

A VIEW OF NEW YORK

A TOWN WITH ONE STREET AND A FEW ALLEYS.

That is a Western Traveler's Idea—Walter Wellman Describes the Characteristics of the Metropolis and Hits Off the Follies of Its Inhabitants.

[Special Correspondence.]
New York, Sept. 22.—It was a western man who came to this city and said New York was a town with one street and a few alleys running into it. He was pretty nearly right. To the average visitor and to thousands of residents New York has only one thoroughfare—that is Broadway.

If you are a stranger you will accent the first syllable, but if observing and imitative you will, after a week's sojourn, say Broadway, with considerable emphasis on the "way." This is a very small matter of course, but you may want to know how to avoid being taken for a stranger. Any man who says "Broadway" is at once spotted as a provincial, and provincials are at a discount in this town.

You have all heard how the average New Yorker feels and shows his superiority to every one who is so unfortunate as to hail from the west—and to the New Yorker everything beyond Philadelphia or Albany is the west. I had heard this, too, and didn't believe it. I thought it one of those accusations of narrowness of spirit which have their origin in the narrowness of the critic. But I am compelled to admit that it is a true charge.

From the New York view point there are two horizons. The sun rises in Paris and London, and sets in Jersey City. Of the west the New Yorker has heard, but to him it is terra incognita. He knows nothing about it, and is proud of his ignorance. Chicago is the only western city he admits having any knowledge of or curiosity about, and I need not tell you the average New Yorker hates and despises and reviles Chicago.

He is amazed when he thinks how Chicago has come up as a rival of New York in trade, in finance, in everything, for, with his ideas of western life and western people, it is incredible that ever an invitation of New York, much less a real rival, should be produced in this region.

There are thousands upon thousands of western and southern men in this city, many of them leaders in law, trade and journalism. But so strong are local influences that nearly all of these transplanted westerners take on the New York air sooner or later—the dominant New York air being an intense localism.

I do not mean to say that New Yorkers never travel or migrate. They do. They find it necessary. The development of the west, the opportunities afforded by a rising and unfolding region have drawn many New Yorkers away from their native moorings, though the number of Gothamites to be found in the west is much smaller than the number of Bostonese. While the blood of New England flows in streams—good, red, vigor-us, conquering blood—throughout the west, New York is represented only here and there.

And the New Yorker in the west is discontented, restless. The country is not good enough for him; when he gets back to New York he heaves a sigh of relief, gives a grunt of satisfaction and resolves never to go west any more.

A little comedy illustrative of the localism of New York—the localism which affects New Yorkers and immigrants from the west alike—came under my notice a few days ago in the smoking room of a Pullman car. Two young men had struck up a traveling acquaintance and, as I gathered from their conversation, had come all the way from Chicago together.

"Though I live in Duluth now," said one of them, "I am a New Yorker born and bred. Lived in New York all my life till two or three years ago. Let me tell you, there is only one New York—only one New York, sir."

"Like it in the west? Only so so. I've done well out there—good place to make money, no place to live. Having been reared in New York, I never could take kindly to the people out in the west. They're so different from us New Yorkers. Once in a while I meet a New Yorker man out there, and it does me good. Do you know I can tell a New Yorker as soon as I see him? Yes, sir; I never fail. There's only one New York, and the New York man has something about him—his clothes, his talk, his style—I don't know just what it is that marks him."

"That's so," said the other young man; "you can tell 'em wherever you see 'em, and there's only one New York. It does me good to get back home."

"Do you know," resumed the first young man, "I knew you were a New Yorker the minute I saw you? Queer, isn't it? But I sized you up the first glance. That's the reason I took to you. I guess. We New Yorkers appear to have some sort of Freemasonry, don't we?"

"Y-yes," replied the other, with the shadow of a cloud on his face, "but I wasn't born in New York."

"Oh, well, you've been there so long that you're a real New Yorker, don't you know. By the way, how many years have you been in New York?"

The second traveler hesitated. Evidently he was ashamed to confess the truth, but he wasn't mean enough to lie. "About three—three months," he gasped.

The first young man was a little taken aback, but stood by his guns. "Then of course you must have been reared near New York?"

Again the other hesitated, but the western habit of telling the truth asserted itself.

"No," he blurted out rather desperately, "I was born in Joliet, forty miles from Chicago, and was never in New York till last June."

At this juncture I am afraid I was unmannerly enough to snicker behind my

cigar. Silence reigned for a few moments, and then the New Yorker born and bred remarked that it was time for him to go to bed.

This Broadway is a remarkable thoroughfare. It is New York. Many thousands of people virtually live on Broadway, rarely going farther from it than to Fifth avenue on the east or Sixth avenue on the west. It is their world. I speak now of the up town Broadway, from Twenty-third to Forty-second street, about two miles.

This main street of the Dutch village of New York starts at the lower end of the island—at the Battery. There are the shipping offices, headquarters of the steamer lines. Then come office buildings—two or three of them as fine as a score to be seen in Chicago—insurance offices, banks. Then the postoffice, Printing House square, City Hall park. After this the dry goods district.

For two miles Broadway is a commercial Palestine. Ninety-nine signs out of a hundred bear Hebrew names, many of them names which is symbolic of great wealth, business probity, good citizenship. It is remarkable how everything has become specialized in this region of trade. There are few general dry goods or clothing houses. One handles hat trimmings, another corsets, a third straw frames, a fourth hosiery, a fifth suspenders, a sixth artificial flowers. Men's and women's wear is subdivided a thousand times, each article being the sole stock in trade of one or a dozen or a hundred houses. One is amazed to see a six story building devoted wholly to merchandising in buttons.

Broadway is very commercial for these two miles. Nearly all the houses are wholesale. There are no alleys in the rear or at the sides of buildings, and the receiving and shipping are all done on the front sidewalks. The street is packed with trucks, and it is about all pedestrian or vehicle can do to get through. The lost time in a single year would defray the expenses of cutting alleys for shipping purposes. But to have alleys for the facilitation of commerce would not be like New York. There are many alleys in town, but all have been made streets of.

At Fourteenth street one enters the shopping quarter. For three blocks east and west is the pretense of having in the town some street besides Broadway. The same thing occurs half a mile farther up, at Twenty-third street. For a short distance, where it is very near Broadway, Fifth avenue takes on some shopping importance. But these are all the diversions there are worth mentioning. Everything else is Broadway.

Take this thoroughfare out of New York, and there wouldn't be enough left to make a Kansas City. Broadway to New York is what Main street is to the country town. Northward and a little to the west sweeps this great thoroughfare. At Harlem, ten miles from the Battery, it is still all important. They tell me it runs twenty miles farther into the country, lined with roadhouses, suburban settlements, villas and occasional stores.

So important is Broadway as a metropolitan artery that the rapid transit commission found on investigation that the travel by parallel elevated railroads is great or small in proportion to nearness to or remoteness from the central highway. The only means of travel along Broadway is horse car. It is the most profitable horse car line in the world. Ten miles long, there are cars every minute and all crowded. They are driven at breakneck speed. Only the best horses are used, and their "life" is a year and a half. It takes as much courage to drive a Broadway car as to run a locomotive.

The stranger who has two or three miles to go walks to the L and climbs the stairs. The New Yorker knows better and takes a Broadway car. You see, a Broadway car takes him from his starting point directly to his destination. There are other streets with horse and cable cars, but so far as I have observed three-fourths of the people want to go from some place on Broadway to some other place on Broadway. The result is many "short riders"—the sort of passengers who enrich street car owners. If the cars had to carry all passengers from Harlem to Battery at a nickel apiece, owners would not get much in the way of dividends. But instead of twenty-five passengers, the capacity of a car, 150 are often carried in the course of a run one way.

The Broadway line carries half as many passengers as the elevated line nearest it. When the cable cars are started—the cable is already in—it will carry nearly as many. Old Jake Sharp knew he was getting the most valuable street railway franchise in the world when he gobbled Broadway. The effort put him first in jail and then in his grave, but if he had lived twenty-five years it would have made him as rich as Vanderbilt.

Rapid transit is one of the greatest problems in New York. There are four elevated railways and five or six surface roads running north and south, but at the busy hours of the day they can't carry the people in comfort.

Broadway is the center of the rapid transit problem, as it is of everything else in New York. The engineers and members of the rapid transit commission recognized that when they recommended the construction of an underground railway under Broadway from the Battery to the country. Such a line may be built some day, but I doubt it. The cost cannot be accurately estimated, but it is supposed will reach \$2,000,000 a mile, or \$40,000,000, including a branch line from Fourteenth street to the east side of Central park. So far capitalists don't appear to want the contract. The line would have to carry 500,000 passengers a day to pay interest on the investment, and they have figured it out that this means 1,000 full laden trains in each direction in the twenty-four hours. There being only five or six hours a day in which travel is heavy and profitable, it is a serious question whether in our generation the traffic would warrant the enormous expenditure.

WALTER WELLMAN.

CHIPPER CHESTNUTS.

Somebody has written a book to show how to reduce the gas bill. A good way is to give up the front steps to Clara and George.—Washington Star.

It is said to have cost the present emperor of China \$10,000,000 to get married. He must have done his courting at a summer resort.—New York Herald.

The aeronaut loves his balloon. In fact, he's completely taken up with it.—Binghamton Leader.

A dealer in cheap shoes recently counseled in one of his advertisements, "Ladies wishing these cheap shoes will do well to call soon, as they will not last long."—Tit-Bits.

Before many years it will become a serious social question as to which is the fashionable side of the Atlantic to be born on.—New York Herald.

In explaining why he no longer visits Miss Sportingstock young Dudley says the reason was a parent.—Texas Siftings.

It is learned from the Binghamton Republican that an enterprising caterer is now serving "clam ice cream" to his customers. Nevertheless there are skeptics who maintain that the world is in a rut and does not move.

Distinguished American (traveling in Russia)—Here is a nice fix I'm in—invited to dine with the czar and no insurance on my life.—Tit-Bits.

An Ohio young man is making a tour of the earth on foot. He should have waited till the coming theatrical season and arranged his time so as to have company.—Washington Star.

He Thought He Knew.

A woman out of town for the summer, finding that a yard more of silk was required to finish a gown, gave her husband a sample, with very explicit directions for buying the material.

After her directions she said, "Now I don't think you could possibly make a mistake," and he, thinking he knew it all, started for the city.

After a hot day's work in town this man toiled up to a Twenty-third street store, and upon asking the floorwalker for silk like the sample was directed to "the third room over, second aisle to the right."

Arriving at the silk counter, and reassuring himself that a mistake was impossible, he asked with great confidence for one yard of silk like the sample.

The salesman's first question was a poser, "How do you have it on the bias or straight?"

Alas, he didn't know! Visions of his wife arose before him and he gasped, "I'll take a yard of each."—New York Recorder.

A Bad End.



"It is astonishing how it cools your whole system if you can only keep the end of your tail cold."



And how it heats you when it is hot—Life.

Where David Had the Advantage.

Deacon Ironside (giving his boy a moral lecture)—Now there was David, Sammy. Look at David. When he was a boy he was good and obedient. He didn't gad about the neighborhood at night. He minded his parents, tended to his work, was a good, faithful boy, and he grew up to be a great man, Sammy.

Sammy Ironside (unconvinced)—When David was a little chap he never had to commit the 119th Psalm to memory for playin' hooky.—Chicago Tribune.

Why She Thought So.

A very pretty young woman entered the editor's room with a delicate flush on her face.

"I suppose you don't care for poetry here, do you?" she inquired.

"No," said the editor diplomatically. "I can't say we do."

"I guessed as much from the verse you published," she rejoined. And she went out.—Exchange.

Spoiled the Sentiment.

"We keep step perfectly," murmured Wadsworth in the promenade.

"Yes," with a sigh.

"Well, my darling—may I call you so? I want to ask you to walk with me through life."

"Thank you, but I've already accepted an invitation to ride."—Chicago News-Record.

What Shortened the Trip.

"Why, hello, old man! I thought you intended to make your European trip last year."

"I did, but my wife found a new fashion in gowns in Paris and hurried home to be the first to wear it."—Indianapolis Journal.

Love and Lucre.

She was fair and tall and stately and I loved her with a love
That might well excite the envy of the seraphim above;
And I swore that my devotion would survive
Earth's storms and wrecks,
But her father kindly or queried me when he touched me for an X.

You may love a stately maiden even as I loved Genevieve,
Rippling rhymes about her beauty and her goodness may weaver;
But your love will sort o' wether, have an action that's reflex
If her father buttonholes you just to touch you for an X.

She, your love, may be a princess, thinking less of earthly dross
Than the best of modern maidens you have ever come across.
But you'll view her with suspicion, as she smiles and bows and beckons,
If her dad formed the habit of applying for an X.
—Walt Mason in Fremont (Neb.) Tribune.

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