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THE AMERICAN ARTISTIC POSTER OF THE 1890S

City University of New York PH.D. 1980

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THE AMERICAN ARTISTIC POSTER OF THE 1890s

by

JACQUELYN DAYS SERWER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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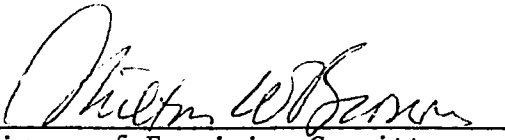
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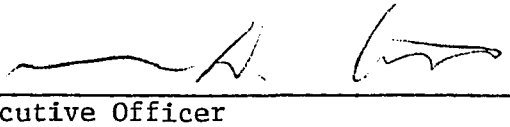
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Professor Robert Pincus-Witten

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Abstract

THE AMERICAN ARTISTIC POSTER OF THE 1890s

by

Jacquelyn Days Serwer

Adviser: Professor Milton W. Brown

The American artistic poster of the 1890s was not a mere imitation of its French and English counterparts. Though there was some inspiration from abroad, the American poster had its own indigenous development. As American interest in the applied arts manifested itself during the seventies and eighties in various ways, a unique arts and crafts aesthetic took form that recognized the validity of fine workmanship in both a mass-production situation and a workshop setting. This new aesthetic combined with America's acknowledged superiority in printing and reproduction demonstrated most clearly by the American monthlies of the eighties made the poster of the 1890s possible. Between 1893 and 1900 book, magazine, newspaper and bicycle posters decorated public spaces promising to educate the masses while at the same time inadvertently inspiring a new generation of elite collectors. At the height of the

phenomenon, the poster participated not only in the artistic and economic life of the decade, but in the social sphere as well: the trend toward self-improvement and the broadening of the woman's role outside the home.

The uniqueness of the movement in the United States is further demonstrated by the special partnership that existed between artists and business people. Through the intervention of commercial interests in sponsoring articles and exhibitions, posters were elevated to the status of fine art. At the same time advertisers enjoyed their new role as art patrons.

The profile of the poster artists also offers some peculiarly American characteristics. Included in their number were Eastern, Southern, Midwestern and Western artists, indicating the decentralized nature of the American movement. Some postermakers were trained as commercial artists, others had attended art school, still others had begun their careers as architects. The significant participation of women constitutes another notable facet of the poster epoch in the United States.

No single style emerged during the course of the poster period. Some designs could be fitted into an art-nouveau/Pre-Raphaelite mold while others defied established categories. Edward Penfield's homespun simplicity flourished along with John Sloan's Japanese-inspired treatment

and Maxfield Parrish's more illustrative vision. In spite of the range of styles, native decorative tendencies combined with art nouveau attitudes constituted a basic feature of all the American work.

In the area of iconography, the "new woman" was the most frequent subject. Postermakers showed her to be independent and unidealized in all of her various activities. Some portrayals were rather traditional, displaying attributes copied from European imagery. In most cases, however, the irreverent American artist transformed the original significance into something new.

Though the American artistic poster of the nineties was in its own period a focus of critics and the subject of innumerable exhibitions, the poster heyday or "craze" lasted only a short time. Early assessments of the poster as the fitting expression of a democracy and the art of the future proved inaccurate. The commercial/artistic balance that defined the poster at its height was gradually compromised. Collectors demanded more artistic specimens, causing advertisers to conclude that their purposes were no longer being served. As a result, their crucial sponsorship of the poster diminished and the artistic poster declined. Moreover, the artistic poster had appealed to genteel people who wished to aestheticize even the marketplace. Events at the end of the decade discouraged that impulse. The artistic poster

became impractical and superfluous.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

I wish to thank Prof. Milton W. Brown, my advisor, whose work in American art has been an inspiration to me since under-graduate days, for his assistance and encouragement during the course of this project. I am grateful to my second and third readers, Prof. Barbara Weinberg and Prof. Robert Pincus-Witten for their careful reading of the manuscript and their thoughtful suggestions.

In conducting the research for the thesis, two people were especially helpful. An early interview with Edgar Breitenbach was important in identifying problem areas. Mrs. John Sloan's patient commentary on many items in the Sloan Archives at the Delaware Art Museum was invaluable.

I also wish to acknowledge several institutions whose collections were made available to me: The New York Public Library; The Engel Collection at Columbia University and the Poster Collection at the Delaware Art Museum.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. viii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS. x

INTRODUCTION 1

Notes to the Introduction. 5

CHAPTER

ONE. BACKGROUND 6

Notes to Chapter One 31

TWO. POSTER PATRONAGE 37

Notes to Chapter Two 76

THREE. THE ARTISTS. 82

Notes to Chapter Three 113

FOUR. STYLE AND THE EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTION. . . .123

Notes to Chapter Four. 153

FIVE. ICONOGRAPHY. 159

Notes to Chapter Five. 184

SIX. DECLINE. 188

Notes to Chapter Six 209

ILLUSTRATIONS. 214

BIBLIOGRAPHY 384

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Edward Penfield, Harper's, March 1893
2. Anonymous, Circus Poster, 1890s
3. Matt Morgan, The Celebrated Spanish Students, 1880
4. Louis Rhead, St. Nicholas, 1891
5. Anonymous, Harper's, Christmas 1893
6. Anonymous, Self-Culture, 1890s.
7. J. E. Laboureur, McClure's, February 1896
8. Ethel Reed, McClure's, April 1896
9. John Twachtman, The Damnation of Theron Ware, 1894
10. A. W. B. Lincoln, The Phantom Death, 1895
11. L. F. Hurd, Days of Auld Lang Syne, 1895
12. Edward Penfield, Pony Tracks, 1895
13. Will Bradley, Inland Printer, Thanksgiving 1894
14. Will Bradley, Inland Printer, July 1894
15. Charles Warde Traver, Inland Printer, November 1898
16. Anonymous, Ault and Wiborg, after 1893
17. Anonymous, Ault and Wiborg, after 1893
18. J. A. Hughes, The Eagle Printing Ink and Color Works, after 1893
19. Will Bradley, "Blue Lady," Chap-Book, 1894
20. Will Bradley, When Hearts are Trumps, 1894
21. Frank Hazenplug, Chap-Book, 1895
22. Ethel Reed, Folly or Saintliness, 1895
23. Anonymous, Picture Posters, 1895
24. Frank A. Nankivell, Posters in Miniature, 1896
25. E. B. Bird, R. H. Russell's Publications, 1895
26. Ernest Haskell, Dr. Jameson's Raiders, 1895
27. Edwin Austin Abbey, The Quest of the Holy Grail, 1895
28. Will Bradley, The Modern Poster, 1895
29. Anonymous, Art Interchange, 1895
30. Will H. Low, Scribner's, 1895
31. Maxfield Parrish, Century, 1896
32. Maxfield Parrish, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Poster Show, 1896
33. Sargent Kendall, Scribner's, 1895
34. L. Maynard Dixon, Overland Monthly, August 1895
35. J. C. Leyendecker, Century, 1896
36. Will Bradley, Echo, 1895
37. John Sloan, Echo, 1895
38. E. B. Bird, Red Letter, 1896
39. Arthur Wesley Dow, Modern Art, 1895
40. E. B. Bird, Poster, 1896
41. George Frederick Scotson-Clark, New York Recorder, 6 January 1895

42. Anonymous, New York World, 15 September 1895
43. Anonymous, New York World, 22 September 1895.
44. Anonymous, Sunday World, (I), 19 April 1896
45. Anonymous, Sunday World, (II), 19 April 1896
46. Louis Rhead, Advertising in the Sun, 1894
47. Edward Potthast, New York Times, 9 February 1896
48. Edward Potthast, Century, July 1896
49. Robert Chambers, The King in Yellow, 1895
50. Claude Fayette Bragdon, Rochester Post Express, 1895
51. Alice Glenny, Buffalo Courier Women's Edition, 1895
52. Ethel Reed, Boston Sunday Herald, 24 February 1895
53. Ethel Reed, Boston Sunday Herald, 24 March 1895
54. George Brill, Philadelphia Sunday Press, 12 January 1896
55. George Brill, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, 1896
56. Will Bradley, Springfield Bicycle Club Tournament, 1895
57. Will Bradley, Springfield Bicycle Club Tournament, 1896
58. Maxfield Parrish, Columbia Bicycles, 1896
59. Edward Penfield, Galakton, 1896
60. Will Bradley, Hood's Sasparilla, 1896
61. Will Bradley, Narcoti-Cure, 1895
62. Maurice Prendergast, The Shadow of a Crime, 1895
63. Maud Fangel, Quartier Latin, 1897
64. M. E. Norton, Two Posters for the Bookman, 1895
65. Violet Oakley, A Puritan's Wife, 1896
66. Violet Oakley, The Lotos Library, 1896
67. Blanche McManus, The True Mother Goose, 1895
68. Florence Lundborg, Lark, 1896
69. Alice Glenny, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and Society, 1897
70. Bertha Corson Day, National Export Exposition, 1899
71. Bertha Corson Day, L'Enfance, 1896
72. Blanche Ostertag, R. R. Donnelley & Co., after 1895
73. Blanche Ostertag, R. R. Donnelley & Co., after 1895
74. M. Louise Stowall, George P. Humphrey, 1896
75. Will H. Low, L'Interlude, Jardin des Macmonnies, after after 1892
76. Kenyon Cox, The Limner, July 1895
77. George Wharton Edwards, Century, September 1895
78. John Sloan, Ticket Design for Twilbe, 1894
79. John Sloan as Twilbe, 1894
80. John Sloan with the PAFA Murals
81. John Sloan, Moods, 1895
82. Aubrey Beardsley, Pseudonym, Antonym Library, 1894
83. Aubrey Beardsley, Publisher Children's Books, 1894
84. Ernest Haskell, The New York Sunday Journal, 1896
85. Jules Chéret, Théâtre de l'Opera, 1896.
86. Fred Ramsdell, American Crescent Cycles, 1899
87. J. C. Leyendecker, The Interior, 1894
88. Eugene Grasset, Salon des Cent, 1894.

89. Louis Rhead, Century, 1894
90. Graham Robertson, A Pre-Raphaelite Collection, 1896
91. Ellen Elizabeth Houghton, Arts and Crafts Exhibition, 1898
92. West, International Studio, 1897
93. Edmund Garrett, Victorian Songs, 1895
94. William Macey Stone, J. M. Neys & Co., 1898
95. Edward Penfield, Harper's, April 1894
96. Edward Penfield, Harper's July 1896
97. Edward Penfield, People We Pass, 1896
98. William Glackens, Lippincott's August 1894
99. Will Carqueville, Lippincott's, January 1895
100. Will Carqueville, Lippincott's Series of Select Novels, 1895
101. J. J. Gould, Lippincott's, January 1896
102. J. J. Gould, Lippincott's, November 1896
103. J. J. Gould, Lippincott's, August 1897.
104. Charles Allen Gilbert, Scribner's, May 1898
105. H. M. Rosenberg, Century, September 1896
106. Aubrey Beardsley, Salomé, 1893
107. Will Bradley, "Pegasus, the Black and Red," Chap-Book, 1895
108. Will Bradley, "The Pink," Chap-Book, 1895
109. Will Bradley, Victoria Bicycles, 1895
110. Will Bradley, Victoria Bicycles, 1896
111. Will Bradley, Victoria Bicycles, 1896
112. Will Bradley, Two Chap-Book Posters, 1894
113. E. B. Bird, Chap-Book, 1895
114. Will Bradley, The Skirt Dancer, 1894
115. Ethel Reed, Fairy Tales, 1895
116. Frank Hazenplug, The Emerson and Fisher Co., 1896
117. Will Bradley, Colliers, 1900
118. Maxfield Parrish, Title Page, Mother Goose in Prose, 1897
119. John Sloan, Drawing, 1892
120. John Sloan in his Studio, after 1893
121. John Sloan, Drawing, 1894
122. John Sloan, Moods, 1895
123. John Sloan, Drawing, 1894
124. John Sloan, Cinder-Path Tales, 1896
125. John Sloan, Apollo Bicycles, 1898
126. John Sloan in his Studio, after 1894
127. John Sloan, The Snake Charmer, 1899
128. Maxfield Parrish, Scribner's, 1897
129. Frederick S. Church, American Watercolor Society, 1899
130. Thomas Fleming, M'lle New York, 1898
131. Francis Day, Century, after 1894
132. Louis Fleming, Printer and Bookmaker, May 1899

133. Howard Chandler Christy, Bookman, 1896
134. J. C. Leyendecker, Chap-Book, 1897
135. Ethel Reed, Penny Magazine, 1895
136. Archie Gunn, Miss Blue Stocking, 1896
137. O. C. Malcolm, Outing, 1896
138. O. C. Malcolm, Outing, 1896
139. Henry McVickar, The Evolution of Women, 1896
140. Louis Rhead, The Sun, 1895
141. George Frederick Scotson-Clark, New York Sunday World, 1895
142. Charles Cox, Bearings, 1896
143. Edward Potthast, Century Cook Book, after 1894
144. Florence Lundborg, Lark, 1896
145. Will Bradley, Bradley, His Book, Christmas 1896
146. Will Bradley, Ode to the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893
147. Blanche McManus, Legends of the Rhine, 1895
148. Will Bradley, "Pan," Chap-Book, 1895
149. Bruce Porter, Lark, 1895
150. Will Bradley, Echo, 1895
151. Ernest Haskell, Sunday Journal, April 1896
152. Eugene Grasset, Harper's, Christmas 1892
153. J. J. Gould, Lippincott's, January 1897
154. Edward Penfield, Harper's Christmas 1897
155. Blanche McManus, Scribner's, 1895
156. Charles Cox, Bearings, 1896
157. Edward Penfield, Harper's, March 1899
158. Edward Penfield, Aetna Dynamite, 1896
159. Claude Fayette Bragdon, Chap-Book, 1895
160. Edward Penfield, Poster Calendar, 1897
161. L. Maynard Dixon, Overland Monthly, 1896
162. Anonymous, Black Rock and the Sky Pilot, 1898
163. George Edmund Varian, Century, August 1898
164. E. B. Bird, The Captured Cunarder, 1896
165. E. B. Wells, Mrs. Cliff's Yacht, 1896
166. R. L. Emerson, Atlantic, July 1895
167. Edward Penfield, Harper's September 1896
168. Edward Penfield, Harper's Christmas 1896
169. Edward Penfield, Harper's, August 1899

INTRODUCTION

The epoch of the American artistic poster,[1] 1893 to 1899, saw many changes in the United States. Increased urbanization and industrialization, higher literacy, new inventions like the electric light and the telephone, a more extensive railroad system and better postal communication turned American life in the direction of the twentieth century. But not all the changes that characterized the decade could be seen as positive. The control of utilities and industries like steel by a handful of wealthy men created abuses that led to labor disputes, bloody strikes and anarchist agitation. Even the Panic of 1893, with its attendant fear of revolt by the unemployed masses, failed to disrupt the power of the elite group of financial giants --the Morgans, Vanderbilts and Rockefellers. Small businesses closed, railroads went bankrupt, magazines folded and Coxey's Army of the Unemployed marched on Washington, but revolution did not come. The urban disaffected channeled their discontent into populism and the free silver movement while their employers opposed them by advocating high tariff. The prolonged and sterile debate between these adversaries soured many on politics for a time.[2] The election of pro-tariff McKinley over free-silver

Bryan in 1896 and subsequent but unexpected currency expansion due to new gold discoveries inaugurated a period of prosperity that rendered the controversy meaningless.

Even before the election, however, there were signs that the country was well on its way to recovery. New magazines and newspapers were established, book publishing thrived and expenditure for advertising reached new highs. The bicycle industry also expanded providing new jobs for hundreds of Americans. The middle-class and those aspiring to it refocussed their attention with new enthusiasm on efforts to improve themselves socially and educationally. Women, relieved of much of the financial worry of the early part of the decade and freed from domestic drudgery by urban conveniences and modern inventions, began to demonstrate their desire for a more active role in the world outside the home.

Although the artistic poster movement began in March 1893 with Edward Penfield's (1866-1925) first poster for Harper's Monthly (Fig. 1), shortly after the Panic hit and not long before the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition opened, it took a year or so to gather momentum. During that year, 1893-94, the country began to revive economically. The political unrest and threat of total chaos that attended the Panic exhausted itself in the free-silver/high tariff tug-of-war. As a result, attention to leisure, the

arts and other pleasurable aspects of life returned. During 1894, 1895 and well into 1896, the new artistic poster was one of the most popular diversions. Though the situation had improved, financial concerns were never far away and people were hardly in a frivolous mood. In fulfilling a dual function, the poster was uniquely suited to these circumstances. It provided a source of artistic satisfaction to a large segment of the society at little cost to the producer at the same time that it played a positive commercial role in promoting and encouraging business. For several years the poster movement was a major focus of journalists and critics. Exhibitions took place all over the country and the poster was widely recognized as both a significant force in the business world and as a sign of the advance of American culture. Nevertheless, numerous scholars have dealt with this period of United States history without even mentioning its existence. In order to draw a more complete picture of the decade, this study will examine various aspects of the poster phenomenon.

The first chapter will describe the emergence of the poster in the context of the American arts and crafts movement and American technical expertise in printing and reproduction. Chapter One will also outline the poster's connection to important events and trends during the

nineties. Chapter Two identifies a variety of business patrons who sponsored and promoted the new poster while Chapter Three concentrates on the postermakers and their reasons for participating in the poster movement.

Chapters Four and Five deal with the internal nature of the poster phenomenon--the development of major styles and the creation of a unique iconography despite important foreign influences. The final chapter examines the most curious fact of the artistic poster's history, its brevity, and the circumstances of the new poster's demise. The resulting profile of the 1890s which includes the story of the artistic poster is richer, fuller and rewards us with important clues to late nineteenth century values, interests and preoccupations.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

[1]The term "artistic poster" was one of several used to designate the new kind of poster that emerged in the United States during the 1890s in which the decorative took precedence over the illustrative. "The Modern Poster" and the "picture poster" were other contemporary expressions favored by critics and commentators.

[2]See Edwin Lawrence Godkin, "The Political Situation in 1896," in Problems of Modern Democracy: Political and Economic Essays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), for his discussion of the withdrawal of many able men from politics and government service as a result of the high tariff/silverite impasse.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

The American advertising poster had been common since the first half of the nineteenth century, but the advent of the new artistic poster in the 1890s represented the culmination of two different print-making traditions: wood-engraving[1] and lithography. The earlier generation of American posters beginning in the 1830s was wood-engraved. The wood-engraving process was first practiced in America in the 1790s by Alexander Anderson (1775-1870).[2] By the 1830s wood-engravings provided circus, wild animal and patent medicine posters as well as illustrations for the new weekly newspapers.[3] Techniques for wood-engraving continued to improve, especially in the area of magazine illustration. In the seventies, the introduction of photography as a means of putting the image on the block, without the interpretation of the artist's work by the engraver, broadened the reproductive capacity of the wood-engraving. Paintings, watercolors or works in almost any medium could be reproduced faithfully. This led to what is known as the "New School of Wood-Engraving," of the 1870s and ushered in the golden era of the wood-engraved illustration characteristic of the 1880s.[4]

Wood-engraved posters, however, did not enjoy continuous refinement. The posters of the fifties and sixties were wood-engraved in colors and were technically advanced, but lacked any aesthetic component. In the 1870s, lithography firms, which had existed as early as the 1820s[5] in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, took over the poster field from the wood-engravers. This take-over was in large part due to the introduction of the power press which made mass production of lithographic work economical. The hand presses in use before the power machines yielded fewer than fifty impressions an hour while the power presses produced several hundred. This expansion of the industry was significant for the artistic poster movement since the background of many of the poster artists of the nineties included stints as apprentices in one of the thriving lithography concerns. By this time, the 1870s, color lithography had established itself as well. P. S. Duval of Philadelphia, and Currier and Ives in New York had produced hand-colored prints[7] as early as the 1840s and 1850s. During the Civil War, the Strobridge Lithography Company produced "oil portraits."[8] In 1860, Julius Bien (1826-1909) provided impressive color lithographs[9] for the re-issue of Audubon's Birds and in the 1870s, Louis Prang (1824-1909) introduced his chromolithographed Christmas cards. They became so popular that Prang held a

color Christmas card competition that included as participants such artists as Thomas Dewing (1851-1938), Dora Wheeler (1858-?), J. Alden Weir (1852-1919) and Will H. Low (1853-1932). The 1870s also saw the first lithographed daily newspaper, the Daily Graphic of New York.

The primary business of the large lithographic poster firms--Strobridge of Cincinnati; the Forbes Company of Boston and the Courier Lithographic Company of Buffalo--in the 1870s and 1880s came from the entertainment industry: the theater, circuses and wild animal shows. Their posters had also been used, however, for patent medicines, plant seeds and tobacco. This older type of poster was very different in approach from the artistic poster of the nineties. A typical nineteenth century circus poster is a good example of the earlier kind (Fig. 2). The emphasis was on the illustrative rather than the decorative. Its make-believe subject matter was a large part of its stock-in-trade.[10] The designing and production of these posters was considered a technical matter more than a creative one. In many cases, images were copied over and over. Circuses often purchased ready-made posters to which the name of the group was simply added while theatrical impresarios demanded only the most banal pictorial references to their performers. Even after the new kind of poster had become popular in the mid-nineties, the old style poster continued

to be used by the entertainment world.[11]

Before the artistic poster of the nineties, only Matt Morgan (1839-1890) of the Strobridge Company emerged as a recognized artist, sought after for his original work. As early as 1886, the French critic, Ernest Maindron, acknowledged him for his special contribution to poster-making in the United States.[12] After Morgan became director of Strobridge in 1881, he improved the overall quality of American posters by requiring original designs from the artists under him. However, the scale of production, which averaged twenty-four stones a day for each artist,[13] made it impossible for these posters to achieve the level of design characteristic of the nineties posters. This older tradition, however, did establish an extensive body of technical expertise that served the artist and lithographer of the succeeding period. It also created a public that was accustomed to the poster as a means of communication and comforted prospective poster clients with the notion that poster advertising had been around for a long time. In other words, the older posters got Americans used to posters as advertising. The poster as art was the contribution of the new movement.

Additional technical advances in the late eighties and early nineties, combined with the earlier introduction of the power press, undoubtedly contributed to the

artistic poster's development. One of these innovations, the rotary press, allowed the substitution of zinc plates for the Bavarian stones used in ordinary lithography. Zinc plates were used as early as the 1860s, but it was the Russell and Morgan Company of Cincinnati that first popularized their use in conjunction with the rotary press around 1890.[14] The resulting zincograph was virtually indistinguishable from a lithograph, but was much cheaper. The zinc plate could be twice the size of a Bavarian stone but cost $1.00 instead of $50.00. Lithographic stones are normally erased after the desired run has been completed so that the same stone is used for different designs over and over again. Because the cost of zinc was so much less, the plates could be preserved with designs intact, making possible an additional run of the same poster. The zinc plates also required only one-twentieth the storage space needed by a stone.

Photo-reproduction, however, was the most important money and time-saving approach used increasingly in the nineties.[15] Combined with lithography or zincography, photo-reproduction insured the faithful rendering of an artist's design without the necessity of his putting the design on the stone or plate himself. Nor was there any need for a middleman to make a painstaking copy. It also allowed the artist to produce his design in a leisurely

manner outside the workshop setting. Besides being associated with lithographs and zincographs, photo-reproduction was widely used beginning in the early nineties for line-cuts. The line-cut was first extensively employed by newspapers as an economical method of reproducing line drawings. In this process, the artist's pen-and-ink drawing was photographically reduced to the requisite size and then photographically reproduced onto a metal plate that would be used to print the drawing on the newspaper page. This freed the artist from the necessity of working on the usual small scale required in newspaper illustrations and from having to risk interpretation of his design by a technician. The case of John Sloan (1871-1951) demonstrates the way in which this development affected the poster movement. Sloan, working at the Philadelphia Inquirer as a newspaper artist, responded to the needs of the line-cut process by creating, as early as 1892, his unique approach to illustration that would also prove effective for the poster medium. His first posters, for the Bradley Coal Company, were done soon afterwards. Sloan called this new style his "poster style" and he continued to perfect it throughout the decade.

Even before Sloan's poster-style work in 1892, there were signs of the American artistic poster. In 1889, Louis Rhead (1857-1926) did his first posters for the Century and

St. Nicholas. Even earlier, Eugene Grasset (1841-1917), the French poster artist,[17] had designed a poster for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly (1882) and in 1889, the same year as Rhead began his poster career, Grasset did two more posters for Harper's Monthly.[18] Between 1889 and 1891 Rhead received poster commissions from Harper's Monthly and the Century. In 1890, the Grolier Club of New York mounted a poster show.[19] The exhibit consisted mostly of French designs, but it served to alert the American public to the European phenomenon and its possible transplantation to the United States. After 1891, Rhead worked and exhibited in Paris, not returning to New York until 1894.

In 1892, Brander Matthews, the well-known essayist and drama specialist, wrote the first article on the artistic poster to appear in an American periodical for the Century. Surprisingly enough, he had already assumed the evolution of the poster in America. Matthews referred to "the recent development of the pictorial poster in France and America," and suggested that it "is worthy of careful consideration by all who take note of the artistic currents of our time."[20]

Although Matthews was premature in aligning the American posters of the early nineties to those in France, his thesis that the poster would naturally grow out of the

new interest in, appreciation for and expression of the applied arts in the United States is central to an understanding of the development of the American movement. After quoting Candace Wheeler (1828-1923), Louis Comfort Tiffany's (1848-1933) partner in the Associated Artists,[21] in regard to the emergence of a recognizable American character in the applied arts, he postulated that,

> In its own way, the American pictorial poster has felt the influence of this movement forward; and it can be called to bear witness in behalf of Mrs. Wheeler's declaration just as her own embroideries and textiles can, or any other latter day development of the art instinct of the American people.[22]

In spite of this positive evaluation, Matthews offers no American examples to illustrate his observations. This is not too surprising since most posters before 1893 were lithographic versions of the "hard and dry"[23] circus wood-engravings of a decade or two before. Matt Morgan's posters, such as the one in Fig. 3, represent the best of this genre. Even Louis Rhead's early designs (Fig. 4), which date from this period, are only marginally acceptable as specimens of the coming change in American postermaking. Nevertheless, the strength of Matthew's faith in the general state of the applied arts was an important testimony to their vitality; his notion of poster art as another expression of this vitality may have helped to convince those with capital and influence that a more aesthetic

approach to advertising was as possible in America as it was in France.

Less than six months after Matthews' essay appeared, Harper's Monthly hired Edward Penfield to do an original poster design for each issue of the magazine. The series began with the March 1893 number (Fig. 1) and continued until August 1899, by which time Penfield had produced over sixty posters. The new approach, which aimed for an aesthetic appeal, was immediately recognizable as a departure from magazine posters of the eighties.[24] The Century, Lippincott's and Scribner's followed the Harper's Monthly example by instituting their own poster campaigns in 1894. By December 1895, the poster fad or "craze"[25] had caught on to such an extent that Wilbur Whitehead, one of the most diligent collectors of the period, was able to publish a catalogue with a list of over 600 designs, all executed in 1894 or 1895, except for a few of Penfield's done in 1893.[26] The momentum of the movement, charged by numerous exhibitions and favorable attention in the press, continued well into 1896. Thenew poster periodicals--the Poster and Poster Lore--and the national poster competitions helped to maintain the enthusiasm. By late 1896, however, both of the poster reviews had folded along with many of the other little magazines that had championed poster art. Though interest was still keen, the movement no longer enjoyed the

wide public attention apparent in 1895 and early 1896. Although critics continued to view the movement as a phenomenon that would have lasting effect on both poster art and modern art in general, the next couple of years saw interest decline further for reasons that will be examined in Chapter Six. After the turn of the century, it was clear that the artistic poster movement was an episode belonging to the past, one that spoke specifically of social, economic and cultural conditions in the nineties.

In order to understand how the poster was woven into the texture of the period, its participation in each of those areas--the social, economic and cultural--must be described. Though its role was not necessarily crucial, its involvement provides a fresh perspective on certain trends and events during the decade.

In the social area, one of the most significant characteristics of the epoch was the accelerating interest in self-education and self-improvement. Although popular education had been an important theme in America since colonial times, the real thrust came in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when more and more people began living in urban centers where time for work and leisure was more clearly defined than it was in a rural setting. Many Americans sought to use their free time for bettering themselves culturally and educationally. In the nineties there

were large numbers of people willing to devote a part of their lives to avocational pursuits. The growth of lending libraries, the flowering of organizations such as the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle, the advent of correspondence schools and university extensions, articles on women's education in the national periodicals, the emphasis on historical subjects in the ten-cent magazines all testify that this phenomenon represented a burning preoccupation for a large segment of the population. Chautauqua, the model for self-education organizations in post-Civil War America, opened its program in the summer of 1874 with eight weeks of lecturing in the arts, sciences and humanities. Some participants returned year after year for the courses and the certificates granted for successfully completed examinations. The nineties witnessed a rapid increase in the Chautauqua-type institution. By 1904, there were over 300.[27]

Those who could not participate in a Chautauqua-like program, turned instead to the now widely available magazines, books and newspapers to nurture the self-improvement impulse. Though there was some faltering in the publishing industry during 1893 in response to the Panic, it soon recovered itself. In the magazine category, several new types thrived: mass-market reviews selling for ten cents (McClure's, Munsey's and Cosmopolitan); miniature

periodicals (the Chap-Book, Lark, Echo were among them), known as toy magazines or dinkeys,[28] that focussed on American literature and art; and mail subscription journals of enormous circulation (such as Comfort and Illustrated Good Stories) that were directed at a rural market.[29]

Of the new periodicals, the monthlies were the most vital factor in satisfying the self-improvement urge.[30] Frank Munsey was the first of the cheaper magazine entrepreneurs to achieve success.[31] In October of 1893, Munsey's sold 40,000 copies a month; by December 1893, 100,000; and in 1894, the average was close to 500,000. His success invited imitation.[32] By 1895 readers had a choice among the ten-cent magazines. McClure's and Cosmopolitan as well as Munsey's offered the best fiction in addition to articles on art, science, history and current events, illustrated with almost as many pictures as pages. The more established monthlies--the Century, Harper's Monthly, Lippincott's and Scribner's at twenty-five and thirty-five cents--were seriously challenged.

The artistic poster played a crucial role in the struggle between the older magazines and the new. In order to compete, Harper's Monthly instituted a new kind of advertising program in March 1893 using the artistic poster. Harper's Monthly was the first to issue original posters for each number to be displayed at newsstands and book-

stores, but the others soon followed its example. By 1894, all four of the older, established monthlies were enthusiastic poster patrons. The cheaper magazines never became as committed to artistic poster advertising, but they did commission posters from time to time. (See Figs. 7, 8.)

The other new kind of magazine involved with the artistic poster was the miniature magazine. In contrast to the ten-cent magazines, these miniature reviews, produced on a small scale and directed towards a limited audience, closely identified themselves with the poster movement. They sprang up all over the country between 1894 and 1897, numbering close to one hundred at their height.[33] The Chap-Book (Cambridge and Chicago), the Red Letter (Boston), the Echo (Chicago), Bradley, His Book (Springfield, Mass.), the Bookman (New York) were among those that promoted the poster, but there were many others as well that commissioned posters and treated them to critical attention.

The artistic poster also represented a key advertising vehicle for books during this period. American readership had been growing since the great success of the cheap popular novel at the time of the Civil War. In the nineties, the desire of the public to elevate itself educationally resulted in a market for more serious books also. At this time there were basically two kinds of publishing houses: the larger, better known companies (Harper Brothers;

Scribner's Sons; Dodd, Mead; and Appleton) that produced books for wide consumption, and a new breed of smaller firms (including Stone and Kimball; Lamson, Wolff; and Copeland and Day). The latter group represented a more specialized taste in literature and exhibited a devotion to producing volumes that were carefully designed and printed in the tradition of William Morris' Kelmscott Press.[34] Both kinds of publishers favored the poster, but in the case of the smaller firms, it became almost an extension of the book it advertised. The posters, in conjunction with the books they publicized, became a new kind of Gesamptkunstwerk. It may be due in part to the poster's effectiveness that book buying reached the point where the idea of what would later be called a "bestseller" first expressed itself in America. From the time the Bookman began publishing in February 1895, it printed monthly the titles of the six books with the highest sales on the basis of reports from 16 cities around the United States.[35] Several "best-sellers" were promoted by artistic posters including The Damnation of Theron Ware (see John Twachtman's [1853-1902] only artistic poster, Fig. 9); The Adventures of Captain Horn (advertised by a Blanche McManus [1870-?] poster); The Phantom Death (Fig. 10); Days of Auld Lang Syne (Fig. 11) and Pony Tracks (Fig. 12).

Newspapers, like the new mass-market magazines, made

great efforts to provide educational-sounding articles in their Sunday supplements. Often these articles, especially the scientific ones, were far from reliable. Nevertheless, the appearance of truth was enough to attract a large, anxious-to-be-informed audience. The Sunday supplements, which brought newspapers into a new era in the mid-nineties, were often advertised by artistic posters. By the time the newspapers took up the vogue in 1895,[36] the book and magazine world had already demonstrated the economic value and aesthetic prestige of the poster.

Within the general tendency of the public toward self-education, one segment of the population, women, showed a marked desire as a group to expand their intellectual horizons and to broaden their participation in society beyond their roles as wives and mothers. Since the poster used women as its primary iconographic vehicle, it constituted a readily available document of the new larger sphere of female activity. Nowhere else in the visual arts does one find such a concrete and revealing record of the new-woman phenomenon.[37] During the nineties members of "The Ten,"[38] especially Frank Benson (1862-1921), Thomas Dewing (1851-1938), Joseph DeCamp (1858-1923), Robert Reid (1862-1929) and Edmund Tarbell (1862-1938) also focussed on the American female and her world. In their portrayal, however, women are always engaged in quiet pasttimes. "These

women idle away their hours playing cards, playing musical instruments and reading, or, . . . writing letters."[39] In contrast, posters of women skating, cycling, playing football and travelling alone probably inadvertently benefitted the movement toward women's independence by providing society at large with a kind of ongoing conditioning. Advertisers were not necessarily trying to encourage the new trends, but they did seek to attract as much of the women's market[40] as possible by identifying themselves with the most up-to-date female imagery.

The role of the new poster in the self-education movement from the point of view of publishing and women's growing independence is undeniable if somewhat indirect. However, the poster was also thought to have contributed to the self-education process more directly. During the poster epoch the artistic poster was touted as a new public art form capable of acclimating, refining, and educating the general population.[41] According to this theory, the ready availability of poster art would make an art experience possible for those deprived of the privilege of exposure to art at home or in museums. For egalitarians, the poster had value as a tool for mass-education. For supporters of the artistic poster among the intellectuals, the new poster represented an avant-garde cause to be encouraged, along with the new literary approaches, because

it offered the possibility of helping to raise the overall cultural level of the country.

From an economic perspective, the new poster came at a time when advertising of all kinds was on the rise. Its success was undoubtedly due in part to the fact that the business world had become more conscious of advertising than ever before. Though Cyrus H. K. Curtis created the model for a lucrative magazine venture based on the large-scale participation of advertisers with his Ladies Home Journal (1883), it was not until the nineties that other mass-market periodicals took up his lead.[42] In the mid-nineties, instead of a few pages of advertising typical of magazines in the eighties, the ten-cent magazines devoted almost as many pages to advertising as they did to their texts.[43]

The advertising role of the poster in the publishing business has already been noted. Its impact may have been even greater, however, on the bicycle industry. The artistic poster was a major promotion tool for the bicycle when its popularity peaked in the mid-nineties. Starting from a few manufacturers in the early nineties, the number of bicycle companies had reached the hundreds by 1896.[44] The decision to use the artistic poster, a new kind of advertising was in keeping with the manufacturers' decision to use new methods of production and marketing. The Overman Wheel

Company, makers of the Victoria bicycle, was the first to introduce what would later be called the assembly line. The larger bicycle companies also pioneered the modern business technique of offering their product at the same price throughout the country using a centrally directed network of retail shops. The use of trade-ins and installment payments were other innovations that became regular features of the bicycle sales process. After the turn of the century, much of this business expertise was transferred to the newly invented automobile.

Although expenditures for advertising had reached a new high in the nineties, a large segment of the commercial world was still ambivalent, considering it "something between a bastard form of journalism and an illegitimate offspring of business."[45] Because the artistic poster was recognized soon after its introduction as a new art form with educational potential as well as a new form of advertising, it identified the advertiser with the progressive, socially responsible forces rather than the seemingly amoral business operators interested only in making as much money as possible.

In the cultural sphere, the nineties witnessed some positive developments that helped assure the artistic poster's success. American literature, which for decades had taken second place behind English literature as far as book

and magazine publishers were concerned, suddenly received a boost. An 1891 copyright law made it illegal to publish works by foreign authors without offering a fee. Rather then pay, editors took a new look at native authors and began to promote them seriously. More Americans felt encouraged to enter the field since the liklihood of recognition appeared so much greater than before. Indications that the American version of the English language had acquired a new, more legitimate status constituted another gratifying sign to those concerned with the development of American literature.[46] The overall expansion in book and magazine publishing came in part as a result of the improved relationship between an ever-increasing supply of able writers with a new confidence in their American background and a publishing world now receptive to their talents. The artistic poster, also in large part an indigenous expression, proved an appropriate advertising vehicle for many of the new publications.

In the area of the visual arts, perhaps the most important event of this period was the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 held in Chicago. It helped to consolidate American confidence in all branches of the visual arts. Architecturally, it proved to European-conscious natives that academic, grandiose schemes could flourish here as well as abroad. For both the applied and fine arts it provided

an unusual opportunity for seeing examples of American accomplishments in many different categories: easel and mural painting, sculpture, graphics, furniture, stained glass, pottery and textiles. The fact that the fair took place in Chicago and drew people from all over the country helped to dispel the notion that art and art events could only take place in the East. Observers saw art-making as a decentralized phenomenon. At the same time, the Exposition had a unifying effect by presenting many different kinds of art that were all linked by having been produced within an American context. An optimistic outlook resulted which stimulated the continued development of the arts in all parts of the country. During the nineties, new art schools, new exhibition societies, new arts and crafts organizations sprang up not just in Boston, Chicago and New York, but in Indianapolis, Minneapolis, San Francisco, New Orleans and Rochester.[47]

In attempting to analyze the reasons for the emergence of the artistic poster, which occurred just around the time of the World's Fair, it is important to examine the development of a renewed appreciation for the applied arts because it was this climate that favored the new poster's rise. The attention of the World's Columbian Exposition to the applied arts was significant, but it was just the culmination of a long process[48] that had begun with the earlier

world's fair held in America, the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. The example of the English crafts exhibits at the Philadelphia fair gave an important stimulus to the American applied arts movement. The New York Society of Decorative Arts was founded in 1877; Maria Longworth Nichols (1849-1932) set up Rookwood Pottery in Cincinnati, the most famous of the American art pottery centers, during 1880; Dora Wheeler devoted herself to the revival of needlework in America at the end of the seventies; Louis Comfort Tiffany gave up painting as his major interest to become a designer in 1878, setting up his organization, Associated Artists, a year later; and the Art Workers Guild of Providence (named after a London group) did silverware, panel painting and furniture during most of the eighties.

Exposure to the English exhibits at the Philadelphia fair affected America so strongly because the conditions and predispositions in the United States were in certain ways similar to those in England. Though the movement was less organized, the decorative arts had already begun to flower here as in Britain. The art pottery movement in Cincinnati, for example, which later culminated in the Rookwood group, was already underway in 1871[49] and the California School of Design, devoted to the applied arts, had been founded in 1874. The Magazine of Art, which began

publishing in 1878, had both a British and an American edition (the American edition was always one issue behind). From the beginning, it stressed the role of the minor arts and home decoration as well as the fine arts of painting, sculpture and architecture. Articles on pottery, silverwork, posters, iron work, glass painting, needlework, china painting and furniture design demonstrated the mutual English and American interest in the arts and crafts area during the years following the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.

In the eighties there were also many parallels between the United States and England. The same William Morris-designed furniture and wallpaper popular in London could be found in New York and Chicago as well. Oscar Wilde, who visited America in 1882, drew large audiences there just as at home. Charles Godfrey Leland, an American living in England in the 1860s and 1870s, published The Minor Arts there in 1869 which expounded his philosophy of crafts. His work led to the formation of the Home Arts and Industries Association in England. Once back in his home town of Philadelphia in the eighties, he convinced the school board to establish the first public industrial arts school. In the nineties, America, again catalyzed by the World's Fair, imitated English groups in organizing arts and crafts societies to furnish outlets for the growing number

of artists and enthusiasts involved in the applied arts.

Despite parallel conditions in England and the U United States during the latter part of the eighties and early 1890s, there were some important differences in attitude. The advocates of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society had a total mistrust of high quality design items being mass-produced. Americans, on the other hand, did not find mass-production and aesthetics necessarily incompatible. During 1880-1900, American arts and crafts standards of fine workmanship and good design operated on both the commercial and small-scale production level. American magazine printing and illustrating showed most forcefully in the 1880s[50] the sensitivity to fine workmanship in an area of large-scale production. Wood-engraved illustrations, whose refinement was noted earlier in this chapter as a contrast to the crudeness of wood-engraved posters, reached its apogee of perfection in the early eighties and became the hallmark of the best American magazines such as the Century, Scribner's, Harper's Monthly and Lippincott's. An English observer conceded America's supremacy in this area:

> . . . the Americans, with an energy and naivete peculiar to them, have set themselves the task of outstripping all nations in the beauty and quality of magazine illustrations . . . it is common to meet people in England asking, 'Have you seen the last number of Harper's or the Century Magazine?' The fashion is to admire them, and English publishers are easily found to devote time and capital to distributing American magazines . . . to the prejudice

> of native productions . . . The American engraver is an artist in every sense of the word, and his education is not considered complete without years of foreign study. The American engraver is always en rapport with the artist . . . working often, as I have seen them at Harper's, the Century Magazine and Scribner's in New York, in the same studio, side by side.[51]

At the same time, in the non-commercial sphere, Americans shared a greater bibliophilia. Book Clubs that promoted and collected well-designed and printed books sprang up in many parts of the country. The Book Fellows Club in Chicago (1881); the Grolier Club (1884) and the Dunlap Society (1885) in New York; and the Club of Odd Volumes in Boston (1886), are some of the best known. In the 1890s, inspired by Morris' Kelmscott Press, new bibliophile clubs appeared in Cleveland and Galesburg, Illinois; Chicago, Milwaukee, New York and Philadelphia.[52]

During the decade of the nineties, the new poster best demonstrated the arts and crafts approach to the applied arts in both the mass-produced and the connoisseurs' marketplace. The posters commissioned by major magazines and newspapers, though carefully designed and executed, were produced and printed in large numbers by many workmen. The posters done for the short-lived little magazines and smaller publishers, however, appealed to the specialist and the aesthete and were a more personal product. Foreign imports such as the Studio, the Yellow Book and Morris'

Kelmscott Press books contributed to the desire for better graphic design, but the new taste of the 1890s for the artistic poster grew to a large extent out of the standard of fine printing and illustrating established by the American magazines of the eighties. The English Arts and Crafts Movement had pointed the way to a more refined taste and higher level of workmanship in the applied arts, but it was America that demonstrated how these values could operate on a wide scale as well as on a more limited one.

The social and economic changes, technical advances and the new improved status of the applied arts described above, along with the examples of the mass-market possibilities of a more aesthetic approach to advertising provided by the work of Grasset, Rhead and Sloan, were the crucial factors in the development of the artistic poster movement. In the mid-nineties, the poster's aesthetic appeal combined with its commercial utility assured it wide public interest. More importantly, however, its dual character attracted the support of the business sector. The ways in which poster art and commerce interacted, the sponsors and patrons whose capital made this new branch of the arts possible, are the focus of Chapter Two.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1]Wood-engraving is to be distinguished from wood-cutting. While woodcuts use blocks of soft wood that are cut away with special gouges and knives, the wood-engraving, which does not appear until the eighteenth century (introduced by the Englishman, Thomas Bewick, (1753-1828), uses boxwood and is engraved with the same tool used for copper engraving, a burin. Wood-engraving produces a much finer reproduction than wood-cutting.

[2]W. J. Linton, The History of Wood-Engraving in America (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1882), p. 1.

[3]Family Magazine (New York, 20 April 1883-May 1841); New York Mirror (2 August 1823-31 December 1842); American Magazine (Boston, September 1834-September 1837)

[4]Frank Weitenkampf, American Graphic Art (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1912, pp. 154-170.

[5]Three of the earliest lithographic firms founded in the 1820s in Boston, Philadelphia and New York were all part of the business enterprise of the Pendleton brothers of Boston.

[6]It was in the three Pendleton firms (see above) that Nathaniel Currier received his apprenticeship. In 1834 he founded his own lithography business. Not an artist himself, Currier took on J. Merrit Ives as employee to do the art work and later made him a partner. Over a period of several decades (Currier retired in 1880 but the company continued until 1901), Currier and Ives produced thousands of subjects. Eventually their prints were to be found in homes and institutions throughout America.

[7]Hand-colored lithographs must be differentiated from chromolithographs--lithographs actually printed in color.

[8]"These portraits were lithographed in colors ground in oil on artist's canvas and simulated genuine oil paintings to a degree . . . 'oil portraits' of Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Webster, and other historical celebrities were sold through agents in great quantity all over the country." See John Merten, "Stone by Stone Along a Hundred Years with the House of Strobridge," Bulletin of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio 8 (January 1950):9.

[9]Chromolithography was rather late in coming to the United States although Alois Senefelder, who invented lithography in 1798, had already explained the technique in his book. The fact that it was printed in German and in a very small edition made it relatively inaccessible to American lithographers.

[10]Harry Peters in his article entitled, "The Greatest Show on Earth," Antiques 38 (July 1940):16, quotes from one of the early wild animal show posters: 'An extraordinary calf. It has two heads, two ears, four eyes, two bodies, eight legs and two tails--come and see it.'

[11]The reasons why are not altogether clear, but the primary reason was probably economic. The new posters commissioned individually from specific artists were undoubtedly more expensive. Furthermore, since this kind of entertainment made no attempt to appeal on a cultural or aesthetic basis, the unique character of the artistic poster would have had no positive value for promoters and, indeed, might have had a negative one.

[12]Ernest Maindron, Les affiches illustrées (Paris: Librarie artistique, H. Launette and Cie., Editeurs, 1886), p. 149.

[13]These large entertainment posters produced at Strobridge were normally 12x24 feet. Several stones (as many as 12) would be brought together to trace the outline of the design and then they would be divided up so that the artist could work on each one separately. At 24 stones a day an artist could turn out two of these mammoth posters. In contrast, the artistic posters were no more than the size of one of the separate stones. Louis Rhead stated in 1896 that he could make an artistic poster in three days. "with the help of those who carry out my designs for me." See "Fine Arts: Poster Making Discussed by Mr. Louis Rhead," Independent 48 (3 September 1896):1195.

[14]See section XX in Herbert Cecil Duce's Poster Advertising (Chicago: The Blakeley Printing Company, 1912).

[15]At the beginning of the chapter, the use of photographic reproduction was mentioned in conjunction with wood-engraving of the 1870s. Basically the same photographic technique comes into common use for lithographers in the nineties.

[16]John Sloan, American Art Nouveau: The Poster Period of John Sloan (Lockhaven, Pa.: Hammermill Paper Co., 1967).

[17]Although Grasset was born in Switzerland, his entire working life was spent in France.

[18]The 1882 poster shows an allegorical female figure draped in an American flag. (This was during the height of the campaign to raise funds for the Statue of Liberty.) The 1889 posters, used to advertise symbolic female figures. Grasset's posters set an important example. They demonstrated that the artistic poster did not have to follow the model made popular by the originator of the modern French poster, Jules Chéret (1836-1932) which many Americans had found risqué and offensive.

[19]Most of the posters in the Grolier Club show were by Jules Chéret (see above), but it did include at least one American example by Matt Morgan.

[20]Brander Matthews, "The Pictorial Poster," Century 44 (September 1892):748.

[21]The official name of the organization was Louis C. Tiffany and Co., Associated Artists. It was established in New York in 1879 and involved the collaboration of four partners: Tiffany, Wheeler, Lockwood deForest and Samuel Coleman. The group lasted until mid-decade and its important commissions included the redoing of the public rooms of the White House, one wing of the Seventh Regiment Armory, New York and the halls of New York's Union League Club.

[22]Matthews, "The Pictorial Poster," p. 756.

[23]Ibid., p. 755.

[24]Elihu Vedder, for example, had done occasional posters in the eighties for the national magazines to advertise special holiday issues, but often the artists of these early magazines posters were anonymous. Usually the designs were done in a very conservative, illustrative style.

[25]An article entitled "Poster Craze in Philadelphia," appeared in the 1 March 1896 Philadelphia Inquirer, p.1. The article noted that Philadelphians were late in joining a fad that was already in full force elsewhere.

[26]A Memorandum Check List of American Posters in the Collection of Wilbur Cherrier Whitehead (Cleveland: By the Author, 1895).

[27]See Hugo Munsterberg, The Americans (New York: McClure and Co., 1904), p. 385.

[28]Some years later, Claude Fayette Bragdon, a writer for several of the little magazines and a poster artist, described them this way: "In the aggregate they can be characterized as 'young,' devouringly eccentric and self-assertive and either good-natured or bitterly critical of one another. They constitute a sort of metaphysical Fleet Street, extending from coast to coast." See Claude Bragdon, "The Purple Cow Period: The 'Dinkey Magazines', that taught the Spirit of the Nineties," Bookman 69 (July 1929): 475.

[29]See Chap-Book 6 (1 May 1897):465, for a discussion of this type of magazine.

[30]See Fig. 6 for a poster advertising Self-Culture, a mass-market, home-study magazine begun in 1895.

[31]Cosmopolitan actually began in 1886 but it wasn't until 1893 when Munsey offered his periodical at ten cents and the others followed suit that the era of the cheap magazine began.

[32]See Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 611.

[33]See Frederick W. Faxton, "A Bibliography of Ephemeral Bibelots," Bulletin of Bibliography 1 (June 1897:21-23; 3 (April 1903-January 1904):72-74, 92, 106-107, 124-126.

[34]The last major project of William Morris' arts and crafts career was his Kelmscott Press, established in London in 1891. The first book, The Story of the Glittering Plain, was issued in April and by October, a photographic facsimile was already available in the United States. Morris printed at least one book expressly for the American market, Rossetti's Hand and Soul, which was distributed by Way and Williams of Chicago. In any case, the Kelmscott Press books quickly became models for bibliophile book production in America.

[35]See Mott, American Magazines, vol. 4, p. 435.

[36]Newspaper patronage of the poster began with George Frederick Scotson-Clark's design for the 6 January 1895 issue of the New York Recorder.

[37]Although it dates from an earlier period in the century, the illustrative work of Winslow Homer done for Harper's in the late sixties provides an obvious exception His sensitive visual descriptions of women involved in a wide range of activities are very close in spirit to the portrayal of women in many of the American posters of the nineties.

[38]In response to the unfair exhibition policy of the Society of American Artists, a group of artists established an organization called "The Ten American Painters." The following artists were the members of "The Ten" when it was founded in 1898: Frank Weston Benson, Joseph Rodefer De Camp, Thomas Dewing, Frederick Childe Hassam, Willard Leroy Metcalf, Robert Reid, Edward Simmons, Edmund Charles Tarbell, John Henry Twachtman, Julian Alden Weir.

[39]Patricia Hills, Turn of the Century America (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art), p. 74.

[40]A statement in Women's Column (3 [4 February 1890]:4) held that 88% of all subscribers to periodicals in the United States were women.

[41]Sylvester Baxter in his article for the Boston Herald, "Pictorial Posters: Notable Exhibition at the Brookline Public Library," 21 February 1895, p. 7, discusses this aspect of the poster movement: "Even if the matter would be of enormous value, for it is something of no small concern that objects which greet the eye on every hand in our city streets should have a predominantly artistic character. The influence thus exerted upon public taste must be very strong . . . when good design and bad design are seen side by side, the preference, in popular judgment cannot fail sooner or later to be given to the good." p. 7.

[42]The key to a successful advertising appeal was to offer a wide national distribution only possible through mail subscription as early as the Postal Act of 1879, the government provided magazines with favorable mailing privileges because of their educational content, but it wasn't until the nineties that publishers made full use of this financial advantage.

[43]See Frank L. Mott, "The Magazine Revolution and Popular Ideas in the Nineties," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 64 (1954):211.

[44]Joseph B. Bishop, "The Social and Economic Influence of the Bicycle," Forum 21 (August 1896):688.

[45]James Pleysted Wood, The Story of Advertising (New York, Ronald Press, Co., 1958), p. 229.

[46]See "Notes," Chap-Book 5 (1 September):375-376, in which the editor praises a new dictionary of American slang. He welcomed the fact that ". . . Americans are beginning to be individual, that [Americans] are borrowing less and developing more."

[47]Boston Society of Arts and Crafts, 1897; Chicago Arts and Crafts Society, 1897; New York's National Arts Club, 1899; Indianapolis Arts and Crafts Society, 1898; Minneapolis Chalk and Chisel Club, 1895; San Francisco Guild of Arts and Crafts, 1895; Newcomb College Pottery Studio, New Orleans, 1895; Rochester Society of Arts and Crafts, 1897.

[48]The growing awareness of the value of the applied arts in America is already apparent from this statement by Brander Matthews in his 1892 article cited above: "Perhaps it is not wholly unfair to suggest that this nineteenth century of ours is a day of little things, and that our silverware, our pottery, our tiles, our wallpaper, our woodcuts, our book-covers each in its kind, and when it is at its best, are better than our historic painting, our heroic sculpture or our grandiose architecture." p. 748.

[49]Martin Eidelberg, "Art Pottery," The Arts and Crafts Movement in America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 119.

[50]Even in 1875, American supremacy in this area was acknowledged by foreign experts. See Henry Blackburne, The Art of Illustration (London: W. H. Allen & Co., Ltd., 1894), p. 17.

[51]Ibid., p.

[52]See Adolf Growell, American Book Clubs (New York: Do Dodd, Mead & Co.), 1897.

CHAPTER TWO: POSTER PATRONAGE

The last chapter concentrated upon the technical and historical background of the artistic poster. Here the purpose is to examine the major sources of the posters, their commercial sponsors, and to describe the circumstances contributing to their great popular success as both advertisement and art.

Besides their obvious aesthetic qualities, artistic posters were prized for their novelty and modernity. The poster's fashionable image stemmed from the early association of the new approach to advertising with France. In France, the poster promoted the new singers, the new kind of cabaret, the new bicycle and was largely identified with the decorative arts style, art nouveau. In addition, Grasset, a French artist, had been the first to do a successful artistic poster for an American audience. Furthermore, the familiarity of American visitors to Paris with the work of Jules Chéret (1836-1932), and the display of Parisian posters at the Grolier Club Exhibition (1890) reinforced the French connection. As a result, the majority of the poster clients first chose posters as a promotion medium in order to give their product the benefit of the poster's link with modish trends abroad. They counted on the chic eye-catching design and clear concise message

to call attention tastefully to what was being sold.

While French and American posters shared certain qualities and achieved similar results, the major clients in each case were different. In France, the entertainment industry was responsible for the best work. In the United States, the world of printing and publishing played the principal role, as stated in this commentary from the magazine Poster Lore:

> . . . nowhere outside America is there any line sharply drawn, as is here, between commercial poster work and the 'art poster' so called . . . With us the art poster has been . . . so completely allied to, and representative of, the printing and publishing trades, that the few modern posters produced for the exploitation of manufactured products, and the theatrical world have been noted as exceptions.[1]

Outside of book, magazine, newspaper publishing and the related industries, there are two other categories of advertisers worth examining: the bicycle manufacturers and the companies making health aids such as tonics and liquid foods. Chapter One included a discussion of the self-education movement in the nineties--the trend to improve oneself intellectually. At the same time, there was an interest in another kind of self-improvement: the improvement of physical health through exercise, better diet and non-chemical cures such as mineral waters, electricity and, eventually, X-rays.

Just as Americans devoured more and more printed

matter in an effort to uplift as well as entertain themselves, they also sought better health and diversion in more physical activity. The most fashionable new form of exercise was cycling. Although the advent of the safety bicycle caused endless debate where the woman was concerned, thousands of Americans began riding their way to fitness and adventure. In Chicago, for example, so many people preferred cycling to the usual sedentary Sunday activities that theaters had to cancel performances on that day.[2] A great many women learned to ride in spite of the dire warnings of physicians and moralists. The necessity for a comfortable costume while cycling led to the elimination of restrictive support garments which had long been a factor in poor female health.

Another aspect of America's growing health consciousness was demonstrated by the popularity of Fletcherism, one of the first comprehensive theories on the relationship of proper eating to health and happiness. Horace Fletcher's books were issued by Herbert S. Stone, co-publisher of the Chap-Book. The acceptance of new tonics and formulas for liquid foods indicated the same concern for greater physical well-being.

Once advertisers had chosen to patronize poster art, they helped legitimize its status in several ways. The same publishers who commissioned posters often hired recognized

authorities to write articles and books proclaiming the poster's uniqueness as a work of art, an aid to commercial development and a tool of social change. Touted as the instrument that would educate and elevate the artistic taste of the masses, transforming big cities into outdoor art galleries that would exert a powerful civilizing influence over the urban populace, the poster had become respectable. Clients also sponsored poster exhibitions that promoted their product under the auspices of a non-commercial endeavor. At the same time they established the new poster as exhibition material, they elevated their own status from advertiser to patron of the arts. As one critic put it: "Finding in the notorious phrase of Mr. Whistler, that 'Art was on the town,' the American advertiser was one of the most eager of those passing gallants who chucked her under the chin."[3] Other promoters held poster contests offering tempting monetary rewards and wide public exposure that succeeded in attracting the so-called fine artists and commercial artists alike.

The result of this mutual enhancement process culminated in the poster "craze" of 1895 and 1896 during which time a whole poster culture was created. The new poster had its own magazines, its own literature, its own artists and its own social responsibilities. Although generally the craze is limited to one or two years in the middle of

the decade,[4] interest continued throughout the nineties.

To provide a more concrete understanding of the unique relationship between the art poster of the nineties and the items it advertised, examples from each of the five main categories (the printing trades, book publishers, the magazine publishers, the newspapers, the bicycle companies and the manufacturers of health aids) must be considered.

A. The Printing Trade

Among the many poster patrons in the printing trade--ink and paper manufacturers, printers, machine makers--two stand out for the originality of the work they commissioned: the trade magazine, the Inland Printer (of Chicago), and the ink-producing firm of Cincinnati, Ault and Wiborg.

The Inland Printer played an important role not only as a consitent poster customer but as an organ for the publicity and promotion of this newly recognized area of the arts. The Inland Printer was the first publication to commission both original work from Will Bradley (1868-1962) and to provide him with favorable critical attention. He had done drawings for them as early as 1891. Over a period of years his style evolved into a full-blown personal expression. Beginning with the April 1894 issue, Bradley did a series of cover designs[5] and posters that are among his most celebrated. The appeal of these designs (see

Figs 13 and 14) was in part what drew the interest not just of American critics, but of the international art world as well. Both the Studio[6] and La Plume[7] praised his work in 1895. That same year, the Inland Printer published a major article[8] on Bradley that assured him of broad recognition in the printing, publishing and advertising sector as well as in the art world.

In the March 1895 issue, the Inland Printer included a review of the poster exhibition sponsored by the Chicago Evening Post. The article provided a concise historical survey of the American poster movement as part of an international phenomenon. The international link, like the connection with France mentioned earlier, enhanced the stature of the new poster in America.

The work of John Sloan was another early discovery of the Inland Printer. He was known in Philadelphia after he began doing poster-like illustrations for the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1892, but his first national exposure came through the Inland Printer. Following the critique in the October 1894 issue,[9] he found himself more and more sought after to do posters and other decorative work. Commissions for posters came from the Echo, Stone and Kimball, Gil Blas and Moods, of which he became art editor in 1895. Around the same time, Sloan left the Philadelphia Inquirer for the Philadelphia Press, where he was encouraged to do more in

the poster-style vein.

Elisha Brown Bird (1867-1943) was another prominent poster artists whose career was promoted by the Inland Printer. An October 1895[10] article outlining his career and praising his work, in conjunction with a series of poster style covers for the magazine, contributed substantially to his subsequent success.

Other poster artists introduced to a national audience by the Inland Printer included I. R. Henri (1836-?),[11] Charles Warde Traver ([1880-?] Fig. 15),[12] J. C. Leyendecker (1874-1971),[13] and Thomas Fleming (1853-1931).[14] In most cases the magazine provided several different examples of the artist's work: often a cover, heading, initial and a few drawings as well as a critique.

Following the so-called "craze" period, the Inland Printer maintained an interest in the poster movement. The editors often commented on outstanding posters in the "Review of Specimens Received," and in "Books, Brochures and Periodicals." Furthermore, from June 1897 to March 1898, Percival Pollard, a writer long associated with the modern poster, wrote a column entitled, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movements." There, Pollard continued to focus on outstanding poster designs and the artists who created them at a time when many of the publications which had previously devoted space to the craze had either

disappeared or redirected their attention elsewhere.

The Ault and Wiborg Company, makers of printing inks, began in Cincinnati, as did so many of the arts and crafts related industries. By the mid-nineties fewer than twenty years after its beginning, the expansion of lithography and other printing media led the firm to extend its operations to Chicago, St. Louis, New York, London and Toronto. Ault and Wiborg, who claimed not only to have "mixed and ground" their inks, but to have "manufactured them," chose some of the best poster artists, including Bradley and Rhead, to design their advertisements. (See Figs. 16 and 17.) At the bottom of each color poster they would list the names of the specific colored inks used. The poster, therefore, provided them with a very practical showcase. Printers and publishers could see at a glance exactly how the inks would appear as printed. They also saw a demonstration of how effective the union between the artistic and the commercial could be. The Eagle Printing Ink and Color Works was another company in the printing trade that commissioned outstanding posters. (See Fig. 18.)

B. Book Publishers

During the 1890s, the relationship between artistic posters and book publishing was an intimate one. Aside from reviews and small advertisements in the literary

magazines, the poster represented the publisher's primary publicity medium. Therefore, an effective and tasteful design that would attract the desired customers had a major economic significance. Since people did not always buy books to read them,[15] an attractive poster, even more than a book's contents, could have made the difference in a book's success.

The ability of posters to promote books effectively was particularly important to the small, independent book publishers whose advertising forum was relatively limited. Of this group, the firm of Stone and Kimball is probably the most significant in terms of the poster. Both Herbert Stone and Hannibal Ingalls Kimball grew up in well-to-do, business oriented but intellectually rich environments. By the time they reached their junior year at Harvard, they had put into operation a scheme to print and publish unusual, non-commercial works. Beginning with their first book, The Decadent (1894), by Ralph Adams Cram, Stone and Kimball adhered to the notion of producing only books that would be objects of art in every respect. Stone's background, especially, helped to determine the kind of volume that was characteristic of the company. reared in Chicago, the son of a wealthy newspaper owner, editor and world traveller, Stone was nurtured in the bibliophilic atmosphere fostered by the bookclubs of the eighties and early nineties.

Just a few months after books began to appear under the imprint of Stone and Kimball, the partners developed the novel idea of publishing and editing a small magazine containing reviews and advertisements of their latest works as well as other literary and artistic efforts that would be of interest to their prospective book audience. Known as the Chap-Book, it initiated a spate of small, specialized periodicals appealing to the amateur and intellectual.[16] With the first Will Bradley-designed placard for the Chap-Book in the fall of 1894 (Fig. 19), Stone and Kimball established an historic link between the new style American poster and the new style literary review. As in the case of the Inland Printer, the modern poster shortly became a cause that the Chap-Book supported, encouraged and publicized. In addition to the posters advertising the Chap-Book, poster-style illustrations decorated its pages and the artists responsible for them had their work analyzed and complimented by writers like Herbert Stone, Harrison Garfield Rhodes and Donald Warren. The Chap-Book even held periodic exhibitions of such work in its Chicago offices. The participation of poster art in the life of the Chap-Book fulfilled its desire to be a publication that promoted new developments in the visual arts as well as those in literature.

In answer to a query about the illustrations chosen

for the Chap-Book, the editor offered the following response:

> . . . were I to be quite frank, my reply would be that pictures in this broad style are the only ones which will print well on the rough Chap-Book paper. It is necessary to go beyond this, however, . . . I reply, that since the Chap-Book aims in a measure to represent certain features of this time as, in the past centuries, the original chap-books suggested the spirit of their period, it is manifestly a part of my function to record artistic as well as literary movements. It is this attempted reflection of the contemporary that has led the discriminate to accuse me of being faddish.[17]

Discussions of Edward Penfield's posters and poster collecting in the 1 October 1894 issue, the work of John Sloan (15 November 1894), Bradley (1 December 1894) and Frank Hazenplug ([1873-?] 1 March 1896), increased recognition of the poster as the new trend in art as well as advertising. On occasion, the Chap-Book even printed fine posters that were not directly related to their book publishing activities,[18] encouraging the movement in still another way. Perhaps their most important contribution, however, was providing a successful model of a specialized literary review that cast posters in a central role.

The posters Stone and Kimball issued to advertise books furthered the cause by furnishing some of the most excellent designs of the period for public consumption. Bradley's When Heart's are Trumps (Fig. 20) and Hazenplug's Chap-Book poster (Fig. 21) became prototypes for the small, bookstore window placards so characteristic of the nineties.

As pointed out in an article in the magazine Poster Lore, this kind of poster ultimately became so sought after by collectors that its effectiveness as an advertising medium gradually diminished:

> The day has passed when posters can be obtained of newsmen and booksellers for the asking. So great is the demand that in many cases they do not serve their purpose as advertisements, but are reserved for regular customers who pay prices ranging from five cents to one dollar.[19]

Lamson, Wolff and Company was another of the small publishing concerns specializing in exquisitely designed and executed volumes aimed at the intellectual, bibliophile market. These books were often promoted through posters of the highest quality. Between 1895 and 1899 Lamson and Wolff, who had frequented the same literary circles at Harvard as had Stone and Kimball, published seventy titles. Ethel Reed (1876-?) produced a series of posters for them, including her Miss Traumerei, Folly or Saintliness (Fig. 22) and Is Polite Society Polite?, that established Lamson, Wolff as a major patron of the art poster movement.

Copeland and Day, the American distributors of the English publications of John Lane and Elkin Matthews, also published works by domestic authors and advertised them with fine poster designs by artists such as Louis Rhead, Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966), John Sloan and E. B. Bird.

Among the larger book publishers, Macmillan, R. H. Russell and Charles Scribner's Sons are notable for

presenting major contemporary studies of the phenomenon as well as using posters to advertise their publications. Macmillan issued Picture Posters by Charles T. Hiatt, an English writer, in 1895. Hiatt, whose volume appeared in England as well, provided his readers with both an historical framework in which to situate the modern poster and a critical survey of the movement in Europe and America. Hiatt's concern with classifying various examples according to quality and rarity assumed a reasonably sophisticated audience already interested in preserving and collecting the finest specimens. Macmillan's placard advertising the book (Fig. 23) though anonymous, is an admirable effort: a combination of color lettering and a simple black and white design with a sketch-like, spontaneous quality.

R. H. Russell and Company of New York produced a book in 1896 entitled Posters in Miniature containing 200 small poster prints with portraits of the artists who created them. Percival Pollard wrote the foreword and Edward Penfield, the introduction. Those advertisers who had seen the poster's promotion value early were probably gratified to see that their patronage had resulted in both a commercial and a cultural success. Frank A. Nankivell's (1869-1959) medievalizing poster in green and white, which was used to advertise the book, made the connection between the handicrafts of the past and this new area of the applied

arts (Fig. 24). Other well-known posters used to publicize R. H. Russell books included E. B. Bird's 1895 design cleverly juxtaposing areas of articulated space with highly detailed passages (Fig. 25) and Ernest Haskell's (1876-1925) understated but forceful treatment of a horse and rider created for Dr. Jameson's Raiders (Fig. 26), an 1896 book by Richard Harding Davis. R. H. Russell and Company also hired Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911) to do a poster in 1895 to promote The Quest of the Holy Grail (Fig. 27). Abbey's use of heavy outlines and arts and crafts inspired lettering are elements that identify his design with the new poster style. Interestingly, it is this same subject, the "Quest of the Holy Grail," which provided Abbey with his most celebrated commission, murals for the Boston Public Library.

Charles Scribner's Sons, which figured prominently in the poster period particularly for their magazine placards, also published a major book on the subject, The Modern Poster. They mounted a publicity campaign using one of Will Bradley's most impressive poster designs: a single splayed peacock in olive green and aquamarine (Fig. 28). Since only 1,000 of these posters were printed, they were obviously intended less for the purpose of attracting the incidental customer than for the purpose of appealing to the connoisseur. Although in theory the poster was the

most democratic form of visual art yet devised, in practice its most dedicated and appreciative audience was, more often than not, drawn from the ranks of the privileged classes. Nevertheless, though ordinary people were seldom collectors, the poster at least provided them with the opportunity to enjoy art in the context of the everyday environment in a way that had not been possible in America before.

As in the case of Picture Posters, The Modern Poster is an international survey of the poster movement. Each study of a separate country is written by a local critic. All the essays situate the new poster within a native tradition. In his treatment of the American phenomenon, H. C. Bunner (whose article also appeared in an issue of Scribner's[20] in the same year) emphasized the important of literature as the inspiration for the new artistic poster in the United States.

C. Magazines

Besides the trade journals such as the Inland Printer, the Printer and Bookmaker and the sports magazines such as Outing, there are basically four types of reviews involved in the poster movement: the established literary magazines such as Harper's Monthly, the Century, Lippincott's, Scribner's and the Atlantic; the newer, cheaper, more mass-

market periodicals such as Cosmopolitan, Munsey's, McClure's, Self-Culture and the Overland Monthly; the art periodicals such as the Art Interchange, the International Studio and Modern Art; and the short-lived amateur, artistic little magazines such as the Chap-Book, the Lark, Echo, the Red Letter, and M'lle New York. This last category included the poster periodicals, the Poster and Poster Lore, whose sole purpose was the glorification and celebration of the new movement.

Often the same magazine commissioned poster articles as well as posters. The Inland Printer, the Printer and Bookmaker, Scribner's, the Century, the Overland Monthly, Art Interchange, Modern Art and many of the miniature magazines published major poster essays during the nineties. At the same time, they are associated with outstanding poster designs that contributed to each periodical's success.

By contrast, some magazines encouraged the poster movement only in writing or only by commissions, thus missing the opportunity of having those two activities complement each other. Reviews such as Godey's Magazine, the Artist, the Decorator and Furnisher, the Critic and Publisher's Weekly are notable for their article devoted to the new American placard. However, their interest did not extend to commissioning posters themselves. In the case of the Art Interchange, some posters were used for advertising

(Fig. 29), but they are hardly in keeping aesthetically or stylistically with the posters described in its articles such as "The Poster of Today," [21] being rather old-fashioned and illustrational. In contrast, McClure's, which did not devote its forum to the poster phenomenon at all, commissioned some outstanding posters. The portrait posters by Ethel Reed (Fig. 8) and the street scene in Fig. 7 contain all the subtle patterning, juxtapositioning of flat spatial areas and simplicity of design one would associate with the best fin-de-siècle work in France. Still other magazines, such as Harper's Monthly and Lippincott's, so indelibly identified with publicity placards of the nineties, did not devote their pages to the movement in any significant way.

In the first category of magazines which both utilized posters in their own promotion campaigns and promoted the movement in poster essays, Scribner's, the Century and the Overland Monthly, among the larger periodicals, are representative examples. Scribner's, unlike the Overland Monthly, used many different artists to design its placards, and by the end of the decade had commissioned numerous noteworthy designs. Artists as divergent as Will H. Low, who had studied in Paris with Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) (Fig. 30), Maxfield Parrish, whose work could have either symbolist overtones or the most no-nonsense modernist simplicity (Figs. 31, 32); and Sargent Kendall (1869-?),

remembered for his elegant, Lautrec-like portrait figures (Fig. 33), popularized the only recently revived[22] but lively new Scribner's. Its articles on the poster published in 1895, and later included in The Modern Poster, did a great deal to publicize and legitimize this new branch of the arts.

The Overland Monthly, probably the most successful Western magazine, published two important articles during the first half of 1896 that helped to establish the movement in the minds of the public. One article described the first exhibition of the recently organized Guild of Arts and Crafts in San Francisco.[23] The exhibition focussed on printing as an art and included a display of how an issue of the Overland Monthly was put together, drawing special attention to illustrations and posters by L. Maynard Dixon (1875-1946). This essay helped to clarify the vital link between the growing interest and respect for the crafts in general, and the fine printing and design of the better magazines and magazine posters. The other article dealt specifically with the poster[24] and detailed in a sophisticated way the evolution of the poster as both advertisement and art:

> There was some difficulty at first about the retailing of posters, as the publishers and artists were not willing that their productions should be diverted from their use as an advertisement to serve a purpose for which they were never intended. However, as the

> collector became a more and more important factor in the poster world, the publishers and artists began to look upon him as the real consumer of their wares and a very worthy person indeed. Accordingly they began to issue posters with a view to his demands, and many were produced to serve no other purpose--a limited edition being issued, and each print numbered as it came from the press. The cant of the etching trade was appropriated 'proof,' 'signed copies,' and prints in the various states of the process of reproduction, being listed in the collections of some enthusiasts.[25]

A mention of the fact that the Overland Monthly had ". . . in preparation posters that bid fair to excel anything yet issued in that line . . ."[26] by various artists demonstrates the element of competition that was so characteristic of the poster period. The Overland Monthly (see Fig 34) issued a series of unusual and forceful posters during the decade designed almost entirely by L. Maynard Dixon. They are distinguished from the posters for other publications by their consistent use of Western imagery: cowboys, Indians and animals peculiar to that region.

The Century, which had published the first study of the developing poster phenomenon in America in 1892, not only regularly commissioned posters during the nineties, but created a great deal of excitement among American artists and the public by holding a contest in 1896 for the best poster design to advertise its midsummer number. Up to this point, the Century's most popular placards had been the two designed by Grasset for their Napoleon series beginning in January 1895. In the summer of 1895 the

Century had held its first poster contest, but in France rather than in the United States, in an attempt to find another Gallic design depicting Napoleon that would duplicate the success of the Grassets. A jury of Frenchmen awarded the prize to Lucien Metivet (1863-1932), a second-rate academic artist. Many American poster artists protested their exclusion. The heated discussions that resulted focussed on the injustice of domestic efforts being ignored in favor of foreign work. Perhaps in response to this outcry and also as a result of the increasing prestige and success enjoyed by the American designers, the Century hosted the American contest the following year. This time the competition was held in the United States and the winners were chosen by an American jury.[27] The competition was announced in the spring for a design to advertise the midsummer holiday issue published in August. The Century offered three prizes of $125, $75 and $50. The overwhelming response that resulted in 700 entries demonstrates the enormous popularity and interest the poster still enjoyed in mid-1896. The winner was J. C. Leyendecker (Fig. 35), a young Chicago artist, then a student in Paris, whose first fame had come in 1895 after a critical profile in the Inland Printer. Maxfield Parrish succeeded as number two (Fig. 31). Among the twelve honorable mentions were Edward Potthast (1857-1927) and J. C. Leyendecker's brother, Frank Leyendecker (1877-1924). The technical requirements for

designs were explicitly detailed (capable of production by lithography or zinc plates, using no more than four printings) indicating that artists were expected to be familiar with the demands of the medium, in order to eliminate the gaps between the design and execution. The obvious influence of the French Beaux-Arts style on Leyendecker's poster and Parrish's rather classical figure treatment were an indication of the Century's continued preference for the more conservative designs, such as those Louis Rhead had done for them previously.

In contrast, the radical designs[28] are generally associated with the often short-lived miniature magazines which commissioned posters and at the same time kept readers informed of poster developments. In this category the Echo and the Red Letter are representative examples. A Bradley design such as Fig. 36, or Sloan's Echo poster (Fig. 37), with their unorthodox figures and bold juxtapositions of flat areas of light and dark contrasting with broad decorative passages, illustrate the Echo's choice of a stylistic approach more avant-garde than that of the Century. The Echo, a Chicago review that subtitled itself, "A Humorous and Artistic Periodical," was the magazine most devoted to making the new poster a success before the appearance of the Poster and Poster Lore.[29] It prided itself on printing the best in black and white design. The

majority of these designs were for the latest posters. Percival Pollard, who was editor, wrote many articles such as the one entitled "In Eighteen Ninety-Five," in the 15 August 1895 number, that described and analyzed the new enthusiasm for the poster:

> The art of the affiche became the craze of the entire people. Some few in the years before had observed and admired the manner in which such Frenchmen as Chéret, Grasset, Toulouse-Lautrec turned the art of advertising into a feast for the eyes, but not until this year did a general fever to create and admire this form of art seize upon America. Exhibitions were held frequently. Young artists who fancied the poster an easy step to fame produced horrid imaginings; on the other hand, much of real value was produced in this sort. . . . It was a year of ferment, of seething, struggling growth; of the battle for new life in this field.[30]

In the October 1895 issue, he predicted a rosy future for the movement and made the first reference to "poster Literature,"[31] as a special category. In December 1895, the Echo published a catalogue of outstanding recent posters. Moreover, its continuing announcement of current poster exhibitions throughout the country may have helped spawn other local manifestations of the movement. The series of poster-style covers commissioned for the bi-monthly included outstanding designs not only by Bradley and Sloan but by Frank Nankivell, E. B. Bird and W. W. Denslow (1856-1915). The Echo's enthusiastic observation in late 1895 that "More than any other American periodical the Echo may be said to keep the intelligent poster-collector

constantly in mind,"[32] was well-founded.

Like most of the little reviews, the Red Letter of Boston concentrated on both literature and visual art. Though it did not bill itself as a poster magazine, in the area of visual art, the poster was its primary preoccupation. In one of the early issues, an advertisement appeared for a catalogue of posters: "Advance orders are solicited for a Descriptive Catalogue of American posters, to contain biographical sketches of all the leading artists illustrated with portraits. Price not to exceed 5 cents."[33] Almost every issue contained a detailed biographical summary and survey of the work of a contemporary poster artist including H. L. Bridwell (1861-?), Parrish, Nankivell and George H. Hallowell (1871-?). E. B. Bird, one of the most successful poster artists, was art editor of the Red Letter. His clown covers and posters with their serious whimsey, daring spatial treatments and bold decorative touches, provided this publication with its own unique visual imagery. (Fig. 38). While each poster or poster cover served the usual advertising or promotional function, it brought the subscriber a bonus in providing him with the satisfaction of a work of art. In the inside cover of the second issue was the following offer:

> The publishers desire to announce that a special limited edition of fifty copies of the cover design of the second number of the Red Letter has been struck

> off on large size Japan vellum, each copy being numbered and signed by Mr. Bird, and of this edition forty are herewith offered for sale at one dollar each.[34]

The vocabulary of the statement demonstrates how thoroughly posters had entered the domain of the fine art print by late 1896.[35] The advertisement also indicates the symbiotic relationship that existed between the art poster and the avant-garde literary review. An editorial comment on the Clack Book of Lansing, Michigan by a rival little magazine provides the ultimate clarification of the identification of the poster with these ephemeral publications: "It is not readable, but it has issued a poster."[36]

Among the art magazines, Modern Art, published in Boston and printed by Louis Prang, exemplifies the special relationship that existed between the poster and the art press. For its Spring 1895 issue the poster artist, Charles H. Woodbury (1864-1940) wrote an article entitled "A Note on Posters,"[37] in which he established the legitimacy of the poster's claim to artistic status without threatening the more conservative position of the fine art magazines. He suggested that a "A Poster may not be a picture, but it may be what is equally serious in its own way, a design."[38] At about the same moment, Modern Art began promoting itself with one of the most famous placards of the period designed by Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922),

Fig. 39, who would later become an art theorist, teacher and orientalist (see Chapter Three).[39] Following the issue containing Woodbury's article, the magazine began to use the work of poster artists more and more often: title page designs by A. C. Newell (1862-1924), Louis Rhead, G. C. Fuller (no dates available), and a two-page decoration by Ethel Reed are some obvious examples.

In the Spring 1896 number, the report of Modern Art's competition for a newsstand poster demonstrates further its participation in the movement. The winner came from Elgin, Illinois, which is an indication of the wide geographic appeal characteristic of the poster phenomenon. Though Modern Art did not dedicate a great deal of space to poster interests in 1895 and 1896, its last two years of publication, it included an occasional article or paragraph devoted to the current poster scene: announcements of exhibitions, of poster competition results, and reproductions of outstanding designs. It also continued to offer the Dow poster to each new subscriber. The editor of Poster Lore considered it ". . . the most artistic lithograph ever issued for advertising purposes in America."[40]

Although the approach of each was slightly different, the two poster reviews, Poster Lore of Kansas City quoted above, and the Poster published in New York, can be considered in the same category. They resembled the other

miniature magazines in size and in their attention to the details necessary to achieve not just a pretty magazine but a well-designed object. All the issues of Poster Lore are characterized by an old style alphabet printed on fine, heavy paper in red and black ink. A description at the end of the first volume of the planned improvements in future issues provides some notion of the review's preoccupation with its physical appearance:

> In size it will remain the same, but a deckle edge, hand-made paper will be used, and old style types after the form of lettering truly correct, together with page decorations, borders, and initials suitable to the spirit, the text, and the types. The photographic reproductions will be mounted on an imitation of Japan paper and inserted in the text with a large number of original drawings, reproductions of posters in colors, bookplates, and book decorations prepared on appropriate paper.[41]

In the first issue of the second volume which was also the last issue of the magazine, there is an article on the amateur press that printed Poster Lore. The discussion of the revival of printing indicates that the poster reviews saw themselves not only as promoters of the poster movement but as champions of the general revival of fine art printing brought about, in the author's opinion, "by an artist in search of something to decorate."[42]

From the point of view of content, Poster Lore consistently published more substantive essays than the Poster. The articles were often followed by announcements of new magazines, new posters, current exhibitions and reports of

artists' activities. In contrast, the Poster was more a newsletter than a magazine. It concentrated its efforts primarily on movement gossip. Statistics on collectors and capital invested were listed right along with marriage engagements of artists and the latest poster fads such as poster parties and poster dinner cards. In both publications, reproductions of current poster designs served to emphasize their artistic side over their commercial. Each commissioned most of its posters from one artist only instead of dividing patronage among the variety of artists whose work these magazines promoted. In the case of Poster Lore it was F. R. Kimbrough. All the issues of the Poster used E. B. Bird's twins, "Miss Art and Miss Litho," (Fig. 40) to adorn the cover.

The publisher of the Poster, Will M. Clemens, a writer whose short stories appeared in Chips[43] (another of the little reviews published in New York), was also, according to a notice in the last issue of the magazine, responsible for the publication of Charles Knowles Bolton's 1895 book, The Reign of the Poster.

D. Newspapers

The decade of the 1890s witnessed changes not only in magazine publishing, but in newspaper publishing as well. Newspaper circulation had expanded enormously between 1870

and 1890. The combined circulation of American dailies increased 222% while population had increased only 63%.[44] Illiteracy had also declined from 20% in 1870 to 13.3% in 1890.[45] For the newly or barely literate, the newspaper, with its simplified language and abundance of pictures, represented the primary source of reading material. In the 1890s newspaper publishers, anxious to attract even larger audiences, introduced colored comics, the Sunday supplement, news service reporting and the women's section as regular features. Along with the poster, these developments enlarged the circulation[46] and influence of the newspapers to the point where occasionally their treatment and interpretation of events became more significant than the events themselves. The most obvious case is the Spanish American War, whose cause many commentators attribute to the jingoistic fever aroused by the Hearst newspapers' reporting of the situation in Cuba. The cablegram exchange between Frederic Remington, the American illustrator sent by Hearst to cover Cuba for the New York Journal, and Hearst makes this point forcefully.[47]

Beginning with George Frederick Scotson-Clark's 6 June 1895 poster for the New York Recorder (Fig. 41), thought[48] to be the first one done for a newspaper, the movement spread to a new area of the publishing enterprise. Scotson-Clark's poster was only a crude, rapidly executed,

cartoon-like treatment of a young woman cycling, but it served to alert the whole industry to the poster's value as an inexpensive and practical promotional medium. By the end of 1895, in New York City alone, the New York Sun, the New York Ledger, the New York Herald Tribune[49] and the New York Times were using posters designed by unknowns as well as by more established artists such as Haskell, Frank Nankivell and Rhead. Just the volume of newspaper posters needed made for a wide variance in quality. Those done for Pulitzer's New York World (Figs. 42, 43) were mostly poorly executed, tasteless designs showing only a superficial deference to the new poster look, yet even there, pains were taken, though without much success, to achieve the most effective design possible. Comparing two versions of the same poster (Figs. 44, 45), and without saying which came first, one can see subtle adjustments in the details of the lamp, petticoat, shoes and the "W." By contrast, the Rhead placards for the New York Sun were uniformly outstanding (Fig. 46) and the New York Times designs done by Edward Potthast[50] (Fig. 47), all with a striking mosaic background, were similar to his work done for the Century Company (Fig. 48). During the period of the Potthast posters, 1895-96, the Times published a series of articles by Robert Chambers (1865-1933), a well-known author, illustrator and occasional poster artist[51] (see Fig. 49), entitled,

"The Poster."[52] Although he had many antipathies, among them women artists, Beardsley, and the poster collector, Chambers provides a good survey of recent work by Bradley, Rhead and Penfield. His series of three essays followed on the heels of two short articles focussing on the new movement.[53] During the first half of 1896, the Times also provided good coverage of the Century magazine contest and the Pope bicycle poster competition.

In commenting on a poster by Frank Nankivell for the New York Journal, Percival Pollard indicated how effective an individual newspaper poster might be:

> One of the most artistic posters that the "L" stations in New York have harboured was the one by Nankivell, announcing an article of Marie Corelli's in the Journal. It was mainly in a delicate grey tint but also had reds, blues, yellows and black. A black and white reproduction . . . can give aught but a hint of its worth. As a piece of printing the poster was also noticeable, the lithographers having sense enough to follow the artist's sketch implicitly instead of inventing details on their own account, as too many seem to be unable to avoid.[54]

This kind of brilliant performance was less common in the newspaper category than elsewhere in publishing. Moreover, Nankivell's design was executed in 1897 during the period when posters were still gaining in artistic stature but had already lost much of their commercial integrity.

Elsewhere in New York State, newspapers and newspaper posters also flourished. Claude Fayette Bragdon's Rochester Post Express poster (Fig. 50) became the archetype for the

new look in black and white. Bragdon, who did posters for the Chap-Book and other publications, also wrote extensively on the movement. His articles appeared in the Rochester Post Express and in Poster Lore. In Buffalo, Alice Glenny's (1858-?) 1895 fresco-like treatment of the bust of a woman accompanied by an art nouveau flower design (Fig. 51), done for the Buffalo Courier, is one of the most satisfying compositions of the period.

In Chicago, several newspapers utilized the new poster type including the Chicago Evening Journal and the Chicago Evening Post. The Post was an early enthusiast of the movement and in March 1895 hosted an extensive exhibition of French and American posters that advertised itself with a Chéret-inspired design by Denslow.

The poster/newspaper partnership also functioned successfully in Boston and Philadelphia. The Boston Herald, the newspaper that launched Ethel Reed on her poster career (see Figs. 52, 53), also commissioned outstanding posters from Miles Gardner (no dates available), Charles M. Howard (no dates available), Edmund Garrett (1853-1929), and William McGregor Paxton (1869-1941).[55] In Philadelphia, George Brill (1867-1918) did a poster almost weekly for the Philadelphia Sunday Press. Brill was prolific but an uneven artist. His work was often pedestrian and poorly drawn but occasionally outstanding, as in Fig. 54. While

there are no readily available examples of actual posters from the Philadelphia Inquirer, it was the newspaper that first gave John Sloan regular employment, using his poster-style black and white drawings beginning in 1892. In the Sunday, 1 March 1896 issue, the poster received a front page spread in an article entitled, "Poster Craze in Philadelphia."

Among the weeklies, Frank Leslie's, which had commissioned a poster from Grasset as early as 1882, continued to employ that medium for advertising purposes. George Brill often worked for them and Fig. 55 is a typical specimen. Louis E. Shipman's article in the 28 March 1895 number acknowledged America's growing mastery of the poster medium and congratulated the movement for "accomplishing more good than a dozen museums of art would do in a decade."[56]

E. Health Products

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, chemical treatment for illness lost favor with both professionals and laymen. Although sometimes referred to by historians of science as the period of "Therapeutic Nihilism," it was, more accurately, a time when the preferred manner of therapy shifted from the chemical to the physical. Doctors moved away from the cures contained in the enormous compendium of

medicines and herbs collected over the centuries and began to depend instead on the newer, non-chemical treatments: climo-therapy (hot and cold air), hydrotherapy, homeopathy, ultra-violet light therapy, Swedish gymnastics and diet regulation. This enormous shift was not lost on the increasingly literate general public. As the final decade of the century unfolded, Americans embraced a variety of exercise fads, diet remedies and environmental cures.

Among the exercise fads, cycling was by far the most popular. The medical journals of the periods are filled with lively debate on the advisability of bicycle riding for women. Some viewed it as the greatest danger to the future propagation of mankind and others hailed it as the key to mental and physical health for the normally confined and often neurasthenic nineteenth century female. Society women especially favored bicycle riding and provided it with the respectability necessary to insure its general acceptance. For men, its physical benefits were never in question.

The conditions for a thriving bicycle industry had existed as early as the 1880s. The Overman Company, manufacturers of the Victoria Bicycle, responding to cycling's increasing popularity, began to underwrite publication of the Wheelman,[57] a magazine devoted to this sport. The League of American Wheelman began operating in 1880 and

Pope, maker of the Columbia model, arranged for a national network of bicycle shops to see his product at a fixed price. By the beginning of the 1890s, the safety bicycle with pneumatic tires was the standard type and at least 27 different manufacturers divided the market.[58] But it took the combination of the "new woman" consumer, a price war and the artistic poster to bring about the craze which characterized the mid-nineties.

The bicycle companies and the poster producers found themselves in a cooperative situation that furthered both their interests. The interplay between the poster craze and the bicycle fad (also known as a "craze")[59] worked well partially because of the parallels between the two. The height of each phenomenon occurred at the same time, during the period 1895-96. The literature on both abounds with pronouncements of social value. Cycling left behind class and sexual barriers while the poster furthered democracy by introducing art into the everyday environment. In reality, the acceptance of women into a wider spectrum of activities was definitely aided by the bicycle vogue and the role of the poster in the women's movement has already been noted. As equalizers of class distinctions, however, the effects of the bicycle and of the poster were mostly theoretical. Most workers would have had to work months for even the cheapest models and though posters were

inexpensive compared to other forms of art, collecting remained primarily a hobby of the well-to-do.

From the point of view of public impact, both cycling and posters lent themselves to sensationalism. Although the attitude of the public toward the artistic poster was mostly positive, there were a few denigrators who saw it as "the very art of Gomorrah . . . a terrible agent of perversion."[60] In a similar vein, social observers alerted the populace to the immoral effects of cycling in bringing the sexes together on an unchaperoned basis. Furthermore, just as posters were the focus of many broad publicity campaigns such as the competitions sponsored by the Century Company and the Pope Bicycle Company, the bicycle was the theme of at least one: a cross-country relay organized by William Randolph Hearst, publisher of the New York Journal, as a maneuver in his circulation war with Pulitzer.

Bicycle Clubs flourished during the 1895-96 period and often they arranged tournaments such as the ones held in Springfield, Massachusetts in September 1895 and 1896, for which Bradley executed two of his most dramatic poster designs (Figs. 56, 57). Bradley's series of bicycle posters for the Overman Wheel Company, makers of the Victoria model, are rivaled only by Maxfield Parrish's cycling design for the cover of Harper's Weekly and his

prize-winning poster for the Pope Manufacturing Company's Columbia bicycle (Fig. 58).

The contest sponsored by Pope was one of the biggest poster events of the decade. Instead of the expected two or three hundred entries, almost one thousand designs were submitted. Artists from all over the country and from abroad competed for the $1,000 in total prizes. The public responded so enthusiastically that the Pope Company had to alter its plans. According to a contemporary New York Times article,

> Instead of accepting all of the designs several hundred had to be weeded out . . . and instead of giving a free exhibition it has been found necessary in some cases to charge admission, the proceeds being given to charitable purposes. The experiment was tried for two days in Boston but seemed to have no effect in diminishing the crowd.[61]

The article goes on to note the irresistibility of the bicycle and the poster in partnership:

> The combination of posters and the bicycle, either of which is high in popular favor at present, probably accounts for the great interest aroused and the manner in which the public has taken hold of it and made it a society event.[62]

Louis Rhead and Charles Woodbury were among the aspirants but the young Maxfield Parrish emerged the winner. His female heroine on wheels with flowing plaid muffler became a hallmark for enthusiasts of both movements.(Fig. 58).

F. Tonics

As noted above, the health debate in the nineties did not limit itself to the area of physical exercise. The interest of the new investigative journalism in the unhealthful conditions among the less affluent segment of the population, and new medical discoveries such as X-rays and radium therapy helped to focus attention on all aspects of health maintenance. While miracle-producing patent medicines had long been a part of the American scene, especially in non-urban areas, the popular panaceas of the nineties displayed a different character. They were not meant as chemical cures. Instead, manufacturers offered them as one ingredient of a total health-oriented regime which included exercise as well. Judging by the newspaper articles advertised on posters and by the covers of the popular magazines, not only cycling but golf, football and tennis also enjoyed a new vogue.

Although Mr. Graham, of "Graham" cracker fame, had emphasized the importance of diet in his movement of the 1860s, it was Horace Fletcher who caught the attention of health enthusiasts with his theories during the nineties on food intake. In his books he instructed the individual on how to achieve a general sense of well-being characterized by both an active mind and a sound body. Specifically, Fletcher suggested that proper selection of food and careful

mastication would result in a well-nourished, healthy individual as well as a spiritually contented one. The new liquid foods, such as Galakton, made famous by Penfield's poster (Fig. 59), extended the possibility of a balanced, fortifying diet to those with special problems: invalids, infants and the aged.

Lighter breakfast cereals, both hot and cold, were other diet innovations introduced at this time. In 1895, after two years of experimentation, C. W. Post introduced his Postum cereal, a cereal beverage that could substitute for both breakfast foods and caffeine drinks like coffee and tea. Two years later, Post put Grape-nuts cereal, the first cold cereal, on the market.

Other products, Hood's Sarsaparilla for example, made curative claims to attract the new health-minded public. Bradley's 1896 (Fig. 60) poster (which announced in the lower left-hand corner that a few copies were available for collectors at $1.00 each), pictures two formidable looking females in the act of imbibing that soft drink in what appears to be almost a ritualistic act. Its promise of "pure blood" was meant to be taken seriously.[63] Bradley's two ladies with their fixed stares and expressions of concentration emphasize the mysterious character of this miraculous cure. Bradley's Narcoti-Cure design (Fig. 61) illustrates another aspect of the new health

culture phenomenon--the recognition of habitual tobacco use as a detriment to the body. Although the cure was likely to have been worse than the illness, the appeal here, as in the sarsaparilla advertisement, was purification of the body: a preoccupation that surfaced often in the new anti-chemical approach to health care.

The poster's economic partnership with the printing and publishing industries, the bicycle companies and the new health aids worked to the advantage of both commercial interests and art. Business initiatives of the period benefitted from the novelty of the new advertising medium and postermaking, previously associated with only the most banal visual expressions, achieved the status of art. This cooperative venture was short-lived, but nevertheless, it adds a new slant to the cultural and commercial record of the decade. Having dealt with the poster patrons, calling attention to the many kinds of positive results accomplished by their support of the artistic poster, it is time to examine the other half of the partnership, the poster artists, who are the subject of Chapter Three.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1]Poster Lore, 2 (September 1896):28.

[2]See Robert A. Smith, A History of the Bicycle: Its Early Life and Times in America (New York: American Heritage Press, 1972), p. 52.

[3]Charles T. Hiatt, Picture Posters (New York: Macmillan, 1895), p. 285.

[4]See Chapter Six for a discussion of the poster's rapid rise and subsequent decline between 1894 and 1897.

[5]Most artistic poster artists did both posters and cover designs. A cover design done in the poster manner would often be used both for the cover of a magazine and as a separate poster advertisement. Cover work and posters can, therefore, be considered to be the same genre.

[6]Charles T. Hiatt, "On Some Recent Designs by Will H. Bradley of Chicago," Studio (London, 1893-1927) 4 (February 1895):166-168.

[7]See Octave Uzanne, "L'Affiche internationale illustrée," La Plume 7 (1 October 1895):421.

[8]A. H. McQuilkin, "Will H. Bradley and his Work," Inland Printer 14 (February 1895):431-433.

[9]F. Penn, "Newspaper Artists: John Sloan," Inland Printer 14 (October 1894):50-51.

[10]"E. B. Bird Designer," Inland Printer 16 (October 1895):59.

[11]"The Inland Printer Cover Design: I. R. Henri," Inland Printer 15 (April 1895):60. The article noted that "Mr. Henri's art training began at the age of twenty-two in an architect's office--architecture pure and simple having been his study previous to that time."

[12]"Charles Warde Traver," Inland Printer 15 (July 1895):401. The article shed some light on Traver's other activities: "About the close of the World's Fair Mr. Traver left Chicago for the Pacific Coast and since that time he has made a tour of Southern California and Mexico,

making illustrations for the Acheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad." Before that, Traver had worked in the Chicago studio of F. D. Millet.

[13]"J. C. Leyendecker, Artist," Inland Printer 15 (September 1895):620. According to this profile, Leyendecker had come to Chicago from Germany at the age of 8, had attended evening school at the Art Institute and at the age of 15 had worked for Manz and Co., Engraving and Designing. At the time of the article, Leyendecker was about to leave for Europe.

[14]Vance Thompson, "Newspaper Illustrators: Thomas Fleming," Inland Printer 18 (February 1897):546.

[15]The Chap-Book claims that book buying during this period out-distanced by far the actual reading of the books bought. "Notes," Chap-Book 5 (15 May 1896):47.

[16]Knight Errant, a review published in Boston between 1892 and 1894, was an important inspiration for the Chap-Book. Charles Eliot Norton, Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Goodhue, creators of Knight Errant, had in turn been influenced by the Hobby Horse, the English Arts and Crafts publication. See Sidney Kramer, A History of Stone and Kimball and Herbert S. Stone and Co., 1893-1905 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 30.

[17]Chap-Book 3 (1 November 1895):509.

[18]In the case of Hazenplug, a regular Chap-Book contributor as well as designer of Chap-Book posters, Stone and Kimball, in at least two cases, printed his posters even when they were commissioned by other organizations: Living Posters, for a Chicago Poster Exhibition and one for Emerson and Company, Carriage Builders of Cincinnati, Ohio.

[19]Poster Lore 1 (January 1896):16.

[20]Scribner's 18 (October 1895):429-443.

[21]"The Poster of Today," Art Interchange 36 (June 1896): 138-139.

[22]In 1881 Scribner's Monthly sold its rights to a new magazine, the Century. Following the five-year grace period during which Scribner's Sons had promised not to issue another periodical with the Scribner name, they established a new monthly, Scribner's Magazine selling at $.25, $.10 less than Harper's Monthly and the Century.

[23]Austin Lewis, "The Arts and Crafts," Overland Monthly 27 (March 1896):292-296.

[24]Garnett K. Porter, "The Poster: A New Province Claimed by Art," Overland Monthly 27 (March 1896): 296-302. The prices of posters ranged from $.25 to $1.00. See Theodore Adams, "A Few Words on the Beginning of a Collection," Poster Lore 1 (January 1896):15.

[25]Garnett, Ibid., p. 298.

[26]Garnett, Ibid., p. 300.

[27]The jury consisted of Elihu Vedder, F. Hopkinson Smith, and Henry Hardenburgh, an architect.

[28]Though many of these designs, especially those by Bradley and Sloan, could be labelled "art nouveau," this term is by no means adequate to describe all the poster work for the little magazines.

[29]Echo, 4 vols. (May 1895-February 1897).
Poster, 1 vol. (January 1896-May 1896).
Poster Lore, 2 vols. (January 1896-September 1896).

[30]Echo 1(15 August 1895):173.

[31]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore," Echo 1 (1 October 1895):111-112.

[32]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore," Echo 1 (15 October 1895):284.

[33]Red Letter 1 (September/October 1896):Inside front cover.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Before the mid-nineties, expressions such as "special limited editions"; "numbered and signed"; were used only in discussions of prints (engravings, wood-cuts, lithographs), rather than posters.

[36]Echo 2 (15 April 1896):323

[37]Charles H. Woodbury, "A Note on Posters," Modern Art 3 (Spring 1895):62.

[38]Ibid., p. 62.

[39]Art Interchange provided this detailed description of the Dow poster: "Mr. Dow shows a brilliant sunset, against which, as a background, a clump of trees are seen reflected in the placid water of a tidal stream. The scene is an impression from the river banks of his native town Ipswich, where quaint old houses perch on the steep banks and mirror themselves in the river, which is an arm of the sea fed by its tides. The landscape is treated in the Japanese manner and surrounded by a light green border, with lotus designs in darker shades running through it." Lilian Whiting, "The Art of the Poster," Art Interchange 35 (November 1895):112.

[40]Poster Lore 1 (July 1896):121.

[41]Ibid., "Prologue."

[42]Poster Lore 2 (September 1896):20.

[43]Chips (New York) 4 vols. (March 1895-June 1896).

[44]See Sanford Winston, Illiteracy in the United States (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1930), p. 9.

[45]Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism (New York: Macmillan, 1942), p. 507.

[46]In the mid-nineties, the New York World was the largest newspaper with a circulation approaching one million, and expenses of over two million. Mott,Ibid., p. 546.

[47]Hearst, Journal, New York:

> Everything is quiet. There is no trouble here. There will be no war. Wish to return. - Remington
>
> Remington, Havana:
>
> Please remain. You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war. - Hearst

Mott, American Journalism, p. 529.

[48]George Frederick Scotson-Clark was an English artist who came to live in the United States in the 1890s. He grew up in Brighton where he had been a schoolmate of Aubrey Beardsley. Scotson-Clark's interpretation of Beardsley's contribution to American postermaking can be found in his article, "The Black Spot in America," Poster and Art Collector 4 (November 1900):84-86. In the article, "Some Posters by Scotson-Clark," Poster and Art Collector 2 (January 1899):31, Scotson-Clark's New York Recorder poster is described as "the first illustrated poster ever designed to advertise an American daily newspaper."

[49]The New York Public Library Poster Collection contains a series of posters for the New York Herald Tribune from 1895 to 1896 done by C. H. Wright.

[50]Although I have found no indication that Potthast did the New York Times posters, given the fact that the initials E.P. appear in the designs and the obvious stylistic similarities between the Century work and the advertisements for the Times, the assumption that he is responsible for them seems well-founded.

[51]Chambers wrote the novel, The King in Yellow, published by F. Tennyson Neeley, and designed the promotion poster.

[52]Robert W. Chambers, "The Poster," New York Times 16 February 1896, p. 32; 23 February, p. 32; 1 March 1896, p. 32.

[53]"The Best American Poster," New York Times, 11 January 1896, p. 7; "The American Poster, "New York Times, 24 January 1896, p. 4.

[54]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movement ments," Inland Printer 19 (July 1897):438.

[55]Paxton studied at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the nineties with three of the artists who would become members of The Ten: Benson, DeCamp, and Tarbell.

[56]Louis E. Shipman, "The Poster Mania," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly 80 (28 March 1895):198.

[57]Published in Boston, October 1882-December 1883.

[58]Smith, History of the Bicycle, p.25.

[59]Joseph B. Bishop, "Social and Economic Influence of the Bicycle," Forum 21 (August 1896):681.

[60]Maurice Tallmeyer, "The Age of the Poster," Chautauquan 24 (January 1897):465.

[61]"The Pope Company's Show," New York Times, 8 March 1896, p. 6.

[62]Ibid.

[63]An advertisement for this product in the Boston Herald offered a testimonial of its effectiveness as a cure for a "scrofula swelling of the neck and granulated ophthalmia." The testimonial was given by "the business manager of a leading Boston weekly newspaper." His statement was as follows:

> Gertie took less than two bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla, and her neck has healed perfectly . . . Her eyes were soon so well that she was able to go to school . . . Of course we never hesitate about recommending Hood's Sarsaparilla for similar cases, and we do urge all who may read this or who may be suffering from impure blood to give this medicine a try.

Boston Herald, 24 February 1895, p. 1.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ARTISTS

The new artistic poster as a medium attracted many hundreds of artists from a wide variety of backgrounds: inhabitants of the West and Midwest as well as the East, foreign-born as well as native artists; those with little or no formal training and those who had degrees from fine arts academies; women as well as men; some for whom the poster was the central focus and others for whom it was an amusing sideline. Undoubtedly, the economic aspect of postermaking drew many into the field.[1] It could be a lucrative endeavor, potential clients were to be found everywhere, and for the artists, with or without credentials, talent was the primary requirement for success.

One observer, in a letter to the New York Times in January 1896, estimated that there were "200 establishments which make posters alone their special production and which show a capital invested of nearly $3,000,000; 100 draughtsmen and 500 men who reproduce originals of the 100."[2] Considering the fact that in January 1896, the movement was still expanding and that these numbers do not include the many free-lance artists who are the major focus of this chapter, the business of poster production had become a noteworthy factor in the domestic economy and in the lives of many artists.

The appeal of the poster as a unique embodiment of two contrasting interests--the commercial and the artistic--has already been considered in the preceding chapter. There were, however, still other aspects of the phenomenon that attracted artists to postermaking. Above all, it was a new area of artistic activity unencumbered by past traditions and requirements.[3]

Whatever their personal ideologies, artists worked on posters without having to abide by an established set of academic standards. More recognized artists, or artists who would later gain status in the world of the fine arts, did poster designs occasionally that gave their creative energy a new outlet. They did not have to concern themselves with the restraints exercised in their other work. Edward Potthast, for example, did poster work for the Century Company and the New York Times from 1895 to the end of the decade. During the period 1879 to 1889 Potthast had alternated between stints as a lithographer for the Strobridge Company in his home town of Cincinnati and intervals of study in Europe. Though he had shown artistic talent from an early age and was an accomplished painter by the mid-1880s, his work at Strobridge was strictly in the traditional commercial poster vein perfected by Matt Morgan (see Chapter One). After a summer's visit to New York in 1894 and his subsequent move there in 1896, his

poster designs, such as the one for the New York Times (Fig. 47) and the one for the Century (Fig. 48), showed his liberation from the stilted commercial forms and his conversion to the new artistic poster aesthetic. Modelling and illustrative detail were replaced by a simple, flat spatial treatment of forms and effective contrasts of bright color. Potthast's artistic poster sideline was perhaps a factor in freeing him from his earlier commercial work and from the dark tones and conservative illusionism adopted during his student years in Antwerp and Munich, making possible the lyrical, light-filled, sybaritic seascapes characteristic of his painting after 1900.

Maurice Prendergast (1859-1924) was another artist for whom posters were probably therapeutic. In 1895, following several years of study in Paris, Prendergast designed posters for Boston publishers. Although he was still largely unrecognized for his oils and watercolors with their loosely painted, boldly patterned and subtly colored surfaces, the posters, such as the one he did for The Shadow of a Crime (Fig. 62), gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his familiarity with art nouveau and Post-Impressionism in a context where more avant-garde approaches were welcomed and appreciated. During this same time Prendergast had other commercial work. He did a series of

illustrations for Sir James Barrie's My Lady Nicotine (Boston, 1896). Like the posters, this commission brought him badly needed funds, but unlike his poster work, which was of a consistently high caliber, the monotony of the book project shows up in the pedestrian quality of many of the drawings. As with Potthast, posters were perhaps a diversion that provided an experimental arena apart from his primary interest, painting.

Although the French undoubtedly, and to some extent the English, had achieved a certain authority in modern postermaking, their achievement was recent and had none of the air of unattainability associated with their position in the fine arts. Perhaps it was the possibility of making trends rather than following them that attracted many young artists, both with and without art school training, to the poster field. It also appealed to artists from abroad. The prospects for success in the United States seemed more promising to English artists like Archie Gunn (1863-1930),[4] George Frederick Scotson-Clark and to German-born Henry Mayer (1868-1954), who had lived in England. However, many of the American poster artists did study abroad at some point in their careers. Some went before the poster era (Rhead, Penfield, Potthast and Prendergast among them) and others (J. C. Leyendecker, Louis Carqueville (1871-1946), and Haskell, for example) only after already making a name

for themselves in the poster world.

A controversy developed over whether or not to study abroad that had strong nationalistic overtones. Louis Rhead, for example, railed against the whole notion of European training in a January 1896 letter to Modern Art. He criticized the American National Institute in Paris, an organization seeking to arrange European studies for female art students. He suggested instead that a National Art Training School situated in the United States be established, patterned after the South Kensington Schools in London. He urged: "Make it possible for women to study art and live cheaply in America and few will want to go abroad."[5] He invoked America's growing nationalism when he asked: "Would any large body of learned men in France, England, Germany, Holland or any European country, be willing to do this and neglect their own national education?" Clearly Rhead, though originally a foreigner himself, felt it was important to cultivate American talent at home away from the authoritative influence of Europe. Poster art did in fact offer the possibility of a totally American career. Such leading American figures as Will Bradley and John Sloan must have gratified Rhead by their lack of interest in leaving America. Sloan, when offered an opportunity to study in Europe by his employer in the early nineties, declined to go. "I was afraid of the

the artistic atmosphere I had heard about and the temptations of Paris."[7]

With this national focus came a home-grown ideology of poster art free of academic theorizing. In Bradley's words: "If we can only look over all the work, study it and understand it, we will find that we are on the threshold of a new art . . . ."[8] Artists were quick to formulate their own theories on how to go about making and judging a good design. Bradley went on to say that this new art had to be composed of three things: ". . . first and paramount the individuality of the artist; second, clear and vigorous thought, third, the utmost simplicity in the mode of expression."[9]

Some artists were more specific in their estimation of what was necessary. Edward Penfield, in his poster article done for The Limner, emphasized the necessity for a few elements and pure, strong color:

> It is more a question of what to leave out than what to put in when designing a poster.[10]
>
> If you wish to get the true value of a color it stands to reason that it should be used as broadly and purely as possible. Every additional line, or any shading you place upon it detracts from its effect. If you wish to get the full effect you must keep that effect broad and simple.[11]

Henry L. Bridwell, noted for his success in doing purely decorative posters at Strobridge and Company in Cincinnati, where "the lettering and ornament upon pictorial posters

were entirely the hard, mechanical sort mostly copied from lithographic showcards"[12] was still the rule, stated his approach this way:

> What I aim at is simplicity and clearness of design and crispness in execution; a design with extremely few elements, and those strong ones. Beyond this, I try never to repeat myself. I do not like eccentricity when it goes to ugliness to attract attention. Art is to make people cheerful . . . .[13]

E. B. Bird, although trained in architecture, as were several other poster artists,[14] turned to graphic design and then poster work following his graduation from M.I.T. Speaking in 1897, he was definite in his requirements:

> It should have as few lines as possible to tell the whole story. As few colors. It should advertise the merchandise or purpose for which it was made. It should have carrying power, that is to be clearly seen at a distance in drawing and lettering. It should contain a little of the real, the ideal and the imaginative.[15]

Harvey Ellis,[16] another architecture-trained poster artist who lived and worked in Rochester, New York during this period, was more concise: "I claim that a picture is no good unless it looks just as well upside down."[17]

Although Arthur Wesley Dow made only a few posters in the nineties,[18] his art theories, which would eventually become the basis of an entirely new method of art education in the United States, were closely related to the ideas expressed by other poster artists.[19] As early as 1891, Dow had rejected a good deal of the academic training he

received during his student years in Paris (1884-1889). A chance encounter with the work of the Japanese artist Hokusai[20] led him to conclude that the Western approach to the teaching of art based on representation was misguided.[21] Undoubtedly Dow, like many of the poster artists, was familiar with the theories of the English Arts and Crafts practitioners which may have encouraged his condemnation of academic art education as well. Along with Louis Rhead, Dow felt that American art could develop independently in the direction of "a powerful distinctly American School."[22]

Dow did not publish his educational method in its entirety until the spring of 1899,[23] but his theories and practices had already been widely diffused in the art community through the many students he taught at Pratt Institute. Rhead actually referred to Dow as a teacher of postermaking at Pratt,[24] but there is no mention of the course in school records. The confusion probably stems from the clear and direct applicability of Dow's ideas, in Rhead's mind, to good poster design. Dow's notion of painting as "a rhythmic harmony of colored spaces,"[25] could describe almost any artistic poster as well. In addition, Dow's concern that art education aim to teach "appreciation," and the ability to "feel beauty and to create it in simple ways," expressed in an 1896 article,[26] is similar to the

ideas promulgated by champions of poster art discussed later in this chapter. After the turn of the century, Dow's ideology would be as pertinent to the first generation of American modernists (he taught both Max Weber and Georgia O'Keefe) as they were to the poster epoch.

Howard Pyle (1853-1911), renowned as a magazine illustrator, was another important art educator during the nineties. His students at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, where he taught during this period, included Maxfield Parrish, Violet Oakley (1874-1961), Elizabeth Shippen Green (1871-1954), Jesse Wilcox Smith (1863-1935) and Bertha Corson Day (1875-1968). Pyle, like Dow, put his emphasis on composition. Pyle's notion about it, however, was quite different from Dow's. As a teacher of illustration, Pyle was very much tied to representation in a traditional sense[27] in contrast to Dow's approach which depended heavily on an understanding of the role of abstract rhythms, forms and color relationships. In a sense Dow and Pyle typify the two poles of art teaching in the nineties that were intended to apply to areas outside the strictly fine arts field. (In Dow's case, his ideas spoke to the fine arts as well, but only as one among many categories of art.)[28] Both approaches can be applied to the poster work of the period. Pyle's central focus on presentation of the figure in an imaginative way[29] and Dow's emphasis on achieving an effective design

regardless of the representational elements are really the essence of the best artistic poster work.

Howard Pyle's teaching contribution in Philadelphia at Drexel Institute has just been noted. The fact is, however, that probably more of the poster artists studied with teachers connected with the Pennsylvania Academia of Fine Arts, following a more traditional art school curriculum, than at Drexel. Jessie Wilcox Smith, whom one associates with Pyle (see page 90), also studied at the PAFA with Thomas Eakins (1844-1916) in the 1880s. John Sloan, William Glackens, J. J. Gould (1880-1935) and Maxfield Parrish were all in the same Thomas Anshutz (1851-1912) class in the fall of 1892.[30] Though Bertha Corson Day did not study with Eakins[31] at the PAFA, she did attend his lectures in the mid-nineties when he taught for a short time at Drexel.[32] Judging by Dow's theories and Pyle's more practical approach to teaching, the art school atmosphere in America in the nineties was less rigid than in the past. However, the exposure of many poster artists to more conventional training must have had an effect as well. John Sloan's experience with Anshutz is perhaps a representative case. Having worked as an artist for some time already before he could afford formal art school classes, the rather inflexible course of study at the PAFA that ignored any experience in the non-academic arts goaded him into

rebellion.[33] This rejection of the academic method characterized to a large extent both his commercial art work (posters and illustrations) and later his painting. Like Eakins and Anshutz, Sloan would later consider himself a realist. His brand of "Ashcan School" realism did not depend upon the detailed, accurate rendering of the human form, but on the ability to grasp and communicate with spontaneity and informality everyday scenes of life in his immediate environment.

The non-traditional character of the poster movement that encouraged artists to formulate theories and perhaps rebel against existing ones, also accounts for its openness in accepting artists of all backgrounds. The strong participation of women is perhaps the best evidence of this liberal bent. Women found the poster world much more welcoming than the conservative art academies. There was even a young female artist from Jamaica,[34] named Pamela Colman Smith, who is mentioned in various contemporary sources.[35] Although women had been gaining entrance to many previously restricted professions, they entered the poster field not painstakingly one at a time, but in large numbers. Of the between 600 and 1,000[36] specimens shown in the Pope Manufacturing Company's Columbia Bicycle Contest Exhibition, 100 were by women. Further evidence of female participation in the arts outside the scope of the fine arts field is

provided by the existence in the mid-nineties of over a half-dozen industrial art schools for women in New York alone.[37] The New York School of Applied Design, founded exclusively for women in 1892 by Mrs. Dunlop Hopkins, was one of the best known. Cooper Union's Art School for women, established even earlier, reached the huge enrollment of over 500 by the fall of 1895. The first bindery for women also appeared in New York in the mid-nineties, under the auspices of Evelyn Hunter Nordhoff (d.1898),[38] a former student of May Morris (daughter of William Morris) and Cobden Sanderson, a well-known arts and crafts figure in late nineteenth-century England.

In the poster designing field women distinguished themselves in all the various categories: book publishing, magazines, newspapers, exposition posters and commerce. Ethel Reed, a young female artist who began her career in 1895 with a poster design for the Boston Herald based on a self-portrait, did most of her work for Lamson, Wolff and Company and Copeland and Day, both Boston publishers. Like so many in the field she had a genteel but modest upbringing, having been born and reared in Newburyport, Massachusetts, before moving to Boston in the early nineties. Although she had studied as a child with Laura Hills (1859-?), a recognized miniaturist, and for a short period at the Cowles School of Art, her real ambition had been to

play the violin.[39] Later, though her poster and illustrating work became increasingly sought after, she toyed with acting as a profession, appearing in a number of amateur productions.[40] Her posters, however, were what made her famous. But in less than two years, her poster career was over. Following an unsuccessful marriage engagement[41] to Philip Hale (1865-1931), artist-son of the writer and churchman, Edward Everett Hale, she went to Ireland for a rest after which she was never heard of again.

The rapid rise to fame followed by total obscurity, as in Reed's case, was a commonplace occurrence among poster-makers. During the height of the movement, these artists were a favorite focus of the periodicals and newspapers, but after the turn of the century many of them dropped from sight as if their short, though flamboyant, careers had never happened. One of the last references to Reed is to be found in Percival Pollard's column in the Inland Printer for January 1898:

> Miss Ethel Reed, whose posters are among the cleverest of the American products in that art, and several of whose decorative sketches were in one of the latest issues of the Vigo Street Quarterly, is now in Ireland resting. It is a little, dull seaport she is in, and her time passes mostly in dreams and admiration for the scenery about her. She is weary, she says, and glad that where she is there is nothing to do but rest . . . I feel nothing but envy for Miss Reed as she plays the part she once drew so well in a poster--'Miss Traumerei,' . . .[42]

A letter from Reed to the photographer Frances Benjamin

Johnston (dated only August, but probably August of 1897, and sent from Crosshaven, Ireland) talks of resting and painting in quiet surroundings.[43]

There is some evidence that other female poster artists suffered even greater obscurity. Women artists who used initials instead of first names in their signatures, such as L. F. Hurd (Fig. 11),[44] were probably assumed by the public to be men. Maud Fangel (no dates available) who some scholars believe sign[illegible]er work H. E. Fangel[45] is easily confused with her husband Henry G. Fangel since they both seem to have received commissions for the same little magazine, the Quartier Latin.[46] (See Fig. 63.) Another artist thought to have been female by a modern historian,[47] is M. E. Norton (no dates available), who was the creator of the studious menagerie of playful beasts that decorated several posters for the Bookman in 1895 (Fig. 64). Their unadulterated whimsey distinguishes them from other designs for the Bookman done by Louis Rhead and Howard Chandler Christy.

Marianna Sloan (1875-1954) is another female artist whose work and identity have been somewhat eclipsed. Sister of John Sloan, Marianna did poster work for the Philadelphia Press[48] and in 1895 for Moods during the time when her brother was its art editor.

Violet Oakley, who had been a student of Howard Pyle,

did posters for Dodd, Mead and Company and for Lippincott that stylistically span the wide gap from a realistic, illustrative approach (Fig. 65) to a very ornamental, rectilinear art nouveau treatment of a theme (Fig. 66). Pyle's importance as a teacher has already been noted and it seems significant, moreover, that a number of his students who developed into successful poster artists were women, including Elizabeth Shippen Green, Jessie Wilcox Smith[49] and Bertha Corson Day.

Another producer of posters for book publishers, Blanche McManus (1870-?), whose married name was Francis Milton Mansifield was known as an author as well as a painter and postermaker. She studied in Paris before setting up a studio in Chicago. From there she issued an impressive series of placards for Lamson, Wolff and Company (Fig. 67).

Among the female artists who worked for magazines, Florence Lundborg (1871-1949) is perhaps the most unusual. Rather than doing lithographs, she cut woodblocks for her posters that advertised the San Francisco miniature magazine, the Lark.[50] This spirited little review, the brainchild of Gelett Burgess, managed to be simultaneously the most irreverent and most original of the ephemerals. Obviously able to hold her own among the male literati who congregated around the bookseller and mentor of the Lark,

William Doxey, Lundborg produced eight posters during 1895 and 1896 (Fig. 68). After 1900 she studied in France and Germany and later did murals at the Panama Pacific Exhibition and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Alice Glenny, one of several female artists who had studied abroad extensively[51] before participating in the poster epoch, did at least two posters, one for the Buffalo Courier and another for the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and Society of Artists Exhibition (Figs. 51, 69). Both are essentially alike and show an original synthesis of art nouveau (ornamental decorative motifs derived from nature) with the formal, classical treatment and muted color associated with the mural art of the period.

Another female postermaker who won prizes in two poster competitions,[52] Bertha Corson Day, should be noted for designing one of the largest posters of the period (Fig. 70). This poster, advertising the National Export Exposition in Philadelphia, held in 1899, shows some of her debt to her teacher Howard Pyle in its combination of fantasy and realistic detail. A Philadelphia artist whose parents were friends of Thomas Eakins,[53] Day was in Pyle's first illustration class at Drexel in the fall of 1894.[54] Lydia Parrish, wife of Maxfield Parrish, was another of her teachers at Drexel. Their student/teacher relationship was the beginning of a long friendship between Day and the

Parrish family.[55] During the nineties, Day received commissions from magazines including the Chap-Book. She did the cover design for the January 1896 number and her drawing, "L'enfance" (Fig. 71), appeared later the same year.[56] Although Day's work of this period held promise, like so many poster artists, she did not follow through. After her marriage in 1902, she continued to design occasional greeting cards, covers or bookplates, but she never reaffirmed her earlier committment to a career as a professional artist. The evidence of her momentary glory, her personal poster collection from the nineties, remained buried in a chest for decades until her daughter recently discovered it and donated it to the Delaware Art Museum.[57]

Blanche Ostertag (no dates available) designed posters for Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company, the Chicago department store housed in the Louis Sullivan building, and for R. R. Donnelley, owner of Chicago's Lakeside Press (Figs. 72, 73). In 1897 the Inland Printer singled her out for praise in an entirely different area, the monotype:

> . . . a young artist who less than a year ago came to Chicago fresh from training in the Paris studios to make this city her home. Her paintings in oil easily won recognition in the local exhibitions by their bold breadth of treatment, and truth and simplicity of color values. But at the recent exhibit of the Pastellists there were shown a number of monotypes from her hand. These were to many, the most interesting feature of the exhibit.[58]

Ostertag's posters in their use of contrasting patterns in

muted colors suggest the possible influence of young Nabis artists Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940) and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947) during her sojourn in Paris before she settled in Chicago during the year 1896-7.[59]

One more female poster artist who serves to complete the broad spectrum of women who joined the movement, however briefly, is M. Louise Stowall (no dates available). She is recognized for a single surviving poster, an advertisement for a bookseller (Fig. 74). Stowall's career, unlike the careers of so many other women, is relatively well documented. She began her art education in 1887 at the Mechanic's Institute in Rochester, New York as one of its first students of free-hand drawing. After distinguishing herself in watercolor painting, sketches from life and clay modelling, Stowall became an instructor at the Institute in 1890. During the early years of the decade her reputation continued to grow as she struggled to make ends meet by sharing a room with another female artist, Ada Kent (no dates available).[60] In 1896, a Rochester newspaper noted her participation in a poster exhibition in Leipzig, whose award committee included Max Klinger (1847-1920):

> In a poster competition held in November in Leipzig, Germany, two designs were exhibited by Miss Louise Stowall of this city. One of these designs gained honorable mention and another one was recommended for purchase. Miss Stowall was the only American and the only woman to enter her work in the competition.[61]

In a later newspaper report, she was mentioned as one of the founders of the Rochester Society of Arts and Crafts along with two other local poster artists, Harvey Ellis and Claude Fayette Bragdon.[62] Perhaps it was this joint enterprise of several postermakers which the magazine the Poster referred to as a veritable colony of poster artists in Rochester.[63] After the turn of the century, Stowall was well-known as a pastellist and collector of Japanese prints.

Beyond the fact that the poster field presented a new channel for artists, regardless of sex or background, it offered the further appeal characteristic of a moral crusade. In an 1895 article from the Bookman, Rhead provided an interpretation along that line:

> . . . the moral aspect of the artistic poster, then, is that it may be if done well an important factor in the life of the community, and it is best to begin aright, with high ideals and aims, to educate, ennoble, and make men and women think of life not as a silly dream, but as earnest and sublime.[64]

Art Interchange said it another way: "Truly there is something more than lies apparent on the surface of the poster, a meaning, a more serious underlying cause pervading the entire art."[65]

Generally, the importance assigned to the movement by contemporary commentators was based on two attributes: the fact that poster art was aesthetically satisfying yet was created for a useful purpose rather than merely for its own sake; and its potential as educator, civilizer of the masses[66] and democratic equalizer providing the same

artistic experience to both the man in the street and the aristocrat. Publications of the nineties that dealt with the artistic poster contain numerous observations such as the following which refer to the movement's important social and cultural role:

> These gay posters have their mission to perform, apart from their legitimate work of advertising. They are an aid to art education of the people.[67]

> So many of the posters now on our fences are accomplishing more good than a dozen museums of art would do in a decade.[68]

> It is a stern movement to replace the rubbish of bygone days by giving the masses art who do not go to the galleries to see art.[69]

> The movement at its best shows the tendency in art as in all other contemporary forms of expression toward democracy; it is, perhaps a stepping stone by which the whole people will come at last to the more elevated stage of truer taste and finer appreciation.[70]

Many artists, especially the young ones, could not help but be impressed by such high-mindedness. For them, much of the snobbery that divided art into the major and minor arts became insignificant in the face of the poster's importance as a positive social and cultural agent. The opportunity for doing good on a large scale satisfied the misgivings of some of the most conservative fine artists of the period. Will H. Low, for example, had no difficulty in using the same idealized academic flower girl in both a mural [71] and a poster for Scribner's[72] (Figs. 75, 30). Kenyon Cox (1856-1919) also did a poster for Scribner's as

well as for The Limner (Fig. 76), the nineties publication of New York's Art Students' League. Although Cox championed the classical approach in art and painted in a neo-Renaissance style, he obviously saw no compromise of his principles in doing poster work. As one writer put it: ". . . at the present time poster designing has entered so thoroughly and legitimately into the domain of high art that there is not a single artist who would hesitate to sign a poster of his own creation."[73] Another critic even went so far as to suggest that the poster might eventually separate itself from its commercial aspect altogether:

> . . . if art is not ideographic and decorative, it is nothing. Its mission is to tell truth by symbols and no chains of convention may hamper its creative workers. Art should be subservient only to the highest ends of life. If the art of the poster is not all this at the present time, it gives promise of fruitfulness in that direction, and the publication of posters without lettering, already commenced, is earnest of further emancipation.[74]

To the artists' satisfaction, contemporary observers not only attributed a moral character to the movement, but also to the artists themselves. In McQuilkin's article on Bradley in the February 1895 issue of the Inland Printer, Bradley is praised for not being concerned with money.[75] While in an essay on Ethel Reed the critic gives this lofty estimation of her goals:

> With the brave spirit of the true artist, she has set face to the future, concerning her mission to be to bring sweetness and light into the dark

> places of the world, always conscious that the darkest spots are nearest the light.[76]

Of the artists who wrote about and tried to promote the poster movement, including Claude Fayette Bragdon, Wilbur Macy Stone and Will Bradley, Louis Rhead was the one who most consistently stressed its moral function. In an address directed primarily to art students, Rhead counseled them to establish high principles and to try to give "each work a moral and intellectual character of its own."[77] Rhead was also a capable spokesman for the notion that art and artists have a positive social responsibility. English-born and trained at the South Kensington School in London, Rhead was nurtured on the John Ruskin, Owen Jones, Christopher Dresser and William Morris theories[78] that formed the basis of the English Arts and Crafts movement.

Through artists like Rhead and Walter Crane[79] (who lectured extensively in the United States in the early nineties) American artists and critics were exposed to the idea that the minor arts could play a major role in elevating the quality of life. By the mid-nineties, the crafts as a worthy and respectable branch of the arts particularly suited to the talents and sensibilities of Americans is a commonplace theme in the art literature.[80] Since, as noted in Chapter One, America, unlike England, did not make a great distinction between crafts done on an individual basis

and applied art done on a mass-production scale, the new modern posters were considered another example of America's arts and crafts accomplishment. As such, poster art enjoyed some of the same moral authority the Arts and Crafts philosophy had assigned to the less commercial applied arts.

In the Morris tradition, the artist who performed many crafts, rather than just one, was held in high esteem. During the time they participated in the poster movement, both Parrish and Bradley saw themselves in this light. In a profile of Parrish, the Book-Buyer observed that in addition to designing the frames for his pictures he "finds pleasure and recreation in hammering out a fine old-fashioned brass door latch, constructing a hall seat, or in putting up a solid and dignified mantelpiece above a big fireplace."[81] Will Bradley, however, is the poster artist who most clearly demonstrated the multi-talented art worker who operated in a broad range of the decorative arts. Bradley's plan for his Wayside Press, established in Springfield, Massachusetts, towards the end of 1895, involved not only an art printing shop but a center for the production of "pictures, books, tapestries, and artistic effects generally."[82] In addition, Bradley envisioned a school of design for instruction in the decorative arts.[83] The idea of publishing his own magazine came somewhat later and the first issue did not appear until May 1896. Furthermore,

according to Fern Bradley Dufner, Bradley, like Morris and others associated with the English Arts and Crafts Movement, believed that appreciation for the artistic aspects of life developed as a result of living amidst tasteful objects. Using this method, Bradley too sought to sensitize his own children.[84] Ultimately, Bradley shared his notions of an aesthetic domestic environment in his house designs published in the Ladies Home Journal during 1901 and 1902.[85]

Although some poster artists such as Parrish and Bradley identified themselves with a wide spectrum of the arts, most poster artists, when they were not doing posters, worked in related areas. Frank A. Nankivell, George Wharton Edwards, F. R. Kimbrough, L. Maynard Dixon were all praised for their book cover work. Harvey Ellis and E. B. Bird were popular book plate designers. Almost all of the poster artists did or had done illustrating for newspapers, books or magazines. John Sloan, Ethel Reed and W. W. Denslow were particularly successful in adapting their poster styles to illustrative work.[86]

Some of the poster artists ventured into still other allied fields. Thomas Fleming, the postermaker for M'lle New York did cartoons, as did Edward Kemble, creator of the "Gold Dust Twins." Hy Mayer did both posters and comics for the magazine Truth. According to the Inland Printer,

Mayer reached the top in that relatively new artistic area:

> In black and white and colored 'comics,' in fecundity of humorous notions, Mr. Mayer is now one of the best known artists our illustrated weeklies use.[87]

Clearly many of the postermakers found acceptance and success in the broad category, including posters, that might be labelled the "printing arts." Whether connected to book publishing (book design, illustrations), magazines (illustration, posters, cover design), or newspapers (posters, comics, cartoons), all these activities were performed with the idea of reproduction (and often mass-reproduction) in mind which distinguishes them from other kinds of artistic expression.

As noted above, many poster artists limited themselves to the "printing arts." However, there was one area of the fine arts, mural painting, in which a number of them participated. The link between posters and mural art is a theme that runs throughout the poster literature. Henry Brevoort Eddy, alumnus of Harvard, self-taught artist and postermaker for the New York Ledger, placed the connection in an historical perspective:

> Fifty years hence he the poster artist can shake hands in an equality with Michel Angelo, [sic] for the poster artist will be the future mural decorator . . . Art is developing as letters and music long since developed. It is ceasing to be a handicraft and is becoming a literature. Reproduction in newspapers and magazines is doing for art what the invention of printing did for letters.[88]

A critic for Art Interchange also made the observation that

> . . . poster art is encouraging and influencing mural decoration to a greater extent than most people are aware of . . . The demand for competent artists as mural decorators is increasing, and we can no longer ignore the fact that the pictorial poster holds a very important position in the development of modern mural decoration.[89]

Even the French saw a relationship between the American artistic poster and mural painting. In his review of Louis Rhead's exhibition at the Salon des Cent, Jules LaForgue discussed Rhead's work in that context:

> These designs modestly catalogued as advertising posters, are really magnificent frescoes constituting the most charming mural decoration possible.[90]

It was, therefore, a relatively small leap for poster artists to find themselves actually executing murals. Among them were Maxfield Parish, George Wharton Edwards, Edward Penfield, William Glackens, John Sloan and Violet Oakley.

Parrish did his first mural at the age of nineteen (1889) so perhaps it was mural art that led him to posters rather than the reverse. This first mural was called "Sing a Song of Sixpence," and was executed at the Sherman House in Chicago. Later Parrish did two large murals of "Old King Cole,": one for the Mask and Wig Club in Philadelphia and another later on (1905) for John Jacob Astor that is now at New York's Hotel St. Regis. By 1898, according to a Book-Buyer article, his goal was to concentrate on mural

painting:

> His artistic ambition is distinctly in the direction of mural painting and his strong taste for architectural effects and color point to success in his chosen field.[91]

Referred to as the "American Poster Competition Winner,"[92] in a magazine article of 1897, his decorative abilities in that area were by then well-established. Around the same time, he acknowledged the primacy of the decorative in his painting as well: "Painting is by bent, the decorative, perhaps, more than the realistic or literal."[93]

George Wharton Edwards, who executed designs for the Century (Fig. 77), Pocket Magazine and the American Watercolor Society, used the same modified classical forms and motifs for both his posters and his murals. Although Wharton's watercolor work and illustrations are somewhat different in manner, his posters and murals bear a definite stylistic relationship. In both he uses illusionistic but simplified figures and objects organized into a well-delineated but shallow series of spatial planes.

A critic discussing the mural work of Edward Penfield, who did over 60 posters for Harper's Monthly in the nineties, suggests that the success of his decorations in the breakfast room of Randolph Hall in Cambridge and the living room of a country club in Rochester substantiate the analogy between mural art and postermaking. The "audacity of

conception, boldness and freedom of delineation, general simplicity of technique, and combined strength and refinement of color should be common to both."[94]

John Sloan and William Glackens, schoolmates in the eighties, renewed their acquaintance in the early nineties when both attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Evening students of Thomas Anshutz in 1892 and 1893, Glackens and Sloan also participated in the short-lived Charcoal Club and in Robert Henri's (1865-1929) famous Tuesday Evenings which replaced it: In 1894, they staged a parody at the PAFA of George DuMaurier's Trilby (Fig. 78). Sloan played "Twilbe" (photo, Fig. 79), the hero, and Glackens played "Gecko." In 1896, Sloan and Glackens were commissioned to paint murals at the PAFA.[95] One of Sloan's works depicted music and opera (Fig. 80). More detailed and illusionistic than his poster work, it still shows the same flowing, decorative quality visible in a design such as that for Moods (Fig. 81). Clearly in the tradition of the French muralists Puvis de Chauvannes (1824-1898) and Boutet de Monvel (1851-1913), Sloan's paintings were considered radical in comparison with the more illusionistic approach of Edwin Austin Abbey, whose work was then much in vogue among Americans.

Although Violet Oakley did primarily illustration and occasional poster work in the nineties, her greatest

triumph came as a muralist after the turn of the century. Her first murals[96] were commissioned by All Angels Church in New York where she also did stained glass windows and a mosaic. The favorable reception of the All Angels murals led to her selection (in 1902) as muralist for the Governor's Reception Room in the Capitol Building at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. When Edwin Austin Abbey died in 1911 before finishing his series of murals at the Capitol, Oakley was chosen to complete them.

The logic of the connection between poster art and mural painting stems from obvious parallels in the way they functioned and in the goals that were envisioned for them by artists and supporters of both mediums. Though interest in American mural painting had been increasing since the seventies, it was the impressive display of mural art at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 that established it as a major area of expression in American art.[97] Thus, the nineties were perhaps the most crucial period for mural painting as they were for the artistic poster.

The necessity in good mural painting of simple, easily readable form, unencumbered by complex spatial dispositions, holds true for the artistic poster as well. Furthermore, both mediums, in general, functioned in open, public places rather than in private, intimate ones. The appeal of both was intended to be universal, to cut across divisions of

class and background. The description of mural painting of this period by a contemporary as "decorative," and "A distinctly flat method . . . that does not lay undue stress upon perspective,"[98] would also describe poster art. John LaFarge's emphasis on color in a talk on mural painting delivered to the Society of Architects of Trinity Church[99] suggests another convergence: it reminds one of Penfield's conclusions about the use of color in postermaking (see page 87).

The insistence on a social role for the artistic poster and the moral stance of the poster designers described earlier in this chapter is echoed in statements about mural painting such as the following:

> . . . it behooves our rich men and our architects to see that the multitude that visits our public buildings, yearning for cultivation, for knowledge, for a glimpse of something lovely outside their unaesthetic experiences . . . are not deprived of the pleasure . . .[100]

These sentiments are similar to those expressed by Louis Rhead, quoted on page 100. Although Edwin Blashfield wrote sometime later, he also cast mural painting in a socially relevant role.[101]

Even in iconography, one can occasionally find examples where murals and posters correspond. Pauline King's analysis of F. W. Benson's treatment of women in his Library of Congress murals (1896-97) is very close to what was said

about the representation of women in the American artistic poster to be examined later in this study (see Chapter Five):

> . . . these delicate figures have clearly been inspired by high-bred American girls, whose beauty is as much intellectual as physical.[102]

In both cases, observers noted the special character of the American female and the fact that artists chose to depict it.

Unquestionably the poster artists were a varied group whose members seldom limited themselves to postermaking even during the height of the "craze." Whether they considered it a major activity or a diversion, a source of cash or a moral committment, in most cases, it provided an opportunity to create a work of art, outside the more restrictive atmosphere of the fine arts, that had wide public appeal.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1]Bradley states that "Among professional designers none receive larger salaries than those whose work is confined to the making of posters." "Notes," Bradley, His Book 2 (January 1897):116.

And from an article in Art Interchange comes the following information: "The poster itself is no new thing but the poster as a serious work of art, for which the artist may receive $1,000 for a single design, is a very modern instance." Lilian Whiting, "The Art of the Poster," Art Interchange 35 (November 1895):111.

[2]"The American Poster," New York Times, 24 January 1896, p. 4. The same statistics were quoted in the following articles: "The Poster of Today," Art Interchange 36 (June 1896):138, and George R. Sparks, "Picture Posters," Inland Printer 19 (May 1897):208.

[3]As the April 1896 issue of Poster Lore noted, "The creative spirits in the world of art have hailed the advent of the new poster with delight because it opened the way to a new field of artistic delight unhedged [sic] by any conventionalities." Vol. 1, p. 89.

[4]According to Charles T. Hiatt, Picture Posters (London: George Bell & Sons, 1895), Gunn was, "the son of a well-known drawing master in one of the large towns of the Midlands," p. 300.

[5]J. M. Bowles, "An American Institute for Women in Paris: A Letter from Louis Rhead," Modern Art 4 (1 January 1896):22.

[6]Ibid., p. 19.

[7]William L. Forwood, Jr., "John Sloan, Japonisme and the Art Nouveau" (M.A. thesis, University of Delaware, 1970), p. 29.

[8]From an interview in Paperworld, requoted in "Concerning the Poster Tendency and Mr. Will H. Bradley," Poster Lore 1 (January 1896):10.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Edward Penfield, "Posters," The Limner 1 (June 1895):7.

[11]Ibid., p. 6.

[12]Harry D. Hunt, "A Pioneer in Artistic Poster Work," Red Letter, 1 (January 1897):124.

[13]Ibid., p. 125.

[14]Claude Fayette Bragdon, Bertram Grovenor, I. R. Henri and Francis Berkeley Smith, son of Francis Hopkinson Smith, are some of the others.

[15]Poster Lore 1 (April 1896):89.

[16]During his architecture apprenticeship in the seventies, Ellis worked for H. H. Richardson on his designs for the State Capitol Building at Albany. Back in Rochester in the eighties his Romanesque revival designs, nurtured by his experience with Richardson, appeared in the Midwest under the names of other architects (including Leroy S. Buffington, Minneapolis; George R. Mann, St. Louis). An alcoholic most of his life, Ellis gave up drinking for a period in the nineties when he did poster work and participated actively in Rochester's arts and crafts movement. A After the turn of the century, his furniture designs were featured in The Craftsman.

[17]Claude Fayette Bragdon, ". . . The Importance of Design with a Note on the Absence of Humor in American Posters," Poster Lore 1 (April 1896):73.

[18]He did a wood-cut cover design for the Winter 1895 issue of Modern Art which was then lithographed as a promotion poster. (See Chapter Two.) Dow also did a cover design for Lotos that was produced in poster form as well.

[19]Dow's first public presentation of his theories came in the form of a lecture before the Boston Art Students' Association in which he made statements such as the following: "A pictorial composition is not merely an assemblage of objects truthfully represented; it is the expression of an idea, and all the parts must be so related as to form a harmonious whole." Arthur Warren Johnson, "Arthur Wesley Dow: Historian, Artist and Teacher," Ipswich Historical Society Publication No. 28 (1934):61.

[20]Frederick C. Moffat, Arthur Wesley Dow (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Collection of Fine Arts, 1977), p. 48.

[21]Arthur Wesley Dow, "The Responsibility of the Artist as an Educator," Lotos 9 (February 1896):612. Specifically he said, "The artist to be a public educator must turn away from so much realistic easel painting and through design and decoration bring beauty into everyday life."

[22]Moffat, Arthur Wesley Dow, quoting from Arthur Wesley Dow, "Ipswich as It Should Be," Ipswich Chronicle, 9 May 1891.

[23]Arthur Wesley Dow, Composition (Boston: Joseph Bowles 1899).

[24]Louis Rhead, "Fine Arts: Poster Making Discussed by Mr. Louis Rhead," Independent 48 (3 September 1896): 1195-96.

[25]Dow, Composition, 7th ed. (Garden City, New York, 1913):4.

[26]Dow, "The Responsibility of the Artist as an Educator," p. 611.

[27]Howard Pyle, "A Small School of Art," Harper's Weekly (17 July 1897):710-11.

[28]Moffat, Arthur Wesley Dow, p. 53.

[29]Pyle, "A Small School of Art," pp. 710-11.

[30]Bennard B. Perlman, The Immortal Eight (New York: Exposition Press, 1962), p. 55.

[31]Certainly Eakins was considered a rebel in his time. He was dismissed from both the PAFA (1886) and later from Drexel (1895) over the use of the nude model. However, his insistence on an accurate, almost scientific rendering of the human form was in a sense only an extension of the traditional academic requirement that art students devote large segments of their training to painstaking drawing of the figure from casts and later from the nude model as well.

[32]Elizabeth Hawkes, Bertha Corson Day Bates (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1978), p. 8.

[33]Perlman recounts the story of Sloan's departure from Anshutz' drawing class: "Finally bored one evening with the prospect of continuing to draw an antique cast, Sloan casually pulled his chair off to the side of the room and

began filling in margins of his paper with sketches of some of his industrious classmates. Anshutz spied the nonconformist, 'You have no business drawing anything but this project from the antique,' he admonished angrily. 'You shouldn't be wasting your time doing illustrations and cartoons.'

Infuriated by this unwarranted attack, Sloan gathered up his supplies and stalked out of the classroom, never to return." The Immortal Eight, pp. 58-59.

[34]"Color Prints," Artist 23 (January 1899):xix.

[35]W. S. Rogers, A Book of the Poster (London: Greening and Co., Ltd., 1901), p. 122; Poster and Art Collector 2 (March 1899): 127.

In recent years, the work of Smith has resurfaced as a result of the research done by William Homer and his graduate students at the University of Delaware on Alfred Stieglitz and "291." The findings on Smith were published in 1975 in conjunction with an exhibition of her work: Melinda Boyd Parsons, To All Believers--The Art of Pamela Colman Smith (Wilmington, Delaware Art Museum, 1975). During the years Smith lived in New York (1893-1899), she graduated from Pratt Institute where she had studied with Arthur Wesley Dow. It was during this period also, that she became an accomplished illustrator and must have designed some posters, though none seem to have survived. Her primary interest at this time, however, was miniature stage productions for which she designed and constructed the stages. In January 1907, Stieglitz gave Smith a one-woman show, the first non-photography exhibition at "291."

[36]The figure given in the American Bookmaker article on the contest was 600 ("Some exhibitions," 21 [May 1896]: 142), but in the New York Times, 8 March 1896, the writer claimed "upward of 1,000," ("The Pope Company's Show," p. 6).

[37]Mary Annable Fanton, "Some Industrial Art Schools for Women," Godey's Magazine 132 (January/June 1896):628-632.

[38]Ellen Day Hale, "In Memoriam, Evelyn Hunter Nordhoff," Artist 23 (December 1898):xxxv-xxxvii.

[39]M.J., "A Chat with Miss Ethel Reed," Bookman 2 (December 1895):279

[40]Ibid., p. 281.

[41]Poster 1 (February 1896):25. "It is announced that during June of this year, Miss Ethel Reed, the well-known poster artist, will marry Philip Hale, himself an artist, the son of the Rev. Edward Everett Hale."

[42]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movements," Inland Printer 20(January 1898):527.

[43]"Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection: Personal Correspondence," Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[44]"Poster Craze in Philadelphia," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1 March 1896, p. 1, lists her as an accomplished female poster artist.

[45]The catalogue raisonné of American posters in German museum collections (Ruth Malhotra and Christina Thon, Das Frühe Plakat in Europa und den USA, vol. 1 [Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1973], p. 62), attributes one of the Quartier Latin to her and they indicate further that H. G. Fangel meant Maud Tousey or Mrs. H. G. Fangel (Ibid., p. 196).

[46]The Quartier Latin was a little magazine issued by the American Art Association of Paris (founded in 1890) from July 1896 to February/March 1899.

[47]Victor Margolin, The American Poster Renaissance (New York: Watson, Guptill, 1975), p. 216.

[48]A poster by Marianna Sloan for the Philadelphia Press Women's Edition is listed in a catalogue for the Poster Show (Richamond, Va.: Benefit Old Dominion Hospital, Pace Building, 1896). Another, also for the Philadelphia Press, dated Thanksgiving 1895, was included in the poster exhibition held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in March 1896. See Poster Show: Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1896.

[49]Green, Smith and Oakley met in Pyle's classes at Drexel Institute and became devoted friends. They lived together in studios first in Philadelphia (1897-1900), and then in Bryn Mawr (1900-1902), and finally in Germantown (Cogslea). In 1911, Green married the architect Hugh Elliot, Oakley moved up the hill to "Cogshill," and Smith remained at "Cogslea." See Catherine Connell Stryker, The Studios at Cogslea (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1976).

[50]Lark, 2 vols. (May 1895-April 1897).

[51]She studied with William Chase in New York and with Boulanger in Paris.

[52]Besides winning the contest for the National Export Exposition poster, she took second place in a competition sponsored by the Colgate Company two years earlier. Elizabeth Hawkes, The Poster Decade (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum), p. 4.

[53]Hawkes, Bertha Corson Day Bates, p. 6.

[54]Ibid., p. 9.

[55]Hawkes, Bertha Corson Day Bates, p. 8.

[56]Chap-Book 5 (1 August 1896):258.

[57]Elizabeth Hawkes, The Poster Decade (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1977), p. 5.

[58]"Monotype Pictures," Inland Printer 20 (November 1897):184-185.

[59]Ibid.

[60]"News of Artists," Rochester Post, 19 December 1894.

[61]Union Advertiser, 31 December 1896, p. 7.

[62]"A society which has in view the cultivation of the arts and sciences has been recently organized. It is known as the Rochester Society of Arts and Crafts.

"Articles of incorporation were filed in the county clerk's office this afternoon. The incorporators are all well-known Rochester art-lovers. They are: Harvey Ellis, Claude Fayette Bragdon, M. Louise Stowall . . . ." Union Advertiser, 7 December 1897, p. 6.

[63]Poster 1 (February 1896):19.

[64]Louis Rhead, "The Moral Aspect of the Artistic Poster," Bookman 1 (June 1895):312-314.

[65]"The Poster of Today," Art Interchange 36 (July 1896):138.

[66]The idea that posters could have a major civilizing function was expressed as early as 1881: "The matter of the advertisements appeals to all but their aspect is of most importance to those who have no pictures at home. We should not, therefore, allow the taste of the poor to be thus condemned to vulgarity. "The Streets as Art Galleries," Magazine of Art (London and New York) 4 (1881):299. The Magazine of Art was published both in London and New York, with the issues appearing in America one month behind those in England.

[67]"The Poster of Today," p. 138.

[68]Louis E. Shipman, "The Poster Mania," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly 80 (8 March 1895):198.

[69]"The American Poster," New York Times, 24 January 1896, p. 4.

[70]Poster Show (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1896).

[71]According to Lois Marie Fink and Joshua C. Taylor in Academy: The Academic Tradition in American Art (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Collection of Fine Arts, 1975), p. 222, sketches for the painting L'Interlude, Jardin de Macmonnies, were probably executed between 1892 and 1895 while Low was visiting the MacMonnies in Giverny, France.

[72]This was Low's first poster design and Scribner's went to great pains to have it reproduced in an effective way as noted by this comment in the Inland Printer: "In addition to issuing this as a poster, it is to be lithographed in twelve colors as the cover for the August Scribner's--the 'Fiction Number.' This is a wide departure from the usual custom of Charles Scribner's Sons, and goes to show that the desire to present art work of the highest grade to the readers of that publication will hereafter not be confined to inside pages of the magazine alone." 17 (June 1896):301.

[73]E. Burton Stewart, "Preface," to exhibition catalogue of Messrs. Meyer Bros. and Co., New York, Poster Lore 1 (April 1896):82-83.

[74]Roger Cunningham, "Cui Bono," [sic] Poster Lore 1 (July 1896):104-105.

[75]As McQuilkin stated it: "If he chose to work merely to the ideals of customers and regardless of his own, that he could, to quote the words recently uttered regarding him by a favorable critic, 'make a pot of money.'" "Will Bradley and His Work," Inland Printer 14 (February 1895):431.

[76]E. St. Elmo Lewis, "Ethel Reed, An Appreciation and a Prophecy," Poster Lore 2 September 1896):10.

[77]"Fine Arts: Poster Making Discussed by Mr. Louis Rhead," Independent 48 (September 1896):1196. Rhead also suggested that the students would never do good art of any kind, "unless they could 'believe in a divine creator who made this world.'" According to Rhead, "Artists who think they can lead immoral lives destroy their early promise."

[78]In most cases the ideas of Jones and Dresser were transmitted to Americans through Charles Eastlake's Hints on Household Decoration published here in 1872. However, in the 1880s, Dresser wrote occasionally for the Art Amateur. One of his most interesting contributions was a series entitled "The Decoration of our Homes." The same magazine also printed articles by Lewis Day during the eighties. Day was another English designer and theorist who differed from the others in his positive attitude toward the possibilities of machine production.

[79]In 1892 Crane exhibited in Boston, St. Louis, Philadelphia and Brooklyn. He lectured in New York, Hartford, Boston and Chicago. His visit to Chicago and his lecture entitled, "Design in Relation to Use and Material," is described in Art Amateur, "News and Notes: Art in Chicago," 26 (February 1892):83.

[80]One of the first to state this was Brander Matthews in his 1892 article for the Century: "Perhaps it is not wholly unfair to suggest that this nineteenth century of ours is a day of little things, and that our silverware, our pottery, our tiles, our wall-paper, our wood-cuts, our book-covers, each in its kind, and when it is at its best, are better than our historic painting, our heroic sculpture or our grandiose architecture." "The Pictorial Poster," 44 (September 1892):748.

[81]James B. Carrington, "Maxfield Parrish," Book Buyer 16 (April 1898):224.

[82]Echo 2 (1 February 1896):169.

[83]Frederick Thoreau Singleton, "And Here Come Some More Notes," Poster Lore 1 (February 1896):57.

[84]This aspect of Bradley as described by his daughter was recounted in Roberta Waddell Wong's thesis, Will Bradley, Exponent of American Decorative Illustration at the End of the Nineteenth Century (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1971), p. 209.

[85]Will Bradley, "A Bradley House," Ladies Home Journal 18 (November 1901):7; 19 (December 1901):17, (January 1901): 11; (February 1902):13; (March 1902):15; (May 1902):13; (July 1902):15; (August 1902):11.

[86]In the case of John Sloan, it would be more accurate to say that his illustrative style was adapted to poster-work because what later became known as his poster style first developed during the period when he did decorative illustrations for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Sloan also did book illustrations but not until 1900 when he did the drawings for Stephen Crane's Great Battles of the World. Ethel Reed did what the Bookman called "decorative book work"--mostly illustrations for children's books published by Copeland and Day; and Lamson, Wolff and Co. (see "A Chat with Ethel Reed," Bookman 2 [December 1895]:278. The International Studio compared her illustrations to Kate Greenaway's. (See "The Work of Miss Ethel Reed," 1 [June 1897]:230-236.)

Denslow's poster and illustrative work for Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Shops in East Aurora, N.Y., an arts and crafts community, provides an interesting link between the poster and other expressions of the arts and crafts movement in America.

[87]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movements," 1 (September 1897):719.

[88]Frank R. Knight, "Henry Brevoort Eddy," Bradley, His Book 1 (July 1896):92.

[89]"The Poster of Today," p. 139.

[90]Quoted in Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movements,: Inland Printer 19 (July 1897):437.

[91]Carrington, "Maxfield Parrish," p. 224.

[92]George R. Sparks, "Picture Posters," Inland Printer 19 (May 1897):208.

[93]Harry D. Hunt, "A Clever Master of the Grotesque," Red Letter 1 (February 1897):149.

[94]Charles Matlack Price, Posters (New York: George W. Bricka, 1913), p. 240.

[95]Although Sloan had had some bitter experiences with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, by 1896, his reputation had grown and his relationship with that institution was much better as a professional artist than it had been when he was a student there. His unofficial connection through the Henri group must have kept him a familiar figure and sheds some light on how he could have received this commission.

[96]These murals won the Silver Medal in Mural Decoration at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904. Stryker, The Studios at Cogslea, p. 30.

[97]Pauline King, American Mural Painting (Boston: Noyes, Platt and Co., 1902), p. 55.

[98]Ibid., p. 5.

[99]Quoted in King, American Mural Painting, p. 23.

[100]Ibid., p. 162.

[101]Edwin Blashfield, Mural Painting in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 175-176.

[102]King, American Mural Painting, p. 206.

CHAPTER FOUR: STYLE AND THE EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTION

Despite the nativist ideology of the American poster artists, at first glance it might seem as though in style as well as iconography the American poster artists had little new to offer. In examining the work of many of them one can often cite some specific European inspiration. Commentators are quick to point out the obvious similarity between Penfield's cats and those of Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen (1853-1923), or Rhead's self-acknowledged debt to Grasset,[1] or Bradley's adoption of certain key elements in Beardsley's work. Though these observations are well-founded and play a part in a stylistic and iconographic analysis, giving them primary importance minimizes the significance of the American transformation of many foreign contributions. Focussing on the instances of superficial American imitation of European models leads one to gloss over the importance of the indigenous development in the applied arts and the increasingly rich native culture in determining the rise of the American artistic poster.

Even before considering style, one must mention a very basic difference between most European posters and those produced in the United States: scale. For the most part, American posters were not meant to be seen on billboards but in the more intimate setting of a bookstore or a

newsstand. A turn-of-the-century commentator noted the contradiction the small placard represented in the American context:

> America has taken kindly to the pictorial placard. It is the country of big things. It owns Niagara. The entertaining bill poster has not hesitated to cry the virtues of his client's wares in eight foot letters on the rocky cliffs of its mountain scenery. It is the home of the giant poster, as we know, who have seen the acres of paper and ink that heralded Barnum's prodigeous show. America also invented the midget; and in poster matters she has fluctuated between the big and the small.[2]

The artistic poster was generally in the "midget" category.[3] The great majority fall between 15x12" and 25x17"inches. Bradley's posters for the Inland Printer, for example, were 12x9 inches. In contrast, Aubrey Beardsley's book posters (The Pseudonym and Antonym Library [1894] and Publisher. Children's Books [1894], Figs. 82, 83) were closer to 30x12". In looking at reproductions presented in a uniform size format[4] it is impossible to tell that this discrepancy exists. The size difference is, however, crucial. The American poster played both the obvious role, as advertisement, and a private role, as the object of connoisseurs and collectors.[5] Because of its smaller size, the American poster could function in a manner closer to the way the art print--the lithograph, engraving or etching--functioned in Europe.[6]

From the point of view of both design and subject

matter, Americans generally borrowed whatever appealed to them in European work without regard to the original intention or cultural context. The resulting product may, therefore, show some similarity, but the overall effect is different. For the most part, poster artists combined these borrowed elements with native ingredients to form a unique expression. There are individual cases that one can use to illustrate direct influence from abroad where the European quotations are readily recognizable. Ernest Haskell's poster for the New York Sunday Journal (Fig. 84) based on a Chéret design (Fig. 85),[7] Fred Ramsdell's adaptation of Paul Berthon's Salon des Cent poster for a bicycle advertisement (Fig. 86) and Leyendecker's Mucha-like approach to his prize-winning Century poster (Fig. 35) come to mind. Therefore, in the later stylistic analysis of some of the major figures in the American movement, specific debts to foreign artists will form part of the discussion.

A more profound effect of Europe on America, however, may be the indirect influence flowing from the English Arts and Crafts Movement. The English movement fostered an appreciation for the applied arts in Britain which soon stimulated a new enthusiasm in the United States for native crafts as well. Arts and crafts objects shown first the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 and subsequently

available on a retail basis in Chicago and New York[8] were a major factor in the development of the applied arts here. The theoretical works were also important. The essence of the English Arts and Crafts philosophy found its way into American periodicals of the 1880s, soon becoming part of the late nineteenth century American sensibility.[9] The American art pottery movement, embroidery, interior decoration, as well as printing and graphic design all felt the English Arts and Crafts impact.

As has been pointed out in Chapter One, American magazine printing and engraving of the 1880s reached a high aesthetic level in part as a result of the new artistic standards established by the Philadelphia Centennial, and this achievement of the magazines fostered a new canon of taste in the graphic arts as a whole. It provided an object lesson in the importance of fine workmanship and the necessity of adapting technique to the requirements of the medium. Since most of the American poster artists were at least in part self-taught, much of their instruction came from studying the black and white illustrations done for the better magazines. They probably also glanced over the many articles appearing in American periodicals by English Arts and Crafts advocates like Jones and Dresser, whose essays provided an intellectual underpining for the new trends. Obviously many of the poster artists of the

nineties were too young to have had this kind of exposure and would have absorbed the basic notions later on, when their effect had already become incorporated into the American decorative arts approach. However, Louis Rhead, H. L. Bridwell, George Wharton Edwards and Henry McCarter (1866-1942), artists who did posters in the nineties, were already earning a living as artists in the 1880s doing decorative work for magazines.

By the eighties, though illustration remained conservative and realistic, American decorative work was being gradually transformed in the direction of greater abstraction and two-dimensionality. English and Japanese models[10] had helped as well as an American synthesis of these approaches exemplified by Candace Wheeler's embroidery designs[11] and Louis Comfort Tiffany's work in stained Glass, wallpaper and textiles. Also, the impulses which produced the American prefigurations of the art nouveau style appearing in Tiffany's decorations for the Seventh Regiment Armory Building[12] (begun in 1880) and the architectural ornament for Louis Sullivan's Auditorium Building (begun in 1886) may have helped move decorative magazine work away from the old conventional forms.

The mature art nouveau style had appeared full-blown by 1893 in centers like Brussels, Paris and London, though it was not yet called by that name. According to

A. D. F. Hamlin, writing in 1902, the first use of the term art nouveau occurred in a letter by V. Champer, a Frenchman writing from Chicago to the Revue des arts décoratifs in Paris, in reference to an exhibit of American silver work at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.

> Outside this interpretation of Nature, Whiting shows that he has offered sacrifice to this 'style nouveau' derived from India and baptised 'Saracenic' by its creator Mr. Moore, one of the art directors of the Tiffany establishment.[13]

According to the same source, Chamber used the term again when talking about the Sullivan bronze doors for the Getty Mausoleum.[14]

Although historians differ as to what represents the first manifestation of art nouveau in the United States,[15] it was safe to say that by 1894 in the graphic arts at least, and in the new posters in particular, the presence of the new style was clearly discernible. Bradley's When Hearts are Trumps (Fig. 20), Leyendecker's The Interior (Fig. 87) or Rhead's Advertising in the Sun (Fig. 46), all from 1894, show how American artists utilized the serpentine line, the more abstract, flatter spatial treatment and decorative contrasts of light and dark.

One likely source of inspiration for American art nouveau in the graphic arts would be the work of Aubrey Beardsley. During 1893 Beardsley's first major project

appeared--his illustrations for Thomas Mallory's Morte D'Arthur published by J. M. Dent--and his first critical recognition--an article in the first issue of the Studio. Examples of his work were soon readily available in America. With the arrival of the first issue of his Yellow Book[16] in the spring of 1894, Beardsley became a subject of much attention and controversy[17] and elements of his style found their way into the work of various American designers including Bradley and Sloan.

Art nouveau, however, as will be pointed out, is only one of the stylistic sources for the new American poster. Evidence of influence from Post Impressionist painting,[18] mural art and an indigenous taste for simple, clear design in domestic objects represent additional factors. As Alan Fern suggests, the art nouveau/poster interaction was not a simple one. According to his point of view the relationship was actually reciprocal.

> As the formal language of art nouveau developed, it naturally found expression in the poster as in everything else, but on the other hand some of the formal elements of art nouveau entered into the style from posters where they had long been evident.[19]

Perhaps more important than the actual stylistic give and take was the philosophy and spirit of art nouveau which seems to have manifested itself in all the best designs. The throwing off of tradition, which has already been discussed as a positive aspect of the poster movement, was

central to the art nouveau impulse as well. As one American critic put it:

> . . . the 'New Art' certainly came into being through an attempt . . . on the part of designers influenced by Morris and his co-workers to make their work more decisively and thoroughly original--to dissolve it entirely, so far as possible, from traditional forms, which throughout the nineteenth century had been the death rather than the life of the arts and crafts.[20]

The other aspect of the art nouveau philosophy which carried over into the poster was the one emphasized by Samuel Bing. His article in the Architectural Record[21] stressed the necessity in art nouveau of adapting technique and design to the materials and the purpose for which an object was intended. The predominance of simple formats easily reproduced by lithograph, zinc etching, relief printing from metal plates or letterpress, and the innovative way in which the artists utilized two-dimensionality to focus on surface patterns and color contrasts, are in keeping with the new attitudes represented by the popularity of art nouveau.[22] America combined this concern for coordinating design and purpose with a long-standing indigenous ". . . liking for decorating things even when they are matters of pure utility."[23] In the artistic poster the native decorative tendencies and the new trends associated with art nouveau together represent the most important basic feature of the American approach.

During the height of the poster craze the most influential artists from the point of view of style were Louis Rhead, Edward Penfield and Will Bradley. Each developed his own original solution to the demands of the medium. As a result, many artists coming into the field were tempted by the example of one or the other or some combination. Therefore, the stylistic approach of each of these artists will be dealt with in detail. The nature of their impact on other specific figures in the movement will also be treated.

Louis Rhead, who came to the United States from England in 1883 to work for D. Appleton and Company, had already received extensive art training in Paris[24] and at the South Kensington School in London. He designed posters for Harper's Monthly as early as 1890, but his mature poster style emerged only after his exposure to Grasset's work in Paris in 1894.[25]

Perhaps too much has been made of Rhead's debt to Grasset, however. What Rhead and Grasset had in common--the ability to adapt a detailed illusionistic, archaizing style to the two-dimensional, graphic medium of the new poster--can largely be attributed in both cases to an appreciation for the Pre-Raphaelites and their successors in England and a familiarity with the decorative arts there. Although Grasset may have set the example for Rhead, his own English

background and study at the South Kensington School had already provided the appropriate orientation. The similarities, therefore, stem more from their common source than from Rhead's direct imitation of Grasset.

In comparing a Grasset poster for his exhibition at the Salon des Cent of 1894, a poster which Rhead surely knew (Fig. 83), with a Rhead prize-winning poster for the Century from the same year (Fig. 89), one is struck by the superficial resemblance. In both posters a female of the same demure facial type, in profile, with a long slender neck and hair cascading to one side is engaged in a reverie that isolates her from the spectator. However, judging by the very different overall treatment, the two artists were not striving for the same effect. Grasset's approach was more conservative: he arrived at a simple design with heavy outlines to clarify the basic masses, minimal modelling and few strictly decorative elements. In contrast, Rhead chose to temper the importance of the central figure by incorporating her into a lively mass of plants a and squiggling lines. Although Grasset was probably even more interested in floral decoration than Rhead,[26] he subordinated it in favor of a more subdued design. Within the medievalizing tradition reintroduced by the Pre-Raphaelites and the William Morris group, Grasset considered himself a classicist. He denigrated the art nouveau

movement and denied his work had anything to do with it.[27] Rhead, on the other hand, shows himself to have willingly incorporated the new curvilinear decorative elements and detailed two-dimensional ornament associated with the art nouveau style.

At least one critic, Octave Uzanne, emphasized the effect of Walter Crane on Rhead rather than Grasset:

> . . . le mieux doué sans doute qui soit parmi ceux de la génération--c'est un décorateur de l'ecole de Walter Crane qui applique a moderniser les impressions et ses prodédés d'art du XVe siècle en leur donnant je ne sais quelle allure Japonaise dans les perpectives et quelle ornementations persanes et arabes qui sont d'un haut ragout malgré tout d'une sincère conviction et d'une absolue individualité.[28]

In comparing Rhead with English poster artists of the nineties who also derive from the Pre-Raphaelite tradition, Graham Robertson (1867-1948) and Ellen Elizabeth Houghton (1853-1922) for example--one notices an important difference between their posters and Rhead's. In both cases (Figs. 90, 91) there is a seriousness, a weightiness in both theme and treatment that is foreign to Rhead's approach. In contrast, Rhead's inventions almost always convey lightheartedness. Rather than serious representations of the poetic past, his elaborately dressed maidens often seem to be amusing themselves in a school pageant.

One of the reasons Rhead was such a prominent figure in the nineties derives from the fact that his work was so

ubiquitous. Unlike the majority of artists in the American poster movement of the nineties, Rhead often worked in a large, street-size format. In addition, his clients included not only publishers of books, newspapers and magazines, but producers of many commercial products as well: Lundborg's Perfumes; Pearline Washington Compound; Bechstein, piano-makers and Packer's Tar Soap are a few examples. His articles on posters[29] and the high production standards he advocated were generally influential. Several successful artists owe a debt to Rhead. His preference for an amazon-like maiden in some sort of anachronistic costume festooned with decorative patterns and bright colors, set against other bold ornamental passages, undoubtedly affected George W. Edwards' poster work and that of an artist by the name of West who designed a calendar for the International Studio. (See Figs. 77, 92.) Edmund Garrett's Victorian Songs (Fig. 93), with its heavy outlines and decorative backdrop, seems also to follow Rhead's example. Frederick Richardson (1862-1937), a St. Louis artist who had studied in Paris and shown at the Salon of 1889, in his poster for the review, International, displayed a kind of coarsened version of Rhead's figure/foliage combination. William Macy Stone (no dates available), poster collector and occasional poster designer, echoed Rhead's designs for Ault and Wiborg and the Bookman in the medievalizing details of

his J. M. Neys and Company goldbeaters poster (Fig. 94) of 1898.

Although Louis Rhead's first posters preceded Edward Penfield's, it is Penfield who gets credit for really launching the poster movement in America with his Harper's Monthly series beginning in March 1893. From then until August 1899 he worked almost exclusively for Harper Brothers, doing a placard every month (with one or two exceptions) for Harper's Monthly as well as occasional poster advertisements for books and poster calendars. His other clients included two Massachusetts bicycle manufacturers and the Aetna Dynamite Company. Called the "Walt Whitman of poster-makers,"[30] Penfield enjoyed a reputation as the most American of the major poster artists and "the least imitative of foreign workers . . ."[31] Although Penfield was popular with the public, his straight-forward genre style got both negative and positive responses from the critics. Bunner praised him for his American wholesomeness:

> In the lightness, freshness and purity of that humor; in the composition, free without license and unconventional without extra vagance [sic]; in the striking yet inoffensive use of color; in the frankness and unaffected innocence and happy simplicity of the whole thing I find a quality which I am grateful to think, comes to the American artist . . . as his natural and honest birthright.[32]

On the other hand, Bolton found his work too simplistic to

be within the artistic realm.[33] Penfield had studied in Europe in the late eighties but Maindron gave him no credit for European chic: "Le travail de M. Penfield peut se comparer a une bonne cuisine bourgeoise qui fournit à profusion des plats substantiels, et le goût populaire a su apprecier ceux-ci."[34]

The anecdotal, storytelling quality of Penfield's posters, achieved with few figures and props and minimal detail, accounts for their wide appeal even when the subject strayed far from the ordinary viewer's experience. Penfield's work retained this character throughout the Harper's Monthly series but his choice of color, drawing and use of textural effects became more and more subtle. The early samples of his placards, most often reproduced, are perhaps the least interesting. Compare, for example, two posters of the same subject, a young woman with an umbrella, one from April 1894 (Fig. 95) and another from July 1896 (Fig. 96). In the later specimen, the linear outlines, bland color and descriptive touches such as the falling rain and the Harper's Monthly cover have been eliminated. Instead, one finds soft-edged contours, decorative patterns, stippled textures, dramatic color contrasts and a poetic passage of water-color like fantasy pretending to be the lady's hat. Even the signature has changed from a conventional one to an ornamental mongram.

Maindron suggested that Penfield borrowed at times from Steinlen. At least one example, People We Pass (Fig. 97), a poster for a Harper Brother's novel, seems to confirm this. In the late designs such as the one above (Fig. 96), the drawing has a hint of Lautrec but the synthesis of the drawing and the patterns against a plain spatial panel are really unique.

While Penfield was considered the least imitative of the major figures, he himself was highly imitated by American postermakers. Lippincott's followed the Harper's Monthly example not only in sponsoring its own poster campaign beginning in August 1894, but also in choosing artists whose approach closely paralleled Penfield's. The first was William Glackens, whose August 1894 placard for that magazine (Fig. 98) copies Penfield's early formula: the magazine logo across the top and the month written along the side with one or two figures engaged in some genteel activity depicted in bright flat colors and soft outlines with minimal spatial detail. Stylistically this poster was far from what Glackens would soon be doing as a newspaper artist for the Philadelphia Press, but the choice of a descriptive rather than a decorative approach shows a certain consistency with his later work.

Will Carqueville followed Glackens and did monthly designs for Lippincott's from December 1894 through November

1895. He was a great success. Even the French liked him, judging from the fact that he was included by Samuel Bing in the group of American poster artists exhibited at his "Maison de l'art nouveau"[35] at its opening in December 1895. Carqueville had previously learned the lithography trade while working for his father's Cincinnati firm, Shober and Carqueville, producers of theatrical posters. Penfield probably appealed to him both because his style had already proven successful and because Carqueville could appreciate how well it was suited to the technical requirements of the medium. Although Carqueville always followed the general Penfield prototype, several of his posters show a personal touch. His color contrasts such as those seen in Fig. 99 are a good deal bolder than those in Penfield posters of the same period. In his poster for Lippincott's Series of Select Novels (Fig. 100) the division of the design into three distinct zones, one a solid panel of dark color with the lettering, another defined by a series of soft-edged parallel lines and the third, light in tone and containing the anonymous single figure, shows a mastery of the new art form that rivalled Penfield's on the basis of effective design. After his stint at Lippincott's, Carqueville went off to Paris for several years, returning at the turn of the century to set up his own lithography concern in Chicago.

Carqueville's place at Lippincott's was filled by J. J. Gould, another postermaker in the Penfield mold. Unlike Carqueville, Gould was a Philadelphia artist who had studied at the Pennsylvania Academy between 1894 and 1895 and, along with Maxfield Parrish, contributed to the decoration of Philadelphia's Mask and Wig Club. Another connection with Parrish is suggested by Gould's January 1896 placard for Lippincott's, which bears a striking similarity to Parrish's poster for the Pennsylvania Academy's Poster Show which opened in April 1896. (See Figs. 101, 32.) Like Penfield, Gould's first few designs, except for the January 1896 placard cited above, are somewhat simplistic. By July 1896, however, Gould had adopted Penfield's use of a heavy painterly outline and textured surface. The November 1896 Lippincott's (Fig. 102) showing three football players is a particularly successful example of Gould's fully developed style. Spatially he manages to create the proper impression of distance between the foreground figure and the two smaller figures without using any scenic details. None of Penfield's designs are quite as clever in the disposition of the figures. The soft outlines of the young man in front are almost baroque in their rhythm and they contrast effectively with the rectilinear grid of the rough paper. Another interesting spatial treatment is to be found in Gould's last poster for the August 1897 number

(Fig. 103). In this charming beach scene the main figures are situated along diagonals and separated by a diagonal architectural framework. The resulting isolation of the ladies is satisfying from both a poetic and aesthetic point of view. The emotional ingredient is rare in the Penfield-type poster but here Gould has definitely captured the end-of-the-season nostalgia often associated with August.

The posters of Charles Allen Gilbert (1873-1929), like Penfield an alumnus of the Art Students' League, also showed a preference for Penfield's anecdotal treatment in his May 1898 design representing a campus scene at Wellesley (Fig. 104). Though it has more illustrative detail than do the posters of Penfield, it shows the same simplicity in the treatment of the figures, minimal modelling and textured surfaces associated with Penfield's poster work.

Sargent Kendall[36] did several notable posters for Scribner's. His design advertising Robert Blum's (1857-1903) painting for the January 1895 number (Fig. 33) except for the detail and modelling of the face, follows Penfield's formula for heavy, painterly outlines and contrasts of smooth and textured passages. However, though Penfield had already been making posters for over a year, he had not yet arrived at his most harmonious designs. The similarity of Kendall's posters to the slightly later ones by Penfield may be incidental. Or, it may indicate that Kendall affected

Penfield's stylistic development.

The artists who worked in the Penfield mode were all associated with the well-established periodicals which generally preferred the genre approach to the more decorative. Perhaps only the Century was adventurous enough to use a variety of artists. Some of them produced posters that were less narrative and quite different from the Penfield type. J. C. Leyendecker's Midsummer Holiday Number (Fig. 35) and Maxfield Parrish's runner-up design (Fig. 31), for example, have more detail and modelling than a Penfield, but are still decorative. In contrast, a specimen such as H. M. Rosenberg's advertisement for September 1896 (Fig. 105) is stylistically too illustrational to be within the realm of the new poster style.

Will Bradley, on the other hand, was most influential among the non-establishment oriented artists--the ones who were hired by the little, specialized reviews or the small publishing concerns like Stone and Kimball; Lamson, Wolff; and Copeland and Day. Bradley's original approach to the new poster was apparent from his first designs in 1894. Unlike Rhead or Penfield, Bradley's goal was primarily decorative. Neither adherence to anatomical reality nor story-telling concerned him. In his first two Chap-Book posters and his placard for Stone and Kimball's When Hearts are Trumps (Fig. 20), he enlivened and energized the entire

surface in a way that was new to postermaking. An 1894 article in the Chap-Book noted that his special talents in this area were already evident.

> Of late he has made a beginning in posters. His wisdom in the massing of colours, the inevitable beauty of his curves and his taste in placing the right thing in the right place give him a peculiar advantage in this sort of work.[37]

It was also during 1894 that America had its first exposure to the work of Aubrey Beardsley and for Bradley this event was critical. Beardsley's Salomé arrived in March 1894 and the Yellow Book in April. In addition, articles on his work were included in the Critic, Modern Art and the Inland Printer while Stone and Kimball of the Chap-Book engaged him to illustrate their edition of The Murders in the Rue Morgue. Since Bradley frequented the same circles as the literati involved in these Beardsley-related enterprises, he undoubtedly took notice of the available examples of Beardsley's work. Most contemporary critics accept the notion of Beardsley as an inspiration for Bradley's poster style, and Roberta Waddell Wong, who has done the most extensive study of Bradley's decorative period, agrees. She credits Beardsley with showing Bradley how ". . . to effectively use large areas of black abstract curves . . ."[38] and how to create a unified composition by employing ". . . fewer, larger bolder decorative elements which subsumed ornamental details."[39] The figures in When Hearts are

Trumps, for example, have an unmistakable Beardsley quality, which probably derived directly from a Salomé illustration published in the Studio's first issue, April 1893 (Fig. 106). However, in his posters of the following year, Bradley had already developed an original treatment using a unifying ornamental motif that is far removed from Beardsley's example. In two 1895 Chap-Book designs, "Pegasus, the Black and Red," (Fig. 107) and "The Pink" (Fig. 108), Bradley achieved an interrelationship of decorative forms and play of figure and ground that was unique. In his Chap-Book poster of the "Blue Lady" (Fig. 19), from the year before he introduced another innovation, white lines[40] to articulate the broad passages of flat color and the ornamental tree forms. In later posters Bradley arrived at three basic treatments. In posters such as the one for Victoria Bicycles (Fig. 109), he uses broad flat forms locked together by a decorative motif. In other designs, as in another Victoria poster (Fig. 110), ornamental forms are the primary unifying agent. Other specimens show that he could also successfully combine the two impulses (Fig. 111).

Though no artist patterned himself after Bradley in the way that artists did with Penfield, Bradley had an important influence on a number of major figures in the movement. E. B. Bird, who has been mentioned before as

poster designer, writer and art director of the Red Letter, owed many key elements of his style to Bradley. The obvious case of Bradley inspiration can be found in Bird's design for the cover of the Poster (Fig. 40). The two ladies, "Miss Litho and Miss Art," bear a resemblance to two Bradley Chap-Book posters: his "Twins" and a Thanksgiving placard, both from 1894 (Fig. 112). One sees the same swirling art nouveau rhythms combined with smaller decorative motifs in all three. In an 1895 poster for the Chap-Book (Fig. 113), Bird picked up Bradley's idea, presented in his May 1895 Chap-book design (Fig. 108), of using parallel lines as a major organizational element. It is not until later, in posters such as his 1896 design for the Red Letter (Fig. 38) that Bird entirely mastered a number of Bradley techniques: white outlines to define large flat masses as in the "Blue Lady" (Fig. 19), combined with a unifying rectilinear decorative element like the one Bradley used in a Victoria Bicycle design (Fig. 109).

The work of Ethel Reed, the successful Boston poster artist, also betrays a debt to Bradley. Although her designs are usually dainty and child-like, while his are bolder and more baroque, there is a definite similarity in the use of light and dark contrasts and in the way ornament and figure are combined. In her Boston Sunday Herald poster (Fig. 52), the simple profile treatment of the woman juxtaposed with a

vertical flower element and the unarticulated silhouette-like forms are very close in approach to one of Bradley's Victoria Bicycle placards (Fig. 109). Her use of the white outline as well as the placement of an illuminated face surrounded by broad dark passages in Folly or Saintliness (Fig. 22) is similar to Bradley's Chap-Book illustration of the "Skirt Dancer" (Fig. 114). Reed had a wide-ranging style that varied considerably from the spartan approach of the Boston Herald (Fig. 52) to the more detailed and illustrative, as in her poster for Lamson, Wolff's book of fairy tales (Fig. 115). In the more simplified, non-illusionistic designs, Bradley provided some important cues.

Frank Hazenplug, whose entire art education, aside from a three-month course at the Art Institute of Chicago, consisted of studious imitation of the work of various masters, was also affected by Bradley. Before his first poster design appeared in the fall of 1895, as an advertisement and cover for the November 1st issue of the Chap-Book (Fig. 21), he had gone through a series of styles.

> One month saw him drawing like the most decadent of decadent Englishmen; the next saw him imitating the style of old woodcuts; and the third found him attacking the problems of poster-making which have been mastered by the French.[41]

The model for this first poster, however, and for his design advertising the Emerson and Fisher Carriage Company (Fig. 116) seems likely to have been Bradley's "Blue Lady" (Fig.

19). The white outlining of flat unarticulated masses and the simplicity and power of these two Hazenplug examples strongly suggest that Hazenplug looked to his more established fellow Chap-Book artist, Bradley.

Even after the demise of his own magazine in 1897, Bradley remained an influential figure, especially in the world of printing and book design. Frederick Thoreau Singleton, who had been editor of Poster Lore, commented on the significance of Bradley's work in 1898: ". . . there is no mistaking the immediate importance and value of Mr. Bradley's work. It is bound to have an enormous influence upon all printing of the future."[42] Because his efforts seem to have become more and more directed toward the art of printing rather than toward posters, his poster work became less and less original, gradually coming to resemble the work of another major figure, Maxfield Parrish. In Bradley's turn-of-the-century cover designs and advertisements, his use of architectural props and caricaturish treatment of human beings is unmistakably derived from Parrish's designs of that period (see Figs. 117, 118).

Among the poster artists who developed original approaches, yet were relatively uninfluential, Parrish and John Sloan are the most interesting. Both were Philadelphia artists and alumni of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. (See Chapter Three.) Both also grew up in homes

where the visual arts were a major focus. Parrish's father, Stephen Parrish, was a painter and etcher. Sloan's family on his mother's side was related to Marcus Ward, the English publisher of Walter Crane and Kate Greenway, and as a result he was exposed even as a child to beautiful books and illustrations.[43]

In 1892, several years before Parrish entered the poster field, Sloan had begun doing newspaper illustration and advertisements for the Bradley Coal Company in a style characterized by simple outlines and unmodelled forms that became the basis for his poster work later on (see Fig. 119). In 1893, he encountered the influence of Japanese art in the form of Beizen Zubota, an artist who had come from Japan to see the World's Fair. Zubota taught him the brush technique which strengthened his committment to flat forms and decorative surfaces. Sloan described this stage of his career:

> My first drawing in the poster style was published in the Inquirer in February, 1892. I had learned things from Walter Crane and study of Japanese prints, but the important change in this work started in 1893, after I met a Japanese artist named Beizen Zubota, who gave me some lessons in brush technique. Because the linecut process does not reproduce shading, I developed ways of making shades and textures with line work.[44]

(See Fig. 120 for a photo of Sloan in his studio surrounded by some of his Japanese-inspired designs.)

In the spring of 1894 Beardsley's Yellow Book arrived

and Sloan, like many other artists, was impressed with the quality and inventiveness of his line. Although one finds the unmistakable presence of Beardsley in Sloan's ticket design for the Pennsylvania Academy's production of the farce Twilbe (Fig. 78), his other work of 1894 continued to develop along original lines with little evidence of Beardsley's impact,[45] except perhaps in the increased emphasis on contrasting broad passages of black and white. (See Fig. 121.) Several of Sloan's illustrations were published by the Inland Printer and by the Chap-Book, but no one seems to have taken up his lead.

In 1895, Sloan did two poster style works for Moods,[46] the ephemeral for which he was art editor. One was a cover and the other a poster (Figs. 81, 122). The cover, done in shades of brown and green with a simplified Pre-Raphaelite type female arrested in a poetic landscape of flat curving forms, is a special case. The totally flat even color is the result of a stencil printing process done by hand. A different stencil was used for each color. The poster for Moods is more daring, closer to his newspaper work but less consistent than the other design. Still, the lilting line and juxtaposition of light and dark display the same expressiveness.

Sloan's poster for the Echo, done in the fall of 1895[47] (Fig. 37), is considered his poster masterpiece.

It has all the liveliness of his newspaper illustrations without the self-consciousness of the Moods poster. The use of a double outline characteristic of his newspaper drawings (such as in Fig. 123) serves to accent each of the curvilinear masses without disturbing the overall integration of the design. The Echo poster was reproduced by the linecut process like his newspaper drawings. Sloan achieved a remarkable variety of gradations from light to dark that he puts into a unique jig-saw puzzle-like juxtaposition. His 1896 design for a book[48] of short stories published by Copeland and Day (Fig. 124) displays many of the same characteristics, including the double outline and the subtle contrasts of light and dark passages combined with lively patterned areas. The only change is a moving away from the art nouveau lilt in favor of a more rectilinear treatment. During this same year, 1896, Sloan began to concentrate seriously on painting. Besides his murals for the Academy (see Chapter Three), he did small oil paintings that were primarily portraits. Perhaps the preoccupation with painting portraits carried over into the poster because the E. K. Tryon poster (Fig. 125) contains a self-portrait.[49] (See Figs. 120, 126 for contemporary photographs of Sloan.) The design, however, is less compelling than the previous ones. There is a confusion over whether the unmodelled passages or the illusionistic

treatment of the horses and bicycle is to predominate.

In 1899, though well into his painting career, Sloan began doing poster drawings, many in color, printed with the new Ben-Day Process, for the Sunday Supplement of the Philadelphia Press[50] to which he had moved in 1895 from the Inquirer. Designs such as "The Snake Charmer" (Fig. 127), have something in common with the earlier poster work, but they have become more and more realistic. Sloan had left his early poster manner in favor of a soft, painterly, illustrative approach ornamented with elements borrowed from late art nouveau.

Maxfield Parrish's debut in the post field came in 1895 with several cover and back page designs for Harper's Weekly, but it was his runner-up design in the Century (Fig. 31) Poster Contest that established the characteristic approach that would continue through the late nineties. Parrish's interest in mural painting was well known (see Chapter Three), and this poster in its subtle tints and linearity suggests a close connection between his mural style and his poster style. Also, the uneven texture of the surface reminds one of a wall-like surface rather than paper and the spots of darker tones within each color area are reminiscent of brush strokes. This linear treatment of a single female figure in profile set against a stylized landscape also describes Parrish's prize-winning Columbia

bicycle poster of the same year (Fig. 58) as well as his 1897 masterpiece for Scribner's fiction number (Figs. 128, 129). Parrish's amusing Adlake Camera advertisement also had many of the same characteristics, but there is more illusionism and he substituted human caricatures for the lovely, more normal creatures who populate the other designs.

The one exception to Parrish's usual treatment is the 1896 poster for the Pennsylvania Academy used to publicize its poster exhibition held in April of that year.[51] (See Fig. 32.) The poster was distributed throughout the city by the American Bill Posting Company, but a limited number of copies signed by Parrish, without the lettering below, were set aside for sale to collectors. As pointed out above, this design bears a close resemblance to J. J. Gould's Lippincott's placard for the January 1896 number (Fig. 101). Although this resemblance may be coincidental, Parrish's treatment in this instance definitely belongs in the Penfield-Carqueville-Gould category. One explanation for the departure has been postulated by Ruth Fern Lehrer:

> It seems plausible that by imitating the prevailing style Parrish is here poking fun at the standardization of the poster type then being commissioned repeatedly and vigorously by some publishing houses. If so, this poster relates both formally and philosophically to several Parrish magazine covers of the following decades in which he similarly poked fun at archetypes by means of large scale, broadly defined figures lacking descriptive environments.[52]

Another reason for the uniqueness of this poster in Parrish's oeuvre may have to do with the unusual method of execution. It was reproduced entirely by relief processes, at least part of it was printed from woodblocks. The use of the woodblock might seem strange for 1896 when so many newer techniques were in use, but in fact several poster artists had begun to rediscover that medium, including Will Bradley, Florence Lundborg, Bruce Porter and Arthur Wesley Dow. Parrish's biographer, Coy L. Ludwig, reports that as early as 1893 Parrish had misgivings about all the new mechanical developments in the area of reproduction.[53] Though Parrish had created a design which is perhaps better than what he intended to imitate or to parody, it is ironic that in trying to escape from the ordinary in terms of execution he created one of his most appealing yet least original posters of this period.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1]Rhead was quoted by Jules LaForgue in his La Plume article, "Louis J. Rhead," 8 (1 January 1896):14: "J'ai été très heureux vraiment d'avoir pur profiter de l'influence vivifiante de l'oeuvre de M. Grasset, dont j'admire sans réserve le talent singulier."

[2]Rogers, A Book of the Poster, p. 85.

[3]A French critic also noted the small size of most American posters: "Ce qui frappe de prime d'abord dans toutes ces affiches, le plus souvent de petite dimension...." Vittorio Pica, "A travers les affiches illustrées," L'estampe et l'affiche 1 (September, 1897):164.

[4]See Ernest Maindron's Les affiches étrangères (Paris: Librarie artistique, 1897), or more recently, Howard and Blanche Cirker's The Golden Age of the Poster. (New York: Dover Publications, 1971).

[5]"From a collector's point of view, American book advertisements are ideal in that they are nearly all of small size and are printed on good paper," Charles T. Hiatt, "Pictorial Book Advertisements in America," The Poster and Art Collector 6 (February 1901):70.

[6]The Beggarstaff's Harper's Monthly poster was about 87x79" while Penfield's Harper's Monthly posters were about 18x12".

[7]See "The Gentle Art of Cribbing," The Poster and Art Collector 5 (October 1900):63.

[8]Morris fabrics, wallpapers and furniture were available in Chicago at Marshall Field and the Tobey Furniture Company in the 1880s and 1890s and in New York at Morris' own showrooms.

[9]See the Art Amateur and The Arts and Crafts, two American magazines that both endeavored ". . . to re-instate the applied arts to the dignity that has for so long belonged to painting and sculpture . . ." according to the Studio. See "The Art Magazines of America," 1 (July 1893):49.

[10]One of the earliest sources of Japanese influence would have been the Japanese Pavilion at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. Samuel Bing's magazine, Artistic Japan was avilable here in English between 1888 and 1891. He also had a showroom on Fifth Avenue in New York where oriental objects were auctioned. Furthermore, the four major collectors of oriental art in America were all involved in one way or another with the arts and crafts revival: Edward C. Moore, silversmith and associate of Louis C. Tiffany; Samuel Coleman, a painter who was one of Tiffany's partners in the Associated Artists: Tiffany himself; and John LaFarge, painter and Tiffany's rival in decorative glass.

[11]See Constance Cary Harrison (Mrs. Burton H.), Women's Handiwork in Modern Homes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881).

[12]See Artistic Houses, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882-1884), which includes examples of Louis Comfort Tiffany's early decorating schemes.

[13]The letter is quoted in A.D.F. Hamlin, "L'Art Nouveau, Its Origins and Development," Craftsman 3 (December 1902): 132.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Koch suggests Sullivan's Transportation Building at the Chicago Fair along with Tiffany's chapel there; Roberta Waddell Wong suggests Will Bradley's design for an advertisement in the Inland Printer, "The Pentateuch of Printing," 13 (April 1894):85.

[16]Henry Harland (1861-1905), publisher of the Yellow Book provides still another connection between England and America during the nineties. Harland was an American who attended City College before making his reputation in Beardsley's London.

[17]See "Beardsleyism," American Bookmaker 21 (August 1895):46-47, where the author speaks of ridding America of the "Beardsley nightmare," p. 46. Robert W. Chambers' article in the 16 February 1896 issue of the New York Times says, "The work of Aubrey Beardsley is not worth the

paper it is printed on . . ." (p. 32), and Percival Pollard, in his essay for the February 1897 number of the Red Letter entitled "The Passing of the Savoy," he criticizes, ". . . the ease with which the general public nowadays, understandingly applies the word Beardsleyism to everything it does not appreciate" (pp. 151-153).

[18]Many of the French posterists (Lautrec, Bonnard, Vallotton) were painters as well and worked in the post-impressionist mode.

[19]Art Nouveau: Art and Design at the Turn of the Century (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1960), p. 36.

[20]Herbert Croly, "The New World and the New Art," Architectural Record 1 (June 1902):135.

[21]Samuel Bing, "L'Art Nouveau,: Architectural Record 12 (August 1902):279-285.

[22]Many critics noted the effective use of the medium by American poster artists. Gleeson White wrote: "When you see a poster of Mr. Rhead's in the original, and the proof side by side with it, it is not easy at first sight to determine which is the autograph; and this is as it should be, because it proves that the designer has fully understood the limits of his material." "The Posters of Louis Rhead," Studio 8 (August 1896):159.

Ernest Maindron praised Bradley's adaptations: ". . . au commencement de sa carrière a refaire les effets des anciens graveurs sur bois, des venitiens par exemple, s'est dégagé de cette servitude en conformant son talent et sa methode de plus en plus au caractère du procède mécanique de réproduction, electro type entre autres, et il devient ainsi le vrai répresentant de cette partie toute moderne de l'art." Les affiches étrangères (Paris: Librarie artistique, 1897), p. 172.

[23]Clarence Cook, "Illustrated Posters," The Book-Lover's Almanac (1896), (New York: Duprat and Company, 1895), p. 9.

[24]At the age of 13 Rhead went to Paris for two years to study with Boulanger.

[25]See Chapter Three.

[26]Grasset published a book of color plates in 1896 under the title, Le plante et ses applications ornamentales, which was highly influential.

[27]Robert Koch made this point in his article, "The Poster Movement and Art Nouveau," Gazette des Beaux Arts 50 (November 1957):285-296.

According to Koch, Grasset ". . . became the spokesman for the naturalists who maintained that there could never be a 'new art' and objected to a break with historical tradition." Ibid., p. 287. Koch bases his conclusion in part on Grasset's 11 April 1897 speech to the L'Union Centrale des arts décoratifs," in which he strongly denounced the art nouveau movement.

[28]"L'Affiche internationale illustrée," La Plume 7 (October 1895):423.

[29]See the following articles by Rhead: "Fine Arts: Poster Making Discussed by Mr. Louis Rhead," Independent 48 (3 September 1896):1195-96; "The Moral Aspect of the Artistic Poster," Bookman 1 (June 1895):312-314; "An American Institute for Women in Paris: A Letter from Louis J. Rhead," Modern Art 4 (1 January 1896):18-22.

[30]Richard Badger, "A Sketch of Poster Styles," Godey's Magazine 133 (September 1896):48.

[31]"The Poster of Today," Art Interchange 36 (June 1896):139.

[32]"American Posters Past and Present," Scribner's 18 (October 1895):443.

[33]Charles Knowles Bolton, The Reign of the Poster (Boston: Winthrop B. Jones, 1895), p. 9.

[34]Ernest Maindron, Les affiches étrangères, p. 152.

[35]The other American poster artists were Will Bradley, Edward Penfield, Charles Cox, Robert Chambers, Charles Woodbury. See Chapter Five in Henry R. Hope, "Sources of Art Nouveau" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1943).

[36]Sargent Kendall studied at the Art Students' League, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with Eakins and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In 1893 he showed a painting at the Paris Salon and won a medal at the Chicago World's Fair. Eventually he became Director of Yale University's art school.

[37]Herbert Stewart Stone, "Mr. Bradley's Drawings," Chap-Book 2 (1 December 1894):60.

[38]Roberta Waddell Wong, "Will Bradley," p. 125.

[39]Ibid., p. 127.

[40]According to Wong, Ibid., p. 126, Bradley had earlier used the white line in head pieces for Vogue.

[41]Harrison Garfield Rhodes, "Mr. Frank Hazenplug's Drawings," Chap-Book 4 (15 March 1896):414.

[42]Frederick Thoreau Singleton, "Will Bradley, Printer," Printer and Bookmaker 26 (June 1898):184.

[43]Sloan's mother's sister was married to the son of Marcus Ward.

[44]American Art Nouveau: The Poster Period of John Sloan (Lockhaven, Pennsylvania: Hammersmith Paper Company, 1967).

[45]It may be that Beardsley became a more important source for Sloan's later poster work--his art nouveau puzzle designs--that appeared in the Philadelphia Press between 1900 and 1903. See Fig. 127.

[46]Moods lasted for only three months in 1895.

[47]It was used to advertise the February 15th issue of the magazine but was obviously designed several months before because it was offered to collectors as early as the September 1895 number.

[48]Cinder-Path Tales by William Lindsey (Boston: Copeland and Day, 1896).

[49]The other Sloan self-portrait appears in the Cinder-Path Tales poster. Compare the latter design, the Tryon advertisement and the Sloan photograph in Fig. 120.

[50]According to John Bullard, "The original drawings were done in pen and ink and watercolor. After being photographed for linecut reproduction, the color was added by the Benday process. Sloan worked directly with the printers." "John Sloan as Illustrator," American Artist 35 (October 1971):57.

[51]Although discussed as early as March 1895, the poster exhibit did not get underway until the following year when Robert W. Vonnoh, a recent convert to poster collecting and former teacher of Parrish at the Academy, devoted himself to its realization. The exhibit was originally scheduled to open March 28 as indicated by the catalogue but did not in fact begin until April 2. See Parrish catalogue entry by Ruth Fern Lehrer (RFL) in Philadelphia: Three Hundred Years of American Art (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976), p. 453.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ludwig quotes from a letter Parrish wrote to his mother: "And about the mechanical--it may come in handy someday, but at present I am wrestling with its evil tendencies as shown in my work, for it is hard to rid myself of the love of a good neat job, which doesn't improve artistic expression one bit." This statement was reprinted by Lehrer, Ibid., p. 454 from its original source, Ludwig, Maxfield Parrish (New York: Watson-Guptill), p. 189.

CHAPTER FIVE: ICONOGRAPHY

In treating the 1890s artistic poster in the United States from an iconographic point of view, one must keep in mind the special character of American culture. In the visual arts especially, there has always been a tendency to concretize, to emphasize the material aspects of nature rather than the intangible, spiritual and symbolic. An artist-critic of the period expressed it this way: "We Americans are not symbolists as a rule . . . except perhaps for Uncle Sam, we are symbolless."[1]

To help clarify the relatively "symbolless" quality of American poster iconography, it is useful to make occasional comparisons with French posters, which were important for the development of the American artistic poster because of their early exposure in the United States (described in Chapter One). Representation in the American poster as in the French one can be divided into two categories. One category presents isolated excerpts from the contemporary world and the other category concentrates on more remote images that derive from the historic or poetic past. In both French and American posters, the contemporary scenes most often show women involved in various activities. The poetic images also focus primarily on women, but in

the latter case the women are usually idle. Although in the French posters one can identify types and make mythological or literary connections with relative ease, in the American posters the allusions are not so clear. Iconographic details and references are often garbled and inconsistent or they are largely original, invented for the occasion. In either case, the symbolic potential of the designs is of far less importance than their decorative effectiveness.

The Americans who chose the non-contemporary category of representation did so not out of a need for closer ties to the fine arts or more literary appeal, but out of a desire to create images that would have, because of their remoteness, greater decorative power.

Women are the primary iconographic vehicle for the 1890s American poster. Though, as discussed above, symbolism was not a serious concern of American artists, there is other meaning to be found in the depiction of women that derives from the fact that the traditional way of life for them, insulated and tied to the home, was rapidly changing. Posters in both categories of representation, the contemporary and the poetic, show the effects of changes in the female role.

Many factors contributed to the trend toward a more independent existence for women. There were, for example,

new institutions of higher learning accepting female students. The new federally supported land grant colleges founded after the second Morrill Act of 1890 greatly expanded women's opportunity for higher education. Before the nineties, women had been limited for the most part to women's institutions such as Vassar (est. 1861), Wellesley (est. 1875) and Bryn Mawr (est. 1880). The wider availability of magazines and newspapers, even in outlying areas, the increase in the number of books published, and the prescription by some physicians of outdoor exercise to cure neurasthenia (the common nineteenth century female malady), all contributed to a greater involvement by women in the world outside the home. The nineties saw their continued participation in the writing profession on a wide scale, but at the same time women made inroads into other male-dominated vocations such as medicine, architecture, the clergy and law. Recognition of women's new interests and capacities is reflected in the Sunday supplement articles of the period that focussed on female activities other than home-making and child-rearing. Some examples from the Philadelphia Sunday Press included "Women as Playwrights"; "The New Woman and the Chaperone"; "The Dress of Women Acrobats"; "Speaker Reed . . . How Mrs. Reed edits his Speeches";[2] "Federation of Bachelor Girls"; "If Women Went to Congress"; "Swimming as a Feminine Fad."[3]

Although advocates of women's wider role generally confined their crusading to article writing and publicity campaigns, there were other more radical expressions of dissatisfaction. In 1897, Mary Walker, physician and spiritualist who wore pants rather than skirts, set up a women's colony which she called "Adamless Eden."[4] New York City had a female, bloomer-clad bicycle thief and many men feared the Louise Labé[5] faction which was said to approve of "erotic poetry, the fiction of free love and marital infidelity. . . ."[6]

To some extent the change from a more homebound to a more independent life for women happened naturally as part of the late nineteenth century's push to democratize education. Gradually the emphasis on the acquisition of culture as a positive value, high-lighted by the self-improvement advocates, extended itself to women as well. Success in society for aspiring middle-class ladies demanded an intellectual polish as illustrated by an excerpt from Edith Wharton's novel set in the nineties, The Custom of the Country. In the following passage, the main character, hoping for acceptance by the best New York families, got this frank advice from a more worldly friend:

> . . . you don't work hard enough--you don't keep up. It's not that they don't admire you--your looks, I mean; they think you beautiful; they're delighted to bring you out at their big dinners, with the Sèvres and the plate. But a woman has got to be something

> more than good-looking to have a chance to be intimate with them; she's got to know what's being said about things.[7]

As in the case of their intellectual development, the introduction of outdoor exercise for women also reflected a generalized social trend. Previously, women had enjoyed only the limited choice of indoor gymnasium exercise under special conditions or genteel but uncomfortable side-saddle horseback riding. In the nineties, women took advantage of the new-found medical justification to broaden their sphere of outdoor activities. Tennis, football and golf were popular choices, but cycling was probably the most favored and the most controversial. Although women were enthusiastic about cycling and many doctors encouraged it, others, not so sanguine about this state of affairs, ranted against the occasions for immodesty and immorality it provided. The possibility that the bicycle seat would foster female masturbation posed the greatest peril. For the Victorian, "This horrible habit,"[8] was synonymous with total moral decay and was to be prevented at all costs.[9]

The debate over the changing conditions of women in turn-of-the-century America was evident in the magazines. There, one finds approval as well as hostile denunciation. On the positive side, Godey's Magazine of the mid-nineties is filled with articles supporting the trend toward broader participation by women. It published a series called

"Talks by Successful Women,"[10] in which female professionals described their chosen careers. Among them were a journalist, a minister, two architects, a sculptor and a gynecologist. Other essays focussed on women artists, women inventors, "The New Woman in Office,""Club Houses for Women," "The Association for the Advancement of Women," and "The New Woman Athletically Considered."[11] On the other hand, many male writers derided the whole notion of the "new woman." M'lle New York was particularly notable for its anti-female editorial bent. Both volumes of this review are infused with hostile rhetoric of this sort:

> God alone has the right to be a misanthrope, for man there is only misogyny . . . Here in the United States the worship of woman is carried to ludicrous lengths. The hen has been told so often that she can crow that she despises her natural function of laying eggs. In no country in the world are there so many hens able to give an imitation--tenuous and absurd, but recognizable--of the crowing of the cock . . . And perhaps in these days when the hens hold conventions and the fritinancy [sic] disturbs the ears of thoughtful men it may not be superfluous to iterate the old truth that woman is physically, mentally and morally inferior to man.[12]

The hostility and paranoia toward women apparent in M'lle New York were also manifested in the plots of short stories published by the little magazines. Authors often focussed on the damage caused by the evil nature of the contemporary woman. It is routine to find that normally sane men were driven to murder unfaithful wives;[13] or, that they murdered themselves as well as the women who rejected

them.[14] In other cases, a hateful woman killed her lover with a lie;[15] and a man succumbed to death after an unconsummated thirty-one-year engagement to a cold and unresponsive fiancée.[16]

Almost none of this negativism toward women is visible in the poster representations of women in America. Either they are depicted contentedly engaged in a variety of standard activities from reading to cycling or they are miraculously removed from a contemporary setting to a poetic space. Equilibrium and absence of conflict characterize both types. This is in sharp contrast to France, for example, where the evil woman, "femme fatale" figure based on the Medea, Medusa, Salomé prototypes, was not uncommon in poster work. Bolstered by Barbey d'Aurevilly's short stories called Les diaboliques (1874), with illustrations by Felicien Rops, and Wilde's Salomé, the tragic temptress appears in Mucha's Job (1897), Salon des Cent (1896), and Imprimerie Cassan Fils (1897) posters and in contemporary settings as the main character of Lautrec's cabaret scenes. In one American example, Frederick S. Church's (1842-1923) design for the American Watercolor Society (Fig. 129), a Medusa-like figure with swirling red hair framed by a group of black swans is reminiscent of the French "femme fatale" type. But instead of snakes there are lotuses and instead of Medusa the figure suggests, if

anything, Aphrodite.

There is only one series of American posters that consistently displayed negative female figures. This group of posters was commissioned by the review discussed and quoted above, M'lle New York. The artist, Thomas Fleming, often depicted women in some immoral role. Prostitute types dressed in low-cut dresses or exposed petticoats[17] are common. One of these shows the bust of a woman being hugged by a bull-faced male while her bosom bulges out of a suggestive costume and a dollar sign jingles around her neck. Another poster shows a female figure with long hair wrapped around a horned male head; in an additional example (Fig. 130), a nude female with two musical pipes is silhouetted against a burst of light emphasizing the seductive curves of her breasts and abdomen. At the same time the silhouetted woman plays, she is being observed by a satyr-like male whose head is visible in the upper right-hand corner. The sharp contrast between the Fleming creature and another seated nude, Maxfield Parrish's studious wood-nymph from the Scribner's poster (Fig. 128), for example, whose position is almost identical with the Fleming figure's, provides a means to measure M'lle New York's sour, pessimistic view of the female sex. The Fleming poster, done a year after the Parrish, was perhaps a parody and a denial of Parrish's vision of innocence. Instead of the delight

one feels before the supple crouching Parrish nude, one feels distaste when viewing Fleming's creation. The harshness of the silhouette treatment in the M'lle New York poster invites sinister association with this female Pan, who, unlike the Parrish nude, prefers summoning the devil to reading a book.

There are other poster nymphs as well: in Florence Lundborg's Lark poster (Fig. 68); in Will Bradley's May Chap-Book (Fig. 108); C. W. Traver's the Inland Printer (Fig. 15); and Parrish's the Century (Fig. 31) mid-summer number. Like the Parrish Scribner's poster discussed above, these images are all in the poetic category and are thoroughly sweet and benign. Fleming and M'lle New York represent the obvious exception to the usual approach.

Perhaps most of this nymph iconography can be understood in the context of art nouveau influences which not only liberated and expanded the vocabulary of acceptable forms and methods of working, but also liberalized ways of thinking. At the end of the nineteenth century, conventional religion, for example, competed with a resurgence of spiritualism (the Rosicrucians in France represented a movement of this new spiritualizing type) that at times took on a pagan quality. Most of these nymphs have a pagan, but playful, nature that demonstrates again America's ability to extract imagery from an essentially European context

minus its original significance.

The most voluminous treatment of the contented female in contemporary settings is to be found in Penfield's series for Harper's Monthly. Penfield's women are not idealized.[18] His debutantes and young matrons exude health, happiness and financial prosperity. Dressed in fashionable hats and dresses, they are always engaged in some pleasant unstrenuous activity. Though they almost never smile, their self-satisfaction is evident in their confident gestures. They are often alone in an outdoor setting, illustrating one aspect of the new female independence. While one finds no hint of neurasthenia, their characteristic vacant gaze suggests that their faculties are less than fully engaged. One contemporary observer was very impressed by Penfield's ladies:

> . . . his woman might stand for 'the ideal American type' . . . Their long necks, blonde hair, pale wistful faces, with prominent noses, and the well-modelled lips must have a strange fascination for the painter and as models they possess a peculiar charm. Their build is firm, with underdeveloped bust, mature waist, and an increased length from hip to knee as a striking peculiarity. Only a few years ago they lived in Boston, in the haunts of the New England bourgeoisie, around Chester Park; but now, like the Dryads, they had fled before the invasion of boarding house civilization.[19]

This description would also fit the elegantly outfitted self-possessed creatures who appear in the posters of Penfield's imitators like Carqueville and Gould as well as those posters by Francis Day (Fig. 131) and Louis Fleming

(Fig. 132). In contrast, French posters depicting the contemporary female such as those by Chéret (see Fig. 85), show an exuberant rather than a reserved woman. In addition, the women in French posters hardly ever appear alone, but are found most often in scenes where they interact with male companions.

Although not all the images of the 1890s women in posters are like Penfield's, the majority, including the Penfields, treat the American female with respect but not with adulation. As one commentator put it: The American woman is "neither languishing nor romantic; she lives on real doings, and doesn't have much time for dreaming."[20] As a result, she "doesn't occupy, as it seems, the same great place in the hearts, minds, imagination and passion of the American artists and poets."[21]

While there is no pretension in Penfield's presentation, there is a kind of drama that is lacking in posters by other artists who treat the contemporary female. The women in Howard Chandler Christy's placard for the Bookman (Fig. 133) are surrounded by props and details. The result is a more informal scene in which the woman is incidental rather than central. This is even more true of J. C. Leyendecker's Chap-Book poster (Fig. 134) of a woman reclining as she reads. The lively design on her dress is more of a focus than the woman herself. Another example, Ethel

Reed's Penny Magazine poster (Fig. 135), features a reader as well. Though there are no conventional props to detract from the figure as in the Leyendecker, she is no more important than the decorative chrysanthemums or concentric circles of the background panel. The woman in Archie Gunn's Miss Blue Stocking (Fig. 136) is central to the design, but the image has little dramatic or decorative interest. Instead, it is a rather shallow and cartoon-like creation without any of Penfield's challenge to the imagination.

While most of Penfield's females are involved in somewhat passive preoccupations, other artists concentrated on the new sportswoman of the nineties. A foreign observer commented on the significance of the new state of affairs: "The American has no time to dream. Lawn tennis, garden parties, football, skating, rowing, absorb all her time without leaving a moment for daydreaming."[22] O. C. Malcolm, working for Outing (formerly Wheelman, see p. 69), created posters of women cycling and playing golf (Figs. 137, 138) which combine a Penfield-like treatment of the figures with a fanciful decorative backdrop. Though modestly attired in properly long skirts and hats rather than in the new sporting costumes preferred by the more daring (see Fig. 139), their posture and expression suggest some genuine interest.

Besides golf and cycling, another frequent subject for the posterist was the woman on skates. Part of the reason

for its popularity as a theme may derive from Jules Chéret, the French artist, whose Palais de Glace series was one of his greatest successes. Unlike the Chérets, which form a continuous narrative involving a woman and man in a flirtatious encounter,[23] the American skaters are almost always alone. In both the Francis Day (Fig. 131) and the Louis Rhead (Fig. 140) the young ladies, with pursed lips and earnest expressions decked out in sensible but always fashionable attire, communicate a kind of innocence and wholesomeness that is typical of the American poster artist's treatment of the female.

The posters done for newspapers provided perhaps the most varied representations of the nineties sportswoman while the articles, commissioned by these same newspapers, focussed on many aspects of the new wider woman's role. It is likely that women constituted the biggest audience for newspapers. Increasingly relieved of their domestic duties,[24] they represented the segment of the population with the most leisure time for reading. Taking this into account, editors selected much of their material on the basis of what would interest women. Judging by the titles of articles (see page 161), reading about their own sex involved in new adventurous activities were what they liked the best. The posters that advertised these articles often used female sports as their subjects. In Scotson-

Clark's series for the New York Sunday World, women play tennis, ice skate and even play football (Fig. 141). In this last example a woman in a multicolored outfit of tunic and bloomers[25] uses a dainty foot to kick a ball into the air in a most unladylike manner. One of the articles advertised on the poster is entitled, "New York Women who Gamble on Wall Street." George Brill, another well-known Sunday supplement poster artist who did a design almost every week during 1895 and 1896 for the Philadelphia Sunday Press, often favored women engaged in outdoor sports. He depicted them fishing, hunting, horsebackriding, boating and playing tennis.

As mentioned above, though sports in general enjoyed great popularity among women in the nineties, cycling was by far the most favored. One female writer evaluated its significance this way:

> Once in the saddle, the rider is on absolute equality with any man, needs no assistance in or out of her seat, and while she rides at as rapid a gait as her masculine companion, loses not one of her feminine perogatives. The road is as open to her as to him, and she is dependent on no strength or encouragement but her own. For the first time in the memory of her sex she is an absolutely free agent, and yet a woman still. She has lost nothing in grace, in womanliness, in her claims on courtesy, admiration, chivalry, and her thousand and one inalienable rights. This fact alone is a sufficiently strong recommendation of the bicycle to every girl who loves pleasure.[26]

According to a modern source, they formed 25 to 30 percent of the market,[27] but a contemporary document placed the demand

for women's wheels over men's at two to one.[28] As a result, there were numerous poster representations of female cyclers. The designs ranged from rather straightforward depictions of young ladies in conventional outfits riding through the countryside, that would include the Maxfield Parrish (Fig. 58) and this Will Bradley (Fig. 111), to more humorous, whimsical images that stemmed entirely from the artist's imagination like Charles Cox's (1864-1905) 1896 poster for Bearings (Fig. 142).

The whole notion of the woman bike rider, away from home, chaperones and other restraints, was the stimulus for elaborate daydreaming by both males and females. Maurice Thompson, a contributor to the little magazines, made this enthusiastic observation of the positive benefits offered by the new cycling fad:

> The streets and suburban lanes of our little western towns and cities offer great facilities for the study of happy girlhood, large thanks to the bicycle. During my summer walks and drives I meet wisps and flocks and bevies of lasses, or they pass me at scorching speed. They put the 'bicycle face' to shame with their rippling countenances and merry chatter.[29]

A short story in Godey's offers a version of the female fantasy associated with the bicycle:

> Mother never keeps a very close watch over my movements in summer, so I was able to devote lots of time to riding, even going out on one or two spins. Naturally, I knew that I must be found out some time, and I did want to have one real spin out into the country beforehand; a sort of century run all by myself in search of adventures--Don Quixote on wheels.[30]

Like Shakespeare's Rosalind, this resourceful young lady undertook her secret escapade disguised as a boy. The plot became interesting when she met a real boy, for whom she preferred to be a girl.

Although contemporary images of women involved in activities out of doors were common, as demonstrated by the examples above, representations of females inside the home, aside from the "readers" (see page 170), were unusual. Homemakers performing their everyday tasks allowed less flexibility for the imagination and little glamour. For these reasons they were perhaps less appealing as subjects. Edward Potthast's Century Cook Book (Fig. 143) and Edward Penfield's Galakton (Fig. 59) were the exceptions. The occasional posters with mother and child as a theme showed a strong inclination to transform the mundane into something more unusual. In Blanche Ostertag's calendar poster for 1899 (Fig. 73), the mother and daughter are playing with a pet monkey on a circular trapeze--hardly a typical domestic scene. In another Ostertag for Carson, Pirie, Scott, the setting and clothing of the two figures is eighteenth century instead of nineteenth. In Florence Lundborg's mother mother and child for the Lark (Fig. 144), the costumes are medieval rendering it a romantic image rather than a contemporary scene. In contrast, the French artist Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen in his posters (see Lait Pur Stérilisé,

1897 and Compagnie Francaise des Chocolats et des Thés, 1899)[31] dotes lovingly on domestic elements like rosy-cheeked children, china-ware, bamboo furniture and cuddly cats transforming the seemingly ordinary into the poetic.

Although most American poster artists did not idealize the female so much as they celebrated her in the guise of perfect normality, Louis Rhead was different (Figs. 46, 89). Though he did some contemporary depictions of the nineties female (Fig. 140), the majority of his designs include a Pre-Raphaelite-inspired type with prominent nose, full, sensual lips and long hair gathered in artistic bunches, who dressed in archaic costumes decorated with lively, ornamental motifs. Ageless, expressionless and often barefoot, she made it possible for Rhead to maintain a clearer distance from reality. He preferred the muse or vestal virgin to the "new woman." Sponsel, the German poster critic, commented on Rhead's chaste images in Das Moderne Plakat:

> Das Plakat Louis Rheads [sic] fur Prang's Easter Publications zeigt das Brustbild eines Engels mit einem Lilienstengel in Renaissancetracht, wie es kaum hoheitsvoller und reiner dargestellt werden kann. Ein gleiches Blatt des Kunstlers, zu Ostern 1896 fur den New York Herold [sic] angefertigt, enthalt die ganze Figur einer zwischen Lilien, dem Symbol himmlischer Reinheit, ornamentierten Gewande, vor dem in der Ferne sichtbaren Berge Golgotha, in so reiner und kreuscher Verkorperung, dass man den Larm der Strasse fur den ungetrubten Genuss des Bildes fast zu laut halten mochte.[32]

In Rhead's designs, women display some of the symbolist aura that one associates with the female figures of Grasset posters. These Rhead women, like their more mundane sisters in other artistic posters, are free and active agents. Their sphere of operation, however, is the imagination rather than the real world.

Other artists besides Rhead chose a more idealized female type in a fantasy setting when they sought a greater metaphorical effect. George Brill, whose women are ordinarily down to earth as in the specimens mentioned above, took another tact in his poster (Fig. 55), for Frank Leslie's. The figure's undulating acrobatic posture and flowing drapery, which incorporates the Cuban flag, succeeds in separating her from a conventional representation of a woman. In spirit she reminds one of Eugene Delacroix's (1798-1863) Liberty Leading the People. Will Bradley's poster for the Christmas number of His Book also falls into the poetic category (Fig. 145). Her frontality, archaic robes and lack of realistic detail bring her as close to symbolic status as American poster images ever came.

Often the female figures in the poetic category play musical instruments. The earliest example is probably Will Bradley's cover design for Harriet Monroe's Ode to the World's Columbian Exposition (Fig. 146), from 1893, showing

a woman in a classicizing drapery sheathed in leafy ornament plucking a lyre. Blanche McManus gave a similar instrument to her muse-like figure. Though a Valkyrie would have been more appropriate to the Legends of the Rhine, the costume and lyre point to the classical world (Fig. 147). It is common to find this kind of inconsistence, confusion and irreverence in the choice and representation of standard metaphors. In one of Bradley's Chap-Book placards of 1895 (Fig. 149), known as "Pan," one confronts not a male with goat's horns playing the pipes, but a sweet little female cherub. Bertha Corson Day's mammoth advertisement for the National Export Exposition (Fig. 70) provides another contradictory image. The figure blows a horn in the role of a kind of herald, but the flowered crown and hermaphroditic face suggest a bacchic association. This representation is also similar to Bruce Porter's Pan,[33] the central figure in one of his Lark designs (Fig. 149). In contrast, J. C. Leyendecker's early poster for Interior (Fig. 87) successfully utilizes the horn as an angelic attribute without the usual iconographic confusion. This theme seems to have been a favorite of Leyendecker's because he presented it again a later poster for the Inland Printer. John Sloan's Echo poster also features a woman in a metaphorical role blowing a horn (Fig. 37). Will Bradley did an Echo placard around the same time as well, that had a similar subject

(Fig. 150). Unlike the examples above, however, Sloan and Bradley invented new poetic images with their horn players while avoiding references to traditional mythology or religion. An 1896 newspaper poster for the Sunday Journal (Fig. 151) by Ernest Haskell shows a young woman with two musical horns. Though not as effective as Sloan's or Bradley's, this design, too, successfully removes itself from work-a-day reality without resorting to undigested cultural allusions. Whether they garbled metaphors or created new ones, American artists demonstrated their originality and independence.

Horns are an understandable choice for announcements, but they may also have been a frequent motif in part because of the popularity of Eugene Grasset's Christmas 1892 design for Harper's Monthly (Fig. 152) which shows a feminine angel blowing on a labyrinthine trumpet. Its success was one of the factors in Harper's decision early in 1893 to begin issuing a regular placard for their monthly magazine.

Although male subjects are less common than female, they represent, nevertheless, an important aspect of poster iconography. Unlike the images of women, however, men are always presented in contemporary settings. There are many scenes of men at leisure. Well-dressed and clearly preoccupied, they read, surrounded by comfortable masculine furnishings. Gould and Penfield did this kind of scene best.

(See Figs. 153, 154.)

A poster critic described this particular poster inhabitant as belonging ". . . neither to the class of multi-millionaire nor rough businessman."[34] But rather, they are part of

> that class of well-bred Americans, quiet in their manners, living a thoughtful, cultivated polished life, passing swiftly through the noisy streets and returning to their most quiet corners, where their feelings are not offended by contrast with the business of the work-a-day world.[35]

Blanche McManus did a poster in this genre as well. Her Scribner's design (Fig. 155) featuring a monocled gentleman at a train ticket window accompanied by his valet provides another illustration of the genteel male existence sought after by the cultivated late nineteenth century nouveau-riche.

Men are also pictured often in sporting scenes. Golfers and tennis players are common, but again the cycler is the sport subject most often featured. The difference in the treatment of men in contrast to women cyclers is notable. Comparing, for example, Charles Cox's female riders (Fig. 142) with his males (Fig. 156), it is clear that the fantasy element plays a lesser role in his depiction of masculine cyclers. Instead of cheesecake and make-believe postures, one senses sweat, dust and real muscles. The same distinction can be made between Bradley's

Springfield Bicycle Club (Fig. 57) showing male riders and a design using female cyclers such as that for Victoria Bicycles (Fig. 109).

This more serious treatment of men in sports posters is consistent with the existence of a number of scenes showing men performing work tasks. Although it was relatively rare to find women even in child-care situations, men are represented in a variety of vocational activities. One of the most effective is Penfield's man with a plow poster for Harper's (Fig. 157). With no landscape and minimal detail, simply a bearded man in rural dress holding on to a primitive plow led by a boldly foreshortened horse, he communicated the stress of manual labor. Penfield's Aetna Dynamite (Fig. 158) also features a man in a work situation. In a poster for the Century, Jay Hambidge, proponent of "Dynamic Symmetry," presented a dramatic scene from the life of a fireman.[36] Claude Bragdon's design showing several sandwich men advertising the Chap-Book (Fig. 159), though not intended to be taken seriously, provides still another view of the other side of the coin from the affluent gentlemen at their ease described above. A kind of compromise of the two worlds--that of work and that of leisure--is to be found in Penfield's self-portrait[37] of himself working as an artist done for the 1897 Poster Calendar (Fig. 160).

Adventure scenes are another male poster subject. There are two main categories, both having to do with an American frontier. The first is the old Western frontier which by the nineties existed mainly in the memories of those who had pursued it. The other was the new frontier, Cuba and the Philippines, which were the focus of the Spanish American War of 1898. Of the posters that concentrated on the West, those by L. Maynard Dixon for the Overland Monthly[38] are always recognizable by their forceful Western images: a lynched cowboy (Fig. 34), or an Indian wrestling with a grizzly bear (Fig. 161), are typical examples. Penfield's poster, "Pony Tracks" (Fig. 12), is along similar lines, as is the anonymous Fleming H. Revell poster (Fig. 162) and Dr. Jameson's Raiders[39] of 1896 (Fig. 26). On the theme of the Spanish American conflict, George Edmund Varian (1865-1923) represented the arrogant Yankee soldier in the midst of exotic tropical surroundings in his design for the August Century (Fig. 163) advertising an article entitled "The Battle of Manila." Howard Chandler Christy did several placards for Scribner's in 1898 showing soldiers or Rough Riders participating in the American imperialist escapade in Cuba. The frequency of this kind of subject matter suggests the romanticism associated with the conquest of the West maintained its hold on the American imagination after it no longer existed. The attempt to recapture the psychological and material benefits

provided by the presence of new territory was undoubtedly in part the basis of our interest in Cuba and the Philippines. Among the poster artists, only L. Maynard Dixon was able to communicate the savagery as well as the fascination of the frontier experience. For others it is simply a metaphor for adventure.

The only other major iconographic theme which operates as a metaphor for adventure is the ship: perhaps the most frequent inanimate motif in the 1890s poster. E. B. Bird (Fig. 164), E. B. Wells (No dates available) (Fig. 165), R. L. Emerson (no dates available) (Fig. 166), and A. W. B. Lincoln (no dates available) (Fig. 10), all did outstanding designs in which the sky and water surrounding the mysterious deserted vessels are transformed into abstract rhythms. The absence of human beings in the scenes enhances their value as vehicles for fantasy and escape. W. Clark Russell, author of The Phantom Death (advertised by Lincoln's poster), described the dangers threatening the nineteenth-century voyager:

> You will remember that I am writing of an age when seafaring was not as it now is. The pirate and the slaver were still afloat doing a brisk business. There often went a desperate spirit in ships, forecastles, and the maritime records of the time abound with tragic narratives of revolt, seizure, cruelty of a ferocious sort.[40]

The sea's vastness and its untamed quality made it perhaps the most obvious unconquered frontier of all.

While conventional symbolism and traditional metaphors were not primary concerns of the nineties poster artist, fantasy was central to the artistic poster's appeal. Whether a fashionable debutante, a determined male athlete or a garbled "Pan," posters soothed and entertained by presenting visual images of an attractive, orderly world that was unaffected by the vicissitudes of real life. At a certain point, however, the poster's interpretation of the world lost its attraction. As the turn of the century approached, Americans, jolted by their confrontation with a wider world, rejected the somewhat artificial tranquility. The poster's fall from favor as a viable advertising medium as well as a major artistic outlet is described in Chapter Six.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

[1]Robert W. Chambers, "The Poster," New York Times, 16 February 1896, p. 32.

[2]Speaker Reed was the powerful Speaker of the House of Representatives in the nineties who just barely lost the Republican nomination for president to William McKinley. See Barbara Tuchman, "The End of a Dream," in The Proud Tower (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

[3]All from the Philadelphia Press between 1895 and 1896.

[4]John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 182.

[5]Louise Labé was a female poet in 16th century France whose name was used for the radical wing of the women's crusade.

[6]"Is the New Woman New?", Chap-Book 3 (1 October 1895): 388.

[7]Edith Wharton, The Custom of the Country (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 541.

[8]R. L. Dickinson, "Bicycling for Women from the Standpoint of the Gynecologist," American Journal of Obstetrics 21 (1895):34, quoted in John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 185.

[9]E. D. Page, "Women and the Bicycle," Brooklyn Medical Journal 11 (1897):85, cited in Haller and Haller, Ibid., p. 185.

[10]See Godey's Magazine, vol. 133.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Vance Thompson, "Leader," M'lle New York, 1 (15 October 1895).

[13]C. Noble,'Expiation," Miss Blue Stocking 1 (February 1896):35-41.

[14]C. Noble, "A Doctor's Argument," Miss Blue Stocking 1 (April 1896):16-21.

[15]See Chips 2 (16 November 1895).

[16]Ibid., 2 (October 1895).

[17]Mary Ann Springer, in her thesis, "Woman in French Fin-de-siècle Posters" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971), lists exposed petticoats under the attributes for prostitutes. The significance in this American example may be the same.

[18]Rudyard Kipling's description of American girls included in the memoirs of his trip to the New World in the late eighties and early nineties would describe the Penfield girl perfectly: "They are clever, they can talk--yea, it is said that they think. Certainly they have an appearance of doing so which is delightfully deceptive.

They are original, and regard you between the brows with unabashed eyes. They possess, moreover, a life among themselves, independent of any masculine association . . . They are self-possessed, without parting with any tenderness that is their sex-right; they understand, they can take care of themselves; they are superbly independent." American Notes (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1899), p. 39-40.

[19]S. C. de Soissons, "Some American Posters," Artist 23 (September 1891):18-19.

[20]S. C. de Soissons, "Her Majesty the American Woman," Artist 23 (September 1898):65.

[21]Ibid., p. 71.

[22]Ibid., p. 66

[23]See Springer thesis again where she postulated a kind of "belle de jour" story behind the three Chéret Palais de Glace posters dated 1893, 1895, 1896.

[24]See Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York: Avon, 1977), p. 7, for a discussion of the late nineteenth century American woman as the "prime consumers of American culture."

[25]Although Amelia Bloomer had introduced her revolutionary pantaloons as early as the 1850s, it took the bicycle craze almost a half a century more to put them into the wardrobe of respectable women. According to Robert Smith, History of the Bicycle, "On Decoration Day of 1894, the dress designers opened the cycling season with the latest style, the bloomer costume," (p. 100) and in August, 1895, the bloomer costume was the favorite at Newport. ". . . once the rich took to Bloomers it was difficult for the middle-class to take offense, seeing that wealth was generally taken as a sign of God's approval." Ibid., p. 107.

[26]Mary L. Bisland, "Women's Cycle," Godey's Magazine 132 (April 1896):386.

[27]Robert A. Smith, History of the Bicycle, p. 35.

[28]Bisland, "Woman's Cycle," p. 387.

[29]Maurice Thompson, "The Return of the Girl," Chap-Book 4 (15 March 1896):407.

[30]Flora Lincoln Comstock, "Rosalind A. Wheel," Godey's Magazine 132 (April 1896):388.

[31]See Hayward Cirker and Blanche Cirker, The Golden Age of the Poster (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), Figs. 62, 63.

[32]Jean Louis Sponsel, Das Moderne Plakat (Dresden: Gerhard Kuhtmann, 1897), p. 192.

[33]Another example of a confused allusion is provided by Porter's Pan figure. Instead of a Pan pipe (triangular in shape like the one in Bradley's Pan design) he plays a type of horn.

[34]S. C. de Soissons, "Some American Posters," Ibid., p. 19.

[35]Ibid.

[36]This poster is included in the Engel Collection at Columbia University.

[37]Self-portraits in posters were not uncommon. Ethel Reed, who did outstanding male portrait posters for McClure's (Fig. 8), generally used her own features as a model for her female poster characters. John Sloan, as noted earlier, also depicted his own face in poster designs. (See Fig. 125.) The most obvious example is Cinder-Path Tales (Fig. 125), in which Sloan pictures himself as a trackman showing the same kind of determination as noted in the male bicycle posters discussed above.

[38]The Overland Monthly first made a name for itself as an adventure magazine. Bret Harte was one of the magazine's first editors and his short stories were important in establishing its popularity.

[39]This poster actually depicts an episode from the Boar War in South Africa.

[40]W. Clark Russell, The Phantom Death. (New York, 1895), pp. 15-16.

CHAPTER SIX: DECLINE AND MODERN RE-EVALUATION

A. Decline

Ned Arden Flood, one of the major poster collectors in the nineties, looking at the movement in 1897, concluded that the rapid development of the poster here was "in the nature of things,"[1] that its unique role was particularly suited to the needs and character of the country. Whether he referred to America's growing commercialism, its affinity for the useful or applied arts or its preoccupation with the new, all were reflected in the artistic poster. After the appearance of Penfield's first poster for Harper's Monthly in March 1893, the poster culture developed rapidly, but it disappeared rather quickly as well. As early as July 1896, a printer and publisher writing in Poster Lore noted America's tendency to embrace, devour and rapidly discard cultural manifestations such as the new poster:

> The American people have about run the new poster craze into the ground and I think the public will soon, if they have not already done so, begin to tire of the whole subject. It is a great shame and pity that we have not restraint enough to take such things with moderation, but it is true that we have not. You know as soon as a thing becomes a public 'fad' the length of its life is already measured.[2]

Though there was some difference of opinion about exactly when the movement lost momentum, the Critic wrote its obituary as early as November 1896 in a review of Percival

Pollard's Posters in Miniature: "The absence of any new designs showing originality or uncommon merit of any kind seems to prove that poster designing has seen its best days."[3] The Poster and Art Collector observed in 1899 that the poster's popularity had diminished from two or three years before.[4] The Chap-Book's negative pronouncement came between the two above, in April 1897: "The poster craze seems to have spent its force . . ."[5] Besides the faddish[6] aspect of American culture that probably accounts in part for the poster's rapid rise and decline, there were several other determinants as well. The artistic poster's viability derived from its unique status as both art and advertising. As long as the aesthetic qualities of the poster complimented its commercial function, both businessmen and artists were satisfied. Unfortunately the art/advertising balance was difficult to sustain. By the end of 1896, the poster movement had become so closely identified with the art world that its artistic side was emphasized at the expense of its promotional role. At least one historian has suggested that the poster lost favor because the quality of the art diminished.[7] On the contrary, the artistic component not only maintained itself throughout the remainder of the decade, by late 1896, it had actually begun to predominate.

In Charles Bolton's 1895 book, The Reign of the Poster,

he stressed the poster's dual purpose: "What the picture fails to do for the advertiser the poster does perfectly . . . by employing those principles in art which out-of-door advertising demands, the poster finds its true place."[8] By the latter part of 1896, however, commentators stressed not so much the twofold nature of the poster advertisement, as its by then accepted status as a legitimate branch of the arts. In the first half of 1896, these pronouncements could be seen as a broadening of the movement rather than a growing denial of its original basis. Advertisers were not yet disillusioned. They continued to commission posters and to enjoy the prestige appropriate to a benefactor of the arts. The Century, Pope Bicycle Company and New York World competitions demonstrated to clients that posters were still a worthwhile marketing tool. Critics such as K. Porter Garnett[9] reassured both poster enthusiasts and businessmen that the poster's growing art autonomy--posters issued in special numbered editions expressly for collectors--posed no threat to its commercial function. However, by October 1897, the Inland Printer had come to the opposite conclusion. The critic stated that "The Poster is designed to sell goods, to make announcements, and whatever may interfere with this purpose makes it a failure to those who made it."[10] He went on to denounce the ". . . decorative drawings which are distributed by the guileless

merchant, forced without his knowledge to become a patron of the arts at the expense of his advertising account."[11] During the intervening year and a half the poster's commercial credibility had clearly suffered.

Many developments during 1896 and 1897 signaled a gradual takeover of the poster movement by the collectors and art enthusiasts who had no allegiance to business interests. This takeover constituted a major contribution to the movement's demise. One of these developments involved the Poster and Poster Lore. Both magazines appeared in early 1896, devoting themselves primarily to the poster as art. Their lack of interest in the commercial side of the poster represented an important expression of the art-coopting trend. The July 1896 issue of Poster Lore discussed the poster in these high-flown terms:

> Art should be subservient only to the highest ends of life . . . the art of the poster gives promise of fruitfulness in that direction, and the publication of posters without lettering, already commenced, is earnest of further emancipation.[12]

In the same issue, the editor announced the imminent formation of the "American Poster Publication Society," with the following goals:

> It is desired that all the poster admirers and collectors associate after the manner common to the international art and scientific societies, with the permanent headquarters in Boston.[13]

The organization planned, furthermore, to use members' dues

for the purchase of plates, publication rights and lithographers' fees. A board of directors would have occasionally selected "a rare and perfect poster,"[14] for a limited edition reprint available to members. Obviously collectors and others seriously interested in the artistic poster ultimately felt compelled to separate the poster as much as possible from its original character as both a tool of commerce as well as a work of art. Unfortunately, the separation weakened the basis of its integrity and limited its social role. Instead of a public art supported by business interests it was becoming a drawing room art sustained by a coterie of collectors.

The move away from the commercial aspect of the poster was evident in more subtle ways as well. Penfield who, from his first Harper's Monthly poster in March 1893 through 1895, always included a copy of the magazine in his designs, excluded it from January 1896 on, except for the March 1896 number. The Harper's logo remained, but the elimination of the magazine's cover brought the designs a step closer to the kind of artistic autonomy the Poster Lore author called for in the statement quoted above. The absence of the Harper's cover also coincided with a definite change in Penfield's style. Designs such as those for July, September and December 1896 (see Figs. 96, 167, 168), are more self-consciously executed with a brush line rather than

a pen line. Bolder juxtapositions of color, less detail, the use of more unusual angles and partial figures and the introduction of a Japanese-inspired, Whistleresque monogram, all signified the growing dominance of "art" at the expense of advertising.

Bradley, too, in his magazine which began in May 1896, showed an inclination to ignore the poster as advertising while focussing on its art aspect. In this little review, which he intended as a forum for both art and literature, he treated the poster primarily as a branch of the decorative arts. Bradley's decision to execute some of his poster-style designs as woodcuts instead of lithographs or zincographs was another indication of a swing away from the commercial, practical side of his work, in favor of the artistic, that carried over into his treatment of posters as well. In November 1896, however, Bradley acknowledged, at least in words, his awareness of the inappropriateness of some of the poster developments: the poster story, the poster poem and perhaps, though he doesn't say specifically, the non-commercial poster. "Let these misguided venturers into a new field call a halt . . . let the poster still serve its own purpose of uniting utility and art in unique fashion."[15] In a statement made only a couple of months later, Bradley notes the poster's undeniable loss of popularity, but reaffirms its on-going value in the context of

advertising. "Although the fad of collecting posters seems to be dying out, there is, and always will be, a demand for posters for advertising purposes."[16] But, ironically, the growing estrangement of the poster in its advertising function was well underway, relegating it to a considerably diminished role.

In 1895 and 1896 there were almost one hundred little reviews that devoted themselves to literature, criticism and often to the poster movement as well.[17] By 1897, however, the majority of them had disappeared and by the end of 1898 they had become almost entirely an historical phenomenon. The reigns of the two poster magazines were among the briefest--they each lasted for only a few monthly issues in 1896. Perhaps they did their job of converting the public to a belief in the art value of posters too well, because they seem to have soon talked themselves out of a function. Once the notion of the artistic poster as a new art form had become paramount, previously satisfied commercial clients, wary of the poster's new anti-pragmatic bent, commissioned fewer posters which discouraged collectors and ultimately reduced the number of people interested in an increasingly close-ended enterprise. Furthermore, a number of artists who had worked mostly for the little magazines left the poster field in 1897 and 1898 depriving the movement of some of its most original talent, among them Bird,

Reed, Hazenplug and Lundborg. The larger magazines, less dependent on faddish impulse and public whimsey, continued to flourish and continued to commission posters until the end of the decade. Scribner's, for example, used a similar type of poster even after the turn of the century designed by a new generation of poster artists.[18] Penfield did his last monthly poster for Harper's in August 1899 (Fig. 169), which can be taken as a good cut-off date for the nineties movement.

The Inland Printer, trade journal for the printing industry that had launched Will Bradley and others on a fruitful career earlier in the decade, was one of the few periodicals that maintained its support of the poster movement after 1896 both by commissioning posters and by writing about them. Percival Pollard authored a monthly column for poster enthusiasts from June 1897 through March 1898. However, the Inland Printer no longer attracted as broad an audience as earlier in the nineties when it had been in the forefront of the drive to establish artistic standards for all the areas of the printing enterprise.

In general, the small book publishers, like the small magazine publishers (among them Lamson, Wolff; Copeland and Day), also withdrew from the field after 1897 eliminating another major source of poster patronage. On the other hand, the more established companies such as Harper Brothers

used book posters on an irregular basis for a year or two beyond. Percival Pollard, writing in his Inland Printer column in 1897, indicated that the book poster business had been destroyed by the bookdealers:

> The booksellers here in America did much to harass the use of posters. By selling the sheets sent to them for display they eventually prevented many publishers from proceeding further with the issuance of posters.[19]

The Chap-Book suggested that the book dealers not only failed to display the posters often, but gave them away as favors to regular customers.[20] Poster Lore offered a further reason for the book poster's ultimate decline: at one point the posters were so popular that customers preferred to buy the poster rather than the book it advertised.[21] Though the bookstore might have been relatively satisfied with this state of affairs, the publishers became less and less enthusiastic.

Newspapers, another major source of poster business during 1895 and 1896, had also decreased their patronage by 1897. George Brill, who had produced a design for the Philadelphia Press almost weekly during 1895 and 1896 as well as occasional posters for the Boston Sunday Herald, Chicago Sunday Tribune and the New York Sunday Journal, rarely did a newspaper poster after 1896. The work of Ethel Reed, Gardener C. Miles and William McGregor Paxton for the Boston Sunday Herald also diminished after 1896. Louis

Rhead, who had begun his newspaper poster career with the New York Sun in 1894, added the New York Journal to his list of clients in 1895. By 1897, however, though Rhead was still designing posters and poster calendars for clients such as Ault and Wiborg, makers of printers' inks, and the Bookman, he no longer worked regularly for the newspapers. The artistic poster had certainly contributed to the popularity of newspapers during the mid-nineties, but by 1897, other features of the new modern newspaper such as the Sunday colored supplements, photographic illustrations and a more sensationalized treatment of the news, represented more important factors in their success. The poster became a frill, an unnecessary marketing tool that seemed increasingly out of step with the more and more practical orientation of the large urban newspapers.

The history of William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal in the period 1896-1898, when the newspaper poster declined, provides some insight into the reason for the poster's loss of favor. Hearst's innovations, which made his daily the best known in the United States were imitated by publishers all over the country. In New York, Hearst's enterprise was rivalled only by Joseph Pulitzer's New York World which had been the city's most successful paper before Hearst's entry into the New York scene. Hearst had bought the New York Journal in 1895 but it was not until the latter

part of 1896 and 1897 that the Journal superceded all the other New York newspapers in circulation. Hearst built up his great popular following with large quantities of cash that he used effectively in a variety of ways including financing crusades against local corruption and as rewards for solving sensational crimes whose details were carefully reported by the Journal in all their lurid glory. He also was unstinting in getting the right reporter to the right place in order to assure that the material would capture the public's attention. Mark Twain, for example, was sent to England for Queen Victoria's Jubilee and Stephen Crane went to report on the conflict between the Greeks and the Russians. In perhaps his greatest coup of all, he bought a yacht and sent the artist Frederic Remington and the writer Richard Harding Davis, two of the biggest names of the day, to Cuba early in 1897 to report first-hand on events developing there. Ever since early 1896, American newspapers, especially those in New York, had made a close study of the deteriorating and increasingly violent treatment of the Cubans by the Spanish. Gradually the newspapers in the rest of the country also made news out of the Cuban situation which became, for them as well as Hearst, a circulation-boosting staple. However, Hearst remained the pioneer entrepreneur in staging news events derived from the Cuban crisis. Others copied his efforts and benefitted

from the publicity he generated to create their own. Articles on Evangelina Asneros, a Cuban heroine who was rescued from prison and brought to New York by one of Hearst's reporters, raised the readership of many other big city newspapers along with the Journal's. Hearst did well in 1897, but in 1898, with the destruction of the Maine and the subsequent war with Cuba, the Journal and the New York World went over the million mark while the newspaper business in general thrived more than ever before.

In addition to the appeal of exaggerated news, the hallmark of the Journal, the World and others who subscribed to the "Yellow Journalism"[22] approach, there were more benign attractions provided by the expanded Sunday supplement. The World had pioneered the colored comic section in the early nineties, but in 1896 Hearst showed the newspaper industry how to attract an even larger Sunday supplement audience. In late 1896, in addition to the by now standard colored comic section, he added two other special interest features: the Sunday American Magazine and the Woman's Home Journal. Advertising revenues increased along with the growing circulation. The new formula for newspaper success was complete and artistic posters as a promotional medium had clearly become obsolete.[23]

The artistic poster had appealed to people with genteel sensibilities, to those who wished to aestheticize even the

marketplace. By the end of the decade, however, such considerations played a less central role. The violent strikes, anarchist propaganda, the Spanish-American War, muck-raking journalism, all contributed to a loss of innocence that ultimately rendered the miniature magazines and the artistic poster merely ornamental and superfluous.

At first the cheaper magazines tried to imitate the aristocratic reviews, Harper's Monthly, Scribner's, the Century and Lippincott's. In the mid-nineties both types featured literature, history and popular science articles. By the late nineties, however, the upper classes had been somewhat discredited by the Robber Baron publicity and increasing Populist sentiment. The Spanish American War cast the ordinary citizen as the hero going to the rescue of the helpless and oppressed. As a result, the cheaper magazines changed their approach. Instead of offering a cheapened as well as a cheaper version of the highbrow periodicals, they presented articles geared to the special interests of the middle classes and the newly literate. To a certain extent the established magazines broadened their appeal as well. Dramatic photographs were much more in keeping with the new spirit than precious poster designs. The Inland Printer noted the changeover from artists' drawings to photographs in the text of magazines and newspapers as early as 1897:

> Harper's Weekly, in a single issue, had but three sketches proper. All the other illustrations were from photographs. Leslie's is long since full of nothing but photographic reproductions. The Sunday issues of the metropolitan dailies are doing their best to substitute photographic half-tones for drawings by staff artists.[24]

The delicate moment had passed when America sought refinement in all aspects of the everyday scene, including advertising. Speed, sensationalism and exposé, took precedence. Posters continued to play a small role in advertising even after the turn of the century, but already in 1898 and 1899 the poster movement had ceased to have a noticeable function in the urban environment. Gradually it had become clear that earlier predictions of the poster's broad social effects had been inaccurate. Poster art had become more and more a hobby of the elite and less and less the popular art of the street its champions had envisioned. After the turn of the century, the Ash Can School would be the avant-garde art directed toward the ordinary, non-aristocratic audience. But, as in the case of posters, it would be the more, rather than the less, sophisticated who would be most appreciative. The fact that two former posterists, John Sloan and William Glackens, would be later found in the Ashcan group provides the poster movement with a physical as well as an ideological link to American art of the next generation.

B. Modern Re-evaluation

The fifties, sixties and seventies of this century have seen a gradual rejuvenation of interest in the art poster of the 1890s. Although Robert Goldwater re-opened the subject as early as 1942,[25] others were not to follow his lead until a decade later. Except for Edgar Breitenbach's essay for the American Federation of Arts travelling show of American posters in 1967,[26] almost all the scholars and critics who wrote about posters of the nineties between 1950 and 1970 made European posters, rather than American, their primary concern.

Robert Koch's 1953 thesis[27] on the modern poster did include a summary of the American movement. He traced its stylistic origins to American proto art nouveau as exemplified by the decorative work of Louis C. Tiffany in the Seventh Regiment Armory begun in 1880. While Koch's parameters seem somewhat narrow--there are clearly other native ingredients that cannot be defined as part of the proto art nouveau idiom--he was the first of the post-war group of historians to view the American poster as other than a naive imitation of a French invention. Koch's 1962 Art Quarterly study[28] explored more thoroughly one aspect of the American poster phenomenon: its debt to the bibliophile movement. According to Koch, it spurred new interest in

printed and illustrated material that helped set the stage for the artistic poster. The only objection to Koch's interpretation would be his continued insistence on confining the poster's stylistic identity to art nouveau. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the native contributions to its evolution provided a new key to understanding the poster era in America.

Edgar Brietenbach's essay, mentioned above, represented an even more important pioneering effort. Though it was primarily a survey and not an analysis of the nineties movement, he constructed a lively narrative that highlighted the major events and re-established the reputations of a number of the artists of the period. There had been a few scattered articles in the early sixties focussing on individual artists, one on Bradley and one on Parrish[30] for example, but Breitenbach was more effective in putting their early work into the context of the poster epoch. The catalogue and the exhibition it accompanied may have stimulated the interest of other critics and historians because several studies of the poster era followed shortly afterward.

The booklet of the same year on John Sloan's nineties poster career, compiled by his wife, Helen Farr Sloan, suggests by its title, although less by its text,[31] that art nouveau, as Koch postulated earlier, is the primary explanation for the poster phenomenon and the best proof of

its artistic legitimacy. Art nouveau was clearly important for Sloan, especially in his later poster work at the turn of the century, but there were many factors, such as those suggested in Chapter Four, that contributed to the formation of a whole range of American poster styles. One of the reasons why art nouveau became such a respectable link for the poster may be due to the positive effects of the Museum of Modern Art's 1960 art nouveau exhibition and catalogue[32] under the editorship of Peter Selz and Mildred Constantine which helped to establish a new, more legitimate identity for art nouveau. Its reputation had suffered since the turn of the century and even as late as the fifties authentic art nouveau Tiffany objects were considered little more than junk store items. After the Museum of Modern Art Exhibit, however, the public's view of the whole stylistic phenomenon in all its varied manifestations changed from disinterest bordering on distaste to one of warm appreciation. A slick adaptation of the original art nouveau elements be began to appear in all the popular printed art of the sixties. The psychedelic head shops thrived on bastardized versions of the art nouveau look while the antique stores resurrected original items which continue to enjoy an enthusiastic following. In any case, the renewed popularity of art nouveau, whatever the reason, made assiciation with it a desirable goal that was pursued by many of those who

sought a similar resurgence of appreciation for the artistic poster.

The three book-length studies of the poster published in 1968 and 1969 by Maurice Rickards,[33] Bevis Hillier[34] and Harold Hutchison,[35] though they varied in seriousness and in accuracy, all placed the primary emphasis on France and England including only a cursory treatment of the American movement. Rickards slipped over the United States entirely and Hillier's chapter on America is filled with misinformation.[36] Only Hutchison attempts to take into account some of the indigenous contributions to the poster by America, giving the United States a formative role along with France and England in developing the art of the poster.

During this same period, Peter Morse, writing primarily for the benefit of would-be collectors,[37] published a straightforward, factual article on the American movement that highlighted the major artists and some of the major influences. Most important of all, however, he rejects both the European art nouveau explanation and the notion that the nineties poster was somehow a continuation of the earlier American circus bills. The effect is to give more value and legitimacy to the American productions of the artistic poster period.

The growing sense of the validity, importance and originality of American art in general as a result of the

international recognition of post-World War II American art in the sixties and early seventies may account for the stepped-up interest in 1890s American posters as well. Historians have found it worthwhile to explore the early twentieth and the nineteenth century for evidence of other native expression in the arts. The seventies poster books by Carolyn Keay[38] and Victor Margolin,[39] as well as isolated articles on various artists (Sloan,[40] Denslow,[41] Kemble[42]), in addition to exhibition catalogues for the Boston Public Library,[43] the Delaware Art Museum[44] and the Whitney Museum, Museum,[45] all helped to give back to the American art poster some of the status it enjoyed in its own time. Keay, though she gives the English too much credit for their role in the American movement, balances her argument with reprints of articles from the nineties. All but one are by Europeans which is a reminder of the American poster's international as well as domestic success during the nineties epoch. Victor Margolin's historical account of the poster phenomenon goes a long way toward recreating the social situation in which the poster blossomed, but his treatment does not succeed in establishing the poster movement as any more than an isolated episode in the applied arts. The study lacks an overview that would give some sense of the broader significance the poster enjoyed during the height of its popularity. However, he does make observations that helped

to clarify the inter-relations of the various styles and the nature of the patronage that encouraged the art/advertising partnership.

In addition to the exhibition catalogues mentioned above, in 1973, two German art historians published an elaborate catalogue raisonné[46] of American and British posters in the collections of West German museums. It is the beginning of a proposed series of poster catalogues and it seems significant in terms of the present status of American posters that they chose to cover the United States in the first volume. German appreciation for the American artistic poster is actually long standing and accounts for the many collections of American posters formed by German museums in the nineties. In an article translated from the German and reprinted in the September 1896 Poster Lore, the author expressed the German view:

> The Classic home of the poster is in America. Not only in the intellectual and artistic, but even more in purely technical fields of labor, there exists in America a far-reaching subdivision of labor. Bill posting, with us usually carried on as a sort of 'side-job,' is there a full-fledged specialty.[47]

Jean Louis Sponsel, the German nineteenth century critic, in his Das Plakat of 1897, also gave extensive treatment to the American poster identifying it with the general development of a national style in the applied arts.[48] The 1973 catalogue, therefore, represents a recent example of an early established recognition by Germany of American

accomplishments during the poster era.

Although the essays provide no new material, the modern German catalogue, unlike all the American publications which are more popular history than scholarly studies, provides the art historian and social historian with a broad selection of well-documented visual specimens from the nineties period. The inclusion of the section on anonymous posters, along with the signed artistic posters, provides a ready comparison for defining the nature of the art poster in contrast to the conventional poster approach. The individual artists' biographies brought new information to light on many artists whose careers had been long forgotten.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

[1]Ned Arden Flood, A Catalogue of American, French, English, Dutch and Japanese Posters from the Collection of Mr. Ned Arden Flood (Meadville, Pa.: Chautauqua Century Press, 1897).

[2]F. Paul Huling, "Notes," Poster Lore 1 (July 1897):118.

[3]Critic 29 (21 November 1896):324.

[4]The Poster and Art Collector 2 (March 1899):123.

[5]Chap-Book 6 (15 April 1897):420.

[6]The term fad is used often in the poster literature. See "Poster Craze in Philadelphia," Philadelphia Inquirer, 1 March 1896, p. 1, and the Poster 1 (April 1896):45.

[7]See Peter Morse, "The American Poster Period: 1893-1897," Auction 3 (October 1969):22-27.

[8]Charles Knowles Bolton, The Reign of the Poster (Boston: Winthrop B. Jones, 1895):2.

[9]K. Porter Garnett, "The Poster: A New Province Claimed by Art," Overland Monthly 27 (March 1896):298.

[10]"The Art Poster as an Advertisement," Inland Printer 20 (October 1897):42.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Roger Cunningham, "Cui Bono," [sic] Poster Lore 1 (July 1896):104-105.

[13]Poster Lore 1 (July 1896):123.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Bradley, His Book 1 (November 1896):22.

[16]Bradley, His Book 1 (January 1897):116.

[17]See Chapter Two on the little magazines.

[18]Preston James, Robert Wildhack, Max Ralston, David Ericson, and Blendon Reed Campbell were some of the artists who did artistic posters for Scribner's after the turn of the century. In my opinion, Scribner's was holding on to an out-moded form, but the use of fine poster designs which recalled the magazine heyday of the nineties may have had some marketing value.

[19]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movements," Inland Printer 19 (June 1897):322.

[20]Chap-Book 6 (15 April 1897):420.

[21]Poster Lore, "Notes," 1 (July 1896):121.

[22]F. L. Mott provided a definition of "yellow Journalism," in his American Journalism (New York: Macmillan, 1942): "(1) scare heads, in which excessively large type, printed in either black or red, screamed excitement, often about comparatively unimportant news, thus giving a shrill falsity to the entire make-up; (2) the lavish use of pictures, many of them without significance, inviting the abuses of picture stealing and 'faked' pictures; (3) impostures and frauds of various kinds, such as 'faked' interviews and stories, misleading heads, pseudo-science, and parade of false learning; (4) the Sunday supplement, with colored 'comics' and superficial articles; and (5) more or less ostentatious sympathy with the underdog, with campaigns against abuses suffered by the common people," p. 539.

[23]The only exception to the decline of newspaper poster art is John Sloan's series of poster style drawings done for the Phildelphia Press between 1899 and 1903.

[24]Percival Pollard, "Poster Lore and the Newer Movements," Inland Printer 20 (October 1897):75-76.

[25]Robert J. Goldwater, "L'Affiche Moderne, A Revival of Poster Art After 1880," Gazette des Beaux Arts 22 (October/December 1942):173-192.

[26]Edgar Breitenbach, "A Brief History," The American Poster (American Federation of Arts, New York: October House, 1967), pp. 7-20.

[27]Robert Koch, "The Poster in the Development of the Modern Movement (M.A. thesis, New York University, 1953).

[28]Koch, "Artistic Books, Periodicals and Posters of the 'Gay Nineties,'" Art Quarterly 25 (Winter 1962):370-383.

[29]Koch, "Will Bradley," Art in America, no. 3 (1962), pp. 78-83.

[30]Ludwig, Coy L., "From Parlour Print to Museum: The Art of Maxfield Parrish," Art Journal 25 (Winter 1965-66): 143-146.

[31]American Art Nouveau: The Poster Period of John Sloan (Lockhaven, Pa.; Hammerhill Paper Co., 1967). In the text made up of Sloan reminiscences of the nineties, he credits the work of Walter Crane and Japanese art with stimulating the development of his poster style in 1892 and 1893. Exposure to French posters and the work of Aubrey Beardsley came afterwards and were more important for his later poster style work for the Philadelphia Press, from 1899 to 1903, a period really beyond the boundaries that have been defined for the American poster movement.

[32]Art Nouveau: Art and Design at the Turn of the Century (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1960).

[33]Maurice Rickards, Posters at the Turn of the Century (New York: Walker and Company, 1968).

[34]Bevis Hillier, Posters (London: Weidenfeld and Macmillan, 1969).

[35]Harold H. Hutchinson, The Poster: An Illustrated History from 1860 (New York: The Viking Press, 1968).

[36]Hillier attributes a date of 1890 to Bradley's When Hearts are Trumps, an impossible mistake for anyone familiar with poster history in the U.S. He also postulates that the poster's development is due to the effect of the Mucha poster brought to American in 1894 to advertise Bernhardt's tour, but in fact the movement was well in motion by that time. He also called Bradley's Masqueraders (1894) the first signed theatrical poster, although Matt Morgan had signed his posters as early as the 1880s.

[37]Peter Morse, "The American Poster Period: 1893-1897," Auction 3 (October 1969):22-27. Auction is published by Parke-Bernet.

[38]Carolyn Keay, American Posters of the Turn of the Century (London: Academy Editions, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975).

[39]Victor Margolin, American Poster Renaissance (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1975).

[40]E. John Bullard, "John Sloan as an Illustrator," American Artist 35 (October 1971):52-59, 67-68.

[41]Michael Patrick Hearn, "W. W. Denslow, The Forgotten Illustrator," American Artist 37 (May 1973):40-45, 71-73.

[42]Francis Martin Jr., "Edward Windsor Kemble, A Master of Pen and Ink," American Art Review (January/February 1976): 54-67.

[43]American Posters of the Nineties. Introduction by Roberta Waddell Wong (Lunenburg, Vt.: Stinehour Press for Boston Public Library, 1974).

[44]Elizabeth Hawkes, The Poster Decade: American Posters of the Nineties (Wilmington: The Delaware Art Museum, 1977).

[45]Patricia Hills, Turn of the Century America, 1890-1910 (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1977).

[46]Ruth Malhotra and Christina Thon, Das Frühe Plakat in Europa und den U.S.A. (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1973).

[47]"The Poster Tendency in Germany," Poster Lore 1 (September 1896):19.

[48]"Ja sogar seit der Chicagoer Weltausstellung ist das Amerikanische Wohnungsausstattung, deren Kunstlerische Formen jetzt in vollkommener Weise dem praktischen Bedurfnis angepasst sind, unseren europaischen Kunsthandwerken als Vorbild angepriesen worden. Jedenfalls sind in dem Kunstgewerve die Angange zu einer nationalen Stilentwickelung unverkennbar. Aber auch in der zeitschriftenillustration und dem modernen Plakat sind de Ansatze hier zu Vorhanden." Das Moderne Plakat (Dresden: Gerhard Kuhtmann, 1897), p. 183.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1 Edward Penfield,
Harper's, March 1893



Fig. 2 Anonymous, Circus Poster, 1890s

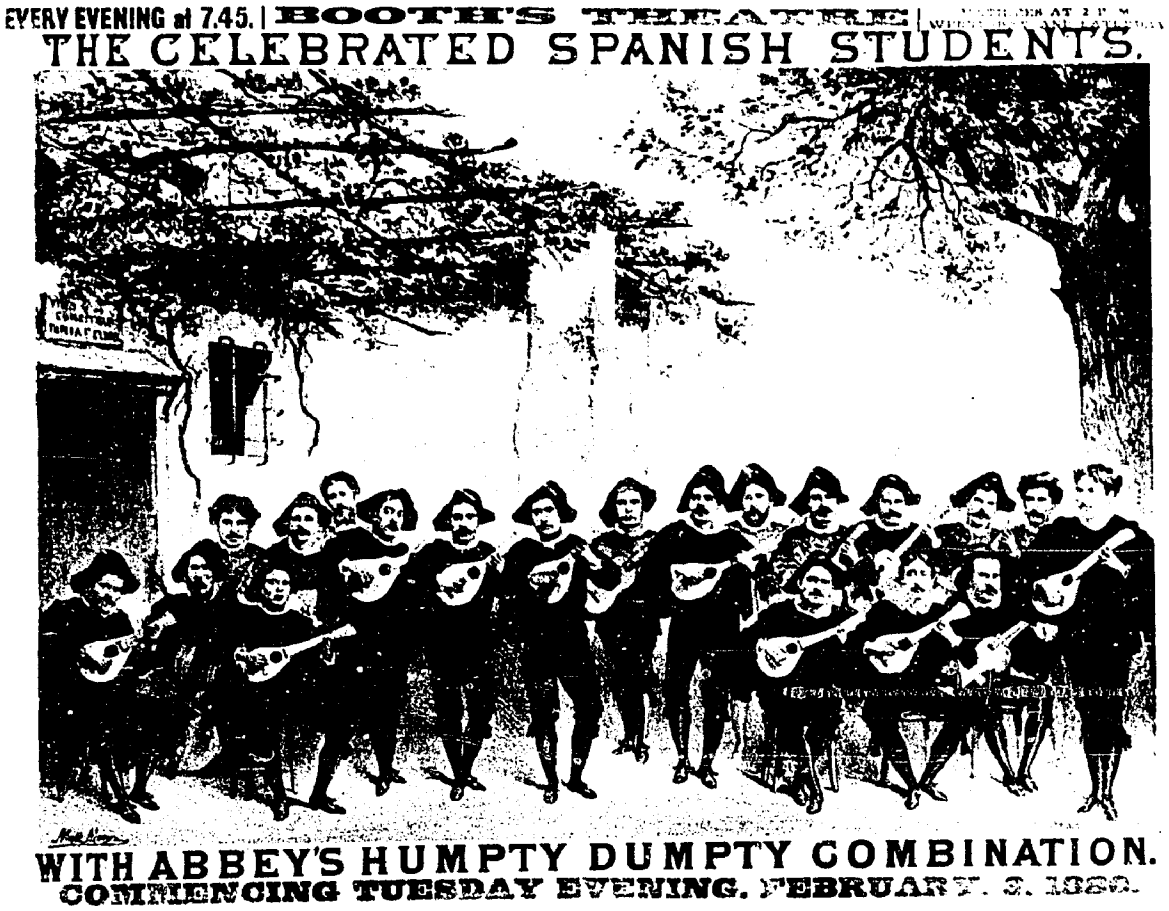


Fig. 3 Matt Morgan, The Celebrated Spanish Students, 1880



Fig. 4 Louis Rhead, St. Nicholas, 1891

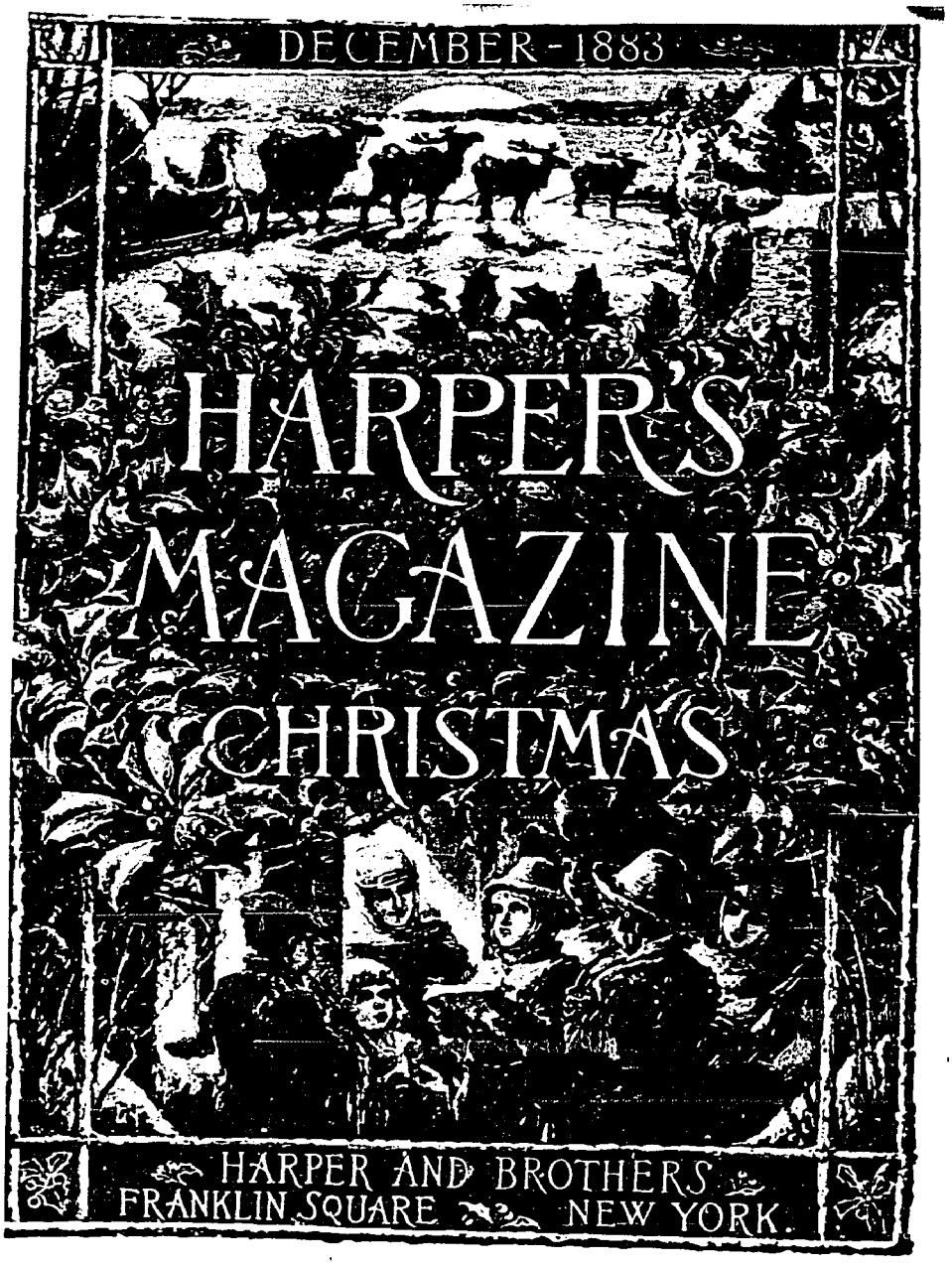


Fig. 5 Anonymous, Harper's Christmas 1893



Fig. 6 Anonymous, Self-Culture, 1890s



Fig. 7 J. E. Laboureur, McClure's, February 1896

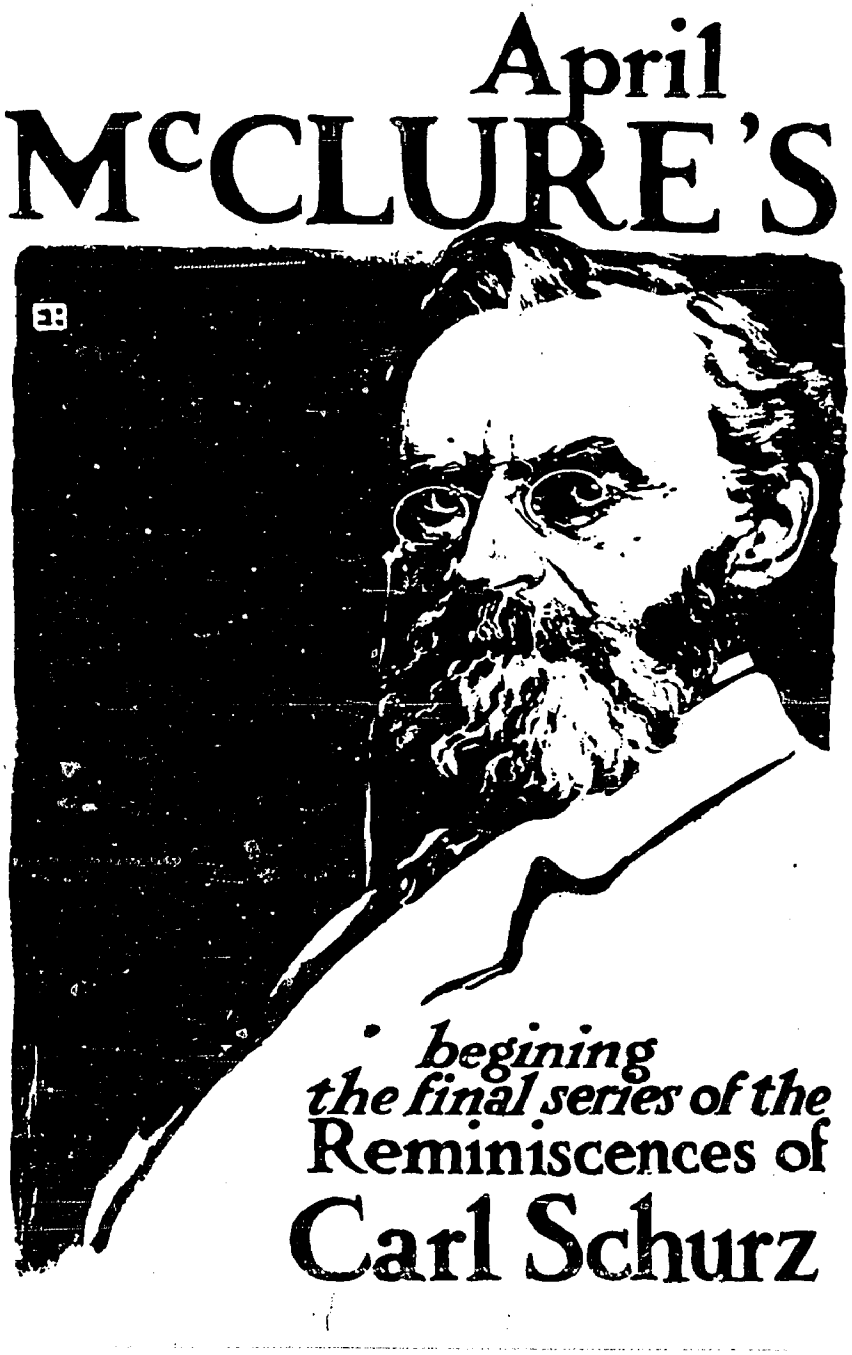


Fig. 8 Ethel Reed, McClure's, April 1896

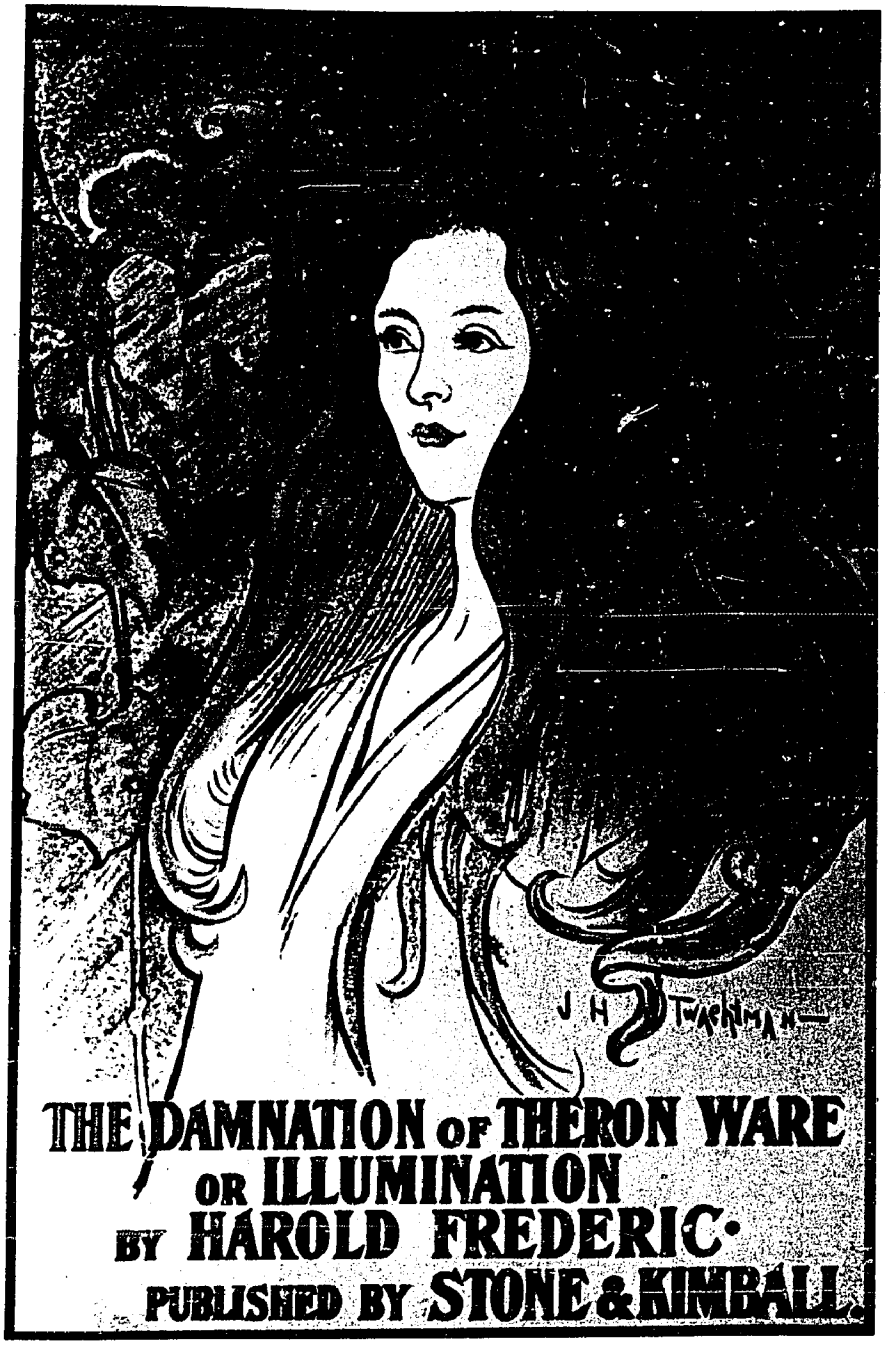


Fig. 9 John Twachtman, The Damnation of Theron Ware, 1894

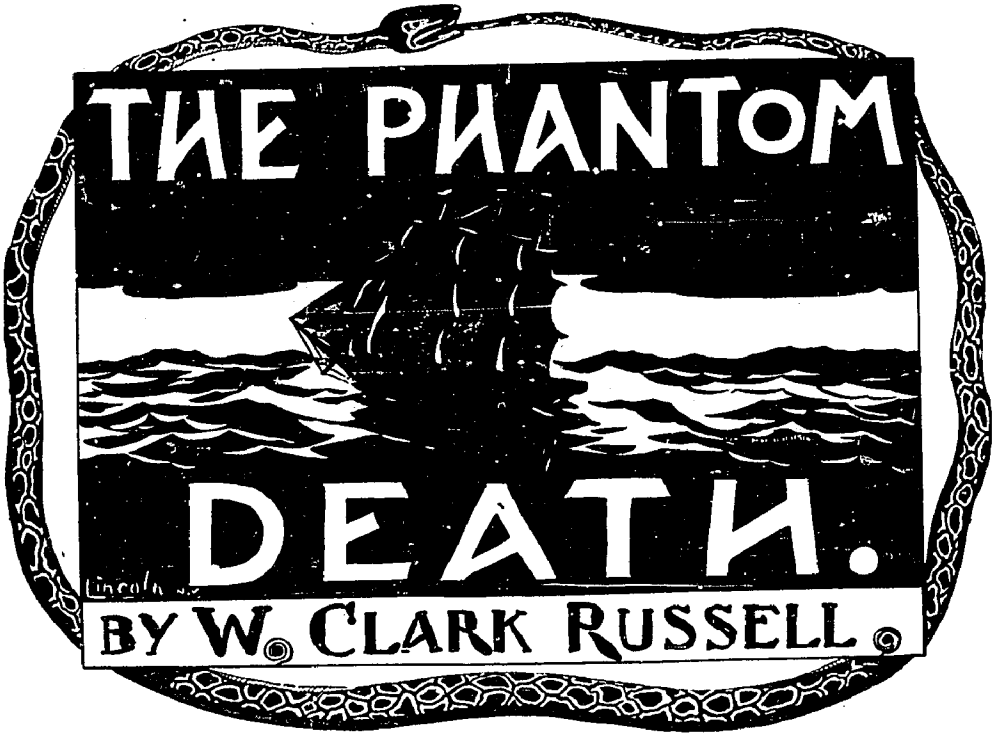
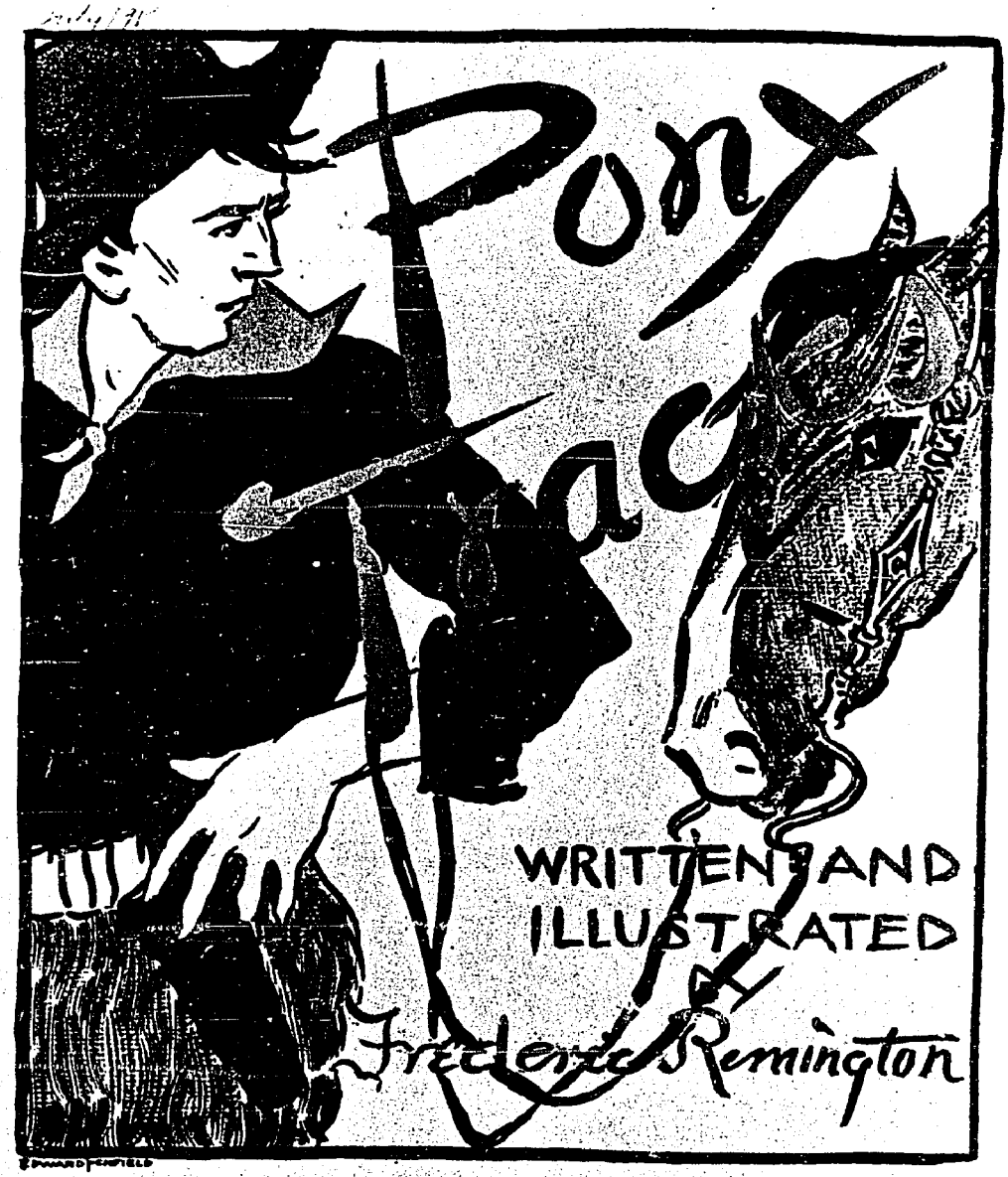


Fig. 10 A. W. B. Lincon,
The Phantom Death, 1895



Fig. 11 L. F. Hurd, Days of Auld Lang Syne, 1895



Edward Penfield, Harper & Bros., 1895.

Fig. 12 Edward Penfield, Pony Tracks, 1895



8 Cover design November 1894

Fig. 13 Will Bradley, Inland Printer, Thanksgiving 1894



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Fern Bradley Dutnall

Fig. 14 Will Bradley, Inland Printer, July 1894

November Number



NOW READY

Fig. 15 Charles Warde Traver, Inland Printer, November 1898

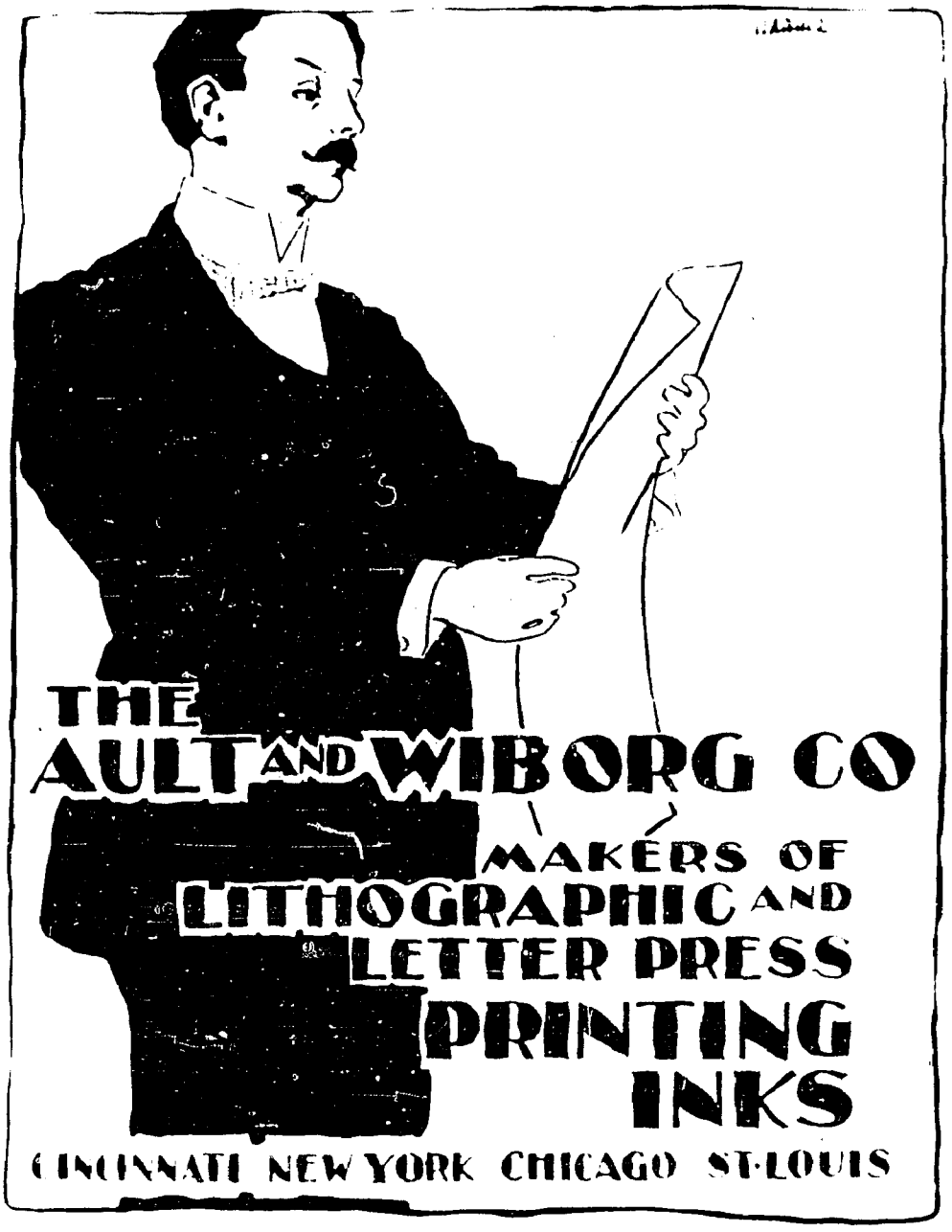


Fig. 16 Anonymous, Ault and Wiborg, after 1893

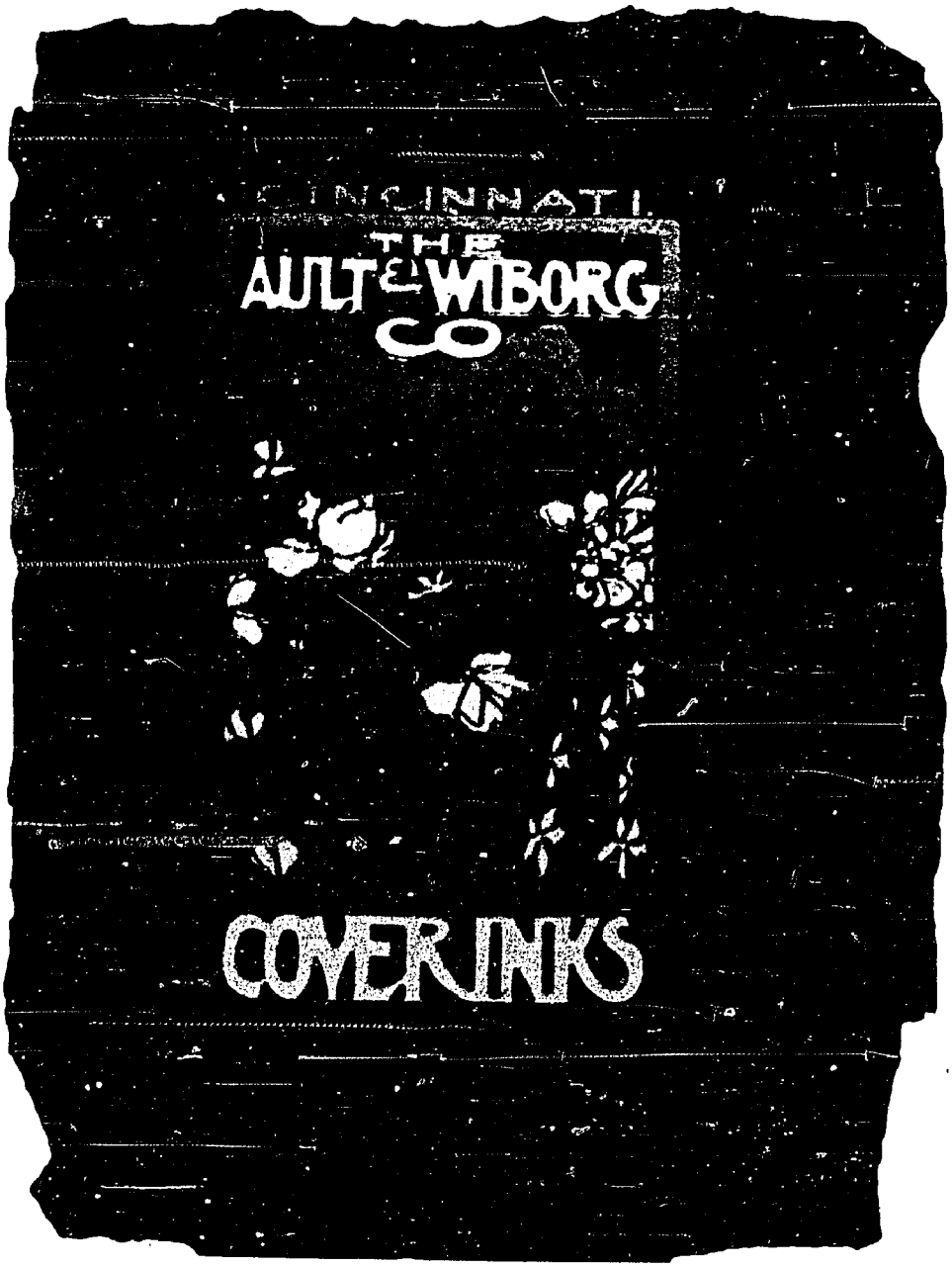


Fig. 17 Anonymous, Ault and Wiborg, after 1893



Fig. 18 J. A. Hughes, The Eagle Printing Ink and Color Works, after 1893

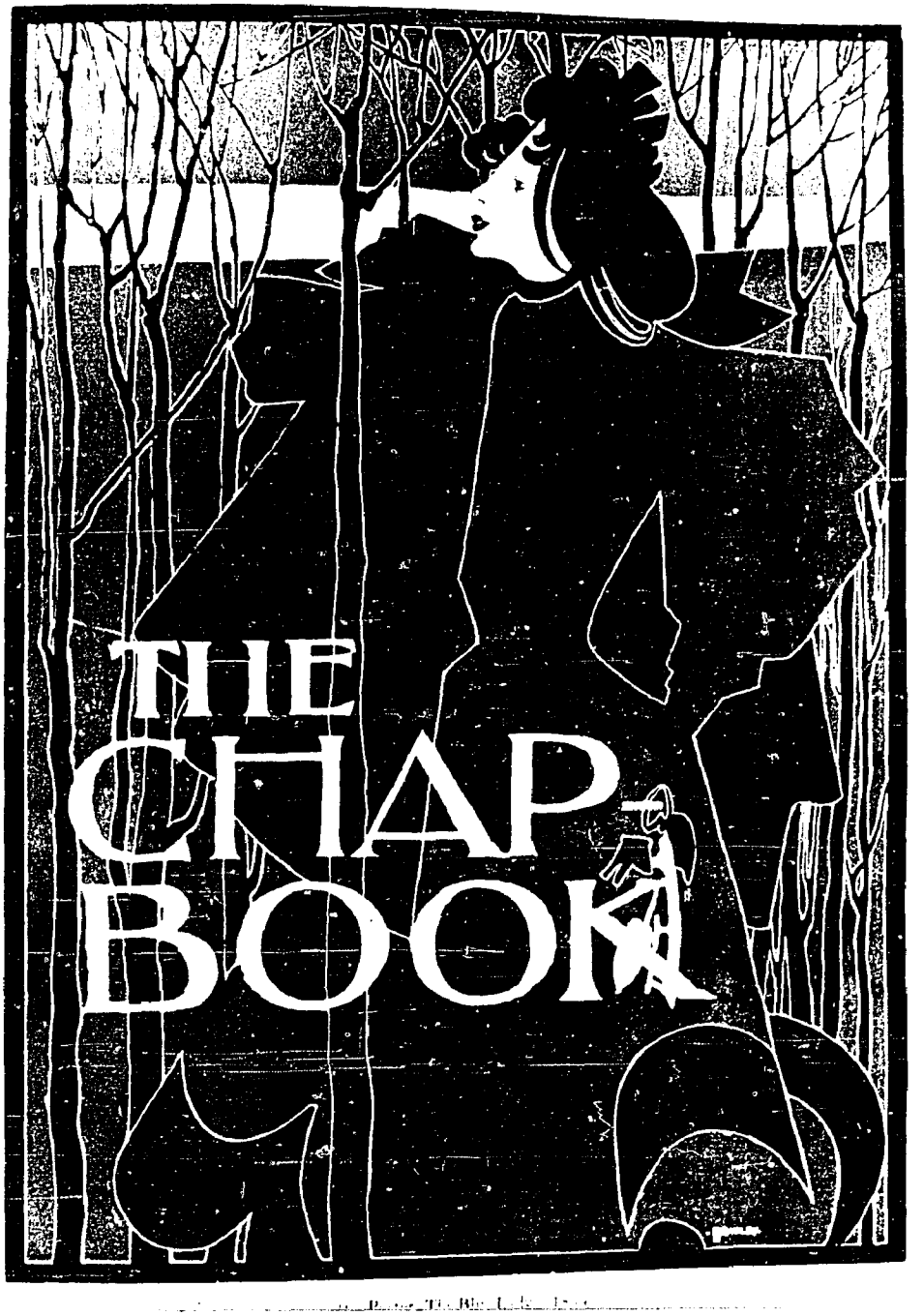


Fig. 19 Will Bradley, "Blue Lady," Chap-Book, 1894



II Poster December 1894

Fig. 20 Will Bradley, When Hearts are Trumps, 1894

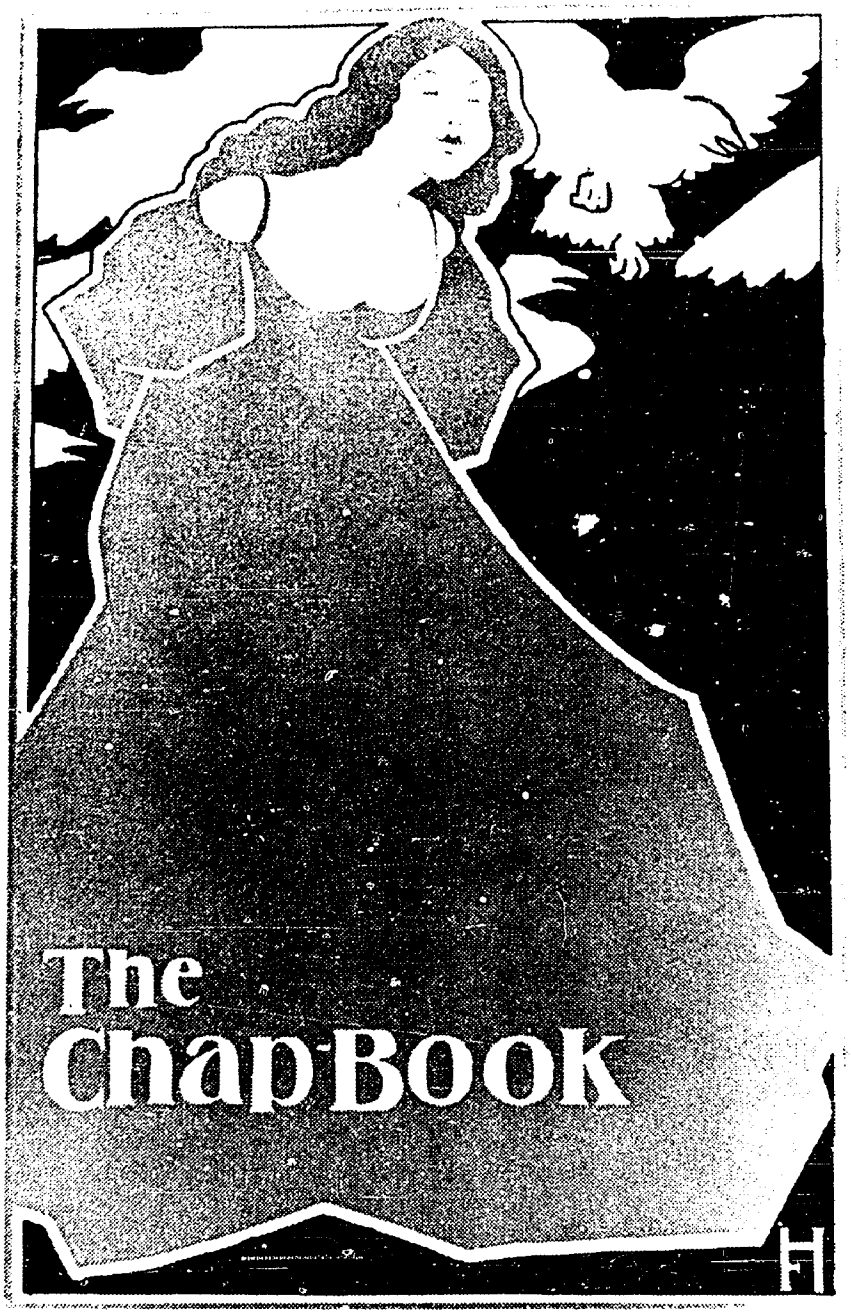
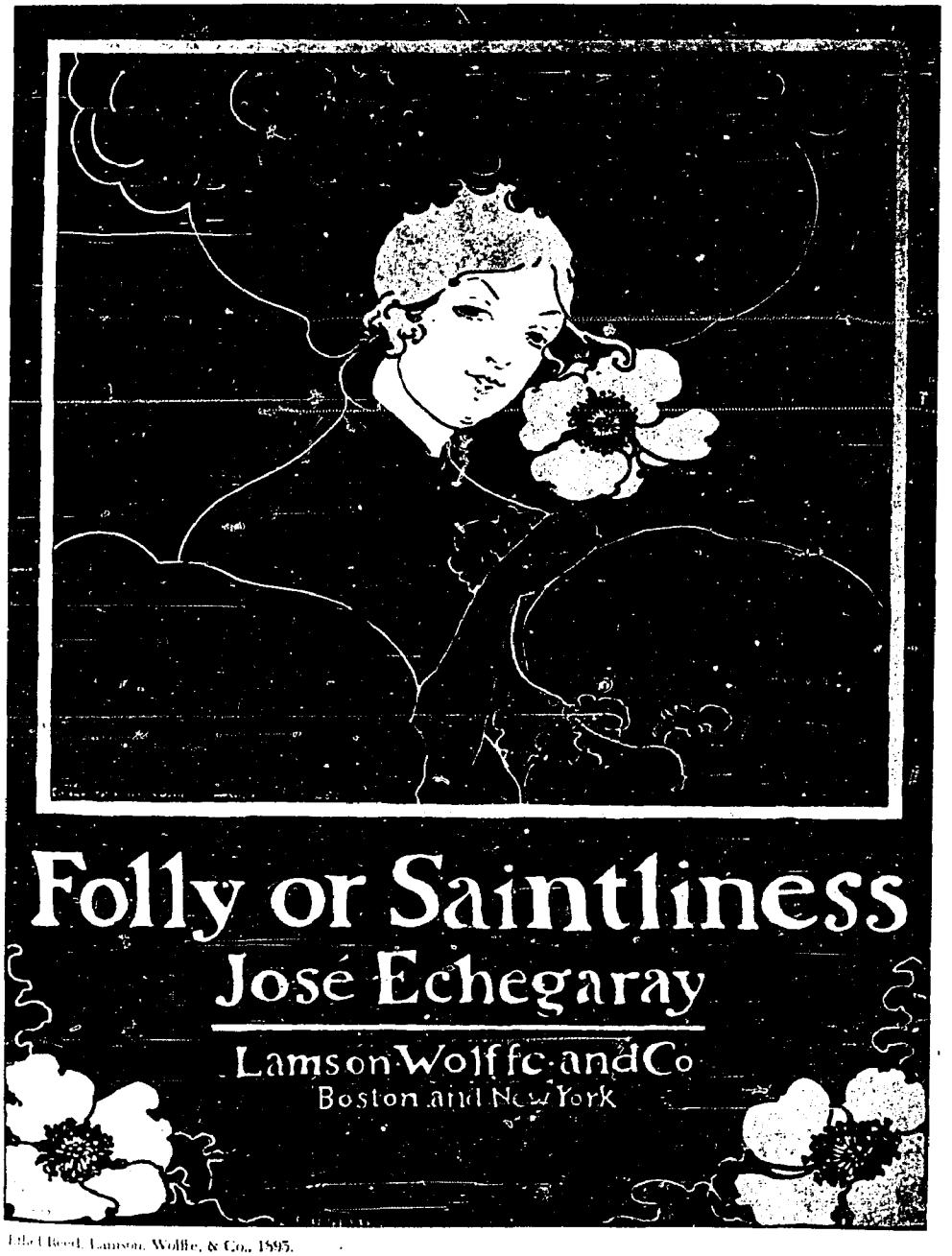


Fig. 21 Frank Hazenplug,
Chap-Book, 1895



Ethel Reed, Lamson, Wolffe, & Co., 1895.

Fig. 22 Ethel Reed, Folly or Saintliness, 1895

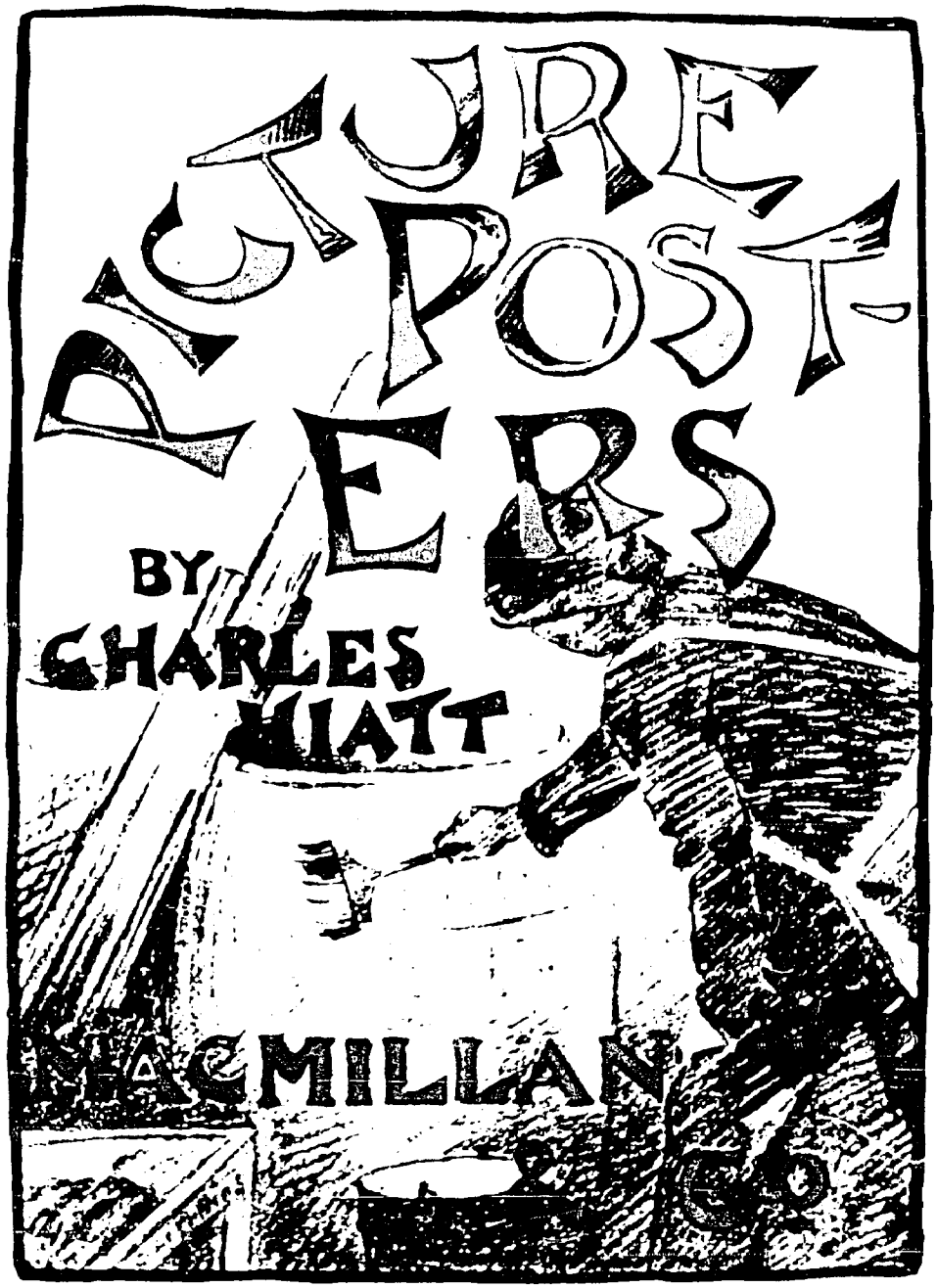


Fig. 23 Anonymous,
Picture Posters, 1895

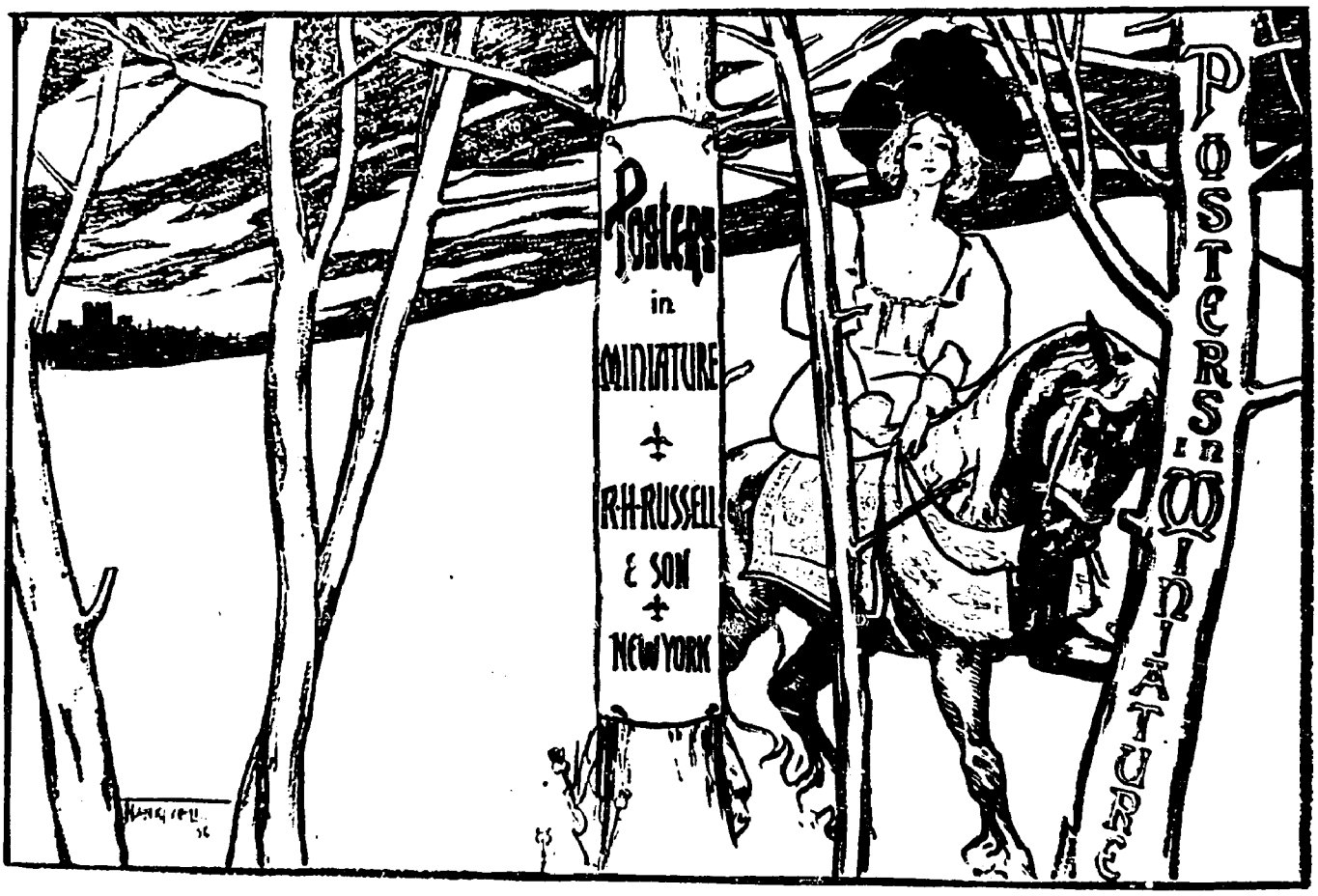
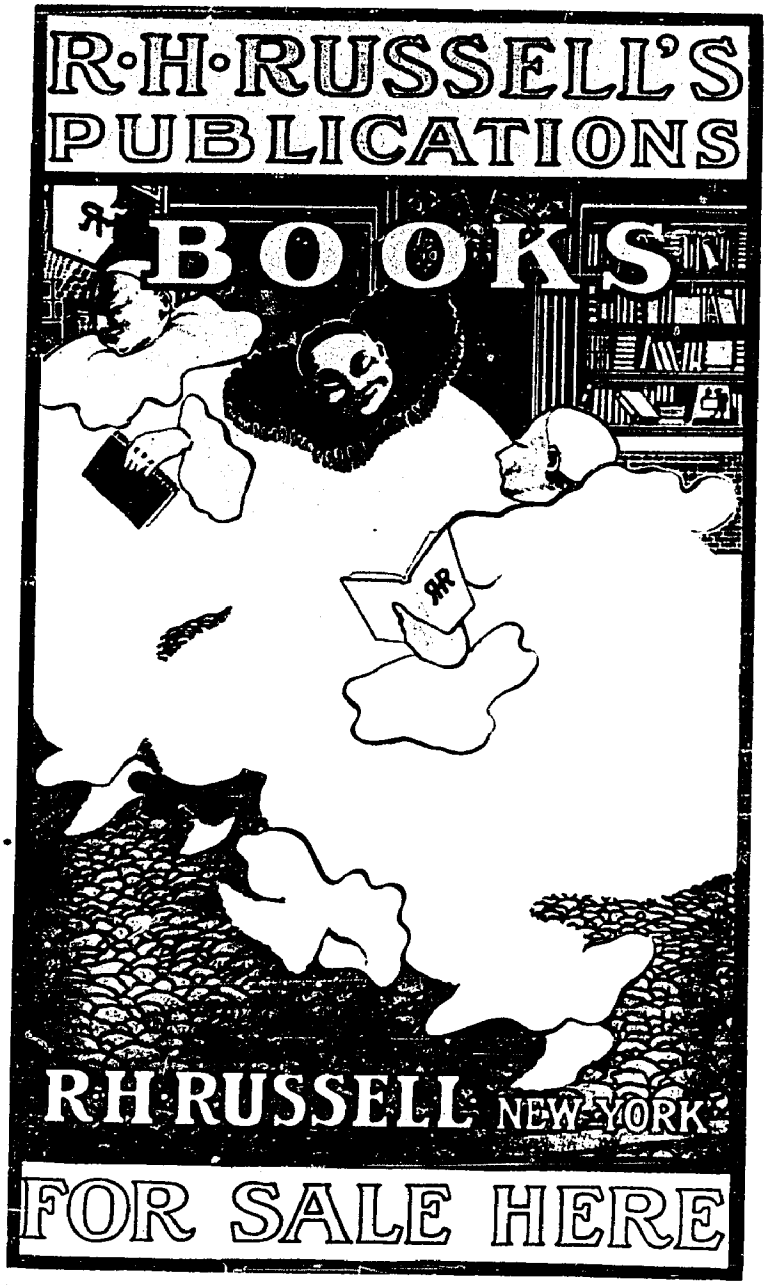


Fig. 24 Frank A. Nankivell,
Posters in Miniature, 1896



E.B. Bird, R.H. Russell, c. 1895.

Fig. 25 E.B. Bird, R.H. Russell's Publications, 1895



DR. JAMESON'S RAIDERS

A NEW BOOK

BY

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

PRICE 50 CENTS

Published by
R.H. Russell & Son
NEW YORK

Fig. 26 Ernest Haskell,
Dr. Jameson's Raiders,
1895



Edwin A. Abbey. R.H. Russell. 1895.

Fig. 27 Edwin Austin Abbey
The Quest of the Holy
Grail, 1895



Fig. 28 Will Bradley,
The Modern Poster, 1895



Fig. 29 Anonymous,
Art Interchange, 1895



Fig. 30 Will H. Low,
Scribner's, 1895

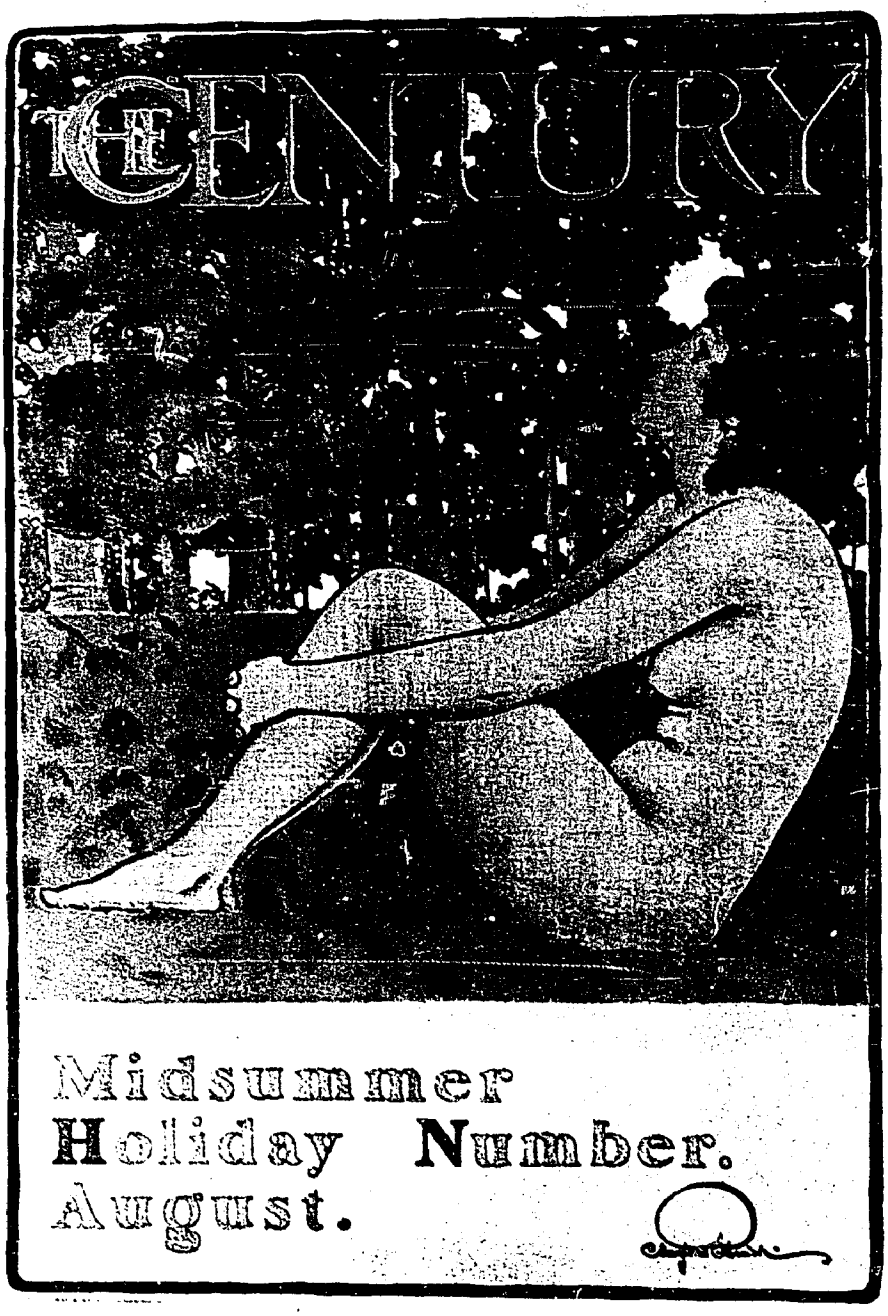


Fig. 31 Maxfield Parrish,
Century, 1896



Fig. 32 Maxfield Parrish, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Poster Show, 1896

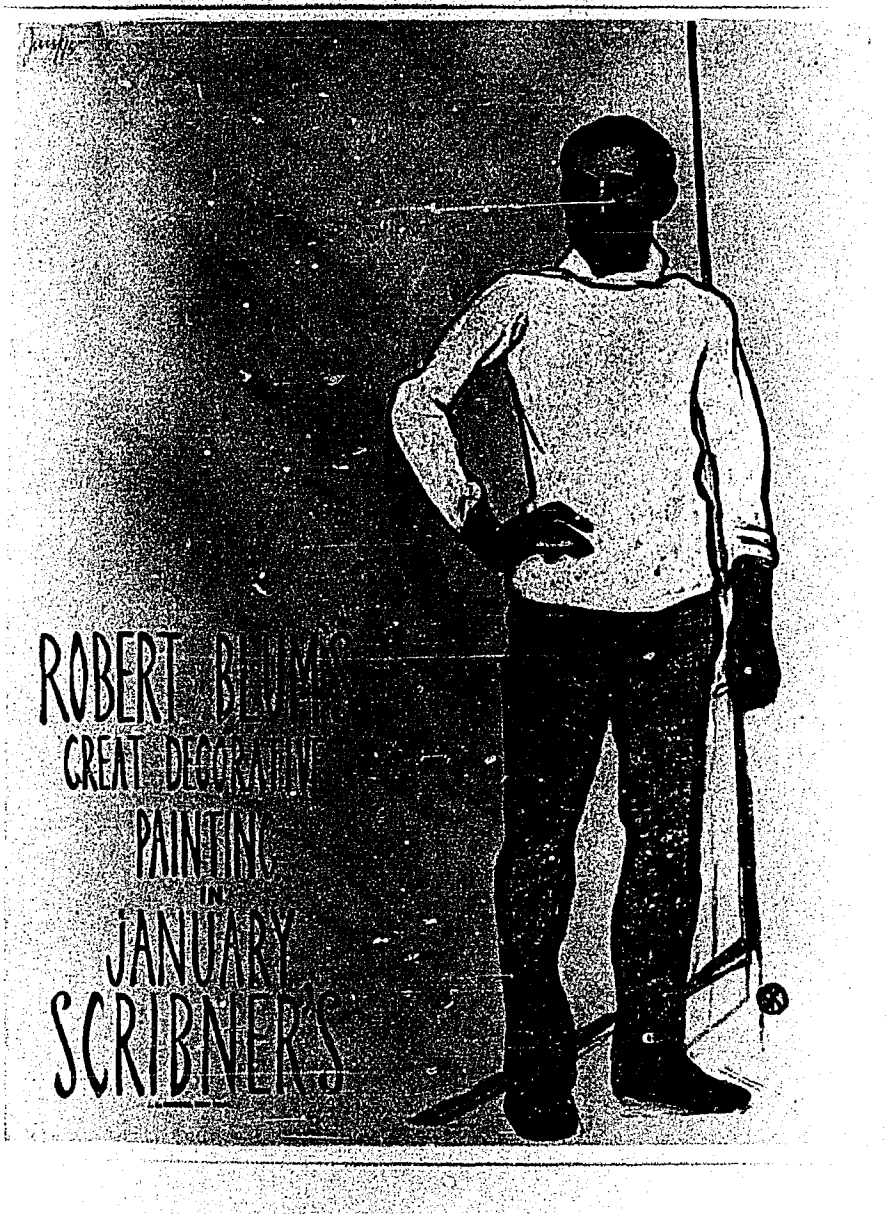


Fig. 33 Sargent Kendall,
Scribner's, 1895

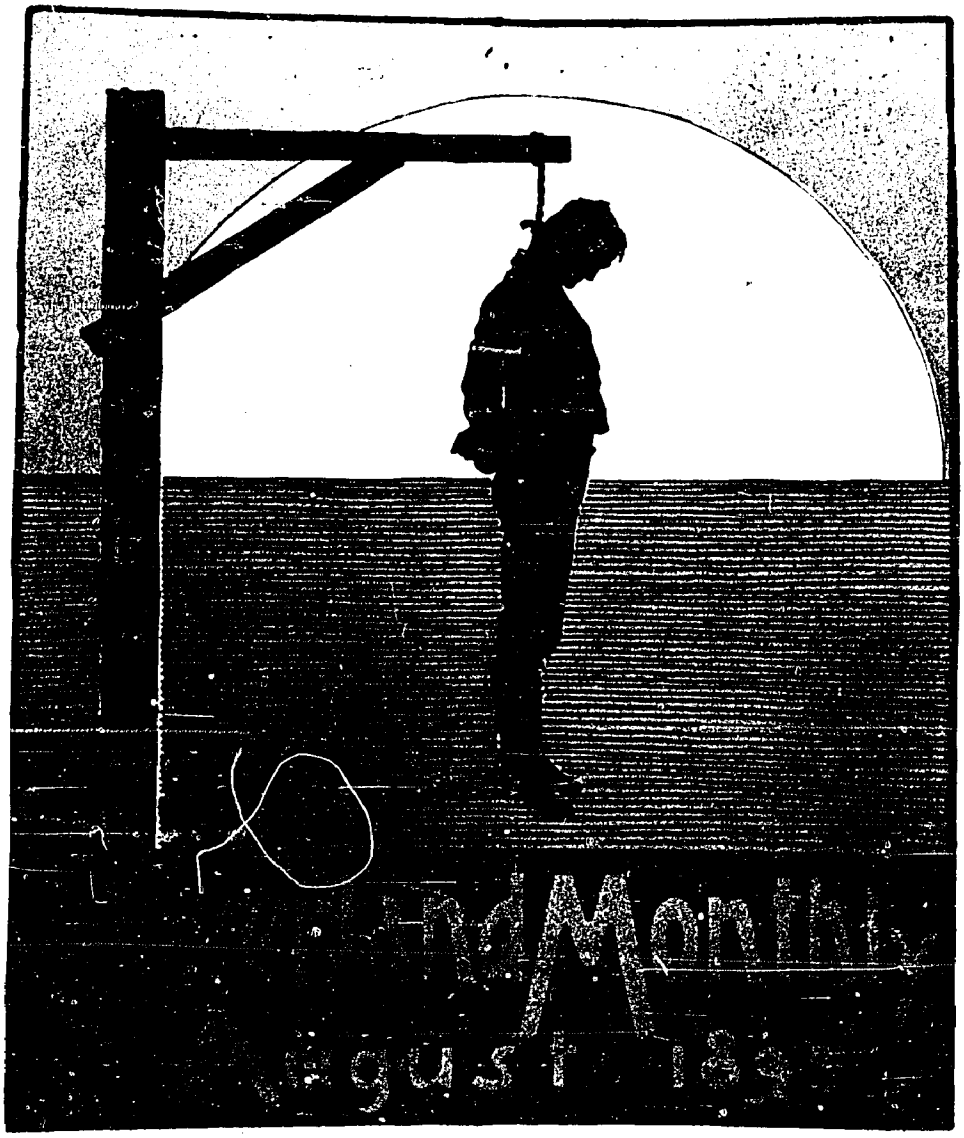
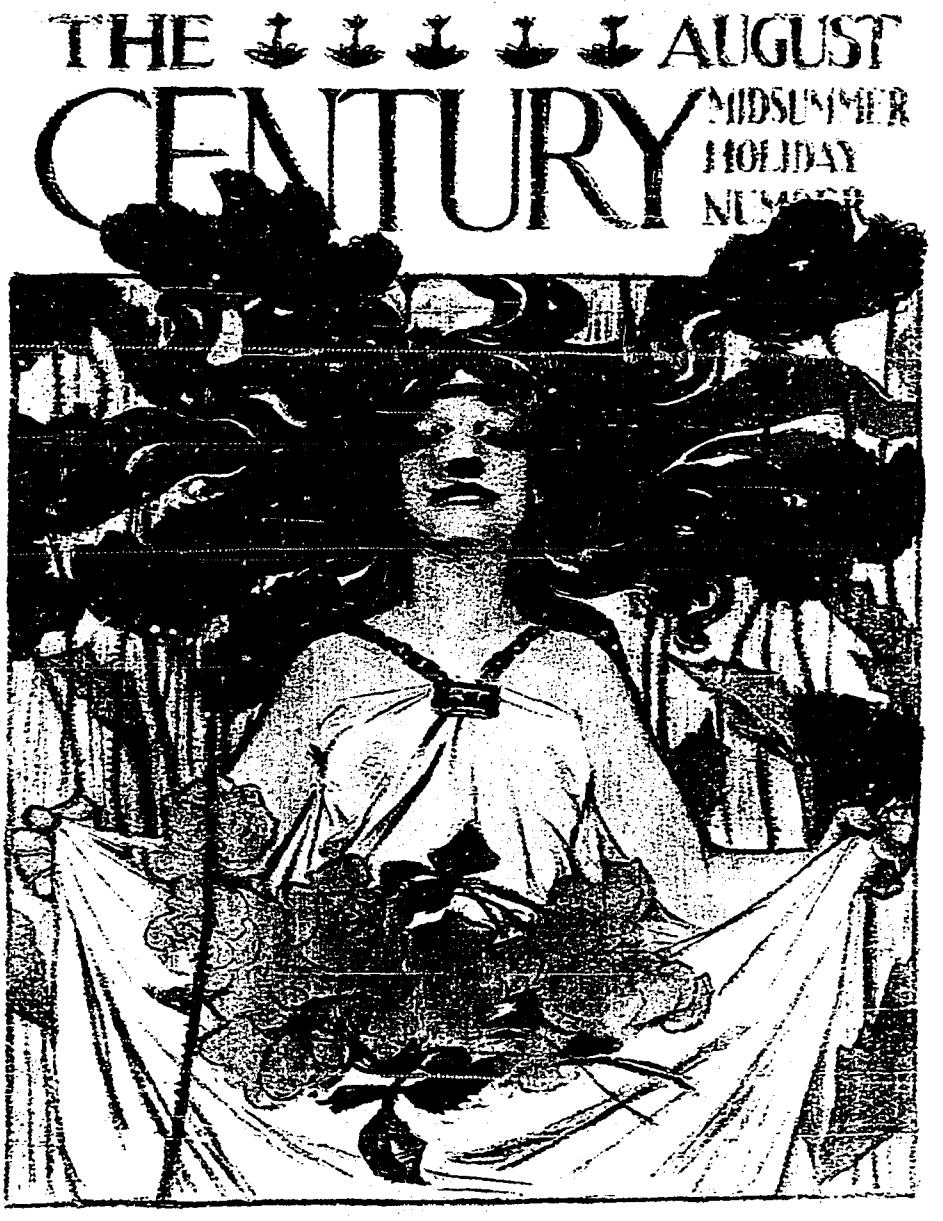


Fig. 34 L. Maynard Dixon, Overland Monthly, 1895



J.C. Leyendecker, *The Century*, 1896. This design won first prize in the magazine's midsummer poster contest.

Fig. 35 J. C. Leyendecker, Century, 1896

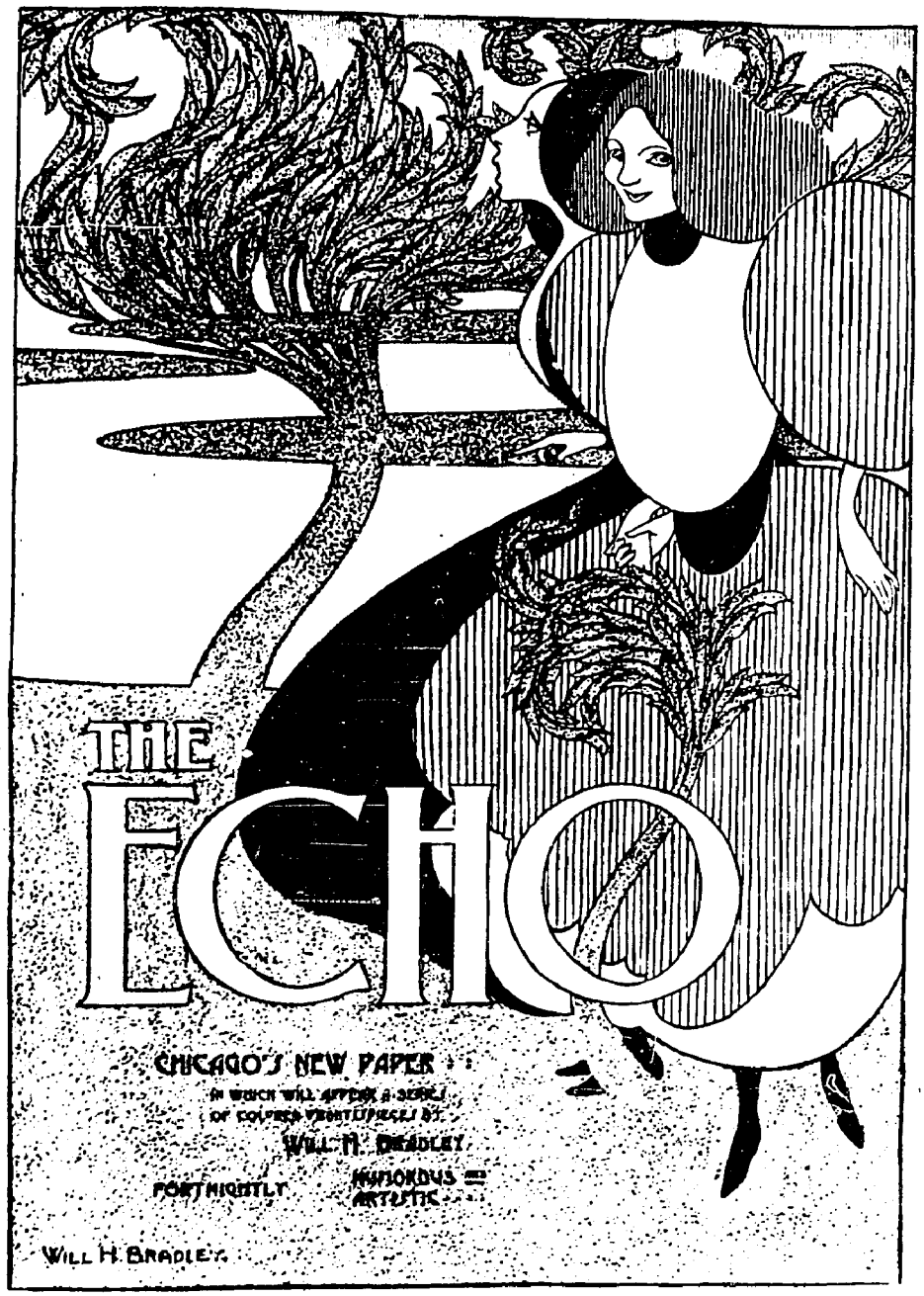
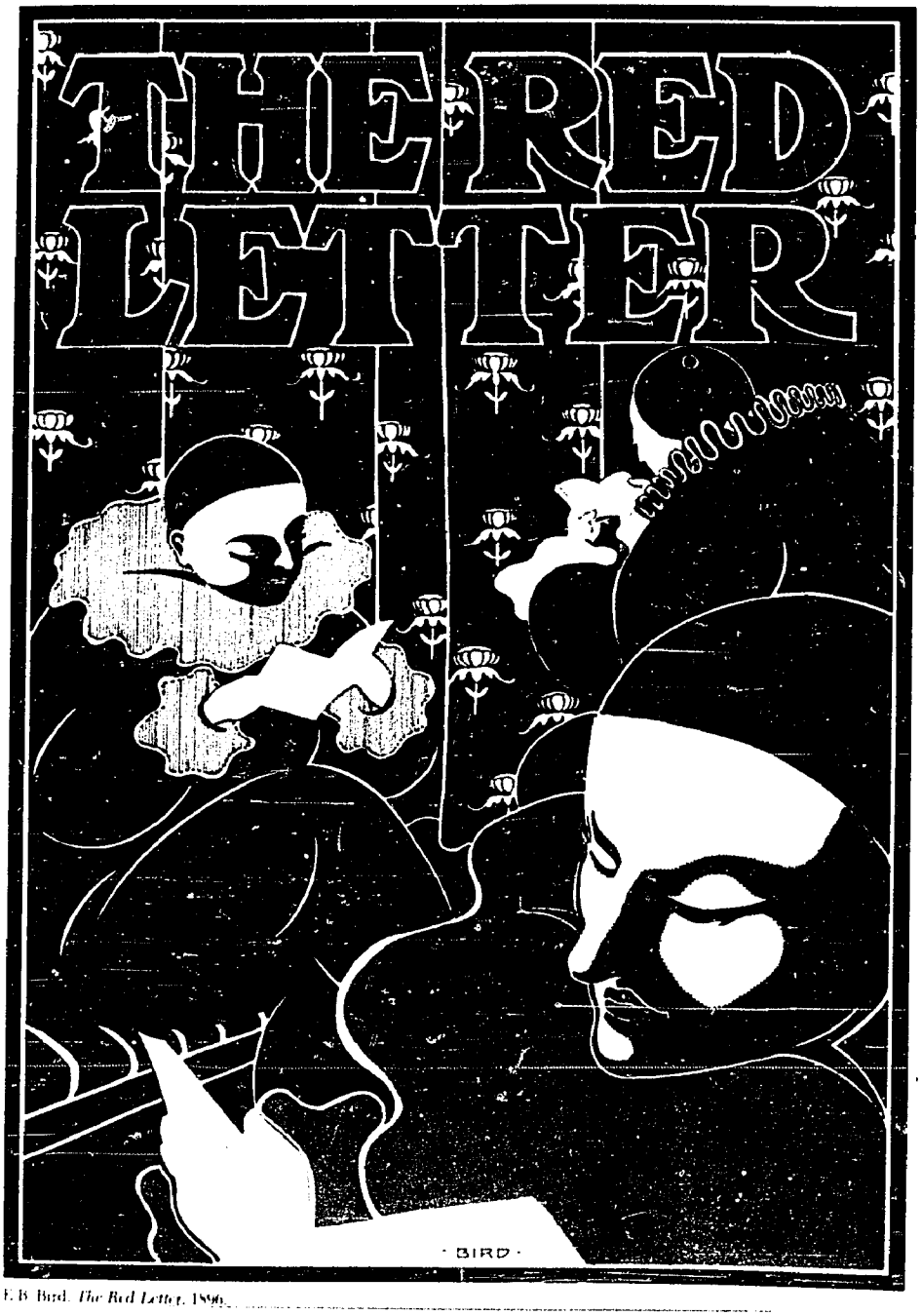


Fig. 36 Will Bradley, Echo, 1895



FOR SALE HERE.

Fig. 37 John Sloan, Echo, 1895



E. B. Bird. *The Red Letter*, 1896.

Fig. 38 E. B. Bird, Red Letter, 1896

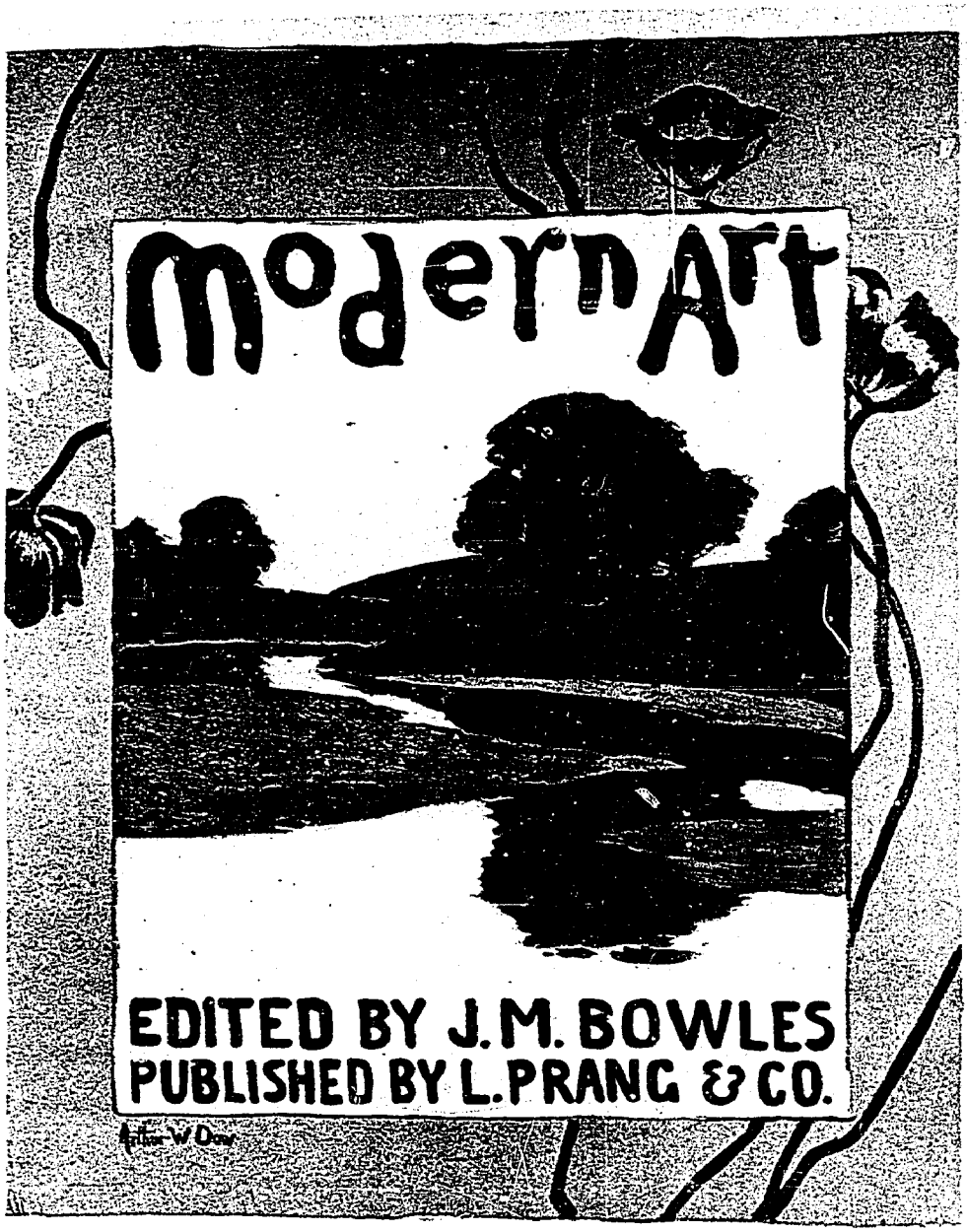


Fig. 39 Arthur Wesley Dow, Modern Art, 1895



Fig. 40 E. B. Bird, Poster, 1896



George Frederick Scotson-Clark, *The New York Recorder*, c. 1895.

Fig. 41 George Frederick Scotson-Clark, New York Recorder, 6 January 1895



Fig. 42 Anonymous, New York World, 15 September 1895

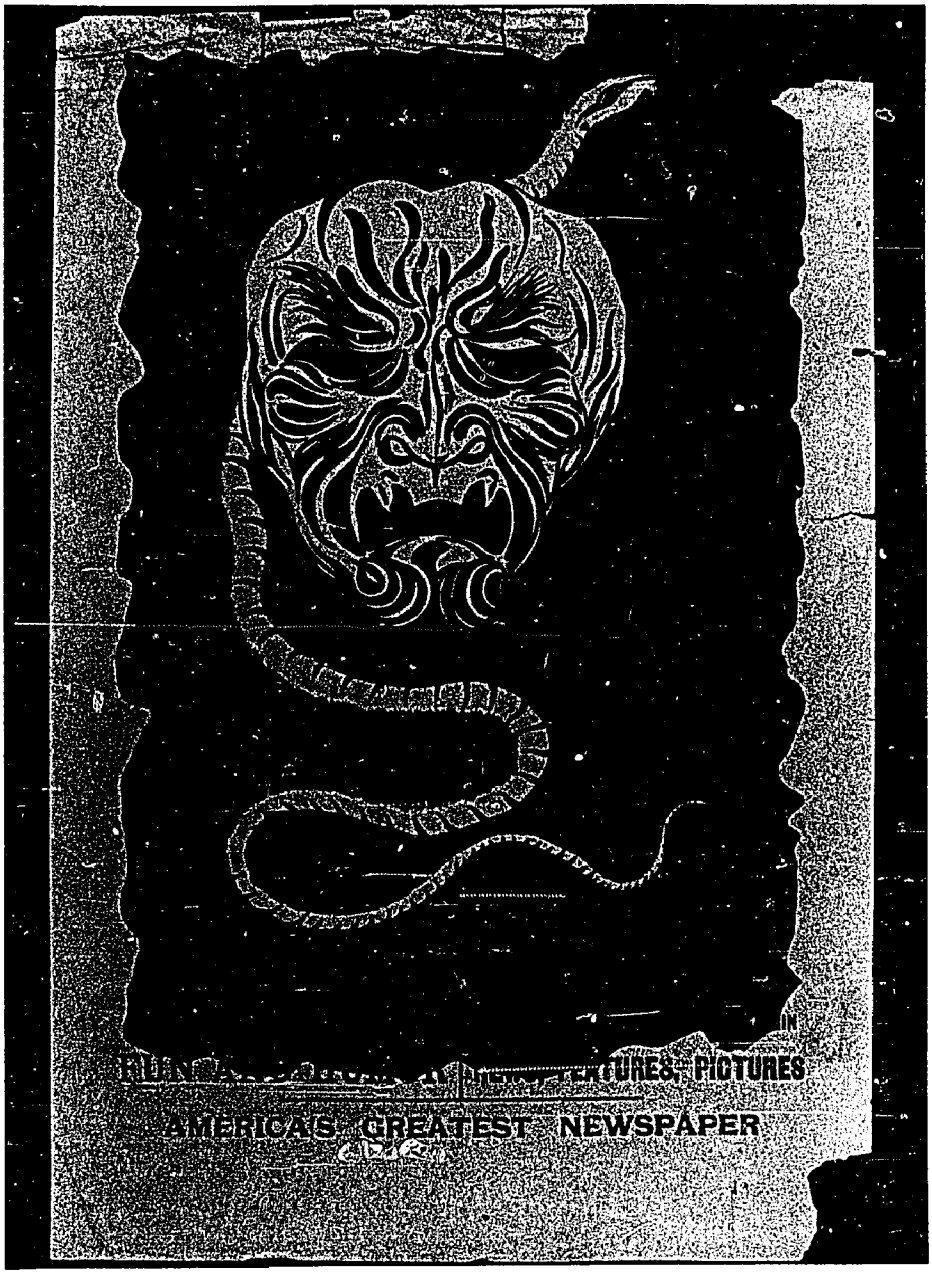


Fig. 43 Anonymous, New York World, 22 September 1895

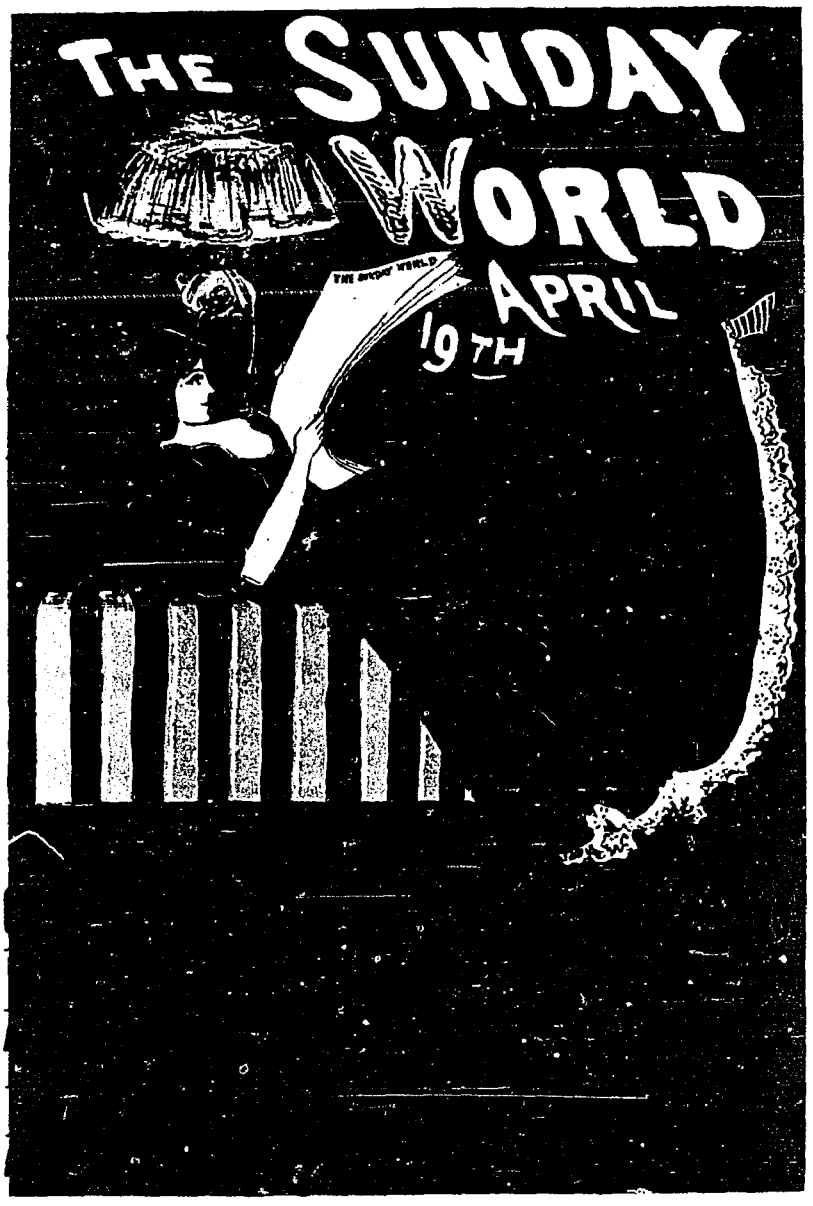


Fig. 44 Anonymous, Sunday World, (I), 19 April 1896

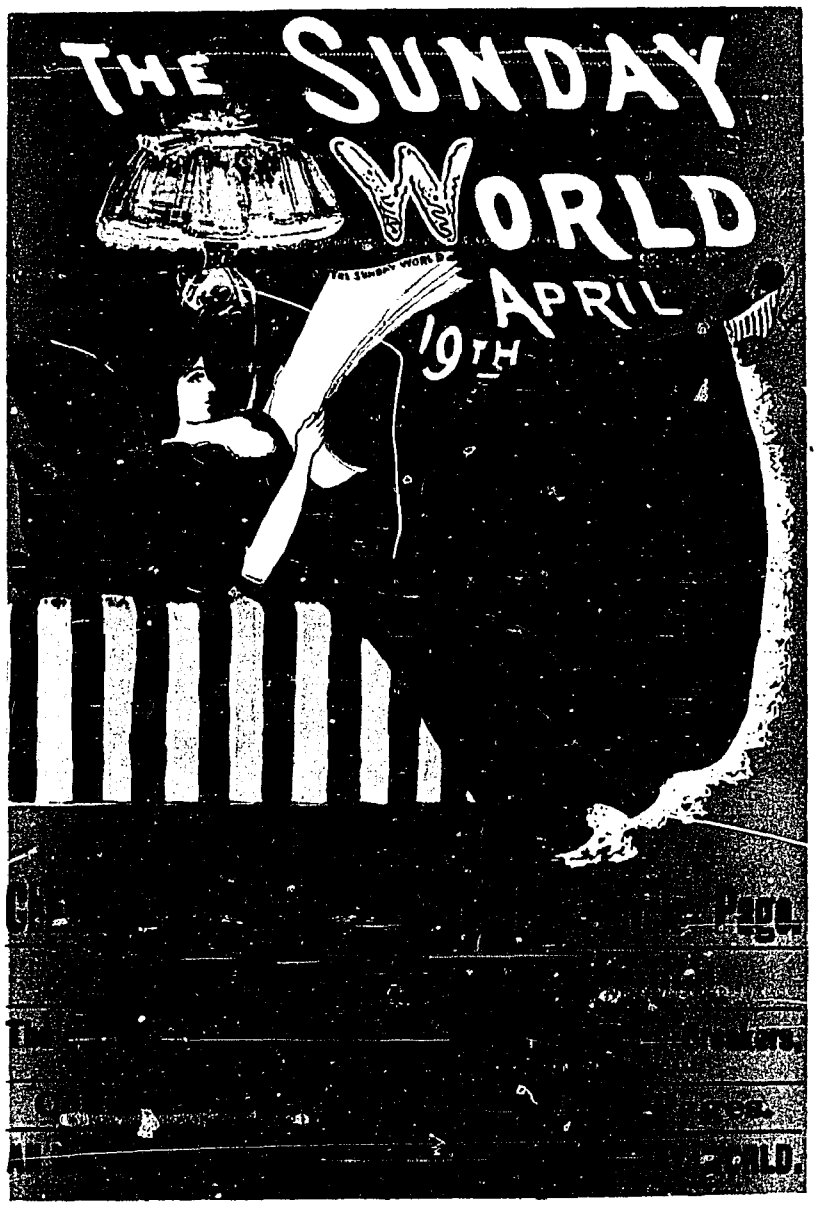


Fig. 45 Anonymous, Sunday World, (II), 19 April 1896



Fig. 46 Louis Rhead, Advertising in the Sun, 1894



Fig. 47 Edward Potthast, New York Times, 9 Feb. 1896



Fig. 48 Edward Potthast,
Century, July 1896



Fig. 49 Robert Chambers
The King in Yellow,
1895

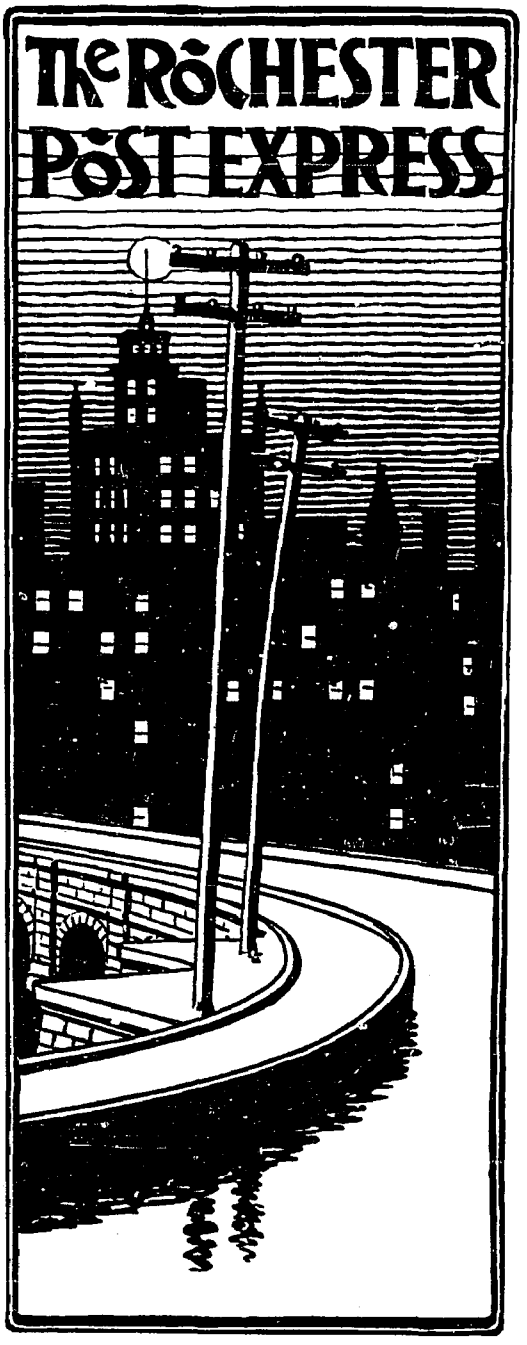
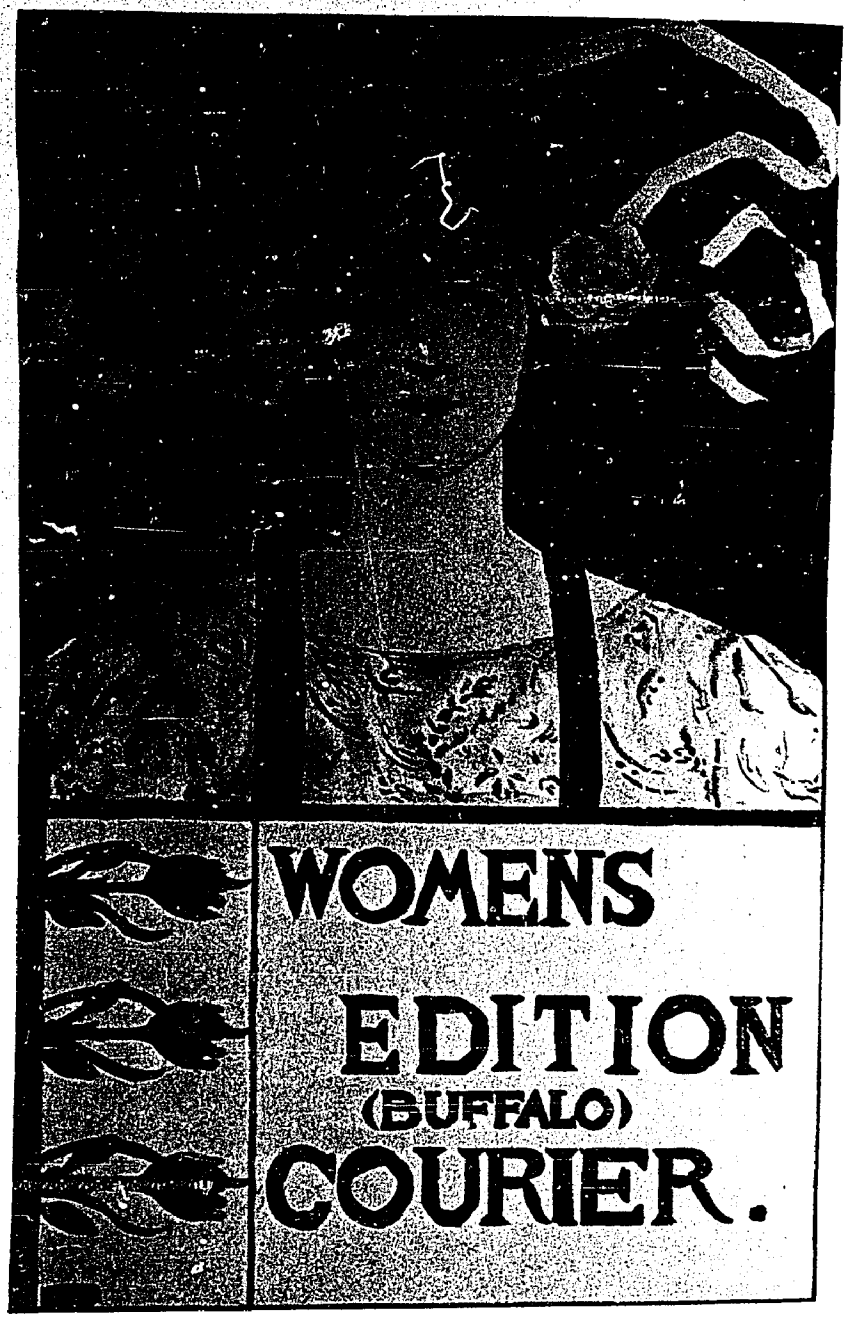


Fig. 50 Claude Fayette Bragdon, Rochester Post Express, 1895



Alice Glenny, *Buffalo Courier*, c. 1895

Fig. 51 Alice Glenny, Buffalo Courier Women's Edition, 1895



Fig. 52 Ethel Reed, Boston Sunday Herald, 24 February 1895



Ethel Reed, *The Boston Herald*, c. 1895.

Fig. 53 Ethel Reed, Boston Sunday Herald 24 March 1895



Fig. 54 George Brill, Philadelphia Sunday Press, 12 January 1896

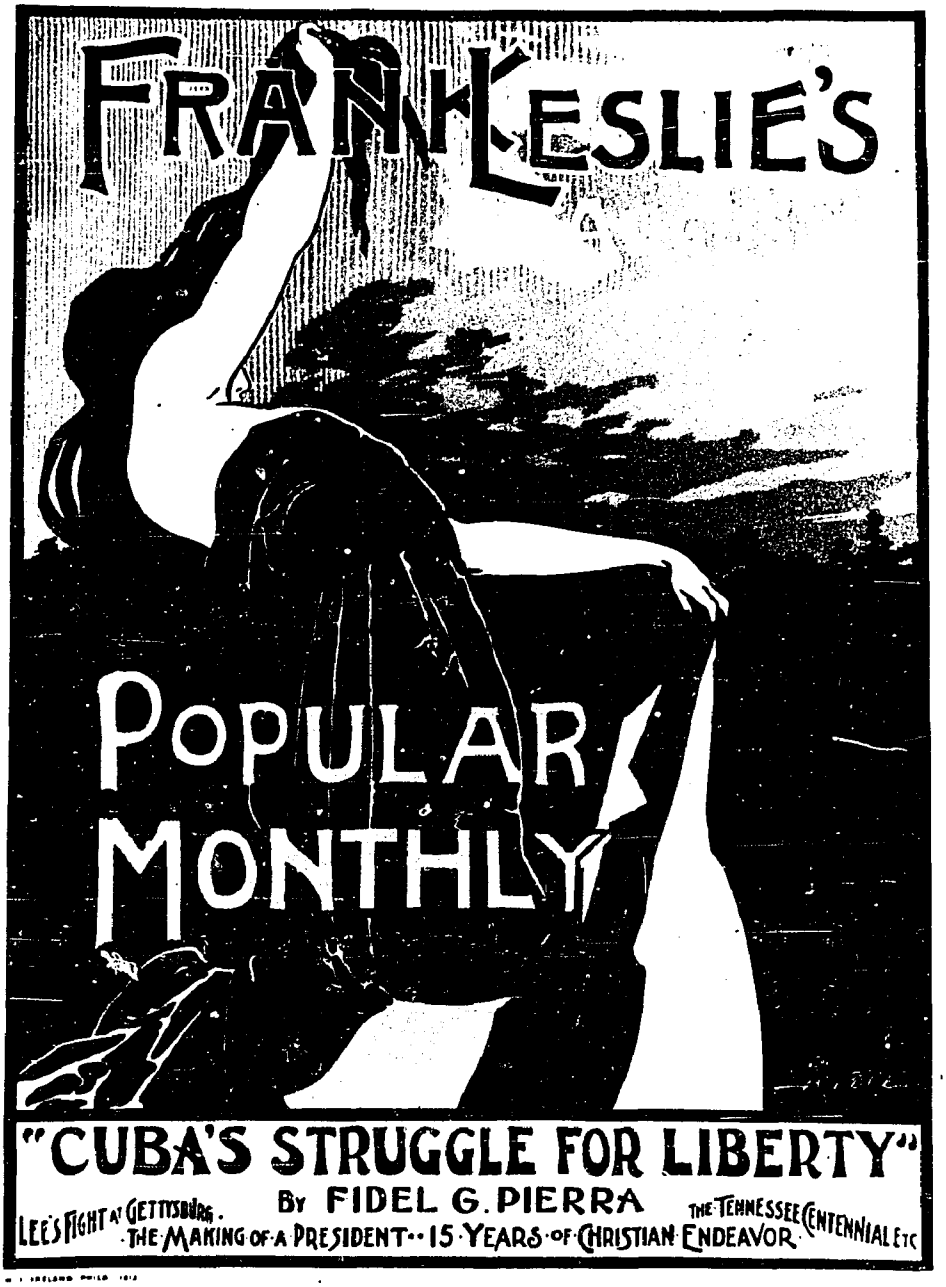
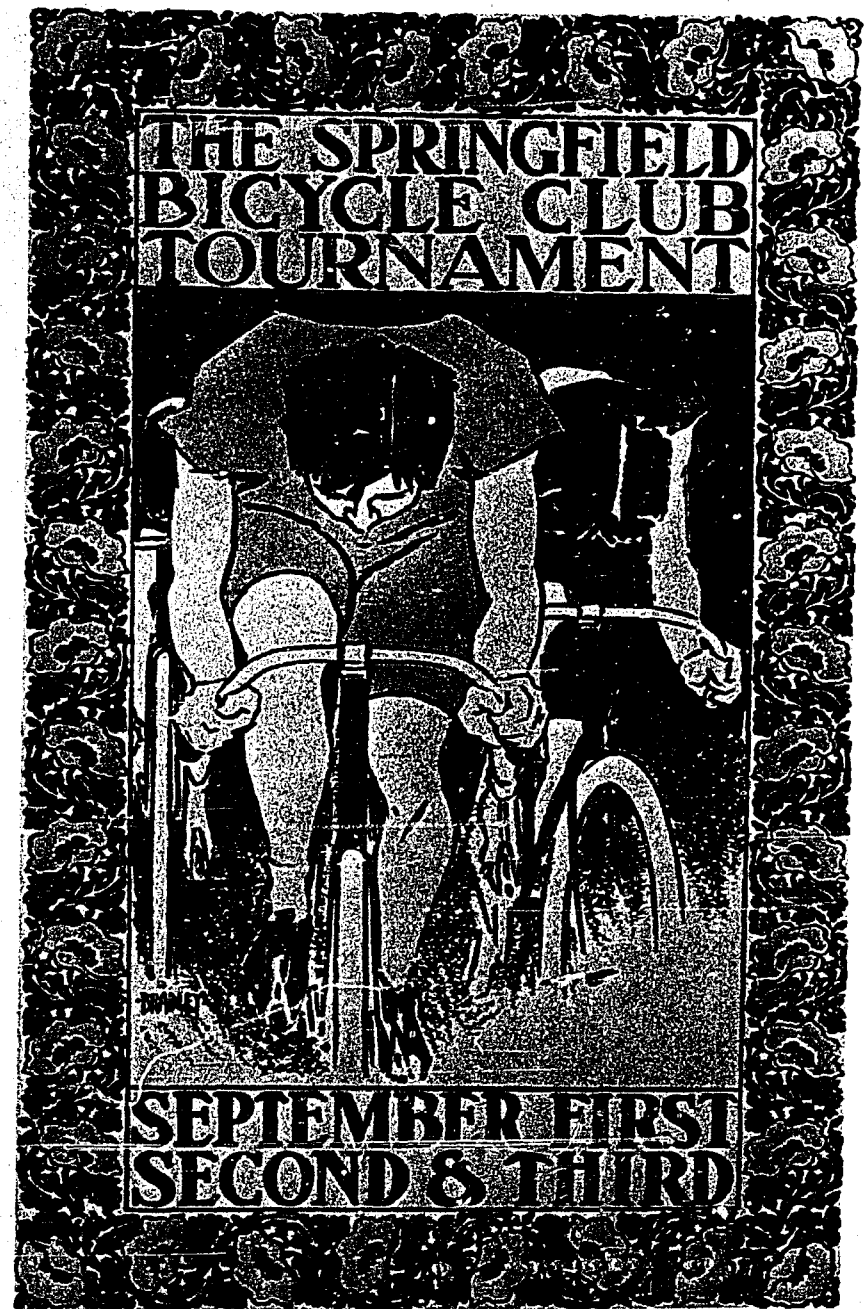


Fig. 55 George Brill, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly, 1896



Fig. 56 Will Bradley, Springfield Bicycle Club Tournament, 1895



Will Bradley, The Springfield Bicycle Club, 1896.

Fig. 57 Will Bradley, Springfield Bicycle Club Tournament, 1896



Maxfield Parrish, Pope Mfg. Co., 1896. Parrish's poster won first prize in the 1896 Columbia Bicycle contest.

Fig. 58 Maxfield Parrish, Columbia Bicycles, 1896



Fig. 59 Edward Penfield,
Galakton, 1896

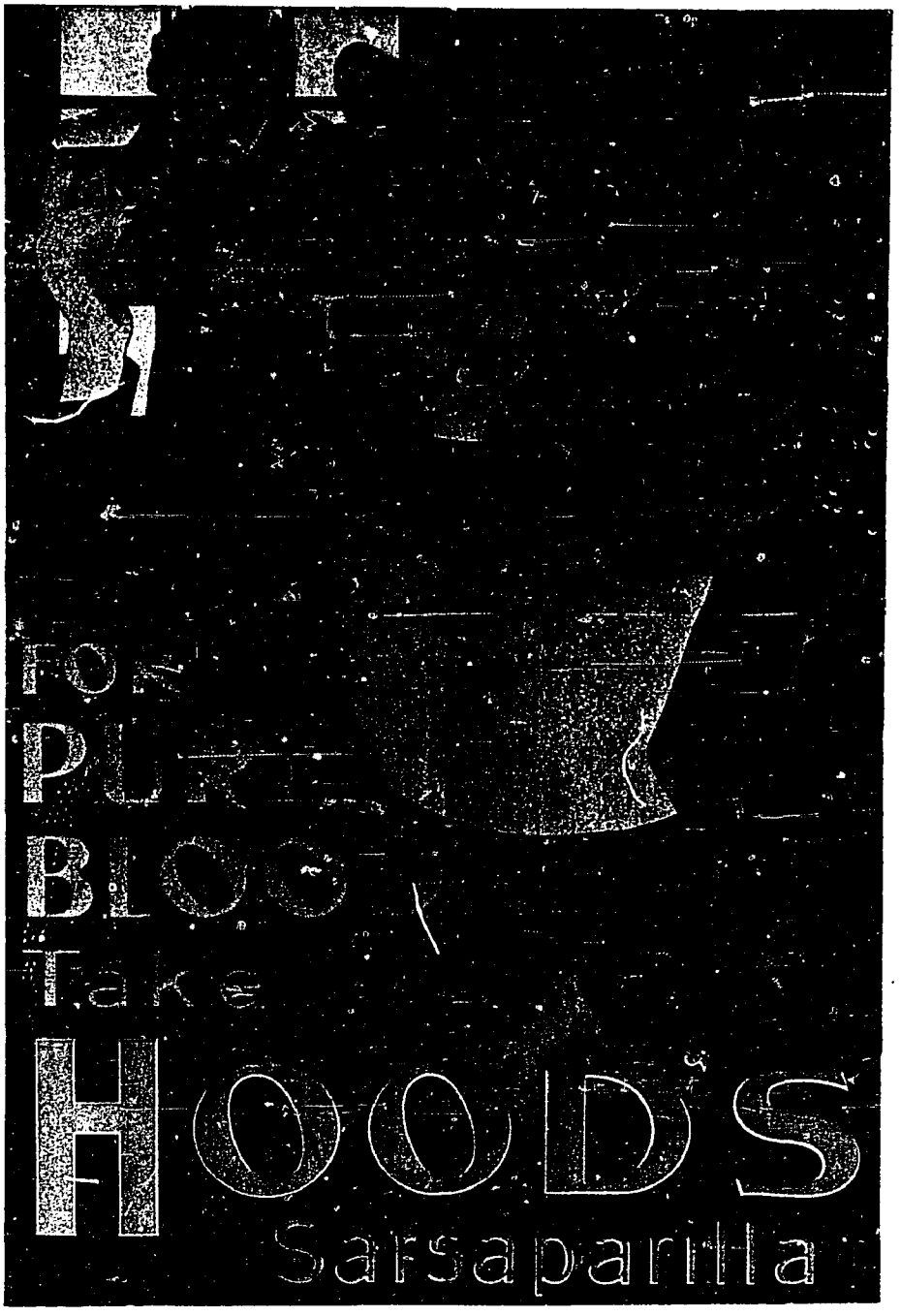


Fig. 60 Will Bradley,
Hood's Sasparilla, 1896

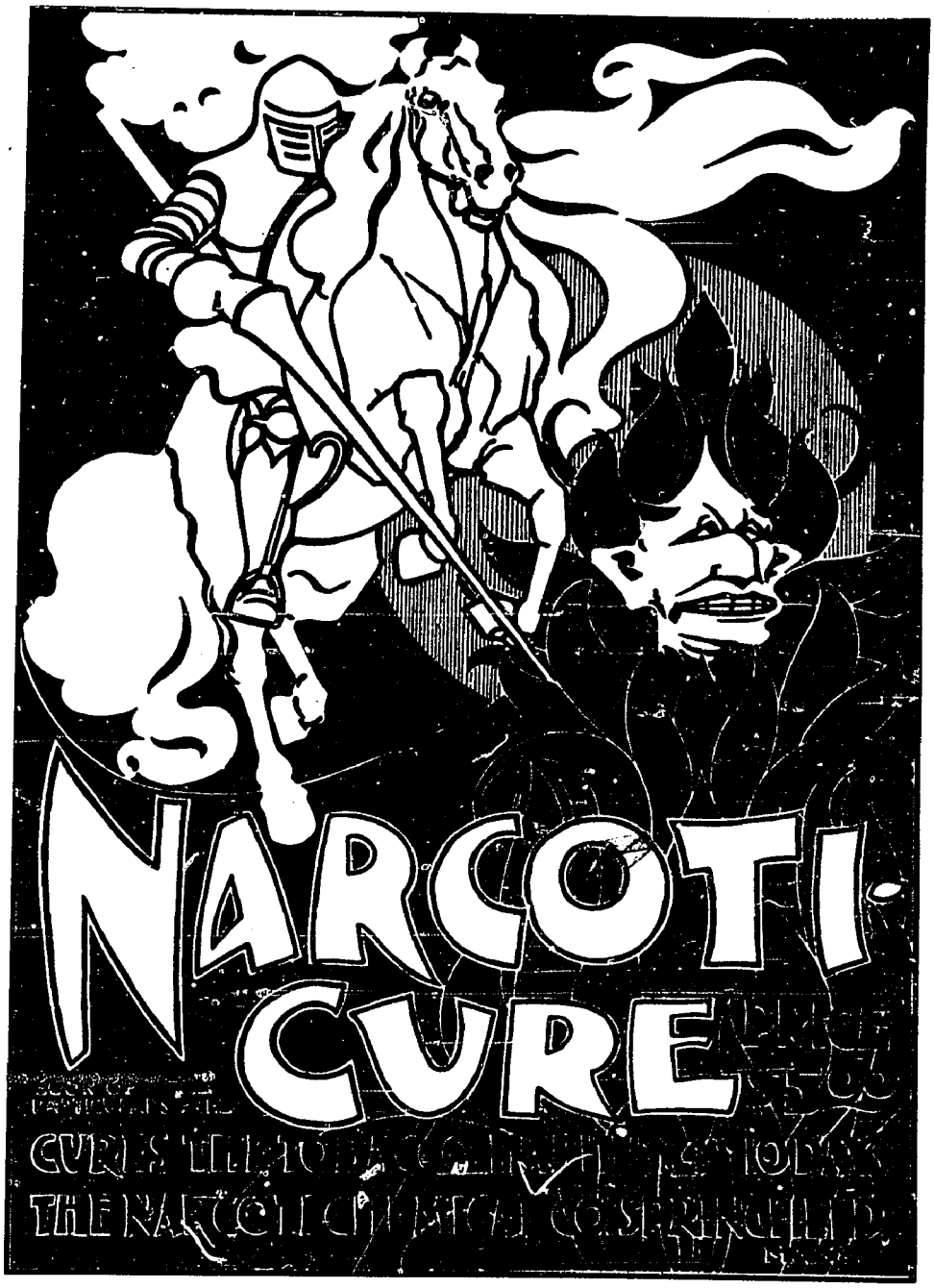


Fig. 61 Will Bradley, Narcoti-Cure, 1895

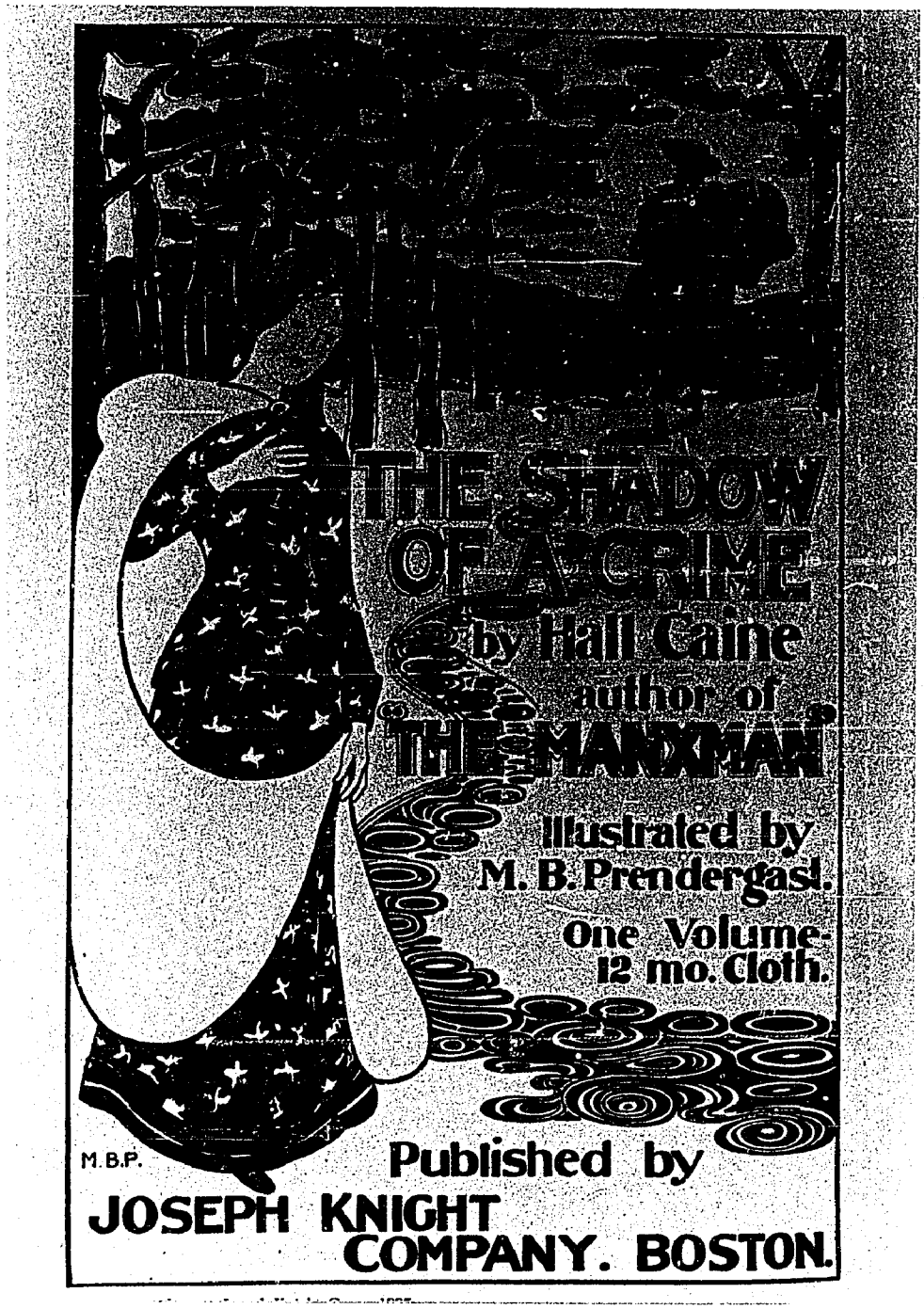


Fig. 62 Maurice Prendergast, The Shadow of a Crime, 1895

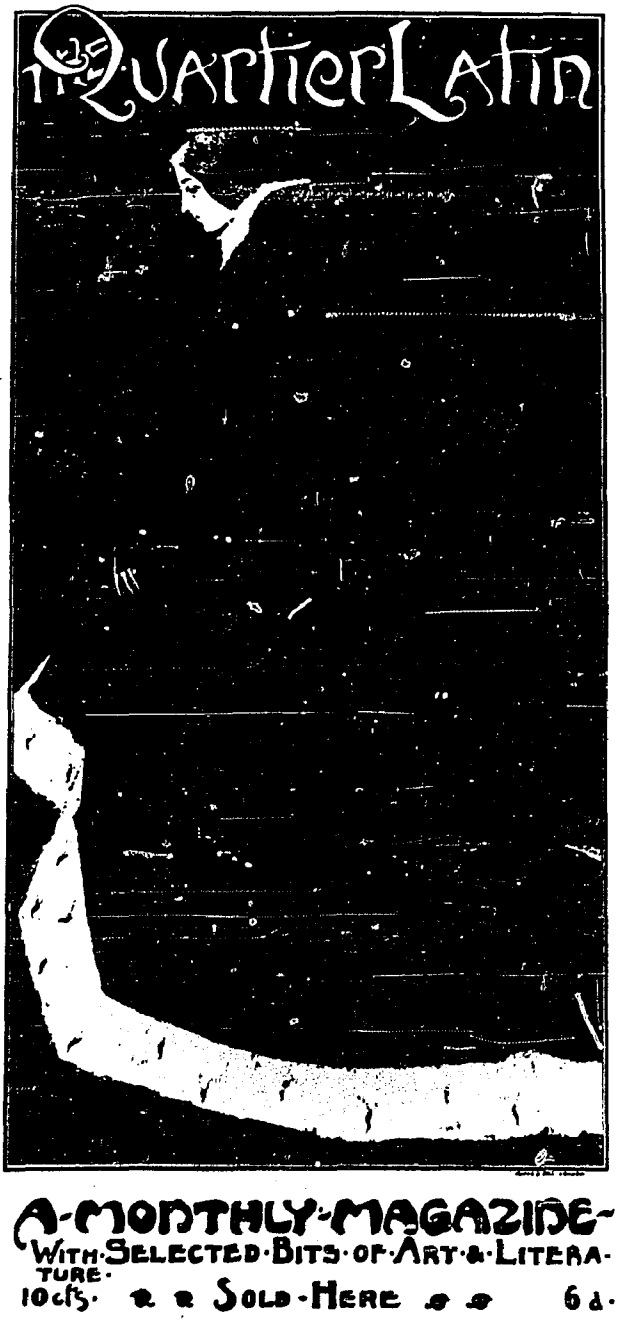


Fig. 63 Maud Fangel, Quartier Latin, 1897



Fig. 64 M. E. Norton, Two Posters for the Bookman, 1895



Fig. 55 Violet Oakley,
<u>A Puritan's Wife</u>, 1896

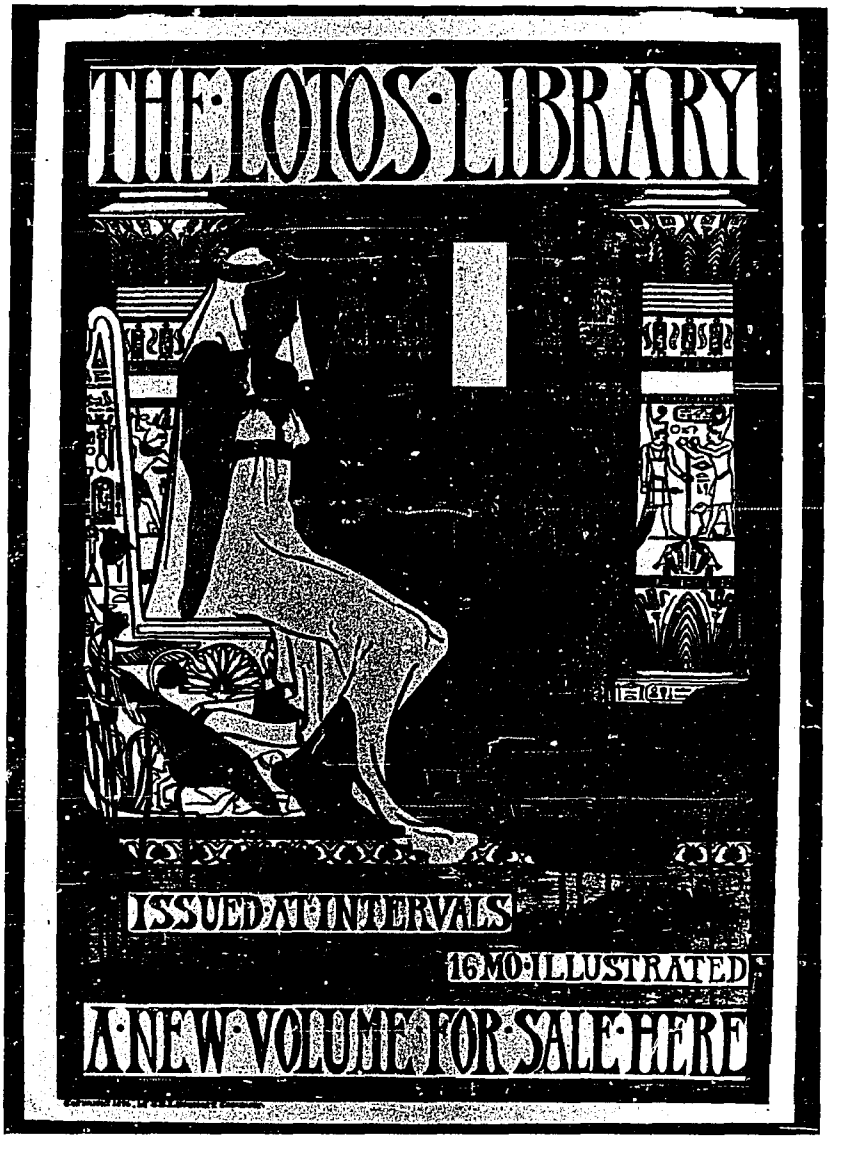
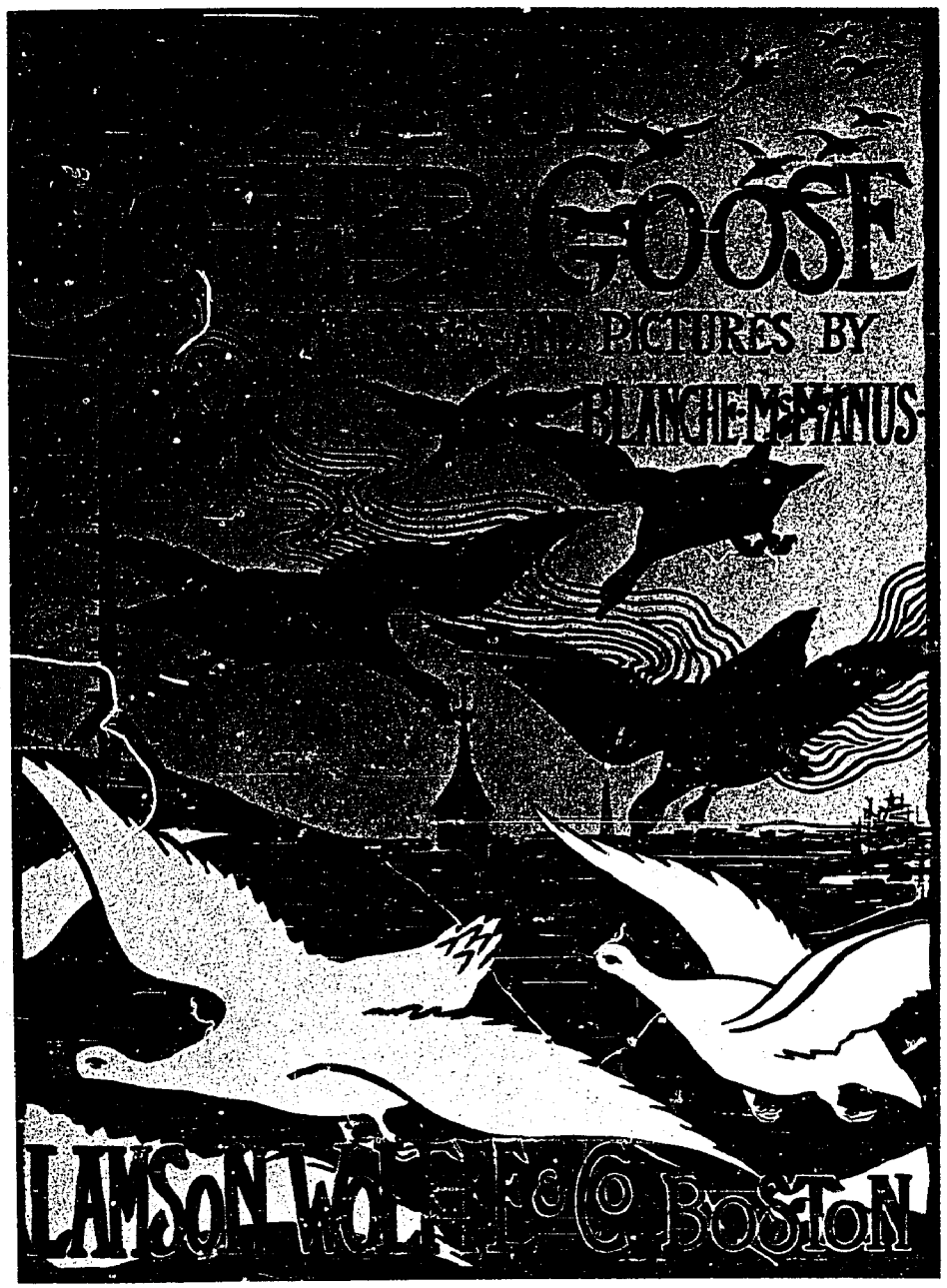


Fig. 66 Violet Oakley,
The Lotos Library,
1896



Blanche McManus, Lamson, Wolffe & Co., 1895.

Fig. 67 Blanche McManus, The True Mother Goose, 1895



Fig. 68 Florence Lundborg, Lark, 1896



Alice Glenny, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and Society, 1897.

Fig. 69 Alice Glenny, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and Society, 1897

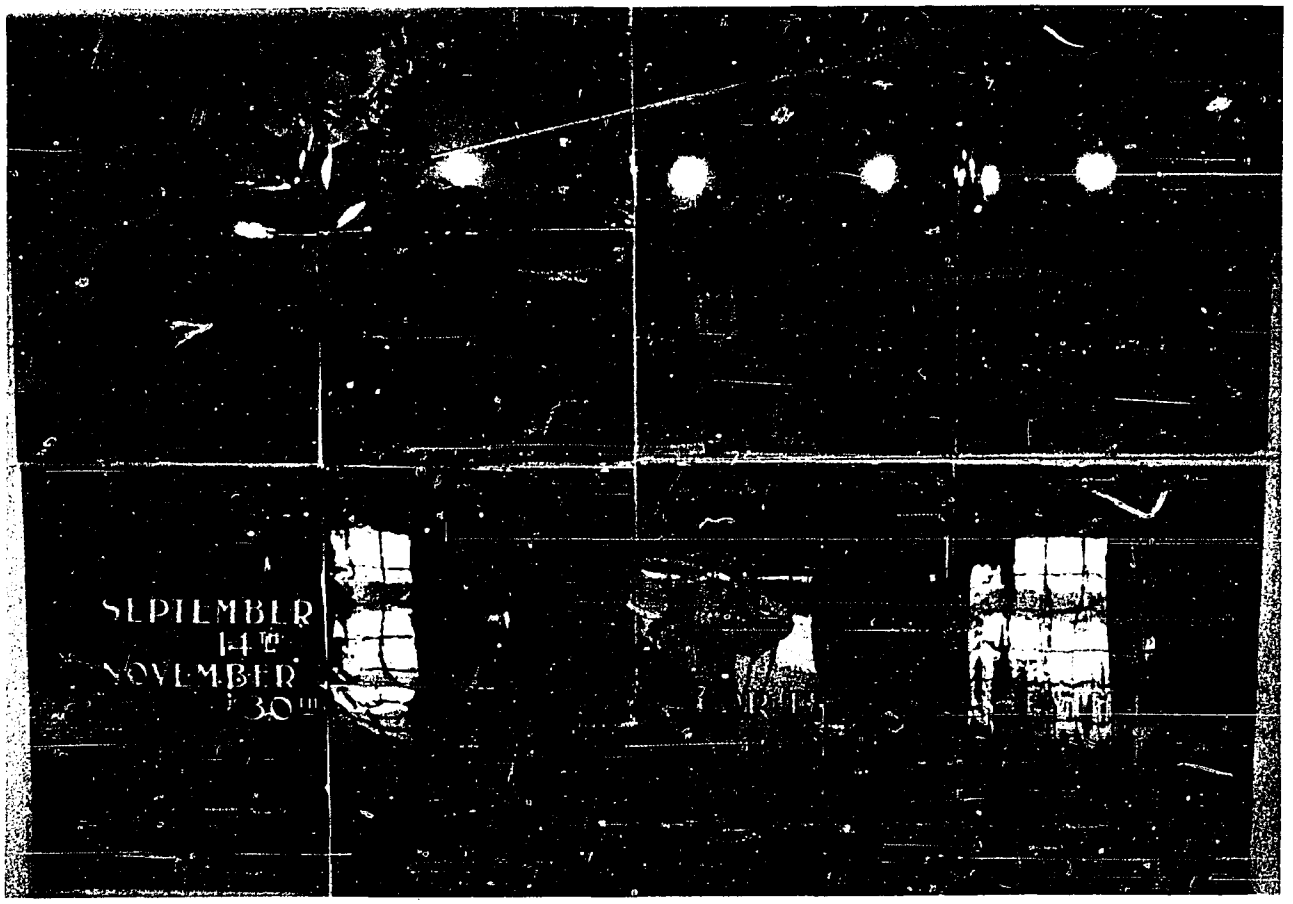


Fig. 70 Bertha Corson Day, National Export Exposition, 1899



Fig. 71 Bertha Corson Day
L'Enfance, 1896



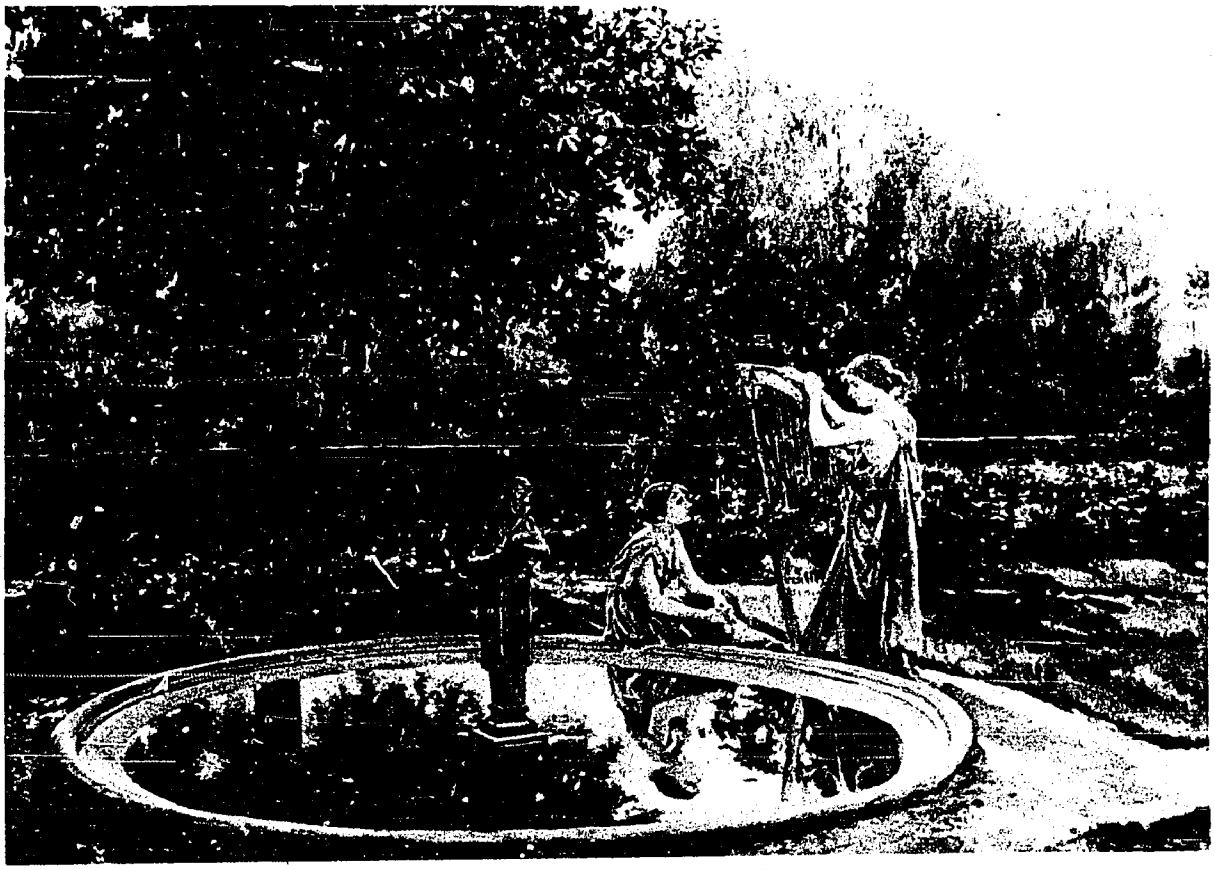
Fig. 72 Blanche Ostertag, R. R. Donnelley & Co., after 1895



Fig. 73 Blanche Ostertag,
R. R. Donnelley & Co.,
after 1895



Fig. 74 M. Louise Stowall,
George P. Humphrey, 1896



4

Fig. 75 Will H. Low, L'Interlude, Jardin des Macmonnies, after 1892

THE

YELLOW BOOK

OF

AMERICA



CONSTRUCTIVE DRAWING

By KENYON COX.

SUBSCRIPTION, 50C. A YEAR

Fig. 76 Kenyon Cox, The Limner, July 1895



George Wharton Edwards.

Fig. 77 George Wharton Edwards, Century, September 1895

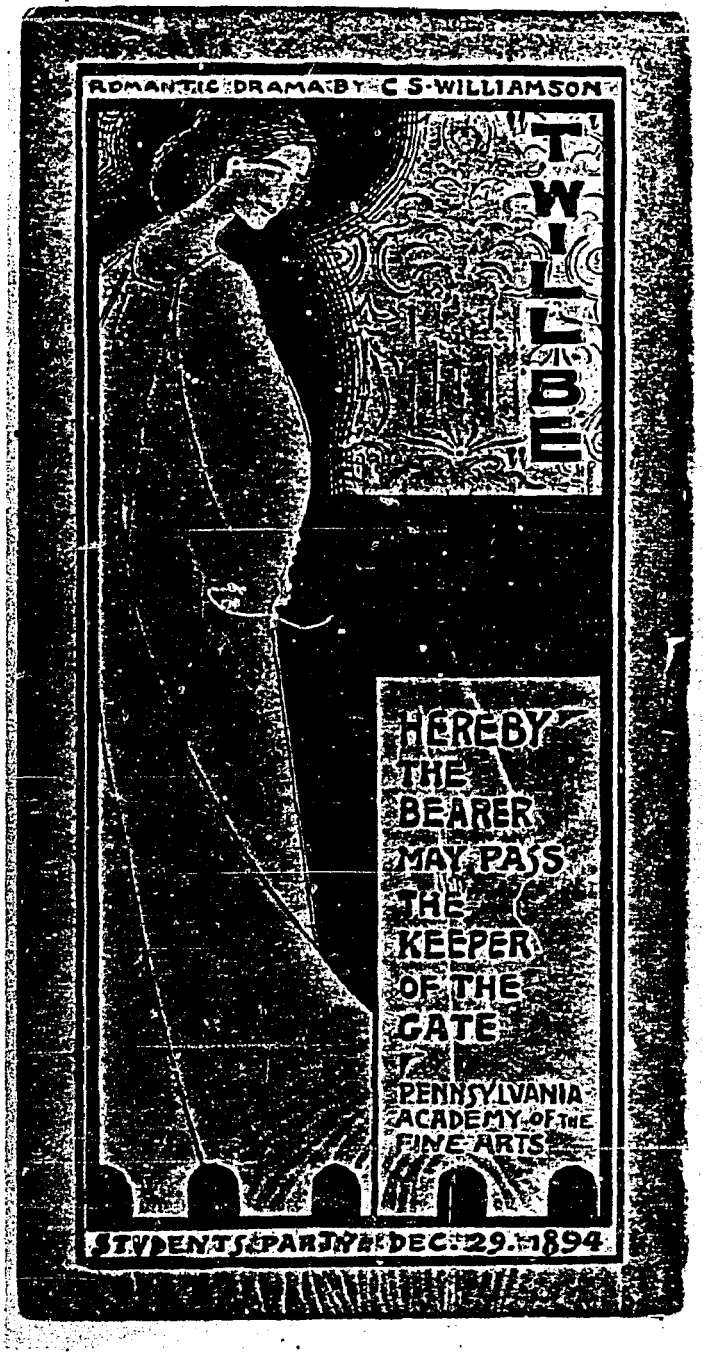


Fig. 78 John Sloan, Ticket Design for Twilbe, 1894



Fig. 79 John Sloan as Twilbe,
1894



Fig. 80 John Sloan with the PAFA Murals



34

Fig. 81 John Sloan, Moods, 1895

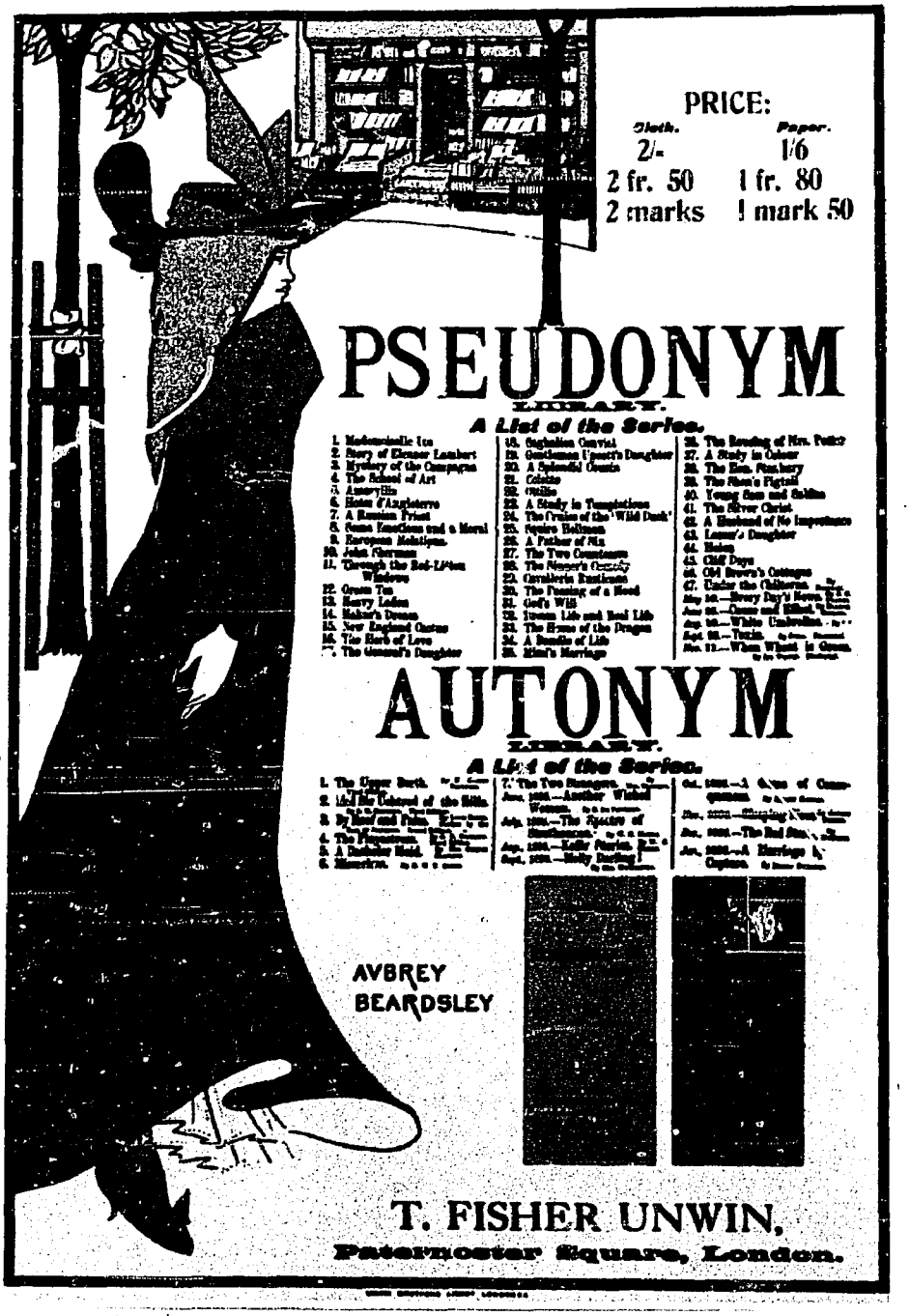
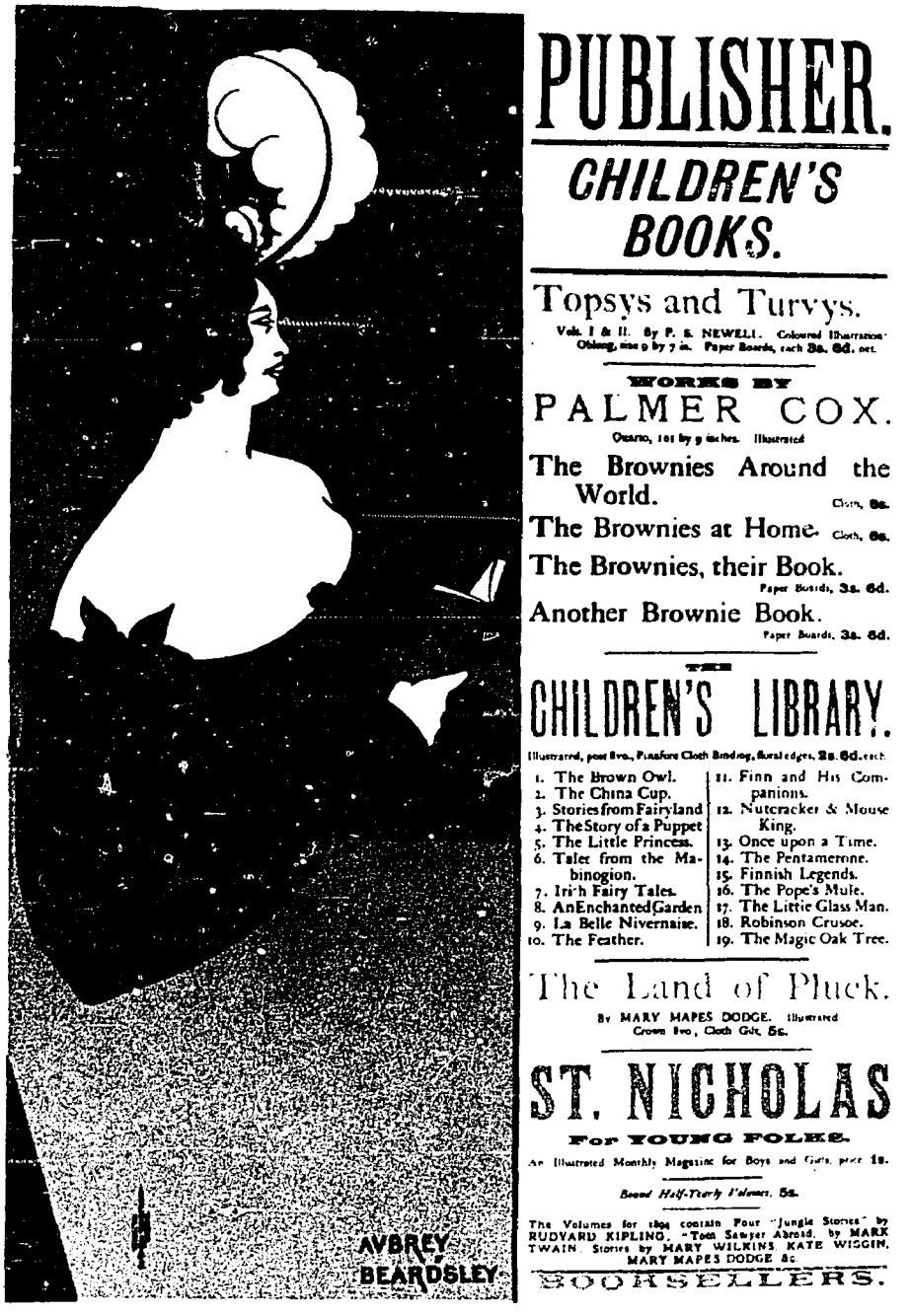


Fig. 82 Aubrey Beardsley, Pseudonym, Antonym Library, 1894



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BOOKSELLERS.

Fig. 83 Aubrey Beardsley, Publisher Children's Books, 1894



Ernest Haskell, *The New York Sunday Journal*, c. 1895(?)

Fig. 84 Ernest Haskell, The New York Sunday Journal, 1896



Fig. 85 Jules Chéret,
Théâtre de l'Opera, 1896



Fig. 86 Fred Ramsdell, American Crescent Cycles, 1899

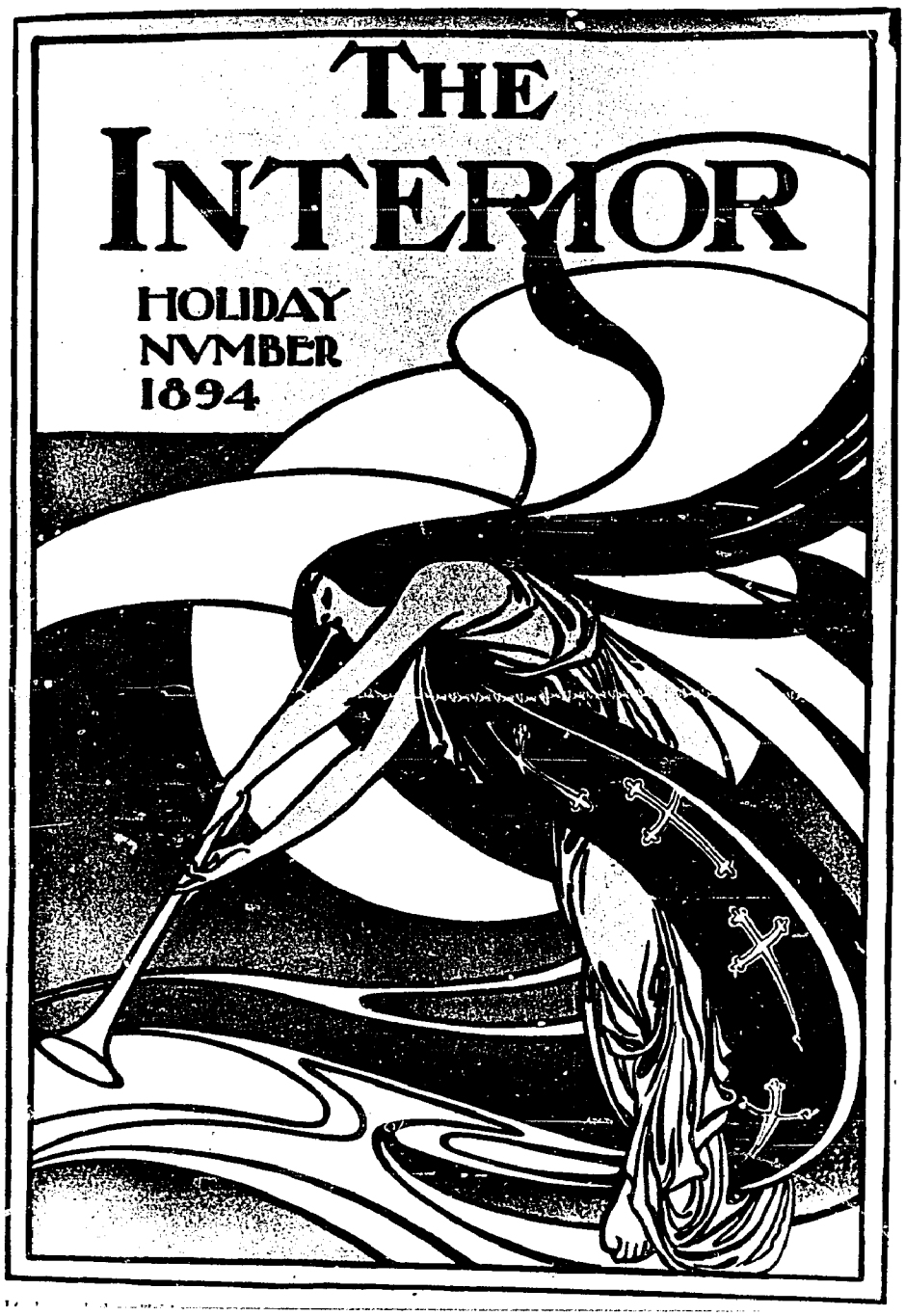


Fig. 87 J. C. Leyendecker, The Interior, 1894



Fig. 88 Eugene Grasset,
Salon des Cent, 1894

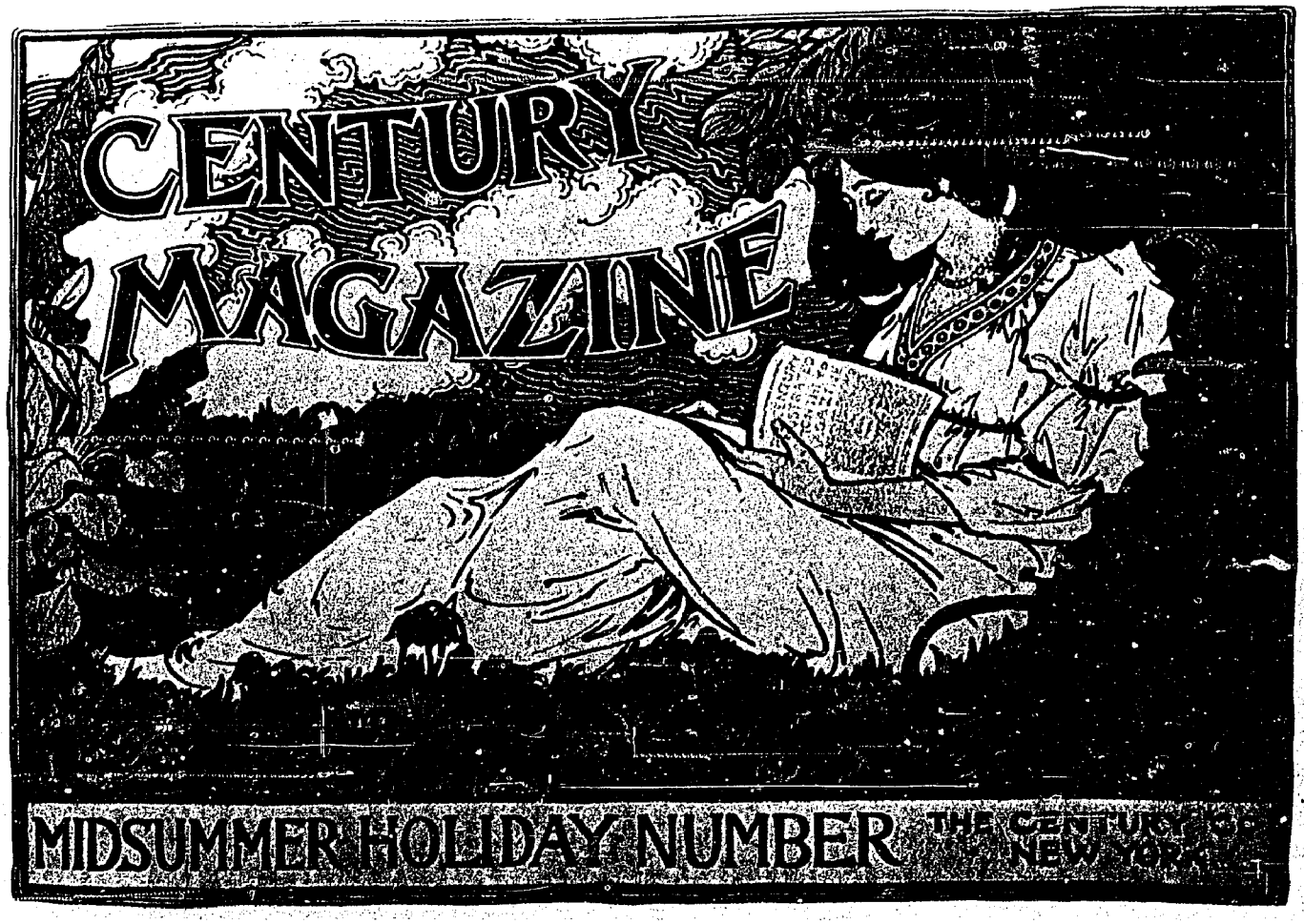


Fig. 89 Louis Rhead, Century, 1894



109

Fig. 90 Graham Robertson, A Pre-Raphaelite Collection, 1896



Fig. 91 Ellen Elizabeth Houghton, Arts and Crafts Exhibition, 1898

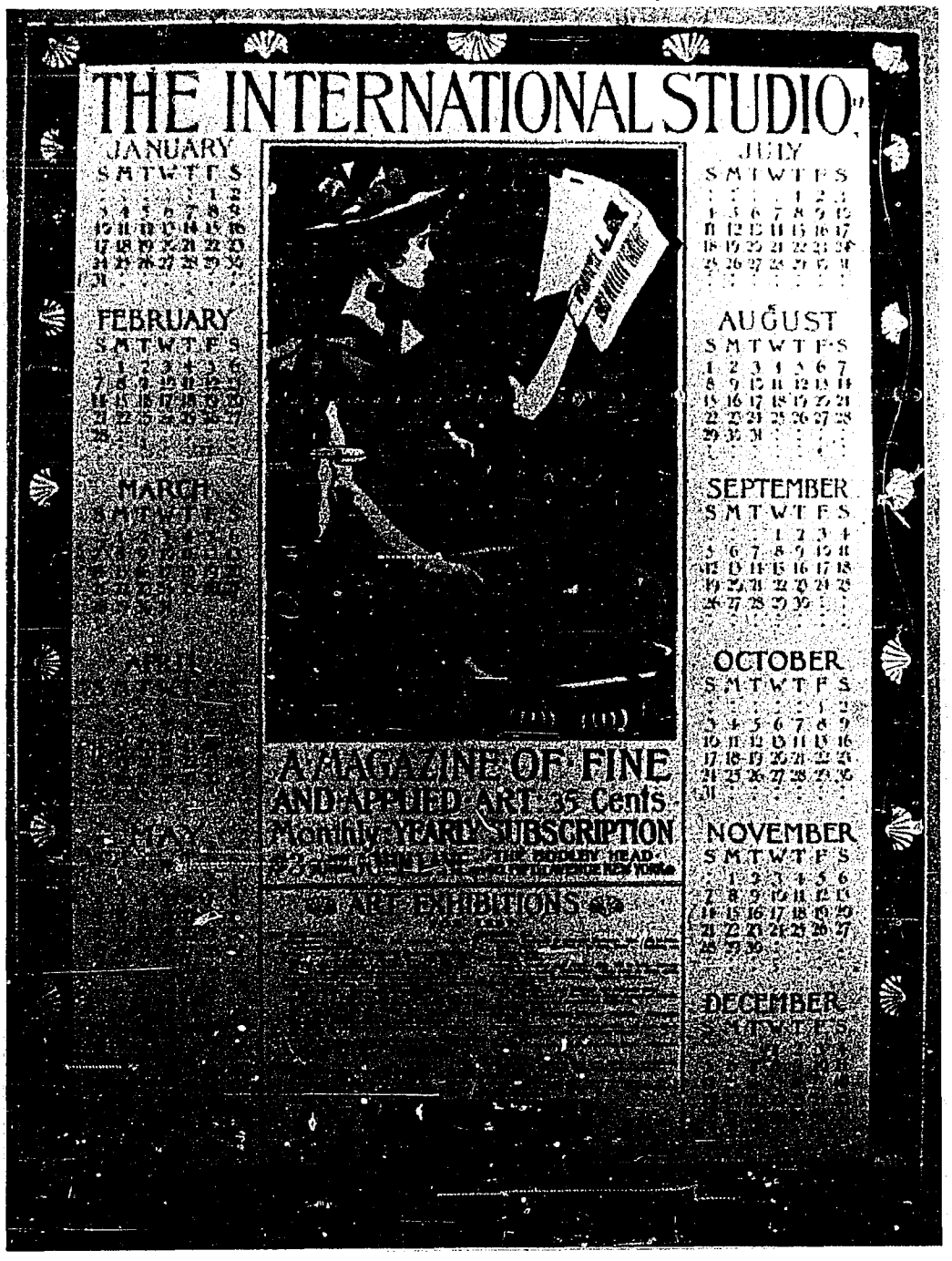


Fig. 92 West, International Studio, 1897



Edmund Garrett, Little, Brown & Co., 1895.

Fig. 93 Edmund Garrett,
Victorian Songs, 1895

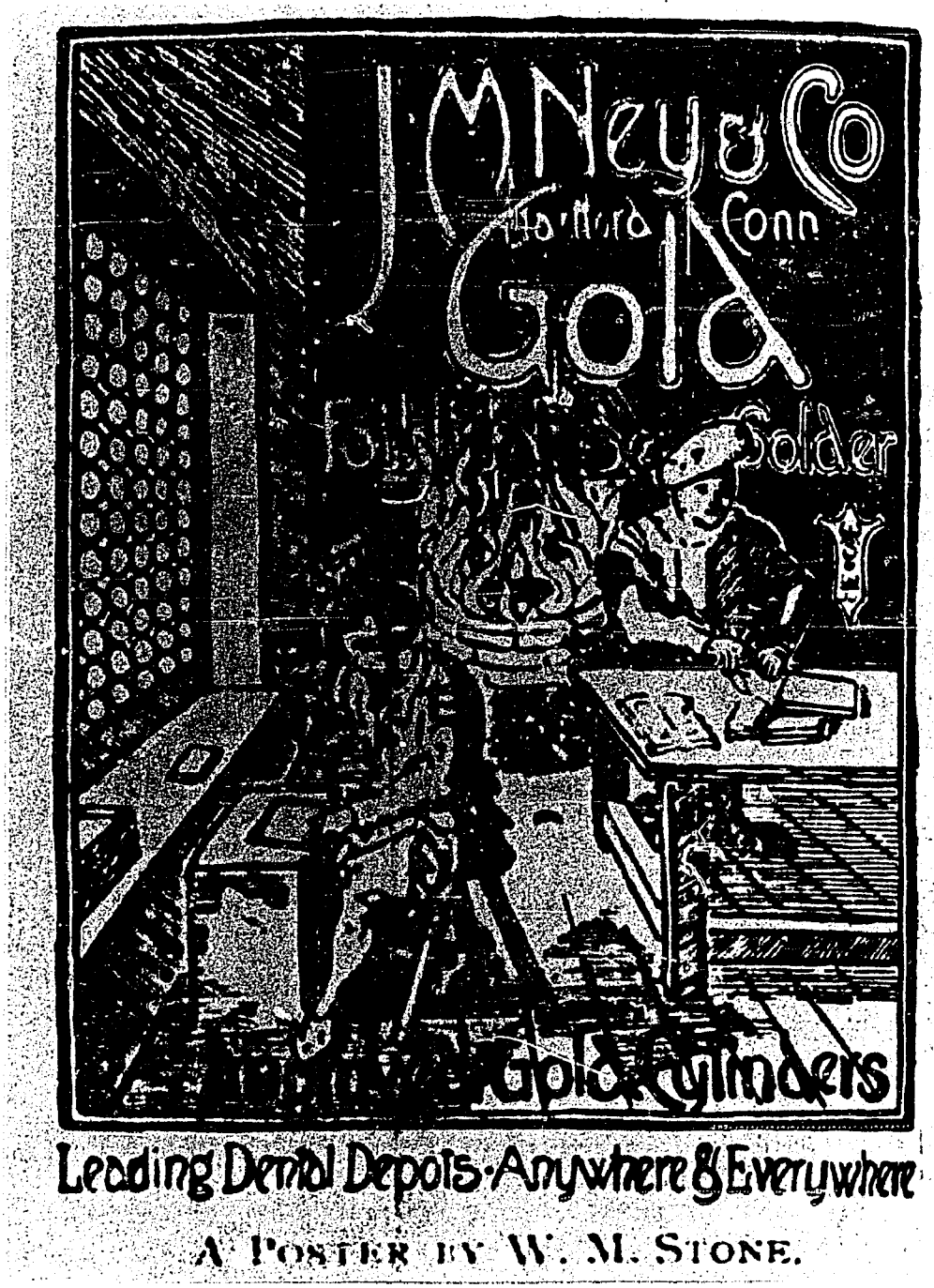


Fig. 94 William Macey Stone,
J. M. Neys & Co., 1898



331

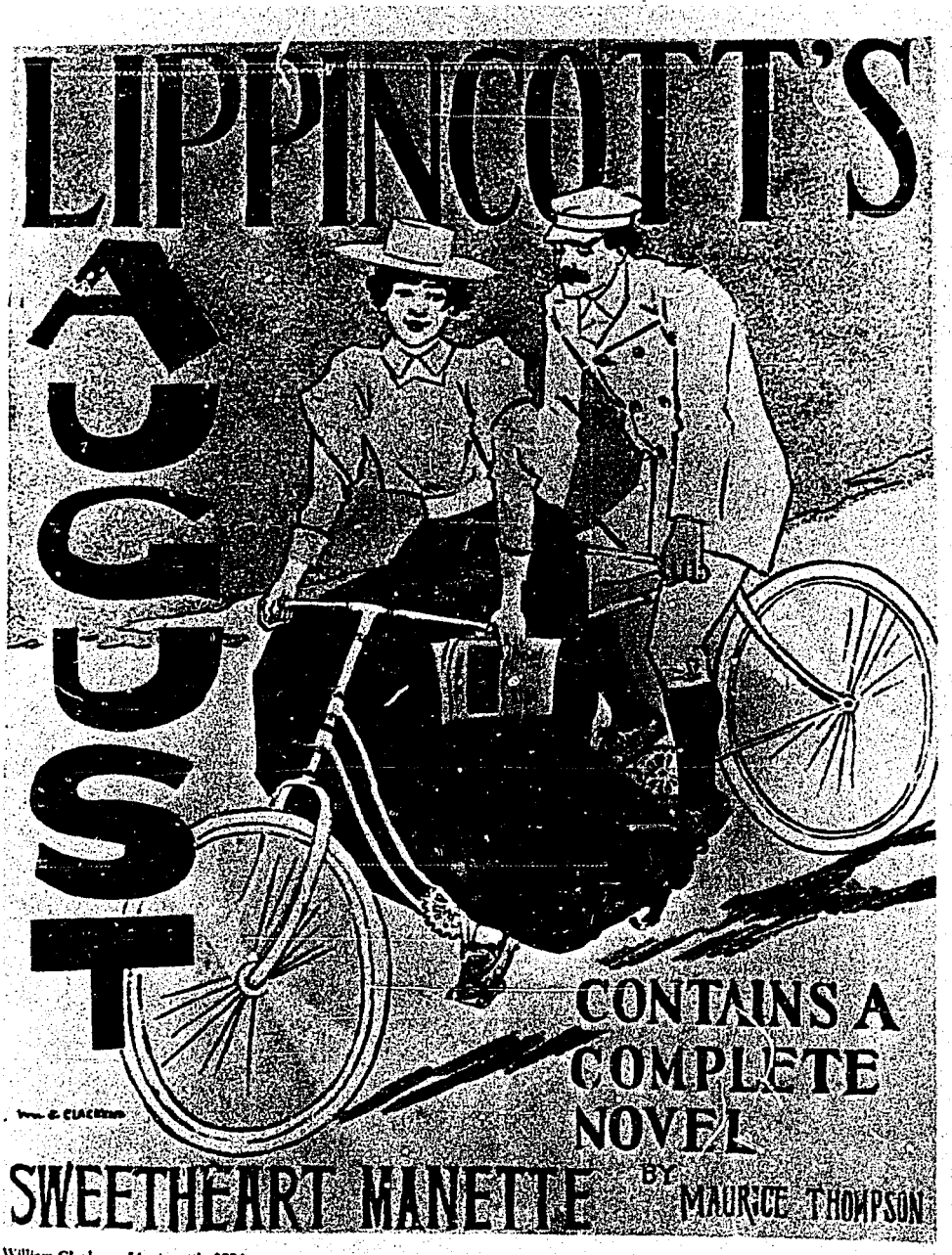
Fig. 95 Edward Penfield,
Harper's, April 1894



Fig. 96 Edward Penfield,
Harper's, July 1896



Fig. 97 Edward Penfield,
People We Pass, 1896



William Glackens, *Lippincott's*, 1894.

Fig. 98 William Glackens, Lippincott's, August 1894



Fig. 99 Will Carqueville, Lippincott's, January 1895

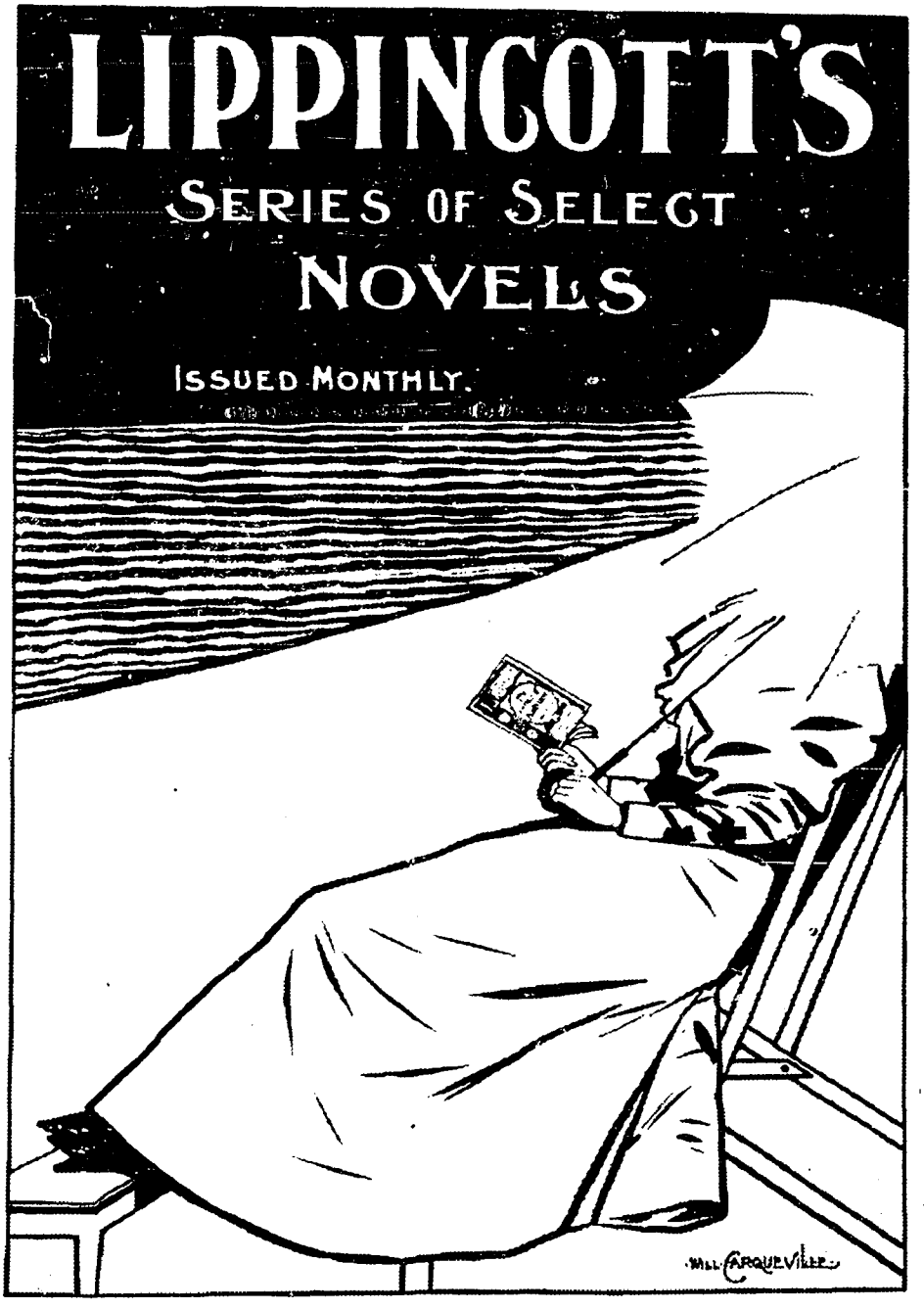


Fig. 100 Will Carqueville, Lippincott's Series of Select Novels, 1895



244

Fig. 101. J. J. Gould, Lippincott's, Jan. 1896

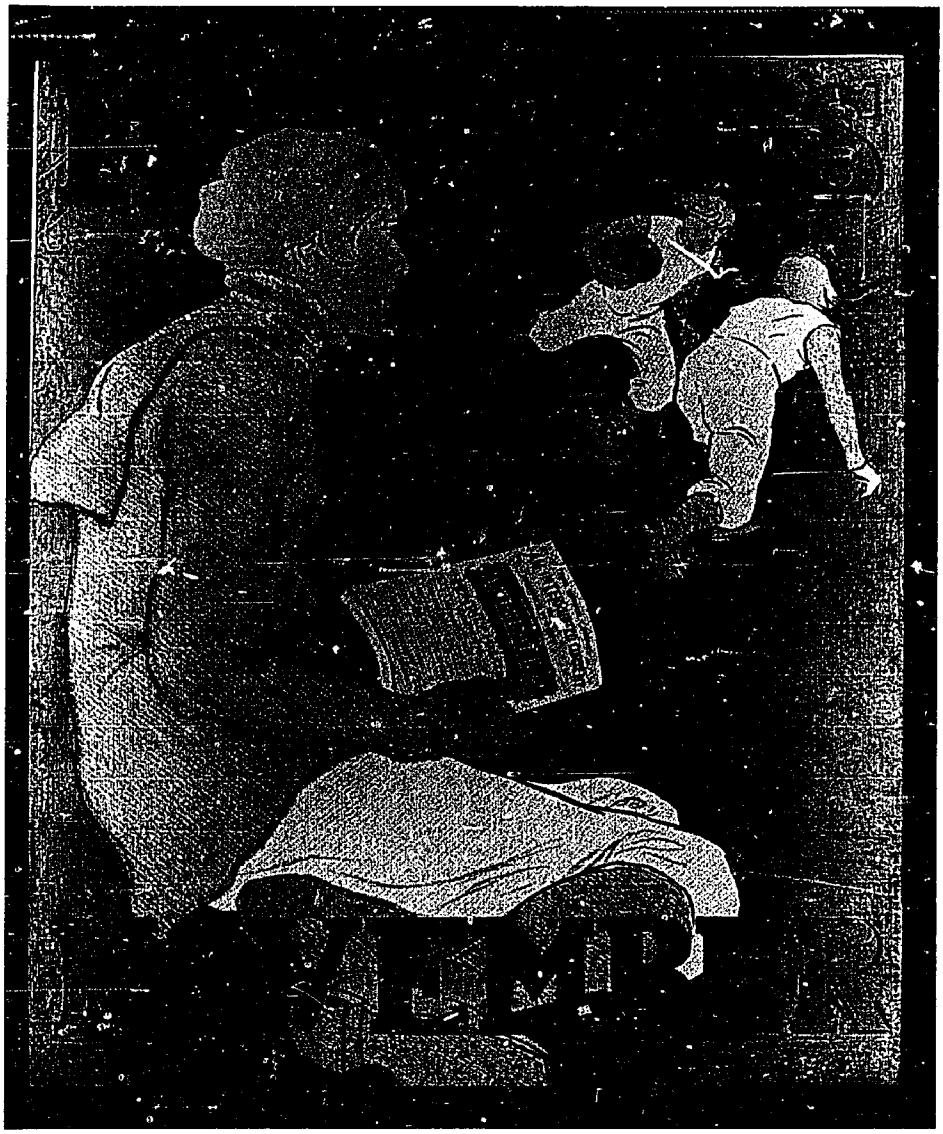


Fig. 102 J. J. Gould,
Lippincott's, Nov. 1896



Fig. 103 J. J. Gould,
Lippincott's, Aug. 1897



Fig. 104. Charles Allen Gilbert
Scribner's, May 1898

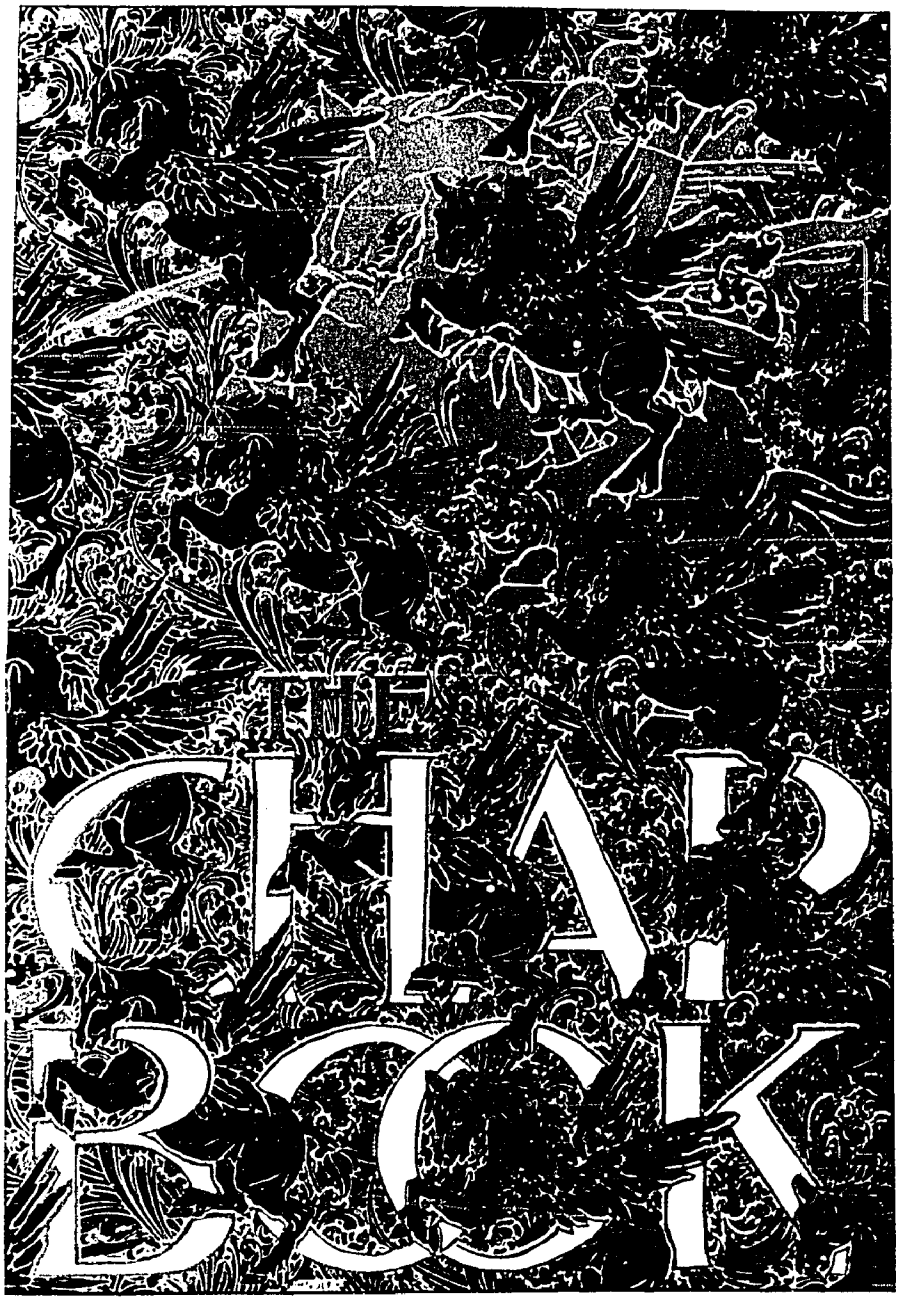


H.M. Rosenberg, *The Century*, 1896. Rosenberg's poster won an honorable mention in *Century*'s midsummer poster contest.

Fig. 105 H. M. Rosenberg, Century, Sept. 1896

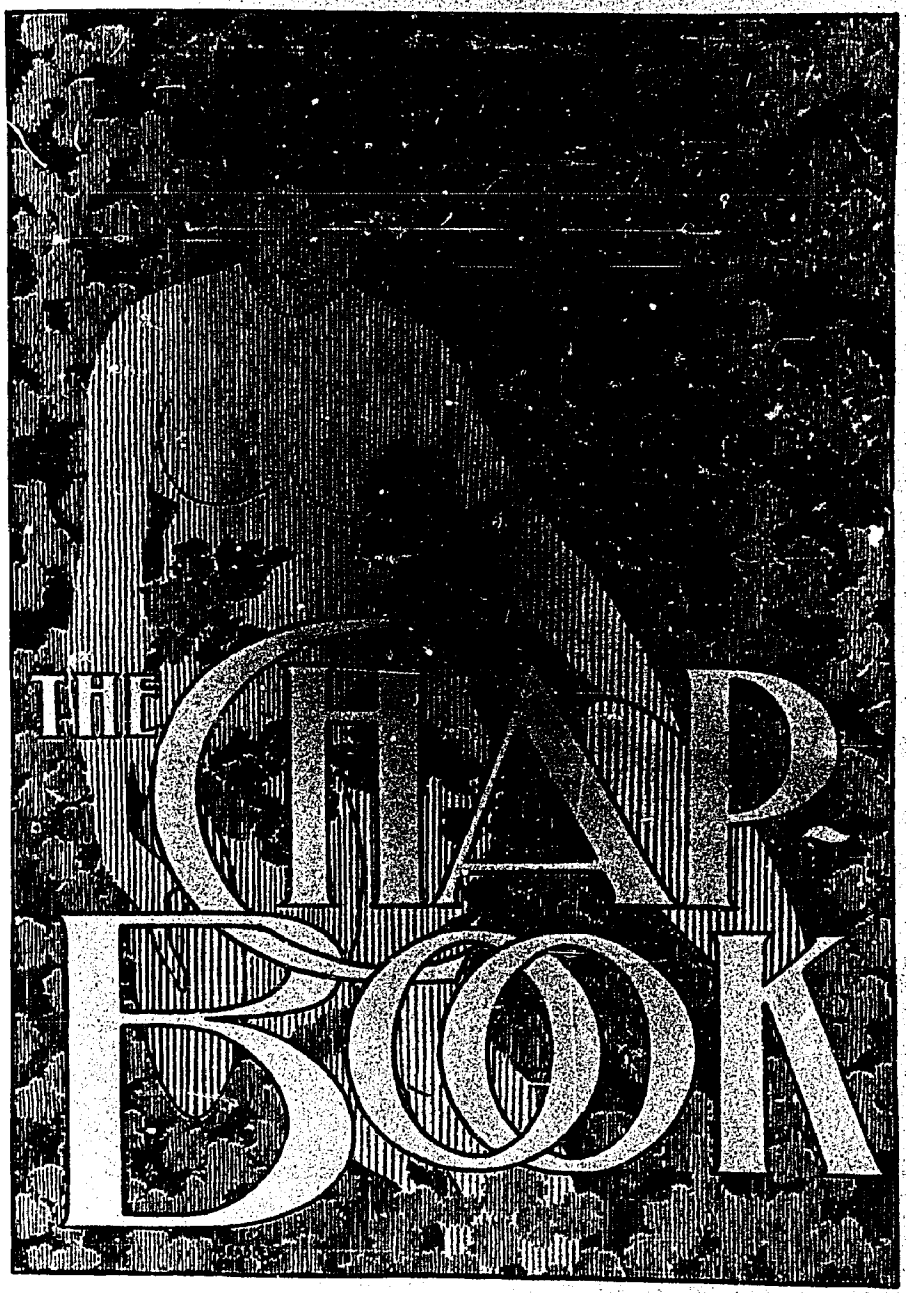


Fig. 106 Aubrey Beardsley,
Salomé, 1893



87 Poster Pegasus September 1895

Fig. 107 Will Bradley, "Pegasus, the Black and Red," Chap-Book, 1895



Will Bradley, *The Chap-Book*, "May," 1895. The large letters spelling "May" are barely distinguishable amidst the flowers.

Fig. 108 Will Bradley, "The Pink," Chap-Book, 1895

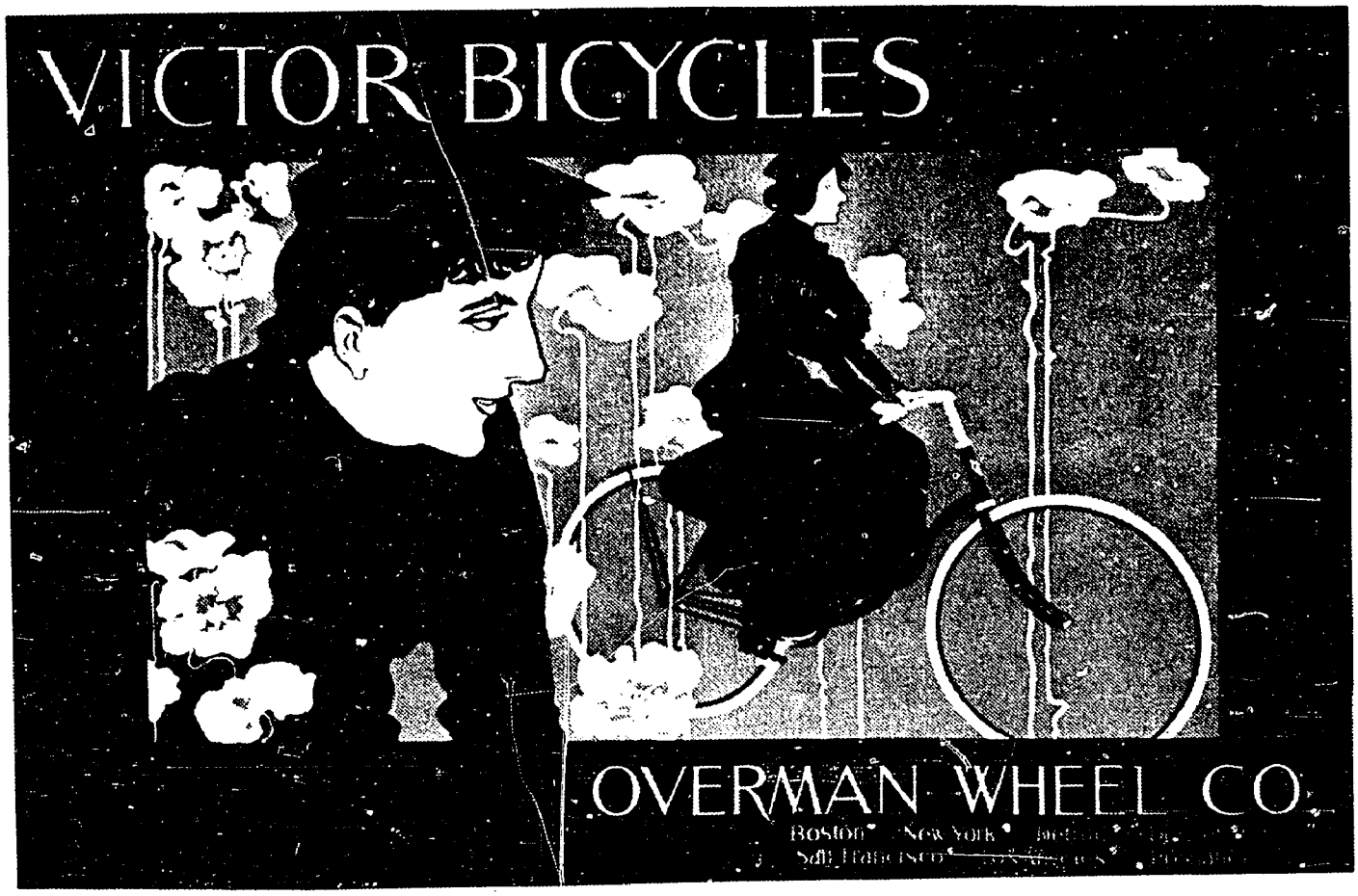


Fig. 109 Will Bradley,
Victoria Bicycles, 1895



Fig. 110 Will Bradley,
Victoria Bicycles, 1896

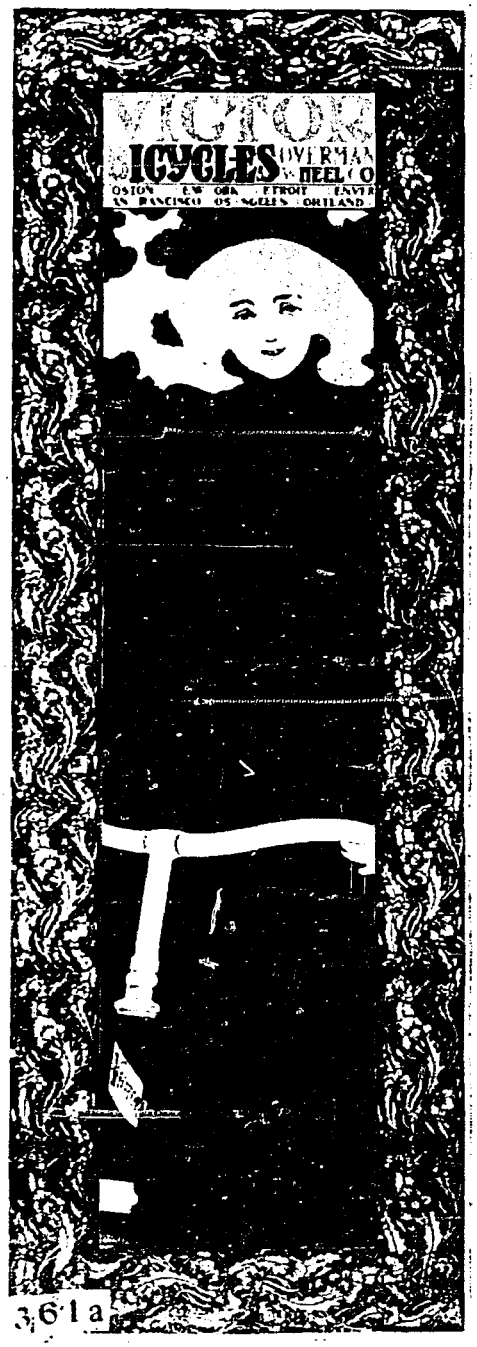
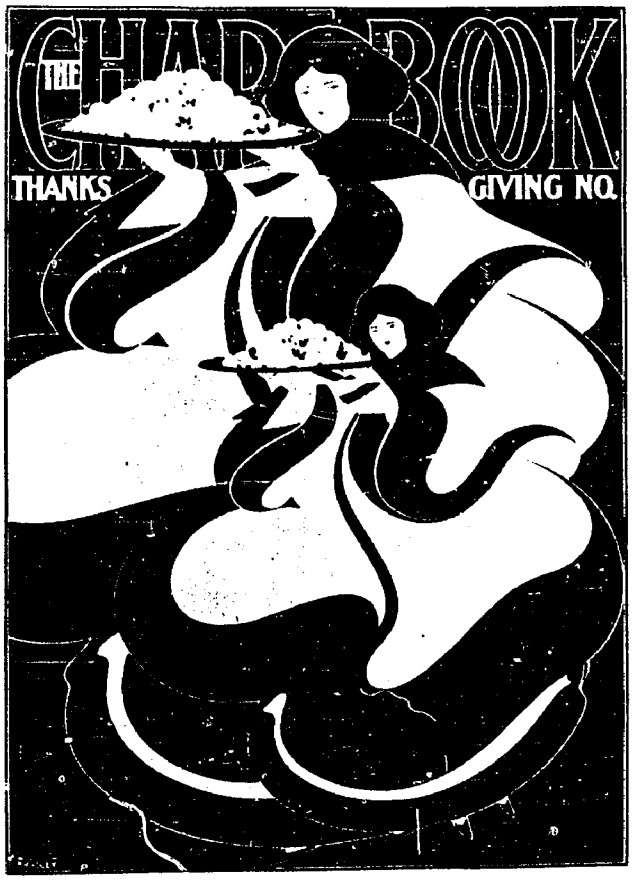


Fig. 111 Will Bradley,
Victoria Bicycles, 1896



151



152

Fig. 112 Will Bradley, Two Chap-Book Posters, 1894

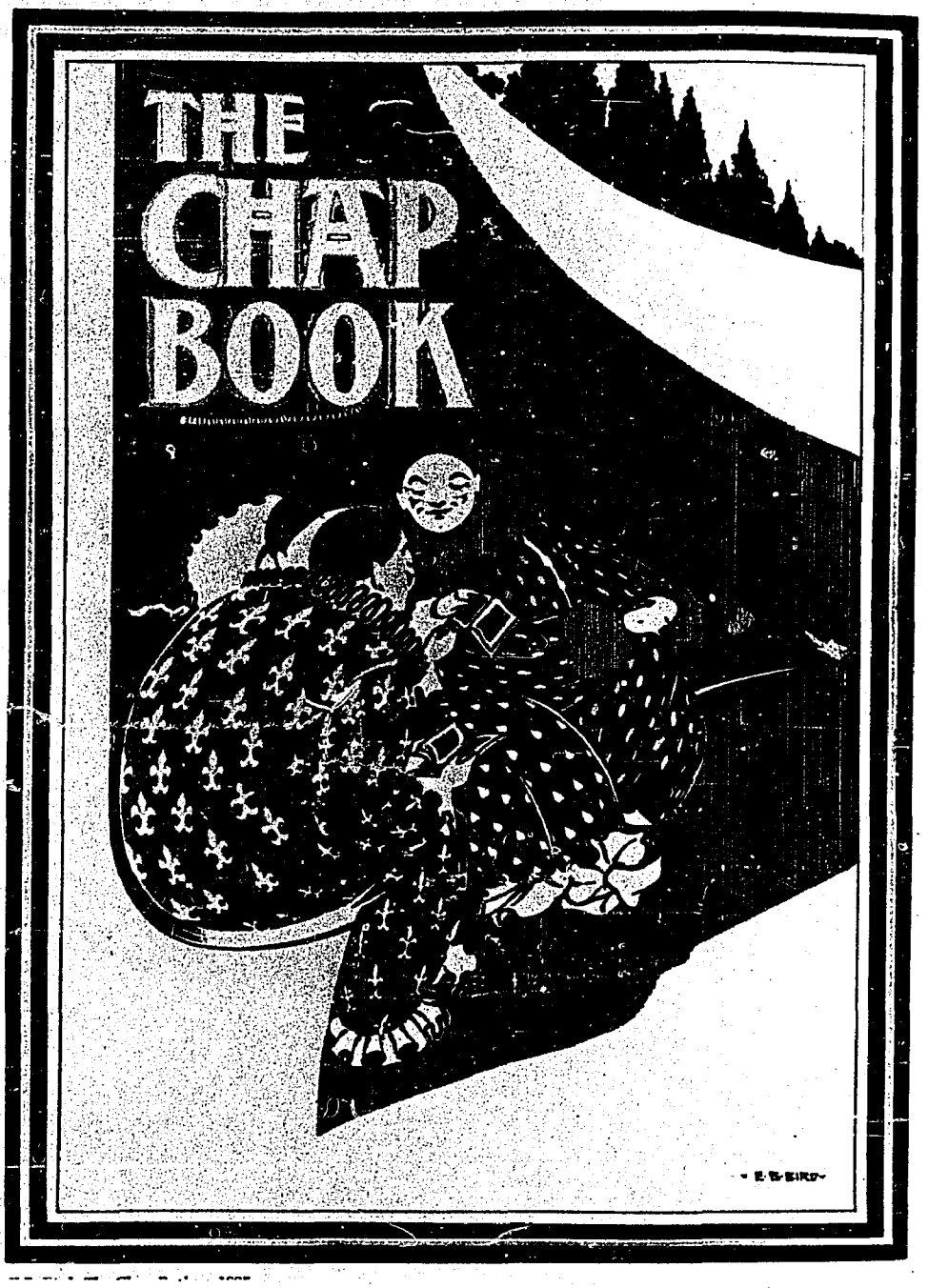


Fig. 113 E. B. Bird,
Chap-Book, 1895



Fig. 114 Will Bradley,
The Skirt Dancer, 1894



Fig. 115 Ethel Reed
Fairy Tales, 1895



Frank Hazenplug. The Emerson and Fisher Co., 1896.

Fig. 116 Frank Hazenplug, The Emerson and Fisher Co., 1896

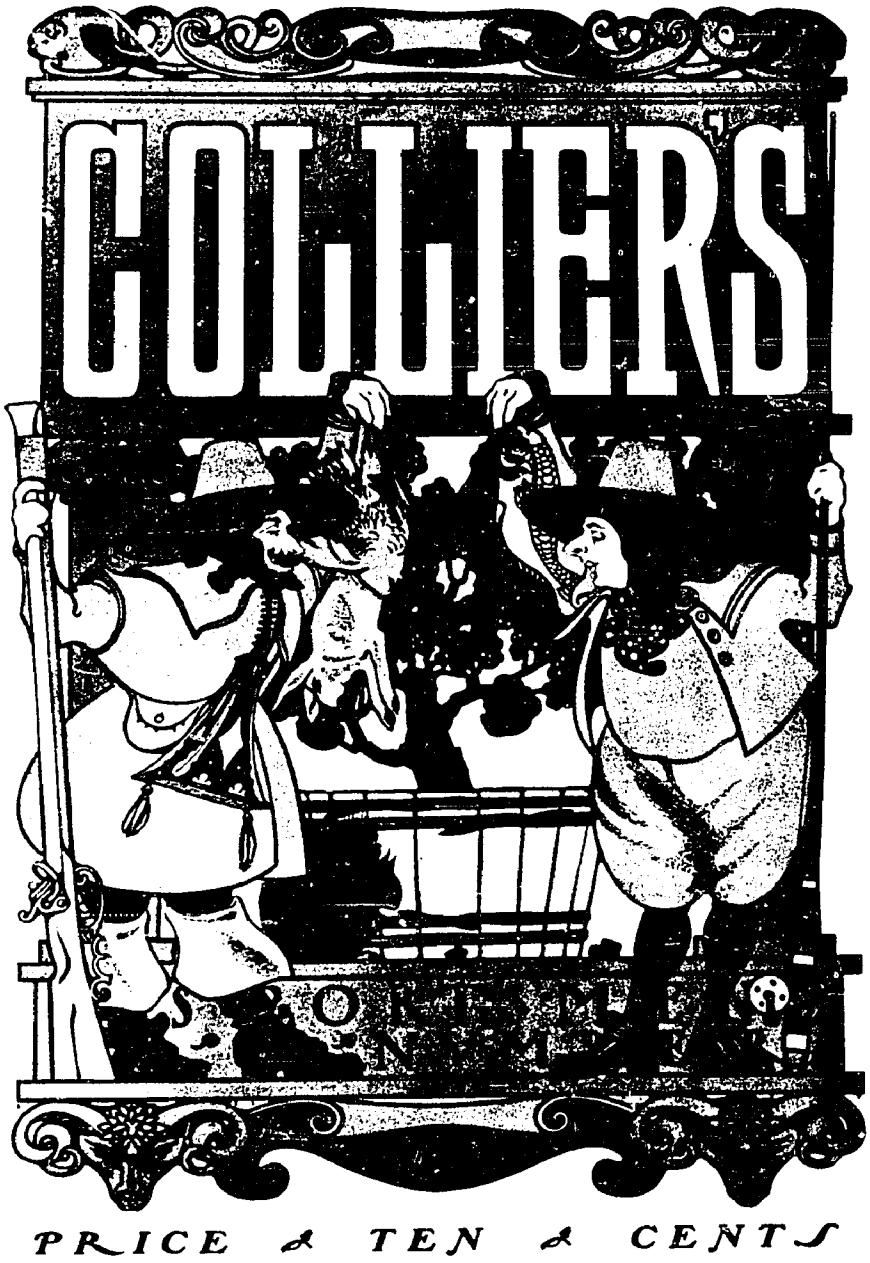


Fig. 117 Will Bradley,
Colliers, 1900

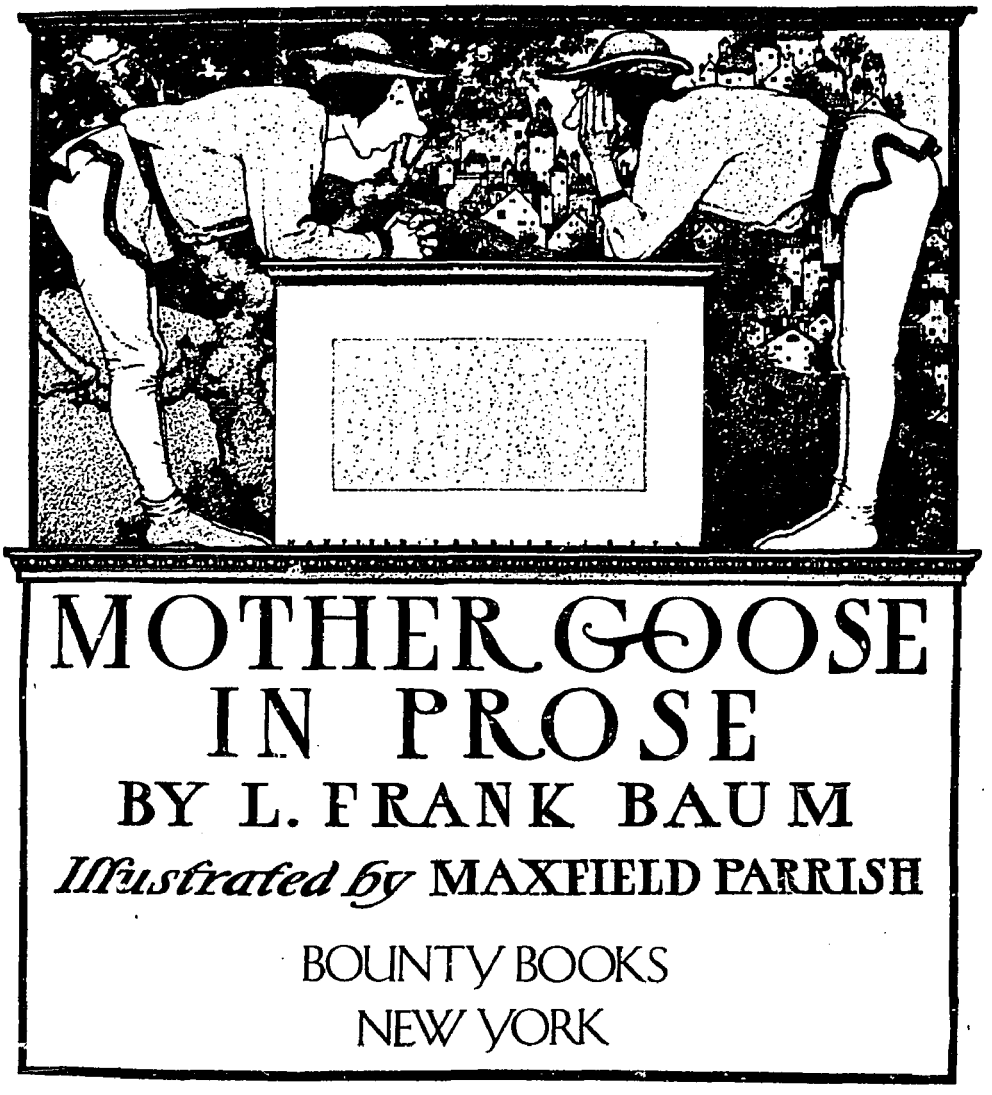


Fig. 118 Maxfield Parrish, Title Page, Mother Goose in Prose, 1897



Fig. 119 John Sloan, Drawing, 1892



Fig. 120 John Sloan in his Studio, after 1893



Fig. 121 John Sloan, Drawing
1894



Fig. 122 John Sloan, Moods, 1895



Fig. 123 John Sloan, Drawing, 1894



Fig. 124 John Sloan, Cinder-Path Tales, 1896



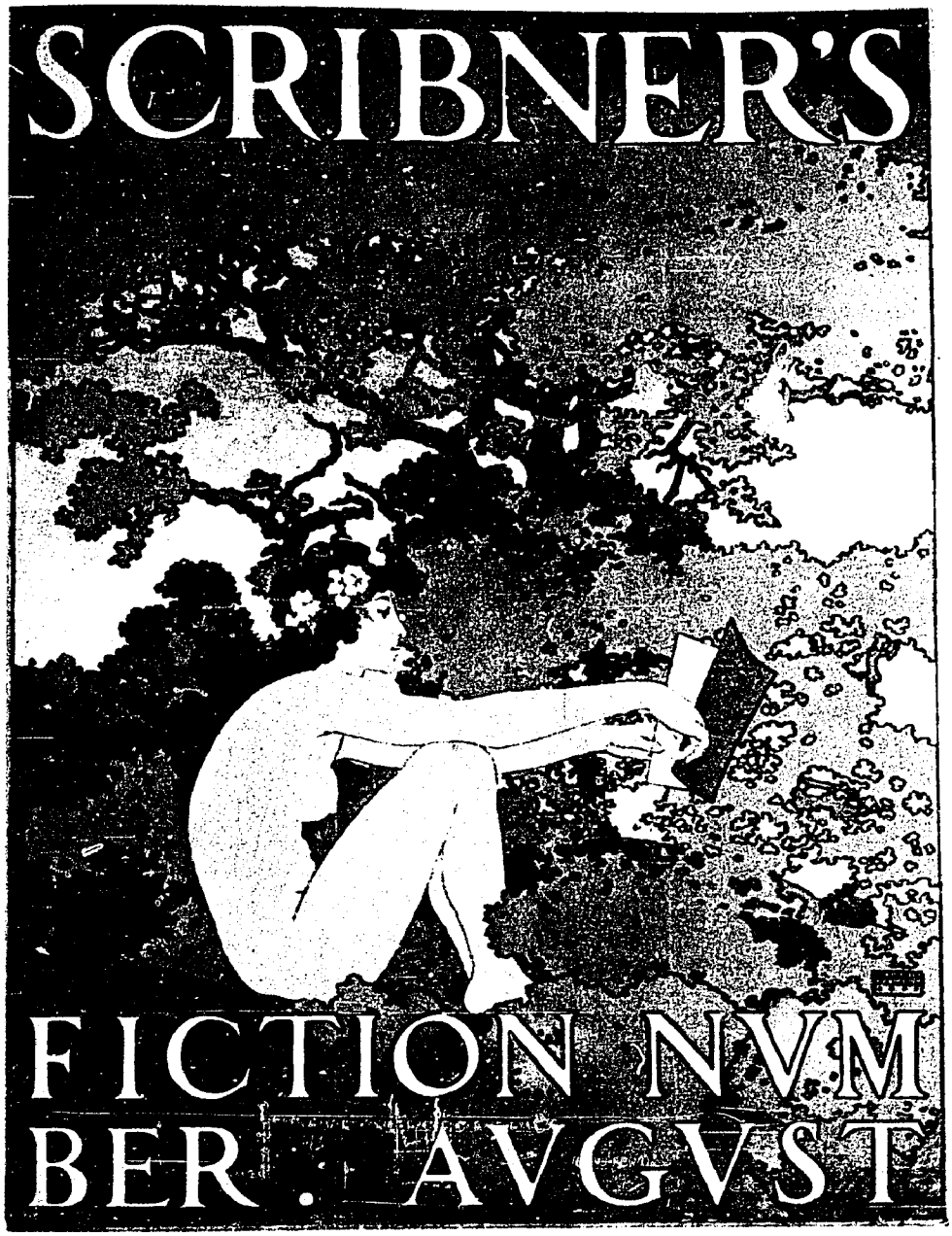
Fig. 125 John Sloan, Apollo Bicycles, 1898



Fig. 126 John Sloan in his Studio after 1894



Fig. 127 John Sloan, The Snake Charmer, 1899



Maxfield Parrish, *Scribner's*, 1897.

Fig. 128 Maxfield Parrish, Scribner's, 1897



Fig. 129 Frederick S. Church, American Watercolor Society, 1899



Fig. 130 Thomas Fleming, M'lle New York, 1898

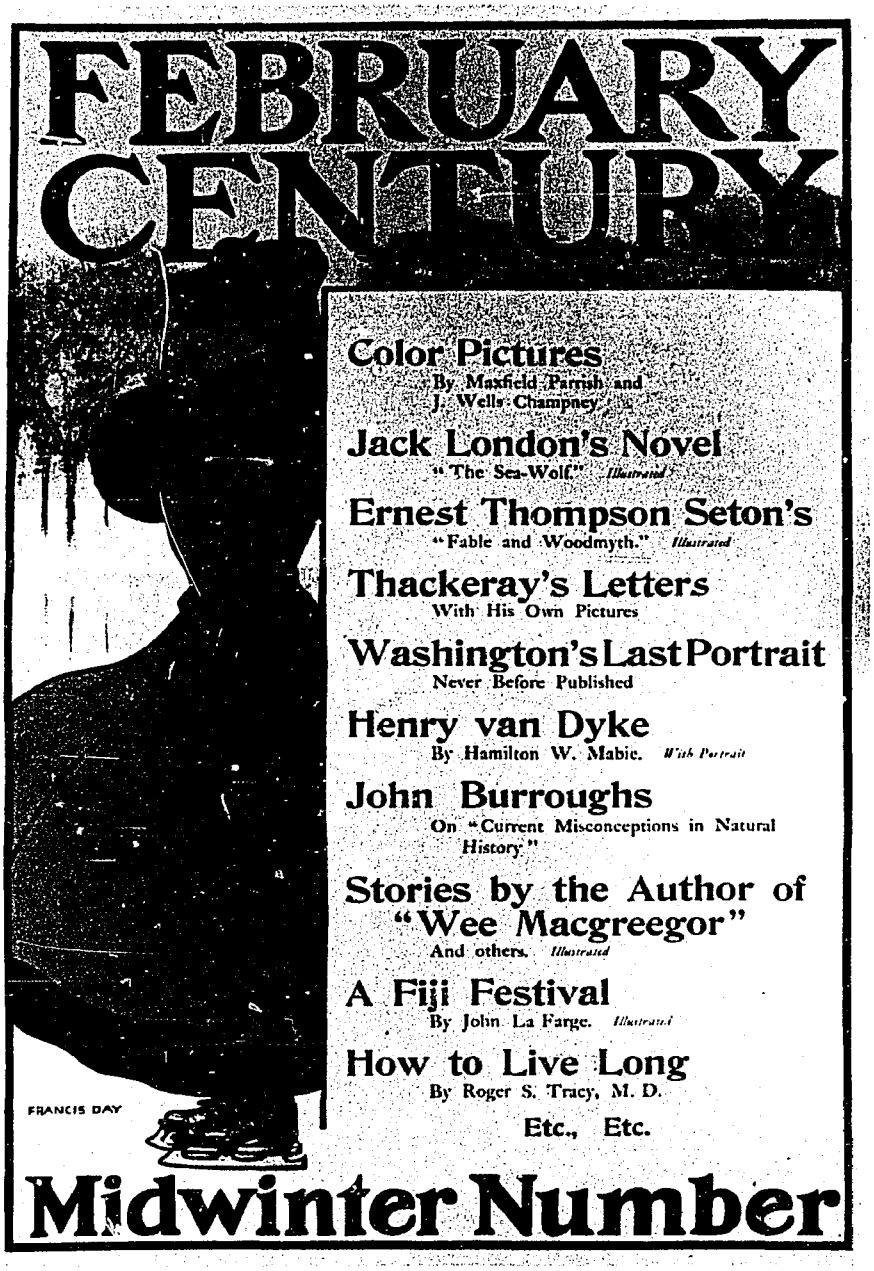


Fig. 131 Francis Day, Century after 1894

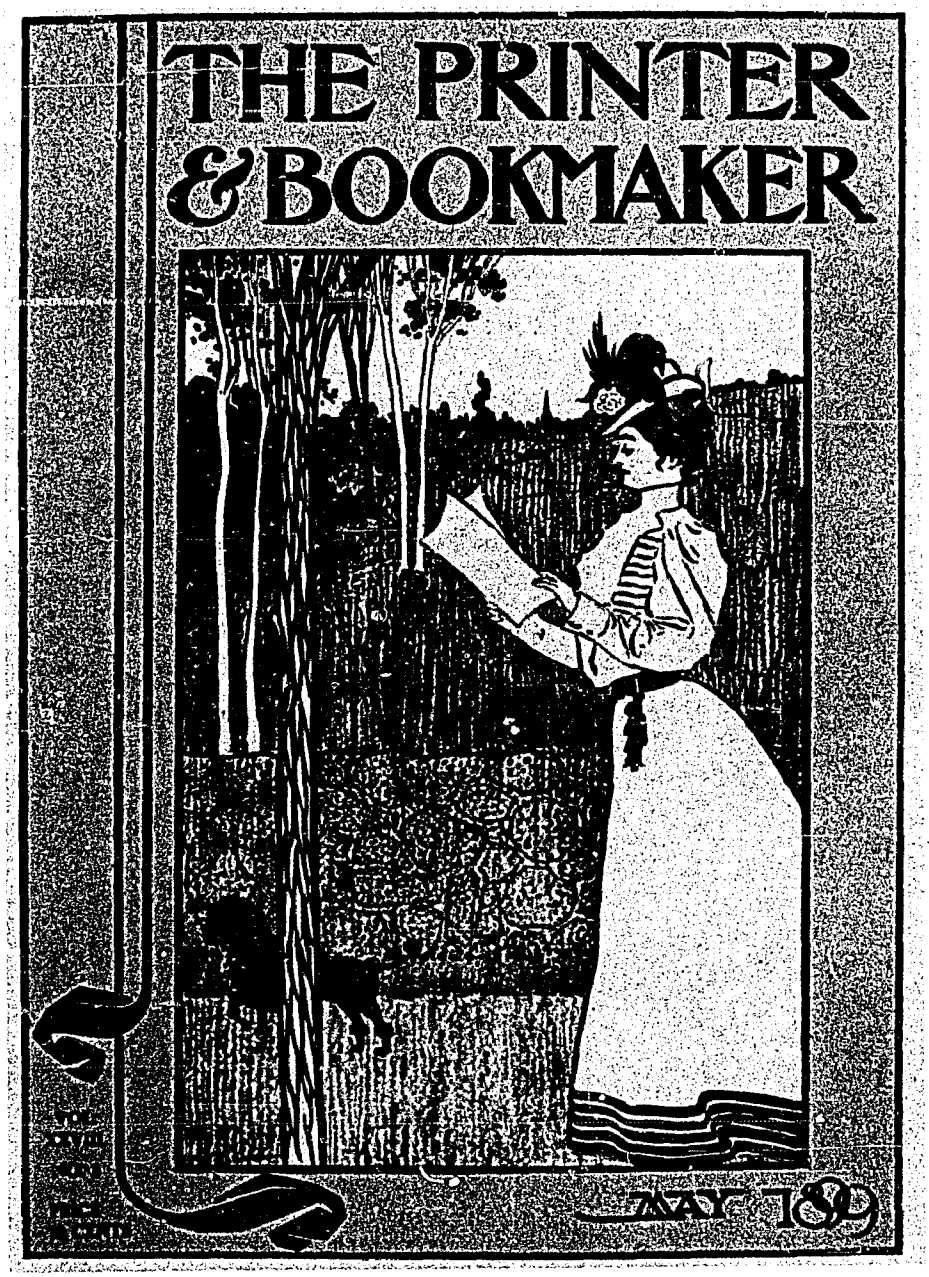


Fig. 132 Louis Fleming, Printer and Bookmaker, May 1899



Howard Chandler Christy, *The Bookman*, 1896.

Fig. 133 Howard Chandler Christy, Bookman, 1896

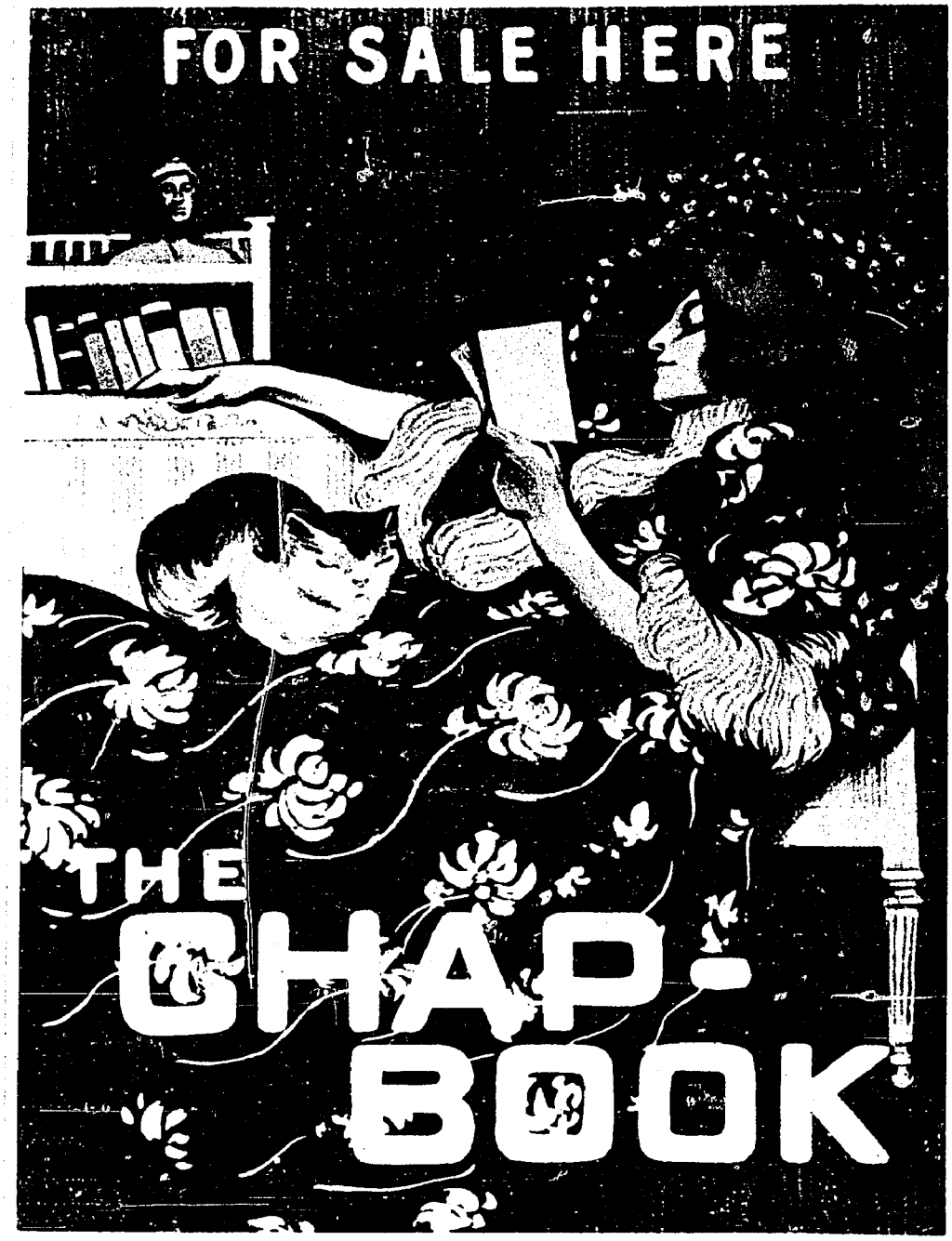


Fig. 134 J. C. Leyendecker, Chap-Book, 1897



Fig. 135 Ethel Reed, Penny Magazine, 1895



Fig. 136 Archie Gunn, Miss Blue Stocking, 1896

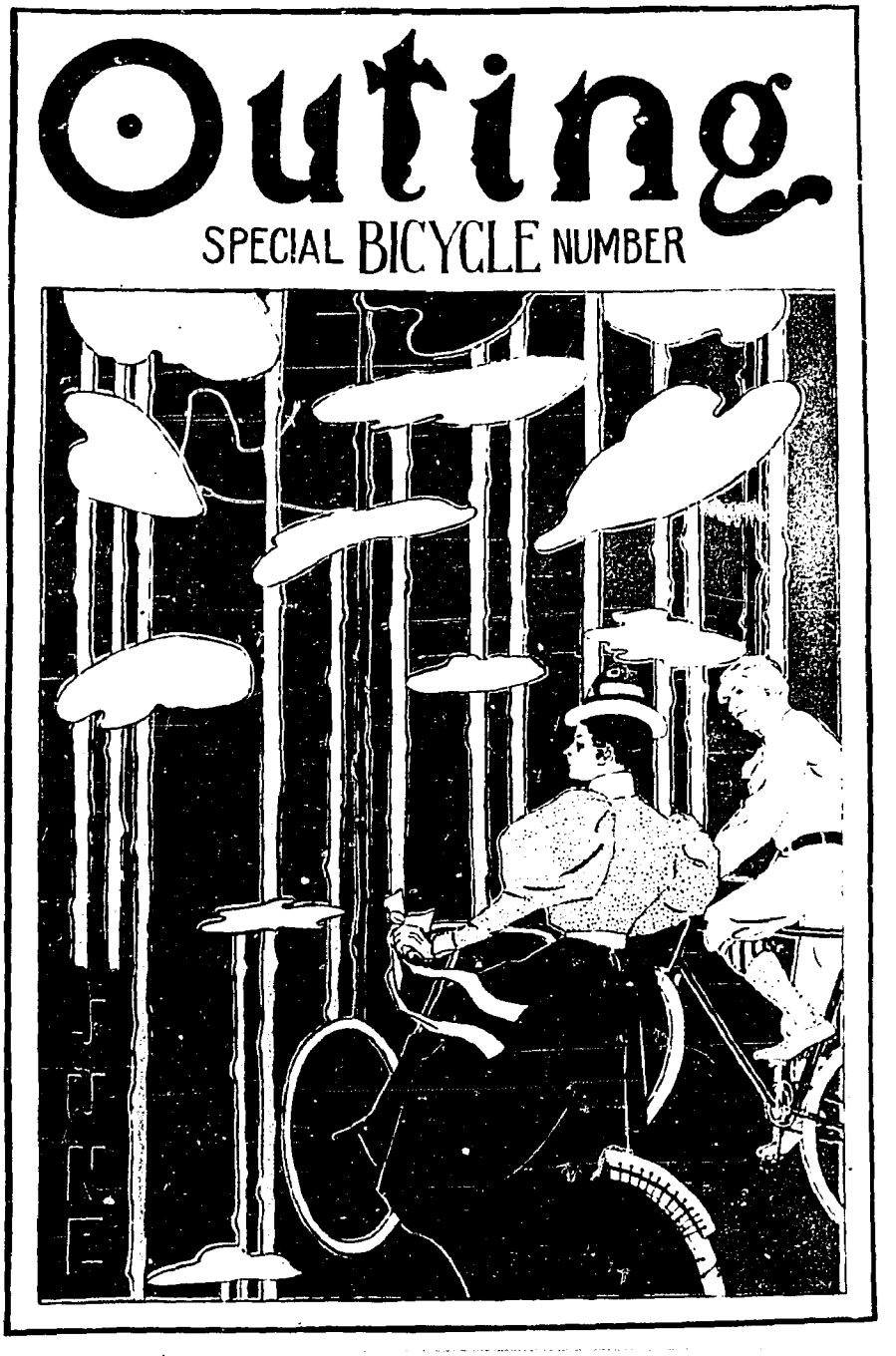


Fig. 137 O. C. Malcolm,
Outing, 1896



Fig. 138 O. C. Malcolm, Outing, 1896



Fig. 139 Henry McVickar,
<u>The Evolution of Women</u>,
1896



Fig. 140 Louis Rhead, The Sun, 1895

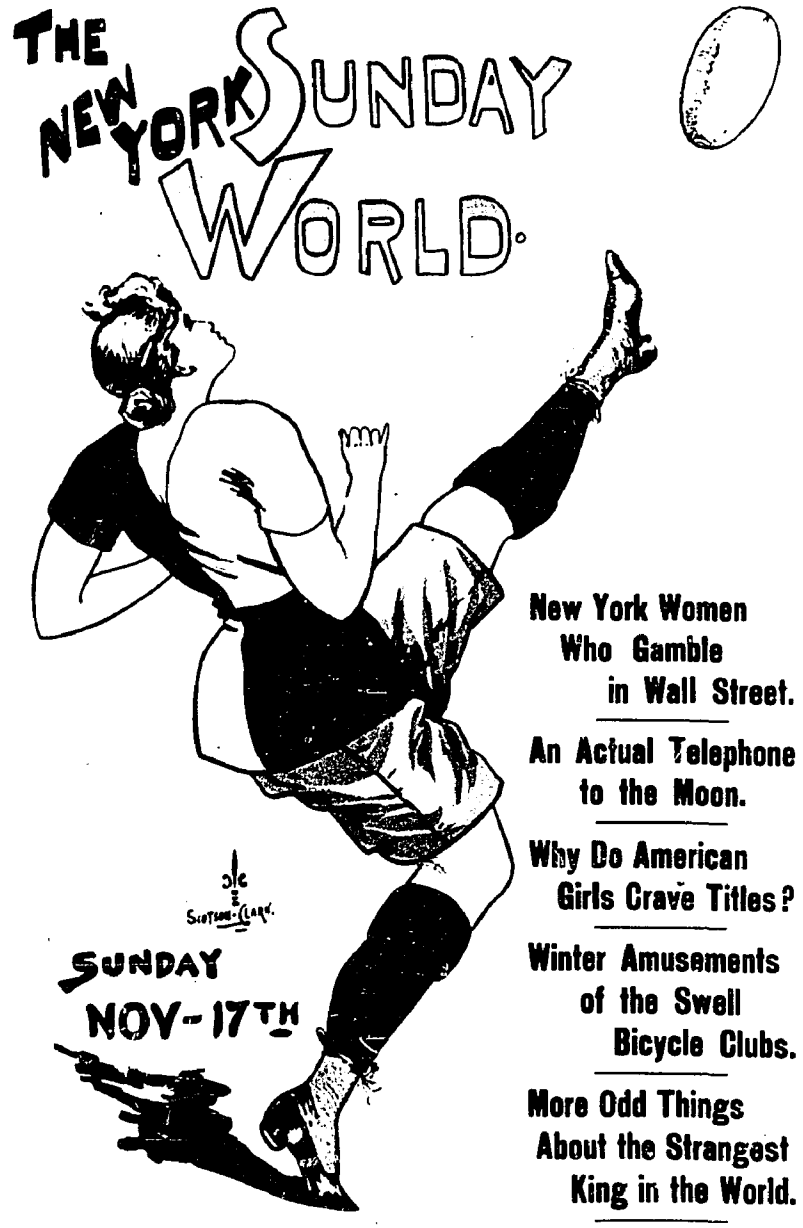


Fig. 141 George Frederick Scotson-Clark, New York Sunday World, 1895



Fig. 142 Charles Cox, Bearings, 1896

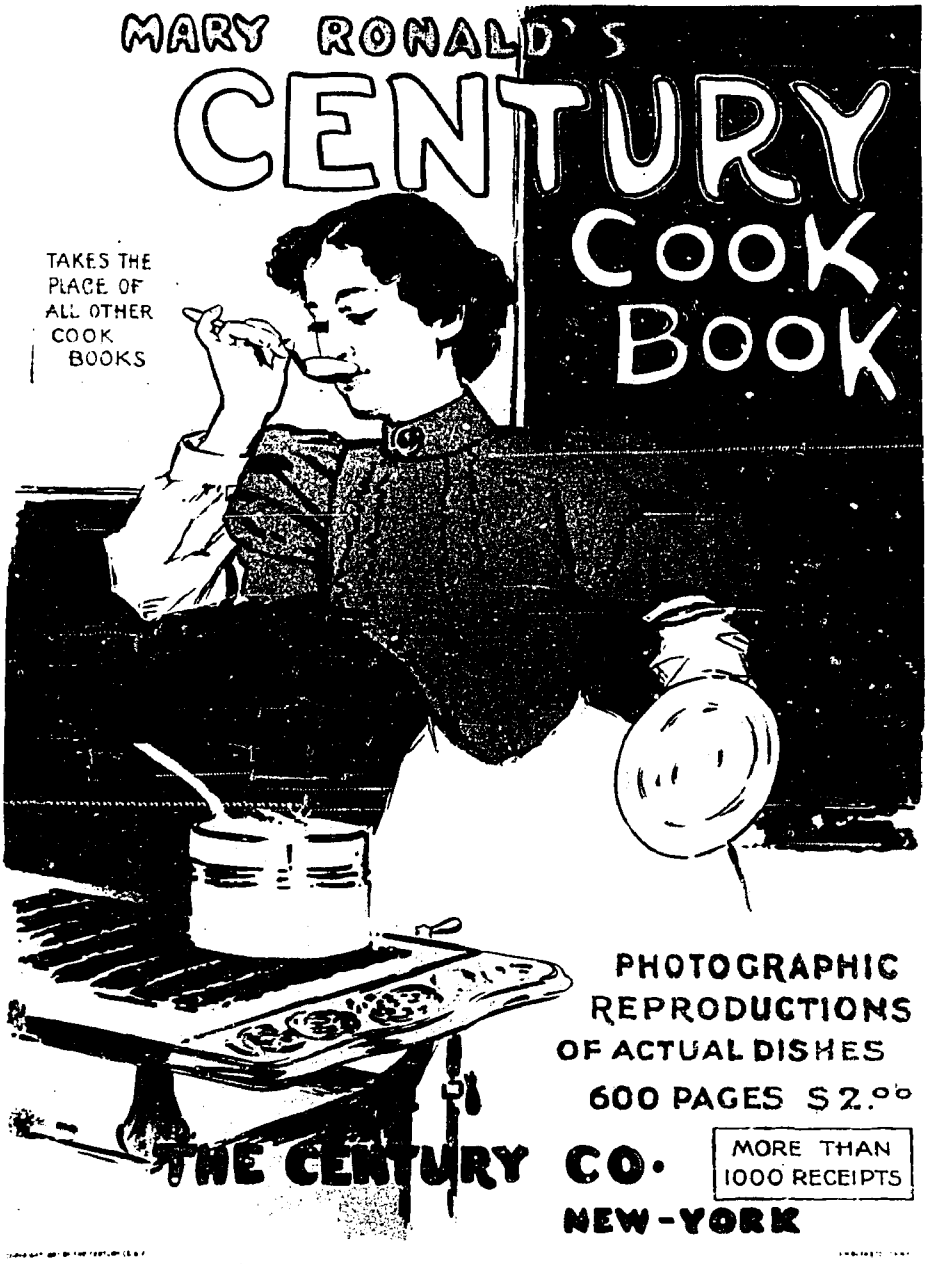


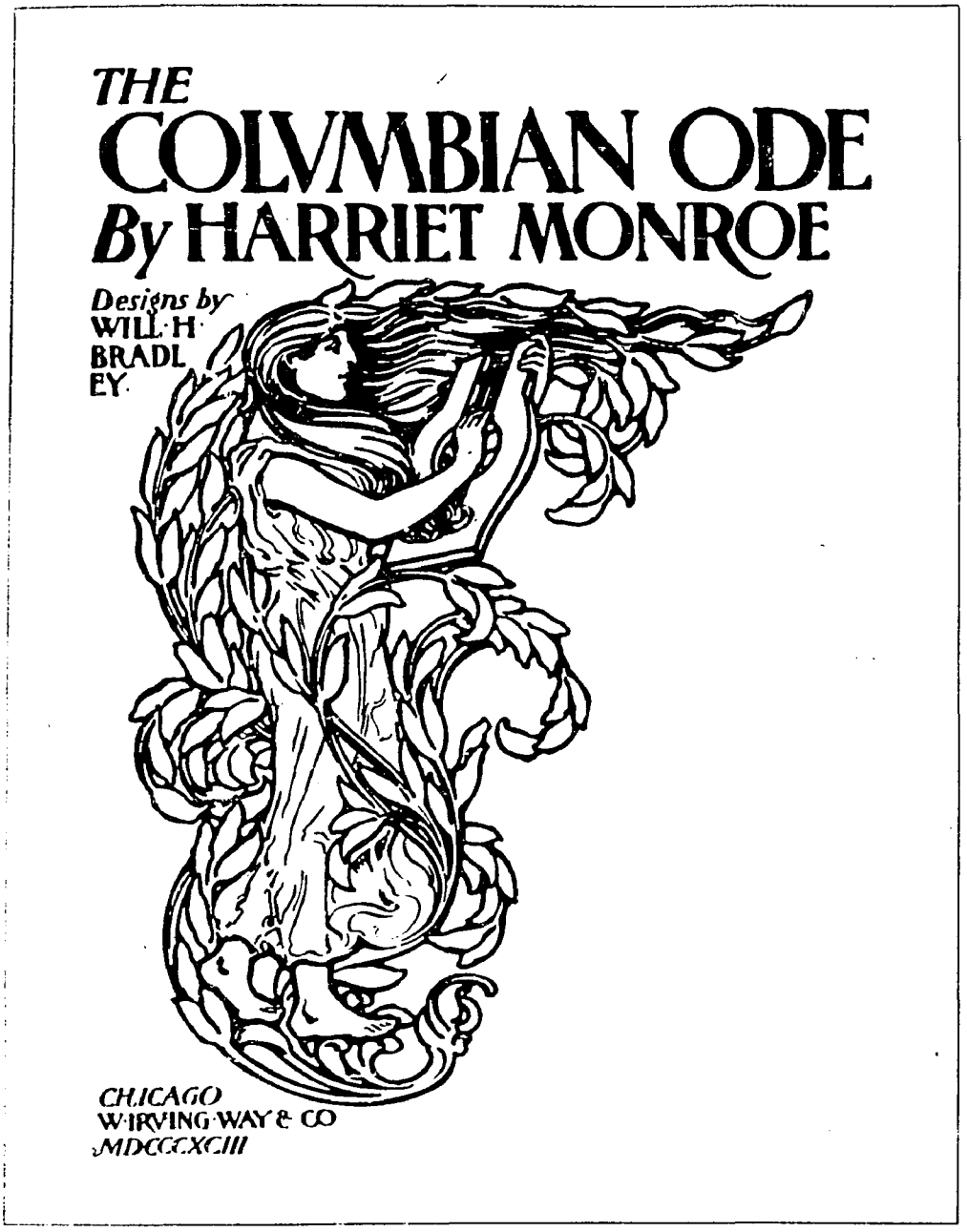
Fig. 143 Edward Potthast, Century Cook Book, After 1894



Fig. 144 Florence Lundborg, Lark, 1896



Fig. 145 Will Bradley, Bradley, His Book, Christmas 1896



The cover of poet Harriet Monroe's ode to the World's Columbian Exposition was designed

Fig. 146 Will Bradley, Ode to the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893



Blanche McManus, A.S. Barnes & Co., 1895.

Fig. 147 Blanche McManus, Legends of the Rhine, 1895

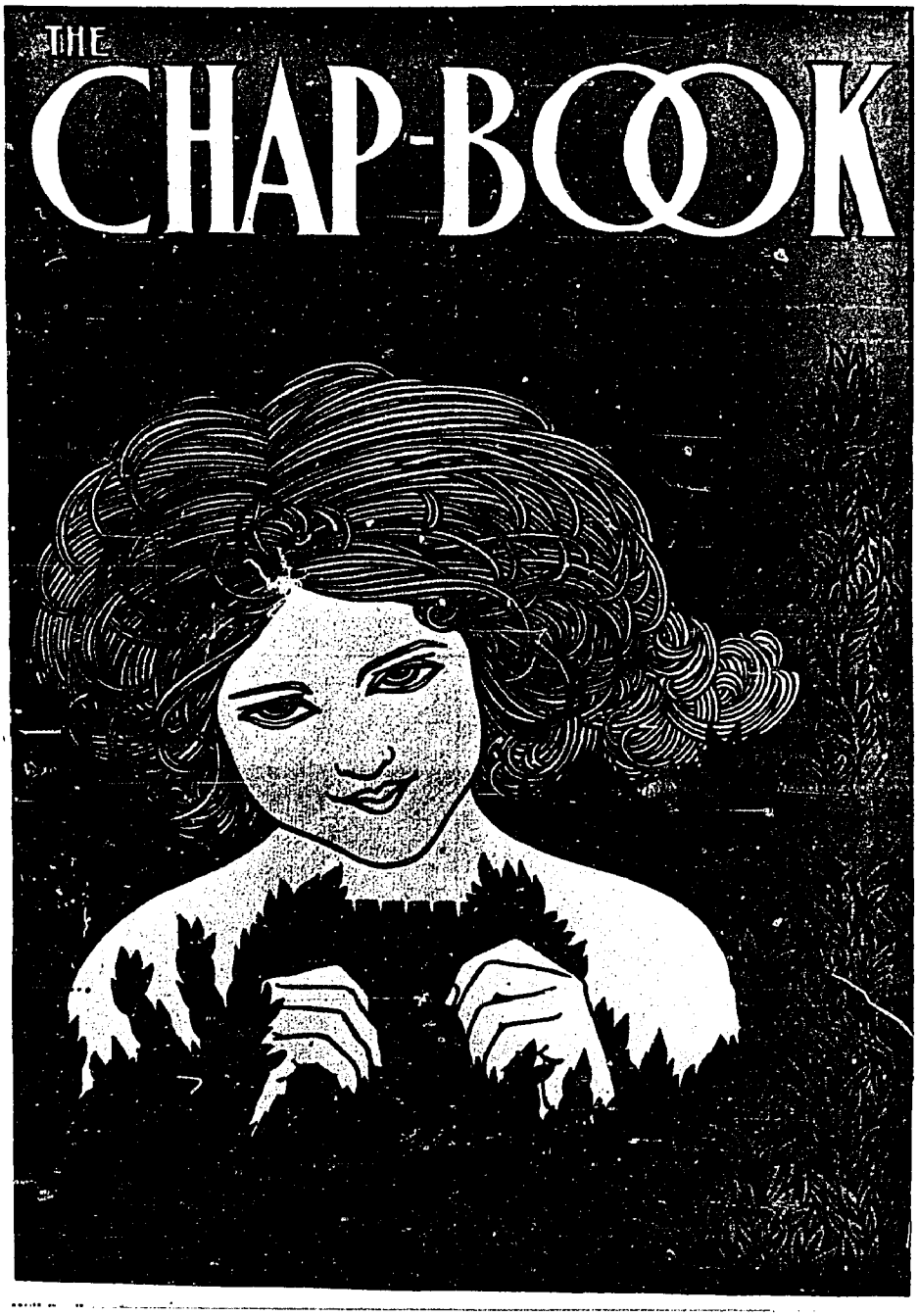
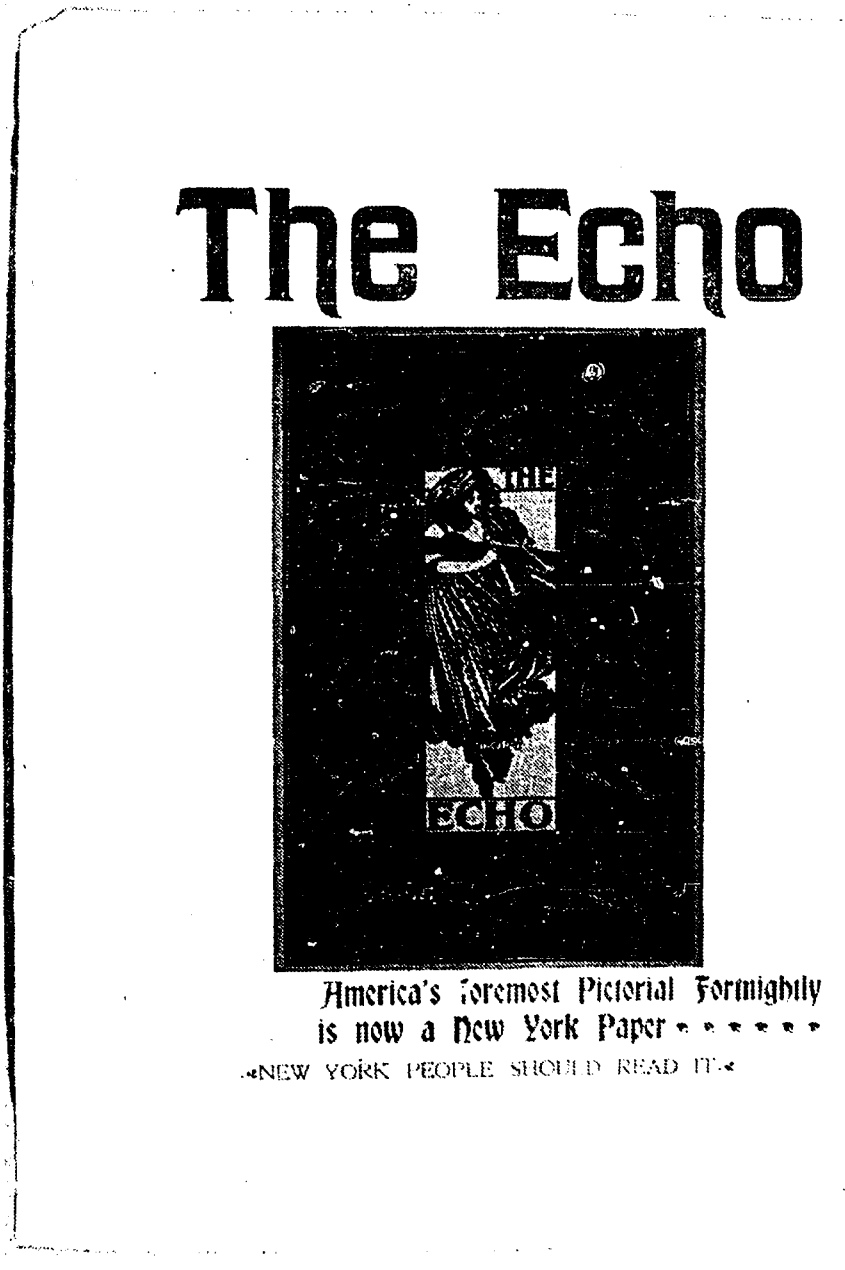


Fig. 148 Will Bradley, "Pan," Chap-Book, 1895



Bruce Porter, *The Lark*, 1895.

Fig. 149 Bruce Porter, Lark, 1895



166

Fig. 150 Will Bradley, Echo, 1895

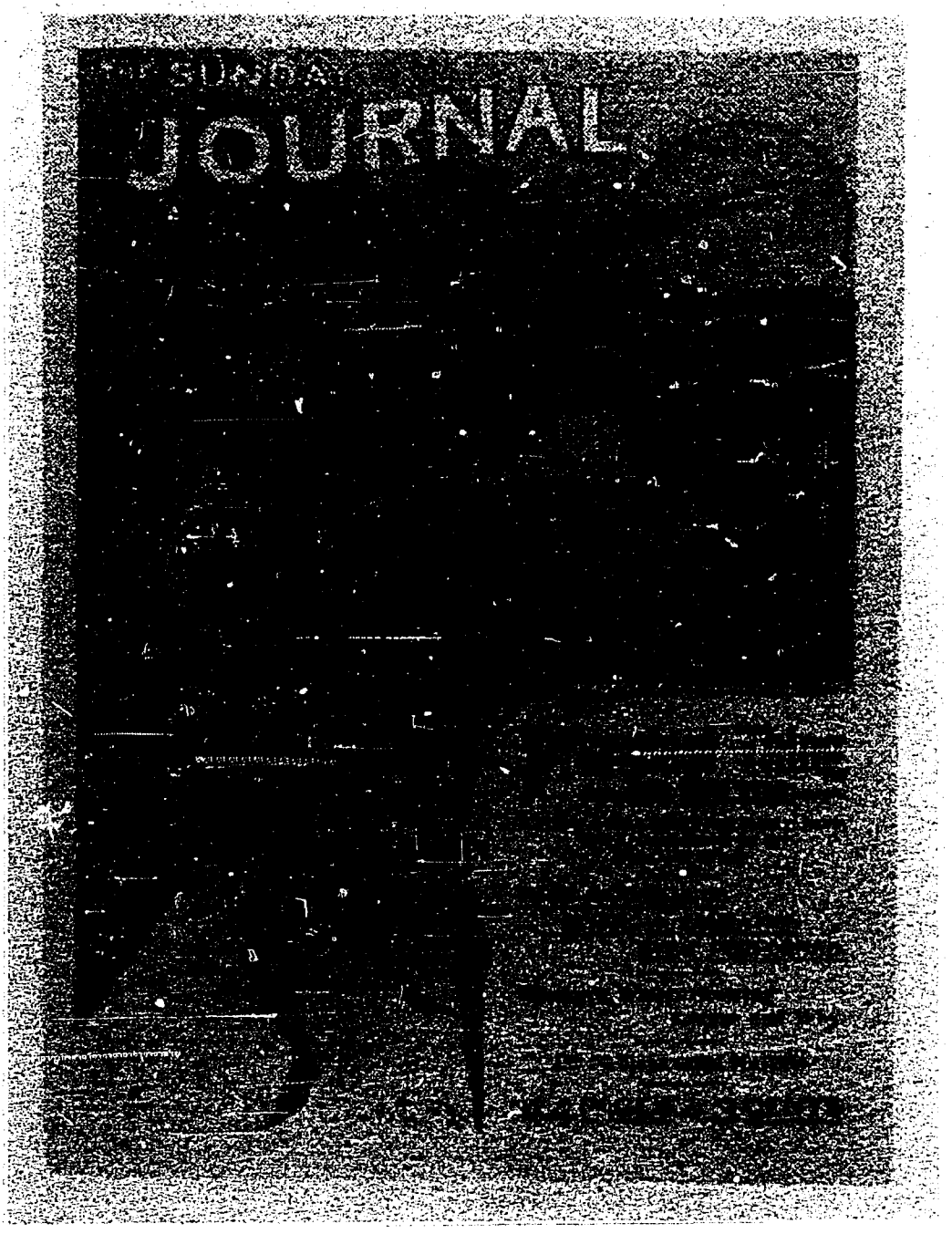
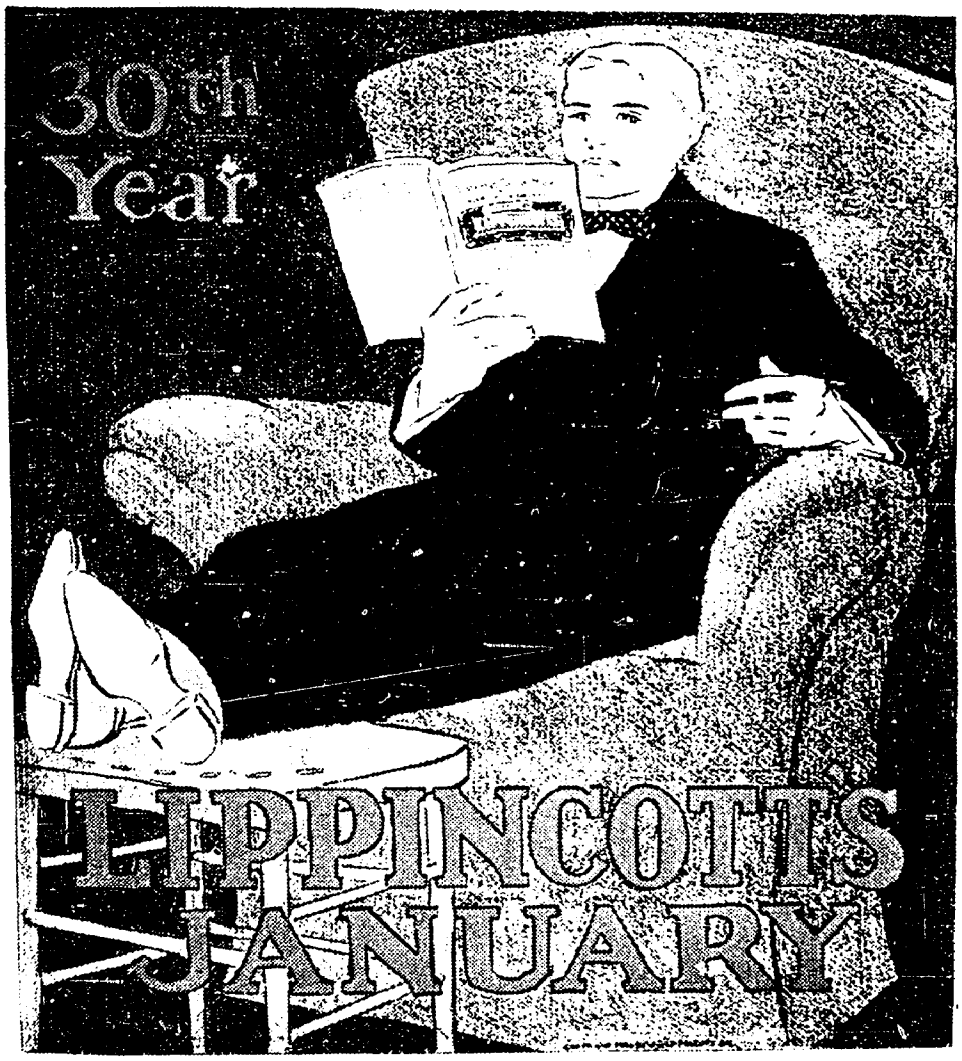


Fig. 151 Ernest Haskell, Sunday Journal, April 1896



Fig. 152 Eugene Grasset, Harper's Christmas, 1892



257

Fig. 153 J. J. Gould, Lippincott's
January 1897

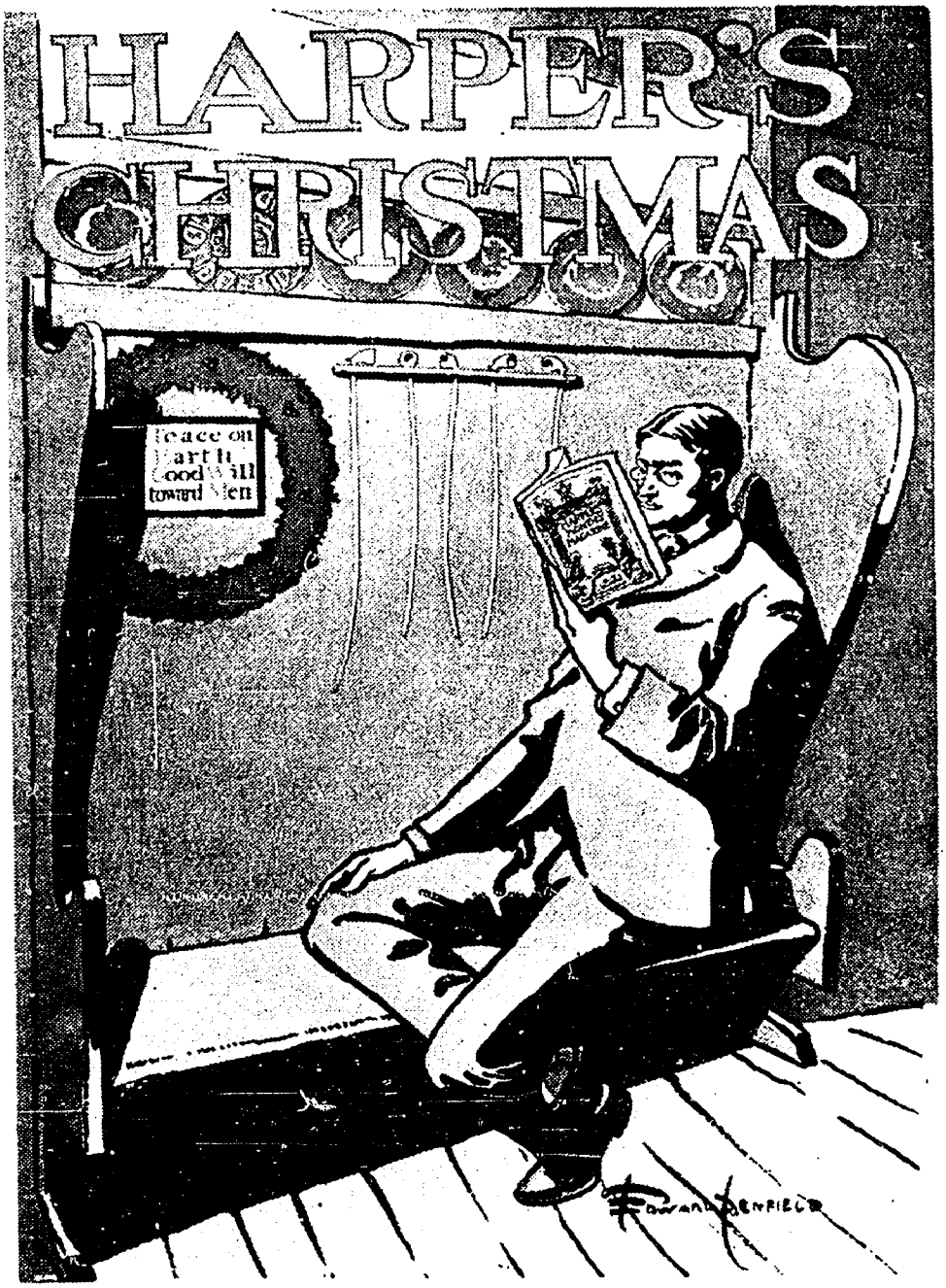


Fig. 154 Edward Penfield, Harper's Christmas, 1897



Fig. 155 Blanche McManus, Scribner's, 1895

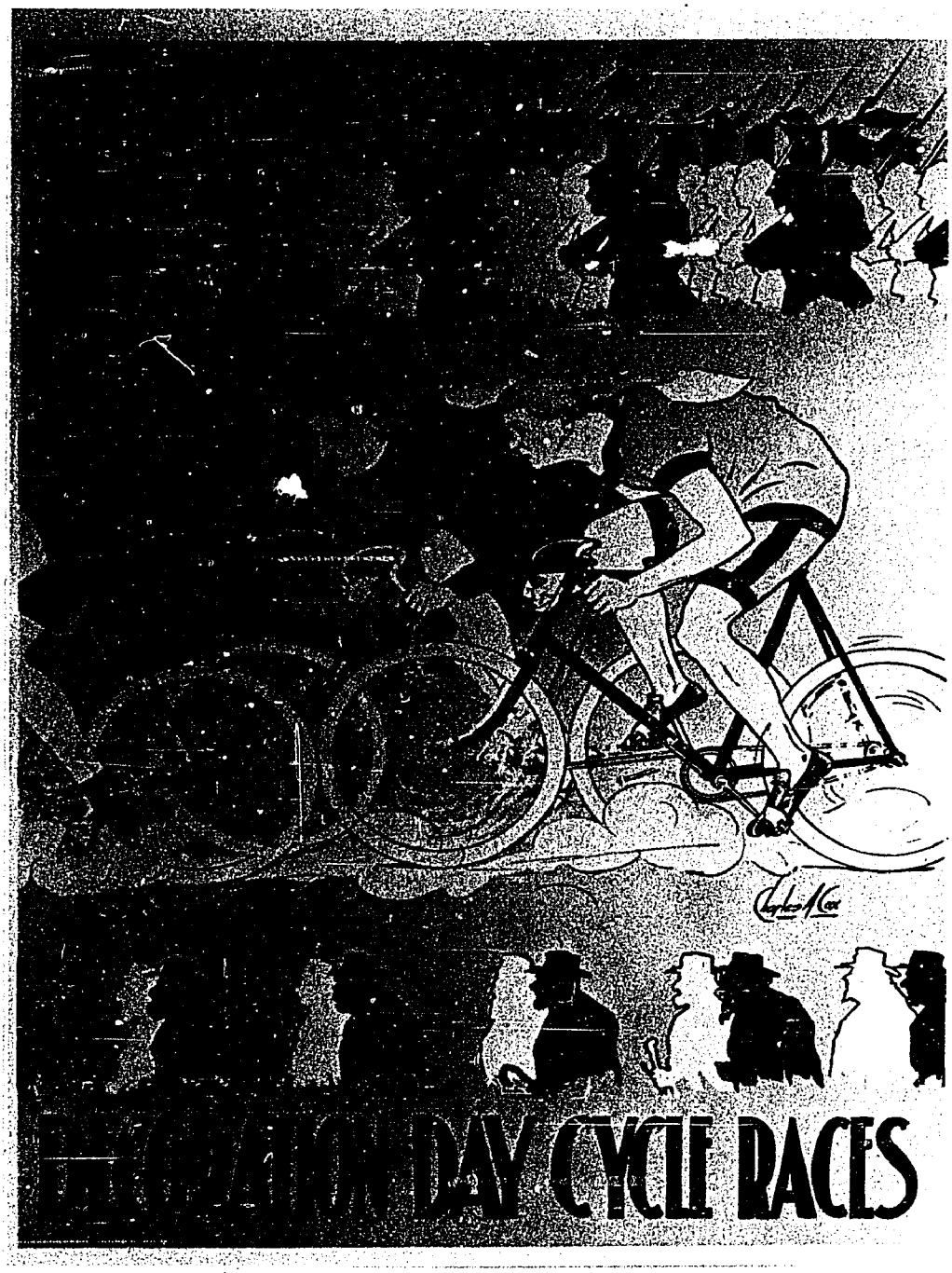


Fig. 156 Charles Cox, Bearings, 1896

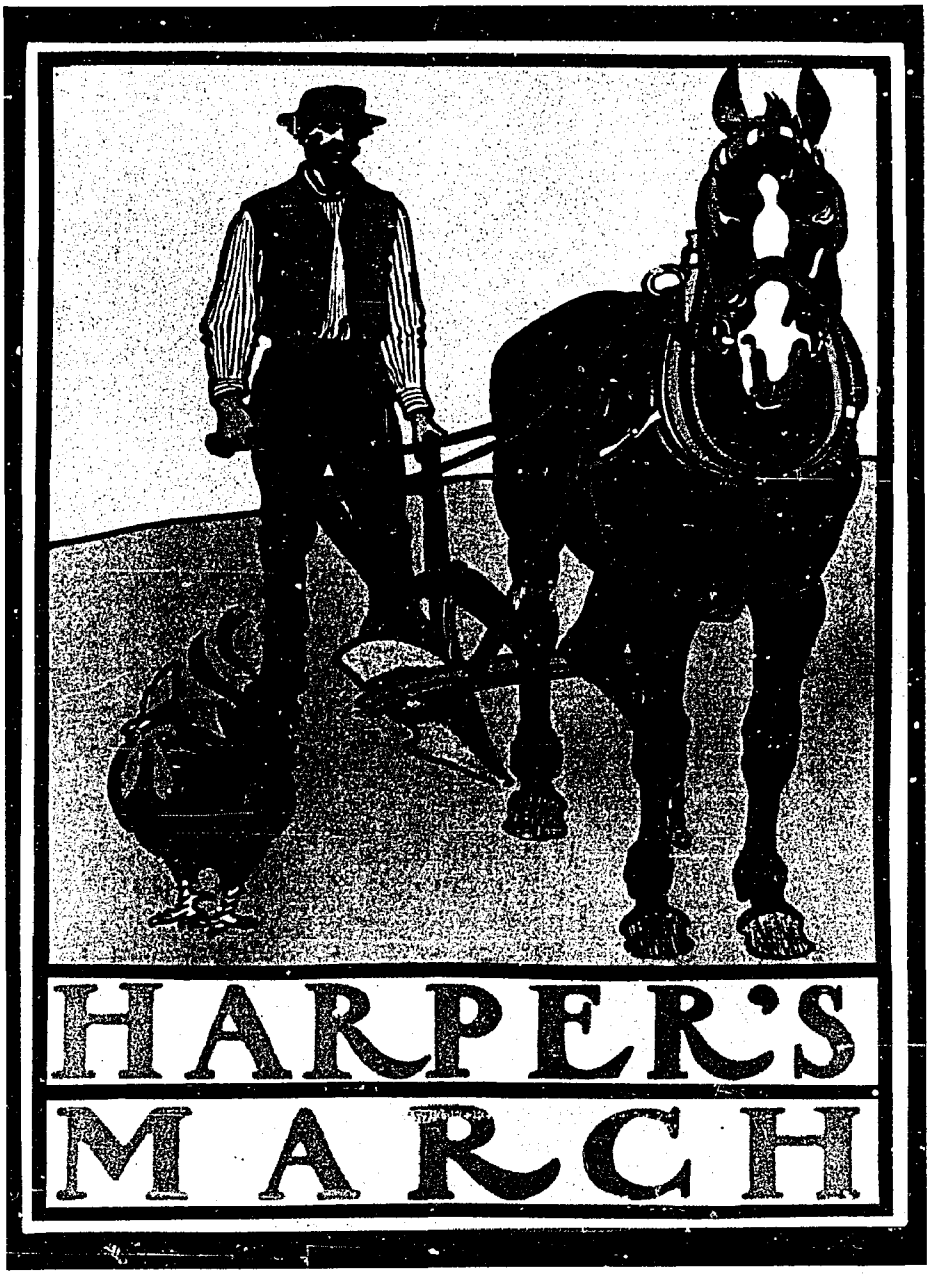


Fig. 157 Edward Penfield,
Harper's, March 1899



Edward Penfield, Aetna Dynamite, c. 1896.

Fig. 158 Edward Penfield, Aetna Dynamite, 1896



Fig. 159 Claude Fayette Bragdon, Chap-Book, 1895



Fig. 160 Edward Penfield,
Poster Calendar, 1897



Lafayette Maynard Dixon, *Overland Monthly*, c. 1894.

Fig. 161 L. Maynard Dixon, Overland Monthly, 1896

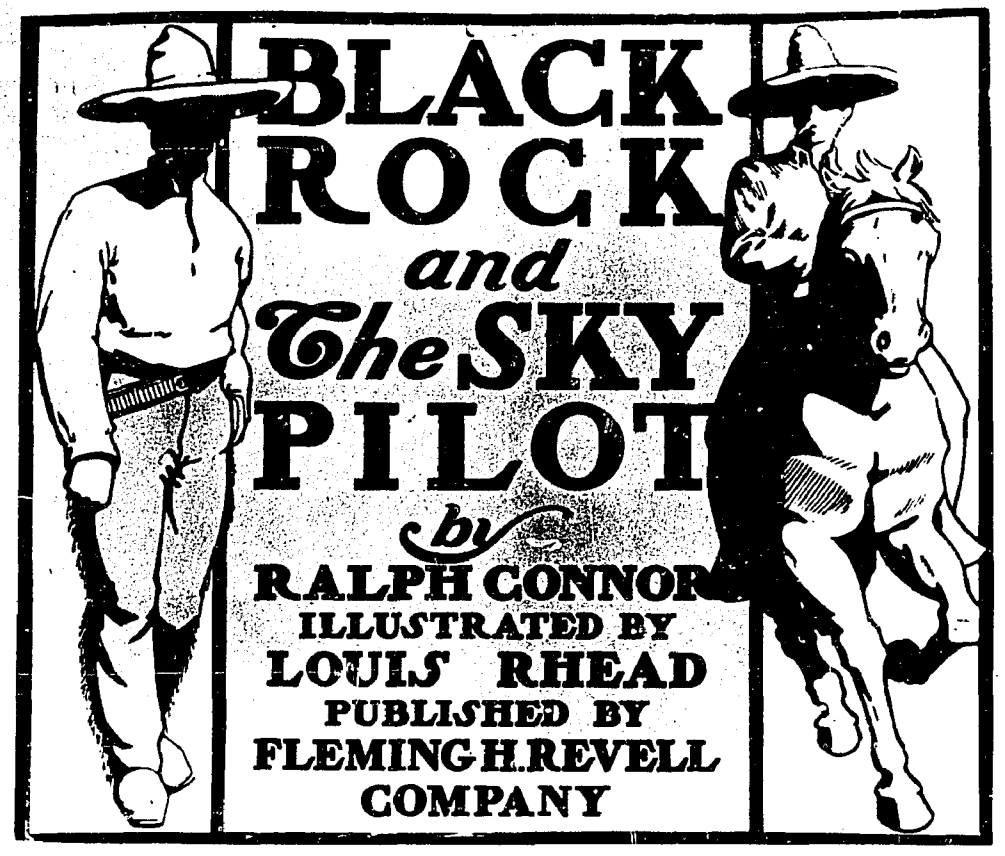


Fig. 162 Anonymous, Black Rock and the Sky Pilot, 1898

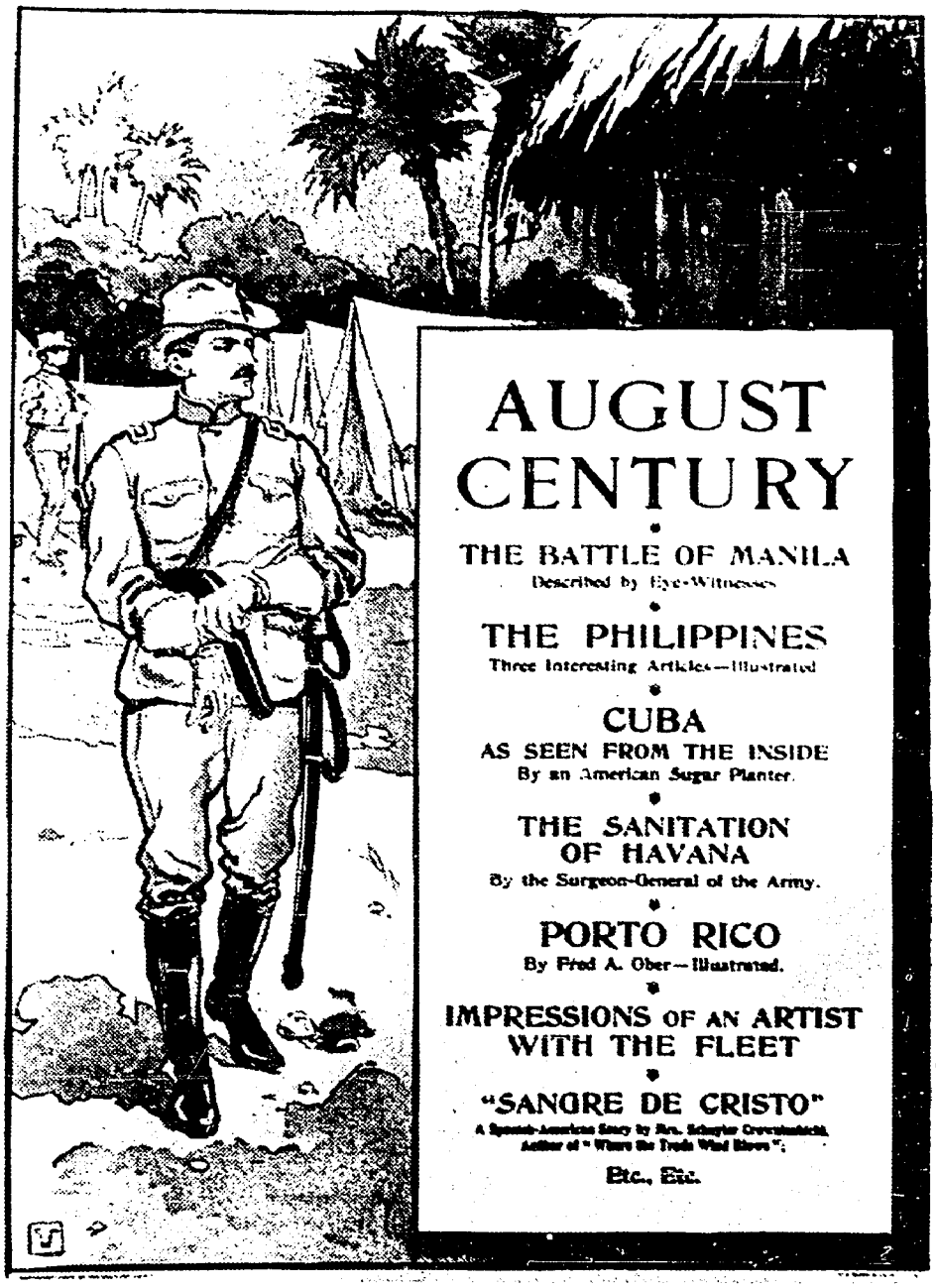
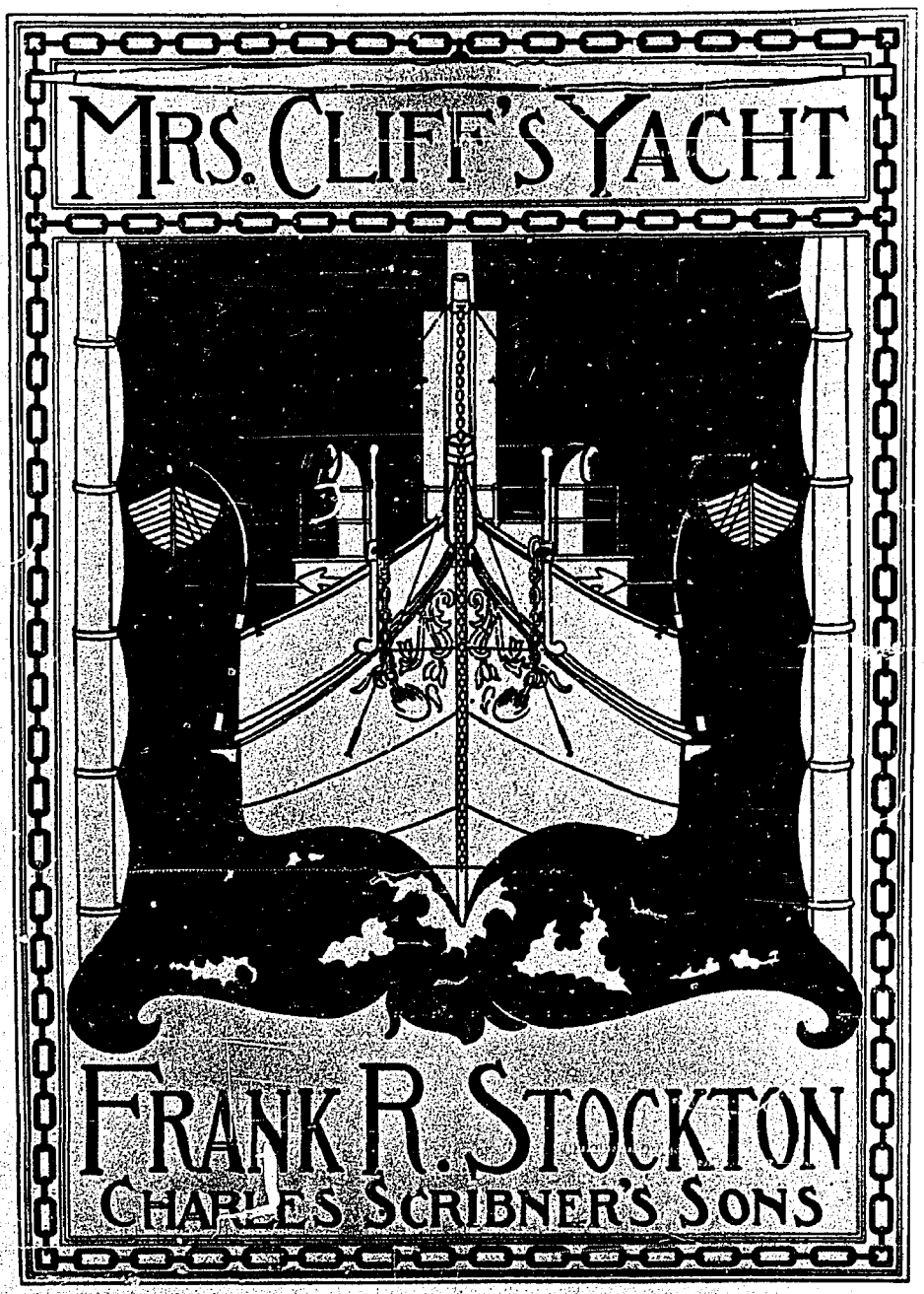


Fig. 163 George Edmund Varian, Century, August 1898



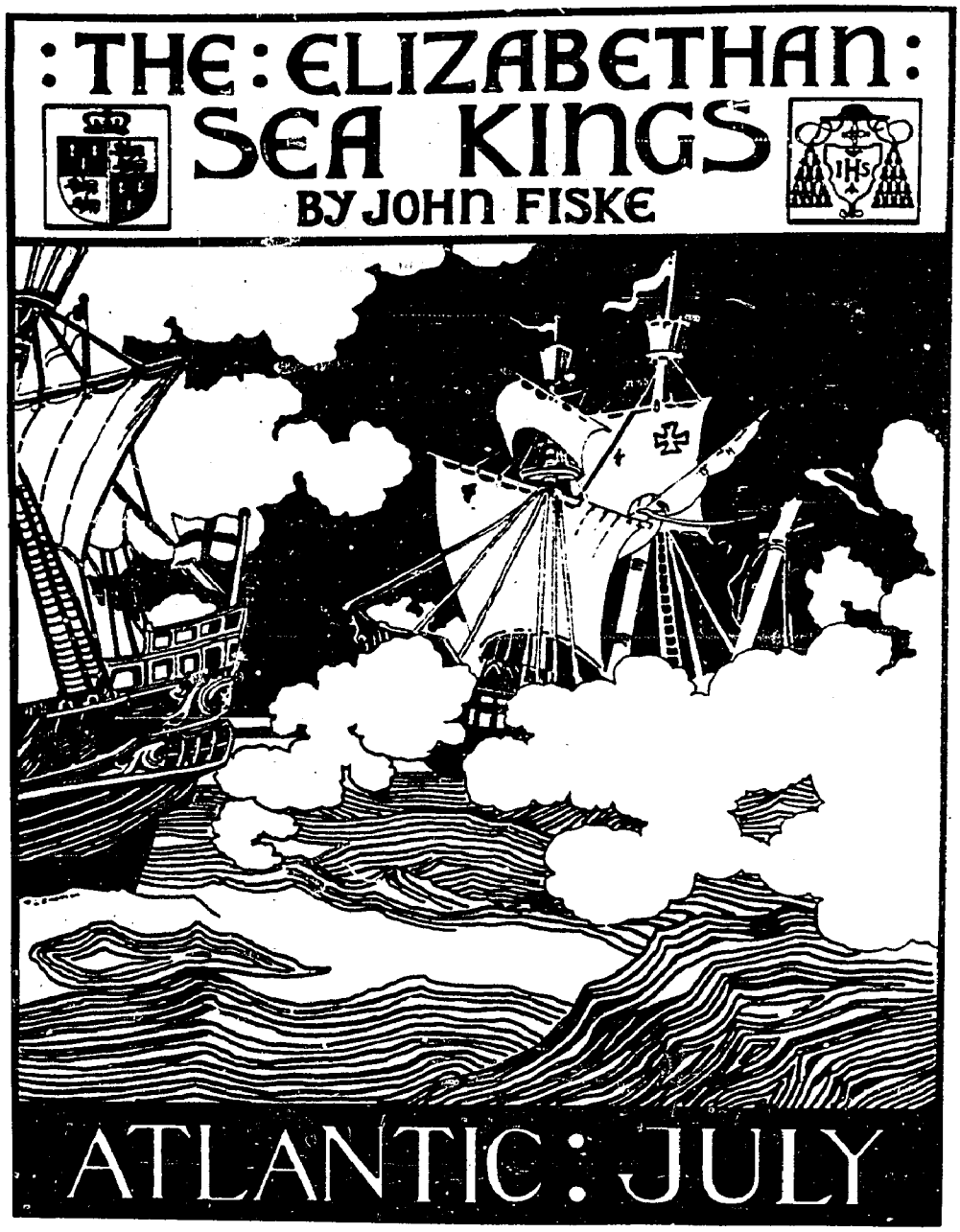
E.B. Bird, Copeland & Day, 1896.

Fig. 164 E. B. Bird, The Captured Cunarder, 1896



E.B. Wells, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896.

Fig. 165 E. B. Wells,
Mrs. Cliff's Yacht, 1896



R.L. Emerson, *Atlantic Monthly*, 1895.

Fig. 166 R. L. Emerson, Atlantic, July 1895



Fig. 167 Edward Penfield,
Harper's, September 1896



Fig. 168 Edward Penfield, Harper's, Christmas 1896

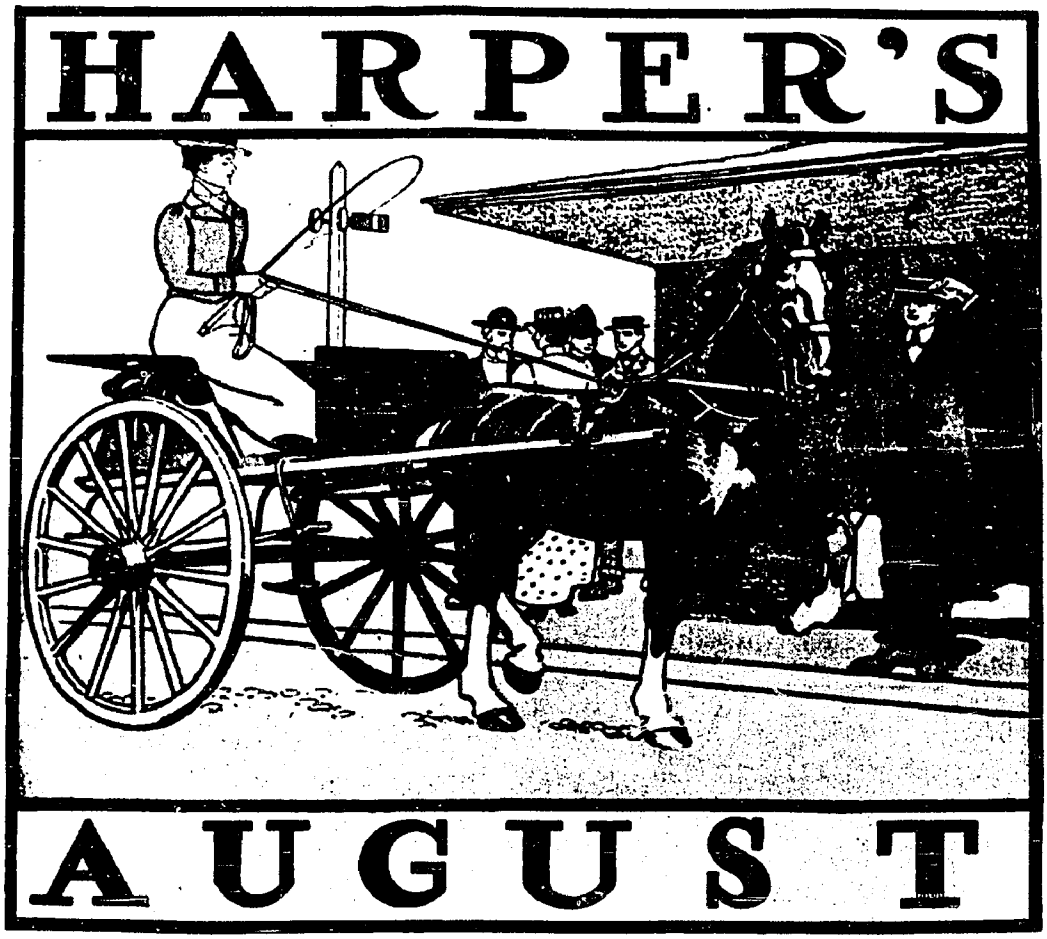


Fig. 169 Edward Penfield,
Harper's, August 1899

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