

Poverty Haunts Genius of Brush

Off Years Drive Masters of Art to Menial Labor as Hunger-Appeasing Means



C. W. R. Nevinston, who admits earnings from art are only \$375 in year.

EMINENT artist would paint portrait of lady for small charge.

THAT advertisement, printed a few days ago in a London newspaper, disclosed a story of hardships, of a desperate need for ready money, that finally drove an artist of recognized ability to do something he would not have dreamed of doing a few years ago—ask publicly for a piece of work at a "small charge."

By coincidence, on the same day that advertisement appeared C. W. R. Nevinston, one of the best known English artists of the modern school, said he was not ashamed to admit that he had earned less than \$1500 by his art during the last four years, an average of less than \$375 a year. He said that he and his wife, by denying themselves new clothes and many comforts, had been able to live by drawing on the savings of former and more prosperous years. He declared that no artist should spend more than 25 per cent of what he earns.

Artists in Moscow and Vienna are starving and have been starving for months; artists in Italy and France are unemployed and are being forced to turn to other work; artists in England are forgetting their pride long enough to almost beg for work that they may live, and even in New York, where people boast that nobody ever really starves to death, artists are feeling the pinch more than they ever have.

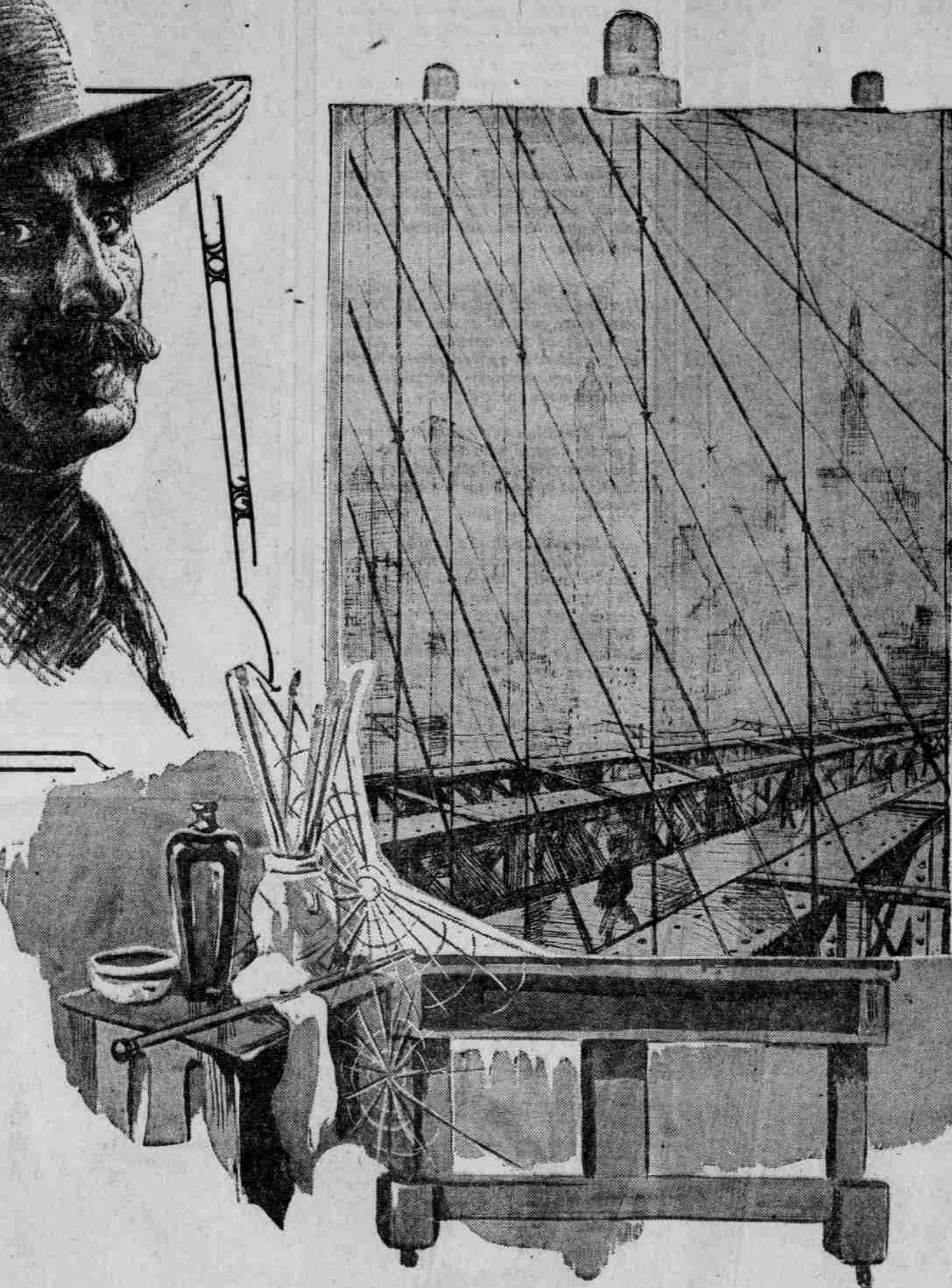
The other day when it was announced that Albert Floegel, hitherto unknown, had been awarded the fellowship in painting that the American academy in Rome gives every year to a young American painter, Floegel himself was found living in a little room in East Eighty-eighth street, broke, hungry, in danger of being evicted, and worn out from the months of work and denial which had enabled him to produce his paintings. "Musio," Floegel will go to Rome now to study, and for three years he will receive \$1000 a year and living expenses.

Much the same thing happened a year ago to Frank H. Schwartz, who, when the announcement of the award was made, was living in a little two-room apartment in East Ninth street. He, too, was about to be evicted.

Floegel used to paint ceilings in east side restaurants to get enough money to keep alive. It was years before he could afford to buy painting materials; so he had to work with watercolors. Schwartz used to work in restaurants as a waiter, and many a time he has been a janitor. Neither Floegel nor Schwartz paraded their poverty, and the story of what they had been through did not become known until they were awarded the prizes. And there are many artists and art collectors in New York who say that the most pathetic stories of suffering do not become known until the artist himself is dead.

When Floegel and Schwartz came back from Rome, what then? If they think they never will have to starve again they probably are mistaken. There are artists in New York today with greater background and greater ability than either Schwartz or Floegel, and they are wondering how they are going to live. Some of them are working feverishly in the hope that they can finish a piece of work and sell it before their money is gone; others are turning, with many regretful looks backward, to cheap commercial work. And the sculptors are suffering more than the painters, because it takes them longer to do their work, and more money is required for materials.

Wherever artists gather and speak of hardships be it in New York, London, Paris, Florence or Stockholm, they do not finish until they have spoken the name of David Edstrom, the sculptor. Even the most ragged and hungry of them all will admit that Edstrom suffered most. Edstrom has a studio now in the Hotel des Artistes, 1 West Sixty-seventh street, the street which he calls



Nevinston's famous painting of the skyline of New York.

the greatest in the world. He is recognized. He has money and fame.

But when Edstrom was a young man he was a cheap day laborer in Iowa. He came to New York as a hobo. Then, as the original hairy ape, he worked his way to Stockholm as a stoker. In Stockholm he shared a room with an organ grinder. He worked 12 hours a day for 23 cents a day as a laborer in the docks, a janitor, an elevator operator, or at any other work he could find. He put himself through the Royal academy, and then came recognition. He had won the fight against the three greatest evils—sickness, poverty and loneliness.

"Heaven knows there is plenty of suffering among artists in New York," said Edstrom. "But the greatest sufferers, if they are genuine, do not flaunt their troubles. We hear of those who suffer most after they are dead, and sometimes

even they have their stories buried with them.

"It is difficult to get at the exact truth, for there are fakers. I remember the student who used to borrow 5 and 10 cents from all of us. He never paid it back. He painted copies and apparently lived on what he got for them and what we gave him. Then one day he got married and built himself a fine home. His show of poverty had been a deliberate game."

"Then there was the other one, whom we used to call 'Poor Benson.' His poverty was a tradition. He was always up against it. Our hearts were touched, and we did all we could for him until one day we discovered that he was a majority stockholder in a large corporation. Some of these much advertised sufferers are fakers."

Edstrom told of a man and his wife,

both of whom have won medals in exhibitions in New York and on the Pacific coast, and who now are working in a tile factory in a New Jersey manufacturing town.

"They are living," said Edstrom. "They will not starve. But they can't live on their art. And both of them, the woman in particular, are forced to burn up the best years of their lives to make money to live on. Their genius is lost. And there are many others. I get letters from some of them, and sometimes I help as much as I can, but what can I do?"

Then Edstrom told the story of Ivar Arosenius, the celebrated Swedish painter, now dead, who is considered by many the greatest satirist in painting that ever lived. Edstrom and Arosenius were friends in Stockholm.

"He was the son of a scrub woman,"



said Edstrom. "His genius was apparent, but he was so proud and sensitive, sometimes so arrogant and sharp, that he repelled those who tried to help him and became heartily disliked. He was embittered because he thought he should live without charity."

"I was in Stockholm on a visit when one night I met Arosenius. I went with him to the garret where he lived with his mother, the scrub woman. His clothes were rags, his hair uncut and he was very sick. In his garret he found a sandwich that his mother had left for him when she went out to work for her slave's wages. Arosenius broke down and wept."

"The next day I went to see Ernest Thiel, the great Swedish art collector, and told him of the plight of Arosenius. He knew something of it already, but, like many others, he had been turned against the man. I reminded him that an artist was great not because he might be a polite gentleman, but because of his genius. Thiel agreed to hold an exhibition of the works of Arosenius. It was a great success. Arosenius became famous in a day, and wealthy. And with it he became the sweetest and gentlest nature I ever have known. He married and had five years of perfect happiness until he died from the effects of his earlier suffering."

Edstrom sees continued suffering, injustice and unequal distribution of rewards among American artists as long as the artistic taste of the American people remains no more discriminating than it is. He wrote a letter recently to Secretary of the Treasury Mellon suggesting

that the unemployed artists of Europe be put to work making copies of famous European art treasures as part payment of the allied debts. These copies, according to his suggestion, would be brought to America and placed in libraries "to give us something we need and cannot produce and to stifle now the seeds of hatred that are germinating in their hearts against us."

There will be suffering among the artists in America, Edstrom believes, so long as lack of artistic sympathy and understanding continues to exist. And some artists will make much money, while others, also good artists, will continue to starve.

"The greatest American artists perish," said Edstrom. "They don't die of hunger—everybody eats somehow in America—but they have to turn to other work, or cheapen their own ability by doing commercial stuff to get along."

"In France it is different. There the artist can live by his art, though he may not make much money. That is true because every Frenchman is in sympathy with art."

"I remember once when I had my studio in the Rue des Volontaires in Paris I took part of my meals at a little restaurant on the Boulevard Pasteur that was owned by an old couple and frequented by the better class of working men and artists. Sometimes I would eat at other places. One day, when I went there for the first time in a week, the old couple came to my table to talk to me. I saw they had something on their minds. They spoke of my health, the weather, and then they recalled that Rodin used to eat there."

"Rodin, he would come here," said the old lady. "He would be very poor sometimes. He could not pay for one day, two days, a week, sometimes three weeks, but then he would sell something and get money and pay all, and then we would have champagne. It didn't matter."

"An so," she added, as the old man nodded, "if M'sieu should ever—if he should ever not pay for one day, two days, weeks, that would be all right. The great Rodin couldn't always pay."

"Those dear people thought because I had stayed away a few days that I was broke. I could imagine how they had talked of me, wondering how they could approach me without injuring my pride and tell me that I need not pay if I was broke. They finally hit upon the memory of Rodin, because they believed I would understand then. Imagine a restaurant in New York doing this!"

To be sure artists suffer in New York. They probably will suffer always, just as artists always have suffered. . . . and some of them will die in the same spirit that the young French sculptor died who made the little masterpiece of the girl with the butterfly on her shoulder. That statue, some may recall, was shown at the world's fair in Chicago in 1894, and the story was that the young Frenchman, after starving and working for months, finally had completed the clay model in his little garret in the Paris Latin quarter.

Suddenly the weather became cold. The artist was afraid the cold would crack the clay. He took his clothing and draped it about the little nude figure in clay. The figure did not crack, but the next day they found the artist frozen to death.

UNEARTHED MEDAL RECALLS BRAVERY OF INDIAN IN RESCUING MAIDEN FROM FUNERAL PYRE

Young Warrior Prepares Two Fleet Horses, Springs From Seat, Rushes Through Crowd, Liberates Victim and Carries Her Off to Freedom.

THE Numismatic society of New York has recently come into possession of a medal, the story around which harks back to the days of chivalry. But instead of the hero being a beautiful maid of the mediaeval ages, she was an Indian girl of the Missouri territory, now Nebraska, who lived in that country 100 years ago, and the hero was an Indian boy of 17 years.

History has recorded incidents of bravery among Indians, such as Pocahontas saving the life of John Smith. The story of "The Bravest-of-the-Brave" has as much dramatic color as that well-known act, and the medal acquired by the Numismatic society is one of the connecting links which marks a fight between barbarism and civilization.

Away back in 1817 the Pawnee Indians of Nebraska, then the Missouri territory, had a custom of burning a human victim at the stake as a sacrifice to the Morning star. The son of the chief of the tribe, Petaleeshrau, of Knife Chief, was the cause of abolishing this horrible custom, when he rescued a girl who had been taken captive from the Comanche tribe. Instead of being punished for his daring act in frustrating the plans of this sacred rite of his people, he was not molested and received the name of "The Bravest-of-the-Brave."

Four years later, in 1821, when this same young Indian accompanied 16 In-

dian chiefs of the western plains country to Washington, D. C., the story was told of the heroic act, and young women of Miss White's seminary of that city presented to him a silver medal.

The young son of the chief returned to his people, and his life thereafter must have been the ordinary life of the Indian, hunting the buffalo, the deer and antelope, but there was no written history to record it. Only an occasional fur trader visited the village to obtain the beautifully tanned hides, done by the women, in exchange for tobacco, whisky or small trinkets. When an Indian died his history died with him, so far as the written language is concerned. His people would put his beloved trinkets, porcupine-quill-embroidered tobacco pouch, beaded moccasins and feathered bonnet, perhaps, in his grave with him, so that he might take them to the happy hunting ground.

It was just such a grave as this that was ployed up one summer in 1883 in Nance county, Nebraska, the former home of the Pawnee before they were removed to Oklahoma. The Indian cemetery was being transformed into fields of corn. The white man had taken over to his use the vast lands of the once powerful nation of the Pawnee, numbering at one time more than 8000 people.

One grave contained trinkets, and among them was a silver piece having the appearance of a one-dollar coin flattened

by pounding. A hole at the top had been used to insert a string, and on one side were the words: "To the Bravest of the Brave." A rack, with fire beneath, and Indians standing by, is crudely engraved on one side, while a man carrying a woman, swiftly moving toward two horses standing in the distance, is on the other side of the silver piece. This is the medal now in the keeping of the Numismatic society.

All these years, since 1883, when it was taken from the unmarked grave, it was only a trinket to the owner, a curious coin found in an Indian grave. Then it was loaned to the Nebraska Historical society, and it was soon connected with the heroic act of the son of a chief.

The story of the sacrifice at which "The Bravest of the Brave" rescued the girl is told in a report given by Rev. Jedediah Morse, who made a research under the commission of the president of the United States to ascertain the state of the Indian tribes in our country. His book was published in 1822. Mr. Morse tells the story of sacrifice as it was repeated to an eyewitness of the transaction to the Indian agent of the district, Major O'Fallon. He also records the presenting of the medal. Mr. Morse's story is as follows:

"The fatal hour had arrived. The trembling victim, far from her home and her friends, was fastened to the stake; the whole tribe was assembled on the surrounding plain to witness the awful scene.