

## Passing of Daily's Brings Memories of Famous Players

From the New York Times.  
So Daily's also is to be demolished, giving place to a steel construction office building. Lovers of the theater had better hurry to see it. Its mid-century brick walls and mahogany roof are inescapably ugly. The spacious entrance, once thronged with the beauty, the wit and the social grace of Manhattan, is now plastered with crude posters and advertising. Long decades were needed to bring even Sheraton and Chippendale into their own again. All that remains of the old Daily's is a distant memory that still fondly lingers but eventually must pass.

The era of Douglas and Mary will doubtless never realize how historic it is in opportunity to the era of Ada and John. A generation insured to the dimpling knees of the Winter Garden would be amazed if it could know the mad thrill which swept the south of this city when Miss Rehan appeared in satin knee breeches in "The Country Girl"—that romping comedy which the music of Augustin Daly Victorianized and the Restoration, naughtiness of Wycherley's "Country Wife." But the greater, the more incommunicable marvel lies in the fact that dramatic art was then a masterful and a delicate. Every wrinkle in those bewitching blue small-clothes is indelibly stamped in memory, but they still stand out less vividly than the sparkling wit and nerve of the dialogue, the abounding nature and vivacity of every character and situation in the play. It is only those who have known the richness and variety of spoken comedy at its best who really suffer from the narrow range and stereotyped dullness of modern character and plot.

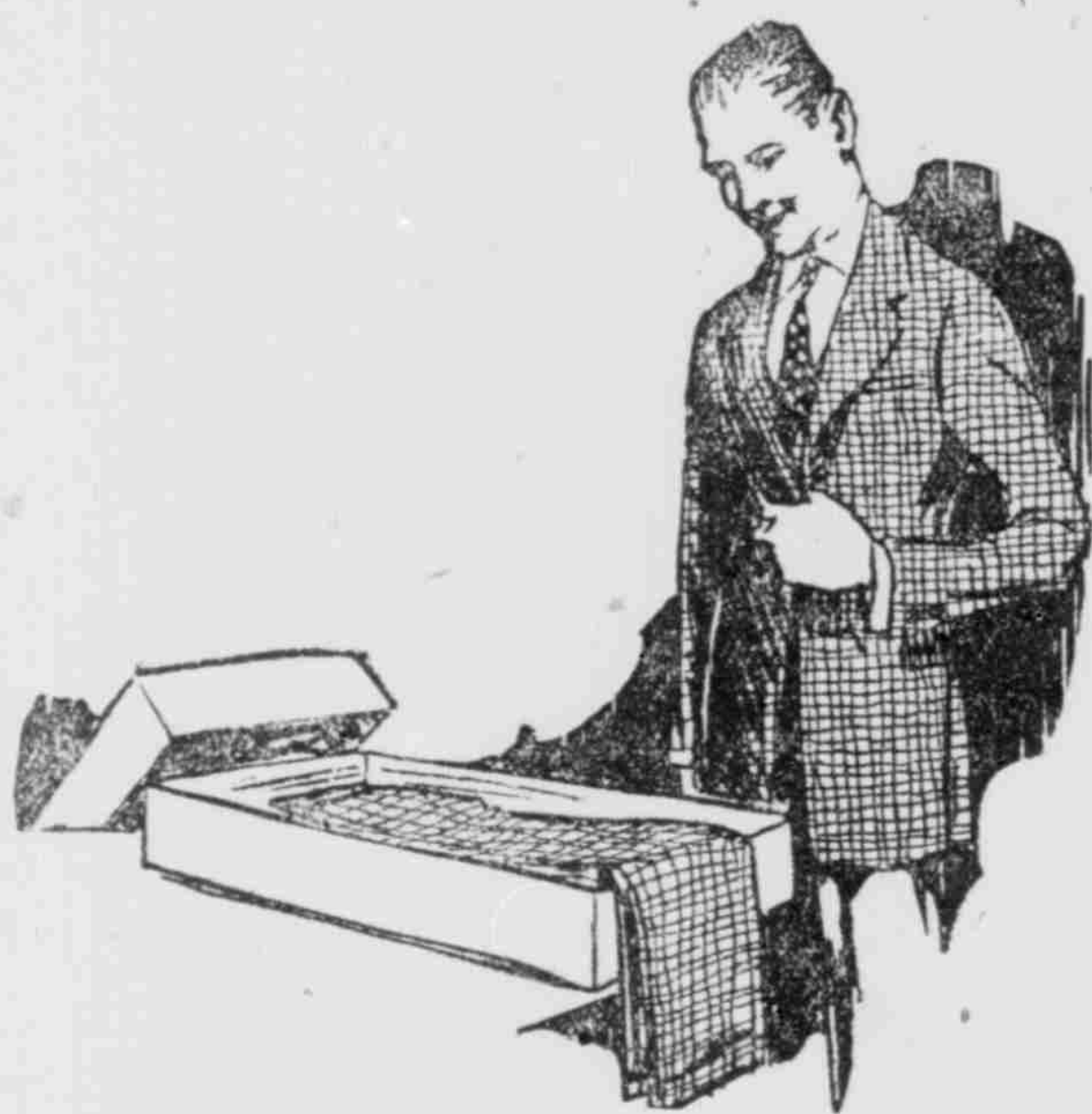
Then there was the Shakespearean repertory. Miss Rehan's Viola and Rosalind were perhaps a trifle decidedly—indeed, in the delicate, peachlike bloom and poignant tenderness of the Shakespearean girlhood, but with a rush of sheer spirit, what an overflowing of divinely potent comedy! Her Kate the Shrew was a towering monument of rage and scorn, lifting the boisterous Elizabethan action to the plane of character comedy, yet always finely emphasizing the essential force of the situation. Her Portia in its serious moments, as in the "quality of mercy" speech, had a cathedral authority, a majesty of the spirit, that suggested possibilities of tragic action destined never to be explored. Her limitations, like her qualities, bore the stamp of the director. In the makeup of his companies Augustin Daly was always a feminist and essentially an explainer of what was beginning to be denounced as the "star," yet others of his household were no less artists and comedians. Mrs. Gilbert and James Lewis, the brothers Holland and a score of others, were perfection itself. In Otto Skinner and John Drew the value of the old stock company training is still manifest for those who have eyes to see.

Art at Daly's was Victorian in the best sense of the word as in the second best. During a brief stay in the company May Irwin had the part of a young housewife who smelled the burning of fish in her drawing room and "retired" to the kitchen. In the rehearsal Miss Irwin gave one swift throw up her hands and bolted through the door. The horrified Mr. Daly led her "down center" and told her to sniff "here gently." Then he led her to the white marble Vestal Virgin pillared in one corner and the Lozgers Group that dispensed "nice hum" in each place. Then he led her to the register (an antique device well known to archaeologists), where he told her to sniff mightily if she must, but not to forget how a gentleman quits her drawing room. Miss Irwin sniffed mightily, as the story goes, but not at the register. "You smelled my word burning," said the unfrightened modernist to the Victorian genius local. "do you suppose I'd have to consult the Rogers Group to find out it was in the kitchen?" Art in those latter days may be many things, but it is

no longer delicate, measured and essential.  
In his Shakespearean productions Daly followed the Victorian scenic tradition as unhesitatingly as did Henry Irving and Beerbohm Tree in London. His greatest triumph was "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in the staging of which in 1888 he used to the full the novelty of electric lighting. In a monograph on the several productions of the play on the New York stage, Prof. G. C. D. Odell of Columbia gives an admirably detailed record of the production and sets down his own impressions of it in a vein of lyric fondness. In the way of a scenic production it was, indeed, as perfect as it was in the acting. This result was almost certainly due, however, to the fact that the play happens to lend itself to pictorial investiture with a minimum of "cutting" the lines and transposing the scenes to fit the scenery. When Daly applied the same method to "The Tempest," the result was disaster. Prospero's magic for a ready belief in which Shakespeare trusted largely to the magic of his lines and his characterizations, became ridiculous when executed by carpenter, mechanic and scene painter. The two passages in which Shakespeare used mechanical effects, Caliban's "rock" and the melting of Prospero's Masque "into thin air" went hope-

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Special to The News-Times.  
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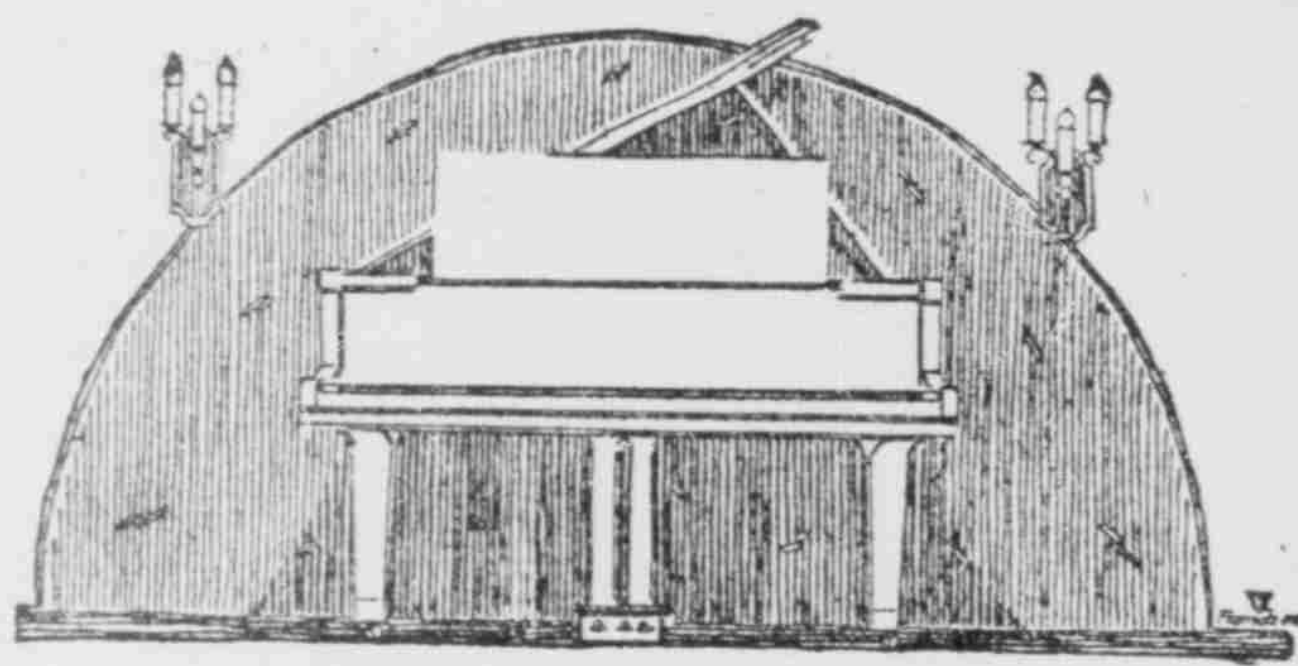


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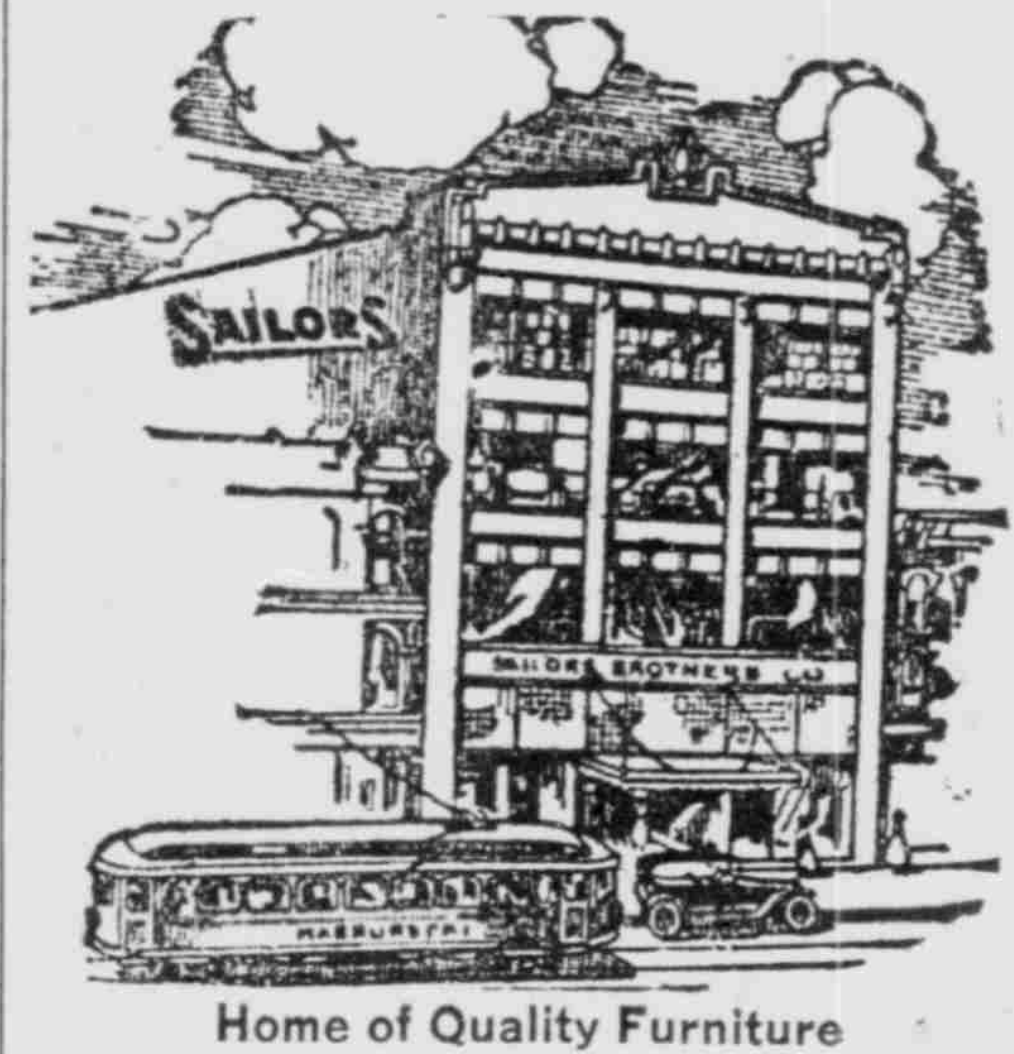
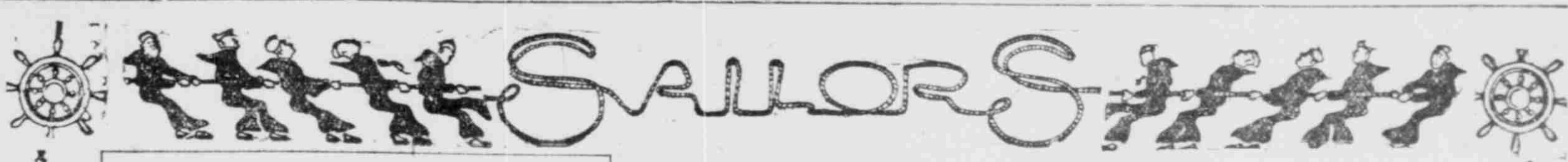
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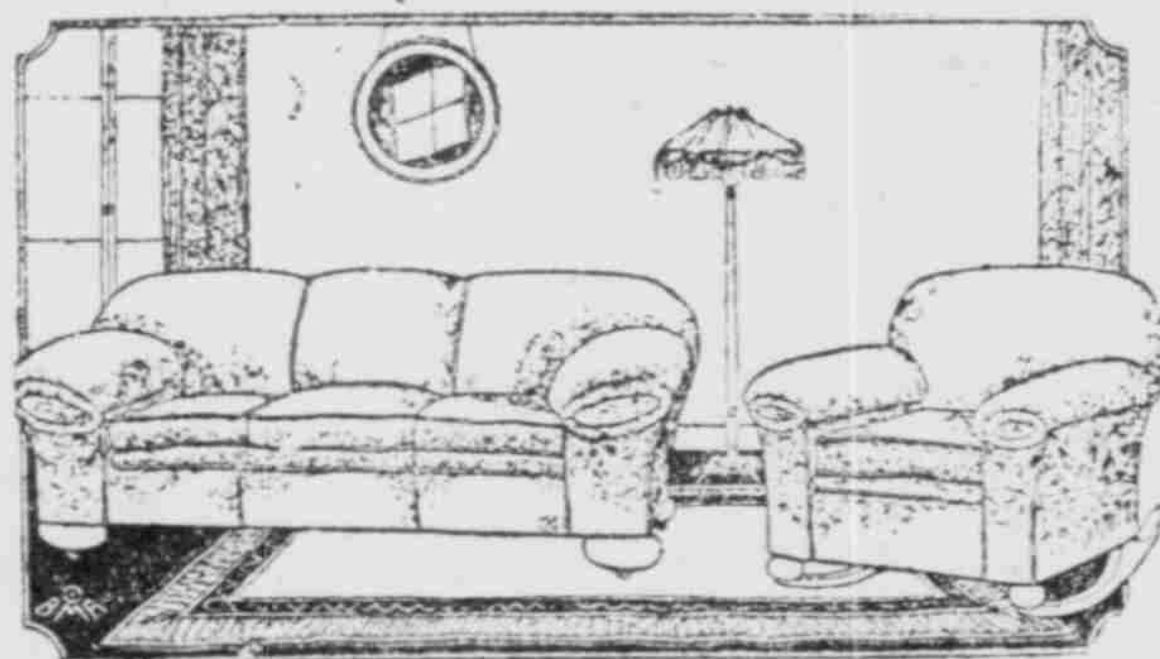
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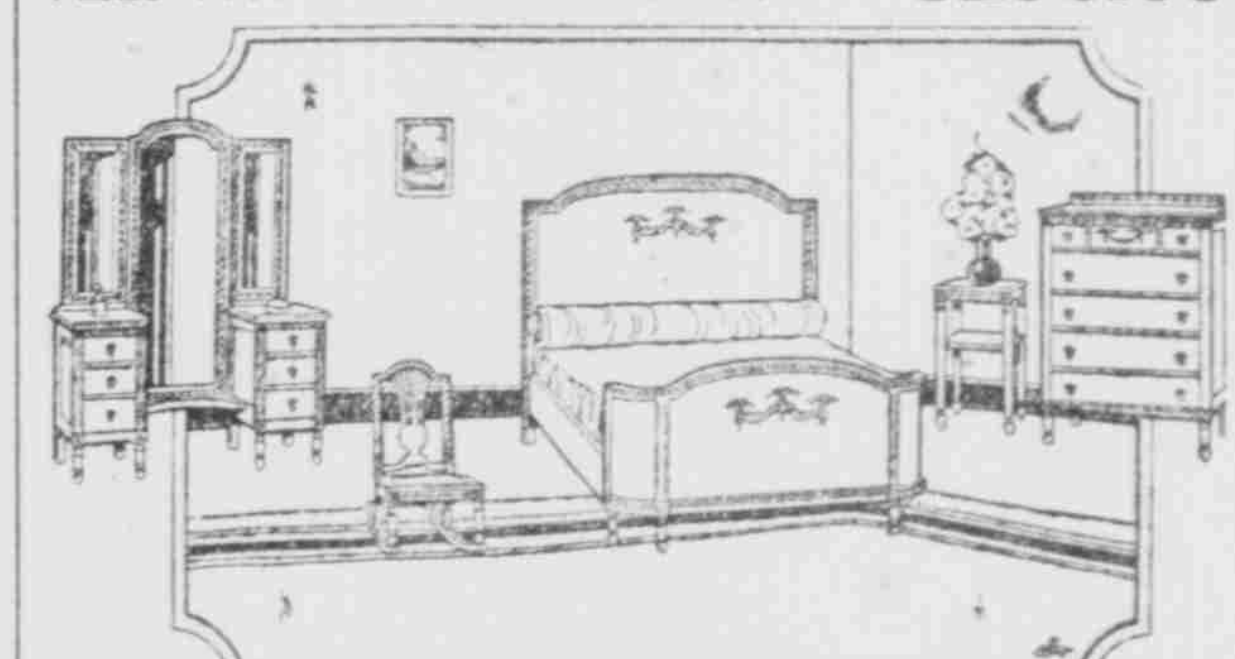


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