

Manhattan sketch

BY ELGIN E. GROSECLOSE, '20

ON LIVING IN THE CITY

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A few facts about commuters and you would think no one lived in New York. The New Haven, for instance, is only one of at least seven railroads that carry people to work in the city. It has 721,800 commuters daily and considers its commuting radius at seventy-two miles, or as far as New Haven, Connecticut. On the New York Central even more ride in and out—some 1,768,800 daily—and that road considers Poughkeepsie, of like distance from Manhattan, as the last stop on its commuter service. The Jersey Central does even better in distance. It has a daily train leaving Philadelphia at seven a. m. with a crowd of commuters, some of whom have been making the trip for twenty years. This select group of mental aberrants are so proud of their four hours daily travel (two hours each way) that they call themselves the Seven O'Clockers Klub. A few more figures, which I hardly dare to quote, after having gone this far, and no one would question the thesis that after eight o'clock in the evening the sidewalks of Manhattan are as deserted as the forgotten halls of Xerxes.

Nevertheless, in spite of the exodus to the country fostered by the real estate promoter and forced by the ever expanding demands of the business section, a few people still retain Manhattan as their habitat—some 1,867,000 in fact. And oddly enough, many of them manage to live fairly comfortably, quietly and reasonably on the island. To do so, however, requires an unusual modicum of will power, stamina and flexibility of mental outlook.

Take the matter of gardens, for instance, which is usually the appeal of the suburban developer which falls most cloyly on the ears of the immigrant from Missouri, Kansas or Texas. For such a lover of the clambering vine and the spreading lawn, there are no front yards and hammocks in Manhattan. Gardens there are, but at present they exist only for the proletariat. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers have a group of delightful apartments on the lower east side,

large handsome buildings, constructed (with state aid at four per cent) on only forty per cent of the ground space, with the balance devoted to pleasing formal gardens in the center. The wealthy are beginning to demand the same conveniences, and the newest enterprise of Vincent Astor, realtor, is a group of "distinguished garden apartments" on the upper east side. For the bourgeoisie there remain only the parks—but such parks they are—quaint Gramercy, slightly soiled but delightful Washington Square, huge 830 acre Central Park—and by picking one's domicile carefully, it is possible to reach these open spaces with the bairns with only one or two risks of being run over.

Admitted that a city park is not the ideal approach to Nature which a log cabin in the Ozarks provides, comparison must be limited to the facilities within commuting radius, and it must be stated that generally speaking, such thought as has been devoted to city planning has been applied to greater degree in the large cities than in their immediate suburbs. By travelling twenty miles into the country one may find a front yard but no park, and I have a suspicion that front yards are not all they are cracked up to be. Particularly in this day of automobiles and gas laden air.

For fear, however, of starting an argument, we hasten on. Anyway the point is not important. Suffice it to be said that Nature can be had in Manhattan, even if only in microscopic quantities and for the generality of us who are concerned with our daily bread rather than poetry, a dash of mustard on our meat serves. A hyacinth in a window box often gives the city dweller as keen a realization of the glories of Creation as a field of daisies to his suburban cousin.

In fact, as one lives in the city, it begins to dawn after four or five years that human beings are rather more interesting anyway. One begins to take a lively interest in what is called the "neighborhood." Manhattan is full of neighbor-

hoods. You may not know the person on the next floor, but you will know your neighborhood. And your neighborhood knows you—and takes a lively interest in you. Go but once into the little grocery store and give your name and address for delivery. The next time you will be remembered and called by name. State you have recently settled in the vicinity and you may charge your order and not pay for a week. The delivery boy will help you with a refractory radio antenna. The ice man will bring up the morning paper if you ask, and the butcher will obligingly run across to the nearby dairy to pick up a bottle of milk for you. Leave for a month and they all miss you.

These neighborhoods have a way of working themselves very intimately into your affections, so much that having lived in one for a spell, one is loathe to leave. Perhaps that is why they cling on in spots, in spite of the encroachments of skyscrapers, of subways and big business. Perhaps that is why, in spite of suburbs and gardens, New York can be very livable indeed.

But to gain their affection, you must give of yours. That, after all, is the secret of the city. This enormous thing, which sweeps on like a flood in which the individual is submerged as completely as the stones along the bank, is only a collection of individuals from Idaho, Iowa and Oklahoma. To grasp this fact is to absorb, rather than to be absorbed.

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R. O. T. C. commandant

After four years of highly successful work as commandant of the university R. O. T. C. unit, Major Edwin P. Parker is to move on to war college at Washington, and Major Harry J. Malony, a West Point graduate, now on the general staff at Fort McPherson, Georgia, has been designated by the war department as his successor.

Major Malony was graduated from West Point in 1912. In 1916, he was made a first lieutenant, and transferred to the field artillery. In 1918, he was detailed to the ordnance department with the rank of lieutenant colonel. For service in the war he was awarded the distinguished service medal for valor.

Following the war, he was assigned to Fort Sill, where he took the battery officers course. For three years, he was secretary of the school. Graduating in 1925, he attended the command and general staff school at Fort Leavenworth in 1926. At present, he is assistant chief of staff in charge of supply at the headquarters of the fourth corps area. He expects to report for duty in Norman June 10. Major Parker, before leaving Oklahoma, will be commandant of the R. O. T. C. camp at Fort Sill during the summer.