

Lady passengers were annoyed, both in their state-rooms and out, with the conduct and vile talk in the rooms near them. Some, unwilling to be so annoyed, left their rooms and remained in the saloons all night. Broadway is not a more noted place for women of this class than are the boats on the North River.

From this grade the class descends to mere ragged, bloated, drunken dregs, who offend all decency as they ply their trade. The second season reveals the destructive power of this mode of life. Pale, young women, thin and wan; women who know early what it is to want fuel and food; women scantily clad, who shiver as they tell their tale and ask relief; women who know that life is brief, and the future without hope — such persons compose the great mass of street-walkers. A short life they lead, and if their tale is true, it is not a merry one.

The court-room of the Tombs on Sunday morning, at six o'clock, is a suggestive place. Children from twelve to sixteen; women from sixteen to sixty; women on their first debauch, in all their finery, and tinsel, and pride, with the flush of beauty on their cheeks, with which they hope to win in the path they have chosen, and from whose faces the blush has not yet passed away forever; and persons in their last debauch, without anything that marks the woman left to them, — these indicate the life and the doom of New York street-walkers.

LII.

HOUSES, OF ASSIGNATION.

THE number of these places of resort in the city cannot be known. The public houses are many, and are well known. But in all parts of the city, houses, private and public, are kept for company, and most of them in the midst of the fashionable and élite of the city.

Most of these places are known by advertisements, which are well understood. A house in upper New York, in a fine location, is selected. It is plainly furnished, or quite gaudily, as the style of the house may permit. It is no uncommon thing for a downtown merchant to take a house, furnish it, hire a house-keeper, use as many rooms as he may wish, and then allow the woman to let out the rooms to regular boarders, or nightly, to parties who may come for an evening, or who may previously have engaged a room. Parties hire a room by the week or month, pay in advance, and come and go when they please. "A widow lady, with more rooms than she can use;" "rooms to let to quiet persons;" "apartments to let where people are not inquisitive;" "rooms to let, with board for the lady only," are of this class.

To a stranger in the city, a search for board is quite

hazardous. A family that is not well known may not be reputable. One with a wife and family of daughters is quite as likely to get into a house of assignation as anywhere else. No reputable lady, who keeps a boarding-house, will take a gentleman and woman to board of whom she knows nothing. Parties must come well recommended, and the fact of marriage must be well known.

Cheap hotels are used for purposes of infamy. The hotels that rent rooms by the day are not particular what relation parties sustain to each other, so long as the rent is promptly paid, and no one disturbs the peace. One or two houses up town, run on the European plan, became so notorious as resorts of the abandoned, that they were compelled to close, or entertain the lowest and most vile. First-class hotel keepers have quite as much as they can do to keep their houses free from this social nuisance. Men and women take rooms, and are registered as Mr. and Mrs. —. The relation of the parties may be veiled for a day or so; but the keen eyes of hotel men soon detect the position of the parties, and then they are packed off, be it day or night. Without this precaution no respectable house could be kept.

Some time since a reverend gentleman was at a leading hotel, where he staid some days. He was in a fine position in a neighboring city, and had much personal wealth. He was of the old school, wore a decidedly clerical dress — white cravat and black suit. At the table, near him, sat a well-dressed, quiet lady, not more than twenty-five years of age. She said but little, was elegantly arrayed, wore few ornaments, and

those of great value, indicating wealth and taste. She accepted the attentions the courteous clergyman bestowed. She seemed to be quite alone, seldom spoke to any one, made no acquaintances, and came in and went out unattended. A table acquaintance sprang up. The husband of the lady was a merchant, then out of the city on business, and would be back in a few days; the lady was quite alone; knew but few persons; so strange to be in a hotel alone in a large place like New York; it was not always safe to make acquaintances in a city, — so she said. The acquaintance ripened; new attentions were proffered and accepted. The parties met in the parlor, and went together to the public table. Soon the husband came, and made one of the trio. He was a quiet, gentlemanly-looking man, dressed in a nice black suit; and his jewels, that shone from his finger and his shirt-bosom, were all that indicated that he was not a man of the cloth. He drank a glass of wine with the attentive doctor, and thanked him for the kind and considerate attention his wife had received from his hands. One day, as the parties sat at their meals, quite cosy and chatting, a merchant came to dine. He was well acquainted both with the clergyman and with the merchant and his wife. An interview was soon had between the new comer and the divine. "How long have you been acquainted with those parties you were to-day dining with?" said the merchant. "Only a week or so." "Do you know who they are?" "O, yes; he is a wealthy merchant of this city, and the lady is his wife, and a remarkably modest and agreeable woman she is." "The man is

not a merchant. He is one of the most notorious gamblers in the city, and the woman is not his wife." Without bidding adieu to his newly-formed acquaintances, the clergyman paid his bill and departed, with a firm resolution never again to be misled by appearances, never to form intimate associations with strange men and women at a hotel, and never to be gallant to a lady he knew nothing about.