

STRUGGLES OF AN ARTIST

How William M. Chase Painted His First Successful Picture.

POVERTY AS A SPUR TO ENERGY

From a Shoe Store in Indiana to a Studio in New York—Success Achieved Over Many Obstacles.

From Fifteenth street, facing Livingston Place, there is one of the prettiest views in all New York. To the north are the red brick buildings of the Religious Society of Friends and beyond the old stone Church of St. George. In an imposing old style house commanding this view lives the famous artist, William M. Chase, and in his drawing room I talked with him the other day regarding his early struggles and his first successful picture.

The walls of the parlors are hung with many of the paintings which made Mr. Chase's working rooms in the old Studio building, in Tenth street, the show place of New York for nearly twenty years. There is the portrait of Carroll Beckwith, the Lady in White, and beautiful Mrs. Chase watching her children at play in the broad hall of the summer house in the Shinnecock hills.

"Whatever success I may have attained," said Mr. Chase, "comes from my love of art for art's sake only. I always wanted to be an artist, and I came to be one this

to do it over again I would not do it for ten times the price. "After entering the academy I had a pretty hard time of it. I foresaw that my money would be spent long before I had acquired the requisite training, and try as hard as I might, I could not sell my work to the local dealers. I had been more or less of a revolutionist in the school. I had objected to painting pictures to order, and it was not the way of the master.

Down to Bread and Cheese. "At last I got down to bread and cheese. Even my canvases and my paints were supplied by my fellow students. I had been in Munich two years and a half. I had worked hard and conscientiously. I had received, it is true, the highest medal given by the academy in each class, but I had been severely criticized by the teachers for my independence and the dealers would have nothing to do with me. I know what despair means."

The artist rose to his feet, walked across the room and looked out of the window where the maid was bringing home his child from their morning walk.

"It was the turning point in my life. I don't know how much longer I could have kept up the struggle. I was fortunate in having secured quarters with some people who had confidence in me—sufficient confidence to let me owe them two years' rent—but I could not have held out very much longer, and I knew it. It was then that I painted my first successful picture. It came about this way: I painted a study of a woman in black dressed in a riding habit. It now hangs in the reception room of the Union League club in this city. I sold it for \$200. It was bought by S. P. Avery, and now belongs to the club. It was not the money that I got from this picture,

"I thanked him, but I went back to my studio and resumed my single canvases and tried to reach the heart of Munich art dealers. This will show you how the master regarded me even before I had submitted the picture that gave me my first successful order. While I was painting the portraits of the children, Piloti asked me how I was getting along with my Columbus picture. I had not begun it. I never had any intention of beginning it, and I didn't know exactly what to say to him. Suddenly an inspiration came to me.

"Do you think, Herr Director," said I, "that Munich is the place to paint this picture in. Isn't Salamanca a better place?" "Quite right," returned the master. "Of course. Come, let us see your models. Here are all Bavarians. You want Spaniards for models. Wait until you go to Salamanca. Do it there."

"That is the last I ever heard of my Columbus composition. But I have the original among my paintings in my studio now."

Rule for Success in Art. "What is your rule for success in art?" I asked.

"Years ago," said Mr. Chase, as he led me to the front window and pointed to the trees in the park and the half withered grass. "I thought the Nature was dead. Now I know different. Art transcends Nature. One must paint what is behind the eye of the artist. As I paint, and I love to paint, there is somebody standing by my shoulder who says to me, 'Don't paint that,' or 'Paint that,' and I follow these directions. I almost hate this somebody. It is conscience personified. It speaks to me. It directs me. Every day I paint whenever it is possible, whether it be well done or badly done. I paint if I have to scratch it out the next morning. I work because I can't help working, I love work because I

"And your best picture, Mr. Chase?" I suggested.

"My best picture? In my studio there is an empty canvas. My best picture is painted there. It's in my mind. I am always painting my best picture. I am always at work on it. If I only could paint the picture I have in here—" and the artist touched his forehead. "I don't suppose, though, that I ever shall. My best picture is still un-painted, and I hope the time will never come when I shall look at that canvas and say, 'There is my best picture.'"

GOSSIP ABOUT NOTED PEOPLE.

For forty years Vermont was represented in the United States senate by four men—Solomon Foot, Jacob S. Morrill, George F. Edmunds and Justin S. Morrill. The Green Mountain state, by the way, has given numerous distinguished sons to the nation, among others, Stephen A. Douglas to Illinois, Matthew H. Carpenter to Wisconsin and Thaddeus Stevens to Pennsylvania.

No public man ever kept his documents in more scrupulous order than Gladstone and his biographer, John Morley, is reaping the advantage, for he finds everything so ready to his hand that he is able to begin the actual writing at once. He has set himself a limit of three years for the task, but may complete it in two. No reserve of any kind has been imposed upon him by the family.

Speaker Reed, when told last summer that Congressman Dingley was very fond of Mark Twain and the American humorists generally, made answer: "Why, when Dingley was a young fellow, he preferred sitting up nights reading the funny reports to holding a pretty girl on his knee. Isn't that so, Dingley?" "Well," replied the author of the tariff bill, "I leave that to Mrs. Dingley."

Colonel George Parmelee Webster, who died a few days ago in New York, cast the deciding vote in the Kentucky legislature at the beginning of the civil war, which kept that state in the union. He was the last to vote on the motion to secede and the vote when it came to him stood a tie. He was a native of Kentucky, but went to Kentucky when a young man and settled in New York after the war. He was a lawyer.

Paymaster General Stanton will soon be placed upon the retired list of the army, having reached the age limit. Hard as a hickory nut and at the same time gentle as a woman, there is nothing of the tin soldier about this veteran, whose department treasury he has held for more than twenty years. He is a native of New York and is now in New York after the war. He was a lawyer.

Until very recently Mayor Silas D. Drake of Elizabeth, N. J., had no middle name—merely the letter. After Dewey's victory he decided to appropriate the admiral's name to himself and himself received the hero of his intention. He has just received a pleasant note in reply, the hero of Manila expressing pleasure at the compliment paid him by the New Jersey official. The admiral adds: "It may interest you to know that I had a cousin, now dead, named Silas Drake Flagg."

CLEVER TRICK FOR PARLORS

Mysteries and Sleight-of-Hand Based on Scientific Principles.

BLOWING EGGS FROM GLASS TO GLASS

Cunning and Interesting Tricks with Plants, Dancing Water Babies and Air Pressure—Mystery with Smoke.

A very interesting experiment to work out during the performance is one based upon the action of chemicals. About an hour is required for this; so it could be commenced just before the entertainment, and the things left to stand as part of the outfit on the table. Take three medium sized leaves from a red cabbage and strip them to pieces, and put them in a clean earthen dish and pour a pint of boiling water over them. As soon as the water is cool, transfer it all to a pretty glass bowl and set that on the magic table. The water will be of a rich blue in an hour. At the same time take four clean wine glasses and put six drops of common vinegar in one, six drops of baking soda dissolved in water in the second, and six drops of alum solution in the third. The fourth is to be left empty. No one would notice the small quantity of liquid in these glasses.

When you are ready to use them you say something like this: "You see these empty glasses. I shall pour this blue liquid into them. They will, at my command, change their color. This (taking the empty one) shall remain blue. This one shall turn red (taking the one with the vinegar), this shall become green (taking the one with the soda) and this one shall turn on royal purple. (The alum makes purple.) This is very effective, as well as pretty.

Air Pressure. A boiled egg—boiled for fear of accident—

is put, large end downward, in a wine glass. Another glass like it is stood an inch distant. The performer must blow forcibly down in the side nearest him of the glass with the egg, and it will jump out and into the other one. Better try this two or three times privately to make sure of distance and force required.

Air pressure may be used as the basis for the "dancing waterbaby." This is easily made, and is very comical. A clear glass milk jar should be filled with water up to an inch from the top. A small walnut has the nut taken out and the shell fastened together with sealing wax, so that it is watertight. At the lower end a small hole is to be made. Two threads are fastened to the shell by wax, and these are tied to the head of a small wooden doll. A bullet is fastened to a string around the waist and hangs down a trifle below the feet. The hole in the nutshell is right over the doll's head. When this is done put the doll down into the water, and the water must reach to about an inch from the top, when all is in. A piece of bladder is to be firmly tied over the mouth. This should be wet first as the water makes it more pliable, and no air must enter. When this is dry the baby is ready to dance for you. You press the cover with one finger, and that causes a corresponding pressure of air upon the nut, which is then filled with water, and that makes it heavier, so that it rises and falls with each pressure of the finger.

Mysterious Smoke. A puzzling trick in chemistry is to take a very narrow glass goblet with four drops of hydrochloric acid in the bottom and a saucer where the bottom has just been dipped in ammonia. Cover the glass tightly with the saucer and stop away, declaring that you will cause the smoke from a cigarette to pass inside the glass. The glass will slowly fill with fumes of smoke. It is the union of these two volatile liquids which forms the white fumes.

If one wants to do a really remarkable thing let him get a handful of lettuce seed and soak them overnight in alcohol. Then have a flower pot or box not over six inches deep. In the bottom strew two inches of well worn or port's soil. At the beginning of the evening's performance the lad should show this box of soil and tell them that before the audience leaves he is going to show them some of his farming. He then takes his seeds, and after putting in the box two inches more of soil, composed of well worn soil and one part of quicklime, he scatters the seeds about with four drops of water, and then sows a little more, very fine and thinly over the seeds. Then he waters the whole and stands it directly in the light. In ten minutes the seeds burst, in twenty there are two leaves and at the end of an hour, if kept sprinkled a couple of times, the lettuce leaves will have attained the size of a quarter of a dollar and ought to be numerous enough to make the whole top green.

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AUTOGRAPH PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM M. CHASE.

way. My father owned a general store in Williamsburg, Ind. You know what a general store is. He kept everything and sold to farmers and village people.

"When I was about 16 he went up to Indianapolis and started the largest shoe store in that city. One part of it was separated from the rest and devoted to women. It was carpeted. It was the first woman's shoe store in the west. One day my father came to me and said: 'William, you have spoiled wrapping paper enough here, but on your hat and come with me. I'm going to take you up to Hays.'

"On our way to the artist's rooms he explained to me regretfully how sorry he felt that his endeavors to make a business man of me had failed; that he hadn't much hope or faith in my art inclinations, but was willing to give me a chance, and he thought that a studio was a better place for that chance than a shoe store, and thus I began my studies with B. F. Hays, the artist, in his studio next to the old postoffice.

Set to Copy Engravings. "Mr. Hays set me to work copying things which were of no earthly advantage to me as an art student. For instance, he had me copy in oil a steel engraving of one of Rosa Bonheur's pictures. After I had done with him a year or so, however, he did do me a genuine service. He advised my father to send me to New York.

"I came to this city with several letters of introduction to wholesale shoe dealers, who were requested to keep a kindly watch over me, and another letter to the late J. O. Eaton, a western artist, who had attained considerable reputation in the metropolis. I went into Mr. Eaton's studio, and upon his advice I entered the National Academy of Design. When I was 20 years old my father failed in business. He might have taken advantage of the bankruptcy law and saved a respectable fortune. But it was an honest failure. He regretted very much that he could not continue supporting me, and he wondered what use I could make of my art training. I didn't know exactly what to do.

"I gave the matter considerable thought. I had one year's experience in the shoe business, and I had learned to sell a woman a pair of shoes two sizes too small for her. I was very successful in that, and I had made up my mind that if it came to the worst I would go into a shoe store as a clerk. But fortunately I didn't have to. I laid the matter before Mr. Eaton, and he advised me to paint flowers and fruits, in which line of work I had been moderately successful. Through his influence I was able to sell some of these. There are a number of them now up around Yonkers, which I would like to recall. I was so successful that by Christmas I had saved up enough money to go to St. Louis, where my father had re-established himself in business, and I decided, after looking over the field to open a studio in that city.

"Now in every large city that I have ever been in there are one or more men who feel a personal interest in art. They are natural art patrons. I met two such men in St. Louis. One of them was named Hodges and the other was Samuel Dodd. They were both very wealthy. One day I overheard them talking in my studio about me.

"Send him abroad," answered Mr. Dodd. "We'll get commissions for him to be executed on the other side, and we will have the money advanced to him for his studies."

"When this plan was laid before me I very willingly gave my studio and went to Munich, where I entered the academy of which the great Piloti was the director. I took with me several hundred dollars and I filled every commission according to promise. The most expensive commission was for D. A. Cole, one of the best known collectors in the west. He had advanced \$100. The picture I painted for him is now in the Widener collection in Philadelphia. If I had

though, that brought me success, because I did not sell it until several months afterward. I took the canvas to Piloti and asked him what he thought of it. He looked at it, and then he said: 'Mr. Chase, I want you to paint the portraits of my children. I will advance you one-half of the price before you begin work.'

"Within a day everybody in Munich art circles knew that the great painter had commissioned me to paint the portraits of his children. My reputation was made. The dealers who had refused to notice me crowded my studio and asked for paintings, studies, anything that I had. The seal of approval had been set by the highest authority of his day. I had money—Piloti's money—and I was independent, so I told these dealers 'No' to go away, to let me alone, that I would have nothing to do with them. I paid my rent. I walked on air. The whole world looked bright. There was sunlight everywhere.

Story of an Exchange. "I won't tell you how I painted these portraits or what has become of them, for that has nothing to do with the matter we are talking about. A curious sequel, however, to this little story of the Bavarian art dealer came to pass only last month. Let me tell you about it. One of the dealers had in his store a portrait of a girl smoking a pipe, by Wilhelm Leibl, even at that time a famous painter. I enjoyed studying this picture more than almost any other in Munich, and it occurred to me that so long as my work was in demand I would exchange some of my pictures for it, so that I could study it at my leisure in my own studio. I gave three studies of heads in exchange for it.

"Now at the Stuart art sale last year one of Leibl's pictures sold for \$15,000. About a month ago the art dealer who arranged the trade in Munich more than twenty years ago wrote to me asking whether I still had this picture, and, if so, whether I would sell it. I replied that I had it and did not care to dispose of it. In answer to this I received a letter asking me to put my own price upon the canvas. This was a different matter. So I wrote to my old-time friends, telling them that if they would send their agent to me with \$2,000 I would part with the picture, never thinking that my offer would be accepted. But they cable their acceptance and they've got the picture now, and I don't know whether to be sorry or glad."

"How did Piloti happen to ask you to paint his children's portraits?" I thought you said he was a severe critic of yours," I suggested.

Made Columbus Turn His Back. "It was not wholly my study of the 'Woman in Black' as I afterward learned, because, although the great painter was a very harsh critic, he had a rather high idea of my ability, which I possibly did not deserve. I'll give you an illustration. I told you how I resented the method of manufacturing pictures, employed in the academy, of my desire for independence, and all that. This happened a month or so before I received my commission. I had all the sensitive independence that goes with unrecognized ability and grinding poverty. I resented almost everything. That was my mood. One day the master said to me that he wanted competitive compositions from the pupils, and he had selected the subject of Columbus before the council because there were a number of Americans in the academy. Now I knew how Piloti wanted those compositions to be made. I knew where he would place Columbus and where he would put the members of the council, and I determined that if I were compelled to paint it I would follow my own ideas. Two days before the time for submitting the compositions arrived some of my fellow pupils asked me what I was doing with Columbus. I told them nothing. 'You'd better do something,' said one of them. 'The chief expects something very important

from you,' I laughed. They insisted, and more as a joke than anything else I laid out my composition. I said to one of the young men, 'There is no great use of so great a Columbus, is there?' No one knew of any. 'So,' I continued, 'I'll paint the back of the discoverer, and I won't put him in one corner of the picture, but in the center.' And so I did. I made him face the council in a position that I knew would not entirely please the chief. The more I worked at the thing the more interested I became, and before I had been painting an hour I was engrossed in it. After I had finished it I laid it to one side and thought no more about it. But I finally entered it with the other compositions. To my intense surprise it received the medal. As soon as the award was announced Piloti came to me, indignation written in every line of his face.

A Loud Roar. "It's an outrage," he said. 'I don't understand how the committee came to give you that medal. You don't deserve it. The idea of making me use of so great a subject! Now, this is what you want to do. Put Columbus over on one side, paint a side view of him. Do it this way,' and he illustrated with his expressive gestures how the figure was to be drawn. 'Now, don't paint on your little canvas. I'll give you a studio for three months. You'll turn them all out. You can have it by yourself. Then we'll put a canvas thirty feet wide and I want you to paint this picture this way. In one, in two years, you will have produced a painting. If I have any influence with your government it will be in Washington, and I didn't know exactly what to say to him. Suddenly an inspiration came to me.

"Do you think, Herr Director," said I, "that Munich is the place to paint this picture in. Isn't Salamanca a better place?" "Quite right," returned the master. "Of course. Come, let us see your models. Here are all Bavarians. You want Spaniards for models. Wait until you go to Salamanca. Do it there."

"That is the last I ever heard of my Columbus composition. But I have the original among my paintings in my studio now."

Rule for Success in Art. "What is your rule for success in art?" I asked.

"Years ago," said Mr. Chase, as he led me to the front window and pointed to the trees in the park and the half withered grass. "I thought the Nature was dead. Now I know different. Art transcends Nature. One must paint what is behind the eye of the artist. As I paint, and I love to paint, there is somebody standing by my shoulder who says to me, 'Don't paint that,' or 'Paint that,' and I follow these directions. I almost hate this somebody. It is conscience personified. It speaks to me. It directs me. Every day I paint whenever it is possible, whether it be well done or badly done. I paint if I have to scratch it out the next morning. I work because I can't help working, I love work because I

"And your best picture, Mr. Chase?" I suggested.

"My best picture? In my studio there is an empty canvas. My best picture is painted there. It's in my mind. I am always painting my best picture. I am always at work on it. If I only could paint the picture I have in here—" and the artist touched his forehead. "I don't suppose, though, that I ever shall. My best picture is still un-painted, and I hope the time will never come when I shall look at that canvas and say, 'There is my best picture.'"

GOSSIP ABOUT NOTED PEOPLE.

For forty years Vermont was represented in the United States senate by four men—Solomon Foot, Jacob S. Morrill, George F. Edmunds and Justin S. Morrill. The Green Mountain state, by the way, has given numerous distinguished sons to the nation, among others, Stephen A. Douglas to Illinois, Matthew H. Carpenter to Wisconsin and Thaddeus Stevens to Pennsylvania.

