

VICE AND WICKEDNESS

Study of Pauperism and Lower-Life Misery.

IN THE FAMOUS TOMBS COURT

Scenes from the Darker Side of Humanity in the Old and Dingy Hall of Justice Make the Average Mortal Well Satisfied with Even Commonplace Lot in the Social Scale—The Experience Which Followed the Research of a Lecturer.

Whenever scenes of squalor, poverty, crime or misery are mentioned or witnessed in Scranton, which for several years has worn the air of the usual city of a diversified population, the writer is reminded of the miserable panoramas exhibited daily in the famous Tombs police court in New York. The low, massive, dingy and dark smelling old building lends a fitting background to the scenes of its interior, and after climbing the steps and turning from the dark corridor into the darker walled police court room, the visitor must, in a measure, be prepared for the dismal side of humanity portrayed within the enclosure.

Of New York's three police courts, each has its peculiar constituency. The Yorkville court, a step up on the East Side just west of Third avenue, gets the pauper crime overflow of the upper tenement house district and occasional cases from the residential portion of the city east of Central park; the Jefferson Market court on the West Side at Eighth street and Sixth avenue receives the sensational cases which bubble from the never sleeping and famous tenderloin precinct and gambling and sporting world.

A RECEPTEACLE FOR SLIME.

But the old and dismal Tombs court is more famous than all; within its arms are received the bloody frays and slime of the great slums, the pauperism and degradation of the lowest possible walks of life, and in the midst of the filth, perhaps an embezzler or high life evildoer appears from the brokerage and Wall street districts. What an opportunity it offers the student of human nature cannot be comprehended. Out of given half dozen cases which are heard there each day could be thrown search lights which would reveal stories too pitiful, too awful, too horribly real to be believed.

The writer's business necessitated frequent visits to the Tombs and a humorous occurrence is recalled which shows what effect the scenes of the court has upon feminine nerves. An official well known in the Woman's Christian Temperance union circles of New York state, while seeking material for a lecture on intemperance among the poor, visited the Tombs one morning with two women friends. Through the courtesy of the justice—Patrick Divver, I think—the trio were given seats inside the railing along the aisle through which the prisoners are conducted to the cages beneath after sentence is pronounced.

WHERE VERMIN ABOUNDS.

For a half hour they listened to the tales of distress and degradation. When one of the visitors rose from her seat to more clearly hear the progress of the cases, the officer administered her against the contact with vermin which during the sessions falls from many of the prisoners and occupies the cracks and corners of the court furniture. The woman drew back with a startled expression and with her two companions stood in the aisle with their skirts raised and drawn closely around them. Their period of nervousness terminated in flight when a dirty, begrimed and filthy old creature, who was being led to the cells, fell at the feet of the lecturer, and after throwing her arms around the woman's limbs began deliriously shrieking for salvation. The weaker for lecture material was carried fainting from the room and it is not probable that the visit to the Tombs was repeated.

Court opens each day, including Sunday, at 8:30 o'clock, and until an adjournment is made at 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon, from 50 to 125 cases are heard. The justice from a list previously prepared calls out the names of the policemen in rotation; each officer with his batch of prisoners gives testimony, the culprits also recite their side of the cases and the squad makes way for another batch. The number is so great that the cases must of necessity be disposed of rapidly, and the order of proceedings after the officer has been heard, is something like this between the justice and the unfortunate.

"Mary, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Well, you see, your honor, I had just come from—"

"I had taken only a wee bit of liquor, and went to my head—which troubles me, since my old man died, you know—your honor, if you'll let me go this time—real, your honor, it's the first time—"

"What will you? you were here last week; thirty days. Next!"

ONLY A SAMPLE CASE.

In the dead of the winter may be seen a woman before the justice whose head is uncombed save by a mass of gnarled and uncouth coarse hair streaked with gray, the upper body hidden only by a thin waist and the limbs covered with a threadbare skirt and dirty socks. Perhaps the feet may be encased by slippers, but just as likely the stockings are the only protection. During the hearing the woman has perhaps pleaded with tears in her eyes not to be sent to the Island and has called upon all the saints in the calendar to bear witness to her innocence, but when sentence is pronounced she turns into a tigress of fury and is led away cursing and heapings vile maledictions on the head of the imperturbable justice.

Such is the court and such is a glimpse of the scenes which make a man's blood boil, and as he draws a full breath of the fresher air of Center street, make one thankful that he exists in more respectable society, no matter how humble his lot may be.

A. T. RAYNSFORD.

THIS IS WRIT SARKASTIC.

An Englishman Upon Jim Corbett's Banknotes of London

Evidently Jim Corbett was like a duck out of water in London, and it is to be hoped that his highly polished and scholarly article will at once be brought before the British parliament in order that immediate steps be taken to rectify those frightful anomalies which the wonderful perspicacity of our noble and gallant Jim has unearthened, to wit: "serving drinks in a rotten manner." What a blot upon

the great Union Jack of England. The idea that "they couldn't give him something fit to drink" is most shocking and moves one to tears. Neither did Jim think much of the English girls, but what an earthquake it would be if they thought less than "much" of Jim and cared still less for his opinions. Note how quickly Jim discovered that "the house of commerce was a big building, of course." After that compliment we may expect Gladstone over to America at once.

To show how thoroughly Jim did London and how he grasped the main points read his remarks: "The best thing in London was the music halls. There wasn't much in London that impressed me. I went to see Westminster Abbey." Jim knows all about London, every historic building and monument for he says: "I don't think much of this thing of chasing around looking at things." No wonder London impressed him so mightily. He met several lords, but they didn't strike him as being anything out of ordinary. It is to be hoped that Jim had concise ideas of an English lord, inasmuch as it has been decided some time ago that an English lord is but a man endowed with human nature.

Latest advice from the greatest city on earth states that London has regained partially the equilibrium it lost over the visit of James Corbett, but probably not one in a thousand ever heard of his name and less than one in a million will care for his opinions.

BIRTON.

NEWS NOTES FROM WALLS.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

LONDON, Aug. 8.—Special importance is attached to the verdict of the jury in the Albion disaster, inasmuch as it is about the only case on record where the management have been censured. According to the evidence there is no doubt that besides negligence, serious infractions of the law and mine regulations have occurred. The verdict is a blessing without doubt, as it will be a salutary lesson to several managers who take their duties in an easy fashion and delegate their department to incompetent assistants.

The Welsh press has been very lively recently. The Cyfarthfa, an Episcopalian monthly, states that they are the conscientious opinion "that our country would be far more religious than it is without one chapel or preacher within it and that the Nonconformist ministers have had a hang dogface and double faced look on them and are never happy without being continually in some communion."

It is a consolation, however, to know that this is but a specimen of the effusions of the High church gang who by their intolerant bigamy and rancor have done so much to make the old church so unpopular. Will it easily be credited that in their eyes it is a sin to call a chapel anything but a meeting house. The sight of a dissenting minister wearing a white "choke" will make them frenzied.

Yet another specimen of "High Churchism": A churchman (?) writes in the *Almanac* advocating the continuance of church elementary schools upon the ground that they are an excellent source from whence Nonconformist children can be proselytized. It is a frank confession but an idiotic one.

These ridiculous effusions bring forth replies from the intolerant section of the Nonconformists, for example, the Rev. D. Oliver Edwards, who commences by calling the church the old harlot and her ministers "a drunken gang," and ends up in language which will not bear reproduction.

Terms are used by both factions in the "religious fight" which are a disgrace to the Welsh language and at times eclipse scenes depicted even in your Arizona Kicker. One more specimen of this week's Welsh press. An Aberystwyth paper speaking of an alleged portrait of the well known divine, the Rev. Job Miles, in a contemporary, states: "Excepting that the eloquent preacher had what appeared to be a black eye, a swelled mouth, and a smudgy face, nobody could say that it was not some sort of a likeness."

The South Walians were proud to bursting point over the number of prizes which went to their territory from the Carmarthen eisteddfod, but alas their joy is short lived as the eisteddfod shows that in the musical competitions twenty-seven went to the north and only twelve to the south. All along the line the north is triumphant, the totals being, North Wales, 64; South Wales, 36. OWEN.

PROMISING MUSICAL AGES.

Interesting *Almanacs* come down with the *General Thomas* Divver. People of Scranton have very little idea, or perhaps have never stopped to think of the number of comparatively old men who are engaged in active business in our city. We mention every day passing to and from their various places of business, looking hole and hearty, and their physical strength unimpaired, and from this very fact, we give the subject a positive thought. A list of the dates of birth of some of Scranton's most prominent and successful citizens here appended which will doubtless prove of interest to many of THE TRIBUNE'S readers.

In July, 1884, at the time of the death of one of Scranton's most respected citizens and benefactors, Thomas Dickson, a party of gentlemen went to the Delaware Water Gap to meet the remains, which were being brought from New York. During the journey a discussion arose in regard to the ages of the several gentlemen and a list of the same was compiled by W. R. Storrs, simply for his own satisfaction and the satisfaction of the members of the party. He gave a copy to each present. The following is the list, with date of birth, made by Mr. Storrs:

James Blair..... May 13, 1807
J. J. Bright..... Sept. 21, 1811
B. H. Throop, M. D..... Nov. 9, 1811
Selden T. Benton..... Oct. 16, 1814
Andrew Watt..... April 6, 1815
John C. Smith..... June 1, 1815
H. P. Flinn..... Feb. 8, 1816
W. W. Moore..... Aug. 30, 1816
J. C. Pitts..... Sept. 17, 1816
C. F. Mattes..... May 20, 1819
Charles Scranton..... June 23, 1822
Jared Chittenden..... July 23, 1823
E. W. Weston..... Dec. 5, 1823
Rev. S. C. Logan..... Dec. 21, 1828
Geo. Young..... May 15, 1834
A. H. Vining..... April 23, 1835
W. R. Storrs..... Dec. 28, 1834
John C. Phelps..... April 20, 1835
Daniel Edwards..... April 28, 1835
William Connel..... Sept. 18, 1837
John Jernyn..... Oct. 27, 1837
Joseph B. Van Bergen..... Feb. 26, 1838
Sidney Broadbent..... April 16, 1838
John T. Dickson..... Feb. 23, 1839
George T. Dickson..... March 26, 1839
Alfred Handald..... June 23, 1839
James Archbold..... Feb. 7, 1843
A. W. Dickson..... Feb. 7, 1844
W. W. Scranton..... April 4, 1844

Of the above list, some have since died, but few, in comparison with the number who formed that party,

THE

Religious World.

The Women's Christian Temperance union, of Green Ridge, has opened a reading room at their rooms, 613 Green Ridge street. It has been furnished with various appliances for amusements, and has a good and varied supply of newspaper periodicals on books. The members of the union have lately given special attention to a gang of boys that were extremely annoying to the neighborhood by their street play. They had become a nuisance, and the attention of an officer was necessary to maintain order and dispel the lads. The women have taken to the boys and have tried to manage them along the principle of the exaltation of goodness. From thirty to thirty-five of them have been drawn into the reading room, where they spend their evenings in amusements and reading. The streets are quiet and the people are not disturbed. The officer on duty could not make out where the lads had gone to suddenly, and in making one of his rounds, he asked him what he had been doing with the boys. The work of the Christian Temperance union is planned for him, and he was shown the hours of the street, audience and pleasure. The members will be invited next Friday the Sunday school of the Pittston Congregational church will hold its annual picnic at Laurel Hill park.

The Ladies' Aid society of the Hickory Street Methodist church gave a contribution to the congregation which attended the Central Park on the 23rd last.

Rev. P. R. Harshbarger, D. D., of the Park Place Methodists Episcopal church, is on a vacation of two weeks visiting friend various parts of the nation. He is expected home the latter part of next week.

Rev. J. G. Morris, of Pittston, will be here next week, and will speak at the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, held at the Hotel Penn in Philadelphia, on the 23rd instant.

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