LIKE THE GORGON OF FABLE.

A PHYSICIAN'S ACCOUNT OF A STRANGE DISEASE.

The Hair Made to Resemble a Mass of Snakes About the Head—The Victim a Lithuanian Lady Who Had Sought a Refuge in Canada—May Explain the Old Myth—Disease Is Not Infectious.

LACHINE, Canada, March 12.—"Did you ever hear of the disease known as plica polonica? Even if you have, you can never form any idea of its horror until you have seen a case of it. Indeed, unless you are a medical man, you are not likely to have an opportunity, and if you are wise you will never wish for one."

The speaker was a well known physician who was travelling west from Portland, Me., where he had placed a patient on board an ocean liner, en route for the European continent.

"I had read about it, of course, but first saw a typical case of it two months ago," he went on. "A Lithuanian lady of rank had mixed herself up in one of those half mad plots against the Russian Government which fanatical patriots are continually starting.

"She was so far favored by the authorities as to receive a hint of the discovery of her connection with the confederates before arrests were made, and she made her escape to this country.

"Her husband, who is one of the meek of the earth, called me up one night and, after begging me to maintain the deepest secrecy, conducted me to an elegantly appointed house, where in a half reclining posture upon a lounge, I found my patient. There was some demur before I was allowed to have the lights fully turned on so that I might make an examination.

"You, of course, remember the old classical story of the Gorgon's head with living snakes for hair, which turned the beholder into stone? I can now understand where the original of that idea came from. The explanation was there before me in that beautiful boudoir.

"Surrounding a lovely oval face with a warm olive complexion and strange lilac blue eyes and standing out a good twelve inches from it, was a tremendous mass of black hair. Every single hair was about as thick as an ordinary manila clothes line and as stiff as that rope is when first bought.

"There was actually a palpitating kind of movement about the hairs, which added to the dreadfulness of it. The likeness to a mass of snakes about the head was very real.

"I don't mind owning up to having been an exceptionally long time in counting the heart beats at her wrist while I was pulling myself together and getting over the shock. I speedily found that every single hair was a tube full of viscid humor and that there were actually pulsations near the scalp, pulsations as marked and as violent as in the case of an abscess or carbuncle.

"The strain upon the head of the sufferer must be intense, though the pain from the thousands of heated, suppurating hairs does not appear to be as great as might be expected. One need not be very much of a surgeon to see that when the hair ducts upon the scalp have been inflamed and become enlarged so as to allow of the free passage of blood and humor the cutting off of the hair becomes amputation of a most dangerous kind. Indeed, local treatment of any kind is almost an impossibility, though the disease is not absolutely incurable.

"My patient was, I think, improving under treatment; but acting upon either a hint from abroad, from some of her revolutionary friends, or upon a sudden resolution to consult her old medical friend, as she told me, she left one day for Germany. Instructions were left with her landlord to sell the furniture and forward the receipts to a lawyer in Berlin.

"No, I don't think that the Polish disease is seriously infectious, though there may be hereditary predisposition toward it. It is commonly thought that cleanliness and care of the scalp and hair are the best preventives.

"But it would be safest to look pretty closely into the condition of immigrants from the Russian provinces and so avoid the possibility of this terrible and really dangerous disease obtaining a foothold among us."

A LANDSCAPE MADE TO ORDER.

The Capitalist and the Pastellist Who Struck Upon the Same Idea.

A young pastellist was standing in the midst of an exhibition of his own work.

"Yes," he said in answer to a question, "I can do one of these street scenes pretty quickly if I have to.

"I remember at the first exhibition I had in New York I was introduced to an old resident with 'nothing but.' He said he liked my pictures of New York, but that to judge from the ones I was exhibiting I didn't know how to choose my subjects.

"I jollied him along and asked him what he would suggest as a topic.

" 'Oh, there are plenty of good ones, said he. 'For instance, why don't you do Castle Garden, the old fort at the Battery? No doubt you call it the Aquarium.

" 'Now, suppose you used a canvas the size of this one,' He pointed with his ebony cane, a beauty, I remember, with a gold and ivory head. I'll have one like it myself some day. 'And suppose you blocked in the old fort there, with trees there, and a passing vessel—a square-rigger or a brigantine—to the left, with green water and blue sky, that would be something like.

" 'Life, movement, color, historical interest, everything. 'By the Lord, I'd buy a picture like that!'

"Before the old boy had finished his speech, an idea had broken in on me, and when he paused for breath, I said:

" 'Well sir, as it happens, I think I can show you what you want—a picture of the Aquarium almost exactly as you describe it, with the tide coming past the breakwater there'—I began to point myself—'and a northerly wind blowing against the tide so that the river looks like a nutmeg grater and——'

" 'Bring it to me before I leave my house to-morrow morning and it's mine,' the old man exclaimed, giving me his card.

"You can do a good deal in one night if your work has been carefully laid out for you. Of course, I knew the Battery like a book.

"I fixed up a beautiful old colored print effect, with girls in crinolines strolling along the breakwater and obsolete steam craft in the offing. All the details he had mentioned were there, too.

"Luckily I wasn't working in oils, and the pastel was as dry as it ever would be when I showed it to him at 9 o'clock the next morning.

"He took one long, satisfied look at it and then reached for his check book. Well, perhaps I did rub it in a little, but this was no hand-me-down article. It was strictly a made-to-order product.

"Still gazing at the picture, he held out the signed check to me, remarking:

" 'It's curious, my young friend, is it not, that we should both have struck upon the same idea?'"

A MASCOT IN A POKER GAME.

This Player's Luck Changed When He Used a Young Woman's Charm.

"I have never been superstitious nor a great believer in mascots when it came to gambling," said a young man who has a fancy for a quiet game of poker now and then, "but after what happened to me the other night I'm not so sure that there may not be a whole lot in them.

"I had an engagement to sit in a five handed game of draw, 50 cent limit, and as the game wasn't scheduled to start until pretty late I dropped into a restaurant to get a bite to eat. It was one of those restaurants where people sit around and drink and listen to music.

"I half expected to find there some one I knew. And sure enough I did.

"I was manœuvring for a table when I noticed a young man, who delights in bright waistcoats and the atmosphere that goes with the glare of the white lights, motioning to me to come over to his table. Sitting with my friend was a young woman, charming and jolly—two traits that seldom go together in woman.

"A cordial invitation to join them followed an introduction to the young woman, and in a few minutes I was sipping a soft drink. The young woman was telling her companion what a great favorite he was with some institution she referred to as the 'old ladies home,' when, to save him, I casually remarked that I was going to play a little poker that night. The young woman became interested at once.

" 'Now,' she said, 'you must win, and I am going to make you win. Harry,' she continued, turning to her companion, 'give me a penny.'

"Harry hunted through his clothes without finding a penny or a coin of any denomination. He had money all right, but he didn't have any in change. The young woman was disappointed and she appealed to me.

" 'Now, Mr. Blank,' that's not my name, but it fits me pretty well when I play poker, 'I want you to let mo have a coin for a few minutes,' she said.

"It happened that I had lots of change, and I gave her a fifty-cent piece. She fondled it, tossed it about in her shapely hands, and finally touched it with her pretty lips. All this mystified me, and, I may say, greatly amused me.

" 'Now,' she said very solemnly, 'I am going to toss this coin five times. 'You must guess each time whether it is head or tail. If you guess right three out of five times, you'll win to-night. You needn't be afraid to guess, for I know that you will guess right.

"To please the young woman I agreed to the proposition, although all the time I felt that the question of whether a man was going to win or lose in a poker game didn't depend on a guessing match. But it was fun, and I went ahead and guessed for all I was worth.

"Well, on the fourth turn it was a tie. I had guessed right twice and wrong twice. The fifth time I guessed 'heads' and so it came.

" 'Oh, you'll win sure,' said the young woman gleefully, and I looked pleased. 'But you mustn't spend that fifty-cent piece,' she added, returning it to me. 'You must keep it until you find that you are losing, and then you want to put it in the game. 'From that time on you will have better luck.

"I promised to remember her advice, but a second later I gave the young woman a shock by offering to pay for a couple of cigars with the coin. The young woman accepted my excuses good naturedly, and when I started for the game she warned me not to forget about my mascot.

"The luck I played in from the start of that game was enough to discourage a hardened poker player. I lost hand after hand when I thought I had a good chance of winning.

"I had hands that would have won ordinary jackpots, but each time some one held a hand that was just a little better than mine. When a fellow stacks up against that kind of luck in poker you know how fast his pile goes.

"When we had been playing about an hour and a half I began to figure out where I stood. I discovered that I was $28 out. We had decided to play only three hours and I didn't see much hope for me to recover in the last half of the session.

"While I was wondering what I was going to do, I suddenly thought of that fifty-cent piece. I didn't have much faith in it, 'tis true, but I couldn't see how it could hurt me at that stage of the game.

"For an instant I thought I had spent some of it for a drink and carfare, but no, it was still in my pocket. I fished it out and tossed it over to the banker, calling for a blue chip, costing 50 cents. I had some chips in front of me and the banker looked surprised, but said nothing. My fellow players muttered things from which I gathered that they thought I was crazy.

"Say, that coin was the real thing in the mascot line. I played that blue chip in the first pot that came along and I won the pot. It was the first pot I had won in a long time and it made me feel good.

"After that I just couldn't lose. I raked in the pots so fast that when we quit I was $22 to the good. From the way I figured it out, that young woman was responsible for my winning $50.

"When I cashed in, you can bet that I made the banker fork over that mascot fifty-cent piece. Of course, my fellow players wanted to know all about it and I told them.

" 'Huh!' growled a hard loser, you won't be in pocket much. If you do the fair thing you'll take the young woman and her friend to the theatre, buy them supper afterward and open a few bottles. When you get through you'll be to the bad.

" 'But you play so close to the board that I suppose you'll reward the young lady by wearing the coin for a watch charm. The luck of some people makes me tired.' "

DROWNING IS A QUICK DEATH,

For Man Can't Live Under Water More Than Two Minutes.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

"The story frequently repeated about professional divers who have been able to remain under water for over two minutes is silly," Dr. Joseph Boehm tells me. "No one can remain under water that long without drowning, whether they are trained divers or not. At Navarino, where the sponge divers are reported to be able to remain under water three and four minutes, tests were made recently and resulted in conclusively proving that none of them remained down as long as a minute and a half. Ninety seconds seems a very long time to the watcher on shore, and it is about the limit of a diver's endurance under water. At Ceylon, where time tests were also made among the famous pearl divers, it was ascertained that few of them remained below the surface as long as a minute, and other tests made on the Red Sea among the Arabs proved that a minute and a quarter was the longest they could endure without a fresh breath.

"On the coast of England several years ago a diver, a trained diver, one of the best on the coast, renowned for his endurance, went down and was pulled up so slowly when he gave the signal that he was under water about two minutes and five seconds. He was drawn out of the water insensible, with blood flowing from his nose and ears, and it was only after long and arduous work that his recovery from the effects of that two minute stay under water was assured. Drowning is a quick death. Even though the water is kept out of the lungs, insensibility will ensue in one minute, and complete unconsciousness in two. The stories of people who have been in the water five minutes being resuscitated are generally mistakes or untrue. A man could not be in the water five minutes without coming to the surface several times, and be restored to life."

REAL ARTISTS DO PAINT SIGNS,

SAYS THE ADVERTISING MAN, AND HE SHOULD KNOW.

Some Have Studied in Paris and Know Art—But Commissions Out of the Front Rank Are Few, and Better Is a Job on a Ladder Than an Empty Pocket.

"Far be it from me," remarked the chief designer in a big outdoor advertising firm, "to say that the pictures you see on walls and fences have esthetic value. Yet some of them are painted by men who have studied art under the best masters.

"Dangling on little scaffolds on sides of buildings, or plying the brush on the high fences around town, you may have seen artists who have painted in Paris and have had pictures in the exhibitions here in New York.

"It is only at night and on Sundays and holidays that they have opportunities to paint as they want to. From 8 o'clock in the morning till dark on week days they are engaged in splashing color on walls and fences. They are victims, of course, of the tyranny of bread and butter, men whose efforts in high art are not appreciated by the grocer and the butcher.

"I spent some years studying art in Paris myself, and used to know a great many of the boys over there. Here they keep drifting in on me. Not a day passes that does not bring me at least one application for work from an artist. I have about thirty of them out painting signs, and there are at least as many more doing the same sort of work in New York.

"Not all the men you see embellishing fences have wrestled with high art, of course, but some of them have. One of them was telling me the other day of an amusing experience he had. This man studied a long time in Paris and has painted portraits of some New Yorkers. But a trip abroad caused him to lose his connections here, and he found, on his return, that bills were coming in a good deal faster than checks. To get over a stretch of rough sledding he came to us. One morning he was adorning a fence with a portrait which is the trademark for a certain brand of cigars. A young man who had been watching the work finally edged up to him and remarked:

" 'Say, this work you're doing is not half bad. It shows talent—it really does. You ought to study art.'

" 'Think so?' answered our man. 'Well, to tell you the truth, I've been thinking of it.'

" 'If I were you I'd do it right away,' replied the young man with enthusiasm. 'I am studying art myself and know that it would be easy for you to get into one of our rudimentary night classes. Here's my card. If you decide to take up art, and let me know, I'll help you all I can.'

"The young man left in a state of inward glow, I have no doubt, at having done a service to a fellow creature. This is the kind of misunderstanding our artists meet sometimes. At first it is somewhat jarring to the artistic temperament, but they get used to it.

"It is rather hard, however, to have your picture pelted with snowballs, as often happens in the winter when your studio is against a fence in the neighborhood of a public school. And then a man who has been used to pouring tea at 5 o'clock finds a little trying, at the beginning, the change from a studio with cozy corners in it to one on a swaying scaffold a hundred feet or so up a wall. Instead of lying in bed till 9 or 10 o'clock he must be up by starlight in winter, and, instead of drawing a comfortable chair up to his work, he must often, if he is engaged on a wall, slide down to it on a rope.

"Such things are abhorrent, of course, to the sensitive, artistic soul, and for this reason many of the artists who come to us for bread and butter have to be dropped. No matter how high on a wall their work may be, some of them have so keen a feeling that the work is beneath them that they are useless to us.

"Others who are clever with the brush fail because they can't catch the special knack of making sign paintings. When a man is engaged on a work of titanic size on a wall he can't step off and squint at it every few minutes as he would in a studio. It is impossible to see his picture as a whole, but he must know just how it appears from the street below.

"Another difficulty with some of our painters is the upwelling artistic instinct that refuses to be kept down even on a signboard. Not long ago one of our men strayed far enough from copy to make a row of trees the background for the letters of his sign. The thing was artistic, but the proprietor of the commodity advertised saw it and at once registered a kick.

" 'It may be handsome,' he exclaimed, 'but, great Scott, it's not trees I want to sell.'

"Despite these little discouragements, artists who are adapted to the work soon get to like the outdoor and rough and ready features of it. They make the best of the circumstance that it is not exactly the career their young ambitions pictured when they were at the art schools. One of them said to me the other day:

" 'When I was studying in Paris I had a tendency to slightly elevate my eyes when I spoke of high art. I guess those upward glances were prophetic, because that Broadway wall you gave me to do takes me up to quite a height. When I was painting the head of the man with the highball yesterday I felt that most mortals were far below me.'

"This man belongs to an art club, and the boys often have fun with him about the frequent changes in the location of his studio. 'Where is the studio to-day, Jimmy?' somebody will ask him. He will give some such good natured reply as this:

" 'Up by a fence in Harlem, and it's all right—plenty of ventilation and a fine north light. To-morrow I'll be hanging out on a dead wall on the West Side. Drop down the rope at 5 o'clock. That's my tea pouring time, you know.'

"One of the stock injunctions to students in art schools is to 'get close to nature.' We give some of our own artists opportunities to do that. We send parties of them through the country to execute works on barns and signboards along the railroads. This roving life is not ungrateful to the artistic temperament, but the gist of the whole matter is that it is better to encounter a small salary on Saturday night than a waiting landlady with blood in her eye."

Western Medicine and Japanese Study.

From the Philadelphia Press.

"You've seen, of course," said the doctor, "the accounts of how perfect is the medical staff of the Japs' army, and indeed in these days original Japanese contributions to medical science are taken as a matter of course; yet it's worthy of note that it was a recognition of the superiority of Western medicine that first led the Japanese to study and adopt European life and language and methods.

"Before the year 1867 the only European language known to the Japanese was Dutch, which was studied by interpreters as a medium for acquaintance with Western medical science. Possibly the choice of Dutch may ultimately be traced to the influence of Boerhaave, the famous physician of Leyden, from whom, as it happens, Peter the Great took lessons in 1715."

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WONDERS OF LUNA PARK

THE TWO MEN WHO HAVE DONE MOST TO TRANSFORM CONEY ISLAND.

The old resident of Coney Island tells you with tears in his barked out voice that "the Island isn't what it was."

It isn't. There came a big fire last fall that burned the greater part of the area which was covered by thieves' joints, low dance dives and lower places. These places have not been rebuilt. Their owners did not admit it then, and would not admit it now: but they were on the verge of bankruptcy and failure when the fire came.

The concentration of business in the few places that were left after the fire kept the survivors alive for a while. But even these look forward to the coming summer with foreboding. Coney Island isn't what it was.

Behind the growing weakness of the dives and the falling away of their custom is a state of things which has forced appreciation from everybody who goes down to Coney Island in the good old summer time to study the human race and its ways.

Some five or six years ago one Bird S. Coler, then Comptroller of the city and always a quick appreciator of other folks' ideas, got hold of the notion that Coney Island was the great breathing place for the thousands of New York people who need a cheap outing once a week to keep them happy, healthy and contented. He took up the agitation for the great free park by the ocean. The park came. It had something to do with the falling off in the dive district. But there was something that had more influence.

The public statements made about the thousands of people who went down to Coney Island travelled around the country. The Buffalo Exposition was going on. In the Midway in Buffalo there were some young men who were happy and who were looking ahead for more worlds to conquer.

THOMPSON, THE MAN OF IDEAS.

Happy folks were scarce around the Midway just then. Of the hundreds or more shows which had paid percentages and ground rent for the privilege of gathering the people's money at Buffalo, only about four had made money. These four were "The Trip to the Moon," "Darkness and Dawn," "The Johnstown Flood" and "The Infant Incubators." Of these, Fred Thompson and "Skip" Dundy owned "The Trip to the Moon" and "Darkness and Dawn."

Dundy, affectionately known as "Skip," because of his great success as skipper of the good airship Luna, speaks of Thompson within the circle of his friends as the crazy man. Mr. Dundy, as will appear later, is a financier. He doesn't know where Thompson gets his ideas and he doesn't care. He backs them.

The difference between Fred Thompson's insanity and that of the folks who are put behind fences with keepers over them, is that when Thompson sets forth a plan such as was never heard of before on land or sea and says that "there are thousands in it," there are. As this chronicle is to show.

A NEW IDEA TRIED.

After the Buffalo Exposition there were resorts all over the country which wanted "The Trip to the Moon" as part of their attractions. Fred Thompson, who had come to New York and opened an office for the firm here because he "likes to be where there's always a crowd," had been reading some of those Coney Island statistics. He decided to take "The Trip to the Moon" to Coney Island. He entered with negotiations with Mr. Tilyou of Steeplechase Park.

Other resort keepers laughed. The notion tickled them. Who ever heard of a Coney Island crowd giving up 25 cents to see a show that wasn't indecent or supposed to be indecent?

Thompson, who had been studying the American people since he was 14, and had come to certain conclusions about them, laughed too. The result of his study of the money spending habits of the American people he sums up this way:

"Give an American crowd action; keep it interested and excited and amused, and it doesn't care what you charge for your show within reason.

"It will come a hundred or two hundred miles at full railroad rates to enjoy what you have to offer. What will please a crowd in St. Louis or in New Orleans will please a crowd in California or in Boston.

"But you have got to have a crowd within reach. You can't make money in the show business on the arid plains where there isn't an average of three human beings to the square mile."

Thompson and Dundy, working on this principle, determined that New York and the country roundabout had greater possibilities for a showman's enterprise than any other place in the United States.

THE IDEA A SUCCESS.

"They tell us that this Coney Island is a five-cent place and a ten-cent place," said they. "If 25,000 or 30,000 ten-cent people can be persuaded to come down here on Saturdays and Sundays all summer, we will undertake to get at least half that number of twenty-five-cent people down here after a while and, besides that, to get quarters out of the five-cent folks who already come down.

"The trouble on Coney Island is that it has always been a bunco game and that people who come down here don't feel like taking a chance at being buncoed out of more than 10 cents at a time. Give 'em their money's worth, and they'll invest five or ten times as much."

"The Trip to the Moon" was installed in Tilyou's Steeplechase Park. Thompson, the "crazy man," furnished tickets in the form of tags to be worn in the buttonhole. Those who went to the show wore the tags away.

Some of them wore them all the way to their homes in northern Manhattan. It was eminently characteristic of the promoters that they made their patrons work as perambulating advertisements. "The Trip to the Moon" put a lot of money into the firm's pockets by the year's end.

It had also given both members of the firm a lot of experience. Not that they needed so very much experience. Both of them had taken their share of the world's fortune.

EDUCATION OF A SHOWMAN.

Fred Thompson was born in a little Ohio town in 1874. He went to school until he was 14. He then discovered that he had more sense than his teacher and left.

His parents applied moral suasion. It failed. He was urged by physical arguments to go back to his books. He wouldn't. He said he would run away first. He was told that he might go to any school in the country he would name.

"All right," he said. "When I hear of a school I want to go to I'll let you know."

His father was a general contractor in St. Louis. Fred Thompson thought he rather liked the contracting business. It had action.

He went to work in his father's employ. Out of a little contracting experience he found that there wasn't anything more useful to a contractor, beyond common sense, than a knowledge of architecture.

His father had a contract at Nashville. When it was finished Thompson went into an architect's office and studied for a year. Then he spent another year in an art glass establishment, learning that he had a great idea of color effects and how to improve that idea.

From this he drifted into furniture designing. He doesn't know how much artistic value his furniture designs had, but he knows that they were popular.

The Chicago World's Fair drew Thompson to itself. He was sure he saw action there. Though he was then but 19, he got a number of commissions as an architect. He also made illustrations for *Leslie's Weekly* and reported for the Chicago *Record*.

By the end of the fair he had saved quite a little money. He had also gained the acquaintance of some of the Midway Mexicans. They told him a lot of things about the opportunities of gold miners in Mexico.

Thompson went to Mexico and became a gold prospector. There wasn't the requisite action in this scratching game.

THOMPSON SEEKS MORE ACTION.

There was an exposition in Atlanta in 1895. Thompson went there as a designer and builder of shows for the Midway. He got plenty of contracts. He went to the Nashville Exposition two years later. Two of the shows he built came back to him in payment of bad debts.

He didn't know whether to sell them or run them himself, but decided that he might as well take a whack at the show business along with his other experiences. He made the show pay.

He went to the Trans-Mississippi Exposition and built "Darkness and Dawn," and ran it to his great profit. There he met Dundy as a competitor.

Dundy was clerk of the United States Court. He was a son of Judge Dundy of the Circuit Court, who was appointed by President Lincoln. Dundy is a man who can always get the use of other people's money. He has a sweet reasonableness of speech and an honesty of eye that completely disarm the most suspicious capitalist. Moreover, he has a record of always backing his arguments by results.

Dundy is a spare, nervous man. He is one of the sort of men who cannot stay in a room more than an hour without changing all the furniture around, to say nothing of the pictures. Like Thompson, he lives on action.

There was a second year's exposition at Omaha, irreverently called "The Hang-Over." Thompson stayed away from it. He felt, along toward the last of the first year, that the public enthusiasm had passed its climax. He came to New York, entered the Art Students' League, and studied diligently and modestly for a year. Why?

"There's only one way to give expression to an idea so that other people will take it all in," he said. "It is by putting the idea on paper. The better a man can do that the more people he can do business with. So I studied art."

DUNDY THE FINANCIER.

Dundy stayed at "The Hang-Over." He lost $50,000.

When the preliminaries for the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo were going on Thompson and Dundy met at Buffalo as rival bidders for the concession of running "Darkness and Dawn," which Thompson had invented but which wasn't patented or copyrighted. The eagle financial eye of Dundy saw profits in it. So did the instinctive showman's eye in Thompson.

"I lost $50,000 in the show business last year," said Dundy. "I'm going to get it back out of the show business. I regard it as a debt due on demand, and I'm making my demand right here."

Dundy got the concession. Thompson scratched his head.

Dundy was a formidable man. He was the first man Thompson had ever tried to walk over without success. He went to Dundy.

"Say, Dundy," said he, "you may think you have got me skinned to death on the 'Darkness and Dawn' concession. You've got to guess again. If you'll let me in on that, I'll show you the beating of it."

Dundy knew Thompson. He knew that Thompson's shows were good; hadn't he appropriated one of them?

"What is it?" he asked.

Thompson outlined the plan of "The Trip to the Moon," with the soaring airship Luna and all the electrical displays in the clouds and the swooping descent of the "Briscilla bird, with eyes like ba-a-a-alls of fire," which, by the way, is to be restored this year to the lunar atmosphere from which it has been so sadly absent since 1902. The partnership of Thompson & Dundy was formed at once.

The two shows which they built and managed at Buffalo headed the brief list of winners at the Buffalo Exposition. It had cost them $50,000 to build "The Trip to the Moon." It cost them $26,000 to move it to Coney Island. But they got their money back, and a lot more besides.

MONEY RUNS LOW.

Meanwhile, as has been said, they were making plans. They bought Boynton's "Shoot the Chute" park. It was known as the hoodoo place of Coney Island. It was regarded in the light of a gigantic proof that the north side of Surf avenue could never support a paying show.

Thompson and Dundy had learned a fine scorn for Coney Island traditions. They started out to fill up their twenty-two acres with action.

Thompson was drawing plans faster than Dundy could make figures. But with their innocent and sublime faith, one in the other, neither suggested modesty or moderation. Thompson's plans called for an expenditure of over $700,000. Dundy's figures showed how they could raise $220,000 and not another cent.

Dundy thought he saw a way to get through. Thompson was satisfied. He didn't want to waste time listening to details.

They went ahead on the $700,000 basis. Along in March the money began to run low. Just how low is shown by an anecdote of Dundy by Thompson.

"I went to Skip," he says, "and I asked him for $10.

" 'What for?' says Skip.

" 'I want to buy a pair of breeches,' I told him.

" 'Wear those you have on!' Skip snorts. 'You wouldn't come around talking breeches if you knew how much lumber $10 would buy!' "

THE FINAL TRIUMPH.

When the last of the $220,000 was spent, Dundy went over to Wall Street. He took a number of eminent financiers—it would make you start to know just how eminent they were—out to the inchoate beginnings of Luna Park and asked them if it wasn't a crying shame that the people of the city of New York should be deprived of such a show as that promised to be merely because of the lack of a few paltry hundreds of thousands of dollars. All of Thompson's experience and reasoning and all of Dundy's were laid before those financiers. The firm borrowed $540,000 on its honest faces and its showing, and finished Luna Park.

They opened the gates $540,000 in debt. Their first notes came due on July 5. They amounted to $78,000.

All the week before the last Saturday and Sunday that they depended upon to swell the receipts to the required amount, it rained. On Saturday morning it cleared. The people shouldered one another to get in at the gates. Enough to make the $78,000 and more was turned in to the cashier.

Dundy breathed a long sigh of relief. He wanted to call a truck and have the two days' receipts carted over to the bank in strong boxes.

"Never! Not on your life," said the joyous but ever practical Thompson. "I've got that beat to death."

He sent for the band. He filled two clothes baskets with paper currency and a washtub with money and moved them across the street to the bank in festal procession, the band playing, "Oh, What a Difference in the Morning," for the benefit of the jealous and astonished Coney Island prophets of failure.

Before the end of the season they had paid all their debts and owned the show free and clear.

PLANS FOR THIS SUMMER.

It isn't quite true that the place as it stood last summer carried out the plans as Fred Thompson had made them in the first place. They had found as the season approached that there was not time to carry out all the schemes, and they tore away a lot of the preliminary work and finished up as best they could.

This year they have invested all they made last year and have gone even further "into the hole" than they did in 1903. They have taken in sixteen acres more. They have double decked almost all of the space they occupied last year.

The upper deck will be covered with palm and flower and shrubbery gardens. There will be a score of little tea houses among them, where geisha girls will serve tea. No hawking of peanuts, no barking for shows, will be permitted here.

In one corner there will be a restaurant. Thompson and Dundy mean that it shall be a good restaurant. So they have given the privilege to a firm that does a great and high priced business in a downtown office building, on very low terms, on condition that the contract may be broken on twenty-four hours notice.

The greater part of the extra sixteen acres will be given up to a reproduction of the Indian Durbar. The audience at this show will see passing through an Indian street sixty elephants and twelve camels decked out with silk and satin and gilt reproductions of the trappings which the princes of India put upon their royal beasts in honor of their Emperor. An illustration of the workings of Thompson's ingenuity is given by the fact that the jewels on the elephant trappings are to be represented by hundreds of colored electric lamps worked by storage batteries concealed in the howdahs.

Thompson made a trip to Morocco last summer with Hassan Ben Ali, a Mohammedan impresario, and bought the doors and window frames out of hundreds of houses. Hassan Ben Ali is in India now hiring natives to appear in the Streets of India and buying native huts to be erected in the Luna Park elephant farm.

Then there will be a three ring aerial circus, over the shoot-the-chute pool, and the new spectacle, "War is Hell!" which will show sixty-four battleships, each one of them twenty-four feet long, in action in an artificial sea. There will be a number of divisions in this performance, the last being the bombardment of New York by a hostile fleet and the rescue of the city by American ships.

REAL FIRE AND REAL AUTO ACCIDENTS.

Most intricate of all, there will be a fire show. Part of a city block front has been erected, including a theatre, a schoolhouse, a tenement and a store. The streets in front of it are regularly paved. There are real street lamps on the corners.

Real Brooklyn Rapid Transit trolley cars will run in front on real tracks. Greek peanut and fruit vendors will obstruct the curb. Automobiles and trucks will run around the corner.

It is worth while to interrupt here, as again illustrating the working of the "crazy man's" mind, just to show how the peanut vendors and the automobiles got into the show.

A few weeks ago Fred Thompson was in Philadelphia with his automobile. He ran over a pushcart man. It cost him a lot of trouble and some money.

"I'll get even," said he, gleefully, a day or two later to Dundy. "I'll put a lot of pushcart men in the fire show and run them down twice a day with my automobile, and it won't cost me a cent."

Just before the fire show performance begins two men will march before the audience with a banner thirty feet long on which this legend will be inscribed in very large letters: "The cry of fire will soon be raised. There is no cause for alarm. It is part of the performance." Then a puff of fire will come from a window in the block.

A policeman will ring an alarm. Two fire engines, with their hose carts, a water tower, a hook and ladder company and a searchlight will dash up. There will be rescues by scaling ladders and the people in the theatre will be rushed out to safety after Mr. Thompson's own patent plans for theatrical safeguards. The buildings, of course, are made of steel and asbestos and cannot burn down.

This same fire department is always on duty and is one of Luna Park's many safeguards against fire. It will have a chief selected with the help of the New York city Fire Department. Mr. Thompson had Edward Croker picked out for the place. Of course, Croker's reinstatement in the city department spoiled this plan. The park is equipped with salt water mains, which proved their efficiency when they were put at the city department's disposal during the great Coney Island fire of last fall, and enabled it to stop the conflagration.

NEW PEOPLE ATTRACTED.

All the old shows and attractions—the old mill, the helter-skelter slide, the "Trip to the Moon," the "Shoot the Chutes," "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," the baby incubators and the Hagenbeck animal show will be there this year as they were last.

Naturally, the building up of such an enterprise as this has changed the face and the character of Coney Island. Toward the end of last season an entirely new kind of people began to make their presence felt in the Coney Island crowds.

They began coming down on weekdays, until toward the last of the season the Saturday and Sunday receipts, large as they were, were hardly larger than those of the formerly despised slack days. This meant that people were visiting the place who were so well off that they didn't have to wait for Saturday for their spending money.

Already another corporation has started the building of another amusement enclosure, just across Surf avenue from Luna Park. Its promoters have announced that the place, which they will call Wonderland, will follow the lines which made Luna Park's success last year. Already its towers are rising like those of a world's fair.

One might think that Thompson and Dundy would feel this an invasion of their field. They don't. Says Thompson:

"All I hope is that they put out a lot of good, strong advertising and help us draw the right sort of people down to the island, and that they will be as careful to keep objectionable characters out of their place and to keep their place as fit for women and children as ours is and always will be.

"All we want is a crowd on the Island every day and every night. We'll be satisfied with what share of them we can get."

ST. LOUIS' PIKE BEATEN BY CONEY ISLAND.

What Coney Island will be five years from now no one, not even Fred Thompson, dares to dream or to pretend to dream with accuracy. Already the amusements and attractions to be exhibited there next summer outnumber and outglitter and outlaugh the Pike, the recreation end of the St. Louis Exposition.

St. Louis will have but four elephants, as has been said, the spectators at Luna Park will see sixty pass before them. At St. Louis there are 1,750 acres of ground, with 20,000 horse-power supply of electric lights. To supply the thirty-eight acres of Luna Park with lights there is to be a 2,400 horse-power plant. This means that where St. Louis will have its lights three or four feet apart Luna Park's lights will be from six inches to a foot apart.

The running expenses of Luna Park for the coming season are expected to reach $500,000. Thirty detectives, with some extra men from the detective agencies and the city detective force, have been employed to keep out thieves and improper persons and to maintain perfect order.

"We'll have people coming from further away to see Coney Island before we get through," says the always confident and always correct Thompson, "than they will go to see a world's fair. No world's fair can induce any sane showman to put up for a single season such an amusement plant as we have put in here. We're here to stay. We've got to make a reputation next summer that will keep men, women and children coming out here in 1905 and 1906, and so on, indefinitely."

"It looks as though you were going to make a lot of money," observed a reporter who was talking to Mr. Thompson in a wilderness of staff and asbestos and galvanized iron, last Monday.

"That's what we're here for," said Mr. Thompson, cheerfully. "If you don't believe, it ask Skip Dundy."