



A REAL LUCKY PENNY

BY
JACOB A. RIIS



READERS of The Outlook will remember the genesis of the Christmas Stamp. It was a Danish postmaster, Einar Holboell, who dreamed the dream of benevolence that has built in Denmark a large sanatorium for tubercular children, three convalescent homes for those who are getting well, and a hospital in Copenhagen for children born to a worse fate, if that is possible—with the taint of syphilis. And all over the world the little stamps have become bullets in the war on the White Plague which humanity is at last in the way of winning.

Postmaster Holboell has dreamed another dream. It was while he was lying ill in a hospital, threatened with the loss of his sight, that it came to him with results even swifter than those which attended his first vision. The "lucky penny" was born this winter, and already it is justifying its name in other lands besides his own. The warm-hearted friend of the children wrote to tell me of his joy in it, and here is the story.

"You remember," his letter runs, "Hans Andersen's story of the little girl's grief because she could not go to the funeral of the pug, not having the suspender button that was the price of admission. It came into my mind while I lay with bandaged eyes, and it worried me, for the sorrows of childhood are as real and as bitter as those of our older years. And naturally I thought of the poor blind, whose lot is getting even harder as more and more the work of their hands is displaced by the products of our age of machinery. All at once I saw the way to start every Danish child in life with a ray of sunlight that should make the little one rich and shed its radiance down the dark way so many have to tread. That was how the lucky penny was born."

This is how it does its work: By arrangement with the association, "Denmark's

Blind," every Danish midwife presents to the happy father of a new-born child at the psychological moment the penny, together with a post-office money-order blank that has this note in the margin: "On the occasion of my child's birth I give —— to the needy blind, acknowledging receipt of my child's lucky penny," and over all the device, "A gift from one who sees the light for the first time to those who will never see it."

The amount is left to the giver. It may be five cents, or five dollars, or five hundred dollars, according to how happy he feels and how deep is his purse. The lucky penny began work in February, and in that month it brought in six thousand kroner. A krone is a little over a quarter, but its purchasing power is more nearly that of a dollar. Seventy-five thousand children are born in Denmark every year. Very few of them will be without their lucky penny, and they are not likely to part with it. It is easy to foresee in it a very considerable revenue for the blind. As for the child: "I call it the lucky penny," writes my postmaster friend, "because to be able to give is the best of luck. And what better start could any one have in life than, that the first thing done by him, or in his name, was a kind deed?"

The lucky penny is of bronze, the size of one of our old copper cents. It is struck in the Copenhagen mint by the Government for this purpose only. On one face it has the word "Lykke"—Danish for luck, under a six-pointed star; on the other the head of Denmark's Queen, with a four-leaf clover. Curiously enough, it bears no date, though it is the one real original birthday penny. The lucky penny is not current coin. It buys only what its name implies; but what golden sovereign could do more? And how many of them can do that?

Sweden already has started the lucky penny

upon the path broken by Denmark. In Norway and Germany they have enlisted it with the Christmas stamp in the campaign for open-

air schools for anæmic children. All Europe wants to know about it. Has it no suggestion for the friends of the needy blind in our country?

HOW RUSSIA LOSES GOOD CITIZENS

BY GEORGE KENNAN

THIRTY-TWO years ago, Isaac A. Hourwich,¹ a student in the University of St. Petersburg, was arrested and thrown into prison at the age of nineteen, upon the charge of "political untrustworthiness." His accuser, an *agent provocateur* of the secret police, declared that the young man was a dangerous character, and produced, in support of his accusation, the manuscript of an essay entitled "What is Constitutionalism?" which the prisoner had written and which had been found in his apartment. After spending some weeks in a solitary confinement cell of the House of Preliminary Detention, young Hourwich was brought before the Procurator of the Crown (Pleve, afterward Minister of the Interior) for examination. There was no evidence whatever to indicate that he had been engaged in a seditious conspiracy, or that a year's study in the University had made him a dangerous enemy of the State; but his passport showed that he was a Jew, and when a Jew, in Russia, begins to ask such questions as "What is Constitutionalism?" it is time to put him in jail. Pleve, therefore, sent the youth back to the House of Preliminary Detention, where he might meditate on constitutionalism without imperiling autocracy.

A few months later, when the Liberal statesman Loris Melikof became Minister of the Interior, the case of the "politically untrustworthy" student was again taken up, and, after another examination, Hourwich was expelled from the University and sent back, in disgrace, to his native town of Minsk. Under such a government as Russia then had, it was practically impossible for an intelligent, thoughtful, and energetic young man to keep out of trouble long, and in the latter part of 1881 Hourwich was arrested again—

this time for organizing "Self-Improvement Circles" and reading to small assemblages of boys or girls Mill's essay on "Liberty," Buckle's "History of Civilization," and Professor Ivanyúkof's "Political Economy Since the Time of Adam Smith."

From an official point of view, the asking of such a question as "What is Constitutionalism?" by a nineteen-year-old Jewish boy was serious and dangerous enough; but the teaching of liberty, political economy, and the history of civilization to school children by the same boy was a menace to "social order and public tranquillity" which could not possibly be tolerated. Hourwich, therefore, was sent by administrative process to western Siberia.

Russian political exiles, as a rule, do not allow enforced change of environment to serve as an excuse for discouragement or idleness. They may be arrested, imprisoned, and banished; but in the remote and often inhospitable regions to which they are sent they generally find something to do that is useful, if not pecuniarily profitable. Some study anthropology, and compile grammars and dictionaries of little-known native languages; some turn their attention to botany or geology; some collect traditions and folk-lore stories of the Samoyedes, the Kirghis, or the Buriats; and all work industriously at one thing or another. Hourwich, who at the time of his banishment was twenty-one years of age, made a painstaking and exhaustive study of Siberian immigration. In the course of the four years that he spent as an exile in the province of Tobolsk he interviewed twelve hundred families of Russian immigrants, as they passed through Yalutorfsk and Ishim on their way eastward, and obtained from them all possible information with regard to their economic condition in the widely scattered provinces from which they came; their reasons for leaving home; their pecuniary resources; and their food, expenses, sick rate, and mortality on the

¹ Pronounced in Russia "Góor-vitch" or "Hóor-vitch." The Russian alphabet has no letter with precisely the value of "h" in "hope," but in the transliteration of such English words as "hypothesis" and "hypnotism," or such names as "Homer" and "Hayden," the Russian "g" is partly aspirated and used as a substitute for "h."