

# IN THE GHETTO OF NEW YORK CITY

## HOW THE BRAVE EAST SIDE WIFE FIGHTS AT ALL POINTS FOR HER OWN



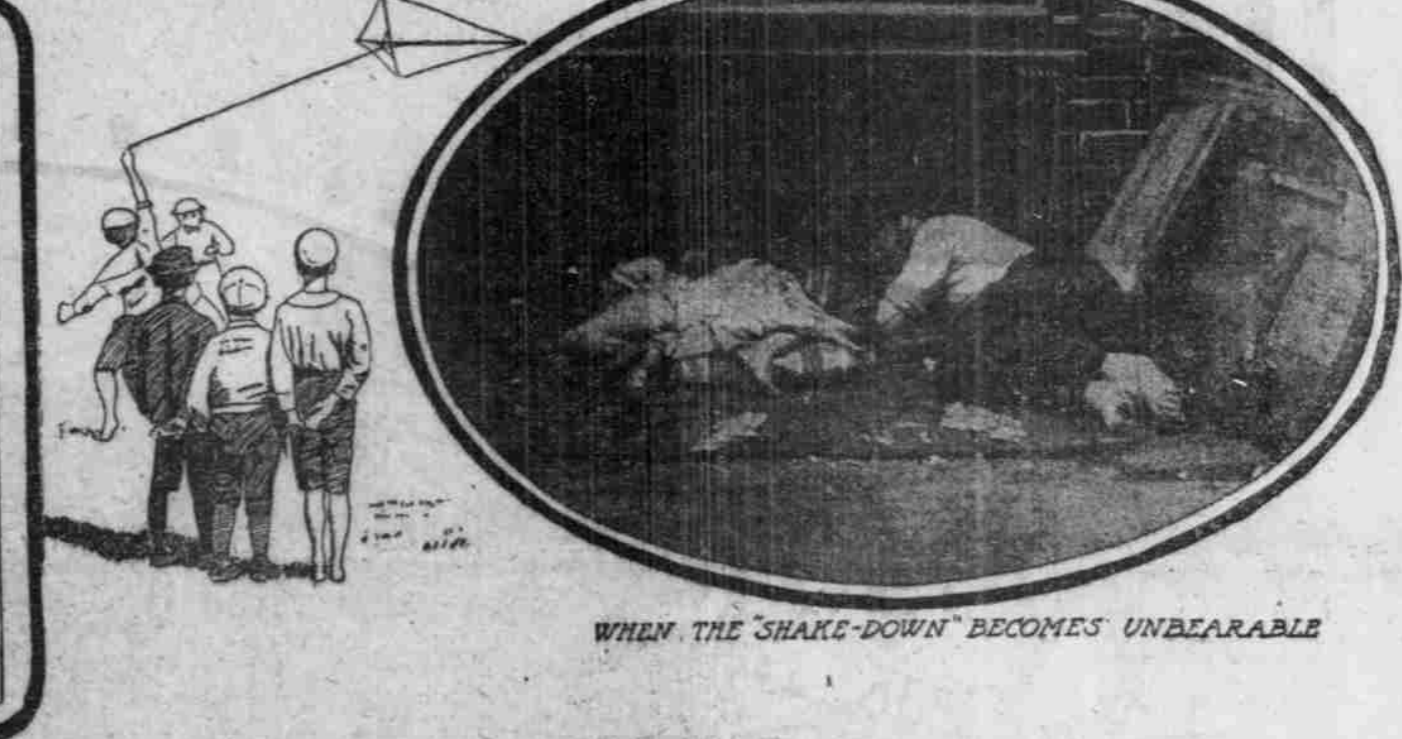
PRETENTIOUS FURNISHINGS SEEN IN A TENEMENT RENTING AT \$8.00 PER MONTH



HER CURTAINED CHINA CLOSET IS A PART OF HER RELIGION



WHY THE EAST SIDE MOTHER DISPENSES WITH A BATH TUB



WHEN THE "SHAKE-DOWN" BECOMES UNBEARABLE

**B**TWEEN the coal strike, the ice trust and the beef combine, the East Side woman in New York is having a hard time of it this Summer. She may shrug her shoulders and raise her eyes to heaven, but the coal dealer and the ice peddler are not to be placated. She may cry out against the extortionate prices demanded by the butcher with whom she has traded for years, but he will simply fall back on the meat combine. What can she do?

The East Side housewife is most thoroughly misunderstood and misrepresented of women. She is pictured as living, without a murmur, in squalor and filth—her favorite pastime to gossip and quarrel with her neighbors, or, better still, with her unfortunate janitress—her children physically imperiled because she either cannot or will not prepare food according to the latest hygienic ruling of American cooking clubs—her husband to be commiserated in the possession of a shiftless, slatternly wife. Not being able, as a rule, to speak English, she cannot refute these charges, and only those who come into close, neighborly relations with her can appreciate her true worth. She is at once the joy and the despair of the typical settlement worker in fine theories and high ideals.

In reality, she wages perpetual warfare on the common enemy of all housekeepers, dirt, and under the most exasperating, the most impossible conditions. Her landlord does not set her a shining example of sanitation and cleanliness, nor does he provide for her use the simplest of modern conveniences. Any woman who attempts to keep house in three rooms, even in the simplest fashion, for her family of six, with, perhaps, a lodger or two, must either "pick up" continually or take refuge on the fire-escape from sheer lack of "foot room." Hence, she has little time for gossiping or quarrelling. For the sake of her children, she will herself go hungry. If necessary, and in the preparation of dishes peculiar to her race or nationality, she could "win out, hands down," against the average head of an American cooking school. And her husband, far from considering her an obstacle to his progress, regards her as a beacon light, leading him ever onward to a bank account and competency. She it is who carries the family purse, purchases every article in the family wardrobe and deposits the family savings in a bank of her own selection after giving the matter deep and earnest consideration.

**A Vacationless Life.**

Summer lays on her shoulders only fresh burdens. In her vocabulary there is no such word as "vacation." The babble of a thousand voices rises, along with fetid odors and heat glare, from the street below. Even had she money to invest in luxuries like screens and awnings, they would be impossible because they would obstruct the entrance of what little air enters her apartments. The cooking of the meals, a comforting process in Winter, new converts her "flat" into a furnace-room. The gradual shrinkage in the five-cent "chuck" of ice, has long since converted the iceman into a deadly enemy. And through and over it all hangs the awful fear that her husband may be overcome by heat in the great factory where he is pressing suits and overcoats for 12 terrific, prostrating hours each day. Then she would be taken to the hospital, from

more obvious the pattern the better, she does not regard as incombustible with a larded floor. Draperies of imitation cretonne in vivid colorings give life to the dull-hued surroundings and are retained the year round with the lace curtains. Bureaus and chiffoniers seem unpopular.

But however many or meager be such furnishings, the china closet of the genuine East Side woman is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. Each shelf is hung with a pleated curtain of stiffly starched linen, trimmed with home-made lace and insertion. Behind these, on the shallow shelves, are ranged two distinct sets of dishes, according to the Mosaic law that the animal products, such as meats, gravies, soups made from meat, etc., shall not be eaten from the same dishes as milk, cheese and butter. Separate sets of knives, forks and spoons are also provided, and two distinct sets of cooking utensils. In the hand-to-mouth existence she leads, little does the East Side housekeeper know of steroform, linen-room or pantry; but her china closet is a part of her religion and is guarded with a jealous eye.

**Lodgers in Corners.**

The thrifty East Sider invariably has a lodger or two who pay her cents a week for a "shake-down" on the floor and a peg whereon to hang the suit he wears to the synagogue. He may also arrange for breakfast in the morning coffee and roll at 2 cents or more, according to market prices.

Her day begins early, as the men must be at their shops by 6. For a family of six, where the daily income is 12, the breakfast will consist of coffee, bread and butter, with occasionally an egg. Directly after the departure of the men the woman begins tidying up. The "shake-downs" are hung on the fire escape to air if the weather permits; if not, they are piled one on the other on the bed, if there is one, or in a corner of the room. The children are prepared for school with watchful care. The Jew regards the education of his children as a profitable investment, and sends them to both the public Summer schools in the morning and the Hebrew schools in the afternoon. Moreover, the mother will stint herself to provide for at least one member of the family a musical training, paying 25 cents for piano lessons, with the privilege of practicing a certain time each day at the teacher's home.

The children disposed of, the woman is ready for her first shopping tour. It may consist merely of a trip down the two, three or four flights of stairs for the daily wrangle with the ice peddler, whose wares she must herself carry the weary flights back to her rooms. The delivery system on the East Side is in the embryonic stage. If she has a refrigerator, the disposition of her purchase is simple. If she cannot boast this much-desired possession, the ice is kept in the stationary wash tub, wrapped in heavy paper or cloth. In either case it is used principally to cool off the drinkables, and not as a means to keep perishable supplies. The latter she purchases only as they can be used. She buys a few ounces of butter at a time, which brings it up to a figure that would make her West Side sister wince. This is one of the conditions that confront the East Sider. There is absolutely no provision in her tenement for storing table supplies, and she spends a good portion of her time each day running back and forth between her home and the various shops.

**A Law of No Credit.**

Her children learn early to shop, and that thriftily. There is practically no credit on the East Side, and the tradesman thrives. The ghetto housewife is clean-shaven, seldom wearing a hat, and with her array of push carts, for her trading, which may include anything from a bunch of onions to a new dress.

Of the great department stores beyond Broadway she knows nothing. Over the remnants displayed on the Hester-street curb she bargains until she wins her point. The unsightly bargain placards of the West Side shops would try her thrifty soul.

She has solved the fuel question partially by purchasing a portable, two-holed gas stove, which she mounts on a table or a box. This costs her \$1.50 now, or considerably less if she finds a trustworthy second-hand dealer. She avoids the monthly visit of the gas company's collector by using the slot-machine meter. The company places in her house a slot machine into which she drops a quarter and the gas is turned on at the rate of \$1.50 for 100 cubic feet. When she has burned a quarter's worth of gas, the flow stops abruptly, and is not resumed until a second quarter is dropped in the machine. An ordinarily good manager uses 25 cents' worth of gas a week, which is considerably cheaper and infinitely more comfortable than coal at the rate of 10 cents a ton, or 15 cents a 100-pound sack.

Once a week, on Friday, she starts her coal fire, to do the baking for her Sabbath day.

Meat is the item of living which strikes dread to the heart of the East Side provider. It must be purchased from a kosher shop, it must be cut from the most expensive portions of the animal, the fore-quarters and breast, and it must be absolutely above suspicion. No kosher butcher may keep meat more than three days.

The breast of beef sells at 14 cents a pound, the cut known as "chuck" bringing 12. Unkasher meat sells as low as 8 and 6 cents per pound, but the Gentiles living on the East Side patronize the kosher shops largely, to be assured of getting clean-cut meat. Only the best poultry is offered on the East Side, where it brings from 15 to 25 cents a pound.

The East Side housewife has not discovered on a single trip. But at various times during the day she has sallied forth, basket on arm, to watch the rise or fall of the market. Her luncheon has been a simple matter. For the man at work a sandwich and some cheese, for the children and herself perhaps only bread and butter, with fruit if there were berries for the little ones. The one meal of the day is dinner, which she prepares with infinite care and serves at about 6.30. For this there will be soup, meat, potatoes, radishes or cucumbers, and if times are good with the family there may be a pie made of prunes or rhubarb. If business at the shop is dull, there will be only one or two dishes, in which case extra care must be taken to provide nourishing quantities.

A never-failing staple for the East Sider is herring, which can be purchased at the rate of two for 1 cent. From those she constructs a peculiarly satisfying salad. The fish is soaked, chopped and then mixed with finely minced onions, boiled eggs, pepper and just enough vinegar to give flavor, but not to make the mixture mushy.

The East Side cook prepares fish after fashion that other housewives have tried in vain to copy. A recipe that sounds simple enough, and yet which baffles the uninitiated, calls for seven pounds of the best white fish, such as pike. This is cleaned, rubbed well with salt and laid on the ice to cool. The bones and heads are used to form a false bottom in the agate pot used for cooking. This prevents burning. The fish is then taken from the ice, washed free of salt, cut into portions sufficient for one person, and laid in cold water to the depth of two inches, to which has been added sliced onions, pepper and salt. It is permitted to simmer quietly for at least 2 1/2 hours. Just before serving a tablespoon of butter is added. This is a popular dish for Friday night, being served cold for the Sabbath lunch, when it will be found that the broth in which the fish was cooked has formed round it like a gelatine. Another

characteristic East Side dish is made from fish skinned and cut fine while raw and then mixed with finely ground cracker crumbs, minced onion, salt, pepper and one or two raw eggs, the whole made into balls, which are stewed, not fried. These, too, are eaten cold for the Sabbath lunch.

**Her Busy Fridays.**

Friday is the busiest day of the week for the East Side housewife, for she cannot so much as strike a match in her house on the next day. No matter what the weather on Friday, the coal fire is started, great loaves of bread, twist and coffee cake glistening with a varnish of beaten egg, and made dishes such as those described here are prepared. When this supply of bread gives out, she buys at the Hester-street market, paying 4 or 5 cents a loaf for white bread, and 2 cents a pound or three pounds for 5 cents for the Russian bread, similar to that used by the Russian peasants in their native land.

The wife of the man who earns \$2 a day, and has a family of five, calculates to spend 50 cents a day on her table. The rest will be \$1 a month, and out of the remainder she will manage to save not only the coveted deposit against a sick season, but sufficient to send her family decently clothed to the synagogue. The children each may have only a single garment to don during the week, but on the Sabbath day they will sally forth arrayed like the flowers of the field, every garment fashioned by the untiring fingers of the under-rated East Side mother.

Aside from her cooking, which, by reason of the Mosaic law, is a complicated process, the East Side housewife conducts her house on simple lines. Bath-rooms are unknown in the cheap tenements, but the children can linger round the nearest hosehouse until the good-natured firemen turn on a freshening stream. The few garments worn by the East Side child can be quickly dried on the roof or the ever-convenient fire-escape. She never cleans house, because there are no "corners" to be weeded out. The cleaning goes on eternally, and her only storeroom is a single trunk, which holds the few family treasures and is hidden from view by a friendly if graying flowered curtain. About her person she is untidy. The heaviest contribution to her wash comes in the form of the inevitable Nottingham window curtains, which are a source of pride.

When the weather becomes unbearable, even the "shake-downs" do not have to be prepared. The suffering family betakes itself to fire-escapes, area way or roof. When a four-story tenement is divided into 16 apartments, and each apartment or flat shelters at least six persons, the picture presented on a hot night can readily be imagined.

As the exhausted housewife drops off into uneasy slumber, the chances are that she dreams of successive rises through \$10, \$15, \$20 apartments, until her husband, now a baster or a presser, may become a clothing contractor of importance, then they will lease a large private house and they will leave a large private house and they will leave a large private house, quite impossible.

The East Sider who has \$300 in bank is ready to start on an independent business career. With a deposit of \$50 at his command, he considers seriously the purchase of real estate. But to the end of the chapter his wife will continue to haggle over the food supply, make her children's clothes and contribute of her blood to the family exchequer.

**How China Got Its Name.**

Upwards of 1100 years before Christ the Chinese were a people ruled by a dynasty of kings, of whom, like the Pharaohs of old, there is no clear history, and not until the "Chow" dynasty, B. C. 1125, is there any clear history of the main Chinese state. The Chinese take their history back to the time of Noah.

This very ancient empire has borne in its time many names, for it was a custom when a new dynasty ascended the throne to give another name to the empire, as Hsi-que, Chum-que, Han-que, etc., according to the name of the ruling monarch.

The true name is said to be Chum-que, "the center kingdom of the world." This term was by usage corrupted to China, and from this word the Portuguese gave it the name of China. China proper consists of 15 provinces, containing 50,000,000 people.

Only male parrots learn to talk. The females have no power to acquire human speech. This is very curious.

### CUT PICTURES FOR SICK CHILDREN

**A** NEW phase of philanthropic work in which boys and girls play the most important part has been inaugurated under the direction of the Home Department of the Evanston, Ill. Woman's Club.

The little folks have been taught to cut out pictures of every sort that will please and morally interest children, and place them in large envelopes, properly labeled, to be sent about wherever there are sick boys and girls to be entertained. Pupils in the first and second grades of the Evanston schools are doing this work under the direction of club women, and the unique philanthropy has proved not only intensely interesting, but decidedly helpful as well.

A great variety of subjects is treated in these bulky envelopes. For instance, one child will cut out several pictures of bicycle-riders and some pretty scenery. These are placed in the envelope, on the outside of which is pasted a gay picture, under which is written the message: "Let's take a bicycle ride and visit these lovely places. With love." The name follows. Another is filled with a folded piece of plain wallpaper, representing a room, with a piano, bookcase, and pictures pasted on the supposed walls. Then furniture is cut out and small strips of paper attached to make them stand, thus forming a neat little playhouse.

Over 100 of these envelopes will this year

be sent to hospitals for the use of sick children. They are placed in the hands of visiting nurses and women in charge of day camps.

"The effort is only begun, but it will no doubt find great favor," says one of the women connected with the work. "It gives useful and instructive bench work to first and second-grade pupils. Only material which would otherwise be wasted is used. Pictures are taken from torn magazines, old picture-cards, calendars, advertisements, and newspapers. Such work naturally educates the boys and girls in philanthropic usefulness and one must look beyond the apparent simplicity of the occupation to see the most promising results. In addition to all this the children are given an opportunity to observe the pictures while cutting them out, and they see more of the picture than would be possible even if they were to look at it steadily for hours. And, best of all, the personal little message will have a wonderful impression upon the little sick one to whom the envelope is sent. The giver's name is attached, so that when the boy or girl recovers, and goes out into the world, the name will always be familiar to him, and if the two chance to meet they will be brought close together."

The energetic young workers are called the Scouts Guild, and they are fully as enthusiastic over the possibilities of their cutting and pasting as those under whose auspices the unique philanthropy is being carried on. One envelope arranged by a little girl and sent to the Chicago Charity

hospital, was filled with pictures of angels and women in beautiful evening gowns playing on an instrument, while nine boys are pictured in the act of singing. The message on the outside reads: "Perhaps these lovely people will sing to you tonight, and the angels will watch over you if you want them to. Lovingly, Agnes Hill."