

# The Chronicles of Cholly Knickerbocker.

CHOLLY KNICKERBOCKER'S PORTRAIT GALLERY.



Mrs. Vatable, formerly Miss Elizabeth Stokes, most conspicuous and admired of the smart crowd of New Yorkers who make their Summer home at Lenox. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Anson Phelps Stokes, and her marriage a year or two ago was a great social event.

an emblem. The loyal native word painter is not sparing of figures of speech when he approaches the subject of the Viceroy's wife and her beauty. All the imagery of the Orient is poured at her feet in praise. Doubtless many of those who admired Miss Mary Leiter, of Chicago, will endorse the description of Lady Curzon written by the young man of the Bangabasi, the leading native paper of Bengal. Says this chronicler: "All the gods of our Hindoo Pantheon must hide their heads in the presence of this divine one. The color of her face is the color of molten gold, and in this are set the priceless pearls of her teeth. No reed at the river's brink is more beautifully slender than her waist. And her head—perfect is it in shape, and beautifully set upon a neck exactly resembling that of a swan. As for her eyes, they could not be imagined more alluring and commanding. They are not common eyes. They are not dark, for instance, and they are not tinged with red. Their color is rather handsomely purple, and they are ever restless, beaming with intelligence. The forehead above them is small and narrow and as white as an elephant's tusk. Her voice resembles the voice of a cuckoo."

This tells how the good people of New York are not fasting, but feasting, in spite of Lent being upon us. It describes the battle being waged by a leading divine from the lofty eminence of his pulpit upon a charming woman who is endeavoring to lighten the sadness of the New York Sabbath, and likewise records the result of the merry war between the Vanderbilts and the Astors. Here also will be found gossip both serious and frivoleous, the chronicles, in fact, of the social pie crust of Gotham—and they furnish food for reflection.

## Gotham.

The first week in Lent is never the very gayest nor yet the most solemn of seasons. Society is in a state of transition. It has not yet settled down to the solemn observance of the Forty Days, nor has it shaken off all the frivolities. Such an extremely gay winter could not come to a sudden stop, and here and there are mild bubblings up of spirits which will not be repressed.

There have been more dinners this Lent than in many an other in social history. Everybody is feasting—not fasting.

Mid-Lent will be the excuse for several dances, including the one which will be given by Howard Constable and the One Hundred Club at his studio. This is to be a fancy dress annexation ball, and the guests are to appear as natives of Hawaii and the Philippines, to say nothing of Cuba and Porto Rico.

There has been much discussion in this connection among the women as to what they shall wear and what they shall not wear.

I do not think that many of them will venture to go either as Philippine or Hawaiian damsels—although there is no telling.

Mrs. Astor sailed yesterday on the Campania. The departure of Mrs. Astor, as a rule, means the ringing down of the social curtain. But the Vanderbilts are all ready to appear in the second act, which will begin at Easter.

None of the Southern trips will be of long duration. The longest will be that of the Seward Webbs, who, with the Fred Vanderbilts have taken out a car-load of their friends.

Creighton Webb was in Washington last week, and he was to have joined the party there. Harry Lehr and James de Wolfe Cutting are travelling around the country with the Fishes. The party will be back at Easter.

Mrs. Astor will visit her daughter, Mrs. Haig, who is living very quietly in London, and will then cross the Channel to Paris to take possession once more of her apartment in the Avenue des Champs Elysees.

Mrs. Astor has certainly shown this Winter that if she chooses she can still be a leader, notwithstanding the croakings of society being too large, and sets being divided, and all that sort of thing.

There will always be one fashionable set which will lead the others. It may be large, or it may be small.

Just now the war is on between Mrs. Astor and the Vanderbilts. It is not a savage war, as these ladies go to one another's entertainments occasionally.

The going into mourning of Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt in the middle of the season has given the victory to Mrs. Astor. She has had undisputed sway.

The Hewitt tea created a mild sensation during the week. The memories of the famous vegetable ball are still fresh, and the announcement that there was to be a fanfare of trumpets led people to believe that there would be something sensational.

But the sensations were only flimsy. Lord Charles Beresford and the Chinese Minister were among these.

The music was strictly classical, and there were nearly a thousand people present.

But strange to say there was not a single representative of the Vanderbilt set, nor of any of the ultra-fashionables, while of Knickerbockers and old-fashioned people there were a plenty.

I believe the party was Mrs. Hewitt's, and she had asked her old friends.

The dinner at the Metropolitan Club was not a great success.

There is no use disguising it; the club is not on the best financial basis.

I spoke of this last week, and I see that it is being generally discussed.

Members have kicked at the extra assessment of \$30, and there is a very meagre waiting list.

The directors of the club have volunteered to give \$1,000 apiece each of the last three years.

They have all done faithfully.

James P. Kernochan, one of the number, has died, and Mrs. Kernochan, who insists that she receives spiritualistic advice daily from her husband, has been told by him not to pay the extra thou.

So there has been a little deficit this year.

I hardly think that the Union Club will consent to come up and join, although the Metropolitan has been singing it siren songs for a long time.

This week Mrs. Everett Culver will give an entertainment at her apartment. Mrs. Culver is the daughter of Clarke, the Montana Senator and millionaire, and all entertainments at her home are original and amusing.

Fancy dress was suggested for this one, but I hear that Mrs. Culver has changed her mind.

At any rate, you can go as you please. But that there will be stunts I have no doubt.

I remember the Lenten entertainment last Winter, with Miss Clarke and Mrs. Culver dancing the "To H— with Spain" cakewalk. There will be something just as startling this week.

There has been only one engagement announced this week, namely, that of Miss Moss, a very pretty girl, to Jimmie Tallier, who distinguished himself at Santiago, and who has been ill with Cuban fever the entire Autumn.

Miss Moss, a sister of Mrs. Carley Havermeier, is a tall, handsome girl, and almost as much of a beauty as her sister. Jimmie is a first cousin of the irrepressible Tommie Sniffen, but does not look in the least like him. He is a very quiet young man, with no coach driving habits.

He has been one of the ballroom heroes of the Winter, and has almost shared honoring with young Bull, who has been in the very thick of the social scrimmage, just as he was in that of El Cane.

I hear, or rather read, much of Alken. But it is one thing to read and another to hear. Alken has not been a success this year.

The hotel burning down has been a great detriment to the place.

There are a few people down there, such as the Hitchcocks, the Motts, the Clinch Smiths, Mrs. John Robinson and her granddaughter, Miss Forbes Morgan, and Mrs. Duncan Elliot. But these few swallows do not make a Summer.

Fred Beach, who was one of a gay crowd of bachelors down there last Winter, has returned in disgust.

It is too quiet, and I hear also that the little games have been abandoned.

And all that makes a difference, you know.

I have always felt the greatest admiration for Mrs. "Bob" Osborn. She is a plucky woman, and when her husband failed she went right to work to help him. She was one of the best dressed women in town, and is always modish.

She began by designing gowns for actresses, and she did much for Miss Tyree, Miss Mannering and Miss Opp at the Lyceum.

She had very strong friends in the Otis family, and I believe that it was at poor James Otis's suggestion that she organized the very successful dramatic breakfasts last year.

Now why Dr. Rainsford should thunder out at this poor little woman, who is simply arranging a series of Sunday afternoon teas with music, I can't see.

There are many people who do not know what to do with themselves on Sunday and who love music. There are women who are tired of holding informal receptions.

The result was some years ago a number of studio teas at the Sherwood, where the artists of the opera would drop in and sing.

These same teas are now being made public, so everybody can enjoy them.

Dr. Rainsford has never objected to the Sunday evening concerts at the opera. Then why should he object to the same in the afternoon?

Mrs. Osborn lives in a beautiful old-fashioned house in the shadow of St. George's. In fact, she is Mr. Rainsford's next door neighbor but one, and he ought to extend the biblical courtesy toward her.

The Metropolitan Club has musical dinners on Sunday evenings. Yet not a word is said against them.

But then Pierpont Morgan, who is the chief pillar of Dr. Rainsford's church, is the president of the Metropolitan and a stockholder in the Opera House.

This may, of course, have nothing to do with it. But I cannot see why there is sin in one and not sin in the other.

Mrs. Osborn, however, is nothing daunted by Christian women who resort to that eminently Christian practice of writing anonymous letters, or by sensational clergymen.

She has another ten on this afternoon, and she has received enough advertising to boom it even more than the dinners de luxe.

These latter institutions will now take a back seat, since both Mrs. Astor and Harry Lehr, star performers, have quit the stage. They are practically ended for the season.

I have no doubt that this Sunday will be just as gay as any other.

I have heard of several musicales and teas and some dinners.

I think that such an entertainment as was offered by Mrs. Oliver Belmont last Sunday was delightful and did not in the least detract from the observance of the Sabbath.

No one is compelled to go out on Sunday. But I notice that every one goes who gets a bid, and you will find very few regrets.

Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs will give a Sunday Lenten affair and Mrs. Belmont another one later in the season.

At Newport Mrs. Belmont's Sunday organ recitals were episodes of the week.

A few broad-minded women can do much toward stamping out the provincial narrowness of ultra Sabatarian prejudice.

The week has been filled with variety enough of entertainment to promise spice.

The Dog Show has been all very well in its way, but it was not the howling fashionable success it was cracked up to be, whatever it might have been otherwise.

A long list of names of "prominent" people was prepared for publication by the management. But I was there three times and hardly saw a baker's dozen.

The Prescott Lawrences, Mrs. Bird, Miss Turure, Appleton Smith and one or two others I saw. The same day on which Mrs. Oliver Belmont and Miss Fair were reported as being at the show they were at Newport looking over the new cottage.

CHOLLY KNICKERBOCKER.

## Washington,

Feb. 25.—It is all arranged, I understand, even to the time set for the marriage, and this important detail having been settled, the bride is turning her attention to the even more interesting details of the trousseau, and wedding gown in particular. The latter is bound to be a stunning affair, for the reason that the bride-elect invariably does have stunning belongings. And who is she? you say.

Why, to be sure, I had begun in the middle instead of at the beginning, where it would be in order to observe that this will be another international marriage of importance. The bride, you understand, is Mrs. Gordon McKay. And the groom? No, guess again. Not Woodbury Blair at all. That is quite ancient history. A decided back number. He has been shelved, and according to the gossip does not in the least like it, even though he is not quite idle in the line of a pleasant little flirtation with another stunning looking woman of the smart set.

Well, this time the groom-elect is a member of the German Embassy; handsome, with a tremendous bank account, and in love from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. He has been paying Mrs. McKay the most devoted attention for more than a year past, and in fact, has been very shadow wherever she has gone. It is a really and truly love match this time and no mistake.

The marriage is to take place in April, and I rather imagine will be a quiet affair, with a few of the most intimate friends and the German Ambassador in attendance. And, by the way, another bit of importance in this respect is that by her marriage with the German diplomat Mrs. McKay will not lose her present princely allowance of alimony. It seems to be an altogether charming arrangement all around, and we are each and all hoping for a chance to dance at the wedding and to have the charming bride throw her wedding bouquet to us, so that each of us girls will come in for a chance at the next affair of the kind on Cupid's cards.

You know, Captain and Mrs. Wilkinson, of England, have been visiting Washington for some little time past. When they first hovered upon our horizon they were taken in tow by a certain society matron, who spent much time, energies and, incidentally, money introducing them to the high lights of the gay world. They were gotten White House invitations, and the hostesses in question almost brought on an attack of nervous exhaustion in her efforts to secure every possible social attention for the Britishers, whom she considered as being under her special wing.

As a last crowning stroke she issued invitations for a luncheon in honor of Captain and Mrs. Wilkinson. It was one of those awful days of the blizzard, but not one of the invited guests thought of remaining away. There was a brave showing. Every one was there except the guests of especial honor. So the luncheon waited and waited. At last Captain Wilkinson showed up, evidently considerably out of breath and decidedly snowy looking from his walk. His wife would not appear, he smilingly explained in the most naive manner, because—well, just fatter! He said: "My wife will not be able to come to the luncheon to-day. She sent out and found that it would cost \$10 for a cab. And so, you see, she could not think of paying that just to attend a luncheon. And so she has quite given up the idea of coming."

All Ferrugus Bey, the Turkish Minister, is making history for himself. He is quite forgetting or perhaps he never really knew that there are some things which will go in his country that are quite out of order here. His speeches are at times blood curdling, and he gets them off with such an air of infantile innocence one wonders whether he is most fool or knave. Every one is talking about the matter, and not a few are comparing notes. There is one conclusion at which we have all arrived, and that is it is about time the official appointments should include a master of etiquette of speech, in society at least.

One of his mildest speeches was at a dinner party recently, at which Mrs. McKay-Smith, wife of the rector of St. John's Church, the Cornelius Vanderbilts' cousin, you remember, was one of the guests. Upon the lace of her corsage, at the right side, she wore a blazing star of diamonds, while upon the velvet at her throat was a crescent of diamonds. All Ferrugus Bey looked at her contemptively for a few moments, then, leaning toward her, he said, without the slightest attempt to lower his voice:

"If see you wear the star and crescent. If one of my wives at home should do that I would throw her down the stairs, for it would mean that she belonged to the Sultan."

Feb. 25.—Those estimable ladies of the 400 who toiled so industriously to make Die Puppenfee, of recent fame, the great success that it was are now split up into factions, I am authoritatively informed, and are waging a war among themselves as to the disposition of the receipts.

There are two charitable institutions in which the society people are more or less interested—the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals being one and the Maryland General Hospital being the other. Miss Mary B. Shearer is the leader of the hosts who contend that the S. P. C. A. should get the "dough," and all of it, while Mrs. Doctor Reuling, who has a goodly number of the elite behind her, holds out for the Maryland General. From those on the inside I hear that the contest is waging very warm and that if the canines of the city or the patients at the hospital are to wait for relief until the matter is finally settled the money taken in at the gate will eventually be given to the Free Burial Association for the interment of those for whom relief was intended, but who will in all probability have expired in the meantime.

And while on the subject of gentle differences in the gay world it may not be amiss to take a "back" at two very worthy organizations of this big town which have adopted names that are very similar, but whose objects and intentions appear to differ widely. The societies in question are the Colonial Dames, whose members desire the first letter of the article spelled with a large T, and the original Colonial Dames, composed of ladies who have little faith in the ancestry of any persons whose names are not upon their membership roll. The exclusiveness of the latter is becoming so alarming that a rumor has been current for several days that within a short time only such persons as have credentials in the handwriting of the Father of His Country will be admitted.

Feb. 25.—The exhibition of the Sargent portraits in Copley Hall, really the greatest event in American art circles this season, is also the great Lenten society event. The distinguished women who host their names as patronesses gave it the proper social stamp, and Copley Hall is thronged with the wealth and beauty of the town day and evening. Not a few come over from New York also to mingle in the crowd.

One exhibitor has just paid \$5,000 for a coach horse which can step higher than any other coach horse in America. He had to go to Chicago to find the animal. Oh, the Horse Show will be a starter!

Mrs. Gardner's Russian sleigh has been greatly admired on the Boulevard of late.

Mrs. J. Montgomery Sears is the matron for the young people's dancing classes at the Tulliettes this season, as Mrs. Nathaniel Thayer was last year. These classes are rather taking the precedence in the way of prestige and exclusiveness so long held by Papanot.

Richard Mansfield's very sudden determination not to continue his engagement at the Hollis Street Theatre not only caused Mr. Rich a heavy loss, but inflicted great disappointment upon thousands of people who really wanted to see "Gyranoo." It probably, however, was not regarded with unmitigated sorrow by Francis Wilson, who has been at the Tremont, and it has certainly been a distinct blessing to the Museum, which hasn't been large enough for the receipts given by "The Belle of New York." There is an enormous advance sale for "The Christian," which follows "The Belle."

It has been three or four years since Boston had anything like a ministerial scandal, but repair has it that the Warren Avenue Baptist Church has something of the sort on hand. Rev. Mr. Dixon, its new pastor, came from Scituate. He has engaged counsel, and neither the lawyer nor any one else will throw light upon the mystery—if mystery there really is.

Feb. 25.—A few small dinners and musicales, two nights of grand opera and the sewing classes for debutantes constituted the week's doings in the social world in Philadelphia. The event of the week was the presentation of "Les Huguenots" on Thursday evening by the Metropolitan Opera Company. It was a gala performance, locally, musically and financially. Everybody of social prominence attended and the Academy of Music was taxed to the aisles.

Mrs. John Esby's musicale on Tuesday evening at her residence, No. 311 South Eleventh street, was a rare success. The artists included the most prominent in Philadelphia. Miss Esby was assisted in receiving by her sister, Mrs. Frederic Thurston Mason, Mrs. John Thompson Spencer, Mrs. George Baker, Mrs. de Grasse Fox and Mrs. Clement Phillips.

Miss Mendensson, of New York, is the guest of Miss Gerstley, of North Broad street. They receive on Thursdays.

One of the most brilliant social events of the season was the musicale tea given on Wednesday evening by Mrs. Clifton Lewis at her South Twelfth street residence in honor of Miss Isabel Kernan, of Utica, N. Y. Miss Kernan is engaged to Mrs. Lewis's son, Mr. Clifford Lewis, Jr., and the tea was given to introduce her to Philadelphia society. The guests, numbering about one hundred, included the social leaders of the city.

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