What It Costs
in Money and Effort to Devise
A Circus Spectacle

By George Macdonald

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it for a little while be en-

tomologists of the animal

world, let us run down that
genius and master of
dramatic effect, the
circus spectacle. How is it put together and how it works.

If you were one of the

watching crowd, you would

be familiar with the circus
spectacle as an eye-filling
delight—an arena-sized simulacrum of televis-

tic nose and color—or of the

'Arabian Nights Entertainment' ma-
cine that feeds flesh and effect—compos-

tively described in this year's program as

"Barans and Bailey's Climax of All

Theatrical Effort,"

Now, to plan this great spectacle, to costume it, to organize it, to arrange "something" in the right manner, to put all the right ingredients in the right places, to bring to the real work of the writing, and then to break

top of aggregation of people and

and to divide them through those same doors that immediately after

ward begin to hang on a seemingly endless prodigy of senator and equestri-
en and jugglers and clowns, and not to have the internal strife with the output, and not to have confusion and disarray in the moments of lesser

circus scene, and to get the thousand costumes and the "puppets" and the

clowns in their appointed places, and to do all this, the manager of a circus is more

dealing with a species of horse than he is a task the accomplishment of which is one of the wonders of the circus.

The first and most obvious method of costuming a circus is: simple appreciation of all the difficulties of this task: it must be remembered that the moment the circus leaves Madison Square Garden after its four or five week stay in New York it begins its "road" career; it enters into that state of self-sufficiency that, together with its own property and its own plant, makes a circus a thing by itself in the show business.

All that the clowns make from the clowns that it is crowded with the play of color for men and beast, and, of course, an enthusiastic exchange of quarrels and jokes and an exchange of stolen looks and stolen smiles. Everything else the circus must do by itself exclusively, the making of the "big show," this daily putting-up and taking-down of a canvas city, keeping it mended all the while with the regular daily work of the circus, you see; but get no idea at all of what it means to

unravel a day to work in the arena a vast spectacle, and at its real half-
hour display to work in motion so that it will be ready for the next perfor-
mance.

The man responsible for the materialization of these animal spectacles, (the Gringling, for instance, with a new, fresh and radiant, every Spring the man who first dreamed them and then brings them into being for the various states of spectacle and stage-dress and costume, clothed and toiled and

hunted, until finally they are ready, each a "hundreds of an entertainment" for the

"ingression of the public") for the very Gringling, is the man who

"For instance, Mr. Gringling

is as near as he knows within circus

predicates, begins writing the scenario. This

will run to about 6,000 words. "I try to

visualize the story," Mr. Gringling ex-

plains, "as I can tell in the arena, I try to translate it, so to speak, into
drama. It is, of course, all the

scents and sounds that cannot be told to the
topmost row of spectators by pantomime, and emphasizing those that are most eloquent." The working tools of a spectator is the 1,000 people, 100 to 120 horses, 10 to 25 elephants, about as many camels, 500 seals, and 4000 other animals as needed, and about 30 minutes by the clock. When the spectacle is

being given in Madison Square Garden a couple of hundred "spectators" are hired, but when the show gets on "the road" under canvas and the Barnum & Bailey

army is recruited up to its full marching strength by the addition of its corps of cossacks and its corps of cow-boys, and, of course, every actor in the spectacle is a circus person, and, conversely, prac-
tically every circus person is a spectacle actor.

After the theme has been decided on a revue artist is called into conference. As soon as he gets his conception he makes what is known as a "dummy script." Mr. Gringling uses this as a guide upon which to visualize the move-
ements of the various groups that are to make up the final spectacle. And the artist begins his task of painting the scenery, and the magnitude of this task is

indicated by the fact that the breadth of his scene is about five times that of an ordinary stage.

Because of the difficulty of setting this arena up in a satisfactory manner under "the big top," a new plan has been used this year for the presentation of "Aladino and His Wonderful Lamp," five mammoths umbrellas—grizzly as tarp-drown are let down from the flying crane and are the main incidents of the pageant.

"The staging dummy" completed, the next in order are the scenes that are to follow it—a tidy little job when your script includes 1,500 characters. But every one of them has to be calculated with the sparrow-carrier, must be enumerated with mathematical exactness, for a costume must be designed for him, and also it must be planned how he is to be got in, around and out of the arena on schedule time.

The next collaborator is the costume artist. He is given a list of the charac-
ters, a number of historically accurate costume plates, and a free license for high-speed pigmentary activity. But there is nothing false about the money that it costs to materialize the conceptions of the costume artist, into real clothes that can be worn by real men and women. The figure jumps high into the thousands. Aladino, for instance, was a Chinese boy, and so to give the real atmosphere of old China to this year's spectacle of "Aladino and His Wonder-

G Lamp," the costume plates were sent to China and the clothes were all made in Chinese sweatshops or whatever takes the place of sweatshops in the flower kingdom. If you are lucky enough to have a front seat near you when the scene is this year, lean over the rail when the spec-
tacle is swinging past, look closely at the costumes, and you will see that every one of them tells the unmistakable story of hand-dye Chinese needlework. You will see a number of those great spectacle wearing tandori coats that will stir the evasion admiration in the heart of many a woman. Forty dollars apiece was paid wholesale for many of these coats, and this sum did not include ex-
pressage or tariff charges. The dragoon, too, was made in China, and every one of his 120 feet is covered with intricate Chinese needlework. Six thousand dol-
ars was given in exchange for him.

When all this has been accomplished the next step is at least ready for ex-

ploration. About twenty-five copies of the working scenario are distributed. Here is the manuscript of the man who is the story-writer, the librettist, the equestrian director, the captain of supers, the lion master, the superintendent of the wardrobe, the master of the wardrobe, the master of the wardrobe, the master of the wardrobe. The word is so many who is the master of the wardrobe. The word is so many who is the master of the wardrobe. And the master of the wardrobe. The ward-

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