

Fifth Avenue eBook

Fifth Avenue by Arthur Bartlett Maurice

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FIFTH AVENUE

CHAPTER I

The Shadow of the Knickerbockers

The Shadow of the Knickerbockers—An Old-time Map—The Beginnings of the Avenue—Watering Place Life—The Beach at Rockaway—Coney Island—Newspapers in the Thirties—Early Day Marriages—The Knickerbocker Sabbath—Home Customs—Restaurants and Hotels—The Leather-heads—Conditions of Travel—Stage-coaches and Steamers—The Clipper Ships—When Dickens First Came.

Boughton, had you bid me chant
Hymns to Peter Stuyvesant.
Had you bid me sing of Wouter.
(He! the Onion-head! the Doubter!)
But to rhyme of this one-mocker,
Who shall rhyme to Knickerbocker?
—Austin Dobson.

Before the writer, as he begins the pleasant task, is an old half-illegible map, or rather, fragment of a map. Near-by are three or four dull prints. They are of a hundred years ago, or thereabouts, and tell of a New York when President Monroe was in the White House, and Governor De Witt Clinton in the State Capitol, at Albany, and Mayor Colden in the City Hall. To pore over them is to achieve a certain contentment of the soul. Probably it held itself to be turbulent in its day—that old New York. Without doubt it had its squabbles, its turmoils, its excitements. We smile at the old town—its limitations, its inconveniences, its *naivetes*. But perhaps, in these years of storm, and stress, and heartache, we envy more than a little. It is not merely the architectural story that the old maps, prints, diaries tell; in them we can find an age that is gone, catch fleeting glimpses of people long since dust to dust, look at past manners, fashions, pleasures and contrast them with our own.

But to begin with the old map. The lettering beneath conveys the information that it was prepared for the City in 1819-1820 by John Randel, Jr., and that it shows the farms superimposed upon the Commissioner's map of 1811. Through the centre of the map there is a line indicating Fifth Avenue north to Thirteenth Street. Here and there is a spot apparently intended to represent a farmhouse, but that is all; for in 1820, though Greenwich Village and Chelsea were, the city proper was far to the south. Some of the names on the old map are familiar and some are not.

Just above the bending lane that ran along the north side of Washington Square, then the Potter's Field, may be read "Trustees of Sailor's Snug Harbor." The land thus



marked extends from what is now Waverly Place to what is now Ninth Street. In 1790 Captain Robert Richard Randall paid five thousand pounds sterling for twenty-one acres of good farming land. In 1801 he died, and his will directed that a "Snug Harbor" for old salts be built upon his farm, the produce of which, he believed, would forever furnish his pensioners

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with vegetables and cereal rations. Later Randall's trustees leased the farm in building lots and placed "Snug Harbor" in Staten Island. Above the estate, in diagonal form, and at one point crossing Fifth Avenue to the west, was the large farm of Henry Brevoort. More limited holdings, in the names of Gideon Tucker, William Hamilton, and John Morse, separate, in the map, the Brevoort property from the estates of John Mann, Jr., and Mary Mann. The latter must have been a landowner of some importance in her day, for the fragment of a chart runs into the margin above the line of Thirteenth Street without indicating the beginning of any other ownership.

On the land to the west of the Avenue line may be read "Heirs of John Rogers," "William W. Gilbert," "Nicholson" (the Christian name lies somewhere beyond the map horizon), and "Heirs of Henry Spingler." Irrigation is indicated by a line, running in a general northwesterly direction, bearing the name "Manetta Water," while a thinner line, joining the first line from the northeast, is described as "East Branch of Manetta Water." Manetta Water was the English name. The Dutch had called it "Bestavaer's Rivulet." It was a sparkling stream, beloved of trout fishermen, rising in the high ground above Twenty-first Street, flowing southeasterly to Fifth Avenue at Ninth Street, then on to midway between the present Eighth Street and Waverly Place, where it swung southwesterly and emptied into the Hudson River near Charlton Street. It ran between sandhills, sometimes rising to the height of a hundred feet, and marked the course of a famous Indian hunting ground.

The joy of the Izaak Waltons of the past is occasionally the despair of the Fifth Avenue householders of the present. Flooded cellars and weakened foundations may be traced to the purling waters of the sparkling stream. But perhaps the trout were jumping. Then the last fisherman probably worried very little about the annoyances to which his descendants were to be subjected. In much the same spirit we are saying today, "What will it all matter a hundred years hence?"

Beginning at the Potter's Field, the line of what is now Fifth Avenue left the "Road over the Sandhills" or the "Zantberg" of the Dutch, later known as Art Street, long since gone from the map, and crossed the Robert Richard Randall Estate. Thence it ran through the Henry Brevoort farm, which originally extended from Ninth to Eighteenth Streets, and which had been bought in 1714 for four hundred pounds. Crossing the tributary stream at Twelfth Street, it passed a small pond between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, and then ran on, over low and level ground, to Twenty-first Street, then called "Love's Lane." To the right was the swamp and marsh that afterwards became Union Square. Following the trail farther, the hardy voyager wandered over "hills and valleys, dales and fields," through a countryside where trout, mink, otter, and muskrat swam in the brooks

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and pools; brant, black duck, and yellow-leg splashed in the marshes and fox, rabbit, woodcock, and partridge found covert in the thicket. Here and there was a farm, but the city, then numbering one hundred thousand persons, was far away. Then, in 1824, the first stretch of the Avenue, from Waverly Place to Thirteenth Street, was opened, and the northward march of the great thoroughfare began. Let us try to picture the old town of that day, the city that was still under the shadow of the Knickerbockers.

First, at the southern extremity of the island, was the Battery and Battery Park. When, in "The Story of a New York House," the late H.C. Bunner described the little square of green jutting into the waters of the upper bay, it was as it had been some years before the earliest venturesome pioneers builded in lower Fifth Avenue. From the pillared balcony of his house on State Street—the house may still be seen—Jacob Dolph caught a glimpse of the morning sun, that loved the Battery far better than Pine Street, where Dolph's office was. It was a poplar-studded Battery in those days, and the tale tells how the wind blew fresh off the bay, and the waves beat up against the sea-wall, and a large brig, with all sails set, loomed conspicuous to the view, and two or three fat little boats, cat-rigged, after the good old New York fashion, were beating down towards Staten Island, to hunt for the earliest bluefish. That was in 1808, and sixteen years later, the Battery, with its gravelled, shady paths, and its somewhat irregular plots of grass, was still the city's favourite breathing spot. There, of summer evenings, after the stately walk down Broadway, the crinolined ladies and the beaux with their bell-crowned hats gathered to watch the sun set behind the low Jersey hills, and perhaps to inspect the review of the Tompkins Blues, or the Pulaski Cadets. There was fierce rivalry between these two commands, one under Captain Vincent, and the other under Captain McArdle, and each corps had its admiring sympathizers. Both Blues and Cadets presented a fine, martial appearance as they swung across the Battery, marching like veterans who had faced fire and would not flinch. "Sure it was," a flippant chronicler has recorded, "both had an undisputed reputation for charging upon a well-loaded board with a will that left no tell-tale vestige." Very likely, in the throng, all were not of New York. There were doubtful strangers, too, looking with yearning eyes out over the dancing waters of the blue bay—swarthy, weather-beaten men with huge earrings. They called themselves "privateers-men." But there were those who smiled at the word, for romance had it that there were still buccaneers in the Spanish Main.

In many families that daily visit to the Battery was all the summer change. Mr. Dayton, in his "Last Days of Knickerbocker Life," informed us that neither belle nor gallant lost caste by declining to participate in the routine of watering place life, simple and inexperienced as it then was. Yet there were summer resorts, and they were patronized by the best and most prominent citizens of the country. The springs at Saratoga had already been discovered, and there were many New Yorkers who made the then long and arduous trip.

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But nearer at hand was the “Beach at Rockaway,” sung by the military poet, George P. Morris, and Coney Island. At the latter resort conditions were primitive. Unheard were the blaring of bands, and the raucous cry of the “Hot-Dog man,” and the riot and roar of the rabble. Mr. Blinker, of O. Henry’s “Brick Dust Row,” could not then have seen his vision and found his light. For there was no mass of vulgarians wallowing in gross joys to be recognized as his brothers seeking the ideal. But he might have been as well pleased with the unpretentious hotel at the water’s edge, where the urbanite could enjoy the cooling ocean breezes, and listen to the waves, and dine upon broiled chicken and succulent clams.

The press of the third decade of the last century was high-priced and vitriolic. Of the morning papers now known to New Yorkers there was none. The “Sun,” the first to appear, began in 1833. But of the afternoon journals there was the “Evening Post,” perhaps even then “making virtue odious,” as a wit of many years later was to express it, and the “Commercial Advertiser,” now the “Globe,” the oldest of all metropolitan journals. Before the appearance of the “Sun,” the morning papers had been the “Morning Courier and New York Enquirer,” the “Standard,” the “Democratic Chronicle,” the “Journal of Commerce,” the “New York Gazette and General Advertiser,” and the “Mercantile Advertiser and New York Advocate.” In the evening there were the “Star,” and the “American,” besides the “Post” and “Commercial Advertiser.” These newspapers were mere appendages of party, “organs” in the narrowest and most restricted sense, espousing blindly certain interests or ideas, expounding in long editorials the views of small groups of politicians.

“Here’s this morning’s New York Sewer! Here’s this morning’s New York Stabber! Here’s the New York Family Spy! Here’s the New York Private Listener! Here’s the New York Peeper! Here’s the New York Plunderer! Here’s the New York Keyhole Reporter! Here’s the New York Rowdy Journal! Here’s all the New York papers! Here’s full particulars of the patriotic Locofoco movement yesterday, in which the Whigs were so chawed up; and the last Alabama gouging case; and the interesting Arizona dooel with bowie knives; and all the political, commercial, and fashionable news. Here they are! Here they are! Here’s the papers! Here’s the papers! Here’s the Sewer! Here’s the New York Sewer! Here’s some of the twelve thousand of today’s Sewer, with the best accounts of the markets, and four whole columns of country correspondence, and a full account of the ball at Mrs. White’s last night, where all the beauty and fashion of New York was assembled; with the Sewer’s own particulars of the private lives of all the ladies that were there. Here’s the Sewer! Here’s the Sewer’s exposure of the Wall Street gang, and the Sewer’s exposure of the Washington gang, and the Sewer’s exclusive account of a flagrant act of dishonesty committed by the Secretary

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of State when he was eight years old; now communicated, at great expense, by his own nurse. Here's the Sewer! Here's the New York Sewer in its twelfth thousand, with a whole column of New Yorkers to be shown up, and all their names printed. Here's the Sewer's article upon the judge that tried him, day afore yesterday, for libel, and the Sewer's tribute to the independent jury that didn't convict him, and the Sewer's account of what might have happened if they had! Here's the Sewer, always on the lookout; the leading journal of the United States!"

Such were the cries, according to the veracious account of Charles Dickens, who had paid his first visit to us a short time before, that greeted the ears of Martin Chuzzlewit upon his arrival in the gate city of the western world. That amiable caricature reflects what the English novelist thought or pretended to think, of the New York journalism of the day. Exaggeration, of course: the bad manners of a young genius of the British lower middle classes. But quite good-naturedly today we concede that beneath bad manners and exaggeration there was a foundation of truth. Into the making of Colonel Diver, the editor of the "Rowdy Journal," may have gone a little of old Noah, of the "Star," or James Watson Webb, of the "Courier and Enquirer," or Colonel Stone, of the "Commercial." Can't you see those grim figures of an old world strutting down Broadway, glaring about belligerently and suspiciously? Almost every editor of that period had a theatre feud at one day or another. On the luckless mummer who had incurred his displeasure he poured out the vials of his wrath. He incited audiences to riot. Against his brother editors he hurled such epithets as "loathsome and leprous slanderer and libeller," "pestilential scoundrel," "polluted wretch," "foul jaws," "common bandit," "prince of darkness," "turkey buzzard," "ghoul." Somehow, in thinking of the old days, I find it hard to reconcile those men and women who lived under the Knickerbocker sway with their newspapers. It is pleasanter to dwell upon the old customs, to picture Mr. Manhattan leaving the scurrilous sheet behind him when he departed from his store or counting house, and repairing with clean hands to the wife of his bosom and his family, somewhere in Greenwich Village, or Richmond Hill, or Bond Street, or the beginnings of Fifth Avenue.

But to revert to the manners of the old town. First of all there was the business of getting married. It was with an idea of permanency then, and the Knickerbocker wedding was, in consequence, a ceremony. To it, the groom, his best-man, and the ushers went attired in blue coats, brass buttons, high white satin stocks, ruffled-bosomed shirts, figured satin waistcoats, silk stockings, and pumps. The New Yorker's tailor, if his pretensions to fashion were well-founded, was Elmendorf, or Brundage, or Wheeler, or Tryon and Derby; his hatter, St. John, and his bootmakers, Kimball and Rogers. For the wedding ceremony, the man's

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hair was tightly frizzed by Maniort, the leading hair-dresser of the day. He was the proprietor of the Knickerbocker Barber-Shop at Broadway and Wall Street, and the town gossip. Years later he was to enjoy the patronage of the Third Napoleon in Paris as a reward for favours extended to the Prince when the latter was an exile here. There is little record of elaborate pre-nuptial bachelor dinners in the style of modern New York. What would have been the use? The gardens of the city's fashionable homes boasted no extensive circular fountains or artificial fishponds into which the best-man or the father of the bride-to-be could be flung as an artistic diversion. As has been said, it was something of a slow old world, lacking in many of the modern comforts.

The robe of the bride was of white satin, tinged with yellow, the bodice cut low in the neck and shoulders, and ornamented with lace. Over her hair, built up by Martell, was flung the coronet of artificial orange blossoms held by the blonde lace veil. Then the satin boots and the six-button gloves. At the wedding-supper the bride's cake, rich, and of formidable proportions, was the *piece de resistance*. Also there was substantial fare; hams, turkeys, chicken, and game; besides fruits, candies, and creams. In place of the champagne of later days there were Madeira, Port, and Sherry. Round the table, illuminated by wax candles and astral lamps, young and old gathered; the women of a past generation in stiff brocades, powdered puffs, and tortoise-shell combs. From the first to last the Fifth Avenue wedding of those days reflected the patriarchal system that had not yet passed.

It was not a matter of denomination, but when the world was young, the pioneers of the Avenue did not smile on the way to worship. The Sabbath day still retained a good deal of the funereal aspect with which the New England Puritans had invested it. The city was silent save for the tolling of the church bells. At ten o'clock in the morning, at three in the afternoon, and again, at seven at night, the solemn processions of men, women, and children, clad in their Sunday best, issued from the homes, and slowly wended their way to church. When the congregation had gathered, and the service was about to begin, heavy iron chains were drawn tightly across the streets adjacent to the various places of worship. It was the hour for serious meditation. No distracting noise was to be allowed to fall upon those devout ears.

Abram C. Dayton, in his "Last Days of Knickerbocker Life," left a description of the service at the Dutch Reformed Church of that day. He told of the long-drawn-out extemporaneous prayers, the allusions to "benighted heathen"; to "whited sepulchres"; to "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Of instrumental accompaniment there was none, and free scope was both given and taken by the human voice divine. Then the sermon! Men were strong in those days!

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Clergymen had not become affected with the throat troubles prevalent in later times. No hour-glass or warning clock was displayed in the bleak spare edifice. In the exuberance of zeal often the end of the discourse came only with utter physical exhaustion. Then the passing of the plate; an eight-stanza hymn, closing with the vehemently shouted Doxology; and the concluding Benediction. From that old-time Sabbath day the affairs of the world were rigidly excluded. It was a day of rest not only for the family but for the family's man-servant and maid-servant. Saturday had seen the preparation of the necessary food.

[Illustration: *The Washington arch. A splendid sentinel guarding the approach to the avenue. Beyond, houses dating from the thirties of the last century, that mark the beginning of the stretch of tradition]*

On the Sabbath only cold collations were served. Public opinion was a stern master. Woe betide the one rash enough to defy the established conventions! The physician on his rounds, or the church-goer too aged or infirm to walk to the place of worship, were the only ones permitted to make use of a horse and carriage. Now and then one of the godless would slip away northward for a drive on some unfrequented road. Detection meant society's averted face and stern reprimand. For an indefinite period the sinner would be a subject of intercession at evening prayers.

The weekday life was in keeping with the Knickerbocker Sabbath. Home was the family castle, over which parental authority ruled with an iron hand. Hospitality was genuine and whole-hearted; but tempered by frugal moderation. Strict punctuality was demanded of every member of the household. The noon repast was the meal of the day. At the stroke of twelve old New York sat down to table. In the home there was variety and abundance, but the dinner was served as one course. Meats, poultry, vegetables, pies, puddings, fruits, and sweets were crowded together on the board. This adherence to the midday meal must have been the weak point in the armour in which the old order encased itself. For there the first breach was made. New Yorkers, returning from visits to Europe, hooted at the primitive noon repast of their youth. At first what were called the "foreign airs" of these would-be innovators were treated with derision. But they persisted, and by slow stages three o'clock became the extra fashionable hour for dinner. The old City Hotel was one of the first public places to fall into line.

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The time was to come when a dining establishment, second to none of its day in social prestige and culinary excellence, was to stand on a corner of Fifth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. But when those who dwelt on lower Fifth Avenue were still pioneers, dining out in public places meant a long and venturesome journey to the southward. The restaurants of that time—they were more generally called “eating houses,”—were almost all established in the business portions of the city. The midday dinner was the meal on which they depended for their main support. Then masculine New York left its shop or its counting house, hurried a block to the right, or a block to the left, and fell greedily on the succulent oyster, the slice of rare roast beef, or the sizzling English mutton chop. Conspicuous among the refectories of this type were the Auction Hotel, on Water Street, near Wall; the dining room of Clark and Brown, on Maiden Lane, near Liberty Street, one of the first of the so-called English chop-houses; the United States Hotel, which stood, until a few years ago, at the corner of Water and Fulton Streets, and which was the chosen home of the captains of the whaling ships from New London, Nantucket, New Bedford, and Sag Harbor; Downing’s, on Broad Street, famed for its Saddle Rocks and Blue Points, and its political patrons; and the basement on Park Row, a few doors from the old Park Theatre, presided over by one Edward Windust. This last was a *rendezvous* for actors, artists, musicians, newspaper-men—in short, the Bohemian set of that day—and its walls were covered with old play-bills, newspaper clippings, and portraits of tragedians and comedians of the past.

But already a demand had been felt for viands of another nature; hospitality of another sort. The womankind of the day was looking for an occasional chance to break away from the monotonous if wholesome and substantial table of the home. Those stiff Knickerbockers knew it not; but the modern dining-out New York was already in the making. At first the movement was ascribed to the European Continental element. In New York Delmonico and Guerin were the pioneers in the field. The former began in a little place of pine tables and rough wooden chairs on William Street, between Fulton and Ann. The original equipment consisted of a broad counter covered with white napkins, two-tine forks, buck-handled knives, and earthenware plates and cups. From such humble beginnings grew the establishments that have subsequently carried the name. Francis Guerin’s first cafe was on Broadway, between Pine and Cedar Streets, directly opposite the old City Hotel. Another resort of the same type was the *Cafe des Mille Colonnes*, kept by the Italian, Palmo, on the west side of Broadway, near Duane Street. It was apparently on a scale lavish for those days. Long mirrors on the walls reflected, in an endless vista, the gilded columns that supported the ceiling. The fortune accumulated by Palmo in the restaurant was lost in an attempt to introduce Italian opera into the United States. Palmo’s Opera House, in Chamber Street, between Centre Street and Broadway, later became Burton’s Theatre.



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Until 1844, New York was guarded against crime by the old "Leather-heads." This force patrolled the city by night, or that part of it known as the lamp district. They were not watchmen by profession, but were recruited from the ranks of porters, cartmen, stevedores, and labourers. They were distinguished by a fireman's cap without front (hence the name "Leather-head"), an old camlet coat, and a lantern. They had a wholesome respect for their skins, and were inclined to keep out of harm's way, seldom visiting the darker quarters of the city. When they bawled the hour all rogues in the vicinity were made aware of their whereabouts. Above Fourteenth Street the whole city was a neglected region. It was beyond the lamp district and in the dark.

In no way, to the mind of the present scribe, can the contrast between the life of the modern city and of the town of the days when Fifth Avenue was in the making be better emphasized than by comparing the conditions of travel. It was in the year 1820 that John Stevens of Hoboken, who had become exasperated because people did not see the value of railroads as he did, resolved to prove, at his own expense, that the method of travel urged by him was not a madman's scheme. So on his own estate on the Hoboken hill he built a little railway of narrow gauge and a small locomotive. Long enough had he been sneered at and called maniac. He put the locomotive on the track with cars behind it, and ran it with himself as a passenger, to the amazement of those before whom the demonstration was made. So far as is known that was the first locomotive to be built or run on a track in America. But even with Stevens's successful example, years passed before steam travel assumed a practical form.

When the pioneer of Fifth Avenue wished to voyage far afield it was toward the stage-coach as a means of transportation that his mind turned, for the stage-coach was the only way by which a large portion of the population could accomplish overland journeys. To go to Boston, for example, the traveller from New York usually left by a steamboat that took him to Providence in about twenty-three hours, and travelled the remaining forty miles by coach. Five hours was needed for the overland journey, and was considered amazing speed. By the year 1832 the overland trip between New York and Boston had been reduced to forty-one hours. But the passengers were not allowed to break the journey at a tavern, even for four or five hours of sleep, as they had formerly done, but were carried forward night and day without intermission. A fare of eleven dollars was usually exacted for the trip.



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Even to go to one of the towns of Connecticut, the shore towns of the Boston Post Road, was an undertaking that called for serious preliminary study. A New York paper, now before the writer, carries in its first column an advertisement of a new steamer, the "Fairfield," plying between New York and Norwalk. But in order to make use of its services, the traveller had to be at the pier at the foot of Market Street at six o'clock in the morning. Upon the arrival at Norwalk stages were at hand for the convenience of such of the passengers who wished to travel on to Saugatuck, Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford, Milford, and other points. The same column carried information for those who contemplated voyaging to Newport or Providence. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday the steamboats "Benjamin Franklin" (Capt. E.S. Bunker) and "President" (Capt. R.S. Bunker) left New York for those Rhode Island towns at five o'clock in the evening.

The Post Road to Boston of those days differed much from the Boston Post Road of the present; especially in its first stages going northward from New York. There was no spacious Pelham Parkway skirting the waters of the Long Island Sound. Before crossing the Harlem the road followed in a general way the Broadway trail. Beyond the river it zigzagged in a northeasterly direction through Eastchester. Not until the crossing of the Byram River transferred the road from New York to New England did it take on any resemblance to the trail of today, and even beyond, the town of Greenwich seems to have been neglected entirely.

Yet, in comparison, the East was developed. It was the bold Sinbad turning his face resolutely and courageously towards the setting sun who experienced the real inconveniences and perils. Nor, at first, did that mean the adventurous journey into the lands that were beyond the great Appalachian range. The shining countenance of the unknown was nearer at hand. It is just a matter of turning the clock back a hundred years.

From the windows of the apartment houses looking down on the Riverside Drive the Delaware River is just beyond the Jersey hills. To journey there today does not even call for the study of time-tables. Mr. Manhattan rises at the usual hour and eats his usual leisurely breakfast. At, say, nine o'clock, he settles back behind the steering-wheel of his motor-car. Crossing the Hudson by the Forty-second Street Ferry, he climbs the Weehawken slope, and swings westward over one of the uninviting turnpikes that disfigure the marshy land between the Passaic and the Hackensack. Then he finds the real Jersey, the Jerseyman's Jersey, of rolling hills, and historic memories of Washington's Continental troops in ragged blue and buff.—Morristown, with its superb estates, the stiff climb of Schooley's Mountain, the descent along the wooded ravine, the road following the winding Musconetcong River through Washington, the clustered buildings of Lafayette College crowning the Pennsylvania shore, and in good time for luncheon Mr. Manhattan is over the bridge connecting Easton and Phillipsburg.

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A few years ago there appeared a little book telling of the experiences of a family migrating from Connecticut to Ohio in 1811. In interesting contrast to the morning dash just outlined is the story of that journey of a little more than one hundred years ago. Before crossing the North River the voyagers solemnly discussed the perilous waters that confronted them. "Tomorrow we embark for the opposite shore: may Heaven preserve us from the raging, angry waves!" The first night's stop was at Springfield, where, within the living memory of the older members of the party, a skirmish between the American troops and the soldiers of King George had taken place.

Another day's travel carried the party as far as Chester. At that point the task of travel became arduous. Over miry roads, in places blocked by boulders, there was the painful, laborious ascent of the steep grade leading to the summit of what we now call Schooley's Mountain. There the party camped for the night, beginning the descent early the morning of the following day. The brisk three or four hours' run that gives the motorist of today just the edge of appetite needed for the full enjoyment of his midday meal was to those hardy adventurers of a century ago almost the journey of a week.

For transatlantic travel there was the Black Ball line, between New York and Liverpool, first of four ships, and later of twelve. That service had been founded in 1816 by New York merchants. The Red Star line followed in 1821, and soon after the Swallowtail line. The packets were ships of from six hundred to fifteen hundred tons burden, and made the eastward trip in about twenty-three days and the return trip in about forty days. The record was held by the "Canada," of the Black Ball line, which had made the outward run in fifteen days and eighteen hours. That time was reduced later by the "Amazon." The first steamer to cross the Atlantic was the American ship "Savannah." She made the trial trip from New York to Savannah in April, 1819, and in the following month her owners decided to send her overseas. The time of her passage was twenty-six days, eight under steam and eighteen under sail. Stephen Rogers, her navigator, in a letter to the New London "Gazette," wrote that the "Savannah" was first sighted from the telegraph station at Cape Clear, on the southern coast of Ireland, which reported her as being on fire, and a king's cutter was sent to her relief. "But great was their wonder at their inability to come up with a ship under bare poles. After several shots had been fired from the cutter the engine was stopped, and the surprise of the cutter's crew at the mistake they had made, as well as their curiosity to see the strange Yankee craft, can be easily imagined." From Liverpool the "Savannah" proceeded to St. Petersburg, stopping at Stockholm, and on her return she left St. Petersburg on October 10th, arriving at Savannah November 30th. But the prestige that the journey had won did not compensate

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for the heavy expense. Her boilers, engines, and paddles were removed, and she was placed on the Savannah route as a packet ship, being finally wrecked on the Long Island coast. The successful establishment of steam as a means of conveying a vessel across the Atlantic did not come until the spring of 1838, when, on the same day, April 23rd, two ships from England reached New York. They were the "Sirius," which had sailed from Cork, Ireland, April 4th, and the "Great Western," which had left Bristol April 8th. The following year marked the founding of the Cunard Line.

About the same time began the famous Clippers, which carried triumphantly the American flag to every corner of the Seven Seas. They were at first small, swift vessels of from six hundred to nine hundred tons, and designed for the China tea trade. Later came the "Challenge," of two thousand tons, and the "Invincible," of two thousand one hundred and fifty tons. "That clipper epoch," said a writer in "Harper's Magazine" for January, 1884, "was an epoch to be proud of; and we were proud of it. The New York newspapers abounded in such headlines as these: 'Quickest Trip on Record,' 'Shortest Passage to San Francisco,' 'Unparalleled Speed,' 'Quickest Voyage Yet,' 'A Clipper as is a Clipper,' 'Extraordinary Dispatch,' 'The Quickest Voyage to China,' 'The Contest of the Clippers,' 'Great Passage from San Francisco,' 'Race Round the World.'" Runs of three hundred and even three hundred and thirty miles a day were not uncommon feats of those clipper ships, a rate of speed far surpassing the achievement of the steam-propelled vessels of the period.

When Charles Dickens first came to New York, in 1842, it was after a transatlantic journey that had landed him at Boston. There is extant a picture of the cabin that he occupied on the "Britannia" on the trip across that throws an interesting light on the limitations and inconveniences to which early Fifth Avenue was subjected when it visited the old world. Leaving Boston on a February afternoon, Dickens proceeded by rail to Worcester. The next morning another train carried him to Springfield. The next stop was Hartford, a distance of only twenty-five miles. But at that time of the year, Dickens records, the roads were so bad that the journey would probably have occupied ten or twelve hours. So progress was accomplished by means of the waters of the Connecticut River, in a boat that the Englishman described as so many feet short, and so many feet narrow, with a cabin apparently for a certain celebrated dwarf of the period, yet somehow containing the ubiquitous American rocking chair. Going from Hartford to New Haven consumed three hours of train travel; and, rising early after a night's rest, Dickens went on board the Sound packet bound for New York. That was the first American steamboat of any size that he had seen, and he wrote that, to an Englishman, it was less like a steamboat than a huge floating bath, and that its

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cabin, to his unaccustomed eyes, seemed about as long as the Burlington Arcade. From the deck of this packet he first viewed Hell's Gate, the Hog's Back, the Frying Pan, and other notorious localities attractive to readers of the Diedrich Knickerbocker History. When, later, Dickens left New York for Philadelphia, he wrote of the journey as being made by railroad and two ferries, and occupying between five and six hours.

The ten years that separated the first visit of Dickens and the first visit of Thackeray had wrought many changes. Thackeray, too, came to New York from Boston, but in his case it was the matter of one unbroken train journey, in the course of which he reread the "Shabby Genteel Story" of a dozen years before. Dickens's transatlantic trip had consumed nineteen days. The "Canada," which carried Thackeray, made the crossing in thirteen. In New York Thackeray stayed at the Clarendon Hotel, on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Eighteenth Street; but his favourite haunt in the city was the third home of the Century, in Clinton Place. Though not in the least given to flattery or over-effusiveness in his comments on Americans and American institutions, Thackeray wrote and spoke of the Century as "the best and most comfortable club in the world."

CHAPTER II

The Stretch of Tradition

Stretches of the Avenue—The Stretch of Tradition—Washington Arch—Old Homes and Gardens—The Mews and MacDougal Alley—In the Fourth Decade—A Genial Ruffian of the Olden Time—Sailor's Snug Harbor—The Miss Green School—Andrew H. Green, John Fiske, John Bigelow, Elihu Root, and Others as Teachers—The Brevoort Farm—The First Hotel of the Avenue—A Romance of 1840—"Both Sides of the Avenue."

A snug little farm was the old Brevoort
Where cabbages grew of the choicest sort;
Full-headed, and generous, ample and fat,
In a queenly way on their stems they sat,
And there was boast of their genuine breed,
For from old Utrecht had come their seed.
—Gideon Tucker, "The Old Brevoort Farm."

Passing under the Washington Arch, the march up the Avenue properly begins. To commemorate the centenary of the inauguration of the nation's first President a temporary arch was erected in the spring of 1889. The original structure reached from corner to corner across Fifth Avenue, opposite the Park, and the expense was borne by Mr. William Rhinelanders Stewart and other residents of Washington Square. It added so



much to the beauty of the entrance to the Avenue that steps were taken to make it permanent, and the present Arch was the result of popular subscription. One hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars was the cost of the structure, which was designed by Stanford White. Comparatively recent additions to the Arch are the two sculptured groups on northern facade, to the right and left of the span. They are the work of H.A. MacNeil.

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Of all the blocks in the stretch of tradition that carries the Avenue up to Fourteenth Street, the richest in interest is, naturally, that which lies immediately north of the Square. Dividing this block in two, and running respectively east and west, are Washington Mews and MacDougall Alley. When Fifth Avenue was young and addicted to stately horse-drawn turnouts, it was in these half streets that were stabled the steeds and the carriages. Of comparatively recent date is the remodelling that has converted the old stables into quaint, if somewhat garish artist studios.

From the top of a north-bound bus as it leaves the Square may be seen the beautiful gardens that have always been a feature of these first houses. Mrs. Emily Johnston de Forest, in her life of her grandfather, John Johnston, has described these gardens as they were from 1833 to 1842. "The houses in the 'Row,' as this part of Washington Square was called, all had beautiful gardens in the rear about ninety feet deep, surrounded by white, grape-covered trellises, with rounded arches at intervals, and lovely borders full of old-fashioned flowers." Although some of the "Row" had cisterns, all the residents went for their washing water to "the pump with a long handle" that stood in the Square. Of that pump Mrs. de Forest tells the following tale. One of her grandfather's neighbours told his coachman to fetch a couple of pails of water for Mary, the laundress. The coachman said that this was not his business, and upon being asked what his business was, replied: "To harness the horses and drive them." Thereupon he was told to bring the carriage to the door. His employer then invited the laundress with her two pails to step in and bade the coachman to drive her to the pump. There was no further trouble with the coachman.

As has been told elsewhere, before the Avenue was ever dreamed of, this land belonged to the Randall estate. The founder of the family was one Captain Thomas Randall, described as a freebooter of the seas, who commanded the "Fox," and sailed for years in and out of New Orleans, where he sold the proceeds of his voyages and captures. To this genial old ruffian was born a son, Robert Richard, after which event the father settled down and became a respectable merchant in Hanover Street, New York. He was coxswain of the barge crew of thirteen ship's captains who rowed General Washington from Elizabethtown Point to New York, on the way to the first inauguration. When Robert Richard came to die, in 1801, he dictated, propped up in bed, his last will. After the bequests to relatives and servants, he whispered to his lawyer: "My father was a mariner, his fortune was made at sea. There is no snug harbour for worn-out sailors. I would like to do something for them." Incidentally, the lawyer who drew up the will was Alexander Hamilton.

[Illustration: *At the northeast corner of the avenue and tenth street is the episcopal church of the ascension, built in 1840, and consecrated November 5, 1841. It belongs to a part of the avenue, from the square to twelfth street, which has changed little since 1845]*

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So the Sailor's Snug Harbor Estate came into being, later to be transferred to its present home on Staten Island. As I survey it from the Richmond Terrace, which it faces, I like to recall its origin. That origin does not in the least seem to interfere with the comfort of the old salts in blue puffing away at their short pipes before the gate or strolling across the broad lawn. Never mind the source of Captain Tom's money. It is not for them to worry about the "Fox," or the "De Lancey," a brigantine with fourteen guns, which the "financier" took out in 1757, and with which he made some sensational captures, or the "Saucy Sally." Eventually the "De Lancey" was taken by the Dutch and the "Saucy Sally" by the English. But before these misfortunes befell him Captain Tom had amassed a fat property. Ostensibly he plied a coastwise trade mostly between New York and New Orleans. But the same chronicler to whom we owe the significant expression: "In those days a man was looked upon as highly unfortunate if he had not a vessel which he could put to profitable use," summed the matter up when he said: "The Captain went wherever the Spanish flag covered the largest amount of gold."

At the northeast corner of Washington Square and Fifth Avenue is the James Boorman house, now, I believe, the residence of Mr. Eugene Delano. Helen W. Henderson, in "A Loiterer in New York," alludes to certain letters about old New York written by Mr. Boorman's niece. "She writes," says Miss Henderson, "of her sister having been sent to boarding school at Miss Green's, No. 1 Fifth Avenue, and of how she used to comfort herself, in her home-sickness for the family, at Scarborough-on-the-Hudson, by looking out of the side windows of her prison at her uncle, 'walking in his flower-garden in the rear of his house on Washington Square!'" When James Boorman built his house, it was all open country behind it. Mr. Boorman built also the houses Nos. 1 and 3 Fifth Avenue and the stables that were the nucleus of the Washington Mews of the present day. In the houses was opened, in 1835, a select school for young ladies, presided over at first by Mr. Boorman's only sister, Mrs. Esther Smith.

Soon, from Worcester, Massachusetts, came a Miss Green, a girl of eighteen, to teach in the school. Another sister followed and in the course of a few years the establishment became the Misses Green School, which, for a long period, before and after the Civil War, was one of the most distinguished institutions of its kind in the city. Later it was carried on by the Misses Graham. There were educated the daughters of the commercial and social leaders of New York. Among the pupils were Fanny and Jenny Jerome, the latter afterwards to become Lady Randolph Churchill, and the mother of Winston Churchill. A brother of Lucy and Mary Green was Andrew H. Green, the "Father of Greater New York." He had for a time a share in the direction of the establishment, and in 1844, taught a class in American

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history. Some of the younger teachers came from the Union Theological Seminary in Washington Square. Among the men later to become distinguished, who lectured at the school, were Felix Foresti, professor at the University, and at Columbia College, Clarence Cook, Lyman Abbott, John Fiske, John Bigelow, teaching botany and charming the young ladies because he was "so handsome," and Elihu Root, then a youth fresh from college. To quote from Miss Henderson: "Miss Boorman has often told me of the amusement that the shy theological students and other young teachers afforded the girls in their classes, and how delighted these used to be to see instructors fall into a trap which was unconsciously prepared for them. The room in which the lectures were given had two doors, side by side, and exactly alike, one leading into the hall and the other into a closet. The young men having concluded their remarks, and feeling some relief at the successful termination of the ordeal, would tuck their books under their arms, bow gravely to the class, open the door, and walk briskly into the closet. Even Miss Green's discipline had its limits, and when the lecturer turned to find the proper exit he had to face a class of grinning schoolgirls not much younger than himself, to his endless mortification. Elihu Root recently met at a dinner a lady who asked him if he remembered her as a member of his class at Miss Green's school. 'Do I remember you?' the former secretary of State replied. 'You are one of the girls who used to laugh at me when I had to walk into the closet.'"

It was in 1835, when the new avenue was in the first flush of its lusty infancy, that a hotel was opened at the northeast corner of Eighth Street. They call it the Lafayette today: tomorrow it may have still another name. But to one with any feeling for old New York it will always be remembered by its appellation of yesterday, which it drew from the old proprietors of the land on which it stands, that family that is descended from Hendrick Brevoort who had served Haarlem as constable and overseer, and later emigrated to New York, where he was an alderman from 1702 to 1713. The Brevoort farm adjoined the Randall farm and ran northeasterly to about Fourth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. Among the descendants of the Dutch burgher was one Henry Brevoort, to whose obstinacy of disposition is owed a curious inconsistency of the city of today. His farmhouse was on the west side of Fourth Avenue and on his land were certain favourite trees. When the Commissioners were replanning the town in 1807 there was a projected Eleventh Street. But the trees were in the way of the improvement, so old Brevoort stood in the doorway, blunderbuss in hand, and defied the invaders to such purpose that to this day Eleventh Street has never been cut through. Instead, Grace Church, its garden and rectory cover the site of the old homestead. Later the vestry of Grace Church was to play old Brevoort's game. "Boss" Tweed determined to cut through or make the church pay handsomely for immunity. The vestry defied him. Tweed never acted.



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There was another Henry Brevoort in the family. He it was who built the house that now stands at the northwest corner of the Avenue and Ninth Street. That Henry was the grandfather of James Renwick, Jr., the architect who built Grace Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral. His house was one of the great houses of the early days. Now known as the De Rham house—Brevoort sold it in 1857 to Henry De Rham for fifty-seven thousand dollars,—it still strikes the passer-by on account of its individuality of appearance. But long before the De Rhams entered in possession it had its romance. There, the evening of February 24, 1840, was held the first masked ball ever given in New York. It was, to quote Mr. George S. Hellman, "the most splendid social affair of the first half of the nineteenth century." But it was also the last masked ball held in the town for many years.

The name of the British Consul to New York at the time was Anthony Barclay, and he had a daughter. Her name was Matilda; she is described as having been a belle of great charm and beauty, and as having had a number of suitors. Of course, after the fashion of all love stories, the suitor favoured by her was the one of whom her parents most disapproved. He was a young South Carolinian named Burgwyne. Opposition served only to fan the flame, and the lovers met by stealth, and the gay Southerner wooed the fair Briton in the good old school poetical manner. In soft communion of fancy they wandered together to far lands; to:

"that delightful Province of the Sun,
The first of Persian lands he shines upon,
Where all the loveliest children of his beam,
Flow'rets and fruits, blush over every stream,
And, fairest of all streams, the Murga roves
Among Merou's bright palaces and groves."

It was "Tom" Moore's "Lalla Rookh" that was dearest to their hearts. Then came the great masked ball, to which practically all "society" was invited.

Matilda and Burgwyne agreed to go in the guise of their romantic favourites; she as Lalla Rookh, and he as Feramorz, the young Prince. She wore "floating gauzes, bracelets, a small coronet of jewels, and a rose-coloured bridal veil." His dress was "simple, yet not without marks of costliness, with a high Tartarian cap, and strings of pearls hanging from his flowered girdle of Kaskan." Till four o'clock in the morning they danced. Then, still wearing the costumes of the romantic poem, they slipped away from the ball and were married before breakfast. It seems quite harmless, and natural, and as it should have been, when we regard it after all the years. But it caused a great uproar and scandal at the time, and brought masked balls into such odium that there was, a bit later, a fine of one thousand dollars imposed on anyone who should give one, —one-half to be deducted in case you told on yourself.



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There is a little magazine published in New York designed to entertain and instruct those who view from the top of a bus of one of the various lines that are the outgrowth of the old Fifth Avenue stage line. The magazine is called "From a Fifth Avenue Bus," and a feature from month to month is the department known as "Both Sides of Fifth Avenue." In the stretch between the Square and Eleventh Street, it points out as residences of particular interest those of Paul Dana, No. 1, George T. Bestle, No. 3, F. Spencer Witherbee, No. 4, and Lispenard Stewart, No. 6; all below Eighth Street. Then, between Eighth and Ninth, Pierre Mali, No. 8, John C. Eames, No. 12, Miss Abigail Burt, No. 14, Dr. J. Milton Mabbott, No. 17, Dr. Edward L. Partridge, No. 19, and Dr. Robert J. Kahn (former Mark Twain home), No. 21. Between Ninth and Tenth, Charles De Rham, No. 24, Mrs. George Ethridge, No. 27, Mrs. Peter F. Collier, No. 29, and Edwin W. Coggeshall, No. 30. On the next block, Frank B. Wiborg, No. 40, Gen. Rush Hawkins, No. 42, Miss Elsie Borg, No. 43, Howard Carter Dickinson, No. 45, Mrs. J.P. Cassidy, No. 49, and William W. Thompkins, No. 68. Besides the private residences are mentioned the Hotel Brevoort (the traditional name is used), the Berkeley at No. 20, and the Church of the Ascension, at Tenth Street, one of the very first of the Fifth Avenue churches, and the scene, on June 26, 1844, of the marriage of President John Tyler and Miss Julia Gardiner, the first marriage of a President of the United States during his term of office. The church a block farther north, on the same side of the Avenue is the First Presbyterian, dating from 1845, when the congregation moved uptown from the earlier edifice on Wall Street, just east of New Street.

CHAPTER III

A Knickerbocker Pepys

A Knickerbocker Pepys—The Span of a Life—A Man of Many Responsibilities—Storm and Stress—Political Protestations—Hone and the Journalists—Contemporary Impressions of Bryant and Bennett—Hone and the Men of Letters—The Ways of British Lions.

There is one kind of immortality that is not so much a matter of amount and quality of achievement as of the particular period of achievement. That, for example, of Samuel Pepys.

Pepys, living in the turbulent, densely populated London of our time, and recording day by day the events coming under his observation, would probably have his audience of posterity limited to a little circle of venerating descendants who would certainly bore the neighbours. It is quite easy to picture the members of that circle in the year 1998, or 2024. "Listen to what Grandpapa's Diary says of the awful Zeppelin raids of February, 1917," or, "But Great-grandpapa, who had just finished his walk in the Park, and was passing Downing Street when the news came, *etc.*" "Il est fatigant," whispered Mr. St. John of General Webb at one of the dinners in "Henry Esmond," "avec sa trompette de

Wynandael.” That persistent blowing of the “trompette” of grandpapa would likewise be voted “fatiguant.” “Grandpapa! A plague upon their grandpapa!”

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It needed the smaller town, the more limited age, the greater intimacy of life, to make Pepys's Diary the vivid human narrative that it has been for so many years.

And as with the Pepys of seventeenth century London, so with the chronicler of events day by day in the New York of the first half of the nineteenth century. If there was a Knickerbocker Pepys it was Philip Hone, who in the span of his life saw his city expand from twenty-five thousand to half a million, and whose diary has been described as one of the most fascinating personal documents ever penned.

There is a little thoroughfare far downtown called Dutch Street. It runs from Fulton to John Street. There Philip Hone was born on the 25th of October, 1780, and there he passed his boyhood in a wooden house at the corner of John and Dutch Streets which his father bought in 1784. After a common school education, he became, at seventeen years of age, a clerk for an older brother whose business as an auctioneer consisted mainly in selling the cargoes brought to New York by American merchantmen. Two years as a clerk, and then Philip was made a partner. The firm prospered, and by 1820, the future diarist, though only forty years old, had become a rich man. With the best years of his mature life before him, with a wish to see the world and a desire for self-improvement, he retired from business, and in 1821, made his first journey to Europe, sailing from New York on the "James Monroe." When he returned, he bought a house on Broadway, near Park Place, on the exact spot now occupied by the Woolworth Building, for which he paid twenty-five thousand dollars. There is extant an old print of the house, showing also the American Hotel on the corner, and another residence, the ground floor of which was occupied by Peabody's Book Shop. On the block below, where the Astor House was built later, were the homes of John G. Coster, David Lydig, and J.J. Astor. It was one of the most magnificent dwellings of the town, and there Hone entertained not only the distinguished men of New York, but also such Americans of country-wide fame as Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and Harrison Gray Otis; and such old-world visitors as Charles Dickens, Lord Morpeth, Captain Marryat, John Galt, and Fanny Kemble. He had children growing up—his marriage to Catherine Dunscomb had taken place in 1801, when he was in his twenty-second year—and for the benefit of the young people his was practically open house. Public and private honours were thrust upon him. An assistant alderman from 1824 to 1826, in the latter year he was appointed Mayor. (The Mayor was not elected until 1834.) William Paulding had preceded him in the office, and William Paulding succeeded him in 1827. But the Hone administration was long remembered on account of its civic excellence and its social dignity. For more than thirty years he served gratuitously the city's first Bank of Savings, which was established in 1816, and in

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1841 he became its president. Governor of the New York Hospital, trustee of the Bloomingdale Asylum, founder of the Clinton Hall Association, and of the Mercantile Library, trustee of Columbia College, of the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, president of the American Exchange Bank, and of the Glenham Manufacturing Company, vice-president of the Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, of the American Seamen's Fund Society, of the New York Historical Society, of the Fuel Saving Society, a director in the Matteawan Cotton and Machine Company, the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, the Eagle Fire Insurance Company, the National Insurance Company, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a manager of the Literary and Philosophical Society, of the Mechanic and Scientific Association, a founder and a governor of the Union Club, and a vestryman of Trinity Church—the wonder is that he found time to write in his Diary at all. According to Bayard Tuckerman, who edited the Diary and wrote the Introduction to it, an ordinary day's work for Hone was “to ride out on horseback to the Bloomingdale Asylum, to return and pass the afternoon at the Bank for Savings, thence to attend a meeting of the Trinity Vestry, or to preside over the Mercantile Library Association.” “He was never,” said Mr. Tuckerman, “voluntarily absent from a meeting where the interest of others demanded his presence, and many were the good dinners he lost in consequence.” Again: “He had personal gifts which extended the influence due to his character. Tall and spare, his bearing was distinguished, his face handsome and refined; his manners were courtly, of what is known as the ‘old school’; his tact was great—he had a faculty for saying the right thing. In his own house his hospitality was enhanced by a graceful urbanity and a ready wit.”

The story of Philip Hone's life is substantially the story of the town from 1780 till 1851. When he first saw the light in Dutch Street, there were but twenty thousand persons for the occupying British troopers to keep in order. When, after his return from Europe in the early '20s he bought on Broadway in the neighbourhood of City Hall Park, that was the centre of fashionable residence.

But by 1837 trade was claiming the section, and Hone sold out and built himself a new home, this time at the corner of Broadway and Great Jones Street. He saw the residence portion of the city go beyond that point, saw it grope up Fifth Avenue as far as Twentieth Street. The first entry in the Diary bears the date of May 18, 1828; the last of April 30, 1851, just four days before his death. That last entry shows that he felt that the end was near at hand. “Has the time come?” he asks, and then quotes seven stanzas from James Montgomery's “What is Prayer?”, adding four stanzas of his own.



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Just eleven months to a day before the last entry, under date of May 30, 1850, Hone commented on the swiftly changing aspect of the city. To him the renovation of Broadway seemed to be an annual occurrence. If the houses were not pulled down they fell of their own accord. He wrote: "The large, three-story house, corner of Broadway and Fourth Street, occupied for several years by Mrs. Seton as a boarding-house, fell today at two o'clock, with a crash so astounding that the girls, with whom I was sitting in the library, imagined for a moment that it was caused by an earthquake. Fortunately the workmen had notice to make their escape. No lives were lost and no personal injury was sustained.

"The mania for converting Broadway into a street of shops is greater than ever. There is scarcely a block in the whole extent of this fine street of which some part is not in a state of transmutation. The City Hotel has given place to a row of splendid stores.

"Stewart is extending his stores to take in the whole front from Chambers to Reade Street; this is already the most magnificent dry-goods establishment in the world. I certainly do not remember anything to equal it in London or Paris; with the addition now in progress this edifice will be one of the 'wonders' of the Western world. Three or four good brick houses on the corner of Broadway and Spring Street have been levelled, I know not for what purpose—shops, no doubt. The houses—fine, costly edifices, opposite to me extending from Driggs's corner down to a point opposite to Bond Street—are to make way for a grand concert and exhibition establishment."

It is far from being all mellowness and amiability, that Diary. Hone had his prejudices and dislikes and strong political opinions. In the portraits that have been preserved there is the suggestion of intolerance and smug self-satisfaction. Also life did not turn out quite so rosy as it promised in 1828, when he retired from business with a handsome competence. In 1836, during the commercial depression, he met with financial reverses which forced him to return to the game of money-getting. He became president of the American Mutual Insurance Company, which was ruined by the great fire of July 19, 1845.

"A fire has occurred," he recorded in the entry of that date, "the loss of which is probably \$5,000,000; several of the insurance companies are ruined, and all are crippled. My office, I fear, is in the former category. We have lost between three and four hundred thousand dollars, which is more than we can pay.

"This is a hard stroke for me. I was pleasantly situated with a moderate support for my declining years, and now, 'Othello's occupation's gone.'"

But he met his reverses in a courageous manner, and in 1849 President Taylor appointed him Naval Officer of the Port of New York, a place which he held until his death.

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As became his day, Hone was a good trencherman. In the index to the Diary there are one hundred and sixteen pages marked as containing reference of some kind to dinner parties. The old New York names appear again and again. H. Brevoort, Chancellor and Mrs. Kent, Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Astor, Bishop Hobart, C. Brugiere and Miss Brugiere, Robert Maitland, Dr. Wainwright, Mr. and Mrs. Anthon, Judge Spencer, Judge Irving, Dr. Hosack, Peter Jay, P. Schemerhorn. And only the formal dinner parties are indexed. Aside from them there are scores of allusions to where the diarist dined and who dined with him. Small wonder that the passing of a cook of unusual abilities was an event to be recorded. An early entry, that of February 17, 1829, reads: "Died this morning, Simon, the celebrated cook. He was a respectable man, who has for many years been the fashionable cook in New York, and his loss will be felt on all occasions of large dinner and evening parties, unless it should be found that some suitable shoulders should be ready to receive the mantle of this distinguished *cuisinier*." When Hone was not entertaining at his own home or being entertained at somebody else's, he was trying out the fare at some one of the public hostelrys. Date of December 18, 1830, there is reference to a familiar name. "Moore, Giraud, and I went yesterday to dine at Delmonico's, a French *restaurateur*, in William Street, which I had heard was on the Parisian plan, and very good. We satisfied our curiosity, but not our appetites."

We are prone to regard the Civil War as an affair of the sixties. Hone was one of those who perceived the threat of it thirty years before. Always a bitter political opponent of Jackson, there was one occasion when he was loud in his applause. The South Carolina Convention had passed a number of resolutions regarded by Hone as rank treason, and the beginning of rebellion. The President had dealt with the matter in a proclamation, of which the diarist wrote December 12, 1832: "Very much to the surprise of some, and to the satisfaction of all our citizens, we have a long proclamation of President Jackson, which was published in Washington on the 12th. inst., and is in all our papers this day. It is a document addressed to the nullifiers of South Carolina, occasioned by the late treasonable proceedings of their convention. The whole subject is discussed in a spirit of conciliation, but with firmness and decision, and a determination to put down the wicked attempt to resist the laws. On the constitutionality of the laws which the nullifiers object to, and their right to recede from the Union, this able State paper is full and conclusive. The language of the President is that of a father addressing his wayward children, but determined to punish with the utmost severity the first open act of insubordination. As a composition it is splendid, and will take its place in the archives of our country, and will dwell in the memories of our citizens alongside

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of the farewell address of the 'Father of his Country.' It is not known which of the members of the cabinet is entitled to the honour of being the author; it is attributed to Mr. Livingston, the Secretary of State, and to Governor Cass, the Secretary of War. Nobody, of course, supposes it was written by him whose name is subscribed to it. But whoever shall prove to be the author has raised to himself an imperishable monument of glory. The sentiments, at least, are approved by the President, and he should have the credit of it, as he would have the blame if it were bad; and, possessing these sentiments, we have reason to believe that he has firmness enough to do his duty.

"I say, Hurrah for Jackson, and so I am willing to say at all times when he does his duty. The only difference between the thorough-going Jackson man and me is, that I will not 'hurrah' for him right or wrong. And I think that Jackson's election may save the Union."

If he disliked Jackson on account of his policies, he seemed to dislike journalists regardless of their political creeds. To his eyes they were a pestilential crew. Here is the first glimpse of Bryant, the great William Cullen Bryant, who as a mere boy had penned the beautiful "Thanatopsis." It is of the date of April 20, 1831. "While I was shaving this morning at eight o'clock, I witnessed from the front window an encounter in the street nearly opposite, between William C. Bryant and William L. Stone, the former one of the editors of the *Evening Post*, and the latter the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser*. The former commenced the attack by striking Stone over the head with a cow-skin; after a few blows the men closed, and the whip was wrested away from Bryant and carried off by Stone." Here and there are flung expressions of admiration for Bryant's verse, but the tone is of one speaking of the cleverness of a trained lizard. Thirteen years intervened between the first and the last Bryant entry. In February, 1844, Nicholas Biddle, the great financier, died. Something that Bryant wrote roused Hone's wrath. Here is his comment of February 28: "Bryant, the editor of the *Evening Post*, in an article of his day, virulent and malignant as are usually the streams which flow from that polluted source, says that Mr. Biddle 'died at his country-seat, where he passed the last of his days in elegant retirement, which, if justice had taken place, would have been spent in the penitentiary.' This is the first instance I have known of the vampire of party-spirit seizing the lifeless body of its victim before its interment, and exhibiting its bloody claws to the view of mourning relatives and sympathizing friends. How such a black-hearted misanthrope as Bryant should possess an imagination teeming with beautiful poetical images astonishes me; one would as soon expect to extract drops of honey from the fangs of the rattlesnake."



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But this was kindly tolerance compared to his attitude towards the elder Bennett. The latter apparently came under Hone's notice in January, 1836, and the first mention in the Diary reads: "There is an ill-looking, squinting man called Bennett, formerly connected with Webb in the publication of his paper, who is now editor of the *Herald*, one of the penny papers which are hawked about the streets by a gang of troublesome, ragged boys, and in which scandal is retailed to all who delight in it, at that moderate price. This man and Webb are now bitter enemies, and it was nuts for Bennett to be the organ of Mr. Lynch's late vituperative attack upon Webb, which Bennett introduced in his paper with evident marks of savage exultation." To that famous masked ball given by the Brevoorts on the evening of February 24, 1840, in their house at Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue Hone went attired as Cardinal Wolsey. He forgot to tell of the romance of the night, the elopement of Miss Barclay and young Burgwyne, devoting his space to the expression of his resentment over the presence at the affair of an emissary of Bennett. "Whether the notice they" (the guests) "took of him" (the "Herald" reporter), "and that which they extend to Bennett when he shows his ugly face in Wall Street, may be considered approbatory of the dirty slanders and unblushing impudence of the paper they conduct, or is intended to purchase their forbearance towards themselves, the effect is equally mischievous." Again, date of June 2, 1840: "The punishment of the law adds to the fellow's notoriety, and personal chastisement is pollution to him who undertakes it. Write him down, make respectable people withdraw their support from the vile sheet, so that it will be considered disgraceful to read it, and the serpent will be rendered harmless." In the entry of February 14, 1842, Bennett is: "The impudent disturber of the public peace, whose infamous paper, the *Herald*, is more scurrilous, and of course more generally read, than any other." September 2, 1843, Hone records that: "Bennett, the editor of the *Herald*, is on a tour through Great Britain, whence he furnishes lies and scandal for the infamous paper which has contributed so much to corrupt the morals and degrade the taste of the people of New York." In one of the last entries of the Diary, a few months before Hone's death, allusion is made to a personal attack on the editor by the defeated candidate of the Locofoco party for the District-Attorneyship. "I should be well pleased to hear of this fellow being punished in this way, and once a week for the remainder of his life, so that new wounds might be inflicted before the old ones were healed, or until the fellow left off lying; but I fear that the editorial miscreant in this case will be more benefited than injured by this attack."



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A man of literary tastes, or at least a man who wished to be regarded as one of bookish inclinations, Hone seems never to have had any great liking for men of letters as such. All of the gifted and unhappy Poe's life in New York came within the period of the Diary, but in it is to be found not a single mention of his name. There was no place at the Hone table for the shabby, impossible genius. There was an impassable gulf between the well-ordered household facing the City Hall Park, or at the Broadway and Great Jones Street corner, and the humble Carmine Street lodging, or the Fordham Cottage. Early references to Fenimore Cooper, whom Hone first met at an American dinner to Lafayette in Paris in 1831, are gracious enough, for the creator of Leather-Stocking was a personage, and it suited Hone to stand well with personages. But when, seven years later, Cooper returned to the United States after his long stay abroad, and incurred the displeasure of his fellow-countrymen, Hone was quite ready to join in the hue and cry.

With Washington Irving it was another matter. But who could have failed to feel genial towards the quiet, scholarly, altogether charming gentleman of Sunnyside? Also the legs of Irving fitted well and often under the Hone mahogany, and the part of the author that was perceptible above the table gave a flavour and dignity to the board. Somehow we see Hone's cheeks puffed out with pride as he chronicles: "My old friend, Washington Irving, who visits his native country after an absence of seventeen years. I passed half an hour with him very pleasantly." "I have devoted nearly the whole day to Washington Irving." "Irving and I left them and came to town to meet friends whom I had engaged to dine with me." "Washington Irving acquainted me with a circumstance, etc." "We next visited Washington Irving, who lives with his sister and nieces on the bank of the river." Any one who reads the Diary can see that Hone thoroughly approved of Irving. But just what, in his heart of hearts, did Irving think of Hone?

The Diary gives some significant glimpses of Charles Dickens in America. In 1842 New York welcomed the Englishman riotously. Washington laughed at New York for doing too much and went to the other extreme. John Quincy Adams gave the Dickenses a dinner at which Hone was a guest. "Some clever people were invited to meet them" is the way the ingenuous Hone puts it. "They" (Dickens and Mrs. Dickens) "came, he in a frock-coat, and she in her bonnet. They sat at table until four o'clock, when he said: 'Dear, it is time for us to go home and dress for dinner.' They were engaged to dine with Robert Greenhow at the fashionable hour of half-past five! A most particularly funny idea to leave the table of John Quincy Adams to dress for a dinner at Robert Greenhow's!" Hone referred to the visitors as "The Boz and Bozess," and described the author of "Pickwick" as "a small, bright-eyed, intelligent-looking young fellow, thirty years of age, somewhat of a dandy in his dress, with 'rings and things and fine array,' brisk in his manner, and of a lively conversation"; and Mrs. Dickens as "a little, fat, English-looking woman, of an agreeable countenance, and, I should think, 'a nice person.'"



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Dickens was not the only British author of those days to kindle the flames of American resentment. Almost all who came to our shores seemed to possess the faculty of “getting a rise” out of Yankee sensibilities. Captain Marryat was one of the offenders. At a dinner in Toronto he gave an injudicious toast. Thereupon the town of Lewistown, Maine, built a huge bonfire on the shore directly opposite Queenstown and destroyed all the “Midshipman Easys,” “Peter Simples,” “Japhets,” and “Jacob Faithfuls” that could be obtained. Hone commented sensibly on the affair in his Diary for May 5, 1838.

“Captain Marryat, I dare say, made a fool of himself (not a very difficult task, I should judge, from what I have seen of him); but the Lewistownians have beaten him all to smash, as the Kentuckians say. How mortified he must have been to hear that his books had been burned after they were paid for!” A year before Marryat had dined at the Hone house in New York and the host wrote: “The lion, Captain Marryat, is no great things of a lion, after all. In truth, the author of ‘Peter Simple’ and ‘Jacob Faithful’ is a very every-day sort of a man. He carries about him in his manner and conversation more of the sailor than the author, has nothing student-like in his appearance, and savours more of the binnacle lamp than of the study.” And again, six months after the Lewistown flare-up: “It would have been better for both parties if the sailor author had been known on this side of the Atlantic only by his writings ... he has evidently not enjoyed the benefits of refined society, or intercourse with people of literary talents.”

The Knickerbocker Pepys grew mellow as he advanced in years. There is a marked change in the tone of the Diary dating from the very time when he himself suffered financial reverses. It was the test of the man that misfortune did not embitter him, but made him more kindly in his judgments of those about him. The smug self-satisfaction belonged to the early days. In the closing years of his useful life there was but one thing that disturbed him greatly. He foresaw the Deluge that was to come. December 12, 1850, was his last Thanksgiving. He wrote: “The annual time-honoured Thanksgiving-day throughout the state. No nation, ancient or modern, ever had more causes for thanksgiving, and reasons to praise the Author of all good, than the people of the United States. Yet there are many, at the present time, ignorant and unworthy of the blessings they enjoy, who would throw all things into confusion, break up the blessed Union which binds the States, and should bind the individuals forming their population; who would destroy the harmony, and condemn the obligations, of Constitution and law. Factionists, traitors, madmen—the Lord preserve us from the unholy influence of such principles!”

CHAPTER IV

Glimpses of the Sixties



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Glimpses of the Sixties—At the “Sign of the Buck-horn”—Madison Square in Civil War Times—A Contemporary Chronicler—Mushroom Fortunes—Foreign Adventurers—Filling the Ballroom—Brown of Grace Church—Sunshine and Shadow—The Avenue and the Five Points—The Old Bowery—Blackmail—The Haunts of Chance—Two Famous Poems, William Allen Butler’s “Nothing to Wear,” and Edmund Clarence Stedman’s “The Diamond Wedding.”

It seems but yesterday that the old Fifth Avenue Hotel passed to the limbo of bygone things. When “Victoria’s Royal Son” came to visit us it was new and stately, and held by loyal patriots to be something for strangers from beyond the seas to behold and wonder at. But before the hotel there had been a famous tavern on the site, and then a hippodrome.

“Can it be true,” wrote Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer in an article in the “Century Magazine” many years ago, “that I dreamily remember a canvas hippodrome where the Fifth Avenue Hotel stands? Kids curvetting in idiotic pride over imaginary mountain peaks on the rough ground of what is Madison Square? Can it be true that when we looked from our nursery windows towards Sixteenth Street we saw, on a lot foolishly called vacant, the most interesting of possible houses, an abandoned street-car, fitted with a front door and a chimney pot, and inhabited by an Irish family of considerable size?” That delightful Swiss Family Robinson-like habitation may have been a creation of Mrs. Van Rensselaer’s fancy, but Franconi’s Hippodrome was an historical fact, and the tavern that she remembers was Corporal Thompson’s Madison Cottage, where, at the “Sign of the Buck-horn,” trotting men gathered. When Fifth Avenue was in its infancy Madison Square still recalled the name of Tieman’s, and in the centre there was a House of Refuge for sinful boys. At the Square the old Boston Post Road for a moment touched what was afterwards to be the Avenue before it twisted off in a northeasterly direction.

Corporal Thompson’s establishment was a diminutive frame cottage, surrounded by what might be called “a five acre lot,” which was used, when used at all, for cattle exhibitions. It was, Mr. Dayton recorded, “the last stopping place for codgers, old and young. Laverty, Winans, Niblo, the Costers, Hones, Whitneys, Schermerhorns, Sol Kipp, Doctor Vache, Ogden Hoffman, Nat Blount, and scores more of *bon vivants*, hail fellows well met, would here end their ride for the day by ‘smiling’ with the worthy Corporal, and wash down any of their former improprieties with a sip of his *ne plus ultra*, which was always kept in reserve for a special nightcap. There was a special magnetism about the snug little bar-room, always trim as a lady’s boudoir, which induced the desire to tarry awhile, as if that visit were destined to be the last; so it frequently happened that a jolly party was compelled to grope slowly homewards through the unlighted, gloomy road that led to the city.”

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But all that has been in the days before. By the time that the Fifth Avenue Hotel had been firmly established on the site of the Buck-horn, the corner had become the centre of the new town. Across the Square, at the northeast angle, on the site of the building now capped by the figure of Diana, was a low, sordid shed. It was the Harlem Railroad Station. There, from one side started the cars for Boston, and from the other, the cars for Albany. Cars, not trains, for horses were the motive power as far as Thirty-second Street. There engines were attached in the open street. Later, the horses ran through the tunnel as far as Forty-second Street where the Grand Central Station now stands. In the Square the Worth Monument had been erected in 1857, and on the east side of the park, then enclosed by a high railing, was the brown church which dated from 1854. That decade from 1860 to 1870 was one of constant changes and shiftings. The New England soldier who marched through the town on his way to the front in 1861 rubbed his eyes a little when he passed through it again homeward bound after the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox Court House had brought the War of Secession to a close. The last vestige of Knickerbocker life had disappeared forever.

It had been, and still was, an era of extravagant speculation. Mushroom fortunes were springing up, and their possessors, as socially ambitious as they were socially inept, invaded Fifth Avenue strong in the belief in the all-conquering power of the Almighty Dollar. In most cases they did not last long. But they served a purpose. They erected the splendid houses on the Avenue that a few years later the clubs were to occupy and enjoy. Of the clubs that were on the Avenue in 1868, a contemporary chronicler wrote that nearly every one recorded the brief life of a New York aristocrat. "A lucky speculation, a sudden rise in real estate," so runs the rhetorical statement, "a new turn of the wheel-of-fortune, lifts the man who yesterday could not be trusted for his dinner, and gives him a place among men of wealth. He buys a lot on Fifth Avenue, puts up a palatial residence, outdoing all who have gone before him; sports his gay team in Central Park, carpets his sidewalk, gives two or three parties, and disappears from society. His family return to the sphere from which they were taken, and the mansion, with its gorgeous furniture, becomes a club-house." Perhaps this picture should be regarded with a certain restraint. The observer was an up-state minister, looking for the excesses, wickednesses, and extravagances of the great city. His judgment may have been as faulty as his style.



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But, if merely for the sake of learning a certain point of view, it is amusing to turn over those old volumes dealing with the sunshine and shadow of the city of the sixties. High Life and Moneyocracy, we are told, were synonymous. To use the Tennysonian line, "Every door was barred with gold, and opened but to golden keys." "If you wish parties, soirees, balls, that are elegant, attractive, and genteel (how they loved those dreadful adjectives 'elegant' and 'genteel'!) you will not find them among the snobbish clique, who, with nothing but money, attempt to rule New York." The words are of the clerical visitor before quoted. "Talent, taste, and refinement do not dwell with these. But high life has no passport except money. If a man has this, though destitute of character and brains, he is made welcome. One may come from Botany Bay or St. James; with a ticket-of-leave from a penal colony or St. Cloud; if he has diamond rings and a coach, all places will be open to him. The leaders of upper New York were, a few years ago, porters, stable boys, coal-heavers, pickers of rags, scrubbers of floors, and laundry women. Coarse, rude, uncivil, and immoral many of them still are. Lovers of pleasure and men of fashion bow and cringe to such, and approach hat in hand. One of our new-fledged millionaires gave a ball in his stable. The invited came with tokens of delight. The host, a few years ago, was a ticket-taker at one of our ferries, and would have thankfully blacked the boots or done any menial service for the people who clamour for the honour of his hand. At the gate of Central Park, every day splendid coaches may be seen, in which sit large, fat, coarse women, who carry with them the marks of the wash-tub." That was the kind of hot shot that the rural districts wanted from those they sent to look into the iniquities of the Metropolis. At once it made them sit up and filled them with a sense of their own sanctity.

According to the same ingenuous chronicler, the most famous figure in the social life of the New York of the sixties, the later Petronius, or the forerunner of Mr. Ward McAllister, was Brown, the sexton of Grace Church, which, for many years, had been the fashionable centre. "Arrogant old Isaac Brown," Mrs. Burton Harrison called him in her "Recollections, Grave and Gay," "the portly sexton who transmitted invitations for the elect, protested to one of his patronesses that he really could not undertake to 'run society' beyond Fiftieth Street. To be married or buried within Grace Church's walls was considered the height of felicity. It was Brown who passed on worthiness in life or death. He arranged the parties, engineered the bridals, conducted the funerals. The Lenten season is a horribly dull season, but we manage to make our funerals as entertaining as possible"—Brown said, according to the quoted story. Without Brown no Fifth Avenue function was complete. "A fashionable lady, about to have a fashionable gathering

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at her house, orders her meats from the butcher, her supplies from the grocer, her cakes and ices from the confectioner; but her invitations she puts in the hands of Brown. He knows whom to invite and whom to omit. He knows who will come, who will not come, but will send regrets. In case of a pinch, he can fill up the list with young men, picked up about town, in black swallow-tailed coats, white vests, and white cravats, who, in consideration of a fine supper and a dance, will allow themselves to be passed off as the sons of distinguished New Yorkers. The city has any quantity of ragged noblemen, seedy lords from Germany, Hungarian Barons out at the elbow, members of the European aristocracy who left their country for their country's good, who can be served up in proper proportions at a fashionable party when the occasion demands it. No man knows their haunts better than Brown."

Here is a picture of the famous Brown, drawn by the same pen:

"Brown is a huge fellow, coarse in his features, resembling a dressed up carman. His face is very red, and on Sundays he passes up and down the aisles of Grace Church with a peculiar swagger. He bows strangers into a pew, when he deigns to give them a seat, with a majestic and patronizing air designed to impress them with a relishing sense of the obligation he has conferred upon them."

Later Peter Marie wrote the poem, "Brown of Grace Church," beginning:

"O glorious Brown! thou medley strange,
Of church-yard, ball-room, saint and sinner,
Flying in morn through fashion's range,
And burying mortals after dinner,
Walking one day with invitations,
Passing the next with consecrations."

This is the eloquent story of Mr. and Mrs. Newly-Rich who did not seek the social chaperonage of the all-powerful Brown. He had been a reputable and successful hatter. She had made vests for a fashionable tailor. By a turn of fortune they found themselves rich. He gave up hatting and she abandoned vests. They bought a house on upper Fifth Avenue and proposed to storm society by giving a large party. The acquaintances of the humbler days were to be ignored. It was guests from another world that were wanted. But instead of going to Brown and slipping him a handsome fee, Mr. and Mrs. Newly-Rich took the Directory, selected five hundred names, among them some of the most prominent persons of the city, and sent out invitations. The first caterer of the town laid the table. Dodsworth was engaged for the music. The result is easy to guess. The brilliantly lighted house, the silent bell, the over-dressed mother and daughter sitting hour after hour in lonely, heartbroken magnificence. But save for its

association with the omnipotent Brown, it is the story, not of the sixties in particular, but of any decade of social New York.

It may be worth while to follow the critic from up-state in some of his venturesome explorations of other parts of New York. Those to whom he was to return, those for whose entertainment and instruction his book was written, wanted to hear of the shadows as well as the sunshine. It was the picture of a very sinful metropolis that they demanded, and the author was bound that he was not going to disappoint them.

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[Illustration: MADISON SQUARE. YESTERDAY IT WAS THE HOME OF THE FLORA MC FLIMSIES OF THE WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER POEM "NOTHING TO WEAR." TODAY, IN THE EYES OF THE MANHATTANITE, IT IS THE CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE.]

The frontispiece of the book shows the Stewart Mansion at the corner of Thirty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, and by contrast, the Old Brewery at the Five Points. Before the Mission was opened the Five Points was a dangerous locality, the resort of burglars, thieves, and desperadoes, with dark, underground chambers, where murderers often hid, where policemen seldom went, and never unarmed. A good citizen going through the neighbourhood after dark was sure to be assaulted, beaten, and probably robbed. Nightly the air was filled with the sound of brawling. Wretchedness, drunkenness, and suffering stalked abroad. There were such rookeries as Cow Bay and Murderer's Alley, the latter of which continued to exist, though its sinister glory had long since departed, until fifteen or twenty years ago. The lodging houses of the section were underground, without ventilation, without windows, overrun with rats and vermin.

For diversion the miserable denizens of the quarter sought the near-by Bowery, with its brilliantly lighted drinking dens, its concert halls, where negro minstrelsy was featured, and its theatres where the plays were immoral comedies or melodramas glorifying the exploits of picturesque criminals. News-boys, street-sweepers, rag-pickers, begging girls filled the galleries of these places of amusement. Here is the clerical visitor's description of the thoroughfare that was then the second principal street of the city: "Leaving the City Hall about six o'clock on Sunday night, and walking through Chatham Square to the Bowery, one would not believe that New York had any claim to be a Christian city, or that the Sabbath had any friends. The shops are open, and trade is brisk. Abandoned females go in swarms, and crowd the sidewalk. Their dress, manner, and language indicate that depravity can go no lower. Young men known as Irish-Americans, who wear as a badge long frock-coats, crowd the corners of the streets, and insult the passer-by. Women from the windows arrest attention by loud calls to the men on the sidewalk, and jibes, profanity, and bad words pass between the parties. Sunday theatres, concert-saloons, and places of amusement are in full blast. The Italians and Irish shout out their joy from the rooms they occupy. The click of the billiard ball, and the booming of the ten-pin alley, are distinctly heard. Before night, victims watched for will be secured; men heated with liquor, or drugged, will be robbed, and many curious and bold explorers in this locality will curse the hour in which they resolved to spend a Sunday in the Bowery."



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To find adventure and danger the rural visitor did not have to seek out the Bowery and the adjacent streets to the east and west. Adroit rogues were everywhere. Bland gentlemen introduced themselves to unwary strangers. Instead of the mining stock or the sick engineer's story of our more enlightened and refined age, these pleasant urbanites resorted to the cruder weapon of blackmail. The art was reduced to a system. Terrible warnings were conveyed to the innocent country-side by the chronicler in such sub-heads as "A Widower Blackmailed," "A Minister Falls among Thieves," "Blackmailers at a Wedding," "A Bride Called On."

Darkly the investigator painted the gambling evil of the New York of the sixties. The dens of chance were in aristocratic neighbourhoods and superbly appointed. Heavy blinds or curtains, kept drawn all day, hid the inmates from prying eyes. Within, rosewood doors, deep carpets, and mirrors of magnificent dimensions. The dinner table spread with silver and gold plate, costly chinaware, and glass of exquisite cut: the viands embracing the luxuries of the season and the wines of the choicest. "None but men who behave like gentlemen are allowed the entree of the rooms" is the naive comment. "Play runs on by the hour, and not a word spoken save the low words of the parties who conduct the game. But for the implements of gaming there is little to distinguish the room from a first-class club-house. Gentlemen well known on 'change' and in public life, merchants of a high grade, whose names adorn charitable and benevolent associations, are seen in these rooms, reading and talking. Some drink only a glass of wine, walk about, and look on the play with apparently but little curiosity. The great gamblers, besides those of the professional ring, are men accustomed to the excitement of the Stock Board. They gamble all day in Wall and Broad Streets, and all night on Broadway. To one not accustomed to such a sight, it is rather startling to see men whose names stand high in church and state, who are well dressed and leaders of fashion, in these notable saloons, as if they were at home." Conspicuous among the keepers of the gambling hells was John Morrissey, who had begun life as the proprietor of a low drinking den in Troy, and as a step in the march of prosperity, had fought Heenan, the Benicia Boy, for the championship of Canada. He was a personality of the city of the sixties. The author of the curious volume thought it necessary to tell of his career as he told of the career of A.T. Stewart, and Henry Ward Beecher, and the particular Astor of the day, and the particular Vanderbilt, Fernando Wood, and Leonard W. Jerome, and George Law, and James Gordon Bennett, the elder, and Daniel Drew, and General Halpin, and half a dozen more of the town's celebrities.



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The Franconi Hippodrome on the Fifth Avenue Hotel site had become a memory, but far downtown Barnum's Museum was flourishing, with the doors open from sunrise till ten at night. Early visitors from the country inspected the gallery of curiosities before sitting down to breakfast. The great showman was living in a brown-stone house on Fifth Avenue, at the corner of Thirty-ninth Street. He was approaching his sixtieth year, and had retired from active life, although he still held the controlling interest in the Museum. A.T. Stewart was living in the white stone home he had erected at Thirty-fourth Street. James Gordon Bennett's city residence was on the Avenue at Thirty-eighth Street. In fact, with a few notable exceptions who still clung to their downtown homes, such as the Astors and the Vanderbilts, all the great money kings of the decade were gathering in the upper stretches of the ripening thoroughfare. But the descendants of the Patroons held to the sweep from Washington Square to Fourteenth Street, or to lower Second Avenue, which, to the eyes of its "set," embracing a number of old-school families of Colonial ancestry, was the "Faubourg St. Germain" of New York.

In every other memoir touching on the New York of the sixties will be found an allusion to the Flora McFlimseys. For example, Mr. W.D. Howells, in "Literary Friends and Acquaintances," told of his first visit to the city at the time of the Civil War. After Clinton Place was passed, he wrote: "Commerce was just beginning to show itself in Union Square, and Madison Square was still the home of the McFlimsies, whose kin and kind dwelt unmolested in the brown-stone stretches of Fifth Avenue." There are two poems linked with the story of New York. They are Edmund Clarence Stedman's "The Diamond Wedding," and "Nothing to Wear," and the William Allen Butler verses, beginning:

"Miss Flora McFlimsey, of Madison Square
Has made three separate journeys to Paris.
And her father assures me, each time she was there,
That she and her friend Mrs. Harris
(Not the lady whose name is so famous in history,
But plain Mrs. H., without romance or mystery)
Spent six consecutive weeks, without stopping,
In one continuous round of shopping—"

were the very spirit of the Fifth Avenue of that day. Butler wrote the poem in 1857, in a house in Fourteenth Street, within a stone's throw of the Avenue. After finishing it, and reading it to his wife, he took it one evening to No. 20 Clinton Place, to try it on his friend, Evart A. Duyckinck. Not only did the verses themselves have a Fifth Avenue inspiration and origin, but the woman who later claimed that she had written the nine first lines and thirty of the concluding lines, told in her story that she had dropped the manuscript while passing through a crowd at Fifth Avenue and Madison Square. It was a famous case in its day, and the claimant found supporters, just

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as the absurd Tichborne Claimant found supporters. But Butler's right to "Nothing to Wear" was fully substantiated. Horace Greeley made the controversy the subject of a vigorous editorial in the "Tribune," and "Harper's Weekly," in which the poem had originally appeared, pointed out that although the verses were published in February, the spurious claim was not put forward until July. Writing of "Nothing to Wear" forty years later, W.D. Howells said:

"For the student of our literature 'Nothing to Wear' has the interest and value of satire in which our society life came to its full consciousness for the first time. To be sure there had been the studies of New York called 'The Potiphar Papers,' in which Curtis had painted the foolish and unlovely face of our fashionable life, but with always an eye on other methods and other models; and 'Nothing to Wear' came with the authority and the appeal of something quite indigenous in matter and manner. It came winged, and equipped to fly wide and to fly far, as only verse can, with a message for the grandchildren of 'Flora McFlimsey,' which it delivers today in perfectly intelligible terms. "It does not indeed find her posterity in Madison Square. That quarter has long since been delivered over to hotels and shops and offices, and the fashion that once abode there has fled to upper Fifth Avenue, to the discordant variety of handsome residences which overlook the Park. But it finds her descendants quite one with her in spirit, and as little clothed to their lasting satisfaction."

The nuptials that Edmund Clarence Stedman satirized in "The Diamond Wedding" united Miss Frances Amelia Bartlett and the Marquis Don Estaban de Santa Cruz de Oviedo, and were held in October, 1859, under the direction of "the fat and famous Brown, Sexton of Grace Church." Miss Bartlett, a tall and willowy blonde, still in her teens, was the daughter of a retired lieutenant in the United States Navy. The Bartlett home was in West Fourteenth Street, a few doors from the Avenue. The groom, many years the bride's senior, and of strikingly unprepossessing appearance, was a Cuban of great wealth. The wedding was the talk of the town, and Stedman, then a young man of twenty-six, satirized the ill-mating in a poem that appeared first in the New York "Tribune." The poem began:

"I need not tell,
How it befell;
(Since Jenkins has told the story
Over and over and over again,
And covered himself with glory!)
How it befell, one summer's day,
The King of the Cubans passed that way,
King January's his name, they say,
And fell in love with the Princess May,
The reigning belle of Manhattan.
Nor how he began to smirk and sue,
And dress as lovers who come to woo,

Or as Max Maretzek or Jullien do,
When they sit, full bloomed, in the ladies' view,
And flourish the wondrous baton.



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* * * * *

“He wasn’t one of your Polish nobles,
Whose presence their country somehow troubles,
And so our cities receive them;
Nor one of your make-believe Spanish grandees,
Who ply our daughters with lies and candies,
Until the poor girls believe them.
No, he was no such charlatan,
Count de Hoboken Flash-in-the-pan.
Full of Gasconade and bravado,
But a regular, rich Don Rataplan,
Santa Claus de la Muscavado,
Senor Grandissimo Bastinado.
His was the rental of half Havana,
And all Matanzas; and Santa Anna—”

Famous as the wedding had been, the verses became more so. They were copied into the weekly and tri-weekly issues of the “Tribune,” and into the evening papers. Stedman, in later years, told of being startled by a huge signboard in front of the then young Brentano’s, opposite the New York Hotel, at the corner of Broadway and Waverly Place, reading: “Read Stedman’s great poem on the Diamond Wedding in this evening’s ‘Express!’” The father of the bride, infuriated by the unpleasant publicity, challenged the poet to a duel, which never took place. Years later Stedman and the woman he had lampooned met and became the best of friends.

CHAPTER V

Fourteenth to Madison Square

Stretches of the Avenue—Fourteenth to Madison Square—From Brevoort to Spingler—The Story of Sir Peter Warren—The First City Hospital—The Paternoster Row of New-York—Former Homes and Birthplaces—Lower Fifth Avenue Residents in the Fifties—Blocks of Departed Glories—The Centre of the Universe—Madison Square in Colonial Days—Franconi’s Hippodrome—The Opening of the Fifth Avenue Hotel—A Thanksgiving Day of the Nineties—Monuments of the Square—The Garden, the Presbyterian Church, and the Metropolitan Tower—The Face of the Clock.

In 1762, a Brevoort—Elias was his Christian name—sold a part of the family farm to John Smith, a wealthy slave-holder. On the choicest site of the purchase, now the centre of Fourteenth Street just west of Fifth Avenue, Smith built his country residence. After he died his widow continued to occupy the house until 1788, when the executors of Smith’s estate, among whom was James Duane, Mayor of the city, sold the property

for about four thousand seven hundred dollars to Henry Spingler. Spingler lived in the house until his death in 1813, and used the land, comprising about twenty-two acres, as a market garden farm. Spingler's granddaughter, Mrs. Mary S. Van Beuren, fell heiress to most of the property, and built the Van Beuren brown-stone front house on Fourteenth Street, where she lived for years, and maintained a little garden with flowers and vegetables, a cow and chickens. In the fifty-seven years between the Smith sale and 1845 the value of the estate had increased from four thousand seven hundred dollars

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to two hundred thousand dollars. Keeping still to the bucolic days of the Avenue, we pass, going from Fifteenth to Eighteenth Street, through what was the farm of Thomas and Edward Burling, relatives of John and James Burling, old-time merchants whose name was given to Burling Slip, down by the East River. Also in the course of these blocks the Avenue crosses land that was the farm of John Cowman until 1836. Between Eighteenth and Twenty-first Streets was part of the farm acquired in 1791 by Isaac Varian, who bought from the heirs of Sir Peter Warren.

This Sir Peter Warren was one of the great figures of the old town. Many have written of him. It was only a year or so ago that Miss Chapin devoted to his story a chapter of her book on Greenwich Village. So here the outline of his career will be of the briefest possible nature. It was in 1728 that he first saw New York Harbour. He was twenty-five years of age then, and in command of the frigate "Solebay." Irish to the core, a Warren of Warrenstown, County Meath, who got their estates in the time of "Strongbow," he had already seen a dozen years of active service in southern and African waters, and as captain of the "Grafton," had had a share in the seizure of the rock of Gibraltar by the British. But New York was his first official post, and here he had been sent at the orders of the home government, to keep an eye on events, and to sound the loyalty of the American colonies. The little island above the great bay and between the two broad rivers won his heart from the first, and after every new adventure he returned to it, until, in 1747, he was summoned to London, to enter Parliament and to be made Admiral of the Red Squadron. The affection for the town seems to have been reciprocal, for two years after his introduction to New York, the Common Council of the city voted to him the "freedom of the city." Then, when he was twenty-eight years old he married Susanna DeLancey, whose father, Etienne DeLancey, was a Huguenot refugee, who, settling here, soon changed the Etienne to Stephen, and married a daughter of one of the Dutch Van Cortlandts. At first the young Warrens lived downtown, but in later years, when wealth came as the result of treasure-seeking adventure on the high seas, Peter bought lands in Greenwich Village, and eventually there erected a great mansion.

Throughout the 1730's he was busy, but his opportunity did not come until the end of that decade. In 1739 trouble broke out between Great Britain and Spain. Five years later Captain Warren was fabulously rich. Early in 1744 he had been made commodore of a sixteen-ship squadron in the Caribbean. Before summer of that year he had captured twenty-four French and Spanish merchant ships, had brought them to New York, turned them over to his father-in-law's firm, "Messieurs Stephen De Lancey and Company," and had pocketed the proceeds of the sale. His "French and Spanish swag," is the way Thomas A. Janvier expressed

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it. Of the house in Greenwich Village on land that is bounded by the present Charles, Perry, Bleecker, and Tenth Streets, Janvier wrote: "The house stood about three hundred yards back from the river, on ground which fell away in a gentle slope towards the waterside. The main entrance was from the east; and at the rear—on the level of the drawing room and a dozen feet or so above the sloping hillside—was a broad veranda commanding the view westward to the Jersey Highlands and southward down the bay to the Staten Island Hills." After Sir Peter Warren went away the Manse became the home of Abraham Van Nest, and stood there more than a century. Not until 1865 did it entirely disappear.

In 1745 Warren played a part in the Siege of Louisbourg that won him promotion to the rank of Rear Admiral of the Blue, and his knighthood. New York, for his share in the exploit, voted him some extra land. In August, 1747, he was in command of the "Devonshire" at the naval battle off Cape Finisterre, capturing the ship of the French Commodore, "La Joncquiere." Then came his recall to England, where, on account of his vast wealth and famous achievements, he was a conspicuous figure. One of his daughters, Charlotte, married Willoughby, Earl of Abingdon. Another, Ann, became the wife of Charles Fitzroy, Baron Southampton. The youngest, Susanna, after her mother, was wedded to Colonel Skinner. New York's affection and esteem for Sir Peter Warren extended to his daughters and through them to their husbands. The old name of Christopher Street was Skinner Road. There was a Fitzroy Road that ran northward from Fourteenth Street. Then, still existing, is Abingdon Square, and Abingdon Road, better known as "Love Lane," was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the present Twenty-first Street. It is to the past rather than the present that the student of the Avenue turns in contemplating the stretch between Fourteenth and Twenty-second Streets. Here and there an historical point may be indicated. On Sixteenth Street, a few yards to the west, is the New York Hospital, the oldest in the city. It received its charter from George the Third some years before the first gun was fired in the War of the Revolution. It was not regularly opened until 1791, but the building, then at Broadway and Duane Street, served as a place for anatomical experiments. In 1788, the story is, a medical student threatened a group of prying boys with a dissected human arm. Soldiers were needed to quell the resulting riot. The reddish brick hospital of today dates from 1877. A chapter in the story of the New York Hospital as an institution concerns the Bloomingdale Lunatic Asylum, for which the land was purchased in 1816, and the building completed in 1821.

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Respectively at 150 and 156 Fifth Avenue are the building of the New York Society of the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Building. The latter houses the Methodist Book Concern and a collection of relics belonging to the Historical Society. A few years ago the stretch was sometimes called the Paternoster Row of New York on account of the number of publishing houses that lined it. Also it was long the home of many of the churches that were erected in the middle of the last century, among them the South Dutch Reformed Church, built in 1850, at the southwest corner of Twenty-first Street, and the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church at Nineteenth Street. In Nineteenth Street, just east of the Avenue, was the former home of Horace Greeley, and in Twentieth Street (No. 28) Theodore Roosevelt was born.

“Worth noting,” says “Fifth Avenue,” the publication issued by the Fifth Avenue Bank, “are the names of prominent New Yorkers who, during the fifties, lived on Fifth Avenue between Washington Square and Twenty-first Street. Among them were Lispenard Stewart, Thomas Eggleston, Silas Wood, Henry C. De Rham, Thomas F. Woodruff, Francis Cottinet, David S. Kennedy, James Donaldson, Dr. J. Kearney Rodgers, C.N. Talbot, N.H. Wolfe, James McBride, Charles M. Parker, L.M. Hoffman, August Belmont, Benjamin Aymer, Henry C. Winthrop, Eugene Schiff, Captain Lorillard Spencer, Moses Taylor, John C. Coster, Henry A. Coster, Sidney Mason, Marshall O. Roberts, Robert L. Cutting, Gordon W. Burnham, Robert C. Townsend, George Opdyke, Robert L. Stuart, whose magnificent art collection was given to the Lenox Library, and James Lenox, the founder of the Lenox Library. The fortunes of these gentlemen as recorded in ‘Wealth and Biography of the Wealthy Citizens of New York,’ averaged between one hundred and three hundred thousand dollars. One of the richest men in New York at that time was James Lenox, who had inherited the then huge fortune of three million dollars; another large fortune was that of James McBride, estimated at seven hundred thousand dollars.”

Then there were the clubs, the Union at the northwest corner of Twenty-first Street, the Lotos Club, just across the Avenue, the Athenaeum, at the southwest corner of Sixteenth Street, the Travellers; in the building that had formerly been the residence of Gordon W. Burnham, at the southwest corner of Eighteenth Street, the Arcadian, at No. 146, between Nineteenth and Twentieth Streets, the Manhattan, occupying the Charles C. Parker house at the southwest corner of Fifteenth Street, the New York, which, occupying another corner at the same street, until 1874, then moved a few blocks northward to a house on the Avenue facing Madison Square. How the window loungers of that clubland stretch of the seventies and eighties would have stared and rubbed their eyes had it been given to them to see the procession that throngs the sidewalks today!

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The stretch of glories departed is quickly passed. The nine blocks are really eight, for it is at Twenty-second Street that the Flatiron begins, and the drab hives behind are forgotten as the vision of the Square strikes the eye. The Parisian, sipping an *aperitif* at the corner table of the Cafe de la Paix, believes himself to be occupying the exact centre of the universe. The Manhattanite knows him to be wrong by a matter of three thousand and some odd miles. Be he plutocrat or panhandler he knows that it is some spot from which he can look up and see the lithe figure of Diana, and the illuminated clock in the tower of the Metropolitan Building.

Although not formally opened as Madison Square until 1847, the story of the land goes back almost two hundred and fifty years. It was in 1670 that Sir Edward Andros, Governor of the Province, granted to Solomon Peters, a free negro, thirty acres of land between what is now Twenty-first and Twenty-sixth Streets, extending east and west from the present Broadway (Bloomingdale Road) to Seventh Avenue. Forty-six years later the negro's descendants sold the tract to John Horn and Cornelius Webber, and a hundred years after it became vested in John Horn the second. In the middle of the present roadway west of the Flatiron Building the Horn farmhouse, occupied by John the Second's daughter and son-in-law, Christopher Mildenberger, stood when the Avenue was cut through to Twenty-third Street in 1837. It was allowed to remain there two years more, when it was removed to the famous site at the northwest corner of Twenty-third Street and became the Madison Cottage. The old chroniclers tell of the joyous spirit and flavour of that roadhouse, a favourite *rendezvous* of horsemen in the forties, and of the genial management of its proprietor, Corporal Thompson. In the Collection of Amos F. Eno there is a photograph of the business card of the Cottage, with the announcement that the stages "leave every 4 minutes." A picture shows the stages before the building with its slanting roof and its three dormer windows facing the Avenue and Park. Several miles beyond the city proper, it was a post tavern in the coaching days, and the huge pair of antlers announced the "Sign of the Buck-horn."

It had its brief and glorious day and then passed. Early in 1853 it was torn down to make room for a circus, known as Franconi's Hippodrome, built by a syndicate of American showmen, among whom were Avery Smith, Richard Sands, and Seth B. Howe. The lithograph in the Collection of J. Clarence Davies shows a combination of tent roof and permanent wall. There was a turretted sexagonal entrance at the corner facing the Avenue and Twenty-third Street, and another at the northern end of the building. Seven hundred feet in circumference was the Hippodrome, of brick sides, two stories high, with an oval ring in the centre two hundred feet wide by three hundred feet long, seating six thousand people, and having standing room

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for about half as many more. It was a bold venture, perhaps too bold for its time. When the novelty had worn off the profits began to dwindle and then ceased entirely. Amos F. Eno, a New Englander who had prospered exceedingly in New York, bought the property and planned to erect a hotel that was to surpass anything that the city had already known. Sceptics ridiculed the idea, predicting that a situation so far uptown meant certain disaster. But the Hippodrome building was torn down, the new structure begun, and in September, 1859, the Fifth Avenue Hotel opened its doors under the direction of Colonel Paron Stevens. It was of white marble, six stories in height. Among the innovations and conveniences that made it the wonder of its day was the first passenger elevator ever installed. New York then knew the device as “the vertical railway.”

[Illustration: “THE TOWER OF THE METROPOLITAN BUILDING. WHATEVER ARTISTS MAY THINK OF IT THE TOWER IS, STRUCTURALLY, ONE OF THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD. EXACTLY HALFWAY BETWEEN SIDEWALK AND POINT OF SPIRE IS THE GREAT CLOCK WITH THE IMMENSE DIALS”]

But between the time when Solomon Peters received his grant and the day when the opening of the Fifth Avenue Hotel ushered in a new era, the land experienced many vicissitudes. In the last years of the eighteenth century it was a Parade Ground, at one time extending from Twenty-third to Thirty-fourth Streets, bounded on the east by the Eastern Post-road and on the west by the Bloomingdale Road. At the southern end a Potter’s Field was opened in 1794, and there were buried the victims of the frequent yellow-fever epidemics. But in 1797 a new Potter’s Field was opened in Washington Square. According to the plans of the Commissioners’ Map of 1811, there was to be no Fifth Avenue between Twenty-third Street and Thirty-fourth Street. The Avenue was to end temporarily at the former point, and resume its journey eleven blocks farther north. As early as 1785 a powder magazine stood within the present domains of the Square. A United States Arsenal, erected in 1808, was near the spot of the Farragut statue. In 1823 the Arsenal building became the house of refuge of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents, the first organization instituted in America to care for youthful offenders. In 1839 it was destroyed by fire. That was two years after the Parade Ground had been reduced to its present limits of 6.84 acres and renamed in honour of President Madison. In 1844 the Eastern Post-road was closed. Its course may still be traced by the double row of trees that runs northeast towards Madison Square Garden.

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In 1847 the Square was formally opened and soon after society began to migrate there. That was during the mayoralty of James Harper. From 1853 until the end of the Civil War it was the social centre of the city. "Among those who lived in this vicinity," says "Fifth Avenue," "were Leonard W. Jerome, and his elder brother, Addison G. Jerome, who, with William R. Travers, were social leaders and prominent Wall Street brokers; James Stokes, who, in 1851, built at No. 37 Madison Square, East, the first residence on Madison Square, and whose wife was a daughter of Anson G. Phelps; John David Wolfe, whose daughter, Catherine Lorillard Wolfe, gave her magnificent art collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Frank Work, William and John O'Brien, Henry M. Schieffelin, James L. Schieffelin, Samuel B. Schieffelin, Benjamin H. Field, Peter Ronalds, and William Lane."

Elsewhere is told of the glories of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, of the part it played as one of the Hosts of the Avenue, of its share in the great days, of its Amen Corner, and of the distinguished men like General W.T. Sherman, former Senator Platt, and the actor, William J. Florence, who for years made it their home. A quarter of a century ago the entrance to the hotel was the starting point, every Thanksgiving Day noon, for many gaily decorated coaches bound for the old Manhattan Field. In earlier days the destination had been Berkeley Oval at Williamsbridge, or the old Polo Grounds at One Hundred and Tenth Street and Fifth and Sixth Avenues. Draped down to the wheels with bunting of dark blue or of orange and black the tally-hos drew up before the portico and were soon topped with eager, ardent youth. As they were whirled away up the Avenue there broke out upon the autumn air the sharp "Brek-a Coex-Coex-Coex" of Yale, or the sky-rocket of Princeton. The return was marked by high elation or deep depression according as the Fates had decided on the chalk-lined turf. For the collection of sundry wagers the victors hurried into the near-by Hoffman House, where the presiding genius and stakeholder, Billy Edwards, divided attention with the paintings of fauns and nymphs that adorned the walls. That youth of yesteryear has come to grizzled hair. There are crow's feet about the eyes, and the world is one of vastly changed values, and the game at which the heart is throbbing is a more poignant one than that which involved touchdowns and goals from the field and desperate stands on the two-yard line. But it is the same old-time spirit, that then expressed itself in the call, "Hold them, Yale," or "Hold them for Old Nassau!" that, passed on to succeeding generations, is grimly awaiting the shock on the plains of Picardy.

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Of all the monuments that have graced Madison Square that which first comes to mind is one that has gone. Twenty years ago a splendid white arch spanned the Avenue, with one pier close to the sidewalk in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and the other touching the edge of the opposite Park. It was in direct line with Washington Arch seventeen blocks away. Under it, on September 30, 1898, passed the victor of Manila Bay, whose name it bore, bowing right and left to the city's riotous welcome. For months it remained there, and then disappeared. Why was the beautiful structure not made permanent? The Worth Monument, in the centre of the triangular piece of ground bounded by Fifth Avenue, Broadway, Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Streets, dates from 1857. By order of the Common Council the plot was set apart for the erection of the shaft in December, 1854. Major-General William J. Worth, of Mexican War fame, died at San Antonio, Texas, June 7, 1849. The monument was dedicated with a parade and a review November 25, 1857, and the General's remains interred under the south side. In bands around the obelisk are recorded the names of the battles in which Worth took part. On the east face, cut in the stone, may be read "*Ducit Amor Patriae*" and on the west face, "By the Corporation of the City of New York, 1857—Honor the Brave." At the moment of writing the building beyond the Worth Monument, at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-fifth Street, is in the process of demolition. At one time the New York Club was housed there, and there, for years, the sign of the Berlitz School for Languages stretched across the southern face of the structure.

"Were all the statues in New York made by St. Gaudens?" was the recent naive and ingenuous question of a visitor from the West who had just completed the first two days of his stay. "Most of the good ones were," was the laughing rejoinder of an artist. "At least that is the way it seems. And nearly all the pedestals for them were made by Stanford White." In query and response there is a certain amount of justice. It is Augustus St. Gaudens's benevolent presentment of Peter Cooper that stands within the little park enclosed by Cooper Square. The name of St. Gaudens is associated with those of John La Farge, White, MacMonnies, MacNeil, and Calder in the making of the Washington Arch. To St. Gaudens belongs the equestrian statue of William Tecumseh Sherman in the Plaza. And here, in Madison Square, the Farragut statue is his. Unveiled in 1881, executed in Paris when the sculptor was thirty years of age, and exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1880, the Farragut is, in the opinion of Miss Henderson, the base upon which St. Gaudens's great reputation rests. "And while," she writes, "in New York its merits are often balanced with those of the Sherman equestrian group, at the entrance to Central Park; the Peter Cooper, in Cooper Square; and the relief of Dr. Bellows, in the All-Souls' Church—all later works—it



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has never had to yield precedence to any, but holds its own by force of its splendid vigour and youthful plasticity. It has the essential characteristics of the portrait, but so combined with the attitude of the artist that the figure stands as much more than a portrait, having in it something more living, more typical, deeper than the mere outward mould of the man. St. Gaudens's Farragut has the bearing of a seaman, balanced on his two legs, in a posture easy, yet strong. He is rough and bluff with the courage and simplicity of a commander; his eye is accustomed to deal with horizons, while the features are clean-cut and masterful. The inscription is happy: 'That the memory of a daring and sagacious commander and gentle great-souled man, whose life from childhood was given to his country, but who served her supremely in the war for the Union, 1861-1865, may be preserved and honored, and that they who come after him and who will love him so much may see him as he was seen by friend and foe, his countrymen have set up this monument A.D. MDCCCLXXXI.'

There are other statues in the Square besides the noble one commemorating the deeds of the hero of "Full steam ahead, and damn the torpedoes!" At the southwest corner there is a bronze one of William H. Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, the work of Randolph Rogers. The effigy of Roscoe Conkling, by J.Q.A. Ward, is at the southeast corner. Cold and proud is the stone as the man was cold, and proud, and biting. What chance had haranguing abuse against his icy: "I have no time to bandy epithets with the gentleman from Georgia"? Then there is the drinking fountain by Emma Stebbins, given to the city by the late Catherine Lorillard Wolfe, and the Bissell statue of Chester A. Arthur.

No other structure in the city is so many different things to so many different people as the Madison Square Garden. To the old-time New Yorker, who likes to babble reminiscently of the past, the site recalls the railway terminus of the sixties, when the outgoing trains were drawn by horses through the tunnel as far north as the present Grand Central. To one artistically inclined the creamy tower, modelled on that of the Giralda in Seville, suggests the collaboration of St. Gaudens and White, and the surmounting Diana the early work of the former inspired by Houdon's Diana of the Louvre. To the more frivolous, the sportingly inclined, the seekers after gross pleasures, the Garden has meant the Arion Ball, or the French Students Ball, the Horse Show, Dog Show, Cat Show, Poultry Show, Automobile Show, Sportsman's Show, the Cake-Walk, the Six-Day Bicycle Race, or events of the prize-ring from the days of Sullivan and Mitchell to those of Willard and Moran; Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show, or the circus, the Greatest Show on Earth, with its houris of the trapeze and the saddle, and its animals, almost as fearful and wonderful as the menagerie of adjectives that its press-agent, the renowned, or notorious, Tody Hamilton, gathers annually out of the jungles of the dictionary. Also the interior of the vast structure echoes in memory with political oratory, now thunderous and now persuasive. Through the words directed immediately

at the thousands that fought their way within the walls Presidents and candidates for president have sent ringing utterance throughout the land.



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Opposite the Garden, at the southeast corner of Twenty-sixth Street, is the Manhattan Club, in a house that was formerly the home of the University Club, and adjoining it to the south, is the Appellate Court House, architecturally one of the city's most distinguished buildings. Designed by James Brown Lord, it was completed in 1900, at a cost of three-quarters of a million dollars. Among the men whose work is represented in this home of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court for the City and County of New York are Maitland Armstrong, Karl Bitter, Charles Henry Niehaus, Charles Albert Lopez, Thomas Shields Clarke, George Edwin Bissell, Philip Martiny, Robert Reid, Willard L. Metcalf, Henry Augustus Lukeman, John Donoghue, Henry Kirke Bush Brown, Edward Clark Potter, Henry Siddons Mowbray, Frederick W. Ruckstuhl, Herbert Adams, George Willoughby Maynard, Joseph Lauber, Maximilian M. Schwartzott, and Kenyon Cox.

The old home of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church was in the block between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Streets. Then, on the northeast corner of the latter street stood one of the last surviving residences recalling the days when the Square was the possession of Flora McFlimsey and her kind, the old brown-stone dwelling of Catherine Lorillard Wolfe. The Wolfe property, offered for sale, was purchased by an official of the Metropolitan Company, and an exchange was effected by which the church relinquished its old site and moved to the northern corner. The present church was designed by Stanford White, who met his death in 1906, the year before the formal dedication. With its grey brick exterior, showing repeatedly the Maltese Cross, its interior following the spirit of the Mosque of Santa Sophia in Constantinople, and its mural paintings and windows, many of them the work of Louis C. Tiffany, it is one of the most beautiful of all the city's edifices for religious worship. But to the casual eye it is quite lost on account of its proximity to its gigantic neighbour.

The traveller approaching Paris can see from miles away, the apex of the Eiffel Tower outlined against the sky. The eye of one nearing New York, whether his point of observation be the deck of an incoming steamer, or a car-chair in a train arriving from the West, is met first by the cluster of skyscrapers at the southern end of the island, and then by a shaft vastly more conspicuous by reason of its isolation, the tower of the Metropolitan Building. Whatever artists may think of it—and there is division of opinion—that tower is, structurally, one of the wonders of the world. Rising seven hundred feet above the sidewalk, topping the Singer Building by ninety feet and being outclimbed only by the Woolworth Building (seven hundred and ninety-two feet), the tower is seventy-five feet by eighty-five at its base, and carries the building to its fifty-second story. Exactly half-way between sidewalk and point of spire is the great clock with the immense dials of reinforced concrete faced with mosaic tile, each twenty-six and a half feet in diameter, with the hour hand thirteen and a half feet long, weighing seven hundred and fifty pounds, and the minute hand seventeen feet long and weighing one thousand pounds. At night the indicating flashes, the hours in white, the quarters in one, two, three, or four, red, may be seen at a distance of twenty miles.



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But nearer at hand, as the hours creep one by one towards the dawn, are the derelicts of the Square, dozing fitfully on the park benches. In waking moments their dull eyes watch the illuminated face, and the hands pushing forward to another day. The spectacle moved one of them, Prince Michael, heir to the throne of the Electorate of Valleduna, in O. Henry's "The Caliph, Cupid, and the Clock," to pessimistic utterance. "Clocks," he said, "are shackles on the feet of mankind. I have observed you looking persistently at that clock. Its face is that of a tyrant, its numbers are false as those on a lottery ticket; its hands are those of a bunco-steerer, who makes an appointment with you to your ruin. Let me entreat you to throw off its humiliating bonds and to cease to order your affairs by that insensate monitor of brass and steel."

Sang Sara Teasdale:

"We walked together in the dusk
To watch the tower grow dimly white,
And saw it lift against the sky,
Its flower of amber light."

CHAPTER VI

Some Great Days on the Avenue

Some Great Days on the Avenue—Pictures and Pageants—When a Prince Came Visiting—A Regiment Departs—Honour to the Captains—Funeral Processions—Receptions—Dinners—The Orient and the Avenue—When Admiral Dewey Came Home—Greeting a Marshal of France—The Roar of the City and the Guns of the Marne.

In the stirring times in which we are living, it seems as if every day is a great day on the Avenue. Take a single example: The morning broke dark and threatening. Heavy clouds presaged showers. But after an hour or two they passed from the heavens, and warmth and golden sunshine came. In the course of various activities the writer made his way to points between the Battery and Fifty-ninth Street, and the means of travel employed included three journeys on top of Fifth Avenue buses. If one of the early settlers could only have seen the proud and amazing thoroughfare!

The air vibrant with excitement. Flags everywhere. Tens of thousands of the Stars and Stripes. Thousands of Union Jacks and Tricolours of France. Hundreds of pavilions of Italy and Belgium. Every few yards gaily decorated booths from which smiling women or lusty-lunged men harangued the passers-by to "come across or the Kaiser will."

On a platform erected on the steps in front of the Public Library a slight figure in kilts addressing a swaying, surging crowd. As the bus, held up for a minute by the cross-town traffic, stopped, we could hear the pleasing burr of Harry Lauder. Two hours later;



a mile and a half farther downtown. The sound of a band in the distance. The horses of the mounted policemen forcing back the curious thousands to the curb. A regiment of regulars, two regiments of militia, and then, swinging along lightly in loose step, a handful of men in soiled blue, Chasseurs a pied of France, who, at Verdun, in the Vosges Mountains, and on the Picardy front, had lived splendidly up to the traditions of the men with the hairy knapsacks and the hearts of steel whose tramp had shaken the continent of Europe one hundred years before.



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It was just a day similar to other days that had gone before and to days that were to follow. To feel the thrill of what were held to have been the great days of the past we must put ourselves in the mood of old New York, or at the very least think of the world as it was wagging along a brief four years ago.

“The national banquet-hall where heroes and statesmen have been feted, or the parade-ground toward which a nation has turned to witness great demonstrations in celebration of national events of a civic or military or mournful nature. Along it have gone to the music of dirges and the sound of mournful drums the funeral corteges of many of the country’s leading statesmen and greatest men, and here, too, have occurred riots and disastrous fires which have startled the city and shocked the nation.” So runs the introduction to a little pamphlet issued some years ago by the Fifth Avenue Bank. One of the earliest and most notable visits, the brochure goes on to tell us, was that of the then Prince of Wales, later Edward VII., in the autumn of 1860. He was then nineteen years old. The city turned out to greet him. On Thursday, October 11th, the revenue cutter, “Harriet Lane,” brought the Prince to New York from South Amboy. Then, a day of blaring bands, of blended flags, of great transparencies, that eventually led to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. He was still very young, still very much of a boy, very much bored with all the tumult and ceremony. Once out of sight of the crowd he threw dignity to the winds and played leap-frog in the corridor with his retinue. But once again, from his bed, to which he had gone with a bad headache, he was called at midnight to acknowledge the salutes of the Caledonia Club. That organization, made up mostly of members of the Scotch Regiment commanded by Colonel McLeay, headed by Dodsworth’s Band, marched up Broadway to the hotel. In the Prince’s honour a serenade was given, the band blared out with “God Save the Queen!”, “Hail Columbia!” and other national airs, and once more the sleepy and sorely tried royal visitor was obliged to appear to bow his thanks.

The next day, Friday, was given over to visiting such public buildings as the Astor Library, Cooper Union, the Free Academy, and in riding through Central Park.

A ball, famous in city annals, was given at the Academy of Music. Among those who attended that ball and left a record of it was the late Ward McAllister. “Our best people, the smart set, the slow set, all sets, took a hand in it, and the endeavor was to make it so brilliant and beautiful that it would always be remembered by those present as one of the events of their lives.”

The ball was opened by a quadrille d’honneur. Governor and Mrs. Morgan, the historian Bancroft and Mrs. Bancroft, Colonel and Mrs. Abraham Van Buren, with others were to dance in it. The rush was so great that the floor gave way, and in tumbled the whole centre of the stage. Carpenters set feverishly to work to floor over the chasm.



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"I well remember," said McAllister, "the enormous form of old Isaac Brown, sexton of Grace Church, rushing around and encouraging the workmen."

In the course of the evening the Prince danced with Miss Fish, Miss Mason, Miss Fannie Butler, and others, and was conceded to have danced well. The supper was served at a horseshoe table. At one end of the room was a raised dais, where the royal party supped. At each stage door a prominent citizen stood guard; the moment the supper room was full, no one else was admitted. "I remember," confesses Mr. McAllister, "on my attempting to get in through one of these doors, stealthily, the vigilant eye of John Jacob Astor met mine. He bid me wait my turn."

Despite the assiduity with which McAllister danced after the figure of the Prince, he was not among those presented. That honour he sought the next day, on the trip to West Point:

"As General Scott was presenting Colonel Delafield's guests to the Prince I approached the General, asking him to present me to his Royal Highness. A giant, as he was in height, he bent down his head to me, and asked sharply, 'What name, sir?' I gave him my name, but at the sound of 'Mc,' not thinking it distinguished enough, he quietly said, 'Pass on, sir,' and I subsequently was presented by the Duke of Newcastle."

Forty-three years after that clamorous greeting of New York to the young Prince of Wales the present writer was to witness in Paris the visit of Edward VII. for the purpose of cementing the Entente Cordiale. The tired face told the story of the hardest-worked public servant in the world. In 1860, on Fifth Avenue, he had already begun to pay the price of the royal privilege of his exalted birth to bear the arduous burden of royal responsibility.

There are extant many old wood-cuts showing the Prince at the Academy of Music ball. But the following morning, that brought repose to so many, brought none to him. There were visits to be paid to Brady's photographic studios at the corner of Tenth Street and Broadway, to Barnum's Museum, to General Scott at his Twelfth Street residence, and the Broadway store of Ball, Black & Company.

That night a great torchlight parade in honour of the Prince was given by the New York firemen. The Prince, with his suite and a number of city officials, stood on the hotel balcony, while five thousand men in uniform, with apparatus and many bands, marched by. Fireworks were set off, the brilliant beams of the calcium light—then a novelty—were thrown upon the standing, boyish figure of the Prince, thousands of flaring torches danced and waved against the darkness of the opposite square.

The next day, Sunday, October 14th, brought some rest. In the morning there were services at Trinity, where Dr. Vinton preached; then a quiet afternoon at the hotel. With Monday came the Prince's departure. At half-past nine he left the Fifth Avenue Hotel,

and in company with the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of St. Albans, and Mayor Wood, was driven down to the harbour where the “Harriet Lane” was waiting to take him to West Point and Albany.

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The next reception that the chronicler of Fifth Avenue events has seen fit to record was that given to General Grant after the close of the Civil War. At the Fifth Avenue Hotel a number of the city's leading business men met and planned the public greeting, and one hundred and fifty men subscribed one hundred dollars apiece. The reception to the returning soldier, which took place at the Fifth Avenue Hotel November 20, 1865, was hardly one of which the city or the street had reason to be proud.

Loose management led to disorder and dissatisfaction. Twenty-five hundred jostling, pushing persons crowded the halls, corridors, and reception rooms. The General stood in one of the hotel parlours surrounded by the committee, with Mrs. Grant and other ladies to his right, and on his left Generals Wool, Cook, and Hooker, John Van Buren, Ethan Allen, and others.

Little judgment seems to have been used in issuing the invitations. The throng was indiscriminate. Farce comedy was in the air. Religious fanatics, passing before the hero, offered up prayers for the salvation of his soul. Precocious children were thrust forward to his attention. Preposterous questions were propounded by preposterous people. To add to the confusion the names of those persons who fought their way through the throng to be presented to the General were announced to him by a little man who got most of them wrong.

In a postscript to his "American Notes," written many years later, Charles Dickens told of the vast changes he found on the occasion of his second visit to the United States—"changes moral, changes physical, changes in the amount of land subdued and peopled, changes in the rise of vast new cities, changes in the growth of older cities almost out of recognition, changes in the graces and amenities of life." Making all allowances for that greater charity, tolerance, and kindness of judgment which comes with the riper years—nobody ever could have remained as Britishly bumptious, or as bumptiously British as Dickens was in his younger days when he first came to pay us a visit—taking also into consideration the fact that a certain explanatory softening of earlier criticisms was politic, that the novelist found a city far more to his taste in 1868 than he had found in 1842 is not for a moment to be questioned. Also, at the time he came to New York from Boston, he was naturally in a rather placid and contented mood. For in letters home, even while complaining of the trying changes of the wintry climate, he had told how he was making a clear profit of thirteen hundred English pounds a week, even allowing seven dollars to the pound. When he returned to New York in April, after an extended tour throughout the country, he had still better cause to be pleased with the young Republic. Says Forster in his "Life":

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“In New York, where there were five farewell nights, \$3,298 were the receipts of the last, on the 20th. of April; those of the last at Boston, on the eighth, having been \$3,456. But, on earlier nights in the same cities respectively, these sums also had been reached; and indeed, making allowance for an exceptional night here and there, the receipts varied so wonderfully little, that a mention of the highest average returns from other places will give no exaggerated impression of the ordinary receipts throughout. Excluding fractions of dollars, the lowest were New Bedford (\$1,640), Rochester (\$1,906), Springfield (\$1,970), and Providence (\$2,140). Albany and Worcester averaged something less than \$2,400; while Hartford, Buffalo, Baltimore, Syracuse, New Haven, and Portland rose to \$2,600. Washington’s last night was \$2,610, no night there having less than \$2,500. Philadelphia exceeded Washington by \$300, and Brooklyn went ahead of Philadelphia by \$200. The amount taken at the four Brooklyn readings was \$11,128.”

And only a few years ago there were Americans deploring loudly the shabby financial treatment we gave Dickens, and figuratively and literally passing round the hat!

Fifth Avenue’s greeting to Charles Dickens, on the occasion of his second visit, was in the form of the dinner that was tendered to him at Delmonico’s, on the evening of April 18, 1868. The hosts were two hundred men of the New York press. Covers were laid for a hundred and eighty-seven guests.

Five o’clock was the time appointed—we were a rugged, early-dining race in those days—but the guest had a slight stroke of illness and did not appear until after six. Then it was a limping old man, aged just sixty-six, who, by the aid of a cane, climbed laboriously up the great staircase. He was led to his seat at the table by Horace Greeley, and seated between Mr. Greeley and Henry J. Raymond. The editor of the “Tribune,” acting as master of ceremonies, began the speech-making by referring to his first discovery, many years before, of a story by the then unknown “Boz.”

In concluding his reply to the toast, Mr. Dickens promised: “manfully, promptly, and plainly in my own person, to bear for the behalf of my own countrymen such testimony of the gigantic changes in this country as I have hinted at here tonight. Also to record that wherever I have been, in the smallest place equally with the largest, I have been received with unsurpassed politeness, delicacy, sweet-temper, and consideration.... This testimony, so long as I live, and so long as my descendants have any legal right in my books, I shall cause to be republished, as an appendix to every copy of those two books of mine in which I have referred to America. And this I will do and cause to be done, not in mere love and thankfulness, but because I regard it as an act of plain justice and honour.”

The amende honorable was not less welcome for being long due and the distinguished visitor sat down to loud applause and the strains of “God Save the Queen.” Mr. Raymond responded to the toast “The New York Press,” and was followed by George

William Curtis, William Henry Hurlbert, Charles Eliot Norton, Joseph R. Hawley, Murat Halstead, Edwin de Leon, and E.L. Youmans.

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Three and a half years after the dinner to Dickens Fifth Avenue greeted in a similar way a distinguished Russian guest. That was the Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovitch, who was entertained by the New York Yacht Club at Delmonico's December 2, 1871. James Gordon Bennett, the younger, was then Commodore of the club, and received the Grand Duke in the restaurant's parlours at seven o'clock. The guests included the Grand Duke and his suite, the Russian Minister, General Gorloff, Admiral Poisset, Admiral Rowan, members of the Russian legation, Russian officers, and members of the yacht club. Against the walls of the banquet hall the Stars and Stripes blended with the blue St. Andrew's Cross. The guests were in naval uniform. The "Queen's Cup," which had been won by the "America" in 1851, had the place of honour among the club trophies. To the toast to the Czar, General Gorloff responded. The club Commodore answered to that to President Grant. After the Grand Duke had been informed that he had been elected to honorary membership, he responded with a brief sailor-like speech.

On December 22, 1877, President Hayes was the guest of honour of the New England Society at Delmonico's. Among those there besides the President were Secretary of State William M. Evarts, Presidents Eliot of Harvard and Porter of Yale, General Horace Porter, ex-Governor Morgan, and Governor Horace Fairbanks of Vermont. Mr. Evarts answered the toast "The Day We Celebrate." The presidents of Yale and Harvard, speaking in behalf of their institutions, indulged in good-natured contrasts and comparisons. In the old days, according to President Porter, when they found a man in Boston a little too bad to live with, they sent him to Rhode Island, and when they found him a little too good to live with, they sent him to Connecticut, where, among other things, he founded Yale College; while people of average respectability and goodness were allowed to remain in Massachusetts Bay, where, looking into each others' faces constantly, they contracted a habit of always praising each other with special emphasis—a habit which they have not altogether outgrown.

[Illustration: IN THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT THE AVENUE GLITTERS WITH THE PAVILLIONS OF PATRIOTISM. OLD GLORY MAY BE COUNTED BY THE TENS OF THOUSANDS; ENGLAND'S UNION JACK, AND THE TRICOLOR OF FRANCE BY THE THOUSANDS. TO FORESTALL THE KAISER THE AVENUE IS "COMING ACROSS"]

The Union League gave a reception to General Grant on October 23, 1880, in the theatre of the club-house. Among those present were Joseph H. Choate, General Chester A. Arthur, Chauncey M. Depew, General Adam Badeau, Colonel Fred Grant, Peter Cooper, Henry Ward Beecher, General Horace Porter, and Rev. Dr. Newman. Another reception to General Grant was given at the Hotel Brunswick May 5, 1883, by the Saturday Night Club. Certain remarks by the former President and by Roscoe Conkling on the subject of Mexico were considered of much significance at the time. Both spoke strongly in favour of the formation of a Mexican-American alliance. Mr. Conkling suggested General Grant as the logical leader of a great movement to aid the sister republic in developing its resources.



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Nearly two thousand guests were present at the reception given by the Union League Club to President Arthur on January 23, 1884. With the Chief Executive, who arrived about nine o'clock, were Secretaries Teller and Folger, of his Cabinet. After shaking hands with the reception committee the President was escorted upstairs by William M. Evarts. About the President were the Cabinet officers, Mr. and Mrs. Evarts, Jesse Seligman, and Salem H. Wales, and Attorney General and Mrs. Brewster. In the distinguished gathering were Mayor Edson, Dr. Lyman Abbott, General and Mrs. George B. McClellan, Whitelaw Reid, Henry Ward Beecher, Parke Godwin, Elihu Root, Cyrus W. Field, Mr. and Mrs. John Bigelow, and Lionel Sackville-West, the British Minister.

At the supper, which was served at midnight, one of the features was the striking pieces of confectionery. In gleaming white sugar was a model of the Capitol, and a tall monument supported statuettes of the President and his Cabinet. Also there was a twenty-four-foot model of the Brooklyn Bridge with the President and troops crossing it.

At the banquet to Lieutenant Greely of Arctic fame, at the Lotos Club, on January 16, 1886, Vice-President General Horace Porter was in the chair, in the absence of President Whitelaw Reid. Besides Lieutenant Greely, Chief Engineer Melville, and Commander Schley, who headed the expedition to relieve Greely, were guests of the club, and among others at the table were Chief Justice Daly, Colonel C. McK. Leoser, Robert Kirby, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, Dr. Pardee, Frank Robinson, Herman Oelrichs, C.H. Webb, Colonel Thomas W. Knox, George Masset, J. O'Sullivan, Douglas Taylor, James Bates, and Chandos Fulton. In his speech the guest of the evening told the story of his expedition to the Far North and explained the reason for every action. Arctic exploration, he declared, could not be futile when eleven nations were offering the lives of their men in the cause of science. He told the story of the splendid spirit of his own men during the dreary months at Cape Sabine and lauded American courage and achievement in all the corners of the earth. There were speeches by Judge Daly and Commander Schley, and then two fun-makers were introduced in the persons of Thorne and Billington, *Poo-bah* and *Ko-Ko*, from the Gilbert and Sullivan opera, "The Mikado," that was then playing in New York.

Late in November of the same year the Lotos Club honoured another explorer, Henry M. Stanley, who had just returned to New York after many years' absence, completing Livingstone's work in Central Africa. Stanley sat between Mr. Reid, the Club's president, and Chauncey M. Depew. Others at the guest's table were Lieutenant Greely, General Porter, General Winslow, Colonel Knox, Major Pond, General Townsend, Lieutenant Hickey, Commissioner Andrews, G.F. Rowe, Bruce Crane, Henry Gillig, and Daniel E. Bandmann. The speakers, besides Mr. Stanley, were Lieutenant Greely, Mr. Depew, and Horace Porter.

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At Delmonico's, December 20, 1889, a dinner was given by the Spanish-American Commercial Union to the visiting delegates to the Pan-American Congress. William M. Ivins, as the principal speaker, touched upon South American relations and international arbitration as a prevention of war. Among those present were Mayor Hugh J. Grant, Elihu Root, Andrew Carnegie, Chauncey M. Depew, and Horace White. On the walls were portraits of Washington and General Bolivar, and intertwined with the Stars and Stripes, the vividly coloured banners of the South American nations. At the right of the chairman, William H.T. Hughes, sat Senor F.C.C. Zegarra of Peru, and at the left Mayor Grant. The address of welcome was delivered first in English and then in Spanish by Mr. Hughes, who possessed a perfect command of both languages. Senor Zegarra responded. The toast "Our Next Neighbour" was answered by Senor Matias Romero of Mexico. Other toasts and speakers were: "International American Commerce," William M. Ivins; "International Justice," Elihu Root; "Our Homes," Rev. Dr. John R. Paxton; "America—All Republican," John B. Henderson, and random addresses from the gallery by Mr. Depew and Judge Jose Alfonso of Chile.

The next Fifth Avenue reception of importance was that given by the Union League Club to General W.T. Sherman on April 17, 1890. It was a belated celebration of the old soldier's seventieth birthday which had taken place on February 8. In the centre of the decorations of the usual patriotic colours and design was the Daniel Huntington portrait of the General in uniform. Regulars of the 5th U.S. Artillery lined the stairway leading from the lobby to the reception hall. The General, reaching the club-house at eight-thirty, was met by James Otis, J. Seaver Page, and General S. Van Vliet, and, between the lines of soldiers at present arms, conducted to a place beneath his own portrait. There, surrounded by President Depew of the Club, Secretary of the Interior John W. Noble, and General Van Vliet, he greeted the six or seven hundred invited guests. The gathering included representatives of the army, the navy, the bench, the clergy, as well as business, professional, and political life. The Vice-President of the United States, Levi P. Morton, was there, and Secretary Noble, Senators W.M. Evarts and Nelson W. Aldrich, Generals Schofield, Howard, Porter, and Breckenridge, and foreign diplomats from Russia, Chile, Brazil, and Peru. Of the march to the sea Chauncey M. Depew said: "It was a feat which captured the imagination of the country and of the world, because it was both the poetry of war and the supreme fact of the triumph over the rebellion."



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Another great day on the Avenue was August 28, 1896, which witnessed the arrival of the famous Chinese statesman, Li Hung Chang. He came as a special envoy of the Chinese Emperor and stayed at the Waldorf, then a comparatively new hotel. President Cleveland sent General Thomas H. Ruger to welcome the visitor. In his cabin on the "St. Louis" in the Bay Li Hung Chang received the welcoming delegation. The author of "Fifth Avenue Events" thus describes the great Chinaman on that occasion: "His appearance was most striking. Over six feet tall, with a slight stoop, he wore the bright yellow jacket denoting his high rank, a viceroy's cap with a four-eyed peacock feather attached to it by amber fastenings, and a beautifully coloured skirt of rich material. His finger-nails were polished till they shone, a huge diamond flashed on his right hand, and he peered out benignantly over the tops of a pair of gold-bowed spectacles. Dignified in bearing, he looked every inch the statesman and scholar. His gracious manner won him friends during his stay in New York, and his indefatigable propensity for asking questions—some of them rather embarrassing to those questioned, as when he politely inquired the ages of the ladies whom he met and the salaries of the officials who entertained him—aroused much merriment."

In the way of a distinguished visitor Li Hung Chang was a novelty. New York gave him a rousing reception. The Avenue was lined by cheering throngs as the Ambassador and his suite were driven to the hotel. The carriages were flanked by U.S. Cavalry. Over the gaily decorated Waldorf the golden imperial banner of the Celestial Kingdom with the great blue Dragon snapping at a crimson ball fluttered in the breeze. But Li Hung Chang did not pay the hostelry the compliment of relying on its cuisine, preferring the services of his own Chinese cooks. The day after his arrival the Ambassador was received by President Cleveland at the home of ex-Secretary of the Navy William C. Whitney, Fifth Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street. Surrounding the President were the Secretaries of State, War, the Treasury, the Attorney-General, and other officials. The visiting statesman was presented to Mr. Cleveland by Richard Olney, Secretary of State, and to the Chief Executive turned over his credentials from the Chinese Emperor.

The banquet that evening, given by former American diplomats to the Celestial Empire, began at six o'clock, as Li wished to set for the Western world the example of early retiring. In his attentions to the splendid repast before him he was most abstemious, but he finished by smoking a cigar. John E. Ward, a former Minister to China, began the speech-making by a toast to the Emperor, the President of the United States, and Li Hung Chang. George F. Seward, another former Minister to China, lauded the Ambassador's long and distinguished services to his country and to the world at large. After a brief response through his interpreter, Li left the banquet hall at eight-thirty, and went to his night's rest. His hosts, however, were not to be balked of their evening's entertainment, and the oratorical feast was continued till midnight.



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About General Grant's tomb, when Li visited it, a crowd of more than twenty thousand persons was gathered. From his carriage Li stepped into his chair of state, and was borne to the tomb by four policemen. At the stairway he left the chair and made his way slowly and laboriously on foot into the vault. To those about him Li said that this visit to the hero's tomb was one of the chief things he had in mind in planning his journey to America, and that he had thought of it continually during the trip. General Horace Porter recalled that Li's contribution of five hundred dollars, one of the first received, was something that had never been forgotten by the American people. Other events of the Prime Minister's stay in New York were his reception of a delegation of American missionary societies, his visits to Chinatown, and to Brooklyn, and the dinner given to him at Delmonico's the evening of September 2nd.

Earlier events of the Avenue fade into comparative unimportance when we come to September 30, 1899. For Admiral George Dewey had come home, and Fifth Avenue had the chance to acclaim the victor of Manila Bay. Down the broad street, from Fifty-ninth Street, under the Arch at Madison Square, and on to Washington Square, the procession in the hero's honour passed. This was the order of march:

Major-General Roe and Staff.

Sousa's Band.

Sailors of the Admiral's Flagship, the "Olympia."

Admiral Dewey, seated beside Mayor Van Wyck of New York in a carriage, at the head of a line of carriages containing Governor Roosevelt, Rear Admirals Schley and Sampson, General Miles, and others.

West Point Cadets.

United States Regulars.

New York National Guard and Naval Militia.

National Guard of other States.

Union and Confederate Veterans.

Veterans of the Spanish War.

When the head of the procession reached Thirty-fourth Street, the sailors from the Admiral's flagship halted and drew up along the side of the Avenue. The Admiral left his carriage and entered the reviewing stand at Madison Square. Admiral Sampson was on his right. Admiral Schley on his left. Surrounding them were officers of both branches of the service. For four hours Admiral Dewey stood there, acknowledging the salutes and saluting the flag. The following day, October 1st, saw the great naval parade through the waters of the Hudson River.

A decade passed, and then came the Hudson-Fulton celebration of September 25—October 9, 1909. Of chief importance to the Avenue was the civic procession of September 28th, when the floats, depicting a great number of historical events, moved



down the Avenue to Washington Square. On the east side of the thoroughfare, from Fortieth to Forty-second Street, opposite the Public Library, there had been erected a Court of Honour. Against the stately pillars of the Court, the procession moved swiftly by. Every nation that went into the "melting pot" was represented, with the harped green flag of Ireland at the head of the long column. Following the Ancient Order of Hibernians and other Irish societies came the Italian organizations, then Poles, English, Dutch, French, Scotch, Bohemian, Hungarian, and Syrian.

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It was the nation's history of four hundred years that passed in effigy on the floats. Pocahontas again interceded with her father Powhatan for the life of Captain John Smith. Balboa caught sight of the waters of the Pacific. The tea was dumped into Boston Harbour. The Minute Men stood fast on the Common. Mad Anthony Wayne stormed Stony Point. Molly Stark's husband said, "There are the red-coats. We must beat them today, or Molly Stark's a widow!" Cornwallis surrendered his sword at Yorktown. Somebody in the Mexican War said, "Give them a little more grape, General Bragg!" and Dewey said: "You may fire when you're ready, Gridley!"

In some of these events of the later years the writer had a personal share. From a seventh-story window at Twenty-first Street he looked down on the procession in honour of Admiral Dewey. From a vantage point at Thirty-fifth Street he witnessed the passing of floats in the Hudson-Fulton celebration. But there was one day on the Avenue, perhaps the greatest and most inspiring of them all, in which he did not share. That was the day that saw the visit of the Allied Commissions, the day of the coming of a Marshal of France. About the time that the guns on the warships and land batteries at Hampton Roads were thundering out their message of welcome to the distinguished guests, the writer in company with six other Americans who had been with the Commission for Relief in Belgium was entering French territory, after a never-to-be-forgotten journey through Germany. How such of us who claimed New York as our own thrilled as we pictured three thousand miles away the city's greeting to the grave, silent man whose cool genius had hurled back the Teuton hordes at the very gates of Paris! How we built up on the limited descriptions that had been cabled across the Atlantic! We saw the sweep of the procession up the Avenue, the thousands upon thousands of flags, the densely packed throngs lining the sidewalks, the eager faces in the windows of the tall buildings, and in the motor-car, for which all eyes were searching, the smiling, saluting Marshal.

"About now," said one of us, "he should be passing Madison Square."

"I can see the people on the sidewalks and crowding the windows and the housetops," said another.

"And I," said a third, "can hear the roar that goes up from the Avenue when the people catch sight of him."

"When he hears that roar," said a fourth, "he will recall the guns of the Marne as gentle zephyrs."

To that last statement and sentiment we all proudly agreed. For despite the three thousand miles of intervening ocean it was our New York and our Fifth Avenue.



CHAPTER VII

Some Avenue Clubs in the Early Days



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Some Avenue Clubs in the Early Days—The Invention of the Club—Cato or Dr. Johnson?—The Judgment of Thackeray—The Union—The Prolific Diedrich Knickerbocker—Omens of 1836—The Century—Its Descent from the Sketch and the Column—Old-Time Austerity—Leaders of the Talk—The Lotos—The Union League—The Manhattan—The First of the College Clubs—The Columbia Yacht—The New York Athletic—Rise and Fall of the Traveller's—The Arcadian.

“Presuming that my dear Bobby would scarcely consider himself to be an accomplished man about town until he had obtained an entrance into a respectable club, I am happy to inform you that you are this day elected a member of the ‘Polyanthus,’ having been proposed by my friend, Lord Viscount Colchicum, and seconded by your affectionate uncle. I have settled with Mr. Stiff, the worthy secretary, the preliminary pecuniary arrangements regarding the entrance fee and the first annual subscription—the ensuing payments I shall leave to my worthy nephew. You were elected, sir, with but two black-balls; and every other man who was put up for ballot had four, with the exception of Tom Harico, who had more black balls than white. Do not, however, be puffed up by this victory, and fancy yourself more popular than other men. Indeed, I don’t mind telling you (but of course I do not wish it to go any farther) that Captain Slyboots and I, having suspicions of the meeting, popped a couple of adverse balls into the other candidates’ boxes; so that, at least, you should, in case of mishap, not be unaccompanied in ill-fortune.”—Thackeray’s “Mr. Brown the Elder takes Mr. Brown the Younger to a Club.”

Very likely there are a few thousand New Yorkers, who like the present writer, not having considered the subject very deeply, have held to the vague idea that the club was an invention of a certain Dr. Samuel Johnson. Also that it came about in some such way as this. The Doctor had grown weary of bullying the patient Boswell, and browbeating the acquaintance met by chance in Fleet Street or the Strand did not entirely satisfy him. So one day, storming out of the Cheshire Cheese, after roundly abusing the larkpie of which he had consumed an enormous quantity, he founded the first club, with the object of gathering together a number of his fellow-mortals in one place, and upon them pouring out the vials of his pompous and splenetic wrath.

One day, however, the “De Senectute” that had been long forgotten was recalled by a passage in Mr. James W. Alexander’s “History of the University Club of New York.” There it was pointed out, that as far back as 200 B.C., Cicero represented Cato as saying: “To begin with, I have always remained a member of a ‘Club.’ Clubs, as you know, were established in my *quaestorship* on the reception of the Magna Mater from Ida. So I used to dine at their feast with members of my club—on the whole with moderation.” But, except as a point of historical interest, whether stern Cato or voluble Johnson was the inventor does not matter greatly to the New York club member who is airing his weekly grievance by drawing up a petition, or writing a scorching letter a day to the House Committee.



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If you will listen to the Manhattanite of the older generation, you are likely to derive the impression that club life in New York is a matter of the last half-century at most. He is rather inclined to flee at any pretension to American club life of earlier date. In one sense he is right. The club as we know it now is essentially a British institution modelled on British lines. More and more is the British idea being carried to the extreme, until we are associating club life with the vast club-house of spacious lounges and marble swimming pools, and a cuisine rivalling that of one of the great new hotels. The Fifth Avenue club of half a century ago had little magnificence as we now understand the word. It was a simpler and more limited hospitality that was offered to the friend or the distinguished stranger from overseas. Yet that hospitality must have had a rare flavour and atmosphere. There must have been something about it that went far to make up for mere material deficiencies, if we are to credit the verdicts of those who were in a position to compare American club life with club life in England and on the Continent. Thackeray was as fine a judge of the matter as any man who ever strutted through St. James's Park and scowled back at the Barnes Newcomeses and Captain Heavysideses in the club windows along Pall Mall, and there was what he said and wrote about the Century.

It was in the middle of the sixth decade of the last century that the clubs began to find their way into Fifth Avenue. One of the first was the Union Club. Writing of that organization in 1906, M. Charles Huard, in "New York comme je l'ai vu," volunteered the puzzling information that it was "*fonde en 1836 par les descendants de Knickerbocker, le plus vieux donc des grand clubs de New York.*" If the Frenchman was to be taken literally he apparently regarded the offspring of Washington Irving's creation as an exceedingly prolific race. The Union, in 1855, moved from Broadway near Fourth Street into a house on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-first Street. That home, which the Union occupied until fifteen or twenty years ago, was described as "a superb structure which cost three hundred thousand dollars." It was the first building erected in the city solely for club purposes. Almost to the day of its demolition, although the neighbourhood about it was changing rapidly, the old house wore an aspect of dignity. To the corner the habitués of other years seldom come today. Instead, at the noon hour, the sidewalks swarm with foreign faces and there is excited babble in an alien tongue. The cloak and suit firm of Potash and Perlmutter is as much at home here now as it was in its East Broadway—or was it Division Street?—loft when the present century was coming into being.

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There is an old volume, bearing the date 1871, called "The Clubs of New York." The author was a Francis Gerry Fairfield, and the chapters that make up the book were originally contributed to the columns of the "Home Journal." There is a perceptible smile on Mr. Fairfield's face as he writes of the town of thirty years before. To the present generation that smile is irresistibly funny. He recalls the year 1836, when the Union was founded as one of meteorological oddities. "Tradition preserves the record of the season under the designation of the cold summer. Weird auroras did not forbear to lift themselves in mountains of fire along the north, even in July; and more than once the canopy-aurora hung like a mock sun in the very centre of the heavens. People predicted strange things; but the strange things did not happen. The hyena of pestilence, the wolf of want, and the red death of war were conjured, but emerged not, nevertheless, from the vasty deep supposed by Shakespeare to be inhabited by their spirits." But Mr. Fairfield disclaims any suggestion that "the gestation of the Union Club, then in progress, had any material influence in the evolution of these omens, or that the weather was affected by the parturition of the great social event." With the metropolitan sophistication of 1871 he pats 1836 on the head as a year when New York was a bit of a village, of rather more than three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Houston, then North Street, Bleecker, and Bond Streets were particularly uptown, and thoroughfares of fashion and aristocracy. The old regime was still in its glory; and real counts, in plaid pantaloons, were sensational occurrences to be petted, set up as lions, and finally entrapped into matrimony, just by way of improving the blood of the first families. He tells of "the little white-faced hotel now termed the Tremont" as having been kept by a real count, expatriated for political reasons, but afterwards restored to titles and estates. There are those of the Year of Grace 1918 who recall the "little white-faced Tremont." But its soul has long since passed to t'other side of Styx.

From the day when the Union first opened its doors at No. 1 Bond Street, it was one of the wealthiest and most exclusive of New York clubs. The names of its organizers are names associated with the history of the city. Ogden Hoffman, whom Mr. Fairfield describes as "a bald-headed, dreamy-eyed man, in his day the star of the New York Bar, both for fervid eloquence and profound learning"; Philip Hone, he of the immortal "Diary"; Thomas P. Oakley, Samuel Jones, Beverly Robinson, W.B. Lawrence, Charles King, E.T. Throop, and J. Depeyster Ogden. These were some of the men whose names were appended to the provisional constitution drawn up on June 30, 1836. C. Fenno Hoffman, "next to Morris the sweetest song-writer America has produced," later became a member of the association, which from its inception, was the representative organization

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of the old families. Livingstons, Clasons, Dunhams, Griswolds, Van Cortlandts, Paines, Centers, Vandervoorts, Stuyvesants, Van Renssalaers, Irelands, Suydams, and other names of Knickerbocker fame, filled its list of membership with a sort of aristocratic monotony of that Knickerbockerism, which has since, to use the words of Mr. Fairfield again, “in solemn and silent Second Avenue (the Faubourg St. Germain of the city), earned the epithet of the Bourbons of New York.” Solemn and silent Second Avenue is solemn and silent no more. Long since gone are the social glories of that thoroughfare that once boldly stepped forward to challenge the supremacy of the street that is the subject of this book. “Sic transit!” or something of the kind would have been the probable comment of Mr. Fairfield, for he, in common with others of his age, delighted in flinging in a scrap of Latin or French on every possible occasion. They were industrious investigators of the thesaurus in those days.

The first home of the Union, at No. 1 Bond Street, was in reality the house of its secretary, John H.L. McCrackan. In 1837 a building on Broadway near Leonard Street was secured, and the club moved into it, there to remain for three years. Then, for seven years, it was in a house on the other side of Broadway, and in 1847, obeying the prevalent impulse up-townward, it shifted its quarters to the spot from which it was later to remove to the Twenty-first Street home. That structure at Broadway and Fourth Street was the property of the Stuyvesant family, and after the departure of the men of the Union, was occupied by the confectioner Maillard as a hotel and restaurant. In 1852 the question of a permanent building began to be discussed, and in 1854 the land at the Twenty-first Street corner was secured and the work of erecting the structure that in its day was the most imposing of all that lined Fifth Avenue between Waverly Place and the Broadway junction begun. The club moved into the new quarters in May, 1855, at a time when its membership numbered approximately five hundred. In writing of the Union as it was in 1871 Mr. Fairfield made the comment that literature was hardly represented at all, and journalism only by Manton Marble of the “World.” As had been the case of Thackeray and the Athenaeum of London, Mr. Marble, at the time of his first candidacy, had been blackballed. The objection, also as in the case of Thackeray, was ascribed not to the personality of the man, but to his profession. But Mr. Marble was eventually admitted through the efforts of a member of the Board of Directors, who declared boldly that not a new member should be elected until the blackballs against the journalist had been withdrawn. Robert J. Dillon, landscape gardener, and J.H. Lazarus, portrait painter, were almost the sole art representatives, and in 1871 J. Lester Wallack was the only actor on the club list. Wallack’s great contemporary of the stage, Edwin Booth, was a member of the Century

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and of the Lotos. The law of the day was represented by such men as Mayor Hall, until he resigned as a result of the criticism of fellow-members growing out of the exposures of the Tammany frauds in the summer and autumn of 1871, W.M. Evarts, Judge Garvin, Judge Gunning S. Bedford, Eli P. Norton, and John E. Burrill. Of men prominent in political and municipal life were August Belmont, Samuel J. Tilden, Peter B. Sweeny, former Mayor George Opdyke, Isaac Bell, and Andrew H. Green, later to become the "Father of Greater New York." Among the dominant financial figures, in addition to August Belmont, were A.T. Stewart, John J. Cisco, Henry Clews, and John Jacob Astor. From the Army were U.S. Grant, then the nation's President, John H. Coster, George W. Cullom, Samuel W. Crawford, Howard Stockton, Rufus Ingalls, J.L. Rathbone, I.U.D. Reeve, and Stewart Van Vliet. From the Navy, James B. Breese, James Alden, Edward C. Gratton, Thomas M. Potter, Henry O. Mayo, James Glynn, W.C. Leroy, L.M. Powell, and John H. Wright.

By virtue of its descent from the Sketch and the Column, the Century Association might lay claim to seniority among the clubs of Fifth Avenue. The Sketch Club was the result of the union of the literary and artistic elements of New York, which, in 1829, were producing an annual called "The Talisman." Among the writers in the Sketch were Bryant, Verplanck, and Sands, and later Washington Irving and J.K. Paulding joined it. There was no regular home, the club meeting at the houses of members in turn. For six months, during 1830, it did not exist, having been dissolved in May of that year, and reorganized in December. Thereafter, for a few years, it met in the Council Room of the National Academy of Design, and then returned to the custom of meeting at the homes of the members. That organization was the embryo Century. The Sketch Club had first taken form in 1829. Four years before that a society called the Column had been established by graduates of Columbia College. That organization, too, had a share in the moulding of the new club.

The meeting that brought the Century into being was held the evening of January 13, 1847, in the rotunda of the New York Gallery of Fine Arts in the City Hall Park. The call for the meeting had been sent out a few weeks before, the men composing the signing committee being John G. Chapman, A.B. Burand, C.C. Ingham, A.M. Cozzens, F.W. Edmonds, and H.T. Tuckerman. The original Centurions were forty-two in number, of whom twenty-five came from the Sketch, and six from the Column. There were ten artists, ten merchants, four authors, three bankers, three physicians, two clergymen, two lawyers, one editor, one diplomat, and three men of leisure. All were more or less representative men of the city, which had grown from the town of three hundred and fifty thousand of the day of the Union's formation, to a young metropolis of six hundred thousand. Gulian C. Verplanck was the club's first president,

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and back in his day began the Century's peculiar Twelfth Night Festival, which has been continued ever since. Twelfth Night with the Centurions is distinctive in that it is not an annual event nor the event of any given year. The very uncertainty of the ceremonial has added zest to the revel, which usually ends with an old-fashioned Virginia Reel. A few years ago the reel was led by Theodore Roosevelt and the late Joseph H. Choate.

The first home of the Century, which it occupied for two years, was in rooms at 495 Broadway—between Broome and Spring Streets. During this period a journal called the "Century" was started, and edited by F.S. Cozzens and John H. Gourley. Then, in 1848, the club moved to 435 Broome Street; thence, in 1850, to 575 Broadway; in 1852, to Clinton Place, where Thackeray learned to love it, and where, by virtue of proximity, it first laid claim to be regarded as a Fifth Avenue club.

[Illustration: WHERE THE AVENUE AND THIRTY-FOURTH STREET CROSS STANDS THE BUILDING POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE KNICKERBOCKER TRUST COMPANY. HERE, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST CENTURY, "SARSAPARILLA" TOWNSEND BUILT IN BROWN-STONE, AND A.T. STEWART LATER BUILT IN WHITE MARBLE]

In Clinton Place the Century stayed until it went to its Fifteenth Street house, where it was so long to remain. Gulian Verplanck's presidency lasted for many years. At first it was a happy tenure of office. But the Civil War came, bringing with it grave dissensions. Verplanck may be said to have invited the divisions that crept into the club, and which led to his overwhelming defeat in the election of 1864. He was succeeded by the historian Bancroft, who held office until 1868, when he resigned because of his departure for Prussia as the United States Minister to Berlin.

From the very day when it took form the Century seems to have had an atmosphere—almost a history. In the years long before the more modern clubs of a literary flavour were dreamed of, the Century was bringing together the leading men-of-letters and of art of New York. Yet somehow the Century of early times impresses newer generations as having been tremendously portentous and dignified. There was never any suggestion of Bohemia. After the establishment of the Century the gifted Poe was to enjoy, or rather to endure, two more years of life. By no stretch of the imagination can we think of his being in the club, even as the guest of an evening. There was plenty of good-fellowship, no doubt, and good cheer, but also the chill of a certain reserve. The talk seems, after all the years, to have been essentially serious—men expressing themselves not lightly, but judicially, and after long deliberation; Mr. Bryant gravely conceding the right of Pope or Dryden or Watts, according to the subject of discussion, to be ranked as a poet, or denying the same, while members of lesser note sat about listening and nodding, but preserving becoming reticence. There was

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almost a Bostonese austerity about the great men of that early time and circle. They wore their garments as Roman Senators wore their togas. It was not good form for the stranger to break lightly into the talk of the Immortals. To have done so would have been to provoke the amazement and censure that was the lot of Mark Twain many years after, when, at a dinner in the Hub, he sought to jest irreverently with the sacred names of Holmes, Emerson, and Longfellow. Again try to fancy the shy, eccentric, improvident genius of "Ulalume," "The Bells," and "The Fall of the House of Usher" at ease in a company that, while delightful, was all propriety and solid intellectuality. No, Poe would no more have fitted into the Century than Balzac or Zola would have fitted into the French Academy which so persistently denied them. And, to be perfectly frank, had the writer been a Centurion of that period, and had the name of Edgar Allan Poe come up for election, he might have been one of the first to drop a black pill in the box, loudly acclaiming the genius, but deploring the impossible and unclubable personality.

After the presidency of Bancroft came that of Bryant. He held the office until his death in 1878, but as he was always averse to crowds, he was seldom seen at the club except in official meetings. An enthusiastic Centurion, writing of the club at the time of Bryant's death, when it had been in existence thirty-one years, spoke of it as having drawn together the choicest spirits of that generation of New York. "Without formality or design, it had become an institute of mutual enlightenment among men knowing the worth of one another's work, likened by Bellows, more than half seriously, to the French Academy. A sure result of this communion was absolute equality among those who shared it. No true Centurion ever assumed anything, each standing in his real place. The atmosphere killed pretension and stifled shams. The pedant or the conceited person silently drifted away. How could it be otherwise, while a famous painter was describing some scene, or a noted philosopher illustrating some theory, or an acute statesman drawing some historical parallel, than that the egotist should drop himself, and the proser forget to prose?" The late Clarence King was in his day a leader in the Century talk, and his comment on the club was that it contained "the rag-tag and bob-tail of all that was best in the country." Many times has it been introduced under thin disguises in the fiction dealing with New York. In some of the novels of Robert W. Chambers it appears as the Pyramid. Twenty years ago Paul Leicester Ford brought it into "The Story of an Untold Love," calling it The Philomathean. According to the hero of that tale, the Philomathean was the one club where charlatantry and dishonesty must fail, however it succeeded with the world, and where the poorest man stood on a par with the wealthiest. The Centurion of all times has had much to be proud of, and he has not been blind to his blessings, nor ashamed to acquaint the world with his great good fortune.

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Although most of them began in side streets, and many of them have in the later years migrated again to side streets, through the greater part of their history the clubs here discussed belong essentially to the "Avenue" from which they have drawn so much of their inspiration. It does not matter that the present home of the Century is at 7 West Forty-third Street, or that the Lotos for the past few years has been at 110 West Fifty-seventh Street. They remain, as they always have been, Fifth Avenue clubs. Part of the history of the Lotos Club is written in the chapter dealing with "Some Great Days on the Avenue." For the fame of the organization as a giver of elaborate banquets to distinguished guests has spread through the land. The Lotos dates back to the early spring of 1870, when a group of young New York journalists met in the office of the New York "Leader" to take the initiatory steps necessary for the formation of a club. These men were De Witt Van Buren of the "Leader," Andrew C. Wheeler of the "Daily World," George W. Hows of the "Evening Express," F.A. Schwab of the "Daily Times," W.L. Alden of the "Citizen," and J.H. Elliot of the "Home Journal." As the founders were all connected with the literary, musical, art, or dramatic departments of their papers, it was not surprising that the projected association was to be modelled upon the Savage, Garrick, and Junior Garrick of London. Earlier failure had shown that a strictly literary organization was out of the question. A wider and more comprehensive membership was a necessity. As set forth in Article I., Section 2 of the Lotos Constitution, the primary object of the club was "to promote social intercourse among journalists, literary men, artists, and members of the theatrical profession."

From the first temporary quarters in the parlours of the Belvidere House, then at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Fourteenth Street, the club moved into a permanent home at No. 2 Irving Place, a building adjoining the Academy of Music. In the autumn of 1870 the first president, De Witt Van Buren, died, and was succeeded by A. Oakley Hall, then the Mayor of New York, who assumed the office entirely in his social capacity, as a journalist, dramatist, and patron of the arts. It was he who suggested the famous "Lotos Saturday Nights." There is a flavour of high Bohemia in the list of members of that period. Among the artists were Beard, Reinhart, Burling, Lumley, Chapin, Bispham, and Pickett; there were such pianists as Wehli, Mills, Hopkins, Colby, and Bassford; singers like Randolfi, Laurence, Thomas, MacDonald, Perring, Seguin, Matthison, and Davis; and actors like Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Mark Smith, John Brougham, and George Clark.



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Some one has said that every generation must express itself in a new club. The decade from 1861-1870 expressed itself in several. To those years of New York date the Columbia Yacht (1867), the Harvard, first of the college clubs (1865), the Manhattan (1865), the New York Athletic (1868), and the Union League (1863). The last named organization owes its birth to the doubts and complications of the darkest hour of the War of Secession. Unite to stand behind the President with our full strength, was the slogan of the men who met in January, 1863, to form the plans for the new association. At the beginning there was talk of adopting the name "Loyal League." The first work of the club was the organization of negro troops in New York City. Despite the opposition of Governor Seymour, and the ridicule of the newspapers, who held up the idea of the negro as a soldier as a huge joke, the Leaguers persisted in their efforts, with the result that in December, 1863, the Twentieth Regiment of U.S. coloured troops was enlisted, and within a few months, two more regiments, known as the Twenty-sixth and the Thirty-first.

In those days the club-house faced Union Square, at the junction of Seventeenth Street and Broadway. Early in 1868 the Union League moved to a house at the corner of Madison Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street, the building afterwards to be occupied in turn by the University Club and the Manhattan Club. The structure had been erected by Mr. Jerome for the use of the Jockey Club, but was leased to the Union League for a term of ten years. Among the early honorary members of the Union League were Abraham Lincoln, General U.S. Grant, General W.T. Sherman, Lieutenant-General "Phil" Sheridan, Major-Generals Burnside, Wright, and Hancock, Admiral David G. Porter, and Rear-Admiral Bailey. The active membership of 1870 included such names as William Cullen Bryant, William M. Evarts, Whitelaw Reid, Parke Godwin, Horace Greeley, Chester A. Arthur, Thomas Nast, Joseph H. Choate, Eastman Johnson, George P. Putnam, Daniel P. Appleton, Dr. Samuel Osgood, George Griswold, E.D. Stanton.

To the name of the Union League is inevitably linked that of the Manhattan Club, for, the Civil War once at an end, the latter became the expression of the political aims and aspirations of the Democratic Party as the former was of the Republican. The Manhattan had its origin in the turmoil of the election of 1864, and the defeat of the Democratic candidate, General McClellan. The first movers in its foundation were Douglass Taylor, then secretary of the Tammany society, Street Commissioner George W. McLean, S.L.M. Barlow of the "World," Judge Hilton, the Hon. A. Schell, A.L. Robertson, and John T. Hoffman, later Governor of New York State from 1869 till 1872. The earlier meetings were held in the old Delmonico's, at the corner of Fourteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, and then the Manhattan moved into its first real home at No. 96 Fifth Avenue, just a block above the famous restaurant, where many of the meetings continued to be held. John Van Buren was the first president, with Augustus Schell first vice-president, A.L. Robertson second vice-president, Manton Marble secretary, and W. Butler Duncan treasurer.

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In the winter of 1867-8 the club was enlivened by a bout of fisticuffs that was a “celebrated case” of its day. There was then a strict club rule forbidding the introduction of a guest. Manager Bateman, the father of Miss Bateman the actress, saw fit to violate this law. A member of the House Committee, perhaps overzealous in the idea of his duties, carried his protest to the point of forbidding the servants of the club to serve the unwelcome guest. Mr. Bateman’s resentment of the action took the form of a personal assault, which became the sensation of the hour and the topic of the newspapers. “Evidently,” remarked the “Herald” (those were the days of the elder Bennett, who in his vast experience in New York journalism had more than once felt the sting of a horse-whip), “to be slapped is what some faces are made for!” But the Governors did not see the matter in the light that the “Herald” did, and the pugilistically inclined manager was summarily expelled, the board refusing to settle the matter by accepting his resignation.

Another Fifth Avenue club that claimed 1865 as the year of its origin was the Traveller’s. For obvious reasons many of the clubs of the seventh decade of the last century chose to be near the old Delmonico restaurant, and the Traveller’s was no exception, making its first home on the opposite corner. The object of the association was to bring together travellers of all nations, and to do proper honour to distinguished who were visiting the United States. After two years at the Fourteenth Street corner the Traveller’s moved northward to a new home at No. 222 Fifth Avenue, the George W. Burnham residence at Eighteenth Street. Mr. Fairfield apparently did not regard the club with entire favour, for in his book of 1873 he speaks of the club-house as being “a leading resort for America-examining Englishmen, and the headquarters of an English coterie of considerable social importance.” “*O tempora! O mores!*” he exclaims. There were palmy days in the past, when the receptions were social reunions of *eclat*. But “they have made an end of all that, having settled into a body as quiet as Mr. Mantilini expected to be after taking a bath in the Thames.” But, granting Mr. Fairfield’s claim that the literary quality of the Traveller’s had deteriorated, there still remained the list of Honorary Members carrying a certain prestige. Professor Louis Agassiz headed the list; and others were Paul Du Chaillu, the African explorer whose adventures were for a long time regarded as clever romance; the Hon. Anson Burlingame, who had been an envoy from the Chinese Emperor; Sir Samuel Baker, of London; Rev. J.C. Fletcher, Professor Raphael Pumpelly, the Right Rev. Bishop Southgate, the Hon. J. Ross Browne, and M. Michel Chevalier, of the French Senate.



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“Lotos and Arcadian: both stuff for dreams. The one excogitated in spring-time, when Nature was taking her break-of-day drowse, previous to getting up and going about business; the other suggestive of Nature indulging in a half-light reverie in a sort of crimson and scarlet dressing-gown, previous to putting on her night-cap and going to bed, after a hard summer’s work. The one reminding of a land where it is always afternoon of a day in the last of June, when one can almost hear the music of corn-growing, the mystic throes of buds toiling into blossom; the other of a land where it is always about eight o’clock in the morning with the dew still on the meadow-grass, and the world rubbing its eyes and brushing away cobwebs of dream, before buckling down to the struggle. The one somewhat reminiscent of Egypt and crocodiles, lispng palms and Arabs, of long and lotos-eating days of *keff*, in which even the lazy hours loiter in shady nooks, and the wind holds its breath in sympathy with the general doziness, and seems to be listening to something; the other of vivid Greek life, with its shepherds:

“Piping on hollow reeds to their pent sheep,
Calm be thy Lyra’s sleep,’

of Pindar, of Orphic song, of lost Milesian tales, of a life growing into sculpture or breaking into sinuous hexameter waves. The one mystic, the other beautiful, both symbolical.”

With this rhapsody Mr. Fairfield introduced the Arcadian Club of New York, an organization that for a time threatened to rival the Lotos in the latter’s particular field. Writing men snatched up into the clouds in those days for their metaphors, and combed Mythology for illustrations with which to garnish descriptions of the most commonplace events of everyday life. Here is another gem from Mr. Fairfield’s book, also in his chapter about the Arcadian Club.

“Gentlemen of society, bankers, stylish young men with vast ideas of personal importance, amateurs and patrons! City Hall is the brain of New York, of the continent, and it is one of the laws of the world that brains will rule. Rebel as muscles merely of the body politic, and ye rebel against inexorable law: that scribbling *literati* in the fifth story—for newspapers like men have their brains in the upper story—is more potent than you in settling the artistic position of a Lucca or a Rubenstein, a Dickens or a Dore, a Tennyson or a Carlyle. Have ye ever read a wonderful little ballad by Uhland, entitled ‘The Minstrel’s Curse?’ If so, recall it—for it is typical, not of that which comes by-and-by, but of that which is: the exponent of the beautiful having become in his way an autocrat. Unfortunate it is that journalism is not always representative of the best culture—that managing editors will now and then entrust criticism to incompetents, but its popular power is quite the same, notwithstanding, and this good the popular newspaper has wrought, to wit—that the exponent of the arts, media of culture as they are, is no longer dependent upon the caprices and whims of isolated patrons, nor hampered in his freedom of expression by canons of theirs.” And so on ad infinitum. The present writer confesses in all humility that he has not the least idea as to what the

eloquent gentleman meant. But remember that it was the age that produced the “St. Elmo” of Augusta Evans Wilson.



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CHAPTER VIII

Literary Landmarks and Figures

Literary Landmarks and Figures—A Vision of Pall Mall—The Paris of the Forties—Mark Twain's Fifth Avenue Home—In the Time of Poe—Where Henry James was Born—The Old University Building—An Encounter in Washington Square—Clinton Place—Memories of the Past—Irving, Cooper, Halleck, Drake, Dickens, and Trollope as Shades of the Avenue—A Home of Janvier—The "Griffou Push"—The Tenth Street Studio Building—The Tile Club—The Cary Sisters—Stoddard, Whittier, Aldrich, and Ripley—"Peter Parley"—"Fanny Fern"—James Parton—Some Figures of the Recent Past.

If, of a day of the fifties of the last century, I had been an arrival in London, my first thought would probably have been of a sole at Sweeting's or a slice of saddle of mutton at Simpson's in the Strand, provided, of course, that the establishments named then existed, and the dishes in question were as delectable as in later years, when I came to know them in the life. The baser appetite satisfied, the first pilgrimage would have been, not to the Tower, or to Lambeth Palace, or the British Museum, but to Pall Mall, in the hopes of catching a glimpse, in a club window or on the pavement, of the "good grey head" of Thackeray. The first impression might have been disappointing. There was in the spectacles and high-carried chin something pompous and supercilious. The great man, had he noticed them at all, would probably have been quite contemptuous of my admiring glances, his mind occupied with the idea of winning a nod from a passing duke; but I would have seen the "good grey head," and thrilled at the memory of "Vanity Fair" and "Henry Esmond." Similarly, in the Paris of that time or of a little earlier period, I would have considered the day well spent if in the course of it I had seen Victor Hugo with his umbrella, riding on the Imperiale of an omnibus, or the good Dumas exhibiting his woolly pate conspicuously in a boulevard cafe, or the author of "The Mysteries of Paris" and "The Wandering Jew" posing at a table in the Restaurant de Paris or Bignon's, or the fat figure of M. de Balzac waddling in the direction of a printing house to toil and groan and sweat over the proofs of the latest addition to the "Comedie Humaine." We cannot behold such giants in our generation, city, and street. Yet Fifth Avenue, from the day the first houses pushed northward from Washington Square, has had its literary landmarks, figures, and traditions.

Ten years ago, had you been passing of a summer's day a house at the southeast corner of the Avenue and Ninth Street, you might have seen emerging from the front door, a figure clad in white flannel, and looked upon the countenance of the creator of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. It was, and is, a house of red brick, a house of three stories and a high basement, built by the architect who had designed Grace



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Church. The number is 21. Clemens went to live there in the autumn of 1904, remaining for a time at the near-by Grosvenor while the new habitation was being put in order, and the home furniture that had been brought from Hartford was being installed. When No. 21 was ready for occupation, only Clemens and his daughter Jean went to live there, for Clara had not recovered from the strain of her mother's long illness, and the shock of her death, and was in retirement under the care of a trained nurse. Clemens, according to his biographer, Albert Bigelow Paine, was lonely in No. 21, and sought to liven matters by installing a great AEolian Orchestrelle. In January, 1906, Paine paid his first visit to the house and found the great man propped up in bed, with his head at the foot, turning over the pages of "Huckleberry Finn" in search of a paragraph about which some random correspondent had asked explanation.

But to go back long before Clemens's time, and to begin in the neighbourhood of the old square. In the days when Fifth Avenue was young Poe must have found his way there, accompanied, perhaps, by the pale, invalided Virginia, to gaze at the fine new houses, for only a few hundred yards away was his last city residence, where Lowell called and found his host "not himself that day," and where were penned "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," the "Philosophy of Composition," and "The Literati of New York." Then there was the house in Waverly Place, the home of Anne Lynch, the poet of "The Battle of Life," which was a kind of literary salon of its day, where Poe once read aloud the newly published "Raven," and where Bayard Taylor visited, and Taylor's friend Caroline Kirkland, and Margaret Fuller, and Lydia Child, and Ann S. Stephens, who wrote "Fashion and Famine" and "Mary Derwent," and young Richard Henry Stoddard, and Elizabeth Barstow, who became his wife. Not far from the Lynch house was the humble dwelling in which Poe wrote "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Just off the Square, at 21 Washington Place, Henry Jones was born. In a house that once stood at the northwest corner Bayard Taylor lived for a time and wrote the "Epistle from Mount Tmolus," and some of the "Poems of the Orient." In later days a large apartment house grew up on the site, and there George Parsons Lathrop dwelt, and penned some of the verse of his "Days and Dreams," while his wife, the daughter of the author of "The Scarlet Letter," composed portions of "Along the Shore." In the old University building on the east side of the Square Theodore Winthrop—later as Colonel Winthrop to meet a soldier's death at Big Bethel—wrote "John Brent," and the famous but utterly dreary "Cecil Dreeme," and a few doors below is the red brick apartment where in more modern days so many of the younger scribblers have toiled in the years of their pseudo-Bohemia. Across the Square N.P. Willis, the town's crack descriptive writer, was in the habit of making his way, and on one occasion with sorry results. The actor, Edwin Forrest, appeared in his path and fell upon him with vigorous assault. Bystanders were on the point of intervening. "Stand back, gentlemen!" cried the Thespian. "He has interfered in my domestic affairs." And he proceeded with the whacking.



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Not only the Square, but the side streets below Fourteenth, must be taken into a consideration of the old literary landmarks and figures of Fifth Avenue. Thackeray was only one of the foreign authors visiting America who found ease and comfort in the clubhouse of the Century in Clinton Place. In the same thoroughfare lived and died Evert Augustus Duyckinck, co-author with his brother George of the "Cyclopedia of American Literature," and author of "The War for the Union"; and Mrs. Botta, the Anne Lynch of earlier mention, had for a time a home there; and in the street Richard Watson Gilder dwelt later, and in No. 33, in a third-story back room, a young clerk named Thomas Bailey Aldrich wrote his "Ballad of Babie Bell"; and there, at No. 84 which was the residence of Judge Daly, the African explorer Paul Du Chaillu wrote fiction and fact that by sceptical contemporaries was generally accepted as fiction. A block farther north was another home of Mrs. Botta, and the house of the actress who is remembered as Tom Moore's first sweetheart, and the one-time abode of William Cullen Bryant, who wrote of it as being near the home of Irving's friend Brevoort. The neighbourhood is rich with memories. We have but to beckon and the ghosts of those literary men and women whose names have been forgotten, and of those whose reputations have endured, step forth in imagination to fill the street. I see Irving, down from his Sunny side estate for a visit to the town that was once the fat village of his Diedrich Knickerbocker, strolling over from the Irving Place structure that is reputed to have been his, but which was not his, to study the new manners and fashions, and to mull on the startling changes and swift passage of time. I see the irascible author of the "Leather Stocking Tales," for the moment weary of squabbling over land agreements with his Cooperstown neighbours and prosecuting suits against up-state newspapers, stealing into New York for a glimpse of his first city residence down in Beach Street in Greenwich Village, where he wrote "The Pilot," and "Lionel Lincoln," and incidentally satisfying his curiosity as to the new developments in urban elegance and fashion. I can see FitzGreene Halleck and Joseph Rodman Drake, a mile or two away from their accustomed haunts; and any one else whom it pleases me to see; our foreign guests and critics, Dickens, looking about superciliously, or Anthony Trollope, breathing hard, or Trollope *mere*, or Harriet Martineau, or Captain Marryat, or Mayne Reid, or Samuel Lover. For in a case like this a trifling matter like an anachronism or a misstatement counts for little or nothing.

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On Ninth Street, just west of the Charles De Rhams house, which was formerly the Henry Brevoort house, are the two or three buildings that in bygone days made up the Hotel Griffou. There, twenty years or so ago, the late Thomas A. Janvier lived and studied the queer Latin-American types that went into his stories of the Efferanti family. There also William Dean Howells frequently dined, and the late Edmund Clarence Stedman and Richard Watson Gilder went from time to time. Then the older and more dignified men drifted away, and the tables in the dining room rang with the laughter and high talk of a younger group, known as the “Griffou Push.” Brave dreams were there, and limitless ambitions, and some achievement. But in many cases *Pallida mors* came knocking all too soon, and those who lived sought other environments, and the “Push” was no more, and the little hotel became a memory of yesterday.

There were literary associations about the old Studio Building in Tenth Street long before the “Old Masters” of New York went there to work, and Carmencita came to dance in Chase’s studio. In the big brown structure Henry T. Tuckerman once lived, and kept his library, and wrote “The Criterion,” and the “Book of the Artists,” and entertained his friends of the world of letters; and there Fitzjames O’Brien, the genial Fitz, the “gipsy of letters,” the author of “The Diamond Lens,” visited him. Almost across the street, in a little rear wooden house that was to serve as the New York home of F. Hopkinson Smith’s Colonel Carter of Cartersville, was at one time the quarters of the Tile Club, where, in the golden days, men ceased to be known by the stiff and formal names used in more ceremonious surroundings, and became instead the Owl, or the Griffin, or the Pagan, or the Chestnut, or the Puritan, or the O’Donoghue, or the Bone, or the Grasshopper, or the Marine, or the Terrapin, or the Gaul, or the Bulgarian, or Briareus, or Sirius, or Cadmius, or Polyphemus.

A little off the Avenue, on East Twentieth Street, was the home of the Cary sisters, Alice and Phoebe; and to the unpretentious little brick dwelling of Sunday evenings repaired Stoddard, and Whittier, and Aldrich, and Ripley, and Herman Melville, and Mary L. Booth, who afterwards became Mrs. Lamb, and wrote the “History of New York,” and Samuel G. Goodrich, the famous “Peter Parley,” and Alice Haven, popular writer of juvenile tales, and Justin McCarthy, and James Parton, husband of “Fanny Fern,” himself one of these rare scribes of his age whose writing can be genuinely enjoyed by readers of the present generation, and occasionally, grim old Horace Greeley, who, if, as he said, in the course of forty years had never been able to get a day off to go “a-fishing,” managed, now and then, to find an evening of leisure in which to divert himself with the pleasant, bookish talk at No. 53. A *salon* as “was a *salon*”—that of the Cary girls. With the vast, unwieldy city of today in mind we wonder



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how they managed it, by what charm and persuasion they gathered with such regularity so many of the *literati* really worth while. But it was a smaller town then. It was easier to be neighbourly. When Thackeray, on the evening of New Year's Day, 1853, journeyed in a sleigh from his hotel to a reception held in a house on the west side of Fifth Avenue between Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth Streets, the destination was characterized as a villa in the country.

To revert to the note with which this chapter began. Were it possible for us to be transported back to the London of the fifties the sight of a Thackeray, a Dickens, a Tennyson, or a Browning would not have been necessary to stir our pulses. It would have been an event to have seen in the flesh some of the humbler men, G.P.R. James, or Samuel Warren, of "Ten Thousand a Year," or any of the ephemeral celebrities who adorned the pages of the Maclise Gallery of Portraits. So why disdain, merely because they are of our own time, the makers of copy who may be seen on the Fifth Avenue of today? I remember my first literary walk down the Avenue. It was in the company of Mr. Edward W. Townsend. I was very young, and he was the creator of Chimmie Fadden, and the author of "A Daughter of the Tenements," and I wished that all the world might see. Then the time came when the sight of literary faces was less of a novelty, when it was not unusual to meet the author of "The Rise of Silas Lapham," who had left his home on Fifty-ninth Street, facing the Park, for an afternoon stroll, and to receive his nod of kindly recognition; or to pass Edmund Clarence Stedman, to whom I owed, as so many others have owed, the first words of encouragement, or to see Frank R. Stockton, or Mr. Gilder and Mr. Johnson of the "Century," or Brander Matthews on his way to the club in West Forty-third Street.

Looking down upon the Avenue, at the corner of Thirty-third Street, just below the Waldorf, are familiar windows. They belonged to a hotel that was, or is, the Cambridge, and in the rooms behind the windows, I recall occasional pleasant and profitable hours spent in the company of Richard Harding Davis. There was another window some blocks farther down, in the building occupying the point where Fifth Avenue and Broadway join. That window gave light to the workshop of James L. Ford, the obstinate satirist, who resents the charge of amiability, and who will not be pleased if you tell him that in the pages of "The Literary Shop" he did the best work of his life. At another corner, between the two already mentioned, the early riser of a few years ago might have seen the literary pride of Indiana assuming the duties of the traffic policeman who had not yet reached his post, and with the aid of a whistle joyously acquired ordering east and west-bound vehicles to proceed and north and south-bound vehicles to halt.

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If you know your Avenue well enough, the countenances of nearly all of the “Best-Selling” kings are easy of recognition. Arriving at the Thirties, Robert W. Chambers is likely to turn off, bound for one of the antique shops that are to be found in the parallel thoroughfare two blocks to the east. At any point on the Avenue between the Washington Arch and the Plaza you may stumble upon the cane-swinging discoverer of the principality of Graustark, and the cane-swinging inventor of the “Tennessee Shad,” appraising together the new styles in women’s hats, or investigating the display in a shop-window. What is the subject that they are so earnestly discussing? The Influence of Rabelais on the Monastic System of the Fifteenth Century? The obscurity of Robert Browning? Whether or not the art of the novel is a finer art than it was in the days of the Victorians? Not at all. The point in dispute is the figure of Delehanty’s batting average in 1867. The vital importance of the matter is the reason of their obvious excitement.

Of more serious aspect is Mr. James Lane Allen, whose tales of the Kentucky Blue Grass Region I hope will be read as they deserve for many generations to come. Rex Beach swings along musing perhaps on the solitudes of Lake Hopatcong. Rupert Hughes studies the faces in the Avenue throng with the hope of finding the inspiration for a title for the projected novel that will be more eccentric, if possible, than the title of the last. Jesse Lynch Williams and Arthur Train seek rest after their perambulatory efforts in the luxurious seclusion of the University Club at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street—the “Morgue” of the flippant—where, from the windows, the former first saw *My Lost Duchess*, and the latter discovered the possibilities of *McAllister*. A few years ago in one of the business buildings that had broken into the residential stretch below Fourteenth Street, was the office that F. Marion Crawford always maintained for use during the occasional visits he made to New York. The tall figure of the author of the *Saracinesca* novels was a familiar sight on the Avenue of the late nineties and the first years of the present century. But his stays were brief. The call of the vineyard-covered mountains about Sorrento was too strong.

From time to time the Avenue has seen literary visitors whose appearance could not be regarded as a temporary home coming. Twenty years have passed since Rudyard Kipling paid us his last visit, and it was a very different Fifth Avenue from the street of today that he knew. But even then it was a part of the town that moved him to dreams of “heavenly loot.” There was, until a year or two ago at least, in an office at Fourth Avenue and Thirtieth Street, an old cane-bottomed chair. Once it had been in a room on the seventh story of a building at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-first Street, and there it had been known as the *Barrie Chair*, for in it the creator of *Thrums* had been wont to curl himself up, and from its comfortable



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depths, peer through the window down at the busy sidewalk below. In the church-going crowds of a Fifth Avenue Sunday there are many who recall the sturdy figure of Dr. John Watson, the Ian MacLaren of the “Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush” tales, who on several occasions occupied a New York pulpit. The last time those who sat under him saw a man apparently in the full vigour of rugged health. Yet a few days later brought the news of his sudden death, far away from the heather of his Scotland. The author of “The Beloved Vagabond” is no more a stranger to the Avenue than he is to Bond Street, or the Rue de la Paix; and Arnold Bennett has recorded impressions that are at once disparaging and polite; and Jeffery Farnol used to trudge it, impecunious and unknown, before “The Broad Highway” came to strike the note of popular favour.

Many more are the names that might be mentioned, for the street has ever been a magnet, and even those who toil in the attics of Bohemia find their way here, in the hours of leisure, to see and to be observed. Grub Street has assumed the garments of propriety, and shorn itself of its long hair, and in the prosperous, well-dressed throng that surges up and down the Fifth Avenue pavement, its denizens pass to and fro, no longer shyly, furtively, and conspicuously out of place, but with the easy assurance of those who are “to the manor born.”

CHAPTER IX

Fifth Avenue in Fiction

Fifth Avenue in Fiction—Pages of Romance—The Henry James Heroes and Heroines—George William Curtiss’s “Prue and I”—Edgar Fawcett and Edgar Saltus—The “Big Four” of Archibald Clavering Gunter—The Home of Dr. Sloper—O. Henry and Arthur Train—Bunner and Washington Square—“Predestined”—The De Rham House and Van Bibber’s Burglar—Delmonico’s—The “Amen Corner”—Union and Madison Squares—The Coming of Potash and Perlmutter—Up the Avenue.

To Macaulay’s New Zealander, contemplating from London Bridge the ruins of St. Paul’s, and the miles upon miles of silent stones stretching to north and west and east, there would undoubtedly have come the desire to reconstruct a mental picture of the vast, dead city in certain of the various periods in which it had been teeming and throbbing with human life. Had the wish become the task, formal history would have played its part. Informal history would have proved more fruitful, and bygone days would have taken shape in the study of old prints, letters, and diaries. But for the full flavour of the town that once was and now had become crumbling dust he would have turned to pages that had been professedly pages of romance.



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Suppose Elizabethan London had been his especial interest. That he would have seen through the eyes of Sir John Falstaff and his riotous, dissolute cronies of the Boar's Head Tavern. Georgian London? What better companion could he have had in his scheme of investigation than Mr. Thomas Jones, recently come up from the West Country? For a vision of Corinthian London could he have done better than take up Conan Doyle's "Rodney Stone," with its vivid pictures of the stilted eccentrics who hovered about the Prince-Regent, the coffee-houses thronged with England's warriors of the land and sea, and the haunts of the hard-faced men of the Prize Ring?

The Artful Dodger, guiding the innocent Oliver to the den of Fagin the Jew, would have introduced that last New Zealander to the sordid section of London about Great Saffron Hill and Little Saffron Hill that existed before the construction of the Holborn Viaduct. In the pages of Thackeray and George Meredith he would have studied the West-End of Victorian days. Certain seamy aspects of London life of the last years of the nineteenth century would have been revealed in the novels of George Gissing; and the books of a score of scribes, whose permanent place in letters is still a matter of conjecture, would have flashed glimpses of the city's streets, foibles, manners, and emotions in the early years of the twentieth century.

Our literature has, as yet, given us no figure analogous to that Last New Zealander of Macaulay. But in the bustling New York of fifty or one hundred years hence the dreamer or the student wishing to feel how the inhabitants of Manhattan lived three or four score years ago, or how we are living today, will not disdain to turn over pages originally designed to lighten the tedium of idle hours.

Now and again, in the novels of the fifties and sixties, there are glimpses of the stretch from Washington Square to Fourteenth Street, but the greater Fifth Avenue, as a factor in fiction, dates from about the time when Daisy Miller became a type. To those who really understand them, every one of the great, vital streets of the world has a soul as well as a body. The social invader from the West, the merchant whose establishment still found profit in Grand Street, the banker from Broad Street, or the ship's chandler from South, the club awakening to the fact that its quarters on Broadway or in one of the side streets near Irving Place was too far downtown, or in size inadequate to its growing membership—those were the agencies that wrought the Avenue's material development. But it was the American travelling in Europe in the days when we first found Henry James's heroine on the shores of Lake Geneva and later in Rome, when transatlantic voyagers were not so commonplace as they became later, whose pangs of homesickness in his *pension* in the Rue de Clichy in Paris, or his hotel in Sorrento, first invested Fifth Avenue with a spirit. It was different perhaps when he returned home with a slight pose of foreign manners, to bask for a brief moment in the sunny flood of distinction that was due him as a kind of later Sir John Franklin. But over there what were cathedral naves and spires, or art galleries, or purple Mediterranean waves, or laboriously acquired French verbs, to the jutting brown-stone stoops and the maples breaking into blossom?

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There was a kind of writing, not fish or flesh or good red herring, but just the same altogether charming in its day, inspiring of dreams, and a vehicle for pleasant fancy. It belonged to what, from our grave old point of view, was the youth of the world, and the spirit of youth, its ingenuousness, and its ardour, were needed to appreciate it. Ik Marvel's "Reveries of a Bachelor" was of that *genre*—and how the hearth logs blazed and the fair faces flickered in the flames in those pages of Mr. Donald G. Mitchell!—and George William Curtiss's "Prue and I"; and the latter book was one of the first in which was to be found the flavour of the old Fifth Avenue. Then there were the forgotten novelists of the seventies and early eighties, and some who are not quite forgotten, such as the two Edgars, Fawcett and Saltus, and the days when every visiting Englishman, no matter what he might have done in real life, in fiction had to stay, while in New York, at the Brevoort House. All sorts of inconsequential novels flit through the mind in recalling that bygone period. There was a gentleman whose atrociously written, but marvellously constructed "thrillers" were to be found in every deck chair at the noon hour on transatlantic steamers of thirty years ago. That was the late Archibald Clavering Gunter. The present generation knows him and his works not at all; but how a past generation used to read and reread "Mr. Barnes of New York," and "Mr. Potter of Texas," and "Miss Nobody of Nowhere," and "That Frenchman," which should have been called "M. De Vernay of Paris." Those were the earliest and the "big four." The list of successors is a long one, but that certain something, that indefinable quality, which had made the first books great trash was irrevocably gone. Of all the flamboyant characters of the tales Mr. Barnes was deservedly the most popular, and at such times as he was not winning international rifle matches at Monte Carlo, or racing about Europe in respectable pursuit of desirable young ladies, he inhabited a dwelling on lower Fifth Avenue. Practically all Fifth Avenue were the scenes of "Miss Nobody of Nowhere," with its charming heroine and her adopted parents, its wicked English nobleman, and its comical little Anglo-maniac dude. Under some name or other a "Gussie Van Beekman" was a necessary ingredient of every Gunter novel.

It is a far cry from Gunter to Henry James, though each wrought according to his lights, and served his purpose in his time. It was when the Avenue was in its infancy that Dr. Sloper, of James's "Washington Square," went to live in the brick house with white stone trimmings, that, practically unchanged, may be seen today, diagonally across the street from the Arch. The novelist wrote of the locality as having "a kind of established repose which is not of frequent occurrence in other quarters of the long, shrill city"; and ascribed to it, "a richer, riper look than any of the upper ramifications

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of the great longitudinal thoroughfare—the look of having had something of a social history.” That “richer, riper look,” that suggestion of a past, is there to-day, and is likely to be there tomorrow. The particular Sloper house is quite easy of identification. It is the third from the corner as one goes westward from the Avenue. In 1835, when Dr. Sloper first took possession, moving uptown from the neighbourhood of the City Hall, which had seen its best days socially, the Square, then the ideal of quiet and genteel retirement, was enclosed by a wooden paling. The edifice in which the Slopers lived and its neighbours were then thought to embody the last results of architectural science. It actually dates to 1831. Among the merchants who built in that year were Thomas Suffern, Saul Allen, John Johnston, George Griswold, James Boorman, and William C. Rhineland. It was their type of house that was accepted for the neighbourhood as the first streets began to open to the right and left of Fifth Avenue. That northern stretch of the Square, first invaded in fiction by Henry James, has ever been a favourite background of the story-spinners, who never tire of contrasting its tone of well-bred aristocracy with the squalor, half-Bohemian and half-proletarian, that faces it from across the Park. In fiction one does not necessarily have to be of an old New York family in order to inhabit one of those north-side dwellings. Robert Walmsley, of O. Henry’s “The Defeat of the City,” lived there, and the boyhood to which he looked back was one spent on an up-state farm; while another erstwhile tenant in the exclusive row was the devious Artemas Quibble, of Mr. Arthur Train’s narrative, who began life humbly somewhere in grey New England, and ended it, so far as the reader was informed, in Sing Sing Prison. Then there was the home of Mrs. Martin, the “Duchess of Washington Square” of Brander Matthews’s “The Last Meeting,” and that of Miss Grandish, of Julian Ralph’s “People We Pass,” and the house of Mrs. Delaney, of Edgar Fawcett’s “Rutherford,” and the structure which inspired one-half of Edward W. Townsend’s “Just Across the Square,” and the five-room apartment “at the top of a house with dormer windows on the north side” where Sanford lived according to F. Hopkinson Smith’s “Caleb West,” and where his guests, looking out, could see the “night life of the Park, miniature figures strolling about under the trees, flashing in brilliant light or swallowed up in dense shadow as they passed in the glare of many lamps scattered among the budding foliage.” Also over the Square, regarded in the light of fiction, is the friendly shadow of Bunner, who liked it at any time, but liked it best of all at night, with the great dim branches swaying and breaking in the breeze, the gas lamps flickering and blinking, when the tumults and the shoutings of the day were gone and “only a tramp or something worse in woman’s shape was hurrying across the bleak space, along the winding asphalt, walking over the Potter’s Field of the past on the way to the Potter’s Field to be.”



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[Illustration: "AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF FIFTY-FOURTH STREET IS THE UNIVERSITY CLUB, TO THE MIND OF ARNOLD BENNETT ('YOUR UNITED STATES'), THE FINEST OF ALL THE FINE STRUCTURES THAT LINE THE AVENUE"]

But to turn into the Avenue proper, and to follow the trail of the novelists northward. At the very point of departure we are on the site of the imaginary structure that gave the title to Leroy Scott's "No. 13 Washington Square," for the reason that there is no such number at all, and that the house in question must have occupied the space between Nos. 12 and 14, respectively, on the east and west corners facing Waverly Place. Before the next street is reached we have passed the home of the Huntingdons of Edgar Fawcett's "A Hopeless Case," and at the southwest corner of the Avenue and Eighth Street, facing the Brevoort, is No. 68 Clinton Place, which was not only the setting, but also the *raison d'être* of Thomas A. Janvier's "A Temporary Deadlock." Almost diagonally across the street is an old brick house, with Ionic pillars of marble and a fanlight at the arched entrance—one of those houses that, to use the novelist's words, "preserve unobtrusively, in the midst of a city that is being constantly rebuilt, the pure beauty of Colonial dwellings." It was the home of the Ferrols of Stephen French Whitman's "Predestined," one of the books of real power that appear from time to time, to be strangely neglected, and through that neglect to tempt the discriminating reader to contempt for the literary judgment of his age.

At the northwest corner of Ninth Street there is a brownish-green building erected in the long, long ago to serve as a domicile of the Brevoort family, which had once exercised pastoral sway over so many acres of this region. Later it became the home of the De Rhams. But to Richard Harding Davis, then a reporter on the "Evening Sun," it had nothing of the flavour of the Patrooms. It was simply the house where young Cortlandt Van Bibber, returning from Jersey City where he had witnessed the "go" between "Dutchy" Mack and a coloured person professionally known as the Black Diamond, found his burglar. There is no mistaking the house, which "faced the avenue," nor the stone wall that ran back to the brown stable which opened on the side street, nor the door in the wall, that, opening cautiously, showed Van Bibber the head of his quarry. "The house was tightly closed, as if some one was lying inside dead," was a line of Mr. Davis's description. Many years after the writing of "Van Bibber's Burglar," another maker of fiction associated with New York was standing before the Ninth Street house, of the history of which he knew nothing. "Grim tragedy lives there, or should live there," said Owen Johnson, "I never pass here without the feeling that there is some one lying dead inside."



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Van Bibber's presence in the neighbourhood was in no wise surprising, for it was one of his favourite haunts when he was not engaged farther up the Avenue, in his daily labour, which was, as he explained to the chance acquaintance met at the ball in Lyric Hall described in "Cinderella," "mixing cocktails at the Knickerbocker Club." Only a few doors distant from the Ninth Street house there is an apartment hotel known as the Berkeley, and it was to a Berkeley apartment that Van Bibber, as related in "Her First Appearance," took the child that he had practically kidnapped to restore her to her father and to be rewarded for his intrusion by being sensibly called a well-meaning fool. But there is another apartment house at the south-west corner of the Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street which better fits the description, which tells how Van Bibber, from the windows, could see the many gas lamps of Broadway where it crossed the Avenue a few blocks away, and the bunches of light on Madison Square Garden.

Edgar Fawcett was hardly of the generation of the Flora McFlimseys. As a matter of fact he was a small boy in knickerbockers when the famous William Allen Butler poem, "Nothing to Wear," first appeared in the pages of "Harper's Weekly." But Miss McFlimsey was an enduring young lady, who, for many years was accepted as symbolizing the foibles of Madison Square, and she was in a measure in Fawcett's mind when he wrote, in "A Gentleman of Leisure," that vigorous description contrasting socially the stretch of the Avenue below Fourteenth Street with the later development a dozen blocks to the north. In another Fawcett novel, "Olivia Delaplaine," we find the home of the heroine's husband in Tenth Street, just off the Avenue; and, reverting to "A Gentleman of Leisure," Clinton Wainwright, the gentleman in question, lived, like a "visiting Englishman," at the Brevoort.

There have been many Delmonicos. But for the purposes of fiction there has never been one just like the establishment that occupied a corner at the junction of the Avenue and Fourteenth Street. It was a more limited town in those days. The novelist wishing to depict his hero doing the right thing in the right way by his heroine did not have the variety of choice he has now. Two squares away, the Academy of Music was, theatrically and operatically, the social centre, so to carry on the narrative with a proper regard for the conventions, the preceding dinner or the following supper was necessarily at the old Delmonico's. They were good trenchermen and trencherwomen, those heroes and heroines of yesterday! Many oyster-beds were depleted, and bins of rare vintage emptied to satisfy the healthy appetites of the inked pages. Somehow the mouth waters with the memory. When Delmonico's moved on to Twenty-sixth Street, and from its terraced tables its patrons could look up at graceful Diana, there were many famous dinners of fiction, such as the one, for example, consumed



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by the otherwise faultless Walters, for a brief period in the service of Mr. Van Bibber—the menu selected: “Little Neck clams first, with chablis, and pea-soup, and caviare on toast, before the oyster crabs, with Johannisberger Cabinet; then an *entree* of calves’ brains and rice; then no roast, but a bird, cold asparagus with French dressing, Camembert cheese, and Turkish coffee,” may be accepted as indicating the gastronomical taste of the author in the days when youth meant good digestion—but with the departure from the old Fourteenth Street corner something of the flavour of the name passed forever.

If New York has never had another restaurant that meant to the novelist just what the traditional Delmonico’s meant, there has also never been another hotel like the old Fifth Avenue. In actual life the so-called “Ladies’ Parlour” on the second floor, reached, if I remember rightly, by means of an entrance on the Twenty-third Street side, was dreary enough; but turn to the pages of the romance of the sixties and seventies and eighties, and on the heavily upholstered sofas enamoured couples sat in furtive meeting, and words of endearment were whispered, and all the stock intrigue of fiction was set in motion. Then, on the ground floor, was the Amen Corner, without which no tale of political life was complete, and the various rooms for more formal gatherings, such as the one in which took place “The Great Secretary of State Interview,” as narrated by Jesse Lynch Williams many years ago.

But for the full flavour of the romance of this section of Fifth Avenue it is not necessary to go back to the leisurely novelists of the eighties and before. Recall the work of a man who, a short ten years ago, was turning out from week to week the mirth-provoking, amazement-provoking tales dealing with the life of what he termed his “Little Old Bagdad on-the-Subway,” his “Noisyville on-the-Hudson,” his “City of Chameleon Changes.” For the Avenue as the expression of the city’s wealth and magnificence and aristocracy the late O. Henry had little love. The glitter and pomp and pageantry were not for “the likes of him.” He preferred the more plebeian trails, the department-store infested thoroughfare to the west, with the clattering “El” road overhead; or Fourth Avenue to the east, beginning at the statue of “George the Veracious,” running between the silent and terrible mountains, finally, with a shriek and a crash, to dive headlong into the tunnel at Thirty-fourth Street, and never to be seen again; or even some purlieu of the great East Side, where he could sit listening at ease in the humble shop of Fitbad the Tailor.



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There was, however, one portion of land belonging to the Avenue where he felt himself thoroughly at home. When, of a summer's evening, darkness had fallen, and the leaves were fluttering in the warm breeze, and high overhead Diana's light was twinkling, and the derelicts were gathered on the Park benches, the world was full of delightful mystery and magic. Close to the curb, at one corner of the Square, a low grey motor-car with engine silent. Then whimsical fancy and a haunting memory of Robert Louis Stevenson's "New Arabian Nights" builded up the story "While the Auto Waits." Or perhaps the sight of a car swiftly moving with its emergency tire dangerously loose, and to that fertile brain were flashed the ingredients of "The Fifth Wheel." "There is an aristocracy of the public parks and even of the vagabonds who use them for their private apartments," wrote Sidney Porter in "The Shocks of Doom." Vallance of the story felt rather than knew this, but when he stepped down out of his world into chaos his feet brought him directly to Madison Square. Probably Sherard Plumer, the down-and-out artist, was another to recognize its quality even before he fell in with Carson Chalmers, as outlined in "A Madison Square Arabian Night"; and also Marcus Clayton of Roanoke County, Virginia, and Eva Bedford, of Bedford County of the same State; and the disreputable Soapy, of "The Cop and the Anthem," when he sought a park bench on which to ponder over just what violation of the law would insure his deportation to Blackwell's Island, which was his Palm Beach and Riviera for the winter months. Here, to O. Henry, was the common ground of all, the happy and the unfortunate, the just and the unjust, the Caliph and the cad; and far above, against the sky, was the dainty goddess who presided over the destinies of all, Miss Diana, who, according to the opinion expressed by Mrs. Liberty in "The Lady Higher Up," has the best job for a statue in the whole town, with the Cat-Show, and the Horse-Show, and the military tournaments where the privates "look grand as generals, and the generals try to look grand as floorwalkers," and the Sportsman's Show, and above all, the French Ball, "where the original Cohens and the Robert Emmet-Sangerbund Society dance the Highland fling with one another."

Other figures of fiction, in fancy, flit across the Square, or throng the near-by streets. In that dense, pushing, alien-tongued multitude that at the noon hour congests the sidewalks of the Avenue to the south of Twenty-third Street, one may catch a glimpse of Mr. Montague Glass's Abe Potash and Morris Perlmutter, long since moved uptown from their original loft in Division Street in the stories, and in Leonard Street in fact. The crowd is thickest at the Twenty-first Street corner, where, in the novels of other days, the mature burghers used to watch the passing ladies from the windows of the Union Club. But there is little inclination to tarry long there. The environment of the Square is a pleasanter environment.



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When Delmonico's was at the Twenty-sixth Street corner, the hero of one of Brander Matthews's "Vignettes of Manhattan" pointed out of one of its windows and confessed that, failure in life as he was, he would die out of sight of the tower of the Madison Square Garden. A reminiscent sign or two is all that is left of the old Hotel Brunswick, which, among the hostelryes of other days, yielded precedence only to the Fifth Avenue and the Brevoort as a factor in fiction.

Reverting to Mr. Davis, the Tower was one of the staple subjects of conversation of his heroes and heroines when they happened to be in the Congo, or Morocco, or looking longingly from the decks of steamers in South American waters; and the shadowy personage—very probably Van Bibber—who took "A Walk up the Avenue" started on his journey from the Square. Van Bibber! Of course it was Van Bibber. It must have been Van Bibber. For when he reached Thirty-second Street a half-dozen men nodded to him in that casual manner in which men nod to a passing club-mate. The particular club has since moved some thirty blocks uptown, but to the old building you will find frequent references not only in the Davis stories, but also in the novels of Robert W. Chambers, who was in the habit of indicating it as the Patroon.

Beyond Madison Square the novelists of earlier generations seldom went. It is to the men of today, above all to those who have been specializing in what may be called the New York "*novel a la mode*" that we must turn in order to follow farther the trail. Here is the stately street as portrayed in Mr. Chambers's "The Danger Mark," or "The Firing Line," or "The Younger Set," or in any one of a dozen swiftly moving serials of the hour, whether the author be Mr. Rupert Hughes, or Mr. Owen Johnson, or Mr. Gouverneur Morris, or Mr. Rex Beach. The novel may serve its light purpose today and tomorrow be forgotten. But the current of human life up and down the Avenue is ever running more swiftly.

CHAPTER X

Trails of Bohemia

Trails of Bohemia—The Avenue and its Tributaries—The "Musketeers of the Brush"—The Voice of the Ghetto—South Fifth Avenue and the Old French Quarter—The Garibaldi—"A la Ville de Rouen"—The Restaurant du Grand Vatel—The New Bohemia—The Lane of the Mad Eccentrics—Sheridan Square—"The Pirate's Den"—Absolam, a Slave—Gonfarone's—Maria's.

Once upon a time an over-astute critic found grave fault with the title of a novel by Mr. William Dean Howells. There was to his mind at least an unfortunate suggestion in calling a book "The Coast of Bohemia," even though "Bohemia" was used in its



figurative sense. What if the title had been derived from a line in Shakespeare? That did not alter the fact that ascribing a coast to Bohemia was like giving the Swiss Republic an Admiralty and alluding to Berne as a naval base. What would that censorious critic have to say of the association of Bohemia with stately Fifth Avenue? For to him and his kind it is not given to realize that Bohemia is a state of mind, a period of ardour and exaltation, a reminiscence of youth rather than a material region.



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The great stream has its tributaries. To Fifth Avenue belong the side streets that feed it and in turn draw from it flavour and inspiration. To it belong Washington Square, the south side as well as the north side, and the street beyond, that today is known as West Broadway, and yesterday was South Fifth Avenue, and before that, in the remote past, was Laurens Street; and the crossing thoroughfares that constituted the French Quarter of the late seventies and early eighties; and the northeastern part of Greenwich Village, that was once the "American Quarter," and is now masquerading as a super Monmartre, with its "Vermillion Hounds," and "Purple Pups," and "Pirates' Dens."

Nor for the flavour of Bohemia is there actual need of leaving the Avenue itself. It was more than twenty years ago that the writer, turning into Fifth Avenue at Twenty-sixth Street of a sunshiny afternoon, was confronted with an apparition, or rather with apparitions, direct from the Latin Quarter of Paris. Three top-hatted young men were walking arm in arm. One, of imposing stature, wore conspicuously the type of side whiskers formerly known as "Dundrearys." The second, of medium height, was adorned by an aggressive beard. The third, small and slight, was smooth shaven. A similar trio was encountered a dozen blocks farther up the Avenue, and, in the neighbourhood of the Plaza, a third trio. It was a time when George Du Maurier's "Trilby" was in the full swing of its great popularity, when the name of the sinister Svengali was on every lip, and certain young eccentrics found huge delight in attracting attention to themselves by parading the Avenue attired as "Taffy," the "Laird," and "Little Billee."

There is a stretch of the Avenue upon which the Fifth Avenue Association frowns; which the native American avoids; and which the old-time New Yorker regards with passionate regret as he recalls the departed glories of the Union Club and the jutting brown-stone stoops of yesterday. At the noon hour the sidewalks swarm with foreign faces. There is shrill chatter in alien tongues and the air is laden with strange odours. Even here Bohemia may be. Perhaps, toiling over a machine in one of the sweat-shops of the towering buildings a true poet may be coining his dreams and aspirations and heartaches into plaintive song; another, like the Sidney Rosenfeld of a score of years ago, who, over his work in the Ghetto of the lower East Side, asked and answered:

"Why do I laugh? Why do I weep?
I do not know; it is too deep."

The attic, the studio, the restaurant, the cafe are the accepted symbols of Bohemia. What reader of Henri Murger's "Scenes de la Vie de Boheme" has ever forgotten the Cafe Momus, where the riotous behaviour of Marcel, Schaubard, Rodolphe, and Colline brought the proprietor to the verge of ruin? Who has not in his heart a tender spot for Terre's Tavern, in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, where the bouillebaisse came from—the

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bouillebaisse, of which some of the ingredients were “red peppers, garlic, saffron roach, and dace”? It is of no great importance whether the particular scene be on the “*rive gauche*” of the River Seine, or in the labyrinth of narrow streets that make up the Soho district of London, or in rapidly shifting New York. All that is needed is youth, or unwilling middle age still playing at youth, and the atmosphere where artistic and literary aspirations are in the air, and poverty wearing a conspicuous stock, and the “glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome,” and the relative merits of Tennyson and Browning being talked over to the accompaniment of knives and forks rattling against plates of spaghetti and the clinking of wine glasses.

Years ago, to find the tangible New York Bohemia would have been a matter of crossing from the Avenue’s southern extremity, and diving into the streets that lie to the south of Washington Square. There was the old French Quarter, and there foregathered the professional joke-makers and the machine poets who contributed to “Puck,” and the “New York Ledger” when that periodical felt the guiding hand of Robert Bonner. Of that group Henry Cuyler Bunner was probably the most conspicuous. In his early days he was a twenty-four-hour Bohemian. In later life, when he had moved to the country, he remained a noon Bohemian. He was the prime spirit of the little Garibaldi in MacDougal Street of which James L. Ford wrote in “Bohemia Invaded.” Not often did he stray over to Greenwich Village. He disliked what he called its bourgeois conservatism.

For a period of years that section immediately to the south of the Square was the French Quarter. There were the peaceful artisans, and also there were political refugees of dangerous proclivities, men who had had a share in the blazing terrors of the Commune, and who, in some cases, had paid the price in years of imprisonment under the tropical sun of Cayenne. In all their wanderings they had carried the spirit of revolution with them and spouted death to despots over their glasses of absinthe in cellar cafes. William H. Rideing, in an article which was published in “Scribner’s Magazine” for November, 1879, described these men as he had found them in the Taverne Alsacienne in Greene Street: “gathered around the tables absorbed in piquet, ecarte, or vingt-et-un ... most of them without coats, the shabbiness of their other garments lighted up by a brilliant red bandanna kerchief or a crimson overshirt.” Keen glances were shot at strangers, for the tavern had a certain *clientele* outside of which it had few customers and suspicion was rife at any invasion. “They are drinking wine, vermouth, and greenish opaline draughts of absinthe. Staggering in unnerved and stupefied from the previous night’s debauch, they show few signs of vitality until four or five glasses of the absinthe have been drunk, and then they awaken; their eyes brighten and their tongues are loosened—the routine of play, smoke, and alcohol is resumed.”



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Pleasanter to recall are the sober, industrious men and women who were denizens of the neighbourhood in the years gone by—Mademoiselle Berthe and her little sisters, fabricating roses and violets out of muslin and wax in their attic apartment, Madame Lange, the *blanchisseuse*, ironing in front of an open window, Triquet, the *charcutier*, Roux, the *bottier*, Malvaision, the *marchand de vin*. Then there were others of the colony, higher in the social scale and less prosperous in their finances, the impecunious music-teachers and professors of languages who maintained themselves with a frosty air of shabby gentility on a very slender income, and the practitioners of literature and art who maintained themselves somehow on no income at all. For the leisure hours of these there were the innocent wine-shops of South Fifth Avenue, such as the Brasserie Pigault, which Bunner introduced to the readers of “The Midge” with a quaint conceit. The sign of the little cafe from without read: “A LA VILLE DE ROUEN. J. PIGAULT. LAGER BEER. FINE WINES AND LIQUEURS.” But its regular patrons knew it best from within, from the warm tables they liked to scan the letters backward, against the glass that protected them from the winter’s night. It was a quaint haunt, where gathered Doctor Peters and Father Dube, and Parker Prout, the old artist who had failed in life because of too much talent, and M. Martin, and the venerable Potain, who had lost his mind after his wife’s death, and Ovide Marie, the curly-haired musician from Amity Street.

But the prize exhibit, the *piece de resistance* of that old Bohemia of the French Quarter to the south of Washington Square was the Restaurant du Grand Vatel in Bleecker Street. Not only the French strugglers, but American artists and authors in embryo used to dine there substantially and economically. As Mr. Rideing described it: “The floor is sanded, and the little tables are covered with oil-cloth, each having a pewter cruet in the centre. A placard flutters from the wall, announcing a grand festival, banquet, ball, and artistic tombola in celebration of the eighth anniversary of the bloody revolution of March 18, 1871, under the auspices of the ‘Societe des Refugies de la Commune’—‘Family tickets, twenty-five cents, hat-room checks, ten cents’—from which we gather that the ‘Restaurant du Grand Vatel’ has some queer patrons. The landlady sits behind a little desk in the corner. She is a woman of enormous girth, with short petticoats which reveal her thick, white woolen socks; her complexion is dark, her eyes are black and deep, and large golden rings dangle from her ears.”



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The regular patrons begin to come in. The poor professor, after his unprofitable labours of the day, enters, and bows to the landlady, who is cordial or severe in her greeting according to the items on the little slate which records her accounts. He begins his meal. "He has *soupe aux croutons, veau a la Marengo, pommes frites*, a small portion of *Gruyere*, and a bottle of wine. He eats appreciatively after the manner of a *bon vivant*; he uses his napkin gently and frequently; he glances blandly at the surroundings; watching him, you would suppose the viands were the choicest of the season, exquisitely prepared, while, in reality, they are poor and unsubstantial stuff, the refuse, perhaps, of better restaurants. Having finished the edibles, he calls for a 'gloria,' that is, black coffee and cognac; and, sipping this, he communes with his fancies which come and vanish in the blue waves of cigarette smoke. His aspect bespeaks perfect complacency—Fate cannot harm me; I have dined today."

To Mr. Rideing we are indebted for certain items indicating the very moderate scale of prices at the Restaurant du Grand Vatel. Outside there was a sign that read: "*Tous les plats*, eight cents; *plats extra varies*; *cafe superieur*, three cents; *cafe au lait*, five cents." Here is a list of some of the dishes and their cost: Soup and a plate of beef and bread, ten cents; *soupe aux croutons*, five cents; *boeuf, legumes*, ten cents; *veau a la Marengo*, twelve cents; *mouton a Ravigotte*, ten cents; *ragout de mouton aux pommes*, eight cents; *boeuf braise aux oignons*, ten cents; *macaroni au gratin*, six cents; *celeri salade*, six cents; *compote de pommes*, four cents; *fromage Neufchatel*, three cents; *Limbouurg*, four cents; *Gruyere*, three cents; bread, one cent. Thus, Mr. Rideing figured out, the professor's dinner, wine included, cost him the sum of forty cents, and with five cents added for a roll and a cup of coffee in the morning, his daily expenditure for food was less than half a dollar.

The trails of Bohemia, or of pseudo-Bohemia, have never been so flaming and flagrant as they are today. From that corner of the Avenue facing the Arch cross the Square diagonally to the head of Washington Place. A hundred yards to the west lies the Lane of the Mad Eccentrics. Two or three years ago the little triangle of a park known as Sheridan Square was surrounded by structures of red brick that dated from the days when Greenwich Village preserved something of its proud individuality. Then a plan of transformation, involving a new avenue, cleared a wide path with the suddenness of a Kansas cyclone. Bits of the picturesque past went tumbling down before the onslaught of the demolishers. But in various nooks and corners that remained there sprang up bits of a picturesque although probably ephemeral present.

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It is easy to regard the Lane of the Mad Eccentrics from the point of view of metropolitan sophistication; to dismiss the Vermilion Hound and the Hell Hole and the Pirate's Den and the Purple Pup and Polly's as clap-trap and tinsel designed for the mystification of yokels and social investigators from Long Island City. But it is impossible to deny that the crazy decorations have added a touch of real colour to what had been a drab corner of the town. The present writer has no intention of going into a detailed sketch of this fragment of Bohemia for the reason that Anna Alice Chapin discussed it so well, so buoyantly, and so sympathetically in her book on "Greenwich Village" published a year or so ago. A few lines from her description of the Pirate's Den will give the flavour of any one of the enterprises that line the Lane of the Mad Eccentrics and are to be found, here and there, in the neighbouring streets.

"It is a very real pirate's den, lighted only by candles. A coffin casts a shadow, and there is a regulation 'Jolly Roger,' a black flag ornamented with skull and crossbones. Grim? Surely, but even a healthy-minded child will play at gruesome and ghoulish games once in a while.

"There is a Dead Man's Chest, too—and if you open it you will find a ladder leading down into the mysterious depths unknown. If you are very adventurous you will climb down and bump your head against the cellar ceiling and inspect what is going to be a subterranean grotto as soon as it can be fitted up. You climb down again and sit in the dim, smoky little room and look about you. It is the most perfect pirate's den you can imagine. On the walls hang huge casks and kegs and wine bottles in their straw covers—all the sign manuals of past and future orgies. Yet the 'Pirate's Den' is 'dry'—straw-dry, brick-dry—as dry as the Sahara. If you want a 'drink' the well-mannered 'cut-throat' who serves you will give you a mighty mug of ginger-ale or sarsaparilla. If you are a real Villager and can still play at being a real pirate you drink it without a smile, and solemnly consider it real red wine filched at the end of a cutlass from captured merchantmen on the high seas. On the big, dark centre table is carefully drawn the map of 'Treasure Island.'

"The pirate who serves you (incidentally he writes poetry and helps to edit a magazine among other things) apologizes for the lack of a Stevenson parrot. 'A chap we know is going to bring back one from the South Sea Islands,' he declares seriously. 'And we are going to teach it to say: "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"'"



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Then there is the Bohemian trail that leads along three sides of Washington Square. In the red Benedick much literary ink has been spilled. Until a few years ago there were several studios of artists along the south side of the Square. One of the artists, highly talented but quite mad, boasted for a brief period the possession of a slave—a huge Riff from the mountains of Morocco, acquired in some mysterious manner. All Bohemia flocked to the studio to witness the anachronism. For the benefit of those of New York who did not belong to Bohemia the artist delighted to promenade the streets followed at a respectful distance by his serf. Absolam—so the chattel was called—bearing his chains lightly, considered his main duty to be to make love to the ladies of Bohemia. The artist's real troubles began when he undertook to rid himself of his slave. Absolam, waxing greasily fatter and fatter, basking in the warmth of delightful celebrity, refused to be lost.

Long before the days of Absolam and his master there were painter men about the Square. Morse, according to Helen W. Henderson's "A Loiterer in New York," was the first artist to work there. He lived in the old New York University building, and when he was not before his easel, was experimenting with the telegraph. In that building also Draper wrote, and perfected his invention of the daguerreotype, and Colt invented the revolver named after him. The old grey castellated structure, erected in 1837, stood on the east side of the Square until 1894.

Of a restaurant that played a part in one of his stories O. Henry wrote: "Formerly it was a resort of interesting Bohemians; but now only writers, painters, actors, and musicians go there." The same topsy-turvical irony might have been directed with equal happiness at the cafe of the Brevoort, or the Black Cat on West Broadway, or Gonfarone's at the corner of Eighth and MacDougal Streets, or at old Maria's. Whatever else it may be Bohemia is a democracy, and regardless of condition or occupation any one who so wishes may lay claim to and enjoy the privileges of immediate citizenship. We have become more tolerant with the years. He who prates of Philistines is himself a Philistine.

Formerly it was different. To escape the reproach of the uplifted eyebrow, the quizzical look, the "*que diable allait il faire dans cette galere?*" expression, it was necessary to be one of the Mr. Lutes or Miss Nedra Jennings Nuncheons, of Stephen French Whitman's "Predestined," who were regular habitues of "Benedetto's," under which name Gonfarone's was thinly disguised. Mr. Lute wrote a quatrain once every three months for the "Mauve Monthly," and Miss Nuncheon, tall and thin, with a mop of orange-coloured hair, contributed somewhere stories about the "smart set," "a society existing far off amid the glamour of opera-boxes, conservatories full of orchids, yachts like ocean steamships, mansions with marble stairways, Paris dresses by the gross, and



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hatfuls of diamonds, where the women were always discovered in boudoirs with a French maid named Fanchette in attendance, receiving bunches of long-stemmed roses from potential correspondents, while the men, all very tall and dark, possessed of interesting pasts, were introduced before fireplaces in sumptuous bachelor apartments, the veins knotted on their temples, and their strong yet aristocratic fingers clutching a photograph or a scented note."

Gonfarone's, the "Benedetto's" of the tale, is an old, converted dwelling house. There are the brown-stone steps, flanked by a pair of iron lanterns, giving entrance to a narrow corridor; and, beyond, to the right, the dining room, extending through the house, linoleum underfoot, hat-racks and buffets of oak aligned against the brownish walls, and, everywhere, little tables, each covered with a scanty cloth, set close together. In the days when Felix Piers was in the habit of patronizing the place there floated to his ears such phrases as "bad colour scheme!" "sophomoric treatment!" "miserable drawing!" "no atmosphere!" But all that was years ago. When the writer dined there last, a month or so back, fragments of conversation caught from the clatter of the tongues of the Bohemians were: "Take it from me, kid!" "If old man Weinstein thinks he can put that over, he's got another guess coming!" "And then I give her the juice and we lost that super-six in the dust!" "Yes, Huggins has got *some* infield!"

Fifteen or twenty years ago the trail of Bohemia would have inevitably led to Maria's in West Twelfth Street. For there to be found, among others, was a certain Mickey Finn, as celebrated in his day and town as Aristide Bruant was in a section of Paris of the nineties. About Finn gathered a group of newspaper men and journalists. The distinction was that the newspaper man was one who earned his daily bread on Park Row, while the journalist had written a sketch for the New York "Sun" in 1878, and still carried and proudly exhibited the clipping. The original Maria, a large Italian cook who presided autocratically over the kitchen of the basement restaurant, long since migrated somewhere to the north. She had exacted her share of the homage and the substance of her clients. After her departure there was still the attempt to keep up the ancient fire of witticism, and "la la la la!" was still uttered in what was thought to be the best Parisian accent, and the judgments of magazine editors, and the achievements of the painters who sold their portraits, and the writers whose novels crept into the lists of the "six bestsellers" continued to be damned in no uncertain tones. But the old spirit seems irrevocably gone.

CHAPTER XI

The Slope of Murray Hill



Stretches of the Avenue—Murray Hill: a Slope in Transition—Early Astor Land Purchases—The Brunswick Building—A Deserted Clubland—Churches of the Stretch—The Marble Collegiate—The “Little Church Around the Corner” and its Story—When Grant’s Funeral Procession Passed—The Waldorf and the Astoria—On the Hill in 1776—When the Red-Coats Loitered.

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After its half-mile journey between the great, square sordid mountains of stone and steel that lie to the north of Fourteenth Street, Fifth Avenue emerges into the sunshine of Madison Square. There it draws in deep breaths of pure ozone before resuming its way as a canyon at Twenty-sixth Street. Reverting to the past, from the Square to Thirty-first Street, the lane runs through what was the Caspar Samler farm. North of that were the twenty acres that John Thompson bought in 1799 for four hundred and eighty-two pounds and ten shillings. A little later, a more familiar name appeared on the maps. In 1827 the Astor hand reached up to this then remote section, William B. Astor purchasing a half-interest, including Fifth Avenue from Thirty-second to Thirty-fifth, for twenty thousand five hundred dollars. While other real-estate investors who considered themselves astute were planning for the future by gobbling up stretches of land along the shore of the East River the Astors were buying across what was primitively known as the backbone of the island.

The sharp rise to what was the old summit and to the modified hill of the present does not begin until Thirty-third Street is reached. But there is perceptible a grade of a kind as soon as the Avenue leaves the northern line of the Square. Today it is a slope in transition. Here and there the change has been wrought. A modern structure reaches superciliously skyward. Beside it and below it the buildings of yesterday give the impression of feeling acutely conscious of their impending doom. They know. Their race is almost run. Tomorrow the old bricks will be tumbled down, the chutes will roar with their passing, and the air will be shrill with the steam drills and riveters ushering into the world the young giants that will take their places. At the northeast corner of Twenty-sixth Street, where the Avenue touches the Square, there is a vast edifice of surpassing ugliness. It is the Brunswick Building, on the site of the old Brunswick Hotel, once famous as the headquarters of the Coaching Club. At one end the principal establishment of one of those firms that have given the term "grocer" a new meaning, at the other, a great book-shop of international reputation, and between, a booking office where the pictures and maps in the show windows stir the passer-by to disquieting dreams on streams of Canada and Maine in the summer, and of semi-tropical verdure in the winter.

Now and again, on the way up the slope, there is a house, which, sturdily and stubbornly, has remained what it was built for, a place of residence, despite the encroachments of commerce. But there are only four or five such. Until a few years ago this was a section of Clubland with the Reform, and the Knickerbocker, the latter at the Thirty-second Street corner, and the New York, just above the Thirty-fourth Street crossing. But the clubs, too, have moved on to the north, and the stretch of today is a riot



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without order or design, tailors, automats, art shops, opticians, railway offices, steamship offices, florists, leather goods, cigars, Japanese gardens, Chinese gardens, toys, pianos, and even an antique shop or two, which have somehow found their way over from Fourth Avenue to the more aristocratic thoroughfare to the west, and where the visitor, like Raphael of Balzac's "Le Peau de Chagrin," may wander in imagination up and down countless galleries of the mighty past. At the Twenty-eighth Street corner there is a tall apartment house, retaining a sort of left-behind dignity; and there are two churches which belong to the Avenue's story, one of them on the Avenue itself, and the other in a side street, a stone's throw to the east. The first is the Marble Collegiate Church, which is at the northeast corner of Twenty-ninth Street, adjoining the Holland House. It is one of the six Collegiate churches that trace their origin to the first church organized by the Dutch settlers in 1628. Its succession to the "church in the fort" is commemorated by a tablet, and in the yard is preserved the bell which originally hung in the North Church.

Then, in East Twenty-ninth Street, is the rambling old Church of the Transfiguration, loved by all true New Yorkers irrespective of creed, under the name of the "Little Church Around the Corner." From it the actors Wallack, Booth, and Boucicault were buried, and in it is the memorial window to Edwin Booth, executed by John La Forge, and erected by the Players Club in 1898, in loving memory of the club's founder. Below the window is Booth's favourite quotation.

"As one, in suffering all: That suffers nothing; A man that fortune's buffets and rewards Hast ta'en with equal thanks." —*Hamlet*, III., 2.

Often as the story from which the church derived its familiar name has been told, no narrative dealing with New York would be quite complete without it. As it deals with Joseph Jefferson, let it be related in the words of the stage Rip Van Winkle's Reminiscences. Mr. Jefferson was trying to arrange for the funeral, and in company of one of the dead actor's sons, was seeking a clergyman to officiate. Here is his story:

"On arriving at the house I explained to the reverend gentleman the nature of my visit, and arrangements were made for the time and place at which the funeral was to be held. Something, I can hardly say what, gave me the impression that I had best mention that Mr. Holland was an actor. I did so in a few words, and concluded by presuming that this would make no difference. I saw, however, by the restrained manner of the minister and an unmistakable change in the expression of his face, that it would make, at least to him, a great deal of difference. After some hesitation he said he would be compelled, if Mr. Holland had been an actor, to decline holding the service at his church.

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“While his refusal to perform the funeral rites for my old friend would have shocked, under ordinary circumstances, the fact that it was made in the presence of the dead man’s son was more painful than I can describe. I turned to look at the youth and saw that his eyes were filled with tears. He stood as one dazed with a blow just realized; as if he felt the terrible injustice of a reproach upon the kind and loving father who had often kissed him in his sleep and had taken him upon his lap when a boy old enough to know the meaning of the words and told him to grow up to be an honest lad. I was hurt for my young friend and indignant with the man—too much so to reply, and as I rose to leave the room with a mortification that I cannot remember to have felt before or since, I paused at the door and said: ‘Well, sir, in this dilemma, is there no other church to which you can direct me from which my friend can be buried?’ He replied that ‘There was a little church around the corner’ where I might get it done—to which I answered, ‘Then if this be so, God bless the Little Church Around the Corner,’ and so I left the house.”

A photograph from the collection of J. Clarence Davies, reproduced in the book issued by the Fifth Avenue Bank, shows Grant’s funeral procession climbing the slope of Murray Hill, August 8, 1885, and passing the residences of John Jacob Astor and William B. Astor, on the sites of which is the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel of the present. The house of John Jacob was at Thirty-third Street, and that of William B. at Thirty-fourth Street, and there was a garden between shut off from the Avenue by a ten-foot brick wall. The Waldorf, named after the little town of Waldorf, Germany, the ancestral home of the family, occupies the site of the John Jacob house, and was opened March 14, 1893. Four and a half years later, on November 1, 1897, the Astoria came formally into being, and the two hotels linked by the hyphen and merged under one management. That point where Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street cross is one of the great corners of New York. It is the one that made the profoundest impression on Arnold Bennett: “The pale-pillared, square structure of the Knickerbocker Trust against a background of the lofty red of the AEolian Building, and the great white store on the opposite pavement.” A city of amazement has been left behind. Here we are at the threshold of still another city. It is different at every hour of the day. But whether we see it in the sweet-scented dawn, or at high noon, or at the shopping hour, or later, when, to use Arnold Bennett’s words, “the street lamps flicker into a steady, steely blue, and the windows of the hotels and restaurants throw a yellow radiance, and all the shops—especially the jewellers’ shops—become enchanted treasure houses, whose interiors recede away behind their facades into infinity,” it is ever the essence of our New York of Anno Domini 1918.



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Then, in an instant, the Hill of today vanishes. The show windows of the great shops, gorgeous with display, the vast hotels, the clubs, the fluttering Starry Banners and Tricolours and Union Jacks, the stirring posters that bring the heart into the throat and send the hand down into the pocket for Liberty Loan or Red Cross, the line of creeping motor-cars on the asphalt, the swarming sidewalks, swim away in a mist, and in their place there is rolling woodland, and a silver stream, and in the distance, a great white house. The years drop away. A boy of eight, curled up in a big chair, is dipping for the first time into the pages of his country's history. His face is flushed, his eyes are bright. With that vividness that belongs to impressionable childhood, and to no other period of life he is seeing bits of the past that he will never forget. To the end of his days the rhetorical phrases will ring in his ears and the letters forming them will dance before his eyes.

Boston Common. The line of defiant Minute Men drawn up. The curt order, "Disperse, ye Rebels!" and the volley that followed so closely upon the words. *This was the first blood shed in the American Revolution.* The morning of an impending battle: the Continental leader exhorting his men. "*There are the Red Coats! We must beat them today, or Molly Stork's a widow!*" Again, the boy is being awakened from sleep in his bed in a quiet street of eighteenth-century Philadelphia. The voice of the watchman is crying the hour and the thrilling tidings. "*Two o'clock in the morning! All's well, and Cornwallis has surrendered!*"

Here, on the Murray Hill of May, 1918, the man becomes the boy once more. Perhaps the suggestion comes from one of the women's faces that are looking straight at him, beseechingly and rebukingly, from the posters that line the Avenue; the face of "The Greatest Mother in the World," or that younger face beyond which the eye perceives dim outlines of marching men in khaki. The veil with the Red Cross is transformed into a coiffure of powdered hair, crowning the countenance and figure of a *grande dame* of the eighteenth century. She is standing before the doorway of a great country house, smiling and beckoning welcome, and at the invitation officers on horseback halt the column of rapidly moving men. The soldiers break ranks and throw themselves down in the shade of the trees. The officers advance bowing, and enter the house. The lady is smiling.

The hostess with the powdered hair is Mrs. Mary Lindley Murray, wife of Robert Murray, British sympathizer and Quaker, and mother of Lindley Murray, the grammarian of later days; the house is the Murray Homestead, or the Manor of Ingleberg, that in Revolutionary times stood in the neighbourhood of what is now Park Avenue and Thirty-seventh Street; the Red Coats whose march westward she has interrupted are the troops of Lord Howe, in close pursuit of the badly demoralized soldiers of General Washington; the day is one of September, 1776.

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A few weeks before the disastrous battle of Long Island had been fought. The Continental cause seemed at the point of immediate collapse. Day by day the list of deserters swelled. Washington, leaving his campfires burning to lull the suspicions of the confident victors, had transported his men across the East River. On September 15th the British began sending over boat-loads, landing them at Kip's Bay, where the Murray estate ended, now the easterly point of Thirty-fourth Street. In overwhelming numbers, fully equipped, and with elated morale, they began the pursuit of the shattered Americans. The detachment of Continentals left at Kip's Bay to oppose the landing had fled without firing a shot. Washington, watching the debacle, had spurred his horse furiously forward, striking the men with the flat of his sword, lashing them with his tongue, in vain attempt to stop the panic. He was on the point of advancing alone when his bridle-rein was seized by a young officer. In an instant, again completely master of himself, he was building new plans in the hopes of saving his army.

The situation on Manhattan Island was this. To the south was General Knox, in command of a fort known as Bunker Hill on an eminence of what is now Grand Street. Near-by was General Israel Putnam—probably less known to posterity (above all, to youthful posterity) for his qualities as a commander than for the mad dash down “Put's Hill” at Greenwich by which he escaped the closely pursuing Red Coats. With Putnam was Alexander Hamilton, in charge of a battery. To the generals Washington sent word to retreat to the north in order to effect a junction of forces. Knox withdrew men and cannon from Bunker Hill. The young man who guided Putnam's troops along obscure paths and by winding lanes close to the Hudson was named Aaron Burr. The busy Washington chanced to spend a night in the Murray home. If there had been any hesitation in Mrs. Murray's patriotism before, it vanished entirely under the grave charm of the Virginia leader. Henceforth she was heart and soul with the Continental cause.

Two days later the British came. Mrs. Murray knew the danger that threatened the Americans. Her woman's wit and woman's charm must save the hour. So smiling she stood in the doorway, curtsying and inviting. The day was hot; the officers thirsty. To the minds of the British, contemptuous of the prowess of the troops in ragged blue and buff, what difference would an hour or two make when the *coup de grace* was so easy to deliver? The lady was charming, *grande dame*, and her husband was known for devotion to King George. So they stayed and drank and drank again, while the American forces were meeting on the site of the present Longacre Square. A few days later came the Battle of Harlem Heights, where the Continentals gloriously redeemed themselves. The wine cups of Mrs. Murray made possible the victory of the “Bloody Buckwheat Field.” Had not a lady with powdered hair been standing before the door of her house on Murray Hill, the signers of the Declaration of Independence might, instead of hanging together, have hanged separately.



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CHAPTER XII

Confessions of an Exiled Bus

After all, it was a hoary-haired scoundrel of a bus; a very reprobate of a bus; an envious, evil-thinking, ill-conditioned, flagrantly thieving, knavish blackguard of a bus. Under no circumstances am I proud of the acquaintance. But then, in extenuation, be it said that it was never anything but an acquaintance of Shadow-Land, conjured up, perhaps, by a material repast that had been palatable and indigestible.

Have you read Alphonse Daudet's delightful "Tartarin of Tarascon"? Are you acquainted with the "baobab villa," and the elusive Montenegrin Prince, who had spent three years in Tarascon, but who never went out, and who decamped with Tartarin's well-filled wallet; and the jaundiced Costlecalde, and the embarrassingly affectionate camel, and the blind lion from the hide of which grew the great man's subsequent fame, and all the other whimsical creations of the novelist's pleasant fancy? The book is one of my favourite books, one of the tomes that are taken to bed to pave the way to restful, happy slumber. Perhaps that night it had been the last volume to be tossed aside before turning out the light, for as I slept, to use the words of the tinker of Bedford, I dreamed a dream.

There was a consciousness of being jolted about abominably in a ramshackle vehicle. The surroundings were vague, as they always are in dreams. Low hills and sandy waste and sparse shrubs. Where was it, the "Great Desert," or some stretch in South America or in Mexico? In my dream I was dozing, trying to forget the painful bumping and twisting. A familiar voice brought me to with a sudden start.

"Say! Listen! Hey you! Wake up, can't you?" Far off as the voice seemed at first, there was a delicious, home-sickness-provoking, nasal twang to the accents.

"Who are you?" I asked sleepily.

"Who am I? Now that is a question. Don't you recognize me? Why I am one of the old Fifth Avenue buses that used to run from Washington Square up to Fifty-ninth Street. That's who I am."

"But why are you here?" I stammered. "What brought you to this strange corner of the world?"

"Believe me," the spluttering voice replied, "I am not here of my own will. You can bet your tintype on that, Mr. Washington Arch, or Mr. Hoffman House Bar, or Mr. Flatiron Building."

"Your mode of address is somewhat obsolete," I ventured. "Changes have taken place."



“Yes, I know. You want to be strictly up-to-date, like all the rest of the New Yorkers. As you say, changes have taken place. That is our unfortunate story. We were discarded, tossed aside, just as soon as they found that they could replace us by those evil-smelling, noise-making, elongated, double-decked children of the devil. Without a word, without a regret, they packed us off. Some of us were sent to the end of Long Island, some to Florida to



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haul crackers and northern tourists, some, like myself, to the uttermost ends of the earth. But the worst fate was that of those who stayed. They were sold to a department store, and kept to run between its door and a Third Avenue El. station, to be packed to bursting with fat women and squalling children from the Bronx. Think of their degradation! Think of their feelings when they reflect upon the days of past glory!

“It was hard,” the confidences continued, “but I do not complain. We were growing old, no doubt of that. We were of yesterday, and you know the old saying of the ring that youth must be served. Even John L. learned that, and before him, Joe Coburn and Paddy Ryan. Then Jim Corbett learned it too, and freckled ‘Bob’ Fitzsimmons, and now there is a young fellow named Jim Jeffries who perhaps will find it out in his turn. You see, in my youth I was something of a patron of sport. I knew them all, and they are all down and out, and I am down and out.” There was a plaintive whine in the spluttering, squeaky voice.

“We knew that our hour was passing. We read the story in the averted eyes of those who in earlier days we had regarded as our fast friends, or we heard it in the outspoken, contemptuous remarks of those who had no regard whatever for our feelings. To strangers, above all, were we objects of derision. Throaty, mid-western voices made disparaging comparison reflecting, not only on us, but on our fair city. Visiting Englishmen surveyed us through monocles and talked of the buses of the Strand and Regent Street. There was a French artist, a Baron Somebody-or-other, who afterwards wrote a book called ‘New York as I Have Seen It.’ He had married an American girl, the daughter of a comedian at whose clever whimsicalities my passengers used to laugh uproariously. I had carried him often—that actor, and knew him as one of the most genial and companionable of men. One day the Frenchman, accompanied by his father-in-law, stopped me at a street corner down near Washington Square, climbed up beside my driver, and rode to the end of the route. Here, thought I, is where I get a little appreciation. Here is a critic from the older civilization, a man with a proper reverence for the past, who can look beyond the freshness of varnish. I have a right to expect something in the nature of consideration from him. Bah! All he said was: ‘Among the splendid carriages and the high-priced automobiles, perhaps to prove that we are in a land of freedom, the black, dirty, wretched omnibuses ply from one end of the Avenue to the other.’ Honest now, wouldn’t it jar you?

“I called you Mr. Washington Arch just now. I was wrong,” the accents were now no longer plaintive, but raucous and sneering. If I had doubted before, there was now no questioning the old rascal’s claim to recognition as a fellow New Yorker. “But I was wrong. You are Mr. Piker from Uptown Somewhere. Had you been Mr. Arch, you would have recognized me as soon as I did

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you. We real ones do not forget. But I have your number. Would you like me to tell you a few things? Oh, I have your *dossier*, all right. Let me see. The first time I carried you you were an infant howling abominably. You were lifted in somewhere in the 'Fifties,' and three blocks farther down a fat old man got out, muttering, 'Why don't they keep those brats off the stages!' The next time you were still howling. You were about six, and you had been taken to the old Booth Theatre at the corner of Twenty-third Street and Sixth Avenue, and had seen 'Little Red Riding Hood,' and when the wolf said, 'All the better to eat you with, my dear,' you burst into a frightened bawl, and had to be hurried out. Soon after I saw you on a balcony near the Square watching a political procession go by. Then there were a few years that I missed you, and then a period when I saw you often. I had grown rather to like you, until one Thanksgiving Day morning. You snubbed me direct. There were buses covered with coloured bunting in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel. You climbed on one. Again you were howling, this time methodically, deliberately, in chorus with a number of other young lunatics. I tried my best to be friendly, but not a look would you give me. You were too busy shouting and waving a flag. Say, do you want any more of those little personal reminiscences?"

I did not. I mumbled a few words of lame apology, pleading the thoughtlessness of youth. The excuses were apparently taken in the proper spirit, for again the voice was tearful.

"Ah, but those were the good old days! Out here I love to think of them and to recall my youth. I am battered now, and my joints creak. But once I was all fresh paint and varnish, one of the aristocrats of city travel. How I used to look down upon the bob-tailed cars at the cross-town streets. Besides I was not merely one of the splendid Old Guard, I was *the* bus—the one of which they used to tell the famous story. Others may claim the distinction, but they are impostors, sir, rank impostors. I was the bus. What! You don't mean to say that you have never heard it?"

Humbly I acknowledged my ignorance, and listened to a tale that, I was assured, had once been told in every club corner and over every dinner table on the Avenue.

"It was nine o'clock of a blustery March night. Mulligan was not my driver on the trip, but Casey, who had been imbibing rather freely at the corner place of refreshment during the wait. Empty we left the starting point under the 'L' curve on South Fifth Avenue. Empty we crossed the Square. At the Eighth Street corner, in front of the Brevoort, we stopped. A gentleman and his wife entered. We proceeded. At Nineteenth Street we were again hailed. Three young men were standing at the curb. The one in the middle had evidently been drinking, for his head was drooping, and he was leaning heavily upon his companions. He was helped in and placed far forward, just under



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the coin box. Casey pulled the strap attached to his leg, closing the door, and we moved on, across Madison Square, past St. Leo's, up the slope of Murray Hill. At Thirty-seventh Street there was a tug at the strap, and one of the young men said a curt 'good-night' and alighted. We passed the old Reservoir, crossed Forty-second Street. Two blocks more and the second of the young men signalled. 'Good-night, Dick!' he said and was gone. As we resumed the journey the gentleman who with his wife had climbed aboard at Eighth Street noticed that the head of the third young man, the one apparently intoxicated, was sinking lower and lower. Thinking that he might be carried beyond his destination he stepped forward and touched his arm. 'We are passing Fifty-third Street,' he said. There was no response. He shook the shoulder and repeated the information. Suddenly he turned to his wife. 'We will get out,' he said quickly. 'But, George—' she began. 'We will get out,' he repeated, pulling the strap. As they stood under the lamp light at the corner the wife continued her protests. 'But there were four more blocks to go.' 'My dear,' said the husband, '*that young man's throat was cut from ear to ear!*'"

"You are," I remarked crossly, "a most infernal old liar."

"Maybe, maybe," was the wheezy response.

[Illustration: "THE SITE OF THE OLD LENOX LIBRARY IS NOW OCCUPIED BY THE HOUSE OF MR. HENRY C. FRICK, ONE OF THE GREAT SHOW RESIDENCES OF THE AVENUE AND THE CITY. A BROAD GARDEN SEPARATES THE HOUSE, WHICH IS EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH, FROM THE SIDEWALK"]

"But I haven't said that it was true, have I? Nor again have I said that it wasn't. Strange things have happened on the Avenue. There have been nights of violence. Sometimes, on late trips, my nerves have jumped at the sound of some terrified cry. Often it has come from one of the most respectable of houses. Again, in broad daylight, I have seen startled faces pressed against upper windows. I have seen hands dropping notes to the pavement. Once in a while a passer-by has picked up one of those notes. But as a rule they were caught by the wind and whisked away. What was in those notes? That's what I want to know. Again, when it was dark, there has been the sound of running feet, and a panting man has jumped from the roadway to my rear step while we were in motion. The next morning there were stains on my cushions—the stains left by bloody hands. They never could wash them out. They never could wash them out."

There was a lurch as a wheel bumped down into a hollow in the rough road, and the exile fell to groaning and blaspheming.

"Ah, my rheumatic joints; my poor old bones! This climate!"



So the old Fifth Avenue bus complained of the rheumatism. I recalled that the diligence that carried M. Tartarin across the Algerian desert also gave vent to many “Ai’s” about aching joints and sudden twinges. What creatures of imitation we are, to be sure!



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“But it is the loss of old friends that hurts the most,” so the confidences went on. “There was Mulligan, for example, of whom I was speaking just now—he of the long coat and the dented brown derby hat. Far up, near the end of the line, there was an old one-story frame roadhouse, that had been there in my father’s time, in my grandfather’s time, in my great-grandfather’s time. Mulligan knew it well, and many the time, when he came out of it, he was swaying slightly, and had to pull himself up to the box by means of the seat rails. Then there were anxious moments, as we raced over the cobblestones, and my wheels scraped other wheels to the right and left. In those days there was a strap, one end of which was attached to the driver’s boot, and the other end to the door at the rear. When a passenger wished to alight he pulled the strap and the driver released his hold. Sometimes the young bucks—we called them dudes in those days—inside had been dining well, and were hunting for mischief. Two or three of them would grab the strap and pull with all their strength. My sides are creaky now, but they ache with laughing when I recall how Mulligan used to swear. Sometimes the strap gave and sometimes the driver’s leg was twisted half off. Was that the origin of the expression ‘pulling his leg’? I wonder! The fare was dropped into the box up in front. At first the driver was the one who made the change. Later the change was handed out in sealed paper envelopes. Mulligan was of the early days. What became of him? Oh, he went into politics.

“I’ll tell you what you can do for me,” the exile went on. “Some day, when you are back in the old town just drop into the Hoffman House bar and take a drink for me, all the time looking up at the pictures of the lovely ladies about to go in bathing in a beautiful brook in the woods.”

“Stop!” said I, sternly. The piratical old plagiarist of a vehicle was about to begin filching from another source. There had been a guilty squeak in the voice that had roused my suspicions. “No doubt,” I said, with pointed sarcasm, “among the many passengers you carried at various times was the late Mr. Richard Harding Davis. He was a literary man of parts, and wrote, among other books, a charming little story called ‘The Exiles.’”

“What! Is he d——? I mean I never heard of the gent,” was the brazen response. “There was a Davis, now, a Sebastian Davis, I think the name was, in the hair-oil business, if I am not mistaken. A little fellow, with mutton-chop side whiskers. But as I was saying, I don’t know anything better than Fifth Avenue at Madison Square of a summer’s night, with the hobos dozing already on the park benches, and people hanging round the entrance of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and the men lined up three deep at the Hoffman bar, and the girls walking by on their way to dance the minuet at the Haymarket up at Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street. I said the minuet. Do you get me?” There was an evil chuckle. “Across the Square Diana is twinkling up there in the sky, and beneath, in the Garden, they are pulling off a middle-weight bout to a decision. Just round the corner, in the Madison Square Theatre, you can hear the clapping. The play is Hoyt’s ‘A Trip to Chinatown.’ Listen:



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“Oh, the Bowery, the Bowery,
They say such things and they do such things
On the Bowery,’

“Or maybe it’s:

“You will think she’s going to faint,
But she’ll fool you, for she ain’t;
She has been there many times before.”

“I see,” said I, for both the theft of ideas and the pretence of innocence were too flagrant; “that your memories are of what we lovingly called ‘the golden,’ and detractors called the ‘yellow’ nineties. We were both young once.”

But the assumption of friendliness seemed only to irritate.

“The nineties! Why, I was an old man in the nineties! An old, old man! I wasn’t a youngster in the eighties, or the seventies, for that matter. There’s another one of the old Avenue buses on this line. No. 27. He says he is older than I am. He’s a liar. Sometimes I think I am the oldest bus in all the world, and that I ought to be enjoying myself in the Smithsonian, instead of dragging out my existence bumping over boulders and prairie grass.

“Come to think of it,” the old bus went on meditatively, “the Smithsonian does not appeal to me after all. I think that I would be better pleased in a corner of the Third Degree room down at Number 300 Mulberry Street, or in the Chamber of Horrors at the Eden Musee. For, as you may have noticed, I am partial to crime. It is the result of my bringing up. It is the excitement of my early days that I miss most now. When I first came out here it was with a feeling of pleased expectancy. I anticipated a daily hold-up. I had visions of stage robbers in cambric masks, and running gun fights, and horses in frightened flight, and my driver stricken to the heart and tumbling from his seat. But it is a degenerate and tame world out here. Give me little old New York.”

“But the statistics—” I began.

“You do not know one-quarter. The police do not know one-half. But I know. You have read what the papers have printed, or what some retired Inspector has seen fit to tell in his Memoirs. You did not pass, night after night, the sinister house of the woman whose open boast was that, if she wished to, she could take half the roofs off the Avenue. You did not know how real that terrible threat was, for you never saw the cloaked men issuing from its doors bearing their ghastly burdens. You have heard of the Burdell murder but you never knew the real solution. You have read of the Nathan murder at the corner of the Avenue and Twenty-third Street. But you did not hear, as I heard, that piercing wail, or see the shaking figure that climbed on my rear step at Twenty-fourth



Street and rode twenty blocks northward. A man once wrote an Australian story called 'The Mystery of a Hansom Cab.' My life had not one mystery but a score of mysteries. You think you know something of Fifth Avenue. What do you know of the killing the Girl in Green, or of Colt and the William Street printer, the Suicides of No. X Washington Square, North, or The Enigma of the Fifteenth Street House, or of The Case of Giuseppe and the Italian Ambassador, which was hushed up by orders from Washington and Rome, or The Affair of the Titled Sexton, or The Madison Square Tower Episode?"



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But I was growing weary of the voice of the old impostor.

“Ever hear of Conan Doyle?” I asked.

“Now come to think of it, a drummer from Altoona left a paper copy of one of his books the last trip.”

CHAPTER XIII

A Post-Knickerbocker Petronius

A Post-Knickerbocker Petronius—The Early Life of Mr. Ward McAllister—A Discovery of Europe—A Glimpse of British High Life—The Judgment of a Diplomat—The South and Newport—Organizing New York Society—The “Four Hundred”—Maxims of a Master and Maitre d’Hotel.

He does not reign in Russia cold,
Nor yet in far Cathay,
But o’er this town he’s come to hold
An undisputed sway.

When in their might the ladies rose,
“To put the Despot down,”
As blandly as Ah Sin, he goes
His way without a frown.

Alas! though he’s but one alone,
He’s one too many still—
He’s fought the fight, he’s held his own,
And to the end he will.

—*From a Lady after the Ball of February 25, 1884.*

Mrs. Burton Harrison, in “Recollections, Grave and Gay,” told of a visit made in 1892 as one of a party of invited guests travelling by special train to the newly built Four Seasons Hotel at Cumberland Gap, in Tennessee, where the directors of a new land company and health-resort scheme had arranged a week of sports and entertainments. About forty congenial persons from New York and Washington made the trip, the mountaineers and their families along the route assembling at stations to see the notabilities among them. The chief attraction, Mrs. Harrison recorded, seemed to be Ward McAllister, who had been expected, but did not go. At one station, James Brown Potter, engaged in taking a constitutional to remove train stiffness, was pointed out by another of the party to a group of staring natives as the famous arbiter of New York fashion.



“I want to know!” said a gaunt mountain horseman. “Wal, I’ve rid fifteen miles a-purpus to see that dude McAllister, and I don’t begrutch it, not a mite.”

All over the land there were yokels and the spouses of yokels and even the children of yokels, moved by a like interest and curiosity; while rural visitors to New York, and also New Yorkers born for that matter—if such a person as a born New Yorker actually existed—craned their necks from the tops of the Fifth Avenue buses in the hope of catching a glimpse of the great man, who, for a brief, flitting moment was an institution of as much importance as the Obelisk or the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



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But so far as the great world beyond the Weehawken Hills went, Ward McAllister's was an ephemeral glory. It was a clear case of anachronism. He was born one hundred years too late, or two hundred years, or two thousand. His was the soul of the Roman Petronius, or of one of the Corinthian eccentrics, who strutted in St. James's Park or past Carlton House in the early days of the Regency, and gave colour to that otherwise grim England that was grappling for life with the Corsican; or of "King" Nash of Bath. It was the "King," perhaps, that he suggested most of all. But in the Carlton House circle he might have out-Brummelled Brummel, and supplanted that famous Beau as the object of the fat Prince's attentions and ingratitude. Indeed there was a flavour of Brummel's biting insolence in some of the sayings that were attributed to the New Yorker. For example, there was a well-known literary woman of New York, who had in some way incurred the arbiter's august disapproval.

"She write stories of New York society!" he said. "Why, I have seen her myself, buying her Madeira at Park & Tilford's in a demijohn."

When Thackeray was contemplating writing "The Virginians," he desired information about the personality of Washington, and applied to the American historian Kennedy. Kennedy began to impart his knowledge in the manner that might have been expected from a historian when the Englishman interrupted rather testily, "No, no. That's not what I want. Tell me, was he a fussy old gentleman in a wig, who spilled snuff down the front of his coat?" It was in some such spirit that I applied to that old friend of the fine Italian manner, and the profound personal and inherited knowledge of the ways and the men and women of New York. I did not, I explained, wish to be unkind, but the memory of that latter-day Petronius was one of the most mirth-provoking memories of my boyhood. Was he fair game for a chapter of a flippant nature? But why not? was the retort. He himself would have adored it.

Fame came to him through the newspaper reporter. It was a smaller New York, a more limited Fifth Avenue in those days, and Mrs. Astor ruled its society without any one to question her sovereignty. She was about to give a great ball, and Ward McAllister, as the self-appointed and generally accepted secretary of society, was in charge of the list of invitations.

To the reporter sent to interview him Mr. McAllister explained that, owing to problems of space, only four hundred cards were to be sent out, commenting: "After all, there are only four hundred persons in New York who count in a social way."

"And who are those four hundred persons?" asked the quick-witted reporter.

On that point Mr. McAllister was more reticent. But the reporter obtained the list of those who were to be invited to the ball, and the names were printed as those who constituted New York's "Four Hundred."



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“Society,” said my friend sagely, “needs to be managed just as a circus is managed. Of good family, with an independent income large enough to make him free from the necessity of work, and small enough to keep him from the time-using diversions of extravagance, with a knowledge of wines, and a bent for selecting the proper kind of buttons for the coat in which to attend a cock-fight, he was the man for his circle and age. A Brummel? Hardly that. There was nothing of the ill-starred Beau in his appearance. His influence was good, as Brummel’s was occasionally good. You recall the saying of the Duchess of York to the effect that it was Brummel’s influence which more or less reformed the manners of the smart young men who were notorious for their excesses, their self-assertiveness, their want of courtesy. He was more akin to the ill-favoured Richard Nash, whose wise autocracy helped so much in the redeeming of the city of Bath.”

After all, whether it was part pose, or whether the man was quite sincere in his professed belief in the profound importance of what most of the world is inclined to regard as trivialities, he was always consistent. As a youth he went to live in the house of a relative, in Tenth Street, New York, when that neighbourhood retained a flavour of aristocracy. A legacy of one thousand dollars fell to him. It was his first legacy. A cannier soul would have made the money go a long way. He spent it all for the costume that he was to wear at the fancy dress ball that was to be given by Mrs. John C. Stevens at her residence in College Place. “I flattered myself that it was the handsomest and richest costume at the ball.” A little later, in 1850, he went to San Francisco, to join his father in the practice of law. It was in the first days of the gold rush, when the city was in the making, and fabulous prices were paid for the commodities of life. In the make-up of a man there had to be a certain amount of stern stuff if he was to survive in that struggle for existence. Young McAllister prospered, and in the course of time built himself a house. “My furniture,” he recorded, “just from Paris, was acajou and white and blue horse-hair. My bed quilt cost me \$250. It was a lovely Chinese floss silk shawl.” His talents as a giver of dinners were in evidence at that early age, and his father made use of them in connection with the law business. There was a French *chef*, at a salary of ten thousand dollars a year. High prices and scarcity served only as spurs to the young Petronius.

“Such dinners as I gave I have never seen surpassed anywhere,” he complacently recorded in later years. Some one spoke to the elder McAllister of the admirable manner in which his son kept house. “Yes,” was the sapient retort. “He keeps everything but the Ten Commandments.”



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Two years of California, and then he returned East. At that period of his life the idea of the Diplomatic Service as a career appealed to him. Mr. Buchanan was going to England as Minister, and Ward McAllister applied to President Pierce for the post of Secretary of Legation. He was *persona grata* with Buchanan, he had the influence necessary to push his petition, and the matter seemed settled. But just then along came his father, who wanted to be made Circuit Judge of the United States for the State of California. Two appointments at the same time to one family were out of the question, so the young man stepped aside as became a dutiful son. But see Europe he would, and if he could not go in the Government's service and at the public expense as a dabbler with official sealing wax, he would go as a private citizen. The record he preserved of that journey gives a marvellous picture of the man.

In London he met a Californian, in with all the sporting world, on intimate terms with the champion prize-fighter of England, the Queen's pages, and the Tattersalls crowd. Chaperoned by this curious countryman, McAllister's first introduction to London life took the form of a dinner at a great house in the suburbs. It was a strange house and a strange company, more in keeping with the eighteenth century than the middle of the nineteenth. The rat-pit, the drawing of the badger, the bloody battling of the bull terriers, the high betting, the Gargantuan eating and drinking and shouting, the smashing of glasses and plates, the imperturbable footmen in green and gold liveries calmly replacing in their chairs the guests overcome by strong potatoes—it was a picture for Hogarth's pencil at its best, or Gillray's at its craziest.

The intimation is that, in the course of this and similar adventures, McAllister was defraying his own expenses and those of his Californian companion. Provided it was the kind of life he wanted to see, it was money well spent.

Then he went off to Windsor, and there, at the village inn, dined with Her Majesty's *chef* and the keeper of the jewel-room. Again it was probably the visitor from across the seas who gave the dinner, as a result of which he was permitted to visit the royal kitchen, and see the roasts turning on the spits.

"I saw Prince Albert and the Prince of Wales that morning shooting pheasants alongside of the Windsor Long Walk, and stood within a few yards of them. I feel sure we ate, that day, the pheasants that had been shot by Prince Albert." Doesn't it read like a bit of Thackeray—say from the paper in "The Book of Snobs" on "The Court Circular" with its references to the shooting methods of a certain German Prince-Consort?

"A tiny bit of orange peel,
The butt of a cigar,
Once trod on by a Princely heel,
How beautiful they are!"



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Having exhausted England the young discoverer travelled to Paris and thence to Florence. There are believed to be a few art galleries in Florence and some monuments of historical interest. But about these Lochinvar did not disturb his head greatly. Instead he discovered a cook—"I paid the fellow twenty-four Pauls a day"—whose manner of roasting a turkey was most extraordinary. He cultivated the English doctor of the city and through him procured invitations to the balls given by the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The King of Bavaria attended one of these balls, and something very terrible happened. It was *lese-majeste* in its most virulent form.

The offender was an American girl who committed the crime while being whirled about in McAllister's arms. "I did it! I was determined to do it! As I passed the King I dug him in in the ribs with my elbow. Now I am satisfied." "I soon disposed of the young woman," recorded her partner of the dance, "and never 'attempted her' again."

There were other eccentric Americans at large in Europe in those days besides the fair belle of Stonington. One of them, in Rome, wore a decoration that excited the curiosity of his host, the Austrian Minister. His Excellency finally found the opportunity to refer to it questioningly. "Sir!" said the American, drawing himself up. "My country is a Republic. If it had been a Monarchy, I would have been the Duke of Pennsylvania. The order I wear is that of the Cincinnati." The Minister, deeply impressed, withdrew. In Rome McAllister found that the American Minister was in the habit of inviting Italians to meet Italians, and Americans to meet Americans. When asked the reason, he replied: "I have the greatest admiration for my countrymen: they are enterprising, money-getting, in fact, a wonderful nation, but there is not a gentleman among them."

In reading the blasting comment I am moved to wonder what manner of man the Minister was who took no shame in giving expression to such an opinion of his brethren of the western world. "And then," Thackeray might have written, "I sink another shaft, and come upon another rich vein of Snob-ore. The Diplomatic Snob, etc." Yesterday Americans travelling in other lands had every reason to resent a type of representative that had been sent abroad to uphold the honour and dignity of our flag; the uncouth manners, the shirt sleeves, the narrow intolerance, that told all too plainly the story of party reward. Yet, somehow, I rather prefer that man, unpleasant as he was, and humiliating to patriotic pride as he was, to the dandy and ingrate of whom Mr. McAllister told. I like to think that, however Europeans may have laughed and wondered at the yokel out of place, for the sycophant denying his compatriots was reserved the bitterest of their contempt.



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From Italy McAllister went to spend the summer at Baden-Baden. The Prince of Prussia, later the Emperor William, was there. It pained the young American to find that the royal visitor was no connoisseur, gulping his wine instead of sipping and lingering over it. But there is haste to express intense admiration. "His habit of walking two hours under the trees of the Allee Lichtenthal was also mine, and it was with pleasure I bowed most respectfully to him day by day." The final touch to the McAllister education came at Pau, where he passed the following winter, and the winter after. He ran down to Bordeaux, made friends with all the wine fraternity there, tasted and criticized, wormed himself into the good graces of the owners of the enormous Bordeaux caves, and learned there for the first time what claret was. "There I learned how to give dinners; to esteem and value the Coq de Bruyere of the Pyrenees, and the Pic de Mars."

Thus equipped for the serious business of life as he conceived it, he returned home. He entertained old Commodore Vanderbilt at a dinner that caused the ex-Staten Island ferryman to remark: "My young friend, if you go on giving such dinners as these you need have no fear of planting yourself in this city." He was at first disappointed at the reception accorded him by his native city of Savannah. He had prided himself on giving that town the benefit of his European education. But there was a certain resentment at his attitude until "I took up the young fry, who let their elders very soon know that I had certainly learned something and that Mc's dinners were bound to be a feature of Savannah." Then came his *coup*. Certain noble lords were expected from England, the son of the Duke of Devonshire and the son of the Earl of Shaftesbury, and all wondered who would have the honour of entertaining them.

The British Consul counted on the distinction. "He was a great character there, giving the finest dinners, and being an authority on wine, *i.e.*, Madeira, 'Her Majesty's Consul will have the honour.' I secretly smiled, as I knew they were coming to me, and I expected them the next day. This same good old Consul had ignored me, hearing that I had the audacity to give at my table *filet de boeuf aux truffes et champignons*. I returned home feeling sure that these young noblemen would be but a few hours under my roof before Her Majesty's Consul would give me the honour of a visit." He was right. The strangers had not been settled an hour when the tactful Briton rushed up the front steps. Throwing his arms around McAllister's neck, he exclaimed: "My dear boy, I was in love with your mother thirty years ago; you are her image; carry me to your noble guests." "Ever after," is the naive record of our hero, "I had the respect and esteem of this dear old man."

Let us get back to our sheep. The narrative has been rambling too far from Fifth Avenue, and it is with the arbiter of the Avenue that we have to do. Behold him launched, laughed at perhaps, occasionally, but feared and courted. He was at the ball given to the Prince of Wales in the Academy of Music, being the first after the royal guest to take the floor for the waltz.



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He devoted an entire day in railway travel in order to procure a dress-suit, as he called it, in which to appear at a dinner to two English lords. He began to arrange for cotillon dinners, figuring the cost, checking off the invitations, standing at the door of the salon, naming to each man the lady he was to take in.

There was one point to which his subserviency to British visitors would not go. Gastronomically he was as sturdy a patriot as any farmer who blazed away at the Red Coats from behind the Lexington hedges. Stoutly he defended the "saddle" of venison instead of the "haunch." Our tenderloin steak was quite as good as the English rump. Of Madeira he once said, with the spirit of Nathan Hale, "You have none to liken unto ours."

That Prince of Wales who afterwards became George the Fourth, in the vigour of his youth, and the prime force of his invention, invented a shoe-buckle. The crowning work in the life of Ward McAllister was probably the institution of the F.C.D.C.'s, abbreviation for the Family Circle Dancing Class. The Patriarch Balls, of which the first were given in the winters of 1872 and 1873, were growing too large and were being monopolized by the married women. The new association was for the *jeune fille*, and was to be more limited and intimate. Its dances were held at Dodworth's, later Delmonico's, and in the foyer of the Metropolitan Opera House. The arbiter paid the price of his greatness. "From the giving of the first to the time of my giving them up, I had no peace either at home or abroad. I was assailed on all sides, became in a sense a diplomat, committed myself to nothing, promised much and performed as little as possible...."

"My mornings were given up to being interviewed of and about them; mothers would call at my house, entirely unknown to me, the sole words of introduction being, 'Kind sir, I have a daughter.' These words were cabalistic; I would spring up, bow to the ground, and reply: 'My dear Madam, say no more, you have my sympathy; we are in accord; no introduction is necessary; you have a daughter and want her to go to the F.C.D.C.'s. I will do all in my power to do this for you; but my dear lady, please understand, that in all matters concerning these little dances I must consult the powers that be. I am their humble servant; I must take orders from them.' All of which was a figure of speech on my part." The arbiter would then diplomatically suggest the possibility of a friend of social influence, and make some allusion to family. That always started the fair visitor. The family always went back to King John and, in some instances, to William the Conqueror. "My dear Madam," I would reply, 'does it not satisfy any one to come into existence with the birth of one's country? In my opinion, four generations of gentlemen make as good and true a gentleman as forty. I know my English brethren will not agree with me in this, but, in spite of them, it is my belief.' With disdain, my visitor would reply: 'You are easily satisfied, sir.' And so on, from day to day, these interviews would go on; all were Huguenots, Pilgrims, or Puritans. I would sometimes call one a Pilgrim instead of a Puritan, and by this would uncork the vials of wrath."



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To the credit of the post-Knickerbocker Petronius it must be said that he was ever content with his lot. If there were poses to laugh at, there were qualities to respect. A meaner soul might have turned the peacock prestige to financial account. "Had I charged a fee for every consultation with anxious mothers on this subject" (that of introducing a young girl into New York society) "I would be a rich man." A Wall Street banker visiting him in his modest home in Twenty-first Street exclaimed against the surroundings, offering to buy a certain stock at the opening of the Board, and send the resulting profits in the afternoon of the same day. Commodore Vanderbilt, who apparently never forgot that first dinner, once advised: "Mac, sell everything you have and put it in Harlem stock; it is now twenty-four; you will make more money than you know how to take care of."

But steadfastly McAllister refused to be tempted. So long as his cottage was a "cottage of gentility," why try to augment his fortune? "A gentleman can afford to walk; he cannot afford to have a shabby equipage," he once said. That distinction which he felt to be his was not to be impaired by his trudging afoot.

It is not in the pictures of his youth, winning his way into society to rule it; but come to ripe years, secure in his position, imparting his creed on points of social usage, with mellow dogmatism laying down the law in all matters of vintages and viands, that he is most impressive. "My dear sir, I do not argue, I inform."

It was that spirit that led to the dictum that made him famous. "My dear boy, there are only four hundred persons in New York who really count socially." It was as if he had said: "Decant all your clarets before serving them, even your *vin ordinaire*. If at a dinner you give both Burgundy and claret, give your finest claret with the roast, your Burgundy with the cheese. Stand up both wines the morning of the dinner, and in decanting, hold the decanter in your left hand, and let the wine first pour against the inside of the neck of the decanter, so as to break its fall." Doubtless, t'other side of Styx, his spirit has found congenial companions. I see his shade in dignified disputation with other shades. He argues with Brummel about the tying of a cravat, with Nash about a minuet, the proper composition of a sauce is the subject of a weighty dialogue with the great Vatel.

CHAPTER XIV

The Crest of Murray Hill

Stretches of the Avenue—The Crest of Murray Hill—The House of "Sarsaparilla" Townsend—A.T. Stewart's Italian Palace—The Knickerbocker Trust Company—The Coventry Waddell Mansion—A House at Thirty-ninth Street—The Present Union League—A Tavern of the

Fifties—The “House of Mansions”—The Old Reservoir, and Egyptian Temple—The Crystal Palace—The Latting Tower—“Quality Hill.”



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Although the name it now bears and has borne for four or five years is the Columbia Trust Company, the building at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street is likely to be known and referred to as the Knickerbocker Trust for a long time to come. As such it was the storm centre of the great panic which shook the country in 1907, ruining many, shaking some of America's supposedly most solid fortunes, and involving a dramatic suicide. The story of the site goes back almost three-quarters of a century. There, at the beginning of the Civil War, was the residence of "Dr." Samuel P. Townsend. Originally a contractor, he had "discovered" a sarsaparilla, advertised it on an extensive scale, acquired a fortune and the nickname of "Sarsaparilla" Townsend. His house, a four-story brown-stone, was one of the wonders of the town. For some reason he did not live in it long, selling it in 1862 to Dr. Gorham D. Abbott, an uncle of Dr. Lyman Abbott of the "Outlook." For a number of years Dr. Abbott, who had been the principal of the Spingler Institute on Union Square, conducted a school there. Then A.T. Stewart, the famous merchant, bought the site. He found brown-stone and left marble. "Sarsaparilla" Townsend's pride and folly was tumbled to the ground, carted away, and in its place there went up the Italian palace that is still a familiar memory to most New Yorkers. It cost two million dollars. Stewart did not live long to enjoy it. But after his death in 1876, his widow occupied the palace until her death in 1886, when the property was leased to the Manhattan Club. There was a story to the effect that during the club's occupancy it was found necessary to make certain interior alterations. One of the committee in charge was an Irishman. He complained that the work was unduly expensive for the reason that "the woodwork was all marble."

But before Stewart demolished and built, and before "Sarsaparilla" Townsend built what Stewart later demolished, there had been a famous mansion in this neighbourhood. Thackeray, in one of his letters to the Baxter family, alluded to the long journey he was about to undertake in order to travel from his hotel to a certain famous house up in the country at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-seventh Street. That was the Coventry Waddell house, on land where the Brick Presbyterian Church now stands. Waddell was a close friend of President Jackson, and his fortune sprang from the services he rendered as financial representative of the "Old Hickory" Administration. In 1845, when he went "into the wilderness" to build, the Avenue, beyond Madison Square, was nothing but a country road lined with farms. It is told that when he was bargaining for the land, his wife sat under an apple-tree in a neighbouring orchard. Nine thousand one hundred and fifty dollars he paid for the tract, which ten years later brought eighty thousand dollars, and for part of which the Brick Church paid fifty-eight thousand dollars in 1856.



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The Fifth Avenue Bank monograph contains a print of the villa, as it was called, reproduced from "Putnam's Magazine." What the print apparently shows is the Thirty-seventh Street stretch, with the wicket fence near the corner, and the low brick wall extending westward beyond. The villa was of yellowish grey stucco with brown-stone trim, Gothic in style, and had so many towers, oriels, and gables, that when Waddell's brother saw it and was asked what he would call it, replied, "Waddell's Caster; here is a mustard pot, there is a pepper bottle, and there is a vinegar cruet." There were a conservatory and a picture-gallery, and the house stood considerably above the Avenue level upon grounds that descended to the street by sloping grass banks. A winding staircase led from the broad marble hall to a tower from which there was a fine view of the rolling country, the rivers to the east and west, and the growing city far to the south. There were celebrities other than the author of "Vanity Fair" who sampled the quality of the Waddell hospitality. For ten years the Waddells lived there, entertaining magnificently. Then came the financial crash of 1857, Mr. Waddell was one of those whose fortunes tumbled with the market, and he was obliged to sacrifice his estate. The villa was torn down, and the grounds levelled. "I remember," "Fifth Avenue" quotes Mr. John D. Crimmins as saying, "very vividly the old Waddell mansion. I was taken into it by my father the day they began to dismantle it, and remember very distinctly the courteous manner in which we were received by Mrs. Waddell, and how she regretted the destruction of her home. At that time the Reservoir was an attraction for the view it furnished. There were no buildings high enough to interfere, and visitors could get a bird's-eye view of the entire city and the Palisades. The neighbourhood at that time is well illustrated in the old New York print showing the Reservoir and the Crystal Palace, 1855. There were no pretentious houses north of Forty-second Street. It was interesting to see the drovers—tall men, with staffs in their hands, herding eight, ten, or twenty cattle—driving the cattle to market, generally on Sunday, as Monday was market day."

[Illustration: THE TERRACE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY. TO-DAY THE SPOT IS THE SCENE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THOSE ENGAGED IN THE WORK OF SPEEDING AMERICA'S ANSWER. ONCE IT WAS FAR UPTOWN, AND ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE AVENUE WERE THE RESIDENCES KNOWN AS "SPANISH ROW," OR "THE HOUSE OF MANSIONS"]

About the time that the Waddell villa was being pulled down there was going up, two blocks to the north, a New York residence that has endured to the present day. The original Wendell and the original Astor were partners in the fur trade, and at the time of the death of the late John Gottlieb Wendell his holdings in Manhattan real estate were second only to those of the Astors. There was a General David Wendell, known as "Fighting Dave," who fought in



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the War of the Revolution. The first Wendell and the first Astor, his partner, married sisters, and they bequeathed to their descendants the sound principle of buying land and buying beyond. The John Gottlieb Wendell of recent memory, a great-great-grandson of the founder of the family fortune, was distinguished for his eccentricities. Although he collected his own rents, would never give more than three-year leases, and could not be persuaded to part with a foot of his land holdings, he was characterized as "one of the squarest landlords in the city." In the old-fashioned brick and brown-stone house he lived in extreme simplicity. From the top of a passing bus may be seen the garden beyond the high board fence. Many covetous eyes of commerce have regarded it; many tempting offers have been made. But according to popular tradition Mr. Wendell clung to the garden because his sisters desired it as a place in which to exercise their dogs. Now, after the death of John Gottlieb, the three elderly sisters still live in the house, in a state of the same old-time plainness. They, with a married sister, are the sole heirs of the eighty million dollars in New York real estate left by their brother. The house, a few years ago, was assessed at five thousand dollars, the site is valued at two million.

Directly across the Avenue from the Wendell house is the Union League Club, on land that formerly was occupied by Dickel's Riding Academy, fifty years ago the fashionable equestrian school of New York. The early story of the organization will be found in another chapter. The present home at the northeast corner of Thirty-ninth Street was built in 1879-1880 at a cost of four hundred thousand dollars. The building is in Queen Anne style, of Baltimore pressed brick, with brown-stone trimmings, the interior decorations are the work of John La Farge, Louis Tiffany, and Franklin Smith, and the club's art collection includes Carpenter's Inauguration of Lincoln. The long room on the first floor facing Fifth Avenue, from the windows of which at any hour of the day may be seen comfortable-looking gentlemen blandly surveying the passing procession, is the Reading Room, decorated in Pompeian style.

On the corner above where the Union League now stands there was, in 1854, a small country tavern known as the Croton Cottage. It took its name from the Croton Reservoir, a block above, then on the other side of the Avenue. A yellow, wooden structure, with a veranda reached by deep stoops from the sidewalk, and surrounded by trees and shrubbery, it flourished by vending ice cream and other refreshment to those who came to view the city from the top of the Reservoir walls. During the Draft Riots in 1863 it was burned down, and Commodore Vanderbilt bought the site in 1866 for eighty thousand dollars, built a house, lived in it, and left it to his son, Frederick W. Vanderbilt. It is the Arnold, Constable site. On the same side of the Avenue as the Croton Cottage,



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in the block between Forty-first and Forty-second Street, was the Rutgers Female Cottage. This institution was first opened in 1839 on ground given it by William B. Crosby in Madison Street. The Madison Street property had been part of the estate of Colonel Henry Rutgers, of Revolutionary fame, after whom the college was named. In 1855 certain buildings known as "The House of Mansions," or "The Spanish Row," were erected opposite the Reservoir by George Higgins, who thought "that eleven buildings, uniform in size, price, and amount of accommodation, of durable fire-brick, and of a chosen cheerful tint of colour and variegated architecture," would suit the most fastidious home-seeker. In his prospectus to the public he informed that the view from the windows was unrivalled, as it commanded the whole island and its surroundings. But either "The House of Mansions" had some defect, or the situation was still too remote from the city. The project was not a success, and in 1860 the Rutgers Female College, incidentally the first institution for the higher education of young women in the city, moved from its downtown home and occupied the neglected buildings. Then there is the story of the great square opposite, running from Fifth to Sixth Avenues, between Fortieth and Forty-second Streets. The Public Library holds the eastern half of it now and Bryant Park the western. Like Washington Square and Madison Square the land once served as a burial place for the poor and the nameless dead. Between the years 1822 and 1825 that northern square was the Potter's Field. Then, on October 14, 1842, the massive Reservoir, which remained to see almost the dawn of the twentieth century, was opened with impressive ceremonies. The distributing reservoir of the Croton Water system, it occupied more than four acres, and was divided into two basins by a partition wall. The enclosing walls, constructed of granite, were about forty-five feet high. This vast structure, resembling an Egyptian temple, contained twenty million gallons of water. The Reservoir had been there eleven years, when the Crystal Palace, modelled after the London Crystal Palace at Sydenham, was formally opened July 14, 1853, by President Franklin Pierce. Six hundred and fifty thousand dollars was the cost of the building, which was shaped like a Greek cross, of glass and iron, with a graceful dome, arched naves, and broad aisles. Upon the completion of the Atlantic Cable in 1858 an ovation was given in the Palace to Cyrus W. Field. Beyond the Palace, to the north, was the Latting Tower, an observatory, three hundred and fifty feet high, an octagon seventy-five feet across the base, of timber, braced with iron, and anchored at each of the eight angles with about forty tons of stone and timber. The tower was the design of Warren Latting, and cost one hundred thousand dollars. Immediately over the first story there was a refreshment room, and above three view landings, the highest being three hundred feet from the pavement. The proprietors



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were as sanguine as the promoters of the Crystal Palace and the builder of “The House of Mansions” had been. They took a ten-year lease of the ground and counted on reaping a fortune. But like the other ventures the Tower was a failure. It was sold under execution and destroyed by fire August 30, 1856, twenty-five months before the burning of the Palace. In 1862 Union troops camped on the site of the latter building, and the ground became known in 1871 as Reservoir Park, which name was changed to Bryant Park in 1884.

Like other world-great cities, New York has many hearts. The spot that means the very centre of things varies according to mood, occupation, and manner of life. To high finance and those who play feverishly with it, the heart of the town is where Wall Street, running from Trinity Church down to the East River, is crossed by Nassau zigzagging into Broad. At high noon the colossal figure of Washington on the steps of the Sub-Treasury looks down on the centre of the earth. To the swarming thousands of the Ghetto, who seldom venture west of the Bowery, there is a point on the East Side that represents the pivot of things. There are descendants of the Knickerbockers who cling arrogantly to the corner facing the Washington Arch. Profound is the belief of the pleasure seeker in the lights, signs, theatres, and lobster palaces of Longacre Square. To others nothing counts as the trees and fountains of Madison Square and graceful Diana and the great clock in the Metropolitan Tower count. But in these stirring days of the spring and early summer of 1918, for the throb of the universe climb Murray Hill to a point on the Fifth Avenue sidewalk opposite the stone lions that guard the entrance to the Public Library. There, as nowhere else, has the quiet of other days been changed to the clamour of the present. To the passing thousands the uniforms of khaki or of navy blue and the blaring band are calling. “In this the vital hour let us show that the Spirit of '76 is not dead! Americans, to arms!” And yesterday it was “Quality Hill,” of which Mr. Clinton Scollard sang:

“Quality Hill! Lo! It flourishes still,
And who can deny that forever it will?
A blending of breeding with puff and with plume;
A strange sort of mixture of rick and mushroom.
Some amble, some scramble, (some gamble), to fill
The motley and medley of Quality Hill.”

CHAPTER XV

Giant Strides of Commerce

Giant Strides of Commerce—The Reasoning of M. Honore de Balzac—The Aristocracy of Trade—The Story of a New York Shop—When Fifth Avenue Began to Rival Bond

Street and the Rue de la Paix—Shopping in 1901—Publishing Houses at the Beginning of the Century—Prices of Real Estate—Some Great Houses of the Present.



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Once upon a time, so the story goes, a French publisher, planning an elaborate volume on the streets of Paris, went to Honore de Balzac, then at the height of his fame, to ask him to contribute the chapter on a particular thoroughfare—let us say, the Rue Une Telle, or the Avenue Quelque-Chose. The idea appealed to the fancy of the great man, and matters were going along swimmingly, until it came to the point of settling upon a price to be paid the novelist for his labour. “And now, *cher maitre*, we must consider the painful triviality of emolument.” Without hesitation Balzac mentioned a figure that was simply staggering. It was a minute or two before the astonished publisher could gather his wits together sufficiently to protest and bargain. But Balzac was not to be moved. He explained that the sum named was not merely for the work but also for expenses that would be unavoidable in carrying on the work. “It is this way, *cher Monsieur*. To write about a street it is necessary to know it thoroughly. It is not enough to glance at the *etalage*, one must investigate the shop behind. Let us consider the street that you wish me to describe. As I recall it, first on the right is the establishment of B., the gunsmith. In studying his premises it will, of course, be necessary for me to purchase a rifle or a revolver and a box of cartridges. Next door to B., as you may remember, is the business of X., the perfumer. Luckily for you, Monsieur, a bottle of perfume is not expensive. But beyond that shop there is the one of Y., the furrier, and furs just now, as you doubtless know, are rather high. Of course, proceeding in my investigation, I shall be obliged to buy a ring at the jeweller’s, a *chapeau de forme* at the hatter’s, a pair of boots at the shoe-maker’s, and a waistcoat at least at the tailor’s. In view of such a condition I protest that the price I name for writing the article is astonishingly reasonable.” Needless to say, M. de Balzac did not write the paper desired. The publisher managed to find another scribe who finished the task creditably without purchasing so much as a sheet of paper. But imagine the expense account that would be presented by a writer engaged to describe the stretch of shopping Fifth Avenue from Thirty-fourth Street to Fiftieth who considered it necessary to follow the method suggested by the creator of the *Comedie Humaine*!

Paraphrasing the saying of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, three or four generations in the story of a New York store make an aristocrat of trade. There are names of commerce that stand out in the imagination of the New Yorkers like the names of great soldiers and statesmen. Solid, imposing, facing the Avenue at a corner that represents land value that is computed by the square inch, is the structure of Brown-Smith. In some cases the passer-by will search in vain for any indication of the name—the information being deemed wholly superfluous. It matters not in the least whether the commodity upon which Brown-Smith has reared its history be hats, or groceries, or furs, or jewelry, or silverware, or boots, or men’s furnishings. The story of the enterprise, its growth and its migrations, is, in epitome, the story of the city.



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The beginning of the tale, dealing with the first Brown-Smith, is the narrative of the Industrious Apprentice, coming to the growing town towards the close of the eighteenth century, a raw-boned country youth from New Hampshire or Vermont, finding after much tramping and many rebuffs employment which meant sleeping on a counter in the hours when he was not running errands, sweeping out dusty corners, and polishing up the handle of the big front door, slowly, persistently winning his way to promotion and pay, perhaps, by way of romance, marrying his employer's daughter, eventually setting up for himself and emblazoning the name destined to be great over the entrance of a shop in Catherine or Cherry Street, and there to purvey to the residents of the near-by fashionable Franklin Square. Then the development of the hundred years. The first migration, suggested and urged by an ambitious and far-seeing son, to a corner on remote Grand Street. That was probably the hardest and most radical step in all the history of the house, and there must have been strange doubts and misgivings in the soul of the founder, now grown grey, as he said good-bye to the familiar dwellings of Quality Row in Cherry Street and prepared to venture forth on unknown seas. Be sure that he took with him, as a sacred treasure, his first day-book, with its quaint entries of expenses and receipts. Very likely he did not long survive the change, and was never quite happy in it.

Probably, if you happen to be a patron of the Brown-Smith establishment, and scrupulously leave its communications unopened in the letterbox at the club, you received, three or four years ago, a little book, commemorating the centenary of the house. They differ from one another merely in form and detail—these souvenir booklets. In substance and flavour they are all pretty much the same. There are the old prints reproduced from Valentine's Manual, the allusions to the horse-propelled ferry-boats to Brooklyn, to the advertisement that appeared in a City Directory of one of the years of the fifties, to the attack upon the establishment during the stirring times of the Draft Riots of the Civil War, to the frequent extensions of business and the migrations that carried the name from Grand Street over to Broadway and Prince Street, thence up the great street to a point near Twelfth, then to Union Square, to Madison Square, and finally, to the stately and spacious edifice of the present, far up the Avenue. And who will venture to predict how many years will pass before that structure, today regarded as the last cry in the matter of architecture and convenience, will be outgrown and inadequate, and its situation hopelessly far to the south?



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It was about 1901 that the movement began that was to transform Fifth Avenue from a residential thoroughfare into a shopping street beside which the vaunted glories of London's Bond Street and Paris's Rue de la Paix seem dim. In the Knickerbocker days the important shops of the town lined lower Broadway and the adjacent streets. Then it was to Grand Street that the ladies journeyed to barter and bargain for the latest fashions from the Paris whose styles were dominated by the Empress Eugenie. When Grand Street had been outgrown the shops moved northward to Fourteenth Street and Union Square. There are tens of thousands of New Yorkers whose childhood dates back to the early eighties who recall as one of the delights of the Yuletide season the visit to the revolving show in the window of old Macy's at the corner of Fourteenth Street and Sixth Avenue. For a decade or so Sixth Avenue was the shop paradise. Above Macy's were O'Neill's, and Simpson, Crawford and Simpson's, and Altman's, and Ehrich's, besides the countless emporiums of lesser magnitude. Macy's moved north to Greeley Square, and Gimbel's came to take its place on an adjoining corner, but the movement in bulk turned eastward at Twenty-third Street, lining the south side of that thoroughfare as far as Fifth Avenue. Some of the pioneers had ventured farther to the north, but Twenty-third Street was the centre as the nineteenth century came to a close.

[Illustration: COMMERCE, WITH GIANT STRIDE, IS MARCHING UP THE STATELY AVENUE. THE STORY OF A BUSINESS HOUSE THAT BEGAN IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CHERRY HILL, MIGRATED TO GRAND STREET, THENCE TO BROADWAY AND UNION SQUARE, AND AGAIN TO THE SLOPE OF MURRAY HILL, IS, IN EPITOME, THE STORY OF THE CITY ITSELF]

A writer in the "Century Magazine," describing "Shopping in New York" in 1901, said that even then New York was known as a City of Shops just as Brooklyn was known as a City of Churches, and went on: "The district begins at Eighth Street, where the wholesale establishments end, and follows Broadway as far as Thirty-fourth Street. At Fourteenth Street and again at Twenty-third Street it diverges to the west until it strikes Sixth Avenue, including that part of Sixth Avenue only which lies between the two thoroughfares. From Broadway at Twenty-third Street, it makes another departure, running up Fifth Avenue and ending at Forty-seventh Street." When the department stores lined the south side of Twenty-third Street a number of the great book-shops were on the north side, near the old Fifth Avenue Hotel. Among such was the long-established Putnam, and adjoining that shop was the shop of the Duttons. Of the publishing houses that carried in their traditions back to Knickerbocker days Harper's was in the home of its beginnings and to which it still clings to the present time, the rambling structure hard by Franklin Square, while on Fifth Avenue, below Twenty-third, were the houses of D. Appleton and Company, Charles



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Scribner's Sons, and Dodd, Mead and Company, the last-named being the pioneer in the movement northward when it relinquished its corner at the Avenue and Twenty-first Street to try the slope of Murray Hill at Thirty-fifth Street on land that is now occupied by the Bazaar of Best and Company. The international house of Brentano, before it moved into its present headquarters in the Brunswick Building at Twenty-seventh Street, was in Union Square. Today Brentano's is the largest shop of its kind in the city, while Scribner's, on the east side of the Avenue at Forty-eighth Street, has been called "the most beautiful bookstore in the world."

In the new shopping district beginning at Thirty-fourth Street and running along the Avenue almost to the Plaza, like the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, so the saying goes, exclusiveness for the masses, Altman was the pioneer. In view of what was then considered the prohibitively high price of real estate the projected invasion of the Avenue by the department stores was thought extremely hazardous. In 1901 the street still suggested the time when it had been lined by the dull, monotonous high stoops. Those old fronts had been knocked away, business had invaded many of the lower stories, but there still remained something of the former flavour. But property holders were awake to their opportunities. Inside lots twenty-five by one hundred feet on the Avenue were held at one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, and corner lots correspondingly higher. Within two years these prices had doubled and trebled. Altman's, covering an entire block, eight stories in height, with an addition that rises twelve stories, is a stately guardian of the corner at which the Avenue becomes the Lane of magnificent commerce. The building, of French stone, was designed by Trowbridge and Livingston. Directly across the street is an entrance to McCreery's, although that establishment faces on Thirty-fourth Street. Above McCreery's, opposite the corner where the New York Club once had its home, and on property part of which was formerly the house of the Engineers Club, is Best's, once Lilliputian in more than one sense, but no more so. Thereafter every block has its imposing monument to commerce. Silverware is represented by Gorham's at Thirty-sixth Street. Furs in magnificent display fill the windows of Gunther's Sons between Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh. At the southeast corner of Thirty-seventh Street is Tiffany's. Information as to the nature of the merchandise in which the establishment deals would be superfluous, and the management is evidently of the opinion that the display in the windows tells the story to all the world, for the passer-by will look in vain for any lettering indicating the ownership. Instead, there is a bronze figure of Atlas, bearing a huge clock on his shoulders, adorning the facade of the edifice. The clock is the old Tiffany clock. Of American make, dating from 1850, it was for many years in front of the original



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Tiffany Building at 550 Broadway, near Prince Street. Then, in Union Square, it presided over the fortunes of the house, again to be removed to serve as guardian of the destinies of the present structure, which is of marble, adapted from the Palazzo Grimani of Venice, of which Ruskin once wrote: "There is not an erring line, not a mistaken proportion throughout its noble front." On the corresponding corner above Tiffany's is Bonwit, Teller and Company, and directly facing the latter on the west side of the Avenue is Franklin Simon and Company. Conspicuous on the next block are Lord and Taylor's, and Vantine's, the former Italian Renaissance, with vestibules finished in Bitticino marble and Travertine stone, ceilings of Guastavino tile, and aisles bordered with black Egyptian marble. Today this establishment represents the last cry in construction and administration. Adjoining it to the north is Vantine's, its dimly lighted and incense-scented aisles running between counters covered with rare and costly curios from the Orient.

Northward to the Plaza commerce has moved with giant stride. The march might be studied and pictured block by block, corner by corner, and page after page blackened with detail and description. Any one of a dozen or a dozen dozen shops of the Avenue might be made the subject of a fat volume. For the present purpose it is enough to mention a few of them by name, and in the order of march. At the south-east corner of Fortieth Street, on land that was formerly occupied by the residence of Frederick W. Vanderbilt, is the department store of Arnold, Constable and Company. It is the new home of a house that dates from 1827. To the west of the Avenue, on the north side of Forty-second Street, is Stern's. Other names that have a commercial significance, that are conspicuous in the stretch from the Public Library to the Plaza are W. and J. Sloane, the well-known rug house, on the east side of the Avenue, between Forty-sixth and Forty-seventh Streets; Davis, Collamore and Company (china and glass), Fifth Avenue and Forty-eighth Street; Duveen Brothers (antiques), 720 Fifth Avenue; Fleischman and Thorley (florists), respectively at 500 and 502 Fifth Avenue; the jewellers and silversmiths, Black, Starr, and Frost, 594 Fifth Avenue; Carlton and Company, 634 Fifth Avenue; Kirkpatrick and Company, 624 Fifth Avenue; and Gattle and Company, 634 Fifth Avenue; and such emporiums designed to delight the hearts of extravagant women as J.M. Giddings and Company, L.P. Hollander and Company, and Alice Maynard, all on the Avenue in the neighbourhood of Forty-fifth Street.

CHAPTER XVI

Beyond Murray Hill

Stretches of the Avenue—The Public Library—Temple Emanuel—The Draft Riots—The Coloured Orphan Asylum—The Willow Tree Inn—Remaining Residences—Clubs of the

Section—As Seen by Arnold Bennett and Henry James—Three Churches and a Cathedral—The Elgin Botanical Gardens—Old Land Values.



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O beautiful, long, loved Avenue,
So faithless to truth and yet so true.

—*Joaquin Miller.*

On the site of the old Croton Reservoir the cornerstone of the Public Library was laid November 10, 1902, and the building opened to the public May 23, 1911. To it were carried the treasures of the Astor Library on Lafayette Place, and the Lenox Library at Fifth Avenue and Seventieth Street. Designed by Carrere and Hastings, the Library was built by the city at a cost of about nine million dollars. It is three hundred and ninety feet long and two hundred and seventy feet deep, the material is largely Vermont marble, and the style that of the modern renaissance. The lions that guard the main entrance from the Fifth Avenue side are the work of E.C. Potter. The pediments at the ends of the front, the one at the north representing History and the one at the south Art, are by George Grey Barnard. The fountains are by Frederick MacMonnies. Above the main entrance are six figures by Paul Bartlett, in order from south to north, Philosophy, Romance, Religion, Poetry, Drama, and History. Augustus St. Gaudens, who was to have directed the choice of the sculptors and supervised the work died before the Library was completed.

Although consideration of the Public Library must necessarily be brief, a word should be said of the collection of paintings. The paintings comprise the gifts of three donors: James Lenox, whose collection of about fifty paintings was presented in 1877; the Robert Stuart Collection of about two hundred and fifty paintings, bequeathed by Mrs. Stuart in 1892; and some of John Jacob Astor's pictures, presented by William Waldorf Astor in 1896. Paintings of importance are, in the main room, Munkacsy's Blind Milton Dictating "Paradise Lost" to his Daughters, Sir Henry Raeburn's Portrait of Lady Belhaven, Copley's Portrait of Lady Frances Wentworth, Turner's Scene on the French Coast, Sir Joshua Reynolds's Mrs. Billington as Saint Cecilia, Gilbert Stuart's Washington, Horace Vernet's Siege of Saragossa, Raeburn's Portrait of Van Brugh Livingston; in the Stuart Room, Boughton's Pilgrims Going to Church, Schreyer's The Attack, Inness's Hackensack Meadows, Sunset, Troyon's Cow and Sheep, Detaille's Chasseur of the French Imperial Guard, Bougereau's The Secret, and Weir's View of the Highlands from West Point.

[Illustration: "ON THE SITE OF THE OLD CROTON RESERVOIR THE CORNERSTONE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY WAS LAID NOVEMBER 10, 1902, AND THE BUILDING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC MAY 23, 1911. TO IT WERE CARRIED THE TREASURES OF THE ASTOR LIBRARY AND THE LENOX LIBRARY"]



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About 1825 the land on the east side of Fifth Avenue from Forty-second to Forty-fourth Streets belonged to Isaac Burr, whose estate extended along the old Middle Road. The present Seymour Building at the north-east corner of Forty-second Street is on the site formerly occupied by the home of Levi P. Morton, and before that by the Hamilton Hotel. Near the adjoining corner to the north is No. 511, the late residence of Mr. Richard T. Wilson, Jr. That number was once the home of "Boss" Tweed. Arrested for robbing the city, Tweed asked permission to return to his house for clothes. While policemen were guarding the Fifth Avenue entrance he escaped through a rear alley, made his way to his yacht in the East River, and sailed to Spain. Today unsightly advertising signs, thorns in the flesh of the Fifth Avenue Association, disfigure the north-west corner of Forty-second Street. Behind the signs there is an office building. Until a few years ago the Bristol Hotel stood here, and back in the days before the Civil War there was a small tavern on the site, while on the adjoining lot was the garden of William H. Webb, the ship-builder. Webb's house was at 504 Fifth Avenue, and 506 was once the home of Russell Sage.

The brown synagogue, Temple Emanuel, at the north-east corner of Forty-third Street, dates from 1868. The congregation was organized in 1845, first holding services in the Grand Street Court Room, thence moving in 1850 to a remodelled Unitarian Church in Chrystie Street, and again, in 1856, to a Baptist Church in Twelfth Street. The present structure, considered one of the finest examples of Saracenic architecture in the country, was designed by Leopold Eidlitz, and completed at a cost of six hundred thousand dollars. The materials are brown and yellow sandstone, with black and red tiles alternating on the roof. Within, near the entrance, are memorial tablets to Dr. Leo Merzbacher, first Rabbi, 1845-56, and to his successors, Dr. Samuel Adler (father of Felix Adler), 1857-74, and Dr. Gustav Gottheil, 1873-1903. The present Rabbi is the Rev. Joseph Silverman.

Back from the Avenue, on the west side, between Forty-third and Forty-fourth Streets, there once stood the Coloured Orphan Asylum. It was a square four-story building, occupying almost the entire block, and there was a garden in front extending to the road. The Asylum, which was under the management of the Association for the Benefit of Coloured Orphans, organized in 1836 by a number of prominent New York women, received from the city in 1842 a grant of twenty-two lots and erected the building in which the children were housed and taught trades. In the summer of 1863 there were between two hundred and two hundred and fifty children in the institution. Then Congress passed the Conscription Law. In the evening papers of Saturday, July 11th, the names of those drafted from New York were announced. Excitement seethed that night and all day Sunday. Monday the storm broke.



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The draft offices were surrounded by a mob, and as the first name was called a stone crashed through a window. That was the signal. The offices were rushed and the building soon in flames. The police were routed, and a squad of soldiers sent to their aid disarmed and badly beaten. Then the mob ranged, pillaging the house of William Turner on Lexington Avenue, firing the Bull's Head Hotel at Forty-fourth Street, and the Croton Cottage opposite the Reservoir, plundering the Provost Marshal's office at 1148 Broadway, and destroying an arms factory at Seventh Avenue and Twenty-first Street. Then some one in the mob cried out that the war was being fought on account of the negroes and the rioters started in the direction of the Asylum. When they reached the spot they found an empty building, for the alarm had been given and the children taken to the Police Station and later conducted under guard to the Almshouse on Blackwell's Island. But the structure they destroyed, and when they came upon a coloured man in the neighbourhood they hanged him to the nearest tree or lamp-post.

During the riot the draft-rioters made their headquarters at the Willow Tree Inn, which stood near the south-east corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, and which at one time was run by Tom Hyer, of prize-ring fame. A photograph shows it as it was in 1880, with the tree from which it took its name in front, and the Henry W. Tyson Fifth Avenue Market adjoining it. "Fifth Avenue" quotes from Mr. John T. Mills, Jr., whose father owned the cottage: "My mother planted the old willow tree," said Mr. Mills, "and I remember distinctly the Orphan Asylum fire. The only reason our home was not destroyed was that father ran the Bull's Head stages which carried people downtown for three cents, and the ruffians did not care to destroy the means of transportation." There were many vacant lots in this section of Fifth Avenue at the time of the Civil War, and a small shanty below the Willow Cottage was the only building that stood between Madison Avenue and Fifth Avenue. On the north-west corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, then considered far north, stood a three-story brick building. The stockyards were between Fifth Avenue and Fourth Avenue from Forty-fourth to Forty-sixth Street, and Madison Avenue was not then cut through. The stockyards were divided into pens of fifty by one hundred feet, into which the cattle were driven from runs between the yards. On the east side of Fifth Avenue, just above Forty-second Street, stood four high brown-stone-front houses, the first to be built in this neighbourhood. In the rear of these were stables that had entrances on Fifth Avenue. "Fifth Avenue" points to the Willow Tree Inn as illustrating the appreciation of Fifth Avenue real estate. "In 1853 this corner was the extreme south-west angle of the Fair and Lockwood farm, and was sold for eight thousand five hundred dollars. Here in 1905 a twelve-story office building was erected, replacing Tyson's meat market and the old Willow Tree Inn. The corner was then held at two million dollars. The property was bought in 1909 for one million nine hundred thousand dollars by the American Real Estate Company."



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At No. 7 West Forty-third Street is the home of the Century Association, at the corresponding number in Forty-fourth Street that of the St. Nicholas Club, formed of descendants of residents, prior to 1785, of either the City or State of New York, and facing diagonally at Forty-fourth Street, are the establishments of Delmonico and Sherry. The site of the former restaurant was occupied from 1846 to 1865 by the Washington Hotel, otherwise known as "Allerton's," a low white frame building surrounded by a plot of grass. The rest of the block was a drove yard. Thomas Darling bought the entire block in 1836 for eighty-eight thousand dollars. David Allerton, to whom he leased part of it, ran the Washington Hotel during the Civil War. When the cattle-yards were removed to Fortieth Street and Eleventh Avenue the tavern's living was gone. John H. Sherwood, a prominent builder who contributed much towards developing upper Fifth Avenue as a residential section, bought the site and erected the Sherwood House. It was in the basement of the hotel that the Fifth Avenue Bank first opened for business. An interesting record of early rental values is found in the original minute book of the Bank. The Bank's offices in the basement of the Sherwood House were secured "at a rental of two thousand six hundred dollars per year, said rental to include the gas used and the heating of the rooms." There have been but four transfers of the corner upon which the Bank now stands at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street since Peter Minit, in 1626, bought the island from the Indians for a handful of trinkets.

[Illustration: ENTRANCE TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY. THE LIBRARY, 590 FEET LONG AND 270 FEET DEEP, WAS BUILT BY THE CITY AT A COST OF ABOUT NINE MILLION DOLLARS. THE MATERIAL IS LARGELY VERMONT MARBLE, AND THE STYLE THAT OF THE MODERN RENAISSANCE]

Despite the invasion of business there are many houses in this stretch of the Avenue that recall the tradition and flavour of the older New York. Between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth, Nos. 555 and 559, respectively, are the residences of Mrs. James R. Jessup and Mrs. John H. Hall. At the north-east corner of Forty-seventh Street is the home of Mrs. Finley J. Shepard, formerly Miss Helen Gould. Between Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth live Captain W.C. Beach (585), Mrs. James B. Haggin (587), Mrs. Robert W. Goelet (591), Mrs. Russell Sage (604), Mrs. Ogden Goelet (608), and Mrs. Daniel Butterfield (616). On the next block, Charles F. Hoffman (620), and August Hecksher (622); and between Fifty-first and Fifty-second, William B. Coster (641), William B.O. Field (645), and Robert Goelet (647). Then, on to the Plaza, comes the sweep of the houses of the Vanderbilts, and the residence of Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler (673), Samuel Untermeyer (675), F. Lewisohn (683), H. McK. Twombly (684), William Rockefeller (689), Mrs. M.H. Dodge (691), W. Kirkpatrick Brice (693), Mrs. Benjamin B. Brewster (695), Adrian Iselin, Jr. (711), Mrs. N.W. Aldrich (721), John Markle (723), Mrs. Lewis T. Hoyt (726), H.E. Huntington (735), Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs (739), Joseph Guggenheim (741), and William E. Iselin (745).



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Of this land the stretch from Forty-fifth Street to Forty-eighth on the east side of the Avenue was a part of the fifty-five-acre estate bought by Thomas Buchanan between 1803 and 1807 from the city, which was then disposing of its common land, for the sum of seven thousand five hundred and thirty-seven dollars. One hundred and eight years later "Fifth Avenue" appraised its value at twenty million dollars. For his country-seat Buchanan purchased a tract of ground along the East River front between Fifty-fourth and Fifty-seventh Streets. Buchanan died in 1815. A daughter, Almy, married Peter Goelet, and another daughter, Margaret, married Robert Ratzel Goelet, which accounts for the large Goelet holdings in this section.

In this stretch of the Avenue and in the adjacent streets is the heart of the new Clubland. The Century in Forty-third and the St. Nicholas in Forty-fourth have been mentioned. At No. 10 West Forty-third Street is the home of the Columbia University Club. In Forty-fourth Street are the City Club (55 W.), the New York Yacht (37 W.), and the Harvard (27 W.). Until a few years ago the Yale Club was diagonally across the street from the Harvard Club, but now the alumni of "Old Eli" have a superb club-house of their own on Vanderbilt Avenue between Forty-fourth and Forty-fifth Streets, which they are occupying jointly with the alumni of Princeton for the duration of the war. Farther up the Avenue, on the northeast corner of Fifty-first Street, is the Union Club, which moved there after relinquishing the house it held so long at the corner of Twenty-first Street. Then, at the north-west corner of Fifty-fourth Street, is the University Club, to the mind of Mr. Arnold Bennett, the finest of all the fine buildings that line the Avenue. "The residential blocks to the north of Fifty-ninth Street," he wrote in the book that on this side of the North Atlantic was known as "Your United States," "fall short of their pretensions in beauty and interest. But except for the miserly splitting, here and there, in the older edifices, of an inadequate ground floor into a mezzanine and a narrow box, there is nothing mean in the whole street from the Plaza to Washington Square. Much mediocre architecture, of course, but the general effect homogeneous and fine, and, above all, grandly generous.... The single shops, as well as the general stores and hotels on Fifth Avenue, are impressive in the lavish spaciousness of their disposition. Neither stores nor shops could have been conceived, or could be kept, by merchants without genuine imagination and faith."

Bennett, though not in an unkindly spirit, was looking for aspects, not to praise, but to abuse. It was a far different neighbourhood forty-five years ago. Henry James, writing in 1873, in "The Impressions of a Cousin" (Tales of Three Cities), said: "How can I sketch Fifty-third Street? How can I even endure Fifty-third Street? When I turn into it from the Fifth Avenue the vista seems too hideous, the narrow, impersonal houses with the hard, dry tone of their brown-stone, a surface as uninteresting as that of sandpaper, their steep, stiff stoops, their lumpish balustrades, porticos, and cornices. I have yet to perceive the dignity of Fifty-third Street."



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Besides being a stretch of clubs it is a stretch of churches. Shrinking back from the sidewalk on the east side of the Avenue between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Streets is the Church of the Heavenly Rest. So inconspicuous in appearance is it that once a passer-by commented: "I can perceive the Heavenly, but where is the Rest?" Two blocks to the north, at the corner of Forty-eighth, is the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas, occupying the block between Fiftieth and Fifty-first is the Cathedral, and at Fifty-third is Saint Thomas's. Once the tract from Forty-seventh to Fifty-first Street was occupied by the Elgin Botanical Gardens. The story of the Gardens, says "Fifth Avenue," "begins in 1793 in the garden of Professor Hamilton near Edinburgh, where Dr. David Hosack, a young American, who was studying with the professor, was much mortified by his ignorance of botany, with which subject the other guests were familiar. Hosack took up the study of botany so diligently that in 1795 he was made professor of botany at Columbia College, and in 1797 held the chair of Materia Medica. He resigned to take a similar professorship in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, where he remained until 1826. For over twenty years he was one of the leading physicians of New York, bore a conspicuous part in all movements connected with art, drama, literature, city or State affairs, and was frequently mentioned as being, with Clinton and Hobart, 'one of the tripods upon which the city stood.' He was one of the physicians who attended Alexander Hamilton after his fatal duel with Burr. While professor of botany at Columbia he endeavoured to interest the State in establishing a botanical exhibit for students of medicine, but failing to accomplish this he acquired from the city, in 1801, the plot mentioned above, for the purpose of establishing a botanical garden. In 1804 the Elgin Botanical Gardens were opened. By 1806 two thousand species of plants with one spacious greenhouse and two hot houses, having a frontage of one hundred and eighty feet, occupied what today is one of the most valuable real estate sites in New York, the tract being now valued without buildings at over thirty million dollars. The financial burden of maintaining the garden was more than the doctor could carry, and he appealed to the Legislature for support. Finally on March 12, 1810, a bill was passed authorizing the State, for the purpose of promoting medical science, to buy the garden. The doctor sold it for seventy-four thousand two hundred and sixty-eight dollars and seventy-five cents, which was twenty-eight thousand dollars less than he had spent on it. The State finally conveyed the grounds in 1814 to Columbia College, and this property, part of which the College still holds, has largely contributed to the wealth of the great University."



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But to revert to the churches. The Heavenly Rest is noted for its fine wood carvings and its stained glass windows. In the tower of the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas hangs a bell, cast in Amsterdam in 1731, which for years hung in the Middle Dutch Church in Nassau Street. While the British held New York the bell was taken down and secreted. When the Middle Dutch Church became the Post Office in 1845 the bell was removed, first to the Ninth Street Church, then to the Lafayette Place Church, and later to its present location. The crocketed spire of the Church of St. Nicholas is two hundred and seventy feet high. Within the edifice is a tablet to the soldiers and sailors of the Revolution, placed by the Daughters of the Revolution, and oil portraits of all the ministers of the church from Dominie Du Bois, who, in 1699, preached in the old Church in the Fort.

[Illustration: "O BEAUTIFUL, LONG, LOVED AVENUE, SO FAITHLESS TO TRUTH AND YET SO TRUE"—JOAQUIN MILLER]

Then St. Patrick's Cathedral. It was conceived, in 1850, by Bishop Hughes of the Diocese of New York, the cornerstone was laid in 1858, and the Cathedral dedicated in 1879 by Cardinal McClosky. It was designed by James Renwick, the architect of Grace Church and St. Bartholomew's. The Cathedral is three hundred and thirty-two feet in length and one hundred and seventy-four feet in breadth, the spires rise three hundred and thirty feet above the ground, and the seating capacity of the edifice is two thousand five hundred. But its full capacity is eighteen thousand, and it is eleventh in point of size among the cathedrals of the world. Considering St. Patrick's in its artistic aspect Miss Henderson, in "A Loiterer in New York," has said: "Renwick considered it his chief work; and the cathedral holds high rank as an example of the decorated, or geometric, style of Gothic architecture that prevailed in Europe in the thirteenth century, and of which the cathedrals of Rheims, Cologne, and Amiens are typical.... The modern French and Roman windows, which, to the eye of the later criticism, impair the beauty of the simple interior, were considered something most desirable in their day, and their completion was hurried in order that they might be shown at the Centennial Exhibition, of 1876, where they were a feature much admired. One of them—the window erected to St. Patrick—has at least an antiquarian interest. It was given by the architect, and includes, in the lower section, a picture of Renwick presenting the plans of the Cathedral to Cardinal McClosky. The rose window is said to be a fac-simile of the rose window at Rheims, recently destroyed by German bombs; a *provenance* that may be the more securely claimed since the original has been immolated. As a matter of fact, it too bears the stigma of the Centennial period, of which it is a characteristic example. The only windows of aesthetic interest in the church are the recent lights in the ambulatory, made by different firms in competition for the windows of the Lady Chapel, which is to be treated in the same rich manner."



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Massive and splendidly Gothic is St. Thomas's. The church dates from 1823. In 1867 the present site was secured, and the brown-stone edifice of the early seventies, designed by Richard Upjohn, was for nearly two generations the ultra-fashionable Episcopal church of the city. In 1905 it was destroyed by fire, and with it, in the flames, perished its artistic contents, among them the decorations made by John La Farge and Augustus Saint Gaudens. For six months the congregation was without a home. Then a wooden structure was erected and the new church was built without interfering with the services during the following years. Designed by Ralph Adams Cram, the present St. Thomas's is of white limestone from Kentucky. The left entrance, which is surmounted with a garland of Gothic foliage composed of orange blossoms, is the Bride's Door. Carved on each side of the niche above the keystone is a "true-lover's-knot." A cynical observer (Rider's "New York City") comments: "Few visitors note the sly touch of irony which, by a few strokes of the chisel, has converted the lover's knot on the northerly side into an unmistakable dollar sign."

On the west side of the Avenue, running from Fifty-first to Fifty-second, are the Vanderbilt twin residences, the wonder of the town of a quarter of a century ago. They were built, in 1882, by the late William H. Vanderbilt, the southerly for his own use, and the northerly one for his daughter, Mrs. William D. Sloane. In 1868 the land on which the brown-stone mansions stand was occupied by one Isaiah Keyser, whose small three-story frame house was in the middle of a vegetable garden. That garden supplied the residents along lower Fifth Avenue, and its owner also dealt in ice and cattle. In the house which Mr. Vanderbilt erected for himself Henry C. Frick lived for a time. The Vanderbilt family spent millions of dollars in purchasing property to protect themselves against business encroachments.

In former days the neighbourhood was given over largely to philanthropic and religious institutions. The New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb stood between Forty-eighth and Fiftieth Streets and Fourth and Fifth Avenues. That was from 1829 to 1853. The building was one hundred and ten feet long, sixty feet wide, four stories high, with a beautiful colonnade fifty feet long in front. The grounds are described as "beautifully laid out in lawns and gardens, planted with trees and shrubbery." When the Asylum sold the property in 1853 it moved to Washington Heights. For many years the National Democratic Club and the Buckingham Hotel have stood on the land. The site of St. Patrick's, originally part of the Common Lands of the City, was sold in 1799 for four hundred and five pounds and an annual quit rent of "four bushels of good merchantable wheat, or the value thereof in gold or silver coin." Then it became the property of the Jesuit Fathers, and in 1814 the Trappist Monks



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conducted an orphan asylum there. Eventually it passed into the hands of the trustees of St. Peter's Church on Barclay Street, and St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mulberry Street, who, in 1842, conveyed about one hundred feet square on the north-east corner of Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street to the Church of St. John the Evangelist. The ground now occupied by the Union Club was once part of the site of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum.

CHAPTER XVII

Approaching the Plaza

Stretches of the Avenue—Approaching the Plaza—The Great Hotels—Old St. Luke's Hospital—"Marble Row"—Some Reminiscences of Mr. John D. Crimmins—Men and Manners of Sixty Years Ago—Early Transportation—The Saint Gaudens Sherman Group—The Cryptic Henry James—The Fountain of Abundance.

One August day I sat beside
A cafe window open wide,
To let the shower-freshened air
Blow in across the Plaza, where,
In golden pomp against the dark
Green, leafy background of the Park,
St. Gaudens's hero, gaunt and grim,
Rides on with Victory leading him.

—*Bliss Carman, On the Plaza.*

Approaching the Plaza, besides the churches, clubs, and the various houses associated with the name of Vanderbilt, there is conspicuous the cluster of great hotels. To sum up the nature of these hostelries briefly, imagine an Englishman. "We now crossed their Thames over what would have been Westminster Bridge, I fancy, and were presently bowling through a sort of Battersea part of the city," was the way in which the British butler in Mr. Harry Leon Wilson's "Ruggles of Red Gap" described part of a hazy, riotous ride about Paris. Later, the same worthy, come to our own New York, indicated the hotel of sojourn by the information that it overlooked "what I dare say in their simplicity they call their Hyde Park." Beneath the caricature there was a sound understanding of the workings of the British mind. So if an Englishman contemplating a visit seeks advice in the matter of hotels there is the obvious short cut. Certain of the less pretentious places in the side streets and overlooking the minor parks may be described as "the sort of thing you find about Russell Square." The Waldorf-Astoria, the Knickerbocker, the McAlpin, or the Astor as "like the Cecil, Savoy, or the

Northumberland Avenue Hotels.” The vast, expensive edifices of public welcome in the neighbourhood of the Plaza as “something rather on the order of Claridge’s and the Carlton.”



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These hotels are the St. Regis and the Gotham on opposite corners of the Avenue at Fifty-fifth Street, the Savoy and the Netherland on the east side of the Avenue at Fifty-ninth Street, and the huge new Plaza Hotel facing them from across the square. When the St. Regis was first opened popular fancy ascribed to it a scale of prices crippling to the average purse. The idea was the subject of derisive vaudeville ditties. When a "Seeing New York" car approached the Fifty-fifth Street corner the guide invariably took up his megaphone and called out, "Ladies and gentlemen! We are passing on the right the far-famed St. Regis Hotel! If you order beefsteak it will cost you five dollars. If you call for chicken they will look you up in Bradstreet before serving the order!"

St. Luke's Hospital, now crowning Morningside Heights, opposite the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, was formerly on the land now occupied by the Gotham and the adjoining University Club. A photograph in the Collection of the Fifth Avenue Bank shows the old Hospital as it was in 1867. The point from which the picture was taken was in the middle of Fifty-fourth Street, east of the Avenue. At the north-east corner an iron rail fence separates the hospital grounds from the sidewalk, but the other three corners are vacant lots. To the west, on the south side of Fifty-fourth Street, a solitary house looms up. It is No. 4, now the residence of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Near the Hospital, until 1861, was the Public Pound. The Hospital was opened May 13, 1858, with three "Sister Nurses" and nine patients. Its cost was two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. It was a red brick building, facing south, and consisted of a central edifice with towers. The cornerstone of the present St. Luke's was laid May 6, 1893.

"Marble Row" was the name given for years to the block on the east side of the Avenue between Fifty-seventh and Fifty-eighth Streets. John Mason, at one time president of the Chemical National Bank, bought the land from the city in 1825 for fifteen hundred dollars. Mason was another of the early New Yorkers who foresaw the future possibilities of the real estate of the island. Buying mostly from the Common Lands of the City, he purchased sixteen blocks from Park to Fifth Avenue, and from Fifty-fourth to Sixty-third Street. When he died, in 1839, he left a will cutting off with small annuities both his son James Mason, who had married Emma Wheatley, a member of the famous Stock Company of the old Park Theatre, the favourite "Desdemona," "Julia," "Mrs. Heller" of her day; and his daughter Helen, who had also married against his wishes. The will was contested, and eventually the block between Fifty-seventh and Fifty-eighth Streets passed into the hands of Mrs. Mary Mason Jones. In 1871 she erected on the land houses of white marble in a style that was a radical departure from the accepted brown-stone type. At once they became known as the "Marble Row." Mrs. Mary Mason Jones, in her day a social leader, lived in the house at the Fifty-seventh Street corner. Later the dwelling was occupied by Mrs. Paran Stevens.



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To "Fifth Avenue" is owed the following description of the neighbourhood of the present Plaza in the middle of the last century. It is from the reminiscences of John D. Crimmins, who has been already quoted in the course of this book. Mr. Crimmins's father was a contractor and at one time in the employ of Thomas Addis Emmet, whose country-seat was on the Boston Post Road near Fifty-ninth Street.

[Illustration: SOUTH OF WHERE "ST. GAUDENS'S HERO, GAUNT AND GRIM, RIDES ON WITH VICTORY LEADING HIM," MAY BE SEEN THE FOUNTAIN OF ABUNDANCE, AND, IN THE BACKGROUND, THE NEW PLAZA HOTEL]

Says Mr. Crimmins: "In the immediate vicinity were the country-seats of other prominent New Yorkers, such as the Buchanans, who were the forebears of the Goelets, the Adriance, Jones, and Beekman families, the Schermerhorns, Hulls, Setons, Towles, Willets, Lenoxes, Delafields, Primes, Rhinelanders, Lefferts, Hobbs, Rikers, Lawrences, and others. A little farther to the north were the country-seats of the Goelets, Gracies, and the elder John Jacob Astor. With all these people, who were practically the commercial founders of our city, my father had an acquaintance. The wealthy merchants of New York at that period frequently invested their surplus in outlying property and left its care largely in the hands of my father, who opened up estates, as he did the Anson Phelps place in the vicinity of Thirtieth Street, which ran north and extended from the East River to Third Avenue. He also opened up the Cutting and other large estates. When I was a lad, as I was the oldest son, my father would take me to the residences of these gentlemen, several of whom had their permanent homes on Fifth Avenue or in the vicinity. At that period, these wealthy citizens conducted much of their business at their homes. James Lenox had his office in the basement of his house at Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street. R.L. Stuart attended to much of his business at his residence, Twentieth Street and Fifth Avenue, and the same may be said of the Costers, Moses Taylor, and others. These men had no hesitation in receiving in their homes after business hours the people whom they employed. I remember distinctly before gas was generally introduced how very economical in its use those who had it were. In the absence of the butler the gentleman of the house would often walk to the door with his visitor and then lower the gas. The estates of many of these wealthy merchants were rented to market gardeners. And it was not an unusual sight to see a merchant drive in his carriage to the vegetable garden, select his vegetables, and carry them to his table, showing the economy and simple manners of the people of that older day as compared with our present extravagance.



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“After the Board of Aldermen had acceded to the petition of the residents of Fifth Avenue for permission to enclose a part of the roadway in a closed yard or area, it was not an uncommon sight to see many of the older men standing at their gates, in high stocks, white cravats, cutaway coats with brass buttons, greeting their neighbours as they passed along the Avenue—a custom which survived to about 1870, when the white cravat, too, passed into history. The improvements on Fifth Avenue, north of Thirty-fourth Street, began with the erection of the Townsend house, which was a feature of the city and shown to visitors. The location was the foot of a high hill.

“On the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street, where the Cathedral now stands, stood the frame church, thirty by seventy feet, in which I was baptized in May, 1844. A path and a road led to the Post Road which ran east of the church and bordered the Potter’s Field. To the north was the Orphan Asylum, and farther on was another cattle yard, Waltemeir’s, a family well known to cattle men. From Fiftieth Street to St. Luke’s Hospital at Fifty-fourth Street there were a few frame houses, and the ground extending to Sixth Avenue was used for market gardens. Old maps of New York show the lanes crossing this section at the time, much like the country roads we see today thirty or forty miles distant from the city. Walls ran along these roads with an occasional house with its gable of the old Dutch type. Mr. Keyser, who dealt in ice gathered from ponds, occupied the site of the present Vanderbilt houses, Fifty-first to Fifty-second Street. The Decker house of Dutch architecture occupied the block between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, Fifty-sixth to Fifty-seventh Street.

“Peter and Robert Goelet I recall very well. Those who called on Peter Goelet would find him in a jumper, bluish in colour, such as we see mechanics wear, with pockets in front. He loved to be occupied and always had a rule and other articles in his pockets. His brother, Robert, was the grandfather of the present Goelets. Peter was the elder and a bachelor. They accompanied each other on walks, Peter, the more active of the two, in front, and Robert a pace behind. They dealt directly with their tenants and those whom they employed in taking care of their properties. I can recall them coming on foot to my father to have him repair a sidewalk or fence. I doubt if these men in their day, except for ordinary living expenses, spent five thousand dollars a year. They were simple in their manners and tastes.

“The older generation was noted for industry, thrift, and economy. An old merchant, an executor of the Burr estate which owned property opposite the new Public Library, once stated that no man who had a million dollars invested, could spend his income in a year. Money at that time brought seven per cent. The contents of an office did not exceed in cost fifty dollars, a pine desk and table, and a few chairs. There were no stenographers and typewriters were unknown.



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“Transportation was principally by stage. There were car lines on Second, Third, Sixth, and Eighth Avenues. The men who kept carriages were few and they generally lived in Harlem or Manhattanville. Occasionally smart four-in-hands were seen, and I recall Madame Jumel driving to town and how we boys used to run to the side of the road to see her pass. Many business men would go to the city driving a rockaway with a single horse. Few of the streets were paved, and there were but two classes of pavements, macadam and cobblestones. Where streets were not paved the sidewalks were in bad condition. In some places the high banks of earth on either side of the street were washed down by heavy rains and deposited on the sidewalks.

“Oil lamps were in general use as street lights, and the light was easily blown out by the wind. The lamplighter was usually a tall man, a character, and his position was considered an important one. Fifth Avenue north of Fifty-ninth Street remained undeveloped for years, and it was not until sometime in the seventies that my father and I finished grading upper Fifth Avenue. Sixty years ago on both sides were stone walls where there were deep depressions. There was no traffic except drovers coming down to market with cattle. There were but two main thoroughfares, Boston Post Road on the east side, and Bloomingdale Road on the west side. From the Boston Post Road long lanes led to the residences of gentlemen who had country-seats on the East River, and similar lanes led from the old Bloomingdale Road to the country-seats on the Hudson River. The sites of the Plaza, the Savoy, and the Netherland Hotels were rocky knolls. A brook which came down Fifty-ninth Street formed several shallow pools which remained for a number of years after the Civil War.”

Whether or not Saint Gaudens was right in his contention that the proper place for his equestrian statue of General Sherman was on the Riverside Drive by Grant's Tomb, without that gilded bronze figure of heroic size and the Winged Victory leading before, the Plaza would not be quite the Plaza. Obscured as it is in these days by the vast scaffolding, there is no true son of Manhattan who passes the corner on his way up the Avenue, or enters Central Park, who does not turn to look at the chief ornament of the broad square. The statue was made several years after Sherman's death, and the sculptor laboured on it for six years, from the time when he began the work in Paris, to its final unveiling, on Memorial Day, 1903. Of the statue and its surroundings as he saw them on the occasion of one of his later visits to the city of his birth and boyhood, Henry James wrote:



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“The best thing in the picture, obviously, is Saint Gaudens's great group, splendid in its golden elegance and doing more for the scene (by thus giving the beholder a point of such dignity for his orientation) than all its other elements together. Strange and seductive for any lover of the reasons of things this inordinate value, on the spot, of dauntless refinement of the Sherman image; the comparative vulgarity of the environment drinking it up, on one side, like an insatiable sponge, and yet failing at the same time to impair its virtue. The refinement prevails and, as it were, succeeds; holds its own in the medley of accidents, where nothing else is refined unless it be the amplitude of the ‘quiet’ note in the front of the Metropolitan Club; amuses itself, in short, with being as extravagantly ‘intellectual’ as it likes. Why, therefore, given the surrounding medium, does it so triumphantly impose itself, and impose itself not insidiously and gradually, but immediately and with force? Why does it not pay the penalty of expressing an idea and being founded on one?—such scant impunity seeming usually to be enjoyed among us, at this hour, by any artistic intention of the finer strain? But I put these questions only to give them up—for what I feel beyond anything else is that Mr. Saint Gaudens somehow takes care of himself.”

Facing the Sherman group, in the centre of the square, with the Cornelius Vanderbilt house in the background, is the Fountain of Abundance, or the Pulitzer Memorial Fountain, designed by Karl Bitter (his last work), executed by Isidore Konti, and erected in 1915 to the memory of the late Joseph Pulitzer, for many years proprietor of the New York “World.” The structure is surmounted by the bronze figure of a nymph, bearing a basket laden with the fruits of the earth. The Vanderbilt residence which is the background when the Fountain is viewed from the north is of red brick with grey facings in the style of a French chateau of the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

CHAPTER XVIII

Stretches of the Avenue

Stretches of the Avenue—The Days of Squatter Kings—Seneca Village—“Millionaire’s Row”—The Avenue Gates—The Soul of Central Park—Some Palaces of the Stretch—The Obelisk and the Metropolitan Museum—Northward Through Harlem.

Here and there in the Island, far to the north, may be found an unblasted rock on the top of which is perched an unpainted shanty with a crude chimney spout from which smoke issues voluminously. A quarter of a century ago there were thousands of such shanties along the upper West Side. From the lofty iron height of the El. Road one could survey them stretching all the way from the Sixties to One Hundred and Sixteenth. On the summits the Lords of the Manors smoked their clay pipes in bland disregard of the world and its rent-collectors, and the family goats gambolled; in the valleys the truck gardens



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waxed green and smiled luxuriously as if conscious of the enormous square-foot value of the land that they were pre-empting. But King Dynamite came, and the steam drill came, and the air clanged with the driving of many rivets, and the Mountain Men, and their goats, and their wives, and their unwashed offspring, and their Lares and Penates went forth into the wilderness—no one knows just where. The days of Squatter Sovereignty had passed.

But the Mountain men and women within the memory were the hardy, obstinate, unyielding survivors, the last to cling to the strongholds in a region that once seemed impregnable. Before Central Park was laid out Fifty-ninth Street was the dividing line. Below, rich brown-stone; above, along the country road which was then Fifth Avenue, a waste, squalid yet in its way picturesque, that extended almost to Mount Morris Park. "Here lived," "Fifth Avenue" tells us, "over five thousand as poverty-stricken and disreputable people as could be seen anywhere. The squatters' settlements in the Park were surrounded by swamps, and overgrown with briars, vines, and thickets. The soil that covered the rocky surface was unfit for cultivation. Here and there were stone quarries and stagnant pools. In this wilderness lived the squatters, in little shanties and huts made of boards picked up along the river fronts and often pieced out with sheets of tin, obtained by flattening cans. Some occupants paid ten dollars and twenty-five dollars rent, but the majority paid nothing. Three stone buildings, two brick buildings, eighty-five or ninety frame houses, one rope-walk and about two hundred shanties, barns, stables, piggeries, and bone-factories, appear in a census made just before Central Park was begun. Some of the shanties were dug-outs, and most had dirt floors. In this manner lived, in a state of loose morality, Americans, Germans, Irish, Negroes, and Indians. Some were honest and some were not; many were roughs and crooks. Much of their food was refuse, which they procured in the lower portion of the city, and carried along Fifth Avenue to their homes in small carts drawn by dogs. The mongrel dogs were a remarkable feature of squatter life, and it is said that the Park area contained no less than one hundred thousand 'curs of low degree,' which, with cows, pigs, cats, goats, geese, and chickens, roamed at will, and lived upon the refuse, which was everywhere. In the neighbourhood of these squatter settlements, of which the largest was Seneca Village, near Seventy-ninth Street, the swamps had become cesspools and the air was odoriferous and sickening."



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Those hovels of yesterday have made way for the beautiful Park and the superb mansions that have earned for the eastern stretch of Fifth Avenue overlooking the Park the title of "Millionaire's Row." There is one impression of the "Row" which one is bound to take away whether the point of observation be the top of a passing omnibus or the sidewalk adjoining the stone wall guarding the boundaries of the Park. That is of a mysterious unreality, due, perhaps to the shades being always lowered and the curtains tightly drawn. In considerable excitement an immaculately garbed little old gentleman was one day seen to descend hurriedly from the Imperiale of the snorting monster by which he had designed to travel down to Washington Square. On the sidewalk, flourishing his cane, he pointed in the direction of a stately palace of white marble. "It is incredible," he kept repeating, "but I certainly saw some one come out of that house. I am the original New Yorker, and I know the thing has never happened before."

As the great lane beyond Fifty-ninth Street is known as "Millionaire's Row," it could have no more appropriate guarding outpost than the Metropolitan Club, more generally called the "Millionaire's Club." The organization was founded in 1891 by members of the Union Club, and the present white marble club-house, at the north-east corner of Sixtieth Street, on land formerly owned by the Duchess of Marlborough, was erected in 1903. The gate to the Park diagonally across from the club, at Fifty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue, is the Scholars' Gate. The other gates along the stretch of the Avenue are the Students' Gate, at Sixty-fourth Street, the Children's Gate, at Seventy-second Street, the Miners' Gate, at Seventy-ninth Street, the Engineers' Gate, at Ninetieth Street, the Woodman's Gate, at Ninety-sixth Street, and the Girls' Gate, at One Hundred and Second Street.

"Park life with us," writes Miss Henderson, "has perhaps become obsolete; our national breathlessness cannot brook this paradox of pastoral musings within sight and sound and smell of the busy lure of money making. Within its gates we pass into a new element; and this element is antipathetic to the one-sided development imposed by city life. Instead of resting us, it presents a problem, and the last thing for which we now have time is abstract thought. And so we prefer the dazzling, twinkling, clashing, clamoring, death-dealing, sinking, eruptive, insistent Broadway, where every blink of the eye catches a new impression, where the brain becomes a passive, palpitating receptacle for ideas which are shot into it through all the senses; and where, between 'stepping lively' and 'watching your step,' a feat of contradictoriness only equalled in its exaction by the absorbing exercise of slapping with one hand and rubbing with the other, independent thought becomes an extinct function."



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Perhaps. These may be the doubts of the grown-ups and the sophisticated. Meditate thus cantering along the bridle-path or lolling back in the tonneau of the motor-car that has come to replace the stately, absurd horse-drawn equipage of yesterday. Survey with *ennui*. Brood over unpatriotic comparisons. Paraphrase Laurence Sterne to the extent of mumbling how “they order this matter much better in Hyde Park or in the Bois de Boulogne.” Quote Mr. Henry James about “the blistered *sentiers* of asphalt, the rock-bound caverns, the huge iron bridges spanning little muddy lakes, the whole, crowded, cockneyfied place.” In that way jaundiced happiness lies. But the soul of Central Park is not for you. Once upon a time there was a Central Park. The approaches to it were along sedate avenues or by restful side streets. When the Park was reached there were donkeys to ride, and donkey-boys, highly amusing in their cynicism and worldly knowledge, in attendance. The “rock-work” caverns were in fancy of an amazing vastness, and the abode of goblins, elves, gnomes, enchanted knights, persecuted princesses—all the creatures of delightful Fairyland. A certain dark, winding, apparently endless tunnel was the Valley of the Shadow of Death of John Bunyan’s allegory. On the sward before the entrance Christian grappled with Apollyon: *“And Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian’s sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death; so that Christian began to despair of life. But, as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, thereby to make an end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon wings, and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more.”*

“And Christian saw him no more!” With the thrill that those words bring the years fall away and again a boy’s eyes are wide in wonder at the mystery of the world. Then the lake. It was not muddy to the gaze of youth. Instead, it was of a crystal clearness that sparkled in the summer sunshine, and the ride in the swan-boats was a joyous adventure, just as it was a little later to the little girls who owed it to the knightly bounty of Mr. Cortlandt Van Bibber. And what was better than the hours in the Menagerie, when the antics of the monkeys provoked side-splitting laughter, and to stand steady close before the cage when the lions stretched and roared was to feel the thrill of a young Tartarin? “Now, this is something like a hunt!” Times change, and conditions change, and aspects change, but it is we who change most of all, and Romance is still there, given the eyes of youth with which to see it.



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[Illustration: THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ON THE SITE OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE DEER PARK, HAD ITS ORIGIN IN A MEETING OF THE ART COMMITTEE OF THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB IN NOVEMBER, 1869]

But back to our sheep and to the Avenue. At the south-east corner of Sixty-second Street is the Knickerbocker Club, which moved there a few years ago from the home it held so long at the Avenue and Thirty-second Street, but before it is reached are passed the residences of Mrs. J.A. Bostwick (800), Mrs. Fitch Gilbert (801), William Emlen Roosevelt (804), and William Lanman Bull (805). On Sixty-second Street, near the Knickerbocker, is the house of the late Joseph H. Choate. Continuing along the Avenue to Sixty-eighth Street the residences are: Mrs. Hamilton Fish (810), Francis L. Loring (811), George G. McMurty (813), Robert L. Gerry (816), Clifford V. Brokaw (825), Henry Mortimer Brooks (826), William Guggenheim (833), Frank Jay Gould (834), Frederick Lewisohn (835), Mrs. Isadore Wormser (836), Mrs. William Watts Sherman (838), Vincent Astor (840), Mrs. Henry O. Havemeyer, south-east corner of Sixty-sixth (No. 3 East Sixty-sixth is the former home of General Grant), Miss Elizabeth Kean (844), George Barney Schley (845), the late Colonel Oliver H. Payne (852), George Grant Mason (854), Perry Belmont (855), Judge Elbert H. Gary (856), George J. Gould (857), and Thomas F. Ryan (858).

At this point begins what prior to 1840 was the farm of Robert Lenox, extending on to what is now Seventy-third Street. The uncle of Robert Lenox was a British commissary during the Revolution. The farm, which is worth at the present day perhaps ten million dollars, was bought in the twenties of the last century for forty thousand dollars. Under the various sections of his will which bear the dates of 1829, 1832, and 1839, Lenox, or "Lennox" as it was then spelled, devised his farm, then comprising about thirty acres, to his only son, James, with his stock of horses, cattle, and farming utensils, during the term of his life and after his death, to James's heirs forever. The will reads: "My motive for so leaving this property is a firm persuasion that it may, at no distant date, be the site of a village, and as it cost me more than its present worth, from circumstances known to my family, I will to cherish that belief that it may be realized to them. At all events, I want the experiment made by keeping the property from being sold." Under a clause in the will dated 1832, however, he withdrew the restriction covering the sale of the farm, but, nevertheless, urged his son not to sell it, as he was still of the firm conviction that some day there would be a village near by, and the property would appreciate. It was the son James Lenox who erected the Lenox Library, which was a conspicuous mark on the upper Avenue until it was merged with the Astor in the formation of the present Public Library. The Lenox Library antedated by some years the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was designed by Richard Morris Hunt, who died in 1893, and whose Memorial, the work of Daniel Chester French, is on the edge of the opposite Park.



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The site of the old Library is now occupied by the house of Mr. Henry C. Frick, one of the great show residences of the Avenue and the city. Beautiful as it unquestionably is, the veriest layman is conscious of the fact that, for the full effect, a longer approach is needed. A broad garden separates the house, which is eighteenth-century English, from the sidewalk. The gallery, the low wing at the upper corner, with lunettes in sculpture by Sherry Fry, Phillip Martiny, Charles Keck, and Attilio Piccirilli, contains pictures by Titian, Paul Veronese, Velasquez, Murillo, Van Dyck, Franz Hals, Rembrandt, Daubigny, Corot, Diaz, Manet, Millet, Rousseau, Troyon, Constable, Gainsborough, Lawrence, Raeburn, Reynolds, Romney, Turner, and Whistler. The chief artistic feature of the interior decorations of the house, which, with the land upon which it is placed, cost, in round figures, five millions of dollars, is the famous series of Fragonard Panels, in the drawing-room. Painted originally for the *chere amie* of Louis the Fifteenth, they are known as the Du Barry Panels, despite the fact that the fair lady did not find them quite satisfactory and the artist placed them in his own home on the shores of the Mediterranean.

But before the Frick residence is reached there are the houses of Harry Payne Whitney (871) at the north-east corner of Sixty-eighth Street, Mrs. Joseph Stickney (874), Henry J. Topping (875), Frances Burton Harrison (876), Mrs. Ogden Mills (878), Mrs. E.H. Harriman (880), and Mrs. William E.S. Griswold (883). Just beyond are Mrs. Abercrombie Burden (898), James A. Burden (900), John W. Sterling (912), Samuel Thorne (914), Nicholas F. Palmer (922), George Henry Warren (924), Mrs. Herbert Leslie Terrell (925), John Woodruff Simpson (926), Simeon B. Chapin (930), Mortimer L. Schiff (932), Lamon V. Harkness (933), Alfred M. Hoyt (934), and Edwin Gould (936). Then, at Seventy-sixth Street, is the Temple Beth-El, which was completed in 1891, and which represents the first German-Jewish congregation in this country, dating back to 1826. The dwelling houses that come next belong to Mrs. Samuel W. Bridgham (954), and J. Horace Harding (955). Then, at the northeast corner of Seventy-seventh Street, is the famous house of Senator W.A. Clark, reputed to have been built at a cost of fifteen million dollars. Beyond, Charles F. Dietrich (963), Mrs. George H. Butler (964), Jacob H. Schiff (965), William V. Lawrence (969), the James B. Duke house with its simple lines at the Seventy-eighth Street corner, Payne Whitney (972), Isaac D. Fletcher (977), Howard C. Brokaw (984), Irving Brokaw (985), William J. Curtis (986), Walter Lewisohn (987), Hugh A. Murray (988), Nicholas F. Brady (989), Frank W. Woolworth (990), D. Crawford Clark (991), E.D. Faulkner (992), Mrs. Hugo Reisinger (993)—there is an apartment house at 998 where the rents are so high that it is popularly known as the “Millionaires Apartments”—Mrs. Henry G. Timmerman (1007), Angier B. Duke (1009), J. Francis A. Clark (1013),

Senator George B. Peabody Wetmore (1015), Mrs. W.M. Kingland (1026), and George Crawford Clark (1027).



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This part of the Avenue faces the Obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle, a present to the United States from the Khedive of Egypt, brought to this country in 1877, and erected here in 1880; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the latter on the site of what was once the Deer Park. The Museum had its origin in a meeting of the art committee of the Union League Club in November, 1869. Among the founders were William Cullen Bryant, president of the Century Association, Daniel Huntington, president of the National Academy of Design, Dr. Barnard, president of Columbia, Richard M. Hunt, president of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and Dr. Henry W. Bellows. Andrew H. Green, the "Father of Greater New York," who was one of those representing the city, was the first to suggest placing the Museum in the Park. For a time the collection was kept in a house rented for the purpose in West Fourteenth Street. The first wing of the present building was opened in 1880.

To continue the list of the private residences of the Avenue. Jonathan Thorne (1028), Louis Gordon Hammersley (1030), Countess Annie Leary (1032), George C. Smith (1033), Herbert D. Robbins (1034), James B. Clews (1039), Lloyd Warren (1041), Mrs. James Hedges (1044), R.F. Hopkins (1045), Michael Dricer (1046), George Leary (1053), William H. Erhart (1055), James Speyer (1058), Henry Phipps (1063), Abraham Stein (1068), Dr. James H. Lancashire (1069), Mrs. Herbert T. Parsons (1071), W.W. Fuller (1072), J.H. Hanan (1073), Benjamin Duke (1076), Malcolm D. Whitman (1080), McLane Van Ingen (1081), A.M. Huntington (1083).

In the block between Ninetieth and Ninety-first Streets, on land where once the squatter gloried, is the home of the Iron Master, perhaps of all the residences in the long line of the Avenue the one most observed by the stranger within our gates. "So well have the architect and the landscape gardener co-operated," is the comment of "Fifth Avenue," "that this mansion and its surroundings have already the dignity and picturesqueness which age alone can give, although the building is of comparatively recent date. It is the only house on all Fifth Avenue which looks as if it might have been transplanted from old England." The Carnegie house is almost the outpost to the north of "Millionaire's Row." Two blocks beyond, after the I. Townsend Burden house, and the Warburg house, and the Willard D. Straight house have been passed, we are once more in the region of unprepossessing chaos. Between Ninety-third Street and the end of the Park there is a riot of hideous signboards, and vacant lots, and lots that though occupied, are unadorned. The only relief in the unpleasant picture is the Mount Sinai Hospital at One Hundredth Street. In name at least the Avenue marches on, its progress being suspended for a space where Mount Morris Park rises to the summit of the Snag Berg, or Snake Hill, where, in the days of the Revolution, a Continental battery for a moment commanded the valley of the Harlem, only to be whisked away, when the enemy came, and a Hessian battery was installed in its place. But where the stretch of magnificence breaks, although it continues to be Fifth Avenue in name, it ceases to be Fifth Avenue in spirit.



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CHAPTER XIX

Mine Host on the Avenue

Mine Host on the Avenue—A Gentleman of Brussels—Poulard's—Some Old New York Hotels—High Prices of 1836—The American—The Metropolitan—Holt's—The Brevoort and the Steamship Captains—Delmonico's—Famous Menus—The Glory of the Fifth Avenue—The Logerot—A Bohemian Chop-house—The Great Mince Pie Contest—About Madison Square—Lost Youth.

Is there anything that civilized man recalls more poignantly than the menus of yesterday? Of the Brussels of the winter of 1917, the last winter that the Americans of the Commission for Relief were allowed to remain, I have many vivid memories. One of them is of a crowd gathered before a shop-window in the Rue de Namur, a street that winds down from the circle of boulevards to the Place Royale. Within, the object of hungry curiosity, a fowl, adorned by a placard informing that the price is forty-four francs. Conspicuous in the crowd, his face pressed against the glass of the *etalage*, a little old gentleman. The bowl of municipal soup and the loaf of bread are all that he has to look forward to as the day's sustenance. But as he gazes his mouth waters quiveringly, and for the moment the grey-green uniforms of the invaders that are all about him, and the hated flag that is flying over the Palais de Justice are forgotten. Soon he will go home and sit down and write a letter to *La Belgique*, in which he will recall the happier days, and tell of how one once was able to dine at the *Taverne Royale* for the sum of two francs, fifty, or three francs, fifty, enumerating carefully and lovingly the various courses. His letter, and others of similar nature and inspiration, were the only genuine letters that the occupying military authorities allowed to appear in the Belgian press.

But a world tragedy was not needed to invest with romance the menus of yesterday. A memory of youth is the rock of Mont St. Michel on the French coast. The name suggests a towering, isolated height in the ocean, close to the mouth of the river dividing Normandy from Brittany, surrounded at high tide by lashing waves, and at low tide by a muddy morass, save where a causeway joins it to the mainland. The monks of St. Michel sent ships to help convey the armies of William to Hastings, and when the yoke of the Normans on England was young two sons of the Conqueror waged battle here, and Henry besieged Robert or Robert besieged Henry. When Philip Augustus burned it and it was the only Norman fortress that withstood Henry the Fifth, and many years later, in Maupassant's "Notre Coeur," a certain Madame de Burne entered a room of one of its hotels and there blew out a candle. But above all I recall, and ninety-five out of every hundred others who have visited the rock recall, the breakfast that was once renowned throughout Europe—a breakfast at two francs, fifty, brought to perfection for the reason that it was always the same, the shrimps, the cutlets, the

chicken, and the amazing omelette, which the portly Madame Poulard prepared in full view, tossing it like a flapjack, to a chorus of delighted “Ahs!”

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There is no need to go far afield. There is the older New York, with its memories of Mine Host of oyster-bar and chop-house, of culinary joys and the ghosts of viands. Yesterday the personality of the landlord was more in evidence and that of his staff happily less so. Mine Host was an individual and not yet a corporation. He oozed welcome. He walked from table to table, bland, smiling, eager for commendation, keen-eared for criticism. Although paid for, it was none the less his hospitality that was being dispensed, and he was acutely sensitive to appreciation. His retainers were fewer in number and were retainers only. Then, from the Spanish Main the last of the pirates disappeared, bequeathing to their descendants the tables and hat-stands of the hostelries of Fifth Avenue and the Great White Way. There they are today, insolent-eyed and "walk-the-plank" mannered to all but the few whom they feel they can hold to high ransom. To those of us who do not belong to that few of the race of Dives there is satisfaction in turning over the old bills-of-fare, and musing on the repasts that were once within the reach of the purses of the humble.

When Horace Greeley arrived in New York in 1831, he had ten dollars in his pocket and knew no one in the city. He entered a tavern. The bartender looked him over superciliously. "We are too high for you. We charge six a week." Horace agreed with him, and found shelter in a boarding-house where he paid two dollars and a half a week. Occasionally, when the table there palled, he and the other boarders sought a change by repairing to a Sixpenny Dining Saloon in Beekman Street where a splendid feast was to be had for a shilling (twelve and a half cents).

Two years after Horace Greeley arrived in New York Holt's Hotel opened its doors. It was the wonder of the town, the largest and most magnificent inn erected up to that time. Even by rich people its prices were thought exorbitant. They were one dollar and a half a day. That, of course, meant the American plan. Even the panic years, from 1835 to 1837, when prices soared in a manner that brought consternation to the breasts of careful housekeepers, do not very much startle us who are living in the present Anno Domini 1918. Philip Hone, in his "Diary," wrote of living in New York in 1835 as exorbitantly dear, and went on to say: "it falls pretty hard on persons like me who live upon their incomes, and harder still upon that large and respectable class whose support is derived from fixed salaries." The sweat of the brow of New York all ran into the pockets of the farmers. Hone laid in a winter stock of butter at twenty-nine cents a pound. "In the course of thirty-four years housekeeping I have never buttered my bread at so extravagant a rate." In March, 1836, he recorded: "The market was higher this morning than I have ever known it. Beef, twenty-five cents; mutton and veal, fifteen to eighteen; small turkeys, one dollar and a half. Poor New York!"



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A few years later and the prices were back to what was then held to be normal. According to a Guide Book of the city issued in 1846, there were one hundred and twenty-three eating-houses in the town, besides the oyster-houses. At the cheaper places the prices were six cents a plate of meats and three cents a plate of vegetables. In the more pretentious restaurants the rates were of course considerably higher. Chamberlain's Saloon in Pearl Street was a famous restaurant in 1851. Here is its advertised bill-of-fare. Soups: beef, mutton, chicken, six cents; roast pig, turkey, goose, chicken, duck, twelve and a half cents; beef, lamb, pork, mutton, six cents; beefsteak pie, lamb pie, mutton pie, clam pie, six cents; boiled beef, any kind, six cents. Made dishes: pork and beans, veal pie, six cents; oyster pie, chicken pot-pie, twelve and a half cents.

Philip Hone lived in a house on Broadway, facing City Hall Park. When he wished to dine out he did not have to go far, for almost next door was the American Hotel, one of the most famous hostelryes of the period. Its cooking was as sturdily patriotic as its name, although the menu is flavoured with badly written French. Here is a sample bill-of-fare, bearing the date of June 10, 1848.

Soup.
Rice Soup.
Fish.
Blackfish.
Boiled.
Leg of Mutton.
Fowl, oyster sauce.
Corn beef.
Ham, Tongue, Lobsters.
Entrees.
Fricassee of chicken, a la New York.
Tete de Veau en Tortue.
Cotillettes de mouton, saute aux pommes.
Filet de veau, pique a la Macedoine.
Tendon d'Agneau, puree au navets.
Fois de volaille, sautee, a la Bordelaise.
Croquettes de pommes de terre.
Stewed oysters.
Boeuf bouilli, sauce piquante.
Macaroni a l'Itallienne.
Roast.
Beef, Veal, Lamb, mint sauce, Chicken, Duck.
Vegetables.
Mashed potatoes. Asparagus.
Spinach. Rice.
Turnips. Pears.



Pastry.

Rice custard. Roman punch.

Pies. Tarts, *etc.*

Dessert.

Strawberries and cream. Almonds.

Raisins. Walnuts, *etc.*

The day came when the hotels farther downtown yielded the palm to the Metropolitan, opened in the middle fifties at Broadway and Prince Street. The late Alfred Henry Lewis thus rhetorically pictured the Metropolitan, in the winter of 1857-58, when to dine there was the thing to do. "Over near a window are Bayard Taylor, the poet Stoddard, and Boker, who wrote 'Francesca da Rimini,' which Miss Julia Dean is playing at Wallack's. Beyond them is Edmund Clarence Stedman, with lawyers David Dudley Field and Charles O'Connor. The second table from the door is claimed by Sparrow Grass Cozzens and Fitz-James O'Brien, who have adjourned from Pfaff's beer-cellar near Leonard Street, where, under the Broadway sidewalk, they were quaffing lager and getting up quite an appetite on



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onions, pretzels, and cheese. They have with them Walt Whitman, who, silent and wholly wanting in that barbaric yawp, is distinguished by what William Dean Howells, ever slopping over in his phrase-making, will one day speak of as his 'branching beard and Jovian hair.' The theatres have a place in the Leland cafe, and that dark, thin-faced scimitar-nosed Jewish woman, who coughs a great deal, is the French actress, Rachel. She has been playing at the New York Theatre, and caught a cold on that overventilated stage, as open to the winds as a sawmill, which will kill her within a year. With her are the singer, Brignoli, and that man of orchestras, Theodore Thomas. The sepulchral Herman Melville enters, and saunters funereally across to Taylor, Stoddard, and Boker. Rachel and Brignoli are talking of the operatic failure at the Academy of Music under Manager Payne. They speak, too, of Mrs. Wood's success at Wallack's, and of Burton's reopening of the old Laura Keane Theatre, in Broadway across from Bond. Thomas mentions the accident at Niblo's the other evening, when Pauline Genet, of the Revel troupe, was so savagely burned. Speculation enlists O'Connor, Stedman, and Field, and Field is prophesying impending money troubles, which prophecies the panic six months away will largely bear out."

Then, quietly at first, but none the less surely, Fifth Avenue began to play its part to the town and to the visiting stranger. Now that the Astor House and the old Fifth Avenue Hotel are gone it is to the Brevoort, or the Lafayette-Brevoort, just as you choose to call it, that one turns to find the ghosts of yesterday. They are nothing to shy at, being comfortable, well-fed spirits, compositely cosmopolitan. For legend has it that the management in the old days was particularly gracious to the captains of the transatlantic steamers when they were in this port, and the seamen were correspondingly appreciative. So as the vessel was passing the Nantucket Lightship the titled Englishman bound for the Canadian Rockies to hunt big game, or the French banker, seeking first-hand information about values in mines or railroads, or the Neapolitan tenor about to fill an engagement at the Academy of Music, turned to the captain for advice as to where to stay during the sojourn in New York, the Briton, or the Gaul, or the Italian was likely to hear such a flattering account of the comfort of the Brevoort and the excellence of its *cuisine*, that any previous suggestions were promptly forgotten. In the old-time novels of New York visiting Englishmen in particular always "stopped" at the Brevoort. It would have been heresy on the part of the novelist to have sent them elsewhere. Nor can any blame be attached to romancer or steamship captain. It was always a good hotel, but in the old days it had not yet been invaded by those who like to play at Bohemia.



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Delmonico's has had many incarnations since the day when the brothers, Peter and John, established themselves in the humble basement at No. 27 William Street, back in 1827. First there was the move to 76 Broad Street, and then to Broadway and Chambers Street. But to that generation of New Yorkers of which only a few remain, there has been only one great Delmonico's, the one which in 1861 opened its doors at the northeast corner of Fourteenth Street and Fifth Avenue. It was the centre of the town in the sixties and early seventies. Two blocks away was the Academy of Music, the Metropolitan Opera House of the time, and Fourteenth Street was burgeoning out as the new Rialto. Society set its seal upon the establishment. The clubs of the immediate neighbourhood, of which there were several, did not think it necessary to install *cuisines* when Delmonico's was so close at hand. The name of the house is still a byword in the land, but the names of Filippini and Lattard, two of the *maitre d'hotel* who helped to make Delmonico's famous, have been forgotten by all but a very few. What supper parties were given in the old establishment, and what dances of that exclusive circle to which Mr. Ward McAllister was later to give the sticking designation of the "Four Hundred," before the house again marched on northward to Madison Square, and a rug-man installed himself and his wares in the halls that had been the scene of such good cheer and so much well-bred revelry!

M. de Balzac, planning to entertain a Russian nobleman at the Restaurant de Paris, asked the management to "put its best foot forward" for the occasion. "Certainly, Monsieur," was the retort, "for the simple reason that it is what we are in the habit of doing every day." Old-time patrons of the Fourteenth Street corner will tell you that such a reply might have fittingly come from the *maitre d'hotel* of the "Del's" that was. But conceding the quality of the everyday service there were famous dinners that have stood out in the annals of the house. Here, for example, is the menu of what was known as the "Swan Dinner" held the evening of February 17, 1873.

Potages.

Consomme Imperial. Bisque aux crevettes.

Hor d'oeuvres.

Timbales a la Conde.

Poissons.

Red Snapper a la Venetienne.

Eperlan, sauce des gourmets.

Releve.

Filet de boeuf a la l'Egyptienne.

Entrees.

Ailes de canvas back, sauce bigurade.

Cotillettes de volaille Sevigne.



Asperges froide en branche.
Sorbet a l'Ermitage.

Rotis.
Chapon truffes. Selle de mouton.

Entremets.
Choufleurs, sauce creme. Carbons a la moelle.
Petits pois au beurre.
Poires a la Richelieu.
Gelee aux ananas. Gaufres Chantilly Sultanne.
Gateaux a la Reine. Coupole a l'Anglaise.
Pain de peche Marechale. Gelee au fruits.



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Dessert.

Delicieux aux noisettes. Biscuit Tortoni.

Fruit glaces.

Petit fours. Bonbons.

Pieces montes.

The musty inn of mid-Europe will boast till the end of time of the two-hour visit within its walls of a certain Elector and his suite in the year sixteen hundred and something or seventeen hundred and something. There is not a hostelry in England dating back to Tudor times without a bed in which Queen Elizabeth is reputed to have slept. But for famous guests, authentically established, there is probably no other hotel in the world that is to be compared to the Fifth Avenue. When the boyish Prince of Wales played leap-frog in its corridors at the time of his visit to the United States in 1860, he began a distinguished procession. Every president of the nation from the day the hotel was opened until it closed at some time stayed there. That meant Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Cleveland, McKinley, and Roosevelt. At the time of Grant's funeral in August, 1885, the immediate family, the relatives, President Cleveland, Vice-President Hendricks, former Presidents Hayes and Arthur, the members of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Supreme Court, the Diplomatic Corps, and the Governors of the various States were all guests of the hotel. Not only did great men stay there, but they did things there. It was at the Peabody dinner at the Fifth Avenue that the movement to nominate Grant for President started. In 1880, after his nomination, Garfield, at the solicitation of Arthur, came all the way from Mentor to meet Roscoe Conkling. But the haughty and powerful Conkling would not see him. If the hotel had not been the recognized shelter of visiting Republican statesmen in New York it is reasonably certain that Tilden, instead of Hayes, would have occupied the White House from 1877 to 1881, for it was there that a rescue of the Republican candidate was set on foot in 1876 after he had been given up as lost. In one of the parlours of the hotel the ill-advised Dr. S.A. Burchard doomed Blaine to defeat when he said: "We are Republicans, and we do not intend to leave our party to identify ourselves with a party whose antecedents have been Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion."

Today it would be hard to find a hotel below Forty-second Street that still continues on what is known as the American plan. But when the Fifth Avenue was young that system of prices was supposed to embody the national spirit of democracy. Yet the idea had its wise critics, who found in it a certain injustice. For example there was an editorial on the subject, apropos of the Fifth Avenue, in the issue of October 1, 1859, soon after the hotel was opened, which ran, in part: "In the first place, what can be more preposterous than to establish a fixed rate of fare at hotels? Big, fat, bloated, blustering Guzzle goes to the Astor House for a week, and, in virtue of his standing and his paunch, gets a room



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near the dining saloon—a large, airy room looking on the Park, with lounge, arm-chairs, pier-glasses, Brussels carpet, and other furniture, all rich and luxurious; at dinner he eats *pate de fois gras* and woodcock, at supper he has elaborate little dishes which exercise an experienced cook for an hour or two, at breakfast he has salmon at fifty cents a pound, for all of which Guzzle pays two dollars and a half a day. The Rev. John Jones has a cup of weak tea for his breakfast, a slice of beef for his dinner, and a room under the tiles, and pays the same two dollars and a half.” Perhaps there was a little exaggeration in the Harper editorial. But judge of Guzzle’s opportunities from the following menu of the first dinner served by the Fifth Avenue, that of Tuesday, August 23, 1859.

Soups.

Green Turtle. Barley.

Fish.

Boiled Salmon, shrimp sauce. Baked Bass, wine sauce.

Boiled.

Leg of Mutton, caper sauce. Chicken, with pork.

Calf’s Head, brain sauce. Beef tongue.

Turkey, oyster sauce. Corn Beef and Cabbage.

Cold Dishes.

Ham, Roast Beef, Pressed Corn Beef, Tongue, Ham.

Lobster Salad. Boned Turkey with truffles.

Entrees.

Fricassee Chicken a la Chevaliere.

Macaroni, Parmesan.

Lamb cutlets, breaded.

Oysters, fried in crumbs.

Currie of Veal, in border of rice.

Queen Fritters.

Kidneys, champagne sauce.

Pigeons, en compote.

Sweetbreads, larded green peas.

Roasts.

Beef. Lamb, mint sauce.

Loin of Veal, stuffed. Goose.

Turkey. Chicken.

Ham, champagne sauce.

Vegetables.

Mashed Potatoes, Boiled Potatoes. Boiled Rice.

Baked Potatoes. Stewed Tomatoes. Squash.

Turnips. Cabbage. Beans.

Pastry.



Sponge Cake Pudding. Apple Pies.
Madeira Jelly. Peach Pies.
Peach Meringues. Squash Pies.
Gateaux Modernes. Cols de Cygne.
Dessert.
Raisins. Almonds. Peaches. English Walnuts.
Pecan Nuts. Filberts. Bartlett Pears.
Citron Melons. Water-melons.
Vanilla, lemon ice-cream.

Considering that this was not an exceptional dinner, but was a sample of the fare that was served every day one is inclined to envy Guzzle and to deplore the neglected opportunities of the Rev. Jones.

Below the Fifth Avenue Mine Host flourished yesterday. At the corner of Eighteenth Street there was the Logerot, sometime called Fleuret's. There, as at the old Martin's, at University Place and Ninth Street, a little play of the imagination enabled the diner to hug the delusion that he was at Foyot's, and that the gentleman with the white goatee at the table opposite was a Senator of France from the near-by Palace of the Luxembourg. After he had eaten of the *moules marinières* and the *escargots* it was no longer imagination, he felt sure of the fact. To stimulate through the palate such pleasant fancy was the idea of Richard de Croisac, Marquis de Logerot, who opened the place in 1892. When Logerot's passed the setting was made to serve a purpose ignominious, though highly laudable. It became an incubator shop, and tiny coloured babies squirmed mysteriously where once the *casseroles* steamed.



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The neighbourhood is rich in gastronomical memories. At the same corner for twenty years the chop-house of John Wallace flourished. In the eighties it was one of the few chop-houses uptown. There was a flavour of Bohemia about the clientele. Characters who were famous in their day but whose very names are now forgotten, congregated there for the steaks and kidneys and the ale drawn from the wood. There, so the story goes, was sown the seed of the Great Mince Pie Contest. An actor, dropping into Wallace's late one evening for the after-work rarebit, overheard fragments of an argument about the relative merits of the mince pies of certain of the city's hotels and refectories. He was playing at the time in the dramatization of Mr. Tarkington's "Monsieur Beaucaire," and the next evening he brought up the subject for discussion with various ladies and gentlemen of the company. Had it been a matter of lobsters he might have had an apathetic response. But the homely mince pie roused to riotous enthusiasm. Each player protested that he or she knew of a place from which came a mince pie surpassing all others. So the contest was arranged and a jury of unimpeachable character selected, and two nights later the pies were brought proudly in and in turn sampled. Incidentally the winning pasty came from the old Ashland House at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, and its sponsor was Mr. A.G. (better known as "Bogey") Andrews.

There was a family hotel called the Glenham on the Avenue between Twenty-first and Twenty-second Streets, and at the north-east corner of Twenty-second, where part of the base of the "Flatiron Building" now is, was the old Cumberland. There was one man, at least, who appreciated the Cumberland. In fact he liked it so well that, when the structure was to be demolished to make way for the new skyscraper, he refused to move out, and having a lease, could not be evicted. So he stayed there to the last, while the bricks came tumbling down about his ears. Then, just around the corner, where Broadway joins Madison Square, was the Bartholdi, celebrated by the patronage of Mr. Fitzsimmons, alias Ruby Robert, the Freckled One, the Kangaroo, and beyond, still standing, a memento of yesterday, Dorlon's, uptown heir to the glories of the old Fulton Market place, which boasted a history that goes back three-quarters of a century. A relic of the old establishment, a mahogany table round which Cornelius Vanderbilt and Judge Roosevelt (the grandfather of T.R.), and John Jacob Astor, and John Swan used to sit at their oyster dinner consisting of oysters raw, stewed, roasted in the shell, and broiled, is still preserved.



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Perhaps, at night, the shades of famous dishes of the past come forth from remodelled walls or forgotten cupboards and meet in the Park to recall the glories that once were. For all about are memories. Beyond where the Fifth Avenue was was the Hoffman House where one went to dine as well as to feast the eyes on the twenty-five-thousand-dollar Bougereau of "Nymphs and Satyr," and "Pan and Bacchante." Then the Albermarle and Saint James, the Brunswick, and the famous south-west corner of the Avenue and Twenty-sixth Street. The Brunswick had its adherents, who proclaimed its table the best in New York, and the land once rang with a Tammany dinner that was held there. But that south-west corner. It was famous as "Del's" and it was famous when it was Martin's. Who that knew it will ever forget what was known as the "Broadway Room," and the special soup for every day of the week, and the *cuisine Russe* with the *plats du jour* for luncheon and dinner, and the vodka that one might have if one wished? And also, the chestnut soup!

If your palate of yesterday craved the exotic in the way of food there was the Indian Palace that once flourished at No. 325 Fifth Avenue. In 1900, a Prince Ranji Something or Other, who claimed to be a son of the Sultan of Sulu or Beloochistan, opened it, establishing the first smoking room for women in the city. He brought the aspect of the East in the shape of Indians, and dancing girls, and jugglers, and Hindoo tango dancers, and flower girls, and cigarette girls, and music girls, all in their native costumes. There was prosperity for a time, and rich promise, until the Prince ran against the callous, unsympathetic Occident in the shape of the contract labour law.

On up the Avenue as far as the Plaza, where, as early as 1870, "Boss" Tweed attempted to erect a hotel on the site of the present Netherlands, the gastronomical trail of the past may be followed. Five years ago it was said that New York had more good restaurants than any city in the world except Paris. Today there is no longer the exception. In the spirit that has long moved the people of Marseilles to the saying: "If Paris had a Cannebiere it would be a little Marseilles," an American city has said: "Paris might cook as well as New Orleans if it only had New Orleans's markets." To an even greater arrogance in its culinary past and present New York has a right. Turning over some of the menus of yesterday is recalling when the world was young. Lost youth is in the memory of "the wharves, and the slips, and the sea-tides tossing free; and the Spanish sailors with bearded lips, and the beauty and mystery of the ships, and the magic of the sea." It is also in the memory of the flavour of certain delectable, never-to-be-forgotten repasts.