

## LAYING OUT ROUTES

FOR THE VARIOUS THEATRICAL COMBINATIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

How the Thing Is Done Systematically—  
The Agent's "Long Book"—Advertising the Attractions—Arrangements with the Manager.

[New York Sun Interview.]

"Of late," one of the best-known theatrical agents in this city said recently, "actors have far less trouble in arranging for dates out of town than formerly. In fact, I may say that the system of routing and booking has undergone a complete change. No longer than seven years ago the old system prevailed. Under it hardly any so-called combinations went on the road. I can say, without being in the least immodest, that I was the first agent to adopt the present system. I based it on that pursued by a New York theatre, which sent many companies on the road. From the family which managed the establishment I got the fundamental principles of the present system. I have it down to such a fine point that if I am asked to book and route a company I can tell in a few minutes what dates and places are open for it."

"How do you manage that?" we asked.

"I will explain. Through my acquaintance with managers, I have the sole agency for about a hundred theatres. To carry out my system it was necessary that I should be sole agent for them here. Otherwise it would be impossible for me to lay out routes by a glance at my books.

To begin with, I have a theatre in each of the large cities in the country. In some sections there are circuits, as for instance, the Vermont, the Texas, the California circuit, and I am in close relation with the representatives of these. I by no means, however, always include such circuits in the routes I lay out. Besides theatres in large cities, I have good show towns between them. For instance, I have on my list ten New York cities, the same number in Ohio, seven in Indiana, six in Pennsylvania, and so on. Let me give you an illustration as to how quickly I can route a combination or star. The first time I had dealings with one of my stars she came up to me and said: 'My route for next season isn't well laid out. I want you to lay out a new route for me. I leave for California to-morrow. What are your terms?'

"I will lay out a route for you," I replied, "if you will leave everything to my hands. When you come back from California I will show you the route, and you will find my terms reasonable."

"Before she left that afternoon for California I had her route laid out, and she was booked for all the theatres on the route. How do I manage it? I'll show you. In this book," opening a long book, "I have on every page every date in the year, with a blank space after each date. Every page belongs to a theatre, the theatres being arranged according to states. I can tell by a glance at each page how many dates are open for the theatre represented by that page. Here is Cleveland—filled you see, from Aug. 24,

1885, to June 21, 1886. Now, suppose I want to book an attraction for some date later than June 21, 1886, in Cleveland. I telegraph to the manager the name of the attraction, the time, and terms. There is a possibility that we may differ on terms and have to adjust them by wire. But I know what ideas the different managers have in regard to terms, and usually get an affirmative answer to my first telegram. In addition to my book, in which each page is devoted to a theatre, I have tables consisting of a page like those in the book, pasted on cardboard. Each of these tables is devoted to a star or combination. I have seen all told. Now look at this table. In it you will find the route of a star actress mapped out. As a rule I start my attraction in New York and wind up in New York."

"But if you have to make routes for sixteen attractions," said the reporter, "I should think the late comers would be hard to satisfy."

"There are no late comers among my regular sixteen attractions, because I book them all in December for the next year. Besides the routes differ in character. Here, for instance, is a route for a play in which a well-known actor starred up to last season. He takes another play this season, so his old play goes on the road without him. That route doesn't take in a single large city. It is confined to towns which are one or two night stands. Of course, some managers come to me too late. They have to take what they can get. They are obliged to jump all over the country, and are put to great outlay for transportation. Then again it may happen that some combination goes to pieces. In that event these late-comers may get a good route after all."

"How do you manage the advertising for your attractions while en route?"

"That is all provided for in the contract. I have a printed form which, when filled out, is a contract between my attractions as party of the first part and the theatre as party of the second part. The attraction agrees to furnish the acting company, advance printing, and stage performance for (usually) 70 per cent of the gross receipts. The manager agrees to furnish the theatre, well lighted, warmed, and cleansed, with scenery and equipments according to photo-furnished stage hands, ushers, property-men, and assistants, janitors, ticket-sellers, supers, ballet, curtain lights, programmes, billboards, a first-class orchestra, or, if impossible to secure an orchestra, a first-class piano and pianist; door keepers, licensees, advertising, stage furniture, and properties."

"I suppose you consider, in making up your routes, how the attractions did the previous season?"

"Yes, I have a book of the receipts of every performance."

"Are not some sections of the country better to show than others?"

"Maine and New Hampshire are poor states, and in Vermont there are only three good show towns. Of course the country is thickly populated in this section, and here there are no long jumps. But the west and south are equally amusement-loving, and if there were as many cities and towns in these sections as in this they would be as good from a theatrical point of view. But let me tell you one thing. The west and south will stand only first-class attractions. You can't palm off anything second-class on them. Anybody who tries it will be truly routed."

The Secret of Long Life.

[John Swinton's Paper.]

Men of brains in New York are apt to enjoy a hole age if they do not ruin themselves by bad habits. And the idea now growing in my head is this: That thought, hard and ceaseless thought, is one of the best means of prolonging life. But you must not drudge like a galley slave nor drink like a helot.

## EX-MINISTER S. G. W. BENJAMIN

Gives a Reporter an Account of His Experience While in Persia.  
[New York Sun Interview.]

"How do the Persians treat Christians and Europeans?"

"Not badly, if their fanaticism is not aroused. Then they become dangerous. A few years ago if a European consorted with a Persian woman he was killed at once, or obliged to turn Mohammedan and marry her. Even now it would create the greatest trouble, so that Europeans confine their attentions to the Armenian women of the native Christian population. When the shah's wives drive through the streets men go ahead to clear the streets and warn all persons to conceal themselves. If a man has no chance of getting away if he turns his face around and does not look, on pain of being roughly handled or perhaps killed on the spot. Europeans are compelled to do the same thing."

In June of last year, owing to the intense heat, I was compelled to move my family out of the city. On my way to the country I met a large force of soldiers escorting the shah's wives. If a man had chance to glance at the royal ladies in such circumstances he would have fared hard, but the foreign legations have rights and privileges of their own, so I stood my ground. Some twenty of the mounted guards violently attacked us and beat my servants and their horses in the effort to drive them back. I directed them to stand their ground, and things were looking serious, when one of the queens had the courage to speak to the soldiers, telling them to call the soldiers away. We were then allowed to pass through without further molestation.

This attack was an insult to the dignity of the legation too great to be overlooked, and I wrote to the Boston Society for Medical Improvement, in which we touched on this question upon which doctors disagree, and said: "It is a common impression that to take food immediately before going to bed and to sleep is unwise. Such a suggestion is answered by a reminder that the instinct of animals prompts them to sleep as soon as they have eaten; and in summer an after-dinner nap, especially when that meal is taken at midday, is a luxury indulged in by many. If the ordinary hour of the evening meal is 6 or 7 o'clock, and of the first morning meal 6 or 8 o'clock, an interval of twelve hours, or more, elapses without food, and for persons whose nutrition is at fault this is altogether too long a period for fasting."

"On another occasion a servant of one of my attachés nearly killed a Persian. This immediately created the greatest excitement, and a mob formed with the intention of attacking the legation. The minister of foreign affairs notified us to be prepared. I ordered our military guard to load their arms, and stationed them at the weak points where the mob might enter, making preparations also to send my family to a place of safety. Happily the earnest efforts of the authorities were successful in quelling the riot."

Last spring the official paper, *Sheriff*, published an article that was disrespectful to President Cleveland. I immediately demanded that a full correction should be made and a new article printed, in which he should be treated with the greatest honor. After much persistency this was done. Visits were very ceremonious, and it was necessary to send notice beforehand, and servants would come out to meet us as a mark of honor."

### The "Old Leather" Tram.

[Detroit Free Press.]

A familiar character in certain sections of Connecticut and New York state is known as "the old leather tramp." At intervals of thirty-four days he has perambulated a wide district, with self-built huts or other self-appointed stopping places, for the last twenty-seven years. He is generally punctual, if not to the minute, up to the hour. One of his huts, built of railway ties, is 100 rods up a mountain, the material being transported by his own physical strength. He has also caves in which he finds shelter. His tour is 306 miles, of which there are 240 miles in Connecticut, traveled by him in twenty-two days, and 10 miles in the state of New York, to which he devotes twice as many days.

He has a leather suit of clothes. It was recently ascertained that he was a French Catholic, 68 years of age, who believes that he is doing penance in expiation of some great sin committed long ago. He carries with him a French prayerbook of date of 1844, a tin pipe of his own making, an ax in one pocket and a handle in another, a tin pail, a frying-pan, hatchet, jack-knife and awl. He wears a crucifix on his breast under his clothes. Never does he solicit alms, nor does he seem to care for money. In the coldest nights he prefers one of his own places of shelter to any civilized home. Altogether he is a strange specimen of the tramp species.

### Shakespeare and George Eliot.

[The Current.]

Miss Rose Elizabeth Cleveland, in her recently published work entitled "George Eliot's Poetry and Other Studies," makes a curious distinction between the writings of Shakespeare and of George Eliot. While discovering resemblances as well as differences, she says that the reader emerges from one of Shakespeare's plays as from an ocean bath, "exhilarated by the tossing of the billows," while he comes from one of George Eliot's poems "as from a Turkish bath of latest science and refinement—appreciative of benefit, but so battered, beaten, and disjointed as to need repose before he can be conscious of refreshment."

### Effects of Cold.

[Scientific Journal.]

In the experiments of Coleman and Mc Kendrick, as reported to the Glasgow Philosophical Society, a live rabbit survived an hour's exposure to a temperature of 100 degrees below zero. It was not frozen, its body heat being reduced only to 43 degrees. Live frogs became quite solid in half an hour at 20 to 30 degrees below zero, and in two instances recovered from the freezing. Intense cold for many hours failed to destroy microscopical organisms, whose vitality was simply arrested by freezing, and was restored when a suitable temperature was reached.

### Don't Burn Their Feet.

[National Stockman.]

If your blacksmith insists upon burning your horse's feet in order to make the shoes fit, hunt another farrier at once. The horseshoer that will do such a thing is either an ignoramus or is too lazy to do his work as it should be done.

### England's Rich Trio.

[Inter Ocean.]

The three men who pay taxes on the highest assessed value of personal property in Great Britain are Giles Loder, \$15,000,000; Richard Thornton, \$14,000,000, and Baron Lionel Rothchild, \$13,500,000.

### Lightning and Thunder.

[National Stockman.]

Lightning is reflected for 150 to 200 miles, and thunder may be heard for twenty or twenty-five miles.

## Restaurant Waiters' Slang.

[Butte City Inter-Mountain.]

One morning recently a hungry pilgrim went into Pat Conlon's restaurant and ordered some toast, boiled potatoes, poached eggs, a rare steak, and some hot cakes. The water, "Professor," Harris, went to the kitchen and roared out to the Chinaman: "Gimme a graveyard stew, potatoes in the dark, two men a horseback, a moonlight on the lake and a famine-bean." When the pilgrim heard this remarkable order he incontinently fled from the house, forgetting to take his hat and muttering that he'd "be gol darned if he proposed to tackle that kind of a breakfast, and that if the people lived on such things in this country he proposed to return to Missouri."

A reporter for The Inter Mountain, who happened to be in the restaurant at the time, approached the waiter and asked for an explanation of the order, and the professor gave the following version:

"You see," he said, "we get tired of commonplaces, and besides, we try to teach the Chinamen the language. A graveyard stew means milk toast; potatoes in the dark is boiled potatoes; eggs circus style means scrambled eggs; rough and ready means pork and beans; a flambeau is light, hot cakes, and moonlight on the lake is rare beefsteak. The waiters all have pet names for these things, and we throw potatoes at the China cooks till they know what we mean."

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