



GYPSY GIRLS AND BOYS.

THE STRANGE NOMADIC RACE OF GYPSIES.

Have Preserved Their Identity for Many Centuries—How They Live in Hungary.

Along the sidewalk he trundles what seems to be a miniature oil well derrick equipped with wheels, and he alternates the ringing of a bell with a guttural cry that seems more an adjuration to the evil one than an attempt to say:

"Sharpen your knives; sharpen your scissors." He is persistent, and pausing before your window he scans every stitch in the curtains in order to detect some one lurking behind. And should he catch a glimpse of you, even a remote glimpse of which an eye less hawklike would be incapable, he will seek to lure you out with gestures so graceful, despite his cumbrous clothes and shuffling gait, that you cannot resist the impulse to move nearer. Although he repeats his incoherent cry, your mind does not heed it. Instead, it is wrestling with the task of reading that upturned countenance.

Lean, with strong, straight nose, piercing black eyes, made narrow by high cheek bones, and dark skin, whose swarthy tells of tropical ancestry, the face seems to defy your inquiry. And although you shake your head and turn away from the window it is not until the tinkle of his receding bell has been drowned in the roar of the city street that his eyes cease to haunt you.

In like manner until recent years those scientists who attempted to learn the origin of the gypsies were compelled at last to draw the curtains over their futile studies. In their ignorance the Greek and Latin sages said that this fortune telling, horse trading nomad came from Egypt, and so they committed an error still perpetrated in the name "gypsy," which is a contraction of the Latin word *Ægyptius* (Egyptian). Not until Rudiger, in 1782, announced that he had discovered a close relationship between the language of the gypsies and the ancient Sanscrit have students agreed that these homeless outcasts were once the rulers of India.

Something which he has breathed in the atmosphere of the New World has made the American gypsy abandon the precepts of his most remote forefathers. In Europe he kept inseparably aloof from other peoples, and like the Jew, although without any common bond of religion or literature, he preserved from one age to another the characteristics of his race—those wild, restless, almost fantastic peculiarities which many still believe are inspired of Satan.

In this city the gypsy has so diluted his blood by intermarriage that he has ceased to be a nomad, and has become a shopkeeper. In cellars of the East Side one will find him selling tinware, crockery and baskets. There are several cafes in East Houston-st. especially frequented by Hungarian gypsies, some of whom are of pure blooded stock, and may be easily separated from their half-caste companions by their peculiar walk. The gypsy, like the North American Indian, does not turn his feet outward, so that as he walks down a street his footmarks all lie in two parallel lines. Most of the East Side gypsies are from Southeastern Europe, and not a few are found in Hungarian orchestras playing that flighty, rambling, almost

bewildering music which Liszt said "was their only religion."

Gypsy immigrants who still refrain from intermarrying with "Gentiles," and whose blood has still the restlessness of their forefathers, become peddlers, and are to be seen wandering around the streets, carrying baskets of trinkets over their arms. Often they are mistaken for Syrians. Many procure machines for sharpening knives and scissors, and so they journey from door to door. Most of the itinerant cutlers and tinkers in the United States are German, Hungarian and French gypsies.

In country districts the majority of gypsies live in tribes and continue their wandering life, camping here and there as they migrate. Yet they have abandoned many of their Old World ways. Their weddings and funerals are devoid of those weird incantations which characterize these services in their European haunts. When Mother Sibbie Riley was buried the other day at Plainfield, N. J., the ceremony was as simple as that of a humble Christian. Some three hundred members of the Harrison-Cooper-Stanley tribe were present, and many came from the Far West and from England. Mother Sibbie's granddaughter, Posie Harrison, stood by the grave; and although she was soon to rule over the tribe as its queen she wept with the simple grief of a child. Even the country gypsies, however, are gradually abandoning



A GYPSY CHIEF.



A FAMILY GROUP OF GYPSIES.

their nomadic life and are building houses and establishing villages. There are several such gypsy villages in Pennsylvania, as well as the one in the outskirts of Plainfield.

In Europe Hungary is the favorite country for gypsies. The Hungarian government recently announced that energetic measures are to be taken to put an end to the vagabond propensities of the wandering gypsy tribes. Among the many races which make up the population of that heterogeneous geographical expression termed the Austro-Hungarian Empire, certainly the most typical are the Tziganes, or gypsies, as they are called.

Hungary is the home of the Tziganes, in so far as they have any home. In all other European countries they were persecuted for centuries as being emissaries of Satan and enemies of Christianity, but the Hungarians took pity on them and treated the wanderers like lost children. It was in the fifteenth century that they first made their appearance in St. Stephen's kingdom. King Sigismund received them hospitably, and recommended to the charity and pity of the public "these poor wandering people without a home and hounded by every one."

There are now about 150,000 of these Tziganes in Hungary. They may be divided into three classes—those who go bareheaded and barefooted, the wandering gypsies; those who wear headgear and shoes on Sundays, the semi-nomads, and those who always wear hats and shoes, and who have to a certain extent abandoned the nomadic life of their ancestors. The Tziganes of the last named category are the most civilized and are generally musicians who excel in the playing of Hungarian tunes. When the Tziganes arrived in Hungary they were not trained musically, but they soon appropriated Magyar music, and out of it have made a crude and weird art of their own. Their favorite instrument is the *bas alja*, as the violin. Some play the harp, but there is a marked aversion to the piano, merely because it cannot easily be moved about. In Hungary no fête or festival takes place without a Tziganes orchestra. At election time Tziganes bands always head the electoral processions, and no wedding is considered complete without their music for the dance. The Tziganes have become natural musicians, playing from inspiration, and generally being unable to read music. Liszt, who made a study of the Tziganes, says that music is to them a sublime language, a mystic song, which they often make use of instead of conversation, and that they have, in fact, invented a music of their own.

The favorite abode of these strange people is near the Croatian frontier. It is there that the typical Tziganes may best be seen. Their "camps" are always set up at some distance from the nearest town or village, often in close proximity to some forest. The Tziganes huts—for they are nothing more—consist of a single room, unless the owner is extremely well to do, and are generally devoid of furniture. The Tziganes eat and sleep on the bare boards. At all times of the day there is a smouldering fire in the hut, over which hangs a sandstone pot, for the Tziganes has no fixed hour for his meals, but eats whenever he feels hungry. The ordinary bill of fare consists of potatoes, stews, milk and lard. On festive occasions such tidbits are indulged in as hedgehogs, foxes and squirrels. Cats are considered by the Tziganes a princely diet, and they train dogs to hunt hedgehogs and foxes. They have a peculiar manner of cooking foxes. They first place the carcass of the animal in running water for a couple of days, after which it is removed and cooked under hot coals in a hole in the ground.

The Tziganes have a horror of work or restraint of any kind. Even those who have a fixed residence like to roam about when they feel so inclined. So strong is this wandering instinct that they have no word in their lan-