

[Uncle Jimmie told me nothing]

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Subject — The Shoemaker of Lynn (Uncle Jimmie) 1938-9 Mass.

Section #2

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[Uncle Jimmie told me nothing of his courtship. I did however secure some glimpses from his sister-in-law.?] [?]

“His first wife was a tubercular girl, beautiful, but definitely sick when Uncle Jimmie married her. They were both in their early twenties. Friends were assembled in the Catholic Church for the ceremony.

“What a good face he has,” said one red-haired Irish girl from northern New York who had come here to visit a few months before and who had remained because she secured a job as “skiver” in a shoe factory. She watched him leave the church with his sick bride on his arm. [?] Some well meaning friend had warned Uncle Jimmie had been warned that this frail girl could not live long, that she had was consumptive. [.] “consumption” No #. run in above

“I asked that girl to marry me,” said , Uncle Jimmie, “an' she said ‘yes'. ‘yes.’ Now marry her I will whether she's sick or not.” 2 I In “Within one short year his wife died. And a few

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years later Uncle Jimmie walked to the altar again[,?] this time with the red haired girl who had termed his face "good." [[?] entire page?]

They had six children, four of whom are dead. No # run in They [ar?] unusually silent about these deaths. ' Once , however, while riding by beautiful St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery with a young mother, Aunt Mary remarked, "Up there, side by side, lays four of a my darlings."

[Nothing more said for a mile or so while Aunt Mary held the other woman's baby. "But I would not wish them back—no, I would not wish them back."?] All of this can [probably?] be deleted

Only once during an acquaintanceship off six years have I heard Uncle Jimmie mention what to him was equally tragic. That too was in the presence of a child.

He reached down in his trouser pocket to extract a dime.

"This is for fur ice cream," he said, "two ice creams." He patted the youngster's curly head. "We had one like this once an' she left us when she wuz jest about this age. There wuz a baby that went too and then two older ones right in their best years." 3 He ended the conversation exactly as Aunt Mary had ended it, "But I wun't wish them back." [?] [enter?] [page?] " The two grown children who had died and one son who is still living, had been afflicted with tuberculosis. " The son who recovered from the disease [was brought to a realization of the real nature of his "cold" by a mouthful of blood one day. He went to a doctor and was told that a sanitorium was his only hope.?] [?]

"I din't tell Mother 'till the night before I wuz goin' ta leave. No use to ta worry her." He went to a hospital about 100 miles distance away and stayed in bed for six months. He said, No # run in above

"I could not stand any more of it and so I said to myself, 'die or not die, I am goin home. " " I mapped out my own cure. I figured that 'stead of goin' to bed with chickens like they

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did at the san, that I would go ta bed at midnight, and stay right under them blankets 'till the next noon. No # run in “ At noon I got up, at breakfast, and then went down town fur a walk. No #

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At supper time, I et my dinner, and round 11 or 11.30 at night I'd eat my supper. Then I'd climb up to ta the attic where nobody slept but me. [?] [?] entire page “ It did the trick all right but it took about four years. I'm O.K. today. Do I look sick?” No # run in

[It is true that this man who now nears fifty is an arrested case. “

Some years prior to coming down with this disease, this man had worked in the Lynn shoe factories. He gives an interesting picture of jovial good fellowship there.?) [?]

“The girls in stitchin' room offen had a gas plate hitched up somewhere near where they worked and they would always give a fella a cup a coffee to ta drink with his sandwiches. For not many of us owned automobiles and almost none no one went home ta lunch. T. [B.?] son's story about shoe factories

“Some a the women even cooked a hull meal there. One woman made a dang good boiled dinner. We got a sniff all mornin' and at noon we'd get a plateful if we found out how ta get on the right side a her.

She used ta have her children come in from school fur their dinner most every day. That way they din't have ta go home and eat a cold lunch the them days their mother was in the shop.”

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[?] “ We wuz encouraged ta have a good time in the shop, long's it din't interfere with work. Always a big party at Christmas time. And baseball teams at every shop of any size a'tal. “ Uncle Jimmie gave me glimpses of recreation in the shop too. “ A lotta men in the shop liked ta read. I been a reader all ma life. I learned ma ABCs in Ireland 'fore I come here

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and I only went ta school here 'bout four year. But I always wunted ta know things an' I usta spend all my sparetime in a librury run by the Y. M. H. A. down on Monroe St. Went to the public librury too ta look up the answers ta questions I wanted ta know. Uncle Jimmie's story [Factory?]

“The public librury itself shows how shop men liked ta read. It's a big librury fur this town and always wuz, and times when the shops is empty you'll always find lots a men in them readin' rooms.

“First along, when I wuz a boy, I read stuff like Horatio Alger. He wuz a great hero a mine. And ya know, I think it's good fur boys ta have him as a hero. After I got tired a him, or growed up too much ta enjoy him, I got hold of a magazine called “ ‘ Youth's Companion. “ ‘

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After a while that got like paper pulp ta me too fur I wanted something deeper. Well I kept on and after a while I got ta readin' Shakespeare. “ In the old days when a lotta of the “ten footers” wuz still standin — after the big shops wuz built— there wuz some [a us cutters?] would take cuttin” work into 'em. [/Maybe?] four of five would each rent a bench and cut piece work for some factory. We would take turns takin days off ta read ta one another. We read most everything there wuz found ta read. Sometimes the newspaper. Sometimes something about religion or politics. That way cuttin' shoes wuz not only work ta help us earn a livin'. We wuz learnin' something. [?] “ Before a man married in them days, nay say when a fellow fella was still in his teens, that readin' a Shakespeare helped us ta have a lotta fun. Them wuz the days when the stage shows usta come ta Lynn. But the managers would not wouldn't hire the hull company, just the main actors. Often we fellas— Irish boys are usually tall fur their age, would hire ourselves out ta be soldiers or sentinels. We'd only be on the stage once or twice in a scene and say a coupla words. We din't need much trainin' for we had learnt our Shapespeare Shakespeare in the ten footers. “they They called us “ soupers “ . “soupers.” Sometimes too we'd be the moon, for we would hold

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a candle behind cut out colored paper, or we'd be thunder by poundin' a piece a sheet iron. 7 “ We could see the show twice a day free fur a week from the wings, we soupers'. “ Them Shakespearean plays wuz great things. Pity mora a 'em are not on ta day. For that guy Shakespeare knows a mighty lotta human nature.” “ Another thing that we usta do in between times when we had ta lay off fur a few hours, and at noon and Saturday afternoon, wuz play cards. In the old days there wuz a game called 'shoemaker's Leu'. Lou.' Ya could play fur pretty high stakes. I've heard some pretty durn good poker players say it wuz the slickest and fastest game they ever played. Why even when a man wuz playin' fur low stakes, he could easy lose his whole pay on a Saturday afternoon if he din't watch out. “ Offen times a bunch a card players would play with some one who would drift in from New York or Pennsylvania, say some shoe worker who come here lookin' fur work while their places wuz closed down. “ After the game, one of the Lynn fellas who wusn't married would take them fellas home with 'em and stake 'em ta eats and a place ta sleep ‘ ‘ till they get a job or went back home. 8 “ There wuz that kinda feelin' in the shoe shops. Sorta lika lodge. We always felt we hadta help the other fella out. That's the way it wuz too, time a sickness or death. One time when a paper wuz brought round fur us to put down how much we would give to a fella that hadta quit his job and go in a hospital. I knew that fella had some money and I knew he was goin' ta get help from somewheres else. But I put down \$1 a [dollar?] and most every one else in the shop did. Would never turn a fella down if he got sick.

“Once the union started a benefit ‘ sociation. Each member had ta pay in so much and then he would get so much if he got sick or if he died. That finally petered out though, fur folks drew on it when they wuzn't really sick. Say a woman wuz goin ta have a baby. Well, she jest took the time off and got paid fur it through the sociation. “ So finally the thing busted up. The money was divided out ta all the members. “ If anybody died the paper always come round too. We always went ta the wake too. Years ago there wuz always a good deal ta eat and ta drink too, but nowadays most a that has been done away with. To a lodge member we always went in a body and we'd leave some money there. In

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the old days everybody din't have insurance and that money from the lodge and from the shop sure come in handy. “