

SIDE LINES OF A BUSY DESK

WHY can't we have a competent neutral authority appointed, conscientiously to tax lawyers' charges for legal work performed for a client? The request that all bills ought to be taxed, should come with better grace from lawyers themselves.

At the present time there is a growing distrust among the plain people against lawyers and the terrible bills of expense they present, often for trifling services rendered. Lawyers rule in our City Councils, our Legislatures, our Senators. They largely make our laws, and take good care that their interests as lawyers are not impeded in the making of these laws. No spider web was ever so tangled as the traps laid about unwary clients, when the lawyer's ingenuity is exercised to spin out lawsuits to their longest possible length and win more money. Law costs are increased out of all proportion to the small point at issue, and if the client-victim kicks there is no remedy except an expensive suit to air the matter before the court.

Why should there be not two or three strictly neutral examiners in costs for Multnomah County, as well as in the other counties of the state? These ought to be a fixed, printed bill of charges for every service rendered by a lawyer and ratified by the Legislature. Then, supposing a lawyer and client differed as to the bill of charges to be paid, an appeal could be made to one of the examiners in costs. The objection may be made that this proposal would only saddle the taxpayers with the salaries of several more or less competent officials. Wait a bit.

Compared with the knowledge that an appeal to law is an expensive luxury, there is also a tendency among business men when they get into a difficulty—to compromise that difficulty without going to law about it. They have been there before, and they know the consequences. The delay, the expense, the appeals from court to court, and the ultimate decision which may not differ very much from that end achieved by the friendly compromise between the interested parties without the aid of lawyers. A wise man has said: "My son, do not go to law. Rather said: 'The law is a bad mistress.' A well-known American trade union has the query in the circular it usually sends out in obtaining the estimate of a business man: 'What is your opinion of Mr. A.? Does he settle his suits amicably, without going to law? Does he believe in compromising when disputes arise?'

Comparatively speaking, business is not flowing to lawyers as fast as the river runs to meet the sea. The consequence is that hundreds of young lawyers in our large towns find difficulty in making a living. The new Portland directory gives the names of about 25 lawyers practicing in this city, and in proportion to population it is no wonder that dozens of these persons complain of poor business. A well-known authority states that he knows many young lawyers in Portland who are glad when they make \$10 per week, and he also asserts that many young lawyers do not make enough money to pay their board. Competition for the small business going is too keen. It is a question of five barriers trying to get an equal share of three bones.

Another lawyer says: "The statutory fee for an attorney at the Circuit Court is \$5, and at the Supreme Court \$15. Yet a fee of \$50 is obtained at the Circuit Court and is usually paid. Really, there is no set figure. It is all the way from \$5 to \$100. What is the largest fee recently paid to a lawyer in this county? I know of one case where two lawyers got \$2,000 between them. I know of another case where a prisoner in jail was charged with having a concealed deadly weapon in his possession, and when arrested this prisoner had a gun in his possession. He hired a lawyer, who heard that the police suspected his client of being a hold-up man. The case came up in the Police Court and the lawyer secured his client's liberty by promising that the man would immediately leave town. This lawyer charged \$50 for his services, and he got the money."

One important step in the direction of the reform of this abuse would be to have examiners tax lawyers' cost bills. The plan has been tried successfully in Canada and in Great Britain. Why not in Oregon? Were the reform accomplished a reform would be removed, and legal business would flow into its natural channel. For one thing, rich and poor would be treated alike, and young struggling lawyers would have a fair chance to earn a decent living. Rich lawyers can be trusted to take care of themselves.

A Famous Church Choir.

WHEN a budding New York musical student was recently told that one of the best church choirs that exist on the American continent is the celebrated choir of Jarvis-Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, she said: "The ideal!"

The pride of the dainty miss was hurt to think that her own well-loved choir of Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, New York City, was relegated to second place in the discussion which had arisen, and she said: "It is not fair that a choir in the backwoods of Canada should receive such high praise. What sort of an organization is Jarvis-Street Church choir, anyway?"

Toronto is the chief town of the Province of Ontario, and it is attractively situated at the head of Lake Ontario. It is a profound education center, and its citizens live in a musical atmosphere. If you cannot sing or play a musical instrument—in Toronto—people look at you with pity. In working hours, the ceaseless jangle of many music boxes through citizens' windows, and the very birds of the air listen critically. At night time the Toronto cuts are so highly educated in music, by reason of the environment that they sing in four-part harmony as they decorate back-yard fences. Toronto boasts of two conservatories of music, with several smaller schools, and the students of music flock to Toronto from all parts of Canada, to receive the benefits of an advanced musical education.

Therefore the singing material in Toronto is practically unlimited. Jarvis-Street choir is the Mecca of all singers there, and the choir consists of the choir singing on Sundays are musical events in that section. The choir consists of about 40 trained singers, men and women, and the conductor is Mr. A. S. Vogt, a Canadian who received his musical education in Germany. Mr. Vogt is a pianist and organist of considerable ability, but he does not pose as a voice trainer. It is difficult to estimate the cost of the choir per year, as nearly every member of it is paid either with music lessons or in money, but the cost will be about \$200 or \$250 yearly.

Two choir rehearsals of two hours each are held every week, and if a member desires to be absent he or she must apply for absence in advance, else discipline is enforced. If offenders are not several rehearsals, without a satisfactory explanation being offered, their seats are quietly given to other singers selected from the waiting list. At reasonable intervals the choir rehearsals are pleasant social occasions, and the choir members are invited, several times throughout the season, to the homes of prominent church members, as honored guests.

The choir seats are arranged in the form of a half-moon, downstairs, directly in front of the preaching platform, with the keyboard of the organ facing the singers. Two anthems, sometimes four, and one solo, are sung at most of the ordinary services. The choir is trained to excel in harmonization effects, and unaccompanied

erable number of our population, especially on the Pacific Coast, where so many unmarried people live who have their paternal homes in the East. Married couples who have no children, and do not wish any, are flocking to boarding-houses, because dainty Mrs. A. is not strong enough or is unwilling to do housework, and it is next to impossible in their case to pay or get a domestic servant. Hotel life is too expensive, besides, it has a disastrous effect on the throat of the male members of the different families. So boarding-houses are necessary in a large and increasing number of cases, and what can be done to make them like homes?

Ah, that's it. The cure for all the ills of boarding-house life cannot be remedied in a paragraph. An exceedingly pleasant boarding-house exists in an Oregon town, where the landlady is a wise woman. It is a home place, with accommodations for about 30 boarders, men and women. Three square meals are given every day, and not two on Sunday, as if we ought to eat less on Sunday because it is Sunday. The table maids are the two rosy-cheeked daughters of the landlady, and each table in the dining-room is arranged for four persons. An evening party is given once every two weeks, at which the people in the house play whist, dance and enjoy a song or two. The man in the house pays for all the refreshment used on the occasion—one sandwich and cocoa or coffee. By midnight all the guests are in their rooms, asleep. There is such a home atmosphere about the place that there are no "sets" in the house, and the boarders are like a large family. They form theater parties, in which every person going pays his or share. Lunch is from 12 to 1 o'clock, but the doors of the dining-room are not closed just as the clock strikes 1. The carpet in the hall and on the stairs is not soiled or torn, and the front steps are not falling to pieces.

Boarders can make or unmake a boarding-house. Knowing that one had decreed that you are to live there, why not make the best of it? If you are in a boarding-house you don't like, leave it and get another one. Give and take. Remember in this life that we cannot expect to get pleasure in everything. Suppose that from this day you try to be a good fellow in your boarding-house. Not forever. It is one comfort to know that boarding-house life is but a transitory condition, after all. If you choose, each, you will have a home of your own, and then mine boarding-house, goodbye.

Hand-Shake, Not Kiss. AFTER a tour among women's clubs, a reporter, hotel and other places where women meet, one is impressed with the conviction that among refined women, kissing is on the decline and that a handshake is being substituted.

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But it will be a difficult matter to abolish the kiss absolutely—the custom will live as long as warm blood flows and human hearts beat. Imagine your telling a mother and daughter, or two sweethearts, that they must not kiss each other!

There is one land, however, where the kiss is not unknown—Scotland. "Why should we kiss our own folk, when Christ was betrayed with a kiss?" a stern Scotch preacher once said in the pulpit. Very rarely does a Scotch mother kiss her baby, and she would not think of kissing her woman friends. At railway depots, or stations as the Scotch call them, when a son, or a daughter, leaves for a foreign land, it is customary to kiss the pilgrim goodbye. His relative shake hands with him, sadly, lovingly, tenderly, but they are too proud to shed tears in public. When the train speeds away leaving the loved one, the woman relatives will shut themselves up in their separate rooms and cry their eyes out. In public, Scotch men and women are taught to repress their feelings. No wonder then that Scotch people are cold in manner. They are like their native snows. Meat does not spoil in Scotland in summer, and refrigerators are unknown. There is so much coolness around. But cross the border into England, and you will see a change. Among the warm-hearted Irish, women kiss each other freely and about their hearts upon their sleeves. But what are you going to do about it?

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Boarders can make or unmake a boarding-house. Knowing that one had decreed that you are to live there, why not make the best of it? If you are in a boarding-house you don't like, leave it and get another one. Give and take. Remember in this life that we cannot expect to get pleasure in everything. Suppose that from this day you try to be a good fellow in your boarding-house. Not forever. It is one comfort to know that boarding-house life is but a transitory condition, after all. If you choose, each, you will have a home of your own, and then mine boarding-house, goodbye.

Hand-Shake, Not Kiss. AFTER a tour among women's clubs, a reporter, hotel and other places where women meet, one is impressed with the conviction that among refined women, kissing is on the decline and that a handshake is being substituted.

Not so very long ago, when two women friends met each other on the street, they would immediately look pleased and peck at each other's lips, like square boys after cherries. At dances and parties, young girls used to peck at each other in the most distracting way. Ultimately the custom became so common that it became cheap, and was accordingly frowned upon. Did the tie of blood demand anything more serious than a cordial grasp of the hand, was asked? Why not acquaintances, or real pleasure? Why not shake hands with friends one esteemed, or with relatives not members of one's immediate family? Gradually staid family customs were broken up.

The girls went to college and brought a load of new friends in their train. A new era of education dawned, and the athletic woman became a reality. More poses of manner was sought after, a quietness, a dignity.

A college woman said the other day, as she pressed a desirable daughter to a visitor: "There is one rule right in my house, that nobody must kiss this little girl on her mouth. My reason is a hygienic one."

But it will be a difficult matter to abolish the kiss absolutely—the custom will live as long as warm blood flows and human hearts beat. Imagine your telling a mother and daughter, or two sweethearts, that they must not kiss each other!

There is one land, however, where the kiss is not unknown—Scotland. "Why should we kiss our own folk, when Christ was betrayed with a kiss?" a stern Scotch preacher once said in the pulpit. Very rarely does a Scotch mother kiss her baby, and she would not think of kissing her woman friends. At railway depots, or stations as the Scotch call them, when a son, or a daughter, leaves for a foreign land, it is customary to kiss the pilgrim goodbye. His relative shake hands with him, sadly, lovingly, tenderly, but they are too proud to shed tears in public. When the train speeds away leaving the loved one, the woman relatives will shut themselves up in their separate rooms and cry their eyes out. In public, Scotch men and women are taught to repress their feelings. No wonder then that Scotch people are cold in manner. They are like their native snows. Meat does not spoil in Scotland in summer, and refrigerators are unknown. There is so much coolness around. But cross the border into England, and you will see a change. Among the warm-hearted Irish, women kiss each other freely and about their hearts upon their sleeves. But what are you going to do about it?

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