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The 'Kid Judge' of Denver.

(Henry J. Haskell, in the 'Outlook')

A Denver school inspector recently sent a boy to the blackboard to write three proper names. 'Of great men?' asked the boy. 'If you like,' replied the inspector. And the boy wrote:

'George Washington,
'Abraham Lincoln,
'Ben. B. Lindsey.'

Denver appreciated the compliment, with the exception of the professional politicians, who hate the Judge of the County Court for his exposure of official corruption.

Colorado thinks its juvenile laws the best in the Union. They are. They provide for the paroling of young offenders and for compulsory school attendance; they prohibit child labor and the confinement of children under fourteen years of age in jails, and they penalize contributory delinquency on the part of parents and other adults. The capital city, moreover, maintains an admirable detention school, where delinquent children may be sent temporarily. Besides, there is a State Industrial School for boys at Golden, and for girls at Morrison. But the chief factor in the Colorado situation is not the laws, but the personality behind them. For this short, slight, boyish man of thirty-five, in the frock coat, with the keen eyes and the soft voice, has his finger on every troublesome boy in the city, and under his wise management the leaders of the 'gangs' have been transformed into pillars of the law.

Early in the court's history the street railway company was having trouble from boys who were derailing cars and smashing windows. Officers finally caught seven and took them to the juvenile court.

Now, Judge Lindsey never asks one boy to 'tell on' another. 'Snitching,' as the street calls it, is against the ethics of the gang, and the Judge assumes that a boy's sense of honor is as sacred as a man's.

'I don't want you to tell on the other fellows,' he said to the seven, 'but you get them to come into court to-morrow, and I'll give them a square deal.'

The next day they returned alone. The other boys were frightened, they reported; but they believed, if the Judge would write them a letter, they would come.

'All right,' he said. 'What shall I say?'

'Begin,' replied one, with the evident intention of refuting a charge already brought against him, 'begin—"No kid has snitched, but if you'll come the Judge'll give you a square deal."'

A day or two later fifty-two boys crowded into his chambers. He explained the character of their offense, and then organized a Little Citizens' League to maintain order in the neighborhood.

'Now, we're not going to have any more policemen out there,' he said to the League. 'I've told the company that I'll be responsible for their having no more trouble.' And they didn't.

'I don't see how he does it,' said a Denver man, after recounting Judge Lindsey's success in getting a gang of boy thieves into court after the police had given them up.

But his success is no mystery to any one who watches him in the court-room. The county court of the city and county of Denver is a probate court, with jurisdiction in certain other cases. And every second Saturday it sits as a juvenile court—'Lindsey's Sunday-school' the police used to call it. They speak more respectfully of it now.

The comparison really isn't bad. The Ju-

or a slap on the back; those who have done well encouraged, the few less fortunate braced to do better with, 'I'm sorry to hear this, Tom,' 'Oh, that'll never do.'

Sometimes a boy's physical condition attracts the Judge's attention. 'Son, why don't you like to go to school?' he asks one with a long truancy record, drawing the boy to his side.

'I have bad headaches,' is the reply.

The Judge looks him over carefully. 'Is his mother here? Oh, yes. Well, have you ever had George's eyes examined? No? Come around to chambers to-night and I'll give you a note to Dr. Smith.'

Many such cases occur. The most remarkable, perhaps, is one the Denver alienist proposes to report at length to the profession. A boy who was so morose and unruly that both parents and teachers had given him up became tractable and happy under the care of the physician whom Judge Lindsey called in when he learned that in early childhood the lad had had epileptic fits.

The school-teachers are the Juvenile Court's faithful allies. They have learned that the truant is under special temptation to petty thieving. Each teacher has a list of the boys on probation. If one fails to appear at the morning roll-call the fact is telephoned to the Juvenile Court office within ten minutes and the case is at once investigated by a probation officer.

After the school cases are disposed of, the complaints of a more serious character are heard. At a recent session of the Court after Judge Lindsey had been out of town for five weeks and the docket had been accumulating, only two criminal charges were brought, and these were for minor offenses. Two boys were charged with robbing a drunken man of a bottle of beer and a small sum of money, and four others were accused of implication in the breaking of a suburban merchant's window.

The four boys involved in the window-smashing had been questioned by police and probation officers in vain. They didn't break the window, and they knew nothing about it. Tearful yet defiant, they faced the Judge, and began repeating their denials. He set the leader on his knee, and a little kindly talk brought out the facts. The boy who really threw the stone was to be persuaded to come in and talk with the Judge, and the gang were to pay for the window.

The boys were encouraged to regard the Court as their friend. One day, in the midst of litigation involving an estate worth more than a million dollars, a youngster, with a bundle of newspapers under his arm, burst into the room, shouting, 'Judge, Judge, I want an injunction!'

The attorneys were shocked and the bailiff started to put the boy out. 'Hold on,' said Judge Lindsey; 'a live boy is worth more than a dead man's millions. We'll adjourn the court for five minutes and hear what he wants.'

The lad explained that a 'fly cop' had just come on the beat and, because he was jumping on cars to sell papers, had driven him from the corner which had been his business stand for several years. He was losing fifty



JUDGE LINDSEY, OF DENVER, COL.

venile Court in session looks much more like a Sunday-school than a court of criminal procedure. The Judge comes down from the bench to a camp-chair on a low platform. Beside him, keeping a record of the cases, sits Mrs. Gregory, a probation officer. Two other probation officers and one or two truant officers are in the room, but there is no policeman, and no officer of any sort in uniform. Teachers and principals from the ward schools are present in force to advise and explain. For the rest, there are one hundred and fifty boys—the few girls come on another day—most of them between the ages of eight and fourteen, sitting in camp-chairs and swinging their feet. It is a clean crowd, though it wasn't so originally. Judge Lindsey found a room in the basement where the engineer stored his oil. He had it emptied and cemented, and water-pipes put in. Now the boys crowd there for shower-baths before going into court. These probationers are required to appear every second Saturday with a report from the teacher of the ward school.

'The boys from the Webster School,' calls the Judge, and half a dozen little chaps crowd forward about him, ragged, perhaps, but clean.

'Here, Sam, come up here,' says the Judge, pulling to his side a boy with a faded coat and patchwork trousers. 'You had only "fair" in last report, Sam, but it's "excellent" this time'—tearing open the envelope and glancing at the slip inside. Put it there.' And the boy gets a hearty handshake and stands aside, grinning all over.

So they pass in a long procession, each one called by name and greeted with a handshake