

grabbin' up the basket. "Besides, I don't want any second hand report."  
 "But surely," puts in Miss Ann, "you are not going into such a—"  
 "Why not?" says I. "I begun livin' in one just like it."  
 At that Miss Ann settles back under the robe, shrugs her shoulders into her furs, and waves for me to go ahead.

**H**ALF a dozen kids on the doorstep told me in chorus where I'd find the Tiscotts, and after I've climbed up through four layers of stale cabbage and fried onion smells and felt my way along to the third door left from the top of the stairs, I makes my entrance as the special messenger of the ministerin' angel.

It's the usual family-room tenement scene, such as the slum writers are so fond of describin' with the agony pedal down hard, only there ain't quite so much dirt and rags in evidence as they'd like. There's plenty, though. Also there's a lot of industry on view. Over by the light shaft window is Mrs. Tiscott, pumpin' a sewin' machine like she was entered in a twenty-four-hour endurance race, with a big bundle of raw materials at one side. In front of her is the oldest girl, sewin' buttons onto white goods; while the three younger kids, includin' the four-year-old boy, are spread out around the table in the middle of the room, pickin' nut meat into the dishpan.

What's the use of tellin' how Mrs. Tiscott's stringy hair was bobbed up, or the kind of wrapper she had on? You wouldn't expect her to be sportin' a Sixth-ave. built pompadour, or a lingerie reception gown, would you? And where they don't have Swedish nursery governesses and porcelain tubs, the youngsters are apt not to be so— But maybe you'll relish your nut candy and walnut cake better if we skip some details about the state of the kids' hands. What's the odds where the contractors gets such work done, so long as they can shave their estimates?

The really int'restin' exhibit in this family group, of course, is the bent shouldered, peaked faced girl who has humped herself almost double and is slappin' little pearl buttons on white goods at the rate of twenty a minute. And there's no deception about her being a fine case for Piny Crest. You don't even have to hear that bark of hers to know it.

**I** STANDS there lookin' 'em over for a whole minute before anybody pays any attention to me. Then Mrs. Tiscott glances up and stops her machine.  
 "Who's that?" she sings out. "What do you— Why! Well, of all things, Shorty McCabe, what brings you here?"  
 "I'm playin' errand boy for the kind Miss Colliver," says I, holdin' up the basket.  
 Is there a grand rush my way, and glad cries, and tears of joy? Nothing doing in the thankful hysterics line.

"Oh!" says Mrs. Tiscott. "Well, let's see what it is this time." And she proceeds to dump out Miss Ann's contribution. There's a glass of gooseb'ry bar le duc, another of guava jelly, a little can of pâté de foie gras, and half a dozen lady fingers.  
 "Huh!" says she, shovin' the truck over on the window sill. As she's expressed my sentiments too, I lets it go at that.

"Looks like one of your busy days," says I.  
 "One of 'em," says she with a snort, yankin' some more pieces out of the bundle and slippin' a fresh spool of cotton onto the machine.  
 "What's the job?" says I.  
 "Baby dresses," says she.  
 "Good money in it?" says I.  
 "Oh, sure!" says she. "Forty cents a dozen is good, ain't it?"  
 "What noble merchant prince is so generous to you as all that?" says I.

Mrs. Tiscott, she shoves over the sweater's shop tag so I can read for myself. Curious,—wa'n't it?—but it's the same firm whose name heads the Piny Crest subscription list. It's time to change the subject.

"How's Annie?" says I, lookin' over at her.  
 "Her cough don't seem to get any better," says Mrs. Tiscott. "She's had it since she had to quit work in the gas mantle shop. That's where she got it. The dust, you know."  
 Yes, I knew. "How about Tony?" says I.  
 "Tony!" says she, hard and bitter. "How do I know? He ain't been near us for a month past."  
 "Sends in something of a Saturday, don't he?" says I.

"Would I be lettin' the likes of her—that Miss Colliver—come here if he did," says she, "or workin' my eyes out like this?"  
 "I thought Lizzie was in a store?" says I, noddin' towards the twelve-year-old girl at the nut pickin' table.

"They always lays off half the bundle girls after Christmas," says Mrs. Tiscott. "That's why we don't see Tony regular every payday any more. He had the nerve to claim most of Lizzie's envelope."  
 Then it was my turn to say "Huh!"  
 "Why don't you have him up?" says I.  
 "I'm a-scared," says she. "He's promised to break my head."  
 "Think he would?" says I.  
 "Yes," says she. "He's changed for the worse lately. He'd do it, all right, if I took him to court."

"What if I stood ready to break his, eh?" says I. "Would that hold him?"  
 Say, it wa'n't an elevatin' or cheerful conversation me and Mrs. Tiscott indulged in; but it was more or less to the point. She's some int'rested in the last proposition of mine, and when I adds a few frills about givin' a butcher's order and standin' for a sack of potatoes, she agrees to swear out the summons for Tony, providin' I'll hand it to him and be in court to scare the liver out of him when she talks to the Justice.

"I hate to do it too," says she.  
 "I know," says I; "but no meat or potatoes from me unless you do!"  
 Sounds kind of harsh, don't it? You'd think I had a special grudge against Tony Tiscott too. But say, it's only because I know him and his kind so well. Nothing so peculiar about his case. Lots of them



The Real Int'restin' Exhibit in the Fam'ly Group.

swell coachmen go that way, and in his day Tony has driven for some big people. Him and me got acquainted when he was wearin' the Twombly-Crane livery and drawin' down his sixty-five a month. That wa'n't so long ago, either.  
 But it's hard waitin' hours on the box in cold weather, and they get to boozin'. When they hit it up too free they lose their places. After they've lost too many places they don't get any more. Meantime they've accumulated rheumatism and a family of kids. They've got lazy habits too, and new jobs don't come easy at forty. The next degree is loafin' around home permanent; but they ain't apt to find that so pleasant unless the wife is a good hustler. Most likely she rows it. So they chuck the family and drift off by themselves.

That's the sort of chaps you'll find on the bread lines. But Tony hadn't quite got to that yet. I knew the corner beer joint where he did odd jobs as free lunch carver and window cleaner. Also I knew the line of talk I meant to hand out to him when I got my fingers on his collar.

**W**ELL?" says Miss Ann, when I comes back with the empty basket. "Did you find it an interesting case?"

"Maybe that's the word," says I.  
 "You saw the young woman, did you," says she. "The one who—"  
 "Sure," says I. "She's got it—bad."  
 "Ah!" says Miss Ann, brightenin' up. "And now about that life membership!"  
 "Well," says I, "the Piny Crest proposition is all right, and I'd like to see it started; but the fact is, Miss Colliver, if I should put my name down with all them big people I'd be runnin' out of my class."  
 "You would be—er— Beg pardon," says she. "but I don't think I quite get you?"

I'd suspected she wouldn't. But how was I going to dope out to her clear and straight what's so muddled up in my own head? You know, all about how Annie got her cough, and my feelin's towards the firms that's sweatin' the Tiscotts, from the baby up, and a lot of other things that I can't state.  
 "As I said," goes on Miss Colliver, "I hardly think I understand."  
 "Me either," says I. "My head's just a merry go round of whys and whatfors. But, as far as that fund of yours goes, I don't come in."  
 "Humph!" says she. "That, at least, is quite definite. Home, Hutchins!"

**A**ND there I am left on the curb lookin' foolish. Me, I don't ride back to the studio on any broad-cloth cushions! Serves me right too, I expect. I feels mean and low down all the rest of the day, until I gets some satisfaction by huntin' up Tony and throwin' such a scare into him that he goes out and finds a porter's job and swears by all that's holy he'll take up with the family again.  
 But think of the chance I passed up of breakin' into the high toned philanthropy class!

## THE PRODIGIOUS COST OF GRAND OPERA

By Everard Lyons

**F**IVE million dollars is the price we are paying this winter for the luxury of grand opera. The astonishing thing about this is that five years ago the figure hardly went above the million mark, and New York, practically alone, paid the piper. The sudden and enormous increase, of which Boston, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, and a few other cities now bear a respectable proportion, is significant of widespread interest in operatic art. With every indication that the present growth will be continuous, another five years may find us paying out ten millions or more every season for this delightful form of artistic indulgence. Meanwhile the fact stands out boldly that grand opera has developed into a commercial enterprise of national importance and entirely worthy of serious consideration from an economic viewpoint.

In its commercial aspects, grand opera presents many angles. The astute man of affairs is likely to wonder how many of these millions may find their way into foreign pockets and how this big annual drain on our circulating medium may be circumvented. The far sighted business man will want to be shown how opera, as at present conducted, can be made a profitable enterprise. The business view of the impresario is always darkened by the grave problem of supply and demand in singers.

But for all this the general public cares nothing. The high prices paid the great stars is the only point of common appeal. The relation between top notes and banknotes involves an element of human interest that obscures any consideration of the economic aftermath.

Nevertheless, curiosity aside, this costly star system, for which the public itself is responsible, is the crux of the operatic situation in this country; for so long as the star system prevails and the public remains firm in its worship of this fetish of its own creation, grand opera will never become a national habit in this country, as it is in Europe and South America.

The reason is purely economic. Caruso's annual income would more than cover all the expenses for an entire season of anyone of a dozen respectable German opera houses, from which some of the best singers of the Metropolitan are recruited.

For years it was the settled policy of the Metropolitan Opera Company to engage the world's greatest singers, regardless of cost. When Mr. Hammerstein opened up opposition and showed that some one had been sleeping around 39th-st. and Broadway, the Metropolitan sought to retaliate by engaging anyone and everyone Mr. Hammerstein might want. At that, they left the Manhattan impresario a few choice plums. The result of this extravagance upon the operatic market will be gleaned from the following table, which gives the guaranteed minimum income for the season of the principal stars of the Metropolitan and Manhattan companies.

Caruso.....	\$160,000	Renaud.....	\$40,000
Bonci.....	80,000	Cavallini.....	30,000
Tetrazzini.....	75,000	Destinn.....	30,000
Farrar.....	60,000	Scotti.....	30,000
Garden.....	60,000	Clement.....	25,000
Slezak.....	60,000	Jörn.....	25,000
Gadski.....	50,000	Burrian.....	24,000
Dalmores.....	48,000	Sammarchi.....	24,000
Zenatello.....	42,000	Homer.....	20,000
Fremstad.....	40,000	McCormick.....	20,000

These figures do not represent the amounts these artists make here during a season. They are the minimum sums received by them under their contracts. Caruso, for example, receives two thousand dollars an appearance and is guaranteed eighty performances during the season. If he is not given the opportunity to sing eighty times, he will be paid just the same. Caruso usually finds time during the season to make a number of phonograph records, and his royalties on these bring him in half as much again as his salary. With the expiration of the present season, Caruso's old contract with the Metropolitan expires and he will begin next year under a new contract which guarantees him eighty appearances at twenty-five hundred dollars a performance for the next five years. That means a cool million to Caruso if his voice holds out.

Bonci is one of the most expensive of tenors, as it took a guaranty of eighty performances at one thousand dollars a night to lure him away from Mr. Hammerstein. Bonci sings only the lyric rôles, and in consequence he is paid for a good many more performances than he appears in. Slezak, on the other hand, receives twelve hundred dollars a night and is