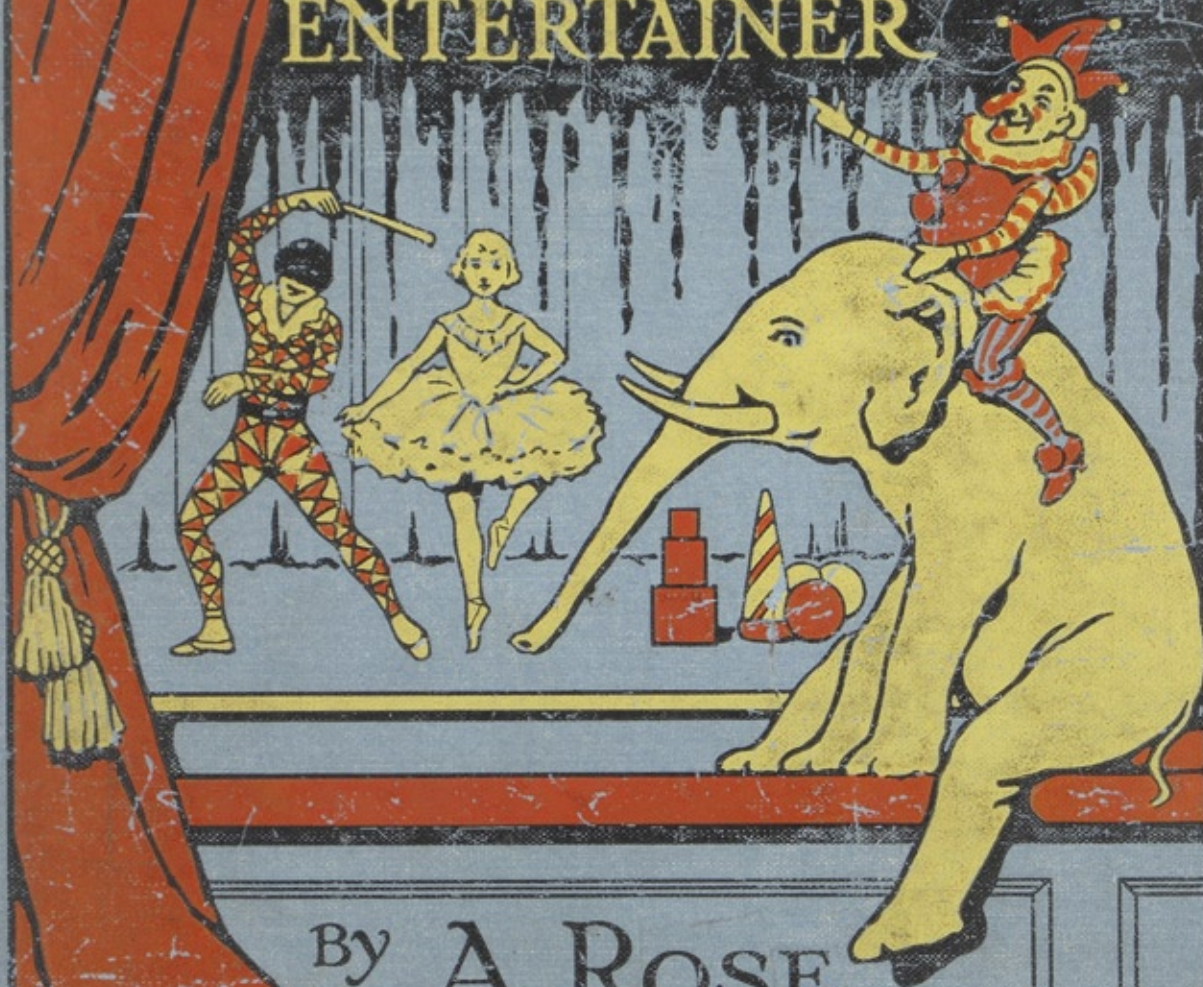


The
BOY SHOWMAN
AND
ENTERTAINER



By **A. ROSE**

With more than 100 Illustrations

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Book: The Boy Showman and Entertainer
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A PANORAMA

Makes a most interesting and artistic entertainment, and one that gives the pleasure in the making, apart from its exhibition to a delighted audience. If the showman has the necessary abilities in the art of drawing and painting, the greater the pleasure in producing a panorama, it being a form of entertainment which has a tremendous range of subjects, as travels about and all over the world, history, science, zoological subjects, comic interludes, and stories grave and gay. Then there are the mechanical and other effects, many of which may be not only beautiful, but most enchanting to the audience, as sunrise and sunset taking part in a picturesque landscape, the moon rising and lighting up the waters of a lake or the sea, during which ships, sailing and otherwise, pass on their way. A city by day, and then by night, the windows in each building being lit up, as also the street lamps; the lighthouse with its warning light—in this scene a storm may be represented, with the wreck of some doomed ship which finally disappears beneath the waves. Again, an animated scene at a railway station, with the arrival of a train, and then its passing out of the station on its journey to what may be the beginning (as a subject) of a trip round the world, the next scene being a big liner in the docks, which conveys us in imagination to different parts of the universe. Now having selected a subject, say a trip round the world, make out a programme of the countries and places to be

visited. Of course, there is no reasonable limit to the number of scenes that may be shown, the first scene being a well-known railway station, from which the journey commences. In a few seconds a train comes steaming along, and pulls up at the platform, the latter being a set piece which extends right across the picture, with a book-stall at one end, porters' barrows and luggage scattered about, with milk-churns, people reclining in seats, and some sitting on the luggage. As the wheels of the train are hidden by the platform, there is no need to fix any to the carriages. Two pieces of glass paper rubbed together will imitate the hissing of steam as the train enters the station. The second scene is the quayside. Alongside is a big liner, which in due course moves away from the quay and sails off on its journey, the train and the liner being made of cardboard and coloured in imitation of the real thing. The above suggestions will answer for other scenes, where moving objects are brought into play, as motor cars and buses, horse-drawn vehicles, etc. All moving objects to have a stout slip of cardboard glued to them, by which means they may be moved on in front of the scene and so drawn off at the opposite side. The proscenium front may be made of wood or strawboard, the former for preference if the opening through which the pictures are viewed is beyond, say, twenty-four inches by eighteen. This proscenium may be quite plain and like an ordinary flat picture-frame, painted black, which will make the coloured scenes tell up. Six short lengths of candle, each to burn for about an hour, will answer for the footlights with which to illuminate the different views. These candles are to be placed at the foot of the proscenium front, and must have little tin reflectors in

the front of each to screen the light from the eyes of the audience. The side of the reflectors facing the candles may be kept bright by polishing. The side towards the auditorium to be painted black. All the views should be landscape shape, or oblong, not square, this being unpleasant in form, and does not lend itself to good composition. Light wooden framework will be required to set the whole show on, a good and convenient pattern being the framework for the artificial fireworks, which can be adapted for a table show, or a panorama large enough to extend across the end of the drawing-room. If the young showman's intention is to design, draw and paint the whole of the panorama, it should be done on a continuous length of calico, of the desired width, fixing a portion of it to the wall of a room by the aid of drawing-pins at the upper and lower edge of the material. But, as a certain amount of paint is sure to find its way on to the wall the latter should first be well covered with old newspapers. The first process is to paint the calico evenly and thinly with white distemper paint. This dries quickly ; then the scene can be drawn with a stick of thin charcoal, and the painting proceeded with, using distemper colours—failing the calico, continuous white cartridge or carton paper, to be obtained at the artist's colour shops. The painting is now to be done with ordinary water-colours, or scenes may be painted in oil, distemper, or water colour on strawboards. If the latter scheme is adopted, the scenes are moved into view by pushing them gently forward in wooden grooves to receive them, which are fixed to the back of the framework, each scene following so closely on the other that no division is seen between any two scenes. Whichever

method is adopted, sufficient space must be left between the pictures and the proscenium front to allow any moving object to pass, as the train, etc. A very good panorama may be made by pasting on continuous paper, or sheets of strawboard, illustrations cut from the illustrated papers and other sources, which can be made up into very pleasing pictures, then cutting out from other illustrations figures of pedestrians, animals, and other objects, and pasting these in appropriate places on the already mounted scene. Then colour to fancy. Although the latter scheme may seem rather a rough-and-ready way to build up a series of pictures, it is really not so, for, if the illustrations are carefully selected and due care is taken in pasting the different parts together, painting each subject carefully, and making up a programme so that the scenes will follow each other in proper order, a unique but small panorama will be the result. When a continuous length of material is used, as calico or paper, rollers must be made for the panorama to be wound upon, FIG. 1 showing method, the left-hand roller having the first scene glued on to it. This scene is cut at an angle, as shown, which allows it to start working evenly upon the roller, the latter being kept in position by the angle wood sections, A, these being screwed to the back of the fit-up framework, and in such a position as to allow such picture to be properly centred behind the proscenium frame, which is fixed to the front of the framework. The wooden angle pieces, in which the rollers turn, are so designed that both rollers can be taken out, the top angle having a slot cut in it for the reception of the handle, which winds the panorama along, the lower piece having a circular hole to receive the pivot, which is at the lower end of the roller.

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The rollers are made by glueing stout brown paper round a thick pole, such as a window curtain pole, using enough paper to make a firm and substantial cylinder. When dry, they are drawn off the curtain pole. Next, a circular piece of wood is glued into the top and bottom of the cylinder, each circle of wood to have a hole made in its centre, through which a wooden rod (such as a casement curtain rod) is inserted, the ends protruding about one

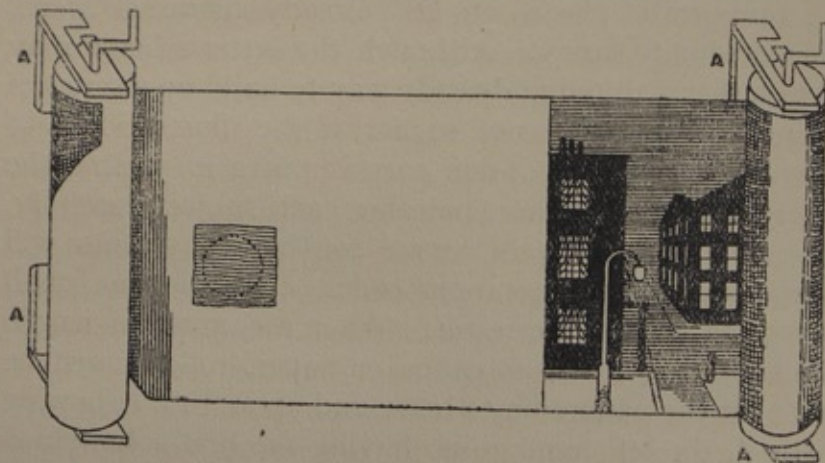


FIG. 1

inch beyond each end of the cylinder, the upper end of the rod to have two pieces of wood glued and screwed to it to form a handle. The handle on the right-hand roller is used to rewind the panorama, ready for the next show. Well-made cardboard cylinders, such as are used to send through the post engravings and unmounted pictures, may be purchased at the stationers' shops, which will save the time of making them. FIG. 1 is the back view of the pictures, or panorama. Now supposing that it is wished to present a view by night, showing the windows in

the houses lit up, also the street lamps. To get this interesting and pretty effect, the form of the buildings must be painted upon the back of the scene with some dark colour, as black or very deep blue, leaving the windows and lamp lights untouched, the sky being painted a medium-toned blue. The picture is first shown as daytime, being lit up in front, then a narrow strip of tin painted black both sides, is placed, or held by the assistant, in front of the footlights, so as to illuminate the scene very slightly. Now a fairly strong light (three or four candles) illuminates the back of the scene, thus giving the effect of the city by night. This treatment, with little variation, applies to all scenes by night. The scene on the left depicts some landscape, with the sun setting. The sun is painted a pale orange tint, on the front of the scene, then over the sun at the back is a square of crimson gelatine, the kind that is sometimes found on bonbons. This is secured to the scene by a touch of gum, or thin glue, along its edges. A little music should be provided to accompany the panorama in its progress, except when an assistant showman, who is to act as a lecturer, is describing the scenes and various places of interest.