

PEOPLE IN NEW YORK.



WITHIN one square mile on the island of Manhattan live three hundred thousand people. Within the titular limits of the city of New York live one million and eight hundred thousand, and more. And the outermost limits of this city, the full number of its sons and daughters, can hardly be fixed; for very wide regions — suburban, semi-urban, or urban under other names — daily send their swarms across the ferries and down the railroads, to mix indistinguishably with the resident islanders. There may well be four and a half million human beings who are nourished by the life-blood which pulses to and from the center of our town. Of course the tips of the fingers are as much a part of the body as the valves of the heart itself; and so a very wise and patient and loquacious pen

would be needed to describe, or even roughly to classify, the people of New York. But it is possible to glance quickly at people in New York for the sake, not of finished pictures, but of broad impressions, and yet to see things that are worth seeing, and cannot be seen elsewhere.

I.

OUR most conspicuous habits result from the narrow elongated shape of our island. As its places for making money, its places for spending money, and its places of residence, are successively grouped from south to north, its people are compelled to travel unanimously southward in the morning and northward again at evening; and between times there is a marked separation of the sexes.

Our down-town streets, in their busy hours,



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

ON THE ELEVATED.



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

URBAN AND SUBURBAN.

show crowds that are unusually black, not only because they are very dense, but because black is the customary wear of men. This is the domain of the masculine New Yorker; and it is less freely invaded by women, I think, than the corresponding part of any other town, although, indeed, early and late, during the brief periods of transit, the approaches to the tall and crowded buildings are brightened by hundreds of girls named for their little clicking machines — as alert, as self-confident, as businesslike as the men among whom they labor.

But pass up town. After Canal street is crossed, petticoats become more and more numerous until, as you reach Fourteenth street, they dominate the general effect. And then, on cross-streets and avenues, you will find blocks and blocks, sometimes as packed as Wall street itself, where men take their turn at looking out of place. This is where our money is chiefly spent, and very motley is the composition of the spending throngs. Side by side

we see comfortable dowdiness (suggesting the suburban contingent), dismal shabbiness, and naïve attempts to copy the fashions cheaply; trim, simple neatness, rich, tasteful elegance, and an exaggerated, showy imitation of this last. As a whole, the effect is certainly not somber. Judged by any European standard, or by any sensible abstract standard, overdressing prevails; and it means colors too bright and *façons* too conspicuous as well as materials too costly for the sidewalk. No such overblown excess in street attire can be noticed in Boston, for example. But, on the other hand, one sees a much larger proportion of highly fashionable, yet impeccably appropriate, street costumes than in Boston or elsewhere in America; and they are not all on women whom one might expect to be exponents of good taste. Again, even when a garment is unsuitable, it is often admirable in itself; no matter what she wears, the back of a New York woman is usually a pleasure to look at, if we can appreciate artistic

niceties of cut and fit; and on the whole we are almost tempted to condone the excessive gaiety of our street clothes for the sake of the brightness they add to the panorama of our up-town crowds.

Of course the varied elements which compose such crowds do not distribute themselves with geographical impartiality. They are most strikingly varied in front of the pretty and stately shops lining Broadway between Fourteenth and Twenty-third streets. They are most demo-

ic, flashier elements display themselves along upper Broadway. Naturally the carriage-folk are more aristocratic in general effect than any groups of pedestrians, despite the fact that well-bred women walk more in New York than in European towns; and to see the rich of New York in all their gorgeousness one must visit Central Park of a pleasant afternoon.

I like to do this myself, in the finest carriage owned by any of my friends, and to pretend that nothing else could suit me quite so well.



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

THE MORNING AFTER ELECTION.

cratic in front of the mammoth shops along the parallel stretch of Sixth Avenue, and the two great connecting cross-streets, Fourteenth and Twenty-third. Then the more aristocratic elements, which are least conspicuous here, increase in number on upper Fifth Avenue, and the show-

But I also like to drive down Fifth Avenue in a hansom-cab, just at the time when every one else is driving up, to contemplate its protean types of feminine dignity and charm, breeding and refinement, pride and ostentation, vulgarity and commonplaceness. And I like as



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

HER MARRIED SISTER.

well to walk for the same purpose where the shopping throngs are thickest, and even where they are most tawdry and ungentle. Nor do I find it disagreeable at times to be still more plebeian, and stray far down the Bowery or far up the quieter but just as democratic regions of Third and Eighth avenues. Surely it is worth while to know the city one lives in, and surely it is a very shallow, uninformative, unhumanizing sort of knowledge which confines itself to the dominions of King Plutus and Dame Fashion.

II.

I SHOULD need a more flexible, versatile pen than I own to explain how the essence and the idiosyncrasies of New York gradually reveal themselves if one studies its humbler and cruder as well as its gayer and more polished sides;

how unlike one feels it is to any other city, and how interesting even when it is least attractive. Taking it bit by bit, and analyzing it in the faces, clothes, manners, actions, and habitations of its people, by turns one loves and hates, despises and admires, berates and ridicules it. It seldom pleases the eye for more than a few moments together. Often it grievously offends the senses which take account of slovenliness and dirt. And always it seems a reckless, immature, inconsequent, unreasonable creature. But it is so big and active, so variable and spontaneous, so well pleased with itself, and so willing that you should take your pleasure as you choose, that you get to feel toward it as toward an overgrown baby whose foolishness, awkwardness, and ugliness are largely excused by its promise of better looks and better behavior, and are offset by its

spasms of cleverness, its comicality, and good humor.

If we look at the worst aspects of New York in a serious spirit, it certainly does not exemplify the gospel of kindness, as, after a little, I shall try to explain. But looking at it superficially, or studying its population, not in the abstract aggregate, but in the myriad individuals one meets, up town and down town, in aristocratic or in extremely sordid precincts, good nature seems the "note" of the New Yorker, provided, of course, that you are good-natured yourself. What patience he has with municipal tyrannies and corporate inhumanities, and enlivened by what a salty touch of humor! One would not cite an elevated-railroad car or a ferry-slip, jammed full of tired and hungry New Yorkers, as a school of courtesy. Yet I think such a throng might easily be less courteous anywhere else—at least anywhere in northern Europe, if we can conceive of its existing there. And no woman with pleasant words on her own lips need shrink from asking help or guidance in the streets of New York: usually it will be given with a good many kindly trimmings, whether it be asked from the "dude" or the hurried business-man, the lawless street-boy or the Italian sweeper, or even the traditionally abused car-conductor. On the whole, a woman is more likely to meet with incivility from her own sex than from men of any class; and if, like too many New York women, she expects courtesy in return for brusqueness, of course she will be disappointed.

I have a friend who was born and who lives on an island in a far-off Southern sea, but who has had much European experience and is a keen observer. He chanced to be in New York during our last presidential election, and was shown its workings through many diligent hours. What impressed him most was, not the way in which order was kept, but the small necessity for keeping order—the extreme good temper of the people. At a big club-house where the losing side had been supported, the members, he said, as the returns came in, buttoned their coats like stoical Arabs, and silently, almost smilingly, stole away. And in the City Hall Park, in front of the big newspaper building where, as State after State reported its vote, effigies of the rival candidates correspondingly climbed up the tall façade on the numbered rungs of symbolical ladders, one might have thought, he declared, that every man in the enormous crowd had voted for the winning climber, and felt a kindly compassion for the climber who lagged behind. Yet we knew, and he could see, that a pretty strong—nay, a very passionate—interest was felt in that particular election.

Facts such as these tempt us to fancy what

a nice place New York may be to live in when oppression, extortion, and stupidity succeed in provoking us into collective bad temper for a long enough time to bring about conditions which will permit individual amiabilities to display themselves unhampered, unexasperated, unabused. Perhaps it may then seem almost as pleasant-tempered, polite, and kindly as did, one summer, the populous fair-grounds at Chicago.

III.

A FOREIGNER must be struck by the lack of certain types, social rather than physical, among the crowds of New York. One great peculiarity of our whole land reveals itself in the absence of soldiers from our streets and drawing-rooms; and the cosmopolitanism of our particular town shows just as clearly to an observant eye. We have plenty of cabmen, for instance, but no typical cabman, while Paris has one such type and London has two—one for her hansoms and one for her dismal "four-wheelers." The New York butler, the New York nursery-maid, cannot be put into caricature with the broad fidelity possible in England, nor can the New York policeman, despite his monotonous grandeur of size. In fact, all our servants, private and public, are drawn from many nationalities, and we have not yet smoothed or coerced them into a general correspondence with our own corporate manners and ideals.

Dudes we have, but not in such amusing numbers as London, nor nearly so large a proportion of those elder lilies-of-the-pavement whose scientific name is "men-about-town," all blooming precisely alike from the curve of their boot-tips to the minutest shaping of their collars and the tenor of their speech; and the beautifully attired, beautifully self-satisfied, beautifully vacuous-looking old gentlemen who decorate the club-windows and the parkways of London are present with us only in rare examples. Again, clerical types make default almost as wholly as do military types; and with all our variety in feminine types, the dowager hardly lives among us. To be a true dowager, not only age and social experience are needed, but social devoutness and an ingrained fine assumption of great social power; so for this type we shall have to wait until the generation now entering middle life sees its grandchildren growing into manhood.

Probably we shall get it then, for this generation now plays a much more important rôle than was formerly attempted by people of similar age. One can feel sure that nothing will ever quite break the scepter of the American girl. But, in New York at least, a rival scepter has recently been erected, held by her married



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

“SHE LOOKS WELL AT A BALL.”

sisters and her mother. Nay, the youthful matron has actually captured the girl's right to the first place in society, and she does not yield what she has achieved even when the adjective no longer fits her. Of course there is great gain in this, for social talent, like other gifts, must be developed as well as born; and a reflex part of the gain already shows in the improvement of the girl herself. Her manners have greatly bettered; she dresses more attractively than ever, because more appropriately; she thinks more about her mind and her intellectual tastes—indeed, just now, her ambition in this respect hardly takes enough account of the boundaries prescribed by her sex and age; and, as was not formerly the case, she continues to improve as she grows older. Married or unmarried, a well-bred New York woman is now apt to be more charming at thirty than at twenty, and not to have lost very much at forty; and this often applies to her looks as well as her mental characteristics. Of her chief physical characteristic do I need to speak? Other American towns may claim more beauty within their borders, but all will agree that the New York woman, individually and collectively, leads in that combination of the results of money, good taste, unaggressive self-content, and that highly finished physical bearing which, in the vernacular, is called "style."

As a rule, I think, she is most attractive in her daytime clothes. She looks well at a ball and well in an opera-box, but better yet in her carriage, and especially in summer when outdoor plumage may be bright and light, beribboned, belaced, and very fluttersome. Shall I venture to say that this is because she is a singularly pretty person rather than a beautiful person? Only true beauty of face and form shows at its best in ball-attire, and the statelier it is the better it then appears. But stateliness of manner and regularity of feature are not the characteristic merits of New York women: brilliancy of expression, rather, charm of eyes and mouth and color, vivacity, piquancy, and a flexuous grace of movement. And therefore when I say that daytime clothes become her best, I do not mean the kind which so singularly well becomes her sturdier English cousin. She is not at her bonniest when tailor-made. If she could wear her tea-gowns in public, the public would probably then admire her most. But failing this, it may very pleasantly contemplate her at the evening sessions of the horse-show. Almost a special type of costume has been devised for her for these particular occasions, more gay and ornate than any worn with bonnets at any other time in town. And when you see her thus arrayed, and multitudinously repeated, you feel that the horse-show must have been established less to display our steeds than to display our

young women in the most scientifically favorable light.

Going outdoors again, and looking at our down-town streets, the most conspicuous type is so ubiquitous that it may simply be called the New York business-man. We all know him—well featured, but hardly handsome; well rounded as to cheek and form, but not with the stodgy plumpness of John Bull; well dressed sometimes, and at other times showing that he has tried to be; looking prosperous even when he is not; affable to the point of familiarity; good-natured and generous almost to the point of weakness; and yet certainly not an altruist by profession or by practice. We all know him, and we also know our German business types in their purely Teutonic and their Hebraic varieties; and just as well, the dignified figure of the elder commercial or professional New Yorker—quiet and refined in face and manner, kindly and courteous in speech, yet with a curious shrewdness of eye and mind. But if I should try to fill out the catalogue of our masculine types, I should have to name almost all those of all America. Hardly more than one is missing. This is the traditional Brother Jonathan type—the "hayseed" type. The real country is much farther from Wall street than from the center of Boston or Chicago; even the most guileless suburban soon learns to assume a measure of our sophistication; and with the development of this the shambling gauntness of proverb and comedy seems to disappear.

It may be worth while to add that once when I said, "How unlike each other are our American faces, yet how quickly we recognize any one of them among European faces!—I wish I knew why," a foreign friend replied that she could tell me why. "The typical American mouth," she said, "is more sensitive than that of other races, and the chin is slenderer; but the main peculiarities are the shape and setting of the eyes, and especially the modeling of the cheek-bones. You have high cheek-bones, but they are narrow, while when they are high in other races they are broad and flat, as with the Japanese, or square, as with the Scandinavians." I am afraid she thought that we all looked a little foxy; but a fox's face has beauty, and shows a keen sense of humor as well as its own sort of cleverness; and besides, every one knows that it is merely a mask.

IV.

Now, what do we see if we look at people in New York collectively again, but from the point of view of their social life?

First we see that "New York society" is not a single sovereign body—one and inseparable to-day as it was in olden days. Of course



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

AT THE HORSE SHOW.

there is one circle, one "set," more prominent, more self-exalting, more "highly fashionable," than any other, and it is often described as containing only a few hundred people. But these are merely such members of the best society in New York as tread the social mill with peculiar diligence and, apparently, with peculiar zest. Closely connected with them are a great many others who make less of a career of their pleasuring, but, an they would, might be as highly fashionable as any one else.

It is largely from among this latter class that are recruited certain circles which touch edges with the most conspicuous. They are formed in part of New Yorkers as well born and bred as the best, and in part of people,

once strange to New York, who have made themselves important within her gates. In these circles the brains and the humor and the wit, the progressive energy, and the higher cultivation, of New York are chiefly to be found; and it is to them that come accredited almost all the famous (which does not mean titled) foreigners who pass by Sandy Hook. Here there is excellent conversation as well as lively talk — excellent nutriment for mind and soul, although less sumptuous feasting for the mouth and eye than in the "smartest" circles. Here one learns about what is being thought and done in our town and in other parts of the world, and not merely about what is "going on." Here genuine reputations are made, the true



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

GOING HOME FROM THE THEATER.

critical, appreciative, and prophetic voice of New York is uplifted, and most of those things are said and planned which seriously redound to her credit; and our very fashionable folk might be surprised could they realize how rarely their ideals are deferred to here, or their verdicts quoted, and how seldom their own kind of prestige is considered enviable.

While no strict line separates these social circles from the most ultra-fashionable, and while some people pass constantly between them, yet I think it is not harder to enter the very "smartest" set in New York than, if you happen to belong to it, to find a welcome just outside it. Of course the reason for this fact is easily read. It merely means that few fashionable folk seem interesting, seem "worth while," to those who are helping to turn the wheels of the big, busy, thinking, experimenting world, because few of them know much about these wheels, or the goals toward which they tend.

A social body such as I am trying to define can never be as conspicuous as the "smart set" of New Yorkers, for its members have not so much time to give to amusement, nor so much money; and as yet it is not as thoroughly organized, as highly conscious of its own powers and resources, as determined to make the most of itself for its own entertainment, and, therefore, not to be over gracious to people who may have other claims upon respect, but who lack the social talent which alone is truly valuable in social life. But a generation ago such a body did not exist at all; year by year it is developing and crystallizing, and the next generation ought to see an intellectual and artistic society in New York, comparable in significance, variety, and interest to that which exists in London, likewise touching edges with ultra-fashionable circles, yet not to be confounded with these, and very far indeed from being jealous of them.

One reason why this society must rapidly increase in numbers and importance is because high intelligences are less often born under the mantle of Dame Fashion in New York than they seem to be in Boston, for example—or, at least, are less likely to be nourished there to full development; so when they do appear beneath this mantle, they are tempted to shake off its folds, and seek association with their kind elsewhere. And surely we may find another reason in the fact that to immigrants New York is more than the most hospitable, that she is the most affectionate, the most motherly, city in the world. She has little time to bestow upon strangers briefly tarrying within her doors, and therefore they sometimes fill the air with taunts of cold indifference as they depart, especially if they had arrived with an un-



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

GOING HOME FROM THE SHOP.

due sense of their personal importance, fostered by the attentions of smaller and less level-headed towns. But come to her claiming a home, and, if you have any importance at all, presto! she forgets that you were not born of her body. Say you intend to be a New Yorker, and you are one, if you have any charm or merit upon which to base your resolve. New York will make no difference between you and her veritable children; soon you will feel none yourself, and, after a little, the fact that you are not her veritable child will be forgotten, only to be recovered when your obituary is in type.



DRAWN BY C. D. GIBSON.

IN THE WRONG SET.

In all of this, I may note, New York is the very opposite of Boston. Boston is found most gratifyingly gracious by her visitors, no matter how well they may think of themselves before they arrive. But she refuses really to adopt any children, or, at the best, she seems to them like a stepmother obliged by conscience, not by inclination, to be just and somewhat kind.

Even the most fashionable circles in New York open not unready to applicants supplied with such credentials as are valid there; and it is a pleasure to say that these credentials, if they do not often take the form of intellect or talent, are by no means to be confounded with the claims of mere birth, or of mere wealth and a willingness to spend it lavishly. They must be social diplomas of a better kind than this. They must mean first, of course, an interest in the things which interest society's present members — a similar point of view as regards the meaning of existence; and then, some measure of social talent: of training in the ways of what

is called the world, of agreeableness and adaptability, of gracious, cultivated manners, and of refinement in external things at least. Fashionable society is very conventional and inelastic, very narrow-visioned, and not a little timid in New York. But so it is almost everywhere on earth; and in New York it is less snobbish, and, at bottom, less influenced by the love of money than, for example, in London town.

Indeed, many of the faults and follies of our fashionable folk should be painted with a lighter tint than is sometimes employed, and they have done the community very good service in certain ways. Try as hard as they may, their imitation of the domestic pomp of European capitals does not nearly equal the undemocratic original thing. Their restless, excessive love for travel, and even for expatriation, cannot have a very bad effect upon any one but themselves; other people are too firmly bound at home by the ties of genuine local interests. And when the result of their lack of absorbing urban oc-

cupations takes the better form of a taste for country life and its wholesome pleasures, they are setting an example which has already profited our citizens of every class. Anglomania is not really very prevalent among them; they do not make or approve of mercenary marriages one-tenth part as frequently as our comic papers say; and even their international marriages are often instances of true love upon which the public sees fit to put a mask. In making athletics fashionable they have made them popular. They have done the same for the sensible physical education of girls. They have raised our standards as regards dainty housekeeping, good cooking, and the training of children in properly modest manners, and they have introduced that once un-American person, the chaperon, for whom our need develops in geometrical proportion to the increasing size of our towns. They often give a portion of their time as well as their money to works of beneficence. Of course they have led the way in refining the taste of America as regards, not attire and cookery alone, but other external material factors in life; and they have also been most prominent in buying works of art, although one cannot call them the best judges or most genuine lovers of art in the community. Artistic reputations they cannot make; but they do much good by patronizing those whom their less wealthy fellow-citizens can only admire and praise, and they will do more good in this way when they learn to believe what they are told with regard to American as well as foreign artists.

v.

BUT I have not yet got to the end of all the forms which social life takes in New York. What other town can show so many groups of foreign citizens as prosperous, united, and well organized for social life as ours? Look at the club-houses of our Germans, for instance; think of their musical societies, half artistic, half social in aim; read of their weddings and balls, where money is spent and diamonds are shown as profusely as on fashionable Fifth Avenue. And note the number of Teutonic or Hebrew-Teutonic faces in the finest carriages in Central Park. It will seem as though all of us Americans might be swept away and New York still exist, socially no less than industrially. Then, we have many well-to-do Italians who have a social existence of their own, and the same is true of our Spaniards and Spanish-Americans. Our French people and our Greeks are fewer, but they still remember that they are French and Greek when their social instincts awaken. It is only the Irish who grow less clannish as they take unto themselves of the dollars of New York.

A strange spectacle is presented by all these

nationalities, all these clear dividing lines; and it seems still stranger when we understand that, nevertheless, every one in New York soon feels himself a loyal New Yorker. Of course, taking these last words as a text, and trying to show what they mean and what they ought to mean, a fine little lecture might be preached, bristling with peculiar points (and very sharp ones), and strongly flushed with local color of a rather dismal tint. But it lies more in my path to note the fact that, despite all this social activity, thousands of men and women in New York have no social life at all.

I do not mean such rich people as willingly shut themselves into narrow domesticities; nor do I mean the really poor—these have their own cheerful ways of associating, as perhaps Mr. Harrigan's theater has shown you. I speak of people belonging by birth and circumstances to the intermediate ranks.

In no community of our race and tongue do the so-called middle classes show as much desire for social pleasures as they do in Continental lands—or perhaps I should write appetite instead of desire. But in New York their case is aggravated not only by our large proportion of strangers, needing time to settle and to throw out social roots, but, among strangers and natives alike, by the great cost of our soil. This means very high rents, and these mean boarding-house life for multitudes of families who elsewhere would have homes of their own: it is said that half the houses within two blocks of Fifth Avenue and between Thirty-fourth street and Central Park are boarding-houses of the better and more high-priced kinds. Then, by a natural reaction (or contamination), the easy-going pseudo-social life of the boarding-house and cheap hotel aids our profusion of public pleasures in keeping many people contentedly adrift after they might have homes and begin to form genuine social ties. These people, and many others with small incomes who do have homes of their own (but most often in cramped, inhospitable flats), find their amusement in theaters and restaurants and the motley pageants of the streets, or, if more soberly minded, in concert- and lecture-rooms and at church entertainments.

And thus, I think, we find a reason for much of that persistent love of shopping and spending with which the middle-class women of New York are so often reproached, and for the over-dressing in street and theater which is its chief result. Outside of home walls it is hard to train girls well in mind or spirit or manners, and it is hard for women to find sensible occupations. The idleness of shallow minds naturally finds relief in extravagance, and where there is no home to make lovely, extravagance finds its only outlet in amassing personal apparel, while

the same is true of that natural love for pretty things which assails even the least extravagant of my sex. Then, if social occasions do not exist for the display of fine clothes, it is small wonder that they are displayed where plain clothes would be better—that the great importance of appropriateness, as essential in costume as in art, should be entirely overlooked.

But the idle and selfish and mentally slipshod habits fostered by boarding-house life have worse results than these. The lack of thorough education, of domestic duties and pleasures, of steady standards in customs and behavior, of the refining power of true social enjoyments and restraints, shows—I need not explain just how—in the faces, the voices, the carriage, the demeanor of thousands of the overdressed young girls and wives who throng our streets and theaters. If one studies them a little, these seem wise words which I recently heard a New York woman speak: “I would far rather have my daughter a working-girl in New York than a girl like one of those who, from the vantage-ground of their fine clothes, their idle, unguarded hours, and their abundance of pocket-money, look down upon working-girls as immeasurably beneath them.”

But any one whosoever that looks down upon the working-girls of New York makes a sad mistake; and I speak as much of those who labor in a factory as of those who sell in a shop or “run” a typewriter. Bad girls there are among them, and foolish girls who easily may become bad. But the good ones, the wise ones, are very much more numerous, and they are good and wise amid temptations which make of mere respectability almost an heroic virtue, of mere common sense almost an inspiration. Any one who understands what these girls really are, and what they so easily might be, must respect and admire their character, whether he be amused or shocked by the saucy independence, the “flip” tone of good-fellowship with men, and the confessed familiarity with evil under which this character is often hidden. Moreover, if he inquires about their more intimate relationships with men, he will find them limited and controlled by rules of etiquette, different, indeed, from those which prevail in aristocratic circles, but quite as moral and quite as strictly obeyed; whereas, with what I may call the boarding-house classes, social rules too often mean no more than the dictates of untrained personal impulse.

VI.

WE have no true “leisure class” in New York, unless our wealthy women may by themselves be said to constitute such a class. Almost without exception even our wealthiest

men are busy workers. Nevertheless, the meaning of the extremes of riches and poverty is bitterly expressed by the contrast between what have been called Upper and Nether New York. Indeed, nowhere else except in London is this meaning so bitterly expressed upon so large a scale. As I now use the term, Upper New York does not indicate the up-town parts of the city. It typifies that central strip running from end to end of the island, and stretching into certain lateral quarters, which the well-to-do possess, while Nether New York implies all those shabby quarters of the East side and the West wherein the majority of the well-to-do never set a foot.

Walk through the brightest regions of Upper New York, in the early evening, as their places of amusement open, as the garlands of fire bloom out upon Diana’s tower, as the great hotels and restaurants and theaters blaze their invitations in streams of golden light across the sidewalks, as luxurious carriages and well-tended horses fill the street, as the doors of one mansion and another swing back with the promise of dainty dining, and through the chinks in the curtains of countless quiet homes come rays like those of Christmas stars: if this is the only New York you see, and if you do not peer below the surface of some of its most glittering or most innocent-appearing spots, it may well amuse and please you; you may well admire the progress, the material development of the last twenty years, and praise our taste and cultivation, our public spirit, our gaiety, hospitality, and kindness.

I do not intend to detail for you the picture on the reverse side of our civic shield. You might not like to go through the nethermost parts of Nether New York—through that square mile, for instance, where three hundred thousand people live, more closely packed together than people in any European town; and I should be loath to show you just how they live, or how and why they die—die in such ways and for such reasons that one tenth of all our funerals have at their end a pauper’s grave. You would not even realize what this fact means unless I could make you understand how much less important it seems to the very poorest that they should continue to live than that they should lie in paid-for graves. You might see dreadful things in the streets of this region, more dreadful things in its flaming bar-rooms and dance-halls, things most dreadful and pitiful beyond words in its damp and filthy cellars, in its naked attics, which are cold past suffering in winter, and in summer pestilential with a tropic heat. And now you might hear the desperate cry, “Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die,” and again the still more desperate moan, “Help us to eat, drink, and

be warm, just for once—for we are dying to-day."

I am not wise enough to take you through these black hives where vice and crime are at once fostered and excused by ignorance, poverty, and pain; not wise enough, and not patient enough with the sins which lie back of the sins we should see there—back in the beliefs and customs and daily actions of each and every social class that helps to populate New York. But I can point you to a very wise and patient guide whom, in some serious hour, it should do you great good to follow. Read what Mr. Riis has to tell you about "How the Other Half Lives" in New York, and about "The Children of the Poor" of New York; and then judge our civilization by Christ's simple tests—*Thy neighbor as thyself*, and *The stranger by the wayside whom others have despoiled, he is thy neighbor*. Read these books carefully, and then see if you do not confess that back of all human evil lies ignorance, and that the burden of the ignorance in New York is shared between its rich and its poor.

Yes; and not in an equal measure. For example, those who have studied such matters attribute half the crime in New York to drunkenness, but they attribute at least half the drunkenness in New York to wastefulness and bad cooking in the homes of the poor. Can we blame the miserable sickly drudge, born and nurtured in such slums as ours, because she does not know how to spend her husband's scanty earnings to advantage, because she does not know how to cook his food so that he will not crave the supplement of drink? Can we blame for similar ignorance even the girls in better homes who are forced to go directly from the public school to the shop or factory, never having time to learn the little that their mothers may know?

But would our slums exist if we all knew about them and their fatal work—streets and acres of tenements in which decent living is impossible, which are as poisonous to the souls as to the bodies of their inmates? Would our present methods of manufacture and trade be permitted if we all grasped their deadly effects upon individuals, their deadly menace to the well-being of the community as a whole?

Do you know that among the 135,595 families—not persons—registered by the Charity Organization Society as asking for help during a recent period of eight years, more than fifty per cent. were honestly seeking work and finding none? Do you grasp the real meaning of "no work" in families where a day's wage can but pay for a day's hard fare, and leave no penny over? Can you appreciate the unspeakable danger, moral as well as physical, involved in the fact that among 150,000 women who,

in our town, earn their living, and often the living of men and children too, the average wage—not the lowest, but the average where some are paid pretty well—is only sixty cents a day? Have you tried to understand the tenor of lives like those of seamstresses who get from twenty to thirty-five cents a dozen for making flannel shirts, and a dollar and a half a dozen for calico wrappers? Or to fancy how it must feel to labor for such pittance in cold and semi-darkness from four in the morning until eleven at night? Or to estimate their purchasing power when coal must be bought by the bucket at the rate of twenty dollars a ton, and rent in the vilest purlieus must be paid at a higher ratio upon the invested capital than is asked on Fifth Avenue? If you and every other man and woman in New York could be brought to realize these things, and to ponder them a little, would they not cease to be? Surely it must be our ignorance, not our hard-heartedness, which permits them now. But is our ignorance—yours and mine and that of all the rich and the well-to-do—as readily excusable as that of the very poor themselves? Where lies the real responsibility for the wretchedness of Nether New York?

VII.

I SHOULD be unjust to the poorest people in New York, however, if I left you to believe that you would be only shocked and alarmed did you visit them in their homes. The whitest virtue, the most lovely merit, lives among them, as well as the darkest crime and sin. When they are not wicked it is sometimes through respect, of course, for the terrors of the law, and sometimes through the apathy of debilitated souls and bodies leading lives of hopeless struggle or forlorn surrender. But it is very often because of marvelous excellences in themselves—because of a self-respect, a patience, a fortitude, a resignation, a perennial hopefulness, a pathetic gratitude for small good-fortunes, a lack of the passions of envy and jealousy, which would surprise us did we find them among the richest, the most cultivated, the most pious people. No philosopher is surprised to find them more often among poor and suffering and sorely tempted people, for of course virtue can reach heroic heights only under stress and strain: the real marvel is that human nature should be able to compass such heights at all.

Sometimes, indeed, one is tempted to think that God will never let extreme poverty be uprooted lest the extremes of virtue be forgotten. Do you know that the tiny gifts in money and food which pass from almost empty to quite empty hands in this town of ours must exceed in their noble aggregate the lordly sums that our rich folk give in charity? Do you know

the ease with which virtue is propagated and the need for charity is removed once material conditions have been bettered? Do you know that among the eighty thousand waifs of our slums sent by the Children's Aid Society to country homes and followed by many times eighty thousand letters of inquiry, only four per cent. are reported as having "gone wrong"? It is facts like these which should make it easy to approach the people of Nether New York in that spirit of fellow-feeling, of true and

brotherly love, through which alone real assistance may be given them — justice instead of charity, prevention instead of relief, better chances at the beginning of life instead of punishment at its end. It is facts like these which should make us look hopefully for the day, distant though it may be, when no such immeasurable difference will exist between the people of the two parts of our town, no such terrible, unchristian contrast between the pictures on the two sides of our civic shield.

M. G. Van Rensselaer.

KATE NEGLEY'S LEADINGS.

By the Author of "The Floating Bethel."



RS. MELISSA ALLGOOD gathered the last handful of meal from the pan on her arm, and scattered it among the young guineas. "Them little guinea-fowl," she said, "can come about as near eatin' folks out of house and home as the next one. They ain't got the ambition to scratch for theirselves that young chickens has, or young turkeys, or goshin's; but seems like I like 'em all the more for it. It's same as babies — they got to have everything done for 'em; and so helpless and confidin' that folks can't keep from lovin' 'em even *when* they got drawbacks."

She settled herself comfortably on the smoke-house step, and pushed back the white sun-bonnet from her plump, rosy face and warm blue eyes.

"But I commenced tellin' you about Kate Negley and the doctor, and here I am plumb off on the guinea line. I never was much of a talker nowadays, and can't stick to what I want to tell. Ma she always says when I commence to tell anything, 'Now, M'liss, you shut up, and le' *me* tell that; you'll talk all day.' Well, as I was sayin', when Kate Negley takes anything, she takes it pretty hard. When she had the whoopin'-cough and chicken-pox and measles, she had 'em worse 'n anybody else; and when she fell in love with Dr. Negley, she had *that* awful bad. Them that run could read. So when she got sanctification, nobody was n't surprised when she taken that hard, too. She said she'd never stop till she was as wholly sanctified as they make 'em. And she never got tired searchin' the Scriptures to find out somethin' you must n't do. Then she'd get up next Sunday in meetin', and tell about such and such a text, and her havin' such and such a leadin', or experience, on that line, and feelin' called to tell it. Kate Negley she commenced

to get so terrible godly, all the rest of us jest felt like we was n't nowheres.

"One of her notions was that nobody could n't be sanctified and drink coffee. You know Solomon says, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is ragin',' and Kate Negley say if coffee was n't strong drink she never seen any, and that anybody that 'u'd drink it was n't truly sanctified. That riled the Station folks consid'able. Of co'se we all thought it was wrong to drink liquor, and we had local option anyways in the Station; but most of us did n't set no store on its bein' wrong to drink coffee.

"The next notion she taken up was on the tobacco line. She got up and talked on that line when she knowed Brother Cheatham hisself, that was then preachin' for us, chewed tobacco and smoked. She said it was a mark of the beast. She said she was 'fraid a heap of church members would spend eternity in a awful hell.

"The Station folks had n't much more 'n got over that talk before one Sunday Kate Negley come in church with her hair hangin' down her back; and after preachin' she up and say she'd had a bright experience on the hair line; that she been studyin' a long time about what Paul says about women folks adornin' theirselves with modest apparel, and not with braided hair or jewels or costly array. She say she done give up the jewels and costly array too long ago to talk about, but she never did quite understand about the braided hair. She say she always s'posed it meant platted, and she quit platin' her hair when she first got the blessin'. But she say she never was jest easy about it, and she went up to town to see her cousin Mis' Simmons last week, and Mis' Simmons done got a new dictionary, and she think that's a good chance to find out jest what 'braided' meant. So she found where it explain the word 'braided,' and she say it say 'braided' means