

AN UNCONSCIOUS HERO—The Shoemaker of Alamo Square

By Franklin Hichborn.

"PAT CORLEY," said the man who knows all about the refugee camps, "is like the apostles of old—he mends soles without money and without price."

"Don't you," sharply broke in a red-armed Irishwoman who had overheard him, "say one word agin' Pat Corley. If the gentlem'n who ride about in automobiles to rehabilitate the refugees were doin' half as much as Pat Corley there'd be less kickin'." Pat Corley's put shoes on our feet. That's what Pat Corley has done. And when we've had the money we've paid for 'em, and when we haven't it's not a word Pat Corley has said, but mended the shoes just the same, God bless him."

Such is one honest woman's opinion of Pat Corley, and such is the opinion of every man, woman and child camped in Alamo square. Pat Corley has from his savings bought stock and mended the shoes of the refugees for pay when they could pay him, without price when they could not. And Pat Corley, as some know and many suspect, is himself the poorest of the poor.

The Little Shop on Franklin.

For years before the fire Pat Corley kept a little cobbler's shop on Franklin street. It was a mean enough little place, scarcely 8x16. But there, day after day, year after year, Pat Corley sat at his bench, laboriously mending the few broken shoes that were brought him. Laboriously well describes the method of his mending, for the world has swung clear away for Pat Corley. A half century ago there was plenty of room in the world for the cobbler who used hand-awl and hammer. But scarcely a block away from the old cobbler's shop was an establishment where a machine run by electricity sewed soles on shoes faster than the old-time cobbler could place shoes on his last. It was hand—and a poor age-enfeebled hand at that—against electricity, and slowly and surely electricity was winning the day. Poor old Pat Corley could not understand why any more than he could understand the new-fangled machines in the modern shop, but as the years passed he saw one-time customers pass his door to the shop where they mended shoes in a twinkling, almost by magic. It is safe to say that there were times when the old shoemaker did not know where the next meal was to come from. But never was he heard to complain, never did his cheerful smile fail to greet the customer or chance visitor to his shop, never did he refuse "credit" when it was asked, although too often such "credit" presented a hard financial problem for the old man to solve, and meant gratuitous services for one probably ten times better able to pay than was the lonely old shoemaker to give.

And then came the April fire. The gentle old man watched it sweep over the hills, uncontrollable, all-mastering.

"They will stop it at Van Ness avenue," said one.

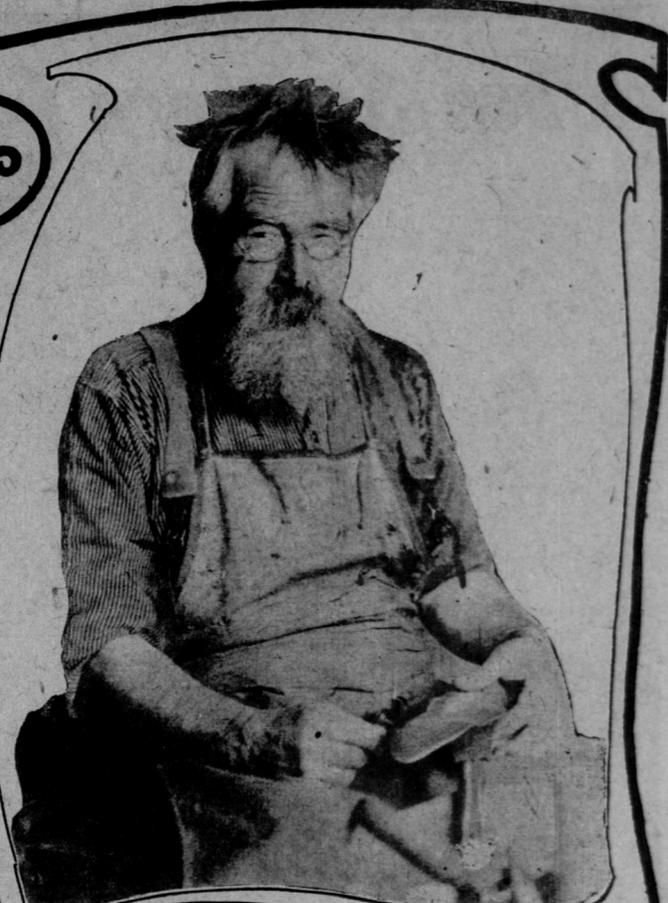
"They will never stop it so long as there is a house to burn," said another.

Pat Corley had no opinion of his own. He took the fire as he took the electric shoe machine in the shop round the corner, as something that he could not understand or successfully combat. He stuck to his shop, drifting during the first two days of the fire as he had drifted during the long years that he had worked there, allowing himself to be governed by conditions as they came to him, without resistance and without complaint. He was not burned out, but he was scorched out, and fled from the place when it was impossible to remain there longer. After the fire he crept back to his shop, for he knew no place else, and took up his awl and his poor, old-fashioned tools as though nothing had happened. And there was a deal of work for Pat Corley to do.

Around the corner the labor-saving machinery of the rival shop stood silent and still. The experts who had operated it had fled and were swelling the bread line. The mysterious power that had driven the sticher and the polisher was gone; the motor stood inactive. Without electric power all the expensive machinery was as useless as old junk. Pat Corley did not realize it, but the fire, the great leveler, had reduced the people of San Francisco in a twinkling to primitive conditions. The man with the strongest arm saved more from the fire than the quick-brained but physically weak; the carpenter could find better shelter for his family than could the millionaire; the cobbler who could employ awl and hand-last was for the moment king of his craft. Such was Pat Corley in the latter days of April and in the early weeks of May. Customers flocked to his shop. Those were the days of his greatest prosperity. Pat Corley had all the advantages of a monopolist—he was one of the few men in San Francisco prepared to mend shoes—shoes that had been ground to pieces in the nerve-racking fight before the fire.

But Pat Corley lacked the instincts of the monopolist—he did not raise prices. Such an idea never entered his head. He worked at his bench earning where he was sought, and he charged dollars out of the almost barefooted men and women who flocked to his shop. But there were newly created monopolists in San Francisco besides Pat Corley, and among them was his landlord. The fire had stopped just short of Franklin street, and for the moment property-owners along that street thought that Franklin was to be what Fillmore within ten days had become. For years Corley had paid from his scant earnings \$3 a month for the poor, little shop in which he worked, ate and slept. When his month was up, early in May, he was notified that thereafter rent would be \$10 a month.

At first he could not believe his senses, as he pondered over the notification. But the energetic agent of the building made him understand soon enough, and the patient, old man prepared to move. At first little understanding the changed conditions, he hunted for another stand where the



PAT CORLEY, THE SHOEMAKER OF ALAMO SQUARE

rental would be \$8, or at most not above \$10 a month.

To his dismay he could find no such place. Somebody told him that the homeless were being given tents on the public squares. He applied for such a tent, supposing that he would have to pay rent for it, and even now cannot understand why rent has not been exacted for it. But he was given a tent free—one of the smallest—and was assigned to Alamo square. To this tent he removed his sign—"Boots and Shoes Neatly Repaired"—took his few tools, and opened his shop, as simply and in exactly the same way as he would have done had the removal been made in the ordinary course of affairs to another building.

Among the Refugees.

Misfortune drove Pat Corley to Alamo Square, but his coming was a godsend to the refugees gathered there. The refugees were made up mostly of families from the mechanic class who had been fairly well-to-do and prosperous before the fire, but had lost their all in the calamity. They had tramped the broken streets of the city—no street cars were running—until their shoes were in tatters. One morning they awakened to find Pat Corley's poor little tent with its inviting sign erected in their midst. Pat Corley at once had a run of business unequalled by anything that he had even dreamed of.

But, alas! many, many of his new customers were not prepared to pay even Corley's before-the-fire prices—and these, the most needy of them all.

The cobbler arranged the shoes in a row in the order that they came to him, and went soberly to work. All day long he hammered and stitched, and far into the night, by the dim light of two candles stuck into bottles, he worked on. No favoritism was shown; it was first come, first served with him. One of the refugees, who has been able to pay his way from the first, told me of his experience with the old cobbler.

"When I took my shoes to him," said the refugee, "I found at least fifty pairs ahead of mine. He was pegging stolidly away at a rate which showed me that it would be days before I could get my shoes if they had to wait until that astonishingly long line was mended. My feet were actually on the ground, the soles of my shoes had been worn to nothing. To expedite matters I offered to pay Corley double price if he would mend the shoes that day.

"Can't do it," he replied; "there are at least forty ahead of you."

"But, I insisted, 'what's that got to do with it?' They are not paying you double price."

"No," he replied slowly, "and I ain't askin' it."

through the harsh months of May and June, putting shoes on feet that would otherwise have been naked. And of his monopoly the gains were eaten up by the free work that he gave, so that the end of his opportunity left him poorer than he had begun.

Two blocks below him, down the hill to Fillmore street, men forgot the calamity, forgot the misery of its victims, forgot the horror of the fire in the mad rush to retrieve their losses. No opportunity was lost to squeeze the last nickel from what opportunity offered. Rents soared to dizzy heights; the man with building material to sell exacted the last cent that could be got for it; labor insisted upon the highest wage. It was a mad rush in which every man, so far as possible, looked to the other fellow to make good his losses. And all the time up in his poor little tent in Alamo, gentle old Pat Corley gave his services free, and with them free material that oftentimes he stunted himself in bread to get.

Stinted himself in bread? will be asked. How about the free rations issued by the Relief Corporation?

Single about; Pat Corley didn't ask or receive free rations from the Relief Corporation or anybody else. He made his little store of hoarded dimes and quarters carry him through the calamity, and out of them he purchased the stock with which he mended free of charge the shoes of his fellow-sufferers.

All the assistance that the old cobbler has received from the Relief Corporation is the use of his tent and one blanket. Poor as he is he has been self-supporting from the first.

Has Always Paid His Way.

A visit to the old cobbler's tent shows the completeness of his poverty. His scant stock, the empty fruit and oyster cans that are put to a hundred and one uses, the candles in the empty bottles, the dry bread on his table which had made up the Rest of which he was just finishing, all proclaimed his necessity.

"Have you ever applied to the Relief Corporation for assistance," Mr. Corley?" one visitor asked.

"Why, no," he replied. "I've applied to nobody. Why should I?"

"But there has been a large sum of money subscribed for the relief of the poor of San Francisco who were injured by the fire," the visitor insisted. "Don't you feel that you are entitled to some of it?"

Again came the same shake of his head. He could not understand that he is a fire sufferer, or that the money was given for his relief.

in a let-that-be-an-end-of-it tone of voice. "I've always earned my way."

"Did you experience any difficulty in getting stock during the months following the fire?" was asked.

"Why, no," he replied. "Why should I? I paid cash for all I got. It was good stock, too. Better, even, than I was able to get before the fire."

Pat Corley is a most unsatisfactory subject for the go-by-rule-only relief worker to tackle. The average business man would probably look upon him as a trifle off in his head. Perhaps he is, from the business man's standpoint. But a psychologist of some prominence once defined the perfectly sane man as he who forgets self and thinks of others—meaning, of course, the comfort and wellbeing of others. Curious, too, the perfect gentleman has been defined in precisely the same terms. If the definitions count for anything, Pat Corley is the sanest of mortals and the first of gentlemen.

Could You Help Tom?

"Is there not," Mr. Corley," one of his visitors asked, "anything that we can do for you?"

The old man's face lighted up eagerly. "There is," he said, "in the third tent from mine Tom lives. Tom worked for the Red Cross for two months, but he didn't receive his pay. Tom is in a bad way. Tom is sick—his wife is sick—consumption she's got, and Tom is down on his luck. He's an Irish boy, but born in San Francisco, and more American in his ways than I. Can't you do something for Tom?"

"But Mr. Corley," insisted the visitor, "we want to do something for you. Tell us something about yourself."

"There ain't anything to tell," was the reply. "My father and mother are dead, over in Ireland. My wife is dead. I haven't a friend but Tom."

"But I happen to know," answered the visitor, "that every man, woman and child in Alamo who is worth considering is your friend."

The calm, blue eyes of the old cobbler opened with genuine astonishment. "Why, they don't even know I'm here," he said.

The visitor looked into the kindly face of the self-sacrificing old man, and dashed a suspicious moisture out of his eyes as the thought came to mind that the kindest fate that can come to Pat Corley is that death may claim him before infirmity and the Alamo house van.



THE REFUGEE TENT WHERE PAT CORLEY WORKS AND LIVES

JEWELS WHICH MAY BE WORN DURING PERIOD OF MOURNING

It is perhaps only the women that wear mourning who fully realize the rigorous change which must then be made in their jewelry as in the details of their grooming. Once, however, the attention is quickened toward mourning jewelry it is surprising how numerous and beautiful are the ornaments from which selection may be made.

Invariably, with the present styles of dressing, a brooch is used for day time wear. In the evening, however, its place perchance is taken by a pretty little dangler or locket of some sort. The daintiest mourning brooches for young women are made in floral designs. They are of gold, entirely covered with dull black enamel, and are lightened with tiny chips of diamonds. The wild rose design is particularly attractive when its petals are turned over a little and outlined with diamonds, and the stamens and pistil of the center are also tipped with sparkling chips. Violets and pansies, either with the rose diamonds or entirely covered with dull black enamel, are also appropriate to wear during the first six months of deep mourning. Without the stones, such brooches cost fifteen to eighteen dollars, while with the diamonds they

vary in price from thirty dollars upward, according to the number and quality of the stones. It is quite possible, however, to have stones that have formerly been used in gay bits of jewelry set in the plain black brooches. The cost of having this done in a moderate way is about five dollars. A few women, even while wearing crepe, chose a "double violet" brooch, enameled with deep purple and showing a drop of dew at its side one good sized diamond. Others adhere closely to the black enameled "double violets."

Locketts are again much worn by those in mourning, taking fashionable precedence over bangles. Usually they hang from an almost imperceptible neck chain to about fifteen inches below the collar. The black enamel with which they are covered is more often of glossy than dull finish, and it is regarded as smart to have the wearer's initials marked on it with small diamonds. A late wrinkle, moreover, is to have these locketts heart-shaped in outline and astonishingly large. Some are seen fully three inches in diameter. Mourning jewelry, perhaps more than any other, is chosen with regard to sentiment. These locketts, therefore, have been especially designed to hold of hair. This is laid in loosely.