

# FOR BETTERMENT OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS

## What The People's Institute Club Is Accomplishing In the North End District



**NORTH END**—to the average mind the word conjures up hazy pictures of myriad red lights, boisterous revellers, skulking thieves and human vultures such as know no restraint other than an excessive fear of a chafing law.

But with the advent of the Institute Club of the People's Institute in that questionable section of the city the word is coming to take on a new significance. New social problems have been shown us by the work of this organization, problems that are to Portland what the crowded tenements are to New York and Chicago. For in this populous quarter the proportion that require constant police attention is a mere fraction. There are hundreds of reputable people in various stages of poverty, and this means hundreds of children. Now, these children get plenty to eat and are generally clothed warmly. Out here in the West people don't seem to get mixed up in hand to hand combats with the wolf. The hitch comes in their environment. About the worst place on earth for a child to a district like the North End. But the petty tradespeople, while suffering no privations, cannot provide better surroundings. Here is where the Institute Club comes in. It takes up where the parent leaves off.

Down at Fourth and Burnside streets is the big brick structure utilized jointly as a Men's Resort and People's Institute. The Institute Club, a mission of the First Presbyterian Church, but supported by people of all creeds, has attractive, spacious, airy and cheerful rooms in which the children of North Portland gather when otherwise they would be romping streets that are not fit to be romped.



1. Friday kindergarten luncheon. A treat for the youngsters.
2. An Oriental miss learning to sew.
3. Learning to make beds. The instructors are Miss Emma Failing, assisted by Mrs. Fred Strong.
4. Miss Valentine Pritchard, director of social settlement work in Portland.
5. Miss Lucy Lombardi talking to the children. Her assistant is Miss Anna Stuart.
6. The girls' cooking class, under instruction of Miss Strickler, assisted by Miss Thompson and Miss Robertson.

**It is Not All Play.**

It is not all play, however. That is not the purpose of the work, which is very much in the nature of social settlement work. The children are taught valuable things, from cleanliness to gymnastics. Little misses are instructed in sewing, cooking and keeping house, and the ubiquitous small boy is taught to cook, to exercise and keep himself clean, and to be manly, truthful and polite.

These things are taught by volunteer instructors, recruited from the ranks of prominent young women of Portland. With a commendable spirit of generosity they give up whole afternoons of their leisure time and patiently labor to teach useful things to the children of the North End.

Of course, the instruction is to a large extent mutual. The pupils, while receiving ideas on domestic science, offer a rare opportunity for the study of human nature. Go up in the Portland and everywhere enters the dining-room the same way, sit down the same way, take up the knife the same way, use his napkin the same way and eat the same way. Down Burnside way humanity has not been cast in conventional molds. There is the place to study human nature as least affected by social evolution.



she had a bath she caught a bad cold, she said.

Another lad of about the same age said he had bathed before when she had the snailpox. Inquiry revealed that she had been visited by that malady four years ago.

The Institute Club has been at work for a month or two more than a year, having been organized November 11, 1904, by the ladies of the First Presbyterian Church. It was organized for the express purpose of conducting social settlement work in the North End, with the object in view of extending educational, social, religious and friendly aid to the women and children within its reach. The work is non-sectarian, and the membership includes all women who contribute regularly to the work, either financially or by active service.

At first interest was confined to rather a small circle. The first class was made up of fewer than a dozen children. But the good news spread. Children who had discovered the boon told their playmates and brought them along. It was not long before the enrollment went into the hundreds. Over 500 children have come under the Club's influence up to this time and the amount of good that has resulted therefrom could hardly be estimated.

**Teachers and Assistants.**

A corps of 90 volunteer teachers and assistants are now engaged in this work, and this list includes many prominent in social circles. The financial backing has extended greatly, although there is still plenty of room for expansion in this direction. It is said by those who know, the executive board is made up of Mrs. Helen Ladd Corbett, Mrs. T. B. Wilcox, Mrs. J. G. Gauld, Mrs. William Mackenzie, Mrs. C. E. Ladd, Mrs. Fletcher Linn, Mrs. A. H. Tanner, Mrs. C. R. Curry and Miss Valentine Pritchard. The active work of the club is under the able direction of Miss Pritchard.

The work of the various committees is carried on under three departments—finance, women's and children's departments. The finance committee, under the leadership of Mrs. A. B. Kjoesterman, Mrs. Dell Stuart and Mrs. Fletcher Linn, has rendered excellent service, according to the first annual report, in the work of securing funds. Every member of each one of the various committees has shown decided interest in the work, and has added much to the success that has been met with.

**Work of the Kindergarten.**

The daily kindergarten has an enrollment of 25, and an average daily attendance of 25. Groups of children living too far to come alone are attended to and from kindergarten by young women assistants, and here for two hours and a half each day the little ones spend undoubtedly the happiest hours their little lives have known, in an atmosphere of love and joy that makes goodness seem the natural way of living. The children have been encouraged to bring their pennies to be devoted to some special purpose. This they are quite delighted to do, and already have a well-filled bank. Miss Pritchard conducts this class, assisted by Miss Virginia Borup, Miss Rachael Smith, Miss Katherine Gilbert, Miss Gertrude Gill and Miss Elsie Beckus.

A children's chorus class meets every Monday afternoon. It has 45 members and an average attendance of 20 children over 10 years of age. The chorus work also serves as a rehearsal for the vested choir of boys and girls, who sing at the Sunday evening service. This class is conducted by Miss Anna Rankin, assisted by Miss Nannie Wood, Miss Marie Jamison and Miss Marion Plummer.

A basket class is conducted by Mrs. John Vogan, assisted by Miss Margaret Wilson and Miss Sterling. This class has 40 girls ranging in ages from 4 to 14. They bring their own pennies to pay for material and some of them have made bags or baskets which they have sold for 25 cents apiece.

**Boys Taught to Cook.**

Fourteen boys are learning camp cooking, with military drill. This class is conducted by Miss Greata Strickler, assisted by Miss Susie Stott, Miss Delta Watson and Miss Marion Noble.

Fifteen little girls are enthusiastic members of the girls' gymnasium class, which meets Wednesday. Mrs. C. C. Childress conducts this work, assisted by Miss Winifred Rankin and Miss Belle Robinson.

**The Kitchen Garden Class.**

The fine art of keeping house is taught by Miss Emma Failing, assisted by Miss Caroline Burns, Miss Etta Honeyman, Miss Alice Sibson, Mrs. Fred Strong and Miss Elsie Houghton.

The class is comprised of 24 little girls under 12 years, with a waiting list of 24 more. This includes all lines of housework, such as washing, ironing, sweeping, dusting, making beds, setting tables, etc.

A sewing school is conducted with a present enrollment of 25. A complete system of sewing is taught, and when the pupils have completed the course diploma are issued which enables the holders thereof to secure paid positions in dress-

making shops. This class is conducted by Miss Lulu Hall, assisted by Miss Veda Nichols, Miss Margaret Catlin, Miss Fannie Brown, Miss Elizabeth Savage and Mrs. Hugh Ladd.

Each Friday afternoon the kindergarten classes are given a luncheon of cookies and milk, cocoa or lemonade. The preparation of these luncheons is directed by Mrs. Will Wright, assisted by the Misses Sterling, Miss Mary Haradon, Miss Edna Burchard, Miss Laura Clark, Miss Edna Reed, Miss Elizabeth Savage and Miss Mabel Lawrence.

**Girls' Cooking School.**

The girls' cooking school is divided into two classes this term, a class of 20 juniors and eight seniors. These girls are taking a simple course in cooking and a waitress course, and will receive a diploma when the course is completed. In this course the girls pay 10 cents a month. The instructors are Miss Greata Strickler, Miss Claire Thompson and Miss Robinson.

Each Thursday afternoon a story hour is held when the children are entertained with pleasing and interesting stories. The stories are supplied by Miss Lucy Lombardi and Miss Anna Stuart.

In a class for deficient children there are two pupils, both of whom are unable to attend public school. One is a little girl who is partially deaf, and the other a little boy who has suffered the loss of both feet. The two unfortunate ones are taught by Miss Anna Stuart and Miss Jamison.

Sunday services are largely attended. A stereopticon story is told each Sunday by Mrs. A. D. Soper.

Other charitable work is likewise conducted by the Institute Club, such as distribution of clothing, providing free baths and affording such other relief as is possible in cases coming under attention. The clothing is provided by a clothing committee made up of 100 little girls who save their discarded clothes for this purpose. Mrs. Thomas Kerr is general chairman of this committee, and Miss M. L. Flanders is secretary. The little misses who serve as heads of subcommittees in the work are: Claire Wilcox, Mildred Graham, Katherine MacMaster, Elsie Kohler, Margaret Mackenzie, Jessie MacLaine, Genevieve Butterfield, Delberta Stuart, Katherine Hart and Genie Kerr.

**Result of First Year's Work.**

Summing up the first year's work, Miss Pritchard says, in her annual report: "The year's work has been one of unlooked for and astonishing growth, and also one of great joy and gratification—not satisfaction—for we have not realized our ideals. Plans which we outlined at first have been laid aside in some instances, and others unthought of carried out. We have simply studied the needs and tried to meet the demand. We have aimed to lay the foundation for a work which would not need to be undone, and one broad enough to meet the future needs. Two of the vital underlying thoughts in this work are: Protection for the children and brotherly helpfulness for all. Protection from the sin and evil that surrounds these little ones on every side, and which they cannot help absorbing unless protected from it. If the family is incompetent to provide this protection, then society must stand ready to offer it."