

Wichita Daily Eagle

THE GOSSIP OF GOTHAM.

The Queer Contrivances of the Scenic Artists.

Painting Pictures on Stills—A Boston Publisher on "Oblivion"—The Two Orphans—"Progressive Buffalo Bill"—Consul General Collins.

One of the oddest of metropolitan industries or arts—sometimes it's one, sometimes the other—is that of the scenic artist.

Time was when the scenic painter was an important adjunct of every theater's behind scenes. He's there still, but his business has dwindled away to that of a mere repair of other men's work, as a rule.

Don't lay it to the interstate commerce law, though theater men are sometimes inclined to make that enactment a universal scapegoat.

No, the old-fashioned scenic painter began to be out of fashion when cumbersome and elaborate settings came in. Space is sold and rented by the square foot now, and there's no longer room for the scenic painter to do his work in the narrow quarters.

Space the new style of scene painting demands, and so many of the best known painters have set up huge studios in the suburbs where land is cheap and they can dash around to their hearts' content, besides backing off a look at their work without danger of stepping on a stage hand's toes.

Harley Merry had his scenic studios Nos. 1 and 2 near the entrance of Prospect park, in Brooklyn. No. 1 is simply an ordinary frame house gutted into one big room. No. 2 is a huge barn of a place propped up against the sea winds with long timbers.

At least one of these great studios is very attractive in external appearance—that of L. W. Seavey away up on Wallon avenue.

It is heavy as well as paint-room—here Seavey lives with his wife and pretty daughter—and its huge bulk is broken with jutting angles, odd windows and tall chimneys.

How does an artist manage to get such big pictures in proportion? By dividing the canvas into a great number of squares first. Then upon a canvas of ordinary size divided into similar squares he draws his picture in oil or water colors. Square by square it can then be transferred from the smaller surface to the large, the painter making use of stazings and swinging scales to get at his work.

Once a Boston editor had occasion to write something like this: "And with the closing of the day the president had retired to oblivion."

Then came rumbling up the speaking tube an awful message: "Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones desires to see you downstairs."

Mr. Brown, the publisher, Brown was meek and a Sunday school superintendent. "Mr. Brown," thundered the autoer, the moment the editor entered the room, "what do you mean, sir, by publishing such a vile insinuation? Here I've labored for years to build up a paper that will go into the homes; into the homes, sir, and you ruin the effect of my labors by printing such filth as that. And you pretend to be a Christian man, you—hypocrite. I tell you, sir, I won't have it. If this occurs again I'll give you the turban."

"But, Mr. Jones," said the trembling Brown, "oblivion did-did-doesn't mean anything nasty. Just let me look up the word in Webster."

"Webster be—," thundered the old publisher, "you get upstairs." And Brown got. However, that was a long time ago.

The Two Orphans.

Somebody nicknamed them "the two orphans," I don't know just why, but the title sticks.

Probably they're not orphans at all. If there is a papa and a mamma, however, or a big brother, or one has ever seen them, but when the weather is fine the sisters appear and pass in their lovely parade up or down the way. They are twins apparently and almost indistinguishable. Their hats are of correct shape, their shoes new and glossy, their gloves unsoiled, their capes modish, yet there is an indefinable air of country breeding about them and the country roses are yet in their cheeks.

There is something impressively lonely in the life of these girls, as I imagine it. They do not know that it is not here, as there, quite the custom for young women to promenade the business streets unattended and purposeless. Probably there is a father absorbed in business, perhaps heedless of them. They know no way to gain the friendship and acquaintance of women of their own age. Except the church there is no way, and the church is not always to be relied upon. In many of them the social atmosphere is Labrador.

Men can make acquaintances while lighting a cigar—in business, in a hundred ways. But the city life of lonely women is a frightful thing. You see it in the hotels and boarding houses everywhere. Sometimes its baneful fruits appear in melancholy scandals.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria. When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria. When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria. When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

There is no place so merciless as a great city. I hope the two orphans, who look good and true as they are pretty, will find a way to its steely heart.

Like the lilies. Like the lilies of the field, which toil not neither do they spin, and more especially like the tiger lilies thereof, are the ultra cravats of the fin de siècle. We have had the blue of heaven—always standard, by the way—and the green of waving grain in spring and all wonderful colors. This year came the tiger lily ties—no, they are more like a frog's belly—no, I know not what they most resemble. But upon a white ground they show such wonderful floral displays of pink and yellow vine and blossom.

Like I have it. They are really more like an old-fashioned Paisley shawl in design and tints than anything else, except very much lighter in tone. A windowful of them looks like a garden of delicate fair-tinted posies.

No Irish-American who could possibly have named would be so much persona grata at the court of St. James as Gen. Patrick A. Collins. Of course, Mr. Collins' official duties are commercial, but his social relations with London will be by no means unimportant either to himself or the nation.

Collins is a keen and shrewd man, a statesman and a leader. He was a decided power in congress, and in Massachusetts has always trained with the tariff reformers.

By the way, there is more or less low-voiced grumbling going on among democrats because Massachusetts got so many plums out of the cabinet pudding.

He doesn't harbor resentments. Life is too short. What is the average height of a man in this country? Probably greater than in any other. One meets good-sized men in New York constantly. The biggest don't live here, though, but come from the south and west. Makers of ready-made clothing send long-legged trousers and coats of wide girls to those regions. Everybody knows that our women are regally tall.

The Chinese aren't registering and photographing themselves very unimpressively yet. What will be done about it when the time limit has expired? Will they all be sent back to China? Here's an interesting query.

The population of New York is increasing during the winter months by as many as five thousand patients undergoing operations or treatment in the hospitals and at the houses of doctors. They come and go, many get well, some die under the knife, some linger in hopeless invalidism. This is one of the tragedies of the great city.

AN EARLY START. Nahum Makes it on One Occasion with a Vengeance.

Early rising was a frequent subject of contention between Nahum Briggs and his wife. Her ability to wake in season for an "early start" was a question often mooted by Nahum, and the result was that all responsibility of waking fell upon him. So it chanced that one night, when it seemed to Mrs. Briggs as if her tired eyes had but just closed, Nahum spoke up briskly: "Come, Lucy, come; time to get up. It's all habit sleepin' so much. The roosters are crowin' in good shape."

His wife rubbed her heavy lids and rose reluctantly. The clock had stopped, but Nahum said it was nearly six, for there was a light in "Bunker's shop," and he usually opened the store at that time.

Soon the kettle was steaming cheerily, and while breakfast was being prepared Nahum took his lantern and went out to "do his chores." He had watered and fed his stock, and returned to eat a hearty morning meal.

Then they sat down to wait for the first streak of dawn, but after an hour it seemed, if anything, darker than before.

"Ain't it terrible long comin' light, think?" asked Mrs. Briggs, as to a carking jargon.

"Oh, I'm used ter bein' up to greet the day," sniffed Nahum. "I guess the sun will be 'round on time."

Soon his wife looked out again. "For the love of John Turner!" she exclaimed. "Bunker has put out his light and is goin' home. Do go out and hail him, an' find out what time it is."

"It's day time, I tell ye," said Nahum, but he went out and "hail'd" his neighbor.

"I dunno exactly," said Mr. Bunker, with some moderation, "but when I shut up shop I think it was 'bout ten o'clock."

Then Nahum came in and shut the door. While Mrs. Briggs prepared for a second night's rest, he wound the clock and set it. She noticed that he took a decided comfort in winding it more vigorously than seemed quite necessary.

YOUTH'S COMPANION.

A PASTEL ON ROULETTE. And the Little Ball Rolls Merrily into the Only Uncovered Square.

Merrily the little ball whirled around. Anxious faces watch its gyrations. The lights glare. There is a rattle of chips as nervous hands hurriedly drop them here and there upon the various numbers or cross lines that mark the surface of the table.

A dozen men are gathered about watching and waiting. What a study their faces present. And the little ball whirled merrily.

How anxiously does each regard the numbers upon which he has placed his chips. Surely his turn must come at last. Every square, every cross line is covered. One, at least, of the dozen anxious watchers will soon find himself richer by many chips.

The croupier smiles. What matters it to him where the ball falls? He will pay the winner with the winnings of the others. He knows this and he smiles. And the little ball whirled merrily.

Its momentum gradually decreases. Gradually it approaches the niche where it will finally rest. Will it be at a swell? Or, perhaps, a twenty?

There; it falls! Seven! Yes, No! It bounces out again. It rolls, and then, as if it were a thing of life, it seeks a spot and rests there.

Again the chips rattle. They are being gathered toward the opposite side of the table, where stands the croupier. There is no joy among the faces of the players. The joy is all in the face of the croupier.

For he smiles. He has every reason to. The ball has fallen into the double zero. It was the only square that had remained uncovered.—N. Y. Herald.

No Fun for Novelists. The project of having a Columbian luncheon at Jackson park has been definitely abandoned. This building, which was intended to be a sort of club headquarters for all notabilities who are to visit the fair this summer, was to be erected on the lake shore just east of the German, Spanish and Russian buildings. But the special commissioners from those countries objected so strenuously to the proposed building, on the ground that it would shut off a front view of their several buildings, that the world's fair management deemed best to abandon the project.

ADVERTISING EXTRAORDINARY. Some early arrivals. He was much struck by their beautiful complexions.

When they took off their opera cloaks he knew the reason why.—Fall Mail Register.

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