

THEY DANCE IN THE AIR.

A Flying Ballet Troupe Which Is to Delight New Yorkers at Hammerstein's Olympia.

Notwithstanding the ingenuity of the average American theatrical manager, the aerial ballet, which for years has created a sensation in European cities, has never been produced in this country. Some time ago, what purported to be a flying ballet was seen at a local theatre, but it was such a crude affair and lacking in all the essentials of grace, that it was soon abandoned.

evolutions, passing now and then to form pictures, occasionally touching the stage and bounding lightly to the floor, their every movement being the personification of grace. One pretty effect is caused when the principal comes down from above, apparently resting on the tip of one toe on the centres of six pink ribbons, which have been made by the other dancers to float in intersecting semicircles.

Tableau after tableau is formed in succession, each one seemingly more beautiful than the preceding. A novel effect is introduced in one of the pictures by the liberating from the wings and shoulders of the suspended beauties, heightening the illusion. The "vision," as it has been termed, concludes with the dancers slowly flying skyward until they disappear from sight.

Here Zschlegner requires ten assistants to manipulate his apparatus and attend to many details. Among the men employed are an expert watchmaker, a harness-maker, machinist, locksmith, wire worker and an engineer.

"BACK SHOPS."

Where Tailors Rent Lofts on Their Premises and Profit by the Anti-Sweatshop Law.

Despite the many investigations into the sweating system as it obtains in this city,

FACTS ABOUT WATCHES.

This Tells You Something of Their History, Oddity, Greatness and Cost.

Thirty millions of people in the United States are occupied for one minute every night of the 365 in winding their watches.

The time which it takes to wind the watches of this country alone, so that they will run for the succeeding twenty-four

hours, could afford to carry them, and, consequently, they were thought much of, had couplets engraved upon them, and were jealously guarded by the heaviest kinds of chains.

For some reason the watch in the shape of a skull was the favorite, and there was a great demand for that variety to the exclusion of all others among the fashionable people in the time of Mary Queen of Scots.

Among the watches owned by Queen Mary was a beautiful, coffin-shaped one in a case of crystal. She had another in which caught supplied the place of the interior chain in the modern watch.

One of her most valuable timepieces, a marvelous piece of workmanship, in the form of a skull, is the property of the Richard Lander family. The Queen bequeathed it to Mary Setoun, her maid of honor, February 7, 1587. On the forehead of the skull are the symbol of death, the scythe and the hour-glass.

RAILROADS OF PERIL.

Strange and Dangerous Aerial Methods of Transportation Now in Use.

The strangest, most perilous railway in the world is in the Himalayas. For convenience sake it is called an aerial railway, and this is no misnomer.

Think of sitting in a hoop suspended from a birch rope over a chasm, at the bottom

paid the cost of the building operations. The length of the line is two miles, and the exact height ascended 1,600 feet. The Chinese population of Hong Kong were much disturbed by the invasion of the mountain by this railway. They attributed the epidemic of the plague to the anger of the mountain demons, who were prevented by the wires from making their nightly flights round the circuit of the hill.

The difficulties in the construction of the Table Mountain wire line were far greater than in that at Hong Kong. A precipice and incline 800 feet in height interrupted the ascent midway. The summit of this precipice was used as a support, and the suspending wire leaped in a single span of 1,470 feet to the edge of the cliff, and thence in another span of 1,400 feet to the flat top of the mountain. The loads carried across these gulfs average half a ton each, and the line is used both for passenger and freight traffic.

The rock of Gibraltar has also its wire line, though of slighter build and far more striking steepness. The height to the signal station is barely a quarter less than the total length of the line, and the wire runs straight to the summit on a series of lofty trestles after a first leap of 1,000 feet in an ascent of one foot in every one and a half. Viewed against the sky, looking parallel to the mountain side, it appears like a telegraph wire stretched

BEER FROM SYPHONS.

German Genius Has Evolved an Idea That Will Interest New Yorkers.

Dispensing beer by means of a siphon containing from fifteen to forty glasses of beer is a brand new idea that has been put to practical use in Germany.

Edward Michels, the proprietor of Francke's tavern, of Washingtonian fame, has just returned from Germany, where he saw this odd device. He says the siphon from which the beer is driven is vastly different from the one in general use in this country, but answers the purpose admirably. The siphons are of three sizes and are made to contain fifteen, twenty-five and forty glasses of beer.

"The beer drawn from one of these siphons is as foaming and fresh as that 'drawn from the wood' of a freshly tapped keg," said Mr. Michels.

"I found them on the tables of private families, on club buffets and on the dining cars on the railroads.



THE NEW FLYING BALLET SKETCHED AT A DRESS REHEARSAL AT HAMMERSTEIN'S OLYMPIA.

he met the late Sir Augustus Harris, with whom he contracted to exhibit his aerial ballet in connection with the Drury Lane Theatre productions. Tempting offers were made him to come to this country, but he stuck to Sir Augustus until the death of that manager left him free to negotiate with others.

Oscar Hammerstein, of Olympia, at once entered into correspondence with Zschlegner, with the result that the inventor and his troupe of seven aerial dancers are now in his city and will appear at Olympia September 21. The dancers are known as the Grigolats, taking their name from the principal performer, Mme. Grigolats, who for several years was court dancer for the Czar of Russia.

The aerial ballet is to be introduced in Oscar's opera ballet "Marguerite." Judging from those who have witnessed the spectacle in Europe, the illusion is most complete. At the conclusion of a dance by the regular staff of corseteers, who group themselves picturesquely about the stage, six beautiful girls, exquisitely costumed, that descend from the wings to within a few feet of the stage and proceed to twist themselves into fantastic attitudes with bows, rebans and gazes. The dancers cross each other in flight, meeting, parting and with no sense of danger. It is impossible to see the source of their support, and the inventor, although protected by patents, will not reveal the workings of his apparatus on the ground that it would detract from the poetic effect.

After the six dancers have finished their graceful evolutions they remain in a picturesque group. Suddenly a seventh, the principal dancer, descends lightly from the clouds and forms the central figure of the All then go through bewildering

no mention has ever been made of the back shop, which is quite an important feature of the cheap tailoring business. It is to be regretted that the matter has never been brought to light, for it is one of the little schemes by which money is squeezed out of the poor man.

Among the poorer men who take work to do there are always many who have no place at home to do it. This fact soon became known to the tailors who had shops of their own, and they were quick to see a means by which they could eke out their rent. They cleaned up the rooms back of their shops and filled them with chairs. Any tailor who wished a place to work in would rent one of these chairs by paying the sum of \$1 a week. The price must have seemed large to the man who might earn less than \$4 for his week's work, but it was a question of necessity with him, and he had to put up with it. If he displayed any resentment at all it was more apt to be against the factory inspector, who refused to let him work at his own home, than against the grasping landlord.

At first all these places were situated in the rear of tailor shops, whence the name originated. They are still so called, although the demand for them has increased so much that at the present time some of the largest lofts in the city are used for this purpose. It must be admitted that these lofts, when properly conducted, are much better in every way than anything the men would get up for themselves. The man who rents the loft readily sees that it depends upon himself whether it shall continue to be a veritable gold mine to him. He measures out the legal space for each workman, and sees that the place never becomes overcrowded.

hours, amounts in one day to sixty years—twice the lifetime of the average human.

And every year several million watches are turned out by the large and small concerns in our Union. Times have changed now. Every schoolboy has a watch. Watches are cheap—that is, cheap watches are. Good watches still cost good money, and curios in the watch line are cherished by curiosity hunters as they have always been.

At first the watch was an awkward affair of about the size of a dessert plate. It had weights and was used as a "pocket clock." It is said that King Robert of Scotland had one in 1310. Again it is asserted that Emperor Charles V. was the first to have anything like a watch, in the year 1550. Here are historic statements regarding watches which are worth keeping.

The spring of spiral steel is ascribed to Dr. Robert Hooke by the English, and to M. Huyghens by the Dutch. Invented in a watch presented to King Charles II. "Robert Hooke, inven., 1658; Tomlin, fecit, 1675." A third authority states that the watch was first made at Nuremberg in 1447.

The cylinder and escapement were invented in 1695; by Thomas Tomlin. Graham, in 1700, invented the horizontal escapement, and in 1716 the compensating pendulum. Jeweled pivot holes were introduced by Patek. The earliest springs were not coiled, but only straight pieces of steel. Early watches had one hand, and being wound up twice a day, could not be expected to keep the time nearer than fifteen or twenty minutes in twelve hours. The dial were of silver or brass, the cases had no crystals, but opened at the back and front, and were four or five inches in diameter. A plain watch cost the equivalent of \$1,000 in our currency, and after one was ordered it took a year to make it. Only

socks. The works form the brains. The dial plate is the palate.

Another skull-shaped watch, which belonged to her, was a gift from her husband, Francis II. Several of these morbid works of art are owned by wealthy ladies in New York. Mrs. William Cassidy, widow of the editor of the Albany Argus, possesses one of this kind.

The first watches were made of wood. A Russian jeweler, named Tagausoff, condemned and sent to Siberia, made a wooden watch, and it secured him his freedom. The aim of watchmakers was to make and the desire of rulers was to own the smallest watch in the world. A Strand jeweler named Arnold in 1764 made a watch for King George III. which was set in a ring. The Czar offered Arnold \$5,200 to duplicate the timepiece for him, but the artist refused.

The smallest watch ever made, up to the present time, is probably that manufactured by O. Atne, who in 1891 was employed by the Cleveland Watch Co. He studied his trade for eight years in Norway. Before commencing the work he designed the watch in detail on paper, deciding upon the exact measurements of each piece, and, although the largest piece did not exceed one-half inch and the smallest was 1-1000 part of an inch, the material cost several hundred dollars to prepare.

Emperor Charles V. owned a watch which weighed twenty-seven pounds. It still exists, the largest watch in the world. The owner of the greatest number of curious and valuable watches in the world is Saragato, the violinist. Several of them, which were given to him, are oddly shaped. The oldest watch known to be in existence is in the Royal Institute at London. It belonged to Queen Elizabeth.

of which a fearful distance down—runs a mountain torrent, and making your way across by "hitching" the hoop along the rope.

This is just how the passenger must proceed to make the chasm crossing at this, the oldest of railways on the Tibetan frontier.

The only development of this primitive system was the addition of a second rope, an endless cord, by which the passenger in the hoop was drawn across from either side, with no more risk than was involved in the task of keeping himself from falling out of the hoop in which he sat.

Some such rough form of transport, with "buckets" and wheels substituted for the hoops, was used for many years in the lead mines of the Peak of Derbyshire; but if hemp had remained the strongest material for ropemaking, the aerial railway would never have taken the place which it has, nor attracted the attention which it now claims among the practical means of cheap transport.

The invention of the twisted steel rope has made the development of the aerial railway practically safe and commercially possible, and more than 2,000 miles of line are now in working order in Spain, Italy, South America, India, the Cape, China and Japan. The cableway at Hong Kong is one of the only two aerial lines used solely for passenger traffic, though it was built for useful and commercial reasons.

tight from the tops of a series of miniature Eiffel towers; yet the soldiers ascend and descend in the little wooden boxes which travel on it with equal safety and comfort. The Hong Kong, Gibraltar and Table Mountain lines are worked on a double cable, along which one car ascends as the other descends, the two being connected by a hauling rope.

But these are toys compared with the complicated and ever increasing system of aerial trams now working in the great iron mines of Spain. Near Bilbao the greater part of a mountain side is quarried away at different levels to obtain the fine iron ore, which is carried to the railway by nine lines, running from the station at the foot of the mountain to the mines along the summit. These nine lines carry on an average of 2,700 tons of ore a day, none of which touches the level of the ground till it has travelled some five miles through space.

The appearance of these multiplex lines of wire stretching from tower to tower of light trestled iron, and hung at intervals with hundreds of ore carriages in constant motion, is one of the strangest spectacles in modern mining enterprise. The double line of iron trestles, where it leaves the terminus in the valley, looks like the support of some enormous viaduct, festooned with wires slung with rows of pendant buckets.

Higher up the mountain, where deep ravines cut the face of the hill, the trestles tower to such a height that the trailing loads of ore look like little black balls against the sky. When the different levels of the wire are reached the lines of the wireway diverge and are carried to nine separate points in the workings.

"Fishing, boating, yachting, hunting and picnic parties found them indispensable, and I could not help thinking how useful they would be to New Yorkers on Sundays. They would do away with the 'growler' and would come in handy for smoking concerts, stag parties and even hen parties.

"But they are not alone useful for private and club houses, as hotels, restaurants and saloons could use them to great advantage for the reason that they could, by means of siphons, keep several brands of imported beer on draught, whereas perhaps the volume of their imported beer trade would not warrant them keeping half a dozen kegs of different beer on tap.

"It is the clubs and private families of Germany who benefit most from this siphon system, as they are served by wagons once or twice a week and have fresh beer on tap continually.

BRITAIN'S LONELIEST SPOT

It is Tristan da Cunha, a Volcanic Island, a Thousand Miles from Anywhere.

The most isolated spot in the British Empire—that Empire on which the sun never sets—is Tristan da Cunha, a volcanic island 1,750 miles from the Cape of Good Hope and 1,300 away from St. Helena, the nearest point of land.

While Napoleon was a prisoner on St. Helena the British Government maintained a garrison on Tristan. His death made the garrison unnecessary, and the soldiers left, with the exception of Corporal William Glass, his family and two privates. The privates married Glass's daughters, and the present population of eighty-four people consists mainly of women.