

# SECRETS OF HIDDEN DEN OF LUXURY AND VICE

## Carefully Hidden Studio in New York Where Stanford White Entertained Men of His Stripe in Ways That Rivalled Days of Fabled Eastern Luxury.

## Was House Within a House Where the Light of Day Never Was Allowed to Penetrate—Only by Secret Passages Could Entrance Be Gained.

New York. — Ever since Evelyn Nesbit Thaw told her story on the witness stand so that all men might judge whether its telling were not enough to turn a husband mad, ever before that, ever since the pistol shot that killed Stanford White, last June let loose on the ears of men countless stories of revel and debauch seemed left to guard the memory of the dead architect, curiosity has been drawn irresistibly to White's Twenty-fourth street studio. It is the place which, if half the stories told were true, White had dedicated to that part of his life which ultimately led him to his death—the place where he played Hyde with a few depraved companions while to all the rest of the world he was a distinguished and an envied Jew; a place which was a heaven of beauty, and also, according to report, a hell of sin.

No other spot in New York has so stirred the imaginations of thousands. No other spot has been at once such a commonplace of gossip and yet so utterly unknown, such a closed mystery to all. And today, stripped of much of its mystery and of all the glamour and lure of its wonderful treasures of art, with only the dull outer walls left to give mute testimony to the reality of the wild scenes they once sheltered, it remains with only a parallel in the history of this or any other modern city.

### Truly Well Concealed.

It is not just a suite of rooms or one or more floors of a house cleverly protected from the observation or intrusion of other tenants. Still less is it an ordinary house, the windows of which, however thickly curtained and screened, must still look down on passers-by in the street below and be exposed in turn to the curious gaze of any and all who cared to raise their heads.

"You may have trouble to find this place," wrote Harry Thaw when he first appealed to the Comstock and the Society for the Suppression of Vice to put a stop to the infamous practices which he said were carried on within its walls; "you may have trouble to find this place, for it is well concealed."

Well concealed it is, for though a man knew street and number he might search all day and never find it going on his way at last satisfied the address he had was wrong. No stranger in the street ever saw the windows of Stanford White's studio; a man might pass through the outer door of the house and wander all through the building, and though he would find easy access to the studios or rooms of other men he would find no hint to lead him to that of Stanford White. That glided temple of the senses stands apart, a house almost within a house, enclosed within two rows of other houses with blank walls on all sides to shut it off from all view and observation. It was a place used only in the night time and with the shades for the light of day, ordinary windows and their outlook had no place in the designer's plan. Only a secret passage, cunningly walled off in the main house fronting on Twenty-fourth street, could it be reached, and only through a secret door which slid open at the touch of a hidden spring could friend or visitor enter that passage.

### Belongs to Other Days.

The studio is situated in the small open court that lies between the rear of the houses on Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets. As it stands today, dismantled and untenanted, it would make an ideal haunt for kidnapers or counterfeiters, or any of the other desperate plotters who figure so largely in romantic novels, and for this reason, even in its present, its most commonplace aspect, it seems to belong to medieval days, an age younger by centuries than busy, prac-

tical, modern New York. But as it was when Stanford White was the presiding genius there, lavishing all the brilliancy of his perverted fancy on nightly entertainments so bizarre that no one was so faded that he did not eagerly seek an invitation to attend, it belonged to the days of fabled eastern luxury and splendor, the days of the Arabian Nights, with all their wizardry of imprisoned geni, enchanted palaces and young girls, beautiful as the dawn.

And the site for this lordly pleasure house, this secret haunt where the master might hold his visitor prisoner for hours or days, this dream house of art and abandon, of refinement and revelry, was chosen, as if in deliberate joy in the contrast, in the heart of the most respectable and commonplace surroundings.

"I sat up the bed and started to scream," said Evelyn Thaw before the court, as she told of her waking in the room of the mirrors. "Then I screamed and screamed and screamed, and he came over and asked me to please keep quiet. Then I began to scream more than ever." All this between Broadway and Sixth avenue, within a stone's throw of the humdrum shopping district of Twenty-third street!

### Commonplace Surroundings.

One wall of the studio backs on the Eden Musee, the delight of children and simple country visitors. The tumult of Twenty-third street, with its indolent or hurrying shoppers and their restless humors of the cheapjack toys along the sidewalk, easily reaches the ear. On the Twenty-fourth street side the eye sees only an everyday row of monotonous looking houses, no uglier or shabbier than a hundred rows exactly like them from which the bright tide of fashion has drifted away forever. If an artist wished to portray a thoroughly commonplace street, without a hint of romance or a touch to fire the imagination, he could find no better scene. And it was just this resting of almost ostentatious respectability, of the staidest and least inviting propriety, that Stanford White chose to use as a curtain behind which he could set his private stage as he willed, could intoxicate himself with a riotous luxury of sensual beauty and extravagant display and teach their sorry parts to the puppets he introduced there without fear of interruption or discovery. There, decked in her brave purple and crimson, mocked at the prim gray gown of virtue's gray gown that sheltered her and let her live. It was as if a dancing hall from Paris should be found hidden among the elms in the churchyard of some little New England village.

### Entrance to the Glided Den.

Here is Evelyn Thaw's description of her first visit to the place: "We stopped at a dingy lodging house and, as we passed inside, the door opened. No one touched it, but it opened of itself. We went through that door and along a passage and up some steps, and then another door opened in the same way. We went up some more steps and when we were half way up I stopped and asked where we were going, and a voice called down, but I could not see who it was. Then another voice called, a man's and we went on up the stairs till we came into a room magnificently furnished with velvets and satins, with all kinds of beautiful things standing around and paintings on the walls and interesting cabinets and bronzes and marble statuettes and shaded lights."

There are three floors to the studio, not including a kind of basement, which was given over entirely to the kitchens, pantries and servants' quarters, and a peculiar feature of the whole building is the fact that instead of one main staircase running straight up through the house, the different

floors are reached by an arrangement of separate staircases, each of which gives access only to one particular floor or set of rooms. Thus, White's friends passed up a staircase which gave them no hint that there were any rooms on the basement floor at all, and, by closing a door here and opening another there—all the doors being operated by a system of secret springs which could be worked from key-boards on each floor—practically to White alone—the visitor could be led straight to any part of the house White wished without being taken through any other part. But for general purposes it was the first floor—the one above the basement—that was used as the main reception room and for the big supper parties, like that in which "the Pie Girl" figured.

### Here Luxury Unrestrained.

Here the artist was in his own kingdom; here was luxury unrestrained. There were glowing antiques in bronze and marble; tapestries in wonderful, subdued tones, softened by centuries; one White had begged himself from an Italian shrine by paying an enormous bribe to the gray-haired priest who burned candles before it. Jeweled chandeliers hung from the painted ceiling—a wild riot of color blended with consummate art—and electrical devices that started and enchanted and charmed the eye. The electrician who furnished the house tells how he worked with the architect for a solid week on the fairy-tale scheme. "It could not be done," was his own appalled objection when the plan first was unfolded. "We will do it," said Stanford White; and no conception proved too novel, no price too high, for his fancy and genius to overcome. It was in this room that the great white bear-skin was spread on which Evelyn Nesbit posed for some of her best known

pictures, and here were gorgeous rose Du Barry portieres, curiously carved pieces of teakwood and Japanese furniture, rare lace curtains, screens inlaid with ivory, and huge old cedar chests carved deep with elephant's heads, with ivory tusks set in. Priceless rugs were on the floor, from Khorassan and Serrebrand, from Bokhara and Tabriz, and on the walls were paintings by Rubens and Gerome and Millais and Bourgeois.

### White's Most Private Studio.

On the floor above was a smaller studio, fitted up with the same royal magnificence. This was the room with the red velvet swing and the big Japanese carved deep with elephant's heads, which the feet of the swivel crashed when strong arms pushed her high. Here White had his ordinary living rooms, bedrooms and dressing-rooms. On the floor above, reached by a tiny back stairway, of which few indeed knew the secret, was a studio—almost a boudoir—smaller and daintier still. Back of this, with a deep and heavy gold-crested tapestries, was the exquisitely furnished little bedroom where, they tell, champagne was poured for those whom the king of this palace of art most delighted to honor—with ruin.

### Few Knew of the Place.

Very few persons ever dreamed of the existence of this Twenty-fourth street "studio." Some of these were workmen, who constructed it under the architect's own direction; others, used to havin' her own somewhat. But she'll answer to the bit if ye'll only be a bit gentle with her at first an' let her have her head. I remember how it was with her ma and me, an' if I'd been a derved fool like so many m'n and tried to get rambunctious when she first got spliced, well, she'd be a million and one divorces in this country in less than a week.

### Condemns Currants as Food.

An English physician, James Cantle, speaks in strong terms of condemnation of the growing custom of using currants in bread and cake. "The baking," he says, makes them wholly impervious to any digestive fluid, therefore they result in serious intestinal disturbances, especially in children.

### Those Foolish Questions.

No sooner did immortal George appear with his little hatchet than the "man who asks foolish questions" arrived on the scene.

"Going to do some cuttings?" asked the latter.

"Yes," replied George, losing his patience, "what did you suppose was going to do with the hatchet, milk a cow?"

But the provoker blandly ignored the thrust.

"Going to cut down a cherry tree?" he chuckled.

"Yes," exploded George, "but I wish it wasn't a cherry tree."

"What kind of a tree would you like it to be?"

"A lemon tree, so I could hand you one."

And then the "man who asks foolish questions" took to the tall timbers.

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those in his service, who from time to time would carry there his choicest art treasures. One at least, a well-known fire insurance man, must have known it—for the house and its contents were insured for thousands of dollars.

Others who entered there were clubmen, like himself, Apostles of the Unusual, ever seeking a new sensation; young women of fortune flattered by the notice of one in the front ranks of wealth and fashion; little "country mice," like 16-year-old Evelyn Nesbit, whose fresh beauty gratified him in the splendid setting provided and whose senses were immediately dazed by the unwonted, oriental luxury. Most of the visits there were made at night. Many of the guests would have been unable afterward to find their way there. Enough, it was Stanford White's domain, held beneath the spell of his genius. How he first conceived it, he bought it, built it, threw his thick mantle of secrecy over it, nobody knew.

Just why the house came to be dismantled and when, remains a mystery. Diners were given there up to within a very few weeks before the night of June 25. Perhaps some rumor reached the owner—who knows? Secrecy is ever on its guard; to be "investigated" most trying to the artistic nature. Whatever the motives, dismantled it now is. The great mirrors rudely torn from their fixtures, the priceless Bokhara rugs bundled up in a hurry and smuggled away. The occupants of the adjoining houses continue to go and come on their daily rounds, with little thought of the grewsome house in their rear. What is likely to become of it is hard to predict. Stanford White is dead, and the veil of secrecy he drew over this, his pet haunt, has been rent from end to

### ENDING IT ALL

By NELLIE CRAVEY GILLMORE

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The water was clear and cold and still, gave for the floating ripples made by Paulding's swift oars as he drove his shell determinedly toward the opposite shore. A dingy Panama was pulled quite over his eyes; could one have caught their look, a sterner expression was in the mild gray depths than they had ever before worn. His shirt sleeves were rolled back to the elbows, the brown, muscular fore-arms flashing like bronze in the sunlight, and with every dexterous stroke, the grim lines about his mouth became more set.

Suddenly the boat scraped on the sand and Paulding sprang ashore, fastening it to one of the willows that dipped its branches low into the water. He stood a moment surveying the placid expanse of treacherous ground. Over the distant edge of it, a rim of blue, like a turquoise hue, curved itself in vivid contrast. High up in the west, the sun glowed a fiery challenge. Paulding waited till the haze grew saffron under the vanishing spire of letters, had been met by and walked up the bank, flinging himself down on the spongy carpet of daisy-studded grass.

An hour slipped by, and he did not stir. He was cynically reviewing the past and wondering, with a last, desperate thread of hope, if life had really come to an end for him in this tragic way; a suicide's grave!

Cynthia was no weeping, he knew that. She was, as a matter of fact, unimpaired, and he could not even try to divine himself further with visions of her relenting. When, on the occasion of his last call, she had coldly sent down word that she would not meet him, then or ever, he had felt in his bones that her words were final. Every effort to communicate with her, thereafter, either personally or by letter, had been met by the same uncompromising frigidity. Every note had been returned with the seal unbroken; she would not even allow him a syllable or appeal. And for what? He coddled his ingenuity in vain. Obviously, he had committed some unpardonable sin in Cynthia's eyes, and quite as obviously, she was never even to know what it was!

Another 60 minutes were gone, and with a groan, Paulding dragged himself stiffly to his feet and moved down to the water's edge. Twilight had choked away the pretty pink haze and long, drab shadows were beginning to quiver gossamerly over the lake. With numb fingers, he fastened the rope that fastened his shell and thrust it in the bottom of the boat. He settled himself with painstaking care in his seat and resting on his oars, sat for a moment, gazing about him at the familiar landmarks everywhere made doubly dear by association. For it was here, almost on this very spot, that Cynthia had given him her hand and he had kissed her on the lips to seal their betrothal.

Twenty feet out, the water was deep. It would be but a moment's work, and—setting his lips, he shot ahead like an arrow, then gradually slowed down. His face was quite pale; almost ashen, and his heart was pounding heavily. His eyes, from mild gray, had grown perfectly black. Suddenly, he dropped his oars and sprang into the water. It closed over him, sending millions of circles rippling away in every direction. It was icy cold and chilled Paulding to the marrow. His head emerged after a second time, ten feet nearer shore. A few powerful strokes brought him to firm ground. He clambered up the bank, shaking himself like a drenched terrier.

"The devil!" he muttered.

Then some sudden revulsion of feeling caused him to laugh aloud. There was an instantaneous echo, and with a hot, quivering Paulding turned and glared in the direction from which it came.

Less than a rod away, a girl, slim and graceful, in a white yachting suit, smiled at him over the yapan.

"Cynthia!"

The next minute, he was at her side. But she deftly evaded his touch and stood regarding him with cold, inscrutable eyes. He noticed with a pang that her cheeks had lost some of their roundness and much of their old-time color.

"Why did you come here to-day?" he asked, steadying his voice by an effort.

The girl remained silent, with quivering lips. Her trembling, humid and half-parted, closed about her words she would have uttered. Her mute gaze accused him more plainly than words could have done.

"Cynthia," he began after a constrained silence, "tell me why you refused to see me?"

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The vivid spots of color leaped to her cheeks.

"After the letter you sent me?" she questioned.

"Letter?"

Cynthia fumbled in her blouse and drew forth a crumpled tearstained sheet. She handed it to Paulding and he opened it wondering, reading the words through a blood-red mist:

"Farewell forever. I have learned to love another better than yourself, and cannot, conscientiously, let you bind yourself to me. Believe me, this is far best for us both. Some day you will learn to be happier than I could hope to make you."

There was no address, no signature. But the handwriting was unmistakably his own. For a moment, he stood, bewildered, looking first at the girl and then back to the letter. Then, in a flash it came to him. This was the note he had composed for Billy, the footman. Billy could not write a line and he, fool-like, had volunteered to help him out of his affair de coeur with the house girl next door. But how in the world had the note gotten to Cynthia?

An embarrassing silence lay between them. Paulding was divided between an intolerable sense of rage and mortification and an inexpressible feeling of joy and relief.

"Cynthia," he said after awhile, "how came you by this?"

"The postman brought it."

"It was directed to you?"

"Certainly."

"In my handwriting?"

"Naturally."

Paulding pondered a second. Then: "Good Lord!" he ejaculated, "Good Lord!"

The girl looked at him with crimsoning cheeks. Her blouse, cut low in the neck, revealed her throat white and palpitant.

"Did you ever get the letter I wrote asking you to go with me to Paris?"

She shook her head slowly back and forth.

"No," she said, "I did not."

All at once, and without warning, Paulding caught her in his arms and kissed her vehemently on her eyes, cheeks and lips.

"I guess I must have mixed up those letters," he explained as Cynthia struggled away from his embrace, breathing fast, her eyes starting through a sudden mist.

Suddenly she broke into a musical ripple of laughter and sat down weakly on the edge of a stump.

"And the house maid—did you take her to Paris?"

"Billy became chicken-hearted at the eleventh hour, I believe, and never sent his letter at all."

Cynthia had removed the white duck hat from her curls and sat regarding the narrow band of red about it with musing eyes. Her cheeks throbbed crimson. All at once, Paulding stooped and got possession of her hands; they were trembling.

"Seems queer you should come down here," he said, down here—where—

"I came," she interrupted him with a little something between a sob and laugh, "just as you did—to end it all—out there."

"But you didn't!" cried Paulding exultantly, flushing scarlet.

"Nor you," she echoed, eluding his dripping arms.

"I did my best," he laughed, with a cynical face.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Cynthia, "we came all roundy doing together to 'end it all,' didn't we?"

"There's a better way than that," said Paulding, looking into her shining eyes, "we can live together instead. Shall we?"

She gave him her hands.

Alumni-Claim Governor.

Gov. Hughes is probably the most "alumni-ed" executive that ever headed the state government. Attending the Cornell dinner the other night, he was called as a son of the Ithaca institution and only a week or so before the Brown alumni had claimed him for their own. But the governor if he had any desire to qualify further may drop in on the Colgate and even the Columbia alumni when they dine. He started his college career at Colgate, stayed there two years and then went to Brown. He studied law at Columbia and became a Cornell man by occupying a lecture chair there for two years.

Martin Van Buren's Letters.

Dr. Stuyvesant Fish Morris of New York during the last year gave to the Library of Congress, Washington, 1,700 letters he addressed and written by Martin Van Buren, thereby contributing all that remained in his possession of the Van Buren collection with the exception of a few of the more intimate family letters which Dr. Morris wished to retain in his family.

PUSH THE COUNTRY'S TRADE.

Invaluable Work That is Done by American Drummer.

"The American drummer is the greatest patriot in the world," said W. J. Clark, in the Washington Post. "I believe no other man can touch the Americans in selling goods or boosting their country. The traveling men of the United States have made our foreign trade. They are good mixers, quick to catch on and are the greatest civilizers we have, with the exception of the newspapers. How faithful and patriotic they are some but, those who have seen them can appreciate. Their patriotism is put to the real test, for anyone who has traveled in a foreign country longs to get back home when he has been years away from his friends. But the men stick to their work, knowing that it is up to them to make trade. And they are doing it bravely and surely. There is no better trade-mark in Europe to-day than that which appears on American goods. Foreign countries know it, too, for many of them are con-

tinually making imitations of our manufactured products, and some are even going so far as to mark them with American names. The people of Europe are beginning to look upon goods that come from America the same as we looked upon goods from other articles a few years ago that were marked imported."

Farm Life in Rhodesia.

Mr. Trollop's farm, near Fort Gibbs, has been visited by two rhinoceroses lately. They are very truculent in their behavior and are doing heavy damage to his crops, besides being a source of danger to all on the farm.

Mr. Trollop was also surprised by a crocodile when fishing on the farm. The reptile plunged into the water from the opposite bank, and made straight toward her—Rhodesia Herald.

Statesman Breaking Down.

Joseph Chamberlain, who, with Mrs. Chamberlain, has gone for a holiday on the Riviera, is reported as very feeble and is traveling under an assumed name.

# LOWERED AMONG DEADLY RATTLED

WESTERN MINING EXPERT HAS TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE IN CALIFORNIA.

## GOES TO EXAMINE PROPERTY

### Descends Into Forsaken Shaft Where He is Attacked by Bats and Reptiles—Serpents Hang by Fangs to His Clothing.

Olive Roberts, well known all over the Pacific slope as a mining expert, was in New York recently. To friends he met at the Herald Square hotel he told of a recent experience that is the most thrilling of his 39 years of mining.

"One day last January," Mr. Roberts said, "I received a commission from a couple of English capitalists to go to Inyo county, California, to examine two mines and report as to their value, condition and feasibility as properties upon which to expend capital.

"Without delay I packed up a camping and mining outfit and was off by way of Mojave and through the Mojave desert.

"The mines are situated on the east side of the Painted range of mountains, facing the famous and terrible

Death valley—a country well known to me from years of residence and travel in that portion of the state. I was to meet two men with horses and a wagon at Mojave. They were to accompany me on the trip and to assist me in every possible way to explore and investigate the mines.

"It was mighty hot down there in that desert country. I had started to go down the mine in a negligee shirt and a pair of slippers, but on second thought I put on a heavy brown duck coat lined with blanket wool. The overalls were made of the same material. I then put on a pair of heavy buckskin gloves, took my pick, got into the rawhide tub and told the men to lower away.

"I was lowered with a vengeance. Instead of letting me down slowly, controlling the windlass by the spokes at each end of the rickety old affair, they employed a brake which they had rigged up for the purpose. It consisted of a rope wound about the roller. This, however, was not strong enough or else it was too stiff to bend or lighten. At any rate, it failed to give sufficient friction on the wood—so down, down I went into the apparently bottomless pit.

"I shouted again and again for the men to hold me, for I was being overwhelmed and choked by a vast swarm of bats. But instead down and down I went. The men evidently could not hear my cries. I held tightly to the rope with one hand and tried to fight the rattle of the windlass with the other, but the bats flew against my face and hands, striking their sharp claws into my flesh. I saw I was completely covered by the evil-smelling and nauseating creatures.

"I was shot down until I was entirely through the bat 'line' or 'belt' and was still descending. Kneeling down in the cowhide tub or bucket, I relighted the candle. Instantly dozens or more rattlesnakes set their fearful and unmistakable sound of warning. I say a dozen, but there must have been hundreds of the deadly reptiles in that old shaft.

"As I went down among the rattling, ghastly mass a big fellow struck from his position on the timber and fastened his fangs in my coat sleeve. 4 letters I fought him quickly by the back of the head, tore him off and dropped him down the pit. I heard him strike bottom and I knew I was not far above it by the promptness with which the sound came back. Two or three other rattlers had struck in that

train ran into it, with the result noted above.

"The brakeman was dismissed forthwith. Six weeks later the superintendent boarded a freight train at a way station on the division and, mounting the 'dog-house' steps in the caboose, was much surprised to find that same brakeman on guard.

"What are you doing here? Inquired the surprised official.

"Workin'," replied the culprit, with a dismal grin.

"Upon whose authority?" persisted the superintendent.

"Aw! I ain't lost no time a-tall," answered the brakeman.

Further questioning brought out the fact that the industrious one had been marking up his own name upon the crew board and in that way was being called regularly to go out on the run.

Asked why he had taken such a course to keep at work he replied:

"Well, boss, my credit for grub is good as long as I keep busy, but when me pay stops me check stops!"

He is working yet—Kansas City Star.

## WOMAN'S CORPSE RIDES ON TRAIN AS PASSENGER

### DIES SUDDENLY IN SEAT BY KIN WHO KEEP SECRET UNTIL END OF JOURNEY.

Prairie Du Sac, Wis.—Mrs. Harry Sawyer, a former resident of this city, was brought here for burial after a most unusual trip. Mrs. Sawyer had for the last ten years been living in a little village above Anaconda, Mont., and recently started with her son and his wife to visit a married daughter at Kansas City. She had been troubled for years with heart failure, and while on the train suffered a sudden attack, dying almost instantly. As there were not many passengers on the train at the time, her death passed unnoticed except to her son and daughter-in-law. They had barely enough money to carry them to Kansas City, and there being no suitable stopping place for a half day, the son and his wife quickly decided to keep the secret of the death, and for two days traveled keeping the knowledge of the death from the trainmen. Whenever the train men were at hand the couple would carry on an energetic conversation as though their mother was a party to the talk. Not for an instant did either of the couple leave the side of the corpse during the long, tedious journey. At Kansas City money was secured for an undertaker and the body was brought here for interment.

## REFUSED TO BE DISCHARGED.

### A Railway Brakeman Who Kept Himself at Work.

In Kansas the railroads have a good deal of difficulty in providing competent men to fill vacancies in the train crews and other positions which do not offer attractions that are especially inviting.

At each division terminal there is usually maintained a "crew board" upon which is written in chalk twice a day a list of conductors and brakemen available for the following 12 hours. This list is posted by the "caller" or some other employe familiar with the situation, and from it men are chosen to fill the various runs.

One day an accident happened which caused some dismay at headquarters, aside from breaking up some cars and tearing up some track. It shattered the plans of the superintendent, who was about to start upon a vacation trip.

Investigation developed that a brakeman had forgotten to close a switch properly and the following

train ran into it, with the result noted above.

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