Irish Bars

HARRY GOLDEN

There is a district in New York I know quite well, but it is changing quickly. The district is from 72nd St. to 115th St., between Amsterdam and Columbus Ave. It was a district once populated solidly by Irish. They were laborers and civil servants, firemen and policemen, clerks in the big grocery stores like the A&P and Gristede's, which made it a point to hire Irish immigrant boys.

This district always had a saloon on every block, and often two. The men gathered there for a few hours, and it was in this district that the practice of "bouncing" a free drink for every three purchases was first introduced (sadly enough, it is a practice nonexistent in many older parts of this country).

The names of these saloons told you exactly where you were. There was no mistaking them. They were called: "The Shamrock Bar," "The Dubliner," "Skelly's," "Thill's Irish Hangout," "Meath's," etc. But as you walked along the district today, you see the saloons have given way and are now Puerto Rican "bodegas" (grocery stores). What saloons remain have changed their names to the "Paradiso" and the "La Cieelo de Harlem."

Here and there, however, an Irish saloon remains stubbornly stuck to the last. "Quinn and Kling's" is still there and "The River Shannon Bar and Grill." But they do not flourish. As you walk by you can peep over the green paint on the window—six feet of the bar's window—never always painted green for two reasons: (1) the green identified it as Irish; (2) the wires passing back and forth could never see over it and thus aye a relaxing husband.

In these last remaining bars you can see two or three old codgers on their stools and the Irish bartender wiping the mahogany counter with his apron. Otherwise the place is empty. The very emptiness itself seems to proclaim that here lives a stubborn Irishman who will stick to the very last. But the very last is not far off, and on my next visit perhaps "The River Shannon Bar and Grill" will give way to the "Ananrosa Bodega."

Each group came, thrived, and moved on, leaving a deposit of its culture and a memory, and all of them together made America.

Eavesdropper

So one day when he found a Negro street gang breaking up worn pavement with a sledge hammer, he paused and saw the amusing sight, and while straining his ears was careful to look another way, seeming to pay no attention. After a quarter of an hour he suddenly caught the meaning of the words and was rewarded in a singular way, for what the gang leader was saying he wished his hammer was.

White man settlin' on the wall (handel) White man settlin' on the wall (handel) White man settlin' on the wall (handel) White man settlin' on the wall (handel)

By Walt Kelly

Eavesdropper - From "The Man Who Feels Left Out" by Gerald W. Johnson. (Morrow, $4). It is not always well to understand too clearly. Some years ago a learned doctor in the faculty of a Southern university developed an interest in collecting folk songs, especially the curious chants of labor gangs. He found two difficulties in his way: the direct approach usually

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