

Good Work Of Kakaako Mission



WITHIN a few blocks of the heart of the city, in Kakaako, perhaps the most hardened of all the citizens of Honolulu reside crowded together in insanitary tenements, living in shanties which are flattered by the appellation of hovels, and continually exposed to the ravages of devastating disease should an outbreak occur. Amid these baneful surroundings the Kakaako Mission stands, one of the few bright spots in the entire district. Here for nine years past Mr. P. W. Ryder, assisted by his wife, has labored in his endeavor to bring a ray of sunlight into the cheerless lives of the poverty-stricken people who eke out a miserable existence within the confines of the district. Attracted thither by reason of the cheap rents which prevail and the proximity of the district to the waterfront, where work is occasionally offering, the people of this district represent the very poorest of the residence of Honolulu, and they have struggled along in their poverty and without a helping hand from anyone, excepting the charitable works which are carried on by the religious bodies. Foremost among these institutions, at least as far as Kakaako

is concerned, is the Kakaako Mission, which carries on an unceasing campaign against the forces which work for the destruction of the benighted people of the district. Mr. and Mrs. P. W. Ryder have undoubtedly done good work in the district. They have labored long and diligently and are still laboring, with but one end in view—the alleviation of the distress which prevails throughout the district and the bringing to the people the word of God. The value of such a mission is hard to realize. It cannot be measured in dollars and cents, nor can a balance sheet be rendered with the debits on the one side and the credits on the other. The debits can easily be enumerated but how would the credits be ascertained? By the number of children rescued from irresponsible parents and trained in the first principles of good citizenship? By the number of conversions made? Even then the benefits of such a mission would be liable to be under-estimated.

The work is of too far-reaching a character to be summed up in a phrase or two. It is ever increasing in strength, but while the work is going on the personnel of the mission has remained unchanged, neither diminishing nor increasing. The funds for the carrying on of the mission are provided by friends of the mission who desire to remain unknown, but the scope of the work was fully explained to a Star representative a few days ago by Mr. Ryder.

With regard to the mission work, Mr. Ryder explained that it was purely a gospel mission and that they had never adopted any devices to gain the attendance of the people of the district to the meetings other than by gospel songs and preaching. On such special occasions as Thanksgiving and Christmas, entertainments or picnics were organized but the money for these was in some measure provided by the people themselves. Mr. Ryder

still the trade goes on, if not increasing, at least undiminishingly. Children who are temporarily homeless or who are afraid to go home on account of troubles which may be taking place under the parental roof are taken care of by the mission until they can be placed in other families where better treatment can be given them. During the year many children are taken into the Salvation Army home from the mission and are there cared for well, until they can be placed out with kind-hearted people. Mr. Ryder is a constant visitor to Judge Whitney's Juvenile Court and also to the police court, looking for waifs and strays or adults offenders who may have overstepped the bounds and come within the clutches of the law.

The Kakaako Mission.

The mission stands at the corner of Queen and South streets, with Mission lane on the Ewa side. It is a two storied building of wood, and faces Queen street, the spare ground at the rear and Ewa side being given over to a playground for the children. It is comparatively a small building, containing on the ground floor of the mission hall, capable of seating about two hundred persons, a small dispensary and several small ante-rooms. Upstairs there is a play-room for the children's use in wet weather, and the living rooms for Mr. and Mrs. Ryder, principals of the mission. There is nothing elaborate about the

mission; everything is clean and tidy, but it is all on an unpretentious scale. On the mauka side of the mission facing South street and extending through to Mission lane is a vacant lot of land which has just been acquired for the purposes of the mission and in one corner of this lot a dispensary is to be erected to take the place of the existing dispensary in the main building, which is far too small for the amount of work which is done therein, under the direction of a nurse, Miss Poppleton. The remainder of the lot will be added to the existing playground to afford further space for the boys and girls to congregate in, in preference to the streets. Round about outside of the mission everything is squalid; dirty lanes are everywhere, but there are few open spaces and the youngsters are forced to spend most of their time playing in the dirt and grime which everywhere abounds. In order to provide a suitable meeting ground for the children this extra lot of land has been procured, and this now gives the mission a frontage of 250 feet on South street and 130 feet on Queen street.

Later on it is expected that the ground may be put to other use, but just as present, as soon as the buildings now on it are removed, the ground will be set apart as a playground. It is easier to get the children to attend classes if there are facilities for play, especially in a district such as Kakaako, where play-grounds are so conspicuous by their absence.

The missions does really wonderful work with the children, who are of all nationalities. It is a matter for wonder that within the boundaries of Kakaako there are over thirty nationalities represented. Among those who have been in the mission at varying times are American, Hawaiian, English, German, Portuguese, African, Cape Verde Islanders, Chinese, Japanese, Porto Rican, Austr-

lian, Cuban, Russian, French, Chilean, Swede, Venezuelan, Pofe, Mexican, Austrian, Maori, Filipino, Spanish, Gilbert Islander, Greek, as well as people from Guam, St. Thomas, Bermuda, Jamaica and Panama. It would seem from the foregoing that all the races of the world meet in Honolulu.

All these children speak a common language, English, though some of them only speak it with difficulty. But as they are brought into contact with the other children of the mission and attend the kindergarten, they rapidly acquire a good knowledge of the language. The kindergarten meets daily in the mission hall.

The sewing classes in connection with the mission are part of Mrs. Ryder's special work, and it is a work in which she takes a great pride, for the girls of the district have proved that they can and will learn, given the opportunity. And the opportunity is provided by the mission. Each Tuesday afternoon the class meets in the upper room, and upwards of forty or fifty girls are taught to make dresses and under-clothing, patch torn garments, and generally to do useful needlework. An effort was once made by the mission to teach the elder girls fancy sewing but it was not a great success, as the girls did not take very kindly to it and the time spent in teaching was wanted for other and more important work. Mrs. Ryder fits out quite a host of the children in the neighborhood with garments cut out by herself and her class from old dresses which have been discarded by women situated in more favored circumstances.

The mission would be glad to receive gifts of old clothing which would be very useful to the poorer classes, who are often compelled to purchase better garments. In the district are many second hand shops which sell cast-off clothing at low prices, but when the people have not sufficient money to provide adequate food they have none to spare to purchase even the cheapest of clothing. If any clothes are sent to the mission the donors can rest assured that they will be put to the best of use.

The dispensary is entirely free and many of the families in the neighborhood are daily provided with medicines. Patients have their wounds dressed free of charge and the nurse is continually engaged on some case or another. In fact, the nurse is seldom at liberty being in constant demand, but when she is unavoidably absent from the mission, attending other cases, etc., either Mr. or Mrs. Ryder attend urgent calls. This section of the mission is one which appeals to all the people in the district in times of sickness or accident, and they are not slow to avail themselves of the relief afforded by the medicines and nursing.

The Sunday School has 250 children on the roll and the average attendance is 167. The children, though of so many nationalities, display creditable and intelligent interest in the teaching of the school.

In the mission hall where the nightly religious services are held various services are held by those of the dis-

trict who may not speak English. The use of the hall has been granted to people of ten different nationalities to hold meetings in their mother tongue on different occasions.

The work of the mission goes on daily, irrespective of weather conditions, and even in the dead of night. It is no unusual occurrence for Mr. Ryder to be called up to prevent a husband from beating his wife to death or to rescue children from the drunken frenzy of their parents. In order to be able to enforce order Mr. Ryder in a special officer of the police force and also of the juvenile court, and he is often instrumental in quelling fights in the district, fights which are a continual source of trouble to him, and his helpers.

AROUND THE MISSION.

The Kakaako Mission is a bright spot in the midst of a district of gloom. It is passing strange, indeed, that a city with so much of beauty, so many evidences of progress and so much of that cleanliness which is "next to Godliness" should have at its door-steps scenes that are not pleasing to the eye, are inimical to health and jar the modern spirit of civic pride as to pleasing surroundings.

Although some effort has been put forward of late years in that direction in Kakaako, insufficient attention has been given by both government and property owners to the important work of draining streets and land. The Bishop Estate is just now engaged in some endeavors along these lines near Atkinson park, and in the blocks between South, Second and Coral streets; and it is understood that attention will be given later to the marshes in which the notorious Ah Leong blocks are situated, mauka of the Honolulu Iron Works.

Some of the Portuguese living in Keawe and the neighborhood cross streets have raised the level of their lands and placed their home sites in fairly good sanitary condition. Ludot lane, between Keawe and Coral streets, however, is little better than a marsh, although quite thickly populated and claiming as its principal citizen a foreman of the Honolulu road department.

Along the makai line of Queen street Kewalo to the town-side of Kakaako, conditions are both unsightly and insanitary. Most of the houses are below the street line and few of them conform to the simple regulations of the Board of Health in regard to air space underneath, and in other particulars. On the mauka side of the brewery, across the street, somewhat better conditions prevail, but immediately opposite the Kawaiahao cemetery is about as fit a home for disease germs as could well be imagined. And all of these places are inhabited by the poor-people who are the least able to defend themselves against the encroachments of consumption, etc.

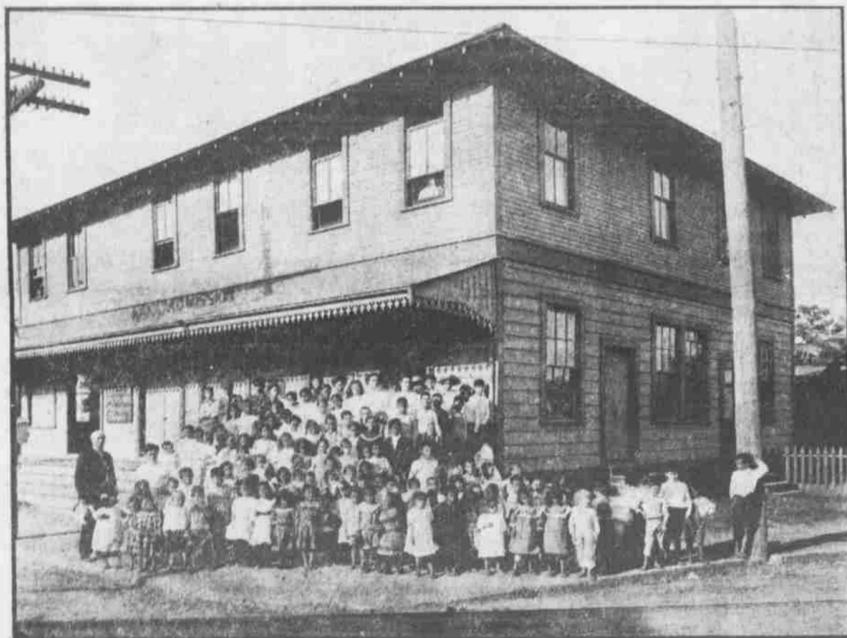
Last, but not least, is the Magoon Block. Who has not heard of the Magoon Block? Established by a good old man and in all probability for a good purpose, it has a police record that is hard to beat. "At the Magoon Block" is frequently used to express the location of a midnight brawl or a crime. It is true that conditions have improved somewhat since the saloons were taken away, but they are still bad enough.

When first built the Magoon Block was on low but comparatively level ground. Since that time the lands makai have been filled and Queen street in front has been considerably raised, with the result that the land under and mauka of the Magoon Block is lower than Queen street; and naturally the ground beneath the building, and mauka, is damp and insanitary at all times, while in the rainy season conditions are near to intolerable.

Back of each store in the Magoon Block is a kitchen, etc., with a strip of ground space between it and the main building. Into these crevices the sweepings from the stores, tin cans and other refuse from the kitchens; and old junk of every imaginable kind, are cast, adding enormously to the already deplorable condition of things.

Who are to blame for these things? The question is a hard one. Surely the property owners are not unaware of the condition of their holdings. Can it be the Board of Health, which has law covering such matters behind it? Perhaps it is partly both.

In the meanwhile the people of this unfortunate district are hopeful of the day when all the property owners down there may be fired with the spirit of civic pride, and clean up and beautify this uncomely spot, almost in the gateway of the city.



Kakaako Mission, Superintendent P. W. Ryder and a part of the large band of children who attend the Mission.

son set out to save being the worst obstacles of all. Many a time, Mr. Ryder avers, have children been beaten by their drunken parents for attending the mission or for singing gospel songs, the words of which would sometimes spring unbidden to their lips as they played about the house.

Whilst talking with Mr. Ryder, the sound of children's voices, lustily singing a mission rally, was borne into the room which he and the reporter were seated. It was a temperance class, singing their battle hymn. There were fifty-four girls and boys of varying ages from tiny mites of six or seven to boys and girls of eleven or twelve. They were all members of the "L. T. L." (Loyal Temperance League) and they joyfully proclaimed their intention to fight against intemperance. This class meets weekly and the teachings of the principal of the mission is directed towards inculcating in the minds of the children a knowledge of the misery and suffering brought about by intemperance. With so much poverty surrounding the children, and so many examples of the havoc wrought by drink, it would certainly seem that the work must bring forth good fruit. There are between seventy-five and eighty children belonging to the temperance class and they are regular attendants at the classes. An effort has been made to reach the adults of the district and preach the gospel of temperance to them, but the success which has so far been attained has not been as great as could be desired. But splendid work has been done. A few years ago there were thirteen saloons in the Kakaako district, ten in Queen street; today there is not one saloon on the Wai-luku side of Richards street, what is even worse, perhaps, the "blind pig" flourishes, and illicit liquor is supplied to those who wish to obtain these. Many efforts have been made to eradicate these pestilent shanties, but

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