

BALLYHOO MAN BACK AT HIS LUCRATIVE TRADE; TELLS LADIES AND GENTS TO STEP THIS WAY

Flaunting, flaming banners announce his presence. Garish lights shed a glamor about his gestulating figure. Blaring noises try joyfully to conquer his voice. America mills about his feet, marvels at his fluency laughs at his wit, is intrigued by his wares and contributes the dimes which make the ballyhoo man's profession profitable says a writer in the Baltimore Sun.

With the coming of warm weather, the ballyhoo man is abroad again. He comes out of his winter's hibernation or returns with the warmer climes which claimed his talents during the cold season in Maryland.

But no matter whether he spent the winter in modest security in Baltimore or ventured to Florida with the coming of warm weather the ballyhoo man has returned and all counties of Maryland hear his eloquence.

Exhorts His Public.

In circuses, in carnivals, in amusement parks the ballyhoo men flourish even as does the green bay tree. Advancing the merits of the ten-horned cow, emphasizing the weight of the fat girl, urging the public to see the fire eating man from Borneo, the ballyhoo man treads the rickety boards of his platform and exhorts the public.

The ballyhoo man and his profession seem practically untouched by the hand of time. Electric lights may replace spluttering kerosene torches but their refulgence shows a

scene nowadays that might, except in minor details have been found anywhere in America fifty years ago.

America may become sophisticated in its taste for the drama it may become discriminating in its selection of movies but its side shows it demands unchanged.

The same freaks appeal to public taste in this year of grace as were popular in 1850. The demand for such entertainment seems to be increasing. No one who can qualify as a freak need ever starve to death in this country.

In fact the profession offers such inducements that many find it profitable even when not qualified by nature to enter. They find that a bit of wit is worth a pound of infirmity in the side-show business that art often surpasses nature. So with the aid of a little make-up and a credulous public they become successful freaks.

Ballyhooing is one of the oldest professions in the civilized world. It even may have flourished in a world not so civilized.

Strictly speaking the word may be applied to the merchant who advertises his wares to the stenographer who advertises for a position to the man who pays particular attention to the decoration of his store windows. All are ballyhoing to persuade the world to pay them something.

In its purest sense the word applies to the barkers to the grinders

who sand before the side-show tents and urge the public inside. These are the true ballyhoo men. Theirs is an ancient calling for which they must be equipped by nature and prepared by training.

The necessary equipment today is just the same as that of fifty years ago. The ballyhoo "artist's" line of chatter remains unchanged; he appeals to the same instincts that are as old as humanity.

Perhaps a ballyhoo man's most important stock in trade in his personal appearance. In this he is closely akin to a gambler. The same type is most successful in both professions.

He Needs Bulk.

The ballyhoo man must be of generous proportions—no pocket-sized edition need apply. He should be at least six feet tall and weigh more than 200 pounds. If he is good-looking so much the better; but he must possess a certain presence.

This is one profession in which age seems to lend dignity and forcefulness. The dignified gray haired ballyhoo man of 60 usually can assemble a larger crowd, hold the people longer and separate them from more dimes than can a younger man.

America demands certain things of its ballyhoo "artists" and an imposing appearance is one.

Dress is important also. The man who attempts to "bally" while wearing a cap is foredoomed to failure. Somehow the American public fails to see congruity in a man who wears a cap, to react favorably to him, to put any faith in his words.

"The people want to be fooled" said one ballyhoo man. But they demand that they be fooled in their own way; and they quite refuse to permit that fooling to be done by any individual wearing a cap, minus a

collar and tie or without a coat. Fooled the public may be, but fooled in a dignified conventional way.

Speech Stereotyped.

Even the flow of eloquence with which the ballyhoo man regales his audience is stereotyped. He is permitted a limited number of unintelligible words, since America likes to think its ballyhoo men well educated. But at the same time he must keep on the level of average intelligence. If he slips in a few "ain'ts" and "seens" at auspicious moments he will endear himself to the masses. Then he is considered a great man who can still be "as common as anybody."

The ballyhoo man must know humanity, must know just what to say and when and how. He must fit his "spiels" to his crowds.

If the artist is ballyhoing for a side show that caters to a masculine trade, he selects his words and phrases carefully, he plays upon the weaknesses of his crowd and makes his hearers feel deliciously wicked and sophisticated by reason of their very presence before such a tent.

If, on the other hand, the ballyhoo man is barking for freak animals he emphasizes the educational value of the exhibit, urges mothers to bring their progeny to be edified by the five legged cow and the two headed sheep.

His Modest Spiel.

The ballyhoo artist who is working for an oriental girl show works up to a fever pitch of interest his masculine audience. His spiel runs something like this:

"Now, my friends will you kindly agther around? As you know it is necessary for all shows of this character and nature to first come before you on the platform and explain the nature of the performance we have on the inside. If you will gaze

upon these pictorial paintings you will let your imagination drift to the nature of the performance.

"As this is a performance for men and men only, I suggest to the ladies and children that there are numerous attractions on the grounds arranged for their personal benefit. This being for men and men only and the sports class of men at that I have the pleasure of introducing our little soubrette on my extreme right who will sing and dance her way into the hearts of all those who attend.

"This first performance of the week is naturally our advertising performance. Therefore, you must realize that it will be a red-hot one. Next I call your attention to Millie in her dance of nations, revealing in her style all the weird, strange, queer, fantastic dances of the Orient.

Zaza Herself.

"Last, but not least, the great feature of the entire medley the one and only Zaza. Zaza doesn't do a kootchy dance. She does a dance that starts where that dance stops, known as the prayer dance of the Mohammedans. Her performance alone is worth ten times the admissions we are asking for the entire performance.

"The band will play. The ladies will retire, and under this great canopy in the glare of millions of electric lights, in all their Oriental splendor the first performance of the week will begin.

"Buy your tickets here. And, remember the price of admission leads to all. No ladies or children. Men and men only. Must be sober and sensible and know what they are doing, and I will guarantee that all who enter will come out a walking talking advertisement. All ready! Let's go!"

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