

JOHN SPOONER'S GREAT HUMAN MENAGERIE.

BY JOEL STACY.



POSITIVELY for one night only!

When Master John Spooner sent out forty-nine and a-half complimentary tickets of admission to his Great Human Menagerie, the boys and girls who received them knew that he meant to show them something worth seeing. So on the appointed night—February 10th, at half-past seven o'clock precisely

—they flocked to Johnny Spooner's house, as the Spooner residence was called by his "set," as eager and happy a crowd of young folks as ever assembled for an evening's frolic.

John Spooner, you must know, is sixteen years old, and a young gentleman who apparently promised himself, in the first six months of his existence, never to do anything half way. He has kept his word. In fact, judging from the testimony of parents, grandparents, nurses, teachers and friends, it is safe to say that he has made five-quarter way his average during the whole of his brief and brilliant career. Therefore, when our forty-nine and a-half guests (the half was "under eight") arrived at Johnny Spooner's house on the aforesaid evening, they were not in the least surprised to see great showy posters in the elegant hall, nor to find the grimest of ticket-men in a sort of sentry-box by the hall door, nor, on a stand near by, great piles of programmes or handbills, the very sight of which made each new-comer almost wild with expectation.

The spectators were hardly seated in the dimly lighted front parlor before a bell rang—none of your half-way bells, but a good loud ringer that seemed to raise the curtain with the final flourish of its big clapper.

Behind the curtain was a stage covered with green baize; in front of the stage, but hidden from the spectators, were lights that made it just bright enough, without showing things too distinctly, and on that stage was precisely nothing at all. This the children all took in as the curtain went up, but they had hardly time to draw a fresh breath when the wonderful Royal Shanghai chicken came tread-

ing his dainty way over the green baize. He was white as snow and as large as a colt! He had the funniest pink bill, the wildest eyes, the strangest tail, and the most remarkable feet that ever Shanghai had, and his head bobbed in a way that nearly "killed" the girls and made the boys clap and shout tremendously.

Now what I should really like to do would be to describe the whole of this great show just as it appeared to the spectators; to tell you how when the

*Spooner's Great
Human Menagerie
For one night only!
Wild Animals!!
Tame Animals!!!
Ante-diluvian Animals!
The Livid Goloconda!
Dwarfs!! Giants!!
The Unequaled
Whirligig, Four-armed
Dancing Boy!
The Wounded Scout!
The Living Headless Baby!
And other lively attractions
Too Numerous to Mention!*

THE PROGRAMME.

Shanghai had picked its mincing way from the stage, Johnny Spooner himself came out, magnificent in scarlet trousers and yellow turban, leading a great elephant that walked back and forth, kneeled down, flourished his trunk, and moved

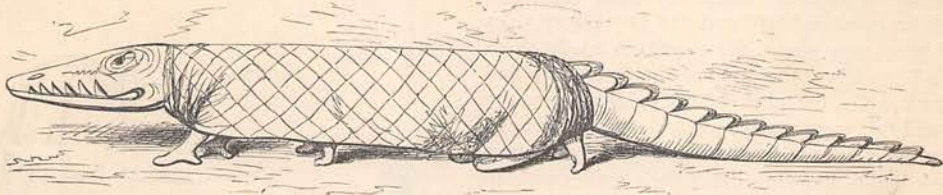
about with great soft heavy tread—a real live monstrous elephant, that everybody knew could n't be an elephant at all, for was not this a *human menagerie*?

I should like to tell you how, after the elephant, came the Dutch dwarfs; the Belgian giant; the great dancing bear from North America; the

their friends by getting up one or more of these animals and oddities at home, they may do so without any difficulty."

Therefore, my friends, we'll proceed to business at once.

In the first place, Master Spooner wishes it to be distinctly understood that, though the Livid Golo-



THE ROARING CALLIOPOLUS.

Livid Goloconda, a snake sixteen feet long and a foot thick, with fiery eyes and a rattling tail; the talented dwarf, Baron Pompalino; the huge antediluvian known as the Roaring Calliopolus, a crawling monster with six legs, a long tail, and a frightful head, with red eyes and white teeth; of the terrible baby who played and clapped its hands glêefully just the same whether its head were on or off; of the telescopic India-rubber man, Seek-a-seek; the unequaled whirligig boy with four legs and six arms; and, last of all, the wounded scout—just as they really appeared to the spectators; and all the funny things that the great showman said, and how the audience cheered and laughed and clapped and shuddered by turns, and how everybody went home perfectly delighted and mystified, and sure that in all the wide, wide world there was n't such another tremendous fellow as Johnny Spooner. I should like to do all this I say, but it would be impossible. ST. NICHOLAS would n't hold it all. Everything else would be crowded out—even "The Young Surveyor" and

oconda, the Whirligig Boy, and one or two others are his own invention, he does n't by any means claim that his entire menagerie is original. He picked up his animals and curiosities here and there, just as other showmen do, and that, he says, is "the long and short of it."

We'll begin with that wonderful antediluvian monster,

THE ROARING CALLIOPOLUS.

The effect of this creature as he went crawling across the stage, roaring fearfully and slowly moving his head from side to side, as if looking for his prey, was something to remember. As Master Spooner and I had the honor of making the head and tail of the monster, you shall know just how they were manufactured. We took a large square of gray cardboard, and folded it something in the shape of the paper horns that, filled with sugar-plums, hang in the candy-shop windows at Christmas time. We dented in the point slightly; then we cut a long slit, running in from the point, to



DIAGRAM OF ROARING CALLIOPOLUS.

the "Eight Cousins" would be sent flying—and what is more, the editors would n't be satisfied, for what they said to me was exactly this:

"Mr. Stacy, we shall be very glad to have you give our boys and girls an account of Master Spooner's menagerie, if you will give them pictures of the animals, and, with Master Spooner's permission, tell them just how they were made, so that if at any time they wish to amuse themselves or

form the mouth; into this slit we inserted on each side a strip of white cardboard, cut to represent the teeth. This was nearly as long as the slit. Then we filled up the rest of the slit with red flannel, and proceeded to paint above it the most hideous eyes we could think of; and, finally, we trimmed and folded the big open end so that it would fit like a cap on a boy's head.

The lower picture will show you how this cap

was attached to the head of one of the two boys who constituted the Calliopolus.

Next came the tail. That was made of soft brown wrapping-paper, cut double, with two or three thicknesses of black cotton batting afterward basted between the two papers to give a sort of soft firmness to the whole. This we painted in black and white to suit our fancy. A stout cord connected the head and tail, and the two paper sides of the latter were parted for a space to enable them to be adjusted over the body of the youth who had to wear it. On the night of the exhibition, as the head and tail were ready, we had only to arrange our two boys as seen in the diagram, put stockings on their hands and feet, cover their bodies with an old green silk quilt, doubled and securely pinned at each end, and our Calliopolus was complete.

I will say here, that in making the Calliopolus the largest play of fancy is allowed. You may have one boy or three boys, instead of two (a little practice will enable the three to hitch themselves along the floor together); you may fashion the head and tail as you please, and, in default of a green quilt, you may throw over the body folded shawls or army blankets.

THE LIVID GOLOCONDA

Was constructed somewhat in the same way, as far as the head and tail were concerned, but the boys arranged themselves differently. This time three poor fellows, after taking off shoes and coats, had to crawl one after the other into a sort of long bolster-case, made of cheap green woolen stuff, and provided with breathing holes under each boy's face. The head was firmly secured to the pate of the first boy; the tail was fastened to one of the

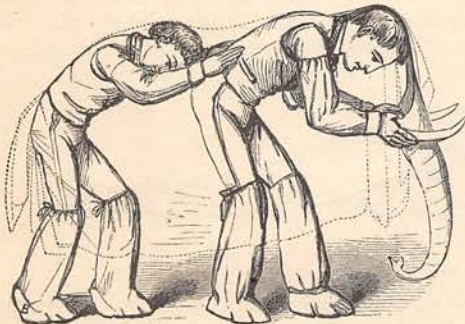
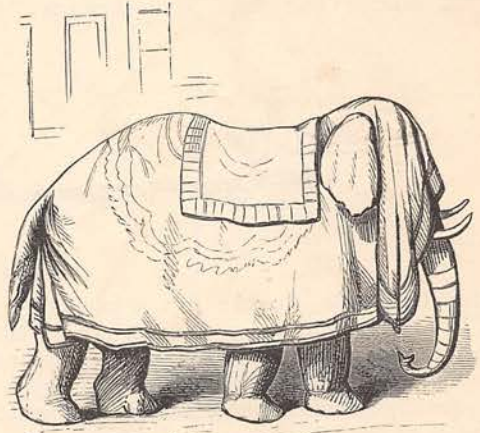


DIAGRAM OF ELEPHANT.

feet of the last boy, and the open ends of the bolster-case carefully lapped and tied over the joinings. The snake-like movement was made by the boys hitching themselves along, partly by their feet and partly by their arms, folded across their breasts

The last boy squirmed the long stuffed tail about by means of his foot, and the desired rattling was produced in some way by his gifted mouth. We had basted bits and stripes of red and silver tinsels all over our Goloconda's case; his eyes were of



THE ELEPHANT.

green tinsel, and from his hissing mouth projected a fearful fang of wire wound with red flannel.

THE ELEPHANT

Was easily made, as you can see by studying the pictures. The trunk was made of brown wrapping-paper; the tusks were white letter-paper, rolled into huge lamplighters, and then carefully bent to a curve. This time, as you see, we again needed a pair of boys, but one boy had to be taller and stouter than the other. Before placing them in the required position, we tied queer cases on their legs made of gray cotton stuff, and closed at the end so as to cover their feet. In the heel of each boy's slipper we placed an upright piece of cardboard (B), shaped so as to make the case project at the heel, thus giving the form of the elephant's foot. The boys once equipped and placed in position, we had only to throw a great gray army blanket over them, as shown by the dotted line in the diagram, pin it together at the back, pin on great ears of soft gray wrapping-paper, throw a gay door-mat over the top for effect, and the elephant was ready to walk forth. As the boys kept step, treading slowly and cautiously, the "walk" was perfect.



Now comes the great

DANCING BEAR.

This was the hardest of all to make, but as Johnny and I prepared everything before the per-

formance, we took plenty of time for the work. The diagram and picture will describe our processes very well. The head was made of pasteboard painted black, wet with glue and sprinkled with burnt coffee grounds, and embellished with



THE DANCING BEAR.

a red flannel tongue. On the elbows and knees of Clem Digby, the big boy who acted the bear, we fastened pieces of pasteboard shaped like the small diagram, A. This sent the bear's joints low down, as they should be. After his shaggy coat was put on, fur mittens on the feet and hands, two brown bear-skin sleigh-ropes, borrowed from a furrier,

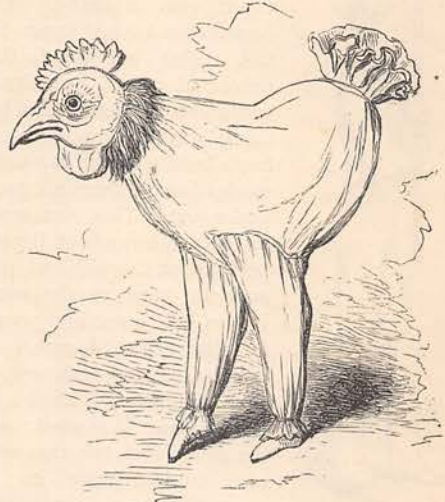


DIAGRAM OF DANCING BEAR.

completed the outfit. We "shaped" the creature by tying the robes as well as we could upon Clem Digby's body with strong twine, that was easily hidden from sight in the shaggy fur. The corners of the robes came in well for the legs and arms.

THE ROYAL SHANGHAI.

To make this Shanghai, we first prepared one of John Spooner's boys by removing his shoes, attaching a pillow to his back, and putting over his fore-



THE ROYAL SHANGHAI.

head a little conical pasteboard cap, painted pink, with black markings to represent the bill. On each knee we tied a piece of stiff pasteboard (see A), to give the Shanghai a joint. Then we



DIAGRAM OF ROYAL SHANGHAI.

stood him in the position shown in the diagram and hastened to put on the finishing touch. This finishing touch was nothing more nor less than a lady's large, long night-dress, with ruffles at the neck and sleeves. We put the poor fellow's legs



DIAGRAM OF GIANT
SEEK-A-SEEK.

about the throat, allowing it to fall in rich profusion.

into the long sleeves; then we secured the neck of the garment as well as we could to his throat, and then gathered the rest of it at the end of the pillow and wound it about with a string. The bunch thus formed made the tail. This last we further decorated with a quantity of white paper fringe. The last thing was to draw over our boy's head a sort of cap-mask made of an old Summer gauze under-vest. This was made to bind tightly about the upper end of the bill and pass over the head to the neck. It was left open underneath to allow the Shanghai to breathe. From each side of this breathing slit hung a bit of red flannel, pinked; and the mask had two enormous eyes painted upon it. To conceal the joinings at the head and neck, we tied on a treble strip of paper fringe

I may add here that, in making a Royal Shanghai, you will find it necessary to have everything in readiness before you put your boy in position, as he has to preserve rather an uncomfortable posture, and you will not wish to waste his strength before presenting him to the spectators. His head-covering and ruff must be the last things put on. He will have no difficulty in finding his way about the stage if his head-gear be sufficiently thin to enable a little light to pass through. A clever Royal Shanghai makes all sorts of queer chicken-noises as he struts about.

Now for

THE GREAT TELESCOPIC GIANT, SEEK-A-SEEK,

whom many of you already know intimately. Those who do not know how to make him have only to look at the pictures to learn the whole process. A tall boy holds a broom or stick upright. On the top of the broom is a hat; a little below the hat, and tied to the stick, is a piece of barrel hoop (this is to form his shoulders); over the stick, and hanging from under the hat, is a long sheet-mantle or a shawl. After this covering is on, the telescopic giant can make himself grow very tall by merely raising the stick higher and higher; or when he wishes to shorten himself he has only to slowly draw down the pole and crouch under the cloak. Seek-a-Seek generally is seen examining a door, apparently in anxious search for the key-hole, which he looks for in every possible spot, from the top nearly to the bottom. This giant is very easily made, and a little practice will enable him to go through his mock search very comically. An impatient little grunt thrown in now and then improves the effect of the performance very much.



GIANT SEEK-A-SEEK



THE SHORTENED GIANT.

THE HEADLESS BABY.

Some of the more critical of Master Spooner's guests felt, when they saw the giant and headless baby, that "menagerie" was hardly the right name for the entire exhibition; but that is none of our business. It is enough to say that the headless baby proved a great success. When the curtain rose, after a brief intermission, there sat his infantile majesty, head and all, safe and sound, in a high baby-chair, beating on his little table with a rattle and clapping his chubby hands in great glee. He was arrayed in the approved yard-long baby-dress, with blue sash about his waist, blue bows on his shoulders, and a lovely white bib tied under his chin. In the interest of the occasion, no one noticed that he was a decidedly large baby, and with more intelligence in his rosy face than is usually seen during the rattle and "goo-goo" age. Still this baby crowed and played and rubbed its little nose so sweetly, as he sat there, that everybody was charmed, and it was not until, in giving his nose an unusually lively rub, it knocked its dear little head *clean off* that anything seemed amiss. However, as he still clapped his hand "patty-cake," and held out his arms to be "taken" when his ruffled-cap nurse came in, and as the nurse at once stooped down behind baby and, picking up his head, put it on his shoulders again, no harm was done, and the scene passed off delightfully.

The explanation is this: A pillow, prettily dressed in long baby-dress, sash, and bows, sat in the chair, while behind it stood chubby little Victor Royle in just such a way as to let his arms apparently come from baby's shoulders, and his head rise from baby's bib. It was easy enough for him to suddenly bob his head down behind the pillow, and so hold it out of sight until the nurse, stooping and pretending to pick it up, should place it carefully on baby's shoulders again. Victor Royle's plump, rosy face was just the thing needed, and his imitation of baby motions and noises was capital.

Johnny Spooner had also a

GIANTESS.

She was made by seating a light boy upon the shoulders of a tall, strong fellow, who could easily bear him about in that position by holding on to the light fellow's feet. A long skirt is made to hang from the head of the big boy, who takes care that he shall have a loop-hole to see through. Two skirts may be put on the lower boy, for that matter,—one hanging from his waist, as the ladies say; the other, a sort of "over-skirt," hanging from his head. The upper boy wears a shawl or deep cape and a lady's bonnet,—as outlandish and showy an affair as can be devised,—and he carries a big umbrella and a satchel. The deception is com-

plete. Johnny's giantess could make a lovely courtesy, sing songs, and in all respects she was quite an accomplished young woman.



BARON POMPALINO.

Following close upon the giant and giantess, came

THE DWARFS.

No. 1 was the celebrated Baron Pompalino. The pictures will give you a capital idea of the Baron and his construction. You will notice that a young fellow stands erect behind a table, upon which he places his hands. These must be thrust into a pair of boots. A stick, furnished at each end with a stuffed glove, is put through the long sleeves of a lady's street sack. This is then buttoned over the Baron's queer little body, fastening at the throat; a false beard is tied under his chin (if desired); a

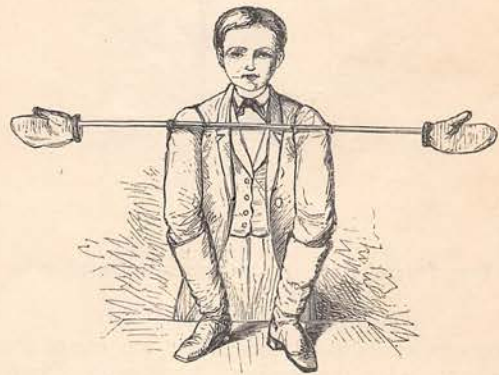
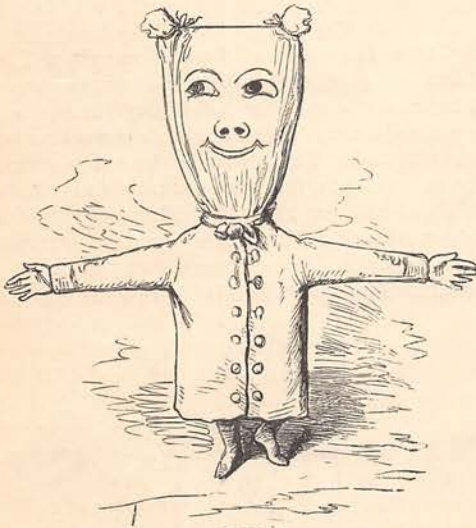


DIAGRAM OF THE BARON.

jaunty cap is placed upon his head; and there he stands, ready to dance his best for the ladies and gentlemen, or sing a song in broken English for their amusement. Our artist has put the stick in position in the diagram, to show you where it will be when the sack is on. It may be found necessary

to secure this stick to the upper part of the sack arm-holes, but experiment will soon decide that point. It would be a hard matter to get on the sack if the long stick were first tied to the boy's body.

Sometimes this dwarf is made by allowing a smaller boy to stand on a bench behind the Baron in such a way that he can lend his arms to that distinguished person, who has a curtain close behind him to hide the small boy's head; but Master Spooner says he prefers the stick arms for the Baron. The two-boy plan belongs to Dumb Orator, which, nearly everybody knows, is made by seating a big man, with his hands behind him, on the lap of a small man, who thrusts *his* arms through the big man's elbow-crooks. This done, a cloak is thrown over the two, so as to show only the big man's head and body and the little man's arms. It looks like a single person with unusually small arms and hands; and if this person speaks a piece while the small hands gesticulate as absurdly as possible, the effect is very amusing.



RYCHIE.

Dwarf number two, who was introduced as

RYCHIE, THE DUTCH DWARF,

was very easily made, though she was one of the great "hits" of the evening. A girl of about fourteen years (the age and size are not of much consequence) held her arms above her head, as shown in the diagram; a scant white cotton skirt, on the under side of which a great face had been that morning painted, was pinned about her waist, and the bottom of it then raised over her head so that she could hold it up by gathering the fullness in

each hand. This, as you see by the pictures, formed something like ears. A long stick was run through the sleeves of a sack, and the sack was



DIAGRAM OF DUTCH DWARF.

then buttoned about her, making her "waist" serve in place of a neck. A large bow was needed to conceal the gap caused by the fact of the waist being larger than an ordinary throat.

This Dutch dwarf, like Baron Pompalino, was a brilliant dancer, though certainly a little stiff in the arms. She had tremendous blue eyes, a smiling red mouth, and very rosy cheeks, and, taken altogether, was a decidedly striking young person.

Now comes John Spooner's celebrated

WHIRLIGIG, OR DANCING BOY,

one of the great successes of the evening. Two boys, respectively about ten and twelve years of age, were tied together with a scarf, back to back, at the waist, loosely enough to enable them to kick and flourish their arms. A stick, with a mitten on each end, was tied between and across them, as shown in the picture. The feet of each were dressed in woolen stockings, put on so crookedly and loosely as to flap. These, when the trousers hung over them, looked something like mittened hands. Boots were then placed upon the boys' four arms (as shown in diagram); a deep cape was hung from the neck of the taller boy, so as to cover the smaller boy's head; and the celebrated whirligig boy was ready to dance.

Such dancing! For a moment all you could see was a spinning something with about a dozen feet and hands flying wildly in the air. The spectators clapped and shouted; the whirligig boy danced and capered; the fiddle behind the curtain played its jig-tune faster and faster, until at last the danc-

ing boy fell in a heap on the floor, a confused mass of the wildest legs and arms that ever were seen, while the curtain descended to the air of "Rory O'More."

Now came the final "lively attraction." The curtain rose slowly to the sound of mournful music. In a moment two men appeared, carrying an empty litter. This was really a six-foot ladder, with a dingy old quilt folded wider and shorter than the ladder and laid smoothly upon it. The men crossed the stage and disappeared. Some confusion was heard outside, and in a moment they appeared again, this time carrying the litter on their heads. A wounded man, with bandaged forehead, lay upon it. You could see his head and feet, but his body and arms were covered. Slowly the men bore their sad burden along, when suddenly one of them tripped. Down they fell, litter, wounded scout, and all. There was a moment's struggle, and when they rose and lifted the litter the wounded scout was gone! There was nothing left of him but his boots. In vain the men, after putting down the empty litter, searched all over the well-lighted stage; in vain they angrily questioned each other in dumb pantomime, shook their fists in each other's faces, and appeared frightened half to death at their loss. The scout was not to be found, nor had any boy or girl among the spectators seen him go. In fact, as they were very sure he had *not* left the stage at all, their excitement and wonder were intense. At this point the fiddle behind the scenes



WHIRLIGIG, OR DANCING BOY.

struck up a lively tune; the men, suddenly reconciled to their misfortune, picked up their litter and danced off with it in the gayest possible manner, and the curtain fell. John Spooner's great exhibition was over.

Where *was* the wounded scout?

The truth is there was n't any wounded scout at all. When the two litter-bearers stepped off of the stage the first time, the hindmost, and taller one,



DIAGRAM OF WHIRLIGIG, OR DANCING BOY.

with the aid of Master Spooner, thrust his head between the last two rounds of the ladder, laying it back upon a cushion. With his head thus thrown back, he carried the ladder on his hands and shoulders. A pair of boots was placed on the ladder, about five feet from the head, and the place between was filled up with a thick shawl, rolled so as to represent the scout's form; over this was thrown a blanket, leaving the head and boots of the scout uncovered. The foremost man, of course, kept his head under his end of the ladder.

Now, my young friends, I trust, from the descriptions and pictures given, you will be able to conjure up any of Johnny's animals and oddities at will, with but little trouble. You need n't attempt to do them all at once, nor to have a stage like Master Spooner's. Any one of them, brought into the drawing-room where family or friends are assembled, will create no little entertainment. The elephant can be made at a few moments' notice by dispensing with the elephant-trousers, and making the trunk simply of a hooked umbrella or cane thrust into a worsted legging or wound with a gray shawl. The pasteboard heads of the animals are more easily made than one would suppose. They can be very rough affairs if they are to be shown in a dimly lighted room. Some boys and girls will prefer to soak the pasteboard, and, molding it carefully into the desired shape, leave it to dry before being painted. Others will be content with merely bending and painting it so that it will "do." At any rate, I hope one and all will find enjoyment in some way or another from this account of Master John Spooner's great human menagerie.