No. I

Broadway at Evening

The Sidewalkers—Hooking a Victim—Balcony Music and Drummond Lights—Scene at the Cosmorama—The Oyster Cellars—Midnight Orgies—Broadway Asleep

NEW YORK BY GAS-LIGHT! What a task have we undertaken! To penetrate beneath the thick veil of night and lay bare the fearful mysteries of darkness in the metropolis—the festivities of prostitution, the orgies of pauperism, the haunts of theft and murder, the scenes of drunkenness and beastly debauch, and all the sad realities that go to make up the lower stratum—the under-ground story—of life in New York! What may have been our motive for invading these dismal realms and thus wrenching from them their terrible secrets? Go on with us, and see. The duty of the present age is to discover the real facts of the actual condition of the wicked and wretched classes—so that Philanthropy and Justice may plant their blows aright. In our own humble way we profess to seek for and depict the truth. Let it speak for itself.

But let us begin moderately and go on gradually, instead of diving at once into the depths of our subject. Let us start fair with the young night and take our first walk in Broadway. Fashionable, aristocratic Broadway! Certainly we shall find nothing *here* to shock our senses and make our very nerves thrill with horror. Broadway, with its gay throng and flashing lights beaming from a thousand palace-like shop-fronts, where fortunes are spread out to tempt the eye of the unwary or the extravagant, surely will not afford us material for much of the horrible, nor draw largely upon our pity or our sympathies. On the contrary, we shall rather be in danger of envying the fortunate position of those we see and hear upon the great fashionable promenade. Well, well—let us look and listen.

Here are two ladies approaching us, magnificently attired, with their large arms and voluptuous bosoms half naked, and their bright eyes looking invitation at every passer by. Their complexions are pure white and red, and their dresses are of the most expensive material, and an ultra fashionable make. Diamonds and bracelets flash from their bosoms and bare arms, and heavily-wrought India shawls, of that gorgeous scarlet whose beamy hue intoxicates the eye, hang carelessly from their superb shoulders, almost trailing on the walk. But for their large feet and vulgar hands, they would be taken for queens or princesses, if such things were ever seen among us. They walk with a free and sweeping gait, and shuffle their feet upon the flag-stones with a noise that sets your teeth sharply on edge. As they pass, they look hard at you, and exclaim familiarly,

"How do you do, my dear? Come, won't you go home with me?"

We of course take no notice of this address, and the fine ladies pass on, stopping for a moment to exchange oaths and the most disgusting obscenity, in a loud and mocking voice, with those flashily-rigged young men who stand at the entrance of an oyster-cellar. They are on the look-out for victims, and will rendezvous an hour later at one of the aris-

tocratic gambling-houses just down the side-street from where they stand. The ladies pass on; and as they reach the next corner a young man stops and stares wistfully at them—hesitates, goes on, returns upon his steps and walks slowly down the side-street. The two "fishers of men," seeing that there is some game afoot, have now separated, and the youngest and handsomest keeps on, while her companion, casting a leering glance at the young man, and giving a leering scrape of the feet, tosses her head, and follows down the side-street—but on *the other side*. The victim knows not exactly what to make of it; wonders if he was not mistaken; and at length makes up his mind that it is some timid creature making her first essay in vice. His vanity, and even some better and more chivalric feeling is appealed to. He will make her acquaintance, at least—there can be no harm in that—and if she is yet pure and virtuous, he will save her. Full of these fine delusions he crosses the street—that street is to him the Rubicon—and accosts the painted demon who has lured him on. From that moment his doom is sealed. Need we follow him to the filthy street, the squalid chamber where Prostitution performs her horrid rites and ends by robbing her devotees?—Where drunkenness is brought in to aid the harlot in her infamous work—and where, if all else fail, the sleeping potion mingled in the foaming goblet does its inevitable work, and delivers the victim helpless into the hands of the despoiler. No—at least not now.

Here we are at the American Museum, crowned with its Drummond Light, sending a livid, ghastly glare for a mile up the street, and pushing the shadows of the omnibuses well-nigh to Niblo's. From the balcony of the third-story windows a cascade of horrent harmony, issuing from an E flat bugle and three mismatched trombones, is tumbling down upon the up-turned faces of the boys and negro-women on the opposite walk—while that untiring chromatic wheel goes ever round and round, twining and untwining its blue, red and yellow wreaths of light in unvarying variety. Although it cannot strictly be said of it that

it is without change, yet the shadow of its turning is painfully perceptible. Let us go up stairs and listen to the negro and Yankee abominations on the little stage in the garret, see the big anaconda, and watch the innocent wonder of those who come here principally and chiefly to be amused. It will be a fine study.

But there are plenty of others who come for entirely different purposes. Not only here, but at the ice-cream saloons and Christy's Minstrels, and the Art-Unions and picture-galleries, are assignations made for almost every hour of the day and night, between cautious libertines and women whose licentiousness has not yet been discovered and who pass for virtuous and respectable wives, mothers and daughters. Let us make use of our Asmodean privilege[1] and listen to this beautiful creature closely veiled, and her gallant companion, who seem to be admiring the mysterious beauties of "Naples by Moonlight," as seen through a round piece of glass with a penny engraving and a lamp behind it.

"Dearest Louise," he whispers passionately, "I can live in this manner no longer. Do we not love each other better than everything else in the world? And what care we for the place that holds us, only if we are together?"

"Oh, Edward, don't talk so—you quite frighten me; and then somebody will be sure to overhear us. But let it be just as you will: my fate is in your hands. Have I not given you everything?" and she leans her veiled head lovingly against his stooped shoulder. He presses her lightly, yet oh, how tenderly, to his breast, beneath the convenient shadow of the half-darkened room, and they hurry down stairs and into a carriage. A whisper to the driver, who replies with a wink and a chuckling "I know, sir!" and they whirl through the throng to a fashionable assignation-house, to accomplish a husband's dishonor and a wife's infamy.

1. Asmodeus is a demon who, among other traits, possesses the ability to lift off the roofs of houses to discover the secret evils of those within. Not surprisingly, he was frequently invoked during this era by city writers.

The oyster-cellars, with their bright lamps casting broad gleams of red light across the street, are now in full tide, and every instant sees them swallow up at one entrance a party of rowdy and half-drunken young men, on their way to the theater, the gambling-house, the bowling-saloon, or the brothel—or most likely to all in turn—while another is vomited up the other stairway, having already swilled their fill of oysters and bad brandy, and garnished their reeking mouths each with an atrocious cigar, which the bar-keeper recommended as "full-flavored." If we step down one of these wide entrances we shall see a long counter gorgeously decked with crystal decanters and glasses, richly carved and gilt, and the wall ornamented with a voluptuous picture of a naked Venus—perhaps the more seductive from being exquisitely painted. Before the long marble bar are arranged some dozen or score of individuals, waiting their turns for liquor—while on the other side a man with his shirt-sleeves rolled up and his face in a fiery glow, seems to be pulling long ribbons of julep out of a tin cup. At the other end of the room is a row of little stalls, each fitted up with its gas-burner, its red curtain, its little table and voluptuous picture, and all occupied with busy eaters. In the rear of these boxes is a range of larger apartments called "private rooms," where men and women enter promiscuously, eat, drink and make merry, and disturb the whole neighborhood with their obscene and disgusting revels, prolonged far beyond midnight. The women of course are all of one kind—but among the men, you would find, if you looked curiously, reverend judges and juvenile delinquents, pious and devout hypocrites, and undisguised libertines and debauchees. Gamblers and fancy men, high-flyers and spoonies, genteel pick-pockets and burglars, even, sometimes mingle in the detestable orgies of these detestable caverns; and the shivering policeman who crawls sleepily by at the dead of night, and mechanically raps his bludgeon upon the pavement as he hears the boisterous mirth below, may be reminding a grave functionary of the city that it is time to go home to

his wife and children after the discharge of his "arduous public duties."

St. Paul's tolls ten o'clock, but the crowd begins to show no signs of decrease, but pours along its turbid tide of life with a sullen roar and rushing, like the sound of the surf trampling upon the rocky beach. Before the theatres, the Tabernacle, and the concert-rooms the omnibuses are drawn up in solid phalanx, and at *the* place where the popular entertainment of the night is given, a row of carriages extends for a quarter of a mile either way. It is the night of Strakosch's farewell concert at the Tabernacle and the fashionable world, and all especially who would be thought to belong to it, are out in full force. Dainty perfumes and delicate-toned bravos float out through the dark door-way and under the gloomy, prison-like entrance. Suddenly the doors are thrown open and the audience rush out tumultuously—the ladies seeming, for such delicate creatures, to stand the squeeze and scramble remarkably well. "Carriage, sir—take you home for a dollar!" "Broadway and Bleecker street—right up!" "South Ferry—all aboard!" and so amid a clatter and confusion that would have done honor to the farewell appearance of the Babel-workers, the immense and gloomy recess discharges its thousands, who at length have all departed, and everything is left to night and silence. In another hour the Broadway, the Olympic and Burton's will be over—the omnibuses will go over the same exciting ground again, and Broadway will prepare

> to wrap the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lie down to pleasant dreams.

It is growing late, and the crowd has somewhat thinned—although there are still many hundreds in the street—some hurrying home to their wives, after an evening out, prolonged beyond the allotted conjugal hour; some creeping reluctantly to their cold, narrow, grave-like bedrooms in private boarding-houses where they receive "the comforts of

a home" for five dollars a week, with breakfast and tea. Others, held all day indoors by their employments, are just escaping to the club, the gambling-house, the brothel or the midnight revel in some underground coffee-house, such as we have described. Here and there a flashily-dressed woman shuffles—or sometimes reels—by, while groups may occasionally be seen on the corners, waiting for a last and desperate chance of game. Most of the sisterhood, however, have been more fortunate, and each has succeeded in ensnaring her victim and dragging him to her den. One by one the late shops close their shutters, and at length the oyster-cellars extinguish their gigantic painted lamps, and shut their inside windows. With the exception of the dim and distant public lamps the street is now dark. Once in a while a belated omnibus rattles furiously homeward, and the side walk sends along a hollow echo beneath the feet of the lonely passenger. Here and there a lamp-post is embellished with a human swine who leans, a statue of drunkenness, against it for support, and consigns his undigested supper to his fellow pigs who rise early o'mornings. A company of happy rowdies, reeling and hiccuping as they go, pass arm in arm and shouting at the top of their voices,

> Oh carry me—hic—to—hic—Virginny,
> T—ic ole Virginny's ic—shore!

Close at their heels follows the bill-sticker with his hieroglyphic paper bed-blankets over one arm and his paste-bucket hanging upon the other. With nice discrimination he selects the fresh bills put up by outsiders and carefully and neatly plasters them over with his own—while those put up by the regular members of the bill-posting profession receive the honors of a pasty passover. Anon the night-carts thump heavily over the pavements, perfuming the cool "cisterns of the midnight air" with a most unsmellable infusion of sulphureted hydrogen—the sub-editors of the morning papers creep wearily homeward—the thief comes out to

take the air and hold up his head like an honest man—the policeman settles himself for his grand central nap—the solitary cab drives swiftly away from Sanderson's club—and Broadway shuts its eyes and prepares to go to sleep, just as the stirring noises of the new day begin to murmur in the dawn's gray distance.

No. II

The Model Artist Exhibitions

The "Walhalla"—Susannah in the Bath—History of Model Artists—Frimbley and the Living Statues—Dr. Collyer—The Goddesses and the Police—Reflections

Having taken our preliminary stroll through the great thoroughfare, and observed its bearings and aspects by gaslight, we will diverge a little and use our eyes in a more limited sphere—where still there is much, very much, to be seen. Beaconed by yonder tongue of flame forever leaping up and sinking back again in that tall black monumental chimney, which scatters such clouds of uncrystalized otto of roses over the city, we stop before a dirty hack-stable thatched with straw manure and reeking knee-deep in filth. Beside the main entrances for the horses to stagger through at night, is a small door opening upon a dark passage, at the end of which we stumble up a narrow staircase and find ourselves in a dimly lighted room—the famous "Walhalla," residence of gods and goddesses, and evidently directly over the stable. The front is occupied by a rough counter furnished with certain bottles of variously-colored raw whisky,

which passes under the various names of brandy, gin, Jamaica or cherry bounce, according to the taste of the customer. A few fetid camphene lamps, hung at dreary intervals along the walls, exhale a gentle lamp-black shower upon the air, and the aromal peculiarities of the place are completed by a delicate mingling of odors from the stable and the smoke of American cigars. The floor is slippery with mud and tobacco-juice, and about half filled with a pretty hard-looking set. A green rag runs across the lower end of the room, and at one corner sit two men, one scraping a villainous fiddle, and the other punishing a rheumatic piano. The music changes to a slow and plaintive air, a little bell jingles, and up goes the rag. We refer to our programme and ascertain that the tableau in order is "Susannah in the Bath." The same brawny female, who has already appeared as Venus, Psyche, and the Greek Slave, is now seated as Susannah in the bath, with her face and frontage to the audience. A light gauze drapery is held in her right hand and falls in a kind of demi-curtain before her knees—otherwise she is *in puribus naturalibus*. Behind her are the "elders," stooping and leaning over each other, trying to get a good sight. Susannah, seated upon the "revolving pedestal of Canova," commences her circumgyrations; and when she has got nearly once round, one of the elders begins speaking to his neighbor in his excitement—or we believe he drops his plug of tobacco on the ground—which startles the fair Susannah, who raises her hand, still holding the little curtain, to her head. The consequence may be imagined. And in this condition she completes her revolution before the audience, who fairly yell with delight as the curtain goes down, continuing their furious applause until the very old horses in the stable below wake up and whinnow out their delight. Overcome by these unexpected demonstrations of popularity, the obliging *artiste* comes out again and goes through the same performance three or four times more, without stopping to take breath.

Such is an unexaggerated description of a specimen of the exhibitions known in the handbills as "tableaux vivants," and which are now openly advertised, posted, countenanced and common-councilled in this virtuous and reputable metropolis. We have by no means selected the worst of these tableaux to pass our pen over. "Venus rising from the Sea," "the Lady Godiva, or Peeping Tom of Coventry," &c. &c. are quite as bad, and others, whose titles we have forgotten, absolutely worse.

The history of these exhibitions, their commencement, rise and progress, may be instructive, as throwing light on the public taste for amusement in this country; and, as we have taken some pains to gather the facts, we will devote a page to the recording of them.

The earliest representative of the "Living Statues" (now called "Model Artists") in this country, was a little Englishman named Frimbley. He was a knotty, knurly, well-formed manikin of a fellow, and used to dress himself neatly in skin-tight cotton fleshings, which he then plastered all over with flour, until, at the distance of stage from audience, he really looked very like a statue in plaster-of-paris, by Garbeille—very well modeled, but rather overcharged in outline and exaggerated in position. Thus accoutred, and furnished with pasteboard shield and helmet, Frimbley would throw himself into all sorts of shapes and attitudes, however, well-chosen, and sometimes really beautiful—of which we recollect a favorite picture, of "Ajax defying the Lightning," "The Dying Gladiator," and two or three others, equally classic and effective. These representations were very popular all over the country, and were really well worth seeing: for Frimbley was a good artist and studied his attitudes carefully. He had been originally a dancing and fencing master, comic pantomimist and stage dancer, and might have made a fortune by his "Living Statues." But he was strongly given to drink; and we heard, a few years ago, that he had died miserably, in some obscure place, without

friends or money to bury him. Now and then, imitators of Frimbley have appeared, singly or in groups; but they never made any sensation—simply, we suppose, because they were not artists, and their exhibitions were merely ridiculous. For an undisciplined naked man, as the article is turned out in these latter days, is the most uncouth and ludicrous thing in existence—always excepting an untutored naked woman.

A couple of years ago, however, a man named Collyer, formerly known as a traveling animal magnetizer, returned from a visit to England, his native land, with what he called a troupe of "model artists." Up to this time, these exhibitions had been composed exclusively of men, and we never heard of their being considered immodest; but the moment the ladies made their appearance, an outcry of outraged public decency rose on all sides. The doctor was familiar with the science of humbugging the public, and proceeded very adroitly. At first, vague and mysterious paragraphs appeared here and there,—smuggled into respectable papers, wherever that was possible—to the effect that "the celebrated Dr. Collyer" had organized, in Rome or London, a company of the model men and women who stand or sit to the painters of the academies, and who are of course selected expressly on account of their symmetry and beauty of form—some for voluptuousness, some for strength, some for grace and delicacy, &c. &c. It was announced that they would give representations of scriptural and classic pictures, being draped and grouped in strict accordance with the works of the great masters. When the exhibition opened, however, it was found that this was only a part, and an insignificant part, of the entertainments—the principal portion consisting of groups of living statuary, such as we have described.[2]

2. Robert H. Collyer, who does seem to have been the humbug Foster claims he was, made an early but slight contribution to the genre of urban sensationalism with a small book entitled *Lights and Shadows of American Life*, published in Boston in 1843.

The fact in respect to these exhibitions was, that they were neither immodest nor exciting, to decent people,—simply obscene and disgusting. The women, so far from being the models from the European academies, were lank-sided, flabby-breasted, in-toed concerns, whose attitudes were about as lascivious as those of a new milch cow; and who shrunk and scrambled about in such fashion as to set one's stomach, for the time being, against all womankind. And then the fleshings, being baggy and unfitted to the form, drew across the bosom, until it looked like a bag of bran, rather than an exquisitely-proportioned female bust. So that lasciviousness and excitement were out of the question. But the doctor's exhibitions were constantly crowded, at first, and, in a few weeks, Yankee enterprise and emulation had established "model artist" exhibitions all over town, provided with abandoned women of the lowest grade, who thus managed to earn a *bare* subsistence, by a new disposition of charms which had ceased to be marketable in another way. In many of these establishments things were carried to the most filthy and incredible extent—dances being sometimes performed by men and women in a state of complete nudity, (without even the tights,) and every device resorted to in order increase the "richness" of these abominable orgies. At length even the municipal modesty was shocked, and the isle fairly "frighted from its propriety." Our readers, we suppose, have not yet forgotten the laughable accounts of the descent of the police upon a squad of naked Olympians, last October, at a hole in Twenty-first street, wherein Venus was trundled off to the Tombs[3] in a wheelbarrow, minus her chemise, and Bacchus had a narrow escape through a back window, leaving his trowsers to the vigilant guardians of the public morals—while the Three Graces—as naked as they were born—made an unsuccessful attempt to scramble, most ungracefully, out at a back basement. However, noth-

3. New York's Halls of Justice and municipal prison, a forbidding Egyptian-styled building on Centre Street, was popularly known as the Tombs.

ing very serious ever came of it—and notwithstanding the "majesty of the law," the model artist exhibitions, if not as numerous and popular as ever, are carried on with perfect immunity from municipal inspection or opposition.

But perhaps, after all, the most interesting and instructive portions of these degrading exhibitions are the audiences who attend them, and who furnish a fertile field for philosophical speculation upon the perverted operation of the sexual appetite—an appetite intended by Nature as the language of the purest and holiest passion implanted in the heart of man and woman. Until one has seen the worn-out rakes and sensualists, the ambitious young libertines and hypocritical old lechers, who sneak into these exhibitions, spy-glass in hand, to gloat over the salacious developments of the poor models who are thus forced by necessity or a beastly shamelessness, to expose themselves to public gaze for a few dollars a week, he can scarcely form an adequate idea of the shifts to which dissipation and conventional restraint have driven the audience, or the want of shifts to which other causes, no less apparent, have forced the performers. Many a man whose daily walk and conversation is held up to the admiration of the community as a "model" of virtue and propriety, may here be seen nightly devouring, with sparkling eyes and panting breath, the flabby figures of these other "models"—while the records of the cases which have now and then come before the courts will show that the models themselves have either stepped from the brothel to the public stage, or are young women from the country, destitute of home, friends and work, and compelled to adopt this repulsive and abhorrent profession, merely for the purpose of procuring bread. As to the first class, nothing is to be said—they are past hope. But who can forbear a sentiment of keenest pity for those innocent and ignorant girls whom the hard fate and ill reward of woman's labor have driven to such dire straits? Their future is scarcely doubtful. The associations into which they thus enter, both before and behind the curtain, speedily and infallibly do their work. From

seduction they go rapidly through the various stages of depravity, until disease, dissipation and the exaggerated appetites engendered by their new mode of life, conduct them in turn to the brothel, the hospital, the penitentiary and the grave. Yes—the life of a "model artist" is easily written. After a brief season of hollow pleasure and unnatural excitement, she sinks willingly to the lowest type of human degradation—the public prostitute; and the pure and gentle woman, capable of all high and holy duties and affections, as wife and mother—endowed by her Creator with faculties fitting her, if properly directed, for the guardian angel and the consoler of man—goes, in utter recklessness of herself and all the world, to add one more to that frightful phalanx of female depravity which is the terror and the curse of an enfeebled and depraved civilization. Let us forget, in sleep, these dreadful sights and gloomy reflections.

No. III

Bowling and Billiard Saloons

"Rooms" versus "Saloons"—Contrasts of Character—Plucking a Pigeon—The Tall Son of York and His Chums—Horn and His Last

It is only within a few years that bowling and billiard saloons have been introduced among us. We used to have bowling "alleys" and billiard "rooms," in abundance; but the grandiloquent cockneyism which dignifies the commonest and most trivial affairs with the language of poetry and sublimity, had not then broken out among us to so fatal an extent as to deserve the name of an epidemic. Now, however, it has become as pervading as the cholera. Every steamboat is a "floating palace," every muddy Daguerreotype is a "magnificent specimen of the fine arts"—and every grog-shop harangue is pronounced by the "intelligent and independent press" to have been a "thrilling and masterly effort of genuine eloquence." This ridiculous and annoying disease has spread, cholera-like, upward and downward, beyond the reach of camphor or veratrum. Our billiard-"rooms" and

ten-pin-"alleys" have been transformed into "saloons"—our oyster "cellars" and drinking-shops have emulated their example; and as to a good old-fashioned barber's shop, there is not such a thing to be found within the circumference of the city. To what extent this saloon-mania will spread, it is impossible to calculate; but we expect every day to see the oyster-stand in front of the Tribune Office disport a gilded sign inscribed "Pat Rafferty's Central Saloon;" while the penny ice-cream man at its side will give a blow-out to the editors, and be chronicled in all the daily and Sunday papers as one of the greatest benefactors of the age.

But whether we treat of them as saloons, alleys, or simply rooms, the billiard and bowling establishments with which the city abounds are well worth a night's attention, as being frequented by a greater diversity of strongly-marked characters than almost any other class of public places of resort. Here the gay and reckless southerner, the half-frightened and half-fuddled country merchant, the watch-stuffer, the green-horn, the blackleg and the clerk, the editor and the genteel pick-pocket, meet and mingle on equal and familiar terms. The polite keepers of these establishments, ever on the watch for customers, take the new-comer by the arm, ask him if he "feels inclined for a game," and introduce him to some regular hanger-on of the concern, who is charged nothing for the games he loses, and whose business it is to troll in strangers, and make them pay as dearly as possible for their whistles. With one or two exceptions, every billiard-room and bowling-saloon in the city supports in liquor and lunch a regular detachment of these stool-pigeons, who, by incessant practice, can play just about such a game as they please, and know how adroitly to "throw off," in such a manner as to escape the suspicion of the stranger, who comes so very near winning every game that he is perfectly certain of the next. Something, however, happens invariably to turn up, just at the close of the next, and the next,—either an unexpected ten-strike, or a tremendous scratch,—which again throws the game into the hands of

the decoy, and only serves to stimulate the baffled visitor to renewed and still more hopeless exertions.

Or it may be that he is the object of a deeper conspiracy. If so, he is permitted, after being considerably excited by his "infernal run of luck," and several well-timed glasses of brandy and water, to win three or four games in succession—the poor decoy at length throwing down his cue in violent indignation, and declaring with an oath that he never had such a run of bad luck in his life, and that he "cannot play for shucks." Now is the stranger's turn for triumph. He chuckles a little, looks at the clock, takes another "stiffener," and suggests that they play one more game for "drinks all round." But the stool-pigeon is tired—he has played enough—he can't see a ball. "I will tell you, though," he says at last, "what I'll do. If you will give me twenty in a hundred, I'll play you for half a dollar a game." The stranger hesitates, and finally consents—"for," (he says to himself,) "if the fellow was a blackleg, he wouldn't ask *odds* of me; and, besides, he don't play well enough for a blackleg." The result, we suppose, we need not trouble ourselves to record. Of course the pigeon is neatly and thoroughly plucked, and sent home somewhere about daylight, with his head ready to split with the compound pressure of bad brandy, excitement and tobacco-smoke, and his purse as light as a feather.

Let us, however, do the billiard-rooms justice. As a general thing, the better class of them prohibit gambling, at least openly, and endeavor to conduct their establishments quietly and respectably; and, although gambling will of course now and then creep in, and be winked at, or altogether ignored by the proprietor, yet the billiard-rooms are by no means the worst places into which a stranger is likely to stumble. The game of billiards itself is one of the most elegant and fascinating amusements in the world, and requires some quietness and refinement of taste for its enjoyment. For an hour of leisure, refreshing recreation or healthy exercise, we know of nothing better than a game of billiards; and if the stranger will remember never to bet a

penny, never to drink, and never to smoke while at play, he may safely indulge himself with an evening at billiards, with no greater expense than the cost of seven-eighths of the games—and that is buying a very delightful amusement at quite a reasonable price. Perhaps, in this connection, the reader will be obliged to us for telling him, that altogether the best tables in New York, and the places where the visitor is safe from disgusting associations or stool-pigeon impositions, are at Bassford's in Ann street, under the American Museum, (now kept by Parsons,) and at Otis Field's Irving Rooms, in Broadway, opposite Florence's. At either of these places you may play at all times with perfect safety.

Bowling is an amusement of a much more generally popular character than billiards, as everybody can appreciate it. The accommodations for it in New York are of almost fabulous extent and splendor. Some of the finest halls and saloons on the continent, luxuriously fitted up with costly furniture, ceiled with immense French plate-glass mirrors and lighted with magnificent chandeliers, are devoted to the business of rolling ten-pins. Some of them contain as many as eight alleys, which are kept in the most careful order, and almost incessantly in use, from noon till midnight. The mornings are usually occupied by your ten-pin bowler in trying to get a little sleep.

The company of the bowling-saloon is of a decidedly lower grade than at the billiard-rooms. Of course there are great varieties of both kinds; but generally speaking, the descent from the billiard-room to the ten-pin alley is very marked. The players are more boisterous, more flashily dressed, swear more, drink more, chew more tobacco, are more apt to quarrel, and not less intent upon winning, than the billiard-players. They are likewise much more indiscriminate, and it is an easy thing to pick up a loafer, a pickpocket, a burner or a Bowery blackleg at even the most dashing bowling-saloon. In the lower varieties, located in cellars and back premises, out of Broadway, it would be difficult to find "anything else."

Bowling is an amusement especially affected by a rather tall class of our metropolitan journalists and literary athletes. They are very chary, however, in the distribution of their patronage, and never make their appearance except at certain rather exclusive and *recherché* establishments, where the liquors are unimpeachable, the cigars delicately flavored, and the company generally select. Among the most conspicuous of this gay and strikingly characteristic type of literary life—conspicuous as well for the eminence of his talent and the goodness of his heart as for the immense distance from the ground he wears his hat—is William T. Porter, the world-renowned editor of the "Spirit of the Times," and altogether so good-natured and excellent a fellow that he will overlook the liberty we have taken with his name, and the next time we meet in Barclay street will hold out his hand to us like a regular brick, and most likely ask us to step into Frank's and imbibe a private smile. It is ten to one that he has a book of rich and rare MS. caricatures in his hat, just sent on from Bob Clarke—or if not, he is "safe" for half-a-dozen new anecdotes, full of roaring fun. If the weather and season are not too tempting for sport among the bushes, it is more than probable that Frank Forrester—not only our best novelist, but our best writer upon the sports of the field and angle, and the most expert practitioner at both—is somewhere in these latitudes: in fact, here he comes, just in time to "join" in our solemnities. If Clarke himself, (the "O.K." whose inimitable sketches of the b'hoys of New York, have preserved to posterity a character whose parallel the world has never yet seen, and who, but for Clarke's graphic pencil, would have passed away unchronicled,) were not in Philadelphia fiddling away at a "blasted" panorama, "or some such wagon," he would be sure to make up a quartette in this agreeable little party. But as it is, we will remember him in our dreams.[4]

4. Clarke provided several of the illustrations for Foster's *New York in Slices*. Two are reproduced in the "New York by Daylight" section of this book.

It would be an unpardonable omission, in an account of the bowling-saloons of New York, were we to neglect mentioning the "Horn," whose "last" has been traveling over the country as if impelled by boot and spur, any time during the past five years. The truth is, in respect to Horn, he has been made the victim of a conspiracy—all the stupidities of the press (our own among the number) having combined together to saddle our bad puns and pointless jokes upon poor Horn. Any one who has the faintest conception of the boundless resources in this direction of which Horn has been made the victim, will easily understand the pitch of desperation to which he must necessarily have been driven. Finally, the poor man having become insane from the effects of our combined attacks, actually started a newspaper himself! Having thus become a living spectacle and specimen of the horrible consequences of vicarious punning, he grows more and more "Inveterate" every week—price two dollars a year in advance.

Somebody,—we think it was Elia,—once wrote an essay on bowling, and the way it was or probably would have been done by various great men of the day. It was an ingenious speculation—and by stepping in at Graves's or Frank's, almost any pleasant evening, you may see it in practical operation. Porter rolls a free and easy ball, yet with a great deal of elegance and suavity, neither too hurried nor too deliberate—just comfortable and natural, and taking time as it goes down by the first quarter-pin to brush the center, as much as to say, "I could easily have taken you, old fellow, if I had been so disposed—but look out for next time!" He usually makes nine pins with three balls, but if hard pushed, can easily get a spare every time, and often two of them. He is very much like a high-spirited horse on the road,—jogging on quietly enough so long as every thing else is *behind*: but the moment anything attempts to *pass* him—whew! get out! there's trouble in the camp directly!

Herbert lobs slightly, though not enough to come within the "rules and regulations." He is rather fiery and impatient, and makes you hold your breath as he rushes down

the alley and launches his ball, as if it were a big marble, smack at the center-pin. He usually hits it, too—for he is a devil of a shot—but his aim has been so true and sportsmanlike that it very often "guts" and breaks up his entire frame, where a much poorer player would have been sure of at least seven, and probably eight or nine.

Clarke takes the ball daintily between his thumb and fingers and contemplating it in silence, for a moment, as if he were about to take its likeness, launches it with a graceful glide at the pins, making it describe the true Hogarthian line of beauty as it slips along. Sometimes he makes three ten-strikes in succession—sometimes doesn't hit a pin at all. But it is all the same to him. The fun of seeing the balls travel down the alley so smoothly is all he cares about. His ambition (if he has any) is somewhere else. Briggs, of Holden's Magazine and the Custom-House, rolls fairly and easily down the center of one alley, while you think he is watching the game of his antagonist on the other. He generally makes his full ten, and now and then has a spare laid up against a rainy day. But even if you should beat him a dozen pins he would be very apt to convince you, before he had done with you, that you had absolutely lost the game. His mania is logic; and he regards every pin in the light of a proposition, against which he is to roll either the heavy ordnance of the lignum vitae number ones, the medium sized blunderbuss of number two, or the keen and cutting rifle-ball poney, until they are all down. After he has tumbled them all over he will go to work and convince you that they are still standing—that the moon is made of green cheese—that H—— ——— is a humbug, or any thing else equally reasonable and preposterous.[5]

5. The disguised reference is probably to Horace Greeley, who is the subject of the next paragraph. The other men Foster describes in this sketch were prominent personalities on the sporting side of New York journalism. Here and elsewhere, Foster takes obvious delight in sketching his friends and acquaintances from the little world of Nassau Street.

We never saw the editor of the Tribune bowl down anything but politicians; but if he makes as much havoc among the pins as among his antagonists, he is sure of a ten-strike every time. He has great advantages in bowling, from the fact that he wears no straps to his pantaloons; and if ever he should get fairly warmed up at it, we expect that it will keep at least one small boy busy enough to "set 'em up."

There are all sorts of bowling-saloons in town, frequented by all sorts of people—any one collection of them furnishing material enough for a rich night's reflection. At present, we will hold a brief consultation with our pillows. We have made a good game and the string is out. So home and to bed.