

all my life," the old man continued. "I've paid my taxes and kept up my line fences and sat on juries, the best I knew how; and they say that's all the law requires of a man. And—I'll not fail you now, neighbors; if only I knew whether this doubt was the right kind or not, I'd answer if—it hung all the Nelsons. But you wouldn't want to send your boy to the gallows till you—*knew* he was guilty, would you, judge? And, *by God, I'll know!*"

A shock waved over the court room. No one breathed. The old juror, filled

with a long forgotten energy, leaned far forward toward the prisoner's chair. He lifted high a gaunt hand.

"Robert, Rob, my boy, *you never lied to me*, and you dare not make liars of us both now. Before God, Rob, did—you—murder—Fred?"

The air quivered with the panting of the prisoner's breath as he raised his head and met his father's gaze. He tried to rise, resting against the table, but could not. Leaning there, panting, quaking, he gasped the answer:

"Yes."

BALL GIVING IN NEW YORK.

BY CLINTON VAN HORNE.

HOW NEW YORK SOCIETY USED TO ENTERTAIN IN THE EARLY DAYS, BEFORE THERE WAS A FOUR HUNDRED, AND HOW IT MANAGES THE GREAT AND COSTLY FUNCTIONS OF TODAY.

THE world loves happiness, and fortunately the human heart always recognizes that the time to dance has its place as well as the time to work, and that occupation and amusement, well mingled, are our best companions for every day life and do much to save us from morbidness when the time comes to mourn. That our forms of amusement have become so conventional is greatly to be regretted; the desire to save ourselves trouble has resulted too often in giving our friends entertainments which have cost us nothing but money.

In old times a ball was an excitement indeed, and it involved an amount of self sacrifice and discomfort on the part of the giver that would hardly be welcome in the family circle of today; but early in the century the resources were from within—not from without. There were no caterers. To be sure, the men servants, china, glass, and small silver of well provided neighbors were frequently borrowed, but then all the neighbors were expected, and could consequently dispense with such luxuries at home. It reminds one of the worthy couple in "The Bachelors of the Albany," who always dined out with their own epergne, and the popularity of the centerpiece insured its owners' social success. But, to be serious, it was the trouble which old fashioned people cheerfully took to be hospitable,

which gave dignity and heartiness to their social gatherings, and, above all, the charm of simplicity. In any city where the social element is so small that it can easily be gathered in the houses of those best fitted to entertain, this simplicity is preserved, but in New York, even in the early sixties, the pressure of numbers was already beginning to be felt. Society had outgrown all but a few great houses, and even in these the hospitable hearts of their owners were often vexed at having to discriminate a little in asking their friends or else to face the certainty of overcrowding their rooms.

It was at this time that Delmonico opened the ballrooms above his restaurant at the corner of Fourteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, and very soon a series of subscription balls given there were followed by private dances. Whatever fashionable New York did then was done under the guidance, protection, and entire direction of Brown, the sexton of Grace Church. No one thought of giving a party without first sending for Brown. He was always employed to carry the invitations, so he naturally knew the date of every ball and kettledrum given during the season. He advised Mrs. A not to select the evening already chosen by Mrs. B; furnished the ladies new to social life with valuable hints as to their guests; kept order among the carriages on the

night of the great event; in short, he married and buried and entertained New York, and led a jovial, fat existence. But even Brown moved with the times, and his round face beamed upon society from Delmonico's, as he opened the carriage doors, just as it had from the steps of its friends' residences.

The expense of a ball at a restaurant was far greater than in a private house, but it combined much which appealed to the rich New Yorker. The sanctity of his own home was undisturbed, and he sat down to his quiet breakfast the next morning with perhaps an aching head and depleted purse, but with his domestic comforts secure. Then, there had been ample room—all his old friends had been there. Brown had saucily remarked, "Did you ever see such a resurrection party!" but at that time, if you were well born, you respected historic names even if their owners had ceased to be fashionable, and Miss Manhattan had not then learned the word "frump" with which to ticket most of her parents' friends. So let us believe it was the promptings of hospitality which made these private balls in public places so popular, and not the spirit of vulgar ostentation. I do not wish to be understood as asserting that these Delmonico balls were then very frequent, but only as regretting that they ever should have been found expedient for private purposes, and that they should have held their sway for twenty five years. There were, fortunately, many fine houses whose doors were always open, and the exquisite taste of whose appointments quite equaled, on a smaller scale, the great houses of today. Many old residents will remember delightful entertainments in the fine old homes in Lafayette Place and Second Avenue, and, most preëminently, at a house at the corner of Eighteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, whose gracious host and hostess had filled their rooms and picture gallery with all that was best in modern art, and whose faultless taste brought perfection to every detail of their establishment.

I also recall with pleasure several balls given in a large house in Fifth Avenue below Fourteenth Street, where the suppers were entirely prepared by the chef, who began his arrangements ten days in advance, and where the family and such guests as might be dining informally,

would adjourn to the kitchen about nine o'clock in the evening and watch the marvelous constructions of that most famous of cooks, the elder Pinard. Nougat forts were mounted with chocolate guns, sugar deer with black currant eyes wandered under nougat trees, spun sugar birds' nests waited for their eggs of colored ices, and as the time drew nearer boned quail, galantine, and aspic were added to the larder.

And now it would be impossible to complete this retrospect which brings me abreast of my subject without a few words about Mr. McAllister. Society owes him a great deal. He worked hard for its amusement, and displayed good judgment and good taste. He saw that distinguished visitors were not neglected; he interested himself good naturedly in the young people as they came out; he took the responsibility no one else would take, and received scant gratitude; but one thing must be laid to his charge—he certainly fostered this deplorable taste in New York for restaurant balls. Undoubtedly it is pleasant at midnight to leave heated ballrooms and find another floor, where the air is fresh and crisp, the supper arranged on little tables, seating four to six people, and then to be served with every delicacy of the American market; and this was, of course, beyond the resources of any private house; but why wish to entertain all society at once?

When Mr. McAllister made his much criticised speech about the four hundred it was undoubtedly in answer to some question as to how many he usually expected at the Patriarchs' and other balls which he managed, and he naturally recalled the number of suppers he usually found charged in Delmonico's bills for these balls and gave the number as four hundred. It certainly was a very just estimate of habitual ball goers during the eighties, and even now, when society is much increased, it is not so very far behind the actual figures. That he ever intended limiting the number of people in New York worthy of social recognition to that, or any definite number, is quite absurd. But Mr. McAllister has passed away, and with him much of the interest in subscription balls. What are the methods of today? Certainly the tide has begun to set toward smaller and more varied entertainments in the smaller

houses, and we trust it may prevail till many of the old customs are swept away. Still, among the palaces of our modern millionaires there are a few ballrooms capable of containing quite as many guests as were ever seen at Delmonico's, and once a year, it would seem, these rooms must be filled.

Mrs. Manhattan, with the heroism of the social martyr, suggests to her daughters that the time has come for their annual large ball, which society expects of them, and which they find so wearing and futile. The daughters plead for something smaller and more amusing, and finally gain the concession that when the monster gathering has made its rush they may supplement it later by anything they please. The Philistines are upon them; there is no help. How is it all to be managed?

If Mrs. Manhattan were preparing a list for a church wedding of one of her daughters, the number of invitations would probably reach two thousand, but for a ball the outside number of those invited must be cut down to five hundred, and of these one third may be counted out, as either refusing or unable to come after having accepted. It is, of course, desirable to get together the young dancing set, both married and single, with not too great a sprinkling of elderly people. There must also be some invitations in reserve for distinguished foreigners and strangers staying in town, but Mrs. Manhattan sternly sets her face against granting any to New Yorkers who are not included in her original list, though that these will be asked for she very well knows. One of the three or four lady secretaries who do the invitation writing for social New York is sent for, the names carefully gone over with her, five or six hundred invitations ordered from Tiffany, and directed by the above mentioned lady in her clear, beautiful handwriting, and there is no retreat. Shall there be two bands—pauses while the musicians rest are always inopportune—or shall one band have three or four extra violinists, so that in turn three or four may rest at a time? On the whole, the two bands carry the day, largely because the uniform of the Hungarians is so picturesque, and their music so inspiring.

And now for the supper. The chef is equal, he declares, to preparing supper

for two hundred, perhaps two hundred and fifty; but for more, madame must order a new range and increase his scullions. Madame does neither. She sends for S——, the celebrated caterer. For four dollars and fifty cents a head will S—— undertake the supper, including champagne? Much diplomacy finally raises the price to five dollars for the first two hundred and fifty, and four dollars for the remainder. S—— agrees for the delicacies so dear to dining out and party going New York. Oysters on the half shell, bouillon, terrapin (Philadelphia receipt, not Baltimore), oysters à la poulette, chicken croquettes, canvas-back ducks with mayonnaise of celery and fried hominy, ices and dessert; all the champagne and all the apollinaris wanted, and claret for those who dislike effervescent drinks. S—— is to bring his own servants, the little tables, linen, china, glass, and silver. The servants of Mrs. Manhattan are exempt from duty as far as the serving of supper is concerned, and can devote themselves to the front door, announcing the guests, and attending in the dressing rooms. Outside Johnson is to keep order among the carriages, and his men to see that the awning is properly lit, and its shelter not too much absorbed by private footmen. A wonderful man is Johnson—even as his father was before him, and dear old Brown before him. No number ever escapes him; as his eye lights upon the home going lady, the number of her house is thundered down the street, and in a twinkling the welcome announcement made that Mrs. Knickerbocker's carriage stops the way, and all without a word from her. This, however, is hardly as marvelous as that he should even know the lady's maids, who frequently accompany their mistress, and should keep them equally well classified.

Then the decorations are to be thought of, and vary so much in kind and expense that no two people will agree as to what is necessary. One hostess will order only growing palms, hired for the evening, another will have every available place in her rooms banked with flowers, another will use flowers most lavishly for the cotillion favors, and will perhaps have little light wheelbarrows of gilded wood heaped with roses and violets trundled into the ballroom at the appropriate time.

The endless detail which is involved in providing for the comfort of four or five hundred people for even one evening, who can guess? Double sets of printed numbers must be secured to use as checks in the dressing rooms, for cloaks and coats; double sets again for the seats for the cotillion; new and effective favors for that much esteemed dance; a leader chosen for it almost before you have made up your mind to give the ball—so much does the success of the evening depend upon popularity and ability.

Though the invitations have read, "Mrs. Manhattan, at home, on Thursday, January 17th, at ten o'clock," no one thinks of arriving till after eleven, and, her toilet completed, the hostess walks through the rooms to give a final glance at everything and be assured that all is as perfect as skill and money can make it. At the end of the two large drawing-rooms is the ballroom, lighted softly from the ceiling, its ample walls covered with pictures, and round its four sides the light gilded chairs for the cotillion, tied in twos and numbered. A very majestic person is Mrs. Manhattan, in her trailing velvet dress, her superb neck and arms ablaze with diamonds, and her head crowned with a tiara which was once a royal possession. Her daughters, simply dressed in white satin, with few or no ornaments, seem very slight and girlish beside their imposing mamma. She, poor lady, is undoubtedly very tired, having thought out every particular and seen it carried into effect. When everything is ready and the guests almost at the door, then if she could only say, "I have earned the right to go to bed, and I am going with all possible speed; have what fun you can, my friends, without me," that would seem only reasonable; but, alas! her trials have hardly begun. She must stand from eleven o'clock till after twelve at the door of the great drawingroom, and as the curtain is drawn back for each entering guest, a draft from the front door which makes her shiver blows down her back. She hears her excellent Flunkett, the most dignified and solemn of servants, playing practical jokes with people's names. All the bores she has been weak enough to ask have formed a coterie at her back and are doing their best to make conversation with her while she strives to welcome the newcomers.

As the evening wears on the woes of each neglected girl must be set straight; reluctant young men forced to dance with the girls they have always avoided; and favors asked which are so unwillingly granted that the weary hostess feels like a beggar in her own house. Four o'clock brings the hoped for release, and the last rosy cheeked debutante has thanked Mrs. Manhattan for such a delightful evening, and the good lady goes to her bed feeling that at least she has given pleasure. But on the morrow a rumor reaches her. Mrs. Manhattan is a prudent woman and never makes confidences, but her daughters have dear friends, and in some way it has been mentioned that this large ball is to be followed by something much more exclusive and select, and gratitude is turned to resentment, and the popularity of the Manhattan family rests with a favored few.

And now let us consider for a moment these small dances which have become the favorite mode of entertaining among our ultra fashionable set of rich people—"the smart set," according to the slang of the day. Here we find the perfection of luxury and good taste, at least as far as the setting of the ball is concerned. The houses are spacious, built with the object of entertaining; the staff of house servants, with some slight reinforcement, equal to the emergency; the floors are polished and wiped until a lace handkerchief could be drawn over them unsoiled; and the ventilation, light, and heat regulated to a degree. Frequently a buffet supper is served continuously during the evening, to be followed at the end of the cotillion with a supper at little tables before the party breaks up. The hours are even later than at the larger balls, the guests hardly arriving before midnight and going proportionately late. The favors for the cotillion are every year growing more and more expensive. In some cases they are still costly trifles purchased by the hostess in Paris, and reserved for such occasions, but too frequently they are articles of jewelry set with semi precious stones, such as turquoise, amethysts, or topaz, beautiful fans, or bits of pretty silverware.

And the guests? Who is considered worthy of admission within these charmed circles? There are no "frumps" there, none of the "old faubourg," as a merry

young woman recently designated the old families whose indifference to society or whose diminished fortunes have caused them to drop out of the race for pleasure. The gathering consists mainly of married people on the sunny side of fifty, young matrons whose pretty heads are crowned with jewels, and of the perfectly dressed girls and gilded youths who form their court. They are certainly very ornamental, these pretty ladies. Sometimes, too, they do much better for their friends than by giving dances. Sometimes they give musicales, and then their doors are opened a little wider and some of the "old *faubourg*" squeeze in. I doubt, however, whether the ears of the frumps are often tickled. They are very munificent, these American royalties. The best talent which the opera and a music loving public can attract to our shores is secured for these private concerts, and is received with the most appreciative attention.

People seem to be striving at present for originality in their entertainments, anything being welcome which varies the monotonous succession of dancing parties. Variety show performances, shorn of improprieties, and toned down to parlor requirements, are much the fashion; clever tricks, jugglery, fortune telling, tableaux, and theatricals are all well received.

I doubt whether the givers of these entertainments expect to get much personal pleasure out of such things, but they naturally wish to return the civilities lavished upon them, and, besides, they feel that hospitality is due to themselves and others, and that their money is doing more good in circulation than in rolling up to their account in the bank.

Let us look a little at the various ways in which such expenditure on the part of the rich assists the poor. Take, for example, the florists. They draw their supply of flowers from all parts of the surrounding country, and a dull winter in the social world is felt by the owners of small greenhouses for fifty miles about New York; whereas a demand for flowers will often send the price of fine roses as high as fifty cents or a dollar apiece. Take, again, the employment given by the livery stables during a gay season; for it is unusual to use private carriages for late night work, and it is not only the ladies who have to be taken care of; the

modern young gentleman has so incorrigibly acquired the cab and hansom habit that he has almost forgotten that his legs will carry him through the streets. The food and wine, used must be of great moment to the purveyors of such things, and the extra service employs many servants.

Such an event as the fancy ball given by Mrs. Martin a year ago, at the end of a hard winter, is really a godsend to many a poor sewing girl. Dressmakers are in the habit of dismissing half their employees in the dull seasons, and between January and March there are few orders given for new clothes. The month which preceded Mrs. Martin's ball—which was a very large one—found the dressmakers reëngaging their seamstresses, the shops selling their richest silks, the costumers, shoemakers, wigmakers, all as busy as bees, and every one glad of the occupation except some of the cheap newspapers, which, as usual, tried to stir up a spirit of communism, and sent Mr. and Mrs. Martin away from their country feeling that they had been cruelly misunderstood in their efforts to spend their money in their own land.

And now, having described some of the varied entertainments of gay New York, I should like to ask whether with so much wealth and so much hospitality the best results are achieved? I really believe not. It is far from edifying for the same set of people to meet night after night, to hear the same waltzes, eat a repetition of the same suppers, and find their only variety in the fresh extravagance of the women's dresses. We should be more careful to include older people; they give a ballast and dignity to the entertainment, and may set our young men and women an example of high bred manners which they will do well to imitate. Let the hours be earlier, and the brain workers will be able to join also. We are a nation of hard working men; why should our hours be copied from foreign capitals whose leisure class can afford to turn night into day? Let our rich people value themselves less for their exclusiveness, and more upon making their houses the meeting ground of the cultured, the artistic, and the literary; and when this is accomplished I venture to predict that social life in New York will have reached a perfection found nowhere else in the world.

least of all, perhaps, in that of the so called *matinée* idol. It may be that so much mock love making, as a business, disgusts them with Cupid and his pranks. Be the cause what it may, your average good looking leading man is hard headed, steady in his heart beats, and either promptly destroys the notes of adoration he receives or else tosses them over to his wife for her collection. For, almost without an exception, these attractive heroes of the drama are staid married men, who go home from business to their wives at midnight instead of at six in the evening.

But at the Murray Hill Theater, New York, a romance is being enacted nightly in the dressing room as well as on the stage. For Mrs. Robert Drouét, the wife of the handsome leading man, accompanies him regularly to the playhouse, and a more devoted couple is not often found in any calling. And there is a story behind it all.

Mr. Drouét began his career twelve years ago, and before he became associated with stock companies he was leading man with Effie Ellsler, supported Joseph Haworth, and played *De Neipperg* in "*Madame Sans Gêne*." His repertoire company connection has been with the Girard Avenue, Philadelphia; the Giffen and Neil, St. Paul; the Schiller and the Great Northern, Chicago, and the Bastable, Syracuse. It was while he was first playing in Chicago, his native city, that he passed in the street a girl whose face attracted him. The next day he met this very girl at a social function. It proved to be love at first sight on both sides. She was the daughter of a retired business man, and had many suitors for her hand—particularly one who possessed a lengthy bank account and a perfectly appointed yacht. Parental eyes looked with disapproval on the mummer, well favored and talented though he was, but this modern heroine of romance was not minded to immolate herself on an altar of sacrifice *à la* Lammemoor. She married the man of her choice, and they are now in the third year of their honeymoon. Mrs. Drouét is an exceptionally charming woman, and since her marriage has appeared a few times on the stage with success.

Mr. Drouét, who is just thirty, is an easy and graceful actor, and an extremely versatile one as well, his repertoire ranging from young lovers to *Svengali*. He has written several plays, in one of which, "*Doris*," he recently appeared at the Murray Hill, where he heads Mr. Donnelly's clever stock company. Early last fall David Belasco endeavored to secure him for the part of *Bernard Dufrène*, the leading man's rôle in "*Zaza*," but after reading the play Mr. Drouét decided that he would not care to identify himself for what must inevitably be a long run with a character of such caddish predilections.



ALICE JOHNSON, WITH DELLA FOX IN THE MUSICAL COMEDY "*THE LITTLE HOST*."

From a photograph by Schloss, New York.

Although Mr. Stevenson succeeds admirably in keeping this trait in the background, it is rumored that he is anxious to be rid of the impersonation and go back to his business, which is connected with the wine trade.

THE MODERN SYSTEM OF GROOVES.

Joseph Wheelock, Jr., who now plays in the Empire company the parts that used to fall