

WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

The way the aristocrats of New York are going into the retail trades should cause a blush of reflection to mantle, I might almost say to cloak the cheek of Lincoln's impoverished, but still haughty aristocracy. Inspired by their example, and spurred on by the desire to make by their own exertions, an independent fortune three young women of Lincoln met to lay the foundations for it, or rather to draw the plans of it. After rejecting various propositions they decided that a pie stand should be the pedestal on which they would mount to opulence. They called it a pie stand, but it meant delicious sandwiches of many kinds, pies, eggs, cold chicken and hot tea and coffee.

After the plan had been decided upon the parents of the partners professed to be shocked and the projectors sank back into hopeless dependence again.

There are a few occupations ir-reproachable for women. Teaching is the choicest of these. Teaching is well enough if the woman have tact, ability, strength, steel nerves, the endurance of a burro, natural aptitude, a disposition that is worth millions if the same tests are used that lapidaries apply to diamonds for rarity, purity, flawlessness, etc., and lastly education. Having all these she would better do something else, for the dust, jar and rub of the school room will blur the whitest gem—and the profession is over crowded.

Writing, because it can be done at home and because writers of talent have given the business a prestige has a vogue that discouraging experiences seem to have no effect upon. Every new aspirant with an engaging style of writing the, to and for begins to consider himself seriously, with the sole result of making it necessary to empty the waste paper basket twice a day instead of once. The feeble, newspaper taper that glimmers and splutters ahead of the individual who thinks it leads to an easy way of making a living is accountable for much useful service never rendered.

It is often forgotten that all except the very poor and the very rich eat three times a day and this habit may be reckoned upon in fat times and lean. If any social descent be necessary to the person making his living by catering, why, society will lose most of its desirable members in the years to come. There will come a time when "The Pie Union" will be as difficult to enter as the "Patriarchs" of New York, and society proper will consist of a few parasites unable even to amuse themselves.

The following from Town Topics is pertinent:

If the present rush to get into trade on the part of well-known young men and women who have lost fortunes or imagine that there is a prospect of the wolf at their door, continues a majority of the 400 next winter will be composed of shopkeepers. It seems rather paradoxical in one way that as New York society begins more and more to resemble and to ape the customs of London society, it should in these latter days permit its members to go into trade and yet retain their social position—something that has not been possible in London until very recently. It is to be surmised, however, that this last hobby is an imported one, and the fact that several titled dames have opened millinery and other shops in London has smoothed the way, to a great extent, for those swell women who have gone into business here. That society has changed its attitude in the matter is evident from the calm manner in which the opening of Sower, millinery and other shops, and even the keeping of hotels by its members, are discussed. The excitement caused ten years ago by a young man, a member of one of New York's oldest families, opening a grocery store in Newport, and the severe criticisms which he received and the

annoyance of his family thereat, will be readily recalled.

One after another the repertoire companies are returning to New York. They report good business. Repertoire companies have improved and increased in number since the first year of the hard times. Troupes whose average ability is high have been forced to play at 10, 20, and 35 cent rates. The eastern half of the country has grown accustomed to excellence and cheapness, but the west still sniffs at low prices. The fact is there are not many actors, taking the best as a standard, compared to the whole number travelling, whose performance is worth a dollar and a half. The classes just out of some dramatic school that Frohman sends over the country, are merely practicing. Their work corresponds to that of a young physician who walks the hospitals after leaving college. With exceptions and reservations the graduate's work is not so dusty. They should keep in mind, however, that they are practicing and that honesty is the best policy. People who only go to the theatre occasionally and then only to be amused, do not care for artistic finish, especially if they have to pay for it. Most anyone, with a little training, can amuse an audience ten cents worth, especially if he have nine or ten students of amusement to aid him. Frohman has been in the habit of making up a company without stars, but with one or two fairly good actors and a few students, and of sending them out on the road as first-class companies. They charge the highest prices and the cubs get an idea they need no more training. They started on the road nice, modest, little students and the system has spoiled them. Mediocre acting ought not to grade A in the market. There is a gulf fixed between Corse Payton and Joseph Jefferson, which the former recognizes. It would be well if other manager actors were as honest. Corse Payton gives a good show for the money. He pleases his audiences, which never leave the house feeling they have not received their money's worth. He, and others like him, are, in the dramatic world, what lithographs are to artist's work i. e., copies of great originals, the sight of which only a few enjoy. Mediocre actors with an enthusiasm for their profession and little creative ability fill an all worthy mission. They "drive dull care away" from hearts weighted down, with something besides a pocket book.

The repertoire companies have made money this season where others have lost. It is more profitable to play to 500 thirty cent people than to 150 one dollar people. The larger audience is more stimulating to the players and the lower scale of prices lessens extravagance on their part. From the standpoint of the public the high prices for poor performances have no excuse for being and the manager who fools theatre-goers into the belief that because they pay a dollar and a half for their seats they are seeing that amount of talent is going to lose the confidence of his patrons, which may not worry him at all until he sees that loss of confidence means empty seats.

John Drew played to very good business at the Lansing on Wednesday night. The audience was unusually brilliant and put me in mind of those of five years ago, when the pleasure of seeing one's friends was one of the delights of going to the theatre. Now-a-nights the seats are occupied by travelling men who are glad to put in their time going to the show, and visitors or new-comers who wish to see the opera house. The faces of acquaintances are not there and it is not the manager alone who misses them.

There is not a stick in John Drew's company, though it was a thin shaving for the man who played the part

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