

**CHARCOALS OF
NEW AND OLD
NEW YORK**

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Charcoals of New and Old New York by F. Hopkinson Smith

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F. HOPKINSON SMITH

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OF NEW AND OLD

NEW YORK

PICTURES AND TEXT BY
FR. HOPKINSON SMITH



GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
MCMXII

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11, 11, 17*

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

NEW YORK CITY, below its man-piled coverings, is a huge stone lizard sprawled flat on its belly, its head erect at Spuyten-Tuyvel, its arms and legs touching the two Rivers, its tail flopping the Battery.

All along the spine and flanks of this Reptile of Gneiss tormenting men dig and bore and blast: driving tunnels through its vitals; scooping holes for sub-cellars five floors under ground; running water pipes and gas mains; puncturing its skin with hypodermics of steam; weighting it with skyscrapers, the dismal streets below dark as sunless ravines; plastering its sides with grass bordered by asphalt into which scraggly shrubs are stuck — and as a crowning indignity — criss-crossing its backbone with centipedes of steel, highways for endless puffing trains belching heat and gas.

This has been going on in constantly increasing malevolence since the Dutch landed, and will continue to go on until three or four, or perhaps six, brand-new cities, each one exactly above the other, are piled on top of the poor beast. What will happen then, especially if it loses all patience and some fine morning gives an angry shiver, as would an old horse shaking off flies, a lucky survivor near the Golden Gate may know, but no one questions that it would be unpleasant for the flies.

INTRODUCTION

In the mean time the sun shines on spider-web bridges; lofty buildings with gold-headed canes of towers; miles of sidewalks obscured by millions of people; endless ribbons of streets swarming with wheeled beetles, and countless acres of upturned ground scarred with the ruins of the old to make ready for the new, while over, through, and in it all stir the breeze and thrill, the spirit and courage of a Great City, made great by Great Men for other Great Men yet unborn to enjoy.

In this twisted, seething mass stand quaint houses with hipped roofs; squat buildings crouching close to escape being trampled on — some hugging the sides of huge steel giants as if for protection; patches of thread-bare sod sighed over by melancholy trees guarding long forgotten graves; narrow, baffled streets dodging in and out, their tired eyes on the river; stretches of wind-swept spaces bound by sea-walls, off which the eager, busy tugs and statelier ships weave their way, waving flags of white steam as they pass; wooden wharves choked with queer shaped bales smelling of spice, and ill-made boxes stained with bilge water, against which lie black and white monsters topped with red funnels, surmounting decks of steel.

All these in the very chaos of their variety are the spoil of the painter. Some of them are reproduced in these pages.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
I Wall Street	1
II The Skyscraper	7
III The Brooklyn Bridge	13
IV The City Hall	19
V Castle Garden	25
VI Behind Shinbone Alley	33
VII Elizabeth Street	41
VIII Clinton Court	47
IX No. 5 West Twenty-eighth Street	55
X The Little Church Around the Corner	63
XI The Grand Cañon of the Yellow	69
XII The Stock Exchange	75
XIII The Upheaval	83
XIV The Subway—Bridge Station	89
XV Manhattan	95
XVI Madison Square	101
XVII Gansevoort Market	107
XVIII Edgar Allan Poe's House at Fordham	115
XIX Jumel Mansion	123
XX The Bronx	131
XXI The Willows	139