Children Of The Tenements

The Effort Of Philanthrophy To Solve One Of New York City's Greatest Problems

Correspondence of The Observer.

New York, Jan. 19.—It is estimated that of New York's 575,000 children—a number which does not include the swarming population of infants—14,000 boys and girls between the ages of two and sixteen are in the city's hands as destitutes, as improperly guardianed, or as criminals, petty or great. In other words, more than two and a half per cent. of the next generation of New Yorkers are to-day in the shelter of asylums, reformatories, and charitable substitutes for homes in general.

Only a few years ago the effort of philanthropy would have been to cast these thousands in one mould, like so many buttons subjecting them all to the same treatment regardless of their individual characteristics. The wiser policy of to-day gives the personal equation first consideration. It begins by making acquaintances—the intimate acquaintances, such as can be gained only by personal contact—with the surroundings that have produced the young unfortunates and the people who have been responsible for their care. The New York Juvenile Asylum, for instance—the Protestant institution to which, with the Catholic and Hebrew protectories, the city authorities consign most of the waifs who come directly under their notice—employs a visitor to cultivate this personal acquaintance in the light of which so much of its work is done.

There has been at the Juvenile Asylum for a month now a well-grown German lad of twelve whose peculiar indifference and hardiness always attracts attention. His mother, at home in three rooms of a tenement on the upper East Side, cries about him every day, calling him "my Philip."

"He was not a bad boy, my Philip," she says to the visitor, "only he has cursed so hart and as was always mit de bad boys. Nights he vould stay oud, unt den, because he is afraid of getting a vipping off his papa, he don't dast to come back. Sometimes he comes back and sleeps in the hall outside; but he vouldn't never come in.

"Den von morning, ven he had been avay t'ree nights, he comes in unt says 'Mama,' he says, 'von't you gif me a cup of coffe?' Unt I tell him I must take him to der judge to put him away because I vas not able to keep him from the bad boys. But he broke my heart," wept the patient, stolidly-looking German woman.

Yet in this home there appears to be nothing to drive a boy away. The rooms are bare but they are clean and wholesome; there is even an attractiveness about them. The mother distressfully thin and sad, has a touching tenderness of manner toward her children; the father is a sober hard working man who uses his authority with his family justly and kindly. It seems to have been the curse of the pavements that made Philip unmanageable.

Only two doors away there is another German mother whose boy was sent to the Asylum from the Children's Court for stealing a gold watch. Here, too are many things that might help a youngster to be good; certainly there is nothing that need estrange him from the home influence. But Herman succumbed to temptation one day, when taking a bundle of washing to one of his mother's customers, he found the watch lying upon a table.

"Herman will do anything to get money—always must he haf money," his mother told the visitor. "He will come by me first, and when he gets all I have, he will go out und stole some. Once he took a wash which gave a bill of seven dollars und sold it for ein dollar. Dat boy was crazy with de theaytre. Dere ain't no night what he ain't went dere since a long time."

Such are exceptional, however. Most often squalor, misery and hunger can be traced in deep lines through the stories of the Asylum's charges. Four tots were before the children's court not long ago for lack of proper guardianship. The home from which they came would seem to justify—would certainly explain—any length of absence on any boy's part.

When the visitor knocked on the door the father was away, and the mother was seriously ill in a hospital. The kitchen stove had been cold for a month. A table and a sink, above which hung a cracked mirror, alone kept it company. In the other room a gorgeous new pink paper was the background for a table, one shaky chair and a sewing machine—nothing else except a dirty upholstered sofa, spread over with a cheap, red quilt which was half thrown back just as the father of the family had left it in the morning.

A Home in the Tenements—From Rooms Such as This Are Recruited the Children of the Streets.

The spectres of drink and sickness stalked through the house. The man spent his money in the neighboring saloons, and could never be depended upon to furnish nine dollars for the privilege of dwelling for a month in the pinched, desolate, repellant quarters. The women like many of her sisters of the tenements, had been slowly crushed by the struggle to exist in the face of this added difficulty. So only the sheltering arms of the Asylum were left open for the children.

In the Asylum's motely company at Dobb's Ferry there is a picturesque little Italian, Romilio, who lately abandoned his home and mother. Although Romeo is fluent in certain branches of English, his mother—a tiny woman whose bright eyes are the one lively feature of an expressionless face—can still speak no language but that of her present home. She wanted to hear about her boy, though and his new life in the Children's Village, so she called in as interpreter a neighbor, another tiny daughter of Italy on whom the impress of the East Side had been deeply fixed.

The two women with their broods of little Giovannis and Francescas clinging about their skirts, stood talking with the visitor in the only spot of the kitchen not cluttered with dilapidated furniture, unwashed pans, kettles and dishes, refuse rags and papers or dirt, pure and simple. And in the riot of disheveled uncleanliness the children were the most dishevelled and uncleanly objects. When the visitor asked what Romi's father was doing for a living, the group of matted heads chorused, "Father drunk"—which gratuitous bit of information was rewarded with a specially imperative call for silence and a particularly pointed menace of a fisti-cuff. Mild curiosity, a dull, perverted cause of importance—these seemed to be the only feelings excited by Romi's predicament; and the eight besmirched, neglected children evidently had all the inducements in the world to follow him as fast as their wobbly legs would carry them when their opportunity arrived.

From homes such as these the transition to the streets is so easy as to be scarcely perceptible. In some cases the lad is actually driven out, and in many he has no apparent reluctance about going. The parents of one little fellow now in the Asylum preferring whiskey to work, began by sending him out to beg for the food they were unwilling to earn. Begging for money followed naturally. Then Jimmy, realizing that he was the real support of the household, began to stay away when he felt like it, spending the proceeds of his industry for himself. When the home broke up entirely, as it eventually did, of course the household goods that had represented the comforts of life for three persons were sold at public auction for sixty-nine cents, and the boy was reluctantly compelled to learn how to earn an honest living in the industrial shops of the Juvenile Asylum.

There is no greater contrast between the wretched hovel with its sixty-nine cents worth of furnishings and the tidy little rooms of Philip's mother than between the boys that represent the two homes in the institution at Dobb's Ferry. The philanthropist, the criminologist, the intelligent reformer have come to realize the full meaning of this, and the youngster guilty of no greater crime than improper guardianship is not treated as if he were an incorrigible ruffian, predestined to state's prison.

The old fashioned barracks that served as institutional dormitories a few years ago have made way for attractive homelike cottages. Broad lawns and blue skies, fresh air, pure food and healthful exercises are depended on as a subtle, permanent tonic for minds and bodies that have grown unwholesome in the poisonous atmosphere of the brick and mortar wilderness. The New York Juvenile Asylum, one of the oldest and most far-reaching philanthropies in the country, has succeeded in shaking off the dust of the city, but only the most necessary buildings have yet been erected. The completion of its Children's Village is still far off in the future; it will take slow and patient work, but it has shown itself so important to the great city twenty miles down the Hudson and, indeed, to the vast country of which the metropolis is the chief gateway, that it is hoped its possibilities may be expanded fast enough to keep pace, in some degree, with the grave problems it does so much to solve.

The Apple's Family Tree.

Chicago Chronicle.

Among the fruits of the rose family are apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries and quinces, as well as the strawberries, raspberries and blackberries. The apple is a fruit of long descent. Among the ruins of the Swiss lake dwellers are found remains of small seed apples which show the seed valves and the grains of flesh. The crab-apple is a native of Britain and was the stock of which was grafted the choicest varieties when brought from Europe, chiefly France. Apples of some sort were abundant before the conquest and had been introduced probably by the Romans. Yet often as Saxon manuscript speaks of apples and cider there is no mention of named varieties before the 13th century. Then one may read of the pearmain and the costard—Chaucer's "mellow costard."

In the roll of household expenses of Eleanor, wife of Simon De Montford, apples and pears are entered. In the year 1286 the royal fruiterers to Edward I presents a bill for apples, pears, quinces, medlars and nuts. Pippins, believed to be seedlings, hence called the pips or seeds, are said not to have been grown in England before1525. The exact Drayden writing of the orchards of Kent at the period, can name only the apple, the orange, the russean, the sweeting, the pome water and the rienette.

John Winthrop is usually held responsible for the introduction of the apple into the New World. But as a matter of fact when Winthrop anchored off Cape Ann the recluse Blackstone already had apple trees growing about his cabin at Shawmut Neck. Some of the best American apples were brought over by the Huguenots who planted there, among others, the pomme royale or spice apple.

Mrs. Raffles.

BEING THE ADVENTURES OF AN AMATEUR CRACKSWOMAN, AS NARRATED BY BUNNY.

By JOHN KEND RICK BANGS.

The Last Adventure.

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I am bathed in tears. I have tried to write of my sensations, to tell the story of the Last Adventure of Mrs. Van Raffles, in lucid terms but though my pen runs fast over the paper the ink makes no record of the facts. My woe is so great and so deep that my tears, falling into the ink-pot, turn it into a fluid so thin it will not mark the paper, and when I try the pencil the words are scarce put down before they're blotted out. And yet with all this woe I find myself a multi-millionaire—possessed of sums so far beyond my wildest dreams of fortune that my eye can scarce take in the breadth of all the figures. My dollars coined into silver, placed on top of one another, would form a bullion tower that would reach higher into the air than fifteen superimposed domes of St. Peter's placed on top of seventeen spires of Trinity on the summit of Mont Blanc. In five pound notes laid side by side they'd suffice to paper every scrap of bedroom wall in all the Astor houses in the world, and invested in Amalgamated Copper they would turn the system green with envy—and yet I am not happy. My well-beloved Henrietta's last adventure has turned my fortune into bitterest gall, and plain unvarnished wormwood forms the finish of my interior, for she is gone! I, amid the splendor of my new-found possessions, able to keep not one but a hundred motor-cars, and to pay the chaffeur's fines, to endow chairs in universities, to build libraries in every hamlet in the land from Podunk to Richard Mansfield, to eat three meals a day and lodge at the St. Regicide, and to evade my taxes without exciting suspicion, am desolate and forlorn, for, I repeat, Henrietta, has gone! The very nature of her last adventure by a successful issue has blown out the light of my life.

She has stole Constant-Scrappe!

If I could be light of heart in this tragic hour I would call this story the Adventure of the Lifed Fiance, but that would be so out of key with my emotions that I cannot bring myself to do it. I must content myself with a narration of the simple fact of the lengths to which my beloved's ambition led her, without frivolity and with a heavy heart.

Of course you know that all Newport has known for months, that the Constant-Scrappes were seeking divorce, not that they loved one another less, but that both parties to the South Dakota suit loved some one else more. Colonel Scrappe had long been the most ardent admirer of Mrs. Gushington-Andrews, and Mrs. Constant-Scrappe's devotion to young Harry de Lakwitz had been at least for two seasons evident to every observer with half an eye. Gushinton-Andrews had considerately taken himself out of the way by eloping to South Africa with Tottie Dimpleton, of the Frivolity Burlesquers, and Harry de Lakwitz's only recorded marriage had been annulled by the courts because at the time of his wedding to the forty-year-old maid of the Bellevue Boarding school for Boys at Skidgeway, Rhode Island, he was only fifteen years old. Consequently, they both were eligible, and provided the Constant-Scrappes could be so operated on by the laws of South Dakota as to free them from ont another, there were no valid reasons why the yearnings of these ardent souls should not be gratified. Indeed, both engagements had been announced tentatively and only the signing of the decree releasing the Constant-Scrappes from their obligations to one another now stood in the way of two nuptial ceremonies which would make four hearts beat as one. Mrs. Gushington-Andrews' trousseau was ready and that of the future Mrs. de Lakwitz had been ordered; both ladies had received their engagement rings when that inscrutable Henriette marked Constant-Scrappe for her own. Colonel Scrappe had returned from Monte Carlo, having broken the bank twice, and Henriette had met him at a little dinner given in his honor by Mrs. Gushington-Andrews. He turned out to be a most charming man and it didn't require a much more keen perception than my own to take in the fact that he had made a great impression upon Henriette, though she never mentioned it to me until the final blow came. I merely noticed a growing preoccupation in her manner and her attitude towards me, which changed perceptibly.

"I think, Bunny," she said to me one morning as I brought her a marmalade toast, "that considering our relations toward each other you should not call me Henriette. After all, you know, you are here primarily as my butler, and there are some proprieties that should be observed even in this Newport atmosphere."

"But," I protested, "am I no more than that? I am your partner, am I not?"

"You are my business partner—not my social, Bunny," she said. "We must not mix society and business. In this house I am mistress of the situation; you are the butler—that is the precise condition, and I think it well that hereafter you should recognize the real truth and avoid over-familiarity by addressing me as Mrs. Van Raffles. If we should ever open an office for our Burglar Company in New York or elsewhere you may call me anything you please there. Here, however, you must be governed by the etiquette of your environment. Let it be Mrs. Van Raffles hereafter."

"And is it to be Mr. Bunny?" I inpuired, sarcastically.

Her reply was a cold glance of the eye and a majestic sweep from the room.

That evening Colonel Scrappe called, ostensibly to look over the house as a landlord to see if there was anything he could do to make it more comfortable, and I, blind fool that I was for the moment, believed that that was his real errand, and ventured to remind Henriette of a leak in the roof, at which they both, I thought, exchanged amused glances and he gravely mounted the stairs to the top of the house to look at it. On our return, Henriette dismissed me and told me that she would not need my services again during the evening. Even then my suspicions were not aroused, although there was a dull, disturbed feeling about my heart whose precise causes I could not define. I went to the club and put in a miserable evening, returning about midnight to find that Colonel Scrappe was still there. He was apparently giving the house and its contents a thorough inspection, for when I arrived, Henriette was testing the fifty-thousand dollar piano in the drawing room for him with a brilliant rendering of "O Promise Me." What decision they reached as to its tone and quality I never knew, for in spite of my hints on the subject, Henriette never spoke of the matter to me. I suppose I should have begun to guess what was happening under my very nose, but thank Heaven I am not of a suspicious nature, and although I didn't like the looks of things, the inevitable meaning of their strange behavior never even dawned upon my mind. Even when two nights later Colonel Scrappe escorted Henriette home at midnight from a lecture on the Inscrutability of Sartor Resartus at Mrs. Gushington-Andrews' it did not strike me as unusual, although, instead of going home immediately, as most escorts do under the circumstances, he remained about two hours testing that infernal piano again, and with the same old tune.

Then the automobile rides began, and prettey nearly every morning, long before polite society was awake, Colonel Scrappe and Henrietta took long runs together through the country in her Mercedes machine, for what purpose I never knew, for whatever interest the colonel might have had in our welfare as a landlord I could not for the life of me guess how it could be extended to our automobiles. One thing I did notice, however, was a growing coldness between Henriette and Mrs. Gushington-Andrews. The latter came to a card party at Bolivar Lodge one afternoon about two weeks after Colonel Scrappe's return and her greeting to her hostess instead of having the old time effusiveness was frigid to a degree. In fact, as they clasped hands I doubt if more than the tips of their fingers touched. Moreover, Mrs. Gushington-Andrews, hitherto considered one of the best fists at bride or hearts in the 400, actually won the booby prize, which I saw her throw into the street when she departed. It was evident something had happened to distureb their equanimity.

My eyes were finally opened by a remark made at the club by Digby, Reggie de Pelt's valet, who asked me how I liked my new boss, and whose explanation of the question led to a complete revelation of the true facts in the case. Everybody knew, he said, that from the moment she had met him Mrs. Van Raffles had set her cap for Colonel Scrappe, and that meeting her for the first time he had fallen head over heels in love with her even in the presence of his fiancee. Of course I hotly denied Digby's insinuations, and we got so warm over the discussion that when I returned home that night I had two badly discolored eyes, and Digby—well, Digby didn't go home at all. Both of us were suspended from the Gentleman's Gentle-

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