

The Free Press Short Story

The Little Nook by the Staircase

By MARY DICKERSON DONAHEY

"DING a ling line," shrilled the telephone in "the pepper pot," tiny office of Pauline Pepper, feature writer of the Conway Daily Post. Polly stuck out an impudent pink tongue at it, for she was very busy. The next moment she felt still more desperate, for the voice of elderly Miss Switzer, society editor, was a mere whoopee, marking now and then into a sort of bark, as she said, "I've just been talking to the city editor, and he switched me to you. I'm afraid I can't come out to-day."

until it was all over, but whoever suspected anything like this would turn up? I'm the girl you heard about, Miss Browning, and it's all true—see far as it goes. Now you just stay right there and listen to me." For Miss Browning was showing every sign of leaving. Instead, she gave a smothered scream of indignation, for two strong little hands had shot through the banisters and caught her by the ankles! She was held tight. "Let me go at once, you horrid little girl, you spy!" cried the beautiful Lucy, who now was on the verge of an agony of tears and did not want to give way to them until she was alone.

"I won't, and I'm neither of those things," insisted Polly, stoutly. "The agonized young man stood helplessly by, not knowing exactly what to do in this unheard-of situation. 'Don't you make me as angry as you are or maybe you never will know the truth! Listen now—I'm Pauline Pepper, on the staff of the Post. You must have read my articles. I wrote up your own, Ebbie class work down along the docks, remember? Well then! My editor sent me to see Joel Larimer, senior, to get a series of stories about working conditions among girls in this town. It had to be done secretly so that the employers who are not fair or kind would not get wind of it, so they could stop us before we knew the truth. Mr. Larimer, senior, was especially interested, as of course a fine, honest man of his sort would be. He helped me get facts I never could have discovered without him! But he couldn't take me around. I have not been in town long. Lots of people don't know me, but everyone knows him. We argued that if his son took me it would be better, so he did."

"No one ever suspected you'd be joining me," said Polly, "and I can't tell you now, but you needn't be. You're a lucky girl. Joel's so in love with you he doesn't know other girls exist. I'm no flirt, but if I were I can tell you it wouldn't have done me any good. He can't talk of anything but you. I've admired you myself, but I got tired of tears listening to your virtues. If you go on being angry you'll be the silliest creature and most unjust girl in all the world! So now, you can go if you like. I'm through."

"Oh, thanks, Amos, I'm not really hungry. I've just lost my notes," stammered Polly. A very happy voice from her dark corner spoke up, saying, "Nonsense! Of course you're hungry! So are we! I haven't really eaten for a week and I'm sure Joel hasn't either! Amos, what have you got? Turkey? Oysters? Beaten biscuits? Pound cake? Lemon jelly! Oh, my gracious! Hurry with more!" Starry-eyed, Lucy rushed out and caught Polly in her arms. "You darling!" she whispered. The next minute three happy young people were sampling the goodies on Polly's tray, while Amos hurried after reinforcements. "Let's take her to the office, Joe," suggested Lucy. The three, now warm friends forever, rode through the snowy streets.

TWENTY NEW WAE FACTORIES

Like a rolling snowball rapidly increasing in size as it swiftly gathers momentum Britain's industrial war output has already reached figures hardly dreamed of in September, 1939. Output of shells has been doubled, and at the end of 1939 was ten times greater than in a comparable period of the last war. During 1940 the output of guns will exceed the height of the final period of the maximum production effort attained in the last war.

Twenty new Government ordnance factories, to cost £46,000,000, have been put in hand since September 3rd, and 300 contractors' factories have been extended at a cost of £10,000,000. In the last war Britain's contribution in transport vehicles was about 40,000; in the first year of this war her contribution to Allied mobility will exceed 100,000 vehicles.

Between the outbreak of war and the end of 1939, nearly £280,000,000 worth of contracts had been placed by the Ministry of Supply, excluding "continuing" contracts for raw materials. This is where most of the money is going: Raw materials, textiles and leather 473 millions

Quna, small arms, ammunition 50 millions
Vehicles 45 millions
Schemes for assisting production 22 millions
Machine tools 13 millions
Optical and scientific instruments 12 millions
General stores 10 millions
Explosives 7 millions

The Minister of Supply, Mr Leslie Burgin, referred recently to his Ministry's power to prevent profiteering in all its branches by law, and its whole establishment to be controlled, he said.

FUR FARMS PROVIDE MARKET FOR FISH

An increasing interest in the use of fish as a food for animals on fur farms throughout Canada has been noted in recent years. The vitamin and mineral content, which makes fish so desirable as a food for humans, also makes it a valuable food for the lower animals, and many Canadian fur ranchers now classify fish as an important food item. At first fresh fish were used, but later in Prince Edward Island a quantity of hake was canned especially for fur farm use. Now a new development is reported in Nova Scotia, where quick freezing methods are playing a part in the preparation of fish food for fur ranches. Cold hand-licked trimmings are compressed into blocks and frozen by the quick freezing method. Then they are wrapped in oiled paper and preserved for sale for fur-raising establishments.

CANADIAN SALT

Commercial production of common salt (sodium chloride) in Canada according to the latest completed data for 1938, totalled 440,045 tons, valued at \$1,912,913. In the preceding year, the production amounted to 458,957 tons at a value of \$1,799,465. In 1938 salt was produced in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta, 83 per cent of the total output, or 388,130 tons, having been contributed by Ontario. Statistics of Canadian salt production represent the recovery of salt from brine wells, with the exception of Nova Scotia, where the output comes entirely from the underground mining of rock salt deposits.

GARBAGE FEED CONTROL

The feeding of swine with garbage, swill, meat scraps, offal, or vegetable refuse, either raw or cooked, obtained elsewhere than on the premises where fed, is prohibited in Canada unless a license has first been obtained from the Veterinary Director General, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa. The enforcement of this regulation is believed to have a direct effect in preventing outbreaks of hog cholera and infection with trichinina, as all garbage fed under license is required to be thoroughly cooked and the premises must be maintained in a sanitary condition. Inspectors are also made of unlicensed premises to ensure that the regulations are being observed.

ACCIDENTS AND COMPENSATION

There were 5,542 accidents reported to The Workmen's Compensation Board during January, this being 404 more than during the month of December, and 1,326 more than during January a year ago. The total benefits awarded amounted to \$394,519.50, of which \$488,435.00 was for compensation and \$100,084.31 for medical aid.

GREAT SCHEME

Strolling along the boardwalk, a man dropped a quarter through a crack in the planking. A friend came along a minute later and found him squatting down, industriously poking a five-dollar bill through the treacherous crevice. "I'm trying to make it worth my while to tear up this board!"

IN THE LONG AGO

"Can't stop here, lady," said the conductor. "What nonsense! I shall report you. You used to stop. I remember distinctly."

"Not since the ... msa."



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BLUEBERRIES 2 No. 2 tin 17c
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PRUNES 60-90's Very Special 2 lbs. 15c
WALNUTS Shelled 1/4-lb. 17c
DATES Golden Hollow 2 lbs. 19c PEANUT BUTTER Our Own Special 2 lbs. 25c RAISINS Australian Seedless 2 lbs. 21c
SALADA Tea 1/4-lb. Yellow pkg. 37c 1/2-lb. Brown pkg. 39c
Butter Bars McCormick's 2 lbs. 27c
CHOCOLATES Christie's Chocolate Mallows lb. 29c
SODAS Weston's Golden Brown Plain or Salted 16-oz. sm. pkg. 9c
CATSUP Tiger Tomato 18-oz. bt. 10c
DOMESTIC Shortening or Easifirst 1-lb. pkg. 13c
MANY FLOWERS Toilet Soap cake 4c P. & G. SOAP White Naphtha Bar 4c CODFISH Boneless 1-lb. pkg. 17c
MATCHES Pontiac 300s 3 boxes 18c
FLOOR WAX Shinola 1-lb. tin 23c
Soap Flakes Economic 3 lbs. 19c
SUPER SUDS Bring Your Coupon 1g. pkg. 18c
SURPRISE Laundry Soap 2 bars 9c
PURE LARD Maple Leaf 2 1-lb. pkgs. 19c
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