HOFSTETTERS WHO GO TO FIRES

THERE ARE THREE OF THEM, A FATHER AND TWO SONS.

They Respond to All Alarms for Big Fires and Find Thrills in Watching Battles With Flames—In Return They Supply Exhausted Firemen With Hot Coffee.

If you mention the name of Hofstetter at any of the engine houses in a certain large district of New York you will hear the remark that the Hofstetters are the real thing. Pursuing the investigation, you may learn that the Hofstetters are a trio, a father and two sons, who are known as fire cranks.

"Don't think that we are the only ones," said Edwin Hofstetter at his home in East Nineteenth street. "By no means. We are only a part of the crazy bunch.

"If you look along you will find Dr. Archer, who turns out with his bag of instruments and surgical appliances at every fire he can reach, and patches people up for the fun of the thing. Then there is Lieut.-Col. Thurston of the Twenty-second Regiment, who just goes and looks on; James Le Baron Johnson, who used to be the worst crank of all when he was chaplain at the Grace Church Settlement, and still runs to every fire now that he is with a big insurance company—oh, and a lot of others.

"We've been at it going on now about fifteen years, and it is not a hereditary trait, unless teaching your father tricks makes them hereditary. The old gentleman never took much stock in fires until we boys taught him, and now he trots out with the rest of the bunch.

"For the first few years we never missed a fire, but after a little while we got to be particular and nothing but a second or a third alarm would drag us out. We lost too much time and strength getting into our togs only to find after we reached the fire that it was over. That is the usual experience of people who start off as soon as they hear the call.

"Our initiation among the non-professional firemen was an easy enough matter. Right opposite our place of business is a large engine house, and, naturally attracted by the horses and the excitement of the place, we became acquainted with the men, and from watching them start off and occasionally running to a fire ourselves we have developed into what you see us to-day, men who start as the horses do when the alarm sounds. It is a fad, like golf or yachting or any other sport.

"I believe that the most hardened New Yorker gets a thrill when he sees an engine drawn through a crowded street by horses three abreast straining every muscle, the men throwing their fire clothes on and ready to face any danger without any more fear than a Jap displays when he goes into battle. I have heard people say that is the one thing that gives them a genuine thrill, a real up and down sensation, and I believe it.

"But when you talk about sensations, the mere sight of the trucks and engines isn't in it with the fire itself. There you get the spectacular effect, the danger, the hand to hand conflicts. Every big fire is a battle, just as terrible and just as inspiring, and the cause of just as much heroism as the better advertised ones that fill the papers."

The Hofstetters show their interest in firemen in a very practical way. Edwin Hofstetter spoke modestly about this.

"Oh, we've been supplying them with coffee and sometimes sandwiches for a long time now," he said in answer to a question. "It's very little to do, and it's a great pleasure. I don't know that it is any more expensive than any other fad.

"How do we manage it? Well, you see as soon as we get to a fire we know immediately whether it is going to be a hard fight or whether it will be over in a half hour. If the latter, we simply see it out, if the former, we hunt around until we find some restaurant in the vicinity and dicker with them for a supply of coffee to be given the men.

"You don't realize what a cup of hot coffee means to a man who has been fighting a fire in bitter weather until he is almost exhausted. I have seen many a one just ready to keel over who braced right up after his drink and went in with renewed courage.

"Coffee has another property besides its stimulating effect and its warmth. It is a good antidote for the fumes that a fireman is constantly inhaling. These fumes are most prevalent in cellar fires. It is not infrequent for half a dozen firemen to be brought into the air more or less unconscious after fighting a cellar fire a few minutes.

"In such cases our great remedy is seltzer and milk, if the case is too serious to be treated by the hot coffee method. No one is allowed to give a fireman whiskey or alcohol in any form. They generally revive quickly after our doses of seltzer and milk and go right back to the fire again. In fact, usually the first thing they say when they come to is, 'Let me go back.'"

Both of the Hofstetter brothers become enthusiastic when they speak of Chief Croker.

"He is more than a fire chief; he is in reality a great general," said Edwin Hofstetter.

"He comes to a fire and takes in its points as a man would study a battlefield, the forces of an enemy, his own chances of conflict or escape. There is nothing that escapes him, and he probably attends personally more fires than any chief has ever attended before him.

"It is an amusing thing to watch him. He is all nerves and all energy. He is here, there and the other place, and suddenly you see him take off his fireman's hat, put on a slouch hat and poke a huge black cigar between his lips, and then the initiated know that the fire is practically over and that they might just as well go home; the slouch hat and the cigar are infallible signs.

"There are certain professional secrets, as you might call them, about a fire that are known only to the elect. For instance, there are many places in New York that are on the black list. As soon as a fire breaks out in one of them you will hear a second and even a third alarm right off, for the firemen know that any kind of fire in one of those places means danger.

"We all have a special list of hotels and theatres which we consider unsafe, lists that we have made up, and when an alarm rings out, as soon as we have located the district, we say, 'I'll wager that it is such and such a place.' The Casino was on these secret lists of all our crazy bunch and if there ever was a prayer of thankfulness uttered it was that the fire broke out before the matinée.

"You would be surprised if you could know the names of some of the places we consider unsafe. It would be a revelation to a good many people. You may depend upon it, whenever the first alarm comes from any one of them a second and a third will follow in short order.

"Do I think men or women display more courage in fires? I don't think there is a bit of difference. Nine out of ten of them, men and women, simply lose their heads.

"You are always reading how a woman will forget her baby and bring down her parrot when a fire breaks out; but my father, in the days when Essex street was a residential part of the city, actually saw a man bring down a small stove in his arms. He was only half dressed and simply frightened to death. Just why he selected the stove I don't know; perhaps he thought the fire wanted heating a little.

"People do all sorts of foolish things. It must be a bewildering experience to wake up and find your room filled with smoke and realize how helpless you are. In such a case as that if a person would only think to throw himself on the floor and crawl on hands and knees to the window he could probably save his life always. The smoke rises and there is always a stratum of fresh air on the floor.

"You can then open a window and crawl out on the fire escape or on a window ledge, taking care if possible, to close the window after you and not to get frightened and jump until every bit of the building is ready to collapse. Time seems like eternity at such a moment, but it is rarely more than a few minutes before the ladders are ready, and if a person can control his nerves he is all right.

"Another thing to remember is to keep the door closed if the fire has not yet reached your room. A closed door will delay a fire a good while, but as soon as a draught is made, the fire leaps toward it.

"Some of the hand made fires on the East Side are funny affairs; the hand made fires are the ones where there is no doubt as to their origin. When one breaks out, particularly in the Italian quarter, the people begin to throw everything they possess out of the window, and for blocks in every direction there will be feather beds, children's cradles, flower pots, old clothes, dogs, cats; and when the fire is over there is a scramble on the part of owners to get back their possessions.

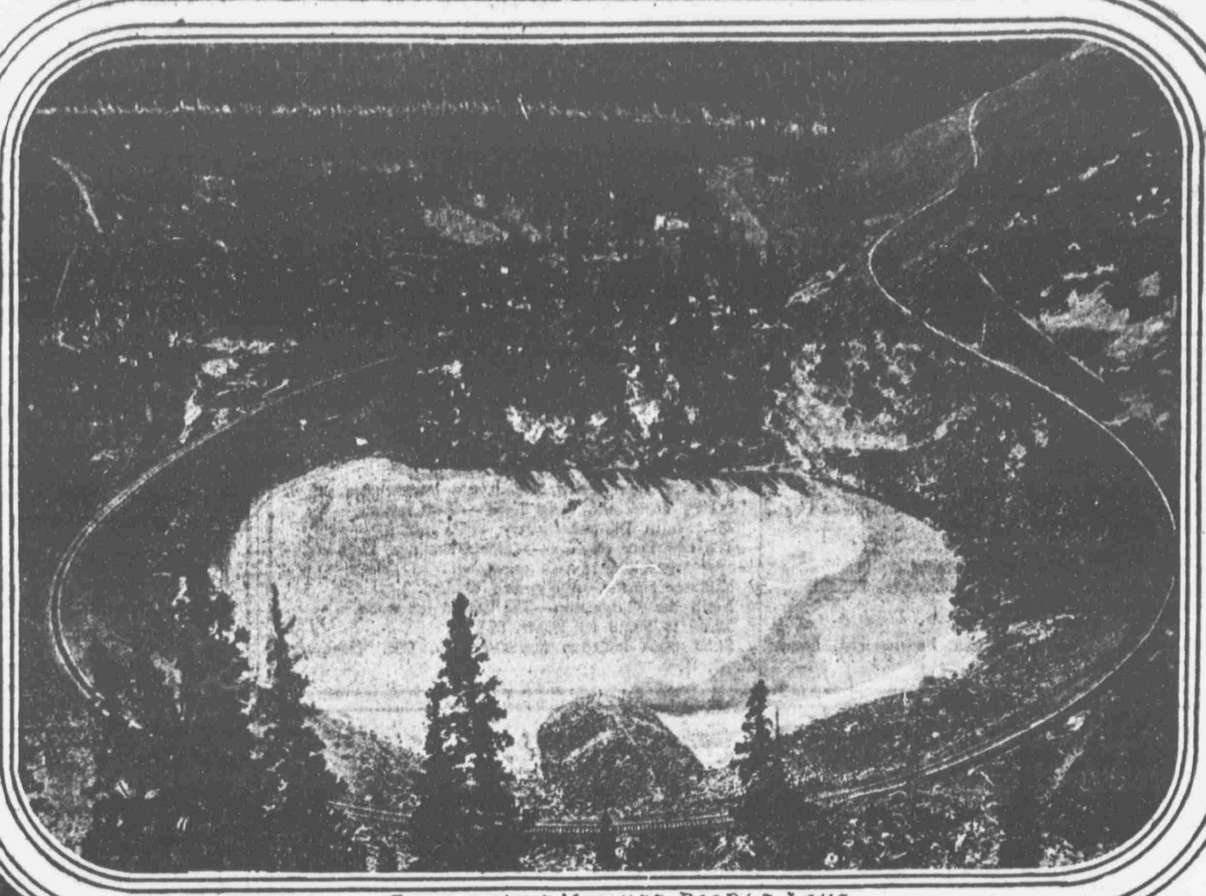
"It's a funny thing about the horses. Some of them never can be trained to go to a fire, and again a horse will be just as docile to instruction and quick about learning as you can imagine. It does not seem to depend on the breed of horse at all. It is more a case of temperament.

"I know at one of the engine houses, there is a horse so ugly that he bites at every boy who comes near him and while he is at a fire he seems to take a sort of fiendish delight in trying to get his teeth into somebody's arm; but he is a fine horse in every other way, and there is constant friction at the engine house, some of the men wanting to get rid of him and the rest to keep him.

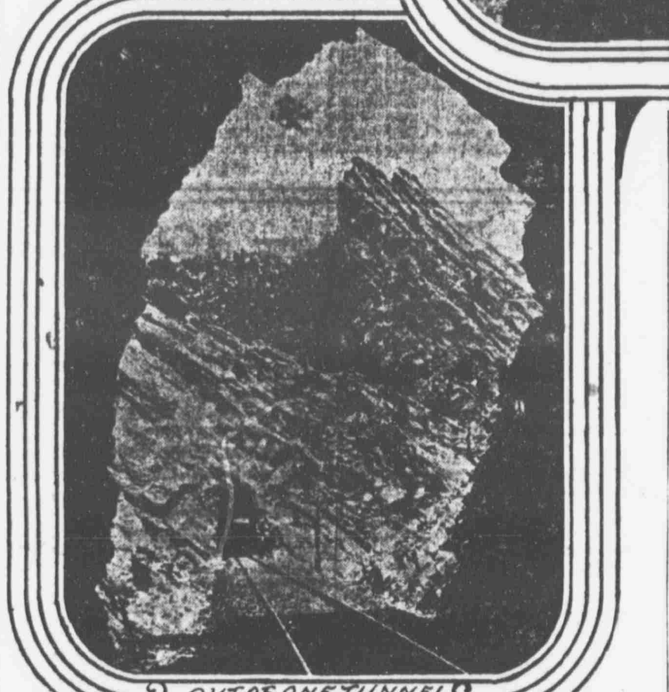
"When I say that we have attended every large fire this winter it might seem that I meant to say that we did nothing else but go to fires, but I can assure you that one a week is a large average, for the first alarms don't count and the Fire Department is in such a state of perfection that one can easily make a fad of attending fires without losing much sleep or allowing it to interfere to any great extent with business."

THE RAILROAD THAT LOOPS THE LAKE

Engineering Feats on the Newest Road Across the Rockies.



LOOP ON THE YANKEE DOODLE LAKE



OUT OF ONE TUNNEL INTO ANOTHER.

DENVER, March 25.—Some notable feats of railway engineering have been performed on Colorado's newest railroad, the Denver, Northwestern and Pacific, popularly known as the Moffat road. Moreover, it is declared that the scenery cannot be equalled anywhere in the world, except, perhaps, in the Andes.

The road is only seventy-seven miles long. It crosses fifteen miles of plains and then plunges into a series of wild glens, glides along dizzy precipices, and finally crosses the summit of the main range of the Rockies at a higher elevation than any other broad gauge railway anywhere in the world. It darts out of one tunnel only to start into another. At one point the line makes a complete turn around Yankee Doodle Lake in order to climb the side of a precipice.

A traveller who has never before crossed a mountain range is apt to expect the railroad to climb a steep mountain and drop sharply down on the other side. Instead of this is found a route winding upward through cañons until at the summit the surroundings are as unlike the conception previously formed as can be imagined.

But on the Moffat road the train fairly pierces the clouds in surmounting the continental divide. The road passes far above timber line, debouching upon the side of a rocky mountain top from which one can almost shake hands with a dozen giant peaks topped with eternal snow.

The train glides steadily upward and stops on the summit, more than 11,700 feet above the level of the sea. As the summit is approached one can see plainly that he is on one main slope, and the vista stretching before him shows vividly that just over the summit is the other slope, whose waters descend into the other ocean.

Another marvel in this engineering accomplishment is that, save for the last twenty miles, the road is operated on a 2 per cent. gradient, and when completed to Salt Lake it will have no grades heavier than that. This 20 mile section is a temporary line—that is to say, it will be used in the summer for the excursion business because of its scenic attractions. The main line will pierce the main range with a seven mile tunnel, instead of surmounting it.

The road is the fulfilment of the dream of years of its promoter and constructor, D. H. Moffat, who has been in Denver for fifty years almost, an has always cherished the ambition to build a great railroad and be its head. Having accumulated $20,000,000, he is gratifying his ambition.

What Happens in London and in New York When a Horse Falls

"I suppose that the word 'helpfulness' has as many different meanings in different parts of the world as a ship's cat has varieties of foreign fleas," observed a travelled man. "Did you ever see a horse, hitched to a vehicle, fall down in London? I have, many, many times, and the proceedings following the little calamity are always and inevitably the same.

"The horse hitched, say, to a London hansom cab slips on the greasy pavement and goes down. All of the other drivers of cabs and 'buses and carts and all sorts of conveyances immediately begin to bawl with all their might at the driver of the fallen horse, those behind execrating him for getting his trap in their way, those in front twisting around in their seats to yell derision at him for being such a duffer of a driver as to permit his horse to go down.

"Then a bobby jumps out of the mass of vehicles and shouts a stream of cockney vilification at the hard luck hansom driver, telling him that it's pretty nigh time for him to be in the work'us if he can't hold his beast up. The bobby stands around and bulldozes the cabby until the thing is all over, threatening to lock him up if he doesn't make haste to clear the thoroughfare.

"Not a solitary driver or foot passenger makes the slightest effort to help the fallen horse or the driver of the hansom cab. If there is a passenger in the cab, he jumps out as soon as the horse goes down, and begins to shake his fist at the cabby and to call him names and to threaten to have him locked up for incompetent or reckless driving and have his license taken away from him.

"Under this stream of abuse the cabby climbs down from his perch, only making reply to the vilification when it becomes particularly bitter and personal. He has to pull and tug and struggle with the horse.

"If it is impossible for the horse to get up without being unhitched, the cabby has to do it all himself. If there's a broken shaft, the thing is complicated. The cabby unhitches the animal, yanks him to his feet, and, followed by the bobby, he takes him to a stall in the nearest livery stable.

"Then the cabby has to walk back to where the stranded cab rests, and haul it out of the way to a side street or the livery stable where the horse is quartered, all the time enduring the derisive yells of the other drivers and the remarks of the hooligans on the sidewalks.

"As he pulls the cab through the streets the crowd of drivers of other vehicles even lash out at him with their whips if he is slow to move out of their way, and it not uncommonly happens that the unfortunate cabby, roused to fury by such treatment, tackles a driver who goes this length, pulls him off his seat, and then there is an out and out fight in the street, blocking traffic, and generally winding up in the arrest of the fighters.

"That's the sort of performance I have seen scores of times when horses have gone down on the slippery streets of the English capital. And it perfectly represents the English idea of the thing known as 'helpfulness.' It's every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost over there, sure enough, and I am bound to say that that sort of thing leaves a grisly sort of impression on the mind.

"Well, yesterday afternoon I saw a hansom cab horse slip and fall at a busy corner in New York's Tenderloin. Nothing in the way of gear was broken, but the horse fell in such a position, with his legs partly mixed up with the harness, that there was no possibility of his getting up himself.

"Well, sir, the horse was hardly down before at least a dozen men from the sidewalks had rushed into the street to do what they could to right the situation. Several of them were very well dressed men, men of business by their appearance, and, on that presumption, busy; but they were willing to let anything they had in mind to do just slide so as to give that horse and the driver of the horse a bit of a lift.

"The hansom cab's passenger, a fine looking man of middle age, evidently bound for a railroad station, hopped out promptly and proceeded to sit on the horse's head, so as to hold him down and keep him from struggling while he was being unhitched. About seven men attended to the unhitching—the cabman himself could hardly wedge his way in to take hold of a strap or buckle; the whole thing was being done for him.

"The big cop from the corner was on hand with shrewd little remarks of suggestion and cheer, and when the animal was unhitched it was this big cop who pulled the horse to his feet, while the rest of the volunteers, including the cab's passenger, pulled the vehicle to the rear to give the horse a chance to find his legs and cool out of his excitement a bit.

"Even when examination showed that everything was unbroken, and all right and trig, the helpers didn't disperse. They stayed right there and hitched the horse up again. When everything was O. K. again, the passenger, perfectly good natured, climbed back into the cab, the driver, saying 'Much obliged, you fellers,' got up to his perch, clucked to the horse, and, amid the cheery words of the crowd and an 'Away you go, Jack!' the cab resumed its journey and the crowd of volunteers broke up.

"There's a whole lot of meaning in this little comparison of the different understandings of the word 'helpfulness,' when you view the thing from the right angle."

New Phase of an Old Game.

From the Milwaukee Sentinel.

"I want to tell you how I was flimflammed on my way to Milwaukee," said George C. Harding of Peoria. "My experience may be of value to the men on the road. As the train was about to pull out of Chicago a big, prosperous looking fellow came into the smoking compartment where I was sitting. He was bare headed, and had a roll of bills in his hand. He counted them carefully, and I noticed that there was $40 in fives.

"He slipped them into an envelope, which he sealed and held in his hand. As the train was pulling out he engaged me in conversation and asked where he would have a chance to mail the money to his wife. I told him, and after apparently thinking the matter over he said he did not think it would be wise to mail the bills unless they were registered, and decided to wait until he reached Milwaukee. As he was about to slip the envelope in his pocket he asked me whether I had the amount in larger bills, that would be less bulky. I found two twenties in my pocket and gave them to him in exchange for the sealed package.

"Then he said he believed he would go and get his hat. The train was just stopping for an instant at Clybourn Junction as he started from the coach, and I have never seen him since, needless to say, for upon opening the envelope I found some neatly folded pieces of paper. The next man that gets any of me money, however, will have to use a gun or a piece of lead pipe."

TRIED IN 27 WAYS TO GET THIN; IS STILL STOUT

Jay Benson Has Tried in Vain Every Remedy for Obesity Known to Him and Now Believes That There Is No Hope of Slimness for the Fat.

BOSTON, March 25.—"Obesity is incurable," says Jay Benton of Boston, the stoutest man for his height in this part of the country.

He is 5 feet 4 inches in height and weighs 230 pounds. For the last ten years he has been trying to reduce his weight, and now, after experimenting with twenty-seven different methods, he has relinquished his ambition and decided to make no further effort toward acquiring a svelte waist and trim figure.

"I was always corpulent," says Mr. Benton, "but my size gave me no trouble up to about ten years ago. Then I began to grow fat at an alarming rate. Taller men than I am would never have been worried by 230 pounds, but to me it was disagreeable to be referred to as a fat man, and so I took steps to remedy the matter.

"My friends soon learned of my hobby, and by every mail I received newspaper clippings telling how to reduce weight. I also subscribed to a press clipping agency, ordering everything printed in newspapers and magazines about fat and how to get rid of it.

"I now have a collection of 3,500 press clippings, catalogued and assorted, telling what other people have done to get rid of superfluous flesh. I have tried every method advocated in these clippings, and I now affirm without hesitation that they are fakes.

"I don't believe it is possible for any one permanently to reduce the weight, for though some methods aid one to throw off a few pounds it all comes right back again.

"The first thing I tried was to stop eating lunches. I also reduced the quantity of food eaten morning and night.

"By starving myself for three days I lost four pounds. This treatment is too heroic to be persevered in. No man who has to work for his living can starve himself and expect to retain his health.

"After a week I had reduced my weight seven pounds, but I was so weak I could hardly stand up. After two days of hearty eating I weighed almost as much as I did before, and after a week of normal living I had regained all I had lost.

"The kissingen and vichy treatment was recommended to me by a doctor. I bought great quantities of kissingen and vichy in bottles and began to drink them alternate days.

"I stopped in drug stores when I wasn't thirsty and ordered kissingen and vichy. I drank water nearly every hour. At the end of two weeks I had gained four pounds, so I stopped that treatment.

"Another specialist suggested lemonade. I switched my drinks and took lemonade.

"I had lemonade for breakfast, for lunch, for dinner. I gained two pounds a week.

"Then the doctor said the sugar in the lemonade was to blame. I cut the sugar out, drank lemonade for another week, weighed myself and found I was two pounds heavier.

"The next specialist advocated abolishing all drinks except half a glass of water between meals. Coffee, milk, cream and water were to be abolished entirely with one's meals.

"I kept this treatment up with difficulty, for water is a necessity, and at the end of a week I found no perceptible change in my weight. Then I drank a quart of water, and the next day I tipped the scales at a slight increase. I continued the treatment another week, drinking coffee without sugar, and found no change whatever in my weight.

"Nearly all of my advisers said I must cut out sweets and potatoes, and for six months I didn't eat candy, sugar, potatoes or bread. This was the longest period of treatment I tried.

"People told me to cut out all starchy foods, and when I had gone over the menu card I found that I must not eat sweets, sugar, potatoes, pie, pastry, beans, peas, macaroni, spaghetti, corn or any kind of cream soups. Thin soups were barred because I must not drink with my meals. Ice cream and all desserts were barred.

"When I investigated the dishes I could eat I found my diet restricted to lean meats, dry toast and crackers, without anything to drink. This seemed bad enough, but I conscientiously adhered to this diet for weeks and weeks, until I hated the sight or smell of meat.

"After nearly three months of this diet I weighed myself, and instead of 230 pounds I tipped the scales at 227. This showed the theory was possibly correct, but the treatment is too heroic to be followed long with such poor results.

"Then I tried the anti-fat remedy suggested by the physicians to the Kaiser, that of drinking great quantities of tea. The Kaiser's doctors said that his Majesty should drink very hot tea at 8 in the morning, at 11 o'clock, at 1 o'clock, at 4 o'clock, at 7 o'clock and at 9 o'clock at night.

"The theory of this was that the Chinese, always fond of great quantities of tea, were notoriously thin, and it was believed by the Kaiser's doctors that tea would remove fat. I tried this method for three weeks.

"I had an alcohol burner in my office, and made tea every two or there hours. I drank it as directed, without sugar or milk. At the end of three weeks I understood why the Kaiser stopped the treatment because of stomach trouble.

"The next fool scheme I tried was suggested by a New York doctor who pretended to have aided a society woman to reduce her weight by drinking buttermilk. Some of my clippings said that actors often reduced weight by drinking buttermilk.

"So I drank buttermilk. I swallowed buckets of it in the course of a month, and grew so much stouter that all my friends began to speak of fatty degeneration, and so forth.

"Some individual out in Wisconsin gained notoriety by advocating a diet of beef and spinach for obesity. I tried the beef and spinach method for nearly a month, until the butcher in the neighborhood began to send me great quantities without any order for them every day. As I was getting stouter all the time, and hated spinach, I discontinued the diet.

"Another doctor went into print and said that the secret of getting thin was to eat all food cold. No hot meals were allowed. I tried this, suffered from indigestion, and gave it up.

"Then a Cincinnati doctor rushed into print and said that to get thin it was only necessary thoroughly to masticate all food. One could eat anything, he said, provided the food was chewed until it slipped unconsciously down your throat.

"I began to eat anything, chewed and chewed until my jaw muscles were hard as rocks, and yet it made no difference whatever.

"Discouraged with the results of dieting, I picked up with pleasure an interview with a Chicago physician who said that food was of small consequence in weight reducing and that the best and only sure method was to give the lungs plenty of fresh air.

"His argument was that fresh air would expand the lungs and keep all organs from becoming torpid and inactive. Laziness, he said, caused fat. Fresh air prevented it. I slept most of one summer in the open air on a veranda, and the only thing I accomplished was to contract several bad colds.

"Melba's press agent gave out a story that the singer reduced her weight by taking three cold baths a day. I took four.

"I went home for lunch and took a bath. I took a cold bath before dinner and another before retiring. Then the city raised the water rent because of my cold baths, and I stopped the treatment.

"Lillian Russell was interviewed on getting thin, and I tried her alleged method. She didn't change her diet, but she used hot water, massage and exercise. But Lillian didn't bathe in hot water. No, she drank it.

"She drank two large cups of hot water before each meal—six cups of hot water a day—in direct contrast to those specialists who say you must not drink with your meals. Lillian then had a massage artist work on her, and then she exercised by raising the arms over the head and trying to touch the floor without bending the knees.

"I drank the hot water, and tried to touch the floor without bending my knees, but I couldn't come within ten inches of the floor. Not being a prima donna, I didn't try the massage.

"I saw Lillian when she was in Boston, and I guess she weighs about 190 pounds, so I don't think much of her method.

"Speaking of prima donnas, I tried Calvé's method next. Her method, by which she claims to have lost nearly fifty pounds in a year, is to eat nothing but underdone beef and mutton, fruits and green vegetables, and walk as many miles as possible every day.

"I tried the underdone beef and mutton racket, and walked nearly ten miles a day without getting tired. But while the walking was good, the dieting had no effect whatever.

"Regarding exercise, one doctor advised me to use a bicycle and I rode a wheel all of one summer, until another doctor told me it was bad exercise because the arms were held rigidly during the operation, and if I walked instead of using the wheel the action of swinging the arms would be beneficial. I tried both ways without result.

"Some doctor advocated running up and down steps. My office is up four flights, and I had always used the elevator.

"I began now to use the stairs and walked up and down them many times when I had no occasion to do so. No good.

"I joined the Y. M. C. A. to use the gymnasium and the physical director advocated running and rope skipping. I wore out two good ropes, but grew no thinner.

"Some of the writers in women's magazines advocated simple exercises at home, like lying on the back on the floor and doing various stunts to develop muscles and reduce fat.

"I tried nineteen such exercises every night for a month and couldn't reduce my weight one pound. Exercises may be very well, but I don't believe they are effective in reducing weight.

"Last summer I went abroad determined to take in the famous waters at Marienbad, where so many stubborn cases of obesity have been cured, if one can believe reports.

"I took the regular cure, mud baths and all, and lived for days on skimmed milk and stewed prunes and rolls without butter. I had a splendid time, but came back to America weighing as much as ever.

"While I was in London I read a great deal in the papers of the somersault cure advocated by a London doctor. He fitted up a gymnasium where aristocratic patients turned somersaults on Swedish principles in the hope of reducing their obesity. This is said to be effective, but it is so violent that I only tried it once.

"I also tried the rubber band method of reduction. This is to get several yards of rubber and wrap it around the body tightly several times. Newport society women started the fad. I ended it.

"I think I have tried every known method of reduction without effect. If there is any system I have overlooked, I beg its pardon.

"Now I am quite reconciled to my corpulency and propose to enjoy life. My ambition has changed.

"Instead of wishing to become thin, it is now my object in life to be elected president of the Massachusetts Fat Men's Association, but, alas! no one is eligible except those who weigh 275 pounds, and I haven't quite reached that figure yet."

ALCOHOLISM AND MORPHINISM ABSOLUTELY CURED

No Detention from Business. Correspondence Confidential. Craving Removed Within 48 Hours.

OPPENHEIMER INSTITUTE

159 WEST 34TH STREET

Telephone 3717—38.

Downtown Office, 170 Broadway.

Full Information Free on Request.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

EAST SIDE TALK RESTAURANTS

TWO QUEER HOMES OF POLYGLOT POLITICAL DEBATES.

Talk, Rather Than Eating or Drinking, the Business of the "House of Commons" and "House of Lords"—Woman's Equal Place in the Gatherings Held in Them.

There are two restaurants in the heart of the lower East Side, each of which rejoices in two nicknames, bestowed upon it by the observing folk of the neighborhood. One is called the Socialist restaurant and one the Anarchist restaurant; and for still further distinction the former is known as the House of Commons, and the latter the House of Lords.

Each is a centre of neighborhood life and gossip, and each, though enjoying the floating patronage of any eating house, is the accepted meeting place for those of the way of thinking indicated by its acquired name. All who gather there are not active propagandists, though they may be socialists and anarchists.

After 11 o'clock at night is the time to see either the House of Lords or the House of Commons in full blast. The East Side ever postpones the dread hour of going to bed as long as possible. In summer the streets swarm till long past midnight. Every night through the cold weather the House of Lords and the House of Commons resound with discussion on all known topics from 11 P. M. to 3 A. M. The frequenters who give the places their names begin to congregate after the theatres, clubs and meetings of the neighborhood are over, and in the subject matter of these functions the news from Russia and the questions of the day are all touched on, along with the theories of Darwin, Spencer, Tolstoi, Marx and Engels.

Appropriately enough, the House of Commons is the larger meeting place. At one side are set tables for games, at which chess and dominoes go on perennially, with a group of watchers intently following the game hour after hour. This is a great chess playing neighborhood, and chess is played nightly for six or seven hours.

The House of Lords, having less space to spare, offers music instead of chess tables for the delectation of its guests. A phonograph dispenses the mellow tones of Caruso, the dead march from "The Prophet," the intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana," or the haunting strains of "Ah, che la morte." Only operatic or classic music is permitted in the House of Lords. Coon songs and ragtime are barred.

Itinerant pedlers pass constantly in and out, offering oranges and bananas, shoe strings and collar buttons to the diners. A stout fellow with rosy cheeks and peasant togs wandered through the other night, bearing a basket of small and doleful apples and carrying on a low and distressed conversation with himself. His words, being interpreted, signified, "I am a poor greenhorn, just landed. Nobody wants to give me a chance, nobody sympathizes with me."

One can get delicious Russian tea in glasses, ruby as wine, hot and rich with lemon and sugar. Coffee comes in glasses also. The sour cabbage soup of the House of Commons can also be recommended to those who like cabbage. The bread is very dark, and apparently made mainly of seeds, but excellent to the taste. The apple pie comes on in little squares instead of the American triangle.

The cakes are many and various and nearly all strange. Some are little sweet crackers, hard as a rock and jammed full of black seeds. One, covered with chocolate, most inviting, proved to be constructed of pie crust underneath in place of cake dough. Goulash, a concession to Hungarian custom, is set down by the American explorer as the "Irish stew" of his infancy; a mixture of boiled potatoes and boiled beef. A course dinner, sufficiently good and plentiful to satisfy hunger, may be had for 25 cents.

The place is a centre of social life. Everybody seems to know everybody else. Newcomers are hailed and invited to the tables of friends. Numerous unmarried persons of the vicinity eat here regularly, women as well as men. A frequenter of the House of Lords is a woman who has a little shop for newspapers, writing materials and the like near Astor place. She retains her early custom of going without her hat, but she is a keen business woman, decided in her political opinions.

She comes for her dinner after the day's work is over, at 10 or 11 or thereabouts. As the men talk all about her she sometimes finds it impossible to satisfy her hunger by reason of her interest in the discussion. When the argument runs high she will leave her chair and with earnest mien and untrammelled gesture set forth her opinions on the subject in hand. The men listen to her with respect and pay her the compliment of serious argument, in which she is likely to silence all opponents.

A younger sister, also unmarried, is a prosperous East Side dentist. She wears a large and stylish hat, and is also interested in politics. A feature of both restaurants is the perfectly matter of fact way in which women enter into the life of the place. A woman can go into either alone, eat, join in the discussion if she has anything pertinent to offer, all without attracting the slightest unpleasant attention.

And so they sit and talk hour after hour. One wonders what profit the proprietors find in such use of their tables, but they seem to prosper. Cards are never seen. Tea and coffee are the universal beverages. There is not even very much smoking, and not an overplus of eating.

Talk is the luxury and business of the place, and every language in New York may be heard but English. No one is safe, however, in talking English with the idea that he will not be understood. The habitués can all speak English perfectly well if they wish.

IRISHMEN AS POLICEMEN.

It Seems to Be Merit, Not Pull, That Gets Them on the Force.

It has been for many years a popular notion in New York that "Irishmen have the first call" on police appointments, and it has even been said, jocularly that newcomers from Erin received appointments as patrolmen on landing at Castle Garden. It is certainly a fact that the number of Irish policemen is large, and the view has been taken popularly that this was due to the large influence exercised by Irishmen in New York city politics.

The recently authorized increase of the number of patrolmen by 400 has led to a searching civil service examination for applicants, of whom there are more than 6,000, and the result of this examination is that in the whole of the Greater New York considerably more than 50 per cent. of those who passed both the physical and the medical examinations were either Irish-Americans or Irish born. Such examinations are conducted on the merit basis without any reference to political influence.