

SOCIETY'S SIDEWALK GALLERY



NOW every one finds that wicked, gay, sophisticated urban centres are the most childlike of any section of the country. The attention of their crowds is caught and held by a twirling mechanism in a shop window, by the passage of a street car of new design, by a fleeting glimpse of luxurious beauty as Milady whisks from her automobile across the pavement into the theatre. There are men and women who linger nightly in the main streets with no other purpose than to watch the crowds enter and leave the theatres.

This interest is not alone for those who find a regular amusement in watching the theatre crowds. The chance passerby, if he keeps his eyes open, may see the hurrying crowds pause suddenly and form a narrow lane from the curb to the lobby of a playhouse, while a dainty woman, enveloped in furs, hurries into the building. A limousine chugs to the curb, the door opens and the conglomerate mass of humanity in the streets is crystallized for the moment by the enchantment of beauty.

The waltz of the street, and the swagger, well dressed man who was elbowing past him stop abruptly, side by side, and breathlessly watch. The tired clerk and the flashy gambler touch elbows as they stand transfixed, and both are gazing at a wisp of a girl who for a second, whisks before their eyes. It is automatic, magic—none mean to do it, but they pause involuntarily, and when the vision has passed they hurry on again, each with his own thoughts which no man knows.

Yet in all these faces one scarcely ever sees a trace of envy or a jealous look. They are drawn by the glimpses of beauty they may catch, and whatever thoughts are stir-

ring within them, from their faces, would seem to be kindly.

One night last week two young men were in the watching throng and I overheard a part of the conversation.

"Look, there's Miss Blank," said one. "She is stunning."

"She is," replied the other, crossly, "but I wish I hadn't stopped here. She's with that Martin, and I had asked her to go to the opera with me to-night."

And with that this young Romeo gave vent to a sigh, the sound of which would have rent the heart of the perfidious young woman who was "with that Martin." To his way of thinking the disappointed young chap had sounded the depths of woe.

Not ten paces from them a man and woman past middle life had paused to catch the glitter of jewelry and the joy of smiling, beautiful faces. The woman wore a shabby shawl about her head and the man shivered a little in his too light overcoat, which was worn threadbare.

"And to think we lost all that, Emma," he said to the woman, who clung closely to him.

"And it was all my fault. If it wasn't for my mistakes we would still be over there, and I'd be helping you into your own car while the crowd over here watched you. I remember how they used to"—

The woman interrupted him. She was looking into his face with a smile that is not to be described, and she patted his arm gently with her free hand.

"But that was before we knew what happiness was," she said. "I only half knew you in those old days, and it is the new days which hold the greatest happiness for us. Will you tuck my shawl about me?"

He lifted the shawl closer about her throat and they moved slowly away, his cane tapping monotonously on the pavement.

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