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NEW YORK LETTER

NEW YORK, Jan. 10.—Those in position to watch the rise and fall of the legal barometer down in District Attorney Jerome's office are wondering whether it is not about time for that strenuous public official to begin his annual crusade on the gambling fraternity. Just as Christmas, New Years and election day roll around so does this winter visitation to those palaces wherein the gilded youth of this old town gather by night to woo the elusive Goddess of Chance. This annual tightening of the lid, as unwelcome as it is to those professional sons of fortune who make the metropolis their favorite anchorage, is a calendar event. It comes off as regularly as the American youth celebrates his Fourth of July, with the difference that, whereas celebration is lacking, it ushers in a period of mourning for the irrepressible gambler.

Just when the District Attorney this winter will glance at his calendar and decide to "shut down the lid" is a mystery which he and his intimates at police headquarters are jealously guarding. When the time arrives the "tip" will go around, form what source will remain part of the mystery. Of course, no politician or policeman would be so careless as to fail to tip off a gambling friend of an impending raid. Squads of Commissioner Bingham's plainclothes men from various precincts will swoop down on the gambling houses and, as the newspapers say, "the war on the gamblers is on." These little "raids" have all the appearances of the real article. In fact, some of the policemen themselves, those recently come on the force, will believe they are aiding in "a vice crusade," as Mr. Comstock would remark in a moment of piety. The "raiding parties" do their duty. They smash in resisting doors with the gamblers, and the "raids" terminate with much show of appealing Justice.

But Justice somehow is blind. These true knights of the faro bank and the roulette wheel give up cash built-real money, they would have you understand, for politicians and policemen must live the same as other mortals—but at the same time we'll admit that few court criers in New York have even grown hoarse from shout-

ing the names of these unfortunates who are appearing for trial. Verily, money is not without its saving influence, even in New York.

This mid-winter police activity, however, is not without its good effects. For a moment the outside world, which in New York means all those square miles of America not included in Manhattan, is treated to the refreshing spectacle of this little old city purging itself of its sins. Those rural residents up-state who glory in the deeds of A. Comstock and his valiant band known as the Society for the Suppression of Crime shake their heads knowingly and say: "Well, maybe that feller Jerome ain't so bad even if he does smoke them pesky cigarettes." Now, does Mr. Jerome object to this honest, outspoken praise? He does not. Perhaps later he'll be running for Governor, and when one is running for Governor those up-state votes count.

Let any visitor gambling bent wander along Broadway at this season armed with the opening wedge, which means a sizeable bankroll; would he likely find opportunity to play at his favorite game of chance? Let him peek behind the drawn blinds of any of three certain brownstone houses, two on Forty-first street just off the "Great White Way" and the other on Forty-third street just adjacent to a well-known playhouse, and the questions perhaps will be answered. He need not be surprised if he hears the familiar click of the falling chips or the whir of the spinning ivory ball. He would know that, while the lid is down hard and tight to all outward appearances, things in Fortune's gay world are more active than they would seem to the uninitiated.

Nor is the gilded youth of New York, as much as he loves his fling at fortune's wheel, alone responsible for this encouragement to our friend the genius gambler. There are among the thousands of visitors to the gay metropolis annually a legion of business and professional men from the all climes who are not adverse to wooing this goddess. Were it not for them perhaps these misguided sons of the green cloth would turn farmers, these visitors come ostensibly to buy goods or transact any and all things in the category of business, but before

they depart for home there are few of them who have not bought a few stacks of chips and drunk of the cheer of some friendly palace of chance. Yea, mankind is but slightly different the world over, though we condition our morals as we approach or leave the home fireside.

Little Italy is grief-stricken. To the thousands of sons and daughters of fair Italy who make up what the world commonly knows as New York's "Little Italy," the blow which has just befallen their compatriots in Sicily has come with stunning force. But this calamity which has cost some 200,000 lives has a significance not to be comprehended except by the Italian mind. To be bereft of relatives and lifelong friends in a cataclysm coming as did that at Messina, Reggio and Catania is all bad enough, but the thought that this fair country being devastated, making it impossible for the sons and daughters of Italy in America to return to spend their declining years, makes their lives now seem empty of purpose.

It may not be understood by the Anglo-Saxon people of America, but the average Italian comes to these shores largely because of the possibility of winning a fortune and then returning to the land of his birth, there to live in comparative affluence. That land to him is always brighter, its skies sunnier and its government better, than any spot on earth. To the Italian, particularly those of sunny Sicily, his residence in the United States is only the means of the end. Italy for him is the ultimate goal. To tell him, therefore, that his Sicily is closed to him forever is like killing his hope of a future heaven. Little Italy will stretch forth the hand of charity to its stricken brethren, but long after the present force of the great cataclysm is spent there will remain in the Italian heart that longing which comes of hopes blasted and ambitious unattained.

In this respect, Italy's immigrants coming to these shores differ from those sent by England, France, Germany, in fact, all those lands not Latin. From most of the countries of Europe arrive annually thousands of hardy immigrants who readily and with enthusiasm born of hope of future citizenship amalgamate with the great body of the American people. On the other hand, the Italian, with few exceptions, may be regarded always as an alien. Whether this homing instinct is due to patriotism or temperment or some other reason, it remains that sunny Italy with its undoubted attractions is the Italian's ideal of home.

In substantiation of this, we may look to the immigration records of the past two years. These records show that more Italians by several thousands passed through New York outward bound than arrived at Ellis Island, that great gateway for the incoming immigrants. Some authorities laid this to the financial depression in the United States, with its resultant lack of employment for thousands of unskilled laborers. Granting this had something to do with the out go, to the Italians who remained behind there was a deeper meaning. Ask any son or daughter of Italy and they may lay bare this secret. Behind it, too, may be the explanation of the Italian's disinclination to leave the crowded precincts of the big American cities when the farm lands of the West and South call insistently for cultivators. The cities, they soon learn, offer the greatest inducements for the fortune making. On the other hand, they take hold of agriculture reluctantly because, by the very nature of its requirements, they soon of

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later must become part of the destiny of the American commonwealth.

Do you wonder why "Little Italy" mourns with its King and its Queen and its brethren at home? Truly, these sorrowing children of Sicily have lost a future home.

GILA MONSTER'S BITE.

The Reptile Turns Over to Get Venom into its Victim.

It was his turning over habit that led me to the discovery as to the bite of the Gila monster. This creature, more like a short, stocky snake with legs on than anything else, has no poison fangs, like the rattlesnake, yet his bite may be just as dangerous. His poison teeth are in his lower jaw, and the poison comes from a gland under the tongue. If he bites without turning over the wound is not serious, but if he turns over there is great danger. Dr. Snow of the University of Kansas wrote me some time ago of an experience he had with the bite of a Gila monster.

The reptile was caught and put in a bucket, the top of which was covered with paper. The bucket was then put in the wagon in which the doctor was driving. As the road was somewhat rough, the bucket was bounced up and down, and in order to steady it Dr. Snow put his hand behind him and took hold of the bucket, thrusting his fingers through the newspaper cover on its top so that he could hold it secure. Suddenly he felt the monster's grip on his fingers. Startled and somewhat alarmed, he carefully pried the jaws of the reptile open and released himself. The wounds were such as any ordinary bite would have made, and he suffered no more inconvenience than might have been expected.

There are many stories current in Arizona and Sonora as to deaths that have occurred from Gila monster bites, but it is hard to get at the facts. Careful experiments made with animals show that when the reptile bites and turns over, so that the poison flows down the tooth grooves into the wound, the bitten creatures die in a short time.—Suburban Life.

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A Dead Bird.

Samuel Butler, the witty but eccentric author of "Erewhon," which means "Nowhere," and of many other remarkable and suggestive books, is now more read than during his lifetime. He died in 1902. In one of his notebooks he tells this incident, which must have amused the great Charles Darwin:

"Frank Darwin told me his father was once standing near the hippopotamus cage when a little boy and girl, aged four and five, came up. The hippopotamus shut his eyes for a minute. 'That bird's dead,' said the little girl. 'Coming along!'"

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