

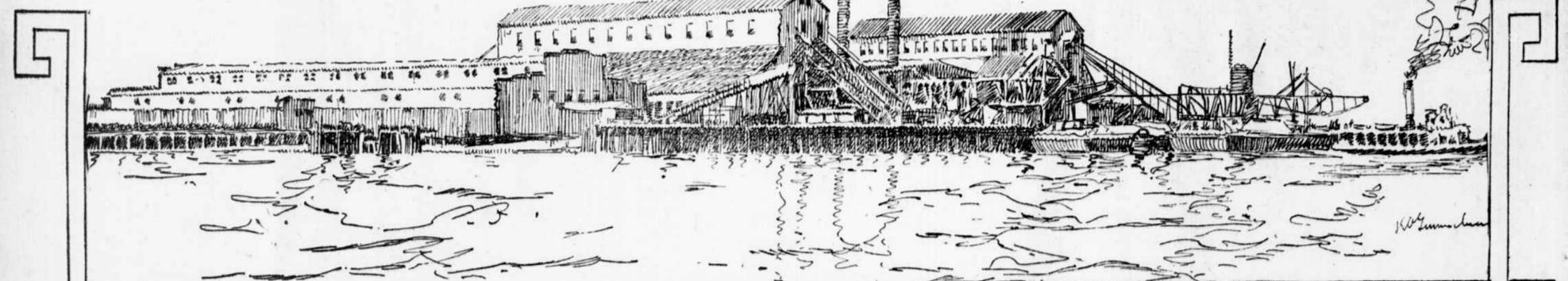
Garbage of New York's Myriad Households Is a Golconda to Those Who Mine It

From the Ash Heap and the Offal Pile Come Materials for Which, Although You Have Once Thrown Them Away, You Later Pay Goodly Sums When They Appear in the Form of Building Materials or Home Utensils.

CAST your bread upon the garbage and it shall return to you after many days—yea, verily, in many ways. Some such garbuling of the Scriptures occurs to the citizen of New York who has been trying to post himself on the merits of the present discussion as to the handling of the city's refuse.

"Why, come to think of it, even the tin washers used to nail on that paper sheathing I spoke of, and your window weights may have come from old tin cans. The idea of a safe in your house is a good one. That owes a tribute to the defunct can also. Burglars find the tin sheets used for the filling a very discouraging proposition. The rubber on the weather strips, the solder on that queer elbow in the conductor pipe, and the glue fastening some of your ornamental woodwork have all danced together on the ash dump."

Thus does a great city turn many an honest penny. "A creative economy is the fuel of magnificence," says Emerson. An important preliminary in the upbuilding of morning and found, after you nibbled it, was one too many; the quarter of a cake that somehow got dry before even the children found it in the back of the cupboard; the scorched potatoes, sent back to the kitchen with your husband's blessing, and the rag end of a roast that the cook forgot to put in the soup kettle, as you ordered. Here they all are, with millions of other household relics of the great city. They are about to suffer, not exactly a "sea change," a Jamaica Bay change, let us say. And they'll return to you, perhaps to your very kitchen, in the form of soap or ammonia to clean the shelves or pans or sinks that they left in greasy disorder.



THE BARREN ISLAND PLANT.

surprised to know that garbage is of any use. They supposed as they carelessly tossed their meat scraps and empty cans into the pail and sent it down the dumb-waiter, in response to the janitor's whistle, that they had seen the end of a bad matter. Not so. Garbage, like the cat of unappreciated fidelity celebrated in song, is quite likely to come back.

Here, alas! is where the careless housewife causes trouble. In spite of courteous requests from accredited officials and discourteous threats shouted up the dumb-waiter shaft by discredited janitors, she will chuck into what the department classifies as garbage (that is, the purely animal and vegetable waste of the kitchen) bottles, rags, papers and tin cans. Even her last season's hat, stripped of its willow plumes, may faintly top off a morning's refuse and escape the vigilant eye of the assorter till its reaches this final place of judgment. If householder and janitor would be careful to observe the department's classification of ashes, rubbish and garbage, city cleaning would be simpler and cheaper. In the garbage proper that reaches Barren Island there is still about 7 per cent of rubbish that has to be assorted and sent to other fields of usefulness.

In what is left there is about 20 per cent fibrous matter, 3 per cent grease and 20 per cent moisture. Practically all but the water is utilized at the Barren Island plant and a fair profit made.

Peradventure, the meat scraps may loom up again in a sweetly scented soap and the empty can as they little foreign restaurant on the East Side and eating their queer, fussed-up, hasty dishes, that Biblical paragon about the returning bread and things is likely to become all too literally true. A word to the wise is sufficient along such unavoy lines.

The disposal of garbage proper, which means the animal and vegetable waste of kitchens and markets, ashes, light refuse and rubbish.

After it has thus passed under the last assorter's eye the garbage is carried by feeders to huge cylinders, called digesters, each holding from eight to ten tons. These steam-tight tanks are sealed by bolted caps, and the contents are cooked about eight hours by steam, introduced at a pressure of about seventy pounds. The mass that comes out looks to a country housewife like apple butter.

Indeed, should you take to prying around among those cute little foreign restaurants on the East Side and eating their queer, fussed-up, hasty dishes, that Biblical paragon about the returning bread and things is likely to become all too literally true. A word to the wise is sufficient along such unavoy lines.

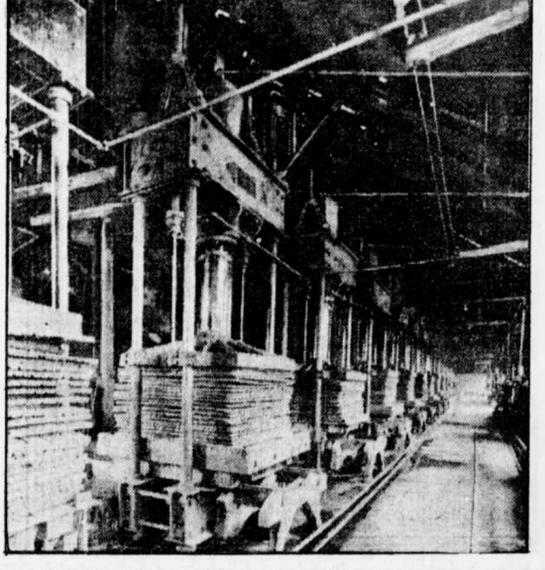
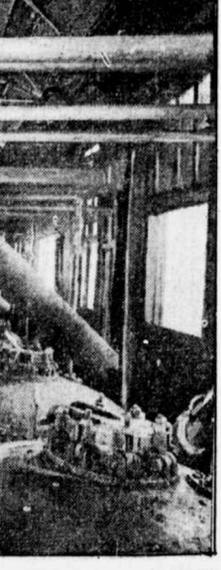
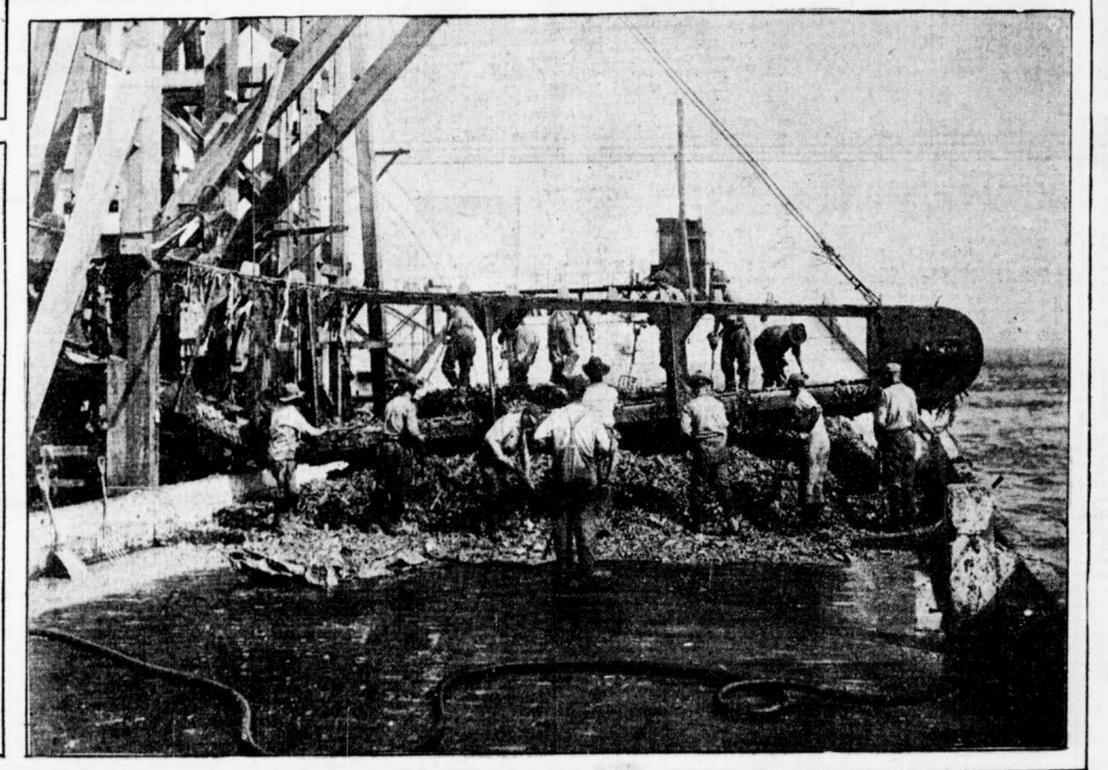
Utilization depends largely on quick handling, for the smell or food waste must be sterilized shortly after receipt owing to the fact that it is so putrescent. The success of the system in this particular is evidenced by a low death rate among the employees who, at Barren Island, daily handle one thousand tons of the stuff.

There are probably few visitors to Jamaica Bay who take the trouble to visit desolate Barren Island, unsavory of reputation. But one who does finds much of interest in those rambling sheds and belching furnaces.

"What do you think of it?" asked the owner. "Garbage!" quoth the friend, laconically. "What do you mean?" gasped the disappointed praise seeker.

Contractors receive the garbage on board their scows at the waterfront dumps and tow it to the island, where it is put through the reduction process. Here are that extra chop you ordered at breakfast the other morning and found, after you nibbled it, was one too many; the quarter of a cake that somehow got dry before even the children found it in the back of the cupboard; the scorched potatoes, sent back to the kitchen with your husband's blessing, and the rag end of a roast that the cook forgot to put in the soup kettle, as you ordered. Here they all are, with millions of other household relics of the great city. They are about to suffer, not exactly a "sea change," a Jamaica Bay change, let us say. And they'll return to you, perhaps to your very kitchen, in the form of soap or ammonia to clean the shelves or pans or sinks that they left in greasy disorder.

Just what I say, garbage!" persisted the friend. "But," he hastily added, "don't feel hurt about it. You don't understand? Well, look. This whole lot of yours is made large. Made of what? Why, some years ago this building site was a swamp. It was filled in with the city's rubbish. Don't look mad, as if you had been imposed upon. Not a bit of it.



UNLOADING A SCOW AT BARREN ISLAND.

from which buttons are punched out which are sold for washers to be used in nailing down building paper. Whatever is left is melted down and used in making asphalt. Often the sheets are used for making filling for the walls of fireproof or burglarproof safes. It is especially valuable for this purpose because of the number of laminations.

NAPHTHA PERCOLATOR IN WHICH THE SECOND STAGE OF GREASE SEPARATION TAKES PLACE.

CHUTE TO DIGESTERS THROUGH WHICH THE MASS IS CARRIED PREPARATORY TO THE COOKING PROCESS.

HYDRAULIC PRESSES THAT SQUEEZE THE GREASE AND MOISTURE FROM THE BURLAP TRAYS.

This is placed in trays, with burlap sides and bottoms, reminding one of the old-fashioned "honey combs" in the beehives of grandfathers' time, only several times larger. These trays are piled on a car and rolled under a hydraulic press, to express the water and grease. It makes one thing of jelly making times in the old farmhouse—partly because it's so different.

we left in the revolving drums after its naphtha bath is practically free from grease. It is now returned to the dryer and thence through a screen, and comes out a flaky mass, like feathers. It is now, after the drying process, useful as a base for high grade fertilizer, because capable of absorbing chemical properties essential for plant life. Some plants need nitrogen, for instance, and others other elements. This vegetable matter is not valuable by itself alone, as it is only a low grade fertilizer. A ready market is found for all this material.

Processes by which gas, electricity, ammonia and other by-products have been produced directly or indirectly from garbage have as far proved only minor features of the system, mainly in the experimental stage.