



The Circus on Parade

"HEY, RUBE!"

The cry came again in the high, piercing voice of the old ticket taker. "Hey, Rube!" It was the traditional alarm call of the circus.

A squeal from the bandmaster's cornet stopped the musicians. The tuba player, deafened by his own broad-belled instrument, pumped out two or three solo grunts after the others had dropped their horns and streaked for the tent door. An elephant man, carrying his hooked pole, and the lion tamer, pistol in hand, trotted briskly in the same direction. The clown, walking on his hands, reached for a broken ax handle and brought it up with him as he snapped over to his feet. He and the aerialist who came sliding down a rope followed the others to the aid of the door-man.

By CHARLES SMUTNY

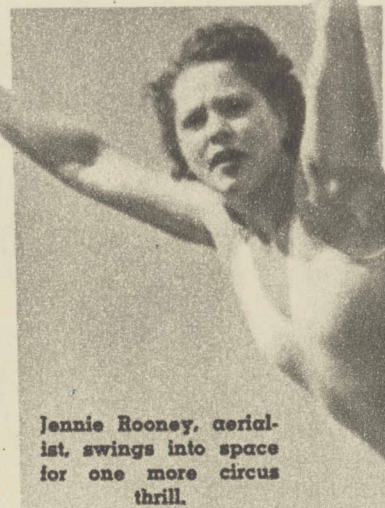
Twenty-five or thirty gate-crashing town toughs surged in, intent on "cleaning out" the show. One drew a revolver and began to fire at the lights. Several husky baggagemen, led by the proprietor of the show, hastily tied handkerchiefs around their left arms, so that friend might be distinguished from foe, and converged on the mêlée. The rowdies, surprised at the prompt and well organized resistance, abandoned their wounded and retired to the saloon up the street. A whistle shrilled and the circus performance continued.

Until recent years brawls frequently interrupted circus programs. Sometimes the townspeople divided and both sides were reinforced. A general engagement might endure for

hours and wreck the show. In pioneer and mining communities firearms ran up catastrophic casualty lists. Fights were a part of the fun, an expectable hazard in the business of enter-

taining the hard-working developers of a new nation.

Post-revolutionary America boasted a few one-ring equestrian circuses and exhibitors of curiosities. On the night of April 22, 1793, George Washington watched John Bill Ricketts leap through a hoop from the back of his galloping horse, regain his footing, and do a dance on the saddle. He saw clowning afoot and ashore. By flickering candlelight Spinnacuta danced on the tight rope.



Jennie Rooney, aerialist, swings into space for one more circus thrill.

bought a train of sixty-one cars and sent out the first circus to travel by rail on its own rolling stock. Conservatism and economy amounting to penury greiv in Barnum's character with the advancing years. He remained primarily interested in freaks and curiosities. Coup was the driving force of the firm. Though their enterprises prospered, Coup retired from the partnership. James A. Bailey, a strong competitor, joined Barnum in 1880, and "Barnum & Bailey the Greatest Show on Earth" was born.

Ten pins was the price of admission to the Ringling brothers' initial performance. It had been called a playtime circus but it was the first expression of a quintuple ambition. Back in the early seventies Dan Rice's Great Pavilion circus made a stand at McGregor, Ia., where Papa Ringling ran a harness shop. He repaired the leather belts belonging to the circus strong man and accepted in payment passes for the entire family. The boys were deeply impressed with the wonders they saw. Five of the seven brothers resolved to own a circus; none some day, but now!

They divided their work. Each began to practice on one or more musical instruments. Charles Ringling learned some stunts. Al tried juggling and plate spinning; Otto trained a goat, and John was the clown. One of their features consisted of a series of pictures illustrating children's stories, painted in parabolic form on rolls of discarded wall paper. Canvas wagon tops left by westward-moving pioneers were sewed together for the Ringling brothers' first tent. Their first performance ended in a typical circus brawl or "clem," as it is called in the profession. A gate-crashing neighbor boy had presented rusty pins for admission and then offered loud and unfavorable criticism of the show.

Twice Bailey took the Barnum & Bailey show to Europe. During the second foreign tour from 1897 to 1902, he left H. Forepaugh-Sells combined circus to hold his American territory against the Ringlings. When he returned the Ringling brothers were well established. Early in the twentieth century the Ringlings acquired the Forepaugh-Sells, and after the death of Bailey they bought the Barnum & Bailey property.

One by one the Ringling brothers died. Periodically the Ringling competitors were absorbed till John, the youngest and only remaining brother, bought control of the American Circus corporation and became king of the circus in America. But John's interest had shifted from the show business to collecting. For several years he had been importing painting doorways, floors, and statuary until the Ringling Memorial museum at Sarasota, Fla., became more valuable than the circus property. Pneumonia ended John Ringling's career on Dec. 2, 1936.

Although many of the small shows are motorized, the large circuses still travel by rail. The Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus some 1,500 to 1,600 people, more than thousand animals, and three million dollars' worth of equipment must be moved efficiently whether the "jump" is 25 miles or 300 miles. More than double-length cars are used.

PUT TO THE TEST...

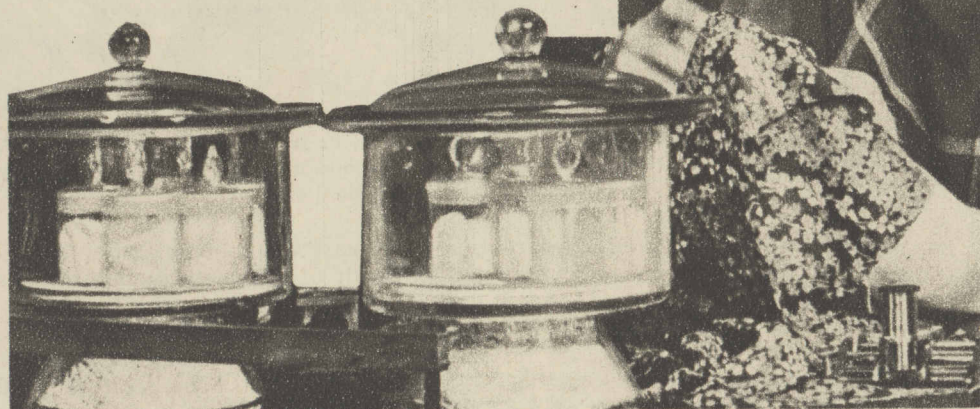
THE SCENE: Better Fabrics Testing Bureau, New York City—Official Fabric Testing Laboratory of the National Retail Dry Goods Association.

THE TESTS:

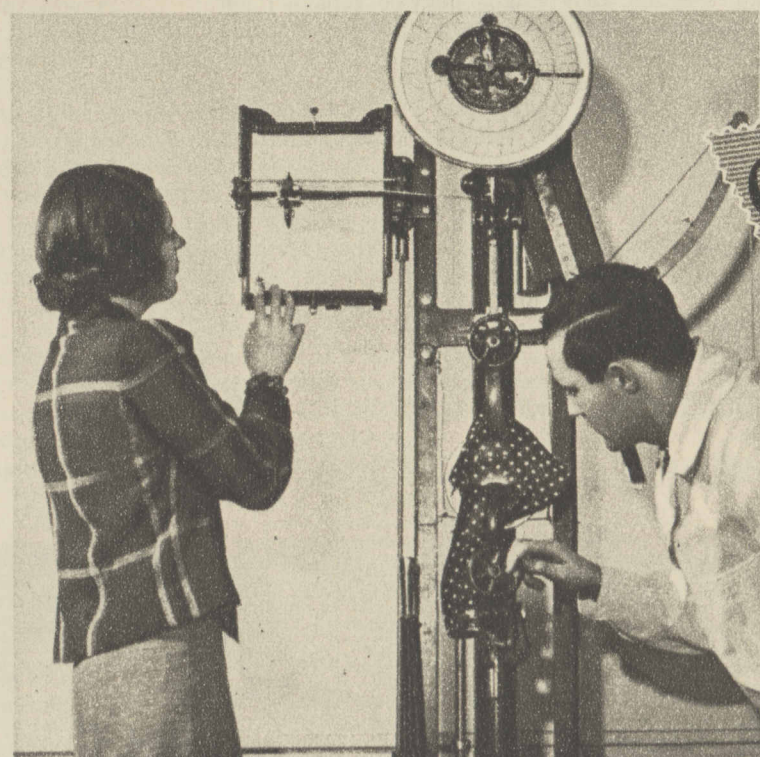
1. To determine fabric purity and construction.
2. To determine fabric washability or dry cleanability (depending on type of weave).
3. To determine fabric seaming strength.

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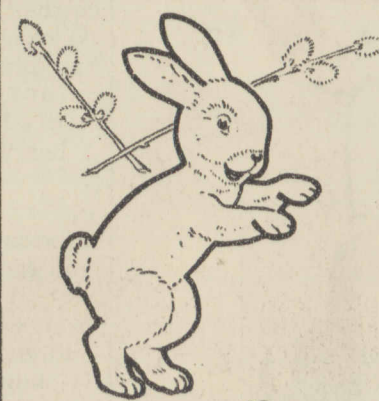
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ATTENTION

Boys and Girls Everywhere

The **Bunny** Cut-Outs

have been moved to the **COMIC SECTION** where they will be found each Sunday hereafter

See Page 12 of today's **COMIC SECTION**