

INSIDE THE ORPHANAGES OF SAN FRANCISCO

7 THE NURSERY for HOMELESS CHILDREN



NOT AN UNDESIRABLE CITIZEN AMONG THEM

AND whose small receive one such little child in my name receive me; but whose shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea.—Matthew xviii:5.

What think you would the master say if he wandered on earth again and found a man, teaching in his name, who denied a group of children because they could bring no dimes nor nickels to his coffers?

Such a man exists right here in San Francisco. He is not an ordained minister, but he stands so high in the councils of the church that, in the absence of the minister, he took full charge of the Sunday school and church and spoke as one in authority. The children denied were those of the Congregational church they have always gone to the one most convenient to the home.

Those who have known of this financial qualification for admission to that Sunday school will never cease to marvel at the kind of man who essayed to teach of the life and works of Christ and yet forget that it was he who said:

"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven."

The charge that a satisfactory commercial rating has been the quid pro quo for churchly welcome has prompted investigators and students of social conditions to make pilgrimages from one church to another in many cities, and the results have never been found to warrant the contention, but who has ever charged that the children—and especially those dependent upon the



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How many tots can be tucked in for a nap that way. This would not be possible if Willie were bent upon tumbling Freddie off the trundle bed. Obedience is one of the first things that the matron insists upon, being perfectly sure that if they do not learn that essential they can not have well ordered lives. So the little ones understand when they are put down for their after dinner nap it means closed eyes and closed eyes soon mean sleep.

The nursery is well placed, facing the west. A big glassed in porch is a place of real joy for the little ones, who go still farther into the big yard when they want to make mud pies and frolic. Low seats are arranged around the porches, and one corner is so popular that a wooden pane has had to be substituted for the original glass. The most curious thing of all is the deep depression worn in the window sill by the hundreds of elbows that have rested there. There is hardly an hour of the day when some little elbow is not in that depression. There are also some "writings on the walls," which tell strange stories of baby nervousness or baby loneliness. Low constant friends and protectors. For 19 of the 20 years of the nursery Dr. Guy E. Manning has looked after the physical condition of the homeless children. Further than that, he has been the never failing friend as well as physician, often taking big responsibilities in matters of administering. Mrs. William Hollis had the responsibilities of the executive head during four crucial years, and Mrs. Jacob Bertz, now president, has been almost nine years at the head of this work.

The nursery has also been fortunate in having the loyal devotions of a group of young women known as the auxiliary. They maintain and equip beds, they take charge of the babies' room, they arrange for picnics, they provide goodies and good cheer for all the holidays. The present officers of the auxiliary are: Mrs. H. Houseworth, president; Miss Martha Harris, vice president; Miss Margaret Gibb, treasurer, and Miss Adeline von Hagen, secretary.

But despite all this the Nursery for Homeless Children, which has met a great need through many years, should have better support—more friends and more money.



HAPPY DAYS ARE SPENT IN THIS ROOM. LUNCHEON IN THE NURSERY

the Nursery for Homeless Children, who live at the corner of Lake street and Fourteenth avenue. The man who denied them was the superintendent of a neighboring Congregational church. The time was August, 1906.

When this institution moved to its present home in 1905 the matron, Mrs. M. J. Hubbert, went to the minister of the nearby Congregational church and asked if her family of boys and girls, which numbered from 50 to 75, could be accommodated in his Sunday school. They were made welcome, but later developments showed that their lack of financial backing must have been a matter of comment at that time. The issue about them came in August after the calamity. The children had been out of town from April to August. Upon their return Mrs. Hubbert went again to the church to make sure that their places had not been filled in consequence of the great shifting of the population during the intervening months.

No Pay, No Welcome

The particular Sunday Mrs. Hubbert set out upon this mission a heavy storm made walking difficult, as there were not at that time many sidewalks and pavements thereabouts. Wet, tired and uncomfortable, she reached the church and was met by a smug, dapper man, who soon made it plain that he was not at all glad to see her. When asked if there was room in the Sunday school for her charges, this man hemmed and hawed and then flatly said:

"Well, of course, we must take into consideration that those children never brought any money into the Sunday school."

It did not take Mrs. Hubbert long to bid that man a goodby he will not soon forget. Through the storm she made her way to the next nearest church, which was Episcopal. There she was received with genuine cordiality and her children made more than welcome to all the parish church had to offer. They are still attending and enjoying the "little church around the corner."

There are no rules as to what church the children of the nursery shall attend, and until the experience with the commercial Christian superintendent of

world's charity—have been weighed in the financial scales before being stamped worthy?

No mother's indignation for a slight put upon her children ever exceeded that of Mrs. Hubbert, who for more than ten years has looked after the welfare of the nursery children. Three years have not mollified her feelings.

This institution is exactly what its name indicates. Hundreds of times in the years gone by the doors of this place have been open for children taken perhaps in the dead of night from drunken, dissolute parents; they have opened for the children left without "protection by irresponsible parents; they have opened for the children of the deserted, sick mothers and for those whose parents have had to account to the law for their criminality. Each child in this institution is part of a tragedy, but happily there is no trace of the misery and the degradation of it on their young faces. Wholesome living and pleasant companionship make the children forget the unhappy past that so many of them have known.

Mrs. Hubbert declared that she is one of the old fashioned kind of women who believe "in a few fundamentals and no new fangled frills" for institutions. Along this line she said:

"I believe in giving children in an institution a good place to sleep, plenty of nourishing food, all the schooling they can get and plenty of play to make them happy. Above all, I exact absolute obedience. The trouble with the world today is that children have not been taught to mind. I have no theories about this business. I've been in it since I was 23 years old, and I know something of what I'm talking about."

As to the "good places to sleep," turn down any of the dainty white beds. They are models. Any of the babies' cribs might belong in a home where there was one tot to be cared for. And the dormitories where these cribs and beds are look truly inviting. In that for the babies, a great doll in a pretty rocker sits in state as if she were a doll paragon saint of the room. Every window holds a picture, for the country and the ocean are so beautiful beyond. Steam pipes and a stove give assurance of added comfort. Runners

of bright rag carpet, made by the older girls, give a homey look.

In the dormitories of the older children there are a few pictures well placed and some shelves of books for the temporarily indisposed child, not ill enough to have the machinery of the infirmary set in motion.

Proof of the second contention, "plenty of food," takes one to the dining room during any meal hour. As to "all the schooling they can get," simply watch them troop in and out to the nearest public school. The play rooms and the big out of doors attest to the further condition of "plenty of play to make them happy." Both the boys and the girls have fine play rooms where there are no rules save those of kindness and fairness. One end of the girls' room is arranged for the sewing and mending classes.

The Rules Are Few

Mrs. Hubbert does not believe in too many rules. She does not believe in dressing institution children alike, she does not believe in numbering them, so all the clothes are initialed and there is a name above every towel, wash cloth and toothbrush. What she believes in she puts into action without rebates of any kind, and there is never a doubt in looking at the children that what she "believes" works out in practice.

"Do I believe in home placing as conducted by the Children's Agency of the Associated Charities?" said Mrs. Hubbert. "Yes, when the home it can get is better than the one they have with us. I believe we are subscribers to the agency's work."

To hear Mrs. Hubbert enunciate her views on the conduct of an institution one might think she was a martinet, but while she is saying these things she picks up a little one to pet it and then she does something for the comfort or pleasure of another child. That the "few fundamentals" result in a comfortable home is emphasized on every side. Each child is incontinent testimony to the excellent care it receives. Besides, there seems to be some one at all times to tell her unselfish work through the long years of the watches she has kept when sickness has overtaken her family, of her good judgment and all around justice.

To attain these results has not always been an easy matter. It has meant constant thought and much hard work. The nursery has no endowment. Anything above maintenance has gone into the building of the home, which is one of the most comfortable and artistic of the modern institutions. The site of the home is one of the really beautiful ones in the city. It is almost a block—a triangular piece to the north and

abutting the Presidio reservation, is what it lacks of being a rectangle. It has not been possible to secure that, owing to a flaw in the title. The site cost \$12,000. The building represents an outlay of \$45,000. Only \$5,000 remains of the mortgage on the property and a recent legacy will probably be applied to the extinguishing of that claim. That means much in the economy of that big family, but the fact still remains that the state aid and the allowance from the court for committed children are far from enough to support the children. Yearly and monthly subscriptions, donations and supplies all handled with the greatest economy just make ends meet. There is nothing over for improvements or emergency calls. The children, with but few exceptions, are dressed in contributed clothes, which Mrs. Hubbert has recut and remade.

Just 11 months before the April calamity the nursery moved into this handsome home. The sight commands a near and clear view of the ocean. The house is admirably arranged; there is not a dark corner anywhere, and it is filled with the sweet air that seems to flow like a river directly from the ocean. The matron laughingly insists, "We get the air directly from the factory," pointing to the clear stretch of ocean off to the west.

Improvements of all sorts were planned in connection with the new home, when the earthquake came and changed them all. At that time three of the main walls to the north fell out. For this wreck no blame was attached to the contractor who had so lately turned the building over to the management. It appears that the two large cylindrical fire escapes, the kind that are used where children have to be considered, were anchored very firmly to the north walls and had their foundations deep in cement. The walls could not withstand the movement of the earth and the dragging of the fire escapes. This wrecking of so much of the building meant that the children had to be taken elsewhere. Provision was made for them in what tents could be secured, but the task of caring for 75 children from 6 months to 14 years of age was a serious one. Wherever possible the matron made relatives take the children that had any claim on them, and at the end of two weeks those remaining were taken to Sacramento and bountifully provided for at the Sacramento founding asylum. Being so competently assisted in the care of their charges made it possible for the managers of the nursery to prepare the home and get it in readiness for the return of the children the following August. With the aid of the relief committee the ruined brick walls were replaced with wood, the fire escapes were righted and other urgent repairs made. From the front and side the building is the same beautiful edifice it was in the beginning. From time to time since then rooms have been repaired as to plaster, and while the very particular matron, who is as fussy a house keeper as she is a good executive, would have many more things done, the nursery looks very inviting.

One side of the building belongs to the girls and the other to the boys, that is as far as dormitories and play-rooms are concerned. They all meet three times a day in as handsome a dining room as ever it was the good fortune of an institution to have. Big windows to the west mean that this room is always comfortable in the morning and the southern exposure insures the winter sun, which is always so grateful. A high wainscoting of wood done in Flemish brown is met by a cream ceiling; the floor is covered with a cheerful, harmonizing linoleum and a large fireplace lends special beauty to the room.

Tables and Manners

The children are seated at four tables according to their ages. These tables are set as carefully as if for a private home, the matron holding that there is no place like the table for teaching children many of the decencies of life. Each table is spread with white linen and each "cover" has its napkin and service carefully arranged. The meaning of these attentiveness of home life are thoroughly understood by the children, even to the little ones, who have to be helped into their high chairs. Tablecloths two days in use were the best proof of the care with which the children sat. There was not a stain anywhere.

No child comes to meals unprepared. Dirty hands and faces are washed every tousled head is combed and when the last bell is rung it is an eager, smiling lot of children who troop into the dining room. Napkins for the most part are tucked in at apron necks, grace is intoned and then comes the substantial meal. With the greatest consideration the children pass things to each other. All the serving is done at the tables, a nurse or an attendant being at the head of each one.

As in all institutions dinner is served at midday, experience proving that a simple nutritious supper means sound sleep. After dinner the larger children start off for school under the protection of a nurse and the little ones all take a nap. They expect to do this thing and there is no trouble for the nurse. The bits of babies are put in their cribs, but the 3 and 4 and 5 year olds who have attained the dignity of a crib in the little dormitory sleep on a few sofas and a couple of trundle beds that the nursery mother has at her command. They make an amusing picture where the curtains are drawn to shut out the bright day. They are all so little that the nurse economizes space by dovetailing them. It is astonishing

The present financial status of the nursery is indicated by the following report of the treasurer, made early last January:

RECEIPTS	
Donations	\$58.53
Mite box	50
Immature relatives	1,278.50
State aid	2,772.95
Annual dues	580.50
Monthly subscriptions	22.50
Advertisements	19.00
Court allowances	806.88
Interest from bank	37.00
Life membership	41.75
Mrs. F. W. Bradley	250.00
Mrs. J. L. McDonald	250.00
Robinson bequest	200.00
Legacies	650.00
Prize estate	200.00
Total	\$6,223.58
Balance on hand Jan. 1, 1908	2,142.96
Total	\$8,366.54

DISBURSEMENTS	
Food	\$2,581.85
Fuel and lights	62.50
Water	105.00
Clothing	37.35
Salaries	8,237.35
Indorsement fund	25.00
Paid on mortgage	500.00
Refund	4.00
Repairs	78.55
Printing	44.00
Drugs	50.00
Supplies	121.12
Telephone	23.00
Interest on mortgage	24.35
Sundries	25.00
Taxes	154.50
Total	\$7,979.87
Balance on hand Jan. 1, 1909	1,156.85
Total	\$9,136.72

Respectfully submitted,
NETTIE R. THEOBALD, Treasurer.

The following group of women and men give their time and earnest endeavor to the care of these dependent children:

Active Area Sponsors

Mrs. Jacob Bertz, president; Mrs. Frank W. Wright, first vice president; Mrs. Hebert E. Law, second vice president; Mrs. William Kaufman, third vice president; Mrs. J. J. Theobald, treasurer; Mrs. E. P. Ackerman, recording secretary; Mrs. James C. Sims, Mrs. W. T. Serron, Mrs. B. Schlesinger, Mrs. Herman F. Whitlow, Trustees—C. S. Neal, Nathan L. Bell, T. J. Schuyler, G. A. Barton, William L. Gerstle, Physiciana—Visiting, Dr. Guy E. Manning; consulting, Dr. William Boerckle, Dr. James W. Ward, Dentist—Dr. O. B. Burns, Attorneys—E. C. Chapman, William F. Hubbard, James C. Sims.

The next article of this series will tell of the work of the Ladies' Protection and Relief society, located at Geary and Franklin streets.