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NELLIE BLY AND THE BAND OF MERCY.

Did You Ever Hear of Such a Crazy Lot of Cranks as These Deluded Women?

WHOLESALE CAT-KILLERS.

6,000 Cats, 70 Dogs, 6 Sparrows, 1 Rabbit and 1 Opossum Chloroformed This Last Year.

STRANGE MIDNIGHT PROWLINGS.

An Odd Gathering of Curious Women Who Are Devoting Their Lives to Alleviating the Sufferings of Itinerant Cats.

CHAPTER I.

Of all the curious phases of New York life the Cattery, cat catchers and cats form the strangest chapter.

I spent ten days looking up the "Midnight Band of Mercy," as the cat-catchers style their little circle. No romance filled with the most striking characters could ever equal them.

First of all, as head, promoter and originator of the Cattery, is Mrs. Grace Georgia Devide, who is known as a fanatical worshipper of all things humane. Mrs. Devide is not easy to find. I spent several days in diligent search for her. Invoked the aid of the police and S. P. C. A., was given a score of addresses and visited each and every one only to be told that Mrs. Devide was not known there. But I did not give up and was rewarded at last by striking a clue which, relentlessly pursued, led me up the narrow, dark stairs of a tall tenement-house to Mrs. Devide's door.

Mrs. Devide asked me at once what I wanted, and I told her frankly that I had been commissioned to obtain an account of the Cattery and cat-catchers for the Sunday World.

"It is very strange that you should be sent here in this way," she retorted, suspiciously. "How did you get my address? No one knows it. I keep myself hidden from everybody."

I explained as much as I thought necessary how I had obtained her address, but she was far from satisfied. Instead, her suspicion seemed to increase with every moment.

"How do I know that you are not from the Bergh society?" she demanded. "They are up to all sorts of tricks to find out what the cat-catchers are doing."

"But I am not," I reply, good-humoredly. "I assure you I am from The World."

"I have nothing to say. The Band of Mercy has been stopped by the Bergh society, and we are doing nothing now."

"Won't you tell me what you have done, and what you hope to do? I thought, maybe, you had some books you could show that would tell if you had responsible people to indorse your scheme and support it."

"I have no books, but the Band of Mercy has been given a stable for the collection of cats," she said, "and if you have time we'll go to see it."

The stable adjoins the S. P. C. A. stable, in West Twenty-second street. It is a small affair, with stalls for some eight or ten horses. In the front, where the wagons were, Mrs. Devide showed me two roughly made boxes, with broad pieces of split boards nailed across the top.

The carpenter work looked much like a woman's, but Mrs. Devide assured me that she had paid for having the boxes made.

"We shall use them for the collection of cats," she explained. "We'll catch the cats, and as we are no longer allowed to kill them, we'll bring them here and then send for the society to come after them."

"But as the society's stable is next door, why not do it all at once, and take the cats there?" I asked.

"Because they'll not receive them. They have so much red tape in that society. The cats have to be taken to their office, and slips have to be signed and all that before they will accept a cat. That requires too much time, so we'll collect here and then send word for them to come and take the cats away."

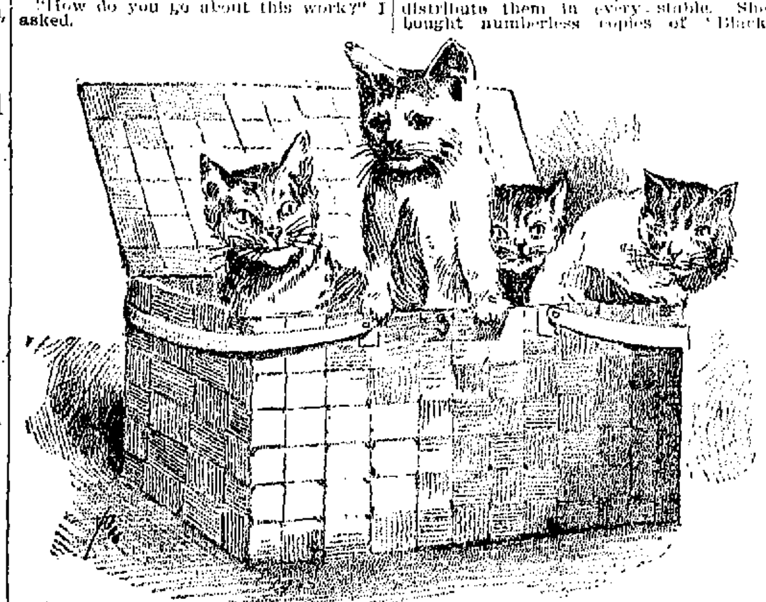
As the days passed I became acquainted with Mrs. Devide and interested in her.

She is as unusual in personal appearance as she is in character. She is of medium height and medium weight; neither fat nor thin. She has a profusion of natural red-gold hair that she combs straight back from her forehead. Her white-and-pink complexion goes beautifully with her hair, but her cinnamon-brown eyes form a striking and fascinating contrast. I could not help imagining her very lovely when a girl, but she assured me that she was never pretty. Of dress she is most careless, not possessing one thing that is becoming, well-made or stylish.

"I suppose I am mad," she said confidentially. "Some people say so. For a woman to care nothing for her appearance or how she lives is a sure sign of madness. I confess I don't care for life. I only care for horses and dogs and cats. All dumb animals are my friends. I love them to such an extent and am so devoted to their cause that I have become estranged from people. I have nothing in common with anything except animals, and them I love. Why, I love a horse better than any relative I ever had. [illegible] relatives are selfish; horses never are. Poor, meek slaves they are! Slaves to cruel man!

"Do you ever think," she continued, rapidly, "how horses suffer? They have the toothache just as we do, and they are forced to take that cold, cruel bit into their poor mouths! And they have headaches; but who cares? They must drudge on and on, under the lash and blows of their cruel drivers if they resist. They get rheumatism just as people do, and have all our pains and aches; but it matters not; they must work. Poor slaves!"

"How do you go about this work?" I asked.



ITINERANT CATS PICKED UP ON THE STREETS.

"I have no system," she replied. "I merely go out in the streets, and if I see a horse abused I appeal to the police. Once they would not help me, and so I would march to the station-house, and would demand of the sergeant to compel the officer to give the aid I asked. 'But there is a society to tend to this business,' they would say. 'That is their work; leave it to them.' 'I guess you don't know the law,' I would answer. 'Now, if you will turn to the Penal Code, section 668, Amended Laws of 1888, and read where it begins, "A constable or police officer must give aid and help," &c.' They would growl, but they had to do it."

"How did you come to start the Cattery?"

"It was first suggested to me by a man, then an editor of The World. He knew how many homeless cats there were in the need of shelter, and that I devoted my life to looking after dumb animals. I published a card, stating that I meant to start such a home, and the next day there appeared a letter from Mrs. Edwards, stating that if I called at her home I would find a friend ready and willing to help in the cause, and that she had a farm on Long Island that I could have for the proposed home. I did not know any more about Mrs. Edwards than you did, and was only too willing to have some one help. I called at her home, and the Cat's Home was discussed, and we went to work to rent a place for it. Mrs. Edwards got Thomas W. Organ, a real-estate man and a prominent Prohibitionist, to act as treasurer and legal adviser. He rented the frame shanty up at One Hundred and Eighty-fifth street for the Band of Mercy, and we paid him $50 a month, and he paid $40 a month for it. Three days before the home was opened, we had a quarrel, and I got out of it, and it was run entirely by Mrs. Edwards and Miss Ewen."

"Then you do not know if money was received for the board of pet cats that were killed?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. I still kept working with them and knew everything. They did receive pay for cats they killed; but no one, except a Miss Hagerman, an actress, threatened to make trouble for them."

"Did they get much money while they had the home?"

"They got about six thousand dollars in six months."

"Won't you describe to me your method of catching and killing cats?"

"We only began to kill after the home was broken up. We would dress in old clothes, generally wore a mackintosh, and with our bottle of chloroform and our basket lined with oilcloth to make it airtight we would start forth. We would go on the east side in the slums, where homeless cats live. We would put meat and catnip on the ground, and call 'Kitty! kitty! kitty!' and they would come from all directions. Cats go crazy over catnip, and will travel any distance to get it. When we had them about us, we would set our baskets on the ground and opening our chloroform saturate a sponge and slip it into the basket, then grab a cat quickly by the back of the neck, lift the lid of the basket, put the cat in, slap down the lid and hold it.

"Then," she continued enthusiastically, "the basket would shake, Kitty trying to escape, and then it would go 'Meow! meow!' 'Hush, Kitty; hush Kitty,' one of our members would say. 'You are going to Jesus, Kitty!' 'Meow!' 'Hush, Kitty; your soul is going to the Lord.' 'Meow! me-o! me-!' 'Kitty has gone to God. Amen!' and all was over."

The spirit with which Mrs. Devide acted this ludicrous scene was sublime.

"I wasn't one of the religious ones," she added, with a smile. "I am a Theosophist, and that is why I did not stand in much favor with the influential and Christian member of our band, who says that the cats are unborn children, and the more she chloroforms the more of her grandchildren she is saving from pain."

"How many cats do you suppose you killed?"

"Fifty a night was nothing. I know we averaged five hundred a month."

"Wasn't your chloroform expensive?"

"Rather. A four-pound bottle cost $2.20. It would kill sixty cats. We always got our chloroform from an east side druggist. I don't want to tell his name, for it might hurt his business. He had no idea what we wanted it for, but we used such quantities that once he said:

"'You buy so much chloroform, you must have a dyeing establishment?'

"'Yes,' dryly replied the member; 'a dying establishment.'"

"How many cats do you suppose there are in New York?"

"It is difficult to say, but we estimate that there are a thousand born every day."

"Did you know that certain members of your band were in the habit of visiting their friends merely for the purpose of carrying off their pet cats?" I asked.

"Yes; I knew it, and I used to tell them not to do it; that it would get us into trouble, but they had such a mania for killing them 'to spare the grandchildren,' that I could do nothing with them."

"It's a wonder you remained with them when you knew all you did about the actions of some of them."

"Well," musingly, "as they used to say, they knew I'd never betray them as long as there was a bottle of chloroform and a cat."

CHAPTER II.

What a strange band was that Band of Mercy!

There is Mrs. Devide, who admits that she is mad. She beggared herself for animals. For their sake she lives like a pauper, dresses like a beggar and knows no time for sleep, no hour for food. She scorns religion and hates what seems to her pretended Christianity.

She is honest in her mania, that I'll swear. She'll walk for miles to give her last penny to buy oats for some poor peddler's horse. She'll stop at any place to defend a horse from a merciless driver. She'll lead a poor, disreputable, homeless cur up Broadway to the S. P. C. A. Society, because she can't let him be stoned on the streets. She'll pay wicked young toughs to give her a poor, disabled, old goat that they are torturing to death, and she'll take it up five flights of tenement stairs to her own rooms to nurse him back to health. She'll pay drivers to read humane tracts, which she buys instead of bonnets. She'll walk from one end of the city to the other to distribute them in every stable. She bought numberless copies of "Black Beauty" and gave them to drivers, and she paid them to promise to read the story. She'll go hungry to buy chloroform to end the misery of homeless cats.

This I know and have proved.

She has had a history. What it is is her affair. She was born in Virginia and lived a long time in London.

She was an intimate friend of Henry Bergh, the founder of the S. P. C. A. Society, and he gave her the first bottle of chloroform.

This I know, for I have seen and read his letters to her.

She knew the Baroness Burdett-Coutts and has letters from her, as well as many other prominent people. She is clever and well read, very well read, I must say, but she is mad. She confesses it and I indorse her opinion.

But as a common feeling makes all the world kin, it is easily understood how Mrs. Devide, with all her eccentricities and strong abhorrence of churches, could affiliate and work with Miss Caroline Ewen.

Miss Ewen lives in a magnificent house in Forty-eighth street, adjoining Fifth avenue. She is one of three sisters to inherit the fortune left by her father, and commonly reported to be $20,000,000.

Miss Ewen's family are society people, devoted to such amusements and diversions as well-bred society offers.

But Miss Caroline Ewen's mind has travelled where society does not know the way. She is a member of Mr. Simpson's church, at the corner of Forty-fourth street and Eighth avenue, and there is not a harder worker in the fold.

Miss Ewen is a devoted friend to cats. She was one of the first to join hands with Mrs. Devide and Mrs. Edwards to start a cat home. Of course money was needed, and Miss Ewen was not only rich, but had wealthy friends, all of which had a big influence with the Band of Mercy.

Heart and soul did this wealthy woman throw into the work of cat-catching. Attired in old garments, with her oilcloth-lined basket upon her arm and her chloroform bottle in her pocket, she went forth daily with Mrs. Devide and Mrs. Edwards cat-catching. This woman, born and bred in luxury, would go fearlessly into the poorest part of New York to catch cats.

She had never known much about fence-climbing, neither did Mrs. Devide, but Mrs. Edwards was long of limb and agile, and the way she would scale a fence and capture a fleeing cat won for her the envy of Mrs. Devide and the everlasting devotion of Miss Ewen.

Now, this Mrs. Edwards, not unlike other mortals, has a history of her own. I do not mean to tell it, for what is the use of looking into the past when to-day is overflowing with startling facts? Only this: To show that Mrs. Edwards was not unknown previous to her cat-catching history, I will merely say that twenty years ago or more she was better known in the Tenderloin district than Parkhurst is to-day, only in a different way.

Jennie or Sallie Edwards was the friend and companion of Belle Charlton, another woman known for her beauty and affability in that back-of-date history. Well, when Mrs. Edwards became a cat-catcher in the Band of Mercy it was naturally learned by the other members that she was not what would be called a church member, and entertained, among other things, very decided opinions on the subject of police protection and the excise law.

These opinions and a few friends, which were not as desirable, as might be supposed, she carried into the sacred fold of the Cats' Home, at One Hundred and Eighty-fifth street and Amsterdam avenue.

Now, Miss Ewen also entertained strong and decided opinions that were opposed to those in Mrs. Edwards's head. But still Miss Ewen was a Christian, and was not only familiar with the example set by the Christ in regard to a certain woman from Magdala, but had heard up-to-date tales that had created a jealousy in more than one Christian breast.

The story goes that a Mrs. Whitmore, a woman of the strongest faith, had one time been very ill, and while confined to her bed, had one day addressed her prayers to an Almighty Power. She held the Bible in her hand and, while praying, promised if health was restored to her that she would not take up her bed and walk, but would pledge herself to open the Bible and do whatever was told her in the first verse her eyes alighted upon.

This she did, and the verse began, as nearly as I can recall, something like this, "And so I say there shall be a door of hope," &c.

Now these words made Mrs. Whitmore start a home which she calls "The Door of Hope," and which offers a standing inducement to lazy women to go out and be lost so that they may obtain a luxurious home for life by promising to be found.

This estimable lady devotes her time to bringing women to think her way, which may be a good cause, but in my eyes would be more worthy of praise if she helped those who fall through the need of aid. But that is not my story.

Several conversions, at least claimed to be such, have been made, notably a character born and bred in the slums and known by the sobriquet of "Bluebird," who, shortly before her death, became converted. It is a strange fact that these persons never become converted in the heyday of their youth. It is only when old, health-broken and ugly that the words of the missionary sink into their brains and awake a desire to be humored and petted for being the direct opposite to that which brought humoring and petting in youth.

Now "Bluebird" died, to become a shining example to be held up to the envy of all missionaries. A pathetic, sentimental little pamphlet was written and printed, entitled "The Red Rose," or "Pink Rose," I forget which, that is enough to send the best of romantic misses into dives just for the glory of being rescued as a tough "Bluebird" and transformed into a fragrant rose.

All church-goers and mission-workers are familiar with the story of "Bluebird's" conversion, and later with the conversion of Belle Charlton, a woman once famous for her beauty and wickedness. Belle Charlton broke a good wife's heart, and after ruining the man, she drove him to Bloomingdale, leaving his little children poor, penniless orphans.

Well, Belle Charlton was friend and housekeeper for Sally Edwards and helped with the Cat Home. But Belle was old and very poor and in wretched health. In fact, she was in a prime condition for conversion, and fell an easy convert to Mrs. Whitmore's pleas. Still, let it be put down to her credit, she wasn't so much of a hypocrite as many of the others. When she sickened of the better life that was merely a farce to her, she would say so with many an oath, and once, if not oftener, she returned to the streets.

But she had to go back. It was the only thing left to her. "Jen," she used to say to her friend, "you might as well turn Christian and let them keep you. It's the only thing left you and me now."

At last she was sent to a hospital, and an operation sent her where she would learn a keener appreciation of things moral and otherwise, or where peaceful oblivion would blot out the mistakes of a very strange character.

That was the end of poor Belle Charlton's connection with the Band of Mercy and the cat-catchers and she did love cats, they all confessed. But she lives in the minds of missionaries who are not allowed to forget how Mrs. Whitmore converted Belle Charlton in her last days.

As I have said before, although jealous Christians will deny the imputation, it is true that a certain rivalry exists among them. Miss Caroline Ewen had heard so much about "Bluebird" and Belle Charlton, and she had heard Mrs. Whitmore pray when she wanted ten or fifteen thousand dollars, and had heard Heaven reminded publicly of how much it has owed her for two souls saved, and had seen how the prayer was always answered by some mortal sending a check for the amount.

So she tried her hand on Sally Edwards, and succeeded. Sally Edwards declared that "while taking a bath she had seen Jesus on the wall and kissed him."

What greater evidence could any reformer desire?

The upshot of this was that Miss Ewen rented a flat for Mrs. Edwards, and gives her a weekly amount for the support of her and her deaf-and-dumb daughter.

Daily have these two strangely assorted women gone cat-catching, and, according to their own statements, have in one year, with the assistance of the other members, killed upward of 6,000 cats, 70 dogs, 6 sparrows, 1 rabbit and 1 opossum.

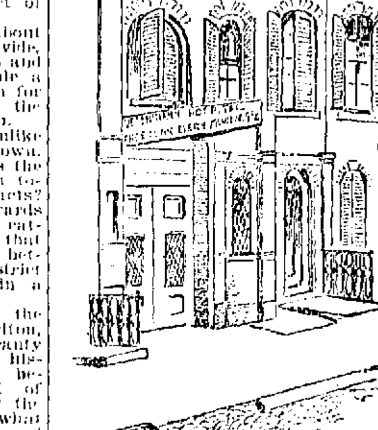
I called to see Miss Ewen at her lovely home and had quite a long talk with her. I did not tell her that I wrote for The World, for she is frightfully afraid of the newspapers, but I did tell her, which is true, that I intend to do all in my power to start a society for dogs and cats. Losing my fox terrier last week has opened my eyes to many things that I intend to try to reform.

"I have had a long talk with President Haines," I said to her, frankly, "and he confesses that he has received many complaints against the Cat Home. One letter was from a woman who had paid to have her three pet cats kept during the summer, and she says you killed the cats."

"That is false," Miss Ewen said, positively. "When we had a home we had no intention of killing cats. After the home was broken up Mrs. Edwards suggested chloroforming the homeless cats, and I have found it the only remedy."

"But you received board for some cats," I suggested.

"Not for a single cat," was her firm reply. "Our home was for friendless cats, and the Board of Mercy supported it unaided and alone."



STABLE FOR BAND OF MERCY CATS.

"It is also stated that you received large contributions," I add, quietly.

"Such statements make me very angry," she retorted, quickly. "I have refused money from friends of mine that have offered it. I repeat, we have no money except that given by the members alone."

Miss Ewen has been deceived by some one if she means what she says, for I know of $50 which was sent to The World for the Cat Home and the check was sent to Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Devide.

"It is also claimed," I went on quietly, "that some of the members of the Band of Mercy had led a life that made it impossible for good women to associate with them."

"That is true," she confessed.

"And you are positive no boarding cats were killed in the home?" I repeated.

"No cats were killed until the home was broken up," she replied, which shows she was deceived again, for I went out to what was the Cat Home—the most miserable shanty one could picture. There I interviewed the car starter, whose post of duty looks down upon the shanty.

"Did they once kill cats down there?" I asked.

"I guess they did," he answered, with a grin.

"What made you think so?"

"They kept cats there, and I used to see 200 at a time dead down on the river shore," was his logical reply.

"Two hundred is a good many," I suggested, but he answered, decidedly:

"There were more than two hundred easier than less."

"Did you keep no books or record of your work?" I asked Miss Ewen.

"It was not necessary," she answered. "It was supported by our own little circle. We were not incorporated, so we could not receive bequests."

"Why did you not incorporate?"

"Because," she answered, bitterly, "Mr. Haines came up and told me we could not, that he had had a law passed preventing the incorporation of any other society for the benefit of animals in New York or Kings County, which, of course, prevented our going to Brooklyn."

"Why did he do this?" I inquired, curiously.

"Because he was afraid that we would receive help from benevolent people that would otherwise go to the S. P. C. A.," she said, indignantly. "What right had he to have such law passed, any more than one orphan society has a right to pass a law to prevent there being any more? It was an outrage. The S. P. C. A. is very rich now, and it is continually crying for more, although they fail to do their duty even as it stands. Why should they fight us? We were a lot of poor women who were trying to relieve suffering that the rich Bergh society does not heed."

"If you could only see the poor cats, maimed, starving, freezing, as I have, you would not wonder at my feelings," she continued, warmly. "Why, the day after the last election I found a cat in Cherry street that the boys had first tied its feet together and then thrown into the fire. One front foot was burned entirely off, the other to a crisp. Both ears were burned to stumps and the tail was gone. Now, to go through the red tape of that detestable society we had to go up to Twenty-second street, make out a complaint, give that gay ambulance that cost so much money time to be hitched up and driven down to Cherry street. In the meantime the cat would have dragged itself off somewhere, and their journey would be for nothing. Was that more merciful than chloroforming the cat the moment we found it?"

When I sit upon the blue silk brocade chair in Miss Ewen's home and think of her as the inheritor of millions of dollars, it is difficult to picture her in old clothes, starting out early every day with her little lined basket cat catching and killing. Then when she begins to talk about the suffering of cats I can understand it better and even share her enthusiasm.

I can't quite conceive her paying a call and walking off with her hostess's pet cat, as a letter I read from the lady herself informed me. And Mrs. Devide frankly confesses that she has known them to go in to see poor women just to get a chance to carry off their cats.

CHAPTER III.

Miss Ewen may be honest in saying the "Henry Bergh Circle of the King's Daughters of the Midnight Band of Mercy," as they call themselves, does not receive money from outsiders; it is strange the way in which they receive their mail.

Letters are addressed merely to the "Cat's Home, New York City," and they

GOLD BADGE OF THE BAND OF MERCY.

go to private letter-boxes at No. 1357 Broadway, No. 701 Eighth avenue and No. 82 Sixth avenue. No such place as the "Cat's Home" or "Home for Friendless Cats" exists to-day, but they still receive letters bearing that address.

Among the members of this society is Mrs. L. Welshofer, of West Twenty-third street. She is a German, a partner in Ferdinand's restaurant, and she has contributed liberally to the support of cats.

The cat band does not exclude any one. Miss Hacknacer is a German washwoman and Miss Ammon is another German member whose occupation I have forgotten. Miss Stone is a piano teacher and a cultured woman, a friend of Miss Ewen. Mme. Robbins is a French teacher, Miss Hannan a dressmaker, Mrs. Hanna, different name and no relation, is a milliner. Miss Hoffman is a laundress, Mrs. Miller, Miss Conklin and Mrs. Bishop are all members and were at different times matrons of the Cat Home. Mrs. Peyser is the wife of the man who has given the use of his stable. So far as I can learn, Belmont Purdy, a wine merchant, is the only male member of the band, the badges of which, a brass five-cornered star, were bought and distributed by Mrs. Devide.

As only two or three of these members have permanent addresses, it was impossible to find them all to hear what they had to say. I did have a delightful visit at Miss Conklin's home. She is now Mrs. Van Orden. She lives at the top of a very dark and dirty tenement on First avenue, in Harlem.

I went to her, loaded down with wood, bread, sugar and coffee, for she is needy, and the sight of gifts loosens Mrs. Van Orden's tongue.

Still, she was most willing to talk. A woman with an injured feeling always is, and Mrs. Van Orden, then Miss Conklin, aged and crippled, feels that her reputation as well as her finances were injured by her stay in the Cat's Home. But that comes later in the story. When I pushed open her door I was confronted by two fat old women, a wash-tub and four cats.

I'm not fond of odors, even those bought at high prices in ribbon-tied bottles in drug-stores. The odors in Mrs. Conklin's house were not of this rank, though most rank they were.

But I seated myself gingerly on the edge of a chair near the window and made believe to be friendly and comfortable.

The four cats eyed me hungrily, the fat woman at the tub smiled stupidly and tried to pin on a dirty blue cloth skirt that would not meet by four inches around her waist. Mrs. Van Orden stood with her hands folded helplessly across her stomach. The offering was laid down upon a dirty table, and the maltese cat immediately jumped up and tried to steal a loaf of bread.

"Get down, Maud," Mrs. Van Orden said, gently, when I made an involuntary move in Maud's direction.

"She is hungry," she explained, as she lifted Maud down.

A white cat, with one blue and one yellow eye, perched itself upon the back of a rocking-chair and fixed its odd eyes upon two white rats in a brass cage at the top of the window. A gray cat got up on the bureau and, sitting down, with its feet folded under it, looked with dreamful eyes and quivering whiskers at the two white rats, so dolefully far above. Another cat curled itself up under the stove, on which sat a stewing-pan and brown clay teapot.

"I've only got four cats now," Mrs. Van Orden said regretfully. "Mrs. Devide persuaded me to give seventeen of them to the Humane Society."

Think of it! Seventeen cats, and she hasn't more than enough to feed herself!

"I had seventeen cats and nine ailments," she added, proudly. "My leg has been paralyzed twice. Come down, Maud! Then I had a tape-worm seven feet ten inches long, and I belong to the King's Daughters and a prohibition society. I have rheumatism till all my fingers are crooked, and my husband was shot when he was in the army, and can't walk very well."

"Tell me about the Cat Home," I interrupted, and the fat woman, having been given five cents, departs to buy meat for the hungry cats. Maud knows what is coming, and jumps up and takes a drink out of the water-pail, to keep her from fainting with joy.

"I had been paralyzed twice, and was in the hospital, when Mrs. Edwards came after me to be matron of the home. She paid for my moving up to the place and promised me $5 a month and board and lodging. I wasn't to do any work. She knew I wasn't able. I was just to look after the cats when she would go downtown every night to her house. Then she set me out one bitter cold day—dispossessed me because I didn't do the work, but I brought suit against her and got judgment for the full amount, but I've never been able to collect anything."

"The real reason they put me out," she added, "was because I objected to the thing they were turning the home into. A cat home was only a shield."

"Did they ever kill any boarding cats to your knowledge?"

"Many of them. If I could find my books, for I kept account of all cats brought to the house, I could show you. I remember one case. A Mrs. Vele, who was high soprano in St. Stephen's Church, lost her health and went to Nanuet, Rockland County. She brought her two cats, Mousie and Spotty, to the home and paid $2 a month for them. Mousie was killed at once, but they went on collecting board for her just the same, and when I said I would tell, they were mad. I used to put ribbons on the boarding cats and keep them in a different room, but when the members would come up they would open the door and let all the cats together, and then they would kill any they pleased."

"Do you recall any other cases of boarding cats killed?"

"Many of them, but as I do not know the names of the people it is useless to state them. One case I remember very well of a Brooklyn woman, who brought her cat to stay four months. She paid $25 for its board, and she wasn't two blocks away until it was killed."

"Do you think the Cat Home was given much money?"

"Plenty of it. People used to drive up there in their carriages and leave $10 or $15, sometimes $25. Then they were given coal and furniture and food for the cats."

"The thing that was wrong with the cats," she added, "was that they weren't fed regularly. They would go often two days at a time without food, and then they got diseased."

Among other proofs that Mrs. Van Orden produced to substantiate her story was a letter written by Belle Charlton to Mrs. Edwards, which I copy verbatim:

"Dear Jennie: I send you the Eye water also Postal card from Mrs. Conckiln. Maud was up to 160 E. 80th st. the lady wants you to call as she has some very hansom cornices for the windows also a hansom wardrobe for the cat home, aint you in luck. she wishes to get them away as soon as you can send for them. you ask for Items what I spent. I guess about two Dollars for Liker and milk and change for Tommy Brennan and some wood 4 bundles. I send you some Mountain dew. Take a drink for me. I am on my good behavior. Jennie I am so sorry for Poor Little Nadgey. you should keep the sick separate from the healthy as much as possible. I will close. I did not take a penny in Last night. well Jennie so long. yours Truly "BELLE."

As a contrast to this letter, I copy one by Miss Ewen, written in a small, uniform, but perfectly legible hand:

"Your favor of the 11th inst. was duly received, and would have been acknowledged ere this if I had not expected to answer it in person; but the rainy weather we have had during the last five days has prevented my getting down to the city.

"I deeply sympathize with and share your disappointment in regard to this unexpected delay in getting the dear pussies moved into their new home. Is the present occupant a 'squatter?' Unless there is a written agreement with the landlord, she has no legal right to the premises.

"But we will not yield to discouragement, for this cause is the Lord's and he will maintain it in the face of opposition and wrong. The suffering cries of these helpless little creatures have been loud enough to drown all the hallelujahs in heaven, penetrating even to the throne of God, their merciful creator, who is now stretching forth his mighty arm for their protection.

"We are only the instruments of our heavenly father, to execute the behests of his merciful will. He has been gathering his elect together from the four quarters of the metropolis, inspiring them with the same holy purpose, and he will never desert them, never! You have now come to the Red Sea of trial and disappointment, and are commanded to 'stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you.' Soon the divine mandate will be issued, 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward, and then will your God go before you as he went before Israel of old, and will search out a resting place for his persecuted little ones. So be of good cheer and wait continually upon the Lord for this blessing.

"I cannot close without expressing my profound appreciation of the noble self-denying character of Mrs. Edwards, who, at great inconvenience to herself, is caring for so many poor cats and kittens. May the Lord bless her abundantly, and you and dear Mrs. Charlton and all who are associated in this holy cause. Faithfully yours,

"CAROLINE G. EWEN."

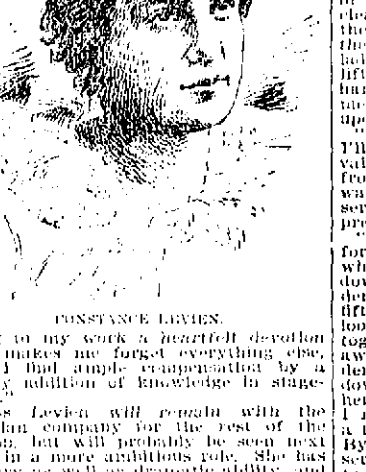
Is not this a strange story of strange people? NELLIE BLY.

SHE NEVER WAS AN AMATEUR.

Something About Miss Constance Levien in "A Woman of No Importance."

A most charming personality is that of Miss Constance Levien, the young girl—she is still in her teens—who entered the ranks of the profession but a few weeks ago, and won immediate recognition by reason of her easy, graceful, tactful bearing in a role that called for natural grace as well as talent. Her Lady Stutfield in "A Woman of No Importance" proves Miss Levien to be deserving of her position in a company which includes such talented women as Miss Coghlan, Ada Dyas and Mrs. Boucicault. The contrast is one that would have blighted the hopes of a less capable artist, but Miss Levien has held her own and shown herself capable even of better things.

Miss Levien is a graduate of the School of Acting, but disdains the title of amateur. "I made up my mind when only a little girl that I would be an actress—a real actress, I mean, but I did not yearn for amateur laurels. I



CONSTANCE LEVIEN.

bring to my work a heartfelt devotion that makes me forget everything else, and I find ample compensation by a steady addition of knowledge in stage-craft."

Miss Levien will remain with the Coghlan company for the rest of the season, but will probably be seen next year in a more ambitious role. She has literary as well as dramatic ability, and is now completing a play of the romantic school.

To Julia, to Bespeake Her Charms.

(To Mistress Matlowe.)

When as my Julia's sweetest eyes
Beame on me like the starre-lit skies,
The little Cupids 'round me rise
And bid me love her;
I note her balilee—maidenly—lac't
With ribbands 'round her slender waiste;
Her petticoats, her shoon—she's grac't!
No queen's above her!
While I behold her, blithe and free,
Over the footlytes flit from me,
Methinks "She's witching-faire to see
To just beholde ye!"
Y'are like the morne at primrose-tide,
Full-sweete and roguishly glorify'd;
Wo'd I were Herrick (ere he dy'd),
And you my "Julia!"

—Stella Weller, in Indianapolis Journal.

INVENTIONS OF A BRIGHT WOMAN.

A Window Seat and Chair for Outside Work, and an Indoor Ladder That May Be Used as a Panel.

A PARLOR ORNAMENT THAT IS USEFUL.

Her Only Incentive Is to Help the Poor, and She Wants Some Manufacturer to Buy Her Patents.

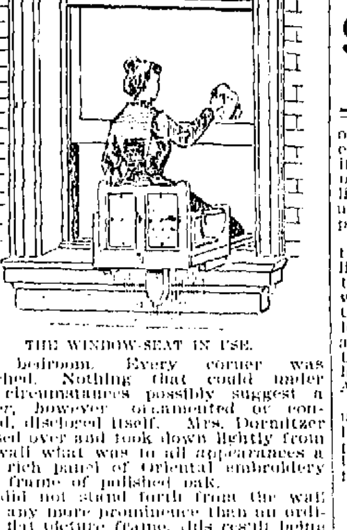
Mrs. Anna Dormitzer, of No. 27 East Seventy-fourth street, is the inventor of a window seat and standing chair for outdoor window work and of a folding indoor ladder which hangs on the wall as an ornamental panel and can be lifted down and opened by a child, while capable of supporting the heaviest man.

THE LADDER FOLDED UP.

At the World's Fair she received a medal for her inventions. But she is in no respect a business woman, and for this reason her inventions are unknown.

The window chair and platform is made, as the illustrations show, to fasten to the window inside. It folds into so small, simple and light a compass that a boy can pick it up in the cellar, get to the top of the house, unfold, attach and mount it ready for work within a space of two minutes. By it all possibility of slip or accident is prevented. The most timid servant can adjust it to sit or stand upon, and while cleaning windows pursue her work with the same feeling of safety she would have on the main floor of a building. It combines a scaffolding for painters, glaziers and awning hangers. It holds the pails for water and cloths or paints and brushes.

The ladder hangs in your library or drawing-room not only with propriety but with actual ornamentation. "There are two folded up here," said Mrs. Dormitzer, traversing the length of her suite, including library, dressing-room



THE WINDOW-SEAT IN USE.

and bedroom. Every corner was searched. Nothing that could under any circumstances possibly suggest a ladder, however ornamented or concealed, disclosed itself. Mrs. Dormitzer crossed over and took down lightly from the wall what was to all appearances a long rich panel of Oriental embroidery in a frame of polished oak.

It did not stand forth from the wall with any more prominence than an ordinary flat picture frame, this result being achieved by the steps of the ladder being made to fold slat-wise, like the Venetian shutter. A slight push, and down fell into form as complete and secure a step-ladder as ever helped mortals to rise to the cobwebs. From one side draws up a round, firm rod, by which you can steady yourself on the top rung or on which you can attach a pail for cleansing purposes. A small cavity in the top opens with a brass slide, and there are matches. By a single push the ladder is shut up again. Mrs. Dormitzer lifts it lightly from the ground and hangs it again on the wall, as ornamental a bit of furnishing as any picture upon it.

"How did I come to invent them? I'll tell you. Some years ago I had a valued man servant. One day he fell from the first story window, where he was cleaning, into the basement and was seriously injured. This made a sad impression on me.

"Two years after there came a day for housecleaning. I had a dear maid whom I had brought up, and I came down to water my bulbs in the back garden, leaving her to begin work in the fifth story back room. Suddenly I looked up. The blind had been drawn together and tied with a ribbon, and away below them there fluttered suddenly Jane's skirt. She was coming down, I felt. In my mind's eye I saw her dashed to pieces before me, and then I remembered no more. It seemed for a time I had a sort of paralytic shock. By and by I became conscious, and my servants were all around me begging me to speak, and I tried to, but could not utter a word. Then I felt a cold, firm hand on my pulse, and 'It's Jane, Mrs. Dormitzer, won't you speak to Jane?' broke the strain. I broke into sobbing. She was safe, but I knew what might have happened.

"In the first words I spoke I said to my servants: 'I promise each one of you as a lady that I shall never ask you to risk danger again. I shall never rest until I invent something to avoid it.'"

Then Mrs. Dormitzer went to work. She became absorbed in her work. She can't draw in perspective, and she couldn't work in wood or rattan, though she tried to and destroyed several sets of fancy tools. Her health failing, Mr. Dormitzer used to say, "Do give this up. Let me buy your thoughts and present them to some one else to develop." But she kept on. When seven out of eight sections were complete, the eighth somehow wouldn't fit. At last it did. One night Mrs. Dormitzer got out of bed, took her scissors and the lid of a band-box and cut and fitted until, presto! the invention of the window platform was complete.

In the same way, she followed with the ladder. "You see," she said, "those little oak presses above that washstand there, reaching to the ceiling? One wants some medicine in the middle of the night. They can't be reached unless by a ladder. Well, out of the way shelves and corners, and my objection to allowing women-servants to carry heavy burdens, suggested the ladder. And now, after long years, I have both."

For every addition and improvement until each article leaves no room for improvement Mrs. Dormitzer secured a patent. The window seat is covered by eleven patents and the ladder by five.

THE WINDOW-SEAT FOLDED.

To secure a good place for exhibition in the Liberal Arts Building, at the World's Fair, Mrs. Dormitzer paid $850 to an agent, who did not do his duty. They were placed in an obscure position and a fashionable young woman had been put in charge who didn't seem to care much about having the things mentioned. But the judges saw them, and awarded Mrs. Dormitzer a medal.

"In the hands of a large manufacturer," says Mrs. Dormitzer, "the window seat might be turned out for, probably, $1.50, and the ladders as low as 2 each. I have had a few of the seats made and six ladders. The ladders cost—at amateur rates—$29 for the six. The window-seats were made by a handy old man under my direction, whom I knew I could trust not to give away my idea. You see, I have been afraid to call in professional workmen lest the thing would be appropriated from me unawares. A man from North Carolina has just written me for a hundred ladders, but I cannot get them made cheap enough.

"I would be glad to see both articles in the hands of a big manufacturer who could give the public the benefit of them. If I ever sell my patents I want to establish a fund to provide free trained nurses for the poor."

Mrs. Dormitzer is the wife of a merchant who retired from business many years ago on an ample fortune, and her only incentive is to help the working classes. She is a woman of singular charity, and unobtrusively does great good among the poor and distressed.

Deutsch & Co.
FIFTH AVENUE. COR. 22 ST.

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Consequent of the hard times, we will sell our entire stock of stylish and extra fine

Sealskins, Russian and Alaska Sables, Persian Lamb and Mink Circular Capes and Coats. Tailor-made Suits, Dinner Dresses, with Russian Sable and other rich materials and trimmings. Rich Velvet Coats and Capes, Hats, Toques and Bonnets.

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Embroideries.

SPRING IMPORTATION
Hamburgh, Nainsook and Swiss Edgings,
with Insertion to match.
WHITE AND COLORED SWISS FLOUNCING,
with Valenciennes Edging and Insertion.
Embroidered Point de Venise and Point de Gene Edging,
with Insertion to match.
Guipure Flouncing, Open Work,
White Swiss Flouncing, 45 inches wide,
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ZEPHYR ROBES,
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