



WONDERFUL FAIRY COLONY FOUND IN HEART OF PORTLAND

Among Decaying Grandeur of Pioneer Days Besides Horde of Fabled Being Seldom Seen by Mortal Eye.

BY DE WITT HARRY.

THERE are legions of fairies in Portland and recently a large colony of ogres, griffins, unicorns, Turks, knights and other fabled and seldom-seen beings frequently described in fabled tales of the imagination has been discovered peacefully living right in the heart of the city. It sounds like romancing in the superlative degree and those who have held Portland to be a prosaic, almost too usual like city will doubtless dismiss this tale right here with a sneer.

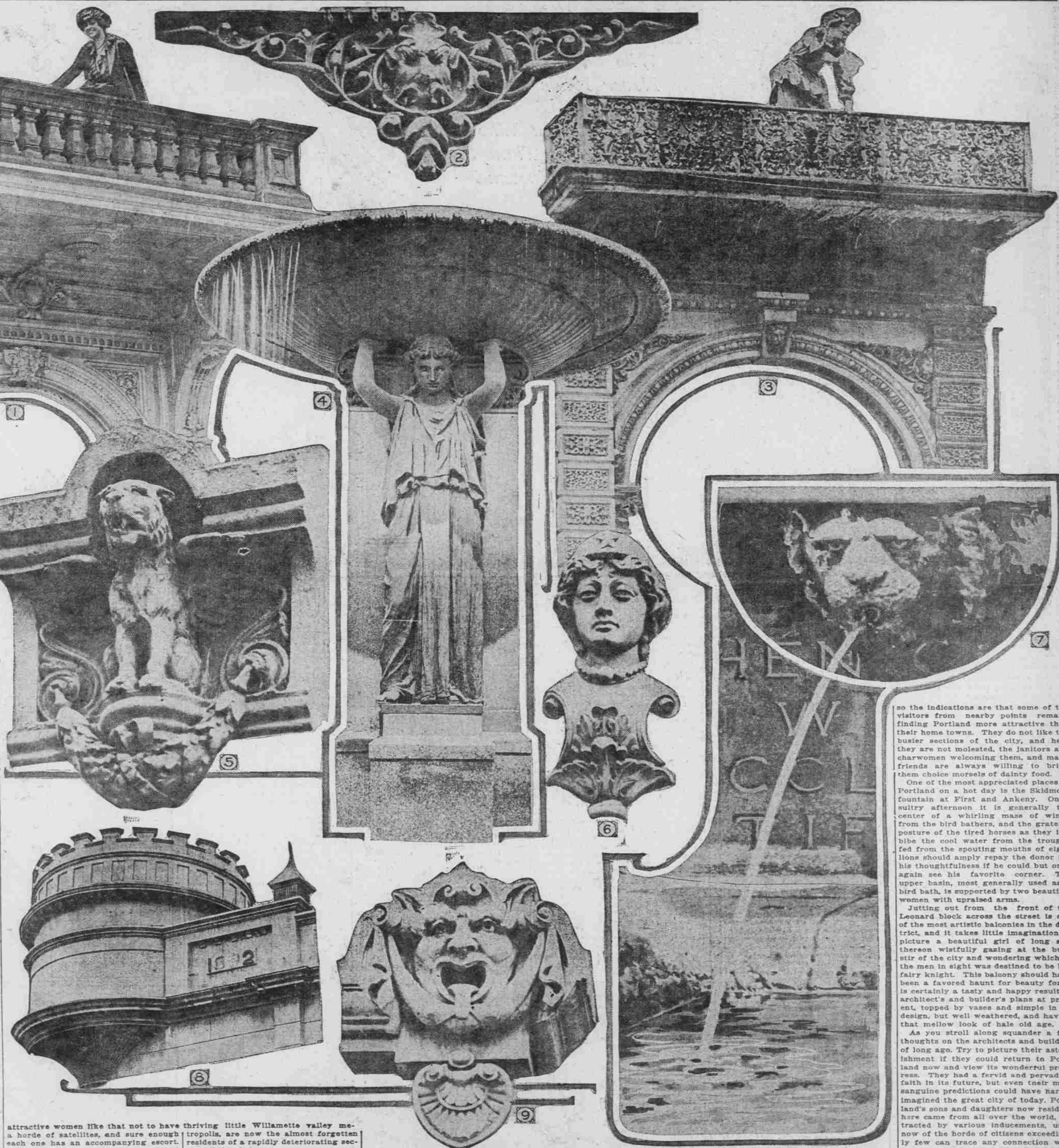
Down on First street, among the drab and decaying grandeur of pioneer Portland's first thriving business center, reside these figments of an almost lost architectural art, the carved decorations on the front of the ancient buildings, just a short time ago the pride of the thriving metropolis of the then raw state of Oregon.

Gargoyles galore, hordes of ogres with satiated visages, griffins spreading their stone wings in a vain endeavor to carry their lion-like bodies soaring above the houses, beautiful fairy princesses imprisoned on the hard fronts of the old buildings, swollen old Bacchanalian devotees with long, long looks fixed on clusters of vineyard grapes, grinning apes aching to swing loose and climb through the commercial jungle, sinking forces with back-turned heads always guarding against surprise, queer old bent men imitating Atlas and from their keystone location bearing the weight of ponderous structures, leering Turks closely scanning passersby for material for their harems and gazing toward the east waiting for the minaret chimneys to call them to worship, ancient castles rearing their battlemented walls frowningly above the roadway, splendidly caparisoned and garbed knights, goblins, pixies, gnomes, and good fairies with magic wands all ready to grant the right wishes, all these and many more matter-of-factly make their homes in our midst and are always ready to receive their many friends at different locations along famous old First street.

Fairy Princess Lives Here.

Start just at Washington street and take a stroll north along the west side walk. Get out of the habit of looking down, swing your arms, hold your head high, get in the spirit of the game and look up, across the street. Breathe deep, get the tang of the salt sea from the river, just a block away. See that gull fluttering overhead—look quick, see where it lights, right there. A fairy princess as sure as you're alive. Note the number of the building, 50 First street, and the modern sign "Coast Steel & Machinery Company." Rather out of place right in the center of a crowd of beautiful girls, for there are girls all about on the front of the building, 15 of them, and all looking at you with merry smiles at your surprise.

Now you would never have known these beautiful girls, who have found the fountain of youth, lived in Portland. But there they are and just as young and pretty as the first day they came nearly 40 years ago. But look closer, the girls have company. Couldn't expect



attractive women like that not to have a horde of satellites, and sure enough each one has an accompanying escort. The girls are evidently sisters, but their tastes differ, for, of the eight animated and lucky stone gentlemen suitors who reside on the floor below, four sport full-flowing mustaches, three have well trimmed hirsute adornments on their upper lips, and the other chap, evidently the junior of the set, is either clean shaven or is not old enough to grow a beard.

Pooh! You say. Just carved decorations on the buildings. Get away from that idea or you can't see any more. Just think a moment how long those same women and men you call decorations have been on the job guarding Portland and acting as good fairies for her. Just try and realize how much they know and have seen. Imagine how proud they must be of their home now that they have watched it outgrow its swaddling clothes and spread until they, who were once inhabitants of the busiest and best portion of the

thriving little Willamette valley metropolis, are now the almost forgotten residents of a rapidly deteriorating section of the city. Look up at the top of that same building, see the eagle crowning the cornice and striving to flutter its stone wings and fly away. And across from the bird of freedom see the luxuriant thistle rearing its proud Scotch head near the crest of the roof. The first owner must have come from the highland glens and wanted some remembrance of his old home. But you cannot spend too much time here, gaze up there next door. Over that Wilhelm Transfer company sign at 46 First street and all along the half block of buildings, see those eight other happy pixies, each surrounded with a wreath. The builder must have been careless as he has cut eight more of them in half. See the fretwork and intricacy of the carving on the face of the building. They don't do it nowadays, styles have changed, and that poor old structure, while solid enough judging

from the exterior, is out of date and, therefore, relegated to the background. And do you like grapes? Stone ones? Grapes are also getting out of style, except as raisins, but ahead there at 38 First street, growing all over the building, are faithful replicas of clusters fresh from sunny southern vineyards that we can show to our children as we tell them of the wicked fluids they used to press from the succulent fruit. And look, yes, 18 of them. How do you spell it, Bacchuses. That's what they are, though it is commonly thought that there is but one of the convivial old fellows. Now, down here at First and Burnside, see the thistles that adorn the

plain stonework of the front of the old Skidmore building, which says it was built in 1888. And at First and Couch, now housing the Noon Bag company, is the Blagen building, built in 1888, and bearing on its front twin sisters of surpassing beauty. Mature women are these, full breasted and serene, and they have their straight gaze fixed on the beautiful hills encircling the city. Immediately below them is a guard of ten lions baring their fangs in a ferocious grin, and yet lower down are three more huge lions snarling at the passers-by. Right here is the end of our northern ramble for the tanks and retorts of the gas company's plant close the street,

so the indications are that some of the visitors from nearby points remain, finding Portland more attractive than their home towns. They do not like the busier sections of the city, and here they are not molested, the janitors and charwomen welcoming them, and many friends are always willing to bring them choice morsels of dainty food.

One of the most appreciated places in Portland on a hot day is the Skidmore fountain at First and Ankeny. On a sultry afternoon it is generally the center of a whirling mass of wings from the bird bathers, and the grateful posture of the tired horses as they imbibe the cool water from the troughs fed from the spouting mouths of eight lions should amply repay the donor for his thoughtfulness if he could but once again see his favorite corner. The upper basin, most generally used as a bird bath, is supported by two beautiful women with upraised arms.

Putting out from the front of the Leonard block across the street is one of the most artistic balconies in the district, and it takes little imagination to picture a beautiful girl of long ago thereon wistfully gazing at the busy stir of the city and wondering which of the men in sight was destined to be her fairy knight. This balcony should have been a favored haunt for beauty for it is certainly a tasty and happy result of architect's and builder's plans at present, topped by vases and simple in its design, but well weathered, and having that mellow look of hale old age.

As you stroll along squander a few thoughts on the architects and builders of long ago. Try to picture their astonishment if they could return to Portland now and view its wonderful progress. They had a fervid and pervading faith in its future, but even their most sanguine predictions could have hardly imagined the great city of today. Portland's sons and daughters now resident here came from all over the world, attracted by various inducements, until now of the horde of citizens exceedingly few can trace any connection with the real old pioneers. For all that they are just as much Portlanders as anyone and all owe a colossal debt of gratitude to the old citizens, who, serene in their faith, laid the foundations for the Rose City's permanent greatness, and left the many memorials, along this old thoroughfare, of their activities.

Gay Old Theater Changed.

Think that you come here at 10 o'clock on a cool dusky evening of long ago. See the crowds coming from the archway of that building, laughing merrily and dressed in the height of fashion. They have just been to see the premier performance of a famous troupe of actors that arrived yesterday on the steamer from San Francisco playing in New Market theater, built in 1872. Now, alas, it is a grimy petrol-soaked garage. Gliman's block at 43 First street (Concluded on Page 7.)