

SOCIAL CUTHROATS.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A COTERIE OF NEW YORK MASHERS.

Well Dressed Destroyers Who Keep Quiet About Their Villainy—The Masher with the White Lock—Daily Round of a Skillful Operator.

"He belongs to a curious set of New York men," said the judge. "They are creatures of a recent growth, and I doubt very much if similar specimens of the genus man can be found anywhere else in the world. They are called 'mashers' in a general way, but they are in no sense like the gorgeous London man who has given the word 'masher' its highest meaning. The British 'masher' is a creature of noble apparel, solemn and dissipated air, advanced degrees in the courts of bankruptcy and general impressiveness. He wears a grand, many-suitable of clothes during the week, affects a burlesque actress and drives dashing traps. The little circle of mashers in New York has none of these proclivities. They are men who have lived on the surface of the town for many years, whose names are familiar to all of the restaurants, clubs, and who have gained in one way or another reputations as slayers of feminine hearts, which stand them in enormous value. They are not in society, sneer at the idea of toil, live in the best possible manner, dress quietly, and are absolutely unmolested by the police. I know a dozen men in this particular crowd, but I never knew one of them to break the rules of the peculiar freemasonry which apparently exists among them to keep quiet about their escapades. This is the most curious feature of the whole thing. A masher who does not talk when success has crowned his efforts would be a rarity anywhere else except in this extraordinary coterie. They are a queer lot, and I can't say that I consider them a credit to the city."

It affords a stroll study of human nature to watch the operations of the mashers. Most of their faces are as familiar to town people as the Fifth Avenue hotel. Their mode of life is simple. Take, for instance, a cold and austere man, with a blonde mustache, a regular profile, square shoulders and careless carriage, who has been more or less famous about town for fifteen years. He has a sear running diagonally across his forehead, and just above it is a single lock or "splash" of hair that is as white as snow, though the rest of his hair is dark. I have heard it enviously remarked by other mashers at this gentleman's chief success is due to the immobility of his face, the yellowness of his mustache, the whiteness of the splash and the dark mass of hair which throws it into such sharp relief. He is, in fact, known as "His Contrasts" in some quarters. Fifteen years ago a woman of his name lived in a house on Fifth Avenue, slipped out as he ascended the steps of a rival's house, ran up the steps, and pushing a revolver against his head, blazed away. The bullet, instead of going through the skull, ran across the forehead. She went to Europe in the arms of her amiable husband, and "His Contrasts" retired into painful obscurity for a time. Five years after that he was mixed up in a row which is still talked about by old timers. It was a three-cornered fight—one woman and two men—in the cabin of a yacht in the lower bay. When they dragged "His Contrasts" out he was pretty well knocked to pieces. Two ribs were broken, and his general physical welfare very sensibly impaired, but he came up smiling, as usual. I have known him for many years. He has but one object in life.

His manner of living varies little from day to day. I have had many opportunities for observing him, as we once had neighboring apartments in the same hotel, and he used to amuse himself when he had an occasional half hour of leisure from his arduous duties by turning the pictures in my room wrong side forward, bribing the chambermaid to sew the hangings into all sorts of grotesque positions, littering my desk with violent telegrams and indulging in various other cheerful and endearing pranks. At 10 o'clock every morning the chambermaid pounded loudly at his door. If the tattoo was loud enough the door would open suddenly, there would be a wild scream and a patter of feet as the chambermaid scudded out of danger, and the masher would rush out into the hall clad in palamas, bath robes, nightgown, felt slippers, and carrying a sponge the size of a bushel basket. He would then wander in a more or less desultory way toward the bathroom, stopping to pound on doors that caught his lightsome fancy, and shying boots through the transoms of rooms where men lived who had the distinguished misfortune to possess his friendship. About an hour and a half later he would wander into the main dining room of the hotel, cast his experienced eye over the people assembled there and eat a very light breakfast. He wore a frock suit all day long, and his tailor made half a dozen suits a year for him. After breakfast he invariably lighted a big cigar, and, if the weather was clear, strolled up Fifth Avenue as far as Central park, and smiled amiably upon the troops of pretty girls who were out with their governesses, nurses, companions, and chaperones, taking the morning air. Every girl over 10 years of age apparently knew his history, for they would stare at him and peep over their shoulders as he passed, in a fashion that would startle a society actor. At half past 1 or 2 o'clock he drifted slowly into Delmonico's, scanned the faces, acknowledged the surly nods of other mashers with a short inclination of his head, picked out his table with undeviating skill, and spent the next two or three hours among the wives and daughters of other men who were down town pursuing the elusive dollar. His habit is to eat slowly, and look, with a gentle and melancholy air, from one pair of pretty eyes to another.

If the portraits of the handful of men who are a constant subject of talk among the women of New York were published they would cause a robust and decisive sort of derision. The majority of them are anything but resplendent or attractive. If there is a professional matinee, a picture sale, an art exhibition, a boat race, a crack horse auction, dog show, horse show or circus coming on in the afternoon, the masher is as sure to be there as the ticket seller. At night he dines at the Brunswick, Delmonico's or the Hoffman house, but never in the cafe. In this way day after day passes without the slightest deviation. The mashers all know each other, they frequent the same places, they are popular with men and pursued by women, and yet the occasions are exceedingly rare when they are called to account. They are adroit and hold their tongues, and perhaps it is therein that their safeguard lies.—New York Sun.

In a Chicago Charitable Institution.

Here, however, is the history of a woman who had something—let us hope it was not "gumption"—"click" is much too brusque a term to apply to such a subtle quality. She found her way into a charitable institution of this city the other day, and, snuggling up to the matron, addressed her thus: "I hope your institution is not on the dormitory plan, madam. I think a sensitive person naturally shrinks from such an institution; don't you? Really, I don't know how I could bring myself to sleep in the room with others. I don't mind hardships. Simple fare and a plain bed will not distress me. But every lady must insist on privacy. I like to be with my own thoughts. I should deem also that your charity was remedial and not expedient. In my opinion such a room is much worthier. I have attended a good many lectures which had charities for their subject and have considered the most popular methods. I should consider that you must meet with a great deal of dissatisfaction in your very interesting work. It must be a great compensation for you now and then meet a person who is intellectually congenial. I am sure I shall enjoy my little rest very much here. Some of my friends thought it best that I should take a little rest before beginning my winter labors. It is between harvests with me now, as it were. I teach classical music, either vocal or instrumental, can do fine hand sewing, or act as rudimentary governess. Now I should esteem it a favor if I could have a room to myself."

The matron settled her white cap over her white crimp. "Madame," said she, "I slept last night with three babies with scrofulous heads, because no one else would sleep with them. The rest of the rooms are in the dormitory. Will you permit me to give up my bed and the babies—to you, or will you sleep in the dormitory?"

It is "conjectured" that she went on in search of other charities not on the "dormitory plan."—Chicago News.

Leaving Port on a Friday.

"When do you sail, captain?" queried Deputy Shipping Commissioner Ferris of the master of a Maine schooner. "Guess I'll get off on Friday," he replied. To the superstitious land lubber of a reporter present this appeared like an unorthodox statement, so he asked Deputy Ferris, himself an old sailor for many years, if modern seamen are less superstitious than their old sears of setting sail on Friday. The reporter broke into the first stanza of the old sea song: "Twas Friday night when we set sail, And 'twas not very far from the land When the captain sailed a jolly merrand, With a comb and a glass in her hand."

Slow Arsenical Poisoning.

I have read a great deal in the papers about slow poisoning processes, but only have traced the various stages when they were brought home to me. My wife, who had been remarkable for her rugged health and rosy appearance, began to fade away. She dwindled to a mere shadow, and yet she reiterated statements of good health. Finally, I insisted on calling in a doctor of high standing, after an emphatic protest from our regular physician. A long diagnosis decided that my wife was suffering from arsenical poisoning drawn into the system from a cheap set of false teeth, which had been purchased about a week before the first symptoms of weakness had been observed. Arsenic had been used in the enamel to secure the glittering whiteness so much admired by women, and in the process of manufacture small particles had been absorbed in the food and taken into the stomach, where the insidious work of arsenic was being progressing surely to fatal termination. I don't know how many cases of the kind may exist, but from the fact that half a dozen medical men were baffled in their attempted diagnosis, I would not be surprised if thousands of women were poisoned annually in this way.—Railroad Conductor in Globe-Democrat.

Development of the Trotter.

Senator Daniel, of Virginia, like many other southern men, is an admirer and lover of fine horseflesh. He was going the other day to run over to the trotting races at Hartford when he saw "H" meet eventually come about that the trotting races will be popular, because it is in this gait that the horse combines utility with speedy action. It is as the roadster that the horse is most available for pleasure and practical service. In a recent article written by Judge Hughes, of Richmond, I saw a theory advanced in reference to the development in the trotting gait which I think I have not seen mentioned before. The thoroughbred animal is to be found on the great plains and level stretches of the country, where his natural gait is running. The trotting gait, Judge Hughes thinks, comes to the animal as he is transferred to undulating countries, where he is obliged to adapt his footing to rising and falling thoroughfares. That would be the natural development of the running thoroughbreds into the trotters. It is, of course, to the thoroughbreds that we must go for the best stock for the development of trotters as well as runners.—New York Tribune.

Absinthe in Light Opera.

"In Cincinnati I took to drinking absinthe to steady my nerves, which had been all unstrung by cigarettes," said a serio-comic. "You don't inhale the smoke, do you? No? Sensible boy! But I was a cigarette fiend and had to brace up on absinthe. Ever drink the stuff? No? Don't, then, except a dash in a morning cocktail. Well, I was drinking it straight on in lump sugar till one night when I found myself out on the stage making such work as this of one of my prettiest songs: Oh, the little birds were singing in the cellar, And the moon was sitting on the sun! "I never got so much applause in my life. And I didn't know why until after the stage manager had dragged me off and sobered me up."—Buffalo Express.

There are twenty morning and ten evening papers published in New York.

A Ring on a Swollen Finger.

"Will you please see this ring off my finger?" It was an old woman who made this request of a Broadway jeweler, and as the worker in gold and silver took the wrinkled, though fat and shapely, hand in his it trembled violently, and a tear dropped upon the counter. "Excuse me," continued the old lady, "but it is my wedding ring. I have never had it off since I was married—forty-five years ago. I had to refrain from having it cut off because it was so tight that it would break it off without breaking it."

"And what if I can remove it without cutting?" inquired the jeweler. "But can you?" said she, looking up in a fit of credulous way. "If you can, do it by all means."

Then the jeweler took the swollen finger and wound it round from the top downwards in a length of flat rubber band. The elastic cord exerted its force upon the tissues of the finger gently and gradually until the swollen part seemed to be pushed down almost to the bottom. The old woman's hand was then held above her head for a brief interval. Then the bandage was quickly uncoiled and re-wound about the member. This was repeated three times, and finally it was worked upon, moving the finger that it was small enough to admit of the ring's being removed with ease.

"I have never failed but once," said the jeweler, "and I have removed many rings from fingers even more swollen than yours. Do I charge for it? Oh, yes. I ask the same amount that I would get if the ring were on a finger that was being cut off. One dollar. Thank you!" and as he turned to his bench and the old woman left the store he added: "But after all she might have done the same thing herself. It's not the work, however, I charge for; it's the 'know how.'"—New York Mail and Express.

Joke on a General.

Appropos of Gen. Faidherbe, an amusing anecdote is related of an adventure which befell him when he commanded the Army of the North in the war of 1870. His charger, a splendid gray Arab, had been wounded at the battle of Pont Noyelles, and the general was obliged to dismount and to lead him to a farm. Some days after, as Gen. Faidherbe was at lunch, a non-commissioned officer of the Prussian army came up with a French dragoon and a horse which Gen. Von Goben had sent him with a polite message, believing it to be his property. The horse was a miserable animal and Gen. Faidherbe, amazed at the apparition, asked the dragoon for an explanation. The man related that he had been taken prisoner with three comrades by a patrol of German cavalry two days before, and that he had hit on the bright idea of representing himself as the orderly and his horse as the favorite charger of Gen. Faidherbe. The German officers had communicated his statement to Gen. Von Goben, who had courteously returned the animal to the French general. Gen. Faidherbe, however, asked the German soldier to take the dragoon and the horse back with him and to return crestfallen at the failure of his ruse. Gen. Von Goben, as soon as he learnt the truth, directed that diligent search should be made for the Arab, but it had been so carefully hidden away that he never succeeded in restoring it to his adversary.—Chicago Times.

The Average Country Journalist.

Every now and again I see in the city papers and in the country papers and jokes at the expense of rural editors. It may be that my experience has been peculiarly fortunate, but I have found that the average country journalist with whom I have come into contact has more brains, more straight out square, less ability, more pride and interest in his profession, and more money, than his city brother. It is the graduates from the country offices who make the best men in metropolitan journalism. I read of the country editor who takes his pay in squabbles and cow-wad, but see the country editor who pays me in checks on his local bank, checks which are always good. I read of the poverty stricken rural newspaper man, but in my experience, and I have met a good many of them, the rural journalist is apt to own a share in the paper he edits, the house he lives in, a horse and buggy, while the metropolitan writer who vents the highly humorous paragraphs concerning his country brother too often owes for the coat on his back. And finally, a good country editor is a king pin in his locality. He is looked up to and respected as a leader of public opinion, a man who knows what is going on in the world. I can't imagine a more enviable position than that of the owner and editor of a good country paper. Compared to the grind of a city daily, the work is light, and the rewards are proportionately greater.—The Journalist.

The Old Clown's Days Are Over.

Col. W. C. Crum, the advance agent of Forepaugh's circus, says: "The day of the clowns is nearly over. Formerly they were half the show, but now they attract but little attention. The enlargement of the shows is the chief cause. The big shows now have two or three rings, and the circus of the sea is so far off that the people cannot hear the jokes of the clowns. In the old days an average clown received from \$100 to \$200 a week. Dan Rice, who was considered the greatest of them all, was paid \$1,000 a week, which was the highest salary a clown ever received. He was a bright, ambitious young fellow, possessed of much originality, and he reached the top notch of his profession. Once an educated young Englishman, a graduate of Oxford university, who possessed excellent comic talents, was brought over to this country, and he was paid \$200 a week. At the present day the pay of the clowns ranges from \$20 to \$50 a week."—Courier-Journal.

The Non-payment of Rent.

In the reports of the health of towns commissioners it is continually pointed out that sickness is the chief cause of the non-payment of rent. One witness says: "Three out of five of the losses of rent that I now have are losses from the sickness of the tenants, who are working men. Rent is the best get from healthy boys." Another says: "Sickness at all forms an excuse for the poorer part not paying their rent, and a reasonable excuse," so that the chief cause of sickness, inability to work, inability to work poverty and non-payment of rent, to say nothing of starvation.—Science Book Review.

Hard and Soft Water.

The importance of soft water for domestic purposes is illustrated by the experience of a large London asylum, in which a change from hard to soft water has resulted in an estimated annual saving in soda, soap, labor, etc., of more than \$4,000.—Arkansas Traveler.

NEED OF PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

Fathers, Examine the Studies Pursued by Your Sons—Mental Exercises.

I have been assured by learned professors that the collegiate course is merely an exercise, useful in forming and strengthening the mind. Therefore, useless studies become useful as dumb bells, stiffening the mental muscles and imparting tone to the faculties. Words are not useful studies and the acquiring of facts needed in the daily grind to come be equally healthful to the mind.

The most our graduates acquire is barely a smattering of each subject. Why? Merely because there is not time to give each branch of study conscientious and exhaustive research. It may be asked why, then, the number of studies is not limited. The answer is simple. Between the vanity of the parents, who like to say that their sons are deep in this abstruse subject or that high sounding science, and the stubborn conservatism of the faculty, retaining the nineteenth century sentiment in this nineteenth century of practical life, the course is filled with tares and there is no room for the wheat. Of what use are Latin and Greek to the youth who must soon strip in the struggle for bread? The honest excuse is that they give an insight into the derivation of language. Well? A dictionary will do as much. Why waste four years in hammering verbs and nouns, declensions and conjugations into a boy who is destined afterward to sell coffee or soap? Of what value is so-called French? It will take several years to learn, and the acquaintance is purely ornamental, and in most cases not worth a dollar to the future man.

Fathers, examine the studies pursued by your sons. You will find that you are spending your money and wasting their most precious time storing up glittering tinsel to the exclusion of what can benefit them in the sterner days to come. Cast them adrift upon the sea of life without a thorough education in some practical subject of value to the world, and which in a needy hour they may coin into bread, and you are casting them adrift in ships of lead without a life preserver or a spar aboard. A sunken rock or a storm and they are lost.

If they need mental exercise let them juggle with practical subjects—mechanics, bookkeeping, drawing, practical chemistry, arithmetic, the English language and physics. Let them learn how to keep accounts, how to handle tools, how to build and work an engine, how to detect adulterations in staples of commerce, how to understand the machinery of the great practical world—and not learn the vagaries of the land of dreams.

If you have learned the bent of your son's mind, confine him strictly to studies pertaining to his calling and cast all others away. Our boys are not fools. They know the uselessness of half the labors imposed upon them, and, being Americans, resent the encroachment upon their liberty. Rather than Latin or Greek, they take up the fantastics of the poker deck, they twinkle a banjo, and are erudite only in the latest lingo appertaining to trousers or collar. We neglect to give them weapons to fight the battle, and they become skulkers in the rear. We turn them loose upon the world with no means for employment; they reply by becoming idle and profligate, prematurely wasted, the soul of Saturn in the body of Adonis, crowded from the race for fortune and fame by striplings of humbler life, whose education is in narrow lines, but who are sturdy and sharp as an ax to hew their path.—Henry Guy Carleton in New York World.

Looking Through the Telescope.

In regard to planets, we must remember that a telescope does not give us what's eye view. We see the nearest planet only as an orb in which all such details as our earth belong to continents are absolutely lost. Mars, the planet most favorably seen, presents continents, oceans, ice patches and such cloud masses as excite our fancy, but they are not real features from time to time. But we cannot hope to see rivers or mountain ranges on the ruddy planet.

I know not, indeed, what to say about certain markings which Sig. Schiaparelli, of Milan, and recently M. Perola, of Nice, think they have seen. They are straight, broad bands running across the continents, and lately Schiaparelli has seen them doubled. If they are canals they are enormously broad, certainly twenty times wider than the Mississippi at St. Louis. They look too regular and straight to be Schiaparelli pictures them to be natural formations; and if he is right about their being double they must be artificial. The great Lick telescope may tell us something about these strange features; I must confess I strongly expect that the telescope will tell us far more than straight lines, if not the whole set, are optical illusions. It is, at any rate, worth remarking that they have only as yet been seen with telescopes of moderate power and when the planet is unfavorably placed for observation.—Richard A. Proctor in Youth's Companion.

What Key West Looks Like.

The key has about as much shape as a camel, and in a general way lies east and west and contains about six square miles. It is as flat as a shingle, the highest point being about fourteen feet above the mean sea level. To the casual visitor it looks as though the sea, particularly in a storm, were about to engulf it. Schiaparelli pictures them to be natural formations; and if he is right about their being double they must be artificial. The great Lick telescope may tell us something about these strange features; I must confess I strongly expect that the telescope will tell us far more than straight lines, if not the whole set, are optical illusions. It is, at any rate, worth remarking that they have only as yet been seen with telescopes of moderate power and when the planet is unfavorably placed for observation.—Richard A. Proctor in Youth's Companion.

The streets are of very good width, tolerably straight and passably clean. The roadway is coral rock. There is no soil to speak of; what passes for soil is triturated coral, very rich in phosphates and making an excellent fertilizer, but by itself deficient in fat. To garden one must use a pick rather than a hoe. Very few vegetables are grown here and vegetation is confined mainly to coconut trees. Here and there can be seen a pine or an Alexander or a star of India or a royal poinciana; a few mulberry and prickly ash trees and popenack bushes. Flowers and flowering shrubs grow in abundance.—Rochester Post-Express.

Safeguards Against Cholera.

Max Von Pettenkofer, a German medical authority, considers that cholera is not contagious in the sense of being communicable directly from person to person, but that it belongs to the malarial group of epidemics, the germs of which find their way from the soil into the air, and thence through the lungs into the system. He regards good drainage and pure water as the most efficient safeguards against an outbreak.—Boston Budget.

CHEAP BOOTS & SHOES

The same quality of goods 10 per cent. cheaper than any house west of the Mississippi. Will never be undersold. Call and be convinced.

ALSO REPAIRING PETER MERGES.

THE FURNITURE EMPORIUM



FOR ALL CLASSES OF FURNITURE

Parlors, Bedrooms, Dining-rooms.

Kitchens, Hallways and Offices.

GO TO HENRY BOECK'S, Where a magnificent stock of Goods and Fair Prices abound.

UNDERTAKING AND EMBALMING A SPECIALTY.

HENRY BOECK, CORNER MAIN AND SIXTH PLATTSMOUTH, NEBRASKA

F. G. FRICKE & CO., (SUCCESSOR TO J. M. ROBERTS)

Will keep constantly on hand a full and complete stock of paper

Drugs and Medicines, Paints, Oils, Wall Paper and a Full Line of DRUGGIST'S SUNDRIES.

PURE LIQUORS.

LUMBER! LUMBER!

RICHEY BROS., Corner Pearl and Seventh Streets.

DEALERS IN ALL KINDS OF

Lumber, Lath, Sash, Blinds, MIXED PAINTS, LIME, Cement, Plaster, Hair

BUILDING PAPER.

Lowest Rates, Terms Cash

M. B. MURPHY & Co., DEALERS IN

STAPLE AND FANCY GROCERIES,

Crockery, Wooden and Willow Ware.

FLOUR, FEED & PROVISIONS.

WE MAKE A SPECIALTY OF FINE CROCKERY.

M. B. MURPHY & CO.

Advertisement for The Free Press Co. featuring a 'Three to Five Dollars a Day' offer. Text includes: 'Agents who are now soliciting subscriptions to THE WEEKLY DETROIT FREE PRESS under its special offer of FIVE MONTHS FOR 25 CENTS. By making three to five dollars per day with very little effort. We want agents to represent us at all the County and District Fairs, and in every town in the United States. Send for credentials and agents outfit at once. Very liberal commissions and cash prizes for large lists. DON'T FORGET that any one can have THE WEEKLY FREE PRESS sent to their address four months on trial for 25 Cents. Address THE FREE PRESS CO., Detroit, Mich.'