

# NOTABLE FIRE FIGHTER

**SLEEPS ALMOST LITERALLY WITH ONE EYE OPEN, BUT NEVER COMPLAINS OF LOSS OF SLEEP**

## CHIEF CROKER IN HIS BIG RED MOTOR CAR

PROBABLY the most strenuous man in America is Edward F. Croker, chief of the New York city fire department. For nearly eight years this physical phenomenon has been at the head of the fire fighting forces in the greatest city in this continent and the second largest city in the globe. It may be said that almost literal meaning that Chief Croker sleeps with one eye open, for he seldom finds time to get both eyes securely shut for a comfortable nap. While more than four millions of people sleep serenely in the five boroughs of the greater city Edward F. Croker has been at a fire alarm going at the edge of his bedstead, ready to leap out and rush in his big red devil automobile to a fire which may imperil the lives of some of the millions over whom he keeps constant watch.

There are five chiefs who use their offices as private snags in the main, but Croker is not of that breed. He is a born fire fighter and sniffs the scent of smoke with a fine relish. Besides, there is his mighty responsibility, which would keep him alert even without his natural propensity for fighting fires. Just how many hours of sleep Chief Croker averages in the twenty-four hours the year around is not easy to approximate. From four to six hours is said to be his average—somewhere between these figures, not above the maximum named. He believes it his business to be present at fires where he thinks the chief is needed, and consequently he is always ready.

Chief Croker goes to all fires south of Thirty-fourth street, in Manhattan,

on the first alarm. On the second alarm he goes to all fires south of Fifty-ninth street, and on the third alarm to all fires on Manhattan Island north of that street. There are 180 alarm stations in what is called the Croker district, to which the chief responds on the first alarm at night. Now and then he may get a full night's sleep, but that is exceptional, for New York has many fire alarms, serious or insignificant. No matter how small the fire may be, the chief makes the run for the blaze may be serious.

Physically, Chief Croker is a perfect specimen. Were he otherwise he would not be able to stand the strain. But the strenuous of his calling does not appear to affect his health unless it be that it adds to his robustness.

**As to Loss of Sleep.**

Somewhere once asked Croker when he made up the sleep he lost at night. "I never make it up," he replied. "The sleep I lose tonight is gone. The sleep I lose every night of my life is never caught up. It goes on the account of profit and loss."

Chief Croker is a fireman, not a preacher, but recently he delivered a secular sermon to an interviewer which the health culturists may use for capital.

"This thing of losing sleep," said the chief, "all depends upon the man. Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred who haven't been firemen will try to make up for lost sleep by taking a drink of whiskey or a cup of coffee. There never was a worse mistake. I cut out coffee and after I became chief. My walk out of bed multiplied then, and I found that coffee was worse than the loss of sleep, so I decided to let it go. So far as whiskey is concerned, that only makes matters worse, and a man who has lost sleep should shun stimulants as poison.

"Cold water is the stuff for a man who has been out all night and has to go to work in the office the next morning. I have recently read the opinions of some doctors that we all drink too much water, that every drop of water taken into the stomach makes that much more work for the heart. That's all nonsense. I drink five or six glasses

of cold ice water with every meal. For breakfast I drink a whole pitcherful of it, and I do the same when I go to bed at night. If I feel drowsy in the morning when I start about my work, I drink freely of cold water and I am aroused.

"Another thing to offset the loss of sleep is a cold bath. Every morning of my life I take a plunge in water that's warm enough to start circulation going at a good clip, and then suddenly turn on the cold stream. It makes little difference to me whether I have slept eight hours or half an hour during the night so long as I can take this cold bath before going to my office at headquarters in the morning."

Truly a water cure extraordinary!

**His Daily Programme.**

Chief Croker goes to headquarters in East Sixty-seventh street about 10 o'clock and works until about 4 in the afternoon. His work there is executive. He is the commander of about 4,000 uniformed firemen, at 210 fire stations. One of these stations, at Far Rock-

away, is thirty miles from headquarters. Reports from all must be looked over by the chief. The sick list he must examine with the department doctor. All transfers, charges, repairs and other things incidental to the department he must look after, not to speak of the multitudinous letters he receives, chiefly from women who write anonymously, complaining that the landlord has not provided fire escapes according to law or that the neighbor in the flat below has put flowerpots or an outdoor ice chest on the fire escape. These letters the chief does not ignore. To do so might leave opportunity for a frightful fire, with loss of human life. All complaints are investigated by order of the chief, or they are turned over to the fire commissioner downstairs with recommendations.

In his off hours the chief climbs into his big racing automobile of fifty horsepower and speeds away to visit and inspect the fire stations. He makes it a point to inspect each of them two or three times a month. When he inspects he inspects. He

gives the fire engine wheel a jolt with his brawny hand to see if it is on straight, and if there is any looseness he orders the captain to make a requisition for repairs.

At his night headquarters in Great Jones street Chief Croker sleeps with most of his clothes on, for at any moment he may be aroused by one of those 180 first alarm stations. Then he leaps into the big red devil and cuts through the streets at a mile a minute clip. He is the only man in New York who has eminent right of way without regard to the speed laws. Frequently the chief reaches a fire considerably in advance of any of his firemen and waits for them to come up. Since he introduced the big automobile his men have bestirred themselves frantically to make lightning time in order to get there if possible before the chief has found out all about the blaze.

**Not For Mere Ornament.**

Chief Croker is not an ornamental commander. Quite often he grabs the hose and rushes in with it himself, yelling to the men his old battle cry: "Get 'er up, boys! Get 'er up!"

One of his lieutenants says:

"I'll tell you what they say of the chief in the department. It's not the man to stand outside a burning building and order the men to go in. He says 'Come on!' and leads the way. At a fire he's in it, on top of it, through it, all over it. Never saw such a man. Doesn't know what fear is. In the old days it was different. The chief in those days used to stand outside and swear at the men to drive them into the fire. But not Croker. I never heard him utter an oath, and I've seen him working like a nigger at many a fire. He'd have been chief a great deal sooner if his name hadn't been Croker—that's sure."

**Nephew of Ex-Tammany Boss.**

Which reminds us that Edward F. Croker is a nephew of Richard Croker, the former Tammany boss, now residing in Ireland. But it is not probable that the Croker name kept him out of the chief's place, any consideration time, for he was only thirty-six years old when he succeeded Fire Chief Hugh Bonner early in 1889. Croker was appointed a fireman on his twenty-first birthday, June 22, 1884, and he has been a fireman every day and every night since then. There were a few weeks in 1902 when he was suspended, practically dismissed, by the fire commissioner, charges being preferred against him. The charges were political, personal and otherwise, but the court reinstated him, and that same year when the International Association of Fire Engineers met in New York the secretary cast the unanimous ballot of the body for Chief Croker as the next president of the organization and a vote of justly first class was given to the Palisades across the Hudson. It was extremely strange to see chiefs that they elected Croker to succeed him.

Edward F. Croker could be known something about the fire fighting business. He has fought more than 300 fires in his twenty-two years of service. From the beginning to his last, a life study of his profession. He would rather fight fire than eat. Two meals a day, never taking time for midday luncheon when on duty. He is a good eater, however.

**Withal a Modest Man.**

Croker's men look upon the chief as the soldiers under General Langford. He goes like a soldier, in the fire and usually gets there first. The way is full of stories of Croker's modesty—how he has rescued men from upper stories and fallen with falling floors from the upper stories to the basement, how he has been hospitalized for bruises and broken bones and that sort of thing. Once as he was tried to get the chief in a talk about these experiences for publication.

"Don't think of these things," he said, shutting his jaws with a snap. "They're part of the business."

"He says nothing," a man remarked in the presence of one who knew Croker intimately. "He'll go right into a situation if a fire catches him, but he has no heart."

"Hold on there," said the man who knew Croker. "I remember when I was a boy I'd be shut myself up in my room for five days and never let my mother in till she was well. He looks there, all right."

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## Horace Fletcher, Unique Food Reformer; High Prices Do Not Disturb His Equanimity

WHENEVER the beef trust announces that there is to be an immediate advance in the price of fresh meat the public pulse begins to flutter more or less wildly. It is not that a contemporary rise in the selling price of meat and meat products alone is regarded as a matter of grave public concern. These occasions have been so frequent during the last decade that the American public is becoming quite accustomed to them. Nevertheless there is a feeling of great inequity, and there is abundant cause for it.

For whenever the trust raises the price of meat dealers in all other commodities follow the pernicious example with remarkable unanimity. It is not easy to understand why it is that clothespins and toothbrushes should acquire additional value when meat rises, but they appear so to do. The subtle interdependence which may exist between two products that differ widely in their composition is illustrated by the following story.

One day a frequent guest at a popular priced restaurant found that his favorite "beefsteak smothered in onions" had been advanced to the extent of an additional dime.

"How about that, George?" he demanded of the "light colored man" who was serving him.

"It's de beef trust," said de pecky hot trait," said George, declared impressively.

"But the onions, surely the trust had nothing to do with raising the price of the onions?" persisted the guest, ready to extract a dime's worth of amusement from the discussion.

"No, not exactly," said the pecky trait, "insane relish gaudy de game when any relish's gone on. Deo is de strong for dat," George explained without a quaver.

And that affords an admirable explanation of the whole matter. When the meat combines with the onion, the onion dealer in almost all other kinds of articles which have become necessities to the human race are pretty certain to follow suit, and the wants of the consumer, he they inherited or acquired, make him powerless to resist.

Be that as it may, there is at least one man in America who is not made

uncomfortable by the possibility of future trust bondage for the human race. If there were more like him—a great many more, that is—there would be no further solution of the food trust problem. All iniquitous combines to regulate the food supply would be compelled to go out of the business, and there would be nothing left on earth but peace and plenty.

Horace Fletcher is his home, and he is the inventor and exploiter of a system of dietetics known as Fletcherism. Perhaps it is not strictly accurate to call him the inventor of the system which he practices as well as preaches. It would be better, perhaps, to claim for him that he has revived and restored to its former importance the original process of food ingestion.

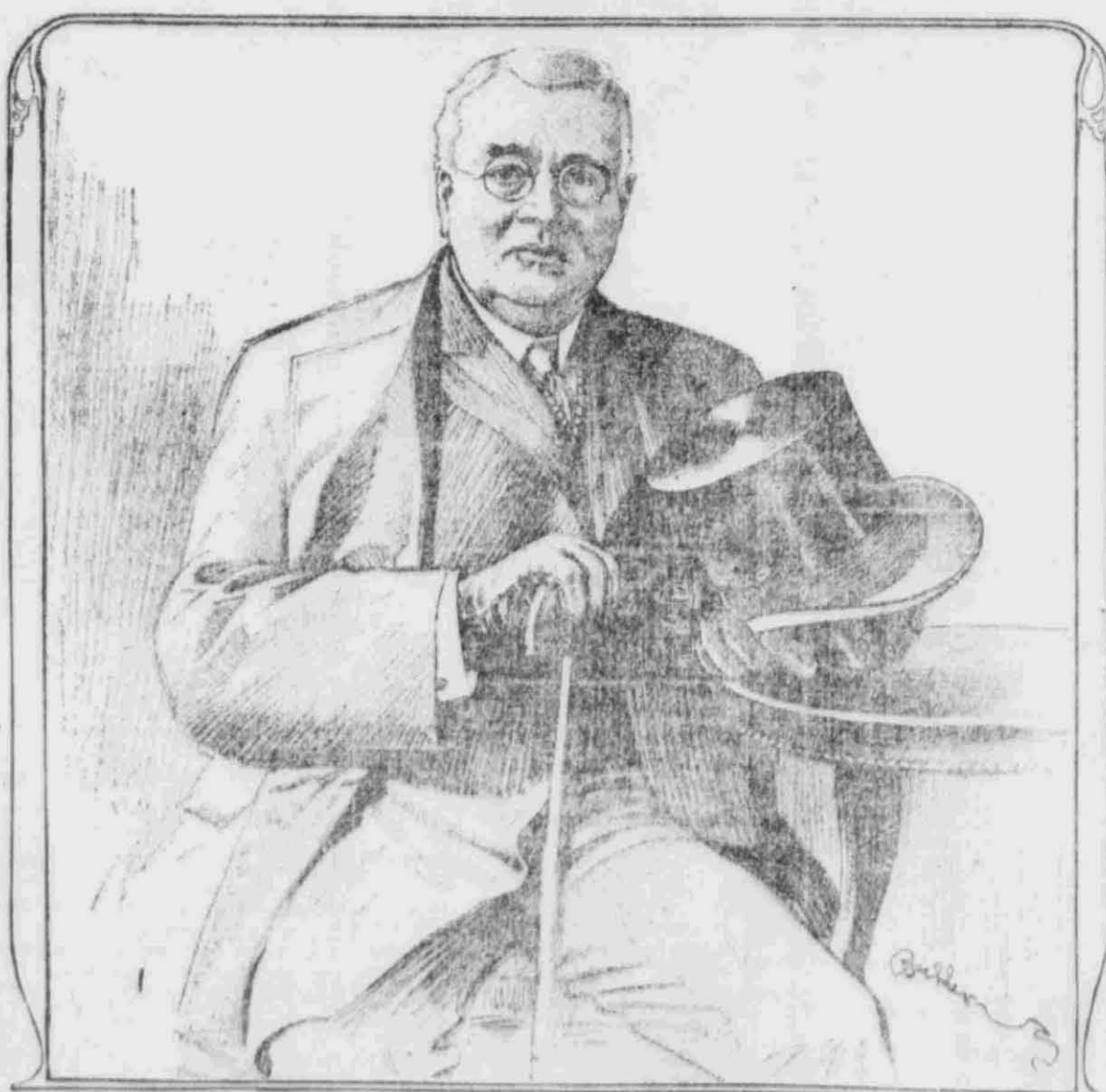
Now, eating, it must be remembered, is not as it used to be, not at all as it was intended to be. The original digestive apparatus was an absolutely perfect mechanism, but it was not suffered to remain so. It was not long before man began to tinker with it with all the abandon of an inquisitive boy left alone with the discarded grandfather's clock in the garret. It cannot be denied that man has worked a great modification of his mechanism. The outcome of his meddlesome interference is that he has put himself into the power of the merciless food combine.

**There is a Remedy.**

According to his chief exponent, Fletcherism is the only logical antidote. "If people did their eating according to right principles, no increase in the price of food could be a serious matter," he declares.

This is a radical statement, but scientific investigation seems to justify it. It is really a simple philosophy. It consists in eating only when one is hungry, in chewing what one is eating until there is nothing left to chew, enjoying the taste of every morsel, eating only what is enjoyed and ceasing to eat when the appetite is satisfied.

As this philosophy is expounded by its advocates there seems to be nothing especially difficult about it. That, however, is a mistake. To require the average healthy American to pause and make sure that he is receiving the full benefit and enjoyment of everything he eats would be to impose a hardship.



HORACE FLETCHER, APOSTLE OF NEW EATING SYSTEM.

There is no doubt that this same average man swallows, but does not eat, in the fullest significance of the term. It is an account of this that he eats more than he needs, derives less enjoyment from his food, and is burdened with more physical discomfort than need be, is less able to accomplish things really worth while than he was intended to be, and, not least important, spends so much more money than is necessary that it is no wonder that a prospect of higher prices for food fills him with dismay.

**The Problem Solved.**

Mr. Fletcher has solved the problem, and he is a living example of the correctness of his solution. Now at the age of fifty-five, a man of great wealth and abundant leisure, he is conducting a modest propaganda for the spread of the dietetic principles which have served him so admirably. Quite lately he visited Yale and broke all records for physical endurance, defeating all the brawny young athletes who tried their prowess in that famous center of cultivated strength.

He maintains that he could conduct a hotel in such a manner that if all the guests could practice exactly what he teaches the cost for each of them would not exceed 15 cents a day, exclusive of the expense of serving, cooking, rent, etc. As if that were not sufficiently startling, Mr. Fletcher adds that his guests would be fed on the best in the market, the most exquisite dietaries to be had for ready cash. Although he is a millionaire and lives at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York city, Mr. Fletcher spends less than a dollar a day for his food. He eats no breakfast, and usually his midday meal is the only regular meal of the day. He admits, however, that he is subject to no fixed rule in the matter of eating, never indulging in refreshment of any description unless he feels hungry.

Sometimes when out for a walk in the late evening he passes a baker's shop and is seized with a sudden craving for a cake or pie displayed attractively in the window. To such a longing he always yields, believing that his physical man needs that very thing. He also believes that if every man, woman and child in the country would adopt his method most of the ills to which the hu-

man race submits so tamely would disappear.

**The Normal Man.**

The normal man, he asserts, is the one who follows the plan of animal maintenance which he has found to be so satisfactory. The man who eats three or more meals a day is abnormal, made so by long years of habit. But there is hope for even such a man, eating only when he is hungry, eating such food as he really needs, and chewing every mouthful well, he has lost all its savor and is reduced to a liquid that must be swallowed such a man would find a method in a moment to find his normal state. With one meal a day and that of the simplest food.

And this, he maintains, is the principle on which all men should live physically. If they were to adopt Fletcherism they would live longer, as they grow older, which is precisely what the average man needs. Five years ago a life insurance company declined to accept him as a risk.

GEORGE H. PRANGE.

**A LOFTY TUMBLE.**

One of the most remarkable falls was that which occurred a day or two ago in an iron manufacturing building on the eighteenth floor of a building to consist of several in an eastern city. Some unusual sound on a lower floor started the man out of his seat and he went to the window. As he looked out he saw a man hanging from the edge of the roof. He was a man of about 40 years of age, and he was still 250 feet above the ground. He also went back to work later.

**Shetlands, where they are catching sheep.**

A swarm of bees alighted in a tent in which a gentleman kept his hampers. The hampers attracted the bees and he succeeded in driving them off. One of the bees was killed, and several were badly hurt.

A woman named Susan, recently back and struck her head. Several hampers were driven into her skull, causing death two hours later.

### BITS OF GOSSIP.

A Roman urn was unearthed during excavations at Seaford, near Scarborough, England. A workman, under the impression that there might be money in it, gave it a tap with his pick, with the result that it was broken.

At a London court a defendant was summoned for the nonpayment of a bill, but failed to put in an appearance. Suddenly the plaintiff rushed forward,

flourishing an illustrated paper. "Here he is, your honor!" he exclaimed breathlessly. "Here he is in a picture, which shows that he was at Henley yesterday!" The plaintiff obtained his order.

One of the new knights is Sir W. S. Gilbert, partner with the late Sir Arthur Sullivan in the famous Savoy operas. Sir William is a Middlesex mag-

istrate. A few weeks ago a small boy stepped into the witness box at Edgware, and Sir W. S. Gilbert inquired, "Do you know what will happen to you in the future if you tell lies?" "Yes, sir," replied the small boy. "Then you know more than I do!" exclaimed the new knight, amid much laughter.

Radford Kipling, who received such a hearty welcome when he went to Durham to receive a degree, was once paid 50 cents a word for a story in a

magazine. This induced a young man to write to him and inquire 50 cents in his letter. "Hearing that wisdom is being retailed at a shilling a word," wrote the youth, with gentle sarcasm, "I send 50 cents for a sample." Kipling kept the money order and sent back the word "Thanks!"

Among the new artist knights is Professor Hubert von Herkomer, B.A., who already was a Prussian Knight. He was born in Bavaria, but went to Eng-

land in early life, had a hard struggle before Dame Fortune took him in her arms. Sir Hubert has painted numerous portraits, for which he has received fees up to \$1,000 each.

Lord Roberts presided at the annual meeting of the Society of Miniature Rifle Clubs, held in London, at which it was stated that the number of clubs affiliated to it had increased from 32 in 1902 to 194 in 1907.

The Mercy dock and harbor board

recently accepted a tender for the construction of the largest sand pump dredger ever designed. It will lift 10,000 tons of sand by a process of suction in fifty minutes from a depth of seventy feet.

The Rev. A. Tupper-Goss, rector of Lowestoft, England, goes to his flock, instead of expecting them to come to him. He has visited the Cornish coast while they were engaged in the mackerel fishing, and now he is going to the

Shetlands, where they are catching herring.

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