

# The Little Sunshiners and the Good Work They Do.



The Sunshine Club has opened a summer home at Bridgeport, Conn., to which relays of New York children in need of fresh air will be sent from time to time, some to stay for two weeks, others the entire heated term.

"Any child who is a member of our club in good standing," said its president, Mrs. Cynthia Westover Alden, at the club's headquarters, 90 Fifth avenue, "and who has paid his dues can go to our summer home. The dues of the club are not of a nature to break him. You can send a flower to a shut-in or give an automobile to our blind babies' home at Bartow-on-the-Sound. Either entitles you to membership.

"You see our cabinet," indicating a large glass cabinet filled with a jumble of things. "Articles needful for the fresh air babies are received and given out here.

"It is like the measure of the widow's meal, never quite empty. You see the little pink sunbonnets? A downtown firm pays its annual dues by donating them, another by giving little flannel sacks for the babies."

Here two small boys came in to make arrangements for sending a third to the country.

"It is wonderful how disinterested children are," said Mrs. Alden, as the boys left. "I have one child who wouldn't go without his blind granny."

"No," he said, "I can't go out in the country and leave her at home." So, of course, we will send blind granny along, too.

She was again interrupted, this time by a pretty young woman who came with her husband to donate an organ for the home of the blind babies. She had hardly taken her departure when another came in, asking for a refrigerator for an invalid woman.

"You might swap the organ for a refrigerator," suggested the reporter.

"We won't have to do that," smiled Mrs. Alden. "We get whatever we asked for. I asked for a carriage for the blind babies last week and got it."

"There are plenty of rich people perfectly able and willing to give what is needed for these children, if they only know about it. We tell them. We will ask for this refrigerator and get a dozen. In all probability they will shower refrigerators on us until we shall have to beg them to stop."

"But I want to tell you what the Sunshine children are doing all over the country to help others."

"In Memphis the newboys raised \$400 for a newboy who had been run over and had lost both arms. They bought him wooden arms. You see, they give entertainments at which each boy does whatever he can do best to amuse the audience. Strange things they are, too, sometimes."

Playing mumble-peg, for instance, whistling, or dancing a clog.

"But the most pitiful thing about this was that the boy couldn't use his wooden arms after they had bought them for him. He wore them three days. When they gathered about him then, distressed at seeing him without them, he said:

"It's no use, boys. They won't buy my papers when they see me with my two good arms."

"It was true. People bought papers from boys who could run to them and hold out their arms, begging them to buy, but they passed by this boy with his two nerveless wooden arms, not understanding that he was a cripple.

"Never mind," the other boys said to him, "you can wear your wooden arms on Sundays, Billy."

"One way in which they raise funds is by having rummage sales. They go from house to house, begging for old cast-off things, then have a sale of them.

"Then they make iron holders. You have no idea how well iron holders sell. The Rhode Island Sunshiners have put an old woman into a home by selling them."

"A football team has sent us 37 cents for ice-water for the babies. That is, they paid 10 cents car fare for the president, who brought us the rest, 27 cents in all. That paid the dues of the entire club, however, besides which we got up a box of things out of our cabinet for them, with something in it for each member of the team."

"In Colorado the Sunshiners got up a picnic to go to Pike's Peak. They paid two cents apiece and sent \$1.55 to the Blind Babies' Home."

"In their enthusiasm these children do some very beautiful things. In one country place they saw an old man digging a grave for a child.

"Let us line this little grave with flowers," they said, and went about picking bluebells and buttercups and every flower they could find. When the mother and father saw the little grave so beautifully lined with flowers for their baby, they sobbed aloud.

"Down in Charleston there are thirty-three Sunshiners who have planned to build a house of two small rooms for an old lady. Each child brings a brick or a shingle, just as he can get it. A Sunshiner who is a carpenter of the neighborhood has given enough timber to help in the work. In order to raise funds for the house rummage sales are given every month at the home of the State president.

"In the Brooklyn branch the girls are making overalls—little blue overalls that are worn by boys and girls at the summer home at Bridgeport. They gather around their president, Lawrence Allen of Borough Park, who is a cripple and sits all day long in a wheeled chair. They talk to him and amuse him while they sew.

"We have a dog that is very dear to our Sunshiners. He taught a crippled baby to walk. The child had been left on the floor tied to a chair while its mother worked out for such a length of time that its limbs became partly paralyzed.

"We fastened a rope to the dog and another to the child. Then when the dog jumped up and ran to bark at something, which it did every little while, the child was obliged to move, too. The movement of the dog jerked him up and about.

"In this way his limbs grew so strong that after a time he walked without difficulty. The dog is now a hero with us and fully realizes his importance."

"An old woman very neatly dressed in blue checked gingham and long white apron arose from the table near the door where she had been placing envelopes in a drawer and put the drawer in a cabinet.

"That is Emily Elwell," explained Mrs. Allen, as she resumed her seat. "We found her in the almshouse on the Island. She had been there for five years. She had taught in the public schools of New York for thirteen years. Then to go to the almshouse! We took her out and sent her to the home for the aged, and now she keeps our cabinet in order for us."

"You would be surprised," returning to the subject nearest her heart, "how many children are paying for scholarships for

other children and taking care of old people. A band of boys, of which J. A. McGregor is the proud president, have raised. They charge a cent admission. With these cents they send one boy to school.

"In Buffalo the children held a sale for the support of a day nursery, so that the little mothers could go to school. You don't know who these little mothers are! They are the older girls of the families, girls of 8 or 10, who care for the babies; for very soon after the baby is born the real mother must go out to work again, you know."

"There are thousands of these little mothers in New York. The street car conductors are well acquainted with them. They put a baby on the car, then wait and call for it when the car has made the round of the city. The conductor knows the Sunshine baby and watches after it.

"The trolley ride is often the only fresh air that the stum baby that can't go to the country. Our members among the shopgirls often call at the homes of these babies, take one out for a trolley ride, and bring it back again."

"A dancing class is taking care of a blind baby at our home. Its members raised \$27 by dancing, picked out a baby and began paying its board at Trumbull mansion, our home on the sound."

"Mrs. Cynthia M. Treagar is the matron there. She is a professional nurse. If you are very sympathetic you wouldn't care to go there much. Such sad things

happen."

"Not long ago she told me she said some thing to a blind boy. He did not answer. By and by she went up to him and touched him on the shoulder.

"Why didn't you answer me?" she asked, not in an unkind way, but very gently, as one talks to the blind always.

"Oh," said the child, "were you talking to me? I didn't know that. Nobody ever talks to me. That is—for these blind children never complain—nobody but the radiator." Then brightly, "But that pops awful fine sometimes," he added.

"I think, of all the afflicted, the blind are the most pitiful," she went on presently, "and there are so many of them. Recently a newboy on the corner of Fourteenth street and Broadway asked me what he must do to become a member of the Sunshine Club."

"There is an old blind man," I answered, "I help him across the street. Then, the next time I see you, tell me what else you have done to help somebody."

"It was a month before I saw him again. He came running up to me, breathlessly showing me a paper upon which were twenty-seven black marks."

"All blind men!" he panted, "that I helped across the street."

"They have been there all the time," I told him.

"Aw, what yer givin' me?" he cried, "I ain't never seen a blind man on this crosin' before I got to be a member of Sunshiners."

"Of course the members of the club are not limited to children or to poor children. Many rich women are interested in this home at Bridgeport. On July 1 they will come in their automobiles to take the children out for an airing."

"Our home at Hillcrest is given us by its owner. A certain number of boys live there until homes are found for them elsewhere, but we get them."

"Rich children assist the poor ones. They give entertainments at which a fairy child touches children with her wand and turns them into Sunshiners. The proceeds of these entertainments are given to the fund. New York has the Golden Hour Home, from which fourteen children will go next week to the home at Bridgeport. You must go and see that."

"The Golden Hour Home, which is at 241 East Nineteenth street, was organized two years ago. Its expenses are paid by two New York women, mother and daughter. The girls of the East Side are invited to make this their home."

"They come after school in the winter, when a bowl of hot soup and bread and butter are ready for them. In the spring fruit

and bread and tea take the place of the soup. In the summer they come at 8 in the morning and stay until their mothers, who work out, come for them at night.

"A pretty, bright little girl of 9 or 10 opened the door for the reporter and found the matron, Mrs. Wicks, for her.

"The little girl," explained Mrs. Wicks, "has been almost trained into truthfulness here. At first I thought we should never be able to do anything with her. We couldn't believe a word she said. Now, we can't wholly rely on her, but she has improved so you'd be surprised."

"She comes early in the morning and stays until 7 at night. Her mother works in a restaurant. Before we took her she ran the streets. Is that you, Freda? Run along, dear."

When the child was quite gone, "She listens to every word," Mrs. Wicks whispered, "and invariably repeats what you don't say. I am afraid we shall never be able to trust her."

She showed the reporter through the house, which was very neat and well furnished. At the dining room table sat a young woman dressed in black.

"That girl," said Mrs. Wicks, in the hall, "supports her mother and ten children. She works in one of the large dry goods stores."

"How can she?" asked the reporter, "on the salary she must get?"

"The poor live on tea and bread," explained Mrs. Wicks, "which is not expensive. But her home is clean, and more than you can say of most of them, and yet to look at these girls you wouldn't think it."

"Which was true, for at that moment they had entered an upstairs room in which the girls were congregated around the piano ready to practise for a concert, the proceeds of which were to go toward the repairs of those bound for Bridgeport. They were mainly girls of 13 or 16, neatly and many of them rather stylishly dressed. A young music teacher sat at the piano

ready to begin teaching them.

"We have helped these girls for two years," said Mrs. Wicks, from the vantage ground of the next room into which she had led the reporter. "First they came to us from the streets running wild here on the East Side."

"We let them stay here. Then, after a time, we found them places in stores, where they could earn a little money to help their families. That pretty girl with the necktie is a clerk in a millinery establishment."

"They work through the day now and come to us of evenings, as you would expect. Then they read or have a little music to be done by a child of 8? See the tiny work quilt, this child."

"Now, I want you to look at that little delicate girl over there, sitting so upright in the chair. She is one of those who are 8 to Bridgeport."

"For two years she was in a plaster cast. Her head had been placed as in a vice. The plaster cast weighed 8½ pounds. It should have weighed only three."

"When we found her she was gradually fading away in this prison-like thing. Her family sat by quietly waiting for her to die, in that calm way common to the very poor, to whom death is often a relief."

"Then we brought her here to our doctor. He took off the cast and the horrible thing that held her head pinned, and she has been getting well ever since."

"I'm glad she is going to Bridgeport. We hope she will get little well there out in the sunshine and the air."

The reporter looked at the child. She was practically a living skeleton. Though she was no longer encased in the plaster cast, her position showed the effect. The attenuated limbs were rigid. The head, with its face of the pallid yellowness of old marble, held itself firmly in the position it had been forced to assume. The dark eyes looked out dully.

The reporter looked quickly away toward the cheerful little liar who was laughing and whispering—less possibly, but as such cheerful lies—to a neighboring girl.

"I am glad, too," she sighed.

## Deputy Chief Kruger Tells of the Worst Fires of All.

While his men were fighting the fire that destroyed a drug storehouse in Ann street a few days ago, somebody asked Deputy Chief Kruger of the First Division if he did not fear an explosion. He answered no. He knew there were no explosives in the building.

As he predicted, there was no explosion, and the fire, which was a stubborn one, was not permitted to spread beyond the walls of the building in which it started—a fact that caused Chief Croker to congratulate him.

Ever since the Tarrant fire, three years ago, a popular impression has prevailed that a fire in any drug house would be a thing to scare the Fire Department into greater caution than usual. While this impression is not correct, there was perhaps better ground for such a belief than for those other popular fallacies that the most dangerous area possible in a city would be in the vicinity of a gas tank or a fireworks store. In reality, there is no extraordinary danger to be apprehended from a fire in either of these situations.

A storage gas tank might be heated red hot without fear of an explosion, because under the conditions in which ordinary illuminating gas is stored in reservoirs it will not explode or even burn. It is only when the gas reaches the air that it becomes dangerous.

In a city shop where fireworks are sold, the stock exhibited for eleven months out of the twelve consists wholly of dummies without any gunpowder or other explosive. Such shops are permitted by the city authorities to handle live fireworks only during one month—from June 10 to July 10 in each year. Even then the bulk of their stock is in transit, but if a fire should break out in a fireworks store at this time of year it would give the firemen a pretty hard fight.

Deputy Chief Kruger is a large man, with muscles and sinews of iron. Despite his grayish hair and closely trimmed mustache, which show that he is well along in middle life, he impresses one at once as being in the prime of strength and vigor, and his frank, open countenance indicates genial friendliness, albeit he is not a talkative man. He would rather do the work and let some other fellow talk about it.

When a Sun reporter asked him what made the hardest kind of fire to fight, he expressed some reluctance about saying anything for print—advised seeing Chief Croker and letting the head of the department speak for it. But it was some account of his own personal experiences that was wanted, some of the episodes of his thirty-one years of active service in the New York Fire Department. So he finally consented to an interview.

"Well," said the Deputy Chief, "about the most difficult fire we've had to fight in my time was in the Chambers street cold storage warehouse, about five years ago."

"The lower part of the building was filled with a poisonous gas of some kind. You've heard of caves of West that have a layer of gas at the bottom; animals going into them are killed and if a man were to lie down he'd die, but standing erect he's safe."

"Well, it was something like that. The men didn't notice it as long as they could remain inside, but as soon as the smoke drove them out to get fresh air, its effects began to be felt."

"One imagined his neck was getting rapidly longer. His head would go round, he had rather pleasant feelings, then he dropped."

"Thirty-three men went over that way in the street, one after another."

"We had to make a temporary hospital out of Engine House 29. All recovered but one, Fireman Rhinehart, of Engine 7. He was overcome in the cellar, and while we got him out alive, we could not bring him to."

"We had a hard fight to get him out. The tenth man who went down got a rope under his body, but had to come out before he could fasten it. We felt the weight on the rope, but when we pulled it came free. The twelfth man tied the rope around Rhinehart's body and then we got him out, but he died in a short time."

"The peculiar thing about it was the men could walk around in the smoke inside the burning building and not feel the effects of the gas until they got outside. We never knew what the gas was."

"The cooling plant," was in the next street, and the byline was sent through pipes to the warehouse. It was supposed that when it struck the flames the deadly gas was generated."

"Nowadays we know pretty well what to expect from a fire in any building in any section of the city. The chief, the deputies, the captains know the district."

"I know that they had nothing but dry drugs, sponges and that sort of stuff stored in that building. Of course, in a case like that some dangerous chemical might have been put in within a day or two—that is a chance we have to take. But we keep close track of such places."

"Some of the Government buildings, the storehouses for army supplies, also contain quantities of chemicals and might make dangerous fire to cope with. But almost the worst thing we have to contend with is the collapse of a building from overloading."

"A fire may be smouldering for three or four hours before an alarm is sent in, and just when we get to work on it the floors give way. In the last few years half a dozen buildings have collapsed that way, but fortunately not many men have been caught or hurt."

"Thorough inspection of every building in a district are made three or four times a year to know whether there has been any change in the contents or any shifting of the location of the stuff. Then we are inspecting every day as we find time for such work."

"The rules of the department call for familiarity with their districts from all chiefs of battalion and company commanders. All warehouses are now pretty well watched by the insurance patrol as well as by the Fire Department."

"This month we look over the fireworks places. For the other months of the year they carry only dummies, as they call them, but from June 10 to July 10 they have the real article and now we keep a close watch on them to see that they have the stuff stored properly."

"The dealer used to stand a stock of sky-rockets up like a bundle of lath. Now he is required to place them on shelves with their heads pointing across the building, so that if they should be accidentally discharged they would not go out through the front windows into the street."

"Of course, if a fire breaks out in one of those stores some of the rockets would shoot into the street anyway. No possible arrangement could prevent their getting twisted about and going in pretty much every direction."

"There are about ten of those buildings downtown in the wholesale district that carry a pretty good stock of fireworks,

but at any time the bulk of stock is in transit.

"In cellars and sub-cellars we meet with a good deal of trouble. We have to get down into them as the smoke and flames are coming up. We had a lively time at the fire in Nassau chambers a few years ago when a back draft in the basement cut off fourteen men."

"The use of elevators in many warehouses causes careless obstruction of the stairways and necessitates the inspections by company officers to be more frequent. Such inspections are made all the time as opportunity offers—at least once or twice a week at all suspected places."

"Electric wires give us a lot of trouble sometimes, but we generally get them shut off quickly by notifying the electrical companies. The Bush Electric Works in Elizabeth street burned so fast that it was impossible to stop the dynamo or engines until we could get into the boiler room, which was in an adjoining building, and shut off the supply of steam."

"There were ten boilers in the separate building and of course as soon as the steam was shut off the dynamo stopped. A few of them had already stopped because of the burning of the belting connecting them with a main shaft."

"After the building had burned down destroying \$200,000 worth of property, we found a live wire in the ruins which came from an uptown branch of the works. The fire was about twelve years ago, in 1882, I think."

"The gas supply also is a source of danger to the firemen. We always have it shut off as soon as possible. At the McKesson & Robbins fire we could not get into the basement until the gas had been shut off in the street. After that was done the men could get inside and also upon the fire escapes."

"There is a lot of alcohol stored in various buildings downtown, but we have been very fortunate in not having any fire in those places—especially in the day time when you can't see the fumes burning."

"Perfumery factories and places where essential oils are used, make bad fires. The water gathers and the oil floats burning, and before you know it cuts off your way of escape. We had a bad experience of that kind at the Horner fire in Platt street about eight years ago."

"A rubber place also makes a hard fire to fight. At one of those in Park place about three years ago several firemen were over-comes, but none of them was seriously hurt, however."

"One of the worst times I ever had was about fifteen years ago at a fire on Broadway, between Broome and Spring streets. I was with a hook and ladder company then."

"We were inside the building when we were caught by a back draught. But we were in a side passage, at right angles to the main passage through the building, and it went by us and out at the end, and after it had passed we got out safely. We were in a pretty bad hole for a time there."

"Another interesting experience was at a fire in Broome street. It was only a three story house, but it made one of the fiercest fires I ever saw."

"When we got there we met a man with a wooden leg bringing a trunk downstairs. He was having a bad time. His wooden leg kept getting caught in the banisters."

"One of the men took his trunk and helped him down. When he got out he said there was some one else upstairs. So another fireman and myself went in."

"We did not get very far before we were out of, both front and rear, by the flames."

"It was in the winter time and the hydrant was frozen. For a few minutes we had a pretty exciting kind of a time. The man managed to get behind a door and hold it shut. I told him to let me know when he couldn't stand it any longer and we'd make a jump for it. We were nearly done for when the men outside got the water, and then they broke a way to us and we got out."

"Fire in the neighborhood of a gas tank was a subject on which the deputy chief was not willing to talk. He would only say:

"My views in regard to that are very different from those of most other people."

**Heavy Athletics Favored in Germany.**

From C. B. Fry's Magazine.

Wrestling is one of the most popular forms of athletic exercises in Germany, and it seems as if the heavy and muscular build of the Germans peculiarly adapts them for this kind of sport.

The general public interprets the word "athlete" as meaning a wrestler, weight-lifter or "strong man." When the English style of athletics was introduced into Germany it was termed "light athletics," wrestling is termed "heavy athletics." In every town there are many clubs indulging in "heavy athletics," and numerous public contests are arranged, in connection with which challenges to all comers are given. I am often witness a pitched battle between science and brute power—see an all out, stupendous but probably a butchery of very fellow—slippery as an eel, on the occasion of the world's championship in Berlin, an open arena, roofed over, as a centre where the wrestling took place, erected, with tiers of seats for the public all around. As luck would have it, the victor proved boisterous and the public cry of "fair" the championships were, finally, the impetuous, unable to pay the stakes, the winners, very discreetly decided to "quit town."