WORK OF THE PORTLAND COMMONS

The Louise Home of the Olive Branch Mission and What It Is Doing for Poor Persons

By Katharine White.

DO you go down on Burnside or Ankeny streets? Not often? No, probably not. But when you do happen to have business down that way, and you see men standing around the billboards outside the employment offices; when you see the unemployed gathered in knots or standing idly gazing into vacancy, what do you think? Do you reproach them that they have not work to do in a world so full of labors? Do you wonder why they wear shabby clothes and ragged boots? Do you, if obliged to elbow your way through the crowd, force your way without a glance at the faces, without a thought of the personalities within the rough garments?

There is at work quietly among these very people an agency which has for its germ thought something quite different from this apathy and intolerance with which most of us regard the men who are out of work and who are seeking the cheapest meal and the least expensive lodging-house in the city. The Portland Commons is its name. It occupies a good-sized building at the corner of Front and Burnside, in the very midst of the section of the city which sees men hungry, men out of work, men hopeless and discouraged because the world has turned a cold shoulder.

We have agreed that the lodging-houses of the cheapest class in our fair city are such as decent, self-respecting animals would shun; We have agreed that "the problem of the unemployed" is a large one, and many of us have gone to the trouble of formulating nice little theories concerning the way to solve it. We have perhaps recommended that the unemployed be sent out into the country, regardles of the fact that men cannot eat hay and that lodgings cost money.

But the Portland Commons has another way of going about these problems than that of theorizing. It goes down to these men, takes them by the hand, speaks words of kindness. It gives the penniless man a clean bed, a bath, some warm soup, bread and coffee, and then finds him a job. Not a job in Canada, nor New South Wales, nor Kamchatka, but right here in Portland. And then the Commons stands by him, brings him the gospel message, tries to lift him out of sin and sorrow and poverty, provides him cheap lodging if he wants to stay in the town and cannot afford the prices of up-town hotels. And when this is done it asks him to find others needing help and to tell them about it.

Within the Portland Commons are the cleanest and most sanitary of bedrooms, where for 10 or 15 cents a man can have a neat bed with clean sheets, comfort and ventilation. There is not a dark room nor an unventilated room in the building. There are bathrooms, with hot and cold water, without charge. There is a reading room, where men may find occupation otherwhere than in saloons. There is a morning gospel preaching at the Olive Branch mission for those who wish to attend. And there is the clasp of friendliness.

Downstairs is the restaurant, where a man can get a good, wholesome, sustaining meal for 10 cents. For 15 cents —the highest price he can pay here—he can have extra luxuries, such as pork chops or steak. And the only thing the restaurants needs now is a "godly, consecrated cook." It is the word of the superintendent of the Commons, W. G. McLaren, whose heart is in this mission to the lowly and poor, and who serves God with a whole-hearted consecration that is wonderful to see in a cynical, careless world.

If you will take time to talk a few minutes with Mr. McLaren he will tell you of instances in which the Portland Commons, in its four months of existence, has been both friend and guide to unfortunate men—and women, but we are coming to them presently.

Just now it is this kindly little keen-eyed Scotchman, whose enthusiasm for helping deserving men overflows his speech, with the unmistakable burr of his native tongue, whose mission to friendless men is to be considered.

This is the sort of men whom the Portland Commons has befriended: A young Englishman was found asleep in the Plaza. He had but 15 cents, and an officer took him to jail, and here he remained two days. Finally his case came to trial. There was nothing against him except that he had no money and no home. The man who was then on the judge's bench is a man who has been scored for his leniency with these offenders. At any rate, when he heard the boys' story—for he is little more—he found no reason why the city of Portland should call him a criminal, and discharged him. Mr. McLaren was there. He followed the boy from the courtroom and nivited him to the Commons until he could do better. Upon examination it was found that the young man had letters of recommendation in his pockets, showing that he has taken special lectures at King's college, London, and of a prominent technical college in England, and that he is recommended as a careful and diligent student and well informed on the subject of sanitary inspection. Thinking he could better his condition, he went to Canada, and, failing to find the work he wanted, tried San Francisco. From there he drifted to Portland, and when the officer found him he had 15 cents left, and, strangely enough, preferred to keep that for a meal the next day rather than to spend it for a night's lodging in the filthy dens where such accommodations await the unwary traveler. Today the young man, who speaks well and has a straightforward way that inspires confidence, is holding a good position and making an honest livelihood. The Portland Commons has lost nothing by its kindness extended when it was most needed. Two men have found the help they needed here, in ridding themselves of a drug habit—for it is an awful thing to fight alone. It needs the friendly word of encouragement, the belief in one's powers, to grapple and throw that demon.

In six months, Mr. McLaren says, the Portland Commons will be on a paying basis. Just now bills are pressing for the fitting up of this and the girls' home on Cable street. And when I could not see how it could be self-supporting at the rate he charges, he pointed me to the fact that he can house comfortably, cleanly and in a sanitary manner 100 men a night.

There are about 15 free beds called for now. In the middle of the winter more will be needed—and these will be provided. But those who occupy the 10 and 15 cent beds pay for them promptly. A small working force is needed, and the salaries paid are small. Hence the need for the "consecrated cook," and also chambermen and day workers.

The restaurant will pay for itself, and it is not expected to do more. A man can get a comfortable meal for 10 cents—which it costs. And when the demand comes in, the long dreary, wet days, for free meals, those will be provided. No man will go away from the Portland Commons hungry. Soup and bread, or bread and coffee can be had at all hours and by any one who wants it. Isn't that worth while?

Another thought has this friend of the poor; when men come in from working in the rain—or looking for work, which is much harder—there will be a place provided in the basement where he can change and wash and dry his clothes, before he has to put them on again and go out for another day.

And now will come the cry that all this is encouraging pauperism—that it will bring thousands of men into town to be a tax upon these well-intentioned citizens.

But those who are doing this think differently. A man will be given two night's lodging free, and if he shows a disposition to work he will be given work to do. If he fails to do it, he will be listed and told to move on. No one can impose for long on the hospitality of the Commons. But it is possible to do this work for those who so sadly need help, and to do it systematically and economically. And even if one or two are found unworthy it will not shake the faith of these earnest workers. One of the great needs in Portland has been a home where unfortunate girls could be taken care of. The Florence Crittenton home has had all it could do to take care of those needing medical assistance and care; the Salvation Army Rescue home has also been engaged in the work, but these have not been sufficient. There are some boarding-houses where a working girl can lodge cheaply and comfortably, but they are few, and there is constant call for more of this sort. So when the Portland Commons took up the question of housing and helping the girls and women who so sorely need help, it was decided to open a home where they could be cared for. The Louise Home is the solution of this problem. It occupies a three-story building on a terrace facing on Cable street, one block from Chapman. Here are the neatest and most sanitary bedrooms, a homelike reading-room, wide porches, bath, kitchen and laundry. A girl who comes here may pay for her room if she has the money—and if she has not, she will be extended help and work found for her. If she is not able to work and needs a friend she will find the sympathy and kindness that sometimes poor heart-sick, weary girls who have gone the wrong way think is not to be found in the whole world. As long as that tender old poem of Hood's rings in the ears of humanity—and when will it not, since this tragedy is always with us—we shall have to think of

"One more unfortunate, weary of breath,
Rashly importunate, gone to her death.
Oh, it was pitiful, near a whole city full,
Home she had none."

The old, old tragedy of broken lives, hearts bowed in shame, the world's accursing scorn, and the despairing end. But it is to help these when they most need help that the Louise Home is founded. Its doors are open to all unfortunate or needy girls—not necessarily bad girls—but all who need a lift; who need a home in this whole city full to which they can come at night after the day's work; in which they can find warmth, ligths, conversation, and home comforts; where they can do their own laundry work, and live cheaply yet cleanly. All of this the Louise Home offers.

But recently a man who was moved by the splendid work that is being done by this branch gave $1,000 toward its support. The home has been partly furnished. It needs more furniture, new bedding, and such things as will make it more attractive to young people.

These two homes, the one for women and the other for men, are supported by the Olive Branch Mission. This mission is kept alive by consecrated men and women who are giving their whole energies to this kind of work; who hold meetings weekly in the city jail and in the county poor farm, and who are constantly in touch with the work of the slums, presenting the better way to world-weary men and women, rescuing girls from lives of shame, preaching the Christ to an indifferent and intolerant world—and being richly blessed with results.

This is what some of the people we all know say of the mission and its work:

"I fully approve of the work done in the past by this mission and hope they will continue in the good work. They have been of great assistance to unfortunate people in securing for them employment, and afterward in looking after their interests.
(Signed) "GEORGE J. CAMERON,
"Municipal Judge."

"I herewith cheerfully concur in the above expressions and indorsements.
(Signed) "C. GRITZMACHER,
"Chief of Police."

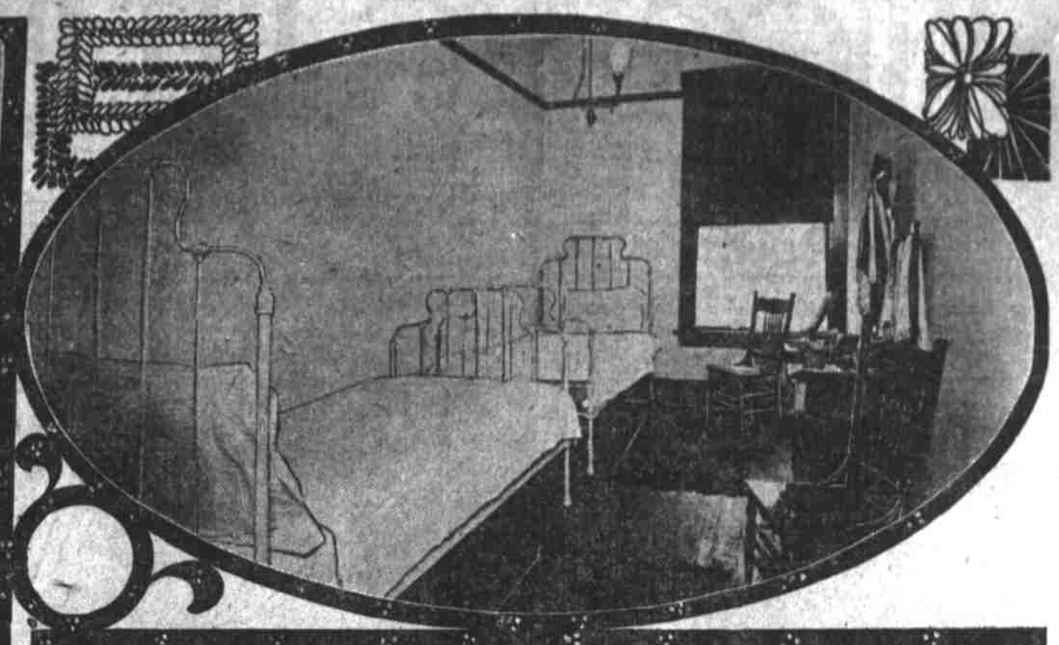
"I fully indorse the work being done by the Olive Branch Mission and feel sure that the Portland Commons will be a boon to the city in many ways.
(Signed) CAPTAIN E. A. SLOVER."

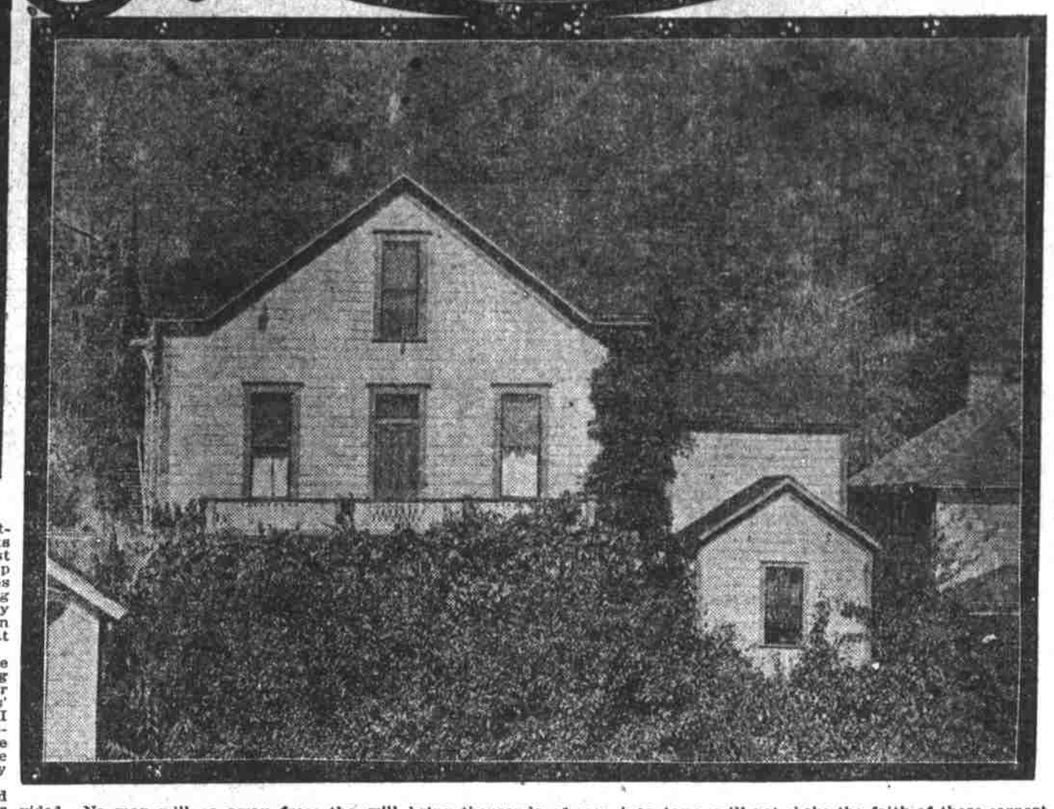
The investigation is open to all citizens to visit the Portland Commons and see for themselves the kind of work that is done. It is the only way in which such things come home to one. And then another word as to the way in which we can all be of use. We want a man to put in the wood—to wash the windows; a janitor for the office; a clerk—if bustiness men would but remember to send their application for these things to Mr. McLaren, phone Main 1665, the help will be furnished promptly and good judgment used in selecting the man who is to do it. If the pastors of the various churches would but visit the Commons and then pass the word along to their various congregations, the opportunities for finding work for men who need it, will be greatly enlarged. The Commons is non-sectarian and all may have an equal share in its hospitality.

Then shall they also answer him saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?"

Then shall he answer them saying, "Verily I say ur.to you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these ye did it not to me."

THE MISSION, ITS RESTAURANT AND A LIVING ROOM





DOYEN'S STORY

By George Gilbert.

"A LITTLE learning is a dangerous thing;
"Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

Thus quoted Burphy, doyen of the repeater corps. The great main room of the New York Western Union office had stilled down as much as it ever does; the last of the beef ciphers were relayed; the cable loop had sent out "30" to Newspaper Row, and all of the local and city wires were silent. In the corner near the south windows the Associated Press repeaters banged and rattled away still, with a sound like the drumming of hail on a tin roof, for down in Washington an ecclesiastical drumhead courtmartial was holding an all-night session upon a higher critic who had dared to hint that the teachings of shorter catechism were as foolishness compared with those of Darwin. I had been listening to the rhythmic swing of the coded Morse fleeting westward, while I watched the veteran nurse his set, admiring the skill with which he corrected the many variations in current caused by a violent thunder storm then sweeping over the Jersey meadows. Knowing that his remark would serve as a text for a story, I waited, while his hand went from helix screw to armature spring, and from armature spring to local adjustment. The heads of the great corporation value that hand sufficiently to move them to keep its owner upon what is virtually a pension, that they may be able to lay claim to its service to coax a president's message out of the Jersey fox, or the beef ciphers from the clutches of the aurora.

"I have no manner of use for the Presbyterian shorter catechism," he began in his pleasant brogue, the niceties of which mere ink and paper can never reproduce, "but I will say that when it is nailed into folks when they are young it sticks. Prentiss might have known this, being of an old Presbyterian family, but then he never did care to know anything except how to have his own way.

"He was depot laborer and freight-handler for the Northwestern Pennsylvania road when I went to Freeboro as operator and station agent just after the big iron discoveries there in the late 70s; a big, hulking sort of a fellow, with the soul of him all shriveled up with the hell fire of evolution that fellow Darwin"—jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the general direction of Europe—"stirred up. He had a turn for reading and investigating odd things and attended a lecture on 'The Ascent of Man,' or something like that, about a week after the Presbyterians of Freeboro turned him down when he wanted the place of deacon. Being in a rage against his church at the time, and moreover, having a mind incapable of holding more than one good, big idea at a time, he gave himself over entirely to the adversary of souls, may he never rest in peace. His change of heart killed his wife, who left him a daughter, Kitty, who was about 12 years old when the mother died. Before the mother went she succeeded in setting the girl's faith on a firm foundation, and the father never made it loosen a peg with all his blasphemies, nor, to tell the truth, did he try very hard, for he loved the girl as much as he hated the church. He could yank boxes and barrels about with one hand, but that hand was always light and tender when it patted Kitty on the head when she brought his dinner to him at noontime. She had been keeping house for the old codger about seven years when I came to Freeboro, and was a fine girl—a fine girl she was. But no matter; a baldheaded old sinner like me mustn't be thinking of the likes of her—she married a better man long ago."

His voice died away and I heard him breathe a bit harder than usual. Looking up, I saw him furtively brush the back of his hand over his eyes. "I have been watching the points on the west relay a bit too close, boy," he said. "Do you mind how they spark? I guess the glimmer hurt my old eyes a bit. Well, as I was saying, Kitty was a fine girl, and it didn't take Jack Malcolm long to find it out after he came down from Pittsburg to take charge of the books at the iron mines, which were back from the station about half a mile, and connection with the railroad by a single-tracked switch. Jack was a bright fellow, who had picked up a bit of telegraphy, but found bookkeeping a better way of making a living, and so never put in enough practice at the key to become first-class. As a great deal of the telegraph business of Freeboro came from the mines, the company ran a wire up the switch and Malcolm worked the far end of it very well after getting his hand in a bit.

"Of course, when he first came to town he spent the greater part of his spare time at the depot and so became acquainted with Kitty Prentiss. Now her father did not object to this at first, and often came in and sat about the office evenings while I was teaching Jack how to pound brass, even going so far at times as to ask me questions about the switchboard and how to cut the instruments in. I showed him which plugs to pull when he came in mornings and so he got a sort of hazy notion of the run of things and thought he knew about twice as much as he really did. After that he always considered it a great thing to have the wires all clicking away when I came to work in the morning. He and Jack were great friends at first, and the boy might have made his way into matrimony pretty easily, if he had not become mixed up in the big Presbyterian revival that swept over western Pennsylvania that year. But after he joined the church, Prentiss turned sour on him and then the young couple's love making began to go hard. But young folks have ways of their own, and one day when Kitty brought her father's dinner, Malcolm came into the depot with her and told the old fellow that he loved the girl and that they wanted to be married. I was in the office at the time and the three of them had the part of the depot used as a freight-room all to themselves. Just what words were passed, no one but Kitty knew, but at last Jack came out his face as white as chalk, but alone. About half an hour later Kitty came out also with her head in the air, walking as stiff as a major, for she had lots of her father's spunk in her. Lastly, out came Prentiss, trundling a barrel of cement on his truck, and never a word did he say, only nursed his wrath and spite close into his withered heart.

"The next day was Saturday, and a close, sultry day it was, such as only the Blue Ridge country can produce in midsummer. There was a shower early, just enough rain falling to make the air more heavy and muggy still. After the shower passed the great, black masses of clouds piled up all around the edges of the hills that wall Freeboro in, and these were lit up every few moments by flashes of lightning, each electrical discharge out on the skyline being followed by a crackling on the switchboard in the stuffy little depot office, which seemed at times fairly ablaze with the blue flames. We had no safety devices to care for the lightning in those days and a severe thunder storm nearly always damaged either the instruments or switchboard.

"During the morning a load of beams intended for the mines was shunted off upon the switch, which left the main line a little west of the depot. The single track to the mines crossed a creek on a trestle about half way over the meadows, and one of the beams jostled off the load while on the bridge, snapping the telegraph line as it fell, the wire being strung along the trestle on arms which extended outward from the ties. One of the trainmen, noticing the accident, told Malcolm of it, and as Saturday was a half holiday for those in the office, he got excused a bit early and started to repair the break, turning up at the station about 11:30. He saw me in the office and hailed me from the platform through the open window, asking me to disconnect the mine wire, as he was afraid to work on it while the lightning was coming in over the main line so sharply. After doing so, I lent him the office repair kit and a piece of wire to splice the break with, and he started off up the switch toward the trestle.

"After Jack left the depot, having nothing to do for the moment, I hunted up my dinner basket, and taking a seat in the main room near the benches, ate my midday repast. After this, feeling rather comfortable and easy, as one always does after an agreeable meal, I tilted my chair back against the wall and read a bit from a paper that I found lying on one of the benches. There was an article in it about a proposition to kill all criminals by electricity, and I grew pretty well interested in it, but finally my eyes began to get heavy. From where I sat I could see through the doorway of the depot office and out through the windows beyond, where the long ribbons of steel that led to the mines stretched over the meadows to the hills. As I looked, they seemed to twist and coil like great snakes as the heat shimmered up, and a vague sense of uneasiness crept over me. How long this state lasted, I do not know, but I finally seemed to lose all control over my muscles and to be in a sort of a trance.

"I suppose I fell asleep and began to dream, or something like that. Anyway I could hear Prentiss going about his work as usual as he made ready for the coming of the 1 o'clock milk train. After the clang of the cans ceased, I heard him wheel his truck against the front of the station. Then he opened the door and came in softly. I could see him plain enough, but it was not the same Prentiss somehow, or at least, the face was not the same—it looked like a devil's. He came over to where I was, looked me over narrowly and then turning quietly about, went toward the office door, which stood open. Through this he passed and closed it after him, but I seemed to be able to see through it and the windows beyond still. Prentiss went right up to the switchboard, which was near the west window and taking down from behind it a diagram of the wires I had made for Jack, began to study it. After looking it over a bit, he first took every piling out of the board and then slowly and deliberately placed them in the line of holes directly opposite the binding post that held the mine wire, thus placing the entire main line in connection with it, and converting it into a veritable magnet which would attract every bolt of lightning that hit the line for miles on either side of us.

"I thought of the danger to Jack, at work out on the trestle, in plain view, as it seemed, and of the possibility of a wreck on the road, caused by the inability of the dispatcher to send train orders over the hopelessly mixed wires, but even then I found myself half humorously trying to interpret the confused rattle of the instruments as they tried to respond to the jumbled impulses they received from the crossed wires. But a full sense of the horror of the situation soon began to dawn upon me as I watched Prentiss standing there, with his evil face lit up now and again by the fierce blue flickers that swept over the board. My vision seemed to reach its climax as after a last look at the diagram, he picked up the very plug I had taken from the board to disconnect the mine wire, and viciously jabbed it into its proper position, thus making the connection doubly sure. With a full sense of the terrible situation upon me, I tried to move, or cry out, but in vain. I saw the old man with his finger still gripping the plug, lean his left hand on the desk, saw him gaze from under scowling brows through the windows that gave a view of the trestle; noticed that his thumb touched the key of the Pittsburg wire; saw the reflection of a lightning flash on the western windows, and then Printiss reeled back, dragging the plug from its place. The floor of the depot seemed to open and he fell through and I slid after him and we began to fall, fall, fall, as though over a precipice. We struck with a crash, I on top. When I came to myself I was lying on the floor, the overturned chair on which I had been sitting on one side of me and my empty dinner basket on the other. Outside the thunder growled and the lightning glimmered. The door of the office was shut and all was quiet within. Laughing to myself as I recollected my odd dream, I started toward the door, but paused as I heard a smothered groan come from inside. Hastily stepping forward, I threw open the door and was horrified to find Prentiss stretched on the floor holding his hands to his eyes. Bending over, I asked him what the trouble was, but received no reply, as he was unconscious. The doctor brought him around all right, but he never saw again—there was a burn on the ball of his left thumb, and a white, fused streak across the bridge of his nose. He said afterward that he went into the office to see me, and that he was near the switchboard when a big flash came in."

The rattle of the repeater rose into a staccato crescendo, marking the end of the long item Washington was pounding away to finish: "In consideration of the evidence presented, your committee of investigation finds Dr. Miggs guilty as charged," it said, and then came the joyful "30." Burphy threw the switches that placed the instruments out of circuit and murmured softly: "So they put him out; serves him right for going back on his church."

"Well," I asked, "did Malcolm marry the girl?"

"He did that," he replied decisively "and I was best man and kissed the bride. And they lived happily ever thereafter and boarded the old blind villain to the day of his death, free of charge."

"Don't you consider that a hard name to call him, considering his misfortune?"

"Well, I don't know. You see, I found the plugs on the switch board just as I saw them in my dream, or whatever it was, and Prentiss had the one that was used to connect the mine wire clenched in his hand when I reached him."

"Did you tell any one about your dream?"

"Not I. I knew the minute I saw him that he was past doing farther harm, and that he would have to depend either upon the young people or charity for a living after that; so I held my peace."

The THREE CUBES

By Simon T. Stern.

"A MOST extraordinary will," said Lawyer Van Tine. "In fact, I have no hesitation in pronouncing it the most remarkable instrument I have ever perused; quite typical of Richard Wingate. I am anxious to learn how his three brothers will take it. After all it is really more than they have a right to expect. None of them has spoken to him during the last 20 years. What's more they have not spoken to each other during the same time. Happy family! Jarvis," this to his clerk, bell-summoned, "I expect three gentlemen at 3 o'clock. As soon as they arrive usher them into my private office."

At five minutes before three Mr. John Wingate entered the sanctum. He was tall and spare and prosperously rural in general aspect. He wore a derby hat several sizes too large for him, and a coat that covered him completely. Two minutes later he was followed by his brother Joseph, who took a chair beside him without offering or receiving recognition. They resembled each other strongly. Joseph was also of the type agricultural and was, perhaps, a year or two younger than the other. Then the clock struck three and on the instant the third brother, Henry, came into the room; small, dapper and nervous. He was clad in the very latest metropolitan fashion and presented a strange contrast to the other two. They sat next each other, almost touching elbows, but for all that they spoke to each other they might have been utter strangers.

Presently Lawyer Van Tine entered and took his place at a large oak table which stood in the center of the room.

"I am about to read to you, gentlemen," he said in a matter-of-fact tone, "the last will and testament of your deceased brother, Richard Wingate. To say the least, it is a most remarkable affair. I am of course well aware that his last years were passed as a complete stranger to all of you; I am also acquainted with the fact that you have passed the last two decades of your lives as complete strangers to each other. Under the circumstances he has dealt nobly with you; he has left you everything. There are conditions attached which you will learn presently. You may not be aware of the fact that for the past 10 years your brother has lived the life of a recluse. During that time he attained great fame as a metal worker. He executed orders for several of our banks and trust companies but suffered no personal associations or friendships. He had a workshop in one of the suburbs of the city, and there he worked as he lived—alone. Among other things he invented a metal so hard that he was offered $100,000 to part with the secret of its composition. This he refused to do; as far as we know his secret died with him. As far as we know he left no tangible property of any kind. On going through his house after the funeral we came upon a large vault which filled the cellar almost completely. Standing outside the vault were three cubes—three cubes constructed of the metal which made him famous. The vault was of similar composition. So far it has successfully resisted all efforts at opening it. Three experts who were called to our assistance, before we found the will, gave up after a week and pronounced the vault the toughest venture they had ever encountered. The front wall is perfectly bare save near the center, where it carries a curiously shaped trefoil keyhole. As your late brother was considered very wealthy it is of utmost importance that we get at the contents of the vault. That rests with you, as you will see when I have read the will."

Then followed the reading of the will intently and in silence. It recited that the deceased left all he had in the world licked up in the vault. He had converted it into gold—as gold was the one chattel of stable significance. He had been unable to choose a beneficiary from among his three brothers and so had provided a postmortal method of selection. The one way to open the vault was by means of three keys. Three keys ran the will, would be found outside the vault. To each of his brothers he bequeathed one of the cubes; to each, a diamond drill, also his invention. The first one of them to bore through the cube to its center and to extract the key could open the vault and become possessed of its contents absolutely and forever. No outside assistance was to be employed; if any of the brothers was caught by either of the remaining two in the act of employing an assistant, the guilty one would forthwith forfeit all right to share in the estate.

The work must be done at the vault; for the cubes were irremovably welded to the iron floor on which the vault rested.

"I'll break that will," cried Henry, as soon as the reading was finished, "it is the work of a mind demented."

"That would be foolish," said Lawyer Van Tine blandly, "breaking the will will not break the vault. After all, your interests demand that the vault be opened. There is no legal mandate, even in these days of comprehensive injunctions, which will open that vault. The very best thing you can do, gentlemen, is to take your drills and set to work. Here is one for each of you. Considering the fact that your relations with your deceased brother were—were unfriendly to say the least, I think he has been extremely generous with all of you. You may have access to the vault at all hours of of the day and night. The lease has some five months to run and the rent has been paid. The rest is with you. That is all."

They journeyed up-town in the same elevated train but in different cars. They reached the house within a minute or two of each other. At the foot of the cellar steps they found the vault and the cubes. Without a word they removed their coats and set to work. They bored, and bored, and bored, finding much sad truth in the assertion of Lawyer Van Tine anent the impenetrability of the metal they were trying to pierce. The next day they came; and the next. At the end of two weeks they found themselves about half an inch further than when they started. From the first and without explanation they adopted a system by which two of them were always to be found at the vault. Such was the measure of their fraternal trustingness.

One night while Henry was at work his drill broke. He looked up in trepidation to discover whether Joseph, who was working at his side, had noted the mishap. Apparently Joseph was oblivious of all save the task before him. So Henry sat there idle until John's arrival in the early morning relieved him. Then he left; going at once to a celebrated diamond setter to replace his drill.

"No use," said the mechanic after he had examined the broken drill. "I cannot replace it. This is one of the drills made by Richard Wingate, an eccentric old chap, who died recently. You can search the world over without finding its mate. My firm offered him a snug fortune for his formulas. He refused to divulge. Where did you get it?"

"Oh, I picked it up in a junk pile," said Henry with assumed unconcern. "It seemed an interesting bit, and I was of the opinion such a tool might be of some use to me. It is really quite trivial. Good day," and he left the shop.

That night his fertile brain conceived a scheme to circumvent the mischance that had robbed him of all prospect of sharing in the estate. It was a desperate chance, but an only one. The next morning two penciled notes were handed to John and Joseph.

"To Whom It May Concern:" was what they read. "Why should we three quarrel? After all, we are blood kindred, and if our late brother was a fool there is no reason why we should endeavor to emulate his imbecility. The interest of each of us has become the interest of all. While I am of course unwilling to be the first to break silence and submit to possible rebuff, I am willing that we three should become friends. If you will speak to me I shall propose a plan which will conduce to the best interest of all of us."

Joseph took the note and tore it up; John did the same. But fortune favored Henry, for that night John's drill broke. And two days later Joseph's broke. Of course all three were now insufferably anxious to bring about a reconciliation. Each was equally determined not to exhibit such anxiety by making the first move.

The next day as they sat idling before their respective cubes John passed a note to Henry. "Sir," ran the note, "while not conceding that I am any more friendly disposed to you than I was, I am willing to do as you say. But I shall not speak first."

To this Henry replied: "That difficulty may be avoided. As the clock strikes 9 tomorrow morning let us ejaculate a simultaneous 'How do you do.'"

This they did. Joseph heard it and became thoroughly alarmed. In an instant he comprehended the danger which accompanied communication, and added his "How do you do" not more than 30 seconds after theirs.

"My plan is this," said Henry. "It has struck me as being the height of folly for us to bore three cubes when by joining hands we can accomplish the same result by boring one. Then, too, if it be satisfactory all around, we can employ outside help. Let us open the vault—as brothers; let us, as brothers, divide its contents into three equal shares. What say you?"

Drilless they agreed, and that day they employed an expert who demanded a cash retainer of $600 before "he tackled the job. I've been up against Richard Wingate's work before, and I know what it means. Where's your drill?"

"I forgot mine," said Henry.

"And I mine," added John and Joseph in rapid succession.

"But you must git 'em," suggested the expert. "There isn't another drill on earth that will touch them cubes."

"Let's blow them up with dynamite," said Henry.

"That will destroy the key," said John. "If you fellows must **really** know, my drill is broken."

"So is mine," said Joseph.

"Mine as well," said Henry.

At last at considerable expense conjointly they had the drills repaired and the expert set to work. At the end of a month the cube was opened. Inside they found the key—and a note.

"I suspect strongly," they read in the handwriting of their beloved testator, "that long before this cube has been opened my three brothers will have agreed upon a truce. The prognosticate that they will combine interests and proceed to open one of the cubes only. That is unfair. Knowing them as I do I have divided the key into three parts. The three parts when joined fit the trefoil keyhole. A duplicate of this note is to be found in each of the other cubes."

So the expert demanded a further fee and set to work on the remaining cubes. At the end of six anxious weeks the cubes were opened and the key complete.

Then with hearts thumping wildly the three brothers opened the vault. At the entrance they came upon a large chest. The vault was dark and they had no light.

"Go fetch a light," said Henry.

"Why should I?" said Joseph. "Suppose in my absence you two—"

"All right," said the practical John. "Let us go together."

Together they left the vault; together they got the light; together they returned and reentered. At last the chest was opened. At the top they found three golden dollars—that was all.

"This is all I have in the world," ran a slip of paper, which lay beside the money, "and if I reciprocated the affection which you bear me, it is just about $3 more than I ought to leave. But I am willing to give you compensation for your recent labors. Take them and be happy."

Then Joseph turned to John and John turned to Joseph. They said nothing; their emotions at that instant precluded utterance. But from that day they were friends. So that Richard's will left them richer after all.

And here endeth the story which was told to me by neither John, Joseph nor Henry. It was the expert who preached.

An electric railway is being built on the Zugspitze, the highest peak in the Alps, on Bavarian territory. Its height is about 10,000 feet. The railway will run to the summit, while a hotel will be built at the 7,000-foot level.