

**MIRACLE MONGERS AND THEIR
METHODS: A COMPLETE EXPOSÉ OF THE
MODUS OPERANDI OF FIRE EATERS, HEAT
RESISTERS, POISON EATERS, VENOMOUS
REPTILE DEFIERS, SWORD SWALLOWERS,
HUMAN OSTRICHES, STRONG MEN, ETC.**

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Miracle Mongers and Their Methods: A Complete Exposé of the Modus Operandi of Fire Eaters, Heat Resisters, Poison Eaters, Venomous Reptile Defiers, Sword Swallowers, Human Ostriches, Strong Men, Etc. by Harry Houdini

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HARRY HOUDINI

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BY

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"THE UNMASKING OF ROBERT HOUDIN," ETC.



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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO MY LIFE'S HELPMATE,
WHO STARVED AND STARRED WITH ME
DURING THE YEARS WE SPENT
AMONG "MIRACLE MONGERS"

My Wife

PREFACE

“ALL wonder,” said Samuel Johnson, “is the effect of novelty on ignorance.” Yet we are so created that without something to wonder at we should find life scarcely worth living. That fact does not make ignorance bliss, or make it “folly to be wise.” For the wisest man never gets beyond the reach of novelty, nor can ever make it his boast that there is nothing he is ignorant of; on the contrary, the wiser he becomes the more clearly he sees how much there is of which he remains in ignorance. The more he knows, the more he will find to wonder at.

My professional life has been a constant record of disillusion, and many things that seem wonderful to most men are the every-day commonplaces of my business. But I have never been without some seeming marvel to

pique my curiosity and challenge my investigation. In this book I have set down some of the stories of strange folk and unusual performers that I have gathered in many years of such research.

Much has been written about the feats of miracle-mongers, and not a little in the way of explaining them. Chaucer was by no means the first to turn shrewd eyes upon wonderworkers and show the clay feet of these popular idols. And since his time innumerable marvels, held to be supernatural, have been exposed for the tricks they were. Yet to-day, if a mystifier lack the ingenuity to invent a new and startling stunt, he can safely fall back upon a trick that has been the favorite of press-agents the world over in all ages. He can imitate the Hindoo fakir who, having thrown a rope high into the air, has a boy climb it until he is lost to view. He can even have the feat photographed. The camera will click; nothing will appear on the developed film; and this, the performer will glibly explain, "proves" that the whole company of onlookers was hypnotized! And he can be certain of a very