

“NEWS FROM ‘HOUR’ FAIR CITY”

Visitors to Victoria: A brief synopsis

Reginald Durving VI

Some short time ago, Victoria celebrated the grand opening of the Crystal Palace with a wondrous Fair. The edifice, as previously noted in the *Times*, shall serve to bring together the people of our city not only with one another but also with visitors from abroad.

I, Reginald Durving VI, had the pleasure of meeting several such visitors over the course of the Fair. Though I cannot hope to do them justice in mere words, I will attempt to sketch a bare outline of some of the visitors, from the strange to the fantastic!

Argus Arbuthnot, of the not too distant city of Esselford where Her Majesty studied, had the honor of instructing Her Majesty in voice lessons and singing. He is a fine man of good stature and may be joining us when Her Majesty performs for us.

Mr. Brickwater, a traveling hunter, arrived with a large pet. He seems to be hunting some rather large game, always looking for adventure. The tales he had to tell were almost beyond belief, though nonetheless fascinating for their grandeur.

King Oberon of the Fairy Kingdom did Victoria the honor of visiting for a time during the Fair. As a gentleman of impeccable manner of bearing and dress, his example could be well marked by many of our city.

Among them all, of course, were the Machines. They seem to have become an everyday part of Victoria, though we still have much to learn of one another. Their presence aided in the rapid completion of the Crystal Palace project, and should be commended.

Treatment of Imbeciles in H. M. Royal Penitentiary and Sanitarium

Conradin Crane

In the spring of last year, having squandered most of my opportunities and all of my wits, I sank into a depression and thence into a catatonia, a pool of blackness so deep that I left all my senses behind at the surface. It being evident that I would never reclaim them, my friends were forced to commit my body to the depths to which my soul had already fled.

Persons in my position are generally interned in the “Breaks,” a dark square in the gray expanse that is Victoria. A year ago, the practice of that place was for its masters to assess imbeciles like me, then deposit us in a long, narrow, sunless, subterranean room with all the others of our kind. There we would lie, unclothed and unaware, rolled to and fro by our wardens when they came to force-feed or (infrequently) clean us; unlike other patients we were harmless to them, but this left them free to exorcise their small frustrations and whimsies in abusing us.

I myself am blessed to recall only the final week of my time in the Breaks. My first recollection is of being cold. My next is of realizing that I was not blind, but surrounded by dimness and a sighing, naked human squalor not to be described in this forum. It took me an hour to mumble forth some question — unanswered, of course, since my companions’ minds were elsewhere — and hours more to begin to move. I was able to sit up just in time for a guard’s visit, and he pressed me back down to the floor with his heavy-gloved hand; when I raised myself up again and cleared my throat I heard the man’s voice exclaim in surprise. Then the hand returned, grasped my head, and dashed it against the wall.

I woke again while another guard was attempting to feed me. To him I explained that I did not know where I was or what I had done wrong, that my name was Conradin Crane — and very suddenly I was taken up out of the cell and dragged into a blinding light.

During what came next — that terrible bath, the freezing black water in which I was immersed again and again until motivation left me and I dreamed of drowning — certain persons reminded me that I *had* no name, that I was mindless and mute, incapable of any action. Two days passed; I learned where I was, and I learned to be silent. They placed me back into the long dark cell. I remained there for another four days. Had not beneficent outsiders interceded, I would be there even now: the Authority had reestablished me in the role to which I had initially been consigned, and was content.

When I was taken out of the Breaks, clothed, and allowed to examine myself, I assumed at first that the replacement of my name with a *designation*, a mark laid on my skin in scars while I was catatonic, was an expediency reserved for inmates who could not speak or remember their names. I learned otherwise. *All* inmates of the Breaks lose their names, and to deny one’s namelessness is to risk a punishment equal to any concocted for those who suffer outbursts of violence or dementia. Their names, and the attendant petty concerns of the World, are stripped away by force. For a few, this reveals an underlying and truer world of knowledge and perception; for most, there is only weakness and pain.

News of the town

Reginald Durving VI

In the wake of a very successful World's Fair, the city is abuzz with new projects and undertakings. First and foremost is a new medical clinic, to be co-staffed by Victorian and Machine alike. With the combined knowledge of these two cultures, it is hoped that we might more easily overcome the ailments that plague our peoples.

In addition, Victoria is excited to announce the upcoming debut of the Queen's new opera. While Her Majesty has unfortunately been set briefly aback, she will undoubtedly recover soon and share with us the gift of music.

On a somewhat more somber note, many find themselves having difficulty sleeping through the night. Dark dreams haunt many, and cries can be heard late into the night. In addition, there are villains about who seem to delight in the discomfort of our Machine visitors. The *Times* fervently hopes that these hoodlums may be soon apprehended and brought to justice.

Census of Victoria!

Her Majesty and Her Majesty's Government
CORDIALLY REQUEST

Your presence at the Baron of Blood's estate.
Her majesty and her government will better be
able to

SERVE AND PROTECT

Her subjects, and visitors to our fair city, with
this knowledge.

Make haste! Act now! For the good of Victoria!

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Machines— Who are they?

Reginald Durving VI

Over the past several months, there have been a great many new arrivals to the fair city of Victoria. Among them are many who call themselves "Machines" and claim to come from beyond the Fog on the outskirts of the city. In our last issue, we spoke with Pencer who claims a place within their society and, due to his acts of valor, within ours. Let us take some time to reflect upon who these machines are and what might be their purpose here in Victoria.

It is important to note first that the Machines, wherever they may hail from, demonstrate many of the same social habits as good Victorians do. They have a respect for authority, a desire to spend time with companions, and a strong interest in the good of their people. And yet, their ways are still strange to us.

As is the way with things foreign, many fear that which they do not understand or have not yet encountered. There are certainly marked differences between our culture and theirs, but that should not stand as a barrier to our attempts to understand them for what they are. Perhaps if we know them more fully we might be better able to instruct them in our ways.

There are some who argue that the Machines have done great disservice or harm to the city. What evidence does stand towards this cause is slight and mostly based upon misunderstandings as we get to know each others' cultures. In fact, the evidence is quite to the contrary.

As our good readers will already know, Pencer has been made a hero of the city. Apparently one of some standing among his people, he earned our respect as well when he went into harm's way to protect the High Aristocrats from a foul creature of the Black Lake. Since then, he has endeavored to keep amiable relations with Victorian society, including standing forth against the Winged Lion which has caused harm to so many of our citizens.

Besides Pencer's good works, there are those of Dr. Duck and Switch/Coil. The two worked with several of our own authorities to quell an unruly "Device". They explained that, as with Victorians, some of their society might become violent and need to be properly dealt with. This particular Device was also even attempting to prevent himself from causing harm, thus demonstrating his high moral character. Even in this "rare case" of such an "unusually disturbed" individual (as Dr. Duck stated), the Machines present were able and willing to put themselves in the fray to calm him. (Note that "Devices" are apparently contraptions imbued with some self-governing thought just as many of the Machines are apparently people given mechanical extensions.)

Let us therefore reason that the Machines here present in the city have endeavored to protect our citizens rather than cause them harm. We must reflect upon their deeds and, in time, help them to reflect upon Victoria. Together, we may be able to overcome the dangers facing the city today!

[After reading the above article for the first time, you feel very well-disposed towards the next apparently-Machine character you see. You may not initiate combat against that person for the remainder of the session, and have at least a passing interest in getting to know him/her.]

(advertisement)
Tock Tick Timepieces



No gentleman should be without an elegant and well crafted time piece

Pocketwatches, Grandfathers, Repairs, and Custom Work

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Editorial:

Terrors in the Night!

Reginald Durling VI

It has recently come to the attention of the *Times* that there are thugs and hoodlums within the city who see it fit to disturb the peace and do harm to guests of the city. It should be noted that some of these guests have protected these selfsame citizens from Dangers and Evils!

We are, and ever have been, Victorian. A Victorian is welcoming to those outside his own circle of friends that he might share with them the right and proper conduct of a gentleman. Should these hoodlums continue in their vein, we shall be presenting to our visitors from abroad a very ill portrait of Victorian society!

The *Times* therefore respectfully asks those responsible for the late night atrocities to reconsider their course and ask themselves, "Is what I do befit a proper Gentleman?" Think long and hard, citizens, for we must be sure to put the right foot forward!

Many thanks, good citizens!

World's Fair Auction

Conradin Crane

On the occasion of its opening, the Crystal Palace was honored with visitors of all stripes, from all quarters of Victoria and beyond. The curious were privy to a silent auction of items representing the tastes and techniques of Victorians and Machines, as well as some products from far afield.

From Victoria itself, browsers could choose a volume of Agrippa's more obscure writings, a blue bottle containing a powerful absinthe, a crystal pendant, a pocketwatch (broken, sadly), a stone egg, or one of two kinetoscopes. The Machines were kind enough to provide a lump of coal and a small card promising to kindle one's memories through a process of random access.

The Ivory Tower's denizens contributed a black stone, an opal, and a portion of copper. Brickwater's Raj supplied a red box and a ration of pet meat. From the Shining Kingdom's secret valleys brought forth a pearl ring, a pink crystal, an amethyst pendant box, and a "Box of Whispers."

Unfortunately — some might say shamefully — a few of the items that had traveled so far were purloined from the auction before they could be sold. These were a white stone from the Ivory Tower (perhaps a companion to the black stone?), a spider and a statue of the sacred eagle Garuda from the distant Raj, and a second random-access memorializer crafted by the Machines. The *Victoria Times* earnestly hopes that these items will find their way into the hands of their rightful owners. If you have any information as to their whereabouts, please contact either the *Times* or Ms. Carlisle that we may rectify the error.

New Horizons

Duke George Pratton

Citizens of Victoria-

The stellar success of the World's Fair is ushering in a new age of contact with the outside world.

While our city has always prized its uniqueness, its protected space in the fogs, that character is in no way threatened by growing firmer links between Victoria and its friends and allies beyond the fog. We are proud to announce new links between our fair city and our brothers in the Raj, as well as our newfound friends and allies in the Shining Kingdom.

What effect, you may ask, will this have on our lives? It is no new World's Fair, for better or for worse. Rather, it means a subtler thing, a chance for goods to ship back and forth, to let our ideas mingle with fresh ones for foreign lands, and to spread Victorian products and values to those who will appreciate them most.

In addition to progress making links with our friends without, the new medical clinic is a renewed sign of friendship towards all Victorian citizens from our new allies within.

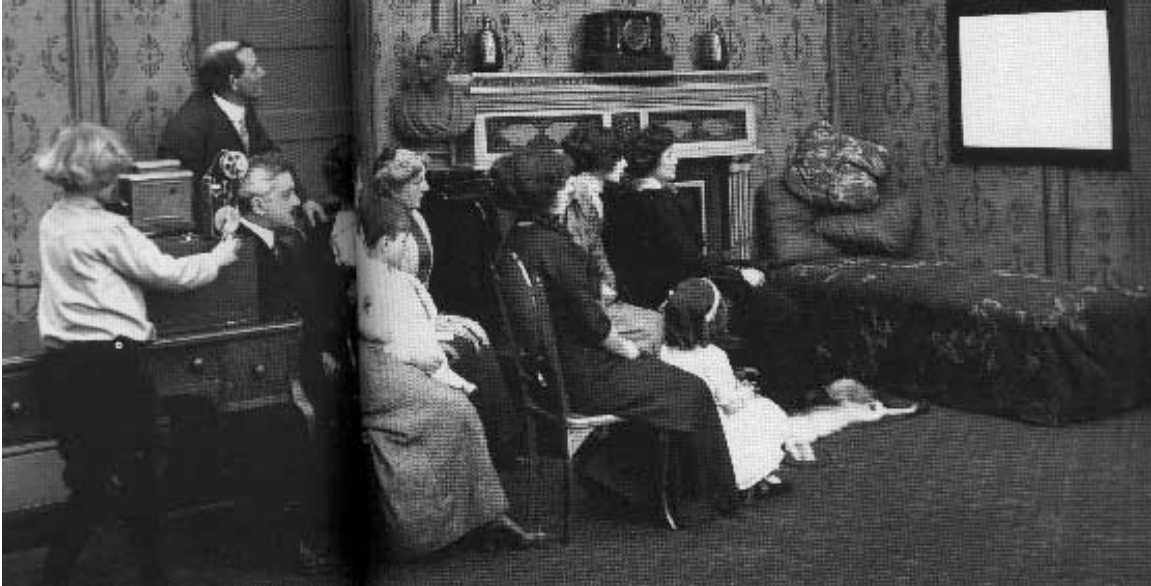
Such joint ventures, as well as the Ribbon Program, will best allow them to work side-by-side with our citizens in a spirit of friendship, cooperation and goodwill.

Correction!!

It has come to the attention of the Times that Burlingby's Tonics, located at 8 Larch Road, is responsible for including Black Lake water in its tonics. The Royal Physician has decreed that such potions may be hazardous to one's health. Please take care if you choose to sample the goods of this shop, which was advertised in our last issue. (Vol. 1, Issue 1)

Queen Incorporated

(Mr. Bandington: Owner)



*Available immediately from Queen Inc.— a Kinetograph!
Those present at the Crystal Palace grand opening will
recall how the Kinetoscope plays moving images.*

*Now, not only may a gentleman play the pre-recorded
"movies" but he may now even record his own!*

Entertain guests, Savor special moments forever, Be the first on your block!

Anyone who is anyone should not be without one.