

SYRIANS SETTLING HERE MAKE ASIATIC QUARTER.

From President Clear Up to Jo-
ralemon Street the Invasion
Prevails Already.

DAINTY HOMES IN TENEMENTS.

These People Pretty Good Citizens, Even
if They Do Like Kousa-Mashy and
Queer Sweetments.

Brooklyn has had a new foreign quarter added to her varied population—a Syrian quarter. If you go inside the police station on Amity street, hard by Columbia, in the tenement region of seafarers and longshoremen, sloop shops, mixed County Clare families and Genoese, around from Atlantic avenue, in the little side street named after Robert Emmet, the stout sergeant at the desk will solemnly state that there is no Syrian Quarter for miles about, and his man Friday, counting on his fingers, will declare that there are only four Syrian families in South Brooklyn. But there is such a "quarter," nevertheless, and it is rapidly growing.

It was brought forward into the light of day within the past fortnight and given definite ranking at that strangest of all places for the introduction of such a topic—an "afternoon" in Society. Over a glass one of the most charming of Brooklyn women was talking.

"Yes, we still live in Congress street," she said, "in the old house, as we always have. But I don't know for how long it will be. The Syrians are getting so close to us that we are worried. You don't know about the Syrians? Oh, they are all along the streets from the river up, and there are more and more of them. Some people confuse them with the Italians, of whom there are thousands not far from us. The Syrians are very different."

And so they proved to be upon an investigation of South Brooklyn and a tour over the streets, supplemented by a talk with a woman who had been a Foreign Missionary in Syria and latterly had conducted a mission over on the Syrian Quarter, in Washington street, Manhattan. By tens, scores and hundreds for a year and more past these Asiatics, so keen at trade and so picturesque, have been slipping into Brooklyn and settling up their homes here. They have chosen that big district of old South Brooklyn, bounding their settlements down by Jorammon street to the north and President street to the south, though a few have found their way to Fifty-fourth and Fifty-sixth streets, along the bay, close to Bay Ridge.

These latter are exceedingly few, however, and they represent what might be called the "ultra prosperous" of Brooklyn's Syrians. Decidedly the greater proportion have congregated over this South Brooklyn area of a mile in length and half that in breadth. As yet, compared with the Irish and Italians, who have long made this region their stronghold, the Syrian men and women are few. But day by day they are coloring the district more appreciably and already, as told above, the note of alarm from the Fashion that yet clings to Old South Brooklyn has been sounded.

What has, in all probability, deceived the worthy, if not keen-witted sergeant in the Amity street station and his man is that this new "quarter" presents peculiar characteristics. It takes something of an expert in Old World and Asiatic peoples to "size it up." Not large as it is, made up of hundreds of Mediterranean and hill folk, it has hardly a shop of its own, no distinctive national restaurant nor place of entertainment, no "quarter life." Washington street, Manhattan, is full of all these things, a locality with an Oriental quirk and quirk to it. None have been transferred to the Syrian quarter of Brooklyn.

This is all easily explainable. It is, in fact, one of the most interesting ends of the story of the new Syrian upbuilding in this borough. The Syrians that have come over here have not attempted to make a business quarter such as the Italians have around Hamilton Ferry. They leave that for Washington street, Manhattan, doing each day's work there as does the ordinary New York business man resident in Brooklyn, and have moved over to this borough to set up homes for themselves. This they have done until quaint dialects are heard in every street. And as they come they creep higher and higher up South Brooklyn's hill, to the worry of old established householders, and they are even fringing the Heights.

It will be recalled by readers of the Eagle last spring how one block of Henry street (that between State and Jorammon) has been taken up by society and is being turned into the "Block Beautiful." That block is one of the most fashionable and representative Brooklyn has to-day. Yet in his search over Brooklyn's Syria one day, this past week an Eagle reporter found himself finally but one short block away from the "Block Beautiful's" stamping grounds. On the very edge of fashion had settled Miss Hannie Kaydough (pronounced Kydoo) and her family.

The Kaydough family, among the most representative and prosperous of those in Brooklyn's Syrian quarter, have their apartments on the northeast corner of Atlantic avenue and Henry street (until recent years never anything else than an Irish locality). Though the Asiatic name could not be kept in mind by the neighborhood and was not "placed" in Atlantic avenue as would have been an Irish or a German patronymic, yet at the word "Syrian" all ears were prickled up and the stranger was informed: "Syrian woman lives here—two flights up"; "Syrian man lives in that house." In fact, the neighborhood knew them well and held them in high honor.

The reason was not difficult to discover when once the reporter in search of Miss Kaydough, Mrs. Nahass and Mrs. Atfny, three personalities of the "quarter" at its Atlantic avenue end, had clambered about a score of tenements and flat houses, old private residences made over and the upper floors of store buildings. For such scenes of comfort, and even luxurious, fitting up, he had never before come across in his tenement travels. Not all indeed had the touch of luxury. The wonder was that so many did, and that this foreign population, settled in America and grown so rapidly Americanized, was on the whole so prosperous.

Like a fairy story and full of drama is the life of these Syrians of Brooklyn. Those who believe in "woman's mission" and "woman's sphere," a definite and high place for women in the working world, would hold their breaths with delight could they once study the people of this "quarter." For with the Syrians in America to-day, and especially with these Brooklyn Syrians, it is the women that are pushing ahead in commercial ways.

In search of a certain miss, a Syrian girl in this country some 6 or 7 years, a reporter entered an Atlantic avenue tenement. It was rather grimy and decidedly commonplace as to walls and stairs, and he had no suspicion as to what was soon to greet his eyes. Nor did the slipshod figure of a woman at the door of these rooms, who could speak no English and mumbled in a foreign tongue reassure him. "Miss Annie" was in "Philadelphia" was all he could understand. But once the door was passed there was a revelation.

A little parlor, with windows on the front and sides, was opened cheerfully to the sunlight. It was bright and handsome with a fresh new carpet of good quality, fitted up with expensive furniture, wall papered prettily, with good pictures on the walls. There was no lawdriness, but substantial artistic taste. A door at the side gave a glimpse of a pretty bedroom with a white-covered metal

bedstead, a bedroom even daintily in its make-up.

The history of this Syrian "Miss Annie" is interesting. The niece of Syrian merchants in New York, she has for several years been traveling as a "peddler digger" on an extensive scale about New York and the near cities and towns, and her profits have on some days reached the figure of \$30 a day. She has sold jewelry from Egypt and Damascus, silver filigree work and Oriental embroideries, carrying her wares about with her in a "dress suit case." Her method of selling has been simple and effective. Instead of going aimlessly from house to house she has in each locality interested clergymen, and has obtained lists of probably-to-be-interested people and possible customers from them. The plan has worked, and brilliantly.

This Syrian girl is but a type of many who live here in Brooklyn and make up this Syrian colony. In pure ability in the disposing of goods and in energy they far outrank the men peddlers. And what is more remarkable, the men seem quite content to let the young women carry off the honors and do the work. This special young woman is now temporarily out of business and is preparing her trousseau, as her wedding is now approaching. She is to marry a young Syrian, and people who know him do not speak encouragingly of his business ability. His bride, it is generally understood, will "take to the road" again when the honeymoon is over and will be the breadwinner for her new home, as she has long been for her own family.

In Hicks street, on both sides of Atlantic avenue, in Willow place, on Atlantic avenue, very nearly up to Court street, on Amity street, on Henry street, on Furman street, on Congress street, here are the Syrian population that do business across the river in Washington street in the daytime scattered. They have their Syrian patriarch here, Elias Saadi, and in time a Greek church will rise either on the Heights or somewhere in South Brooklyn. It is said that funds have been collected for it already.

Very thoroughly Americanized in appearance are all these people, and the rooms they occupy are fitted up in accordance with American ideas. The chief Asiatic custom they cling to is connected with their food. American meals do not please their palates, and they refuse to be converted to them. On Atlantic avenue a Syrian baker has his shop, and supplies all the "quarter" roundabout with native bread. This is circular in form, hollow and of the pin cushion order. Blown up, it collapses when punctured. It is filled with olives and cheese and is highly regarded.

A delicacy is Kousa-Mashy (as nearly as it can be spelled in English). Italian squashes in which are put chopped meat and rice with onion flavoring and pine cone seeds if they have them. For state occasions there is Kibby, meat, pounded in a pestle to a pumice and partly cooked wheat also pounded. All this is mixed together with pine cone seeds and onion juice, put in a tin, baked and marked out in squares.

The Syrian sweetments and desserts are sliced carrots, with English walnuts mixed in with them, sugar-coated almonds, pistachio nuts and Turkish Delight, the latter made of sugar and water with pistachio flavor.

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