REMINISCENCES

By MARY WHITE OVINGTON CHAPTER FIVE

Living on San Juan Hill A Lone White Woman Living in a City Block with 5,000 Colored Folk.

Not living on San Juan Hill in Cuba up which the the colored soldiers charged, but on San Juan Hill in New York, a poor neighborhood running from West 60th Street, to West 64th Street, between 10th and 11th Avenues. Whites dwelt on the avenues, colored on the streets, and fights between the two gave the hill its name. A rough neighborhood, but, at least among the Negroes, a place where all classes lived.

There were people who itched for a fight, and people who hated roughness. Lewd women leaned out of windows, and neat, hard-working mothers early each morn-

ing made their way to their mistresses homes. Men lounged on street corners in as dandified dress as their women at the wash tubs could get for them; while hard working porters



them; while hard working porters and longshoremen, night watchmen and government clerks went regularly to their jobs. Race prejudice and economic necessity threw all sorts when leaned out and conditions of colored people together. I speak of the San Juan Hill of the past. I know little about it now, but when in January, 1908, I moved into the Tuskegee Apartments, built by Henry Phipps, its reputation was little better than Hell's Kitchen, the picturesque Irish gangster neighborhood a few blocks south.

John E Milholland, whose name husband and older children supshould be revered by all of us, was instrumental in having the Tuskegee Apartments built. He knew family. She did this by taking medit tenements in having the Tuskegee Apartments built. He knew family. She did this by taking medit tenements and found themselves at home, got model tenements, to return four per As a domestic, she would be away esque and yet full of common sense, model tenements, to return four per As a domestic, she would be away esque and yet full of common sense.

time to her family's wants. On San ment was the determining factor in common in Greenpoint.

Juan Hill, this was the exception, juvenile arrests. Where, as in a I thought of this one day when I Jewish neighborhood, the push-cart was poking about in an inner court ident.

There were families where the stood temptingly by the side walk, to find the home of an impoverish-



there petty larceny abounded. And where, as on San Juan Hill, mothers had to go out to work, arrests were numerous for improper guardwhere numerous for improper guardwere n

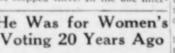
instrumental in having the Tuske gee Apartments built. He knew that Henry Phipps was building amount, or since we have the thought of the second of the investment. Mitholand, learning through me of the fright of the business of the second of the investment of the investment of the investment of the investment of the business of the second of the second of the second of the second of the investment of the from Greenpoint. There was, of guardianship. That was the only the china on the shelf would be gay course, the difference of race, or color, but I soon forgot that. The noticeable difference was in the lower economic status of the Negro.

Greenpoint had been a factory neighborhood, and though the work had been hard it had been fairly constant. Girls worked in factories and shops, men worked regularly at skilled and unskilled labor. All got a decent wage, so that the house wife stayed at home giving her full pages and learned that environting the neighborhood in the stuffy court house. Ruth mistresses, but it was there. The mistresses, but it was there. The streets, too, though they knew labour and shops, men worked regularly at seen the cases instead of the records in the stuffy court house, used to laughter and screams of terror, preserved a certain decency. I can sillustrate this in no better way wife stayed at home giving her full pages and learned that environting that had been time to her family's wants. On San

for the gross offers I had grown familiar with years before. But instead, on one of these walls, in a neat handwriting, I read: "Unless above himself he can erect himself, how poor a thing is man." And be-low: "No conflict is so severe as his who labors to subdue himself. But in this we must continually be engaged if we would strengthen the innereman.

would not imply that it was al to find Shakespeare and usual to Thomas a Kempis written upon the walls. I never saw them again. But the imagination and religious fervor that they expressed were fa miliar to these sordid city blocks.

"Yes, we knows deys women walkin'
Some of the children on my street streets right now. But who's were a delight to entertain. I loved to have them come to my flat, their hair standing out in two little





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in their play. They have a street song, "Sound dem weddin' bells," that I have not heard before . . . An evangelist moves past me say. ing, "Salvation is so convenient, don't forget that. Friends, it's con-It's for this world. An old woman, in a high, shaking voice sings, "Give me Jesus, give me Jesus. You may have all this world but give me Jesus." It is afternoon. A knock comes at my door. I open it, and three little girls, in freshly laundered white dresses, slip shyly in. The oldest, she has laundered

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