

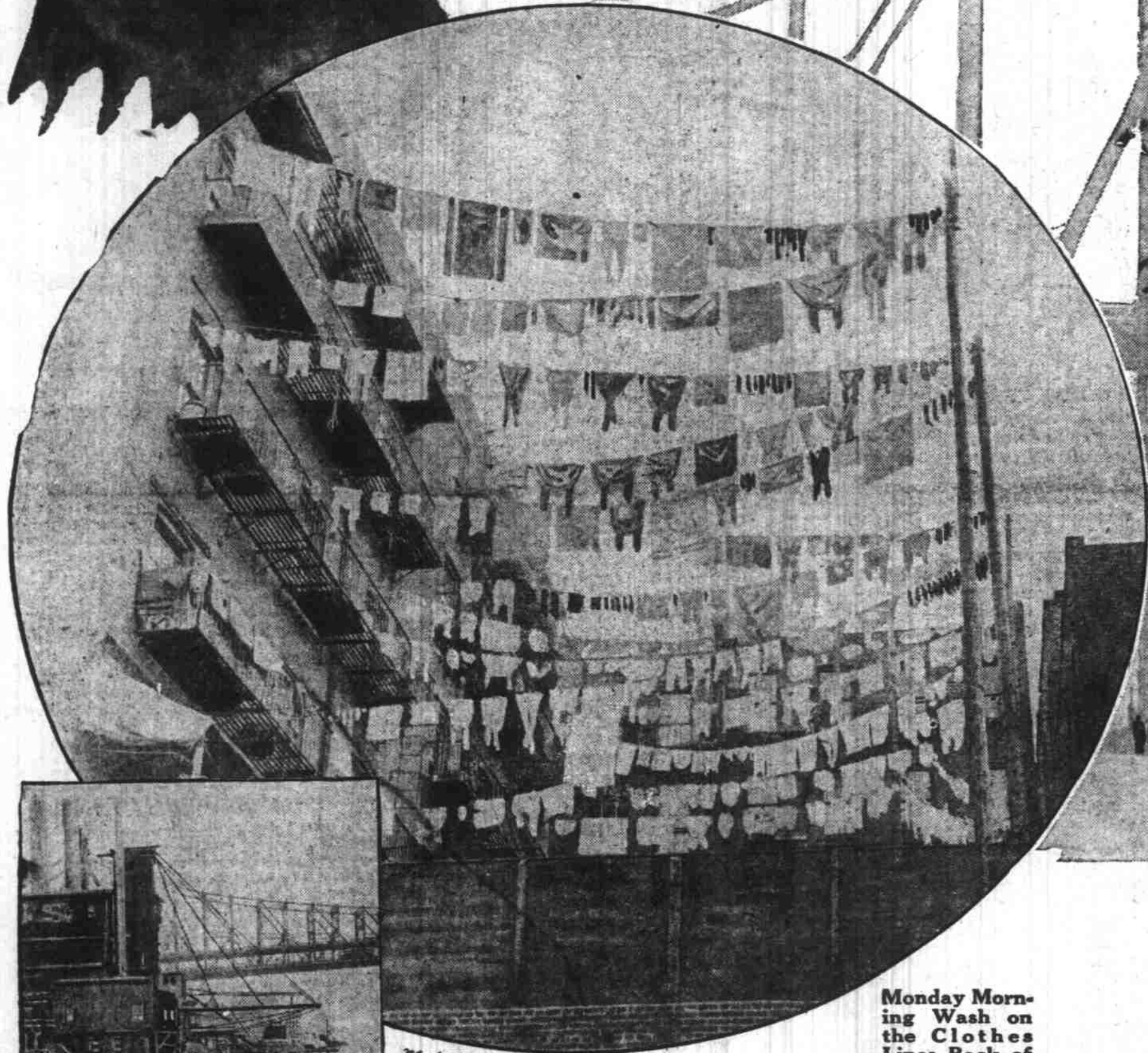
Mrs. Vanderbilt Moves to the Slums

Sells Her Fifth Avenue Palace and Will Live Near a Coal Dock With East Side Tenement House Neighbors

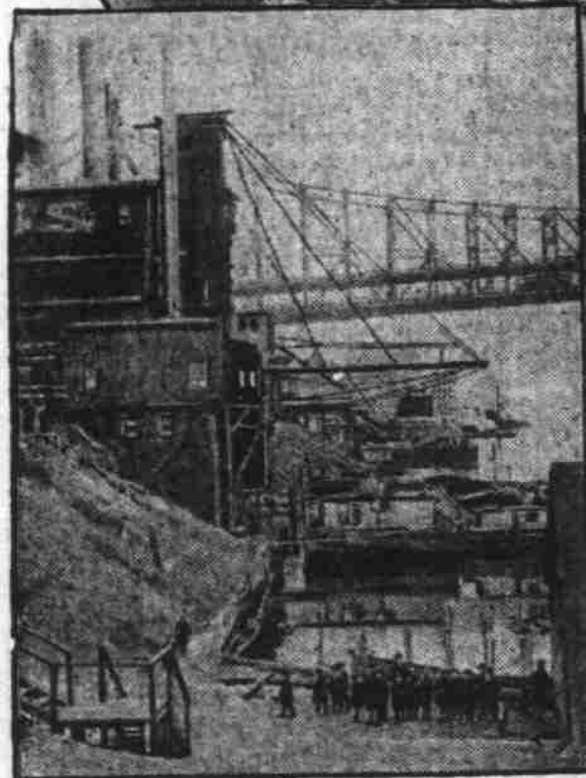


Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, Leader of New York Society and Widow of the Head of the Vanderbilt Family, Who Has Moved to the Heart of the East Side.

The Corner House Is the New Residence of Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, at No. 1 Sutton Place, a Part of Avenue A in New York's East Side Tenement District.



Monday Morning Wash on the Clothes Lines Back of the Tenements Which Mrs. Vanderbilt Will See on East Fifty-sixth Street, the Block Next to Her New Home.



The Coal Dump at the Back of Mrs. Vanderbilt's Home, with View of Coal Barges, the Blackwell's Island Bridge and Other East River Features.

MRS. W. K. VANDERBILT, widow of the late head of the great Vanderbilt family and herself one of the leaders of New York society, has moved to the East Side of New York—to the heart of the slums.

Various plausible reasons are given for Mrs. Vanderbilt's move, but the one fact that will excite the curiosity of everybody is that Mrs. Vanderbilt has undoubtedly gone to the slums. She may have found her fortune reduced, she may think the East Side is romantic and she may have a deep love for the poor, but it is still very remarkable that one who has always lived in the greatest luxury should move to a tenement district.

The house which Mrs. Vanderbilt has taken at No. 1 Sutton place, an old thoroughfare forming a continuation of Avenue A and running north from East Fifty-seventh street. A generation or two ago Sutton Place was a highly refined neighbor-

hood, but to-day it is entirely surrounded by crowded tenements, factories, smokestacks, dirt, evil odors and all the unpleasant features of East Side life.

Mrs. Vanderbilt's house, an old-fashioned four-story and basement brownstone dwelling, stands on the corner of Fifty-seventh street, a few feet away from the East River. On the river end of the street there is a great dump of coal dust and refuse thrown out by Burns Brothers Coal Company, which has a depot there.

From the back of Mrs. Vanderbilt's house there is a fine view of the East River, which at this point is partly occupied by Blackwell's island, the city's place of hospitality for minor criminals, tramps, alcoholics and other unfortunates. It will be possible for Mrs. Vanderbilt from her window to watch the poor wretches at their daily tasks and exercises and perhaps even to catch the expression on their faces.

Two blocks north of the Vanderbilt house is the Queensboro, or Blackwell's Island Bridge, but before coming to that there is an immense electric power station with two great smokestacks which rise up into the sky, looking almost as if they were above the house because they are so high. They contribute to the variety of smoke and smells given forth by the factories and other features of the neighborhood.

From her front windows Mrs. Vanderbilt can see over a fence on the opposite side of Sutton Place. This fence reveals a rear view of some tenements with their wash and other decorations. At the back of her

house the other day no less than fourteen of the coal company's barges were anchored in the East River.

On the southwest corner of Fifty-seventh street, diagonally across from No. 1 Sutton Place, is an empty lot used as a storage yard by the coal company. One the same block is visible the factory of a coach manufacturing concern. Across the empty lot Mrs. Vanderbilt can catch a glimpse of a particularly dingy five-story tenement. A little farther away she can see a big brewery on Fifty-fifth street, discharging thick smoke and manufacturing its sad product.

The adjoining blocks are mainly and in some cases entirely occupied by tenement houses of the poorest kind. Here festoons of simple, old-fashioned underclothing hang out of the windows every day and all day long. The exquisite Mrs. Vanderbilt can catch a glimpse of them amid the variegated sights that will meet her eye on every side in this picturesque region.

The fire escapes of the tenement block across the way from Mrs. Vanderbilt will be a never-ending source of interest to a philanthropist and sociologist. Out there in Winter most of the family provisions are placed to avoid the cost of ice and economize valuable space. Sometimes a hunk of sausage falls from one fire escape to another below. A deft hand shoots out and grabs the precious piece of meat. Then there are indignant demands from above for its return and a free fight involving the whole house. At another time a heavy object, like a milk bottle or a flat iron, falls from the home above, and then the

indignant outcries arise from the home below.

In Summer the fire escapes will be crowded with crying children and grown-up people gasping for a little air. There will be many distressing noises and even horrible scenes, such as have led poets to describe the tenement district in Summer as "The City of Dreadful Night." Children will howl, and many of them will die from Summer trouble, and some will fall from windows and fire-escapes. But probably Mrs. Vanderbilt has not yet decided to spend the Summer in the slums.

One social commentator has remarked solemnly that the block chosen by Mrs. Vanderbilt can never be changed into a centre of fashion. "Surrounded as it is by slums on every side except the river, it is too difficult and unpleasant of access."

This observer remarks that the streets by which it is approached are neither inviting nor fragrant, and if Mrs. Vanderbilt's guests attempt to stroll homeward on foot they will be in danger of unwelcome encounters—possibly attacks by footpads, but more probably just little attentions from rude boys, who would be apt to make fun of well-dressed persons.

Then there is the peculiarly isolated position of the place in the heart of the East Side. If there were a serious riot, which does not appear probable but is, of course, possible, Sutton Place would be somewhat cut off from help by the police and other authorities.

Another social chronicler has been driven to poetry by Mrs. Vanderbilt's move. One of his entertaining verses runs as follows: "The trend throws a shadow on future events

To the tap of society's drums, Who dare look askance at a dinner and dance

Or a Bachelors' one in the slums, A formal reception or debut or tea In Finnegan's former cafe, Or an automobile in the place of a wheel Of an ash cart on Avenue A?"

The location of the colony does not appear to have any natural advantage except its view of the East River, and this is not one of pure delight. Not only is there the outlook on Blackwell's Island, with its

mental, moral and physical misery, as already mentioned, but on the other side of the East River there is a great group of factories, which belch forth volumes of smoke and noxious fumes. These are wafted across the East River to the New York side when the East wind blows.

Having said so much about the unpleasant surroundings of Mrs. Vanderbilt's house, it is only proper to say that it will form part of a colony made over in a most artistic manner by a distinguished architect and entirely occupied by persons of refinement.

Mrs. Vanderbilt's house will be rebuilt by Elliot Cross, who has a growing reputation as an architect, belongs to a well-known banking family and occupies one of the houses himself. Others who have purchased houses in Sutton Place are Mrs. Vanderbilt's sister, Mrs. Stephen H. Olin; W. Seward Webb, Jr.; Robert C. Knapp; Mrs. Lorillard Cammann, Miss Elisabeth Marbury, Dr. Edgar Stillman and Professor J. P. Chamberlain, of Columbia University.

Mrs. Vanderbilt, it is stated, paid \$50,000 for her house and its remodeling will cost \$100,000. The decoration will be in charge of Miss Elsie de Wolfe. The entire scheme of developing Sutton Place, it is estimated, will cost \$2,000,000.

Reduction of fortune, a desire for a simple but picturesque dwelling and interest in the poor have all been motives in inducing Mrs. Vanderbilt to make her surprising change.



A Group of Mrs. Vanderbilt's Little Tenement House Neighbors, Who Are Hugely Interested in the Fashionable and Wealthy People Who Are Moving Into the District.

received the largest share of his fortune, while his other children, the Duchess of Marlborough and Harold Vanderbilt, received liberal shares, which made only a modest provision for the widow possible. The enormous taxes of recent years also had a great effect in making it impossible to keep up the former scale of living.

Mrs. Vanderbilt was compelled to sell the tremendous white stone house at Fifty-second street and Fifth avenue, built on the French chateau style and often described by architects as the most beautiful house in New York.

She also thought it advisable to sell her beautiful country estate, Stepping Stones, near Jericho, L. I., as a matter of economy. Mrs. Vanderbilt is perhaps the most noted figure in New York social life. She was originally Ann Harriman, of the well-known family of that name. She was married first to S. S. Sands, then to Lewis Morris Rutherford, and last to William K. Vanderbilt.

After the death of Mrs. Astor Mrs. Vanderbilt became the most influential leader of New York fashionable society. Her removal to the East Side tenement district indicates that she no longer has any desire to hold this position.