

MINIATURE FOREIGN LANDS IN NEW YORK CITY



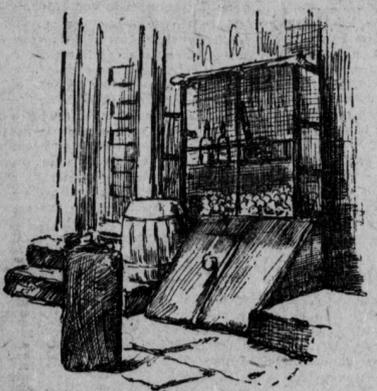
WASHINGTON STREET TYPES.

(Copyright, 1909, by the New York Herald Co. All Rights Reserved.)

NEW YORK, Saturday.
 YOU leave the elevated at Rector on your way to Little Syria, and Washington is upon you ere you know it—Washington, which stretches, unkempt and frowsy, to the Battery and bares the heart of Little Syria before your un-raptured eyes. For it is unlucky; it has the misfortune of dirt and unromance—and dirt may never be accepted but with the mystery of the Orient upon it, when, of course, it may be sensibly hailed as delight. Little Syria has strayed from grace. The flowing garments, the silver bracelets, the majestic pendants which hung from low drawn ears but ten short years ago have, like the snows of yesterday, vanished from sight. It is modernized-to-day and wears its celluloid collar, its rolled and rattled hair, with a becoming grace. The phonograph croaks out its Syrian chant (the worse for that) in a restaurant, and you are met by the distressing consciousness that the world moves—even in Washington street.

Little Syria! A jagged perspective of red bricked decrepitude, from whose upper parts may be seen stretching from window to window eternal strings of undergarments in many shades of elemental color. Again one takes heart of grace. Little Syria, after all, is not perfectly civilized, one reflects; its tastes are similar to those of many self-respecting American and European women. It is a grateful and comforting thought, which may even deaden the agony of celluloid collars.

The tiny stores, too, level with the street, seem to be touched by the same note of saving barbarity. These, at least, respect the traditions of their Phoenician ancestry, for green of a peculiarly thrilling quality may be observed. A certain yellow of atrocious shade, too, does much to balance the degradation of many a conventional suit. One becomes comforted and soothed by such artistic villany and is



A WINDOW DISPLAY IN LITTLE SYRIA.

even prepared to appreciate—as one passes along between sentinel ash cans—the wares displayed within the tiny windows. And one will not be disappointed, as strange collections (for which presumably one will be found to pay money) are gathered upon their outstretched shelves.

Dark, doubtful looking sausages! Who will be found to eat you, as you lie there above the fruit, close by the side of those mysterious candles, your companions?

All Is of the Orient.

And now may be noticed how Oriental is everything in Little Syria—by name. The druggist is an "Oriental pharmacist." There are Oriental barbers and Oriental restaurants, Oriental groceries and Oriental

butchers. In the window of the Oriental pastrycook's lie large, flat products, with decorative squares and coiled rope effects. At other stores, with cryptic Arab inscriptions (in which the illuminative flights of the proprietor may be more than suspected), seem to be gathered generous collections of everything.

Variety, in fact, seems chiefly characteristic of the window displays of Little Syria. There the pure tobacco leaf rubs edges with the lady's blouse; here postal cards and bottles of Syrian wine will in all likelihood fraternize with the domestic feather duster. But how can one know the full glory of a Syrian window till one looks upon the bowls of brass and colored glass, enwreathed in gorgeous spiral stems, which conjure up visions of Eastern indolence? They are majestic, and cost money, too, if one may believe Pat Fallon, who collects the rents in Washington street and who has inhabited its classic shades for thirty years or more.

"You won't get the cheapest av thim," says he, with his mellow brogue (which, to his praise, is yet in splendid trim), "for less th'n three or four-dollar-rs"—money enough, too, in Little Syria or out of it. Pat is a fine old fellow and remembers Washington street in its ancient Irish days, before it came to be called "out of its name." "Me boy," said he, "it's tin year-rs ago ye sh'd have come down her-re, when they dressed in them ear-rings an' their funny clothes, and they squatted round' on the floor as they eat, and cooked their mate in the pots by the low stoves—it's thim ye sh'd have seen thim!"

But Little Syria, alas! has changed. It sits in chairs and eats from tablecloths, and cooks its food by gas stove in these degenerate days. "You see," continued Fallon explanatorily, "it's only the old timers that's lift her-re now, an' they're as much American as Syrian. They live in Brooklyn when they get well off, and new ones come no more; they're all shipped to the West."

A very quiet, industrious people, according to Fallon, and very generous, too, when you come to know them. "But if it's trade you want," said he, "you've got to find their equal. They've beaten thim Jews fr'm the pushcar-rt business, an' if ye c'n match that ye're matchin' well, me b'y."

One leaves Pat to his pursuit of rents and moves along the chipped and broken sidewalks, past the dilapidated, dark little shops, which are held by owners for the value of the land, which is enormous; the littered roadway; past the olive skinned, keen faced pedestrians, so disappointingly Americanized of garment; past the women, whose draping of woollen shawls at least brings some faint flavor of their far off land, and whose invariably slippers help to mitigate the bloused coarseness of their swelling frames. They stand in mildly interested groups about the pushcarts, which string in uneven intervals along the road—pushcarts rich with the freightage of calceos and knives, can openers and saws and tin cans packed in a bright confusion.

It is then that one meets George Sheheri, standing at the receipt of custom, near the several carts and horses of his business of express, and it is here that one gains the first insight into the inherent generosity of the Syrian character.

George listens to you as you state your need of information with widely opened, scrutinizing eyes. "For the newspaper?" says he, with a dawning interest. "You know Davenport?" You do, and henceforward he is yours. For Davenport, the cartoonist, possesses Arab horses from George's own country, and George has ridden them, Arab horseman that he is, at Davenport's own farm, and Davenport is to him a prince of men. So George claps your shoulder and squeezes your hand and whispers instructions to his olive subordinate and leads you into labyrinthine ways, and you may have anything in Little Syria that he can give you without a price. For to offer a Syrian money for a friendly act is the extreme of insult. You would be, as George described one so offering, "a cheap skate."

Into the little school he leads you, with crossed American flags upon the vivid walls, divided into red and green. At the end, with authoritative slat in hand, stands the very courteous Syrian teacher, whose purity of English is a delight. Twenty brown eyed, dark skinned boys with sweaters or little dark suits, adorned with the familiar celluloid collars, drone over books of Arabic and English.

They are going to perform the Biblical incident of Joseph at the well in Brooklyn presently, and some rehearse their parts. The table is the well, underneath which the mimic Joseph crouches; the ash can for the stove represents the bucket and the poor teacher is hard put to it by Joseph's brethren, who insist upon outside interests. Bang! goes the slat, but very lightly, and a wall comes from Joseph's temporary relative. Another disturbance elsewhere. "Gee!" says the teacher in good colloquial exclamation; "but boys, though Syrians, are boys yet."

George has now thoroughly given himself up to the delights of courierage. He rushes, in enthusiastic precipitancy, up the dark stairway to the daily newspaper Al Hoda, whose circulation may reach the high water mark of 5,000, and shows you its inner workings; its three compositors, who pick the Syrian type;

"Little Syria."
 BY GARNET WARREN

its press, which turns out 3,000 copies in an hour without wrenching a screw, and turns with disconsolation to his boy, who has followed, with notification of potential work.

"Tell him he'll be moved all right," says George unhappily. "He wants to know when," says the insistent boy. "This afternoon, some time," says George, with evident disfavor. For business must come second when hospitality is at stake.

He smiles again when the boy has disappeared. "I'll show you," says he, and darts into dark, bare passageways, whose rickety stairs are painted with



TO MARKET.

the color so popular in Ireland, too, dashes into the privacy of families, where walls are decorated with heavy paper flowering designs, and where there is a good deal more of green paint and blue paint, and doubtful lithographs of evident husbands, and linen couches, and cooking stoves near to them (for living rooms often go with kitchens in Little Syria), and big, thick, billowy beds peeping from the smallest of inner rooms, whose walls are also green. It is all very clean and comfortable, and one is impressed by the sharp contrast of Little Syrian interiors with the exterior. From the outside you expect a barn; one enters a clean and very tidy home.

The insatiable George is now possessed of the joy of living and has forgotten slavish commerce. He races you off to tenements, where dark complexioned girls (who are not languorous, however, but rather practical of eye) sit in long rows at their machines and make kimonos and lace, which (who knows?) may yet be listed as product of the East. Into pastry cooks and dry goods houses you go in quick succession. "And now," says George, "I'll take you to a club."

In the Restaurant.

You enter and see a room with clean, bare swept floors and five or six tables, around which sit black mustached men with crisp, wavy hair, who are neatly dressed in American suits, and play dominoes and a certain game resembling checkers, into which dice enters. There is no gambling, however, but they play with the pleased interest of half grown children delivered to the delights of steeplechase. One now sees in use for the first time the hubble-bubble, or long stemmed water pipe, whose glories in the window have attracted you. Part of the stem is buried in the water of the large bowl, and the tobacco smoked is pure leaf, which, being moistened, is kept alive by lighted charcoal laid upon it. You receive cigars, you have thrust upon you small, sweet, strong cups of Turkish coffee, for which you may not pay, and finally George lands you in the restaurant of one H. Hassey, whose place, at the corner of Washington and Rector streets, is the best native establishment in the city, and with the light of utter complacency in his eyes, orders your Syrian fare.

You receive a pinkish looking thing cut into slices. It is beet, George says. It is soaked in salt and water and vinegar for two weeks, and served uncooked, is not unpleasant. Next comes a sort of stew (Syrian cooking runs strongly to stews), in which eggplant, rice and tomatoes form parts. George is insistent on Syrian virtues in the cooking of rice. "We use just enough water to keep it from burning," said he; "then you get every grain separate—not a pulp, a mess."

He introduced the kibbe, a very particular dish made of finely crushed wheat and finely minced meat, fried in butter. It was extremely good, and George dilated on the virtues of the butter. "Syrians have no bum butter," said he in his language of daily use. "Our butter es imported from Seeraan. The poorest Seeraan pays fifty-five cents a pound for hees

butte-r-r; no Seeraan will eat lard." It was the same with the pastry—that mysterious ropelike stuff, so frankly delicious. It was cooked in butter, which the wondrous herbs of Araby are calculated to affect with sweet flavors. And then came the dessert of raisins and pistachio nuts swimming to some sweet liquor, and the glass of arak, in flavor like absinthe and with a more delicate fire than that of whiskey. The small, sweet cup of Turkish coffee finished these Syrian excellences. Mr. Nageb Dehan, excellent cook, continue in thy good work! Thy name shall not be unrecorded in history, even though it be but for a week.

"That'll Be All Right."

I was wondering what this luncheon might cost. The wealthy Syrian importers go here. Fugitive Americans with tastes for Bohemia not too infrequently drizzle in. It was a somewhat elaborate luncheon, and Hassey's is à la carte. I speculated upon \$1.75. "How much? Oh, that will be all right," says George, with large delight. "But you don't own the restaurant, George," I said. Here came the proprietor, with a smile and a respectful protest. Charge a friend of George's? Perish the thought; and I must come again.

But here again came the insistent boy; another man wanted moving, and George grew obviously impatient. "Some time this afternoon—some time," said he, with lowering brows. Was he not entertaining? Again the boy was exalted to the wags, and my friend talked of Beyrout, of Damascus, oldest of cities in the world, as though they were parts of Harlem. The tears came to his eyes as he spoke of his home. "It is the grandest place in the world," said he with deep feeling. "Can't you go and visit there for your paper? We'll go together. Get five or six rich Americans. I'll be their guide. We'll make money—lots of money—picking up little curios cheap that we can sell over here. I know every hole and corner of the East—I can show them everything."

Assuredly he can. And should a "rich American" see this and possess Eastern roving desires let him now know that George Sheheri, whom all Washington street knows, will fix him up and be a guide, philosopher and friend into the bargain. But let him not forget to mention the name of Davenport. He pressed upon me a postal card, with highly colored camels on it, from his private store, and departed moodily again to work. The joys of hospitality were over.

Should you talk to a Syrian you will find him very proud of the generosity of his race. "In Damascus," said the "Oriental pharmacist," who has his American diploma, "there are only a couple of hotels for tourists. A stranger coming from the country has but to present himself at any house to gain a shelter. I talked with my pharmacist for half an hour about his country, and thought to order something from his soda fountain. He supplied it, but refused to take the payment. He had accounted the conversation to be a friendly one. Dr. Nagib Abson, formerly medi-



LITTLE SYRIAN SKETCHES.

Abdo, proffered dates and cigars and rich Syrian wine with a generosity quite overwhelming. I had passed a day in Little Syria, simply using the ordinary courtesies of life, and went away as rich as I had entered it. May it not receive its tribute?

Some facts regarding Little Syria follow—its population varies from 5,000 in summer to 10,000 in winter. All the wealthy Syrians live in Brooklyn apartment houses.

They esteem themselves a superior race to the Armenians; the Armenians say Syrians wish to be considered Armenians.

Little Syria has no "joints," no theatres, and the amusements of the people are few and simple. There are ten Syrian newspapers published in New York, of which one is a daily.

Syrians become Americanized very rapidly, and of late years show a tendency to stay here. They are domestic and home loving, and the keenest traders on earth.

They engage in almost all occupations. They eat many stews, and vegetables enter largely into their food.

As evening comes, the activity of Washington street decreases; the business places close. Dim yellow lights come into the upper windows, and shrill brown



GATHERING ROUND THE PUSH-CART MAN. A POPULAR DIVERSION IN LITTLE SYRIA.

cal inspector for the United States government, gave me photographs and much of the information used here. His relatives, Salim Bey Elias and T.

children scream in play amid the dusk of the streets. These, too, cease, and one by one the upper lights disappear. Little Syria is silent!

NEW YORK, Saturday.

WHEN Mrs. Jack Edgerton was left a widow, with two children to support and an income which, thanks to the gambling instincts of her husband, had been reduced from \$25,000 a year to a thousand, she was not slow to realize that if she intended to do her duty by her children she must go to work at once. Nor was it strange that, considering my intimacy with her late husband—Jack and I had been schoolmates and lifelong friends—she should have taken me into her confidence and asked my advice as to her future course.

It was about a fortnight after the funeral that I called on her in answer to her request and found her so becomingly robed in black, and with such a charming color in her cheeks, that my feelings of sympathy began to take on another and rosier hue. "I wish," said this clever and admirable little woman, as she took my hand into her own with a warm pressure, "that you would tell me what you think of society boosting as a profession?"

"Certainly," I replied. "I think it is rapidly becoming an honored calling, because, as the throwing open of any new territory to the public is certain to be quickly followed by the establishment of some system of transit to and from that territory, so does the throwing open of the golden portals of society to climbers of every race, hue and previous condition serve to create another class, who make it their business to facilitate entrance to this new Oklahopa."

"Admirable!" she cried. "I have already figured out that these golden portals are now open to any one who is willing and able to pay the price of a ticket of admission—a fact amply proved by the large number of persons who come into view the moment the limelight of notoriety is thrown upon the social stage of Newport, New York or Bar Harbor. And, as there are many climbers who lack the necessary skill or nerve, but still possess the price of admission, there has arisen the new and wholly admirable profession

THE SOCIETY BOOSTER ---- By James L. Ford.

of boosting practised by specialists in the art of precipitating clients into the very heart of the best advertised society in the land.

"Of course in this as in other social matters we are simply copying the customs of the older countries, and especially those of England, which is pre-eminently the home of the booster and the cradles of boosting. I positively blush for my countrywomen when I try to compute the number of hard earned American dollars that have been poured by them into the pockets of those 'ladies of title' who advertise their will: as to undertake social sponsorship and secure for their clients invitations to balls and country houses and perhaps even a presentation to royalty itself."

Her Fertile Field.

"And so you are going to undertake to boost people into the Four Hundred?" I inquired. "Well, you certainly have a much larger acquaintance in that set than I have, and I am really sorry that I cannot be of much service to you."

"Oh, I know plenty of the fashionable crowd!" she cried. "Jack and I never went with any others. They're easy. What I want now is to make the acquaintance of some rich vulgarians who are willing to pay to know them, too, and to pay more than the value of their money. I've always been taught that by utilizing our waste products we add to the nation's wealth."

"Therefore I am going to try and enrich our country by making practical use of these hordes of wealthy barbarians who come crowding into New York in the hope of identifying themselves with the noisiest and most overrated social element that it can find. And, by the way, isn't it strange that they never take into account the real society that exists in this city of

achievement and serious thought and growing influence? Well, I propose to make some of the people pay for the education of my children. But I want you to help me, and first of all please tell me what is the best lever to employ in the work. What do you say to the press?"

"An excellent idea," I made answer. "Three months later she told me that she was earning \$40 a week by purveying society news for half a dozen weeklies and small dailies, and that she hoped to secure one or two clients to be boosted."

Is it strange, then, that I should have looked with feelings of admiration and interest which quickly deepened into genuine affection on a woman capable of absorbing my ideas and putting them into operation in so short a space of time? And who could have been gladder than I when I learned from her own lips that no less a family than the Puddletons had placed their social future in her hands for a handsome consideration."

Within a week or less than seven papers had announced to the world that Miss Gladys Puddleton was about to make her debut at a tea to be given by her mother, Mrs. J. Wesley Puddleton, assisted by—and here followed a list of half a dozen of the very sharpest of the sharp set crowd.

About this time I reluctantly turned my back on New York for a six months' trip to the West—a space of time that under ordinary circumstances is equivalent to about six years, but which in this particular instance seemed more like sixty, so deeply had I become interested in Mrs. Jack and her scheme of society boosting. I wrote to her regularly, of course, and from time to time received long letters descriptive of her manner of living, her amusements, the health of her children—everything, in short, except her new business, or profession, whichever one

might choose to call it. Again and again I inquired about the success of her undertaking, but she always ignored my questions and confined herself to saying that she was "getting along very nicely."

Her reticence led me to suspect that she was hiding something, and, fearing that she might be in actual want and too proud to reveal her necessities even to an old friend, I wrote to her in terms that she could not positively ignore, and the very next mail brought me a letter containing these words, which, although reassuring, only served to whet my curiosity to the boiling point.

Very Profitable Business.

"You ask me how I am getting along financially. Well, my dear friend, when I tell you that I expect to lease a small house in the autumn and furnish it with the money that I have made since I first launched the Puddletons on the social sea you will realize that I am not actually destitute. I have found boosting a very profitable business, but that is because I have made one of the most wonderful discoveries of the age in that science—a discovery so remarkable that I do not dare to commit it to paper for fear some train robber, overhauling the mail, might learn my secret, come to New York and start in as my competitor."

By this time I knew that I really loved the Society Booster. I knew it because I was, in a way, sorry to hear of her great success. With the purest motives in the world I had hoped that she would find life so hard that she would be glad to listen to what I had made up my mind to say to her at our next meeting, but now I feared that she was growing into a state of independence which might render a husband entirely unnecessary to her existence.

Two weeks from the day on which I received this letter I stood in the pretty little parlor of the Society

Booster's flat and heard, my heart beating fiercely the while, the indescribably sweet sound of her rustling draperies as she hurried down the long narrow passage to greet me. Through the half open door leading to the dining room I could hear the sound of childish voices as her two children sat on the floor in play.

Almost the first words that I said as I took her by the hand were:—"Well, what of your secret? What is this discovery in the science of boosting?" "My dear friend," she said, "it is simply this. Instead of boosting the new millionnaires into the Four Hundred I am boosting the Four Hundred into them. I found that our effete aristocracy was far more eager to get its hands on the new rich than the new rich were to get into what we call society. And now, thanks to me, New York is enjoying such an infusion of new financial blood as it has not known since the civil war. Delmonico's and Sherry's are crowded to their doors every night, and the cost of entertaining is paid for in bills so new and crisp and bright that it is a pleasure to handle them. I only wish I could get my pay in those bills instead of the worn and tattered currency that my clients dispense."

"Wonderful woman!" I exclaimed, and something in her face told me that the next move in the inevitable sequence of love-making would not be taken amiss; but just at this moment an angry yell reached our ears, and glancing through the doorway I saw the two children squabbling over their toys. For one moment I hesitated. Then I remembered that there were boarding schools in the land, and I took the Society Booster in my arms and told her that she must become my wife. I did not ask her, I simply appropriated her, and I am glad to say that she did not resist.

Of course our happiness since then has been ideal, but my advice to widows who are tired of loneliness is to keep the children out of the way when eligible company is calling.