

## WILES OF STRONG MEN.

How They do Some Remarkable Feats, and How They Fool the People.

It might be of interest to know something of the tricks used by the men of muscle, and their agents or spokesmen, who were so much patronized at the time of the last "strong man" craze.

As an agent who has had the pleasure of conducting three of the most celebrated of them through the provinces and the United States, their feats, genuine and otherwise (the "otherwise" portion greatly preponderates), are, of course, perfectly known to me; as well as the utmost limit to which their strength will reach. Indeed, I may say that the utmost capacities of all the strong men who are at present or who have been before the public during the last two years are well known to me.

The feats of strength in this article will be divided into two classes—lifting, and chain, wire, strap, and coin breaking.

Firstly, as to lifting. A weight, to be fairly lifted, must be raised until it is at arm's length above the head, and the body in an upright position, and must not be allowed to rest on any part of the arm or shoulder after it has once started thence. The greatest authentic lift ever made in public was 256lb. by Eugene Sandow at St. James's hall about September, 1890.

This lift he claimed was the record, yet he professed nightly at Cardiff, Liverpool, and other places to lift a weight of 320lb. To my certain knowledge nobody has, either previously or since, lifted on the public stage as much as 250lb., except on this one occasion, the weights really lifted being nearly always under what they are said to be. The smaller ones, under 100lb., only a few pounds less; the 112lb. being about 98lb.; 150lb., 125lb., and the 200lb., 250lb., 300lb., and 320lb., being seldom over 170lb., unless it is known that some competitor is coming upon the stage, when the weights are loaded up to the limit of the performer.

There is only one exception to the above reductions, that of a dumb-bell belonging to a member of the fraternity now in the States, which weighs 219lbs. 8oz. without any shot whatever in it. It should be remarked that the balls at the end of the larger bells are hollow, and fitted with a hole and a cork, so that they may be loaded up with shot or sand at the pleasure of the performer.

One gentleman whom it is needless to name, but who is now fulfilling an oakum-picking contract for Her Majesty's government, used nightly to lift out of its trolley and carry about the stage a huge dumb-bell, which he claimed weighed 1,000lb., and used likewise to offer £50 pound to any two men who were able to merely lift it out of the trolley. This challenged was accepted one night by two burly foundrymen, who to their surprise, as well as that of the spectators, lifted the dumb-bell, trolley and all, off the ground. The trolley was loaded, and the dumb-bell fixed into it by a catch which had to be loosened by giving the shaft a half turn forward, pushing it along the groove of the trolley in which it rested, and then turning it back. When this was done, almost anyone could have lifted it out, as it only weighed 78lb. It is interesting to note that if the balls of this dumb-bell were solid, as they were claimed to be (they were about 2ft. 6in. in diameter), the whole would weigh roughly 8,000lb.

Holding out a weight at arm's length is done by letting it lie along the fore-arm, this position being more graceful and seeming harder to the uninitiated, whereas it is about 50 per cent. easier. Another feat, seemingly wonderful, the lifting from the ground by one of two well known brothers of a horse and cart, is done as follows: A scaffolding has to be erected over the platform upon which stand the horse and cart. At the top of this scaffolding, out of sight of the "house," as it moves through an arc of a few inches only is a lever of the second class, which has its fulcrum on the scaffolding, and by means of which the strain is reduced by about 50 per cent.

Breaking leather straps and wire round the chest are merely tricks, and could be done by most people. The tongue of the buckle in the first place is filed into an edge, which cuts the leather and so starts a tear, which, being continued across, soon breaks the strap. In the second case a kink is twisted in the wire, which has the effect of rotting the metal so to speak at the twist; a wire being also used which does not stretch, because the expansion of the chest being limited to a few inches, the wire could not be broken if it were to stretch more than that.

The chains used for breaking are of two kinds—those which are put over a hook in the stage and broken by a straight pull, and those that are burst on the biceps or chest. The former, technically termed "Jack chain," are broken by sheer strength, the material of which the links are made being unriveted soft iron, which of course unbends as the strain is put on, and is thus stretched apart. The latter are trickier pure and simple, and are made of hard, unstretchable steel, having been prepared for the purpose in several ways, two or three of which it might not be out of place to mention here.

One way is to cover the link with wax, scratch a thin line round one part of it with a needle, and immerse in either hydrochloric acid or aqua regia, letting the acid corrode the metal until only a small portion is left. After this it must be well washed in water, and then the fine line where the acid entered painted over like the rest of the chain, which of course conceals the mark effectually. This method is seldom used, as there is considerable danger of the fraud being discovered by some inquisitive individual of the audience who might, on its being handed round for inspection, pull on the prepared link. Besides, the very fact of the chain being painted looks queer.

Another method, slightly better, as it does away with the painting, but far from perfect is to simply break the link and then to solder it up again. This, however, has the disadvantage of looking "fishy" on the broken pieces being examined by the "house."

The method, however, mostly used at present, and seemingly perfect, is to temper the link dead hard, so hard in fact that it would break like glass if dropped on a stone slab. Now this link, to break, must have a bending, not a vertical, strain on it, and so must be brought over the small projection of the biceps, or, in the case of the chest, over the angle of one of the pectorals. As the right link is only known to the performer, he is safe, as any other

man might try for a month and never get the right position.

It might be remarked here that the bicep of the gentleman above referred to as being pro tem, in her majesty's service, was got into that peculiar ball shape by, so to speak, training the muscle, by constantly rubbing and pressing it upwards with the hand. This formation is undoubtedly of great use in chain-breaking, as it increases the expanding power of the muscle to a very great extent.

There is a feat—that of breaking a penny or a shilling—that would be, if it were genuine, which it is not, the greatest and most wonderful part of all the business of the strong man. This is done, in the case of pennies, by placing the coin in a vice and, with a pair of pincers, bending it backwards and forwards until it is soft; the jaws of both instruments being covered with leather so as to not mark the coin. A shilling may be prepared in this way, but it is generally done by covering with wax, scraping a narrow channel in the same, and putting mercury upon it, which, our chemical readers will know, rots the silver so that a breath would almost break it. The wax is then wiped off and the coin rubbed up with a bit of leather, when it looks perfectly natural, as also does the fracture.

The agent or spokesman for the strong man, being fully supplied with pennies or shillings of the most common dates, asks one of the spectators to throw up a penny or a shilling after he has marked it so that he may know it again. As often as not the thrower simply looks at the date, when, of course, it is plain sailing for the agent, who has only to be slightly acquainted with palming to substitute a prepared coin of the right date. If, however, the coin is marked, he gives a prepared one to his man, and when it is broken, throws the pieces over the house, taking care that they do not go anywhere near the person who sent up the original marked coin. It is seldom that the man so treated objects; but, if he does, the agent apologizes for his mistake, and offers to give another coin. This always ends it, or has at least in my experience, which is not small, for a man is not fond of making himself too prominent as a rule, especially in a music-hall.

It is hardly necessary to say that it is not possible to break a coin in the fingers, as, in the first place, there is hardly anything to take hold of, and in the second, the material is very hard and tough, much larger than one would be led to expect.

Of course, in this business a great deal depends on the *savoir faire* of the agent or spokesman, whose patter is 50 per cent. bluff, about 45 per cent. absolute lying, and the rest truth.—*English Paper.*

## THE MAN WHO SELLS TICKETS.

He is the Best Paid Employee of the Tent Shows, Yet is Never Mentioned.

There is one attraction of a circus never mentioned on the bills, yet he is one of, if not the most, important personages connected with the enterprise. He is the man who sells the tickets, or, in circus parlance, "the juggler of the papes." He receives your money, passes back your change—if you don't let him forget it—and can tell a counterfeit bill or coin simply by the touch. A reporter recently sat in the back of one of these perambulating box offices, and was amazed at the dexterity accuracy and speed with which the business of "filling the canvass" was performed.

The ticket seller sat on a high stool. Tickets flanked him on either side, and in less than twenty minutes this master of his calling had dealt out over two thousand one hundred cards of admission, reserved seats and half tickets. As the money was handed in he placed it on a little carpet covered shelf on a level with his elbow, there to remain until the next buyer had been served. This keeping the money in sight, as it were, was done to settle any dispute that might arise over a question as to the accuracy of the change given. Once a patron leaves the wagon he leaves all hope behind, if any mistake has occurred, for "no mistakes are rectified after leaving the window." The money is swept off the little shelf every few seconds onto the floor of the wagon, whence it is gathered up and put into piles for change by two young men employed for that purpose. The ticket seller never makes change. He merely passes out the admission cards and rakes in the money.

The expert "juggler" can handle the reserved seat tickets with one hand, the admissions with the other, and yet keep both hands free enough to dispense change, half tickets and pull in the money. They never look at faces. They see only the hand that holds the money. Counterfeit money has no terrors for them, for, as the one referred to above said to the reporter: "We can smell it a mile off. All sorts of calls are made for tickets. One man came up at the place instance and asked for thirteen whole and seven half tickets and slapped down a handful of bills and coin in payment.

The transaction did not "rattle" the man at the wicket a bit. He managed the matter just as easily, so it seemed, as if the call had been for one fifty cent ticket and been accompanied by one fifty-cent piece. Lightning ticket sellers, however, are born, not made, and command salaries accordingly. Some are paid as high as \$5,000 for a season of thirty weeks, and none, it is said, receive less than \$100 per week. They are really the best paid employees of a circus, and it is no wonder that they flash up at the little window in immaculate linen, from which a "sparkler" emits a blaze like the rays of an electric light.

## Cows Feeding on Codfish.

Cows in Norway have been credited with the power of extracting sustenance from stones which travellers in that country will have seen them licking. A more substantial diet is found for them in the winter in some parts of the country, where provender of all kinds is scarce, in the shape of heads of the codfish, which are pounded into a mush. The milk of cows so fed, tastes strongly of cod-liver-oil, and cannot be pleasant to drink, yet with all its unpleasantness it may be very valuable for consumptive patients.

## A Voice from the Kitchen.

A loud, rasping, and impatient voice rang out from the kitchen. It was the voice of the new cook. "Mrs. Billus!" "Well, Mary?" "You told me to bile the water, mam, and I've been bilin' it an hour and a half. I want to know if you think it's done yet."—*Chicago Tribune.*

## HISTORY OF TABLE UTENSILS.

How People Ate in Olden Times—The Table of Today.

How many persons there are who do not know, or at least know but vaguely, that the manner of taking meals has not always been the same as it is at the present time, and that most of our table utensils are of quite recent origin. We shall briefly discuss this subject in speaking successively of all the objects that in our day constitute the equipment of a well-served table.

Let us, in the first place, speak of the table. Everyone knows that the Romans took their meals in lying upon very low couches that somewhat resembled what we call a lounge. When we say that they lay down, our statement is not exactly accurate, since cushions permitted them to change position frequently, for it would have been very difficult for them to abandon themselves to the pleasures of the table in constantly occupying a horizontal position.

When Gaul was conquered by the Romans, the latter introduced their habits into the provinces subdued by them, and it was not till about the time of Charlemagne that the guests at a repast seated themselves upon cushions around a stand in order to take their meals. At the homes of the great, these cushions and stands were relatively elegant as regards decoration. The table made its appearance later on, in the middle ages, accompanied with benches provided with backs, which were placed all around the board. At first, the table was not covered with a cloth, and napkins likewise were unknown. The first mention is made of were manufactured at Reims, and offered to Charles VII. at the time that he was crowned there, thanks to Joan of Arc. They became quite common under Charles V. and Francis I.

The Greeks and Romans were acquainted with plates, or rather with a sort of porringer, and yet, during a portion of the middle ages, people made use of slices of bread cut round, which took the place of plates. This practice is again spoken of in the coronation ceremonies of Louis XII. at the beginning of the sixteenth century. After the repast this bread was given to the poor.

The spoon must date back to a very ancient epoch, for although it is always possible to eat solid food with the fingers—the same is not the case with a liquid or semi-solid aliment, and it is not possible the famous Lacedemonian black broth was consumed otherwise than with a sort of spoon. Moreover, spoons have been found at Pompeii and in several excavations and notably in the famous treasury of Hildesheim. In a much remoter antiquity, the Egyptians, in the seventeenth century before the christian era, used spoons for mixing certain powders with beverages. These spoons, of which quite a large number are in existence, were remarkable for their generally fine and very rich ornamentation. The Museum of the Louvre possesses several of them.

The use of spoons in France was not generally adopted until toward the end of the fourteenth century, but there is a question of this in the will of Saint Remi, who baptized Clovis in 496. The use of the knife is very ancient, and the first that we know of were of hard stone. Herodotus tells us that the knives used by the Egyptian surgeons were likewise of stone. Yet the use of the knife among us as a table utensil does not date back to a very ancient epoch. Although there was a famous cutlery works at Beauvais in the tenth century, it does not appear that the knife was much used upon the table. At this epoch, and for a very long time, the blade was fixed and enclosed in a sheath. It is not two centuries since the use of clasp knives became common. The tables were not provided with them, and each person carried his own. This custom has been preserved even in our day in some distant provinces by old men, who, when they go to dine out, take their knife from their pocket and use it skilfully during the whole course of the meal. Such are evidently exceptions, which are daily tending to disappear, yet they serve to show the rarity of the knife, to within a short period, upon the tables of persons belonging to the lower classes. The fork was absolutely unknown to the Greeks and Romans, who, for taking their solid food, used their fingers, which they washed in basins. The meats were served cut in pieces of varying size, and each one divided the piece that he had before him as best he could with his fingers.

In the middle ages, the fork appeared only as a curiosity, and the use of it was not as yet the same as that to which it is now put. It was employed for eating fruit or slices of bread and cheese.

We find a few folks figuring in the treasury of John II., duke of Burgundy; and Gavelston, a favorite of Edward II., of England, owned, says a historian of the time, sixty-nine silver spoons and three forks for eating pears with. Again, we find numerous traces of the existence of forks in the middle ages, but they were never used for eating meat. At this epoch they had but two tines, and it is from that circumstance that is derived their name of fork.

Henry III. was the first to use forks upon the table. He had a certain number of silver ones made, and the use of the article spread very quickly at court. It must be added that such use was regarded as quite ridiculous by the public, as may be seen from the following passage from a satire upon the court of Henry III.: "Firstly, they never touch meat with their hands, but with forks, and they carried it to their mouth in bending forward the neck and body upon their seat. They took salad with forks, for it is forbidden in that country to touch meat with the hands, however difficult it may be to take, and they prefer that this little forked instrument, rather than their fingers, shall touch their mouth."

Despite the morose criticism that we have just cited, the use of the fork rapidly extended, and the fact must be recognized that it was not without good reason.

Since the remotest antiquity, cups have been employed at banquets for the beverages drank thereat. They were of metal, more or less precious, according to the wealth of the amphitryon.

In the middle ages, drinking glasses and cups were very rare. They were generally mounted upon a foot or stem, of gold or silver, enriched with precious stones. It was not till the fifteenth century, the epoch at which Venice began to spread abroad her products, that the use of glasses became more general, yet in ordinary life,

people continued for a long time to use tin drinking vessels, which were often of beautiful workmanship, and which figured with other utensils, likewise of tin, upon the dressers and buffets of the lords.

The custom of setting several glasses before each person, for the different wines that are to be served, belongs to the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century the glass was dipped, at each new wine, into small earthenware vessels filled with water, and which were placed upon the table within reach of the guests.

The salt cellar dates back to remote times, and that is natural, since the use of salt is lost in the night of time. Homer qualifies it as divine. Among the Greeks and Romans, it occupied the place of honor at banquets. Among the wealthy, it was of silver or gold, and was handed down from father to son. Benvenuto Cellini purchased some from Francis I. that were of the most exquisite workmanship. There are likewise some beautiful specimens in falence, and at the Louvre may be seen those made at Orion for the celebrated set, called the service of Diana of Poitiers or of Henry II.

Although salt cellars were likewise made of very common earthenware, Olivier de la Marche tells us that, at ordinary repasts, the salt cellar was often a piece of bread hollowed out to receive the salt, and which was placed near each guest.

As for the caster or cruet stand, which was unknown to the ancients, it has been impossible for us to find out to what epoch it dates back. It is probable, however, that it is not older than the sixteenth century.

Such is the origin of the utensils that are now to be found upon the humblest tables, and it will be acknowledged that a notable progress has been made in the manner of taking one's daily food.

## He Kept His Congregation.

The pastor of a church in a Pennsylvania mining village was greatly annoyed last winter by the conduct of the younger members of his flock.

When a young woman grew tired of the evening sermon she would rise and go out. A moment later her "beau" would seize his hat and sheepishly follow her to escort her home.

By the time the sermon was over it was mostly the old people who were left to hear the conclusion of it. Mr. Blank smothered his annoyance for some time. At last he resolved to act.

A youth grew sleepy one Sunday evening, and, taking up his coat and hat, stepped into the aisle. To his dismay, the minister stopped short in his discourse.

"Young man," he said, "the lady who went out last is not the one you wish to escort home. When she goes I will let you know. Sit down. In future when a woman goes out I will call on the proper man to take care of her."

He resumed his sermon. There was much giggling and a great deal of wrath. But his sermons were not interrupted again during the whole winter.

In the rural portions of France, it is said, the cures in their sermons often make personal appeals to their hearers, lecturing them by name for their avarice, drunkenness, or other misdoings.

"They are like children," one of these faithful men said to a stranger. "If you reprove or exhort them *en masse*, each man passes his share on to his neighbor and holds himself innocent."

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"After suffering for about twenty-five years from scrofulous sores on the legs and arms, trying various medical courses without benefit, I began to use Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and a wonderful cure was the result. Five bottles sufficed to restore me to health."—Bonifacio Lopez, 327 E. Commerce st., San Antonio, Texas.

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"My daughter was afflicted for nearly a year with catarrh. The physicians being unable to help her, my pastor recommended Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I followed his advice. Three months of regular treatment with Ayer's Sarsaparilla and Ayer's Pills completely restored my daughter's health."—Mrs. Louise Kiehl, Little Canada, Ware, Mass.

## Rheumatism

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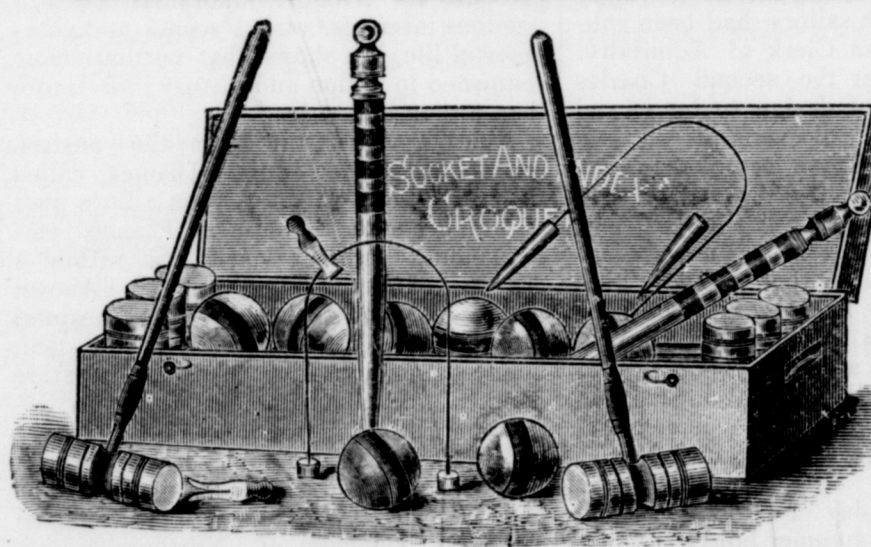
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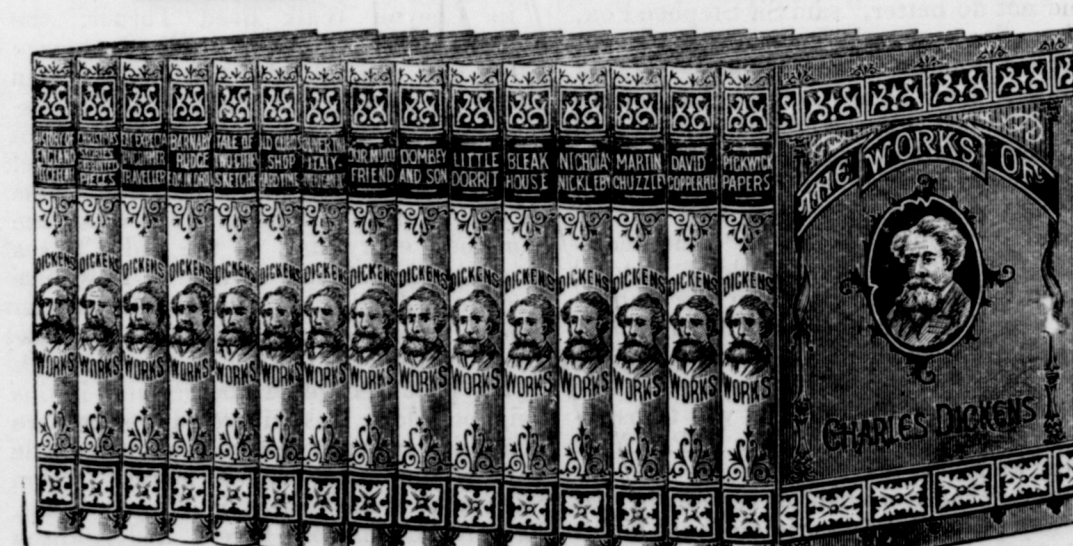


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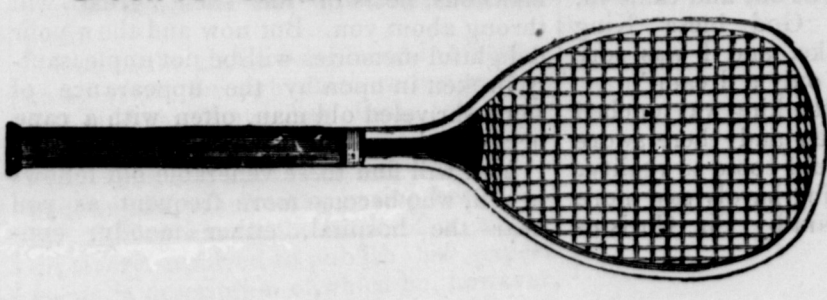
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