

it is said, the owners of such property ought to have some assurance that their property value will not be destroyed by some hasty act of revocation. And so they ought. But the assurance should be that, if their rights to use the streets be revoked, their property suitable to and used for street railway purposes should be taken off their hands at a fair valuation; not that they should be privileged to remain in undisputed possession of the public streets for a definite period of time, whether they serve the public well or ill.

"The Street Railway Commission believes that the definite term grant, whatever its duration, is open to serious objections. It is of opinion that a grant of indefinite duration, but subject to termination at any time upon certain conditions, one of which should be the taking of the property of the grantee at a fair valuation, would be productive of much better results."

The most important feature of sound municipal policy, in other words, is the retention by the public authorities of the right to terminate the grant at any time, in case the public interests render such action desirable. The grantee is afforded sufficient protection, if given assurance that his property will be taken off his hands at a fair and reasonable valuation, in case of termination of the

grant. This one feature alone, if adhered to, would afford to American communities in future immunity from the worst abuses which some of them are suffering. But there are other features of franchise policy that ought to prove beneficial in practice, though none so important as the one already discussed. For one thing, excessive capitalization should not be allowed, and to accomplish this something more than a legal pronouncement against stock watering is necessary. There must be somebody constituted to pass on all bond and stock issues as they are put forth — for example, like the state railroad and lighting commissions in Massachusetts — to insure that the spirit of the law is not contravened. For another thing, the system of accounts and public reports of corporations operating under franchise grants should be such as to enable the public to detect abuses and to understand whether the rates charged for service are reasonable. In many quarters the referendum has been advocated as a cure for franchise ills. The remedy may be somewhat clumsy, but it seems to be the only effective safeguard where grants running for definite term periods are allowed. Where the grant is — as it ought to be — subject to termination at any time, the referendum would not seem to be necessary.

George C. Sikes.

FALSE GYPSIES.

ONE of the best restaurants in New York, and one of the most exacting for young purses, had once its vogue among discontented youths of irrepressible individuality. There they found, on happier days, some popular tenor, an approachable merchant from Martinique, a talkative *boulevardier*, or some other incarnation of their Mistress France. At least they found one another. When

plain William had failed once more to vend his erotic verse, and the undoubted distinction of Edward's black mane had not yet sufficed to palm off his impressionism, and Herbert had a thing for Town Topics, not quite finished, it was a distinct solace to leave work for condolence in the pose of the Latin Quarter. You sauntered into the café, saluted the very business-like woman at

the counter, found a loose French weekly, and sat beside a marble-topped table at the window. The others would arrive; and together you would drink toward a serener view of life. To have hope rather than faith, to be idle under the guise of research into humanity, to indulge a smattering of French and a taste for spirits, to talk dispassionately of vaudeville, — these made you eligible; this was Bohemian. *Deux mazarans*, said with quiet assurance, was almost equivalent to conversation. If you expatiated upon symbolism without boggling at the absinthe, you were a Bohemian professed. What have cigarettes and uncooked criticism in a French restaurant to do with Bohemia?

Something, no doubt. Bohemia may be entered by the Pass of Discontent. Revolt from the conventional, as it may happily lead into generous enthusiasm for whatever asserts individuality, may arise from the assertion of one's own individuality. Only, the assertion is not tolerable for long without proof; and merely to put on the manner of Bohemia is a convention, like any other. Alas! for the perpetual youths at the marble-topped table it was the cloak of indolence, sham Bohemia dissipating the alms of Philistia. A murky basement not far away showed franker stuff. The company that met with friendly nods by the long tables had already weighed the price of freedom. Each held his half-success in what he loved and believed, and the fellowship of those that measured life so, worth a hall bedroom, and plain, irregular meals. The cutting away of pretense, instead of bringing a crop of cynicism, left the ground clear for the best of talk, for a criticism of life which, though sometimes thin, was never unreal. They were not artists and poets, nor even journalists, but second-rate illustrators, story-writers, and essayists in the dear leisure of a newspaper day, serious students of ideas, — ideas barren enough, it might chance, but still ideas. So

dinner was an unaffected gayety, — the higher if there had been no luncheon, — asking no stimulus beyond the cheap ordinary wine and the man across the table. The low room clashed with conversation and laughter, reeked with pipe-smoke; but there was no other intemperance. Until the foothold was gained, the mastery won, this for them was life. Brave travelers, they chose Bohemia for their crossing.

And Bohemia repaid the choice. At the long tables one was free to wear his own guise without apology, and sure of the welcome he gave. It was the code that you might not address a novice, however promising he, however talkative you, until he opened the way; but that you might smoke your rat-tail cigar on the back of a friend's chair, or on the table after the apples and cheese. When music came in from the street, harp or guitar and violin tucking themselves between tables against the wall, the whole roomful would sometimes chink the measure on glasses, or sing a chorus from *Trovatore*. On one supreme evening the taciturn Colonel left his spaghetti, flung a coat-tail over each arm, and with a fine decorous abandon danced up and down the midst, precisely nimble. There was a roar of applause at this hyperbole of the spirit of the place; but the Colonel, having had his fling, resumed his fork without word or smile. He had expressed himself.

Withal it would have been hard to find a tavern stricter. The few women that came were reporters, eager sometimes in talk, smoking when they chose, but rarely expansive, and commonly in the sober dignity of middle age; or minor singers with their husbands, a hard-working few, less adept in conversation. Of drinking there was very little. Money was too hard won, and this was distinctly a place to eat in. When an Italian impresario and his presumable patron stumbled in by chance one evening and talked tipsily loud — no more — Teresa was in from the kitchen, order-

ing them from her house in brave Italian and broken English. The company silently approved, and they never came again.

For its little while, the time of passage, this was a solace in discipline. To be free, to be worthy of your neighbor's keen question, to give and take the ease of simple gayety that you might the better work for yourself, it is a colored life. But not for long. Rather, "Woe is me that I have my habitation among the tents of Kedar." They that dwell in Bohemia because they have unlearned the way forth suffer dreary and repulsive decline. An old gypsy is tolerable only if he be a real gypsy, not in choice or lapse of will, but in the blood. This is the race whose journey has no end, for whom life and all the world is Bohemia, only a space for travel. Moving always on the highway, stopping always short of the city, these are no shiftless tramps in wagons, but a race doomed to make no progress except in physical distance, and to make

that always, to kill time. For any but the blood to spend a lifetime on the road is as unnatural as for this blood to keep house. The real gypsies are happy, doubtless, as the nomads of the world's childhood. Perpetual youth is perpetual limitation; once the limitation is seen, intolerable to any zeal for manhood.

To us others, not of the blood, even to the least conventional of an elaborate civilization, Bohemia must be a country of inns, — inns for the poor adventurous young, responsive to the freedom in others which they must have in themselves. Like the actual Switzerland, it is only for our summer. A careless while to have no home is to some men, fewer women, an exhilaration. To let slip the hope of home is a cowardice or a curse. Clap pack on back, then, or ship as stowaways for the seacoast of Bohemia. But be ready for random fare and a truss of hay; be ready also to go on, or else to return, even to Philistia, not ungrateful for memories.

Charles Sears Baldwin.

BOOKS NEW AND OLD.

A REVIEWER who has fallen into the habit of classifying his material according to some more or less fanciful method must have now and then a bad moment in realizing his delinquencies. It is too likely that in his eagerness to expound a gospel according to himself he may have got to neglecting the other part of his business, which is to tell people something about particular books. He may have failed to give his actual impression of the whole value of a book because he has been thinking about its pertinence to his theme; or he may have said nothing at all about certain new books which he has read with great pleasure, but which have not happened to fit in with any of his little plans. He can,

if he is not too slow about it, do something toward making up for the latter fault, at least. Some day in the middle of his uneasiness, before "the good minute goes," he may turn to resolutely and cull these inconveniently remembered volumes from the odd corners in which he will have shiftily tucked them; and permit himself to remember for what uncategorical reasons he enjoyed reading them.

His enjoyment must of course have varied in degree as well as in kind. There, for example, was Marion Crawford's *Cecilia*,¹ which yields whatever satisfaction may be had from a book

¹ *Cecilia*. By F. MARION CRAWFORD. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1902.