

THE LURE OF NEW YORK

BY ALLAN L. BENSON

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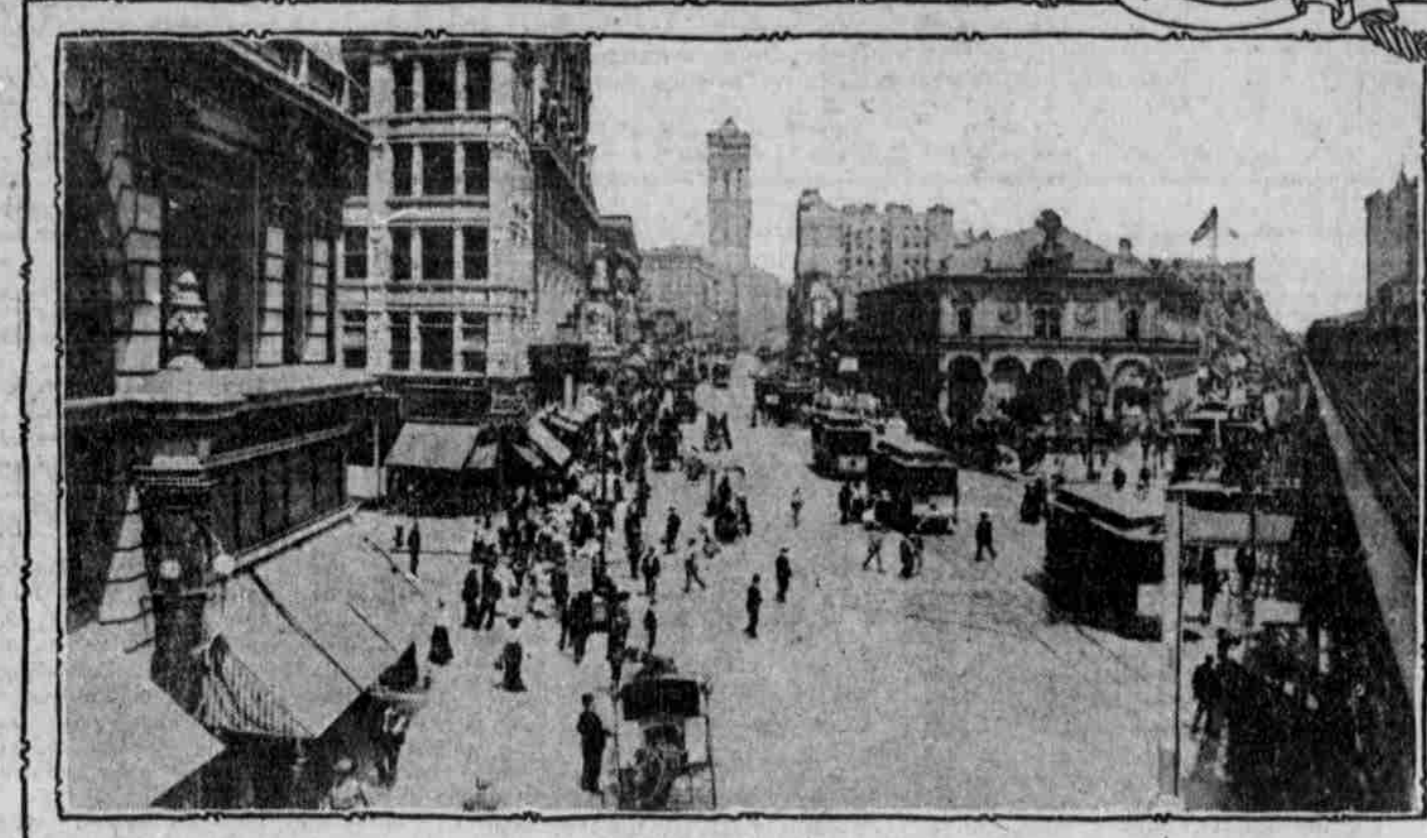
To ride into New York on a freight train is a heinous offense. The law says so. Railroad companies suggested the law and secured its enactment. They prefer to handle their passenger traffic in the regular way. Fares cannot so easily be collected from passengers who are secreted around the trucks. Besides, freight train travelers have gained the reputation of being uncertain persons. They sometimes steal small things that rich persons would not think of stealing. Yet, against them as the law is, patrons of the box-cars pour into New York at all seasons of the year.

An Ohio boy, one morning last winter, was in court for beating his way into the metropolis. He was only sixteen years old, and rather small for his age. His coat fitted him a little too soon and ankle-grease was on it. Hadn't had time to slick up since he was pulled from the trucks. Still, he was cheerful. Answered the court's questions as if it were a pleasure. Told all about the folks at home, and why he left home.

He and another boy craved the big life. They wanted to be in the midst of something and be something. Only, the other boy had a little hitch to his ambitions. He wanted to go to Chicago, where he had an aunt who, in an emergency, might be induced to provide food.

The boy who stood before His Honor waved his comrade away.

"I told my chum," he said, "that I would rather be in New York, broke and hungry, than be in Chicago with a



meal ticket at every restaurant. I left my chum right there. I paid my fare as far as I could and beat it the rest of the way."

The court, some years back, having broken into town in substantially the same way, did not hear the boy's story without feeling. During the recital, the judicial mind had gone back to that other day, now long gone, when he, a penniless lad, had said good-bye to his native town. So he said to the boy:

"My son, let me commend your judgment. Any boy who will ride the trucks to New York, in preference to going to Chicago and living with his chum's aunt, has the right spirit. I think this town needs boys like you, and I am going to let you stay. Discharged."

Nothing can illustrate better than this incident the lure of New York. Perhaps no other city ever had so large a percentage of the world's population bluffed. A bigger word than "bluffed" is needed here, but it does not come. The point is that the city has the power to cast a great spell, and casts it. She makes no comparisons. To make comparisons would be to admit that there are others in her class. She says only: "I am the wonderful city—come."

The call goes north to the edge of the frozen world; east to the point where the east is west; south as far as a white man lives, and west till the west is east. Not everybody comes, but everybody hears. Millions would like to come, but can't. Everybody would like at least to see the siren city. And, untold thousands do come. One railroad thinks nothing of dumping 100,000 strangers into New York in a day.

The reason for so much coming is plain. Everybody likes to be mixed up with a success. The bigger the success, the better. New York is universally regarded as a big success. It has the tallest buildings, the richest men, the whitest "White Way" that ever cut a streak through the night, and some of the most prodigious disburbers of the circulating medium that ever dazzled any community.

In a variety of ways comes the message to mix with this great success—to become a part of this wonderful bigness. Perhaps the newspapers and the stage do the most to spread the lure. New York date-lines appear over the most important items of news. There seems to be only one place in which anything worth while can happen. Has Mr. Morgan bought an old master or formed a new trust? Where did he do it? New York. Has Mr. Rockefeller paid his annual visit to the office of Standard Oil? Yes—a New York dispatch says so. Has Mr. Carnegie slipped in the icy park and sprained his ankle? What park? Why, Central Park, in New York, of course. And, whenever an Italian opera singer, a Russian revolutionist, or an Irish patriot comes to this country, where does he land? At New York. What city sends out the news? New York.

As an advertiser of the glories and splendor of this great town, the stage is second only to the press.

Twenty years ago, a Nevada youth went to see a show in Carson City. The show was that old

classic, "The Two Orphans." In the cast were extremely few persons besides the orphans themselves, as railway transportation and board were both high. But the show made up in scenery what it lacked in cast. One scene, in particular, appealed to the chuckle-faced youth. It was a scene in which the two orphans were sitting on the steps of Trinity church. The snow was drifting down over their thin shoulders. Broadway was thronged with pedestrians. Horse-cars flew along at eight miles an hour. Nobody looked at the orphans. But the orphans, silent as little sphynxes, looked straight ahead—straight up the street. There was Broadway! The infinite skill of the scene painter seemed to have carried the street clear to the horizon. Nothing but buildings and people and people and buildings till they blended, at the finish, into an indistinguishable haze of paint.

The Nevada youth could hardly keep his seat. The painted scene had fired his mind with an intense desire. He must be off to New York. All during the show, which he saw not, though he looked straight at the stage, he kept his eyes riveted to the splendid vista of Broadway. The whole thoroughfare seemed to him to be a treasure-house of opportunity. And, at dusk, when the lights begin to blaze up along the "Great White Way"—ah, it is all just as he had dreamed it to be! All grand! All surpassingly great!

But, kind friends, he dines at no lobster palace that evening. Nor do his magnificent jewels glitter in the "horseshoe crescent" at the opera. With the money that he can spare for his evening meal, he couldn't buy a lobster's tail, and a drygoods box in an alley would fit him better than a box at the opera. So, he dines poorly for sixty cents at a side-street restaurant, gets a glassy eye from the waiter for not giving a tip, finds a room in which there is no light by day, nor pure air night or day—and goes to sleep to dream of home and mother.

The next morning, he is awakened by a miscellaneous assortment of noises, ranging from elevated car wheels to horses' hoofs. As he puts on the shirt that mother laundered for him, his heart takes a sudden lurch back to the old roof. He calls his heart back. He is in New York to make good. It is up to him to do it. And, by the time he is ready to go out to hunt for breakfast, his nerve is all back.

With nothing to do but get a job or starve, he looks for work. He hears that motormen are wanted on the subway. Half afraid to offer his services, he nevertheless decides to do so. On the way to the company's offices, he considers all of the situation's glorious possibilities. Never in the country did he dare dream that some day he might make a battery of motors bite off 2,000 horsepower of electricity and snatch eight loaded cars through the subterranean night.

The good news goes home to the old folks that their boy is going to run a train in the New York subway. Oh, if the boy could only see the mingled sorrow and pride that light up his mother's eyes when she reads the letter. It breaks her heart to have her boy away, but it mends it to know how emphatically he has made good in the

in thirty years, and had to fry some more. In such a hurry to put on her "other dress" and run over to Mrs. Pratt's to tell her: "My boy is coming home." The boy came home. When he took mother in his arms and held her for a full minute, she couldn't speak. All choked up. So glad to see him, she couldn't say a word. And, when she did speak, the first thing she said, as she looked up into his brown eyes, was: "Oh, my boy, how pale you are!"

He was pale. He knew it. Subway air makes no red blood-corpuses. Kills some of the red ones that exist. Nor does the electric light of the subway brown the cheek as the sunlight browns the cheek of the farmer. All the year that he had been away, mother had carried in her mind the picture of her farmer boy. Never had dreamed that her farmer boy would come home with a grayish-white face. Didn't need to say she was shocked. Looked it. The boy caught the message and laughingly replied:

"Oh, mother, all city folks are pale." During the week that he remained at home, the boy was kept talking. Father and mother constantly asking questions. Seemed to mother as if she couldn't ask questions enough. Wanted to get first-hand information about everything of which she had read.

Six months after he returned to work, his mother had an opportunity to see for herself, just how big was New York. A telegram told her that her boy had been hurt. She and father found him in a hospital, with his head bandaged until they could barely see his eyes. At the end of his run, he had tried to cross the tracks to catch another train back and get to dinner more quickly. Didn't see a train running in the opposite direction. Car struck him. Picked up for dead. Seemed to have a fractured skull. Fortunately, did not. Revived in the hospital and would get well.

Oh, but the mother's heart was glad when she heard the best instead of the worst. Glad until she and father went to the boy's room. Not his room in the hospital, but his room in a lodging-house. Glad until she saw how miserably he had lived. A dirty street. A dirty house. A dirty hall. A cheerless room. Little light. Bad air. A skimpy bed. A frayed counterpane. Not a decoration, save her own picture, stuck in the edge of a mirror.

Her boy could afford no better place to live. His pay was only \$2.25 a day. That is, his pay from the company was only \$2.25 a day. The lure of New York made up the rest that was needed to induce him to live for millions in New York. Not life as the newspaper dispatches describe it. Not life as the stage pictures it. Life as it is. A few draw colossal prizes. A few more draw good prizes. But if only those should come to New York who can earn a better living here than they can elsewhere, a handcar, running once a day, would almost bring them in. Ninety-two per cent. of the population have not drawn enough prizes to enable them to own their own homes. Yet people come. Come from every state in the Union. Come from every town in every state—every hamlet. Come from Italy, Norway, Sweden, Turkey—come from everywhere.

WHO'S WHO-AND WHY

HEADS MOTHERS' CONGRESS



Mrs. Frederic Schoff, now completing her ninth year of leadership as president of the National Congress of Mothers, is a philanthropist who gives freely, not only of her means but herself to the cause of child welfare. Having compiled the laws of every state in the union concerning dependent and delinquent children, and having led the several movements to establish courts for children in Pennsylvania, Alabama, Idaho and Connecticut, she is a recognized authority the world over. She received the unique honor of an invitation to address the Canadian parliament on this subject, and is the only woman who has ever been thus honored. The amount of her daily work is tremendous, and she could not have persevered through these years of service were it not for her superb physique and a certain sustaining spiritual force. Mrs. Schoff's versatility is as astonishing as her accumulation of facts. Neither pessimist or optimist, she looks upon exist-

ing conditions with unbiased eyes, and her vision is ever clear as to formative preventive and corrective policies. As an impressive public speaker Mrs. Schoff is unexcelled, having an exhaustive knowledge of her subject and the power to clothe her thought in clear, forcible and felicitous phrasing. She also has a delightful voice which is easily understood in the largest assembly. Among the elements which make up Mrs. Schoff's intrinsic greatness are her earnestness, her sincerity and her deep-rooted conviction that the most important work in the world is the conservation of childhood. Though masterful and a born leader, she is wholly effeminate, independent and full of initiative, yet conservative to a degree in all matters of social usage. She is uncompromising where principle is at stake, yet tolerant and yielding in non-essentials. Thus it is that she wins the devotion of her co-workers.

"ASSISTANT" RULER TO RETIRE

Forty years in one position is not a bad record, but this is what has been accomplished by Lord Knollys, the king's private secretary, whose retirement is now imminent. He originally intended to give up his arduous duties at the death of the late king, and it was well understood that he merely stayed on in order to "train in" Sir Arthur Bigge, upon whose shoulders the responsibilities of the royal secretariatship will now fall.

Such a post requires not only hard work, but a keen knowledge of the world, combined with tact, judgment, decision and memory. It has been said of Lord Knollys that no one could hope to undertake his task with a tittle of the success which now attaches to it.

The royal correspondence alone would frighten the average man. About 500 letters a day are addressed to the king, and the majority of these are attended to by Lord Knollys, assisted by the under secretaries.

No correspondence is more varied than that received by the king. There are letters from his relatives, a daily letter from the prime minister when parliament is sitting, letters from cranks, faddists, inventors; begging letters and a never-ending stream from madmen. As a rule the only letters that the king answers himself are those from his relatives and personal friends; and therefore the bulk of the replies falls on his secretary.



HETTY GREEN TO OWN BANK



Mrs. Hetty Green, with the assistance of her son, Colonel E. H. R. Green, has decided to have her fortune managed through a \$10,000,000 private bank with branches in other states, and will retire from all active participation in her financial affairs. Her realty and financial interests are now in the hands of the son she sent into Texas as a youth and educated along the lines of sound, business common sense.

Colonel Green pictures his mother as grossly misrepresented in the past. Although she conducts her business on careful and conservative lines, he says she has made it an invariable rule to re-invest her profits in the territory from which they were drawn for the upbuilding of that territory. "Her argument has been," he explained, "that every community is entitled to the benefits of its own prosperity."

"Since my mother began her business career she has never asked more than 6 per cent. for her money. The bulk of her loans have been made at considerably lower rates. You may set it down that the ratio of income diminishes as the size of the estate grows. Because of this attitude and widely known liberality to her customers in panic times my mother has been able to skim the cream of the borrowers."

"TRUST BUSTER" IN SENATE

W. S. Kenyon, known as a "trust buster" when he was assistant to the attorney general of the United States, was elected United States senator to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the late J. P. Dolliver.

Mr. Kenyon will be one of the youngest members of the senate. He was born in Elyria, O., June 10, 1869. His father was a Congregational minister. He was educated at Grinnell, and later was graduated from the law department of the University of Iowa.

His public career started almost immediately with his election, soon after graduation, as public prosecutor of Webster county, a position he held for two terms. He was elected circuit judge when he was barely 30 years old, but left the bench after one year, declaring that it was too quiet and sedate. He became the general counsel for the Illinois Central railroad, and though his official duties required his presence in Chicago he kept his established residence in Fort Dodge, where he practiced law with Senator Dolliver.

Kenyon was the original "trust-buster" under the Taft administration. He has had much the same position under this administration that was occupied by Wade Ellis when Roosevelt was president. He was appointed assistant to Attorney General Wickersham in March, 1910.

