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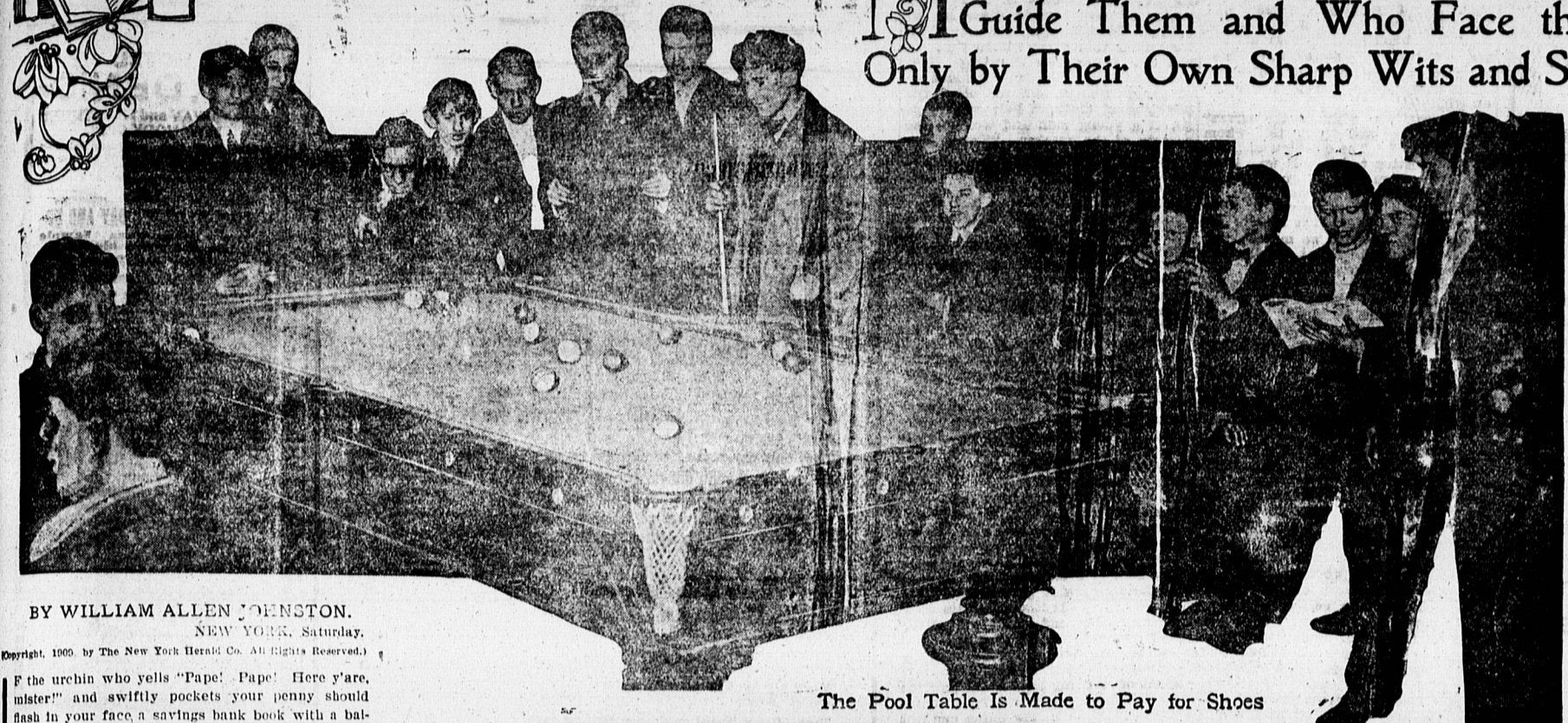
MORNING DAILY FOUNDED 1854 WEEKLY (NOW RURAL DAILY) 1917

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, CANADA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1909.

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The UPLIFT of the HOMELESS BOY

MAKING Men of Little Chaps Who Have No Mothers to Guide Them and Who Face the Big Battle Backed Only by Their Own Sharp Wits and Sturdy Muscles.



The Pool Table Is Made to Pay for Shoes

BY WILLIAM ALLEN JOHNSTON. NEW YORK, Saturday.

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If the urchin who yells "Paper! Paper! Here y'are, mister!" and swiftly pockets your penny should flash in your face a savings bank book with a balance of several hundred dollars, you need not be greatly surprised. If some time you are hard up and need a quick loan to tide over the business day—why, just consult your office boy!

Over at the West Side Boys' Lodging House, at No. 225 West Thirty-fifth street, they are teaching homeless youngsters how to save. It is an interesting experiment on interesting subjects, and the results are quite remarkable, not alone in the accumulation of the bank accounts, but, what is more to the point, in the development of character and ambition among boys who have no homes to help them, no parents to guide them, and who, backed only by their own sharp wits and sturdy muscles, are holding their own in the battle of life in a big city.

They are waifs of the streets, these boys. About fifty per cent are orphans and about half as many half orphans; the others are homeless for one reason or another, in most instances because of a stepmother who can't find a place in her heart for another woman's offspring.

Some are city boys; a considerable number come from the country, "freighting it" in from the mill towns of New England, from the coal towns of Pennsylvania, from as far away as Texas. The irresistible magnet of New York city draws them, just as it attracts men. There's a "chance" here.

How do they find the Boys' Lodging House? Why, policemen bring them in; the Children's Aid Society sends them, but, principally, they are introduced by other boys, already inmates of the home. Every other night or so a waif is led to the desk and stands there, hungry and hopeful.

"Say," says his sponsor, "Here's a kid wot y' can look over. He's been livin' in a cellar on Grand street. I think he's all right!"

In all likelihood the new applicant is admitted and then the problem—quite a problem—of his uplift is worked out.

In the first place, the home in itself is admirable in every way. It is modern in appointments—built in 1903 by John Jacob Astor—and looks more like a club than a lodging house. In front there's a spacious reading and lounging room, with books, magazines, games and a piano and pool table. To the rear is the dining room, which on certain nights is turned into a gymnasium. Below the first floor are wash rooms, swimming pool and a complete steam laundry; up stairs are the dormitories.

For board, lodging and laundry the older boys—sixteen to eighteen years—pay \$1.50 a week. Boys under sixteen pay \$1.05. Transient rates are:—Lodging, five cents a bed; meals, five cents each.

At these low rates—together with the free fare and clothing that must be furnished—the home, of course, cannot pay expenses. Last year the total expenses were \$9,277.28, and the income was only \$2,774.05. Seven thousand and ninety-five lodgings and 12,781 meals were furnished free.

To Support Itself.

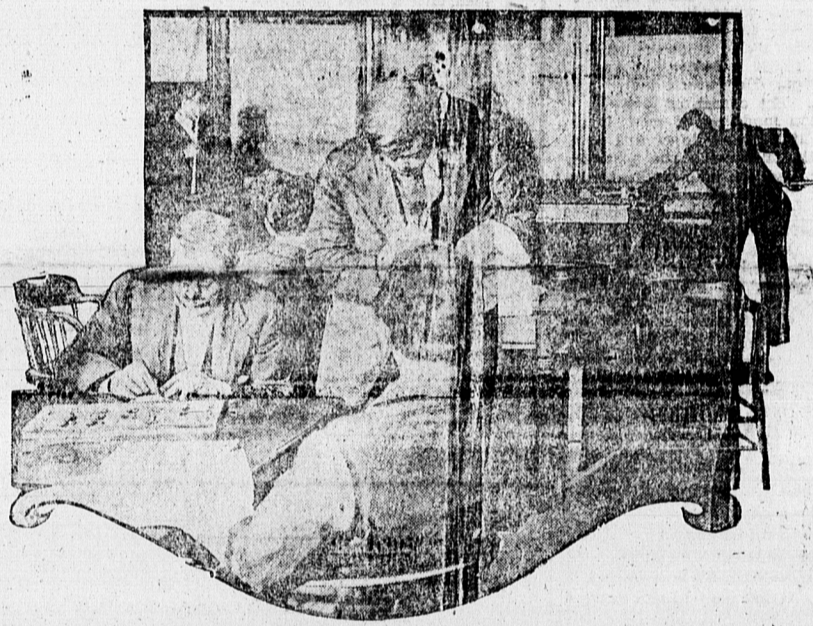
But the home aims, to the highest possible extent, to be self-supporting—not for its own interests so much as for the sake of the boys. They must be taught to be self-supporting; and the way—the main way—to bring this about is to teach them to save.

That, indeed, is the central problem, the one that the superintendent, Mr. Hennefrund, and the book-keeper, Mr. Patterson, face continually and struggle hardest with.

First of all, employment must be found for the newcomer. Advertising in the daily papers has been tried this year with splendid success. Through this means 532 boys were placed during the eight months ended October 1.

Then the wage earners must be clothed properly at the start. Feet that trudge for work, run errands, help sell newspapers, must be well shod. Now, shoes are a first consideration.

It is rather a clever scheme they have of making the pool table pay for these shoes. A cent a week is the pool table rate and this income is set aside, after the upkeep expense of the table is subtracted, as a fund for shoes. A second hand dealer sells them for seventy-five cents a pair.



A Corner of the Spacious Reading and Lounging Room



The Dining Room Where Meals Are Served for Five Cents Each

Then underwear, purchased in wholesale lots, is dispensed at thirty-eight cents a suit. Hats, stockings, suits and overcoats are also to be had at reduced prices. All these articles are sold to the boys. Only shoes are on the charitable list, and, if at all possible, the price of them is taken out of the newcomer's future earnings.

Messrs. Hennefrund and Patterson strive earnestly to help the boys to maintain a savings account, first with the home, later with some savings bank at four per cent rate of interest.

A struggle takes place each Saturday night, when the boys come home with their week's earnings. They are boys and money burns in their pockets, just as it does in the pockets of all other boys of high and low degree. They are not inclined to save it.

Mr. Hennefrund, a young man who combines with the genial and spiritual demeanor and self-sacrificing spirit of the social worker a vast amount of hard

headed practical knowledge—he was once a newsboy himself—gives general talks on the advisability of saving. Then he and Mr. Patterson roll up their sleeves and enter each individual.

Here's "Red," Sweeney, for instance. "Red" has all of \$4 in his pocket, but he is inclined only to deposit \$2. Thence follows an argument, swiftly, shrewdly given by both sides.

"I want to buy a necktie," says "Red."
"You do not," says Mr. Patterson. "You bought a blue one last week."
"I need a hat," says "Red."
"All right," says Mr. Patterson, "I'll charge it. Come over with \$3 now. A dollar you can keep," and the upshot is that "Red" deposits \$3 and has soon forgotten the matter in a game of pool. First, however, he peered through the grating before the cashier's window and saw that Patterson put down the right amount.

Last year Mr. Hennefrund tried the scheme of offering large interest on deposits. He proposed to give twenty per cent for the three months before Christmas on all deposits of \$25 and over. It worked well. There were many deposits of the required amount and they were all afterward transferred to the savings bank. This interest money, by the way, came out of Mr. Hennefrund's own pocket.

There is one vital difference between these homeless, self-dependent boys and those reared in prosperous homes:—They know the value of a penny—they fight so hard to earn each one—and that's a kind of knowledge that dependent boys never learn till they grow to be men, often never learn at all.

Appeals to Thrift.

So it is easier to teach these boys the savings bank idea. It appeals to their thrifty heads. Once let them be shown, by example, that money earns money and little further urging is necessary. The trouble is to start them, to get them up to the interest-bearing point.

Said one youngster, noting his interest accumulation, and tapping his deposit book:—"Hully Gee! Dis 'ting works while I sleep. I'm on!"

Last year the savings deposits in the home reached \$1,079.79. This year the amount will exceed \$3,000. In the month of October \$135 was deposited. This refers, of course, only to deposits at the home. Many of the boys have individual savings bank accounts of more than one hundred dollars, but all of them

started to save at the home.

"The trouble is," says Mr. Patterson, "that once they get the bit—of this savings idea—in their teeth they run away with it. They become regular misers. They'll sponge on you, if you'll let them, just like the shiftless boys. And they'll try to beat me before my very eyes and at my own game—of book-keeping."

There are a few shiftless boys in the home, but the percentage is kept down pretty well. If a boy evades employment he is made to work within the home for his board and lodging. Then they have a scheme of making each inmate pay for his meals. Tickets are issued at the cashier's desk for every meal. If a boy has credit at the desk—a deposit account—or the requisite nickel, he gets a green ticket, which entitles him to a seat in the dining room and all he can eat. If, however, he is "broke" as to cash and credit, he receives a much despised red ticket

which admits him to a small room in which he finds only a shelf to eat from and where he can have but one helping.

"Appetite is a vulnerable point with them," says Mr. Hennefrund. "Most of them have a capacity of several liberal helpings. Cutting them down to one is an excellent way to stir up their energies."

Messrs. Hennefrund and Patterson have each had experience teaching rich boys and goody-goody boys, and they prefer, they say, to handle these untutored waifs and wanderers. They are more amenable to discipline and you can generally reach and hold them with sympathy and kindness, in both of which possessions their lives have been sadly lacking.

Some cases are very pitiful. There's the one of Leon Wesley, who died in a hospital last year. He was a courageous, hard working, thrifty little chap, suffering all the time with a serious malady, but never complaining about it. He was so sunny—in fact, so confident of speedy good health—that he did not reach the hospital until it was too late.

Mr. Patterson received word one afternoon that the little sufferer was dying and hurried to his cot. Even then Leon was cheerful. He had a firm belief in the efficacy of a little lemon juice and sugar, which had always cured his colds, and which he believed was good for every ailment. He had pleaded so hard for it that at last, to quiet him, the nurse gave him his "dose."

His Friend Patterson.

He was very optimistic as his friend Mr. Patterson set down by his cot. "Aw, I think I'll be up in a week," said he.

And then Mr. Patterson told him the truth, very simply and tearfully.

The boy listened with wide open eyes. "Is dat straight?" he asked, sharply. He seemed to find the answer in Mr. Patterson's eyes and was silent. "So, I'm goin' to chuck it, eh?" he said finally. "Well, all right." He closed his eyes.

"Shall I let your mother know?" asked Patterson. The boy opened his eyes quickly.

"Naw! Naw!" he said earnestly. "Don't say a ting. Don't never let her know."
"Why not?"

"I'll tell you. I don't think she is my mother. She always said she was, but I think she lied. If she was she wouldn't 'a' treated me so mean."

"Old Man" Patterson, as they call him behind his back, knows boys. He is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and has tutored and taught all his life; moreover, he has raised "two broods" of children. This was all good experience, but nothing like his present one. He knows boys now because he deals with boys who know men.

They are sharp, shrewd, wily, these youngsters. They are used to a daily battle of wits and are constantly prepared for another. Moreover, they are the shrewdest, quickest judges of human nature.

"Let a new boy come in," says Mr. Patterson, "and they size him up in a minute; quite often I take my cue from them. At first they are silent. Then a remark rings out and—flash! It echoes over the room, a unanimous opinion. Generally that boy gets his nickname then and there."

Mr. Patterson keeps a prodigious set of books, as is natural when accounts are drawn out in pennies, and he expects to leave the home in a tiny flat. A week or so later he called at the home.

Mike is under five feet in height, but he was taller with importance as he came in. He led several of his friends over to the window.

His Wife, To Be Sure.

"Pipe de girl!" said he, pointing to a little woman standing obediently on the sidewalk and smiling back at them.

"Who is she, Mike?" they asked.
"Who is she? Dat's me wife!" He tapped his chest proudly.

Most of the boys who leave come back to visit the home. It is still "home" to them, the only one many of them ever knew. One comes all the way from Toronto each year, another from Ohio.

Two years ago a "graduate" returned after twenty-five years' absence and delivered an impressive address. He is to-day United States Senator O'Neill, of Idaho. Other distinguished "graduates" of this and other boys' lodging houses in New York include a Governor of a State, a Governor of a Territory, two Representatives, seven State legislators and a long list of physicians, lawyers, bankers, engineers, college professors, clergymen, &c.

There are several talented individuals in the home to-day. Who knows what the future has in store for them?

There's Charles Shonman, writer of popular songs, including "Jimmy Mine" and others; two are being sung on the vaudeville stage. Then there's "Scotty"—just "Scotty"—of whom I get his own modest description:—"Late of Glasgow, Scotland, the world's undefeated champion of rope wrestlers, will challenge any man alive to bind me with ten yards of clothesline and will guarantee to free myself in the space of three minutes."

There are other interesting types in the West Side Boys' Lodging House. The past life, the struggles, the aspirations of every boy would make a good story in itself; and "Old Man" Patterson, shrewd, painstaking, ceaselessly busy, is a character one does not meet every day. I would earnestly recommend an evening there for all of those who are tired of the theatre and its puppets, and who find delight and refreshment in the study of genuine, vivid, boyish human nature.