

## Community Ideals and Boy Life

(By J. W. Storey.)

### Part II.

Three institutions are responsible for the education of the adolescent boy. By "education" is meant not merely the acquisition of certain forms of related knowledge, but the symmetrical adaptation of the life to the community in which it lives. The three institutions that co-operate in the community for this purpose are: the home, the school and the Church. There are many organizations and orders that have a large place in the life of the growing boy, but these must be viewed solely in the light of auxiliaries to the home, school and church in the production of efficient boyhood and trained manhood.

The greatest of the three institutions affecting boy life, from the very fact that it is the primary one, is the HOME. In the forefront of all institutions stands the home. No other can compare with it in opportunity for character development. Other organizations are needed to supplement its work in specialized ways, but the home is the unit of and is central in all community work. It has the primary responsibility of direction and control of all other means of character development and community welfare. The home is the basis of the community, the community merely being the aggregation of a large number of well-organized or ill-organized homes.

"At the centre of community life the world over, among all races of men, there stands the Family. It determines the character of community life. The Hebrew nation developing out of the family of Abraham, is a summary of social development. The human family grows out of smaller families. Scattered in lonely regions, in solitary mountain huts and forest cabins, crowded together on Chinese river boats,

or in New York tenements; living in the primitive condition of African jungles or in the high development of an American suburb, all families have in them the possibility of contributing to world life. Those who would Christianize the communities of the world must raise family life to its highest terms."\*

The first impressions the boy receives are through his home life, and the best of his whole career is often determined by the home relationships. As the home is, the individual will be on the one hand, and the community will be on the other. The ideals of the city, the state, the nation, the school and the church will never rise higher than the ideals of the home, for the home is the foundation of society as well as the most ancient of all God-ordained institutions.

The great problem demanding a satisfactory solution is the problem of maintaining the wholesome home ideals which will make the Canadian home the nation's bulwark. The home is the citadel, the hope or despair of it all. As the home goes, so goes the battle. Theodore Roosevelt was right when he said—"Our civil life in the long run will rise or sink as the average family is a success or a failure," also Jacob Riis—"Upon the home rests our moral character: our civic and political liberties are grounded there. We forget it to our peril."

In dealing then with the home we touch the spot of the most serious weakness and the finest possibilities in the whole range of the boy problem. Other things are important; this is all important. Other influences are mighty; but the strong, splendid home is normally invincible in the making of character. If the club or gang is evil, something is lost; if the Y. M. C. A. is missing or the public school defective, much is lost; if the church is weak and impotent, because not virile, still more is lost; but if the home is wrong,

\*"Christianizing Community Life"—Ward-Edwards.

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