MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EMINENT ARTISTS TO WORK ON MINNESOTA'S NEW CAPITOL

Mural Decoration Will Be Assigned to a Famous Quartet Headed by John La Farge---His Associates Will Be E. G. Garnsey, E. W. Blashfield and Simmons.

BY ITS decision to provide means for the complete decoration of the new capitol by the greatest mural artists of the country, Minnesota has t ken a most important step in the artistic development of the state. Whatever belongs to the people interests and concerns them; consequently these beauties will

JOHN LA FARGE.

receive a degree of attention that would be bestowed on no other similar art works. The capitol is to be the show place of the state, where every citizen may go without let or hindrance, and the work of La Farge, Garnsey, Blashfield and Simmons will have an exhibition such as would be possible under no other circumstances.

In the magnificence of its plans and in their scope Minnesota will be the pioneer of the west in mural decorations and civic beautifying. It is rarely fortunate that the state first undertaking a great piece of decoration should be so admirably guided by the capitol architect, Cass Gilbert, as to assure the elevated character of the work even before the details are fully planned.

Garnsey Will Direct Work.

The work of interior decoration as a whole has been intrusted to Elmer E. Garnsey of New York, a most distinguished artist, whose particular gift is for planning large decorative schemes with breadth, magnificence, harmony and variety. Mr. Garnsey occupies a unique position, being without a peer and with scarcely a competitor in his line of work. He had complete charge of the mural decorations of the congressional library at Washington and was responsible for its entire color and decorative scheme, superintending the work personally. So fully has he grasped the relation of decoration to architecture that he is greatly appreciated by architects and scarcely an important public building has been decorated since the Columbian exposition except under his direction. One of his notable successes was the United States pavilion at the Paris exposition and for this he received a silver medal. Other commissions of importance have been the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburg, and Mr. Carnegie's house in New York; Boston public library, Ryedson library, Chicago; Columbia university, and the New York Stock exchange.

John La Farge's Crowning Work.

The particular triumph for Gilbert is in securing, for the most important portion of the work, John La Farge, the pioneer American mural painter and an artist whose fame rests upon a sure foundation. Mr. La Farge is nearly 70 years of age and could not be expected to execute many more monumental works. He expects to make his contribution to the plan, the decoration of the supreme court chamber, the crowning work of his life.

Mr. La Farge stands in a class by himself, both by reason of his great and varied gifts and by reason of the attitude of all other artists toward him. It is a remarkable thing that the man who made the beginning of a great field of art should still be surviving and full of vigor to see such a development as it has attained. The history of mural art does not even cover the whole of Mr. La Farge's artistic career, for, while he always had a strong inclination towards mural art with its splendid color possibilities and his noble treatment of the figure, it was not until he had made his artistic reputation that he found his first adequate opportunity for mural painting, with its accessory arts.

Trinity church in Boston was Mr. La Farge's first important commission and was in reality the first large decorative undertaking in the country. The plan was an experimental one, undertaken under very unfavorable conditions, but its successful completion was a revelation to Americans and it remains important and admirable intrinsically as well as historically.

The story of the Trinity decorations as told by Mr. La Farge is full of interest, as are the circumstances leading up to this work. While studying art abroad as an accomplishment, Mr. La Farge had interested himself especially in the work of the old masters, their breadth, simplicity and richness of effects appealing to him. On his return to America his artistic inclinations gradually forced him out of his chosen profession, the law into a career devoted to art, altho as he declares, "No one has struggled more against his destiny than I; nor did I for many years acquiesce in being a painter, tho I learned the principles and studied the methods of my art. I had hoped to find some other mode of life, some way of satisfying the desire for a contemplation of truth, unbiased, free and detached."

While abroad Mr. La Farge had entered the studio of Couture, but his strong personality and artistic gifts being recognized by the French master, he was advised to study independently and develop his individuality. This he did thru the study of architecture, of the old masters, and of Delacroix, Millet, Rousseau, Corot and the pre-Raphaelites. His principal technical instruction he received from William H. Hunt, but this was quite limited, and he is not especially indebted to special instruction.

First Great Mural Decoration.

The Trinity decorations were not proposed until 1876, but even before his first venture in 1861 he had desired an opportunity for mural work. His first decoration, a panel representing "St. Paul Preaching at Athens," painted for the Church of the Paulist Fathers, New York, was not accepted for some reason. A large triptych was begun in 1862-3, but only two panels were finished. Altho these were never

"HEAD OF ST. JOHN," FRESCO BY LA FARGE.

placed in churches, as was planned, they remain very important works of art and are the property of William C. Whitney. These made a profound impression on those competent to judge the work, and this impression, deepened by Mr. La Farge's success in some dining-room work, led the late H. H. Richardson to single this artist out to undertake an important decorative scheme at the first opportunity. This did not come until several years later he persuaded the Trinity church building committee to give Mr. La Farge complete charge of the interior decorations.

There was little money and little time for the work and untried workmen, skilled or unskilled, and untried materials must be used. The artists had to work along with the carpenters and other workmen and use their scaffoldings, as there was neither time nor money to provide others. Practically everything had to be improvised and done in a mad rush. He found the materials prepared for decorative work purposely bad, in order that dealers might profit by their decay, so he had a hand-to-hand fight with commerce, in this as in many of his earlier undertakings.

Much of the basis of Mr. La Farge's success lay in his study and appreciation of architecture, and this stood him in good stead in this work. In discussing this work Mr. La Farge says, "The use of color in architectural decoration is not mere arrangement of pleasing tints. It is a matter of construction by color." He proposed to make one notable change from the habits of the time which suggested machinery—the absence of personality. "I knew our work at Trinity would have to be faulty," he said, "but this much I was able to accomplish—that almost every bit of it would be living, would be impossible to duplicate."

Revolution in Stained Glass.

The Trinity decorations consist of magnificent stained glass, which was the beginning of his activity in this direction, small lunettes over the windows of the central tower, panels between the windows, arches over them, and three great paintings, "St. James," "Christ and Nicodemus" and "Christ and the Woman of Samaria." Of the subsequent mural work of Mr. La Farge his "Ascension of Our Lord," in the Church of the Ascension in New York is unquestionably his masterpiece. By many this is held to be unequalled outside of Italy, being the great religious painting of modern times.

The art of stained glass has been completely revolutionized by Mr. La Farge. He found the materials and methods most crude and incapable of expressing his color ideas. In order to include stained-glass windows in his decorative schemes, he found it necessary to provide them himself in order to carry out his ideas, he was obliged to invent the means and control his own workshop. He became an actual workman in glass in order to master the technical difficulties. In his first window he adopted all kinds of expedients to enrich the effects, using the lead lines in a handsome pattern, instead of merely as a part of the construction and placing one color over another, to add to the variety and give modulation.

Mr. La Farge's Inventions.

The invention of opaline glass and its development is one of Mr. La Farge's great achievements. This was suggested by his examination in a shop of the thick white toilet bottles with opalescent tints, imported from China. He cut up bottles until he was satisfied with the result, and then went to work to make glass having the same qualities in other colors. Other beautiful varieties of glass have been invented by Mr. La Farge, streaked and wrinkled glass, glass of several colors blended and glass sprinkled with pieces of other glass or metal.

To work in glass Mr. La Farge has devoted himself chiefly, superintending his workshop himself. His first very great window, and still one of his greatest, was the so-called Battle window in Harvard Memorial hall. Nearly every city has one or more La Farge windows in its churches or public buildings, for the output of his shop has been enormous.

Not only is Mr. La Farge pre-eminent in mural painting and ornamental glass, but he is an authoritative and charming writer on art, was one of the first serious illustrators, is famous as a painter of flowers and landscapes. He was the first American ever asked by the French government to make a one-man exhibition at the salon of the Champ De Mars, and has been asked for a painting for the Luxemburg. He is president of the Society of American Artists and of the Society of Mural Painters, and was decorated with the Legion of Honor for his work in glass.

Civic Decorative Art.

After Mr. La Farge's church decorations the next step in mural art was taken at the Columbian exposition, which tried out with amazing success most of the men who have since come to the front as illustrious decorators. The chief success of the white city work was achieved by Edwin H. Blashfield. This was in part due to his preparation and in part due to his intellectual tendencies.

An army of soldiers drawn by young Blashfield were shown to Gerome, who advised an artistic career for the youth, but when Blashfield went abroad it was to study with Bonnata, altho he received criticisms from Gerome and Chapu. Mr. Blashfield spent about twenty years abroad but returned to America when the time was ripe, wholly unspoiled by his long foreign absence and fully equipped for the commanding place he has taken. At the exposition the subject of his decoration of a dome in the manufactures' building was "The Arts of Metal-Working." Mr. Blashfield's decoration in the library of congress occupies the position of honor and binds together the whole decorative scheme, as the dome is the architectural and decorative center of interest. His decorations are in the dome. In the lantern itself the subject represented is "Human Understanding." Around the collar in a band twelve feet high stretches the representation of "The Evolution of Civilization," a grouping of twelve seated winged figures, types of the peoples who have carried forward the light of civilization.

One of the most interesting and important decorative commissions in the young American art of mural decoration is the building of the appellate division of the supreme court of New York, and in this Mr. Blashfield has a noble panel showing "The Power of the Law." Other of his decorative commissions have been a courtroom in Baltimore, a lunette for a Pittsburg bank, the ceiling of the Astoria ballroom and several notable decorations in the homes of W. K. Vanderbilt, G. F. C. Drexel, C. P. Huntington and others.

Father of Municipal Art.

Like Mr. La Farge, Mr. Blashfield has varied talents. He is one of the ablest lecturers in the country, and he has employed his gifts in pressing art interests. His lecture, "A Plea for Municipal Art," afterwards published, had such influence that he is called "The Father of Municipal Art." He has done some splendid work in illustration, and, with Mrs. Blashfield, wrote "Italian Cities" and has done other writing.

Simmons Won Competition.

One of the first results of the newly awakened interest in mural art was the formation of the Municipal Art society of New York, for which Mr. Blashfield wrote his "Plea." Its aim was to present to the city from time to time gifts of paintings or sculpture such as it deemed worthy of acceptance. The first gift was to provide the decorations for the appellate courtroom of the criminal courts building. A competition to which there were many responses was held, and the award was won by Edward E. Simmons. The work done by Mr. Simmons is the tall panel of "Justice" and the small wing panels of three grouped figures on each, representing "The Fates" and "Liberty, Fraternity and Equality."

Mr. Simmons was also one of the decorators of the library of congress who gathered fresh laurels by his treatment of a curtain corridor in which he represented the muses in nine large tympanums in a remarkable way, a series of figures of rare dignity and significance. Mr. Simmons also contributed a splendid panel to the decorations of the supreme court room in New York, his "Justice of the Law" balancing that of Mr. Blashfield's. The Astor gallery of the Astoria has some of the most delicate and charming of Mr. Simmons' work in a light and joyous vein suited to the uses of the room. One of his most recent works is the painting of "The Battle of Lexington" and "The Return of the Battle Flags."

Garnsey Already at Work.

Mr. Garnsey is already in St. Paul and has begun his work on the general scheme of the decorations. In addition to this work of strictly architectural accentuation in color, Mr. Garnsey will provide the entire decoration of the house of representatives chamber.

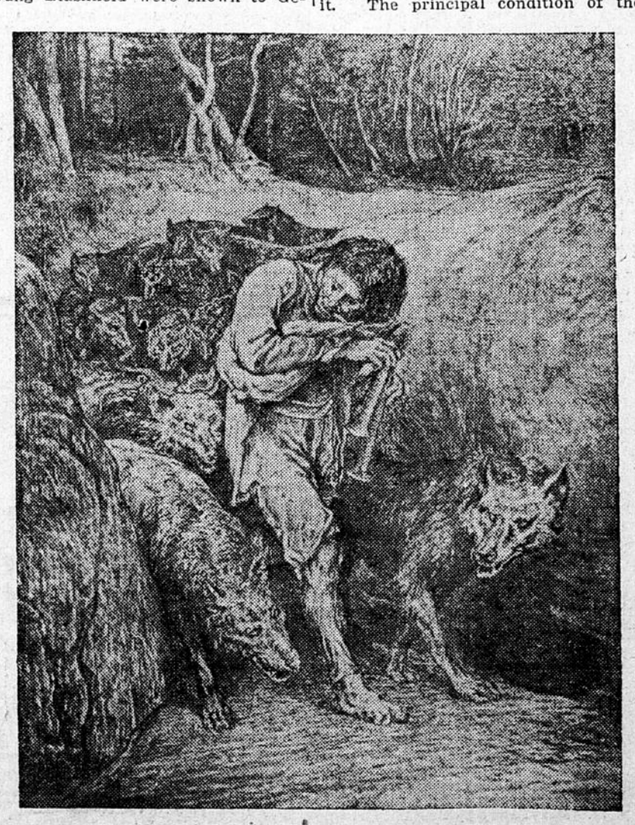
Of the painters, only Mr. La Farge has progressed far with his work. The four spandrels for the supreme court room have for their subjects the development of law, and include "The Divine and Moral Law," "The Relations of the Moral Law to the State," "The Recording of Precedent in Law," "The Adjustment of Conflicting Interests and Privileges Under Law." These are well under way.

The method of managing the decorative scheme is in accordance with the best development of the ideas of mural decoration. It is intended that not only each decoration shall be beautiful but that there shall be a definite relation between the parts of the work and between that and the beautiful building of which the decoration is to be a vital part. In order to unify and harmonize the entire work a board of design that includes the artist's, Cass Gilbert, architect of the building, and Daniel French, the distinguished sculptor, who is providing a portion of the exterior decorations, will pass upon all designs, insuring the conformity of each individual to the best general results.

Harmonious Designs Insured.

This plan is one evolved and strongly indorsed by the Society of Mural Painters, of which all of the artists are members. The brilliant success of the code is suggested and of which this is an essential feature received a complete demonstration in the decoration of the appellate court in New York, in which it was first put to the test. The program for this building was prepared by a committee of the society and approved by it. The principal condition of the program was the formation of a similar board of design, to pass upon all of the plans. Each artist pledged himself to withdraw if he proved unwilling to make such alteration of his designs as the committee desired. The arbiter chosen, who had the final decision in case of dispute, was Mr. La Farge.

Mr. Garnsey, speaking for the associated artists, says they do not care to impress their personalities so strongly upon any one thing that it shall attract immediate attention. "Perhaps there is a tendency to indulge in detail and to enlarge on personality in these days, but we hope to eliminate it in our work."



"THE WOLF CHARMER," ONE OF LA FARGE'S FAMOUS PAINTINGS.

LITTLE SATURDAY CHATS WITH SOME WELL KNOWN MEN

His Honor, the Mayor, Gives Some Inside Views on Running a City—His Chief Trouble Has Its Source in the Belief that His Power Is Greater Than It Really Is.

"Running a city might be a business as agreeable as it is honorable," says Mayor J. C. Haynes of Minneapolis, "if only the head of the firm didn't have so many silent partners.

"If a mayor were half as powerful as the boys and girls believe when they're studying civics, or as this society believes, or that society, or the other association—you can name them yourself—then His Honor's Life Would Be a Happy One..

"Some of my friends, especially among the ladies, the serious, benevolent kind, of pure and placid lives, flatter me immensely as to the extent of my power. They assume that I'm something Russian with a uniform and a 'koff'; that a word from me would banish all evil from our midst. If I had a mind to, they believe, I could say to the chief of police, 'Crime must cease in Minneapolis,' and the next morning at 8 o'clock all our criminals would go on strike. I could suggest that bad habits disgrace an enlightened community and aren't to be tolerated; then the very few people with bad habits would exchange them at once, like misfit gloves, for good, becoming habits.

"If I really were a Jove-like autocrat—if I 'owned the business,' could give all the orders, and could be certain of absolute obedience, my task would be simplified immensely. But half the community never realizes that a mayor must always consider, even i fhe does not always follow, the wishes of his fellow citizens, and that his power to enforce obedience to orders is extremely limited, not only by the small police force under him, but by popular sentiment itself.

"Yet some good folks seem to think that a literal enforcement of the laws and ordinances is all that's needed to put an end to the so-called social evils; every practical man knows better.

"The laws against murder and theft and arson have been literally enforced from time immemorial, and it is historically true that at the period when the statutes against these crimes were most vigorously enforced and the penalties were most severe the offenses themselves continued to multiply. At one time sheep-stealing was punishable by death in England, and the law was strictly enforced. But the hunger for fresh mutton was greater than the fear of the law, and sheep-stealing went on merrily just the same.

"Of course, it is the first duty of the authorities to see that the laws are enforced; but, as I said, this does not prevent the recurrence of offenses. And what is true of murder and of similar crimes is vastly truer of drunkenness, gambling and other minor misdeeds.

"The mayor can't be guided by individual opinions, but must consider the will of the majority. That majority, I think, expresses itself best at the polls. So I had to throw into the waste basket a fifteen-page letter upon 'The Mayoralty and Its Duties,' which I received the other day from 'Sociologist.' I can't always see my way clear to follow exactly the resolutions that 'call upon the honorable, the mayor' to check instanter certain actions that are 'viewed with alarm,' tho these resolutions may often contain helpful hints. Why, I couldn't even go over to a wholesale dry goods house last week and collect $3.50 for a stranger up at Mapleton, Minn. He was sure the money was really due him, and he knew I could get it 'by exerting my authority.' "

A MODEST DRAMATIST

William Young Runs When Crowd Goes Wild Over "Ben Hur."

William Young, who dramatized General Lew Wallace's "Ben Hur" for Klaw & Erlanger, is almost entirely known by his works. Amid the tremendous scenes of enthusiasm which swept thru the Broadway theater, New York city, four years ago, when "Ben Hur" received its first presentation, with the people fairly wild to reward him with their plaudits, Mr. Young quietly slipped out of the playhouse and disappeared. Those who know him best can easily understand such an act, for the glare of publicity is extremely distasteful to him. Mr. Young has done much for contemporary literature as well as for the stage.

He has been especially successful in his dramatization of "Ben Hur." Not only has he caught the spirit of General Wallace's great novel, but the dialogue is written in the author's lofty, dignified and vivid picturesque style. Mr. Young has handled the religious side of the story with a sincere and delicate appreciation of the danger of intrusion upon a sacred theme. There is not a moment in "Ben Hur" when the highest Christian sentiment is not carefully guarded and preserved.

Adelina Patti.

Adelina Patti, the famous singer, on her farewell tour, travels in a sumptuous private car, and every precaution is taken to see that she is accorded every attention and care that the unforseen may not happen and prevent her appearance at the engagement contracted.

Madame Patti's private car will be attached to the "Twin City-Omaha Limited" of the North-Western Line, leaving Omaha Dec. 28, arriving Minneapolis morning of the 29th.

Madame Patti invariably chooses the North-Western line in her travels.

Dyspepsia in its worst forms will yield to the use of Carter's Little Nerve Pills, aided by Carter's Little Liver Pills. They not only relieve present distress but strengthen the stomach and digestive apparatus.

Al-Ki Makes a Perfect Skin,
Cures chapped hands; clears the skin or roughness, pimples, blackheads, blemishes, wrinkles. 25c. Druggists or by mail. Al-Ki Chemical Co., St. Paul.

WHEN THE ARCHBISHOP WAS AN ARMY CHAPLAIN

The Eminent Churchman Tells How He Entered the Army and How an Old Photograph Came to Be Taken.

REV. JOHN IRELAND.
At the age of 23, when he was appointed chaplain at large to all the Catholics in the Minnesota volunteers.

(One of the latest photographs of Archbishop Ireland by Kuhn of St. Paul.)

Yesterday, when the Journal representative handed Archbishop Ireland the photograph of the black-haired young man which heads this article, he gazed at it in astonishment for a few moments and then exclaimed: "Well, well; where did you get that picture? I haven't seen it for almost forty years."

"When was it taken?"

"Why, in the spring of 1862, just before I went to the civil war. Whitney, the old photographer, whose gallery was in the Lamber block, corner of Third and Cedar streets, made it. I remember that just after I had received the appointment from Governor Ramsey of chaplain-at-large to all the Catholics in the Minnesota volunteer regiments, I went there alone to have my picture taken so that I might leave one with my father and mother when I went to the front. I think that I had two or three copies struck off, and this may possibly be one.

"In June, 1862, the resignation of Chaplain Chaffee of the Fifth regiment left a vacancy which the governor, having in mind the large number of Catholics in that regiment, filled by assigning me to the place. I joined the regiment at Corinth and remained with it until April, 1863, when I was obliged to resign on account of ill-health. I was with the boys at Corinth, Vicksburg, Iukah, Holly Springs and numerous other places where they fought hard and manfully. I presume that I was as good at foraging in those days as any of them, and it may be that I added a chicken or two to the mess as we went along.

"Did I wear a uniform? Well, a sort of one. I wore a military overcoat because that was the most comfortable one I could get, and my army hat had a cord and tassel on it.

"Colonel Borgesrode, who was in command of the regiment when I joined, is now the proprietor of a hotel at Winsted in this state."

Rogers Pocket Knives
At Gardner Hardware Co., 304 Hen. av

Delay has cost many a man his best chance.

Bring in your want ads for The Journal Monday and let stand till you get your want.

Defective Page