

CENTRE OF OUR CONTINENT

LONG ACRE SQUARE, WHICH EVERY ONE VISITS.

A Little Patch of Manhattan Where There Are Scores of Theaters, Clubs, Famous Restaurants, Big Hotels, and Crowds as Great by Night as by Day.

In a little book called "A Summer in New York," written six or seven years ago, the author has a young lady from the West write home of an adventure with her city cousin, thus:

"Will took me to a place called Long Acre Square. It is a part of Broadway which looks as if it had been struck by an earthquake, a landslide and a blizzard all at once. We climbed a pile of rocks so high that the automobiles which tried to run us down had to give it up, and then Cousin Will began, like the man who explained the views in the panorama:

"Here you see what in the span of a few brief moons is destined to be to the known world what the Place de la Concorde, Paris, now is to Europe—its centre, its eye, the centre of gaiety, of art, of literature, drama; Occidental civilization in all its moods. In the near future here we shall find transportation unequalled, views unsurpassed, climate glorious, society various, fresh eggs and milk in abundance, theatres, hotels, policy shops, cab stands, waltzes! in rpd and yellow fresh every hour. Here state caravansaries to house an army, temples of Theopis to seat a cityful, repositories of painters' inspirations, of sculptors' dreams, will wall the clifflike sides of the broadening lane we call Broadway."

The author should be—in fact he is—proud to see with what a prophetic under-



GORGEOUS RESTAURANTS FOR LONG PURSES, BUT SOMETHING TO SUIT EVERYBODY.

standing he wrote of Long Acre so few years ago when it was the most hopelessly torn up clutter of a place in New York and lined, for the most part, with ramshackle buildings. If not then, certainly a few years before it was the dreariest place at night to be found on the island of Manhattan.

The whimsically worded forecast of the Acre has more than come true. There are more theatres, hotels, restaurants and clubs in the neighborhood than even were seen by the author's prophetic eye, and if the old Acre is not yet the centre of the world by the general consent of the world it certainly is to America, including Canada and Mexico and most of South America, what the Place de la Concorde is to Europe, the centre of a continent.

Long Acre Square is more than an acre and not square, yet that is its name, beloved by its habitués, and no laws of the State or ordinances of Aldermen can change it. The space to which the name applies that irregular widening of Broadway as that thoroughfare makes its slow crossing of Seventh avenue, where the two combine at Forty-third street, only four blocks in length, and at no point much wider than many broad village streets.

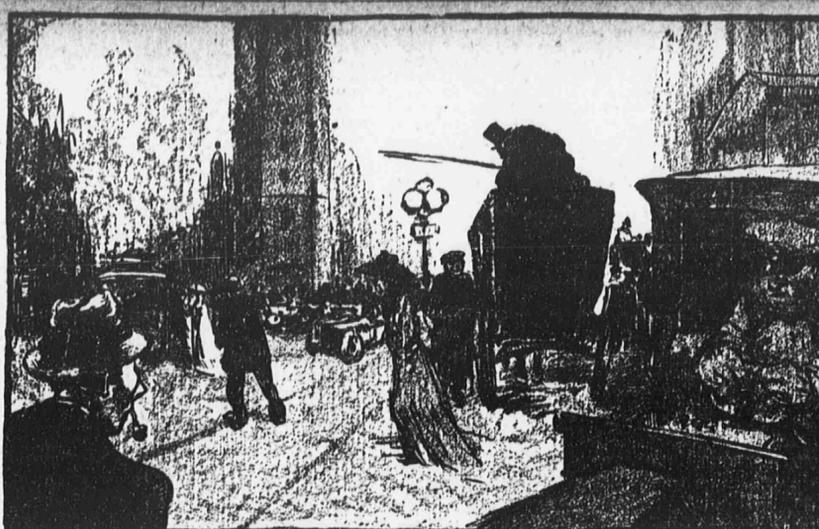
But Long Acre district, as distinguished from the square, is more extensive, beginning at Broadway and Thirty-eighth street and spreading for about half a mile to Fifth avenue on the east and Eighth street on the west. Within that compact little patch of Manhattan there are, to be exact, twenty-one first class theatres, about the same number of clubs, among them some of the finest and most exclusive in the city, America's most famous restaurants, including Delmonico's, Sherry's, Shanley's, Rector's, Churchill's, Harvey's and the restaurants of the Hotel Astor and Knickerbocker.

There are not less than a dozen hotels, such as the Algonquin, Iroquois, Seymour, Royalton, Woodstock, any of which twenty years ago would be observed for its great size and elegance. There are literally hundreds of apartment houses of every grade of excellence, there are artist studios where artists paint and studios where people of no visible means of support seem to exist in comfort and luxury, and there are furnished rooming houses where people sometimes go hungry. It is even said that there are gambling establishments and resorts of other kinds whereof nearly all who know the Acre know—except the police.

But one mentions such sorts for the value of contrast; the characteristic of the Acre is gaiety, light, laughter, good dressing, feeding, drinking and good fellowship; and if people will crawl into its corners and starve there they fail to diminish the general tone of the Acre, which is exceedingly lively.

Before consideration is given to the activities of the Acre which have in so short a time made it the best known spot in America, the most written about, the Mecca not only of the stranger in New York, but of all New York as well, a bit of a stroll about the district will help to an understanding of the mighty forces, social and professional and business, converging in the Acre. First, the two blocks running east from the centre of the Acre, Forty-fourth street.

At the corner of the Acre is the Criterion Theatre, and a few steps toward Fifth avenue one comes to two little



LONG ACRE SQUARE, "THE REAL CENTRE OF AMERICA."

French restaurants as unlike anything on the Acre itself as may be, yet of the Acre too. And then some little hotels, such as the Hotel Royal, home of notably prosperous showgirls, and of some who have been, as Mrs. Harry Thaw.

A little further is that surprising Waiters Club, in size and appointment equal to many of the old and aristocratic clubs. Almost opposite is the fine clubhouse of the Alpha Delta Phi Society, and a few steps further the Lambs, oldest of American players' clubs, and an offspring of a still older Lambs of London. Opposite that is the Hudson Theatre, and just beyond the Hotel Gerard, built when that block was almost out in the country and surprised to find itself now in such lively company.

Then, on the same side of the street, is Belasco's Stuyvesant Theatre, where Enoch's fellow San Franciscans, David Warfield, has made a name of fortune. Beyond that, but still west of Sixth avenue, is the street entrance of Burns's, with its small paneled windows, its cosy lace-curtained window seats, looking like some old English inn of the quietest and sedate class. Oh, Burns!

Opposite you see an empty brownstone residence, and as an empty building in the Acre district is a novelty you inquire the reason and learn that it is being converted into an extension of the Army and Navy Club, whose main building is on Forty-third street.

Crossing Sixth avenue, one comes to the block of Forty-fourth street which until a few years ago was a block almost entirely of stables, beginning with the big stables of the Sixth avenue horse car line, where the great Hippodrome now stands—and that is a part of the Acre district now, as is the rest of the wonderful block, formerly stables, which one strolls along to reach Fifth avenue.

On the north side of the street, opposite the side entrance of the Hippodrome, is Henri's, the most Parisian little restaurant in town, beloved of ladies lunching alone. Then on the same side follow the big hotels—Algonquin, Iroquois, Seymour; the New York Yacht Club with its granite front, in reproduction of an ancient warship; the City Club, large, sedate, but said to contain one of the best cellars in town—one may be very fussy about municipal reform and also about the age and character of one's wines at the same time; and the Harvard Club, severe almost in its simplicity of architecture, yet they do stand—and that is a part of the Acre district now, as is the rest of the wonderful block, formerly stables, which one strolls along to reach Fifth avenue.

On the other side of that wonderful block, chief feeder of the Acre, the south side, is the Hotel Royalton, with its quite amazing variety of private dining rooms, the sombrely vast library and club of the Bar Association, the Yale Club, the Racquet Club extension and the home of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, founded in 1775 but newly housed; and at the corner, Sherry's.



A PRIVILEGED ONE CAN CROSS THE STREET IN SAFETY.

Across the avenue as one reaches the eastward end of the Acre district are Delmonico's and the Night and Day Bank, and of course the Acre of all places in the world would be the first to need a bank which never closes its doors.

Returning to the Acre by Forty-third street one passes the Century Club—the deans of all the learned professions lunch well there—the Racquet and the Army and Navy clubs, the Royalton again, the Bar Association and the Hippodrome, and of these all but the Century extend through the block to Forty-fourth street. Finally the Hotel Woodstock, on the edge of the Acre, and then a stroll across—you don't stroll, but hop, skip and jump to escape the gasoline cars—and a start on another short trip along Theatre Row; that is west on Forty-second street for one block only, but in that one block you pass Hammersmith's, Belasco's, the Lyric, the New Amsterdam, the Liberty, Hackett's and the American, seven theatres in one block, with Harvey's restaurant to take the hungry of the fifteen thousand theatregoers who turn out from playhouses in that one block every night.

On the southerly spur of the Acre, along Broadway itself, are other theatres, the Broadway, Metropolitan, Empire, Casino, Knickerbocker, and just off the main

street Maxine Elliott's new playhouse; and, by the way, there is to be an Annie Russell playhouse in West Forty-fourth street, just off the Acre.

In the Acre itself are the New York, the Criterion, the Astor and a little way to the east the Lyceum Theatre. They may not all have been mentioned here, but including the Annie Russell there soon will be twenty-two theatres nightly pouring their crowds into the Acre.

What this means as to daytime in the Acre only those who have closely observed the phenomenon realize; the Acre is the business centre of the theatrical world in America. Referring now to those who have to do with the business end of the theatre, "the front of the house," their number is surprising, and they may all be seen in the Acre during some part of the production of some book or opera. A business so varied, employing so many millions of capital, so many thousands of people, with its companies scattered throughout the whole of the United States and much of Europe, has to be elaborately organized in its administrative end. Owners and managers of theatres, producers, stage managers, costumers, employment agencies, scene painters, authors, composers, scene painters, must all be in close touch, for there are many and sudden shifts to be provided for. A failure at some point requires the changing of several routes, the organization of a new company, the shifting of players, the rehearsal of a play sooner than planned or even the production of new costumes, new scenery; and the army of business men, of writers, artists and others concerned must meet, as they do, almost daily to learn of new or changed intentions.

By common consent these meetings, many of them, are at some club or more commonly in some restaurant in the Acre. This is the business end of it, the practical work by practical men whose efforts bring the many thousands of pleasure seekers to the Acre and make its more characteristic life.

That pleasant life begins when the Acre takes on its first brilliance, when the fronts and roofs of a score of theatres blaze with electric lights, when dozens of hotels and restaurants are little less bright with attractive illuminations, when the highway of the Acre is alive with hundreds of brilliantly lighted cabs, automobiles, street cars running hither and thither like countless distracted glowworms.

Then the Acre takes on its show aspect, the restaurants fill with gay crowds of diners as the streets begin to fill with hundreds of players hurrying from their earlier dinners to prepare for their nightly entertainment of those thousands of more deliberate diners. But the hurrying business of the day, the eager preparation of the early evening are all as nothing in pomp and importance, in a Long Acre way, to the scenes after the theatres are closed and the players and audience rush into the Acre for its night gaiety.

The white room Oscar Hammerstein usually takes supper—dinner, it really is, though midnight—at a corner of the white room, all alone.

The playwrights seem to be social and not jealous, for you may see so many of them gathered that tables are joined to accommodate the number. Paul Armstrong, James Forbes, Henry Blossom, George Broadhurst and George Ade may be seen in one group; and the artists forerather, too, for Will Fisher—his "Fisher girls" now, not Gibson—girls—Archie Gunn, Eddie Unit, who designs and paints scenery; Will Barnes, who designs the stunning costumes of the stage, and Hy Mayer, who draws funny things in English, French and German, hobnob at one table. Victor Herbert, who really is Irish in spite of his slight German accent, comes into a grill room, a white room or any other kind of a supper place like a breeze, waltzes about from table to table until he has said "Howdy" to half the people in the place before ordering a modest repast impartially composed of French,

they drink to each other with something more moist than eyes, from table to table. The late men patronize the place freely; men who have been working late find a welcome relaxation there, and even some of the women of exalted place in the profession may go to Churchill's with a friend later, that is, after passing the shank of the evening, from midnight to, say, 1 or 2 o'clock in other restaurants.

And at about that hour, that is some time after midnight, another class of restaurants in the Acre are crowded with patrons; restaurants where some kind of meal may be had for 10 cents, and where the patrons are glad to have the price. They have been better days most of them, at least brighter days, and no doubt many have dined where a fifty dollar supper was as common as a ten cent supper is where fortune sends them to sup now.

The edges of the district retain their faithful patrons; over on Sixth avenue in Jack's and Burns's tables are crowded with men and women who assert that only there can they get the kind of supper they like. None of the newer fancy dishes of the Acre itself for them.

And still you note, as you did when as a very young man you first supped at Jack's or Burns's, that the waiters all look like pugilists in good training—they should. In Jack's there is a peculiar rule, a woman may not leave her table and visit at another table. You may say that this is unconstitutional, and threaten to write to Mr. Roosevelt about it, but that makes no difference. A woman just can't visit among the tables, no matter how socially inclined she may be, no matter how much she may desire to cross to another table than her own and ask Bessie where she got her new hat, or what her route will be when they go on tour. A rule is a rule, and as has been remarked the waiters all look well trained.

During these lights are out, the big signs of colored electric globes which implore you when you drink water to drink Somebody's, or if beer or whiskey are yet on your mind be sure to consider the merits of So-and-so's. The Acre is not so bright with light, the milk wagons begin to crawl slowly up Broadway, the street cars run with an appreciable interval between, the latest of the evening extras have been called in and the earliest of the morning papers are out, but there is not much change in the amount of human activity in the Acre.

The astonishing number of calls it takes to convey the women residents of the district still makes the Acre dangerous crossing, the crowds are thinned some in some of the supper rooms, but the enthusiasm is just as thick as ever—a little more so perhaps. The Acre never sleeps; even as the latest of the supper parties break up the day also breaks and calls upon thousands to begin the activities of the next day, just as other thousands are closing the activities of the day before.

The lesser women of the profession sup numerous in the high priced places of the Acre, generally in the company of

non-professional men; they sup well too, and their presence lends liveliness to many of the places.

Leaving the "Knick" and going north in the Acre, Shanley's and Rector's are next in line. The managers of these two famous places will assert, with some heat perhaps, that there is a distinction between the class of patrons of their respective places. There may be; to the casual observer those who sup there are much alike. In Shanley's perhaps there are more New Yorkers, strangers being more likely to favor Rector's, but those who sup in their native Pittsburg, Boston, Philadelphia or wherever, as the natives in the other shop.

In Rector's there is a division of classes, so old patrons assert, which is physically marked by a certain aisle. North of that the ushers seat those they size up as of a certain financial or social standing; south of the line those of another class financially or socially. It would of course be unfair to tell which, according to the ushers, are the goals and which the sheep. Perhaps it isn't so at all, but the belief that it is cannot be disturbed in the minds of those who hold it.

At the many supper rooms of the Astor the patrons are not so much of the class who frequent the Acre at that hour because it is the Acre. They are more, rather, people who are in search of good food, drink, music and agreeable surroundings and take it where they find it, in the Acre or elsewhere.

Not that the Astor is without acreage characteristics, so to speak. Attractive show girls may be seen there in quiet company and wholly on their good behavior. Also David Belasco, David Warfield and others of the "Belasco crowd" seem to find satisfactory nourishment in the victuals of the Astor and may be seen there now and then with some of the Belasco women stars or leading women.

Yet further north, in the heart of the Acre, is Churchill's, a restaurant of a class more popular, or at least more frequently seen, in New York fifteen years ago than now. Society may be a little less conventional there than elsewhere; but it is none the less fashionable in part at least, for if you haunt the Acre much you discover that the same individuals seen earlier in the night at other Acre resorts are supping again at Churchill's later in the night.

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"ESTABLISHMENTS EVERY ONE KNOWS ABOUT SAVE THE POLICE."

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When the Teddy bear craze came there were opened up numerous small factories in which first and last a considerable number of people found steady work in an entirely new occupation, the manufacture of Teddy bears; there are just such little factories now in which people work all day long and day after day in the manufacture of the popular jig saw puzzles.

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HINTS FOR HUSBANDS

On Compliments, General and Specific—The Hair Question.

"To be happy though married," remarked Uncle Henry after peering through the crack of the door to be sure she was not coming back, "you have got to be quick on your feet and a good jollier. To take things for granted is the greatest compliment in the world; but they don't like their compliments that way.

"See what I mean? This silent admiration gag is no good. You can unbutton your collar, take a cough lozenge and sing 'I Love You, Darling. Even as of yore' until you've built up a \$2.98 throat and when you get through your wife will want to know when you were here. At least my wife will, and they're all on the same style.

"No, son, the gentle art of being accessories either an art or gentle. Not so you could notice it isn't. What they want is to see the goods. They know it and you know it and they know you know it. Understand? Well, then it's up to you to come down stage and bat it out.

"And strong too, good and strong. They're like the kid at the circus who sees the elephant stand up, lay down, ring a bell, run, jump and give a good show generally and then turns around to you and says 'Huh, that's nothin'; let's see him pick his teeth.'

"I'm giving it to you straight, son; you can't surprise 'em no matter what you say, and the thicker you lay it on the better chance you've got to have custard pie next Sunday.

"You hear me. This stuff I'm giving you is no bunk. It took me years to learn it and I've got a ways to go yet. See what I mean? It's a study. A regular kind of a science like. Important, too, by gum. If you're married that is. Don't say like this, 'My darling, you look very pretty this evening,' or 'My dear, I never saw you look better.' Can't I. Don't waste good breath that you're sure going to need. Catch the idea? That is old stuff and went out around about the time somebody put the kibosh on hoopskirts. If you've got to do it at all go at it so it will count.

"Now see. Here's what I mean. Take your time. If you don't she will. There's regular kind of rules for this sort of thing. Begin at the top and work down, and anything you see that looks particularly fierce get that in twice.

"Tell her her hat's a wonder. Never saw one like it before. That's likely to be true, anyhow, and that's what she bought it for. Then get after her through the curtains, and there was Mr. Croker evidently playing like a Handel or a Mozart or a Paderewski. Deftly and delicately Croker's big right hand touched the treble keys and the big left was in rhythmic unison on the bass.

Suddenly to Woods's surprise Croker crossed hands and threw in a few variations with the ease of a professor of music at the Paris Conservatory. Woods's eyes were bulging, and turning to the butler, who was in rapt attention, Woods whispered:

"I'll have a devil of a story to tell in New York, and where in the devil did he become a professor of music like that? How did he learn?"

From nocturne to rhapsodie Croker continued, and he turned to the "Ave Maria" and then to Mendelssohn's "Song Without Words." Gen. Woods was too dumb himself with wonderment, and he stood as he thought of the great story he had to tell of Croker's masterful piano playing acquired during his absence from New York city.

Suddenly Croker stopped and rejoined Woods in the smoking room.

"Where the devil did you learn to play the piano?" demanded Woods.

"Oh, I've had a little leisure time," replied Croker, "and of course there are great professors of music in London and Dublin, and it comes easy."

"Why, you're over 60 years old," cried Woods, "and I know it didn't come easy with you. But you're a dandy player, just the same, and I'll tell the boys about it when I get back."

Croker never cracked a smile. He had the same grim visage that is so familiar hereabout as he told Woods that it was time for dinner.

Woods stopped over night and before closing his eyes that night he became a little suspicious. He knew Croker had celebrated for his practical jokes in his old days. He climbed out of bed early the next morning and tiptoed down to the reception room and touched the keys of the piano. No sound came.

He was amazed. He hustled all around the piano and looked into it, and fussed and fretted, all to no purpose. He tried the keys over and over again without the breath of a sound coming from them.

At breakfast he so jaxed Croker, what he had seen and heard the night before and what he had seen and failed to hear before breakfast that Croker finally broke down and bubbling over with laughter he told Woods that the piano was electrical, with continuous rolls of music, classical and otherwise, and as he sat down to eat that he had told Woods to cough hidden buttons and the piano would pour forth the sweetest of the most resounding strains.

"Well, I'm damned!" was all that Woods could reply.

When Justice Platzek called on Mr. Croker, Croker had framed up a joke on Platzek. Croker's estate covers 600 acres, and he grows all sorts of vegetables and grains. A week before Platzek's arrival Croker had received from New York a bunch of green bananas. On the day of Platzek's arrival these bananas were yellow and ripe.

Croker and Platzek got into a conversation as to the agricultural aspects of Croker's farm, and Platzek asked what Croker raised on the farm.

"Oh, almost anything, Judge," replied Croker. "Best sugar, pumpkins, potatoes, bananas—almost anything."

"Bananas!" exclaimed Platzek. "You're too far north to raise bananas. Bananas are a southern fruit."

"You can grow anything in Ireland," replied Croker. "Just cast your eye out of that window. What's growing on that tree out there?"

"Bananas, by Jove!" exclaimed Platzek. "Thomas," said Croker to a servant, "go out there and cut off that bunch of bananas and bring 'em in and we'll have them for dinner."

The servant man did as he was bidden and returned with a bunch of beautiful yellow bananas. Platzek had watched him cut the bunch from the tree, Platzek was completely convinced the bananas were real. The servant man who had cut the bunch from the tree had, by Croker's instructions, tied that bunch early in the morning in such a way that the foliage completely concealed the bananas. The Croker household at Glenora for months laughed over the "bananas" of Woods and Platzek.

CROKER SURPRISED

MUSICAL AND FARMING FEARS ON HIS IRISH ESTATE.

He Demonstrated His Proficiency on the Piano to Gene Woods of Albany. Proved to Justice Warley Platzek 'You Can Grow Bananas in Ireland.'

"They don't have any more fun in politics," said Richard Croker the other day, "no fun at all."

"When I was a young man we had all sorts of fun. The newspapers had a number of funny stories of the pranks of the politicians. Even up to a few years ago there was a funny story in Democratic and Republican politics in New York city."

"Now everybody seems to be so deadly in earnest. Either they take themselves very seriously or they take the world very seriously. I don't know how to plain it. But there is no more fun in politics, and you seldom read a funny story concerning the practical jokes of politicians on one another."

Mr. Croker, with a group of friends about him, told with great relish how he entertained Eugene D. Woods of Albany on one occasion and Supreme Court Justice Warley Platzek of New York at another at his house near Dublin. Gene Woods and Mr. Croker have not always agreed, and at one time there was a severe break between them; but a couple of years ago Woods was in London and telegraphed to Croker that he was going to run over to Ireland to see him.

The day came for Woods's arrival at Croker's house. Croker, his wife, and a drive in the afternoon they returned to the house and Croker and Woods were in the smoking room. Quietly and without apparent reason Croker got up and walked into a reception room, took a piano and in a moment the sweetest strains of music came from the piano.

"There were no women in the room," Gene Woods knew, and he couldn't make out where the music came from.

"Who's that playing the piano?" inquired Woods of the