

Nice Nest for Crooks.

An Abandoned Tunnel Made Use of by Bold Criminals.

A Subterranean Passage Where the Police Will Never Find Them.

Efforts to Fill Up a Brooklyn Plague Spot Thus Far Not Successful.

A RETREAT FOR COUNTERFEITERS.

Dens of Vice Under Atlantic Avenue All the Way from South Ferry to Flatbush Avenue—A Problem for the Police.

There exists in the very heart of the great metropolitan district a secure retreat to which crooks and criminals can fly and rest there, in peace and comparative comfort, while they bid defiance to the police.

This is almost midway between the City Hall of Brooklyn and New York. It has existed for nearly a fifth of a century, and it has been and is to-day the biggest and most complex puzzle with which the police forces of these two great cities have had to deal.

Although a thoroughly discussed subject among police officials, the facts connected with its existence are carefully kept from the public, and it is only through especial courtesy, extended to the Journal by one of the Brooklyn officials, that a portion of the facts are now given.

Years ago, when the Long Island Railroad was projected, a tunnel was constructed, which reached from a point near South Ferry, in Brooklyn, to Flatbush avenue, and which extends under and directly beneath Atlantic avenue. Later, when this tunnel was abandoned, the several entrances were closed, and gradually the existence of the tunnel was forgotten by the general public only, not by the crooks.

The latter saw in this underground passageway a place of future resort, and a sure refuge from pursuit. During the rainy days of Superintendent Campbell, of the Brooklyn police, and while Thomas Byrnes was Chief of the Detective Bureau, this apparently forgotten resort was used as a trap, into which many an unwary criminal thrust his head, only to find it caught fast, until such moment as the captors chose to release him.

The wave of reform which swept over Manhattan Island and the adjacent territory, and which relieved the then existing police authorities from duty, left no record of many of these traps, and notably neglected the importance of this particular one, which is over a mile in extent, and which possesses entrances and egresses unnumbered, from the cellars of houses along the route.

There have been several attempts, mostly abortive, to fill in this Atlantic avenue tunnel with debris and refuse of various kinds, but whatever has been done has been accomplished only in sections, so that the tunnel remains to-day exactly what it was eighteen years ago, a home and a refuge for crooks of the worst stamp.

It is stated that there is no place within fifty miles of New York where so many fugitives from justice and where so much stolen property is secreted as in the different sections of the Atlantic avenue tunnel.

One of the prominent officials of the Brooklyn police, upon being assured that his name would not be mentioned in connection with the subject, made the following statement to the Journal last night:

"There are sections of that tunnel—a dozen or more of them—from fifty feet to two or three hundred feet in extent, where criminals of the worst type eat and sleep and live in perfect security, and there is no earthly way in which we can get at them, unless we blow up the pavement with dynamite. Whenever a prominent crook eludes the New York police and is last heard of in the vicinity of South Ferry, we know where he is, but we can't find him. We know that he has gone into one of those 'filled-in' sections of the tunnel and that there will be no chance of catching him until he comes out. The only thing we can do, under the circumstances, is to detail a few extra officers to the vicinity where he is expected to reappear, and to wait upon his pleasure. During the last fifteen or eighteen years we have closed, by actual count, one hundred and four entrances to the tunnel. We have blown the passageways into smithereens, choked them with bricks and stones, and have destroyed the nests themselves as completely as possible without interfering with the avenue above. But we cannot entirely fill in the tunnel itself, or even that particular section of it. It is a physical impossibility. The result is that, no sooner is our raid over and completed, than the crooks begin the manufacture of a new passageway from another cellar, knowing that we will consider that particular place wiped out and that they can dwell there in comparative security for a year or more.

"Frequently they have several entrances to the same places, and they are so cleverly concealed that it would defy the sagacity of such phenomenal personages as Sherlock Holmes and Nick Carter to find them.

"Only a short time ago, one of our men found his way into one of these places, and he only succeeded by playing the 'escaped prisoner' game upon them. He was taken in through a tunnel that had been bored from a basement that had been hired and fitted up as a shoe shop. Shoe shops and laundries, Italians and Chinamen are accommodations, usually. He found a large room, the full width and height of the tunnel, partitioned off at either end with slabs, boards, barrels and boxes. Bunks were fitted up on the slabs, made of boxes and barrels; there was an old stove in the place, where they smoked, and they shouted and swore, laughed, sang and fought, in defiance of the policemen patrolling over their heads. The smoke from the fire escaped in a dozen different ways, and if seen in the open street, was thought to come from any source except the right one.

"The place I speak of was the resort of a regular gang, who did nothing worse than manufacture bogus quarters, dimes and nickels, but they were regularly organized, and when we raided the place we found two or three old offenders who were 'wanted' and who were staying there 'for their health.' Their captain was an Italian, and he was fastidious. He had a room fitted up for his personal use, and it was a dandy. There were rugs on the floor and pictures on the walls. There were easy chairs, a row of books, a row of books, papers, and a regular stock of wines, liquors and cigars. He is in Sing Sing now."



"There is no place within fifty miles of New York where so many fugitives from justice hide and where so much stolen property is secreted."



This West Indian Negro Is Dying by Inches of the Most Dreadful Known Disease in the Pest House.

(Drawn by a Journal staff artist from a photograph.)

Four Wait for Death.

Isolated Forever Within Sight of Happy, Gay and Careless People.

Their Home Is to Them a Dismal Tomb Without a Ray of Hope to Relieve the Fearful Monotony.

SLOW ADVANCE OF THE DISEASE.

Several of the Stricken May Have a Quarter of a Century of Life to Endure.

Four hopeless, apathetic, desolate men, guarded with a vigilance that is military, restrained and restricted to a narrow room and a strip of walk along the beach are living day by day a tortuous horror of horrors, the curse of which not even science can mitigate, and with awful slowness, at such a small pace that its advance cannot be measured or even calculated, the disease is making inroads upon their bodies and sapping the vitality of each with a power that is horrifying.

So time will go on with these men, each day finding them an infinitesimal shred worse, even while there be mouths and mouths when the strength of the curse seems to be stayed, and the patient appears to be growing better. One cannot call them sufferers, for they lie on their cots without an atom of pain, and walk slowly about the room and even outside without the slightest agony. That is the torture of it for the leper, to know that all this while the curse that makes them "things apart from all men," is silently, steadily gripping them with fresh tentacles and getting them more and more irrevocably into its clutch.

Oddly assorted are the four that are thus "lions" banded together to die—there

can hardly be a doubt of that—one by one. In grim fashion it might be called a society, the members of which had sworn never to part while life lasted. There is a Chinaman among them, an Italian, long resident in Brazil; a negro, and a white boy from the West Indies. Soon there will be only three, for death is speedily coming to claim the wretched—yet, perhaps, happier—black. The medical men in charge shake their heads when asked about this young negro's case, and predict that six months will see the end of it for him.

The others may live on, "accursed of men," as separated from their fellows as though they were walled up in a cemented tomb, may live on for a quarter of a century yet, and even more. Already the treatment that has been given them shows its good effect, for so far as outward appearance goes, the disease in their cases has not gone forward a particle. Yet do they wait, now and always lepers, unless the recent reports from Japan be true, and that great Japanese method, Kitasato, has discovered a leprosy lymph that will cure beyond a doubt this terror of men that has proclaimed itself independent of medical history.

Whether there be truth in this report, it is difficult to say, though much credence is given to it by doctors. From the fact that Kitasato is the foremost physician of Japan, a man world-renowned and a man who sat at the feet of the great Kook, and studied his lymph theory in its entirety. Besides, Kitasato has long been a student of leprosy, and few doctors in the world know more about it than he.

Those men that think only of material things may feel that North Brother Island, that the leprosy patients, is without horrors when compared with the famous Sandwich Islands and Polynesia, where the natives are lepers of that land are thrown without mercy, cast upon their own resources, and made to perform, no matter how severe may be their condition, all the duties of life for themselves. But in this little leper settlement of New York, horror enough remains, though sufficient care is bestowed upon the men imprisoned within its confines.

Perhaps they cannot feel the four are one and all ignorant men, who can do little more than read simple books and laboriously with the famous Sandwich Islands and Polynesia, where the natives are lepers of that land are thrown without mercy, cast upon their own resources, and made to perform, no matter how severe may be their condition, all the duties of life for themselves. But in this little leper settlement of New York, horror enough remains, though sufficient care is bestowed upon the men imprisoned within its confines.

One of their little tribe of a few steps seaward is desolate in the extreme. Over the waters of Long Island Sound, the flat expanse of Riker's Island, long used as a dumping ground, spreads itself out, and beyond that is another sweep of pitiless, unrelieved landscape. Not a vestige of human life is at any time visible, save when the big sound steamers pass with their crowded decks, and these only serve to remind the lepers that they are out of the world.

Every material thing that can be done to add to their comfort is, as a matter of course, followed out. The room the four men occupy is well ventilated and warm, its chairs and beds are comfortable, its "orderly," or man nurse, is attentive and careful. Satisfactory food, with the exception of fish, which must be avoided in leper cases, is furnished them. Diligent medical treatment is applied. But yet these men, shut off from their fellows, are living day by day a tortuous horror of horrors, the curse of which not even science can mitigate, and with awful slowness, at such a small pace that its advance cannot be measured or even calculated, the disease is making inroads upon their bodies and sapping the vitality of each with a power that is horrifying.

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The Secret Entrance to the Tunnel in Brooklyn Where Criminals Hide from the Police.

His hands he has very nearly lost the use of. Both eyes greatly swollen when he came into the pavilion, on October 31 of last year. Now the left has resumed its normal size, but it looks a giant hand when placed upon his right, which is shrunken out of all semblance to a human hand.

The man Peters is cheerful on the whole, reads a little and sits idly in his chair a great deal. That he feels his situation is easy to tell, for at times tears can be seen standing in his eyes, and the poor, drawn frame will shiver and shake a little, betraying the man's inner fears. Like all the others, he is exceedingly docile. It is a quiet, obedient set of men that they go on, their whole life being spent in their room. It is literally the silence of death.

One curious thing is to be noticed about this leper ward—that all of its four occupants keep to their own corners of the room, practically never moving from them save at the order of a physician. Even the bond of the common scourge does not seem to unite them in any way. Desolately they go on, their whole life being spent in their room. It is literally the silence of death.

Little interest is there to relate about the boy, Bryan-William Bryan. He has been in the ward longer than any one else, having been admitted on April 30 of last year. When he came he was in a terrible condition. So far as can be told from his story, he was perfectly healthy until a year and a half ago, when leprosy suddenly appeared.

The fourth man, Vito Daleo, the Italian bootblack, is a recent occupant of the ward, not having been admitted until November 25. Yet in many ways, he is the most interesting of all the cases. Leprosy has marked him in an awful and convincing way, for he wears the signs of it upon his face from scalp to throat, and from ear to ear. The entire face is terribly drawn, and its skin curled up into prominent and deep ridges on forehead, cheeks, chin and ears. The whole effect is appalling, and as one looks at it moment after moment and scans the big, rough-looking mass some gleam of remembrance comes into his brain, and he says, "Where have I seen such a face before? Yet, no, it can't, yet it is the face of a lion."

Glance after glance makes the proof convincing that this is indeed a lion's face in the guise of a man.

For what Vito Daleo is cursed with is the famous and malignant "lion leprosy," which has its wonder in the way it alters the countenance and seems to change it from that of a man into that of the king of beasts. The skin in these cases seems to take on a totally different texture, and the beard grows more coarsely and more unrestrainedly.

These men seem quite able to take care of themselves in almost every particular. The room they are in is almost square, large and high. An iron cot bedstead stands in each corner, and there are several looking chairs and a big table to make up the other furniture. Enough books to supply them all are scattered about. These latter, after they have been read by the lepers, are destroyed by being burned in the big furnace that is one of the most prominent features of the island.

Rich, but Shovels Coal.

A Brooklyn Millionaire's Son Quits College for an Engine Cab.

George Pratt, Who Wants to Learn Railroad Engineering, Begins at the Bottom.

TRIED LIFE ON A FREIGHT TRAIN.

Has Worked in the Machine Shops and Taken a Turn at Track Walking. Pluck of a Wealthy Young Man.

From college to a machine shop; from an aristocratic home on Brooklyn's "Hill" to a daily run as fireman of a locomotive, is not a step that every wealthy young man would choose, yet it is what George D. Pratt chose, and what he would be proud of if he were not so modest.

He is a son of the late Charles Pratt, the multi-millionaire philanthropist, Standard Oil prince and railway magnate. He graduated with distinguished honors from Amherst College in 1893. He spent a year in travel, making a trip around the world, and then began his earnest preparation for work. The Pratt estate is a very heavy stockholder in the Long Island Railroad. George's brother is vice-president. George set about to learn railroading in all its branches.

The shops of the company are at Morris Park, and there George first began work. He learned how the various parts of a locomotive are made and how they are put together. Then he moved to a new class-room—the cab of a locomotive. That is not for health and also bad for shoe leather.

The most important element of health and freedom from cold is pure air. Which of you would not be indignant if a butcher offered to sell you bad meat, or a grocer bad food? The air you breathe is of more vital importance, it is both food and life, yet a good many people do not worry about it. When you rent a house go to the cellar, and if it isn't airy and drained, don't live in that house. Learn something about plumbing and inspect the plumbing when you live.

Never sleep in a room that fresh air is not entering. Daily cold water bathing, dip or sponge, will prevent colds. Walk in the air worth their weight in diamonds to women in winter. Take off wraps or, at least, throw them open, when you enter a street car or "L" train.

Wear your overcoat buttoned to the throat when you go out. Never wear it in the house. Don't take anything for wet feet on your feet. Get home as quick as you can and change your shoes and stockings. Your mouth, its function in breathing exercise is to throw off carbonic acid. It is the business of the nose to strain the air and pass oxygen along.

How to Gatch Cold.

Interesting Information Furnished in a Lecture by Dr. Phillips.

A Generous Use of Common Sense Would Prevent Much Illness.

If People Dressed Properly There Would Be Less Business for Doctors.

SEALSKIN SACQUES NOT HEALTHFUL.

Always Wise to Button Up Your Overcoat and Not Wear Thin Shoes. Droughts Not So Deadly as Supposed.

Taking cold is easy. Getting rid of it is hard, and paying doctor bills is the worst of all. Dr. Wendell C. Phillips was good enough to tell an audience the other night how not to take cold and ruin the doctors. He didn't put it just that way, but it amounts to the same thing.

It worried Dr. Phillips that his name should be mentioned in connection with his lecture. It looked non-professional to get in print, he said, and his professional brethren would kick. Perhaps they are mad because this doctor goes around telling people how to avoid illness.

"Cold: How to Prevent Them," is the subject of the lecture. It was delivered at the American Museum of Natural History, being one of the free Winter courses.

"I will begin by making a practical point," said the lecturer. "Don't wear your outer street clothing when you are in the house. I advise every man and woman here to take off his overcoat and her wrap. If you don't the chances are two to one you'll have a cold to-morrow. Now, stand up and do it."

Two-thirds of the audience was on its feet for the next minute getting down to house clothing.

"You would have been foolish enough to sit here all night in those things, wouldn't you?" said the Doctor, good-humoredly. "You might as well go out without an overcoat as to sit here with one on."

"How many persons here wore rubbers out to-night? Hands up who have rubbers on."

"Not half of you. Now, that's what I thought. Every one of you should have rubbers on a night like this. To go without them is to invite colds, bronchitis, trouble, catarrh or pneumonia."

"It is astonishing how people neglect their feet. You will see a man come along with a barefooted overcoat turned up to the crown of his head and a pair of thin shoes. I saw a woman on the corner to-night in a sealskin sacque and muffled at the neck. She wore a pair of kid shoes, with water soles and no rubbers. She is sure to have a cold to-morrow."

"Don't buy your wife a sealskin sacque. If she has one don't let her wear it. You can help it. Tell her you heard a doctor lecture to-night and he said sealskin sacques were unhealthy. The blood circulation is through the feet, and your clothing remains dry."

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"Let's get back to those feet. There's where all the trouble comes from, the most abused part of the whole anatomy. Your feet get wet or cold, the blood recedes from them and goes to the head and throat, because there are more avenues open to it there than anywhere else. I am not going to be technical with you, you know."

"Well, those thousands of small blood vessels in the nose and throat become distended and irritation to the delicate membranes results. The throat becomes congested. Congestion is cold."

"Mothers are too much afraid for their children. They think that they may take cold they keep them in the house. That is a sure way to give it to them. Let them go out and toughen. Tender plants can stand frost. The boy who runs out in cold weather will be less troubled by colds than the one who is kept indoors."

"I don't believe in the draught theory much. This city is full of draught cranks. They go to church, or some other place, and the first thing they do is go draught hunting. If they don't find what they want they are disappointed. I believe very few people take cold from draughts, though most everybody seems to think that is the whole trouble."

"You should always have a cold if you bundle up your neck. Leave your neck alone. I recollect a boy who went to school with me. His mother used to make him wear a muffler three yards long. He would wind that around and around his neck. When he took it off it was cold for his neck anywhere. I never saw that boy without a cold."

"In the matter of clothing, an iron rule can't be laid down for everybody. A clerk should wear light underclothing and heavy street garments. A man who works outdoors should wear heavy underclothing."

"I advise women who work to own two pairs of rubbers, and two gossamer, one at home and the other at the place of business. Some of you will say you can't afford it. Rubbers are 50 cents and gossamer \$2.50 and \$3.00."

"You will save a lot of money on the investment. Perhaps a ten-days' doctor's bill is very nothing to you. Everybody should own two pairs of shoes. You will make money on that, too. Wear such shoes as will keep your feet healthy and also bad for shoe leather. The most important element of health and freedom from cold is pure air. Which of you would not be indignant if a butcher offered to sell you bad meat, or a grocer bad food? The air you breathe is of more vital importance, it is both food and life, yet a good many people do not worry about it. When you rent a house go to the cellar, and if it isn't airy and drained, don't live in that house. Learn something about plumbing and inspect the plumbing when you live. Never sleep in a room that fresh air is not entering. Daily cold water bathing, dip or sponge, will prevent colds. Walk in the air worth their weight in diamonds to women in winter. Take off wraps or, at least, throw them open, when you enter a street car or "L" train. Wear your overcoat buttoned to the throat when you go out. Never wear it in the house. Don't take anything for wet feet on your feet. Get home as quick as you can and change your shoes and stockings. Your mouth, its function in breathing exercise is to throw off carbonic acid. It is the business of the nose to strain the air and pass oxygen along."