

### NEW FRONTS FOR OLD HOUSES

#### A WORK OF GROWING INTEREST TO CITY ARCHITECTS.

Dull brownstone facades transformed—Utilization of the basement—Attractive entrances built—Conventional houses made distinctive.

The desire for a change from the old brownstone stoop house led some time ago to the introduction by builders and architects of the English basement house. They favored this style because they believed that it presented an opportunity for facade ornamentation which the old fashioned architecture did not supply.



HOUSE OF CELESTINO PIVA, WASHINGTON SQUARE, WEST.

and at the same time solved many problems of space and interior fitting.

But many of the old houses stood firm and solid as the day they were built, and the owners, while tired of the monotony and cheerlessness of the facades, did not wish to go to the expense of building an entirely new front. Here then was presented a new problem, one that has recently been working itself out through the demand of house owners on one hand and an awakened interest among architects on the other.

Architects used to say that it was about as much trouble to build an entirely new facade as it was to alter the old. Recently more satisfactory results have been attained. An interesting example of how the problem is solved is furnished by the house of Frederick J. Sterner, on East Nineteenth street.

He found there a house with a red brick front and a side stoop of much the same style as most of those in the dignified old Gramercy Park district. He changed the color to a bright gray, put light green shutters at the windows, retaining the

### FAIR POKER AND AN UNFAIR FIGHT

#### The Hennessy-Gallagher Feud Gives Brownsville a Lively Night.

Nobody knew exactly what the original cause of the quarrel was, but the citizens of Brownsville were keenly alive to the situation, and some of them had even made bets on whether Gallagher would kill Hennessy or whether Hennessy would get away. The fact that Gallagher himself had run for safety several times when Long Mike had undertaken to kill him was not considered as having any bearing on the existing trouble, because it was well understood that fight was the only possible means to obtain safety when Long Mike was the aggressor, whereas the difficulty between Gallagher and Hennessy was merely the uprising of one able-bodied in the barroom Stumpy against another of the same sort. To run from Long Mike was the natural and excusable course, but for Gallagher to run from Hennessy or for Hennessy to run from Gallagher was inconceivable, both men being Irish.

But although no man knew for a certainty what the beginning of the trouble was there were several of their fellow citizens who offered explanations that seemed plausible. "Sure it's none other but Hennessy's gorge rize up," said Stumpy when Sam, the bartender, asked him how it started. "Gallagher's stir up the bile of an archangel, wance he starts in bossin'. He's th' b'ist man in Iowa fer to drive maules, is Gallagher; but fer the foreman as a gang o' live Orlinmen he's too dam' domineerin'. Sure if Binnissy hadn't hit him the day some was the wud, a Gallagher'd kept an drinkin' a day or two longer. It's bad enough he is sober, but wid th' liquor in him he bates th' devil."

small panes, and tearing away the old cornice, substituted red tiles projecting the same distance over the top of the wall. Over the main entrance, which was reached by two steps down, he placed a tablet of tiles in color harmonious with the rest of the front, and the side entrance was made relatively unimportant by having a little barrier and a row of small trees before it. The basement was turned into an attractive entrance hall with a dining room in the rear.

In order to secure a large dining room, drawing room and library the space was carefully economized, and in this way the kitchen came to be in the front of the house and to the left of the entrance.

The yard back of the house was arranged artistically, and in order to obviate the appearance of a basement the yard was excavated to a depth that made it on a level with the dining room floor. The walls enclosing the yard were finished in

rough stone; rafters and trellises for plants were built so as form a summer roof, and a fountain with a Diana was built on a line with the dining room door. Another house in the same neighborhood that has attracted attention is that which was restored for the late Mrs. Osborne on Stuyvesant Square. The character of the original facade can be seen by studying the houses on either side. The whole of the front above the third floor was retained, but the material of the original house was torn away and in their place was built an enclosed porch over the front of the basement and the first story, reaching almost out to the sidewalk line. There were two entrances with a barrier for a flower bed between, and on each side ornamental urns. An arched window with an ornamental panel above extended across the front of the first story, and the

structure was surmounted by a balustrade and urns. The little balcony thus formed is reached from the drawing room on the third floor. The changes have been made with such skill that the house stands out with prominence and furnishes a striking example of what can be done with the old fashioned residence. To change a high stoop brownstone house of the style formerly built along Park avenue into an English basement house was the problem that the architect had in the alteration of the residence of E. P. Whitney. The material of the original house was retained, but the plainness of the front was relieved by wrought iron doors and windows on the lower story and by balconies on the upper stories.

Instead of reaching the former level of the basement floor by two or three steps downward, as in the case of the

two other houses that have been mentioned, the floor was raised two feet and the front door was placed on a level with the sidewalk. How attractive an old fashioned basement may be made is illustrated by the entrance hall in this house.

Since it is merely a passage to the main hall above it was made as simple as possible, but at the same time effective. A fireplace is on one side, and a fountain in a bed of green on the other. The walls are wood panelled and the floor of stone, which is the material used in the construction of the fireplace, fountain and table.

The dining room and the drawing room are on the first floor, the former decorated in English style, the latter in Italian. The floor of the dining room is of dull red Moravian tiles laid in broad black joints, with occasional glazed tiles set in patterns. The ceiling is beamed and

paneled in gray oak and the walls are of the same material, the mantelpiece being an elaborately carved piece of yellow gray Irish stone. In the drawing room an attractive bit of ornamentation is the old Italian marble mantel over the fireplace. The floor in this room, which is of costly pine, is stained to a deep golden brown, the ceiling and the woodwork are of antiquated gold leaf and the walls are of a Colonial style with a slight tinge of gold. A Colonial staircase leads from the entrance hall to the top of the house.

A house on Washington Square West that is pretty certain to attract attention even from a casual observer is that of Celestino Piva at number 37. The front of the house was originally the same as that adjoining it on the south and a comparison emphasizes the value of the alterations that have been made. The brownstone was rubbed and the

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Formerly a student who worked his way through college anywhere was regarded with approval, even heroized. Now he meets with condemnation on both sides; from his associates in his work because he is willing to do anything and do it cheap, and from his associates in his study because he lowers the tone of the college and does not contribute to its athletics and social display.

Many of our colleges were started with the idea that students should support themselves, at least in part, by labor for the college, when we are by force of law and public opinion compelling college students, as we have convicts, to become a leisure class. I see only two movements which might counteract the prevailing tendency to make higher education increasingly expensive and parasitic.

One is the plan of the University of Cincinnati, by which engineering students work alternately two weeks in the classroom and two weeks in the shops. The other way is to bring higher education to the people who are at work by some form of university extension.

ng a small wad from his pocket laid that on top of the chips. Stumpy looked anxiously at Gallagher, fearing for the moment that Hennessy's large bet—when they counted they found it was nearly \$100—might faze him, but so far from that being the case the foreman's rugged face was gleaming with malice and the anticipation of triumph.

"H'ist the spalpeen, Stumpy," was all he said, and Stumpy without stopping to count emptied the wallet on the table. There was nearly \$300 in it.

At this, which seemed wholly unexpected to Hennessy, that worthy did the one thing remaining for him to alienate all his friends. "Sure Oi was jokin', Stumpy," he said. "We was playin' a limit game, Sure Oi k'now it, raise ye but \$2, an' it's well ye k'now it. He started to draw back his own wad and chips.

But Gallagher interfered at this amid a general howl of derision from the others in the room. "Ye made a bet on th' outside," he said, angrily, as he leaned over and grasped Hennessy's wrist. "An' it's my money that's raisin'. Ye'll have th' sportin' blood fer to berry enough to call loike Stumpy done ye may call for a show fer yer pile. This Hennessy presently did, seeing that no other course was open to him, he handed the sportsman's four tens, and the sudden termination of his run of luck caused the entire crowd filled him with anger and humiliation.

Ye have the best o' me at the cards, ye handy leaved son o' th' devil," he shouted at Gallagher as he rose from his chair, "but Oi'll bate the shuffin' out o' yer ugly carcass as ye'll face me loike a man."

Hennessy had thrown caution to the wind, and with much bluster raised again, much to Stumpy's joy. The raise followed raise in quick succession. Long Mike trailing with grim doggedness till there was over \$50 in the pot. Stumpy would gladly have continued the play, but his previous losses had impaired his small capital and he found himself unable to raise further, so he simply made good on Hennessy's last bet, and as Long Mike trailed again the pot was closed and Ryan picked up the deck to serve the draw.

"Sure, Oi do be thinkin' these'll do me," said Stumpy as he slid his last white chip into the pot and Long Mike called for one. Hennessy stood pat. Long Mike found he had filled his flush as hard as possible, promptly raised it \$2, regardless of the two fat hands out against him. Still Hennessy was undaunted.

Ye've too much confidence in them little straight-aways," he said, bumpkinly. "When Oi have yer shirt on my back, ye'll k'now more," and he boosted it again.

"Sure it's a sin an' a shame," said Stumpy, looking angrily at his four tens. "O'ive the chanst o' me loife, an' I'll play to push it with. Av ye'll have me play on wind, now, O'll be s'ist ye ag'in an' ag'in, till ye have O'll's s'ist ye ag'in the pot."

But Long Mike interrupted, sternly. "There'll be no wind play here," he said. "O'll be s'ist ye ag'in ye loike, but ye'll not run in deels wid me. Hennessy also refused, with needless jeers, to listen to the proposal.

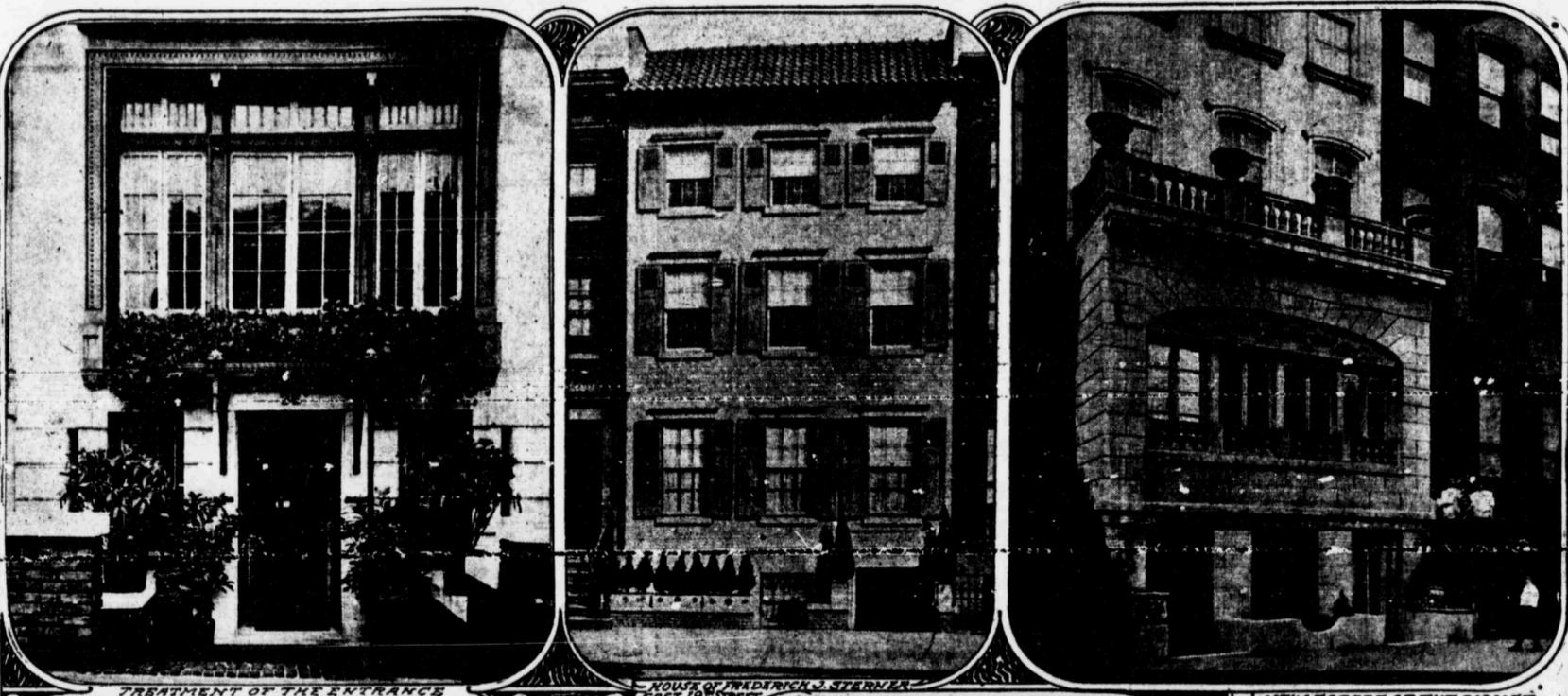
As he had been doing. The one-eyed man, who was stolidly good, and he had a high regard for a man who had had to draw five cards, seeing the tempting odds. The one-eyed man also trailed, and Hennessy, with a look of interest, held the advantage of public sympathy. Being a crafty man by nature and malevolent as well he bided his time, waiting until he could make worse than the other's luck, dropped a pair of kings, which came Ryan's deal and there was a jackpot of \$10 on the table, making it certain that anybody who opened it, even for the limit of \$2, would have at least two or three strays.

Stumpy sat first and lifting his cards one at a time found that the first three were all spades, the fourth a spot. He further he pushed in his \$2 and waited to see what the others would do.

Long Mike sat next, and he put in his money as a matter of course. He had five cards, seeing the tempting odds. The one-eyed man also trailed, and Hennessy, with a look of interest, held the advantage of public sympathy. Being a crafty man by nature and malevolent as well he bided his time, waiting until he could make worse than the other's luck, dropped a pair of kings, which came Ryan's deal and there was a jackpot of \$10 on the table, making it certain that anybody who opened it, even for the limit of \$2, would have at least two or three strays.

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Stumpy, however, had looked at his other two cards in the meantime, and finding one of these was a ten spot raised with serene confidence. This made \$24 in the pot, and it also made it necessary for Long Mike to put up \$4 to draw cards. The odds were still in his favor, and he had a high four flush, so he trailed, thinking his own usual luck would be likely to serve him, especially if Hennessy played as recklessly as he had been doing. The one-eyed man, however, regarded his own three strays with professional caution and threw them down. He did not fear Hennessy or Long Mike, but there was that in Stumpy's expression when he raised back, that made



TREATMENT OF THE ENTRANCE TO A PARK AVENUE HOUSE.

HOUSE OF FREDERICK J. STERNER, EAST NINETEENTH STREET.

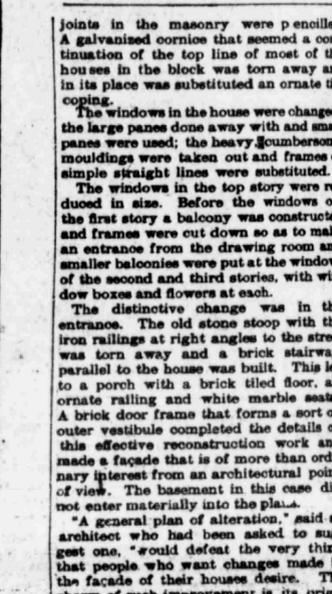
NEW FACADE OF THE HOUSE OF CELESTINO PIVA, WASHINGTON SQUARE, WEST.



ARTISTIC ENTRANCE HALL MADE FROM BASEMENT, E. P. WHITNEY'S HOUSE, PARK AVENUE.



HOUSE OF E. P. WHITNEY, PARK AVENUE.



NEW FACADE OF THE HOUSE OF CELESTINO PIVA, WASHINGTON SQUARE, WEST.

joints in the masonry were pencilled. A galvanized cornice that seemed a continuation of the top line of most of the houses in the block was torn away and in its place was substituted an ornate tile coping.

The windows in the house were changed, the large panes done away with and small panes were used; the heavy, cumbersome mouldings were taken out and frames of simple straight lines were substituted.

The windows in the top story were reduced in size. Before the windows on the first story a balcony was constructed and frames were cut down so as to make an entrance from the drawing room and smaller balconies were put at the windows of the second and third stories, with window boxes and flowers at each.

The distinctive change was in the entrance. The old stone stoop with the iron railings at right angles to the street was torn away and a brick stairway parallel to the house was built. This led to a porch with a brick tiled floor, an ornate railing and white marble seats. A brick door frame that forms a sort of outer vestibule completed the details of this effective reconstruction work and made a facade that is of more than ordinary interest from an architectural point of view. The basement in this case did not enter materially into the plan.

"A general plan of alteration," said an architect who had been asked to suggest one, "would defeat the very thing that people who want changes made in the facade of their houses desire. The charm of such improvement is its originality and the character that can be put into the work."

There is little doubt that there will be in the next few years much more improvement of this sort than at any time in the past. The work that has been accomplished along this line has attracted so much attention and favorable comment that many more attempts are sure to be made.

A good many of the cheerless old brownstone houses began to show their age and the owners have grown tired of them. Some are scarcely worth the expense of an entirely new front and so there is a compromise on an alteration of the old. Such improvement would certainly have a tendency to take away the dreary monotony of some of the brown cantonlike side streets, and while it would mean the passing of a distinctive New York type of house it would certainly tend to give much more character to the architecture of the residential part of the town."

### SCENTING THE BLUEFISH.

#### Information From the Skipper for a Party Out Fishing.

"Ah! said the skipper out with a party bluefishing, turning his face to windward as he spoke and at the same time throwing the wheel over and bringing the boat up and putting her off on the other tack. "I smell them!" "You smell them?" said a member of the party in the boat. "Do you mean to tell me you can smell the fish?" "Why, certainly," said the skipper, as he got another little pull on the sheet, "or you can smell where they are, which amounts to the same thing."

"You see," the skipper continued, "the bluefish is a voracious feeder—very voracious; he will eat about a million of the little fishes that you find around so plentiful in the water, put there apparently for bigger fish to eat. He does it when he has gorged himself on about a million, more or less, of these little fishes the bluefish will settle down on the bottom and there digger them, and this disgorged food, it floats up to the surface, and that you can smell, and it means bluefish; and I can smell them now, sure. And so speaking the skipper got an inch more of the sheet, and he sailed ahead and kept her a-going with every ch drawing, just a humming and a-boiling, keen on the scent."

And did the party come up with the bluefish and catch lots of them? A boatload of fish? Keep hauling them in till they all got tired of fishing? Well, that—as you can plainly see—is another story; scenting bluefish and catching them being two quite different things.

### A SWORDFISH WEATHER VANE.

#### Still Pointing to the Wind, as It Long Has Done, on a Block Island Barn.

There are more hotels at Block Island now than when I was there some years ago, and more people, said a man just back, "but I found at least one familiar object there that pleased my eye, that being an old weather vane." "On the road running to the south from the island's centre of population to the remarkable clay bluffs that rise to the height of a hundred feet or more along the island's southern shore, here is a barn above whose cupola turns a home-made wooden vane fashioned in the form of a swordfish. The hardy fishermen as every other sort of fish that finds a home in or over these waters, and here the swordfish weather vane seems all too striking but strikingly appropriate. "This vane is about six feet in length, which to be sure would be small for a swordfish, but which is big for a weather vane; and there it was, still, the only one I ever saw, and a pleasure it was to see it still there and still turning easily and as ever pointing true to the wind."