

Mr. Archibald has posed for a number of years as the only Simon-pure, eighteen carat war correspondent in this country, but newspaper men have had his number ever since the Russian-Japanese war when Dick Little and Christian Dane Haggerty returned from the Orient with the story that he was a photographer and social lion and not much of a war correspondent. The present incident puts him in a fine position, and entitles him to the contempt of not only those in his own profession, but of every American.

Charles E. Van Loan, fictionary, good fellow brilliant writer and, in a word, "regular folks," spent a day or two in the city early in the week on his way to California where a moving picture concern is interested in having him compile his series of moving picture stories which have delighted the readers of the Saturday Evening Post and other periodicals. He will return here within a month to gather some material for a new series of articles which he has in view. It is with pardonable pride that we mention the fact that his first contribution to fiction was a story written for Goodwin's Weekly seven years ago which we will reproduce in an early issue.

### VIRGINIA CITY THEATRICALS

By C. C. G.

MR. CHARLES E. VAN LOAN is publishing in the Saturday Evening Post a series of epitaphs of the "Ghost Cities" of Nevada, meaning the cities that arose and flourished until the mines which caused their creation ceased to produce and they perished from want of sustenance. They make interesting reading and are as nearly correct as most epitaphs are. But he makes an error here and there.

When he says the theatrical companies in the early sixties were wont to stop off at Reno and go up to Virginia City to play, he is a bit forgetful, or he would have recalled the fact that in the early sixties there was no Reno and there was nothing to stop off from.

But the companies went to Virginia City to play all the same, only they went from the west over the Sierras in stage coaches, not from the east by railroad coaches.

And if Mr. Van Loan had known all the facts he might have added an interesting paragraph to the epitaph regarding them.

They began in a small way, but they grew. Lottie Crabtree was playing in one hall and one night she put on the emblazoned regalia of the first fire company that existed there. It was the fashion in those days for audiences to give instant and substantial recognition when they were pleased by a performance by tossing their pocket change on the stage—anything from a four-bit piece to \$20. When Lottie recognized the fire company, the fire company responded. A few members went out, roused a bank clerk, bought a \$900 silver bar—it was 44 per cent gold—and tossed it upon the stage. It was mentioned in the next morning's paper and next night Susie Robinson, who was singing in another hall, put on the colors of the other fire company. The rival company had that day received an intimation of what was to happen and the brick they, with irrepressible enthusiasm, tossed on the stage for her was stamped \$1,873.

Ada Isaacs Menkin went there with her famous black horse and played Mazepa, and rightfully robbed the boys without stint, and they were as happy at being robbed by her as she was over the proceeds of the robbery.

Her coming gave Parker Price a chance for his finest pun. Just before she left California for Nevada she was married to Jim Barkley, who had made a large fortune dealing faro.

When the pair appeared arm in arm on the street in Carson, Parker insisted that they should

be arrested. Then it was explained to him that they were married, but he still insisted that they should be arrested on the ground that even if they had committed no crime, they supplied a clear case of "Adir and a Better." When a fine opera house was built then McCullough and Barrett and their full California theatre company went there and played a week at a time. Frank Mayo was a boy actor then, and Adams and Murdoch and Stark and Julia Dean Hayne played there. The old and only California minstrels, Birch, Bacchus & Co., often went there and played.

One night when McCullough was taken ill and Othello was on for that night, Colonel and Judge Robert H. Taylor took McCullough's role and played a superb Iago to Barrett's Othello.

And there were other plays not so stately. Vaudeville was born there and some of both the actors and the audiences were not angels.

Some gentlemen who are now staid and respected citizens took their first dancing lessons in the Virginia City dance halls. The music in those halls was exquisite, from the jolliest waltz to the highest measures of grand opera, for when men had worked their shifts in the deep drifts and went above ground for fresh air and enjoyment, they were satisfied with nothing but the best and they had the money to pay for it, and they did not much care for money, for would not the stock they had in the Curry or Ophir or Norcross or some other mine make them solid when the next bonanza was opened?

Then there was the Cornish quartette, with voices like flutes and organs and tolling bells combined. There was a brass band there, too, and when a big Chinaman had died and the procession for his funeral started up C street, that band could play "We'll get blind drunk when Johnnie comes marching home," all the Chinese were exultant as they marched behind the band and the

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