

Vignettes of San Francisco eBook

Vignettes of San Francisco

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Vignettes Of San Francisco

By Almira Bailey

Vignettes

Title

As Pilgrims Go to Rome
At the Ferry
The Union-Street Car
The Latin Meets the Oriental
The Pepper and Salt Man
The Bay on Sunday Morning
Safe on the Sidewalk



Port O'Missing Men
Market-street Scintillations
Cafeterias
The Open Board of Trade
The San Francisco Police
A Marine View
Hilly-cum-go
I'll Get It Changed, Lady
Fillmore Street
In the Lobby of the St. Francis
The Garbage-man's Little Girl
The Palace
Zoe's Garden
Children on the Sidewalk
Feet that Pass on Market Street
Where the Centuries Meet
Bags or Sacks
Portsmouth Square
Miracles
Impulses and Prohibitions
Stopping at the Fairmont
San Francisco Sings
Van Ness Avenue
The Blind Men and the Elephant
You're Getting Queer
The Ferry and Real Boats
A Whiff of Acacia
It Takes All Sorts
The Fog in San Francisco
A Block on Ashbury Heights
The Greek Grocer
Billboards or Art
Golden Gate Park
Extra Fresh
On the California-street Car
Western Yarns
Mr. Mazzini and Dante
On the Nob of Nob Hill

Vignettes of San Francisco

As Pilgrims go to Rome

In the same way that the poets have loved Rome and made their pilgrimages there — as good Moslems travel toward Mecca, so there are some of us who have come to San Francisco. Then when we arrive and find it all that we have dreamed, our love for it

becomes its highest tribute. And I don't know why it is sacrilege to mention Rome and San Francisco in the same breath. As for me I greatly prefer San Francisco, although I have never been to Rome.

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I love San Francisco for its youth. Other cities have become set and hard and have succumbed to the cruel symmetry of the machine age, but not San Francisco. It is still youth untamed. They may try, but they cannot manicure it, nor groom it, nor dress it up in a stiff white collar, nor fetter it by not allowing a body to stretch out on the grass in Union Square or prohibiting street-fakers and light wines served in coffee pots and doing away with wild dashing jitneys.

Then there is something about San Francisco's being away out here from everyone else, a city all alone. New York is five hours from Boston; Philadelphia is close between New York and Washington; Baltimore is a trolley ride away; Chicago is only overnight from all the other cities, while Atlanta is only two sleeping car nights from her sister cities. But San Francisco, out here as far as it can reach with one foot in the great Pacific, nearly a week from New York and a month away from China, some people wouldn't like it, but something vagabondish in me rejoices to have run away from them all. Especially at night when the fog comes in on the city and shuts out even Oakland, and fog horns out of the Golden Gate call mournfully, and boats in the bay go calling their lookout calls, I get this feeling of far-offness from the rest of the world that is very gratifying.

And I love the sound of San Francisco, the sound of its singing — some cities roar and others hum, but San Francisco sings. And I love the look of it and the feel of it. I love to stand, on its hills in the mornings when the bride-veil fog is going out to sea and the smoke and steam and fog and sunshine make one grand symphonic morning song. And I love to stand on high hills on clear days when all her cubist houses stand bold in the sunlight and the cities across the bay are so close to the touch. And I love its color, flowers and girls and splashes of the Oriental. And I love its Bohemia which is not affected, but real. I love it because it is young and live and spontaneous and humorous and beauty-loving and unashamed of anything that is life. Oh, I don't know.

If I were in New York and it should begin to suffocate me I would run and run across the continent and never stop once until I landed on the top of Telegraph Hill.

At the Ferry

The shrill of newsboys, the bass of older venders, the call of taxis, trolleys that proceed all day in ordered sequence, the wide swing of traffic on the Embarcadero, a tang of salt in the air, the atmosphere of flowers for sale, hoarse call of ferries in the bay like politicians who have spoken too much in the, open air and lost their voices, the beautifully ordered hurry and bustle and expectancy of people on their way somewhere, and over it all the mentor of the police.

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“Help pass the time pleasantly,” so does the electric piano coax away our nickels. To those who know music it is a horrible sound, but to the rest of us its tunes are rather gay. On the wall a defunct comedy flashes. Hypnotized, but never amused, we gaze at it as we wait for the great doors to swing back. A woman is thrown from an auto by her husband, and in her fall displays a pair of husky, ruffled underwear. Time was when that would have raised a howl of joy, but no longer. She hardly touches the ground when we find ourselves gazing at an orchard of California figs, zip, the woman picks herself up, gazes comically at the audience for a laugh and receiving none, hops with phenomenal agility up astride of the hood of the auto, piff, a yard of Santa Rosa hens, ping, the husband throws his wife up to the roof of a skyscraper, the commuters gaze solemnly, biff, a scene from Santa Clara, clang, the gates are opened.

On the Sausalito side, a jammed together happy vacation crowd, grotesquely varied and elaborately gotten-up hikers, bags and suitcases to fall all over everywhere, professorish looking men off, “taking a book along,” people laden with all the cheap magazines in the market, smartly dressed people on their way to country homes in Marin and Sonoma, a well modulated, nicely groomed crowd — bing, the doors slide back and everybody rushes off for a holiday.

Commuters and tourists, most of the time I’d rather be a tourist. They are easily distinguished in the crowd, an accent from Louisiana, a woman who has just returned from the Orient, a man with continental manners, they are easily distinguished. and the predatory red-capped porters know them well. We are wistfully sorry to be going only to Oakland, we long to go out on the Main Line, the out-leading, mile-wandering, venturesome Main Line. Reluctantly we turn to where duty and necessity calls us ignominiously to the electric suburban.

The first sight of San Francisco. “Ah, this is San Francisco!” The shrill of newsboys, the bass of older venders, the flash of electric signs. Do you prefer “Camels”, “Chesterfields” or “Fatimas”? the call of taxis, invitations to hotel buses, the wide sweep of traffic on the Embarcadero — “So this is San Francisco.”

The Union-Street Car

It is surprising how many people patronize the shabby little thing. But then it waits right where those who leave the ferry may see it first as though it were the most important car in town, and I have a fancy the big cars humor it a bit and give it first place. Besides, it goes anywhere in the city, Chinatown, the Hall of Justice, the Chamber of Commerce, the Barbary Coast, St. Francis Church — sinners, saints and merchants may travel its way — Portsmouth Square, Telegraph Hill, Little Italy, Russian Hill, Automobile Row, Fillmore street, the Presidio and I expect with a little coaxing it would switch about and run over to the Mission. It has actually been known on stormy nights to take its constituents up the side streets to their very doors.

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It is a surprising little boat which looks like nothing more than a bug crawling up the backs of the hills with its antenna of khaki-wound legs sticking out fore and aft. Those who have traveled in Ireland tell us that it is much like the jaunting cars, and it is not unlike the Toomerville Trolley.

One night I set out to find the little thing to take me home. I was in a strange part of the city and when my friends told me to get on and get off and get on again I did as I was told. With blind faith I told the conductors to put me off and they did. I continued in this way until long after midnight when I found myself at a lonely corner with no one in sight. I waited and waited and was getting nervous when I spied a blue uniform. I looked sharply to see if he were a motorman, a fireman or an officer from the Presidio. I am careful about these matters since last summer when I was coming North on the President, and asked a naval officer for some ice water. I rushed up to him and told him, which was true, that it was the first time I had ever seen a policeman when I wanted one. This led him into a defense of the San Francisco police, which I told him was quite unnecessary with me for I thought them the finest policemen in the world, probably because they are so Irish.

"Irish," said he with a twinkle, "I'm not Irish."

We chatted awhile until the Union street car came along, and then that policeman who said he wasn't Irish leaned over and whispered confidentially, "If you miss this car, there'll be another." I suppose they get lonesome.

You see how I am wandering away from my subject. That is because I followed the Union street car. It switches from subject to subject just like that. It begins with the wonderful retail markets of San Francisco, and then changes abruptly to all sorts of sociological problems, then before we know it gives us a beautiful marine view, and then drops us down where the proletariat lives, then up to the homes of the rich and mighty, and ends in the military.

Everyone should sight-see by the little Union street car.

The Latin Meets the Oriental

In that spot where Chinatown merges into the Latin quarter there must be, I think, a Director of Delightful Situations who holds dominion there. For instance, can you imagine anything more subtle than a group of large fat women haranguing, in Italian-American, a poor thin Chinaman over some bargains in vegetables?

In a place which marks the line of cleavage between the two quarters is a picture store containing in its window religious pictures, enlarged family photographs of Filipinos, and, of course, views of the Point Lobos cypress. There is something very appealing

about that window. Pictures of Jesus, no matter how lurid they are, never fall short of dignity. And it seems not at all incongruous that He should be there in the midst of all those strange human contacts.

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There are not only contacts between the Latin and the Oriental, but anything unusual may come to light in that particular neighborhood. A buff cochin rooster was wandering about the street the other day. Stepping high and picking up choice tidbits and showing off before his harem of hens who peeked at him from their boxes, he strutted about exactly as though he had been in his own Petaluma barnyard.

One day I saw an enormous negro running through the streets with a piece of new, green felt bound around his stomach. Now why should a huge negro run through the street with a piece of new green felt around his stomach? No one knows. And another time a small Chinese maiden bumped into me because she was so absorbed in that great American institution, the funny sheet.

On one of those side streets, in there somewhere, one of those streets untoured by tourists, I saw some Chinese boys, dressed in American "Boss of the Road" unionalls, playing baseball and calling the call of Babe Ruth in sing-song Chinese. Then near them was an empty lot and what do you suppose it was filled with? Scotch thistles, and edged with wild corn flowers. Even Nature enters into the fun.

There is a story of an Italian who went through the streets somewhere on Leavenworth, calling, "Nica fresha flowers," and from the opposite side of the street a Chinaman with flowers would call, "Samee over here." All went well until the Chinaman began to outsell the other, when the Italian remonstrated. "Yella for yourself, see," he said, to which the Chinaman answered, "Go to hellee," and went on as before.

This story was told to me by very reliable eye witnesses. The buff cochin rooster and the huge negro and all the others I saw myself. And many other strange things which I have not room to write, I saw in that spot where Chinatown merges into the Latin quarter.

The Pepper and Salt Man

He was a man, I should say about sixty years old, a most uninteresting age, and a homely, weather-beaten fellow too, when you stopped to look at him. His suit was pepper-and-salt, and he was just like his suit. Good as gold, I have no doubt, a roomer of whom his landlady could say: "He comes and he goes and is never a speck of trouble."

Still, he might have been as good as Saint Anthony but no one would ever have noticed him except for what happened. What happened wasn't so much either but it was enough to illumine that dun, common-place man so that everyone in the side-seating trolley was suddenly aware of his presence. What happened was ten months old and was a girl.

A regular girl, one hundred per cent feminine. One could tell just by the way she wore her clothes, by her daintiness, by the tilt of her bonnet and by the way smiled out from under it. I can't describe a baby girl any more than I describe a sunset or moonlight or any of the wonders of God — I can only say that she was everything that a baby girl should have been.

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When she entered with her mother we all edged and crowded over but the pepper-and-salt man won. Down she sat close beside him. Then you should have seen that man, the foolish, old fellow. He turned toward her; he beamed; he mentally devoured her; he never took his eyes off her long enough to wink.

When she seemed about to turn her restlessly bobbing head toward him, his hands moved and the strong muscles of his face worked in excitement. Then, when she smiled his way and for an instant there was a flash of tiny, milk teeth, that man, the old silly, made the most dreadful facial contortion, something between a wink, a smile, a booh and a grimace.

Then when she turned from him he sat there eating her up. I saw him look reverently at her exquisite hands and at the awkward little legs sticking out straight ahead. When her mother arranged her ruffles he watched every move — absorbed. Then he would wait eager, hoping and praying for her to smile his way again. . .

Why, I was waiting for her smile too and so was every one of the staid and grown-up people in the car. I don't know when we would ever have come out from the spell of that ten-months-old baby girl if just then the conductor had not called out reproachfully — "Central Avenue — Central Avenue." Then the pepper-and-salt man jumped and looked nervously out and rushed for the door. I, myself, had to walk back two blocks and when I turned at my corner he was still going back to his street.

The Bay on Sunday Morning

Perhaps to go to Fort Mason on a sunny Sunday morning, that beautiful relaxed moment of the whole week, and there to sit with others who have no autos to go gallivanting in, and to sit idly gazing off at the bay. That's not bad. To read a little and doze a bit, but mostly to gaze out to sea and dream.

A big foreign steamer in port, perhaps a Scandinavian boat, inert, enormous, helpless, while the little tugs chatter, around it and finally get hold of it, and tug it slowly around with its nose pointing out to sea. Lumber schooners come in slowly and rhythmically, long and low and clean. The Vallejo boat, looking like a rocking horse, goes importantly chugging off toward Mare Island. It's hard to read a book with so going on out there.

Sunday morning, blessed play time, there is a fellow in a green canoe, and the muscles of his body play into the movement of the waves until he and his green canoe and the white capped waves are all one motif of the whole symphony. Men play around the yacht club like a lot of school boys, and now — "Shoot," they push a long slim racer into the water. Dainty white yachts go dipping to the waves and seem like lovely young girls in among the sturdier boats.

Now the fishermen come in from their night's work, making music all in an orderly procession, and every boat of them a brilliant blue inside. I'd like to catch a Maine fisherman allowing color in his boat, like a "dago" or a "wop."

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Over all the swing and dip and rhythm of the sea gulls. How beautifully they accent the movement of the symphony, like the baton of some great leader — this great beautiful Sunday morning symphony.

Then there is Alcatraz. Oh, Alcatraz, why should they have placed a prison there as a monument to men's failure to order their lives in harmony with nature. Alcatraz, most beautiful island in the most beautiful bay, you sound an ugly, sinister, most unhappy undertone in the morning's symphony.

Still it is a symphony. A symphony of San Francisco Bay. Why shouldn't the composers put it into music. We're sick of the song of the huntsman by the brasses, the strings and the wood instruments. With Whitman we exclaim: "Come, Muse, migrate from Aeonia," and come out here to the West, and conserve the symphony of the bay which is already composed and waiting.

And for the argument, the overture, the prelude, there could be a sailing schooner with sails all set coming into the Golden Gate, in the full brilliant sunlight, or mysteriously through a fog, or against a sunset sky. It should be "full and by" like that beautiful painting by Coulter in the stock exchange of the Merchants' Building.

Symphony of San Francisco Bay, boom of fog horns, calls and answers of the ferries, chug of the fishermen's boats, twink of lights in the harbor at night, rhythm of sea gulls, and the brooding fog to soften it all. "Come, Muse, migrate from Aeonia."

Safe on the Sidewalk

Are there others, I wonder, who feel as I do about crossing the street? There must be. Now I, when I cross, say Market street at Third, I run. I take my life and my bundles in my hand and run, darting swift glances to the left and to the right. It looks "hick." I know it looks "hick." And I care. But I prefer to be alive and countrified than sophisticated in an ambulance and so I run.

At corners, too. I think corners are worse. For there the machines may turn around and chase me, which they often do. It's a horrible feeling.

There must be others who feel as I do about crossing the street, but they never betray it. I watch to see and when they cross, they just cross — that's all. Not with nonchalance exactly, but with ease and assurance. Once I actually saw a man, a native son, I'm sure, roll a cigarette as he crossed at a point where even the traffic cop looked nervous.

No one ever gets killed or even injured. But always everybody is getting almost killed and almost injured. They like it. It's a sort of sport. I've noticed it more since the city's

gone dry. The game is, if you are walking, to see how close to a machine you can come and not hit it.

Street cars, machines and people all go straight ahead and they all come out right. It's the only city where it's done with such abandon. They never stop for anything except taxis — not even fire engines.

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The secret of it is, I think, that no one ever hesitates. This is understood by all San Franciscans — that, no one is ever going to hesitate. That's why there are no accidents. It's the unexpected in people that makes disasters and creates a demand for traffic cops.

I try to cross the street as others cross. I choose a chalk mark and, pretending I am a native daughter, launch out. I get on fine — suddenly a monster machine is on me. Or would be if I did not jump back. I shouldn't have jumped back it seems. But how was I to know? In the jaws of death you don't reason, you jump. In jumping back I hit another machine and it stops. And that stops a street car. That stops something else. And in a minute Market street, the famous Market street, is all balled up because I jumped back. Drivers, red in the face, swear at me, not because they are cross, but scared-more scared than I.

Next time I am more careful. I look to the traffic cop for attention but, being a handsome man, he thinks I'm trying to flirt. Policemen should be homely. So I wait until the street is entirely empty. I wait a long time — it is empty — I run like a steer — and suddenly out of nowhere a machine is yelling at me individually and I know no more until, breathless and red, I reach the haven of the sidewalk.

Once I heard a horrible story of a man who lost control of his machine and ran up on to the sidewalk.

Port O'Missing Men

They say that San Francisco is known all over as the Port o' Missing Men. That it is a city where a man may lose himself if he chooses, and that by the same token it is a good place to look for "my wandering boy tonight." I can believe all this especially on Third street. Third street should be called by some other name or it should have a nickname. If it were in Seattle it would be known as "skid row." Third street doesn't describe it at all.

When I see a lot of men like that, wanderers, family men out of work, vagabonds, nobodies, somebodies, "rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief; doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief," I always get to thinking how once each one was a tiny baby in a thin white dress, and how before that each one of them was born of a woman. If I could ever forget that, I could perhaps sometimes call men "a lot of cattle." Come to think of it, it is men who call other men "cattle." At any rate, I like to think that no woman would ever see men as less than the sons of mothers.

The Port o' Missing Men is like the Port of San Francisco, and these men are like boats in from a foreign port, tramp steamers some of them, out of nowhere, going nowhere,

no baggage, no traditions, men who'll never get lost because they are on their way to Nowhere.

Yet, the majority of these men are going to some place, but where I do not know. What do they talk about in groups down there, tall, young fellows and strong middle-aged men and reminiscent, old ones down in the Port o' Missing Men? If they're out of work where do they sleep at night, and what do they have to eat? And have they any women folks?

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Not all kinds of men are down there, but many kinds. There are Mexicans, Sinn Feiners, old American stock, and once in awhile a venturesome Yankee. There are lumberjacks in from the North, and Chinamen in shuffling slippers, and philosophers and Swedes, half-breeds and just plain men. Some are Vagabonds who can't help their roving, and others are very tired and would like to lie over in port for or a long spell. There are Italians, and Portuguese, and many Greeks, and turbaned Hindus, tall and skinny, always traveling in pairs like nuns. Sometimes the Port is fairly crowded.

New England is a section of the country where men leave home, and I have heard mothers sing with tears in their voices: "Oh, where is my wandering boy tonight?" On Third street down at the Port o' Missing Men, I have a fancy that I would like to write back to all those mothers that here are their boys. But, after all, what good would that do, for who can tell which is which?

Market St. Scintillations

Oh, the things our eyes discover as we walk along on Market street. Such a medley — infinite, incongruous, comical, pathetic, motley and sublime.

Harding in a window with "pure buttermilk." He'll be in more difficult situations before he is done, I'm thinking. An electric fan above him that keeps the buttermilk "pure" and flies the American flag in crepe paper.

"Crabs to take home." They are freshly cooked, very large and forty cents apiece. I decide that some I shall really buy one and take it home when I confronted with the fact that "All Hair Goods Must Be Sold." Why, I wonder. Why must they be sold? And here are "Eggs any style," so close to the hair goods that I immediately visualize them as marcelled "style" and pompadoured.

"Shoes Drastically Reduced." It is the truth. The Oxfords I wear are reduced by a drastic five dollars. Well, I couldn't go barefooted, I comfort myself and hurry on.

A shooting gallery and a man standing there trying to make up his mind to try it. A second's glimpse of him and all that he is is revealed. One knows immediately that his favorite song is "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," and that his ideal man is Governor Allen and that he is on his way to spend his "remaining days" with his sister Lottie in Los Angeles.

Who would eat "stewed tripe Spanish." Someone must or they wouldn't advertise it on the outside of the restaurant. Well, it takes all sorts of people to make a world. Probably the man who would order "stewed tripe Spanish" wouldn't touch an alligator pear salad. To him alligator pears taste exactly like lard. To the person who wouldn't eat "stewed tripe Spanish" they are a delicacy.

A crowd around a window. On your tip-toes to see. It's that fascinating Lilliputian with a beard and electric bowels who stands in drug store windows and administers corn cure to his own toes with a smile.

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The professional window shopper is a vagabond at heart — a loiterer by nature. Here is one gazing in a photographer's window to discover someone he knows. These two are not professionals though but a spring couple looking in furniture windows for nest material. And sailors wandering about, nothing but kiddies, lonesome looking and no doubt wishing we were at War again and hospitable once more.

Here is a "Pershing Market" and a "Grant Market," beside it. There's a lot of that in San Francisco. Is there an "Imperial Doughnut?" Up goes a "Supreme Doughnut" next door. It's the spirit of "I'll go you one better every time." It's the spirit of Market street.

Cafeterias

This is not to hurt the feelings of anyone, for some people are very sensitive about cafeterias. They are cafeteria wise, they have a cafeteria class consciousness. Such people are to be admired. They have accurate minds which enable them to choose a well-balanced meal at minimum cost. Lacking that sort of mind, I do not get on well in cafeterias. As sure as I equip myself with a tray and silver in a napkin and become one of the long procession, I lose all sense of proportion, and come out at the end with two desserts, or a preponderance of starches or with too much bread for my butter, and a surprising bill.

Those who are cafeteria wise can choose a good meal for 28 cents or 33 cents at the most. They don't take food just because it looks delicious. They "yield not to temptation." They have a plan and stick to it. Wise and strong-minded, they shuffle their way bravely to the end. It is said that in time they acquire a cafeteria shuffle which one can detect even on the street. But I don't believe it's so.

Other sections of the country have cafeterias and in some parts of the South, especially in Louisville, they are run quite extensively. But it is in the West, especially in California, that they have attained a dignity and even lavishness that makes them the surprise and delight of the tourist. Irvin Cobb says that this is the cafeteria belt of which Los Angeles is the buckle.

We have music in our cafeterias. We have flowers on the tables. People don't just eat in them, they dine. They take their guests there. Our cafeterias have galleries with rocking chairs and stationery. They have distinctive architecture. We take visitors to see them. We brag about them, and when we wish to be especially smart we pronounce them *caffa-tuh-ree-ah*.

Personally, I am proud of our cafeterias, but I do not get on in them. I enter hungry. I look sideways to see what other folks are eating. I decide to have corned beef and cabbage and peach short cake and nothing else. Then in the line I have the hurried feeling of people back of me, and that I ought to make quick decisions. Everyone ought

to eat salad, so I take a salad. Then some roast beef looks good so I take that, and the girl asks

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briskly with a big spoon poised, if I'll take potatoes, and I don't wish potatoes, but she makes a great nest of them beside the meat and fills the nest with gravy and I pass on. According to Hoover or Maria Parloa or Roosevelt, I ought to have a vegetable, and so I take two. Meanwhile I have taken bread, but the woman ahead takes hot scones and so I do. I choose some thick-creamed cake, very fattening, but just this once, and then, oh, I don't know. The tray is heavy and no place to put it, and in my journeying I peek at the bill and it's over 75 cents, and when I finally sit down opposite a stranger I find on my tray two salads, and when I chose the other I don't remember.

But cafeterias are very fine for those who have cafeteria sense.

The Open Board of Trade

Months ago one of The Journal readers suggested a story to be found down on Market street near the Hobart building. Many times since when passing there I have thought that those street hawkers must have a certain picturesque and even humorous value, and hoping to find it I have stopped to listen. But the moment I stop they win me with their everlasting logic, and then blessed if I can write them up. They have the same effect upon others. I have seen chambers of commerce and stock exchangers and professors from Berkeley passing with a supercilious glance which did very well so long as they kept moving. But once let them step into the magic ring and they too became mesmerized and stood there gaping in spellbound interest. "Logic is logic, that's all I say."

Those hawkers are artists, skilled in the arts and wiles of persuasiveness. There is one with a long, horse-hair wig which he occasionally brushes back from his eyes with a dignified flourish. This man has found the supreme elixir and the secret of perpetuity. He is the only man in the world, this modern Ponce de Leon, who knows the secret. Surely we need not blush to listen to its exposition, \$2 is a small sum to pay for such a bonanza. Forty thousand people have used it in the last thirty-nine days. Think of it. "Take it right out into the crowd and sniff it for yourself," he urges and somehow that breaks the spell, and strong men look foolishly at each other and move a-way.

Horoscopes, suspenders, iron watch charms, brown cakes that may pass for maple sugar, ironing wax, laundry soap or penuchia, a book on Prohibition, mending wax and books of magic are all there. They are not things which we particularly want, but that's the point. Anyone can sell things that people want. But these men are professional persuaders of men against their will whose mission it is to make people want what they don't want. That's Art.

The horoscope seller must have taken his degree from some college of venders, his call has such finesse. I cannot reproduce the lilt of it — “Here’s where you get your horoscope, a dime, ten cents.” It is suggestive of the midways of country fairs, shooting galleries on the Board Walk, and circuses in the springtime. “Here’s where you get your horoscope, a dime, ten cents.”

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The little, old, blind man sitting there with one hand outstretched and the other holding a book, his white hair and beard neatly combed, reminds me of something Biblical and prophetic like pictures in old churches. Alas! no one seems to buy his story of prohibition. I think he would do lots better in Kansas or Iowa. A particularly fascinating one is the man of mending wax who stands before his table like some professor of chemistry with a tiny flame and saucers of mysterious powders and, I almost said, a blow pipe.

But, pshaw, I can't write them up. I take them too seriously. "Logic is logic, that's all I say."

The San Francisco Police

The San Francisco police are the handsomest and most-willing-to-flirt policemen in the United States, if not in the world. What a surly lot, the New York policemen. They treat one as though he were a blackguard for merely asking some direction.

"What car shall I take for the New Jersey Central Ferry?" we ask.

"Zippity-ip," he snaps, moving off.

"What did you say?" we ask in timid desperation.

"Zippity-ip," he yells, shaking his fist at us.

But ask a San Francisco policeman the way and how different. He will take your arm and smile down at you and even go away with you chatting all the time — "Stranger here? Well, you'll never go back East again." And somehow after that you never do.

Of course, the San Francisco police are many things beside being handsome and willing to flirt. But these are important qualifications which, up to this time, have never had their place in journalism. Ah, many a Raleigh and Don Quixote in the roster of the S. F. police.

A policeman is all things to all people. What a policeman is depends upon what we are. To those who are fast, either in reputation or driving, he is a limb of the law to be either evaded or cajoled. To the small boy he is a hero to aspire to become when grown. To the public-spirited citizen of the reforming order he is a piece of community linen to be periodically washed in public with a great hue in the papers about graft expose. To almost anybody in the dead of night with burglars prowling about, he is a friend to be called — in case one has a nickel handy.

But to the great army of women who are hopelessly respectable, the policeman is something quite different. And what we women think of the police is important. We pay

taxes, we vote and we cross the street. We like our policemen to be handsome and cavalier and, again I say, the S. F. police are both. Any fine day they will make a funeral procession out of the motor traffic to escort a nice woman across Market street.

It goes without saying and is an unwritten law that policemen should be Irish. I enjoy Greeks in classic literature or in restaurants, but not as policemen. There is a saying in the city that when Greek meets Greek they go together to get a job on the Market Street Railways. But when they get upon the police force, I for one, shall move to the country. Policemen should always be Irish.

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And handsome. This is a woman's reason, but listen: O men, are they not, I ask, a part of the civic beauty of the city? Is it not important that these animated equestrian statues should be gallant men upon noble and spirited horses? And who is more imperial in the pictorial life of the city than the officer on the Lotta Fountain pedestal by the raising of whose sceptered hand the life of the city moves or stays. Yes, policemen should be handsome and gallant. It is written.

A Marine View

Russian Hill had always seemed economically remote to me as an abiding place until recently I was invited out where some people were living in a modest apartment with a good view of the bay. And when they suggested that I try to get an apartment over there I decided to do it.

It was a beautiful morning when I started out. There stood Russian Hill and as Gibraltar bristles with armaments so it glittered with windows facing the sea and one of them for me. Perhaps I could get a few rooms from a nice Italian family and fix them up. Ah, the Latin quarter, Greenwich village, the ghosts of artists haunting the place, Bohemians, enthusiasm, the lust for adventure. I bristled with personality.

"Oh, you want a marine view," said the real estate man. "Not for that price, lady."

A "marine view." I didn't want a marine view; I only wanted one window facing the sea. Surely with all those windows — .

I left the real estate man and began wandering about. I asked a group of Italian women and they exclaimed in a chorus "No marine views left." I hadn't said a thing about a "marine view." I wandered further and it was always the same. Some were smug and some were sorry but they all spoke of a "marine view" in a certain tone of voice, as Boston people say "Boston."

It was getting hot. I could not remove my coat because my waist was a lace front. Only a hair net restrained me from utter frumpiness. Still I was not altogether beaten and when I came to a nice countrified looking house standing alone in the midst of modern art and a man came out I asked him. The moment I did there came into his eyes a hunted glitter and he told me how he had held out against them and how he had been besieged for years to rent his marine view and wouldn't.

As I turned away I met an Irish delivery man and he said that there were dozens of vacant apartments very reasonable and waved his hand vaguely in the direction where I'd been searching. I like the Irish but his cheerful fibbery was the last straw and I went home.

The next day my friends called up and said that they had a marine view for me. I was to live all summer in the apartment of the So-and-Sos while they were away. So now I am. They are artistic and I drink my coffee from saffron colored cups on a bay green table runner over a black table under a turquoise blue ceiling with a view of the bay from the window.

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But I am humble and if some day I meet a hot, tired looking woman who can't find an apartment on Russian Hill, I shall say: "Shucks, a marine view isn't so much."

Hilly-Cum-Go

This is a story for children, because they will know it's only fooling, while grown-up people will believe it's true.

The cable car isn't a car at all, children, but is a hilly-cum-go, a species of rocking horse and a grown-up kiddie-kar. It is a native of and peculiar to San Francisco, and is a loyal member of the N. S. G. W. It has relatives in the South, and the electric dinkie that rolls up and down between Venice and Santa Monica is its first cousin. Some say that it is distantly related to the wheel chairs at Atlantic City. It is not at all common.

The men who run it are its Uncles. The parents live underground caring for the young kiddie-kars. At times, if you peek down in that hole near the Fairmont and are careful not to be run over you may see them bustling about. Before she was married, the mama was a Marjory Daw of the Daw family, famous see-sawers. The children take after their mother.

The Uncles are very kind and pick the hilly-cum-goes up in their arms as tenderly as a woman would. You must have seen them pick the little things up and run with them across the streets out of the way of autos. And at night they tuck them in their little beds and hear them say their prayer which goes:

Oh, dear me, I hope I'm able,
All day long to keep my cable.

These hilly-cum-goes are not run by electricity at all, but just pretend. They are run by three things — black magic, white magic and a sense of humor. Black magic takes them up the hills, white magic restrains them down, and the sense of humor is in the Irish conductors. You may hear, if you listen, the magic coming out of the ground, "Kibble-kable, kibble-kable," only fast as anything. At noon time it goes "Putter, putter, putter," and at bed-time, "Kuddle-kiddie, kuddle-kiddie."

This magic is very, very important. Especially going down hill. Did you ever, my dears, descend that precipice at the end of the Fillmore street line? What is it that keeps you from landing flat on your nose on Union street? Nothing but white magic. What is it that keeps you from shooting from the Fairmont, straight down into the St. Francis? White magic.

The sense of humor is also very important. Suppose a stout person gets on, the conductor hops immediately to the opposite side for ballast. That takes a sense of humor. If the hilly-cum-go is full of young people, especially sweethearts, the Uncle

jiggles the hilly-cum-go horribly, but if old people are on it goes — “See-saw, Marjory Daw,” just gently.

I trust, dear children, that all these facts will make you appreciate more the hilly-cum-go, and when you sit on it so cosy, so intimate with the street, riding along looking at the scenery, you will be thankful, that poor old horses do not have to tug you up hill, and that you have this sturdy little creature to haul you about. Nice little, old hilly-cum-go.

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I'll Get It Changed, Lady

This expressman was a regular San Franciscan. And there is such a thing, you know, as a regular San Franciscan. He is a native son and more. His speech betrays him. He calls a "car" a "cahh," and when he's surprised he says: "Yeah"! He has a permanent laugh in his eyes, and the only thing he gets mad about is prohibition. But the particular thing that I started to say of him is that money is to him a thing to spend. Money is an incident to life, that's all.

He said it would be a "dollar, six-bits," and I was sorry, but I only had a ten-dollar bill. When I said that, he just reached out and took it from me, and said he'd get it changed, and disappeared. Now, the significant thing, and the one that made him a regular San Franciscan, was that he never dreamed that I would doubt his honesty in returning with the change. And I didn't. It was this last that surprised me. If it had been in New York — I gasp — if it had been in New York, no expressman would have dared do such a thing because no one would have trusted him, and if they had been so hick as to trust him, the expressman would have had no respect for himself if he himself were so hick as to return with the change.

I never shall forget the shock of seeing a pile of newspapers in front of a drug store, the day I landed in San Francisco, where men took their morning paper and threw down a nickel, and even made change for a dime. Right out on the pavement — a lot of nickels lying loose and no one paying any attention. Why, in New York — well, it couldn't be done in New York, that's all.

It's not because San Francisco is not metropolitan. For San Francisco is essentially a city just as Los Angeles will always be a terribly big country village. It's not at all a matter of population. In Connecticut, we always said that Bridgeport was a city, and New Haven which was larger, was not. It's a bing, and a zip, and a tra-la-la-lah, that makes one city a city and another not. I can explain it no other way.

But with all its cityfiedness, there is a strange lack of suspicion, a free and easy attitude toward mere physical money, that one finds in no other large city except San Francisco. In the stores the clerks will say: "Shall I put it in a sack?" and you answer just as they hoped you would: "Oh, no, I'll slip it right in my bag." In New York as soon as one did that she'd be nabbed on the way out for a shoplifter.

Perhaps the constant use of silver money has had something to do with the matter. Paper money can be tucked away. Silver is more spendable, everyone knows that. Break a five-dollar bill into "iron men," and it's gone, gone. And yet it can't be the use of silver money alone that accounts for it. Reno has silver money, and yet there is little of the old, free Western spirit left in Reno.

No, it's something to do with San Francisco where suspicion doesn't yet grip the hearts of men and where money is made to spend.

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San Francisco, the last stand of the old, free West.

Fillmore Street

I walk along on Fillmore street. I try to walk very fast with eyes straight ahead. One needs a strong will to take a-walking on Fillmore street and keep from spending all his money. In fact it is better to have no money at all for then one is tempted to hold on to it.

Everything in the world is in the windows on Fillmore street — everything. There isn't a phase of human activity that isn't represented. Every nation has left its stamp. Spain — tamales and enchiladas. France — a pastry shop. Italy — spaghetti and raviolas. The Islands have for sale all that's hula-hula. Here is a Hungarian restaurant. And the "O. K. Shoe Shop — While U Wait" is pure American.

There is "Sam's Tailor Shop." I feel as though I should know this fellow Sam. Apparently he knows me from his chummy sign. Sam, Sam — I ought to remember Sam.

Do you wish to paint and varnish? Well, here you are. Or to be shaved or have your eye-brows arched? Walk right in. Here is a place to learn to paint china. Here are drugs, corsets, religion, fish, statuary, cigars and choice meats all in a row. Meats, on Fillmore street, are always "choice" or "selected" or "stall-fed." I doubt if you could get just "meat" if you tried. Next to the meats, out on a table before a second-hand book store is romantic, old "St. Elmo" of mid-Victorian fame. He must have come West by the "Pony Express."

I always stop, if I have time, to look at shoes to be mended. They are like people who have fallen asleep in public, off their guard and at their very worst. Take a shoe — a real, old shoe without a foot in it and it looks so foolish, betraying so mercilessly its owner's bumps and peculiar toes. There is pathos there, too. A scrub woman's run-down shoes, a kiddie's scuffed-out toes, a man's clumsy, clay-stained boots and the happy dancing slippers of a young girl.

Back of the shoes — the cobbler. Cobblers are always philosophers. Not pretty men, but thinkers. In their little, dingy shops they sit all day with their eyes down, isolated from the "hum and scum" about them, to the tune of their "tap, tap, tap," their minds are detached to think and philosophize and vision.

Now we are at the corner where we turn away from Fillmore street. There is a window full of dolls. Such a lot of homely dolls. They don't make pretty dolls any more. They make them to look like humans. "Character" dolls they call them and they are

“characters.” Now, when I was a little girl, they made dolls to look the way you wished human beings could look. — It is not hard to turn the corner.

In the Lobby of the St. Francis

There is something about having money enough to stay at the St. Francis, and to dine there and to wear smart clothes there that makes people step out and act sure of themselves. Even when they can't afford it, and their stay there is a splurge or an outing, they act just as sure and stepping. And as for the people to whom the St. Francis is but an incident they act sure because they were born that way.

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Never in my life have I seen such sure, well-dressed women as in the lobby of the St. Francis. And I am no greenhorn at lobbies. I have reviewed in my day some of the best peacock alleys in the country. There is the New Willard. Now when I think of the New Willard, I see frumpily dressed dowagers talking through their lorgnettes to moth-eaten senators. The Selbach in Louisville, the St. Charles in New Orleans are famed for their handsome women, but none are so free and proudly sure of themselves on peacock alley as California women. No women dress as they do either. They are not so chic as they are smart; their tailor makes, their furs, their hats with a preponderance of orange, their well-dressed legs and feet and a reserved brilliance that makes them the finest-looking women in the United States.

It is a fine pastime to step out from the surge of Life for a minute and let it ebb and flow around one in the lobby of the St. Francis. Such a pageant of individual stories. An exquisitely dressed young girl meets another there, and soon two young chaps appear and they all begin talking silly nothings, and laughing at each other's silly jokes, and looking into each other's foolish young eyes much as lovers have always done. A harassed business man rushes frantically to the telegraph desk and wires his firm at Pittsburgh. Some staid, comfortably-fixed tourists from Newton Center, Massachusetts, come in from sight-seeing and go up to their rooms and quickly get their shoes off. A group of Elks come in, arm-linked, and start one wondering about the enforcement of the dry law. In and out among all these moving comedies and tragedies flits like an orange-colored butterfly a little Oriental boy, an angel-faced page goes calling "Mister Smith," and sober looking bell-hops stand alert to the sound of "Front."

A beautiful woman steps forward and meets a handsome man and they go to dinner together, and somehow I don't think he is her husband and wonder if she is a widow and decide that it is none of my business. If she has a husband he is probably an "ornery" fellow who never takes her anywhere.

Everyone who passes by me looks alert, and sure, and happy and prosperous, but I comfort myself that probably each one of them has as much to worry about as I myself do.

The Garbage Man's Little Girl

This vignette is written because it can't help itself and carries with it a hope that someone who reads it may know a little girl whose father is a garbage man. Suppose that you can't think of anyone just now who is a daughter to a garbage man, it is best to read this just the same for you never know when you may meet her.

When you do, tell her not to care too much when the children at school tease her about her father and cry — "Phew — phew, here comes the gar-bidge-Garr-bidge-Garr-

bidge.” Tell her at that time to try and sustain her personal integrity with philosophy. It won’t do her a particle of good but tell her just the same.

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Tell her that her father is a terribly useful man. That if he should fail to function, then the disposal of garbage would become an individual problem and that the mamas of kids whose fathers are not garbage men would be obliged to say to their husbands — “Ed, dear, don’t forget to take the garbage bucket to the public incinerator on your way to the office.”

Tell her that just because her father collects dirt, it is no disgrace. Tell her to look at the people in good standing who peddle dirt. Tell her to look at the papers. Tell her to tell the world that it’s better any day to collect than to peddle dirt.

Tell her that when her father, up on his great smelly throne, drives around the corner of Powell and Geary that dressed-up folk needn’t disdain him so much. He’s a sermon. They won’t like him as a sermon so much as a garbage man but he’s a sermon just the same. The text is that back of most things that are dainty and beautiful is the drudgery worker. Tell her that there isn’t an immaculate kitchen in San Francisco that doesn’t depend upon her father.

Nor a feast at the Palace or the St. Francis. Tomato skins and the nests that cauliflowers come in, and gnawed “T” bones. What would become of them if she had no father. And coffee grounds and the nameless things that have been forgotten and burned by the absent-minded. Tell the little girl about Omar Khayyam and how he might have said — .

Oh, many a charred secret into the garbage can goes
That from the kitchen range in blackened cloud once rose.
Tell her that there is a professor at Yale whose father was a junk man.
All this and more tell the garbage man’s little girl.

The Palace

Someone was telling me of an old couple who lost everything they owned at the time of the fire, and that they were very brave about it and never broke down, and even helped others, but that when someone came running up and said: “The Palace is on fire,” they both sat down on the curb and gave way completely to grief.

And they say that after the fire the first piece of publicity which was given to the world as a proof that San Francisco would come back, was that the Palace would be rebuilt immediately. And a man from Virginia City, a descendant of the Comstock days, told me that in Nevada they speak of “The Palace” as Russians speak of the Kremlin as a pivot of destiny. What I am trying to say, of course, is that the Palace is a tradition just as the Waldorf-Astoria is a tradition, only not at all in the same way.

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The Palace is a great place for women who are alone and a place where a man may bring "the missus" with impunity. The Palace is stylish, perhaps, but principally it is select. It suggests to me women who wear suits of clothes, mostly dark gray, all wool and a yard wide, women who wear two petticoats and Hanan shoes and Knox hats and who carry suit cases covered with foreign express tags, and whom porters run to meet because they know that these women may not be so stylish as they are generous tippers. And the Palace suggests to me afternoon teas, and that peculiar composite chatter of women's voices which is more like the sound of birds in a flock, and which Powys speaks of as a strange inarticulate chitter chatter which isn't really speech at all.

The other day a well groomed young official from the hotel took me out to see the famous old Palace bar and the beautiful Maxfield Parrish painting above it. They have taken the rail away, and around the edge of the bar they have built a nicely finished woodwork wall which looks exactly like a great coffin, the coffin of John Barleycorn. After the manner of my species I wanted to see over the edge and the young man, thinking that I might be suspecting a blind pig, boosted me up to peck over. I asked him why they didn't remove the bar entirely and he said with unsmiling naivete that they were waiting "to see" and that they had saved the rail, "in case."

If I were a reformer I should agitate and have that remarkably joyous and beautiful Parrish painting placed where it could be seen. I'd take it out to some San Francisco school so that the dear Pied Piper and all the little round kiddies running after should be a delight to school children.

And now I have come to the end and all that I have said is that the Palace Hotel is the San Francisco tradition and everyone in the United States knew that long ago.

Zoe's Garden

Zoe says emphatically that it is not her garden, but everybody's garden. But it is her garden because she tends it, and every morning goes around among her flowers lovingly, giving a little dig of dirt here, and tying some frail sisters up there and then, with her scissors, clipping, snipping and nipping away. Yes, it is Zoe's garden.

Anything that has spunk to grow is welcome in this essentially San Franciscan garden. And no one is allowed to bully the others. Big burly geraniums and proud dahlias must keep in their places and give the dainty lobelia, cinnamon pinks, oxalis and candy tuft their chance. The oxalis! How we tended it in pots in New England, and out here in California, bless its heart, it runs around like a native daughter. And as for the fuchsia, how far it has grown from the blue laws.

There is no formality in Zoe's garden. Marigolds go wandering about in the most trampish manner, and poppies, because they are privileged characters, spring up as

they please. Then, as though the two of them were not sufficient California gold, there is the faithful gaillardia with its prim little sunflower-faces smiling up at their Mother Sun.

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It is a democratic garden, too. Golden rod and asters grow right in among the aristocrats. Fancy the snubbing they would get if they once ventured into a New England garden — Hm. There is freedom there, but not license, and every opportunity for individuality. The gladiolas, canterbury bells, gillie flowers and fox gloves grow as prim as in a conservative English garden. Pansies smile in their little bed, and although the nasturtium, the wild-growing, happy-go-lucky nasturtium, goes visiting around among all his neighbors, he is never allowed to interfere with those who wish to keep by themselves. The sweet peas stay very close to their tradition of wire netting, but they are not snobs at all, and give of their bounty to all who call. The sensuous jasmine is there, and the cold puritanical ceneraria and old maids' pin cushions, with fragrance of sandalwood. The red-hot-poker grows stiff and straight, but the ragged sailor goes uncombed and untidy still.

Cosmos is coming soon, dressed in her very feminine clothes, and the coreopsis has come on ahead. All old-timers are represented there, honeysuckle, wormwood, petunias, rosemary, gillas, mignonette, heliotrope and foxgloves. If they can not all be there together, all are there at some time in the summer. Montbretia, Japanese sunflower, larkspur, columbine and gourds all have their time and place and opportunity in this San Francisco garden. And the hollyhocks, the bossy things, I've a mind to leave them out. Besides I know some gossip about them. When Zoe was away to Yosemite one morning they were all leaning over from too much moonshine or too much sunshine and — well, I won't repeat what the marigolds told me about them.

Besides it is time to come away from Zoe's garden, which is everybody's garden.

Children on the Sidewalk

When you were a little girl, when you were a little boy, where did you play? Was it in a barn? Was it a city park? Did you hunt gophers on the plains of Iowa? Perhaps it was in a California poppy field. Perhaps a graveyard. I played in one, and remember very vividly the grave of Josephine Sarah Huthinson who died at the age of 11 months, and had a little lamb on the top of her stone and an inscription: "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Many delightful games we played around the grave of little Josephine.

Wherever childhood found us we played, and out of our environment and often in spite of it, lived in a delightful world of our own into which no grownup ever really entered. Now, you and I, grownup, walk along the sidewalks of San Francisco and all we see under our calloused old feet is a sidewalk. But to children even a sidewalk blossoms with possibilities. Who but a child invented: "Step on a crack, you break your mother's back." Only the other day I saw a kiddie avoiding every crack and muttering some incantation as he walked along.

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And out of the sidewalk grew all the different types of kiddie kars and coasters that are so prevalent. I saw a whole load of children zipping down a steep San Francisco hill the other day much as we children coasted down winter hills on wicked “double rippers.” A hill and gravity and a lot of kids, what possibilities. And out of the sidewalk have evolved those nameless explosives that have been so popular over the recent Fourth. A row of kids sitting on a curb, one of them darts out to the car track, a car comes, great expectancy from the kids, terrific noise, annoyed looks on the faces of sour adults, unbounded joy from a row of kids sitting on the curb.

Recently I saw a tomboy who had organized the children in her block, and had confiscated an alley between two straight gray houses, and I don’t know what the game was but it entailed trips on a car down the alley and a very bossy motorman, and “turns,” over which everyone quarreled.

Some dainty little Chinese girls were playing a sidewalk game with a white stone which was a version of an old, old child game. The child would hop to the stone and kick it away and hop to it again until she missed, the object being to beat her opponent in the distance traveled. And I saw some exquisite little Japanese girls playing jump rope and chanting one of the numerous litanies that go with that beautiful game.

The sidewalks of San Francisco. They are full of adventure. Robert Louis Stevenson would have seen it all. But to our dull eyes are only gray cement block. Just a sidewalk to us and to kiddies there are mountains in which Roy Gardner hides, and woods, and Tom Mix on a horse dashes right past us and we never see him at all.

Feet That Pass on Market St.

There is something about walking along Market street with the procession of people that passes all day, ah, how shall I express it? It is thrilling and it is amusing; it is cosmic and it is puny. It is often ridiculous and always sublime. Sometimes when we are in most of a hurry the consciousness of the procession will come to us. It is as though we were one of a moving crowd that never began and will never end. At such times we listen to the sound of their feet, the steady, unceasing step by step, an endless tramp as though it were beating out the rhythm — “Eternity, eternity, eternity.”

As we pass voices call to us from the wayside, a cripple so far down below us on the very ground offering his silent pencils; the allurements of flowers; a hoarse newsboy with his old, old face screwed into a thousand anxious wrinkles; a blind man, silent supplicant, twirling his thumbs; and from the windows the call of strawberries at 15 cents a basket. Overhead an aeroplane hums its way and receives from us the tribute of an upward glance. We gaze upward and think how many years before our day aeroplanes were flying overhead in the dreams of men who passed and passed in the long procession.

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Idly we glimpse faces that pass us in the procession that meets ours. We pass them and are never the wiser for the struggle and tragedy that may be going on behind their show of brave masks. A man clutching his last dime and wondering whether to spend it for rolls and coffee or coffee and rolls. A business man absorbed and a lady pondering deeply some detail of her dress. A young girl with soft un-massaged chin hurrying to keep a tryst with her “friend,” and country folks, their feet sore on the unaccustomed pavements, glad to be going home soon.

It is such an orderly procession and although they all seem to be walking along forever, there is an order in their going and each is on his way. Each one is free to go to his own place and yet no one is free. No one is free to leave the procession once he gets into it. Once a man is born he's done for.

Let him veer one iota from that procession and soon there will come rumbling up to the curb a big black Maria and off he's whisked away from his fellows. Let him but get into the wrong house or take the wrong overcoat or chuck the wrong person under the chin — Pff! Let him forget where the long procession leads and wander about a free spirit and his wanderings will lead him to the madhouse.

I love to be one of the procession that marches forever up and down Market street, such a brave procession.

Where the Centuries Meet

She was a tourist and she had just finished Sing Fat's. As she passed out of the door she said smugly to her companion — “I don't see anything so wonderful here.”

I was standing right there and said I: “Madame, if you have been through Sing Fat's and have failed, to see anything wonderful then you should go home and give yourself the Benet test which is used to test the intelligence of children.” Oh, of course, I didn't say this so that the lady could hear. The bravest speeches we humans make are never aloud. Then I continued: “Madame, you may travel far in mileage but you will never take anything back to Dingville, Kansas, richer than a souvenir ash tray.”

Why, just to take a trip from Sing Fat's to the White House is a tremendous journey if one has the perceiving faculty. In Sing Fat's a bit of old Cloissonne, tiny pieces of enamel on silver, done with infinite pains by hand labor, perhaps centuries ago, grown beautiful with age. In the White House georgette flowers, exquisite things made for the passing minute, a whiff and a whim and off they go. Just in these two there is a meeting of the centuries, Handcraft Days and the Machine Age — B. C. and A. D. — the oldest civilization in the world and the newest.

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The most interesting thing in Chinatown are the Chinese. To some they all look alike, but to me they seem very human and individual and folksy. I find myself paraphrasing: "But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford," and when I meet a crafty looking old Chinaman this whimsy comes to me, "If Deacon Bushnell who passed the plate in the Centerville Methodist Church had been a Chinaman this is the way he would have looked." They are such small town folks. Even with the steady cycle of tourists they gaze at each newcomer as though he were the latest comer to Podunk. One day with a friend I called on a Chinese girl, and all the large family and their friends gathered around and discussed us and laughed among themselves and pointed at us. It was embarrassing but I was never once conscious of rudeness, simply a childlike curiosity and honesty.

In Chinatown the other day a peddler was selling spectacles and somehow the old men trying them on and squinting for "near" and for "far," seemed so quaint and countrified and like a lot of old Yankees around a country store trying to get a "new pair of eyes, by Heck." In Chinatown the tong men do not seem at all real and the hair raising movie serial with its Chinatown terrors, Buddhist idols that open and swallow the movie actors and floors that drop into dungeons, seem very remote.

Bags or Sacks

"Do you like cafeterias?" I asked.

"Don't know," he answered, "I've never played them."

"What religion do you follow?" another man asked me.

In a mining camp they told me to take such and such a "trail."

The point is, that we did not talk that way where I came from. Of course, I hasten to say, we doubtless talked some other way just as peculiar. And if I could detect our colloquialisms I would write a lot about them but alas I can't. I was in the West two years before I noticed that a "trolley" is a "street car."

A woman in a mining camp said to the stage driver, "I want out at the bank because I don't want to pack this sack of silver." In the first place we wouldn't have had a sack of silver and if we had, it would have been in a "bag" not a "sack," and we never "pack" things and we never "want out."

In the East we never refer to our locality as "this country," as in the West and South. We do not take the name of our state either as "Californian" or "Kentuckian." One never hears of a "Connecticutian" or a "Massachusettsian." I do not profess to give any reasons for these peculiarities.

In the West, speech is more brief. “Autos go slow” is the warning while on the Fenway in Boston the signs read — “Motor Vehicles, Proceed Slowly.” I wouldn’t swear to the comma but the words are identical.

There is a small town near Provincetown where a sign reads — “Friends, we wish to think well of you and we wish you to think well of us. Kindly observe the ten mile motor limit.” After that the roads are so bad that one couldn’t possibly exceed ten miles if he tried. Probably the longest sign in California is that one which reads — “Drive your fool heads off.”

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“Booze-fighters” are Western. Oh, they’re Eastern too, but under a different name. It’s a misleading term, that. As though one were fighting against booze like an anti-salooner. I actually know of a woman who came West and thought for or a long time that a “booze-fighter” was a “Dry.” In the East he is a “rummy” and when he’s drunk he’s “tight.”

“It’s a fright,” is Western. “Ornery,” is middle-Western. That’s a wonderful word. Sometimes, I wish I could live my life over with “ornery” in my vocabulary. It describes so many people I never knew just how to classify.

There are no “T” bones in the East. And scrambled brains are not common. Oh, of course, we have them but not as something to eat. Personally, I was brought up to reverence brains and when I see them lying pale and messy on a plate in a Greek restaurant, I confess it gives me a start.

Hot tamales have never crossed the plains East. And baked beans have never come West — not real ones. The difference between the Eastern baked bean and the Western is all the difference between a tin can and a religious rite and it is the same with succotash. A cruller is only a fried doughnut when it gets out West. Tea is more subtle in the East, but out here the waitress will ask “Black or green” in a black or white tone and stands over you until you decide. Maybe you don’t want black tea, maybe you don’t want green, but just “tea,” but there she stands in her unequivocation — “Black or green?”

Silver money has never traveled East. A man told me recently that he didn’t like silver money when he first came out here and that it was always wearing his pockets out but since he’d gotten into Western ways it never wore a hole in his pockets any more. In the East a change purse is scorned by anything masculine, but here all the men carry one, I don’t know why not in the East, nor why in the West. Blessed old “two-bits” and a “dollar six-bits” are the only woolly things left over from the old wild West.

What else — oh, I could keep on for pages. “Stay with it” is Western and has lots more feeling I think than “stick to it.” A Westerner when his wife and babies were going back East to visit her relatives, telegraphed to her brother — “Elizabeth and outfit arrive Tuesday.” And until she arrived the brother spent his time in conjecturing as to just what an “outfit” would mean. Rhubarb plant is “rhubarb” in the East and also “pie plant,” and one day I was in a fruit store and when the man — he was a Greek — yelled “Wha else?” I could only think of “pie plant” and so I didn’t get any.

It’s all the way you are “brought up,” Eastern, and all the way you are “raised,” Western.

Portsmouth Square

“To be honest, to be kind.” Loiterers, vagabonds, slow-going Orientals, poets and blackguards, all day long come and drink at Stevenson’s fountain. Some of them look up and read it all and some only get as far as “to earn a little, to spend a little less” — .

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Small-footed Chinese women pass, humping along on their stumps and their babies running along beside have larger feet than the mothers who bore them, Bench warmers gaze after them with lazy curiosity. A fat Italian granddaddy washes a kiddie's hand from the fountain and a man with a demijohn and a sense of humor goes smilingly down the path and what he has in the demijohn is none of our business.

"To make on the whole, a family happier for his presence." It is noon and a bride has brought lunch for herself and her husband off the job in his white overalls, and the two eat together on the beautiful grassy slope. The poplar trees around Stevenson's fountain whisper poetry all day long and the little iron boat on top looks sad not to be sailing away on high adventure to the South Sea islands.

"To renounce when it shall be necessary and not be embittered." A woman with a baby carriage comes by. Something tender and sane and everyday and basic about her and her baby. A Chinese woman passing looks for all the world like a black and iridescent purple grackle in her shiny black coat and shiny black pants and shiny black shoes and shiny black hair, although the grackle has a prouder strut than her dancing little trot.

"To keep a few friends and those without capitulation." Where, oh where, do all the men come from who lie stretched out on the grass? I've seen the very same men lying on Boston Common, and when my father was a boy he said he saw them there. Hats over their eyes or else blinking up at the blue sky. Then on the curb facing the Hall of Justice, philosophers up from the water front or fresh from box cars, everyone with a story that Stevenson would have got from them.

"Above all on the same grim conditions to keep friends with himself." On the bench an enormous woman with a hat that looks like a schooner atop of a great pompadour wave and on the very same bench a mummied old Chinese as thin as a wafer. An aeroplane hums above and Stevenson's little boat looks envious. Where did Captain Montgomery of the sloop Portsmouth stand when he planted the flag in 1848? The Mission bell, so many miles to Dolores, so many miles to Rafael. Ring, Mission bell, ring and show us where the El Camino Real will lead us all by and by. We who pass all day, show us the way, Mission bell. — "here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy."

Miracles

"Why, who makes much of a miracle?

As for me, I know of nothing else but miracles.

Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,

Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,

Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,

Or stand under trees in the woods,

Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car.”

- Walt Whitman.

If man or woman be at all sensitive to life, he must react to the commonplace much as Whitman did. Such a person may be hurrying along about his business with perhaps no time for reflection and yet in a flash, the miracle of life will come. to him through the slightest happening.

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A little girl on the ferry sitting with her mother takes from her small prim bag a set of doll clothes, and fondles them and smooths them much like a pullet with her first chickens. The sight of those square, little, gingham dresses, trimmed with scraps of lace and silk and with awkward sleeves standing straight out, brought to me, on that Oakland ferry, all my childhood again, and I was cuddled close between the surface roots of a great elm and from the nearby lane came the sight and scent of Bouncing Bet, Joe Pye Weed, Tansy, Yarrow, Golden Rod, Boneset, and over in the meadow the sight of cows and the smell of peppermint and water cress, beside a little stream.

The moment I write it down in physical words it becomes somehow less miraculous. The mind is so infinite and the human being so essentially mental, that the spoken or written word may never express them.

The sight of electric lights flashing at night, the view of the city from a cable car, the wonder of great trucks bearing down upon us like fiery-eyed dragons, a bunch of poppies growing close to the roots of a billboard in the heart of the city, and the silhouette of a young girl, wind-blown, so that her straight slender figure shows more beautiful than the statue that tops Union Square. Up Kearny street the glimpse of eucalyptus trees on the top of Telegraph Hill standing out against the pink sunset sky, the postman with his pack of human messages on his back, the spirit of Robert Louis Stevenson in Portsmouth Square, and a row of old, old men sitting in the sun on Union Square discussing the Universe.

Did you ever stand listening to the seals just at nightfall, and did their weird, low call stir you to a feeling of kinship with all the creatures of the great deep, and did you lose yourself there out under the cold, dark water in that mysterious untamed world of the sea that is older than the land?

I don't know what it's all about. I only know we need more poets. Still every man who reacts to life and feels it to be a miracle, he is himself a poet. Even Whitman could only articulate in terms of wonder.

Impulses and Prohibitions

One day last week a man — a regular man, neither a decided proletarian nor a typical bourgeois — but just a man was walking along. He was dressed in average clothes, he was shaved and carried a suit case and didn't look out of work and was evidently going somewhere.

He was walking along with this suit case — it was on Larkin near McAllister about two o'clock on one of those superb days of last week — and he came to a place where there was a stretch of grass near the sidewalk. I think he was hot and the suit case was getting heavy. . . .

At any rate when he saw that grass, tall, dark green and fragrant, he immediately lay down on it, pulled his hat over his eyes and, I expect, went to sleep. It sounds so free and easy written down. Which makes it no less significant.

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First, it was significantly Western. An Easterner or a Middle Westerner would have thought it over first. Then the fact that the man was so average made it significant. If he had looked like a vagabond it would have been not even an incident. It is we who are respectable who are fettered by Grundy. It was a logical thing to do and natural and terribly human, but most of us can't do the logical thing and natural even if inside we do feel terribly human. Especially these spring days. Today at noon I would like to have gone up on the grass in Union Square and taken my shoes off. Why didn't I? Not because of the police — but Grundy.

Now a Piute Indian woman could have done it. Her stockings too. A Piute Indian woman when she's tired she sits down right in the street, right where she's tired. But you and I, when we are weary we may sigh — "Wish I could sit down." But we can't, not until we've gone down the street and up in the elevator to some particular place where Grundy says we may sit.

The most significant thing about that man on the grass was that he was in the heart of a great city. Cities are like homes. Some you're comfortable in — some you're not. Now, San Francisco, it is a real city, with all the metropolitan lares and penates, dignified and vividly active. And yet there is no city in the country whose children may be as "at home" as here. It is the only city I know of that has forgotten to provide itself with nasty little "Keep Off The Grass" signs. It will probably never be an altogether prohibition town.

Stopping at the Fairmont

It is best to say at the very beginning that if one is tremendously wealthy he will not enjoy this dissertation on staying at high class hotels. If one has more than two bathrooms in his home and can afford chicken when it is not Sunday and turkey when it is not Christmas and could stay at the Fairmont all winter if he preferred, then these words will mean nothing to him.

She has gone, this friend of mine. All winter she has been staying at the Fairmont. Much of the time I, too, have been staying at the Fairmont as her guest. So it is with a sense of double bereavement that I write.

Talk to me no more of the comfort of cozy little homes. Give me a hotel where I am treated as though I were a Somebody. Where I have but to press a button and a liveried servant comes running as though I were Mary, Queen of England, or Clara Kimball Young. And plenty of hot water for baths and lots of enormous towels and, as soon as one's butter is gone, another piece, and fresh butter at that. Pitchers of ice water and a strapping big man standing so solicitously and watching one's every mouthful. It makes me feel as though I were the Shah of Persia. At home I don't feel at all like the Shah of Persia.

I came across something the other day that Boswell quotes Dr. Johnson as saying on this same subject: "There is no private house in which people may enjoy themselves as at a capital tavern. At a tavern you are sure you are welcome, and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are."

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This friend of mine can go to the room telephone and say, so incidentally, "Room service, please," and order a meal in her room with almost negligence. That, I say, is elegance. Taxis, too, are another test. I never order a taxi without a feeling of seasickness. Even when someone else is paying the bill I can't sit back in comfort. Always they are ticking off the minutes as though they were my last on this earth.

They are simple tests that divide the plebeian from the patrician. Was it Kipling who wrote:

"If you can order breakfast in your room and not feel reckless,
If you can ride in taxis with aplomb,
If you can read the menu and not the prices,
Then, you're a qualified patrician, son."

After my friend had gone I went back to the hotel and someone else was in her room and no one treated me as though I were the Queen of Sheba and I went out into a cold, indifferent world where no one cares when my glass is empty, where no chair is pushed under me at table and where, alas, I must sugar my own tea or go without.

San Francisco Sings

Some Cities roar and others hum, but San Francisco sings. Especially on Saturday at noon and downtown. Saturday noon in San Francisco is like nothing else anywhere but Saturday noon in San Francisco. And Saturday noon is like the noon of no other day but Saturday. On Sunday they're off. On Saturday noon everybody's on the street.

There are more flowers on Saturday noon. On the street stands great plumes of gold acacia, riots of daffodils, banks of violets, white, waxy camellias and branches of Japanese peach blossoms. It's still winter by the calendar but it's spring in San Francisco. Everywhere you turn a man or boy from the country with baskets of the spring flowers. All you want to carry for two bits and a nice bunch for a dime. Big, fat men and oldish men with young twinkles in their eyes sell them, unromantic, but very nice to deal with.

There are the flowers and there are the women. No women in the country so beautiful. No women in the world wear color as they do. Their colors are never primitive, never gaudy, but gorgeous and vivid and alive, seldom do you see a woman dressed in black, and black hats almost never. Sit in the gallery of any church on Sunday morning when the sun comes pouring in and it is as though you were looking down on flowers.

Never two alike in the Saturday noon crowd and yet the same type. Free women, happy women, regular women. Women who can recall a judge or so and still be



graceful and dainty. It is very significant that a San Francisco woman stands at the very pinnacle of the city, graceful and alert on that tall slender column in Union Square.

And the Saturday noon men — men? — men? In describing color what can one say of men? Well, it's not their fault that they can't wear pretty clothes. They make a nice grey background for the women and a very desirable audience and that's the best I can do for them.

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The street musicians, they contribute a lot to the Saturday noon atmosphere. And when we drop a penny into their cups, perhaps it is not so much pity as pay for the joy their piping gives us. And the people who call papers, of whom the blind are the dearest of all. There's a blind man on Powell street who sounds exactly as though he were saying Mass.

Dearie me, I can't describe it. All its lilt and rhythm and color and humanness as well. And ladies walking along with huge white balloons from the White House as though they had been blowing bubbles from some great clay pipes. And a plump, rosy Chinese woman so dainty in her breeches with her shiny, black hair bound in a head dress of jade and opal and turquoise.

We need more poets.

Van Ness Avenue

Van Ness avenue is sole. Nowhere in the wide world does the proud and culminating automobile own and dominate such a wide and sweeping display boulevard.

The automobile, what a magnificent animal it is, long, low, luxurious, purring softly, full of a great reserve, ready to dart forward, not to the cruel touch of a spur or bit, but to the magic touch of a button. It is the culminating achievement of this period of the machine age. The airplane, clumsy and awkward as yet, belongs for its consummation to the men of tomorrow. The automobile is the zenith of today's accomplishment, and that is why men speak of it as "super" this and "super" that.

The machine age has its own cruelties and its own, ugliness, but it also has its own art and its own beauty, of which the automobile and the houses which men have built to accommodate it, are the consummate art. Not all will agree with me here. The critics will damn me with disdain, and the King of Van Ness, who ought to agree, but is too busy talking cars, will only remark, if he listens at all: "Pretty good dope at that." But argumentatively I proceed.

Not that I can name them. I am only sure, really sure, of a Ford. But I admire them with a great pride in my human kind. They sit so majestically in their palaces on Van Ness, great limousines, powerful roadsters, luxurious touring cars, waiting there on display and containing in themselves all the skill, energy, artifice, and beauty of line, color and trim that the machine age can produce.

And the buildings on Van Ness strike a new and independent note in architecture. All that the ages have contributed of arches, columns, coloring and lighting are utilized and made into palaces of great dignity and beauty. There is something about the arched and windowed walls and the spacious, open look of the buildings that is entirely

distinctive and Van Ness. It is not Mission, Grecian or Colonial, but it is all of them. It is as new and distinctive as the service stations that have sprung out of the automobile needs. If we dared we would call it entirely American.

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And the printing that high lights each building is an achievement in modern art. Who but Americans would dream of using printing instead of gargoyles or classic medallions as ornamentation. Some of it is very beautiful and almost none is ugly. The use of the word "Paige," the printing of "Buick," the "H" of Hupmobile, the Mercury "A" of Arnold are to me very beautiful.

Van Ness avenue. It is exactly like its name. A long wide sweep for the regal motor car, the most wonderful and proudest automobile row in the world. The ghosts of the old, aristocratic and residential before-the-fire Van Ness have seen to it that even commercialized it shall still be — Van Ness.

The Blind Men and the Elephant

You live in San Francisco and I live in San Francisco, and so does the man who owns the peanut wagon on the corner, and none of us live in the same San Francisco — funny. We're like the blind men who each gave a different version of the elephant.

To some, San Francisco is always eight o'clock in the morning or six o'clock at night, swinging on the straps homeward, swallow their dinners and to a show in the evening. Such people never have wandered through Golden Gate Park of an afternoon or sunned themselves on the benches of Union Square. They have never seen San Francisco by week-day sunlight.

Then there are home women and leisure women to whom San Francisco is always afternoon, down-town in the shopping district with ladies in pretty clothes passing each other on the street or in and out of the sweet-scented stores.

To some, San Francisco is always night. A taxi-driver who used to be a newsboy down on the old Barbary Coast. He has never seen anything but the night life of the city. Not bad, but night provincial — a sort of male version of Trilby.

The neighborhood of Merchants Exchange on California Street is San Francisco to hundreds of men. They ride out to the golf links and into the country on Sunday. Occasionally they go to New York, but when they return San Francisco is limited to the neighborhood where men inquire anxiously — "Is she picking up any in the East?"

No matter how wealthy, no matter how poor, to each of us San Francisco is very much limited in the confines of what each of us is interested in. It's funny when you stop to think about it. How the Master of Marionettes must laugh at us when he sees us together. Perhaps some night after the show, the traffic cop raises his imperial hand and there, waiting to pass, the taxi driver of the night and a dear little home woman with her husband, and Mr. Chamber-of-Commerce and close to him a man who has never

seen San Francisco by week day sunlight. There they all wait looking out of their eyes on San Francisco and each seeing it so differently.

San Francisco is one thing to you and another thing to me and something entirely different to the man on the peanut stand.

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You're Getting Queer

Everyone ought to have — well, what is it that everyone ought to have? No, not a machine, not necessarily a garden and not even a camera. Everyone ought to have children. If not children of their own, then borrowed ones or nieces or nephews or the neighbor's kids. Everyone ought to have children.

People who have no children anywhere in their environment to whom they can talk intimately soon become queer and lop-sided. They may not always realize it but others will find them awkward and stilted and covered with cobwebs and dust. Such people will be found hard to get on with and full of snippiness. It is half what ails folks, that so many of them have no children in their lives and it affects them like malnutrition. Let a baby enter a street car filled with moldy, musty grown-ups and watch the starved looks and the foolish and pathetic boohs and pokes they will dart in the direction of the child.

It is often my privilege to tell stories to a group of babies, and one day when they were crowded close around me one of them exclaimed — “Hey, you spit right in my eye.” Then it came to me what a lot of eyes I had probably spit into all down the years, and how no one had ever told me of it so frankly before. Children are so honest until we teach them to say that they're sorry when they're not, and to listen to stories that bore them and to pretend not to like Jazz when all the time they do.

Contact with children takes us back to the genesis of our being and revives in us something primitive and honest and natural. I saw a man recently being led out of a grown-up meeting by the hand of a child and he looked so cross about it and was so obviously trying to maintain his dignity while the child hurried him up the aisle. I thought how silly. When a child has to leave a meeting he has to, that's all, and there's no use in arguing or getting cross about it. And really how good it was for that pompous individual to get taken down a peg by the terribly human appeal of a little child.

All of us ought to find some children to tell stories to for our own sakes. And then when we have gotten Jack up the beanstalk and into the ogre's kitchen, and the ogre says in an awful voice — “I smell a human being,” perhaps there will come to us some of the old thrill that we had forgotten.

If you don't know any children intimately, children who call you “George” or “Auntie Flo,” children who run to meet you, children who hurt your pockets with anticipation, children to whom you read the funnies or whom you take to the movies, children for whom you may revive your childhood tricks of making a blade of grass squawk, or wiggling your scalp, or cutting out a row of dancing paper dolls, then hurry and get acquainted even if you are driven to pick them up. If you don't, then as sure as you're alive, you'll find yourself growing queer.

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The Ferry and Real Boats

As a matter of fact the ferry isn't a boat at all. It is more like a house or a street car or a park full of pretty benches. It doesn't sail, it only plies, plies between two given points at stated intervals, and could anything be more dull. Nothing is more prosaic than a ferry unless it be an ironing board.

Even a barge is superior, and a barge doesn't pretend to be a boat. A barge goes somewhere and it gets mussed up by the real salt sea, and so do flat, old scows, honest and rough and sea-going. Any boat in the bay is superior to the effeminate ferry. Even the boat to Sacramento has a bit more atmosphere. As for tug boats, they are little, but O-my as they pull the great, impotent barges after them. Pilot boats have quite an air making the big, dignified steamers look foolish being yanked here and there. The tidy fisherman's motor boats look rather unimaginative, all tied in rows at Fisherman's Wharf, but they go somewhere, sometimes away down the coast and from their sides the long nets reach away down into the sea itself.

How the real boats in the bay must despise the ferry. Think of being called a boat and never once sailing out of the Golden Gate. How maddening it must be. If the ferry had any spirit at all, some day it would just switch about and go chunking out to sea. Imagine then the concern of the staid commuters from Oakland and Alameda to say nothing of the citizens of Berkeley and Marin County, to find themselves being borne away from their vegetable gardens and fresh eggs out to sea in a wooden boat.

I suppose there are many people living right here in San Francisco who have never sailed away out of the Golden Gate, people who have been bound economically or by love or duty, and have had to ply like the ferry daily between two given points. But can there be a man who has seen tall-masted schooners and long-bodied ocean-going steamers pass in and out of the alluring Golden Gate, and has never longed to sail away to the enchanted South Seas, or to Alaska. Such a man is not a man any more than the ferry is a boat.

If I could choose the boat I'd sail away upon, it would not be a coast-wise steamer, nor the prim Alaska packers nor even the steamers to the Orient. I'd choose me a four-masted schooner, carrying freight and going somewhere, anywhere, no one knows where. And then some day the wind would die or some night the wind would howl and there would come to me a great longing for or a ferry that should take me home at night in a safe and prosaic manner.

A Whiff of Acacia

In Connecticut now, and in Illinois and in Utah too, it is lilac time. Lilac time — I'll stop, if you please, to say the words over lovingly. In San Francisco now the lilacs are in bloom

but it is not lilac time. In Golden Gate Park the rhododendrons are blossomed into gorgeous mounds of color but they are not an event in San Francisco, only an incident. In “The Trail of the Lonesome Pine” set in the mountains of Virginia, they are the dominant background.

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Poppies and lupine and many others are the flower tradition of California but they are not what I mean here. It is an impression of mine that San Francisco more than any other city has taken the traditional plants and flowers of other sections and made them into a composite that makes up the plant atmosphere of this city.

Take roses and geraniums and callas, none of which are epochal because they are always at hand. But with old Mrs. Deacon Rogers in Connecticut who nursed her calla through the long winter that she might take it to church on Easter Sunday, the calla was history.

Even the camellia San Franciscans take very philosophically. It has not, for instance, the supremacy that Dumas gives it in "Camille." In Sacramento they feature it more and an Easterner who saw them picking it in branches instead of single flowers, exclaimed: "Why, they think they're oleanders."

The plant and flower atmosphere of a community is very important. Some child is now growing up in the city, who some day will be far away when there will come to him a whiff, perhaps of acacia, and in an instant there will come surging over him all the feel and urge and thrill and wistfulness and dreams of his childhood, and he will be once more in the atmosphere of San Francisco. It will not include winter and summer but an all-round-the-year-ness, it will not mean a flower, but flowers, cherry blossoms from Japan, acacia from Australia, and the best from everywhere which all together will mean to him — San Francisco.

The smell of the acacia, which he knew as the wattle, inspired Kipling to write those words

"Smells are surer than sounds or sights
To make your heart strings crack."

Perhaps many others see with me this difference between San Francisco and the rest of the country, as though nature here expresses herself in bounty more than in resurrection. Oh, well, whether it be "lilac time" or "all the time" to each locality there is its own beauty and, as for me, I have yet to find, in all my travels, the "place that God forgot."

It Takes All Sorts

"Hey, hey," called the tall, nervous man with the fat, little wife, waving his arms at the conductor for fear he would be carried past his corner.

"It takes all sorts of people to make a world," remarked the sensible-looking woman beside me.



It is not the first time that I have been impressed with the philosophy of those words. Who said them first, I wonder. "It takes all sorts of people to make a world." That is, if we only had one sort or even a number of sorts we would have no world. To make a world there must be all sorts, including the funniest folks we ever knew.

I looked from the sensible woman with her well-chosen clothes to the woman across the way. This second woman was a sort of dressed-up-and-no-place-to-go type, with a squirt of Cashmere Bouquet in the center of her handkerchief. And nothing on that went with anything else she had on. And a hat which one knew was a hat, because it was on her head, otherwise it might have passed for almost anything.

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The woman beside me wouldn't have been caught dead looking like the second woman. Yet she should have been thankful for her. For it is only by contrast that the well-groomed look smart, and the overdressed look fussy. Whether that is Einstein's theory of relativity or not, I don't know. I only know that, "It takes all sorts of people to make a world."

There we sit on parade in these side-seater cars, and what we are is revealed so pitilessly to all who sit across from us. It is as though Fate were making jokes of us and sits us down beside the antitheses of ourselves. Such a one of Nature's jokes I saw recently. They were two men. The first was the sort whom one calls an "old boy." A racy individual, well-fed with a round front, an Elk, of course, a city man, reeking of good cigars, and an appraising eye out for a good-looking woman.

Beside him sat a man who had been studying birds in the Park. Berkeley was written all over him. A thin, pure type. He was dressed in field glasses and a bag full of green weeds and stout walking boots. There was an ecstatic glint in his eye which meant that he had discovered a long-billed, yellow-tailed Peruvian fly-catcher, "very rare in these parts."

So there they sat packed in so close and so terribly far apart, both so necessary to the making of a world.

And as they sat a boy entered the car with a shoe-box, full of holes, and out of the holes came a "peep" and then another. And the Berkeley man lost his abstracted look and the man-about-town laid down his paper and pretty soon the boy lifted the lid a bit and both men peeked in.

The Fog in San Francisco

Sunsets in the desert, spring in New England, black-green oaks lying on tawny hills in Marin County, fields of cotton on red soil in Georgia, surf on the rocks of Maine, moonlight on Mobile Bay, and the way the fog comes upon San Francisco on summer afternoons.

Sometimes when all its hills lie sparkling in the sunshine and children play on the sidewalks, young fellows whistle, business autos go zippity-ip around the corners, and the whole city is out of doors or hanging out of the windows, then suddenly in great billows the fog comes rolling in through the Golden Gate, and between the hills right up the streets into the city.

Then immediately all is changed and everything is nearer and more intimate and nothing of the city is left but the street you're on. Then you hurry home for supper and home seems good and sometimes you even light a little fire in the grate.



Still it is not a cold fog, it is not a wet fog, it is never an unkind fog. It comes swiftly, but very gently, and lays its cool, dainty hand on your face lovingly. Hands are so different, sticky or wet or clammy or hot, but the hand of the San Francisco fog is the hand of a kind nurse on a tired head. The rain is a beautiful thing too, but the fog has another significance. — It is the “small rain” that Moses spoke of — “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”

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It is very beautiful too. My, but I've seen fogs that were ugly, and heard the fisherman say "She's pretty thick tonight." San Francisco fog is not like that, but like great billows of a bride's veil. Then in the morning when the sun comes it chases the bride and her veil out so fast, and they go out to sea together, sunshine and fog.

The other morning I awakened very early and there in the square of my window was a hard, black cube against a white background. I lay there and blinked and wondered where that telephone pole had come from, which like Jack's beanstalk, had grown there overnight. Then I saw that the fog had shut out the whole world and brought that pole close, and made it seem big and formidable and ugly.

The fog makes some people lose their perspective, and for others it only wraps with a great kindness the whole world and blots out all ugliness. But upon everyone, upon the just and unjust, this San Francisco fog lays its gentle hand lovingly and with an ineffable kindness.

A Block on Ashbury Heights

Sometimes in the afternoons when the mothers are out shopping and the youngsters have not yet returned from school our block looks so deserted and wind-swept and dull. The houses are so much alike. They all sit there in a row with their poker faces like close-mouthed Yankees refusing to divulge any secrets. But from the bow-windows where I sit and type, in spite of their silence the house fronts have become individualized into so many human stories.

I never stop to look out but somehow the stories get in through the window. For instance, I would not be so rude as to stare at the family washing which once a week is hung on the flat top of a neighbor's garage, but those clothes up there have a way of flapping in the wind so conspicuously that I cannot help see. There is the man of the house and his, shall I say garments, kick themselves about like some staid old deacon having his fling. Then there is the middle-sized bear whose bloomers, billowed by the wind, become a ridiculous fat woman cut off at the waist. And the little bear's starched clothes crack and snap while the revolving tree-horse whirls about like some mad dervish. I often wonder if the family know of the wild actions that take place on the roof.

It is a very respectable block inhabited mostly by grown-ups except one lively house where a dog lives with some boys and their incidental parents. The door of that house continuously bangs, and other boys with other dogs are always hanging around whistling under the windows.

Most of the windows are only used to admit light except one that is used to look out of and is inhabited by an old lady who sits all day and knits for her grandchildren. It must

not be so bad, I think, to look out of the window upon life instead of always rushing off to catch a car that takes one into the thick of it.

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Out of the window of my kitchenette I can look into the window of a girl in the next house. Every morning I get my breakfast by her dressing. My coffee I start as she begins to unwind her curls from their steel cages. I have a suspicion that she also dresses by me. If she sniffs my coffee first, I imagine she hurries with her curls. She is usually fixing her eye-brows to my toast and by the time I sit down she is doing her lips.

After that she goes off for the long day and so do most of the people in the block. Then at night they all return, drawn by some tie of love or habit or despair, each to his right place in the long row of houses, which have been sitting there all day with their poker faces, waiting.

The Greek Grocer

He had just opened a store on our street and in a Lady Bountiful spirit of helping him out, I went in to do a little trading. I told him I would like a can of baked beans. Baked beans, but he didn't seem to understand. So pointing over the counter where they were in plain sight, I said with all my teeth and tongue: "Baaked Beens." He followed my finger. "Oh," he said correcting me, "You min Purrk ind Bins."

That was the beginning and for weeks that Greek has been correcting my pronunciation. There is no use to argue about it. The fellow has no reverence for Noah Webster and besides there are more Greeks, nowadays, than Yankees, and their way is probably getting to be the right way. Sometimes I think it is we who are the "foreigners."

Once it was cauliflower. Now, I say cauliflower exactly as it is spelled but that isn't right. It is "Culliefleur," said staccato. And honey — one day I wanted honey and after I had sung "Hunnie, hunnie" in high C, and he didn't understand, I went around and picked out a jar of it. "Oh," he said reproachfully, "you min hawney."

A Scotch woman had a scene with him the other day over some "paeper." There is no way of spelling it as she said it. She kept repeating it and he kept getting the wrong thing. No, she didn't want paper but "paeper" - seasoning for the table — salt and "paeper." The more excited she got, the more Scotch she got and the more confused he. Then, when they were both fairly hysterical, I discovered that it was pepper.

Then you should have heard that Greek scold. He told her that it was "Pip-RR."

And she said back, "Paeper."

Then they argued and never once did either one of them get it "Pepper."

"Paeper."

"Pip-RR."

“Paeper.”

“Pip-RR.”

One day I heard him laying down the law to a woman who had dared question his price of “Rust Bif.” He told her what he had to pay for it in “Cash Mawney” and asked her if she could do so, to explain. “Explin — you kin explin — explin.” But she couldn’t explain. So, chastened, she meekly bought the roast beef at his price.

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Yesterday a U. C. girl was in and asked, "You are a Greek, are you not?"

"Naw," he answered, "you min Grik."

Billboards or Art

If you like billboards you are not artistic. Take it or leave it. That's the criterion. It's not my verdict. Ask those who know, the literary clubs, the art clubs and our distinguished guests from Europe. I can remember away back when Pierre Loti visited this country and was so shocked at the glaring billboards that marred the beauty of New York harbor and blinded his continental eyes with their gaudy colors.

Now, I would like to be both artistic and fond of billboards. I can't be both. So I choose — billboards. Everyone who reads these words must make his choice.

I not only enjoy them; I think they are beautiful. A lovely splash of color in the grayness of the city, a sincere expression of American life, so sincere that the critics who take their opinions from Europe never have been able to sneer us out of them.

We must admit, those of us who admire billboards, that the critics had their justification in the early days. We have not forgotten the days when mortgaged farmers prostituted their barns by selling advertising rights to Hood's Sarsaparilla and Carter's Little Liver Pills and to Lydia Pinkham, and when Bull Durham marred every green meadow from Boston to Washington. Billboards were an unsavory addition to the landscape then. But the modern art of bill posting is quite a different thing and in California it has reached its highest development. Segregated spots of color in the dun cities, surrounded by well manicured lawns, supported by classic figures in white and lighted by dainty top lights. And out along the boulevards, how lovely they are at night, luminous breaks along the dark highways, suggesting so tactfully the kind of tire to use or the sort of mattress to lie upon.

The critic has had his mission. He has forced the Poster man. Fortunately though young America has not taken him seriously. If he had this country would have missed some of its most distinctive contributions to Art. The electric sign for instance. That was condemned as vigorously as the billboard. And today, tell me, anybody, anywhere what is more beautiful in all the world than the dancing lights of Market Street at night. In what a unique and vital way they express the life of the great modern city.

And anything that expresses Life, whether that life be mediaeval or the life of the machine age, that is Art. There.

How pleased everyone is to know that the pretty Palmolive girl who "kept her girl complexion" is married and has a sweet little daughter who has inherited her mother's skin.



I don't always take the posters seriously. Now, I don't believe that that man "would walk a mile for a Camel." He'd borrow one first. And "contented cows." Cows are always contented. All I've known. But they may have had bolshevikish notions recently, cud strikes, perhaps. Hence the accent on "contented cows," to reassure us that there is no "Red" propaganda in the milk. Then, there is the parrot; what a long time it takes to teach him to say "Gear-ardelly." And that sentimental touch, "If pipes could talk." They do.

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Sometimes, in an absent-minded way, I get them confused, movies and merchandise, and find myself wondering who's starring in "Nucoa." Then there's that ecclesiastical looking party, the patron of Bromo-Quinine, whom I always take for some bearded movie star.

But to return to their artistic merits, they are artistic. Take those same "contented cows." What could be more futurist than the coal black sky under which they so contentedly graze? Or the henna hills so far away, or the purple grass they chew. Matisse and Picasso, great modernists, could not out-do those cows.

The cigarette men are particularly interesting. A bit over done. One cannot help wonder what enthusiasm they would have left for a gorgeous sunset having spent so much on, a cigarette. But I expect they are good men at heart and not so sensuous as they appear. There's that jolly old boy who hasn't had such a good smoke in sixty years. One wonders if his teeth are his own. They all have teeth. Everyone has teeth these days. It would be a change to see someone on a billboard with his mouth shut.

Golden Gate Park

Enter slowly, by foot is much the better way, and join the long, loitering procession.

Black-green foliage, the curious old-green of trees that never wither and never resurrect. Something very foreign or is it San Francisco? Cubist effects of the horizontally-lined cypress, vertical lines of the eucalyptus, and the soft, down-dropping of the willow trees and pepper.

Women on the benches tatting, reading, resting. A retired Kansan widower passes, glances sidewise. Well, no harm in looking at a comely woman. Gossip of mothers over baby carriages, "Only nine months old! Mine is a year. Well, we think he's pretty fine."

Comes the sight-seeing bus. Blare of the megaphone. "Seventeen miles of driveway, boost, boast, greatest in the world."

All day long the swings are swinging, rhythmic, slow to the touch of loving hands. Then at night when all is still and dark, they go on swinging dream children, rhythmic, slow.

Down the slide into the soft sand. Grandpa tending Nellie's children: "Careful there." Ding, ding like the sound of a temple bell the whirling, dizzy iron rings clang against their iron pole. Tramp of the patient little burros. "Mother, I want another cone."

Bum-ti-bum, too-too-too, ta-ta-ta, ta-ta-tahh, the band. Wagner by request. Music lovers in the crowd. A symphony orchestra is very fine, but simple people like ourselves, we also love a band.

I've never been to Japan, but this must be the way it looks. Tinkle of the wind bells, petals of Cherry floating down. Sorry, but I've used the last of the films. Well, we'll come again.

The bears, the big brown grizzlies, leave them now. Out, what is this! Fairyland of flowers and fragrance. Bears and orchids, wise planned contrast.

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People with accumulative minds wander through the museum, very interesting, "Just look at this mosaic, John." Exhibit of modern art in the gallery. "Portrait of a girl," only a daub to the wayfaring man,

Lovers in secluded places stealing a kiss, caught by the middle-aged. "Silly young things," wistfully.

Once all parks were private grounds. Free now to the poorest serf. Well, there's something century-gained. Some people say the world's growing worse all the time. Perhaps, perhaps. . . .

Who cares. Lying flat on your back close to the smell of the earth, the great kind mother. Up, up at the sky, how deep, how blue. Is there a God? There must be Something; look at each perfect blade of grass. An airplane across the blue. There's something gained.

Automobiles in stately procession proud as horses ever were. Automobiles proudly rolling, swings swinging, people passing, and the swimming of all the water fowls, the swans, the Japanese ducks and the little mud hens. Infinitude of movement, infinitude of life, ineffable beauty. There must be a God. There must be Something back of it all.

Extra Fresh

Some one in San Francisco keeps hens. Not only hens, but a rooster. I distinctly heard him crow. It was in the very early morning, and like Tennyson's "Queen of the May" — lying broad awake — "I did not hear the dog howl, mother, but I did hear this crow."

It is Ralph Waldo Trine, I think, who says that "So long as there remaineth in it the crow of a cock or the lay of a hen a city is not a city." But I would not base the citifiedness of a city upon the mere crow of a cock any more than on the census. It is a vulgar criterion.

For human nature is human nature and nothing betrays human nature like hens. It is not surprising, therefore, that some woman has sneaked into the city limits a mess of hens. Neither is it an aspersion on the police.

Besides this was to be about eggs.

Has anyone noticed how eggs of late years are never just eggs, but classified? The hens seem to lay them classified. There are hen eggs and pullet eggs and large hen eggs and small hen eggs and large pullet eggs and small pullet eggs and strictly fresh eggs and ranch eggs and choice eggs and large dark eggs and all-mixed eggs and fresh cracked eggs and mixed color eggs and small brown and, oh, hundreds of subdivisions.



The very latest I noticed were “dirty” eggs, 2 cents cheaper. I look next for “small dirty eggs.” Why should they sound so unrefined? More so some way than “small dirty boys.” But an artist must paint life as he sees it and I saw these “dirty” eggs on that bazaar — and bizarre — of diversities — Fillmore street.

On Haight street I saw “extra fresh eggs” and how an egg can be more than “fresh” I fail to see. Now, a man may be “extra fresh,” but an egg is different. Even if it left the hen early it would still be only “fresh.” Well, the grocer probably knows.

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Every adjective he uses has its significance. Take “ranch” eggs, how pastoral they sound and fanned by fresh zephyrs. The same with “yard” eggs, such an “out in the open — let the rest of the world go by” impression they confer. And so reassuring, too, as though they couldn’t have been manufactured for Woolworth’s.

There is much, I find, to be written about eggs.

Isn’t it “up-looking,” as Mr. Wilson would say, that they are so cheap now?

I cannot help wondering if that woman’s hens — the hens that went with the crow — if they laid well when eggs were so high.

On the California-Street Car

She was a little black girl about four years old, riding with her mother on the observation seat of the California street car. She was a little black girl and didn’t know the difference — she might have been as white as milk for all she knew. She was poor but daintily dressed beside being very neat.

The rest of us in the car were grown-up and white — well-dressed people who looked as though we knew a lot. We were all riding along; we and the little black girl with her mother, when suddenly we came out from the surrounding wall of apartment houses into the open, facing a side street — .

And there before us, in all its morning glory, lay the great city of Saint Francis. It was just emerging out of fog. The smoke and steam rising, touched into color by the sun, softened it into a great mystery with forms and hulks coming into relief through the mists. For a moment it wasn’t a city but a magnificent singing of the morning.

In a dull, inert way I suppose all of us, the grownup people, glimpsed some of its beauty. But we were all intent upon the business of the day — we didn’t look out very far — .

But the little black girl who didn’t know any better, the little black girl raised her two arms above her head and exclaimed in a high, joyous child voice — “*Gee whiz!*”

Western Yarns

The men around the corner store at home were forever telling stories about the big yarns that Were told in the West. One of the favorites was that ancient one of the Western town that was so healthy they had to kill a man to start a graveyard.

Having been brought up on this tradition of Western yarns, I have been surprised since living here never to have heard a single story that didn't sound perfectly reasonable. But it has dawned on me recently that the "Yarns" are true. Therefore, they are no longer yarns, but facts.

Here is an oil boom story I heard first-hand the other day. I believe it, but you couldn't get those men around the corner store to believe it — .

It was in a dusty town where everyone rushed in to make quick money and never mind about the main street even if they did have to plough through dust to their knees. Then one day a heavy rain came that made the street one slough of soft oozy clay which no one could cross.

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Then enters the hero. Even while they stood dismayed, gazing at each other across the clay, he appeared with a mud sled and took them all across for 50 cents a passenger and \$1 if you had a bundle.

Now, I believe it. Didn't I see the man who had been there and paid his four-bits to cross? Imagine, if you can, though, trying to make those Yankees around the corner store believe that there was a town where one had to pay 50 cents to cross a narrow country road in a mud sled.

I believed a man who told me a story down in Kern County last summer. We were riding over the desert and I asked the stage driver the name of a low yellow bush that grows down there. He was an interesting fellow, that stage driver, who had been a buccaroo all his life and apparently knew all about the sage brush country. And when he didn't know he was not lacking in an answer. I like a man like that. Answer, I say, whether you know or not.

He said with great assurance that the little, low, yellow bush was "Mexican saddle blanket" or "Tinder bush," this last because it burns like tinder in the fall of the year.

"Why, that bush is so dry," he said, "that once when I lighted it to cook my bacon for breakfast it traveled so fast that by the time my bacon was cooked I was five miles from camp."

I laughed — I couldn't help it when I imagined that six-footer traveling across the desert with a frying pan over that low bush. I laughed because it was so real to me, but he misunderstood, and said so sort of hurt, "Don't you believe me?"

And I told him I did. And I did. And I do. Five miles isn't a great distance to travel over the desert after one's bacon.

Mr. Mazzini and Dante

Mr. Mazzini will never be rich. He takes too much time for philosophy and gossiping with the women, and he loves a joke too well, and his heart is too kind. He is a universal type, as old as the world is old, Theocritus knew him well.

"You pick me out some good cantaloupes," I said with deadly tact, and Mr. Mazzini answered that it couldn't be done and that melons were like men, that there was no sure way of picking them out for their kindness of heart. Then he took time over the melons to tell me how his mother in Italy, who was evidently something of a match-maker, had gotten fooled on a young man who was both "laze" and "steenge" in his youth but who made a very good husband.



One day it was figs, and I was strong for the nice appearing ones, but Mr. Mazzini told me a lot about figs and chose me some that were lop-sided from packing. What delicious figs they were, all stored with sunshine and sweetness and flavor just as he had told me. Mr. Mazzini owns his own store, and yet when he throws in a few extra, as he always does, because they are soft or a little specked, he will wink and glance slyly around just as though he were putting one over on the boss.

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One morning I saw him sweeping out his store and he wore a woman's sweeping cap with the strings tied under his grisly old chin. When I saw him I just stood and laughed aloud, and he asked me why not, and said that a sweeping cap was just as good for a man as for a woman, and then he stopped his sweeping and gave me quite a male feminist talk. And he has a horse, Mr. Mazzini has, a fat old plug that peeks around his blinders as humorously as his master. Oh, I could just keep on talking about Mr. Mazzini for pages, but I started to speak of Dante.

I like the Italians and I like the Latin quarter where they live. I like it better than Ashbury Heights for instance. I like the way the Italians use their windows to look out of and to lean out of, and I like the way they have socialized the sidewalk. It's all a matter of taste, and I wouldn't criticize the people of Ashbury Heights simply because they use their well-curtained windows only to admit the light, and do not lean out and gossip with their neighbors and yell to their children, "Mahree, Mahree," nor sit out on their steps in the evening and play Rigoletto on the accordion. It's all a matter of taste.

Six hundred years ago Dante was an Italian, but he is much more than that today. After six centuries Dante belongs to all those and only those who can read him with appreciation and pleasure. Our scavenger is an Italian, and he reads Dante just as so many of the Anglo Saxon proletariat read Shakespeare. So Dante belongs to this garbage man, not because he is Italian, but because he sincerely loves the Divina Commedia. A waiter, in Il Trovatore, a rarely honest man, acknowledged to me that he could not read Dante, and that every time he tried he got mad and threw the book away.

Dante belongs to the literary elect of all nations, Dante belongs to the great internationale of the immortals. Dante belongs to Eternity. And for that matter so does Mr. Mazzini.

On the Nob of Nob Hill

On the very nob of Nob Hill there is the ruin of a mansion which was the Whittell home. In ruins it still is a mansion. In ruins it is grander than any place around because it belonged to the grand days.

There is an enclosed garden in the rear after the fashion of old Spanish gardens in Monterey. And between the boards that cover a door in the high wall, one may peek and catch a glimpse of hollyhocks in a row and roses running wild, trellises of green lattice and ghosts of beautiful ladies having afternoon tea.

To one side of the mansion there is a formal garden that hugs up close to the ivy-covered walls of the house. It is such a garden as one sees in elaborately illustrated copies of Mother Goose "with silver bells and cockle shells." It's so beautiful that it doesn't seem real. California gardens are like that, and to those of us from bleak

countries they look like pictures out of books. There is this well-groomed garden of the living present hugging up close to the ruins of yesterday and then, if you please, Mother Nature, with her penchant for whimsy, has grown right up against these two a riot of purple and gold lupine, a product of her own unaided husbandry.

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I am not much on allegory nor sermonizing, but I declare San Francisco gets me started. And when walking along about one's business, one sees such a vivid picture, the allegory forces itself. The grandeur of yesterday, the serious beauty of today, and then the wild flowers that covered the hills before man interfered and will live on after man has gone into dust to make new flowers.

Such a contemplation would make some people blue but it gives me a feeling of something basic and secure and eternal in all this strange puzzle of life. It was a beautiful day up there on the tip-toe of Nob Hill. What a beautiful view they must have had from the mansion windows. The same sky and the same banks of heavy soft white clouds. And Job, that mysterious man of the Bible, must have looked up at just such a sky when those stern questions came to him:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding.

"Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him that is perfect in knowledge?"

"Hast thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?"

The nob of Nob Hill, how close it is to the sky.

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2000	1999	December
2500	2000	December
3000	2001	November
4000	2001	October/November
6000	2002	December*
9000	2003	November*
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