

East

LODGINGS IN TOWN

By

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"An Island Cabin" and "The
Unwritten Law"

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When at last I came from the West and stood

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upon the ferry skimming the North River, between Jersey City and New York, I had a little less than eight dollars in my pocket. A small paper grip contained the rest of my possessions—a clean collar, a night dress, a roll of manuscript and a corn-cob pipe.

New York is chiefly remarkable in that it can allure to it both Russell Sage and me. It is said that Mr. Sage, in his gaunt youth, strode to the city with nothing but Honesty, Industry and Thrift. I had nothing but a poem. I had lived long enough to see most of my friends become successful and blasé. The progress of life had made me errand boy, clerk, private secretary, reporter, city editor, politician, promoter and the proprietor of a business. I had helped to build an electric railroad, to lobby a bill through Congress, to give Illinois its only Democratic victory since the war.

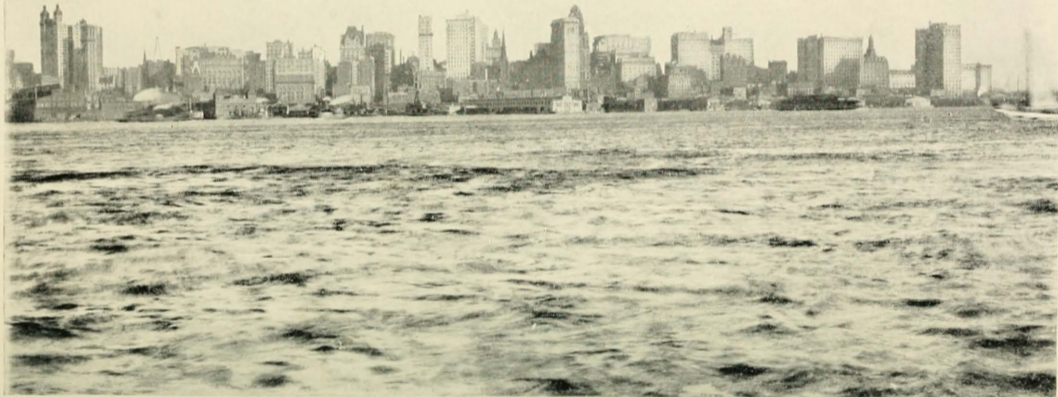
In the midst of the vigorous struggle fortune, in one of her coquettish moods, had left me penniless. I knew, however, that in a moment she would smile again. In fact, the certain prospect of an electric railroad of my own leered at me with seductive eyes. Bankrupt to-day, I might

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drink champagne with Morgan to-morrow and on Sunday sit with Rockefeller in his pew. And then it was that a miracle was wrought, like that which transforms the convict into a preacher. A great light blinded me, and, abandoning forever the wild pursuit of wealth and respectability, as the prodigal left his husks, I turned in my tracks, and made for New York, a boy again, with nothing but my ticket, a night-dress, eight dollars, a pipe and a poem.

Standing on the ferry, New York, across the water, gleaming in the sunlight, seemed to me to be those fantastic visions realized. A strong wind was blowing in from the bay, whipping the surface of the river. Ferryboats, tugs and steamers left wakes of sparkling foam, and innumerable sailing craft, varnished pleasure yachts and weather-beaten smacks alike leaned gracefully from the wind, throwing showers of spray about their bows. The afternoon sun flashed from the windows of the city we were approaching. It tinted



“ New York seemed to be those fantastic visions realized.”
(From a North River ferryboat.)

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the floating plumes of steam that rose from roofs, and traced the progress of elevated trains. It accentuated shadows and projections and heightened the effect of the gilt of the cornices of tall, white buildings. In those days New York was smokeless, immaculate, and I, in smiling eagerness, approached her as a lover runs to a mistress that holds out her arms, for I had learned what good fortune is, and in seeking this was seeking what the lover seeks, affection and delight.



“Out of the Ferry House.”
(West Street.)