

briefly peer into its simmering depths, and then,—pass on.

It is not with such as they that this narrative has to deal. It is not of the heralded, the glorified and the toasted that we tell, but of those who slip into the pot with the coarser ingredients, and who never, by any chance, become actually absorbed by the processes of integration but remain for ever as they were in the beginning: distinct foreign substances.

From all quarters of the globe the drift comes to our shores. New York swallows the good with the bad, and thrives, like the cannibal, on the man-food it gulps down with ravenous disregard for consequences or effect. It rarely disgorges.

It eats all flesh, foul or fair, and it drinks good red blood out of the same cup that offers a black and nauseous bile. It conceals its inward revulsion behind a bland, disdainful smile, and holds out its hands for more of the meat and poison that comes up from the sea in ships.

It is the City of Masks.

Its men and women hide behind a million masks; no man looks beneath the mask his neighbour wears, for he is interested only in that which he sees with the least possible effort: the surface. He sees his neighbour but he knows him not. He keeps his own mask in place and wanders among the millions, secure in the thought that all other men are as casual as he,—and as charitable.

From time to time the newspapers come forward with stories that amaze and interest those of us who remain, and always will remain, romantic and impressionable.