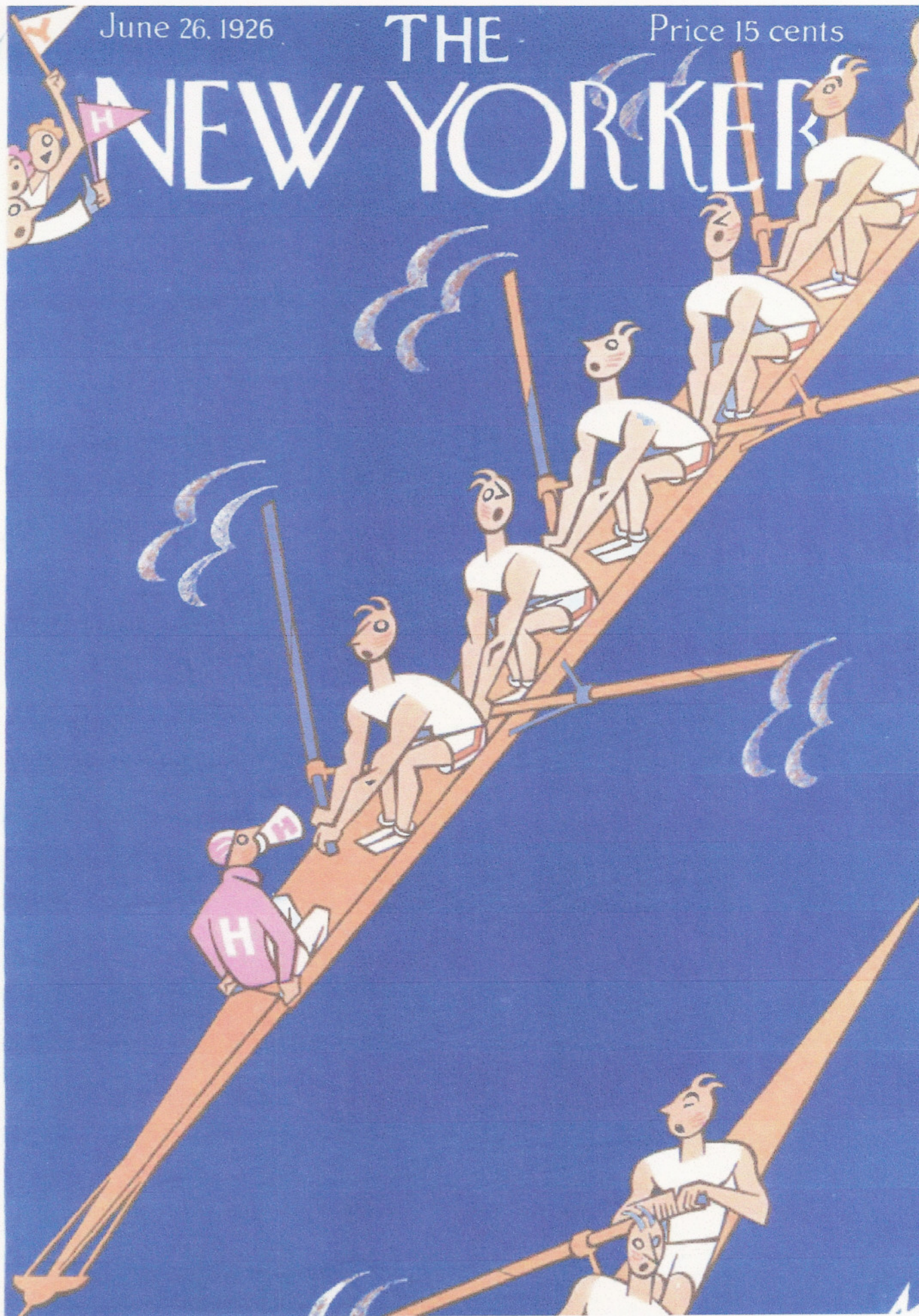


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THE NEW YORKER





THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

ALL our sympathy goes to the unfortunate man who last Saturday night, about theatre time, attempted in vain to leave a rocking horse at the parcel checking stand in the Times Building. "No, sir," said the clerk flatly, "we don't check rocking horses." A look of despondency overspread the victim's face as he clutched his wooden steed and mounted the stairs and went out into the night.

IF there were any doubt about the importance to America of the visit of the cardinals it was dissipated when they traveled in a special train painted red. It is a nice idea and capable of development. A red, white, and blue train for Mr. Coolidge, a gilt train for Mr. Rockefeller, and flesh-colored trains for Messrs. Ziegfeld, Shubert, et al.

WE cannot help loving New York. On the gloomiest days, when pessimism is rife and age is felt to be creeping on, there is always something cheerful at hand. This time it is the construction shack of a new building going up on Sixth Avenue at Fifty-fifth Street. A construction foreman of fine sensibilities has draped the window of this little building with dainty chintz curtains.

LIKE everybody else we have been wondering whether the radio pictures would not improve. Now comes an explanation in the shape of a rumor

that half the patents covering the device are owned by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and half by a newspaper, and that the two interests are having a row. In the name of the public we demand that these interests get together and settle their differences at once.

WE feel that many people have been watching with interest the lives of the police Ford roadsters which appeared on the streets a few years ago. In many minds there was a question whether

the exalted autos would follow the best traditions of the Detroit factory. Would they grow shabby in spite of the fact that they carried policemen? Would they begin to rattle? Would they get wheezy and generally run down at the heel like the Fords of common people? And people are now beginning to find the answer, which is in the affirmative.

THE week just concluded contained the longest day in the year, the day on which the benefits of daylight saving were most deeply appreciated. On this day it was possible to get into a dress suit for a seven o'clock dinner and take a taxi with a feeling that one was going to a very dressy lunch.

THE comparative obscurity of the once well known Mayor Hylan is regretted only by a handful of eccentric individuals who love the incongruous in American life. To them, as consolation, we wish to point

out the current news poster on shop windows. The picture is of Sweden's royal pair, and the caption is "Attaboy Gus!" In spite of our neat-dressing Mr. Walker, New York is still herself.

The Week

YALE Freshman crew to race with Harvard after all and Harvard Varsity is said to improve under new coach. Salvation Army warns girls against auto flirtations and Board of Estimate approves plan for express motor high-

way along the Hudson. Wayne B. Wheeler testifies at Senate hearing and New Jersey Medical Society says most supposed "incurable" maladies can be eliminated. Dr. Howard warns that foreign elements here exploit our liberty and Chilean crowd hisses General Lassiter of American Commission in Arica.

Bowery speak-easy equips beggars as cripples, arrest reveals, and nation's employment situation is officially pronounced satisfactory. J. P. Morgan

wins fight against apartment building near his library and Henry Curran, of City Survey Board, advises "No more skyscrapers." Cornell graduates warned of dangers to democracy and Yale confers LL.D. on Sweden's Crown Prince. Police send flowers to funeral of girl killed in hold-up and Headquarters announces curfew rule for cabarets will be strictly enforced. Dr. Butler, in Paris speech, says Parliamentarianism is on trial and hearing reveals huge slush funds in Pennsyl-



vania primary. Ex-bootlegger tells of whisky deals financed by national banks and Republican Club defers vote on indorsing wets in State referendum.

Quite a Difference

FROM the awful tabloid newspaper row comes a story about an old-time reporter who got a job there. At every turn the city editor blocked him; he could do nothing right.

"Well, I guess I'd better quit," he said one day sourly.

The only answer he got was "Huh!"

"Nothing I do seems to please you. I think I'll go back to my old business."

"This caught the editor's ear. 'That so! What was your old business?'"

"Newspaper work."

The Three Hundred

THERE are only two or three hundred people living in private houses on Fifth Avenue. Only that many!

Sam Johnson, when asked what he thought about women preaching, said it was like a dog walking on its hind legs; the astonishing thing about it was not that it was done well, but that it was done at all. And the same thing could be said of private houses on Fifth Avenue: it is not astonishing that there are so few; it is astonishing, considering the price of land, that there are any at all.

There are, in fact, 105 between Ninety-sixth Street and Forty-second Street. You may walk down and count them. They start with Mrs. Elmhirst's house on the corner of Ninety-fourth, three blocks above Mr. Kahn's and they end with Mrs. Jessup's modest mansion between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth streets, within a stone's throw of the Catholic Cathedral and five hundred of the most expensive shops in the world. We speak of Fifth Avenue as having ceased to be a street of private houses, of having become a boulevard of apartment houses and department stores; yet in spite of the depredations of rapacious Messrs. Winter, Catts, Bing and Bing, and other destructive professionals, there remain an average of almost three residences to the block, over a two-mile stretch on Fifth Avenue. Which is very like a dog walking on his hind legs.

Whoever had the good fortune to be able to look out of the window of the Astor bedroom on Sixty-fifth Street—and many did the day it was open to the public—can easily imagine how pleasant it must be to stretch, yawn, have your coffee brought up on a tray, and observe across the street the green leaves of Central Park waving in the morning breeze; to get up and do calisthenics with the eyes of nesting robins fixed benevolently upon one's private casement. And when to this esthetic privilege is added the more mundane pleasure of being able to say affably to one's friends, "Drop in and see me sometime when you are on The Avenue," the attractiveness of Fifth Avenue becomes irresistible and the peculiarities of the hundred or so householders who still pay their millions to

enjoy it becomes much more understandable.

Yes, it is part and parcel of the irony of wealth, that many of the houses should be boarded up or inhabited only by caretakers. That's the way it works. But in many of the buildings life exists.

After you have passed Mr. Felix M. Warburg's at Ninety-second Street, the next private house you come to is the Travertine pile of Otto Kahn, father of the excellent jazz band. Mrs. Carnegie's house and park are across the street. A block below is the son of Benjamin N. Duke. They are all private houses in this block. Mr. Phipps is at the Eighty-seventh Street corner; then James Speyer and Anne Benjamin, both boarded up, and Bernard Baruch and Colonel William



FIRST PROFESSOR: *The Governor is going to visit us. How shall we show our gratitude?*



SECOND PROF.: *Let's give him an honorary degree.*



THIRD PROF.: *But he has an honorary degree.*



ALL TOGETHER: *Oh, gosh!*

Hayward. Whitney Warren, if the house is not torn down in the meantime, is next of the important ones; near Eighty-third is Frederick Vanderbilt; 1009 Fifth Avenue is Mr. Drexel Biddle; a little below Eightieth Street comes the Brokaw fleet of houses and Harry Sinclair, the oil man.

The next block displays Senator Clark's house, "Clark's Folly," the site it was once thought the Metropolitan Opera would move to; and Seventy-fourth to Seventy-fifth Street is variously tenanted by Gould, Wimpfheimer, Mitchell, Schiff, and Chapin—all private houses, and only one vacant. At No. 900 Mrs. Twombly is building a house to replace the one at No. 684, which she recently sold to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Then at Seventieth Street comes the lovely house of the widow of Mr. Frick, which is to become a museum. The block below contains the Adolph and Sam Lewisohn household, and the block below that of Ogden Mills and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney.

At Sixty-eighth Street pause and observe the house and garden of the Ryans; which garden on the corner, now concealed by a wooden fence, was created by the destruction of a house which formerly stood there. This garden, said to have cost more than the hanging gardens which Nebuchadnezzar built to please his Median queen, and Mrs. Twombly's new house on Seventy-first Street are the only recent additions to the Valhalla of homebuilders; all other change is of the nature of katabolism.

Then on through Garys, Masons, Havemeyers, Watson Webbs to the gutted Astor's. More Lewisohns, more Brokaw's, next the Knickerbocker Club, the domicile of two Roose-

velt families, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fitch Gilbert, Jr.; on Sixty-first Street Louisa Gerry and the end of the Park. We have been inquiring into the subject lately and could set down an almost complete list, but it would be too long to print.

Below Fifty-ninth Street it is a maelstrom—and yet there is a scattering of private houses to be picked out through the haze of gasoline. Mr. Iselin lives at No. 46, Samuel Untermyer is on Fifty-fourth Street, the remaining Vanderbilts lurk in Nos. 666 and 640, Mrs. Ogden Goelet resides at Forty-ninth Street, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Goelet are a block below, next to the Paris Silk Shop which Mr. Goelet owns. At Forty-seventh are the Finley Shepards, and last comes Mrs. Jessup, whose residence is between Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Streets.

They say that the end of Fifth Avenue as a section of private residences is already in sight, but if you look at it impartially there are many personalities and more dollars still on the street which will combat extinction for many years. That apartment houses will eventually swallow the private houses is something the real estate man believes. The big buildings will come down from the north slowly but surely: the three hundred will be reduced to two, the two to one, and at last there will only remain the old lady who refuses to move until her pet dog dies.

Adventure

WE could tell he was a charming driver the moment we got into the cab.

"Allow me—" he said as he pushed aside the starter at the Plaza, whence

we had emerged to get the taxi, and opened the door himself. And, "A delightful midnight, sir and madam. Where to?"

"West Fifty-seventh Street," we said, eagerly responsive to his interest. Up Fifty-ninth, gazing obliquely at the Manufacturers' Trust sign which always seems to grow a little faint and wistful after eleven. To the left on Sixth Avenue. A bumble over the timber which a construction company had thrown on the street with a royal free gesture, and a brace for a right-hand turn at our street.

No turn—perhaps he was going to do the thing in the grand manner around by Seventh Avenue. No. Fifty-fifth Street, Fifty-fourth came, went. We clutched each other's hands. He had been so nice.

Timidly, "We said," we said, "Fifty-seventh Street."

He turned a stricken face. "I forgot all about you."

Mild Scandal

THE Big Summer Theatrical Opening, according to our authority on first nights, was the premiere, last week, of Mr. George White's Scandals, for which fifty-five dollars a seat was charged. We stopped at the Racquet Club, en route to our reserved standing room, and found a small group of members waiting upon the theatre ticket clerk. It was disclosed that they were not there to buy, merely they had heard the price of the tickets and were waiting to see some one sign for a pair. The strange part was that before we left they had worked themselves up to such a pitch of curiosity that they had all bought bills and were refreshing themselves preparatory to the adventure.

Apparently most of Broadway felt the same way and those who couldn't afford sixty dollars to satisfy their appetite bought standing room, or waited on the sidewalk outside, or picked somebody's pocketbook. One pickpocket was apprehended in the lobby not ten feet from us. An irate gentleman, accompanied by a manager, stopped him. "You stole a hundred and ten dollars' worth of tickets from me in the subway this morning," he said. "Pshaw!" answered the gentleman accused, calmly handing over the stubs. "They're only worth six dollars; those printed figures don't mean anything. I know, because I tried to sell them." Before the surprised orig-



gan, in 1863, he visited the home of a certain Judge Bacon. The latter, as all good judges should, had a beautiful daughter. The captain fell in love; the father objected. Elizabeth Bacon, as all beautiful daughters should, eloped, and the Custers spent their honeymoon in a Virginia farmhouse near the front, for the Civil War was on.

Captain Custer became Brigadier General; the Indians became obstreperous; and he and his lady rode over the prairies. One day, with fifty men, he went to fight the Sioux, and never came back.

THUS it happened that, for half a century, Elizabeth Custer has roamed the earth alone. Some years ago we heard an interesting anecdote about her. At the time of the Durbar a quiet little lady in black entered the British Admiralty Office in London. She had heard that a whole ship of officers' widows was being sent to see the King of England proclaimed Emperor of India. Could she go?

They were only widows of British officers, explained the official. Was she British? No, American—Mrs. Custer. "Any relation to General Custer?" The official, like all Englishmen, was more familiar than we ourselves with tales of our West. The little lady smiled up at him with bright black eyes: "His widow." She went to the Durbar.

In certain old army circles Mrs. Custer is still called "the General's Wife." She is said to manage her own finances with keenness; carries on a considerable correspondence, mailing three or four letters daily to all parts of the world; and avoids all notoriety, believing it the duty of an officer's wife not to talk for newspaper publication. She has written three books. Now she walks in Murray Hill an hour each evening, and once a week drives through Central Park. Frail link between modern Manhattan and an old romantic West, her steps are slow but her eyes still sparkle. The Park Avenue doorman calls them "happy eyes."

Illuminating

A GOOD example of what the world is coming to may be found on Broadway in the person of a gentleman who at first flush looks and acts like a bootlegger, but who is something else. His existence is known to many, and the manner in which he earns

his living has been authenticated by impeccable authorities.

He comes up to his very, very carefully chosen clients and asks them what they would like. A rug? Certainly. What size? Eight by ten. It will cost you about twelve dollars. A dozen silk shirts? Silk shirts will run at one dollar and a half apiece. The answer is simple. Agents, competent and light-fingered, will steal for you whatever you desire, whether it be stored in warehouses, or displayed in department stores. The bootlegger-like person is a modern "fence" doing business in a modern way. Nothing is stolen that has not been sold short. No large orders are taken—a few things here and a few things there, so that the police won't get over-excited. And the go-between is well protected and prepared to sue any one who dares to cast aspersions on his good name.

The man was at one time a bootlegger, of course. Until prohibition brought home to the criminal the mer-

its and possibilities of crime as a business and trained the honest people to regard with good humor those who came to them with illegal propositions, such a comprehensive marketing of stolen goods would not have been possible.

DURING the big ecclesiastical reception, the office boy of a friend of ours presented a new excuse for being late. Coolly facing his employer, the boy declared, "Cardinal Hayes tied up all the traffic while he went downtown to meet a lot of Popes and cathedrals that were coming over from Europe."

MR. DAVID H. WALLACE points to a devastating weakness in the Play Jury system. It does not, he says, provide that one who has served as a juror be excused from the duty of attending a theatre for the customary two-year period thereafter.

—THE NEW YORKERS



"Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful—"