

TUMBLING FOR SCOUTS

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by

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AND
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With a Foreword by

**THE CAMP CHIEF
GILWELL PARK**

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T.E.W.B.
R.G.S.B.

FOREWORD

OUR aim in Scouting is to secure the self-development of boys in body, mind, and spirit, and it is the Scouter's duty to encourage that development by all possible means in his power. This book treats of one means of physical development which is somewhat neglected in Scout Groups. This neglect is either due to ignorance or to diffidence, or even to both.

Many Scouters appear to imagine that physical development should be confined to the development of muscle and brute strength only. They forget that agility is of quite as much importance as large muscles, and, in point of fact, is more beneficial to a boy as giving him a healthy tone of body. Games have become a great feature of Scout physical development for this reason, but even games can be overdone, and games alone are not sufficient to serve our purpose. Other exercise is required in the shape of free gymnastics, running, walking, swimming, and so on, each of which should, if at all possible, find a place in a Troop's programme, and be given // just the amount of time they deserve and no more."

Diffidence becomes more marked when such an activity as tumbling is mentioned. Scouters who are getting on in years naturally feel that they are not able to give a lead in such matters; those who are younger may feel that they will lose prestige and dignity if they place themselves in weird and wonderful positions. For these last tumbling is badly needed. There was once a Commissioner who used to secure a more friendly atmosphere when he visited anew Cub Pack by turning a somersault and inviting the Cubs to keep the ball rolling!

Tumbling can and should start in the Pack, and be carried on from there into the Troop with the more difficult and more skilled exercises. It is not necessary for the Scouter himself to be able to do these things — he cannot possibly be an Admirable Crichton. It is sufficient if he can lay his hands on someone — Rover Scout or other — who can lend a hand, and if he knows the way various tricks should be done and the dangers and positions that must be avoided. This book will prove a guide in these matters, and should serve to introduce Tumbling into any and every Troop.

Apart from the question of ability and agility involved there is the question of nerve and grit. We do want to develop both these qualities in all Cubs and Scouts, and activities of this kind will secure that development very quickly. Every normal boy should be able to attempt the simpler of these tumbling tricks without any more risk than is involved in walking across the room. They will stand him in good stead by giving him agility and by teaching how to fall without hurt or harm; they will serve to steady his nerve and to keep his head clear and cool in emergencies; and, in this way, they help to link up physical with mental and spiritual development.

I for one welcome this book, just as I welcome the return to use of apparatus in gymnastics because of the moral benefits that they convey to growing boys.

J. S. WILSON,

Camp Chief.

GILWELL PARK.

TUMBLING FOR SCOUTS

CHAPTER I

THE 14TH CATTLEBRIDGE TROOP TAKES TO TUMBLING

WEE-E-E! Wr-r-r! Clank!

A screech, a rattle and a crash announced the arrival of P.L. Reginald Bishop to represent the Woodpecker Patrol at the 14th Cattlebridge Court of Honour. The age-old bicycle, from which the above cries of protest had been wrung by a combination of a high-speed arrival and a vigorous application of its last remaining brake, sank patiently to the ground, and with slowly spinning wheels, reflected on the few bright spots which still remained amid the general dullness of its existence.

Meanwhile its owner, better known to the Troop, and not without good reason, as "Reckless Reggie," had dashed in to take his accustomed seat at the Court of Honour table.

"Evening, Reggie," said the Skipper. "We've got something especially interesting for you on the agenda to-night."

"What's that? A job?" said Reggie, knowing his S.M. He seized a copy of the agenda and ran his eye over the items in anticipation.

"Log, Reports, Competition, Canteen, T.F.S. — What on earth is T.F.S., Skip?"

"Trouble for Skipper, most likely; anyhow, wait and see," so, rising and extending the threefold sign over the table, the S.M. pronounced the familiar formula, "Brother Scouts, the Court of Honour is open," and the business of the evening was begun. In spite of the clamour for enlightenment on the subject of the mysterious initials, it was not until all the routine jobs of the Court had been settled that the Skipper consented to satisfy their curiosity.

"Some of us were lucky enough to see the Tumbling stunts done by the Canadian Scouts at the Jamboree," he began, "and I think you will agree with me that they looked jolly attractive. Now, we have still part of our winter programme to fix, and every prospect of having to get up a concert early next year to rake in more gold for the Troop treasure chest. What says the keeper of the chest?"

"Two doubloons and three pieces of eight."

Thus tersely did the A.S.M. reveal the present state of the Troop finances as a credit balance of two pounds seven and six. A.S.M., did we say? The initials would have conveyed little to the members of the 14th Cattlebridge, for, with its origin buried in a Scouting game of hoary antiquity, the name of Kuchinarbar had long been the label attached by the Troop to Arthur Phillips, Mr. Fergerson's assistant.

"Well, that won't get us very far with camp gear, especially as we want at least two new tents and a complete extra set of patrol equipment. It seems as if we ought really to begin thinking about chest expansion right away, and if I'm not mistaken, the

initials T.F.S. will help us to do it in more ways than one.”

“I suppose T.F.S. stands for ‘Tumbling for Scouts,’” said Tony Woolbright, second of the ‘Peckers, and the “intellectual” of the Troop, “and you mean that we should put on some kind of gymnastic display at the next Troop concert. I don't think we ought to waste time learning a lot of monkey tricks when there are lots of really decent plays we could do. Besides, what about the Electrician stuff we have started, and the First Class work? We ought not to give those up.”

“Bilge,” was Reggie's brief retort. “Jolly fine scheme, I call it. But aren't those stunts awfully difficult, Skipper? no you think we could do them well enough to put up a decent show?”

“Just a minute,” said the S.M., “let's get this sorted out a bit. In the first place, I'm not suggesting for a moment that our 'monkey tricks' should take the place of all our other kinds of Scouting. If we do decide to take up tumbling, we shall have to give it just the amount of time it deserves, and no more. Say one hour a week for a start, with a bit more later if we decide to do it at the concert.”

“Then there's much more than mere monkey trick about it. The Chief Scout says, ‘If you want to be a fine specimen of a man, you must work for it as a boy... and as you come to manhood you will find yourself strong and upright, with smooth steely muscle on every limb, and on back and stomach, with a feeling of health and fitness which makes you ready and able to undertake any amount of hard work with a hopeful idea of getting through it successfully and well.’ Now I suppose all you fellows are keen to train yourselves to be real Scouts of this kind, and while I'm not pretending that the tumbling we should do would be sufficient exercise in itself to develop every muscle, it would get at muscles like those of the stomach, neck, and arm which tend to get neglected in the ordinary way. Even more important than this is the sense of balance and nerve control which tumbling develops; you very rarely hear of an acrobat taking a toss from a cycle, or crashing whilst climbing, and even if he does, the habit of relaxing the muscles automatically which he has acquired by long practice, usually prevents him hurting himself severely. I'll tell you more about these things later, but I think I've said enough to show Tony that there's more in it than he thought.”

“Then again, there's the question of difficulty. Of course it's going to be difficult. It wouldn't be much use to us if it wasn't. It isn't that the stunts themselves are hard — most of them are quite easy to *scramble* through, but merely to scramble through them will give no satisfaction either to us or to an audience if we work Tumbling into a concert. We must be prepared to work away at even the simplest things until we can do them with perfect balance, muscular control, and finish.”

“But it's not much use merely talking about the scheme when you haven't had a chance of trying things for yourselves. What about trying it out one evening next week before deciding whether we shall take it up?”

The discussion of ways and means went on with growing excitement, enlivened, after the Court had been formally closed and its rigid etiquette abandoned, by frequent demonstrations by Reggie, as memories of stunts seen at the Jamboree and other shows were revived. Finally, arrangements were made for a meeting on the following Wednesday, the Skipper having undertaken to get hold of a couple of

old mattresses, and all having agreed to bring shorts, singlet, and gym shoes, together with a towel, so that a complete change and a rub down after their exercise should enable them to get the greatest possible benefit from it. They were all familiar with the Skipper's yarn on the "Sweat Gland Sewers of the Body" and knew that half the value of exercise was lost if they did not scrub off the poisonous perspiration afterwards with a stiff towel and so help to cleanse their blood.

Wednesday night saw the members of the Court of Honour stripped and ready for the fray in their clubroom. Besides the Skipper, Kuchinarbar, Reggie, and Tony, whom we have already met, there was John Roper, leader of the Woodpigeons, a thick-set, rather heavy-looking fellow, captain of the local junior football team, and his Second, Jack Church, answering in the Troop to the name of "Doctor." Jack was the Patrol ambulance expert and "dope fiend," and it was only gradually and with difficulty that he was weaned from the belief that patent medicines produced as healthy a body as exercise and fresh air.

The fire-place, built by the Troop in the corner of the disused coach-house which served them for a headquarters, was in peevish mood, and poured volumes of smoke into the room, filling the air and making the place quite useless for any form of healthy exercise. Doors and windows were flung open and Kuchinarbar was left behind to deal with the offending monster, while the rest doubled out into the night to do a half-mile stretch of Scouts' pace to open up their lungs and stretch their muscles before beginning their tumbling. When they got back the fire was glowing merrily, throwing out a pleasant warmth, while the clean, cool, night air streamed in through the open windows. On the floor the mats were laid out ready to begin. An old flock mattress begged from a kindly friend by the Skipper, a couple of old canoe cushions given by the Vicar, and a sack of straw completed the equipment. Not an expensive outlay!

"Teewhit! Teewhit! Teewhoo!" The Troop call brought everyone to the alert, and the outstretching of the Skipper's arms which followed, resulted in the formation of a line of Scouts facing him with a rapidity which would have surprised any onlooker unfamiliar with the keen discipline of Scouting.

"Now!" said the Skipper, "we'll start with one you all know. The Forward Roll, or 'Pitch Pole,' as some of you call it. Put your hands on the mat, duck your head, push off your feet, and carry the weight of your body on the hands until you can put the back of your neck on the mat. Then push off hard with your hands and roll quickly on your rounded back. You should get sufficient impetus from the first part of the roll to carry you straight up on to your feet at the finish. Are you ready? First man — Go!"

Reggie, who thought this much beneath his powers, went at it with careless abandon, and was not a little crestfallen when the S.M. showed him at least half a dozen faults he had committed. The slipshod takeoff from one foot with the other wildly waving in the air, instead of a clean, crisp jump from both feet



Fig. 1. The Forward Roll (Incorrect).

with the legs kept together all through the roll. The careless scramble to his feet from the sitting position in which he finished the roll, instead of utilizing its impetus to bring himself up to the alert. Fig. 1 shows the sort of faults mentioned above, while Fig. 2 illustrates a well-executed roll.



Fig. 2. The Forward Roll (Correct).

John, who always liked to go into a question very thoroughly before coming to a conclusion, proceeded with his usual caution, and having resolutely placed his head upon the mat, thrust the seat of his shorts up into the air, and there remained until pressure was brought to bear upon him by the Skipper in the shape of a hefty push, which sent him sideways off the mat on to Tony's foot.

"By George!" said the Skipper, "your joints want kneading about a bit, John. Never mind though; after a few weeks of tumbling we'll have you as pliant as a piece of whalebone, and as whippy as a steel spring. There'll be no counting your goals for Cattlebridge United then! Next bloke!"

Tony and Jack inverted and recovered themselves eventually, and the S.M. went on to explain the old-world courtesy of the circus salutes, telling how they had been handed down through the centuries from the Roman and Greek athletes, and how they were at the same time an appeal for the attention of the audience, a graceful method of concluding an act, and an expression of thanks for any applause received. Fig. 3 illustrates the two most usual types of salute, and simple though they appear, a considerable amount of practice is required before they can be done with ease and grace.

Further practice at the forward roll followed this yarn, with salutes before and after, and the pace got hotter and hotter until the six of them were fairly hurling themselves down the mat.

"Steady all!" said the Skipper. "Now let's have a shot at the headstand. Reggie, demonstration, please!"

Plate I shows the demonstration offered, which was not above criticism, the S.M. pointing out that the head and hands should form a triangle on the ground if a sure balance was to be obtained, and Reggie, though balanced, was anything but sure.

"To be absolutely certain of the headstand," said the S.M., "you must have control of your body from start to finish, and you can't do that if you start by flinging your legs up into the air and trusting to luck that they will stop in the right place. Get your triangle first, and push slowly up into a balance with your knees well bent; then, as soon as you feel secure, you can straighten out your legs and point your toes so that the whole body forms a graceful curve. Just one more hint. Never try to keep in a headstand too long. We want to

use these stunts to make and keep us fit, and not to put strains on our bodies which they were never intended to bear. In coming down from the headstand, don't flop like

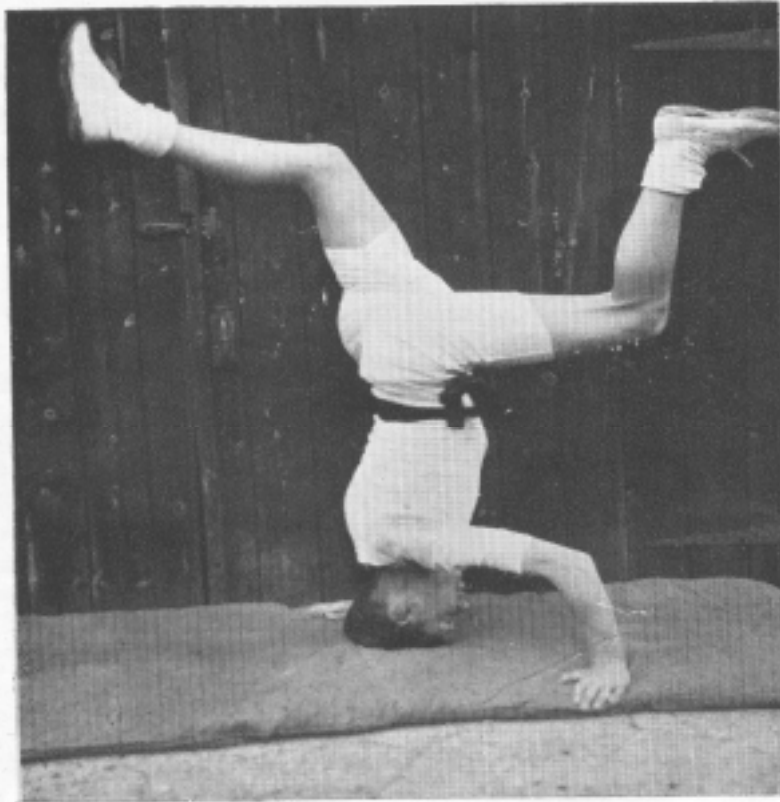


PLATE I.—AN ATTEMPT AT A HEADSTAND



PLATE II.—THE HORSES
Rolling after landing on the hands.

Reggie; just duck your head, round your back, and roll over on to your feet. Come on, John!"

We must, however, pass over the efforts of John and the rest to achieve the headstand, and describe as briefly as possible the stunts which occupied them for the remainder of the evening. The next one they tried was —

THE BACK ROLL

and this was the way the Skipper explained it. "Lie on your back, John, So that you can see if you have enough space on the mat for the roll. Now come up to a sitting position and quickly fall backwards, bringing your

legs over your head and shove hard with your hands at the same time. If you push hard enough you will come right over on to your feet with a jump, but you must get your hands in the right position first" (Fig. 4).

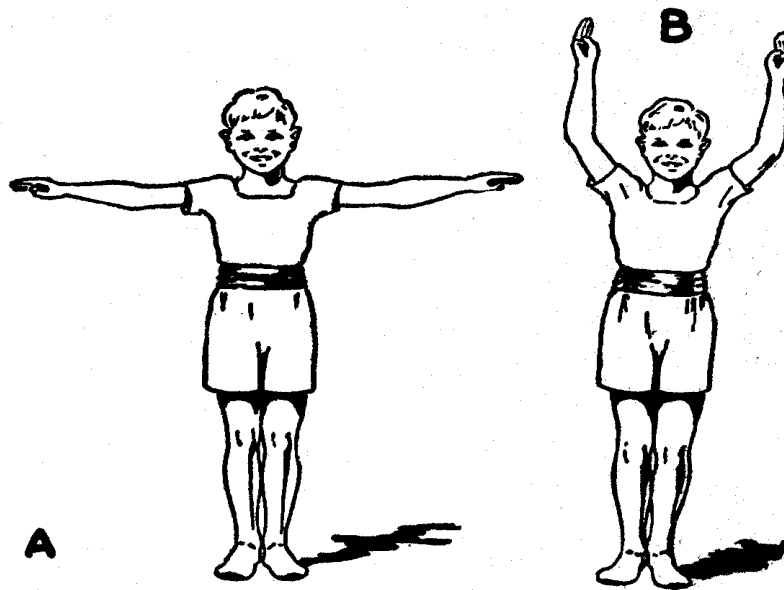


Fig. 3. Salutes (A and B).

When they had become fairly proficient at this roll, decorative additions in the shape of salutes before and after were added, and before long Reggie had devised a quaint combination of forward and backward rolls all down the mats by the simple expedient of crossing his legs as he came up from each roll. In this way he did a sort of "about turn" each time, so that after starting with a forward roll he got straight into a position for a backward roll.

THE WHEELBARROW AND ROLL

was the next upon the list, and this the Skipper introduced by explaining its value in strengthening the arms and back in preparation for the more advanced work. He pointed out that energy expended on practice of these simple stunts would be amply repaid, for in addition to building up their muscles it would also increase their fighting resources against the armies of disease germs which were always seeking an opportunity to break through the defences of their bodies.



Fig. 4. The Back Roll.

"As most of you know," he told them, "our chief defenders are the 'white Knights' of the blood, the white corpuscles, which attack and destroy any harmful germs which may have penetrated the outer defences, the skin, mouth, and nose. These white corpuscles are maintained in fighting trim by means of the nourishment passed on to them from our food, and by the purifying action of the fresh air breathed into our lungs, and you can

easily understand that both these processes are backed up by our tumbling work.

The constant kneading of those yards of tubing through which our food passes, the intestines, ensures that all the waste material is passed on and discharged by our daily, or more frequent, visits to the latrine, so that only the more valuable nourishing part of our food, free from any poisonous material, is absorbed through the walls of the intestines, while the strength and development of the lungs and chest, which come to the practised tumbler, ensure that a sufficient supply of purifying air is always available.

“The heart, pumping the blood around the body, keeps this watchful army of corpuscles on the march, and it is therefore even more important that this organ should be tuned up to a high pitch of efficiency. Tumbling can do this most effectively if we work away at the easier tricks, the rolls, wheelbarrow, cartwheels, diving, and so on, which will gradually strengthen the muscles of the heart, as well as those knobby growths which we can see and admire outside.”

With this encouragement they went wholeheartedly at their practice for the wheelbarrow, which is too well known to need much description. Figs. 5 A and 5 B will probably suffice to make this clear. They found it difficult at first for the Scout being “wheeled” to keep his back straight and rigid, and to carry his own weight smoothly on his arms, but in these difficulties lay, of course, the very value of the stunt. An exercise which could be done without effort was, they were told, of little use for developing their muscles, and if they really wanted to grow stronger they would have to work away at things which were a little harder than they could manage with ease. When their muscles became equal to this new demand, something still a little

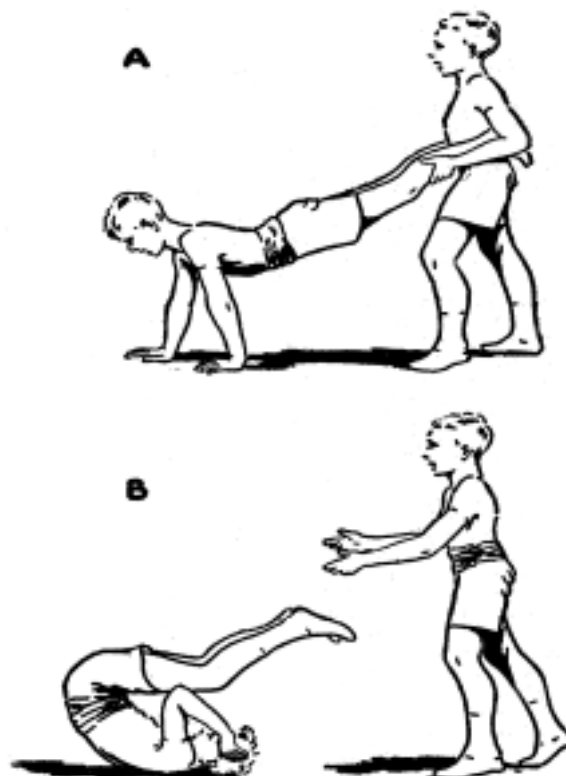


Fig. 5. The Wheelbarrow (A and B).

more difficult must be tried, and so on. “But remember this,” continued the Skipper, “the stunts must be only slightly more difficult each time. If you set your muscles a bigger step than they can manage at once, something will give way, and that will most likely be the most important muscle of all — the heart muscle. So go slow.

'Softly, softly, catchee monkey.' Now the next stunt:

THE CARTWHEEL

"Face the mat with your left arm stretched out in front of you; bend slightly backwards and then quickly forwards so that your left hand comes on to the mat; at the same time swing the right leg up into the air and bring the right arm in a circle over your head to share the weight of the body as the legs come over the vertical; push slightly with the left arm as the right leg comes to the ground and you will come to the alert facing the same way as the start."

Most of the fellows found this too difficult to get hold of at once, so the Skipper showed them how to get the correct swing and sequence — left hand, right hand, right leg, left leg, in which the limbs touch the mat, by letting the body and legs come round more or less horizontally at first, getting the legs higher and higher as they got used to the motion, until the perfect movement of the rotating spokes of a wheel, with rigidly extended arms and legs, was obtained (Fig. 6).

When the Skipper's "Pack up now!" came after about an hour's energetic practice at these stunts, even the one-time scornful Tony expressed disappointment, for to his great delight and to the surprise of most of the others, he had fallen into the knack of the cartwheel almost at once, and was throwing them to left and right with an easy motion which told plainly of the splendid muscular development which could be his if he only became sufficiently interested to train himself.

Certainly there was doubt about the decision arrived at on the subject of tumbling by the Court of Honour, and on the following Wednesday evening — but that must be told in another chapter.

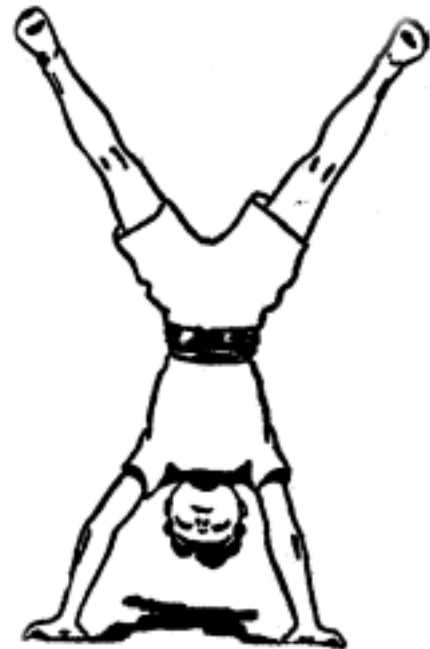


Fig. 6. The Cartwheel.

CHAPTER II

THE ELEMENTS OF TUMBLING

"WHOOPEE, chaps!" sang Roy Mackensie, alias Scottie, as he executed a couple of neat cartwheels down the mat on the Wednesday evening following the Court of Honour's trial sample. The troop had taken enthusiastically to the new activity, and most of them had found little difficulty in getting hold of the stunts described in the last chapter, though none had yet learned to do them with poise and smartness.

"Now that we have become fairly proficient at the roll," said the Skipper, "we can start to learn the dive, and the best way to begin is by getting someone to hold a staff about a couple of feet in front of us, and about the same height above the

ground. To start with, just place your hands on the mat over the staff, and throw your legs over in a roll. Take care to keep the weight on your arms until you are far enough over to put the back of your neck on the ground, then push hard, roll, and come up to the salute in the ordinary way."

So, with Kuchinarbar holding the staff, the Troop made its first essay in diving. With the exception of Ron Neaverson, a rather dull, listless youngster, who seemed to lose all sense of direction as soon as he placed his hands on the mat, they acquitted themselves creditably, and Reggie, and Doc of all people, were soon hot in competition as to who could clear the greatest height, as Kuch raised the staff higher and moved it further from their starting-point.

"Very good," said Skipper, "only don't go merely for height and length in your diving. Remember that position is important, and especially the change from the rigid extension of arms, body, and legs when you are going over the bar, to the relaxed and flexed position on landing. The first not only gives a graceful appearance during the dive, but, when you come to hoop diving, you will find that you cannot get through cleanly unless your body is as straight as a dart, while the relaxed position is necessary in order to avoid any shock or jar on landing. The only muscles which must not be completely relaxed at first are the arm muscles; these must take the weight of the body and lower it gently on to the back of the neck as you roll over."



Fig. 7. Hoop Diving.

Fig. 7 shows the correct position whilst going over the bar, while Fig. 2 shows the roll which follows.

Next came further practice in diving in a stunt which the Skipper called

THE HORSES (Plate II)

They got Ron Neaverson to crouch down on his hands and knees, with his head well tucked in, at one end of the mat. Then Scottie, taking a short run, dived over him, and after rolling to his feet, ran back and crouched down in a similar position alongside. John followed, dived over the two, came back, and made a third back, and so on, until the limit of their diving capacity had been reached.

This makes a very effective display item if a star diver can clear four or five backs with ease and certainty as a finale.

"Now, a rather more difficult balancing stunt,

THE TIGER BALANCE,"

said the Skipper, and he proceeded to demonstrate as shown in Fig. 8. "Kneel down and place your forearms on the mat with the tips of the fingers together and the elbows well separated so that the arms form an angle of about ninety degrees; stretch the right leg out behind, and, rising slightly on the toes of the left foot, swing the right leg up over the head, allowing the left to follow as soon as the balance has been obtained. Don't be afraid to let your legs come well over your head, and keep them well braced with the toes pointed. If you find yourself going over too far, turn your head to one side, so, and roll over on one side of your back."



Fig. 8. The Tiger Balance.

This trick proved too difficult for any of them at a first attempt, but after their legs had been hauled up and placed in a balance by Kuchinarbar, both Scottie and Reggie managed to hold themselves in position for several seconds. Scottie, who had apparently a back like a piece of clock spring, found the Skipper's advice in case of overbalancing quite unnecessary, for with perfect ease he was able to let his legs droop over until they found their footing on the mat, and with a bit of a scramble he could push himself up to a standing position.

"Hullo!" commented the Skipper, "Troop contortionist, hey? I think you ought to be given a handicap, young Scottie. You'll be able to do lots of these stunts without putting half the vim into the job that most of us will have to. Still, we'll find you plenty to get your teeth into, I expect. Now let's try a new variation of the forward roll. Ron, Tony, and Hugh, kneel down alongside each other as you did for the horses, but with your arms and thighs straight up so that your backs are about a foot and a half from the ground, and quite level. Reggie, you follow me. Put your hands on the mat just behind the first chap, and roll like this over the three backs" (Fig. 9).

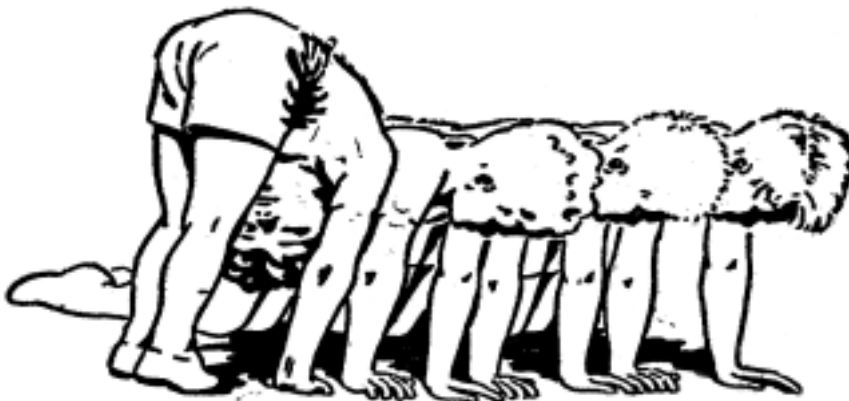


Fig. 9. Roll over Three.

There were three wailing cries of protest as the Skipper distributed his weight

over the backs of the kneeling Scouts by way of demonstration, and the voice of Tony was heard above the rest declaring that his name was Woolbright, not Atlas, and that if they expected him to give weightlifting displays they were jolly well mistaken!

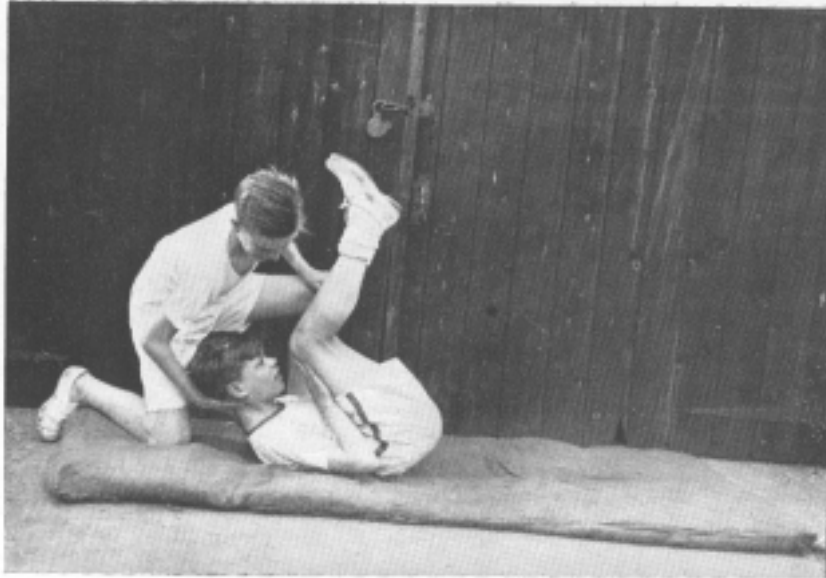


PLATE III.—THE ASSISTED UPSTART



PLATE IV.—THE CRAB OR BENDER

“After you've rolled, slip back and kneel beside the foremost chap, so that the Scout at the other end can get up and roll over three backs. Continue like that till you get to the end of the mats.”

After everyone had tried his hand at this game, the Skipper produced two wooden hoops, about three feet in diameter, and, holding them out with a theatrical flourish, announced in a dramatically husky voice, “Ladies and Gentlemen, in conclusion we will show you our most sensational feat entitled ‘Parking the Arrowe’ or

the Human Projectiles. These fearless lads will project themselves like a shaft from a bow through this narrow hoop without any support from wires, ropes, pulleys, strings, or other artificial aids, land unharmed on their heads and arms, and come up alert and smiling on the other side.”

“Ha! Joke! Laugh, chaps!” said Doctor.

“Thank you, sir, for those kind words,” was the Skipper's reply. “Now let's see what sort of a show you can make of hoop diving. It's really the same as going over the staff except that you must keep your legs quite straight, and lift them up well to avoid catching the sides of the hoop. Start the ball rolling, Reggie.”

Reggie sailed through quite gracefully, but John, though he had acquired considerable skill in rolling and in diving over the staff, still lacked control of his legs, and attempting to go through with these wildly waving in the air, took hoop and all with him in his roll.

Further practice at these stunts brought their first evening to a conclusion, and we must now imagine ourselves back in the clubroom some three weeks later, when the Troop had gained sufficient skill in the simpler work to proceed with rather more difficult exercises. The first of these which they attempted was

THE HANDSTAND

“Place your hands on the mat about the width of your shoulders apart, and keep your arms straight,” was the Skipper's first piece of instruction. “Now stretch one leg out behind and throw it up over your head as you did in the Tiger Balance” (Fig. 10 A).

They soon discovered that more vigour was required to get their legs up into a handstand than was required for the Tiger Balance, and one or two boys found it easier to start from a standing position, getting extra impetus by swinging their arms down on to the mat and throwing up their legs at the same time.

“If you find your legs going over too far,” said the S.M., “either turn your head to the left and lift your left hand off the mat so that you come down sideways (Fig. 10 C), or else duck your head quickly, bend your arms, round your back, and roll over on to your feet. What you want to avoid, unless you have got a back as flexible as Scottie's, is letting the legs fall over with the arms still straight, and with the back arched. This will mean that you will fall rather heavily on your back, and, while this is not likely to matter on a soft mat, you can easily wind yourself, or do worse damage, on a hard surface.”

They found it necessary at first to have a second Scout holding their legs in the balance and taking some of the weight from their arms, which in most cases sagged sadly when called upon to support the whole weight of their bodies. A few months' practice soon remedied this, however, and the horrid, scraggy portions of their arms began to fill up with smooth, firm muscle. Soon some of them were able to hold a really good balance, with the legs well braced, curving gracefully over the head, the toes pointed, and the head held well back — i.e. with the chin away from the chest (Fig. 10 B).

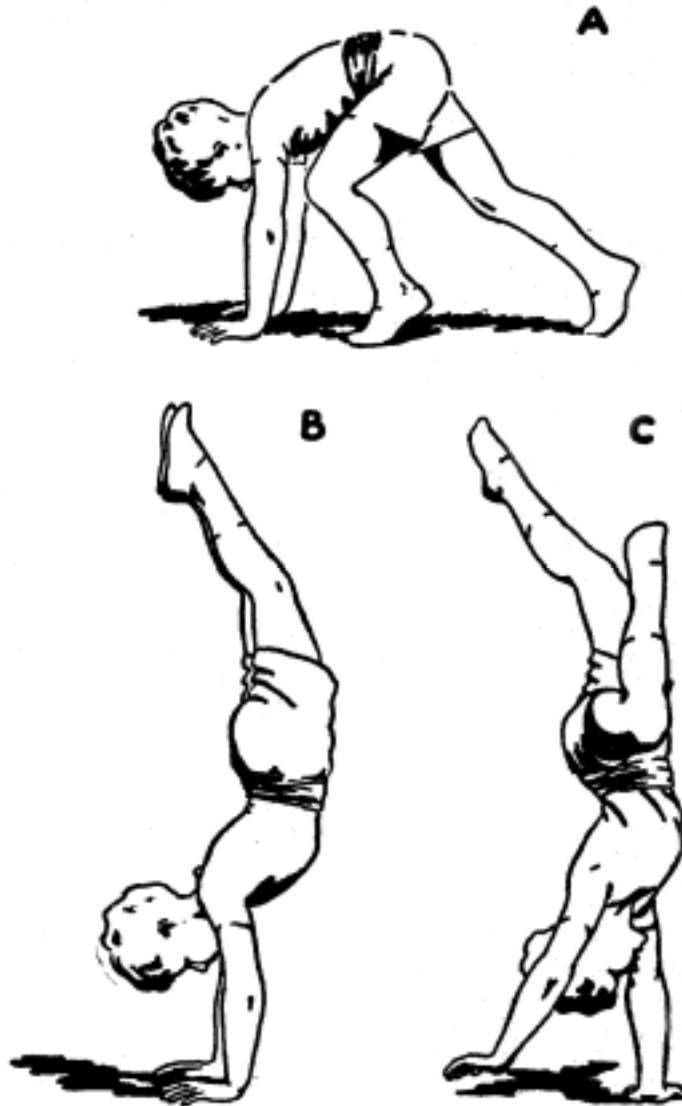


Fig. 10. The Handstand.

Reggie had his own method of practice. Putting his hands about fifteen or eighteen inches from the wall he threw up his legs and allowed them to rest against it; then with a gentle push off from his toes and by sliding his hands backwards he gradually got accustomed to holding himself in a balance. Coming down again was a painful process at first, as he had so little control of his body that he invariably flopped heavily on to his knees until the Skipper showed him how to bring down one leg first, leaving the other well behind to keep the body balanced so that he could land lightly on his toes.

“When you are able to hold a balance for a little while,” said the Skipper, “you can try to walk a few paces. When you go forwards, let your legs fall a little further over, so that the movement of your hands keeps you in a balance. If you want to go backwards, just reverse the process. It’s quite easy. Watch!”

In spite of the demonstration, however, opinions differed on this point, and certainly no one was able to make much progress even with the handstand alone at their first attempt, so that by way of encouragement the Skipper proceeded to show them how to roll on a hard floor without hurting themselves.

"The only part of your body," he told them, "which is likely to get hurt in rolling is the back of the head, and so when going over on a hard surface the hands are placed behind the head and locked together so (Fig. 11); bend down and tuck the head well under so that only the hands come in contact with the ground when you commence the roll."

It looked so easy that Billy Wood, the infant of the Woodpigeons, went at it without stopping to think how useless it was to put his hands behind his head and then put the top of his head on the hard and cruel concrete. However, Billy was



Fig. 11. The Floor Roll.

nothing if not plucky, and, forcing back his tears he assured everyone that it didn't hurt really, though it was evident to all that he was not rubbing his head merely for amusement.

Replacing the mats they went on to learn

THE HANDSPRING

which they found could be performed either backwards or forwards, and the latter being much the easier, a start was made with this.

"Get down on your hands and knees at the near end of the mat, John," said the S.M., "and just leave enough room for a handstand between you and the end. Now, watch. All you have to do is to throw up to a handstand and let your legs come straight over your head, KEEPING YOUR ARMS STRAIGHT. That's most important. Also you must not try to round your back until your feet touch the floor, otherwise you will probably slide backwards off John's back. When you've got the knack, John can lift slightly as you come over, which will help you on to your feet."

The first time they tried this, practically everybody tried to round his back and roll, having got into the habit whilst learning the handstand, but Doc just managed to scramble over, though his arms sagged badly as he came out of the balance.

After a bit of practice, however, the knack of holding the straight-armed, hollow-backed position until their feet touched the ground began to be grasped, and the Skipper was able to show them how, by means of a short run, sufficient impetus could be obtained to carry them over on to their feet without touching the back of the fellow kneeling. Soon they were able to go for the handspring proper, i.e. without any help from a back, but, for the sake of safety the Skipper knelt beside the mat placing

his hand under the back of each fellow as he came over. Reggie and Scot tie picked



Fig. 12. Handspring over a Back.

up the correct motion in about three weeks; the latter, though slightly weaker in the arms than Reggie, was able nevertheless to land lightly on his feet by reason of the suppleness of his back, while Reggie, though putting much more energy into things, invariably had to put his hands quickly behind him to prevent himself falling backwards after getting over into a crouching position. Fig. 12 shows the method of starting this exercise from a balance.

We should be departing from the truth if we conveyed the impression that the high-pitched enthusiasm with which the Troop had entered on this new activity had been unflaggingly maintained. The 14th Cattlebridge suffered, as other Troops have done, from the weaknesses of the flesh, and, save for those who had quickly become proficient at the game, and therefore liked it, they showed a marked tendency to lose interest after the first novelty had worn off.

So, too, those of you who start off on this trail will find this stage a stern test of your character and determination, and the "Straight Half Minute" with which the Skipper spurred the Troop over this difficult patch may, it is hoped, also stimulate you to further efforts.

"Playing the fool" had a very definite place in the Troop's activities, and when carried out in the spirit of sheer good fun, was encouraged and participated in by the Skipper; but when it became, as it did during their fourth practice, merely a cloak to hide their lack of skill and of any effort to attain it, the owl call was blown, and the difference quickly pointed out in a few crisp and well-aimed sentences. From their brevity and directness these blunt reminders had been dubbed the "Straight Half Minutes" by the Troop, and the one called forth on this occasion was strictly true to type.

"Now look here everyone; there's some bad Scouting about tonight that we have got to get rid of. Some of you have found that this game isn't as easy as you thought it was going to be, and instead of realizing that this is just the sort of thing that gives a fellow a chance of showing his grit and determination as a Scout, you're weak enough to play the silly ass, and kid yourselves that it's cleverer to pretend that you never will be able to do these stunts. Now, come on and let's get down to it for another ten minutes' good work."

After they had changed, and while they were drinking their Oxo and coffee, and munching biscuits purchased from the Troop canteen which Doc managed with great efficiency after almost every meeting of the Troop, the Skipper told them the yarn of the frogs in the bowl of cream which all of you will of course have read for yourselves in *Scouting for Boys*. Then, with lights turned down, and with only the flickering glow of the fire breaking the darkness, Kuchinarbar told the story of the amazing endurance of that great Scout, Dr. Wilfred Grenfell. They heard how when he was returning to his hospital up on the bleak icy coast of Northern Newfoundland, after morning service, he was sent for to an urgent case some sixty miles away. They heard too how in order to save time and so probably the patient's life, he took his own life in his hands and crossed the melting ice instead of taking the safer but longer journey round the bay. Then, with bated breath, they listened while Kuchinarbar told of the sinking of his sledge into the soft "sish" ice, and of his breathless slither, towed by his gallant dogs through icy water to temporary safety on a tiny isolated raft of frozen snow; of how even then he refused to give up hope or become depressed, though he was wet through with icy water and, clad only in his Oxford Rugger kit and fur-lined moccasins, having removed his other garments before making his plunge for safety, and though he could see floating on the thin ice only a few yards away his warm clothing as well as matches and wood. He told them how the gallant doctor kept himself from looking on the black side of things by setting to work to make himself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances; how he had reluctantly to kill three of his beloved dogs, using their skins to keep himself from being frozen to death, their carcasses for a wind break, and their bones, which he lashed together with pieces of harness, for a flagstaff, sacrificing his shirt to top it, while he attempted to make a fire by using the fat from their bodies and frayed-out pieces of rope from the harness, only to find that all his matches were soaked to a pulp and useless. They were impressed when they heard that even these trying conditions did not destroy the gallant doctor's sense of humour, for he found himself laughing at what seemed to him a ridiculous position — standing hour after hour, waving an old shirt at barren and empty cliffs. Happily, however, those cliffs were not so barren or empty as they seemed, for in the early morning the doctor espied the black shadow of a boat's hull, and before long he was safely back at the hospital.

"Once back," continued Kuchinarbar, "his first thought was for the injured man for whom he had originally set out, but much as he wanted to carry on to his assistance, the long exposure had so frozen his feet that it was some days before he was able even to walk a few yards. After his recovery he set up a bronze tablet in the hospital bearing these words:

'To the Memory of
Three Noble Dogs,
Moody
Watch
Spy,
Whose lives were given
For mine on the ice.
April 21St, 1908.'



PLATE V.—THE DOUBLE ROLL



PLATE VI.—KICK-UP AND DIVE

“The patient did not die after all, but was brought to the hospital in a boat a day or two later, and was soon placed on the road to recovery by the doctor.”

There was a queer silence for a moment, as though their minds were still lingering away in the far North-West, till “Whinnie” Jenkins, who earlier in the evening had apparently lost every spark of interest in tumbling, said, “Well, I must be going. Same time next week, Skipper?” and as he broke away from the group, hurrying slightly to get his hat and staff so that he could leave before the lights were turned up, the Skipper saw that in one case at least the shaft had struck, though how long the memory of its point would last with such an impetuous youth as Whinnie was a matter of much greater uncertainty.

Let us, too, steal away before the lights come up, and take away with us the memory of this fine story of grit and pluck, leaving for another chapter the description of the Troop's further adventures in tumbling.

CHAPTER III
SPECIALITIES AND DOUBLE WORK

The next Court of Honour was of unusual length, mainly because of one item which appeared on the agenda as the single word “concert,” but when at last the Court did rise after nearly two hours deliberation, it was with that sense of achievement which Kuchinarbar christened “The Village Blacksmith Feeling” — with the satisfaction that a job had not only been attempted but successfully concluded.

The necessity for a concert of some kind had been agreed upon by all, and the discussion had centred around the questions of dates and programme. Eventually they had fixed upon a date some three months ahead, and had ruled that though Kuchinarbar and Tony and their confederates were to be given full scope in compounding their rare dishes of music and drama in the first half of the programme, tumbling was to come into its own in the second half. The whole Troop undertook to acquire sufficient proficiency in the elements of the game to provide the solid meat of the display, while the enthusiasts agreed to put in extra time working away, under the Skipper, at the more spectacular stunts, which like a stimulating sauce, would give a pleasant zest to the whole feast. So, as our interest lies with the latter, we will leave the rest of the Troop to practise away at their plays and songs and simple tumbling tricks, while we betake ourselves along with the half-dozen or so who intended to journey further along the acrobatic trait.

“Professional acrobatic work is a very serious business;” says Ernest Balch, in his book, *Amateur Circus Life*. “The life is one of great self-denial. A first-class acrobat does not drink, use tobacco, or gamble; he must have plenty of sleep and he cannot follow any other occupation. He is always going somewhere and never getting any- where.... Travelling all over the world and seeing nothing and knowing nothing about the best things in that world — behold the life of the acrobat.”

In similar words, at the commencement of their first evening of special practice, the Skipper, while emphasizing the importance of learning as much as possible from the professional acrobat, and utilizing his methods, pointed out the vast difference between playing the game for the sake of the good fun and physical development which could be got out of it, and the strain of having to rely upon it for their daily bread.

“Still, I think it will be good fun to pretend that we are real circus folks, for a while,” he said, “and imagine that we have to work up our acts to as high a pitch of polish and efficiency as they must, to please an exacting public. A collection of really first-rate artistes, such as ourselves — ahem! — usually works in the profession as a family. This doesn't mean that they are necessarily related, but it is just a sort of trade mark or booking name for their act. What do you say to calling ourselves the ‘Dare Family’ for the concert?”

“Sensational acrobats! Whoopee, chaps!” contributed Scottie. “Let's make a start, Skipper.”

And, following Scottie's excellent advice, we too will make a start, describing the stunts which occupied them fairly completely until the concert.



Fig. 13. The Headspring.

THE HEADSPRING

This is in many ways similar to the handspring, and if you have learnt that, the headspring will give you little difficulty. Place the head and hands on the mat as though commencing the headstand, raise the legs with the knees bent, then, just as they begin to fall over the other side, push hard with the hands, and jerk the head forwards so that you land on your feet in a squatting position without your back having touched the ground. After practice you will be able to speed up the motion so that you land almost, upright on your feet (Fig. 13).

THE BACK ROLL TO A HEADSTAND

Take up the position for the back roll, and as you roll back on to your head, push just hard enough with your hands to remain standing on your head with the knees bent; then straighten them as in the ordinary headstand. If the roll is made slightly faster and a more vigorous push is given with the hands, it is possible to get into a handstand in this way.

CARTWHEEL ROUND OFF

Begin as in an ordinary cartwheel, and as the hand which first went on the mat is about to leave it, and while the legs are still vertically above the head, turn the body so that this hand may be placed alongside the other, i.e. so that you are temporarily in a handstand with your back to the starting-point. Push hard on both hands so that you land on your feet facing the start (Fig. 14). This is used when a series of cartwheels is followed by a back flip.

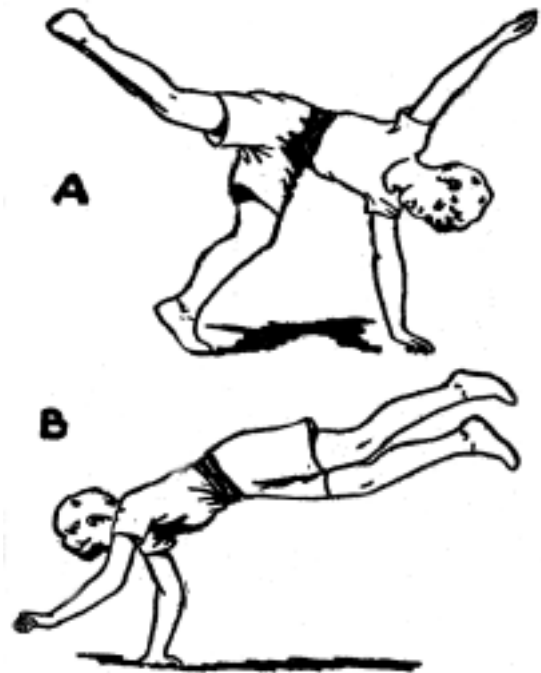


Fig. 14. Cartwheel Round Off.

GROUND UPSTARTS

A. *The Assisted Upstart.* Lie on your back on the mat with your thighs drawn up over your stomach and the palms of the hands placed flat upon them. Get a friend to

put his hand under your head and to lift it suddenly as you kick your legs straight upwards (Plate III). This kick, if vigorous enough, will take the bottom of your back off the mat, while his push lifts your head. When clear of the mat, round the back quickly, and draw the legs under you so that you come on your feet in a crouching position. This sounds far more complicated when thus described than it is in practice, and if sufficient vigour is given to the kick, and if a friendly hand is kept in readiness to prevent you falling on to your back, the motion should soon be picked up.

Some people prefer to place the hands behind the head, as for the back roll, and assist the lifting of the head by a push on the mat, but the extra impetus which can be given to the kick by pushing with the flat hand on the thigh is just as effective.

B. The Clown's Upstart. This is performed without the helping hand behind the head. The lifting of the head is performed by jerking the head backwards at the same time as the upward kick is given, which levers the shoulders off the ground. The best way to learn the stunt is to begin using the neck muscles more and more while being assisted by the hand behind your head, getting the friend to decrease the amount of assistance until the whole force needed to throw the head and shoulders clear of the ground is derived from your own efforts.

C. The Forward Roll and Upstart. Commence a forward roll in the usual way, then, just as the legs are in a flexed position above the head, and as soon as the top of the back has touched the mat, kick with the legs, lift with the neck as for the clown's upstart, and quickly rounding the back, come up on to the feet. The bottom of the back should never touch the mat at all in this exercise.

THE CRAB OR BENDER

The easiest way to learn this is to start by lying on the back on the mat. Place the hands palms downwards on the floor behind the head, draw up the legs, and push with the arms until the body is supported as in Plate IV.

Some fellows, however, find it easier to stand about two feet from a wall, and get someone to place a foot against their toes to prevent them slipping outwards, while they put their hands on the wall over their heads and gradually move them down until they reach the floor. Others, more flexible, can afford to laugh at these precautions, and, like our friend Scottie, merely bend their bodies gracefully backwards until their hands drop gently into position. Whatever method we adopt, practice at this stunt will not be found a waste of time, for not only shall we increase the flexibility of our backs and in this way make it easier for us to learn such stunts as the back flip, but it will tend to give us a more graceful carriage in everyday life. Dr. Lagrange, in his book, *The Physiology of Bodily Exercise*, tells us that "Suppleness of figure comes from the great ease with which the vertebrae can glide in all directions over each other. So that the greatest possible grace of figure may be observed in clowns." And again, "Balancing jugglers are, like rope dancers and 'indiarubber men,' types of perfect physical straightness; they preserve when on the ground the position which their well-disciplined muscles are accustomed to give to the bones on which they act."

Having attained the position of the bender, the next stage is to try to walk as far as possible without falling over, or, alternatively, proceed with:

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

From the position of the bender, flex the arms so that the top of the head can be placed on the mat; then walk the legs in a circle round the head, turning the body over so that the chest faces the ground as the circle is half completed. When sufficient flexibility has been gained this can be speeded up until the motion is such as to justify the above title. You will find this a most effective "tube kneader!"

THE SUN AND PLANET, OR ONE-HAND ASSISTED CARTWHEEL

Stand as if to perform a left-hand cartwheel, with your partner in front of you holding your right hand. Throw over in the usual way, placing the left hand on the mat, but let your partner do the work of the mat as he brings your right hand round and assists you to your feet. As confidence is acquired a succession of these may be performed, circling round your partner as centre (Fig. 15).

Double cartwheels, performed in perfect unison by two Scouts of the same size standing back to back, are most effective, and in learning these it is helpful to tie them together at the waist with a towel or strong belt. Try it on a soft mat and look out for crashes at first!

THE BACK FLIP

Practice at the bender will help in acquiring the knack of this, but it will be found advisable in any case to make use of a broad canvas belt fixed around the waist with two or three small straps, and fitted on either side with a swivel carrying a short length of soft rope (Fig. 16). This instrument is called by professionals the "Mechanic," and is largely used in teaching backward and forward somersaults as well as for the handspring and back flip.



Fig. 15. One-hand Assisted Cartwheel.

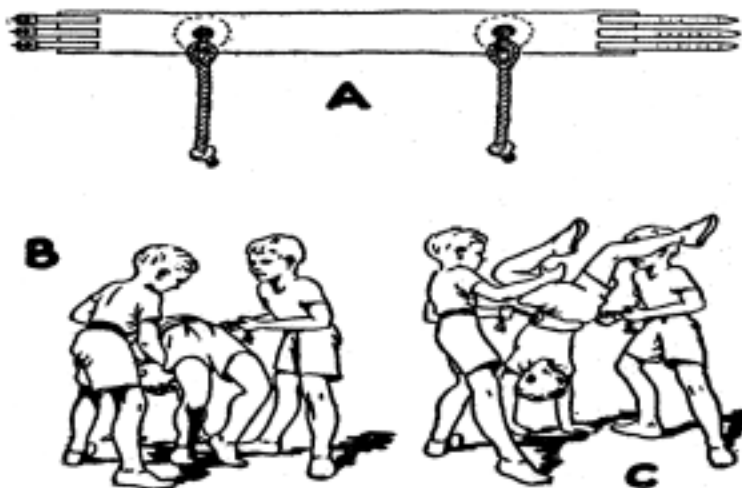


Fig. 16. The Mechanic and its Use.

Buckle on the mechanic, and get two reliable fellows to stand, one on either side, holding the ropes close up to the belt. Holding the hands over the head, bend backwards as far as possible, then let one of the assistants put his hand under your thighs, and, while they both take the weight of your body on the ropes, lift your legs until your hands come on to the mat, continuing the motion until your legs come over your head and you arrive at a standing position facing the same way as you started (Fig. 16 A and B). When you get used to the motion, try to help yourself over by giving a little jump as you bend backwards, but take care to keep your arms straight to prevent your head hitting the ground. Practise away until you can get over without any help from the mechanic, and then learn to do a series of flips, called by professionals, "a string of spotters."



PLATE VII.—THE DOUBLE WALK



PLATE VIII.—THE "COAL DE SACK"

If, as was the case in the 14th Cattlebridge, the time available for practice is limited, it will be found advisable to let each fellow concentrate on one or two of the

foregoing. In this way they will be better able to put in the continued practice which is necessary to acquire style and polish, and on these the success of any performance will depend. A difficult stunt slovenly and carelessly done will leave an audience unmoved, while a simple exercise executed with vim and smartness cannot fail to appeal. So, after you have learnt how to do your speciality easily, persevere and practise, getting a dependable friend to criticize each part of it, until from the first appearance to your exit after the final salute, each motion is perfectly timed, and gracefully performed.

If hard practice is necessary for individual acts, it is even more essential in the concerted work next to be described. As soon as your partners have been selected for the stunt in which you have decided to specialize, practise with them, and WITH NO ONE ELSE. In individual work, finish comes from your own timing and control, but in double work each has to know to a nicety his partner's timing as well, and this can only be done by constant practice with the same partner. Nothing looks more attractive in acrobatic work than two or more fellows working together in perfect rhythm and unison in every part of the act, even to their entry and exit. This effect can be obtained just as completely in a simple exercise such as the double roll, described below, as in the most intricate and advanced acrobatics, but it means lots of steady practice.

THE DOUBLE ROLL

Two Scouts of about equal build are best suited for this, and as it is comparatively easy, the smaller chaps should be given their chance here. This is the way that Billy Wood and Tom Seago, the "young 'uns" of the Woodpigeons, set about it. Billy lay on his back on the mat with his legs sticking straight up, while Tom stood astride, his neck, facing his feet, and seized hold of Billy's ankles placing them one each side of his own neck. After Billy had grasped Tom's ankles, Tom bent forward and began to roll down the mat, pulling Billy up on his feet as he went down; so they went, over and over, the whole length of the mat, Billy doing one extra roll at the end so that they both came to a standing position at the end and saluted. At least that was how they did it after some amount of practice, but their first attempt ended long before all this had been achieved. Instead of Tom getting the back of his neck on the mat while his legs were still stretched out behind him, so that the maximum amount of leverage could be exerted to pull Billy up as he rolled over, he went at it with a vigorous jerk which not only landed his own head rather too violently on the mat, but made it quite impossible for Billy to retain his grip of Tom's ankles (Plate V). You will find it helpful to roll as close to your partner as possible, and to keep a fairly steady backward strain on his legs as he rolls over .

DIVE OVER A ROLL

Another fairly simple stunt. The two Scouts performing this turn to face each other at opposite ends of the mat after saluting. One does an ordinary forward roll, taking care to keep well doubled up all the time, or, alternatively, rolling with his legs slightly bent and spread well apart, while the other, seizing the right moment, dives over his rolling partner, and doing a roll, comes to his feet on the other side. Both turn inwards and repeat the movements, the second Scout now doing the roll while his partner dives. At the end, both turn to face audience, salute, and run off. Though simple, practice is needed to determine the correct distance to stand apart at the beginning, and to time the dive so that both get to their feet together.

KICK UP AND DIVE

Reggie and John did this, and Plate VI shows their starting position. Both saluted to begin with, and then John lay on his back with his legs raised and knees bent. Reggie sat on his upturned feet, and when balanced clapped his hands as a signal for John to shoot up his legs to give him the necessary impetus to execute a neat dive and roll, while John continued the motion of his legs to perform a back roll. Both came smartly to their feet, turned inwards and saluted.

THE DOUBLE WALK

Doc and Scottie were the exponents of this. Watch them set about it. After the preliminary salutes, they stand facing each other at opposite ends of the mat. With a fiendish war cry Scottie rushes forwards and putting his hands on Doc's shoulders, jumps and throws his legs around his waist. As soon as he feels certain of the grip with his legs, he lets go with his hands and bends his body backwards through Doc's legs, putting his hands on the latter's ankles, and pushing up to straight arm position. Doc then bends forward, and, placing his hands on the ground, walks in stately fashion around the mat (Plate VII). After their constitutional, Scottie recovers his original position, jumps down, and both salute.

FORWARD ROLL OVER ABACK

One Scout, having a broader back than his partner, bends down, and clasping his hands round one knee, makes a level and fairly low back for his partner to roll over. The latter, who will probably require some assistance at first, takes a run, and seizing the other's waistband, ducks his head, rolls along the back and lands on his feet over his partner's head (Fig. 17). When both are certain of the timing, the Scout laying the back can stoop ever so slightly as his partner comes over, which will add a neat flip to the finish.



Fig. 17.
Forward Roll over a Back.

"COAL DE SACK"

was the name which they gave to the next double act, which the Skipper explained to Reggie and Whinnie, thus: "Throw up to a handstand, Reg, and Whinnie, step in close behind him, back to back, and seize his ankles over your shoulder (Plate VIII). Bend forwards, slowly at first till you both get the scheme of things, and pull on his legs till he lands on the mat in front of you. Don't hold his legs too long, or it will be his face which will take the landing shocks... and Reggie's bigger than you are!"

After a few preliminary "feelers" they soon dropped into the motion, and in a very few minutes had speeded it up until Reggie came over like a catapult.

There are a number of ways of finishing this stunt, in addition to plumping the "sack" straight over on to his feet. One is to pause a second in the "sitting on shoulder" position, and then, climbing to a shoulder stand, to do the "Two-high Fall".

Another, also from the shoulder sit position, is to come to the Planche, and from there the front Scout can bend forward, place his hands on the ground, and both can do a double roll.

SHOULDER BALANCE AND BACKLIFT

One Scout lies on his back with his knees drawn up, while a second stands astride his feet and places his hands on the knees of the first. The second Scout throws up to a balance, keeping his arms straight, but letting them swing forwards so that his shoulders rest in the other fellow's arms (Plate IX). Though this is quite an easy balance, a little assistance from a third person will undoubtedly be needed at first.

The backlift is performed by letting the legs fall over the head and on to the mat, the supporting Scout helping by a push on the shoulders of his partner. This exercise can be speeded up with a little practice, the second Scout taking a short run before putting his hands on his partner's knees, and using the impetus of this to jump straight up and over, helped as before by his partner.

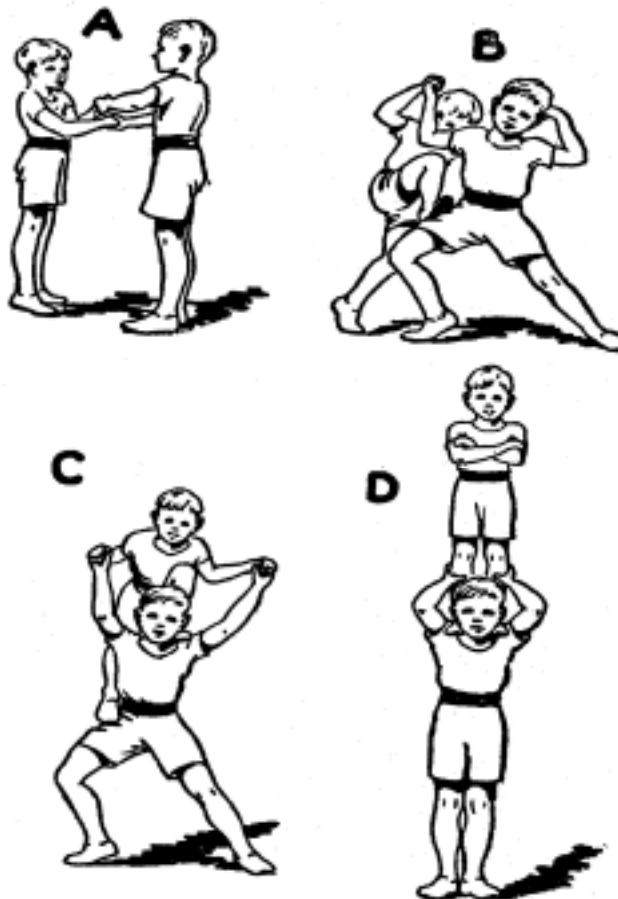


Fig. 18. The Shoulder Mount.

THE MOUNT

It is often necessary, in tumbling stunts and pyramids, to have one Scout standing on another's shoulders. The supporting Scouts in such cases, called the Undermen, should be solidly built, stronger fellows, while those who have to do the climbing, the Topmen, should be small, agile, and plucky.

One method of mounting quickly to a shoulder stand is for the Scouts to stand facing each other, with their arms joined across as in Fig. 18 A. The Underman bends his left leg, and the Topman places his left foot on it, fairly close to the former's body. Assisted by a pull from the Underman, he steps up, using the thigh as a step, and swings his right leg round and up on to the Underman's right shoulder, bringing his left foot up on to the left shoulder. When properly balanced, he leaves go with his hands and stands erect, steadying himself by pressing his legs against the Underman's head, and helped by being grasped by the latter just below the knees. He is now in a position for executing the:

TWO-HIGH FALL

This is a most spectacular stunt, but not half so dangerous in practice as it appears. The two Scouts, having completed the mount, lean forwards and roll, keeping perfectly straight and in line, until the last possible moment, when the Topman jumps, and both do a forward roll, coming to the salute. At first it will be found that the straight line can only be maintained for a very small part of the fall, but with sufficient practice, the effect of a fall practically on to the ground may be conveyed, though actually the Topman jumps clear early enough to land on his feet, doing the roll so smartly that it appears part of the fall. Care must be taken that the Underman does not hold his partner's legs when he wants to jump (Fig. 19).

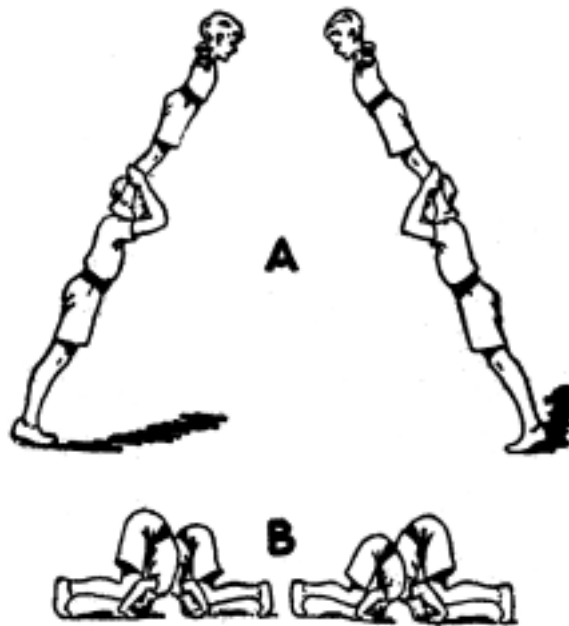


Fig. 19. The Two-high Fall.

THE PLANCHE

The Topman gets to a sitting position on the Underman's shoulders. The latter bends his knees slightly, and places Topman's feet on his thighs; Topman stands up, while his partner holds him by the legs just below the knees; both hollow their backs, and Underman slides his head through his partner's legs, coming to the position shown in Plate X. This is a useful pose for pyramids. Finish either by double roll, or by recovering sitting position on shoulders, and Topman going back to a handstand and over to his feet behind his partner.

THE KNEE HANDSTAND

Topman, who must be able to throw up fairly vigorously for a handstand, places his hands on his partner's knees, which are bent slightly as in Plate XI. As he throws up his legs, he is caught by the Underman, who holds him by the belt. This is another useful pyramid pose.

THE DOUBLE BACK ROLL

One Scout places his hands on the mat as though for a wheelbarrow; his partner steps in between his outstretched legs, and lifts them up around his waist as in Plate XII. Pressing down on the legs, he bends slightly forwards, while the first Scout lies on the back of the Underman, and brings his legs over his head, continuing the motion given to them by the downward pressure of his partner, dropping on to his feet in front of, and facing, the latter. Assistance will be found necessary in learning this trick, which is rather difficult and requires considerable nerve at first. The helper should put one hand on the chest of the rolling Scout, and the other under his thighs, so that he can both assist him to get over, and also prevent him, rolling off sideways.



Fig. 20. The Triple Roll.

THE TRIPLE ROLL

Three agile fellows of approximately equal build are best for this. One lies straight out on his back, number two stands with one leg each side of his head, and number three, placing his head between the legs of number one, seizes the latter's ankles, and has his feet lifted up to be grasped by number two. Fig. 20 will make the position plain. In rolling, all must bend their legs slowly as they go over, to avoid hitting the head of the following man on the ground, and considerably more strength is needed to pull the third man up from the ground than was needed for the double roll. They should roll as closely as possible to the feet of the preceding man, just as in the latter stunt.

THE DOUBLE BACK FLIP, OR JAP TRICK

Two flexible Scouts of about equal build stand one behind the other facing the same direction. The foremost Scout bends back, puts his head between the legs of number two, and each clasps the other round the waist. Number two then bends backwards, and by a heave on his partner's waist, pulls his legs up and over his own head so that their positions are reversed, number one now standing upright on his feet, with number two's head between his legs (Fig. 21). The motion is continued down the mat, and the stunt is finished off by the second Scout assisting the other to an upright position without continuing the turn himself.



Fig. 21. The Double Back Flip.

DOUBLE ROLL TO HANDSTAND

This is a stunt requiring a considerable degree of strength, and is more suited to chaps of Rover age who have become fairly expert at the simpler exercises. Start from the shoulder balance, the Topman moving his arms one at a time from the knees of the Underman to the position shown in Fig. 22 A as soon as the balance is certain. The Underman then slowly lets his arms drop backwards over his head, the Topman retaining his balance by bending his body at the hips, ducking his head, and rolling over behind the Underman, as seen in Fig. 22 B, till they are both lying at full length, head to head, on their backs. From this position, the Underman gets to the balance previously held by his partner by raising his legs, keeping them straight from the hips, and executing a back roll, being assisted to the balance by the arms of his partner.

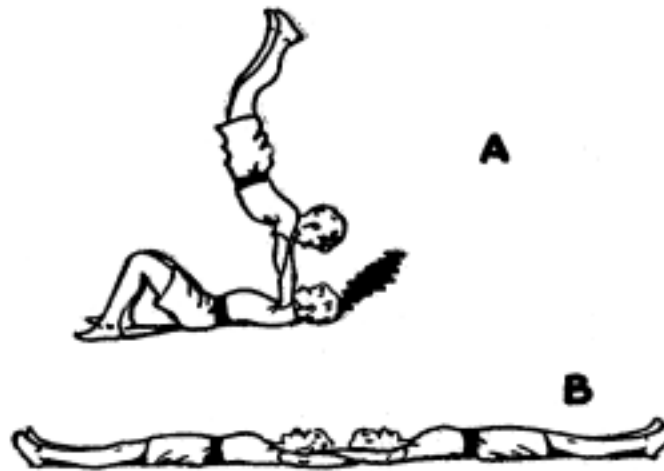


Fig. 22. The Double Roll to Handstand.

If the second part of this is found too difficult, a suitable finish can be made by both doing clown's upstarts from the head to head position, practising these until they

are perfectly in unison.

You will not have got to this stage without meeting with difficulties and disappointments, and possibly a few falls and bruises, but remember that these are only opportunities to prove your worth as a Scout. If you want to realize how small your troubles are compared with those of the real circus folk, you cannot do better than read *My Circus Life*, by James Lloyd (Noel Douglas, Ltd.), in which you will find, as well as thrills in plenty, chapters of accidents, triumphed over by the cheerfulness, resourcefulness, and pluck of the true Scout.

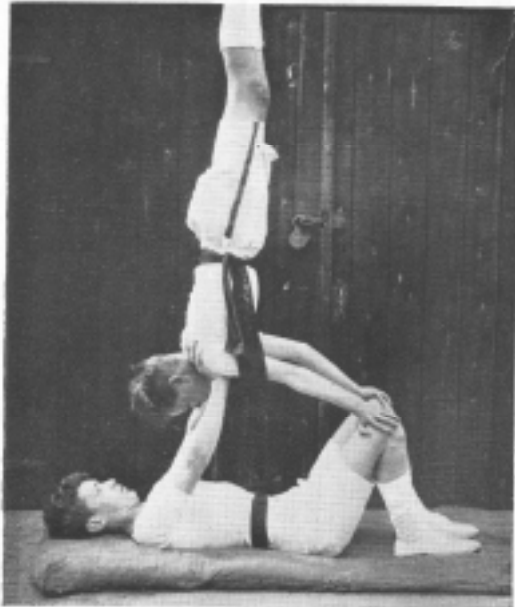


PLATE IX.—THE SHOULDER BALANCE



PLATE X.—THE "PLANCHE"

Other real Scoutcraft, too, is required of the circus proprietor. He must be able, Mr. Lloyd tells us, to "splice ropes, sew canvas, box a wheel, shoe a horse, make up seating, and be a letterer, and be not afraid of work and an early riser," as well as being an expert performer, so that tumbling and acrobatics are not the only parts of circus work which should appeal to us as Scouts. "And the moral of that is," as the Duchess said in *Alice in Wonderland* — practise away at your tumbling for all you are worth, BUT — don't forget the rest of your Scouting!

CHAPTER IV

TIGHT-ROPE WORK, MORE STUNTS, AND PYRAMIDS

"SKIPPER," said Reggie, as they were changing for their second "Dare Family" evening, "that was a jolly fine book you lent me. Did you read what the Chief said about tight-rope walking in it? I wonder if we could do some. It would be jolly

good fun to try. Could we, Skipper?"

The book in question was *What Scouts Can Do*, by the Chief himself, and, as it was passed from hand to hand, interest and enthusiasm grew, until finally it was agreed that an attempt at rope walking should be made the very next week.

"Half the trick in tight-rope walking," says the Chief, in the book quoted above, "is to get the rope hauled very taut, and if possible stayed with bracing ropes stayed tight on either side. Beginning with your rope low down near the ground, you soon gain confidence, and can raise it foot by foot, till soon you will be performing at a respectable height."

So it was that on the following Thursday evening all the Troop bridge-building gear was dumped on the small patch of ground that served as their outdoor headquarters, a couple of low trestles were soon completed, and, with the aid of a couple of convenient trees — holdfasts would have to be used if these are not available — the structure shown in Fig. 23 was erected. It will be seen that this is merely an aerial runway, hauled very taut by a double purchase tackle, and stayed at the centre by a couple of side ropes to prevent excessive swaying.

The Troop had all been warned to work in rubber-soled shoes, and the use of the "resin board" had been explained to them. This is just a board on which powdered resin is placed to rub the soles of the shoes in before starting on the rope, so that the chances of slipping are reduced to a minimum. Leather soles particularly if they are at all shiny, are dangerous, so if you intend to follow their lead wear rubbers, use resin, and — don't have the rope more than a couple of feet from the ground until you are sure of yourself.

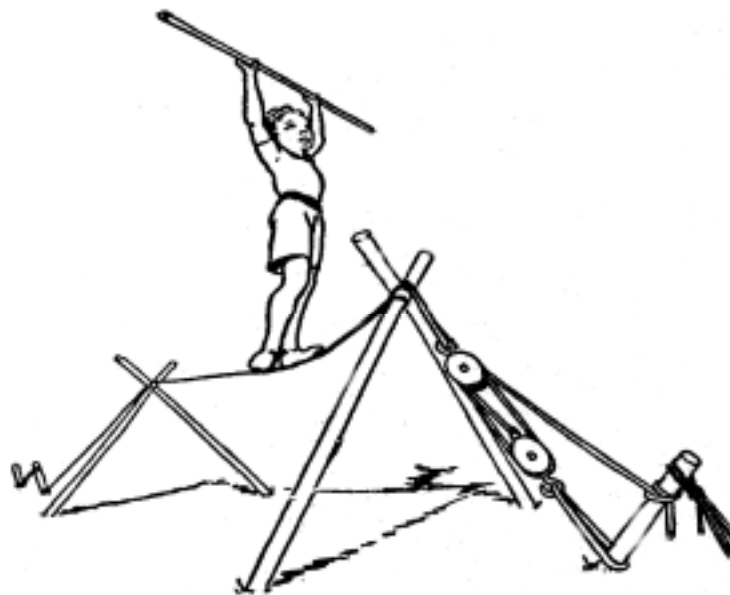


Fig. 23. The Tight-rope.

At first a balancing pole will be found useful. The Chief says, "If you carry an open umbrella in each hand you will find yourself wonderfully steadied, and if you then take a very long, heavy balancing pole — well, you can't fall off."

Even if you don't find the Chief's words completely true in your case, you will find a ten or fifteen-foot pole, about two inches in diameter, a great help.

Fix your eye on a definite point some distance away, say the other end of the rope, and make sure that each foot is placed centrally on the rope. There is very little else that can be said by way of introduction to tight-rope work. All the rest is simply a matter of practice-and still more practice.

When you become confident, try some simple stunts such as turning on one or both feet, kneeling down, picking up a handkerchief, etc. Scottie was able to put up a fair show after only about a month's practice, while Reggie was sufficiently at home to be able to do clown work on the rope — starting off from one end and then turning and running back in exaggerated terror, pretending to fall off, and so on, so don't be put off by thinking it too difficult.*

Besides being jolly good fun, rope walking is a very valuable exercise, increasing your power of concentration and nerve control, as well as developing a sense of balance and giving you a graceful carriage. It will be found to make a popular spare-time activity at camp. Try it!

TRICK CYCLING

While most of the professional cycling tricks are difficult to learn and rather dangerous, there are a number of fairly easy stunts which can be learnt with perfect safety by any normal Scout, and which make quite useful items to fill in gaps at an outdoor circus or display, especially if some clown work on an ancient old "crock" can be introduced as comic relief. Some of these, such as riding "hands off," are too well known to need description, but are useful to work in with the more difficult ones. A few suggestions are given below.

1. *Steering with the Feet.* Place the feet lightly on the handlebars, and steer as though riding "hands off," till you get the knack of using your feet entirely.

2. *Standing on Saddle holding Handlebars.*

3. *Standing Still.* Can be either a sheer feat of balance, which is extremely difficult, or the front wheel can be twisted quickly across frame as soon as bike is stopped; then one foot is placed on the front tyre on each side of the front fork (*note* — mudguard must be removed) and by a to and fro motion of the wheel a balance is maintained. Professionals use this, moving the wheel with their hands, to enable them to crawl through the frame, but this stunt requires more practice than the average amateur can afford to give.

*For Indoor Tight-rope see end of book.

4. *Riding Backwards.* Get astride the top bar, facing backwards. Grip the handlebar behind your back, place one foot on the pedal, push off with the other, and make your first attempt. It won't be a very long one, but keep on trying. Reggie learnt it in a week. Then learn the mount; standing beside the cycle facing backwards, grip the handlebar behind you, place your outside foot on the pedal, push off with the other, and as soon as sufficient speed is obtained, swing the inside leg over the saddle.

5. *Riding Astride the Front Wheel.* This is almost the same as the last stunt, but the body is in front of the handlebars, and you rest your stomach on them, with your legs straddled across the front wheel.

6. *The Bicycle Jump.* With the machine almost stationary, place one hand on the top bar near the saddle, and with a vigorous upward movement of the whole of the upper part of the body, lift the cycle completely off the ground. By a series of these small jumps the bicycle can be balanced without any forward motion, and with some practice a skipping rope can be cleared if turned rather slowly.

These are only a few of the possible stunts, and others will no doubt suggest themselves. Double and triple work, which mostly consists in carrying two or three people on one cycle, by shoulder mounts, front and back planches, etc., can also be worked in, but there is not room here to do more than suggest ideas. One final reminder. Remember that you are a SCOUT first, and therefore consider others before you start to practise. DON'T use other fellows' bicycles to practise somewhat risky stunts; DON'T use your own if it happens to be a new one just bought for you by an indulgent parent, and — DON'T PRACTISE ON A ROAD USED BY FAST TRAFFIC!

MORE STUNTS

Here is a further selection of stunts, just in case you feel that there isn't enough variety in tumbling!

1. *The Jam Roll.* Two Scouts stand facing the same way, one behind the other; the front one straddles his legs apart while the other bends down and puts his legs between them. The front Scout then leans backwards, giving a little jump off his feet so that he can do a back roll over his partner's back, while the latter reaches his arms back and supports the rolling Scout around his waist. With a little practice this can be made a continuous stunt, the rolling Scout placing his head between the other's legs, as his feet come to the ground, and lifting him over in turn. If the rear Scout holds the ankles of the front Scout during the roll, this stunt becomes:

2. *Andy Over* with exactly similar motions. This, like the last, can be made a continuous stunt, or the rolling Scout can be steadied into a handstand, or headstand, the other fellow then walking away. Plate VIII shows the middle stage of this stunt, which is really "Coal de Sack" reversed.

3. *Stomach Balance.* Scout number one lies on his back with his legs raised. His partner lies on his stomach on number one's feet and leans over to grasp his hands which are extended outwards. Number one then slowly raises his legs, carrying number two's body to a horizontal position, the latter assisting by giving a slight jump. When certain of the balance, they can let go their hands, number two being balanced in a graceful swallow dive position on number one's feet (Plate XIII).

4. *Stomach Flip.* The starting position for this is exactly the same as in the last stunt, but when number one raises his legs, number two gives a more vigorous jump, so that his legs swing up and over his head. At the same time number one puts his hands up to catch his partner's shoulders so that he can assist him on to his feet. When confident, do it with a short run.

5. *Sitting Flip.* Starting position similar to the last stunt, except that number two is half sitting on number one's feet, with his back to his partner's face. As Scout on floor raises his legs, the other leans back, and with a spring lifts his legs backwards over his head, doing a back roll on the feet and hands of his partner. Number one

helps by giving a slight push on the other's shoulders as he comes over (Plate XIV).

6. *The Loom of Youth*. This is similar to a dive over a roll, but is done by three Scouts instead of two. They stand, two at one end and one at the other end of the mat, facing each other. One of the first pair rolls, while the Scout at the other end dives over him and rolls; the remaining Scout then dives and rolls over number two. Meanwhile Scout number one has come to a standing position at the far end of the mat, turned about, and is ready to dive and roll over number three. With practice this may be speeded up into a very effective continuous stunt.

7. *Backward and Forward Overthrows*. Two Scouts stand one behind the other, facing the same way. The front Scout bends down and puts his hands back through his legs and the rear Scout seizes his wrists. At a given signal the latter gives a sharp pull upwards, while the front fellow gives a jump and throws his legs backwards, turning his body over and landing on his feet in the same position as at the start. Care should be taken to see that the lift given by the rear man is enough to keep his partner's back from hitting the mat, and for this reason it is better if he is rather bigger than the front man.



PLATE XI.—THE KNEE HANDSTAND

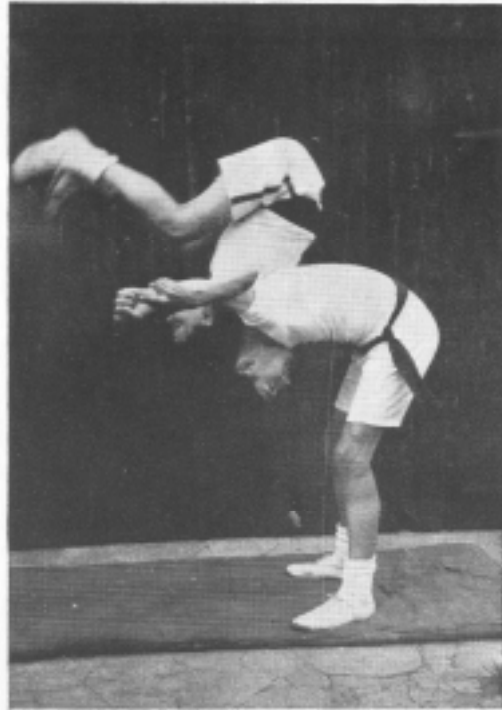


PLATE XII.—THE DOUBLE BACK ROLL

For the forward turnover (Plate XV) the two Scouts stand facing each other. One then bends forwards and places his hands between his legs as before, but this time the other grasps his wrists by bending forwards over the first Scout's bent body. When both are ready, the second Scout pulls vigorously, while the first jumps, ducks his head, and turns completely over on to his feet. It is important that he should keep well doubled up whilst turning to prevent hitting the mat violently with his legs.

PYRAMIDS

These groupings come as a pleasing break in the sequence of class tumbling

acts and specialities during a display, and if the most spectacular in your repertoire is kept till the last, there can be no more effective way of rounding off your show. In designing your pyramids, the first thing to take into account is the number of Scouts available, then, using match-stick figures as shown in Fig. 28, scheme out the general form on paper, bearing in mind such important points as symmetry, boldness of outline, the strength of your Undermen, and the height of your stage. Avoid crowding. If you have lots of Scouts it is better to have two or more pyramids than to attempt to crowd them all into one. See that the Topmen are not right up in the "flies" lost to the view of the audience and therefore spoiling the lines of your pyramid. If necessary rearrange your pyramid. For example, the 14th chaps found that the Topman in the "Pedestal" was hidden if he stood upright, so that during their show he knelt like the others, and the general line was not thereby upset.

With regard to "props." Quite striking effects can be obtained with very simple things; three chairs, for example, are used in the group christened for this reason "Three Cheers" by the Troop. It is best to restrict such props to simple, easily moved articles, for any "wait" while heavy apparatus is moved will destroy the impression of quick-fire smartness which should characterize every tumbling display.

It is impossible to give more than a very few examples from the huge number of pyramids which are known, and reference must be made to one or other of the books mentioned at the end of this volume if others are required. The names may be unfamiliar to most, being those bestowed by the 14th Cattlebridge, but the pyramids themselves are mostly well known.

1. *The Pedestal.* An easy one for six beginners (Fig. 24). Practise in four stages, thus:

- (a) Form up in standing position-three, two, one.
- (b) Bottom three down.
- (c) Middle men in position.
- (d) Topman up.

Similar division into separate movements, each of which can be smartly executed on a given signal, should be made with all pyramids. The break up of the pyramid can be done with equal effect if well thought out, and the movements of both this and the building should be practised until they can be performed with clockwork precision. In this case the break up could be done by succession of dives and rolls, which would bring all the team to their feet at the salute, and this could be followed by a neat turn and double off stage.

2. *The Arrowe.* Six or eight men (Fig. 25). If only small fellows are available, it is better to leave out the Topman, and so avoid too great a strain on the Undermen. Supported handstands at the side, as in Fig. 26 may be added if required, but practise the



Fig. 24. The "Pedestal."

centre group separately before adding the handstands, and always let these be last up and first down. These are examples of two very general rules — practise each section of a pyramid separately and arrange that all positions of difficulty or strain are held for the minimum time.

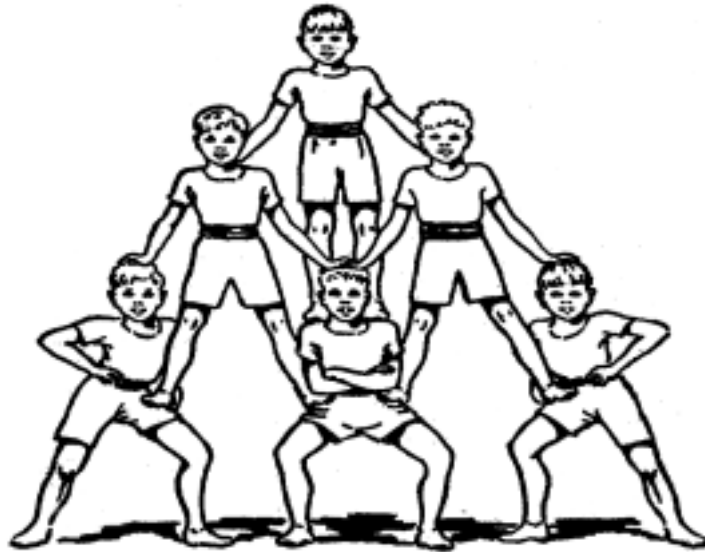


Fig. 25. The "Arrowe."

3. *The Three Cheers*. Nine men and three chairs (Fig. 26). An important point is to pair off Scouts to get equal heights on each side.

4. *The Fan*. Six men, one chair or stool (Plate XVI). Top three stand on chair, then side men are lowered and the two bottom fellows link on, pressing themselves up from the ground.

5. *The Arch*, Eight men (Fig. 27). Start with two backward planches. These will require assistance at first. Then let Topmen of these lean backwards as far as possible till asymmetrical arch is made by their linked hands, arms, and backs. Meanwhile the two shoulder mounts move into position. A spectacular finish can be made by shoulder mounts moving out of line and doing two high falls past each other, while planches jump down and salute.

6. *The Pillars of Hercules*. Twelve men (Fig. 28). The side shoulder headstands require considerable practice, and some assistance will be needed at first. Choose an older and stronger fellow for the centre Underman, as the strain is fairly heavy .

7. *The Aerial*. Eleven men (Fig. 29). Gradation of height each side, and smoothness of the "Aerial" formed by the outstretched arms, should be looked to. Crab in front optional. (Not shown.)

Though the usual method is to distribute pyramids singly throughout a display, finishing with one rather more spectacular than the rest, it should be remembered that this is not the only way of doing things. A quick sequence of two or three can be made most effective, either at the beginning, the end, or in between the other acts. Pieces of pyramids can also often be worked into the active tumbling; for example, diving can be performed through set pieces, or the groups themselves can be designed to allow of movement.



Fig. 26. "Three Cheers."

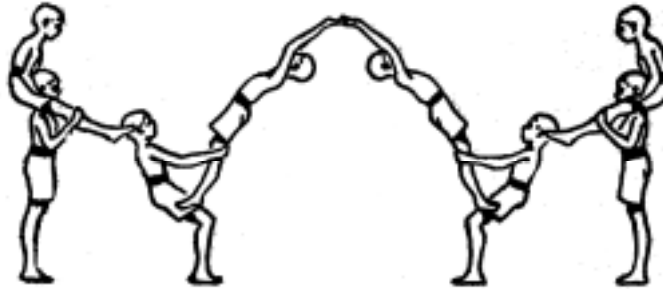


Fig. 27. The "Arch."



Fig. 28. The "Pillars of Hercules."

Finally the old, familiar advice: Practise — till every movement is perfect in grace and rhythm, till every position is faultless, and — SMILE ALL THE WHILE!



Fig. 29. The "Aerial."

CHAPTER V CLOWN STUNTS

"BEFORE I tell you who I have selected for the clowns," said the Skipper, after about three weeks general practice for the concert, "I want to read you this little extract from a Canadian book on Scout entertainments, so that you will realize that

being a clown is not merely a case of putting on comic clothes, painting your nose red, and looking silly, but of real hard work and thought if you are going to amuse an audience. Listen: 'Boys do not realize always that it is harder to be a good clown than it is to take a "straight" part in a play. The boys playing the parts of the clowns should be studying their end of it for weeks and even months ahead, the same as the rest of the Troop. The audience will expect clowns to be clever and funny, to be foolish, and at times to be surprisingly acrobatic. It frequently takes the best gymnast in the circus to play the part of the clown.' Well, that's that! and it lands us up against a snag right away, because we've got so few good tumblers that we really want them all in the team. The only way out, I think, is to have one passable bloke to do the actual tumbling part — no use giving you swelled head, Reggie! — and one less expert chap to get the rest of the jokes across. I've picked you for that, Hugh, because if you can look as miserable as you're looking now, the audience will think it the best joke of the show!"

In this way the 14th Cattlebridge solved the preliminary difficulties caused by their small numbers. Large numbers present other problems, and quite often Scouts who have neither comic nor athletic abilities have to be fitted in. One way of getting over this is to have a crowd of "Interlude Clowns" whose job it is to come on between the acts and shift mats or other properties. A considerable amount of funny business can be worked into this, and it will usually be found that even the shy bird feels that he is able to let himself go when one of a fair-sized gang. Sufficient definite stupidities, such as getting one clown rolled up in a mat, having a consultation apart over some absurdly simple point such as reversing the position of the mats, etc., should be fixed upon beforehand, and practised.

The rest may be left to the natural impulse of the boys; BUT, beware of doing too much. Always err on the other side and leave the audience wanting more, and have an understanding that a word from the Ringmaster to arrange things without further business is immediately obeyed. This is the one exception to the rule that every act, joke, or stunt done at a performance should be rehearsed and timed in every detail, and the only justification for it is that it enables us to get everyone into the show.

Since the fun in most jokes depends upon the unexpected thing occurring, they don't become more amusing on repetition. This is not only a hint to avoid stale jokes, but also a warning against a very real danger. At the first rehearsal everyone will be in first-class fettle, and the roars of laughter which greet each new stunt will give the clowns confidence and make things go with an encouraging swing. At the second rehearsal the trouble starts. There are giggles instead of hearty laughs from the rest, and the poor distressed clowns, feeling that they are making fools of themselves instead of being funny, want to chuck the whole thing up.

One way of combating this trouble is to have a sound and critical producer whose job it is to detect whether the failure of a joke to "get across" is due to clumsy slipshod working, to the boredom of repetition, or whether the joke itself is really poor stuff. He best can see these things, and can spot the reason for clumsy working if the failure is due to that. It may be that facial expressions are wrong, or that words are being taken too fast or too slowly. It may be that the timing of actions, so important in stunts like the "Waiter Joke" is faulty. Whatever the cause, it is the producer's job to remedy things, and it is absolutely essential for the success of a show that his

instructions are obeyed.

Another help in avoiding the awful "second rehearsal depression" is to rehearse the clown stunts separately at first, so that they are not seen by the others until the clowns are sure of themselves. Then the stimulus of appreciation comes on a well-built foundation so that it is less likely to crack up under the strain of subsequent criticism.

Clown work may either be "Pantomime," that is, action only, or the action may be helped along by spoken jokes. The latter is usually adopted by amateurs as being the easier, but in large circuses, or in displays out of doors where the audience is at too great a distance to allow of talking, pantomime must be used. It is impossible to give more than a few examples of each type of work in a book of this size, but if you bear in mind that almost every clown stunt ever performed depends for its success on the fiendish glee which all human beings feel at seeing somebody "taken in," you should have little difficulty in devising lots of others.

PANTOMIME WORK

1. *The Waiter joke.* Two acrobats come forward, one at each end of the mat, and make elaborate preparations for their stunts; stretching muscles, wiping hand, etc. No. I calls off stage for waiter who enters with a tray having on it a jug of water and a tumbler. Waiter pours out tumbler of water, hands tray to acrobat No. I, but just as latter reaches for it, waiter takes tumbler and drinks it himself. Acrobat looks round in mild surprise when he does not feel glass, then with marked surprise and annoyance as he sees waiter drinking. As latter finishes water he wipes acrobat's mouth with napkin and walks to No. II. Here actions are repeated, but No. II is still more indignant and punches waiter in stomach while he is still drinking. Waiter chokes and acrobat receives spray of water in his face. Finish by either acrobat or Ringmaster chasing waiter off.

Notes. Most difficult points are timing of handing of the tray and the taking of tumbler by waiter. It will be found helpful for the acrobat to look at audience while reaching for tumbler, and for waiter to count, one, two, as he hands tray and takes tumbler, acrobat reaching out on the count, "three." Spare no effort to make each move look natural. This stunt looks a little pointless in cold print, but goes down extraordinarily well with an audience.

2. *Fake Acrobatic Work, etc.* This may be done either as pure burlesque, or the comic business of failing at first to perform a stunt done by the tumbling team may be followed by the clown eventually doing it as well as any.

"It is a common trick in circuses," says the Chief Scout, in *What Scouts Can Do*, "to miss succeeding at the first attempt or two, and when you finally succeed, people think it must have been awfully difficult and they applaud accordingly."

"As a clown, of course, you make the most appallingly bad shots at it, and then in the end do the trick as smartly and well as it could possibly be done. The more you talk to yourself about it and appear to enjoy yourself, the more amusing it will be to the audience. Only, for goodness sake don't try to be funny before you are a perfect master of all your tumbling and balancing stunts, otherwise you will only be laughed at instead of being laughed with."

So says the Chief, and he speaks from experience, for in their regimental pantomimes the great "B.-P." as the clown was invariably the success of the show. Who knows but that his early training in tumbling and clown work may not account in some measure for his amazing litness and agility at an age when most men are beginning to think of bath chairs and ear trumpets?



PLATE XIII.—THE STOMACH BALANCE



PLATE XIV.—THE SITTING FLIP

The fun of a burlesque, on the other hand, lies in the fact that success never is achieved, and in order to prevent this developing into mere stupidity it must be made a definite character study. Decide at the outset whether you wish to portray the poor fish who gets more and more depressed at each failure, or the cheerful optimist who always looks forward to success at the next attempt, and then model each movement and expression on the character you have chosen. In the stunt outlined below, for example, the professor was portrayed as a swaggering, bombastic man, who got more and more annoyed at each successive catastrophe, but it could be easily adapted to the type of character given above. If you do it as the bombastic man take care not to use up all your paroxysms of anger at the first trouble; let the rage grow gradually to the real fiery outburst at the end, for that is really the point of this stunt, which the 14th called:

PROFESSOR IVANITCH O'SCRATCHME, THE CONTINENTAL TRAPEZIST

Loud noises off announce the arrival of the professor in his high-speed car. He enters with great bustle, dressed in an enormous motoring coat and carrying absurdly small bag and large umbrella. After asking for permission to change, he goes off and reappears a second later with large cloak covering burlesque acrobat rig — baggy tights, vest with lace collar, etc. — comes to front of stage and bows. It is useful for him to have some silly, half-foreign catch phrase to say each time he bows, such as, "A la carte. A heenan egg!" He throws cloak off his shoulders and hands it to an attendant who walks off with it, but it has along loop attached to the bottom which catches the professor around the neck and nearly pulls him over as he is bowing again. The professor then stands in middle of stage and, looking off left, claps his hands for trapeze to be lowered. After some pause this comes down right, having a large bag or weight attached which knocks professor over. He picks himself up, bows, and repeats catch phrase. Ringmaster, after whispered conversation with professor, announces that the professor will jump and catch the flying trapeze whilst blindfolded, a feat never before attempted on the British Stage.

He blindfolds the professor, and, turning him round and round whilst explaining to the audience the danger of the feat, leaves him facing off stage. Yelling, "Hoofski! Poofski! Skaaaaa!" the professor jumps. A loud crash is heard off, and he reappears with a black eye and in a bad temper. The process is repeated, the professor peeping through his bandage just before he jumps, but as he leaps the trapeze is hoisted about six inches and he lands flat on mat. More rage. After argument with Ringmaster he decides to present his last and greatest feat, introducing the O'Scratchme Family — Madam Hadanitch O'Scratchme, and Master Itchiwitz O'Scratchme. These appear, also dressed absurdly, and a see-saw and a chair are brought on. Madame holds the chair on her shoulder. Master O'S. stands on the end of see-saw nearest her while the professor, after measuring the distances carefully, and generally portraying great concern at the tremendous risk involved, climbs on to the trapeze, explaining, in broken English when he gets up that he will somersault from the flying trapeze, land on one end of the see-saw, and sends Master O'S. up with a somersault on to the chair. He gets ready, and just as he yells "Hoofski!" etc., the rope breaks and he is dropped on to one end of the see-saw which breaks in the middle. General confusion. Both Ringmaster and professor furious, and latter is pushed off the stage. Ringmaster returns to send rest of family off the opposite side with their battered gear, and as he does so, the professor slips on again to give his bow and explanation, but he is seen and driven off again by Ringmaster .

Notes. Considerable practice will be required to get the timing of the taking of the cloak just right. It must look perfectly natural. When the professor jumps off stage a reliable, strong fellow must be waiting to catch him, otherwise the jump cannot be made to look realistic. Practice is also required to get an effective jump and miss at the trapeze the second time. This should always be practised on a soft mat, as otherwise the jar of landing on the hands may easily damage the joint sockets at the wrist and elbow. It should be performed just like a dive, except that the feet are kept behind the arms, and remain in the air slightly after the hands meet the mat. When preceded by a trip, i.e. by catching one toe just behind the other heel, this fall is known as the "Clown Fall." The see-saw, is, of course, nearly sawn through in the middle before use. It should be painted white and decorated with red and yellow trimmings after the fashion of acrobatic gear.

CLOWN WORK WITH DIALOGUE

It is difficult to explain the make up of the successful circus joke. Literally hundreds of books of funny stories have been published, and the humorous weeklies are continually pouring new jokes into the world; many of these are extraordinarily clever and funny to read, but few of them can get the laughs which the old, old circus jokes do, when tried in the ring. That is the only real test. Any new jokes should be tried out before an audience — three or four people who have not previously seen the show will serve — before they are incorporated into the programme, and if they fail to get across they should be cut out at once.

Two favourite types of joke are the “Bet” type, and the “Conundrum” type. These each require a “feeder” and a “principal.” The feeder takes the whole thing very seriously and always falls into the trap laid by the principal; it is not the easiest part to take, and it certainly isn’t the most popular, for few of us like being scored off, even in pretence. It must be remembered, however, that the success of the joke depends just as much on the serious stupidity of the feeder as on the broad comedy of the principal, and as Scouts our concern is, of course, with the success of the whole show rather than with our own selfish little triumph. Often it is the Ringmaster who does the feeding, while the clowns are continually scoring off him. This should be balanced up by an extreme severity on his part, which should be kept up as far as possible all the time. In this way you goad the audience into thinking, “Good! they’ve scored off him again, the surly old bounder!” each time a point is made, and they smack their lips and enjoy the joke mightily. Of course they know all the time that the surliness and severity of the pompous old Ringmaster are part of the joke too, but they forget that in their delight at the collapse of his dignity.

One or two typical examples of such jokes are given below.

I. THE BET TYPE

A. Coloured Socks Joke. Clown pulls up one leg of his trousers, which should be long enough to hide his socks normally, and says, “What do you think of that for a sock, Master?”

Ringmaster: Why, that's very fine indeed, Joe.

Joe: Fine! I should think it is. Why, I wouldn't mind betting that there isn't another sock in the room like that.

Ringmaster (looking at audience with a nod, as though to say, “Now I've got him!”): Well, do you know, I've a good mind to take that bet. What about half a crown?

Joe: Sure, I'll bet. Why, that sock, Master, is unique. There isn't another one like it in the country.

Ringmaster: There's my money. Now, you bet there isn't another sock like that in this room?

Joe: I do. Ringmaster: Well, what about the one on your other leg. That's got you, hasn't it?

Joe: Not quite, Master. (Pulls up other trouser leg and shows sock of quite

different pattern.) You see, I thought I should find one fool here tonight, so I came prepared.

B. *Hoop joke*. Ringmaster holds up paper-covered hoop, as tumbling team get ready to dive through.

Clown: What's he going to do with that hoop, Master?

Ringmaster: Do with it? Why dive through it of course.

Clown: Without bursting the paper?

Ringmaster: Don't be a fool, you fool. Of course he will have to burst the paper in order to jump through it.

Clown: I bet you I can jump through it without bursting the paper.

Ringmaster: All right. I'll take the bet. Half a crown?

Clown (throws money on mat just in front of hoop): There's my money. (Clown II, who has watched all with great interest, bends down to look at half-crown; Clown I gives him a push which sends him through the hoop, and then gets down and crawls cautiously through the broken paper, looking up while still half-way through, and saying): There you are, Master, I didn't burst the paper.

II. THE CONUNDRUM TYPE

These may be either the ordinary, straightforward conundrum, of which there are so many that illustration is unnecessary, or they may be of the more elaborate type outlined below:

1. *The Fisherman*. Here the plain conundrum is, "Why is the ringmaster like a fisherman?" *Ans.* Because he has a long pole with a string fixed to it, and there is a fool at one end and a worm at the other.

The elaborated form would go like this:

Clown: Master, you remind me of a fisherman with that whip in your hand.

Ringmaster: Oh! How's that?

Clown: Because, when a man goes fishing, he has along pole in his hand, with a string fixed to it; and there's a worm at one end and a fool at the other.

Ringmaster: I am no fool, sir!

Clown: Then you must be the worm!

2. *The Goat*. Plain conundrum is, "If a goat has lost its nose, how does it smell?" *Ans.* Horrible!

The elaborated form might be:

Clown II, the complete fool, is caught out on this by Clown I, and then tries to get his own back on Clown III. He substitutes "breathe" for "smell," however, in asking the question, and then wonders why Clown III can't see the joke.

Lastly there is the joke based on a misunderstanding of instructions. One example will illustrate this type.

The Singing Clown. Clown, after being abused by Ringmaster, goes over to one side of ring and sulks. Presently, he cheers up a bit and begins to sing some stupid little refrain, such as:

“Don't drive those poor little sparrows away,
You may be a sparrow yourself. some day.”

The Ringmaster becomes angry and shouts, “Stop that! You mustn't sing over there.” The clown moves away and repeats his sulk and gradual revival of spirits on the other side of ring. Then he sings again. Ringmaster, still more annoyed, says, “I told you you mustn't sing here!”

Clown: Oh no! You said I wasn't to sing over there.

Ringmaster: Well, you mustn't sing here, or over there.

The singing is repeated in a third place with appropriate remarks by clown and ringmaster, and clown is eventually kicked out, the Ringmaster saying, “I tell you, you mustn't sing anywhere. Get out!”

To fill in odd comers of the programme, and to give the tumblers a rest between their stunts, it is useful to have an assortment of comic acrobatic tricks which may be done by the clowns. A selection of these is given below.

1. *Clown Fall and Rise.* The fall has already been described, and the rise is performed by pushing up on hands and feet, bringing the latter close to the hands by a series of tiny steps, keeping the legs stiff, and apparently lifting yourself by catching hold of the seat of your trousers.

2. *The Sitting Hop.* Sit on the mat with your knees drawn up, and your feet off the ground. Then, by a series of jerks with elbows and legs, hop along on your seat, keeping the feet in the air. This requires considerable practice but is very effective and jolly good exercise.

3. *The Camel's Hump Walk.* Bend forward and place the hands flat on the floor, as near as possible to the feet, keeping the legs perfectly straight. Move the hands forwards, one at a time, with the feet stationary, until you are in the position of “On the hands, down,” then bring the feet up to the hands by a series of tiny steps, and repeat the whole motion across the floor.

4. *Jack in the Box.* Two clowns stand side by side, facing the same way. Clown on right places his left hand on the head of Clown II, pressing him down into a squat position. He then lifts his right leg, and, swinging on his left foot, swings the right leg over his partner's head, making a complete turn, and coming back into his original position. Clown II at the same time comes back to a standing position. Of course the band must be lifted momentarily as the leg swings over the other clown's head. Repeat this, reversing positions.

5. *The Twin Walk.* Two clowns stand back to back, link elbows, and slowly bend their knees till they are sitting down on nothing (Fig. 30). Keeping their backs closely pressed together, they march off round the ring, one going forwards and the

other backwards. This stunt may effectively be finished by doing:



Fig. 30. The Twin Walk.

6. *The Back to Back Roll.* This is almost the same as the double back roll. The two stand upright, keeping the elbows locked; then a rocking motion is commenced by one clown leaning forward and lifting the other off his feet. They rock to and fro in this way once or twice until sufficient momentum has been obtained to enable one to do a back rollover the other's back. This stunt may be modified by rolling with the arms extended sideways, only the hands being clasped.



Fig. 31 A. Clown Make-up.

Finally a few words on the important subject of make-up and costume. In almost all cases the conventional baggy clown costume, with frills at neck, arms, and legs, is the most suitable, and can be easily made. Leache's and Weldon's Fancy Dress books will give you details as to design and measurement, but remember that

these are drawn out for use in the ballroom, and not in the ring, so make sure that ample room is allowed for movement when making them for acrobatic work. A good design is given in *Amateur Circus Life*, by Ernest Balch (Macmillians), price 6s.

If you have several clowns, variation may be introduced by dressing one in some other burlesque costume; say short, brightly coloured, baggy trousers, an old tail coat, with an immense collar and coloured bow. A battered top hat might very well complete the outfit.

The make-up used with the conventional clown kit requires care, and as time is valuable just before a show, it is best not to have too many of these to do. You will require one stick of white grease paint, one of vermilion, and one black liner, also an old spoon, a small paint brush, and a spirit lamp. First, cover the face evenly with white, rubbing it well down and round the neck and ears. Then, using the black liner, paint in the eyebrows and other lines shown in Fig. 31 A. Finally, melt a little of the vermilion paint in the spoon, and paint the triangles on the cheeks and nose, and the broad band round the mouth. Do not powder over these as they look best shiny. To get the make-up off, use cocoa butter or cold cream; smear it all over the face liberally, and then wipe everything off with a clean rag before you try to wash.



Fig. 31 B. Clown Make-up.

For clowns in other costume, a simpler make-up suffices. A slight enlargement of the eyebrows, a carefully painted triangle of red on the nose — beware of the usual daub of red which merely looks as though you've had a nasty accident! — and a slight enlargement of the lips with red, with a broad white band round the outside, is enough, but do take care that the paint is put on evenly and symmetrically (Fig. 31 B). Also, in clown make-up, leave well-defined, sharp edges to the patches and lines. This is quite different from "straight" make-up, in which all the colours are blended into each other.

The interlude clowns should have the simplest possible costume and makeup.

Quite a good notion is to dress them all in fairly bright pyjamas, and black their faces, calling them the "Blacko Boys," or something equally appropriate. The principal clowns, too, should have their names, and often the boys own nicknames can be utilized for this purpose. Reggie and Hugh took upon themselves the names of "Rabbits" and "Uncle Joe" respectively, and, with names like these, and the Dare Family, not to mention the Talented Tokio Tumblers, preparations for the Troop circus began to assume quite a professional air. What the rest of these preparations were, however, and how they were made, must be the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

PRODUCING A SCOUT CIRCUS

GROUP SCOUTMASTER WILLIAM BOSKETT, known to the 14th Cattlebridge as "The Boss," was the fortunate possessor of two rather rare qualities. He had an unerring eye for the man who could do things, and the wisdom to sit back and let him get on with the job when he had found him. So it was that the whole of the preliminary arrangements for the concert were made by the Skipper, and not until these had been disposed of did the Boss come forward and offer to shoulder the whole burden of the business side of the show, assisted, of course, by his hard-working Rovers.

It is difficult to emphasize too strongly the desirability of some such arrangement for any kind of Troop entertainment, not only to divide up the arduous preparatory work, but also to avoid the trying ordeal of having to be in two places at once on the night of the show itself. Perfect as one's preparations may seem, it frequently happens that some unforeseen event, either in the front of the house, or behind the scenes, necessitates the deciding voice of authority, and if both occur together, and the voice of authority is one voice — your own — well, where are you?

Of the front of the house, or of the business arrangements, little need be said here, for these are much the same in any kind of entertainment, and many books of advice on these matters exist. Do, however, remember that the comfort and peace of mind of the audience are essential factors for the success of your show, and an excellent programme can easily be wrecked by badly arranged or uncomfortable seats, by inefficient stewarding, or by the presence of an uncontrolled, rowdy element at the back of the hall.

On the production side, one of the first jobs is to draw up some kind of provisional programme so that the sequence of the stunts as well as the stunts themselves, can be practised from the start. It is difficult, even for the producer, to carry in his head the exact order of the many disconnected items in a circus programme, so, to avoid hitches, it is advisable to have a copy of the whole programme, printed in very large type, hung up at each of the stage or ring entrances, in addition to rehearsing the sequence of the acts. This programme should have on it such additional information as the properties required for each act, and a small diagram showing where these are to be put. Any changes in mat positions to be made by the interlude clowns should also be shown, as no matter how

well these have been rehearsed there is always the possibility of “panic” wrecking things at the last moment.

The producer’s own “prompt copy” will have marked on it, in addition to the above, cues for lights and music, and both “warn” and “call” cues for performers who may be off stage for any length of time. The warn should be sent five minutes, and the call one minute, before they are due to appear, longer times being required if the dressing-rooms are further from the stage.

The “property master” and call boy should be carefully drilled in their jobs. “Props” for circus work are fortunately few, but it must be some *one* person’s job to see that they are put on when required. A good plan is for the property master to arrange a small railed-off space for the properties of each act, with a list above and a cue for their entry. He should check the list before the performance, and see that any article which is required again later in the show is returned to its correct space when it is brought off the stage.

The call boy should be always at the producer’s side, returning there immediately he has made his calls. He, the producer, and the prompter should be the only persons allowed to stand in the wings during the performance, the performers being warned to keep right out of things until their entry. This sounds a bit brutal, for everyone wants to have a peep to see how things are going, but it is the only way to ensure slick working and absolute silence behind the scenes, two essentials for the real success of any show. Let the artists see the show right through from the front at the first dress rehearsal, and then be prepared to make this sacrifice for the general good.

In planning your programme, jot down first the list of stunts which everyone can do. These must form the basis of your programme, the solid meat of your banquet. Separate them by batches of Family or Brother acts, in which the most spectacular feat is kept until last, to provide an appetising thrill, and keep an even more difficult feat in readiness, in case of an encore. Then push in your clown interludes, fake animal acts, etc., to rest the tumblers, and to wash down the more serious acrobatic work with draughts of sparkling humour. Lastly, round off each section of your show with one or two quick-fire pyramids. Don’t forget to allow time for changes of costume, erection of apparatus, etc., so as to avoid waits, for, important as are change and variety, it is even more essential for the items to follow each other like shots from a machine gun, and for them to be carried out with absolute precision, if success is to be assured.

One of the best ways of getting this precision is to work, from the earliest moment, to the crack of the Ringmaster’s whip. With class acts, probably the best arrangement is to have them double in at the first crack, and line up behind the mats. Then each one doubles out in turn, taking his cue from the whip, and saluting before and after their stunts with distinct pauses between each movement. Similar methods could be used in the speciality work.

The programme of the 14th Cattlebridge Circus, which was planned to last about forty minutes, and to fill the second half of the Troop concert, is given opposite, by way of illustration.

This “first-attempt” programme has been chosen, rather than one of their later,

more elaborate, shows, for two reasons. In the first place because this book has been written for beginners at the game who will obviously want to know how to start out on this "circus idea," and, secondly, because the difference between any two circus programmes is really only one of detail — more difficult tumbling stunts, tight-rope walking, rope spinning, more elaborate burlesques, and a greater variety of massed team work can, of course, be worked in as experience is gained, the general lay-out being the same in all cases. Finally, remember Shakespeare's observation:

"They are as sick that surfeit with too much
As they that starve with nothing."

Don't crowd in too much. Try to leave your audience wanting more.

PROGRAMME

- I. Rhymed Introduction. (Spoken by Rabbits.)
2. Parade of all performers, with further explanations by the Ringmaster. Mostly complete rot!
3. THE TRAINED TOKIO TUMBLERS. Forward Rolls. Interrupted by Uncle Joe, who thinks it most dangerous.
4. THE DARE FAMILY. In Specialities. (With Clowns.)
 - A. Kick Up and Dive.
 - B. Headsprings.
 - C. The Waiter Joke.
 - D. Dive over Roll (3 times)].
5. Clown Interlude. Hoop Joke.
6. THE TOKIO TUMBLERS. Team Diving. The Hoops. Pyramids — The Pedestal, the Arrowe.
7. PIEBALD PETE. The Almost Human Horse. (Fake animal act.)
8. THE TOKIO TUMBLERS. Diving. The Horses.
9. PROFESSOR O'SCRATCHME. The Continental Trapezist.
- IO. THE DARE FAMILY. (With Clowns.)
 - A. Double Walk.
 - B. Double Roll.
 - C. Cartwheels.
 - D. Hoop Joke II.
 - E. Covered Hoop Diving.
 - F. The Fiery Hoop of Death.
- II. Clown Interludes. The Fisherman Joke.
- I2. THE TOKIO TUMBLERS. (Each doing his own speciality.) Pyramids — The Fan, the Aerial.

The real circus atmosphere is difficult to get on a stage, and if the shape of the hall and the rest of your programme allow a ring should most certainly be selected. Besides being right for the circus, a ring has the additional advantages of requiring no scenery, of being easy to light, and of forming an almost perfect setting for most Scouting displays, camp fires, etc., if they are included in your programme.

The regular circus ring is 42 feet in diameter, but since you will not be performing on horseback, one slightly larger than half this size is more suitable. For outdoor work the full-sized ring may be used. Curtaining or covered boxes may be used to form the kerb of the ring, the colours being chosen to tone in with the costumes and mats. Clown costumes have already been discussed, and for the tumblers, white shorts, vests, socks, and shoes, set off by a fairly broad black sash, make a combination which is hard to beat. Tights and trunks may be used if preferred, and if funds allow. They will cost you about six or seven shillings per boy, and can be obtained from Whites Ltd., Nut tall Works, Bobbers Mill, Nottingham.

No circus is complete without its band, and if the troop does not boast an orchestra, a gramophone will be found to fill the breach adequately, for indoor work. Our friends of the 14th were fortunate enough to get hold of an electrical pick-up and amplifier, so that they were able to fade out their music most effectively when the dialogue commenced, and to bring in the full blare of the orchestra during the pantomime work.

Up to the last fortnight before the concert, the 14th had merely their usual two nights a week for the practice, so that other Scouting work should not suffer unduly, but for the rest of the time all else was sunk in the final burst of preparation, and the pace became positively red-hot. The Tokio Tumblers began to realize that the success of the show was going to depend as much on their snappy performance of the easy stunts and pyramids, as on the more thrilling feats of the Dare Family, who could be seen nearly every evening putting the finishing touches to their specialities.

Billy and Scottie, the front and back ends — and middle too — of Piebald Pete, pranced away, perfecting their comic dance steps, and picked up handkerchiefs from all manner of positions. They even drew out several yards of calico from the back of Uncle Joe's breeches, which looked like a handkerchief but wasn't, as he backed unsuspectingly into the ring. Clowns ran about with red-hot pokers, and did amazing things with hoops and mats, and glasses of water. Doc, who had been appointed property master, could be found at odd times painting hoops all manner of gorgeous colours, covering them with black and white tissue paper, and sticking wonderful five-pointed stars in the middle for the divers to aim their hands at, while Skipper would be found squatting on the clubroom floor, sewing brilliant orange and black covers on to the mattresses. Parents were vying with each other for the production of startling clown costumes, at a maximum cost of three and six, or making black sashes for the tumbling team, at a cost of practically nothing at all. They had met together some three weeks earlier, to discuss with the Skipper suggestions for costumes, and rather to his surprise had almost surpassed the boys in their keenness for the success of the concert. In short, the 14th Cattlebridge, even to its "sisters and its cousins and its aunts" fairly hummed with activity during those last fourteen days.

A full week before the show came the dress parade — just a dress rehearsal without the actual rehearsal part, to see that all the costumes were in order, and to

spot any defects in plenty of time to get them put right. Then the two real dress rehearsals, the second being really a first performance with very cheap seats, to get the fellows used to an audience, and to find the weak spots in the show under actual running conditions — no dress rehearsal is quite the same as playing to an audience — and, finally, the show itself!

What fun it was, and how the audience, to say nothing of the boys, enjoyed themselves. They laughed at the pompous old Ringmaster, with his flowing moustache, and funny foreign accent. They laughed at the clowns, and fairly rocked at the antics of Piebald Pete. Rounds of applause greeted the Dare Family, as they cartwheeled and dived, as they flung themselves through paper-covered hoops, and, as a grand finale, through the “Fiery Hoop of Death” — just an ordinary hoop, bound with cotton wool soaked in methylated spirits in which had been dissolved some strontium chloride, set on fire as the lights were snicked off. But the greatest impression of the whole evening was created by the team work of the Tokio Tumblers. Their rapid succession of crisp, finished rolls and dives, the clockwork precision of their every movement as they sprang to their positions in the pyramids, and the cheery, smiling salute at the end of each act, proved irresistible, and the audience clamoured for more.

These were the fellows who thought they were duds at the game, who thought that tumbling was not in their line!

“And the moral of that,” said the Duchess — well, perhaps you might be left to think that one out for yourselves!

CHAPTER VII

MAKING FAKE ANIMALS

“How can we have a circus without any animals?” said Tony Woolbright, when the circus described in the last chapter was first proposed, and as this seemed to be taken by the rest as a reasonable and natural objection, the Skipper found it necessary to explain that though real animals were essential for a professional performance, a Scout circus laboured under no such limitations. “If we can make a fairy coach out of a pumpkin,” he said, referring to the Troop's recent production of Cinderella, “the conversion of a few disused Scouts into elephants or buffaloes should be mere child's play to us,” and he told them how, for the purpose of Scout shows, the animals could be built of wood and cloth with boys inside to work them, and how the expenditure of time and money in their manufacture was usually amply repaid by the interest and amusement they gave to an audience. “Of course they may differ a bit from the real thing in appearance,” he said, “and as for their habits-well, I don't want to disgust you, but some of them *have* been known to wash with their shirts on. Haven't they, Scottie?” He went on to remind them of the monsters of this kind which they had seen at the Jamboree, with the result that the 14th Cattlebridge were soon unanimous that at least one such animal was necessary to complete their show, and they went on to discuss ways and means.

It was eventually resolved to place the job in the capable hands of Jim Baker, a willing Rover with a mechanical turn of mind and a sufficient knowledge of biology

to enable him to produce simple skeletons of wood and cane which could be covered with skins made of coloured cloth, a borrowed sewing machine fortunately being available for the latter purpose.

The designs submitted by Baker a few days later included a variety of species, the final choice of the Troop, as our readers are aware, falling on "Piebald Pete," the "Almost Human Horse." This equestrian wonder shortly afterwards began to materialize under the direction of its enthusiastic designer and a few chosen assistants.



PLATE XV.—THE FORWARD TURNOVER

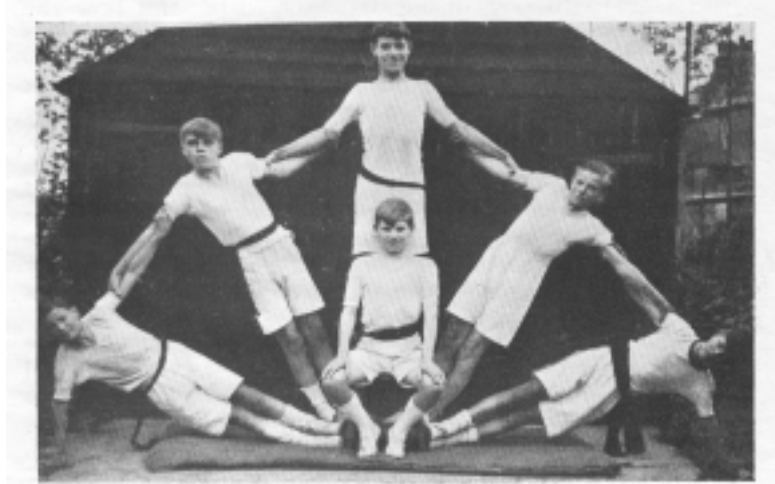


PLATE XVI.—THE "FAN"

For the benefit of those whose tastes may differ from that of the 14th Cattlebridge, all Jim's designs will now be given in detail as examples of what may be attempted.

"BONY BERTHA, THE BABY ELEPHANT"

Fig. 32 shows Bertha's working parts with the outer covering, which is made of a dirty blue-grey coloured cloth, removed. A hole is left in the underside of the stomach to admit the boys after the cover has been permanently fixed to the frame. This hole also allows the boy who forms the rear legs of the elephant to see the feet of the boy in front, so that he can keep in step with his partner. Similar but smaller

holes must be made, as inconspicuously as possible, in the under side of the neck, in the forehead and flanks, to enable the front "legs" to see where they are going.

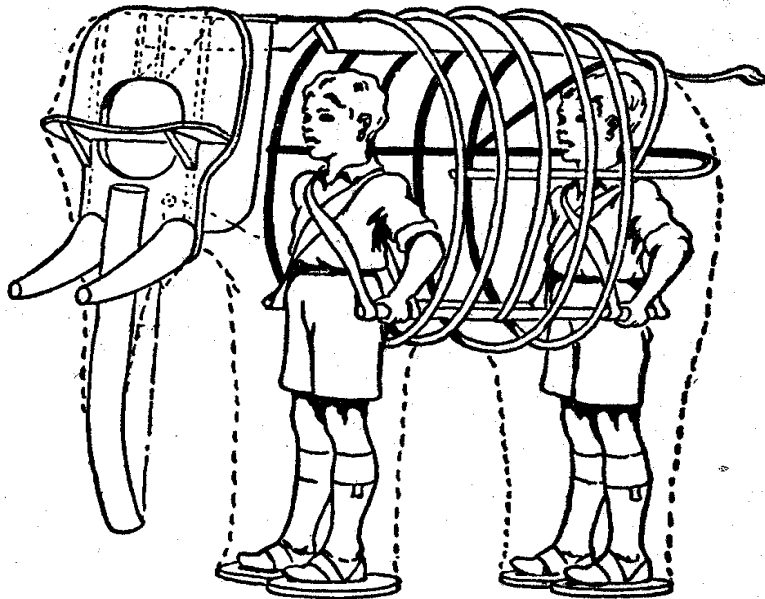


Fig. 32. "Bony Bertha" (Interior).

Four flat pieces of wood, roughly cut to shape and put together as shown in Fig. 33, form the face, top, and sides of the head, while a fifth piece is fitted on the face pieces just above where the eyes will come, to form the forehead. This framework is padded and covered with cheap cloth, stuffing being added as required to give smooth rounded surfaces.

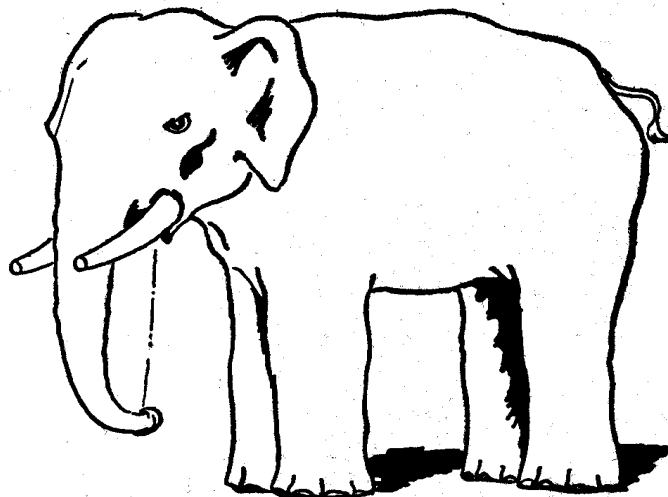


Fig. 33. "Bony Bertha" (Exterior).

The trunk consists of a length of rubber pipe fastened to the face piece and reaching to within an inch of the ground at the lower end, while the top end must be surrounded with padding so that when the covering is put on the surface of the trunk merges smoothly into that of the face.

The tusks may be shaped out of wood or cows' horns screwed to the face piece, and painted to look like ivory. The eyes consist of large buttons sewn in position with a white background cut from an old kid glove.

At this stage, when the shape of the head and trunk has been completely moulded, the outer covering of coloured cloth may be added and the eyelids formed, the latter being fitted with wire along the edges. To make Bertha wink you have only to attach elastic and operating strings to the upper lids, the bottom ones remaining stationary.

A sharp hook is fixed to the lower end of the trunk and a fine piece of gut is attached at the same point. The latter is then brought up through the mouth and over a small pulley fixed on the back of the face piece, leaving sufficient length inside to allow the front boy to operate the trunk by pulling steadily on the, gut, and so drawing the end of the trunk into the animal's mouth, and with it any small object stuck to the hook. In this way, Bertha can be made to eat buns, or wisps of hay, or even the clown's hat!

If a thin tube reaching from the mouth of the Scout in front is fixed down inside the trunk, he will be able to blow a piece of paper about on the ground, or suck up small articles. The ears are made of cloth cut to shape, double thickness, padded where necessary, and attached at the top to pieces of wood which pass through the side of the head. Inside the skull springs and wires are fastened to these, the wires being pulled to make the ears flap.

Running the whole length of the back from head to tail, is the "backbone," consisting of a fairly strong piece of wood about six feet long, and slightly curved along the top side. The face piece of the head is securely fixed to the front end of this, and if you wish your animal to nod in true fashion as an elephant, it must be cut through about two feet from the front, and joined again by bolting a flat spring along the top of the two pieces.

The ribs may be made of five or more hoops of various sizes up to about three feet diameter, these being firmly fixed to the backbone at the top (nine inches apart if five are used), and braced together half-way down by thin sticks, which are continued round the back in the form of half circles.

Near the bottom of the hoops must be firmly fixed two fairly stiff pieces of wood 5 feet long and 18 inches apart, and on the ends of them the four web slings by which the animal is carried. The tail, which is made from a piece of grey cloth, stuffed and fitted with a tuft of black horsehair at the end, is of course fixed to the rear extremity of the backbone, being mounted on a stick which passes inside the body far enough for the "back legs" to wag it from side to side.

It now remains to make the feet. To do this get two old pairs of large boots and fasten them securely with screws to four flat round pieces of wood, about eleven inches in diameter, which should be padded well and covered with strong canvas stuffed to the correct shape.

Next you can pad the skeleton all over and cover it with the grey cloth, finishing it by getting the Scouts who are to act as bearers to stand inside with the slings in position, while the legs are cut to the correct length, and sewn to the feet at the bottom end. Lastly get photographs and pictures of elephants, and see how you can make Bertha look more realistic by padding here and there, by wrinkling the skin in some places and stretching it in others. This will be easier if an inner skin of cheap material is stretched tightly in position first and the coloured cloth stitched on

afterwards. Put on final touches with grey and black paint, around the eyes and ears more especially, and then stand back to admire the most docile, intelligent, and amazing animal ever taught to perform in the sawdust ring!

In conclusion it may be said that the elephant is the most profitable subject on which to spend time and money in trying to make the illusion as complete as possible, because it is the only animal well adapted to "faking." This is mainly because the legs are so easily imitated, for, after all, an elephant's legs are just like two very large pairs of badly fitting trousers, whereas in the case of other animals which have thin legs, it is very difficult to disguise a boy's legs and feet with success. In constructing these other animals, the object therefore is to produce a grotesque representation rather than an exact imitation of the subject. As an example of this we have:

"PIEBALD PETE, THE ALMOST HUMAN HORSE"

The design and construction of the skeleton for Pete are almost exactly the same as those described above, the dimensions only being altered as indicated in Fig. 34, which shows the working parts before the skin is put on. The latter, as befits a circus animal, is white or light grey, liberally spotted with black on the back and sides in the manner illustrated in Fig. 35, in which this remarkable creature is shown in the act of stepping a graceful measure in the ring.

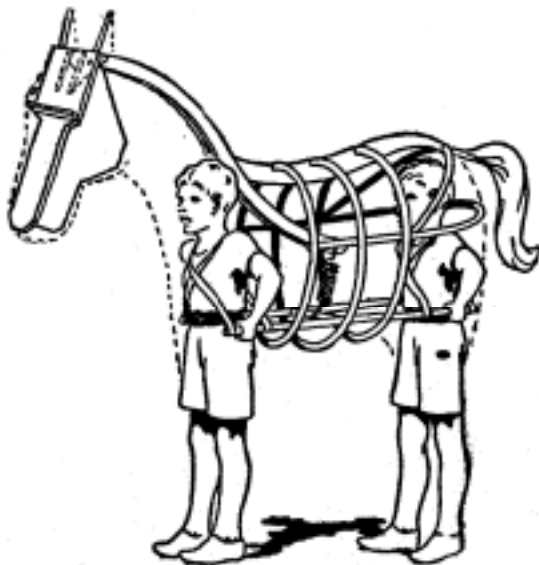


Fig. 34. The Working Parts of Piebald Pete.



Fig. 35. Piebald Pete in the Ring.

The head and neck may be rigidly attached to the back, or hinged at either or both ends of the neck, as desired, the mechanical details being beyond the scope of this book and therefore left to the ingenuity of the constructor. The actions of the ears, eyes, and tail described in the case of the elephant are, of course, applicable to any animal, and others may be added according to the tricks which it is desired to perform. In the case of Piebald Pete, the head was made sufficiently large for the Scout in front to be able to reach his arm down and put his fingers out of the mouth to pick up handkerchiefs, etc. A small hook might be used for this purpose, though it would not be so easy to swallow the handkerchief in this way.

“BOUNCING BILLY, THE BARCELONA BULL”

Here again the same principles of construction hold good, although Billy will be of rather abnormal height unless the Scouts adopt a stooping attitude, which, however, is very tiring after a short time. The best way is to get smaller boys inside, and to make the structure light enough for them to manipulate.

In this case the head is not given an up-and-down motion, but is free to swing from side to side, after the manner of the bovine tribe.

Having built a truly ferocious-looking bull, it will at once occur to the enterprising showman to change his clowns temporarily into toreadors and matadors, to rehearse them in the pomp and ceremony associated with the Spanish bull fight, and so stage a burlesque offering ample scope for motion, colour, and acrobatics.

An alternative setting for Billy, equally spectacular, although perhaps less appropriate, is around up by cowboys, after the style of the Wild West show, and introducing lariat throwing and rope spinning.

Other animals which may be treated in a similar way are the giraffe, zebra, camel, deer, etc., while the ostrich and the ape, being bipeds, may be made a one-man show, and are fairly easy to construct.

This chapter would be incomplete without some reference to that vast range of faked animals which has been exploited on several occasions with marked success namely, the

“PREHISTORIC MONSTERS”

Here we have a rich field for the imagination of the designer and the means of filling the largest of arenas.

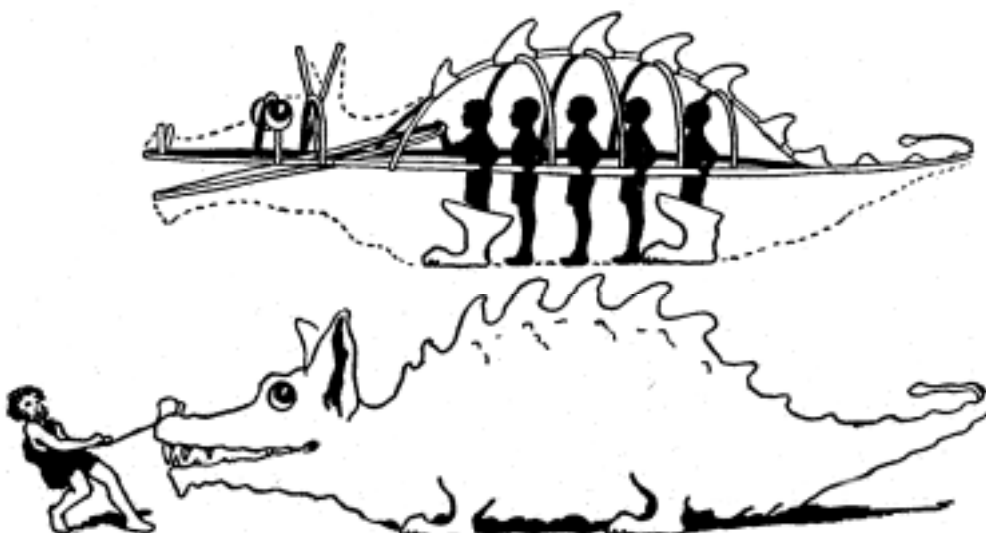


Fig. 36. The Terrifying “Isosaurus Cattlebridgiensis.”

Occasionally it is desired to produce a display which will occupy effectively a fairly large space, and this requirement may be well fulfilled by a number of Troops uniting to stage a “PREHISTORIC CIRCUS.”

In this show the clowns and tumblers, of which there may be several teams, appear as Stone Age men, clothed in skins of fur, armed with clubs and spears, and accompanied by a number of strange monsters of no particular species. In designing the latter one is not restricted in the matter of colour, shape, or size, the sole aim being to produce a picturesque result, which may resemble the legendary dragon, a scale-clad, fire-breathing thing, or the huge reptile of the type which one associates with natural history museums and books on evolution (Fig. 36). In any case they will be heavy and bulky, needing up to ten or twelve Scouts to manoeuvre them, and for this reason, rather cumbersome and slow in action, not suited for performing tricks, but valuable for space-filling properties, and forming a spectacular background for the rest of the show.

In conclusion a few of the commonest stunts which may be performed by the more active of these animals, will be given, to assist beginners, and to give suggestions from which they may elaborate ideas of their own. Generally speaking the first part of the act should be as serious and as natural as possible, the foolery being introduced later to give a good finish.

Walk, and run backwards, forwards, etc., in obedience and occasional disobedience to the instructions of a clown or trainer. The latter should wear evening dress or uniform. Sit and lie down, the back legs working independently or in opposition to front legs. Skip, jump, and do simple dance steps to music, the time of which may be varied in an exaggerated manner to keep in time with the horse, thus burlesquing the usual "Dancing Horse Act" of the professional ring.

Shake head, wag tail and ears, wink eyes, and make noises in answer to questions put to it by trainer or clown. Eat, drink, scratch, be ill or intoxicated, and receive the attention of a doctor. See-saw on a plank, climb and walk over obstacles, including trainer, and finally sit on him or clown.

As a final hint to the ambitious, a small Scout suitably rigged as a fair young equestrienne in ballet frock and flaxen wig might, with practice, perform many of the usual trick-riding acts, jumping through hoops, etc., if a suitably designed horse is provided. In short there are immense possibilities in fake animal acts, and the successes which can be secured far outweigh the expenditure of time and energy spent in their production, while the Troop gains, in addition, a training in the use of tools and materials, and the even more valuable experience of sharing in the communal effort of manufacture. If, however, you still feel scared by the apparent difficulties of the job, just take this as a final motto:

"It Can Be Done!"¹

and get on with it!

¹ Motto of the 1st Norwich (Capt. Bower's Own) Troop.

CHAPTER VIII

A WORD TO SCOUTERS

“Nations have passed away and left no traces,
And History gives the naked cause of it —
One single, simple reason in all cases;
They fell because their people were not fit.”

(From the Preface to Rudyard Kipling's
Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides.)

“THE training of the Boy Scouts would be incomplete if it did not endeavour to instil ideas of personal hygiene and physical fitness into the boys.”

These words at the head of Chapter VI of *Scouting for Boys* remind us of a responsibility which is too often shelved, even by Scouters who believe themselves to be fully alive to the meaning of Scout training. They realize the value of the training in Woodcraft and Service, but sometimes forget how largely the boy's mental processes, his loves and hates, his courage or his cowardice, his alertness of mind or dull listlessness, are controlled by his physical condition. What steps are we, as Scouters, taking to build up this particular corner of the Scouting edifice?

“And though your Spirit seem uncouth or small,
Stubborn as clay or shifting as the sand.
Strengthen the Body and the Body shall
Strengthen the Spirit till she take command.”

(Kipling, *Land and Sea Tales.*)

Are we definitely setting out to cultivate the youngster's interest in his physical well-being as a first step in getting him to realize his own responsibility in the matter? Or are we contentedly assuming that training in the First and Second Class Tests, or even living under canvas in the open air, is alone sufficient to convert Mutt's stick-like arms into well-formed, muscular limbs, or to give to Jeff's rounded shoulders the splendid configuration of the genuine athlete? Our job is, surely, first to observe and then to try to remedy these deficiencies, and there is no need for us to possess medical qualifications to be able to do both of these. Such defects as those already mentioned are only too plain to see, and, alas, only too frequently seen. Even with boys who have ample opportunity for school games — those we are apt to dismiss with the thought, “Well, at any rate *they* get all the exercise they need” — even these, with their apparently sound muscular systems and splendid stamina, often show exaggerated stiffness and lack of control in important muscle groups which are not called into play in their particular field of sport.

With the need thus apparent we have to consider how we may best utilize the three chief aids which lie ready to our hands — those of health-giving habits, games, and systematic physical training — in order to remedy this state of things, and there seems no doubt that a judicious selection from all three must be made if we are to produce a well-balanced and harmonious development.

In making this selection we have to keep in mind not only the actual effect of the activity on the physical development of the boy, but also the equally important

question of its attractive appeal, utilizing this to the full to stimulate the youngster to further efforts, and while this appeal may be very largely influenced by the personality and leadership of the Scouter or Schoolmaster, the part played by the boy's natural aptitude for some particular branch of sport must not be overlooked.

Boys who do not respond to the stimulus of cricket, football, or "Rugger" will often be found to possess marked natural ability for some form of gymnastic work, and we should be neglecting a valuable opportunity if we did not turn this to account in awakening in them a desire to attain perfection of physical development. It is more particularly for this type of boy that this book has been written, and if it serves to launch even a few of these on the voyage to health and efficiency, it will have served its purpose. But, lest misunderstanding arise, it must again be emphasized that tumbling stunts are merely the jam around the pill, and not the pill itself.

Still, jam too is nourishing!

Just as the games enthusiast should be led to perfect his development by supplementary corrective physical training, so the tumbling genius should be encouraged to complete his training by acquiring the stamina and endurance, the pluck and determination, and the highly desirable "team spirit," by taking his part in games, while the necessity for health-giving and hygienic habits needs usually to be impressed on all alike.

What kind of physical training are we to adopt? The grown man who feels the need of physical training wants a ready-made system which can easily be learnt, as a short cut to health and fitness, and the stimulus of the goal ahead is usually enough in his case to carry him through the somewhat dull routine of set exercises which make up such a system. To meet a demand of this kind arose the Swedish System of Physical Culture devised by Ling. This was based certainly on firm theoretical principles and pointed to a high physical and mental ideal, but it was equally certainly dull, at all events from the boy's point of view. The boy is easily stirred by the ideal of physical perfection, but it is such a distant ideal that only rarely is it a sufficient incentive to keep him steadfastly on the trail. He wants fun, excitement, and the thrill of a spice of danger, to help him on his way — and rightly so. The Danish system devised by Niels Bukh recognizes this need, and, while having quite as sound a theoretical foundation as the Swedish system, incorporates with its more formal exercises a considerable amount of agility work of the kind described in these pages. His book, *Primary Gymnastics* (Methuen, 6s.), is probably the best answer a Scouter could have to the question at the head of this paragraph.

In conclusion, the practical question of the incorporation of tumbling into the Troop programme must be touched upon. The passing glimpses of the activities of the 14th Cattlebridge will have shown something of their method of tackling the job, and it is difficult to lay down a much more rigid plan of procedure.

The following hints may, however, be found useful.

I. *Balance*. First and foremost, let tumbling teach you, as well as your Scout, BALANCE. No matter how keen you all may get, never let it take up more than its fair share of the Scouting programme. A short period, packed tight with vigorous movement, after a Troop meeting, is a good way of starting, provided the latter is not too long. Experience, however, goes to show that a separate evening is desirable. In

the summer time bathing parades provide exactly the right conditions, and ten or twenty minutes might be worked in two or three times a week in this way.

2. *Qualifications.* You may possibly be dubious about your ability to undertake instruction in this work, but, provided you have common sense, genuine keenness born of a conviction that the job is worth doing, and sufficient agility to lend a hand to avoid falls, you may dismiss your doubts and start away at once. Certainly there is no need for you to be a trained acrobat; in fact such a one might even be at a disadvantage, for not only would he find it harder to appreciate the boys' difficulties, but he would always be open to the temptation of stimulating them to do difficult and perhaps dangerous stunts before they had the necessary experience and muscular development to attempt them with safety.

3. *High Standard.* It is most important to insist upon a high standard from start to finish. The elementary stunts are not hard to do, but it is very difficult to do them *well*. You will reap the benefit of this in other ways for, once you get the tradition of smartness and slickness established in the tumbling team, its livening influence will soon spread to other phases of the Troop's activities.

4. *Fresh Air.* Work as far as possible outside in the fresh air. Tumbling, like practically all Scouting activities, is an open-air job, but you will be well advised at first, when waits during instruction are inevitable, to insist on the donning of jerseys or sweaters between stunts. Boys are apt to think this a bit old-womanish at first, but if you explain that a first-class athlete would never think of standing about without doing so, even between two successive high jumps, they will soon accept the tradition.

5. *Softly, softly, Catchee Monkey!* Don't rush! Learn two or three easy stunts only on the first evening, and intersperse these with games and a selection of exercises such as those from *Primary Gymnastics*. The latter lend themselves very well to training in mental as well as in physical alertness, as almost from the start two or three different motions can be performed at once. The frequent changes of movement invariably catch someone out, and the amusement of these situations liven up things enormously.

6. *Hygiene.* Insist from the start on everyone having a complete change, and bringing a towel to rub down well afterwards. Set the example yourself! It is important to keep to this rule strictly, and to make it at the very beginning, for once they are allowed to work slackly, in ordinary clothes, the spirit of keenness is liable to fade away, and it will be found a most difficult thing to recapture. The changing affords a splendid opportunity for a yarn on hygiene, and the nature and functions of the sweat glands, and the importance of keeping them in good working order should be explained.

The actual rig used is of small importance. Shorts, vest, and plimsolls are as good as any, while if local conditions allow, as much of the work as possible should be carried out in shorts alone, as recommended by Niels Bukh. This not only gives the skin a chance to get much-needed air and light, but also gives the Scouter an opportunity to spot deficiencies in the physical condition of his Scouts.

7. *Displays.* The progressive nature of tumbling work is normally sufficient to stimulate the youngster to further efforts. He wants to go one better, to learn

something a little more difficult, and we can turn this keenness to account in making him realize his own responsibility for his physical development. Sooner or later, however, this interest may begin to flag and lose its power. This is the time to introduce the further stimulus of a public display. Let it have something of the glamour of the sawdust ring, something of the flavour of the professional acrobat performing incredibly daring feats — in name only — let rumours of gigantic animals of fearsome habits and doubtful ancestry be noised abroad, and soak the whole programme with the clean, cheery fun of the old-time circus clown. Avert the danger of swelled head in your most gifted youngsters by focussing attention on making a success of the show as a whole — a Troop Concert is a sort of shop-window display of Scouting — and when your success comes, let your tumbling “bide a wee while” until the inevitable reaction has blown over. But don't wait too long, or the impression will be created that it has all been done “just for the concert” — and nothing could be more destructive of our aim than that!

The urge to “do” should be both the mainspring and ideal of all our training, awakening in the boy, as he acquires new skill and strength of body and mind, an appreciation of mental and physical perfection, and the urge to “be.” Then, finally bringing him to a realization of the immense joy and satisfaction of applying his newly gained powers to the service of his fellow-creatures.

“Wherefore we pray you, sons of generous sires,
Be fit — be fit! For Honour's sake be fit.”

LIST OF BOOKS ON TUMBLING, ETC.

- WHAT SCOUTS CAN DO. By the CHIEF SCOUT. Pearson, 2/-
- MY CIRCUS LIFE. By James Lloyd. Noel Douglas, Ltd.
- PYRAMIDS FOR GYMNASTIC DISPLAYS.
By STAFF-SERGT. Moss. Health and Strength, Ltd., 1/6
- TUMBLING TRICKS. By the EDITOR OF “Health & Strength”
Health and Strength, Ltd., 1/6
- HEALTH BY STUNTS. By Pearl & Brown. Macmillans, Ltd., 6/-
- AMATEUR CIRCUS LIFE. By Ernest Balch. Macmillans, Ltd., 6/-
- TUMBLING FOR AMATEURS AND GROUND WORK. By Prof. Gwathmey.
Spaldings, 9d.
- TUMBLING AND PYRAMIDS BUILDING FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN.
By A. Cotteral & S. Barnes. New York, 7/6
- PRIMARY GYMNASTICS. By Niels Bukh. Methuens, Ltd., 6/-

APPENDIX

IF an indoor tight-rope is required, Fig. 37 will show you how to make it. The following materials and dimensions have been found by experience to be satisfactory.

Uprights, A and B: 4 in. by 6 in. by 10 ft. deal.

Compression members, D and E: 3 in. by 2 in. deal.

Compression member, C: 1¼ in. diameter iron gas-pipe.

Rope: 16 ft. of 4 in. circumference manilla, with metal thimbles spliced in firmly at each end.

Bolts and hooks: ½ in. diameter wrought iron.

Length, A to B: 18 ft.

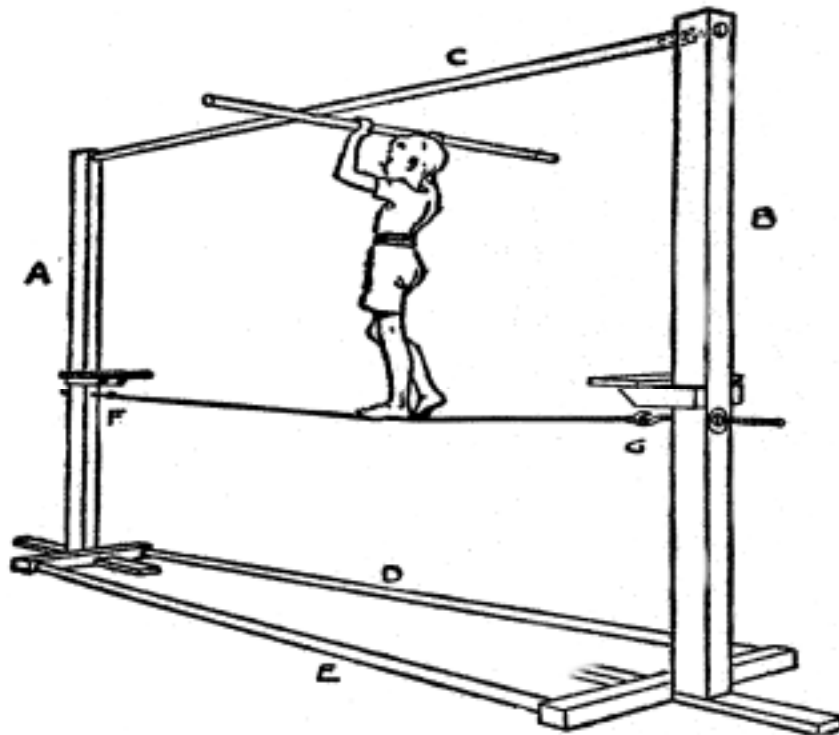


Fig. 37. An Indoor Tight-rope

In erecting, the pipe is first slipped over the bolts at the top and the bottom compression members laid in position on the floor; the rope is then hooked on and tightened up by using a large spanner on the nut at G. The rope will stretch considerably at first, and new eyes will have to be spliced in, but after a time the length becomes fairly constant. Made in this way the rope can be used in or out of doors, and as it can be taken down and erected within five minutes it is admirable for display work, for which purpose it was in fact designed by "The Boss."