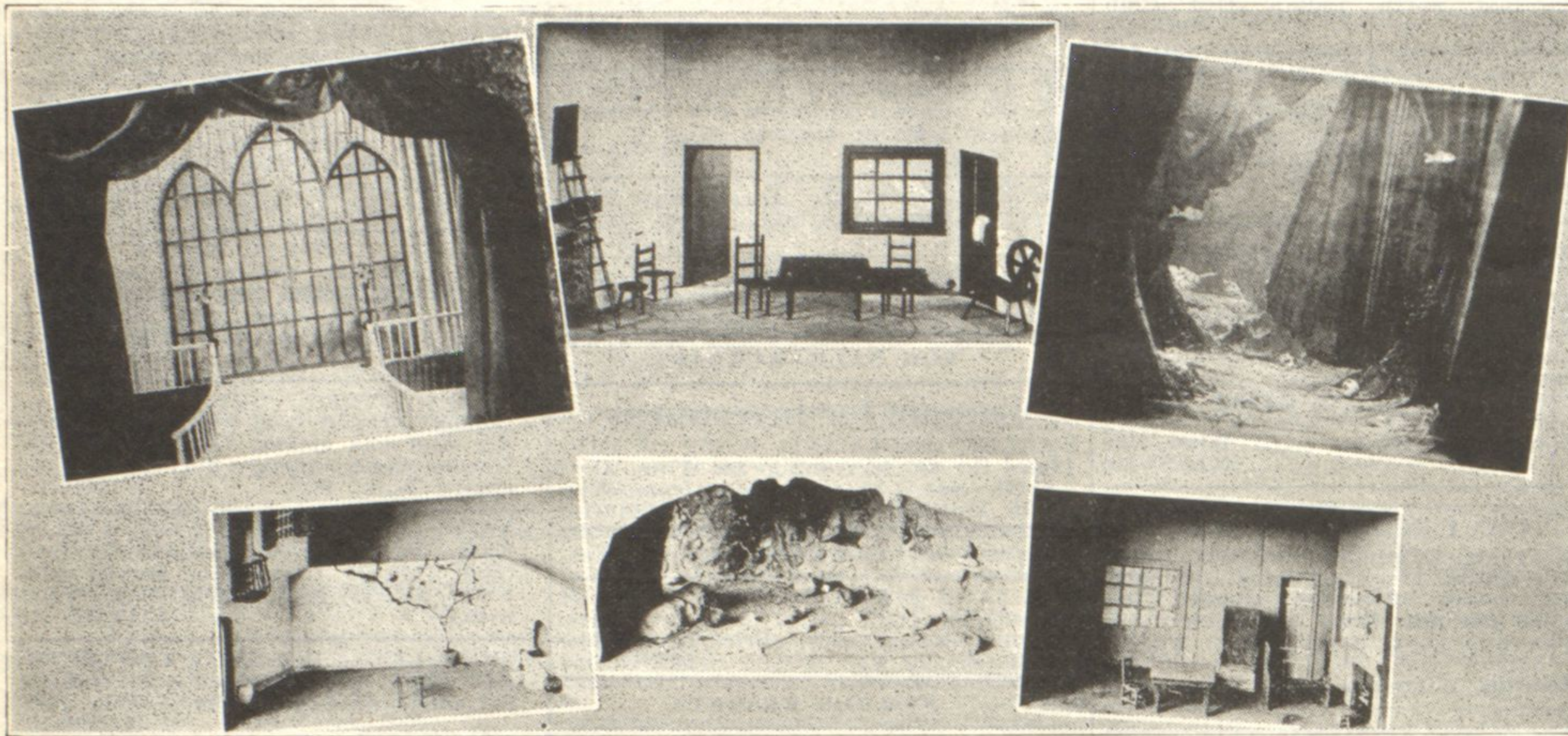


## Students Display Talent at Stage Designing



Above are illustrated a wide variety of stage settings, all of which have been done in miniature by the pupils in the art department of New Trier High school under the direction of Miss Olive Grover. Scenes depicted are: upper left to right, "R. U. R.," "Riders to the Sea," and "Garden of Paradise"; lower, in the same order, "Kismet," "As it was in the Beginning," and "A Night at an Inn."

Photo by Lehle

### HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS PROVE REAL ARTISTS

#### Art Classes Achieve Remarkably Effective Results in Miniature Stage Set Designs

As long ago as the second year of New Trier, the custom was established

of giving at least one play every year. In the beginning, these were given on the very tiny stage, or platform, in the Assembly hall, with a few draperies tacked to the wall to simulate windows, and the doors to the stage for entrances, no other setting being possible. The next step was to go to the theater at Ravinia, at that time used for many performances given by amateur groups; equipped with marvelous painted sets, both interior and ex-

terior. There, also, were held the Commencement exercises for a number of years.

Then the new Manual Arts building supplied the school with an embryonic gymnasium, and here was arranged a stage rather interesting to look back upon, because, with nothing but a platform, two actual windows in the back wall draped with chintz, and a green denim curtain across the front, that worked rather lamely, as is the habit with such curtains, a fairly realistic setting was accomplished for two plays.

It seems a far cry from these early beginnings to the rather finished performances of today; but it has been most interesting to watch the development of both the acting and the production ends of the drama at New Trier.

When the auditorium was built, with a comfortable stage back of a ten-foot apron, it seemed the proper thing to do to purchase two sets of scenery, of the scenic studio variety, a so-called woodland set, long since consigned to oblivion, and an all-round utility set, as inoffensive as could be found, for use as living or sitting room, kitchen, cottage or palace. Of course there was no such thing, but by careful elimination of as much over-decoration as possible, a fairly simple set was obtained. These, with a later addition, to be used for library or dining room, but familiarly dubbed the "kitchen set" by the stage crews, served for several years.

Then came a time when the interest in Little Theaters and their possibilities along creative lines, became a live issue; and along with the rest, New Trierites felt the desire to do something for themselves. The first real accomplishment was "Pomander Walk," made entirely by the stage crew and property people of the student body, two stories, practical windows and doors, fences and gates, a gazebo, a tiny step at each front door, street-lamps, a real tree, surrounded by a circular seat, flowers and climbing vines. In order to carry out this project successfully and have all fit together properly, it was necessary to have some kind of a model from which to work. This, the first stage model made for New Trier, was in half-inch scale, and being followed to the minutest detail, gave the much to be

desired result. Furthermore, the members of the cast, watching from day to day, their little row of houses being made ready for occupancy, were inspired with the spirit of desire to put as much energy into the learning of their parts, as the crews were in the fitting of the stage.

From that time on, it has been comparatively easy to construct new pieces, and paint over the flats already on hand, to fit the needs of the play to be given. Always, however, it has been more satisfactory when a model has been made to work from.

And this brings us up to the class in Stage-craft, and some of the results which are pictured here. The first year, one of the property girls thought she would like to try her hand at model-making. As she was a special student, not caring for credit, she was given a chance. From this start, the class has grown, until now it gives full credit. It is one of the courses in the art department, open to Juniors and Seniors, giving a practical side of interior decorating, some knowledge of applied color, study of period, type or place architecture and furniture; and a very real understanding of proportion, as every detail, even to the thickness and weave of textiles used, must be in scale. Besides this there is much opportunity for creative thought and imagination.

In the beginning of the course, there are talks on the construction of scenery—frames, covering, paints and how to use them, the effect of lights on colors, and the suitable combining materials, along with the nomenclature of the different parts of scenery and of the stage. Then each member of the class makes a model of a door, with frame, and a window, two of the most difficult pieces to construct. This is followed by the reading of several one-act plays of their own choosing. With the advise of the teacher, one of these is selected to use in the making of the first model, and work is begun.

If the play is other than a modern one, requiring only careful selection of color and arrangement, there is the matter of research; reference to books showing architectural detail, to the Geographical or other magazines of travel for place, articles on period furniture, etc. It is necessary to follow directions given in the play as to entrances and windows, and the placing of certain pieces of furniture, but outside of that, there is chance for much individuality of treatment, as has been shown when two people have made models for one play, quite unlike, but both what is called practical. The tiny flats are painted in the same manner as the full sized ones using a number of colors in the making of gray or cream, the usual backgrounds, in order that different lighting may bring out different color effects. The most difficult models to make, in scale, are those using draperies or curtain backgrounds, and these come late in the course.

Models are not the only things done by the stage-craft folks; there is scenery to paint, sometimes a rush order, all sorts of accessories, from paper flowers to papier-mache masks, and appliqued hangings, and for the boys, pieces of furniture.

Skill with the use of drawing materials and with the fingers, accuracy, patience and imagination—these are the requirements for the completion of work that means satisfactory accomplishment.

The last regular meeting of the North Shore Oberlin Women's club will be held on Friday, May 13, at 3 o'clock, at the home of Mrs. Karl A. Roth of 320 North Green Bay road, Highland Park. A musical program will be given by Mrs. W. G. Waterman, Miss Ethel M. Cain, Mrs. Wright Whitlock and Mrs. H. F. Malott.

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