

# WHAT THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE HAS ACCOMPLISHED

THE Neighborhood house, the center of social settlement work on the West side, has been most auspiciously named. "A neighbor is one who lives near another," says a modern lexicographer, and one would have to puzzle long to find a finer or more complete definition than that. For he is privileged to accept the word "near" in the spiritual sense, and thus interpreted it means very much indeed.

Before ever there was a Neighborhood house on the West side flats there was this appreciation of the meaning of the word "neighbor" entertained by a little group of people who dwelt in other parts of the city and by a little group who dwelt on the West side. Although their homes were far apart, these two little groups of people lived near each other. The one gave and the other accepted in the most neighborly spirit, and gradually that spirit spread, until today it is difficult to estimate the number of those who are influenced by it.

The Neighborhood house, then, is an outgrowth of this neighborly spirit. It is a social settlement in the most social meaning of the phrase. But to give its history it is necessary to go back several years to a time when the phrase "social settlement" meant nothing, when the neighborly spirit was known by no other name.

About eight years ago Mrs. J. Wirth, a member of the Hebrew Benevolent society, interested a number of Jewish women in the opening of a sewing class for girls. The class met one morning of each week in a building on Indiana avenue. The children were taught plain sewing, and as the work advanced the classes were graded. After the school had been in existence about three years the local branch of the National Council of Jewish Women took charge of it and manual training for a class of boys was introduced into the school. The school continued to grow, and finally the building in which the classes were held became the center of social life in that part of the town.

When Dr. I. L. Rypins came to St. Paul to take charge of the Mount Zion synagogue he displayed keen interest in the work that the women of his congregation were carrying on over on the West side, and the development of the industrial classes into a social settlement was carefully fostered by him.

### Its First Humble Quarters.

On the first day of September in the year 1899 the Neighborhood House association took possession of a small two-story house opposite the present Neighborhood house, and a little over a year later, on Oct. 4, 1901, the association incorporated with the following board of directors: President, Dr. Rypins; vice president, Mrs. J. Wirth; treasurer, Mrs. Westheimer; Mrs. M. Frankel, Mrs. W. L. Goodkind, Mrs. W. H. Elsinger, Mrs. Ambrose Gutterman, Mrs. Henry Stein, Mrs. Joseph Elsinger and Mrs. Albert N. Rose.

An old tenement house which stood at the corner of Indiana avenue and Eva street had been placed on a new foundation and thoroughly renovated, and in this new home which it rented the association began its work on a broader scale than had heretofore been attempted. Mrs. M. M. Pentland was installed as resident and the staff of volunteer teachers was increased.

A social settlement demands for its success co-operation. If the early efforts of those Jewish women who started the industrial school over on the West side had not met with a response from the people for whom the school was opened, the sewing class, of course, could not have evolved into the Neighborhood house of today. But the people did respond and it is their ready response that makes the story of the settlement so encouraging and interesting. They were quick to read opportunity in the plans that were made for them and they entered with such spirit and with such entire willingness into those plans that they practically carried all of

work soon began to overlap that of the Neighborhood house. Finally when the Neighborhood House association took possession of its present building the civic league realized that the new home was commodious enough for all in that part of the town who desired to avail themselves of the opportunities offered both by the association and the league. The reading room was abandoned and its library that the league had gathered together for its reading room was sent to the new Neighborhood house, and this uniting of the two forces that were at work for the good of the community had the effect of broadening the work and of hastening its evolution from a sectarian to a non-sectarian institution, an

nations of lessons given by the teachers, or working out problems for themselves on the blackboards. The classes, of course, are graded and the teachers are members of the senior class of the Humboldt high school. The sessions begin at 7:30 and continue until 9 o'clock. There are first, second, third and fourth reader classes. Commercial arithmetic, spelling, writing, history and geography are taught. The classes vary in size from week to week. The boys and men who attend the school are often not able to give the four evenings in the week to it, and the busiest of some of these takes them into the country, so that the attendance is by no means regular.

which make the settlement so important. If they would permit themselves to be drawn into the work they would soon realize that they are receiving as much as they give, for the spirit of helpfulness which permeates the settlement touches and strengthens all who allow themselves to come in contact with it.

### DEATH IS WELCOMED BY THE DYING

CHICAGO, Nov. 28.—That death has no terror for those who know that it is only a few hours away, and dying is not an unpleasant sensation, is the conclusion drawn from the observation of 200 cases by Dr. Benjamin Reisman, a young physician who has practiced in several Chicago hospitals. Why this is true, he says, is something that cannot be explained.

Since he became a medical student Dr. Reisman has kept a record of the persons he has seen die, noting carefully each time the impression which the approach of death made on the mind. He observed his two hundredth case a few days ago and then announced the conclusion he had reached. "Persons in sound mind and body fear death," said Dr. Reisman. "At least the most of them do, but it is a foolish fear. Besides the shrinking from whatever they may conceive to be the hereafter, they fear the act of dying as if it were some shocking sensation or torture. But I have yet to see a case where a dying person, even one whose faculties were alert and who was not suffering great bodily pain, was overwhelmed by the knowledge that he had only a few more hours to live."

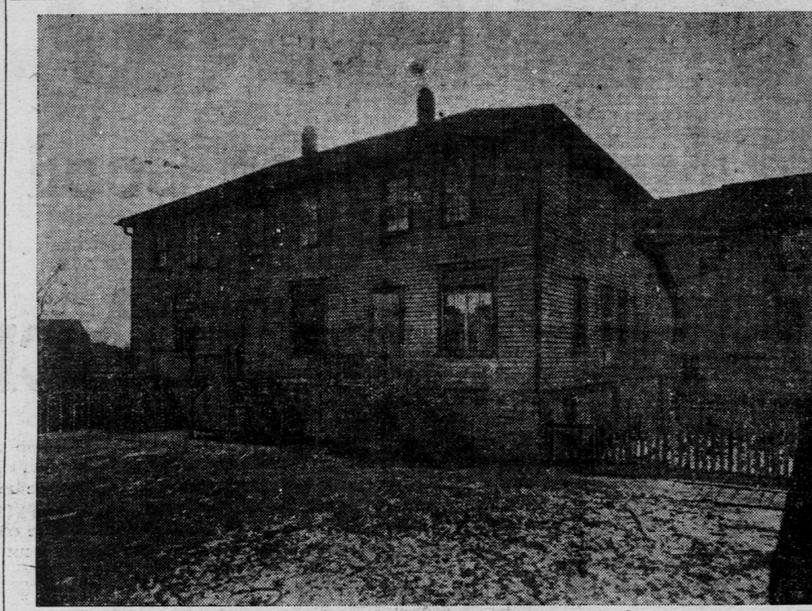
"There may be persons whose dying hours are clouded by the thought that they are leaving someone dependent on them or someone dear to them, but death itself they do not care. I have even known cases where it was pleasant, apparently, and several persons I have seen die laughing and joked in their last hours."

Pointing to specific cases, Dr. Reisman showed that the death bed was sometimes a cheerful place and that intense sorrow and horror really had no place there.

"It is not only great men who die heroic deaths," he said. "Those things sound dramatic when they are recorded in biography, but they are commonplace enough. I know of a case of a young man, a carpenter, who fell from a high building and was so severely injured that he could live only a few hours. He regained consciousness and when told he could not live, said: 'All right. I would have liked to have finished that job before my end came.'"

"Another case I remember was that of a switchman who had both his legs cut off in a railroad accident. He was brought to the hospital and told he had about an hour to live. He was not in great pain at the time, and yet he asked me if I could not hurry it along. He had no fear of death."

"In cases of death from natural causes there is no difference. Nearly everyone is sorry to give up the life, but they are seldom overwhelmed when told they cannot live. It is a peculiar psychological fact that people living



West Side Neighborhood House.

them out themselves, those who had originated them merely advising and directing.

The Neighborhood house as it stands today is as much a monument to the ambition of those who live on the West side flats as to the neighborliness of those who live away from the flats, but are desirous of being near its dwellers.

Made Non-sectarian. Many of the first incorporators of the Neighborhood House association were desirous of making it non-sectarian in the broadest meaning of the term, but it had to grow to this, just as it had to grow from the industrial school into the social settlement.

About three years ago the Woman's Civic league decided to open a reading room on the West side. It secured a building on South Robert street and fitted it up in comfortable fashion for the benefit of those who cared to avail themselves of the privilege of meeting there. This, too, evolved gradually into a social settlement, for the building became the center of the social life of the neighborhood. Classes were formed, concerts and parties were given, and the

evolution that Rabbi Rypins encouraged.

Reorganized Last October. On Oct. 2, 1903, the Neighborhood house once more incorporated, this time as a non-sectarian institution. The following are the officers: President, Gustav Scholle; first vice president, Rev. Theodore Sedgwick, of the Church of St. John the Evangelist; second vice president, Rev. Richard W. Boynton, of Unity church; third vice president, Mrs. Ballard; and treasurer, Mr. Geary. There is a governing board of twenty-five directors which includes these officers. Any one may become a member of the association by paying annual dues of \$5.

So much for the history of the settlement. Of the work itself there is much more to be said. Should one happen to drop in at the Neighborhood house on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening he would find himself in the midst of very busy life, for school is held on these nights. Girls as young as fifteen or sixteen and men as old as forty will be seen bending over books in the study rooms or listening to the expla-

But the pupils attend when they can and no matter how long their absence has been, when they return they are ready to take up the work just where it was left off. In winter three or four boys are attending the school, and they are faithful and diligent pupils.

### Well-Equipped School Rooms.

There are six school rooms on the first floor of the Neighborhood house and six resident rooms on the second floor. The school rooms are lighted by electricity and fitted up with all the necessary school room conveniences. In addition to these rooms there is an assembly room on the first floor which seats 300 people. It is furnished with a piano and is well lighted and ventilated. In this room every other Sunday a sacred concert is given, the vice presidents taking turns arranging for this. Here, too, are held the dancing parties of the Neighborhood house.

The industrial work which marked the beginning of the settlement is continued, though on a much more extensive scale, of course. About seventy-five girls assemble at the Neighborhood House every Tuesday afternoon from 3:30 until 6 o'clock for sewing lessons. There are three classes in primary work and the rest are divided into underwear, apron and shirt-waist classes.

The beginners learn to make the various stitches on patchwork, and their sewing, like the sewing of the older girls, is carefully examined by Mrs. Pentland, the resident, and on each lesson a mark showing the quality of the work is placed after the pupil's name. A record is also kept of the attendance. All the garments are cut out for the more advanced pupils and no garment is allowed to leave the house until it is finished.

Nearly Self-Supporting. The industrial school of the Neighborhood House will soon be self-supporting, for each pupil pays for the garment she has made, and she pays each being the cost of the material. After the school has been dismissed each article is subjected to a rigid inspection. If the work is badly done it is ripped out and at the next session of the school the pupil is requested to do it over again. This method insures real progress and the pupils soon become very deft with their needles.

The piano classes meet on Mondays and Thursdays after school. Twenty-five cents is charged for a lesson and the pupils have the use of the piano in the assembly hall for practice.

The Mothers' club is an important factor in the development of the community. This club meets every Thursday at the Neighborhood House. The meeting opens with a question box and then either the resident or somebody interested in the work gives a practical talk on some subject. Sometimes there is music and at the close of the meeting refreshments are served. Over their cups of tea the mothers discuss matters pertaining to the care of their homes and aid each other in the solution of those problems that confront all housekeepers.

The above outlines briefly the work that is being carried on in this social settlement, but it gives little idea of the widespread influence that the Neighborhood House exerts. To realize this it is necessary to live for a week at least in the settlement, and even in that time it is hardly probable that the visitor would be able to grasp the full scope of the work. The warm, pleasant home, with its plain but comfortable furniture, its attractive pictures, its interesting books and, above all, its atmosphere of cordiality, represents a haven to many, a restful place where advice may be sought with the full confidence that the best will be given. It is not so much the Neighborhood House as a Neighborhood Home.

Promoters Not Yet Satisfied. But those who have the interests of the settlement close at heart would not admit that it realizes in any measure their ideal. They know that there is room for still greater growth. In the house itself there is need of many improvements. In the basement there is a room large enough for gymnasium purposes. If this were fitted up it would add immeasurably to the attractiveness of the Neighborhood house. One of the needs of the institution is a library. The books donated to the house by the Woman's Civic league form the nucleus of a library, but there is not enough of them to represent a library. Aside from these material needs, more neighborliness should be displayed on the part of those who live away from the settlement, but who are in position to offer those very things

# PIANO CLEAN-UP SALE

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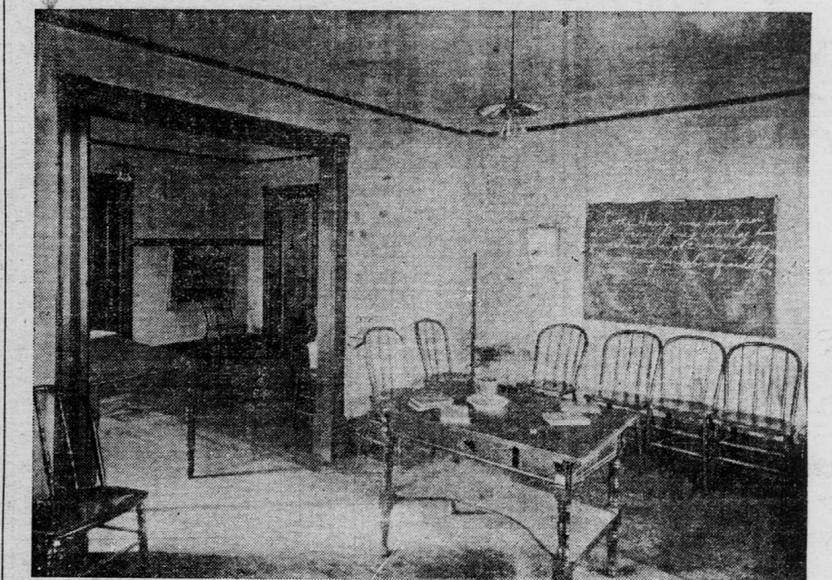
- Hall Square Piano; is very old, but just repaired. Only \$10
- Boardman & Gray Square Piano; a little better than the above. Only \$15
- McPhail Square Piano; just overhauled and in very good condition. Only \$65
- New England Upright, parlor size, very good instrument, but for this sale we have marked it down to only \$125
- Smith & Barnes Upright, ebony case, plain design, good tone, and sold new for \$350. Sale price only \$140
- Wesley Upright, oak case; used about three months and really as good as new. Only \$165
- Willard Upright, mahogany case; very nice design and splendid tone. Only \$185
- Willard Upright, mahogany case; has been on the warehouse floors several months, slightly shop-worn; regular price, \$300. Now \$200
- Smith & Barnes Upright, walnut case; a piano that to the casual observer would look as good as new, but it is shop-worn, and we offer it at only \$235
- Ludwig Upright, Colonial case, walnut finish; a new piano, shop-worn, on which you can save \$100; price new, \$360. Price now \$260
- Rogers Square Piano, mahogany case; this has also just been repaired. Only \$12
- Newton Square Piano; will do very well for new beginner. Only \$18
- Hall Upright, ebony case. This has just gone through the hands of our repairmen, and is in good condition. \$115
- Shoninger Upright, walnut case. The case is in good condition, and the tone clear and musical. Only \$140
- Willard Upright, walnut case; been used as a rental piano, but is in good tone and very desirable at only \$130
- Chickering Grand, in ebony case; very good tone, and sold new for \$800. We offer it at this sale for only \$175
- Willard Upright, oak case; one of the discontinued styles, and can't be told from new; regular price, \$275. This sale \$190
- Weber Upright, mahogany case, and just thoroughly overhauled; practically as good as it ever was. Now only \$200
- Emerson Upright, mahogany case; just been refinished, and is as good as when it sold for \$400. \$225
- Gabler Upright, walnut case, beautiful design, and nice sweet tone; worth new \$450. This sale only \$235

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and enjoying life shrink from death, and yet when the same persons are near it they have not the slightest fear." Of the 200 people Dr. Reisman has seen die, according to the figures that he has kept, only two feared death. A third wanted it hastened, while the remainder were not moved, being willing to meet it whenever it came.



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