

The Book Table

Edited by EDMUND PEARSON

"All Right for a Visit, Maybe."

WHEN I came into my office that morning, a woman and a boy were already there. The woman was determined and irritated. The boy was merely sleepy; he was about ten years old. It soon appeared that she had not come to see me, but the man who shared my office. She was a distant relative, or a friend of the family, and this was her first sight of New York and of the Atlantic coast. Her method of getting her first impression of America's largest city was as follows: She had driven her car all night, and arrived on Manhattan Island at 3:30 A.M., Eastern Standard Time. This was half an hour before dawn, and, as the month was June, it might have been a very good way to get a first impression and to see a wonderful sight—the skyscrapers of New York in the early morning twilight, not less wonderful and hardly less beautiful than that other great spectacle, "While Ilion like a mist rose into towers."

But she had not come to see beauty, nor anything good nor true. She had come from a land of virtue, or so she said, and she had only scornful eyes for Sodom and Gomorrah. This was the home of all that was wicked in American life, and the vials of her wrath were full. Without any breakfast, and therefore in no amiable mood, she had driven her car up and down the lonely streets for an hour or two, disapproving everything she saw. At about six o'clock she came to the building where my office-mate and I work, and sat on the front steps for three mortal hours, fuming at the lazy New Yorkers. When the doors were opened at last, she came inside in a high, old temper. While she waited for her kinsman she let me know her ideas about New York.

Was this her first visit? I asked it in a painfully cheerful manner that is often mine in the morning. Yes, it was, thank God, and it would be her last. That very night she would shake the dust off her Buick, and set out again, like great Orion, sloping slowly to the West. But a week, and she would be once more in the own land of the Almighty; in the wide open spaces; out where the hand-clasp is a little warmer, where goodness abounds. I asked her, by the way, if she were aware that the author of "Out Where the West Begins" now lives in

New York. She replied shortly that she was not, and that he did not come from the right part of the West, anyhow. She would not allow New York even as much as would the original author of the ancient saying that it is "All right for a short visit, maybe, but I wouldn't live there—no, no, not if they'd give me the place!"

I could not offer to give her the place, but to keep her mind off her sufferings and to give her the benefit of a warning I related a little story from my own experience. A dozen or fourteen years before some one had suggested that I ought to come to New York to work, and I had made the usual reply by asking what would compensate me for the agony of living in New York. I made a meal of my own words with unusual promptness, for within a fortnight I had agreed to come, and since then had spent nine or ten years living, not in the country round about, but on the actual and wicked island of Manhattan itself. Now, so lost was I to righteousness, as it is understood elsewhere, that nothing could induce me to move. This made no impression. I could see that in her own mind was the thought that it was only natural to find the infernal regions inhabited by fallen angels.

The metropolis is ever in disrepute. Probably the country folk outside Babylon plumed themselves on their good sense and good conduct for not living in the city. There is a tale of two old *bourgeois* gentlemen in a village in southern France who, fifty years earlier, had spent four days in Paris. To the end of their lives their fellow-villagers looked upon them as delightfully wicked, but hopelessly corrupt. Any opinion advanced by either of them met the reply, "Oh, you old rogue—you have been in Paris!" Doubtless there are places in New York where one can spend money fairly foolishly; pay fifty dollars, as once was said, for the privilege of eating bad food and having somebody hit you over the head with a wooden clatter-clatter. Doubtless, also, these places derive their most enthusiastic support from centers of virtue farther west or east or south.

One of the foci of lunacy in New York is Greenwich Village, and its most idiotic manifestations are kept up by and for outsiders. The Village is also a place where many people can and do live sim-

Save Your Eyes.

No longer need you suffer the torture of eyestrain! No longer need your mind be robbed of its powers of concentration, occasioned by strain and tension, resulting from wrong posture. Here is a new comfort with complete body relaxation.

Dr. Farrington's Portable Lap Table—Adjustable To Any Position



Sit Right—Read Right—Feel Right

The Farrington fills a long felt need. It holds heavy books, magazines, reading matter, typewriter, writing, drawing materials, etc., at scientifically correct angle to the line of vision.

Your Brain Acts Best When Your Body Rests

This means keener concentration, with increased comfort and enjoyment, greater mental and physical energies. Use the "Farrington" for reading, writing, drawing, sewing, eating, playing cards, etc. Enjoy complete bodily relaxation. Conserve and prolong the life of your eyes. Especially valuable to students and helpful when traveling.

Ideal for Children

Don't let your child hump! It's dangerous! Eyestrain, distorted organs, curved spine and retardation of normal development results. The Farrington compels correct posture.

Practical Gift for All Ages

Usable in so many ways, it will give you many years of joyful service. Beautifully finished. Light weight (less than 48 ozs.) sturdily constructed, portable, folds to 1 inch. Size 12x18 inches. A handsome piece of useful furniture.

Indispensable to Invalids



Used with detachable metal legs for **Reading in Bed** by sick, invalid or crippled patient in home, hospital or sanitarium. Used on beach or in camp for eating, cards, etc.

Styles and Prices

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---|
| 1. Natural Finish | \$6.50 | Table and legs pack easily in suitcase. |
| 2. Walnut Finish | 7.50 | |
| 3. Mahogany Finish | 7.50 | |
| 5. Genuine Walnut | 9.50 | |
| 6. Genuine Mahogany | 9.50 | |

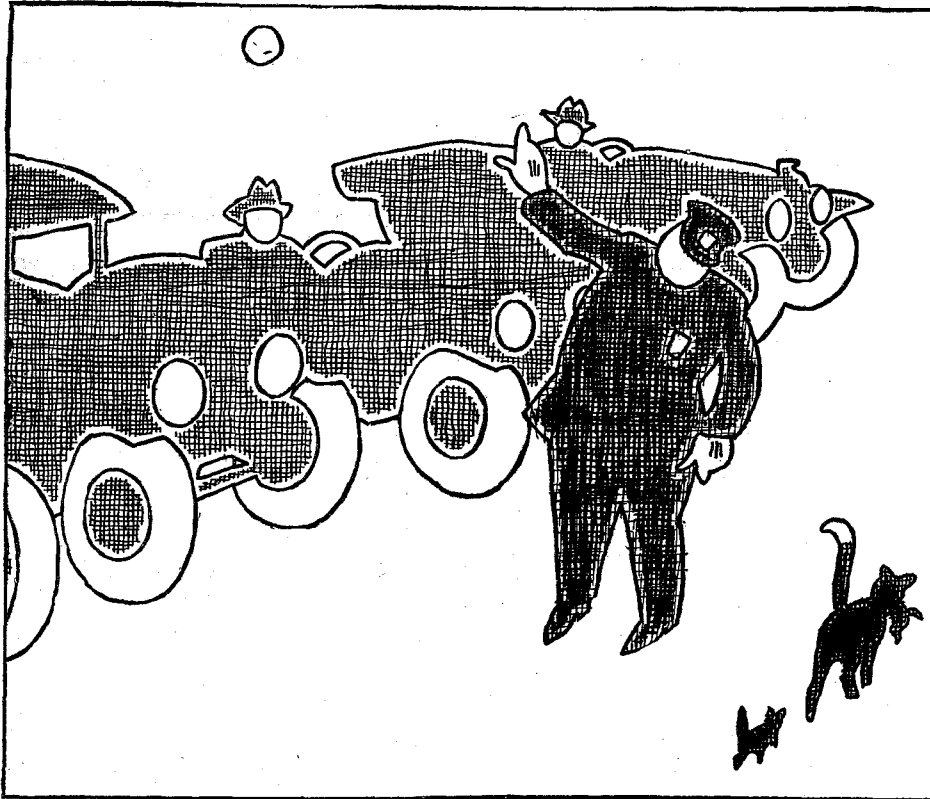
Note: Special detachable legs shown above \$1.00 extra

Order Now on 5 Days' Trial

Just tell us the style desired. Your "Farrington" will be shipped promptly, prepaid. Use it for 5 days. If you're not delighted, we'll refund your money. Just enclose your check or instruct us to ship C. O. D.



The Farrington Company
21 W. Elm St.
Dept. O.4.
Chicago
Illinois



Courtesy Macy-Masius, Publishers

That's New York!

Johan Bull

ply, quietly, and happily. Frigidity of the heart is frequently attributed to New Yorkers. Why, you don't even know your next-door neighbor, says the shocked and motherly soul. The New Yorker is placid about this; he knows the wisdom of picking his own friends and acquaintances, instead of having them thrust upon him by accidents of neighborhood.

To the dweller in any great city it is a commonplace that he may live in seclusion if he likes and be much less the goldfish in the bowl than is the inhabitant of the small town. The fiction of the wild riot of city life still persists. A

year ago a dozen men came to New York, one night, to take dinner with some former fellow-townsmen. They were all natives of a small city three hundred miles away. By eleven o'clock the party had diminished in number by at least half, as the thought of business next day or mere physical weariness sent one after another off to bed. But five or six resolute spirits remained. They were determined to see something of this night life about which so much is said and written. They wished to go to the Midnight Follies, and they appealed to the two New Yorkers for guidance. These two were sure it could be ar-

ranged, and they would be glad to lead the expedition. They seemed a little foggy about it, however—a fact which the visitors remarked upon. But they would soon set that right, and one of them strolled over and asked the doorman of the club where he could get tickets for the Midnight Follies. The doorman's smile was full of pity, as he looked at this New Yorker.

"Why, there haven't been any Midnight Follies, sir, for over two years."

That was New York, and that was as much New York as the hullabaloo emanating at that moment from the throats of gentlemen from Detroit, Boise, and Spokane enjoying themselves at Texas Guinan's. Mr. Morris Markey's "That's New York"¹ is an able transcript of many phases of the city's life. There are gunmen in it, and there is the Black Bottom. And there is also the Rev. John Roach Straton and his Child Evangelist, Uldine Utley. There are trials and prize-fights, and there are notable bequests and acts of philanthropy. Mr. Markey writes well; his essays about the city are sophisticated, but not bitter or cynical. Perhaps nothing in it is a more truthful representation of New York than Mr. Bull's drawing, reproduced on this page. For if there are big brutal motor cars, and traffic jams, and heavy-footed cops in New York, so also there is domestic life, calm and rather triumphant. And for it the rest of the noisiness often ceases—as it does for Mother and little Cyril and little Gertrude in Mr. Bull's picture.

¹That's New York! By Morris Markey and Johan Bull. Macy-Masius, New York. \$2.

Fiction

CAPTAIN CAVALIER. By Jackson Gregory. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$2.

In the days when the Spanish still flourished in Lower California there were out-and-out pirates at sea. One shipwrecked crew with a captain who could be masterful over brutes and chivalrous to fair ladies furnishes the romance and peril for this somewhat high-colored tale.

IN THE PATH OF THE STORM. By James R. Franklin. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. \$2.50.

A study of the still primitive mountain life to be found in far-back "coves" of the Virginian Alleghenies. Thoroughly striking and convincing is the character of Lebedy, an ancient and queer but true-hearted woman of the hills, and in a less degree that of her vicious and murderous moonshiner husband, Achilles—pronounced, Mr. Franklin tells us, Atch-i-lees. Generally speaking, the local color and character rendering are good, but the plot is melodramatic to a degree.

THE SON OF THE GRAND EUNUCH. By Charles Pettit. Boni & Liveright, New York. \$3.

A novel of China about thirty years ago. Court customs are explained and satirized,

and a humorous effect is extracted—not without agony—by the familiar Cabell method of hovering on the brink of the naughty. The publishers compare it with "Candide" and with the works of Pierre Louys and Anatole France. It does recall those writers, particularly Anatole France, and makes us realize how well he could do this kind of thing.

RESPECTABILITY. By Bohun Lynch. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. \$2.50.

"Respectability," as a novel by an artist, brings to mind that theme of Havelock Ellis's once developed (with variations) by Carl Van Vechten. "It is hard indeed to think of any artist in design who has been a bad writer. The painter may never write, but when he writes, it would almost seem without an effort, he writes well." There is no doubt that Mr. Lynch writes well, fluently even. He knows how to construct a novel, to balance a sympathetic character against a sanctimonious or hypocritical one, to study various periods and levels of English society. The novel has every virtue except that of being interesting. "Respectability" is more than respectably dull. That this defect is chiefly

attributable to a wrong choice of subject is suggested by the genuinely entertaining chapter which describes the portrait exhibition held by St. John Orgrave.

SLAG. By John McIntyre. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. \$2.

Slag is the refuse of the melting-pot. Mr. McIntyre's strong, swift, and tragic story is of a group of characters, evil or pitiable, who are part of the human slag of a great city. It deals with these forlorn and fated people as starkly as do the much-praised Russian realists with the dregs of their Russian villages and towns, and it is, for most Americans, better and more wholesome reading. Its artistry is not diluted by translation, and one does not become uselessly miserable over types and conditions difficult wholly to understand. There is no drag in the telling, no fog of futility in which the writer seems to grope. The tragedy is clear-cut and meaningful, such a thing as happens often in our own imperfectly civilized civilization among our recently transplanted alien folk, bad or good. Poor Cochack, with his twisted ideals and his adored and oddly companioned twin champions of the poor, St. Francis and