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GLEANER'S SAN FRANCISCO LETTER.

SOME METROPOLITAN SUNDAY PICTURES.

Retouching of Old Familiar Scenes. —Our Every-Sabbath Carnival—A Peek at the X-Ray—The Woman's Congress — 'Monumental' Topics —May Day. With Its Past and Present.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 2, 1897—Last Sunday, with the best of intentions, I started out, like Lord Bateman, of the poem, "strange countries for to see." But those good intentions became paving stones. I had provided myself with a note book, a cigar and some small change, and felt I should astonish these pages with something entirely new and worthy of applause.

But the colored bootblack who had stared me into a ten-cent shine quietly informed me that the "kears had done gone stop." So all I could possibly do was to take a Haight street car and ride out West. Perhaps I might meet Horace Greeley, whose soul, if it followed his own advice, must have shipped from this point.

Despite the open car and the temptation, I could not smoke. The "old" woman does not approve of it, even if the new one does, and there is a huge notice, "No Smoking." What a panorama the city is as one glides up its big avenue. I think the postscript to the third commandment would have read, "Thou shalt wear thy best clothes," for the dress on the Sabbath is remarkable. I suppose that the idea of a Sunday suit is as old as Susan B. Anthony—perhaps older. All along the wide sidewalks people in their very best sannter up and down as if they were used to good clothes. I had to look twice to make sure it was our carpenter who posed in the most elegant black suit at the corner. On week days I have been really alarmed at the contingent possibilities of some of his clothes divorcing themselves from his person. But to-day he quite overshadowed all about him.

The working class is truly in resplendent order. Do you know all that the average working girl desires is a stunning hat? Not but what she has to wear something else, but that is her glory. To a casual observer the sidewalks are animated flower-gardens. I think of that marvelous sidewalk in Chicago, which kept moving by machinery. The people walk so regularly that they appear to move by machinery.

The party well-dressed for a Sunday only is always conscious of it. It is so elsewhere. At church they move down the aisles in a sort of look-at-me manner, although they do not think anyone suspicious it. Market street on Sunday is a revelation of good clothes on the part of the working class.

It is really productive to cross eyes to see how people will try to look about, and yet not appear to. The girl who has on something very nice will stop the car with a gesture that is admirable. The grigman almost has a fit. There are a good many of our folks whose forms deserve good clothes every day, and who are ships in sorry canvas on most all occasions.

So, as we go up the street, we see many such sights, and enjoy the lovely breeze. Up past the big mortgaged hotels, the labyrinth of places "to let," the corner depots for drinks, the ugly architecture; up past the waiting crowds, who are told to wait for the next car. Along the street, over hill and grade, out to where the store changes for the residence, and homes smile in their prettiness. We begin to look at distant things now; the cemeteries perhaps, the tall, smoking chimneys, or the big advertisements. A good many of the bad passengers get off at the Chutes, but good people, like myself, keep on to what's coming.

Well, I did go to the beach. I could not refuse the solicitor, awaiting train. I got a good seat beside three men, four women and seven children, all eating peanuts. I could not have obtained a better peanut seat for a nervous man who wanted to try his nerves. One of the men had a pipe that was a Samson in strength; and one of the women held a child that held a dog which held a lot of fleas. There is nothing so social as a Sunday Cliff House car. The cinders are very social also, and the sand is like a poor relation—lovers all about you.

The conductors are not especially good, but they get the transfers. The trains go at a good speed. There is is no view but sand and shrubs until you strike the ocean. The tide was away up, and the combers were in good form. It is not a Coney Island, but as common as it is and as often as you see it there is always something quite interesting about it, this mixture of people and beams. The bicycles fly past you, yet never meeting with an accident. It is no use to hurry, for the crowd is immense. Only the aggravating small boy rushes by, regardless of your equilibrium.

Mr. DeYoung, of the *Chronicle*, in a very nobby suit, walks his bicycle up the grade. In the caravan he is not noticed particularly. Even such greatness as his does not scintillate, unless it is upon a platform all by itself. There are a few swell turnouts, dozens of cosmopolitan carriages, a few on horseback, and the army on foot. No two look alike or are dressed alike. Yet all are in their Sunday best.

The peanut venders are many, and "Hot roasted peanuts!" drowns the noise of the surf. Some of the venturesome climb out on the Olympic pier. There are men with telescopes for you to look at the seals and the beach is well-lined with the many loungers. One man interests a hundred by throwing a bit of wood into the surf, and away swims "Towser" after it. Among the rocks children build small fires. Out at sea there is hardly a sail, and a distant fog bank is hurrying towards the land.

I made no stop, but walking slowly up the hill I took a Sutro car back to where they transform the park. Here one car runs back and forth all day through a sort of a sand valley, and it left me at the park drive. Here again one sees the panorama of life. I think that the better quality of people do not go to the Cliff House on Sunday. They content themselves with the park, with its longer range. For at least two miles there are seats where one can sit down and note the flying teams or hikes. One lot of blue-shirted fellows went along so evenly together that they made me think of the ducks that just skim the water.

Just now Golden Gate park is lovely. They keep the roads and drives well-watered. The foliage is heavy, and up in the dark shades you find the calls lily in profusion. In fact, I never noticed before the vast quantities of flowers smiling from hidden places, as if they had stolen a march upon the gardener and got out of his beds.

The music stand was a mass of people. Probably two or three thousand folks were gathered together to enjoy the occasion. The trees have grown now so as to make quite a shade about the seats. As I stood listening, looking, my eyes rested upon a peculiar couple, a man and a child. He was very tall and very slim, in fact there was no outline from foot to head, but just a straight line of bone. His face was thin, careworn. He had on a frock coat, once black, but now faded with age, and, like his pants, seemed a great deal too large.

He reminded me of one of those quaint dummy figures you see in the cornfields at home. His lierly hat was too large and almost hid his head from view. His shoes were great, coarse affairs. He stood as if he was about to come to pieces. His child was about thirteen, and was evidently dressed in clothes given her, for the dress was too long, the sleeves too short, and the brown hands and arms, like her father's, were very thin. She had a half-stoop as she stood awkwardly. She was oblivious to the music. She was all eyes to the gowns of the people about her. She would take such a sweeping, searching look at girls her own age.

Well, I forgot the music in studying the faces of this couple. Who were they? What had they in life? While thus thinking two girls of about her own age happened to look at her also. One nudged the other, then they both laughed. These new comers were resplendent in their beggary, all very clean and nice. Their hats were marvels of a flower garden on bonds; while her's was an almost comical echo of a man's hat, with the loudest of velvet and nodding clover blossoms. She was so engaged in her inventory of these more fortunate ones that she did not grasp, that she was also the focus of attention from them. Their ridicule was also drawing attention from others in the crowd. I had a mind to go and speak to the man who, drinking in the music, was like as if in a trance. But presently I could see the awakening coming. A sort of flush came over the tanned face, and one little hand went awkwardly up to the father's sleeve. He straightened up, and somehow seemed to have a premonition that they were conspicuous, for they moved slowly down the pathway. She never will quite forget that sting.

It was a mellow day, and wheelmen were sprawled about the grass. Lovers and their admirers stood in groups. Standing room only for those in their Sunday clothes. How delightful it all was. The youngsters on the play ground were having a great time.

What a change in the opinion of the masses regarding the observance of this day, this restful day! The working classes of to-day could not get along without those hours of freedom and liberty. It is not easy to make the equation of church and park to the tired-out laborer. The keeping holy of the Lord's day is a hard text if to keep it holy is to deprive one of all exercise and sunlight.

If it were forbidden us to go out to the beautiful park on Sunday and it were shut out from patronage, what a waste of beauties it would be. What a sorry exchange the dark church with a dry sermon and a small collection. I think that the country combines the two very well. Usually the getting to the park means a healthful walk or ride, and the breathing in of a good deal of ozone.

I wonder how it would be if some big cathedral was here close to the park where one could go for service of song or prayer. Youth chafes at the restraint of religion when it means deprivation of exercise or the reading of dry memoirs, and the modern church seems to realize it. The Young Men's Christian Association meets the situation when it has a gymnasium, a salt-water tank and all the needful ways of working off surplus energy.

If one could remove from the border streets of the park the fringe of liquor shops it would be well. They are the devil's outposts, and too often catch the unwary as they start for home tired out. At most all of the entrances of the park there are hosts of these sirens who are poisonous in the fact that they do not pretend to have the best of morals.

But as I retrace my steps to the homeward car, I know I cannot have it all my own way, which is probably very well for all concerned. I look at my note-book, which has not a defacement. And so I have to put it down from memory, all about the Sunday clothes, and the kaleidoscope crowd that wore them.

The other day a little friend of mine went the way of all boys who do not mind their mothers. He was just leaving the school-yard with his books when he spied a horizontal bar, which had been improvised hastily by some small fellows, and left as a temptation. Despite the parental admonition to come right home from the school, he laid down his books and thought he would take a swing. Climbing up the fence, for he could not reach the bar from the ground, he reached out for it. It was insecure, with the result that he went to the ground at once, dislocating his arm. Despite the pain, the little fellow struggled to his feet, took a car and rode home.

Upon an examination by the physicians, it was decided to have an X-ray examination, as the arm would not stay in the socket. So he was taken to the hospital. The room that contained the apparatus was somewhat gruesome. It had the rough bricks, the confusion of wires, and a table covered with white oilcloth that is itself suggested a slab.

The boy was stripped to the waist, and laid down flat upon the table. A plate not unlike those used in regular photography was placed underneath the bad fracture. Over the boy was a sort of green, frosted globe which, when the current of electricity was turned on, emitted a pale, sickly glare. The buzzing of the mechanical work was quite appalling at first, but after a little we got used to it. The spectacle of the child with his black, raven hair, his little white body, the uncanny surroundings, and the mysterious watchings of the doctors made quite an impression. The time of exposure was eight minutes. A second plate was put under the well shoulder and the operation repeated.

During this time we were handed a sort of contrivance similar to that we look at stereoscope pictures with. By putting our hands up between it and the grueesome, spitting green light, we could see the defined skeleton of our fingers. I do not know that I admired mine very much, although these same bones have done me good service for a good many years. We tried to look through each other's heads, but there was not much to see! The plates were a success, and determined the treatment of the fracture.

It is unfortunate at this time, when this X-ray has promised so well, that there has arisen some doubt as to whether it is not a too severe agent. The press gives forth the news that the results have sometimes accrued to the danger of the patient in producing sores, abscesses and the like. Nature seems jealous early of this prying into her mysteries. It has yet to be loudly proven that such is the case. Still, there is always a great percentage of old fogies who, inoculated with the doctrine that pennyroyal tea is good for corns, will always cry down the introduction of all new in science. To me it was a very interesting half-hour, and shows that science is full of strange developments.

The Woman's Educational Congress has had its way at Golden Gate hall all the week. The powers that are tried to secure the First Congregational church, but it was refused them. The attendance at the hall has been greater than the place could accomodate. Some have confounded the meetings with those of the Woman's Rights, which is a mistake. It is purely a congress of women who are making a study of the education of their sex in order to place them upon the highest possible plane.

Some very noted speakers have read papers, and Mayor Phelan gave a most excellent original article. Some of the ideas have been somewhat ultra, bordering upon socialism. One of the issues presented was Heredity, which has occasioned a good deal of outside comment. The positive expressions were somewhat startling, especially in regard to maiden ladies. Earnest discussions of live topics are always interesting.

I have observed, however, that there is not a practice in life of the principles preached in a good many cases. Without being willing to acknowledge it, there is a great deal of hypocrisy in all our natures. We like to witness the admiration that follows our ambitious expressions; when we know at heart we do not pretend to live up to them in any degree.

The lecturer, the preacher, the dogmatic crank all talk well; the first two are paid for it. I question whether it is a possibility to live up to the ideal standard any length of time. Our friends would consider us a nuisance; we should get weary of well doing. The lines between the real woman and her stronger minded sister are getting more defined. Who will come out ahead is the problem. Meanwhile the ladies at the Congress write and speak most beautifully. Their utterances printed remind me of sheet music. They are so difficult to digest in our daily life that we turn to murders and suicide and scandal, just as the pupil likes to go back to catchy music rather than study the hard compositions of the true musician. Not to be prosy, life is optional in its way to a certain measure, and what we do and what we do not do is for the individual choosing. Three days dead—the percentage of results is very small, unless you are rich and have made a will.

We like idols despite the sacred edict against them. New York has this week dedicated, in the presence of the President and Sir Julian Pauncefote (or was it Sir Julian first), governors, soldiers and civilians, the splendid memorial monument to General Grant. All that could be said or done was well said and well written. This man is one of the few who found the tide of fortune his way and grasped it. There were others who had the chance and failed, notably McClellan. The hour, the whole bent of circumstances favored Grant. In will show the world that republics are grateful, and that we like to have some national totem pole for worship. Yet the monument to Lincoln is growing grassy at Springfield; and Lincoln was a great man.

The mighty towering monument to Washington does not cover his remains, but they lie in a most humble vault at Mt. Vernon. Some of the graves of ex-Presidents have been almost forgotten. Garfield has a splendid tomb at Cleveland, Ohio, but the generation of to-day turn to the magnificent tomb of Grant at Riverside park, and it will be the pilgrimage of all tourists for a century to come.

Over in Green they are waiting for a man like this to aid them, but they are waiting in vain. The jealousy of crowns does not permit of the rise of men save by the most awful upheavals. We need great men in our own country in times of peace as well as war; but the outlook is not so very good. Perhaps it might be answered that we are all great—well, if the country can stand it, alright.

San Francisco is not as yet devoted to monuments on a public scale. We have one to Garfield, one to Key, who wrote the Star Spangled Banner, the Lick group at the City Hall square, Childs' Prayer Book Cross and the new Call building. Mr. Cogswell has erected one to himself over in Oakland.

We keep talking about what we are going to do, but it will be left to the future generations to pile up the marble to do honor to the dead and glorious. We have subjects: Mr. Huntington, Dennis Kearney, Dr. O'Donnell, Dr. McDonald, of Pacific Bank fame, his sons, and possibly others who are now out of the country temporarily. Monuments to such men are incentives. Meanwhile the nation is proud of its stupendous pile of granite that marks the resting place of the General who brought peace to the distracted country. Dallas, Texas, dedicated one last week to Jefferson Davis; Texas went solid for Bryan.

May Day has come and gone. Most everybody who could get away went to Sutro's. The day was specially inviting and the children enjoyed the outing. Time was when the children used to go to Woodward's Gardens. That was almost but yesterday, but Woodward's Gardens are now a thing of the past; only the pavilion remains to be used on spasmodic occasions.

That historic place filled a chapter in the early city life. Twenty years ago it was the great resort of the town. All great men were entertained there. It was the Sunday picnic ground; we did not have El Campo then. On May Day the children danced and sang and made merry. I wonder what become of those dreadful animals, stuffed and otherwise, that inflicted smells on us at 25 cents admission. On the Fourth of July the Americans had a treat, and on the fourteenth of the same month the French had a charivari.

I often wonder what has become of that raunchy, perspiring German who could not get near the counter after he had drawn the beer, but reached it out at you with a sort of side twist. Woodward's was a place that I thought would make a splendid site for the Southern Pacific to have a depot. According to my idea it would have been just the place. But as I was not properly consulted in the matter it was closed out to the monotony of the Mission real estate houses and all sorts of cheap affairs.

People who have millions to rust in the Hibernia Bank, and who float away to Europe to buy a bit of property here and a bit there, fill a long felt want by a corner beer shop, and the big city sights and waits. How ugly everything is to us when we do not have everything our own way. Did you ever notice it? Yes?

Down East May Day was a real fun affair. We had had half a day's vacation. The boys wore white pants and straw hats, and the girls straw hats and white—dresses. We spoke pieces and read compositions in the morning, and in the afternoon we went a-Maying. You have heard that lovely song:

"Oh that we two went Maying."

Well there were not only two, but about sixty-two of us. Away we went in the splendor of dress to hunt for wild flowers. And want of fun—of course we were late home; so were the cows. One hundred and twenty parents, for no one died in those days, stood at the gates—some with whips, some with tears, and a few came to meet us. Some of the things we wore were not so sweet and clean as they were in the morning. Oh, the enormity of a spot on the clothes to a genuine Dora Easter, unless they are are all spots, and that is eternal damnation right straight off!

May baskets! Did you ever make them? Braid two colors of papers together with twenty strands. Then fill them with flowers, hang upon a neighbor's door and rap and run away. If you did not get a May basket you were no account. If you got caught you felt life was a failure; all the sparkle had gone out of existence.

Somehow I see myself a boy hunting these wild flowers, wresting off a sprig of the early maple. I hear the song of the water and see the sacred lamb of the twilight. The alders hide the blushing cardinal. Old hours go by like the phantasmagoria of the lantern, and the Northern lights make wonderous coloring in the sky. I would do it again this May Day. I start from my chair as if to put the hope to a realization; but the mirror shows no boyish face, the past a withered prairie, home is 3000 miles away. A moment ago I could have told you of a crevice in a rock where I buried a robin red breast, but I do not care to talk anymore now. GLEANER.

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