

HOUSEHOLD.

The Wandering Feet.

(Katharine Tynan, in the 'Westminster Gazette'.)

Despite all that their mothers may
To keep the children safe and warm,
There are some golden heads astray
Out in the night and in the storm.

Two and three by the churchyard wall,
The little ones creep close together.
There are some lambskin, soft and small,
Out in the night and the rough weather.

She holds them in her arms so close,
Broods on them with her tender breast,
But one has slipped from his play-fellows,
And comes no more to the old nest.

Two and three in the world to-night
Wander, their mothers know not where,
Oh, bitter rain and sleet fall light
Upon the darling face and hair.

Two and three in the churchyard clay,
The little ones sleep safe together;
But oh, the wandering feet that stray
Out in the world and the rough weather!

The Boys' Club: Why it is Needed.

(By the Rev. Charles Stelzle, in the 'Sunday School Times'.)

A visit to any one of our penitentiaries will reveal the fact that the great majority of its inmates are young men; and as one goes through the corridors and workshops of the great institution, and thinks of the lost opportunities represented in the wrecked manhood of the prisoner, it seems as though the sad words, 'It might have been,' are written upon the forehead of every criminal.

But the time when 'it might have been' was back in the boyhood days of the man who is now hardened by crime. If only he had had a friend to advise and help when he was beset by the temptations of city life, he might now be found occupying a position of honor instead of wearing the prisoners' stripes.

Social conditions in our large cities are such that the home no longer influences the average boy as it did in the days when society had fewer claims upon us, and the problem of what is to become of our boys without parental oversight and training is serious enough in the refined home. But what can we say for the boy who has no place that is a real home, but simply a lodge where he spends the night?

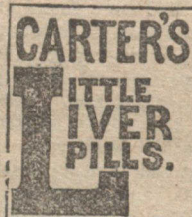
There are thousands of boys in our cities whose homes consist of only one or two small rooms in a tenement-house, sometimes back of a dark, dingy alley, and these conditions in our crowded tenements have more to do with crime and immorality than will ever be known on this side of the judgment day. Eighteen persons living in three rooms, twelve of them being adults, are not calculated to stimulate high ideals in the mind of the average boy.

The boy in such a home is usually out of sympathy with his father, especially when he leaves school and starts out to 'help support the family.' At any rate, his father is not always the help that he should be; and if the boy happens to lose his job, sometimes through no fault of his own, and is unable to secure another, the adjective 'loafer' will frequently drive him out of his home, and, if he was not a loafer before he lost his job, he is in a fair way to become one now. Few of us are aware of the great number of young men who board outside of their own homes, even when their parents live in the same city.

In most cases the boy has no trade, and when he passes the age of eighteen, he finds that no one will hire him as a boy, and he is compelled to take his place as a common laborer, getting an odd job wherever he can, because there was no one to help and advise him during the days when he might have prepared himself for the work which would have paid him a fair salary.

Usually, he starts to work at fourteen. If

SICK HEADACHE



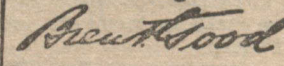
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he is large and strong for his age, he goes to the factory just as soon as he can pass for that age.

His evenings are now open to him, since he has no school lessons to prepare. He has more money to spend than he ever had before. His circle of acquaintances is enlarged, and, ordinarily, it includes some young fellow who has seen something of the shadowy side of city life; and as our boy goes about town with him, seeing its gay life, and comparing it with his own monotonous existence, it is a question of only a short time, usually, when the slender tie that binds him to his humble home is broken, and he falls into the clutches of the manager of the cheap theatre, the saloon-keeper, and the keeper of the down-town dive.

In most of our cities, our boys are attracted by the small balls which may be found in the poorer parts of the town, where they advertise 'Dancing to-night at eight o'clock,' or a 'Soiree on Sunday night; gentlemen, 35 cents; ladies, free,' or else they are tempted to join a social club which meets back of a saloon because there is no rent to pay, on the condition that the members of the club will 'treat.' The chief function of the social club is to 'run' a ball, and attend the balls conducted by other social clubs, each striving to outdo the rest in the gorgeousness of the badges worn by the floor manager and his assistants, or in the prizes offered to the best dancer or the most elegantly dressed couple.

Most of these so-called social clubs are a positive curse to the boy who has become associated with their members. The rooms are open every night, and the new boy learns more of sin, in a single evening, by sitting about the table and listening to the coarse and immoral stories being told, than he will forget in a lifetime. There is absolutely no effort made to improve the mind. The young men simply gather at their headquarters to spend the time in idle talk, coarse singing, and card-playing.

If our boy is not attracted by the social club, he spends his evenings standing upon the street corner, where he is in danger of being arrested by the policeman, who is his natural enemy.

Nearly every member of a young men's club which was composed of the fellows in one of my Bible classes had spent at least one night in the police station before joining the club, guilty of no greater crime than that

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they had no place of greater interest to meet their friends than upon the street corner or in front of their own homes.

It is a sad thought that the poor boy, even when he would do right, must go to some cheap 'variety show,' if he would spend an evening of relaxation after a hard day's work in the shop, because, in most instances, there is no other place to which he could go where he would secure that diversion which he needs.

It is all well enough to make the statement that any boy with push and ambition will find useful employment during the evening, but we must remember that not all boys have this push, and that the great majority are only ordinary boys, and will be only ordinary men. But if they are to be only ordinary men, we ought to help them so that they may at least become good men.

Earnest men and women have become interested in the boys who are thus situated, and have organized what are now known as boys' clubs, into which they seek to gather boys, who are shown the possibilities of a larger life and a broader development than they would ever secure upon the streets or in places of questionable amusement.

Let the mothers and fathers who have boys think over this problem, and in many cases a home club may not only save your boy, but his chums. Take time and trouble to make the boys' room fit for use as a gathering place, and give him help with his fads and collections.

Correct Carriage.

The woman who would be beautiful must carry herself well. A perfectly proportioned figure is a thing to be desired, but it is of little avail without a perfect carriage. Stand with the weight of the body on the balls of the feet, with the chest high and the chin in. The abdomen will then naturally be drawn in and correct position will come of its own accord. Shoulders, hips and ankles should be all in line.—'Woman's Home Companion.'

As snow is itself cold, yet warms and refreshes the earth, so afflictions, though in themselves grievous, yet keep the soul of the Christian warm and make it fruitful.—John Mason.

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