

IMPRESSIONS OF MACMANUS

Doegal Pilgrim Gives Some Picturesque Views on American Life. NO CONFIDENCE GAMES WORKED ON HIM

Some Remarks on the Deadly Peace—Democracy Really Exists—Defence Shown to Women—American Workingmen.

(Copyright, 1906, by Seumas MacManus.) A friend from the south asked me, "Have they tried to bucco you since you came to New York?"

"Or sell you green goods?" "No." "Have you been ambushed?" "No."

"What do you mean?" said I. "I mean," said he, "that I have had the same unflattering experience. Notwithstanding that I came north for a business opportunity and equipped with all precautionary knowledge, the bunco stealer, the green goods man, the sandbagger and the homie-chieve have contemptuously passed me by. They considered both of us not worth while."

I confess that I had not looked upon my escape in this pride-wounding light before. And though I have since sedulously sought opportunities for re-establishing my self-esteem, I have miserably failed, and for the sake of my self-respect would like to conclude that America in general and New York in particular are not the gardens of dishonesty and violence that perverted patriots would fain make the avid outside world believe.

The bunco stealer and the green goods man who spins his web in Hoboken and advises the unprudent farmer to walk into it with his carpet bag, are as distinctly American products as the American wheat and the New York newspaper. Yet, far from proving the clever dishonesty of Americans, these gentlemen only expose the primitive simplicity of stupidity.

Secrecy of Old Men. For some time I used to wonder why it was that I never saw an old man in America. And coming from a country where it is common to see men of 90 digging in the fields, untroubled by the rain and hail which pelted them, I was amused to find the promise given by the press to the fact that John So-and-So had just died at Ulton, N. Y., at the wonderful age of 93 years.

There is more honesty and more dishonesty in America than any other country the sun shines on today. Despite moral conditions that are peculiarly favorable to the multiplication of politicians and the thousand and one other species of pick-pocket, the average American outside of business hours, is an estimably honest person. Old world conceptions of the "Yankee" have been formed from observations made upon the "clever" class, which, though it is certainly an American type, is far from representing the true average American.

Having formed my ideas of Americans entirely from books and travelers' tales I was on coming here most pleasantly disappointed to find my preconceived notions utterly falsified. While here are quite a number of distinct types not to be found elsewhere, I discover that the great bulk of people differ from the commercial populus on the other side of the water only in being less formal and ostentatious, kinder, franker, more direct, more natural. Both in social relations and generally in business relations, the brotherhood of man, its rights and its duties, are tacitly acknowledged to an extent that is striking and pleasing to a foreigner.

most of the artificial manners which stamp the gentleman in England. He has the ill-mannered to act and speak as his feelings prompt, provided there be nothing hurtful in the action or the word. Also, whereas an Englishman will treat you with cold formality until your worth forces itself on him, the American will meet and greet you as a friend until you have shown unworthiness. Woman is the best touchstone with which to test a gentleman and American stand this test well. In such a large, brusque, practical nation, the deference shown to women is remarkable—still more remarkable when we see this deference granted regardless of station—to the humblest and by the humblest. It was particularly pleasing to me to see in a crowded street car a weary, poor laborer, begrimed beyond recognition with the soil of honest, hard work, tender his seat, with the quiet deference of a bred gentleman, to the woman who had just entered. There is more true gentleness in the little finger of such a poor fellow than in the whole frame of many a fine man who is a perambulating encyclopedia of etiquette.

The American girl has no parallel among her sisters of other countries. She is a fine illustration of the disputed assertion that woman may compete with man in the general pursuits without losing her femininity and womanly charm. Large liberty has been granted the American girl and this liberty has not been abused. She has been emancipated, or rather she has emancipated herself, for good purpose. American progressiveness forced the American girl out of woman's traditional limits. The new sphere in which she found herself robbed her of those naive graces which the unprogressive lament the loss of, but it was full time that woman came to see they had some more important mission here than as mere ornaments; under the old circumstances women might educate the admiration of men, but the new regime, as in America, where they command that admiration, is far heavier. The American girl who, without false reserve or bashfulness, without womanly weakness or timidity, goes openly and composedly about all lawful business, has thereby lost none of the essentials of true womanhood, and has gained much, for she is a stronger, more moral product, and because of her strength is not seldom sneered at by a class who desire women to remain the charming weak things that are glad of to be toyed with in man's moments of relaxation.

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ing-a task that he grimly resolves to go through with, and the more quickly he can crush it the better. He has been so long, so grimly, so persistently chasing wealth and station that he has set out all right, looking to the end as the means to an end, yet, from his persistent pursuit of them, they have entirely shut out the true end and supplied its place to his strained vision. That a fitful value given at some time or other to almost worthless bits of meat and show through time obtain a (practically) real value that has upset the whole moral theory of humanity, is a curious instance of the hallucination to which human minds both great and small are so liable.

In the labyrinth of things I had almost lost sight of the boarding house table and the quiet lunch counter toward which I was toiling. It is certain that the amount of meat eaten in America is greater than a healthful mind and physical constitution could stand. Meat is the staple commodity of all meals; and the American with whom I remonstrate shakes his head and informs me that much meat is a physical necessity here. His proof for this, given after much hesitation, is that he has always heard so. From personal experience I know that meat is not necessary in New York than in Donegal. And I see, as any observant person will see, that much meat eating clogs the system, and clogs and dulls the senses, and creates a craving for stimulants and exciteants. Moreover, as brain and stomach are vital each other in their demands upon the nervous energy, meat is suited to a nervous, race like Americans. The use of coffee is as much abused as the use of meat. The American lives in and for the moment, and so never hesitates to draw drafts upon the future. The coffee stimulates his jaded nerves and makes them do more than they are naturally fit for. But even latent nervous power is a fixed quantity, though he never dreams so. Of course he exhausts it long before the first frost, for it is certainly divine gotten by the panting one who catches his place.

I think I forgot to enumerate the corner drug store in the list of life that shorten life in America. And it does not deserve the reputation for it. It certainly divides honors with its rival, the quick lunch. Yet, on reflection, I do believe the latter has the heavier score to its credit. And, scientifically, it is the more interesting of the two. The drug store has been reckoned with for ages, but the quick lunch as a factor in mortality returns only in the latest development of new world civilization. All morning the business man has been rushing and thinking, thinking, and rushing. Suddenly he discovers it is 12 o'clock. He sees his friends hurrying toward the quick lunch, and he is obliged to get to it as necessary a form as an shave and a clean collar in the morning. He has been in the habit of swallowing a lunch all his life; so, though he knows well that he can fit afford the fifteen minutes he is going to waste on it, he finds himself instinctively joining the crowd who are struggling and striving, as if for dear life, to get into the restaurant, for one human life is pouring out while the other tries to pour in; and charge another like crack foot ball teams, and other two men get shoulder against shoulder and are trying to glare at each other with all the venom of caged wild beasts. Inside, the opposing teams are jostling savagely, white jacketed waiters bob through them shouting unintelligible orders at the top of their voices, and the clatter of chairs, the rattle of knives and forks and spoons adds the number of ear like the noise of pandemonium. A hundred men crowd the counter and the tables, firing the food into their mouths and swallowing it untouched by tooth, economizing time, to be in luck if they get to the closest possible proximity to the waiter to make knife and fork travel a foot further than is absolutely necessary is evidently considered criminal waste.

The eyes of the devouring multitude protrude, and the veins in their necks and foreheads like blue bedcord, show through the fiery red of their perspiring skins. When our friend grabs a vacant seat, for which five other men sprang, and seats himself, his neighbor, without delaying knife or fork, reaches for the first morsel, and sideling his way to the table, he is picking a bone would give an intruding brother. Our friend barks an order to the waiter, who, in a jiffy, has placed it before him; he swallows it, grabs his hat and check, charges down the aisle, flings a piece of money at the cashier, and using his wedge fashion, dives through the seething mass who struggle at the door, and with the aspect of one who has performed a trying duty, rushes breathlessly to an appointment.

New. I have not seen any American mortality returns, and do not know what are the proportions ascribed to the different causes of death. But after close observation and mature deliberation I have, for my own use, drawn up a mortality table, which I am prepared to check for, and from which, if the official figures differ, the official figures are decidedly misleading. Here is my table (and I challenge doubt), calculated on the basis of every 100 deaths in the eastern states of America:

Table with 2 columns: Cause of death, Mortality. Includes: Epidemic and pulmonary diseases, 7.5; Love, accident, murder, suicide, etc., 7.5; Coffee and meat, 16.00; Corner drug store, 25.0; Quick lunch restaurant, 25.0; Brooklyn trolley, 12.5; Total, 100.0.

RELIGIOUS. A vote of the New York presbytery of 77 to 35 refusing to entertain the charges of Dr. Birch against Prof. Moffitt, settles that matter. Rev. Dr. Witt Talmage is now a very different preacher than the one who, in the famous in Brooklyn. He is a quiet preacher and rarely indulges in the thundering style of his former sermons. The Methodist Ministers' Relief association has had another prosperous year during 1895. It paid out \$1,460,000 in relief, a total distribution for twenty-one years of its existence of \$11,250,000. It is stated as a fact that out of the 22,000,000 widows to be found in India 10,165 are under 4 years of age and 5,000 are between the ages of 5 and 9. This is a terrible evil that our missionaries are striving to uproot.

As an evidence that the Methodist Episcopal church is making gains in Italy the Rev. Dr. William Dunn, presiding officer at the Rome district of the Italian conference, alleges the fact that twelve years ago collectors in that country were paid, while they were \$15,36 last year. A meeting was held in St. John's Roman Catholic church, recently to protest against profanity in speech and for the purpose of organizing a movement against it. No serious work was done at present. This is a good movement and worthy of imitation. The Rev. James Hamilton, pastor of the First Methodist church in St. Joseph, Mich., was recently nominated for congress by the prohibitionists of the Fourth district of Michigan, but he has declined to be the candidate, saying that he is a member of the ministry he resolved to forego all political honors and all appointments for worldly gain.

The women of Marimaton, Kan., five miles west of Fort Scott, have organized themselves into a band of "four-fingered" of the United Brethren church there. They have done old clothes the other day and began the raising of money for the foundations. Enough money to build the church was raised. The women determined, rather than raise the project be abandoned, to take up the work and do themselves. According to the Alto, a German newspaper publication, the number of Christians in the world is as follows: North Africa, 50,000; islands around Africa, 50,000; farther India and Ceylon, 70,000; islands adjacent to India, 100,000; Europe, 180,000; Japan, 20,000; Oceania, 30,000; Greenland and Labrador, 15,000. In total there are 115,200 converts in India and in Central and South America 215,000. The 28,000,000 Christians in the world, the number of Christians at present, 12,000,000 was once known as the heathen world, 1,500,000.

GOLDEN CHANCE FOR POETS

Two Omahans of Literary Leanings Would Organize Verse Writers. VOTARIES OF POESY ARE INVITED TO POOL

Scheme is to Form a Club Whose Members Are to Collaborate in the Publication of a Metropolitan Monthly. Three weeks ago this advertisement appeared in the want columns of an Omaha newspaper: WANTED—Men and women to join our poetry club, each to contribute poems for publication for particular. E. Bechtel, Merchants' Hotel, Omaha.

The purpose of this enterprise, as outlined by Mr. Bechtel, is to induce people to furnish him "copy" to be used in the publication of a monthly or quarterly periodical. Contributions will be accepted from club members only, but from such membership none are barred. Eligibility inheres in the possession of \$2 and a willingness to pay it over to the club treasurer.

Mr. Bechtel admits that the project is in embryo form as yet. The advertisement was held out merely as a feeder. If sufficient favorable answers were received it would be time enough then to formulate the conditions under which the club members might be able to meet. But from the fact that, in twenty-one days since its appearance, only two ambitious posters have been moved to apply for admission, there are deducible three conclusions, viz: First—that the venture is still in a rudimentary state.

Second—that there are fewer literary suckers in Omaha and vicinity than some people think. Third—that the newspaper in which the club appeared is an interior advertising medium. However, there is no disposition on the part of the projectors (for there are two of them) to abandon it. They are going to try again. They are going to put in another advertisement, more extensive than the first—worded so cleverly, playing so adroitly upon human egotism—that it must be an iron will, indeed, that can withstand the suasion of it. They purpose forming a club of fifty, which would mean \$100 in initiation fees and a high manuscript dossier to get out a book the size of city directory, which the rules of the club will not bar its members from purchasing as many copies of the book as they wish.

Mr. Bechtel's silent partner is named Curtis Hahn, who, by an odd coincidence, is a writer employed by the paper in which the advertisement appeared. He is remaining in the background and, when the feasibility of the scheme is finally established, presumably will permit his associate to hold the bag.

Mr. Bechtel and his silent partner write verse, but it is said the verse of Mr. Bechtel is much better than that of his partner. Another interesting fact in this connection is that Mr. Bechtel is "yard man" at the Merchants' hotel. He is second in command of the staff, and is in charge of the steward and it is his duty to oversee the dishwashers, scrubbers, coal heavers and other functionaries of the culinary department. This prosaic occupation, however, does not freeze the genial current of his pen. He is a member of the Omaha Poets' Club, and he has written a poem in praise of the "shade" of the moonbeams. The night is calm, and he sees a peaceful lake whose "spirit" is underneath it—probably under its bed. On the "distant shore" of this lake are rushes so violently agitated that their shadows are clearly visible in the bedroom of the singer. He neglects to state whether it is an earthquake or a herd of goats that is rustling the reeds. But the "poem" will speak for itself, though in broken English. Here it is:

Sung in the Moonlight. Let's wake, love, for 'tis moonlight; Come, raise thy slumbering brow— Give me one loving kiss tonight— Let's sit up, love, in bed. Let's look through the open window, love, and gaze at the stars that shine above, And the earth so fair and bright. Don't hang about your brow your tresses, dear. Let them bang loose and still. Place thy white arms about me here And whisper what you will. 'Tis just but a moon since our hands were joined, With our hearts in this holy fire, And now in this still and happy abode, We'll wait the dawn of a new day. The clock on the mantle is telling the hour of 1, but we'll heed it not; The cry of the watcher on yonder tower shall not disturb our sleep. Behold on the lake how bright and calm Sleeps the blue water in peace, As if from the moon there comes a balm To still its proud spirit beneath. The sigh from the reeds on the distant shore, Like Eolian harps of old, Waft their sweet music the waters o'er, As they in my arms fold. Now listen, love, while I sing to you A song so low and sweet— It tells a tale of two lovers true, As a song of the moonlight deep. And when the song is finished, love, Thee I would see, and I would see thee, And I will be with my little dove— Then I might call the moonbeams keep.

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