

### THE FOREIGN ELEMENT IN NEW YORK.

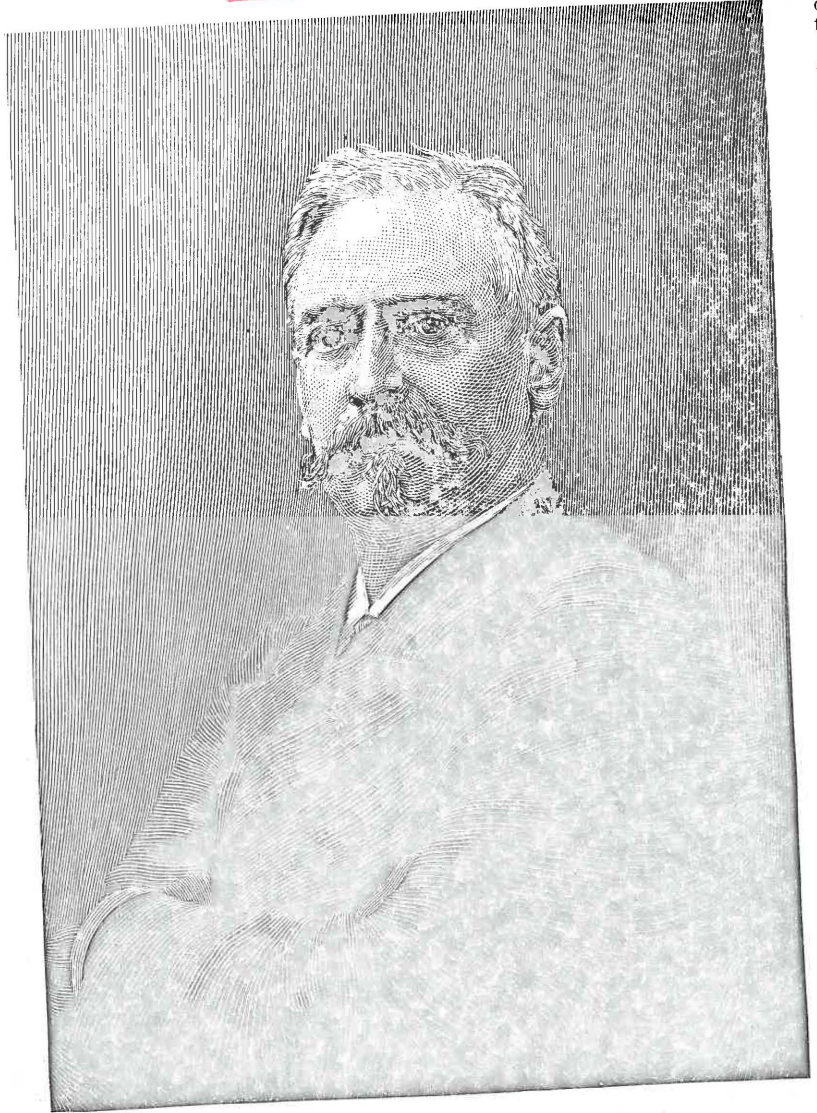
#### THE SYRIAN COLONY.

Those natives of Syria who have forsaken the historic land of their birth and transferred their abode to the prosaic surroundings of Washington Street form but a small colony when compared with the other three great foreign settlements. They number in all only about one thousand, and occupy less than a block on one side of Washington Street, near the Battery. There are some others—about thirty families—who live in Brooklyn, and a large number of brickmakers who find work in the brick-yards of the upper Hudson.

The Mount of Lebanon and the coast of Syria are the localities from which, as a rule, they have emigrated; and they have gladly left behind the land of the Turk and sacred history for the less poetic environments of soap factories and dingy warehouses, among and in which they live and move and have their first sensations of American citizenship.

The Syrians follow various trades and occupations, many of them being skilled workmen in silk, needle, and other industries; cigarette-making is also a favorite trade, while the more unskilled or illiterate take to peddling. There are some importers of Syrian goods who are quite prosperous, while the colony itself supports several native restaurants and shops. The peddlers in the city are generally women, who sell Eastern trinkets and jewelry at basement doors.

These women are usually decorated in the Syrian style with tattooed ornaments, sometimes covering broad surfaces of the body, and on the backs of the hands; it is seldom, however, that the Syrians of the colony are found with the face tattooings which are so fashionable among the Bedouin women, who mark their faces and lips until the whole aspect of the mouth is changed to a chilled bluish tint. Those among them who are ambitious to become thoroughly Americanized are ashamed of these evidences of their foreign birth, and try in vain to remove the marks. They have come here to be Americans, and to leave all the restrictions and superstitions of their older civilization behind. And their sense of freedom here is probably more acute than that of any of the other nationalities, because they have come out from under the Turkish yoke; for while these people from the coast of Syria are to a great extent under the protection of the Christian powers, still they are happy to be away from any possible trouble which might be brought upon them by their Mohammedan rulers. Although the colony is Christian, it is



RICHARD M. HUNT.—DIED JULY 31, 1895.—[SEE PAGE 749.]

divided into four distinct religious sects, the most distinctive being the Syro-Chaldean Church of the Maronites, which worships in an upper loft of one of the old warehouses, where an altar and confessional have been cheaply constructed, and the service is conducted in their own tongue by Father Korkemay, who was sent out to take

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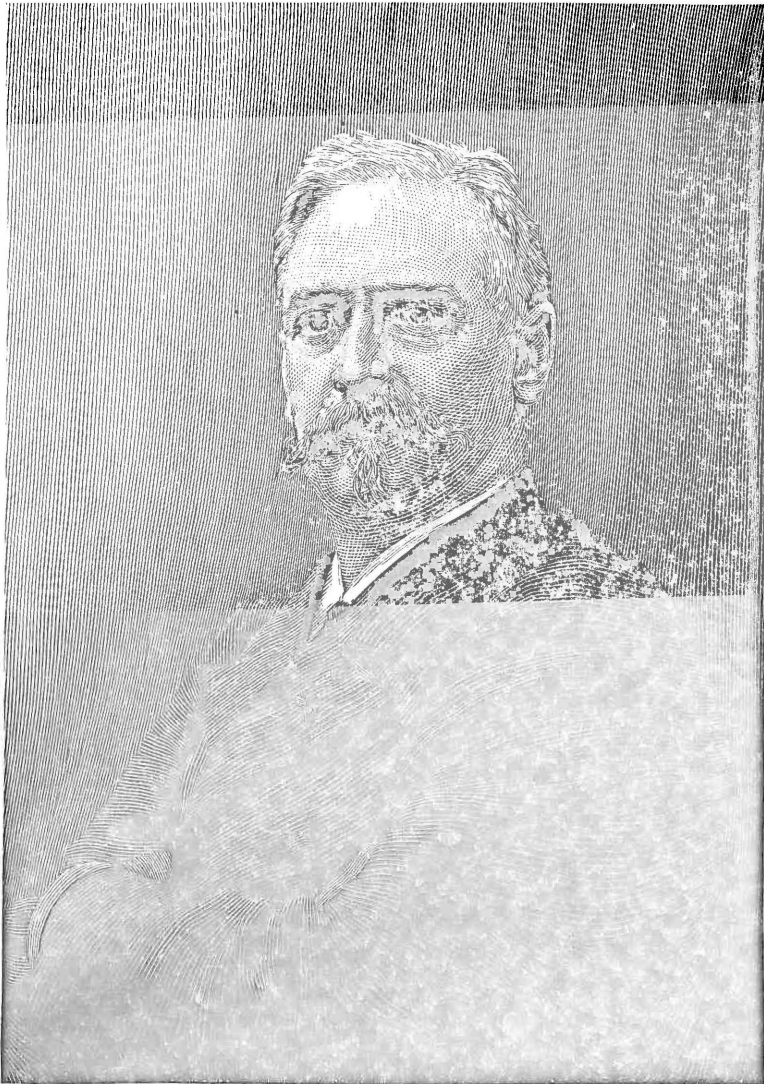
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tion.

Other sects represented in the colony are the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant; and the regularly established churches in the city, such as old Trinity, and Barclay Street Catholic, and the Greek church of the Russians are variously attended.

One newspaper, called *The Star of America*, is published in Syrian characters, and furnishes the news and gossip for the colony. The editor is a man of superior intelligence, who is kept exceedingly busy between his dual duties as newspaper editor and immigration commissioner.

On a bright summer Sunday, when the people gather for church and sociability, the street presents its liveliest aspect. There is a queer mingling of American and Syrian costumes. Some of the prosperous young women are arrayed in all the glory of the latest picture-hats and most startling costumes of colors, putting off the old and taking on the new with such a vigor that there is no doubt at all about their American aspirations; others, less ambitious and less prosperous, still wear their picturesque lace or colored head-dress, conspicuous jewelry, and pointed, upturned shoes; the men cling very generally to the red fez, and occasionally a fur cap or a gorgeously colored sash is seen.

The Turkish water-pipe is a conspicuous feature and a universal household article, the members of the family keeping it alight as they follow one another with a whiff of the fragrant weed.

The restaurants along the street serve as social gathering-places, where games of cards or chess are generally in progress; meals are served in Eastern style, the cooking being altogether strange to American tastes; the bread is in the form of flat cakes, like Scotch "scones."

The waiter sociably joins the groups between courses, puffing meditatively at the nearest water-pipe, while the woman cook sits on the floor at the door of her kitchen taking her ease and her whiff of cool smoke, calmly waiting for the next order. Some of the cooking operations are carried on in the open air, such as roasting corn on a fire-pail.

The children of some of these people are very beautiful, with large black eyes and dark skin, and regular clear-cut features. They are bright and intelligent, being well up in their school studies, and



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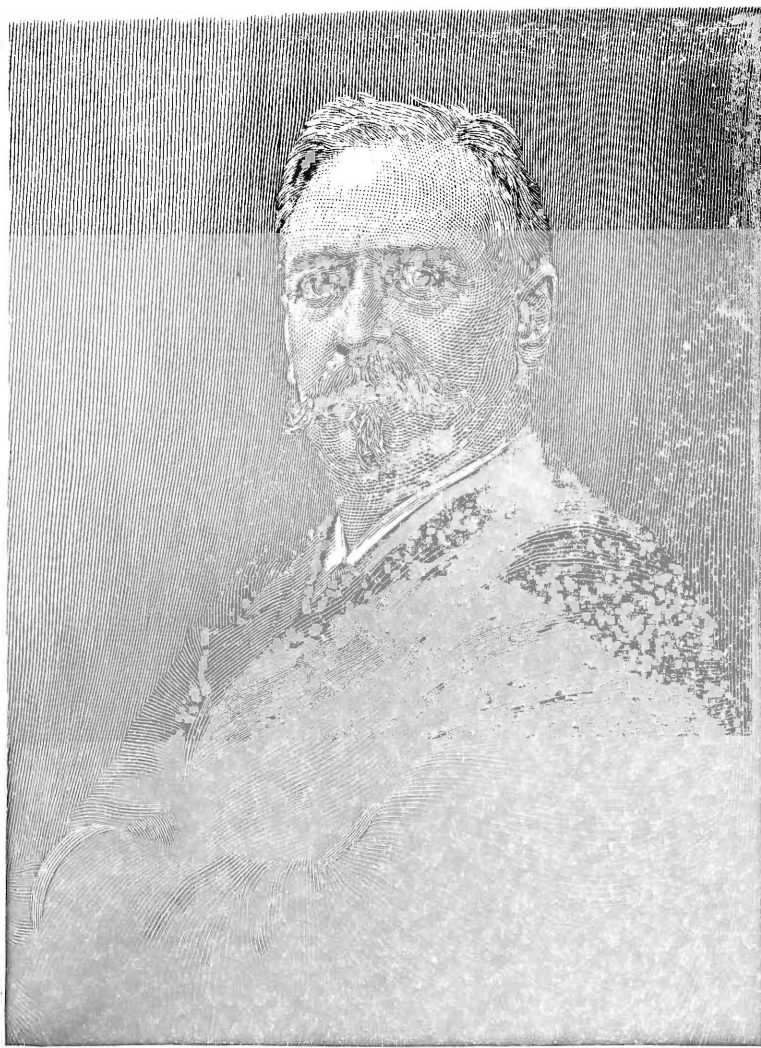
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ELEMENT IN NEW YORK—THE SYRIAN COLONY, WASHINGTON STREET.—DRAWN BY W. BENGOUGH.