

FINDING HOMES HERE.

Rises from Penury to Affluence in Gold and Peace.

By eastern ancestry might easily believe he was in the Orient. The signs on the street corners read Washington-st., but the inhabitants of its dingy tenement houses know the place as the village of Ahl-esh-Shemal. The men that one meets talk a language which is as unintelligible as the fantastic inscriptions over their stores. It is the same language which Haroun al Raschid spoke in the golden days of Bagdad. The shop windows are filled with huge Turkish pipes, whose water filled bulbs and serpentine stems would seem able to bring to the smoker all the dreams of the Thousand and One Nights. Here, too, the passerby may see lamps of Damascus brass, both great and small, and lighted by innumerable tiny tapers. They look much as the imagination might picture the lamp of Aladdin.

A block to the west roll the heavy trucks along the North River front, and above the clatter of hoofs and wheels rise the shouts of drivers and stevedores. A block to the east rear the trains of the elevated. A little further eastward are the rushing throngs of Broadway. In the midst of all this tumult and confusion is situated the quiet village of Ahl-esh-Shemal. And yet in spite of a certain calmness which



THE NATURALIZED PEDLER. He has accumulated a small capital and sells his own goods.



THE PUSHCART PEDLER. Now fairly on the road to prosperity.



HIS FIRST STORE.

He has rented a basement and now has a permanent business address.

pervades this Asiatic settlement there seem many evidences of prosperity. One need only stop and watch some little store, for example, where all kinds of handmade lace, each yard of which represents a day's work for some weary woman's fingers, are for sale. Before long a swarthy faced customer will enter, run his hands over a lot of fabric, throw down a few crisp banknotes, and, still talking as if in the heat of anger, he will carry the goods away, wrapped up in a newspaper.

"How is it possible for these people to succeed?" the Caucasian visitor asks himself.

"Do not these people land here abjectly poor?"

"Are they not utterly unfamiliar with the language of their adopted country?"

"How can these uneducated foreigners get employment when native born Americans are unable to find work?"

These are some of the questions one is likely

to ask one's self. But the riddle is easy to solve if one only remembers that the Syrian is a born trader. Even as his forefathers, the Phoenicians, were once the leading merchants of the world, so their descendants, although subjugated a dozen times by various dynasties since those days, still have an inherent genius in driving a bargain. The Syrian immigrant when he comes to America comes to make money. If he does not make it, he goes back. It is sufficient to say that few go back.

To see how the immigrant gets his first start, one needs to visit a novelty store, where the itinerant pedlers stock their packs. Such a place may be found at No. 45 1/2 Washington-st. Joseph Phabo-Urab is its proprietor, and he and his black eyed daughter, whose cheeks are so rosy that one suspects she may have rubbed them with a few grains of henna, are glad to show the goods. The shelves seem to hold every-

thing that human whim or necessity might want. Combs, pins, thread, scarfs, beads and a thousand other things are here for sale.

While the daughter is showing how pretty are the combs by fixing them at different angles in her raven hair, a youth shambles into the store, and clumsily bows to the proprietor. The baggy trousers of the newcomer, his sash, which answers the purpose of an American pair of suspenders, and his rather suspicious glances at other customers, easily show him to be a newly arrived immigrant. Phabo-Urab brings out a medley of wares, and the youth culls them over. After many bickerings, the immigrant hands the storekeeper a twenty dollar bill, and, packing his wares away in a trunklike case, he shambles out with his burden on his shoulder.

"That fellow has just come over from Beirut," says Phabo-Urab. "His brother, who came over here two years ago, sent him the money. That twenty-dollar bill was his brother's, too. Well, he will take that pack and go through the State peddling. He has learned the best routes from his brother, who started the same way. When he comes back here he will have \$50 to \$70 in his pocket. No, no; he never gets tired. He is afraid to get tired. He is afraid he'll get bad luck. The Syrian pedler's motto is: 'He cannot rest who will succeed.'"

Throughout the Syrian quarter most of the olive skinned women are always sewing. Instead of going to a matinee, they sew; instead of reading the papers and magazines in the evening, they sew; instead of playing bridge whist or giving receptions, they keep on sewing. Some of the women sit on the bare floors of their tenement homes and sew with needle and thread. Others, who have learned of the wonders of the sewing machine, save up their earnings and sew with a machine. When a pedler has earned enough to bring his wife or his mother or his sister from the home land, he puts her to work sewing.

Far better and healthier for these working Syrian women are the kimono factories. They are under the management of Syrian merchants who have learned the value of light and air and who understand the American ideas of sanitation. Thus on the fourth floor of No. 108 Greenwich-st. nearly a score of women may be found at work any weekday, sewing kimonos from brilliantly colored fabrics. The room is bright, and occasionally the women hum a native song as they work.

"These women will not work with us a long

time," said Mr. Machsoud, of the firm of Lutfy & Machsoud, who are among the largest kimono makers in this country. "As soon as a wife has saved up enough of her earnings, she joins her husband in running a store. And it is no wonder that they welcome this work, for where they earn a dollar here they received only ten cents in Syria. I have known of women and girls working for eight cents a day in that country."

The next stage, where the Syrian and his wife develop from the pedler and the kimono maker to storekeepers, may be seen in half a hundred places in Washington-st. Their name has been painted both in Arabic and English on the window panes. What matter if the English sign looks scraggly. A friendly neighbor a little more Americanized than themselves painted it, and charged them only a quarter. The newly established merchants stock their shelves with lace of various patterns and different widths, which they say was made by hand in Syria and Italy. Some of the more elaborate patterns they sell for fifty cents a yard, and yet they say that it took a poor woman two days to make that amount.

"No, we don't make lace by hand in this country," said the swarthy complexioned proprietor of No. 85 Washington-st. "It would cost too much."

In such stores it is common to find the storekeeper and his wife eating at the end of the counter out of a common dish. When night comes they sleep at the other end of the room. Expenses are kept as near nil as possible.

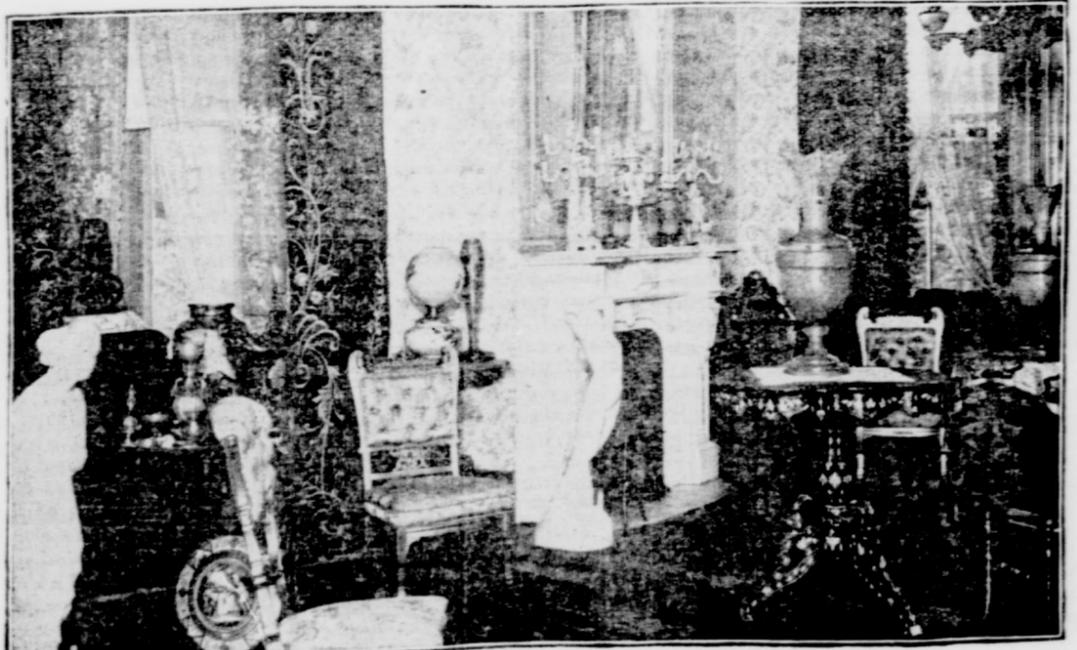
In a couple of years it will be hardly possible to recognize the rudimentary merchants who were wont to sleep and eat in their stores. Syria and its impecuniosities are further in the past. The suspicion which they were wont to have of the American is almost gone. The man takes his luncheon at a café, and in such an establishment as No. 30 Rector-st. you may find him any noon. Here he drinks the fiery arrack, which is to him what the cocktail is to the American. It is the distilled spirit of fermented rice, with enough anise to give it an aromatic flavor. With two or three genial companions he orders a luncheon of laban, or curds of milk; makshie, or minced meat and rice wrapped up in grape leaves or stuffed into a squash gourd, and some grapes for dessert. Then he gives H. Hassey, the proprietor, 10 cents more for a smoke.

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THE SYRIAN MANUFACTURER.

With increased resources he starts a kimono factory in this case and employs recent arrivals from his native land.



THE SYRIAN AS A CAPITALIST.

Parlor of the country home of John Abd-el-Nour at Eltingville, Staten Island.