

IN OREGON'S FEMALE BARBER SHOPS

Four Establishments Where Deft, Delicate Fingers Perform All Tonsorial Operations.

BY HELEN HOPE.

THE man who first said "History repeats itself" must have drunk copiously at the fount of eternal wisdom. A round-up of the Portland "lady barber shops" would certainly bring to mind a Sunday school story of a comely maiden called Delilah—an aspiring soul who couldn't endure the commonplace, who hated the ordinary dead level. She was consumed with an inward fever of unrest, an insistent yearning for power and self—a yearning that banished sleep—a yearning that made the wine of life seem like unto stale buttermilk.

Now there was also living in that country the "champion" athlete of his time, even Samson, who was causing no end of trouble by smashing everything and everybody that didn't look good to him. But Samson grew very confidential with his best girl, this same Delilah, and told her the secret of his extraordinary strength, and Delilah, like her modern sisters, told everybody else. Thereupon, the great men of the country roundabout came to Delilah and offered her the largest barbershop on record if she would separate Samson from his hair. A great light broke upon her. Here, in one fell swoop, was the chance to attain her heart's desire, to be the great, the original, the only lady barber! She welcomed Samson with her most alluring smile. He laid his curly, unsuspecting head against her knee, and she artfully lulled him to slumber. To be sure, at the last moment she lost her nerve and called in a man to assist her, and it is distressing to record that poor Samson's flowing locks were removed with a razor.

This simple story of awakened feminine ambition has gone stampeding down the ages, until it has been turned to practical account by several Portland young women who wield the razor and shears far more dexterously than Delilah of old, though certainly with less startling results.

I'm rather of the opinion that these young women are a vast improvement over their aggressive sister of the misty past in more ways than one. First, they must get down to hard, cold-blooded business by passing an examination and procuring a license. Besides this, they must compete with a thousand and one barbers of the stronger sex. Then they must combat public opinion, which is about as slow in accepting a new idea as Methuselah was in calling the undertaker.

In one of the largest shops there are four chairs, presided over by as many decidedly skillful young women. Needless to say, these chairs are always occupied, with an additional row of prospective patrons awaiting their turn. The customers stepped into this shop with self-assurance aplenty, but when the actual process began, they were, on the whole, struck with a sort of panicky bash-

fulness that they likely hadn't felt since their puppy days. But it takes a lot of nerve for a sailor lad or horny-tipped logger, who hasn't even seen a woman's face maybe for weeks at a time, suddenly to find a pair of azure eyes, or eyes of brown like those of a half-forgotten sweetheart, gazing over a bank of snowy lather straight into his own. But in spite of his unwonted shyness, the soft hand of the lady barber slipping caressingly across the stubble on his chin gives him a thrill that's worth twice the money it really costs him.

Probably owing to the location of these shops, most of the patrons appear to be men from logging camps, sawmills and longshoremen. But one day during a little lull in business, a nattily dressed youth, evidently bent on novelty, stepped briskly into the shop. Casting a hasty look around, his glance fell on the Zaza-like girl at the second chair, and he seated himself before her with an airy smirk. She gave a daring little wink at one of her co-workers, a willowy, blond girl who was diligently chewing her gum as she wrung out her clothes. A watch-me-squish-him look darted into Zaza's eyes, as she quickly spread the lather over his face, not neglecting to drop a generous lump directly on his mouth. The irrepressible youth wiped his lips clean with a corner of the towel, and began what was intended to be a very chummy conversation, but during which the girl maintained a dead silence. Finally he had an inspiration. He would ask direct questions and then she would at least have to answer. He was right. She did answer.

Was the barber shop prosperous?
"Yes."
Did she belong to the Barbers' Union?
"Yes."
Did many fellows come regularly to the shop?

Same result.
Did any of the Johnnies ever try to make love to her?
She winked again at the gum-chewing goddess as another huge chunk of soap-suds dropped squarely on his mouth. He was squelched.

In strode a jolly old skipper, with the tang of salt air still about him and the roll of the sea in his swagging gait.
"Gimme a hair-cut, lady, and clip her clean down to the roots!"

"You've got an eye for business, haven't you?" said the girl.
"Well, when a cuss has a wife an' children, an' twins, back on the Maine coast, an' all eatin' well, business is business, I opine."

The girl followed his directions as near as she could without actually scalping him.

"Want a shave?"
"Yes, ma'am, an' mind you, scrape her mighty close, say about three days under



the hide!" The work finished, the seafarer surveyed himself with a critical eye.
"Lord! You look like a peeled onion!" laughed the girl.

"Now, look here, lass. No man with a grownin' family has any business tryin' to preserve his manly beauty."
"Oh, but, abn't men the bluffers, though?" broke in the Zaza-like creature.

"They've bluffed about a woman throwing Adam out of his job, they've bluffed about women causing all their troubles since, and now they're bluffing about us having a corner on vanity! Say, what are those rows of bottles for, and all those jars of fancy dope, and the massage creams and the powders? Hic-a-brac!"

If the barbers in the large downtown shops imagine they do more face steaming, massaging and other beauty-producing stunts than is done by these lady barbers, they're certainly floundering in error. The barber girl knows a lot about human nature, and she has discovered these weather-beaten loggers and longshoremen have a most amazing desire for beauty, and are never happier than when their faces are being half-cooked with steaming cloths, then kneaded to a roseate hue, to be finally toned down with a generous application of powder. In fact, it's a matter of record that a big, husky longshoreman will gaze at his face after a shave and massage as long and anxiously as a budding debutante.

She's learned, too, that a man who isn't eternally on the anxious seat about his rapidly thinning locks must be some sort of a freak, for every man from Samson and Abraham down to the present day seems to feel instinctively that his hope of present and future happiness lies in his hair. In fact, every man creature who has enough brute adoration to outlive a turnip is mightily puffed up, and never fails to "rub it in" to his less fortunate brother.

The barber lady has also made a discovery that should be very disconcerting to the lords of creation, to-wit: They can't keep a secret! She admits that they may be able to keep them from each other, but that they're not only willing but anxious to pour all their hopes and fears into the ears of a sympathetic woman. And when it comes to giving offhand advice on all subjects, if the lady barber collected for all the wisdom she dispenses at a lawyer's idea of value, she could soon own all the barber shops in Portland. Indeed, to meet the daily calls made upon her, she feels that it's as well as the fortune-telling seeress, should have been born the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, to say nothing of a double veil.

There are four of these "lady barber shops" in Portland, two on Fourth street, one on Madison and one on Burnside street, and mightily well conducted shops they are. Their unprejudiced patrons unite in the opinion that the "lady barber" idea has passed beyond the stage of fad or experiment to the dignity of a real profession. They also aver that the gossip of the lady barbers is a decided relief from the endless, unpermeated observations of her masculine competitor. From her the mere man may learn the newest details of the bargain counter sensations, and get an expert analysis of the charms of the latest matinee idol, without extra charge while he waits.

Naturally, the male barbers are not any too enthusiastic over this feminine invasion of the tonsorial field, but they are far too gallant to make any unpleasant allusions. And since men elect to become dressmakers, cooks, dish-washers and milliners, really now, why shouldn't a lady be a barber?

THE HOTEL CLERK ON SOME RECENT LEGISLATION

BEING A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON HUMAN NATURE WITH REFERENCE TO SUMPTUARY LAWS

BY IRVIN S. COBB.

"I SEE they're havin' a lot of trouble enforcin' them new prohibition laws down South," said the House Detective, of the St. Reckless.

"Quite, yes, Larry. That's one of the disappointing features about a prohibition law. It's so easy to pass that people get the habit and keep right on passing after it's passed. I see where the Governor of Georgia, the same that used to run a neat little bar of his own in that hotel of his down at Atlanta, has worked himself up into a free father because of our old fraternity brother, Colonel J. Denson Run, found a few refugees wherein to lay his head in some of the large towns. Once he gave a hard-boiled egg with everything smaller than a schooner and had a lovely fountain playing in the middle of the floor with a piece of statuary in the middle of it, entitled Venus Rising From the Turkish Bath, done by an artist that never learned to sculpt a lady's clothes. That now he feels very keenly about this thing and he talks of calling out the state troops to enforce the law at the point of the bayonet. Well, in an issue like that, with the point arraigned against the point, I know where the money will be. Those noble young Rube millionaires from Jeff Davis County and Bob Toombs County and other counties with the full Christian names, will certainly have their work cut out for them, from what I can hear."

"A chap who was in here yesterday told me that when he was down to the Savannah auto race in the Fall he went up to a policeman as soon as he got off the train and asked him in a whisper to please direct him to some place where he might haul a clandestine high ball into his travel-stained interior. With true Southern courtesy the officer walked him six blocks down one of the main streets and showed him a large stone building that looked like it might be a Carnegie Library or a county jail."

"You see that building yonder?" said the policeman.

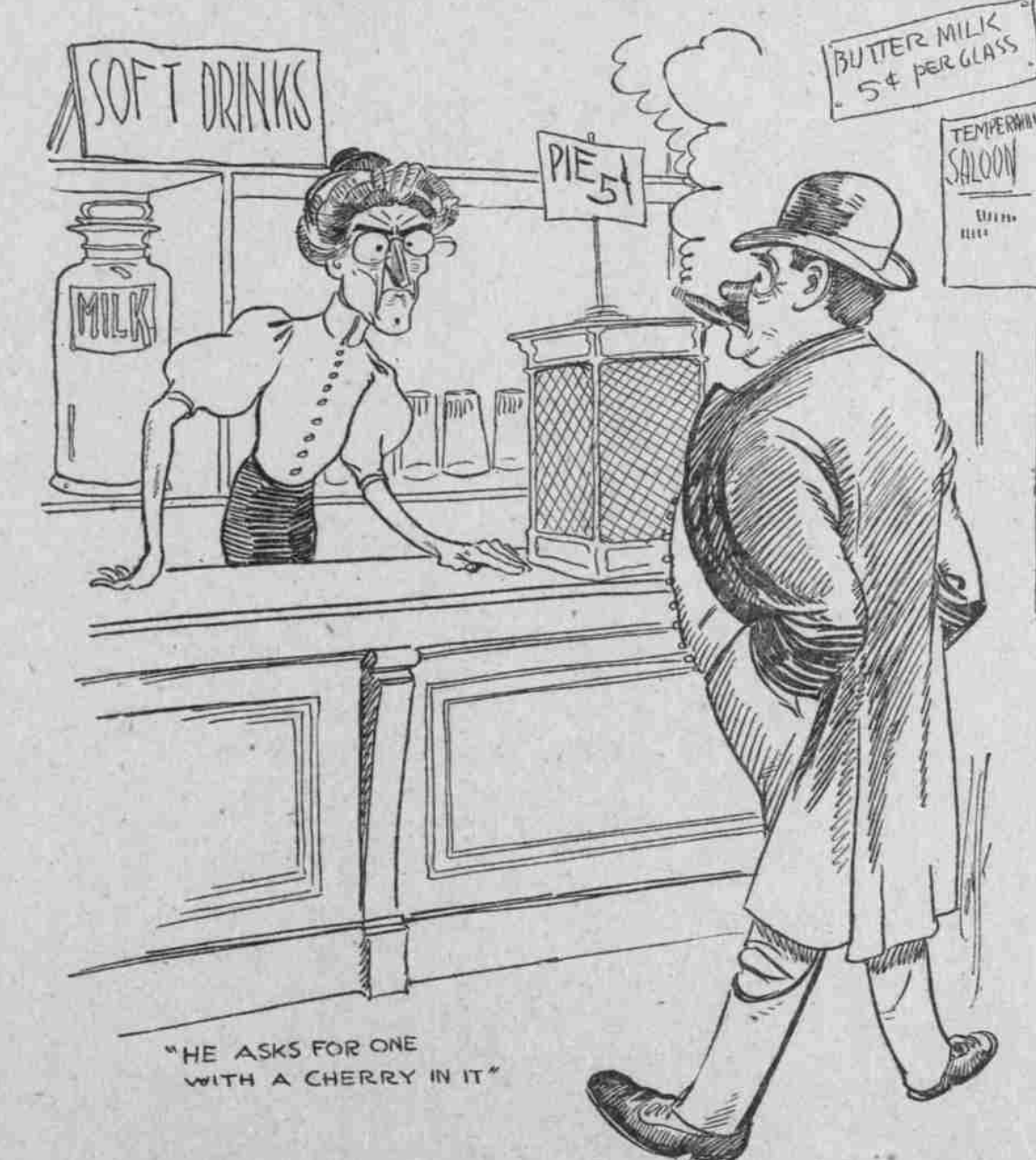
"I do," said the visitor from the North, mistaking his lips.

"Well, said the kind-faced cop, 'that's the only public place in this town that I know of where you can get a drink. It's the sacred name of Southern hospitality I did you welcome to our city.'"

The exception of a few openly moist spots, called oases, in Kentucky and Louisiana, still I wouldn't go so far as to say that all hope is dead. I don't believe there'll be any real danger of the parched waterfearer dying of thirst in said Dixie this Spring. Take it from me, Southern hospitality will positively refuse to be buried back of the hen-house, with simple informal rites, at the hands of sumptuary legislation that fails to sumpt, or any other beast whatsoever. It may be necessary in some localities for your host to take you into the umbrella closet under the hall stairs and turn out the light before he extends to you the compliments of the season but he'll be there with the said compliments if he has to keep 'em in a fire extinguisher. Already they tell me of a delightful temperance mixture called Rebel Yell, that you can find at the soda fountains of any dry town down there that's guaranteed to cause the most hardened nature to lean up against something and begin quoting Sidney Lanier's poems after the third treatment, or your money cheerfully refunded. Take four of them and you sing 'Bonnie Blue Flag' by the hour.

"Here's the way the thing works, Larry. The Prohibition forces organize under the leadership of a few ladies and gentlemen who know all about the curse of drink because they never drank anything themselves. It stands to reason that a horse doctor would know better how to treat a horse if he'd had the same diseases that the horse has but with a Prohibitionist it's different. For his purposes hearsay evidence is amply sufficient, providing it's good and vivid, and backed up with a few illuminated charts from a Boston publishing house showing green snakes with forked tongues wrapped around black bottles, and drunkards' stomachs in four colors. So he organizes a large number of noteworthy old ladies and a lot of children under 12 years of age, all of whom pledge themselves never again to indulge in excess in intoxicants, and then they begin to hold public meetings and have parades and vote to wipe out rum."

"There's another thing I've noticed about the Prohibitionist, Larry, that he always calls it by the short, harsh name of just rum. The chap who's been there refers to his favorite family remedy for what ails him by some affectionate pet name, or else he knows the common trade names such as even the most ignoble barkeep can understand. But the earnest Temperance advocate with the infuriated Adam's apple and the shell-like ears, who never drank anything stronger than coffee with the waiter's thumb in it, always speaks of it as rum with the hard round of the 'U' as in 'bum'; and that same goes for everything from dear old Stewarna, only 40 per cent alcohol and much beloved in dry communities, on up to lemonade with a refined pink spike of sherry in it, and thence right straight along the brass



"HE ASKS FOR ONE WITH A CHERRY IN IT"

rail to that delicious brew which a Po-lack coal miner makes out of molasses and crude oil and wood alcohol, with a pair of old gum boots stirred in to give the desired bouquet, and drinks it, and then goes home and beats his wife. Well, anyway, they start in to much champagne wine at the annual

banquet of the State Bankers' convention and how he sang 'The Holy City' to an entirely new air while going home in the cab and how his lady wife gave him the sad eyes of silent reproach the next morning at breakfast. But as I say he feels the need of a slight libation and he drops into

a place on the corner, with swinging doors and asks for one with a cherry in it.

A young woman wearing a pair of glasses draped across a severe expression of countenance rises from behind the place where the bar used to be and says, 'How would you like to have a nice slice of squash pie and a glass of buttermilk?'

"Not for mine," says Mr. Ladyfinger, with sudden resolution. "I can drink buttermilk or I can leave it alone, especially the last named. Haven't you anything else of a liquid nature?"

"Only ink," she says, "ink and Hoyt's German cologne. We've put in school supplies and toilet goods as a side line," says she.

"So Mr. Ladyfinger goes outside and speaks the name of William Tell's younger brother over and over again several times. 'Wat Tell,' Bill says, 'Wat Tell, where do I seem to get off if at all? If I'd known local option was going to be like this I wouldn't have voted for it. What right,' says Mr. Ladyfinger to himself, 'have I of old ladies of both sexes to post guard on my face and dictate to me what sort of upholstery I use for my own interior decorating? I'll show 'em,' says Mr. Ladyfinger. So he inquires of the nearest Deputy Sheriff the quickest route to the closest blind tiger, and he hastens to the edifice sacred to follies thus afflicted and gives the required cabalistic signal—three knocks on the door and one on the prohibitions—and pushes four bits through a crack, and at that a mysterious hand extends to him a flat flask of the genuine old warranted Spinal Meningitis. He takes one swallow of it and has all the sensations of a lighted library lamp with a fluted green art shade, and he takes two swallows and falls down in his tracks with the smoke curling out of his ears and feet in his own lap. Why does he do it? Because they told him he shouldn't."

"We're all that way, Larry, from the cradle to the grave. Why does the young child scale the pantry shelf and gorge himself on match-heads and a bottle of shoe polish? Because he loves matches and liquid blacking?" says Mr. Ladyfinger. So he inquires of his mother warned him to stay out of that closet. Why, when you were a small boy, did you run the risk of being scalded with a fond of salt out of a shotgun, and having some honest Fowler make a dental impression of your boyish face in the fleshiest part of your boyish person, in order to hook a stomach full of green peaches? You didn't care for the green peaches naturally. They tasted like the wrath to come, and frequently were. But you took chances on cholera morbus and cramps that doubled you up like a pretzel, and you dared the sturdy farmer's rage, and the chief reason for it was a sign on the orchard fence that said, 'Trespassing Forbidden.'"

"I knew a man once that loved health foods and the likes of that—honest, he did. Personally I never

could understand why a man who could possibly get a few measures of buckwheat cakes and country sausage would want to eat that fine-cut chewing and smoking breakfast food unless it was because it saved him the trouble of brushing his teeth with a regular tooth-brush of a morning. But this chap I'm telling you about actually seemed to like it for its own sake.

"But one day along came a doctor and looked him over and told him that he regretted to report his stomach had fouled on him and his digestion had acquired an impaired disposition and that all the rest of his life he'd have to cut out the heavy ballast and stoke his machinery with light inflammable stuff such as the shredded doll stuffing and the peptonized packing around the Malaga grapes. Well, that was what he'd been living on all the time but did he keep right on with it when the doctor told him to? He did not. He embarked on a riotous, a la carte life that caused him to fall for the latest Bavarian cheese. You know the kind that should be treated with drainage tubes and absorbent gauze before serving, and for the insidious slipper, which in a not mince pie lying in wait for its prey, beneath a weasel rarebit, and things like that. The last time I saw the poor doomed wretch he was sitting down in front of a roll-top, which Larry is a deadly imitation of our first revolutionary pine tree flag, consisting of a dill pickle with a Bismarck herring curled around the base of it, ready to strike, the motto in each case being 'Do Not Tread On Me,' or words to that effect. He was merely proving to the doctor that nobody could dictate to him and get away with it."

"And so it goes, Larry, when you clamp on a Prohibition law. As long as the rum hole is there with a sign over the door and the doors swing inward at the slightest touch, you may not visit it once a month, but just let the state Legislature try to shut off the flow and you find yourself becoming a consistent friend and patron of some chaotic dump in a back alley, that's run on the light housekeeping plan—never wash the glasses and keep the stock of goods all in the same barrel."

good time because the company will be mixed and so will you, but you're showing your independence, or you think you are. No, sir, Larry, Prohibition will never be a complete success until they learn how to prohibit one very strong falling fellow most of us seem to suffer from."

"What's the fallin'?" asked the House Detective.

"Human nature," said the Hotel Clerk.

An Old Man's Comfort.

Exchange.

An old man has one comfort; he is old enough to know there is no fun in a "party," and refuses to go.