The Minster Street
Neighborhood Guild.

Warren B. Rodney
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In the history of
social reform the student soon finds that such
labors is undertaken as a rule by men collec-
tively rather than individualy, and that such ef-
forts are directed not at men in particular but
rather at society in gen-
eral. This the reader
will readily recognize
when he remembers how
The great majority of reform institutions are established and maintained for men at large by organized societies or by the state. I say reform institutions; for until recently society has been content to make a feeble attempt at curing social disease and has scarcely even thought of preventing it. Within the last half century however thinking people have realized that effort in the direction of social reform must be
toward the root of the disease and toward the individual; although society in general has not as yet fully understood that in order to reach the individual the work must be performed by the individual. Still there are instances where this fact is recognized, and it is the history of such a case that it falls to my lot to chronicle.

Before we enter upon the account of the work however it will be neces...
ary to learn something of the causes which led to the establishment of the enterprise. Less than five years ago Rev. Charles Daniel, a minister of the gospel in the city of Philadelphia, wrote a book called "Ai," or "A Social Vision"—a work which has not had the wide circulation of Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward" or of Mrs. Humphrey Ward's "Marcella," but which is of more practical worth than either of them. Under it
title of a dream of social reform the book is a satirical condemnation of conventionalism in society, but particularly in the church. It is a satirical condemnation of the formal accusations which have gathered about the pure religion of Christ. In it the writer strikes a blow at the too practical life of the present age, and makes a strong plea for a deeper thought in our existence. The author had been the pastor of a city church; but partly because he was
disguised with formality in
the church, and partly
because he desired a wid-
er and free field of labor
he withdrew from his
falling and struck out
on lines entirely new.

Mr. Daniels aimed to
work for the reformation
of sound life both by died
effort and by showing to
others the need of such
reform. His theory is that
it is of no use to attempt
social reform from a dis-
tance; that personal contact
is necessary to influence hu-
man beings; and that the
The best way to awaken an interest in a different life is by example. His principle is that efforts at social reform should be directed towards the young, for they are easier to reach and consequently more easily prevented from becoming criminals. He believes that in order to successfully contend against depraved nature in individual cases, to some extent at least, must be studied; the causes of their degradation must be known before that condition can be intelligently treated. In
that he would attack so
pial disease much as a
physician does physical
sorder. It was in purs
ance of this theory that
Mr. Daniel purchased a
house in Minster Street
and established what is
now the "Minster Street
Neighborhood Guild".

As one who has never
visited Minster Street
will deny the need of
a new regime within its
borders. It is one of the
cosmopolitan districts whose
inhabitants are bound to-
gether by the pole tie of
their common lot of filth and vice. If you will walk the length of its two squares you will learn more of slum life than I could tell you in a hundred pages. You have learned that cleanliness is next to godliness, but then you will fully realize how nearly allied is ungodliness to filth. The quarter is populated chiefly by Jews and beggars, and the race roars carried on in the streets are often quelled only by the arrival of the police.
one of the neighborhoods that furnish material for runamuking and Cherry Hill. Where crime reigns supreme, shame is unrestrained, and where privacy within doors is impossible, modesty on the street is inconceivable. Where honesty and theft are learned almost before the child can talk or walk, what but crime can be looked for in the adult? 

Such then is the hot-bed of crime in which Mr. Daniel began his work. It was in July 1893 that
The house was purchased in which Mr. Daniel and his family live. The dwelling as well as the neighboring church, which was bought at the same time, of necessity had to be thoroughly renovated before they were tenable. Let me introduce a paragraph from the last Annual Report of the School, which will aid in giving the reader some idea of this little home. "There are books all over the house, and the latest magazines are read and made the subject..."
of table talk. There is also an occasional attempt at original story-telling, and many a manuscript has never seen the light except of our supper lamp. How we are sure of our friends who come to see us, not for the clothes we wear, or our house full, or our table nice, but for what we really are, and we doubt whether any private family anywhere has the honor of so various and bright personality introduced into it as we are favored with. In our little dining room there have been, at least
feast of reason, though our
treasury was low. We have
had at our table and before
feast with editors, educators,
doctors, students, writers of
books, artists, scientists, law-
yers, clergymen of every rank
except a bishop. But that
may come in due time, after
the revival. Edward
Everett Hale found his way
up the narrow lane and
caught the girls at a car-
dy pull. He tasted the pro-
duct and pronounced it good.
The church audience room
was converted into a grand
assembly hall, and the base-
ment was filled up as a sort of primitive gymnasium and club room. In these two small rooms, neither of which accommodates a hundred people, is carried on a work that reaches in the aggregate about a thousand persons. The work has no organization except an advisory board selected by Mr. Davill of which he himself is chairman. The board consists of the following six members in addition to the chairman: Mr. Robert Gilley, Mr. George W.
South, Mrs. George Boyd, Mrs. A. Y. Aikin, Mrs. Anna L. Yelverton, and Mrs. D. Riche.

The object of the resident family, as has already been stated, is to get into closer touch with those who are to be helped. The very contact with the refined woman, host of Mrs. Daniel and her daughter is a blessing to the poor girls whose home is the street; and even the thought that someone is interested in them is an inspiration to these people to be interested in
themselves. Once interested all they need is to have their interest guided into proper channels.

The Assembly room is used for informal lectures or entertainments and Mr. Daniel promises a full house to anyone who has anything to say to the children. The religious instruction is limited to such as may be given on Sabbath evenings by invited speakers, and even that is made as non-sectarian as possible on account of the large number of
Rehearsals in the Child. In this room the writer has enjoyed, probably as keenly as the motley assembly of Child members, an illustrated lecture and an elaborate concert entertainment.

The Child room is open at some time during every day of the week, as will be seen from the following schedule which will be sufficiently explained below:

Monday 4 P.M.
Tuesday " " "
Wednesday (Girls) 7 " " 
Thursday (Boys) " " "
Friday 4 P.M.
Saturday 10 A.M.
Sunday 7 P.M.
Here the children gather for recreation and play as well as for instruction and the exchange of library books. Usually it is a general club room but at certain set times the exercises are limited to one sex, as on Boy’s Night when only members of the harder sex are admitted. Then the boys amuse themselves with books or games for an hour, after which a talk is given by Mr. Pauld
or some one else on a prac-

tical subject. The past

winter a medical stud-

cut has been explaining

the structure of the hum-

an body, and the know-

ledge these boys of the

physicians have acquired is

truly wonderful. Their

wit seem preternaturally

sharpened by their hard

life. Many a ragged

footloose has gathered

more knowledge of the

The nature of the Parlor

he uses from the Child

room than his supposed

petition has been able
to obtain from a college course. Sometimes each boy is given a tool of some kind and taught to use it. More than one apprentice has handled his first saw or hammer in the build room.

Two hours a week are devoted exclusively to the girls. As with the boys, recreation comes first, and often it is very welcome to the little news girl or to the young nurse hardly larger than the baby she carries. Sometimes a
story leads to some little experiment, or a discussion is engaged in to draw out the young minds. Enough system is introduced into the work to ensure good running, but all formality and rigid rules are tabooed. In connection with the girls' work a sewing school is carried on. The school was at first opened on Saturday, but was changed to Friday afternoon on account of some Jewish
parents' objection to their children's working on hot day. Now about fifty girls meet after public school hours and under the direction of Miss Dew and a few interested friends are rapidly becoming expert needlewomen. From the first they are allowed to work on some real garments so that they may understand the practical work of what they are doing. It is interesting to watch the little girls industriously endeavoring to
do something particularly well, or the rather slow
by negro girl painfully
learning to thread her nee-
dle. When a garment is
completed it belongs to the
one who has made it
and each girl is taught
to make a whole gar-
ment. Thus a double of
jict is held before the
student and the pride
they naturally take in
their own work is not
discouraged.

The Library is one
of the Guild's chief
features. Although the
number of books which it comprises is not above three hundred, yet the selection has been most carefully made, and the worn edges of most of the volumes show a wide circulation. In order to ensure that the applicant for membership is in earnest a registration fee of two cents is charged each member. This goes toward the purchase of new books. Books can be borrowed or exchanged at any time when the child
room is often, or the books may be read in the room without removing them. The borrowers are often children wholly unknown to the officers of the Guild, and it might be supposed that occasionally a book would fail to be returned, but such an occurrence remains to happen. It is this lesson of responsibility that benefits the children, as much as the knowledge gained. Wherever it is seen that
a member reads intently and is desirous of broadening his circle of knowledge, race is taken to have become a member of one of the Free Libraries of the city. The writer has had the privilege of discussing with a twelve year old boy reclaimed from the slums a recent article in the Forum. This boy is of course of more than ordinary ability, but of what use to the world would he have been had he
not been brought to light. And how many others like him may be lost to a life of usefulness through the lack of just some such agency as this! Unless they have been for years a degraded family, the children of the plans are just as intelligent and contain as great possibilities as their more fortunate neighbors. The business side of the Guild work comes before the children's minds in the shape of a Penny Savings Bank.
Here thefootsteps or
agrostry may deposit
a portion of his earning
and receive a credit
and which shows the
amount of his savings.
One little girl sends
a deposit of wages in
the bank. There are
now thirty-nine regular
deposits, who lay aside
a certain percentage of
their incomes every week.
As with the other depar-
tments of the Guild the
object is twofold. The
saving of money is in
itself a good thing, but the effect on the character of the patient is a far greater consideration. It keeps the children from spending the few pennies they can earn for candy or chewing-gum. It encourages them to work more industriously in order to increase their bank account. It keeps them from begging on the street, for a child who will beg money to buy chewing gum will not beg it to deposit in the bank. That seems to be
Contrary even to the principles of child nature. These are not merely theories worked out on paper; they are facts noticed by constant observation in ministerial life.

A very practical point in the neighborhood child work is its happy cooperation with the efforts of other societies organized for similar purposes. While he is devoted to his own child, yet Mr. Daniel is too broad-minded not to see the benefit of united effort where individual
work would be of no avail. The Municipal League is in debt to its member street friends for many a bit of information that has been of use in its attacks on misgovernment. Mr. Daniel and his co-workers have advantages that officials and public investigators might well envy in getting at the facts of city administration. The Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Animals have often had the benefit of the Guild
members' watchfulness.

The same wide knowledge of the plans and their inhabitants enables our Daniel to aid the County Week Association in going to the deserving poor summer vacations and sometimes permanent houses in the country. During the summer the Child is engaged in providing one-day outings in the Park, on the river, or the country surrounding Philadelphia. It was the writer's privilege to be present and assist at one.
of these picnics the past summer. In the morn-
ing Mr. Daniel brought by train a company of thirty children ranging in age from four to four-
teen to a pleasant grove near Dairy Creek. Sever-
al of the boys had never been in the country
before, and their delight in examining the unknown
world of nature was touch-
ing. One or two girls
who had only occasionally
been beyond the bound-
daries of the narrow
court in which they lived,
did not understand the mystery of a horse without bridle or harness.

To see these poor people devour probably the first full meal in a week was to bring tears to a man's eyes; but when they asked to pass out a portion to carry to their parents at home one felt drawn to them by the universal bond of human sympathy. Happily the thoughtfulness of the ladies had foreseen and provided for this contingency, but the incident made one
realize that nobility of character may exist even in a gavel.

In his Annual Report for the year 1896, Mr. Daniel gives a resume of the work of the Guild since its inception in July 1893. The work, as he says, has been of a preventive rather than of a corrective character, and has been confined almost exclusively to children. Adults are not excluded but no especial effort is made to reach them except incident
by through the children. About fifty girls now attend the Girls Night Exercises, and a like number are in the Sewing School. That is, there are that many regular attenders, though a larger number come irregularly. The number of boys is somewhat larger, but their attendance is less regular, owing to the uncertain occupations which many of these pursue. These people do not always work a certain number of hours. Those of them who do work...
do so wherever he can get a chance or whenever they are in need of money. In all about a thousand persons come under the influence of the Guild system. Owing however to the shift in the nature of the population, only a small portion of these can be hoped to profit by the efforts on their behalf. The attempt is made not to reach a large number, but to personally influence a few, to get enough leave to
them to learn a larger lump. That such a plan is attended by good results is evident from the cases we have not cited above, whether it is the best way to accomplish the desired result we can not decide.

A comparison of figures shows that the Mission Street Church is supported on a much smaller sum of money than most similar undertakings. The Annual Report for 1896 gives the following table.
College Settlement Philadelphia
$4,400
College Settlement Boston
2,600
College Settlement New York City
8,100
Chicago Commons
9,500
Kingsley House Pittsburgh
3,200
Lincoln " Boston
6,400
Minister Street Neighborhood
Trinity
2,900

Of course a much larger sum than this would be used in the Child Work, but it is entirely dependent upon voluntary contributions, and can only hope to increase its
usefulness as the work becomes more widely known. For this purpose a weekly leaflet, called "The Nazarene," is published. On Daniel also delivers lectures on "Some City Problems" and "Child Life in the Tenements."

Such is the work of which I have tried to give a description. Perhaps the enterprise is too young to look for great results. Some of them, however, you have been to note as you need the
Forgoing pages. The sum total of these will not already never be known the side of eternity, but a few points will bear emphasizing. First, although we do not need to be told that the curse of the poor is their poverty, yet we may be able to more fully comprehend the meaning of that statement were we know that of the forty-nine thousand vagrants in the city of Philadelphia not one per cent make use of the lodging house at Seventeenth and Southard
There is a good phishing test is in no
prime, but the trash people laugh at it. They do not want
to work for a living; they have no desire to
do anything but live on
the charity of foolish
people who make their
worthless life possible.
Their sole effort is expended
in inventing shallow stories
of frustration or sickness to
frighten the minds of
weak-hearted people.
Civilization is not free
from blame as long as
it allows well-meaning
but thoughtless people to feel the pain of society, and thus make all suffer for the sins of a few. Ask a tramp to earn his dinner by sweeping your sidewalk and see how soon he makes off.

Then to fully understand the nature of urban life one must study it at close range. The closer the better. Last summer a young man, employed in a bank in Philadelphia, became interested in social science. He rented a lodging in a tenement
of the congested districts
and spent his spare
hours in the slums.
He penetrated many a
blind alley, and saw
many a sight that es-
capes the observation of
the professional inspector;
he chose the right method
of studying the subject.
When that man becomes
an employer of labor or
a property owner he will
certainly have an enlarged
conception of the relations
between himself and his
employee or tenant. He
will know something of
the effects of long hours, poor food, and unhealthy houses. At all costs he will not be blind to his civic duties and privileges.

Again it is plain that the student, having learned the secret of degradation, must give personal service to the individual, if he hopes to accomplish anything. It is direct contact and the ever-present influence of character that counts in the reformation of a degraded life. It is the love for the human race, manifest
by one individual toward another in some circumstances, that draws the
iron wedge out of the depths of vice and places him upon the
solid path of virtue.

Finally, we come to the question of personal responsibility. Are we
doing our part? Do we know of the condition of our fellow creatures?
If we do not know we are guilty of criminal indifference. If we do
know are we not respon-
sible for our attitude to-
work the welfare of the human race? When one part of the body is poor does it not effect the whole body? Let us then give consideration to this so sadly diseased member of the universal body.
Material.

The weekly numbers of "The Magazine" for the last twelve months.

"Aji", or "A social Vision" by Chas. Daniel.

Lectures on "Certain City Problems" and "Child Life in The Movement".

Visit to the Child Room and the Residence House.