

THE HOTELS OF NEW YORK.

BY ROBERT STEWART.

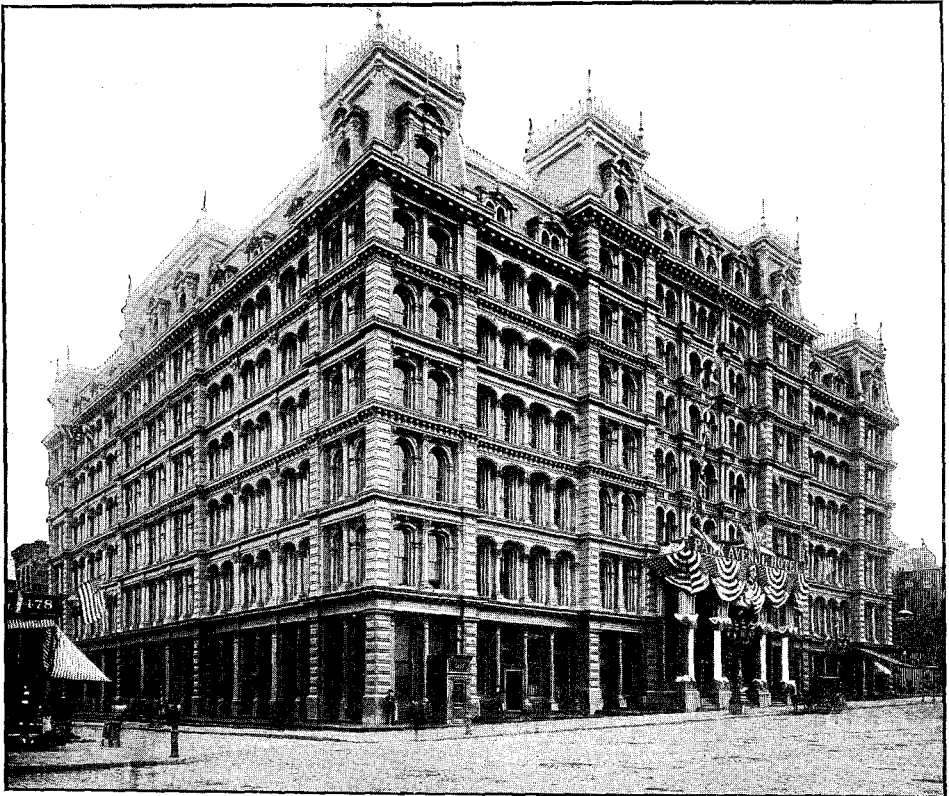
THE GREAT HOSTELRIES THAT ARE SO MARKED A FEATURE OF THE METROPOLIS, ARCHITECTURALLY AND SOCIALLY—VARIED PHASES OF HOTEL LIFE, FROM THE CORINTHIAN SPLENDOR OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA TO THE SPARTAN ECONOMY OF THE MILLS.

AT THE
ENTRANCE
OF THE
HOLLAND
HOUSE.



“A VISITOR from New Zealand,” to paraphrase Lord Macaulay’s celebrated phrase, who should take his stand upon the arch of the Brooklyn Bridge, and view the brick and mortar wilderness of New York, could hardly fail to discover most of the hostelries I am going to mention by their mere size and towering stories.

“You Americans,” one can fancy the sarcastic foreigner remarking, with a supercilious twirl of his mustache, “are forever preaching your ridiculous doctrine of equality; and yet I am hardly



THE PARK AVENUE HOTEL, PARK AVENUE AND THIRTY FOURTH STREET.

From a photograph by R. F. Turnbull.

landed in your city before I see the palaces of your plutocrats looming gorgeously ahead of me."

"Ah, yes, my dear sir, those are palaces, indeed, I grant you," says his smirking cicerone, "but they are palaces for the people—for the people who can pay, that is—and are as free to you and me, who have the

Trinity Church steeple, to get a view of the town, they could look over the roofs of most of them, and, on a clear day, see the circus tent on the green hill top where the Fifth Avenue now stands. Fifty years ago that was, and now all the big new hotels, with bedrooms ever so much higher than the steeple window, have deserted Broad-



THE HOTEL IMPERIAL, BROADWAY AND THIRTY SECOND STREET.

price, as—what shall I say? As a most pleasing and invigorating native stimulant known as a 'Manhattan,' to which I hope to have the pleasure of introducing you the moment we get off this wearisome long bridge and arrive at the Astor House in Broadway."

Broadway used to be *the* street for hotels, and when our fathers climbed up

way, and planted their vast buildings in Fifth Avenue, and in our dear American Belgravia, the "upper west side."

There is a way, I believe, practised by certain visitors and young gentlemen about town, of doing the New York hotels, which is easily and joyously accomplished by hiring a hansom cab and stopping at each of them in turn. But as

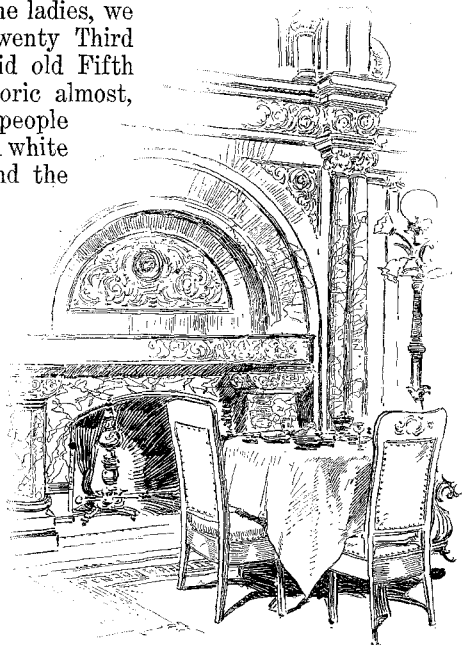


THE MURRAY HILL HOTEL, PARK AVENUE AND FORTIETH STREET.

From a photograph by R. F. Turnbull.

we, I trust, are sedate and orderly persons, and moreover, as we expect, I hope, to see something of the ladies, we will avoid all masculine shrines, below Twenty Third Street, at least, and go at once to the staid old Fifth Avenue, because it is still good, and historic almost, and has entertained more distinguished people than any hotel standing. Look at that plain white marble façade facing Madison Square, and the long straight corridor within. It has been the headquarters of the Republican party for years, and hundreds of statesmen and warriors, General Sherman and Mr. Platt among the rest, have made history there, and smoked and chatted and toddled off to bed up the stairs, opposite the desk.

The Hoffman House, built a good many years afterwards on the block above, tops it, and has always been favored by politicians of the Democratic persuasion, because, I suppose, they could be near their friends and antagonists. This hotel, a dozen years ago, was noted for the expensive-ness of its decorations and appointments, and contained a huge bar filled with the costliest objects of art. Bouguereau's noble painting of the "Satyr and the



IN THE HOTEL NETHERLAND.

Nymphs" hung there, and ladies used to be permitted to walk through and admire it. The great bar is turned into a billiard parlor now, and the house, I believe, has become more of a commercial one.

Do you like a table d'hôte, by the by,

operated on the plan of Mr. Mills' justly celebrated hotel in Bleecker Street.

Still, we can go in and sit about for the price of a cigarette, or for nothing at all, for that matter; and I hope my New Zealander will be brought here first, be-



THE SAVOY HOTEL, FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY NINTH STREET.

From a copyrighted photograph by J. S. Johnston, New York.

or just to order what you choose?" They don't serve a table d'hôte at the Waldorf-Astoria, but if there is any other mortal thing a guest can ask for and not get it, may I be charged double for the next meal I pay for there; and that will be penalty enough. The Waldorf is not intended to be an inexpensive establishment, and makes no pretense of being

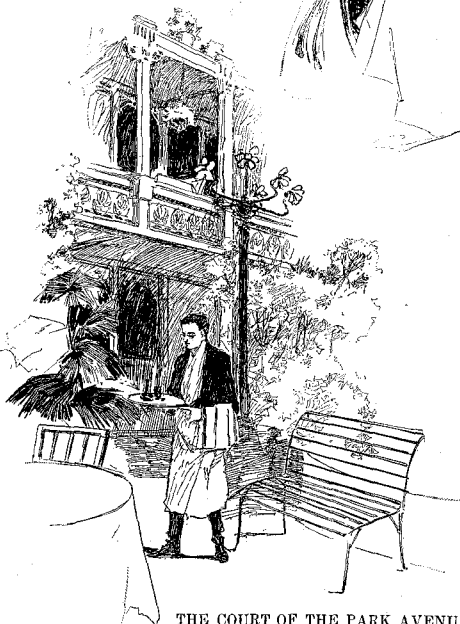
cause in its way the place is *sui generis*, in spite of the fact that most of the newer hotels are modeled after it.

The Waldorf-Astoria, as you doubtless know, occupies a whole block on the west side of Fifth Avenue, on the rise of Murray Hill, and extends for hundreds of feet into the side streets. Its vast kitchens, and wine cellars, and throbbing engine

rooms, are a world in themselves, and on the ground floor, the corridors and ladies' parlors, and smoking rooms, and cafés and diningrooms, with music, and crowds, and chatter, present to the student of contemporary manners an interesting and ever changing kaleidoscope. A too conscientious art may insist, indeed, that it is over florid in treatment and inharmonious in structure—that it is an ambiguous combination of a First Empire palace and a summer hotel. Its furniture and decorations are certainly reminiscent of that most pompous period of French supremacy; its corridors are suggestive of Saratoga. As you stand about the great crowded halls and parlors, you have a presentiment (which you are well aware is grotesquely impossible) that the clerks behind the office desks will presently march out and "introduce everybody all round."



A STAIRWAY IN THE SAVOY.



THE COURT OF THE PARK AVENUE.

THE PALM ROOM OF
THE IMPERIAL.

Nevertheless, this air of hilarity, I hasten to remark, is tempered by the rarefied atmosphere of functions, and you are instinctively made aware that however hospitable the restaurant is, the parlors above may be the reverse of accessible. Gentlemen apparently respond to this appeal by donning evening clothes, and most of the ladies appear as if they were going to a party. The young women arrayed along the Thirty Fourth Street corridor wear a more or less conscious attitude of expecting you to ask them to dance, and their attendant parents view the frivolous scene with that lenient worldliness with which they deposit a five franc piece on the roulette tables at Monte Carlo. At home it would be shocking, but in frivolous New York they are here for a good time and mean to have it.

This impression, I say, of subdued revelry, of champagne diluted with seltzer water, comes back to me, when I try to evoke a taste of New York hotel life, as

background, but rather to give as illuminating a notion as possible of the striking features of these great New York hostelries.



THE HOTEL MARIE ANTOINETTE, BROADWAY AND SIXTY SIXTH STREET.

From a photograph by Pach, New York.

the most permeating flavor left upon a palate too often irritated, perhaps, to be responsive. But I am reminded that, however temptingly pictorial the subject may be, it is not within my province to sketch the effect of hotels on the human

Farther down Fifth Avenue, on the corner of Thirtieth Street, is the Holland House; above, surrounding the open space where this fashionable thoroughfare widens and dips into Central Park, are the Plaza, the Netherland, and the Savoy



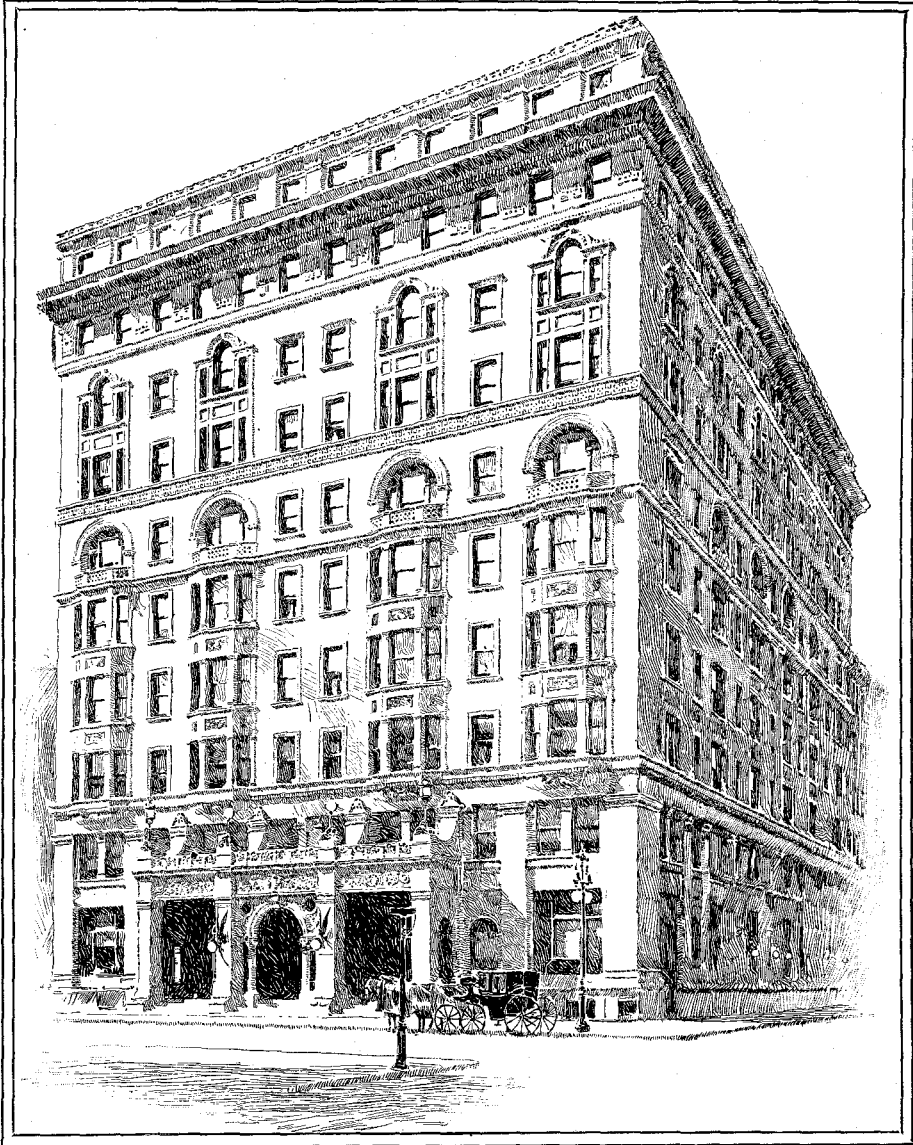
THE ST. ANDREW'S HOTEL, BROADWAY AND SEVENTY SECOND STREET.



THE PLAZA HOTEL, FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY NINTH STREET.

Hotels; on the corner of Madison Avenue and Forty Second Street is the Manhattan; and at Park Avenue and Fortieth Street the Murray Hill. These are all very big little brothers to the Waldorf,

Upper Fifth Avenue has not as yet been invaded by the builders of great hotels, but on the west side of Central Park there are several new and immense hostleries which in every way rival, I am



THE HOLLAND HOUSE, FIFTH AVENUE AND THIRTIETH STREET.

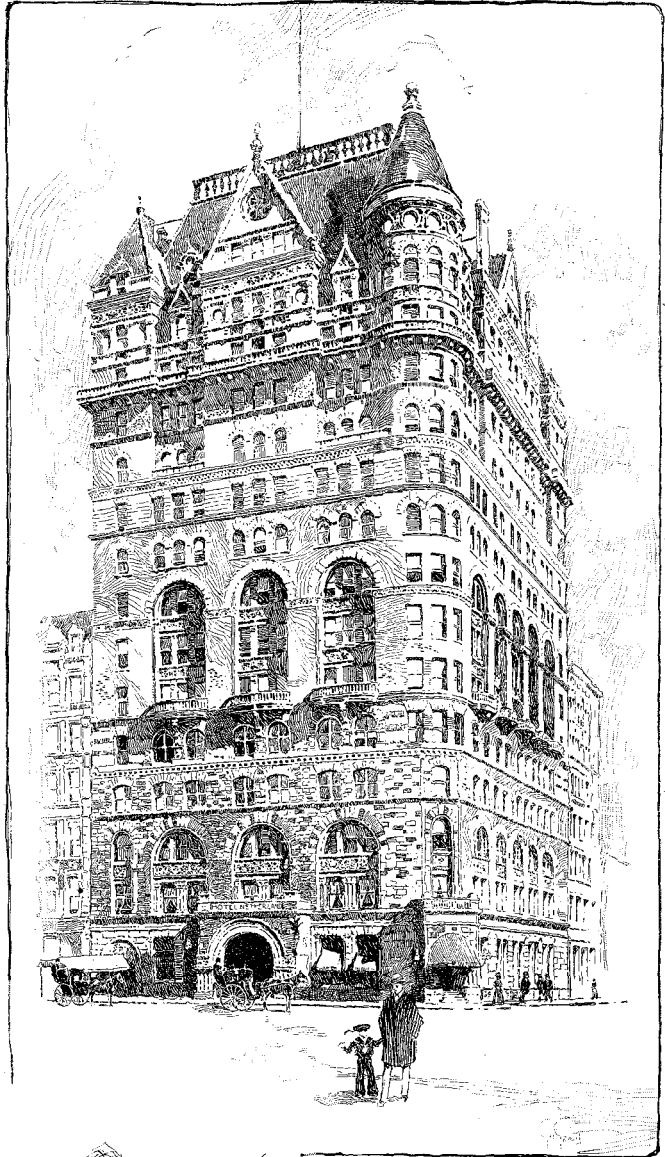
and done "regardless of expense," as the advertisements say, though they lack the peculiar social, show dining feature which makes the Waldorf so fascinating and beautiful. They are simply very fine and huge and lofty and decidedly expensive places in which to eat and sleep and lounge.

told, their down town neighbors. The Majestic, at Seventy Second Street and the Park, is certainly big enough to quarter a regiment, and on the Boulevard are the St. Andrews, the Marie Antoinette, and several others. The Majestic was the first hotel to inaugurate a roof garden, which has been so delightful a feature of

the Waldorf for the past two years, and where they have music and light refreshments and a wondrous, strange view of the city's myriad lights twinkling below in the darkness.

The most recent departure in hotels is the big combination hotel and apartment house. There are a number of these scattered about the town, and they are arranged for both bachelors and families. You have your suite of rooms by the year, furnish it yourself, and either take your meals, at so much a week, in the hotel diningroom, which is exclusively for the guests, or live out, as you choose.

For a small family, it is much less expensive



THE HOTEL NETHERLAND, FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY NINTH STREET.



IN THE FIFTH AVENUE.

than hiring the same number of rooms at an ordinary hotel, and you enjoy the felicity of having your own Lares and Penates about you. Light, heat, and attendance are included in the rent of the apartment.

Speaking of the apartment hotels leads me to refer to a peculiar characteristic of American hotel life—its substitu-

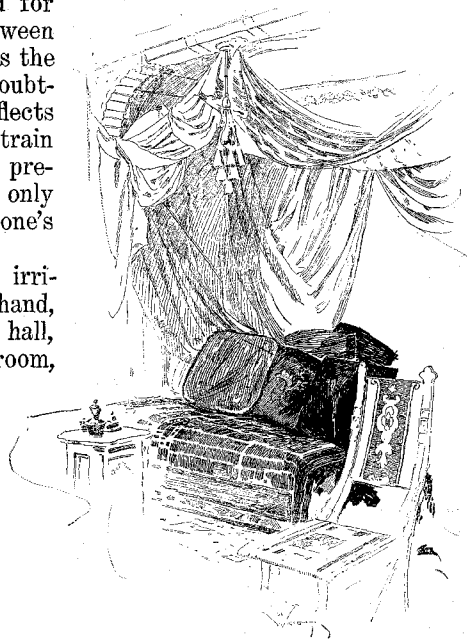


THE WALDORF-ASTORIA, FIFTH AVENUE AND THIRTY FOURTH STREET.

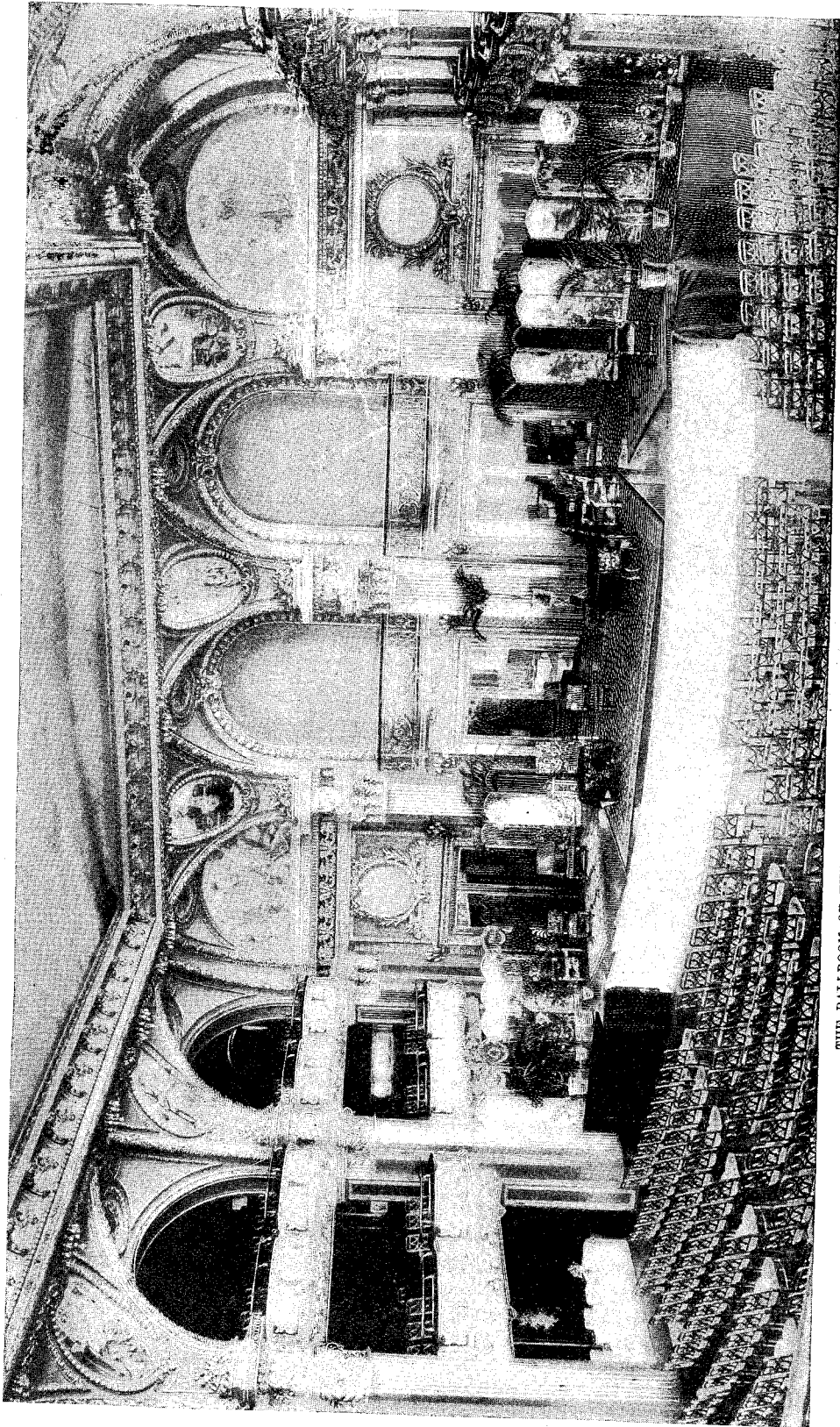
tion for home life. This is the one social lesson London has learned of New York, and for the past few seasons it has become quite a fad for families there to spend a few weeks between seasons at the Cecil or the Savoy. With us the custom, after a period of decadence, is undoubtedly again on the increase, and when one reflects on the cares of big country houses, and the strain of entertaining, one doesn't wonder people prefer wintering in establishments where the only worry in existence consists in ordering one's meals.

Think of it! You arrive tired, dusty, irritable. Your bag is whisked out of your hand, and you are conducted through a brilliant hall, with a dazzling glimpse of the diningroom, sparkling with glass and china, suggestive of all the good things imaginable, to the lift. You enter. The boy with your bag enters, too. Presto! You find yourself in a bijou of a suite, with your trunks awaiting you, with a bed which simply beseeches you to repose on it, and with a porcelain tiled bathroom all your own. You press one button in the wall; electric lights flash up. You press another; a maid or valet, as the case is, knocks to un-

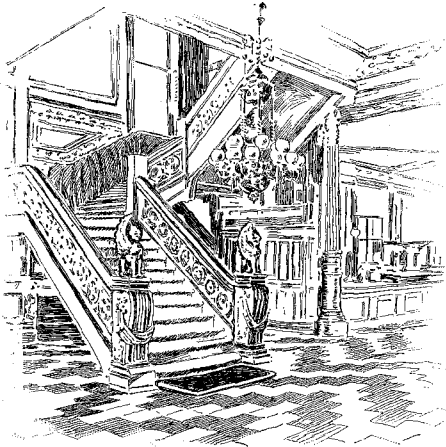
pack your luggage and help you to dress. You press a third; a hall-



IN THE TURKISH ROOM OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA.



THE BALLROOM OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA, ARRANGED FOR AN ENTERTAINMENT.
From a photograph—Copyrighted by "The American Architect," Boston.



STAIRWAY IN THE MURRAY HILL.

boy appears, like the slave of Aladdin's lamp, to execute any possible command monsieur may issue, from fetching a glass of iced water to ordering a banquet served up to you. In the little hall outside your parlor is a telephone connecting you with the office, and I suppose one day's list of the requests transmitted over these instruments, in any of our large hotels, would make a marvelous catalogue of the multiplied wants this luxurious life has generated.

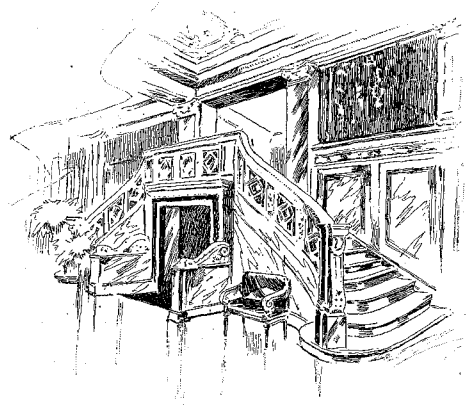
Do you wonder, I say, that people like to live in such places, or that the women refuse to accept the vexations of house-keeping? It may be a pampered, false, artificial way of life; but this is not a moral treatise, but a statement of facts, and I humbly admit that if I were very rich, and didn't know how to manage a great establishment, or were tired of maintaining one, I should go straight to such a hotel, where I could live just as I chose, where I could stay as long as I liked or be off at a moment's notice, and where the key in my pocket was the open sesame to every material pleasure.



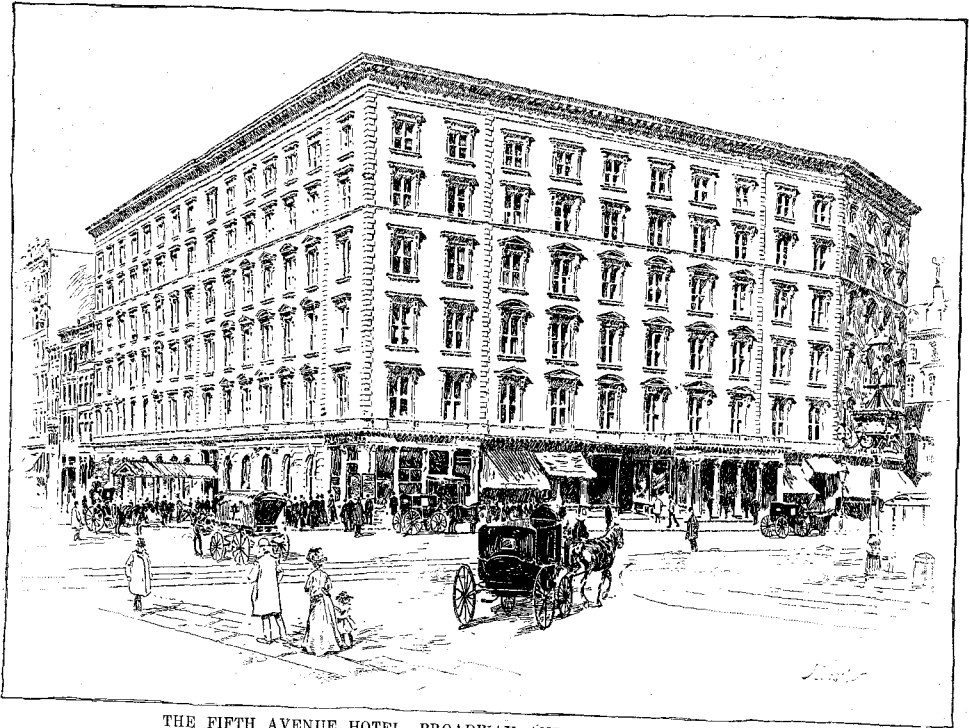
OAK ROOM IN THE MARIE ANTOINETTE.

But one of the most interesting hotels in New York is the establishment owned by Mr. Mills, which I have casually mentioned already. It is situated in Bleecker Street, and just west of South Fifth Avenue, where De Pauw Row, so dear to old New Yorkers, used to present its drab front to the sad, dreary old mansions opposite; so that, aside from being big, it has a morganatic claim, so to speak, to be introduced along with its aristocratic relations. It is a man's hotel, and I have forgotten how many the great building will accommodate or the number of poor wretches who daily meal there for a pittance. My recollection is, however, that gentlemen can dine, sleep, and breakfast for fifty cents a day, and that they serve

a sufficiently sustaining dinner for fifteen cents. Rooms, except the corner ones, are only divided by partitions, like a lodging house, and the floors are cement, but the place, when I inspected it, was scrupulously neat, and light and well ventilated, and the beds looked comfortable. Each guest is provided, on registering, with a locker and key, in which to deposit his "valuables," and it is a droll sight to see forty or fifty of them making their artless toilets, performing



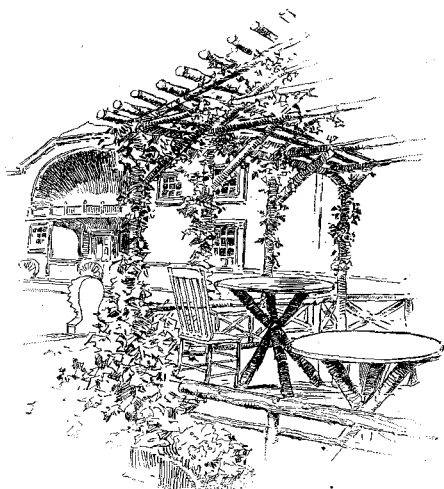
STAIRWAY IN THE MANHATTAN.



THE FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL, BROADWAY AND TWENTY THIRD STREET.



THE HOFFMAN HOUSE, BROADWAY AND TWENTY FIFTH STREET.



THE ROOF GARDEN ABOVE THE HOTEL MAJESTIC.

their ablutions and arranging their hair, before these lockers in the wash room.

Nevertheless, it was a noble deed in him who erected it. It saves many a homeless, broken man from the horrors of the Bowery lodging pens, and, singularly enough, it is one of the best paying hotels in town.

Personally, I shouldn't care to stop there, and a diet of corned beef and cabbage would give me dypsepsia confoundedly, but really I don't know of a better way to give a stranger an adequate idea of New York life than to take him first to the Waldorf and afterwards to the Mills.

As I write, the clock is chiming midnight, and out of my window, in one of the apartments I have referred to, I can see across the dark, shining city street, blazing with lights and showy with flags in welcome of the great admiral whose triumphant warship is even now in home harbor, the enormous hive of fashion of which we were recently talking. Hark how the cabs and carriages rattle up to it,



THE HOTEL MAJESTIC, CENTRAL PARK WEST AND SEVENTY SECOND STREET.

now they are laughing and feasting luxuriously within. Society is gathering about it to see the parade, which will have marched into history ere these words

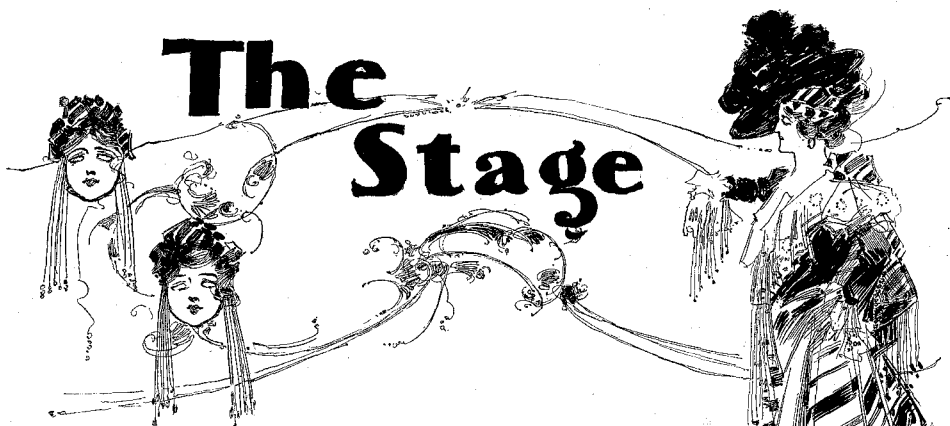
rush past, and vice hovers, and hunger begs, and laborers reel to squalid garrets, and the night seems low and dark, hundreds of poor weary fellows are turning



THE MANHATTAN HOTEL, MADISON AVENUE AND FORTY SECOND STREET.
From a photograph—Copyrighted by "The American Architect," Boston.

are printed, and the rest of the world has followed it there, too. And on the other side, away down below me, underneath all that light and bright gaiety, where Italians hive, and hucksters shout, and trains

into those other bare, clean, lonely cells, and thanking God, perhaps, for the luxury of them. *Vae victis!* Let us say our prayers tonight, friends, humbly, thankfully, penitently.



THE CAREER OF IRVING.

Transatlantic voyagers, bound for Southampton or London, hear much of the Lizard Light as they approach the English coast. Those among them theatrically inclined may like to be reminded that it was at Helston, near the Lizard Point, that a good portion of the boyhood of Henry Irving was spent. This was the home of his mother's sister, Sarah Behenna, who had married a Cornish miner, one Captain Isaac Penberthy. Irving himself—or, to give him his true name, John Henry Brodribb—was born in Somerset, in the little town of Keinton, in 1838. The Brodribb family were not particularly well to do, and when Henry was fourteen, and had spent three years at Dr. Pinch's school in London, he was obliged to take a clerkship with a publishing concern.



This was the house of Thacker, with a branch in Bombay, India, the firm that brought out Kipling's early work. Young Brodribb, who was of a studious turn of mind, enjoyed the literary atmosphere of the place; but he loved the theater even more than books, and a residence in London meant to him, more than anything else, a chance to see a play now and again. Thus it came about that when, at seventeen, his employers offered him promotion in the shape of a position in their India house, he declined to be tempted from the project that had already shaped itself in his mind—to become, by hook or crook, an actor himself. It was to enter a provincial theater, in Sunderland, two years later, that he gave up business for the stage, and up hill work he found it for a good long time after the start.

During one of these engagements he was hissed regularly every night, not on his own account, but because he had taken the place of an actor who was more popular with the public than with the management, and the public made young Brodribb the scapegoat on which to vent their displeasure at his predecessor's dismissal.

For nine years Irving—which he had chosen as a stage name, and has since legally made his own—played in the provinces with varying success. In 1866 he first realized his ambition of an appearance in London. It was while he was acting there the next year in Henry J. Byron's "Dearer Than Life," as *Bob Gassit*, a crook, that Charles Dickens saw him and remarked, "If that young man does not some day come out as a great actor, I am no judge of art." Unhappily Dickens did not live to see his prophecy realized, for it was not until November 25, 1871—a year after the novelist's death—that Irving's name was