

New York Letter

by
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NEW YORK, April 8.—How the old pastimes do return! No one has thought of selling the Grand Central Terminal for quite a long time now. In fact the new one never had been sold until just the other day. Confidence men have rather specialized on Grant's tomb, the Aquarium and the Brooklyn bridge. The used to be able to get a fair price for one of them every once in a while. And "Grand Central Pete," credited by Bartlett's book of quotations with the authorship of "There's a sucker born every minute," made a regular profession of selling the old station. But here in 1921, with airplanes flying around and wireless telephones in practical use, two good salesmen disposed of the new Terminal for \$1200 to George Pantzi, who runs a restaurant right here on Manhattan Island. He complained to the police about it, which was pretty brave of him, all things considered.

"Why doesn't she brush the powder off her eyelashes?" The words came musingly in a perfectly clear voice, from a gentle-looking girl next to me in the subway. She was gazing at the woman opposite us and it was a half-minute before she realized that she had spoken out loud. The much-powdered woman, who had, sure enough, left a coating of it on her lashes, grasped the situation at the same time. She grew almost apoplectic as she glared at the gentle-looking girl, while the girl herself got white and then crimson and sat as far back of my hat and furs as possible. "Oh, I didn't mean to say that; I didn't know I was talking out loud!" she murmured over and over, apparently to me. At the next station she hurried off the train.

Margalo Gilmore, who made considerable of a hit as Sylvia Fair in "The Famous Mrs. Fair," when that play was first produced by Henry Miller and Blanche Bates, will appear next autumn in Eugene O'Neill's new play, "Straw," under the management of George C. Tyler. O'Neill has achieved an enthusiastic following and one of very good size, in these past two seasons, and in spite of the fact that a great many people still find him too "gloomy," his public will undoubtedly continue to increase. Miss Gilmore is a daughter of Frank Gilmore, secretary of the Actors' Equity association.

Three or four times a year there comes to New York proof that the romance and heroism has not completely died out of "shipping by sea." That is when the little freighter from Iceland, the "Lagerfoss," comes into harbor. It arrived the other day on one of its trips, having come through some of the worst weather of the year. It had taken them 19 days from Reykjavik, where it usually takes 12 or 14, which gives some idea of what the weather was. An officer of a big liner at the next pier shook his head as he looked at the Lagerfoss. "That little cockleshell isn't much larger

than your sight seeing boats that run out to the Statue of Liberty. Think of her passing Cape Race in such weather, 700 tons, with 200 tons of hides in her hold! The passengers on our liners talk about storms but you have got to take your hat off to those Johnnies, going about as if nothing had happened with the lee rail in the water most of the time and the waves higher than her superstructure."

A permanent shrine will be built for the "Christus de Profundis," the carving of Christ's head, cut on a bean by a Spanish prisoner, 25 years ago, which has just recently come into the possession of Mrs. H. Willis McFadden of New York. The carving has aroused tremendous interest here, not only because of its unusual origin and the mystery of its creator, but because of its actual beauty and artistic perfection. Mrs. McFadden is planning the erection of a small building about twelve by twenty feet, in the style of the old Spanish temples, where the tiny carving may be suspended within a circular case of magnifying glass, so that it may be viewed from every angle.

Greater New York always takes a sympathetic, if sometimes slightly patronizing interest in the affairs of upper New Jersey, insisting upon considering everything from New Brunswick up, as "suburban." Consequently, now that it has lost the edge from its excitement over knowing whether or not Dorothy Miller would marry somebody for \$1000, it is getting wrought up over the Trenton ghost. Some months ago, John Koch killed himself in Trenton. And lately he has been seen, it is said on good authority, prowling about interrupting the affairs of people who had no part whatever in any suicide. The bilmax came when a man hurled a lamp at the walking ghost the other night and failed to make any impression, except on the empty wall beyond. New York City seance followers are making up little parties to spend the evenings in Trenton at spots favorable to first hand demonstrations. The ghost not only walks but talks.

This is the war romance of a man who didn't go to war. Like so many of New York's dramatic romances its action took place at Ellis Island. There were more characters in it than a romance really needs, but they are all important; Aaron Hempling, husky South Dakota farmer, plowing his way through crowds and official red tape with equal determination; Mme. Victorine Augagneur, of Villeneuve, France, her two children, Gabriel, 14, and Simone, nine; and a cousin of the children, Marcelle, 15. As soon as they get to Claremont, S. D., Mme. Augagneur will become Mrs. Hempling, and the young Augagneurs will become young Hemplings. The only reason for delaying the wedding and adoption is that the South Dakotan doesn't think much of New York. This is the last chapter of the story that began in

1918, when Hempling, unable to go into service, began to play godfather to some French children whose father had been killed at the front. He went to France last year and looked them up as a godfather should. The rest of the story has been told.

From dances to sardines seems like a sizable step. But the human temperament is many sided at its mildest. So Estaban Cortez and Miss Peggy—just Peggy, that's all the name she appears to have—expect to take it shortly. They have been serving as premiere dancers at the Winter Garden and now they have decided to be married. But Peggy insists that dancing is no occupation for a married couple and in searching for more stable profession, Estaban, who really is as Spanish as his name, remembered for some reason the sardines he used to eat in his native land. Then and there the couple decided to import these sardines for a livelihood. As soon as they have saved enough money to start, they are going to get a marriage license, leave the dancing floor, and cable for sardines, all on the same day.

A subsidy for export students! That is the idea of E. E. Schwartzkopf, who has been for many years connected with the automobile industry and is now publisher of the Automotive Exporter. Mr. Schwartzkopf has written a letter to J. Walter Drake, chairman of the foreign trade committee of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, asking the chamber to provide \$40,000 a year to send 40 young men taken from the commercial schools of the country to different parts of the globe, each man to be placed with some large automobile dealer under the supervision of the American consul. Each man is to receive \$1000 a year and to remain abroad for three years to learn the local automobile trades, the language, and to get the "atmosphere." "The German government worked out a similar plan years ago," Mr. Schwartzkopf told me the other day, "and it helped materially in building up that country's foreign trade. I am going out to the foreign trade convention in Cleveland in May and maybe I can get them interested in the plan there."

Gold fish are supposed to be rather effete and to be found in more or less decorative homes. But some of them get sidetracked. At the far end of Lexington Avenue subway platform, over at Atlantic avenue, there is a little dark hutch outside of which hangs the various colored signal lanterns, to be hung forth as occasion requires. Inside the hutch is a quiet serious-looking man who spends his whole day writing down train numbers, or something of the sort, and who looks as though he had no other interest in this passing life. You wouldn't suspect him of even ever having petted a cat. But back of his desk, in the dark room in the dark subway tunnel, is a large glass tank of murky water, under a green-hooded light. And in the tank are swimming goldfish. They aren't very shiny ones, but they do mighty well under the circumstances. About twice an hour the pessimistic-looking man gets up and surveys them gravely and goes back to his figures.

Whatever Bernard Shaw thinks about us and our country—or says he does—we are going to keep on having his dramas. Lawrence Langher, one of the Theater Guild directors,

has just returned from London with the script of Shaw's latest play, "Methusalem." Remembering some of the things Shaw has said about youth, it is going to be interesting to find out what he will do about the old-age record-holder. Mr. Langher also secured the right to produce any of Shaw's plays at the Garrick Theater, as well as a new play from Arnold Bennett and St. John Irvine, and arranged with Nigel Playfair, of Queen's Theater, Hammersmith and Jacques Copeau, for the first option on the American presentation of their plays.

We haven't yet been able to get a glimpse of those much-rumored Russian crown jewels, but New York is now having a look at examples of

Russia's art, which had to be smuggled out of the country with as much care and almost as much danger as has followed the movements of the jewels. Ilya Repin's exhibition just opened has a thrill of human interest, aside from art criticism, in the actual heroism attendant upon its getting here. When Repin died a short time ago, he handed over as a trust to some of his most devoted students, men and women, the task of exhibiting his work in America. They carried it out, smuggling the canvasses in loads of hay and lumber, through Finland and Estonia, and then across the Baltic in small fishing vessels. Had there been the slightest suspicion of what was being done, the smugglers would have been shot. It took

months to get them to the Scandinavian shore, where they were collected and packed and started on the peaceful part of the journey. Repin was one of the master artists of the generation.

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