

They tell of the royal princess living in squalor on the lower east side; of the heir to a baronetcy dying in poverty in a hospital somewhere up-town; of the countess who defies the wolf by dancing in the roof-gardens; of the lost arch-duke who has been recognized in a gang of stevedores; of the earl who lands in jail as an ordinary hobo; of the baroness who supports a shiftless husband and their offspring by giving music-lessons; of the retiring scholar who scorns a life of idleness and a coronet besides; of shifty ne'er-do-wells with titles at homes and aliases elsewhere; of fugitive lords and forgotten ladies; of thieves and bards and wastrels who stand revealed in their extremity as the sons and daughters of noble houses.

In this City of Masks there are hundreds of men and women in whose veins the blood of a sound aristocracy flows. By choice or necessity they have donned the mask of obscurity. They tread the paths of oblivion. They toil, beg or steal to keep pace with circumstance. But the blood will not be denied. In the breast of each of these drifters throbs the pride of birth, in the soul of each flickers the unquenchable flame of caste. The mask is for the man outside, not for the man inside.

Recently there died in one of the municipal hospitals an old flower-woman, familiar for three decades to the thousands who thread their way through the maze of streets in the lower end of Manhattan. To them she was known as Old Peg. To herself she was the Princess Feododric, born to the purple, daughter of one of the greatest families in Russia. She was never anything but the Princess to herself, despite the squalor in which she lived. Her epitaph was written in the bold,