellent.

Barnum did put money into many schemes and business enterprises, and almost always it was lost. Phillips's Fire Annihilator, an English patent; the steamship *North America*, designed to carry immigrants and freight from Ireland to New York; and the *Illustrated News*, a weekly illustrated newspaper published in New York in 1853, were a few of his investments. The Fire Annihilator refused to put out fire; the *North America* could not find enough Irish freight, and the *Illustrated News* was abandoned after one year because Barnum's partners did not know enough about the issue of a newspaper. Throughout his career whenever he turned from pure showmanship to trade, he usually lost money.

II

While indulging moderately in sundry enterprises, Barnum kept careful control of the Museum. He visited New York only one or two days each week, spending the rest of his time at "Iranistan," but he transacted business for the Museum at his home, and he continued his efforts to make the collection larger and better. Any curiosity that happened to be passing through New York was requisitioned for the Museum. Miss Pwan Tekow, a Chinese lady, arrived in New York in April, 1850, and Barnum exhibited her at the Chinese Museum, a collection he purchased at this time and operated separately from Barnum's American Museum. The advertisement for Miss Pwan Tekow read: "She is such a curiosity! The women admire her tiny feet, the men her pretty face, plump figure, and both the air of high breeding and education she exhibits. Surrounded by the immense Chinese collection she fancies herself in the Flowery Nation, and laughs and talks with all the spirit and vivacity of our own beauties. This is the first time that a Chinese lady of consequence has ever been seen by the eyes of 'barbarians.'" The Chinese Museum brought in revenue while the American Museum was being enlarged, so that business literally continued while alterations were going on.

In August of 1850 a negro came to New York who claimed to have discovered a weed that would turn negroes white. Barnum exhibited him at the Museum. He hailed this negro and his weed as the solution of the slavery problem, contending in his advertisements that if all the negroes could be turned white the problem of slavery would disappear with their color. The newspapers reported daily the progress of the negro's change in color.

A Gallery of Beauty, a contest in which two hundred prizes were offered to "the handsomest women in America, the Public to be the Judges" from daguerreotypes sent to the Museum, created a sensation, and another Baby Show added greatly to the popularity of the Museum. Barnum wrote to his friend Ballou, of *Ballou's Pictorial*:

> "Friend Ballou.
>
> "Dear Sir: We gave Mr. French to-day our advertisement of the Baby Show—I send here a circular of particulars which I hope you will notice.
>
> "Two triplets and one Quartern are already engaged, and we expect the woman from Ohio who has *five* (at a birth).
>
> "In a few days we shall have the Giant Woman from Maine, said to be a very tall curiosity. I guess our Museum can sometimes furnish as good things for you to illustrate as you can pick up elsewhere, and I will occasionally pay for engraving special curiosities such as giant, etc., if you will publish them. Of course I don't expect or wish you to publish anything that is not of itself full of *interest* to the public.
>
> "Our Baby Show will make a grand scene for illustration.
>
> "Yours very truly,
>
> "P. T. Barnum."[12]

In July, 1853, The Bearded Lady was exhibited at the Museum, and she caused Barnum trouble of the kind he liked most. The Bearded Lady, according to a pamphlet she sold when she was exhibited, was born in Versoix, Switzerland, March 25, 1831. Her parents noticed a slight down on her face when she was a baby, and at the age of eight she had a beard two inches long, which grew to be five inches long by the time she was fourteen years old. Physicians in Geneva advised against cutting the beard, for fear it would become hard in texture. In

1849 a French showman offered the parents attractive terms for the right to exhibit their child, and she consented. Her popularity in Europe was great; Louis Napoleon was interested in her and presented her with many gifts. In London it was said that she was visited by more than 800,000 persons. She married a French artist, M. Clofullia, and gave birth to a boy, whose face was covered with hair at his birth. Barnum met the woman and her son, Esau, in New York in 1853 and engaged them for the Museum, where they attracted large crowds.

One William Charr made a complaint against The Bearded Lady, and she was brought to the Tombs Court. Charr had visited the Museum at a cost of twenty-five cents and after looking at The Bearded Lady came to the conclusion that he had been humbugged out of his money. He expressed the belief in court that said lady was "nothing more nor less than a dressed-up man," and further, "that she and Mr. Barnum were humbugs and ought to be 'dealt with according to law.'" Barnum appeared in court to defend the character of his curiosity and his own reputation. He presented for the consideration of the court a letter and certificate from three physicians that such a hirsute growth was possible, and that Madame Clofullia's was natural. M. Clofullia, the husband of The Bearded Lady, being duly sworn, insisted that he was the legal husband of Madame, that they had been married for three years, and that she was the mother of two children, one of whom was alive in the presence of Esau, the Hairy Boy. Jacques Boisdechene, being duly sworn, said that he was the father of the woman known as The Bearded Lady, that M. Clofullia was her husband, and that she had borne two children, one of whom was alive. Phineas T. Barnum, being duly sworn, said that to the best of his knowledge the woman in question was a woman, that she had been examined by Dr. Valentine Mott, Dr. John W. Francis, and Dr. Alexander B. Mott, and that they had all come to the same conclusion. Dr. Covil, of the Tombs Prison, also made an affidavit to the effect that in collaboration with the matron of the prison he "had an interview with the lady in question, and both are perfectly convinced that, in spite of her beard, she is a woman." The magistrate was satisfied that Barnum had proved his innocence of humbug, and the case was dismissed. Barnum and The Bearded Lady left the court-room, followed by a large crowd.[13]

This episode was probably a piece of Barnum's planned publicity. It would seem offhand as if he could readily have proved out of court to the complete satisfaction of William Charr that The Bearded Lady was a woman. But "a large crowd of spectators, whom the novelty of the case had collected," said the *Tribune*, followed them out of court, and that could not have been accomplished out of court.

Barnum, having passed the first ten years of his notorious career, was now known the world over as a consumer of curiosities. He had first choice on all the monstrosities in the world, because he paid more for them than anybody else. Men, women and children wrote to him, telegraphed him, and called with varied products for his inspection. Ossified men, all bone, india-rubber men, with no bones, three-legged men, and men without legs were brought to his attention. Often Barnum must have felt like the Creator in the presence of His mistakes.

Upon one occasion a man rushed into the Museum office and asked how much Barnum would pay for the greatest curiosity ever exhibited anywhere by anybody. Barnum asked for particulars. The curiosity was a man, but this man had two heads, with two distinct faces, both handsome. His two mouths spoke Spanish, French, and English; they could carry on a dialogue with each other, sing duets, one mouth singing in English and one in Spanish, or vice versa, including French, and the two mouths could converse at the same time with Spanish, French and English gentlemen. The discoverer of this unique man wanted only a price and traveling expenses to transport his man from Mexico. Barnum said: "Why, let me see. There's no use specifying a particular sum, or standing upon trifles in an affair of such importance, and I'll tell you what I will do. As soon as you bring your curiosity to me, and I find that the man is, and can do, what you say, you may hire a wagon, and the stoutest cart horse you can find in New York, and I will go with you to the United States Sub-Treasury building at the corner of Wall and Nassau Street, and load on all the silver coin the wagon can carry and the horse can drag. That is merely your commission as agent. I will make terms with the curiosity afterwards." The agent never appeared again.

While some people thought that they could make Barnum believe in anything, others sincerely believed that anything was a valuable curiosity. He received a telegram from Baltimore, Maryland: "To P. T.

Barnum: I have a four-legged chicken. Come quick."

Sometimes when Barnum could not get exactly what he wanted for his Museum, he stooped to deception of a kind that might be characterized as both fraudulent and damaging to the interests of other entertainers. Alexander, the Conjurer, known as Alexander, the Great, who in the middle period of the nineteenth century was the most famous of all magicians, told Houdini, the magician, when the latter visited him in Germany some years ago, that when he was in New York Barnum offered him an engagement at the American Museum. Alexander refused, because at the time he was exhibiting his art for an admission fee of fifty cents, and he was afraid to lose caste if he were to exhibit at Barnum's, where admission was only twenty-five cents. Barnum promptly hired an unknown magician and advertised him widely as Alexander, the Great.

Barnum was now forty years old. In 1841 he was living on cold dinners, and Charity Barnum was hostess of a boarding house in Frankfort Street. In 1851 his wife entertained in a palatial example of Oriental architecture, and Barnum was president of a bank, with a general reputation as the most delightfully crafty man in the United States. The first decade of Barnum's extraordinary career was summed up in the following verses published in 1851 in the *Albany Argus*:

THE GREATEST MAN

What man, of all the nation's host,
Now fills the public eye the most,
By ever being at his post?
Why, Barnum!

Who is the man beyond all doubt,
Who always knows what he's about?
Whose mother always "knows he's out"?
That Barnum!

Who lines his pockets first with gold,
By many a speculation bold,
And levies on the young and old?
Paul Barnum.

Who carried round old, old "Joice Heth"
Till she had neither life nor breath,
And never gave her up till death?
O! Barnum.

Who told us she was "George's nurse,
Full three half centuries old or worse,"
And stopped with rum her muttered curse?
Didn't Barnum?

Who made a man of Tommy Thumb,
Who though a little man was "*some*"
And quickly brought a handsome "*plum*"
For Barnum!

And who but Barnum would have thought
A "*Woolly Horse*" by Frémont caught
Could such a host of money 've brought!
But Barnum?

But not a *horse* alone was *wooled*;
For that same stuff was often *pulled*
O'er many eyes, and all got fooled
By Barnum!

A Mermaid rare—a curious bird,
A five-legged cat that never stirred
Bring gold, as we have often heard,
To Barnum.

But Barnum, though he's always *bold*,
Is also *shrewd*, as we are told,
He's often *bought* but never *sold*,
Not Barnum!

But all his speculations past
Compare at nothing to the last;
This made the people stand aghast
At Barnum!

An angel's voice was heard afar
Eclipsing every former "*star*"
And in a twinkling, Barnum's "*thar*"
Was Barnum!

Yes, Barnum's offered her a "*pile*"
Some thought him crazy all the while,
But now he "does it up in style"
Does Barnum.

III

In 1854, sitting under the weird, gilded minarets and Persian domes of his replica of the George IV. Pavilion, in his private study, where the walls were brocaded with rich orange satin, Barnum composed his first autobiography. He was forty-four years old. General Tom Thumb, The Fejee Mermaid and The Woolly Horse, The Swedish Nightingale and The Bearded Lady, had made his fortune, and, taking his ease at his "Iranistan," the promoter of these works told the world how to do it, or at least how he thought he did it.

The book is an extraordinary one; in the large library of theatrical memories and books of actors' and managers' reminiscences it stands out as highly exceptional both in quality and quantity. From the year 1855, when Barnum first issued the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*, until 1891, when he died, there were seven different editions of this book under that and other titles. The story is that a lady who bought all the successive editions of the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*, and *Struggles and Triumphs, or Forty Years' Recollections of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*, as it was sometimes called, said to Barnum: "You know, Mr. Barnum, I am continually busy with your 'Life.' You have no idea how much I enjoy reading it." "My dear madam," said Barnum, "that is nothing to the way I enjoy living it." He should have added, "and writing it," for, every year after the first revised edition was issued in 1869, Barnum added an appendix, telling in detail what had happened to him of interest to the world during the past year. He developed his autobiography, which was sold in large numbers first at the Museum

and later at the Circus, into an annual message to the American people, a periodical repetition of the details of his lively achievement. The appendix usually told how much the Circus had earned during the past year, what cities Barnum had visited and who had visited him at Bridgeport; if he chanced to move his residence, there was a new, pretty description of his latest house. He also gave thanks that he was still alive, and expressed appropriate humility before God and his readiness at any time to proceed to heaven, should the necessity arise. There is so much solemn reiteration of the fact that "all of that which we now prize highly (except our love to God and our affections for humanity), shall dwindle into insignificance," that one suspects Barnum of an obsession in the nature of regret that the Greatest Show on Earth could not by any known means be transported to heaven.

The first edition of the book in 1855 bore the dedication: "To the Universal Yankee Nation, of Which I Am Proud to Be One, I Dedicate These Pages, Dating Them from the American Museum, Where the Public First Smiled Upon Me, and Where Henceforth My Personal Exertions Will Be Devoted to Its Entertainment." The book caused a storm of protest on the literary side and enjoyed a popular success almost immediately. Many of the editors who reviewed Barnum's book were shocked, and England was especially mortified. The élite, the classes, had taken up Barnum, called madly for General Tom Thumb for their week-end parties and evening fêtes, rushed after Jenny Lind, and now Barnum had the audacity and the bad taste to take his machine apart and show those who had watched it eagerly how it turned the wheels of their fatuity. They recognized their folly,—and blamed him for it. *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine*, *Tait's Edinburgh Review* in Great Britain, and the *Southern Literary Messenger* in the United States, among others, wrote ten page reviews of the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*. They recalled the shades of Cagliostro and other famous and comparative rascals and impostors to prove that Barnum was the present world's worst woe. The editors were very angry, and through the pages of their reviews one can hear the sounds of their gasps of perturbation in their too apparent determination to finish this charlatan once for all by a mighty stroke of a thundering pen, wielded for the common good. The burden of their complaints was that Barnum had deceived the world by his brazen curiosities: Joice Heth, he admitted, may not have been

161 years old; General Tom Thumb was born in Bridgeport, not imported from England, and was five years old, not eleven: The Woolly Horse and Colonel Frémont were strangers. And Barnum boldly admitted his deceptions in his book. It was immoral, said the editors. No one of them had had the perspicacity to doubt Barnum's integrity when his ventures were presented for admiration. The editors, along with their wives and children, had screamed their delight. It took Barnum himself to tell them the secret that they had been humbugged, and they never forgave his lack of editorial ethics. To have whispered privately in an editor's ear that he was only spoofing him would have been taken in confidence and with dignity, for the editor could then have bragged about it from his club chair. But to take in the public and the editor too was unpardonable sin, and the man who did it was a scoundrel, and no mistake. One New York newspaper writer was also shocked by Barnum's admission that he did good for his own profit: that was a radical and cynical principle of ethics, which turned slightly sour the milk of human kindness.

The popular journals and Barnum's host of patrons accepted his book as the greatest curiosity of all, and half a million copies were sold, according to his estimates. His was the virtue of success, and the large majority, who bowed down in what William James called "the exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess SUCCESS," accepted Barnum's autobiography as a handbook. It had the advantage over all other such manuals, that it was witty. Mark Twain "sat up nights to absorb it, and woke early and lighted the lamp to follow the career of the great showman," according to Albert Bigelow Paine, his biographer. Mrs. Clemens could not understand, did not at all approve of her husband's interest in Barnum and Barnum's methods. "She did not realize then," wrote Mr. Paine, "his vast interest in the study of human nature, or that such a book contained what Mr. Howells calls 'the root of the human matter,' the inner revelation of the human being at first hand." She also did not realize then, or ever, that there was much of Colonel Sellers in Samuel L. Clemens, and that her husband was compelled by circumstances to make a fortune first, and immortality afterwards. It is natural that Mark Twain should have found worth reading by early morning lamplight the chronicle of an adventurer who had carved out of the world a fortune for himself.

Barnum also admired Mark Twain. He tried persistently to harness his friend's literary ability and popularity to his own enterprises. Whenever Mark Twain spent a night in Barnum's home at Bridgeport the greatest showman on earth tried very hard to get the highest paid writer in the country to write a piece about the circus.

The book itself undoubtedly contains "the root of the human matter," and it is so fascinating because Barnum succeeds in concealing nothing except certain facts. He attempted to paint himself in angel white, with a dash of coloring in the cheeks to make the picture popular, but his very strivings after sainthood reveal his mind and character too plainly, and whenever he tries most to deceive the reader, he succeeds only in enlightening him. The book is well written, if we consider that the man who wrote it left school when he was twelve years old and found little leisure for study in composition after that period. Of course, the subject was one that always delighted the author, and his inspiration was therefore ever with him.

Barnum wrote as he talked, grandly, sonorously and wittily, but he is often exceedingly dull. What he never learned was the art of concentrating his material. He was himself Boswell to his own Dr. Johnson, and he wrote with even less critical perspective than the illustrious Scotch *raconteur*. Almost anything that happened to him seemed to him fit for publication, unless it was obscene or self-damaging. When he gave a relative money, it was set down with unction in the current edition of the autobiography. When he bought a sister's son a farm in Wisconsin, so that the boy might spend the rest of his days in honest toil and healthy happiness, it was set down in the autobiography, with the notation that it is always admirable to help those who will help themselves. Barnum labored under the delusion for the most part of his career, at least so far as his literary expression was concerned, that everything he did was both important and interesting; that is why one quarter of the autobiography is soporific. There is nothing so tiresome for continued reading as a joke book, and Barnum was unsparing in his rambling anecdotes cheap-jack chronicles, and tales of country yokelry. Indiscriminately, promiscuously, without connection or reason, he poured forth jokes on or by his friends and neighbors and himself, in a barber shop, in a church, on his father's farm, in the Museum, at "Iranistan." Some of the anecdotes are interesting, and some are revelatory, but even these

lose their effect in the jumble of their dreary companions. In the later editions he, or an adviser, had enough judgment to omit some of the extraneous boyhood anecdotes that fill many pages in the first edition, but too many are retained, and after a period with the books the reader must conclude that the charm of many of his stories probably lay in the way he told them rather than in the stories. Barnum as a wag in print was inferior to Barnum as a manipulator of choice pieces of waggery gathered from the ends of the earth, or at least from Bridgeport, Connecticut.

"The idea haunts one like a presence," wrote the editor of the *Christian Review* concerning the autobiography, "that having sold the public in so many nice tricks, he may have sold it again in explaining how they were done." This is fair criticism, for while reading Barnum there is always a suspicion that he is not telling the truth even now when he thinks it can be told, a suspicion confirmed often by other men's books.

Whether or not he told the truth, he struck a note that found large sympathy among his contemporaries. The American people were looking for a philosophy of Success, and Barnum combined for them "There's a sucker born every minute," with "Honesty is the Best Policy." These truths, neither imposing in itself, taken together, as Barnum took them, formed the metaphysics of business, whose Aristotle was Barnum.

It is easy to believe that his book sold half a million copies, for Barnum's influence contributed profoundly to the life of his period, and has lapped over into our own time. His success was so much admired, envied, and emulated, that to-day we have a host of advertising and publicity experts, who owe more for their facility than they realize to the way which Barnum paved. It would be absurd to make Barnum responsible for the crimes and follies of publicity that have since his time become common, but since he was clearly the father of publicity, which has developed into unquestioned and legitimate misrepresentation on a large scale, he must acknowledge his child, and must also be held responsible in some measure for its antics, but only in so far as any father may be said to be responsible for the actions of his child. The effect alone of the statement attributed to Barnum, which he made in a speech, "There's a sucker born every minute," is incalculable, but the persistency with which it

has worked its way into the body of American proverbs until it stands as one of the few distinctive proverbs of the country indicates its prestige. This simple sentence of Barnum's has done more than any other one thing to crystallize the American preference for bluff rather than scientific thoroughness: the implication of "There's a sucker born every minute" is "Catch him, or you're a sucker of the worst order," and it unconsciously converts the Golden Rule into "Do the other fellow, or he'll do you."

While a few editors roared and the people bought his book, Barnum sat in his study at "Iranistan" and laughed. All he usually asked of any one was, "Mention my name." If people called him a scoundrel in print, it was good; for to call him a scoundrel in print they had to say, "P. T. Barnum, of the American Museum, is a scoundrel," and their diatribes soon made it unnecessary to add, "of the American Museum." The more people who read of Barnum's rascality, the more people bought the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself* and dated from the American Museum. And those who read the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself* visited Barnum's American Museum. There was not more than a loud minority of censure. Even the pious portion of the community recommended Barnum. He had so cleverly and sincerely mixed his own earnest piety with his large-scale deception that clergymen were known to recommend his book to the young. Henry Hilgert, a preacher in Baltimore, said from his pulpit: "I pray you to recommend the good citizen, Phineas Taylor Barnum, to your children as an exemplary man. When you give one of your daughters away in matrimony, advise her to imitate Charity Barnum; when your son leaves home to try his luck upon the ocean of life, give him Barnum for a guide; when you yourself are in trouble and misery, and near desperation, take from Barnum's life and teachings consolation and new courage." Barnum never neglected to include this reference in the subsequent editions of the autobiography. And Mr. Hilgert was not alone. The clergy followed close behind the business community, taking him into the fold, with frequent and familiar public references to their good fellow citizen, "Brother Barnum."

CHAPTER IX

HUMBUGGED AND BANKRUPT

I

BARNUM'S interest in the future of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and its suburbs as a manufacturing center was one of the abiding influences of his financial life, and he did more than any other one man to make that city such a center. In 1851 he purchased with William H. Noble, a wealthy citizen of Bridgeport, 224 acres of land on the east side of the Pequonnock River, where they planned a new manufacturing suburb, with model houses for sober workmen. The new city was laid out with an eye to beauty and convenience as well as profit; trees were planted, and an eight-acre grove was set aside as a park. Then Barnum and his partner began to sell lots at cost, reserving for themselves enough property to guarantee a large profit when the new city should begin to flourish and property should be in demand. The purchasers of lots were constrained to build after a style of architecture approved by Barnum and his associate—there is no record of an attempt to make it Oriental—and they planned a city which for neatness would be an example to other communities, and which would harbor enough manufactories to keep its happy population out of mischief.

The two real estate operators built a large toll bridge to connect their new city of East Bridgeport with Bridgeport proper. Soon a coach builder set up his factory on the Barnum and Noble property, and other buildings began to rise in the town, for Barnum advanced money liberally, permitting purchasers who would build in East Bridgeport to repay their debts in instalments; he had become so infatuated with East Bridgeport that any one with a scheme for its improvement or a new enterprise to be located there was listened to with undivided attention that soon developed into enthusiasm.

A small clock company which manufactured its product in Litchfield, Connecticut, had absorbed some of Barnum's money; he became a director in the company, which soon afterwards failed, and

Barnum took over the clocks on hand, removing the materials to East Bridgeport. At about the same time Theodore Terry's clock factory at Ansonia had been destroyed by fire, and Terry approached Barnum with the proposal to build a new clock factory in East Bridgeport. A joint stock company was formed, known as the Terry & Barnum Manufacturing Company. Barnum's Litchfield clocks and Terry's stock which had not been destroyed by the fire were combined, and in 1852 Barnum built a factory in East Bridgeport for the manufacture of clocks.

Several years later Barnum was approached by the Jerome Clock Company, the largest clock manufactory in America, for financial aid. The company's factories were situated in New Haven, Connecticut, and Barnum supplied extra capital on condition that the company would remove as soon as convenient to East Bridgeport. The Jerome Company employed more than seven hundred workmen, and Barnum saw in this number a valuable addition to the population of East Bridgeport. He wrote in his autobiography that Chauncey Jerome, the reputable president of the company, visited him in Bridgeport on this business, but Chauncey Jerome later wrote a book in which he said that he had never seen Barnum until after the termination of their business relations.[14]

Barnum was finally persuaded to lend his name as security for $110,000 to aid the Jerome Clock Company. The cause of the need for $110,000, as stated to Barnum, was the dull business year, and Barnum wrote that he was impressed by the information that unless the company could get financial aid it would be forced to dismiss many of its honest, toiling operatives. He was also impressed by the general reputation of the company, whose clocks were known and sold throughout the world; they were sold even in China, where, Barnum said, the natives took the movements out and used the cases as temples for their gods, "thus proving," wrote Barnum, "that faith was possible without 'works.'" Chauncey Jerome's reputation was another thing that pleased Barnum. He was a wealthy man, a pioneer clock maker, who with Seth Thomas had been associated with the manufacture of American clocks since the industry was established in this country. But what interested Barnum even more was that Chauncey Jerome had built a church in New Haven and had donated a magnificent clock to a church in Bridgeport.

When the cashier of a New Haven bank expressed the opinion in a letter to Barnum that the Jerome Clock Company deserved the highest confidence, Barnum gave his notes for $50,000 and promised to accept the Jerome Clock Company's drafts for $60,000. He was also willing that his notes should be renewed any number of times, providing that the stipulated sum of $110,000 was not exceeded. He was told that it was impossible to say when his notes would be needed most, and therefore he signed his name to notes without dates for $3,000, $5,000, and $10,000.

The Jerome Clock Company went into bankruptcy in the autumn of 1855. From time to time Barnum had been asked for additional notes by the agent of the company, which he refused to furnish until he had received back his canceled notes. This was done, and he soon grew confident enough in the Jerome Company to neglect the precaution. He was told one day that the banks were hesitating to discount his notes, and upon inquiry he discovered that they had not been taken up as they expired, and that the blank date notes he had issued had been made payable for longer terms than he had intended. He soon discovered that unwittingly he had indorsed notes for more than half a million dollars, and that his money had been used to pay the debts and expenses of the Jerome Clock Company. This drain on his credit was one that Barnum's resources could not withstand, and he was compelled to go into bankruptcy.

The entire Jerome Clock Company transaction is both complicated and obscure. The only sources of information concerning it are Barnum's own statements in his autobiography, on the one hand, and Chauncey Jerome's statements in his autobiography on the other. Neither deserves to be believed, if we consider the weight of the evidence offered. Barnum shouted fraud loudly and accused Chauncey Jerome personally. Jerome wrote that he knew nothing about the transactions, that he was retired at the time, although he owned stock in the company, and that all the financial dealings with Barnum were conducted by the secretary of the Jerome Clock Company, who was making desperate but sincere efforts to retrieve the company's fortunes. It is likely that both men were either swindled or deceived by some one who thought that, eventually,

everything would be all right. And, what made Barnum even angrier, the company had never even removed its more than seven hundred workmen to East Bridgeport!

II

As soon as Barnum's failure was announced, there was an almost universal cry of "I told you so!" He was called an adventurer, a swindler, and a fraud by persons and papers who but a short time before had hailed him as a genius. His autobiography, which had been published only a year before the bankruptcy, in so far as it admitted many deceits and much humbug, did Barnum great harm in public opinion when he went into bankruptcy. Especially were the newspapers anxious to point the obvious moral, since it was at them Barnum had laughed in his autobiography, for, while professing to admire newspapers and their editors, Barnum's book showed by the facts of his career that his deceptions were made possible by either the innocence or the ignorance of editors. James Gordon Bennett, especially, seized the opportunity with avidity, and the *Herald* for March 17, 1856, contained this editorial:

> "THE FALL OF BARNUM—The author of that book glorifying himself as a millionaire from the arts and appliances of obtaining money upon false pretenses, is, according to his own statements in court, completely crushed out. All the profits of all his Fejee Mermaids, all his woolly horses, Greenland whales, Joice Heths, negroes turning white, Tom Thumbs, and monsters and impostures of all kinds, including the reported $70,000 received by the copyright of that book, are all swept away, Hindoo palace, elephants, and all, by the late invincible showman's remorseless assignees. It is a case eminently adapted to 'point a moral or adorn a tale.'"

The tale was adorned with much morality, preached against him from the pulpit, and preached to him in private. Barnum later said that he was able to endure all the abuse with equanimity, but that it always made him furious to read moral strictures about himself in which were mentioned the "instability of ill-gotten gains."

But Barnum had many friends as well as detractors. Individuals, corporations, hotels, actors, actresses and singers, financiers and leading citizens, offered him loans, gifts, benefit performances, and other forms of aid. A letter signed by more than one thousand business organizations and citizens, including Cornelius Vanderbilt, James W. Gerard, Simeon Draper and Robert Stuyvesant, was published in the New York newspapers. It urged Barnum to accept a series of public benefit performances that his wife and children might have security. Barnum answered, declining, "because I have ever made it a point to ask nothing of the public on personal grounds, and should prefer, while I can possibly avoid that contingency, to accept nothing from it without the honest conviction that I had individually given it in return a full equivalent." He added that he still had his health and felt competent, while that remained with him, to earn a livelihood for himself and his family. Bridgeport congregated in a mass meeting, headed by the Mayor, and resolved its utmost sympathy for its distinguished citizen. Mr. Dwight Morris said that "it was principally to him [Barnum] that they owed their present beautiful resting-place for the dead. (Applause.)"[15] Some citizens of Bridgeport offered him $50,000. Barnum thanked them for their kind resolutions and declined their generosity. He wrote to his townsfolk in part:

> "No man who has not passed through similar scenes can fully comprehend the misery which has been crowded into the last few months of my life; but I have endeavored to preserve my integrity, and I humbly hope and believe that I am being taught humility and reliance upon Providence, which will yet afford a thousand times more peace and true happiness than can be acquired in the din, strife, and turmoil, excitements and struggles of this money-worshiping age. The man who coins his brain and blood into gold, who wastes all of his time and thought upon the almighty dollar, who looks no higher than blocks of houses and tracts of land, and whose iron chest is crammed with stocks and mortgages tied up with his own heart-strings, may console himself with the idea of safe investments, but he misses a pleasure which I firmly believe this lesson was intended to secure to me, and which it will secure if I can fully bring my mind to realize its wisdom. I think I hear you say—

"'When the devil was sick,
The devil a saint would be.
But when the devil got well,
The devil a saint was he.'

"Granted, but after all, the man who looks upon the loss of money as anything compared to the loss of honor, or health, or self-respect, or friends,—a man who can find no source of happiness except in riches,—is to be pitied for his blindness. I certainly feel that the loss of money, of home, and my home comforts is dreadful,—that to be driven again to find a resting-place away from those I love, and from where I had fondly supposed I was to end my days, and where I had lavished time, money, everything, to make my descent to the grave placid and pleasant,—is, indeed, a severe lesson; but, after all, I firmly believe it is for the best, and though my heart may break, I will not repine."

All is for the best, in this best of possible worlds!

Barnum paid his personal debts and sold his assets to make good some of his notes. Though he took the public sympathy without any suggestion that he did not need it, Barnum was not exactly penniless, a condition which some of his pitiful public statements of the time would seem to indicate. The lease of the American Museum, one of his most valuable possessions, was in Mrs. Barnum's name. The collection itself was sold to Greenwood and Butler, two of Barnum's former managers, for double its original cost. This sum was used to pay clock debts, but the lease held by Mrs. Barnum brought her $19,000 a year. "The situation is disheartening," Barnum had said, "but I have experience, energy, health, and hope." He also had money in his wife's name, a world-wide notoriety which developed in spite of some newspapers into sympathy, and valuable personal friends.

Barnum's creditors, and especially people who had bought up the clock notes cheaply, caused him much annoyance. He was examined in supplementary proceedings daily for a long period. The process was called, "putting Barnum through a course of sprouts." This heckling won him much sympathy from the public and the newspapers. One lawyer asked him his business. He answered, "Attending bar." "Attending bar! Attending bar! Why, I thought you

were a teetotaler." "So I am," said Barnum. "And yet, sir, you have the audacity to assert that you peddle rum all day, and drink none yourself?" "That is not a relevant question," said Barnum. The judge decided that it was a relevant question, and Barnum finally answered, "Very well, I do attend bar, and yet never drink intoxicating liquors." "Where do you attend bar, and for whom?" "I attend the bar of this court nearly every day, for the benefit of two-penny lawyers and their greedy clients," was the answer. When another lawyer, who had been asking him many questions, said apologetically, "You see, Mr. Barnum, I am searching after the small thing; I am willing to take even the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table," Barnum asked, "Which are you, then, Lazarus, or one of the dogs?"

Barnum was asked in court how he lived without any means, and he answered: "I hired a furnished house in Eighth Street last December, where my family resides, and where we have kept five boarders from the first day that we took the house." "Do you pretend to say that you make your living by keeping boarders?" asked the lawyer. "Partly so; my vegetables were raised last year on my land in Connecticut, and my son-in-law at Bridgeport sends me a box of meat every week. I have also a few friends who would not let me exactly starve this year. I have received various letters from friends at a distance offering to send me money, which I have declined. One wealthy gentleman, whom I scarcely knew in Bridgeport, offered to be one of ten to raise me $100,000, without security, if I could be relieved from clock debts and return to Connecticut to reside. But I desired no assistance, and would not receive it." "What does your wardrobe consist of?" the lawyer asked. "I am ready to answer truthfully all civil questions," said Barnum, "but I will not be insulted! My position is not a pleasant one, but I shall try to meet all my troubles with patience. If you choose to trifle unnecessarily with my feelings, however, I shall be protected by the Court, or will protect myself." "By advice of his counsel, Mr. Barnum answered the question," said the *New York Tribune*. "I have only one suit of clothes besides the one on my back, and this you will see is rather seedy." "Do you own a gold watch?" Mr. Barnum was much nettled, and appealed to his counsel, who told him he was bound to answer the question. "Yes, sir." "What did it cost?" "About $250." "Where is it?" "I believe it is in my pocket." "Do you own any diamonds?" "Does that look like

a diamond?" asked Barnum, pointing to a plain gold pin on his cravat. "That is not answering my question," said the lawyer. "I own a diamond pin and ring, which cost about $300." "Where are they?" "I can produce them when they are wanted." "Do you own a pianoforte?" "I do," said Barnum, and added triumphantly, "but, unfortunately for you, it is mortgaged for about its full value. I have had the money and spent it." "Have you any money in the bank?" "I have no money except what is in my pocket." "How much is that?" "I can count it for you, but there is less than $25." "Never mind, I don't want it, if that is all you have got." "Mr. Barnum: 'Then I shall probably spend it before long.'"[16]

In an examination on March 20, 1856, Barnum made a significant statement:

"Q. You stated, in your examination yesterday, that you were the poorest kind of business man. Do you mean to convey the impression that you are *non compos mentis*? A. I mean to say that I do not understand the details of accounts and a credit business; my business has always been a cash business—'pay before you go in,'—I never knew the meaning of the expression 'bills payable' until within a year." This is one more proof that Barnum was always a poor business man. During his early career he understood nothing of ordinary business methods and was not interested in them. He had also had no experience in financing his large operations. The Museum was bought on its receipts, and the Jenny Lind enterprise was refused financial backing. When Barnum was approached with a financial statement as complicated as that of the Jerome Clock Company must have been, he was undoubtedly at a loss. In fact, whenever he turned from showmanship to the ordinary operations with which the average small business man and clerk are occupied daily, he was completely bewildered.

Soon after Barnum's bankruptcy the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine Company bought property in East Bridgeport for its large factories. This caused Barnum to renew his faith in the future of East Bridgeport, and he repurchased some of his property from creditors with $5,000 loaned to him by Mr. Wheeler, of Wheeler & Wilson. This property eventually brought him more money than he had lost in the Jerome Clock Company failure.

Barnum had received one letter of sympathy which he now took advantage of. General Tom Thumb wrote from Jones' Hotel, Philadelphia:

> "My dear Mr. Barnum,—I understand your friends, and that means 'all creation,' intend to get up some benefits for your family. Now, my dear sir, just be good enough to remember that I belong to that mighty crowd, and I must have a finger (or at least a 'thumb') in that pie. I am bound to appear on all such occasions in some shape, from 'Jack the Giant Killer,' upstairs, to the doorkeeper down, whichever may serve you best; and there are some feats that I can perform as well as any other man of my inches. I have just started out on my western tour, and have my carriage, ponies, and assistants all here, but I am ready to go on to New York, bag and baggage, and remain at Mrs. Barnum's service as long as I, in my small way, can be useful. Put me into 'heavy' work, if you like. Perhaps I cannot lift as much as some other folks, but just take your pencil in hand and you will see I can draw a tremendous load. I drew two hundred tons at a single pull to-day, embracing two thousand persons, whom I hauled up safely and satisfactorily to all parties, at one exhibition. Hoping that you will be able to fix up a lot of magnets that will attract all New York, and volunteering to sit on any part of the loadstone, I am, as ever, your little but sympathizing friend,
>
> "Gen. Tom Thumb."

Barnum did not accept this offer immediately, but early in 1857 he arranged his affairs and left for England with General Tom Thumb and Cordelia Howard, a small girl whose Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was very popular in this country.

CHAPTER X

"THE ART OF MONEY-GETTING"

I

UPON his return to England Barnum was greeted cordially by those who had admired him in the days of his reputation. His autobiography, in spite of the few scathing reviews, had not damaged either his popularity or his esteem in England.

One of the first to greet Barnum in London was Albert Smith, playwright, dentist, literary hack and showman, who had admired Barnum and had studied his methods during the first English tour of General Tom Thumb. Smith at the time of Barnum's return to England was exhibiting his panorama of Mont Blanc, which he had ascended the year before. He gave a descriptive lecture explaining his model. In the course of this lecture Smith referred several times to a character he had met on his trip, whom he called "Phineas Cutecraft," a Yankee showman, who had visited Cologne Cathedral with him. According to Smith's story, the sexton was telling them the sad tale of the ashes and bones of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne, who had been sacrificed upon a certain black historical occasion. "Old fellow, what will you take for the hull lot of bones?" asked Phineas Cutecraft. "I want them for my Museum in America." "Mine Gott! it is impossible," the German was supposed to have answered. "We will never sell the Virgins' bones!" "Never mind," said Phineas Cutecraft, "I'll send another lot of bones to my Museum, swear mine are the real bones of the Virgins of Cologne, and bust up your show!"

A celebrity who received Barnum cordially upon his return to England was Thackeray. When Thackeray visited the United States in 1853 to deliver his lectures on The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century, he had called upon Barnum at the Museum with a letter of introduction from Albert Smith, and he had asked Barnum's advice on the management of his lecture tour. Barnum had given Thackeray valuable information concerning the cities he should

visit, the lecture halls suitable in each city, and the proper admission charges, for which the novelist was grateful. When he returned to New York in 1855 to deliver his lectures on The Four Georges, he visited Barnum often. Therefore, in 1857, when Barnum returned to London, Thackeray hastened to offer him sympathy and financial aid. To Thackeray's question whether he needed money, Barnum replied, "I need more money in order to get out of bankruptcy, and I intend to earn it; but so far as daily bread is concerned, I am quite at ease, for my wife is worth 30,000 or 40,000 pounds." "Is it possible?" Thackeray said. "Well, now, you have lost all my sympathy. Why, that is more than I ever expect to be worth; I shall be sorry for you no more."

It is difficult to reconcile this statement to Thackeray, which Barnum gives boldly in his autobiography, with the pose of a martyr to innocent misfortunes which Barnum adopted towards his Bridgeport friends, and with his statements in court,—which are not included in the autobiography—that he was supporting himself by keeping boarders and by boxes of meat from his son-in-law.

Thackeray took Barnum to one of his famous whitebait dinners at Greenwich, and they dined together at a Covent Garden cabaret, where music was furnished by a boy-choir. An entertainer dressed on one side in a woman's long skirts, and on the other with a man's side-whiskers, did a male and female duet, much to the disgust of Thackeray and to the delight of Barnum. Soon after his return to New York Barnum found a woman who could sing in two registers. He presented this hermaphroditic entertainment at the Museum under the name of Dora Dawron, who was popular with New York audiences for many years.

Otto Goldschmidt, who was in London, called upon Barnum and said that Jenny Lind, who was then living in Dresden, had asked him to find out if Barnum needed money and to beg him to accept her aid. Goldschmidt also advised Barnum to bring his family to Dresden because living was cheap there, and he added, "My wife will gladly look up a proper house for you to live in." Barnum declined the kindness on the ground that Dresden was too far from his business opportunities. Julius Benedict and Giovanni Belletti also called and offered assistance. But Barnum needed none. General Tom Thumb was drawing crowded audiences wherever he went, and Cordelia

Howard's "Little Eva," with her mother as "Topsy," was a great success in London and the other large cities. That Barnum was in any way financially interested in these enterprises was not made public, for fear that his creditors would interfere with his plans for paying them off. But he remitted money from London continually, and it was used for paying some of his debts.

After a successful tour of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, as well as England, Barnum and General Tom Thumb went to Germany. They toured the spas, where General Tom Thumb drew huge crowds at large prices. Barnum made so much money at these resorts that he was able to send home thousands of dollars for the payment of debts and for the repurchase of Bridgeport real estate.

They visited Holland, which pleased Barnum more than any country in Europe, except Great Britain. He admired the Dutch most for those very virtues which counted against his own success in that country: frugality, industry, and thrift. The Dutch were not enthusiastic over General Tom Thumb, because they were not accustomed to spend money for such things. But Barnum enjoyed himself so much in this clean and busy little kingdom that he was compensated in pleasure for his expense, and he also found there the Albino Family, consisting of perfect Albino specimens, a man, his wife and son, whom he sent to America, where they were the most popular attraction at the Museum for a long period.

Barnum returned to England, where his wife and daughters had arrived. He settled them in a house in London, arranged for General Tom Thumb's management by agents, and made a hurried trip to New York for the purpose of settling some of his debts. When he arrived in New York, he found that many of his friends avoided him on the streets, and in Bridgeport he was cut by a few of those he had known well before his bankruptcy.

"Iranistan" had been taken over by Barnum's creditors, but they found it impossible to sell the weird residence, and they offered Barnum the use of it as a home. Painters and carpenters were putting the house in order; they were in the habit of eating their lunches in the dome room, where there was a circular cushioned seat. One of them left his lighted pipe on a stuffed cushion, and on December 18, 1857, Barnum, who was in New York, received a telegram from his brother announcing that "Iranistan" was burned to the ground.

Barnum's reflections on this disaster were: "My beautiful Iranistan was gone! This was not only a serious loss to my estate, for it had probably cost at least $150,000, but it was generally regarded as a public calamity." No doubt; it was also a great loss to Barnum's immortality, for, were it standing to-day, nothing could be so effective as a memorial to his unique personal traits. The insurance on "Iranistan" was only $28,000. Subsequently Barnum's creditors sold the grounds and outhouses to Elias Howe, Jr., the inventor of the sewing-machine needle, who intended to build another resplendent mansion on the site, but death prevented him from carrying out his plans.

II

Barnum returned to England early in 1858 and took General Tom Thumb on another successful tour of the British Isles. Soon after beginning this tour he discovered that it did not require his personal attention—General Tom Thumb was now famous enough to require only routine exploitation—and he therefore placed his midget in the hands of assistants and devoted his own time to another activity. Some friends in England suggested that he lecture on "The Art of Money-Getting." At first the paradox of the title amused him, and he tells us that he thought himself more competent to lecture on "The Art of Money-Losing." But he came to the conclusion that in order to lose money, it was first necessary to have made it. However, the paradox remains, that Barnum helped to pay his debts incurred by careless handling of money by means of a lecture on "The Art of Money-Getting."

In his lecture Barnum stated many bald platitudes, no longer honored even by time, and he added to them none of the humorous twists with which he sometimes enlivened truisms. It is difficult to realize from a reading of this printed lecture why it was so successful, unless many good anecdotes, which Barnum said were omitted in the printed version for the sake of brevity, alleviated the dullness of his commonplace ideas. He assured his readers of things they knew so well that they should have begun to doubt them. In simple terms he urged economy: he did not believe, he said, in saving extravagantly,

but he was also opposed to lavish spending. Such expressions as "laying by a 'nest-egg,'" "easy come, easy go," are elaborated in great detail and with little novelty. "The old suit of clothes, and the old bonnet and dress will answer for another season; the Croton or spring water will taste better than champagne; a cold bath and a brisk walk will prove more exhilarating than a ride in the finest coach; a social chat, an evening's reading in the family circle, or an hour's play of 'hunt the slipper' and 'blind man's buff,' will be far more pleasant than a fifty or a hundred dollar party, when the reflection on the difference in cost is indulged in by those who begin to know the pleasures of saving." Sound health, and above all, abstention from intoxicating drinks, and from tobacco, "the noxious weed," are indispensable to success. He said that he spoke from experience, for he used to smoke until he "trembled like an aspen leaf," but on the advice of a physician he had given up tobacco entirely. But economy and abstemiousness were not the only attributes of Success: he assured his audiences that "unless a man enters upon the vocation intended for him by nature, and best suited to his peculiar genius, he cannot succeed." He did not tell them how a man was to determine such natural fitness for vocation, and he neglected to mention that for some years of his own early manhood he looked with little success for the vocation suited to his peculiar genius. "Avoid debt," "go-aheaditiveness," "whatever you do, do it with all your might," are some of the mottoes Barnum offered his listeners as substantial, and they listened as to a man with a message. It does not profit a man to be too visionary, Barnum warned, and he cited the instance from a London newspaper of a "philosophic pauper who was kicked out of a cheap boarding-house because he could not pay his bill, but he had a roll of papers sticking out of his coat pocket, which, upon examination, proved to be his plan for paying off the national debt of England without the aid of a penny."

Luck, in Barnum's opinion, was for all practical purposes non-existent: "There never was a man who could go out in the morning and find a purse full of gold in the street to-day, and another to-morrow, and so on, day after day. He may do so once in his life; but so far as mere luck is concerned, he is as liable to lose it as find it." He also hazarded the revolutionary belief that Providence was not absolutely dependable; he urged people to remember Cromwell's,

"Not only trust in Providence, but keep the powder dry," and he added a story of Mahomet and a faithful follower, who remarked in the desert one night, "I will loose my camel, and trust it to God." "No, no, not so," said the prophet in consternation, "tie thy camel, and trust it to God."

And above all, Barnum urged, Advertise: "But I say if a man has got goods for sale, and he don't advertise them in some way, the chances are that some day the sheriff will do it for him." To a man who told him that he had advertised three times and received no good, Barnum said he replied: "Sir, advertising is like learning—'a little is a dangerous thing.'" He claimed that there was only one liquid a man could use in excessive quantities without being swallowed up by it, and that was printer's ink.

"The Art of Money-Getting" was immediately successful in getting money for Barnum. In a half-column review of the lecture the *London Times* paid tribute to the showman's "fund of dry humor," sonorous voice, and surprisingly respectable appearance, more like that of a man of business than a charlatan! The *Times* reported that "hundreds of people pressed one after another into the large music-hall [St. James's] for the purpose of seeing and hearing the most adventurous and least scrupulous of showmen.... The whole scene was, in fact, an apotheosis of notoriety." "Whether a huge multitude," reflected the *Times*, "applauding an orator for a deliberate panegyric of 'humbug' may be considered as a sign of the high moral state of a nation is a point that we will not here discuss." But before taking credit for the achievements of a Prince of Humbugs, Barnum had taken a precaution: "... he had so defined the word 'humbug' as to render it comparatively harmless." "Had he satisfactorily demonstrated," said the *Times*, "that he was John Howard or Alfred the Great or any other immortal benefactor of his race, he couldn't have been honored with more encouraging cheers than when, with marvelous effrontery, he declared that he himself was considered the greatest humbug in the whole world.... And we may assert, with equal truth, that notoriety puts itself out at compound interest. If Mr. Barnum has got nothing else by the admiring throng he has at least got a new chapter for a second edition of his autobiography. Having already related how he

drew together a mob of Yankees to see a few tame bulls, he can now describe the eagerness of John Bull to see the most enterprising of Yankees."

Barnum's lecture was proportionately as popular in the provinces as it was in London. He delivered it more than one hundred times during 1859 and repeated it several times with success in London. At Oxford and Cambridge the undergraduates received his wisdom with enthusiasm, but it was not always serious applause. At Oxford, after he was interrupted several times, he added this remark to the lecture: "I am an old showman, and I like to please my patrons. Now, it is quite immaterial to me; you may furnish the entertainment for the hour, or I will endeavor to do so, or we will take portions of the time by turns—you supplying a part of the amusement and I a part—as we say sometimes in America, 'you pays your money, and you takes your choice.'" The students decided on a compromise: Barnum to supply half the entertainment, and they would supply the other half, and after fifteen minutes of the lecture, some one suggested singing "Yankee Doodle." But Barnum was pleased with their jocularity and happy with the receipts, for that night at Oxford brought him £169. A London publisher offered $6,000 for the copyright to "The Art of Money-Getting," but, wisely, Barnum declined, for he intended to deliver the lecture in the United States and again in England, and he also wanted it for that second edition of the autobiography, where, he agreed with the *Times*, it would form an interesting new chapter of the chronicle of his conquests.

III

Barnum returned to the United States in 1859 with enough money to pay all but $20,000 of his debts. His family had boarded and lived cheaply, and all their money was devoted to taking up Barnum's notes and buying in East Bridgeport real estate at assignees' sales.

On March 17, 1860, Butler and Greenwood, who had purchased the Museum collection, sold it to Barnum again. Although during their management a newspaper reported that "there is no pleasanter temple for the vacant hour," and that in the Museum might be seen "parsons, poets, publishers, and other public characters looking at the

curiosities and studying the fishes," the Museum had not prospered during Barnum's absence. Barnum renovated the building and decorated it with brilliant flags and streamers. Flaming posters announcing, "Barnum's on his feet again," were plastered throughout the city. A large audience greeted him on March 24, 1860, when he made a speech about his decline, fall, and rise again. An advertisement in the *Herald* of March 24 read: "Between the first and second acts Mr. P. T. Barnum will appear, and give a brief history of his Adventures as a Clock Maker, showing how the clock ran down and how it was wound up; shadowing forth in the same the future of the Museum."

Barnum, remantled in the esteem of Success, was received by the large audience of his fellow citizens with an enthusiasm that caused him to experience deep emotion. He told them the sad story of his clock debts, and how, with admirable foresight, he had in the days of his prosperity made over to his wife some of his property, including the lease to the Museum. Concerning this piece of sagacity, Barnum added the following footnote when he reprinted his speech in the autobiography: "I was worth hundreds of thousands of dollars when as a matter of love I transferred a portion to my wife, little dreaming that it would be needed during my lifetime." Mr. Barnum did for love what so many men do as a precautionary measure of business.

He told his audiences how his family had lived frugally, although the value of the Museum lease was more than $80,000, so that his debts could be paid and his real estate repurchased. "The Christian name of my wife," he said, "is Charity. I may well acknowledge, therefore, that I am not only a proper 'subject of charity,' but that 'without Charity I am nothing.' But, ladies and gentlemen, while Charity thus labored in my behalf, Faith and Hope were not idle. I have been anything but indolent during the last four years." Then he told of his accomplishments in Europe.

"Many people," said Barnum, "have wondered that a man considered so acute as myself should have been deluded into embarrassments like mine, and not a few have declared, in short meter, that 'Barnum was a fool.' I can only reply that I never made pretensions to the sharpness of a pawnbroker, and I hope I shall never so entirely lose confidence in human nature as to consider every man a scamp by instinct, or a rogue by necessity. 'It is better to be

deceived sometimes than to distrust always,' says Lord Bacon, and I agree with him." Assuredly, all was for the best, said Barnum. The very factory which he had built for his defunct clock company was now a thriving sewing-machine manufactory "filled with intelligent New England mechanics."

Barnum's speech concluded with a reiteration of the Museum policy, which, he assured his audience, would remain the same as it always had been under his management: "The dramas introduced in the Lecture Room will never contain a profane expression or a vulgar allusion; on the contrary, their tendency will always be to encourage virtue and frown upon vice." He sent free tickets to clergymen and editors, assuring them in a circular letter of the same policy, and asking that after an inspection of the Museum they would kindly recommend it to their friends, for he desired "to enlist the influence of the intelligent and educated."

Much verse commemorated the return of Barnum, including one woman's "A Health to Barnum," which ended:

"Here's health and luck to Barnum!
An *Elba* he has seen,
And never may his map of life
Display a *St. Helene*!"

But there was not much danger of a *St. Helene*, for Barnum was once more in his element, and he worked with all the verve he had formerly exhibited in the exploitation of Museum attractions. About one month after his renewed management began, he was visited by James C. Adams, known as "Grizzly" Adams, who had traveled from San Francisco by boat with his collection of California animals, consisting mostly of vicious bears. He had twenty grizzly bears, several wolves and buffaloes, California lions, tigers, and elk. One of his stars was "Old Neptune," the great sea-lion of the Pacific. Most of these animals "Grizzly" Adams had captured himself during his long career as a hunter and trapper in the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains.

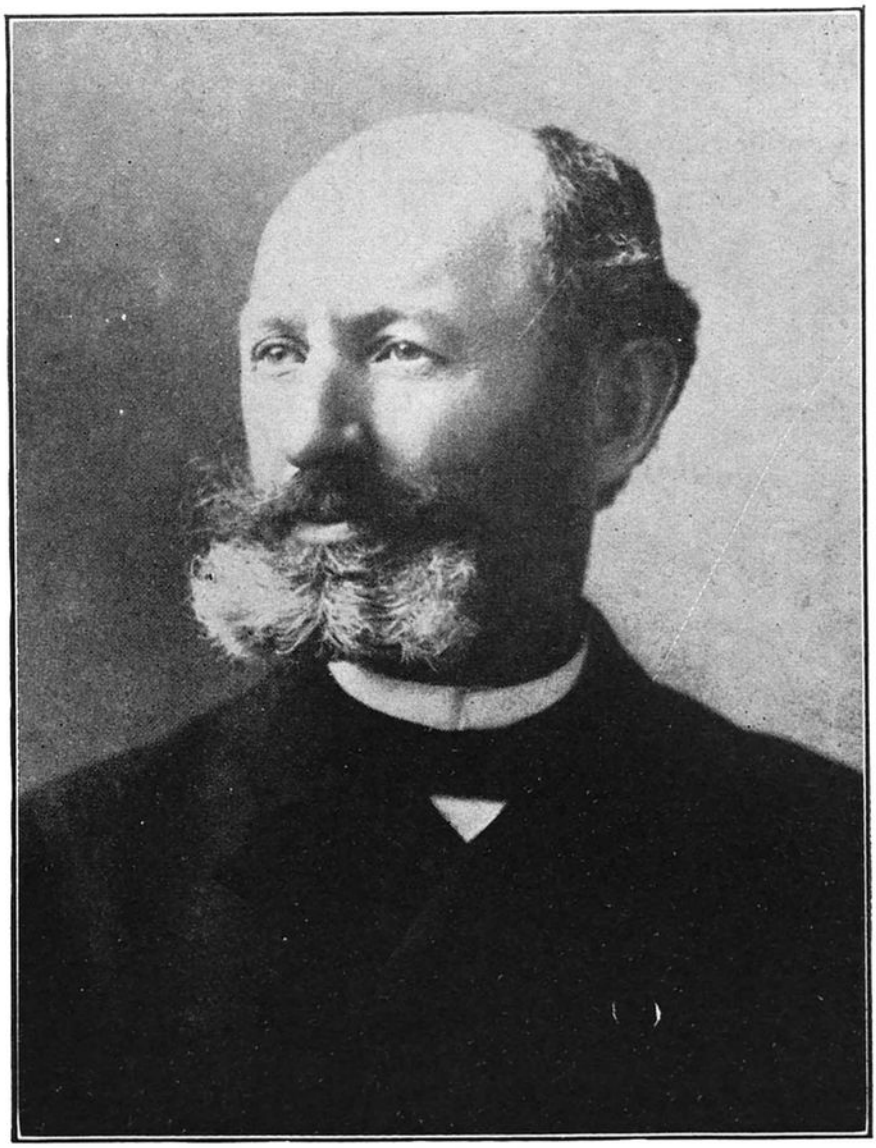
"Grizzly" Adams was as much a show as his beasts. He wore a hunter's buckskin suit, trimmed with the tails of Rocky Mountain animals. For a cap he used a wolf's head, trimmed with tails; his own stiff, bushy, gray hair grew long. His beard was white, long and grizzly, and after a voyage of three and a half months around Cape Horn with constant care and attention to his wild animals, who were trained to obey him but recognized no other master, "Grizzly" Adams was not natty when he presented himself to Barnum. During their conversation the hunter removed his hat out of deference to his prospective employer, and exposed the top of his skull, which was smashed in; he explained to Barnum that one of his pet bears, "General Frémont," had laid open his master's brain in a moment of playfulness. Barnum remarked anxiously that the wound looked dangerous. "Yes," said Adams, "that will fix me out. It had nearly healed; but Old Frémont opened it for me the third or fourth time before I left California, and he did his business so thoroughly, I'm a used-up man. But I reckon I may live six months or a year yet." Later he said: "Mr. Barnum, I am not the man I was five years ago. Then I felt able to stand the hug of any grizzly living, and was always glad to encounter, single-handed, any sort of an animal that dared present himself. But I have been beaten to a jelly, torn almost limb from limb, and nearly chawed up and spit out by these treacherous grizzly bears. But I am good for a few months yet, and by that time I hope we shall gain enough to make my old woman comfortable, for I have been absent from her some years."



CASTLE GARDEN IN 1850
From a contemporary color print



CHARITY BARNUM,
P. T. BARNUM'S FIRST WIFE
From 1888 edition of his Autobiography



JAMES ANTHONY BAILEY

Harvard Theatre Collection

Barnum and "Grizzly" Adams formed a partnership and exhibited his animals in a tent at the corner of Broadway and Thirteenth Street. On the opening day a brass band preceded the animals down Broadway and up the Bowery, the first forerunner of the Barnum

street parade which became such a popular feature of the circus in later years. Adams, mounted on his favorite bear, "General Frémont," who was docile for the occasion, rode on a float with three bears. He, in his strange costume, and his uncaged bears attracted great attention in the crowded streets of New York's business section.

"Grizzly" Adams's wife came from Massachusetts to nurse him. His dangerous wound was dressed daily, but the doctor assured Barnum that his partner could not live longer than a few weeks, and he also told Adams that his wound was incurable. But this information did not seem to interest him; for six weeks he continued to perform with his animals at Broadway and Thirteenth Street, and then the doctor insisted that he must take a rest. Barnum bought out his partner, and Adams, instead of retiring, asked Barnum to employ him as trainer in a tour of Connecticut and Massachusetts during the hot summer months. For sixty dollars a week and his traveling expenses "Grizzly" Adams traveled with the animals, and when Barnum urged him to retire before he died in one of the cages, he replied that he would guarantee to travel with the bears for ten weeks longer if Barnum would pay him five hundred dollars as a bonus for his physical endurance at the end of that period. Adams was interested in getting as much money as he could for his wife, whom, he considered, he had neglected long enough. After five weeks of this endurance test, Barnum took pity on the hunter and asked him to accept half the bonus and retire to die. But Adams refused to die until his ten weeks' engagement was finished, and during the hottest days of August he continued his vigorous work with the animals, while his wound became worse and his physical condition weaker. At the end of the stipulated tenth week Adams collected his five hundred dollars, traveled to his wife's home in Massachusetts, went to bed and never got up again, for five days later he died. After the death of "Grizzly" Adams, his animals were added to the Museum collection and later sold to a menagerie, except the famous Sea-Lion of the Pacific, who lived in a tank in the Museum and was supplied daily with fresh sea water by the deck hands of the Fall River steamboats.

At the time of his partnership with "Grizzly" Adams, Barnum planned a large wild west show, with real Indians and western animals, something in the nature of the Buffalo Bill exhibition which was organized many years later. He never carried out this plan,

although he was always confident that a show of this character, touring the United States and Europe, would yield large profits. Several years later, in 1864, ten Indian chiefs, the most distinguished in the country, visited President Lincoln at the White House to pay their homage. Barnum bribed their interpreter to bring them to the American Museum in New York. They were proud chiefs, and they were under the impression that this New York reception at Barnum's American Museum was an honor; they had no suspicion that they were exhibiting themselves in a theater for the benefit of the proprietor.

Barnum personally introduced his guests from the platform of the Moral Lecture Room, and they considered that they were receiving treatment worthy of their position in the country. After two public receptions at the Museum, Barnum took the Indians in carriages to visit the Mayor of New York, who made a speech of welcome at the City Hall. At a public school the children gave an entertainment in their honor, and they were delighted. Barnum drove with them in Central Park and through the crowded city streets, always returning to the Museum in time for the public receptions, admission twenty-five cents, children half-price.

Barnum paid nothing but the original bribe for these unique curiosities, but his position was made embarrassing by the interest which the Indian chiefs took in the other curiosities of the Museum. Whenever they saw a glittering shell or sparkling ornament, one of the chiefs would remove his coat or his shirt and insist that Barnum exchange the article for the garment. Of course, Barnum presented the chief with the coveted object, and as soon as they realized the extent of this generosity the chiefs begged for everything portable in the Museum.

Among the Indian chiefs was Yellow Bear, who, in his belligerent days, had a reputation as one of the most successful enemies of the white men. Barnum introduced the chiefs individually and with great ceremony from the stage of the Lecture Room, and when Yellow Bear's turn came, Barnum would always pat him familiarly on the head, place his arm about the chief, and say in unctuous, flattering tones: "This little Indian, ladies and gentlemen, is Yellow Bear, chief of the Kiowas. He has killed, no doubt, scores of white persons, and he is probably the meanest, black-hearted rascal that lives in the Far

West." A pause followed, during which Barnum patted Yellow Bear affectionately on the head; the Indian would respond with smiles and bows of pleasure and gratitude. "If the blood-thirsty little villain," Barnum continued, "understood what I was saying, he would kill me in a moment; but, as he thinks I am complimenting him, I can safely state the truth to you, that he is a lying, thieving, treacherous, murderous monster. He has tortured to death poor, unprotected women, murdered their husbands, brained their helpless little ones; and he would gladly do the same to you or to me if he thought he would escape punishment. This is but a faint description of the character of Yellow Bear." Then Barnum gave his pet another pat on the head, and the introduction was finished, with grateful bows from Yellow Bear and roars of laughter from the audience.

After a week at the Museum the Indians discovered that people were paying for admission. They were insulted and left the next day for Washington, feeling a tremendous loss of dignity. Barnum felt relieved when he saw them depart without any attempts to wreck the Museum.

The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, visited Barnum's American Museum on October 13, 1860. The Prince was touring the United States, and Barnum felt that it would be a pity if he were to go back home without seeing one of the national institutions, so he sent an invitation. Just an hour before the royal party intended to visit the Museum, the manager was informed that Barnum's invitation was accepted. Barnum was in Bridgeport, and the Prince of Wales was therefore received by Greenwood, the manager, instead of by the Prince of Humbugs. With great interest Albert Edward examined The Siamese Twins and the "What Is It?" According to the *Herald*, this was a deformed, idiotic negro boy, whom Barnum exhibited as the connecting link between man and the ape. After looking over the curiosities in the cases, the Prince of Wales said that he supposed he had seen all, and almost in the same breath he asked for Mr. Barnum. When told that he was in Bridgeport, the Prince said, "We have missed the most interesting feature of the establishment." The Prince undoubtedly remembered the jovial gentleman who had brought his General Tom Thumb to Buckingham Palace for the entertainment of the Queen and her children. Barnum felt complimented at the Prince's visit and the royal statement concerning him, and he was

pleased especially because all the newspapers printed accounts of the visit and the Prince's words. He also made much of the fact that the Museum was the only place of public amusement visited by the Prince in this country. A few days before the Prince's arrival Barnum had prepared for the possible visit by having removed to the cellar a frightful wax figure of Queen Victoria, which had delighted Museum patrons for nineteen years. It bore the placard, "An exact likeness of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, taken from life," but Barnum feared the Prince might not recognize his mother in the dirty wax which was supposed to represent her regality.

Barnum called upon the Prince of Wales in Boston and was received cordially. He reminded the royal visitor that he knew him when he was a boy in short pants. The streets of Boston were crowded on this occasion, and Barnum would have had great difficulty getting to the Revere House if a policeman had not mistaken his appearance for that of Stephen A. Douglas and shouted with much spectacular respect, "Make way there for Judge Douglas's carriage." The crowd opened a passageway, and hurrahs for Douglas were shouted all along the route. Barnum took off his hat, bowed to right and to left, and received the borrowed cheers with gratitude and pleasure. When Douglas was a candidate for President in 1860, several newspapers remarked that he looked the image of P. T. Barnum.

Barnum's renewed enterprise and the publicity which came to him by reason of his past reputation contributed largely to the rejuvenation of the Museum, until as a source of profit it was as valuable as it had ever been. Sometimes Barnum was lucky enough to gain publicity from deceptions practised upon him as well as by means of his own deceptions. His famous Cherry-Colored Cat was an example of both forms of deception in one. A farmer visited the Museum one day and informed Greenwood that he had a cherry-colored cat, which he would sell for twenty-five dollars. Greenwood agreed in writing to pay that amount, providing the cat was not artificially colored. The farmer returned with a handsome black cat, and told Greenwood calmly that his cat was the color of black cherries. Greenwood refused to pay for this deception, but as soon as Barnum heard about it he was delighted at a joke he might have perpetrated himself and insisted that the practical joker was worthy of

his hire. He got back his twenty-five dollars by exhibiting the cat in a paper bag as a mysterious novelty, a Cherry-Colored Cat. He fooled his patrons precisely as the farmer had fooled his manager.

In 1861 Barnum created a sensation with whales. He learned that fishermen had caught a white whale at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, and he hurried to Canada to arrange for the capture alive of a pair of white whales for his Museum. Barnum witnessed the capture and arranged for the transportation of his whales, and then he started back to New York. On the way he informed telegraph operators that they might take from the wire any news about whales addressed to P. T. Barnum and give it out to their townspeople. The result was a triumphal procession seven hundred miles long, with plenty of attendant publicity, when the white whales started on their journey. People gathered at all the railroad stations to catch a glimpse of the white whales in their long boxes, filled with sea weed and salt water. Before he left Quebec, Barnum wrote accounts of the capture and shipment of the whales for the Quebec and Montreal newspapers, and these were copied in other papers. Despatches telling the progress of the trip were posted on bulletin boards outside the Museum in New York, and the excitement in the city was great. When the whales were finally deposited in their tank, built specially for their reception in the basement of the Museum, thousands rushed to see them.

But neither Barnum nor any of his assistants knew the daily diet of a whale, and they had neglected to provide salt water in the tanks. The Museum cellar was badly ventilated, and all these factors caused the sudden death of the notorious animals. A *Tribune* editorial expressed the mock hope, “May both whales meet again in the open seas of immortality.” Barnum was not discouraged by this unforeseen catastrophe, and the publicity he had aroused was too valuable to waste. He ordered pipes laid between the Museum and New York Bay so that sea water could be pumped into the new tank he ordered for the second floor, where new whales could get plenty of fresh air. This tank, according to Barnum’s own estimates, was twenty-four feet square and lined with slate and French plate glass at a cost of $4,000. Two whales were soon on their way to New York, and soon they died. Barnum ordered two more. The public was now excited, and the necessary controversy was created by the statement in some of the newspapers that Barnum’s whales were mere porpoises. Professor

Agassiz, of Harvard, visited the animals and gave Barnum a certificate that they were genuine white whales. The publication of this authoritative statement silenced all comment by amateur newspaper naturalists.

It was Barnum's contention that more persons are humbugged by believing too little than by believing too much. "Many persons," he wrote, "have such a horror of being taken in, or such an elevated opinion of their own acutness, that they believe everything to be a sham, and in this way are continually humbugging themselves." In illustration he gave the instance of a Yankee lady who visited the Museum to see the whales. Barnum knew her personally, and after she had watched the whales she called at Barnum's office. "Mr. B., it's astonishing to what a number of purposes the ingenuity of us Yankees has applied india-rubber," she said. The whales, in her opinion, were constructed by Barnum of india-rubber and compelled to rise to the surface at regular intervals by means of a bellows puffing air into their bodies. Barnum realized that it would be useless to argue against such an ingenious conviction, and he therefore begged his friend to keep the secret to herself, assuring her that she had been the only person acute enough to discover it. Whenever he met the lady in later years, she assured him that she never had revealed his secret, and never would so long as she lived.

Barnum advertised his whales in screaming captions daily. The following is a sample:

Barnum's american museum

After months of unwearied labor, and spending

NEARLY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS
NEARLY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS
NEARLY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS

in capturing and transporting them from that part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence nearest Labrador, the Manager is enabled to offer his visitors

TWO LIVING WHALES,
TWO LIVING WHALES,
TWO LIVING WHALES,

TWO LIVING WHALES,
TWO LIVING WHALES,
TWO LIVING WHALES,

a male and a female. Everybody has heard of WHALES

IN NURSERY TALES AND "SAILOR'S YARNS,"
IN NURSERY TALES AND "SAILOR'S YARNS,"

everybody has read of WHALES in story, song, and history, and everybody

WANTS TO SEE A WHALE,
WANTS TO SEE A WHALE,
WANTS TO SEE A WHALE,
WANTS TO SEE A WHALE,

and now they have the opportunity. Barnum has

CAPTURED TWO OF THE LEVIATHANS,
CAPTURED TWO OF THE LEVIATHANS,
CAPTURED TWO OF THE LEVIATHANS,

has built a small ocean in his Museum, filled it from the briny deep, and there

THE TWO LIVING WHALES,
THE TWO LIVING WHALES,
THE TWO LIVING WHALES,
THE TWO LIVING WHALES,

measuring respectively fifteen and twenty feet in length, may be seen at all hours sporting in their native element. Who will miss the opportunity of seeing them? Another may not offer in a lifetime. Embrace this ere it be too late.

LAST TWO DAYS OF
WILLIAM TILLMAN AND WILLIAM STEDDING,
The Colored Steward and German Sailor of the
SCHOONER S. J. WARING,

Who slew three of the piratical crew, and rescued themselves and the vessel from their power.

WHAT IS IT? OR, MAN MONKEY.
MADAGASCAR ALBINOS,
PURE WHITE NEGROES, OR MOORS.
SEA LION, MAMMOTH BEAR SAMSON, with a variety of other

living Bears; MONSTER SNAKES, AQUARIA, HAPPY
FAMILY, LIVING SEAL, WAX FIGURES, &c.

In the Lecture-Room, a great Dramatic Novelty is offered,
EMBRACING FARCE, VAUDEVILLE, and BURLETTA,
with a brilliant and talented company, including
LITTLE LOLA, THE INFANT WONDER,
MR. and MRS. C. B. REYNOLDS,
MISS DORA DAWRON, DOUBLE-VOICED SINGER,
LA PETITE ADDIE LE BRUN,
The favorite Juvenile Danseuse, always popular.
MARIE; THE CHILD OF SORROW,
With a laughable farce, every day at 3 and 7¾ o'clock.
Admission to all, 25 cents; Children under 10, 15 cents.

When his last pair of white whales died Barnum utilized his tank for the abode of a still greater wonder. He obtained for an engagement of several weeks at the Museum the first and only hippopotamus that had ever been exhibited in America. He advertised his hippopotamus as "The Great Behemoth of the Scriptures," and as such the animal was visited by clergymen, naturalists, theological students, and devotees of the Bible, as well as by the common people, whose curiosity was aroused by the controversy created by the theologists and scientists. Barnum's advertisements were a great factor in the popularity of the animal; the following will serve to show his style of sonorous statement and ecstatic hyperbole, which later developed into the roaring phrases of the circus press agent:

Barnum's american museum

SECOND WEEK OF THAT WONDERFUL
LIVING HIPPOPOTAMUS,
FROM THE RIVER NILE IN EGYPT,
THE GREAT BEHEMOTH OF THE SCRIPTURES,
AND THE MARVEL OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.

The history of this animal is full of interest, and to every class, especially the educated and intelligent, but above all to the biblical student, who has read with interest the glowing description of

THE GREAT BEHEMOTH

in the Book of Job. He is strictly an

AMPHIBIOUS ANIMAL,

living in the water and out of it; under the water, or on the top of it; floats on its surface with perfect ease, or beneath the surface, midway between the top and the bottom. In their natural state these animals are wild and ferocious; though on the land, they are not very formidable, but when pursued they fly to the rivers,

DESCEND TO THE BOTTOM AND WALK ACROSS,

frequently appearing on the opposite side without the least indication of their course on the surface of the stream. If exasperated by assaults, in the water they are the most

FRIGHTFUL ANTAGONISTS,

their gigantic proportions and herculean strength giving them power over every opposing force, frequently destroying whole boat-loads of men and their boats, crushing with their huge jaws everything that comes in their way.

In the Museum the specimen here exhibited has an

ARTIFICIAL OCEAN OR RIVER,

where he is to be seen in all his natural peculiarities, floating on, and swimming beneath the surface, walking on the bottom several feet beneath, exhibiting, in short, all the peculiarities of his nature; and to perfect the scene a native

ARABIAN KEEPER, SALAAMA,

who is himself a curiosity as a specimen of that historic tribe of men, who exhibits all the stolidity and Arabian dignity of that Oriental race; the only man who can control or exhibit his Hippopotamiship, is in constant attendance. They are both to be seen at all hours, DAY and EVENING.

This is the

FIRST AND ONLY REAL HIPPOPOTAMUS

ever seen in America. He is engaged at a cost of many thousands of dollars, and will remain

A SHORT TIME ONLY.
A SHORT TIME ONLY.

Also just obtained at great expense, and now to be seen swimming in the large tank in the Aquarial Hall,

A LIVING SHARK,

besides a great variety of other living Fish, Turtles, &c., &c.

WHAT IS IT? OR, MAN MONKEY.
SEA LION, MAMMOTH BEAR SAMSON, MONSTER SNAKES,
AQUARIA, HAPPY FAMILY, LIVING SEAL, &c.
The Lecture-Room Entertainments embrace
PETITE DRAMA, VAUDEVILLE, BURLETTA, and FARCE.
By a company of rare musical and dramatic talent.
MISS DAWRON, DOUBLE-VOICED VOCALIST,
MLLE. MATILDA E. TOEDT,
The Talented Young Violinist, &c.

Admission to all, 25 cents; Children under 10, 15 cents.

The description of the behemoth in the Book of Job and Barnum's description of the hippopotamus as given above do not tally exactly. And a comparison of the two leaves the impression that the author of the Book of Job was the better press agent:

"Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of reed and fens.

The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares."

JOB xl., 15–24.

Barnum advertised his behemoth "for a short time only," then added another week "by special request," and continued a "farewell week" through many months of public curiosity.

By such enterprises and expedients as the Indian chiefs, the whales, and the behemoth, "The Art of Money-Getting" and the Prince of Wales, Barnum recovered his fortune and redeemed his reputation for success and cunning. He was once more a venerated Prince of Humbugs because he was able to maintain a palace, and many of those who had seen in his downfall a subject of righteous retribution saw in his revival the happy achievement of deserving merit.

Before the reopening of the Lecture Room in 1864 with a dramatization of Dickens's *Great Expectations* Barnum delivered the following rhymed speech, which in bare outline sums up some of the characters and oddities Barnum had introduced to the public until 1864, when he was fifty-four years old:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

"That Prince of Humbugs, Barnum," so it appears
Some folks have designated me for several years.
Well, I don't murmur; indeed, when they embellish it,
To tell the truth, my friends, I rather relish it,
Since your true humbug's he, who as a host,
For the least money entertains you most.
In this sense I'm a "humbug," I succumb!
Who as a "General" thing brought out Tom Thumb?
Who introduced (you can't say there I sinned)
The Swedish Nightingale, sweet Jenny Lind?
Who brought you Living Whales from Labrador?
The Hippopotamus from Nilus's shore,
The Bearded Lady with her (h)airs and graces,
The Aztec Children with their normal faces,
The Twins of Siam—rarest of dualities—
Two ever separate, ne'er apart realities?
The Family of Albinos? the Giraffe?
The famous Baby Show that made you laugh?
The Happy Family—cats, rats, doves, hawks, harmonious?
Their voices blend in tones euphonious.
The great Sea Lion from Pacific's coast,
The "Monarch of the Ocean," no empty boast;
Old Adam's Bears, cutest of brute performers,
In modern "peace meetings" models for reformers.
That living miracle, the Lightning Calculator,
Those figures confound Hermann the "Prestidigitator."
The Grand Aquaria, an official story
Of life beneath the waves in all its glory;
The curious "What Is It?" which you, though spunky,
Won't call a man and cannot call a monkey.
These things and many more time forbids to state,
I first introduced, if I did not originate;
"The World's Seven Wonders," pooh! let them invite you,
Here "seven" saloons all wonder-full delight you.
To call this "humbug" admits of no defense,
For all is shown for five and twenty cents.
And now, good friends, to use less rhyme than reason,
To-day re-opens our dramatic season;
Therefore I welcome you! And though we're certain

To raise “Great Expectations” with the curtain,
And “play the Dickens” afternoon and nightly,
I bid you welcome none the less politely
To these my “quarters,” merry and reliable,
That yours are always welcome ’tis undeniable!
And Patrick Henry like I say, I boast of it,
If that be “humbug,” gentlemen, “make the most of it.”

CHAPTER XI

THE DWARFS' DUEL, OR THE MARRIAGE OF THE MIDGETS

I

General Tom Thumb had exhibited himself throughout the United States on his own account with great success, and after Barnum had recovered from bankruptcy with his aid the General returned to his own management.

In December, 1861, a dwarf visited Barnum at the Museum, who promised to be a great success with the public. He was seventeen years old, twenty-nine inches high, and weighed twenty-four pounds. He had a well-shaped body, a pretty head, and the sharp tongue which is such an asset in a midget. His name was George Washington Morrison Nutt, and he was the son of Major Rodnia Nutt, a New Hampshire gentleman farmer. Barnum instructed an agent in New England to proceed immediately to Manchester, New Hampshire, and to offer Major Rodnia Nutt as much as $30,000 for the privilege of exhibiting his son for three years. In addition to this salary of $200 per week Barnum offered to pay all expenses of board, clothing, costumes and travel, as well as the expenses of any companion Major Nutt might select for his son. The dwarf was also to enjoy the profits of all the sales of books, pictures and autographs. This high offer is explained by the postscript of Barnum's letter to his agent: "I hear that several showmen are after him. Nail him, and don't let them get ahead of you. Get him on lower terms if you can. Get privilege of continuing engagement two years longer, if possible, on same terms. Payments always to be made weekly. P. T. B" Several other showmen wanted the services of George Washington Nutt, but none was able to offer $30,000, the price which Barnum was finally compelled to pay, and by reason of which the dwarf became popularly known as "The $30,000 Nutt."

Barnum rechristened his new dwarf Commodore Nutt, after the manner of General Tom Thumb, and he was dressed in naval uniform. His presence at the Museum was proclaimed by large posters and newspaper advertisements, which brought immediate results. Two Shetland ponies, a miniature coachman and footman in livery, gold-mounted harness and elegant carriage in the shape of a huge English walnut, were Commodore Nutt's properties. When he made his first appearances, Commodore Nutt resembled General Tom Thumb in his youth. Tom Thumb, meanwhile, had grown more portly, but many Museum patrons insisted that Commodore Nutt and General Tom Thumb were one and the same person, and that Barnum was a humbug. Tom Thumb was just then touring in the West. When the controversy had grown to proper dimensions, Barnum persuaded General Tom Thumb to return east and to exhibit at the Museum on the same platform with Commodore Nutt. In August, 1862, the rivals, advertised as "The Two Dromios," appeared together. Many persons visited the Museum again to settle their doubts on this momentous question, and some of them went away convinced more than ever that it was all a deception. It was confidently stated by those who had visited General Tom Thumb in his childhood that Commodore Nutt was General Tom Thumb, and that the stout, small man labeled General Tom Thumb was a newcomer. The continued controversy increased receipts and delighted Barnum.

In 1862 Barnum visited Washington with Commodore Nutt, and they were received at the White House by President Lincoln. At the time Lincoln was busy with the Civil War, but he was interested in Barnum and his dwarf. When they called at the White House a special cabinet meeting was in progress, but Lincoln had left word that Barnum and the Commodore were to be shown in at once. They were introduced by Lincoln to the members of his cabinet, and when Commodore Nutt shook hands with Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, he remarked, "I suppose you are the gentleman who is spending so much of Uncle Sam's money?" Stanton, Secretary of War, spoke up, claiming that credit, and the Commodore said, "Well, it is in a good cause, anyhow, and I guess it will come out all right." Lincoln was pleased with this remark, and he bent his long body down to take the little Commodore's hand, as he said: "Commodore, permit me to give you a parting word of advice. When you are in command of your fleet,

if you find yourself in danger of being taken prisoner, I advise you to wade ashore." "I guess, Mr. President, you could do that better than I could," answered the Commodore, as he gradually looked up the long expanse of Lincoln's legs.

As a contrast to the "Two Smallest Men and Greatest Curiosities Living," Barnum engaged Anna Swan, the Nova Scotia giantess, who was seventeen years old and was supposed to be the tallest woman in the world. Her features were attractive, and in spite of her enormous size she was admired for her beauty. For many years she was a leading attraction at the Museum; later she married Colonel Bates, a giant, and they toured England with success.

In the same year, 1862, Barnum discovered another dwarf, a young girl, Lavinia Warren, who lived with her parents in Middleboro, Massachusetts. Lavinia Warren, whose name at baptism was Mercy Lavinia Warren Bumpus, was born October 31, 1841. She traced her pedigree to William, Earl of Warren, who married Gruneda, daughter of William the Conqueror. Lavinia had two older brothers and two older sisters, and they were all more than six feet tall. She had two younger brothers of normal size and a younger sister, Minnie Warren, who was also a dwarf. Lavinia's father was six feet in height, and her mother was a tall woman. After she was ten years old she stopped growing, and at that time was twenty-four inches high and weighed twenty pounds. She went to school in Middleboro and was taught housework by her mother. Throughout her girlhood she lived the life of a normal person; she was extremely sensitive about her abnormality and determined that it must not make any difference. She studied hard, and at the age of sixteen became a school teacher in the Middleboro school, where she was always able to maintain proper discipline in spite of her size. She was satisfied with this occupation for life. Then a cousin, who was a traveling showman, visited the Bumpus house and suggested that Lavinia should travel with his show. She was eager to see the country, and, after gaining the reluctant permission of her parents, she went West with her cousin, whose show was located on board a Mississippi River boat that stopped for exhibitions at all important towns on the river. During her travels Lavinia Warren met General Grant and Stephen A.

Douglas. The latter tried to kiss her, but she was conscious of her womanhood and drew back with becoming modesty. Douglas did not bother her further.

Barnum heard of Lavinia Warren in 1862, and he engaged her for several years, including the privilege of a foreign tour. Before exhibiting Lavinia Warren at the Museum, Barnum placed her in a suite at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where she was visited by fashionable society and popular Civil War generals, including the Vanderbilts and the Astors and Generals McClellan, Burnside, Rosecrans and McPherson. Barnum purchased jewels and an elaborate wardrobe for Lavinia, and when society admirers had stimulated general curiosity sufficiently, he exhibited her to the public at the Museum.

II

When Lavinia Warren exhibited at Barnum's American Museum, the spectacle of "The Two Dromios" had ended; General Tom Thumb was on a vacation in Bridgeport, his home, and Commodore Nutt was the only other dwarf at the Museum. The Commodore was about five years younger than Lavinia Warren, but age has never acted as a check on affection, and in this respect at least these midgets did not differ from ordinary men and women, for it was not long before Commodore Nutt was fascinated. Lavinia Warren was well-mannered, demure, intelligent, and she had pretty pink cheeks. The Commodore was a sprightly, gay boy of seventeen, whose susceptibility to a woman's charm seemed in no way limited by his size.

Among the many presents of jewelry which Barnum made to Lavinia for her use in her exhibitions was a small ring, which was still too large for her tiny fingers. Barnum, inadvertently, suggested that she give it to the Commodore as a present. The Commodore was delighted; he regarded the ring as a token that his obvious interest was reciprocated. Lavinia was uneasy, for, as she confided to Barnum, she could only regard the Commodore as "a nice boy," while she considered herself a serious-minded woman; had she not taught school? She continued to treat the Commodore kindly, but she refused to encourage his attentions.

Meanwhile, General Tom Thumb was spending his time in Bridgeport with his ponies and his yacht, which were his favorite sources of amusement since he had come of age. He visited New York one day and dropped in to see his friend Mr. Barnum at the Museum. He was introduced to Lavinia Warren, and after chatting pleasantly with her for a short time the General hurried to Barnum's private office. As soon as they were alone, he asked Barnum for detailed information about Lavinia and her family. Tom Thumb looked up at his friend earnestly and said with emphasis in his diminutive treble voice, "Mr. Barnum, that is the most charming little lady I ever saw, and I believe she was created on purpose to be my wife!" There was a pause. Barnum refused to express any opinion on this statement. "Now, Mr. Barnum," the General continued, "you've always been a friend of mine, and I want you to say a good word for me to her. I've got plenty of money, and I want to marry and settle down. I really feel as though I *must* marry that young lady."

The little General was excited, but determined. Barnum was amused, and, indulging his inordinate love of a pun,—and that pun in particular, since he had already used it once on Jenny Lind,—he said, "Lavinia is already engaged, General." "To whom? Commodore Nutt?" the General asked with suspicion and jealousy in his voice. "No," said Barnum, "to me." The General was immensely relieved, and he insisted that Barnum's contract must not interfere with his happiness. "I hope you will favor my suit with her?" he asked. "Well, General," Barnum said, "I will not oppose you in your suit, but you must do your own courting. But I tell you, Commodore Nutt will be jealous of you, and, more than that, Miss Warren is nobody's fool. You will have to be careful, if you want to succeed."

The General was confident and active. He abandoned his yacht and neglected his ponies. Much of his time was now spent at his sister's house in New York City, and every day he visited the Museum for pleasure. Commodore Nutt grew jealous, and he resented the General's frequent intrusions. When the rivals were left alone in the Museum dressing-rooms one day, the Commodore laid the General flat on his back, for the Commodore was wiry and alert, while the General, who was eight years older, was portly and slow. Although physically the General was at a disadvantage, in his courtship he had the advantages of a man of wealth and leisure over at person who

must work every day for his living. While Commodore Nutt was entertaining the Museum patrons, General Tom Thumb was entertaining Lavinia Warren. Sundays and evenings, when Lavinia was at leisure and the Commodore was not present, the General chatted shyly with her, and by his constant presence he indubitably established in her mind the reason for it. Finally, satisfied that he had made discreet and sufficient progress, General Tom Thumb returned to his neglected family in Bridgeport. But before he left New York he begged Barnum to invite Lavinia Warren to the Barnum house in Bridgeport for the week-end. He wanted his mother to meet Lavinia.

On the following Friday, when the Commodore and Lavinia were sitting in the Museum Green-Room, Barnum said, "Lavinia, would you like to go up to Bridgeport with me to-morrow and stay until Monday?" "Thank you," she said, "it will be a great relief to get into the country for a couple of days." "Mr. Barnum," said the Commodore, "*I* should like to go up to Bridgeport to-morrow." "What for?" asked Barnum innocently. "I want to see my ponies; I haven't seen them for several months." Barnum was afraid that he could not spare both Lavinia and the Commodore from the Museum, he said. But the Commodore insisted that he could perform at half-past seven Saturday night and catch the eight o'clock train for Bridgeport. Barnum did not wish to lose the Commodore's friendship, and Lavinia did not seem to object to his company at the week-end party. Barnum confessed that he knew nothing of Lavinia's opinion of the rivals. At the time he believed that she wished the presence of the Commodore to prevent a declaration by the General, but she confided nothing to him.

General Tom Thumb waited with his best coach at the Bridgeport railroad station on Saturday morning. The coachman was dressed up for the occasion with a broad velvet ribbon and a new silver buckle on his hat. The General drove Barnum and Lavinia to Barnum's house, and then he took Lavinia for a drive. Stopping with her for a few minutes at his own house, he showed her the rooms which his father had ordered to be constructed midget size, and also showed her the gorgeous diminutive furniture which filled those rooms. Then he drove with her to East Bridgeport and pointed out his real estate. At

luncheon he was delighted when Lavinia, in answer to Barnum's question about her drive, said: "It was very pleasant; it seems as if you and Tom Thumb own about all of Bridgeport."

The General returned to Barnum's house for dinner, and he brought his mother along. She did not yet know that her son intended matrimony, but she was delighted with Lavinia Warren. Taking Barnum aside, the General asked for an invitation to spend the night at "Lindencroft," Barnum's new Bridgeport residence. "I intend," he explained, "to ask her to marry me before the Commodore arrives."

After dinner Lavinia and General Tom Thumb played backgammon. At nine o'clock Barnum yawned ostentatiously and said he would like to retire, but that some one must wait up for the Commodore. General Tom Thumb volunteered, "if Miss Warren will remain also." Lavinia explained that she was used to late hours, and the two dwarfs waited for the third. The Barnum family retired, excepting two young girls, who had been told of the situation, and who were interested in its dénouement. They took up positions on the hall stairway, where they could watch and listen in darkness. It is to their curiosity that we are indebted, via Barnum, for the detailed report of what happened that evening.

Backgammon grew tiresome, and the General finally suggested that they had had enough. There were a few minutes of meditative silence. Then the General drew from his small, inside coat pocket a large, much-folded paper, and, handing it to Lavinia, he asked her if she knew what that was. "It is an insurance policy," she said. "I see you keep your property insured." "But the beauty of it is," said the General with a cunning smile, "it is not my property. And yet I get the benefit of the insurance in case of fire." He unfolded the large insurance policy, and the two little heads bent over its wide expanse. "You will see," the General demonstrated, "that this is the property of Mr. Williams. But here, you will notice, it reads, 'Loss, if any, payable to Charles S. Stratton, as his interest may appear.' The fact is, I loaned Mr. Williams three thousand dollars, took a mortgage on his house, and made him insure it for my benefit. In this way, you see, I get my interest, and he has to pay the taxes," he wound up triumphantly.

"That is a very wise way, I should think," Lavinia said.

"That is the way I do all my business," the General answered, and he returned the large insurance policy to his pocket. "You see, I never lend any of my money without taking bond and mortgage securities, then I never have any trouble with taxes; my principal is secure, and I receive my interest regularly." Thus any one, and especially Lavinia, could see what a smart little, rich little man he was. This exposition, and the romantic morning drive around the real estate, made his point.

He drew his chair closer. "So you are going to Europe soon," he said, although the fact was well known to both of them.

"Yes," Lavinia answered. "Mr. Barnum intends to take me over in a couple of months."

"You will find it very pleasant," Tom Thumb said, "I have been there twice; in fact, I have spent six years abroad, and I like the old countries very much."

"I hope I shall like the trip, and I expect I shall," said Lavinia. "Mr. Barnum says I shall visit all the principal cities, and he has no doubt I will be invited to appear before the Queen of England, the Emperor and Empress of France, the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Austria, and at the courts of any other countries we may visit. Oh! I shall like that; it will be so new to me!"

"Yes, it will be very interesting, indeed. I have visited most of the crowned heads," said the small man of the world. "But don't you think you'll be lonesome in a strange country?" he asked anxiously. Lavinia did not think she would be lonesome. "I wish I was going over," Tom Thumb said. "I know all about the different countries, and I could explain them all to you."

"That would be very nice," Lavinia admitted.

"Do you think so?" He moved his chair closer.

"Of course," she said calmly, without emphasis. "It would be pleasant to have some one along who could answer all my foolish questions."

"I should like it first-rate, if Mr. Barnum would engage me," said the General.

"I thought you said the other day you had money enough and were tired of traveling," Lavinia said, slyly teasing him.

"That depends upon my company while traveling," said the General, gallant and bold.

"You might not find my company very agreeable," suggested Lavinia.

"I would be glad to risk it," said the General.

"Well, perhaps Mr. Barnum would engage you if you asked him."

"Would you really like to have me go?" the General asked, as he insinuated his arm around the back of the chair. He did not dare to touch her yet.

"Of course I would," she said gently.

The General's arm boldly encircled her small waist, and he turned her towards him. "Don't you think it would be nicer if we went as man and wife?" Lavinia was surprised, and she removed the General's arm. When questioned further, she said that she did think it was all very sudden, but the General did not agree with her. He finally argued away her doubts with a kiss, and she consented to marry him if her mother granted permission.

A few minutes later a carriage drove up, and the bell rang. Commodore Nutt entered. "You here, General?" he asked gruffly.

"Yes," Lavinia answered for him. "Mr. Barnum asked him to stay the night, and we were waiting for you."

"Where is Mr. Barnum?" asked the Commodore.

"He has gone to bed, but a supper has been prepared for you," Tom Thumb said.

"I am not hungry, thank you," said the Commodore brusquely. "What room does Mr. Barnum sleep in?" He was told, and he went up to see Barnum, who was reading in bed.

"Mr. Barnum," the Commodore asked, "does Tom Thumb *board* here?"

"No," said Barnum. "Tom Thumb does not *board* here. I invited him to stop over night, so don't be foolish, but go to bed."

"Oh, it's no affair of mine; I don't care anything about it. Only I thought he'd taken up his residence here." And he went off to bed, but not to sleep.

Ten minutes later Tom Thumb rushed into Barnum's room. "We're engaged, Mr. Barnum! We're engaged! What do you think of that!"

"Is that possible?" asked Barnum.

"Yes, sir, indeed it is, but you mustn't mention it. We've agreed to tell no one, so don't say a word. I'm going to ask her mother's consent Tuesday."[17]

The next day, Sunday, Lavinia said nothing about the event of Saturday night. She treated Commodore Nutt with her usual cordiality, and as General Tom Thumb went home early in the morning, the Commodore was once more in good humor, for, although he was suspicious, he was still uncertain of the exact extent of the General's progress. On Sunday evening the General had a short conversation with Lavinia, and that night Lavinia and the Commodore went back to New York together. There is no report of their conversation on the train.

The General sent a good friend to Lavinia's mother, with a letter, and the friend also urged the suit personally. On the following Wednesday the General went to New York, where he waited in Lavinia's company for her mother's answer. Both of them entered Barnum's private office Wednesday afternoon, and Tom Thumb said: "Mr. Barnum, I want somebody to tell the Commodore that Lavinia and I are engaged, for I'm afraid there will be a row when he hears about it." "Do it yourself, General," was Barnum's suggestion. "Oh, I wouldn't dare do it," said Tom Thumb. "He might knock me down!" "I will do it myself," Lavinia decided.

The General retired, and Barnum sent for Commodore Nutt. When the Commodore entered, Barnum said: "Commodore, do you know what this little witch has been doing?" The Commodore had no idea. "Well, she has been cutting up one of the greatest pranks you ever heard of. She almost deserves to be shut up for daring to do it. Can't you guess what she has done?"

He looked at Barnum in silence for a moment, and then in a low, trembling voice, he said, looking full at Lavinia, "Engaged?"

"Yes," said Barnum, "actually engaged to be married to General Tom Thumb. Did you ever hear of such a thing?"

"Is it so, Lavinia?" the Commodore asked earnestly.

"Yes, it is really so," said Lavinia.

The Commodore turned weak and pale. He choked, turned on his tiny heel, and when he got to the door, he just managed to say in a broken voice, “I hope you may be happy.”

“That’s pretty hard,” Barnum said to Lavinia.

“I am very sorry,” said Lavinia, “but I could not help it. That diamond and emerald ring you asked me to give him caused all the trouble.” Lavinia Warren was placing too much responsibility on a small ring.

Half an hour after Barnum told him the news, Commodore Nutt returned to the private office. “Mr. Barnum,” he asked, “do you think it would be right for Miss Warren to marry Charlie Stratton if her mother should object?” “No, indeed,” said Barnum. “Well, she says she will marry him anyway; that she gives her mother the chance to consent, but if she objects, she will have her way and marry him.” Barnum reassured the Commodore. He would not permit such disobedience, he said, and if Mrs. Warren objected to the match, Barnum intended to put an end to it by insisting on the terms of the contract with Lavinia and taking her to Europe immediately. The Commodore was joyful. “Between you and me, Mr. Barnum,” he said, “I don’t believe she will consent.” But the Commodore was wrong. Mrs. Warren consented, but only after she was convinced that the match was not prompted by Barnum for the purpose of making money.

When the Commodore’s last hope was destroyed, Barnum, endeavoring to comfort him, said, “Never mind, Commodore, Minnie Warren is a better match for you anyhow. She is two years younger than you, and Lavinia is older.” “Thank you, sir, but I would not marry the best woman living. I don’t believe in women,” was the Commodore’s reply.

Barnum suggested that Commodore Nutt act as best man at the wedding, with Minnie Warren as bridesmaid. The Commodore refused without giving any reason. A few weeks later he told Barnum that Charlie Stratton had asked him to act as best man, and that he had accepted. “And when I asked you, you refused,” said Barnum. “It was not your business to ask me,” the Commodore answered. “When the proper person asked me, I accepted.”

III

The public announcement of the forthcoming wedding of General Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren created great popular excitement. The levees held at the Museum daily by Lavinia Warren were crowded beyond the capacity of the space, and she sold daily three hundred dollars' worth of photographs of herself. The receipts at the Museum were more than $3,000 each day, and Barnum offered General Tom Thumb, who was on exhibition with his fiancée, $15,000 if he would postpone the wedding for one month and continue the joint appearances. "No, sir," the General said excitedly, "not for fifty thousand dollars!" "Good for you, Charlie," said Lavinia, "only you should have said one hundred thousand."

Barnum's profits were so large that he could well afford a fine wedding. He determined to make it a grand occasion, because he wanted to do the right thing by his exceptional wards, he tells us, but he was also doing a good thing for his Museum. Many accused Barnum of having arranged this diminutive marriage on a large scale as an advertisement. "Had I done this," he wrote later, "I should at this day have felt no regrets, for it has proved, in an eminent degree, one of the 'happy marriages.'" But he did not arrange the attachment General Tom Thumb felt for Lavinia Warren, and it is probable that the match was for him a financial loss, because it meant the end of his lucrative contract with Lavinia Warren and the renunciation of a European tour which would have brought him large profits.

It was suggested to Barnum that he hire the Academy of Music and charge admission to the wedding ceremony. But that impressed even Barnum with its lack of dignity; there was always something sacred to him about any church ceremony, which aroused his sense of propriety as nothing else could. He had promised the couple a respectable wedding, and he intended to see that they had one. Preparations were made for one of the most imposing social events of the time. Two thousand invitations were issued to New York's notorieties, plutocrats and celebrities. As much as sixty dollars was offered for one of these private invitations, but none was sold by Barnum.

The *Herald* printed a long protest against Barnum's part in the wedding. The motive for it is difficult to understand, for Mr. and Mrs. James Gordon Bennett were among the invited guests, and Mrs.

Bennett sent the couple a miniature silver tea set. The *Herald* wrote:

> "The American press and public have been exceedingly lenient with Barnum. They have allowed him to make money by humbugging innocent people, and more money by selling a book telling how well his humbugs have succeeded. Recently, however, he has taken altogether too bold an advantage of this leniency. Having secured a dwarf woman, he has been exhibiting her at the Museum for some time past as the betrothed of another dwarf, called General Tom Thumb. How this match was arranged, we do not care to know; but we are informed that it is to be consummated at Grace Church to-morrow with all the display of a fashionable wedding. Of course, we have no objections to the marriage, and no desire to forbid the bans. Miss Warren is a woman and Tom Thumb is a man, no matter how small they may be, and they have as good a right to be wedded as any other man and woman. This will be by no means the first time that dwarfs have been married and lived happily ever after. We do object, however, to Barnum's share in the transaction, and particularly to his attempt to make money by the public exhibition of the intended bride and all the paraphernalia....
>
> "By his connection with this miniature marriage, Barnum has injured himself sadly in the estimation of virtuous people. There is such a thing as going a little too far even with patrons so indulgent as Americans. The marriage vows ought not to be trifled with for the interest of a showman. The exhibition of Miss Warren at the Museum, the display of Miss Warren's wedding dress, Tom Thumb's wedding shirt, Miss Warren's wedding shoes, and Tom Thumb's wedding stockings in store windows on Broadway, and all the other details of Barnum's management of this matter, are offensive to delicacy, decorum, modesty and good taste. Why should men and women be so much more eager to see Miss Warren after she was engaged to Tom Thumb than before? What class of ideas did Barnum appeal to when he advertised her engagement so extensively? One had only to listen to the conversation of silly countrymen and countrywomen as they stood gaping at the 'little Queen of Beauty,' or to open his ears to the numerous jokes in circulation upon the subject, in order to receive a sufficient answer to these questions. What Barnum will do when the wedding is over nobody can tell. Doubtless he intends to

> exhibit the couple after the marriage ceremony. There will be a crowd to see the little people married, and certainly there would be a greater crowd to see them encouched, as the princes and princesses of France were exhibited during old monarchical times. We advise Barnum not to attempt this, however. He has already overstepped all ordinary barriers, and must be satisfied. Those persons who have encouraged him by their wish to see Miss Warren and her dry goods have our sincere compassion. We hope that the wedding will pass off pleasantly to-morrow, and that no speculating Barnum will henceforward overshadow the happy pair."

There was a part of the population who visited the Museum in order to comment lasciviously on this unusual engagement and its probable results, but this could hardly be blamed on Barnum. There was a larger part of those present who visited the couple because to them a marriage between two "cute" personalities was a "cute" spectacle, and it was for this effect that Barnum was undoubtedly striving. He had never before in his career catered to the propensities towards lewdness inherent in men and women, and he never did so again; there is no reason to believe that by this wedding he wished to attract those interested in abnormal sex suggestions. The *Herald's* contention, based as it was on the deep-rooted antagonism of James Gordon Bennett to Barnum's personality, was far-fetched, to say the least.

The wedding of General Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren took place at Grace Church, Tuesday, February 10, 1863, when the General was twenty-five years old, and his bride twenty-two. The governors of several states, members of Congress, army generals, millionaires, and men and women of old New York ancestry were the spectators. President Lincoln and his wife sent the couple a "gorgeous set of Chinese fire screens." Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt gave them "a coral and gold-set brooch, ear-rings and studs of the finest workmanship," and Mrs. August Belmont sent "a splendid set of silver chaste charms."

The neighborhood of Grace Church was crowded as if for a public procession, and people waited hours for the privilege of seeing the diminutive bride and groom enter the church. The invited guests were attired in full dress, and the women wore what a contemporary called

"opera costume." In front of the altar a platform three feet high had been erected and covered with Brussels carpet in order that the little couple could be seen and could see.

At noon Barnum and the bridal party arrived at the church, followed by Commodore Nutt and Miss Minnie Warren. General Tom Thumb had respectfully applied to Bishop Potter to perform the ceremony, and the Bishop had consented, but pressure was brought to bear on his sense of propriety, and he finally decided that it would be better for him to take back his promise. Two clergymen read the services, and Mr. Morgan played operatic selections on the church organ.

After the marriage was performed, the wedding party drove to the Metropolitan Hotel, where thousands of enthusiastic citizens were waiting for them. A reception was held in the hotel parlors, and so great was the confusion resulting in the effort to reach the couple, who were mounted on another dais, that it was necessary to shut the doors. Lavinia Warren in white satin, the skirt decorated with a flounce of "costly point lace," with a long train, bowed and smiled from her platform. She also wore "*tulle* puffings," and "a *berthe* to match." Her hair was waved and "rolled *à la Eugenie*, elaborately puffed in *noeuds* behind, in which the bridal veil was looped." "Natural orange blossoms breathed their perfume above her brow," wrote an observer, "and mingled their fragrance with the soft sighs of her gentle bosom." Tom Thumb and Commodore Nutt were in full dress suits with white corded silk vests and blue silk undervests.

At three o'clock in the afternoon two thousand boxes of wedding cake were distributed, and the wedding presents were placed on exhibition in the hotel parlors. In the evening the couple were serenaded by the New York Excelsior Band, and General Tom Thumb made a speech of thanks from one of the balconies of the Metropolitan Hotel.

Strenuous objections were made by some of the Grace Church pewholders against the clergymen who allowed the church to be devoted to what one of them described as "a marriage of mountebanks, which I would not take the trouble to cross the street to witness." But this indignant pewholder wanted to know why he had been excluded on that day from his pew. The Rev. Dr. Taylor, the responsible clergyman, replied that the wedding had been private,

decorous and beautiful, and that it was not possible for him to refuse the church to any couple so long as no admission charge was asked. But the protests continued, and an attempt was also made to blackmail Barnum. Soon after the wedding a woman called at the Museum and showed him a copy of a pamphlet called "Priests and Pigmies." She said that she intended to issue this pamphlet, which she assured him said some frightful things about him, unless he wished to purchase the copyright for a large sum. Barnum laughed and said: "My dear madam, you may say what you please about me or about my Museum; you may print a hundred thousand copies of a pamphlet stating that I stole the communion service, after the wedding, from Grace Church altar, or anything else you choose to write; only have the kindness to say something about me, and then come to me, and I will properly estimate the money value of your services to me as an advertising agent. Good morning, madam."

In the course of their honeymoon, General Tom Thumb and Mrs. Tom Thumb visited Lincoln at the White House, where he gave a dinner and reception for them. Lincoln liked Lavinia because her face resembled his wife's. The dwarfs retired from public life for a few months, but soon they were weary of their privacy, and together with Minnie Warren and Commodore Nutt they toured Europe for three years.

Several times it was rumored that Commodore Nutt and Minnie Warren were married. Barnum met the Commodore after his return from Europe. "Are you married yet, Commodore?" Barnum asked. "No, sir; my fruit is plucked," he answered. "You don't mean to say you will never marry?" "No, not exactly," was the Commodore's reply, "but I have decided not to marry until I am thirty." "I suppose you intend to marry one of your size," Barnum hinted. "I am not particular in that respect," said the Commodore. "I think I should prefer marrying a good, green country girl to anybody else." But when he died in 1881 at the age of thirty-three, he was still a bachelor.

It was said that the Commodore became "a fast young man" after his disappointment, and when he made advances to Minnie Warren, she refused him because of his past. In 1874 Major Newell, known as General Grant, Jr., was added to the troupe of famous dwarfs. The Major and Minnie were married in 1877. In July 1878, a baby was about to be born to them. Neighbors in Middleboro, Massachusetts,

where they lived with General and Mrs. Tom Thumb, saw Minnie cutting baby clothes from doll patterns, one-sixth the size of ordinary baby clothes. A girl was born and died four hours later. Minnie died of exhaustion soon afterwards. At birth the baby weighed five pounds, ten ounces. Major Newell later went to England, where he was very popular. He married an Englishwoman of normal size, and when he died at the age of sixty he left a widow and two children.

General Tom Thumb and Mrs. Tom Thumb had one child, who died of inflammation of the brain two and a half years after her birth. The General and his wife, together with the other dwarfs, visited Queen Victoria, Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie, Pius IX, Victor Emmanuel and William I, of Germany. When they toured England in 1865, the tax assessors estimated the receipts at between ten and twenty thousand pounds a year. In 1872 they made a tour of the world with Commodore Nutt and Minnie Warren, visiting Australia, China and Japan, as well as the principal European countries. When they arrived in Japan, General Tom Thumb and Sylvester Bleecker, who managed the tour and wrote a book about it, visited one of the famous mixed bathing pools, where men and women bathe together without the formality of clothes. "Mr. Bleecker," said General Tom Thumb, "if we tell this to the folks at home, they will not believe us; but it is *so*! Men and women bathing together with not a rag upon them, and they don't mind it a bit! Write and let P. T. [Barnum] know what we have seen. If he had that place, just as it is—men, women and children, all in the United States, it would be the biggest show he ever had."

When he was young, according to Barnum, General Tom Thumb was miserly, and he spent no penny that could be avoided. In later life he spent thousands of dollars on yachts, horses and precious stones. Before leaving for Europe he asked Barnum to sell his sailing yacht and buy him a steam yacht for thirty or forty thousand dollars. In his letter he explained that when he was not using it, his crew could use it to tug vessels in and out of Bridgeport harbor, and thus pay their own wages and eventually the entire cost of the yacht. His tastes ran along conventional American lines: after he was eighteen years old the General smoked cigars regularly, and a few years later he became a third-degree Mason. General Tom Thumb's dimensions made very little inward difference to his character. He was very much a man of

the world as soon as he was old enough to think. It was his body that he sold to the public, and it was his body that he always comforted; it is doubtful if he had much of a soul. Between him and the Bridgeport business man there were no essential differences, if we disregard for the moment the all important difference in size. And it was this similarity to the normal business man, the seemingly incongruous fact that in spite of his size he thought and acted like any one else, that made his appeal as a curiosity so great. His dumpy, portly figure, straight wisps of beard, thin, irregular mustache, and sharp, stern eyes, give the impression of a wistful caricature of the American man of business. And when he died at the age of forty-five, on July 15, 1883, he was buried with the ritual of the Free and Accepted Masons.

Not long after the General's death Mrs. Tom Thumb married Count Primo Magri, an Italian dwarf, who received his title of nobility from Pope Pius IX. Count Magri, with his brother, Baron Ernesto Magri, traveled with General and Mrs. Tom Thumb. The General had spent too much money on yachts and horses, and Mrs. Tom Thumb was not rich when her husband died. After many years of exhibiting with her second husband, they kept a general store for automobile tourists in Middleboro, Massachusetts. The store was called "Primo's Pastime," and was open only in the summer, when the proprietor and his wife were not exhibiting at Coney Island.

Mrs. Tom Thumb died at the age of seventy-seven on November 25, 1919. In order to get money enough to return to Italy Count Magri was compelled to sell his wife's effects, which brought only $300. On October 31, 1920, he died at Middleboro, aged seventy-one, and he was buried by the Grand Rapids, Michigan, Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

CHAPTER XII

THIS WORLD, AND THE NEXT

I

AFTER he had sensationally married his dwarfs, to the immense credit of the American Museum, Barnum had time in his fifty-fifth year for rest, reading and recreation, but he did not take it. He wrote a book, he became a state legislator, he developed East Bridgeport real estate, he lectured on Success and on Temperance, and he projected forerunners of what was to be his admission card to immortality: The Circus.

The book was *The Humbugs of the World*, the most revealing book Barnum wrote, although it is written in general terms for the information and guidance of his contemporaries rather than for the instruction or benefit of mankind. *The Humbugs of the World* tells most about Barnum because it is abstract and subjective, and in it he gives us a better impression of his own character than in all the anecdotes of all his autobiographies.

The Humbugs of the World begins with a definition of the scope of humbug by the man who styled himself "Prince of Humbugs": "A little reflection will show that humbug is an astonishingly widespread phenomenon—in fact, almost universal.... I apprehend that there is no sort of object which men seek to attain, whether secular, moral or religious, in which humbug is not very often an instrumentality." We all use humbug in our business, said Barnum, and religious humbugs in his opinion were a large division of the subject. In his discussion of humbug in commercial life, Barnum seems most accurate:

> "Business," he wrote, "is the ordinary means of living for nearly all of us. And in what business is there not humbug? 'There's cheating in all trades but ours,' is the prompt reply from the boot-maker with his brown paper soles, the grocer with his floury sugar and chicoried coffee, the butcher with his mysterious sausages and queer veal, the dry-goods man with his 'damaged goods wet at

> the great fire,' and his 'selling at a ruinous loss,' the stock-broker with his brazen assurance that your company is bankrupt and your stock not worth a cent (if he wants to buy it), the horse jockey with his black arts and spavined brutes, the milk man with his tin aquaria, the land-agent with his nice new maps and beautiful descriptions of distant scenery, the newspaper man with his 'immense circulation,' the publisher with his 'Great American Novel,' the city auctioneer with his 'Pictures by the Old Masters,'—all and every one protest each his own innocence, and warn you against the deceits of the rest. My inexperienced friend, take it for granted that they all tell the truth—about each other! and then transact your business to the best of your ability on your own judgment. Never fear but that you will get experience enough, and that you will pay well for it too; and towards the time when you shall no longer need earthly goods, you will begin to know how to buy."

But in Barnum's opinion there was one more thorough humbug than all the others: "The greatest humbug of all is the man who believes—or pretends to believe—that everything and everybody are humbugs." Then follows this detailed definition of the chronic cynic:

> "We sometimes meet a person who professes that there is no virtue; that every man has his price, and every woman hers; that any statement from anybody is just as likely to be false as true, and that the only way to decide which, is to consider whether the truth or a lie was likely to have paid best in that particular case. Religion he thinks one of the smartest business dodges extant, a first-rate investment, and by all odds the most respectable disguise that a lying or a swindling business man can wear. Honor he thinks is a sham. Honesty he considers a plausible word to flourish in the eyes of the greener portion of our race, as you would hold out a cabbage-leaf to coax a donkey. What people want, he thinks, or says he thinks, is something good to eat, something good to drink, fine clothes, luxury, laziness, wealth. If you can imagine a hog's mind in a man's body—sensual, greedy, selfish, cruel, cunning, sly, coarse, yet stupid, short-sighted, unreasoning, unable to comprehend anything except what concerns the flesh, you have your man. He thinks himself philosophic and practical, a man of the world; he thinks to show

> knowledge and wisdom, penetration, deep acquaintance with men and things. Poor fellow! he has exposed his own nakedness. Instead of showing that others are rotten inside, he has proved that he is. He claims that it is not safe to believe others—it is perfectly safe to disbelieve him. He claims that every man will get the better of you if possible—let him alone! Selfishness, he says, is the universal rule—leave nothing to depend on his generosity or honor; trust him just as far as you can sling an elephant by the tail. A bad world, he sneers, full of deceit and nastiness—it is his own foul breath that he smells; only a thoroughly corrupt heart could suggest such vile thoughts. He sees only what suits him, as a turkey-buzzard spies only carrion, though amid the loveliest landscape. I pronounce him who thus virtually slanders his father and dishonors his mother, and defiles the sanctities of home, and the glory of patriotism, and the merchant's honor, and the martyr's grave and the saint's crown—who does not even know that every sham shows that there is a reality, and that hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue—I pronounce him—no, I do not pronounce him a humbug, the word does not apply to him. He is a fool."

In this virulent exposé of the cynic, Barnum was right from his point of view to call that type of mind a fool's, for that type of mind is so seldom successful. Barnum, as he indicates clearly in *The Humbugs of the World*, was constantly on the look-out for deception of different species, but his attitude was never that of the chronic cynic. His profound belief in Christianity—particularly in Universalism—and the ultimate perfectibility of man, whether in heaven or on earth, made it possible for him to denounce sincerely those who doubted man and God, and at the same time to use energetically the opportunities offered by the present imperfect state of society. He was not his own last word in degradation, the cynical humbug, because he had a sincere faith in spiritual values. It is true that he capitalized man's machinery of Christianity for the purposes of the show business, but he himself believed piously and with sincerity in the immediate and ultimate efficacy of that machinery. Barnum felt enough to be no worse than his contemporaries, and he knew enough to be no better. He had so much sincere belief in the

popular Christian ideals, and so much ability in the practice of his profession, that he was accepted by mankind as an honest as well as a successful man.

To be a humbug, by Barnum's sanitary definition, was not to be dishonest. His humbug was not a cheat, nor an impostor, and he excluded counterfeiters, forgers, confidence men and pickpockets from his select company of happy deceivers. However, even Barnum's distinction between humbug and dishonesty is vague, and one that allows latitude for personal opinion in specific instances. Almost every one would disagree with a few of Barnum's examples of humbug, preferring to characterize them as pieces of thievery, and there are those who would accept some of his stories of imposture as merely innocent deceptions. No subject, based as it is on varying standards of honesty, could offer more room for difference of opinion, which is why Barnum's consideration of it is such an excellent index of his own moral character. The true humbug, said Barnum, is the man who advertises his wares in an *outré* manner, but who gives his customers their money's worth after he has attracted their patronage. He wrote in *The Humbugs of the World*: "And whenever the time shall come when men are kind and just and honest; when they only want what is fair and right, judge only on real and true evidence, and take nothing for granted, then there will be no place left for any humbugs, either harmless or hurtful." Meanwhile, he felt it was his legitimate privilege to supply the demand.

After making it clear that the difference between a thief and a Barnum is a great one, the author exposed various humbugs in detail. Barnum's book contains chapters on the spiritualists of his day, adulterations of food and of drink, fraud in auctions, lottery deceptions, bogus oil and coal stocks, the Dutch tulip speculations, the South Sea Bubble, patent medicines, the Moon Hoax, ghosts and haunted houses, witchcraft, magic, adventurers, vampires, religious impostures and heathen humbugs. Many of these subjects, and others in the book which are too detailed to mention, do not fall within the scope of Barnum's definition of a humbug; most of them are treated entertainingly, even if they were perpetrated by swindlers and impostors, with whom Barnum usually had no patience, and of whom he had no understanding. His sense of honesty and propriety as expressed in this book is great enough to lead the reader to believe

that he was guilty of his own accusation in that he condoned deception only in the show business, and believed firmly that cheating in other trades was indefensible.

And even in his own trade practices which were distasteful to him, but no worse than some of his own acts, come in for rigorous moral condemnation. In discussing advertising he is very hard on the man who dares to deface landscape with billboards: "Any man with a beautiful wife or daughter would probably feel disagreeably, if he should find branded indelibly across her smooth white forehead, or on her snowy shoulder in blue and red letters, such a phrase as this: 'Try the Jigamaree Bitters!'... A lovely nook of forest scenery or a grand rock, like a beautiful woman, depends for much of its attractiveness upon the attendant sense of freedom from whatever is low; upon a sense of purity and of romance. And it is about as nauseous to find 'Bitters' or 'Worm Syrup' daubed upon the landscape, as it would be upon the lady's brow."

Barnum's favorite example of the harmless humbug type, who retained his integrity along with his notoriety, was Monsieur Mangin, the French pencil maker, to whom a chapter of *The Humbugs of the World* is devoted. Mangin used to drive through the Champs Elysées, the Place Vendôme, the Place de la Bastille, or the Place de la Madeleine, in a large, ornamented carriage drawn by two bay horses. When he stopped his horses in one of the populous Parisian streets, his servant would hand him several large portraits of himself, which he would hang on the sides of the coach. Then gradually Monsieur Mangin would change his clothes, substituting for his hat a burnished helmet, a velvet and gold tunic for his modest business coat, steel gauntlets for his gloves. A shining brass cuirass covered his breast. The servant would also change into a medieval costume and then would play the organ which occupied part of the carriage. A large crowd collected rapidly. Mangin would rise, and in a calm, dignified, and solemn manner address his audience:

> "Gentlemen, you look astonished! What is the name and purpose of this curious knight-errant? Gentlemen, I will condescend to answer your queries. I am Monsieur Mangin, the great charlatan of France! Yes, gentlemen, I am a charlatan—a mountebank; it is my profession, not from choice, but from

> necessity. You, gentlemen, created that necessity! You would not patronize true, unpretending, honest merit, but you are attracted by my glittering casque, my sweeping crest, my waving plumes. You are captivated by din and glitter, and therein lies my strength. Years ago I hired a modest shop in the Rue Rivoli, but I could not sell pencils enough to pay my rent, whereas, by assuming this disguise—it is nothing else—I have succeeded in attracting general attention, and in selling literally millions of my pencils; and I assure you there is at this moment scarcely an artist in France or in Great Britain who doesn't know that I manufacture by far the best black-lead pencils ever seen. When I was modestly dressed, like any of my hearers, I was half starved. Punch and his bells would attract crowds, but my good pencils attracted nobody. I imitated Punch and his bells, and now I have two hundred depôts in Paris. I dine at the best cafés, drink the best wine, live on the best of everything, while my defamers get poor and lank, as they deserve to be. Who are my defamers? Envious swindlers! Men who try to ape me, but are too stupid and too dishonest to succeed. They endeavor to attract notice as mountebanks, and then foist upon the public worthless trash, and hope thus to succeed."

In Paris Barnum met Mangin at a café and was introduced. Mangin had read the French edition of the autobiography, and he had been much impressed with Barnum's methods and their success. Barnum had seen Mangin in his working clothes and he was delighted. Mangin outlined his policy, which coincided perfectly with Barnum's lifelong practice: "First, attract the public by din and tinsel, by brilliant sky-rockets and Bengola lights, then give them as much as possible for their money." After congratulating each other for an hour on their respective successes with the public, they parted, and as he got ready to leave Mangin told Barnum that he had a humbug in his head that would double the sale of his pencils. "Don't ask me what it is," he said, "but within one year you shall see it for yourself, and you shall acknowledge Monsieur Mangin knows something of human nature." Barnum was curious; but soon afterwards he read in the newspapers that Mangin had died, leaving 200,000 francs to charity. His praises were sung in all the newspapers of France and Great Britain. After six months Mangin appeared again in Paris in the same cuirass and

helmet, with the same chariot and bays, and the same servant in robes of velvet and gold. Barnum met him again, and he said that his sudden death had quadrupled the sale of his pencils and had given him a six months' rest in the country. "You Yankees are clever," he said, "but none of you has discovered that you should live all the better if you would die for six months." Mangin died a few years later and left his heirs half a million francs.

Although Barnum disliked the conceited manner in which Mangin clapped him familiarly upon the back and assured him that Monsieur Mangin was equal to the Yankee humbugs, he recognized in the Frenchman a true humbug of the ideal type, whom Barnum would have been proud to recognize as one of his disciples. Notoriety at any cost to dignity, even if it had to be sought in the grave, was legitimate, if the pencils were good; whatever the deception he admitted, Barnum pointed with pride to the fact that after all the Museum show was always worth more than twenty-five cents. In *The Humbugs of the World* Barnum did recognize that dignity was advisable for some professions. He regarded advertising as a necessity for every individual who had goods or services to sell, but he did not advise the banker or insurance broker, who aim to be the custodians of the people's money, to adopt his methods of hyperbole. Clergymen, lawyers, and physicians, he admitted, needed different tactics, and he often changed his own methods to meet the particular demands of an occasion. His own methods were successful because his taste was varied as well as crude; he never repeated himself. Tom Thumb was followed by Jenny Lind, whose successor was the white whale, for Barnum realized early in his career what many panderers to public taste who merely copied him, failed to realize: that a baby does not play with a rattle for twenty-one years.

II

A large, and by far the most interesting, section of *The Humbugs of the World* is devoted to religious humbugs: "The domain of humbug reaches back to the Garden of Eden, where the father of lies practised it upon our poor innocent first grandmother, Eve." This, said Barnum, was the first and worst humbug on the human race, and next after

that in scope and damage were the heathen humbugs. In his opinion all heathen religions—and by a heathen religion he meant any religion besides Christianity and Judaism, whose Bible is used in Christian churches—"always were, and are still, audacious, colossal, yet shallow and foolish humbugs. It is a curious fact that the heathen humbugs were all solemn. This was because they were intended to maintain the existing religions, which, like all false religions, could not endure ridicule."

Throughout this section of his book of revelations, Barnum was treading dangerous ground too recklessly for the good of his own faith. The glorious truths which some millions believed were revealed in other religions besides Christianity were to Barnum humbugs similar in nature to the great heathen god on whom some travelers had held a *post-mortem* examination. As Barnum told the story in his book these Christians stole into the innermost sacred rooms of the heathen temple, where the awful god of a savage tribe reposed. They found the god wrapped in numerous cloths, and sacrilegiously they unwound the coverings until they had removed more than an hundred cloths. The god grew smaller and smaller, until at last, after all the coverings were removed, the fierce, great heathen god proved to be nothing but a cracked soda-water bottle. Barnum would be shocked at the investigations that, in the manner of the inquiring travelers, some liberal thinkers have made into the miracle of the Resurrection, but it would have been well for him, before denouncing an onion because it was nothing but peels, to be certain that potatoes grew in his own garden.

Barnum was sincerely pious and devoutly religious, and it is significant of the narrow scope of his mind that he could stop completely and bow faithfully before his own brand of worship, while he was virulent in his attacks on any forms of religious devotion whose adherents were not patrons of the American Museum in large numbers. He even went further than this personally in his dogmatism: he narrowed the truth down to Universalism, which he accepted as his own faith early in life, and which many equally devout Christians thought one of the most flagrant forms of Christian humbug. He did not attack in *The Humbugs of the World* other Christian sects or Judaism, for that would have been too dangerous for the welfare of the Museum; he took out his contempt upon the so-

called heathen religions, with their oracles, sibyls and auguries. But even in these he saw some comfort, for they were a sign to him "how universally and naturally, and humbly and helplessly too, poor human nature longs to see into the future, and longs for help and guidance from some power higher than itself." "Thus considered," Barnum believed, "these shallow humbugs teach a useful lesson, for they constitute a strong proof of man's inborn natural recognition of some God, of some obligation to a higher power, of some disembodied existence; and so they show a natural human want of exactly what the Christian revelation supplies and constitute a powerful evidence for Christianity."

The history of religious controversy would be much simpler if all adopted Barnum's view, but his assumptions are rather large, and his proofs are childishly vague. If he had anything but an *a priori* faith, there was ample opportunity within the scope of his book to announce it, and by neglecting to particularize some of the evidences of Christian preëminence, he leaves his own dear faith wide open to attack with his own thunder. The religious section of *The Humbugs of the World* suggests the conclusion that Barnum's theological philosophy was comparable to the conviction of the soldier who believed that every one was out of step except himself.

The nearest Barnum allowed himself to approach criticism of his own gods was a paragraph of condemnation of the long and "windy prayers" of young, inexperienced clergymen, which he likened in mild and forgiving terms to the prayer-mills of the heathens. There is no recognition, however, of a possibility that Mohammedans, Buddhists, and followers of Confucius may have real faiths as well as the humbugs incidental to those faiths. Christianity's humbugs he ignored altogether, except in the matter of ordeals practised in faraway medieval days, and he pointed out their absurdities only to prove "how much more preferable is our American principle of separation in all matters of State and Church." Even this criticism was omitted in the English edition of *The Humbugs of the World*. Barnum's whole nationalist theology and Christian philosophy can be narrowed down to a simple assertion, to the effect that we, the Americans, are the greatest members of a Christian world. He never said this in so many words, for he had too many friends in England

and France, but there was no necessity for regarding the feelings of Mohammedans or Chinese, for after all were not these peoples merely subjects for exhibition to a curious Christian world?

Personally, Barnum's religion was an acute form of Universalism. He wrote a pamphlet which was published by the Universalist Church called "Why I am a Universalist," in which he revealed his whole religious philosophy and much of his character. In this pamphlet, which was written one year before Barnum's death, but which is discussed here because it is appropriate, he showed clearly that it was impossible for him to conceive that every one will not eventually seek and find salvation. He said that he could not believe that in order to complete their paradise the angels need a sight of the evil ones roasting in hell. He craved a salvation where The Woolly Horse, The Fejee Mermaid, and Joice Heth would not be thrown up to him as the sins of his days upon earth. In "Why I am a Universalist" Barnum wrote; "All Christians pray for the salvation of sinners, and yet profess to believe it will never be. The first essential of prayer is that it be in faith. The Universalist Church is the only one that believes in success." And it must have been unbearable to the pious and practical mind of Barnum even to entertain the idea of eternal failure in the matter of the end of all. Such a faith in the "ultimate holiness and happiness of all mankind" was natural, almost inevitable, to Barnum's character. Success on earth depended for him upon natural resource of ambition and energy, a dash of luck, stirred up in a whirlpool of notoriety. But it all depended upon ourselves. In eternity the rules were different. There was an absolute monarch, and the only comfort to a man who, like Barnum, was used to a thorough dependence upon his own head and hands, was the faith that this Great Dictator was a benevolent despot, and that paradise was a museum, in which all the varieties of human curiosities lived in harmony with no embarrassing attempt to delineate good from bad, and in which there was no wilful segregation of types on the part of the Creator, who in His everlasting mercy made them all in His own image.

Against all the texts which urged repentance before it was too late, Barnum placed the one psalm which twenty-six times declares, "His mercy endureth for ever." His Universalism allowed wide latitude for work on earth, coupled with faith hereafter, and set no specific time limit, as Barnum expressed it, for repentance. There was no promised

punishment for a Universalist who neglected the forms of repentance before his day of death. It was the only possible religion for a Barnum, and he was so grateful for its existence that besides remembering the church in his will and endowing a natural history museum at Tufts College, the Universalist college, he often argued strenuously and picturesquely in the effort to aid the dissemination of its doctrines. When he was seventy-three years old, he told a reporter for the *New York Sun*: "I believe in the ultimate holiness and happiness of all mankind. The idea of a sufficiency of repentance is revolting to common sense. Suppose a case: A pirate, who has killed in cold blood a hundred men, is caught, repents on the gallows, and says, 'I am sorry for what I have done, and am going to Jesus.' A certain proportion of those he has killed, say fifty per cent., having been cut off in their sins, without time for repentance, are supposed to be damned. Is it conceivable, as consistent with the justice of God, that the repentant pirate shall look over the battlements of heaven down upon those fifty whom he sent to hell, and complacently congratulate his redeemed soul upon his luck in having had time to repent before he was hanged? No: I can't believe in that.... Now I don't think that fear is the proper thing to incite people to do good. Putting punishment away off in a dim and indefinite future is not making much of a present influence. It reminds me of a chap who was caught by a deacon in the act of stealing a piece of silk. 'Don't you know that you will have to pay for that silk at the day of judgment?' said the deacon. 'I'd no idea you gave such a long credit, or I'd have taken two pieces,' replied the thief. All sects do good in their way, but I prefer to have my children believe as I do—not as I was taught in my youth, however—in a God of love, instead of cruelty or vindictiveness, and that His chastisements are only parental and disciplinary."

Barnum often tried to convert those of other beliefs, and especially clergymen, which would seem to indicate that the anxiety which his mind suffered at the thought that he might not be saved was greater than he would have cared to admit. He met on the street his old friend, the Rev. C. A. Stoddard, editor of *The New York Observer*, a religious publication. "Is it possible," Barnum asked, "that the *Observer* still sticks to the old doctrine of endless suffering?" "The *Observer* doesn't budge an inch from its lifelong creed and doctrines," answered the Rev. Mr. Stoddard proudly. "Surely you must lose

numerous subscribers who at this day of the 'new orthodoxy' cannot believe that there are childless mothers in the Paradise of God?" said Barnum. "The places of such subscribers," the clergyman replied, "are readily filled by those, who, like myself, loath the thought of spending an eternity in the company of Judas." "But cannot Infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness conquer, purify, and win even the betrayer of our Saviour, who on the cross prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers?" asked Barnum. The religious editor replied, with a good-natured, patronizing smile, "Judas would require considerable fixing up before he would be fit to come in close contact with the holy angels and saints in heaven." "True," said Barnum, "but will not you and I need some 'fixing up' for that state of perfect holiness without which no man can see God?" The Rev. Mr. Stoddard admitted that both of them would need such fixing up, "but evidently," Barnum reflected sadly, "he cannot as yet see a chance for Judas." Judas worried Barnum: it may be that deep in his consciousness, so deep that he himself felt its distressing murmurs but vaguely, he realized that the temptation of thirty pieces of silver would have been difficult for a practical American man of business to resist. Many of the *Observer's* subscribers probably thought it natural that Barnum should take such an interest in Judas, but many more forgave him because his profits were considerably greater than thirty pieces of silver, and in justice to him it must be admitted that his crimes were not of a tremendously serious nature.

But there were days of depression and remorse, when Barnum, goaded by his sincere piety, feared that he would roast in hell for the Buffalo Hunt, General Tom Thumb's age, the model of Niagara Falls, The Fejee Mermaid, and The Woolly Horse, and maybe for sins which he kept carefully to himself, and then he could clutch at the comfort of Universalism, which offered him the hope of condonation for mankind, and the assurance that he could share in the general pardon.

III

But such doubts of his future and anxiety for his past could only occupy minutes in the busy days of such an active mind as Barnum's always was. The smooth operation of the Museum allowed him time for other activities and gave him money to devote to them. His preoccupation with the autobiography and his interest in humbugs could not occupy all that time and required no money. East Bridgeport real estate filled in the gap. His bankruptcy had not discouraged him from business activity, and he was still infatuated with the development of his ideas for a model suburb.

After the destruction of "Iranistan" by fire, Barnum built "Lindencroft," a modest house, as impressive as its neighbors, but not extraordinary in its architecture. During the period of Barnum's recuperation from bankruptcy East Bridgeport had grown into the consummation of his hopes. Other large factories had followed the Wheeler & Wilson sewing machine buildings, and there were now many neat houses for mechanics and laborers where six years before there was nothing but farm land. It was one of Barnum's greatest pleasures until the end of his life, he tells us, to drive through "those busy streets, admiring the beautiful houses and substantial factories, with their thousands of prosperous workmen, and reflecting that I had, in so great a measure, been the means of adding all this life, bustle, and wealth to the City of Bridgeport."

As soon as he had repurchased some of his former holdings in his pet suburb, Barnum renewed his activities as a real estate operator with a philanthropic turn of mind. He began a campaign for the sale of houses and put notices in the Bridgeport newspapers urging "Every Man to Own the House He Lives In." He offered to lend money at six per cent. to any number, not exceeding fifty "industrious, temperate, and respectable individuals who desire to build their own houses." The houses were to be paid for in small weekly, monthly, or quarterly instalments, in amounts of not less than three per cent. per quarter. The owners could engage their own builders and build according to any reasonable plan, subject always to Barnum's approval, but he himself bought materials in bulk, and he offered to build "nice dwellings, painted and furnished with green blinds," for $1,500 each.

Many took advantage of either of these two offers, but many more held back. There was one slight difficulty. Mr. Barnum's contracts of sale included a temperance pledge and a clause promising the renunciation of the use of tobacco. It puzzled Barnum and worried him that many men really preferred to pay rent month after month in dirty tenements, where they could drink, smoke, and beat their wives in freedom, to the opportunity which he offered them of living under his management in "nice dwellings, painted and furnished with green blinds." Moralizing on the subject in his autobiography, he wrote in his bewilderment: "The money they have since expended for whisky and tobacco would have given them a house of their own, if the money had been devoted to that object, and their positions, socially and morally, would have been better than they are to-day. How many infatuated men there are in all parts of the country who could now be independent and even owners of their own carriages but for their slavery to these miserable habits!"

There was even a clause in the contracts of sale providing that if the door yards of the model cottages were not kept clean P. T. Barnum had the right to arrange for their cleaning at the expense of the owners of the houses. If these conditions were accepted, Barnum sometimes advanced as much as seven-eighths of the purchase money, and accepted in payment instalments as low as ten dollars. But the nice dwellings were the pride of his heart, and it concerned him even more than the profits of his enterprise that no tobacco juice should stain those pretty green blinds, and that the happy, smiling New England mechanics should not give off fumes of whisky as they came to pay him their rents.

There were enough sober, thoughtful, economical laborers to take advantage of Barnum's offers, and the new suburb prospered rapidly. A horse car line, in which Barnum owned ten per cent. of the stock, was soon in operation. The toll bridges operated by Barnum and Noble were bought by the City of Bridgeport and opened to the public free of charge. East Bridgeport became a recognized part of the City of Bridgeport, and streets were named for Barnum and his daughters, Caroline, Helen, and Pauline; but none was called Charity, in the proper fear, no doubt, that no one would live in it.

IV

It was inevitable that before the end of his career Barnum should go into politics. He had always been a pseudo-public character, whose immense notoriety was a political asset, and several times he had been asked to run for office. In the early days of his youthful editorial career, when he was the *Herald of Freedom*, Barnum was a strict Jacksonian Democrat. In 1852, after Jenny Lind's tour had raised his esteem and increased his fortune, Connecticut Democrats offered him the nomination as governor of that state, but, though the party was in power, and election would not therefore have been difficult, he declined the honor. In spite of his decision, several votes were cast for him in the state convention. Barnum continued to be a loyal Democrat for many years, declaring upon one occasion that if he thought there was a drop of blood in his veins that was not democratic he would let it out if he had to cut the jugular vein, for he seemed to be under the impression that democratic and Democratic meant the same things. When the Democratic Party advocated secession, Barnum disagreed with his party and became a Republican and a strong supporter of President Lincoln. During the close and exciting presidential campaign of Lincoln just before the Civil War, he aided the "Wide-Awake" clubs in Bridgeport, and when the war broke out in 1861, Barnum, who was in his fifty-first year, sent four substitutes to the front and contributed money to the Union cause. He also aided in disturbing a Bridgeport pacifist meeting, where he was hoisted on the shoulders of some soldiers, and from that vantage point he made a speech which was said to be "full of patriotism" and "spiced with humor." He was so active as a member of the Bridgeport Prudential Committee during the draft riots that he was threatened with violence to himself and the destruction of his home by fire. Sky rockets were always kept in the cellar at "Lindencroft," in case Barnum should need aid from the arsenal or friends in other parts of the city.

In 1865 Barnum accepted the nomination of the Republican Party for a seat in the Connecticut legislature. He did this, he tells us, so that he might enjoy the privilege of voting for the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, by which slavery was to be abolished forever. It is difficult to understand Barnum's reluctance to enter politics: he loved to make speeches, he was a "good mixer," and he

had a profound interest in improving his fellow citizens by forcing his own standards upon them. It may be that he felt that he could use his time to better financial advantage as a private citizen, and it may be that he shrank from the necessity for answering criticism of his character, which would have caused him embarrassment had he accepted the nomination for governor.

Barnum was elected to the Connecticut legislature. During his term of office he fought the railroads in their efforts to raise commutation rates, and in this fight he defeated the New Haven Railroad lobby. It was while he was speaking on this railroad bill in the legislature at Hartford on July 13, 1865, that Barnum received a telegram from his son-in-law, S. H. Hurd, informing him that the American Museum was in flames. Barnum makes much of the fact in his autobiography that he laid the telegram upon his desk and continued his successful speech against the railroads.

The fire in the Museum had started in the engine room, where a small engine pumped sea water for the aquaria. Smoke soon rose into the upper floors and filled the galleries of curiosities and animals. Monkeys jabbered, cats miaoued, dogs barked, parrots screeched, bears growled, a kangaroo made his own familiar cry of distress, and the birds fluttered wildly against their cages. Before long 40,000 people had been attracted by the noises and the flames. Efforts were made to rescue some of the animals, but few of them were saved, the only survivors of the fire being one bear, the educated seal, some birds, and a couple of monkeys. The crowd was delighted with the opportunity to see the curiosities free of charge, and the giantess, the fat lady, the Albino girl, and some of the ladies of the *corps de ballet*, who had lost all of their wardrobe except their ballet skirts, were followed down Fulton Street by a large and enthusiastic audience. Two white whales, who had arrived one week before the fire, were burned to death and steaming when Barnum saw them afterwards. The newspapers of the following day published long descriptions of the fire and editorials on the subject; practically the entire front page of the *Herald* was devoted to it. Most of the newspapers attempted peculiar humor on the subject of the burned animals.

Barnum's insurance was worth only $40,000, and he estimated the value of the lost Museum collection at $400,000. This disastrous fire tempted Barnum to retire. He considered devoting the rest of his

years to East Bridgeport, possibly with the autobiography as recreation, and when he asked his friend Horace Greeley for advice, Greeley said, "Accept this fire as a notice to quit, and go a-fishing." But fishing requires solitude and quiet, repose and a fatalistic satisfaction with whatever chance throws in the way. Fish are not caught by publicity, and that was the only bait Barnum had ever previously used. He wrote in his autobiography that his temptation to retire was offset by two worthy considerations. More than one hundred and fifty men were thrown ruthlessly out of employment by the fire, and would be kept out of employment, he thought, if he were to retire; also, he was long since convinced that his Museum was an institution, and that New York needed such an one as he had provided for more than twenty years. It may also have occurred to him, although he does not say so, that a museum was a profitable investment for capital.

Barnum's insurance was not his only asset after the fire. His wife still owned the lease to the Museum property, which had increased tremendously in value since he had renewed it fifteen years before. A real estate agent offered the lease for sale at $225,000, and James Gordon Bennett bought it for $200,000 with the intention of building a new home for the *New York Herald*. Bennett also purchased the land on which the Museum stood and the building for $500,000, and soon afterwards he read in other newspapers that he had paid the largest sum for a piece of property of its size that had ever been paid for any property in any city in the world. He was more frightened than flattered by this statement, and he arbitrarily canceled the purchase. Then he attempted to get his $200,000 back from Barnum, but Barnum had already invested the money in bonds, and he refused to take back the lease.

The following day the *New York Herald* refused the advertisement of the Winter Garden, where Barnum was managing a temporary museum until the Chinese Museum rooms at Broadway and Prince Street could be remodeled. Barnum was a member of the Producing Managers' Association, which included in its number Lester Wallack, Wheatley, Stuart, and the other theatrical leaders of the period. A committee of the Association visited Bennett to protest against the exclusion of Barnum's advertisement, but Bennett insisted that he would not publish Barnum's advertisements, and that he had the

right to run his business in his own way. The managers did not dispute this point, but they claimed the same privilege, and the next day every theatrical advertisement was withdrawn from the *Herald*. The *Herald* had also been employed as the job printer for most of the New York theaters, and this business was taken elsewhere. Bennett continued to print some of the withdrawn advertisements, hoping to bring back the managers to his newspaper, but then the producers printed in other newspapers above their advertisements, "This Establishment does not advertise in the *New York Herald*." The *Herald* retaliated by printing editorials almost every day for several months on the corrupt and inartistic state of theatrical representation in New York, and Bennett praised Tony Pastor's Bowery show as the kind of entertainment New York needed, for Pastor was not one of the protesting managers. Bennett's virulent publicity caused the managers to prosper, and it was estimated that the *Herald* lost $75,000 each year in advertising and printing contracts. Finally the owner of Barnum's Museum property sued Bennett, and he was compelled to take over the property at the original price. The managers continued their boycott of the *Herald* for two years.

During one of the meetings of the Producing Managers' Association Barnum was urged by Lester Wallack to take a drink during the recess provided by tradition for that purpose. "Excuse me, Mr. Wallack," said Barnum, "you know my record, and I am sure you will respect my intention of keeping it up. It has been the boast of my life that no man has ever seen a drop of anything stronger than water pass my lips for many years. Be kind enough to turn your backs!" The managers turned their backs, and when they turned again Barnum's glass was empty, but whether he had filled it was never determined; all were too considerate to ask.

After James Gordon Bennett's death, Barnum again advertised in the *Herald*. James Gordon Bennett, the younger, recalling his father's animosity against Barnum, tried to renew the feud in the pages of the *Herald*. Barnum was in London at the time, and he wrote the new editor: "Young man, I knew you when you rode the hobby-horse which I bought for Tom Thumb, and which your father and mother brought you to see, and I have a right to give you some advice." What that advice was Barnum never said, but the *Herald* soon forgot its feud and praised the circus as much as its contemporaries.

Four months after the Museum fire Barnum reopened his Museum in a granite building at Broadway and Prince Street, with new curiosities gathered from all over the country.

After one term in the Connecticut legislature, Barnum intended to return to private life, but one of the directors of the New York and New Haven Railroad remarked that if he could help it, Barnum would not be in the next legislature. Barnum accepted the challenge, and he was reëlected in 1866.

He was nominated for Congress by the Republicans in 1867. His Democratic opponent was William H. Barnum, not a relative, who was the political boss of Fairfield County, the district for which they were nominated. During the summer of 1867 Barnum entertained many political guests at his Bridgeport home, among whom were the Speaker of the House of Representatives and several United States senators. It is likely that he foresaw for himself a career of usefulness and notoriety as a federal law-maker and national entertainer. The campaign was highly competitive, for both Barnums had advantages which appealed to large numbers of their constituents. P. T. Barnum sent his opponent a challenge to debate the issues of the day on one evening each week until election, in order that the people might be enabled to vote understandingly. He promised in his letter to conduct his part of the debate with fairness, consideration, and proper respect for his adversary. But W. H. Barnum was one of the most astute politicians in the state of Connecticut, and he apparently realized that to appear on the same platform with P. T. Barnum, the famous lecturer and entertainer, would be to practise bad psychology, for he declined the kind offer. It was rumored that votes were being bought at wholesale by the Democratic Barnum, and a loyal Republican wrote P. T. Barnum, asking if he did not intend "to fight fire with fire." Barnum grasped the opportunity of publishing the request and his reply in the *Bridgeport Standard* and the *New York Tribune*, two newspapers which always remained friendly to his interests and his activities. His reply is characteristic because of its sonority and righteous invective:

> "Your kind letter of the 20th inst. has caused me painful emotions. I now wish to say, once for all, that under no conceivable circumstances will I permit a dollar of mine to be

used to purchase a vote or to induce a voter to act contrary to his honest convictions.

"The idea that the intelligent reading men of New England can be bought like sheep in the shambles, and that the sacred principles which have so far guided them in the terrible struggle between liberty and slavery can now, in this eventful hour of national existence, be set up at auction and knocked down to the highest bidder, seems to me as preposterous as it is shameful and humiliating. But if it is possible that occasionally a degraded voter can thus be induced to 'sell his birthright for a mess of pottage,' God grant that I may be a thousand times defeated sooner than permit one grain of gold to be accursed by using it so basely!

"I will not believe that American citizens can lend themselves to the contemptible meanness of sapping the very life-blood of our noble institutions by encouraging a fatal precedent, which ignores all principle and would soon prevent any honest man, however distinguished for his intelligence and loyalty, from representing his district in our national councils. None could then succeed except unprincipled vagabonds, who, by the lavish expenditure of money, would debauch and degrade the freemen whose votes they coveted.

"No, sir! Grateful as I am for the distinguished honor of receiving a unanimous nomination for Congress from the loyal Union party in my district, I have no aspiration for that high position if it is only to be attained by bringing into disgrace the noble privilege of the *free elective franchise*. Think for a moment what a deadly weapon is being placed in the hands of tyrants throughout the civilized world, with which to destroy such apostles of liberty as John Bright and Garibaldi, if it can be said with truth that American citizens have become so corrupt and degraded, so lost to a just estimate of the value and true nobility of the ballot, that it is bought and sold for money.

"My dear sir, any party that can gain a temporary ascendancy by such atrocious means, not only poisons the body politic of a free and impartial government, but is also sure to bring swift destruction upon itself. And so it should be.

"I am unaccustomed to political life, and know but little of the manner of conducting a campaign like the present. I believe, however, it is customary for the State Central Committee to assess candidates, in order that they shall defray a proper portion of the

> expenses incurred for speakers and documents to *enlighten* the voters upon the political issues of the day. To that extent I am willing and anxious to be taxed; for 'light and knowledge' are always desired by the friends of human rights and of public order.
>
> "But I trust that all money used for any other purpose in the pending election will come from the pockets of those who now (as during the rebellion) are doing their utmost to aid traitors, and who, still unrepenting, are vindictively striving to secure at the ballot-box what their Southern allies failed to accomplish on the field of battle. If any of our friends misapprehend my true sentiments upon the subject of bribery, corruption, and fraud, I hope you will read them this letter.
>
> "Truly yours,
>
> "P. T. BARNUM."

And in a postscript he appended a copy of the Connecticut law of bribery in elections.

But "the intelligent reading men of New England" apparently could be bought "like sheep in the shambles," and they poisoned "the body politic of a free and impartial government" by electing W. H. Barnum instead of P. T. Barnum. The forces of corruption, fraud, bribery, and rebellion gained a victory, possibly temporary, but still a victory. After the election some voters in Bridgeport contested the election of William H. Barnum, charging that it had been procured by bribery, the importation of voters from other states, and by the use of forged naturalization papers for foreigners. But they were not successful, and "the noble privilege of the free elective franchise" was brought into disgrace by the presence in the national councils of the Democratic candidate for more than eight years thereafter.

Possibly P. T. Barnum's defeat was not due altogether to fraud, if any fraud was practised. There was much honest opposition to the presence of P. T. Barnum, of the American Museum, in Congress. The opposition was national as well as local. The *New York Nation*, uninspired by the heat of Connecticut factions, felt that Barnum's place was in a museum, and some Republicans in Connecticut felt that Congress was not a museum. "A circular in opposition to the nomination of P. T. Barnum" was distributed to Connecticut voters; it

was made up of excerpts from newspapers throughout the state, and these papers not only opposed showmanship in Congress, but also discussed Barnum's moral character. The *Hartford Press* wrote:

> "The Republicans of the Fourth District have, in the nomination of Mr. P. T. Barnum for Congress, selected a man of world-wide reputation. Unfortunately his widest reputation *is not his best*. Mr. Barnum is called a 'humbug,' and he accepts the title, under his own definition of the term. He believes in carrying on the 'show business' in the humbug manner, and frankly avows his course and justifies it. *We* cannot regard it *as he does*. We cannot agree that it is right to *paint a common dove* and then exhibit it as a *rare and singular variety of that bird*."

The tenor of the other comments in the circular was the same. Barnum was denounced as a candidate for Congress because he was the self-confessed Prince of Humbugs, and no other congressman had ever before admitted the charge.

It is unfortunate for the story of his life that Barnum was never admitted to Congress. His speeches, which in his own small district of Connecticut were "full of patriotism" and "spiced with humor," would have been uncontrolled in the national assembly. In introducing General Oglesby, Governor of Illinois, at a political meeting in Bridgeport a few years after his defeat for Congress, Barnum referred to the distinguished guest as "a veritable Sucker," an allusion to the popular nickname for early Illinois settlers, who drew their drinking water through long reeds to purify it. "This Sucker," said Barnum, the political chairman, "of fifty-five has lately gone and married a young wife. I cannot blame him for that; if he can afford such a luxury, it is nobody's business."[18]

Though he would not have added dignity to the House of Representatives, Barnum's speeches could not have been anything but distinctive, if it is permissible to judge from the few political orations he delivered during his short political career. His speeches in Congress would have amused the nation, if they did not contribute to its political philosophy, and on the strength of his originality and notoriety he might have become a senator and a candidate for President of the United States, but the sudden check to his political

activities forced him to confine his talents for oratory to the show business. He was urged at one time to be the candidate for President of the United States on the Prohibition ticket, but he refused that honorary position.

Barnum asserted several times in his autobiography his reluctance to enter public life: "As I have already remarked, politics were always distasteful to me. I possess naturally too much independence of mind, and too strong a determination to do what I believe to be right, regardless of party expediency, to make a lithe and oily politician. To be called on to favor applications from office-seekers, without regard to their merits, and to do the dirty work too often demanded by political parties; to be 'all things to all men,' though not in the apostolic sense; to shake hands with those whom I despised, and to kiss the dirty babies of those whose votes were courted, were political requirements which I felt I could never acceptably fulfil." But Barnum's vanity and the feeling that he was deserving made it impossible for him to resist any distinction which was offered to him. Besides, he now had plenty of leisure which needed occupation.

During this period of his career Barnum often lectured throughout the country. In 1866 he lectured on "Success in Life" under the auspices of the Associated Western Literary Societies, touring Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri and Iowa. For this work he received one hundred dollars and his expenses for each lecture. He delivered five lectures each week at these terms from the summer of 1866 until New Year's Day, 1867. Before this tour he had lectured in Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois for other organizations, and as soon as he finished the second tour he took up the work of campaigning for Congress, so that his vocal powers must have been inexhaustible. He apparently took great interest in the advance publicity of his lectures, and there is a letter from him to an agent on this subject:

"Dear Sir,

"Yours of yesterday is recd. I am glad you are advertising so thoroughly. Much depends upon that. You will be so good as to send the notices to the Mayor and to Mr. Ainsworth. It would be very well to say in the advertisements that I have taken legal steps to prevent the publication of the Lecture.

"I think I had better leave here at 3.30 and arrive at 5.10 on Wednesday unless you think that would be too late. I shall require a table or desk about 4 feet high and a *good light*, although I shall have much to say without notes. But notes are necessary for the *statistics*.

"I enclose you the General's autograph. There should be a one sheet bill posted early Wednesday morning—reading

GO AND HEAR
BARNUM
His Amusing and Instructive Experiences in the
'Art of Money-Getting.' TO-NIGHT

"I propose to have one or two thousand such bills printed in 2 colors so that they will be good for any place where I am to speak. I will send you say 100 of these bills on Tuesday and will write you what they cost, and you can use them or any portion of them or not as you please. They will doubtless be cheaper & more effective than you could get a single hundred for.

"Truly yours,

"P. T. Barnum.

"P. S. The *Manchester Weekly Advertiser* says: 'The audience *thoroughly enjoyed* the lecture *from the beginning to the end*, and our opinion is that it was *decidedly clever*, and just what we should expect from Mr. Barnum.'

"You can do as you think proper about inserting the above in Wednesday's advertisement—or the small bills. B."[19]

Barnum devoted to charity the proceeds of his lectures, except those delivered on "The Art of Money-Getting" immediately after his bankruptcy. Barnum's lectures do not read well. They were filled with homely sentiments, platitudes, and the jokes he had used so often before. Although he exhibited flashes of wit, he was not a great humorist. He would have done well to consider Josh Billings's "Hints to Comik Lekturers":

"No man kan be a helthy phool unless he was nussed at the brest of wisdom.

"Those who fail in the comik bizzness are them who hav bin put out to nuss, or bin fetched up on a bottle.

"If a man iz a genuine humorist he iz superior tew the bulk ov hiz aujience, and will oftentimes hav tew take hiz pay for hiz services in thinking so."

V

The New Museum on Broadway was not so successful as the old, and Barnum joined with Van Amburgh, of Van Amburgh's Menagerie, in an effort to form a large traveling show, consisting of Barnum's curiosities and Van Amburgh's animals, which would tour the country in summer and exhibit at the Museum in winter. Van Amburgh was the most popular lion tamer in the show business, and he was also a good showman: he literally made a lion lie down with a lamb in one of his cages, and he also introduced a little child to lead them.

Barnum owned forty per cent. of the stock of the new enterprise, and he lent it his valuable name as general manager, but he did not take an active part in its management. The new combined museum and menagerie was more popular than any other place of amusement in New York, and Barnum made many efforts to add to its collections. John Greenwood, formerly manager of Barnum's American Museum, was sent abroad in the *Quaker City*, on the same voyage of the ship in which Mark Twain traveled with the Innocents Abroad, and this trip resulted in many new curiosities from the Holy Land. The following letter to a friend in London, written about the time of the partnership with Van Amburgh, will illustrate one of Barnum's methods of collecting material:

"Museum, New York, Dec. 20, '67.

"My dear Lindsay—or Lindley:

"It is so long since we have met, or communicated, I have forgotten how to *spell* your *name*!

"I had hoped to have seen you last summer on my way to the Great Exposition, but the continued illness of my wife prevented me from going over *at all*. I am glad, however, to hear a good account from you by the Tom Thumb party—Kellogg Wells &c.

"I have a singular sort of commission for you to execute for me. It is to look at some wild animals for me to add to my Zoölogical Collection. Ordinarily I send such things to my friend Fillingham, but lately I think a circus & menagerie Co. here have enlisted him in their service, hence I wish you to make the inquiries for me *without communicating* the same to *Fillingham* or *anybody else*.

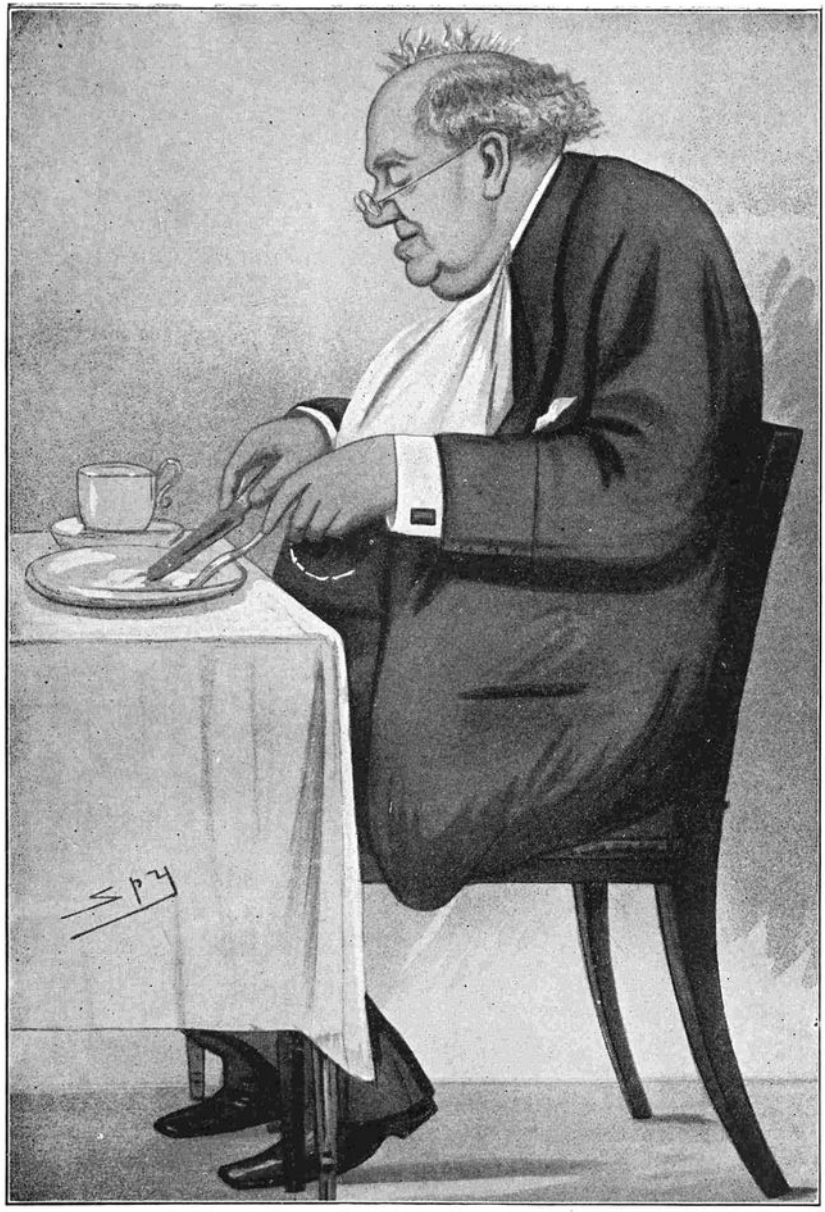
"I want to purchase any of the following animals at a reasonable price—Zebras, Gnu or horned horse—a small Rhinoceros—Giraffe, Hippopotamus—Polar Bear—African Wart Hogs, Lamas—Striped & spotted Hyenas, double humped Camels—Kangaroos & almost any other animals not natives of this country. I have written the Secry of the Zoölogical Gardens, Regents Park, so it is not necessary to apply there, but I want you to apply in person or by note to *Jamrack* the great animals man in London, also to any other persons in London who trade in living Wild Animals—and also write to such parties in Liverpool or any other part of Great Britain as keep wild animals on exhibition or for sale. ☞ Don't let them know or suspect *who* you apply for. Let them think it is for some traveling concern in Great Britain or France, & especially don't let *Jamrack* suspect America, for he has an agent here and as soon as you can get lists of animals & prices please write them to me. Possibly it might pay to put an advertisement in the *Era* for me once saying the advertiser wishes to buy the wild animals of a Zoölogical Garden or Collection, or will buy at reasonable prices wild animals of almost any description, and especially Zebra, Gnu or horned horse (here go on & name the others which I have mentioned). If you think it would also be advisable to put it once in the *Times* or *Telegraph* you can do so, although I don't want to expend money on uncertainties & can hardly think it will help much to advertise, except perhaps once in *Era*—but of that I leave you to judge, only don't do *more* than one insertion in one or all of the papers named above. Hoping to hear from you soon & not wishing you to take steps which will incur much expense I am

"Your old friend,

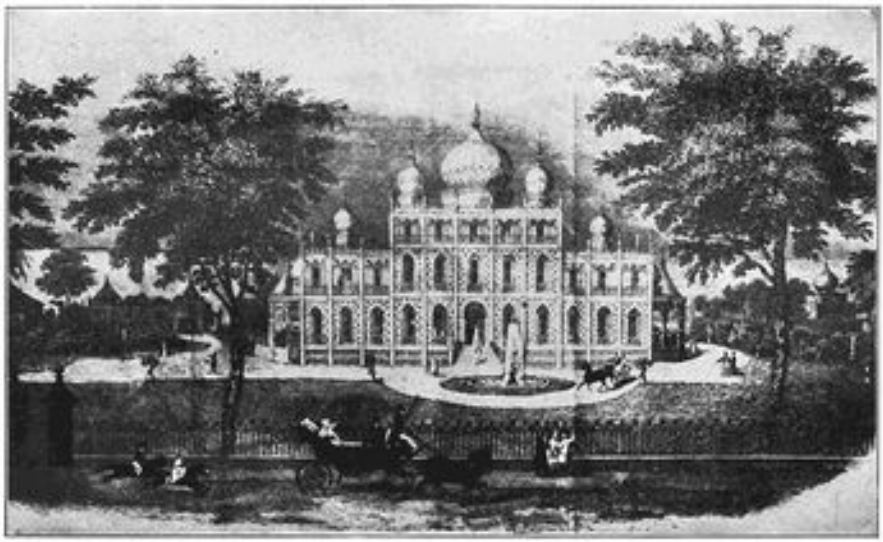
"P. T. Barnum."

Barnum planned to form the nucleus for a public zoölogical garden in New York from his menagerie, and he also planned to make his Museum collection a public institution, which would eventually be taken over by the government and opened to the public free of charge.

For this purpose he persuaded President Andrew Johnson to give him a letter of instruction to consuls abroad to collect as much material as possible for Barnum's Museum. Barnum's scheme was indorsed by leading citizens and editors, including Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, Henry Ward Beecher and Simeon Draper. General Grant donated the hat he had worn during his Civil War campaigns to Barnum's Museum. But on March 3, 1868, the new Museum was burned to the ground.



BARNUM, THE VETERAN SHOWMAN
A caricature by Spy drawn from life in 1889 for "Vanity Fair," London.
Houdini Collection



BARNUM'S BRIDGEPORT HOME
"IRANISTAN—AN ORIENTAL VILLA"

It was one of the coldest days of that year, and the elements combined to advertise Barnum, for the streams of water that were played upon the blazing building froze into sparkling coverings of ice, and the next morning a gorgeous spectacle was presented free of charge to thousands of New Yorkers, who stood in the cold all day to watch the lights and shades the sun made on the ice-covered ruins. The sight is noted in the annals of the time as a picture no artist could have painted.

Barnum lost much money in the fire, and Van Amburgh's collection of lions and tigers died painfully. This time Barnum determined he would retire and devote himself entirely "to serious reflections on the ends and aims of human existence," social pleasures, and intellectual pursuits. George Wood, proprietor of Wood's Museum, Barnum's most important rival, offered him three per cent. of his receipts for the right to say that Wood's Museum was the successor to Barnum's Museum. He thus capitalized his valuable name, and he was firmly convinced that now his public life was ended. The organization which was to make his name most famous, the circus, was not even present in the recesses of his mind.

He bought more Bridgeport real estate, planted trees, laid out streets, and continued his endeavors to improve the City of Bridgeport in spite of the strenuous opposition of those whom he characterized as "old fogies." He himself was sixty years old at the time. "Conservatism," Barnum said in this connection, "may be a good thing in the state, or in the church, but it is fatal to the growth of cities." In spite of the conservatives, however, he was able to consummate his plans for Seaside Park, a lovely tract of municipal land off Long Island Sound, and to-day a bronze statue of P. T. Barnum, cast when he was an aged man, looks tranquilly with sad eyes across the wide stretch of Long Island Sound, as if he were searching tirelessly, but somewhat wearied, for new curiosities in the distance.

The health of Mrs. Barnum had been delicate for many years, and she no longer felt fit to manage "Lindencroft." Barnum sold the house, and soon afterwards he purchased land near his beloved Seaside Park. Here he built a house, which was described by a friend and admirer as "a pleasant mélange of Gothic, Italian, and French architecture." The new home was christened "Waldemere," an Americanization of *Waldammeer*, "Woods-by-the-Sea."[20] Whenever the master of the house was at home, a white silk flag with the initials "P. T. B." in blue was hoisted on the "Waldemere" flagpole for the information of his friends and visiting admirers. Barnum also purchased for $80,000 a New York City mansion on Fifth Avenue at Thirty-ninth Street.

Thus having made elaborate provision for the comfort of his leisure, Barnum sat down to enjoy it, and soon afterwards he discovered that he had nothing to do that was enjoyable. Reading was only a pastime, writing without a special purpose tiresome, and friends were always occupied with their own business. He took up lecturing again, but he could not find in it a constant occupation. The arrival of an English friend, John Fish, who had based his success in his Manchester cotton mill on Barnum's principles of success as laid down in the autobiography, suggested travel. Barnum showed John Fish and his young daughter, Nancy, the United States. They visited Niagara Falls, Washington, Cuba, and New Orleans, and then went to California. On this trip Barnum stopped off at Salt Lake City, where he lectured to a select audience of Mormons, including many of the wives of Brigham Young. By invitation he visited Brigham Young at

the presidential mansion, known as the Bee-Hive, and he was received cordially. “Barnum,” said Brigham Young, “what will you give me to exhibit me in New York and the eastern cities?” “Well, Mr. President,” said Barnum earnestly, “I’ll give you half the receipts, which I will guarantee shall be $200,000 per year, for I consider you the best show in America.” “Why didn’t you secure me years ago when I was of no consequence?” asked Brigham Young. “Because you would not have ‘drawn’ at that time,” was Barnum’s reply.

In San Francisco Barnum discovered another valuable dwarf. He was smaller than General Tom Thumb, and handsome; his father, Gabriel Kahn, a German, asked Barnum to exhibit his son, and Barnum could not resist the temptation. He hesitated, for he had determined to retire, but the dwarf was pert in both German and English, and Barnum finally engaged him for a long term of years, christening him immediately “Admiral Dot, the Eldorado Elf.” Admiral Dot was exhibited in San Francisco for three weeks under Barnum’s management, and his levees were crowded. Then the party returned to New York. Admiral Dot was joined later by a nephew, known as Major Atom. Barnum was also financially interested in the world tour of General Tom Thumb, Mrs. Tom Thumb, Minnie Warren, and Commodore Nutt and his brother, Rodnia Nutt. He also arranged a tour for The Siamese Twins in Great Britain. Interest was aroused in this enterprise by the previous announcement that they were visiting Great Britain to consult eminent surgeons with a view to their separation. Of course, they had no intention of becoming by a stroke of the knife merely two Siamese, instead of The Siamese Twins, but the publicity was effective.

All these enterprises, however, were only silent partnerships, and Barnum was not satisfied with such comparative inactivity. His energies, unassuaged by travel and entertainment, insisted upon a wider outlet, and in 1870, when he was sixty years old, he organized the first forerunner of what was later to become the famous Barnum & Bailey circus.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CIRCUS

I

An immense traveling show, combining all the elements of the museum, menagerie, and variety performance, was not Barnum's own conception, at least in 1870, when he first joined some other showmen in the organization of such a combination. It is true that forerunners of the circus were present in "Barnum's Great Asiatic Caravan, Museum, and Menagerie," and in Barnum's and Van Amburgh's Museum and Menagerie, but these were nothing in comparison with the enterprise which was now projected. W. C. Coup and Dan Costello, showmen of experience, called upon Barnum during the period of his semi-retirement and urged that he form with them a great traveling show. They asked for the power of his name and for any financial support he was willing to supply, and they arrived at the correct time, for, tired of doing comparatively nothing, Barnum approved of all their plans. In 1869 he had decided that it was time for him to devote himself "to serious reflections on the ends and aims of human existence," and he had no thought of engaging in the circus business. In 1870 he was making preparations with his new partners for the huge exhibition which they suggested, and which was larger than anything Barnum had ever previously attempted.

In his autobiography Barnum was in the habit of giving himself credit for the origin of anything with which his name was associated, and his partners, realizing the immense asset of the name of Barnum in their enterprises, were willing to be silent, at least until their retirement. W. C. Coup published many years after the end of his association with Barnum an interesting book of circus recollections, *Sawdust and Spangles*. In his book he printed the following letter which Barnum wrote him in October, 1870:

"Bridgeport, Oct. 8, 1870.

> "My dear Coup: Yours received. I will join you in a show for next spring and will probably have Admiral Dot well trained this winter and have him and Harrison in the show. Wood will sell all his animals outright, and will furnish several tip-top museum curiosities. You need to spend several months in New York arranging for curiosities, cuts, cages, bills, etc. All things got from Wood I will settle for with him and give the concern credit. We can make a stunning museum department. If you want to call it *my* museum and use my name it may be used by allowing me the same very small percentage that Wood allows for calling himself my successor (3 per cent. on receipts). You can have a Cardiff Giant that won't crack, also a moving figure, Sleeping Beauty, or Dying Zouave—a big Gymnastic figure like that in Wood's museum, and lots of other good things, only you need time to look them up and prepare wagons, etc., etc.
>
> "Yours truly,
>
> "P. T. Barnum.
>
> "I will spare time to look up the show in New York when you come. I think Siamese Twins would pay."

"A Cardiff Giant that won't crack" referred to the then famous curiosity, a huge figure, supposed to have been dug up in the small town of Cardiff, New York, and presented on exhibition as a fine prehistoric relic. Soon after the exhibition of the original Cardiff Giant, the figure began to show seams and other signs of artificial manufacture. Barnum planned the manufacture of a prehistoric relic without blemishes.

Coup devoted time and energy to the organization of the Greatest Show on Earth, and Barnum supplied advice and some financial support. On April 10, 1871, the show opened in Brooklyn, New York, with the largest area of tent canvas that had ever been spread for a circus, and the show boasted that it employed more men, horses and animals than any previously organized in the United States or Europe. There were wax works, dioramas, the Sleeping Beauty, and the Dying Zouave—mechanical figures which breathed evenly, and gasped realistically for breath—Swiss Bell Ringers, and the Cardiff Giant, who did not crack. Admiral Dot, the Eldorado Elf, and Colonel Goshen, the

Palestine Giant, exhibited together, the Admiral sometimes occupying the Colonel's hand as a seat. Esau, the Bearded Boy, and Anna Leake, the armless woman, were other special attractions.

But the greatest attraction of the opening season was the family of Fiji Cannibals, whom Barnum was supposed to have obtained from the Fiji Islands with the aid of the United States consul. These man-eating cannibals, according to Barnum, had been captured in war by King Thokambau and rescued from death and consumption as food by Barnum's agent at Na Vita Levu. King Thokambau accepted a bond for the safe return of his captives, and a large sum of money for their use in Barnum's circus. "Accompanying them," wrote Barnum, "is a half-civilized Cannibal woman, converted and educated by the Methodist missionaries. She reads fluently and very pleasantly from the Bible printed in the Fijian language, and she already exerts a powerful moral influence over these savages. They take a lively interest in hearing her read the history of our Saviour. They earnestly declare their convictions that eating human flesh is wrong, and faithfully promise never again to attempt it. They are intelligent and docile. Their characteristic war dances and rude marches, as well as their representations of Cannibal manners and customs, are peculiarly interesting and instructive. It is perhaps needless to add that the bonds for their return will be forfeited. They are already learning to speak and read our language, and I hope soon to put them in the way of being converted to Christianity, even if by so doing the title of 'Missionary' be added to the many already given me by the public."

Another great attraction of the first season was the giraffe. "Other managers," Barnum explained, "gave up trying to import giraffes several years ago, owing to the great cost and care attending them. No giraffe has ever lived two years in America. These very impediments, however, incited me to always have a living giraffe on hand, at whatever cost—for, of course, their scarcity enhances their attraction and value as curiosities." The giraffe's long neck was always of great advertising value to the circus.

The success of Barnum's circus was almost immediate, but it was not spontaneous. While Barnum was enjoying the fruit of his past activities at his home in Bridgeport, Coup was preparing the country for the Barnum show. The name of Barnum was a great attraction, for

his thirty years of association with the public in the amusement business carried his name and reputation everywhere throughout the United States and in many of the important countries of Europe. General Tom Thumb, Jenny Lind, and the American Museum formed a background of notoriety which finally made Barnum's name, and later the name of Barnum & Bailey, a household expression and a national institution. During the first season Barnum was present with the show in all the large cities, and he exploited his personality and reputation for the benefit of his circus. Frequently he delivered lectures on temperance at the Y. M. C. A. in a city where the circus was performing. "My managers and assistants," Barnum wrote, "insist that my free lectures, especially in the large cities, result to my pecuniary disadvantage, as fully satisfying many who otherwise would patronize the exhibition to gratify their curiosity. However, as our immense pavilions are always crowded, I can see no real cause for complaint." No doubt there were enough people who, after seeing Barnum, still wanted to see the giraffe and the Fiji Cannibals.

But in its first year the factor that contributed more than any other to the success of Barnum's circus was W. C. Coup's advance publicity and advertising and his excellent transportation arrangements. Every other circus had previously been confined to a town and its immediate vicinity for its patronage; Coup ordered his advertisers to post their bills as far as fifty and seventy-five miles from the place where the circus would exhibit, and his advance brigade of bill posters, it was said, posted more bills in one week than other circus companies posted in an entire season. Coup then arranged with the leading railroads of New England and New York to run special excursion trains at reduced fares to points where the Barnum Circus pitched its tents. Often the attendance at the circus was in this way brought up to a total of twice and three times the population of the town visited. The gross receipts of the first season were more than $400,000, and this sum did not include the profits from candy stands, incidental concerts and side-shows.

Coup noticed that in the larger towns the receipts averaged from $5,000 to $7,000 a day, and in the smaller towns they fell to $2,000 a day. This led him to consider the possibility of transporting the Barnum show by rail, thus making sufficiently long trips to eliminate all towns where the receipts were likely to fall below $5,000. Barnum

tells in his autobiography how he triumphed over all other showmen because of his high-handed enterprise and his liberal outlay of money. He particularly records how he startled his partners, Coup and Costello, when he decided to transport the circus by rail. But these statements were not true. All his associates in the circus who have left any records of their opinions agree that in his last years Barnum was inclined to be niggardly and conservative, traits which would have been fatal to the success of such a gigantic enterprise as he was then conducting. It was Coup who negotiated with the railroads for the transportation of the circus, and who informed Barnum arbitrarily that during the season of 1872 the circus would be transported by rail. The innovation startled Barnum, and he protested vigorously. Even after rail transportation had been demonstrated as successful, Barnum urged that it should be abandoned in favor of the old wagons, confining the show to short trips. But Coup refused to listen to Barnum, and he so perfected the details of loading and unloading that it was made possible to make trips of one hundred miles each night, give the far-famed street parade in the morning, and an afternoon and evening performance in each city visited. His system of railroad transportation also made it possible to carry a much larger show about the country, and during the first season of rail transportation the receipts of the circus were more than one million dollars, according to Barnum's own figures. These tremendous figures of profits and expenditure were enough to frighten a younger man than Barnum.

For the winter months, when the circus could not travel, Barnum and Coup hired the Hippotheatron, on Fourteenth Street, New York, and they used some of their curiosities and performers in this continuous museum, menagerie and circus. Part of the show was also sent during the winter on a tour of the southern states, and in 1872 Barnum accompanied the show on this trip. On December 24, 1872, the Hippotheatron was destroyed by fire, and Barnum found himself in possession of nothing but two elephants and one camel, besides the part of the show which was then exhibiting in New Orleans. He immediately, so he wrote, cabled his agents in Europe to obtain duplicate curiosities and new animals and properties, and he telegraphed his son-in-law: "Tell editors I have cabled European agents to expend half million dollars for extra attractions; will have

new and more attractive show than ever early in April. P. T. Barnum." Coup, meanwhile, had provided for the reorganization of the show, and in 1873 it was able to take the road with a larger collection of performers, curiosities and animals than during its first tour.

The Barnum show depended for its patronage upon its size, and in 1872 Coup and Barnum added another ring under their tent. This was the first two-ring circus, a development which was followed by every other large show in the country, and which eventually grew into the famous three-ring circus which has been universally adopted in this country. The three-topped tent circus, with its two separate rings, and later three separate rings, had great advertising advantages over its smaller rivals. The very fact that the spectator was offered more than he could possibly see was such a glamorous inducement for him to spend his money that he usually forgot the obvious disadvantage of not being able to see it all. This large-sized show, inaugurated by Barnum and Coup, has always been deplored by circus performers from an artistic point of view, for they have always seen in its immensity no opportunity for the display of individual merit. Clowns and acrobats have considered that their decline in individual popularity was due to the increase in the magnitude of circus presentation, for it was impossible to do stirring or excruciating things in the air, in animal cages, or on the sawdust when two other groups were occupied in distracting the attention of the audience at the same time. Circus clowns like Grimaldi are no longer popular personally, because the maximum time allowed for an individual performance under the Barnum & Bailey régime, which came a few years later than the Barnum and Coup show, was six minutes. Bailey is said to have imported a famous English clown, who could not possibly shorten his act, he insisted, to less than twenty minutes. Bailey paid the clown's expenses back to England. But psychologically the three-ring circus proved a great success, and brought huge financial profits. The size of the circus gave body to the statement that it was the Greatest Show on Earth, and Barnum's show when it finally combined with Bailey's was certainly the largest: throughout Barnum's career largest and greatest were synonymous.

In September, 1873, Barnum visited Europe for the purpose of attending the International Exhibition at Vienna. In England he met again his old friend John Fish, and he traveled throughout the

country with Fish and his daughter, Nancy. While Barnum was in Europe, Coup obtained a lease on the old New Haven Railroad depot at Madison Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street, New York, and he determined to build what is now Madison Square Garden, where the Barnum & Bailey circus has performed for many years. Barnum declined absolutely to join Coup in this enterprise until Coup cabled him that he had plenty of offers of capital and did not need his aid. Then Barnum determined to join the enterprise. In his autobiography Barnum presented a different version of his reaction to the plan for Madison Square Garden. If we are to believe him, he received letters from Coup and his son-in-law that the New Haven depot was available. "I immediately telegraphed them to take the lease, and within twenty-four hours from that time I was in telegraphic communication with seventeen European cities where I knew were the proper parties to aid me in carrying out a grand and novel enterprise." The grand and novel enterprise was the construction of Madison Square Garden on the site of the New Haven depot and the operation there of a gigantic place of amusement, combining all the features of the circus, museum and menagerie, which was to be called the Great Roman Hippodrome. Coup's health broke down from overwork on the Madison Square Garden project. He went to Europe and later sold out his interest in Barnum's show. Costello had already left the show. Coup was a bold adventurer. Later he invested all his capital in the New York Aquarium, where he had a valuable collection of aquaria and several giraffes and elephants. His partner was a German, who insisted that the Aquarium must be kept open on Sunday. Coup would not consent to this, and since they could not settle the difference of opinion, Coup coolly suggested that they flip a coin to determine which partner should own the giraffes and other large animals, and which should take the aquaria, which were far more valuable. Coup lost, and by the flip of that coin he lost the fortune he had spent years of a wandering circus life in gaining.

While Barnum was in Hamburg in November, 1873, he received a cablegram from his son-in-law, S. M. Hurd, informing him that his wife, Charity Hallett Barnum, had died on November 17, 1873. Barnum wrote in his autobiography that it was difficult for any one to imagine the anguish he suffered by thus being suddenly separated from a companion of forty-four years. "But when the intelligence," he

continued, "is not only unlooked for, but, as in my case, it finds the sorrowing husband four thousand miles away from the bedside of his dead wife, alone, in a strange land, where his native tongue is not spoken: when he reflects that children, grandchildren, and other kindred are mourning over the coffin where he is needed, and where his poor stricken heart is breaking to be, the utter loneliness of that mourner cannot be truly comprehended. Long accustomed as I have been to feel that God is good, and that His ways are always right, that He overcometh evil with good, and chastens us 'for our profit,' I confess the 'cloud' seemed so utterly black that it was hard to realize it *could* have a silver 'lining'; and my tongue ceased to move when I attempted to say, as surely we all ought unhesitatingly at all times to say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'" But apparently there was a silver lining even to this black cloud, for, less than one year later, Barnum married Nancy Fish, the young daughter of his English friend and traveling companion.[21]

II

When he returned to New York, the show, which had opened as the Great Roman Hippodrome at Madison Square Garden, was larger than ever, and he was greeted with cheers by the crowd assembled in the immense building. This applause Barnum took as a gratifying tribute to his enterprise as manager of a monster exhibition. President Grant and his cabinet, governors of states, and judges visited the great show and congratulated Barnum on a stupendous achievement. When he arrived home in Bridgeport, his friends and neighbors gave him a complimentary dinner to place on record their "esteem for his liberality and energy in private enterprise and in promoting the industries and public improvement of our city." In his speech of gratitude Barnum said that night would "ever stand out a red letter day on the calendar of my history."[22]

In London Barnum had contracted with Sanger Brothers for duplicates of their costumes and properties belonging to the Sanger show, known as the Great Congress of Nations. In December, 1874, the show returned to New York and again filled Madison Square Garden with an enthusiastic audience. King Kalakaua, the first King

of the Hawaiian Islands to visit this country, and one of the first reigning sovereigns ever entertained here, visited Barnum's show and enjoyed himself. King Kalakaua had been received with great enthusiasm by the newspapers and the public on his tour, which began at San Francisco and ended in New York. Kalakaua's predecessor on the Hawaiian throne, King Kamehameha V, had visited this country when he was Prince Lot, before the American Civil War. He was thrown out of a New York street car because he was considered "nothing but a dressed-up nigger."

Barnum sent King Kalakaua an invitation to watch the Greatest Show on Earth, and when the King arrived at Madison Square Garden, P. T. Barnum was in the arena, ready to conduct his guests to the royal box, decorated tastefully with the United States and Hawaiian flags. There was a capacity audience in Madison Square Garden to greet Barnum and the King. A great display of fireworks, which formed the word "Kalakaua" in letters of blue and red, followed the entry of the King, and His Majesty was much pleased. The King was particularly impressed by the horse race between lady jockeys, and he handed the winner a white rose. He was also interested in Admiral Dot, the Eldorado Elf, who presented his portrait free of charge. During an intermission the cry went up from the audience, "King Kalakaua! King Kalakaua!" Barnum invited the King to answer the call by riding around the arena with him in an open carriage. There was much cheering and waving of hats and handkerchiefs for Barnum and His Majesty, while the band played "Hail to the Chief." After the performance King Kalakaua visited behind the scenes, where he was introduced to the "gauzy ballet girls." Barnum then gave him a Christmas present of a handsomely bound copy of the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*. A New York newspaper remarked editorially on this reception: "They [Europeans] will be astonished that any man on earth would have had the presumption to propose making a show of a living monarch, albeit his kingdom may not be the most extensive in the world, and we confess that, in our opinion, the only human being on the footstool who would have the temerity to show up a King is our worthy countryman, Phineas T. Barnum." The King seemed to realize that he was being made part of the Greatest Show on Earth, for as he and Barnum stepped into Barnum's carriage he murmured philosophically, "We are all actors."

In March, 1875, some of Barnum's fellow citizens in Bridgeport recognized his preëminence and civic spirit by offering him the Republican nomination for mayor. He wrote in his autobiography that he refused the nomination until he was assured that it was intended as a compliment and would be sustained by both parties. But the Bridgeport newspapers of the period do not tell the same story. Barnum's election was contested bitterly by his Democratic opponent, Frederick Hurd, and Barnum was elected by only 141 votes; he was the only municipal official of the Republican ticket who was elected, and his colleagues in his administration were all his political opponents. In his inaugural address Barnum said: "It is painful to the industrious and moral portions of our people to see so many loungers about the streets, and such a multitude whose highest aspirations seem to be to waste their time in idleness or at baseball, billiards, etc." He also assured the Gentlemen of the Common Council that "Honesty is always the best policy."

Barnum opened his administration by declaring war on whisky dealers, and one of his first measures was an attempt to enforce the Sunday closing law for saloons. His administration also advocated public ownership of the water works, although he himself was one of the largest stockholders in the private water company. One of his most unpopular measures was his advocacy of a fifteen per cent. reduction in the salaries of all civic employees, including the mayor. The reduction was designed to aid the city in its financial difficulties, but men who were dependent for their livelihood upon their municipal salaries were not so eager for the reform as was the mayor, whose circus was earning more money than ever. After one year as mayor, Barnum refused a renomination.

III

The circus season of 1876 was one of special features. That year was the centenary of the Declaration of Independence, and Barnum made the most of it. In the list of attractions were patriotic numbers that succeeded in stirring national enthusiasm, and the printed program contained this boast:

"And the Star Spangled Banner
In triumph shall wave
O'er the grandest of shows
Even Barnum e'er gave."

There was a Goddess of Liberty, "a Gigantic Live American Eagle," which was scheduled to "hover overhead"; groups of patriotic figures, including a man dressed as the Father of His Country and other appropriately costumed Revolutionary heroes, marched in a triumphal procession around the arena. "A stupendous chorus of several hundred thoroughly trained voices," led by Señora Donetti and J. Russell Haynes as soloists, sang "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," while the Goddess of Liberty "triumphantly waved the stars and stripes over the splendid and animated scene."

Barnum's patriotism was one of those sincere beliefs of his which he was able to enjoy personally and to profit by financially at the same time. But his patriotism was as nothing in sincerity or value to him compared with his piety. Barnum's personal piety was one of the greatest assets of the Greatest Show on Earth. The church had been opposed to shows, and especially to the circus, since the first circus toured America, and at one time the Methodist Church in its regulations provided that any Methodist who attended the circus automatically forfeited membership in the church. But Barnum's show was not only attended by clergymen and their most pious parishioners, but even reviewed in most of the religious publications of the country. "That the Church should ever tolerate, patronize, or even recognize as an educator the circus," wrote Barnum, "was a possibility that probably entered into the dreams of no man but myself, and perhaps no man but myself believed it possible to organize a circus which should respect the Church and all pertaining to it." It was true; Barnum accomplished both these things, which combined to form one of his most valuable assets, and he alone of all showmen could have done it, because his personal reputation for piety, temperance, and abstinence was universal.

Barnum forced recognition upon his clerical friends. His show was always advertised as "Barnum's Great Moral Show." The unobjectionable character of its performances was stressed

unremittingly in its programs. And then in Barnum's program notes each year appeared this notice: "The gentlemen having charge of my advertising department will address a letter, containing tickets, to each of the clergy of every denomination, resident in the towns where we exhibit, which will admit them and their wives, free of charge, to my entire combination of exhibitions. It sometimes happens, however, that my agents are not able to procure the names of all the resident clergy. Should any be omitted, they will receive a cordial welcome by calling either on me in person, or on my Treasurer, at the ticket wagon, any time before or during the entertainment. My exhibitions contain nothing that professed Christians do not approve." Though he gave passes liberally to clergymen and to editors,—and for the latter he sometimes supplied transportation from their distant homes,—Barnum told others that "we never issue one to the big show except to editors, clergymen, or orphan asylums, or to persons who render us equivalent service in some way." He had printed a card which he handed to those who bothered him for free passes, that read:

FREE PASSES

In those days there were no passes given.
Search the Scriptures.
"Thou shalt not pass."—*Numbers* xx. 18.
"Suffer not a man to pass."—*Judges* iii. 28.
"The wicked shall no more pass."—*Nahum* i. 15.
"None shall pass."—*Isaiah* xxxiv. 10.
"This generation shall not pass."—*Mark* xiii. 30.
"Beware that thou pass not."—*2d Kings* vi. 9.
"There shall no strangers pass."—*Amos* iii. 17.
"Neither any son of man pass."—*Jeremiah* li. 43.
"No man may pass through because of the beasts."—*Ezekiel* xiv. 15.
"Though they roar, yet they cannot pass."—*Jeremiah* v. 22.
"So he paid the fare thereof and went."—*Jonah* i. 3.

The clergymen were grateful for their passes, and sometimes mentioned the circus from the pulpit, advising their congregations to attend this strictly moral exhibition, of interest and instruction to all. The show depended for its success on winning the patronage of thousands of persons in small towns who rarely saw any newspapers except country weeklies, but who seldom missed Sunday attendance at church. By reiteration in his advance notices and his programs, and by careful supervision of the show itself, Barnum impressed upon his patrons the fact that his circus was reputable and moral. "The reverend clergy and school teachers of both sexes throughout our land are among my firmest friends," Barnum wrote in his program notes for 1879, "and strongest supporters of my great moral exhibition. I am both a husband and a father, and I will *never* place any entertainment before the public that a Christian mother cannot patronize in every department, with her innocent daughters, with pleasure and profit." Not a broad joke nor a suggestive gesture was allowed a clown in Barnum's Great Moral Show. In his program he assured his patrons: "I desire to elevate the morals and refine the tastes of my patrons. In fine, I aspire to make the world *better* for my having lived in it."

His success in this particular was recognized in many different ways by his contemporaries, and all were effective as advertising. An important religious paper, *The Examiner and Chronicle*, wrote a review in which the editor said: "Barnum's Great Show is well worthy everybody's seeing. It is not too much to say that it is the greatest exhibition of its kind in the world." "Amusement is necessary to us all," said *The Christian at Work*, "and when we can combine instruction and amusement, as in this case, we see no reason why we should not be gratified in this respect, and our children as well." Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore L. Cuyler, E. H. Chapin, the most notorious ministers of their day, wrote endorsements for Barnum's show and in public utterances expressed themselves as satisfied that he was a force for great moral good. The Rev. Robert Collyer, minister of the Church of the Messiah in New York City, saw Barnum enter the church one evening after the services had begun and quietly take a back seat. Dr. Collyer announced from the pulpit: "I see P. T. Barnum in a back pew of this church, and I invite him to come forward and take a seat in my family pew. Mr. Barnum always gives me a good seat in his circus, and I want to give him as good in my church." Barnum

said of this incident, "I thought the reverend gentleman had the courage of his convictions to a most unusual degree, and I was grateful to his congregation for the gravity with which they listened to this very remarkable 'pulpit notice' and made way for me as, with some embarrassment, I took the prominent seat so peremptorily indicated." If Barnum was embarrassed then, it was for the first and last time in his life.

Barnum's genius for astute showmanship never was displayed to greater advantage than when he harnessed his caravan to the church by the straps of his personal piety; since his piety was sincere and his show carefully moral throughout, his plea for moral support was responded to with enthusiasm by a large body of clergymen and churchgoers, who admired solemnly Barnum's personal virtues and giggled contentedly at the antics of his clowns. This admiration for him and his enterprise, which was based psychologically on Barnum's own continual reiterations of his own merits and those of his show, was often productive of personal results. In his advance notes for 1879 Barnum wrote: "One charming old lady in Boston, with a troop of happy grandchildren in her train, shook me cordially by the hand and, with a face beaming with smiles, said to me: 'Oh, Mr. Barnum, I don't know how to thank you enough for the pleasure you have afforded these darlings. I never saw them so happy before in all their lives; and they have learned so much in your delightful Museum and wonderful Menagerie. It is better than all the books in Natural History they ever read. I enjoyed it too; I shall never forget this day as long as I live; neither will they. I tell you, Mr. Barnum, you are doing a great deal of good. You deserve canonizing more than many of the saints. God bless you!' and with another shake of the hand she left me, surrounded by her happy charge." Even granting the possibility that this particular old lady of Boston was a mythical press agent figure, the incident recorded is one that must have occurred to him often.

Barnum was frequently approached personally by his patrons, and the thrill of such admiring contact never lost its power to satisfy him. He occupied in the sentiments of his host of patrons a position more enviable for the satisfaction of natural, human vanity than that of any other public figure in the world. His personality was removed from the stress and conflict of political controversy, which makes enemies

as well as friends, and by nature of his contributions to a nation's amusement he was accepted with a cordiality that was never bestowed even upon a President of the United States. His reception was more familiar and more general than that of any other public person: instead of a world figure, he was a world character, and the kindly manifestations of his genial success were an immense source of comfort to his old age. Whenever possible he was present at the circus in all the large cities to enjoy the triumph which he had so justly earned. And his presence invariably increased the gate receipts. Many people came to look at the famous Barnum and remained to look at the other curiosities, while of those larger numbers who were attracted by the show itself, few missed the opportunity to look at Barnum. He once heard a small boy in Toronto ask his father excitedly, "Say, Pa, which cage is Barnum in?" In Erie, Pennsylvania, he was watching the circus performance and caught the conversation of a farmer and his wife, who were sitting behind him. They had not seen a circus since their childhood and were emotionally aroused by its manifold wonders. When a young equestrian rode round the ring, standing on his head on the horse's bare back, the farmer jumped to his feet, waved his straw hat, and shouted with enthusiastic excitement, "I'll bet five dollars that's Barnum! There ain't another man in America who can do that but Barnum!" Barnum did not disillusion him.

The name and personality of Barnum became a strong American legend, and it was recognized as such by some of his more unscrupulous rivals. Barnum wrote in his autobiography: "Nearly every circus and menagerie in the country has lately added what is called a 'museum,' and in some cases they have employed a man named, or supposed to be named, Barnum, intending to advertise under the title of 'Barnum's Show,' thereby deceiving and swindling the public. The trick is very transparent, and can be successful, if at all, only in very rural regions, where the newspapers fail to penetrate. The whole public knows that there is but one P. T. Barnum, and but one show in the country of sufficient importance to bear his name."

Another factor in the spread of the Barnum legend was his autobiography. It was sold at the circus for one dollar, fifty cents less than the published price, and, so anxious was Barnum to increase its circulation, each purchaser was entitled by his purchase to a fifty cent

ticket to the entire show, so that the book was sold at the circus for less than half its published price. The cost of the autobiography to Barnum, he told Major J. B. Pond, was nine cents a copy, because he ordered a million copies of the book. Barnum told a reporter for the *Buffalo Courier*, who found him at "Waldemere" in the act of adding another appendix to the book, that he sold 100,000 copies each year at the circus. "Nearly every family buys one or more of my book," Barnum said. "As the multitudes pour out of my canvas tents at the close of each exhibition, every third person seems to have a book under his arm." "That must be a funny sight," said the reporter. "Yes," said Barnum, "it looks as if they were coming out of a circulating library." When the same reporter expressed his astonishment at the magnitude of Barnum's circus, Barnum said, "My business is to astonish as well as to please."

But in spite of his support from the church, his personal notoriety, and the extent of his advertising, Barnum's show was not alone in the field. There were many circus troupes touring the country, and at least one other was as large as Barnum's, that owned by Cooper & Bailey. So great was circus rivalry that circus men stopped at nothing to hinder the progress of a competitor. W. C. Coup wrote in *Sawdust and Spangles* that a circus company once burned a railroad bridge after crossing it so that a rival show could not get to its next stand.

The rivalry manifested itself in Barnum's advertisements. He plastered the country with large bills, reading, "Wait for Barnum. Don't spend your money on inferior shows." He also attacked competitors in his program notes, and when he chronicled the glory of his curiosities he frequently offered rewards for those who could honestly equal them. In 1879 he promised $10,000 "to any person who can show that the bare expenses of running my establishments during the last six years has not averaged more than *the entire gross receipts* of any other show during the same time, which has ever traveled either in this country or Europe, and in making this offer I promise every facility for learning the facts." Barnum was proud of his menagerie and sure of its preëminence. He printed the following offer: "While most exhibitions advertise more animals than they possess, and many which the advertisers never saw, I hereby solemnly agree to forfeit and pay $50,000.00 if the proprietors of any Menagerie now in the country can show that they have incurred the

same expense, and if an equal number of rare wild animals was ever before seen in any traveling exhibition in this country or in Europe, or anywhere on the face of the whole earth. I am thoroughly in earnest in making this proposition, and pledge my honor and my money for its due fulfilment." This magnificent menagerie included, "the only Two-Horned Rhinoceros ever exhibited in America, which cost me $16,000.00"; a Black, Double-Humped Camel, "as dark as Erebus," and "by his side in strong contrast, another Double-Humped Camel perfectly White." Then there was "the remarkable anomalous pachyderm from the interior of Africa, which even the savants of Europe have not been able to classify. It has the head of the hippopotamus, the tusk of the elephant, the hide of the rhinoceros, the body of the lion, and the feet of a camel. It weighs nearly two tons and has been named from its peculiar form and strange combination, the ELEPHANTUS-HIPPO-PARADOXUS; as it paradoxically combines several animals in one." The zoölogical boast continued:

> "To the perfecting of this grand Zoölogical Collection, I have made Earth, Sea, and Air pay tribute, and my brave rangers, hunters, and agents have traveled to the uttermost parts of the Earth to complete it; braving the dangers of the jungle, the miasma of the morass, the arid, burning plains, the snows of the Polar Circle, the simooms of the desert, the ferocious cannibals of the African forests, and 'the pestilence that walketh by noon-day' in the dread lagoons and poisoned swamps of India. This superb and only exhaustive Zoölogical Collection in the United States contains more costly and rare specimens of natural reptiles, amphibia, and wild denizens of every clime and country than have ever been before presented to the public, and form a Vast Living School of Instruction, where the student may spend hours in wondrous contemplation, looking 'from Nature up to Nature's God.'"

The foregoing sounds as if Barnum had stepped out, and the circus press agent had stepped in. But he took personal interest in all the publicity of his huge show, and he undoubtedly approved all blurbs which he did not write himself. These Barnum circus advertisements

have a grandiose intensity that is unsurpassed in the history of advertising. There is a Walt Whitmanlike fervor in Barnum's exhortation to the public not to miss his free street parade:

> "Come from your fields, your workshops, your offices, your stores and homes! Gather your families—your friends—your neighbors, and make a holiday for once! Secure an eligible position by 9 o'clock in the morning, and see the gorgeous procession—then troop along to the acres of snowy canvas, and devote the rest of the day to seeing my Grand Museum, my School of Automatic Wonders, the Tattooed Greek Nobleman, Giants and Dwarfs, my Gigantic Menagerie, my Twenty Trained Imported Stallions, and my Magnificent Circus! Then you can go home happy, having enjoyed yourselves innocently and learned much that will afford you pleasure hereafter. Then for a night's refreshing sleep and a good day's work to-morrow."

But in spite of all the wonders of the Barnum show, as advertised, Cooper & Bailey continued to prosper and enjoy some of the patronage that Barnum thought was exclusively his. Barnum's programs and advance publicity began to question the honesty of other shows. One year this verse was used:

"Others may issue paper lies,
But we show all we advertise."

In another paragraph Barnum suggested that other showmen advertise things that are not included in their shows, and dare not advertise some of the things they have. The bitter rivalry between Barnum's show and the show now owned by Cooper, Bailey and Hutchinson, which was called "Great London Circus, Sanger's Royal British Menagerie, and Grand International Allied Shows," came to a crisis when a baby elephant was born in the Bailey show, the first baby elephant ever born in captivity. Barnum, realizing the value of this feature, telegraphed Bailey an offer of $100,000 for the baby elephant. Bailey refused, and as soon as his show reached Barnum's territory, Bailey issued bill posters and small handbills with a reproduction of Barnum's telegram, under the spreading caption,

"What Barnum Thinks of the Baby Elephant." Barnum was anxious for peace, and he offered J. L. Hutchinson, one of Bailey's partners, a free partnership in his show if Hutchinson would persuade Bailey to combine with Barnum. In 1880 Bailey reached an agreement with Barnum, and the combined shows were organized under the firm name of Barnum, Bailey & Hutchinson. Cooper was dead, Hutchinson soon retired, and the firm became Barnum & Bailey, the Greatest Show on Earth.



LETTER-HEAD OF BARNUM, BAILEY & HUTCHINSON

In all his enterprises Barnum used his envelopes and letter-heads to advertise his face and his business.

Westervelt Collection

James Anthony Bailey was the perfect partner for P. T. Barnum, for they were opposites in character, but never antagonists in their business relations. Bailey was born to the name McGinnis in Detroit, Michigan, on the Fourth of July, 1847. His father died of cholera during an epidemic, and his mother died soon afterwards. He could not agree with his brothers and sisters, and school teachers were always an annoyance. He ran away from home and worked with a traveling show whose advance agents were Frederick H. Bailey and Benjamin Stevens. Bailey gave young McGinnis his first job, took care of him, and the boy, wishing to forget his brothers and sisters and to avoid detection, took the name of Bailey. In later years he never admitted to the name McGinnis, and he once discharged a clown who boasted that he knew the boss well and had played marbles with him when his name was McGinnis. During the Civil War Bailey was a

sutler's clerk, and after the war he traveled with several small shows. He finally became a partner in Cooper & Bailey and traveled with his show throughout the United States, Australia and South America.

The contrast between Barnum and Bailey extended even to their physical characteristics: Barnum was more than six feet tall, robust, strong, and corpulent after middle age; Bailey was short, thin, alert, and nervous. Barnum's disposition was placid, serene, and, after the period of his bankruptcy and recovery, he could not bring himself to worry for long about the circus or anything else; Bailey was always worried, always anxious, and his twitching, electric energy made it impossible for him to leave the circus grounds until the tents had been struck; a rain storm, which usually frightened and aroused the elephants to a state of panic, was a constant source of worry to him, and always when the skies were clouded he asked every one he met whether he thought it would rain. Barnum lived for publicity, Bailey hated it: he objected even to the use of his photograph in the advertisements. Barnum reveled in the title, "Prince of Humbugs"; Bailey hated every form of humbug and used his energy as much as possible to make it unnecessary by obtaining curiosities which people would recognize readily as unique. This was more expensive than Barnum's cunning, but it paid larger returns eventually. Bailey was prodigal with money used for increasing the size and magnificence of his show, and Barnum was always complaining about the expense. Bailey was at the circus before nine o'clock in the morning, and he usually locked up at night; Barnum in his old age seldom visited the circus except to enjoy his notoriety in the arena whenever it played in large cities. Bailey and Mrs. Bailey traveled with the circus in a private railroad car, which was their home for more than six months every year.

Barnum realized the value of his partner, and he never lost an opportunity to praise him in the newspapers. "Bailey knows," he told a reporter. "Would you believe it, I've never been behind the curtain of our present show [1890]. I don't know a performer. That's Bailey's business." And upon another occasion he said: "I want you newspaper fellows to let the public know how great a man my partner, Mr. Bailey, is. I've never met his equal. He's got brains—lots of them—and he knows how to use them. He doesn't copy any of us, old or young. He's original in his methods, and his resources are amazing. I ought

to be jealous of him, and I would be if he were not my partner. How I would hate to have him for a rival! Don't forget when you are scattering around adjectives about this great spectacle to save a good one or two for Mr. Bailey." Even Barnum would have admitted that if there was one asset as useful as the notoriety of P. T. Barnum in making Barnum & Bailey the Greatest Show on Earth, it was the astute energy of James Anthony Bailey.

There was one point on which Barnum and Bailey agreed in their general principles, and that was the value to the circus of temperance. Barnum advocated it on moral grounds, and Bailey believed in it for the sake of efficiency. Every contract between Barnum & Bailey and each circus performer or circus employee contained a clause prohibiting the use of either malt or spirituous liquors during the period of time covered by the contract.[23] Barnum knew that drink was a curse, and Bailey believed that the occupation of a circus performer was too hazardous without the additional risk of intoxicating influences.

Although Bailey's achievements were great, the publicity value of Barnum's name is not to be underestimated, and Bailey always took it into account; nor did Bailey object to the exaggeration in circus advertisements, for he was too discerning not to realize the value of imaginative words in the description of actual phenomena.

Barnum could always be depended upon, even in his old age, to create a controversy or cause a laugh. In 1880 Henry Bergh, president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who was one of the constant annoyances of Barnum's life, caused a controversy that settled their antagonism forever and gave Barnum excellent publicity. The show was then exhibiting at the Empire Rink, New York, and one of the main attractions was Salamander, the Fire Horse, who walked through fire and came out unscathed. Bergh protested against this cruelty to the horse. Barnum challenged Bergh to meet him in the circus ring and to discuss the subject before the public. Bergh did not appear, but he sent his superintendent, Hartfield, with a squad of twenty policemen to prevent the cruelty. Barnum entered the circus ring and addressed the audience. He assured the public that Salamander's performance had been witnessed by Queen Victoria, Prince Bismarck and the Emperor of Germany. Then Salamander was led into the ring by Prince Nagaard,

his trainer. The fire hoops were lighted, and Barnum ran his own hand through the flaming circles. Ten clowns performed in the hoops of fire, and then Salamander passed through without fear and was not even singed. Superintendent Hartfield walked through the artificial fire himself and was satisfied that it was harmless.

Before the demonstration Barnum told the audience that many years before Bergh had insisted that the hippopotamus which Barnum was exhibiting as the Great Behemoth at his Museum must be provided with a swimming tank filled with water and was satisfied that this was impossible only when Barnum pointed out that such a pleasure would kill the beast, although it was necessary for the whales. Bergh objected again when he heard that Barnum's snakes were being fed with live toads and lizards, although he was assured that they killed their prey before eating it. Bergh's letter of protest read:

> "I am informed that several live animals were recently thrown into the cage with your boa constrictor to be devoured! I assert, without fear of contradiction, that any person who can commit an atrocity such as the one I complain of is semi-barbarian in his instincts. It may be urged that the reptiles will not eat dead food. In reply to this I have only to say—then let them starve; for it is contrary to the merciful providence of God that wrong should be committed in order to accomplish a supposed right. But I am satisfied that this assertion is false in theory and practice, for no living creature will allow itself to perish of hunger with food before it—be the aliment dead or alive. On the next occurrence of this cruel exhibition this society will take legal measures to punish the perpetrator of it."

Barnum took measures to punish Bergh. He sent a copy of Bergh's letter to Professor Louis Agassiz at Harvard, who wrote in reply:

> "I do not know any way to induce snakes to eat their food otherwise than in their natural manner—that is alive. Your museum is intended to show the public the animals as nearly as possible in their natural state. The society of which you speak is, as I understand, for the prevention of unnecessary cruelty to animals. It is a most praiseworthy object, but I do not think the

> most active members of the society would object to eating lobster salad because the lobster was boiled alive, or refuse roasted oysters because they were cooked alive, or raw oysters because they must be swallowed alive. I am, dear sir, your obedient servant,
>
> "L. AGASSIZ."

Barnum sent Agassiz' letter to Bergh and demanded an apology. Bergh answered that he was convinced more than ever of the necessity for laboring in the cause of righteousness, when such distinguished savants were fighting on the other side. He added: "I scarcely know which emotion is paramount in my mind, regret or astonishment, that so eminent a philosopher should have cast the weight of his commanding authority into the scale where cruelty points the index in its favor." Evidently Henry Bergh did not like oysters. Barnum gave all this correspondence to the newspapers, and it created publicity for several days.

It is interesting in this connection that, in spite of his long association with animals, or perhaps because of it, there is no indication in Barnum's life of any personal love for them. So far as we know, he did not keep dogs; he never mentions a cat, and he kept fine horses for his carriage only because they made an excellent impression on the streets. Animals were a part of his business. But he had sufficient interest in their welfare to support societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. He was the head of such a society in Bridgeport, and he contributed liberally to a similar society patronized by Queen Victoria in England.[24] His controversy with Henry Bergh did not impair his personal respect for the man and his work, even when they interfered with Barnum's own interests. In his will Barnum gave the City of Bridgeport $1,000 "to be used for the erection of a statue of Henry Bergh, the Distinguished Philanthropist and founder of the Society for the protection of animals from abuse and cruelty." If the City of Bridgeport did not erect the statue, Barnum provided that the $1,000 was to be donated to any city that would do so.

IV

The greatest single acquisition of the Barnum & Bailey show during its entire history, from the point of view of the international excitement which it caused, and the probable financial returns as a result of that excitement, was Jumbo, the largest elephant in captivity. For many years Jumbo had been the favorite animal in the collection of the Royal Zoölogical Gardens in Regent's Park, London. In his youth Jumbo was captured by the Hamran Arabs, who sold him to a Bavarian collector, Johann Schmidt, and in 1861 Schmidt sold him to the Jardin des Plantes of Paris. The Royal Zoölogical Society traded a rhinoceros for him at a time when Jumbo showed no signs of becoming a giant; he was an African elephant, and African elephants take longer to mature than their Indian brothers.

Barnum had seen Jumbo many times in London after Jumbo had become a famous giant elephant. Barnum coveted him, but it seemed hopeless to think of obtaining him. However, an agent was instructed to ask the Royal Zoölogical Society secretary how much he would take for Jumbo, and the secretary, much to the surprise and delight of Barnum and Bailey, replied that he would sell Jumbo for $10,000. The money was sent immediately, and Jumbo was purchased in the name of P. T. Barnum. After the sale was completed, it was announced in the London newspapers. Immediately there was a furor of public indignation, and Jumbo became the most important question of the day in England. Hundreds of letters were written to the newspapers by fathers and mothers whose children had been carried for many years on Jumbo's back, and the children themselves wrote sentimental notes, appropriately misspelled, begging Mr. Barnum not to take from them their dear Jumbo. The Queen and the Prince of Wales, who had often ridden on Jumbo's back, joined in protesting against this outrageous sale of a public character; John Ruskin wrote indignantly that England had not been in the habit of selling her pets. Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales, and John Ruskin begged the Zoölogical Society to refuse to deliver the elephant to Barnum, and they promised that the British nation would be responsible for any damages due to breach of contract. It was almost as if Barnum had purchased an English institution, like Mr. Gladstone or the Albert Memorial, and the volume of protest was greater than it

would probably have been had Barnum been successful many years before in his attempt to carry off Shakespeare's home. Lord Winchilsea undoubtedly expressed the view of thousands of Englishmen in his verse entitled "Jumbo":

"But since in England's fallen state
She owns two things supremely great,
Jumbo and Gladstone—(each we find
The most prodigious of their kind)—
And one won't budge. Then, Barnum, make
A fair exchange, for quiet's sake!
Take the Right Honorable, and go!
He'll make the better raree show!
Leave Jumbo."

Patriotic citizens were indignant with the Secretary of the Royal Zoölogical Society. He wrote a statement to the press, in which he claimed that for some time past Jumbo had been a source of constant anxiety to the directors of the Zoo. "It is well known," wrote the secretary, "to all who have had much experience with such animals in confinement that male elephants, when they arrive at the adult age, are periodically liable to fits of uncertain temper." Jumbo was eleven feet tall and weighed seven tons. In a fit of anger it was likely that he could cause considerable damage. "The possibility of having to destroy the animal," said the secretary, "would be repugnant to the feelings of all who know and admire him, especially as there seems to be no reason whatever to suppose that when once the removal is over he may not be well cared for and live comfortably." He pointed out that Barnum & Bailey had more than twenty elephants living together in the circus menagerie, and the fact that they lived in harmony and happiness, said the secretary, was proved by the birth of two baby elephants, "an occurrence hitherto unprecedented in captivity." The publication of the letter by Mr. Sclater, secretary of the Royal Zoölogical Society, occasioned an answer, which was published in *The Times* on February 24, 1882, in which the correspondent asked how often, if ever, it had been found necessary to confine Jumbo or seclude him owing to his "alleged recently-developed bad temper." It was also asked if the Society had already determined to part with

Jumbo before Barnum's offer of $10,000. The correspondent failed "to see why the possession of 20 elephants enables the American firm to make arrangements for their custody so superior to those of our own Zoölogical Society for four or five animals, and I would ask whether it is or is it not a fact that one of the animals at Regent's Park is at this time expecting that 'unprecedented occurrence'—viz., an addition to her family in captivity?" The correspondent also asked whether it was, or was it not, a fact that this supposedly dangerous animal had been allowed during the last few days to mix with little children. "Assuming that the transfer of locality," he concluded, "will not affect his daily exhibition, is it quite fair and honorable to accept so large a price for an animal that will presumably be at least as dangerous, if not more so (for his removal may not improve his temper), to the American, as he is said to be to the English children?"

The public was so eager to look at this animal they were about to lose forever that the Royal Zoölogical Gardens were crowded daily, and $50,000 were added to its receipts by the farewell receptions of Jumbo. Jumbo had a passion for buns, and so many were fed to him by his new ardent admirers that it was feared he would be killed with kindness before he could be transported. After Jumbo became a national question, the popular enthusiasm took a form it seems to take often with its greatest favorites. There were Jumbo cigars, Jumbo letter-heads, Jumbo ear rings, fans, hats, and cravats, Jumbo underclothing and Jumbo overcoats, Jumbo boots and Jumbo perfumes. On the menus of London hotels were Jumbo soups and hash, Jumbo fritters and stews, Jumbo salads and pies, Jumbo ice-cream and Jumbo kisses.

The editor of the *London Daily Telegraph* sent the following cable despatch to Barnum:

> "London, February 22, 1882.
>
> "P. T. Barnum, New York:
>
> "Editor's compliments. All British children distressed at elephant's departure. Hundreds of correspondents beg us to inquire on what terms you will kindly return Jumbo. Answer prepaid, unlimited.
>
> Lesarge, *Daily Telegraph*."

But Barnum was firm. He answered prepaid, and took advantage of the word unlimited to advertise the Greatest Show on Earth:

> "New York, February 23.
>
> "My compliments to Editor *Daily Telegraph* and British nation. Fifty millions of American citizens anxiously awaiting Jumbo's arrival. My forty years' invariable practice of exhibiting best that money could procure makes Jumbo's presence here imperative. Hundred thousand pounds would be no inducement to cancel purchase. My largest tent seats thirty thousand persons, and is filled twice each day. It contains four rings, in three of which three full circus companies give different performances simultaneously. In the large outer ring, or racing track, the Roman Hippodrome is exhibited. In two other immense connecting tents my colossal zoölogical collection and museum are shown.
>
> "In December next I visit Australia in person, with Jumbo and my entire mammoth combination of seven shows, via California, thence through Suez Canal. Following summer to London. I shall then exhibit in every prominent city in Great Britain. May afterwards return Jumbo to his old position in Royal Zoölogical Gardens. Wishing long life and prosperity to the British nation, *The Daily Telegraph*, and Jumbo, I am the public's obedient servant,
>
> "P. T. Barnum."

This reply was published in full in the *Daily Telegraph*, and it looked to Jumbo's many new admirers as if there was no longer any possibility of saving Jumbo for England. And the enthusiasm for Jumbo increased every day. Four thousand six hundred and twenty-six curious and sorrowing persons on a certain Wednesday in March, 1882, visited Jumbo, as against 214 for the corresponding Wednesday of the previous year. London *Fun* suggested that the British coat of arms should be altered by the removal of the lion and the substitution of Jumbo, the motto reading, "Dieu et Mon Jumbo." James Russell Lowell, American ambassador to the Court of St. James's, remarked in a public speech that "the only burning question between the two nations is Jumbo."

But the English did not give up hope of retaining their favorite. Some of the fellows of the Royal Zoölogical Society brought an action in chancery for an injunction against the removal of Jumbo. The fellows contended that the council of the Society had no power under its charter to sell any animal, and they declared it as their opinion that "it must be morally wrong for the Council to sell a dangerous animal, and as a consequence whenever an animal cannot be safely retained in the gardens it ought to be killed." "The Society is felt to be established for the promotion of science, and not for the purposes of trade," wrote one of the fellows to the *Times*. This suit in chancery caused considerable comment in the *Times*. Sir George Bowyer, Fellow of the Royal Zoölogical Society, wrote that the British Museum had the power to dispose of duplicates and useless books, but if its trustees were to sell the Codex Alexandrinus, or some similar rare volume, a court would intervene. The Society, in the sale of Jumbo, said Sir George, had disposed of its most valuable and rarest item. There was only one elephant in the world known to be larger, and he belonged to a maharajah of India. Sir George refused to believe that the animal was in the dangerous state of "must," a term used to designate elephants with tempers, and refused to admit that if he was he should be removed. This letter brought one from Major-General William Agnew, who said that his thirty-four years' experience in Assam, "where elephants abound," qualified him to say that an elephant in a state of "must" was an elephant to be removed from public gardens. "Among the elephants I myself owned at different times when magistrate of Goalpara was a male which became 'must,' and after attacking and almost killing its keeper broke from its stable, and for four days defied all my efforts for its recapture, which was only effected by the help of a party of elephant hunters who happened to pass through the station at the time in question.... I should like to be allowed to say one word more, which is that it behoves those in authority to see to the safety of Jumbo's fellow-travelers on his voyage to America—at least, if he is to be a passenger in an emigrant ship. For my own part I should be very sorry indeed to travel with him." The question was asked in the House of Commons if the Board of Trade had taken any measures to safeguard Jumbo's fellow passengers.

Jumbo's case then came up before Mr. Justice Chitty in the Court of Chancery. The *Times* for March 9, 1882, published a leading article on the decision. "The case was one into which sentiment and prejudice have entered so far that the verdict of a jury," said the *Times*, "if to a jury we can imagine it submitted, would not have been doubtful. It needed an impartial Judge to separate the question of propriety and advisability from the question of legal right." Mr. Justice Chitty gave it as his opinion that the Royal Zoölogical Society had the right under its charter to sell animals without consulting all its fellows. The fellows had contended that this right was a delegated power, which was exercised legitimately when a gnu was sold for £150 or a pair of tigers for £400, but that Jumbo was unique and irreplaceable. Mr. Justice Chitty said that Jumbo's mere size did not exempt him from the power of sale possessed by the Council. A report was read from the superintendent of the Zoo, written to the Council more than one year before the sale, in which he called attention to Jumbo's temperamental state of mind and asked that he be provided with means for the animal's destruction, should he become dangerous. The dissenting fellows urged the immorality of selling a dangerous animal to the American people, and the *Times* wrote in its leader: "Regard for the safety of Mr. Barnum's keepers and of the American public does not seem to have entered into the Council's deliberations. A celebrated Latin poem ends with a prayer that Cybele will drive others frantic, but not the speaker himself. The Council of the Zoölogical Society will tell Jumbo in effect to crush and trample upon Americans if he will, but not upon us. This is a somewhat startling application of the principle of *caveat emptor*." Mr. Justice Chitty replied to this argument that the Council of the Royal Zoölogical Society was not the guardian of the American people. Mr. Justice Chitty finally decided that the sale was valid, and that Jumbo was Barnum's rightful purchase. At the last hearing Mr. Justice Chitty said that he had received a number of letters with respect to the case. Of course, they had not the slightest effect upon his mind, he said, but still it was extremely improper that they should have been sent. Some of the letters were from children. The *Times* did not approve of the Jumbo excitement. Its editorial ended:

> "People who have no suspicion that the friendly relations between Russia and Germany have been endangered by Skobeleff's speeches, who have a vague idea of the Irish as a tiresome people, who are far from comprehending the issues raised by the appointment of the Lord's Committee, and who confess that they have not followed the discussions upon Parliamentary procedure, have taken a keen interest in Jumbo's destiny. Others have let fall the thread of public events while they gaped open-mouthed at Jumbo reconnoitering his trolley. It is well enough that children should crowd in thousands to the Zoölogical Gardens, and, as a parting act of kindness, or cruelty, stuff the hero of the hour with buns innumerable. But it speaks volumes for the fundamental levity of adult nature that men have, for the last fortnight, given the first and foremost place in those of their thoughts which did not regard themselves, not to kingdoms and their destinies, but to Jumbo. It is too much to hope that we have heard the last of this famous elephant; but perhaps Jumbo's future will not monopolize conversation after Mr. Justice Chitty's decision of yesterday."

It was too much to hope that the *Times* had heard the last of Jumbo; when the public realized that his departure was inevitable, a wave of sentimental expression swept over England that surpassed anything that had gone before. Besides the accounts in newspapers, the illustrated papers published engravings of Jumbo in various attitudes. Picture books were published, and one of these contained the following verses about Jumbo and the female elephant, Alice, who was known as his wife:

When quite a baby I came here, and now to London folk I'm dear,
They'll try to keep me yet, I know, from Barnum and his traveling
show.
I have no tusks, for one fine day I had some very merry play,
And ran against a door of oak, and that was how my tusks were broke.
It grieves me sadly to be sold for just two thousand pounds in gold,
And could I talk I'd quickly say, 'I'm treated in a shameful way.'
They chained me up one day, to be shipped across the raging sea,
But I, your faithful friend Jumbo, did not just feel inclined to go.
Again they tried the nasty chain, but all the efforts were in vain,
For with a very angry frown upon the ground I laid me down.

I love each little girl and boy who mounts my back for fun and joy,
And hope they'll leave me here for life with Alice, my dear little wife.
I love the brave old British flag, of it, my boys, I'll always brag,
And you must clearly understand, I do not care for Yankee land.
Leave me with Alice kind and true, leave us together in the Zoo,
And let our friend Squire Barnum know, I can't go with him in his
show."[25]

Jumbo himself took an active part in the controversy by lying down in the Royal Zoölogical Gardens and refusing to go near the large case constructed for his removal. His admirers were delighted and praised his intelligence as much as they had previously marveled at his size. Barnum's agent cabled to him: "Jumbo is lying in the Garden and will not stir. What shall we do?" Barnum replied: "Let him lie there as long as he wants to. The publicity is worth it." It was said that Barnum's agents stimulated the sentiment for Jumbo in England; they may have started the sentimental ball rolling, but once it started it required no further attention. The ordinary elephant is afraid of a horse, and Jumbo, who had not been outside the Gardens for seventeen years, sat down as soon as he saw a horse. The superintendent of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who was in attendance to see that Jumbo was not injured or maltreated, refused to allow the use of a goad. The superintendent of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was also present to see justice done to the favorite of his charges.

Another difficulty Barnum's agents experienced was with Jumbo's size; there were few steamers with hatchways large enough to drop a huge elephant down into the hold. Finally, the *Assyrian Monarch*, a British freight steamer, was chosen. Then the huge box was built, and Jumbo was led into it several times in order to accustom him to his new quarters. Finally, when he suspected nothing, he was shut up in the crate and chained. For an hour he struggled against confinement, and it was feared he would smash his cage, but the box was placed on wheels, and ten horses were hitched to the shafts. During the early hours of the morning Jumbo was led triumphantly to the docks. In spite of the time a large crowd followed Jumbo on his nine mile trip to the pier. At seven o'clock he breakfasted and was treated to a large draught of beer by a lady admirer who had followed him all the way from the Zoölogical Gardens—Jumbo's keeper, Matthew Scott, who had been his keeper since the animal's childhood, had shared with him everything, including whisky, beer and cuds of tobacco. At the dock thousands of people gathered in windows, on roofs, and in boats to bid Jumbo farewell. He was placed on a lighter ballasted with sixteen tons of iron, and floated down the Thames to the *Assyrian Monarch*.

A select party sat down to luncheon on board the *Assyrian Monarch* to bid farewell to Jumbo. William Newman, his American keeper, was presented with a gold medal by a few fellows of the Royal Zoölogical Society "to commemorate their appreciation of the coolness and skill of William Newman." Mr. Patton, a member of the steamship company which owned the *Assyrian Monarch*, proposed the toast, "The United States," to which General Merritt, the American Consul-general at London, replied. General Merritt expressed his belief that the possession of common objects of interest and sympathy tended to unite America and England in friendship and mutual understanding. He regretted that the great elephant was not conveyed in an American ship, but expressed the hope that America would soon have a mercantile marine of her own. The Consul-general then spoke of the large numbers of the subjects of the Queen who had left England for America in recent years.

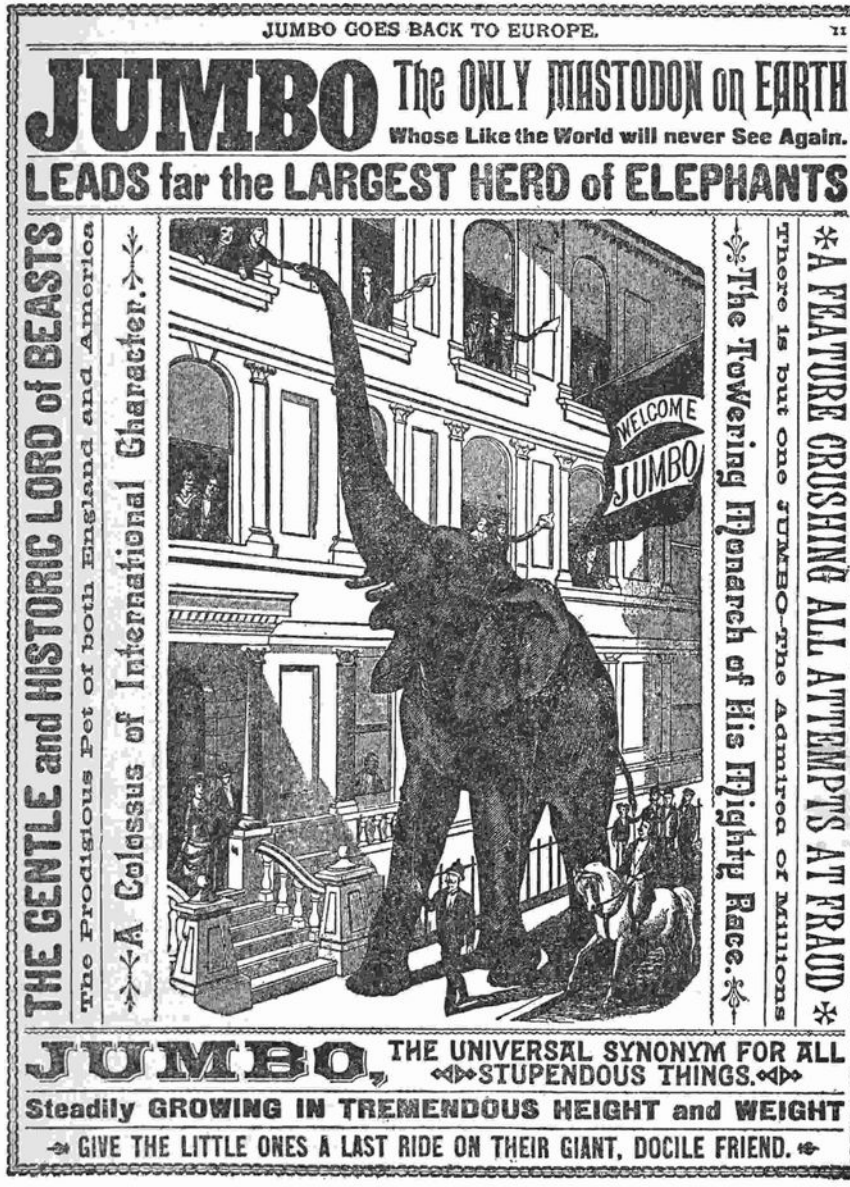
As the boat dropped down to Gravesend, Jumbo received royal honors, the crews of the training ships mounting the yards as he went by. Baroness Burdett-Coutts, friend and correspondent of Dickens,

admirer of Louis Napoleon, and collector of Shakespeare folios, took as much interest in Jumbo as she did in her other hobbies. She traveled by train to Gravesend on the day of Jumbo's final departure, and she took with her a party of Lords and their Ladies. The Baroness had sent ahead a large box of buns for the use of Jumbo during his passage. Before the *Assyrian Monarch* left she gave Jumbo his last bun and bid him good-by, expressing the opinion that he would find as many warm friends in America as he had found in England. She shook hands with Newman and Scott, and the boat departed. A code of signals was arranged by which news of Jumbo was signaled for more than twenty-four hours after the *Assyrian Monarch* passed Dover, and accounts of his health were sent from The Lizard, the last point on British soil. The ship also carried elastic bags, into which communications concerning Jumbo were placed and dropped overboard for the information of the British public.[26]

Jumbo arrived in New York harbor on Sunday morning, April 9, 1882. Barnum, Bailey, and Hutchinson went down to the ship. The *Tribune* said that "Mr. Barnum's nose shone in the morning light, and his eyes sparkled with boyish eagerness," as he "clambered nimbly on board the *Assyrian Monarch*." "'Bless my soul!' he exclaimed. As nobody complied, he continued, 'Where's Jumbo? I didn't know he was here until I read of his arrival in the papers this morning.'" When at last he found himself in front of Jumbo, Barnum was almost moved to tears. "Dear old Jumbo," said the showman, who was then seventy-one years old, "that beast has cost me $50,000," he added thoughtfully. Mr. Hutchinson was seized with a fit of coughing, according to the *Tribune* reporter, and said that Barnum's figures were a trifle high, that the actual cost of Jumbo and his transportation was nearer $30,000. Barnum became sentimental and reminiscent. He remarked that he had ridden on Jumbo's back with General Tom Thumb. "Thirty years ago," Barnum addressed the reporters in his squeaky, aged voice, "I brought the biggest thing New York had ever seen up the bay in the shape of Jenny Lind, and she cleared $700,000 in nine months." Then he looked hopefully at Jumbo and stroked him tenderly. He asked that Jumbo's dimensions be given to the press. "How high does he reach up with his trunk?" Barnum asked. "It's forty-nine feet, isn't it?" and he stared suggestively at one of the keepers. But the keeper did not take the hint. "Twenty-six feet," he

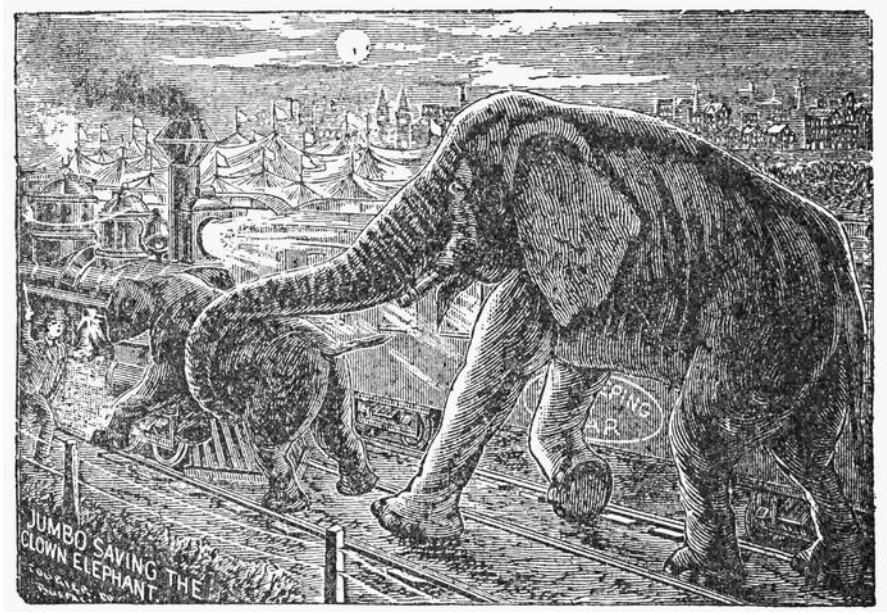
answered. Barnum remarked, “If I were a showman, I would have exaggerated it, but there’s nothing like the truth!” “They took in $2,000 a day after he was sold to me,” Barnum said, “but I let them keep it; I didn’t want any trouble.” A bottle of whisky was brought forth for Jumbo. Barnum shouted, “I object to my elephant drinking whisky,” but in spite of his protests the entire quart of whisky was poured down Jumbo’s throat, and the animal did not even blink an eyelash. The whisky was followed immediately by a quart of ale, Barnum protesting vigorously, but nobody paying any attention to his wishes. “Look at the evils of intemperance,” he said. “Why, Jumbo would have been twice as large if Scott hadn’t stunted him by giving him a bucket of beer every day.”

Barnum had an order from the Secretary of the Treasury, admitting Jumbo free of duty, on the declaration that he was an animal imported for breeding purposes. When he first bid for Jumbo, Barnum intended to use him mainly for breeding purposes, but after England sentimentalized about the elephant, he was worth more as a curiosity. Jumbo was led up Broadway to Madison Square Garden, where the circus was then playing. At first he was frightened by the band music, the crowds, and the horses, but he soon grew accustomed to his new surroundings. Barnum told a reporter that in six weeks Jumbo had attracted $336,000 to the circus.



"THE TOWERING MONARCH OF HIS MIGHTY RACE," IN NEW YORK
From a circus pamphlet

Before Barnum had purchased Jumbo, the elephant was known only to the population of London; after the controversy he was known throughout the British Isles. It was Bailey's intention, therefore, to take the Greatest Show on Earth to England with Jumbo and give the entire population of the British Isles an opportunity to see the animal. For several years Jumbo was with the Barnum & Bailey show in this country, while preparations were being made for the extensive foreign tour. Exhibited with him was a baby elephant, called "Tom Thumb." On September 15, 1885, in Ontario, Canada, Jumbo was struck by a freight train and pinned between it and a train of show cars. The freight train was derailed and the engine broken. Jumbo's skull was fractured, and he suffered internal injuries. He died a few moments later. It was said by the circus publicity men that Jumbo died in a heroic attempt to rescue his favorite, the baby elephant, "Tom Thumb."



BARNUM PORTRAYS JUMBO IN A HEROIC MOOD
From a circus pamphlet

Jumbo's death was cabled all over the world, and English newspapers and public mourned his loss. Soon after Jumbo's death Barnum & Bailey succeeded in buying Alice from the Royal Zoölogical Gardens. She was brought to this country and advertised extensively as "Jumbo's Widow." Jumbo's skeleton was articulated and his skin stuffed. He was thus exhibited at the show by the side of his widow, and the specimens were finally given by Barnum to Tufts College, of which he was one of the founders. That college still uses the head of Jumbo as its emblem. Three days after Jumbo died, Barnum wrote to Harper Brothers, the publishers:

"Waldemere, Bridgeport, Conn., Sept. 18th, 1885.

PRIVATE

"Gentlemen

"Millions of children and adults (myself included) are mourning the death of *Jumbo*.

"Would you like to publish for the holidays—the life history and death of Jumbo, with many incidents and anecdotes not heretofore published By P. T. Barnum Profusely Illustrated? The title can of course be changed from the above. Probably numerous cuts now extant can be used. If properly written up, would it not be an interesting Christmas Childrens book—perhaps on *both* sides of the Atlantic? Truly yours,

P. T. Barnum.

"Messrs. Harper Brothers & Co."

There is this reply penciled on the letter, apparently a memorandum from a member of the Harper firm: "If Mr. Barnum would employ some one, accustomed to writing for publication, to prepare the book (retaining Mr. B.'s name on title-page) we think it might be a successful venture and would like to consider the Ms."[27] This to the author of the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself* and *The Humbugs of the World*! Barnum could not receive such a suggestion with equanimity.

But in his last years Barnum did allow several juvenile books of adventure to be written by the circus press agent and published under his name. Among these are *Lion Jack: A Story of Perilous Adventures*

Among Wild Men and the Capturing of Wild Beasts; Showing How Menageries are Made. By P. T. Barnum; *Dick Broadhead, A Tale of Perilous Adventures by P. T. Barnum, author of "Lion Jack," "Jack in the Jungle," "Struggles and Triumphs of P. T. Barnum,"* etc. The circus press agent also wrote for Barnum his book called *The Wild Beasts, Birds, and Reptiles of the World: the Story of Their Capture. By P. T. Barnum*. These books are written in the familiar style of all juvenile adventure stories. On page 167 of *Lion Jack* occurs this sentence: "'Up the river, now, and keep a sharp look-out for the hippopotami,' said the doctor." The hero, Jack, is a circus-rider, who has all the virtues of ambitious boyhood and not a vice, a veritable Horatio Alger, Jr., hero. Barnum himself is introduced by the press agent as a character in his own story, and he is called "the good-natured, benevolent-looking, middle-aged gentleman," designated as "the owner" of the show, who lived in "a pleasant city on the coast of Long Island Sound."

V

While Jumbo was still a popular favorite, Barnum & Bailey indulged in another adventure in elephants that created national interest. Two agents of the Greatest Show on Earth were traveling in the East in search of human types for the great "Ethnological Congress of Strange Savage Tribes," which was the leading feature of the show one year. The agents, Thomas H. Davis and J. B. Gaylord, visited Burmah. Here they learned of the extravagance of King Theebaw, who found it difficult to keep his expenditures within the limits of his enormous revenues. Davis made a substantial present to the chief priest of the King's chapel, in order to obtain confidence at court, and this gift was appreciated by the King's favorite wife, who worshiped regularly at the chapel, which, without the aid of American money, would have fallen into a state of irreverent decay. Davis spent much time in the company of the chief priest, who was anxious to return the favor of the American gift. Davis's only request was a sight of the Sacred White Elephants, which were famous throughout the world for their rarity.

The chief priest admitted Davis to the royal stables; he decided that Barnum & Bailey must have a Sacred White Elephant. Since it was considered an act of the worst religious profanation for one of the Sacred White Elephants to leave Burmah or Siam, it was necessary for Davis to act with care and patience. He made a friend of the prime minister of Burmah, whose double task was to keep the King always supplied with money and to restrain the nation from rebellion. The tasks were daily growing more incompatible, and Davis hinted that he knew a way by which the King's treasury would be richer by $50,000. The prime minister was anxious for the details, but Davis allowed several weeks of economic worry to pass, in order that the prime minister might become frantically interested. Meanwhile, he met King Theebaw several times in audiences, and the King was delighted with Davis's American vivacity. Davis learned about the court that the prime minister was beginning to abandon the interests of the King, who was headed for ruin, and was thinking of his own pocket, and one day Davis bluntly offered the prime minister $75,000 for one of the Sacred White Elephants. The prime minister answered that he valued his life at more than $75,000, and Davis changed the subject for several weeks. Finally the prime minister was persuaded that a Sacred White Elephant could be smuggled out of Burmah without any hint of his part in the transaction.

Davis and Gaylord chartered a wheel steamer at Rangoon and hired fifteen Mohammedans as their crew, for Mohammedans laugh at the sanctity of the White Elephant. The distance from the royal stables to the wharf was three-quarters of a mile. A docile white elephant was chosen, and he was painted red and blue to disguise him. The real Sacred White Elephant is not white, but a pinkish gray, differing only slightly in color from the ordinary elephant, and often distinguishable only by a few pink spots. The Sacred White Elephant was covered with trappings and embroidered cloths. When night came, the animal, whose name was Toung Taloung, was led through the streets to the wheel steamer. It was then a comparatively simple and safe matter to get him to Liverpool, and thence to New York.

While the Sacred White Elephant was en route to New York, Barnum, his partners, and his press agents made preparations for his enthusiastic reception. A prize of $500 was offered for the best poem commemorating the arrival in this country of the first Sacred White

Elephant to be seen by profane eyes. This was the method of publicity Barnum had found so efficacious in the matter of Jenny Lind. The $500 were finally divided among three of the competitors, and one of the successful poets was Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras, who apparently needed $500 in a hurry. His contribution read:

THE SACRED WHITE ELEPHANT—TOUNG TALOUNG

By Joaquin Miller

For fifty years good Barnum bought
  God's wondrous creatures every one;
And last, impossible! he sought
  To buy the "sun spots" of the sun—
The Sacred Elephant! as soon
Could silver buy the silver moon.

'Twas daring much to gain the prize
  Where kings had failed, and more than bold,
And doubtful Europe rubbed her eyes
  To see him scatter heaps of gold!
But Barnum gold, and Barnum grit,
And Barnum wit accomplished it.

Salaam! And welcome from Siam,
  O sun-crowned of the Orient!
The people cry, from pine to palm,
  Thrice welcome to the Occident!
Cry, mottled Monarch of Siam—
Salaam! Salaam! Salaam! Salaam!

They see the storied East in thee,
  See vast processions, kneeling priests,
Proud tents beneath the banyan-tree,
  Swift chariot wheels, great kingly beasts—
Triumphant Alexanders drawn!
Against the golden door of dawn;

But see! thy temples wrapt in mold,
  For all their glorious, ancient years!
Thy people prone, thy priests in gold—
  A land of tyranny and tears.
And this the lesson, royal beast,
God recks not pagod: beast or priest.

We both have much to learn, no doubt,
  Beneath the bright path of the sun
Where all the nights are blotted out,
  And all thy days are blent as one,
You little dreamed the world was best
And wisest as you rounded west.

But welcome to the Christian's West,
  From land of dreams to land of deed.
You teach us much. Yet it were best
  You pack this in your trunk to read
To tyrants on returning East:
We worship neither man nor beast.

Another contribution, which did not win a prize, but which delighted Barnum by its "originality and naïveté," is worth reprinting:

THE WHITE ELEPHANT

By Helen Conway

Columbia sat in most royal state,
Beside the Atlantic's open gate.
Columbia fair! Columbia great!

But wealth and power hold secret stings;
Tho' proud of her state and envied by kings
She humanly longed for impossible things.

Lovers a many had fair Miss C.,
But none so dauntless as Pee Tee Bee,
Who brought many treasures from land and sea.

She summoned him near and she said with a sigh:
"Is it true there's a token which gold may not buy—
And has love no device with which to reply?

"Since Helen eloped with the son of Priam
Never was woman unhappy as I am.
Unless you can bring from the far land of Siam.

"The 'Rose of the East,' an elephant white,
Great 'Toung Taloung,' so rare a sight!
Oh! deny me not, mine own true knight.

"To this sacred beast they bow the knee
With as great devotion, far over the sea,
As we worship the dollars in our country."

"Oh, bethink yourself," cried brave Pee Tee Bee,
Of the elephants *now* on your hands, Miss C.
Pray, have you forgotten the 'heathen Chinee'?

"And Patrick and Norah will stay a long while,
They have come with their *trunk* from the Emerald Isle.
And Indians and Mormons your leisure beguile."

But Columbia bowed her beautiful head:
"These bring me but sorrow," she mournfully said;
"Now, listen to me: tho' I never may wed,

"I will give to that knight my most radiant smile,
Who captures this treasure through danger and trial,
And children and poor men will bless him the while."

Then up rose the knight without a regret—
"'Tis the hardest task she has given me yet,
But I vow she shall have this rare white pet."

What magic he used—the means or the way—
A mysterious problem remaineth to-day;
But the elephant came without any delay.

And Columbia smiled on Pee Tee Bee,
As she had not smiled since she took tea
In Boston Harbor with one J. B.

When Toung Taloung arrived in New York in March, 1884, Barnum and the patrons of his show were astonished that he was not a milk white in color. He looked very much like any elephant, and the only distinguishing marks of his sacred value were several leprous-like pink spots in various places about the ears. Barnum and his partners made the best of the situation, and insisted in their advertising that the Sacred White Elephant was not supposed to be white. They obtained excellent testimonials to the genuineness of their article. General Daniel B. Sickles, one time Minister of the United States to Siam, was a member of the welcome party to Toung Taloung, and he pronounced the elephant to be the best specimen of Sacred White Elephant he had ever seen. Similar endorsements were also obtained from Colonel Thomas W. Knox, the only American to whom the King of Siam had presented the Order of the White Elephant, and from Mr. David Ker, Siamese correspondent of the *New York Times*.

Accompanying the Sacred White Elephant were two alleged Burmese, Bo Tchoo and Ba Tchoo, but their names sound somewhat like publicity Burmese. The following certificate was printed in all the newspapers and exhibited with the Sacred White Elephant:

"In the year 1245, month of Tasoung Mong, 5th increase at Mandalay. I, Moung Thee, Second Minister of Royal Elephants, do hereby certify that the Elephant named 'Toung Tylongu' is the specie of White (Sacred) Elephant, and possesses the qualities and attributes of such. By Order of

"Hpoung-Daw-Gyee Hpayah
"(King and Lord of all White Elephants)
"(Signed) Moung Thee
"Second Minister of Royal Elephants.

"W. Maling, Translator."

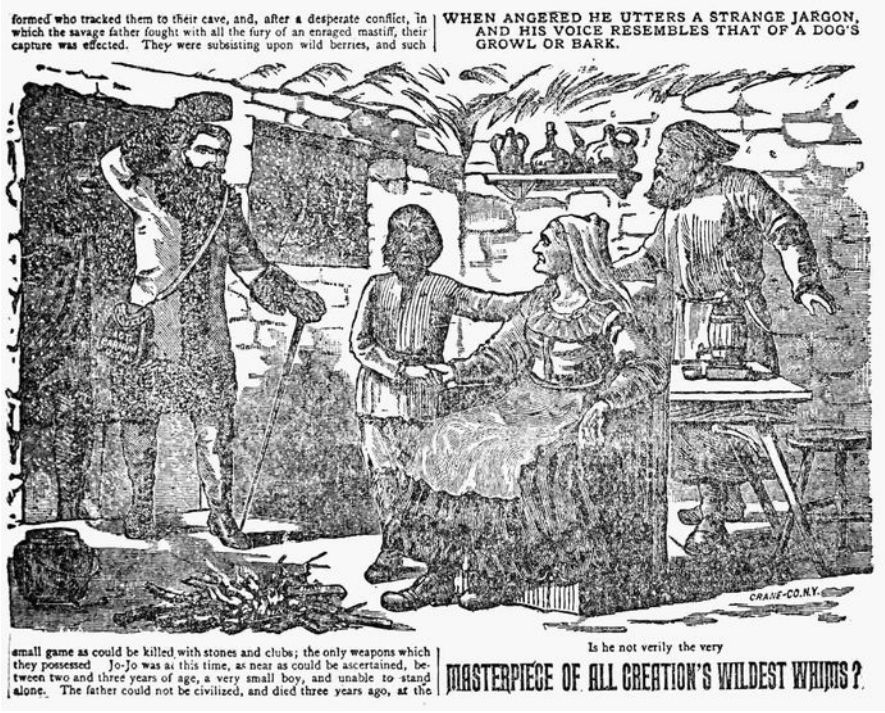
Some have said that this Sacred White Elephant of Barnum's was a sand-papered and scrubbed elephant of ordinary profane habits, who was painted. But it is more probable that Barnum was fooled by his conception of a Sacred White Elephant as really white, and that his agents thought that a genuine Sacred White Elephant would have enough publicity value, even if the color was not up to expectations. The elephant did have great publicity value, but as a curiosity he did not last long. Most people who visited the Barnum & Bailey circus were disappointed when they did not see a cream-white elephant, and Toung Taloung was subsequently returned to the circus winter quarters at Bridgeport, where he perished in the fire that destroyed those buildings in 1887.

The Adam Forepaugh circus, one of the strongest rivals of Barnum & Bailey, determined to have a Sacred White Elephant that would really be white, but Adam Forepaugh did not trouble to send to Burmah or Siam for his specimen. The elephant trainers prepared a white elephant by the sacred use of sufficient paint, and with careful applications every other day of a preparation that would not too easily wear off, a White Elephant of Siam, but truly white, was with Adam Forepaugh's show. Just at this time the Prince of Siam was traveling in the United States, and after much trouble he and his suite were persuaded to visit Forepaugh's circus and pass upon the elephant. There were no interpreters present. When the Prince entered, Adam Forepaugh is said to have rushed up to him, slapped him on the back cordially and vigorously, and said in American: "There now, Prince, ain't that the kind of elephants you have in your country?" The Prince was too astonished, and his suite too shocked, to deny anything, and they left the circus hurriedly. Adam Forepaugh took this as a sign of unqualified approval, and he advertised accordingly.

VI

The Barnum & Bailey show continued to increase in size each year, and also to increase its receipts. Efforts were continued to supply more startling novelties and larger performances. "Jo-Jo, the Dog-Faced Russian Boy," or "The Great Ethnological Congress of Strange Savage Tribes," were supplemented by other attractions each year.

The newspaper reviews of the progress of the circus through the country are the panegyrics to a victorious army of entertainment. Every town of any size throughout the East, South, and Middle West of the United States soon had its "Barnum Day," heralded weeks in advance by large bills showing the satisfied smile of the veteran showman.



THE CAPTURE OF JO-JO, THE DOG-FACED BOY, IN SIBERIA BY ONE OF BARNUM'S AGENTS

From a circus bulletin

During one of the annual tours of the circus the press agent, one M. H. Warner, kept a diary of events that gives the best possible impression of the magnitude, crudity and diversity of the enterprise:

> April 1 (in Madison Square Garden)—Instantaneous hit of the Sylvesters and the Julians. Their first season with a circus. Mr. P. T. Barnum receives an ovation.

April 2—Death of Lottie Stirk, of the Stirk family of Bicyclists. Little Lottie was only eleven years of age at the time of her suddenly taking off. She was a bright, pretty, fearless child and her loss was a sad blow to the members of the Company, who had christened her "The Pet of the Show."

April 5—Henry Cooper, the giant, received the joyful tidings that his wife had presented him with a seventeen pound boy.

April 14—Thousands turned away in the evening. Mr. P. T. Barnum gives up his private box to a party of pleasure seekers.

April 26—Philadelphia—At the first performance of the Sylvesters, Lola, one of the trio of mid-air performers, dislocated her shoulder, and their thrilling trapeze act was taken from the bill.

Mr. Barnum refused an offer of $500 a performance, stating that the Barnum show was strong enough without his presence.

Principal among the casualties in the ring during the week was a severe tumble received by Mrs. Adam Forepaugh in the hippodrome race, and an accident to the Decomas, who fell in their mid-air bicycle act.

On Saturday, May 1, the menagerie was augmented by birth of a baby dromedary.

Monday, May 3, Carlyle, Pa.—"Best street parade ever given," was the comment on all sides. Indians from the reservation and the pupils of two female seminaries visit the show. The Gilfort brothers capture the audience.

Wednesday, May 5, Hagerstown, Md.—Schools suspend and courts adjourn on account of the show.

Thursday, May 6, Frederick, Md.—Splendid business. Detective Cooper arrests a professional thief and monte man, and is complimented by the local press. Trouble in the tiger cage comes near causing Bockburn to lose his life. His bravery and presence of mind comes to his rescue.

Monday, May 10, Washington, D. C.—Chinese Legation and Ministers of foreign lands visit the performance in their native costumes. Mr. P. T. Barnum is offered a place on the Exposition Grounds to found the Barnum National Museum and Menagerie.

Tuesday, May 25, Cincinnati, Ohio—William Beecher called to his home in Philadelphia by a telegram announcing the dangerous illness of his mother.

Frank Morgan has his leg broken accidentally while skylarking with some friends.

Saturday, May 29, Louisville, Ky.—Weather warm. Big business. Capt. Cook Smith, the Kentucky giant, presented with a gold-headed cane by the chief of police, John Whalan. [Dimensions of the cane are not stated in the diary.]

Saturday, June 5, Evansville, Ky.—Weather warm. Magnificent attendance. Robert Eddy, an attaché in the cook department, accidentally killed by falling between the cars. His mangled remains were sent to his former home in Chicago.

Monday, June 7, Vincennes, Ind.—The boys distinguished themselves by assisting to extinguish a burning grist mill located near the lot. They are thanked by the owner of the building.

Saturday, June 12, Dayton, Ohio.—Mr. Hyatt orders in the "red seats" again and they are filled with well-pleased thousands. Weather propitious. James E. Fay leaves to attend his grandmother's funeral. A 100-yard foot race between Joe Mayers and W. Spedden for $5 a side is won by the latter.

Monday, June 14, Columbus, Ohio—Charles Rench, one of the Stirk family, is surprised at the evening entertainment. He is called before the vast audience and presented with a magnificent gold-headed cane by his Columbus friends. Mr. Henshaw eloquently made the presentation speech. George Sherer is injured while unloading, his knee being thrown out of joint. The kind-hearted drivers come to his rescue.

Saturday, June 19, Steubenville, Ohio—Good business to clear weather. Dick Sands, the champion clog dancer, receives a slight paralytic stroke and is carefully attended to by the ladies of the dressing-room. Detective Cooper captures four notorious pickpockets.

Friday, June 25, Youngstown, Ohio—Rain in the afternoon and an "adventure" with roughs in the evening prove that our canvasmen are not afraid to "work."

Monday, June 28, Mansfield, Ohio—Subscriptions amounting to $125 raised by canvasmen for a youth who was injured in the Youngstown "adventure." Reported death of a man alleged to have been in the same. Subsequent investigations by coroner and detectives exonerate our boys from all blame. Detective Cooper adds five more crooks to his long list of "circus followers."

Friday, July 2, Defiance, Ohio—Clever business. Weather clear. Whitfield stricken with paralysis after the evening concert, and carried to his birth in car 51.

Saturday, July 3, Toledo, Ohio—Whitfield's condition pronounced dangerous, his entire left side being helpless. He is visited by all the company at the Oliver House, and attended by expert physicians.

The Arabs celebrate a national feast after a fast of thirty days. Sheriff, the priest of the tribe, officiates, and Ali Mohamed, the interpreter, acts as host. Among the number of distinguished invited guests are Mayor Moore, Manager Cooper, and the editors of the local papers.

In the evening Miss Venoa receives an injury to her knee in the ladies' flat race, which brings to her assistance a doctor from the audience, and firm friends from each dressing room. No bones broken, but a vacation recommended.

Sunday, July 4, Detroit, Mich.—In the evening the company assembled to witness a presentation to Mr. Edwin Fritz, the mail agent of the show. It consisted of a neat uniform of blue, together with a silver shield and badge, a present from his associates.

Monday, July 5, Detroit—The seventy-sixth anniversary of P. T. Barnum's birthday appropriately celebrated by the company and congratulatory dispatches are sent to the great showman by all interested in his success. During each performance the red, white, and blue colors were worn by each actor and actress.

Saturday, July 17, South Bend, Ind.—The following married gentlemen are made happy by the companionship of their genial better halves: Messrs. Hager, Hyatt, Putnam, Newman, Coyle, Door, and Detective Cooper.

Friday, July 30, Champagne, Ill.—Scorching weather does not interfere with good business. After the day show the company in two band wagons and carriages visit the grave of Frank Seymour, a former member of Forepaugh's band. Through the energies of Mr. George Cann, a former friend of the deceased, the grave was found and appropriate ceremonies were held. Prof. James Robinson's band played two solemn dirges. W. L. Marsh executed an artistic solo on the 1st B♭ trombone, and Mr. James Bigger delivered an appropriate eulogy. Cooper, the giant, who was also a friend of the dead musician, arranges with the sexton to properly

decorate the neglected grave. This touching tribute to a brother professional was favorably commented upon by the press of the surrounding country.

Saturday, July 31, Bloomington, Ill.—After the day performance a number of the gentlemen amused themselves at target shooting with a toy rifle. During this innocent sport Abdellah Ben Said, the manager of the Arabs, was accidentally shot in the neck by Orrin Hollis, and subsequently taken to a hospital. All the doctors' bills, the salary, and the board bill of Abdellah and his wife were paid by Mr. Hollis. Firearms of all descriptions were prohibited in the dressing room by Mr. Ducrow.

Sunday, Aug. 1, Peoria, Ill.—An anti-swearing society for 30 days is organized. A fine of twenty-five cents for every naughty word was imposed, and "finders were keepers." Considerable merriment was indulged in by the "can't cuss club" during the day, and not a few dollars changed hands.

Hassen Ali, one of the Arabs, is assaulted by roughs and in the mêlée his hand broken.

Thursday, Aug. 5, Jacksonville, Ill.—Two clever houses to smiling weather. Orrin Hollis receives word that Abdellah is rapidly recovering. He wears his first smile since the accident.

Sunday, Aug. 15, Aurora, Ill.—At midnight a violent wind, rain, and thunder storm sweeps over the city which totally demolishes the menagerie and museum tents. The tempest continues for nearly two hours and tests the bravery and skill of the employees of the lot. Most all of the cages have to be chained to the ground, and the elephants guarded rigidly.

During the progress of the tornado two whelp leopards were born. R. H. King is held responsible for the following conundrum: "Why was the storm like the city? Because it was a-roarer!" Chestnut bells were rung.

A stampede of the little elephants is promptly nipped in the bud by Mr. Frank Hyatt and C. F. Callahan.

At this juncture a word of praise should be extended to the intrepid canvasmen who never deserted their posts, although danger to life and limb threatened at every moment.

Thursday, Aug. 26, Oshkosh, Wis.—The events of this day are too well known to those who peruse "Barnum's Budget" to demand a detailed account. Each has his or her individual views

upon the subject, and enough has been spoken and published about it. In brief: An incipient riot was quelled by the clever management of Mr. Hutchinson, several arrests were made and a number of attachés discharged.

A celebrated linguist visits the dressing room and tests the memory of Ali Mahomet, the Arabian interpreter, as to dead languages. Ali comes off first best.

The Anti-Swearing society disband.

Mr. Cooper, the giant, receives the sad news of his infant child's death.[28]

For some reason, Bailey is never mentioned in this diary of the circus. He may not have been present with the show during that season. But the management of a troupe as large as the Greatest Show on Earth was a job that P. T. Barnum never could have undertaken at his age. If Barnum had not had the foresight to select Bailey as a partner, it is likely that the present generation would never have known his name as a showman. Bailey was able to cope with every calamity quickly and efficiently. When the winter quarters were burned down on November 20, 1887, all the animals were destroyed except thirty elephants and one lion. Bailey ordered a new menagerie by cable, and in six hours he had purchased enough animals to form a better menagerie than the one destroyed by fire. The one lion who was saved was found by circus employees in a barn near Bridgeport. He had been eating sheep, and when the farmer's wife heard a noise in the barn, she entered. What she saw in the dark looked to her like a large dog, and she began to beat the animal with a broom. The lion was busy with his meal, and he paid no attention to the blows. When the circus employees arrived and told the farmer's wife what she had been beating, she fainted.

CHAPTER XIV

OLD AGE

I

It was Bailey's custom often to do things first and then consult Barnum, or rather, tell him what had been done, so that in his last years Barnum's function at the circus was as a huge advertisement. Whenever his carriage entered the arena at Madison Square Garden, he received an ovation from the audience. The old man, whose curly white hair surrounded a shiny bald dome, smiled complacently at the adults, and sometimes stopped to shake the hands of the children and to ask them if they were having a good time. "To me there is no picture so beautiful," wrote Barnum in his old age, "as ten thousand smiling, bright-eyed, happy children; no music so sweet as their clear-ringing laughter. That I have had power, year after year, by providing innocent amusement for the little ones, to create such pictures, to evoke such music, is my proudest and happiest reflection."

One day in 1888 Bailey called Barnum to Madison Square Garden and announced to him that the circus was going to England. "That'll cost a lot of money," Barnum protested, but Bailey insisted that it would make more. The circus went to England; and the achievement of its transportation alone was worth much in advertising value. In 1889 the show opened at the Olympia in London, and Barnum, of course, was present. He and the show were each received with tremendous enthusiasm by both the élite and the populace.

Barnum was accepted in London as the jolly, veteran showman. A banquet was held in his honor at the Victoria Hotel, where more than two hundred politicians, noblemen and writers, with the Earl of Kilmorey as chairman and George Augustus Sala as toastmaster, paid honor to the personality whom they regarded as America's most representative man. At the show he was greeted with due homage. Every afternoon and evening Barnum's open carriage drove up to the entrance to the arena, drawn by two fine horses, driven by a

coachman and adorned with a footman in luxurious livery. The performance stopped immediately, and there was a feeling silence as the old man, tall and portly, but slightly bent with age, dressed in a frock coat, a turn-down collar and a shirt with an extraordinary number of ruffles and a big diamond stud in its center, drove around the enormous arena. At intervals in his progress he would stop the carriage, rise, remove his shining top hat and call out in his squeaky, decaying voice, with its sharp Yankee accent: "I suppose you all come to see Barnum. Wa-al, I'm Barnum." Then he would make a deep bow, and the carriage would proceed a little further, when the same interesting demonstration would occur, until the circuit of the huge arena was accomplished; the men removed their hats and the ladies waved handkerchiefs to the ambassador of vast entertainment. In explaining this daily incident to a reporter, after he had returned home, Barnum said, "I felt that Barnum's show with Barnum left out would be as bad as Hamlet minus the famous Dane."

The Prince of Wales visited the circus and congratulated Barnum ostentatiously; the Princess of Wales saw the performance four times, and when arrangements were made for the return to the United States, she asked Barnum to delay the departure so that Queen Victoria, who was at Windsor, might be present. "I said I was very sorry that we couldn't wait for the Queen, and that she [the Princess of Wales] had better tell Her Majesty she was making a mistake in not changing her plans and coming before we packed up." The Princess of Wales promised to convey Barnum's message to her mother-in-law, and Barnum added, "Tell her she is missing the greatest spectacle of her life." When the Prince of Wales said to Barnum, "It must have cost you a lot of money to come here," Barnum answered: "It cost upward of £100,000, your Royal Highness." In telling the story to reporters in the United States, Barnum explained: "The Prince, of course, thought showmen always speak the truth. As a matter of fact, it did cost half that much, and I thought I treated Wales very fairly in placing the amount at so moderate a figure."

Barnum's success with royalty was always great because of his inoffensive familiarity. Familiarity was unusual, and what would have been insulting and disrespectful in a native subject was accepted in an American showman as quaint and amusing, the interesting entertainment of a court fool with an international reputation; and it

may be that he was admired universally by those who enjoyed artificial attainments because it was impossible for them to envy his achievements.

Barnum asked the young Prince George, now King George V, whether he was going to stop until the end of the performance. He looked around cautiously, paused for a moment, and leaning towards Barnum said: "Mr. Barnum, I shall remain here until they sing God Save Grandmother!" When Gladstone occupied the royal box one evening with a party of distinguished guests, he delighted Barnum by requesting that the showman remain seated by his side during the entire performance. Barnum later said that the statesman was the best conversationalist he had ever met, but from Barnum's account of the meeting to newspaper reporters one gathers that Mr. Gladstone did not do most of the talking. After Gladstone had remarked pleasantly that they were both of the same age, Barnum suggested boldly that Mr. Gladstone should emulate his example, cross the Atlantic Ocean and visit the United States, "where I can guarantee you the greatest ovation any man ever received." Gladstone straightened stiffly in his chair, pointed at one of the gladiators in the great spectacle of "Nero, or the Burning of Rome," and asked, "What is that man doing?" It was Barnum's impression from this that Gladstone was immune from flattery, and averse to it; but it is also possible that Mr. Gladstone feared that Mr. Barnum wanted him for his museum.

While Barnum was in London, a representative of Mme. Tussaud's Wax Works called upon him to ask if he was willing to be put into immortal wax. "Willing?" said Barnum. "Anxious! What's a show without notoriety!" He was asked for his dimensions, and instead he sent his valet with samples of his socks, shoes, coat, waistcoat, trousers, frilled shirt, necktie, and hat.

At last the time came to abandon this profitable notoriety and return home to native enthusiasm. Barnum said his good-bys to royalty, nobility, and clergy. The Bishop of London, bidding him farewell, said: "Well, good-by, Mr. Barnum. I hope I shall see you in Heaven." "You will if you are there," said Barnum to the Bishop.

Three ships took the large show back to New York. Just before the departure Barnum gave the London reporters a luncheon on board the *Furnessia*. As they arrived on board, an incoming Australian steamer, loaded with dressed meat, ran into an outbound boat and

was sunk. The reporters neglected their host and watched this unexpected news event, thus exasperating Barnum beyond words. A fine meal was ready for them, with plenty of liquor, for Barnum never allowed temperance to interfere with publicity. Finally, irritated beyond endurance, he shouted at the reporters, “Come, come, boys! That’s nothing but mutton! Come on down and have some wine and something to eat.”

II

The London triumph of the circus was utilized for all it was worth in advertising when the show returned to this country in 1890. Barnum gave innumerable interviews; in every city he visited he told reporters his experiences as friend of the royal family and caterer to the British public. Advertisements bellowed forth the praises of “The Princes of the Royal Blood” at the spectacle of “Nero, or The Burning of Rome, in which are included Religious Rites, Roman Orgies, Vestal Virgins, Marriage Ceremonies.”

It was rumored in the United States that the circus had not made money in England, that it was growing too large for its own financial good, and when a Chicago reporter questioned Barnum about how the show was doing financially he answered: “Badly, very badly, losing money every day.” “Losing money? How?” asked the reporter. “Turning people away,” said Barnum. It was said that Bailey sold $1,500,000 worth of stock in the Barnum & Bailey Company after its return from Europe, and still retained the controlling interest.

Although he was now eighty years old, Barnum still retained the use of all his faculties, and one especially, publicity. One day he tripped over a rope in Madison Square Garden. He was slightly scratched. As he was helped to his feet by some workmen, he yelled, “Where’s the press agent? Tell him I’ve been injured in an accident!” He remained at his home all the next day, and the newspapers published accounts of the “painful accident” in which “the veteran showman” was “seriously injured.” Wherever he was, in railroad cars, on ferry boats, on the streets, Barnum spoke to strangers, and he invariably ended the conversation by telling them that they had been talking to P. T. Barnum. His personal appearance was pleasantly

obtrusive, the face of a person who makes himself genial to others without effort, and who can never understand that other people may not want to be pleasant. But most people must have enjoyed his geniality, for there was a readiness about the eyes to smile, and an expression of broad cordiality on the large face. The fat, bulbous nose, which in his last years was prominent and red, causing the men about the circus winter quarters to say that "the old man had quite a snitch on him," the firm, set mouth and lips, the large head, and the broad, round chin make their impression almost immediately that here was a man who would introduce himself, and that one might not be altogether ungrateful for the introduction. What in others might have signified determination, in Barnum meant "nerve," "cheek," and a complete lack of embarrassment in any kind of company. He was a man who always assumed that he was welcome, and in nine cases out of every ten he was right. But there was sometimes the tenth case. Barnum went to the steamer to greet his wife, who was returning from Europe. The Duke of Argyll, who somebody said "looked like a lucifer match just ignited," because of his flaming red hair and beard, was on the same steamer. Barnum clapped the Duke on the back and said: "Well, how are you, Duke? Welcome, welcome, Duke, to our glorious country!" The Duke looked straight ahead, as if a fly, not worth brushing aside, had been so impertinent as to interrupt him.

Barnum's senile efforts for publicity were not always judicious. When Cleveland was nominated for President, Barnum wrote a letter to the press, without consulting either his partner or his press agent. He wrote that "should Cleveland be elected, I will sell all my real estate at 25 cents on the dollar." This statement cost the circus many thousands of dollars, for Cleveland was very popular in the South, and the circus that year was compelled to restrict its tour to anti-Cleveland territory. Even a few years later rival showmen in the South reproduced Barnum's letter on Cleveland in the newspapers as his show approached each town. On another occasion a woman approached Barnum outside the Murray Hill Hotel, where he always stayed when the circus was in New York, and asked him where was 125th Street. "Is it too far to walk?" she asked in a tired voice. The wealthy old man genially gave her five cents. The same day, a few hours later, the same woman approached him with the same questions. He handed her over to a policeman, and he forced the

press agent of the circus against his better judgment to send the story of this experience to all the newspapers for its publicity value. In his account for the newspapers Barnum wrote that "he had done the community a service."

When he was at Chicago, after the return of the circus from Europe, Barnum suggested to the newspapers that the World's Fair should place on exhibition the mummies of Pharaoh Rameses II and his family, and also the mummy of the daughter of Pharaoh who had saved Moses from the bulrushes. "Every Hebrew in the world," said Barnum, "would go to see them out of hatred. Every one in Christendom would go to see them out of curiosity. I instructed one of my men to offer $100,000 for them for a year." But the offer was not accepted. Barnum also said that he liked the idea of showing every man, woman, and child in the free country of America, "the face of the despot," but a thoughtful reporter pointed out that if the face were shown, free from its casings and wrappings, it would crumble into dust. The World's Fair did not consider Barnum's suggestion worth attention.

When he was not traveling through the country getting personal publicity and acting antics for his show's advertisement, Barnum spent his time tranquilly at Bridgeport, editing and re-editing his autobiography, adding appendixes and entertaining distinguished visitors. Matthew Arnold spent a night at "Waldemere," after delivering his lecture, "Numbers: or the Majority and the Remnant," at Hartford, Connecticut. He wrote to Mrs. Forster of his visit: "The night before last I dined and slept at Barnum's. He said my lecture was 'grand,' and that he was determined to belong to the remnant." That was all Matthew Arnold wrote in his published letters about Barnum. It seems that Barnum never impressed his literary friends as worth mentioning, even in their letters. Thackeray's letters contain no reference to him, although they were good friends, and Mark Twain, who often visited Bridgeport, never wrote any comments on his host. It may be that after Barnum finished talking there was nothing else to be said on the subject.

Barnum in his last year also published another book, called *Dollars and Sense, or How to Get On, The Whole Secret in a Nutshell*, By P. T. Barnum, to which is added sketches of the "Lives of Successful Men who 'Rose from the Ranks' and from the most Humble Starting

Point Achieved Honorable Fame, By Henry M. Hunt, and an appendix containing, Money! Where It Comes From and Where It Goes To, Being a Concise History of Money, Banks and Banking, By Selden R. Hopkins." The pages of this book are edged all around with gold, and the cover design includes three silver dollars, obverse and reverse, a man's exposed brain, and a sprig of laurel. The contents were nothing more than a collection of the anecdotes contained in various editions of Barnum's autobiography, and added to them were the homely sentiments he delivered in his lectures on "The Art of Money-Getting" and "The World and How to Live in It." It was designed to tell young men "How to Get On," but its platitudes are neither useful in their selection nor novel in their expression: Barnum spent many years, so far as his written philosophy is concerned, assuring the public that two and two really do make four, if one only persists in working it out.

The strength of the Barnum legend did not diminish as Barnum's own powers began to decay. He still received letters from everywhere, offering him services and curiosities, and it was a source of great pride to him that some of these letters were addressed merely, "Barnum, America." A man from Orleans County, New York, wrote: "I can remove the effulgence from the disk of the sun with the magic power that I possess. If you want to see it done, if you will write me a line and state the time, I will perform this feat ten times in half an hour. From 5 to 6 is the best time. My own family don't know I possess this power. You will say this is a big humbug, but it is no humbug. If you don't want to put this on exhibition, you will do me a favor by saying nothing about it." Another correspondent offered himself "with confidence as being the ugliest man beyond question in the United States or Canada. I have resided many years in this State, and am universally acknowledged by travelers and residents as the ugliest man ever seen. Yet there is nothing repulsive in my appearance. I am naturally lazy, and desire a job that does not require much exertion."

A friend urged Barnum in a letter to open a permanent museum in New York City, and though he admitted in his reply that it should be successful because "there is really *no fit place for children* to go to be amused in N. Y. City, and adults will go where children do," he feared he was too old to start a new project. He preferred the tranquillity of his Bridgeport home, where he could look upon his thriving shade

trees and the avenues he had laid out, realizing, as he wrote, that "wherever art has beautified nature, it has but utilized plans and carried out suggestions of my own."

CHAPTER XV

"NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE, BE DONE"

In November of 1890, when he was eighty years old, Barnum suffered an attack of acute congestion of the brain, which kept him in bed for three weeks, and the physicians decided that this was his last illness. He had prepared for that possibility in detail. Before making his final will he called in a horde of physicians to testify to his sound mental condition, because the relatives of a Bridgeport friend, who had recently died, contested the will. In this lawsuit Barnum had been called as a witness of Captain Brooks's mental condition. He replied that he thought the mind of the deceased was as sound as that of any rich man who has poor relations. He himself was determined by this example to frustrate any chance of dissension after his death, and his will provided that contestants were to be deprived of their bequests; his will also set aside a fund of $100,000 to be used in fighting contests.

Besides preparing his will, Barnum exacted from his wife the promise that she would write "The Last Chapter" of the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*, giving the details of his last year to the world. From Mrs. Barnum's account we learn that he was merry and refused to entertain the thought of death, and the mention of it was considerately kept from his eyes and ears. The newspapers, anxious to print reports of his condition, desisted when they were told that he read the papers carefully every day. He continued his business transactions, especially those involving Bridgeport real estate, and he inquired eagerly concerning the daily receipts of the circus. Until the last few weeks of his illness Barnum never gave up hope of his recovery. "Of his own death," wrote his wife, "he would not speak. Of Death in the abstract he said, 'It is a good thing, a beautiful thing, just as much so as life; and it is wrong to grieve about it and look upon it as an evil.'" But he looked long and wistfully at his wife and daughter, and every night his last, whispered words were, "Thy will be done...."

He lingered, but in the beginning of April, 1891, it became obvious that his death was a matter of days. He calmly made arrangements for his own funeral, but always ignoring whenever possible the word, Death. He insisted that he must not be embalmed and chose a plain deal casket with a black pall for his last resting place. In giving his directions for a simple funeral, he said that of show and parade he had had enough during his fifty years before the public. He had never forgotten the horrible impression made on his mind as he gazed on General Grant's dead face, and knowing that he was emaciated, he wished no public exhibition of his body. He sent for the Rev. Dr. Robert Collyer and chose for his funeral two hymns, one by Whittier and the other by Oliver Wendell Holmes; he said that if there was to be an address he would like the text of it to be from Luke xxii, 42: "Not my will, but Thine, be done," and that is the text graven on his tombstone.

Four days before Barnum's death, the *Evening Sun* of New York learned that a few weeks before, when he had been dangerously ill and was thought to be dying, Barnum, on his recovery, had written to a friend: "The only thing lacking to make me happy on my return to good health is the chance to see what sort of lines would have been written about me." The *Evening Sun* sent a reporter to the circus to inquire whether it would hurt Barnum's feelings if the newspaper should print an obituary notice of him before he died. "Not at all," answered Tody Hamilton, the press agent, knowing his boss. The next day the *Evening Sun* devoted four columns to the facts of Barnum's career, and there was a noticeable improvement in Barnum's health.

At half-past six in the evening of April 7, 1891, Barnum died, and his last words were a request to know what the circus receipts had been during the day at Madison Square Garden. It would have pleased him greatly to know that it was said after his death that more newspaper space had been allotted to his career than to that of any other American who was not a President of the United States. Another post-mortem comment that would have delighted this man who never resisted a joke was the conundrum which circulated widely: "Will Barnum get to heaven?" The answer was: "He certainly has a good show."

In his will Barnum disposed of an estate of $4,100,000, and he made careful provision for the perpetuation of his name. Since he had no sons, he provided that his grandson, C. H. Seeley, should receive $25,000, besides his share in the estate, if he would change his name to C. Barnum Seeley, "so that the name of Barnum shall always be known as his name." Provision had already been made for the continuation of the name of "Barnum & Bailey" as circus proprietors for fifty years from October 26, 1887.[29]

In a back office at the circus winter quarters in Bridgeport was a large packing box, turned on its side and nailed securely to a wall. On it was painted in large black letters, "Not to be opened until after the death of P. T. Barnum." Some circus employees expected that this box contained their legacies. When the box was opened, it was found to contain for each of his oldest employees a copy of the *Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself*.

THE END

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FOOTNOTES

[1] *From Sea to Sea*, by Rudyard Kipling. American edition, Doubleday, Page & Co. P. 175.

[2] Autograph letter. Gordon L. Ford Collection, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, New York Public Library. This letter bears no date, but since Barnum mentions that he will be in Charleston, S. C., it was possibly written during the Jenny Lind tour in 1850. There is no trace of the Mr. Baker to whom it is addressed, or of his letters to Barnum.

[3] It is interesting in this connection that during the late war a spiritual medium visited Mr. Leonidas Westervelt, a collector of material on Barnum, with the information that she had been in communication with the showman. His spirit told the medium: "Look out for the Germans.

Remember, the first man who cheated me was a German." The first man who cheated Barnum was his grandfather; but he doubtless forgot that in the harmony of his extra-mundane existence.

[4] Editors sometimes sold their commendations, and Barnum frequently paid for his publicity in advertising. The following note from Barnum to Gordon L. Ford, business manager of the *New York Tribune* under Whitelaw Reid, speaks all too clearly for itself:

"New York, March 24, 1873.

"My dear Mr. Ford:

"Pray don't fail to have a good notice given in your *Weekly* which will contain our big illustrated advertisement and oblige

"P. T. Barnum."

Autograph letter. Gordon L. Ford Collection, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, New York Public Library.

[5] *Illustrated London News*, August 31, 1844.

[6] Autograph Letter in the Theater Collection, Harvard College Library. General Tom Thumb in this letter, one of the few letters he wrote that are extant, gives his official age, according to Barnum, and not his actual birth year. He was born on January 11, 1838, but since Barnum had added six years to his age when he first exhibited him, the General retained that method of calculation carefully for many years. He is the only stage celebrity known who found it to his advantage to increase his age. This letter was written when the General was nine years old.

[7] *Memoir of Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt: Her Early Art-Life and Dramatic Career. 1820–1851. From Original Documents, Letters, MS. Diaries, &c., Collected by Mr. Otto Goldschmidt (her husband).* By Henry Scott Holland and W. S. Rockstro. Two volumes. London: John Murray, 1891.

[8] Bayard Taylor, by Albert H. Smyth, pp. 82–83. Houghton Mifflin, 1896.

[9] Letter from Julia Knapp to Miss Susan N. Knapp, Greenwich, Conn. In the collection of Leonidas Westervelt.

[10] *The Early Years of the Saturday Club*, by Edward Waldo Emerson, p. 101.

[11] In *Samuel Butler, A Memoir*, by Henry Festing Jones, p. 126, Vol. II, there is a characteristic anecdote of Otto Goldschmidt. It concerns Goldschmidt and W. R. Rockstro, who taught Samuel Butler and Henry Festing Jones harmony and counterpoint, and who was one of the authors of *Memoir of Madame Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt*. Jones writes:

"During the time we knew him [Rockstro], but I forget precisely when, he fell from the top of an omnibus near South Kensington Station. Otto Goldschmidt ... came to see him in the hospital, and Rockstro told Goldschmidt all about the accident. Goldschmidt would not believe him and said:

"'You don't mean to tell me you fell off from the top of the bus down to the ground?'

"'Yes, I do,' said Rockstro, 'right off from the top down to the ground, and they took me into the pastrycook's before bringing me here.'

"Next day Goldschmidt went to see Rockstro again and said:

"'I find you are quite right. I have been to the pastrycook's and you actually did fall from the top of the bus to the road.'

"Butler was amused when he heard this, and made the wicked comment that as Otto Goldschmidt had known Rockstro nearly all his life he ought to have been able to form a correct idea of his truthfulness without calling at the pastrycook's for confirmation."

[12] Autograph Letter in the collection of Leonidas Westervelt, New York.

[13] New York Tribune, July 2, 1853.

[14] *History of the American Clock Business for the Past Sixty Years, and Life of Chauncey Jerome, Written by Himself; Barnum's Connection with the Yankee Clock Business*. New

Haven, 1860.

[15] Barnum had persuaded General Tom Thumb and other performers to give benefit performances for the Mountain Grove Cemetery in Bridgeport.

[16] The accounts of Barnum's supplementary proceedings are taken from the *New York Tribune* for March, 1856, where they were published daily from the stenographic records.

[17] Barnum verified this account of General Tom Thumb's proposal by the confirmations of both the General and Lavinia Warren.

[18] *Bridgeport Daily Standard*, March 24, 1875.

[19] Autograph Letter in the Harvard Theater Collection, Harvard College Library.

[20] Major J. B. Pond in his book, *Eccentricities of Genius*, described the interior of "Waldemere" as "a museum of itself." "All the gems of the old museum that were of extraordinary interest as curios were to be seen there. Although he cared nothing especially for rare paintings, the things that he gathered about him seemed designed to attract the eye rather than the ear or the finer qualities of the mind." P. 352.

[21] There are persistent rumors of Barnum's moral irregularity. Men have told me that he was "an old devil," which in the salty manner in which they deliver the dictum sounds more enticing than degrading. These rumors are so persistent as to be worthy of mention—on the principle of the co-existence of smoke and fire—but they are also so vague as not to be worth much in the tracing of his character.

The *New York World* of January 17, 1897, more than five years after Barnum's death, printed a long Sunday feature article on his moral character. According to the *World* story, he had an illegitimate son, whose mother was a French actress performing at the American Museum. Barnum, according to the *World*, educated the boy, who later became a physician. Before Barnum's second marriage, said the *World*, this son appeared in Bridgeport and claimed some settlement in case of the birth of a male heir, for which Barnum was anxious. The petitioner

received $60,000 after he had signed a contract that he would never bother the heirs after Barnum's death, according to the *World*.

The *World* also wrote that when one of Barnum's daughters committed an offense against her husband for which Barnum reproved her, she snapped her fingers in his face, remarking: "How can I help it? I'm P. T. Barnum's daughter."

These stories in the *World* are worthy of mention because they have never been denied. The sources of information to their verification are closed completely by the comprehensible secrecy of family pride.

[22] Barnum apparently thought it necessary to handle the publicity even for this complimentary dinner. He wrote the following letter to Gordon L. Ford, business manager of the *New York Tribune*:

"Waldemere, Bridgeport, Conn., June 18, 1874.

"My dear Mr. Ford:

"Will you please hand the enclosed slip to Mr. Reid [Whitelaw Reid] with my compliments. The Committee on dinner are to invite Mr. Reid. If I cannot have the honor of his company (which I hope I can) I hope he will kindly send a reporter and I shall be glad to pay his expenses. There will be 150 to the dinner including some distinguished guests.

"Yours,

"P. T. Barnum.

"Dinner at 7 P. M., all over before 10."

Autograph Letter from the Gordon L. Ford Collection, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, New York Public Library.

[23] Information to the author from Mr. A. H. Hummel, formerly attorney for Barnum & Bailey.

[24] According to Major J. B. Pond, Barnum was inconsiderate of human and other animal life: "That afternoon one of the Amazons in the great Amazon march, which was a feature

that year, was run over and killed by a chariot near the entrance of the ring. Mr. Barnum did not move, and I said:

"'That is dreadful, isn't it?'

"'Oh,' he replied, 'there is another waiting for a place. It is rather a benefit than a loss.'

"I think I never knew a more heartless man or one who knew the value and possibilities of a dollar more than P. T. Barnum." *Eccentricities of Genius* by Major J. B. Pond, pp. 353–354.

[25] From illustrated Jumbo folder for children. In Harvard College Library Theater Collection.

[26] This account of Jumbo's departure is based on reports in the *London Times* for March 24, 25 and 27, 1882.

[27] Autograph letter in the collection of Leonidas Westervelt.

[28] *The Barnum Budget, or Tent Topics, An Original Route Book of The Season of 1886*, by Morris H. Warner, Press Agent. Authorized by P. T. Barnum, etc. In the Everett Wendell Collection, Harvard College Library.

[29] James A. Bailey died in 1906 from erysipelas after an insect bit him while he was inspecting the circus menagerie. The Barnum & Bailey circus was sold to Ringling Brothers in 1907, and is now known as the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

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Colophon

Barnum
M. R. Werner

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