

ONE'S POINT OF VIEW.

HOW THE PEOPLE AND THE WORLD
LOOK TO THE CORNER GROCER.

He Tells Some Folk How He Sees Them.
Which Is Not the Way They See Them-
selves—A Kindly, Good-Natured Critic
of Erring Humanity—The Parson and
the Doctor—Drunkard Meets Drunkard.

I heard a very clever man once say that everyone looked out upon the world and his fellow-men and women through a window whose panes gave him an opportunity peculiar to himself, and that the things that one man saw were by no means the same as those his neighbor might see, although the "objective" world, at least I think objective was the word he used, was exactly the same. I've often turned over that saying in my mind, and I think, that, although I never had any great education, that I have found out what he meant, and I believe that he told the truth. I think, too, that it is every man's duty to add his little bit of knowledge to the knowledge that the world possesses, and although the window through which a corner grocer looks out is apt to be a small one and somewhat dimmed with molasses and flour, I have been thinking that it mightn't be a bad thing for me to tell some of the things that I see, and perhaps some of the people who have bigger and clearer windows than mine, may be induced to do the same thing, and in this way I may do a small service by helping people to see themselves as others see them. I am not sure that what I see is the only truth concerning any man, for I dare say that my window is not always in the best condition; but, on the other hand, I think that I often see things in a man or woman that they do not see themselves and that none of their friends would care to tell them about. Of course even in my humble position, I know more people than I could undertake to describe, but if I tell about a few they might do for examples, or what the educated people call types of others.

There's my parson, for instance. He's a very nice man, and sometimes, when he gets all worked up in the pulpit and preaches about the beauty of being good, you'd think that he never knew what it was to be anything else, and yet he has his own faults. He talks a great deal about having faith in God, and once or twice when business has been bad and I was pretty down-hearted, the way he exhorted me to have faith and rest assured God would bring me through all right was really beautiful. But I have seen him sometimes, when the church was pretty empty, owing to rain or sickness in the congregation or because it was hot, look as though he wasn't able to take his own medicine. Instead of preaching on these days strong words of faith and assurance he'd almost groan when he'd talk about the indifference and the carelessness of the people about church going. And I can't help thinkin' that if he'd show his faith by his own actions that his advice to people would carry more weight with it. After all I believe it is the imaginary troubles more than the real ones that shake people's faith. For I saw that same parson when he lost his little boy, although for weeks after when he prayed for the little children, his voice would almost break, and we all knew whom he was thinking about, yet he wasn't gloomy, but preached about being patient under affliction in a way that did us all good to hear. However, he's a pretty decent sort the parson, after all. There is one thing I'll say for him, and that is that he always pays his account at my store and doesn't have to be chased for it for months, which brings me to speak of a certain lady whose name I'll not mention, for she has a very high place in society in our town and has offices in I couldn't tell you how many benevolent and charitable organizations and if I said a word against her, it might do me a lot of harm.

She's a good customer in a way. She'll stop her carriage and come in, and, looking at me as though I belonged to another sort of people than herself, will say, in her high-pitched voice, "Well, Jones, have you any fresh vegetables this morning?" She doesn't haggle over the price, but she talks to me in a way that makes my blood boil. I could stand that, though, for a man mustn't be too particular when he has his living to make, but what does make me mad in the way she'll put off paying her bill month after month. My creditors won't wait for me, and many a time I've been hard put to it by her carelessness, for it's nothing short of carelessness, of that I am sure. If only people would think about things. Half the trouble there is in this world is because people don't think, but look at matters only from their own side of the fence.

I remember having that brought home to me once by our doctor. He's a good sort, is the doctor, and has brought me and my children through more than one tight place. This time I was talking away at a great rate to him about my little girl, who was ill at the time, but not very ill, and I noticed that he looked as though he were a bit wearied, and I took the hint, and said that I guessed he hadn't much interest in my little girl. He's not a profane man, the doctor, at least I never heard him use strong language before, but this time he broke out, "Good God, woman, I have seen a

dozen houses this afternoon, and have heard nothing but stories about aches and pains until I am sick of the whole family of humanity. My sympathy is exhausted, and I'll have to get a taste of something else before I get back to a normal condition." I thought a good deal about it after he had gone away, and when I remembered all the sick people that doctors and parsons have to meet with, sometimes not very bad, and again, very, and I don't know which is the worse, and all of them grunting and groaning, it's little wonder that they get tired out. It wouldn't be a bad idea if some doctor and parson would just follow my example and tell us something of what they have to go through. Perhaps it would teach some of us a little sense.

There's another character I want to tell about and then I'll have to quit, I guess, or I'll use up all the space the editor will give me. This chap was a farmer, and his father, who was one of the pioneers in our section, left him as good a hundred acres as any man could desire. Pretty well cleared, with a nice bit of bush on the back lot, a neat house, and fences all in good condition and well stocked. Well, for a while everything went well. Bill had married a nice wife, and had three little folks growing about him, when the devil got into the Garden of Eden by telling Bill that he was a smart fellow, and that he ought to run for Township Councillor. He did run, and got in, and as he was a pretty glib talker, he didn't stop there, but was next Reeve and then Warden, and at last I'm blest if he didn't go down to Ottawa. But the farm had been going to the dogs, and Bill, who was a jovial fellow and fond of his glass, wasn't far behind the farm. I'm not going to make a long story, for it's too sad for that, but the last I heard of Bill he was driving a team for a wood yard, and living in a little bit of a house that he wouldn't have put his hired man in in the days when he was on the farm.

I've often wondered what use I'd make of that story if I were a preacher, for preachers are always working in things in their sermons that they have seen and known. Bill was ambitious and wanted to serve his country, and there were lots of people to tell him that he was too good a fellow to stay in a quiet life; so I am not sure that the Almighty is going to blame Bill very much. It's a queer business, though, when the drink gets hold of a man. I'm not a total abstainer, and I think that some of the women's organizations go too far; but there's no question about the mischief that's done by liquor. Even when a man sees what a fool it makes of him, he'll keep on. There was a man in our town, an old bachelor and a well-educated man. He had retired from business and could live comfortably on his income, but he was drunk most of the time. He went regularly to church, and I've seen him sitting behind the pillar in the church swearing away at the minister under his breath and fairly baptized in whiskey. Well, one day he was sitting outside his house quite in view of my store when a big baker across the way came out on the street, shouting and roaring and drunk as a fool. The old gentleman I tell of was quite sober at the time, and he sat watching the baker, who was shouting, being a Scotchman, "Scotland forever." By-and-bye he came across the street and held out his hand in a friendly way to Macdonald, but the latter got up with a look of utter contempt on his face, and saying, "Ye damned idiot," went away into the house. And that very afternoon he was out on the street drunk as ever, so that seeing ourselves as others see us doesn't cure a drunkard.—C. Karl, Corner Grocer, in The Globe.

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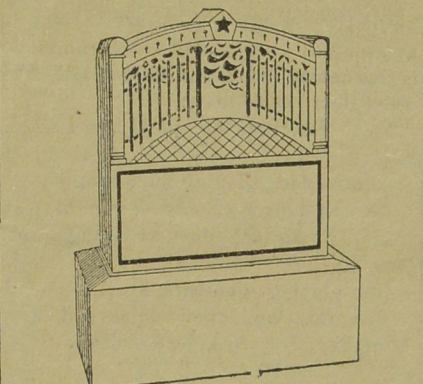
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