

building, and on this are represented scenes from military and naval life — infantry, artillery, and cavalry on the march, wounded men, sailors in boats, etc. This much at least can be said in praise of the figures, that they are not the stereotyped soldiers and sailors of the picture books, but seem to have been designed by some one who has seen actual warfare. They are too small, however, to be effective. The building is not yet far advanced, but one or two things are clear: it will have the beauty of usefulness, which is lacking in so many of our public structures, and it will be a wide departure from the classical ideas that long dominated our Government architects. For the purpose of providing a large number of well-lighted and well-ventilated office rooms, the plan seems an excellent one. The architect is Gen. Meigs, formerly Quartermaster-General of the army.

From any fair examination of the pension system, whether hasty or thorough, a few definite conclusions are pretty sure to be reached by the observer. These are:

1. That the *ex-parte* system of proving

claims is bad, and becomes worse and worse as the war recedes into the past and men's memories concerning it grow dim. It should be abandoned, and in place of it there should be substituted a system of taking evidence in public before Government officers and in the neighborhood where the claimant resides.

2. That examinations to ascertain disability should be made by traveling boards of Government surgeons instead of by civil physicians living in the same neighborhood as the claimant, in order to secure freedom from partiality and prejudice, and uniformity of action.

3. That the entire present roll of pensioners should be examined by the same system proposed for new cases and pending applications, as the only practicable way of purging it from fraud.

4. That within its limitations, as prescribed by law and tradition, the Pension Office, with its disbursing agencies and its special examiners, is an efficient piece of governmental machinery, only requiring the aid of appropriate legislation to carry into effect all needed reforms.

Eugene V. Smalley.

THE REVERSIBLE LANDSCAPE.

To LOOK at me no one would suppose it; but it is, nevertheless, a fact that I am a member of a fire company. I am somewhat middle-aged, somewhat stout, and, at certain times of the year, somewhat stiff in the joints; and my general dress and demeanor, that of a sober business man, would not at all suggest the active and impetuous fireman of the period. I do not belong to any paid department, but to a volunteer Hook and Ladder Company, composed of the active-bodied and active-minded male citizens of the country town where I live. I am included in the active-minded portion of the company; and in an organization like ours, which is not only intended to assist in putting out the fires of burning buildings, but to light the torch of the mind, this sort of member is very valuable. In the building which we occupy, our truck, with its hooks and ladders, stands upon the lower floor, while the large room above is used as a club and reading-room. At the beginning of the first winter of our occupancy of the building, we found that this room, which had been very pleasant in summer, was extremely uncomfortable in winter. The long apartment had been originally intended for purposes of storage; and although we had ornamented it and fitted it up very nicely, a

good deal of carpentry and some mason's work was necessary before it could be made tight and draught-proof for cold weather. But lately we had spent money very freely, and our treasury was absolutely empty. I was chairman of the committee which had charge of everything pertaining to our rooms, and I felt the responsibilities of my position. The necessary work should be begun immediately, but how could the money be raised to pay for it? Subscriptions for this and that had been made until the members were tired of that sort of thing; and the ill success of the last one showed that it would not do to try it again.

It revolved in my mind a great many plans for raising the sum required, and one morning, as I was going to my place of business in the city, I was seized with a happy idea. At the moment of seizure I was standing in front of a large show-window, in which were a number of oil paintings, all of them very fresh and bright. "How would it do," thought I to myself, "to buy a picture at a moderate price and put it up at a raffle? People who would not be willing to give the money outright will often enter into a scheme of this kind. I will go in and make inquiries."

When I entered I found myself in a large

show-room, the walls of which were covered with paintings. A person advanced to meet me who, it soon became evident, was the proprietor of the place. He was a large man, dressed in black, with an open shirt-front and an expansive countenance. His eyes and hair were black, and his ears stood out from his head in a manner which, according to a recent writer, indicates the money-getting faculty; and he plainly belonged to that class of persons who in the Middle Ages did not, as is the present custom, pay money for having their teeth extracted, but often disbursed large sums for the privilege of retaining them. When I asked him if I could procure a good and effective picture at a moderate price, he threw out his chest and waved his arms toward his walls. "There, sir," he said, "you can see oil paintings of every subject, of every style, and of every class; and at prices, sir, lower than they can be found elsewhere in the known world. Mention the kind of picture you want, and I can accommodate you."

I replied that I did not know exactly what I wanted, and that I would see what he had. I now began to look at the pictures on the walls, occasionally giving my ideas in regard to their merits, when suddenly my companion turned to me and said:

"Are you connected with the press, sir?"

I replied that I was not, although I occasionally wrote for periodicals.

"Upon art subjects?" he asked.

I replied in the negative.

"Then you are unprejudiced," he said, "and I believe from your appearance that you are a man of influence, and there is nothing I should like better than to exhibit the workings of my artorganization to a man of influence, unprejudiced on the subject. My object is, sir, to popularize art; to place high art within the reach of the masses, and thus to educate the artistic faculties of even the poorest citizens."

I said that I supposed the chromo movement was intended to do all that.

"No, sir," he replied warmly; "chromos cannot accomplish the object. They are too expensive; and, besides, they are not the real thing. They are printed, not painted; and what the public wants is the real thing, the work of the brush; and that is what I give them. The pictures you see here, and an immense stock besides, are all copies of valuable paintings, many of them in the finest galleries of Europe. I sell no originals. I guarantee everything to be a copy. Honesty is at the bottom of everything I do. I would scorn to pretend to sell a ten- or twenty-thousand dollar painting for — for the price asked. But my copies are exactly like the originals; that is all I claim. I would like, sir, to show you

through my establishment, and let you see how I am carrying on the great work of art education. There are picture-dealers in this city, sir, plenty of them, who try to make the public believe that the vile daubs they sell are originals, and the works of well-known painters; and when they admit that the picture is a copy, they say it is the work of some distinguished student; that there is no other copy in the country; or make some other misstatement about it. These persons conceal their processes, but their tricks are beginning to be well known to the public. Now, sir, I conceal nothing. The day for that sort of thing is past. I want men of influence to know the facilities I have for the production of art-work upon a grand scale. We will first go into the basement. Sir," said he, as I followed him down-stairs, "you know how the watch-making business has been revolutionized by the great companies which manufacture watches by machinery. The slow, uncertain, and expensive work of the poor toilers who made watches by hand has been superseded by the swift, unerring, and beautiful operations of machinery and steam. Now, sir, the great purpose of my life is to introduce machinery into art, and, ultimately, steam. And yet I will have no shams, no chromos. Everything shall be real — the work of the brush. Here, sir," he continued, showing me into a long room filled with workmen, "you see the men engaged in putting together the frames on which to stretch my canvases; every stick cut, planed, and jointed out at a mill in Vermont, and sent on here by the car-load. Beyond are the workmen cutting up, stretching, and preparing the canvas, bales upon bales of which are used in a day. At the far end are the mills for grinding and mixing colors. And now we will go to the upper floors, and see the true art-work. Here, sir," he said, continuing to talk as we walked through the rooms on the various floors, "is the landscape and marine department. That row of men are putting in skies they do nothing else. Each has his copy before him, and, day after day, month after month, paints nothing but that sky; and of course he does it with great rapidity and fidelity. Above, on those shelves, are sky-pots of every variety; blue-serene pots, tempest pots, sunset pots in compartments, morning-gray pots, and many others. Then the work passes to the middle-ground painters, who have their half-tone pots within easy reach. After that the foreground men take it up, and the figurists put in the men and animals. That man there has been painting that foreground cow ever since the first of August. He can now put her in three and a half times in fifteen minutes, and will probably rise to

sixteen cows an hour by the end of this month. These girls do nothing but put white-caps to waves. There's a great demand at present for the windy marine. This next room is devoted to portraits to order. You see that row of old ladies without heads, each holding a pair of spectacles, and with one finger in the Bible to keep the place; that's very popular, and we put in a head when the photograph is sent. There is a great rage at present for portraits of babies without any clothes on. Here is a lot of undraped infants with bodies all finished, but with no heads. We can finish them to order at very short notice. I have one girl who puts in all the dimples. You would be surprised to see what a charming dimple she can make with one twist of her brush. Long practice at one thing, sir, is the foundation of the success of this great establishment. Take that girl away from her dimple-pot, and she is nothing. She is now upstairs, putting dimples into a large Correggio order from the West. This next room is our figure department, battle-pieces, groups, single figures, everything. As you have seen before, each man only copies from the original that part which is his specialty. In addition to its other advantages, this system is a great protection to us. None of my men can work at home at nights and Sundays, and forge pictures. Not one of them can do a whole one. You will find minor establishments who pretend to sell copies of the great originals, and they impose on the public by stating that their pictures are made by art-students in Munich. This has created a great demand for cheap pictures by art-students in Munich. Now, sir, I concede to this popular demand. All my pictures are made by Munich art-students. Every person in my place, from the canvas-stretchers in the basement to that man by the window with the expression-pots, who finishes up all heads and portraits, is a student of art-students in Munich, several of whom I have had as instructors to my operatives. Thus, sir, with a few of these students, I have leavened my whole force. And now, sir, you have seen the greater part of my establishment. The varnishing, packing, and storage rooms are in another building. I am now perfecting plans for the erection of an immense edifice with steam-engines in the cellar, in which my paintings shall be done by machinery. No chromos, mind you, but real oil paintings, done by brushes revolving on cylinders. I shall have rolls of canvas a mile long, like the paper on which our great dailies are printed, and the machines shall do everything; cut off the picture, when it has passed among the cylinders, whereupon fresh canvas will be rolled in for a new one; another ma-

chine will stretch them; and they will pass through a varnish bath in the twinkling of an eye. But this is in the future. What I want of you, sir, and of other men of influence in society, is to let our people know of the great good that is ready for them now, and of the greater benefit that is coming. And, more than that, you can do incalculable good to our artists. Those poor toilers on the solitary canvas should know how to become prosperous, great, and happy; tell them to go into some other business. And now, sir, I must see what I can do for you. We will return to my gallery, and I will show you exactly what you want."

When we reached the back part of the show-room, down-stairs, he brought out an unframed picture about three feet long and two high, and placed it in a favorable light. "There," said he, "is a picture which will suit you. It is what we call a reversible landscape, and is copied from the only genuine picture of the kind in the world. It is just as good as two pictures. In this position, you see, a line of land stretches across the middle of the picture, with trees, houses, and figures, with a light sky above and a lake, darker in hue, below. Everything on the land is reflected accurately in the water. It is a landscape in morning light. Turn it upside down, so, and it is an evening scene; darkening sky above; light water beneath; the morning star, which you saw faintly glimmering in the other picture, is now the reflection of the evening star."

I do not pretend to be a judge of pictures, but I fancy I appreciate an original idea when I see it, and I thought that this picture might answer my purpose.

"What is the price of the painting?" I asked.

"Well, sir," said he, "to you, as a man of influence, I will fix the price of this great painting, from a comparatively unknown work of Gaspar Poussin, at four dollars and a half."

In spite of what I had seen of the facilities possessed by this establishment for producing cheap work, I must confess that I was surprised at the smallness of the sum asked for an oil painting of that size; I had expected to give forty or fifty dollars. But, although I am not a judge of paintings, I am a business man, and accustomed to make bargains. Therefore I said:

"I will give you two dollars and fifty cents for the picture."

"Done," said he. "Where shall I send it?"

I gave him my city address, and paid the money. As he accompanied me to the door, he said: "If you would like more of these pictures, I will sell you one dozen for eighteen dollars, or the whole lot of one hundred, just finished,— and there will be no more of

them painted,—for one hundred dollars." I told him one was all I wanted, and departed. I carried the picture home that afternoon, and in the evening exhibited it at our club-room, and made known my scheme for raising the money we needed by getting up a raffle with this painting as the prize; one hundred tickets at the low price of two dollars each. The reversible landscape was set up, first one way and then the other, a great many times, and created quite a sensation.

"I don't think it's worth the half of two hundred dollars," said Mr. Buckby, our president, "but as the money is for the use of our Association, I don't mind that. But my objection to the scheme is that, if I should gain the prize, I should be laughed at by all my fellow-members; for, to tell the truth, I think that painting is a good deal more funny than otherwise. It's not what I call high art."

The other members generally agreed with him. They were very much amused by the picture, but they did not care to possess it, imagining that those who ridiculed it might also ridicule its owner. This opposition discouraged me, and I retired to reflect. In about five minutes I returned to the company, which had now greatly increased, as it was one of our regular meeting nights, and I asked if they would consent to this raffle if I would engage that the winner of the picture should not be laughed at by any other member.

"How will you guarantee that?" asked Mr. Buckby.

"I will put the matter in the hands of the Association," I answered. "If, after the raffle is over, a majority of the members shall decide that any of us have reason to laugh at the winner of this painting, I will refund all the money paid for tickets."

There was something in this proposition which aroused the curiosity of my fellow-firemen; and when the meeting was called to order, a resolution was adopted that we should have the raffle, and that the management of it should be placed in my hands, subject to the conditions mentioned above. There were a good many surmises as to what I was going to do to keep the people from laughing at the prize-winner, the general opinion being that I intended to have the picture altered so that it would be like an ordinary landscape, and not reversible. But the affair was something novel, and promised to put much-needed money into our treasury; and several gentlemen assured me that they would make it their business to see that every member took a ticket, one generous man promising in the interests of the Association to present them to such of the few absent

members as might decline to buy them for themselves. This offer was made in consequence of my insistence that every one of us should have a chance in the raffle.

The next morning I went to the art-factory and told the proprietor that I would take the lot of reversibles he had on hand, if he would include the one already purchased, and receive ninety-seven dollars and a half as the balance due.

"All right!" said he. "I have the ninety-nine still on hand. Are you in the tea business, sir?"

"Oh, no," said I; "the pictures are intended for a large Association."

"No better way of extending the influence of art, sir," he said heartily. "I shall charge you nothing for boxing. The same address, sir?"

"No, they must be forwarded to my residence," and I gave him the needful directions, and a check.

The next day the ninety-nine pictures arrived and were stored in my barn. My wife, to whom I had told my plan, made some objections to it, saying it did not seem right to use half the money paid in in buying so many pictures; but I told her that no one could expect in a raffle to clear all the money subscribed, and that although we should not gain as much as I had hoped, we should clear a hundred dollars, and every man would have a picture. This was surely fair, and the fact was that the unsympathetic state of mind of our members made it necessary for me to do something of this kind, if I expected to raise the needed money at all.

The raffle was announced, and on the appointed evening there was a full attendance. The prize was won by a Mr. Horter, an art collector of a nervous temperament, who had objected to the raffle, and who had consented to buy a ticket only after repeated solicitations.

"Now, mind," he said to me, "you promised that the other men should not laugh at me, and I hold you to your contract."

I answered that I intended to stand by it, and that the painting should be sent to him in the morning from my house, whither it had been removed. Every member present announced his intention of calling on Horter the following evening to see why he should not be laughed at.

All the next forenoon my man, with a horse and light wagon, was engaged in delivering the reversible landscapes, one to every member of our club. These gentlemen were, in almost every case, absent at their places of business. When they came home in the evening each found his picture, with his name on the back of it, and a printed slip informing

him that in this raffle there had been no blanks, and that every man had drawn a prize.

Not a man called upon Mr. Horter that evening, and he greatly wondered why they did not come in, either to laugh or to say why they should not do so; but every member of our club was visited by nearly all his fellow firemen, who ran in to see if it were true that he also had one of those ridiculous reversible landscapes. As everybody knew that Mr. Horter had one, there was no need to call on him; and even if they had hoped to be able to laugh at him they could not do so, when each one of them had drawn one of the pictures himself. A good many called on me, and some were a little severe in their remarks, saying that although it might be a very pretty joke, I must have used up nearly all the money that they had given for the good of the Association, for, of course, none of them cared for the absurd prize.

But when, on the next meeting night, I paid in one hundred dollars to the treasury, a sum more than sufficient to pay for the work necessary to make our room comfortable, they were quite satisfied. The only thing that troubled them was to know what to do with the pictures they had drawn. Not one of them was willing to keep his preposterous landscape in his house. It was Mrs. Buckby, our president's wife, who suggested a way out of the difficulty.

"Of course," she said to her husband, "it would have been much better if each one of you had given the two dollars without any raffle, and then you would have had all your money. But you can't expect men to do a thing like that."

"Not after we had all paid in our regular dues, and had been subscribing and subscribing for this, that, and the other thing for nearly a year," said I, who was present at the time. "Some extra inducement was necessary."

"But, as you have all those horrid landscapes," she continued, "why don't you take them and put them up along the top of your walls, next the ceiling, where those openings are which used to ventilate the room when it was used for storage? That would save all the money that you would have to pay to carpenters and painters to have those places made tight and decent-looking; and it would give your room a gorgeous appearance."

This idea was hailed with delight. Every man brought his picture to the hall, and we nailed the whole hundred in a row along the top of the four walls, turning one with the darker half up, and the next the other way, so as to present alternate views of morn-

ing and evening along the whole distance. The arrangement answered admirably. The draughts of air from outside were perfectly excluded; and as our walls were very lofty, the general effect was good.

"Art of that kind cannot be too high," said Mr. Horter.

A week or two after this, when I arrived at home one afternoon, my wife told me that there was a present for me in the dining-room. As such things were not common, I hurried in to see what it was. I found a very large flat package, tied up in brown paper, and on it a card with my name and a long inscription. The latter was to the effect that my associates of the Hook and Ladder Company, desirous of testifying their gratitude to the originator and promoter of the raffle scheme, took pleasure in presenting him with the accompanying work of art, which, when hung upon the walls of his house, would be a perpetual reminder to him of the great and good work he had done for the Association.

I cannot deny that this pleased me much. "Well!" I exclaimed to my wife, "it is very seldom that a man gets any thanks for his gratuitous efforts in behalf of his fellow-beings; and although I must say that my services in raising money for the Association deserved recognition, I did not expect that the members would do themselves the justice to make me a present."

Unwrapping the package, I discovered, to my intense disgust, a copy of the Reversible Landscape! My first thought was that some of the members, for a joke, had taken down one of the paintings from our meeting-room, and had sent it to me; but, on carefully examining the canvas and frame, I was quite certain that this picture had never been nailed to a wall. It was evidently a new and fresh copy of the painting of which I had been assured no more would be produced. I must admit that I had felt a certain pride in decorating our hall with the style of picture that could not be seen elsewhere; and, moreover, I greatly dislike to be overreached in business matters, and my wrath against the manufacturer of high art entirely overpowered and dissipated any little resentment I might have felt against my waggish fellow-members who had sent me the painting.

Early the next morning I went direct to the art-factory, and was just about entering when my attention was attracted by a prominent picture in the window. I stepped back to look at it. It was our reversible landscape, mounted upon an easel, and labeled "A Morning Scene." While I examined it to assure myself that it was really the landscape with which I was so familiar, it was turned

upside down by some concealed machinery, and appeared labeled, "An Evening Scene." At the foot of the easel I now noticed a placard inscribed: "The Reversible Landscape; A New Idea in Art."

I stood for a moment astounded. The rascally picture-monger had not only made another of these pictures, but he was prepared to furnish them in any number. Rushing into the gallery, I demanded to see the proprietor.

"Look here!" said I, "what does this mean? You told me that there were to be

no more of those pictures painted; that I was to possess a unique lot."

"That's not the same picture, sir," he exclaimed. "I am surprised that you should think so. Step outside with me, sir, and I'll prove it to you. There, sir!" said he, as we stood before the painting, which was now Morning side up, "you see that star? In the pictures we sold you the morning star was Venus; in this one it is Jupiter. This is not the same picture. Do you imagine that we would deceive a customer? That, sir, is a thing we never do!"

Frank R. Stockton.

JOHN BRIGHT.

It is seldom that men who have taken a prominent part in the history of their time are able to anticipate with calmness and confidence the verdict of posterity upon their character and their achievements. For the most part they have commenced enterprises, and been associated with movements, the true merits of which must be judged by slow results. Years may conclusively prove the soundness of their judgment and the accuracy of their prevision, but are, perhaps, just as likely to show that the measures which they labored to advance were crudely formed and pressed forward in ignorance of the difficulties and complications which posterity is quick to see in their development. It would be confessedly premature to attempt to define the place which Lord Beaconsfield will permanently fill in the gallery of English statesmen. It would be yet more difficult to forecast the final award of political and national criticism in the case of Mr. Gladstone. But with Mr. Bright there is none of this uncertainty. The foundations of his fame are not laid more securely than its quality is decided, irreversible. He is already an illustrious figure of the past. His voice is still listened to wherever it is heard; the familiar presence is gazed at with admiration wherever it is seen. But alike as statesman and orator, reformer and partisan, John Bright belongs to a by-gone generation, and his fellow-countrymen have long since come to an agreement as to the measure and kind of the distinction that is his due. It is not that he has outlived his powers, or has worn away to the shadow of his former self. His parliamentary eloquence is still occasionally impressive. He can hold vast audiences in the country spell-bound by the rhetoric which is always more or less autobiographical; his intellect is yet clear and powerful; his

memory is undimmed, and his faculty of appreciation and enjoyment of existence is singularly keen. But the cause for which he battled was long ago definitely won; the strongholds of exclusiveness, privilege, and monopoly which he entered public life to attack have all surrendered; the fruits of his service to political progress and popular enlightenment have been gathered into the storehouse of history, and weighed in an unerring balance; the questions which were open in his early, and even in his mature, manhood are closed; the principles for which he first contended, and which were denounced by those who differed from him as involving consequences disastrous to English trade and industry, to the whole structure of English society, and to the British empire itself, have become the postulates and common phases of politicians of every school. Free trade, parliamentary reform, religious equality, the assimilation—gradual and qualified though it be—of the government of Ireland to that of England, the removal of Irish grievances, the avoidance by every legitimate expedient of friction between England and Ireland; these are the objects round which Mr. Bright's activities chiefly centered at successive stages of his career, which incurred for him an amount of personal obloquy and bitterness proportionate perhaps to the vehemence of his own attacks, and which are now regarded as nothing more than reasonable and right. Periodically feeble attempts are made to propose Fair Trade as an alternative for Free Trade, to check the political enfranchisement of whole classes of the population, and to revert in other matters to the policy of an extinct period. But every serious politician in England knows that it would be just as possible to rebel against Free Trade as to mutiny