

Dr. Annie Daniel, the East Side's Friend

Modest Little Physician Adored by the Poor She Has Aided for Years and Honored by Fellows

By EILEEN O'CONNOR.

AN observer of the East Side, one who has been watching it with friendly eyes for forty years, sees its continuous regeneration. Forty years of observation have registered deeply imbedded impressions.

That it is not true that the East Sider lives in the congested submerged part of the city from choice. He wants to escape those conditions and does as quickly as he can.

That the East Side is not static, but in a state of flux. It is as restless, of movement as constant, as the sea.

That in forty years she has seen 75 per cent. of the population of the East Side move to more hygienic and congenial regions in and about New York.

That the East Side is richer per capita this year than it has ever been before. Riches in this instance do not mean a plenitude of possessions, but that state which is its forerunner, freedom from debt.

That the East Side is in a continuous stage of evolution. The third generation marks the transition into a purely American type of good citizen.

That the regions to which the graduated East Sider removes are The Bronx, Staten Island and New Jersey.

Honored by 300 Physicians.

The friend, apologist, counsellor and guide of the East Side is Dr. Annie Sturges Daniel. At the banquet tendered her by the women physicians and surgeons of New York, and at which 300 of the most eminent healers in the city paid the tribute of their presence and their speech to her, Dr. Abraham Jacobi, who has been called the Nestor of the medical profession of New York, said: "Our distinguished and unselfish little friend has learned more in the East Side tenements than have some of us in Fifth avenue mansions." Dr. Gertrude Kelly said of her: "So dear has Dr. Daniel become to the residents of the East Side that her patients refer in the same breath and tone to 'God and Dr. Daniel.'"

Round the brilliant board at which sat men and women whose names are household words in the temple of medicine went the whisper:

"I don't believe the dear little doctor ever wasted the time getting into a low necked frock before."

She looked very serious, very surprised, a little frightened, and to her neighbors at the table she said: "I really don't know why you are doing all this for me."

Made Her Understand at Last.

The three hundred doctors tried to enlighten her. By the time they had reached six and coffee they had made her understand at least in what light they saw her uninterupted ministrations to the crowded poor in the most congested part of the largest city in the world. They toasted her in wine she could not drink as "The Friend of the Poor" and "The Ministering Angel of the East Side."

"How have you accustomed yourself to the evil smells?" asked a dainty practitioner.

"I didn't notice any smells," responded the little doctor.

"How have you kept your limbs whole on those rickety stairs?" asked a physician who goes on his professional tours in his limousine.

"They were always strong enough to hold me," was the reply of the little doctor.

"Why have you never tired of work among the poor and taken up more lucrative practice?" asked many. To all of the questioners she made the same answer: "It has always interested me."

"Don't you grow very tired?"

"I am seldom tired."

She did not quote from the hospital records, as others did, that she and her assistant visited 22,000 homes of sick poor in New York in one year.

Her official title is head of the outdoor work of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. The fine old hospital, with sixty-five years of usefulness



PHOTO BY SUN STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER.

behind it, has been closed by war exigencies and pending repairs and the success of the \$200,000 drive, which it will begin in the autumn. But the dispensary is still open and there the little doctor goes each morning before she starts on her rounds. The old fashioned rectangle of dull red brick, that is the "shadow" of the two noble sisters, Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell, who founded it, has sent forth 300 alumnae from its college. These include Dr. S. Josephine Baker, the head of the bureau of child hygiene of the Health Department of New York; Dr. Marie Volkstein, who is with the Rockefeller Institute; Dr. Sarah J. McNutt, one of its senior physicians; Dr. Yamei Kin, the Chinese doctor, and Dr. Annie Sturges Daniel. It has sheltered 700 women and new born babies each year.

Six Times the Danger of War.

"It is six times more dangerous to be a baby in a crowded home in New York than to be a soldier in the trenches in France," is the slogan of the female practitioners from this the only institution for and by women in New York. Because summer is the season of menace to children Dr. Daniel, friend of the poor and Understanding Friend of the East Side, will take no vacation this summer.

"We're a little anxious about Spanish influenza," said the little silver haired woman in black, whose gray eyes and clear voice are equally direct. "It is not dangerous, but it is an epidemic and an annoying one. Influenza may leave so many weaknesses and tendencies to graver diseases behind it."

"Vigilant but hopeful," should be the motto on the Little Doctor's family crest. I suspect that she sleeps with one eye open, in her cosy, a bit old fashioned apartment near Stuyvesant Square, where they say they never know when she will come home nor how soon she will be away again. Forty years of vigilance at her post has registered in the health and manner of living of the East Side. She has impressed the tenants with their duty to themselves and their children of not living in crowded conditions. To her is due a large part of the exodus to more sanitary portions of the city, and surrounding country. Landlords she confesses she has not deeply impressed save as a scold. For she admits that the tenements are as noisome as ever, a little fouler, she thinks, this summer. Perhaps because labor is at a premium.

"I notice a great deal of paper and rubbish thrown into cellars," she says, "and the streets have their usual amount of littering stuff."

But in Dr. Daniel's heart hope is supreme. She is hopeful of the future because she has witnessed the evolution of the East Side in the past.

"Since I began my out of door practice, as it is called at the infirmary, I have seen three-fourths of the population move away. The families have gone as soon as they could. Once on their feet, that is out of debt, and with enough money to pay for the moving, they emigrate to more healthful environment. It is a cruel untruth that they prefer to stay on the East Side. Not one of them does. Their chief thought is to pay what they owe so that they can get to a more healthful spot to bring up their children. I know no exception to this save among parents who are so sick that they have lost all hope."

"Are times better or worse on the East Side since the war?" I asked.

"They are better. I see an improvement in the condition of most of the families. There have been fewer evictions this year. Families have been able to pay old debts. They are at least 'even.' That does not mean that they have anything ahead, but it is wealth to them to be rid of the burden of debt. Some families are buying Liberty bonds by paying a dollar a week for them."

"You have been called the friend of the immigrant. You see no danger in the influx of strange peoples?"

"I am the friend of the immigrant because I have watched him develop. He constitutes no menace to this country. The third generation of his family can be guaranteed to be a purely American type of citizen. I have watched families grow up to new standards. The first generation might rear its children and die in the environment of the East Side. But the struggle to get out of it was manifest in the second. Sometimes the second generation has struggled up and out of the congestion and taken new root in The Bronx or in Staten Island or in New Jersey. But the third generation is guaranteed to live and flourish in better soil than that between the Bowery and East River, Fourteenth street and Brooklyn Bridge.

Boy Became Member of the Bar.

"Some typical instances recur to me. I was in the Supreme Court Building one day on some legal business. A dark eyed, dark haired, young man came up to me and said: 'You don't remember me, Dr. Daniel, but I'll never forget you. You attended my father and mother fifteen years ago on Forsythe street.' I recalled the name as soon as he mentioned it. They had been immigrants. Their battle to get on in the new land had been hard. I recalled the boy, bright eyed, energetic, keenly alert. I asked about his parents. Slowly but surely conditions had improved for them, and they had disappeared from the East Side. He told me his father had died. 'But mother is splendid.' He took a picture of her from his wallet and showed

Ministering Angel Tells of Patients' Gratitude and Pleads for Better Sanitation and Care of Children

it to me. She was wearing a fine silk gown and a broad collar that looked as though it were real lace. 'I'm taking care of her,' he told me with pride. He was a lawyer with a good practice. He was waiting to try a case in the Supreme Court that day. I went into the court room to watch his handling of it. The Judge complimented him for the thorough manner in which he did it."

"Are your patients grateful?"

"Nearly always. There was that young couple who married two years ago. I had attended the parents of both. They lived across a dark hall from each other, this boy and girl. She went into a store as soon as she could get working papers. So did he. Because they were intelligent and industrious both did well. Like all of the young folk of the East Side they helped the folks at home. They waited until they had helped their families into better homes and greater comfort before they became engaged. The day before they were married they came to me and said: 'Dr. Daniel, we have heard you say that you came from Buffalo and that your parents are buried there. Will you tell us their names?' I did, and talked to them of my girlhood before I came to the College of the Woman's Hospital.

Honored Her Father and Mother.

"They said they were going to Niagara Falls for their wedding trip and that they would be sightseeing in Buffalo. While they were there the bride wrote me that they had visited the cemetery and laid flowers on father's and mother's graves."

"One day I tried to cross Fourth avenue. Twice I had to dodge the same automobile. I looked up at the driver and saw a friendly face laughing at me, and realized that the manœuvres of the automobile were deliberate. I stopped. The man at the wheel laughed.

"You don't remember me, of course, Dr. Daniel. But thirty years ago you treated my father and mother, who were poor immigrants. You may be sure I haven't forgotten you."

"You see, if year after year I were treating the same families I might be discouraged about their progress, but I don't. Or if I had the children and grandchildren of those I used to treat I should become despondent for the future of the East Siders, but I don't. The poor immigrants of forty years ago are well to do persons and taxpayers of today, or their children are. Every one of them is worth the chance we give him."

"What are the worst menaces of the East Side?"

Crowds to Lessen Shortly.

"The crowded and unsanitary conditions of living and home manufactures," she answered. "Since the landlords show no signs of relenting the hope of the emigrant is the exodus. With more and more means of rapid transit you will see the crowds on the East Side lessening."

"The other menace of home manufacture is harder to check. We have been trying to meet it with legislation, but the last bill was left in the committee at Albany. Home manufacturing is serious, because wherever it exists there is surp to be child labor. Children about 3 years of age are kept at work for four or five hours at a stretch."

"What can such a baby do that is gainful?"

"Sew buttons and make artificial flowers. I had a case of a child of 3. It had suffered in the typhoid epidemic. As soon as it was able to sit up it was put to work. Not being strong enough to sew on buttons they put it at threading needles. It threaded needles for its elders until it fainted."

"I found one baby 18 months old helping its mother make artificial flowers. The child assorted the cut forms from which the flowers were made. I had two cases of infantile paralysis in which both victims, though slowly dying, were at work. I remember a child of 18 months who earned 50 cents a day for its family."

(Continued on following page.)