

NEW YORK CITY IN MY BOYHOOD

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUTLER.

Recently a celebrated clerical association held its sixty-third anniversary, and some of its senior members were called on for their reminiscences of ancient times. I first saw New York City before "Chi Alpha" was founded—1828—when I was six years old. A packet-boat on the Erie Canal brought us from the Cayuga Lake to Schenectady, a stage-coach dragged us through the mud over to Albany, and there we took the day boat "Independence" for New York. At Poughkeepsie and a few other large towns the steamer came to dock, but passengers for the smaller places were sent ashore in a row boat. On our return we went up the Hudson in the new steamer, "North America," which was then regarded as a marvel of magnificence and speed. She had a single cabin lined with velvet, and reached Albany in fifteen hours.

New York at that time had a population of 180,000. Its mayoralty was regarded as a most distinguished office, and its aldermen were a potent force of blood and breeding. The unclean herd of "Mikes" and "Barneys" and other denizens of the slums had not yet vaulted into the city councils, and the Tammany tiger was yet a distant, unaccounted-for. Canal street was about the northern limit of the city, and although Broadway was built up a little farther, yet the region about Houston street and Bowler was still a pasture ground for the family cow. Pearl and Pine streets were the headquarters of the dry goods trade, and almost everywhere the well-to-do merchants, as well as the mechanics, lived up over their stores and shops. My good mother and her ladies were the guests of Mr. Francis Hall, the founder and owner of the Commercial Advertiser, then edited by the genial and gifted Col. William L. Stone. Mr. Hall resided in John street, near William. He was one of the magnates of the Methodist denomination, and the historic John street church, the cradle of American Methodism, was packed every Sunday by the most influential followers of Wesley, Coke and Asbury. In those days lung power was at a premium, not only in the pulpit, but in the pew, where a roving sermon was expected to command the respectful attention of Americans and Hallelujahs.

While Methodism had its headquarters in John street, and Baptists had a church hard by in Nassau street, and the Lutherans at the corner of William and Franklin streets, but chief Presbyterian church was in Wall street, near Broadway, but I forget who was then its pastor. Dr. Gardiner Spring was at the height of his popularity in Beekman street (on the corner where the Times building now stands), and he used to boast that he had over fifty graduates of colleges among his pew holders. Another famous Presbyterian church was in Cedar street, with which the names of more than one Mason was associated. The congregation afterwards moved to an elegant church in Duane street, under Dr. George Potts; thence to Fifth Avenue. Nineteenth century life. Just in the right time the hand will be laid on our shoulder, the word whispered in our ear. We must leave the sewing undone, the house unkept, the child neglected, and the story untold, the picture unfinished, the song unsung. We may not, perchance, even kiss our loved ones good-by. But let us strive to live that we may say: "Yes, Lord, I am ready, always ready; for I need money only with a rod on the top of the steeple, which stood in Nassau street, on the spot now occupied by the grand Mutual Life Insurance building. The other collegiate edifice was at the corner of Fulton street, where Dr. DeWitt, Dr. Brownlee, Dr. Knox and Dr. Matthews, who was subsequently the first Chancellor of the New York University. It was the custom of Dutch dominions to make a New Year's call on their parishioners, and we were not exempted from this custom. We were then supplied with water from pumps, and carts went through the streets with fresh "spring water," which was peddled over the paillor or pitcher. Anthracite coal was not yet introduced, and the ordinary fuel was wood; and the rich indulged themselves with soft coal from Liverpool. One of the especial pleasures of my first visit to New York was the chimney-sweeps. When I heard their claxon voices ringing in the street, I used to run to the door to look at these "poor blots—innocent blacknesses" (as Charles Lamb called them)—clergy-imp, who from their chimney-top pulpit on a nipping cold December morning preach a sermon of patience to mankind. The poor, ragged variety had nothing white about them except their teeth, but no voices in the Seldi Orchestra Troupe, or the "Jubilee Singers," have a richer or wilder melody. I would go a long way to hear one of these dusky vocalists again, for the street-singers of New York are pretty much a thing of the past.

The finest thing to be seen then in New York was the Battery on a bright spring afternoon. The nabobs of the town resided around it, and in Broadway and Greenwich street, and especially in Chambers street and around Columbia College. Mayor Philip Hone entertained the elite and foreign celebrities at his mansion on the corner of Broadway and Park Place. The millionaire, Stephen Whitney, lived on Bowling Green, and even Cortland street was filled with the residences of prominent merchants. The fashionable promenade was on the Battery, with its luxuriant shade trees and its superb view of the harbor, enlivened by the shipping. As everybody knew everybody else was watching, and these afternoon stambleries on the Battery were a sort of city sociable on a large scale. There was an American homogeneity in society which has passed away since New York has become the Noah's Ark for all humanity, with every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth after its kind. The best people lived in their own houses, and were not yet huddled in huge hotels, or stacked up in tiers of "flats" towards the clouds.

The chief hostelry was the "City Hotel," which stood on Broadway, just above the modest old Trinity church. It contained a large hall, which was used for festive occasions and also for religious and philanthropic meetings. I have always heard that the American Bible Society was organized at a convention of sixty-five gentlemen held in that room in May, 1826. The chief place for public meetings in those days was Maelson Hall, a handsome Gothic building on Broadway, between Duane and Pearl streets. It was afterwards the great rallying place of the Whig party, and here the student days of the illustrious Hoffman, the fascinating orator of the New York bar. One of my pleasant memories of that visit to the city, and the friends who were taken by himself and family to see Captain Cooper's new packetship, a wonderful vessel of six hundred tons! Ten years afterwards I went on board the Sirius, the great Western mail steamer, which arrived from Europe. One day my good mother took me over to Brooklyn, a large village lying about the Fulton ferry. Brooklyn heights were mostly covered by orchards, and on the spot where I am writing this "acred" the farmers were working in their fields, a full mile and a half from the village! Sixty-five years have rolled away since that day, and now the quiet Dutch village is a city of almost one million inhabitants! A busy life and a happy life has intervened between the visit of that lad of six years to New York City and this evening, when a gray head is bending over the sixty-third anniversary of the city's birth. Next week I will (D.V.) open the sketch of memory again.—*Evangelist.*

—Jesus Christ calls you to happiness, not through self-interest, but through self-sacrifice. The cross that He bears He bids you bear; the suffering He asks for love's sake He lays on you, or asks you rather to lay upon yourself. There is higher happiness than the possession of money; it is the sacrifice of self for the sake of love. Is there any happiness in this world of ours like the delicious happiness of a mother? Is there any sorrow in this world of ours like the quiet sorrow of a mother? In this strange symphony of our human life the minor and the major key are twined together, and life passes from the one to the other with transition so rapid as to be imperceptible. Did you ever think that the highest expression of joy is a tear, and the highest expression of sorrow is a tear?—*Lynnon Abbott, D. D.*

—There is no time to stop and prepare for that journey [of death], even if we could. God demands the last day's labor as well as the first. He seems to say: "Never mind death. I will take care of that. Nineteenth century life. Just in the right time the hand will be laid on our shoulder, the word whispered in our ear. We must leave the sewing undone, the house unkept, the child neglected, and the story untold, the picture unfinished, the song unsung. We may not, perchance, even kiss our loved ones good-by. But let us strive to live that we may say: "Yes, Lord, I am ready, always ready; for I need money only with a rod on the top of the steeple, which stood in Nassau street, on the spot now occupied by the grand Mutual Life Insurance building. The other collegiate edifice was at the corner of Fulton street, where Dr. DeWitt, Dr. Brownlee, Dr. Knox and Dr. Matthews, who was subsequently the first Chancellor of the New York University. It was the custom of Dutch dominions to make a New Year's call on their parishioners, and we were not exempted from this custom. We were then supplied with water from pumps, and carts went through the streets with fresh "spring water," which was peddled over the paillor or pitcher. Anthracite coal was not yet introduced, and the ordinary fuel was wood; and the rich indulged themselves with soft coal from Liverpool. One of the especial pleasures of my first visit to New York was the chimney-sweeps. When I heard their claxon voices ringing in the street, I used to run to the door to look at these "poor blots—innocent blacknesses" (as Charles Lamb called them)—clergy-imp, who from their chimney-top pulpit on a nipping cold December morning preach a sermon of patience to mankind. The poor, ragged variety had nothing white about them except their teeth, but no voices in the Seldi Orchestra Troupe, or the "Jubilee Singers," have a richer or wilder melody. I would go a long way to hear one of these dusky vocalists again, for the street-singers of New York are pretty much a thing of the past.

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"PLAIN SPOKEN PERSONS."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth by this door into the sheepfold, and climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

"All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers."

"Whoever shall say, Thou fool, shalt be in danger of hell fire."

"The sheep go away into everlasting punishment."

"We unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

"Within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

"God shall smite thee, thou whited wall."

"The wages of sin is death."

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of it shall be against you as fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days: the hire of the laborers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth."

—Word comes from all quarters that the nearest and the most satisfactory dye for coloring the beard a brown or black is Buckingham's Dye for the whiskers.

—If his dark nights are as bright as the world's days, what shall his days be? If even his starlight is more splendid than the sun, what must his sunlight be? If he can praise the Lord in the fires, how will he extol Him before the eternal throne? If evil be good to him now, what will the overflowing goodness of God be to him then? O, blessed assurance, what would not be a Christian? Who would not bear the present cross for the crown which cometh afterwards? But herein is work for patience, for the rest is not for today, the triumph for the present, the "afterward" wait O soul, and let patience have her perfect work!—*Spurgeon.*

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Prepared by G. A. MOORE, St. John.

Phillips Brooks.

(In a contemporary we find the following interesting reminiscence of Bishop Brooks from the pen of Rev. W. C. Cutting.)

It was in the midsummer of 1887, aboard the steamer Adriatic, that we were sailing out of New York for London. We had been told that the "Narrows" when good fortune opened to me the chance to speak with him. Most eagerly I seized the moment to pay the just debt of owing him greatly his life and influence upon me through sermons, books, and large visions opened by his words and example.

"And who are you?" he asked most kindly. "A little Baptist preacher from New York," I answered. Then the loving hand laid itself down upon my forehead, and bent back my head a moment as he looked me squarely in the eyes. "Well, boy, let us be chums during the voyage. We sit down in a couple of empty steamer chairs near us to get a little better acquainted. In those few moments, by express utterance he took all locks of the doors of his heart, and I came to know him as I could from all the vast treasure his own life had stored there. Thus began an ocean friendship of from two to six hours of conversation, the inspiration of which abides to-day, and will endure until the end.

The great boy was all too small a shell for the larger soul. Perennial sunshine gleamed from word and thought. He was a prophet, and he came to me to repeat here the charming accounts of his personal experiences with Maurice, Hare, Stanley, Farrar, and many others. His simple but majestic conception of the preacher's life was most refreshing. I never forgot that I am God's messenger to men, and daily look for and keep alert to the message He would have me bring."

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