

Does the City Street Offer Salutary Training for Life to the Newsboy?

That the city street offers salutary training for life to the newsboy is one of the popular misconceptions of the day. In support of this erroneous idea one often hears a business man say, "Our small 'newsies' are potential merchants. Thru their experience in salesmanship they are learning to deal with people and to make their way in the world. Just look at me." He adds chestily, "I once sold papers."

Now the National Child Labor Committee which was organized to bring about better conditions for the industrial child, has made studies of the social aspect of the newsboy. This Committee condemns the methods these youngsters early learn to practice and the psychology they apply. These children soon learn that dirty, raggedy clothes make an appeal, that a last paper accompanied by a woe-be-gone expression always finds a sale. Children are clever little actors and they play up to the sympathy of their customers. Any educator will grant that the attainment of an object thru working on the sympathies of people is a poor principle to inculcate in a child and that the implanting of such a principle is encouraging a wrong attitude toward life.

Again the business man argues, "It is a financial question. The poverty in the home impels the youngster to augment the family income by his earnings." Again we have recourse to statistics. These show that it is necessary only in few cases. There are families who live on the earnings of their children, but is this fair to the children? I was present one night when a nine year old boy came home and turned his pockets inside out to shake out all the pennies. Now, he had a perfectly ablebodied father who could support his family. Incidentally this family was acquiring property, but I believe, at the sacrifice of the boy. One family, I know, lived off the earnings of two little boys. The father probably would have worked if the living of the family hadn't been so easily procured by the children. The rights of childhood should not be violated because of the poverty of the family, for if a family really needs the assistance that can be rendered by a little child, the problem can always be handled some other way. Enlisting the aid of well-to-do relatives, fraternal societies, and church charities; increasing the natural bread winner's efficiency by the use of employment bureaus, and vocational guidance, or by stimulating his feeling of family responsibility; - these are the daily tasks of organized charity. In many instances the children never get home with their small earnings. They play craps

or pitch pennies at a line: newsboys are notorious little gamblers.

It is the lure of the street and not necessity that holds the 'newsies'. On the street these children are surrounded by many kinds of dangers which demand an alertness beyond their years. They are in the midst of constant excitement and soon become nervously overstimulated. They come in contact with the evils of adult city life. The street becomes the source of many thrills. The thrill becomes the incentive to action. Once a youngster has succumbed to the lure of the street, he becomes a problem for his parents and his teachers. They are unable to cope with him. He may find his way to the reform school, but wherever he may find himself motivation thru thrills is a poor substitute for motivation thru a sense of duty. The former makes for a volatile, unstable type of workman.

To sum up the business man's contention that newsboys receive efficient training for business life is ^{un}supported by the facts, as the youngsters who sell papers develop a tendency to play on the sympathies of the public, and overstimulated by the thrills of street life they consequently become delinquent and make bad employees later because they lack stability. The further contention that the newsboy's earnings are a necessary part of the family income is not supported by social statistics.

The few instances of actual dire poverty can be dealt with in more efficient and less anti-social ways. And further more the money after instead of being turned into the family treasury is gambled away by the young crap shooters.

Miriam Teichner, in her poem "Newsie-Boy", graphically portrays the dangers and the tragedy of street life:

The street is home for you. You eat and
 sleep
 With bigger boys and hark to what they say,
 And think them mighty men and, shamafaced,
 keep
 Your baby fears and thoughts all hid away.
 You're starved for food and sleep and love,
 though you
 Would scoff at this and call it all untrue.

And oh, you're just a little lad, a little lad,
 a little lad,
 Who ought to think the world's a place for
 having fun and being glad,
 Who ought to be good friends with trees and
 chummy with the sky and breeze,
 And who's to blame, I wonder, if you grow
 up queer and gross and bad?

The few instances of...
in more efficient and...
the young...
A Popular Misconception
English 1-F.

May 21, 1927. Frances Ingram

Dr. Holzknacht

The string is...
With bigger...
Your baby...
And of...
who ought...
And who's...
up...
a little...
having...
who ought...
usually...
And who's...
up...

"I don't care how awful he is," I said, "I am not going to
listen to such language another instant." The husband, embold-
ened by my presence, vented in a low, hoarse voice, "You

May 7, 1927.

Frances Ingram

A Pen Portrait.

Such was my introduction to Mr. and Mrs. Haines at
three in the morning in the library of a First Street lodging
house, where they had recently come to make their home in a

English 1-F.

Dr. Holzknicht

furnished room.

Later I learned that these poor souls had sunk their
drink to the lowest state of degradation, and that in consequence
the Juvenile Court had deprived them of their children. Often
they attended the Mission alone at hand in hopes of reforming
themselves. On such occasions they read their Bible diligently,
but they couldn't resist temptation long. Soon they slipped
out to get a drink and then the vicious circle of a drunkard's
life began all over again. Mrs. Haines, the savior at times,
was much more kindly of heart than was her husband, for whose
welfare she was always most solicitous.

Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom of the page, including a large signature that appears to be "Frances Ingram".