

and the allurements of drink and women. Villon, the robber-poet, is the presiding genius of the place, and in the inner-room on the front floor there is his full length portrait.

'The theatre, which is upstairs, is the quaintest in the world. The effects are produced on a sheet by silhouettes and a magic lantern. The pieces we witnessed were *La Marche à l'Etoile*, *True for Life* and *Noah's Ark*. The first was one of the most poetic things in its way I have ever seen, and (May says) the most artistic.

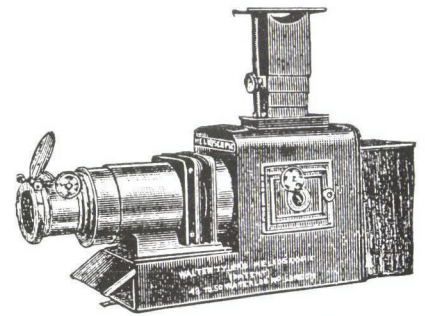
'M. de Salis makes a witty, semi-satirical, and political comment during the performance. Then there were, interspersed with the dramatic performance, songs and recitations as at the Savage Club on a Saturday night. I shall never forget my visit to the Chat Noir, for I enjoyed myself as I have never done before.'

After the show they met habitués of the place, including 'the eccentric French poet' Paul Verlaine. 'Paul Verlaine is a strange-looking poet, like, I should imagine, Walt Whitman. As he spoke to me in English – broken though it was – we got on very well. We talked of Pope, Byron, Shelley and Shakespeare. I mean to see the curious place again after I have seen the Folies Bergères, where Charlie is going to take me next.'



Rodolphe Salis

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