

ROCHESTER WAYS

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—BY—

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The following pages seek to give a glimpse of the intimate side of Rochester life at the turning point of the century. Such is their only claim to historical importance. A small—in this case, a very small—part of the sketches have appeared from time to time in the writer's department of a local paper. It might be added that the present collection's companionship to "Third Ward Traits," on which it bases a hope of kindly reception, can be described as nearly resembling that of the city to the little mother district.

C. M. R.

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ROCHESTER WAYS

I.

Main Street.

In the matter of pageants a new custom has lately come to Rochester. It is to rope off Main street and clear it of traffic. The custom has a civic merit. It gives to Rochesterians a chance to think about the street, and to note its dignity and what degree of beauty it has. In the pressure and turmoil of traffic this may seem little; but who is there, having from the vantage point of stand or window the view up and down the street on such an occasion, that does not feel some pride at the spectacle? The long thoroughfare is gay at these times with flags and bunting from end to end. The fine proportions, which are emphasized by the gleaming car tracks tapering in perspective; the clean pavement; the fluttering flags; the life and motion of the

rope-restrained, impatient crowd, all this makes an urban prospect of uncommon merit for a city of the size of Rochester.

No doubt, however, Rochesterians, realizing how truly Main street is the dominant chord in the song of the city's life, read into the scene more than a visitor could. How many things, indeed, a resident may see as he looks up and down the long street—how many things that would be invisible to strangers! To him it does not represent only a highway, a street important merely because he takes it when going to his work and when going home again, or when going to his amusements and his shopping. In his imagination there are surely afforded visions of other pageants—military, civic, funereal, and circus—sweeping down that street which has heard the blare of every band and the tramp of all the feet that ever have marched in Rochester. A small city has that advantage that the major part of all the spectacular side of its life is crowded, with certainty, into one or two of its thoroughfares.

He will see other things, too, than pageants. His remembering eyes, rising to the gayly dressed façades, will see in their place golden store fronts, glowing windows, and below them a gleaming pavement burnished by November's setting sun. And then, perhaps, the vision will change into a picture of the same street swept by winter storms, the clinging snow putting pure new sculpture on the gray façades, half veiling in white mist the double street lights, and hiding the tops of buildings in swirling clouds of snow.

In the long wait for the procession, the resident of Rochester will also pick out many a point in the street to dwell upon in half amused thought and tender affection. Starting at the Four Corners, that heart of the city—its pulsing then strangely stilled—he notes, with sure remnant of traditional pride, the curving corner of Powers Block. In fancy he sees the long double row of lighted street lamps, and the line of trolley cars starting at a whistle's sighing signal in the evening, like a lot of children trooping away to bed. His

gaze pauses at the Front street corner, with its mingled record of good and ill, the good crowding away the evil twice certainly in each year, when the market wagons of Christmas and Thanksgiving choke the rollicking way with cheer. He pictures the old Liberty Pole, only a memory now, on the summit of the hill—that hill where an extra horse used to help the bob-cars up, with gay jingle of bells, steaming of flanks, and prodigious kicking of legs, the man astride the helper like an outrider to the rickety chariot. The glory of the hill's summit is still, he recollects, as of old, the glory of the dawn, in the rush and clatter of market business, and of the Christmas-tide, with its city forest of evergreens when Christmas trees are before and behind you, and on either side of you, filling the air with their delicate, nerve-tingling aroma.

Oh, you strangers, who look up our Main street at these times, you do not see the half that is visible to the loving, reminiscent eyes of Rochester!

Now the procession has passed, the ropes are lowered, and the crowd surges freely.

The Main Street Crowd. Vehicles throng the way, the insistent clang of the trolley gong rises to high windows,

and the song of the street has begun again. What a song that is, varying from season to season, from day to day, from hour to hour. In the music of the Main street crowd is written the story of Rochester's life.

The crowd passes up and down the Hill in endless procession. It is a Hill to us in our acres of flatness, but the stranger hardly sees and never mentions the rise, finding his subject for wonder in the bridge, built up like old London's. The crowds pass ceaselessly, day in and day out. The street is our Broadway—and more. It is our Piccadilly, Strand, and Regent street thrown in one. Except in name, it is our Boulevard, and Main street strollers are Rochester's "boulevardiers." Saturday nights you should see them choke the street—all of our villagers, and they are thousands, shopping or promenading.

There is no lover of the city but learns to read and love the music of the daily crowd in this street. The song changes with the seasons and the days. There is a song for summer and a song for winter, a song for autumn and one for spring. There is a martial swing to the music on Independence day, there is the scream of victory on election night, and on Christmas eve the notes crowd closely, the chords are full and strong, and the music rolls in an anthem that is the best the street can sing. Every year the people listen for it.

Then there is the daily song. Go forth early in the morning that you may hear the opening strains, when the players are fresh and the air is crisp and cool. The notes hurry at *allegro* time, and there is a swing to the music that makes it inspiring. Very gradually does the melody change, and it is not until ten o'clock that the march of the workers is varied with an interweaving of light and playful airs. But with the striking of the big bell of the city hall at twelve o'clock, and the blowing of the whistles, the dominant motif appears again.

There is that joyous call to dinner which great cities never hear at noon. The tempo is swift and glad then, as the workers hurry forth. In early afternoon it changes to the slow, voluptuous march of those who have feasted well. Then the motif is lost in the chorus of women, with its slow time and crowded notes, and the gay little arias that run far up in the treble. As the day closes, the chorus dies away. The workers' motif is heard again, the time slow, with the basso accompaniment very strong, and a minor chord appearing in the theme. The music seems now to drag. It sings the song of the weary, and the feet that tripped along so easily and swiftly in the morning are shuffling now on much worn walks. The setting sun has thrown long shafts of light on the tired street, the tall buildings have cast shadows that reach far. The darkness lights the street lamps as it rides down the eastern hill, stars twinkle where there had been windows, dragon-eyed cars round distant corners screechingly. The song of the day changes into that of the evening. Twilight falls and the music

grows soft, singing of love, pleasure and wine, dwindling away at last.

And at any time of the day, if you would hear the music at its loudest, if you would be in the very midst of the orchestra, you will stand at the Four Corners, with the players all around you.

II.

Rival Corners.

The Four Corners are still held to be the Charing Cross of Rochester, whence distances are measured and where appointments are made, but they are not without a rival. The strenuous Apostle has, in fact, a very worthy memorial in the activity at the St. Paul street corner. This happens also to be the place in town where, notoriously, the devil is busiest with skirts and hats. At the very top of the hill there are the Seven Corners.

Now the Seven Corners owe much of their fame to a department store. It advertised them, giving to the locality a reputation that mere press of business would not have bestowed for many years. The memory of the old Liberty Pole had afforded designation enough, until the department store sought to

emphasize the advantage of its site by out-cornering the beloved Four Corners. The site was not much respected until then, for it was mainly notable as a conspicuous civic failure, as a lost opportunity, the little triangle that some of the corners enclose being covered by a low, old-fashioned building where fish is sold, when it ought to have had a bit of sculpture—as was from time to time suggested—or at least have been given over to turf and flowers.

The Seven Corners, however, shamelessly ignoring their remissness, have acquired a reputation. Back of this fact there is something more than the zeal of the advertiser; there is that deeper significance of a new evidence of the rivalry of East Side and West. This is one of the most vital factors of Rochester life. The Four Corners are indisputably a jewel in the West Side crown. The East Side will not be undone. It would fain knock the pretensions of the Four Corners into a cocked hat—and, behold, there are Seven Corners! So they are pitted against one

another: The Four Corners, solid, substantial, with hereditary glamor; the Seven, numerous, vigorous, blatant. There is no corner on corners.

You find the rivalry of the sites constantly cropping out. When Front street, from its intersection of Main, is crowded with produce and poultry wagons on the eves of Thanksgiving and Christmas, is there not a conscious attempt to rival the traditional "corner grocery and market" — somewhat more than seven-fold glorified on the East Side corners? Ask yourself if a loyal West Sider would then climb the hill to buy his turkey. When a beautiful temporary arch was erected on the Seven Corners site to welcome a returning hero, was not the neighborhood of the Four Corners honored, also, with the official reviewing stand? Thus was peace bought for the triumph.

The rivalry of the Corners is but a detail, we have said, of the rivalry of East Side and West. It is extraordinary how, with good-natured veneer, this competition permeates the life of the town. In some communities the like conditions are frankly met by calling the districts different cities, as Allegheny and Pittsburg; in others there is attempt to reconcile such competition by strongly distinguishing the character of the different sides of the river, as the *Quartier* differs in Paris from the right bank of the Seine, as the boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn differ in Greater New York. But with us the two sides of the river are very eager to be precisely alike in all matters, except that on the like lines each would fain outdo the other. The rivalry of the Corners is typical.

It is not merely, then, a social emulation. The products, for instance, that at present are making Rochester most famous are kodaks and flowers. The kodak works are on the West Side, the nurseries are on the East. The

four largest commercial buildings are evenly apportioned ; the University, which was originally on the West Side, has been secured by the East Side ; but a new Mechanics' Institute has risen on the West Side to equalize educational claims. It is pointed out, also, in this connection, that if the department stores with their frivolous fashions are on the East Side, the West still has the leading book-store. Each side of the river has its hospital and its seminary, you can go to the lake by trolley or boulevard on either side, the parks are divided as evenly as possible ; the principal Protestant cemetery is on one side, the Catholic is on the other ; society, above or below the turf, has taken neither side exclusively to itself.

On the latter point, a powerful light is thrown by an incident which is minor as yet, but rich in possibilities. It used to be the custom, when there was to be a more or less fashionable concert at Music Hall, to put the tickets on advance sale at a Four Corners

book-store, for the convenience of those to whom the box-office might prove out of the way. Repeatedly of late, however, the diagrams have been evenly divided, half left at a Four Corners book-store and half at a store at the Seven Corners. The division is exactly through the middle of the house.

There results a demarcation of the audience that is not only remarkable in itself, but of extraordinary social potentiality. One half of the house is occupied by people from the West side of the river, the other half by people from the East side. East Avenue and the Third Ward are elbow to elbow only on the dividing line. One who knows Rochester fairly well can follow the line with certainty. The isolated exceptions are so rare that they must feel like cats in a strange garret. Now and then a Third Warder will be on the wrong side of the house—for him, but in such a case good clothes usually reveal that he has gone there only at the price of a dinner. On the other side of the house an East Sider will occasionally sit, sometimes a little uncomfortably, with

wistful glances toward the friends who are beyond the divide, and somewhat more rarely with a satisfied smile of reminiscence, as though the prodigal had found home again.

Now, Rochester is still so village-like in many particulars that one cannot observe this condition, pleasant enough in its beginning, without trepidation, trembling for the developments to which such an opportunity may give rise. On account of the rivalry, may not both sides of the river go to entertainments in far greater numbers than they want to, each from the fear that the other will make the better showing? If the entertainment be a bit instructive, if to attend would indicate ordinarily a taste for music or a good mind, we can see in fancy both sides of Music Hall crowded in future with audiences that are jealous of each other. They would rather be bored than not appear. And if, on some occasion, the East Side, for instance, should make the better showing of the two, so that all its seats would be filled, while there were vacant chairs across the divide, we can picture

more East Siders coming and standing in the aisles — their aisles — rather than take the seats over the line, so that the triumph might be more complete, more obvious, the mortification of the older district more overwhelming.

And perhaps there is a danger greater even than this, in social heartburnings and fraud. We have suggested that you can tell when a Third Warder has dined on the East Side, or vice versa. Behold, then, an opportunity! Mr. and Mrs. A. wish their neighbors, the Bs., to think that they dined out. They buy their seats on the wrong side of the house, next to creditable acquaintances, and go to the show in their best clothes. Result, consternation in the hearts of the Bs.; social triumph in the heads of the As.; surprise on the part of the creditable acquaintances when they discover some friends who seem offended because not invited to a dinner that was never given! From this evil, which may spread to a really dreadful extent, it is but a step to rivalry in dressing. Each side may try to outdo the other in bravery of attire, with heartaches and

final bankruptcy as the pitiful consequence.

Does the picture look overdrawn, do we seem to exaggerate? In a little hall, where everyone knows everyone else, and where to social rivalry is added the jealousy of residence districts in a city that has not yet outgrown many of its village characteristics, to what lengths may not so dangerous an opportunity lead?

It should be said here, however, that there are two sure signs by which you may know a

**What's Bred
i' the Bone.** Third Warder. Draw him out to talk of the town's past, and he will tell you—they all

do—that there was a time when he knew everybody in Rochester that rode in a carriage. Then you should thoughtfully nod your head and sigh. If you have no chance to talk, dog his steps until he comes to a canal bridge, as he presently will. He will cross the road just before he reaches the bridge or when he is on it. No one knows why Third Warders do this, though there are theories aplenty. One

accounts for the phenomenon by the saving of some feet of distance, old bridges having been slightly narrower than the street. Another explains that the habit is formed in a wish to economize time when the bridge goes up. At all events, even in winter, when the bridge never rises and no cross-walk is shoveled there, little diagonal paths are worn pathetically through the snow.

Third Warders, successfully making homes of mansions that resemble Grecian temples, take also the Greeks' egotistic point of view. If they are going over the river—the Rochester way is always "over," not "across"—they vaguely define their destination as the "East Side," as if assuming all other regions than their own to be barbarian. But the East Siders explicitly say, when returning these calls, that they are going to the Third Ward—as the old "barbarians" used to talk with proud definiteness of journeying to Athens.

III.

Charity Envieth Not.

Yet Rochester is nothing if not charitable. If you are wise and not too witty, or if you are rich and not too much amazed at it, or if you have ancestors of accepted glory, you may hope for prominence; but though you have none of these things, and have a pet charity and are diligent in its behalf, you need have no fear. Your hobby may be trusted to take you where Pegasus might stumble, riches' wings seem clipped, or blood prove thinner than water. "Charity never faileth." The beautiful part of this is that Rochester is given over to good works. We all are zealous for something, and with perfect good will for the objects of others' zeal. It is understood that the help we give to benevolent, or even to religious, institutions will be returned in kind,

and Charity brings us all together. In its blessed behalf are distinctions of East Side and West Side forgotten. Our church and our charity envieth not.

It has been said by visitors to Rochester that the most characteristic local feature is that whirligig of human and social dynamics which we call a **Donations.** They wonder that with the varied demands of a city's wants upon our sympathies, there can yet be such interest and enthusiasm, and wholesome and wide coöperation, as then for a common cause. They do not understand that Rochester has never learned to grow old; that formalism, dignity, city reserve are yet to be practiced here.

Nothing illustrates better this peculiarity than our Donation. In another city it would have been called a charity bazaar or monster fair, but to give that name to it here would endanger its charm of individuality, and would prove one a stranger to Rochester ways. The arena on such an occasion is one of the sights

of the town. The great crowd, the gaiety and cheerfulness of the scene, this harmonious working together of all classes of people and sets of society in behalf of a worthy object, form one of the inspiring sights of every Rochester autumn.

And the invalids fare no less well than the active workers, for if one must be sick, there is no time in Rochester like a Donation time. On those days flowers and dainties are sure to come from friends. One must buy something, you know, and if one can help the suffering in the abstract and concrete at once—so much the better. So pleads the Rochester conscience. The mere annual recurrence of these donations is among their distinctions. A very big city might suffer such an upheaval once in a decade, while it is the essence of the pleasant simplicity of village life to give way, year after year, to this community exuberance and enthusiasm.

Consider, if you would realize the town's upheaval, where the Donations are held. Long ago it was seen that the benefitted institution

was no place for such a debauch of sympathetic interest, but since then even an abandoned roller skating rink and a political convention hall have crowded the women. The new post-office was opened with a Donation, and the big federal structure throbbed from basement to attic with philanthropic energy; a business building that had been occupied by a dry goods store, whose hundreds of customers found ample room on several floors, cramped the departments of a Donation that was open for three days. During that time, be it remembered, society women sat behind the very counters where "clerk girls" had sat long and patiently, and perhaps they waited on those girls. It was a rare chance for the latter to enjoy a turning of the tables, and it is possible that those on each side of the counter learned a few lessons. Even a Club house has been given up to Donations.

Does it all pay? A local asking of that question may be frankly admitted every year, by many tired workers and by scores of others who do not like to see those they love ex-

hausted. Perhaps as much money could be raised by different means, but the theory in Rochester has been that money is not all. Abolish the Donation and would there not come a loss to many hearts of a certain personal interest in the charity, a loss to the charity of a brief but considerable prominence before the public that, repeated annually, must be of value? Without such occasions to bring us all together on the common level of good works and common sympathy, would there not be increased social narrowness, reaching disastrously and far? If there are some who feel that it is better for their moral nature not to treat a charity as if it were a department store, to bargain with, the present system provides a table for them, as for everybody else. There, making outright gifts as quietly as they please, they yet can experience the exhilaration of contagious enthusiasm, securing a better knowledge than before of the sympathy and good heartedness of their neighbors. In Rochester, except for a few days every year, we do think our Donations are justified.

To show again how East Side and West Side come together through the charity which envieth not, something might be said of the spectacular entertainments that set the town agape for a series of years. There were **Charity Spectacles,** kirmesses and festivals, and through these for a little while Stageland's painted scenes became a part of Rochester's real world. But it was without a dividing river.

Otherwise the world was not as different as one might fancy. The people who met behind the curtain were in the habit of seeing each other at receptions and dances. They had agreed to perform, not necessarily because they could act, but because they had been persuaded that the programme would seem stronger for their names. With a carelessness, then, that could have been born only of a modest belief in hopeless incapacity, most of the performers strolled into the glare of the calcium lights, blinked through their simple parts, and hastened out again to resume an interrupted conversation in the wings. A

series of pageants made us callous. The nightly assemblies behind the scenes were transformed into conventional social functions. That is why the painted world differed so little from the real. The man and maid who usually wander to the conservatory, retired without a questioning word to a hidden canvas tree. There, as he leaned on the wabbling trunk and she pulled the cloth vine-leaves, they took up the conversation exactly where they had left it when, under a real palm and oleander, some one had claimed her for a dance. Reginald, in war paint, lingered at the door with the modest Angelina, now in short skirts and wooden shoes, and by a psychical triumph that was almost sublime she appeared to him as in a ball gown and he to her as in faultless evening dress. No need here to say that the performances were good, the spectacles beautiful. That is history long since written; but our charity covers a multitude of other things than sins.

There is a better evidence, however, of the broadly cementing power of Rochester charity than are amateur performances.

“Twigs.” These, on whatever scale, are alike in effect. It is afforded by the “Twigs.” In Twigs the Flower City has a feature as distinctive and unique as in Donations. The Twigs are sewing societies whose members, numbering in each from a dozen to a score or over, meet at two-week periods—except in summer—have luncheon together, and sew for the daily needs of the City Hospital. The luncheons are held in turn at the members’ houses and are confined to two, or at most to three, courses, for it is believed that the sap which runs through all the Twigs and keeps them alive is not the food but the gossip.

The Twigs are a power. To the cause they represent they are like campaign clubs, and the Donation is their general rally. They were formed years ago in loving memory of a devoted friend of the hospital. The oldest is called the “Parent Stem.” There follow a series designated by numbers in the order of

their foundation, and then have come Twigs with special names, as the Hemlock, which now has withered. New organizations were formed. The idea spreading from the mothers to the daughters, the "First Graft" appeared. Then came the "Second Graft." Meanwhile the young girls confessed themselves in name as well as in formal deed to be "Chips of the Old Block." "Splinters" were formed among the little girls; "Shavings" among the children. With nearly a score of these societies, averaging perhaps twenty members each, it is clear that the Twigs become a factor in the social life of the town. They try always to meet on the same day, a Friday, and every other week that unlucky day is known through the length and breadth of the community as "Twig day." It is barren of social function until after the meetings, which end at four o'clock. The Twigs are called by the luncheons, which are at one, and the cars just before that hour are filled with women with little sewing bags. "Where does your Twig meet?" is a colloquial greeting that must astonish

passengers who do not know Rochester ways.

That day the men meet down town or at the clubs, or go home for a meal with the children. That night they have the news of the town, from the latest book to the newest betrothal.

We have said that Rochester charity extends to the churches. When a new synagogue was

**Churches
and
Clubs.**

opened here with the clergymen of several Christian faiths on the platform, the fact was commented upon throughout the country. But to Rochesterians the event presented nothing extraordinary. It seemed no more than was to be expected, for we have had pretty much everything here in the way of civilization's religions, from the "Rochester Knockings" — heard almost as far as the Minutemen's shot at Concord — to the Holy Rollers on Cobb's Hill, and we have been kind to all of these. The church militant, then, we neither have nor wish. And yet there are said to be twenty-five hundred men in Bible classes in Rochester, and one of the classes has the largest enroll-

ment in the United States — these facts giving to us a proud preëminence. Time was when the rivalry between the Bible classes, sometimes of different sects, was incongruously attested, rumor says, in wagers; but even that period has passed.

The oldest Protestant churches are the First Presbyterian and St. Luke's Episcopal, and at the social affairs of these you can hardly tell, in the mixing of congregations, which church is which. They draw for the most part from friends and neighbors of long standing, and because these give to good talk and to famously good suppers a precedence over dogma, their friendship escapes wreck on reefs of Apostolic Succession. Where mother churches thus pleasantly lead the way, others are sure to follow. Prayer meeting night is Wednesday, all agreeing as unitedly on that as do the Twigs upon the Friday afternoon; and it is again considered better taste, when practicable, to provide social distractions for any other time than that.

And yet the stranger must not fancy that

Wednesday night is dull. Nor does the spice go out of Sunday morning though anathemas be so rarely hurled at the religious doctrines of one's friends. It sounds cynical, but it is nearly true, to say that in many churches the service only "opens" the meeting. As a national political convention is opened with prayer, so in our churches—a little more perhaps than in other cities, since here everyone is zealous for a charity—the benediction is a signal for real business to begin. The scene becomes that of a clearing house. It is a produce exchange with some cash transactions and heavy calls for future delivery. It is a reception, a recruiting station, and a caucus.

Of clubs Rochester has many. There have been visitors here who say they have seen no city more pervaded by organizations. Rochester women yearn to be wise hardly less eagerly than they yearn to do good, and toward both goals they flutter in innumerable small groups of kindred spirits. Lately a central representative organization has been formed, to which all the women's clubs send delegates.

It ought to become a power for good. Outside of that, it is significant to observe, the Ethical Club is the largest association, with an average attendance of several hundred members. There is, in fact, no surer way to impress a Rochester resident with the size of the town than to read to him the names of some leading women in various organizations. He is amazed to find how many brilliant, kind-hearted, and clever women he doesn't know. In the Third Ward whist has a firm hold and there have been times of euchre excitement; but that is a dear and queer little district to be judged by itself. It hardly is typical of the city. In clubs even more than in charities Rochester shows how wide awake it is, how in touch with modern movements of thought and aspiration, and how reverent for all that is best in the long past. We are very like a city from the standpoint of our clubs.

IV.

Rochester Trolleys.

There are several peculiarities about Rochester's electric ways that must impress strangers. All lines pass the Four Corners. If

**Some
Peculiarities.**

you are anywhere in or near Rochester and can get on a trolley car, it may be depended upon to bring you to what is the town's north star, the iron front of Powers Block attracting as surely as if it were a magnet. There has already been reference to the custom of sending the cars out together from the Corners, at a whistle's signal, in the evening. They wait for that, it coming at the quarter hours, and troop away in long, solemn lines, a row of them for each of the four cardinal points of the compass and each with a trail of pursuing humanity. Since all the cars pass the Four Corners, and transfers are given on all, it follows that the great transfer point is there, and that

if you stand there, where the interchangeable tracks make a wonderful network of interesting mechanism — there was a turntable in the old horse-car days — you can study the Rochester trolley system in a concentrated form. You can even hear a continuous bumpity-bump, which is still, though in lessening degree, a characteristic, in penalty for our having had one of the first electric systems in the country.

Another impressive discovery is that none of the city lines and only one of the suburban run the familiar open car with transverse seats. That is because in Rochester we have a pretty way, on the park-like residence streets, of throwing the car tracks inside the curb, one track on each side of the road, leaving the latter unbroken for driving and sending the cars over the greensward very close to the trees. It is quite bucolic, and when one sees what we call our "open cars," with seats arranged for couples, it looks Arcadian. With the great number of lake and bay resorts reached by trolley, there is doubtless a de-

mand for this sort of thing and electric courtships are a summer reality with us. The romance inside the cars is not, however, hinted outside, unless in the recurring and scandalous coupling of the names "St. Paul and Sophia." The titles of the lines are attractive by their mysterious unexpectedness. St. Paul and Sophia are frankly bound for the New York Central station. Clinton and Jefferson is an odd coupling even for politics. There is South and Lake, though the lake is north; and North and West, which is an uncommon order in which to begin to name points of the compass. The words "street" and "avenue" are, indeed, so uniformly omitted that the signs must seem cabalistic to one who does not know them. At the Four Corners the electric railway company has an office, and as the cars come opposite to it and pause for the shuffle of passengers, the conductors fly to the office with transfer envelopes. And over and over, at this one spot where Rochester tries to be city-like, they will stop good-naturedly to mail a letter for a passenger.

But the noise and press of traffic at this point, aided so much by the congestion of the cars, does still seem metropolitan; and one who stands there, watching the trolleys come and go, finds himself exclaiming, "What toilers the street cars are!" It seems as if the concentration of population were their daily purpose. All day they are patiently shifting and collecting.

When they come empty from the barns in the early morning, men, women, and children are scattered widely and thinly over the city in thousands of homes. The cars turn to their task with fine energy. Each brings its quota of passengers to the city's center, leaves them, scurries back for another load, and soon returns with the new crowd it has gathered. The scores and scores of cars, working busily and journeying in a dozen directions, and making many trips, quickly achieve results. The men, who are the first care, are well collected down town by nine o'clock, so that the factories and commercial buildings, which may

be compared to great packing boxes, are filled. In the meantime also, and incidentally, the cars have picked up the little children and hustled them into the schools until those "boxes" are just as full as they can be. Then comes the filling of the stores. When the children and men have been gathered, the ceaselessly toiling cars bring along loads of women. Thus, by mid-morning, a fair proportion of the city's population has been placed in the city's workrooms. But women are slippery things. They steal rides back; you can't keep them away from home; and before the cars realize it, as many are riding outward as are coming in. Still the cars labor until, with what seems a preconcerted movement, at the signal of many whistles and the sounding of a bell, men, women, and children make an onslaught, to the accompaniment of the song of the street's sonorous "March of the Workers." The helpless cars go loaded back.

Yet they do not give up the struggle. They are patient, long suffering. With clanging gongs they entice the men once more from

home, and running swiftly and tirelessly they soon again fill up the "boxes" in the city's center, fill up the schools, and bring back the slippery women. Once more the cars have made progress in their mighty task, but they do not rest. If any woman announces that she will, absolutely, stay "At Home" on that afternoon, the cars find it out. They gather women here and there from outlying streets and pack them into that "At Home" until its rooms are as crowded as any of the city's dry goods stores. But at 5 o'clock the whistles blow again their dreaded signal. The onslaught is renewed, and twice more is the charge repeated at calls to the attack at 5:30 and 6 o'clock. The cars now journey back heavily laden. It becomes a losing battle. The day is lost. They make one heroic effort about 8 o'clock, bringing great loads to the theatres, but this is a last struggle; it seems to sap the remnant of their strength; and thereafter, all the evening, you see the people going homeward in unchecked companies. The final rout take place when the theatres

close. At one A. M. the last retreat is sounded. It is a long day's heroic struggle: Yet with dawn it will begin again.

The effort is not in the least discreditable. The world's work is done nowadays through association; and on Sundays **Sunday and Holiday Cars.** the cars try just as hard to pack the people into churches in the morning. On afternoons of the warm and pleasant Sundays they seek to take them to the country, and succeed wonderfully well. Speaking popularly rather than socially, it is a Rochester way, indeed, to go to the lake or country on summer Sunday afternoons. The scene at the Four Corners at these times is really striking, and one whose like was not anticipated a dozen years ago. A pleasure-seeking multitude lines the sidewalks waiting for the cars. The whole conception of Sunday observance seems for the moment to have changed, but the long, broad streets are nearly empty of other vehicles. There is no business traffic. A Puritanical quiet reigns except on

the trolley lines. The passengers, having reached the terminus, do various things. Some desecrate the day; but most, walking along the lake shore, strolling in the parks, resting beneath the trees, have a peaceful Sunday. They can say, paraphrasing in a modern sense the psalmist's words, that the day maketh them to lie down in green pastures, leadeth them beside the still waters, restoreth the soul. Whether this be good religion is still questioned; but if the people can be trusted to judge for themselves, such a method of worship is not disapproved.

There can be no doubt that the picnic habit has grown upon us in the last few years. Perhaps it has grown in other places. Here at least, with the constant Sunday practice, it is very marked. A holiday means a day by the lakeside or in the parks. It means the country, by bicycle or trolley. After the morning parade the crowd moves out together. Main and State streets are choked with cars. Everything that has wheels which will fit on the track is used — old cars with the paint worn off, new

cars with the paint not on, big cars and little cars, long ones and trailers — all are in use. Still there are not enough and the crowd rushes, surges, and jams. It is significant of this that the holiday query is no longer, "What shall we do?" but, "Where shall we go?" A holiday means a people on the move. And with us in Rochester conditions give to this fact a peculiar scenic attraction, for perhaps two-thirds of the travelers are transferred, or start from, "down town." One can see the migration of a people.

Of all our urban car lines, the most famous is probably the Park Avenue. Its claims to distinction are many. The line is the most uncomfortable. Its track is uneven; exclusive of the switches it rounds nearly twenty corners, and the cars are often over full. Moreover, the new cars have curved cane seats, with the springs very tight, so that a woman who would keep her balance on them needs to have each muscle on a strain, and has almost the experi-

**A Famous
Line.**

ence of riding on a barrel. Yet the line is socially patronized; and the genial conversation there carried on, amid tetering, rolling seats, and crashing windows, is something of a triumph.

In respect to social position, the University Avenue line is the Park Avenue's closest rival, since these two, between them, cater to East Avenue travel and connect the Third Ward with the Twelfth. The exclusive avenue, admitting no car tracks upon itself, runs diagonally through adjacent street systems. There results a problem in paralleling, which the University Avenue line solves by traveling two sides of one long triangle, and the Park Avenue by zigzagging through a series of short triangles. The latter, therefore, approaches close to "the" avenue at many points, and it is the line to the traps of the Country Club. Thus it has the social advantage.

Long ago, when horse cars made the tortuous journey upon it even slower than now, there was a familiar bit of facetiousness in Rochester to the effect that the street car com-

pany was considering the advisability of running sleeping cars on its Park Avenue line. A little later, in seeming unconsciousness of the popular sneer, the company actually did put on cars that bore conspicuously the imprint of the Pullman company, and the old pleasantries, that had appeared to be entering upon its dotage, had a new lease of life. This particular car line always has been a popular butt for comment. It is said that when the Twelfth Ward wants gossip fairly screamed into its ear it boards the Park Avenue car; and the incongruous suggestion that a hostess from one of the pretty streets in the East Side group that is so oddly and aspiringly named for colleges should take to the car, when she wishes really to be "At Home," is not without an apparent justification in fact. She would see friends from both sides of the river; and she would need only to set up a tea table, for this, in spite of drawbacks, is notoriously the "chattiest" line in the town. As they say on ocean steamers, however, it would be weather for racks all the time.

This consideration is a reminder that when the speedier trolley supplanted the horse car, the old joke about the sleeping car on this line had a substitute. It was the shameless query of the first stander to the second stander as to the number of "laps" he made to the mile. The question is a painful one on the route. Why were two red lights chosen as the distinguishing mark of these cars, it is asked, if not for a danger signal? And indeed, to see these coming down the Hill, gives to the experienced traveler the feeling of a mariner who watches a ship make port in safety after tempestuous voyaging. But it is a merit of the Park Avenue line—we should do it the justice of saying—that its sudden swoops have a part in keeping our Rochester ways informal. A society that has met on these cars couldn't be stiff.

V.

What We See.

We like to talk, and even better to have visitors talk, of the beauty of Rochester. The city is pretty. Its detached houses with their ample grounds, its tree-lined streets, the shrubs and flowers that in common ownership ornament the public way through some of the newer districts, give excuse enough for the name "Flower City," without regard to the nurseries. There is a social, even a psychological, significance, more important to us than the commercial, in the recent change of spelling from "Flour" to "Flower." The community is larger and busier than it ever has been before, but it has learned that beauty is better than bigness. As in Florence, which is the old "Flower City" of Italy, the civic pride and wish is high. We are glad to be rich for the

beauty that leisure, pausing to dream of, can work for, and that money will buy.

There is a good deal for us still to learn. Some day we may not plant poles for overhead wires in the middle of flower beds, nor place them at intervals in a mid-street row of beautiful magnolias. It is something now for a city to have even the flowers and trees, in Rochester's joyous profusion. Ghostly statues and red iron dogs and deer no longer populate the lawns of which we feel most proud. The private taste is leading the public; but the Cogswell fountain was, indeed, spirited away.

It is the general effect that impresses a visitor. Rochester is beautiful not for this street or for that district or for a special view; but for its generally open, home-like air, for its shaded streets and unfenced gardens and its miles of comfortable homes. Yet the resident, grown familiar with all this, picks out certain views to cherish particularly. On these he lets his memory dwell as Rochester's chiefest treasures.

Which are they? Who can say what is the finest natural prospect of the town in this year that turns the century? If "natural" scenery be understood to bar out the civic fairness of broad streets well paved, richly shaded, and built up with square, substantial houses bespeaking Southern hospitality, as in our old Third Ward; if it shut out the like streets of newer districts, where the houses might be seaside villas in their rambling luxury and comfort; if it be allowed to exclude the picturesqueness of tower, chimney and steeple, when these are silhouetted against an evening sky; or if it discard the golden glory that autumnal haze and city smoke pour flood-like upon Main street on a November afternoon, when the weariness of the toiler rolls away in perception of the city of his dream; if it except the beauty of the tower of new St. Paul's against a summer's twilight sky; or the night splendor of our richest avenue with the full moon gleaming down on it—yet, with all these omissions, much still remains.

There is the broad view from Highland Park

of the garden-like valley of the Genesee, the carpet of flowering shrubs rolled out at one's feet, the blue of the little Reservoir lake at the right hand, with the fountain singing in it, and the faint outline far away of the framing purple hills. There is a view down the gorge of the river in the russet fall, when

"The gentle wind, a sweet and passionate wooer,
Kisses the blushing leaf and stirs up life
Within the solemn woods of ash, deep crimsoned,
And silver-beech, and maple, yellow-leaved."

Then there is the summer romance of the narrow, winding, upper river or of the sylvan solitudes of the creek. There is the pastoral loveliness of the rolling meadows of Genesee Valley Park by sunlight or by moonlight. There is the majesty of storm-tossed Ontario; the splendor of her waves dancing in an endless field of blue; or their beauty as sunset paints them violet and tries to match their wondrous sober loveliness with the glory of a sky that throws out arms of cloud to draw them to its breast. There is the Dugway's

strange beauty in the riot of wild flowers; there is the rush and turmoil of the swollen river when choked with tumbling ice, or the famed grandeur of its falls; there is the gentle loveliness of the Bay; there is the wierd fascination of that somber avenue of uncountable poplars that offers the perfect approach to a home of the dead; and there is the majesty of the mighty trees in the grove at Sea Breeze. Which of all this is finest? *De gustibus non disputandum est.* Amid the beauty even around flat Rochester, who can say what of all we see is best?

VI.

Whom We See.

If we Rochesterians have a good deal of natural scenery to enjoy, it must not be supposed that we have nothing else to watch. We could grow homesick even among the greatest beauties of nature. Personality can tug at the heartstrings more than beauty of lake, river and field. So, returning from travels far, the view from Highland Park might kindle the eye with kindly affection; when a familiar face would set something within on fire.

The city has had its share of greatness. In the councils of state and nation, on the battle-fields of sea and land, in the world **Heroes.** of art, books, and industry, and in the sphere of beneficence, Rochester's name has been carried to front ranks. Nor have

we always withheld from our prophets until after their death the dear home appreciation. We salute to-day our "grand old man," the surgeon, become in a beautiful old age "the father of the parks." We recognize with informal adoption to universal kinship that dauntless woman who has been so oftentimes the victor in the long fight for equal suffrage. With what pomp and circumstance of war we have greeted the returning soldier; with what eagerness we have followed the fortune at sea of our heroes in the navy! What honest pride is felt that Rochester, in her prominence of the present, lives up to the legacies of her past.

If we cannot all know well the great, we yet have Rochester friends, cordial, eager, sympathetic in joy and sorrow. **Some** who come here marvel at the heartiness of the welcome they receive; **Friends.** and but a little while have they been in Rochester who still are strangers here. It is said that this cordiality to our new comers and visi-

tors is one of the most impressive of Rochester ways.

Distinct from those who make us proud and those we love, are the familiar figures of the street—the people whom we know
Street Friends. by sight, if not by name. With a few of these the passing acquaintance has become so general that they are rightly deemed to be features of the town.

Such is Blind Tom, the strangest of “sandwich men.” For years he has paced the business streets, his round, benignant face unchanged whether his boards announce the sale of clothing or reek with Scriptural warnings to urge regard for immortal souls. He has a shocking way of preferring texts that are couched in the first person, so that one has a scare before the reference is reached. But the expansively smiling face sees no frightened looks; the shambling feet, on summer days encased in slippers, shuffle on; and always at the crosswalks some ready arm slips into Tom’s to lead him through a maze of

vehicles. He is the gentlest Jeremiah that a city could possess, his very blindness taking away all sting of personal allusion from the warnings which he thrusts upon you. How can he know that you are not your neighbor? Then there is the loquacious peanut man; there is a lozenge vendor, known by his lavish handful of cough drops and a fur coat summer and winter; there is a gentle faced blind pencil-seller, led by his little girl or boy; and finally there is a nomadic company that comes and goes, its members familiar sights for a little while, but passing unmissed until, some day, you ask yourself when such and such an one has been seen and realize that he has slipped again into the unknown whence he came. Beyond these are the bootblacks and news-boys that soon grow to be features of the scene.

There is, further, a certain bridge tender. The picturesqueness of this urban occupation has been lately lessened somewhat by a change of mechanism substituting lift for swinging bridges. Yet he survives. The Erie canal is

a burlesque from a marine standpoint ; but to look at this guardian of its commerce you might think it a mighty sea. His face is burned and tanned by long exposure to the elements until its ruddiness is as the sailor's who rounds the Horn. And never has captain of a liner paced his bridge more persistently and anxiously than has this mariner on the bridge that spans the ditch. Something of the seaman's air, in walk as well as look, has come to him in long devotion to his duty. How he hastens to his gong when descrying the white prow of a boat ; how ill concealed his importance, his excitement ; how great his impatience while we, his minions, hurry ! He is like the commander of a man-of-war, with ship in action. Watching the approaching vessel, ringing the gong, measuring with practiced eye the lessening distance between boat and bridge, he orders his craft cleared for action in stentorian tones. A score of times a day throughout the season is the scene repeated. He has been cheated of half the fun of life and dignity of office when he puts his ponder-

ous machinery in motion without making mortals flee. When the slow moving vessel is majestically passing he shouts greetings to its officers, and after it has become a speck on the horizon and the eddies in its wake have settled in the canal's accustomed calmness, then—and not until then—is a thoroughfare restored through his graciousness to the waiting city and does he resume his march. In an environment pathetically unmaritime he is a buccaneer-like man-of-the-sea.

Then there are, for each of us, the familiar figures whose location in the street is the human minute hand in the clock of our walks. For who, taken by duty regularly over a certain route, does not have passing acquaintances that to him are as much a part of the landscape as are buildings and poles? With similar constancy he meets them daily in the same spot. Should he fail to do so, he quickens his pace; or, looking back, sees with grim amusement that they have quickened theirs.

Your lives may never blend; it may be you never have introduction; but each thinks and wonders a little about the other, or bows, perhaps, after the summer's absence—in forgetfulness that a made-up story is not true. Passing acquaintances are surely included in thought of home. They are the universal concrete image of that abstract term, our "city's population."

the tower is still our beacon. Where, by day, but on Powers tower should ball games be announced by flying pennant; what vane save its gilded arrow should show to business men the wind's direction; whence but from the colored lights at the corners of this tower should the city's center throw far at evening its inviting gleams of warmth, festivity and light? And when a gala night arrives, when the city is *en fête* in celebration, where but around Powers tower should hundreds of red and blue lights be hung to express, in popular thought, not the sentiments of the building's owners but those of all Rochester? Powers Block is our municipal building far more truly than is the hidden city hall.

Not far from the tower, as a crow could fly over the roofs of buildings, poises Rochester's god. On the tall chimney of the American Tobacco Company's building is Mercury. The work of a gifted Rochester sculptor resident in Paris, he stands in a conventional pose, full of life

**The
Mercury.**

and grace and action, an inspiration in bronze to the messenger boys of earth. Light of step, he presses forward with upturned gaze and extended arm—a veritable god when the smoke rolls out beneath him, hiding his prosaic pedestal so that he seems to stand upon a cloud; or when the flying snow winds its filmy veil around him and shuts from view with swirling gusts the chimney. A deity? Would boy of earth thus spurn cigarettes?

Far beneath him the people are at play and labor, and if Mercury ever drops his eyes he must find many a thing at
Skating on which to smile. In bright
the Aqueduct. winter weather he will see, directly below, as gay a sight as can anywhere be found so near a city's center. This is the happy, swaying throng of skaters on the aqueduct. The sight is very dear to Rochester. It is like a public carnival, with its mingling of humor and of grace; and all day and evening the onlookers, more numerous even than the skaters, stand in serried rows.

But even Mercury might sometimes frown. He would see such numerous pennants of soft coal smoke as should never be, although their message is of prosperity. On principal

Driving. streets he would see such driving and hitching of horses as is very country like, for Rochester—perhaps because the center of so great a farming district—has been strangely slow to learn to drive. With all the press of business, we have few marks of a great city in this matter, turning our horses anywhere, driving on the wrong side of the highway with entire disregard of danger, and permitting disreputable wagons to stand long before our proudest doors. But the bicyclists, in calling attention to our negligence, are teaching better.

What a swarm these bicyclists are! It has been said that in proportion to its size Rochester has more of them than any

Bicycles. other city in the country. To be sure, here as elsewhere, the wheel has lately lost ground socially; but it remains a force.

When it was more of a novelty than now there were some meets at Genesee Valley Park, for legislative purposes, and wheelmen's carnivals were organized at the Driving Park. These called together such hosts of riders—men and women—that their own surprise was hardly less than the amazement of the city. All could understand that the spectacle of such numbers was significant.

In 1897 there was a scene that meant more. A strip of new pavement was opened on State street. It was not of much length, nor of great import to any except the bicyclists; but for them it formed a valuable connecting link, both in the trip to the lake—then very popular—and for the regular daily ride, on business or pleasure, of a considerable population. The event was made a general celebration which, seen in retrospect, appears to have been Rochester's formal acknowledgment of the triumph of the wheel. The great crowds in the streets—thongs so dense that the ropes stretched along the curb could not always hold them back—the almost continuous illumina-

tion of buildings and residences for several miles, and especially the thousands of lanterns on Lake avenue where the asphalt had been laid for years, were popular tributes, not to the occasion, but to the riders. And no one, watching the progress of the procession, could fail to be impressed by the spectators' good will. Theoretically, indeed, the foes of the swift and silent steed should be the pedestrians, the drivers and the street car companies. But the enthusiastic onlookers comprised these hostile classes. The pedestrians, constituting the majority, did not exhibit a spirit of mere tolerance. Their applause was frequent and warm, the bicyclists advancing like conquering heroes between the cheering throngs. At every cross street wagons and carriages were bunched respectfully out of the riders' way, their occupants watching and approving with no suggestion of enmity between horse and wheel. The trolleys, pinned to a standstill by the crowds, were like little observation trains along the avenue, and with their bright lights formed not the least

of the decorations. Meanwhile the great procession filed by, exemplifying in a striking manner the bicycle's triumphant cosmopolitanism and the rollicking spirits of its riders.

It has seemed worth while to recall the scene in detail, as one of the rare popular festivals of the town and as illustrating Rochester's sentiment toward the bicycle. Visitors from hillier cities, or from communities where the wheel is not so common—feeling that Providence is sorely tempted when they dodge across our bicycle crowded streets—marvel at the good will we seem to bear to the riders. Perhaps the reason is that we each own a wheel. Certainly there is not even insistence on the carrying of lighted lamps, and the ordinance that requires a bell is not enforced, since the ringing would be continuous.

There are other Rochester ways to note. How strange are those dangling bits of paste—"Ice!" board, square, oval, or diamond shaped, in delicate tints or lurid colors, that contain in readable letters only the

one word, "Ice!" It is a pathetic and more or less frantic appeal that hangs on the front piazza. Is there another city that needs ice as publicly as we do? You go to make a formal call, and this is the chilly welcome when you mount the steps. You accept an invitation to dine, and discover that your host wants ice, and the *débutantes* are welcomed into society with this freezing supplication on the doorpost. The house in which no appointment of luxury is lacking frankly confesses a need of ice. Thus is our warm-hearted city utterly without shame in extending public invitations to the iceman.

To the world at large we talk, as befitting the Flower City, mainly of seeds and plants.

Flower Catalogues. No other literature that comes from Rochester is circulated so widely as that brilliant pamphlet of optimistic promise, the Flower Catalogue. Until one reads that, one couldn't guess to what glory of size and color plants attain.

This is no mean or unworthy message which we send forth. To turn the thoughts of innumerable Darbys and Joans to floriculture, to make them yearn for rose-embowered cottages and backyards that are thriving groceries; to change the weary housewife's dream from dusting cloths to lilies, is a triumph that might be envied by the greatest poet. Surely these catalogues, giving a knowledge of how to raise flowers, incidentally raise humanity.

That in every scheme for Eden's successful restoration there must be not only gorgeous and mammoth plants, but a couple to love them, is the Flower City's furthest heard and most insistent message to the world. And the illustration of it in so many gardens on so many streets is one of the best loved of our Rochester ways.

