

established are welcome. Those who do not must find a place of prayer that suits them."

## FINALE.

About a fourth of the meeting are ladies. A very large number are young men. They come with blank-books in their hands, pencils behind their ears, memorandum-books peeping out of their pockets, and marks of trade about them. They come not simply as spectators, but they bear an important part in the meeting. Carmen and draymen drive up to the curbstone, leave their teams, and come in with frocks on and whips in their hands, and join heartily in song, prayer, and speech; bankers, expressmen, merchants, and mechanics unite in the service. Such a grouping of classes, conditions, trades, and sects can be found nowhere else. The formal Churchman, the conservative Dutchman, the ardent Congregationalist, the quiet Friend, the impulsive Baptist, the stately Presbyterian, sit side by side, while the hearty "Amen" ringing through the chapel indicates that the Methodist element is not wanting. As a success, as a meeting of power, with a fame of ten years which has followed the drum-beat of nations round the world, this simple, plain, unpretending meeting of united Christians for daily prayer is one of the most wonderful institutions of the metropolis.

## XXVI.

## BUSINESS REVERSES IN NEW YORK.

MIRAGE OF WEALTH. — RAILROAD CONDUCTOR. — A RAILROAD KING. —  
SARATOGA BELLE. — ROCK IN THE CHANNEL. — SUCCESS A COY THING. —  
OLD-SCHOOL MERCHANTS.

## MIRAGE OF WEALTH.

MEN who visit New York, and see nothing but the outside aspect which it presents, imagine that success is one of the easiest things in the world, and to heap up riches a mere pastime in the city. They are familiar with the name and history of the Astors. They know that Stewart began life a poor boy, kept store in a small shanty, and kept house in a few rooms in a dwelling, and boarded his help. They walk through Fifth Avenue, and look on the outside of palaces where men dwell who left home a few years ago with their worldly wealth tied up in a cotton handkerchief. They stroll around Central Park, and magnificent teams, gay equipages, and gayer ladies and gentlemen, go by in a constant stream; and men are pointed out who a short time ago were grooms, coachmen, ticket-takers, boot-blacks, news-boys, printer's devils, porters, and coal-heavers, who have come up from the lower walks of life by dabbling in stocks, by a lucky speculation, or

a sudden turn of fortune. So young men pour in from the country, confident of success, and ignorant that these men are the exceptions to the general law of trade; and that ruin and not success, defeat and not fortune, bankruptcy and not a fine competence, are the law of New York trade.

Nothing is more striking or more sad than the commercial reverses of this city. They come like tempests and hail storms which threaten every man's plantation, and cut down the harvest ready for the sickle. Few firms have had permanent success for twenty-five years. In one house in this city twenty men are employed as salesmen on a salary, who, ten years ago, were called princely merchants, whose families lived in style, and who led the fashions. Men who embark on the treacherous sea of mercantile life are engulfed, and while their richly-laden barks go down, they escape personally by the masts and spars thrown to them by more fortunate adventurers. One house in this city, quite as celebrated at one time as Stewart's, who, in imitation of that gentleman, built their marble store on Broadway, are now salesmen in establishments more successful than their own. New York is full of reduced merchants. Some of them bravely bear up under their reverses. Some hide away in the multitude of our people. Some take rooms in tenant-houses. Some do a little brokerage business, given to them by those who knew them in better days. Some take to the bottle, and add moral to commercial ruin.

## RAILROAD CONDUCTOR.

Riding down town one night in one of our city cars, I paid my fare to a conductor who gave me a sharp, searching look. When below Canal Street, as there were no other passengers in the car, he came and sat down beside me. He said, "I know you very well, though I suppose you do not know me. I used to go to school with you in Boston." I remembered him as the son of a wealthy gentleman not unknown to fame in that city. His father had an elegant house in the city, and, what was then unusual, a fine mansion in the country. The son was indulged in luxuries unusual in that day. He had a pony on which he rode to school, and was attended by a servant. He had a watch and other trinkets that excited the envy of his companions. His father lived in grand style, and his equipage attracted general attention. He lived fast, but it was said he could afford it. To maintain his position he was tempted to commit a great crime. Able counsel saved him from the penitentiary, but his ruin was complete, and his family shared in the general wreck. His children are now scattered over the country, to earn a living wherever they can find it. This son, well educated, tenderly cared for, and trained to every indulgence, gets his as the conductor of a city railroad car, a calling laborious and ill paid.

## A RAILROAD KING.

One of the most successful railroad men of New York boarded at one of our principal hotels. He was an unmarried man. He was accounted an eminent and

successful financier. His reputation and standing were unquestioned. He was connected with the principal capitalist in the city, and was one whom New York delighted to honor. In a small house in the upper part of the city he had a home. Here he lived a part of his time, and reared a family, though the mother of his children was not his wife. Down town, at his hotel, he passed by one name, up town, in his house, he was known by another. It would seem impossible that a prominent business man, reputed to be rich, brought into daily business contact with princely merchants and bankers, the head of a large railroad interest, could reside in New York, and for a number of years lead the double life of a bachelor and a man of family; be known by one name down town, and another name up town; yet so it was. At his hotel and at his office he was found at the usual hours. To his up-town home he came late and went out early. There he was seldom seen. The landlord, the butcher, the grocer, and the milkman transacted all their business with the lady. Bills were promptly paid, and no questions asked. The little girls became young ladies. They went to the best boarding-schools in the land.

An unexpected crisis came. A clergyman in good standing became acquainted with one of the daughters at her boarding-school. He regarded her with so much interest, that he solicited her hand in marriage. He was referred to the mother. The daughters had said that their father was a wealthy merchant of New York; but his name did not appear in the Directory, he was not known on 'change. The lover only knew the name by which the daughters were called. The

mother was affable, but embarrassed. The gentleman thought something was wrong, and insisted on a personal interview with the father. The time was appointed for the interview. The young man was greatly astonished to discover in the father of the young lady one of the most eminent business men of the city. He gave his consent to the marriage, and promised to do well by the daughter, though he admitted that the mother of the young lady was not his wife. The clergyman was greatly attached to the young woman, who was really beautiful and accomplished. He agreed to lead her to the altar, if, at the same time, the merchant would make the mother his wife. This was agreed to, and the double wedding was consummated the same night. The father and mother were first married, and then the father gave away the daughter. The affair created a ten days' sensation. The veil of secrecy was removed. The family took the down-town name, which was the real one—a name among the most honored in the city. An up-town fashionable mansion was purchased, and fitted up in style. Crowds filled the spacious parlors, for there was just piquancy enough in the case to make it attractive. Splendid coaches of the fashionable filled the street; a dashing company crowded the pavement, and rushed up the steps to enjoy the sights. These brilliant parties continued but a short time. The merchant was rotten at heart. All New York was astounded one day at the report that the great railroad king had become a gigantic defaulter, and had absconded. His crash carried down fortunes and families with his own. Commercial circles yet suffer for his crimes. The courts are still

fretted with suits between great corporations and individuals growing out of these transactions. Fashionable New York, which could overlook twenty years of criminal life, could not excuse poverty. It took reprisals for bringing this family into social position by hurling it back into an obscurity from which probably it will never emerge.

## SARATOGA BELLE.

A few summers ago a lady of New York reigned as a belle at Saratoga. Her elegant and numerous dresses, valuable diamonds, and dashing turnout attracted great attention. Her husband was a quiet sort of a man, attending closely to his business. He came to Saratoga on Saturdays, and returned early on Monday morning. The lady led a gay life, was the centre of attraction, patronized the plays, and was eagerly sought as a partner at the balls. After a very brilliant and gay season she disappeared from fashionable life, and was soon forgotten. One cold season a benevolent New York lady visited a tenement-house on an errand of mercy. Mistaking the door to which she was directed, she knocked at a corresponding one on another story. The door was opened by a female, who looked on the visitor for an instant, and then suddenly closed the door. The lady was satisfied that she had seen the woman somewhere, and thinking she might afford aid to a needy person, she persistently knocked at the door till it was opened. Judge of her surprise when she found that the occupant of that room, in that tenement-house, was the dashing belle whom she had met a season or two before at the Springs! In one room

herself and husband lived, in a building overrun with occupants, crowded with children, dirt, and turbulence. Mortification and suffering, blended with poverty, in a few months had done the work of years on that comely face. Her story was the old one repeated a thousand times. Reverses, like a torrent, suddenly swept away a large fortune. Her husband became discouraged, disconsolate, and refused to try again. He lost his self-respect, took to the bowl, and became a drunkard. The wife followed him step by step in his descent, from his high place among the merchants to his home among the dissolute. To furnish herself and husband with bread, she parted with her dresses, jewels, and personal effects. She pointed to a heap in the corner, covered with rags, and that was all that remained of a princely merchant!

## ROCK IN THE CHANNEL.

The speculating mania which pervades New York is one of the rocks in the channel on which so many strike and founder. Shrewd, enterprising men, who are engaged in successful business, are induced to make investments in stocks and operations of various kinds, and are thus at the mercy of sharpers. Their balance in the bank is well known. Speculators lay snares for them, and catch them with guile. A man makes money in a business he understands, and loses it in one he knows nothing about. One is a successful merchant, and he imagines he can be a successful broker; one stands at the head of the bar, and he thinks he can lead the Stock Board. He is a broker; he adds to it an interest in railroads or steamboats. Men have a