

EVENING AT HANLAN'S POINT.

SEVEN o'clock, at the close of a sultry day. The bells of St. James' are sounding out the hour, the slow, even toll beating dully through the lazy atmosphere. The grey stone of warehouse and pavement, after long hours of fierce mid-day blaze, yield a sullen heat that unites with the dust of the roadway to accentrate the prevailing sense of sultriness.

The wide, descending thoroughfare, free from the noise of heavy drays and shouts of drivers, is almost deserted, save for the few citizens who are hurrying wharward to catch the waiting ferry. An hour later, when early tea or dinner is over, they will come down in throngs, and the ticket-stand will be pressed by a crowd of busy workers, eager for an hour or two of Island breezes, plus the pretty environments and many attractions that are to be found at Hanlan's Point.

The roomy ferry moves slowly from its dock, passes through the narrow crib, and presently we are out in the centre of the bay and heading slowly for the low line of kaleidoscopic light that shows faintly through the sunset.

A yellow haze lies over the water, while the city we are leaving rises every moment more distinctly into its envelopment of smoky atmosphere.

A little breeze ripples the yellow waters; we feel its breath about our brows; we look out into the golden west, where the sun is dropping—a glowing globe—behind a low-lying bank of dark cloud, which it turns with Midas touch into marvellous pillars of gold. We look eastward, where Island Point and breakwater show in shadowy lines; we move in a world of sunset yellow of water and sky, encircled by little, friendly, twinkling points of light.

Suddenly our ferry stops its easy motion. We are at Hanlan's Point.

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Eight o'clock.—The muffled tones of St. James' reach us across the bay. We are on the western piazza of Hotel Hanlan, and beyond the pretty bit of private lawn stretches the placid lagoon, all rose red with the aftermath of sunset.

A dainty pleasure skiff drifts lazily on the surface, the oars feathering a soft ripple. The young man bends to his companion, and the girl's gay laugh floats toward us, as she trails a bulrush through the rosy water. The hour is theirs; the world also is theirs,—this beautiful world of dimming rose-light, of fresh soft breeze, of magnetic influence.

The light bridge, the baths beyond, the swaying stretch of rushes, frame the pretty picture that grows momentarily more hazy and indistinct.

There is stillness and absolute privacy on this

western piazza; we have the soft summer night all to ourselves. The retirement so possible and perfect at Hotel Hanlan, amid the pretty gaieties of the Point, is one of the things to marvel over.

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Eight-thirty.—And we have climbed the stairway, and are seated in the roof garden—a pretty little upper pavilion, bright with its gay curtains, hanging baskets and neat little stage. The crimson side awnings are gathered up; and while waiting for the concert to begin, we enjoy the breeze and the outlook

Presently the pretty stage takes our attention, with its clever tricks, its refined light amusement. It is an excellent little programme, at which all may laugh and none may cavil; and to enjoy it thus—with the fresh soft breeze and lovely night views—is a piquant summer delight.

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Nine-thirty o'clock.—We have left the roof garden and are out upon the broad promenade, the evening gathering-place of the people.

The tall pillars of kaleidoscopic lights—crimson, blue, white, purple, green—throw a dainty, fantastic variety of tints over the scene. In the pavilion the band is playing—a choice band with choice programme of familiar favourite airs. The people are gathered thick about, the seats are filled, the promenade is thronged; while below the range of lights cluster the pleasure boats, rowing gently or resting on their oars. It is a remarkably pretty and effective scene—a pleasure-place and hour that words are too weak to paint.

At intervals there is a pause among the instruments; a figure moves to the pavilion front; he stands bareheaded, facing the people. The night breeze lifts his hair; the tinted lamps shower their colours over his face, and throw his figure in fantastic shadow upon the promenade. There is a soft orchestral prelude, then a splendid baritone voice breaks out into some fine old melody, tender love song or stirring patriotic strain. The notes ring out over the darkling waters. The people listen with entranced enjoyment of place and hour; and as the last notes drop over the darkling waters,—break into cordial applause.

The open pavilion, with its brilliant interior agleam with brass instruments; the seats thronged with listening people; the broad promenade with its moving throng,—girls

in their summer gowns, business men in sombre dress, Islanders in free-and-easy costume, young men campers in an ecstasy of careful deshable, mothers with little children, the bright shop girl and the lady of leisure,—all caught and glorified under the changing light-tints; the shoal of pleasure skiffs and their occupants, glorified also into a dainty spirituelle, beneath these magic lights.

And out beyond,—the darkling water with its moving ferries, the far-off, gleaming city, and high up in the sky the golden moon-boat.

'Tis a magic world, filled with wondrous transformations, filled also with a perfection of restfulness, coolness and pleasure for Toronto citizens.

