

THE INFAMY OF THE PARK.

NELLIE BLY UNEARTHES A SCOUNDREL FAVORED BY THE POLICE.

Charles Cleveland, a Man of Letters, Debatches Central Park to His Own Vile Uses—He Drives There Daily and Invites Young Girls to Ride—The Police Smile at Him and Assist in Getting His Fry.

There is one man in this city who, with the sanction of the Park Police, debatches Central Park to his own infamous uses.

Many complaints have come, from time to time, to THE WORLD touching Park policemen. Women complain that they dare not go to the Park alone because of the familiar and offensive manner of those officers—those paid guardians of propriety and quietness. Young men complain that if they stay in the Park after dark these same guardians blackmail them, and that rather than be subjected to the disgrace of taking their companions before a magistrate, they accept the officers' offer to compromise and give up their money.

A few days ago a young married woman sent THE WORLD a letter, the startling contents of which suggested the necessity for an investigation. She said she went to Central Park every morning for a walk and she had noticed particularly the peculiar actions of one man. Regularly every morning he drove through the Park. Whenever he saw a girl sitting alone on a bench he would draw up and ask her to take a drive. One morning he asked a girl—who was to all appearance a working girl—to take a spin with him around the Park. She did so and when he brought her back the young married woman went to the same bench and, sitting down, began to talk to the girl. First they talked about the weather and then the girl, yielding to the subtle inquiries, told the story of her drive.

The man, while driving around, spoke to every officer and in return received familiar salutes. Several times he drew up and spoke in a whisper to some, who would continue on their beat with a smile, while he resumed his drive. He told the girl that every policeman knew him, and that they would solicit girls for him to take driving. Every day between 10 and 11 A. M. he took to the officers their beer, which they drank behind the trees. This insured his safety, and he could do anything he wished, from robbing a man to cutting down a tree or stealing flowers, and they would not molest him. He repeatedly referred to the "madam," who he said owned the team which he drove.

This was about the substance of the letter, which, in addition, contained a description of the man and his turnout, so I decided to see if the Park policemen, who are paid to protect, were capable of abetting crime. I dressed myself like a country girl and went to the Park. I sat down on a bench fronting the drive which leads from the Fifty-ninth street entrance to the Seventy-second. I opened a book and awaited developments. I had not long to wait. Among all those driving I saw only one who answered the description of the man I wanted, and it required but a few moments to be convinced by his actions that I had made no mistake.

When he saw me sitting alone he endeavored to attract my attention. Although he never once glanced at the other women around who were accompanied by officers. Four times he drove past me, turning within a few yards and reposing. He gave him a glance, coughed and smacking of his lips he made a sign to me. I still gazed at the top line in my book, which allowed me, without raising my eyes, to see all that was going on before me.

THE MEETING WITH THE SCOUNDREL.

When he passed the fifth time, going towards Seventy-second street, I lifted my head and gazed steadily at him. He nodded his head for me to follow him, and though I made no move and did not look pleasant, he kept on making motions with his head for me to come after. An officer on the park, who could not but see the man's performances, scowled at me lazily. I walked down along the path, going in the direction he had driven, and, turning a bend, I saw him a few yards distant talking to a woman. He held his team close by the path and she stood on the green sward which divided the path and the drive, talking to him. A guard was standing beside his horse, on the opposite side of the road. I sat down on a bench almost facing the guard and pretended to read.

Just then the man and woman saw me. She laughed and waved back to a bench, while he drove close to me. He drove as closely to where I sat as he could without allowing me to see his face.

"Good morning," he said. I made no reply, but kept my eyes fastened on my book.

"I would like to take you for a drive," he said, "if you will go down the path while I turn."

I got up without saying a word and looked at the officer. He was looking at me.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked.

"I am waiting for my horse," he said.

"What is the name of your horse?" he asked.

"I don't know," he said.

"What is the name of your driver?" he asked.

"I don't know," he said.

"What is the name of your groom?" he asked.

"I don't know," he said.

myself. I told him that I was a country girl and had come to New York as a governess. He told me it was lucky that all my relatives were dead, and asked me if I would not like to gain the stage. He could easily get me on, as he had lots of friends among the profession. Let the man be given to telling untruths I shall not mention the names of the managers whose friendships he claims; however, he told very strange stories concerning their treatment of the girls. He said he received lots of complimentary tickets and asked me to go with him to the theatre.

"Who was the woman you were talking to in the Park?" I asked him.

"She's a friend of mine," he answered.

"Why didn't you take her driving, then, instead of a stranger?" I inquired.

"Oh, I never take her driving," he said, with a laugh. "She understands it."

"Understands what?" I asked, but he would not answer.

"Does she often come to the Park?" I asked, and he answered that he talked with her there every day—of what I could not learn.

"I go away in a short time to visit all the summer resorts," he said. "I always take several horses along and I have a good time driving. Will you come along?"

"I?" I exclaimed, in my simple, country manner. "Oh, that would be impossible. Is your livery-stable far away?" I asked, artlessly.

"No, it is not far," he said.

"Down on West Fifty-eighth street, and I live on West Fifty-seventh street," said he; "and where do you live?"

I named a street—the first one I thought of—and refused to give a number simply because I was afraid of giving wide of the mark, which he would find out. I endeavored to tell the avenues it lay between but got mixed up in that, which was due, I explained, to my country simplicity.

"You will go with me, then, to the summer resorts," he urged.

"Oh, you shouldn't ask me so soon; wait until we are better acquainted. Maybe we will not like each other then," I said evasively. "What is your name?" I asked coaxingly.

"If you meet me to-morrow I tell you my name," he said cunningly. "You can call me Charles until then."

Determined to hunt him down, I made an engagement to meet him the next morning at 10 o'clock, at the corner of Seventy-second street and the Boulevard. If it rained I should not come until the following morning.

WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.

The man, who is about 5 feet 8 inches, usually wears a gray pongee duster, which is buttoned up closely to his chin, hiding his clothes entirely. He wears a white straw hat of cheap grade with a black band around it. His gloves are a snuff-brown hile thread with brown leather inside, rather the worse for wear. His entire clothing is cheap and coarse. His face does not bespeak refinement or culture. His black eyes, deep set and rather close together, are overhung with heavy black brows. His nose is long and very red, the redness which looks more the work of the sun than drink. His drooping black moustache, in which are many gray streaks, covers his mouth completely. His chin and cheeks wore the stubbled beard of many days' growth. His collar, which accidentally got above his gray waist, was a straight band, very much soiled. His hair is rather white on the temples and above his ears. His conversation is conducted without regard for any grammatical rules. The team he drove was above reproach. One was a bobtail sorrel and the other a bay whose tail almost touched the ground.

A reporter was instructed to follow me the next morning and to track the man to his home, while a photographer was waiting in the Park to get a picture of the man and his rig. Although it rained we were all on the watch for Mr. "Charles." I had found a place where I could watch without being seen. A few minutes before 10 the rain ceased and the sun came out—so did the man. He drove to the place where I was to meet him and round and round, as though expecting that I would yet come. At last he gave up in despair, and about 10:30 went to the Park, closely followed by the reporter. Here he met and talked with the woman he had met the day previous, and, after a consultation of some length, he resumed his drive. The woman went down a side path, and though the reporter followed after as quickly as he dared, she was lost to sight, and he was unable to again find her.

HIS NAME AND ADDRESS.

A photographer from THE WORLD office got a view of the man and his team and the reporter followed him to the stable where he was housed. He was housed in the stable of the Central Park Hotel, and his name is Charles Cleveland.

He is a native of New York, and is now in the city on a visit to his mother, who is a widow and lives in the city.

He is a man of letters, and is well known in the city as a man of letters. He is a man of letters, and is well known in the city as a man of letters.

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"All right, I don't intend to drink it," I said, finally.

"You drink it, now. I have to pay for it," Mr. Cleveland said, coarsely. "You think I put something in it, don't you? That's why you won't drink; you're afraid."

"Probably I am," I answered, slowly. "I could not trust a man who has done as you have."

THE SCOUNDREL'S PLANS.

"I've been better to you than most men would be," he hurled at me. "When they bring girls out and they refuse to do what the men say they put them out and they have to get back to the city as best they can."

I gave him a gentle hint that it would save him trouble to take me where he got me, and so he made me go to the back of the house to where the team was standing beneath a shed. We drove back to the Park.

"You will get into trouble if you go around hunting up girls in the Park all the time," I said, after a long silence.

"Will I? I'm safe enough. I ask the girls to take a drive and if they make any fuss the police will pull them in. They wouldn't touch me. I'm sold."

"How do you get sold?" I asked.

"That doesn't make any difference. It's only the girls that get into fusses," he said. "I never ask regulars to get in; I always take girls who are strangers. Now, I knew you were a stranger the first moment I saw you."

"How did you know?"

"Well, I'm in the Park all the time, and I know everybody by sight who comes there. The moment a strange girl comes in I can pick her out. I'm no fool. I'm not picking up the ones that know the town. Anyway, you can't say that I used you badly."

"It's according to what we call badly," I said. "Any man who will try to entrap a girl because she looks innocent deserves harsh treatment."

"I don't want to talk about it. You can get out here," said he, gruffly.

I refused to get out because it was too far from any station, and compelled him to drive me nearer to Seventy-second street. Mr. Cleveland let me get out, and whipped up the borrowed horse without a word of farewell—almost before my foot reached the ground. NELLIE BLY.

THE OBSERVANT CITIZEN.

a girl—who  
to take a spin with him around the Park. She  
so and when he brought her back the young mar-  
ried woman went to the same bench and, sitting  
down, began to talk to the girl. First they talked  
about the weather and then the girl, yielding to the  
subtle inquires, told the story of her drive.

The man, while driving around, spoke to every  
officer and in return received familiar salutes.  
Several times he drew up and spoke in a whisper  
to some, who would continue on their beat with a  
smile, while he resumed his drive. He told the  
girl that every policeman knew him, and that they  
would solicit girls for him to take driving. Every  
day between 10 and 11 A. M. he took to the officers  
their beer, which they drank behind the trees.  
This insured his safety, and he could do anything  
he wished, from robbing a man to cutting down a  
tree or stealing flowers, and they would not molest  
him. He repeatedly referred to the "madam,"  
who he said owned the team which he drove.

This was about the substance of the letter,  
which, in addition, contained a description of the  
man and his turnout, so I decided to see if  
the Park policemen, who are paid to  
protect, were capable of abetting crime. I  
dressed myself like a country girl and went to the  
Park. I sat down on a bench fronting the drive  
which leads from the Fifty-ninth street entrance to  
the Seventy-second. I opened a book and awaited  
developments. I had not long to wait. Among all  
those driving I saw only one who answered the  
description of the man I wanted, and it required  
but a few moments to be convinced by his actions  
that I had made no mistake.

When he saw me sitting alone he endeavored to  
attract my attention, although he never once  
glanced at the other women around who were ac-  
companied by escorts. Four times he drove past  
me, turning within a few yards and repeating. He  
gave little whistles, coughs and smacking of his  
lips to make me look, but I still gazed at the top  
line in my book, which allowed me, without raising  
my eyes, to see all that was going on before me.

THE MEETING WITH THE SCOUTS.

When he passed the fifth time, going towards  
Seventy-second street, I lifted my head and gazed  
steadily at him. He nodded his head for me to fol-  
low him, and though I made no move and did not  
look pleasant, he kept on making motions with  
his head for me to come after. An officer on the  
path, who could not but see the man's performances,  
merely looked at me lazily. I walked down along  
the path, going in the direction he had driven, and,  
turning a head, I saw him a few yards distant talk-  
ing to a woman. He held his team close by the  
path and she stood on the green sward which  
divided the path and the drive, talking to him.  
A guard was standing beside his horse, on the  
opposite side of the road. I sat down on a bench  
almost facing the guard and pretended to read.

Just then the man and woman saw me. She  
laughed and went back to a bench, while he drove  
direct to me. He drove as closely to where I sat  
as the road would allow and then stopped.

"Good morning," he said. I made no reply, but  
kept my eyes fastened on my book.

"I would like to take you for a drive," he said.  
"If you will go down the path while I turn."  
I got up without replying and looked at the offi-  
cer. He was watching us.

"Which way?" I asked the man.  
"Down towards Seventy-second street," he re-  
plied. I walked past the officer, who turned his  
face, on which rested a broad smile, towards his  
horse, presenting his back to us. I passed the  
woman with whom the man had been talking and  
she looked at me in an amused way. I stopped  
where the first path crossed the drive and the man  
came up.

SOLID WITH THE POLICE.

"Aren't you afraid to do this?" I asked as I got  
into the vehicle with him.

"Why, there's nothin' to be afraid of," he an-  
swered, as he arranged the lap robe.

"The officers," I suggested, "aren't you afraid  
they will arrest you?"

"No, I'm solid with them," he answered, laugh-  
ing, as if the idea was a good joke. "They  
wouldn't touch me, no difference what I do."

"You are sure of that? I mean, do the police  
allow men to do such things in the park?"

"They wouldn't allow everybody," he answered.  
"But there are men who come out every day just  
to pick up girls and the police never bother them.  
They are only too glad to do something for me,"  
he added. "Just notice how respectfully they  
salute me when I drive past them."

That's just what I intended to do, so I kept  
my eyes open. His boast was not a vain one.  
Every officer we met or passed, on foot or  
mounted, spoke to him, and in every instance  
smiled. Whether the smile was but pleasantness or  
had a meaning I do not know.

"This is a handsome team you drive," I said.  
"Yours, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, they're mine; I've got lots more. I  
own a livery stable," he replied.

"Oh, indeed. Then you come to the Park fre-  
quently, I presume," I insinuated.

"About four times a day."

"What do you call your horses?" I asked.

This seemed to stagger him, for he was silent  
some time; then he answered that he had no names  
for them. I smiled and said that seemed strange,  
as I never knew any one who owned horses to have  
them unnamed. He then asked me if I liked to  
drive and if I could ride. When I gave him an af-  
firmative reply he said he had a phaeton he would  
allow me to drive, and he had a good saddle-horse  
I could have any time. I told him his kindness was  
overwhelming.

REGULARLY HUNTING FOR GIRLS.

"Do you often get acquainted with girls this  
way?" I asked.

"Every day," he replied.  
While we drove around he asked me all about

between his get acquainted  
I explained, to my country  
"You will go with me, then, to some  
sorts," he urged.

"Oh, you shouldn't ask me to do that, what we  
are better acquainted. Maybe we will see each  
other then," I said evasively. "What's your  
name?" I asked coaxingly.

"If you meet me to-morrow I will give my  
name," he said cunningly. "You can call me  
Charles until then."

Determined to hunt him down, I made an en-  
gagement to meet him the next morning at 10  
o'clock, at the corner of Seventy-second street and  
the Boulevard. If it rained I should not come  
until the following morning.

WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE.

The man, who is about 5 feet 8 inches, usually  
wears a gray pongee duster, which is buttoned up  
closely to his chin, hiding his clothes entirely. He  
wears a white straw hat of cheap grade with a  
black band around it. His gloves are a snuff-  
brown lisle thread with brown leather inside,  
rather the worse for wear. His entire clothing is  
cheap and coarse. His face does not bespeak re-  
finement or culture. His black eyes, deep set  
and rather close together, are overhung with heavy  
black brows. His nose is long and very red,  
the redness which looks more the work of the sun than  
drunk. His drooping black mustache, in which  
are many gray streaks, covers his mouth com-  
pletely. His chin and cheeks were the stubbled  
beard of many days' growth. His collar, which  
accidentally got above his gray waist, was a straight  
band, very much soiled. His hair is rather white  
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ical rules. The team he drove was above reproach.  
One was a bobtail sorrel and the other a bay whose  
tail almost touched the ground.

A reporter was instructed to follow me the next  
morning and to track the man to his home, while  
a photographer was waiting in the Park to get a  
picture of the man and his rig. Although it rained  
we were all on the watch for Mr. "Charles." I  
had found a place where I could watch without  
being seen. A few minutes before 10 the rain ceased  
and the sun came out—so did the man. He drove  
to the place where I was to meet him and round  
and round, as though expecting that I would yet  
come. At last he gave up in despair, and about  
10.30 went to the Park, closely followed by the  
reporter. Here he met and talked with the woman  
he had met the day previous, and, after a consul-  
tation of some length, he resumed his drive. The  
woman went down a side path, and though the re-  
porter followed after as quickly as he dared, she  
was lost to sight, and he was unable to again find  
her.

HIS NAME AND ADDRESS.

A photographer from THE WORLD office got a  
view of the man and his team and the reporter  
followed him to the stable. There it was learned  
that his name is Charles Cleveland, and that he  
is said to be foreman of Lovell's boarding stable,  
No. 230 West Fifty-eighth street. The team he was  
driving was said to be the property of Judge Hilton,  
who is boarding in there during the summer.

It is hoped that he would throw some light on his  
business with the woman and his "pull" with the  
policemen. It was to see him the next morning.  
It was a bright, sunny morning. I was there at  
the hour named, and Mr. Cleveland came a few  
moments afterwards. He wanted to go to the  
Riverside Drive, but I insisted on going to Central  
Park, where I knew a reporter was waiting for us.  
He refused to drive over the road where he found  
me the first morning; why, I do not know. He  
wanted to go out on the road, but I told him I  
was to go downtown with a woman and I must  
return in a few moments. He roughly told me the  
story was manufactured and kept on his way. He  
spoke to all the officers, as he had the other day.  
Driving out the road on the occasion of  
our first meeting, he proffered the informa-  
tion that he intended to stop at a road house for  
drinks.

I told him I never drank and insisted on his  
returning. It made no difference, he drove up to  
a one-story frame house on One Hundred and Six-  
teenth street, speaking to the two mounted guard-  
ians on the corner, and we got out. The horses  
were taken around to the stable, and he came into  
the reception-room, pulling off his gray ulster.  
He had on a clean collar, and his hair couldn't  
have been slicked tighter to his head. His trousers  
were the worst bagged at the knee I ever saw and  
were quite short, plainly showing the new heavy  
shoes he wore. After removing his ulster he  
looked at me in a self-satisfied way, as if he felt  
sure in all this "get-up" he would completely  
capture, as well as awe, the simple country girl.

IN THE ROAD HOUSE.

He told me to "sit down and give us a tune,"  
and when I declined he said: "I seen my friend  
of Wallack's Theatre, and he sez he'll take  
you on, so I want to hear your voice. Come, give  
us a tune!"

Finding that I would not be wunt out to order  
drinks, I had at last consented to drinking a lem-  
onade. The waiter, in white jacket and apron, fol-  
lowed Mr. Cleveland in with two glasses, which he  
placed on the table. The lemonade was a deep  
amber shade to the depth of an inch on top.

"That doesn't look like country lemonade," I  
said, as I stirred it around with the straws until it  
all became an amber tinge. "What is in it?"

"I only had him out some sherry in it," he said.

"Go ahead and drink it; it won't hurt you; it will  
trace you up."

"I don't want to drink it," I said.

"Drink it; it won't hurt you; you're mighty par-  
ticular," he growled.