

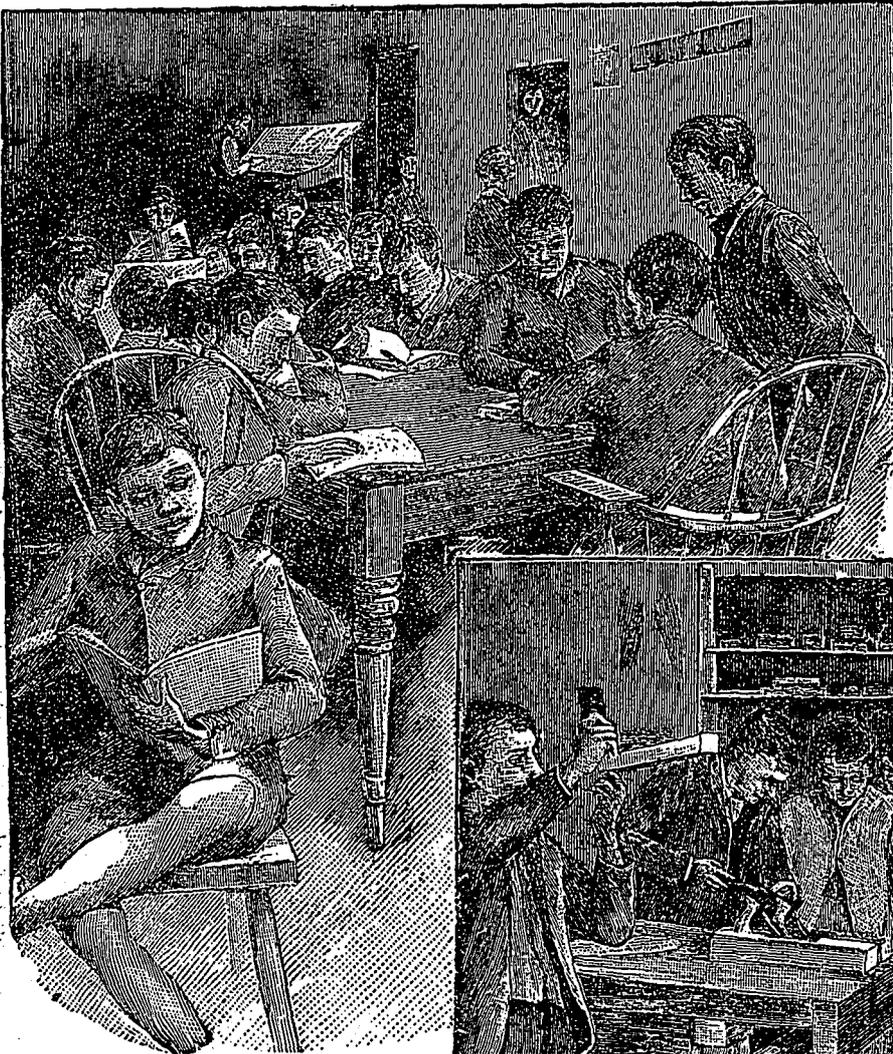


DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

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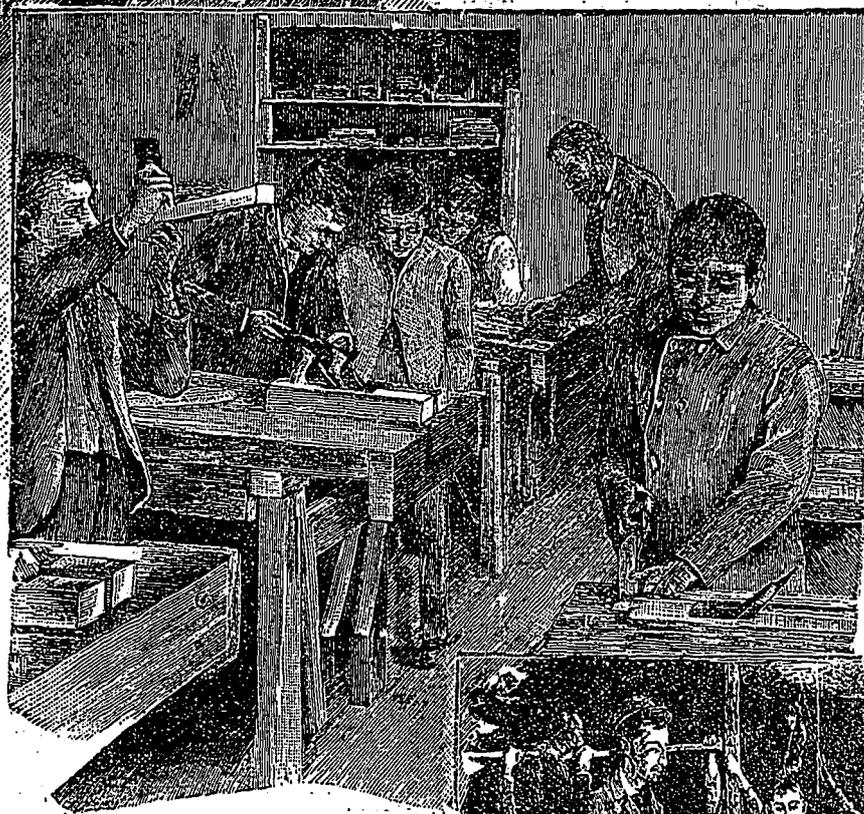
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Boys' Reading Room.

BOYS' CLUBS.

How many boys and youths in the crowded parts of our cities spend their evenings in lounging about street corners making careless remarks on women passing by, loitering in pool and billiard rooms, listening to and telling low stories. This is the school in which are raised the future inmates of all our gaols and penitentiaries. The boys are not all bad to begin with; they are what they are largely because nothing better has ever been shown them, or if they have different aspirations these are stifled by the miserable surroundings almost before they are felt to exist. It is with a view to opposing strong counter attraction to this life that boys' clubs are being organized. A description of those now in operation in the city of New York is given in a late *Scribner* by Evert Jansen Wendell. He says: It was in the fall of 1878 that the small boys about Tompkins square, having exhausted the ordinary methods of street enjoyment, began to amuse themselves by throwing stones



Carpenter Shop.

through the windows of the Wilson Mission at No. 125 St. Mark's Place, and by jeering at the various people connected with it as they passed in and out of the building. These customs proving in time both expensive and annoying to the ladies and gentlemen connected with the mission, and complaints to the Police Department only resulting in a temporary cessation of hostilities whenever the lynx-eyed policeman on the beat appeared, and as long as he remained in sight, one of the ladies determined to try the soothing effects of coals of fire, poured metaphorically upon the heads of the offending boys. So one even-

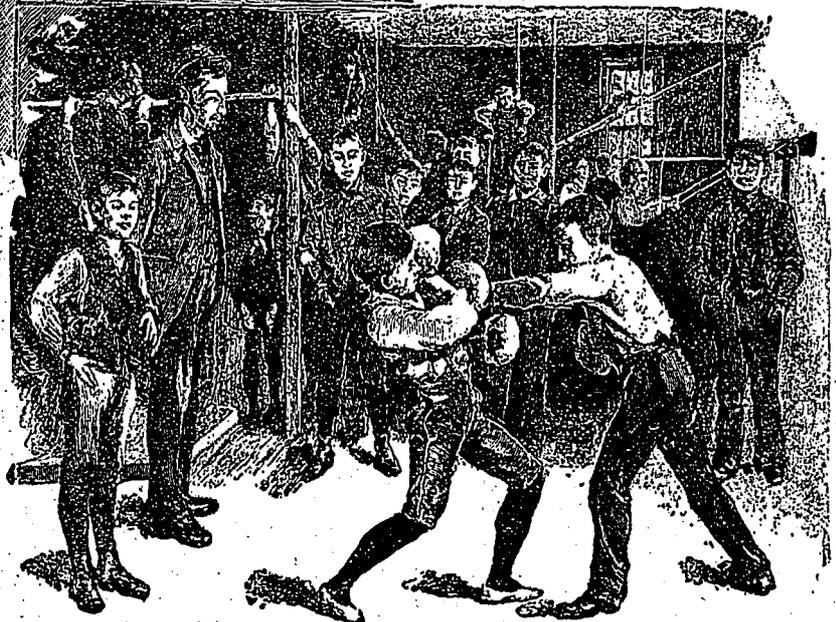
ing she answered an especially irritating volley of stones by appearing on the doorsteps, and taking advantage of a momentary lull in the cat-calls which her appearance had excited, asked the boys if they would not come in and have some coffee and cakes. Visions of "cops" with big clubs behind the door naturally occurred to the minds of the prospective guests; but when a few of the more venturesome had sidled in, and no attacks, apparently, had been made on them, the others took courage and followed them, to find themselves quietly welcomed to the simple repast which the lady had plenteously provided as the most practical form in which to administer her coals of

fire. Everyone had as much as he wanted, no reference was made to the cause of the broken glass, and each boy was treated with a kindness and courtesy quite unexpected, in view of the fact that within a few moments he had been engaged in smashing his hostess's windows. When the supper had all been absorbed, the boys were sent forth with a pleasant good-night to ruminate on their evening's experiences, and to decide which part of the evening had been the more enjoyable—defacing the exterior of the mission building, or being treated with kindness and courtesy within its walls; and their decision soon became apparent, for not only did the annoyances cease, but the boys were soon back again, not for coffee and cakes, but to ask if they could not come in and play games—though there was little in the room but an atmosphere of kindness and good breeding.

Then more boys came and were welcomed, interested friends sent down chairs and tables and games, a board of managers was instituted, and so the first boys' club was started on the broad principle which should underlie them all, of hearty welcome for any boy, whatever his condition or belief, who prefers an evening of innocent enjoyment in a place where he must show respect and courtesy to all about him, to the thoughtlessness and hidden dangers of an evening in the street.

The Boys' Club is now in its thirteenth year of work, and an average attendance of over two hundred and fifty boys a night was the result of the season's first three months.

When boys first come to the club the



A Good-natured Scrap—Boys' Club, Calvary Parish, in East Twenty-third street.

GALLON
W. M. Poyer
1891