

the Amphitheatre, being advertised as "two circuses united."

Performances having terminated on February 6, 1860, the show proceeded up the Mississippi on March 14. Perhaps fearing the "irrepressible conflict" between North and South, Spalding & Rogers did not return to New Orleans, but worked their way east, opening in the remodeled Bowery Amphitheatre in New York City on November 5, 1860. The roster included Marietta Zanfretta, ropewalker, Kate Ormond, Frank Barry, Levi J. North, and Master Charley, riders; Auguste and François Siegrist, aerialists; Rose Siegrist, dancer and ropewalker; Tom King, leaper and acrobat; and Dan Castello, acrobat. Pantomimes and dramas were presented from time to time. The show closed on January 28, 1861.⁹⁵

Now, before continuing with the history of Spalding & Rogers' wagon shows, river show, railroad show, and indoor exhibitions, which had brought them wealth and a leading position in their field, we shall take note of a dancing, singing, and talking clown who battled with Spalding & Rogers for many years, amassed fortunes, lost them through mismanagement and intemperance, and became a national character as a showman, temperance lecturer, and political aspirant.

DAN RICE

Dan Rice (1823-1900, born Daniel McLaren), noted singing and talking clown, began his career as an entertainer by singing, dancing, lifting weights and exhibiting trained animals. The files of the Daven-

port, Iowa, newspaper disclose that Rice was granted a license on March 30, 1844, to give a performance in that city. Soon thereafter he came to the notice of Dr. G. R. Spalding, who engaged him to act as a clown on Spalding's circus. This association continued during the tenting seasons for a number of years, Rice seeking other employment between seasons. Thus we find him with Nathan A. Howes' company in John Tryon's Bowery Amphitheatre in the fall of 1845⁹⁶ and with the same circus in Palmo's Opera House, New York, during the following February.⁹⁷

For the season of 1848 Spalding and Rice entered into partnership and operated a circus bearing Rice's name.⁹⁸ Under the management of Spalding's brother-in-law, W. T. Van Orden, and traveling on the steamer *Alleghany Mail*, the circus played Mississippi and Ohio river towns from St. Paul to Pittsburgh and thence to New Orleans.⁹⁹ The partnership proving highly unsatisfactory to all concerned, the firm was dissolved at the end of the season of 1849 to the tune of bitter litigation. Thereafter, Rice operated shows of his own, both indoor and under canvas.

In 1851 Dan Rice's Circus traveled by canal boat and steamer in New York State and along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The following year Rice's circus toured by steamer on the Mississippi and Ohio, using the title Dan Rice's One-Horse Show. When exhibiting in Davenport, Iowa, on September 11, 1852, the show used the title, Dan Rice's Hippodrome, and advertised that the company included "a Creole Ballet Troupe of forty members."¹⁰⁰

During the winter of 1852-53 Rice conducted a

circus, menagerie, and museum in New Orleans in a building named Dan Rice's Amphitheater. When spring came Rice again started up the Mississippi. Returning to the Crescent City early in the following winter, Rice occupied his amphitheater with a company that comprised Mme Louise Tourniaire and her troupe of French riders, and Mrs. Dan Rice, an equestrienne.¹⁰¹

While Rice's songs and witticisms appealed to many, there were some who found them distasteful. When his circus was exhibiting in Baltimore in the fall of 1856, the theatrical critic of *Porter's Spirit of the Times*, October 4, 1856, commented that:

The populace have been delighted with Dan Rice and his Circus company. Rice seems to have talents which might have given him eminence in some higher class of public exhibition, if he had received an education. The lack of it causes him to make many unintentionally ludicrous speeches, and his ungrammatical sentences and improper pronunciation sometimes create a great laugh, of which he is not aware. In speaking of the classical positions of his horse [Excelsior] he said they were equal to the highest productions of art. The idea of considering Nature as having succeeded in producing a horse of equal beauty of form to those of art, was new, I think.

Rice and his circus were again in Baltimore at the Front Street Theater in December, 1857,¹⁰² moving thereafter to Lent's New National Theater in Philadelphia and thence to Niblo's Garden, New York, for the remainder of the winter. While at Niblo's the *Tribune* advised the management to omit Rice's performances from the program. He was said to be "unfortunately a grammatical assassin, and the King's

English nightly dies a hundred deaths under his tender mercies."¹⁰³

The following June Rice's Circus was in Detroit, presenting a ropewalking elephant, a tame rhinoceros, a dancing camel, mules that played "low comedy," and the trained horse *Excelsior*.¹⁰⁴

In the fall of 1860 Dan Rice's Great Show exhibited in the Academy of Music, New Orleans, featuring a young man by the name of Omar Kingsley (1840-79),¹⁰⁵ who impersonated a female equestrienne and was known to the world as Ella Zoyara.

THE MABIE BROTHERS

Edmund Foster Mabie (1810-67) and his brother Jeremiah (1812-67) were typical of the substantial citizens who founded the American circus. They grew up on a farm near Patterson, Putnam County, New York. Observing the success attained in the circus business by the Howes brothers, Nathan (1796-1878) and Seth (1815-1901), who resided in the neighboring town of Brewster, the Mabies enlisted the aid of Seth as a partner and manager and organized the Howes & Mabie New York Circus in 1840.¹⁰⁶

After touring in the East for several years, the Howes & Mabie show ventured into the Midwest. In June of 1843 they were in Detroit, but failed to make a good impression on the editor of the *Daily Advertiser* (June 15, 1843). After the show had departed, the editor assured the editor of the *Jackson Gazette* that "the Circus of Howes and Mabie which is now perambulating through this State is a regular humbug