THE DEMOCRAT.

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Knitting.

An old-time kitchen, an open door,
Sunshine lying across the floor,
A little maid, feet bare and brown,
Cheeks like roses, a cotton gown,
Rippling masses of shining hair,
And a childish forehead, smooth and fair.

The child is knitting. The open door
Woos her, tempts her more and more.
The sky is cloudless, the air is sweet,
And sadly restless the bare brown feet.
Still, as she wishes her task were done,
She counts the rounds off, one by one.

Higher yet mounts the sun of June;
But one round more—a childish tune
Ripples out from the childish lips,
While swift and swifter the finger-tips
Play out and in, till I hear her say:
"Twenty rounds! I'm going to play!

Up to the hedge where the sweet-brier blows,
Down to the bank where the brook let flows,
Chasing the butterflies, watching the bees,
Wading in clover up to her knees,
Mocking the bobolinks; oh, what fun
It is to be free when the task is done!

Years and years have glided away.
The child is a woman, and threads of gray
One by one crept into her hair,
And I see the print of the feet of care.
Yet I like to watch her. Tonight she sits
By her household fire, and as then she knits,

Swiftly the needles glance, and the thread
Glides through her fingers, white and red,
'Tis a baby's stocking. To and fro
And in and out the needles go,
She sings as she sang that day in June,
But the low, soft strain is a nursery tune.

Close beside her the baby lies.
Slowly closing his sleepy eyes.
Forward, backward, the cradle swings,
Touched by her foot as she softly sings,
And now in silence her work she keeps;
The song is hushed, for the baby sleeps.

Up from the green, through the twilight gray,
Come the shouts of a troop at play.
Blue eyes, black eyes, golden curls—
These are all hers—her boys and girls.
Then wonder not at the prints of care,
Or the silver threads in her braided hair.

Does she ever pine for the meadow brook,
The sweet-brier hedge, the clover nook?
When sweet winds woo, when smiles the sun,
Does she ever wish that her task was done?
Would you know? Then watch her where she sits,
Smiling dreamily, while she knits.

—[Ellen F. Allerton.

THE LOT OF TWO GIRLS.

COMPANION PICTURES OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN NEW YORK.

I.

At 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon a daintily attired woman stepped from her coupe to the south curb of Fourteenth street not far from where that thronged thoroughfare pours its Saturday pleasure-seekers into sixth avenue's stream of humanity. A pretty little girl of seven or eight years sprang lightly out after her, put her mittened hand in her mother's well-gloved fingers and walked jauntily off. They were good to look at, these two, in their fashionable drapery, becoming head-gear and polished boots. They mixed readily in the current of promenaders, for they had money to spend while the coupe waited and delicate tastes to gratify. They turned into a shop door not far off and took places in a row of other well-dressed women and children waiting their turn to be supplied with tickets by a busy little brown-haired cashier. The shop was filled with the rustle of female skirts and bright with a kaleidoscopic mass of brilliant bonnets, tip-plumed hats and pretty ribbons.

The short counters on either hand stopped at a row of cabinets, each just big enough for three chairs and a mirror. Some of the hardwood doors of the cabinets were open, and outside them all customers waited for a chance at the crimping-irons, the shears, the clipper and the cologne bottle, over which the big-eyed, white-aproned girl within presided with grace and alertness. There was perfume in the air, and everywhere a suggestion of fluttering laces, crisp bank notes and jingling portemonnaies.

When Ethel's turn came she climbed into the big arm-chair in front of the mirror. Her mother sat down by her, and Hose of the shears removed the little one's broad-brimmed hat and wrapped her to the collar in soft white crash.

"So you want your bangs cut again, and Madame will have hers curled," said the attendant; "why, how fast they do grow, to be sure," and she raised the thick sunny locks from the child's smooth, white forehead and weighed them on her nimble fingers.

"Yes," said Ethel, mama let me have the chair first, and while I'm waiting for her I'm to have some chocolates, ain't I, mama? and if it isn't too late we'll stop for ice-cream on the way home!"

"That will be nice," laughed the girl-barber, "sure enough. And you'll let me polish your nails, too, before you go, won't you? And by the time I am through with you you shall be the sweetest child in all New York."

Then all three laughed. There was nothing too good for Ethel, and she knew it as well as they.

II.

A little earlier on the same afternoon women and children with tin pails and little baskets in their hands were crowding in much the same way into a narrow doorway on Centre street, not far from the Tombs prison. They didn't come in coupes and had some trouble to keep from being run down by the drays, the street-cars and the express wagons which rushed along by the Diet Kitchen. They had to take some risks, they thought, to be sure and get there before closing hour. They were bare-headed, mostly, and their shoes were cracked and rusty-looking. Calico skirts and clean but ragged shawls kept out the chilly freshness of the air. There was in their eyes an eager look, as if something vital might be missed by tardiness or accident. A Sunday without food is not a pleasant thing to look forward to, even by people who are not unused to it.

Inside the narrow doorway, which was cleanly swept and scrubbed, a plain little wooden desk, three yellow wooden chairs and a big, low table, covered with white oilcloth, met the eye. A bright-faced woman in black sat behind the table and received, as fast as they were handed her by the thin-fingered girls and red-handed, but white-faced women, slips of white paper, on which this was printed:

Centennial Diet Kitchen, No. 137 Centre st.
New York Dispensary District.
New York.....188
For.....No.....st.
age.....years.....months.....of.....parentage.
Please issue to bearer.....
.....Physician.
Kitchen opened from 10 a. m. to 3 p. m.
Take clean vessel with you to the kitchen.

The bright-faced woman in black had a smile for some and a cheery word for all.

She had been sitting there almost every day for seven years, and many of the haggard faces that brightened up at her kind words were those of old friends.

"Why didn't you come yesterday, Maggie?"

"I couldn't, Mrs. O'Donnell; I was washing."

Maggie is a twelve-year-old girl, barefoot, in a thin skirt and a shawl. Mrs. O'Donnell gave her a pair of shoes some time ago, but Maggie likes to save them for Sunday when it isn't too cold. She takes her noggin of fresh milk and her little can of snowy boiled rice and limps away. Maggie is dying of consumption.

A tall, fine-looking old woman, with very white hair and very wrinkled cheeks, comes next. A puny, quiet little baby, scarcely as big as a doll, lay listlessly across her left shoulder. Its face was as pale as its grandmother's. To her right hand clung a sickly little boy, barely able to reach up to her, emaciated by want and sickness until his little clothes fell in folds about him. There was a wistful look on his face as he peered around the corner of the table at the big, spotless tins of milk and the steaming boiler of rice. He looked as if a little of the beef tea in the shiny crock at Mrs. O'Donnell's right hand would do him no harm.

"Shall I give you an extra portion today?" asked the matron, kindly. As she poured the rich-looking milk into the old woman's bucket the puny babe raised its head and crowed with feeble delight.

"Poor baby," she said, "poor baby, how he loves the milk!"

"Thank you, ma'am," said the grandmother, "but if you give me any more this little fellow won't be able to carry it across the street." The white-faced boy could barely lift the can with its one day's portion!

"Next came eight-year-old Jennie. She had been a lovely child once. The roses hadn't all gone yet out of her cheeks, and the glad light of childhood might yet be restored to her eyes. Her feet were notably small, evidently much smaller than the ragged shoes she wore. She was scrupulously clean. Small blue veins—a very unusual thing in childhood—stood out on her wrists and temples.

"Were you at school yesterday, Jennie?"

"No, ma'am. I haven't been this week. The doctor says mother is dying. And if it were not for this milk I think she'd died long ago. Thank you, ever, ever so much!" There was a rising sob in the soft, gentle voice.

"Has your grandfather got work yet?"

"No ma'am."

"Well, you come down again in an hour or two, Jennie, dear, and I have some clean sheets for your mother's bed."

Five diet kitchens are maintained by private enterprise. The New York Diet Kitchen association keeps them up by subscription and by an occasional but rare donation from non-members. There haven't been more than two or three bequests in the history of the association. One of them was for $5000. Its members are women, many of them women of wealth and social position. The Vanderbilts have contributed liberally more than once. Charades, musicales and entertainments of that sort are given at private houses every winter for the benefit of the Diet Kitchens. A matron is in charge of each. She is paid just $35 per month.

The Flower Mission sends them flowers. Flannels and sheets are received from various sources. Money and clothing, everything indeed that aching bodies and sad hearts need find their way to the deserving poor through these channels. Tickets good for a week are given out by the district and visiting physicians to such of their patients as seem to them deserving. When necessary these tickets are renewed, and as often as necessary. More than a hundred sufferers have their needs supplied sometimes in a single day at a single kitchen. In a single year 117,214 pints of milk and 16,362 pints of beef tea were distributed. The diet kitchens are good places to go to, for people who feel like doing real good in a quiet way. Rich people might to take their children there occasionally to learn something of human life and human suffering.—[New York World.

The English Church Army.

On Wednesday the Bishop of Marlborough presided at the seventh annual meeting of this society at the Princes Hall, Piccadilly. The association, which was initiated in 1881 by the present honorary secretary, the Rev. W. Carlile, aims at drawing the masses into the communion of the Church of England. Its officers and nurses, some 200 in number, are distributed throughout the country, working in connection with the various churches to which they are attached. The society numbers among its patrons the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of Carlisle, Chester, Durham, Ely, Exeter, London, Llandaff, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Rochester, Ripon, Southwell, Sodor and Man, Truro, Wakefield, and Winchester.

The Rev. G. G. Chambers, the secretary, read the report, which showed that during the year the army held 44,000 outdoor and 50,000 indoor meetings, which were attended by over 7,000,000 of persons, and resulted in a large number of conversions. There were confirmed during the same period 5000 persons. The army has 10,000 communicant members, 160 officer-evangelists, and 10 mission nurses, who paid 400,000 visits with Bible and prayer book during the year, and sold more than 1,000,000 religious papers. The chairman remarked that the army was doing a great and noble work. Many of the clergy who at first treated them with coolness, now looked upon their officers and nurses as important factors in the parochial machinery of the church. Their missionaries went into dens of vice and misery where the clergyman could not go, and they thus rescued many persons from vice and misery. He believed that a glorious future was before the army, whose work he hoped would be still further expanded. Having alluded to the difficulty experienced in getting a sufficient number of properly trained nurses, who were in great demand, he said a great deal more work was before the army, and they must press steadily onward with the conflict.—[London Times.

Forks are Quite Modern.

It is difficult to realize what a modern invention the table fork is. Queen Elizabeth never heard of one. She had, it is true, a few dainty forks, perchance with crystal handles, for eating preserved fruit at dessert. But long after her time dinner forks were unknown in England. The very earliest now to be found belong to the same nobleman whose hour-glass salt has been already spoken of, and these are not older than the middle of the reign of Charles II. The few early forks of the reign of George I. are three-pronged, and but few of our neighbors can show us four-pronged forks much before the reign of George III., from which time their fashion has remained unaltered to the present day, except for their handles, which have followed the fashions of spoons, finishing up with the familiar "fiddle-pattern" of nineteenth-century use. Before the days of forks the ewer and basin, which have now generally disappeared, were much in request after every course; whereas now the basin alone, with a little rose-water, makes its appearance at civic feasts after dinner, as a matter of fashion rather than necessity. Four out of five fine old basins have no doubt been melted up to supply the very forks whose invention rendered the washing of the fingers superfluous.—[Murray's Magazine.

Death Struggle of the Moose.

Last November Mr. B. F. Colburn was in the vicinity Chamberlain Lake, when he came across two bull moose engaged in a fierce struggle, the cause being a demure looking cow moose which stood hard by. The combatants were huge fellows, weighing about one and a half tons each and their struggles for the supremacy were awful. They fight in a peculiar manner, sometimes like the stallions of the great prairies; separating themselves a few yards they charge on each other, rearing and striking with their forefeet. This warfare is continued until one or the other is defeated, when he escapes if he can, but the combat often ends in the death of the weaker. These animals fought until one of them was so lacerated as to be helpless on the ground, and the hunters who shot him did him a good turn. A party pursued and shot the other bull, but the cow escaped. Mr. Colburn has had the heads mounted which are valued at $100 each.

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