

TWELVE BUBBLES, ONE INSIDE OF THE OTHER.

## THE "SOAP-BUBBLERS'" FIRST RECEPTION.

BY MEREDITH NUGENT.

THE "Soap-Bubblers'" reception was a success from the start.

The Soap-Bubblers — but recently organized, with our old friend Phil as Head Bubbler, Harry Baker as Chief Cornucopia, the minor Bubblers occupying minor odd-titled positions, as well as all Bubblers occupying no positions at all — had resolved that the ancient and honorable amusement of blowing soap-bubbles was sadly in need of reformation; and, further, that it was their mission to reform it.

Thus it came to pass that on this late blustery November evening the interior of Masonic Hall presented such a scene of brilliancy as had rarely been equaled within its historic walls.

Never shall I forget the fairy-like transformation which followed the signal for all Bubblers to begin "bubbling." The magician's wand had hardly fallen when there arose forty-seven large bubbles from forty-seven golden cornuco-

pias, held in the hands of forty-seven rosy-cheeked boys and girls standing by twenty-four little oblong tables. A cry of delight swept round the hall, and forty-seven more bubbles arose, and still another shower of the iridescent spheres glittered in the surrounding brilliancy before the Bubblers settled down to the business of the evening.

For this occasion every member had promised to perform at least one bubble trick, and to perform it well; so that when Eddie Stark showed a top spinning within a bubble, and Minnie Sargent — seated opposite — a beautiful rose within another, it was only an indication of the wonderful success which was to characterize the entire performance. Freddie Wilder did fully as well at the table allotted to him, while "Little Victor" cleverly dropped all sorts of objects through some beautiful bubbles blown by Frank Burt. Charley Tefft had



a table all to himself, and by his funny tricks with the soapy liquid kept the onlookers in a constant roar of laughter. At another table Arthur Taylor joyfully fried bubbles to order; near by was a delighted crowd looking at the "bubble-topped top."

I cannot tell you of all the many things I saw during the first hour — which seemed scarcely ten minutes — of this marvelous entertainment, except to refer to George Wingate's attempt to beat his own record of nine bubbles inside of one another. This achievement, from a Bubbler's standpoint, was the most important event of the early evening, and just before the intermission they crowded themselves into George's immediate neighborhood just as he had succeeded in raising his record to eleven. He now had one eleven, three tens, and any

ble inside of bubble was blown until eight had been scored quickly enough; then, with remarkable precision, he placed in three more, equaling his own best record of eleven; and finally, amid tumultuous applause, succeeded in putting in the twelfth bubble.

There was much rejoicing and hearty congratulation during the twenty minutes' intermission, and then Bubbler and spectators seated themselves in readiness for the principal part of the performance, which was to be given by Phil.

The idea had spread, somehow, that the Head Bubbler would treat them to another surprise, although what the nature of this would be, not any of the Bubbler knew, excepting Harry Baker and a few assistants.

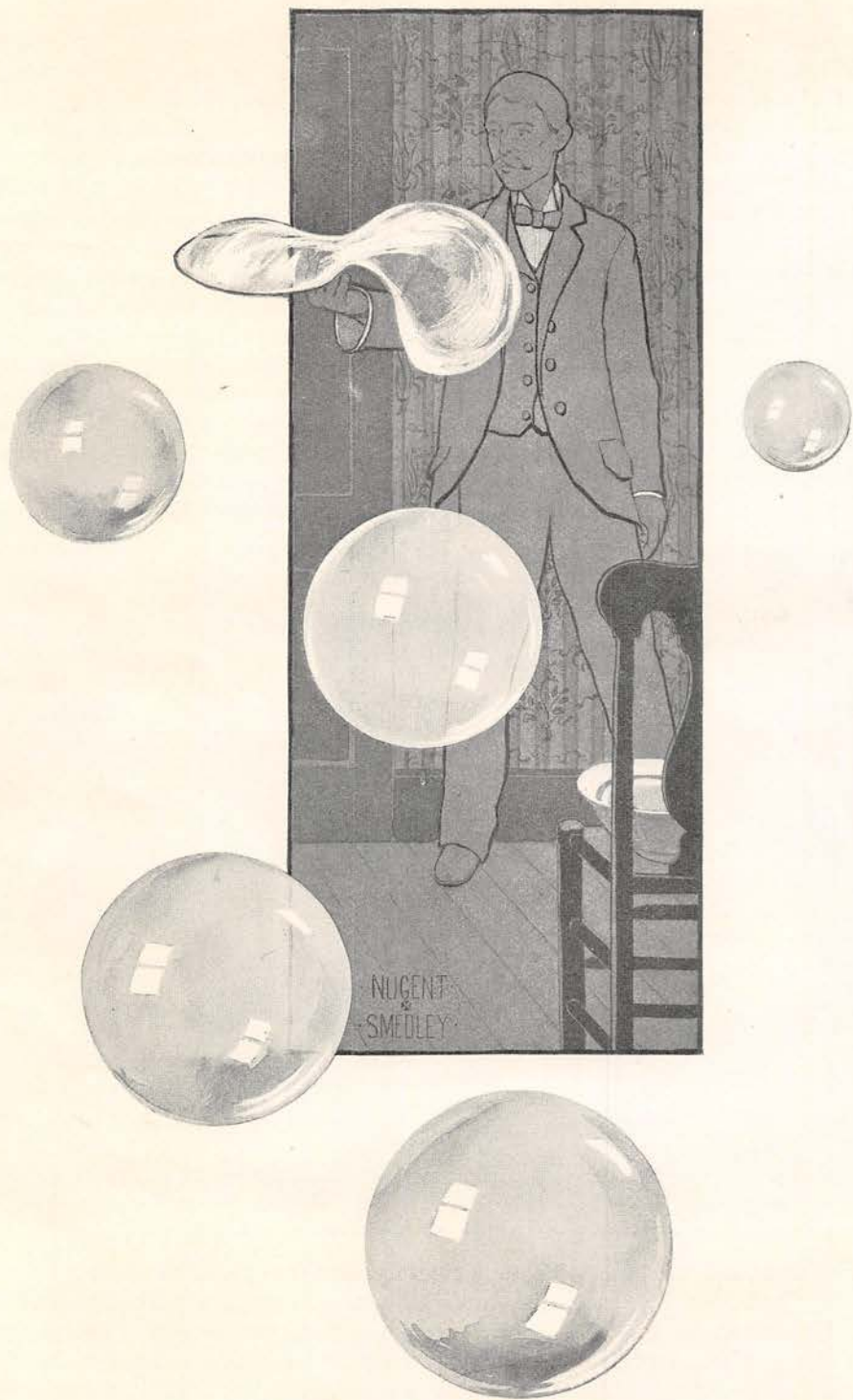
Promptly at nine Phil stepped on the plat-



"FIRST KITTENS EVER INSIDE OF A SOAP-BUBBLE!" (SEE PAGE 351.)

number of nines, and figures below that number to his credit, yet he determined to do better. He started off again by placing six bubbles with wonderful rapidity, but in putting in the ninth some broke. His next trial was still more unfortunate, as he failed on the fifth. The next attempt opened splendidly, and bub-

form, and was greeted most cordially. I failed to hear his opening remarks, as I was seated in the rear of the hall; but, whatever they were, every Bubbler boy jumped to his feet and shouted for joy, and every Bubbler girl jumped to her feet and waved her handkerchief for joy. Amid the uproar, I learned that Phil had an-



LARGE BUBBLES THROWN FROM A SOAPED WIRE RING.



nounced he would show the Bubblers how to make large bubbles without blowing them! The pandemonium increased when six Bubblers, with Harry Baker leading, formed in procession, and walked on to the platform, carrying between them two large galvanized-iron pans (each measuring nine feet in circumference), five children's wooden hoops, a number of copper and brass rings, two shining pails full of soap and water already mixed, and—think of it!—not a pipe, tube, or cornucopia of any kind! No wonder the audience shouted; no wonder the Bubblers waved aloft their gilded cornucopias. If Phil was not going to do something wonderful, what were all those pans, hoops, and copper and brass rings for? Why did he appear without a single cornucopia?

After a few words explanatory of the evolution of the soap-bubble from the clay-pipe stage to its present one, Phil dipped a wire ring into the solution, and, gently sweeping it before him, cast off a bubble fully twice the size of his head. Every Bubbler boy gave a cry of satisfaction at this, and it looked as though all the Bubblers might fling their golden cornucopias on to the stage, when the master of the soap and water tossed off five large bubbles in succession, not only from the same ring, but from the same film!

Almost immediately Phil's assistants—there were five of them—followed his example, and from that time on the stage was continually aglow with the brilliant spheres.

Harry Baker now came forward with the club's two kittens, and set them on a dry block of wood resting in the center of one of the large nine-foot pans—now filled with soapy water. Before the animals could move, Phil quickly lifted a hoop from the pan, and in a twinkling covered both kittens over with a glorious bubble. "First kittens ever inside of a soap-bubble!" Harry Baker announced, just as the little kits started to wade about within the iridescent dome. Phil sphered them over a second and even a third time, when the pussies, excited by their uproarious surroundings, offered decided objections to being imprisoned any more. Then Bubblers and audience were treated to an exhibition of what were perhaps the largest

bubbles that have ever been made. Harry Baker was especially fortunate, and, at the end of a very exciting contest with Phil, succeeded in sphering the pan over from brim to brim! Realize, if you please, that this bubble measured over nine feet in circumference! Phil followed up this feat of Harry's by launching from the large hoop a round bubble measuring fully six feet in circumference! Compare this giant in size with the bubbles you have been used to blowing from clay pipes. As one Bubbler hilariously remarked, this was "more like a balloon show than a bubble show." Not the least noticeable fact was that the bubbles often measured twice the diameter of the rings from which they were thrown. Remarkable, too, was the ease with which both boys picked up the films with their hoops. These hoops, measuring from thirty to thirty-four inches in diameter, when thus filmed over, flashed like disks of waving gold. Phil slowly revolved one of these golden disks upon the tips of his fingers, and a moment later the audience were enthusiastically applauding another of our magician's startling surprises. Here were two large elongated bubbles, springing from the same film, attached to each other in the center, and yet traveling in opposite directions, as shown in the illustration on page 354.

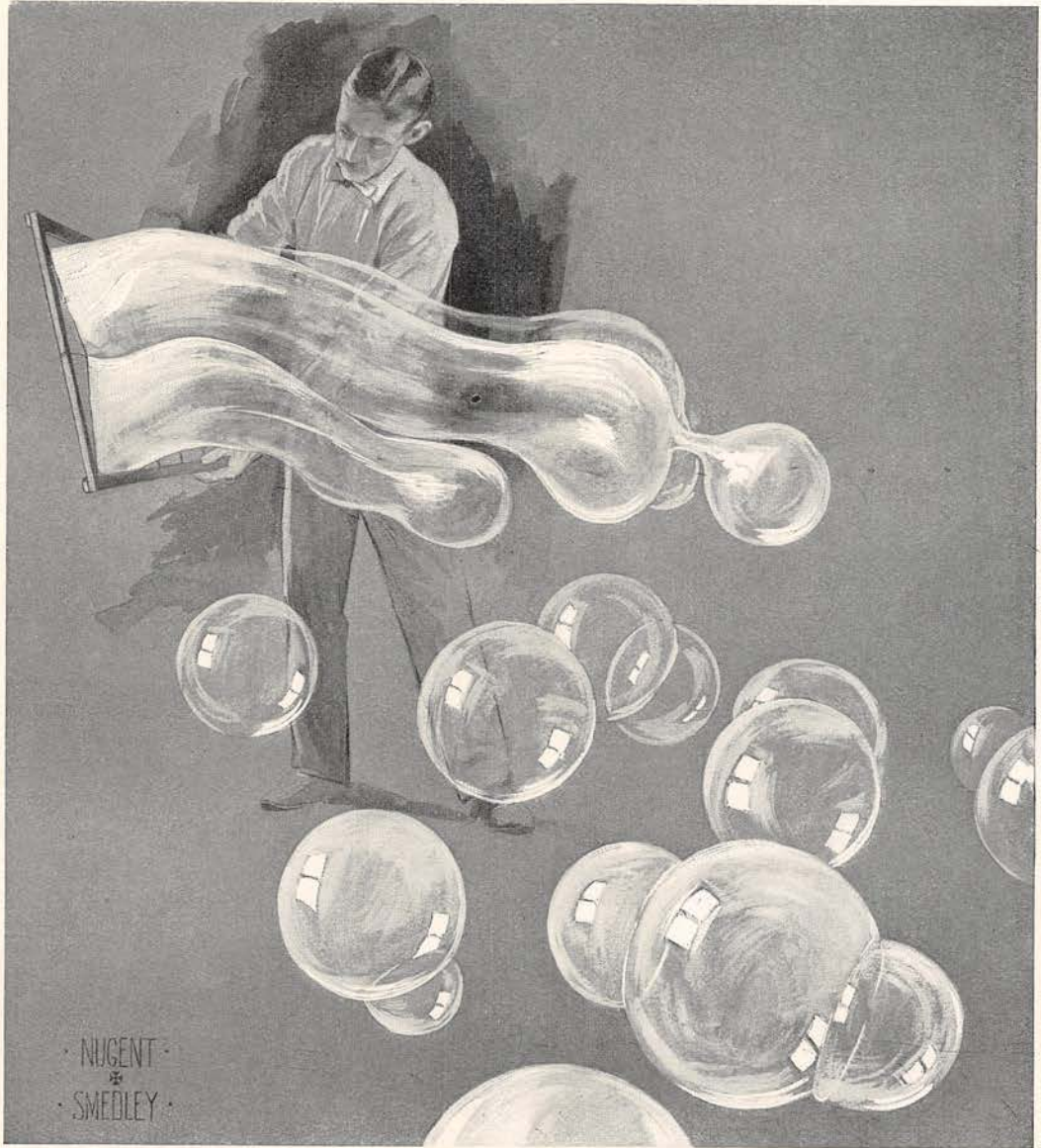
There seemed to be no limit to Phil's storehouse of wonders, and the spectators, who up to this time had been so very vociferous, settled down to a state of mute astonishment. "What will he do next?" was on everybody's lips. Though somewhat fatigued, the wizard of the soap and water adhered strictly to business, and now requested the audience to give their closest attention to his next performance. With a small ring in his left hand, and one twice the diameter of this in his right, Phil slowly advanced to the edge of the stage, where he covered both of the wire circles with a film. Then, from the smaller ring, he tossed a bubble high up above his head, and as the sphere slowly descended, he made a sweeping movement with the ring in his right hand in such a manner that he completely enveloped the small bubble within a second and much larger one. For a moment the Bubblers looked at each other in perfect amazement, and then



broke forth into heartiest applause. Phil responded with an encore, and again a bubble, imprisoned within another, swept its way across the stage. As I fixed my eyes upon these glittering spheres, I noticed the imprisoned bubble strike upon the bottom of the larger one, and

achievement; but, as Harry enthusiastically announced to the audience, there were more tricks to come. More tricks? What else could be done?

Fairly beaming with satisfaction at the success of his double-bubble trick, Phil took a large



"THE RESULT WAS A WHOLE SHOWER OF BUBBLES." (SEE PAGE 355.)  
*(These bubbles are thrown from a network of wires crossing a wooden frame.)*

bound up again. This it did a number of times. Phil might have spent the remainder of the evening in repetition of this beautiful

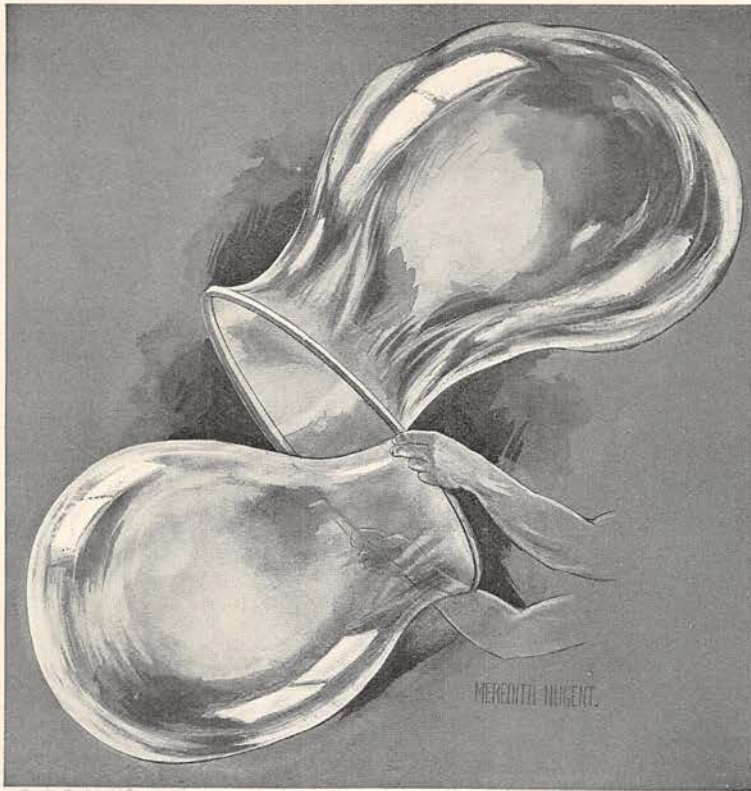
hoop, and dipping it in one of the great pans, withdrew it covered by a film. Then he held the lustrous disk well up in front of him, and



MEREDITH NUCENT.

"THE JOLLIEST OF THE BUBBLERS LOOKED SMILINGLY UPON THE AUDIENCE FROM WITHIN A SOAP-FILM HOUSE!" (SEE PAGE 355.)

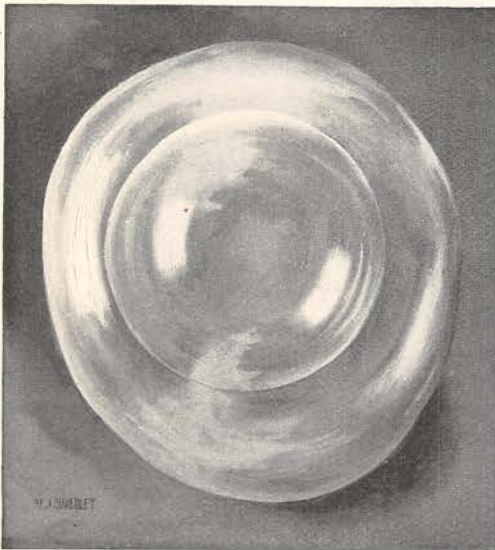




TWO LARGE BUBBLES SPRINGING FROM THE SAME FILM AND TRAVELING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

started to blow. Had our magician been in league with the spirits of the mythical North,

he could hardly have produced a result more weird and fantastic.



"THE SMALL BUBBLE WAS COMPLETELY ENVELOPED WITHIN A SECOND AND MUCH LARGER ONE."

Starting from the hoop, first slowly, and then almost shooting forth, was an ever-moving, ever-lengthening, ever-varying, twisting, writhing shape — such a form, in fact, as might have found existence in the imagination of Edgar Allan Poe. When Phil and Harry, together with their assistants, gave themselves up fully to this exhibition of monsters, the stage looked as though peopled by one of the hobgoblin races. Sometimes great bubbles, five feet in circumference, would snap off the end of these soap-bubble dragons, and sometimes a number of very small ones. In length they varied from two to eight feet — that is, measurement in a straight line. Could all the windings and twistings have been taken into consideration, they would have been found far longer.

Phil now turned his attention to the hoops and rings again, and drew forth storms of applause by some wonderful "film tricks." One

in particular, the giant letter S, was especially brilliant. It looked like a serpentine tongue of flame; and the manner in which Phil whirled the flashing light above his head fairly thrilled the audience.

Placing the ring aside, he picked up a curiously made wood and wire framework, and, after covering it with film, swished it through the air with a long, sweeping movement. The result was a whole shower of bubbles—single, double, and triple bubbles! This display was very effective, and had to be repeated ever so many times before the Bubblers were satisfied.

"Leroy Kimball!" now shouted out Harry Baker. "Leroy Kimball!" And a minute later there walked on to the stage the youngest, shortest, and jolliest Bubbler in the club. Everybody knew Roy, and as the little fellow blushing stepped on to the square block of wood set fast in the middle of the big pan, he was greeted with loud cheers and cries of "What are you going to do there, Roy?"

Phil promptly began to answer this volley of questions by lowering a hoop over the little Bubbler until it lay immersed in the pan of soap mixture. "Oh!" cried the Bubblers in unison, "Phil's going to put Roy in a soap-bubble!" And the excited audience rose to their tiptoes.

Amid a profound silence Phil started to lift the hoop; but after raising it a short distance, the film broke with a peculiar noise, sounding



"THE GIANT LETTER S."

like "w-h-e-e-p." "W-h-e-e-p" went the film again, "w-h-e-e-p, w-h-e-e-p."

Suddenly there was a swish, a flashing gleam of silvery light, and Leroy Kimball, the jolliest of the Bubblers, looked smilingly upon the audience from within a soap-film house!



"AN EVER-MOVING, EVER-LENGTHENING, EVER-VARYING, TWISTING, WRITHING SHAPE."